



## **Chinatown/North Beach Campus, City College of San Francisco**

### **Background**

City College of San Francisco (CCSF) proposes to establish a permanent home for its Chinatown/North Beach Campus at Washington and Kearny Streets. With a dedicated, adequately-sized and modern facility, CCSF will finally be able to respond in full to the community need for reliable and expanded access to high quality educational programs that keep pace with the learning needs of adult students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and to essential language, citizenship and vocational programs for immigrant learners.

### **A Critical Resource for the Community**

The Chinatown/North Beach Campus is a critical resource for mostly Asian immigrants, with limited English speaking ability and has the lowest income among the City's population. 73% enroll in classes aimed at basic skill development – to learn English, prepare for the U.S. citizenship exam and to gain job skills in housekeeping, hospitality and entry level office work. Others are there to pursue new careers or are hoping to transfer to other institutions of higher learning.

The campus serves more than 6000 students each semester who come from throughout the city, but almost all live, work or do business in Chinatown and attend our programs during the course of their busy days in the community. More than 90% of the students walk or ride public transportation to class.

With classes fully enrolled and more than 700 students on waiting lists, it is clear that the campus needs to grow to meet increasing demand, but space constraints have been a historically limiting factor.

### **The Need for a Permanent Home**

CCSF began serving the Chinatown community in the early 1970s as part of an off-site program of the Alemany Campus. Then, buoyed by a groundswell of support from the growing, local Chinese community, Chinatown/North Beach formally became its own campus in 1977.

Since its very first days at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the campus has never had a home of its own and has moved from one leased site to another, often renting several sites at once to accommodate its many classes. Today, the school serves thousands of students each semester at no less than eight (8) leased facilities throughout Chinatown, North Beach, and one location in the Marina District.

Over the course of its three decades in Chinatown, the school has repeatedly lost access to community sites for classes due to changes in the landlord's mission, construction, poor classroom conditions, inability to use space at a time suitable for students, or rising rental costs. In the last fiscal year alone, this has occurred at three sites.

Compounding this space crisis is the fact that the campus' primary, current site at 940 Filbert St., leased from the San Francisco Unified School District, is deteriorating quickly. CCSF is not able to address this increasingly pressing problem since state funds cannot be used to renovate leased facilities.

### **Building for the Future**

In response to this ongoing threat of reduction or elimination of services to the community, San Francisco voters overwhelmingly supported three separate bond initiatives (in 1997, 2001 & 2005) to build a permanent facility in Chinatown. The state also demonstrated its support by matching these local efforts with \$48 million.

Today, CCSF has received a total commitment of \$122 million, enabling it to move forward with plans to develop the new consolidated campus at Washington and Kearny Streets on a compact, 12,000 square-foot lot that it currently owns. Located in the heart of the community, the proposed campus will finally centralize classrooms and support services at one convenient location readily accessible by public transportation, comfortably and safely accommodate the existing demand for classes, restore programs that have been lost due to space constraints and allow for new programs to meet the evolving needs of the community.

This new facility will dramatically increase CCSF's service to the community with additional support services such as modern computer and language labs, a library, an assembly space and facilities for culinary and home health aide training – all entirely accessible to older adults and people with disabilities.

### **Working with the Community to Design the Dream**

CCSF unveiled its concept for the new facility in fall 2006 and invited the public to a trilingual meeting on November 27 to comment on its preliminary plans and participate in defining the scope of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Another open meeting took place on December 6, over 300 people attended two public meetings. CCSF listened to the comments and concerns of the community and carefully collected and incorporated them into the planning process.

The EIR is currently underway to study the potential impact of the development on a whole host of topics from land use, visual quality, transportation, geology, hazards, shadow and wind. The Board of Trustees will conduct a hearing on the draft EIR and will vote to certify the final EIR and to act on the project in fall 2007.