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November 14, 2007

Op-Ed

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of Trustees Take a Closer Look at Costco Proposal **By: Jerry Patterson, President Board of Trustees**

Earlier this year, administrators at Golden West College in Huntington Beach received an unsolicited land development proposal from Costco and the City of Huntington Beach. The proposal included a Costco retail store, student/faculty housing and a pedestrian bridge over Gothard Street. The proposal was presented as a part of the City's Edinger/Beach Corridor Vision plan.

On September 19, administrators and faculty at Golden West College determined through its shared governance procedure that the proposal warranted further study and presented information to the Coast Community College District Board of Trustees on October 3. At that meeting, the Board approved a motion to continue to investigate the proposal for land development at the college. The City of Huntington Beach and the Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce voted on October 1 and October 3, respectively, to continue to investigate the proposal.

A staff report will be presented to the Board on December 12, 2007, however the Board will likely take no action at that time.

There seems to be a good deal of misinformation regarding the Costco issue. The first one is that this is on the November 19th Agenda of the Board of Trustees. It is not. Secondly, the Board of Trustees has not decided to move forward with the Costco proposal. In fact, we have many questions about it and have requested a staff investigation and evaluation to determine if this proposal would be compatible with the college environment. However, we are committed to studying the proposal so that we may have our concerns addressed in the Environmental Impact Report that the City of Huntington Beach must do for this type of project. During our December 12th meeting we will receive a preliminary staff report on findings. Interested parties are invited to attend the December meeting to hear the information first-hand. Finally, I can assure you that track and baseball fields will not be destroyed at Golden West College, as some have reported.

At first glance, I think the project has many benefits and many challenges. Our colleges are faced with a multi-faceted mission and serve many community members while facing shrinking budgets and resources. Providing our students, staff and community members with affordable housing and new jobs while creating a revenue stream for the college to develop new programs is attractive. However, increased traffic, redeveloping college land and dealing with the operations and hours of a large retail outlet are just a few of the challenges that we will face if this project were to move forward.

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All of the benefits and challenges are being considered and the staff report that is presented in December will provide the Board with some preliminary findings. This issue is in its infancy and we look forward to hearing from our constituents as we move forward in examining this, or any other land development proposal.

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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.