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“Alternative Spring Break”: Four San Diego Community College Students Spend Week Marching for the Future, not Partying

Merced, CA – Four San Diego community college students departed this week for an “Alternative Spring Break,” marching up the Central Valley to protest cuts to public education, safety, health and other critical services. The students are foregoing Spring Break revelry, and instead will spend the week with educators and public service advocates who have already covered 217.2 miles of a 365-mile Bakersfield to Sacramento trek. Following in Cesar Chavez’s footsteps, Jason Emami, Norman Stuart, Jose Rodriguez, and Naomi Santa Cruz are joining the march during the celebration of Cesar Chavez Day. The students are making an extraordinary personal commitment and sacrifice to protest cuts to public education, public health and public safety, and to draw attention to the need to reclaim California’s promise.

Jason Emami, 23, is an economics major at San Diego Mesa College. Jason is marching because he believes quality public education and quality public services are vital to California’s future. “If we’re all equal, like we’re always told, then we all deserve to have quality public services, education and equal treatment by the government,” said Jason. “I’m here to make sure that happens. That we get everything we need and deserve as human beings.”

Jose Rodriguez, 24, majoring in history, joined the march because he believes everyone should have equal access to a quality higher education. “The future is in education. And we deserve to have a good education accessible to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status,” said Jose.

March for California's Future, Alternative Spring Break SD students, March 31, 2010, page 2
Naomi Santa Cruz, 25, majoring in sociology, feels that schools in California are being shortchanged and we need to stand up for a better education. "I am marching to draw support and attention to the needs of current and future students," said Naomi. "The way things are going the future looks really bad for our schools."

Norman Stuart, 42, computer, business and film major, would like to see a better economic future for California. Norman says, "I am marching for equality. I am marching for a better California in terms of our economic status, and the future of jobs."

Sponsored by the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) and a coalition of labor, education, civil rights and faith-based organizations, including the American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the march is the beginning of a campaign to restore quality public education and public services, a government and an economy that works for all Californians, and a fair and stable tax system to fund the future.

For more information, please visit www.fight4cafuture.com