CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1-1 PIERCE COLLEGE INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Los Angeles Pierce College is a 2-year community college accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and one of nine community colleges that form the Los Angeles Community College District (District). The College offers academic associate degree and occupational associate degree programs in the arts and sciences as well as occupational certificate programs and certificate of achievement programs. The primary service area for Los Angeles Pierce College is the West San Fernando Valley, which is the home of approximately 80 percent of the students at the College.

In 1943, the Los Angeles Board of Education voted to purchase nearly 400 acres of land in the southwestern part of the San Fernando Valley for eventual development into a campus for an agricultural school. In 1945 this agricultural school was named the Clarence W. Pierce School of Agriculture, becoming the third college in the District. The College opened its doors to students on September 15, 1947. Original enrollment was approximately 70 students with 18 certified faculty members. Coeducation began in 1951 with the enrollment of 26 women students who attended the evening division of classes.

Farm, vocational, and agricultural curriculums characterized the College for the first few years of its operation. Due to student and community forces and educational needs, the College saw the need to modify these narrow specializations in the direction of an expanded offering in General Education. This transition in curriculum was the most significant growth during the founding period of Pierce College.

Among the first buildings on campus to be used for school purposes, Quonset Hut (also called Exposition Hall) was the site of the opening day ceremonies on September 15, 1947. A large metal war surplus building, it served for the next 2 years or more as classroom space and the main assembly room on campus. The Classrooms/Administrative Building 21 and Library/ Cafeteria Building 19 were among the first buildings to be constructed in 1948. Both of these were located along the northwest side of the existing pedestrian Mall—a campus roadway at the time. Building 21 was the first permanent building on campus, and the Library became the cultural center of Pierce College. The first intercollegiate athletics competition on the campus was held in 1948, several years before any formally established athletic field is documented. During the second phase of construction in 1949, the Horticulture building and six dormitories (currently used as faculty offices) were built. A Master Plan for the campus was developed in 1950, which included site grading to the hill to the south for the next phase of construction. Buildings constructed in the early 1950s include the Poultry Building, Swine Unit, Hay Shop and Dairy Processing Building (now the Office Administration Classroom), Physical Education Building, and Shop Building. A new Master Plan was adopted in 1956 that guided campus development through the 1980s. A majority of the buildings in this plan were built on the northeast side of the pedestrian Mall between 1958 and 1965 and were utilitarian in design and character. During this period, the "Bungalow City" was built in 1958, the Mathematics Department Classrooms in 1962, and the Music Department Building in 1965. The Swimming

Pool was completed in 1977 and the Performing Arts building in 1980. Since 1980 the only two major changes on the campus were the construction of the Biology Lab in 1982 and the addition of the Auto Shop in 1986.

Student enrollment has varied substantially over the years. In the Fall of 1981, there were 23,700 students enrolled at the College. Enrollment declined to a low of 13,078 students in the Fall of 1998. In the Fall 2001 semester there were 18,118 students enrolled at Pierce College. The estimated number of annual full-time-equivalent (FTE)[1] students for the 2001-2002 school year is 13,591. As of the Fall 2001 semester there were 566 full-time-equivalent employed staff members at Pierce College.

There are five Pierce College semesters/sessions for the 2001-2002 academic year, beginning with the Fall 2001 semester, commencing on September 4, 2001, and concluding on December 20, 2001. The 2002 year starts with the Winter session, a 5-week program beginning on January 2 and concluding on February 2. The Winter session is followed by the 15-week Spring semester. The Spring semester starts on February 4 and continues through graduation ceremonies on June 4. Pierce College offers two full Summer sessions, Summer A 2002 and Summer B 2002. Summer A begins on June 17 and ends July 20. Summer B begins July 22 and ends August 24. The school calendar year ends with the start of the Fall 2002 semester.

The academic semesters offer classes during the day and evening Monday through Friday starting at 8:00 a.m. and finishing around 10:00 p.m. Saturday classes are also offered during the semester sessions beginning at 9:00 a.m.

