

**Testimony to Little Hoover Commission regarding the
Central Valley Higher Education Consortium
Thursday, April 28, 2011**

Dear Chairman Daniel Hancock and Members of the Commission:

It is my pleasure to appear before you to speak about the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium which includes in its membership twelve Community Colleges, three California State Universities, one University of California campus, and nine independent or private colleges and universities in the Central Valley. The Consortium covers the geographic area between Bakersfield in the south to Stockton in the north and was founded in 2001.

Dr. John Welty, President of California State University, Fresno, convened a group of CEOs from public and private colleges in the Central Valley to discuss avenues for improving participation in higher education for students in the Central Valley. This meeting was prompted by the low participation rate of Central Valley students in higher education; particularly by Hispanic and African American males. As a result of the initial meeting the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium was formed and facilitated by a grant from the James Irvine Foundation.

The Consortium was designed to include CEOs from participating member colleges and universities. These CEOs serve as the board of directors and meet quarterly. An executive committee was formed that includes four representatives from Community Colleges, two representatives from the California State Universities, one representative from the University of California, and one representative from the private and independent colleges and universities. This committee meets regularly to carry out the business of the Consortium. The Consortium is headed by an Executive Director who works directly with the executive committee and the larger board of directors.

The identified mission of the Consortium is to increase higher education participation and success in the Central Valley. The goals of the Consortium are:

1. Building and nurturing a college-going culture in which a higher percentage of our Valley residents obtain associate's and bachelor's degrees.
2. Enhancing cooperation between two-year and four-year institutions to increase the student transfer rate.
3. Establishing an effective policy voice and advocacy for higher education in the Central Valley.
4. Encourage Valley higher education institutions to provide programs meeting the workforce preparation needs of Valley employers.

To date the Consortium has been successful in meeting these goals by initiating a number of initiatives including the following:

- College Place - The College Place reached its two year anniversary August, 2009. Over thousands of students have been served with information and resources such as college planning, college searching, goal-setting, financial aid, cash for college workshops, and more. The Center, located in the Manchester

Mall in Fresno, is being housed with Fresno City College's Manchester Educational Resource Center. Albert Valencia, CSU, Fresno professor is the lead faculty advisor and has recruited four new interns, known as college coaches, who will serve through the fall semester. The interns are all enrolled in the M.A. program and conducting their counseling internships at the Center and receiving a stipend of \$1,500 to help offset their college expenses. The College Place attracted grant funding from the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley in the amount of \$200,000 to jumpstart the services in 2007. Since then, the City of Fresno has invested \$100,000, the **Walter S. Johnson Foundation** granted \$50,000, and the Rotary Club of Fresno granted \$1,600.00.

- Hispanic Youth Symposium - Every summer since 2006, CVHEC partners with the Hispanic College Fund to co-host a four day, three night program which has brought over 600 Central Valley high school sophomores and juniors students to Fresno State to experience college life, learn how to prepare for a professional career, get involved in community service, and meet role models and leaders from thriving businesses and industries. During the event, students compete for scholarships in the following contest areas: speech, art, dance, and "issues to action." The event is funded by grants and donations by Wells Fargo, Kaiser Permanente Hospital, and other partners. Scholarships won at the event competitions, in the amount of \$15,000 per event, has helped many students pay for college tuition.
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA Grant) - December, 2009 CVHEC teamed up with the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley in a WIA grant that will assist Valley high schools and colleges in providing training and awareness on the workforce needs in the Valley as well as provide workforce preparation initiatives. This collaboration creates a stronger connection between higher education and industry in order to provide a better trained workforce for the Central Valley. CVHEC was granted \$25,000 for 2010 and \$25,000 for 2011 as part of a sub- contract. CVHEC is responsible for three deliverables related to economic development.
- Youth Ambassadors for College Opportunity – This is a joint effort between the Consortium, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and Fresno Pacific University to promote a college-going culture among the region's high school students. Dr. Karen Crozier, special assistant to the provost at Fresno Pacific University, spearheads this effort. The project trains high school students as college advocates in four local high schools: Hoover High School, Washington Union High School, El Diamante High School, and Riverdale High School. Using the "near peer" model, college students are mentoring high school students on how to develop a college-going culture within their high school community and neighborhoods. The Stuart Foundation sponsors this initiative.

