

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2002-03

Santa Monica College

Submitted to the Board of Trustees
June 26, 2003

Introduction

Santa Monica College guessed – correctly, as it turned out – that the State budget adopted in September 2002, which provides 79 percent of the college's operating revenue, would be rescinded following the November 2002 elections.

This decision, a mid-year cut of 2.3 percent in State funding, was unprecedented in community college history. Yet less than two months later, the Governor announced a proposed cut for community colleges for the following year nearly five times as large as the mid-year cut. These proposed cuts – unprecedented, brutal, in some ways incomprehensible – as well as the extraordinary range of uncertainty caused by alternative proposals, have made the 2002-03 year the most challenging and difficult year in Santa Monica College's recent history.

Any discussion of this past year and the coming year has to be made within the context of this wrenching budget instability.

Despite all, SMC continues to demonstrate why it is considered among the best community colleges in the nation. Our accomplishments should make us proud, and our evolution continues on a path that raises the bar on our own measurements of success.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge the painful cuts and tumult that the budget crisis has caused: a 7.5 percent class offering reduction in spring and an estimated 20 to 25 percent reduction this fall; severe reductions in the counseling staff; the discontinuance of academic programs; the elimination of 11 administrative positions; across-the-board cuts in discretionary funds that affect every area and department on campus; and more. We are also faced with the Herculean task of making fiscal plans while Sacramento is entrenched in a partisan war that is crippling the state's ability to pass a budget.

The budget situation has also fostered a negative climate on campus. It has created lines of entrenchment. This is unfortunate, and must be addressed with openness, resourcefulness, and commitment to improvement.

The Board of Trustees has borne much of the burden of the budget fallout. As individuals and as a group, the Board has demonstrated strength, leadership and vision. The Board continues to play an important part in the crucial statewide lobbying efforts in the budget battle. The Board has committed itself to the June 30 Budget Summit as yet another attempt to bring understanding of the options the college faces in 2003-04. The Board has demonstrated its acuity in analyzing the budget and in making fiscal decisions that will provide long-term financial

stability. In short, the Board has stayed committed to the purpose of education – to create the best institution possible for all our students.

Outside the budget arena, the Board of Trustees has also shown its leadership in several ways – its behind-the-scenes and public efforts to establish a better working relationship with the City of Santa Monica, particularly through the Liaison Committee; its visibility at events and functions at SMC, in the community, and in the state and national community college professional arena; its involvement in community organizations; and its appointment of a Citizens Bond Oversight Committee so that rapid progress is already being made on the implementation of Measure U.

With this introduction, we present the following annual report, which outlines our accomplishments for 2002-03. Two subsequent reports – the “**Master Plan for Education: 2002-03**,” which provides a detailed account of how we achieved or made progress toward the objectives we identified at the beginning of the fiscal year, and the “**Master Plan for Education: 2003-04 Objectives**,” which discusses the college’s plans for the coming year – will be published in July.

This report is an executive summary of the past year’s major accomplishments and the challenges for 2003-04. It is not comprehensive, but gives the essential idea of college activities and achievements.

Accomplishments of 2002-03

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Curriculum: The Academic Senate Joint Curriculum Committee approved 36 new courses and 89 course revisions, has made substantial progress in designing and implementing an online curriculum approval process, and completed the initial review and updating of all Curriculum and Instruction administrative regulations.

New “Early Intervention” Pre-School Teacher Program: Responding to an enormous need for pre-school teachers and paraprofessionals with specialized skills in working with children with disabilities, SMC graduated this year its first class of students from a new program that provides such specialization. SMC is just one of six community colleges statewide to offer the special training. Twenty students received special certificates, along with their Associate of Arts degrees, in the “early intervention” teacher or assistant program. Allowing them to enter one of the fastest growing occupations in California, the students have been trained to work with children with disabilities at public and private schools, at child care centers, with families, and at a wide range of early childhood education facilities.

