



OIR Group

Independent Evaluation of Santa Monica College's Readiness and Response to October 14, 2024 Campus Shooting

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Introduction

On October 14, 2024, Santa Monica College was stunned when it learned of a horrific act of workplace violence that resulted in the murder of Felicia Hudson, a longtime employee of the college then serving as a Custodial Operations Manager. The perpetrator was Davon Dean, who worked as a custodian at SMC with Ms. Hudson as his direct supervisor. On that date, Dean arrived at one of SMC's satellite campuses, the Center for Media and Design ("CMD"), where he was due to begin his shift. Dean entered the building, walked over to where Ms. Hudson was seated, shot her twice, and left campus. Ms. Hudson was rushed to a local hospital but never regained consciousness and eventually expired from her injuries. The tragic event roiled the campus in the ensuing days as the College's leadership endeavored to provide support while SMC's community struggled to process the unsettling circumstances.

On the date of the incident, consistent with her regular responsibilities, Ms. Hudson arrived to supervise the graveyard shift as a Custodial Operations Manager at SMC. That night, she arranged to meet with custodian Davon Dean, as well as the Lead Custodian at the CMD. The purpose of the meeting was to provide supplemental training to Dean on the cleaning of restrooms. After Ms. Hudson arrived at the satellite campus, she sat in one of the common areas and waited for Dean and the lead custodian to arrive. Dean walked into the building, approached Hudson from behind and shot her. As Hudson slumped from the first gunshot, Dean fired again and proceeded to walk out of the building.

Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) received a call of "shots fired" via 911; SMPD notified the Santa Monica College Police Department (SMCPD) dispatch, and both SMPD and SMCPD officers responded to the scene. Hudson was rushed to the hospital but expired from her injuries the evening of October 16.

Upon learning of this incident, SMC's community was understandably seriously impacted by the horrendous act of violence. In response to this incident, SMC engaged in numerous initiatives intended to inform and support Ms. Hudson's family, friends and colleagues, as well as the larger college community, including conducting frequent messaging related to the incident, organizing memorial and funeral services for Ms. Hudson,

and hosting listening sessions for employees and students. The College also convened a committee of leaders at SMC to consider and develop after action plans, which eventually led to the initiation of this independent review. To identify an entity to prepare an independent after action report, SMC solicited proposals and interviewed several proposers. Based on that process, SMC recommended that the Board of Trustees approve a contract with OIR Group to conduct the after-action review of the incident. That recommendation was approved by the Board.

Scope of Review

Pursuant to the scope of work devised jointly by SMC and OIR Group, the plan was for OIR Group to speak with stakeholders of the SMC community, review investigative reports, evaluate the College's safety plans, review current policies, conduct an independent analysis and make recommendations designed to improve the College's preparedness for future similar challenges. OIR Group began the project in earnest in January of 2025.

Consistent with the work plan, OIR Group interviewed over 60 individuals connected to the College, including key representatives of the College's leadership, students, and staff. With the assistance of the College's messaging, we invited anyone from the campus community to speak with us and provide their insight and perspective. We were impressed by the number and breadth of individuals who reached out to speak with us, demonstrating the keen interest in the tragic event and leading to a spectrum of views and suggestions for improvement.

In the meantime, SMPD continued with its criminal investigation of the incident. That investigation was not completed until September 23, 2025 and consisted of over 5,000 pages. OIR Group reviewed the report as part of its scope of work.

We appreciated the input and perspective of each individual with whom we met and the extensive cooperation from the College's leadership in facilitating our meetings. OIR Group reviewed notes from over 100 hours of interviews, as well as police reports, other relevant records, college policies and protocols, and internal communications. Throughout our review, we received unfettered access to materials and personnel and

complete assistance from the College in providing us the materials needed to facilitate this review.

Factual Background

Felicia Hudson, the victim of the October 14 shooting, had been working at Santa Monica College as a Custodian for over 25 years. Ms. Hudson was promoted to Custodial Operations Supervisor in 2019. In 2024, Ms. Hudson's job classification status changed to Custodial Operations Manager.

Davon Dean was hired in 2018 as a Custodian and assigned to the graveyard shift. In the summer of 2023, Ms. Hudson was transferred from overseeing the day shift to the graveyard shift and, as a result, became Dean's supervisor.

The Custodial program at Santa Monica College is part of the Operations section of the Facilities Department which manages all custodial services for SMC campuses, including the Main Campus and the Center for Media and Design, Emeritus Campus, Malibu Campus, Bundy Campus, and the Performing Arts Center which are collectively referred to as the "satellite campuses." Dean worked on the graveyard shift satellite crew, mostly at the CMD; Ms. Hudson supervised all campuses for the graveyard shift.

Night of Shooting: October 14, 2024

At 9:50 p.m., Ms. Hudson was seated in Building D of the Center for Media and Design waiting for Dean to arrive to provide training to him. She was approached by Dean, who pulled out a handgun and shot her twice. Dean then left the CMD campus.

Within a minute or two of the shooting, SMPD received a 911 call of shots fired at the CMD.¹ At 9:53 p.m., SMPD dispatch notified the Santa Monica College Police Department's dispatch of the report. When SMPD arrived, a SMC custodian directed arriving officers to where Ms. Hudson had been shot.

¹ One of the other custodians assigned to CMD contacted 911 and advised them that his supervisor had apparently been shot and needed medical attention. As the custodian was on the call, he can also be heard helpfully and repeatedly instructing students to evacuate the campus.

SMCPD dispatch contacted the Campus Safety Officer (“CSO”) who was on-duty at CMD about the shots fired call. The CSO reported that he was in the satellite campus parking structure performing end of day lock-down procedures and had not heard any shots. The CSO also advised that SMPD personnel were arriving on scene.

By 9:59 p.m., additional SMCPD personnel had arrived at the location. Two minutes later, the Chief of the campus’ police department received a phone call notifying him of the incident and that SMPD was on site. Per the Chief, a lockdown of CMD and all other SMC facilities was initiated. This lockdown became particularly critical because of the recognition that the suspected perpetrator had keys to virtually all SMC facilities. The key fob system that provided electronic access was successfully disengaged, but it was learned that Dean had hard keys to at least some of the College’s facilities.

Upon arrival on campus, SMPD located Ms. Hudson, saw that she was an apparent gunshot victim and Santa Monica Fire Department’s emergency medical personnel were called who transported her to a nearby hospital. Moreover, SMPD with the assistance of SMCPD, conducted a safety sweep of the CMD campus.

Classes at CMD had ended for the evening at 9:30 p.m. so there were only approximately 10 students and employees at CMD when the incident occurred. The students that remained on the campus were evacuated.

Within eleven minutes of the shooting, Superintendent/President Dr. Kathryn E. Jeffery was notified of the occurrence and received updates as additional information was learned.

Within twenty minutes of the shooting, a SMCPD on-scene sergeant and SMPD confirmed that Dean had left the area and was no longer an immediate and apparent threat to the campus.

Within thirty minutes of the shooting, the SMCPD Chief arrived at CMD and asked the on-scene SMCPD sergeant to arrange to have all custodians currently on SMC’s campuses to be moved to one location. Only one additional custodian was at the CMD. On duty custodial staff were all moved to the SMCPD police station headquarters on the main

campus. Eventually, SMPD investigators arrived at SMC's main campus to interview relevant custodial staff.

At SMCPD's police station, the Chief and other personnel viewed the fixed camera footage and were able to locate the shooting incident which was clearly captured on college surveillance cameras.

