

Response to Recommendations of the 2004 Visiting Team

The team recommends the college initiate an institution-wide dialogue about student learning outcomes and processes to facilitate learning. This dialogue should lead to documented implementation and results of a cyclical process of learning outcomes development, systemic assessment, and institutional and programmatic improvement. (Standards I A.1; I B; I B.1 and 3; II A.1.a and c; II A.2.a, b, e, f, h, and i; II A.3 and 6; II.A.6.a; II B; II B.4; II C; II C.2; III A.1.c; IV B.2.b)

In early September 2004, the Superintendent/President and the Academic Senate President called together a group of faculty leaders along with the Vice President, Academic Affairs and Vice President, Student Affairs for the purpose of setting goals and creating timelines for establishing course level student learning outcomes. This group reviewed the plans and materials associated with the “Beta Project,” an earlier effort that had been abandoned in Spring 2002 due to issues related to the College’s fiscal crisis. The group agreed to use the Alverno College Institute publication, *Student Learning: A Central Focus for Institutions of Higher Education*, as the framework for discussion and to focus initially on two key committees: the Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee and the Academic Senate Department Chairs Committee.¹ The group also developed a tentative 2004-2005 academic year timeline for institutional activities and events such as guest speakers, conference/workshop attendance, flex day breakout sessions, in-house presentations, and other meetings.

Both the Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee and the Academic Senate Department Chairs Committee devoted one meeting (in September 2004) to the discussion of the introductory chapter and selected case studies from the Alverno publication and a PowerPoint presentation developed by a Counseling faculty member on the evolution of the student learning outcomes/assessment movement. While these preliminary discussions were valuable and informative, they generated few follow-up activities.

In October 2004, the Academic Senate President and the Vice President, Academic Affairs devoted one of their weekly academic leaders meetings (attended by Academic Senate leaders, the Vice President, Academic Affairs and Vice President, Student Affairs) to addressing their common concern that their original approach of establishing a meaningful dialogue was too passive and could result in an entire academic year engaged in a “planning to plan” dialogue rather than plans of action. This meeting, which included several of the faculty leaders who had participated in the September planning meeting, was pivotal in moving the process forward. The group agreed that good humor and a hands-on approach would most likely achieve the desired results.

Discussion revealed that, while faculty were not necessarily resistant to the concept of student learning outcomes, attitudes ranged from disinterest to intimidation when faced with the perceived complexity of formally assessing student learning outcomes. To address this, the group developed an exercise, “best-guess SLOs” (derived from an elementary school spelling activity), in which groups of faculty members were given basic information about student learning outcomes and then asked to develop measurable student learning outcomes from the objectives of their own and each other’s courses. The purpose was to stimulate interest in student learning outcomes in a non-judgmental environment in which there could be no “wrong answers” and no intended official product. The faculty members present agreed to serve as facilitators for this activity with groups of faculty members they would informally recruit.

Starting with a group designing “best-guess SLOs” for history, mathematics and English, these informal discussions gradually spread to other disciplines and accomplished the intended purpose of heightening the level of interest needed to initiate a more formal dialogue. At an October meeting, the Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee used the course outline of an introductory accounting course as an example of a course with well-defined course objectives and broke into small groups to analyze the objectives to determine whether they were goals, objectives, or student learning outcomes. In November 2004, beginning with a course in comedy acting, the committee chose one of the proposed new courses at each meeting as a vehicle for discussion with the faculty member proposing the new courses, of how to convert course objectives into measurable student learning outcomes. Both Curriculum Committee members and the faculty members proposing the new courses found this exercise beneficial and stimulating.

Since Spring 2005, the Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee has required that each proposal for a new course or major revision of an existing course include submission of at least two student learning outcomes. The Academic Senate Joint Program Review Committee also revised its guidelines to ensure that development of student learning outcomes became part of the required update of all course outlines for instructional programs under review. (All college programs are reviewed on a six-year cycle.)

In Summer 2005, the Academic Senate established a Student Learning Outcomes Task Force, co-chaired by two faculty members (who became members of the Academic Senate Executive Committee) and the Director, Institutional Research, to further engage the college community in a discussion of student learning outcomes and to facilitate the production of stated outcomes and assessments at the course, program and institutional level. Specifically, the task force established the following goals, to be accomplished over a three-year period:

- to create a timely process to achieve student learning outcomes that reflect the College’s culture;
- to promote a collegewide commitment to student learning and success;
- to encourage dialogue on student learning and success within and among all units of the College; and

- to engage every unit of the College in the production of specific outcomes and assessments.

The Student Learning Outcomes Task Force began by developing a handbook that included a definition of student learning outcomes and highlighted the teaching-learning cycle, the importance of dialogue among colleagues, and the process for preparing specific outcome statements, augmented by instructive exercises and samples.ⁱⁱ During the 2005-2006 academic year, the task force consisted of representatives recruited from every academic discipline, with the goal of having each discipline develop two or more student learning outcomes for at least two of its courses. Activities at monthly meetings of the task force included training in the development of student learning outcomes and in the relationship of student learning outcomes to curriculum approval, program review, and accreditation requirements; identification of the two courses in each discipline for which student learning outcomes would be developed and articulation of the rationale for selection; and progress reports on the collaborative work of the task force members with their colleagues. Professional development activities included an assessment workshop, in preparation for the second-year goal of assessing course level student learning outcomes.

The 2006-2007 academic year began with a workshop presented by the Student Learning Outcomes Task Force co-chairs as part of the College's Opening Day flex activities and the preparation of a *Year Two Handbook* that focused on both assessment and the development of discipline/department, degree, certificate, and program student learning outcomes. The task force co-chairs attended monthly meetings of the Academic Senate Department Chairs Committee, which, in essence, served as the 2006-2007 task force. At the first meeting, the task force co-chairs and department chairs determined that there were still many courses for which student learning outcomes had not yet been developed. As a result, the focus for Fall 2006 became the completion of this task, adhering to the principle that developing assessments of student learning outcomes is an essential part of composing the outcomes. A timeline for creating discipline/department, degree, and certificate student learning outcomes was established for Spring 2007 and a variety of resource documents were distributed, reviewed, and discussed. The task force also hosted a presentation on assessment of course level outcomes, viewed from both a course and program perspective.

