
PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 25, 2005

**FOR
ACCREDITING COMMISSION
FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**



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VISION

*Santa Monica College:
Changing Lives
Through Excellence In Education*

MISSION

Santa Monica College strives to create a learning environment that both challenges our students and supports them in achieving their educational goals. We prepare our students to contribute to the global community as they develop an understanding of their personal relationship to the world's social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and natural environments.

To fulfill this mission, the College provides open and affordable access to excellent associate degree and occupational certificate programs. These programs prepare students for successful careers, develop college-level skills, enable transfer to universities, and foster a personal commitment to lifelong learning.

Santa Monica College serves, represents, and embraces the community's racial and cultural diversity. We promote the exchange of ideas in an open, caring community of learners and recognize the critical importance of each individual to the achievement of our vision.

GOALS

Student Success:

The College's learning environment will challenge, motivate, and support students. The College will use data on student outcomes to enhance educational programs and services.

Academic Excellence:

The College will uphold its tradition of academic excellence and innovation centered on a strong core of classified staff, faculty, and administrators. All are dedicated to the lifelong development of individual skills and competencies.

Community of Mutual Respect:

The College will be exemplary as a diverse community of mutual respect—a community characterized by respect for the individual, free exchange of ideas, broad collaboration, and participation in college governance.

Effective Use of Technology:

The College will promote access to technology to achieve its goals.

Community Partnerships:

The College will develop public/private partnerships to meet the educational needs of our community, ensure financial viability, and promote employment of our students and alumni.

Supportive Physical Environment:

The College will acquire, plan, develop, and maintain facilities and equipment to provide the best possible educational environment and promote the use of sustainable resources.

STATEMENT ON REPORT PREPARATION

Santa Monica College is pleased to submit this Progress Report as a summary of institutional progress made in response to four of the recommendations of the 2004 Accreditation Visiting Team. The Accreditation Liaison Officer prepared the report in consultation with faculty and staff members. The report was distributed to the senior administrative staff and college constituent group leaders for their review.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVAL

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AT THE COLLEGE SINCE MARCH 2004

A number of significant events have occurred at Santa Monica College since March 2004. These include the acquisition of major new resources, significant changes in leadership, the completion of several construction projects and the start of several others, and the formation of new interagency partnerships.

- New resources have been acquired this past year for ongoing operations (\$3.6 million in equalization funds), grants (\$6.2 million total over five years through two Title V grants), and capital needs (the passage of Measure S for \$135 million—the College’s third bond since 1992).
- Leadership changes include the decision by two incumbent trustees to not run in the November 2004 election, the election and seating of two new trustees, the retirement of Superintendent/President Piedad F. Robertson, and the appointment of Thomas J. Donner as Interim Superintendent/President.
- With capital funds available from two bond measures (Measure U for \$160 million approved in March 2002 and Measure S for \$135 million approved in November 2004), earthquake recovery funds from federal and local sources, and state capital grants, the College has completed facility improvement projects this past year for the Kinesiology/Dance, Athletics, and Mathematics departments and has begun major new improvement projects for the Theatre Arts, Music, Psychology, Philosophy and Social Sciences, History, Athletics, Health Sciences, Education, and Continuing Education departments.
- Several new organizational structures were formed this past year. Santa Monica College formed a joint powers authority with the City of Malibu in preparation for a new instructional center in that city, has a tentative agreement with the City of Santa Monica to cooperatively build and operate an Early Childhood Education lab school, and is actively discussing additional joint projects with the City of Santa Monica for parking and new field space.

NEW RESOURCES

Equalization. Santa Monica College received an increase in base funding of \$3.6 million this year from equalization. Efforts are ongoing to secure funding in future state budgets to achieve the full benefits of fairness, efficiency, and simplicity that are provided through equalization. (The Santa Monica Community College District continues to be the lowest-funded in the State, receiving 50% less per student than the second-highest district and 14% less per student than the neighboring Los Angeles Community College District.)

Title V Grants. Santa Monica College has been awarded its two largest federal grants ever—Title V grants totaling \$6.2 million over five years, starting in 2004-05. The funding—from the

U.S. Department of Education—comes in the form of two awards: an individual grant to help first-time college students succeed and a cooperative agreement grant with El Camino College to help future teachers complete their lower division coursework. Title V grants are reserved for institutions that qualify as Hispanic Serving Institutions, with more than 25 percent of their enrollment Hispanic. Santa Monica College’s Hispanic enrollment is 28 percent.

