



**MEDIA ADVISORY:**

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## **College of the Desert welcomes 1,000 pLEDGE students**

**PALM DESERT, CA** — When the 2017-18 school year begins on Monday, Aug. 28, College of the Desert will welcome about 1,000 students taking part in the school's inaugural free tuition program. Overall, enrollment in credit courses is up seven percent so far this semester compared to last fall and prospective students are still welcome to enroll in about 1,300 class sections at [www.collegeofthedesert.edu](http://www.collegeofthedesert.edu)

The college's new pLEDGE program provides free tuition to incoming students who graduated from local high schools in the spring and attend College of the Desert full-time this school year.

"We do not want the cost of college to prevent students from pursuing a higher education," said Superintendent/President Joel L. Kinnamon, Ed.D. He announced the pLEDGE program during his State of the College to the public in January.

"This program helps remove some of the economic barriers to entering the first year of college while also providing critical guidance, skills and support that is essential to students achieving their educational and career goals," he said.

And the program doesn't cost taxpayers anything extra.

About 75 percent of College of the Desert students qualify for some sort of financial aid, including PELL grants and Board of Governors (BOG) fee waivers. All incoming pLEDGE students apply for those programs as part of the admissions process. Generous donors in the desert community fund the difference.

College of the Desert has campuses in Palm Desert, Desert Hot Springs, Indio and Mecca/Thermal. The community college also offers classes at off-campus sites such as Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs and Palm Springs high schools.

### **DETAILS ON HOW TO COVER THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

The media is welcome to cover the kickoff of the new school year on Monday, Aug. 28, at the Palm Desert Campus. Please let us know if you'd like to join us so that we can help you navigate. Morning through lunch will be the most visual.

**RSVP:** Please email or contact James Meier by 2 p.m. Friday, Aug. 25, at (760) 773-2589 if you plan to come out. He's also reachable at the college's Public Relations cell phone at (760) 848-8230.

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**About College of the Desert:**

Established in 1958, College of the Desert (COD), located in Palm Desert, is an accredited community college serving eastern Riverside County, California. The College leads the region in providing quality, higher education, technical training and lifelong learning opportunities, in response to the dynamic needs of our diverse community. The College serves more than 14,000 credit and 1,000 non-credit students each year and is the number one source of transfer students to California State University, San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus. For more information, visit [www.collegeofthedesert.edu](http://www.collegeofthedesert.edu).

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