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NEW SWEETWATER EDUCATION FOUNDATION PRESIDENT TO CARRY LEGACY OF FORGING PARTNERSHIPS TO HELP STUDENTS ACHIEVE

SAN DIEGO – June 19, 2008 – A veteran of community involvement with a passion for helping students achieve is taking the reigns at Sweetwater Education Foundation.

Edward Lopez, who took his new role June 16, is succeeding Eduardo Valerio, who is stepping down to pursue a new business venture. Sweetwater Education Foundation is a Chula Vista-based nonprofit organization with a single purpose: that no financial barrier will stand between a Compact for Success student and the right to a college education.

Through Compact For Success, a pact between Sweetwater Union High School District, Sweetwater Education Foundation and San Diego State University, Sweetwater students are guaranteed admission by demonstrating financial need for scholarship assistance and meeting the following criteria:

- Maintain a California State University grade point average 3.0 or higher by time of application and through senior year;
- Completed all CSU “a-g” course requirements;
- Satisfy the Entry Level Math Placement Test;
- Satisfy the Entry Level English Placement Test; and
- Maintain attendance in the SUHSD since the ninth grade.

Sweetwater Education Foundation – 2-2-2-2-2

The foundation, which is responsible for raising funds to support student scholarships, granted 155 Compact Scholars scholarships in the past year. In summer 2006, when the first class of Compact students entered SDSU, 92 Sweetwater students received foundation scholarships; last August, the second class entered the university and 63 students received scholarships. Through various fundraising efforts, the foundation has met its goal of obtaining funds to assist future Compact Scholars through the SDSU graduating class of 2013.

“We have some big shoes to fill. Ed Valerio has done a tremendous job, and the Sweetwater community has him to thank for taking the prospect of college education from dream to reality,” said Drew Schlosberg, the foundation’s chairman. “We believe we’ve found the right person in Ed Lopez, with his combined passion for student achievement and community involvement.”

Lopez is coming to the foundation from Sempra Energy, where he was corporate manager of community partnerships with business associations, charitable groups and educational institutions. Prior to Sempra, he was regional manager of public affairs at San Diego Gas & Electric; manager of government relations for Cox Communications; outreach coordinator for university-school partnerships at University of California, San Diego; and director of UCSD’s student retention program.

“Ed Lopez has a demonstrated track record of forging strong business and community partnerships for the benefit of educational needs, and we look forward to having him lead our foundation,” said Jesus Gandara, Ed.D., superintendent of the Sweetwater Union High School District.

Lopez’ community involvement includes being an elected board member for San Diego City Schools (1996-2004). He is a former a board member of Centre City Development Corp., the South County Economic Development Council, High Tech High and East County Economic Development Council.

“Ed Valerio helped make Compact for Success a great story, one that works successfully for the students of Sweetwater,” said Stephen Weber, Ph.D., president, San Diego State University. “Ed Lopez’ experience and savvy will help us continue on that path.”