EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1 Introduction

This Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) has been prepared by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD or the District) and the Los Angeles Mission College (LAMC) to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan) and the subsequent projects described in the Master Plan. The Master Plan is a development program designed to expand and improve college facilities at LAMC. The LACCD and LAMC have prepared the LAMC Master Plan (Master Plan) to guide the orderly development of instructional and support facilities to accommodate increased enrollment through 2015. LAMC enrollment is projected to grow from the current estimated 7,500 students to an estimated 15,000 students by the year 2015. The existing 22.5-acre campus provides approximately 260,000 gross square feet (gsf) of instructional and support facilities housed within permanent buildings, temporary structures, and leased facilities (with approximately 200,000 gsf of this building area provided in permanent structures on the LAMC Campus). Approximately 350,000 additional gsf would be necessary for the College to serve the anticipated enrollment growth, for a total of 550,000 gsf.

The LACCD is the Lead Agency under CEQA for certification of the Program EIR and approval of the Master Plan and its subsequent projects. The LAMC completed an Initial Study for the Master Plan in July 2006 and determined that a Program EIR should be prepared (see Appendix A, Notice of Preparation, Initial Study, and Scoping Comment Letters).

An EIR is an informational document prepared to:

- Inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project;
- Identify possible ways to minimize the significant environmental effects through “mitigation measures”; and
- Describe reasonable alternatives to the project that would substantially reduce environmental effects.

Preparation of a Program EIR is an alternative to preparing a Project EIR for the Master Plan and will form the basis for later decision making (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168). A Program EIR is intended to streamline the later environmental review of projects or approvals included within the master plan analyzed in the Program EIR. Accordingly, this Program EIR, to the greatest extent feasible, evaluates the direct and indirect impacts, cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and irreversible significant effects on the environment of the subsequent projects that would be developed under the Master Plan. It also provides mitigation measures to reduce potentially
significant environmental effects of the subsequent projects. Upon certification of this Program EIR by the District, subsequent projects described in the Master Plan and Program EIR will be examined in light of the program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared.

- If a later activity would have effects that were not examined in the program EIR, a new Initial Study would be prepared leading to either an EIR or a Negative Declaration.

- If the District finds that, pursuant to Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines, no new effects could occur or no new mitigation measures would be required, the District can approve the activity as being within the scope of the project covered by the Program EIR, and no new environmental document would be required.

- The District shall incorporate feasible mitigation measures and alternatives developed in the Program EIR into subsequent actions in the program.

Public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or minimize environmental damage where feasible (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15021). In discharging this duty, the District has an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including technical, economic, environmental, timing, social, and legal issues.

While the information in the Program EIR does not control the District’s ultimate discretion on the Master Plan, the District must respond to each significant effect identified in the Program EIR by making findings (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091) and, if necessary, by making a Statement of Overriding Consideration (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093).

The information in the Program EIR may constitute substantial evidence in the record to support the District’s action on the Master Plan and subsequent projects if its decision(s) is later challenged in court. The District is required to consider the information in the Program EIR with any other relevant information in making final decisions on the Master Plan and subsequent projects (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15121).

As a result of the analysis undertaken in the Initial Study, and following consideration of the scoping comment letters received during the Program EIR scoping period, it was determined that the proposed project would either not result in significant impacts or would result in less than significant impacts with mitigation to the following issue areas: agricultural resources, mineral resources, and population and housing (please refer to the Initial Study and scoping comment letters in Appendix A). No further analysis of those environmental resources is undertaken in this Program EIR. However, the Initial Study and Program EIR scoping process concluded that the Master Plan and subsequent projects do have the potential to result in significant impacts to 13 environmental
resource areas, which are the subject of the detailed analysis in this Program EIR. These issues are identified in Table ES-1.