Between May and August 2007, the Student Learning Outcomes Task Force, in collaboration with the Professional Development Committee, planned a collegewide process for developing the College's Institutional Learning Outcomes. Facilitators led 25 concurrent breakout sessions during the August 2007 Opening Day. Ultimately, 461 participants, working in small groups, discussed possible institutional learning outcomes that students should have achieved through their studies at Santa Monica College. This process resulted in remarkable agreement on four institutional learning outcomes that were subsequently approved by the Academic Senate and the District Planning and Advisory Council, ratified by the relevant college community organizations, and eventually adopted by the Board of Trustees in Fall 2007. Department chairs and program leaders then led the process of developing competencies to link program outcomes to one or more of the Institutional Learning Outcomes. The seamless relationship among all

three levels of student learning outcomes—course, program, and institutional—allows for assessment of Institutional Learning Outcomes through tools developed within courses and/or programs in addition to broader assessment at the institutional level. The March 2008 Institutional Flex Day featured breakout sessions that highlighted how many disciplines and programs specifically promoted student achievement of the Institutional Learning Outcomes.

At the August 2008 Opening Day, focus was shifted to assessment of the first Institutional Learning Outcome with a break-out session called “It Takes a Village.” During the 2008-2009 academic year, the task force continued to develop and distribute standardized reporting forms to be used collegewide to list course- and program-level student learning outcomes and to report the results of faculty assessment of student and institutional learning outcomes. In Spring 2008, at the successful completion of the Student Learning Outcomes Task Force’s three-year charge and based upon the task force’s recommendation, the Academic Senate approved the creation of the standing Academic Senate Joint Student and Institutional Outcomes Committee. This committee maintains and updates a website that includes the College’s definition of, philosophy of, and approach to student learning outcomes; its Institutional Learning Outcomes; three handbooks to guide the writing of course, program, and college operational support services outcomes; forms for reporting outcomes and assessment results; and other related resources.

At this point, student learning outcomes and appropriate assessment tools for each have been developed for all courses and instructional programs, both credit and noncredit. Each learning outcome is mapped to at least one of the College’s four Institutional Learning Outcomes. Faculty regularly assess student learning outcomes, and the focus has now turned to using assessment results to improve course/program effectiveness. The Student and Institutional Learning Outcomes Committee and Office of Institutional Research work with departments and programs to assist in formalizing the process of reviewing outcomes for quality and measurability and strengthening assessment plans to ensure sustainability. They are presently working towards developing a consistent automated/electronic system to capture assessment results that will allow assessments to be easily accessed and results more readily utilized institutionally.

Parallel with the work of the academic departments, the student and instructional support areas of the College have also been engaged in activities related to the development and assessment of student learning outcomes. In Spring 2006, all student services areas began attending retreats, workshops, and meetings devoted to the development of student learning outcomes. For example, the Counseling Department began the process by first redefining departmental goals and objectives. Overarching student learning outcomes were then created for the department goals, followed by the creation of student learning outcomes for each of the specialized counseling programs. Currently, 90 percent of Student Affairs and Enrollment Development programs have identified student learning outcomes, and 68 percent have assessed them. The goal for 2009-2010 is to achieve 100 percent in both categories and to shift the focus to program modification based on the results of learning outcomes assessment. The Library has developed student learning outcomes and assessments for its courses and one-hour bibliographic instruction sessions as well as program level outcomes and assessments.

The College Services Committee, a subcommittee of the District Planning and Advisory Council, has served as the body that facilitates student learning outcomes development for the College's operational services. To date, this committee has assisted over twenty college operational support services, most of which have little direct student contact, in developing outcomes that support the College's Institutional Learning Outcomes and appropriate assessment tools for these outcomes. The Student and Institutional Learning Outcomes Committee is now assuming the responsibility of supporting the operational services as they move to the next stage in this process.

To implement the college's shared vision, the team recommends the college create a long-range comprehensive master plan to include instructional and student services programs, human resources, facilities, technology, and equipment. Annual efforts to improve the institution, budgets and resource development should be derived from this multi-year plan. The college must include in such an integrated comprehensive planning structure the means to evaluate the model and assure itself of the model's effectiveness. (I B; I B.3, 4, 6, 7; II A; II A.1.a; II A.2.e and f; II B.3 and 4; II C; II C.2; III A.6; III B; III B.2; III B.2.a and b; III C.2; III D.1.a, b, c, d; III D.3; IV B.2.b.)

During Summer 2006, the Superintendent/President charged the District Planning and Advisory Council with the development and implementation of a new strategic planning initiative for Santa Monica College. This initiative, envisioned to unfold over several years, was intended not only to result in the product described in this recommendation, but also to engage the college community in an evaluation of existing planning processes and a meaningful dialogue about strategic institutional concerns, thus creating a true sense of ownership of the resulting action plans among all college constituencies. The fact that the District Planning and Advisory Council structure had, by then, been securely established made the timing appropriate for this endeavor. It was agreed that the College's current planning efforts (such as the annual update of the *Master Plan for Education*) would continue while the strategic planning initiative was being developed and implemented.ⁱⁱⁱ

In July and August 2006, the District Planning and Advisory Council reviewed the qualifications of several consulting firms who expressed interest in providing facilitation assistance for this process and forwarded a recommendation which was approved by the Superintendent/President. In late August, the consultants met with the District Planning and Advisory Council to begin planning for this initiative. The consultants gave a presentation at the College's Fall 2006 Opening Day convocation and assisted the Executive Vice President and the Academic Senate President (who serve as chair and vice chair of the District Planning and Advisory Council) with a strategic planning breakout session later that day. Subsequent planning meetings during Fall 2006 firmly established the role of the District Planning and Advisory Council as the steering committee to guide this initiative and created a task force to focus on effective communication to promote widespread involvement in the strategic planning process and to oversee the implementation of specific activities. The task force was composed of sixteen members, eight of them also members of the District Planning and Advisory Council and the other eight "at large" representatives selected by college constituent organizations. Faculty, classified staff,

administrators/managers, and students were represented in equal numbers. Although the task force did not include in its membership Board of Trustees members or external community representatives, the communication plan for the strategic planning initiative included regular updates at Board of Trustees meetings, interactive discussions at Board study sessions, and periodic community focus groups.

The District Planning and Advisory Council agreed upon the major focus for each of the first three years of this planning endeavor: in 2006-2007, efforts were to be devoted to the identification of the College's major strategic issues; in 2007-2008, strategic goals were to be developed from the issues identified; in 2008-2009, the focus was to be the development of strategic action plans to address these goals. Since the College's Student Learning Outcomes Task Force had designated 2007-2008 as the year of focus on institutional learning outcomes, it was anticipated that these two initiatives would begin to merge at that time. A review and, if appropriate, revision of the College's mission statement was also planned for late Spring 2007. This activity was consistent in timing with the process that occurs periodically through the *Master Plan for Education* annual update process.

