



SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

# 2025-2028 STUDENT EQUITY PLAN



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## HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND ASSURANCES

California’s commitment to student equity has evolved over more than three decades. First established in the law in the 1990s, Student Equity called on community colleges to confront barriers faced by students of color, women, and students with disabilities through intentional strategies to close achievement gaps. Since then, the state has remained steadfast in addressing inequities, continually refining policies and practices to meet the needs of our communities. As Felix <sup>1</sup>(2025) reminds us, advancing equity is not optional—it is our mandate. We have the policies, leadership, and momentum to sustain this work, but only if we demonstrate the courage to act on them. [California Education Code \(EC 78220-78222\)](#) makes it a condition for receiving Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) funds that colleges ensure equal educational opportunities and promote success for all students—regardless of race, gender, disability, or economic circumstances—while prioritizing efforts to support students experiencing disproportionate impact, high need, or disadvantage in order to effectively advance the goals of the policy.

In 2012, the Student Success Act (SB 1456) strengthened this commitment by restoring critical student services—including orientation, assessment, counseling, and education planning—and requiring colleges to track progress with disaggregated data. This laid a stronger foundation for supporting students in achieving their goals. The work deepened in 2017 with the creation of the Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program, which consolidated three initiatives—Basic Skills, SSSP, and Equity—into a single funding stream, while requiring every college to adopt a Student Equity Plan aligned with systemwide goals to reduce and ultimately eliminate equity gaps.

The 2025–2028 Student Equity Plan builds on Santa Monica College’s longstanding commitment to eliminating equity gaps and aligns closely with the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) Vision 2030 objectives, with a focus on racial equity, completion and transfer success, and comprehensive educational planning. This plan emphasizes early and equitable access to student education plans, fostering strategic enrollment management and supporting timely completion. This cycle challenges SMC to implement innovative, collaborative, and race-conscious strategies that advance a culture of sustainable, transformative change. Building on deliberate investments in equity and capacity over the past decade, this plan represents both a continuation of that work and a reimagining of how the college fulfills its promise. At its core, it reaffirms SMC’s institutional commitment to closing equity gaps while positioning the college to meet the

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<sup>1</sup> Felix, E. R. (2025). *In California, we have a mandate to advance racial equity*. CCHALES Research Collective. Retrieved from <https://www.dreicfelix.com/ourwork/in-california-we-have-a-mandate-to-advance-racial-equity>

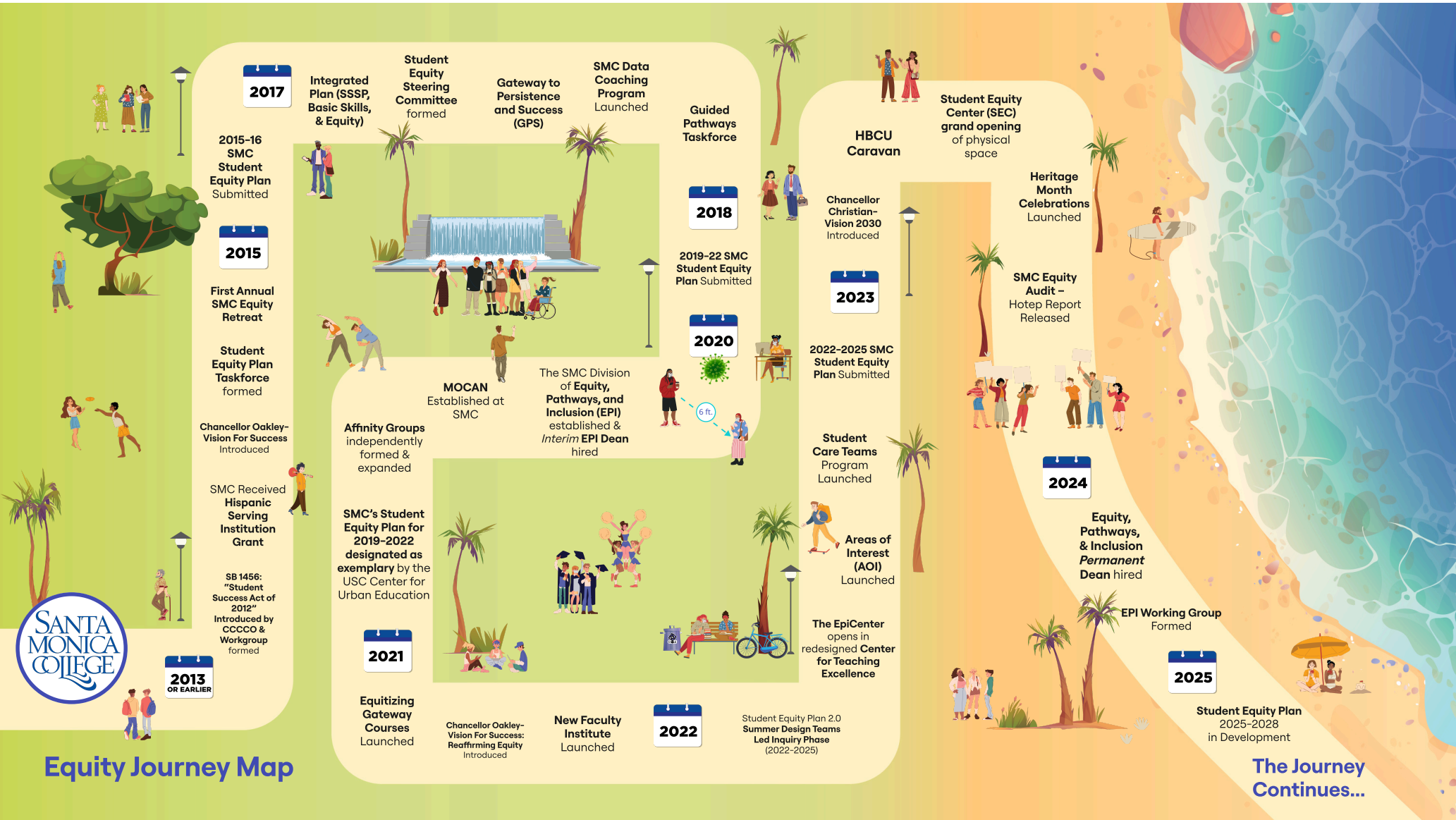
future with clarity, courage, and action. The implementation of the Student Equity Plan will be carried out in alignment with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. This commitment ensures that all students have equitable access to college programs, resources, and opportunities.

### **SANTA MONICA COLLEGE’S JOURNEY MAP: A LOOK AT OUR INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO CLOSE EQUITY GAPS**

The SMC Journey Map was created as an act of accountability and a reflection of our shared progress toward meeting our student equity and redesign goals. It offers an overview of key developments and shifts in our equity and institutional redesign work over the past decade—since we first received state funding and the mandate to establish concrete equity and guided pathways goals.

While not exhaustive, the Journey Map highlights pivotal policies, milestones, and initiatives influenced by the CCCCO—beginning with the Student Success Act of 2012 and evolving through multiple iterations of the Vision for Success, first introduced by Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley and now reimagined as Vision 2030 under Chancellor Sonya Christian.

This map is both a progress report and an invitation for reflection. It aims to foster alignment, transparency, and shared understanding across our many equity-focused efforts. Because these initiatives are deeply personal and community-driven, and we recognize the journey has been influenced by many diverse perspectives, we will continue updating the map with community voice over the course of this plan.



**Equity Journey Map**

**The Journey Continues...**

Furthermore, this plan is in alignment with the institutional mission, vision, and values statement, recently revised and adopted by the Santa Monica College Board of Trustees.

### **Mission**

Santa Monica College offers robust educational programs and support services that assist students in the development of skills needed to succeed in college, prepare for careers and transfer, and nurture a lifetime commitment to learning. The College provides an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that supports intellectual exploration and helps students achieve their educational goals. As a proud Minority-Serving Institution (MSI), the College works to eliminate racial equity gaps and recognizes the critical importance of each individual's contribution, ensuring that each person feels seen, affirmed, and valued.

### **Vision**

Santa Monica College will be a leader and innovator in college transfer, career preparation, upward mobility, and lifelong learning. We will provide an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education designed to transform the lives of our students, their families, and the community.

### **Values Statement**

As an institution committed to the free exchange of ideas, Santa Monica College will foster its core values: knowledge, intellectual inquiry, research-based planning and evaluation, integrity, accountability, ethical behavior, democratic processes, communication and collaboration, civic engagement, global citizenship, and sustainability.

The inputs that shaped this plan draw from a range of sources, including institutional planning documents such as the [Board Goals](#) and [Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#), [EEO Plan](#), [Diversity Report](#), community feedback gathered during the Spring 2025 Imagining Sessions, and thoughtful contributions of the Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion (EPI) Working Group. Together, these perspectives foster alignment, shared vision, and collective ownership, guiding the college into the next three years of sustained commitment to addressing the equity needs of our current educational climate.

### **ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS**

To view annual assessment of progress reports from our 2022-2025 Student Equity Plan, visit the Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion, *Reports* link below:

<https://admin.smc.edu/administration/epi/reports-and-documents.php>

**EXPENDITURE REPORT 2022-2025 AND SEAP ALLOCATION**

	2021-2022			2022-2023			2023-2024		
Total Allocation	\$9,271,311			\$9,735,824			\$9,735,824		
Expenditure Type	Year 1 Amount	Year 2 Amount	% of Allocation	Year 1 Amount	Year 2 Amount	% of Allocation	Year 1 Amount	Year 2 Amount	% of Allocation
1000 - Instructional Salaries	\$1,179,314	\$2,212,070	36.58%	\$2,418,213	\$3,027,973	55.94%	\$2,658,076	\$255,232	53.55%
2000 - Non-Instructional Salaries	\$943,935	\$1,631,499	27.78%	\$550,635	\$881,774	14.71%	\$1,059,027	\$404,408	15.03%
3000 - Employee Benefits	\$850,050	\$1,319,351	23.40%	\$857,096	\$1,346,688	22.64%	\$1,104,052	\$953,124	21.13%
4000 - Supplies and Materials	\$0	\$9,877	0.11%	\$0	\$30,080	0.31%	\$1,664	\$22,033	0.24%
5000 - Other Operating Expenses and Services	\$252,392	\$864,706	12.05%	\$231,178	\$387,978	6.36%	\$512,986	\$440,208	9.79%
6000 - Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	0%	\$0	\$3,763	0.04%	\$0	\$0	0%
7000 - Other Outgo	\$8,117	\$0	0.09%	\$446	\$0	0%	\$0	\$25,015	0.26%
Total Expenditures	\$3,233,808	\$6,037,503	100%	\$4,057,568	\$5,678,256	100%	\$5,335,805	\$4,400,019	100%

**Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) Funding Distribution  
2025-2026 Allocation (\$9.7)**

Human Resources	Student Affairs	Academic Affairs	Enrollment Development	Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion (EPI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">The EpiCenter</a> (Equity-minded Professional Innovation Center)</li> <li>New Faculty Institute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counseling (FT and Adjunct)</li> <li>Guided Pathways Efforts</li> <li>New Student Orientation</li> <li>Black Collegians and Latino Center Specialists, Book vouchers, Tutoring</li> <li>Transfer Services Center</li> <li>Veterans Success Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum &amp; Program Revisions</li> <li>Tutoring</li> <li>Counseling</li> <li>Guided Pathways Efforts</li> <li>Institutional Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach</li> <li>Enrollment</li> <li>Admissions &amp; Records</li> <li>Stellic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">EPI Division Operational</a></li> <li><a href="#">Equitizing Gateway Courses</a> (EGC)</li> <li><a href="#">Guided Pathways Leads &amp; Efforts</a></li> <li><a href="#">Student Equity Center</a></li> <li><a href="#">MOCAN Counseling</a></li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL: \$276,250</b> <i>(Carryover)</i>	<b>TOTAL: \$4,975,000</b> <i>(Annual Allocation)</i>	<b>TOTAL: \$1,583,416</b> <i>(Annual Allocation)</i>	<b>TOTAL: \$2,266,726</b> <i>(Annual Allocation)</i>	<b>TOTAL: \$909,903</b> <i>(Annual Allocation, Carryover varies by year)</i>

The following sections of this Student Equity Plan address required CCCCO components outlining both the process for developing this plan and its alignment with Education Code and race-conscious practices. Section 2 reflects on what the college has learned about the root causes of equity gaps for disproportionately impacted student populations identified in the 2022–25 plan, while Section 3 presents updated data on these populations. Sections 4 through 8 provide a detailed breakdown of each metric (successful enrollment, completion of transfer level math and English, term-to-term persistence, completion and transfer) identifying the disproportionately impacted groups and the strategies the college

will employ to close gaps. Section 9 emphasizes the college’s intensive focus on Black/African American and Latine/x students, who continue to experience the most significant equity gaps. Section 10 outlines strategies to ensure students complete both abbreviated and comprehensive education plans, and Section 11 describes how the college coordinates institution-wide efforts to advance Vision 2030 goals. Collectively, these sections reaffirm Santa Monica College’s commitment to race-conscious, equity-driven action and to eliminating equity gaps across all student success metrics.

## **ASSURANCES**

### **Campus Involvement & Student Voice**

The Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion (EPI) Working Group was established in Fall 2024 as a cross-campus, representative body to: 1) submit annual Student Equity Plan reporting to the CCCCCO); 2) serve as an advisory group for SEAP-funded and aligned equity initiatives; and 3) lead development of the 2025–2028 Student Equity Plan.

In January 2025, eleven EPI members attended the Student Equity Plan Institute (SEPI) in Ontario, CA. SMC was one of 20 colleges selected to participate in this statewide workshop themed “*Roots of Renewal: The Power of Planting Seeds.*” The team emerged as catalysts for reimagining equity work at SMC and informed the planning process that followed.

Inspired by SEPI’s race-conscious equity framework, the EPI Working Group launched a multi-pronged campus engagement effort between March and May 2025. We began with two Data Sessions led by Institutional Research, followed by five Imagining Sessions that invited faculty, staff, and students to envision equity-centered change. Additionally, two weeks of asynchronous feedback were collected via posters in high-traffic student areas.

In total, the planning process engaged 130+ unique participants and generated 115+ individual comments. By offering in-person, virtual, and asynchronous options, we prioritized broad, inclusive input across the campus community. These sessions were designed to surface root causes of equity gaps, question assumptions, and co-create strategies to improve student outcomes.

Following the Spring engagement, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to assess progress under the 2022–2025 Student Equity Plan and inform future priorities. Over Summer 2025, a core team from the EPI Working Group drafted the new plan, integrating community feedback and key insights. Additionally, the summer feedback loops included multiple campus consultations with leads who provided programmatic and divisional input. The full EPI Working Group were provided with the opportunity to review and revise

the various drafts that led us to this version. With affirmation from the EPI Working Group in August, this plan will move through campus approvals in Fall 2025.

**Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion (EPI) Working Group (2024-2025)**

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Thomas	Bui	Associate Dean, Student Life
Hannah	Lawler	Dean, Institutional Research
Jamar	London	Academic Senate President (Past)
Vicenta	Arrizon	Academic Senate President
Sara	Nieves-Lucas	Counseling Department Chair
Guido	Davis Del Piccolo	GP Redesign Lead, Instructional (Past)
Daniella	Washington	GP Redesign Lead, Counseling (Past)
Tyffany	Dowd	Dean (Interim), Counseling
Debra	Joseph-Locke	Dean (Interim), Special Programs
Deyadra	Blye	Project Manager
Esau	Tovar	Dean, Enrollment Services
Jose	Hernandez	Associate Dean, Onboarding & Student Engagement
Elisa	Meyer	English Department Chair
Colleen	McGraw	Math Department Chair
Janet	Robinson	Transfer Center Lead
Abigail	Orosz	Professional Development Coordinator
Hugo	Yepez	Guided Pathways Regional Coordinator
<b>Vice Presidents</b>		
Sherri	Lee-Lewis	VP, Human Resources (Retired)
Jason	Beardsley	VP, Academic Affairs
Mike	Tuitasi	VP, Student Affairs

Teresita	Rodriguez	VP, Enrollment Development
<b>EPI Team</b>		
Llanet	Martín	Dean, Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion
Silvana	Carrion-Palomares	Project Manager
Paige	Glaves	Administrative Professional

Given various leadership transitions over the summer, additional review was facilitated with the new Vice President of Human Resources, and the new Redesign Leads.

<b>New Leadership</b>		
Tre'Shawn	Hall-Baker	VP, Human Resources
Kristin	Lui-Martinez	GP Co-Redesign Lead
Jessie	Garcia	GP Co-Redesign Lead

**RACE-CONSCIOUSNESS**

The EPI Working Group discussed each equity metric with a critical focus on race, data and the current state of our institution. We continued the theme from the SEP Institute, “Roots of Renewal: The Power of Planting Seeds” and the core writing group used data-informed identification of our disproportionately impacted equity groups addressing each metric.

The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to assess progress made in the 2022-2025 Student Equity Plan, while remaining open to the feedback that stakeholders shared to move equity efforts forward in the next planning cycle. Race-conscious conversations took place around the need to improve our college infrastructure, policies, and practices to ensure we can fully implement this plan.

Race-conscious policies and actions are designed with an explicit awareness of race, often to address historical inequities and promote racial equity or diversity by recognizing race as a factor that shapes outcomes. In contrast, race-neutral policies treat everyone equally under the law without regard to race, aiming to provide fair opportunities for all, but often overlooking structural barriers that disproportionately affect certain groups.

With our shared understanding of the systemic inequities that have historically—and continue to—create disproportionate impacts for our identified student populations, we drafted this plan through a race-conscious frame and approach.

In the Imagining Sessions, we heard a resounding need for SMC to design more intentional institutional practices, focusing on systemic barriers within the institution that perpetuate racism and maintain the status quo. We need to establish actionable, measurable changes that support how we measure race consciousness, progress, amplification of student voices and lived experiences, and leverage resources offered by the EPI Division to increase student success. Implementing these practices will support a reimagining of, and rebuilding, inequities across the college to be more race conscious, culturally responsive, and student-centered, committed to racial equity, transformational change, and lead to institutional progress.

### **LOCAL REVIEW PROCESS & SCHEDULE**

To ensure ongoing local review and evaluation of how our Student Equity Plan advances institutional equity goals and supports continuous improvement, Santa Monica College established a structured, participatory process led by the Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion (EPI) Working Group. Formed in Fall 2024 under the leadership of the Dean of Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion, the group includes cross-functional representatives and plays a central role in equity planning, implementation, and evaluation of our student equity efforts.

**To support ongoing evaluation**, the college will continue to engage the EPI Working Group and engage in:

- **Annual review of progress** by the EPI Division each **Spring**, using both quantitative and qualitative data to assess outcomes and equity gaps.
- **Annual reporting** in **Fall** through the annual California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) reporting requirement.
- **Integration of SEA Annual Report data** in Program Review and NOVA, to ensure alignment with statewide metrics and accountability.
- **Establish clear alignment** with the EpiCenter and Student Equity Center's, as well as all SEAP funded initiatives to ensure efforts being carried out in those areas are aligned with stated Student Equity Plan metrics and strategies.

This approach ensures that equity work is not only evaluated on a regular basis, but that findings actively inform institutional decisions and resource allocation. The plan will be reviewed and refined annually, with full progress reports made available to the campus community through annual reports submitted to the California Community College Chancellors Office (CCCCO).

## Section 2: Student Equity Plan Reflection

**3. Reflecting on the efforts implemented to support your college's pursuit in achieving the target outcomes developed for the 2022-25 Student Equity Plan cycle, please answer the following questions:**

*a. What has your college learned in terms of the root causes of the equity gaps experienced by the student populations identified for each of the five metrics within the 2022-25 Student Equity Plan? What institutional approaches or processes have helped your college foster and further a culture of equity? Please share 2-3 institutional actions, cultural changes and/or processes that are having the most impact in helping your college reduce equity gaps and meet target outcome(s) developed in the 2022-25 Student Equity Plan. (2500 characters max)*

Over the last three years, SMC has prioritized foundational efforts to create the conditions, structures, and culture necessary to enact race-conscious, equity-minded practices across the institution. Rather than rushing to implement isolated interventions, we focused on cultivating a shared understanding of equity and building the tools, leadership, and systems needed for sustained impact.

One major step was conducting a comprehensive assessment of existing equity policies, practices, and culture. This included an external equity audit, an employee satisfaction survey, and an assessment of campus racial climate. These efforts provided actionable insights into institutional barriers, highlighted the need for greater alignment, and underscored the importance of shared leadership with equity. As an existing step toward creating a shared leadership model, the Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) funding is distributed across the campus divisions including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Development, and Human Resources.

Through this shared funding model, the campus deepened our investment in professional learning. We launched the *Equity-Minded Professional Innovation EpiCenter*, a professional development hub serving all employee groups. We expanded two important initiatives: *Equitizing Gateway Courses (EGC)*, a faculty learning community that supports course redesign to close equity gaps; and *Data Coaching*, where cross-functional teams engage in race-conscious inquiry to investigate root causes of equity gaps.

Through data coaching, we uncovered critical root causes. One inquiry project on enrollment among Black/African American students found that while SMC has strong academic offerings, many students and families experience a deep mistrust of higher education, shaped by historical harm, structural exclusion, and a perceived lack of culturally affirming support. Another project exploring equity gaps in transfer-level math

found that Black and Latine students often enter college with internalized belief that they don't belong or aren't "good at math", shaped past exclusionary experiences. These narratives persisted, even when they were academically successful, often undermining their confidence when facing challenges in math classes.

Perhaps the most significant acknowledgment is that, through these efforts, SMC has cultivated equity-minded practitioners who naturally integrate equity into institutional planning and priorities. Together, these insights have shaped our new Educational Master Plan and will inform the development of our upcoming Strategic Plan. Notably, the most recent equity planning cycle coincided with the college's overhaul of its program review process, an intentional opportunity to align planning efforts. The redesigned program review process now embeds equity at its core, prompting departments and programs to examine disaggregated data, investigate root causes of equity gaps, and develop strategies to address them. These efforts have clarified institutional priorities, strengthened cross-campus alignment, and laid a strong foundation for collective action. As a result, we are now better positioned to reduce equity gaps with greater intention and coherence.

*b. Based on your response above, what is working well that your college plans to continue into this upcoming 2025-28 Student Equity Plan? Please share 2-3 discoveries that will offer continuity between plans and guide your development and implementation of the 2025-28 Student Equity Plan. (2500 characters max)*

Building Infrastructure (Student Equity Center, EpiCenter, and EPI Division, Data Coaching, and EGC)

SMC has made significant strides in establishing a commitment to supporting our disproportionately impacted student groups. Notable achievements in the right direction that took place during the last Student Equity Plan 2022-2025, include the opening of a Student Equity Center which aims to create a sense of belonging for students, the opening of a reimagined professional development hub, the EpiCenter offers equity-focused professional development for all stakeholders, and lastly establishing a permanent Division of Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion.

Equity-minded leaders across campus continue to build capacity within their areas to better understand the root causes of equity gaps. Guided by our Institutional Research Office and the Data Coaching model, root cause analysis has informed us of how disproportionately impacted students experience our Outreach and Recruitment and experience courses in Mathematics. Further, the Equitizing Gateway Courses (EGC) Initiative, a college-wide, multi-semester professional development initiative equips faculty with equity-centered and anti-racist pedagogical tools to better serve today's students, especially African American

and Latine students. With nearly 350 faculty completing, we aim to launch the fifth cohort in Spring 2026.

Given the foundational efforts that have been built to date, and the momentum and energy being spread across campus to support our disproportionately impacted students, we will continue to invest in the Student Equity Center, The EpiCenter, Data Coaching, and EGC.

# Section 3: Student Populations Experiencing Disproportionate Impact

The Student Equity Plan (SEP) is organized around five metrics that serve as indicators of student progress and success. These metrics help the college identify and address equity gaps for disproportionately impacted student groups. Each metric reflects a critical stage in the student group, from access to transfer, and collectively, they support a comprehensive approach to advancing educational equity.

The five SEP metrics are:



### Successful Enrollment

The percentage of first-time applicants who enroll at SMC within one year of applying



### Term to Term Persistence

The percentage of first-time college students at SMC who enrolled in the next primary term at any college



### Completion of Transfer-Level Math & English

The percentage of first-time college students who completed transfer-level math and English within their first year of enrollment



### Vision Goal Completion

The percentage of first-time college students who completed a credit certificate, associate degree, and/or CCC bachelor's degree within three years, and were enrolled at SMC in the year they completed



### Transfer to a Four-Year Institution

Percentage of first-time college students who earned at least 12 units, exited the system, and transferred to a four-year institution within four years of enrolling at SMC

To identify and address equity gaps in student outcomes, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office uses a [methodology known as Percentage Point Gap minus 1 \(PPG-1\)](#). This approach compares the success rate of a specific student group (e.g., Black, Latine/x or Hispanic, Veteran, or first-generation college students) to the success of all other students combined, excluding the reference group from the comparison.

This method answers the question: *“It this group performing at a lower rate than their peers, and by how much?”*

A group is experiencing disproportionate impact if the gap between their outcome rate and that of all other students is **a negative value, and the absolute value of the gap is larger than the margin of error threshold**. In the example below, if Latine/x students have a Vision Goal completion rate of 12.7% and, and all other students combined have a rate of 24.2%, the PPG-1 value is -11.5%, indicating that Latine/x students are experiencing an equity gap for the metric and are disproportionately impacted in terms of vision goal completion.



PPG-1 is used across all five SEP metrics to identify where equity gaps exist for the following groups:

- Ethnicity/Race
- Gender
- Disability status
- Foster youth status
- Homelessness status
- LGBTQ status
- First-generation college status
- Economically disadvantaged status (Perkins definition)
- Veteran status

In the Student Equity Plan, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) provides colleges the baseline data for each of the five metrics, each with its own baseline year. The CCCCCO identifies and pre-populates the student groups that are

disproportionately impacted (experiencing equity gaps) into the plan template. Colleges are then expected to analyze this data and develop targeted strategies to eliminate disproportionate impact and fully close equity gaps for each affected group and metric.

**EQUITY GOALS**

For each of the five metrics in the Student Equity Plan, colleges are asked to respond to one or both of two related goals:

- **Goal 1:** eliminate *disproportionate impact* which means that the subgroup’s outcome rate is improved enough to bring the PPG-1 value within the margin of error (refer to the reference guide [CCCCO Percentage Point Gap Minus One](#) for more information)
- **Goal 2:** *fully close the equity gap* which means the subgroup’s rate is improved to match the success rate of all other groups combined (i.e., where the PPG-1 value equals 0%).

Guided by the College’s goal-setting framework recommended by the Academic Senate [Institutional Effectiveness Committee](#) (2019-2020), the strategies outlined in the 2025-2028 Student Equity Plan will focus on Goal 2: setting aspirational targets that envision racial parity and reflect the College’s long-term commitment to educational justice for our most persistently and marginalized student groups.

**STUDENT POPULATIONS EXPERIENCING DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT**

The table below describes the student subgroups who are both from a minoritized or marginalized group<sup>2</sup> and are experiencing disproportionate impact in a metric. The table includes the baseline success rates for each DI student populations as well as the percentage increase and the number of additional students needed to fully close the equity gap for that group.

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<sup>2</sup> Refers to student groups who have been systematically excluded, underrepresented, or underserved in higher education due to longstanding structural inequalities rooted in racism, colonization, or other forms of oppression, that have led to barriers to access and success in higher education.

DI Student Population	# Cohort	# Successful	% Success Rate	% Increase to Fully Close Equity Gap	# Additional Successful Students to Fully Close Gap
<b>Metric 1 – Successful Enrollment (2022-2023)</b>					
Asian	1,785	336	18.8%	+3.1%	+57
Black	1,924	350	18.2%	+3.9%	+75
<b>Metric 2 – Completed Both Transfer-Level Math &amp; English (2022-2023)</b>					
Black	465	32	6.9%	+9.5%	+45
Latine	2,500	323	12.9%	+4.6%	+115
Econ Disadvantaged	3,882	515	13.3%	+6.1%	+236
First Generation	2,168	251	11.6%	+6.2%	+135
LGBT	619	71	11.5%	+4.7%	+30
<b>Metric 3 – Persistence First to Second Primary Term (2021-2022)</b>					
Black	400	249	62.3%	+9.0%	+36
Latine	2,311	1,594	69.0%	+2.7%	+62
First Generation	1,917	1,287	67.1%	+5.1%	+99
LGBT	544	338	62.1%	+9.3%	+51
Foster Youth	95	53	55.8%	+15.1%	+15
Veteran	63	36	57.1%	+13.6%	+9
<b>Metric 4 – Vision Goal Completion (2019-2020)</b>					
Black	515	49	9.5%	+11.0%	+57
Latine	2,888	368	12.7%	+11.4%	+331
Two or More Races	315	43	13.7%	+6.4%	+21
Econ Disadvantaged	4,573	741	16.2%	+9.1%	+418
First Generation	2,567	348	13.6%	+9.5%	+243
LGBT	620	79	12.7%	+7.7%	+48
Foster Youth	117	12	10.3%	+9.7%	+12
Male	3,439	561	16.3%	+6.4%	+221
<b>Metric 5 – Transferred to a Four-Year Institution (2018-2019)</b>					
Male	1,632	331	20.3%	+3.4%	+56

Many of SMC’s disproportionately impacted students hold multiple, intersecting identities that compound the barriers they face in higher education. For example, 57–59% of Black students and 73–78% of Latine students report being first-generation college students, navigating college without the benefit of inherited knowledge about academic systems. Additionally, 70–74% of Black students and 68–69% of Latine students at SMC are classified as economically disadvantaged, highlighting the financial challenges that

intersect with race and first-generation status. These overlapping identities underscore the need for strategies that are not only race-conscious but also responsive to the broader structural and socioeconomic conditions shaping students' experiences.

