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Farewell Receptions for Chancellor Helen Benjamin

As Chancellor Helen Benjamin's time with the District comes to an end, all three colleges and the District Office (DO) held "Retirement Receptions" to honor her leadership. District retirees joined faculty, classified professionals and managers as attendees reminisced on her 26-year legacy with the District. Chancellor Benjamin's commitment to students was evident even during these retirement receptions. She asked that in lieu of gifts, donations could be made to the Minority Student Study Abroad Scholarship which she created with retired Senior Dean **Tim Clow**.

Each event was unique in its own way and featured speakers highlighting accomplishments and memories during the Chancellor's tenure. However, Chancellor Benjamin echoed the same message when speaking at each event, "I have accomplished nothing by myself. I can't lay claim to anything that I alone have done because I alone can't do anything. It's because of all the wonderful people I work with and I have just had the amazing privilege while working here of working with some really smart, talented, amazing people."

Chancellor Benjamin also told colleagues her immediate plans following retirement will include a cruise, a trip to Mexico with her siblings, and a move to Dallas, Texas, to be closer to her parents.



Chancellor **Helen Benjamin** reflected on her career with the District at the LMC reception.

New Chancellor Contract approved

At their December 14, 2016, meeting, the Governing Board approved the contract to officially make **Dr. Fred E. Wood** the 8th permanent Chancellor of the District effective January 1, 2017.

"We are excited to work with Dr. Wood as he leads this District into the future," said Governing Board President Vicki Gordon. "He brings an exemplary higher education background that will help us grow our transfer rates to 4-year institutions, strengthen our career technical education reputation, and increase our online offerings. The Governing Board looks forward to his leadership and innovation that will contribute to our pursuit of increasing student success."

Prior to working for the District, Dr. Wood served as the Chancellor at the University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC). UMC, is a workforce focused campus with half of the degree seeking student's on-campus and the other half on-line. Dr. Wood also worked for 26 years at the University of California, Davis (UCD), where he served as vice chancellor of student affairs from 2007 to 2012. Prior to UCD, Dr. Wood was a faculty member at North Idaho College.

"I am honored and thrilled that the Governing Board selected me to lead this great district and cannot wait to roll up my sleeves and get to work," said Wood. "Our future success continues to be dependent on the dedicated faculty, classified professionals, and managers that work in the District. I look forward to joining them as we engage more deeply with our community and business leaders, and fulfilling the District's mission to transform the lives of our students as they achieve their educational goals with us."

Dr. Wood is a first-generation college student earning his A.A. degree from DVC, a B.S. and Ph.D. in chemistry from UCD.



Chancellor
Fred E. Wood, PhD



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LMC Debate Team Wins Again

Despite being the only community college competitor at the tournament, the Los Medanos College (LMC) debate team won the Dominican University Penguin Invitational and ended up beating out every competitor including UC Berkeley and Cal Poly San Louis Obispo.

“Debate is an extremely nerve-racking, competitive sport, so we all try our best to create a positive environment in practice and in competition,” said Genaro Mauricio, the team’s student president.

Since 2012, the LMC debate team has won a total of 10 highly acclaimed awards. The team usually holds weekly practices to stay updated on current events and prepare for upcoming debates. The weekly practices include research briefs and regular current event quizzes.

“Hard work and dedication on the students’ behalf is the (top) contributor to the success of the LMC debate team,” said Marie Arcidiacono, the director of forensics for the team. “The coaching staff provides them with the structure and guidance, and then it’s up to the students to put that theory into practice.”

The LMC debaters look forward to their next competition as the host of the third-annual Steeltown Invitational Debate Tournament on Jan. 28 and 29, 2017.



The Los Medanos Community College debate team – Coach **Star Steers**, Coach **David Zimny**, **Julio Campos**, **Israel Castro**, **Genaro Mauricio**, **Tim Sellers**, **Arianna Berumen**, **Randy Utz**, **Richard Stanfield** and Coach **Marie Arcidiacono**.

CCC Food Pantry

On Thursday, December 15, 2016, Contra Costa College (CCC) held a soft opening for its first-ever food pantry. From 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Associated Student Union (ASU) members provided food for CCC students battling food insecurities. The program is a partnership between the ASU and the Solano County Food Bank.

Students in need were given a bag full of food that included rice, oatmeal, pasta, pasta sauce, juice and other non-perishables. Student Life Coordinator **Joel Nickelson-Shanks** is working to have a standard bag of food that is balanced and have good nutritional value.



While only a handful of students took advantage of the new program, they were extremely grateful for the food provided. Moving forward, ASU looks to make the food pantry a biweekly event with food giveaways on Mondays to help get students through the week, and again on Fridays to send students home with food for the weekend. The goal of the program is to reach a day when CCC will be able to support all of their students battling food insecurities.

Community College Success Stories

President Obama proposed America's College Promise, offering two years of free community college for responsible students. The Heads Up Campaign, a movement launched to support the Promise proposal, gained momentum as community colleges nationwide joined in the dialogue.

Retired Chancellor **Helen Benjamin**, who chaired California's College Promise Leadership Committee, put out a call for employees to share their story in order to highlight the tremendous value community colleges provide. *The News* will feature a few of the stories submitted every month.