The Strategic Planning Task Force held its first meeting in early Spring 2007 and immediately engaged in surveying the college community to identify key strategic institutional issues, using a list developed through a Fall 2005 Opening Day staff development activity to provide examples. Based upon the results of this survey, another survey was administered to begin prioritization of the issue "clusters" developed through task force analysis of the results of the first survey. A series of collegewide focus group sessions was then held to gain further input. Eight priorities identified by the college community were "clustered" into four overlapping and interconnected categories, which were to form the foundation for the development of strategic initiatives and action plans:

- Student Learning and Achievement
- Innovation and Leadership in Serving Students
- Improve Collegiality and Communication
- Funding and Resources

A subcommittee drafted a narrative for each of the clusters to clearly indicate to all college community groups that all eight of the original priorities had been included. This document was then approved by the District Planning and Advisory Council and the Superintendent/President.

In reviewing its work at the end of the first year, the task force re-evaluated its initial timeline and agreed upon an accelerated schedule for 2007-2008 to attempt to complete the process in two, rather than three, years so that it would be better coordinated with the timeline for developing the Accreditation 2010 Institutional Self-Study. This was to be accomplished through extensive use of subcommittees and electronic communication.

By the end of Fall 2007, the four strategic initiatives—Basic Skills, Global Citizenship, Sustainable Campus, and Career Technical (Vocational) Education—had been identified. During Spring 2008, action plans for each were developed within four general previously agreed upon categories: Hiring Full-Time Faculty and Permanent Staff, Training Priorities, Student Support Services, and Fiscal Stability. To ensure inclusion of all key elements of task force discussions over the two years, qualitative process descriptors—Collegiality, Collaboration, Communication, and Interconnectivity—were used to characterize the action plan implementation environment. The action plans were designed to be implemented over a five-year period.^{iv}

Also during 2007-2008, the Strategic Planning Task Force assumed the task of drafting a major revision of the College's Mission, Vision and Goals statements based upon input received from the college community through the strategic planning process. This review and revision resulted in the College's four Institutional Learning Outcomes becoming the central focus of institutional goals and the addition of an explicit statement of institutional values. The resulting draft document—Mission, Vision, Values and Goals statements—was then reviewed by the District Planning and Advisory Council, which, in turn, sent it to all of the organizations represented on DPAC for review and ratification. Upon ratification by all of the organizations, DPAC approved the document (with minor revisions recommended through the ratification process) and submitted it to the Superintendent/President. Before responding to DPAC, the Superintendent/President gave the Board of Trustees the opportunity to individually comment. This informed further modifications made to the document by the Superintendent/President, who shared the revisions with DPAC. The final version of the document, approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2008, provided an appropriate new framework for the College's annual planning efforts.^v

As the strategic planning process unfolded, there was consensus that, rather than generating a completely new planning process, the strategic planning initiatives and action plans would instead be used to enrich and inform the existing annual *Master Plan for Education* update process. For the 2008 *Master Plan for Education* Update, the strategic planning initiatives were included, and the strategic action plans were the focus of many of the institutional objectives. The Institutional Learning Outcomes and five supporting goals—Innovative and Responsive Academic Environment, Supportive Learning Environment, Stable Fiscal Environment, Sustainable Physical Environment, and Supportive Collegial Environment—became the organizational framework for the annual institutional objectives.

In the current year, there have been further efforts to refine the *Master Plan for Education* Update and more clearly document linkages within the institutional planning process. Beginning with the 2009 update of the *Master Plan for Education*, all institutional objectives are linked to one or more of the Institutional Learning Outcomes (with a narrative to describe the relationship) in an effort to make planning and decision-making more transparent and to communicate the connection between the mission statement and specific actions. In addition, the new institutional objective template includes references to program review recommendations, strategic initiatives and action plans, and estimated cost and funding source (with a descriptive budget narrative) for

each institutional objective. Methods to accomplish each specific objective and anticipated outcomes are also described.

The team encourages the college in the strongest terms possible to pursue strategies that will result in a financial system that will produce clear, reliable, timely, and transparent reports in which all constituents can have full faith and confidence. (III D.2.b.)

At a February 2007 meeting, the DPAC Budget Planning Subcommittee (composed of four representatives each of faculty, classified staff, administrators, and students) unanimously approved a motion of commendation of the College's Fiscal Services staff for the timeliness, accuracy, clarity, and transparency of the fiscal information provided to the committee during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. More recently, the DPAC Budget Planning Subcommittee unanimously approved a motion receiving a budget report that was "the result of a transparent process which enabled all stakeholders to participate and provide input." A far cry from the sentiments expressed in the 2004 accreditation self-study, these are compelling indications of the considerable efforts devoted to addressing this recommendation. In addition to hiring additional Fiscal Services staff, the College established new goals to promote trust in the reporting of fiscal data. Specific efforts have included:

- electronic distribution of budgetary reports to departments to enable better planning and monitoring throughout the year, including the implementation of an online budget inquiry system that can be accessed at any workstation and that allows access to up-to-date budgetary information;
- development and implementation of new reports to improve the response time to questions posed by the college community;
- membership and regular participation of the Director, Fiscal Services and Vice President, Business and Administration on the DPAC Budget Planning Subcommittee to improve its functionality through direct and timely responses to questions regarding financial data;
- creation of a set of scenarios to explain the relationship between Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES) and funding to provide the college community with a better understanding of enrollment and funding strategies;
- external validation as a result of increasingly improved audits culminating in a "perfect audit," free from audit findings, in the 2008-2009 fiscal year, achieved through enhanced allocation of resources to the Fiscal Services area and improved communication with all related college units; and
- fostering of a general philosophy of cooperation and inclusion that has significantly improved the relationship among all constituencies.

The team recommends the college consider establishing a reserve for contingency sufficient to maintain stability and meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. (III D.1.c, III D.2.b.)

In 2002-2003 the District had a \$1,862,057 contingency reserve equal to approximately 1.78 percent of expenditures, thus falling well below the five percent reserve recommended by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Since that time, the District has made great strides in establishing a reserve for contingency sufficient to maintain stability and meet financial emergencies and unforeseen events. For the last six years, the contingency reserve has exceeded 5 percent of total expenditures and transfers, and current year projections indicate that this will once again be the case for 2009-2010. In 2003-2004, the contingency reserve was \$6,834,088 or 7.04 percent of expenditures; in 2004-2005, it was \$5,586,996 or 5.24 percent of expenditures; in 2005-2006, the fund balance was \$8,385,633 or 7.47 percent of expenditures; in 2006-2007, the fund balance was \$15,960,596 or 13.06 percent of expenditures; in 2007-2008, the fund balance was \$18,797,976 or 14.48 percent of expenditures and in 2008-2009, the fund balance was \$19,408,758 or 14.47 percent of expenditures. The 2009-2010 adopted budget projects a contingency reserve of \$17,603,195 or 13.09 percent of expenditures, while providing a significant District-funded backfill for categorical programs to offset significant funding reductions.

