

The Economic Value of Santa Ana College to Orange County





SANTA ANA COLLEGE (SAC) creates value in many ways. The college plays a key role in helping students increase their employability and achieve their individual potential. The college draws students to the county, generating new dollars and opportunities for Orange County. SAC provides students with the education, training, and skills they need to have fulfilling and prosperous careers. Furthermore, SAC is a place for students to meet new people, increase their self-confidence, and promote their overall health and well-being.

SAC influences both the lives of its students and the county economy. The college supports a variety of industries in Orange County, serves county businesses, and benefits society as a whole in California from an expanded economy and improved quality of life. Additionally, the benefits created by SAC extend to the state and local government through increased tax revenues and public sector savings.

This study measures the economic impacts created by SAC on the business community and the benefits the college generates in return for the investments made by its key stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. The following two analyses are presented:

 **Economic impact analysis**

 **Investment analysis**

All results reflect employee, student, and financial data, provided by the college, for fiscal year (FY) 2023-24. Impacts on the Orange County economy are reported under the economic impact analysis and are measured in terms of added income. The returns on investment to students, taxpayers, and society in California are reported under the investment analysis.



**Orange County,
California**

SAC influences both the **lives of its students** and the **county economy**.

Economic impact analysis



SAC promotes economic growth in Orange County through its direct expenditures and the resulting expenditures of students and county businesses. The college serves as an employer and buyer of goods and services for its day-to-day and construction operations. The college's activities attract students from outside Orange County, whose expenditures benefit county vendors. In addition, SAC is one of the primary sources of higher education to Orange County residents and a supplier of trained workers to county industries, enhancing overall productivity in the county workforce.

Operations spending impact



SAC adds economic value to Orange County as an employer of county residents and a large-scale buyer of goods and services. In FY 2023-24, the college employed 2,311 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, 69% of whom lived in Orange County. Total payroll at SAC was \$119.7 million, much of which was spent in the county on groceries, mortgage and rent payments, dining out, and other household expenses. In addition, the college spent \$54.0 million on expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services.

SAC's operations spending added \$154.2 million in income to the county during the analysis year. This figure represents the college's payroll, the multiplier effects generated by the in-county spending of the college and its employees, and a downward adjustment to account for funding that the college received from county sources. The **\$154.2 million** in added income is equivalent to supporting **2,473 jobs** in the county.

Student spending impact



Around 34% of credit students attending SAC originated from outside the county in FY 2023-24, and some of these students relocated to Orange County to attend SAC. These students may not have come to the county if the college did not exist. In addition, some in-county students, referred to as retained students, would have left Orange County if not for the existence of SAC. While attending the college, these relocated and retained students spent money on groceries, accommodation, transportation, and other household expenses. This spending generated **\$114.7 million** in added income for the county economy in FY 2023-24, which supported **1,577 jobs** in Orange County.

Impacts created by SAC in FY 2023-24



Operations spending impact

\$154.2 million

+



Student spending impact

\$114.7 million

+



Alumni impact

\$1.3 billion



Total economic impact

\$1.6 billion

OR



Jobs supported

16,729



Alumni impact



The education and training SAC provides for county residents has the greatest impact. Since the establishment of the college, students have studied at SAC and entered the county workforce with greater knowledge and new skills. Today, hundreds of thousands of former SAC students are employed in Orange County. As a result of their education from SAC, the students receive higher earnings and increase the productivity of the businesses that employ them. In FY 2023-24, SAC alumni generated **\$1.3 billion** in added income for the county economy, which is equivalent to supporting **12,679 jobs**.

Total impact

SAC added \$1.6 billion in income to the Orange County economy during the analysis year, equal to the sum of the operations spending impact, the student spending impact, and the alumni impact. For context, the **\$1.6 billion** impact was equal to approximately **0.5%** of the total gross regional product (GRP) of Orange County. This contribution that the college provided on its own is about half as large as the entire Utilities industry in the county.

SAC's total impact can also be expressed in terms of jobs supported. The **\$1.6 billion** impact supported **16,729 county jobs**, using the jobs-to-sales ratios specific to each industry in the county. In addition, the \$1.6 billion, or 16,729 supported jobs, stemmed from different industry sectors. For instance, among non-education industry sectors, the spending of SAC and its students and the activities of its alumni in the Health Care & Social Assistance industry sector supported 1,840 jobs in FY 2023-24. If the college did not exist, these impacts would not have been generated in Orange County.

SAC impacts by industry (jobs supported)



1,840

Health Care & Social Assistance



1,639

Retail Trade



1,603

Professional & Technical Services



1,305

Accommodation & Food Services



1,287

Other Services (except Public Admin)

The **\$1.6 billion** total impact supported **16,729 county jobs**.



