



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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Paul Feist

Phone: 916.327.5353

E-mail: pfeist@cccco.edu

Proposed Online Community College Would Offer Pathway in Information Technology Support

Technology and Organized Labor Giants Hail Move as Way to Develop Talent and Fill Jobs

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Gov. Jerry Brown’s proposed online community college seeks to fill the growing demand for information technology workers in California by offering education programs in IT support, Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley announced today.

“There are thousands of openings each year in IT network and end user support in California,” Oakley said. “Working hand in hand with the state’s technology sector we will create a pathway for more Californians to gain skills that will lead to increased wages and expanded career opportunities.”

“We strongly support Gov. Brown’s proposal for an online community college with a new pathway aimed at IT Support,” said Mark Plunkett, senior director of strategic business development at CompTIA, the world’s leading technology association.

“CompTIA’s most recent Cyberstates report indicates there were more than 400,000 technology job postings in California last year,” Plunkett added. “To fill these positions and remain competitive across the globe, students must have access to flexible and affordable training programs that allow them to get necessary certifications to land lifelong careers.”

The IT Support employment outlook is strong over the next several years. There are currently around 100,000 network and user support specialists in California, with more than 10,000 new openings projected per year through 2024. These entry-level support specialist jobs, with median wages of \$28 per hour, are also viable steppingstones to higher paying IT jobs.

“On any given day, IBM has thousands of job openings in the U.S., including many positions which do not require a traditional four-year degree,” said Robert McDonald, vice president of training for IBM. “There's a shortage of candidates with the right mix of in-demand technology skills to fill such positions. IBM is advocating for innovations in technical training and novel skills programs to address this skills gap.”

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Both the network support and user support programs will include foundational curriculum in literacy, numeracy, digital and soft skills with instruction contextualized to the IT workplace.

In addition to drawing support from the tech sector, the proposal has the backing of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1000, which represents 96,000 working people employed by the state of California.

“Developing leaders is a priority for Local 1000, and we are proud to be partners with the state to establish an online community college creating pathways to train qualified IT professionals,” said Margarita Maldonado, vice president for bargaining for the local.

The IT support pathway is the second to be announced for the online college, which is included in Brown’s revised budget plan released today. Last month, the community colleges system and SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West Joint Employers Education Fund detailed plans to partner in a program leading to a certificate in medical coding, another career field with significant labor demand.

If approved, the new online college would help so-called stranded workers who have struggled to obtain credentials to get ahead in today’s economy because work or family obligations prevent them from attending a brick and mortar campus.

The proposed online programs, whose fees would be in line with the low-cost options available at other community colleges, would allow working learners to earn their credentials in a flexible and personalized manner so they can keep their current jobs and continue to support their families. If approved, the college will operate with unionized faculty and staff just as at other community colleges.

Learn more about the proposal for a more accessible higher education alternative at the [online community college website](#).

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, composed of 72 districts and 114 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. California community colleges provide career education and workforce training; guaranteed transfer to four-year universities; degree and certificate pathways; and basic skills education in English and math. As the state’s engine for social and economic mobility, the California Community Colleges supports the [Vision for Success](#), a strategic plan designed to improve student success outcomes, increase transfer rates and eliminate achievement gaps. For more information, please visit the [California Community Colleges website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).