

DPAC Integrated Planning Recommendation

1. Background and Recommendation

This document presents a recommended framework for strengthening Santa Monica College's institutional planning system. It combines an evidence-based governance model with documented implementation standards, examples of planning structures used by California community colleges, a responsibility matrix, and a proposed integrated planning process. Together, these components are intended to support committee discussion by providing a practical framework for strengthening institutional planning, improving coordination across planning processes, clarifying governance and administrative responsibilities, and establishing a sustainable system for implementation, assessment, and continuous improvement. The recommendations are based on Santa Monica College's governance documents, ACCJC accreditation standards, and publicly available planning models from peer California community colleges.

The purpose is not to prescribe a particular job title or administrative reorganization. Any decision regarding a new office, position, reassignment, or reporting relationship should follow a documented workload, capacity, classification, fiscal, and governance review.

Sources and reference links

- [ACCJC – Eligibility Requirements, 2024 Accreditation Standards, and Policies](#)
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Scope and Function 2026-2027
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Discussions on Strategic Planning, 2025-2026
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC and Strategic Planning Discussion, May 13, 2026
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Annual Report 2023-2024
- SMC document reviewed: Report on 2023-2024 Annual Action Plans

2. Recommended Governance and Planning Model

Formal Recommendation

DPAC should reaffirm its role as Santa Monica College's primary institutional planning and advisory body and recommend an integrated planning framework consisting of:

- DPAC oversight, review, and recommendations;
- a representative, time-limited Strategic Planning Task Force responsible for developing or substantially revising the strategic plan;
- a permanent Institutional Effectiveness and Planning function responsible for coordinating implementation, maintaining planning records, supporting data analysis, monitoring progress, and reporting regularly to DPAC; and
- formal integration of strategic planning with program review, resource allocation, staffing, budget, facilities, technology, accreditation, enrollment, student equity, and other institutional plans.

DPAC should also establish an annual planning calendar, standardized implementation reports, a searchable planning repository, a strategic-plan dashboard, and a regular schedule for reports from planning subcommittees and responsible administrative or governance bodies.

Sources and reference links

- [San Diego Mesa College – Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – 2021 Strategic Planning Taskforce](#)

- [MiraCosta College – Integrated Planning](#)
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Scope and Function 2026-2027
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC and Strategic Planning Discussion, May 13, 2026

3. Why This Model Is Recommended

3.1 DPAC already has the formal planning role

SMC's governing documents identify DPAC as the College's primary planning body. DPAC is responsible for facilitating long-term planning, assessing the planning process, developing recommendations for strategic initiatives, reviewing the College mission and goals, and developing annual action plans.

Accordingly, the most direct approach is to strengthen the infrastructure that allows DPAC to perform this role rather than establish a second permanent body with potentially overlapping authority.

Sources and reference links

- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Scope and Function 2026-2027
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Annual Report 2023-2024

3.2 Plan development and ongoing implementation are different functions

A task force is appropriate for intensive, time-limited work such as environmental scanning, campus engagement, priority development, drafting, and revision. A task force is not, by itself, a permanent implementation and reporting system.

San Diego Mesa College documents this distinction: a Strategic Planning Taskforce drafted its strategic plan and reported to the permanent Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

Sources and reference links

- [San Diego Mesa College – Strategic Planning Taskforce](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee](#)

3.3 SMC records identify a continuing planning-capacity gap

SMC's 2023-2024 DPAC Annual Report records discussion of a centralized planning database and states that responsibility for gathering and maintaining the information would need to reside with a lead administrator for planning and development who had staff support. The report also states that such a position did not exist at that time.

The same report records calls to connect Program Review and Institutional Effectiveness to institutional planning, make Annual Action Plans data-driven, and route individual program requests through the PBAR process.

Sources and reference links

- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Annual Report 2023-2024, September 13 and October 11, 2023 entries

3.4 Accreditation emphasizes evidence, effectiveness, and continuous improvement

The ACCJC 2024 Accreditation Standards are the basis for comprehensive reviews beginning in fall 2025. ACCJC publishes both the Standards and detailed review criteria and suggestions for evidence. The standards do not require every college to use the same committee chart; they require institutions to demonstrate that their structures and processes support mission achievement, student outcomes, institutional effectiveness, and improvement.

