



# CHAPTER 1

# Introduction



### ***THE SANTA MONICA COLLEGE MASTER PLAN FOR EDUCATION 2025-2030***

The Santa Monica College Master Plan for Education (MPE) is a comprehensive guiding document presenting the college's 5-year plan for education program development. The education plan helps inform and drive other foundational plans for the college, including the enrollment management plan, technology plan, facilities plan, staffing plan, and budget priorities. The MPE deeply reflects the college's mission and vision, and is rooted in intensive study of local community and workforce needs, as well as a careful assessment of the college's own strengths and opportunities for growth.

The Santa Monica College Master Plan for Education (MPE) was developed through a collaborative and inclusive process that engaged community stakeholders and relied on a comprehensive review of both internal and external data drawn from a wide range of sources. The MPE workgroup — a team composed of employee groups, including administration, faculty, and classified staff — brought diverse perspectives and professional expertise to the table, along with input from students. Over the course of several years, this group worked collectively to deeply understand the college's current state, engage the broader campus community, and collaboratively shape a shared vision for the institution's future.

The MPE presents a thorough overview of Santa Monica College's current state, grounded in the institution's mission, vision, values, and goals. Informed by detailed analysis of the external environment and an extensive review of the college's academic programs, the plan offers a clear assessment of institutional strengths and areas for improvement. In response to an era marked by rapid technological advancement and profound global shifts, the MPE outlines strategic goals and forward-thinking recommendations designed to help the college evolve. These strategies aim to ensure that SMC continues to effectively support student success and remains responsive to the needs of the broader community the college serves.

## **SANTA MONICA COLLEGE – AN OVERVIEW**

### ***History of Santa Monica College***

The city of Santa Monica was founded in 1875. That same year saw the founding of the Santa Monica school district, which grew over time to also serve Malibu. In 1929, just weeks before the Great Depression, the school district established Santa Monica Junior College (SMJC) on the second floor of Santa Monica High School, offering classes to 153 students. During a humble time for many, SMJC survived the devastating 1933 Long Beach earthquake by erecting makeshift classrooms in temporary wooden structures that earned the nickname “Splinterville.” Despite the hardships, annual enrollment grew at the college as it played a critical role supporting those seeking a better path during the economic depression.

The school district founded the Technical School in 1937 at 2200 Virginia Avenue, now the site of Virginia Avenue Park. In 1940, the school district purchased the first parcels of land for what is today’s main campus for SMC. Notably, during World War II, Santa Monica College made significant contributions by training over 40,000 workers for the Douglas Aircraft company, showing early prowess as a center for workforce-responsive technical training. This legacy of practical education continued into the post-war era, significantly shaping the college’s future identity. In 1945, three divisions — the junior college, vocational training, and adult education — were combined, and the college was renamed as Santa Monica City College to reflect the dual mission of academic and workforce education.

In 1970, after becoming a separate district, the college renamed itself Santa Monica College, and has grown to become a leading public community college serving a diverse student body from across the state and around the world. Through the latter half of the 20th century, Santa Monica College developed an identity as a hub of innovation, fostering creative academic initiatives such as the Scholars Program, Black Collegians, the Adelante Program and Latino Center, and other special programs that contribute to SMC’s 35-year reputation as the premier California community college for transfer to the University of California (UC), and to UCLA in particular. The college, accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), has consistently embraced new educational models, establishing itself firmly as one of California’s top institutions not only for transfer, but also for career-focused education.

SMC’s history is one of obstacles overcome, such as the impact of the 1994 Northridge earthquake, state fiscal reforms introduced by Proposition 13, and, later, by the Student-Centered Funding Formula (SCFF). Recent years have brought new trials, notably declining enrollment exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions in international student enrollment. Despite these challenges, Santa Monica College has rallied by enhancing online and hybrid (online and on campus) educational opportunities, expanding community partnerships and ties to the local and regional workforce, pioneering transportation initiatives to manage campus accessibility and sustainability, and pursuing creative revenue streams for greater fiscal stability.

Community support has been a cornerstone of SMC’s development, demonstrated through multiple successful bond measures, including the substantial Measure V in 2016, enabling extensive campus improvements such as the modernized Student Services Building, the Center for Media and Design (home to renowned public radio station KCRW), a top-quality athletic facility, and a new 111,000-square-foot Math and Science Building featuring a world-class observatory and planetarium.

