March 1, 2013

Update on Long Beach City College
Career and Technical Education/
Workforce Development Programs

Long Beach Community College (LBCC) has a long and distinguished history as one of the leading community colleges in California for providing high quality career technical and workforce education programs (CTE/WFD). Few community colleges offer the breadth or number of programs as does LBCC. Therefore, the recent decision of our Board of Trustees to discontinue instructional programs in 11 disciplines at LBCC has raised questions about the future of CTE/WFD programs at LBCC. This open letter is being sent to all colleagues and interested parties to reaffirm LBCC’s ongoing commitment to CTE/WFD programs.

LBCC’s commitment to CTE/WFD programs is unwavering. LBCC has always had a comparatively large number of stand-alone CTE programs and will continue to offer a wide range of CTE/WFD programs going forward. The decision to discontinue programs was difficult but necessary as we redesign our programs to focus on supporting changing regional needs with innovative responses to current and emerging regional economies.

Although we have discontinued some programs, LBCC is in the process of a comprehensive assessment process to identify ways in which we can better support those that are most relevant to our regional industry sectors. We are working with our Academic Senate leadership and its CTE Subcommittee to complete the process and will direct current and future resources towards industry clustered programs that train the 21st century workforce for our region. These changes also align with our Board of Trustees’ goal that our CTE programs and WFD activities are linked and in alignment with regional industry sector needs. For instance, LBCC will work to expand its training in the area of Alternative Fuels while other skills that are in less demand go away. We will also move towards offering comprehensive industry skill certificates to meet current workforce demands while creating new hubs in emerging areas like Homeland & Cyber-Security.

Elimination of programs and reallocating existing resources is the only way that LBCC can make the investments needed to update our programs due to several consecutive years of budget cuts from the State of California. With the passage of Proposition 30 and the Governor’s January Budget Proposal, LBCC has gone from a $6.4 million to a $3.5 million dollar deficit this year along with millions of dollars in deferred revenues for the foreseeable future.
The programs were recommended for discontinuation after a lengthy process that included significant input from faculty leadership including the Academic Senate, Department Heads, faculty union leadership, affected faculty members and the College Executive Committee. Despite these reductions, 88% of degree and certificate programs will remain intact which represents 93% of the degrees and certificates conferred by the College over the past six years.

These reductions will allow LBCC to direct more resources to courses and programs which serve the majority of our students and will lead to career certificates, degrees, and transfer in high demand fields in our local economy.

We are doing everything possible to assist the students in these programs. Students will be provided support to either complete their course of study or adjust their educational goals. The affected students will be assisted in exploring all options available in completing a certificate or degree program that may include major coursework credit for spring or summer semesters, earning additional credit by exams or independent study, or identifying and applying for similar programs at other local colleges.

As our economy begins to turn the corner and our revenues begin to slowly increase in coming years, LBCC will continue to invest in and expand CTE/WFD programs to prepare our students to succeed in our regional economy.

Sincerely,

Eloy Ortiz Oakley
Superintendent-President

Lou Anne Bynum
Executive Vice President