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Newly Approved College Transfer Reform Bills to Benefit RSCCD Community College Students

(Santa Ana)—Last week, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law two historic transfer reform bills (SB 1440 and AB 2302) that will pave the way for more transfer students from Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College (campuses of the Rancho Santiago Community College District - RSCCD) to successfully transfer to California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) campuses statewide.

“On behalf of our students, we applaud the Governor and the statewide system leaders for urging the passage of this important transfer reform legislation,” commented Raúl Rodríguez, Ph.D., RSCCD chancellor. SB 1140 establishes a new 60-unit associate degree for transfer. Students who earn this degree will receive priority admission to a CSU campus in the same or a similar major from the transfer institution. AB 2302 calls for increased transparency with the UC system to inform students and community college transfer specialists about admission requirement changes that could impede a student’s ability to successfully transfer to a UC campus. The bill also urges the UC system to explore an improved transfer pathway, like the one articulated in SB 1140 for the CSU system. Both laws are slated for implementation by fall 2011.

Each year, more than 2,000 students transfer from RSCCD campuses to local four-year publicly-funded universities in the county and state. A smaller number transfer to out-of-state and to private institutions. If the CSU and UC systems are not funded at appropriate levels by the Legislature, there will be no available classroom space to receive the increased number of local transfer students who will earn the new associate degree specified in SB 1440. As it stands now,

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campuses across the state, including California State University, Fullerton, have been declared as impacted and cannot enroll transfer students or incoming freshman. Funding must be restored so that the CSU and UC campuses can offer more class sections to honor the commitments of SB 1140.

“We are optimistic that these new laws will ensure that our students will attain advanced degrees in their majors of choice. However, we are concerned about the persistent underfunding of all of the higher education segments and how that reality has inhibited access for transfer students,” Rodríguez explained. Successful implementation of both SB 1440 and AB 2302 will require an ongoing commitment of the Legislature to provide adequate funding to the state’s three higher education systems.

About the Rancho Santiago Community College District

Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of the Rancho Santiago Community College District, which serves the residents of Anaheim Hills, Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, and customized training for business and industry.

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