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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LACCD Chancellor Announces Formation of Review Panel to Take 'Fresh Look' at Building Program

Panel of distinguished citizens to examine various aspects of the program modernizing the LACCD's nine campuses with a goal of making recommendations for improvement of policies and processes

Los Angeles, April 27, 2011 -- Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) Chancellor Daniel LaVista today announced the formation of an independent review panel to examine the LACCD's \$6 billion Building Program. The 10-person panel of distinguished citizens will examine various aspects of the program modernizing the LACCD's nine campuses with a goal of making recommendations for improvement of policies and processes.

"With new buildings and facilities at every one of our nine campuses, we have much to be proud of as a result of our Building Program," said Chancellor LaVista. "Nonetheless, at the mid-point of our spending, it is an opportune time for independent eyes to take a fresh look at our program to make sure that we have the best possible policies and processes in place. Delivering on our promises to the taxpayers who generously funded this program must be our top priority and this panel has the intelligence and experience to do the job."

LACCD's Building Program is a 16-year, \$6 billion program funded mostly by taxpayer-approved bonds, supplemented by additional funding from the state of California. With approximately \$3 billion spent so far, the LACCD's nine colleges are benefiting from brand new and renovated academic buildings, sports facilities, arts complexes, administrative buildings, child development centers, and parking structures. The Building Program has completed hundreds of separate projects, with hundreds more in the planning or construction stages.

The review panel will examine ethics, costs, planning and control processes, communications, checks and balances, and the effectiveness of program management. The panel's membership reflects a variety of backgrounds, in construction, law, economic development, education, engineering, labor, and business. The panel's membership is attached.

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“I cannot thank the panel enough for its willingness to serve,” said the Hon. Georgia Mercer, president of LACCD’s Board of Trustees. “I’m also pleased that it reflects the diversity of our great city and our great district. Further, my confidence in its effectiveness is increased by the fact that it will be independent, in that no one is affiliated with the District.”

“I applaud the creation of a review panel to examine LACCD’s building program,” said the Hon. Jack Scott, chancellor of the California Community Colleges. “While the program has made great strides in remaking LACCD’s nine campuses, it’s a good time for an independent look at the program to see where the program can improve its operations and controls.”

“The independent review panel will be a valued complement to the ongoing work of the District Citizens Oversight Committee, and I compliment the Chancellor’s swift action,” said Nancy Carson, chairwoman of the LACCD District Citizens Oversight committee, which is made up of representatives of each of the nine colleges and other specified constituencies. “As we move closer to achieving our goal of building state-of-the-art learning institutions at the nine colleges, I am confident that collaboration and cooperation with the independent panel will strengthen the oversight process.”

“The Building Program is changing each of the District’s colleges for the better,” noted LaVista. “We’re providing a better environment for our staff, our faculty, and our students, and giving additional resources to the communities that surround and support our colleges. But we need to ensure that taxpayer funds are being spent wisely. This review panel will help us do that.”

The panel is expected to begin its work next month. The chancellor noted that he will be providing periodic reports on the panel’s progress and recommendations.

About the Los Angeles Community College District

The Los Angeles Community College District, the nation's largest community college district, serves one-quarter million students a year in more than 36 cities in Los Angeles County. The District covers nearly 900 square miles and has educated and trained the region's diverse workforce since 1969.

About the LACCD Building Program

With more than \$6 billion in bond funding to modernize its nine colleges, the LACCD’s Building Program is one of the nation’s largest green construction efforts. For more information on the LACCD’s construction program and a list of awards the District has received for its environmentally responsible projects, visit www.laccdbuildsgreen.org.

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Building Program Review Panel Members

- Roberto Barragan, President, Valley Economic Development Center, manages the largest business development non-profit organization in Southern California, serving businesses with financing, training, and direct business assistance.
- Jim Cowell, Associate Vice President for Facilities, California Institute of Technology, with responsibility for campus facilities, utilities, capital construction and sustainability; former Deputy Chief Facilities Executive for New Construction at LAUSD.
- David Crippens, Consultant, School Construction Bond Oversight Committee, LAUSD; Chairperson, Unite-LA; and former Senior Vice President of Foundations and Education for KCET-TV.
- John P. Dacey, Esq., Partner, Bergman & Dacey, former legal counsel to LAUSD with responsibilities for construction and design contracts, program policies and protocols, and disputed construction claims
- Fred Harris, Assistant Vice Chancellor, College Finance & Facilities Planning, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, with responsibilities for capital outlay policy development for the state's 72 community college districts
- Karen Hathaway, President and Managing Partner, Los Angeles Athletic Club, and First Vice Chair, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Robbie Hunter, Executive Secretary, Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council, representing 140,000 members from 15 construction trades and 42 affiliated Craft Local Unions. Licensed Construction Structural Inspector
- Sarah Meeker Jensen, AIA, Founding Partner and President, Jensen and Partners, former Vice President of Engineering and Operations and former Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences Design and Construction, UCLA
- Gary Lee Moore, City Engineer of the City of Los Angeles, responsible for design and construction of all public facilities, e.g., fire stations, libraries and projects involving parks, wastewater treatment plants and the regulation of private development affecting the public right-of-way.
- Rita Robinson, Deputy CEO, County of Los Angeles, for budget, finance and facilities asset management and development; former General Manager of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation