Standard IIB: Student Support Services

Introduction

Santa Monica College has long recognized the vital role student support services play in helping students achieve their academic, career and life goals. The College takes great pride in the breadth and depth of its student services, and continues to expand these services, which focus on access, retention, and student success.

To that end, the **Welcome Center** was established to provide a one-stop resource to assist new students with their course selection and enrollment. Opened in Summer 2004, the Welcome Center, described in greater detail in Standard IIB.3(a), offers a variety of student services including academic counseling, enrollment services, financial aid, introduction to special support programs and campus tours. In addition to the Welcome Center, the College offers a comprehensive array of counseling, enrollment and other student services.

Counseling Programs and Services

- The **Asian American and Native Pacific Islander Serving Institutions** program was recently funded by the US Department of Education. This program, begun in October 2009, will serve a cohort of students with an emphasis on the participation of Asian American, Pacific Islander, and low-income students. The program will provide a range of innovative student support services and instructional strategies designed to help participants complete their Associate in Arts degree or transfer requirement within three years, resulting in a significant increase in the success rate of Asian American, Pacific Islander and low-income students.

- **Black Collegians** is dedicated to promoting and increasing the retention, transfer, academic success, and graduation of students of African descent. The program helps guide students through the transfer process and has helped participants transfer to a variety of prestigious four-year institutions such as Spelman College, Howard University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of California at Los Angeles, and Stanford University. The program welcomes participants of all ethnic backgrounds.

- The **Career Services Center** offers a full spectrum of employment and career services including job and employment advising, career counseling, job placement, internship placement, and assistance with resume writing and interviewing. The Center houses an extensive library of career resources and computer-based career information systems.

- **CalWORKs**, funded through California's welfare reform program, helps eligible students transition from welfare to self-sufficiency. This includes academic and training support, pre-employment assistance, work-study experiences, financial resources and childcare services.

- The **Counseling and Transfer Services Center** helps students find balance between their academic and other life commitments, guides them in course selection, provides

long-term academic planning, and helps them overcome barriers to success. Counseling services include advising students on certificate, degree, and transfer requirements, reviewing with them important dates and deadlines, and helping probationary and disqualified students regain their status as students in good standing. Transfer services include annual visits from college representatives from more than sixty four-year institutions, campus tours of California colleges and universities, and workshops on the transfer application process and financial aid.

- The **Center for Students with Disabilities** serve students with disabilities who require specialized assistance to succeed in their academic endeavors and to actively participate in mainstream college life. This assistance includes counseling services, technical support (including, for example, alternate media production for sight impaired students, sign language interpreters for hearing impaired students, and test accommodations as needed for any student with documented disabilities) and specialized support classes.

- **Extended Opportunity Programs and Services** provide educational and financial assistance to full-time students who are from low-income families, are first generation college students, or face other barriers to academic success. **Cooperative Agencies and Resources for Education** is a state-funded program that offers educational and financial support services to single parents attending Santa Monica College full-time and receiving Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) funds.

- The **Latino Center** is dedicated to promoting, encouraging and increasing the retention, transfer, academic success and graduation of Latino students. The *Adelante* **Program** is a support program that focuses on academic achievement, cultural awareness, and personal growth and offers classes that accentuate the Latino experience. All Santa Monica College students, regardless of ethnicity, are encouraged to make use of the Center.

- The **Pico Partnership/On the Move Program**, a joint effort between Santa Monica College and the City of Santa Monica, is designed to provide educational counseling and financial assistance to youth living near the College.

- **Psychological Services** provides a broad range of services including brief individual psychotherapy, crisis intervention, and referral services. The staff work to enhance the personal well-being, psychological and social development, and academic advancement of a diverse student population, thus promoting student retention and graduation.

- The **Scholars Program** is an honors program that offers academic challenges and critical support services to students with at least a 3.0 grade point average and provides priority consideration for transfer admission to a variety of universities including the University of California (at Los Angeles and Irvine), Loyola Marymount University, Occidental College, California State University Pomona, and California State University Northridge.

- **TRIO/Student Support Services and Upward Bound** are federally-funded programs from the US Department of Education that provide educational and financial support services to students who are physically and/or learning disabled, who are from low-

income families, who are first-generation college students (i.e., neither parent possesses a Baccalaureate degree), or who have demonstrated academic need.

- The **Veterans' Resource Center**, which opened in October 2009, assists honorably-discharged veterans and their qualified dependents attending Santa Monica College with academic counseling, peer-tutoring, support groups, workshops and other services.

Enrollment Services

- The **Office of Admissions and Records** provides enrollment and registration services, degree audit and graduation information, and petition processing, all of which contribute to the overall college mission of transfer and degree completion.

- The **Assessment Center** provides testing services, using state-approved, computerized adaptive tests to determine students' English, English as a Second Language, and mathematics proficiency levels. Assessment is an essential tool for evaluating the educational skill levels of students and assisting them in the selection of courses most suited to help them achieve their educational goals.

- The **Financial Aid and Scholarships Office** provides information and applications for federal and state grants, work-study, loans, and fee waivers. Scholarships are also offered, based on a wide range of student achievement and activities.

- The **International Education Counseling Center** offers academic and personal counseling for international students studying at Santa Monica College.

- The **Outreach Program** serves as a bridge between Santa Monica College and local high schools, middle schools, and community agencies to ensure that students experience a smooth transition from high school to college. Outreach provides services such as college and career fairs, recruitment, on-site English and mathematics placement testing, financial aid presentations, and application workshops to over sixty local high schools in Los Angeles County.

**Other Support Services and Activities**

- **Associated Students** provides opportunities for students to enrich their college experience through active participation in student government and a variety of college clubs.

- The **Athletics Department,** housed under the Office of Student Affairs, affords students the opportunity to play sixteen intercollegiate athletic sports on nine women's teams and seven men's teams.

- **College Police and Safety Services** provides law enforcement, crime prevention, investigation, security, and parking and traffic control services to the college community. The College's sworn police officers collaborate with the college community and local municipalities and local law enforcement agencies to prevent crime and ensure the safety of everyone at the College.

- The **Ombuds Office** acts as a receptive ear, conciliator, mediator, and resource for students encountering difficulties with other students, faculty or administrators. Additional responsibilities include investigating grade disputes and other related issues.

- The **Office of Student Judicial Affairs** serves as a central resource for information regarding student conduct, academic honesty policies and behavior/anger management. The office seeks to solve problems, reach agreements, and address concerns before they escalate into discipline problems.

- The **Health Services Center** provides primary health care services and focuses on promotion of healthy habits and prevention of illness. The Health Center, staffed by registered nurses and health assistants, provides referrals for needed services and health education. Its primary goal is to advocate student self-care and assist students in making informed health care decisions.

One of the most significant changes since the last self-study has been the restructuring of the Student Affairs Division into two areas: Enrollment Development and Student Affairs. Recognizing the importance of maintaining strong and stable student enrollment, the Superintendent/President, who began his tenure during a period of enrollment recovery, promoted the then-Dean, Enrollment Services to the level of vice president, thus creating a new position responsible for all enrollment services including related areas such as Outreach and School Relations, International Education, and Institutional Research.

The Vice President, Enrollment Development is charged with the responsibility for developing enrollment and recruitment strategies for domestic and international students to enable the College to better address its ongoing structural deficit (i.e., the difference between ongoing revenues and ongoing expenditures during a fiscal year), a result of the last budget crisis. The creation of this new position required the restructuring of the Vice President, Student Affairs position and responsibilities, allowing that position to focus on issues pertaining to student success and retention.

Another milestone affecting both student affairs and enrollment development has been the initiation of construction of a new Student Services building. Student services at the College have long been hampered by inadequate and aging facilities scattered throughout the campus in more than twenty locations, deficiencies that were noted by several past accreditation teams. The passage of Bond Measure U in 2002 earmarked funds for the development of a new, comprehensive Student Services building, a rendering of which is shown in Figure IIB-1. Ground was broken in February 2009 for a three-story structure (plus three additional underground parking levels) that will house most of the College's student services along with offices for the Superintendent/President and most instructional and student services administrators.
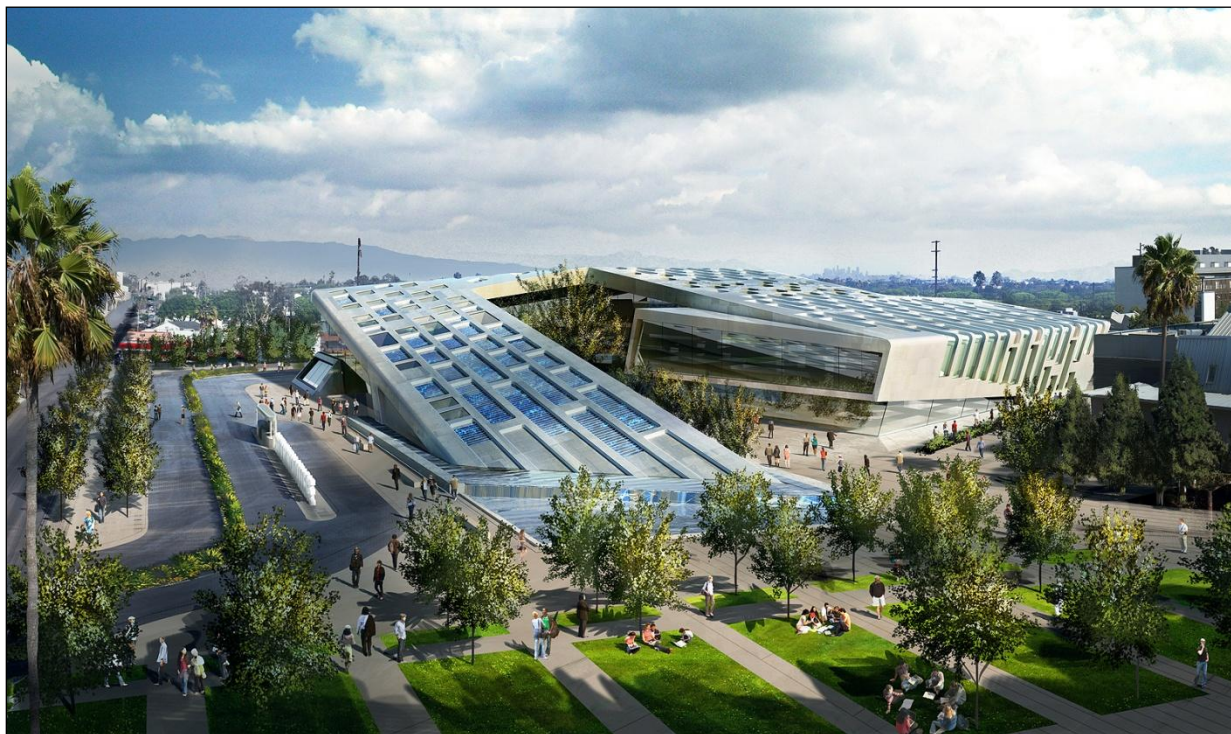
Figure IIB-1: Artist Rendering of the New Student Services Building

Future occupants of the building are actively involved in the building's interior design. The first floor will house services that cater to the needs of first-time or first-year students including Admissions and Records, the Assessment Center, the Bursar's Office, the Welcome Center, the Center for Students with Disabilities, and the Veterans' Resource Center.

The second floor will be devoted to the College's many counseling/retention programs including the Counseling and Transfer Services Center, the Latino Center, the Black Collegians Program, the Scholars Program, the Career Services Center, Psychological Services, the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, the Ombuds Office, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services/Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education, CalWORKs, federally-funded TRIO programs (Upward Bound and Student Support Services), the International Education Center, and the City of Santa Monica-funded Pico Partnership Program.

The third floor will house the offices of the Superintendent/President, and other administrators. The staff members of both the Offices of Student Affairs and Enrollment Development are confident that the centralization and modernization that the new building affords will dramatically increase the effectiveness of the College's already highly-regarded student services and programs.

