



PRESS RELEASE

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Contra Costa Community College District Chancellor Helen Benjamin Announces Retirement

MARTINEZ, CA – After serving eleven years as the Contra Costa Community College District (District) Chancellor, Helen Benjamin has announced her retirement, effective December 31, 2016.

A native of Alexandria, Louisiana, Benjamin joined the District in 1990 as Dean of Los Medanos College's Language Arts and Humanistic Studies and Related Occupations. In her 25 years with the District, she progressed to higher level positions that included District Vice Chancellor, Educational Programs and Services, interim President of Los Medanos College and President of Contra Costa College before becoming chancellor in 2005.

"What an incredible ride this has been for me! I could not have worked in a better place," said Benjamin. "I have been allowed to grow, develop and contribute alongside my peers as we have transformed the lives of thousands students. For that, I am grateful."

Board members said Benjamin has left her mark on many aspects of the District's three main campuses: Diablo Valley College, Los Medanos College and Contra Costa College. In her tenure, Benjamin managed a variety of District crises, including the 2006-07 cash-for-grades, as well as recurring dips in state funding. During her chancellorship, the District has also benefitted from \$736 million in bond measures voter-approved in 2006 and 2014. That money has paid for major improvements at the

Los Medanos and Diablo Valley campuses, and similar work at Contra Costa College has started. Among her many accomplishments, Benjamin remained committed to student success.

There's been a common thread to her work, said Board Secretary Tim Farley. "The number one concern for Helen is always, 'How is this going to impact students?' "

Added District Board President Vicki Gordon, "She has always been a leader who wanted to make sure our success and accomplishments were done as a team."

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The Contra Costa Community College District (CCCCD) is one of the largest multi-college community college districts in California. The CCCCCD serves a population of 1,019,640 people, and its boundaries encompass all but 48 of the 734-square-mile land area of Contra Costa County. The District is home to Contra Costa College in San Pablo, Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, Los Medanos College in Pittsburg, as well as educational centers in Brentwood and San Ramon. The District headquarters is located in downtown Martinez.

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