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**For Immediate Release**

**March 18, 2011**

## **From Ball Boy to Compton Community College District CEO, Keith Curry is Dedicated to the City of Compton**

Compton native Keith Curry's roots in the city run deep. Appointed on March 16 as interim CEO of the Compton Community College District, by Special Trustee Genethia Hudley-Hayes, Curry was welcomed with a standing ovation by an audience that included family members, students and community supporters—including friends from his local barbershop.

Born and raised in Compton, Curry's life work has centered on the city. His service to the community has included volunteering as chair of the Compton Unified School District Achieving College Partnership and serving on the Compton Unified School District Foundation board; he also co-authored the Compton Unified School District Gear-Up proposal during his tenure at UC Irvine. More recently, he completed his doctoral dissertation on the former Compton Community College's loss of accreditation.

At his appointment announcement, the mood was upbeat and full of hope for the future of the community as Curry spoke about his own humble beginnings and his first "job" at the District where he served as ball boy for the college baseball team at the age of twelve. "And today, I'm CEO," he said. He also shared personal stories of his dedication to student success and of working with former gang members and at-risk teens who have earned their degrees at ECC Compton Center and transferred to both the University of California and California State University systems.

"My work has meaning because of students like Terrance, who emerged from a tough background to become an ASB officer, advocated for students, and had the determination and drive to graduate from Compton Center and transfer to UC Riverside," Curry explained. "He plans to return to Compton Center possibly as a counselor and help others. That's why we are here—to provide an opportunity for all of these individuals to receive a college education."

Curry's background and experience makes him uniquely suited for his new position. Many existing student support programs expanded and others were created under Curry's leadership, most notably the First Year Experience (FYE). Established at ECC Compton Center two years ago, FYE offers a supportive educational environment that encourages student success through shared learning communities and services such as counseling, mentoring, orientation, and campus tours. The first year of the program, 68 students participated; by the second year, the enrollment more than doubled with over 140 students. Research results from Purdue University and at other programs across the United States show that students who take part in a learning community like the FYE program earn higher grades, make friends faster, and graduate at higher or faster rates than students who don't participate.

During his address on March 16, Curry was at ease as he injected humor while sharing stories illustrating his personal dedication to the District, and subsequently outlined his plans to address budget shortfalls, facilities needs, supporting the partnership with El Camino College and community outreach. He also acknowledged

the fact that he is the interim CEO of a District without a college and stressed the importance of the partnership with the El Camino Community College District.

“Our goal for this District is to once again have a college,” said Curry. “There are some people in our communities who misunderstand the partnership and the accreditation process. That is why the Special Trustee and I will be hitting the road fast and furiously with visits to area elected officials, business organizations, churches and community leaders to inform and update everyone about both of these important issues.”

“At the end of the day it is all about student success – we are here to ensure that the residents of our communities have access to a quality higher education – that is our mission and our goal today, tomorrow and into the future. We are all about students,” Curry stated.

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