



September 3, 2020

San Mateo County Community College District
Members of the Board of Trustees
3401 CSM Drive
San Mateo, CA 94402

RE: 2020-21 PROPOSED SMCCCD BUDGET – CALL FOR EMERGENCY ACTION

Trustees,

I am requesting the Board add to its upcoming budget meeting agenda an item to consider the attached emergency resolution to invest in San Mateo County's future by using SMCCCD's substantial reserve to address COVID's devastating impact to our working class and Latinx families.

San Mateo County faces unprecedented conditions due to COVID (over 8,000 cases and 131 deaths). Our Latinx community (25% of population) is disproportionately impacted (50% COVID cases). Many Latinx are on the front-line in the healthcare sector battling COVID or are essential workers keeping our economy moving. Others work in the service, hospitality or retail sectors largely closed by COVID. The Latinx community is suffering from higher infection rates and disproportionate job losses from COVID.

These same underserved communities face raging social unrest calling out tragic, recurring instances of police brutality and on-going structural barriers to equal economic opportunity.

SMCCCD could use a portion of its substantial reserve to deliver tuition-free rapid workforce retraining programs for displaced workers and to reduce the full cost of attending SMCCCD. The full cost of attendance, including tuition, books, transportation and living expenses, can exceed \$15,000 per year. Flat enrollment numbers show that high cost programs on traditional academic calendars are not useful in helping our working families survive COVID.

SMCCCD's proposed \$207 million General Fund budget includes \$10 million in tuition from San Mateo County residents and a \$43 million end of year surplus. I recommend the Board show compassion and long-term vision by directing staff to make plans to **reduce total cost to attendance, double the Promise Scholars Program and devise tuition-free rapid workforce retraining offerings.**

The Board should also consider directing staff to establish clear success metrics such as **increasing transfer students by 50% and doubling the number of students completing employment training programs.** Finally, should report on how best to make this emergency action an ongoing commitment that makes community college tuition-free and affordable for all County residents, permanently.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Pimentel".

John Pimentel