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PRESS RELEASE

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ENROLLMENT AT THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SKYROCKETS TO 2.9 MILLION

Announcement Issued on Eve of Secretary Duncan's Visit to State Capitol

Sacramento, Calif. – California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott today announced that enrollment for the 2008/09 academic year increased by more than 135,000 students at the system's 110 colleges, based on newly collected data. This announcement comes on the eve of a visit to the state's capitol by President Barack Obama's Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

The final 2008/09 headcount reflects a 4.9 percent increase in students in relation to the 2007/08 academic year. The total number of students enrolled in California's community colleges was 2,913,735, the highest enrollment figure in the history of the system. The 2008/09 enrollment increase follows three consecutive years of growth for the system. California Community Colleges have seen a 15.9 percent increase in headcount in the last four years. This translates to nearly 400,000 additional students on our college campuses since the 2004/05 academic year.

"I am pleased that Secretary Duncan is taking time to meet with education leaders and policy makers in California in order to help ease the burden the state's fiscal crisis has placed on our education systems," said Chancellor Jack Scott. "I talk regularly to students and their families about the frustrations and hardships they face as they return to school to pursue a college degree or job training. Personal hardships are felt across the board and are very real for many Californians."

Cuts to the California Community Colleges 2009/10 budget are causing concern for college officials. The shortfall in funding is placing stress on a system that is already bursting at the seams and threatening its ability to sustain the record number of students it serves. Restricted admissions at four year colleges coupled with an 11.9 percent unemployment rate have led to record numbers of students seeking degrees, certificates or job training. Enrollment demand for fall 2009 is expected to climb even higher as greater numbers of high school graduates, students turned away from the University of California and California State University, and displaced workers flock to college campuses.

The recent increase in enrollments for 2008/09 was well beyond the two percent growth funding the colleges received from the state budget. Additionally, the California Community Colleges sustained \$840 million in state funding cuts for the 2008/09 and 2009/10 academic years combined. Revenues from the student fee increase will help offset these cuts by roughly \$80 million. An

undetermined level of federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds will also provide some degree of aid to the colleges and help mitigate the state cuts to the current year budget. The ARRA funds, however, will not be a sustained source of income as it is proposed funding for only one year.

As California's community colleges begin the fall semester, students are facing fewer course offerings, longer waiting lists, larger class sizes and higher fees. At most of the community college campuses, students are finding it difficult to get into the classes that are in highest demand such as those required to complete a degree or transfer to a four year college. The \$840 million in budget cuts has forced campuses to reduce course offerings by as much as 20 percent at a time when more students than ever are seeking admission.

A look around the State:

- **Long Beach City College** reduced its course offerings by 12 percent in the fall of 2009-10 compared the same period last year.
- **Cerritos College**, located in Norwalk, reduced its fall course offerings by 20 percent compared with the same time last year.
- **San Diego Community College District** reduced its course offerings by 600 classes this fall. Classes are nearly filled to capacity and students are on long waiting lists. The district turned away about 18,000 students and advised them to register early for the spring semester.
- **Los Rios Community College District** in Sacramento reported preliminary fall enrollment growth of 5,000 students compared to same period last year. Course offerings will be reduced by four percent in the 2009/10 academic year.

"These new enrollment figures confirm the concerns our college presidents began voicing last academic year – the demand for a community college education is soaring at a time when there is an unparalleled divestment in higher education," said Scott. "This divestment will hurt California for years to come and undermine the state's economic recovery. Our funding doesn't match our enrollment and students will see the effects in many ways.

"It is more important than ever for the colleges to protect core programs and preserve classes in the areas of career technical education, transfer and basic skills. But, even with a concentrated focus on these areas, countless students will simply not be able to get the classes they need to graduate or transfer and it will be difficult for them to get counseling and other critical services," said Scott.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation comprised of 72 districts and 110 colleges serving more than 2.9 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit www.cccco.edu.

Note to Reporters/Editors:

- California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott will be available September 3 by telephone for interviews. Please contact Paige Marlatt Dorr at 916.327.5356 or via e-mail at PDorr@cccoco.edu for availabilities and scheduling. Chancellor Scott will be speaking, along with Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at the Leadership Forum: Mayors, Superintendents and School Boards event taking place Thurs., Sept. 3, from 3:45 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria, Sacramento Room (828 I Street, 2nd Floor, Sacramento, CA)
- Enrollment data for 2008-09 is available upon request.