



# **FOOTHILL-DE ANZA Community College District**

**District Opening Day  
September 16, 2010**

**State of the District address  
By Chancellor Linda Thor**

Good morning! Today marks seven months since I assumed the Office of Chancellor of this great district. This morning I want to share with you some observations from the perspective of 212 days. I also want to give you updates on some important district initiatives and, finally, I want to offer some goals for the future.

But before I do, some introductions and recognitions are in order.

I am delighted to introduce to you our new vice chancellor of business services, who began his duties on August 16. Kevin McElroy comes to us from the Coast district in Southern California where he served as the vice president of administrative services for Coastline Community College for 21 years. In the month that we have worked together, Kevin already has demonstrated that he is an experienced manager and leader who is committed to shared governance and transparency. Given his extensive background in budget and finance, facilities planning and construction management, we are very lucky that we attracted him to our great district. Please join me in welcoming Kevin McElroy.

We are also welcoming dozens of new faculty, staff and administrators who have joined us in the past months. If this is your first opening day, please stand and be recognized.

Each of us, particularly me, remembers what it's like to join a new college or district, so please reach out to our new colleagues, give them your best advice and information, invite them for coffee or simply engage them in conversation. Although our colleges are very large, we can build and maintain community one person at a time.

I'd also like to take a moment to honor our faculty and staff who have devoted 25 years or more to Foothill and De Anza. If you are eligible for the quarter century club, please stand and let us thank you for the many years of dedicated service.

And speaking of people who should be honored, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the incredible commitment, expertise and dedicated service of the man who lead you so ably last year as your interim chancellor and who continues to serve as a mentor to me. Please join me in thanking Mike Brandy.

I would also like to recognize Foothill-De Anza's participatory governance leaders—your elected representatives who play a leadership role in ensuring that the innovative ideas, varying perspectives, advice, counsel and concerns of all of our employee groups are respected and communicated to the advisory boards and committees that make decisions about what's best for our students and our colleges. Governance leaders, please stand and let us thank you.

I want to especially acknowledge the De Anza Classified Senate that was recognized as a Model Senate by the California Community Colleges Classified Senate, the highest honor conferred by that group. Congratulations!

Moving to statewide governance, it is noteworthy that Dolores Davison has been elected Northern California representative to the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges. Congratulations, Dolores!

And speaking of honors, the past year saw much state and national recognition for our colleges and the professionals who work in them. To name just a few:

Vice Chancellor Fred Sherman was named Campus Technology Innovator in Technology Planning by the California Community College Chief Information Systems Officers Association. Ceramics instructor Andy Ruble won the Best of Show Award in the Feats of Clay national juried competition. Intercultural studies instructor Michael Chang received the Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Award from the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus.

Astronomy instructor Andrew Fraknoi received the Hayward Award for Excellence in Education from the California Community Colleges. Dean Gertrude Gregorio was named one of the 100 most influential Filipinas in the U.S. by Filipina Women's Network Magazine. Music instructor Bruce Tambling was nominated for a Grammy, and Lori Susi, Bonnett Saussol and Lois

Jenkins won two first-place awards from the Community College Public Relations Organization.

English instructor Rosemary Arca and mathematics instructor Kathy Perino are among 26 outstanding basic skills faculty from across the country participating in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Skills for College Completion project while mathematic instructors Nicole Gray and Rachel Mudge are faculty in residence with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on the Statway project. Accounting instructor Sara Seyedin was named to the California Board of Accountancy's Accounting Education Advisory Board.

Institutional Research Executive Director Andrew LaManque contributed to a new report from the Institute for College Access and Success, "After the FAFSA." President Judy Miner was elected to the board of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, and President Brian Murphy served on the Community College League of California's Commission on the Future. CAD/Digital Imaging instructor Gary Lamit published a children's book "Wally the Walking Fish Meets Madison and Cooper," part-time history instructor Nannette Regua co-authored the book "Mexicans in San Jose," and part-time film/TV instructor Glenn Lovell's book "Escape Artist: The Life and Films of John Sturges" was named among the best books for special interests by the American Association of School Librarians and for general interest by the Public Library Association.