Measure S. Santa Monica College’s main campus was originally developed over a period of about thirty years, from the first purchase of land in 1940 to the opening of the Technology Building (now called Drescher Hall) in 1969. The College is currently at the midpoint of a similar cycle to renew and improve college facilities. Measure T, a \$23 million bond measure approved in 1992, together with FEMA earthquake recovery funds and state grants, provided resources to construct a new Science Complex and an expanded Library. In turn, this effort provided the impetus to develop a facilities master plan, which was adopted in 1998. Measure U, a \$160 million bond measure approved in March 2002, provided additional funding to renew a number of obsolete buildings on the main campus and to address the need for permanent off-site parking.

Further analysis conducted in late 2003 and in the first half of 2004 identified a need for additional funding to complete the renewal program of buildings on the main campus and also a need to provide significant program improvements—a performing arts center, an Early Childhood Education lab school, a Career Opportunity Center, and field space—that could provide both educational and public benefit. A comprehensive set of documents, including an existing facility assessment, an historical review, a review of partnership opportunities, and a review of new facility needs, was prepared and made available for review and comment.

As a result of this analysis, the Board of Trustees in August 2004 authorized the placement of Measure S, a \$135 million bond measure, on the November 2004 ballot, and the measure was successful. Additionally, Measure S incorporates a framework for potential partnerships with other public agencies that is leading to new, and very beneficial, outcomes for the District.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Trustees. In May 2004, Trustee Annette Shamey, who was first elected to the Board of Trustees in 1992, announced her decision to retire and not run for re-election in the November 2004 contest. In June 2004, Trustee Graham Pope, who had been appointed to the Board in 2003 to fill a Board vacancy, announced his decision to not run for election. In November 2004, two new trustees were elected—Dr. Susan Aminoff, a sociology professor at Los Angeles Pierce College, and Rob Rader, an entertainment lawyer for MGM Studios.

Superintendent/President. Dr. Piedad F. Robertson announced in November 2004 her retirement from the College to accept the position of President of the Education Commission of the States, a national educational policy organization. In December 2004, the Board of Trustees appointed Thomas J. Donner as Interim Superintendent/President, effective January 1, 2005 through the end of 2005. Dr. Donner has been the College's Executive Vice President, Business and Administration. This is the second time that Dr. Donner has served as interim president; he

served in that capacity from October 1994 through June 1995 between the presidencies of Dr. Richard Moore and Dr. Robertson.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Relocation Projects Completed. With funds from Measure U, two facility relocation projects have been completed since March 2004. The new Kinesiology/Dance and Athletics faculty offices opened in July 2004, and the new Math Complex of faculty offices, classrooms, and labs opened in August 2004.

Santa Monica Airport Campus West Building. With funds from Measure U, the renovation and site improvements to a four-story building at the new 10.4-acre Santa Monica Airport Campus site began in Spring 2004. The building will open for Summer 2005 and will house the Health Sciences, Education, and Continuing Education departments.

Main Campus Theatre Arts Building. With funds from Measure U, the total renovation and modernization of the Theatre Arts building began in Spring 2004. The building is expected to open in Fall 2006.

New Performing Arts Complex and Theater. With funds from Measure U, Measure S, federal capital grants, and private sources, the renovation of the Madison campus building to house the Music Department, the addition of a professional quality 540-seat theater, and parking improvements were approved in November 2004. Construction began in January 2005. This project will provide Santa Monica College with a major new opportunity for institutional advancement, as the theater is expected to attract national and international talent and exposure.

New Liberal Arts Replacement Building. With funds from the City of Santa Monica's Earthquake Recovery Redevelopment Project Area agency, state capital grants, FEMA, and Measure U, the District anticipates the award of construction for Phase 1 of a 65,000-square foot building replacement of the earthquake-damaged Liberal Arts Building in March 2005. The building will house the Philosophy and Social Sciences, History, and Psychology departments and provide general classroom space.

Other Facility Planning Efforts. Other planning efforts are now underway, including the program analysis and design of a new Student Services and Administration building, the design of a new 2.5-acre campus quad, a long-range master plan for the Santa Monica Airport Campus site, and renovations for the conversion of Corsair Field for year-round use.

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Joint Powers and Other Partnerships. The Santa Monica Community College District encompasses both the City of Santa Monica and the City of Malibu (as well as a small portion of unincorporated Los Angeles County). Measure S, the \$135 million bond measure approved in November 2004, provides for potential partnerships with other public agencies for several of the projects identified in the bond in order to reduce costs for the partner agencies. Activities have centered on achieving partnerships with the two municipalities.

