



Moving Forward

January 20, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year and welcome back from winter break! I hope that you enjoyed some downtime with friends and family.

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to challenge us, and certainly reinforced the need for flexibility and grace. I know that we have asked a lot of our employees in the past two years as we struggled to navigate and adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of the pandemic — and I cannot thank you enough. The Board of Trustees and I are deeply grateful for your perseverance and commitment to the success and safety of our students.

As we begin 2022, your health and safety, and the health and safety of our students, remain our priority. We will continue to closely follow the latest developments with this current COVID-19 surge and will not let our guard down when it comes to public health measures and guidance.

I would like to share a few updates.

Update on the Spring Semester

After careful review of the most recent local COVID-19 data, the Chancellor's Cabinet has decided to temporarily move as many on-campus spring classes as feasible to remote delivery, through February 18. Courses that cannot easily shift to remote instruction will continue to meet in-person on campus.

In the coming days, the presidents and their leadership teams will carefully assess which spring semester classes can be moved online, and which must remain in person. The Presidents and Vice Chancellors will also work with their teams to determine the schedule for their employees to return to campus based on a variety of criteria including: population density in various locations on campus, operational needs, and whether essential functions can be done remotely on a temporary basis. Your supervisors and managers will be in touch with more specifics.

We know that the Omicron variant of COVID-19 is highly transmissible, so our goal is to manage the number of employees and students spending time on campus. The volume of Omicron cases has begun to level off, but we continue to keep a close eye on the latest trend. Public health experts project that the current surge will subside in about three to four weeks. We plan to fully return to on campus operations beginning February 22.

The District has a limited supply of KN95/N95 masks available to employees working on campus. We are planning to order more masks and COVID-19 rapid tests, as supplies become available, to support health and safety throughout the spring semester.

Thank you for your flexibility and continued commitment to our students.

Governor Proposes a Robust State Budget

Last week, Governor Gavin Newsom proposed a \$286 billion budget for fiscal 2022-2023 that would make bold new investments in the state, including in California community colleges. The budget proposal, called [The California Blueprint](#), projects a \$45.7 billion surplus and calls for increasing state spending overall by about 9 percent. The proposal still has a long way to go, including negotiations with state lawmakers over the coming months. The final budget must pass the State Legislature by June 15.

The proposed budget offers a vision for tackling short and long-term challenges facing the state, ranging from income inequality to natural disasters. Governor Newsom emphasized that the budget includes fiscally disciplined measures such as contributing \$34.6 billion to reserves, continuing to pay down long-term retirement debt, and prioritizing one-time spending over ongoing.

The Governor identified major statewide investments in five key areas:

- **Fighting COVID-19** with science, including spending an additional \$2.7 billion to increase vaccines, boosters, and statewide testing, and adding medical personnel.
- **Combating the climate crisis**, through \$22.5 billion in spending over the next five years to fight climate change and protect communities.
- **Confronting homelessness** by creating 55,000 new housing units and treatment slots.
- **Tackling the cost of living** through universal access to healthcare coverage, bringing down the cost of childcare and education, building more housing, and growing small businesses.

- **Keeping streets safe** through bolstering law enforcement and local responses to crime, adding more prosecutors and getting more guns and drugs off the streets.

When it comes to higher education, Newsom emphasized developing a multiyear framework across California's community colleges, and UC and CSU systems. The framework would set both goals and expectations, including 70 percent postsecondary degree and certificate attainment by 2030. The multiyear framework focuses in part on closing equity gaps, improving workforce preparedness, reducing the cost of attendance, and building enrollment.

The proposed budget includes a relatively even split between ongoing and one-time revenue.

Following are the highlights for community colleges:

- **Ongoing Funding:**
 - \$409.4M: 5.33% Cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Student-Centered Funding Formula
 - \$17.5M: 5.33% COLA for EOPS, DSPS, and CalWORKS programs
 - \$200M: Part-time faculty health insurance program. This additional funding will allow the State to pay the District back at a higher rate than the current reimbursement rate.
 - \$100M: Student success completion grants related to expanded Cal Grant eligibility
 - \$24.9M: Systemwide enrollment growth of 0.5%, which includes all components of the SCFF
 - \$25.M: Technology modernization
- **One-time Funding:**
 - \$387.6M: Deferred maintenance
 - \$150M: Student retention and enrollment efforts
 - \$130M: Adult education healthcare pathways
 - \$105M: Common course numbering implementation
 - \$75M: Technology modernization
 - \$20M: Emergency financial assistance grants to AB540 students

Next Steps in the Budget Process

January marks the beginning of the budget cycle in California each year. Over the next several months, the proposed state budget will likely change as interest groups and public entities advocate with members of the Legislature. Each year, our Governing Board members, District leadership and student leaders travel to Sacramento in late January to meet with our state legislators. This year, we are planning to visit remotely, and we will strongly advocate for our funding priorities, including approving the 5.33% proposed COLA; stabilizing funding for districts that are currently funded based upon enrollment levels in 2017 (hold harmless); and supporting student basic needs.

Following the Legislature's review of the budget and updated state revenue projections later this spring, a revised state budget will be presented in May, with final approval by the Legislature by mid-June.

We are encouraged by the Governor's early indication of strong support for community colleges. There is a great deal to applaud and reason for optimism.

Building long-term financial stability continues to be a top priority for our District. Along those lines, one area of strong advocacy will include making permanent those temporary protections for community colleges through the Student-Centered Funding Formula's (SCFF) hold harmless provisions.

Over the next few months, District and college leadership will focus on developing the budget for 2022-2023. As part of the budget development process, we will continue to address our long-term fiscal health to ensure stability. The process will include broad participation from all constituent groups.

We remain optimistic about improvements in the coming year and will keep you updated on our efforts.

With gratitude,

Lynn

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