Meanwhile, SMPD continued to search for the perpetrator. The afternoon of the next day (October 15), Dean was located driving his car in El Segundo. As Hawthorne Police surrounded his car and attempted to negotiate with Dean to surrender, he took his own life.

After the incident, a family member of Dean reported that she had received a call the night of the incident and that Dean sounded like he was in a "rage" because he was tired of his new supervisor bullying and harassing him. Dean advised the family member that as a result he had shot his supervisor.

Per existing protocols, SMPD was responsible for conducting the criminal investigation into the incident although with the suicide of Dean, there was no one to charge with the murder of Ms. Hudson. SMPD recently delivered its investigative report to SMC with one remaining investigative task outstanding, namely an analysis intended to link up Dean's firearm with the bullets fired at the two crime scenes.

Prior Interactions Between Hudson and Dean

A review of Hudson and Dean's work email accounts showed that the evening of the incident, Hudson emailed Dean to remind him of the retraining she had arranged related to the cleaning of the restrooms and provided him a document that contained more information about the college's custodial standards. In the email, Hudson requested Dean to read the material ahead of their meeting. Hudson advised Dean that she and the lead custodian would be arriving to provide the training and instructed Dean not to begin the restroom cleaning until she had arrived.

Dean responded through email that despite Ms. Hudson's instruction, he was not going to advise her when he started the restroom cleaning. Dean added that he had been cleaning restrooms for six years, had never

received a complaint about how he had cleaned toilets, and didn't need "micromanagement".

Approximately one hour before the shooting, Ms. Hudson briefly responded to his email to advise Dean that she would meet him at CMD to provide the training.

Outreach by Dean Prior to Shooting

Four days prior to the shooting, Dean emailed Ms. Hudson's supervisor advising that he just had a meeting with Ms. Hudson and the lead custodian in which he claimed he was told he was going to be "micromanaged" for two weeks. Later, Dean emailed the supervisor that he had requested time off and Ms. Hudson had not approved it.

The supervisor responded that he was going to look into these matters as soon as possible and that he would meet with Ms. Hudson and the lead custodian. The supervisor also suggested that Dean apply for a transfer to the main campus and provided a link for that process.

Four days prior to the shooting, Dean also emailed SMC's Personnel Commission indicating that he was a night custodian and that he was trying to get in touch with his union representative.² Dean wrote that he needed to have a meeting about his supervisor because of the excessive "micromanagement" and that it needed to "come to a stop". The Personnel Commission employee replied the next day by providing a contact email for the Association's Chief Job Steward.

Three days before the shooting, Dean sent an email to a CSEA representative. In the email, Dean advised that he was having problems with his supervisor (Ms. Hudson) "micromanaging" him. Dean wrote that the day before, Hudson and her lead had come over to his area and advised him that for the next two weeks, she and the lead would be visiting him to make sure that he was using a bucket when he cleaned the toilets. Dean advised that he immediately responded by telling Hudson she would not be micromanaging him. Dean wrote that in the six years he had been working he never had a complaint about how he cleaned the

² SMC custodians are represented by the California School Employees Association (CSEA). We have been advised, however, that Dean was not a member of CSEA.

toilets and advised that Hudson's response was "very petty and personal". Dean accused Ms. Hudson of trying to run the crew with an iron fist and that he was not going to accept "petty stuff" from her.

There is no evidence that the CSEA representative ever responded to Dean's email. However, it should be noted that Dean's email to the representative was sent late in the work day on a Friday and the shooting occurred the following Monday evening.

Prior Work Performance of Dean

Dean's prior work performance as a custodian at SMC had been spotty. For example, his first quarter 2019 evaluation indicated issues with not following the break and lunch policy. Training was also scheduled during that time period relating to organization and priority of job duties. Finally, the 2019 evaluator (not Ms. Hudson) indicated that Dean should increase the communication provided to his supervisor and lead including advising of any challenges and following through on all job tasks.

However, in Dean's second half of 2023 evaluation, Hudson wrote an evaluation indicating that his performance was in good standing, his communication, quality of work, and his willingness to take direction from supervision had improved. The only negative comments in the evaluation noted that Dean had been observed taking overly long breaks and that he needed to take more initiative in his work.

In 2024, there was a push from SMC to have custodial managers instill more accountability and engage in more meaningful supervision of line staff. Training was provided to managers with strategies intended to ensure effective communication and active supervision. Dean (and other custodial staff) reacted negatively to this approach and blamed first level supervision for what was characterized as "micromanaging" when, in fact, the new direction and approach was initiated from a higher level within the organization. In any event, and as discussed in more detail elsewhere, in the ensuing months, Dean's resentment focused almost entirely on his immediate supervisor, eventually leading to the ultimate act of violence against her.

June 7, 2013 Campus Shooting

The October 14, 2024 murder of Ms. Hudson was not the first time that SMC has had to deal with a shooting incident. Approximately a decade prior to the shooting of Ms. Hudson, SMC's campus was victimized by a mass shooting. What started as a domestic dispute, transitioned to the SMC campus with a total of six people being killed, (including the suspect) and four others injured. The shooter, John Zawahri, was killed by police officers after he exchanged gunfire with them at the SMC library. While as detailed below, at least as to the victims on the SMC campus, the motivations of the shooter were distinct, a number of folks we talked with expressed how the 2024 shooting brought back the trauma they experienced in 2013.

The incident began at a nearby residence where Zawahri lived. Police responded to a "shots fired" call and observed a fire at the residence. The Santa Monica Fire Department was eventually able to control the fire. Upon entry of the residence, the bodies of two men were located, both having expired from gunshot wounds.

It was later learned that after setting fire to the house, Zawahri had killed his father and brother. Zawahri then armed himself with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle which he had assembled, despite being legally prohibited from possessing firearms. He stopped a woman in a vehicle at gunpoint; another driver attempted to intervene but was shot and wounded by the gunman. Zawahri ordered the first driver of the car to take him to the SMC campus. As they traveled to campus, Zawahri shot at a passing Big Blue Bus, three of the riders suffered injuries. Zawahri also shot at a police patrol car.

When Zawahri arrived at SMC, he shot into a car, killing the driver and passenger. He proceeded on foot toward the college library, fatally shooting another woman immediately outside. Zawahri then entered the library and approached the counter while staff and students behind the counter began a slow retreat to a closet. Zawahri then opened fire on those who had retreated to the closet. Police reported that while on campus, Zawahri fired at least 70 rounds.

Police responded to the library and exchanged gunfire with Zawahri. He was shot by two SMPD police officers and a command staff member of

the SMCPD. Zawahri succumbed to his wounds. Police continued to search the campus for several hours for any potential additional threats or accomplices.

SMC was placed on lock-down and issued a statement on social media and other platforms for students to stay away from campus. The lock down was lifted later that day, but the campus grounds remained closed for several days. In the days and weeks following the shooting, mental health counseling was provided at SMC to students and employees.

The resulting police investigation eventually reported that when Zawahri was a student at a local high school in Santa Monica, a teacher saw him surfing the Internet for information on assault weapons and instructions on making explosive devices. The investigation also revealed that he had repeatedly made threats against students, teachers, and campus security officers while in high school. Prior to the shooting, police visited Zawahri's residence and found bomb-making materials. Zawahri was subsequently admitted to a mental facility. Zawahri had been a student at SMC in 2009-2010 but had no history of disciplinary issues on campus.

Police discovered a three-page handwritten note on his body that expressed remorse for killing his father and brother, but did not provide a motive. Investigators believed that mental illness played a role in the killings, but no further explanation was provided.

Improvements in security made after the 2013 incident included the installation of surveillance cameras and automatic door locks on campus.

