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**Contact:** Laura J. Mulry, Director  
Media and Public Relations  
(505) 428-1776, c: 505-946-7980  
[laura.mulry@sfcc.edu](mailto:laura.mulry@sfcc.edu)

## **Santa Fe Community College Announces Santa Fe Higher Education Center**

***Beginning this August, students can work toward bachelor's degrees in Santa Fe  
Higher Education Department approves land purchase at former College of Santa Fe campus***

**SANTA FE, NM** – Santa Fe Community College President Sheila Ortego announced today that a pilot of the Santa Fe Higher Education Center will launch in August on the SFCC campus. Also today, the college received approval for the purchase of state land where the center will be built. The Santa Fe Higher Education Center is a partnership among SFCC, New Mexico Highlands University, the Institute of American Indian Arts and the University of New Mexico to increase access to higher education. The center provides a single location where students can pursue a bachelor's degree directly upon earning an associate degree at SFCC. Ortego also announced that the New Mexico Higher Education Department has approved SFCC's purchase of state land that was formerly part of the College of Santa Fe campus. Once final approvals from the Higher Education Department are received, the college will use the land for construction of a Santa Fe Higher Education Center within the city limits.

"Northern New Mexico students no longer have to defer their dreams of continuing their education beyond an associate degree due to the barriers of access and affordability," said Dr. Ortego. "Today's economic climate calls for new perspectives, and we are committed to joining with other public colleges and universities to transform the way we deliver higher education and eliminate those barriers. The Higher Education Center allows us to demonstrate this commitment to innovation and collaboration for the benefit of students and taxpayers."

At the Santa Fe Higher Education Center, students can complete an associate degree at SFCC and go on to earn a four-year degree on the same campus, without leaving Santa Fe and at a price that is affordable. The Santa Fe Higher Education Center partnerships combine resources to efficiently and effectively serve students. Today, more than ever, it makes sense for students to save money by attending SFCC for two years before transferring to a four-year college or university. In many cases, the savings realized by students who choose this path to a bachelor's degree will be \$10,000 or more. This fall semester, NMHU, IAIA and UNM will pilot a selection of programs that can be offered at the SFCC campus prior to construction of the permanent Higher Education Center. The pilot program includes bachelor's-level classes in business administration, criminal justice, early childhood education, human services, teacher education and indigenous studies, among others, at the center (lower level, West Wing). Interested students must register at one of the four-year college partners.

"Our community members now have full access to higher education right here in Santa Fe," said Chris Abeyta, Chair of the Learning Center District Board and a member of SFCC's Governing Board. "The Santa Fe Higher Education Center will be a boost to our community and our local economy. By increasing access to higher education we improve the quality of our workforce."

In 2009, SFCC commissioned a needs-assessment study by Research and Polling, Inc. In it, 58% of current and prospective students showed interest in attending such a center. The majority (73%) of those interested in obtaining a bachelor's degree said that they preferred to complete the first two years at a community college.

## Higher Education Department Approves Land Purchase

Also today, Thursday, July 14, the Higher Education Department's Capital Projects Committee approved SFCC's purchase of land at the former College of Santa Fe campus for the purpose of developing a central location for the Santa Fe Higher Education Center. In 2010, Santa Fe voters overwhelmingly approved a bond, with \$12 million earmarked for construction of the Higher Education Center.

"Our students are strongly in favor of staying in Santa Fe for their higher education," continued President Ortego. "They want to live at home, save money and spend time in the classroom, not on the road. The SFCC Higher Education Center will save students time and money, providing the incentive students need to complete a higher degree."

Local public officials and community members showed support for the college's initiative. Santa Fe Mayor David Coss, Santa Fe City Councilor Ronald Trujillo, Santa Fe County Commissioner Kathy Holian, Citizens for SFCC Chair Ann Sperling, SFCC Student Government Association President Jason deLeau, higher learning center experts Martha Romero and Dick Markwood, among others, all attended the state's Higher Education Department's Capital Projects Committee meeting Thursday in support of SFCC's state land purchase for the Santa Fe Higher Education Center. In addition, the entire Santa Fe Legislative delegation sent a letter of support, in favor of the state land purchase and advocating that the college move quickly to construct the center.

The state land parcel on the former College of Santa Fe campus approved for SFCC purchase is described as "Tract C" and is on the northeast side of the campus at the intersection of Yucca/Alumni Road and the main campus loop. The 4.103 acre lot will be purchased from the state's General Services Department at a cost of \$1,517,000.

In the future students will also be able to earn or complete a master's degree at the Santa Fe Higher Education Center. To register, contact NMHU, IAIA or UNM or SFCC's Dr. Tina Ludutsky-Taylor at (505) 428-1182 or [tina.ludutsky-taylor@sfcc.edu](mailto:tina.ludutsky-taylor@sfcc.edu). For a full list of courses and more information, visit [www.sfcc.edu](http://www.sfcc.edu).

**About Santa Fe Community College:** *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. For information, visit [www.sfccnm.edu](http://www.sfccnm.edu) or call (505) 428-1000. Follow us: [SFCC on Facebook](#), [SFCC on Twitter](#).*

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