Distance Education: The Distance Education Program continues to experience growth in student demand for online courses and faculty participation in teaching online. Since the fall of 1999, a total of 67 courses from 23 disciplines have been

developed and offered online. The number of online faculty has grown from seven full-time during fall of 1999 to 70 – 40 full-time and 30 part-time faculty. In 2001-02, 5,027 students successfully completed online courses. Due to budget constraints and a 30 percent reduction in course offerings, online student completion was 3,920 for 2002-03, and will be capped at 3,500 students for 2003-04. In addition, there has been a substantial increase in the number of California resident students who live outside travel distance to SMC, as well as an increase in the number of students from other states and countries. The Distance Education Program is working with two SMC academic areas and two private entities to develop and offer fee-based, Professional Development Extension programs.

Vocational-Occupational Programs: As a result of an extensive collaborative effort in the last two years to enhance the identification of potential vocational/occupational students through surveys, SMC increased its VTEA allocation by \$177,360 in 2003-04 over 2002-03.

Electronic Class Scheduling: Academic Affairs deans, Information Technology staff, and a subcommittee of department chairs have embarked on a project to transform the current paper-intensive class scheduling process through the use of technology. A pilot group of departments will be testing the initial project efforts in the creation of the Winter 2004 schedule.

STUDENT SERVICES

Transfer: SMC increased its transfer of students to the prestigious University of California system by a huge margin – 32 percent – in 2001-02, compared to the previous year. (Transfer figures were compiled in fall 2002). SMC held on to its traditional No. 1 UC transfer position and also led the state in transfers of African American and Chicano/Latino students to UC. Altogether, the college transferred 938 students to UC campuses in 2001-02. In addition, SMC was No. 1 in combined transfers to the UC and California State University system. UC Davis started an intensive effort to attract more SMC applicants, sending an outreach representative to the college in the fall and spring, making presentations in classrooms and scheduling individual appointments with SMC students for six full days. The university also funded a trip to Davis for SMC students.

Financial Aid: SMC had its lowest loan default rate ever – 4.1 percent. That compares to last year's 5.3 percent which, at the time, was the lowest ever.

Student Retention: The Presidential Student Retention Task Force submitted 12 recommendations to President Robertson at the end of the fall semester and has implemented three so far. They are mandatory math, English and ESL assessments for incoming freshmen; examination of the Financial Aid process; and the SCORE program, which is a collaboration of counselors and English and math professors who meet regularly to devise strategies to improve student retention. Within budget constraints, the college will work on the remaining recommendations in 2003-04.

Student Success Project: The Student Success Project – designed to encourage students to complete their coursework, improve their grades and stay in school – won a national award this year for its work. The National Council of Student Development, an affiliate of the American Association of Community Colleges, gave the 2003 “Best Practice Award” to SMC’s Student Success Project, citing its effectiveness, quality, significance to the field, and adaptability of strategies to other colleges. Studies have shown that students in the program, all first-time freshmen, are more likely to stay in school, complete their courses, and perform better than the overall student population. For example, studies show that approximately 90 percent of students in the program successfully completed their courses, compared to an overall rate of 68 percent of first-time SMC students.

Orientation: A new in-house online student orientation program was launched in May and has greatly improved the orientation process. The program, developed with Information Management, provides greater interaction, allows students to receive their enrollment date immediately, and provides immediate troubleshooting. Online orientation continues to increase – for example, of the 2,259 students oriented for spring, 1,284 were oriented online.

BUSINESS & FACILITIES

- **Budget Cuts:** Substantial mid-year budget cuts were implemented this past year, which required time-consuming and labor-intensive processes to successfully monitor and maintain the reduced budget. In addition, the ongoing budget crisis has demanded an extraordinary amount of time and energy from the Business Office.
- **New Financial System:** massive training efforts were undertaken to train the Business Services staff in the new PeopleSoft financial system that the Los Angeles County Office of Education is converting community colleges to in 2003-04.
- **Audit:** The college completed a successful audit, receiving its first-ever “unqualified opinion,” which means the auditing firm found nothing that would substantially affect the financial standing of SMC. The “unqualified opinion” was attributed to substantial strides made in the inventory and inventory control areas.

