With classes now offered at $20 per unit, California’s community colleges offer what is perhaps the most affordable college education in the country. What’s more, according to data collected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, low unemployment rates and higher earnings are directly related to the level of one’s educational attainment.

Clearly, there’s no better time to go to college, whether it be as a recent high school graduate, as a re-entering adult, or a career professional seeking further skills or a degree to achieve a higher position or salary.

Thirty or forty years ago, there were much fewer career choices, and an education prepared one for a lifelong career. Today, however, there are many more career choices, and an education prepares one for a lifetime of multiple careers. More than ever, the demand today for skilled workers is at an all-time high. During a recent presentation at Cerritos College to a crowd of industry professionals, Jack Stewart, president of the California Manufacturers and Technology Association (CMTA), spoke about how a skilled workforce is widely desired and explained how colleges and the business industry can make education more relevant for students through collaboration.

There is no better workforce and industrial sector than right here in Southern California,” he said.

“Post-secondary training is necessary, and the bright spot in workforce development is the California Community Colleges,” said.

In fact, the average graduating GPA of UCLA students who transferred from a community college were exactly the same: 3.22 (UCLA Undergraduate Profile: Fall 2006). An advantage of attending a community college also includes smaller class sizes and more time with the professor of the course.

UC school. Community college transfer students actually have more likelihood of being accepted into area schools of choice. In fall 2005, acceptance rates at UCLA of high school seniors was 25.65 percent, while its acceptance rate of transfer students was higher, at 41.35 percent.

Research has shown that students who transfer to universities from community colleges do as well, if not better than, students who start as freshmen at universities. (Continued on pg 2)

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(Continued on pg 1)
Community colleges also enable students to save money. Consider that at a community college, a full-time, annual student (30 units) would spend $6,576 in fees. These figures don't even include costs of books, transportation and housing, which can vary.

Simply put, a community college like Cerritos College is a perfect option for students who wish to maximize their transfer options, save money and receive the benefits of smaller faculty to student ratios. Gwendolyn Juarez, a Cerritos High School graduate who attended Cerritos College before transferring to USC, agrees:

"Students who are still undecided can take classes in different areas at a community college and really narrow down their study focus instead of going out there and wasting time and money," she said.

"Like a lot of students, I wanted a little more time to make a good decision."
In January, with the support of the Cerritos College Foundation, Cerritos College launched a $4.8 million capital campaign for private support to help augment local bond funds provided for the $15 million expansion and creation of the Southland/Cerritos Center for Transportation Technologies (SCCTT). The proposed SCCTT will include a $9 million renovation of the existing three-acre auto complex and a new $6 million automotive partners building that will focus on management education for the auto industry. When completed in 2009, the center will play a large role in filling the ever-changing, highly skilled employment needs of the auto industry.

Key features of the SCCTT will include a state-of-the-art Hybrid and Alternative Fuels Training Center, three manufacturer-sponsored technician apprentice programs, and Northwood University’s West Coast program center, which offers a bachelor’s degree in automotive management for full-time students and working adults.

In response to the SCCTT campaign kick-off, the Southland Motor Car Dealers Association (SMCDA) provided Cerritos College with a $500,000 pledge. SMCDA President John Dinsmore of Penske Toyota presented Cerritos College President Dr. Noelia Vela with a check on Thursday, January 18 during SMCDA’s annual dinner, held at the Cerritos Performing Arts Center.

Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee
Donna Jones, Chair

I would first like to thank you, our community, once again, for your support of Cerritos College—your community college. It’s with your confidence in our campus that we are able to provide necessary updates and modernization to our college’s infrastructure and facilities. As required by Proposition 39, the Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee for the Cerritos College District continues to oversee the expenditures of bond funds to assure area voters that bond proceeds are expended for the purposes set forth in the ballot measure. In reporting to the community, I am pleased to assure you that the staff at Cerritos College continues to use bond money efficiently and wisely toward projects that fall directly under the college’s mission: serving the community by building futures through learning.

As chair of the Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee, I lead our committee members through review and discussion of progress reports related to bond projects in various stages of development. We receive reports on expenditure of bond funds, as well as plans and financial projections, including audit reports. I am thrilled to report the progress Cerritos College has made in the three years since passage of Measure CC. Projects detailed on these pages are only the first of many positive changes that will enable Cerritos College to continue to provide an opportunity for a first-class education for the residents in our community. For more information on past and future meetings of the Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee and ongoing bond projects, please visit Cerritos College’s website, www.cerritos.edu/bond. We welcome all members of the public to our meetings. Sincerely, Donna Jones, Chair

Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee

Cerritos College Track and Field Formally Dedicated

Cerritos College’s new all-weather track and field were dedicated during the California Relays Invitational on Saturday, March 24. Pictured at the ribbon-cutting ceremony are, from left to right, Board of Trustees Members Dr. Ted Edmiston and Dr. Bob Hughlett, track team member Dennis Drisdol, President Dr. Noelia Vela and Board of Trustees Vice President Bob Arthur.
Cerritos College, the Chinese Culture Association of Southern California and the Cerritos Chinese School hosted more than 500 attendees at a Lunar New Year celebration of “The Year of the Boar” on Saturday, March 10 in the Cerritos College Student Center.

The colorful event featured music concerts, dance performances and cultural workshops that introduced visitors to Chinese culture and traditions. Performances also included a drum and symbol demonstration, icon dancers, martial arts displays and Chinese music. Workshops were offered in Chinese language, calligraphy, cooking and folk dancing.


The new plan designates one campus staff member and at least one board trustee member to serve as college representatives at one of more than eight chambers of commerce in the district. Involvement on behalf of the staff and trustee members includes attending events, serving on committees and accepting appointments to chamber boards of directors. Relationships between the college and local chapters are crucial in helping to increase awareness within the community of the college’s offerings and services available to local employers and small business owners, while also providing connections and opportunities for development of internships and work-study programs.

Newly hired Community Relations Coordinator Toni Grjibula serves as the chamber representative at the Bellflower Chamber of Commerce, while Dean of Liberal Arts Linda Rose has become Cerritos College’s representative at the Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce. Fiscal Manager Lela Rikallah serves as the campus’ representative at the Cerritos Regional Chamber of Commerce.

A few times throughout the year, staff members representing the college at various area chambers meet to discuss outreach strategies and ways of supporting ties between local commerce and the college, and to plan collaborative approaches to further serving the community through outreach.

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Cerritos College Expands Outreach to Local Chambers of Commerce

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