



*Creating college bound communities*

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## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**‘CASH FOR COLLEGE’ EFFORT HELPS OPEN DOORS TO HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**13 area Cal Grant and financial aid clinics provide students and families with free support;**  
**San Jose Kick-Off Event on Saturday, January 20 to feature Assembly Member Joe Coto**

(SAN JOSE, CA) – The UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC) and its San Jose California Student Opportunity & Access Program (Cal-SOAP) are launching the 2007 California Cash for College Campaign on Saturday, January 20, 2007 with a special kick-off event at The National Hispanic University, Sobrato Hall from 10:00 to 3:00 p.m. The Welcome Session from 10:00-11:00 a.m. will feature Assembly Member Joe Coto and other special guests from UC Santa Cruz, The National Hispanic University, California Student Aid Commission, East Side Union High School District, San Jose Unified High School District, San Jose Evergreen Community College District, and students and parents. Thirteen Cash for College workshops in January and February will provide free, in-person help to low-income and first generation college-going students and families in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Cal Grant application. This year, an additional \$1,000 incentive scholarship will be available at each workshop to make sure all students apply for financial aid.

Recent education trends in California show the state ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in the United States for high school students going directly to college. With nearly 400,000 California high school seniors in 2007, the new Cash for College campaign is designed to aggressively raise awareness about the availability of Cal Grants as a financial aid option to low- and middle-income students and encourage students to apply by the March 2 Cal Grant deadline. The Cal Grant application window is January 1 to March 2.

“It’s our mission to keep students moving forward with their education after high school graduation,” said Diana Fuentes-Michel, executive director of the California Student Aid Commission. “With a Cal Grant, more than 90 percent of Cal Grant recipients attending two- or four-year schools re-enroll for a second

year. And, students and parents should know that the Cal Grant will cover the proposed new fee increases instituted at UC and CSU campuses.”

Many high school seniors, especially students from low-income and traditionally non-college-going families, assume they cannot attend college because they cannot afford tuition. All students should maximize their future options and apply for financial now. To help students navigate the financial aid process, the San Jose Cash for College workshops will offer line-by-line assistance on required financial aid forms and offer additional information on funding for undocumented students and scholarship resources. The Cash for College Campaign supports the ongoing efforts of the Educational Partnership Center in building college-bound communities through improved academic achievement and increase college-going rates. Reducing financial barriers is an important step in helping underrepresented and educationally disadvantaged students reach their postsecondary education goals. Cal-SOAP is one of many academic preparation and education outreach programs under the umbrella of the Educational Partnership Center, which provides direct services, academic enrichment, and college awareness to students from elementary school through college graduation in communities across the Monterey Bay and Silicon Valley regions.

“California high schools cannot improve the college-going rate alone,” said Jack O’Connell, state superintendent of public instruction. “We rely on our state and community partners to make sure graduating high school seniors complete the application process for federal and state aid, such as the Cal Grant.”

Added Michel of the California Student Aid Commission: “Now more than ever, the Cal Grant program provides a viable alternative for many students who are ready to walk away from the pathway to college – either because they feel they can’t afford it, or because they have less than perfect grades. Students need to remain motivated to pursue post-secondary education, and the best way for us to do that is to spread the word about financial aid and help point them in the direction toward collegiate and career success.”

Throughout the months of January and February, 13 Cash for College workshops will be held in locations across San Jose:

- January 20, 2007 at The National Hispanic University, 10:00-3:00 p.m.
- January 23, 2007 at Yerba Buena High School, 3:00-8:30 p.m.
- January 24, 2007 at San Jose High Academy, 3:00-8:00 p.m.
- January 25, 2007 at San Jose High Academy, 3:00-8:00 p.m.

February 3, 2007 at The National Hispanic University, 10:00-2:00 p.m.

February 8, 2007 at W.C. Overfelt High School, 4:00-8:00 p.m.

February 10, 2007 at Willow Glen High School, 8:00-2:00 p.m.

February 12, 2007 at Independence High School, 9:00-8:00 p.m.

February 13, 2007 at Yerba Buena High School, 3:00-8:30 p.m.

February 15, 2007 at Independence High School, 9:00-8:00 p.m.

February 15, 2007 at The National Hispanic University, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

February 27, 2007 at Evergreen Valley College, 9:00-5:00 p.m.

March 2, 2007 at San Jose City College, 9:00-5:00 p.m.

For more information about the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center, contact JAIMIE VARGAS at (831) 459-1747 or [jevargas@ucsc.edu](mailto:jevargas@ucsc.edu). For more information about San Jose Cal-SOAP and the 2007 Cash for College Campaign, contact SONIA RAMOS at (408) 898-0443 or [sbramos@ucsc.edu](mailto:sbramos@ucsc.edu).

#### **About the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center**

Established in 1999, the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC) coordinates new and ongoing outreach efforts of the University of California, Santa Cruz with the goal of increasing access and opportunity to higher education for students across the Monterey Bay and San Jose/Silicon Valley regions, including Santa Cruz, Monterey, Santa Clara, San Benito, and San Mateo counties. EPC is a research- and data-driven, umbrella organization for an array of complimentary, integrated academic preparation programs, serving students, teachers, and families from kindergarten through college. The mission of the Educational Partnership Center is to create college-bound communities that improve student learning and increase college-going rates among students from low-income and traditionally non-college-going families in collaboration with school, college, business, and community partners. Through a variety of direct services and grant-funded projects, EPC offers tutoring, mentoring, academic planning and counseling, leadership training, test preparation, college awareness and enrichment, and teacher professional development.

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