In addition to these major changes, the Offices of Student Affairs and Enrollment Development continue to emphasize refinement of enrollment and retention strategies. Some strategies are based on external feedback from past accreditation visits, California Community College

Chancellors Office site visits conducted for categorical programs, and effective practices employed by other colleges throughout the state and country. Others are the result of ongoing internal assessment of services offered to students. Student affairs and enrollment development staff continually seek to improve the services offered to students and, when appropriate, discard less effective strategies or those that have ceased to meet the changing needs of students. New or improved strategies include those designed to:

- **streamline and simplify the enrollment process.** The Office of Enrollment Development has established several new initiatives including a new searchable online schedule, a dynamic enrollment process that eliminates the need for waitlists, and a more responsive financial aid process that allows students to receive their awards much sooner—in most cases, by the first day of a new session.

- **improve student retention**. The College continually works to improve student retention by employing strategies that evolve over time and are developed through a number of planning bodies:

  o In 1999, the College secured a Title III, Strengthening Institutions grant from the US Department of Education that funded several initiatives designed to increase student retention including a computerized student educational plan, a degree audit system, and an improved early alert system.

  o In 2002, the Presidential Student Retention Task Force was formed to develop recommendations for improving student retention, many of which have been implemented including developing alternative course delivery options such as short term courses, enforcing prerequisites, requiring mandatory counseling office visits by students in jeopardy (e.g., probationary students), and instituting mandatory assessment testing.

  o In 2004, a group of faculty and administrators met to develop strategies to improve retention and recover enrollment lost during the previous year's budget crisis. From this group emerged the initial concept of the Welcome Center, a one-stop enrollment/counseling/orientation location, which became the first of its kind among California Community Colleges.

  o In Summer 2005, VIP Welcome Day, an outgrowth of the Welcome Center, was developed. VIP Welcome Day is a highly successful annual event designed to introduce new students and their families to success strategies and inform them of programs, academic departments and student services in a friendly and relaxed environment.

  o In 2007, the College, recognizing that many students had come to rely on web-based services, began redesigning the College's website to ensure that information used by students was accurate, current and accessible.

  o The College retooled its Early Alert program and, beginning in Spring 2008, deployed an online version to improve the efficiency with which instructional faculty identify students who may be experiencing difficulties and refer them to appropriate services.

Standard IIB: Student Support Services

- **expose students to a variety of proven success strategies**. First offered in the late 1990s, the Student Success Seminar (Counseling 20) is a three-unit, University of California-transferable course which is the second most enrolled course at the College in the fall semesters. More than 100 sections are offered each year. New and continuing students are exposed to a variety of proven success strategies to increase retention.

- **address the needs of basic skills students**. The population of basic skills students at the College has risen dramatically and now represents over 70 percent of the student body. Santa Monica College, along with many other colleges throughout the state, has created a Basic Skills Task Force, charged with identifying needs and developing programs and strategies in response to those needs. One of the most successful efforts, the result of collaboration between the Offices of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, has been the Basic Skills Counseling Classroom Visitation Project. This joint venture, which includes the Counseling, English, English as a Second Language, and Mathematics departments, allows counselors to efficiently and effectively disseminate information on support services and success strategies to basic skills students.

- **improve the accessibility of online services**. As part of its continued commitment to accessibility, the College now offers an online complement of most student support services, including orientation and counseling, to prospective and continuing students. Online sections of student services instructional programs (including online sections of the Student Success Seminar (Counseling 20) and library services modules) are also offered.

- **ensure accountability and ongoing assessment of all student services**. The primary means of ensuring that student outcomes match student and program intention is through the development of student learning outcomes and assessments for student services programs. As will be noted later in this standard, most of the College's student service programs have developed student learning outcomes and nearly 70 percent have completed initial assessments of those outcomes.

- **continue the College's long-standing commitment to transfer**. For the past 20 years, Santa Monica College has led the state in successful transfers to the University of California system. Significant resources, both financial and human, and a great deal of energy are devoted to helping Santa Monica College students achieve their transfer goals. During a visit to the College in Spring 2009, UCLA Chancellor Gene Block noted that over 10,000 Santa Monica College students have transferred to UCLA in the last 25 years, adding that Santa Monica College students perform on a par with students who begin their academic careers at UCLA.

In sum, Student Affairs and Enrollment Development faculty and staff play a vital role in the College's efforts to better serve the needs of its students and promote their success.

Standard IIB: Student Support Services

The institution recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission. Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student success, progress, learning and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

Description—IIB

As one of the California Community Colleges, Santa Monica College embraces its role as an open access community college serving a wide variety of student populations with diverse educational goals and levels of academic preparedness. Students come to Santa Monica College from the greater Los Angeles area, from throughout the country and from around the world.

As described in Standard I, Santa Monica College students reflect the ethnic diversity of the state as well as diverse ranges of age, socioeconomic status and physical ability. Services provided by the various student services, described in the introduction to Standard IIB, help all students— whether they are first-year freshmen, are recently graduated from high school, or are returning adults—experience a smooth transition from their current situation to the rigors of postsecondary education and become familiar with the tools they may need to succeed.

Outreach services also serve to meet the diverse needs of individuals from the greater Los Angeles area. Outreach services at Santa Monica College are somewhat unique in that the College visits more than sixty high schools throughout Los Angeles County, providing prospective students with placement testing, financial aid presentations and application workshops at their respective high schools. Based on anecdotal evidence from various students, the proactive outreach and nurturing network of support services help both college-bound individuals and those who might never have considered college a viable option to make the decision to attend Santa Monica College.

By offering a wide range of student services, the College strives to meet the varied needs of its student population and takes great pride in the quality and scope of its student support services and the timeliness of their delivery. Ongoing collaboration and dialogue within student services departments further ensures that services effectively address students' evolving needs. Discussions occur at departmental, flex day, and inter-program meetings, where student services personnel discuss student learning outcomes and their success in helping students achieve them. As of Spring 2009, more than 90 percent of the College's student services programs had established student learning outcomes, and more than 68 percent had assessed them. Discussions regarding student access to services and the effect that the services have on student success are carried out regularly through department meetings and, every six years, through the support service programs' participation in the College's program review process. Programs receive an

executive summary report that includes recommendations, areas to be improved and areas that could benefit from additional institutional support.

In addition, external evaluations serve as a means for the College to enhance its programs and services. Many categorical student services programs have designed their own program-specific evaluations, and the College's state-funded categorical programs (Extended Opportunities Programs and Services, CalWORKs, Disabled Students Programs and Services, and Matriculation) received an onsite visit and written report from a team of representatives from other colleges prior to this accreditation review.

Finally, ongoing assessment of changing student needs by staff allows student services to respond quickly and develop strategies to address them. For example, recognizing the growing number of basic skills students, the College implemented mandatory assessment several years prior to the state mandate. The College's current policy requires assessment of all first-time students who enroll in more than six units during their first semester (fall or spring) or who enroll for their second semester not yet having taken the placement tests. The tests are designed to identify mathematics, English, and ESL skill levels, and are used to assist students in their selection of appropriate courses.

Evaluation—IIB

Santa Monica College is proud of its comprehensive range of student services, which provide a supportive learning environment and help guide students through their academic journey whatever their goals or level of academic preparedness might be. Student success is the constant theme and primary motivation of these programs, which consistently strive to meet student needs. Always looking to improve, student services are assessed regularly, both formally and informally, and through systematic student learning outcomes assessment. Thus these programs remain vibrant, effective and responsive to the changing needs of the students.

A triad of research studies conducted by the Office of Institutional Research during Summer 2009 and released in Fall 2009 revealed that the College's student support services are having a significant effect on student persistence, grade point average, and social integration. The first study revealed that students enrolling in the Student Success Seminar (Counseling 20) in their first term were 29.7 percent more likely to persist to the following fall term than students who were not enrolled in the course.

Other student support services were also positively associated with student persistence including:

- a 49 percent higher persistence rate for students who participated in VIP Welcome Day;

- a 32 percent higher persistence rate for students who completed Orientation;

- a 50 percent higher persistence rate for students who participated in Extended Opportunity Programs and Services; and

- an 88 percent higher persistence rate for students who participated in the Scholars Program.

The study also revealed that the strongest predictors of higher first-term grade point averages are participation in the Scholars Program and completing Orientation. Also influencing grade point averages are participation in the Pico Partnership Program, TRIO programs (Upward Bound and Student Support Services), Extended Opportunities Programs and Services, Athletics, and the number of general counseling contacts.

In a separate study that looked at the impact of the Back-to-Success program for probationary students, it was determined that program participants persisted (fall to spring) at dramatically higher rates than students who elected not to participate in a workshop. Furthermore, Back-to-Success participants had lower rates of continuing on probation.

A third study, which looked at the Title V-funded Summer Bridge Program, determined that students who participated in the program tend to benefit socially and affectively. In other words, these students were more likely to feel accepted on campus and connected to campus activities.

Plan—IIB

None

IIB.1   *The institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution.*

Description—IIB.1

Student services at Santa Monica College continually evolve to meet the changing needs of students and the external forces that shape delivery of those services. The College's programs have emerged sometimes as a result of pilot projects or grant-funded initiatives and other times based on requirements developed through legislation. Other innovations, such as the Basic Skills Counseling Classroom Visitation Project, have been developed in response to changing student needs. Regardless of the original cause for the changes, the College continually reviews, improves and refines its services. In fact, the mandate to develop student learning outcomes has served as an impetus to document much of what the College's various student services programs have been doing for years: continuously assessing the quality of the programs based on what students gain or take away from those programs and improving the programs based on those assessments. In every case, the College strives to improve its student services to support its Mission:

> *Santa Monica College strives to create a learning environment that both challenges students and supports them in achieving their educational goals . . . [and to serve] the world's diverse communities by offering educational opportunities which embrace the*

exchange of ideas in an open, caring community of learners and which recognize the critical importance of each individual's contribution to the achievement of the College's vision.

In addition to undergoing a thorough and comprehensive program review every six years, many special student service programs have designed their own program-specific annual evaluations. For example, student services deans and directors, in response to data provided by the Student Equity Committee, analyzed the outcomes from the committee's report to assist them in planning future program changes. One visible improvement has been the sharp decrease in the time it takes for students to receive their financial aid checks. In Fall 2008, program improvements resulted in more than 3,100 checks dispersed on or before the first day of instruction as compared to only 431 checks dispersed within the first three weeks of instruction in Fall 2003.

Another avenue for review is through the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office assessment of state-funded categorical programs. In 2007, the College completed a written review of its Matriculation, Disabled Students Programs and Services, Extended Opportunity Program and Services and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education, and CalWORKs programs. These programs were visited by a team of colleagues from other colleges, whose report noted that Santa Monica College provides a comprehensive array of quality services to its students. Other commendations noted by the review team included:

- the College's collaborative, inclusive year-end celebration for students;

- the College's comprehensive Student Equity Plan;

- the range of unique professional development opportunities offered to CalWORKs students;

- the exceptional access provided through the Center for Students with Disabilities;

- the productive partnership between the College's Financial Aid and Extended Opportunities Programs and Services offices, which has resulted in students' needs being met; and

- the variety of programs, services, and other resources that promote student success such as the College's outreach services, the Welcome Center, VIP Welcome Day, Early Alert, the Student Planner, online Student Planning Guide, Student Success Seminar (Counseling 20), Fantastic Fridays (weekly college tours for local high school students), and the Summer Bridge Program.

Furthermore, the College's implementation of new technology enhances the quality and increases accessibility of student support services. For example, many components of the academic counseling process are now administered electronically, including the new, college-developed appointment and tracking system, student educational plan, and the degree audit system, which allows student services personnel to monitor students' academic progress. The

customized scheduling program allows support personnel to schedule advance appointments for students and record drop-in student contacts. The program also provides distinct student contact data for all counseling areas in both a semester and a year-long format. In addition, since the last accreditation visit, the Assessment Center has fully implemented computer-adaptive testing as the sole means for assessing students.