To ensure the economic viability of the institution, the team recommends the college must focus on developing and implementing the enrollment recovery plan, while concurrently developing the specific contingency plans to address alternative enrollment and economic scenarios. (Standard III D.1.c, III D.2.b)

The College's goal for 2004-2005 of achieving enrollment growth to the level of the 2002-2003 base created an ambitious target of producing growth of approximately 6,000 FTES over that reported in 2003-2004. An FTES goal of 2,500 was set for Summer 2004, with the remaining growth in FTES to be accomplished in the fall and spring semesters and winter intersession.

Implementation of the enrollment recovery plan involved participation of the entire college community but relied primarily upon seamless collaboration among the Enrollment Services, Counseling and Retention, Academic Affairs, and Information Technology areas of the College. Central to this plan was the establishment of the Welcome Center, a "one-stop" center that provides new students with a wide range of services including admissions, counseling, financial aid, registration assistance and fee payment. In addition to the Welcome Center, several other innovative strategies were developed or refined to maximize the College's restoration efforts:

- "Fantastic Fridays," an outreach program that brings local high school applicants for fall admission to the campus for assessment, a meeting with a counselor, and a campus tour, was expanded to five days per week.
- The Outreach Office enhanced its communication plan for recruited students.
- The Application for Admission was redesigned to be more user-friendly, the admission letter was revamped to provide more information and clearer direction on

next steps for new students, and the Admissions website was updated and expanded to provide more comprehensive information and feedback for new and prospective students.^{vi}

- Students who had applied for admission in Fall 2003 or Spring 2004 but had not enrolled were informed via email that the College had restored its course offerings, and they were invited to “give SMC another try.”
- The College’s High School Dual Enrollment Program was reinstated.^{vii}
- The enrollment calendar was revised significantly to create longer registration periods for each semester/session and to allow students to commit to the College and make their course selections earlier. Summer 2004 enrollment began about two weeks earlier than in prior years, and Fall 2004 enrollment began well over a month earlier. The calendar was further revised to allow for enrollment to begin simultaneously for intersessions and semesters (winter/spring, summer/fall).
- Enrollment after the beginning of a semester or session was simplified through an automated system making use of instructor approval codes to override the block on enrollment that formerly required an instructor’s signature to approve adding a class. By allowing students to add classes using any computer with Internet access or from any touch-tone telephone, the need to wait in lines to complete the enrollment process is minimized.

Great care was taken to ensure that intense student recruitment activities did not in any way compromise the College’s dedication to the goal of student retention and success. A newly implemented assessment policy requiring all students to be assessed in both mathematics and English or ESL by their second semester or seventh unit, whichever comes first, allows for more accurate placement in skill-appropriate courses. Students who complete the assessment process prior to their assigned enrollment dates have, upon a counselor’s recommendation, the opportunity to enroll earlier.

The Academic Affairs Office revised its operational procedures to implement a dynamic scheduling process more immediately responsive to student needs:

- The revised enrollment calendar facilitated early identification of scheduling adjustments required by enrollment trends, particularly with regard to numbers of course sections needed for the various levels of English, ESL, mathematics, and other disciplines with sequential courses. For example, when assessment results for new students dictated a larger proportion of developmental English and mathematics sections than in past semesters, it was possible to create additional sections before all existing sections had closed.
- In addition to its student services functions, the Welcome Center served as a communications hub to inform Academic Affairs of enrollment trends and resulting schedule adjustment needs in a timely manner.^{viii}

- The “View Open Classes” feature of the college website was revised to include a beginning section devoted to newly created course sections. Daily enrollment figures demonstrate that students find this feature, which is updated twice daily, particularly helpful.

Although slightly below the goal, the 2,250 FTES produced in Summer 2004 was encouraging, given the disadvantage of drawing upon a smaller number of continuing students than in previous summers. Likewise, the Fall 2004 opening day FTES projections indicated that the College was well on its way toward achieving its goal. However, it became clear at the fall census that the great efforts to encourage early registration and to accommodate students by adding sections of impacted courses prior to the beginning of the semester had resulted in a severe decline in the enrollment gains generally accomplished through the add/drop process during the first two weeks of the semester. Late-start fall sections were added and winter intersession and spring course offerings were increased beyond original plans. Special recruitment efforts targeted students who had applied for admission but had not registered for courses and students who had registered in, but dropped, fall course sections. In the end, the Fall 2004 semester produced approximately 1,150 more FTES than Fall 2003, but about 600 FTES fewer than Fall 2002.

At this point, the need to shift to a two-year enrollment recovery plan model became apparent. Consistent with the statewide trend toward lower or flat community college enrollments, Winter 2005 and Spring 2005 produced results similar to those of Fall 2004. Although the College managed to restore an impressive 5,315 FTES for 2004-2005, it had to resort to FTES “borrowing” from Summer 2005 to maintain its funding base for 2005-2006. While recognizing the tremendous accomplishment of achieving most of its ambitious FTES recovery goal in an environment of sluggish community college enrollments, the College acknowledged the daunting task ahead of maintaining the pressure to refine, enhance, and build upon the strategies that were successful in 2004-2005 to attempt complete recovery during the 2005-2006 academic year.

Unfortunately, 2005-2006 proved to be an even more challenging year for enrollment than 2004-2005. Beyond the external environment, in which the entire community college system was experiencing a significant enrollment decline, Santa Monica College was dealing with several internal conditions that became deterrents to increasing enrollment. Timing of ongoing construction projects created a temporary but significant reduction in the number of available classrooms on the main campus, and access issues with the cities of Santa Monica and Los Angeles for the College’s new Bundy Campus placed severe limitations on the use of a new facility intended to mitigate this temporary loss of classrooms. In addition, the College lost the use of the Santa Monica Airport shuttle parking lot, which had served as a long-time solution to the parking shortage and traffic congestion on the main campus, and struggled with the task of redirecting students to temporary, less convenient parking alternatives, often with inadequate time for effective communication strategies prior to the beginning of semesters and intersessions. These conditions obviously worked against enrollment recovery strategies and resulted in a slight decline in FTES for 2005-2006. Therefore, the College once again found itself in the position of

choosing between increasing the amount of FTES “borrowing” or suffering a decline in base funding for 2006-2007.

