Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges
ARCC 2009 – Self Assessment

Established in 1929, Santa Monica College serves a diverse population of approximately 51,000 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 California. 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 three of the seven college performance indicators. These indicators include: percent of students earning 30 units, fall to fall persistence rate, and ESL improvement rate. Additionally, the college exhibits improved performance over the baseline year in the fall to fall persistence rate and in the basic skills successful course completion rate.

SMC’s above average performance on several 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. 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 are attributable to the resources invested in student success, high quality instruction and instructional support, and the implementation of innovative and effective student services.

Overall, the trend in college performance on most measures has been relatively stable with only slight fluctuations from last year and is good in relation to its peers. Given the performance measures, the college is continuing to devote more attention to vocational education and basic skills. Revitalization efforts continue in the area of vocational education, and the college is actively pursuing efforts to align vocational programs with community needs and provide relevant and effective support services for vocational students.

Positively, the college experienced a nearly one percent increase in the basic skills successful completion rate over the baseline year. Like other colleges, SMC 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%. The college continues to expand access to instruction for these students and address student outcomes through various student support and instructional initiatives. In keeping with what is known about best practices in this arena, the college has recently developed a Director of Student Success Programs position to coordinate and provide leadership in developing basic skills programs and services for students. It is anticipated that high coordination and focused attention on these students’ needs will continue to result in improved outcomes for students. As well, the college will undertake an in-depth examination of its course coding processes to ensure accuracy of course coding and data collection related to ARCC measures in these areas.