

## Fact Sheet: Proposed Cuts to Community Colleges

### **What cuts are currently proposed for colleges?**

- The Governor's May Revise proposal includes **more than \$850 million in cuts to community colleges** during the 2008-9 and 2009-10 fiscal years, resulting in about 250,000 "lost students."<sup>1</sup>
- **The cuts include across-the-board, ongoing cuts of nearly 60% to categorical programs**, including Technical Education, Basic Skills, Apprenticeship, Economic and Workforce Development, and Student Success. These programs would also receive an \$85 million cut in the current year.
- The Governor has proposed **full elimination of the Cal Grant program**, which enables 125,000 community college students to attend college. The Legislature's Budget Conference Committee has now voted against eliminating the program entirely, but has not yet determined how much funding it will receive.
- The Legislative Analyst's Office has recommended **raising community college fees to levels possibly reaching \$60 per unit** (currently \$20/unit), and it is likely that a substantial fee increase will be implemented. It is up to the Legislature and the Governor whether the revenues from these additional fees are designated to backfill cuts to colleges or not.

<sup>1</sup> *Community College League of California*



**Approximately 54 percent of federal stimulus-funded jobs will require some education beyond high school.**

- Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce

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## The central role of community colleges in California's economic recovery

- The California Community College system is **the state's largest and most diverse higher education and workforce training provider**, educating more than 70 percent of California's higher education students. Community colleges have been recognized by both President Obama and Governor Schwarzenegger as key partners for economic recovery and individual opportunity.
- Demand from unemployed Californians, returning veterans, students turned away from state universities, and individuals seeking training has surged in this recession, as **California community colleges hit a record enrollment of 2.8 million students** systemwide this year. The colleges are already serving more than 140,000 students beyond funded levels this year.<sup>2</sup>
- The "green" and health-care sectors – identified for special investment in the federal stimulus and projected to be growth sectors – **depend on community colleges** to train an important segment of their workforce.
- **Technical and vocational training courses often have higher costs than academic courses**, making them particularly vulnerable when the colleges are economically squeezed.
- **Community colleges are not now slated to receive any direct operating funding** from the federal stimulus package.
- The cuts as proposed would seriously weaken the state's education and training infrastructure, **stripping away workforce pipelines that are crucial to California employers and a strong economic recovery.**

<sup>2</sup> California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

## Recommendations

- Although community colleges have multiple important missions, **it is critical that California maintain the colleges' career technical and vocational training capacity.**
- The Legislature and the Administration have suggested that many cuts to education will be "backfilled" with federal stimulus money for the next year. However, community colleges received no federal stimulus funding support in the initial round of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Program (SFSF). **The state should designate an enhanced portion of funding for the colleges in its Phase 2 (and/or revised Phase 1) application for SFSF funds.**
- **Employers, workforce boards, unions, and others should partner with their region's community colleges to make sure that critical training pipelines are preserved.** For example, the Los Angeles City Workforce Investment Board has invested funds to support selected CTE courses in key regional industries at Los Angeles Community College District campuses.



**On average, students completing a degree or certificate at a community college increase their earnings by 63 percent within three years.**

- California  
Community Colleges  
Chancellor's Office