Wow! Please join me in congratulating these colleagues.

And there's another group of employees that I want to recognize today. It has been only 31 months since the Board of Trustees gave the approval to purchase Banner as a replacement for our old information system. For some of you, especially those of you who have been working on the new system, they have been long and challenging months.

But all of your hard work has paid off. We have now successfully implemented the four major modules of Banner: finance, HR/payroll, financial aid and student. Left to go are degree audit, institutional advancement and Banner document imaging plus eliminating bugs, rolling out more of the inherent functionality and continuing to tailor the system to fit our needs. To give you a little taste of what we have achieved through the Banner implementation: We have been running payroll through Banner since January, students have submitted paperless applications and received their financial aid checks electronically through Banner, and we currently have over 34,561 students registered in Banner for the fall quarter.

This could not have happened without the support of some very dedicated staff members. Let's recognize the staff members who have made this a success. If you have worked on any aspect of the Banner implementation, would you please stand. Let's give them a big round of applause. Thank you all for making this happen.

For some months now, I have been making the rounds of local service clubs like the Rotary, Kiwanis and League of Women Voters. My speech has been entitled: A Newcomer's Perspective on Public Higher Education in California: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. I have taken these opportunities to share with the community what is wonderful about our college district, but also what challenges we face.

I tell them about my visit shortly after my arrival with one of our founders, Dr. Robert Smithwick, who is in the audience today. Dr. Smithwick shared with me that from the beginning the core values of the district were excellence and opportunity for all. He talked about the emphasis that was placed on hiring the very best faculty and staff. And he talked about the strong community support from the beginning that enabled the acquisition of land and construction of these two great college campuses.

And what amazing assets to the community these campuses are. As you walk around the campuses this fall, stop and appreciate the Euphrat Museum, the planetarium and the observatory, the Smithwick and Lohman theaters, the Flint Center and Visual and Performing Arts Center, the aquatic centers, the Krause Center for Innovation and the Kirsch Center for Environmental Studies to name just a few.

And more are on the way. Design for the two largest Measure C projects are nearing completion. We expect both the Foothill Physical Sciences and Engineering Center and the De Anza Mediated Learning Center to begin construction early in 2011. And both have already won awards. The PSEC received a Design Award of Merit from the Community College Facility Coalition and the Mediated Learning Center was recognized at the California Higher Education Sustainability Conference as the best overall sustainable design.

But as wonderful as our facilities are, what is more noteworthy is what goes on inside them. Our colleges are ranked among the best community colleges in the nation and deservedly so. We offer exemplary programs that educate students for "in demand" careers in the Silicon Valley. And Foothill and De Anza are among the top five districts for transfer to UC and CSU. And did you know that we train more health care professionals than any other community college in the Silicon Valley? Remarkably, our students received

a 100 percent pass rate in 2009-10 on national and/or state licensure exams in the fields of:

- Dental assisting
- Dental hygiene
- Diagnostic medical sonography
- Massage therapy
- Medical laboratory technician
- Paramedic
- Pharmacy technician
- Radiologic technology
- Respiratory therapy, and
- Veterinary technology

Remarkable! Outstanding!

And we continue to enjoy national recognition as witnessed by a visit last April by Bill Gates and the commencement speeches by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

But I wouldn't be telling the community the whole story if I only talked about the good. So I transition to the bad.

Clearly community colleges like Foothill and De Anza are more critical than ever.

- The cuts to UC and CSU are bringing more students to community colleges.
- When people are unemployed, they go back to school for new careers. When people are fearful of losing their jobs, they go back to school for skill upgrading.
- We have veterans returning home looking for college degrees and post-military careers.
- We have the largest high school graduating classes in history.
- And we are the only affordable, accessible option for many students and families.

