



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 14, 2011

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SFCC President Sheila Ortego Announces Retirement
Board credits sixth President as visionary leader

Santa Fe, NM, November 14, 2011— Santa Fe Community College President Sheila Ortego has announced she will retire at the end of August 2012. Now in her sixth year as president of the college, Dr. Ortego told employees of the college today she remains devoted to the mission of SFCC, but faces increasing responsibilities as a caregiver for her elderly mother.

“I am deeply committed to the college, but this is a time I must put family first. I plan to work diligently over the next months to maintain momentum on our many ongoing initiatives and improvements, and I know our employees will carry on their dedicated service to the students and community as always.”

Dr. Ortego cited ongoing work to construct the Santa Fe Higher Education Center and the college’s continuing efforts to improve performance under the Quality New Mexico model as two priorities she will focus on during the remainder of her tenure as president.

SFCC Governing Board Chair Linda Siegle joined Dr. Ortego at the campus announcement today. She said the board is disappointed to lose Dr. Ortego’s leadership, but understands the need for the president to assist her family.

“Sheila is not only a visionary who inspires others, she also takes the visions and makes them real,” said Siegle. “She has guided SFCC toward achievement in academic and career programs and workforce development. She has been passionate about broadening access to higher education for all who seek it, and we greatly appreciate her service over the past six years.”

Siegle noted Dr. Ortego’s emphasis on building partnerships with business, government and the nonprofit sector has helped SFCC become a more effective resource for the community.

“Establishing the La Familia Dental Clinic on campus in partnership with our Health and Sciences Center has been particularly valuable, both for our students and dental patients on the south side of the city. Dr. Ortego’s vision in creating the Trades and Advanced Technology Center has also been extremely successful in connecting students and employers,” Siegle noted.

Ortego said she is proud of the college’s efforts to advocate for students, especially those who need the most help to succeed.

“We live in a time when students face multiple challenges, and the institutions that serve them are under increasing pressures as well. Decreasing funding levels and a tight job market test higher education to find more efficient and affordable ways to help people get ahead. I will continue over the next nine months to work make sure we strengthen opportunities for students to reach their potential, she said.”

Ortego has been with SFCC since its founding in 1983. Prior to being named president in 2006, Ortego led the college’s top administrative staff as executive vice president, providing management and direction in institutional, strategic and master planning. She previously served as an adjunct faculty member and in

many of the college's academic leadership posts, including dean of instruction and division head in various departments. She also served as the initial president of the GROW Santa Fe Community College Foundation.

Siegle said the Governing Board will discuss options for a search process at upcoming meetings. A plan will be announced as soon as possible. She said whatever process is used will emphasize input from faculty, staff, students and the community.

The college was established in 1983 and serves about 15,000 students per year in its credit, noncredit and adult basic education programs.

About Santa Fe Community College: For more than 28 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. For further information, visit www.sfcc.edu or call (505) 428-1000. Follow us: [SFCC on Facebook](#), [SFCC on Twitter](#).

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