More recently the Consortium undertook the initiative to create a Central Valley degree completion model that aligns itself with Senator Alex Padilla's SB1440. The Consortium convened a summit in October, 2010, which included representatives from member

colleges and universities as well as representatives from the Legislative Analyst's Office, Campaign for College Opportunity, College Access Foundation, Senator Alex Padilla, Assemblyman Paul Fong, and corporate partners who chose to invest in this initiative. Following the summit there were two additional convening's of faculty in the Central Valley working to create transfer degrees so students can get their degrees in a timely manner.

The Central Valley Higher Education Consortium is uniquely designed to provide a unified voice for all segments of higher education in the Central Valley, provide high level discussions amongst CEOs on policy and advocacy matters, and provide opportunities for various segments of higher education to convene and discuss issues of mutual interest. For example in the development of a campaign aimed at Latino males titled "Aqui se Puede", public information and outreach officers of member colleges came together to create television spots and print media to reach out to this underrepresented population. Additionally transfer and curriculum specialists of member institutions convened to discuss articulation of courses amongst member colleges and universities.

To date the Consortium has not engaged in discussions about creating efficiencies by combining to such things as joint purchasing, joint contracting, partnering to create an integrated electronic data system, or other opportunities that might present themselves to create budget savings and better efficiencies. Frankly the initial impetus for creating the Consortium was to create a college-going culture so students in the Central Valley would attend local colleges and universities and continue to stay in the Central Valley after receiving their degrees so we do not continue to suffer from "brain drain" of the best and brightest students.

Is a model like the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium able to be replicated elsewhere in the state? I believe it could. In my opinion, the ingredients needed for a successful consortium in other parts of the state include strong direction and leadership from the CEOs of the region and a group of colleges and universities that serve the same geographic area. Given the shifts in the nature of delivery of higher education in the next decade it is possible a consortium like the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium can, in fact, bring colleges and universities together to provide opportunities for improving instructional programs. Also it could provide buying and negotiating power to allow for substantial savings from vendors and service providers.

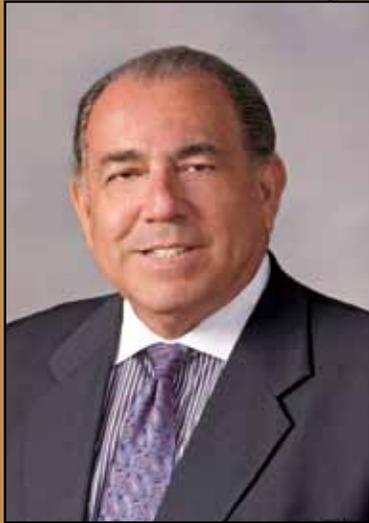
Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share with you the success the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium has enjoyed over the last ten years. I am happy to answer any questions you have.



Central Valley
HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
2010 ANNUAL REPORT

*Of all the things worthy of support,
the most important offer hope
for a better life.*





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends;

There are so many things that make living in the Central Valley great. While we remain the world's agricultural epicenter, our Valley is home to a number of emergent cities that more and more people are calling home. With our excellent weather, wide-open spaces, and friendly, diverse population, it's no wonder why the Valley is one of the fastest growing areas in the country.

While we have much to celebrate, the Valley still has much to accomplish. Chronic issues such as high unemployment rates and poverty continue to hamper our growth. Too many Valley natives are not pursuing the plentiful opportunities for higher education that this Valley offers. Therein lies the mission of the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium.