1-2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE MASTER PLAN

In January 2000, Los Angeles Pierce College reactivated a Facilities Master Plan contract that had originally been awarded in 1997 and then placed on hold by a previous administration following production of Volume 1, which documented existing conditions. Pierce College's Educational Master Plan served as the foundation for the Facilities Master Plan. At the beginning of the planning process, a significant outreach effort was undertaken, internally and externally. Three symposia were held with guests invited from the University of California at Davis, Cal Poly University Pomona, Cal Poly University San Luis Obispo, agricultural businesses, and Pierce's agricultural faculty to examine the potential for urban agricultural education. Numerous meetings with on-campus stakeholders as well as neighbors, community organizations, business interests, and elected officials were held. An Open House Workshop for the general public was held in March 2000 for which 10,000 invitations were sent.

Three broad alternate Facilities Master Plan concepts were developed to fulfill the following objectives: meet the College's educational needs as defined in the Educational Master Plan,

[1] To determine the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) students, the District calculates the total number of instructional hours for all of the enrollments and divides by 525 hours, which is roughly the number of instructional hours of one student taking five 3-unit classes for two primary terms. Instructional hours are based on enrollments on a census date and hours are counted differently for full-term and short-term classes. Some courses require reporting of actual hours of attendance only.

improve the image of the Pierce College campus by giving priority to high visibility/high use areas, provide space to allow the College to support an enrollment of 20,000[2] students, re-establish the College as a center for urban agriculture, and form public/private partnerships to support academic initiatives. The intent was to develop a comprehensive plan that meets the needs of the College, the students, and the community.

In September 2000, the three alternate Master Plan concepts were presented with another round of campus and public outreach. Members of the public were encouraged to examine the concepts and submit opinions, suggestions, and concerns so that they might be incorporated into the plan. The resulting proposed Master Plan concept, including comments received during the public outreach process, was submitted to the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District in December 2000. That Master Plan concept provided the basic project description for this Environmental Impact Report.

1-3 PROPOSITION A BOND MEASURE

Proposition A is a $1.245 billion facilities bond that is being used to repair, rehabilitate, and modernize facilities at all nine of the Los Angeles Community College District's campuses. Los Angeles voters approved Proposition A on April 10, 2001, by a 67 percent margin, surpassing the 55 percent needed for passage. The District has established a goal of spending $525 million in the first 36 months on programming, design, and construction for the District's nine campuses.

Proposition A requires that bond revenues be expended only for construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or replacement of college facilities and that no bond revenues be expended for any teacher or administrative salaries or other college operating expenses. To ensure that all Proposition A requirements are met, the District established an independent District Citizens' Oversight Committee, as well as Citizens' Oversight Committees for each of the District's nine colleges. The committees are comprised of business, labor, education, student, senior, and community leaders. A Pierce College oversight committee has also been established.

Pierce College was allocated $166 million of the $1.245 billion bond measure. The Facilities Master Plan was developed for the College to set forth the vision, commitment and objectives of the College and its use of the bond money. Pierce College kicked off the District's comprehensive Proposition A construction program to upgrade campus facilities in a ceremonial groundbreaking on October 25, 2001, for the construction of Pierce College's Student Store and Support Services Center.

[2] Current projections indicate that future enrollment in the Fall 2010 semester under the proposed Master Plan would exceed previous projections and would be 23,252 students. This estimate is based on a projected enrollment in the Fall 2002 semester of 16,990 students and a subsequent average increase in enrollment of 4 percent per year through 2010. The estimated number of FTEs in the 2010-2011 school year would be 16,423.

1-4 THE CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) when there is substantial evidence that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. The purpose of an EIR is to provide decision makers, public agencies, and the general public with an objective and informational document that fully discloses the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The EIR process is specially designed to facilitate the objective evaluation of potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project; and to identify potentially feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that reduce or avoid the project's significant effects. In addition, CEQA specifically requires that an EIR identify those adverse impacts determined to be significant after mitigation.

The EIR for the Los Angeles Pierce College Facilities Master Plan is a combined Project/Program EIR. A Project EIR is the most common type of EIR and examines the environmental effects of a specific development project. A Program EIR is described in Section 15168 of the *CEQA Guidelines* as an EIR, "which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either geographically, as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions, [or] in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program…" According to the *CEQA Guidelines*, a Program EIR can provide the following advantages:

- provide an occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action;
- ensure consideration of cumulative impacts that may be slighted in a case-by-case basis;
- avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations;
- allow the lead agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impact;
- allow reduction in paperwork.

