

**October 6, 2005**  
Draft Proposal  
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# Project Airwaves

## Introduction

There presently exists relatively little sense of community at Santa Monica College and all campus constituencies lose out as a result. Too many events or programs – though they may be compelling, entertaining, and/or richly educational, and which might bring students (and others) together into communal solidarity – suffer from low attendance and/or participation. Numerous reasons (e.g. busy class/work schedules, conflicting time commitments, limited size of venues, the transient mindset of students at a two-year school, etc.) contribute to this dilemma and are relatively beyond the scope of the college to resolve. Pre-existing avenues of information flow or marketing at the school continue to prove inadequate to ameliorate this situation.

The author of this paper presumes to suggest a proposal to help remedy (not to suggest that this idea completely resolves a complex problem) the aforementioned by ***filling the information vacuum too long existing at Santa Monica College by creating:***

- 1) A campus-wide installation of TV and radio monitors (located in areas where students congregate) to take advantage of presently underutilized SMC broadcast signals***
- 2) A democratically-responsive, student-centered broadcast program to fill those airwaves***

***The outcome of this program will be to powerfully bring the college into the “Information Age,” to significantly increase the potential opportunities for educational and cultural experience of not only SMC students, but of all campus constituencies, and to raise a collective sense of connectedness and shared concerns, thereby elevating the empowerment of all participants.***

The contents presented herein, the author believes, are mostly questions needing answers before the suggested broadcast program can be implemented. Ideally a small action committee comprised of fast-working, resourceful, committed students and faculty should be tasked to facilitate and expedite the grounding of this project in collegial discussion and resolution of the issues.

And to further the democratic values underscoring this initiative, with a widespread promotion of this project across all constituencies, it would be valuable to have an easy means by which any

and all interested parties could contribute any ideas or input that might not otherwise be conceived by the committee.

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### **What is its mission?**

- 1) Stated in bold italics above

### **Who benefits and how? Specifically and collectively**

- 1) **The school and its population, overall**, by the exponentially increased opportunities for campus richness. Not only will all constituencies be exposed to many aspects of SMC life to which they may have been heretofore unaware, but potential students will have an opportunity to become even more enthusiastic about choosing SMC for their education.
- 2) **Governance groups** – the Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate, Associated Students, Inter-Club Council, etc. – can have their meetings aired and witnessed, not only for content, but for parliamentary and leadership modeling
- 3) **Sports, theatre, music, dance and any other performance-oriented program** will have a vastly greater opportunity for viewership and following
- 4) **Clubs** (qualifying club speakers, lectures, events, etc.)
- 5) **Academic departments** – lectures, teach-ins, debates, colloquia, panel discussions
- 6) **Students** – Clocktower events, **original programming**, live and on-campus news broadcasts, poetry readings, etc.
- 7) **PSAs (public service announcements)** can be created by (or contracted to the broadcast department to produce) the college, governmental groups, etc., to promote any worthwhile message(s).
- 8) **The broadcast journalism program** at SMC stands to become much more convergent and dynamic, especially given its proximity within the “entertainment capital” and the creative possibilities potentially unleashed.
- 9) **The administration** receives a powerful marketing tool with which to increase student enrollment.
- 10) **Faculty** will have an outlet and opportunity to produce lectures/presentations based on areas of expertise

## Overall Plan

### How should it be organized?

- 1) Advisory board
- 2) Operations
- 3) Costs, financing
- 4) Overseers/monitors
- 5) Maintenance
- 6) Security

What kind of charter can be created to help fend off Pacifica-like, NPR-like, Daily Bruin-like deviations from the charter and the subverting of democratic values driving and structuring this program? How can the vision be maintained?

What infrastructure is necessary for operations?

What similar programs exist at other colleges?

What about multiple, side-by-side TV monitors with alternate looped content?

