EMC Research, Inc. recently completed a telephone survey of 501 randomly selected likely November 2008 voters in the Santa Barbara Community College District (SBCCD). This random sample was representative of the entire community college district, both demographically and geographically. The sample of 501 likely voters was drawn from a list of registered voters within the district. In this survey, we measured voter attitudes regarding the programs and management of the SBCCD, as well as their opinions regarding a general obligation bond and the programs it could fund.

A detailed analysis of the results indicates the following key findings:

- Voters have exceptionally positive opinions of Santa Barbara City College;
- The College receives very strong ratings both on quality of education and on variety of classes and programs available;
- Departments and programs at the College are unknown by many but receive favorable ratings from almost all that are familiar with almost no unfavorable;
- Although voters are familiar with the college, they are not aware of structural or facility problems;
- At 60% Yes, support for a bond measure is above the 55% needed for approval;
- Many voters in the District are fiscally conservative. Support for a measure decreases when told it would increase taxes;
- Improving access for people with disabilities, making facility repairs and improvements that will benefit academic programs are important to voters;
- After voters in the poll learn more about the projects that can be funded with a bond measure, support increases;
- Survey data indicates that the District should move forward cautiously with a bond measure, focusing on securing funding for the highest priority projects.
Votes

Respondents were asked four times whether or not they would support a general obligation bond offering by the Santa Barbara Community College District. The first vote was before any information was given about the college or the projects that could be funded by the bond. The second vote came after respondents heard the cost of the bond measure. The third vote came after respondents heard supportive arguments about Santa Barbara City College and information regarding specific projects that could be funded if the measure passed. The final vote followed arguments in opposition to the measure. The measure needs 55% support to pass on Election Day. The results were as follows:

- Vote 1 – 60% Yes; 9% Lean Yes $\rightarrow$ 69% support
- Vote 2 – 51% Yes; 6% Lean Yes $\rightarrow$ 57% support
- Vote 3 – 64% Yes; 8% Lean Yes $\rightarrow$ 72% support
- Vote 3 – 51% Yes; 6% Lean Yes $\rightarrow$ 57% support

Opinions of SBCCD

Respondents were asked their opinions of Santa Barbara City College. Some of the results are highlighted below:

- 92% gave the College a “Favorable” rating
- 82% rate the Overall Quality of Education as “Excellent” or “Good”

College Role/Bond Projects

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of certain roles for the College to fill within the community and of specific projects that could be funded if the bond measure was successful. Respondents were asked to use a 7-point scale, where 7 means “Very Important” and 1 means “Not at All Important.” Some of those results are highlighted below:

- 71% rate providing affordable, local higher education as a “7”
- 69% rate preparing students for 4-year universities as a “7”
- 83% rate making all buildings, classrooms, and community facilities accessible to people with disabilities as “important” (5 or higher)
- 86% rate repairing leaky roofs, replacing heating, cooling, plumbing and electricity throughout the aging college campuses as “important” (5 or higher)
- 84% rate improving academic facilities to help students prepare for jobs and/or transfer to 4-year universities as “important” (5 or higher)
- 80% rate improving programs that help students develop essential literacy and English skills as “important” (5 or higher)