Alicia Huntley, Senior Library Assistant, Diablo Valley College, Contra Costa College, San Pablo, CA & Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, CA

I graduated from high school and a week later began classes at Contra Costa College (CCC) in the Dental Assisting Program. I landed a wonderful job with a general dentist in Berkeley following graduation. I worked for 8 years in the dental field but quit when my first daughter was born. Once friends and family found out I was staying home, they asked me to watch their children. I became a licensed family child care provider. I took classes on Saturday in child care at CCC. Once my children started elementary school, I returned to CCC to obtain my A.S. degree in dental assisting. I completed that and began taking prerequisites for the Dental Hygiene Program. I struggled big time with organic chemistry and decided I needed to head in another direction. I told a friend I was done and

was going to find a job in a bookstore. She suggested I get my certificate in library technology at Diablo Valley College (DVC). I took her advice and completed the program in 1½ years. The week after I graduated, my husband was diagnosed with colon cancer. Looking for a job was put on hold as I cared for him, our household and our two daughters. I was hired as a library assistant substitute at DVC. My husband died the following summer. That fall, I continued subbing at DVC and also at our local public library. A few months later, I heard about a job at an elementary school near our home. It was a great interview. I drove home and my daughter met me at the door and said, "They forgot to have you do the written portion, you have to return." Oh, my gosh! I drove back and they gave me an essay question. It was material that a librarian had covered in my first library science class. I aced the question and was offered the job! I continued subbing at DVC. When my predecessor retired, I applied for her position as senior library assistant. I started working at the DVC library almost nine years ago. There's never been a dull moment. I learn something new every day and I love helping the students who come to the library!

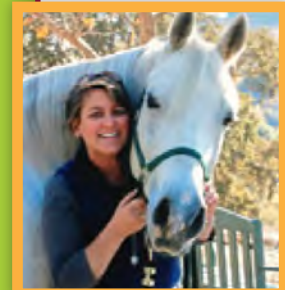
Victoria Gordon, Governing Board President, District Office, Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, CA

My community college story is really generational. George Gordon, my father-in-law, was one of the founding fathers of the community college district and served on the Board for 27 years. After graduating from College Park and looking at what an education would cost me (I was paying for my own education), I decided DVC was the best option as it allowed me to keep my waitress job at Anna Miller's Pies in Sun Valley Mall. I started out as a nursing undergraduate and switched to business. I was very focused on finishing my undergrad work and eventually ended up graduating from CSUH (now CSUEB) with a B.S. in Business. I went back and got my teaching credential from CSUEB, which eventually led me to teaching at a middle school. My husband attended Diablo Valley College (DVC), I attended DVC and our son, Steven, attended DVC where he swam and was

captain of the swim team his last year at the college. Steven was like so many of our students. He was accepted to several California State Universities, but wanted to swim. When he shared on Facebook that he had chosen DVC over the CSUs choices, the peer pressure caused him, at the very last minute, to choose Sonoma State University. It was not a fit for many reasons, but especially because there wasn't support he needed. He then transferred to DVC where he found support from so many of our employees. From faculty and staff to coaches, administrators and counselors. He finished with an A.A. degree for transfer in government and is now finishing up at Sacramento State University. He has really grown to be a very independent young man and loves helping other students that struggle. Community college has been a huge part of my whole family's educational experience and I cannot imagine what our lives would have been like had there not been Diablo Valley College.

Pamela Rudy, Professor, Computer Information Systems & Business Office Technology, Contra Costa College, San Pablo, CA

Eighteen years after graduating from Contra Costa College (CCC), I attended a private 4-year university. I came to appreciate even more the faculty that were my instructors at CCC for their caring, interested, and supportive attitudes. I have been on the CCC campus in some shape or form since I was five years old. I love this campus and the family atmosphere both we as faculty and our students can experience here.



LMC Police Aides Make History

Los Medanos College (LMC) made history on December 8, 2016, when two groups of all female police aides worked back to back shifts. Senior Parking Officer **Michael Hotton** believes this achievement is a result of the District's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

"I think that the diversity is part of the department's commitment to be fair and equitable to all," said Hotton. "We take great pride in representing our diversity in all of the department members we hire and employ."

Police Aides act as goodwill ambassadors for the department and often are the first point of contact with the public. They enforce parking, lock and unlock facilities, provide personal safety escorts, post class cancelation signs, work the front desk, and assist dispatchers.

Hotton was very proud of them. "These women are very professional and represent our department well, while embracing the important public service they perform each day they are at work."



Top row left to right: **Janette Macias, Alisha Pickens, Francis Stephens**

Bottom row left to right: **Brittany Bangert, Lilly Henry-Walker**

District Welcomes New Employees

Please welcome the following new employees who were approved by the Governing Board in December.

Regular Monthly Classified Employees

Location	Name	Title
DVC	Dana Colvin	Instructional Laboratory Coordinator
LMC	Maureen Wilhoite	Administrative Assistant

Board Reports

To review highlights of the special Governing Board Meeting held on December 14, 2016, click on the link below:

http://www.4cd.edu/crpa/board_reports/December%2014,%202016.pdf

Cabinet Highlights

To review highlights of the Cabinet meetings held on December 13, 2016, click on the link below:

http://www.4cd.edu/crpa/chancellors_cabinet/December%202016.pdf

The Contra Costa Community College District, founded in 1948 and governed by a publicly elected five-member board, is one of the largest multi-college community college districts in California. The mission of the District is to attract and transform students and communities by providing accessible, innovative and outstanding higher education learning opportunities and support services.

Contra Costa Community College District is committed to equal opportunity in educational programs, employment, and campus life. The District does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, parental status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in any access to and treatment in College programs, activities, and application for employment