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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Ryan Ahari Named Student Trustee for Rancho Santiago Community College District**

(Santa Ana)—Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) has named 19-year-old Irvine resident Ryan Ahari as the student representative on its Board of Trustees for 2012-2013.

Ahari, a third-year student at Santiago Canyon College (SCC) with a 3.69 grade point average, is a political science major.

With the SCC Associated Student Government (ASG), he served as the Senator of Campus Development. In that role, he represented the student body on the college's facilities committee. The committee reviews current or upcoming construction projects on campus and has input on a range of campus facility issues, including the Facilities Master Plan, parking needs, temperature control, and other maintenance issues.

In addition, Ahari has served as a proxy for the ASG Vice President of Senate at Academic Senate and RSCCD Board of Trustees meetings. He was honored to be appointed as the SCC Region VIII delegate to the Student Senate for California Community Colleges. Last summer, he served as an SCC orientation leader helping to acclimate new students to college life.

"In my role with ASG, I learned to network and build relationships with students to ensure that their voice was heard," said Ahari. "As student trustee, I plan to continue to focus on vital issues affecting many students. I am concerned about student fee hikes, textbook reform, veterans' issues, adequate financial aid, and ensuring that LGBT students find our campuses welcoming."

In recent months, Ahari has come to value the importance of higher education more than ever. One year ago, his life changed dramatically when his father told him that the family's home was going into foreclosure. The house was put on the market and was sold as a short sale. He went to live with his father in Irvine and his mother went to live with his sister and his dog in Orange. At the time, he was taking 17 units of classes, but the emotional strain caused him to drop three classes.

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“Things are better now, but I came to believe that the key to the world’s problems is education, vocational skills, and job training,” he said. “Society really needs to invest in a solid education for its citizens.”

Fortunately, Ahari has benefitted from a Board of Governors fee waiver, grants, and scholarships that make enrolling in college possible for him. In addition, he got a job working at Target to help pay the bills. This experience he believes has helped him better understand the obstacles that many community college students face in getting a higher education.

His future plans include transferring to a four-year university, preferably UC San Diego or UCLA, and continuing his studies in political science. After completing his bachelor’s degree, he hopes to attend law school. His goal is to study civil liberties and constitutional law and to run for elected office.

**About the Rancho Santiago Community College District**

*The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) is to respond to the educational needs of an ever-changing community and to provide programs and services that reflect academic excellence. Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of RSCCD, which serve the residents of Anaheim Hills, East Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, customized training for business and industry, and programs to train nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.*

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