Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges
ARCC 2008 – Self Assessment

Santa Monica College was established in 1929 with only 153 students. Today, the college serves a diverse population of approximately 50,000 students annually; including California residents, out-of-state, and international students. The college offers more than 80 fields of study and has one of the strongest reputations for transfer in the California system. The college transfers the highest number of students in total to the University of California, the California State University, the University of Southern California and other four-year universities.

Santa Monica College demonstrates above average performance in relation to its peers on five of the seven college performance indicators. These indicators include: the student progress and achievement rate, the percent of students earning 30 units, the fall to fall persistence rate, and the improvement rates for basic skills and ESL courses. Additionally, the college exhibited improved performance over the baseline year in the student progress and achievement rates, the percent of students earning at least 30 units, and the ESL improvement rate.

SMC’s performance on these measures is related to its tradition of integrating student support services with instruction. Counseling programs focusing on the first year, including the Welcome Center and First Year Institute, and a Student Success Seminar course, assist students through the transition to the college as well as with proper educational planning to meet future goals. Uniquely, the college offers over 19 different specialized counseling programs such as the Latino Center, the African American Collegiate Center, specialized financial aid counselors, and a Scholars program. Above average progress and achievement rates of SMC students are attributable to the resources invested in student success, high quality instructional support, and the implementation of innovative and effective student services.

Overall, college performance over the period and in relation to its peers is good; however, the areas of vocational education and basic skills warrant further institutional reflection. In response to the community and previous examinations of performance data, the college, over the course of the last year, has renewed its focus on revitalizing occupational programs and addressing the needs of vocational students. The college is actively pursuing efforts to align vocational programs with community needs and provide support services for the students enrolled in those programs.

The college has experienced increases in the number of students assessing into basic skills English and math courses. Between fall 2004 and fall 2007, the number of students assessing into these courses increased by 30%. Since fall 2004, the college has expanded access to instruction for these students - increasing the number of basic skills offerings by 35% with corresponding enrollments in basic skills courses also increased by approximately 29%. Performance on basic skills measures is being addressed through the Basic Skills Initiative. The college continues to align tutoring and other academic support services with empirically-based standards of best practice. As well, the college is creating and implementing innovative methods to improve success and performance through technology, and examining and assessing the effects of innovation so that resources can be targeted efficiently and effectively.