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GROSSMONT-CUYAMACA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

**2011-2012 Federal Legislative Program**

**Financial Aid and Workforce Preparation**

**Summary**

Federal priorities for the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District focus on access to community college through financial aid and on workforce preparation programs that are key to students and the community. Grossmont and Cuyamaca are part of a vast network of 112 colleges in California and almost 1,200 nationwide that serve as primary gateways to higher education for 44% of the nation's undergraduates and, in the East County, for 30,000 students – a number that has begun to decline as revenue cuts force the reduction of courses and services.

**The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District supports:**

1. Preserving maximum access to the Pell Grant program for all eligible low-income community college students.
2. Maintaining the Pell Grant maximum award at \$5,550.
3. Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act and prioritizing the role of community colleges in delivering education and training.
4. Recognition by local workforce investment boards of community colleges as “preferred partners.”
5. Continued funding of the Carl Perkins Act Streamlined reporting requirements for Federal programs.

**Background**

**Financial Aid**

Federal programs provide significant financial aid for community college students, supporting their access to career/technical, general education, and transfer programs. **Pell Grants** are widely recognized as the largest and most important federal higher education program. With the help of Pell Grants to assist with the costs of tuition, books and supplies, and living expenses, approximately 3 million low-income students are able to attend community college each year. The economic downturn has made these grants even more essential, as both the overall number of community college students and those with financial need have surged. The maximum grants, with their increase to \$5,550 in 2010, have been particularly important to San Diego region's residents because of the high cost of living. Efforts to reduce this level would penalize the most financially needy students.

For the 2009-10 school year, more than 6,500 GCCCD students received a Pell Grant, a 78 percent increase from 2007-08. The average income of Pell Grant Recipients classified as independent students (not living with a parent or guardian and reliant on their own income) is \$13,413. The average income of dependent students is \$25,685. The majority of independent and dependent students are employed either part- or full-time. Need-based grants provide essential support for students who come from the lowest-income households.

*The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District supports:*

- 1. Preserving maximum access to the Pell Grant program for all eligible low-income community college students.*
- 2. Maintaining the Pell Grant maximum award level at \$5,500.*

## **Workforce Preparation**

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District plays a major role in helping the economy recover and is committed to increased attainment by our students of high quality degrees and certificates to meet the need for an increasingly skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that occupations which require an associate degree will grow the fastest of any occupations from 2008-2018, at about 19 percent. Middle-skill jobs represent 49 percent of the jobs in California, including health care workers, police, and firefighters. Middle-skill jobs are also essential to the energy efficiency, wind, solar, and bio-fuels industry.

*A Grossmont College student in the cardiovascular technician program has been selected to work on a NASA-sponsored research program studying space medicine in zero gravity.*

Federal career/technical policies and funding support preparation for specific occupations and industries.

*Cuyamaca College has been at the forefront of green jobs training, housing the Environmental Training Center, working on the Border Area Development and Growth of Environmental Responsibility (BADGER) Project for the Environmental Protection Agency, and developing new solar energy training programs.*

*Grossmont College's forensic program has been praised as being one of the best in the nation.*

Many of the federally supported workforce programs carry with them onerous reporting requirements which are in need of streamlining. In addition, public institutions of higher education, whose programs are monitored for quality through accreditation, state licensure and other state and federal programs, should be deemed automatically eligible to provide services to WIA participants.

*The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District supports:*

- 1. Streamlined reporting requirements for Federal programs.*

The **Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act** is one of the largest and most established sources of federal institutional support for community college career/technical programs, helping improve all aspects of cutting edge educational programs. The Perkins Act gives postsecondary institutions the flexibility to identify local priorities and use the basic State Grants to fund innovation in career/technical education programs.

Community colleges use these funds for a variety of purposes, including training first responders and other public safety officers; helping students meet challenging academic, vocational, and technical standards; improving curricula; purchasing equipment; integrating career/technical and academic instruction; and fostering better links between colleges and the business community.

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District received \$1.6 million in federal Perkins funds in 2009-10, using those monies for supplies, equipment and training in a variety of program. Expenditures included simulation supplies for the health professions; fingerprinting and crime scene processing equipment for administration of justice programs; irrigation supplies and equipment leases for the ornamental horticulture program; and engine performance and repair equipment for the automotive program. Funds are also used for some staffing, including tutors and student aides. The District's Tech-Prep program works closely with East County high schools to align curriculum and support seamless progression from high school through community college career/technical workforce preparation.

*The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District supports:*

1. *Continued funding of the Carl Perkins Act, including the Tech Prep Program*

A source of support for unemployed and underemployed adults is the **Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**, which has been due for re-authorization since 2004. The WIA governs the federal workforce development system administered by the United States Department of Labor and the adult education program administered by the United States Department of Education. Both are vital to community colleges. The WIA should be reauthorized in 2011. The role of community colleges in delivering education and training programs and services should be prioritized. Job training and adult basic education must be better integrated and emphasize the attainment of postsecondary credentials.

*The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District supports:*

1. *Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, prioritizing the role of community colleges in delivering education and training*
2. *Recognition by local workforce investment boards of community colleges as "preferred partners"*