



THE LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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IN THIS UPDATE:

- Community College Initiative Update 1
- A Renewed Focus on SB 361 1
- Equalization Allocation Approved by BOG 2
- Concurrent Enrollment Plan to be Developed 2
- CPEC Recommends 5-Year Freeze in Student Fees 2
- CPEC to Establish Advisory Committee on Servicing Rural Areas..... 2
- Facilities 2
- Intercollegiate Athletics 3
- Transportation Fees 3
- “AB 540” Repeal Defeated 3
- Upcoming Committee Hearings and Legislative Deadlines 3
- Reports This Month 3
- Fast Facts 4
- Staffing Changes 4

COMMUNITY COLLEGE INITIATIVE UPDATE

After extensive consultation within the system, a decision has been made to retrieve the community college initiative from the Attorney General’s Office and re-submit it in July, which will allow the system the full 150-days to gain the necessary signatures for inclusion on the June 2008 (instead of the November 2006) ballot. Because of unexpected delays earlier this year, if the measure were scheduled for signature-gathering starting in April, the window for this November’s election would only be 30 days. Extension of the time will allow for a full signature-gathering period, collection of additional funds, and additional time for students and other interested parties to work on the campaign. In the meantime, the system will be able to focus its full attention on obtaining passage of SB 361 which contains many important provisions for the colleges (see below).

Contributions are still needed and should be sent to: Californians for Improving Community Colleges, c/o Rix-Bradford Consultants, 512 N. Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90004.

A RENEWED FOCUS ON SB 361

SB 361 (Scott), the proposed funding formula for community colleges, will be a major focus of the League in the coming weeks. This bill, which was developed by system representatives, contains many essential elements for funding the colleges including: restoration of the three-year stability mechanism; a formula to fund and maintain equalization over years so that district revenues do not become unbalanced; a three-year unfunded enrollment factor in each district’s growth rate of up to 8%; access grants for rural colleges; and a two-tiered approach to noncredit funding in which apportionment funding would be increased gradually for non-credit enrollment in the areas of ESL, citizenship, remediation and basic skills, and vocational/occupational education.

EQUALIZATION ALLOCATION APPROVED BY BOG

In recent weeks, discussions have continued on the best way to distribute the \$130 million of equalization funds in the Governor's proposed budget. These negotiations have been very successful, with agreement reached among various groups in the system two weeks ago, and last week approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors. In addition, the allocation agreement includes intent to seek \$31 million of additional funds; representatives of the Department of Finance have indicated "receptivity" to adding the additional funds to bring all colleges up to the 90th percentile.

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT PLAN TO BE DEVELOPED

With many districts seeking the ability to serve students who have not passed the high school exit examination and/or collaborate with their local high schools in providing basic skills to local students, Chancellor Drummond will be meeting with various groups to determine a system position and strategy for easing the 5% limitation on summer school for high school students.

CPEC RECOMMENDS 5-YEAR FREEZE IN STUDENT FEES

The California Postsecondary Education Commission received a staff report which noted that their principles of "gradual, moderate, and predictable" fee increases needed modification since "moderate" had been defined as 10% which would now yield a \$700 annual increase for UC. The Commission further recognized that although fees in California are relatively low, a more appropriate measurement would be the total cost of attendance which is quite high, due especially to high housing and transportation costs in California. Commissioners also expressed skepticism about the proposed "high-fee, high-aid" strategy proposed by some policymakers, with Commissioners recognizing that "high-fee, high-aid" strategy equals "high risk." Following the presentation, the Commissioners recommended a five-year moratorium on fee increases, and endorsed an "affordability," rather than a fee, policy. Further information is available at: www.cpec.ca.gov.

CPEC TO ESTABLISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SERVICING RURAL AREAS

Over the past few months, CPEC has considered the needs of rural areas for more education services. The League has been working with districts to provide the Commission with information on the difficult choices which must be made in far-flung community college districts with relatively few citizens in service areas covering thousands of square miles. At their March meeting, Sandra Serrano, Robert Turnage, Fred Harris, and Patrick Murphy (who wrote a report on community college funding two years ago) provided the commissioners with perspective on the situation. The commission indicated it intends to establish a follow-up advisory committee which the League will follow to assure that the committee understands the many demands made on local districts as they serve students in their service areas within funding constraints.

FACILITIES

SB 1290 (Ducheny) was amended and passed by the Senate Education Committee to allow community college buildings to be built according to the California Building Standards Act in lieu of the Field Act. Similar language was included in the proposed comprehensive infrastructure bond measures. We have been told that SB 1304 (Runner) will be amended to return it to its introduced version (2/16).