When the new Superintendent/President arrived in February 2006, he immediately identified enrollment recovery as paramount among the many issues the College was facing at the time. He charged the senior administrative staff with the development of various scenarios to inform both short-term and long-term planning regarding enrollment and its direct relationship to the institution’s fiscal health and asked the District Planning and Advisory Council to begin developing recommendations based upon the data provided. The March 2006 Board of Trustees Retreat featured presentation of historical enrollment and fiscal data and projections based upon various enrollment and funding assumptions for future years. Vigorous debates of various scenarios within the DPAC Budget Planning Subcommittee and the District Planning and Advisory Council itself resulted in a recommendation from DPAC that the College proceed with “borrowing” from Summer 2006 the amount of FTES necessary to maintain base funding for 2006-2007, but that a plan be developed for reduction of summer FTES “borrowing” over time.

In addition to these fiscal planning efforts, the Academic and Student Affairs areas of the College, in collaboration with an *ad hoc* Academic Senate FTES/Enrollment Recovery Task Force, engaged in the development of new strategies to stimulate enrollment. Among the new initiatives implemented for 2006-2007:

- VIP Welcome Day was instituted as an annual event for welcoming new students to the College each fall. Students, along with their friends and family, are invited to this collegewide event designed to introduce students to college services and create an initial connection to the College.
- The Outreach Office, in conjunction with Financial Aid, added more financial aid workshops at area feeder high schools.
- The College began hosting “Cash for College” events for students from area high schools and their families to demystify the financial aid process and assist with FAFSA applications.
- “Financial Aid Awareness Day,” a program to increase participation in financial aid programs, was instituted to assist continuing students each spring with financial aid applications and provide answers to questions during the application period. The goal is to increase student awareness of available sources of funding and to assist with early application.
- The interface for the online enrollment system was revised to facilitate the enrollment process.
- The fee payment policy was modified to give students more time to pay enrollment fees, thus allowing more students to enroll early.
- The student communication plan was expanded to include email, telephone (through new technology), and direct mail pieces to keep students well-informed throughout

the enrollment cycle. Communications included reminders about upcoming deadlines, invitations to meet with counselors and updates about parking and transportation services.

- The College initiated a program to enable the online purchase of parking permits, a process that formerly required students to come to campus and wait in long lines.
- To improve access, the enrollment period was further extended to accommodate a schedule adjustment period through the evening before the second class meeting.
- Evening, weekend, and online courses were marketed differently through the creation of a mini-schedule used to promote these opportunities to students who were employed full-time.
- The Emeritus College implemented telephone registration, making the enrollment process convenient and easy to use from remote sites.
- Outreach services were expanded to include regular visits to area continuation and alternative high schools.

In June 2006, the District entered into an instructional services agreement with the Compton Community College District to provide instruction for two Summer 2006 intersessions at Compton Community College, as that institution awaited a decision on its appeal of termination of accreditation. To ensure that outreach to the students at a sister institution in a time of need did not create a negative fiscal impact on Santa Monica College, a financial arrangement was negotiated that guaranteed a minimum of the funding for 500 FTES in exchange for these instructional services. This arrangement added a new component to the College's ongoing long-term discussions regarding FTES revenue strategies and thus resulted in the development of myriad multi-year (through 2008-2009) enrollment/funding scenarios over the following two years. These were discussed at all levels of the College's governance structure, particularly within the District Planning and Advisory Council and its Budget Planning Subcommittee.

Among these scenarios was an especially controversial 2007 recommendation that originated in the DPAC Budget Planning Subcommittee: since the 700 FTES (beyond the College's base FTES) produced through the Compton instructional services agreement would result in moving into stabilization for 2007-2008, it was recommended that the College borrow the maximum FTES possible from Summer 2007 to maximize apportionment revenue for 2006-2007, go into stabilization for 2007-2008, begin restoration efforts during the year of stabilization, and then make the budget assumption that the College would restore FTES incrementally over the next three years to achieve the maximized 2006-2007 FTES base. Since this scenario directly conflicted with the previously adopted principle that the College would reduce FTES borrowing over time, it was passionately debated in the DPAC Budget Planning Subcommittee and in the District Planning and Advisory Council. These discussions not only resulted in a recommended budget scenario that proved to be enormously beneficial for the College in terms of building its fund balance but also provided a stunning illustration of how much the College's relatively new planning structure had matured.

An administrative reorganization implemented in January 2007 created a new Vice President, Enrollment Development position to head a college division charged with centralizing services directly related to new students and the marketing of student programs. The name of this new division intentionally signals a shift in perception from “enrollment recovery” as a short-term initiative to address the College’s 2003-2004 enrollment decline to a reality of “enrollment development” as a long-term initiative to ensure the institution’s fiscal viability. The first major initiative of this division was the redesign of the college website, now the central component of college communication with students. Parallel to this effort was the implementation of a transportation plan to address the College’s serious parking and traffic congestion issues, known to be major impediments to student enrollment and persistence.

For the 2007-2008 year of stabilization, the College far exceeded its budgeted incremental FTES restoration goal, and in 2008-2009, not only restored FTES to the 2006-2007 base level but also produced more than 1,200 FTES beyond its funded growth. The current state economic downturn paired with increased community college enrollment demand has created a completely different enrollment management challenge—reduction of the course offering to decrease expenditures. For 2008-2009, the College has reduced the summer, fall, and spring course offerings within the range of five percent to seven percent, and has made the most significant reduction (approximately 50 percent) in the winter intersession. (Since Winter 2009 produced over 2,300 FTES, even this major percentage reduction leaves an intersession larger than that offered by most community colleges in the state.) Even with these reductions, the unprecedented course fill rate (still 102 percent at Fall 2009 census) will result in significant unfunded FTES. In preparation for 2010-2011, the College is developing several alternative budget/FTES scenarios to inform discussion of various strategies.

The team recommends the college clarify, develop, document and regularly evaluate the roles of individuals and constituent groups in college governance and decision-making structures and processes to ensure their effective participation and communicate the processes and outcomes to the college community as the basis for continued improvement. (Standard IV A. 1, 2, 3, and 5)

During the March 2004 accreditation visit, team members observed a meeting of the Collegewide Coordinating Council in which a portion of the meeting was devoted to the ongoing process of evaluating its functions and its relationships to other college planning committees, the Budget Committee in particular. These difficult discussions continued over the next two months, with a growing dissatisfaction of members in the lack of progress and an accompanying deterioration in effective and collegial communication. In June 2004, the Academic Senate unanimously approved a resolution suspending participation of its members in the Collegewide Coordinating Council and its “subsidiary organs” (such as the Budget and District Technology committees), but agreeing to future participation in a collegewide planning committee when such a body was “established by the District Board of Trustees, based upon mutual agreement among the Administration, Academic Senate, Classified Senate, Faculty Association, California State Employees Association Chapter 36, and the Associated Students.” Although meetings of the Collegewide Coordinating Council were held during June and July to review the annual update to the *Master Plan for Education*, a quorum was not achieved for any of these meetings.

