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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# **New buildings, added classes credited for big enrollment boosts at Grossmont, Cuyamaca colleges**

*Record headcount of 8,364 reported at Cuyamaca*

**EL CAJON** – A sparkling new science and technology center and impressive offerings of new and expanded classes have students flocking to Cuyamaca College in record numbers, according to just released enrollment numbers.

Strong growth is also reported at Grossmont College this fall, where additional classes and laboratories in a trio of recently completed buildings helped boost student enrollment by a healthy margin.

That both colleges are reporting higher enrollments is not unexpected, given that it is the third consecutive semester of increased headcounts, but the percentage of growth at Cuyamaca is unprecedented, college officials say.

“We are up in excess of 12 percent in terms of the number of students we are serving and the enrollment of more than 8,300 is an all-time high,” said Dr. Geraldine M. Perri, college president, about the census numbers reported to the state Sept. 4. “The total units of classes for which students have registered are up 10 percent. I am very delighted by these numbers, which reflect not only student demand, but also the hard work and innovative outreach work of faculty and staff.”

Census day for California community colleges is significant because state funding is partly based on that day’s enrollment. This semester’s numbers show a combined increase of 7.6 percent in headcount at the two colleges, for a total growth of 1,812 students since fall 2006. Grossmont College’s enrollment of 17,434 students reflects a 5.4 percent hike, or 895 additional

students. Cuyamaca, with an enrollment of 8,364, reported a record 12.3 percent increase, or 917 more students.

The combination of new buildings and added courses – on campus and online – are behind the big boosts, said Governing Board President Rick Alexander.

“This marks an exciting new era for our colleges,” said Alexander. “Students are returning to campuses where modern facilities equipped with the latest teaching tools and technology are part of the educational mix.”

Students at Grossmont College have at their disposal three new instructional buildings, thanks to a combination of state and local Prop. R bond funds. Along with the three facilities -- the science laboratory building, and the digital arts and sculpture complex – the new semester which started Aug. 20 also yielded 111 new course sections, including high-demand science classes and labs.

Even with a nearly \$20 million science building featuring a multiplicity of high-tech, well-equipped labs, the biology and microbiology classes were quick to reach capacity, indicative of the high demand. These foundational science classes are required of all students pursuing nursing and other allied-health careers, said Dr. Sunita Cooke, Grossmont College president.

“Clearly, we must look at a variety of ways to meet student needs,” she said. “For example, the biology and nursing departments are designing hybrid courses which include both in-class and online components. These courses will be piloted this fall and offered in spring ’08.”

At Cuyamaca College, where a \$25.1 million science and technology center has meant the addition of physiology and microbiology to the curriculum and more sections of high-demand anatomy labs, some 300 more students have enrolled this fall in science classes.

“But for staffing limitations, both colleges could have enrolled even more students in the science labs,” said Chancellor Omero Suarez. “Courses such as anatomy, physiology and microbiology are all in such short supply everywhere that they form a bottleneck for students on a path to careers in the allied health professions.”

Dr. Madelaine Wolfe, dean of instruction at Cuyamaca College, noted that with 11 new biology sections this fall, the college’s staffing resources are stretched to the point that further expansion of the science programs will have to wait until more instructors are brought aboard.

“The demand is clearly there,” she said. “We started in August with two sections of microbiology, which were already filled by mid-July.”

Staffing limitations have not dissuaded Cuyamaca from exploring other means of expanding enrollment.

After a highly successful kickoff during summer session, the college expanded its offering of personal development counseling classes for high-school juniors and seniors in the Grossmont Union High School District. The PDC classes, offered both online and at the high schools, have attracted more than 320 teens – numbers included in Cuyamaca’s headcount. The students receive college credit and learn time and money management, test-taking and note-taking and a host of other skills in preparation for college. The classes are customized according to each school’s needs.

The PDC classes have proven so popular that busy high-schoolers, whose schedules are already chockfull with core classes and extracurricular activities, are taking the classes as early as 6 a.m. at El Capitan High School and as late as 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Helix High School.

“The courses all have a different angle—some for at-risk students, some specifically for college-bound students, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) and more,” said Cuyamaca College instructor and counselor Cindy Morrin. “We look at the population at each school to find the best time slot for students. We think about sports, athletes and more. This is why some schools have more than one section. It is becoming a very popular program among the students and word is spreading to take the class.”

Enrollment at Cuyamaca will continue to climb, college officials say, with the opening Oct. 11 of the \$19 million student center and the Jan. 31 unveiling of the \$44 million communication arts building. The well-appointed student center with its panoramic views of the verdant campus is predicted to draw more students and increase the number of classes they enroll in for the simple reason that students will at long last have a comfortable place to study, eat, hold meetings and socialize. The student center will house a modernized and more spacious bookstore and health center, both previously relegated to cramped quarters not conducive to easy use.

The communication arts building will provide much-needed laboratory and independent learning facilities for Cuyamaca’s English, communication, American Sign Language, fine arts and music disciplines.

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District serves nearly 26,000 students per semester at its two colleges in the East San Diego County region. At Grossmont College, 8800 Grossmont College Drive in El Cajon, enrollment is expected to reach 20,000 students by 2015. Cuyamaca College, at 900 Rancho San Diego Parkway in Rancho San Diego, is continuing a growth curve that began in 1995, is expected to more than nearly double its current enrollment, reaching 15,000 students by 2015.

For more information about the colleges, go to [www.grossmont.edu](http://www.grossmont.edu) or [www.cuyamaca.edu](http://www.cuyamaca.edu)