Online services have also contributed to increased efficiency and student access to services. Students now may apply, receive orientation services, enroll, receive counseling services, and purchase textbooks and parking permits online. Whether students take all of their classes onground, online, or a mix of the two delivery methods, they can resolve counseling and admissions issues through online advisement. Such innovations ensure greater accountability and precision and increase the College's ability to track student performance.

Financial aid services have become more accessible as well. The Financial Aid Office has implemented a rolling cart with Internet access, used during peak times to reach students more efficiently. The "BOGmobile" traverses the campus to where students congregate, providing information about Board of Governors fee waivers and the federal financial aid application, thus augmenting the services provided in the Financial Aid Office.

Improvements in support services have also been supported through innovative grant-funded projects, some of which focus on the unique needs of first-time students. For example, a dedicated counseling staff, located in the Welcome Center, provides newly-assessed students with initial advisement services. The Back-to-Success Program, designed for probationary students, has developed procedures that include small group re-orientations, an approach that has yielded statistically significant improvements in retention and persistence rates, thus demonstrating improved quality of service. Originally funded in 2002 by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office under the Fund for Instructional Improvement grant program, the Back-to-Success Program was designed to address the alarming number of students on probation: 33 percent of the College's students were on probation in 2002, an all-time high. Although funding for the pilot program ended, the College immediately institutionalized the effort and has continued to develop its principal tenets, adjusting them over the years, resulting in an impressive reduction in the percentage of probationary students from that staggering all-time high of thirty-three percent in 2002 to nine percent in Fall 2008, representing a *decrease of twenty-four percentage points in just seven years*.

As noted by previous accrediting teams, the overall quality of Santa Monica College student services has long been hampered by aging and inadequate facilities. Student services are spread throughout the campus, causing frustration for some new students as they attempt to locate and coordinate support programs. In the last few years, efforts have been made to create clusters of services, resulting in improved delivery. As described in the Introduction and illustrated in Figure IIB-1, the College is in the process of constructing a new Student Services building, which will house the majority of the College's student services programs, providing students with one-stop access to the services they need, at the same time creating a stunning entrance to the campus.

Evaluation—IIB.1

Ongoing evaluation of student services has resulted in a process of continuous change and adaptation, ensuring the College's programs maintain a high level of viability, vibrancy and appropriateness, responsive to changing student needs. Dedicated student services staff, who collaborate regularly, are the mainstay of the evaluation process. Department staff and division meetings, *ad hoc* and joint senate committees, program review, site visits, and the student learning outcomes assessment process all contribute to ongoing evaluation during which concepts and innovations to promote student success are discussed, developed, nurtured and measured by their effect on student learning and success.

The College has also implemented several technology-based and grant-funded innovations. These new systems provide much needed tracking data and serve as a basis for grant funding as well as for ongoing improvement of counseling services.

Although the College's concerted effort toward developing student learning outcomes for its services has resulted in more than 90 percent of the programs having developed student learning outcomes, greater emphasis needs to be placed on assessing those student learning outcomes using appropriate research and data-driven results to effect improvement in their achievement. The College's student services programs are working toward a goal of having 100 percent of the programs assessed by the end of the 2009-2010 academic year.

Plan—IIB.1

- The Offices of Student Affairs and Enrollment Development will work with the Office of Institutional Research to implement outcomes assessments that result in data-driven improvements in student support services.

IIB.2   *The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate and current information.*

The Office of Academic Affairs, in conjunction with the Articulation Officer and the Transfer/Counseling Center, prints and annually updates the college catalog, which includes general information, academic requirements and major policies affecting students.

The catalog is available in print as well as online.[i] While the online version is a static document (via an Adobe PDF file), thus preventing updates, modifications are made regularly to the curricular guide sheets provided by the Articulation Officer and include changes to degree requirements and course transferability.

Both the print and online versions of the catalog have been reorganized. The online version has been separated into four sections, making it easier for users to download.

- Part I includes the Superintendent/President's Welcome; the 2008-2009 Academic Calendar; the College's Mission, Vision, Values and Goals; and general information

about: the College; community support; admissions procedures; orientation and course planning; assessment; fees and tuition; matriculation; and transfer processes (including guides for preparing for transfer, transfer information specific to the University of California and California State University systems and Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum) and articulation agreements.

- Part II includes major requirements, which can also be accessed at the Transfer Center website.[ii]

- Part III includes descriptions of individual courses (also found in the online class schedule).

- Part IV provides information about: special programs and support services; honors and awards; college policies; rules and regulations; administration and governance structures; and listings of the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff; a telephone directory; campus maps; and an index. The policies portion of the catalog covers: matriculation rights; fees (including refund schedules and tax credits); class auditing; course repetition and re-enrollment; prerequisites and co-requisites; attendance; grades; units; transcripts; probation and disqualification; graduation requirements; a student right-to-know statement (including completion and transfer rates and crime statistics for the college community); college conduct (including the Honor Code and Honor Council); student complaints, hearings, and appeals (including descriptions of the college ombudspersons' functions); the Office of Student Judicial Affairs; academic conduct; disciplinary and program removal appeals; student privacy rights; student records policy information; residency; and campus and community safety.

The process for annually updating the catalog has been revised in recent years to increase the accuracy of the information provided therein and the efficiency of updating the document. Previously, responsibility for updating the catalog was assigned to deans in the Office of Academic Affairs on a rotating basis. The process is now the ongoing responsibility of one dean, who works with a team including the College's Articulation Officer and Associate Dean, Enrollment Services and representatives from the Counseling Department. As a result of this continuity, the catalog is not only updated but is improved and refined.

Sometimes it is necessary to redirect students to other sites to provide precise, accurate and current requirements. The online catalog includes references to websites such as ASSIST[iii] to obtain transfer information or the Counseling Department Articulation website for Associate in Arts degrees and certificates of achievement requirements, which frequently change.[iv]

In addition to the print and online college catalogs, the College provides information for students and the community through its award-winning class schedule, searchable online class schedule and online Student Planning Guide.[v]

Student Complaints/Grievances

Student complaints are handled through a variety of offices, and students have a number of avenues through which to register informal and formal complaints. Students may register complaints about student misconduct with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. For more egregious concerns, students are directed to the College Police. Faculty file reports of cheating or disruptive classroom behavior with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, which investigates and takes appropriate action. In Spring 2009, the Office of Student Judicial Affairs handled 225 cases of academic dishonesty, disruptive behavior and similar complaints registered between Spring 2008 and Spring 2009.

Other concerns brought before the Office of Student Judicial Affairs include harassment, threats, fighting, theft, and fraud. After extensive research and in response to students' right to due process, the Academic Senate Joint Student Affairs Committee developed an Honor Council in Fall 2007, one of the first of its kind among California Community Colleges. Students who believe they have been falsely accused of academic dishonesty may have their case officially heard by the Honor Board, which is composed of faculty, students, and administrators.

Students alleging sexual harassment or discrimination by faculty or staff are directed to the Office of Human Resources, which is governed by state and federal mandates. There were nine student complaints of this nature in 2007-2008. Prior to beginning an investigation, students are required to officially register such complaints in writing.

Students may also file complaints with the Ombuds Office, which has existed at the College for more than thirty years and is still unique within the California Community College system. Two full-time faculty members are appointed part-time Ombuds staff. The Ombudspersons follow standards established by the University and College Ombudsmen Association. The Ombuds Office offers a safe, confidential environment in which students may voice their concerns and complaints and receive advice on addressing their problems and learn about college policies and formal processes that they may pursue if the informal ombuds process does not satisfy their concerns. For example, students who contest grades may pursue a formal grade appeal process.

During 2007-2008, the Ombuds Office handled over 200 complaints of various types, the three most common being grade surprise (65 cases); instructor attitude or rudeness (48 cases); and allegations of cheating or disruptive behavior in the classroom (22 cases). Other student issues included requests for a W (withdrawal) after having received a grade, dismissal from a program, technical problems with distance learning classes, and disability considerations.

The Ombudspersons note problems and trends and alert key representatives about them. They also act as a sounding board for many staff and faculty on college policies. They participate in professional development activities and frequently collaborate with the Honor Council and the Academic Senate Professional Ethics and Responsibilities Committee.

Students may choose other routes through which to file complaints. Students dismissed for multiple semesters may appeal the decision through the Counseling Department. In addition, the Office of Admissions and Records has a formal appeals process for administrative decisions

made concerning students' status and fees. Disabled students who are dissatisfied with their accommodations may file a complaint with the 504 Compliance Officer, who officially investigates each case.

Overall, the College offers many opportunities for students to voice their concerns and have them addressed, and ongoing discussions ensure that these concerns are responded to effectively. For example, trends noted in the student behavioral complaints generated a discussion among a variety of campus services and resulted in the formation of the Crisis Prevention Team, composed of key student affairs professionals who educate faculty about warning signs and discuss prevention and intervention strategies with them. The team addresses individual cases quickly and effectively, and it makes recommendations for institutional change as appropriate. The team is currently evaluating the need for an individual to assume case management of international students in need of psychological services.

Evaluation—IIB.2

The Santa Monica College Catalog is a reliable source of information for students regarding policies, procedures, course descriptions, degrees and certificates, and special programs and support services. An indication of its high quality is its proven benefit to other transfer institutions and external organizations that still require printed catalogs as an instrument for their review process.

The current catalog review process has been slightly modified over the last several years with regard to organization and content in both print and online formats. However, there remain some areas for improvement. The process can be further streamlined and its efficiency and effectiveness improved. In its current static (PDF) form, the catalog is neither user-friendly nor presented in a way that students now use online resources. Transforming the catalog into a dynamic document with embedded links will improve the overall effectiveness of the College's website and facilitate students' search for critical information.

The College maintains a number of offices through which students may register concerns, and it scrutinizes trends in student and faculty complaints and grievances. The College responds to such trends by continually developing or refining its policies and procedures, and it is especially proud of unique policies and the councils established to implement them such as the Honor Code, Honor Council, the proactive Office of Student Judicial Affairs and the Ombuds Office. Collectively these efforts represent an efficient and comprehensive process for adjudicating complaints.

Plan—IIB.2

- The Offices of Academic Affairs and Enrollment Development will research software packages to improve the utility of the Santa Monica College online college catalog.

IIB.3   The institution researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs through a wide variety of activities

IIB.3(a)   The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method.

Description—IIB.3(a)

The College offers a broad range of services that support students as they pursue their educational objectives. Programs and services are publicized to students in a variety of ways including through the Santa Monica College website, the Schedule of Classes and program brochures such as the Student Services Calendar, which lists workshops and student services events offered throughout the year. New students receive a personalized welcome letter that provides them with a detailed description of specific and relevant services. In addition, students and parents are invited to attend VIP Welcome Day, held the Friday before the beginning of fall semester. As shown in Figure IIB-2, students and their families have the opportunity to attend informative workshops, meet faculty members in key departments and support services staff, hear administrative presentations, and attend a campus resource fair.

Although the college website is the first point of contact for many students, the Offices of Enrollment Development, Admissions and Records, Outreach, and Financial Aid typically provide initial or subsequent access to the College.

In 2004, partly in response to student retention data, the College created the Welcome Center, designed as a one-stop general resource to assist new students with course selection and enrollment. In 2008-2009, the Welcome Center assisted 16,425 first-year students with their initial enrollment in the College. Originally developed in Summer 2004 as a short-term project to help rebuild student enrollment lost during the 2003-2004 budget crisis, the Welcome Center proved so successful that it has not only remained open but has evolved and flourished over the years to become a vital part of the services designed to inform and integrate new students into the college community and introduce them to the variety of programs and services available to them.

The Welcome Center is a convenient one-stop shop where new students find the information, services and support they need to adjust to college life. During enrollment periods, academic and financial aid counselors, staff from Admissions and Records, and trained student ambassadors are on hand to answer questions and assist new students with admission and enrollment processes.