During Summer 2004, the Superintendent/President agreed to a proposal made by the Academic Senate leadership that an *ad hoc* workgroup be formed to develop a new planning and governance structure for the College. It was further agreed that the Superintendent/President and the Academic Senate President would serve as co-chairs for the workgroup; that the workgroup would include faculty, administrators, classified staff, and students; and that an external facilitator would be hired to lead the activities and enhance communication among the participants. With the assistance of the facilitator, the following charge was developed for the workgroup, with a December 2004 goal for completion:

- create a vision for college governance structures that will enhance the effectiveness of institutional planning;
- identify and address the challenges to create effective structures;
- determine the breadth of work and a timeline; and
- determining next steps, roles, and responsibilities.

The first meeting of the workgroup illustrated the difficulty of the task ahead, with initial disagreement over the numbers of representatives of each of the constituent groups and how those representatives should be appointed. (Eventually, the workgroup comprised six representatives each of faculty, administration, classified staff, and students.) The workgroup established ground rules for its operations and communication and formed six subcommittees representing specific areas of planning—instruction, student services, human resources, budget, facilities, and technology—to examine the needs of these individual areas and formulate recommendations on how best to integrate them. Each subcommittee included representatives of all constituencies and held open focus group meetings to gather information from the college community for use in preparing a report back to the workgroup. Although many of the focus group meetings were not well-attended, each subcommittee gathered information and presented a report to the workgroup. From these reports, each subcommittee developed three major recommendations, which formed the basis for a series of issues on which the workgroup would attempt to develop consensus.

The workgroup made fitful progress during October and early November, narrowing the issues for which there was no consensus down to a few: equal representation of all constituencies on a collegewide planning council and other planning committees; numbers of representatives on the various committees; who would chair a collegewide planning council and other planning committees; and communication of recommendations to the Superintendent/President and the Board of Trustees. At the November 30, 2004 meeting of the workgroup, the Academic Senate, in an effort to accelerate the process, proposed a Board Policy establishing a collegewide planning committee named the District Planning and Advisory Council (DPAC). The proposed policy, with some modifications from the workgroup, was presented to the Board of Trustees for a first reading at its December 2004 meeting, and a slightly modified version was approved at the January 10, 2005 Board of Trustees meeting. Board Policy 2250 stated:

The Board of Trustees establishes the District Planning and Advisory Council. The Board recognizes the Council as the body primarily responsible for making recommendations to the Superintendent/President on matters that are not otherwise the primary responsibility of the Academic Senate (BP 2210), Classified Senate (BP 2220), Associated Students (BP 2230) or the Management Association (BP 2240). Issues include, but are not limited to, District budget, facilities, human resources, instruction, student services and technology planning. Discussion of these issues by the Council will not supplant the collective bargaining process.

The District Planning and Advisory Council shall comprise representatives of the faculty (Academic Senate and Faculty Association), classified staff (Classified Senate and CSEA), students (Associated Students) and management (Administration/Management Association), who shall mutually agree upon the numbers, privileges, and obligations of Council members. The District Planning and Advisory Council shall establish its own procedures in conformity with the law.

At the last meeting of the Governance Structure Workgroup in January 2005, Academic Senate representatives presented for discussion a governance structure proposal in which membership on the District Planning and Advisory Council would be based upon leadership of or participation in three new or reinvented district planning committees—Budget and Human Resources Planning, Facilities Planning, and Technology Planning—and three Academic Senate Joint Committees—Curriculum, Program Review, and Student Affairs, with the Superintendent/President or designee chairing the Council and the Academic Senate President serving as vice chair. Although representation on the Council from the three district planning committees would be equal among the four constituencies (faculty, classified staff, administrators, and students), representation from the Academic Senate joint committees would include only the faculty and administrators who serve as chair or vice chair of those committees. Objections raised by workgroup members regarding inequality of representation were partially addressed through consensus on a modification of the proposal to include two “at large” members on the Council—a classified staff member and a student. At the conclusion of the meeting, the workgroup reached consensus (defined by the facilitator as “nothing you can’t live with”) on the proposed structure.

The Interim Superintendent/President communicated his approval of the Governance Structure Workgroup product to the college community, but the classified staff organizations and the Faculty Association raised objections to the proposed structure. The classified staff organizations indicated an unwillingness to support any structure that would not result in equal representation of all constituencies on the District Planning and Advisory Council. The Faculty Association asserted that the “mutual agreement” statement of the Board Policy was in reference to all constituent organizations and that the Governance Structure Workgroup had gone beyond its authority in recommending a specific planning structure. (Although the workgroup had included representation from all constituencies, it did not have specific representatives from all constituent organizations.)

The Interim Superintendent/President then convened a group, consisting of the presidents and two other representatives of each constituent organization, to discuss the concerns and recommend a planning structure. This group met twice to discuss several alternative structures and modifications of the Governance Structure Workgroup proposal. At the conclusion of the second meeting, consensus was reached on presenting to the constituent organizations a modification of the workgroup proposal—adding a separate Human Resources Planning Subcommittee with representation on the District Planning and Advisory Council and specifying a voting structure limiting each constituency to two votes, regardless of the number of representatives on the Council. Mutual agreement was achieved on this modified proposal, and the first meeting of the District Planning and Advisory Council was held on April 21, 2005.

Although the Spring 2005 meetings of the District Planning and Advisory Council faced a degree of skepticism by some participants, these meetings were well-attended, and communication was largely collegial. The initial focus of meetings was clarification of the organizational structure, particularly defining charges for the Budget Planning, Technology Planning, Facilities Planning, and Human Resources Planning subcommittees. Additionally, the Council debated and eventually approved a proposal for the formation of a fifth subcommittee—College Services Planning. Toward the end of Spring 2005, the Council began to shift its focus from organizational matters to discussion of actual planning issues, including enrollment recovery initiatives for 2005-2006 and the annual update of the *Master Plan for Education*.

As the 2005-2006 DPAC Annual Report illustrates, the first full year of the Council's existence proved to be a success in terms of developing substantive recommendations on important college planning issues. Early in the year, the Council agreed upon operating procedures to be codified through administrative regulation, which facilitated a shift in the focus of the Council to consideration of collegewide issues. Among the issues for which DPAC developed recommendations in 2005-2006 were redesign of the college website, enrollment recovery initiatives, relocation of the Superintendent/President's office to the main campus, facilitation of college communication by the Superintendent/President, the number of full-time faculty members to hire for Fall 2006, summer "borrowing" of FTES, analysis of college expenditures, and hiring of classified staff members. The Council also completed and approved the 2005 *Master Plan for Education* Update and began development of institutional objectives for 2006-2007. Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report resulted in clarification and enhancement of process and procedural elements of DPAC's operations through modification of DPAC's charter, and this process of review, evaluation, and modification, when appropriate, has become an annual one.

