



Ventura County Community College District

Chancellor's Office

Sherice Bellamy

Public Information Officer

VCCCD

sbellamy@vcccd.edu

(805) 652-5538

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VCCCD and the League of Women Voters to Co-Sponsor forum on college readiness and affordability

(VENTURA, Calif.) February 16, 2016 – Ventura County Community College District and the League of Women Voters of Ventura County announced plans to co-sponsor “Public Higher Education: A Privilege or A Necessity,” a panel discussion on college readiness, access, funding, and affordability. VCCCD Chancellor Bernard Luskin confirmed the event will be held in the District Board Room (255 West Stanley Avenue, Suite 150, Ventura, CA) on Saturday, February 27, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Parents, industry leaders, educators, students and concerned citizens are invited to attend. Guests are advised to RSVP at (805) 701-0109 to reserve lunch. The agenda is outlined as followed: 9:30 a.m.-10 a.m. meet and greet; 10 a.m.-12 p.m. panel discussion with a question and answer session; and 12 p.m.-2 p.m. lunch and consensus meeting. Free parking is available.

VCCCD Board Trustee Stephen Blum and California State University Channel Island Celina Zacarias, Director of Community and Government Relations are scheduled to serve on the panel, as well as LWV President Pat Essick and Public Higher Education Committee Members Pat McCart-Malloy, Judy Murphy, and Dr. Betsy Patterson.

“Our aim is to draw upon the expertise of professors who are hands-on with these students every day and the academic research of the LWV,” said Blum. “This forum will allow us to continue the dialogue, document best practices, and develop a viable strategy to resolve this issue and substantially improve student access and success.”

“With California’s projected shortfall by 2025 of one million students with four year degrees and more than 2.3 million with degrees, certificates and diplomas needed to meet the states workforce requirements¹, it is imperative that we look at the public higher education system and figure out how to overcome these predictions,” stated Essick. “We are in a unique position to fundamentally change higher education in a way that builds on the values of access, affordability, and quality and supports a thriving and resilient economy that provides broad economic and social benefits for future generations.”

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¹California Competes. June 2012, “The Road Ahead: Higher Education, California’s Promise and Our Future Economy.”

The collaboration's focus on college readiness is timely as it follows the recent state budget hearing, where the District hosted Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin and the budget Subcommittee on Education Finance at Oxnard College. Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, California Community Colleges Vice Chancellor Pamela D. Walker, committee members, educators, and students gathered to hear and share details about the Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program, and the \$60 million grant allocated in the 2015 Budget Act for community colleges to improve remediation practices, a result of legislation authored by Irwin. Community College districts may apply for the grants to adopt or expand programs that offer solutions towards effective skills assessments, instruction, and ultimately more college graduates.

After a brief welcome from Chancellor Luskin and Oxnard College President James Limbaugh, Irwin commented on the large number of incoming community college students who test below college-level in math and English (75% or more than 157,000 throughout the California Community Colleges). "The more semesters of remedial courses students are required to take, the less likely they are to complete a college degree," said Irwin.

"We welcome partnership programs that help inform our citizens and highlight the important contributions of the community colleges of Ventura County," said Larry Kennedy, Chair of the VCCCD Board of Trustees.

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The Ventura County Community College District is a member of the 113-campus California Community College system, and serves more than 50,000 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 www.vcccd.edu.

¹California Competes. June 2012, "The Road Ahead: Higher Education, California's Promise and Our Future Economy."