

# FIRST MONDAY

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR BRICE W. HARRIS

## Memorandum

**DATE:** May 4, 2015  
**TO:** California Community College CEOs  
**FROM:** Brice W. Harris, State Chancellor  
**SUBJECT:** First Monday – May 2015

Colleagues,

The following are items of interest and importance for our system, and are provided for your information. If you have comments or concerns on any of these items, feel free to email me at [bharris@cccco.edu](mailto:bharris@cccco.edu), or telephone me at (916) 322-4005.

1. **Student Success Initiative Update:** As you know, it is our plan to conclude work in the Chancellor's Office on the Student Success Initiative by the end of this year. I have enclosed an updated matrix on the 22 recommendations approved by the Board of Governors in January 2012. As you will see, we have completed the Chancellor's Office responsibility on all but five of the recommendations. However, completing the state-level work is not meant to suggest that all of you are not continuing to implement the many changes you are making at the local level. Student success work at all of our colleges was robust before this initiative and will continue as long as the system exists. In the last few weeks we have posted the most recent college-level data on the Scorecard to the website and if you have not had a chance to look at your college results, I encourage you to do so. Unfortunately, our key metric of overall completion has still not increased, but some of the key trends of improving remediation have continued and I am convinced that all the numbers will begin to trend up in the coming years as the work you are doing begins to positively affect student success. Thank you for all your work on this very successful effort.
2. **Update on Online Education:** I have written to you before about the Online Education Initiative (OEI), a system-wide initiative designed to expand access to quality online courses and student services in order to increase student success and retention. The initiative has been making great progress, recently completing a rigorous RFP process that selected the Instructure's Canvas product as the project's course management system. Canvas and OEI will be implemented at a significant number of colleges within the next year. It is anticipated that the new system will significantly reduce the cost that colleges are currently incurring for their course management systems. Over the next two years, pilot colleges will begin offering online courses within the OEI framework. All faculty and staff will have opportunities for collaboration and professional development starting in Spring 2015. Upon successful completion of the pilots, all California community colleges will have access to online learning readiness modules and tutoring solutions for free, or at reduced cost. By 2016, the common course management system will also be available to all colleges. The OEI is managed by the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, in partnership with the CCC Technology Center at Butte College under a grant issued by the CCC Chancellor's Office. Frequently asked questions about this process are available at the OEI site at <http://ccconlineed.org>.
3. **Web-Based Education Planning Tools:** The Education Planning Initiative (EPI) was established based on a recommendation of the Student Success Task Force to leverage technology tools to better guide students through their community college education. EPI is a system-wide initiative that will develop a student services portal to customize and sequence matriculation information and activities to lead students toward successful completion of



their goals, and an education planning and degree audit system to provide transcript, articulation, and curriculum inventory elements to colleges and help college counselors reach more students. Through an extensive bidding process, the initiative recently selected Unicon to develop the student services portal using open source software. After the pilot phase, the portal will be made available system-wide and will give colleges the ability to brand each portal with their logos and school colors and will provide flexibility to adapt the solution to the evolving needs of the community college system and student needs. In addition, Hobsons was selected as the most responsive and responsible vendor to develop and provide the education planning tools and degree audit system. Their solution includes the Starfish Retention Solution which further strengthened their offering. EPI is maintaining an aggressive timeline through development, piloting and a phased release and implementation plan aimed at delivering a solution to the pilot colleges by the end of 2015. The California Community Colleges Technology Center at Butte-Glenn Community College District is coordinating EPI under a Chancellor's Office grant. More information can be found at <http://cccedplan.org/>. This is a project that holds tremendous potential to benefit our students and I appreciate all of you who have been involved in its development.

4. **Improved Assessment Tools:** The Common Assessment Initiative (CAI) was launched to develop a state-wide system for students that provides test preparation tools, greater diagnostic guidance for course placement, and the ability to apply the results of a single placement test at multiple colleges. CAI will also reduce test taking for the students, yielding convenience and cost savings to both students and colleges. CAI is making great strides toward a phased rollout beginning in Fall 2016 for Spring 2017 placement. After an extensive bidding process, two vendors were chosen by the selection committee: Unicon, Inc. for Platform and Administration, and Link Systems International, Inc. for test content development in English, math, and ESL. The partnerships with these two vendors means the CCC system will own the Common Assessment System and all of its components, leading to a cost savings for colleges and districts. The test development workgroups are busy developing test items for the adaptive system to be made available system-wide. Test item piloting will begin in June and piloting for software, professional development, and multiple measures components will happen this fall. CAI is being implemented by a coalition led by Butte-Glenn Community College District, in partnership with San Joaquin Delta College, Saddleback Community College, the California Community Colleges Technology Center, the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS Plus), and the Academic Senate. All those involved in this important pilot phase deserve our thanks and appreciation.
5. **Task Force on Workforce, Jobs and a Strong Economy:** Although many of you were updated at the recent Northern and Southern California CEO meetings on this subject, I wanted to provide you with some supporting documentation for the work of the Board of Governor's Task Force on Workforce, Jobs and a Strong Economy. I have enclosed the executive summary of the fourteen regional college conversations and five town hall meetings that have been held since late last year. My sincere appreciation to all of you who participated and/or hosted these activities. As you will read in the document, there was a good deal of consensus among the more than 700 participants in these activities on the challenges we face in workforce education and on the thematic areas in which the task force should focus their work. Since the completion of these meetings, the task force has met once and will meet again in May, June and July before producing their report. That report will be shared with the Consultation Council and statewide in two additional meetings in July before ultimately going to the Board of Governors for consideration in September. Although some believe that this process is moving too fast, our employer community partners tell us it is too slow, so we must have the pace about right. I assure you there is ample opportunity for everyone to participate in this process and if you want to know more about how to provide your opinions please go to the Task Force website at <http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/StrongWorkforce.aspx> where you will find a way to participate electronically.
6. **Board of Governors Appointees:** Last week, Governor Brown appointed two new members to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors. New to the Board are Connie Conway and Jennifer Perry. Connie Conway, of Tulare, served as a member of the California State Assembly from 2008 to 2014, where she was Minority Leader from 2010 to 2014. Jennifer Perry, of Los Angeles, has been executive director at the Children's Action Network since 1990. Both of these appointments are strong additions to the Board of Governors and we look forward to working with them on behalf of the more than 2.1 million students attending a California community college. Enclosed is the press release announcing the appointments.