

History

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 original Santa Maria Airport, Hancock College of Aeronautics and, later, the University of Southern California's School of Aeronautics.

In July 1954, the name of the college was changed to Allan Hancock College to honor Captain G. Allan Hancock, a prominent state and local community leader who owned the land and facilities of the airfield.

In September 1954, the community voted to establish the Santa Maria Joint Junior College District. In 1963, the Lompoc Unified School District and Santa Ynez Union High School District were annexed to the community college district, and the district was renamed the Allan Hancock Joint Community College District.

Today, the district includes all of Northern Santa Barbara County and small parts of San Luis Obispo and Ventura counties, including the cities of Santa Maria, Lompoc, Cuyama, Guadalupe, Solvang, Buellton, and Vandenberg Space Force Base.

In 2020-2021, Allan Hancock College celebrated its 100th birthday. From its humble beginnings in 1920 with six students to its four locations with approximately 20,000 students served annually, the college has come a long way.

Academics And Career Training

The college's curriculum has grown to meet the community's needs, from 12 courses in 1920 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 agricultural plant pathology, Latinx studies, and LGBT studies today.

To take advantage of rapidly-changing educational technology, the college began offering instruction on television in 1972, and classes via video in 1989. In 1998, online classes were incorporated into the curriculum, with more than 200 now offered each semester. The college also carries a 50-year tradition of offering extensive evening classes. In addition, classes are offered remotely via Zoom during scheduled meeting times.

The Community Education program, active since 1973, offers hundreds of noncredit and fee-based classes. Program areas include English as a Second Language, basic skills, citizenship, short-term vocational, and other curriculum areas.

Student Success And Community Commitment

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. The Small Business Entrepreneurship Center opened in spring 2012. The college opened the Veteran Success Center, a space dedicated to provide services for U.S. military veterans and their dependents, in spring 2015. The MESA & STEM Center, and AIM to Dream Center also provide support to help students succeed during their time at Hancock.

Students' financial needs outside the classroom have been met over the years by a growing number of support programs. During the last academic year, the college awarded more than \$25 million in financial aid to students. In the same year, the Student Emergency Fund provided more than \$127,000 to financially assist Hancock students with housing, food, childcare, mental health and wellness resources. In each of the last three years, the Allan Hancock College Foundation has awarded more than \$500,000 in scholarships to students.

In 1974, the college opened its Financial Aid and Job Placement offices. In addition, the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) has helped students with "over and above" support services since the 1970s.

College Achievement Now, a TRIO program funded by the Department of Education, was launched in 2010. The program serves first-generation and economically disadvantaged college students.

In March of 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Hancock expanded its Food Share Because We Care program by providing pre-bagged produce and nonperishable food to any member of the public twice per week at its Santa Maria campus. The food was provided by the Food Bank of Santa Barbara County, and bagged and distributed by Hancock student ambassadors, staff, and college volunteers. The program provided food to more than 80,000 local households and approximately 360,000 individuals.

The college's bond with the community has been significantly strengthened through its involvement in theater. From its beginning in 1964, Pacific Conservatory Theatre (PCPA) has offered more than 500 plays and musicals, maintained a resident company of artists, and trained more than 10,000 actors and technicians. PCPA has also presented plays in Solvang since 1971, leading to the building of the Solvang Festival Theater in 1974.

Alumni success runs the gamut from Academy Award winners to superior court judges to professional athletes and thousands of successful community leaders and citizens.

Facilities

Since the first classes taught in 1952 at the Camp Cooke Army barracks (now Vandenberg Space Force Base), the college has offered extensive courses in the community and remains committed to serving the Lompoc and Santa Ynez valleys. The college opened its Vandenberg Air Force Base Center (now Vandenberg Space Force Center) in 1957. Classes have been taught in the Santa Ynez Valley since 1971 and in Lompoc since 1974. The college completed construction of a permanent Lompoc Valley Center in spring 1999 and opened the Solvang Center in August 2000. In 2006, district voters passed a \$180 million bond Measure I to upgrade facilities and technology. See the timeline for results. The bond modernized and changed the look of the college. Since then, the Public Safety Training Complex opened at the Lompoc Valley Center, while the Industrial Technology Complex, the track and field facility, and Student Services building were among the projects completed at the Santa Maria campus. The college relocated the Solvang Center to Santa Ynez Valley Union High School in 2017 and renamed the facility the Santa Ynez Valley Center.

Facilities Timeline

1958

Voters approved a bond issue to purchase the airfield site and finance a building program

1962

Opened four new buildings - Student Center, library, science building and north wing of the gymnasium - to form nucleus of a campus designed for 2,000 students

Continued classes in buildings built for the original aeronautics college

1964

Opened Business Education building

1965

Opened Fine Arts building

1967

Completed the Gymnasium and Industrial Technology buildings; opened Administration and Student Services buildings

1968

Opened Performing Arts Center, including Marian Theatre

1971

Completed the Bookstore

1974

Purchased nine acres of property and buildings from Southern California Gas Company ("South Campus")

1977

Opened Learning Resources Center with 16,000 square-foot library addition and re-model of existing structure

1982

Opened Learning Assistance building for physically disabled students and those with learning disabilities

1989

Completed the Humanities complex

1991

Built Family & Consumer Sciences facility

1992

Completed the Severson Theatre, an addition to the Performing Arts Center
Improved entry and roadways

1999

Opened the Lompoc Valley Center

2002

Opened the remodeled and expanded Student Center to include the Bookstore, café, coffee bar, and more (partial funding from Measure I)

2006

Voters passed Measure I, a \$180 million general obligation bond focused on facility and technology improvements over a 10-year period

2007

Expanded the library building to include the Academic Resource Center (ARC), and remodeled the library (partial funding from Measure I)

Opened the Community Education and Science buildings (Measure I)

2013

Opened the new Early Childhood Studies building, including the Children's Center Lab School

Completed new athletic facilities for baseball, track and field, football, and soccer

Renovated building D and the Performing Arts Center

Opened the new Student Services and Administration buildings (Measure I)

2014

Opened the new Public Safety Training Complex adjacent to Lompoc Valley Center (Measure I)

Opened the new Industrial Technology Complex (Measure I)

2015

Opened Veteran Success Center

Opened Student Success Center at Lompoc Valley Center

Hosted first on-campus football game since college moved to existing campus in 1954

2016

Dedicated the Children's Center and renamed it the Orfalea Children's Center Lab School at Allan Hancock College

2017

Opened Santa Ynez Valley Center at Santa Ynez Valley Union High School

2023

Opened new Fine Arts Complex on the Santa Maria campus (partial funding Measure I)

Opened new Baseball/Softball Concession Stand