As chair of this Consortium, it's my duty to work with Valley colleges and universities to promote wider access to higher education. Together, we strive to provide the tools students need to acquire the skills necessary to meet the workforce demands of today's competitive environment. Remember, the key to our economic future lies in the education of our people.

I'm proud to report that the Consortium is making significant headway in helping more Valley residents obtain advanced certificates and degrees. In this publication, you'll read about programs like the Hispanic Youth Symposium, the Youth Ambassador Project, and The College Place—all successful Consortium endeavors that are helping Valley students achieve their college dreams.

I'm also pleased to report on the Consortium's expansion. In 2009, our membership grew to include a school of law, a professional school of psychology, a technical training college, and two private universities. This expansion represents a good cross-section of the schools that make up the Consortium and their enthusiasm in uniting and embracing true collaboration for the sake of improving the access and quality of higher education in the Valley.

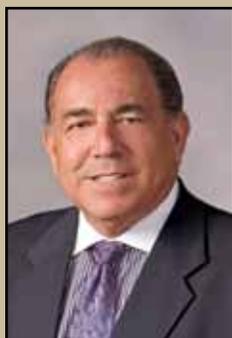
As we look back on the successes of 2009, we also focus on the challenges of 2010. Over the next year, we will continue to implement and fine-tune programs geared toward improving education attainment levels, increasing access for those who may feel college is out of reach, promoting transfer to four-year institutions, and encouraging quicker degree completion. These initiatives and others will help us create a stronger workforce for the Valley. For up-to-date news on our progress, we invite you to visit the Consortium's Web site, www.collegenext.org.

Finally, on behalf of the Consortium board of directors and our partners in education, I'd like to sincerely thank our donors and supporters. Without you, none of what we've accomplished would have been possible.

Benjamin T. Duran, Ed.D.
President, Central Valley Higher Education Consortium
Superintendent/President, Merced College, Merced, Ca.

CENTRAL VALLEY HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM BOARD

CVHEC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



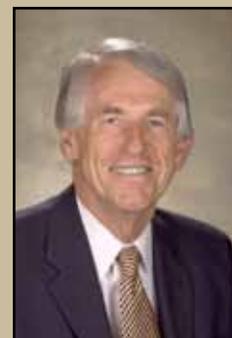
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President,
Merced College



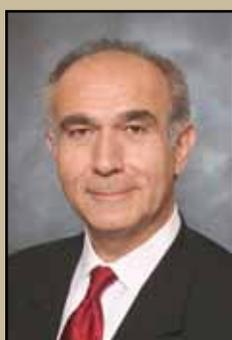
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CENTRAL VALLEY HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