- **Workers Comp and Benefits:** SMC was instrumental in forming a new consortium to substantially limit the increase in workers compensation premiums and found a cost-effective alternative to the college's current PERS-CARE medical benefits (the latter, if approved by college bargaining units, could save the college as much as \$1.2 million a year).

Delinquent Property Tax: SMC formed a consortium with other community colleges and K-12 districts to realize immediate gain from delinquent property tax.

MEASURE U IMPLEMENTATION & PROJECTS

SMC moved quickly this past year to begin to implement Measure U, the \$160 million bond approved by Santa Monica-Malibu voters in March 2002. In July 2002, the Board of Trustees-appointed Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee held its first meeting and continues to assemble quarterly. In addition, the college launched major facilities projects in 2002-03 as part of a 12-year process that will modernize and beautify the college to give students a top education. These projects include:

- **New Emeritus College Building:** Contractors have almost completed the four-story, contemporary glass building on Second Street in downtown Santa Monica that will be the beautiful new home of Emeritus College. Emeritus is expected to move into its quarters in the fall. The college last June purchased the building, which was still under construction, for \$9 million. This was the first major project included in Measure U.

- **Main Stage:** The theatre arts department in May staged its last production in the 1950s-era Main Stage before the building gets an \$8.1 million major overhaul. The renovation project – a cutting-edge, 280-seat facility – was designed over the last year by Los Angeles architect Leo A. Daly in close consultation with theatre arts department faculty and staff. Work is expected to begin in December and be completed in mid-2005. The new Main Stage will include high-tech sound and light booth, fly space, studios, prop shops, showers and dressing rooms.

- **New Athletics and Kinesiology-Dance Offices:** Construction has just begun on a new office facility for Athletics and Kinesiology-Dance above the dance studios of the Gym, where the old east bleachers were located. When completed, the departments will move their offices from the PE Annex, which was originally meant to be temporary.

- **BAE Property:** SMC took full possession this spring of the 10.4-acre BAE property at Santa Monica Airport, which had been purchased in December 2001. Because of the budget crisis, the college will have to put off plans for establishing a satellite campus at the location, but subleasing the property could provide a source of funding to pay for the certificate of participation for the BAE acquisition.

Other Measure U Projects: The college is moving ahead with planning and design/drawings for the Liberal Arts Building, Literacy Center, and Campus Quad. On July 8, the Santa Monica City Council will consider a staff recommendation to authorize \$10.5 million in earthquake redevelopment funds for replacing the earthquake-damaged Liberal Arts Building.

OTHER MAJOR FACILITIES

- **Swim Center:** The long-awaited Santa Monica Swim Center – a municipal aquatics complex jointly operated by SMC and the City of Santa Monica – opened last July. The center features a 50-meter Olympic-size fitness pool with diving area, recreational shallow splash pool, sun deck and more.
- **Parking Structure C New Entry:** The new and handsome brick-inlaid entryway into Parking Structure C from 17th Street was completed in time for the beginning of the winter session. The new entryway vastly improves safety and pedestrian flow in and around Parking Structures C and A, the Business Building, and the new Swim Center.
- **Library Expansion & Modernization:** The Library Expansion & Modernization project is nearly completed and is expected to open for the beginning of the fall semester. The project nearly doubles the size of the building, provides more than twice the number of seats and computer stations, and adds other features. An opening ceremony is scheduled for October.
- **Smaller Projects:** SMC completed several small projects, including editing classrooms at the Academy of Entertainment & Technology, Art Complex renovations, Bookstore Addition, and Student Services Building C, which now houses Financial Aid and EOPS. This last move consolidates the majority of student services in one complex.

TECHNOLOGY

The college has updated its Technology Master Plan for 2000-05 – both for its goals and specific objectives. Among the most notable achievements is the completion this year of the online degree audit system (funded by Title III), which is dramatically improving the way the college counsels students. In short, the new online audit system allows counselors to develop the most effective academic plans through the automation of student degree/certificate and transfer readiness checks. Counselors started to use this new system in the spring semester.

