

“Happy Birthday, Dear Alma Mater”

Planning the Centennial Celebration of MJC

Our college’s 100th anniversary represents an opportunity to celebrate our shared history, to publicize the accomplishments of the institution over the past century, and to recommit to MJC’s mission for the future. A carefully marketed, mission-driven anniversary serves our overall advancement and institutional goals. It can also raise the campus community’s consciousness about the mission and character of the college and refocus attention toward issues of current concern, such as the need to strengthen academic programs or outcomes or raise the profile of strong programs and outcomes.

An anniversary is a rare type of occasion in which all constituencies of the institution and all members of the community can participate. This makes anniversaries ideal for building ties between constituencies and enhancing campus morale. Take this opportunity also to reevaluate organizational goals; introduce a new institutional image or logo; influence public perceptions about MJC; and make a statement about its future.

Our anniversary year is also a time to strengthen our alumni relations, including engagement of those who seldom attend reunions and other annual events. Returning to campus and seeing the institution’s accomplishments in the context of its history can increase an alumnus’s level of involvement...and support. The planning process for an anniversary celebration also can be an important tool for cultivating volunteers whose participation will bring them closer than ever to MJC.

An anniversary brings together internal constituents (students, parents, faculty and staff) and external constituents (alumni, government and business leaders, the local community, prospects and donors). It educates our constituencies, boosts institutional pride, and acknowledges the important contributions of individuals – founders, faculty and staff, alumni, and benefactors – to MJC’s history and future.

If we plan this anniversary well and accomplish our objectives, when it’s over alumni and the local community will have a better sense of the institution’s current direction, parents and students will have a better sense of the college’s past and how it developed, and faculty and staff will feel even more honored to be associated with Modesto Junior College.

Adapted from CASE publication, Happy Birthday, Dear Alma Mater, 2002