



# News Release

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## **Monumental Gift from the Osher Foundation Begins Paying Off for Yuba Community College District (YCCD) Students**

Marysville, CA – Just 17 months after its formation, the California Community Colleges Scholarship Endowment has provided \$5,000 in scholarship support to YCCD students for the Fall 2009 semester. These dollars have provided \$1,000 scholarships to 3 students at Yuba College, one student at Woodland Community College (WCC), and one student at the Clear Lake Campus (CLC).

Next year, the Foundation for California Community Colleges will provide a minimum of 15 Osher Scholarships to colleges and campuses within YCCD, with the opportunity for the colleges to receive as many as 35 permanent \$1,000 Osher Scholarships. This will be achieved through a matching gifts campaign of \$345,000 toward which YCCD employees and friends have already donated \$118,500 in support.

Earlier this semester, \$625,000 in scholarship money was provided to the state's 110 community colleges by the Foundation for California Community Colleges, fulfilling an ambitious pledge to provide swift benefit from a fund created in May 2008 with a \$50 million commitment from the Bernard Osher Foundation. Thanks to this funding, 1,250 scholarships were distributed at community colleges across the state this semester, helping students pay for educational expenses such as text books, lab fees, uniforms and transportation. A second installment of the same amount will be distributed to colleges for the Spring 2010 semester, providing a total of \$1.25 million in scholarship funding this academic year alone.

The California Community Colleges Scholarship Endowment is a permanent fund that provides scholarships of up to \$1,000 annually to students who have already completed 24 units of study, are enrolled in at least six units for the current semester, and who qualify for a Board of Governors fee waiver. It combines the historic \$50 million commitment—including an upfront gift of \$25 million—from the Osher Foundation with a three-year match fundraising campaign that involves all 110 California Community Colleges. Through this campaign, the Endowment will ultimately grow to \$100 million and provide scholarships for thousands of California students annually.

“The fact that our students are receiving additional resources during these tough financial times is a true blessing,” said YCCD Chancellor Dr. Nicki Harrington. “These scholarships will help make higher education a reality for many of our students at a time when attaining such an education is becoming a much more daunting task due to the financial crisis of the state.”

The scholarships come at a critical time, indeed. A record-high unemployment rate, coupled with enrollment caps at the University of California and California State University, is sending unprecedented numbers of students to the community colleges seeking a degree, certificate or job training. At the same time, recent legislation has increased California Community College fees from \$20 to \$26 per unit. While California Community Colleges continue to remain affordable compared to other systems, non-tuition costs of college enrollment have grown much faster than the state’s general cost of living in recent years, according to *California Community Colleges: Making Them Stronger and More Affordable* by William Zumeta and Deborah Frankle.

“Thanks to the Osher Foundation, Yuba College has been able to provide more financial support to its students at a time when they most need it,” said Dr. Kay Adkins, Yuba College President. “These scholarships are assisting some of our neediest students continue with their education, which will in turn prepare more of our students to enter the local workforce and revitalize the economy.”

“This scholarship has helped me out tremendously, allowing me to purchase books and other school materials,” said Samira Timury, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Yuba College student studying to be a Registered Nurse (RN). “As a single parent working and studying in these difficult times, any little bit helps. The Osher Scholarship has enabled me to continue my education, and for that I am very grateful.”

In addition to the financial hardships students face, community colleges across the state, including YCCD, are dealing with budget challenges of their own. With more than 2.9 million students enrolled last year, 18,129 of which attended YCCD, California Community Colleges are seeing their highest attendance levels in the history of the system. Despite such rapid enrollment growth, \$830 million in budget cuts to community colleges have forced campuses to reduce course offerings. YCCD has been no exception, compressing its schedules for the Fall, Spring and Summer semesters.

“Our community colleges are facing extremely difficult economic challenges due to state budget cuts and the national recession, yet we must do everything we can to continue to serve our students and provide them with a quality and affordable education in order meet the workforce needs of the region and throughout the state of California,” said Dr. Angela Fairchilds, WCC President. “These scholarships are a positive step in that direction, easing the financial burden on our students while simultaneously assisting the colleges that serve them.”

The Yuba Community College District spans eight counties and nearly 4,200 square miles of territory in rural, north-central California. It has colleges in Marysville and Woodland, an educational center in Clearlake, and will be adding outreach facilities in Sutter and Colusa Counties as part of the Measure J facilities bond. For more information on the Osher Scholarship and how to contribute to the YCCD Foundation, please visit the Foundation’s website at [www.yccd.edu/foundation](http://www.yccd.edu/foundation).

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