INTRODUCTION
A. Introduction

History of Los Angeles Southwest College

Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) was founded in 1967, a product of decades of hard work, vision, and perseverance to achieve the dream of a dedicated group of community activists.

Today, the two-year college, part of the Los Angeles Community College District, offers a range of programs that meet the community’s needs, including college transfer services, occupational training, community services as well as general, transitional and continuing education.

Located on a 78-acre site on West Imperial Highway in South Los Angeles, LASC awards Associate’s Degrees in more than 30 fields and occupational certificates in more than 45 disciplines. More and more students each year are also taking part in online Distance Education courses, providing a new avenue for students to receive an LASC education.

LASC’s students come from a wide service area, including Los Angeles and portions of Gardena, Hawthorne and Inglewood. More than half of the student body is made up of first-generation college students. The college also serves international students from dozens of countries.

LASC houses an array of state-of-the-art facilities, including its recently renovated Library and Little Theater as well as the brand new School of Career and Technical Education building, where students receive top-notch instruction from a dedicated group of educators.

The college’s principal founder, Mrs. Odessa B. Cox, and a small group of community members started their efforts to bring a comprehensive community college to South Los Angeles in 1947 and formed a citizen’s group, the South Central Junior College Committee, in 1950. The diverse group influenced the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, which oversaw Los Angeles community colleges, to purchase 54 acres of land for $3,500 per acre in 1950 from the Union Oil Company at the corner of Western Avenue and Imperial Highway—the eventual site of Los Angeles Southwest College—for the purposes of building a school of higher learning. Another 16 acres would be purchased for $14,230 per acre from Union Oil in 1964. A sign was placed on the site in 1950 announcing the college’s expected arrival, but many years would pass before construction would begin.

That day would arrive rather quickly after the "Watts Rebellion," a violent outbreak from August 11-17, 1965, during which 34 people died and more than 1,000 people were injured. A California commission, under Gov. Pat Brown, later determined that the rebellion was caused by locals’ resentment toward police as well as a lack of jobs and educational opportunities for African-Americans. Sandra Cox, daughter of Odessa Cox, and many others believed the riots caught the attention of the Los Angeles Unified School District and led to LASC being fast tracked to development.
In January 1967, the LAUSD school board would earmark $2 million to open the college campus at Western Avenue and Imperial Highway. At 3:30 a.m. July 11, 1967, the first of 13 bungalows were delivered to the site from Los Angeles City College. Classes started September 11, 1967, with more than 600 registered students and 22 full-time faculty members.

In the 1970s, the college erected four permanent buildings, but the discovery of earthquake faults in 1991 caused the demolition of two buildings in 1994. The college replaced much of the demolished space with a state-of-the-art athletic complex, a technical education building, and a lecture/laboratory building. In 2003, the college developed a facilities master plan, and, as part of that process, it discovered that a large portion of the 78 acres site is not suitable for building.

In spite of challenges, the college has been in the midst of construction growth. With the passage of three bonds, Proposition A in 2001, Proposition AA in 2003, and Measure J in 2008, the college has continued to build out the campus, which has included the construction of the Thomas G. Lakin Physical Education Center, Student Services Building, Child Development Center, athletic stadium and field house, Maintenance and Operations facility, multi-level parking structure and more.

The Athletics Department is housed in the Lakin Center, which is a state-of-the-art sports complex with world-class amenities. The complex features an Olympic-sized outdoor pool, physical therapy pool, fitness center, and dance studio. LASC offers students intercollegiate athletics and competitive team sports in football as well as men’s and women’s basketball.

Thanks to Measure J, on April 2, 2015 LASC celebrated a grand opening of the new School of Career and Technical Education building as well as the renovated, modernized and upgraded Cox Building, which includes the refurbished Little Theater and Library.

A partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District has also resulted in the construction of Middle College High School on the campus of LASC. Dozens of Middle College High students take college courses at LASC to obtain their Associate’s Degree while meeting the requirements for a high school diploma.

Since its opening, LASC has established itself as a key force in the educational, recreational and cultural development in the region. Several academic and occupational programs have distinguished themselves over the years, including the Nursing and Child Development departments.

Today, LASC’s student body has increased to more than 8,000 students. More than 300 faculty, staff, and administrators at LASC are also looking to help students find academic success.

