



March 18, 2022

Hon. Anthony Rendon
Speaker, California Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Hon. Toni G. Atkins
President pro Tempore, California Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Community College Budget
6870-101-0001

Dear Speaker Rendon and President pro Tem Atkins:

On behalf of our diverse coalition in the California Community Colleges, we thank you for your commitment to our mission and especially to our over 1.8 million students. As the most diverse public system of higher education in the nation, the California Community Colleges are essential to our shared goals of economic and social equity and mobility where all can partake and prosper.

In addition to the items proposed in the Governor's January Budget, we encourage the Administration and Legislature to use any additional new revenues to address the following shared priorities of our organizations. Although we, the undersigned organizations, may have individual priorities for new funding, the following are common to us all, which is why we are bringing them to your attention.

1) **Increase base apportionment by \$300 million to enhance student support, strengthen on-campus and online instruction, and protect students and districts from cybercrime.**

California is in a unique financial position this year to address our chronic per-student underfunding while helping our institutions mitigate the effects of expiring federal COVID support and declining enrollment. While we are thankful to the Governor's proposal to create a new funding floor for the Hold Harmless provision of the Student Centered Funding Formula, we believe it is incumbent for the Legislature to recognize the need for approving a \$300 million increase to our base funding level. In its analysis of the community college budget, the Legislative Analyst's Office concurs with the rationale for a base increase and recommends exploration of this request.

Our coalition recognizes there are multiple ways to implement a base increase, including but not limited to establishing an ongoing line item for technology, separate from that already proposed in the January budget.

2) Use of non-Proposition 98 funding to buy down the districts' escalating pension obligations.

In these inflationary times, our districts cannot advance on the goals contained in the Vision for Success, the Governor's proposed Roadmap, or on various legislative proposals if 30 percent of the proposed COLA is dedicated to covering increased pension costs. Above all, our communities will be shortchanged by such a high percentage of new unrestricted funds reserved for this purpose. We agree with the LAO and many legislators who have insisted that this be a top priority.

3) Use of non-Proposition 98 funding to simplify and modernize financial aid, fund the total cost of education, and assure the needs of community college students are met.

While we are grateful to the Governor for proposing to increase Completion Grants in the January budget, now is the time to update the Cal Grant system in a way that funds the total cost of education and removes unnecessary barriers for eligibility, including high school GPA requirements which often disadvantages community college students who are years removed from high school. Preliminary estimates suggest that 150,000 additional low-income students could be eligible for Cal Grants based on the reforms in AB 1746 (Medina and McCarty).

As noted by the Governor's veto of last year's AB 1456 (Medina and McCarty), consideration of financial aid reform should be addressed in the budget process. As such, we believe this should be a top priority in the budget.

We are once again grateful to you for your commitment to the California Community Colleges and to the principles of equity and success which are central to our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Dolores M. Davison
President
Academic Senate for California
Community Colleges (ASCCC)



Willy Duncan
Chair of the Commission for
Finance, Legislation & Advocacy
Association of California
Community College
Administrators (ACCCA)



Morris Rodrigue
President
Association of Chief Business
Officials (ACBO)

Austin Weber
Legislative Advocate
California Community College
Association for Occupational
Education (CCCAOE)

Lataria Hall
President
Chief Student Services Officers
Association (CSSO)

Larry Galizio
President and CEO
Community College League of
California (CCLC)

Wendy Brill-Wynkoop
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Faculty Association of California
Community Colleges (FACCC)

Gerardo Chavez
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Student Senate for the
California Community Colleges
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