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NEWS

Board Holds Special Budget Meeting

The Coast Community College District Board of Trustees will hold a special meeting on Wednesday, June 3 at 5:00pm at 1370 Adams Avenue, Costa Mesa, to study budget options for the 2009-10 fiscal year. The Board will hear initial input on potential cost savings measures developed by the District Budget Advisory Committee. The District is expected to have to cut over \$20 million of its operating expenses.

“California’s budget crisis will have a tremendous negative impact on our three colleges,” said Board President Jim Moreno. “The Board has to figure out how to make these staggering cuts while trying to mitigate the impact on our students. It’s a daunting task to have to try to solve a situation that was created in Sacramento but impacts our local communities.”

The Governor has proposed \$825 million in cuts to the state’s community colleges for the coming year. The Coast Community College District will account for approximately \$20 million of those cuts. The state has also proposed specific cuts, including the elimination of the CalGrant program and a per unit fee increase for students, from \$20 to \$60. “Our students will have to pay more for less,” Moreno said. “The fee increase goes directly to Sacramento coffers, not to our colleges. The state is trying to balance the budget on the backs of our students.”

That’s not the only problem students will face. Enrollment is expected to skyrocket as students are turned away from California State Universities and University of California institutions and displaced workers and returning Veterans enroll in classes to obtain new skills. “They can cap enrollment,” Moreno commented. “We need our friends and neighbors to help us send a clear message to Sacramento that they can’t make these draconian cuts and then expect that our colleges will be able to serve all of the students blocked out of CSU and UC, retrain displaced workers, and provide viable economic development programs. We have always done more with less – but this is a lot more with nothing.”

“This is only the beginning of the storm and is expected to continue for years. Short term, we have to determine a budget and consider what will happen if the state runs out of cash,” Moreno continued. “It has been reported by the State Controller that the state will be out of money on June 29 unless the legislators come up with a viable plan. While we wait for the budget from the state, we have to develop our own plan and prepare for the worst. Long term, we have to develop

options that will allow our colleges to operate for the next few years while facing even deeper cuts. It is important that our neighbors understand how the budget is going to impact their colleges and help us by contacting legislators in Sacramento. We are in a not-so-perfect storm of decreased property tax revenues, decreased allocations and an influx of more students. We must all work together to get through this difficult situation.”

The Coast Community College District is headquartered in Costa Mesa and is the ninth largest district in the country. The District’s three colleges - Coastline Community College in Fountain Valley, Golden West College in Huntington Beach and Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa - serve over 60,000 students each year providing traditional degree and transfer opportunities, career and technical training and community programs.

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