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For Immediate Release

May 7, 2012

El Camino College to Award \$600,000 in Student Scholarships

John Twedt travels 100 miles each week to attend El Camino College. He began taking a couple of night classes three years ago while working as a carpenter at ExxonMobil in Torrance. With the economic downturn, he was laid off and began taking more classes.

"I liked El Camino College so much I decided to stay," said John, who plans to transfer to the University of California at Santa Cruz in the fall. "At first I was just looking to learn vocational skills, but I found out it was possible to earn an engineering degree. It is worth it to drive so far each week for this college."

John is one of 424 El Camino College students who will receive a scholarship for the upcoming academic year. He will be honored for his academic achievements at the annual Scholarship Awards Ceremony and Reception on May 10 at Marsee Auditorium. Melanie Lundquist, alumna of Los Angeles Valley College and dedicated El Camino College supporter, will be the keynote speaker. More than \$600,000 in scholarships, ranging from \$500 to \$4,000, will be awarded to deserving students.

A recipient of the \$1,000 Northrop Grumman STEM Scholarship, John's award will help pay for tuition and books next year. Last year he won the ECC Foundation Donors Scholarship and the Ralph and Jean Jenkins Memorial Scholarship. Earlier this academic year, he secured the prestigious \$4,000 NSF ASEMS Scholarship.

"These scholarships make all the difference to me," John said. "I would have dropped out by now if I didn't have this help. There is no way I could have done it without these scholarships. It has made all the difference between going to school and not."

A record number of students applied for scholarships this year using the online system. This spring also marks the first year that El Camino College will receive a full distribution from the Osher Scholarship Endowment Fund of \$139,000, which will continue each year.

"Helping celebrate student success at the Scholarship Awards Ceremony is one of the most anticipated events of the academic year," said El Camino College President Thomas M. Fallo. "We are proud of our students and this event is a great way to congratulate them, while also recognizing the donors and supporters who made these scholarships possible."

John feels prepared for the rigors of the engineering program at UC Santa Cruz. He credits the support from scholarships and the El Camino College (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) MESA program as keys to his success.

"When I first started coming to El Camino College I really didn't have any sense of direction, but MESA lined up all of the resources and put them at my fingertips," he said. "I was fortunate to have found MESA early on; it's a great environment, where everyone is serious about school and trying to go for it. I'm a first-generation college student and to have all this ready for me was a huge deal. It helped me find my way."

For more information about the El Camino College Scholarship Program, contact the El Camino College Foundation at www.elcamino.edu/administration/foundation or call 310-660-3683.

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