

Santa Monica Community College District
Strategic Initiatives
Approved by DPAC April 11, 2012

GRIT (Growth, Resilience, Integrity, Tenacity)

Rationale: Recent studies have strongly suggested that in addition to numeracy and literacy, non-cognitive skills, e.g. perseverance, integrity and purposeful engagement, rather than grades and test scores are keys to being a successful human being and a successful student. The GRIT initiative can enhance student success and enrich the College community by focusing our attention on non-cognitive attributes like grit, perseverance, dedication, integrity, thoughtfulness, and engagement.

Institutional Objective: To develop a plan for organizing and institutionalizing a strategic initiative called GRIT (Growth, Resilience, Integrity and Tenacity) that will facilitate a College-wide focus on non-cognitive skills (e.g. integrity, understanding, perseverance, purposeful engagement), on supplementing competencies supporting ILO #1, and on supporting the students, faculty, staff and administration as they pursue their aspirations.

Goal: The College will develop a working definition of GRIT and use the initiative to articulate a plan to enhance student achievement and enrich the College community. This plan will outline ways in which members of the College community will incorporate non-cognitive skills into the work of the College and help students make the links between what they've learned in the classroom and how they can positively impact the world outside the classroom. We may assess progress on character through ILO #1 and competencies supporting that ILO, as well as through the traditional metrics we use to measure student success and behaviors, e.g. grades, transfer, completion, reduction in disciplinary incidents, etc. The College might also devote resources to speakers on the subject, to relevant professional development activities, and to supporting experiential learning opportunities.

Institutional Imagination Initiative (I³)

"What matters for knowledge creation is creativity. New ideas that provide good explanations for phenomena require outside the box thinking as the unknown is not easily predicted from past experience." David Deutsch, **The Beginning of Infinity**

Background: Periods of rapid transformation and change challenge us as individuals and institutions to adapt, re-imagine and re-invent. Seismic shifts are occurring in our models and patterns of learning, interacting, engaging, communicating, and working. The economic, political, technological and cultural forces driving these shifts demand adaptive, nimble, and fluid minds and responses. How will the SMC community of students, faculty and staff drive creative changes to the educational process and institutional structure?

Goal: Through appreciative inquiry and building on the many innovations that have made SMC a leader, the SMC community will envisage a future that focuses on fostering, nurturing, and valuing imagination, creativity, and innovation. Understanding that responsive engagement and increased connection between and among all segments of the SMC community will strengthen the institution and lead to more innovation, this initiative seeks to expand upon the uniqueness of SMC by recognizing that the intersection of rapid technological change, external pressures and economic realities present opportunities for broad, encompassing institutional re-invention.

Exploration of intriguing new pedagogical and structural models and the role of technology and how that changes learning are examples of discussion topics to guide the process of imagining future directions in creative ways that prepare students for accelerating change, jobs that have yet to exist, and access to educational opportunity.

This initiative provides a broad framework for envisioning a future that simultaneously explores how technological advances and access to it are changing how we think, communicate, engage and interact; recognizes that expectations of what education is and should be are changing; investigates new research on learning; engages students in dialogue to ensure their needs are addressed; and encourages participation of all segments of the SMC community in setting new directions. The intent is to ensure that creativity and innovation drive our future, regardless of economic realities and external requirements.