



Santa Ana College Foundation Announces Monumental \$300,000 Gift from SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union

(Santa Ana, Calif.) - Santa Ana College Foundation officials have announced that **[SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union](#)** has pledged a gift of \$300,000 to the Santa Ana College Foundation in support of the Foundation's mission to raise the game for all Santa Ana College students, staff, and faculty. This gift is the first of its kind for the Foundation and solely dedicated to supporting and growing innovative programs that empower faculty and staff to provide completion and retention support for students both inside and outside the classroom.

This impactful gift directly speaks to the mission and vision of the Foundation's next level work and will be centered where the college and Foundation are headed, as forward-facing institutions with a vision to build the brightest and strongest future for students and communities, which includes providing more funding for **proven high-impact programming at Santa Ana College**.

"In a season of significant financial challenges compounded by the needs of a pandemic, this contribution is a breath of fresh air to support innovation in teaching and other support for students," says Roy Shahbazian, President of the SAC Academic Senate. "SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union has been a dedicated supporter of the college, but this endowment takes their support to the next level-- allowing faculty and staff to provide innovations that students need to learn and succeed in challenging times and for years to come."

It's estimated that by 2025, there will be more than 1 million unfilled jobs in California due to the lack of educated workers. Key industries in California are currently unable to find enough sufficiently trained employees to fill jobs, according to the National Skills Coalition, and 65% of all future jobs will require more education than a high school diploma. **This gift will play a direct role in increasing Santa Ana College's transfer rates, certificate, and completion rates as well as inspiring the next generation of students who attend SAC as it builds on opportunities for the future of the Santa Ana College community, its students, and ultimately the region's economy.**

"We have been working for some time on what the next level focus will be philanthropically for the college. Now more than ever, we know that engaging donors, alumni, and friends to create more strategic resources for students is the most relevant work we can do at this time. We couldn't be more confident about moving in this direction to inspire students to enroll at SAC and see through the completion of their programs," says Dr. Linda Rose, President of Santa Ana College. **"This is one of the most important things that we can**

do now for our community. The ripple effect that our communities will feel economically in the next 3-5 years is critical. Community colleges are at the forefront of empowering individuals who want to make a change for themselves, their families, and their communities. Whether that be training for a new career, or completing the requirements to earn a college degree or transfer, we are grateful for the ongoing support of SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union and the many other stakeholders that support our students, staff, and faculty. SAC is a much stronger college because others care."



SchoolsFirst Plaza Grand Opening at Santa Ana College, March 2018.

SchoolsFirst FCU has a passionate objective to ensure SAC students, staff, and faculty have opportunities and feel supported, making considerable gifts and contributions to SAC since their inception 86 years ago when SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union was formed in 1934 by 126 school employees from Santa Ana College and Santa Ana High School, which were combined at the time. "Anything is possible when you bring bright minds together and create an environment where new ideas and original and creative thinking can happen," said Bill Cheney, President and CEO of SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union. "We are proud of our long history with Santa Ana College and the launch of the SchoolsFirst FCU Innovation Fund. **By connecting staff, faculty and students, we can discover new ways to build a brighter future for the communities we serve.**"

This gift from SchoolsFirst FCU represents the deep enthusiasm of donors, alumni, businesses, students, and others who are eager to jump in and get more involved than ever.

Data shows that the fastest-growing occupations in the country all require post-secondary education and Santa Ana College is the largest pathway for students looking to transfer to a four-year university in Orange County. Together, SAC and SchoolsFirst FCU have continued to build a stronger Santa Ana and advance education in the community and will continue

that partnership as they look to raise the game for students. Partnerships help create a future where students will have access to the education they need to be competitive and find in-demand careers to become not just contributing members of society, but the leaders who will take our city, Orange County, and its workforce into the future.

"Our regional economy and local communities are at risk of losing these students and potential employees because of financial obstacles and institutional challenges. **We are certain that given the right support, our students are ready to rise to the challenge of tomorrow by digging deeper, working harder, and reaching higher.**" Christina Romero, Santa Ana College Foundation Executive Director said. "In the last few months alone we have seen so many supporters raise their hand for students and have given us confidence that our donors want this work to happen and now is the time. SchoolsFirst FCU is a champion in our community and a leader that has already initiated an infectious desire from many of our donors to rise to this challenge in building more opportunities for students to succeed. Simply put, it is so inspiring. We are confident that taking this work to another level will be one of the most important things we do."

For additional information about how you can join the Santa Ana College Foundation in supporting our hard-working students, please visit sac.edu/foundation.

About Santa Ana College

Santa Ana College (SAC), which turned 100 years old in 2015, serves about 18,000 students each semester at its main campus in Santa Ana. The college prepares students for transfer to four-year institutions, and provides invaluable workforce training and customized training for business and industry. In addition, another 11,000 students are served through the college's School of Continuing Education located at Centennial Education Center. Ranked as one of the nation's top two-year colleges awarding associate degrees to Latino and Asian students, the college is also recognized throughout the state for its comprehensive workforce training programs for nurses, firefighters, law enforcement and other medical personnel. SAC is one of two comprehensive colleges under the auspices of the [Rancho Santiago Community College District](http://ranchosantiago.org).