MEMBERS

Alliant International University

Brandman University

California State University, Bakersfield

California State University, Fresno

California State University, Stanislaus

College of the Sequoias

DeVry University

Fresno Pacific University

Heald College

Kern Community College District

Bakersfield College

Porterville College

Cerro Coso Community College

National University

Merced College

San Joaquin College of Law

San Joaquin Delta College

State Center Community College District

Fresno City College

Reedley College

Taft College

University of California, Merced

University of the Pacific

West Hills Community College District

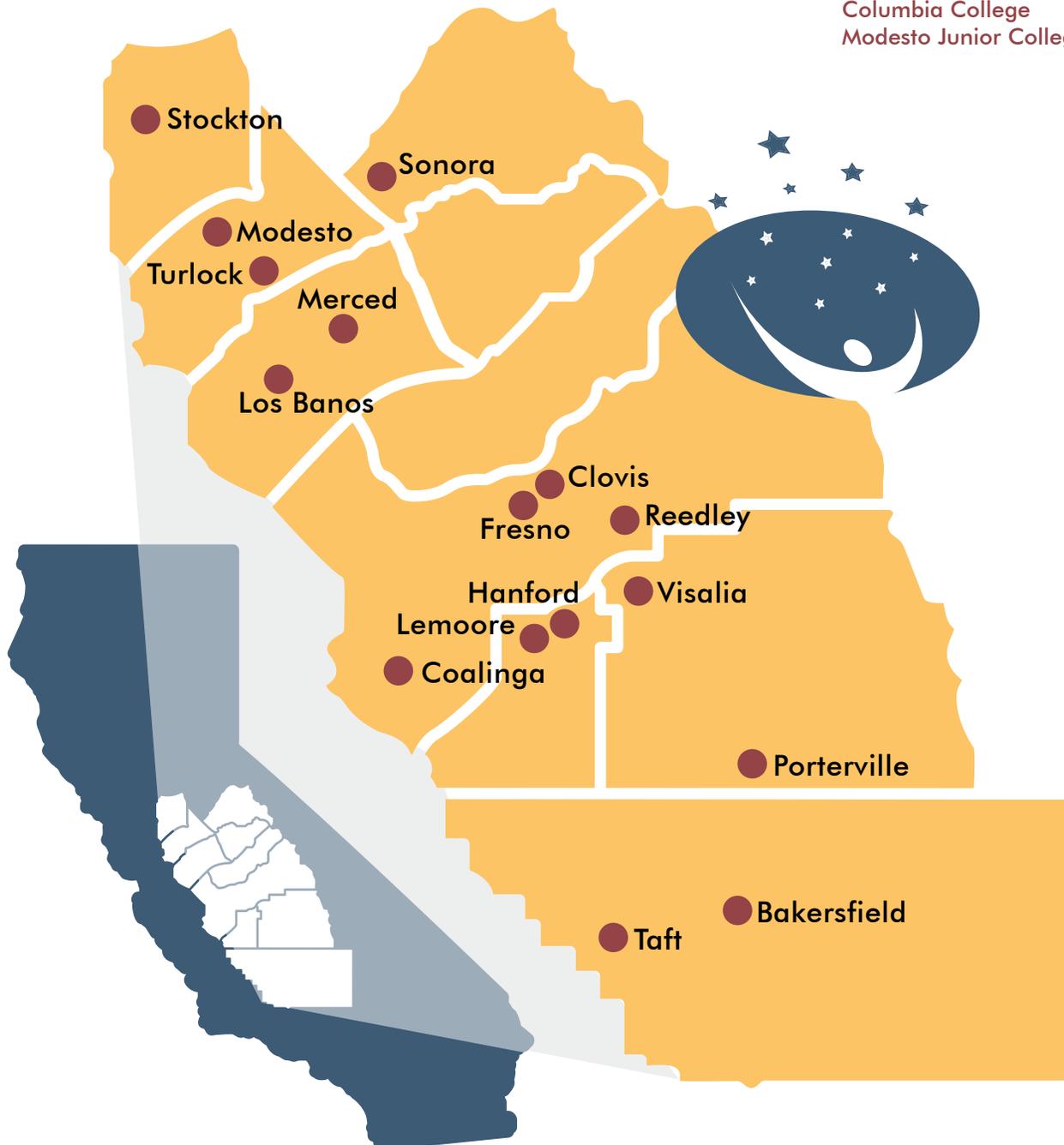
West Hills College Coalinga

West Hills College Lemoore

Yosemite Community College District

Columbia College

Modesto Junior College





MISSION, VISION & GOALS

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

The Central Valley has great needs in employment, education, income level, and overall quality of life for its rapidly growing and increasingly diverse population. Educational attainment levels in the region fall significantly below the state's average. CVHEC is investing in education as part of a long-term solution to the problems of unemployment, poverty, crime, and lack of economic development. Together, our higher education leaders are making a positive impact on the educational achievement of the region. This, in turn, will impact the economy and availability of skilled workers needed to grow the economy.

Mission

We unite to increase higher education participation and success in the Central Valley.