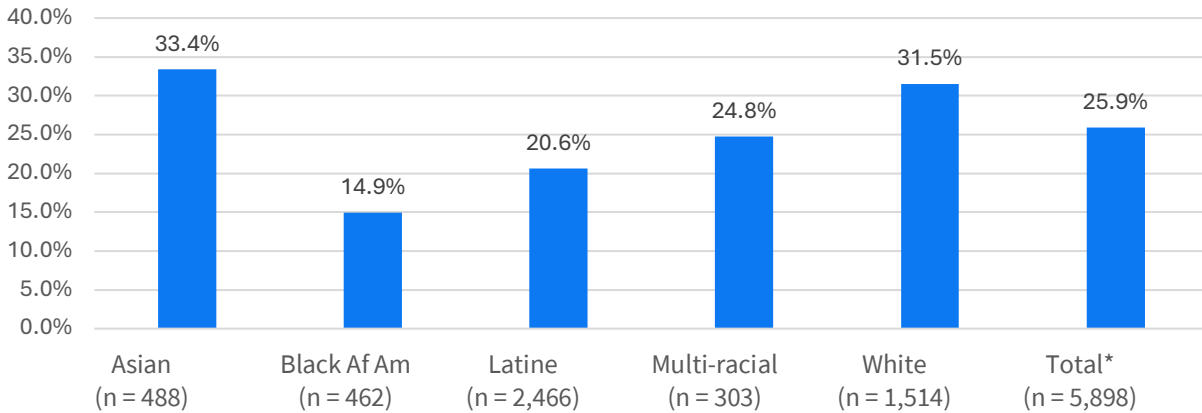
### **ALTERNATE METRIC FOR TRANSFER**

While the transfer metric did not identify any race-specific DI groups, male students were identified as an overall intersectional DI group. This result conflicts with what we know from experience working directly with students and transfer leads. Anecdotally, we believe the current methodology may mask equity gaps. For example, the metric only includes students who have completed at least 12 units, which excludes many of the most vulnerable students who face significant structural barriers. In addition, the methodology excludes students who are concurrently enrolled at SMC once they transfer to a four-year college or university, a common practice among our students who may return to complete GE or lower-division courses due to cost or course availability. As a result, students who have successfully transferred may not be captured in the data, limiting the accuracy of equity analyses for this metric.

The state transfer metric is also limited by its strict three-year timeline. A large proportion of our students attend part-time (60% of credit-enrolled students), which means many may not be able to transfer within the three-year window, even if they are making steady progress towards their goal.

To address the limitations of the state metric, we are using an alternate metric to assess momentum toward transfer: the percentage of first-time in college students in a baseline year (2021-2022) who, within three years of entry, complete 30 or more UC or CSU-transferable units with a grade of C, P, or better. While not a direct measure of transfer, this proxy provides a more inclusive and realistic indicator of students' progress toward transfer among students who may be on longer trajectories due to part-time enrollment or systemic barriers.

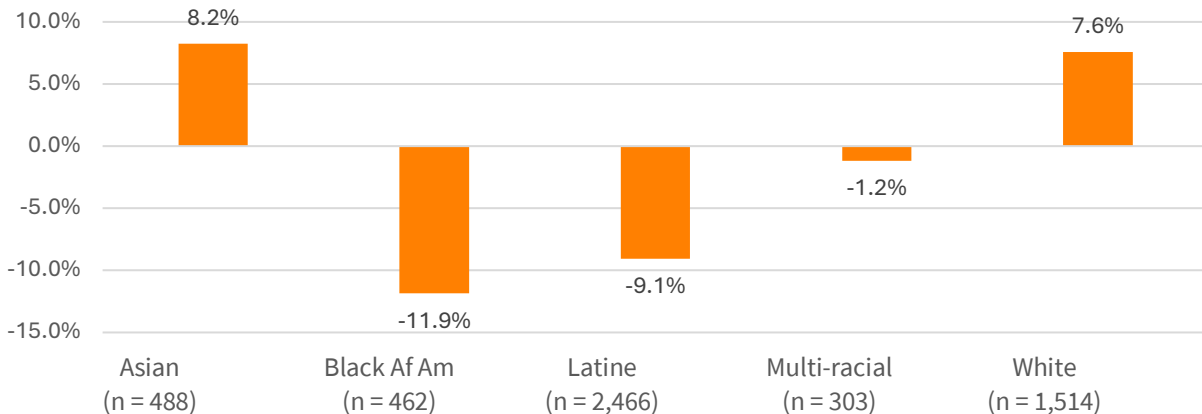
## Completed 30+ UC/CSU Transferable Units in Three Years by Race/Ethnicity 2021-2022



\*Total includes racial/ethnic groups with fewer than 10 students, which were suppressed in the disaggregated data, as well as the “unknown/unreported” category

The alternative data metric shows that among first-time in college students who enrolled in 2021-2022, Black students had the lowest rate of successfully completing 30 or more UC/CSU transferable units within three years (14.9%), followed by Latine students at 20.6%. This suggests early momentum toward transfer is disproportionately lower for these two racial/ethnic groups.

## Completed 30+ UC/CSU Transferable Units in Three Years PPG-1 Values



These two groups also show significant equity gaps based on PPG-1 calculations. To fully close the gap, Black students would need to improve by 11.9%, which equates to 55 additional students, and Latine students by 9.1%, or 224 additional students successfully completing 30 or more UC/CSU-transferable units within three years.

DI Student Population	# Cohort	# Successful	% Success Rate	% Increase to Fully Close Equity Gap	# Additional Successful Students to Fully Close Gap
<b>Alternate Metric 5 – 30+ Transfer Units (2021-2022)</b>					
Black	462	69	14.9%	+11.9%	+55
Latine	2,466	508	20.6%	+9.1%	+224

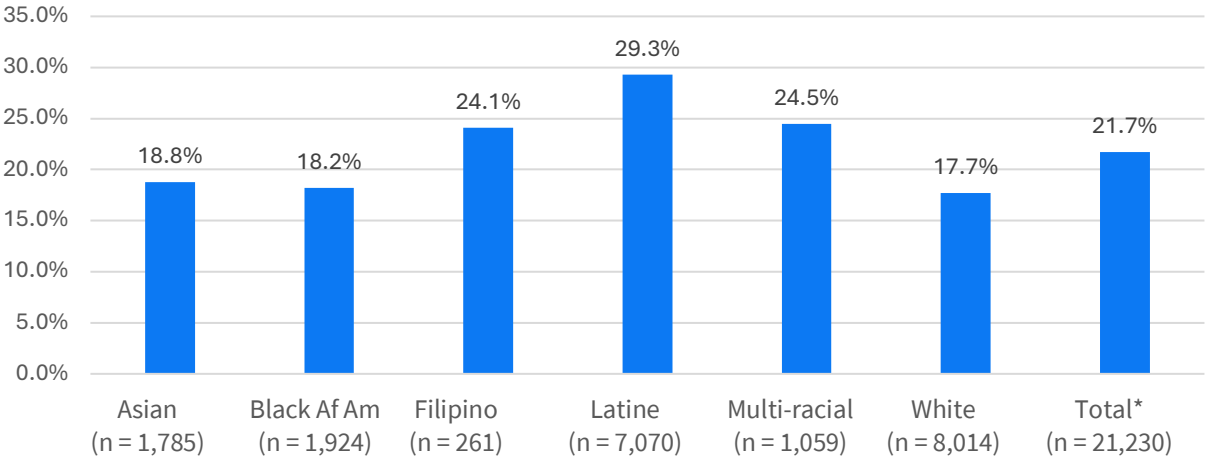
The Student Equity Plan outlines targeted strategies to close equity gaps for all disproportionately impacted (DI) groups identified across the five metrics. While all DI groups are addressed, the plan places particular emphasis on the “intensive focus” groups (Section 9), the racial/ethnic populations experiencing the most significant and persistent gaps.

# Section 4: Metric – Successful Enrollment

## DATA REVIEW

The graph below illustrates the percentage of first-time applicants who applied to and enrolled at SMC in 2022-2023. Overall, 21.7% of applicants enrolled. Among racially minoritized groups (non-white), Asian and Black/African American applicants had the lowest successful enrollment rates enroll at 18.8% and 18.2%, respectively, resulting in equity gaps of -3.1% (Asian) and -3.9% (Black) based on PPG-1 calculations.

**Successful Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity 2022-2023**



\*Total includes racial/ethnic groups with fewer than 10 students, which were suppressed in the disaggregated data, as well as the “unknown/unreported” category

## GOALS

The table below describes the goals for Successful Enrollment of fully closing equity gaps for the two racially minoritized populations.

DI Stu Pop	# Applicants	# Enrolled (2022-2023)	% Successful Enrollment (2022-2023)	% Increase to Fully Close Gap	# Additional Students to Enroll to Fully Close Gap
Asian	1,785	336	18.8%	+3.1%	+57
Black	1,924	350	18.2%	+3.9%	+75

## KEY STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE SUCCESSFUL ENROLLMENT GOALS

One of the core action strategies in SMC’s 2022-2025 Student Equity Plan was to investigate the root causes of the disproportionately low successful enrollment rates among Black/African American students. As a first step, the College administered a survey to prospective Black high school students<sup>3</sup> to better understand their perception of college broadly, and of SMC specifically. While most students expressed intent to pursue college, only 17% strongly agreed that college was worth the cost, and only 9% strongly agreed and 24% agreed that SMC was a “good place for a person like me”. Awareness of SMC was uneven, and most opinions were neutral, suggesting limited connection to and identification with the college. These findings highlighted early concerns about belonging, return on investment, and institutional visibility.

To deepen this inquiry, the 2024-2025 Data Coaching Program cohort focused on engaging practitioners from the Outreach and Marketing departments to disaggregate enrollment data and examine the factors contributing to equity gaps for Black students. As the team reviewed the data and reflected on existing practices, their inquiry led to a qualitative study of high school counselors, whose insights affirmed the critical importance of trust, representations, and culturally affirming outreach in how Black students evaluate whether a college is right for them. The sensemaking process made clear that outreach and marketing strategies must not only convey information, but reflect care, community, representation, and that Black students belong at SMC.

The figure below illustrates the nine themes that emerged from the interview study with high school counselors. These insights directly informed the development of the three strategies aimed at closing equity gaps in successful enrollment for one of SMC’s disproportionately impacted groups: Black/African American students.

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<sup>3</sup> To access the full results of the 2023 Black Students High School Students Perceptions of College Survey Findings, visit the SMC Institutional Research website: <https://admin.smc.edu/administration/institutional-research/documents/2023-high-school-black-afr-am-student-survey.pdf>

# Interview Themes: Insights to Strengthen SMC's Support for Prospective Black/African American Students

1



While Black/African American students explore post-secondary options similarly, they face unequal access to supports and resources

2



A sense of belonging and community is central to Black/African American students' college decision-making

3



Black/African American students need to know what resources exist tailored for them

4



Proximity and transportation significantly impact Black/African American students' college decisions

5



Black/African American students face systemic, personal, and psychological barriers when pursuing college

6



Families act as both supporters and gatekeepers in the college decision-making process for Black/African American students

7



Outreach/engagement strategies should center relationships, visibility, and cultural relevance

8



High school counselors need targeted information, training, and resources to better support Black/African students considering community college

9



Outreach and marketing should be centered on trust, representation, and cultural relevance

**STRATEGY 1: DEVELOP MARKETING CENTERED ON BLACK STUDENT SUCCESS**

High school counselors consistently emphasized that for Black students, choosing a college is not just about academics, it’s about whether they will feel seen, safe, and supported (Theme #2). Students frequently ask, **“Do I see myself there? Am I going to be safe? Do I have community at that school?”** These questions stem from lived experiences in educational settings where they have felt isolated or marginalized. For many, finding community is what makes colleges feel like a real and viable option

This sense of belonging must be visible and authentic in how the college presents itself to prospective students. As one educator noted, **“My students often vocalize that they don’t see students who look like them.”** Another shared that students assess a college’s climate by asking who will be there to support them, not just what services exist, but what it actually *feels* like to be a Black student on campus (Theme #2).

However, current outreach and marketing materials fall short in communicating this. While programs like Black Collegians Umoja Community are mentioned, they are often buried within general DEI messaging that lacks the specificity needed to resonate with Black students and their families (Theme #8). As one counselor explained, **“Most of what we receive is general DEI stuff. It’s not specific enough to really help us guide our Black students.”**

Moreover, trust-building is critical. Black/African American students and families often approach higher education with hesitation and skepticism, shaped by generations of systemic exclusion and unmet promises. Authentic representation, both in visuals and narratives, is essential in signaling that SMC is a place where Black students belong and are expected to thrive. High school counselors advised that sharing real stories and successes of current Black students and alumni is far more powerful than a list of resources and services.

Finally, students want to know not just *what* support exists, but *how* those supports will affect them in practice. They want to know, **“Will they support me as a whole person – culturally, emotionally, academically?”** (Theme 3).

**Strategy 1: Develop marketing centered on Black student success at SMC.** In partnership with Marketing, Outreach and Recruitment, feature testimonials, academic support, and identity-affirming programs like Black Collegians and HBCU tours. Collaborate with students and staff to highlight the community and belonging fostered by these programs, helping prospective students see themselves reflected and supported at SMC.

**STRATEGY 2: ENGAGE BLACK STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY AS CULTURAL AMBASSADORS**

High school counselors emphasized that Black students often seek signals of cultural belonging and representation when exploring college options (Theme #2). Yet, many noted that colleges can often feel unwelcoming or difficult to navigate, especially when they don't see others who share their cultural backgrounds (Theme #5). Establishing early, affirming relationships through peer and faculty connections can help students feel more confident and supported in their transition to college (Themes #7 and 9). One educator shared, **“Outreach shouldn't just be about enrollment. Students need to know that there are people who look like them, who care about them, and who will help them thrive once they're on campus.”**

High school counselors in the study stressed that there is a sense of mistrust in higher education for many Black/African American students and their families, and this mistrust is rooted in generations of structural exclusion and systemic marginalization (Overarching Theme #1). They also emphasized the importance of proximity and familiarity in enrollment decisions as students often choose colleges that feel accessible, both physically and relationally (Theme #4).

Additionally, Black students frequently feel alienated by institutional environments not designed with them in mind (Theme #5). Counselors shared that students and families want to know: **“What do they have for us? Who's there for us?”** To meaningfully address these concerns, SMC must go beyond transactional outreach and engage in authentic, sustained community-building.

Families, too, are essential partners in the college-going process. Rather than being a barrier, they are thoughtful decision-makers who often prioritize safety, belonging and return on investment (Theme #6). As one educator shared, **“It's not they don't care. It's that they're afraid. The system has failed them before”**. To build trust and confidence, outreach must include families and community organizations that create space for them to experience the SMC community firsthand.

**Strategy 2: Develop strategic partnership with Black Collegians and identity affirming programs to position them as cultural ambassadors in the college's outreach and onboarding pipeline.** This partnership will intentionally center representation by leveraging Black staff, faculty, and students to affirm Black excellence, foster trust with prospective students and their families, and create a sense of belonging before enrollment. This strategy will strengthen connections between prospective students and the holistic Santa Monica College community, ensuring a seamless transition from interest to enrollment.

**STRATEGY 3: COLLABORATE WITH INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOWER ENROLLMENT RATES AMONG ASIAN STUDENTS.**

One of the core action strategies in SMC’s 2022–2025 Student Equity Plan was to investigate the root causes of disproportionately low successful enrollment rates among Black/African American students. Using a Data Coaching Program (2024-2025), the college began by administering a survey to prospective Black high school students to better understand their perceptions of college broadly and of SMC specifically. The findings revealed that outreach and marketing must go beyond simply conveying information—they must communicate care, reflect community values, ensure representation, and affirm that students belong at SMC.

These findings and processes offer a tested framework that can be adapted to investigate the root causes of disproportionately low successful enrollment rates for Asian students, a new DI population that surfaced in this planning cycle.

This new strategy, to address disproportionately low successful enrollment rates for Asian students, will begin with a partnership with Institutional Research to collect and analyze enrollment data. This will include identifying schools with low yield rates and surfacing disparities within Asian subgroups. Building on these findings, the college will determine further action to address the unique needs of Asian students, families, and high school counselors to better understand perceptions of college, SMC, and the enrollment process.