In addition, the Welcome Center has also provided new students (and their parents) with guided tours of the campus so that when the semester begins, students are already familiar with the location of their classrooms, the many different types of student services available at the College, the bookstore, and places where they can meet with their peers or relax.

This function, now assumed by the Outreach staff, has been an important service of the Welcome Center for the last five years. When enrollment ends, the Welcome Center shifts its attention to student retention, but it continues to stay in touch with new students. For example, the student ambassadors call on new students during their first semester to see if they have any questions and, if appropriate, to invite them to the Welcome Center for individual counseling. This ongoing contact between the College and the students plays a significant role in improving student retention.

Other programs and services have been developed to ensure equitable access to all students including:

- the Back-to-Success Program, created to address the previously high probationary rates, currently nine percent (down twenty-four percent from an all-time high of thirty-three percent), achieved through intensive small-group counseling sessions during which students and the counselor discuss college resources, time management, effective study skills and career planning. Additionally, students placed on probation or disqualified must meet with a counselor in person,

Figure IIB-2: Students and their families attend VIP Welcome Day, August 28, 2009

which allows counselors to accurately assess student academic needs and refer them to appropriate student services.

- the Basic Skills Counseling Classroom Visitation Project, in which counselors visit basic skills classes, providing information to students about the support services available to them.

- special consideration petitions, filed by students regarding course waivers, unit overloads, and course repetitions.

- the online Early Alert program, an efficient computerized communication system for faculty, their students and counselors, which enables faculty to send a letter to students informing them of areas of concern and to refer them to appropriate student services.

- extended evening hours in the Office of Admissions and Records and the Counseling Department, increasing access for students unable to visit during the day.

- the Center for Students with Disabilities, which ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act standards and ensures access by assisting special needs students with appropriate academic adjustments including test accommodation, provision of specialized equipment (e.g., computer-based modifications), classroom aides and scribes, and academic materials in alternate media.

Many student services are replicated at the satellite sites to ensure that students who do not typically visit the main campus receive vital services such as financial aid, library services and counseling. These services are well-utilized and much-appreciated by students taking classes solely at satellite locations.

To augment onground services, most programs at the College provide extensive online information and assistance to students. For example, since the last accreditation team visit, the Counseling Department has instituted online counseling, which has proven so popular that additional staff hours have been dedicated to it. In 2008-2009, 4,736 online counseling contacts were made. In addition, the number of students using the College's online orientation has tripled over the last eight years, from 7,227 students who were oriented online in 2002-2003 to 24,654 students in 2008-2009.

Furthermore, students taking online classes are afforded the same services as their onground counterparts including access to registration staff, financial aid advisors, academic counseling, and instructional faculty.

Evaluation—IIB.3(a)

Overall, the College effectively ensures equitable access by providing all students, whether they attend classes at the main and satellite sites and/or online, a wide range of support services.

Student services programs distribute surveys, hold focus groups and employ other research methods to ensure that the programs and services effectively meet students' needs. For example, the Financial Aid Office conducted an electronic student survey with over 10,000 email surveys sent to student aid applicants. The student responses were predominately favorable, with fairly high marks given to the office's ability to deliver aid in a timely manner. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest response, 60 percent of the respondents gave a ranking between 7 and 10. Students also said that they were pleased with the way they were treated by the staff (more than 70 percent of the respondents marked "very satisfied," "satisfied," "somewhat satisfied," "neutral" or "not applicable") and 75 percent indicated that the financial aid they received was "very important" in helping them pay for classes, books and daily living expenses.

The Offices of Student Affairs and Institutional Research worked together to examine the impact of some of the programs and courses on student achievement and persistence. As previously described, these studies revealed high persistence rates for students who participated in services such as VIP Welcome Day, Orientation, Extended Opportunities Programs and Services and the Scholars Program. The College plans to continue to conduct similar research to better understand the learning support needs of its students as well as the effectiveness of its student services programs and curriculum.

Meanwhile, the Academic Senate Joint Student Learning and Institutional Outcomes Committee is discussing the feasibility of a cohort study with first-time freshmen (who would be re-assessed at the end of their second or third year at the College), which would aid in determining students' learning support needs as well as the overall institutional effectiveness of curriculum and services.

Plan—IIB.3(a)

- Student Affairs and Enrollment Development will work with the Office of Institutional Research to implement a comprehensive evaluation process to determine student support needs and the progress made in achieving each program's stated student learning outcomes.

IIB.3(b) *The institution provides an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.*

Description—IIB.3(b)

The College, with its wide range of support services, breadth of courses, and variety of opportunities for active student engagement is able to effect change in several key areas of student development. Students who avail themselves of these opportunities can develop leadership skills, expand their aesthetic sensibilities, and grow psychologically, socially, morally, and intellectually, thus contributing to their communities.

The student activities program offered through Student Life includes the Associated Students Board of Directors, the Inter-Club Council and student organizations. A student trustee is elected to serve as an advisory voting member of the Santa Monica College Board of Trustees. Students are invited to join collegewide committees and participatory governance bodies such as the Academic Senate Joint Student Affairs Committee, the District Planning and Advisory Council (DPAC) and its subcommittees, the Honor Council, and the Grade Appeals Committee.

This year, a newly revised student leadership course was reinstated and offered. This course covers fundamental principles and practical applications of student government organizations. Students have the opportunity to reflect on their leadership and communication styles by creating a personal development plan.

Students also have the opportunity to participate on college committees. Students' participation has increased substantially as a result of extensive recruitment efforts on the part of the Associated Students Board of Directors who also approved a $200 stipend for student representatives who serve on DPAC, its subcommittees, and Academic Senate joint committees.

The President's Ambassadors, a program consisting of a diverse group of students who serve as student representatives for the Superintendent/President and Associated Students President, has been initiated. The ambassadors serve as peer role models and work with the college community by sharing their experiences with new and prospective students. Ambassadors receive a scholarship based on their individual hours of service.

These student-led activities and organizations allow students' voices to be heard and afford students the opportunity to participate in the College's decision-making processes. Leadership opportunities abound, and civic responsibility is encouraged with student clubs such as Phi Theta Kappa and Alpha Gamma Sigma, whose members are required to perform volunteer work in local communities. Currently, the Associated Students faculty and administrators are developing a more concerted leadership program and to this end reinstated the Student Government class in Fall 2009.

Additional opportunities for students to develop personal and civic responsibility include:

- Constitution Day, originally sponsored by the Associated Students and the Political Science Department in 2008. Representatives from three major political parties addressed key issues of the presidential election and 500 pocket American Constitutions were distributed to students.

- designated activity hours (11:15am to 12:35pm) on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during which students may attend club meetings, events, and special conferences and create innovative programming.

- student clubs that represent common interests and that receive funding for special programs. These clubs enrich the lives of the members and the entire college community. There are more than seventy clubs with student membership numbering from fewer than ten to more than one hundred members.

A sense of civic responsibility naturally leads to a realization of global responsibility and the imperative to act in environmentally sustainable and responsible ways. The College's fourth Institutional Learning Outcome expresses the commitment for students to become aware of environmental issues that directly affect their community. In support of this Institutional Learning Outcome and to demonstrate the larger student body's commitment to sustainability, the Associated Students have added a Sustainability Director to the Associated Students Board of Directors. Additional efforts include:

- a college-sponsored transportation initiative, "Any Line, Any Time," was established to encourage students, staff, and faculty to use the City of Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus lines to reduce traffic congestion and pollution and to ease the College's chronic parking problem. With assistance from the Associated Students, the College negotiated an agreement with the Big Blue Bus that allows all Santa Monica College student, staff and faculty to ride for free by showing their current college identification card. In addition, free shuttle buses transport riders among the main campus, off-site college parking lots, and satellite sites.

- the Center for Environmental and Urban studies, which offers students the opportunity to learn more about the natural and human environment through the Sustainable Works Project, a program jointly-sponsored by the College and the City of Santa Monica. Each semester, at least two hundred students meet in teams for eight weeks to learn about the human impact on the environment.

- the abundance of recycling bins and signs across campus, which encourage environmental responsibility, and a concerted effort to host food vendors on campus who offer healthy choices, fair-trade coffees and organic food.

- development of a Zero Waste Resolution and Policy Guidelines, which are currently being considered by DPAC.

Other Santa Monica College organizations serve to promote students' intellectual, aesthetic and personal development. One such group is the Santa Monica College Associates, a college support group that funds a variety of speakers in the Arts and Sciences. The Associates has sponsored performances and lectures from world-class artists in dance, photography, entertainment, film and music. In recent years, the Associates has brought renowned authors such as Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner*, and well-known performers such as the Actors from the London Stage, who perform on stage for students and the community and also lecture and/or conduct master classes for students. The Associates also sponsors the Santa Monica College Distinguished Scientists series, inviting distinguished researchers in the fields of biology, geology, and psychology to speak at the College. Many of these programs are presented on the Eli and Edythe Broad Stage at the College's new Performing Arts Center.

Students' professional and personal development is also enhanced through the many workshops and seminars offered by the College. For example, each semester the Office of Student Affairs produces a calendar of workshops and events designed to address pressing student issues from

stress and time management to managing mathematics anxiety to learning how to deal with university entrance rejections. Similarly, the Career Center offers a variety of internship opportunities, tools for students to explore their career potential, and a bi-annual job fair. An annual professional speakers' forum, Cool Careers, affords students the opportunity to meet with working professionals from a wide assortment of careers and to hear their real-world experiences.

Evaluation—IIB.3(b)

The College is dedicated to empowering its students by teaching life skills and developing civic-mindedness. Opportunities for students' academic, personal, and career development abound. Students can explore their various identities and interests by accessing a variety of specialized counseling services, participating in clubs, attending lectures and completing coursework. Faculty and staff respond quickly to emerging themes and student development needs. The college community is encouraged to contribute innovative and creative ideas when developing programs and services that inspire personal and civic responsibility in students. For example, during an institutional flex day, faculty and staff were asked to generate methods for promoting student development and outcomes.

Enthusiastic student participation in events and activities demonstrates their effect on students' intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development. For example, the Director, Community Relations reported that nearly one hundred students attend each of the various speaker series events sponsored by the Santa Monica College Associates. College-sponsored workshops, fairs and activities are also well-attended by students, and the number of student clubs is growing, a testament to the culture of the College, which embodies and promotes personal and civic responsibility.

Plan—IIB.3(b)

None

IIB.3(c)   *The institution designs, maintains and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function.*

Description—IIB.3(c)

The faculty of the Counseling Department support and lead counseling services in more than twenty unique and varied student support programs. Specialized counseling programs, documented in the *Student Guide to Counseling Services*, address the needs of students facing financial and economic barriers, physical and learning disabilities, childcare concerns, licensing regulations, and federal, state and local program requirements. Additional services or benefits provided to students vary according to the target population and include book vouchers, grants, and childcare services. Students with disabilities have access to a variety of accommodations

provided through the College's Center for Students with Disabilities, where specialized tutoring and other ongoing services are available.

A unique aspect of the College is the rapidity with which counseling and other student support services are able to respond to the changing needs of its students. For example, when counselors recognized the need to provide services designed for the growing population of US veterans returning to school, the College responded by expanding the services offered by the Veterans' Office, renaming it the Veterans' Resource Center and giving the expanded program an entire suite of offices dedicated to serving the more than 500 veterans who now attend the College. In addition, the Center for Students with Disabilities occupational therapist, in conjunction with the local Veteran's Administration hospital, created an innovative program, the first of its kind in the state, which provides special services to veterans with Acquired Brain Injury.

Strong leadership is provided to all counseling units by deans, academic directors, and faculty leaders collaborating to create and maintain a working environment that supports student-centered counseling. For example, the California Community College Counselor Training Program (also referred to as 4C Training Program)[vi] is an intensive training program offered every spring semester to all prospective Santa Monica College part-time and full-time counselors. (The 4C Training Program has been temporarily suspended due to the lack of new faculty hiring resulting from the ongoing budget crisis.)

