



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott Encouraged by Obama's Initiative to Raise Awareness for Community Colleges

SACRAMENTO – California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott applauds President Obama's recognition of the important role that community colleges must play in the economic recovery of the nation.

As the leader of the largest system of higher education in the country, Scott is encouraged by the news that President Obama is giving Jill Biden, a community college professor, the charge of raising awareness about the value of higher education and how U.S. community colleges can help turn around the economy of our crisis-hit nation.

"With California's unemployment rate at 11.2 percent, it is important to raise awareness about how community colleges can help displaced workers," said Scott. "In today's changing economy, as more people lose their jobs, the best place they can turn to for help is their local community college where they can learn new skills and work toward building a stronger financial future."

California community colleges are stepping up to meet the state's pressing needs in workforce training. With many Californians facing difficulties because of rising unemployment, the demand for a community college education and training is surging. Displaced workers are looking to get the skills they need to get back into the workforce quickly and affordably.

Reports submitted by California's 110 community colleges show enrollments are up statewide by 6.4 percent, or more than 150,000 students compared to last year. This figure is staggering and expected to grow even higher over the next year.

President Obama, Governor Schwarzenegger and many of California's legislators recognize the

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value of community colleges and role they play in helping train the workforce and generating additional revenue for the economy. State leaders have demonstrated a concerted effort to protect community colleges from deep budget cuts. Community college chancellors and presidents are still worried about what the future holds with the state facing a \$16 billion budget deficit. Statewide the colleges are serving more than 140,000 students for which they are not receiving funding. The colleges are attempting to meet the increased demand but are concerned about enrollments growing at an even faster pace as more people seek job training.

“We welcome the focus the president has placed on community colleges,” said Scott. “As evidenced by California’s surging enrollments, we are part of our nation’s economic recovery solution.” Scott continued, “We are hopeful there will be additional federal and state resources available to help us meet the need so we can continue to provide access to all Californians facing hardship due to the weak economy and shifting job market.”

The California Community Colleges is the largest higher educational system in the nation comprised of 72 districts and 110 colleges with more than 2.7 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training and basic skills education, prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions and offer opportunities for personal enrichment and lifelong learning. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit www.cccco.edu.

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