In October 2004, the District entered into a Joint Powers Authority with the City of Malibu in order to acquire land for building an instructional center and providing field space, as well as to meet the environmental need to manage waste water reclamation. The District has committed \$25 million from Measure S for this project and anticipates a like amount from the City of Malibu. Santa Monica College operated a small instructional program in Malibu until the early 1990s, but the program had been discontinued due to a lack of available facilities and for budgetary reasons. The District is currently underserving the Malibu community in comparison to its service to the Santa Monica community.

In several meetings with the City of Santa Monica during the fall of 2004, the District reached a tentative agreement to enter into a development agreement for the purpose of constructing a child care center and Early Childhood Education lab school at a site in the Santa Monica Civic Center. The District has committed \$7 million from Measure S for this purpose.

The District also envisions additional development agreements with the City of Santa Monica for shared-use facilities for parking and for recreational use. Measure S allocates \$37 million for physical education field space improvements; the District has committed about \$2 million to a retrofit of its football field with an artificial turf able to support both men's football and women's soccer. The year-round availability of this field will also provide community groups with about thirty hours of use each week. Discussions are ongoing with the City of Santa Monica as to the appropriate use of the remaining funds in ways that can meet both educational needs and community recreational needs.

RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST OF THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION IN THE ACTION LETTER

The team recommends the college initiate an institution-wide dialogue about student learning outcomes and processes to facilitate learning. This dialogue should lead to documented implementation and results of a cyclical process of learning outcomes development, systemic assessment, and institutional and programmatic improvement.

(Standards I A.1; I B; I B.1 and 3; II A.1.a and c; II A.2.a, b, e, f, h, and i; II A.3 and 6; II.A.6.a; II B; II B.4; II C; II C.2; III A.1.c; IV B.2.b)

Although the time and energy devoted to enrollment recovery and addressing planning and governance issues have limited the amount of progress made on this recommendation, the College has succeeded in initiating and sustaining a dialogue among faculty and academic administrators about student learning outcomes, primarily at the course level. In early September 2004, the Academic Senate President and the Superintendent/President called together a group of faculty leaders and the vice presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to set goals and establish timelines. The group reviewed the plans and materials associated with the “Beta Project,” an effort that had been abandoned in Spring 2002 because of issues related to the College’s fiscal crisis. The group agreed to use the Alverno College Institute publication *Student Learning: A Central Focus for Institutions of Higher Education* as a framework for discussion and to focus initially on two key groups—the Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee and the Department Chairs Committee. The group also developed a rough timeline for other institutional activities—guest speakers, attendance of conferences and workshops, staff development day breakout sessions, meetings, and in-house presentations—for the entire 2004-2005 academic year.

Both the Curriculum Committee and the department chairs devoted one September 2004 meeting to a discussion of the introductory chapter and selected case studies from the Alverno publication and a PowerPoint presentation developed by a Counseling faculty member on the evolution of the student learning outcomes/assessment movement. While both meetings resulted in excellent discussions, they generated very little in the way of follow-up activities.

In October 2004, the Academic Senate President and the Vice President, Academic Affairs decided to devote one of the weekly Academic Leaders (Academic Senate leaders and the vice presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs) meetings to addressing their common concern that the originally agreed upon approach to establishing a dialogue was far too passive and could easily result in spending a full academic year engaged in a “planning to plan” syndrome. This meeting, augmented with several of the faculty leaders who had participated in the September planning meeting, proved to be seminal in moving the process forward. The group agreed that activity and humor had always been key elements in accomplishing any type of change in the Santa Monica College “culture.”

Discussion revealed that, while there was little open resistance on the part of faculty members to the concept of student learning outcomes, prevailing attitudes ranged from disinterest to a sense of intimidation relative to the perceived complexity of the assessment component. To address this, the group developed an exercise called “best-guess SLOs” (derived from an elementary school spelling activity) for which groups of faculty members would be given very basic information about student learning outcomes and then engage in an exercise to develop measurable student learning outcomes from the objectives of their own and each other’s courses. The purpose was to stimulate interest in student learning outcomes in a non-judgmental environment in which there would be no “wrong answers” and no intended official product. The faculty members present agreed to serve as facilitators for this activity with groups of faculty members they would informally recruit.