The 2013 shooting incident is significantly different from the killing of Ms. Hudson, at least as to the SMC victims. While the 2013 shooter was a former student at SMC, unlike the killing of Ms. Hudson, there is no indication that the campus victims were targeted by him. However, there were similarities with regard to SMC being required to make decisions regarding the closing of the school, providing mental health services and other support to survivors and the larger campus community, and charting a path forward.

As noted above, even over a decade later, the 2013 incident continues to traumatize those who were on campus that fateful day, a number of who

still work at the main campus. Several of those individuals spoke to us about how the shooting of Ms. Hudson caused the 2013 memories to resurface. In responding to the more recent shooting, campus leadership was cognizant of the 2013 event and considered the potential of this horrific incident to cause the resurfacing of trauma suffered some eleven years prior.

Analysis

Public Safety Issues: Coordination Between SMPD and SMCPD

Santa Monica College Police Department has primary responsibility to address most public safety issues on campus. However, pursuant to long standing protocols, the Santa Monica Police Department responds to serious violent crimes on campus. Accordingly, SMPD took over primary responsibility for the Hudson shooting investigation.

Coincidentally, on that very day, SMPD had responded to an alleged assault adjacent to the Main Campus but the campus police were not notified of the incident until hours later. When we spoke with campus police officers, they advised that there are inconsistencies relating to when or whether SMPD responding officers contact them when an incident is geographically close or adjacent to campus or potentially involves SMC students.

SMPD and SMPCD's complementary responsibilities are documented in an MOU between the agencies. Among those responsibilities, is a requirement that SMPD share information relating to campus related responses. SMPCD has reminded SMPD numerous times of this responsibility at both the watch commander and Chief level but the sharing of information has been inconsistent over the years.

We were further advised that most campus radios are not fully compatible with SMPD's communications equipment which has the potential to hinder coordination between the two agencies. We have been informed that SMPCD has been working on interoperability through the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communication System ("RICS") which is a joint powers authority that has been created to oversee and improve how

police and fire departments throughout Los Angeles County communicate with each other. As of the time of this report, SMPCD reports that there has been insufficient funding to replace current radios with a radio that would have interoperability features.

We were also advised that joint training between SMPD and SMCPD is ongoing. We were particularly informed of active shooter scenario training that is conducted at a “live fire” range. Moreover, SMCPD officers participate in 40 hours of Advanced Officer Training developed by SMPD. We commend the joint training programs already in place and recommend that additional training opportunities be explored and developed.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: SMCPD leadership should redouble its efforts to advise SMPD of the notification requirements relating to college related responses and document any instances where there has not been timely notification.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: SMCPD should continue to report on the progress (or lack thereof) of any interoperability radio campaigns by RICS or any other entity.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: SMCPD should continue to participate in joint trainings and seek additional training opportunities with SMPD on public safety-related mutual concerns.

Public Safety Issues: Greater SMCPD Visibility at CMD and Other Satellite Campuses

The CMD campus has had at least one additional prior recent incident that raised security issues and increased concerns about campus safety. On the evening of March 17, 2023, a man later learned to be unhoused wandered into the computer lab and began moving items around. When students entered the room, the man produced what appeared to be a handgun and placed it on a desk in front of the students.

Two students contacted the SMCPD and campus police arrived within three minutes. It was learned that the gun was an imitation firearm. The man was arrested when it was learned he also had warrants in another jurisdiction for felony assault.

At the time of the incident, SMCPD had advised students of the security protocol for access to the room in which the incident occurred whereby it was to be locked at all times. At the time, authorized students were able to access the room remotely by calling dispatch. On the day of the incident, students instead propped open the door in order to obtain snacks. When they returned, they saw the subject, retreated, but then decided to enter the room anyway.

Following the incident, various options were considered to increase security at the satellite campuses. One proposed option was to create a substation at CMD with officers permanently stationed at the location. However, this option was not implemented because of staffing requirements; instead, the facility was hardened; for example, a door key pad is now installed and students are provided a code to enter the computer lab at CMD. This solution significantly reduces the likelihood of a security breach since there is less incentive for students to breach security and leave the door propped open.

The murder of Ms. Hudson renewed security concerns, especially at CMD, and those we talked with spoke about the low visibility of any police presence at the satellite campus. While we do not necessarily advocate for a “substation” at CMD, a greater police presence is warranted to assure students, faculty, and staff. Usually an unarmed campus security officer (“CSO”) is assigned to CMD (supplemented by patrols by police) when the campus is open but it would be helpful if SMC could ensure a greater visibility. One approach is to install docking stations throughout CMD where it would be expected that the CSO would travel to each docking station at regular intervals. In addition to ensuring a greater visibility, it would also create an electronic record so that the college would have documentation that security was “making the rounds” on campus and creating a greater sense of safety and security on the grounds.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: SMCPD should increase expectations for personnel assigned to CMD intended to increase police visibility and consider creating an electronic record designed to facilitate that visibility.

In this case, while initially SMCPD leadership attempted to access the surveillance cameras at CMD, accessing through a remote computer

required that computer to load the profile which takes time. Rather than wait, leadership instead traveled to the SMCPD police station so that the cameras could be immediately accessed.

As noted above, in this case when time was of the essence, campus police leadership ended up traveling to their headquarters at Main Campus to facilely access the surveillance cameras which depicted the murder of Ms. Hudson. We were advised that CMD did not maintain a police-dedicated computer which would have provided the ability to quickly access the cameras from that location. On a going forward basis, SMC should consider providing a computer station for police so that immediate access of surveillance cameras and other police databases are available at CMD and other satellite campuses.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: SMC should consider creating a computer station at its satellite campuses so that police could access cameras and other police-related databases from those locations.

Public Safety Issues: Failure to Cooperate with Criminal Investigation

SMPD's investigation identified two SMC employees who had conversations with Dean the night of the shooting. An SMPD detective attempted to interview these two employees (and enlisted the assistance of an SMCPD supervisor to do so) but the witnesses declined to provide an interview. SMPD did not request SMC to intervene but simply completed its report without any further action.

Considering the seriousness and nature of this incident, the SMC employees had an obligation to cooperate in the criminal investigation and sit for an interview with the investigating detective. As noted above, Dean's whereabouts after he shot Ms. Hudson and left CMD are to this day not known with certainty until he resurfaced the next afternoon in the South Bay. Those employees who had telephone contact with Dean potentially could have provided insight into his whereabouts and intentions during those intervening hours.

There is an outstanding question about whether under current protocols, SMC would have been able to compel the employees to cooperate in the criminal investigation. To address this uncertainty, on a forward going basis, SMC should consider developing policy that would require employees to cooperate in a criminal investigation into a campus crime of violence.

RECOMMENDATION SIX: SMC should develop a policy concerning when employee participation is required in investigations concerning criminal conduct occurring on campus.

Communication to SMC Community

SMC officials were eventually able to distribute a red alert banner on the Announcements page of the Santa Monica College website which stated the basic facts of the shooting – time and location – as well as advising that the suspect was still outstanding and that the victim was an employee of SMC. The announcement also reported that all SMC campuses were to be closed on October 15.

SMC reported that an initial bulletin was sent to SMC employees at 11:56 p.m. on October 14. SMC further reported that student email, text messages and “robo” calls were made announcing the incident at 12:36 a.m. on October 15.

At approximately 8:00 am on October 15, 2024, the Chief posted a message on the Announcements page stating that: “This was a workplace violence incident, not a random act.” The message advised that the individual who had been shot was transported to a local area hospital and was in critical condition. The message also indicated that SMPD was conducting the investigation into the incident and that the suspect was still at large.

