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NEWS

State Budget Raises Student Fees at Coast Community Colleges

After a very long wait, the state legislature and the Governor have passed a budget. The Coast Community College District is now able to deal with the current year's fiscal issues and start planning more effectively for 2010-11. The Coast District represents approximately three percent of the state's community college overall funding. Based upon the initial estimates, the Coast Community College District for this fiscal year is facing over \$5 million in the general apportionment cuts and over \$6 million in categorical program cuts.

In anticipation of deep cuts, the Coast Community College District prepared for more than \$20 million in cuts; this year alone we have already cut \$10 million. Board of Trustees President Jim Moreno explained, "The assumptions made by Sacramento regarding our budget allocations represent a best case scenario. These conservative estimates are based upon anticipated property taxes and state revenues. If revenues do not materialize the Governor could, as he has done in the past, initiate another mid-year cut."

Moreno went on to state that the most immediate impact on students, "Student fees have been increased to \$26 per unit. Students will have to pay more with no understanding that the decision to increase fee is straight from Sacramento and out of our hands."

In a message to the District's approximately 4,500 employees, Trustee Moreno outlined a few of the many ways the budget impacts Coast Community College District:

- Community members will have a difficult time getting classes at the three colleges (Coastline Community College, Golden West College and Orange Coast College) because there will be so many students looking to complete their general education requirements that were turned away from the Cal States and the University of California schools. Worse, many will be delayed in their efforts to transfer or graduate in a timely manner because we simply will not have the resources to serve them.
- Teachers and support staff will have to do more work with less money. The District will be forced to serve more students (including returning Veterans, displaced workers and students turned away from the 4-year colleges) with fewer resources. For the next fiscal year, the District could be facing millions of dollars in additional budget cuts.
- Sacramento will be in worse trouble than today and will have to focus its limited resources on public safety and limited essential healthcare, hampering any hope of restored funding.

The District's Board Members will continue to be involved with the reports from Sacramento and continue to advocate for our institutions. The Board will also continue to support our student efforts at advocating in Sacramento; they have proven to be outstanding advocates.

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The Coast Community College District is the ninth largest community college district in the state in credit enrollment, serving 60,000 students each semester. The District is comprised of Coastline Community College headquartered in Fountain Valley, Golden West College in Huntington Beach and Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa.