



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Community Colleges React to Today's LAO Fee Increase Report **Colleges advocate fees must be moderate, not increased by 200 percent**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Community colleges differ with the state Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) on the impact of fee increases to student enrollment. Information presented by the LAO in its June 11 report, "California Community Colleges: Raising Fees Could Mitigate Program Cuts and Leverage More Federal Aid" is at odds with a prior report issued by the Chancellor's Office in December 2005. The LAO report states that raising student fees to as high as \$60 per unit would have no impact on community college students.

"Although the state's fiscal crisis and the deep budget cuts proposed for the community colleges may compel state leaders to increase student fees in order to preserve core instruction and services, the legislature must carefully consider the negative impact on student access," said Community Colleges Vice Chancellor, Terri Carbaugh. "Our experience indicates that larger fee increases drive away students and that for a fee increase to achieve its end goal, it must be moderate."

In 2005, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office prepared a report on the effect of student fee increases. Below are highlights of the report:

- California Community Colleges student fees increased from \$11 to \$18 a unit in 2003-04 and from \$18 to \$26 in 2004-05.
- Student fee increases and budget cuts resulted in significant decline in enrollments of approximately 230,000 to 315,000 students and a loss of more than 12,000 course sections.
- It is not possible to isolate the separate effects of the fee increases and budget cuts but it is clear that the fee increases had a significant role in the enrollment decline.
- The full report is available at:
http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/TRIS/research/reports/impact_study_18_26.pdf

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“The reality is when you are dealing with many of our younger and lower income students, especially those ranging from 17-25 years of age, it may be unrealistic to expect everyone to fully take advantage of a tax credit as the LAO proposes,” said Carbaugh. “Although many community college students currently receive Pell Grants, fee waivers and Cal Grants, these aid programs help them to pay for fees, textbooks and the general costs associated with attending a community college. Raising student fees will not leverage additional federal financial aid for these students. The Pell Grant won’t increase as a result of the state taking action to increase fees. Community college students will have less money available to cover other educationally related expenses such as textbooks. “

In testimony before the state budget committee, Chancellor Jack Scott has argued, “In order to minimize negative impacts on students, any fee increases should be limited to \$2 per unit. An increase above \$6 per unit would risk significant and lasting negative impacts on community college participation.”

Current fees for the California Community Colleges are \$20 per unit.

The California Community Colleges is the largest higher educational system in the nation comprised of 72 districts and 110 colleges serving 2.8 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit www.cccco.edu.

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