Table ES-1

Environmental Issues Requiring Analysis in Program EIR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetics</th>
<th>Hydrology and Water Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>Noise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Resources</td>
<td>Public Services and Utilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy Conservation and Sustainability</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology and Soils</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous Materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: URS Corporation, July 2006

This Draft Program EIR was distributed to various federal, state, regional, and local governmental agencies and interested organizations and individuals for a 45-day public review and comment period. This Draft Program EIR was provided to the State Clearinghouse for further distribution to responsible agencies. In addition, a public Notice of Availability of the Draft Program EIR was published in local newspapers and mailed directly to interested parties requesting the document. Electronic copies of the Draft Program EIR are available on the Los Angeles Mission College Web site at: <www.lamission.edu>.

Printed copies of the Draft Program EIR are available during the public review period at the following public libraries:

Los Angeles Mission College Library
13356 Eldrige Avenue
Sylmar, CA 91342-3245

Los Angeles Public Library
Sylmar Branch
14561 Polk Avenue
Sylmar, CA 91342

Los Angeles Public Library
Pacoima Branch
13605 Van Nuys Boulevard
Pacoima, CA 91331
Written comments on this Draft Program EIR should be transmitted during the public review period to the College:

Nick Quintanilla – Construction Manager  
c/o Michele Walters – Administrative Assistant  
Gateway Science & Engineering  
Los Angeles Mission College  
13356 Eldridge Avenue  
Sylmar, CA 91342

Written comments provided by the community and public agencies will be evaluated, and written responses will be prepared for all comments received during the designated comment period. Upon completion of the evaluation, a Final Program EIR will be prepared and provided to the Los Angeles College District Board of Trustees for certification of compliance with CEQA and for review and consideration as part of the decision-making process for the proposed Master Plan.

**ES.2 Proposed Project**

The LAMC Facilities Master Plan would further develop the existing LAMC campus located at 13356 Eldridge Avenue and two vacant parcels at the southeastern corner of Eldridge Avenue and Harding Street (Harding Street site). Figure ES-1, *Project Areas*, depicts the existing 22.5-acre LAMC campus and the two vacant parcels at the end of Harding Street. St. Ephraim’s Church (Syrian Orthodox Church) owns the approximately 3-acre northern parcel at Harding Street. Comstock Homes owns the southern parcel of approximately 7 acres at Harding Street.

The purpose of the Master Plan is to respond to the existing and projected demand for access to higher education facilities serving the Sylmar area and surrounding communities by expanding and enhancing existing community college facilities. LAMC partially fulfills the existing demand of residents within the Sylmar area and surrounding communities for access to higher education. The projected increase in student

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1 Reference to the Sylmar area includes the 12.84 square miles of land identified as the Sylmar Community Planning Area by the City of Los Angeles.
Figure ES-1
enrollment, in combination with the need for expanded academic programs, will require several hundred thousand square feet of additional building space. Academic and vocational training programs, including Media Arts, Health and Physical Education, and Culinary Arts, require interior floor space beyond the square footage needs of a classroom, instructional laboratory, or lecture hall. Gymnasiums, locker rooms, training rooms, painting and sculpture spaces, photography laboratories, music practice rooms, food preparation areas, dining and exhibition space, storage, and other requirements unique to instruction within each academic program are included in the increased building space needs. As a result, LAMC requires additional land and building space to meet the academic, administrative, and student services needs of the projected enrollment. Shortfalls in classrooms, classroom laboratories, instructional computer laboratories, instructional service rooms, offices, support facilities, and parking spaces are anticipated where projected enrollment exceeds the current planned physical capacity of the College.

If additional space is not provided, deficiencies associated with the unique space requirements of several LAMC programs would prevent the College from offering a comprehensive course of study leading to much needed college degree and certificate programs and job training. For example, the American Culinary Accreditation Board mandates a comprehensive industry-ready curriculum from dining room presentation and service to food preparation, purchasing, menu planning, sanitation and safety, and restaurant operations. The space and equipment needs of the LAMC Food Service Management/Culinary Management program must cover all of these instructional needs and others.

