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## **Mayor & Community College Leaders Launch SJ Promise**

*Program includes launch and expansion of SJ Promise College Scholarships that will ensure hundreds of low-income students can attend two years of community college for free*

*San Jose, Calif.* – This morning, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo joined San Jose – Evergreen Community College District Chancellor Debbie Budd, Community College Presidents Byron Breland, Henry Yong and Bradley Davis, and several other local elected officials and education leaders to officially launch the **SAN JOSE PROMISE**: a collaborative, city-wide campaign to ensure that community college is affordable and accessible for all San Jose high school students.

“College remains a daunting financial challenge for thousands of San Jose families, leaving far too many of our kids unprepared to compete in an increasingly challenging global economy and relegated to a future of financial struggle,” said Mayor Liccardo. “The San Jose Promise reflects our city’s collective commitment to ensuring that every single San Jose high school student has the opportunity to continue their education and pursue a future with unlimited opportunity.”

The San Jose Promise is built upon three core elements: College Readiness Programs, College Promise Scholarships and College Pathways Partnerships. And in conjunction with the launch, **San Jose City College, Evergreen Valley College, and West Valley College announced a significant expansion of College Promise scholarships** that, when leveraged with other sources of financial aid, will ensure up to two years of free community college for approximately 800 qualifying students next school year. The College Promise scholarships will be focused on low-income, first-generation and historically under-represented students.

In particular, San Jose – Evergreen Community College District announced the launch of new College Promise Scholarship programs at both San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College that will cover full tuition and fees, textbook, transportation and summer bridge program costs for approximately 500 students attending in the 2017-18 school year. Applications for these new scholarship programs will be open to students graduating from a San Jose high school this June.

“For too long, the opportunities afforded by a college degree or certificate have seemed out of reach for many in our community,” said Dr. Budd, Chancellor of San Jose – Evergreen Community College District. “We are proud to work with the Mayor’s Office in leading the way to break down barriers for student success and college access. By ensuring that more local students are prepared for, enroll in, and

graduate from college, we will diversify the Silicon Valley workforce and ensure our local economy has the skilled workers needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.”

In addition, West Valley College will expand its existing Community Grant program (which currently provides free tuition for graduating high school students who live in the college’s service area) to also include textbook grants, a summer college prep program for eligible first generation and underserved students. The scholarships will be available for approximately 300 eligible students next year.

“This collaboration between the Mayor’s Office, and the community colleges that serve San Jose residents, will be a vital resource to help students reach their educational goals,” said West Valley College President Bradley Davis. “This sends a strong message that we can work together to support students in their quest to learn and thrive. We are pleased to be a part of this effort to promote student success “

The launch of the San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College “Promise” scholarships, and the expansion of the West Valley College’s existing scholarship program, are being largely funded by 2-year grants from the California College Promise Innovation Grant Program (\$750,000 has been awarded to each campus).

Through these grants, the three Community Colleges will also be providing college readiness programs and outreach to help San Jose middle and high school students prepare and plan for college.

To help drive future expansion of the program and achieve the vision of making Community College affordable for ALL San Jose students, Mayor Liccardo will also be including a recommendation in his upcoming March Budget Message to allocate a modest amount of one-time funds to convene additional partners, seek additional private funders, and pursue options for providing additional scholarships.

“We know that achieving our vision will require the commitment and involvement of a wide array of business, educational, philanthropic and non-profit partners,” continued Mayor Liccardo. “We invite all members of our community to join us so that we can ensure none of our kids are left behind.”

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