Investment analysis



An investment analysis evaluates the costs associated with a proposed venture against its expected benefits. The analysis presented here evaluates SAC as an investment from the perspectives of students, taxpayers, and society in California. As with the economic impact analysis, this analysis considers only FY 2023-24 activities.

Student perspective



In FY 2023-24, SAC served 42,280 credit and 21,218 non-credit students. In order to attend the college, the students paid for tuition, fees, books, and supplies. They also took out loans and will incur interest on those loans. Additionally, students gave up money they would have otherwise earned had they been working instead of attending college. The total investment made by SAC's students in FY 2023-24 amounted to a present value of \$134.3 million, equal to \$19.3 million in out-of-pocket expenses (including future principal and interest on student loans) and \$115.0 million in forgone time and money.

In return for their investment, SAC's students will receive a stream of higher future earnings that will continue to grow throughout their working lives. For example, the average SAC associate degree graduate from FY 2023-24 will see annual earnings that are \$10,800 higher than a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in California. Over a working lifetime, the benefits of an associate degree over a high school diploma will amount to an undiscounted value of \$378,000 in higher earnings per graduate. The present value of the cumulative higher future earnings that SAC's FY 2023-24 students will receive over their working careers is \$829.9 million.

The students' benefit-cost ratio is 6.2. In other words, for every dollar students invest in SAC in the form of out-of-pocket expenses and forgone time and money, they will receive a cumulative value of \$6.20 in higher future earnings. Annually, the students'

Students see a high rate of return for their investment in SAC



Average annual return for SAC students

24.6%



Stock market 30-year average annual return

10.1%



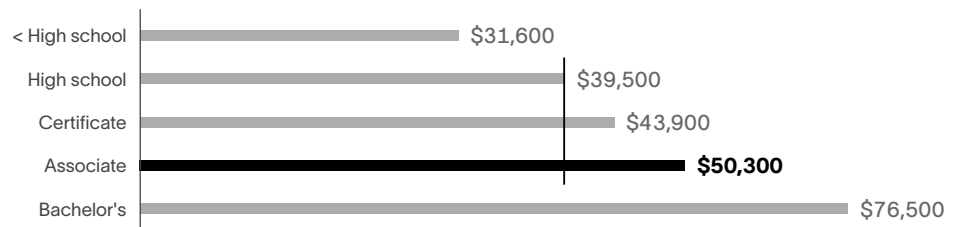
Interest earned on savings account (national deposit rate)

0.5%

Source: Forbes' S&P 500, 1994-2023; FDIC.gov, March 2023.

Average earnings by education level at career midpoint

The average associate degree graduate from SAC will see an increase in earnings of **\$10,800** each year compared to a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in California.



Source: Lightcast employment data



investment in SAC has an average annual internal rate of return of 24.6%, which is impressive compared to the U.S. stock market's 30-year average rate of return of 10.1%.

Taxpayer perspective



SAC generates more in tax revenue than it receives. These benefits to taxpayers consist primarily of taxes that the state and local government will collect from the added revenue created in the state. As SAC students will earn more, they will make higher tax payments throughout their working lives. Students' employers will also make higher tax payments as they increase their output and purchases of goods and services. By the end of the FY 2023-24 students' working lives, the state and local government will have collected a present value of \$359.5 million in added taxes.

For every dollar of public money invested in SAC, taxpayers will receive a cumulative value of **\$2.10** over the course of the students' working lives.

Benefits to taxpayers will also consist of savings generated by the improved lifestyles of SAC students and the corresponding reduced government services. Education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes. The education that SAC students receive will generate savings in three main categories: 1) health care, 2) justice system, and 3) income assistance. Improved health will lower students' demand for national health care services. In addition, costs related to the justice system will decrease. SAC students will be more employable, so their reduced demand for income assistance such as welfare and unemployment benefits will benefit taxpayers. For a list of study references, contact the college for a copy of the main report. Altogether, the present value of the benefits associated with an education from SAC will generate \$67.7 million in savings to state and local taxpayers.

Total taxpayer benefits amount to \$427.2 million, the present value sum of the added tax revenue and public sector savings. Taxpayer costs are \$203.4 million, equal to the amount of state and local government funding SAC received in FY 2023-24. These benefits and costs yield a benefit-cost ratio of 2.1. This means that for every dollar of public money invested in SAC in FY 2023-24, taxpayers will receive a cumulative present value of \$2.10 over the course of the students' working lives. The average annual internal rate of return for taxpayers is 5.9%, which compares favorably to other long-term investments in the public sector.