By leveraging the approach and lessons learned for Black/African Americans, and applying this inquiry model to Asian student populations, SMC will be able to design intentional, equity-focused strategies that address the unique needs of each group while advancing the College’s broader goal of closing equity gaps in successful enrollment. Insights from this inquiry will help identify cultural and structural barriers—such as language access, family engagement, representation, and communication styles—that may influence students’ decision-making.

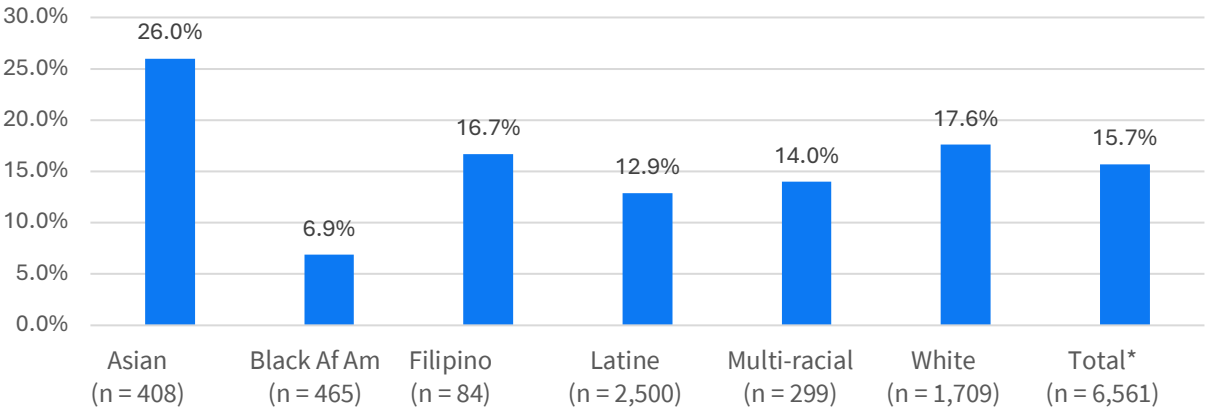
**Strategy 3: Collaborate with institutional stakeholders to examine and address the root causes of low enrollment rates among Asian students.** Building on the proven inquiry model used to investigate enrollment disparities for Black/African American students, apply a similar evidence-based approach to identify systemic barriers and equity gaps for enrolling Asian students. Insights gained will inform the design of targeted, culturally responsive strategies that strengthen outreach, reduce barriers to access, and improve enrollment outcomes for this student population.

# Section 5: Metric – Completed both Transfer Level Math and English

## DATA REVIEW

Among 2022-2023 first-time in college students, 15.7% completed both transfer-level math and English courses within the first year. Black/African American students had the lowest math/English completion rate (6.9%), followed by Latine (12.9%) students, resulting in equity gaps or PPG-1 values of -9.5% and -4.6%, respectively.

**Completed Transfer-Level Math and English by Race/Ethnicity 2022-2023**



\*Total includes racial/ethnic groups with fewer than 10 students, which were suppressed in the disaggregated data, as well as the “unknown/unreported” category

## GOALS

The table below describes the goals for Completed Transfer Level Math and English of fully closing equity gaps for all DI groups.

DI Stu Pop	# Cohort	# Completed (2022-2023)	% Completed (2022-2023)	% Increase to Fully Close Gap	# Additional Successfully to Fully Close Gap
Black	465	32	6.9%	+9.5%	+45
Latine	2,500	323	12.9%	+4.6%	+115
Econ Disadvantaged	3,882	515	13.3%	+6.1%	+236
First Generation	2,168	251	11.6%	+6.2%	+135
LGBT	619	71	11.5%	+4.7%	+30

## KEY STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE TRANSFER-LEVEL MATH AND ENGLISH GOALS

### STRATEGY 1: REVAMP THE ECI PROGRAM IN ENGLISH AND MATH COURSES

The Embedded Counseling Initiative (ECI) program at SMC embeds counselors directly into English and math classrooms to provide proactive, personalized support. It includes a minimum of three classroom visits, a student needs assessment, and priority access to counseling. Counselors collaborate closely with instructors, offer individualized follow-up for students, and connect students to key campus resources.

Student surveys show that the current ECI model is effective in increasing awareness of resources and academic confidence. For example, there was a 17 percentage-point increase in students who said they know where to go for support and a 30-point increase in awareness of SMC resources and services from pre- to post-survey. In addition, there was a 20-point increase in students who felt prepared to complete their educational goals.

However, the program has not demonstrated a measurable impact on course success or retention. One opportunity for growth is to make the ECI model more culturally responsive and meaningful for Black and Latine students. Currently, the focus is primarily on sharing resources, often through presentations. To increase impact, the program should shift toward building authentic relationships. Research shows that racially minoritized students benefit from meaningful relationships with faculty and staff who affirm their identities and acknowledge their lived experiences (Rendon, 1994<sup>4</sup>; Strayhorn, 2012<sup>5</sup>). As such, there is value in creating formal, campus-initiated spaces that foster community and connection. These spaces can strengthen students' sense of belonging and affirm their potential.

The ECI program, if revised with intentionality, can serve as a key strategy to address the equity gaps for Black and Latine students for transfer-level math and English course completion by fostering meaningful connections, community, and a strong sense of belonging in the classroom.

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<sup>4</sup> Rendon, L. I. (1994). Validating culturally diverse students: Toward a new model of learning and student development. *Innovative Higher Education*, 19(1), 33-51.

<sup>5</sup> Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. Routledge.

**Strategy 1: Revamp the Embedded Counseling Initiative (ECI) program in English and Math courses.** The goal is to transform ECI from a transactional support model into a relational, race-conscious framework that fosters belonging, identity affirmation, and academic resilience.

## **STRATEGY 2: DEVELOP FACULTY GUIDE FOR CULTURALLY AFFIRMING COMMUNICATION FOR MATH COURSES**

As part of the seventh cohort of Santa Monica College’s Data Coaching Program, twelve full-time math faculty participated in a yearlong inquiry (Spring–Fall 2024) focused on addressing racial equity gaps in transfer-level math. Grounded in race-conscious and equity-minded principles, the cohort engaged in data analysis, collaborative learning, and qualitative research. Faculty examined course outcome data disaggregated by race/ethnicity and conducted interviews with eleven students who identified as Black/African American and/or Latine. These interviews explored students’ perceptions of instructional practices, classroom conditions, and support structures that either supported or hindered their learning, persistence, and help-seeking in math.

The figure below illustrates the six key themes (five themes and one overarching theme) that emerged from the interview study with Black and Latine students. The first theme underscored the transformative impact of instructors who demonstrated care, responsiveness, and commitment to students’ growth beyond the classroom. This form of engagement, rooted in high expectations, meaningful relationships, and affirming feedback, was especially powerful for students who identified as Black and Latine, many of whom described years of complicated relationships with math and schooling in general. This insight directly informed the second key strategy related to the development of a math faculty guide designed to support culturally affirming communication. By equipping instructors with concrete tools to foster trust and connection through their feedback and interactions, the guide aims to create a more inclusive and motivation classroom environment where all students, especially Black and Latine students, can thrive.

# Interview Themes: A Critical Look at Math Instruction through the Experience of Racially Minoritized Students



**#1**  
Faculty Engagement and Culturally Responsive Relationships Matter



**#2**  
Peer Support and Community Play a Critical Role in Math Learning



**#3**  
Math Anxiety Shapes Performance - But It's Rooted in Preparation and Perceived Fairness



**#4**  
Instructor Feedback and Structure Improve Confidence and Learning



**#5**  
Studying and Help-Seeking Are Strategic, But Emotionally Complex



**Overarching**  
Belonging and Identity in Math Spaces Are Shaped by Past Experiences

**Strategy 2: Develop a faculty guide to support culturally affirming communication and high expectation messaging in math courses.** A faculty guide will support instructors in building meaningful relationships with Black and Latine students with a universal design for learning to accommodate diverse learners.

### **STRATEGY 3: REDESIGN ENGLISH 28 WITH A RACE-CONSCIOUS, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE FRAMEWORK**

In response to AB 705, Santa Monica College redesigned its transfer-level English 1 course (Reading and Composition 1) to increase direct access to college-level coursework and eliminate placement into stand-alone remediation. As part of this redesign, the English Department also developed English 28 (Intensive College Writing Skills), a corequisite support course for students who, based on multiple measures, may benefit from additional academic scaffolding. English 28 was launched in Fall 2018 and has remained largely unchanged since. In contrast, English 1 has since been revised again in response to AB 1111, the legislation requiring common course numbering across the California Community Colleges. The new course, now English C1000, was thoughtfully updated using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 3 framework to ensure greater flexibility and accessibility for a diverse student population. However, English 28 has not yet undergone a similar review, representing a critical opportunity for reexamination.

A redesign of English 28 is now urgently needed. With new Title 5 updates requiring Curriculum Committees to have documented procedures “for ensuring that course outlines of record [...] describe approaches that would accommodate and engage diverse student bodies, advance equitable student outcomes, and promote the inclusion of all students.” And “to guarantee accessibility for every student to ensure individuals with disabilities can equally participate in learning through course outlines of record that reflect Universal Design for Learning strategies, which include multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to support learner variability and diversity.”

Although the course was originally intended to support student success in English 1, current data (Fall terms 2018 to 2024) reveal that 76% of students enrolled in English 1 with the corequisite identify as Black or Latine, and these students complete the course at lower rates (45% and 46%, respectively) compared to white students (67%). This overrepresentation points not to student deficits, but to the inadequacy of current structures in meeting the needs of racially minoritized students. Like most courses at SMC and across higher education, English 28 was initially developed within a default course design framework shaped by dominant cultural norms and white-centered pedagogical assumptions. As a result, the course may unintentionally overlook the linguistic, cultural, and racialized experiences of the very students it aims to support.

The next phase presents a powerful opportunity to rethink English 28 through a race-conscious, culturally responsive lens, one that affirms students’ cultural wealth (Yosso,

2005)<sup>6</sup>, validates community literacies and linguistic diversity, and repositions students' lived experiences as assets, not barriers, to their learning in the course.

**Strategy 3: Redesign English 28 with a Race-Conscious, Culturally Responsive Framework.** The goal with this strategy is to reimagine English 28 to affirm students' identities, literacies, and lived experiences—closing racial equity gaps in transfer-level English completion for inclusive curriculum design.

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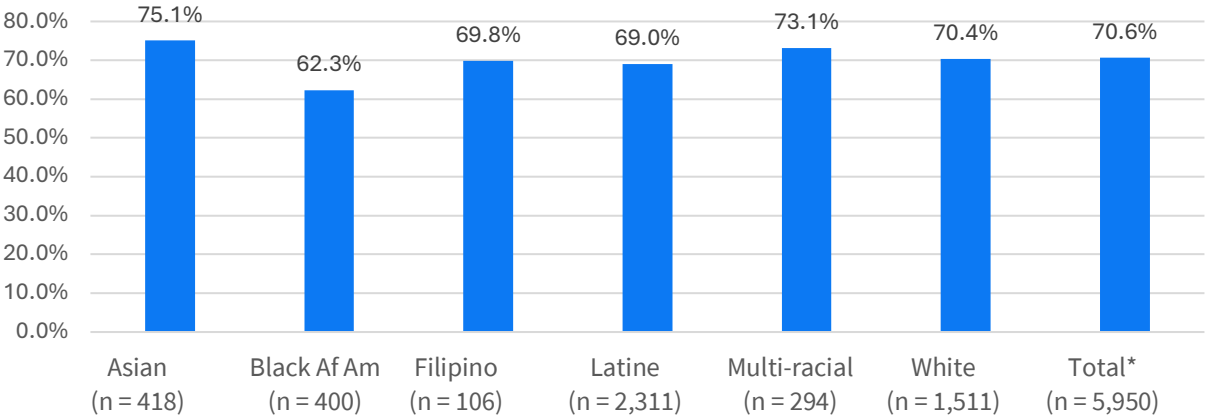
<sup>6</sup>Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

# Section 6: Metric – Persistence First Primary Term to Secondary Term

## DATA REVIEW

Among 2021-2022 first-time in college students, 70.6% returned and enrolled in the subsequent primary term. Black/African American students persisted at the lowest rate (62.3%), followed by Latine (69.0%) students, resulting in equity gaps or PPG-1 values of 9.0% and -2.7%, respectively.

**Persisted First Term to Second Term by Race/Ethnicity  
2021-2022**



\*Total includes racial/ethnic groups with fewer than 10 students, which were suppressed in the disaggregated data, as well as the “unknown/unreported” category

## GOALS

The table below describes the goals for Persisted First Primary Term to Second Primary Term of fully closing equity gaps for all DI groups.

DI Stu Pop	# Cohort	# Persisted (2021-2022)	% Persisted (2021-2022)	% Increase to Fully Close Gap	# Additional Successfully to Fully Close Gap
Black	400	249	62.3%	+9.0%	+36
Latine	2,311	1,594	69.0%	+2.7%	+62
First Generation	1,917	1,287	67.1%	+5.1%	+99
LGBT	544	338	62.1%	+9.3%	+51
Foster Youth	95	53	55.8%	+15.1%	+15

**KEY STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE STUDENT PERSISTENCE GOALS**

**STRATEGY 1A: CONDUCT GAP ANALYSIS TO INFORM EQUITY FOCUSED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Reflecting on the progress of the previous Student Equity Plan, the College has established an allocation for the EpiCenter—a new professional development hub that is uniquely collaborative, where faculty, classified professionals, and managers all take lead roles in facilitating learning opportunities. Focusing on equity-minded programming tailored to each constituency, the EpiCenter’s aim is to build community and capacity across all employee groups, making SMC a place where everyone belongs and can realize their full potential. Feedback from the community imagining sessions reaffirms the importance of this work as “central to advancing racial equity” and recognizes the progress achieved in these early years since the EpiCenter’s opening.

To sustain this momentum and ensure our efforts are targeted where they are most needed, the next phase of work will include a comprehensive gap analysis. This will allow us to assess where knowledge, skills, and practices still need strengthening—particularly as they relate to supporting disproportionately impacted (DI) student populations and meeting persistence goals. Understanding these gaps will provide the evidence base for developing professional development offerings and targeted supports that are strategic, equity-driven, and responsive to the evolving needs of our campus community.

**Strategy 1A: Conduct gap analysis to inform equity focused professional development.** Identify knowledge and practice gaps among faculty, staff, and managers related to achieving persistence goals for DI student groups. Utilize findings to inform strategic initiatives and targeted supports that advance equity and close persistence gaps.

**STRATEGY 1B: EXPAND REACH TO EQUITY-FOCUSED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Building on progress, the College will commit to expanding the reach of EpiCenter programming to ensure professional development is not only sustained but also deepened in scope and impact. Working closely with the EpiCenter Leads, the EPI Division are reimagining their approach to providing targeted professional development for key stakeholder groups. Initiatives will be designed to strengthen cultural humility, equity-minded teaching and service practices, and cross-constituency collaboration. By tailoring programming to the unique roles of faculty, classified professionals, and managers, the EpiCenter will continue fostering a culture where all employees feel both responsible for and supported in advancing equity. These offerings will serve as an anchor for professional

learning at SMC, reinforcing the institution’s commitment to creating an environment where every student can thrive.