### **Does the program use Channel 28 (which broadcasts to the Santa Monica community as well as SMC) or a campus-only, closed circuit?**

- 1) Does it start with closed circuit and segue into using Channel 28 later?
- 2) Does the system use both closed circuit and Channel 29?

KWRF (campus radio signal) is broadcast to the campus only. Does the program seek a broadcast signal beyond SMC?

What emphasis will be given to TV broadcast and to radio? Why?

Who will write the operations manual?

### **Does the project start off with seed money and resources, with the ultimate goal of it becoming self-financed and income generating?**

- 1) Is that possible or desirable?

## Installation

What are the steps in its roll-out?

What physical tools and structures need to be acquired and set up?

### **Where should it be rolled-out initially?**

- 1) Where will the various physical components be placed for use?
- 2) Possible suggestions for initial installation of main campus TV monitors
  - a. Cayton Center
  - b. Counseling office
  - c. Cafeteria – multiple monitors
  - d. Welcome Center
  - e. Library
  - f. International Student Center
  - g. Others?
- 3) What, if any, locations are recommended for satellite campuses in initial roll out?

## Operations

How and who will assess, monitor and facilitate feedback from campus constituencies?

How will content be decided? And by whom? And what time slots?

What managerial chain of command will there be?

What additional training may be needed?

How can various constituencies get PSAs produced?

Where will the broadcast center be? Now? Later?

What about outside network content – presidential debates, emergency alerts, State of the Union speeches, the World Series, etc.?

### **What legal issues need to be considered?**

- 1) Who will monitor on-going compliance?
- 2) Copyright issues?
- 3) Releases?
- 4) Censorship
- 5) FCC requirements
- 6) K-14 constraints

What problems or concerns affect taped-delayed broadcasts? Live broadcasts?

How will the system be maintained?

How will the program be staffed?

### **If there are physical broadcast and/or reception problems, who will attend them?**

- 1) How easily can maintenance staff be reached?
- 2) How quickly can they respond?
- 3) How can feedback regarding problems be expedited and responded to?

### **What kind of security needs to be established for all aspects of the program?**

- 1) Operations
- 2) Monitors
- 3) Content
- 4) Archives

## **How will people hear/receive the audio signals?**

- 1) Speakers
- 2) Headphones provided
- 3) Inexpensive headphones sold

How to advertise broadcast schedules?

## Costs and financing

Who can oversee the writing of the business plan for this program?

- 1) Who are the possible and/or optimal candidates?

### How much will it cost – overall?

- 1) Infrastructure – installation
- 2) TV monitors
- 3) Radio monitors
- 4) Operations
- 5) Maintenance
- 6) Security

### How much will it cost – initial roll-out?

- 1) Infrastructure – installation
- 2) TV monitors
- 3) Radio monitors
- 4) Operations
- 5) Maintenance
- 6) Security

### What are the possible sources for financing?

- 1) Associated Students
- 2) Board of Trustees
- 3) Grants
- 4) Others
- 5) Are there any campus personnel who can help explore financing sources?

### How are the physical components chosen? And by whom?

- 1) TV monitors – size, quality, vendor, etc.
- 2) Other components

### Can money and other resources, monitors, etc. be obtained from local industry, especially the entertainment industry?

- 1) Does anyone on campus have any connections that can be leveraged for this project?
- 2) Are there people outside the campus who can help obtain these resources?
  - a. How best to pitch our project?
  - b. How can this project benefit potential outside resource providers?

Would SMC Associates or any other campus support group be interested in financially supporting the project?

### **Can the program be partially/wholly financed by potential advertisers?**

- 1) Who is qualified and capable of negotiating effectively with these parties?

Can the program become income generating?

