

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Local Community College District Reacts to Governor's Budget Proposal

(ORANGE COUNTY, CA)—When the Governor released his proposed 2010-2011 State Budget, administrators at the Coast Community College District—which represents Orange Coast College, Golden West College, and Coastline Community College—reacted with both appreciation and apprehension.

The plan provides \$126 million to community colleges statewide for enrollment growth which is enough to fund about 26,000 new full-time students. This will help the schools to accommodate more people looking for affordable training programs.

“In addition to prioritizing our transfer and basic skills programs, we have enhanced our offerings in our career and technical programs,” said Jerry Patterson, President of the Coast Community College District Board of Trustees. “This budget proposal clearly shows the Governor’s commitment to help the underemployed and unemployed get back on their feet and we would like the legislators to hold firm on that promise to higher education.”

However, the added funding may not be enough. “Even with this funding, enrollment will continue to exceed state support,” said Dr. Ding-Jo Currie, Chancellor of the District.

Additional challenges include another reduction in funding to categorical programs. The first major cut to categorical programs came with the Governor’s 2009-2010 budget. Categorical programs include programs for students with disabilities and programs established to assist those students who are deemed extremely low-income.

“At Coastline, the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services department and the Acquired Brain Injury Program are both supported with categorical funds,” said Dr. Vangie Meneses, Coastline’s Vice President of Student Services. “Apportionments for these types of programs were cut by 16-51% last year, and to propose cutting another \$22.9 million in additional categorical programs statewide is almost unthinkable,” she continued.

Also included in the 2010-2011 budget is the planned elimination of the competitive Cal Grant program. “This move would hurt the neediest community college students at a time when California’s citizens are deeply concerned with college affordability,” expressed Patterson. Currently, this program provides 44,000 community colleges students with grants of \$1,551 for textbooks, transportation and supplies. These are generally older students whose income averages \$14,000 and are ineligible for the state’s entitlement program because they worked between high school and college.

Administrators see at least one positive in the proposed 2010-2011 State Budget. Student fees will remain at \$26 per unit. Robert Lane, Coast District Student Trustee, is thankful for that. “I pay for everything myself so if tuition goes

up, I have to work more,” said Lane. “The more I have to work, the less time I have to study.”

“We are relieved that our students will not be facing another tuition hike,” expressed Dr. Currie. “Our students are on very tight budgets,” she continued, “and we are too.”

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