

The California Community Colleges are a major asset for the state and the nation. They have provided services vital to the advancement of millions of citizens, and have been a crucial element in support of the state's economy, serving more than 2.8 million students annually. Yet California Community Colleges are burdened by a greater number of state imposed restrictions than colleges in any other state. During this time of scarce resources and state budget cuts, we must reevaluate regulations that inhibit student success and recognize that the need to prepare students for viable employment is critical to the economy of California. The **Accelerating Student Success College** initiative proposes to use increased local flexibility with existing resources to meet the extraordinary challenges of our times.

Last year, as part of his administration's effort to combat the country's current economic recession, President Barack Obama challenged the 1,166 community colleges in the U.S. to play a central role by providing unprecedented numbers of students with not only the opportunity to pursue their higher educational goals, but to see that those goals are achieved. The centerpiece of the President's proposal is **improved performance** of the colleges themselves—assuring that greater proportions of students entering community colleges actually achieve their goals through vocational training, earning a certificate or Associate degree, or transferring to a four-year institution. Current congressional proposals including the College Access and Completion Fund may provide additional federal funding opportunities for higher education to increase college-going and improve student success may become available in the future to provide further incentive to implementing systemwide reform measures. California must play a critical role in achieving this national goal and be proactive in securing new federal dollars since 25% of the nation's community college students are in our state and our own economy relies on community colleges to meet workforce demands, especially in critical fields like healthcare.

A number of recent studies have pointed out that the completion rates of students in California's community colleges rank among the lower third of all states. Recognizing the need to increase student success, The Campaign for College Opportunity, in consultation with community college leaders, has proposed important legislation—Accelerating Student Success College—designed to maintain access to college while significantly improving student completion. At the heart of this pilot project is a commitment: participating colleges will **improve student retention and completion** in exchange for **flexibility** on (not elimination of) a handful of restrictive state codes and regulations that allow them to better serve students in their community. Some of these state regulations include:

- **Minimum Qualifications for Tutoring Coordinators:** allows a qualified administrator to supervise the activities of a tutoring center in order to ensure that students get the help they need.
- **Advanced Education:** removes the 5% high school pupil limit to attend summer session in order to support better student preparation and participation in college early on.
- **Prerequisites, Corerequisites, and Advisories:** removes many barriers to establishing prerequisites that will help guarantee that students are prepared to successfully enter and complete courses.
- **Matriculation:** allows the local governing board to require orientation, assessment, and counseling in order to ensure that students are appropriately supported to succeed as they begin college.

- **Transfer Functions and Lower Division Transfer Patterns:** grants the authority to self-certify courses for transferability ensuring that the rules are not changed for students in the middle of their transfer preparation.

In exchange for the flexibility granted above, these **colleges will be funded** not on the current basis of third week of the semester census, but rather **on the number of students successfully completing the semester**. As a further incentive, Accelerating Student Success Colleges will be **allocated an additional \$1,000 per student who completes** an Associate Degree, Certificate in an occupational program, or becomes eligible for transfer to a four-year university above and beyond the colleges' current completion rate.

The **Accelerating Student Success College** is designed to encourage student success. The number of institutions is limited (no more than five). The mechanisms to be employed will require extensive planning by each of the colleges involved, approval from the local Board of Trustees, collegial consultation with the academic senate, and approval of each of their strategic plans by the California Community College Chancellor. The initial trial period for the Accelerating Student Success College will be five years towards the conclusion of which a thorough evaluation will be performed. Now is the time to try innovative new ideas to help increase the number of students who achieve their college goals and strengthen our economy.

The Campaign for
**College
Opportunity**