At the same time, programming will evolve to address emerging challenges and priorities identified through the gap analysis and institutional funding challenges. This means the EpiCenter will not only partner with the EPI Division, but also with other campus partners to deliver workshops and training, facilitate sustained communities of practice, mentorship opportunities, and applied learning projects that directly connect professional growth to student success outcomes. With this next phase, the college is positioning the EpiCenter as a dynamic hub that both responds to and anticipates campus needs—ensuring professional development remains relevant, equity-centered, and impactful in closing achievement gaps.

**Strategy 1B: Expand Reach to Equity-Focused Professional Development.** Building on this momentum, the EPI Division and EpiCenter are reimagining their approach to provide targeted professional development for key stakeholder groups. Leverage best practices and lessons learned from Equity Communities of Practice, New Faculty Institute, Equitizing Gateway Courses, and Classified Professionals Equity Certificate—as ongoing best practices to support collective institutional learning and advance equity across the college.

## **STRATEGY 2: REIMAGINE COLLABORATION ACROSS SPECIAL PROGRAMS OFFERING COUNSELING AND THE STUDENT EQUITY CENTER.**

SMC’s previous Student Equity Plan—and the data gathered during the imagining sessions—highlighted a clear need to broaden institutional responsibility for supporting disproportionately impacted (DI) populations. Feedback from participants stressed that “Cross-departmental and institutional collaboration is critical for growth in equity work.” Rather than relying solely on special programs like Black Collegians and Adelante, the college must expand its reach through cross-collaboration with the Student Equity Center and the broader Student Affairs division.

Since opening its doors in 2022, the Student Equity Center (SEC) continues to establish a sustainable foundation and expand its role as an essential partner across campus. The SEC experienced remarkable growth, with student check-ins increasing by more than 100% over the past year—totaling 2,358 individual visits.

Guided by four faculty leads and a dedicated student leadership team, the SEC implemented more than 91 events in 2024–25 designed to strengthen student retention and persistence. With the active participation of faculty, staff, and partners across campus, the four focus areas—Racial Justice, Pride, Dream Resource, and Gender Equity—collectively sustained impactful programs and events throughout the year.

The SEC also hosted distinguished keynote speakers and workshop facilitators, receiving strong positive feedback from students, staff, and faculty. Both in-person and virtual offerings reached broad audiences, engaging more than 2,000 participants across the SMC community.

Highlights from the year included the *Student Equity Center Social*, UndocuAlly Training, and Affinity Graduating Student Celebrations, alongside a range of workshops and speaker series such as *Historical Trauma and Eating Disorders* with Gloria Luca and *Screen and Scenes: Inspiring Social Justice Through Media Engagement*. The centers also hosted programming for Affinity Heritage Months—Indigenous, Hispanic, Black, and API—as well as UndocuAction Week and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In addition, events such as *Know Your Rights & Immigration 101 Overview* and art therapy workshops provided critical resources while fostering a sense of belonging. Collectively, these offerings underscored the Center’s commitment to equity, education, and community engagement.

**Strategy 2: Reimagine Collaboration Across Special Programs Offering Counseling and The Student Equity Center.** Explore opportunities to expand existing initiatives through the Student Equity Center, Special Programs and include all programs that serve Black and Latine students. Collaborate with programs like Adelante, which centers a culturally affirmed approach to student and parental engagement within the Latine community.

**STRATEGY 3: PARTNER WITH HUMAN RESOURCES TO EQUITIZE HIRING AND ONBOARDING PRACTICES.**

We acknowledge that the concepts of diversity and inclusion are evolving, and that equity gaps persist despite the good work already underway. To remain responsive, we must intentionally create space for growth through the periodic review of our institutional plans, including the EEO Plan, the Diversity Report, and the Student Equity Plan. In alignment with these goals, Santa Monica College is committed to fostering an employment environment that ensures equal opportunity for all employees and an educational environment that offers equal opportunity for success for all students, especially our disproportionately impacted Black and Latine students.

As reported in the 2024 SMC Diversity Report, over the last decade, SMC has made measurable progress in diversifying its employee groups, though gaps remain when compared to the student population. Employees identifying as White continue to represent the largest racial/ethnic group across most categories; however, notable gains have been achieved among historically underrepresented groups. Among academic administrators, representation of those identifying as Black or African American increased by 8.9% (from

20.0% in Fall 2013 to 38.9% in Fall 2023), while Hispanic or Latino administrators increased by 6.7% to 20%. Classified managers and staff have also become more diverse, with increases among those identifying as Black or African American (+7.0%), Asian (+5.1%), and Hispanic or Latino (+1.1%). Among classified staff specifically, representation of Hispanic or Latino employees grew by 9.7% over the past decade, with women now comprising a slight majority at 52.2%.

Faculty demographics reflect both progress and continued challenges. Hispanic or Latino full-time faculty now represent approximately 20% of the group (+5% over the decade), with modest increases among Black or African American (+0.4%) and Asian (+1.6%) faculty. Yet full-time faculty remain the least racially/ethnically diverse employee group, with 50% identifying as White compared to 26% of students. Part-time faculty, while somewhat more diverse, also fall short of reflecting the student body; Hispanic or Latino part-time faculty increased by 7.5% over the last decade (to 17.5%), still significantly below the 41% of students who identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Overall, while the College has expanded diversity across leadership, staff, and faculty roles, additional effort is needed to bring employee representation into closer alignment with the student population, particularly among faculty. These findings underscore both the progress achieved and the importance of sustaining intentional efforts to close representation gaps in hiring and retention. To support this work, the EPI Division will collaborate with Human Resources to refine hiring and onboarding processes, with a focused consideration on candidates who demonstrate a record of success in serving BIPOC students, specifically Black and Latine students.

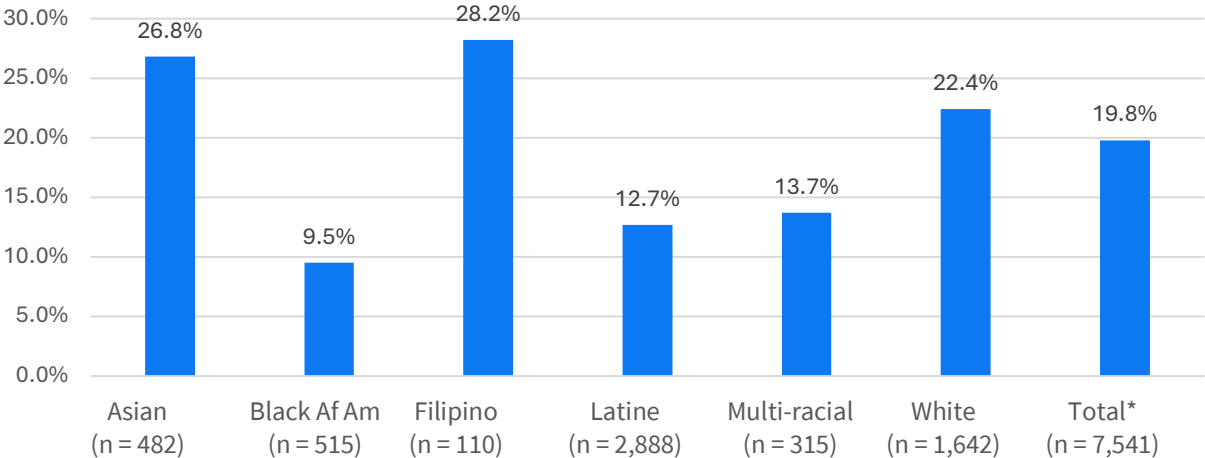
**Strategy 3: Partner with Human Resources to Equitize Hiring and Onboarding**  
**Practices.** This strategy centers on developing equity-minded screening practices, diversifying hiring, and strengthening the onboarding process to better prepare new faculty, staff, and managers to meet the needs of disproportionately impacted students. Equitizing these systems is essential to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment where employees are equipped to foster a sense of belonging, ensuring DI students feel seen, valued, and encouraged to persist.

# Section 7: Metric – Completion

## DATA REVIEW

Among 2019-2020 first-time in college students, 19.8% completed a Chancellor’s-approved certificate, associate’s degree, and/or CCC bachelor’s degree (Vision Goal) within three years of first enrolling. Black/African American students completed a vision goal at the lowest rates (9.5%), followed by Latine (12.7%), and multi-racial (13.7%) students. These racial equity groups experienced the largest equity gaps, with PPG-1 values of -11.0% (Black), -11.4% (Latine), and -6.4% (multi-racial).

**Vision Goal Completion by Race/Ethnicity 2019-2020**



\*Total includes racial/ethnic groups with fewer than 10 students, which were suppressed in the disaggregated data, as well as the “unknown/unreported” category

## GOALS

The table below describes the goals for Completion of fully closing equity gaps for all DI groups.

DI Stu Pop	# Cohort	# Completed (2019-2020)	% Completed (2019-2020)	% Increase to Fully Close Gap	# Additional Successfully to Fully Close Gap
Black	515	49	9.5%	+11.0%	+57
Latine	2,888	368	12.7%	+11.4%	+331
Two or More Races	315	43	13.7%	+6.4%	+21
Econ Disadvantaged	4,573	741	16.2%	+9.1%	+418

First Generation	2,567	348	13.6%	+9.5%	+243
LGBT	620	79	12.7%	+7.7%	+48
Foster Youth	117	12	10.3%	+9.7%	+12
Male	3,439	561	16.3%	+6.4%	+221

**KEY STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE COMPLETION GOALS**

**STRATEGY 1: LEVERAGE EXISTING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES THROUGH ESTABLISHED BEST PRACTICES**

A sense of belonging is critical to student success and completion, particularly for historically marginalized populations. Santa Monica College (SMC) has recognized belonging as a priority across Student Affairs, Marketing, and Enrollment Management and has embedded it within the [Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#). In response to recent federal actions that have created a chilling effect for some students, SMC established the Federal Action Impact Analysis Team (FAIAT) to assess and address the experiences of our most vulnerable community members.

Student feedback gathered through campus “Imagining Sessions” highlighted the importance of affinity-based programs, socioeconomic and experience-based supports, basic needs resources, academic supports, and peer connections in fostering a sense of care, connection, and engagement. Programs such as the Peer Navigator initiative—funded by a Title V grant—have demonstrated a great approach to serving hundreds of first-year Black and Latinx students with mentorship, guidance, and resource navigation. Similarly, the Student Equity Center (SEC), which houses the Racial Justice Center, Pride Center, Gender Equity Center, and Dream Resource Center, has become a central hub for equity-focused initiatives, hosting events, workshops, and cultural programming that promote retention, persistence, and advocacy.

Despite these successes, the college faces fiscal limitations that constrain expansion and sustainability of these programs in the current model. There is a clear need to strategically align existing resources, reimagine program structures, and integrate initiatives to maximize impact. By leveraging established best practices, fostering cross-campus collaboration, and prioritizing programs that directly support disproportionately impacted students, SMC aims to strengthen sense of belonging and equity-centered support across the student experience.

**Strategy 1: Leverage existing programs and initiatives through established best practices.** This strategy aims to reimagine Peer Navigators, Ambassadors, and Student Equity Center to provide peer-to-peer support to DI students within a First Year Experience Program Model. Collaborating with Student Affairs, the Student Equity Center, Marketing, Special Programs, Outreach/Welcome Center, and all student-facing programs, a robust and visible campaign and programming will enhance sense of belonging focused on DI populations.

## **STRATEGY 2: CONTINUE TO LEVERAGE STELLIC STUDENT SUCCESS SUITE**

Santa Monica College’s adoption of Stellic represents a transformative opportunity to address equity gaps by providing students with clearer, more accessible, and more culturally responsive educational planning tools. Since its launch in January 2025, over 5,000 students have already engaged with the platform, supported by comprehensive training of all counseling faculty to ensure smooth implementation. Stellic replaces MyEdPlan and outdated degree audit systems with a more robust, integrated experience, offering students—particularly those from historically marginalized communities—a transparent, user-friendly pathway to completion. The fact that 169 academic pathways have already been created and published demonstrates SMC’s commitment to ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has access to clear and equitable roadmaps for success.

A central equity benefit of Stellic lies in its ability to help students plan for multiple goals simultaneously. With 251 degree audits established across Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT), Certificates of Achievement, and noncredit Certificates of Completion and Competency, students can now explore and stack credentials with greater ease. For Black and Latinx/e students, who often balance school, work, and family obligations, this flexibility reduces barriers and provides clearer options for advancing both academic and career goals. Stellic’s integration with program maps and Cal-GETC requirements also prevents excess units—a major obstacle that disproportionately delays completion for first-generation students and students of color.

Equally important, Stellic strengthens equity-centered student services. Its real-time communication features and counselor review functions enable proactive interventions that go beyond transactional advising. For example, the Awards Without Petition Initiative, supported by Stellic’s advanced audit/reporting tools, resulted in a nearly **180 percent increase** in noncredit certificates of completion and achievement—from 392 in 2023–24 to 1,096 in 2024–25, of which 657 (60 percent) were awarded to students from equity populations such as Black and Latinx/e. By reducing bureaucratic barriers and automatically recognizing student accomplishments, Stellic helps ensure that

disproportionately impacted students are celebrated and supported along their educational journey.

Finally, Stellic’s data and analytics capabilities create opportunities for structural equity by informing institutional decision-making. Early pilots with MIS and Enrollment Services have shown that Stellic’s expanded parameters can identify additional students eligible for degrees and certificates, providing a powerful new tool to close opportunity gaps. As the college implements Stellic’s transfer module, early alert system, and course scheduling analytics in 2025, the institution will be better positioned to align academic offerings with actual student demand and availability. This alignment not only increases efficiency but also advances SMC’s commitment to equity by ensuring that course access, program completion, and transfer opportunities are equitably distributed across all student populations—in particular our DI students.

**Strategy 2: Continue to leverage Stellic Student Success Suite.** Leverage Stellic, our newly implemented educational planning tool, launched in January 2025 and yielded notable early successes. Working closely with the special programs, including Black Collegians, Adelante, the EOPS Suite, and general Counseling analyze completion milestones, increase comprehensive education plans, and actively support students with transfer or graduation petitions and class scheduling.

**STRATEGY 3: UPDATE INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES WITH EDUCATION CODE**

Over the past three years, several significant state and federal policy changes have been enacted. Vision 2030’s strategic directions continue to prioritize equity, with a focus on dismantling systemic prejudice and racism. Feedback from recent imagining sessions underscores the need for ongoing, collaborative efforts to regularly review and update policies and language to better reflect the needs of our disproportionately impacted student groups.

This strategy offers a framework for the campus community to evaluate and revise policies—such as employee evaluations, Course Outlines of Record (COR), and other key institutional practices—through an equity-focused lens. By embedding equity principles and compliance standards into both policy and curriculum, the district can strengthen its alignment with statewide regulations while fostering more inclusive, student-centered learning environments.

Notably, several policies have already taken effect and are currently being implemented. These include Section 53602 of Title 5, which mandates the incorporation of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) competencies into employee evaluations. At

SMC, revisions to these evaluations are well underway and have been actively implemented since the policy's adoption. Additional professional development opportunities will further support campus-wide understanding of implementation practices and enhance stakeholder competencies in alignment with institutional needs.

