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Construction of SBCC School of Media Arts (SoMA) Postponed

Santa Barbara City College announced the decision to indefinitely postpone building the new School of Media Arts (SoMA) on the college's main campus. Groundbreaking was expected for 2010 for the 65,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art facility which would have brought together the diverse media arts departments – including journalism, photography, graphic design, and film and television production – under one roof. The move would have also cleared badly needed space for other departments on campus.

The State of California's ongoing budget crisis and inability to provide funding for approved construction projects were the major factors in the decision, according to Dr. Kathryn Alexander, President of the Santa Barbara Community College District Board of Trustees.

The State had originally committed \$32 million toward SoMA. In June 2008, voters in the SBCC District approved **Measure V**, a local construction bond issue. The successful bond passage provided the college \$77 million additional funds, of which \$9.3 million was reserved for SoMA.

Since then, the State reduced its commitment for building SoMA from \$32 to \$22 million, with no guarantee as to when the funds would actually be provided in light of the ongoing budget crisis. The only way to complete the project given these new developments would be for the college to allocate \$28 million of the \$77 million Measure V funds to SoMA. This would take away money from other critical college renovation projects. It was an extremely difficult decision, given the years of internal planning as well as hearings and negotiations with various regulatory boards. The Board of Trustees and the College made the decision that is in the best interest of the entire college community: to indefinitely postpone SoMA and to maximize the Measure V funds by improving the core, aging infrastructure on campus (including the renovation and modernization of existing facilities that house SoMA programs).



“In a difficult economic environment like this, we owe it to our students, faculty, staff, and the voters who supported Measure V to achieve the greatest good that we can for our campus and the community who benefit from our programs and facilities,” said Dr. Andreea M. Serban, SBCC Superintendent/President. “We will use the remaining funds toward as many other capital projects as possible,” said Dr. Serban. Much of the work will be focused on renovating existing buildings, meeting safety and seismic codes and ADA regulations while also increasing substantial dollar savings through better energy efficiency.

“We want to thank all the individuals who have volunteered their time and our many donors who have supported our SoMA fundraising campaign,” said Dr. Serban.

Current SBCC Measure V Bond Projects

- Remodel of the **Drama/Music Building**, including upgrades to the Garvin Theatre which is used for both classroom instruction and as a community performance venue.
- Construction of the new **Luria Conference and Press Center** overlooking La Playa Stadium. Also generously supported by the Luria Family Foundation and other private donors, the new 971 square-foot, state-of-the-art facility will include two conference rooms, coaches’ box, an announcer’s booth, and universal viewing areas.
- Repairs and upgrades to the **Pedestrian Bridge** connecting the East and West Campuses
- Other bond construction projects will include renovation and upgrades to the Humanities Building and MacDougall Administration Center on the Main Campus and to the Alice F. Schott Center where a large number of Continuing Education classes are held.

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