Starting with a group designing “best-guess SLOs” for history, math, and English, these informal discussions gradually spread to other disciplines and accomplished the intended purpose of creating the level of interest needed to initiate more formal dialogue. At an October meeting, the Curriculum Committee used the course outline of an introductory accounting course as an example of a course with well-defined course objectives and broke into small groups to analyze the objectives to determine whether they were goals, objectives, or student learning outcomes. Beginning in November 2004 with a course in comedy acting, the committee is now choosing one of the proposed new courses at each meeting as a vehicle for discussion with the faculty member presenting the course proposal on converting course objectives to measurable student learning outcomes. Curriculum Committee members and faculty members proposing new courses have found this to be a useful and stimulating exercise. As of Spring 2005, the College’s official Course Outline of Record form includes the category “Student Learning Outcomes,” and the Academic Senate Joint Program Review Committee is changing its guidelines to ensure that development of student learning outcomes is part of the required updating of all course outlines for instructional programs under review. (All college programs are reviewed in a six-year cycle.)

These initial activities were not intended to produce a usable product, but the growing dialogue has resulted in faculty pressure on the Curriculum Committee to produce guidelines and a template to ensure that those proposing new credit and noncredit courses are aware of the committee’s expectations regarding student learning outcomes. Several faculty members and academic administrators have attended workshops and conferences focused on student learning outcomes, including those sponsored by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges and the California Community Colleges Association for Occupational Education. The eight faculty and staff members who attended a recent CCCAOE session are planning a series of “brown bag lunch” activities to share what they learned. Following the lead of the Modern Languages Department, several academic departments, the Counseling Department, and the Library have planned departmental flex days with a focus on student learning outcomes. The March 10, 2005 institutional flex day features a transformation of the traditional “Navigating the Curriculum Process” workshop to focus primarily on student learning outcomes, and the recently acquired Title V grant provides additional opportunities for the faculty working on its instructional component to incorporate this focus.

The Academic Senate is discussing a proposal to form a Student Learning Outcomes subcommittee to work with the Curriculum and Program Review committees in guiding the implementation process and perhaps reviewing the plans of the September *ad hoc* group for inclusion in a professional development agenda. As of February 2005, the College has a permanent Director, Institutional Research, and she is joining the staff at just the right point in the dialogue to provide leadership in ensuring that an appropriate assessment component is developed. Although there has not yet been a great deal of discussion about institutional student learning outcomes, faculty and administrators who are participating in the ongoing planning and governance discussions have consistently advocated for structural components intended to ensure that student learning and assessment are central to college planning.

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

The College's goal of achieving enrollment growth to the level of the 2002-2003 base created an ambitious target of producing growth of approximately 6500 FTES over that reported in 2003-2004. (This number is the result of the reported FTES in 2002-2003 having included a significant portion of a "borrowed" summer intersession in addition to Summer 2002, Fall 2002, Winter 2003, and Spring 2003.) An FTES goal of 2500 was set for Summer 2004, with the remaining growth of 4000 FTES to be accomplished in the fall and spring semesters and winter intersession. In addition, the College's adopted budget for 2004-2005 included income for 1.5% (approximately 337 FTES) growth above base enrollment.

Implementation of the enrollment recovery plan involved participation of the entire college community, but relied primarily upon a seamless collaboration among the Enrollment Services, Counseling and Retention, Academic Affairs, and Information Technology areas of the College. Central to this plan was the establishment of the Welcome Center—a "one-stop" center that provides new students with a wide range of services, including admissions, counseling, financial aid, registration assistance, and payment of fees. Between June 28, 2004 and September 10, 2004, the Welcome Center served 3,723 students, 1,854 of whom visited the Center more than once.

In addition to the Welcome Center, other innovative strategies have been developed or refined to maximize the College's restoration efforts:

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

- Students who had applied for admission in Fall 2003 or Spring 2004, but had not enrolled, were informed via e-mail that the College had restored its course offerings and were invited to “give SMC another try.”
- The College’s High School Dual Enrollment Program has been reinstated, with a course offering totaling 75 weekly hours of instruction for Fall 2004 and more than double that for Spring 2005.
- The enrollment calendar was revised significantly to create longer registration periods for each semester/session and allow students to commit to the College and make their course selections earlier. Summer 2004 enrollment began about two weeks earlier than in prior years, and Fall 2004 enrollment began well over a month earlier. The calendar was further revised to allow Winter 2005 and Spring 2005 enrollment to begin simultaneously, and the College plans to continue this model of simultaneous intersession and regular session enrollment for Summer/Fall 2005.
- Enrollment after the beginning of a semester or session has been simplified through an automated system making use of instructor approval codes to override the block on enrollment that formerly required an instructor’s signature to approve adding a class. This minimizes the need for students to stand in lines to complete the enrollment process by allowing them to add classes at any computer with internet access or at any touch-tone telephone.

