



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Maria Iacobo | 213-891-2054 | iacobomc@email.laccd.edu

# LACCD Colleges Awarded Five-Year \$24 Million Grants to Support STEM Education and Degrees Among Latino Students

(LOS ANGELES, CA) Four Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) colleges have each been awarded five year \$6 million in grants to provide support and increase opportunities for Hispanic and low-income students to succeed in careers in math and the sciences. The grants were awarded by the U.S. Department of Education's Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Articulation Program to Los Angeles City College, East Los Angeles College, Los Angeles Harbor College and Los Angeles Valley College.

The HSI STEM grants will support programs that increase the number of Hispanic and low-income students attaining degrees in these fields, increase academic self-efficacy and develop model agreements between two- and four-year institutions in these fields.

"STEM skills are necessary in order to compete in a global economy," said Scott J. Svonkin, President of the LACCD Board of Trustees. "Our colleges have the programs and facilities to support student success and these generous grants will help us offer even more assistance for students to complete their degrees and continue their studies at four-year universities."

A report by the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee estimates overall employment in STEM occupations will increase by 17 percent between 2010 and 2020, but there are not enough students pursuing degrees and careers in the STEM fields to meet this demand. The lack of STEM representation is more prevalent among Hispanics, who accounted for 16 percent of the U.S. population in 2010, but only earned eight percent of all certificates and degrees in the STEM fields.

### East Los Angeles College – Jardin de STEM Project

ELAC has the largest Latino enrollment in California with 80 percent of the 28,673 credit students being Latino. Approximately 75 percent of ELAC students enrolled in STEM classes are Latino. The Jardin de STEM project targets students who are interested in STEM, have strong potential, but lack confidence in their ability to succeed. Among the support programs is an Acquaponics lab, built and maintained by students, used as a thematic core in all STEM disciplines to teach the biology, chemistry and physics of food science. Two years of intensive course work will culminate in research at major research laboratories in the region and workshops to help students navigate the complex process of transferring to a four-year university.

### Los Angeles City College – STEM Pathways Program

Approximately 51 percent of LACC students are Latino. LACC is partnering with its feeder high schools and Cal State L.A. to develop a robust STEM pipeline and transfer culture so students can begin preparing for careers in STEM fields while in high school. LACC has developed a student-

centered program and incorporates strategies identified by research to increase success among underrepresented students, including: a STEM Learning Center with centralized resources to participants, peer facilitated study groups and tutoring; providing early undergraduate research opportunities to support students transferring to four-year universities and obtaining STEM degrees; offering high school students prescribed college courses, exposure to STEM activities and undergraduate research opportunities. LACC will invest \$1 million of its HSI STEM grant to establish an endowment, to which the LACC Foundation is providing a \$1 million matching grant.

#### Los Angeles Harbor College – STEM STEP (Success, Transfer and Equity Program)

LAHC will establish an alumni association to connect current students with alumni who have transferred to four-year universities or are working in STEM-related careers and establish a \$100,000 HSI STEM endowment to support long-term sustainability to support the success of students in STEM fields. “STEM pathways are very difficult fields of study taking students a long time to get through these classes,” said Sandra Sanchez, dean of economic and workforce development at L.A. Harbor College. “We want to keep our alumni connected to Harbor, provide mentoring opportunities and show our current students that their perseverance will pay off.”

#### Los Angeles Valley College – Promoting Awareness of STEM Opportunities (PASO)

Approximately 42 percent of LAVC students are Latino and from some of the poorest communities in the San Fernando Valley. PASO is designed to attract more Latino students and support degree completion in STEM fields with proactive academic advising and peer mentoring; redesigning chemistry and physics courses; offering an annual summer STEM Investigations Camp and faculty professional development in STEM programs.

#### **About the Los Angeles Community College District**

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) is the largest community college district in the country, spanning 36 cities in Los Angeles County and serving nearly 250,000 students per year at its nine colleges. Drawing 80 percent of its enrollment from historically underserved populations, LACCD offers affordable and accredited higher education that empowers students to transfer to four-year institutions, earn associate's degrees, and obtain training and job skills that open doors to lifelong opportunities.

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