On the curriculum side, an adopted Title 5 regulation emphasizes the importance of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-racism, and Accessibility (IDEAA) in the revision of Course Outlines of Record. This policy highlights the necessity of ensuring that course content is culturally responsive and fosters appreciation, awareness, acceptance, and value for all cultures.

Specifically, [Title V updates](#) require Curriculum Committees to have a documented procedure “for ensuring that course outlines of record [...] describe approaches that would accommodate and engage diverse student bodies, advance equitable student outcomes, and promote the inclusion of all students” and “to guarantee accessibility for every student to ensure individual with disabilities can equally participate in learning through course outlined of record that reflect Universal Design for Learning strategies, which include multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to support learner variability and diversity.”

Moving forward, we are committed to collaborating with campus stakeholders to ensure the thoughtful implementation of these policy updates. Through ongoing dialogue, shared responsibility, and collective action, we will continue to refine our practices to meet the evolving needs of our campus community. Together, we will uphold our commitment to equity by embedding inclusive principles into every layer of policy, curriculum, and institutional practice.

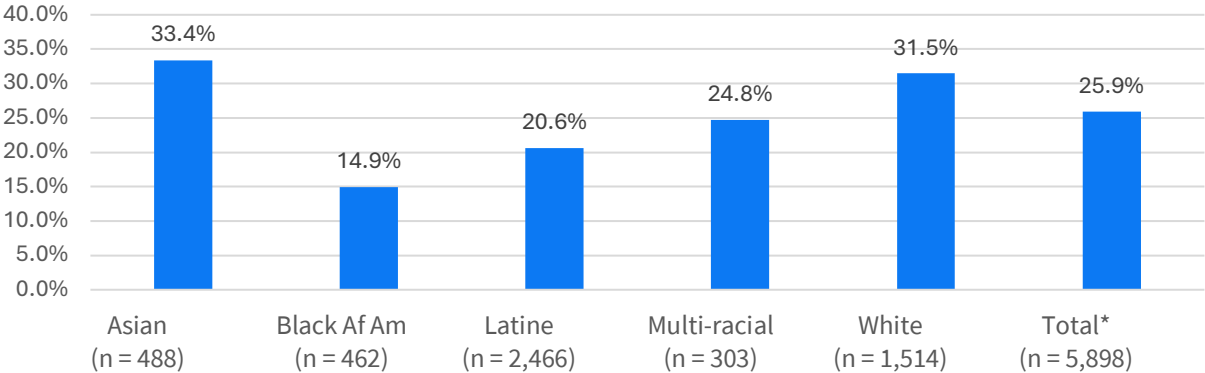
**Strategy 3: Update Institutional Policies and Practices with Education Code.** Continue to evaluate policy changes and build on past efforts, including performance evaluation for all groups, to be aligned with Title V updates through joint efforts with Human Resources, Academic Senate, and other campus stakeholders.

# Section 8: Metric – Transfer to a Four-Year

## DATA REVIEW

Using an alternate metric to assess momentum toward transfer, approximately 26% of first-time in college students who entered in 2021-2022 successfully completed 30 or more UC/CSU transferable units within three years. However, when disaggregated by race/ethnicity, the data reveal large disparities. Black/African American students complete the 30-transfer unit threshold at the lowest rates at 14.9%, followed by Latine students at 20.6%. These two groups experienced the largest equity gaps with, PPG-1 values (equity gaps) of -11.9% for Black students and -9.1% for Latine students.

**Completed 30+ UC/CSU Transferable Units in Three Years by Race/Ethnicity 2021-2022**



\*Total includes racial/ethnic groups with fewer than 10 students, which were suppressed in the disaggregated data, as well as the “unknown/unreported” category

## GOALS

The table below describes the goals for Transfer of fully closing equity gaps for all DI groups.

DI Student Population	# Cohort	# Successful	% Success Rate	% Increase to Fully Close Equity Gap	# Additional Successful Students to Fully Close Gap
<b>Alternate Metric 5 – 30+ Transfer Units (2021-2022)</b>					
Black	462	69	14.9%	+11.9%	+55
Latine	2,466	508	20.6%	+9.1%	+224

## KEY STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE TRANSFER GOALS

## STRATEGY 1: CONDUCT RACE-CONSCIOUS INQUIRY INTO TRANSFER SENDING CULTURE

For the 34th consecutive year, Santa Monica College (SMC) was ranked the **#1 transfer college to the University of California (UC)** system, the **University of Southern California (USC)**, as well as **Loyola Marymount University (LMU)**. SMC also led the state in:

- **#1 in African American transfers** to UC (84 students)
- **#1 in Chicano/Latine transfers** to UC (217 students)
- **983 total UC transfers**, with UCLA as the top destination (451), followed by UC Berkeley (133), UC San Diego (109), and UC Santa Barbara (100)
- SMC transferred **1,071 students to the CSU system**, ranking **#11 statewide**, a slight decrease of 13 students from the previous year.

SMC's Transfer Team hosted a variety of events and services throughout Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 to support student transfer success, including virtual counseling, application workshops, college fairs, and themed events such as *Transferpalooza*, *On-the-Spot Admissions Day*, and *Transfer Toast*. These efforts provided students with guidance, resources, and a sense of community as they prepared to transfer to four-year institutions.

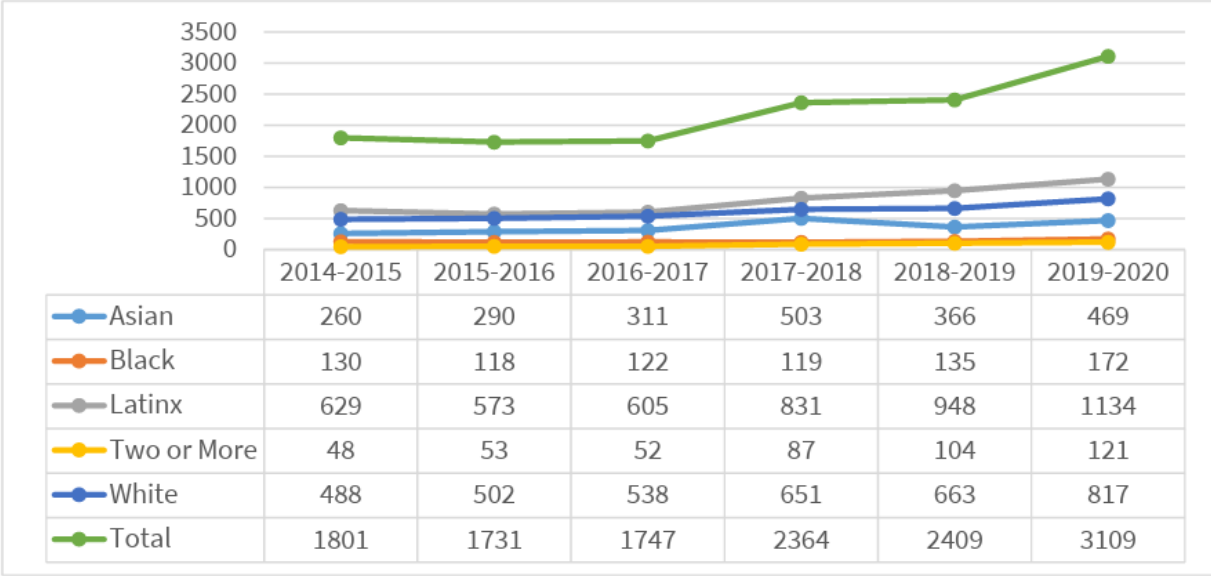
SMC's Transfer Team remains committed to fostering a strong transfer culture, ensuring equitable access, and delivering high-impact support services for all students pursuing four-year degrees. Despite SMC's statewide leadership in overall transfer numbers and in transferring Black and Latine students to the UCs, equity gaps persist when evaluating transfer momentum metrics. For instance, only 14.9% of Black/African American and 20.6% of Latine first-time in college students in 2021-2022 completed 30+ transferable units within three years, compared to 26% overall. To close these gaps, SMC will implement the following race-conscious and structurally embedded key strategies.

For two consecutive years, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, the IE Committee has investigated and recommended a focus on inquiry for the institution to examine strategies to strengthen and maximize the opportunities to increase completion of the Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT), associate degrees that are fully transferable to the CSU, especially considering AB 928, the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021, which created the Cal-GETC general education pathway to simplify and improve the transfer process for community college students to the [California State University](#) and [University of California](#).

According to the December 2021 IEC recommendation to DPAC, while the number of Vision Goal completers overall and for each racial/ethnic group has improved over time, the

equity gaps experienced by Black and Latinx students has widened during the same period, from -3.1% to -3.5% for Black students, and from -5.4% to -6.4% for Latinx students.

**Figure 3. Number of Students Who Attained the Vision Goal Completion Definition by Race/Ethnicity, 2014-2015 to 2019-2020**



A larger number of Black and Latinx students transfer to the CSU (624 combined in 2020-2021) than the UC (286 combined in 2020-2021) (visit the statistics webpage of the SMC Transfer Center for more information), which suggests that the populations experiencing the equity gaps for the metric primarily access transfer through the CSU.

A continued look from IEC, in the 2022-2023 DPAC recommendation, the number of Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) awarded from 2016-2022, demonstrated that over those six years, “the number of ADTs awarded increased by 104%.”

**Figure 5. Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT) Awarded, 2016-2017 to 2021-2022**

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT)	572	775	902	1,154	1,260	1,165

Overall, the data points from these IEC recommendations indicate that we are still experiencing equity gaps for our Black and Latine students, and further inquiry and strategy is needed to best understand the underlying factors that contribute to these gaps.

Equity gaps in transfer outcomes for Black and Latine students persist due to structural and institutional factors that often remain unexamined. Before SMC can effectively act to close these gaps in transfer, it is essential to first deeply interrogate and understand their root causes. Race-conscious inquiry of our *transfer sending culture* provides a structured

approach to illuminate the systemic barriers and inequities embedded within transfer practices, policies, communications, and structures.

The concept of a *transfer sending culture* was introduced by Jain et al. (2011) as a framework for understanding how community colleges can intentionally foster student transfer, particularly for racially minoritized and first-generation students. This framework will serve as a lens for examining our own transfer-sending culture, as it emphasizes that transfer is not merely the responsibility of individual students, but rather a collective, institutional commitment to creating structures, practices, and mindsets that normalize and expect transfer as a viable pathway.

Within this framework, proactive advising, strong articulation agreements, faculty and staff engagement, and the cultivation of students’ transfer aspirations are critical. By centering equity and institutional responsibility, the framework offers a way to assess how our college is building an environment where transfer is not exceptional but embedded in the mission and daily practices of the institution (Jain et al., 2011). Findings will allow us to better understand and develop key practices to further embrace an SMC wide *transfer sending culture* for all students and center the unique needs of DI populations.

By employing a root cause inquiry into equity gaps in transfer outcomes, we can facilitate intentional collaboration between the Transfer Team and faculty, staff, and managers across campus, deepening collective commitment to equitable transfer outcomes. This model encourages joint examination of data, fosters a culture of shared accountability, and cultivates a community of practice committed to dismantling structural barriers and supporting the success of Black and Latine students in their transfer pathways.

**Strategy 1: Conduct race-conscious inquiry to better understand transfer sending culture.** Use a cross-institutional “inquiry team” model to examine how Black and Latine students experience transfer pathways at SMC, disaggregated by race and also transfer systems (UC, CSU, Privates), with the aim to foster shared accountability, affirm students’ racial identities, deepen institutional commitment, and dismantle structural barriers to equitable transfer.

**STRATEGY 2: BUILD RELATIONAL, COLLABORATIVE, AND DISCIPLINE-EMBEDDED TRANSFER SUPPORT**

Cross-departmental and institutional collaborations are central to the effectiveness of this inquiry. Findings from the collegewide “equity imagining sessions” highlight our desire for intentional, coordinated, collaborative, aligned approaches, rather than siloed equity efforts as the latter leads to fragmentation, burnout, and duplication and ultimately limits the impact of our work.

In the 2022–2025 Student Equity Plan, SMC identified campus climate and institutional structures as key friction points to equitable transfer outcomes. Our institutional culture and structures often center Euro-centric perceptions of what a “successful transfer student” looks, standards that can marginalize Black and Latine students. As a result, these students may experience lower sense of mattering in the classroom, reduced access to faculty mentorship, and consequently, fewer opportunities for informal guidance on majors, careers, and transfer planning. Collectively, these conditions undermine their ability to navigate and succeed in the transfer process.

While SMC is proud to be the #1 transfer institution, our transfer efforts remain siloed, often perceived as the responsibility of counselors and student services alone. We lack a shared, race-conscious transfer culture grounded in collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs.

Although Wang (2020)<sup>7</sup> does not center race explicitly, their research underscores the importance of relational, cultural, and structural dimensions in shaping transfer outcomes. Three findings resonate with our equity efforts:

- **Transfer is Relational and Cultural**  
Students thrive when they experience academic and cultural belonging. Affirming student identities and fostering faculty and peer connections are key.
- **Advising is Fragmented and Reactive**  
Students describe advising as procedural and inconsistent. Proactive, integrated, and culturally responsive advising is essential.
- **Disciplinary Belonging Fuels Momentum**  
Students persist when they feel connected to their discipline. Early exposure to faculty, mentors, and peers within their major supports this.

At SMC, these findings point to the need for proactive, discipline-anchored approaches that embed culturally responsive transfer support early in students’ academic journeys. One model is the creation of “transfer circles”, cohort-based spaces organized by Areas of Interest (AOIs) that connect students with faculty and peers in their major, promote identity-affirming guidance, and foster a campus culture where transfer is everyone’s responsibility.

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<sup>7</sup> Wang, X. (2020). *On my own: The challenge and promise of building equitable STEM transfer pathways*. Harvard Education Press.

**Strategy 2: Build relational, collaborative, and discipline-embedded transfer support.**

Foster early, identity-affirming connections between students, faculty, and counselors within their AOIs to establish a *transfer going culture* from onboarding through completion. Use various strategies to integrate culturally responsive guidance into academic pathways and promote shared responsibility for transfer across Academic and Student Affairs. Leverage Stellic analysis to establish clear transfer milestones, align with transfer options, and optimize transfer outcomes for Black and Latine students.

**STRATEGY 3: BUILD EQUITY-MINDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICES**

A race-conscious and equity-minded culture is essential to sustain the strategies that support Black and Latine students’ transfer success. Building such a culture requires sustained professional learning that challenges deficit-based narratives, foster cultural humility, and encourages critical reflection. Through cohort-based professional development and communities of practice, faculty, counselors, and staff can strengthen their knowledge and skills to implement culturally responsive pedagogy and advising practices.

Leveraging the concept of a *transfer-sending culture* as a framework for understanding how community colleges can intentionally foster student transfer, particularly for racially minoritized and first-generation students, will allow us to build an environment through professional learning and communities of practice where transfer is not exceptional but embedded in the college’s mission and daily practices (Jain et al., 2011)<sup>8</sup>.

This strategy will leverage the expertise of existing equity-minded practitioners on campus to co-develop training that centers the lived experiences of Black and Latine students, surfaces and challenges biases about their transfer potential, and affirms their identities and aspirations. These communities of practices will foster a collective shift, from questioning whether Black and Latine students are “transfer material”, to actively cultivating a culture where their transfer success is expected, supported, and celebrated. By doing so, SMC can elevate its already strong transfer culture, recognized statewide for overall excellence, to one that also leads in advancing Black and Latine transfer excellence. This ongoing professional development will institutionalize equity-minded practices and promote shared responsibility for sustaining a race-conscious transfer culture.

