



# ***THE LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE***

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### **2007 Bills in Their House of Origin**

The Legislature has introduced few new bills to date this year since it has been concentrating on meeting the deadline (January 31st) for passing 2007 bills out of the house of origin, as well as working on mid-year cuts for the emergency session due to end on February 23rd. The primary bill of interest to community colleges from last year’s bills is AB 591 (Dymally) which, in its current version, would increase from 60% to 67% the amount of time a part-time faculty member could teach while remaining a temporary employee. Previously, this bill included mandates for pro-rata pay and benefits, but these provisions are not currently in the bill.

### **50% Law Under Consideration**

Discussions are being held between administrators and faculty groups to determine if agreement can be reached on including librarians and counselors, and possibly faculty on released-time within the “right” side of the 50% Law. Faculty are also arguing that greater audit oversight is needed. Reportedly, Senator Scott has indicated that the bill (AB 906) will not be approved by his committee unless there is full agreement among all community college organizations.

### **Upcoming Hearings**

On January 10th, Governor Schwarzenegger proclaimed a “fiscal emergency” using the authority provided by Proposition 58, which was approved in 2004. Under these provisions, the Governor can call the Legislature into a special session to deal with substantial revenue declines or expenditure increases. If the Legislature fails to pass legislation by the 45<sup>th</sup> day after the proclamation, the Legislature may not act on any other bill. Therefore, most of the current legislative attention is focused cuts to the current-year budget. The budget committees of both houses are meeting daily to address the Governor’s Current Year Budget- Balancing Reduction (BBR) Proposals. Policy and fiscal committee hearings have been limited to hearing only 2007 bills which have not been approved by their house of introduction. With the budget emergency and related deadlines driving the agenda, most policy committees are limiting actions to “informational hearings,” with action on individual bills not scheduled for several weeks. In the meantime, the following hearings are scheduled:

- **February 7 -Assembly Select Committee on Community Colleges-** Green Clean Technology Jobs and Economic Workforce Development
- **February 7- Senate Select Committee on Gender Discrimination and Title IX-** Status of Title IX compliance at the California Community Colleges
- **February 13- Assembly Education Committee-** Education Data Systems
- **February 19- Senate Committee on Local Government-** Winding Down: Preparing for the end of older redevelopment programs

### **System Office Proposals**

The System Office will be proposing the following priority legislation this year:

- School-to-College Bridge Program – placeholder for potential new legislation if BCP is approved;
- Online Instructional Materials – support AB 577 (Ruskin);
- Inmate education – support current legislation SB 413 (Scott)
- Expand Access to Pell Grants and other financial aid – placeholder for potential new legislation if BCP is approved.
- Concurrent Enrollment – support and sponsor AB 1409 (Portantino) to extend provisions that expire in 2009;
- Textbook Cost Relief – placeholder for potential new legislation;
- Early College Assessment – Support SB 946;
- Field Act Process Relief – Sponsor legislation seeking increased efficiency in processing facilities approval process;
- Transfer Initiative – possible legislation to streamline transfer.

### **Federal Dream Act**

League staff has produced a summary of the issues in the federal Dream Act (**see attachment #1**) for trustees and others to take to Washington D.C. as they lobby during the annual ACCT conference in February. The paper is intended to remind our congressional representatives of the importance of the Dream Act for our students.

### **FAFSA Simplification**

League staff will be providing ACCT conference attendees with a summary of the issues involved in FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) simplification; this paper is not yet available but will be completed in time for the ACCT conference.

### **Hispanic-Serving Institutions**

Staff has also produced a summary of information for colleges to become more aware of the requirements for, and benefits of, serving as a “Hispanic-Serving Institution” (HSI.). This paper (**see attachment #2**) also summarizes the uses of funds, noting that many of them benefit all students rather than just Hispanic students.

### **Fast Facts 2008**

League staff will be drafting *Fast Facts 2008* and forwarding it to all districts, with a tentative deadline for completion before the end of February.

### **New Report**

*Winning the Skills Race and Strengthening American’s Middle Class: An Action Agenda for Community Colleges*, The National Commission on Community Colleges (chaired by Augie

Gallego, with members Ding Jo Currie and Christine Johnson et. al.) The College Board, January 2008.

Among other items, this report recommends that:

- 1) The federal government should encourage universal public education through at least 14 years of schooling as the minimum educational requirement;
- 2) The maximum Pell Grant should be set at 70% of the average cost of attendance at a four-year public institution;
- 3) Accountability should be improved;
- 4) Improvements are needed in articulation between segments and K-20 alignment is important for meeting national educational goals;
- 5) The federal government should establish a facilities program for community colleges as well as provide funding for guidance and counseling;
- 6) The “Achieving the Dream” initiative should be brought to a national scale to improve the success rate of low-income and minority students. (This initiative currently involves 43 colleges in 11 states, each of which has the support of a coach -- often a retired community college president with a strong track record as an organizational leader -- and a data facilitator who help the colleges develop strategies, set priorities and implement institutional improvements.)