

## SMCCCD ENROLLMENT REPORT FALL 2025

### SUMMARY

The implementation of **Free College** in the **San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD)** under the authorization provided by **SB 893** has been transformative in its impact on the communities of San Mateo County. Since its implementation, over **33,500 unique students** have received support through Free College, with an average of **12,489 or almost 70% of students per semester**. The SMCCCD has seen a **24% enrollment increase** in domestic students from Fall 2022 to Fall 2025 as a result of the implementation of Free College. The District has also seen significant increases in enrollment from underrepresented portions of the County including a 33% increase from East Palo Alto, 31% increase from Redwood City, and a 34% increase from Half Moon Bay. Overall, more than half of Free College recipients were first-generation students, more than half identified as female, and almost three-quarters came from communities of color in San Mateo County.

Following the passage of SB 893 in Fall 2022, the Board adopted policies in the Spring 2023 semester outlining the parameters for the Free Community College strategic initiative in the SMCCCD. At the same time, a strategic marketing campaign was developed and deployed to promote Free College across multiple platforms, including physical promotion (e.g., bus wraps), radio, and social media. Additionally, each of the three colleges has been focused on growth in dual enrollment and investments in expanded high school and community outreach, and recruitment to increase the transition of high school students into higher education in the SMCCCD.

Compared to Fall 2024, overall Fall 2025 domestic student headcount decreased nominally by -2%, with the majority of the decrease occurring in First Time students. This suggests that the District may be reaching a plateau in the enrollment increases seen as a result of Free College. Overall, the SMCCCD experienced a 4% increase in domestic Continuing student headcount for the Fall 2025 semester compared to Fall 2024 and a slight increase (1%) in domestic students with educational goal of obtaining a degree or certificate. The number of First Time students has increased 55% from Fall 2022 to Fall 2025, and a parallel increase of 141% ( $n = 610$ ) in Returning Students who are coming back to higher education after some time away. Taken together, the District's colleges have achieved a 24% ( $n = 3,323$ ) increase in unduplicated domestic student headcount from Fall 2022 to Fall 2025.

Student Headcount Categories	Fall 2022 Headcount (Actuals)	Fall 2023 Headcount (Actuals)	Fall 2024 Headcount (Actuals)	Fall 2025 Headcount (Census)	% Change from Fall 2022	% Change from Fall 2023	% Change from Fall 2024
Unique Headcount NonK12 Domestic (all) TOTAL	14,049	16,465	17,720	17,372	24%	6%	-2%
Unique Headcount NonK12 Domestic (GOAL=ACE)	9,905	13,622	15,089	15,204	53%	12%	1%
Unique Headcount NonK12 Domestic (GOAL=ACE) First Time and First Time Transfer	2,514	3,718	4,142	3,901	55%	5%	-6%
Unique Headcount NonK12 Domestic (GOAL=ACE) Continuing	6,959	8,996	9,886	10,261	47%	14%	4%
Unique Headcount NonK12 Domestic (GOAL=ACE) Returning	432	908	1,061	1,042	141%	15%	-2%
Unique Headcount Non12 Domestic (GOAL Not ACE)	4,144	2,843	2,629	2,168	-48%	-24%	-18%

Table 1 – Fall 2025 domestic headcount growth compared to Fall, 2024, Fall 2023 and Fall 2022