At approximately 10:53 a.m. on October 15, Superintendent Jeffery sent a notification confirming the incident, the campus closure, and setting out next steps (ongoing investigation and availability of counseling services).

For the remainder of that afternoon, there were additional announcements:

- At 1:12 pm, an announcement by the Human Resources Director offering grief counseling for employees
- At 5:00 pm, an announcement by the Center for Wellness and Wellbeing offering mental health resources for students
- At 5:11 pm, an announcement about the move to remote instruction and the closure of campuses between October 16 and October 20

At 7:18 pm on October 15, 2024, President Jeffery sent out a message to the SMC community which stated the following:

- The shooting suspect, Davon Dean, had been apprehended earlier that afternoon and was now pronounced deceased
- The victim, an SMC employee, remained in critical condition
- “There are no known additional suspects involved, and there is no ongoing threat to the public.”

The following day, October 16 at 5:26 pm, President Jeffery sent a message titled “Santa Monica College Custodial Operations Manager Felicia Hudson Has Passed Away.” The message included announcement details for Hudson’s candlelight vigil and celebration of life as well as information on how to donate to Ms. Hudson’s legacy fund. The message included a photograph of Ms. Hudson as well as contact information for SMPD for anyone with information relating to the crime.

On October 17 at 5:00 pm, President Jeffery sent out a video message to students and employees to summarize the messages of the past few days and remind the audience of resources going forth.

While the College’s efforts to notify its campus of events as they transpired were noteworthy, it was somewhat hampered in its ability to provide information soon after the incident because Dean remained at large and SMPD was concerned that providing too much public information too early might make his apprehension more difficult. While that obstacle was largely outside the control of the College, there were also problems with the College’s notification system, particularly in the hours after the incident.

First, on the night of the shooting, the Emergency Notification System could not be immediately accessed because the College’s official in

charge of the system did not have her login information up to date. As a result, she was required to contact a colleague who was out of the country at the time. Despite their collective (and unsuccessful) efforts to log into the system, another College official had to step in and send the message hours later.

A separate communication system used by Admissions was also being used for updates. Since the incident, SMC has a new notification system that integrates the two.

Many employees and students reported that they did not receive notifications apparently because emergency contact information was not current. In the aftermath, a concerted effort was made by the College's leadership to get the college community to update that information through repeated announcements and bulletins. While those reminders were helpful, SMC could be more proactive in ensuring current emergency contact information by sending out emails to all members of the campus community and requesting that each confirm that the contact information on file is current. For those who do not respond, a secondary notification could then be undertaken through texts, phone calls, or other means of communication.

We have been advised that a more assertive and concerted effort to keep such critical information current is in process by SMC. We recommend that the College to continue to support that initiative.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN: SMC should continue to develop more proactive strategies to ensure that emergency contact information of its community remains current.

Issue with Dean's Arrest History

On October 15 at 6:53pm, the Santa Monica Police Department released a public statement about the shooting and included information about Dean's criminal history; specifically, a prior arrest for attempted murder. This information roiled the campus and raised questions about why SMC chose to hire an individual with this troubling arrest history.

Per California law, when Dean applied for a custodial position at SMC, the police department conducted a background check for any prior

convictions. However, California law prevents that check from inquiring into any arrest history of the applicant unless it leads to a conviction. While Dean had been arrested for attempted murder, that arrest did not lead to a filing of charges or any conviction. Accordingly, when making its hiring decision, the College would not have been aware of Dean's prior felony arrest. While this legal barrier was explained in President Jeffery's video broadcast of October 17, 2025, the issue was not fully dissipated; many of we spoke with had lingering concerns about the hiring of Dean in light of his prior arrest.

To be clear, California law, as delineated in the Fair Chance Act, enacted in 2018, restricts employers from inquiring about or considering an applicant's criminal arrest history that does not lead to conviction. According to the California Department of Civil Rights website, the law aims to reduce barriers to employment for individuals with criminal records because gainful employment is essential to these individuals supporting themselves and their families and to improving their community ties and mental health – all of which reduce recidivism. Studies have also shown that reliance on criminal arrest history has a disparate impact on persons of color. Accordingly, when a criminal history check was undertaken of applicant Dean, consistent with state law, the inquiry did not include the attempted murder arrest since it had not led to a conviction.

Some may still question whether the restrictions on employer's access to criminal arrest history strikes the appropriate balance between the interest in safety and the competing interest in assisting those who have a history with the criminal justice system gain meaningful employment, particularly in a learning environment. Nonetheless, the law currently strikes that balance in favor of the applicant and does restrict access to criminal arrest history. Accordingly, Santa Monica College should not be faulted for adhering to the law. For those interested in a recalibration of competing interests, it would require revisiting this issue with California legislators.

Steps Taken by Santa Monica College Administration in the Shooting's Aftermath

Outreach to Victim's Family

Ms. Hudson was rushed to UCLA Medical Center after the shooting and did not immediately succumb to her injuries. SMC representatives reached out to Hudson's mother who lived out of state and promptly arranged and subsidized a flight to Los Angeles for her.

The President of the SMC Foundation picked up Hudson's mother from the airport and thereafter attended to her needs while in Southern California. The two immediately went to UCLA Medical Center to visit Ms. Hudson. As a result of the College's efforts, Hudson's mother was able to see her daughter. Hudson's mother and son (who lived locally) were also able to make the decision to take Hudson off of life support in person. Ms. Hudson was taken off of life support and passed away soon thereafter.

Vigil, Celebration of Life, and Funeral

In the days following the shooting, the following events were held in memory of Ms. Hudson:

- Candlelight Vigil – Thursday, October 16
- Celebration of Life – Friday, October 18
- Funeral – Friday, October 18

Both the Candlelight Vigil and Celebration of Life events were well attended. Numerous members of the college community and others honored Ms. Hudson's memory with grace and compassion. Those at the college responsible for planning the events should be commended for their efforts in convening the community and meaningfully celebrating Ms. Hudson's life while recognizing the college's loss as a result of her untimely passing.

Listening Sessions

Following the shooting incident, the College facilitated a number of listening sessions. During those listening sessions, the following suggestions were raised.

October 17, 2024 (Staff) – Issues raised:

- Supportive resources
- Facts of incident and information sharing
- Workplace Violence Protocols
- Supporting your team
- Campus support and activities planned

October 24, 2024 (Staff) – Issues raised:

- Additional wellness events
- Active shooter drills
- More mental health services (training and care)
- Proper identification
- Conflict resolution training

Meeting with Maintenance and Operations Staff

On October 21, 2024, Maintenance and Operations Staff had two meetings with SMC senior leadership the day they were due to return to work. Supervisors and other SMC officials were prepared to provide the employees support that day instead of sending them back to work. The meeting was meant as a check-in to determine readiness of employees to return to the work setting and a therapist was present for the meeting. None of the employees requested a meeting with the therapist, however.

Instructional Chairs Meeting

On October 22, 2024, an Academic Affairs Department Chairs and Administrators meeting was convened to discuss the shooting incident.

On October 30, 2024, an “all hands” gathering was facilitated at CMD.

Approximately one month after the shooting, an instructional chairs meeting was convened. During that meeting, a draft of the Safety Training Plan was shared. The composition of the College's Emergency Operation Team was explained. Feedback was solicited from attendees and notes of the attendees' responses was documented.

Wellness Support

To its credit, within a day of the incident, SMC deployed its Center for Wellness and Wellbeing ("CWW") as well as its Employee Assistance Service for Education Program ("EASE") to ensure that counselors were present on campus to provide support for impacted persons. As described on the College's website, the CWW provides a holistic range of timely, inclusive, culturally appropriate and effective mental health services to SMC's diverse student body. The CWW also provides professional consultation to faculty and staff and promotes the personal wellbeing of students.