In addition, the college continues to make progress in its efforts to “web-enable” many student and faculty self-service functions. This makes it possible for students and faculty to conduct business anytime, from anywhere – including the online application process. To this end, Academic Computing has continued its ongoing initiative to provide effective tools for student-faculty communication and sharing of learning resources online.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Sexual Harassment:** The Human Resources Office worked with the Academic Senate to adopt a revised administrative regulation on sexual harassment. In tandem with that, Human Resources conducted extensive training of employees and students in sexual harassment and continued to deal in a sensitive manner with sexual harassment complaints from students and employees.
- **Faculty Hiring Process:** Human Resources worked with the Academic Senate to revise and improve the full-time faculty hiring process. The college remains committed to a diverse workforce while adhering to new legal restrictions in the area of Affirmative Action.
- **Diversity:** The college continues to maintain diverse ethnic and gender representation among its academic and classified employees to more closely reflect its student population – which is currently 62.6 percent minority and 56.8 percent women.
- **Online Classified Employee Hiring Process:** Human Resources implemented a web-based process of requesting the filling of classified positions, which streamlined the process by integrating the Human Resources and Personnel Commission staff functions and by providing managers the ability to review online the status of hiring requests. The success of the project is attributed to Human Resources working with the Personnel Commission along with valuable assistance from Information Management.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

- **Federal Funding:** The Planning & Development Office, in collaboration with Cassidy & Associates in Washington, D.C., worked successfully with **Senator Barbara Boxer** to insert language into the 2003 VA-HUD Bill, directing FEMA to settle its conflicts on reimbursements of nearly \$7 million owed to SMC after the 1994 Northridge earthquake. In addition, appropriation requests were made by **Congressman Henry Waxman** for \$3 million to support development of the Madison Theater Project. Boxer also submitted an appropriation request of \$15 million on behalf of SMC to the Transportation Committee for development of additional parking facilities.

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Internships: A record 20 SMC students were placed this summer in prestigious federal government and university internship programs throughout the nation. The interns are working at a wide variety of organizations, sometimes on very sophisticated projects that include the Human Genome Project, laser technology, energy-efficient lighting, and building and fire research. Students are interning at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkeley; National Institute of Standards & Technology in Gaithersburg, Md., a U.S. Commerce Department agency just outside Washington, D.C.; U.S. Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Washington, both part of the U.S. Department of Energy; UCLA's Membrane Biology; Loyola Marymount University's engineering program; and the U.S. Defense Department through the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

• **Professional Development Institute of Early Childhood Educators:** Thanks to the \$1.6 million Prop. 10 grant that came to the college and partner agencies in July 2002, SMC established a program designed to dramatically improve the training of early childhood educators. Together with the city of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, Connections for Children and other local child care groups, SMC set up the Professional Development Institute of Early Childhood Educators. The institute offers early childhood educators special training through workshops, seminars and more.

Institutional Effectiveness: Working closely with SMC's institutional researchers, the college coordinated several studies, including an assessment of the Early Alert System and, along with USC, a comparison of academic outcomes for African American and Latino students vis-à-vis white and Asian students. The latter project, funded by the James Irvine Foundation, is called "Diversity Scoreboard Project." In addition, the Office of Institutional Research developed a profile of first-time students who enrolled at SMC in fall 2001 to examine how the students performed academically and how they differed from the rest of the student population.

• **Office of Workforce & Economic Development:** The Office of Workforce and Economic Development raised the bar in 2002-03, bringing in more than \$1.4 million in employment and training contracts. That compares to \$268,000 in contracts the previous year. This dramatic increase came as a result of SMC bringing in new funding streams, such as the Employment Training Panel, and obtaining private monies in connection with Cedar Sinai Hospital Weingart Foundation grant. Through this collaboration, Cedar Sinai Hospital employees will receive R.N. training from SMC under a career ladder structure. Workforce and Economic Development also established partnerships with other local health-care providers, such as Kaiser Permanente, to upgrade the skills of their front-line staff.

