The following is a summary of the highlights of the SMC Board of Trustees meeting of Sept. 15, 2009. The Board summaries are posted at http://www.smc.edu/apps/docs.asp?Q=586.

In addition, the meeting minutes, which provide all the official actions of the Board, are posted at http://www.smc.edu/apps/Pub.asp?Q=544.

Podcasts of the meeting are available at http://www.smc.edu/itunes.

2009-10 BUDGET: The Board of Trustees voted to adopt a $341.4 million budget for 2009-10, which includes a $150 million general unrestricted fund and the remainder in restricted funds for a variety of purposes, including bond projects, student financial aid and more. Despite a $6.6 million cut in state funds this fiscal year, the college is on solid financial footing, thanks to careful planning and spending that left SMC with an ending balance of $17.4 million at the end of 2008-09, or a substantial 13 percent. It is estimated that SMC will end up with reserves of $15.6 million, or 11.6 percent, at the end of this fiscal year. The budget reflects a 1 percent reduction in supplies, a 15 percent reduction in contracts and services (with some exceptions), and a 20 percent cut in capital expenditures. College officials say the budget reflects the best information currently available. The budget was reviewed by the District Planning & Advisory Council's Budget Planning subcommittee, which acknowledged that the budget procedure followed transparent processes and that all constituencies had input. College officials caution that it is inevitable that there will be changes during this fiscal year -- some because of revised state revenues, and others because of internal adjustments resulting from new or updated information.

NEW SCHOOL YEAR/ENROLLMENT: Officials reported to the Board that the new academic year is off to a great start, with enrollment up slightly compared to fall 2008 and classes at 98 percent capacity, despite a 6 percent reduction in class offerings because of budget cuts. Because of intense student demand, 45 class sections were added at the beginning of the school year, and the largest area of growth is in business courses and more students are switching to online classes, officials said. The VIP Welcome Day held Aug. 28 for new students and their families attracted a record 4,500. Although the first two weeks typically drew much traffic around the main campus, traffic was smoother this year because the college for the first time instituted a traffic control plan in conjunction with the Santa Monica Police Department, and for several days, the Big Blue Bus added buses to accommodate more student riders. Making the report were Vice President of Academic Affairs Jeff Shimizu, Vice President of Enrollment Development Teresita Rodriguez, Vice President of Student Services Mike Tuitasi and Dean of Campus Security, Student Health and Safety Al Vasquez.

GRANT FOR ASIAN AMERICAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER STUDENTS: The Board voted unanimously to accept a two-year, $2.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a comprehensive pilot program targeting Asian American and Pacific Islander students with academic need and other low-income students. The two-year program, which will serve 300 students, will include a comprehensive array of innovative student support services and instructional strategies designed to help participants complete their Associate of Arts degree and/or transfer within three years. The grant is given to colleges and universities that qualify as Asian American/Pacific Islander-serving institutions. To qualify, a college must have an enrollment of at least 10 percent of this
population, and SMC’s enrollment of Asian American/Pacific Islander students is 14 percent. Federal guidelines also allow the college to serve some other low-income students who do not fall into this ethnic category.

ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES FOR MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY COMPLEX: The Board voted unanimously to approve a $5.5 million agreement with Clive Wilkinson Architects of West Hollywood to design, do construction drawings and handle construction administration for the Media & Technology Complex to be built at the Academy of Entertainment & Technology. The complex will consist of the existing AET building, which will be renovated, a new addition to the AET building, and a new building for radio station KCRW. In addition to the current programs at the AET, much of the Communication Department will be relocated to the site from the main campus along with all of KCRW. The KCRW Foundation covered the preliminary planning costs for this project. The project is funded by Measure AA, the $165 million bond measure approved by Santa Monica-Malibu voters in 2008. It is estimated the entire project will cost $61.2 million.

BOARD’S 2009-10 GOALS & PRIORITIES: The Board voted unanimously to approve its 2009-10 Goals and Priorities, which had been discussed and drafted during its summer study session on Aug. 1. Altogether, there are seven listed broad goals, with several specific goals under each category, ranging from educational advancement and quality to facilities and sustainability. The full list, which was modified slightly on Tuesday, will be in the Board minutes, which will be posted at http://www.smc.edu/apps/Pub.asp?Q=544.

AB 947: President Dr. Chui L. Tsang reported that Assembly Bill 947, which would help SMC because it will allow community colleges to add a capital outlay charge to fees for out-of-state students, has been passed by the State Legislature and is awaiting Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s signature. He said that reports from Sacramento indicate the governor has no objection to the legislation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY: The Board voted unanimously to give final approval to a policy that updates the list of designated positions required to file Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms. The list of designated positions is long and includes the trustees, president, vice presidents, deans and more. The new policy is required because the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved and amended the Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Code for SMC.

POLICY ON CLAIMS AGAINST SMC: The Board voted unanimously to give final approval to a policy that allows the college president to proceed in a timely manner with appropriate action related to claims filed against the college.

QUARTERLY REPORT: The Board voted unanimously to acknowledge submittal of the college’s quarterly report as of June 30 to the California Community Colleges’ Chancellor’s Office.

CLOSED SESSION ACTIONS: Board Chair Louise Jaffe announced the following action from closed session: The Board voted unanimously to approve the participation of the Santa Monica Community College District in the joint appeal with other community college districts and unified school districts in Clovis Unified School District, et al. v. Westley, Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, C061696, and ratified an
agreement with Lozano Smith to contribute to the costs of the appeal not to exceed $10,000. The purpose of the appeal is to challenge the formula developed by the State Controller concerning how school and college districts recover certain costs mandated by the state.