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

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

- The revised enrollment calendar facilitated early identification of scheduling adjustments required by enrollment trends, particularly with regard to numbers of course sections needed for the various levels of English, ESL, mathematics, and other disciplines with sequential courses. For example, when assessment results for new students dictated a larger proportion of developmental English and math sections than in past semesters, it was possible to create additional sections before all existing sections had closed.
- In addition to its student services functions, the Welcome Center served as a communications hub to inform Academic Affairs of enrollment trends and resulting schedule adjustment needs in a timely manner.
- The “View Open Classes” feature of the college website was revised to include a beginning section devoted to newly created course sections. Daily enrollment figures demonstrate that students find this feature, which is updated twice daily, particularly helpful.

These strategies have resulted in a significant number of scheduling changes on a daily basis during registration periods, most dramatically in the disciplines of English and mathematics. During Fall 2004 registration, course sections totaling 162 weekly teacher hours in English and 86 weekly teacher hours in mathematics were added, and course sections totaling 123 weekly teacher hours in English and 36 weekly teacher hours in mathematics were cancelled. (In most cases, students enrolled in cancelled course sections were moved to course sections scheduled at the same time and immediately notified of the change. When this was not possible, students were informed of the cancellation immediately and presented with alternatives.)

Although slightly below the goal, the 2250 FTES produced in Summer 2004 was encouraging, given the disadvantage of drawing upon a smaller number of continuing students than in previous summers. Likewise, the Fall 2004 opening day FTES projections indicated that the College was well on its way toward achieving its goal. However, it became clear at the fall census that the great efforts to encourage early registration and to accommodate students by adding sections of impacted courses prior to the beginning of the semester had resulted in a severe decline in the enrollment gains generally accomplished through the add/drop process during the first two weeks of the semester. At this point, the goal of attempting growth beyond restoration of the base was abandoned, but efforts to achieve restoration continued. Late-start fall sections were added, and winter intersession and spring course offerings were increased beyond original plans. Special recruitment efforts were targeted at students who had applied for admission, but had not registered for courses, and students who had registered in, but dropped, fall course sections. In the end, the fall semester produced approximately 1150 more FTES than Fall 2003, but about 600 FTES less than Fall 2002.

Halfway through the year, the need to shift to a two-year enrollment recovery plan model became apparent. Consistent with the statewide trend toward lower or flat community college enrollments, the College's winter intersession produced about 150 FTES more than Winter 2004, but fell short of Winter 2003 by about 90 FTES. Early Spring 2005 projections indicate FTES growth over Spring 2004 slightly lower than that experienced in the fall semester. Therefore, the College is simultaneously recognizing its tremendous accomplishment in achieving approximately 70% of its ambitious enrollment recovery goal in an environment of sluggish community college enrollments and acknowledging the daunting task ahead of maintaining the pressure to employ this year's successful strategies and identify new ones to ensure that complete recovery is accomplished during the 2005-2006 academic year.

The fiscal impact of incomplete enrollment recovery in combination with \$2.5 million in audit adjustments that reduced the 2003-2004 restricted and unrestricted general fund ending balance is dramatically illustrated in the Quarterly Report presented to the Board of Trustees at its February 2005 meeting. This report shows a reduction of the projected ending balance in the unrestricted general fund budget from \$6.2 million to less than \$200,000. Although this figure may improve slightly with more complete spring enrollment information (including expenditure reductions created through cancellation of underenrolled course sections) and clarification of the Chancellor's Office approach in calculating the funding reduction for unrestored FTES, it is clear that expenditure patterns must be modified for the remainder of the current year and in planning for 2005-2006.

As college leaders work to finalize a new planning and governance structure for the College, planning committees are beginning to meet again, and all constituencies are now participating. A newly constituted Budget Planning Committee is undertaking the task of dealing with this latest set of fiscal challenges, and there seems to be cause for cautious optimism that leadership changes, a new planning structure, and lessons learned by all groups from Spring 2003 experiences will promote a collegial planning process that will result in recommending an effective course of action to the Superintendent/President.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the last meeting of the Governance Structure Workgroup in January 2005, Academic Senate representatives presented for discussion a governance structure proposal in which membership on the District Planning and Advisory Council would be based upon leadership of or

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

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

The Interim Superintendent/President then convened a group, consisting of the presidents and two other representatives of each constituent organization, to discuss the issues and recommend a planning structure. This group met twice to discuss several alternative structures and modifications of the Governance Structure Workgroup proposal. At the conclusion of the second meeting, consensus was reached on presenting to the constituent organizations a modification of the workgroup proposal—adding a separate Human Resources Planning Committee with representation on the District Planning and Advisory Council and specifying a voting structure limiting each constituency to two votes, regardless of the number of representatives on the Council. To date, mutual agreement has yet to be achieved.

