



Veterans Caucus Meeting Minutes

California Community Colleges Veterans Caucus (CCCCVC)

**The Community College League of California's
2025 Annual Legislative Conference
Sheraton Grand Sacramento, CA**

January 27, 2025 | Time: 9:00 AM – 9:55AM

[Hybrid] Room: Compagno

Attendees via Zoom: *Bill Withrow; Larry Kennedy; Melissa Church; Stan Mantooth; Desiree Campos; Juan Arzola; Luis Padilla; Amy Kennedy; Maria Buffo; Evelyn Andrews; Adolfo Leiva; Ariel Nelson; Bree Gartley; Marina Barella; Brenda Threatt; Jenny Frank; Tina Humphrey; Leo Perez; Obianuju Nzewi*

Attendees in Person: *Dr. Rick MacLennan; Yvette Davis; Daren Otten; Don Azale; Ken Wagman; Martani Davis; Chuck Uyeda; Kristy Kingsbury; Richard Teagarden; Ryan Cornner; Dr. Keri Then; Joe Piechowski [Additional in-person participants]*

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Dr. Rick MacLennan called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM and called for introductions. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2024, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

A meeting participant shared with the caucus, one of the challenges veteran students face with math in the community college system. He referred to one of his



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veteran students, who had enlisted for duty right out of high school. Upon his return from duty, he enrolled in Gavilan College but could only be registered for pre-calculus as they do not offer Algebra 2 at the college; and as a result, the student failed pre-calculus, having not had the foundation laid in Algebra 2. He urged the caucus to share this issue with the math faculty of their respective colleges.

In response, Dr. Rick MacLennan noted that Assembly Bill 1705 addresses the impact of such gaps/inequities on returning adults generally, including veterans. He informed the caucus of a specific AB1705 review in the works regarding the subject matter, as well as some guidance issued by the chancellor's office which provides that a college can offer one level below the calculus, adding that a lot of the math faculty at different colleges are working on those classes. He stated that he has spoken to Jacqui Irwin, the author of AB1705 several times and has made her aware of the impact of that gap and how adjustments are being made regarding that. He thanked the participant for sharing this issue with the caucus.

3. Strategic goals planning:

Dr. Rick MacLennan and Ryan Cornner led discussions on the draft proposal for increasing VRC funding. Dr. Rick MacLennan stated that the proposal really came from a central premise, and he thanked all those who have contributed to the caucus for defining this based on the issues that have been talked about several times in the group regarding VRC underfunding.

The Co-Chairs gave a summary of the discussion points in the draft proposal noting the following:

- Part of the strategy is to deliberately align with the Chancellor's office vision 2030 goals.
- On vision 2030, although several meetings have been had, they are behind the clock in terms of the proposal because the Governor already put out his budget in January, and the Chancellor's Office which is under the executive branch have to make their budget request to the Chancellor or to the Governor sometime in October, so they want the proposal to be submitted



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in June as a budget request for January - the 26-27 fiscal year; therefore, this will be an 18-month advocacy effort for money to come in two years from now. In essence, this is a year of building momentum.

- It is based on the Veterans Resource Center documentation that says that they require or in some cases highly recommend a full-time director who does not do certifying, a certifying official and a counselor.
- Ryan Conner stated that they have also prepared a one-pager that basically takes points from the proposal. He informed the caucus that his team and Trustee Davis will be meeting with both the Senate and Assembly Chairs of military affairs, and will be pushing them to start thinking about increased funding for student veterans and the college system.

A concern was raised by Brenda Threatt regarding the need for additional staffing so as to have a person dedicated to the vision alignment reporting - the data and the metrics that is required by these programs that's part of the 2030 vision.

- o In response, Dr. MacLennan stated that as of now, a lot of services are being funded on general funds. He explained that if the amount of money that's coming in to support veterans is tripled, then colleges will have opportunity to expand resources in other areas; however, a critical decision was made to focus on a unified model of what different institutions would need, and the choice was to focus on what the Veterans Resource Center documentation already laid out as the requirements, which have been underfunded for a decade.

Following discussions, additional questions and clarifications were made regarding the draft proposal.

Dr. MacLennan stated that he and Stan Mantooth will attend the annual Triple C Veterans Symposium in June; regarding a call for proposals, discussions were had on considerations/issues to be highlighted such as the advocacy agenda of the caucus to again try to build support at the launch of the legislative work that needs to happen.



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Referencing the devastation caused by the LA Fires, Brenda Threatt expressed that it is going to take a huge workforce to put the affected communities back together, therefore it is an opportunity for all colleges to work with the workforce development personnel to ensure that veterans get priority, get trained and are put to work to help rebuild these communities; adding that this might be part of the ask as it relates to funding people to work.

A participant requested to be included in the email list for the caucus, and a sign-in sheet was passed around the room to have attendees include their email addresses for the record.

4. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 9:54 AM.