**Project Objectives**

The LAMC Master Plan sets forth the broad goal to update aging buildings and expand educational and support facilities at the Los Angeles Mission College to accommodate a projected increase in students while preserving the suburban atmosphere of the college campus. The following objectives have been identified in support of the project goal.

a. The primary objective is to create a high quality, innovative and attractive physical college environment to promote academic excellence and service in the Mission College community, region and State for a projected enrollment of 15,000 students. Leading edge facilities, including buildings, classrooms, and laboratories, will support a strong comprehensive academic setting, provide technology opportunities, and encourage workforce development making Mission College a premier learning environment.

b. Maximize the educational benefits of available public funds, including Proposition A and AA, by efficiently developing new educational facilities and improving and reinforcing existing structures at LAMC.

c. Organize and develop land-use activities within the campus to strengthen academic, cultural and social interaction and to create a strong sense of place that supports the academic and social life of the college.
d. Maintain flexibility in the use of spaces and buildings and design for future growth and expansion to keep pace with the growing population in the Sylmar and northeastern San Fernando Valley area by providing local facilities capable of delivering quality higher education and technical training to a projected enrollment of 15,000 students.

e. To the extent practicable, design and locate buildings and facilities consistent with the policies, goals, and objectives of the City of Los Angeles General Plan and the Sylmar Community Plan; implement a site layout and architectural design that is compatible with adjacent land uses and the existing community character; and preserve, enhance, and restore the natural environment at the campus.

f. Maximize the use of available vacant and underutilized lands proximate to the LAMC campus for the development of educational opportunities available to the public.

g. Strengthen physical connections and campus activities that serve the surrounding community and promote academic excellence, technical aptitude, and job growth by providing a comprehensive college experience, diverse educational programs, and superior campus facilities available to all Sylmar and northeastern San Fernando Valley area residents.

Projects described in the LAMC Master Plan would be developed in phases according to LAMC priorities and as project funding becomes available. For the purposes of the Program EIR, the Master Plan is divided into two phases: Phase 1: Proposition A and AA projects, and Phase 2: Beyond Proposition A and AA projects. Table ES-2 provides information on the Master Plan construction projects. Sections 2.4.1.1 and Section 2.4.1.2 in this Program EIR provide more details on each of these phases.
Table ES-2

Master Plan Construction Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction Project Number</th>
<th>Construction Project</th>
<th>Timing of Construction</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Project Area (PA)</th>
<th>Floor Levels</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health, P.E. and Fitness Center</td>
<td>2007/2008</td>
<td>Phase 1B</td>
<td>HSS</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Plant Facilities</td>
<td>2011/2015</td>
<td>Phase 1A</td>
<td>LAMC</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2A</td>
<td>Parking Structure B2</td>
<td>2011/2015</td>
<td>Phase 1A</td>
<td>LAMC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Family and Consumer Studies with Bookstore</td>
<td>2008/2009</td>
<td>Phase 1A</td>
<td>LAMC</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Media Arts</td>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>Phase 1A</td>
<td>LAMC</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>2011/2015</td>
<td>Phase 2A</td>
<td>LAMC</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Parking Structure B1</td>
<td>2011/2015</td>
<td>Phase 2B</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Education Buildings 5</td>
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<td>Phase 2B</td>
<td>HSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Education Buildings 6</td>
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<td>Phase 2A</td>
<td>LAMC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Construction of this facility has been addressed under the 1983 Final Environmental Impact Report for Los Angeles Mission College Master Plan and therefore is not part of the proposed project.

