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SBCC at a Crossroads: Enrollment Trends and Student Futures

Santa Barbara, CA – On **Wednesday, March 17 at 4:00 p.m.**, the SBCC Foundation will host ***SBCC at a Crossroads: Enrollment Trends and Student Futures***, a virtual Campus Conversation with **Paloma Arnold**, Dean of Student Affairs, **Michael Medel**, Director of Admissions & Records, and **Dr. Pamela Ralston**, Executive Vice President of Educational Programs.

Community college enrollment has quickly become one of most talked about areas of concern in the COVID-19 era. From all-time high enrollments in the wake of the Great Recession just over a decade ago, overall enrollments had already begun a modest decline prior to the pandemic. The disruptions of the past year, however, have had a dramatic effect. At SBCC, enrollment for the Spring 2020 semester is down 15% from a year ago, and for certain populations, the decline is twice that.

The panelists will discuss SBCC's long history of innovation in student support programs, financial assistance, and counseling, and what the college is planning to encourage students to return to their higher education paths.

Please [click here to register](#) in advance.

Paloma Arnold is a native of Santa Barbara and earned her BA in History from UCLA and later went on to earn an MA in Psychology from Antioch University, Santa Barbara. Paloma has worked in Student Services at Santa Barbara City College for almost 20 years; she began her career in the Financial Aid office at SBCC and eventually worked her way "across the hall" to the EOPS Program. During these 20 years, Paloma feels fortunate to have worked as a Student Program Advisor, Associate Professor/Counselor, Director of the EOPS/CARE Program and currently serves as the Dean of Student Affairs. Through her work in the Financial Aid and EOPS programs, Paloma has developed a passion for serving students and believes that Student Services plays a very important role in our students' academic journey. Additionally, Paloma brings very strong experience and commitment to equity and serving SBCC's most vulnerable and marginalized students.

In addition to serving on various college wide committees at SBCC, in the greater Santa Barbara community, Paloma serves on the Board of Trustees for Marymount School of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara High School's MAD Academy, the CalSOAP Governing Board and Cottage Hospital's Community Health Advisory Committee. In 2019, Paloma was honored to receive SBCC's Administrator of the Year Award.

Michael Medel is a proud alumni of SBCC and has worked at the college in a variety of capacities for 19 years in departments such as Enrollment Services, Financial Aid and as a part-time faculty member in the Communication Department. His current role is Director of Admissions and Records where he has served for the last 8 years. Michael is heavily involved with his community and currently serves on the Board of Directors for local nonprofit organization Leading from Within, as well as the Board of Directors for the 19th Agricultural District (Earl Warren Showgrounds). He also previously served on the Board of Directors for the United Boys and Girls Club of Santa Barbara County. Michael was born and raised in Carpinteria and currently resides in Goleta with his wife Monique and newborn daughter Gianna.

Pamela Ralston, Ph.D., is the executive vice president of educational programs at Santa Barbara City College. In this role, she provides leadership and oversight to all instructional and student services programs. In addition, she is actively engaged in enrollment management, accreditation, and strategic planning.

Prior to coming to SBCC, Pamela served as the Vice President for Student Learning at College of the Desert in Palm Desert, CA, overseeing the academic affairs of the college. Prior to that, she was the Dean of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo. Before moving into administration, Pamela was faculty member and division chair of English and Written Communications at Tacoma Community College and a Lecturer at the University of Washington in American Ethnic Studies. She has her bachelor's degree in English from the University of Oregon and her master's and doctorate from the University of Washington in Comparative Literature.

About the SBCC Foundation

The SBCC Foundation has provided Santa Barbara City College with private philanthropic support since 1976, serving as the vehicle through which individuals and organizations may invest in the college and its students.

As an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization and partner to SBCC, the SBCC Foundation awards more than \$5 million annually for student success programs, scholarships, book grants, emergency funds, and other critical needs of the college. For more than four decades, the resources raised and managed by the SBCC Foundation have supported SBCC students as they prepare for careers, transfer to four-year universities, and pursue lifelong learning goals.

In 2016, the Foundation launched the SBCC Promise, offering all recent, local high school graduates the opportunity to attend SBCC full-time at no cost. The SBCC Promise relies entirely on private support and covers all required fees, books, and supplies for up to two years. To date, nearly 5,000 local students have participated in the SBCC Promise. By removing financial barriers, the SBCC Promise ensures that SBCC's life-changing educational programs are fully accessible to all local students.

For more information, visit <http://www.sbccfoundation.org>

