



FOOTHILL-DE ANZA Community College District

October 14, 2010

Colleagues:

I hope you have settled into the fall quarter and your new academic year is off to a good start. I know that you are busy because we have successfully registered nearly 40,000 students using the new Banner system. I am pleased to report that all four major modules of Banner are up and running – on time and on budget. Congratulations to all whose months of hard work made this feat possible!

I am writing because I would like to report to you on our fiscal situation now that we know the outlines of the state budget as well as tell you about my recent participation in the White House Summit on Community Colleges and share some guidelines on political conduct as we move closer to the Nov. 2 election.

Measure E parcel tax election

As I believe most of you know, the Board of Trustees has placed a \$69 parcel tax on the November ballot. If approved by two-thirds of district voters, Measure E would raise about \$6.9 million annually in local funding for Foothill-De Anza for the next six years.

Because it is so important that we scrupulously follow the law, I want to share with you some advice on permissible political conduct by district employees.

Education Code section 7054 prohibits employees from knowingly using or approving the use of district funds, services, supplies or equipment to support or defeat any ballot measure or candidate. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging in advocacy activities during work hours
- Using district-owned photocopying machines, telephones, fax machines, and computer networks at any time, including before or after work hours or during weekends or holidays.

Students are not employees and are free to engage in campaign activities on campus if they are subject to the same rules applied by the campus to other groups. However, students are bound by the same rules as employees with respect to prohibitions against using district resources for campaign activities.

Of course, it is your right as a private citizen to independently choose to donate non-work time to the Measure E campaign or any other political activity. Once again, you cannot use any district resources whatsoever in the course of such activities.

White House summit on community colleges

I was honored to be among only 20-25 community college CEOs, and one of three from California, invited to attend the historic White House Summit on Community Colleges. It was a heady experience to be in the East Room on Oct. 5 listening to remarks by President Barack Obama; Dr. Jill Biden, a career educator who teaches English at Northern Virginia Community College; Melinda Gates, who announced a new initiative by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to improve community college completion rates; and Penny Pritzker, who spoke about Skills for America, a new workforce initiative that will strengthen partnerships between industry and community colleges.

A point of personal pride for me was listening to the comments delivered by Albert Ojeda, a graduate of Estrella Mountain Community College. Estrella Mountain is in my old district, Maricopa, and is the college where my son is on the economics faculty.

After the summit's opening session, I had the opportunity to participate in a financial aid breakout session where I advocated for providing more work-study funds for our students, extending financial aid for developmental education courses and non-credit workforce certificates, as well as extending the American Opportunity Tax Credit that expires this year. Other highlights of the summit included a visit with U.S. Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter and a reception at Blair House hosted by Vice President and Mrs. Biden. I've posted a few snapshots at <http://www.fhda.edu/summitphotos>. I want you to know that Foothill-De Anza will aggressively pursue grants through the Skills for America and the Gates Foundation's Completion by Design initiatives.

2010-11 budget

Finally, three months into the fiscal year, we have a state budget. For California community colleges, budget highlights include:

- Funding for enrollment growth, which in reality would only partially backfill last year's reductions
- Restoration of 10 percent of last year's devastating categorical program cuts, including a provision that the funding would not be paid until 2011-12
- Rejection of a negative COLA
- A new round of state funding deferrals
- A minimal expansion of career technical education as well as workforce and economic development programs.

We believe we can operate under the budget adopted last month by our Board of Trustees, which assumed that we would hold even on state revenue, with no cut to base apportionment. Any enrollment growth funding, if it materializes, would help offset the expense associated with the 800 full-time equivalent students we served last year without any state funding, and who we will continue to serve. However, it is unlikely to be enough to support an increase in the number of course sections to meet the unprecedented demand for class offerings from our community.

If the state budget holds true, we would be able to bring back into the operating budget those 27 positions now slated for layoff at the end of the fiscal year (Escrow II). We must continue to be prudent in our fiscal decisions and maintain our own stability fund to address the possibility of mid-year reductions and

budget cuts next year. The state budget is seen by many as once again relying on overly optimistic assumptions that are likely to require additional reductions overseen by a new governor. California still has not resolved its structural budget deficit; there is little doubt that our state will face another major deficit in 2011-12.

As you well know, our fiscal strategy has involved elimination of nearly 170 full- and part-time positions from the budget in the past three years and sharp cuts to supply and operating budgets at every level. Neither of these approaches is sustainable over the long term to meet the needs of our students. We are fortunate to have had one-time funds to help us manage in this unstable fiscal environment, but those funds could be largely exhausted by the end of 2011-12.

So yes, we face challenges, and continue to hope for the best while working diligently to maintain the staffing and operational funding we need to provide our students with the best education possible. With the leadership of the Board of Trustees, the district continues to chart a path for fiscal stability and integrity. We are doing this by actively pursuing grants and donations, reducing energy and other costs, and taking steps to secure a stable source

of local funding to help the district transition through this period of fiscal uncertainty.

In Foothill-De Anza's recent report seeking reaffirmation to the board of the League for Innovation in the Community College, Fred Sherman, our vice chancellor of technology, sums up the district's attitude toward its greatest resource, our faculty and staff. He says:

"Our source of excellence occurs through the innovations and hard work of our staff and faculty members. The shared goal of our administrators is to remove obstacles and provide resources so that excellence blossoms through the great work of our team members."

I could not agree more and want each of you to know how much we value your contributions. Please know that we are doing all we can to remove obstacles and provide you with the resources you need to continue Foothill-De Anza's legacy of excellence and innovation.

Yours sincerely,

Linda M. Thor, Chancellor