



CONTACT:

Martha Parham
District Director, Public Affairs
(714) 438-4605

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NEWS

**ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGES:
SO MUCH MORE THAN AN EDUCATION**

Community colleges provide opportunities to obtain a degree or retrain for a changing job market, but they are also economic engines that save taxpayers money and contribute to a higher quality of life in Orange County.

According to a recent study conducted by the Orange County Business Council (OCBC,) our local community colleges provide significant and measurable benefits to students, the local economy and taxpayers.

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

Students receive a 17.4% return on their investment of time and money. Community college graduates earn \$387,000 more in their lifetime than high school graduates and \$20,000 more per year than those without a high school diploma. After college, 73% of those graduates will stay in the region, contributing to economic growth and stability.

BENEFITS TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Our community college districts are the fourth largest employer in the county, operating 11 facilities, employing 8,300 faculty and staff, and educating more than 300,000 students. In fact, our operations enhance the regional economy by over \$1.6 billion annually. Construction programs alone will generate an additional \$2 billion in regional economic impact over the next 10 years. **For every \$1 invested in community colleges, \$4.78 is returned to the local economy.**

BENEFITS TO THE TAXPAYER

Orange County taxpayers receive a 14.7% return on their investment in local community colleges, well above the 4% normally received from government organizations, creating a surplus to fund other state and local programs. The OCBC research also demonstrates a direct correlation between higher education, improved quality-of-life benefits, and reductions in social/protective services spending. In Orange County alone, taxpayers realize an annual savings of approximately \$14.4 million in avoided social/protective services costs, including lower absenteeism from work, reduced smoking, reduced alcohol abuse, fewer incarcerations, and lower incidences of welfare and unemployment.

TIME TO REINVEST

It is clear from Governor Brown's 2013-2014 budget proposal that the state intends to focus on rebuilding its investment in education after a long and arduous period of disinvestment.

Community colleges statewide have sustained \$809 million in cuts over the last three years, resulting in 485,000 students who were denied educational access. True recovery from these deep cuts will be a challenging and continuing process, requiring a loyal commitment to investing in higher education. **An investment in education is an investment in the economy. We make a tangible, positive impact on the County of Orange and we urge you to remind your elected state officials that restoring funding to your community colleges is vital to our region's success.**

Orange County community colleges contribute \$9 billion in combined activity, higher earnings, increased spending, and public benefits each year. Our colleges touch every aspect of life in Orange County, enriching lives and earning power and driving the economy forward. If our colleges did not exist, taxes would have to be raised to offset the contributions in economic, quality of life, and social benefits.

As your elected officials, we take our responsibilities seriously, reaching out to all community members who need an education – first time college students, the unemployed and underemployed, veterans, those needing basic English, writing or math skills, and seniors. We are good stewards of your money and your dollars are truly well spent.

The Orange County Business Council socioeconomic impact materials can be viewed at www.occltf.org.

Donna Miller, Board President
North Orange County Community College District

Lorraine Prinsky, Ph.D., Board President
Coast Community College District

Nancy Padberg, Board President
South Orange County Community College District

Arianna P. Barrios, Board President
Rancho Santiago Community College District

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The Coast Community College District is headquartered in Costa Mesa, Ca. along the Orange County coastline. The district is comprised of Coastline Community College headquartered in Fountain Valley, Golden West College in Huntington Beach and Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa.