



**COLLEGE**  
*of the*  
**DESERT**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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## **College of the Desert Offers Free Education in 2017-2018**

### **Changing Lives Starts with a pLEDGE**

***College of the Desert announces pLEDGE, allowing local high school graduates from the class of 2017 to attend first year at College of the Desert free.***

PALM DESERT, CA—College of the Desert (COD) is launching a tuition-free pLEDGE program guaranteeing one-year scholarships for all incoming freshmen graduating from local high schools in 2017.

Applicants must apply for all eligible state and federal financial aid, including FAFSA and Cal Grants. Counselors and financial aid staff will help guide students through the process.

The COD pLEDGE program is designed to make access to higher education available for all Coachella Valley high school graduates. It guarantees one year of free “tuition” to all graduating students who would like to attend the college full-time starting in Fall 2017.

“We do not want cost to keep students from pursuing their education,” stated Joel L. Kinnamon, Ed.D., COD Superintendent/President. “We know that an education makes a difference for each student, their families, our community and our economy.”

Students who qualify will be asked to pLEDGE that they will maintain full-time enrollment, complete required work experience or community service, and maintain their academic performance. In the weeks ahead, we will be making more formal announcements about the program, eligibility requirements and pledge details. We expect the pLEDGE will open the door for many students who previously lacked any hope for higher education.

The program removes the economic barriers to the first year of college while providing critical guidance, skills and support that is essential to achievement of individual educational and career goals. Research shows that students who enroll full-time, participate in work experience programs and have fewer financial stresses achieve higher grades than their peers, continue their education beyond their first year at a higher rate than typical students, transfer to four-year colleges or are better prepared to enter the local workforce.

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The pLEDGE program was outlined by Kinnamon in his annual State of the College address to local elected officials, alumni, education partners, supporters and the public.

The College has secured the funds to launch this important program and will look to partner with others in order to secure future years as well as to expand the program to include other costs that are also a significant challenge for students, such as books, transportation and childcare.

“I’m excited that our pLEDGE program will be placing students squarely at the intersection of education, opportunity and success,” Kinnamon stated.

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 students 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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