November 7, 2012

Colleagues,

In approving Proposition 30 yesterday the voters of California placed their faith in public education as a means of getting our state back on track. The measure’s success indicates that they believed the balanced approach, including the cuts made by the administration and legislature combined with an investment by the taxpayers, is the right path out of these difficult times. For California community colleges it will finally allow us to begin adding back some of the thousands of classes we have been forced to cut since we began this nightmare of educational rationing in 2008. Although we have a long road back to financial stability, this victory will allow us to begin serving some of the nearly one-half million students we have turned away in the past four years. To the voters of California our students and staff say, “Thank you!”

With this vote of support from California’s citizens, community colleges will receive $210 million in additional funding this year. This should allow us to serve an additional 20,000 students statewide and to begin erasing the financial deferrals that have plagued our budgets in recent years. More importantly, the added support will help stabilize our funding in the near term. Although this measure does not return our system to its pre-recession level, it does head the state commitment to our students and colleges in the right direction.

With added support comes added opportunity to restore access and improve student success. The Board of Governors, through its Student Success Task Force, has charted a course for increasing student performance for all our students. Of dual importance will be adding classes so that no one who can benefit from higher education in California finds the door closed. These challenges will require the kind of hard work and dedication for which our system is known. We have a reputation for being the segment of education in California that can be depended on to provide an educated citizenry, a quality workforce and a gateway to a better life for anyone coming to our doors.

This is my first week on the job as your Chancellor. I am humbled by the opportunity and could not be prouder than I am to represent all of you and our system. Thank you for everything you do each day in support of our students. Keep up your miracle work in our colleges. The best days for our students and colleges lie ahead.

Brice