Santa Monica College opened in 1929 with just 153 students and has now grown to a thriving campus with approximately 30,000 students and course offerings in more than 80 fields of study. The college draws its extremely diverse students from throughout Southern California and boasts one of the largest international and out of state student populations in the system. Santa Monica College has a strong reputation for transfer of all student populations to the University of California, the California State University, the University of Southern California and other four-year universities.

In Fall 2003 due to a severe budget crisis, course offerings were reduced by 27% (compared to Fall 2002) and this included the discontinuance of several vocational programs. The 2003-2004 annual successful course completion rate for credit vocational programs appears to be an anomaly due to the smaller cohort of students taking vocational courses because of the program discontinuance. The continued downward trend, however, is of concern and the college recognizes the need to more closely monitor these rates as we continue to add new vocational curriculum. Additionally, given the dramatic cuts in course offerings enrollment naturally declined, which more harshly affected students with later enrollment priority. This resulted in a serious decline in the under-18 population during 2003-2004, since high school concurrent students are required to receive the lowest priority. The college profile indicates an increase – a near doubling – in enrollment of students under the age of 18, which can be attributed to college’s enrollment recovery efforts and re-growing of high school dual and concurrent enrollment programs.

The basic skills improvement rate declined slightly for the period 2002-2003 to 2004-2005 as a result of the change in demographics produced by the enrollment decline caused by the budget cuts. By the following period 2003-2004 to 2005-2006 not only had the rate stabilized, it improved over the base year. While there was the one year of decline, Santa Monica College’s performance level in this area is above the peer group average in this area.

The student progress and achievement rate, percent of students who earned at least 30 units, and improvement rate for ESL have each increased over the past six years. SMC’s excellent counseling programs focus efforts on the first-year experience. Programs such as the Welcome Center, the Title V First Year Institute, and the Student Success Seminar course assist students through the transition to the college as well as proper educational planning to meet future goals. The steady improvements in these three performance indicators can be directly attributed to the implementation of innovative and effective student service delivery.

Santa Monica College’s performance indicators show progressive improvement in most areas over the last three to six years. Although the college’s persistence rate in year three is equal to the rate in year one, when compared to its peer institutions it is well above average. Santa Monica College is very proud of its long history of academic excellence and student success and embraces every opportunity to evaluate programs and improve performance.