



ACCCA Legislative Platform Addendum 2023 Priority Issues

As a supplement to ACCCA's legislative platform, this addendum highlights ACCCA's priorities specific to key legislative and budget issues for 2023.

Full-Time Faculty Obligation Number (FON)

On February 23, 2023, the California State Auditor released its report, "Increasing Full-Time Faculty and Diversity Remains a Challenge," which assessed the hiring practices of four community college districts and how they utilized the additional funding that the Legislature has provided since 2018-19 to increase the amount of instruction taught by full-time faculty and hiring processes that promote diversity.

The report contends that the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) does not ensure community college districts (CCDs) use funds for their intended purpose or implement best practices for hiring a diverse faculty. While the report did not recommend any legislative changes to the FON calculation, it did aim several robust recommendations at the CCCCCO, which would have implications for CCDs. The report may also spur lawmakers to draft legislation to amend the FON calculation and process or legislation to ensure that CCDs are hiring a more diverse faculty.

ACCCA is willing to partner with the CCCCCO and other allies on making effective and reasonable changes to the FON. However, ACCCA will oppose any proposal that could trigger the need to hire additional new full-time faculty, without consideration of whether existing faculty capacity could meet the needs of current enrollment, student success, and equity. It is fiscally unsustainable for the state to require additional hiring when enrollment and corresponding funding levels are declining.

ACCCA will also work with our allies to communicate that our colleges are making strides in hiring a more diverse faculty, but change is slow for many colleges because they have a large group of tenured faculty that have long extensive careers. As the tenured faculty begin to retire, our colleges can hire new faculty that will have a more significant impact on the diversity of the workforce. The funds provided by the state for new full-time faculty are so small in the grand scheme of how much colleges spend on full-time faculty and thus is not enough to make an immediate significant impact on the hiring of a diverse faculty.

Enrollment

Governor Gavin Newsom's 2023-24 State Budget proposal summary says that his Administration will be "monitoring district-level enrollment trends and will collaborate with stakeholders to consider options to adjust budgets should a district not display that they are regaining enrollment lost during the pandemic." The Department of Finance (DOF) has publicly said that they are concerned that they have heard anecdotally that some community colleges are not focusing on recouping enrollment.

New data from the CCCCCO shows that after a 16% enrollment decline due to the pandemic, system enrollment has mostly stabilized, and some colleges have recouped the number of students they had lost during the pandemic. However, it will take most colleges another two to

three years to return to pre-pandemic enrollment while some colleges may never reach pre-pandemic enrollment again.

There are many factors that have contributed to the decline that are outside the control of community colleges, including the removal of entry level math and English classes with Assembly Bill 705 (Irwin, Statutes of 2017), the paradigm shift from college to the workforce by traditional student populations, and non-traditional students who require different support services to be successful in college. ACCCA commits to working with the CCCCO and its other allies on highlighting the improvement in enrollment and emphasizing that community colleges are making every effort to recruit and retain its students.

ACCCA must also collaborate with its allies to highlight that while enrollment may never reach pre-pandemic levels again, the cost of educating students has significantly increased due to the broadening of the California Community Colleges (CCC) mission to include services previously provided for by other agencies, such as basic needs and housing. Additionally, we have been better serving our existing students, significantly moving the needle in the Vision for Success goal to increase the number of students earning credentials and degrees. While our colleges will continue to prioritize recruitment and retainment, they should not be punished financially for declining enrollment when the cost of serving its students continues to increase year over year.

Deferred Maintenance

Governor Newsom's 2023-24 State Budget proposes to decrease the 2022 State Budget Act's \$840 million investment for deferred maintenance by \$213 million. The proposal effectively reallocates \$200 million from deferred maintenance commitments to provide another round of recruitment and retention dollars.

ACCCA must make it clear to the Administration that 99% of the \$840 million from the 2022 State Budget has already been committed to projects and that this midyear reduction would require CCDs to terminate projects or eliminate instructional equipment purchases, including technology that are critical for students and instructional programs.

ACCCA opposes this midyear cut and must collaborate with our allies to preserve the funding. While we would like to see the funding for deferred maintenance preserved, and the \$200 million proposal for retention and recruitment retained, an alternative approach could pitch to lawmakers is:

- Make the \$200 million discretionary, so that CCDs can decide whether to use it for deferred maintenance of recruitment/retention; and
- Extend the deadlines for spending the retention/recruitment dollars from the 2021 and 2022 State Budget Acts (\$270 million total) and the COVID-19 Recovery Block Grant dollars from the 2022 State Budget Act (\$650 million)

Categorical Flexibility and COLA

In his May Revision, Governor Newsom will propose a mechanism to provide districts with additional categorical program spending flexibilities for CCDs that are making progress toward the CCC Roadmap goals. The DOF has said that this mechanism will include the ability to consolidate reporting requirements across specified and to-be-determined categorical programs.

While the Administration will not release its proposal until May, it is important for ACCCA and our allies to advocate for a "do no harm" approach to avoid unintended consequences for CCDs. Additionally, ACCCA will advocate that all CCDs receive flexibility for categorical spending and streamlined reporting and not just those districts meeting the CCC Roadmap goals. There are too many pots of categorical dollars that each have their own unique reporting requirements and ACCCA supports districts having more discretion on how to spend these dollars to improve student outcomes. Finally, while we recognize that state funding resources are tight, we believe

that all categorical programs, not just a select few, should receive the same COLA as all programs are facing increasing costs to operate.