The EASE program provides free face-to-face counseling, phone consultations, and community referrals to employees of the College who may be facing issues such as family troubles, emotional distress, drug/alcohol problems, job anxiety or stress, or grief/loss.

SMC was fortunate to have two pre-existing programs designed for mental health support to address those in the campus community impacted by the crime of violence. And to the College's credit, it bolstered its wellness support by also engaging with Empathia, a crisis support service with crisis/grief counselors. We also received feedback from community members who were grateful that the college made wellness available at the CMD campus where the violent incident occurred. Mini-therapy horses were also deployed at both the Main Campus and CMD to provide additional support. Additionally, under its Wellness support program, the Department of Mental Health was present for weeks following the reopening of the campuses at both the Main and CMD sites.

We were advised that there were not many individuals who took advantage of these programs in the aftermath of the incident. As noted above and to the college's credit, there was proactive outreach to M&O employees the day they were scheduled to return to work and an offer of counseling services, but no staff took advantage of the offer of assistance.

We have also been advised that SMC was provided information about those directly impacted at CMD and used that information to reach out to those individuals. On the SMCPD side, the Department's contracted psychiatrist was brought in to conduct multiple sessions of specific police related therapy. When future trauma ridden events arise, SMC should continue to proactively identify those most impacted and advise and offer appropriate services.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT: When a traumatizing event occurs on campus, in addition to providing wellness support to the campus writ large, the College should continue to proactively reach out and offer services to campus community members that were most directly impacted by the incident.

Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

Following a serious work place violence incident in Santa Clara County, the California Legislature enacted Senate Bill 553, requiring many employers to devise a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan. Pursuant to the legislation, SMC was required to devise such a plan effective July 1, 2024.

Specified requirements of the legislation mandate that:

The plan shall be in writing and shall be available and easily accessible to employees, authorized employee representatives, and representatives of the division at all times.

The plan shall include:

Names or job titles of the persons responsible for implementing the plan.

Effective procedures to obtain the active involvement of employees and authorized employee representatives in developing and implementing the plan, including, but not limited to, through their participation in identifying, evaluating, and correcting workplace violence hazards, in designing and implementing training, and in reporting and investigating workplace violence incidents.

Methods the employer will use to coordinate implementation of the plan with other employers, when applicable, to ensure that those employers and employees understand their respective roles, as provided in the plan. These methods shall ensure that all employees are provided the training required by subdivision (e) and that workplace violence incidents involving any employee are reported, investigated, and recorded.

Effective procedures for the employer to accept and respond to reports of workplace violence, and to prohibit retaliation against an employee who makes such a report.

Effective procedures to communicate with employees regarding workplace violence matters, including, but not limited to, both of the following:

How an employee can report a violent incident, threat, or other workplace violence concern to the employer or law enforcement without fear of reprisal.

How employee concerns will be investigated and how employees will be informed of the results of the investigation and any corrective actions to be taken.

Effective procedures to respond to actual or potential workplace violence emergencies, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

Effective means to alert employees of the presence, location, and nature of workplace violence emergencies.

Evacuation or sheltering plans that are appropriate and feasible for the worksite.

How to obtain help from staff assigned to respond to workplace violence emergencies, if any, security personnel, if any, and law enforcement.

Procedures to develop and provide requisite training

Procedures to identify and evaluate workplace violence hazards, including, but not limited to, scheduled periodic inspections to identify unsafe conditions and work practices and employee reports and concerns. Inspections shall be conducted when the plan is first established, after

each workplace violence incident, and whenever the employer is made aware of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.

Procedures for post-incident response and investigation.

Procedures to review the effectiveness of the plan and revise the plan as needed, including, but not limited to, procedures to obtain the active involvement of employees and authorized employee representatives in reviewing the plan. The plan shall be reviewed at least annually, when a deficiency is observed or becomes apparent, and after a workplace violence incident.

The employer shall record information in a violent incident log for every workplace violence incident.

Information that is recorded in the log for each incident shall be based on information solicited from the employees who experienced the workplace violence, on witness statements, and on investigation findings.

The employer shall provide effective training to employees with initial training when the plan is first established, and annually thereafter, on all of the following:

The employer's plan, how to obtain a copy of the employer's plan at no cost, and how to participate in development and implementation of the employer's plan.

The definitions and requirements of this section.

How to report workplace violence incidents or concerns to the employer or law enforcement without fear of reprisal.

Workplace violence hazards specific to the employees' jobs, the corrective measures the employer has implemented, how to seek assistance to prevent or respond to violence, and strategies to avoid physical harm.

The violent incident log

An opportunity for interactive questions and answers with a person knowledgeable about the employer's plan.

All records shall be made available to employees and their representatives, upon request and without cost, for examination and copying within 15 calendar days of a request.

In 2024, in response to the legislation, SMC completed a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan. The robust document tracks the requirements set out in the legislation and provides a roadmap for identifying and addressing workplace violence issues that may arise on campus. While the plan was completed and published onto the SMC Risk Management website by the law's July 2024 deadline, it still needed to be approved by the District's Planning and Advisory Council, which occurred in September 2024 with training to commence in November 2024.³ As a result, at the time of the shooting, the College had yet to begin training employees on its newly adopted Workplace Violence Prevention Plan.

We have been advised that since the implementation of the plan, there have been at least 12 workplace violence incidents that have been received and processed. Pursuant to the plan, if the threat of violence or violence is happening in real time, the campus police are to respond immediately. If the threat is more attenuated, a different campus response might be appropriate. Once a workplace violence incident is received, a designated team reviews the campus response and documentation is completed. Importantly, when the matter is resolved and closed, the initiator of the complaint is advised of any action taken.

We have also been advised that current employees have been trained on the plan. The training was provided in two modules, first a general overview of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program and a second focusing on how SMC has implemented the program providing instruction on how to locate the written program, how to initiate an incident report, how to conduct a department hazard assessment, and what to do in the event of an emergency. The training is sound and consistent with industry standards.

³ There was also an outstanding issue relating to compensation for adjunct faculty to review the training that held up implementation of the plan.

Moreover, while the plan itself can be found on SMC's website, there is no obvious prompt guiding a visitor to the plan.⁴

RECOMMENDATION NINE: SMC should make it easier to locate the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan on its website.

SMC's Campus Safety Plan

As stated on its website, SMC confirms that the safety and security for students and staff of Santa Monica Community College District is a priority. As part of the Disaster Resistant California Community College consortium, SMC has the opportunity to continually improve, evaluate and modify emergency procedures and protocols. All six SMC campuses face both natural and human-made disasters. By planning, training and organizing mock exercises, SMC recognizes it will be better prepared to handle these critical incidents.

SMC's emergency preparedness website has prompts to the following important topics:

- Active Assailant Situations
- Evacuation
- Get Ready to ShakeOut
- Civil Disturbance and Demonstrations (Involving Students)
- Crime in Progress/Civil Disturbance
- Disaster Service Worker
- Earthquake Early Warning
- Earthquake Information
- Faculty Tool Kit
- Fire Extinguishers
- Fires
- Flooding & Water Damage
- Hazardous Materials
- Heat Wave Safety
- Medical Emergencies
- Personal Preparedness
- Power Outages

⁴ To SMC's credit, it has subsequently developed an Alert Safety App that has a link directly to the reporting form.

