August 29, 2014

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

RE:  SB 1391 (Hancock) Community Colleges: Inmate Education Programs: Computation of Apportionments

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 support Senate Bill 1391 by Senator Loni Hancock. This bill would increase educational and workforce training opportunities for prison inmates by equalizing reimbursement rates for community college courses held at correctional facilities statewide and by also creating an interagency agreement between the Chancellor’s Office and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to expand inmate access to community college courses.

Specifically, SB 1391 waives open course requirements for community college courses offered in state correctional facilities and requires that credit courses at all correctional facilities be funded at the credit rate; Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) courses be funded at the CDCP rate; and noncredit courses be funded at the noncredit rate. SB 1391 would therefore eliminate an existing disincentive for community colleges to provide educational courses to inmates at state correctional institutions and require that appropriate reimbursement rates be provided for credit, enhanced noncredit or noncredit courses.

SB 1391 also requires the Chancellor’s Office and the CDCR to enter into an interagency agreement to provide community college courses to inmates in state correctional facilities. The courses provided would lead to degrees or certificates that would enhance workforce skills or allow for transfer to four year universities. The provision of expanded educational opportunities to incarcerated students under SB 1391 will help these inmates find jobs and become productive citizens when they are released so that they can contribute positively to the state’s economy. In the long term, reducing recidivism will result in substantial savings to the state by reducing incarceration costs.

We thank you for your consideration of this measure and urge you to sign SB 1391. If you or your staff has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 445-4434.

Sincerely,

Brice W. Harris
Chancellor

cc: Senator Loni Hancock