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*New center at former CSF campus brings access to bachelor's, master's degrees closer to home, work*

SANTA FE - Santa Fe Community College President Sheila Ortego announced today that the college has finalized the land purchase where the Santa Fe Higher Education Center will be built. The Higher Education Center provides a new, affordable pathway to a degree in Santa Fe through a partnership among New Mexico colleges and universities, making it easier for students to earn a bachelor's or master's degree without leaving Santa Fe.

"We are closer to realizing our plan to bring higher education and workforce training to more students in the community, in a location that will be convenient to many," said President Ortego. "This is a critical step in moving forward our commitment to our taxpayers to build the center they voted for."

The partners in this initiative to better serve Santa Feans are SFCC, the Institute of American Indian Arts, New Mexico Highlands University and the University of New Mexico. Last month NMHU, IAIA and UNM began piloting a selection of programs at the SFCC campus prior to construction of the permanent Higher Education Center, and enrollment has skyrocketed. This is a collaborative, cost-effective and efficient way to serve more students, noted Ortego. An open house for potential students to explore the educational offerings at the Higher Education Center will be held Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 3 to 6 p.m.

SFCC has been developing the concept for the Santa Fe Higher Education Center since 2009. In March, the New Mexico Legislature gave approval for the New Mexico General Services Department to sell or donate land to SFCC for the express purpose of constructing the Higher Education Center. The purchase was completed yesterday at a cost of \$1,518,799.00, which was funded through a local bond that was overwhelmingly supported by voters. In addition, last night SFCC's Governing Board passed a resolution supporting the City of Santa Fe's Educational Corridor Planning Initiative, which includes the Higher Education Center as one of the leading and integral initiatives in the Siringo Road/St. Michael's Drive revitalization area.

The Santa Fe Higher Education Center was developed in response to requests from SFCC students and Santa Fe voters for an affordable, convenient way to achieve a bachelor's or master's degree without leaving Santa Fe. According to a recent local survey, 30 percent of those responding said that they were very interested in pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree in the next five years. Those who were attending or taking courses through a college or university said the primary reason for attending the selected institution was location. Cost was the second highest reason given. Students enrolled in the Higher Education Center can save as much as \$10,000 toward earning a bachelor's degree.

The new site for the Santa Fe Higher Learning Center is on the former College of Santa Fe campus (now Santa Fe University of Art and Design). It is an ideal location due to its proximity to DeVargas Middle School, Santa Fe High School and SFUAD, and nearness to federal, state and city government offices. The facility will be built on approximately four acres next to the college campus entrance at Siringo and

Yucca Roads, on the land known as Tract C. The location preserves the previous educational function of the property by providing additional educational options and expanding educational resources. The center is supported by public officials and community and business leaders. Its launch furthers the City's plans for economic and workforce development collaboration.

SFCC has hired the architectural firm Dekker/Perich/Sabatini to design the new facility. The goal will be to construct a highly energy-efficient building to earn LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification at the highest level (platinum). The intent is for the design aspects to contribute to and enhance the surrounding environment and support the area's revitalization efforts. It is anticipated that the new center will be open for the fall 2013 semester.

Registration for the spring semester through the Santa Fe Higher Education Center on the SFCC campus starts in November. To register, visit [www.sfcc.edu/hec](http://www.sfcc.edu/hec). For more information, contact Dr. Tina Ludutsky-Taylor, Special Assistant to the President at (505) 428-1182 or [tina.ludutsky-taylor@sfcc.edu](mailto:tina.ludutsky-taylor@sfcc.edu).

*For more than 25 years, Santa Fe Community College has been the gateway to success for individuals and the community by providing affordable, high quality educational programs that serve the social, cultural, technological and economic needs of a diverse community. The college serves more than 14,500 students per year in its credit, noncredit and adult basic education programs. Visit [www.sfccnm.edu](http://www.sfccnm.edu), call (505) 428-1000, follow [SFCC on Facebook](#), [SFCC on Twitter](#).*

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