Vision

Our vision is to make the Central Valley the state leader in higher education attainment resulting in an enhanced quality of life and economic vitality for Valley residents. We want everyone to know that the Central Valley is the premier place to get a quality education.

Goals

1. Building and nurturing a college-going culture in which a higher percentage of our Valley residents obtain associate's and bachelor's degrees.
 2. Enhancing cooperation between two-year and four-year institutions to increase the student transfer rate.
 3. Establishing an effective policy voice and advocacy for higher education in the Central Valley.
 4. Encourage Valley higher education institutions to provide programs meeting the workforce preparation needs of Valley employers.
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HISPANIC YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

The Consortium partnered with the Hispanic College Fund, a Washington D.C. based non-profit organization, to host the Fourth Annual Central Valley Hispanic Youth Symposium held in July 2009 at California State University, Fresno. Nearly 200 students from across the Central Valley attended the four-day program, which provided students with the tools needed to focus on college, careers, and community service. Student advisors and community members met with high school students to discuss ways to get into college, obtain financial aid, and compete for available scholarship money. Over \$10,000 in scholarship money was awarded to students at the Symposium to help them afford college tuition.

The 2009 Symposium was another major success. Of students surveyed, 98 percent of them indicated they intended to apply to three or more colleges/

universities, 86 percent said they have a mentor or positive role model after the program, and nearly 60 percent reported that they planned on volunteering after attending the Symposium—a jump of close to 30 percent from those surveyed before the event.

The Symposium featured a college, career and community fair in which 40 public and private colleges and universities and a variety of state, federal, local, private, and community-based organizations attended. Also, a number of private and public entities hosted career workshops to familiarize change to colleges and universities. These businesses and agencies included Pacific Gas & Electric, Kaiser Permanente, Wells Fargo, the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, and Social Security Administration.

“I met professionals from different careers, participated in motivational workshops, learned about college life, and had a good time meeting new friends. I definitely feel more comfortable believing I can afford college after attending the financial aid seminar.”

– Carrissa Avalos,
MIRA LOMA HIGH SCHOOL

A BIG THANKS
to community supporters & Fresno State
- the success of the Symposium
was made possible by you!

100

- The number of active community volunteers who served in various roles including as Hispanic Heroes, workshop facilitators, and planning committee members at the Symposium. A big thanks to you all, the success of the Symposium was made possible by you!



YOUTH AMBASSADORS FOR COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY

Since its inception, Youth Ambassadors for College Opportunity has trained over 80 college students to become peer advocates through the program. These Ambassadors visit Valley high schools and college fairs, educating their peers about the region's colleges and universities as well as enrollment requirements, available programs, college life, and much more.

5,000

- The number of high school sophomores per year who receive college information through the Youth Ambassador project. These students are provided a college plan and advised on opportunities to attend a Central Valley college or university.

The Youth Ambassadors project is a joint effort between the Consortium, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and Fresno Pacific University—the Consortium's only faith-based University—to promote a college-going culture among the region's high school students. Dr. Karen Crozier, special assistant to the provost at Fresno Pacific University, spearheads this effort.

The project trains high school students as college advocates in four local high schools: Hoover High School, Washington Union High School, El Diamante High School, and Riverdale High School. Using the “near peer” model, college students are mentoring high school students on how to develop a college-going culture within their high

school community and neighborhoods. The Stuart Foundation sponsors this initiative.

Activities of the Youth Ambassadors project include:

- Participation in the “Save Me a Spot in College” scholarship contest
- Annual college fairs
- Presentations at high school rallies and in classrooms





THE COLLEGE PLACE

In 2009, we marked the third anniversary of The College Place, a collective project to increase the college-going culture in the Central Valley. Located in the Manchester Mall in Fresno, The College Place is where students and the general public can receive assistance and information about preparing and enrolling in college.

