



Ventura County Community College District

**Chancellor's Office
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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VCCCD to Request Assistance through Mediation

CAMARILLO, Calif. (November 5, 2019) –The Ventura County Community College District (District) Negotiation Team has requested assistance from the California State Mediation and Conciliation Service in current contract negotiations with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 1828. The District believes such assistance will help the parties reach agreement on key issues.

“This next step is specified in our current contract with AFT and provides both parties with the opportunity for assistance from an outside, impartial state-appointed mediator when no further progress is being made,” said Chancellor Greg Gillespie.

The District has been in negotiations with the AFT since March 2019 and hopes to move forward to agreement. Among other items, the AFT is demanding pay increases of 10 percent in each of the next three years with no changes to their medical plan. The current medical plan provides full-time faculty with coverage through either Anthem Blue Cross or Kaiser, fully paid by the District.

The District desires to provide pay increases and equitable health benefits for all employee groups. The District's salary and benefits offer to the AFT provides salary increases of 2 percent, 6 percent and 2 percent over the next three years, plus a one-time, lump-sum bonus of \$2,410. Much of the offered salary increases would be generated by procuring Anthem Blue Cross and Kaiser medical benefits for all its employees in a more efficient, cost-effective manner. Retirees would continue to participate in the benefits coverage.

The District has also been in contract negotiations with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 99 since March 2019. SEIU represents the District's 484 classified employees working at Moorpark, Oxnard, and Ventura colleges and the District Administrative Center. The current medical plan covering SEIU employees is not fully paid for by the District and requires some classified employees to pay a premium. The inequity caused by the dissimilar benefit plans between employee groups is something the District wants to correct through current negotiations. At this time, the District and SEIU are not of the opinion a mediator is required during their current negotiations.

If the District were to utilize the proposed larger insurance pool of 1.4 million covered public employees offered by the California Public Employees' Retirement System, a savings of approximately \$10.5 million could be used to fund pay raises.

“The savings could fund long-awaited pay increases for our more than 1,800 District employees, of which 431 are full-time faculty, 793 are part-time faculty, and current classified employees. We want parity for all employee groups,” stated Gillespie. “We are actively looking for ways to fund salary increases by reducing costs and finding new alternatives in a changing economy.”

“The Board of Trustees and District leadership continue to work for everyone – students, faculty, staff, and the community that we are accountable to. By asking for help from a state-appointed mediator, we will be able to continue moving forward in a positive, meaningful way,” commented Board Chair Dianne B. McKay. “We are doing many great things at our colleges in service to students and the community. Identifying more efficient ways to spend taxpayer dollars is critical to the fiscal sustainability of our district.”

About Ventura County Community College District

The Ventura County Community College District is a member of the 115-campus California Community College system, and serves more than 32,000 students annually. The District’s three colleges--Moorpark, Oxnard, and Ventura--offer programs in general education for degrees and certificates, transfer to four-year colleges and universities, career technical education, and provide opportunities to engage in co-curricular campus activities. For more information, please visit vcccd.edu.