



COMMUNITY COLLEGE
LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA

April 29, 2020

Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
US House of Representatives
1236 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Kamala Harris
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Federal Stimulus
California Community Colleges

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Senator Feinstein and Senator Harris:

On behalf of the Community College League of California (the League), the association of California Community College districts, and the Association of Chief Business Officers (ACBO) of the California Community Colleges, the professional association of those who manage our district budgets, we want to express our appreciation to you for your leadership in this extraordinary time of crisis and support of our institutions. As the nation's largest segment of public higher education, the California Community Colleges educate and train the majority of respiratory therapists, nurses, public safety officials and others deemed essential for today's economy. Moreover, we are prepared to absorb those who have been dislocated by the pandemic if given the funding to do so. Our colleges are critical for the continued education and training of the frontline workers during this emergency and serving as an economic catalyst for our communities to recover from the recession.

In contrast to our four-year counterparts in California and other universities across the country, our colleges run on extremely narrow financial margins and lack the capacity to sustain reductions in funding from the state without curtailing programs or services to students. While our colleges have quickly shifted educational offerings to remote learning with minimal disruption to students, they have expended tremendous resources in the process and are looking at tough choices ahead.

Our hope in receiving funds from the federal CARES Act was to serve all of our students and quickly replace lost revenue. Unfortunately, we have several concerns with the limitations imposed by the Department of Education on the use of this money that disadvantage the California Community Colleges and which we hope you will address in the next round of federal stimulus.

- A) **We need funds to cover all students, not just those who are eligible for Pell Grants.** As open access institutions of higher education who welcome and value all who enter our doors, we strongly urge you to allow federal funds to be used for our entire array of students,

including, but not limited to, noncredit, fully online, international, DACA, and others that are undocumented. Our institutions cannot in good conscience favor only those who are eligible for Pell Grants while leaving the rest behind. This not only runs contrary to our mission, it tragically pits our system against our four-year counterparts whose students do not reflect as broad a demographic.

- B) **The limitations on the use of institutional dollars are problematic as they severely impede the backfill of expenditures on many critical services and lost revenue upon which we significantly rely.** As all activity at our colleges support instruction, our inability to use these funds for critical services that maintain the campus functionality, such as campus safety, cleaning supplies, and technology, or to make up for other lost revenue from the state or local sources, forces us to constrict our offerings. Like everyone else in this economy, we are in a world of the unknown and doing our best to maintain not just our programs, but our payroll as well. As such, we need the flexibility to locally determine how best to use these resources.
- C) **The overall dollar amount in the CARES Act is insufficient to allow us to maintain quality instruction to students, let alone absorb those dislocated by the crisis.** From our experience with prior downturns, we know that the state government resources will likely be cut at the very time when more students will seek our programs. Our institutions stand ready to serve as the educational destination of first resort for unemployed Californians if funded to do so, and in this regard, we stand proudly with you in serving as a major solution to the national recovery. That said, the needs of higher education across the country and for the California Community Colleges in particular, require the full funding of the \$50 billion initial request, which is more than three and one-half times that allotted in the CARES Act.

As we navigate through these unprecedented times, our community colleges are acting boldly to protect the interests of our over two million students while serving as an economic catalyst to both California and the country. We urge you to continue to act boldly in your role as policymakers by strategically investing in our institutions and allowing us the flexibility to best determine how to use federal resources. Our colleges stand ready to be at the forefront of the recovery and we need your assistance in this effort.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Larry Galizio, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Community College League of California



Ann-Marie Gabel
President
Association of Chief Business Officers