Under CEQA, specific projects proposed under the program or plan (e.g., Master Plan) may rely on the Program EIR as the base environmental document for environmental review. Subsequent activities (or projects) in the program or plan must be examined in light of the Program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document (i.e., Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or EIR) must be prepared. If the lead agency finds that the subsequent activity or project would not result in new effects or require new mitigation measures, the lead agency 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. If an EIR is required for a subsequent activity, the subsequent EIR can focus solely on new effects that were not considered before. According to CEQA, a Program EIR will be most helpful in dealing with subsequent activities if it deals with the effects of the program as specifically and comprehensively as

possible. With a good and detailed analysis of the program, many subsequent activities could be found to be within the scope of the project described in the Program EIR, with the result that no further environmental documents would be required.

In accordance with the *CEQA Guidelines*, which are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with Section 15000, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was distributed on February 1, 2002, to responsible and trustee agencies as well as private organizations and individuals that may have an interest in the proposed project. The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that Los Angeles Pierce College planned to prepare an EIR and to solicit guidance on the scope and content of the EIR. Approximately 100 copies of the NOP were distributed to various agencies, organizations, and individuals. Responses to the NOP as well as a copy of the NOP are included in Appendix A of this Draft EIR. In addition, a public scoping meeting was held on February 12, 2002 to provide information on the project and to receive comments on issues to be addressed in the EIR. Written comments submitted at the scoping meeting are also provided in Appendix A.

This Draft EIR focuses on the environmental impacts identified as potentially significant during preparation of the initial study and public circulation of the NOP and addresses other adverse impacts of the proposed project as well.

As the lead agency under CEQA, the Los Angeles Community College District directed the preparation of this Draft EIR through the use of professional environmental services contractors. This Draft EIR, however, reflects the independent judgment of the District and is intended to comply with CEQA and the *CEQA Guidelines* (see Public Resources Code, §21100; *CEQA Guidelines*, §§15120-15132).

This Draft EIR is now being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days. During this period, comments from the general public, organizations, and agencies on environmental issues raised in the Draft EIR and the Draft EIR's accuracy and completeness may be submitted to the District at the following address:

W. Andrew Dunn, Director, Facilities Planning and Development
Los Angeles Community College District
770 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017
tel. (213) 891-2159
fax (213) 891-2490

Formal comments on the Draft EIR should be submitted as written letters and delivered to the address above by 5 p.m. on the last day of the public review period identified in the Notice of Availability attached to this Draft EIR. Upon completion of the public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared that will include the comments on the Draft EIR received during the formal public review period as well as responses to those comments. This Draft EIR and the Final EIR will comprise the EIR for the proposed project.

Prior to approval of the proposed project, the Los Angeles Community College District, as the lead agency, is required to certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the Los Angeles Community College District, as the decision-making body for the proposed

project, has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the Los Angeles Community College District.

Prior to approval of the proposed project, CEQA also requires the District to adopt "findings" with respect to each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR (Public Resources Code, §21081; *CEQA Guidelines*, §15091). For each such significant effect, CEQA requires the approving agency to make one or more of the following findings:

- The project has been altered to avoid or substantially lessen significant impacts identified in the EIR.
- The responsibility to carry out the above is under the jurisdiction of another agency.
- Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

In the event that the District, as the lead agency, concludes that the proposed project will result in significant effects that are identified in the EIR but are not substantially lessened or avoided by feasible mitigation measures and alternatives, the District must adopt a "statement of overriding considerations" prior to approval of the proposed project (Public Resources Code, §21081, subd. (b); *CEQA Guidelines*, §15093). Such statements are intended under CEQA to provide a written means by which the lead agency balances in writing the benefits of the proposed project and the significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Where the lead agency concludes that the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable environmental impacts, the lead agency may find such impacts "acceptable" and approve the project.

In addition, pursuant to Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code, public agencies, when approving a project, must also adopt a monitoring or reporting program for the changes that were incorporated into the project or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The reporting or monitoring program is adopted at the time of project approval and must be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation. If the Los Angeles Community College District, as the lead agency, approves the proposed project, Los Angeles Pierce College will implement the proposed project and mitigation monitoring program on behalf of the District.

