



California Community College Legislative Priorities for 2011-12

Rebuilding California's Economy: Maximizing Efficiencies and Investing in Community College Student Success

The California Community Colleges are facing unprecedented challenges that require unprecedented solutions. The colleges are doing everything in their power to meet historic enrollment demand driven by a weak economy, dislocated workers and record numbers of high school graduates seeking a college education to learn new skills. At the same time, the community colleges have been hit with some of the deepest cuts in community college history.

The following legislative proposals create new efficiencies and enhance resource and planning stability – all for the purpose of helping students succeed.

AB 743 (Block) – California Community College Systemwide Common Assessment

- This bill establishes common systemwide assessment tests for placing California Community College Students in the appropriate English, Mathematics and English as a Second language courses. Placement in the appropriate gateway courses is essential for student success.
- This proposal saves state resources, makes it easy for students to use their test results for enrollment at any California Community College and offers the opportunity for students to take an online pre-test which allows them to practice and prepare before taking their assessments.
- *Please support this cost saving measure that helps students succeed.*

AB 1056 (Fong) – e-Transcripts: A Systemwide Conversion from Paper to Electronic Student Transcripts

- This bill expedites the process for California Community Colleges to convert from a paper-based transcript process to an electronically-based system called e-Transcript.
- Converting to electronic transcripts can save the colleges \$4 to \$10 per transcript by reducing paper consumption, operating costs, and postage. Moreover, students would be able to have their transcripts sent within 24 hours versus the two to three week period it currently requires.
- *Please support this important student friendly and cost saving measure.*

AB 285 (Furutani) – Property Tax Back-fill Aids Planning and Stability and Helps Students

- This bill removes funding uncertainty and averts the need to make sudden, mid-year cuts to community colleges base operations because property tax revenues come in short. Like the K-12 system, this bill would automatically backfill the community college budget when there is a property tax revenue shortfall.
- The colleges are already faced with absorbing deep budget cuts year after year. Requiring the colleges to absorb an additional mid-year property tax cut to cover the shortfall leaves no time for reasonable preparation and causes further unexpected, mid-term cuts for students.
- *Please support this measure which stabilizes resource planning and help students access the courses and services they need to succeed.*



California Community College Budget Priorities for 2011-12

State Investment in College Access and Educational Opportunity is Key to Full Economic Recovery

The proposed 2011-12 budget would cut the community colleges by \$400 million and increases student fees by 38% (from \$26 to \$36 per unit). This is on top of \$520 million in cuts sustained in the 2009-10 Budget Act and a loss of over \$600 million in purchasing power through foregone COLAs since the 2007-08 fiscal year. These cuts significantly reduce the capacity of the community colleges to meet the essential education and training needs of Californians. Without approval of the Governor's revenue extension proposal, the cuts to community colleges would at least double, damaging California's economy and dashing the hopes of hundreds of thousands of Californian students.

- **Access to a college education is threatened.** Recent budget cuts have already forced districts to cut course sections by over 9 percent—just as the demand for these courses is at an all-time high. A record number of graduating high school seniors, unemployed Californians seeking new job skills, veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and students being displaced from UC and CSU due to restricted admissions are all seeking a place in the community colleges, yet many cannot get into the classes they need. Class sizes are growing, course sections are full, waiting lists are longer than ever, and many students are being turned away.

Last year, an estimated 140,000 Californians who attempted to enroll at a community college were turned away without courses. This tragedy is only growing in the current year, as colleges further cut course sections to fully implement recent budget reductions. This is a devastating situation for prospective students, their families, employers, and the state's economy. If the Governor's proposal for revenue extensions is not approved in June—or not placed on the ballot—the impact will be far worse.

- ✓ **Support Governor Brown's revenue extension package to prevent deeper cuts to the community colleges.** The need for a community college education has never been greater. Failure to extend the revenues proposed by Governor Brown would result in a further loss of access for several hundred thousand students. If the revenues are not extended and the Community Colleges are cut by the amount detailed in the Legislative's Analyst's Office's "all-cuts" scenario, funding for over 400,000 students would be eliminated.
- **Reject hasty policy changes.** Recent proposals from the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office to change how community colleges are funded would have harmful impacts on equity and student success. Such major policy changes require thoughtful consideration and should not be rushed through an expedited budget process.
 - ✓ **Leave policy changes to the Student Success Task Force, not to the budget process.** The community colleges are committed to student success, and many changes to how the system operates are being considered by a multifaceted task force of experts. SB 1143 (Liu) authorized a thoughtful process for improving student success and will consider breaking down programmatic and fiscal barriers to better ensure that the state's resources are invested wisely in ensuring student success. The Task Force will report its findings to the Legislature early next spring. The Student Success Task Force is the appropriate venue for policy changes, not the budget process.