Designing and Maintaining Academic Counseling Programs

Since the last accreditation self-study, the Counseling Department has undertaken a number of initiatives to further increase opportunities for student success such as:

- a variety of orientation programs (online, onground and others tailored to specific populations). As previously mentioned, an online orientation program is available to all new for-credit students. Upon completing the online orientation, students are encouraged to meet with a counselor in the Welcome Center to create their first semester plan. The fall VIP Welcome Day is another all-day orientation event for first-time college students and their families. Specialized orientations for new students are also offered through various counseling units including the Scholars Program, International Students Counseling, Extended Opportunities Programs and Services and Cooperative Agencies and Resources for Education (EOPS/CARE), the Latino Center, and the Black Collegians Center.

- the Welcome Center, which assists in easing the transition for first-time students to the College. The Welcome Center staff continues to support new students by providing them access to information about other programs and services that will support them throughout their stay at the College.

- an updated website that offers comprehensive information about the Counseling Department as well as links to specific counseling programs and services at the College including online counseling.[vii]

- the Transfer Center and Articulation websites that provide detailed information on requirements for available certificates of achievement, Associate in Arts degrees, and transfer institutions, and that allow counselors to verify articulation agreement details.[viii,ix]

- the recently-revised online Early Alert program that enables instructional faculty to identify underperforming students in their classes and alert them to their lack of progress, suggesting courses of action they might take to improve their class performance. Faculty may also refer students to a counselor, who will assist the student in developing strategies for achieving success in the classroom.

- the Back-to-Success Program, a small group-counseling program designed to assist students on academic or progress probation through intensive, small group counseling sessions and in-person counseling appointments.

- the integration of educational planning and transfer information into the Student Success Seminar (Counseling 20) curriculum. The faculty leader of the Transfer Center visits each class, presenting an overview of the university system and outlining the top seven strategies for success in transferring. A follow-up presentation by a counselor provides an overview of the basics of educational planning including a detailed review of prerequisites and appropriate course sequencing and an explanation of pre-major, general education and elective requirements. After completing an educational planning assignment, students are required to schedule an individual appointment with a counselor allowing the counselor to provide the student with constructive feedback. An estimated 3,000 students per year participate in educational planning through enrollment in the Student Success Seminar.

- the Basic Skills Counseling Classroom Visitation Project, begun in Spring 2008, which is designed to assist developmental or basic skills students, a population of students who are often particularly reluctant to seek the services essential to their success. The intent of the program is to provide targeted outreach to basic skills students and increase their knowledge and awareness of all available counseling services and special programs. Throughout the first six weeks of the semester, counselors conduct 30-minute presentations in most English and ESL basic skills classes. In addition, the counselors provide 18 hours per week of concentrated drop-in counseling in the English writing lab, the Math Lab, and the ESL building.

- the integration of transfer-focused effective practices into all counseling programs. In 1990, Santa Monica College merged its Transfer Center with the Counseling Department, a change that infused general counseling with effective practices from transfer counseling causing a significant cultural shift at the College by formally recognizing Santa Monica College's status as a leading transfer institution.

Counselor Minimum Qualifications and Training

All counselors hired by the College meet or exceed the minimum qualifications defined by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and the California *Education Code*.

Proper training of counseling faculty is vital for the College to consistently provide the highest quality of service to students in all of its counseling programs**.** To this end, all new counselors receive the comprehensive *Policies and Procedures Manual*, developed in Fall 2005, and complete an internship and rotation in each counseling services area through the 4C Training Program, which includes six two-hour training sessions on various counseling topics; counselor rotations through student services areas; and regular meetings with an assigned mentor. Topics covered in the training include:

- use of the computer, including mastery of the College's enterprise software system (known as ISIS) and the degree audit program;

- college-specific electronic forms that assist student enrollment (e.g., the Course Substitution form);

- an overview of student populations unique to each counseling program;

- an overview of the Counseling Department's philosophy;

- a review of the Counseling Department's *Policies and Procedures Manual,* with special attention given to policies related to probationary and disqualified students;

- a review of the assessment process including how to evaluate mathematics and English assessment scores and how to administer prerequisite waivers;

- the calculation of grade point averages and eligibility evaluation for academic and progress renewal;

- related counseling services and activities such as campus tours and application workshops;

- sources for student referrals and other college resources; and

- additional resources for information including counseling Outlook email and Public Folders, Bridges (career planning software licensed by the College), ViaTron (the method by which counselors access scanned transcripts), ASSIST, College Source (an online database of catalogs) and the Counseling Department and Transfer Center websites.

Regular training sessions on a variety of topics are provided to the entire counseling staff in conjunction with bi-weekly department meetings, during which counselors are informed of changes to transfer and Associates in Arts degree requirements. In addition, at these meetings,

chairs from the academic programs and their faculty provide updated information about their departments.

Further training devoted to topics requiring in-depth discussion is provided during the fall and spring semester meetings. Counselors are trained on the Degree Audit System, originally developed under a Title III, Strengthening Institutions grant from the US Department of Education, which was designed to help counselors and students monitor and verify the status of students' progress toward achieving their individual goals. In addition, counselors are trained on the online Transcript Evaluation Request system, which allows counselors to submit non-Santa Monica College courses for evaluation for transferability, applicability to the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) and the Associate in Arts degree. Counselors are trained to do these evaluations themselves; only the most unusual or specialized courses are submitted to the Articulation Officer for evaluation.

Evaluating Counseling Faculty

Critical to maintaining the high quality of counseling services is regular evaluation of counseling faculty. Included is a self-evaluation allowing counselors to evaluate their own effectiveness, professional relationships with colleagues and students, skills, and personal and professional growth. The evaluation process varies according to whether the faculty member is full-time tenured, full-time probationary or part-time. Tenured faculty, including counselors, are evaluated every three years by the department chair or a designated tenured peer and every nine years by a panel consisting of the chair and two tenured peers. Newly hired (full-time probationary) faculty are evaluated in each of their first four years of service. Part-time faculty are evaluated during their first semester and every four semesters thereafter.

Counselors are evaluated for their knowledge, technical skills and ability to connect with students. The evaluation process ensures that counselors are commended for their performance and/or alerted to opportunities for improvement, growth and development. In Fall 2007, a departmental committee of counselors from a variety of student support programs convened to revise the counselor evaluation form. Throughout 2008, counseling faculty enthusiastically collaborated with the Faculty Association in developing an evaluation form that comprehensively and accurately reflects the work of counseling services and that was first implemented in Spring 2009.[x]

Evaluation—IIB.3(c)

The Counseling Department continues to emphasize staff training, ongoing assessment, and improvement of its programs to meet the needs of the College's ever-changing student population. Professional counselor training and peer evaluation are critical to maintaining the high quality of counseling services at the College.

The department is committed to evaluating the impact of its services on student achievement (success, retention, persistence, transfer) and on student learning outcomes, particularly those pertaining to affective development as demonstrated in one of the program's student learning outcomes, which states that:

Students will formulate a realistic self-appraisal of their educational status and its relationship to their stated goal(s) as a result of exploration in the counseling session.

The results of a General Counseling Sessions survey, administered in 2007 to students receiving both drop-in and appointment-based counseling, indicated that this outcome is being successfully achieved. Survey results indicated that 87 percent of students believed that, as a direct result of the counseling session, they had a better understanding of their overall educational and career goals. This finding is significant when compared to a Winter 2001 Transfer and Counseling Center student survey of 350 students, reported in the Counseling Department's 2001 program review report, in which only 68 percent of the students reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the assistance they received in defining their educational goals.

After reflection and review by the department, this program-level student learning outcome was refined and divided into two separate but related student learning outcomes to more effectively address departmental goals regarding student achievement:

- *Students will identify their math and English course sequences and chart their individual math and English course sequences to achieve their educational goals.*

- *Students will increase self-confidence by formulating a realistic self-appraisal of their educational status and its relationship to their stated goal(s).*

The Counseling Department is presently conducting a multi-layered assessment of the educational planning process, which typically begins during a student's participation in the Student Success Seminar (Counseling 20) and concludes in individual counseling appointments. Assessments include counselor-scored rubrics, a student quiz on educational planning, a student survey evaluating the effectiveness of the educational planning process and instructor feedback. Initial results are promising: 67 percent of the students assessed by counselors in the counseling session demonstrated general proficiency in the ability to chart their English and mathematics course sequences and to conduct a realistic self-appraisal of the time needed to achieve their goals. Slightly less than two-thirds (63 percent) of the students were generally proficient in identifying all applicable courses, units, and prerequisites for their chosen major. Over two-thirds (68 percent) of the students assessed appeared proficient in developing a three semester/session educational plan and classifying courses as meeting General Education, major, prerequisite, or elective requirements.

In addition, the results of the educational planning assessment administered after the educational planning process concluded demonstrated the students' ability to satisfactorily apply what they learned using a fictitious student transfer case. A majority of students demonstrated an understanding of the IGETC requirements, the prerequisites for college-level English and the correct sources of transfer and degree information. The assessment also provided feedback regarding what students felt they needed from student services including more time devoted to course selection and additional time for meeting individually with a counselor. These results are used to inform the Counseling Department's services and improve them based on student need.

These assessment results and others described in Standard IIB.4 indicate that counseling services are effective and responsive to changing student needs. The College is proud of the manner in which support services are initially designed and evolve over time to ensure that all faculty and other personnel engaged in counseling at the College are adequately trained and able to provide students with comprehensive support services of the highest quality.

Plan—IIB.3(c)

None

IIB.3(d)   The institution designs and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Description—IIB.3(d)

Santa Monica College is privileged to serve a highly diverse student population. The College Outreach Program gathers students from the many diverse communities of the greater Los Angeles area and the International Education Center attracts students from around the world. These students, by their very presence, contribute to and strengthen the college culture. Indeed, the College's third Institutional Learning Outcome states that students will:

> *Respect the inter-relatedness of the global human environment, engage with diverse peoples, and acknowledge the significance of their daily actions relative to broader issues and events.*

The College has developed and supported, over the years, a number of programs that specifically support the College's diverse student body and help educate the college community. For example, the Latino Center and the *Adelante* Program enrich the community by presenting annual collegewide programs highlighting Latino culture. In 2008-2009, during Latino Heritage Month, the cultures of Central and South America and the Caribbean were highlighted through food, music and dance. The program also hosts celebrations of specific holidays such as *Cinco de Mayo* and *Dia de los Muertos*. In addition, the program sponsors on campus a spring Latino/Latina conference for high school students, the theme of which this past spring was "Latinos in Leadership."

The Black Collegians sponsors special events during Black History Month to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of African Americans and individuals of African descent. In February 2008, the Pan African Support group and the Black Collegians, supported by the Santa Monica College Associates, sponsored one of the individuals documented in "The Lost Boys of Sudan." More than 250 students attended the event, the turnout for which was so great that it had to be transferred to an outdoor facility. Together, the Pan African Support group and the Black Collegians also host an annual conference.

The College was recently awarded a grant from the US Department of Education under the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions program to assist a cohort of approximately 300 students with an emphasis on the participation of Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and low-income students. The program will include activities designed to recognize and support the cultures of Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students.

The College holds annual celebrations for students in the various student services programs (i.e., Extended Opportunity Programs and Services/Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education, Center for Students with Disabilities, US Department of Education funded TRIO programs (Upward Bound and Student Support Services), CalWORKs, Athletics, and the City of Santa Monica-funded Pico Partnership Program,) as well as for any students who have earned an Associate in Arts degree or certificate and/or have been accepted for transfer to a four-year institution. These events bring together students with diverse experiences and backgrounds but with one commonality—their success at having achieved their personal academic goals whether those goals are degree or certificate completion, transfer, or the acquisition of new job skills.