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<sup>8</sup> Jain, D., Herrera, A., Bernal, S., & Solórzano, D. G. (2011). *Critical race theory and the transfer function: Introducing a transfer receptive culture*. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 35(3), 252–266.

**Strategy 3: Build equity-minded professional learning and communities of practice that foster cultural humility, address bias, and affirm the identities of Black and Latine students.** Leverage the expertise of equity-minded practitioners to support faculty, managers, and staff in professional learning that promotes shared responsibility and shifts mindsets toward deeply believing in students' transfer potential. This strategy emphasizes moving from a perspective in which transfer is viewed as solely the student's responsibility to a *transfer sending culture* where we actively share that responsibility and centers culture affirming practices across the institution.

## Section 9: Intensive Focus on Population(s) Experiencing Disproportionate Impact

*After completing the individual metric sections, review the student groups identified, the goals established, and the key strategies proposed. Of all the identified DI student populations, please identify 1-3 student population(s) your college will intensively focus on during the equity plan cycle (2025-28) and answer the question below for these identified populations. The intensive focus population(s) may be the same student population(s) experiencing DI your college selected in the previous 2022-25 student equity plan. (minimum of one population is required, maximum of three)*

**Current Challenges/Barriers** *Consider your institutional policies, processes, practices, and culture: what current structures are challenges/barriers for the identified student population experiencing DI at your college? (2500 characters max)*

Santa Monica College recognizes that the most significant challenges facing our disproportionately impacted (DI) student populations—particularly Black and Latine students—are rooted in long-standing institutional structures that have not been designed to support racial equity.

A primary barrier is the lack of sustained coordination across departments and divisions. While numerous well-intentioned efforts exist to support DI students, these initiatives are often siloed, under-communicated, and disconnected from broader institutional planning. Without a centralized framework, equity strategies are inconsistently implemented and difficult to scale or sustain.

Additionally, intentional and disaggregated data collection remains a challenge. Although the college has access to large volumes of data, it is not always systematically used to inform practice. Many departments do not consistently examine outcomes by race/ethnicity or other key equity indicators. This limits our ability to design responsive interventions or measure the true impact of existing programs on DI students.

Another persistent challenge is the lack of shared institutional ownership for equity work. While some areas—such as Student Equity, Outreach, and Special Programs—have assumed responsibility for advancing outcomes for DI populations, equity is not yet fully embedded as a core responsibility across all levels of the college. This has resulted in uneven accountability and slowed progress toward systemic change.

Finally, we must acknowledge that years of institutional racism have shaped our policies, practices, and campus climate. From curricular choices to resource allocation, historical patterns of exclusion have limited the sense of belonging and support for our Black and Latine students. These legacies manifest in subtle but powerful ways—such as the limited culturally affirming pedagogy, limited representation among faculty and leadership, and inconsistent responses to student concerns about equity and inclusion.

Addressing these barriers requires more than programmatic fixes—it demands structural transformation. Santa Monica College is committed to this work, and our current equity planning process is an opportunity to confront these realities and reimagine systems that truly serve all students.

### ***Action Plan for Ideal Institution***

*What is your college’s action plan to achieve your identified goals across all five metrics for this specific student population? Please include, at minimum, the following information in the action plan:*

- 1. How will your college address and overcome the challenges and/or barriers shared above?*
- 2. What specific strategies will be implemented, **especially across academic and student affairs**, and what will success look like?*
- 3. What resources, structures, and/or support will be utilized to effectively accomplish this action plan?*

Santa Monica College is committed to becoming an institution where equity is fully embedded across all levels of student experience. Our Student Equity Plan focuses on addressing systemic barriers, strengthening institutional alignment, and implementing sustainable, data-informed strategies. At the center of this work is the Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion (EPI) Division, which plays a key role in ensuring cohesion across college-wide equity efforts.

#### **1. Centralizing Equity Through Institutional Alignment**

The EPI Division leads the coordination and integration of SMC’s institutional equity strategies. This includes aligning the Student Equity Plan, Guided Pathways work, Strategic Enrollment Management, and the Vision 2030 goals outlined by the CCCCO. By embedding equity into all planning and reporting structures, we establish a unified framework that keeps equity-focused outcomes at the forefront.

Key structures supporting this alignment include:

- The EPI Working Group, which consists of cross-functional leads who guide the development and implementation of the 2025–2028 Student Equity Plan.
- Student Equity Center, which provides intersectional support to reach our disproportionately impacted (DI) students.
- EpiCenter, which centers equity-minded professional development across all stakeholder groups including (faculty, classified professionals, and management).

## 2. Addressing Structural Barriers

To overcome longstanding barriers impacting our Black and Latine student populations, SMC is implementing the following strategies:

- **Strengthening Belonging and Engagement:** We are developing a Belonging Campaign to amplify the visibility of support resources and culturally affirming spaces, such as the Black Collegians and Adelante programs, and the Student Equity Center. The campaign includes inclusive marketing, storytelling, and peer engagement strategies rooted in student voice.
- **Curriculum and Pedagogy:** Through the EpiCenter, and Equitizing Gateway Courses (EGC), we are expanding professional learning that supports equity-minded teaching. Faculty are being trained in anti-racist and culturally sustaining pedagogies, with an emphasis on closing equity gaps in success and retention.
- **Enhanced Data Use and Evaluation:** The Office of Institutional Research (IR) will continue its efforts building dashboards and tools to provide real-time equity data to faculty, staff, and administrators. These tools support disaggregated analysis of course outcomes, program engagement, and student support utilization—enabling more targeted, data-driven interventions.
- **Strengthen the Student-Centered Experience:** Santa Monica College has cultivated a culture in which employees deeply value student success, often highlighting strong interpersonal connections and communication as key individual practices. However, institution-wide communication and structural coordination remain areas for growth. While the college embraces a student-centered ethos at the individual level, misalignment across departments may inadvertently hinder efforts to fully support students. These internal structural challenges can contribute to an inequitable environment, particularly for our diverse student populations, and limit the overall effectiveness of our student experience.

#### 4. Continuous Improvement and Accountability

- **Annual Equity Evaluation:** SMC will conduct an annual review of the Student Equity Plan, disaggregating outcomes across all five metrics and DI student groups. Results will be shared with the campus each fall, in preparation for submitting an annual report to the CCCCCO.
- **Campus Engagement:** Regular community updates and “Equity in Action” forums will provide opportunities to reflect on progress, collect feedback, and refine strategies. The EPI Division will also conduct mid-cycle equity check-ins with academic departments and support units.

This action plan reflects our belief that achieving equity is not a one-time initiative, and not the sole responsibility of one division, but a sustained institutional commitment requiring shared responsibility, clear metrics, and authentic engagement. Through the leadership of the EPI Division and alignment of our collegewide efforts, Santa Monica College is building a more just, student-ready, and equitable institution.

## Section 10: Student Education Plans

### DATA REVIEW

The table below describes the percentage of new, first-time, non-special admit students (not exempt from education planning) who completed a comprehensive education plan by the end of their first primary term and by the end of their first academic year. Plans completed in terms prior to a student’s first primary term were included in the analyses.

Academic Year Cohort	Total Number of Enrolled Students in Cohort	# and % of Students Who Received a Comprehensive Ed Plan by End of First Primary Term		# and % of Students Who Received a Comprehensive Ed Plan by End of First Academic Year	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Fall 2022	4,726	3,291	70%	3,492	74%
Spring 2023	1,172	756	65%	777	66%
Fall 2023	4,857	2,890	60%	3,205	66%
Spring 2024	1,217	712	60%	741	61%

The data show a decline over time in the percentage of new students completing a comprehensive ed plan by both the end of their first primary term and academic year. In Fall 2022, 70% completed a plan by their first term and 74% by their first year. By Spring 2024, those rates dropped to 60% and 61%, respectively. In general, spring cohorts experienced lower comprehensive ed plan completion rates. However, these figures do not account for students who completed abbreviated education plans. On average, 88% of first-time new students completed abbreviated ed plans. The transition from abbreviated to comprehensive plans is lagging, suggesting an opportunity for SMC to strengthen practices and systems to ensure students receive timely, long-term academic planning support in their first year.

### POPULATIONS EXPERIENCING DI IN RECEIVING A COMPREHENSIVE ED PLAN

The PPG-1 calculation was used to determine whether any student populations experience disproportionate impact (DI) in receiving a comprehensive ed plan by the end of the first primary term and/or first academic year. Local data on homelessness were not available and, as such, could not be disaggregated for this analysis. The disaggregated show that none of the historically minoritized or marginalized groups are experiencing equity gaps in terms of receiving comprehensive education plans within one academic year. However,

male students were identified as the only group disproportionately impacted in completing a comprehensive education plan with one year, with male students completing comprehensive plans at a rate of 67.3% and showing a PPG-1 value of -2.5%.

<b>Student Subgroup</b>	<b># Cohort</b>	<b># Received Comp Ed Plan by First Year</b>	<b>% Received Comp Ed Plan by First Year</b>	<b>PPG-1 Value</b>	<b>DI (PPG-1 value is greater than Margin of Error) (Y/N)</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
Asian	798	539	67.5%	0.8%	N
Black	1,073	754	70.3%	0.7%	N
Latine	4,979	3,571	71.7%	-0.6%	N
Two or More	590	407	69.0%	-2.1%	N
White	3,005	1,789	59.5%	-1.8%	N
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	6,021	4,215	70.0%	2.8%	N
Male	5,644	3,799	67.3%	-2.5%	Y
Unreported	307	201	65.5%	-3.2%	N
<b>First-Generation Status</b>					
First Generation	5,810	3,995	68.8%	0.3%	N
Not First Generation	4,224	2,813	66.6%	-3.1%	Y
Unknown	1,938	1,407	72.6%	4.8%	N
<b>Students with Disability</b>					
Disability	358	288	80.4%	12.2%	N
No Disability	11,614	7,927	68.3%	-12.2%	Y
<b>Veteran Students</b>					
Veteran	135	113	83.7%	15.3%	N
Not Veteran	11,837	8,102	68.4%	-15.3%	Y
<b>Foster Youth Students</b>					
Foster Youth	149	112	75.2%	6.6%	N
Not Foster Youth	11,823	8,103	68.5%	-6.6%	Y
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>					
Economically Disadv.	7,409	5,358	72.3%	9.7%	N
Not Econom. Disadv.	4,563	2,857	62.6%	-9.7%	Y
<b>LGBTQ</b>					
LGBTQ	26	15	57.7%	-11.0%	N
Not LGBTQ	11,946	8,200	68.6%	11.0%	N

## **COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION FOR DI STUDENT POPULATIONS**

While the data show that SMC has a strong tradition of providing high-touch services, including counseling and comprehensive education planning, to historically underserved student populations at rates equal to or higher than non-traditionally non-DI groups, it remains vital that these services are delivered in culturally affirming and race-conscious ways. Access alone is not enough; students must see themselves reflected in the process, feel a sense of belonging, and receive guidance that honors their lived experiences and aspirations.

SMC is in the process of fully adopting Stellic, an education planning and degree audit platform that will replace our homegrown tool. This transition offers a critical opportunity to reimagine how we deliver ed planning support to our historically marginalized and racially minoritized students. Stellic offers a unique opportunity to design a more responsive and scalable approach to education planning for all students. Students will be able to build, revise, and track their comprehensive plans with support from counselors, faculty, and peer mentors (when applicable).

As we implement Stellic, we will intentionally design its use to advance equity by embedding tools and practices that center the needs of Black, Latine, and first-generation college students. We will use disaggregated data in Stellic to identify students who have not yet completed a comprehensive education plan or whose plans only span one to two terms. Outreach to these students will be coordinated with equity-centered programs such as Black Collegians, Adelante, EOPS, MOCAN, and peer-to-peer support efforts. These efforts will include follow-up from culturally responsive counselors who affirm students' strengths, cultural identities, and long-term goals, shifting the conversation from one of compliance to one of empowerment.

Stellic's visual planning tools will also be integrated into advising and milestone interventions (e.g., at 15 and 30 units), helping students monitor their progress and make informed adjustments. This student-centered approach reinforces agency, transparency, and momentum, particularly for students navigating college for the first time.

By implementing Stellic through an equity lens, SMC is not only modernizing its planning tools but ensuring they are used to affirm, support, and elevate the students who have historically been most underserved.

The college will also partner with student support and special programs (e.g., SMC Promise, Scholars, STEM, Black Collegians, Adelante, Athletics, etc.) to integrate education plan completion into program eligibility criteria and engagement milestones. This approach

reinforces the value of planning while embedding it into students' broader academic and campus experience. By normalizing education plan completion as a success strategy, rather than a compliance task, SMC aims to build a culture of proactive, goal-oriented planning across all student populations. These strategies work collectively to ensure education plans are not just completed early, but remain meaningful, relevant, and updated throughout the student journey.

**Strategy #1: Leverage Stellic for Personalized and Scalable Planning**

Stellic will be embedded into onboarding, first-year counseling, and AOI based workshops. Students will receive automated reminders to complete or update their plans, and staff can identify students with incomplete or short-term plans. Counselors will be trained to use Stellic's advisor view to reinforce ed planning across multiple touchpoints.

**Strategy #2: Incentivize Plan Completion and Reinforcement**

To promote early and ongoing comprehensive education planning, SMC will leverage the peer-to-peer support model offered in various programs, and develop incentive structures that recognize and reward students for completing and maintaining their education plans.

**Strategy #3: Establish Milestone-Based Planning Interventions**

SMC will implement structured checkpoints tied to unit milestones (e.g., 15, 30, 45 units) to prompt plan review and updates. AOI counseling leads will coordinate with campus partners to promote each milestone, helping students remain on track toward credential (certificate/degree), transfer, and career goals.

# Section 11: Vision 2030 Equity Alignment and Coordination

## **INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON EQUITY ALIGNMENT AND COORDINATION**

The following section represents the collective voices of key campus leaders who are actively implementing the efforts described below. In response to the CCCCO's request, each division lead has summarized the strategies their respective programmatic or institutional areas have implemented—or will implement—to align with the Student Equity Plan and advance equity-centered practices.

### **GUIDED PATHWAYS/REDESIGN**

Submitted by: Guido Del Piccolo and Daniella Washington, Redesign Leads

Santa Monica College continues to strengthen alignment between the SEA Program and the Guided Pathways framework by embedding equity-minded practices into onboarding, planning, and student support. Redesign Faculty Leads have collaborated closely with Enrollment Development and Student Affairs to co-host large-scale onboarding events such as College Kick-Off, Preview Days, and VIP/Welcome Day. These events are designed to support student transition and create a sense of community from the start of their educational journey. Evaluation data collected from the 2024 College Kick-Off highlighted the value of these activities: 93 percent of participating students reported that the event fostered a stronger sense of belonging, while 100 percent indicated it boosted their confidence in their ability to succeed at SMC. While formal evaluation processes were not yet in place for other events, the College is committed to implementing consistent assessments moving forward. Doing so will help determine the effectiveness of each program in supporting student onboarding and belonging, while also identifying opportunities to strengthen retention efforts.

In addition to these onboarding initiatives, Redesign Faculty Leads played a central role in advancing curriculum clarity and alignment. They led the development of 38 new program maps for certificates and revised 143 existing maps to reflect the updated General Education patterns. This work directly supports the rollout of Stellic, Santa Monica College's new degree management and student success platform, launched in January 2025. Stellic replaces MyEdPlan, its supporting degree audit tools, and College Scheduler, consolidating multiple systems into a single, student-centered platform. By simplifying academic planning for students, counselors, and evaluators, Stellic provides greater transparency and helps students stay on track for timely degree and certificate completion.