Sources and reference links

- [ACCJC – 2024 Accreditation Standards and Review Criteria](#)

4. How the Recommended Model Would Work

Body or Function	Primary Role
DPAC	Sets planning principles; approves timelines and membership principles; receives reports; reviews alignment and transparency; makes recommendations to the Superintendent/President; evaluates the planning system.
Strategic Planning Task Force	Conducts the environmental scan and engagement process; drafts goals, objectives, performance measures, timelines, and resource implications; responds to feedback; submits the proposed plan to DPAC.
Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Function	Maintains the planning calendar and repository; coordinates data and dashboards; supports crosswalks among plans; collects progress evidence; prepares implementation reports; supports process evaluation.
Responsible Administrators and Units	Implement assigned objectives; align unit plans and resource requests; identify barriers; submit evidence and progress reports; recommend continuation, revision, or discontinuation.
Superintendent/President and Senior Leadership	Provide administrative direction and resources; assign executive ownership; respond to DPAC recommendations; hold responsible administrators accountable for implementation.

Sources and reference links

- [San Diego Mesa College – Roadmap Implementation](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – Roadmap to Mesa2030](#)
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Scope and Function 2026-2027

5. Documented Planning Practices and Standards

The following are documented practices reflected in ACCJC materials, SMC policy and records, and published California community college planning systems. They are presented as reference practices, not as a claim that one organizational model is mandatory.

Documented Practice	Application
Clear governance authority	The institution identifies the body responsible for institutional planning and the route for

	recommendations.
Defined implementation ownership	Every strategic objective has an executive owner and an operational lead or coordinating body.
Integration with program review and resource allocation	Unit plans and resource requests identify their connection to institutional goals.
Measurable outcomes	Objectives include baselines, measures, targets, timelines, and evidence requirements.
Regular progress reporting	Responsible bodies report implementation status, evidence, and barriers on an established schedule.
Permanent planning support	A continuing office or function coordinates data, planning records, dashboards, reporting, accreditation support, and process evaluation.
Broad and meaningful participation	Planning includes constituency representation and operational expertise.
Institutional memory	Plans, decisions, evidence, status, and lessons learned are maintained in an accessible repository.
Continuous improvement	The institution evaluates both results and the effectiveness of the planning process, then revises the system.

Sources and reference links

- [ACCJC – 2024 Accreditation Standards and Review Criteria](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee](#)
- [MiraCosta College – Integrated Planning](#)
- [College of the Canyons – Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness](#)

6. California Community College Examples

6.1 San Diego Mesa College

Mesa’s Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee is a participatory governance committee that reports to the President’s Cabinet. Its published charge includes monitoring campus initiatives using data, supporting resource allocation aligned with goals, evaluating planning structures, overseeing long- and short-term planning, and updating the integrated planning process.

Mesa used a representative Strategic Planning Taskforce to draft the strategic plan and report to the permanent planning committee. For implementation, Mesa assigned strategic objectives to coordinating bodies and developed progress reporting. Its published implementation page states that Program Review and resource allocation processes were aligned to the Roadmap.

Sources and reference links

- [Mesa – Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee](#)
- [Mesa – Strategic Planning Taskforce](#)
- [Mesa – Roadmap Implementation](#)
- [Mesa – Roadmap to Mesa2030](#)
- [Mesa – Mesa2030 Comprehensive Master Plan Overview](#)

6.2 MiraCosta College

MiraCosta's Long-Term Planning Framework connects mission, vision, values, goals, strategies, existing plans, program review, and action planning. Its published framework states that measurable strategies are developed within existing plans rather than through a separate disconnected strategic plan.

MiraCosta's College Council is its primary college-wide advisory body and is charged with ensuring that governance processes, accreditation, integrated plans, and institutional activities promote institutional effectiveness through coordination, assessment, communication, and refinement. Its Budget and Planning Committee recommends policies and procedures related to integrated planning, accreditation, budget preparation, strategic and master plans, and resource allocation.

Sources and reference links

- [MiraCosta – Integrated Planning](#)
- [MiraCosta – College Council](#)
- [MiraCosta – Budget and Planning Committee](#)
- [MiraCosta – Office of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness](#)

6.3 College of the Canyons

College of the Canyons maintains an Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness office. The office's published functions include providing data for evidence-based planning, supporting district planning activities, assisting with accreditation, and supporting grant requirements.

The office also makes strategic plans, master plans, reports, dashboards, and research-request processes available through a centralized public site.

Sources and reference links

- [College of the Canyons – Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness](#)
- [College of the Canyons – IRPIE Reports and Briefs](#)
- [College of the Canyons – IRPIE Directory](#)

7. Recommended SMC Implementation Components

Component	Purpose	Suggested First Deliverable
Planning gap analysis	Compare current practice with BP 2515, the DPAC Scope and Function, Annual Action Plan requirements, and existing reporting obligations.	Written list of current strengths, gaps, overlaps, and missing responsibilities
Interim planning lead	Assign responsibility for coordinating the first implementation year while the College evaluates the long-term staffing and organizational model.	Named coordinator and written interim charge
Planning repository	Create a searchable location for plans, recommendations, decisions,	Document inventory and central

	progress reports, data, implementation evidence, and historical status.	index
Planning calendar	Publish annual dates for program review summaries, IE findings, budget development, staffing decisions, facilities and technology updates, strategic-plan reports, and annual action plans.	One-year integrated calendar
Objective implementation records	Require every objective to identify baseline, measure, target, owner, lead, timeline, resource impact, evidence, barriers, and assessment result.	Standard implementation-report template
Strategic dashboard	Publish status and outcome measures at least annually and provide scheduled progress reports to DPAC.	Initial dashboard with baseline status
Subcommittee reporting	Restore or formalize recurring reports from Budget, Facilities, Human Resources, Technology, Program Review, Institutional Effectiveness, Accreditation, Enrollment, and other responsible groups.	Approved reporting schedule
Annual process evaluation	Evaluate whether planning information was timely, resource decisions aligned with priorities, objectives progressed, and barriers were resolved.	Annual evaluation report and recommended revisions

Sources and reference links

- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Annual Report 2023-2024
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Scope and Function 2026-2027
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Discussions on Strategic Planning, 2025-2026
- [Governance Handbook](#)

8. Minimum Documentation for Each Strategic Objective

To make implementation trackable, each strategic objective should have a standard record containing the following elements.

Required Element	Purpose
Strategic goal and objective	States the intended result.
Baseline	Documents the starting condition.
Performance measure	Defines how progress will be evaluated.
Target and target date	Defines expected achievement and timing.
Executive owner	Identifies the senior administrator accountable for implementation.
Operational lead or coordinating body	Identifies who manages the work.
Participating units	Identifies cross-functional responsibilities.
Staffing impact	Documents workload, classification, personnel, and succession needs.
Budget and funding source	Documents one-time and ongoing costs.
Facilities and technology impact	Documents infrastructure requirements.
Compliance and accreditation impact	Documents legal, regulatory, reporting, and accreditation requirements.
Implementation milestones	Establishes scheduled deliverables.
Evidence of completion	Defines the documentation required to verify progress.
Status and barriers	Supports intervention and resolution.
Assessment findings	Determines whether the activity produced the intended result.
Continuation, revision, or discontinuation decision	Closes the loop and records the next action.

Sources and reference links

- [Mesa – Roadmap to Mesa2030: assessment and annual dashboards](#)
- [Mesa – Roadmap Implementation: coordinating bodies and progress reports](#)

9. Responsibility Matrix

The matrix below separates governance oversight, technical coordination, plan development, implementation, and executive accountability.

Function	DPAC	Strategic Planning Task Force	IE / Planning Function	Administrators & Units	President / Senior Leadership
Establish planning principles	Approves and recommends	Consulted	Provides technical support	Consulted	Responds and authorizes
Develop strategic plan	Oversees and reviews	Leads drafting	Coordinates data, engagement records, and process	Provide operational plans and feasibility analysis	Provides executive direction
Set goals and measures	Reviews and recommends	Drafts	Provides baseline and reporting methods	Validate feasibility and data	Confirms executive ownership
Assign implementation responsibility	Reviews transparency and alignment	Proposes owners	Maintains responsibility register	Accept and execute assignments	Assigns and holds executives accountable
Connect plans and resources	Reviews integration	Identifies alignment	Maintains crosswalks	Align program review and requests	Makes final administrative decisions
Implement objectives	Does not implement	Ends or transitions after adoption	Supports and monitors	Responsible	Oversees administration
Track and report progress	Receives, questions, and evaluates	Provides final transition report	Maintains dashboard and reporting cycle	Submit evidence and barriers	Reviews performance and resolves barriers
Preserve records	Sets transparency expectations	Transfers records	Maintains repository	Submit documentation	Ensures staff support
Evaluate planning system	Leads governance evaluation	Provides lessons learned	Conducts analysis	Participates	Responds to recommendations

Sources and reference links

- [Mesa – Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee](#)
- [Mesa – Roadmap Implementation](#)
- SMC document reviewed: DPAC Scope and Function 2026-2027

10. Integrated Planning Process Visual

The process should operate as a continuous cycle. DPAC provides oversight throughout; the task force performs time-limited plan-development work; administrators and units implement; and the permanent Institutional Effectiveness and Planning function supplies the data, documentation, reporting, and continuity required at every stage.

