



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

MEDIA STATEMENT

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California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott Comments on the Santa Monica College Decision to Hold-off on Two-Tier Fee Plan

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott today issued a statement about the Santa Monica College Board of Trustees' decision to hold off on its plan to institute a two-tier fee structure for high-demand courses beginning in the summer session 2012:

“Santa Monica Community College District trustees and President Tsang have my respect and appreciation for their decision to hold off on plans to institute a dual fee system for courses in high-demand. Although I disagreed with this proposal, I cannot fault college leaders for searching for new approaches to serve students hungry for the opportunity to receive a college education. Tragically, we as a state have failed to properly fund community colleges, and our economy will suffer as a result. I will work closely with the Santa Monica College leaders on strategies to improve access and success for all students.”

In March 2012 the Santa Monica College Board of Trustees passed an initiative to have a nonprofit foundation offer some high-demand core classes such as math and English at a higher price during the summer and winter sessions alongside the same state-funded courses. The California Community Colleges system-wide fees, set by the governor and Legislature, will increase to \$46 per unit this summer. The Santa Monica College two-tier plan would offer a 3-unit class such as English 1A at the state-funded amount of \$138 in addition to the same student-subsidized course offered for \$540.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office believes the two-tier fee program is not permissible under the California Education Code and has asked the California Attorney General's Office for advice.

Santa Monica College developed the two-tier plan in response to the deep cuts the California Community Colleges have suffered the last several years. In July 2012, the two-year system had its state funding reduced by \$400 million, and in December mid-year “trigger” cuts resulted in an additional \$102 million reduction because state revenues fell short of projections. Then, in February 2012, community colleges took an additional \$149 million unexpected cut. Since 2008-09, the college system has seen its funding slashed by \$809 million, which translates into a 12 percent reduction.

State budget cuts have forced community college campuses to reduce course offerings by roughly 15 percent at a time when more students than ever are seeking admission. The cuts have resulted in a greater number of

students squeezing into fewer classes, waitlisted seats soaring in to the tens of thousands and summer and winter session offerings either being greatly reduced or eliminated entirely. Since the 2009-10 academic year, the California Community Colleges enrollment has decreased by nearly 300,000 students. The decline is directly attributed to the state's disinvestment in higher education because students simply cannot get into the classes they need to achieve their educational goals.

The [California Community Colleges](#) is the largest system of higher education in the nation. It is composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.6 million students each year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills courses in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

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