



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Santa Ana College Students Join President Obama's Initiative to Complete College ****Student Honor Society Hosts "Pledge to Completion" Signing****

(Santa Ana)— President Barack Obama recently challenged community colleges nationwide to produce an additional five million graduates by 2020 in an effort to increase U.S. global competitiveness. To that end, Phi Theta Kappa, the honor society serving two-year colleges, is leading the C4: Community College Completion Corps, a student-led initiative to raise awareness of the importance of college completion.

Santa Ana College's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society is bringing the C4 to Orange County April 10 - May 22. At Santa Ana College (SAC), as part of the activities slated for Early Decision Registration, the honor society will host a "Pledge to Completion" signing campaign.

On selected dates in the above timeframe, seniors from Santa Ana Unified School District high schools will spend a morning at the college preparing for fall enrollment and getting answers to their questions.

Among the students who are gearing up to enter SAC this fall is 18-year-old Pedro Tochiuitl, currently a senior at Century High School in Santa Ana. Being part of the Early Decision Program at SAC is important to Tochiuitl. With plans to study criminal justice, he is the first in his family to go to college.

"It feels good to be done with high school, but I'm anxious to know what I need to study and what I need to do when I get to college. I'm a little nervous about starting over in college."

His concerns center on how he'll adapt to college. Will he be able to keep up the pace of learning required in his classes? How will the college support his special needs? Also, will he be able to access financial assistance that he may need to complete his education?

From 12:00 p.m. to 12:45 p.m., the high school seniors including Tochiuitl will be asked to sign the pledge as they eat lunch in the college amphitheater.

"Students who complete a certificate, community college degree or transfer are poised to earn up to \$400,000 more during their lifetimes than those who don't complete," said SAC

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President Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D. “Degree completion opens the door to a much brighter future.”

Even as student fees soar, community colleges remain the affordable solution to train workers for middle-skill jobs — requiring more than a high school diploma, but less than a bachelor’s degree. Even when unemployment was over 10 percent last year, research by the Manufacturing Institute found that two-thirds of manufacturing companies reported moderate-to-severe shortages of qualified workers to hire.

In addition to the “Pledge to Completion” signing campaign as part of the Early Decision Program at Santa Ana College, the college’s Phi Theta Kappa chapter is working to engage currently enrolled students in their campaign. On March 27, they launched a campaign to ask fellow students to sign the “Pledge for Completion.” On April 18, they plan another day-long signing day on campus.

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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