- Relocation of Persons with Disabilities
- Severe Winds
- Building Monitors
- Student Tool Kit
- Terrorist Incident
- Traffic Accidents
- Trainings/Exams
- Tsunami

SMC's Care and Prevention Team

The SMC Care and Prevention Team (CPT) is dedicated to addressing issues of safety and concern on campus. The mission of the Santa Monica College Care and Prevention Team is to promote the health and safety of the campus community and improve campus community safety through a proactive, collaborative, coordinated, objective, and thoughtful approach to the prevention, identification, assessment, intervention, and management of situations that pose, or may reasonably pose, a threat to the safety and well-being of individual students or the campus community.

The purpose of the CPT is to coordinate existing resources with a focus on prevention and early intervention in campus situations involving students experiencing distress or engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors. The Team is empowered to develop intervention and support strategies and offer case coordination. This team is structured to regularly review and assess these situations and recommend actions in accordance with college policies.

According to SMC's website, the CPT has the following responsibilities:

- Receive, review, and catalogue information about concerns regarding student behavior
- Perform initial assessment of risk and refer cases to offices and officials as needed for additional assessment
- Develop specific strategies to manage potentially harmful or disruptive behavior to protect the safety and rights of both the student and the college community
- Make recommendations to college officials on appropriate actions consistent with college policies and procedures
- Engage in ongoing refinement of Team procedures and protocols to foster optimal Team Functioning and interface with the College

community. Identify College policy and procedural issues warranting further examination and refer such matters to appropriate entities.

- Make training available to faculty and staff regarding the identification and referral of students who may pose threats to the campus community

The website notes that SMC faculty and staff are encouraged to report concerns regarding student behavior to the Care and Prevention Team using the online referral form.

SMC's College-Community Emergency Response Team

The campus police department oversees the College-Community Emergency Response Team (C-CERT), First Aid/CPR training, and the Building Monitor program. The police chief and captain chair the Emergency Preparedness Committee and the Emergency Operations Team with the goals of preparing for natural and man-made disasters, i.e., pandemics, active shooter, earthquake, wildfires, severe weather, and violence.

SMC's Safety Committee

SMC also has a Safety Committee which is chaired by the Director of Risk Management. The Safety Committee has engaged in safety walks in order to identify lighting issues, trip hazards; equipment malfunctions and other possible concerns in order to improve the safety for those attending the college. The Committee also receives updates, collaborates, and discusses the status of safety policy and program implementation, as well as suggested improvements. This Committee is multi-disciplinary, with classified staff, faculty, and managers represented.

SMC has a robust emergency preparedness program and has devoted significant resources and time to keep its community safe. In fact, the various committees and leaders responsible for various aspects of emergency preparedness and safety may overlap in responsibilities. While these meetings are public and representatives attend from varied constituency groups, there are currently no public announcements advising of those meetings. It would be beneficial for SMC to routinely announce upcoming meetings.

To SMC's credit, an annual public report is prepared on these processes; there are sections in the report on safety, emergency preparedness, and the CLEAR Annual Security Report. It would be helpful if those reports were announced when released and more prominently featured on a relevant SMC webpage.

RECOMMENDATION TEN: SMC's committees devoted to emergency preparedness and school safety should publicly announce its meeting schedule through its social media platforms.

RECOMMENDATION ELEVEN: SMC's committees devoted to emergency preparedness and school safety should continue to prepare an annual public report and announce and prominently feature those reports on a relevant SMC webpage.

SMC Should Strengthen Its Support of Any Initiative Designed to Promote Performance and Accountability

To its credit, commencing in 2024, SMC endeavored to strengthen its interest in performance and accountability for classified employees. That interest has been communicated to first level supervisors and training has been provided to give them a better understanding of SMC's expectations for custodial staff as well as communication skills designed to optimally implement that approach.

Specifically, SMC provided training workshops in 2024 intended to provide instruction to its M&O leadership team, including its Custodial Operations Managers. Ms. Hudson participated in the following; workshops:

- Understanding the Collective Bargaining Agreement and Our Labor Partners
- Leaves of Absences and Abuse of Leave
- Performance Evaluations and Having Difficult Conversations
- Addressing Performance and Conduct Concerns⁵

We have reviewed Power Point presentations intended to guide the presentations and found them sound and creditable.

⁵ Additional planned workshops were cancelled after the shooting of Ms. Hudson.

We were advised that in past years, classified employees have not been effectively supervised or held to account, resulting in repeated issues of poor attendance, substandard performance, and lack of respect for supervision. We were repeatedly told of how custodial line staff were repeatedly absent from their job assignments, with little effective intervention. Sometimes classified employees would not even bother to call in to advise they were not coming to work, again with little repercussions. In part because of absentee supervision, when some employees reported to work, they were discovered to be sleeping on the job, playing video games, or otherwise not attending to their responsibilities. Significantly, such behavior was either ignored or resulted in little adverse consequences.

Consequently, SMC leadership had good reason to recalibrate work expectations for their classified employees. However, whenever there is an effort to change workplace culture and increase accountability, some employees will chafe at the enforcement of even existing rules especially when they have become accustomed to low expectations and lax supervision. And when first level supervisors are provided direction to increase their level of supervision, line employees will often blame that supervisor for “micromanaging” as if it were the supervisor’s fault for the changes in accountability. That is why it is incumbent upon leadership to ensure that when a new approach to accountability is to be implemented, to impress upon line level staff that it is an organization supported initiative and that first level supervisors are simply following the direction of leadership at the highest level.

Effective ways of communicating that message is by second and third level management informing line level staff of any new approach toward accountability at the inception of any change in direction combined with complete and sustained support of the first level supervision if and when line level staff resist the new approach. We were provided with documentation that at M&O’s 2024 annual meeting with both managerial and line staff there was a section entitled “Change in Management and

Departmental Expectations”. We were advised that this presentation discussed communication, collaboration, and new expectations.

While it was helpful to inform line staff of this new approach, a single presentation may not have been sufficient to convey that this revision in operational culture was devised and supported by SMC leadership. What is clear, as detailed above, is that Mr. Dean believed Ms. Hudson’s perceived change in her management style was initiated by Hudson herself. It is incumbent upon the college to strengthen its efforts to ensure that future classified staff are informed that any new direction in employment expectations is originating from the highest levels of the institution.

Of course, overinvolvement by senior leadership could unintentionally undermine the authority and effectiveness of first level supervisors and we recognize that precaution. But the message here is that when the College, as it did last year, adopts a significantly new direction in management philosophy, the entire supervisory chain should be united in that transition and those first level supervisors should be supported as they attempt to implement the desired changes. While as noted above, there was one meeting from leadership which was intended to communicate that message, it is apparent from Dean’s communiques that he blamed the increased supervisory attention on no one but his immediate supervisor.

In addition, when a change in approach to accountability and performance is initiated, the implementation of that transition should not be limited to leaders and supervisors. Ideally, line level staff should be apprised of the workshops and at least some of the training sessions should include attendance and feedback by representatives of line staff. Otherwise, managers who are directed to “change the rules of engagement” will likely face resistance and conflict when they attempt to unilaterally change their work relationship without effective communication to those at the line level.

RECOMMENDATION TWELVE: SMC should ensure that whenever a new approach to accountability and supervision is envisioned that it effectively conveys to line staff that the approach was initiated and/or supported by the highest levels of the institution.

RECOMMENDATION THIRTEEN: SMC should ensure that line level staff and its association leadership are advised of and provided an opportunity to provide input into any trainings intended to interpose new direction in areas of accountability and performance.