Students also enhance their understanding of and appreciation for diversity through participation in the more than seventy student clubs, which aptly represent the College's diverse student population and its varied interests. Through participation in clubs, students develop their own identities and increase their awareness of and appreciation for the unique qualities of others. Impressive and representing a wide range of interests is the variety of students clubs such as the Bike Club, Chemistry Club, Chinese Martial Arts Club, Hillel Club, International Soccer Club, Mathematics Club, Middle Eastern Club, Night Sky Project Club, Phi Theta Kappa, Respiratory Therapy Club, Speech and Debate Club, and Student Veterans Association Club, just to name a few.[xi]

In addition to sponsoring their own activities and events, which are open to all members of college community, twice yearly, the clubs participate in "Club Row," a festival of food, music, dance and other activities that highlight the focus of each club. The entire college community is drawn to this exciting event, which tangibly and visibly demonstrates the wealth of diversity that exists at the College and which transforms the College into an international marketplace of ideas.

The promotion of global citizenship, an effort that began as an initiative of the College's Superintendent/President and the Academic Senate, has continued to gain momentum and collegewide influence demonstrated by its inclusion in the College's third Institutional Learning Outcome:

> *Santa Monica College Students will respect the inter-relatedness of the global human environment, engage with diverse peoples, acknowledge the significance of their daily actions relative to broader issues and events.*

The College's Global Council is currently discussing methods for improving the integration of the substantial international student population at the College, thus more fully engaging them in college life and the local community. In addition, the Council seeks ways to increase the number of students from underrepresented populations who participate in study abroad experiences.

Standard IIB: Student Support Services

These global awareness and global citizenship efforts exemplify how the College's programs support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity. Another is illustrated in a recent change (Spring 2008) to the requirements for the Associate in Arts degree which now include classes designed to increase student awareness of and commitment to global citizenship. The previous degree requirement was limited in its scope, and students met it by taking one course that qualified under the American Cultures requirement. However, now the requirement has expanded and allows students to meet it by taking a course in several categories: American Cultures, Ecological Literacy, Global Studies, Service Learning, or through a Santa Monica College Study Abroad experience.

Global citizenship as a means for enhancing student understanding of diversity has also developed out of the College's study abroad program. The growing program includes annual trips to South Africa as well as a new program to study geography in Central America. In Fall 2008, a group of musical theater students were invited to China to perform music from the quintessentially American art form of the musical theater in honor of the 50th anniversary celebration of Shandong College of the Arts, enabling students to serve as cultural ambassadors. Other study abroad programs include ongoing summer trips to Europe, and new programs are being planned for Turkey, Greece and Egypt. Yet another program being developed will bring student nurses to Mexico. The Associated Students funds $68,000 in scholarships for students to participate in the College's study abroad programs.

The Santa Monica College Associates, a group of community supporters who sponsor lecture series and other events, lends its support to the College's global initiative by sponsoring a variety of performing and fine arts programs. For example, the Associates sponsors master teachers for the Dance Department, and in Fall 2008, the department offered an exhibition/master class with an expert in Indian dance. The Associates has also funded speakers and demonstrations for a variety of academic departments. For example, one program in psychology hosted an expert in disability issues on the continent of Africa. Another program, the Global Connections Lecture Series, included speakers on topics such as Contemporary Muslim Society in America and Soybeans and Service: Nutrition for the World.

In addition to the aforementioned programs, the College works to ensure that all its new students entering college for the first time are engaged in exploring and understanding diversity by including diversity as a topic of discussion in the Student Success Seminar (Counseling 20). Students learn about each others' cultures through a variety of class assignments. In an exercise, called Lifeline, students describe significant events from their past that have shaped them. For another assignment, called "A Coat Of Arms," students discuss and share their key values with their classmates. Students interact with their peers, learning about each others' cultural and religious values and rites of passages such as *Quinceaneras*, and *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvahs*. Students also have the opportunity to learn about the experience of being an international student who is navigating the systems of the College and the local community in an effort to adapt to cultural norms and values that may differ from his/her own.

Evaluation—IIB.3(d)

Santa Monica College enhances students' understanding and appreciation of diversity through a deliberately cultivated and deeply-rooted commitment to the belief that the learning environment is enriched and expanded through a celebration and exploration of diversity. The College celebrates diversity in the classroom through curricular innovations and in co-curricular activities and events that complement classroom activities.

The College has developed an ever-widening variety of programs with a global focus that celebrate student diversity beyond the local communities, and participation in these programs has grown since the last accreditation cycle.

Plan—IIB.3(d)

None

IIB.3(e)   The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases.

Description—IIB.3(e)

The Office of Admissions and Records and the Assessment Center concentrate on enhancement of their services to students, faculty and staff. To this end, an enrollment management meeting is held monthly (or more frequently as needs dictate) to discuss and evaluate enrollment issues. The participants vary depending on the issues under discussion but typically include the Executive Vice President; Vice President, Enrollment Development; Dean, Academic Affairs; Dean, Information Technology; Dean, Counseling and Retention; Associate Dean, Enrollment Services; and Associate Dean, Online Services and Support. The meetings ensure that the various functions work collaboratively, anticipating and resolving enrollment issues related to changing college policies and enrollment procedures, such as parking/transportation guidelines modified to accommodate construction activities or the promotion of new college initiatives or academic programs at the various satellite sites.

Admissions

The Office of Admissions and Records is responsible for all information regarding admission, registration, enrollment and student records. The California Community College mandate specifies that all students who have the capacity and motivation to benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to enroll. Santa Monica College complies with that mandate as an open-enrollment institution that admits any student who has earned a high school diploma or its equivalent, or who is at least 18 years of age. The College's policies and procedures are consistent and in compliance with state and federal regulations. The Board of Trustees approves local policies as determined by California's *Education Code* and *Code of Regulations,* Title 5.

Assessment

At an open-access community college like Santa Monica College, there are no formal admissions testing requirements. However, students are mandated to complete the College's assessment process: new students who have never attended another college are required to take English/ESL and mathematics assessment tests before enrolling in English, ESL, or mathematics classes for the first time or if enrolling in more than six units during their first semester. Management and oversight of the assessment and placement process at the College are the responsibility of the Assessment Center, under the direct supervision of the Associate Dean, Enrollment Services. The Center's primary responsibility is to assess students' reading, writing and mathematics skills when they enter the College. The Center's staff fully understand their charge and they work to ensure that the College adheres to California's *Education Code* and Title 5 standards for professional, ethical standards, and practices for testing. This includes using only assessment instruments approved by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. To ensure that the Assessment Center remains abreast of assessment trends and practices, the Faculty Leader and Student Services Senior Specialist maintain subject currency, are trained and certified to administer tests, and are active in state and national organizations. Formal evaluations of the assessment tools and college cut scores are conducted through the Assessment Center.

Evaluation—IIB.3(e)

To ensure that placement instruments are appropriate for use with the College's student population and that no group is negatively impacted, diverse studies are conducted on a regular basis. The Office of Institutional Research along with the Assessment Center Faculty Leader convene appropriate members of the faculty (e.g., from the English, ESL, and Mathematics departments), administrators, and students to outline and discuss the Assessment Center research agenda. In addition, during the last few years, the Assessment Center Faculty Leader has conducted a series of validation studies addressing such issues as content validity, consequential validity, cut score validity, disproportionate impact, and test bias. This has been accomplished as part of a systematic evaluation process and periodic effort to validate the initial placement processes and adjust them as appropriate and as a means for securing approval for locally managing select instruments. Validation studies were conducted during Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 to maintain effective assessment practices in compliance with state guidelines and regulations.

Plan—IIB.3(e)

None

IIB.3(f)   The institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records.

Description—IIB.3(f)

Santa Monica College maintains student records in full compliance with the California *Code of Regulations*, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and the guidelines outlined in the *Education Code* chapter on Retention and Destruction of Records. Class 1 records, which are retained permanently, are scanned and indexed into a secure and confidential database only accessible by Admissions and Counseling staff members.

Although hardcopy records have been scanned and indexed, they continue to be stored in a fire-proof vault protected by a fire extinguishing system. Microfiche, magnetic tape, CD-ROM and computer imaging are utilized to ensure that all records are securely backed-up and available for the reconstruction of transcripts. Class 2 and 3 records, which are no longer required by Title 5 to be physically retained, are imaged, indexed, and destroyed after the approval of the Board of Trustees and in accordance with state destruction policies to ensure the security of student information contained in the records.

Student records maintained on computing systems include sophisticated security provisions for recovery and catastrophic failure. These include network security, server physical security, password policy, backup/recovery plan, and antivirus software protection. Computing data are retained for one month onsite at the College and an additional six months at an off-site location. Computerized student records, residing in an Oracle database, are backed-up each morning. Hardcopy documents, such as incoming transcripts, are scanned into a document imaging system and backed up weekly.

The Associate Dean, Enrollment Services or designee approves access to student data and records to individuals and departments on an as-needed basis. Access to levels of student records information is governed by an employee's individual computer access code and is specific to the needs and functions of staff within that area of the College. These access codes not only limit access to authorized persons but also leave a record of transactions for audit purposes.

Enrollment Services staff who have daily access to student records sign a confidentiality agreement before beginning their employment in the office. Access to more sensitive information requires higher security clearance, which is administered through employees' access

codes. When employees separate from the College or are away for extended periods of time (as in the case of limited-term employees), their access codes are suspended or disabled.

Students gain access to the College's self-service system (the interactive system used by students to enroll, view records, review class schedules, add or drop classes, check fee balances, and look up grades and transcript information and their student records) through the use of a password that corresponds with the student's date of birth. The College is developing a system whereby students may create their own unique passwords used to access the student self-service system to replace the use of birthdates as passwords. The new system will be completely encrypted so that staff members will not have access to student password information.

In addition to securely maintaining student records, the College publishes and follows established policies to govern the release of student records. Each semester, the student's right to privacy information is published in both the print and online versions of the Schedule of Classes and annually in the College Catalog. The College also records, at the time of application or at any time thereafter, students' requests for a FERPA block on their records, which is prominently posted on the systems used by the students.

To help the college community better understand the rules governing student records, security and policies related to the appropriate release of student information, the College recently created a website that outlines these requirements;[xii] printed and distributed FERPA information cards to faculty, staff and students; and created a handout for parent orientations, which was disseminated during the 2009 VIP Welcome Day. The College has also revised the FERPA Administrative Regulation.

Enrollment Services staff conducted collegewide FERPA training to educate the faculty and staff about their role in protecting student information. Over 100 participants attended the first of many important discussions on the topic. Individual departments have requested further FERPA training to address the specific issues and concerns. The College will also implement mandatory training for all employees by Fall 2010, and the Associate Dean, Enrollment Services has been designated as the College's FERPA Compliance Officer.

Evaluation—IIB.3(f)

The College has always been concerned about the security and confidentiality of student records and has implemented policies and procedures that ensure proper authorization and authentication in the storage and access of student records. The College's Management Information Systems team requires employees to change their network passwords annually to reinforce security. They have implemented the use of Virtual Private Network server access for off-site access to the system to ensure the use of enhanced firewall security.

Imaging and electronic systems may have changed how records are maintained, but the College's commitment to maintaining security for students remains strong. Student records are maintained in individual virtual folders, which contain all petitions, counseling notations, transfer documents, and correspondence from faculty or staff.

Currently, student passwords are initially based on their birth date. Students are urged to change their passwords through the Admissions Office but many do not. The College is in the process of changing password protocols to a more secure method in response to a series of incidents that occurred in 2008-2009, when several students were involuntarily dropped from classes. Internal investigations by Management Information Systems staff revealed that their passwords had been compromised. The College took immediate steps to rectify this breach, helping the affected students change their passwords, reporting the incidents and the audit trails to College Police, and reexamining and securing all potential vulnerabilities. The students responsible for the enrollment breaches were identified and referred the Disciplinarian and College Police. Enrollment Services accommodated the students whose classes were dropped. The new password protocols are in the process of being implemented.

