



BUDGET BRIEFING



TALKING POINTS

- ☑ The governor has taken significant steps to protect college access at a very difficult fiscal time for California. This gives hope to the graduating high school seniors and unemployed Californians seeking education and a skilled job.
- ☑ Even with funding for 26,000 additional full-time students, enrollment will continue to exceed state support, and community colleges will have to prioritize basic skills, transfer and career technical enrollment.
- ☑ The decision to propose a negative cost-of-living adjustment is disappointing, as state mandated increases in pension benefits for non-academic employees appear to not be fully considered and districts are seeing continued double-digit health insurance increases. The negative COLA also fails to recognize a deficit that has accrued over the last two years as the state has failed to provide over 10% in statutorily guided COLAs. We will collect information on actual cost increases from districts to present to the Legislature if indeed the index does not match reality.
- ☑ The proposed cuts of \$10 million each to Part-time Faculty Compensation and EOPS are a further blow to programs that took devastating cuts last year and should be rejected. Even without these additional cuts, devastating program reductions will have to be implemented as districts across California used one-time budget reserve funds to protect student access to the most vital programs. We commit to looking at the impact of these cuts on student success, particularly among the most vulnerable students, and finding ways to maintain the most essential services.
- ☑ The proposed elimination of the competitive Cal Grant program would hurt the neediest community college students at a time when California's citizens are deeply concerned with college affordability. This program provides 44,000 community colleges students grants of \$1,551 for textbooks, transportation and supplies. These are generally older students whose income averages \$14,000 and are ineligible for the state's entitlement program because they worked between high school and college.
- ☑ From Sacramento to Washington, the recognized role of community colleges in our state and nation's economic future has never been higher, and locally elected trustees, faculty and staff are ready to step up to the challenge and deliver quality degrees, certificates and lower-division transfer curriculum to the record number of students and would-be students turning to our colleges. Colleges are repositioning their curriculum to meet the needs of the challenging economy and ensure California's brightest economic days lie ahead.
- ☑ This budget proposal for community colleges is a good starting point and shows Governor Schwarzenegger's commitment to help underemployed and unemployed Californians get back on their feet. The proposal cements his legacy as an advocate for the role community colleges play in California's economic recovery.



ON-LINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSESSMENT

Legislation is proposed to create a centralized storage and delivery data system of California assessment instruments, test scores, and other data used in the assessment and placement process in the community colleges. The project would be voluntary for colleges to participate in.

- By creating a centralized delivery of test instruments, funded by a central dedicated categorical amount, on-line Community College Assessment will help to streamline assessment for students, improve portability of placement and assessment, reduce local and state costs, increase data available for counselors, and support articulation of data between segments.
- Students will encounter the same assessment instruments, and prior assessment information will be valid and portable for placement at other colleges.
- With severe cuts to matriculation funding, colleges are being forced to reduce assessment, placement, and counseling at a time when external policy experts are arguing for significant increases in these student success strategies. By using the collective purchasing power available at the state level, we can stretch the state's limited education dollars and save even more by ensuring students are guided efficiently through their college experience.

CAPITAL FACILITIES

While the Governor did not include any funding from a proposed 2010 bond for California Community College capital outlay projects in his budget proposal, he did commit to address higher education infrastructure needs in the May Revise. The State Treasurer has issued warnings about California's debt level impact on future state-funded services, and this should be considered by the Legislature in the timing and size of a bond. If final agreement is reached by the Legislature and governor on a 2010 bond, AB 220 (Brownley) is a possible legislative vehicle for the facilities bond.

- If a bond to meet California's higher education facilities needs is placed on the November ballot, community colleges should receive a share that recognizes that two-thirds of the full-time students in California higher education are enrolled in community college.
- The California Community Colleges are the largest system of public higher education in the world, serving of 2.9 million students annually. 25% of all community college students in the United States are enrolled in California's community colleges.
- The Chancellor's Office estimates that systemwide facility needs for the next 10 years are over \$35 billion, and the need for 2010 is \$4.1 billion. Much of the currently needed funds would be used to match funds approved by local voters to complete facilities projects funded by local facilities bonds.
- During the next 5 years, community colleges need 15 million square feet in new buildings for enrollment growth and 28 million square feet in modernization existing buildings. Over 27% of community college facilities are between 25 and 40 years old, while 45% of the existing facilities are over 40 years old.

LOCAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The League currently supports SCA 6 (Simitian). SCA 6 would propose a constitutional amendment to lower the vote threshold for the approval of school and community college district parcel taxes from two-thirds (66.7%) to a super majority of fifty-five percent (55%).

- The state's budget woes will continue for several years and, even under the rosier Proposition 98 scenarios, there will be insufficient funds to restore enrollment and student success programs that have been recently cut.
- SCA 6 would empower local voters and boards with local funding options combined with accountability and oversight to address critical priorities for student success and educational priorities.
- California's seventy-two local community college districts are among the lowest funded in the country. By providing the voters with the option to invest in local community colleges, we can enable the community colleges to better meet the needs of their communities and California's workforce.