



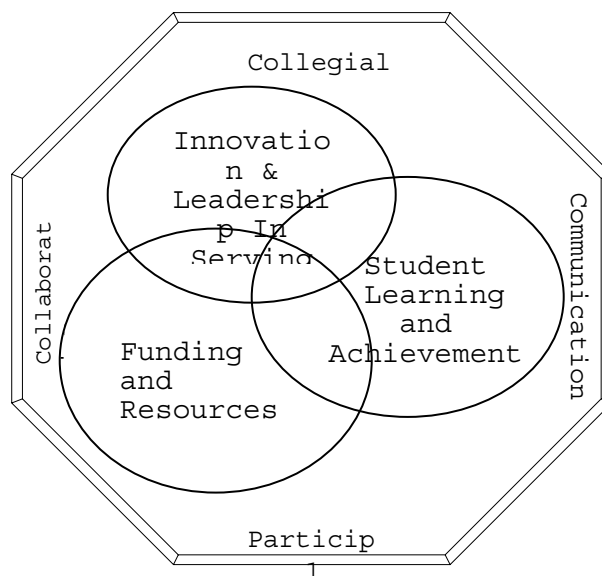
Santa Monica College Strategic Planning Task Force

Santa Monica College has long been considered a leader in community-based higher education. Our faculty and staff are revered as among the best in community college education, our facilities rival those of many larger, more prestigious, and better funded institutions, and our student success record has been impressive. However, Santa Monica College may be missing opportunities to refresh itself as an innovative leader in community college education in terms of its procedures, governance, curriculum, environmentalism, and student-run programs. The Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) and the greater college community recognize that the world is changing. Technology is changing. The environment is changing. Industry is changing. Students are changing. To properly prepare students for our evolving world, higher education must change, too. Santa Monica College is uniquely positioned to lead the changes in higher education aimed at improving student access and success in higher education through innovative programs, curriculum, and services. By developing a plan for embracing this change, we can provide our students with a world-class education to prepare them to participate in a global community.

After reviewing the results of the professional development workshops from 2005/06, further surveying the campus community, and considering current and emerging campus concerns, the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) has identified four interrelated campus priorities on which our strategic planning efforts should be focused:

- Student Learning and Achievement
- Innovation and Leadership in Serving Students
- Communication and Collegiality
- Funding and Resources

It is important to note that there is tremendous overlap and interconnectedness among these categories, further highlighting the need to prioritize these issues. Our understanding of these issues can be captured by the following graphic:



Within each of these priorities or categories, several specific concerns have emerged. Following is a brief explanation of each and suggestions for specific areas of consideration.

Eight Priorities Identified by the College Campus

Rank Order

Attract & Retain Students 2.29

Parking & Transportation 2.19

Funding and Resources 2.03

----- 65% of Respondents -----

Educational Innovation & Leadership 1.91

Welcoming Campus 1.89

Technology Innovation & Leadership 1.83
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----- 60% of Respondents -----

Improve Collegiality 1.79

Green Campus 1.73

STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

Attract and Retain Students
Parking and Transportation
Welcoming Campus

Those items that were initially identified as falling under the categories of "attracting and retaining students", "parking and transportation", and "creating a welcoming campus" in the surveys have been linked under *Student Learning and Achievement* as these three categories can be viewed as vital to overall student success. Santa Monica College is part of the larger progressive, environmentally conscious community of Santa Monica. As such, students expect the college to reflect these ideals through its programs, courses, facilities, and opportunities for student participation.

The health of the college is dependent on student success. Enrollment growth and retention are the *sine qua non* of the college. Unfortunately, despite the tremendous progress the college has made and continues to make in terms of course and program offerings, facilities, parking, and environmentally conscious systems, there has been a growing perception that the college has not been able to keep pace with student needs. The SPTF found that a perception exists among students that an inadequate variety of vocational programs and insufficient numbers of sections of certain transfer courses, insolvable parking shortages and a lack of public transportation alternatives may be impacting student success. This perception and any underlying realities that feed the perception have contributed to the college's enrollment challenges.

Additionally, we know that many students who take the first timid steps to becoming SMC students never complete the enrollment process or fail to make it through even a week of classes. Some of these lost opportunities can be attributed to students' sense of fear, isolation, or confusion upon entering the campus either digitally or literally. Attractive grounds, engaging faculty, supportive staff, and an easy-to-navigate web interface are crucial for creating a welcoming campus wherein students feel safe, connected, and confident. We have seen how powerful first contacts can be in fostering not only successful enrollment of first-time students, but also true opportunity for student success through the good work of the Welcome Center. We must build upon these efforts to do more.

SMC needs to ensure that a student's first contact and each subsequent contact make each student feel welcomed and wanted. Understaffing, frustrated staff and faculty, confusing procedures, and a cluttered, confusing "too-many-clicks" website contribute to frustrated students who, all too often, choose simply to give up. A clean, well-maintained campus environment, less reliance on temporary employees and part-time faculty, pleasant faculty and staff interactions, clear mapping and directions, and user friendly procedures can contribute to making potential students enrolled students. To accomplish our student success goals, the SPTF has identified just a few examples of student success concerns needing attention and resources:

- Adequate parking
- Public transportation alternatives
- Sufficient well-trained staffing
- Clean, safe, and well maintained classrooms, restrooms, and open spaces
- Adequate signage and maps
- Adequate access to tutoring, drop-in labs, computers, faculty office hours, library services, counseling, and peer mentoring

Activities currently underway to address some of the identified issues include:

- SMC website revision projected to be completed beginning Fall 2007
- New Olympic Shuttle & Parking lot opening Fall 2007
- Free parking at all SMC satellite sites with permit
- SMC Shuttle connecting all satellite sites and main campus
- New, free Big Blue Bus Commuter route from Mar Vista and Palms
- Big Blue Bus line 11 now free with SMC student ID. Revised route connects to Metro transfer for \$.25. Ride other Big Blue Bus routes at reduced rates with ID.

INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP IN SERVING STUDENTS

Educational
Technology
Environmental

Those items that were initially identified as falling under the categories of "education", "technology", and "environmental concerns" in the surveys have been linked under *Innovation and Leadership in Serving Students* as these three categories can be viewed as integrated and complementary as well as necessitating continuous leadership and innovation. Throughout its history, Santa Monica College has strived to be a leader in community college education. With accelerating change taking place locally, nationally, and internationally, the college will need to re-focus energy and resources toward maintaining our cutting edge reputation as a leading educational institution. To that end, innovation and leadership needs to focus on serving students' educational, technological, and environmental concerns.

With one of the largest international student populations, located in an internationally renowned environmentally conscious city, surrounded by the world's leading-edge technologies, and boasting a world-class faculty, Santa Monica College can avail itself of the resources and creative energies surrounding us to better serve our students. To do this we must make educational innovation a top priority. Fortunately, the spirit of innovation and leadership in terms of the environment, technology, and education is strong at Santa Monica College as evidenced by our current mission statement. What is needed is concrete support for realizing our vision.

Examples of areas identified as needing attention and resources:

- New approaches to curriculum and course delivery (e.g. global citizenship across the curriculum, new pedagogies, distance education)
- Educational partnerships with business and industry (both for professional development within businesses and for student opportunities)
- Commitment to greening the campus
- Environmental and global conscience across campus
- Access to state-of-the-art technologies and equipment for faculty, staff, and students
- Ongoing maintenance and replacement of technologies
- Comprehensive Professional Development program and opportunities for both staff and faculty

Activities currently underway to address some of the identified issues include:

- Completion and dissemination of the Environmental Audit
- All new campus buildings must meet basic LEEDS standards, at a minimum

IMPROVE COLLEGIALITY AND COMMUNICATION

Those items initially identified under the categories of "shared governance", "collegiality", "communication climate", "transparency", and other campus communication concerns have been grouped under *Improve Collegiality and Communication*. Indeed, without clear, non-defensive, open communication problem solving, planning, and implementation are difficult and unproductive. Over the past two years and under Dr. Tsang's leadership, Santa Monica College has made tremendous strides toward improving the communication processes, procedures, and climate on campus. Improved transparency, participatory governance processes, and efforts to create meaningful dialogue have resulted in an improved communication climate. However this spring, the Santa Monica College community—comprising students, Classified staff, Faculty and Administrators—through surveys, public forums and Strategic Planning Task Force committee dialogues has concluded there is still a need for improved collegial relations amongst peers and the various campus constituencies. If our collective goal is to support our students on their educational paths, we must work together to create a campus climate that embraces inclusion and the sharing of ideas in order to promote academic excellence.

Webster defines *Collegiality* as "marked by power or authority vested equally in each of a number of colleagues." Encarta's dictionary defines it as "power-sharing: with power shared equally between colleagues." Although these definitions of Collegiality deal with the sharing of powers equally among colleagues, the word is more commonly used in the workplace environment to describe the manner in which colleagues are expected to treat each other. Therefore, we as a community must first come to an agreement on what collegiality means to us. Only then will we be able to implement an action plan that further promotes open communication, freedom of expression, and collaboration on the functions and policy-making processes of the college. In turn, SMC Students, Classified Staff, Faculty and Administrators will work together to achieve an environment which respects individuals and their contributions to the college community.

Although there is no formula to create student success and to yield high campus morale, there are several prevailing core principles which have surfaced as key issues important to an overwhelming majority of members of our community. Only by working as a cohesive unit on the below listed issues, will we be able to improve campus collegiality:

- Mutual respect
- Collaboration
- Transparency in the decision making process
- Participatory governance processes
- Meaningful dialogue throughout the campus community
- Equal participation of all constituencies on joint district committees

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Recently the Santa Monica College Board of Trustees adopted a clear set of budget planning principles to help guide future budgeting decisions. In that spirit, the SPTF identified funding and resource concerns as a key priority in our strategic planning efforts. Obviously, financial concerns are paramount to any strategic planning effort. Indeed, every strategic planning initiative, action plan, or goal has far-reaching budgetary implications. At SMC recent budget crises, enrollment concerns, and the related fiscal realities have necessarily brought budget considerations to the forefront of our strategic planning priorities.

To protect the College's ongoing operations and ensure the fiscal viability of future strategic planning initiatives, the College will develop budget plans that use benchmarks to bring ongoing revenues and expenditures into balance and maintain a fund balance that meets or exceeds that recommended by the System Office. In addition to being operationally sound, budget plans should incorporate and reflect strategic goals and priorities identified through the strategic planning process.

Approved by the Strategic Planning Task Force: July 20, 2007
Presented to and approved by the District Planning and Advisory Council (DPAC): August 8, 2007
Revised by the Strategic Planning Task Force: September 19, 2007