Description of Service Area

LASC serves a socioeconomic and ethnically diverse community. In addition to southwest Los Angeles, our service area includes the communities of Gardena, Hawthorne,
Inglewood, Compton, and Lynwood. Our service area has a lower median household income and a higher rate of poverty than both Los Angeles County and the state of California.

![Map of LASC's service area](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Median Household Income (Dollars)</th>
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<tr>
<td>LASC Service Area</td>
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<td>$40,381</td>
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</tbody>
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**Source:** 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

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<th>Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months</th>
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<tr>
<td>LASC Service Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.9%</td>
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</table>

**Source:** 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

LASC’s service area is experiencing demographic changes that will impact the college over the course of the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan. The ethnic composition of the area has gradually changed over the past 20 years and is projected to continue changing into the next decade. In the early years of LASC’s existence, the LASC service area was composed of a predominantly Black/African-American population. Over the past 20 years, this community has become predominantly Hispanic. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 49.7 percent of our service area’s residents were Hispanic. In 2010, this number increased to 58.9 percent. Population projections suggest that this trend will continue over the course of the next five years.

Over the past five years, LASC’s Black/African-American student population has declined, while the Hispanic student population has increased. However, the trends in the student population have not reached the magnitude of the change in the LASC service area. In 2013, the LASC service area population was 61 percent Hispanic and 30 percent Black. In fall 2014, LASC’s credit student population was 33 percent Hispanic and 56.8 percent Black.
With continued influx of Hispanics and Blacks moving in and out of the service area, it is likely that the LASC student population will continue to change and will become more representative of our service area.

In order to best serve the needs of our community, LASC must ensure that we are meeting the needs of our Hispanic and Black/African-American student population. This includes offering programs and services that can provide the most benefit to this community.

In spite of the ethnic changes occurring in both the service area and student population, there is little change in the relative percentage of males and females in both our service area and student population. For the last five years, males have been under-represented in our student population. In 2013, males made up 48.4 percent of the service area population, but they only composed 31 percent of our student population.
LASC’s community is experiencing changes to the age of its residents. Across the U.S. and California, baby boomers are reaching retirement age as the birth rate is declining. As a result, our community is aging. This trend is expected to continue well into the future.
Age of Residents in LASC Service Area

There are expected to be fewer 19 and under year olds in 2020 (the last year of the Strategic Plan) than in 2014 (the first year of the plan). Further, the school-age population (i.e. age 10 to 19) is projected to decrease by 11 percent between 2014 and 2020. Thus, in each successive year of the 2014-2020 LASC Plan, there will be a smaller pool of potential students for LASC to draw its enrollment from. This is trend is also supported by the State of California’s high school graduate projections for Los Angeles County.
Likewise, LASC is beginning to see a decline in the “19 or less” age group.

If this trend continues, LASC will face more competition from other local community colleges when trying to recruit new students. However, this pattern is not occurring in isolation. The improving economy will likely compound the effects of this trend. Thus, LASC is facing a short-term future where there is a smaller total pool of potential students who also have viable employment alternatives to community college.

Although the LASC service area is aging, the LASC student population has not shown a similar pattern. A number of analyses, however, have demonstrated that younger LACCD students are more likely to complete a degree, certificate, and/or transfer than older students.

**Enrollment Trends and Description of Student Population**

**Student Services Area**
LASC has consistently enrolled students from our Central Service Area for the past five years with a slight increase (1.8 percent) of students from 2013-2014 to the 2014-2015 academic year. LASC enrollments from the Central Service area yielded 63.5 percent of the credit enrollments and 58.3 percent of the credit student population on average over the past five years.