Current California Schools Employees Association Collective Bargaining Agreement With SMC Hamstrings Accountability

During our review, we heard repeatedly that the accountability system for classified employees at SMC is seriously flawed. The most frequent refrain was that for performance related misconduct, it was virtually impossible to hold an employee accountable due to the rigid requirements that must happen before any serious discipline could be imposed.

The current accountability system for classified SMC employees is found within the Memorandum of Understanding between the College and the Association. The MOU divides behavior between misconduct and performance. While misconduct violations provide discretion in deciding the appropriate level of discipline or accountability, the MOU requires a circuitous path be taken for performance related matters.

Per the MOU, performance-related matters include the following:

- Below standard work performance
- Pattern of inefficiency or continued negligence in work
- Repeated or unexcused tardiness or absence after warning
- Persistent discourteous conduct toward other employees, students, or the public
- Refusal to obey District safety rules

Per the MOU, before any discipline can be imposed for any of the above violations, the College is required to have, at minimum, provided the employee with a Conference Memorandum (conference to discuss concerns) and then a Written Reprimand. After the issuance of a Written Reprimand, the supervisor is required to meet with the employee and develop a written Performance Improvement Plan.

Accordingly, should an employee commit a serious act of discourteous conduct toward another campus community member (including an immediate supervisor), the most severe consequences for that employee would be a conference with his or her supervisor. And should the employee commit a second serious act of discourteous conduct, the most severe consequence for that employee would be a written reprimand. And it would only be for a third discourteous conduct violation could any more formal discipline such as a suspension accrue. Finally, if a year goes by before all of these steps are completed, per the MOU, the pre-disciplinary intervention clock starts all over again.

While we agree that most performance related misconduct should be remedial, the rigid steps that must be followed by SMC to address extremely serious discourteous conduct, negligence, absences and other misconduct straightjackets the discretion that leadership of the College should have in determining the appropriate level of accountability. The rigid steps in the MOU should become a topic for reform. Discussions between the college and the Association should ensue to eliminate the rigidity that currently exists and hamstrings accountability.

RECOMMENDATION FOURTEEN: The College and the Association should negotiate a modification to the Collective Bargaining Agreement to allow more discretion on imposition of discipline for performance-related misconduct.

Need for Refinement of Anti-Nepotism Policy

During our meetings, another concern that was raised was that M&O was lax in allowing family members and/or those with a close personal

relationship to supervise each other. It is universally considered inappropriate to permit such to occur in the workplace and SMC generally disallows a family member to supervise kin or those with a close personal relationship to be in a supervisor/subordinate situation, but a gap was identified in the system that have allowed supervision of family members and those with personal relationships to occur and should be addressed.

Until recently, when an employee is hired, there was often insufficient disclosure about whether that employee is related to anyone currently employed at the college. To SMC's credit, this gap has been addressed by expressly asking the question during the application process. And a new form for hires requires verification and disclosure of personal relationships.

However, a remaining gap is that team or crew "leads" have supervised family members under the auspice that the leads are not technically supervisors. While leads may not technically perform as supervisors, in reality they do provide a quasi-supervisory role and they should not have family members working on their team or supervising employees with which they have a close relationship.

RECOMMENDATION FIFTEEN: SMC should continue to ensure that when new hires are onboarded that they are not assigned a supervisor who is a family member or with whom they have a personal relationship.

RECOMMENDATION SIXTEEN: SMC should develop protocols prohibiting leads to have family members or those with whom they have a personal relationship from working on their team.

The Need for a Civility Code of Conduct for the Campus Community

A civility code of conduct is a set of guidelines that promote respectful and considerate behavior, particularly in a workplace or community setting. It emphasizes treating others with courtesy, kindness, and understanding,

even when disagreements arise. The purpose of a code of civility is to foster a positive and productive environment where individuals feel valued and respected.⁶

Key elements of a Civility Code of Conduct embrace the following concepts:

- **Respect and Courtesy:**
Treating all individuals with respect, dignity, and courtesy, regardless of their background, beliefs, or status.
- **Kindness and Empathy:**
Showing understanding and consideration for others' feelings and perspectives.
- **Effective Communication:**
Communicating clearly, respectfully, and constructively, avoiding language that is offensive, demeaning, or disrespectful.
- **Taking Responsibility:**
Owning one's actions and behaviors and avoiding blaming others or making excuses.
- **Cooperation and Collaboration:**
Working together with others in a spirit of cooperation and shared purpose.
- **Addressing Incivility:**
Having a clear process for addressing instances of incivility or disrespect.

Examples of Behaviors that are often included in a Civility Code of Conduct:

- Greeting and acknowledging others.
- Using polite language like "please" and "thank you".
- Listening actively and respectfully to different viewpoints.
- Refraining from using profanity, insults, or disparaging remarks.

⁶ As an example, the Los Angeles County Bar Association has adopted a Code of Civility for its members: <https://lacba.org/?pg=code-of-civility-guidelines>.

- Avoiding personal attacks and focusing on the issue at hand.
- Respecting others' time and commitments.
- Protecting others from bullying and harassment.

A Civility Code of Conduct can assist with the following:

- **Improved Workplace Culture:**

A code of civility can help create a more positive and inclusive work environment, leading to increased employee engagement and job satisfaction.

- **Enhanced Collaboration and Productivity:**

By fostering respectful communication and collaboration, a code of civility can help improve teamwork and productivity.

- **Conflict Resolution:**

A code of civility can provide a framework for resolving conflicts in a respectful and constructive manner.

- **Promoting Ethics and Good Conduct:**

A code of civility can help reinforce ethical behavior and promote a culture of respect and responsibility.

While the current bargaining contract between classified employees and the College sanctions abusive acts, insubordination, and other disapproved conduct, a code of civility focuses less on sanctioning prohibited conduct and more on developing a climate of conduct that fosters effective working relationships. The code of civility should be more than a list of “do nots” and is intended that strategies be designed to create a positive work environment for both line staff and managers. It can also be used to assess both line staff and managers in the evaluative and disciplinary process and raises expectations of both, particularly with regard to line/manager relationships.

One effective way for developing a code of civility is to include both line employees and managers in its creation. Such a process promotes inclusion, credits the insights of all employees, and leads to greater “buy in” of the completed work product. Once a code of civility is created, it is imperative to provide facilitated scenario-based training on its expectations to both current and onboarding employees. While the initial focus should be on SMC’s classified employees, the College should also

consider devising similar constructs for its students, faculty, and leadership.

RECOMMENDATION SEVENTEEN: SMC should develop a campus-wide Code of Civility.

SMC Should Develop a More Principled and Learning Approach to Accountability

We were advised that over the past several years, only one disciplinary matter of an SMC employee has proceeded to a full hearing. While resolution of such matters may be appropriate for minor transgressions, those that implicate safety concerns, workplace conflict, or integrity issues should not necessarily be subject to a presumption of compromise. When conduct rises to the level where a SMC employee has made threats of overt violence or made false statements in a work-related matter resulting in fear and/or a lack of trust in said employee, SMC should take a principled approach and stay the course in removing such employees from the campus.

As with many institutions, the most common interventions at SMC for serious or repeated violations of policy are written reprimands or suspension days. Yet these traditional disciplinary interventions do not address the core of the performance deficiencies. For cases that do not warrant separation, SMC should devise remedial plans that are more attuned to address the concerning behavior. For example, in cases in which an employee has displayed a loss of temper or other inappropriate responses to supervisors or colleagues, SMC should develop interventions such as anger management sessions or other learning opportunities as part of any remedial plan. In cases involving interpersonal verbal abuse or discourtesy, the perpetrator should be required to write a note of apology in lieu of a suspension. Because the college is the epitome of a learning institution, it is well-placed to develop remediations that are more meaningful than suspension days or written castigations and address the core of the conduct that is creating dissension and concern.

