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Kris Swedin, President's Office
Jill Janov, Marketing and Public Relations

(505) 428-1300
(505) 428-1776

SFCC President Signs Pledge to Address Climate Change

Santa Fe, NM, June 11, 2007 — Santa Fe Community College President Sheila Ortego will sign an agreement Wednesday to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions on campus and accelerate research and educational efforts to re-stabilize the Earth's climate.

Ortego is among 276 college presidents across the country to sign the agreement, which was drafted by the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. The agreement calls for SFCC to take a leadership role in working to solve the challenges posed by global warming. **Ortego will sign the agreement at 2:30 p.m. June 13 in the SFCC Board Room, 6401 Richards Ave., Santa Fe.**

"SFCC has already made strides toward environmental conservation and energy efficiency to meet the needs of our campus and our students," Ortego said. "Signing this document will help us coalesce these projects and attain real results as we work toward eliminating global warming emissions and integrating sustainability into our academic programs."

Building on a growing momentum for leadership and action on climate change, the Presidents' Climate Commitment will provide a framework and support for SFCC to go climate neutral. The commitment recognizes the responsibility that institutions of higher education have as role models for their communities and in training the people who will develop social, economic and technological solutions to reverse global warming.

SFCC already has taken steps in this direction including the installation of a biomass heating unit in the Early Childhood Development Center, low-consumption lighting, solar hot water collectors to heat the swimming pool and a computerized system to maximize heating and air conditioning efficiency. The college recycles campuswide and will add another biomass heating system for the main campus by winter 2008. On the academic side, SFCC offers training programs in energy, conservation and sustainable practices and will soon offer a certificate and an associate degree in environmental technologies.

Initial efforts toward conservation began at SFCC two years ago and are already conserving valuable natural resources including 500,000 gallons of potable water and 110,000-kilowatt hours of electricity annually. This electrical savings is equivalent to what would be used by approximately 50 homes in one year.

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“While we have taken various steps toward environmental conservation and have established academic programs that cover sustainability, this commitment will help us track, measure and eliminate our campus greenhouse gas emissions over time,” Ortego said. “The first step will be to complete an emissions inventory, set a target date and interim milestones for becoming climate neutral. We will also work toward integrating these issues into the entire SFCC educational experience. ”

When SFCC builds its new health and sciences building, it will conform to standards set out in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System, the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings.

The full agreement, which is posted at www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org, also calls on colleges to make the action plan, inventory and progress reports publicly available.

“We still have work to do to address issues that affect our world’s natural resources,” Ortego said. “But we are looking forward to new opportunities that will allow us to create a sustainable campus and a sustainable society by becoming an environmental model in energy conservation, maintenance, purchasing, waste removal and educational programs.”

About Santa Fe Community College

Santa Fe Community College serves more than 14,500 students per year in its credit, noncredit and adult basic education programs. The 24-year-old college offers academic, career and personal-enrichment programs and services to meet the needs of business, government and the region’s diverse population. To learn more, visit www.sfccnm.edu or call (505) 428-1000.

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