Together, these efforts represent key structural and programmatic strategies that integrate SEA and Guided Pathways priorities. By fostering belonging at entry, streamlining educational planning, and ensuring pathways are clearly mapped and accessible, SMC is working to close equity gaps and create the conditions for disproportionately impacted students to persist, succeed, and achieve their educational goals.

## **EOPS/CALWORKS, NEXT UP/FOSTER YOUTH, JUSTICE INVOLVED/IMPACTED STUDENTS**

Submitted by: Debra Joseph-Lock, Interim Dean Special Programs

At Santa Monica College, Special Programs—including CalWORKs, EOPS, NextUp/Guardian Scholars, and RISING—are co-located within a shared suite. This physical proximity fosters collaboration across programs, allowing for coordinated support and integrated services. A joint summary is provided below to reflect these collective efforts.

**Goal 1: Equity in Success** Our Special Programs—CalWORKs, EOPS, NextUp/Guardian Scholars, and RISING—are rooted in counseling-based support with a focus on academic, transfer, and wellness services. All participants complete a structured intake process, including orientation and at least three counseling contacts per semester. Students build ongoing relationships with a consistent counselor to foster trust and belonging, particularly among BIPOC and system-impacted populations. Students also engage in workshops and events to promote community, belonging, and academic momentum. These programs collaborate with the Career Services Center to connect students to internships and employment opportunities. Participation is tracked to inform future programming.

**Goal 2: Equity in Access** EOPS recently hired a specialist to lead recruitment and onboarding efforts across the EOPS suite. This role collaborates with Outreach and Onboarding and attends off-campus events to engage foster youth, justice-involved students, and prospective BIPOC students. The EOPS suite also partners with Student Success Teams (SSTs) to create clear pathways for disproportionately impacted students to connect with Special Programs that align with their academic and personal needs.

**Goal 3: Equity in Support** Special Programs maintain a strong partnership with Financial Aid to provide targeted resources to students, especially former foster youth and formerly incarcerated individuals. This includes annual scholarship workshops, financial aid information sessions, and financial literacy education—such as required Student Lingo modules for grant recipients in NextUp. Program counselors offer specialized academic guidance to ensure students remain on track for degree completion, transfer, or certification—tailored to the unique needs of each student population we serve.

## **CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING**

Submitted by: Jason Beardsley, Vice President Academic Affairs

Santa Monica College has made significant investments in the development of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) opportunities by providing release time to an instructional faculty member to lead a cross-functional CPL team. This team is tasked with creating digital workflows and establishing SMC's first documented course articulations. To further support implementation, SMC engaged Candace Rose of Palomar College—a recognized expert in the CPL field—to coach the team through procedural and operational challenges. Outreach and presentations on CPL have been delivered to department chairs, instructional faculty, and counseling faculty, resulting in several departments actively working on course articulations for industry-recognized credentials and military transcripts. Looking ahead, SMC will continue expanding outreach to departments, refining workflow development, and formalizing enduring CPL roles and responsibilities across Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Services to ensure sustainable implementation and long-term success.

## **DUAL ENROLLMENT**

Submitted by: Maral Hyeler, Director Academic Affairs

Santa Monica College (SMC) is committed to expanding equitable access to dual enrollment opportunities, aligning with Vision 2030's goal of ensuring all California high school students graduate with at least 12 units of dual enrollment credit. SMC's Dual Enrollment Program offers transferable college-level courses at partner high schools, enabling students to earn both college and high school credit. These opportunities ease the transition to higher education, foster a college-going culture, and support long-term educational attainment.

Due to Title V geographic restrictions, SMC can directly serve only two high schools and one continuation school. However, with the cooperation of West Los Angeles College, SMC also provides dual enrollment at four additional high schools. Current partners include:

- Beverly Hills High School
- Culver High School
- Malibu High School\*
- New West Charter High School
- Olympic High School\*
- Palisades Charter High School

- Santa Monica High School\*  
(\*within SMC’s service area)

Additionally, SMC maintains a strategic partnership with St. Monica Prep, a local private school seeking rigorous academic offerings.

A hallmark of SMC’s equity-focused approach is the **Young Collegians Program**, now in its 18th year. In partnership with Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), the program provides first-generation Black and Latine students with a three-year bridge experience, culminating in 14 college credits, mentorship, and wraparound support. While highly successful, with many participants transferring to four-year universities, its small cohorts (20–25 students annually) highlight the need for scaled models to broaden impact.

To align with Vision 2030 and expand equitable participation among disproportionately impacted students, SMC will:

- **Strengthen Infrastructure and Support:** Expand institutional capacity, including dedicated dual enrollment counseling to ensure academic and social-emotional guidance. Replicate and scale equity-focused models like Young Collegians across additional schools, leveraging external funding.
- **Deepen Community Partnerships:** Build on collaborations such as the Pico Partnership and coordinate with SMC’s Outreach Team to develop intentional pipelines for historically underserved students.
- **Support Statewide Alignment:** Advocate for unified messaging, resources, and expectations from the Chancellor’s Office and CDE, ensuring consistency across districts while strengthening college–K-12 collaboration.

SMC’s evolving strategy reflects both local context and statewide priorities. By expanding capacity, deepening partnerships, and advancing equity-centered practices, SMC is committed to making dual enrollment a transformative pathway for all students, especially those historically underserved by higher education.

### **STRONG WORKFORCE PROGRAM/PERKINS (TRICIA AND RUTH)**

Submitted by: Patricia Ramos, Dean

Ruth Casillas, Director

*As part of Goal 1: Equity in Success, Vision 2030 sets a workforce outcome to “increase with equity the number of California community college students who earn a living wage.” Vision 2030 sets a system Strategic Direction of Equitable Workforce and Economic Development, centering on the action to “increase educational access for prospective low-*

*income learners to enhance their socio-economic mobility by developing a high-tech/high-touch system, to take customized educational and training opportunities to them.” - [Vision 2030: A Roadmap for California Community Colleges \(pages 8 and 12\)](#)*

The colleges Strong Workforce Program and Perkins Program will focus on building awareness and strengthening partnerships in service of closing equity gaps. At Santa Monica College (SMC), priorities include addressing performance gaps for nontraditional students, single parents, foster youth, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners.

SMC provides a range of resources to support these populations. The Santa Monica Promise offers free enrollment and textbook vouchers to new full-time California high school graduates. CalWORKs, GAIN, and TANF provide educational funding, academic and career counseling, child care referrals, and employment assistance, while EOPS supports enrollment, retention, completion, and transfer for students experiencing financial hardship.

Through the Career Education (CE) Committee, faculty and administrators advocate for student success by reviewing labor market trends, recommending program innovations, and aligning recruitment with workforce needs. The committee promotes cross-program communication by inviting resource leaders, such as CalWORKs staff, to share eligibility requirements that faculty can relay directly to students.

Leveraging Perkins and Strong Workforce funds, SMC provides industry-recognized certification exam vouchers for students completing CE capstone courses. Credentials such as AWS certifications validate students’ knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), enhancing employment opportunities. While aligning certifications with procurement processes can be challenging, these efforts are essential given the high costs of exams. Student pass rates on these credentials remain strong.

SMC also offers Financial Literacy workshops to equip disproportionately impacted students with tools for self-sufficiency. Topics include housing and real estate basics, budgeting, saving, investing, taxation, and credit management, enabling students to make informed financial decisions.

Finally, CE programs provide an equipment loan program, allowing students to complete assignments at home—especially important in high-cost fields requiring specialized equipment.

Through these targeted programs and collaborative strategies, SMC ensures that special populations have equitable access to resources, support, and opportunities that promote academic success, workforce readiness, and long-term achievement.

## FINANCIAL AID

Submitted by: Tracie Hunter, Associate Dean, Financial Aid and Scholarships

Santa Monica College’s Strategic Enrollment Plan (2022–2027) outlines a holistic framework to maximize financial aid receipt and systematically increase FAFSA completion, particularly among disproportionately impacted groups such as Black, Latinx, foster youth, veterans, and AB 540/DREAM students. The plan is guided by seven goals: increasing awareness, supporting on-campus work opportunities, implementing student-centered fiscal policies, closing equity gaps, enhancing noncredit-to-credit transitions, supporting students disqualified from aid, and addressing overall college affordability.

To increase awareness, the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships partnered with affinity group programs (e.g., Black Collegians, Adelante, Veterans Resource Center, Guardian Scholars, Dream Resource Center) to host in-person and virtual FAFSA/Cal DREAM workshops and created a curriculum embedded in Counseling 20 courses. Additional outreach included coordinated campaigns with the Associated Students, Equity Center, and Welcome Center, as well as “just-in-time” mobile messaging to reduce anxiety and destigmatize the process.

To expand access and retention, the college promoted Federal Work Study and piloted the state’s Learning Aligned Employment Program (2022–2024). Student-centered policies were also implemented, including BankMobile direct deposits to expedite aid disbursement and a “bubbling” safeguard preventing drops for nonpayment while aid is pending.

Targeted support for disproportionately impacted groups included dedicated DREAM Resource Center webpages, AB 540 guidance, and tailored application labs. Transition workshops were created to encourage noncredit students to apply for aid when moving into credit programs, while Promise Program partnerships expanded affordability support through grants and textbook waivers.

The college also leveraged federal CARES emergency grants, CCCCCO emergency aid, and private donor wildfire recovery funds, ensuring students—particularly AB 540 and low-income populations—received critical support.

As a result of these coordinated efforts, Santa Monica College has seen year-over-year increases in FAFSA/Cal DREAM completions and disbursements of Pell Grants, Cal Grants, and SSCG awards. Moving forward, the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office will continue to align fiscal policy with equity priorities, ensuring financial aid access is a driver of persistence and completion for disproportionately impacted students.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Submitted by: Denise Henninger, DSPS Manager / Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services Supervisor

Santa Monica College's DSPS (Disabled Students Programs and Services), also known as the Center for Students with Disability (CSD), is a crucial component of the college's commitment to student success and equity. The department ensures that students with disabilities have equal access to all college programs and activities, directly supporting disproportionately impacted (DI) student populations.

The core mission of DSPS is to empower students with disabilities to achieve their full potential by fostering independence. To accomplish this, DSPS provides a comprehensive array of services that remove non-academic and academic barriers to success. These services are essential for student persistence, retention, and completion.

Key services offered by DSPS include:

- Academic and personal counseling
- Support classes
- Assistive technologies
- Learning disability
- Acquired brain injury assessments
- Alternate media formats for course materials
- Interpreting and captioning services
- Testing accommodations
- Note-taking support

## **VETERANS**

Submitted by: Thomas Bui, Associate Dean, Student Life

**Santa Monica College's Veterans Success Center (VSC)** is a vital part of the college's mission to ensure equitable outcomes and academic success for all Veteran and military-connected students. The core mission of the VSC is to facilitate a smooth and successful transition from military service to academic and professional achievement. The program fosters a sense of belonging, addresses non-academic barriers, and ensures that veterans and their families have full access to college services, resources, and pathways for success. These efforts directly support SMC's equity goals, including increased access, persistence, and completion.

**Key services offered by the Veterans Success Center include:**

- Academic, personal, and career counseling tailored to veterans
- VA benefit certification and support navigating GI Bill and other programs
- Mental health and wellness support in partnership with U.S. Vets
- Assistance with transition to college, including onboarding and educational planning
- Remote and in-person services for flexible access
- A dedicated veterans’ lounge and study space to foster community
- Workshops and peer mentoring to support academic success
- Coordination with campus and off campus resources for veterans with PTSD, TBI, or other service-related conditions
- Tutoring and referrals to transfer and career development resources

Through these services, the Veterans Success Center works proactively to reduce equity gaps in critical areas such as successful enrollment, term-to-term persistence, completion of transfer-level English and math, and transfer to four-year institutions. The VSC is planning to work toward disaggregating and monitoring outcomes for student veterans across race, gender, and ability to ensure that all veteran students, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds, have the support they need to thrive.

**ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO SUPPORT STUDENT EQUITY EFFORTS**

**STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Submitted by: Susan Fila, Ph.D., Dean, Student Health and Wellbeing

Santa Monica College (SMC) recognizes that academic success is closely linked to students’ physical, emotional, and basic needs. The Student Health and Wellbeing (SHW) cluster supports disproportionately impacted (DI) student populations through an equity-centered, holistic model of care.

The cluster includes:

- **Basic Needs Department:** Food programs, wraparound case management, technology access, emergency relief, and housing/legal referrals.
- **Center for Wellness and Wellbeing (CWW):** Mental health outreach, therapy, crisis intervention, and stigma-reduction workshops, with therapists embedded across affinity centers and programs.

- **Student Health Services (SHS):** Preventive care, immunizations, family planning, dermatology, substance use education, and harm reduction resources including Narcan training.
- **Care and Prevention Team (CPT):** A cross-functional team providing early intervention and restorative approaches to student conduct.
- **Graduate Trainee Program:** Supervised social work and MFT trainees expand service capacity across campus, including equity-focused centers.

The SHW cluster advances Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program goals by addressing barriers disproportionately affecting DI students, including food insecurity, housing instability, poverty, and unmet mental health needs.

- **Basic Needs:** In partnership with the SMC Foundation, Student Life, and Associated Students, SMC provides culturally relevant food distribution, CalFresh enrollment, Wi-Fi and laptop access, and emergency aid, removing economic barriers that impede persistence.
- **CWW:** Provides culturally responsive therapy and outreach in programs such as Black Collegians, Adelante, Guardian Scholars, STEM, International Education, and the Equity Pride Center, ensuring timely, relevant mental health support.
- **SHS:** Offers preventive care, substance use education, and Medi-Cal enrollment, supporting student health and engagement.
- **CPT:** Facilitates faculty and staff referrals for early intervention, promoting a restorative, proactive campus culture.
- **Graduate Trainee Program:** Expands capacity while training the next generation of diverse mental health professionals.

Through coordinated, cross-program efforts, SHW integrates health, wellness, and basic needs into SMC's equity framework. By centering whole-student wellbeing, the cluster dismantles structural barriers, enhances retention, and advances institutional equity goals.

## Section 12: SUBMISSION PROCESS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### SUBMISSION PROCESS

The plan will undergo review and approval during the fall 2025 semester, with adoption by the SMC Board of Trustees anticipated in November 2025. Following adoption, the plan will be submitted to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) through the NOVA platform and published on the Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion (EPI) Division website under the [Reports](#) section.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reflect on the completion of this plan and my first year at Santa Monica College, I am both deeply moved and proud of the collective contributions represented here. Over the past year, the College **developed** this plan through thoughtful partnership and guidance from the EPI Working Group. Beyond its membership, many across the SMC community **stepped forward** to inform key elements of the plan, **assessed** the feasibility of draft strategies, and **committed** to championing these efforts through implementation.

This work would not have been possible without the collaboration of the EPI Working Group, as well as the many participants who **provided** feedback during the Data and Imagining Sessions.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the co-authors and editors of this document—Dr. Hannah Lawler, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness; Silvana Carrion-Palomares, EPI Project Manager; and Jason Beardsley, Vice President of Academic Affairs—for their invaluable partnership in bringing this plan to fruition.

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