ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES FOR HEALTH/P.E. FACILITY: The Board voted unanimously to approve a $3.5 million contract with GENSLER to design a new Health-Physical Education-Fitness-Dance and Central Plant project. The project, to be funded by bond Measure AA, will create a new fitness complex on the location of the current P.E. Locker Room Building, which was constructed in the 1950s, as well as a central plant.

FINANCIAL AID: The Board was given an update on financial aid and scholarships that revealed that greater numbers of students are receiving larger financial aid awards and that substantial changes and improvements in the financial aid operation have occurred in the last five years. Financial Aid and Scholarships oversees 19 different programs that will provide more than $30 million in assistance in 2009-10; average award packages have grown in recent years, with the highest need students now receiving grant packages of $7,000 to $8,000 a year; improvements to operations have included the early packaging of awards and early delivery of grant checks to students; and over the past five years, SMC’s largest two aid programs – Pell Grants and Board of Governor Enrollment Fee Waivers – have grown dramatically in both the number of recipients and in total program dollars.

STATE BUDGET: Vice President of Business & Administration Bob Isomoto reported that the latest forecasts from Sacramento indicate that the projected state budget deficit for 2010-11 might not be as severe as originally thought. The latest projection is the deficit will be at $10 billion rather than the $20 billion forecast earlier this year. That bodes well for community colleges, but as President Dr. Chui L. Tsang noted, a clearer financial picture will emerge after the April 15 tax deadline and when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger releases his revised 2010-11 state budget in early May. Isomoto said at this point the college is still working under the assumption that it faces a $5 million budget shortfall in 2020-11.

STATE LEGISLATION ON NONRESIDENT TUITION: President Dr. Chui L. Tsang reported that on Tuesday the state Assembly Higher Education Committee unanimously passed a bill that would change the state formula for the amount of community college tuition charged to nonresident students. The net effect of Assembly Bill 2297, by Assemblymember Julia Brownley of Santa Monica, would be to allow colleges to charge more than they do under the current formula. Tsang said he is hopeful the bill will eventually pass the Legislature and be signed into law by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

BIG BLUE BUS: President Dr. Chui L. Tsang reported that the City of Santa Monica is considering a fare increase for the municipally owned Big Blue Bus – an increase that would likely cost the college more in its subsidies of the “Any Line, Any Time” free student and employee bus rides. However, city officials have told SMC that any increased cost for the college would likely not occur until 2011-12, Tsang said.
CCCT BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The Board voted unanimously to cast their votes for four candidates for the California Community College Trustees Board of Directors, including SMC Trustee Louise Jaffe.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH: The Board voted unanimously to adopt a resolution recognizing April as National Community College Month.

AWARDS: President Dr. Chui L. Tsang reported that the SMC Center for Environmental & Urban Studies will honor the SMC Board of Trustees April 21 for its visionary leadership and commitment to sustainability. In addition, Director of Contracts Charlie Yen will be honored in May as a “Community Hero” by the Santa Monica Human Relations Council.

SUPPORT FOR MEASURE A: The Board voted unanimously to approve a resolution supporting the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District’s Measure A on the May 25 ballot. Measure A is a parcel tax of $198 a year that would be used for school funding.

INITIAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROPOSALS: The Board voted unanimously to receive the initial collective bargaining proposal from the SMC Faculty Association, publicly disclose the college’s initial proposal, and schedule a public hearing on the proposals May 4.

NOMINATION OF QUIÑONES-PEREZ TO ACCT: The Board voted unanimously to send a letter of support for the nomination of Trustee Margaret Quiñones-Perez as a director-at-large on the national Association of Community College Trustees Board of Directors and ACCT Diversity Committee.

BOARD POLICIES: The Board voted unanimously to give a first reading to four revised and new policies having to do with managers and the Management Association. Final approval is expected next month.

“APPLAUSE” AWARD: SMC Management Association President Erica LeBlanc said that EOPS Director Leonard Crawford and his team won the “Applause Award” for March.

CLOSED SESSION ACTION: The Board authorized the college to purchase property located at 1516 Pico Blvd. in Santa Monica for $1.775 million. The property purchase is being funded by bond Measure AA.

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