The visual below shows the recommended cycle and the distinct roles of DPAC, the temporary task force, the permanent IE/Planning function, and administrative implementation.

☞ Recommended SMC Integrated Planning Cycle

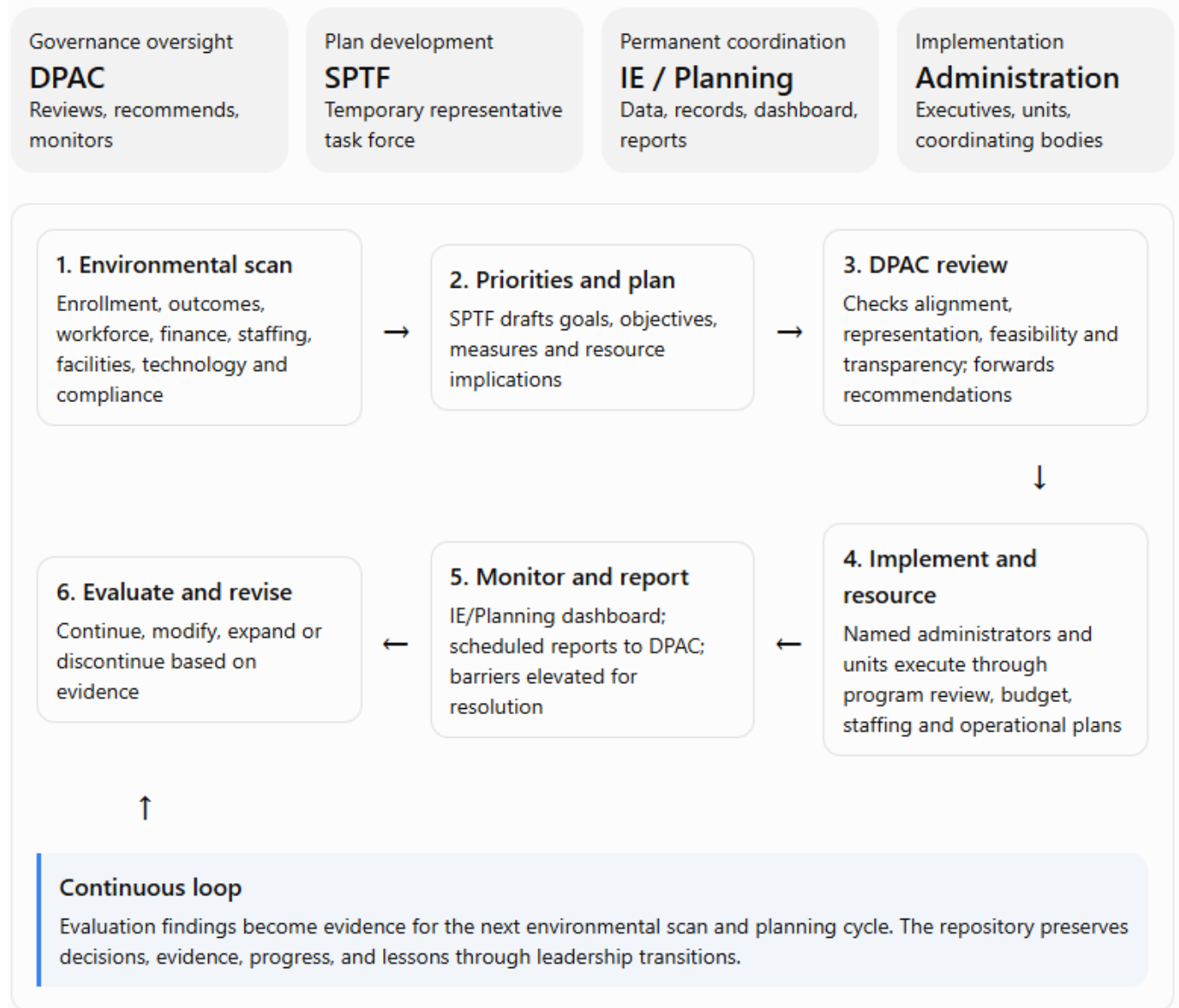


Figure 1. Recommended SMC Integrated Planning Cycle

Sources and reference links

- [Mesa – Roadmap Implementation](#)
- [MiraCosta – Integrated Planning](#)

