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Office of Campus Communications

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## **\$1 Million Donation to Aviation Program is Largest Individual Gift in Cypress College History**

Cypress College has received its largest individual gift in the campus' history, a \$1 million donation to its aviation program. The commitment, made this semester by an anonymous donor, is being used to transform the program's state-of-the-art flight-simulator lab into the region's best public facility.

The simulator lab, which has already relocated to a larger space to accommodate upgraded equipment, will ultimately feature eight simulators, including a full-motion multi-engine turbo-prop simulator and one mirroring the recently released Boeing 737 Max. The donation is also intended to help the college acquire an airplane that can be flown from any one of four partner local airports. In addition, the donation will support the college's flying team.

"We are inspired by the generosity and vision of our donor," said JoAnna Schilling, Ph.D., president of Cypress College. "This donation was made to catapult our program to a level we only dreamed could be possible. At the same time, its immediate impact means that future pilots will already have unique learning opportunities at Cypress College."

The donor — a retired businessman and investor — shared his two-question philosophy in seeking and identifying organizations to help: "What program can I invest in and have a great return? Is this a well-managed company that is operated with integrity?"

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A pilot himself at a young age, the donor looked to Cypress College because of the work of Department Chair Ed Valdez — an Airline Transport Pilot with type ratings in the Boeing 727, 737, 757/767, A319/A320, and Gulfstream’s G2, G3, G4, and G5 aircraft — and the college’s physical location with proximity to Long Beach, John Wayne, and Fullerton airports.

“A huge advantage we have here is the Los Angeles airspace,” the donor said. “This is the most-complex airspace in the world. Pilots come from across the globe to train here.”

The existing philosophy of the Cypress College program — which uses simulators in a comprehensive fashion — also attracted the donor.

“We are creating pilots who know how to fly before they ever get into an airplane,” said Professor Valdez, who has served as a first officer, captain, and line-check airman for various airlines, including United Airlines, Skywest Airlines, and Champion Air, as well as for FlightSafety International as a Gulfstream and International Procedures Instructor. “Where we shine is that we build a very strong foundation.”

Said the donor: “Cypress College offers a great product at a great price. From a business standpoint, that’s the recipe for long-term success. Aerospace is a field where we can build an economic future, a way to address an eroding middle class. There is something bigger than I just like planes. This will make a difference.”

### **About Cypress College:**

Cypress College has motivated the minds of students since 1966. For nearly a half-million people — including actors, athletes, doctors, executives, mechanics, nurses, and teachers — Cypress College has been a springboard to their dreams. For some, Cypress College is the ticket into their university of choice and for others it provides essential training for a rewarding career. Just one Cypress College class is often all it takes to provide cutting-edge skills that lead to a promotion or a new job.

Cypress College's 16,000 students and the highly qualified teaching faculty are proud of the many excellent academic and vocational programs. Cypress College offers 56 university-transfer majors, 176 career-certificate programs, and degrees in 73 areas of study. The college's traditional semesters begin in January and August, while short-term courses start throughout the year. A Cypress College education costs \$46 per unit — \$138 for a typical, full-credit class — California's lowest tuition. Financial aid and scholarships are also available to qualifying students.

Cypress College is one of three campuses in the North Orange County Community College District and a member of the 114-campus California Community College System. The college primarily serves the cities of Anaheim, Buena Park, Cypress, Garden Grove, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Seal Beach, and Stanton.

Located at 9200 Valley View Street in Cypress, the college is easily accessible from several Southern California freeways, including the 5, 91, 605, 22, and 405. The campus is just a stone's-throw from Downtown Disney and Knott's Berry Farm.