Community Services & Continuing Education: In 2002-03, the Noncredit ESL Program received funding from the non-profit Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) to purchase new resource materials to upgrade the Basic Skills computer lab. The continued efforts of staff, faculty and students alike, along with improvements in testing strategies, contributed to gains in benchmarks in this past fiscal year. However, due to budget cutbacks, the ESL Noncredit program was identified among those to be suspended as of fall 2003. The students served by this program have been referred to the SMMUSD Adult programs. The college and SMMUSD are working closely to make this a smooth transition for both student and teachers. It is expected the school district will take over the program in the fall. Community Services – which is merging with Workforce and Economic Development – is developing a strategic plan to transform itself and strengthen its ability to help adult learners discover their talents, master new skills and stay current with the latest trends.

- **Grants:** The college raised \$5.1 million in grants this past year, down slightly from the \$5.4 million of 2001-02. Considering the budget situation and greater competition for grants nationwide, this total is highly respectable.

- **National Conference:** SMC, along with Texas A & M University, hosted this year's Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities/Department of Labor conference on workforce development. The conference was held in May in Santa Monica.

SMC FOUNDATION

This was another highly successful year for the SMC Foundation, which raised an all-time record of \$5.5 million.

- **Annual Giving:** Set an all-time high for non-bequest, undesignated gifts – exceeding \$150,000 in gifts and pledges, attributable largely to the success of the President's Circle annual giving support group.

- **Gifts:** A total of 5,750 gifts were processed, with the major categories being Madison (\$4.25 million), Emeritus College (\$132,000), and Scholarships (\$500,000).

- **Capital Campaign/Madison Theater Project:** Total gifts and pledges to Madison exceeded \$3 million, bringing the total raised to nearly \$8 million toward the \$15.7 capital campaign.

- **Scholarships:** In 2002-03, the Foundation distributed a record \$600,000 in scholarships and other student awards to 900 students. The donors specifically designate these scholarships.

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Chairs of Excellence: The Foundation named a recipient of the second Marvin Elkin/Northrop Grumman Chair of Excellence in Physical Science – chemistry professor **Dr. Jamey Anderson**. This is the first of four Chairs of Excellence established that has gone through a three-year cycle. Each endowed chair provides each recipient \$5,000 a year for three years for research projects of their choice.

- **Dale Ride Interns:** For the second year in a row, the Foundation secured sponsors (at the \$5,000 level) for each of the four Dale Ride interns so that all their expenses were covered by private donations. For the first time, the President's Circle sponsored a Dale Ride intern.

MADISON PROJECT

The Madison Project remains on track thanks to the leadership of **Dale Franzen** and major support from the SMC Foundation.

- The Madison Project raised more than \$3 million last year of private funds strictly earmarked for the theater project, bringing the total raised so far to almost \$8 million.

- The college finished the design of architectural drawings, completed the highly public environmental review process (except for the Board's final EIR hearing scheduled for August), and will shortly be sending the plans to the State Architectural Board for approval.

- The Madison Advisory Group – made up of a broad cross-section of community members, including Madison area neighbors – finished their work with a very positive public neighborhood hearing at which more than 60 people spoke in favor of the project as compared to three in opposition.

- The Madison Performance Series continued with its wide array of performing artists in six free concerts this past year. Once again the concerts grew in attendance and popularity. The Kirov-Mariinsky Theatre Opera concert at the Santa Monica Pier had over 900 SMMUSD students in attendance. The series coordinator continued to bus in about 150-200 school children to other concerts.

- The performance series continued to raise the level of artistic quality this past year. An example of this was a reading of a new play, "Supper With Anna," directed by **Tom Hulce** and starring **Alfred Molina** and **Glenn Headly**.

- In addition to the theater site at Madison, the concerts were also presented in local community locations to serve a larger audience. "Madison on the Road" had concerts at the Santa Monica Pier and the Santa Monica Museum of Art.