### **Who has control of the advertising and monitor area in the west end of the cafeteria?**

- 1) Campus Link holds a contract for the material and space until May 2006. ***The contract, signed with SMC in May 1996 (10-year boilerplate contract drawn up by Campus Link) and a copy of which was obtained from the office of Interim-President Tom Donner, is attached with this outline.***
- 2) Is there a better use of this space?
- 3) How can Campus Link be persuaded to perform more to SMC's advantage under the current contract?
- 4) Is it possible that competitive bidding and a capable negotiating team be involved before the contract is renewed so that SMC ends up with terms more favorable than presently held?



## **Obstacles**

### **Who are potential opponents? And their concerns?**

- 1) Fear of student content?
- 2) Loss of control?
- 3) Fear of student empowerment?

Budget constraints

What other institutional resistance is there?

### **How long will this take?**

- 1) The roll-out – first phase
- 2) The overall plan

What to do about leadership continuity from semester to semester, year to year?

Delays of any kind would seem to threaten the full implementation of this program.

## **Strategy to implementation**

### **What are the best ways to market this?**

- 1) Publicly
- 2) Privately
- 3) Strategically

### **How soon can the program be rolled out?**

- 1) What is needed at this initial phase?
- 2) Is it possible to have this program started during this, the fall semester?

What needs to happen to implement the grand plan?

What political structures and people must be dealt with to implement the plan?

Who are the key people with answers, knowledge, and/or decision-making power who can facilitate the project?

Once this project finds a committee to help it move quickly forward, the broadcast program should begin encouraging students to become involved in creating content, and in practicing creating content, with the assumption that the program happens in the foreseeable future.

## Miscellaneous Notes – November 8

In spring 2004, the Associated Students' president-elect won approval from the A.S. to place TV monitors in the Cayton Center the following semester. But her decision to attend elsewhere in fall 2004, coupled with the new leadership's scramble to regroup, contributed to those approved monitors being lost in the shuffle. A commitment to continuity of leadership and vision, at all levels, to see this project through seems essential if it is to become what it may.

Since the first week of October 2005, this proposal has been shared with increasing numbers of campus faculty, as well as leaders of all constituencies, to almost universal encouragement and enthusiasm. At the advice of Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein, I requested and was appointed by A.S. Director Christian Herrera in mid-October to the Information Services Committee (under the auspices of the Faculty Senate) as the group's sole student representative. On November 3, the committee examined this proposal under an agenda item, "discussion item," which resulted in an informal subcommittee of Al DeSalles, David Javelosa, and Jeff Higley agreeing to meet to further ground the project. Frank Dawson has also agreed to participate. Due to near-term scheduling difficulties, the first such meeting will occur soon after the Thanksgiving break.

There is a widespread dissatisfaction with the flow of information at the college. The faculty senate "college doable" – to improve communication across the campus – is but one constituency's awareness and prioritization of the problem. The Associated Students have their own committee to address the better flow of campus information. While references to improving SMC website efficiency have been recommended as part of a solution and admittedly has great value, such a medium would not have the same immediate, dramatic, proactive, communal and easy accessibility inherent in a campus-wide, multi-faceted broadcast capability.

The clock ticks. We are ending the eleventh week of the fall semester. SMC has needed this program since many yesterdays past. The biggest obstacle likely to be confronted by its proponents will be that of budgetary constraints. While at first blush, this objection might seem reasonable (even seemingly insurmountable), the overwhelming value to SMC, in multiple respects, will more than justify the return on investment and necessitates a serious response. Furthermore, due to both SMC's relatively unique juxtaposition to the entertainment industry (with all the obvious reciprocal advantages) and the opportunity to build more boldly on the college's stellar reputation, it seems within the realm of possibility that such a program could be packaged to entice entertainment/broadcast/corporate interests to jointly collaborate in its creation, funding, and possible endowment.

This program is inevitable. More and more high schools are implementing multimedia programs that could/would send such prepared students into our own program. The question is whether the leadership at SMC has the vision to lead in terms of effective multimedia distribution and exchange of information tied into instruction for students, or whether it will follow, and in the meantime lose not only those students who aspire to such knowledge, but all the other benefits that could accrue to the college.

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