1-5 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR AND OTHER PUBLIC AGENCY ACTIONS

According to Section 15121 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, an EIR is a public document used by a public agency to analyze the significant environmental effects of a proposed project, to identify alternatives, and to disclose possible ways to reduce or avoid possible environmental damage. As an informational document, an EIR does not recommend for or against approving a project. The main purpose of an EIR is to inform governmental decision makers and the public about potential environmental impacts of the project.

Accordingly, this EIR will be used by the Los Angeles Community College District, as the lead agency under CEQA, in making decisions with regard to approval of the Master Plan and implementation of projects identified in the Los Angeles Pierce College Facilities Master Plan.

The information in this EIR may also be used by the responsible agencies identified below in deciding whether to grant permits or approvals necessary to construct or operate the proposed projects discussed in the Master Plan.

- State of California
  - Department of Food and Agriculture
  - Department of General Services
    Division of the State Architect
  - Department of Toxic Substances Control
  - State Fire Marshal

- Regional Water Quality Control Board (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit)

- South Coast Air Quality Management District (stationary source permits)

- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

- County of Los Angeles
  - Department of Health Services
  - Department of Public Works

- City of Los Angeles
  - City Planning Commission and City Council (planning/zoning approvals)
  - Department of Water and Power
  - Fire Department
  - Public Works Department
    Bureau of Engineering
    Bureau of Sanitation
  - Department of Transportation

1-6 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

The Summary chapter of this EIR provides an overview of the detailed information contained in subsequent chapters. It consists of an introduction, a description of the proposed project and alternatives considered, a discussion of areas of controversy and issues to be resolved, and a table that summarizes the potential environmental impacts in each category, and the significance determination, mitigation measures, and significance after mitigation for those impacts.

Chapter 1 of this EIR describes the purpose of the proposed project and project background. It includes a brief overview of the CEQA environmental review process, a description of the

intended uses of the EIR and public agency actions, and this section describing the organization of the EIR.

Chapter 2 of this EIR provides a detailed description of the proposed project as well as the project objectives, location, project characteristics, and construction scenario. Related projects in the project area are also identified in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 of this EIR describes the potential environmental effects of implementing the proposed project. The discussion in Chapter 3 is organized by impact category (e.g., air quality, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, historical resources, geology and soils, hazardous materials, traffic, etc.). For each impact category, the analysis and discussion is organized into four subsections as described below:

- **Environmental Setting** – This subsection describes the environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed project site at the time of publication of the Notice of Preparation. It also describes applicable governing bodies and state regulations. The environmental setting establishes the baseline conditions by which the Los Angeles Community College District will determine whether specific project-related impacts are significant.

- **Environmental Impacts** – For each environmental impact category, and where appropriate for each project site, criteria are identified for determining whether an impact is considered significant. This subsection provides detailed information on the environmental effects of the proposed project, and whether or not the impacts of the proposed project meet or exceed the established significance criteria.

- **Mitigation Measures** – This subsection identifies potentially feasible mitigation measures that would avoid or substantially reduce significant adverse project-related impacts. It also identifies mitigation measures that the State has agreed to implement, and indicates whether or not project-related impacts would be reduced to below a level of significance with implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the EIR.

- **Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts** – This subsection identifies any residual significant and unavoidable adverse effects of the proposed project that would result even after mitigation measures have been applied.

Chapter 4 of this EIR describes the No Project Alternative and other alternatives that were considered during the planning process. It also identifies the environmentally superior alternative.

Chapter 5 of this EIR provides an overview of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including:

- **Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts** – This subsection summarizes for quick reference and identification the unavoidable significant adverse impacts described in detail in Chapter 3.

- **Impacts Found Not to Be Significant** – This subsection summarizes for quick reference and identification the potentially adverse impacts that were found not to be significant.

- **Irreversible Environmental Changes** – This subsection discusses any irreversible changes to the environment that could occur as a result of construction or operation of the proposed project.

- **Cumulative Impacts** – This subsection addresses the potentially significant cumulative impacts that may result from the proposed project when taking into account the related or cumulative impacts resulting from other reasonably foreseeable past, present, and future projects.

- **Growth Inducing Impacts** – This subsection describes the potential for the proposed project to foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.

Chapter 6 provides a bibliography of reference materials used in the preparation of this EIR.

Chapter 7 includes a list of persons and organizations consulted during preparation of this EIR.

Chapter 8 identifies the preparers of this EIR.

Several Appendices follow Chapter 8.