While demand is up, Foothill and De Anza have faced and are facing deep state budget cuts. As you know, because of state funding reductions, we have had to:

- Cut the budget by more than \$20 million over two years on a base of about \$180 million annually.
- We have eliminated more than 100 full and part-time positions. However, working closely and in collaboration with our unions, we were successful in finding alternatives for continued employment for nearly all affected full-time employees. This was a significant effort

and we are very grateful to all who assisted in helping to make this happen.

- We reduced 500 course sections in 2009-10, yet we served nearly 900 full-time equivalent students above our funding cap.
- We negotiated with our unions for \$5.3 million in reduced health benefit costs and we successfully implemented the negotiated changes effective July 1, achieving 100 percent open enrollment elections during the month of April.

We don't always stop to recognize that in order to keep things running smoothly, there are often Herculean efforts going on behind the scenes. We appreciate the dedication and very long hours of the staff who contributed to these successes and recognize we could not move forward without them. Our hats go off to you.

However, ongoing state cuts are projected, which means the problem stands to get worse for students.

- With demand up, there is more competition for fewer classes.
- It is taking students longer to reach their educational goals.
- And we are concerned about capacity for transfers at UC and CSU
- We are saddened that half the state cuts to community colleges in 2009-10 were to programs that provide direct services to help the most vulnerable students succeed, the educationally and economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

Shifting to the 2010-11 budget:

The Governor took a stand in support of higher education, but without revenue enhancements, the money isn't there.

- The California Legislative Analyst's Office projects double-digit state budget deficits for several more years.
- Proposed state cuts to programs like Cal Works and subsidized childcare will hurt our students' ability to stay in school.
- And, of course, there is no state budget yet!

However, even without a state budget, our Board of Trustees is required by law to adopt our district budget by September 15 and did on Monday evening. Key goals for structuring the 2010-11 budget, which were broadly articulated throughout the district, included:

- To bring the operating revenue into balance with the operating expense

- To preserve student access and support services as much as possible
- To set aside sufficient funds to carry the non-budgeted positions identified as Deferment I and Escrow II through the 2010-11 year
- To maintain a “stability fund” to guard against possible last-minute revenue reductions imposed by the state, and
- To anticipate further state revenue reductions in the 2011-12 fiscal year

Each one of these five goals has been accomplished through all staff coming together in labor negotiations and through the participatory governance process. We can all be proud of the process used to achieve a far-reaching set of recommendations, which accomplished the goals set out at the beginning of the process.

In summary, the Board of Trustees adopted a balanced budget with \$2.3 million of revenue in excess of expenses, one-time funds set aside to fund Deferment I and Escrow II position, and a one-time \$7.9 million stability fund that will help maximize student access for 2010-11 and offset moderate cuts from the state in 2010-11 and/or 2011-12.

But back to what I have been telling the community. After describing the bad, I then move to the ugly.

I am telling the community that I am appalled by the state’s disinvestment in public high education. California’s system of public higher education has historically been one of its greatest strengths.

- However, now, for the first time, we are turning away students at all levels—community colleges, CSUs and UCs.
- This has enabled the growth of for-profit higher education like the University of Phoenix and Kaplan. Did you know that the for-profits enroll 9 percent of all college students, but account for 23 percent of all federal financial aid and rack up 44 percent of the loan defaults?
- And out-of-state colleges and universities are eagerly recruiting our students, creating a potentially large brain drain out of California.

And all of this will have a significant economic impact on this state. We are facing a looming workforce skills gap as Baby Boomers retire and California’s demographics continue to shift to groups with historically low college attendance and graduation rates.

The Public Policy Institute of California reports that if the current trends persist, California will have one million fewer college graduates than it needs in 2025. So what do we collectively need to do?

- We need to improve access to college for more students
- We need to improve degree and certificate completion
- We need to improve efficiency through technology and continuous improvement
- And we need to invest in education. We must return to viewing education as a public good, not a private benefit.

