

**CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE**

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August 27, 2014

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2558 (Williams) Community Colleges: Faculty and Staff Development

REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, the Chancellor's Office is pleased to sponsor and support AB 2558 by Assembly Member Das Williams. This bill updates and revises statute on professional development to make it more inclusive of all community college employees.

In 2011, the California community colleges began a historic process to improve student outcomes through the Student Success Task Force (SSTF). The work of the task force resulted in specific recommendations to identify key strategies to invest in student success. Included in these strategies were recommendations to revitalize and re-envision professional development opportunities for community college faculty and staff. Subsequent to the SSTF, a system-wide Professional Development Committee was tasked with developing specific proposals to improve professional development. AB 2558 embodies statutory changes recommended by the committee. Specifically, the bill updates the Education Code to establish the Community College Professional Development Program. The bill authorizes the use of state funding for professional development activities if it becomes available in future years and specifies that districts that apply to participate in the Community College Professional Development Program must provide professional development opportunities to both faculty *and* staff.

Over the past 12 years professional development activities for community college employees have been in a state of decline. Although a state funded program was originally established in 1988, budget reductions over the years resulted in an elimination of this funding by 2002. Consequently, few resources for professional development opportunities have existed in recent years. In addition, what little support there has been for professional development on campuses has been focused primarily on faculty and not *all* campus employees, such as classified and administrative staff, who also strive to ensure a positive environment for students.

The importance of professional development cannot be understated. Students need the assistance of a wide variety of effective, well-trained, and motivated personnel on campus. Students who receive the best assistance with arranging their financial aid, navigating the assessment process, developing an education plan, and finding educational resources are more likely to be successful in their course work. In addition, community colleges serve a diverse population of students. Faculty and staff can benefit from the most up-to-date training on meeting the needs of all students to ensure that an inclusive and

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accessible environment is provided at our campuses. Although funding for professional development was not included in this year's budget, the statutory changes are still necessary to ensure that all campus employees will be included in the future. The Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office thanks you for your consideration and urges you to sign this measure. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 445-4434.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brice W. Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a distinct "W".

Brice W. Harris
Chancellor

cc: Assembly Member Das Williams