

Reaffirmation of Core Values and Principles
Board of Trustees
San Mateo County Community College District
December, 2009

Public higher education in California is facing the most difficult and challenging budget environment experienced in the State since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. The three Colleges and the District Office are currently engaged in a process to determine the budget cuts that will be necessary in order for the District to have a balanced budget in 2010-11. This follows the 10% reduction that was made last year; budget and political experts are predicting a \$21 billion shortfall over the next 18 months (through June 30, 2011). The Board of Trustees recognizes that dealing with the impact of one more year of budget reductions and related uncertainties will be extremely difficult for faculty, staff and students of the San Mateo County Community College District. The decisions we face will not be easily made and likely will not satisfy everyone. Given these realities, the Board reaffirms its commitment to the following core values and principles of the District:

- **Student-Centered Mission:** The Board places top priority on our core mission of providing transfer education and workforce training to as many students as possible. Basic skills classes which are focused on preparing our students for our core mission courses as noted above are also necessary and appropriate. While lifelong learning classes have long been an important part of the community college mission, in the current situation, these courses cannot assume the same importance as transfer and workforce development courses.

In our current economic reality—with high jobless rates and four-year colleges and universities reducing their course offerings—many more students are turning to community colleges as their last opportunity to obtain a higher education and we must be able to respond to this demand. Therefore, the most important consideration as budget reductions are proposed is whether or not the proposed action will unnecessarily reduce our core mission courses in transfer and workforce development.

The Board recognizes that low-enrolled courses; classes and programs that are outside of the core mission of transfer and workforce training; and courses and programs that no longer meet student or employment demand will have to be reduced or eliminated. The Board also expects that, when possible, the Colleges will work together to consolidate under enrolled classes or programs in order to preserve opportunities for our students.

The Board expects that the Colleges and the District Office will examine all items in the budget to evaluate whether they are essential and whether they contribute to student instruction in our core mission areas and reduce or eliminate those items that do not contribute (e.g., travel, conferences and other discretionary items). Preserving core mission courses and programs must be our highest priority.

The Board acknowledges the commitment of faculty members who have increased their class sizes in order to accommodate as many students as possible. It is this type of commitment to students that has distinguished our District as a student-centered and first-rate institution.

Student support services and staff are also important and help ensure the success of our students in their pursuit of a postsecondary education; however, the Board believes that, in order to preserve the greatest number of classes and programs to meet student demand, the College District may need to reduce, consolidate and/or automate student support services.

- **Support for Innovation:** The Board believes that its long-standing support for innovation and creative solutions to problem solving is essential for the overall advancement of the District; this support is even more important during difficult economic times. The Board will aggressively encourage the pursuit of innovative efforts that result in preservation of classes and programs for students, such as the development of partnerships and cost-sharing programs with local schools, businesses and other public agencies; additional grant writing; moving lifelong learning classes to Community Education; and other entrepreneurial endeavors.
- **Employment Philosophies:** The Board subscribes to the principles of human resource management which promote: equal access; equal opportunity; equal treatment and fairness; staff development and training opportunities; fair compensation and accountability. The Board reaffirms the long-standing District policy that it always seeks to employ the very best qualified applicant for each job and does not make decisions about employment, retention, compensation, promotion, termination or other employment status which would discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, medical conditions or other similar factors.
- **Shared Governance:** The Board is deeply committed to the shared governance process as it has been established in this District, and believes that this process can produce decisions that are comprehensive, fair and in the best interests of students, the community and employees. The Board encourages and expects the participation of all constituents in shared governance and recognizes shared governance as the means for having the voices and opinions of various constituencies heard.
- **Final Decision-Making Authority:** In this shared governance environment, the Board, as the elected representatives of the people of San Mateo County, will ultimately make the final decision regarding budget reductions based upon what it believes is in the best interests of the District as a whole. In reaching its decisions, the Board acts independently, but considers the informed viewpoints of all participants and constituencies; it relies on the research, advice, experience and management expertise within the District.

The Board believes that adherence to these core values and operating principles will continue to support the District and advance the interests of students, faculty, staff and the San Mateo County community.