News from Saddleback College and Capistrano Unified School District

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Saddleback College and Capistrano Unified School District Partner to Improve College Student Preparedness and Success

Mission Viejo, CA – A landmark partnership plan that helps prepare high school students for the rigors of college has been established by Saddleback College and Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD). The High School Partnership Program (HSPP) was formally approved through a memorandum of understanding between Saddleback College and CUSD and will be carried out at all of the district’s brick-and-mortar high schools (Aliso Niguel, Capistrano Valley, Dana Hills, San Juan Hills, San Clemente, Serra, and Tesoro).

HSPP is a comprehensive effort to improve first-year college student preparedness and success. The centerpiece of the program is the Gaucho Guarantee, which states that high school students who follow all of the recommended steps outlined in the plan will have the necessary tools to achieve success whether they seek to attend college, enter the workforce, join the military, or pursue any other pathway after high school. In addition to providing recommended steps for high school students, the HSPP provides suggested roles for the college, high school, and parents or guardians in support of a student’s chosen pathway.

Dr. Tod A. Burnett, president of Saddleback College, said, “This partnership has the potential to be a model program in the state. The HSPP’s comprehensive approach with our local high schools provides students – beginning in their freshman year – with a promising first look at college life to better prepare them to succeed at Saddleback College or in any other chosen pathway.”

“This partnership promises to give our students another advantage by directly connecting them with additional resources necessary for their future college and career success,” John M. Alpay, president of the CUSD Board of Trustees, said. “It is community partnerships like this one that help differentiate our school district and add value to the already high quality instructional programs in place at our schools. I look forward to working with Saddleback College to find and implement additional college-level opportunities for our students.”
“We are excited about expanding our partnership with Saddleback College,” Dr. Joseph M. Farley, Capistrano Unified School District Superintendent, said. “The High School Partnership Plan will provide another resource to help ensure that all of our students are prepared for college and career. We look forward to working closely with the educators at Saddleback College to implement this exciting new collaboration.”

Students who follow the HSPP’s recommended steps will: 1) Develop a clear understanding of the expectations for attending college; 2) Complete the requirements for preparation to succeed while attending college; 3) Develop study strategies that will enable them to complete college courses; 4) Establish career and academic goals; 5) Complete transferable or basic skills English and math courses; 6) Complete a Saddleback College academic planning or educational and vocational planning course; 7) Complete Saddleback College’s orientation and assessment process; 8) Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); 9) Create an academic plan for their first semester at Saddleback College; and 10) Register for college-ready courses for the fall term.

A report released by the Student Success Task Force of the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office in January 2012 calls for “greater coordination between K-12 schools and community colleges.” This report shows that the biggest indicator of a student’s academic success in college is directly related to skills in English and math. A lack of student preparedness upon entering college is a statewide trend; in 2010, 79 percent of high school juniors in the state who took the Early Assessment Program college readiness test did not test “college ready.” Further, a lack of preparation has a long-term, negative impact on a student’s ability to complete his or her educational goals and succeed in the workplace. A recent Orange County Business Council survey reveals that many employers believe that students are not fully prepared for success in a job or career.

For a copy of the HSPP or additional information, please visit www.saddleback.edu/hsp or contact Leslie Humphrey, director of outreach and recruitment, at (949) 582-4272.

Located in Mission Viejo, Saddleback College provides quality higher education and training to the greater south Orange County community. Having served more than 500,000 students since 1968, Saddleback College offers more than 300 degree and certificate programs to help students reach their personal, career, and educational goals. For more information, please visit www.saddleback.edu.

Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD) has been empowering students for success since 1965. A public school system serving seven cities in South Orange County, the District currently educates 53,000 students at 63 schools, making it the ninth largest school district in the state of California. The District has a reputation for instructional excellence, earning the highest academic achievement scores of any large school district in the state. Each year, nearly 97 percent of its seniors graduate and 96 percent of its graduates attend college. For more information about the District and its programs, visit www.capousd.org or follow us on Twitter @CapoUnified.

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