The College Place features 18 computer stations equipped with high-speed Internet access. College coaches are available to provide information on:

- Goal setting
- Preparing for college
- Exploring majors and careers
- Housing options
- Financial aid scholarship searches
- Early awareness resources

Since its inception in 2007, The College Place has enjoyed significant support from the community and local media. The

Walter S. Johnson Foundation, the City of Fresno, and Fresno Rotary all made significant donations in 2009.

Some highlights of 2009 include:

- Met performance goal of reaching 1,000 students and providing college-going information.
- Exceeded college application goal as 1,200 youth were counseled to complete college applications.
- 550 students were counseled to enroll in a two-year or four-year college.

The program formed a partnership with the Central Valley Library Consortium and now hosts satellite locations in 10 libraries throughout the Valley. Marketing and outreach efforts of this initiative include the main Web site – http://www.collegenext.org/The_College_Place.html, a social media presence www.myspace.com/thecollegeplace, and a radio campaign that started in February 2009.

The College Place is a critical step in helping Valley residents gain access to college readiness and coaching services in the evenings and weekends in a non-traditional, yet familiar setting.

1,200

- The Number of students who were counseled to complete college applications at The College Place. Eighty percent of these students submitted completed applications.



PARTNER PROFILES

None of the Consortium's accomplishments over the past year would have been possible without the support of our member organizations, grants from various foundations, and corporate support. Below, we've outlined the projects and programs that were funded by generous donations from our partners.

Stuart Foundation

(\$60,000 Youth Ambassadors for College Opportunity)

The Stuart Foundation is dedicated to the protection, education and development of children and youth. Its goal is to ensure that all children grow up in caring families, learn in vibrant and effective schools, and have opportunities to become productive members of their communities.

For more information, please visit www.stuartfoundation.org

Walter S. Johnson Foundation

(\$25,000)

Located in Menlo Park, California, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation seeks to help youth become successful adults by preparing them to participate fully in their education, their workplaces, and their communities.

For more information, please visit www.wsjf.org

College Access Foundation of California

(\$65,000 College/University President's Scholarships)

College Access Foundation of California funds scholarships aimed at increasing the number of young people attending and succeeding in college and has awarded over 17,000 scholarships for low income and first generation college students. The Consortium completed the final round of scholarships in 2009 for 60 students enrolled in Central Valley colleges and universities.

For more information, please visit www.collegeaccessfoundation.org

Rotary Club of Fresno

(\$1,600 The College Place)

The mission of the Rotary Club of Fresno is to bring together like-minded individuals in fellowship to encourage and foster the ideal of services as a basis of worthy enterprise. The purpose is to encourage high ethical standards, achieve good in the community, conduct humanitarian projects and foster world understanding and peace.

For more information, please visit www.fresnorotary.org

The City of Fresno

(\$14,000 The College Place)

The City of Fresno is a major supporter of The College Place. Led by Mayor Ashley Swearingen, the City of Fresno continues to support higher education and the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium.

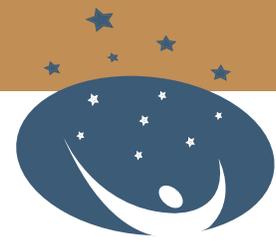
For more information, please visit www.fresno.gov

California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (CPSJV)

The CPSJV has been a gracious partner. Set in motion by an executive order from Governor Schwarzenegger in June 2005, the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley is an unprecedented public-private partnership focused on improving the region's economic vitality and quality of life for the 3.9 million residents who call the San Joaquin Valley home. Over the past three years, The Partnership has awarded the Consortium with a \$224,000 seed grant to launch The College Place and support higher education initiatives and advocacy. In 2009-2011, CVHEC will work with CPSJV on a Workforce Investment Act project to promote job training and leadership for Valley residents.

