



# CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

**PRESS RELEASE**

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### **New Research Finds California Community Colleges Fee Waiver Program is Most Effective in the Country at Providing Assistance to Needy Students**

*Thirty-year-old program has enhanced college access for historically under-represented students*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – New research comparing community college state financial aid “Promise” programs and other efforts directed at covering tuition around the country shows that the California Community Colleges fee waiver program does the most to provide access to students in need of financial assistance.

Now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year, the [Board of Governors Fee Waiver](#) has provided tuition-free education for more than 5.1 million needy Californians and effectively provides access to historically underrepresented students, according to the [report](#) by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Division of Technology, Research and Information Systems. Some 1.1 million students in California are now receiving the Board of Governors fee waiver.

The research conducted by Dr. Stacy B. Fisher compares the Board of Governors Fee Waiver to America’s College Promise proposed by President Obama and aid programs in six other states and tracks the history of the California program.

Only California and two other states, Georgia and New York, offer programs that do not limit how much support a student receives from a tuition grant based on other aid received. This “first dollar” approach helps cover more of students unmet needs.

California’s application and eligibility process is relatively straightforward and more flexible than other states, according to the research. Additionally, the share of historically underrepresented students receiving the Board of Governors Fee Waiver is increasing. While African Americans and Latinos as a share of the state’s population is 45 percent, these students represent 58 percent of the total receiving the Board of Governors Fee Waiver.

Three of the states studied, Oregon, Kentucky and South Carolina, allow assistance to be used for other educational expenses. The Board of Governors Fee Waiver covers enrollment fees only, but other assistance such as Pell Grants and Cal Grants are available for this purpose

“More assistance, however, needs to be provided to cover non-enrollment costs of college,” said California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris. “Despite the tremendous success of the Board of Governors Fee Waiver over three decades, much more must be done to support students in a high cost state such as California,” Harris said. “Only 6 percent of the state’s Cal Grant dollars go to community college students, making the net cost of education for our students higher than for UC and CSU students in many areas of the state.”

The Board of Governors is sponsoring legislation that would enhance Cal Grant benefits. Assembly bill 1721 by Assembly member Jose Medina (D-Riverside), Assembly member David Chiu (D-San Francisco), Assembly member Evan Low (D-Campbell), Assembly member Freddie Rodriguez (D-Pamona), Assembly member Miguel Santiago (D-Los Angeles) and Assembly member Phil Ting (D-San Francisco) and Assembly bill 1892 by Assembly member Medina (D-Riverside) would expand the Cal Grant B and C programs for community college students to provide more assistance to help cover the full cost of attending college.

*The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 113 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education in English and math, 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 <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.*

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