Particularly in light of the repeated instances of conflict among classified employees and supervisors, the college should also consider developing a “restorative justice” alternative to the concepts of traditional discipline.

This option was raised during the listening sessions held after the shooting. Using principles of mediation, the complainant and complained upon party opt to participate in a facilitated discussion by a neutral party. These sessions allow individuals an opportunity to hear and be heard in a safe setting with an experienced third-party facilitator. These alternative dispute resolution programs can often result in positive outcomes for those participating and paths forward that can be designed to reduce the likelihood of future conflict.

We have been advised that in the Spring and Summer of 2024, SMC's Office of Human Resources, Office of Student Judicial Affairs, and the Dean of Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion explored restorative justice programs. That included several meetings with the California Conference for Equity and Justice. We recommend that additional exploration of a restorative justice system is in order.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHTEEN: The College should reconsider its accountability system to ensure that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken and maintained when the conduct involves violence, threats of violence and integrity issues.

RECOMMENDATION NINETEEN: The College should develop remedial interventions that are tailored to address the “root cause” of the concerning conduct.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY: The College should consider developing restorative justice resolutions as an alternative to the traditional disciplinary process.

Uniforms for Maintenance and Operations Employees

Currently, there are no uniform requirements for SMC employees who work in Maintenance and Operations (M&O). As a result, there is no facile way to identify such an M&O employee by what they are wear on the job. From a purely safety perspective, a standard uniform would allow others, such as campus police, students, and SMC staff to easily recognize the role and status of a custodial employee. A uniform requirement would also ensure that the clothing is compatible with work requirements. The

identification of custodial employees has been found to be particularly important for security in buildings, especially after hours.⁷

In addition to the safety benefits of a standard uniform, their use can reduce the burden of work clothing maintenance for the employee, avoid conflicts regarding “proper” work attire, emphasize a commitment to standards, further the SMC “brand” and promote team unity and spirit among employees. In the past, M&O had acquired SMC branded shirts and jackets for staff who want to wear them. However, it has always been a voluntary program and we have been advised that most staff have historically not been interested in participating. We have been further advised that there is very little uniform stock currently available.

Should SMC decide to implement a uniform requirement, it will need to recognize that the supplying of the uniforms will be a cost incurred by the campus. And importantly, seeking input from current employees on uniform design and their preference for comfort and functionality will lead to a more successful uniform program.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-ONE: SMC should consider implementing a uniform requirement for all Maintenance and Operations employees.

The Abhorrence of Victim Blaming

During some of the listening sessions, some attendees faulted Ms. Hudson for her “micromanagement” style and intimated that it caused Dean to respond in the way he did. Even more concerning was the inference in both private and public meetings that if supervisors didn’t stop “micromanaging”, they would be at risk of additional violence. The “victim blaming” that was repeatedly articulated was deserving of a more formal response from the College.

Supervisors have a wide range of styles, strategies, and approaches to their responsibilities. And to think that murder is somehow an appropriate response or even explainable response to a supervisor who is perceived as micromanaging is beyond the pale. While listening sessions are

⁷ To its credit, SMC already has a requirement that custodial employees wear an identification badge as well as mandating certain safety footwear. SMC should advise its supervisors of the need to ensure compliance with these requirements.

intended to allow folks to speak their mind in a safe space, the outlandish nature of these types of comments deserved a formal rebuttal from campus leadership

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-TWO: Any comment suggesting that violence is an understandable response to campus conflict should be forcefully and immediately rebutted by the highest levels of campus leadership.

KCRW's Safety Concerns

The Center for Media and Design campus also houses KCRW's radio studios and administrative offices. We were advised that after police responded to the campus, the sole employee who was working at the station at the time was escorted away from the campus. In the aftermath of the shooting, while KCRW staff did attend at least one of the listening sessions afterward, the College made no special efforts to meet with KCRW personnel and hear any concerns that their unique situation may have engendered. It would have been helpful for a college representative to specifically reach out to KCRW leadership so that their voices could have been heard and incorporated into any college response.

KCRW's presence on campus is different in that personnel do not have college email addresses, nor are they directly tied into other campus notification systems. That unique challenge should be considered and addressed; when a critical event occurs, a member of KCRW's leadership team should be notified at the same time as college leaders are apprized. Moreover, KCRW operates a 24/7 radio station with at least one employee on premises at all times. Accordingly, that unique situation should be considered in further refining a safety plan for that adjunct campus. In addition, the safety plan for CMD should be provided to KCRW as well as offering safety training comparable to the training provided to faculty and administration.⁸

Finally, KCRW has identified additional safety concerns regarding ingress, egress, lighting, and other structural issues, particularly in light of the shooting incident. We have been advised that SMCPD leadership conducts an annual safety walk through to discuss safety protocols as well

⁸ We have been advised that SMCPD has conducted safety training which involved KCRW representatives.

as soliciting suggestions to improve site safety. In addition, campus police should meet with KCRW personnel specifically to inquire of any such concerns and identify any potential solutions to those concerns. Moreover, at least annually, campus leadership should check in with KCRW leadership specifically to identify any ongoing or new concerns relating to safety issues at the campus.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-THREE: SMC should develop a notification procedure so that KCRW leadership is promptly advised of any critical incident.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-FOUR: SMC should reach out to KCRW leadership in the aftermath of any critical incident at the CMD satellite campus.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-FIVE: CMD's safety plan should be provided to KCRW leadership and SMC should continue to offer training on the plan.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-SIX: In refining a safety plan for the CMD satellite campus, SMC should consider the unique position of KCRW personnel and any safety concerns identified.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-SEVEN: As part of its annual CMD walkthrough, SMC leadership should meet specifically with KCRW personnel to learn of any new safety concerns.

Entreaty for Further Transparency

In 2018, SMC Administration hired Consultant George D. Reyes to examine the structure of the Custodial program, which had not been re-examined since its inception, despite years of considerable growth. Consultant Reyes issued a report (Reyes Report) in 2018 to SMC Administration with recommendations to improve the Custodial program. Specifically, Reyes made recommendations related to service levels, cost of service delivery, staffing levels and assignments, supplies and equipment, custodial procedures, and safety and security.

We have been advised that SMC implemented some but not all of the recommendations from the Reyes Report. But we were also advised that

it was only a handful of the campus' leadership that determined what recommendations to adopt and reject. Ideally, such decisions should include a wider group of stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees, the President's cabinet, faculty, students, and classified employees. In contrast to how the Reyes report was considered, we are hopeful that the college adopts a more inclusive approach to consideration of this Report's recommendations.

More significantly, the "heavy lift" with any report and recommendations is the implementation phase of any accepted recommendation. Again, to the degree that any particular recommendation is accepted, the College should also devise a plan for implementation and report to its community on its progress.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-EIGHT: The College should develop a transparent and inclusive process to consideration of the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-NINE: The College should develop an implementation plan for any accepted recommendation and report to its community regarding the plan's progress.

Conclusion

As a long-time highly regarded institution of higher learning in the Southern California area, SMC has a well-earned reputation of being responsive to its students, faculty, and employees. This report credits the College for its sincere and robust response to the horrific shooting of one of the College's own, Felicia Hudson. The report does identify current sources of conflict within segments of the college community and provides recommendations intended to ameliorate that tension and provide an even safer learning environment. We appreciated the opportunity to meet the dedicated leaders of SMC, export, consider, and catalogue their suggestions. We are hopeful that our contributions will help provide additional transparency and suggestions for improving college safety and welcome further dialogue on how to achieve those goals.