Chancellor’s Update August 12, 2011

Many of us have been around long enough to know that the past academic year has been remarkable in so many ways. Although we celebrated nine wonderful graduations, with thousands of LACCD students obtaining certificates and degrees, the academic year ended in fiscal uncertainty for public higher education. Despite shortfalls in state revenue projections announced this week, let’s all hope that our greatest budget difficulties are behind us. Before the fall semester approaches, I would like to share some of the accomplishments, events and projects that the college communities have been involved with over the summer.

- Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) hosted State Senator Alex Padilla on July 20th; he convened an informational hearing to discuss the progress and implementation of SB 1440, the community college transfer legislation. Proponents of the legislation seek to meet the fall 2011 timeline to fulfill the intent of the law, which is to improve the transfer pathway to four year universities in California and ensure that more students reach their college dreams.

With respect to grant funding, LASC was successful in soliciting $100,000 in its efforts to match a grant from the Kresge Foundation for the Achieving the Dream national student success initiative. Additionally, the college was awarded a five year TRIO --- Talent Search federal grant; the award provides $230,000 annually for the five year period.

- The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine named Los Angeles Valley College as one of the “Top 50 Community Colleges For Hispanics – Five-Year Comparison Degrees Granted to Hispanics” in 2011. This recognition was bestowed to the top community colleges in the nation for their success in granting associate degrees to Latino(a) students.

- Los Angeles City College (LACC) welcomed Congressman Xavier Becerra to the campus on June 29th, at which time he met with faculty and staff to discuss some of the political challenges facing Congress. He also met with LACC students in a political science class and, during his presentation, encouraged them to register to vote.
Members of the Board of Trustees, President Moore, and I welcomed Governor Jerry Brown and Assemblyman Gil Cedillo to LACC on Monday, July 25th for the bill signing of AB 130, the California Dream Act that pertains to eligibility for scholarships derived from non-state funds for students attending the CCC, CSU, or UC who are exempt from paying nonresident tuition.

- With respect to other student success efforts, Pierce College is one of the sixteen colleges participating as a founding member of the Collaboratory in the Statway project, funded by a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. The project began last summer with an institute to discuss the goals of the Collaboratory; the Pierce team includes four faculty members, the curriculum chair/articulation officer, the Associate Dean of Basic Skills, and the institutional researcher. The second institute occurred in late July and will be followed by the classroom program, officially launching on August 22. The scholar – practitioners in the Collaboratory will become leaders and champions for the improvement and advancement of teaching focused on better student outcomes.

LACCD’s colleges will welcome returning students later this month, along with an incoming group who is new to our District community. The optimism and eagerness among our students will carry us forward and remind faculty and staff why we do what we do. Of course, it is because we care.

With you, I look forward to a promising fall semester.