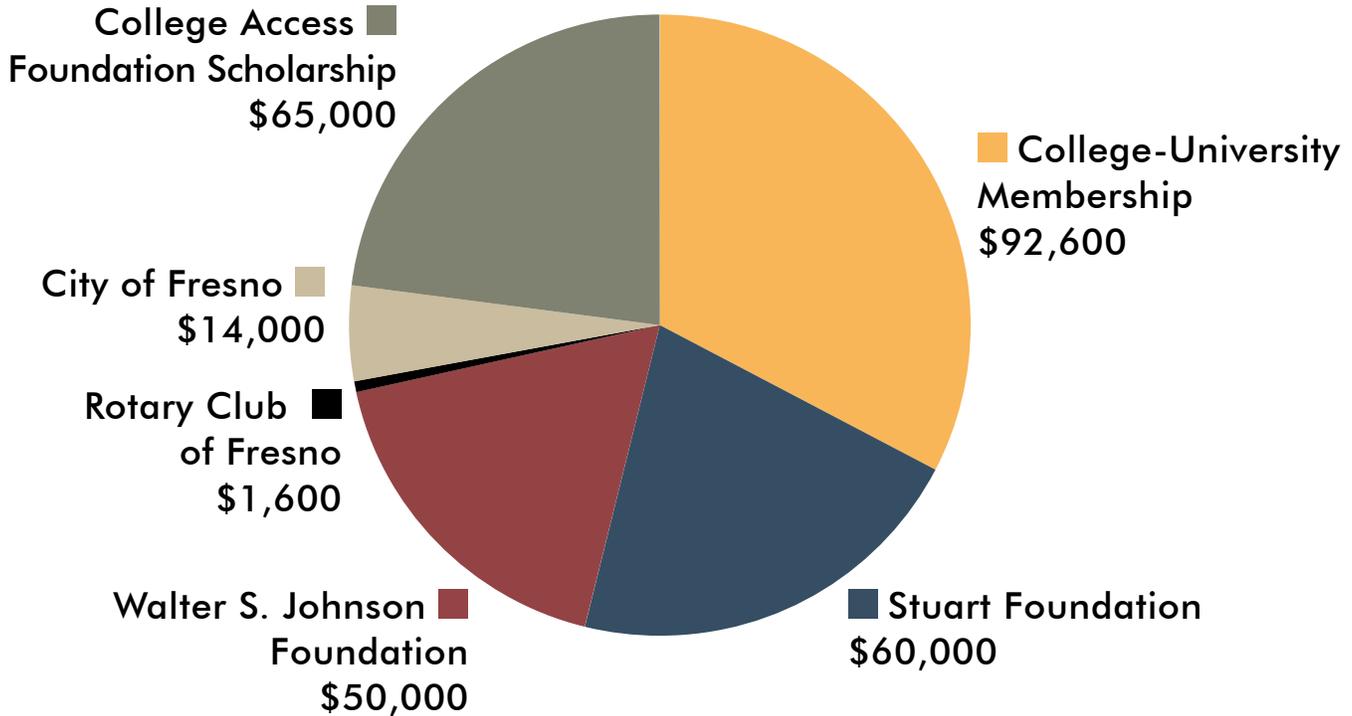
For more information, please visit www.sjvpartnership.org