11. Suggested First-Year Implementation Schedule

Timing	Action	Deliverable
First 60 days	Confirm DPAC's role, approve planning principles, and complete a gap analysis.	Approved framework and documented gap analysis.
First semester	Assign an interim planning lead and establish repository and reporting standards.	Named coordinator, interim charge, document inventory, and central index.
First semester	Establish a representative Strategic Planning Task Force.	Approved charge, membership principles, deliverables, and timeline.
First and second semesters	Complete environmental scan and operational-capacity analysis.	Baseline data, workforce, resource, facilities, technology, compliance, and service-capacity report.
Second semester	Draft goals, measures, owners, timelines, resource impacts, and implementation requirements.	Draft strategic plan and responsibility matrix.
Before adoption	Conduct constituency review and operational-feasibility review.	Feedback record and revised plan.
At adoption	Assign executive and operational responsibility for every objective.	Signed implementation assignments and reporting calendar.
Each semester	Provide implementation and barrier reports to DPAC.	Updated dashboard and written progress report.
Annually	Evaluate outcomes and the effectiveness of the planning process.	Annual implementation and planning-effectiveness report.

12. Recommended Feasibility Review for Major Initiatives

Before a major initiative proceeds to implementation, the responsible body should document the following. This applies to new programs, baccalaureate degrees, grants, reorganizations, facilities projects, major technology initiatives, and other proposals with ongoing institutional impact.

- Connection to an adopted institutional priority and documented student or community need.
- Required faculty, classified, counseling, managerial, research, technology, facilities, and administrative support.
- Initial and recurring costs, funding source, and sustainability after temporary or grant funding ends.
- Workload, classification, reporting relationship, and collective bargaining impacts.
- Facilities, technology, data, and compliance requirements.
- Named executive owner and operational lead.
- Implementation timeline and decision points.
- Measures of success and evidence requirements.
- A continuation, revision, scaling, or exit strategy.

Sources and reference links

- [MiraCosta – Integrated Planning and existing institutional plans](#)
- [Mesa – Mesa2030 and integration of unit planning with long-term goals](#)

13. Committee Decision Options

The committee could take one of the following actions:

1. Recommend the integrated model in full and direct preparation of a formal implementation proposal.
2. Approve the model in concept and assign a workgroup to refine responsibilities, staffing implications, and the first-year schedule.
3. Begin with a planning gap analysis and repository project, then return to DPAC with findings before deciding on the permanent support structure.
4. Request that the Superintendent/President identify current administrative capacity and propose how the permanent planning functions will be assigned.

14. Suggested Motion

DPAC recommends that Santa Monica College establish an integrated institutional planning framework that preserves DPAC's role as the College's primary planning and advisory body; uses a representative, time-limited task force to develop or substantially revise the strategic plan; assigns a permanent Institutional Effectiveness and Planning function to coordinate data, implementation monitoring, reporting, documentation, and process evaluation; and formally connects strategic planning with program review, resource allocation, staffing, budget, facilities, technology, enrollment, accreditation, and other institutional plans. DPAC further recommends completion of a planning gap analysis and first-year implementation proposal before any permanent staffing or organizational structure is approved.

Reference Index

- [ACCJC – Eligibility Requirements, 2024 Accreditation Standards, Institutional Policies, and Operational Policies](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – 2021 Strategic Planning Taskforce](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – Roadmap Implementation](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – Roadmap to Mesa2030](#)
- [San Diego Mesa College – Mesa2030 Comprehensive Master Plan Overview](#)
- [MiraCosta College – Integrated Planning](#)
- [MiraCosta College – College Council](#)
- [MiraCosta College – Budget and Planning Committee](#)
- [MiraCosta College – Office of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness](#)
- [College of the Canyons – Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness](#)
- [College of the Canyons – IRPIE Reports and Briefs](#)
- [College of the Canyons – IRPIE Directory](#)
- [Governance Handbook](#)

SMC Documents Reviewed

- DPAC Scope and Function 2026-2027
- DPAC Discussions on Strategic Planning, 2025-2026
- DPAC and Strategic Planning Discussion, May 13, 2026
- DPAC Strategic Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, Organizational Sustainability, Governance Review, and Future Planning Considerations
- DPAC Annual Report 2023-2024
- Report on 2023-2024 Annual Action Plans