In addition to the annual update of the *Master Plan for Education* (described in the above response to the previous team's recommendation on planning), DPAC has continued to make recommendations on important institutional issues:

- Topics for 2006-2007 recommendations included initiation of a strategic planning initiative (described in the above response to the previous team's recommendation on planning); borrowing an additional 250 FTES from Summer 2006 (through the filing of

an amended CCFS-320 attendance report) to increase the District's 2005-2006 apportionment revenue; use of Academic Senate Joint Program Review Committee overarching issues and recommendations in developing the annual update of the *Master Plan for Education*; offering of courses during the Student Activity Hour; support of an Associated Students recommendation for a Smoke-Free Campus; and development of budget guiding principles.

- In 2007-2008, DPAC made recommendations on hiring of a sustainability coordinator to implement environmental audit plans; a strategy for maximizing the District's apportionment revenue for 2006-2007 (described in the above response to the previous team's recommendation on enrollment recovery); approval of Institutional Learning Outcomes; approval of a definition of Global Citizenship; approval of revised Mission, Vision, Values and Goals statements (described in the above response to the previous team's recommendation on planning); values and criteria to be used in the selection of campus food vendors; support of an Associated Students Organic Garden Initiative; endorsement of facilities proposals to be included in the Annual Five-Year Facilities/Capital Outlay Plan; and support for the District to pursue a bond measure.
- In 2008-2009, recommendation topics included centralization of District contract functions; the SMC Emergency Operations Plan; a Budget Summit; a targeted District ending balance for 2008-2009 and an accompanying list of cost saving and revenue enhancement measures; implementation and enforcement of the Smoke-Free Campus policy; a Board Policy on political activity; promoting campus awareness of Institutional Learning Outcomes; budget assumptions for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011; consistent departmental content on the college website; a new *Master Plan for Education* institutional objective template mapping objectives more clearly to Institutional Learning Outcomes, Program Review recommendations and overarching issues, budget implications, and strategic planning initiatives; and integration of the Facilities Planning Subcommittee's resolution on Bicycles on Campus into the update of the *Comprehensive Facility Master Plan*.

Additionally, DPAC has made judicious use of its subcommittees and has created *ad hoc* task forces to deal with certain ongoing planning efforts. In addition to the Strategic Planning Task Force (described in the above response to the previous team's recommendation on planning), DPAC established a 2007-2008 GASB 45 Task Force to develop a recommendation to inform actions of the Board of Trustees regarding the District's unfunded retiree benefits liability and an ACUPCC (American College and University President's Climate Commitment) Task Force after the Superintendent/President signed the ACUPCC commitment letter. The Technology Planning Subcommittee develops the annual update to the *Master Plan for Technology*, the Facilities Planning Subcommittee is monitoring and providing guidance for the update of the *Comprehensive Facility Master Plan*, and the College Services Planning Subcommittee has assisted college operational support services in the initial development of learning outcomes tied to the College's Institutional Learning Outcomes. All planning subcommittees and task forces report to DPAC on a monthly basis.

The District Planning and Advisory Council planning structure is successfully addressing the intent of this recommendation of the 2004 Accreditation Visiting Team. The Council has met regularly since its formation, and participation has been consistently strong (e.g., there has never been a lack of quorum for a meeting). From its inception, the Council has endeavored to communicate its discussions and actions to the college community as effectively as possible. Agendas and minutes are distributed well in advance of meetings and posted on the college website, meetings operate according to Brown Act requirements, including providing an opportunity for public comments, and an annual report of all actions and discussion items is prepared and distributed.

Despite occasional dissatisfaction expressed by some members when the Superintendent/President does not approve or modifies a DPAC recommendation, participants are generally satisfied with DPAC's structure, functions and accomplishments. That DPAC is valued and respected by the Superintendent/President and the Board of Trustees is clearly illustrated by its influence upon significant college planning and policy actions since its inception in 2005.

The team recommends that the college develop and implement concrete strategies and processes to improve communication and professional relationships in order to create a campus climate characterized by collegiality and mutual respect. (Standard IV A.1 and 3)

Progress toward accomplishment of the goal expressed in this recommendation is relatively difficult to measure, but most would agree that the College has made considerable progress toward improving communication and professional relationships among its various constituencies over the last six years. For the period of time immediately following the 2004 accreditation visit, a curious dichotomy existed at the College. While faculty and staff joined to work tirelessly, effectively, and enthusiastically to support the implementation of the College's enrollment recovery plan and monitor its results, college leaders continued to engage in passionate, and often bitter, disagreements about a planning and governance structure for the institution.

The Governance Structure Workgroup, an institutional initiative intended to address both this recommendation and the planning recommendation of the previous accrediting team, had an unlikely beginning. Originating as a proposal of the Academic Senate leadership to address the Academic Senate's resolution to withdraw participation of its members from the Collegewide Coordinating Council and other district planning committees, this partnership between the Academic Senate and the administration to collaborate on addressing some of the College's most difficult issues was indeed a "leap of faith" at the time.

Developing the Governance Structure Workgroup framework together and working cooperatively through the high and low points of its existence dramatically improved the relationship between the Academic Senate and the administration. That process was characterized by collegial discussion and resolution of areas of disagreement and the joint development of creative solutions to challenges along the way, both inside and outside the workgroup's operation. For example, the Academic Senate brought forward the dilemma of its

desire to proceed with recommending new full-time faculty positions for Fall 2005 in a timely manner without violating its resolution not to participate in the Collegewide Coordinating Council, the body designated through administrative regulation to deal with this process. The Superintendent/President agreed to a one-time *ad hoc* process in which a group of faculty members appointed by the Academic Senate President and instructional and student services deans appointed by the Superintendent/President would be assembled to recommend a ranking of requests for new full-time faculty positions. When the process proved successful, the Superintendent/President and Academic Senate leaders agreed to use it as the basis for a permanent process, which is now codified through administrative regulation.

Ironically, the workgroup initiative did not improve, and probably even eroded, relationships with and among other constituent organizations over the same time period. Classified staff representatives expressed the belief that they have not been equal partners in planning and governance processes, and there was, at times, tension between the Academic Senate and the Faculty Association, which did not have specific representation on the workgroup. Student representatives felt torn by the attempts of other constituent groups to influence them. These tensions fueled the growing impatience and frustration on the part of faculty members and administrators that the prolonged discussions were delaying college planning at a particularly crucial time.