FINANCIAL REPORT



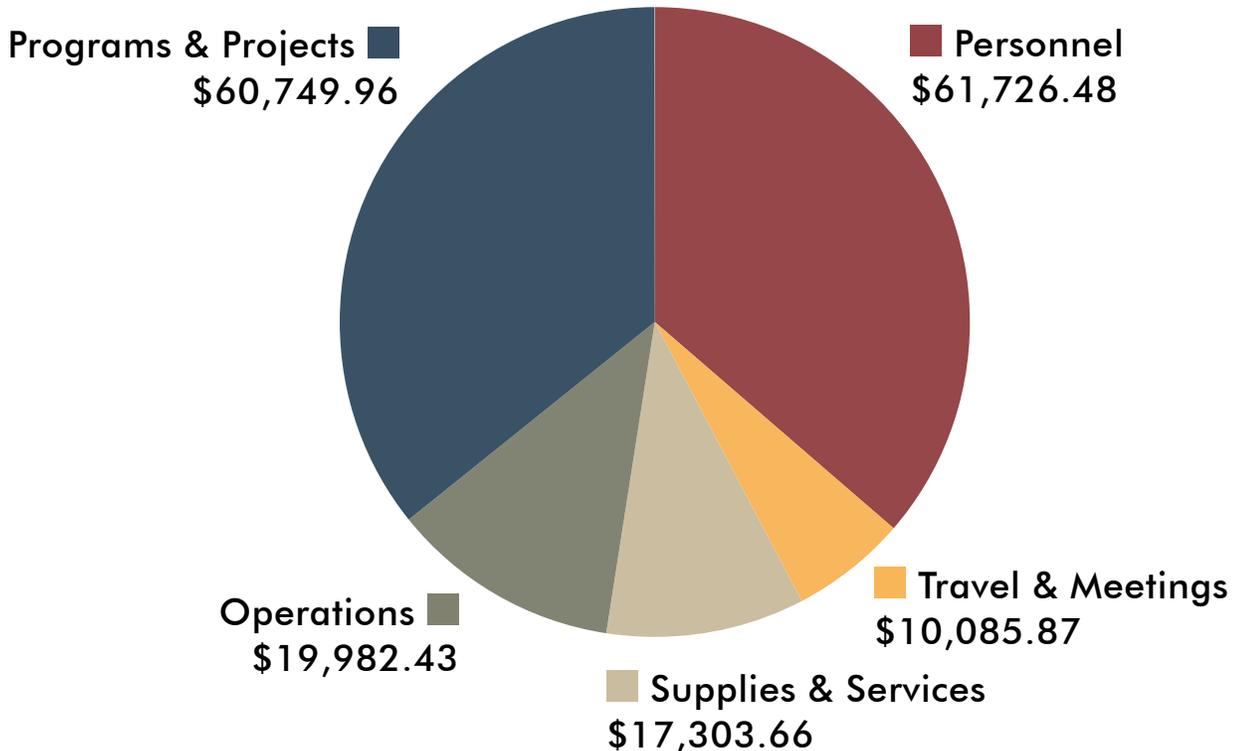
CVHEC 2009 INCOME

○ TOTAL INCOME: \$283,200



CVHEC 2009 OPERATING EXPENDITURES

○ TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$169,847





MOVING FORWARD

BY 2010 AND BEYOND...

The Central Valley Higher Education Consortium board is working closely with the California Legislative Analyst's office to develop policies and procedures that will help the Consortium align with President Obama's goals of putting the United States first in the world by 2020 by establishing a Baccalaureate Completion Initiative that is designed to:

1. Increase college completion rates.
2. Improve policies and practices, and reduce barriers to timely degree.
3. Align curriculum and articulation across the region. The Consortium will use collaboration and innovation in promoting articulation and transfer functions, outreach, and college readiness efforts. Supporting efforts to improve outcomes including productivity, student learning and success of underrepresented groups, advancing partnerships with business and industry, and providing incentives for inter-segmental collaboration, including course articulation.

This proactive and strategic approach will not only produce immediate results in terms of more college graduates, but these "home grown" success stories will help create a cross-generational college-going culture in the region, further escalating gains in college attainment over time.

By accomplishing the above goals, the Consortium believes it can create a successful regional project that will become a model for timely degree completion in California and beyond.

New and Sustaining Partners in 2010 and Beyond

*Join us in our quest to improve the economic vitality
of the Central Valley through higher education*

In 2010, we initiated an industry/corporation partnership campaign to invite CEOs and executives from leading industries and corporations in the Valley to join forces with the Consortium board of directors in improving the economy through higher education. Visit our Web site at www.collegenext.org to find out how your company can **HELP BUILD A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE VALLEY.**



Central Valley
HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

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