

**DRAFT RESOLUTION
TO INVEST IN SAN MATEO COUNTY'S FUTURE WITH "TUITION-FREE SMC"**

WHEREAS: San Mateo County faces unprecedented, emergency conditions with the COVID-19 public health crisis (over 8,000 cases, 130 dead). The County's economy is in deep recession (9.2% unemployment, over 41,000 out of work).

WHEREAS: COVID's health impact has been disproportionately concentrated on the Latinx community where infections are occurring at double the rate of other groups, and its economic impact is focused on the service sector which employs tens of thousands Latinx in San Mateo County.

WHEREAS: The tragic deaths of Black Americans has vividly demonstrated the unequal application of justice in American society. And, the continued, systemic disadvantages faced by People of Color has released widespread social unrest protesting persistent unequal economic opportunity.

WHEREAS: SMCCCD is considering its 2020-21 budget including a \$207 million General Fund (87% from local property tax), and another \$246 million for servicing bonds and running specialized programs on federal/state grants. The budget proposes a \$43 million end of year surplus.

WHEREAS: SMCCCD "Basic Aid" status and the County's uniquely high property values make SMCCCD well positioned to tolerate fluctuations in state funding or continued economic recession.

WHEREAS: San Mateo County residents pay \$10 million per year in tuition to attend SMCCCD based on \$46/unit, which is almost \$1,500/yr for full-time student; Adding books, transportation, technology, and other living expenses makes SMCCCD's full cost over \$15,000 per year (source: SMCCCD). While many needy students receive tuition waivers or other financial assistance, and community college is a tremendous value for most individuals, the total cost to attend SMCCCD is a barrier to many people.

WHEREAS: Typically, SMCCCD enrollment *declines* in full employment, *rises* in recessions, however, Fall 2020 SMCCCD enrollment is flat and Full-Time-Equivalent enrollment is DOWN. This may be due to tuition and other direct costs creating a barrier to entry, or course offerings which do not meet the immediate need for students in a changing economy. It also may be that the overall high cost of living in San Mateo County is forcing out SMCCCD's primary market of aspiring first-generation college families.

WHEREAS: In response to the 9/11 induced recession, SMCCCD brilliantly and quickly reformed workforce training programs to retrain laid off travel industry workers into areas like biotechnology.

WHEREAS: Prior to 1985 all California Community Colleges were tuition-free pursuant to the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education.

THEREFORE: In order to address this crisis situation, the San Mateo County Community College District Board of Trustees hereby declares this emergency condition and directs staff to:

- (1) Propose how best to reduce the total cost of attending SMCCCD for San Mateo County families in financial need by reducing tuition, fees, parking and living expenses for 2020-21.

- (2) Recommend how best to double the Promise Scholars Program from 2,000 students per year to 4,000 per year to provide tuition, general financial support and other services such as: academic and personal counseling, food security, transportation, mental health and housing.
- (3) Create rapid workforce retraining programs to address the rout of service sector employment through tuition-free, accelerated courses designed to help service and hospitality sector workers find gainful employment in other industries critical to San Mateo County.
- (4) Organize a committee of SMCCCD stakeholders including students, faculty and staff, community leaders, business leaders to study and recommend approaches to make permanent these policy changes and financial support programs.
- (5) Propose program changes necessary to implement the strategic direction of Tuition-Free SMCCCD for San Mateo County residents by reallocating up to one-third of the proposed \$43 million reserve and without faculty/staff cuts.
- (6) Recommend statutory and regulatory changes to facilitate these programmatic changes and establish specific goals such as doubling the number of graduates from SMCCCD workforce training programs from 2,000 to 4,000 (100% increase), and increasing the number of students successfully transferring to 4-year colleges from 2,400/year to 3,600/year (50% increase).