



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Maria Iacobo | 213-891-2054 | iacobomc@email.laccd.edu
Yusef Robb | 323-384-1789 | yrobb@icgworldwide.com

**LACCD BOARD PRESIDENT SCOTT J. SVONKIN, DR. JILL BIDEN,
MAYOR GARCETTI HIGHLIGHT L.A.'S 'COLLEGE PROMISE'
AS EXAMPLE FOR NATION**

LOS ANGELES – Underscoring the value of higher education and applauding a bold initiative to support one of the nation’s highest concentrations of low-income students, Jill Biden, Ed.D., Second Lady of the United States, joined local officials to launch the Los Angeles College Promise – a program that provides one year of free enrollment to any of the nine colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD).

“We are delighted to have Dr. Biden join us as we launch one of the most important education initiatives in the history of Los Angeles,” said Scott J. Svonkin, President of the LACCD Board of Trustees. “The LACCD Board of Trustees committed to President Obama’s ‘America’s College Promise’ when we heard of his initiative. We are the nation’s largest community college district and proud to create a ‘Promise’ program as President Obama envisioned.”

President Obama appointed Dr. Biden as the honorary chair of his College Promise Advisory Board, a group working to influence the nation’s citizenry and elected leaders about the need to provide free community college education to all. Dr. Biden is an English teacher at a community college in Virginia in addition to her work as the nation’s second lady. Svonkin was appointed by President Obama and is the only elected community college leader in the nation appointed to the College Promise National Advisory Board.

The Los Angeles College Promise will provide one year of free enrollment to all full-time (12 units) qualifying students graduating from LAUSD and charter high schools starting with seniors graduating in 2017. Included in this program are priority enrollment, placement in math and English courses required to succeed in college and career support and counseling. The program’s goal is to increase the number of community college graduates, university transfers, and workforce-ready students.

Surrounded by cheering Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) high school students and LACCD students, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced the new program to an enthusiastic crowd of educators, business and civic leaders at Los Angeles City College, one of LACCD’s nine colleges.

“Higher education should be within reach for every student in Los Angeles. The L.A. College Promise is a path for every Angeleno to earn a high school diploma and pursue the skills and education they need to realize their dreams and potential,” said Mayor Garcetti. “When the first Promise students step onto campus next fall, they’ll be doing more than putting themselves on a launching pad to prosperity — they’ll embody a commitment that is fundamental to who we are as a people, and what we want for our future.”

“Community colleges don't just create pathways of success, they do so for some of our most underserved populations, which amplifies their positive impact,” said LACCD Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D. “So many LAUSD students feel college is simply not an option. But by making community colleges tuition-free for the first year, the Los Angeles College Promise will ensure students have a real opportunity for higher education at a time when it's more essential than ever to have a college degree or certification to be competitive in today's job market.”

The nine colleges of the LACCD comprise the nation's largest community college district, with an annual enrollment of nearly a quarter million. Eighty percent of LACCD students are from underserved populations, more than half are older than 25 years of age, and more than a quarter are 35 or older.

“It's easy for new high school graduates to get caught up in living paycheck to paycheck right after graduation, rather than pursuing an education that may lead to middle class or better career opportunities,” said Bryant Woodert, who grew up in Watts and is a student at Los Angeles City College. “The L.A. College Promise would give more LAUSD students an immediate pathway to college, setting them on the right track to the middle class or better before they get sidetracked.”

LACCD colleges have an impressive record of success. More than two-thirds of its students successfully complete their credit courses, with almost 15,000 students annually earning an associate's degree or certificate and 5,700 students transferring to a UC or CSU campus every year.

“The Los Angeles Community College District is working with the business community to join us and support our high school students and all area residents who want to challenge themselves or enhance their career objectives with additional training,” said Svonkin. “LACCD supports the educational aspirations of students of all ages.”

The Los Angeles College Promise benefits the city and region by creating a college-going culture and responding to the workforce readiness gap in California. The Los Angeles College Promise is a partnership among Mayor Garcetti's “Mayor's Fund,” LAUSD, LACCD and the LA Area Chamber of Commerce. ●

###

About the Los Angeles Community College District

The Los Angeles Community College District, the nation's largest community college district, serves one-quarter million students a year in more than 36 cities in Los Angeles County at its nine colleges. The District covers nearly 900 square miles and has educated and trained the region's diverse workforce since 1969.

Members of the Board

Scott J. Svonkin, President | Mike Eng, Vice President | Mike Fong | Andra Hoffman | Sydney Kamlager
Ernest H. Moreno | Nancy Pearlman | Alexa Victoriano, Student Member