



Official numbers for the Fall 2009 45<sup>th</sup> Day show SMCC with a whopping 21.1% increase in FTSE from a year ago....the biggest increase of any college in the Maricopa District!

But that's nothing new for this college....check out this clip from 1983, when our headcount jumped to 1,875....(about one-third of our total for Fall 2009)...and tuition was a whopping \$14 per hour. Those were the days....

1,875 enrolled

## SMCC campus caught in 'boom'

By Don Warne  
*The Phoenix Gazette*

South Mountain Community College is growing much faster than predicted — causing some crowding and juggling of rooms, officials say.

"It's a good problem to have, and it proves the need was there," SMCC President Raul Cardenas said.

Enrollment hit 1,875 this fall, 32 percent more than forecast.

The newest campus in the Maricopa County Community College District, South Mountain is caught up in a boom for the two-year schools.

The total enrollment in the seven-campus MCCC is 66,791 this year, about 6 percent more than last year, despite an increase in tuition to \$14 a credit hour from \$11.

Cardenas said the economy is a factor, along with the cheaper cost and accessibility of community colleges.

"Many people are out of jobs and are coming back to college for retraining. Others are new to higher education but are finding they need training to qualify for good jobs, particularly jobs in the high-technology area," Cardenas said.

SMCC has a capacity for 1,200 full-time-equivalent students, and the president acknowledged that the campus is nearing that figure.

"We are very close. Our classrooms are up to maximum use evenings and have good use day-times except between 3 and 5 p.m.," Cardenas said.

"But I feel we could handle another 1,000 (part-time) students if they took the right courses at the right times."

Located at 7050 S. 24th St., SMCC was launched four years ago

in rented facilities. It got its own campus three years ago.

"We were projected for a maximum 3,500 students in 10 years, but, quite conservatively, we should reach that in another four years (two years ahead of predictions)," Cardenas said, adding:

"I think our growth may slow down, but enrollment is very difficult to determine."

The school was opened to serve an area including Tempe and Buckeye, and Cardenas said one surprising development was that most students are from South Phoenix.

Initially, most students were women.

And most students attended evening classes.

"Now, 54 percent of our students attend during the day, and women only slightly outnumber men," Cardenas said, noting that the average age of SMCC students is 28.

Cardenas said the school will be adding classrooms and other buildings — but MCCC officials admit openly they are worried about keeping up with growth because of legislative cutbacks in capital outlay funding.

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Gary Ulik, *The Phoenix Gazette*  
the record 1,875 students enrolled this fall at South Community College dine in the cafeteria recently.