



RANCHO SANTIAGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lumina Foundation Partners with Santa Ana College on Program Focusing on Graduating More Latinos from College

Investment in Orange County's Future Will Help Boost Local Economy

(Santa Ana)—Santa Ana College (SAC) has been selected by the Lumina Foundation for funding to support a 20-member partnership to increase Latino student success and to create a guaranteed college admission pathway from Santa Ana to California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) and the University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine). The collaborative initiative Santa Ana ¡Adelante! was launched last year with no available funding from state or federal resources. The Lumina Foundation Grant will provide a total of \$600,000 over a four-year period for the Santa Ana ¡Adelante! program.

“Being selected for a Lumina Grant is a testament to the collaboration of many organizations who share our commitment to a college degree in every home,” said Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D., SAC president. “We are very grateful for the Lumina Foundation’s support that will strengthen students’ path from SAUSD to SAC and on to Cal State Fullerton or UC Irvine. A more educated community will boost the economic well-being of the community.”

Latinos are the fastest-growing student population in the United States and this new effort is focused on leveraging the critical connection between their educational attainment and the future of our national economy. Santa Ana College’s ¡Adelante! program serves the city of Santa Ana where residents are 79 percent Hispanic, 83 percent speak a language other than English at home, and 48 percent have not graduated from high school. Ninety-four percent of the students in Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD) are Latino.

The initiative guarantees that all SAUSD students who graduate from high school, enroll at SAC, and complete all academic requirements and application paperwork will be admitted as transfer students to CSUF or to UC Irvine. Santa Ana ¡Adelante! begins with all SAUSD sixth graders and their parents signing a college-going pledge and completing a related curriculum. The college-going pathway is strengthened as students enter high school, renew their educational plans, and apply for college admission.

Among the students who signed an ¡Adelante! contract this year are 18-year-old Mayra Mendez, a graduate of Santa Ana High School, and 18-year-old Ivan Padilla, a graduate of Godinez Fundamental High School. Both are now enrolled in Santa Ana College. Padilla, who will be the first in his family to graduate from college, has set his sights on a bachelor’s degree in computer science. He knows that college graduation is key to “success in life” and sees that financial support may be an obstacle to his success. He sees the ¡Adelante! program as “a great opportunity that will benefit the entire community.” Mendez, also the first in her family to go to college, wants to transfer from SAC to UC Irvine or CSUF to study creative writing. She hopes to achieve a Ph.D. and teach students the importance of writing. She, too, fears that financial challenges may stand in her way of achieving her academic goals and knows she will need financial aid. She sees signing the ¡Adelante! contract as “a promise to [herself] to stay in college and fulfill an education for [her] future.”

“At Santa Ana Unified our goal is to ensure that students are college and career ready in the 21st century. We are so grateful to be a part of the Santa Ana ¡Adelante! collaborative with Santa Ana College, California State University at Fullerton, and UC Irvine. This initiative serves as a launching pad for equipping our students with the best opportunity for follow through on this goal, getting us closer to placing a degree in every home by 2020,” said Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana, Ph.D., SAUSD superintendent.

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To help boost the success of students like Padilla and Mendez, program strategies include:

- All SAUSD seniors will receive help in completing SAC admissions and financial aid/scholarship applications;
- All SAUSD seniors will receive priority registration at SAC and will be fully matriculated before high school graduation;
- All students will have access to specialized transfer planning and transfer application workshops, individualized case management, and peer mentoring;
- Guaranteed funding assistance to all students with unmet need who complete financial aid applications; and
- Bridging activities once SAC students transfer to universities, including direct linkages for academic and financial support.

Anticipated outcomes include increasing the college-going rate to 80 percent among all SAUSD graduates, 40 percent of all ¡Adelante! students obtaining an associate degree within three years, and 85 percent of all ¡Adealante! students who transfer to CSUF or UC Irvine will earn a bachelor's degree within three academic years.

On November 10, all four educational institutions reconfirmed their commitment to the ¡Adelante! program in a Signing Ceremony. Michael V. Drake, M.D., chancellor, UC Irvine, was on hand to sign the partnership documents for the first time.

"Our university has worked proudly with our Santa Ana Partnership colleagues for over 20 years, supporting the educational aspirations of students from Santa Ana. UC Irvine is committed to ensuring access for talented young people in this community. Our collaborative initiative will help us make this promise a reality. The goal of ¡Adelante! is to have a college degree in every home by 2020; we are committed to ensuring that many of those degrees come from UC Irvine," said Drake.

Partners in the Santa Ana ¡Adelante! program include SAC, SAUSD, CSUF, UC Irvine, University of Southern California Center for Urban Education, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the White House Office on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, Padres Promotores de Educación, MANA de Orange County, the League of United Latin American Citizens, KidWorks, National Hispanic Business Women Association, American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, City of Santa Ana, Comunidad Latina Federal Credit Union, SAC Foundation, Hispanic Education Endowment Fund, *Miniondas*, La Rockola 96.7 FM, Union Bank, and the Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Other recipients of the Lumina Foundation Grants include Phoenix College in Arizona, Long Beach City College, Miami Dade College in Florida, Armstrong Atlantic State University in Georgia, Bluegrass Community and Technical College in Kentucky, University of New Mexico, the Hispanic Federation of New York, Hispanics in Philanthropy in North Carolina, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the San Antonio Education Partnership of Texas, and Southwest Texas Junior College.

About Santa Ana College

Santa Ana College (SAC), which will turn 100 years old in 2015, serves about 18,000 students each semester at its main campus in Santa Ana. The college prepares students for transfer to four-year institutions, provides invaluable workforce training, and customized training for business and industry. In addition, another 13,000 students are served through the college's School of Continuing Education located at Centennial Education Center. Ranked as one of the nation's top two-year colleges awarding associate degrees to Latino and Asian students, the college is also recognized throughout the state for its comprehensive workforce training programs for nurses, firefighters, law enforcement and other medical personnel. SAC is one of two comprehensive colleges under the auspices of the Rancho Santiago Community College District. Visit <http://www.sac.edu> to learn more.

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About Lumina Foundation

Lumina Foundation, an Indianapolis-based private foundation, is committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college—especially 21st century students: low-income students, students of color, first-generation students and adult learners. Lumina's goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina pursues Goal 2025 in three ways: by identifying and supporting effective practice, through public policy advocacy, and by using our communications and convening power to build public will for change. For more information, log on to www.luminafoundation.org.

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