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SFCC Sees Spike in Callers Concerned, Misinformed About Future of Community College

Santa Fe, NM, April 29, 2009 — In a case of collegiate mistaken identity, telephone lines at Santa Fe Community College are ringing steadily with calls from those seeking an answer to an increasingly common question: “Is Santa Fe Community College shutting down?”

The answer to this question is, of course, No.

Now wrapping up its 25th year anniversary, SFCC is going strong. But this hasn't prevented some confusion. Some are mistaking Santa Fe Community College with College of Santa Fe, the beloved private liberal arts college that will likely close its campus this May due to ongoing financial problems.

At a recent college fair in Las Vegas, NM, SFCC director of recruitment Rebecca Estrada addressed the question more than 15 times. The college's Continuing Education Program has received around the same amount of inquiries in recent weeks, said program administrator Gordon Fluke. “This has been going on for years in small amounts but lately, it's been increasing,” he said. “The last call was from a woman who was worried her classes weren't going to take place. She said, ‘I hear you're closing and I didn't know if you'd still be around by then?’”

“Over the years we have provided directions and telephone numbers for the College of Santa Fe to many people who come to our campus or call looking for a particular event, class or person,” said SFCC President Sheila Ortego. “I know it happens the other way around, too, with folks calling CSF who mean to contact SFCC. It's good natured, and with all the attention on our two institutions lately the confusion is easy to understand. But we really want to emphasize that Santa Fe Community College is still here, quite strong and in no danger of ceasing operations.”

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Perhaps no one knows more about the confusion than SFCC phone receptionist Kris Toth, who has been receiving more than a dozen calls a week from people who are concerned, saddened, curious, and misinformed about the “fate” of the community college. “I tell the callers right away that Santa Fe Community College isn’t going anywhere,” she said. “I remind them that we are all very sad about the situation at College of Santa Fe, but this institution is not in any way affiliated with CSF.”

“It’s a simple case of mixed identity,” said Toth.

As noted, the community college is not closing, but in fact, growing. In recent semesters, the community college has witnessed record enrollment, as more students turn to SFCC for degrees, certificates and workforce training in a turbulent economy. On May 15, SFCC holds its Spring Commencement ceremony, where more than 300 students will walk with degrees and certificates. During its first 25 years, more than 65,000 students have taken classes with more than 3,205 graduating with associates degrees and certificates. Many of these students move on to acquire higher degrees at other colleges or discover fulfilling careers here in New Mexico and beyond.

The college is also in the midst of two construction projects: a new Health and Sciences Building that will house nursing, dental, emergency medical services programs, among others; and the forthcoming trades and advanced technologies building, which will house the Sustainable Technologies Center, an educational center for “green” education and workforce training.

The rumors are troublesome to Toth because she doesn’t want students to miss out on any opportunities they might have at SFCC. That’s why, before she hangs up the phone to answer another call, Toth takes time to reinforce her message to each and every confused caller: “Don’t worry, Santa Fe Community College is alive and well.”

About Santa Fe Community College

Now celebrating its 25th year, Santa Fe Community College is 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 further information, visit www.sfccnm.edu or call (505) 428-1000.

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