



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Dr. Mary G.F. Bitterman receives praise, honor from the
California Community Colleges Board of Governors**

*President of The Bernard Osher Foundation is commended for her leadership
and advocacy on behalf of community colleges and higher education*

SAN FRANCISCO – November 2, 2009 – The Foundation for California Community Colleges congratulates Dr. Mary G.F. Bitterman, President of The Bernard Osher Foundation, who was honored today by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors with an official resolution commending her support of community colleges and higher education.

As President of the Osher Foundation, Dr. Bitterman has been a strong advocate for the need to support community college students, and was instrumental in launching the Osher Initiative for California Community College Students in 2008. The Initiative included a \$50 million commitment for the California Community Colleges Scholarship Endowment, marking the single largest gift to a community college system in our nation's history.

“California's Community Colleges are fortunate to benefit from the leadership of this exemplary woman,” said Dr. Paul Lanning, President of the Foundation for California Community Colleges, which manages the Endowment. “Through her many efforts to advocate the need for supporting community college students, Dr. Bitterman has been instrumental in turning the tide of philanthropic support for community colleges throughout the nation, helping to make the dream of an education more attainable for everyone. Our congratulations go out to this remarkable ally of the California Community Colleges.”

Dr. Bitterman's commendation came during a regular meeting of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, and included high praise from the system's leaders.

“Dr. Bitterman is a true champion of California's Community Colleges and she serves as an inspiration for all of us. She works tirelessly to ensure the doors of higher education are open to every individual seeking the opportunity and that financial barriers for those who want to attend college are eliminated,” said California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott. “Dr. Bitterman's contributions to community college students are immeasurable. If we had to put a price tag on her efforts, it's fair to say that the generous \$50 million commitment from The Bernard Osher Foundation for the California Community Colleges Scholarship Endowment can be attributed to her hard work.”

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“For community college students across the state, the possibility of a better life begins with higher education,” added Board of Governors President Lance Izumi. “Dr. Bitterman understands the challenges facing our students and has been a leader at the forefront of addressing these issues. The goal of the Scholarship Endowment that Dr. Bitterman worked so hard to turn from a dream into a reality creates a permanent fund for scholarships, offering long-term relief to the rising costs that keep many students from completing their education. I am proud to present Dr. Bitterman with an award acknowledging her hard work and dedication on behalf of our system’s 2.9 million students.”

Dr. Bitterman has long been a leader of philanthropic organizations benefiting higher education and the public good, serving as president of the James Irvine Foundation and KQED prior to joining the Osher Foundation. She has served as director of the Public Broadcasting Service, Bank of Hawaii, Barclays Global Investors, and the Commonwealth Club of California, and as an honorary member of the National Presswomen’s Federation and a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.

For more information about the Osher Foundation’s efforts, visit www.osherfoundation.org. To learn more about how the California Community Colleges Scholarship Endowment, visit www.SupporttheEndowment.org.

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About the Foundation for California Community Colleges

The Foundation for California Community Colleges is the official non-profit foundation to the California Community Colleges’ Board of Governors and Chancellor’s Office. The Foundation’s mission is to benefit, support, and enhance the missions of the California Community College system, the largest higher education system in the nation. Incorporated in 1998, the Foundation works with Community Colleges and partner organizations to manage donations, grants, programs, and services that drive excellence in education while saving millions of dollars for colleges each year. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit corporation and receives no direct state or public support. For more information about the Foundation, visit www.foundationccc.org.

About the California Community Colleges

The California Community Colleges is the largest higher education system in the nation. The system is comprised of 72 districts, 110 colleges and enrolls more than 2.9 million students. Community colleges provide basic skills education, workforce training and courses to prepare students to transfer to four-year universities. Colleges also provide opportunities for personal enrichment and lifelong learning. The Chancellor's Office operates under the direction of the state chancellor who is guided by the Board of Governors. The Chancellor's Office is charged with providing leadership, advocacy and support of the California Community Colleges. Serving as the administrative branch of the California Community College system, the Chancellor's Office is also responsible for allocating state funding to the colleges and districts.

About the California Community Colleges Board of Governors

The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, by statute, provides leadership and policy direction in the continuing development of the California Community Colleges system. Among its charges are establishing minimum academic and personnel standards; evaluating and reporting on the fiscal and educational effectiveness of the 72 districts; conducting research and providing appropriate information services; and administering fiscal support programs (both operational and capital outlay).