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

Progress toward accomplishment of the goal expressed in this recommendation is very difficult to measure. Standard IV of the 2004 institutional self-study contains the following statement:

At the present time, it is abundantly clear that the college administration and constituent groups have different definitions of the phrase “participatory governance” and do not

agree upon what constitutes an appropriate balance between the concept of participatory governance and the ultimate authority of the Board of Trustees.

Although the substantial time and energy devoted to clarifying governance and planning issues in the months since the accreditation team visit have served to increase and improve communication, this statement continues to be accurate. A curious dichotomy exists at Santa Monica College. While faculty and staff have pulled together to work tirelessly, effectively, and enthusiastically to support the implementation of the College's enrollment recovery plan and monitor its results, college leaders have continued to engage in passionate, and often bitter, disagreements about a planning and governance structure for the institution.

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

Developing the Governance Structure Workgroup framework together and working cooperatively through the high and low points of its existence have dramatically improved the relationship between the Academic Senate and the administration. This period has been characterized by collegial discussion and resolution of areas of disagreement and the joint development of creative solutions to challenges along the way, both inside and outside the workgroup's operation. For example, the Academic Senate brought forward the dilemma of its desire to proceed with recommending new full-time faculty positions for Fall 2005 in a timely manner without violating its resolution not to participate in the Collegewide Coordinating Council, the body designated through administrative regulation to deal with this process. The Superintendent/President agreed to a one-time *ad hoc* process in which a group of faculty members appointed by the Academic Senate President and instructional and student services deans appointed by the Superintendent/President would be assembled to recommend a ranking of requests for new full-time faculty positions. When the process proved successful, the Superintendent/President and Academic Senate leaders agreed to use a similar process in the future.

Ironically, the workgroup initiative has not improved—and may have even eroded—relationships with and among other constituent organizations. Classified staff representatives have often expressed the belief that they are not equal partners in planning and governance processes, and there has, at times, been tension between the Academic Senate and the Faculty Association, which did not have specific representation on the workgroup. Student representatives have expressed a sense of feeling torn by the attempts of other constituent groups to influence them. There is now a growing sense of impatience and frustration on the part of faculty members and administrators that the prolonged discussions are literally "holding hostage" college planning at a particularly crucial time.

Despite the messiness of this process and the ill feelings it may have created, college leaders have been forced to face and attempt to address difficult institutional problems and challenges—literally “the good, the bad, and the ugly.” The seeking of alliances between and among groups that normally have limited communication has created opportunities for a sharing of perspectives that would not have occurred under other circumstances. Hopefully, the knowledge gained will serve to enhance communication within the planning and governance structure that eventually emerges.

As illustrated by the enrollment recovery example, relationships and communication within and among college departments are generally positive and collegial, and effective operational planning guides the institution’s day-to-day functions. Communication within the negotiations between the Faculty Association and the District has been collegial and respectful, although the Faculty Association has expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of progress that has been made. The tone and quality of communication in the negotiations between CSEA and the District have improved considerably in recent months, and tentative agreements exist for most articles of that contract.

The following statement in Standard IV of the institutional self-study is made in reference to the former Superintendent/President: *For many faculty and classified staff, trust will be restored only with new leadership at the College.* With her recent departure, it is clear that the College’s issues surrounding trust, communication, and collegiality are institutionally ingrained and go far beyond differing perspectives on the leadership of a single individual. It continues to be impossible “for the college community to speak with one voice about issues of leadership and governance,” and commenting on specific planning and governance issues would still require stating different perspectives of the various constituencies. However, the college community has now taken the all important first step of truly facing its longstanding problems and attempting to address them.

Although this is currently being done by debating what form a new planning and governance structure may take, many college leaders would concede that how a planning structure is to be used is far more important than which structure is selected, no matter how impassioned individuals may currently be about particular structural aspects. This transition period between college presidents provides a golden opportunity for the college community to continue the painful, but necessary, process it has begun and avoid pinning all hopes on a new leader to arrive and “fix things.” It is incumbent upon college leaders to be creative in devising ways—collective and individual, structural and operational, formal and informal—to take full advantage of this opportunity.