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## **Full-Year Free with Cuesta College Promise**

Cuesta College is further removing financial barriers for current and future Promise Scholarship recipients by extending the scholarship to pay all student fees for an entire year. Currently, the scholarship provides a fee-free fall semester to all newly graduated San Luis Obispo County high school students. Beginning in spring 2015, the 646 current Promise recipients will have their second semester fees also paid for, and all future Promise applicants will be guaranteed fee-free fall and spring semesters at Cuesta College.

"We are extremely excited to extend the Promise Scholarship from one semester to a full-year," said Cuesta College Superintendent/President Dr. Gil Stork. "It is truly amazing that the private philanthropy of one family has produced the opportunity for hundreds of local young people in our county to attend a full-year of college with all fees paid for."

The Cuesta Promise is the result of a generous donation of more than \$8 million to the Cuesta College Foundation from the Charles and Leeta Dovica Family Trust, who requested the funds be used for scholarships. The scholarship endowment, created in the fall of 2013, currently saves students an average of \$700 per semester by paying for the per-unit cost of classes, health fees, Associated Students of Cuesta College fees, materials fees, Student Center fees, and the Student Rep fee.

The first class of Promise students began at Cuesta College this fall. Approximately \$200K in fees have been paid out from the earnings of the endowment. Upon review of the scholarship fund by the Cuesta Foundation, it was determined that sufficient funds were available to extend the scholarship to a second semester.

"For generations to come, thousands of our SLO County students will have the opportunity to attend a full year of college for free – all because of a single donation. What an incredible gift for the children and grandchildren of our local families," said Cuesta College Foundation Executive Director Shannon Hill.

In addition to breaking down financial barriers, the scholarship is designed to improve the college-going rate in SLO County. In its inaugural year, the scholarship accomplished this goal; the college saw an increase of about 100 local high school student registrants.

"As Cuesta College looks to the future of increased enrollment, it becomes more important than ever to improve our education and job training facilities so that these students are prepared to transfer to four-year universities or get good paying jobs when they graduate," said Cuesta Foundation President Bob Wacker. "While our Promise Scholarship increases access to college education, it does not address the need to repair our aging buildings. The Cuesta College Board of Trustees has placed Measure L, a \$275 million facilities bond, on the November 4 ballot, which would provide funding to upgrade and repair college facilities and thereby improve quality education and job training for local students."

All San Luis Obispo County high school completers, whether they come from public or private schools, or are home schooled, are eligible for the Promise scholarship, regardless of financial status or income.

Students will be able to begin the scholarship application process in January, 2015, by going to [www.cuesta.edu/student/aboutmoney/cuestapromise/](http://www.cuesta.edu/student/aboutmoney/cuestapromise/). The webpage contains information on the steps a student must take in order to attain the Promise, along with detailed instructions, timelines and frequently asked questions. Students who do not qualify for the Promise can still apply for many of the existing scholarships that are offered through the Foundation. The deadline to apply for the Promise Scholarship is August, 2015.

The Cuesta College Foundation was founded in 1973 for the specific and primary purposes of promoting the general welfare of Cuesta College. The Foundation assists and supports Cuesta College in the attainment of educational, scientific and cultural goals and in fulfilling the College's mission of service to the community. The gift from the Charles and Leeta Dovica Family Trust is the largest in the foundation's 41 year history. As the lead entity for resource development for the College, the Foundation has provided millions of dollars for student scholarships, equipment, and programs and projects.

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