



Aspen Award Finalists: The Aspen Institute recently announced that two of our colleges have been selected as finalists for the prestigious Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Chaffey College was recognized for its Fast Track program that provides accelerated instruction in an eight-week course format. Pasadena City College was singled out for its success at closing achievement gaps in its STEM programs. The Aspen Prize is the nation's highest recognition for community college innovation and effectiveness, so it is a tremendous accomplishment to have two of our colleges selected as finalists. We will be studying the two programs to determine which effective practices to spotlight in our future best-practices trainings, including those offered through our Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative. The prize winner will be announced in March. Congratulations to Chaffey College President Henry Shannon and Pasadena City College President Rajen Vurdian and their teams for their remarkable achievements. Following are links to related press releases issued by the Chancellor's Office and the Aspen Institute: [CCCCO News Release](#), [Aspen Institute News Release](#)

LACCD College Promise Event: Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of attending an inspirational rally at Los Angeles City College at which Los Angeles Community College District announced their new LA College Promise program. This initiative, crafted in partnership with the City of Los Angeles and LAUSD, will offer a pathway to community college for recent high school graduates from Los Angeles, including no tuition for the first year. The rally included speeches by Dr. Jill Biden, Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, LA Mayor Eric Garcetti, LACCD Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez, LAUSD Superintendent Michelle King, student leaders, and others. It was a star-studded line up, but it was Chancellor Rodriguez who really got the rafters shaking with his moving oratory about how our colleges open doors to opportunity and change lives for the students we serve. With over 100 cheering high school and community college students on the stage, it was one of those moments that lifts our souls and reminds us how fortunate we are to be part of this great system. An article about the Los Angeles event can be found at: [LA College Promise](#)

Incoming Chancellor Oakley Receives National Honors: Incoming Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley was named a Champion of Change for College Opportunity by President Obama at a White House event that was held last week. Our next Chancellor was one of eleven individuals from across the nation—and the only from California—to be recognized for their accomplishments in advancing access and success in higher education. Congratulations to Incoming Chancellor Oakley. The following link will take you to a related article: [Oakley](#)

More For-Profit Failures Ahead: Following the closure of ITT Tech colleges nationwide, our colleges partnered with other state and federal agencies to reach out to former students of the for-profit chain to let them know of options related to pursuing their education goals. Our colleges participated in more than 25 outreach events and assisted more than 600 of these students. While the failure of Corinthian Colleges and ITT Tech centers grabbed headlines across the country, a somewhat below-the-radar federal action against the Accrediting

Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) could affect up to 13,000 more California students. The U.S. Department of Education is revoking the authority of this accreditor. If the move is upheld on appeal, 43 California colleges would lose accreditation and may no longer be approved by the state Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education to operate. We are working closely with the bureau to stay informed of this possibility and plan accordingly. A related story can be found at: [ACICS](#)

Civic Participation Grants: The Foundation for California Community Colleges (FCCC) recently announced a new initiative to engage California Community College students in the democratic process at significantly higher rates. The California Community Colleges Civic Impact Project, housed at FCCC, will support a multi-year, non-partisan effort to register voters and promote civic participation at community college campuses across the state. The project seeks to expand and amplify existing college efforts to register and engage students in political life. The new initiative is supported by a grant of \$775,000 from NextGen Climate America. In the months ahead, the Foundation will be seeking other funders to support and expand this civic participation initiative. A press release announcing the new initiative can be found at: [Civic Engagement Initiative](#)

LAO Report on SSSP: Late last week, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released its *Second Progress Report on the Student Success and Support Program of 2012*, evaluating the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) and Student Equity Program (SEP). The 24 page report finds that the programs have been implemented in general alignment with the legislative intent and that an increasing number of students are accessing core services of orientation, counseling, advising, and educational planning. Areas in need of improvement, include: 1) uneven implementation, with some colleges lagging behind; 2) suggestions for improving equity gap analysis; 3) concerns that lags in data reporting impair the Legislature's ability to monitor results; and 4) that colleges have more work to do aligning course offerings with student needs. The report also included some praise for the Chancellor's Office for our ongoing efforts to integrate and align SSSP, SEP, and Basic Skills Initiative. I find the report to be thoughtful and generally fair. We are currently in the process of carefully reviewing the findings and recommendations and will use this feedback in our continual efforts to improve the programs. The report can be found at: [LAO Report](#).

Update on Legislation: Governor Brown has taken action on the last of the bills deposited on his desk from the 2016 Session. Attached, you will find two summary documents prepared by our Governmental Relations team: 1) a summary of legislation deemed to be of highest interest to the California Community Colleges; and 2) a tracking matrix showing the outcomes for a larger set of legislation. Thanks to Acting Vice Chancellor for External Relations Mike Magee and his team for assembling and sharing this useful information.

Save the Date for our March Veterans Summit: Attached you will find information about next spring's California Community Colleges Veterans Summit. The event is always a powerful event as educators from across the California community colleges, along with our colleagues from CSU and UC, gather to share expertise and resources that can support the success of veteran students. The Chancellor's Office hosts the annual event, in conjunction with our partner at the Foundation for California Community Colleges and the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges. This year, the summit will be held March 9-10 in Sacramento. You can find additional information about the event at the following link: <http://veteranssummit.org>.