HSS = Harding Street Site

ES.3 Project Alternatives

The District and LAMC initially evaluated four alternatives to the Facilities Master Plan and removed them from further evaluation in this Program EIR based on a variety of factors (see Section 4.0 Alternatives). Alternatives that were initially considered and screened from further analysis include:

- Expanding LAMC eastward into the El Cariso Golf Course;
- Expanding LAMC into the neighboring residential community;
- Developing the LACCD/LAMC-owned parcel adjacent to the Pacoima Wash; and
- Developing the proposed LAMC facilities within one of the four off-campus centers that serve LAMC, which include three locations in Sylmar and one location in the City of San Fernando.
The previous 2005 Draft EIR evaluated the following three alternatives:

- Reduced Build-Out Within the Existing LAMC Campus;
- Full Build-Out Within the Existing Campus (essentially, the 2006 Master Plan); and
- Full Build-Out with Golf Course and Park Improvements.

A reasonable range of alternatives was selected for evaluation in Section 4.0 of this Program EIR. In addition to the No Project Alternative, these alternatives were selected based on their ability to simultaneously meet most of the project objectives and to have the potential to reduce the significant environmental effects of the project. Following are the alternatives evaluated in Section 4.0:

- Alternative 1 – No Project;
- Alternative 2 – Compressed Plan at LAMC;
- Alternative 3 – Add New Site at Terra Vista;
- Alternative 4 – Expand Remote Campus Centers; and
- Alternative 5 – Reduced Build-Out within Existing Campus.

The Program EIR concludes that the No Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative because it would reduce project impacts in the most categories, including significant aesthetics and air quality impacts. The environmentally superior alternative, other than the No Project Alternative, would be the Reduced Build-Out within Existing Campus Alternative. This alternative would reduce the project’s significant impacts with respect to construction- and operations-related air emissions and would avoid significant aesthetics impacts at Harding Street.

The Reduced Build-Out alternative would meet most of the project objectives, but it would not meet three objectives. First, because it would involve constructing fewer facilities, it would not be able to accommodate the planned growth in enrollment. Second, because it would occupy a greater portion of the LAMC campus, it would not be able to enhance the campus environment or allow as much buffer between the campus and surrounding community, to ensure it would be compatible with adjacent land uses and the existing community character. Third, it would not make use of available vacant and underutilized lands for development.

**ES.4 Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Residual Impacts**

The environmental impact analysis is contained in Section 3.0 of the Program EIR. For each environmental issue area the Initial Study and EIR scoping process identified as having potentially significant effects, the environmental setting is described, significance thresholds are presented, the environmental impact analysis is summarized (including direct, indirect and cumulative impacts), mitigation measures are provided, and the residual impact level is stated. This impact analysis identified significant impacts listed in
Table ES-3, Summary of Significant Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures, which is provided at the end of the Executive Summary.

### ES.5 Areas of Controversy

Following are the known areas of controversy associated with the adoption of the LAMC Master Plan. These issues were raised in response to the Notice of Preparation of the Program EIR and during the public scoping period. They are addressed in Section 3.0 of the Program EIR.

- Compatibility of proposed LAMC facilities with the suburban neighborhood on the Harding Street site;
- Request that LACCD fully mitigate the traffic and parking impacts of the Master Plan, focusing on reducing and avoiding LAMC-related traffic through adjacent residential areas;
- Need to address public security and nuisance issues associated with the development of the Harding Street site;
- Request to explore an alternative site that would not further impact the neighborhood in the vicinity of the existing LAMC campus and the Harding Street site;
- Request for the LACCD to respect the policies of the Sylmar Community Plan; and
- Protection of the campus community in the event that a major earthquake caused freeway overpass collapse, potentially isolating the campus from emergency responders south of the freeway.

### ES.6 Issues to Be Resolved

The results of the environmental impact analysis conclude that the project will result in unavoidable significant environmental effects related to air quality because of cumulative regional exceedances of the state and federal nitrogen oxide (NOx) emission standards from commuter traffic and unavoidable operational significant impacts related to traffic and aesthetics (Harding Street site).

The LACCD Board of Trustees will be required to consider these significant impacts and to determine whether the benefits of the proposed project warrant accepting these significant environmental impacts. If so, a Statement of Overriding Considerations will be required.