

# Executive Summary

Student enrollment at the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) has always been an area of concern, particularly in the closing years of the twentieth century. Although statewide, the student headcount for California Community Colleges has been sharply increasing since 1995, it has not been the case for SDCCD. Student enrollment numbers at SDCCD have reflected only relatively modest increases during the same time period and even a slight dip at the start of the new millennium. Despite the many strategic efforts by the District to enhance student enrollment, there are several external factors (e.g., regional economic conditions and service area population growth) beyond the District's control that may have contributed to the slow enrollment growth. However, the extent to which these external factors have impacted student enrollment at SDCCD is not quite understood. Therefore, the purpose of this report is to provide information in regard to enrollment trends (District and college level) over the past ten years and the extent to which identified external and internal factors may have contributed to these trends.

This report is divided into the following sections: (1) Enrollment Trends, (2) 10-Year Trend in Student Characteristics, (3) 5-Year Trend in Academic/Vocational Course Enrollment, (4) Internal Factors Affecting Enrollment, (5) External Factors Affecting Enrollment, (6) Future Projections and (7) Presidents' Perspectives on Enrollment. Some of the observations in each of the sections are highlighted below:

## **Enrollment Trends**

- From 1991 to 1995 declines in student headcount and FTES (Resident and Non-resident) have been experienced at SDCCD and community colleges statewide.
- From 1995 to 2000 student headcount has steadily increased for community colleges statewide, but remained relatively flat at SDCCD.
- Resident FTES has been declining in the past few years, particularly at ECC.
- Non-resident FTES however, has been steadily increasing since 1995.

## **10-Year Trend in Student Characteristics**

- The proportion of students 18 years old and under has increased over the past ten years.
- Fewer students are reporting that they are coming to SDCCD for vocational reasons.
- Fewer students are reporting that they are coming to SDCCD with the intention of transferring without an AA/AS degree.
- The percent of students reporting that they are "returning transfer students" has increased.

- The distribution of most student characteristics has remained stable over the past ten years.

### **5-Year Trend in Academic/Vocational Program Enrollment**

- Student course enrollment in the top 15 subject areas in each of the colleges has increased in the past five years; only ECC has experienced a decrease in course enrollment for its top 15 subject areas.
- Examples of subject areas that show enrollment increases include Physics (City College), Multimedia and Computer Business Technology (Mesa College), and Health Education (Miramar).

### **Internal Factors Affecting Enrollment**

- There was an enrollment decline in various programs which may be a result of implementing mandatory prerequisites in Fall 1997, particularly in Engineering, German, Psychology, English and Spanish.
- Almost all of the new programs at each of the colleges have been added only in the past three years; therefore, it is too early to determine their impact on student enrollment.
- Financial difficulties, conflict with work schedules, enrollment in another college, and inadequate parking were among the top reasons expressed by former students for not re-enrolling at the District.

### **External Factors Affecting Enrollment**

- During the early 1990's, there was an inverse relationship between District-wide enrollment and the unemployment rate. In the second part of the decade, the unemployment rate continued to decline, while the District enrollment leveled out.
- Over the past 10 years, the District service area population grew at a slower rate than the service areas of other community college districts in the county.
- Mesa College's service area growth over the past 10 years was very small compared to City College and Miramar College.
- The percent of San Diego high school graduates completing A – F requirements has increased.

### **Future Projections**

- The enrollment increase in California public colleges and universities is predicted to continue.
- The San Diego Community College District's service area adult population is predicted to grow 21.4% by 2020.