- The Opera Camp program with Los Angeles Opera was able to offer scholarships to almost 15 children from SMMUSD and other school districts.

- The project held a celebrity donor recognition event that featured **Dustin Hoffman** in a private reading of selected play scenes with actress **Zoey Deschanel**. The event was well attended and brought new and possible donors to the table.

PUBLIC PROFILE

- The college continues to have a high public profile in the community with a wide range of free and low-cost special events, cultural offerings, lectures and more. “RussiaFest,” held over the fall and winter sessions, was a particular highlight that included music, lectures and an art exhibit – and reached out to an ethnic group often taken for granted.
- SMC’s national profile was raised by such achievements as being named “Publisher’s Pick” by *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*, which selected colleges and universities throughout the country for “enabling so many of our Hispanic youth to succeed.”
- One of our alumni, **Barry Gutierrez**, was part of a team on the *Rocky Mountain News* that won a Pulitzer Prize in news photography for pictures of the 2002 Colorado wildfires.
- Many employees won a wide range of honors and awards, at the local, state and national levels.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

- SMC hosted and co-sponsored last August the first-ever “Relay for Life” in Santa Monica, which raised \$60,000, much of it by teams of SMC employees, for the American Cancer Society. The college will also host and co-sponsor the second “Relay for Life” at Corsair Field, this time on July 26-27.
- The college’s General Advisory Board was chosen as an outstanding example of external relations in a statewide report, published by City College of San Francisco and entitled, “We Could Do That! – A User’s Guide to Diversity Practices in California Community Colleges.”
- SMC entered into a creative and progressive partnership with Easter Seals Southern California and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District to provide childcare services for approximately 125 children (including children of SMC students).

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A wide variety of special relationships in the community and outreach programs continue to generate goodwill among many constituency groups. A special liaison committee between the college, the City of Santa Monica, and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District ensure an ongoing discussion on issues of mutual concern. And our outreach programs reach into schools, the senior citizen population, business community, clubs, community organizations, and more.

Challenges of 2003-04

- **Budget Reductions:** The major challenge will be preserving quality education and the opportunity for student success while making reductions in budget. A budget crisis of the magnitude has ripple effects that reach deep into the lives of our students, employees and community. The crisis not only forces us to do more with less, but it diverts energy from our other major tasks and goals. We've had to discontinue programs and lay off employees. We've been forced to put on hold the hiring of new faculty. We will need to engage the resourcefulness of all parties in finding and embracing solutions.

- **Accreditation:** The college has been preparing for the accreditation team visit March 23-25. The accreditation steering committee and various subcommittees are engaged in completing the first draft of the self-study. The process for reaffirmation of accreditation – which occurs every six years – requires a close examination of virtually everything we do at this college. It's an exhaustive – and sometimes exhausting – process that involves representatives from throughout the campus. The chair of the accreditation team will share major commendations and recommendations at the exit interview March 25, with a final report coming out in June 2004.

- **Budget:** Beyond the current budget crisis, we also face the challenge of planning for what could be an unfavorable fiscal situation for 2004-05. The chaos in Sacramento, along with a continued weak economy, underline the need for SMC to maintain a strong budget reserve.

- **College Climate:** We will need to continue to make every effort to keep lines of communication open on campus and to deal with the issue of perception to bring our college community together.

- **Fundraising Efforts:** Given the economic realities, the college will need to invigorate fundraising efforts and look for creative solutions to fiscal challenges.

- **Community Relations:** Because of the symbiotic relationship between SMC, the City of Santa Monica, and the SMMUSD, we will need to continue to strengthen relationships with these two public entities.

Conclusion

As we enter 2003-04, we continue to face challenges that will test our mettle. But crises present new opportunities. I am certain we will pull through these difficulties and emerge stronger and ever more committed to the unique and invaluable contributions made by community colleges – and SMC, in particular. We thank the Board of Trustees for its continued support and exemplary leadership.