Despite the messiness of this process and the ill feelings it temporarily created, college leaders were forced to face and attempt to address difficult institutional problems and challenges—literally “the good, the bad, and the ugly.” The seeking of alliances between and among groups that normally had limited communication created opportunities for sharing perspectives that would not have occurred under other circumstances. It is now apparent that the knowledge gained provided a foundation for enhancing communication and trust within the planning and governance structure that eventually emerged.

As detailed in the above response to the recommendation of the previous team on clarification of the roles in participatory governance, communication within the District Planning and Advisory Council and its various subcommittees was generally collegial and respectful from the outset and has continued to improve as the new structure evolves. However, consistent underlying tension existed over the lack of resolution of the District’s contracts with the Faculty Association and the California State Employees Association (CSEA), Chapter 36. Negotiations between the District and CSEA were finally completed, and the 2003-2006 CSEA contract was adopted July 12, 2005. This triggered the hope and even the expectation that the faculty contract would be settled soon thereafter, but those protracted negotiations were destined to continue for more than a year.

In February 2006, the new Superintendent/President received a warm welcome from the entire college community, but this “era of new beginnings” was tempered by an undercurrent of tension and pressure surrounding the unresolved faculty contract. In mid-April 2006, Santa Monica College was contacted by the Compton Community College District in regard to providing instruction for two Summer 2006 summer intersessions at Compton Community College, while that institution awaited a decision on its appeal of termination of accreditation. While there were

numerous obvious reasons not to undertake such an ambitious initiative at that particular point in time, the College agreed to consider this request, and the consultation and planning processes that followed were not only effective in terms of implementing this initiative but also served to set a standard for future collaborative planning efforts within the College.

The Superintendent/President asked Academic Senate leaders to determine the level of faculty support for providing this assistance to Compton Community College and to commit to taking a leadership role should the decision be to proceed with the initiative. The Academic Senate leaders accepted this challenge and, after participating in a series of meetings with Compton Community College faculty, the Academic Senate recommended to the Superintendent/President that the College proceed with the initiative. As documented in the substantive change proposal approved by the Accrediting Commission in June 2006, this initiated a series of complex curricular actions that required a major commitment of time and energy on the part of the faculty, department chairs, the Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee, and the Academic Senate, as well as contractual issues that required reaching agreement with the Faculty Association. These tasks were completed over a very short period of time, as the District worked out the terms and conditions of the instructional services agreement with the Compton Community College District and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. United through a commitment to the objectives of ensuring academic quality and protecting Santa Monica College from any negative fiscal impact, faculty and administration accomplished both the planning and the successful implementation of this initiative in a spirit of true partnership.

Near the beginning of the Fall 2006 semester, the District and the Faculty Association agreed to participate in "marathon" negotiations sessions over a defined period of time to achieve settlement of the faculty contract. For these sessions, the District changed the membership of its team to include the Superintendent/President and the Executive Vice President, and the Board of Trustees appointed two of its members to serve as non-participating observers of the process. In one seven-hour session on September 6, 2006, agreement was reached for the 2004-2007 faculty contract. Taking care of this last bit of "old business" seemed to remove the only remaining barrier to shaping a new culture and amicable working relationship among college constituencies, and the leadership of the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent/President has since been perceived as positive in support of collegial participation in college governance processes.

The January 2007-January 2009 contract between the District and CSEA, Chapter 36 was ratified in November 2007, and the August 2007-August 2010 contract between the District and the Faculty Association was ratified in February 2008. The negotiations were generally professional and collegial, without the resentment and bitterness that had characterized past protracted collective bargaining experiences. Both contracts featured significant provisions beyond percentage salary increases and maintaining health benefits coverage. For the faculty contract, agreement was reached for a significant increase in compensation parity for part-time faculty and a salary schedule enhancement for full-time faculty. The CSEA contract featured implementation of a market salary adjustment related to the Hay Group Classification Study.

Additionally, the Board of Trustees approved a salary schedule market adjustment for academic administrators and a market salary adjustment related to the Hay Group Study for classified managers and classified confidential employees in February 2008.

As stated in previous responses to recommendations of the 2004 visiting team, the District Planning and Advisory Council has made great strides toward becoming a true long-range planning entity with a structure supported by active subcommittees for specific planning areas. DPAC has consistently enjoyed full participation from its faculty, classified staff, administrator/manager, and student members and the various resource liaisons who inform the planning process, and its work has earned it the respect of the Superintendent/President and the Board of Trustees.

The relationship between the Academic Senate and the administration has evolved into a true partnership in terms of both process and results. The weekly meetings of the Academic Senate leaders and college vice presidents have been particularly productive in collegially addressing both short-term and long-term planning goals. From agreeing to a revised routing process to resolving issues of communication related to the approval process for administrative regulations dealing with academic and professional matters to the launching of an ambitious strategic planning initiative, there has been dramatic improvement in both the collegiality of the process and the timely implementation of results, particularly in comparison to what the visiting accrediting team observed in 2004.

Other examples of this successful partnership between the Academic Senate and the administration include the development of the Global Citizenship Initiative; the work of the Interdisciplinary Studies Task Force to consolidate resources and update curriculum (including the creation of two new Associate in Arts degrees); the process for recommending Vocational and Technical Education Act allocations through the Academic Senate Joint Career Technical Education Committee; the establishment of faculty leader positions for the Global Citizenship, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Basic Skills initiatives; and the revised process for recommending new faculty positions through the Academic Senate Joint New Contract Faculty Position Ranking Committee.

There is no question that the College faces unprecedented challenges from the current multi-year state budget constraints. However, the vastly improved structures and relationships built over the last six years have secured a commitment from all to maintain a positive spirit of collaboration and continue clear and open communication between and among all college constituencies as the College addresses these challenges.

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ⁱⁱⁱ Santa Monica College Master Planning Documents: <http://www.smc.edu/apps/pub.asp?Q=943&B=1>

^{iv} Strategic Initiatives And Proposed Action Plans:

http://www.smc.edu/Projects/31/Strategic_Planning_Task_Force/2008SPTF/SPTF-2008-06-27-StrategicInitiatives.pdf

^v Santa Monica Vision, Mission, Values and Goals: [http://www.smc.edu/apps/comm.asp?\\$1=31](http://www.smc.edu/apps/comm.asp?$1=31)

^{vi} Online Application for Admission: <http://www.smc.edu/apps/Pub.asp?Q=8>

^{vii} High School Dual Enrollment Program: <http://www.smc.edu/apps/pubs.asp?Q=2>

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