

The History of Allan Hancock College

Allan Hancock College was founded in 1920 when the Santa Maria High School District established Santa Maria Junior College. Classes were held in high school rooms until 1937 when a bond issue passed and a college wing was built on the northwest corner of the high school campus. In 1954, because of expanding enrollment, the college moved from the high school to Hancock Field, which for a number of years had housed the Hancock College of Aeronautics and, later, the University of Southern California's School of Aeronautics. Shortly thereafter, the community voted to establish a separate junior college district. At this time, the name of the college was changed to Allan Hancock College to honor Captain G. Allan Hancock, a prominent community member who owned the land and facilities of the airfield. In 1958, the voters approved a bond issue to purchase the airport site and finance a building program. By the fall of 1962 many classes were held in four new college buildings, the nucleus of a campus master plan designed for 2,000 students. These buildings included the Student Center, the Library, the Science Complex, and the north wing of the Gymnasium. Many classes continued to be offered in buildings constructed for the original aeronautics college.

On July 1, 1963, the Allan Hancock Joint Community College District was formed by annexing the areas served by the Santa Ynez Valley High School District and the Lompoc Unified School District. This move expanded the district to 3,000 square miles, including the Channel Islands.

As enrollment continued to grow, the college expanded its facilities. The two-story Business Education building was opened in December 1964 and the Fine Arts building in the fall of 1965. Both the Gymnasium and the Industrial



Technology building were completed during the fall of 1967. The Administration and Student Services buildings were ready for fall semester 1967 and the Performing Arts Center followed the next spring. The college Bookstore was completed in May 1971.

In 1974, property and buildings located three blocks from campus were purchased from the Southern California Gas Company, resulting in the addition of nine acres to the district's assets. Those buildings house the district's plant services operation as well as instructional programs. Health sciences, law enforcement, fire technology, and

emergency services share space in these buildings. In 1977 the Learning Resources Center opened after the completion of a 16,000 square foot addition to the Library and extensive remodeling of the existing structure.

The Learning Assistance building opened in 1982 to serve the physically disabled and students with learning disabilities. The Humanities Complex at the south end of the campus was completed in 1989.

The Family and Consumer Education facility began full operation for spring 1991 classes, and the Severson Theater, an addition to the Performing Arts Center, was completed in fall 1992, along with entry and roadway improvements. The original Student Center was completely remodeled and expanded in 2002 and now incorporates the Bookstore within its walls.

An extensive remodel and expansion of the college's Learning Resources Center, one of four original campus buildings, was completed in 2007. This includes a new, two-story addition, the Academic Resource Center (ARC), which houses student support operations such as the tutorial and writing centers. The Ann Foxworthy Gallery is also located inside the ARC.



The Community Education building opens in summer 2007. The new Science Complex is scheduled for completion in fall 2007. It offers modern lab and classroom space for life, physical, and mathematical sciences classes, in addition to health sciences programs including nursing, medical assisting, and dental assisting.

A \$180 million bond measure passed by voters in June 2006 will pave the way for additional new facilities and technology over the next 10 years.

The college is committed to a vigorous presence in the Lompoc and Santa Ynez valleys. It opened the Solvang Center in August 2000 and completed construction of a permanent Lompoc Valley Center in spring 1999. The 58,000 square foot Lompoc facility consists of three main buildings that offer full academic and student service options. The center is designed for 2,000 students.

The college's curriculum has also grown to meet the community's needs, from the 1920 curriculum of 12 courses paralleling the University of California's lower division requirements, to more than 1,000 credit courses today. Programs have kept pace with changing needs since the very beginning with such courses as airplane mechanics and radio code in the 1930s and '40s to mechatronics and viticulture and enology today.



Since beginning its certificate programs with law enforcement in 1965, the college has granted certificates in such areas as fire technology, dental assisting, licensed vocational nursing, medical assisting, nursing assistant, emergency medical technician, and human services. In addition, since 1963, the apprenticeship program has helped hundreds of students gain union employment in carpentry, plumbing, wiring, painting, and heavy equipment operation.

Liberal arts courses have continued their long-standing contributions through hundreds of courses and programs. In science, such courses as bacteriology and astronomy were taught as early as the 1940s, and the science department's collection has grown to include a 35-foot gray whale skeleton hung in the science

lecture hall. English, foreign languages, history, psychology, political science, music, drama, and art have anchored the curriculum since the college opened its doors. Since 1980, the college has sponsored a semester abroad program, which offers students the opportunity to study in such places as Italy, Costa Rica, Thailand, Spain, Chili, Argentina, and China.

Starting in the late 1950s, the college began to offer remedial instruction, especially in mathematics and English. Since 1974, the Tutorial Center has helped students on an individual and group basis. The resulting search for more effective teaching methods led to the opening of the Writing Center in 1975. The Math Center was established in 1996.

Students' financial needs outside the classroom have been met by a growing number of support programs. Since 1962, the Scholarship Committee has overseen the awarding of scholarships. Last year nearly \$300,000 in scholarships was awarded through the Allan Hancock College Foundation. In 1974 the college opened its Financial Aid and Job Placement offices. In addition, the Extended Opportunities Program and Services (EOPS) office has helped students adjust to the college environment since the 1970s.

Ever since the first classes taught at the Camp Cooke Army barracks in 1952, the college has offered extensive courses in the community. The college's Vandenberg Air Force Base Center opened in 1957; classes have been taught in Santa Ynez since 1971 and in Lompoc since 1974. The college has offered instruction through television beginning in 1972, and classes via video in 1989. In 1998, online classes were

incorporated into the curriculum. The college also carries a 40-year tradition of offering extensive evening classes.

The Community Education program, active since 1973, offers hundreds of courses including noncredit courses such as citizenship and classes for older adults. In an effort to offer programs for citizens of all ages, the college also sponsors an extensive College for Kids dance program throughout the year. The arts and lectures series has been presenting distinguished speakers and performers since 1965.

Drama has formed a strong part of the college's relationship with the community since Ethel Pope's vigorous program of the 1920s and 1930s. From its beginning in a converted badminton court in 1964, the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (PCPA) has offered more than 480 plays and musicals, maintained artists in residence, and trained more than 3,000 actors and technicians, many of whom have found employment in professional theater and the entertainment industry. PCPA has also presented plays in Solvang since 1971, leading to the founding of the Solvang Theaterfest in 1981.



Allan Hancock College has established itself as a premier educational institution serving residents from the Central Coast of California and afar. It also contributes significantly to the local economy as it is among the 10 largest employers in Santa Barbara County with approximately 1,300 employees. The history of Allan Hancock College is rich with accomplishments. Although the board of trustees, administration, faculty, and staff value the college's history, they also have a vision for the future. That vision can only be built upon an understanding of both the past and the present.