Social perspective



Society as a whole in California benefits from the presence of SAC in two major ways. Primarily, society benefits from an increased economic base in the state. This is attributed to the added income from students' increased lifetime earnings (added student income) and increased business output (added business income), which raise economic prosperity in California.

Benefits to society also consist of the savings generated by the improved lifestyles of SAC students. As discussed in the previous section, education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes that generate social savings. Note that these costs are avoided by the consumers but are distinct from the costs avoided by the taxpayers

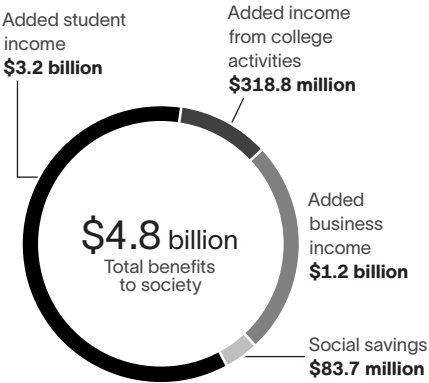


outlined above. Health care savings include avoided medical costs associated with smoking, obesity, substance abuse, and depression. Justice system savings include avoided costs to the government and society due to less judicial activity. Income assistance savings include reduced welfare and unemployment claims. For a list of study references, contact the college for a copy of the main report.

Altogether, the social benefits of SAC equal a present value of \$4.8 billion. These benefits include \$3.2 billion in added student income, \$1.2 billion in added business income, \$318.8 million in added income from college activities, as well as \$83.7 million in social savings related to health, the justice system, and income assistance in California. People in California invested a present value total of \$301.6 million in SAC in FY 2023-24. The cost includes all the college and student costs.

The benefit-cost ratio for society is 15.9, equal to the \$4.8 billion in benefits divided by the \$301.6 million in costs. In other words, for every dollar invested in SAC, people in California will receive a cumulative value of \$15.90 in benefits. The benefits of this investment will occur for as long as SAC’s FY 2023-24 students remain employed in the state workforce.

Social benefits in California from SAC






Source: Lightcast impact model

Summary of investment analysis results

The results of the analysis demonstrate that SAC is a strong investment for all three major stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. As shown, students receive a great return for their investments in an education from SAC. At the same time, taxpayers’ investment in SAC returns more to government budgets than it costs and creates a wide range of social benefits throughout California.

Summary of investment analysis results

 Student perspective	 Taxpayer perspective	 Social perspective												
<p>Present value benefits</p> <p>\$829.9 million</p> <p>Present value costs</p> <p>\$134.3 million</p> <p>Net present value</p> <p>\$695.5 million</p>	<p>Present value benefits</p> <p>\$427.2 million</p> <p>Present value costs</p> <p>\$203.4 million</p> <p>Net present value</p> <p>\$223.8 million</p>	<p>Present value benefits</p> <p>\$4.8 billion</p> <p>Present value costs</p> <p>\$0.3 billion</p> <p>Net present value</p> <p>\$4.5 billion</p>												
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* The rate of return is not reported for the social perspective because the beneficiaries are not necessarily the same as the original investors.

Conclusion

*The results of this study demonstrate that SAC creates value from **multiple perspectives**.*

The college benefits county businesses by increasing consumer spending in the county and supplying a steady flow of qualified, trained workers to the workforce. SAC enriches the lives of students by raising their lifetime earnings and helping them achieve their individual potential. The college benefits state and local taxpayers through increased tax receipts and a reduced demand for government-supported social services. Finally, SAC benefits society as a whole in California by creating a more prosperous economy and generating a variety of savings through the improved lifestyles of students.

About the study

Data and assumptions used in the study are based on several sources, including the FY 2023-24 academic and financial reports from SAC, industry and employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau, outputs of Lightcast's Multi-Regional Social Accounting Matrix model, and a variety of studies and surveys relating education to social behavior. The study applies a conservative methodology and follows standard practice using only the most recognized indicators of economic impact and investment effectiveness. For a full description of the data and approach used in the study, please contact the college for a copy of the main report.



Lightcast provides colleges and universities with labor market data that help create better outcomes for students, businesses, and communities. Our data, which cover more than 99% of the U.S. workforce, are compiled from a wide variety of government sources, job postings, and online profiles and résumés. Hundreds of institutions use Lightcast to align programs with regional needs, drive enrollment, connect students with in-demand careers, track their alumni's employment outcomes, and demonstrate their institution's economic impact on their region. Visit lightcast.io/solutions/education to learn more or connect with us.