Plan—IIB.3(f)

None

IIB.4 The institution evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

Description—IIB.4

Student support services are evaluated through four processes:

- Program Review;

- fulfillment of state and/or federal reporting requirements, applicable to categorically-funded programs such as Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, Disabled Students Programs and Services, and TRIO programs;

- internal evaluations initiated by the program directors; and

- the implementation and assessment of student learning outcomes.

Program Review

All student support services undergo program review once every six years. Service area leaders coordinate a self-study in their area and compose a report by following the Process for Student Support Services.[xiii] After submitting the self-study report to the Academic Senate Joint Program Review Committee, the program leaders meet with the committee. The committee asks questions to clarify points and compiles an executive summary with commendations and recommendations for program improvement. The report is also submitted to the District Planning and Advisory Council to assist in the budget and decision-making processes.

State and Federal Evaluation

Federal and state-funded or regulated programs must often meet reporting requirements mandated by the agencies that govern them. In March 2008, the College's categorical programs including Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, CalWORKs, Disabled Students Programs and Services and Matriculation were evaluated by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office during a two-day Student Services Program Review and Technical Assistance Site Visit. The programs were commended for:

- providing a collaborative, inclusive year-end celebration for students;

- the College's model, comprehensive *Student Equity Plan*;

- the array of unique professional development opportunities offered to CalWORKs students;

- the exceptional access provided to students with disabilities through the College's Center for Students with Disabilities;

- the partnership between Financial Aid and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services in their joint efforts to meet the needs of students; and

- the array of programs designed to promote success such as Outreach, the Welcome Center, VIP Welcome Day, Early Alert, the Student Planner, Counseling 20 (Student Success Seminar), Fantastic Fridays, and Summer Bridge.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office visiting team commented that "Santa Monica College has the benefit of an unusual high number of noted exemplary practices that other schools should take note of."

Similarly, in response to program challenges in the Athletics program, the Vice President of Student Affairs requested a comprehensive review by the Commission on Athletics at the end of the Fall 2009 semester. This review was designed to ensure district compliance on established standards and to prepare the program for the regular Conference Program Review Process with the Commission on Athletics in Spring 2010.
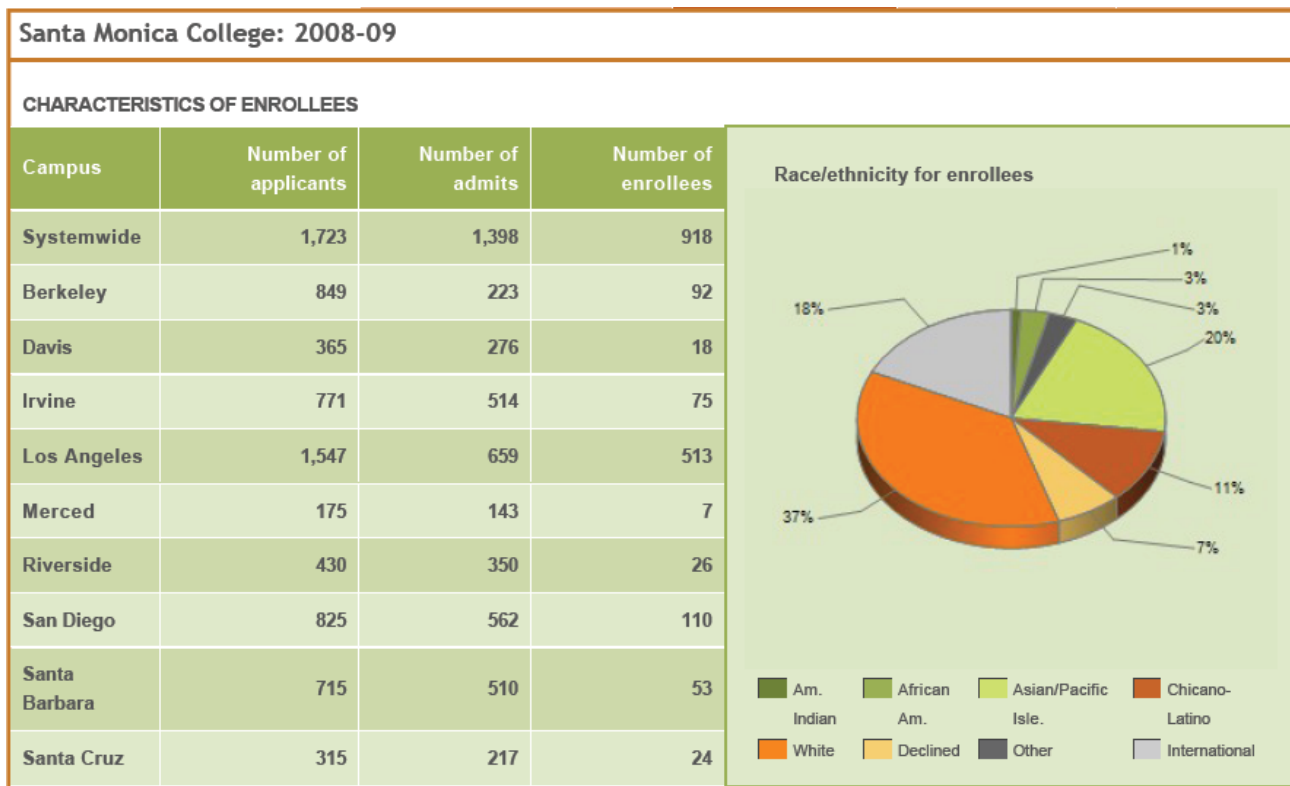
Internal Evaluations

The College takes pride in all its special programs; however, there are several that, due to their exceptional contributions to meeting identified student needs, warrant special recognition.

Transfer: As described in the Introduction to this standard, Santa Monica College continues to send more students to the University of California than any other college or university in the country and has done so for twenty consecutive years. Over the last four years, more than 500 students transferred annually to the University of California, Los Angeles alone. Santa Monica College also sends the largest number of students of African descent to the University of

California. The number of students who transferred to the University of California in 2008-2009 as well as the ethnic breakdown of those transfer students is shown in Figure IIB-3. Combined University of California and California State University transfer numbers also place Santa Monica College at the top in terms of number of transfers. The College is also the number one transfer institution to the University of Southern California.
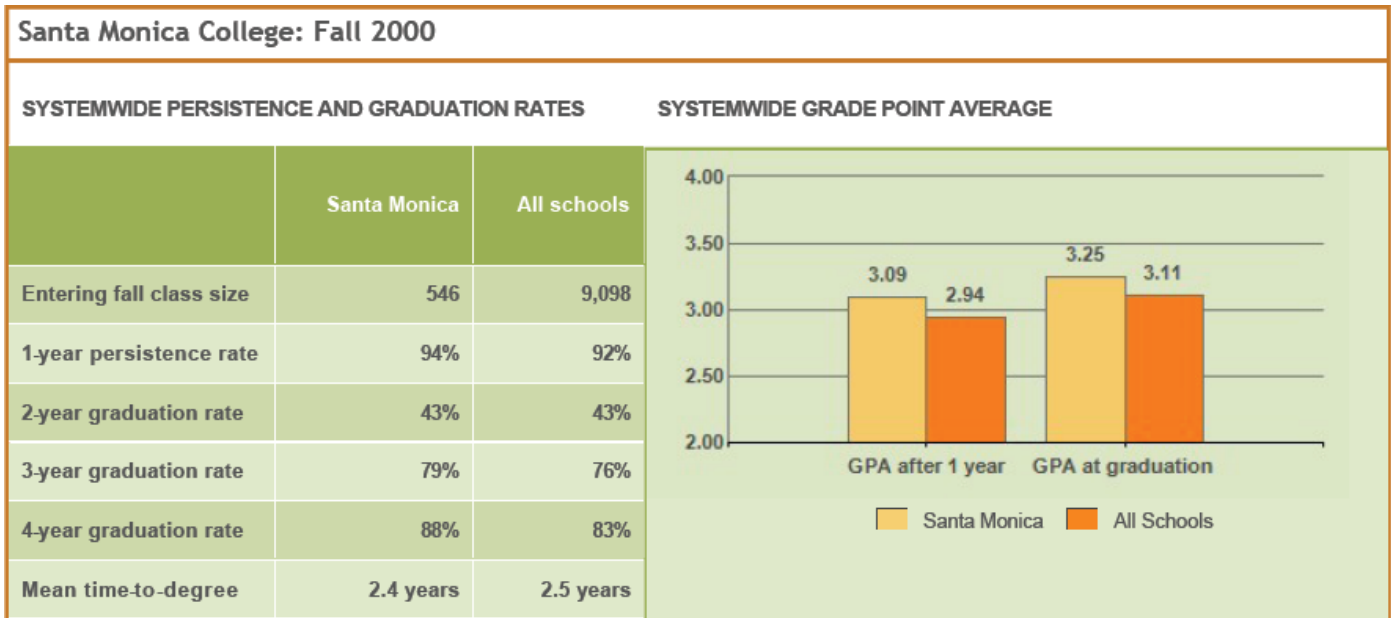
Students who transfer from the College also perform very well. A new online tool, the University of California StatFinder[xiv] indicates that Santa Monica College students both persist and have higher grade point averages than the overall population of students who transfer from the California Community College system. As illustrated in Figure IIB-4, Santa Monica College students who transferred in Fall 2000 had:

- higher grade points than students from the entire system both after one year and at graduation (e.g., 3.25 for Santa Monica College students compared with 3.11 for the entire system at graduation);

Santa Monica College: 2008-09

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENROLLEES

Campus	Number of applicants	Number of admits	Number of enrollees
Systemwide	1,723	1,398	918
Berkeley	849	223	92
Davis	365	276	18
Irvine	771	514	75
Los Angeles	1,547	659	513
Merced	175	143	7
Riverside	430	350	26
San Diego	825	562	110
Santa Barbara	715	510	53
Santa Cruz	315	217	24

Race/ethnicity for enrollees

1%
3%
3%
20%
18%
11%
7%
37%

Am. Indian — African Am. — Asian/Pacific Isle. — Chicano-Latino — White — Declined — Other — International

Figure IIB-3: Number and Characteristics of Santa Monica College Students Who Transferred to the University of California in 2008-2009 (University of California StatFinder, statfinder.ucop.edu)

- higher persistence rates one year after transferring (94 percent for Santa Monica College students versus 92 percent for students from the entire system); and

- lower mean time-to-degree (2.4 years for Santa Monica Students compared to 2.5 years for all transfer students in the California Community College system).

Santa Monica College: Fall 2000

SYSTEMWIDE PERSISTENCE AND GRADUATION RATES

	Santa Monica	All schools
Entering fall class size	546	9,098
1-year persistence rate	94%	92%
2-year graduation rate	43%	43%
3-year graduation rate	79%	76%
4-year graduation rate	88%	83%
Mean time-to-degree	2.4 years	2.5 years

SYSTEMWIDE GRADE POINT AVERAGE

GPA after 1 year: Santa Monica 3.09, All Schools 2.94
GPA at graduation: Santa Monica 3.25, All Schools 3.11

Figure IIB-4: University of California Report on Fall 2000 Transfer Students (University of California StatFinder: statfinder.ucop.edu)

During Spring 2009, Santa Monica College was invited by Alfred Herrera, UCLA's Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Partnerships, to host UCLA Chancellor Gene Block and several high-level administrators, including the UCLA Director of Admissions and the Director of Financial Aid, for an afternoon devoted to reaffirming the commitment to the transfer process. Chancellor Block and his team met with Santa Monica College faculty and staff for lunch and a roundtable discussion, as well as with students who applied to UCLA for Fall 2009 and program participants from a variety of special programs (Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, the Latino Center, Black Collegians, Scholars, the International Education Center, and leaders of the Associated Students).