Credit and Non-Credit Enrollments and Headcount

LASC in the last five years had a peak in enrollments in 2013-2014 (fall and spring). This peak in enrollments allowed the college to take advantage of an opportunity to grow in FTES and receive funding above the usual from the state. The growth was primarily in the credit enrollments (21.6 percent increase). There was a 16 percent decrease in credit and non-credit enrollments from 2013-14 to 2014-15 with the greatest drop in credit enrollments (decrease of 15.3 percent) and a 20.7 percent drop in Non-credit enrollments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit and Non-Credit Student Enrollments</th>
<th>2010-2011 through 2014-2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Credit</td>
<td>4,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>35,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>4,923  6,735  6,630  6,502  5,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>35,555  29,993  31,982  38,901  32,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>40,478  36,728  38,612  45,403  38,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>38,121  40,143  38,612  45,403  38,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>36,728  38,612  38,121  45,403  38,121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The increased FTES growth in 2013-14 fostered an increase in credit and non-credit headcount by 9.9 percent (with an increase of 10.3 percent in credit headcount and 7.7 percent increase in non-credit headcount). The 11.7 percent decrease from 2013-14 and 2014-15 resulted in a 12.7 percent decrease in credit and only a 3.3 percent decrease in non-credit headcount as the growth of enrollments were primarily in credit courses.
LASC in this five year period saw the most decrease in the “19 or less” credit students age group with an 18 percent decrease in students, while seeing the greatest increase in the “20-24” age group with an 8.6 percent increase. The rest of the age groups showed a gradual increase in headcount over the five-year period.

LASC’s credit student population is primarily Black/African-American. Over the past five years, although the Black/African-American population has decreased from 2010-11 to 2013-14 by 9.2 percent, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, the population has increased by 3.2 percent. Meanwhile, the Hispanic population increased by 8.4 percent from 2010-11 to 2013-14 with a slight decrease in 2014-15 (3.1 percent). The other ethnic groups have been pretty stable in the percentages.
LASC is seeing the fruit of our labor as it relates to increasing the male students population. Although the credit students’ gender percentage has been stable over the last five years, there has been a 1.7 percent increase in the male population from 2010-11 to 2014-2015.

Credit Students by Ethnicity
2010-2011 through 2014-2015

Credit Students by Gender
2010-2011 through 2014-2015

Although most of our students come from low-performing high schools, they are increasingly stating that their educational goal is to transfer to a 4-year university. Thus, many students view LASC as one step along a longer educational path. From 2010-11 to 2014-15, there was a 12.3 percent increase in students who were focused on transferring to 4-year universities, with a 5.6 percent increase from 2013-14 to 2015-16. The Student Support Services Program (SSSP), which requires students to complete the matriculation process early on, is fostering
an increase of students who declare a major, decide on their educational goals and take placement tests in English and math early on which will increase the number of students graduating in a timely manner.
The path to transfer, however, is still not a short one. While the current percentage of students who need remediation in English is still high (76 percent), there has been a 12 percent improvement in the number of students needing remediation as compared to fall 2013 (88 percent).

Math still presents a developmental climb as 87.6 percent of students assessed require remediation in math. Furthermore, 77.5 percent of students assess into the noncredit levels of the math sequence.
A student who assesses into noncredit math and English will require three semesters of remedial English and math before they are able to enroll in transfer-level English and math. However, remedial math courses have the lowest course success rates in the college. Thus, it is more likely that a student will require at least four semesters, or two years, of remedial English and math courses before even attempting transfer-level English and math. Thus, the odds of transferring to a 4-year university within two years are very low. Further, students with remedial English and math skills are less likely to pass other courses that require college-level English and/or math. A student with an eighth grade reading level, for instance, will likely not perform well in a college-level political science course. Thus, it is important that LASC moves students through the remedial sequences as efficiently as possible, so that students are able to achieve their goals in a reasonable timeframe.

LASC students also face external pressures that impact the length of time they are able to devote to their studies. A spring 2012 survey indicated that nearly 40 percent of LASC students work more than 20 hours per week. In addition, 52 percent of students said that financial factors were a moderate or major problem in their academic success. Further, 26 percent of LASC students have children under the age of 5, and 30 percent of LASC students have children between the ages of 6 and 18. As a result of these many external demands, only 23 percent LASC students attended full time in Fall 2013. Thus, the vast majority attend part time, which means that they are not able to accumulate units as quickly. This further increases the length of time it takes LASC students to reach their educational goals.

Unit Load Distribution

LASC is seeing a slow increase in the percentage of students who are moving from part-time to full-time, which has leveled off in the 2014-15 academic year. This increase in full-time student enrollments is fostered by the 7.9 percent increase in full-time student enrollments from fall 2012 to fall 2014, with a 3.5 percent increase in students who took a full load from fall 2013 to fall 2014. Likewise, there has also been an increase of 2.3 percent in students taking “6 to 11 units” from fall 2013 to fall 2014. This increased momentum in students taking a full-time load will increase the number of students who will have a better opportunity to graduate within five years, which in turn will improve graduations rates.