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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SKYLINE COLLEGE AWARDED
BENEFITS ACCESS FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION GRANT
TO PILOT MODEL AS PART OF \$4.84 MILLION INITIATIVE**

San Bruno, California – September 21, 2012: Skyline College is one of 6 colleges nationwide awarded a three-year Benefits Access for College Completion (BACC) grant to pilot a program designed to connect students with public benefits in order increase retention and student success. Together with the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), Skyline College will implement one of several models being tested in the BACC Initiative to serve approximately 1,700 students who demonstrate significant financial need.

Low-income students now make up 40 percent of the student population. BACC will connect these students to coordinated income supports including Medi-Cal and food assistance. The initiative will be evaluated to determine if low-income students who receive coordinated income support stay in school longer and complete their studies more quickly. Public supports and refundable tax credits can help low-income students bridge the gap between financial aid and the resources needed to attend college. The initiative's aim is to help students complete their studies swiftly, successfully and into jobs earning family-sustaining wages so they will be less likely to need such supports in the future.

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The three-year \$4.84 million initiative is funded by the Ford Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Lumina Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations. The Annie E. Casey Foundation is also contributing to the initiative. SparkPoint at Skyline College will lead the initiative and integrate efforts throughout departments within the college such as Enrollment Services, General Counseling, Extended Opportunities Programs & Services (EOPS), Disability Support Programs & Services (DSPS), CalWORKS, Health and Psychological Services, Career Services and Transfer Services, TRIO Program, and the multiple learning communities, which are so prevalent at the college.

“The BACC grant is an exciting opportunity for Skyline College to pilot efforts for colleges nationwide in fully resourcing students. The innovative initiative will assist students in completion with the goal of guiding students on a path toward long term self-sufficiency. The BAAC grant will bring us one step closer to fulfilling our mission of empowering and transforming a global community of learners,” said, Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud, President, Skyline College.

“We applaud these colleges for taking an informed and proactive look at how they can help those students most in need of financial and public support to pursue their college and career goals while dealing with work and family pressures,” said AACC President Walter G. Bumphus. “These benefits, including health insurance, food, and child care, as well as financial aid, can help them to complete credentials and get into well-paying jobs.”

“In today’s economy, it’s more important than ever that students have the supports to earn a higher education so they can land better jobs and support their families,” said Evelyn Ganzglass, Director of Workforce Development at CLASP. “Rising college costs mean an education is increasingly out of reach for millions. By combining traditional student financial aid with public supports, students are better positioned to get by and complete their education. And when more students earn credentials, more employers have the skilled workers they need, and the labor market is able to stay competitive.”

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"These institutions have stepped up with new and creative ideas to meet the financial needs of low-income college students," said Ford Foundation Program Officer Chauncy Lennon. "This initiative will offer a space for experimentation to test whether delivering these supports on campus will ultimately increase the number of students who complete credentials, become skilled workers and succeed in our economy."

The pilot period for this initiative will last from the fall 2012 semester through 2014, after which BACC will share the most successful strategies and lessons learned with policymakers and other community colleges nationwide to improve retention and credential completion.

***Skyline College** is an accredited, comprehensive California community college serving more than 10,000 students offering over 80 Associate Degree and Certificate programs. Located on a 111-acre campus overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Skyline College offers world-class educational opportunities to residents from North San Mateo County and beyond since 1969. Part of the San Mateo Community College District, Skyline College strives to inspire a global and diverse community of learners to achieve intellectual, cultural, social, economic and personal fulfillment.*

***The Center for Law and Social Policy** develops and advocates for policies at the federal, state and local levels that improve the lives of low income people. We focus on policies that strengthen families and create pathways to education and work. Through careful research and analysis and effective advocacy, we develop and promote new ideas, mobilize others, and directly assist governments and advocates to put in place successful strategies that deliver results that matter to people across America. For more information, please visit www.clasp.org or follow @CLASP_DC.*

***The American Association of Community Colleges** is the leading national association representing the nation's close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges and their more than 13 million students. Community colleges are the largest and fastest growing sector of higher education, currently enrolling almost half of all U.S. undergraduates. For more information on AACC and community colleges, visit www.aacc.nche.edu.*

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