And I share that I am appalled that some of the same issues from 20 years ago when I left California still have not been resolved—such as transfer. We have an inefficient and confusing system of transfer requirements negotiated between each individual community college and each individual CSU and UC campus, by major. But there is hope on the horizon. The Legislature has finally stepped in with a bill, SB 1440, that would simplify the transfer process and it is awaiting the governor's signature. The bill would establish a transfer associate of arts degree that will enable students to be admitted to the CSU with junior standing. This historic bill will better align our higher education system, saving students time, money and freeing up state resources to serve more students.

As we work to meet current challenges, it's important to look to the future. The current climate offers an opportunity to rethink things, form new alliances and make real progress. As the economist Paul Romer says, "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste."

So here are just a few of the things we are doing to help ourselves.

- First, we are taking very seriously the process of our accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. We see this process as an opportunity to periodically conduct a thorough review of what we are doing and how well we are doing it. Later this morning you will hear an update on this college-wide and district-wide dialogue on effectiveness and continuous improvement.
- By participating in the Community College League of California's Electricity Consortium program, electricity rates for the 2010-11 year have been obtained at a level that is 25 percent below our current rate. The new rate of \$56 per megawatt hour will equate to an approximate savings for this year of \$250,000. Additionally, in conjunction with the consortium, we have locked in very favorable rates for the subsequent two years, the lowest rates since July 2003.



- We have made a commitment in the Measure C bond program to more than double the current photovoltaic capacity at both colleges. When complete, these new installations will result in more than \$400,000 a year in annual savings in electricity costs.
- We have established a grants and resource development office to strategically seek major funding from federal, state and foundation sources. And we have already seen success with the awarding of \$1.25 million from the California Employment Development Department for curriculum development for the SolarTech Workforce Innovations Collaborative. Other major grants are in development or pending review.
- In an effort to free ourselves of a nearly \$1 million lease, we are continuing to have discussions with the City of Palo Alto and the Palo Alto Unified School District about acquiring eight acres of land at the Cubberley Community Center so that we can construct our own facilities. Additionally, should we not be able to continue our presence at Cubberley, we have issued a request for qualifications for consultant firms to provide services for planning, property acquisition and development of a Foothill College Education Center in the northern portion of the district along the corridor between El Camino Real and Highway 101, where educational needs continue to grow with the population and job expansion.
- Particularly key to our efforts to take back control of our own future is the decision by the Board of Trustees to place on the November 2 ballot a parcel tax of \$69 per year for six years. Important to note is that the parcel tax would provide stable local funding that the state cannot take away. By law, parcel taxes require two-thirds approval by those voting. A poll conducted in May of 800 likely voters showed initially that 71 percent were likely to support the \$69 tax. However, that rating rose to 75 percent after receiving more information about the need and uses of the funds. The \$69 tax would raise a maximum of \$6.9 million annually for six years. While the funds wouldn't make up for all cuts we have received from the state, they would protect essential educational programs such as:
  - Maintaining core academic classes for transfer, such as math, science and writing
  - Preparing students for careers in science, technology, engineering and math
  - Restoring funding to increase the number of classes and labs
  - Preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities in a timely manner

- Improving support services for students with disabilities
- Keeping libraries open and maintaining critical library services and resources
- Preparing students for careers in computers and emergency technology
- Maintaining job retraining programs, and
- Providing essential student and support services

For the foreseeable future, the key to maintaining high-quality, affordable higher education at Foothill and De Anza colleges is stable local funding.

Well, we have quite a year ahead, wouldn't you agree?

In closing, I want to personally express my appreciation for your dedication to our mission and vision. Foothill-De Anza employees are exceptional—many of you give 110 percent to your jobs on a regular basis. This district could not achieve such consistently high levels of students success and community support without your professional contributions and dedication. You are greatly valued! I wish you all an outstanding 2010-11 academic year! Thank you!

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