Melissa came to Santa Barbara City College after 23 years as a small business owner in hospitality and real estate. She joined the SBCC community in 2008 as a founding director of the now national award-winning Scheinfeld Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation. She created leading-edge experiential components for the center, such as the Enlightened Entrepreneurship lecture series, which featured luminaries such as the founders of Patagonia and Deckers Outdoor Corporation, and created the Enterprise Launch program where students engage in the rapid development of a product or service in a single semester. She authored the Practical Guide to a Rapid Startup, which shares the success of the Enterprise Launch program.

In 2014, she was promoted to dean of the SBCC Business Division and launched the SBCC Career Skills Institute, an award-winning and innovative noncredit “flipped classroom” concept that partners with local employers and adult re-entry students to strengthen the skills of the local workforce. Partners include Cottage Hospital, UCSB, large local employers, and the America’s Job Center. As dean, she worked with the SBCC Foundation to raise $1 million for the business division, creating the Jack & Julie Nadel School of Business & Entrepreneurship, and also to help house SBCC Cosmetology in a building purchased by the Foundation in downtown Santa Barbara at 525 Anacapa Street.

In 2017, Melissa was promoted to vice president to create the SBCC School of Extended Learning that has already grown to offer over 1,600 noncredit sections per year, and more than doubled the college’s noncredit revenue.

Melissa is a licensed California attorney.