Figure IIB-5: UCLA Chancellor Gene Block (right) and Dr. Chui Tsang, Santa Monica College Superintendent/President (center) speak with Santa Monica College Student Reyna Reyes about transferring to UCLA at the Santa Monica College Theatre Arts Main Stage on Wednesday, March 25, 2009. Photo by Fabian Lewkowicz

Chancellor Block remarked that he felt a "different energy" at Santa Monica College and informed the students in attendance that Santa Monica College had transferred over 10,000 students to UCLA in the last 25 years, more than three times as many as any other community college in the nation. He also stated that students from Santa Monica College do just as well academically if not better than those who begin their academic careers at UCLA, and today, nearly seven percent of all UCLA graduates are transfer students from Santa Monica College.

Student Tracking: The student services staff at Santa Monica College has long recognized the need for effectively tracking students who utilize the College's services, particularly counseling services. In an effort to address this issue, the Counseling Department has worked over the past several years with the College's Management Information Systems staff to create a computerized appointment system that allows all counseling areas to track students who receive counseling services. This system is now in use by all counseling programs. Consequently, the Counseling Department knows that during the 2008-2009 academic year, 104,994 student counseling contacts were made. The next step in this process will include working with the Office of Institutional Research to gather more evaluative data related to the retention, persistence and

student success of students who receive counseling services and/or are engaged in one of the many special counseling programs. This research project is in the queue for the current academic year and should produce data for analysis within the coming year.

For the last two years, the Counseling Department has also tracked student participation in VIP Welcome Day, relative to the number of participants, the inclusion of family in the event and the subsequent success rates of students. The resulting data revealed that students who participated in VIP Welcome Day experienced a 49 percent higher persistence rate.

Basic Skills Counseling Classroom Visitation Project: Mentioned earlier, the Counseling Department, funded through the College's Basic Skills Initiative, created a Counseling Classroom Visitation Project, the intent of which is to provide targeted outreach to the burgeoning population of basic skills students attending the College, and through the classroom visits, increase students' knowledge and awareness of available counseling services and special programs.

Initial results have been positive indicating that over 90 percent of the students who attended a counselor presentation in Spring 2008 felt that they were more likely to seek a counselor's assistance with educational planning, career exploration, and the services available to help them succeed in their classes. Over 90 percent of the students reported that after the presentation, they were more aware of where and how to get help in managing problems that interfere with their academic pursuits. Survey results from Fall 2008 reflected the same positive outcomes. Over 90 percent of the students responded affirmatively to the aforementioned statements as well as on two additional assessments that focused on students' increased awareness of possible obstacles that affect student success and their understanding of strategies they could employ to become successful students.

The next phase of research will be a comparative study between students who experienced the counselor presentation and those in the same courses who did not. The project will evaluate whether a significant statistical difference exists in the usage of counseling services between the two student groups. The Basic Skills Counseling Classroom Visitation Project has an expansive reach; to date, counselors have conducted presentations in 65 classes during the spring 2008 semester and 95 classes during Fall 2008. Approximately 4,250 students have experienced the presentation in their first or second semester.

Probationary Students, Specialized Interventions: As described in IIB.3(c), the College institutionalized a previously grant-funded program, Back-to-Success, which provides direct intervention and specialized assistance to probationary students.

Student reaction to the program continues to be positive: 98 percent of the probationary students who participated in Back-to-Success sessions in Winter 2007 stated that they would recommend the program to a friend. Survey data collected during the Winter 2008 session demonstrated that, as a result of participation in a Back-to-Success session, eight out of ten students were able to correctly identify the consequences of being on probation and apply strategies for overcoming probationary status. Similarly, results from the subsequent Summer 2008 Back-to-Success
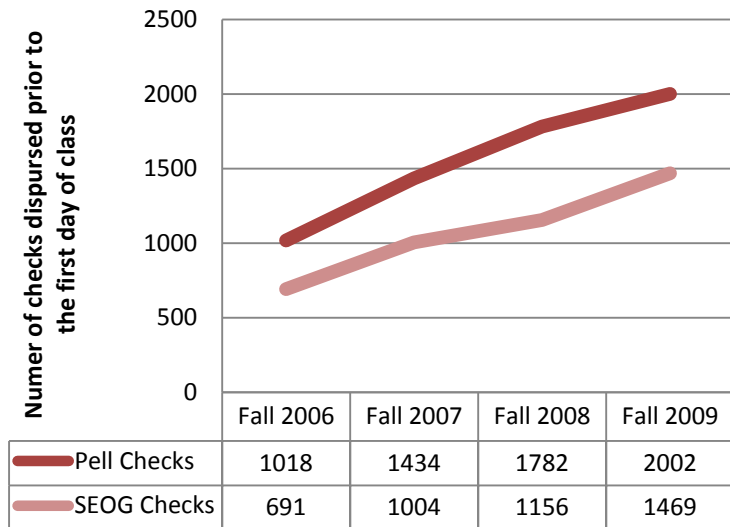
sessions indicate that 80 to 90 percent of the students who participated in a session were correctly able to identify the consequences of being on probation and, perhaps more importantly, between 80 to 90 percent were consistently able to correctly identify and apply various strategies for overcoming probationary status.

As of Summer 2008, approximately 2,800 students were on probation, which represents a 39 percent decrease in the number of probationary students since Summer 2003, when 4,579 students were on probation.

A recent study released by the Office of Institutional Research also revealed that program participants persisted (fall to spring) at dramatically higher rates than students who elected not to participate in a workshop. Furthermore, Back-to-Success participants had lower rates of continuing on probation.

Financial Aid: In Spring 2005, the Financial Aid Office embarked upon a transformation of its operations. Over the course of several years, it has substantially improved both the delivery system and the services to students. As a result, the Financial Aid Office, in the span between 2003-2004 and 2007-2008, significantly increased the number of students receiving aid and the total aid generated. The number of aid recipients rose to over 14,000 for 2007-2008, compared to 8,876 in 2003-2004. The total amount of aid also increased significantly, with over $20 million of aid being generated in 2007-2008, compared to $12.5 million in 2003-2004.

	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009
Pell Checks	1018	1434	1782	2002
SEOG Checks	691	1004	1156	1469

Figure IIB-6: Fall Financial Aid Disbursement, First Payment

The Financial Aid Office has also improved the timing of grants check disbursement to high-need students. Historically, the first grant checks were not mailed until the third or fourth week of the fall or spring term. This was changed in Fall 2006, when the initial checks were disbursed on the first day of the term. This policy remains in place and, as shown in Figure IIB-6Figure IIB-6, the College now disburses over 3,000 checks by the first day of the fall term. During the spring term, more than 4,000 checks are dispersed before the first day of class. For comparison purposes, the College disbursed only 421 grant checks on the first grant disbursement run of Fall 2003, and these checks were mailed in the third week of the term, too late for many students who were already terminally behind in their classes due to a lack of books.

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services: This program is designed to serve full-time students (i.e., those enrolled in at least 12 units) with language or educational and economic disadvantages. In addition, the program offers a single parent program called Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE), which provides extra services for single parents with children under the age of 14. The Extended Opportunities Programs and Services staff have worked with the Office of Institutional Research to develop an online "End of Term" survey to assess student needs, learning outcomes and program satisfaction.

Overall, the Extended Opportunities Programs and Services staff consider the program to be "the best in the West," offering students a comprehensive array of tools designed to help them succeed. This belief is backed by program outcomes indicating an 86 percent persistence rate from Fall 2008 to Spring 2009. In addition, 42 percent of the participants with 12 or more units have a 3.0 GPA or better. A recent study conducted by the Office of Institutional Research also revealed that program participants persist at a fifty percent higher rate than students who do not.

Admissions and Records: Since the last accreditation visit in 2003-2004, the Admissions and Records Department sought ways to use technology to improve communication and ease the application and enrollment process for students. The revised online application process now allows for an electronic signature for students. The Admissions and Records website is an accurate and helpful resource with features such as term-specific dates and deadlines, downloadable forms, open class listings, online transcript and verification ordering, links for faculty and staff information, graduation information, out-of-state student information, housing information, parent Frequently Asked Questions, and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act information.

A searchable schedule is now included on the main Santa Monica College website, which helps current and potential students review which courses are available. This technology also includes the ability to search by instructor, meeting date/time, campus location, and whether it is an online, onground, or hybrid course. Parking decals may be ordered online through the student self-service system. A roommate finder has been created to help students connect with potential roommates and find affordable housing.

Student Learning Outcomes

The Counseling Department has primarily relied on the student learning outcomes process for collecting and assessing evidence that indicates that student services and programs are meeting student needs. Counseling faculty members in specific service or program areas work together to determine areas that should be assessed and craft unique outcomes that also fit within the mission and goals of the particular student services program/service, or, in the case of instruction, the core requirements of the course. Depending on the outcomes, counseling faculty members then evaluate assessment results to determine what improvements need to be made and the method for realizing those improvements. The cycle of defining, assessing and improving outcomes allows the College to make program and curricular changes that continually and significantly improve student services and outcomes.

Evaluation—IIB.4

Although the mechanisms of program review, internal evaluations and site visits from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office have provided the College's student services programs with useful measures of evaluation, the Offices of Student Affairs and Enrollment Development anticipate working more closely with the Office of Institutional Research to design evaluation processes and instruments consistent with effective research practices and designed to effect research-based changes that meet student needs.

However, since the Office of Institutional Research has undergone a period of leadership and staff transition over the past three years, institutional support has not been readily available to provide ongoing or regular research and analysis of student support services. Instead, the programs have relied on the expertise of internal student affairs faculty to create various student program surveys for counseling and, in the case of one, the use of a student quiz to determine students' ability to apply information learned. The same faculty expertise has been relied upon for the development of instruments and assessments for program review purposes and initial student learning outcomes assessment efforts.

Nearly all of the College's student affairs and enrollment development programs have developed student learning outcomes and are in the process of assessing them or designing assessment instruments for them. A student learning outcomes progress grid was created to assist in the monitoring and tracking of all outcomes. As reported previously, 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 reach 100 percent in both categories and shift focus to program modification.

Now that the College once again has leadership in the Office of Institutional Research, several research projects are slated for the student services programs. To augment these projects, the Office of Institutional Research has initiated ongoing training workshops designed to assist programs in designing their own methods of assessing student learning outcomes and conducting ongoing improvement of their departments' specific student learning outcomes.

Plan—IIB.4

- Student Affairs and Enrollment Development will work with the Office of Institutional Research to implement a comprehensive evaluation process to determine student support needs and the progress made in achieving each program's stated student learning outcomes.

Selected Standard IIB References:

[i] Santa Monica College Catalog: http://www.smc.edu/apps/Comm.asp?Q=191&menutab=5

[ii] Counseling Department Transfer Center webpage: www.smc.edu/transfer

[iii] ASSIST website: http://www.assist.org

[iv] Counseling Department Articulation webpage: www.smc.edu/articulation

[v] Searchable Class Schedule and Student Planning Guide: http://www.smc.edu/apps/page.asp?Q=Class%20Schedules&menutab=1

[vi] California Community College Counselor Training Program (4C Training): www.smc.edu/counselortraining

[vii] Counseling Department website: http://www.smc.edu/apps/comm.asp?%241=7

[viii] Articulation website: www.smc.edu/articulation

[ix] Transfer Center website: http://www.smc.edu/apps/comm.asp?Q=25

[x] Faculty Evaluation Form: http://www.smc.edu/projects/169/SMC_Employees_Only/Evaluation_Forms/Faculty_Evaluation_Forms/Certificated_Peer_Evaluation_Form.pdf

[xi] Student Clubs website: http://www.smc.edu/associated_students/index_sites/as_clubs.htm

[xii] FERPA website: http://www.smc.edu/apps/pub.asp?Q=1662)

[xiii] Process for Student Support Services: Appendix C found on the Academic Senate Program Review Website: http://www.smc.edu/apps/docs.asp?Q=600

[xiv] University of California StatFinder: http://statfinder.ucop.edu