In alignment with its longstanding commitment to equity, SMC has expanded support structures for historically underserved groups, establishing initiatives like Guardian Scholars, the Veterans Success Center, and programs funded by Title VI Hispanic Serving Institution STEM grants aimed at closing racial equity gaps and enhancing faculty development.



Moreover, Santa Monica College continually aligns its academic programs with evolving workforce demands. California's pioneering Bachelor's degree in Interaction Design, the launch of cloud computing certificates in collaboration with industry leaders like Amazon Web Services, and robust career-technical education programs reflecting the dynamic Silicon Beach economy demonstrate the college's continual cycle of improvement.

Today, Santa Monica College's 43-acre Main Campus on Pico Boulevard anchors the district with a full spectrum of instructional facilities, student-services hubs, and beautiful open spaces. The SMC Main Campus is complemented by a constellation of satellite campuses across the Westside: the Bundy Campus for nursing, teacher training, workforce, and noncredit initiatives; the Administration Building at 2714 Pico Blvd; the Performing Arts Center — home to the Pete & Susan Barrett Art Gallery, the Eli & Edythe Broad Stage, and the Edye Second Space; the Center for Media and Design, which also hosts KCRW; the Emeritus Program in downtown Santa Monica, home to one of the state's largest lifelong learning programs for older adults; the recently opened Malibu Campus; and the Early Childhood Lab School developed with the City of Santa Monica to support teacher preparation and child-development research.

## **MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS**

### **Mission Statement**

Santa Monica College offers robust educational programs and support services that assist students in the development of skills needed to succeed in college, prepare for careers and transfer, and nurture a lifetime commitment to learning. The College provides an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that supports intellectual exploration and helps students achieve their educational goals. As a proud minority-serving institution, the College works to eliminate racial equity gaps and recognizes the critical importance of each individual's contribution, ensuring that each person feels seen, affirmed, and valued.

### **Vision Statement**

Santa Monica College will be a leader and innovator in college transfer, career preparation, upward mobility, and lifelong learning. We will provide an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education designed to transform the lives of our students, their families, and the community.

### **Values Statement**

As an institution committed to the free exchange of ideas, Santa Monica College will foster its core values: knowledge, intellectual inquiry, research-based planning and evaluation, integrity, accountability, ethical behavior, democratic processes, communication and collaboration, civic engagement, global citizenship, and sustainability.

*Adopted: June 6, 2017*

*Revised: July 6, 2021, June 4, 2024 (references only)*

*Revised/Updated: June 3, 2025*

### **Goals**

To fulfill this mission, Santa Monica College has identified the following Institutional Learning Outcomes and supporting goals.

### **Institutional Learning Outcomes**

Santa Monica College students will:

- Acquire the self-confidence and self-discipline to pursue their intellectual curiosities with integrity in both their personal and professional lives;
- Obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to access, evaluate, and interpret ideas, images, and information critically in order to communicate effectively, reach conclusions, and solve problems;
- Respect the inter-relatedness of the global human environment, engage with diverse peoples, acknowledge the significance of their daily actions relative to broader issues and events;
- Assume responsibility for their own impact on the earth by living a sustainable and ethical lifestyle; and
- Demonstrate a level of engagement in the subject matter that enables and motivates the integration of acquired knowledge and skills beyond the classroom.

### ***Supporting Goals***

- Innovative and Responsive Academic Environment
- Continuously develop curricular programs, learning strategies, and services to meet the evolving needs of students and the community.
- Supportive Learning Environment
- Provide access to comprehensive student learning resources such as library, tutoring, and technology;
- Provide access to comprehensive and innovative student support services such as admissions and records, counseling, assessment, outreach, and financial aid.
- Stable Fiscal Environment
- Respond to dynamic fiscal conditions through ongoing evaluation and reallocation of existing resources and the development of new resources.
- Sustainable Physical Environment
- Apply sustainable practices to maintain and enhance the College's facilities and infrastructure including grounds, buildings, and technology.
- Supportive Collegial Environment
- Employ decision-making and communication processes that respect the diverse needs of the entire college community.

### ***ACCREDITATION***

Santa Monica College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, or ACCJC. SMC's accreditation was reaffirmed for seven years by the ACCJC in January, 2024, with no compliance requirements and no recommendations for improving institutional effectiveness. The decision reflects SMC's strong institutional quality and effectiveness, as demonstrated through its Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the September 2023 site visit, and the Peer Review Team's findings. The next step in the accreditation cycle will be the Midterm Report, due October 15, 2027, followed by the next comprehensive review in 2030.