Legislative negotiations over infrastructure bonds appear to be on- and off-again. Election year politics plays a large part in the status of the bond discussions. The deadline for the Legislature to place items on the November 2006 ballot is June 29. Many express legitimate concerns whether the bonds will even be placed on the 2006 ballot, with some speculating that the bonds may be delayed until the 2008 general election. Others believe that education-only bonds may emerge from legislative negotiations for placement on the 2006 ballot.

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Assembly Higher Education Committee passed legislation, AB 2165, which prohibits student athletes at the community colleges, UC, and CSU who have been prosecuted and convicted of certain violent felonies from participating in intercollegiate athletics teams or events. This bill is now scheduled for the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

TRANSPORTATION FEES

Legislation introduced to permit local districts that provide transportation services, including discounted mass transit passes, to partially- or fully-exempt low-income students from transportation fees, is now on the Assembly Floor. Current law mandates exemptions for low-income students. AB 1968 (Leslie/Jones) is similar to 2005 legislation that permitted districts to charge low-income students for health services, and will encourage colleges to participate with local transit services to offer low-cost transit passes and other transportation services to students.

“AB 540” REPEAL DEFEATED

Legislation to repeal existing law (AB 540-Firebaugh) , which permits California-resident classification for purposes of paying in-state fees for students without legal immigration status who attended and graduated from a California high school, was voted down by the Assembly Committee on Higher Education. AB 2472 (Wyland) is one of a series of bills seeking to overturn the provisions of AB 540.

UPCOMING COMMITTEE HEARINGS AND LEGISLATIVE DEADLINES

Legislative hearings are beginning in earnest as hundreds of bills face policy committee deadlines. Many hearings were delayed or rescheduled as members were distracted by deliberations over infrastructure bonds, the death of former Assembly Member Marco Firebaugh, and general election year events.

April 5th: 9:30 a.m. – Senate Education Committee

WHERE: State Capitol, Room 4203

April 6th

Legislature begins its Spring Recess, to reconvene on April 17.

April 18th: 1:30 p.m. – Assembly Higher Education Committee

WHERE: State Capitol, Room 437

April 19th & 26th: 8:30 a.m. Senate Education Committee

WHERE: State Capitol, Room 4203

April 28th

Last day for bills with fiscal considerations to pass policy committees

REPORTS THIS MONTH

California Educational Opportunity Report: Roadblocks to College. John Rogers, Veronica Terriquez, Siomara Valladares, Jeannie Oakes. UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access; UC All Campus Consortium on Research for Diversity, March 2006. Available on-line at: www.edoppo.org

This report analyzes public data about the state’s college preparation infrastructure and reveals why most California students are not adequately prepared for college. It provides statewide and high school data that demonstrates the relationship between California's declining educational system, lack of high school completion, and relatively low levels of four-year college enrollment.

Rethinking Cooling Out at Public Community Colleges: An Examination of Fiscal and Demographic Trends in Higher Education and the Rise of Statewide Articulation Agreements. Gregory Anderson, Mariana Alfonso and Jeffrey C. Sun. Teachers College Record, vol 108 (2006), pp. 422-451.

Recent data indicate that a large proportion of students entering community college are identifying terminal certificate or occupational associate degrees instead of academic majors or transfer as their short-term goal. Despite this, states have established articulation agreements as policy instruments to enhance the transfer of students from public two-year to four-year institutions. This document raises a two-part question: In the absence of a significant increase in the demand for transfer by community college students, why have states enacted these agreements and what potential impacts may arise from these legislative trends? The authors contend that the rise of articulation agreements constitutes a new state strategy to cope with the stagnation of higher education appropriation, the spiraling costs of tuition, and an excess demand for affordable higher education. The authors also argue that to save money, students are being channeled into community colleges to reduce pressure on universities – and because it takes a relatively long time for the typical community college student to transfer

FAST FACTS

In the past, the League has periodically published “Pocket Profiles”; the most important data has been updated and entitled, “Fast Facts, 2006” which follows. This document contains the most up-to-date information on the major elements of interest to colleges; we urge districts to use it in all areas of advocacy.

STAFFING CHANGES

- ◆ Mark Zacovic, Vice Chancellor of Business Operations and Fiscal Services at Rancho Santiago CCD, has been appointed superintendent/president of Mt. San Jacinto CCD, effective April 17, succeeding Richard J. Giese, who has been serving as interim president since his retirement in July.
- ◆ Lydia Ledesma-Reese has announced that she will leave Oxnard College in June.
- ◆ Leo Chavez, interim president of San Jose City College, has been named superintendent/president of Sierra College, effective July 2006. He succeeds Morgan Lynn who has served as interim president since January 2005.
- ◆ Benita Haley, long time community college administrator and government relations consultant, has been reappointed to the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.