



# CAREER LADDERS PROJECT

December 12, 2014

Dr. Chui L. Tsang  
Superintendent and President  
Santa Monica College  
1900 Pico Boulevard  
Santa Monica, CA 90405

We are writing to support Santa Monica College's (SMC) interest in developing a Bachelor's Degree in Interaction Design (IxD)—which, if approved, would be one of the first such degrees offered by a California Community College.

California is at the epicenter of the design field, yet data suggests that thousands of jobs are going unfilled in this rapidly evolving field. Santa Monica is in the heart of the "Silicon Beach," yet regional employers lack a talent development pipeline to meet their need for skilled employees in these high wage, and rapidly expanding, occupations. By any measure—be it EMSI data, BurningGlass postings, and/or in-depth interviews with regional employers about their hiring and skill needs—employers in the region clearly need a more expansive strategy to meet their hiring needs for skilled designers in the coming years. For California to maintain its current edge in this industry, building out a bachelor's prepared workforce—as well as scaffolded, stackable opportunities for local residents to attain these advanced credentials—is essential. Yet, currently, no CSU offers a degree that serves this cutting edge field.

SMC is a natural for offering such a degree. Building on your already renowned quality design program—including well developed, leading edge curriculum; esteemed and innovative faculty; and impressive new facilities—SMC is clearly positioned to get a program off the ground right away. SMC has the partnerships and the expertise needed to offer students an excellent baccalaureate education in this vital arena. Further, having the college offer this opportunity means that youth and adults in the region will have an affordable, accessible option to attain employment and to continue to advance their careers in this dynamic, in demand and high wage field while contributing to the bottom line needs of employers across the region.

The Career Ladders Project works statewide to foster educational and career advancement for Californians and to build career pathways systems that can better meet the needs of California employers for high skill employees. We've worked closely with SMC in recent years, with a focus on advancing career pathways in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, including the IxD field.

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We have been impressed with the expertise and creativity of SMC faculty, as well as SMC's acumen in building programs which meet the demands of today's technology. SMC is among the key leadership of the LA HITECH Career Pathways Trust Consortium, where they are partnering with employers, other regional colleges, and Unified School Districts to create a more seamless pipeline of ICT talent.

We are in earnest support of your proposal, and look forward to opportunities to work with you in the future to build on your successes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda Collins". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Linda Collins  
Executive Director