

May 15, 2018

The Honorable Holly Mitchell
The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Fully-Online Community College Proposal – Oppose

Dear Senators Mitchell and Portantino:

The California Federation of Teachers deeply appreciated a detailed-oriented subcommittee hearing (April 12, 2018) on the administration’s proposal to create a fully-online community college and calls on you to reject that proposal.

Upon the release of Governor’s January proposal, there have been several hearings from both chambers pointing out the many flaws associated with this problematic proposal. Community college educators throughout the state soundly reject the governor’s proposal for a fully-online college.

The Governor’s May Revision continues to commit \$120 million to this proposal, despite the proposal coming under fire for being expensive, unnecessary, duplicative, and counterproductive. We are deeply disappointed by the lack of understanding and acceptance of this issue by the administration. While some details have changed, the revision continues to avoid several criticisms raised during the subcommittee hearings:

- **Governor’s Proposed Solution Not Tied to Root Issues.** The administration does not identify specific root causes responsible for low educational attainment among some groups. As a result, it is unclear if an online college would address these needs in any way.
- **Creating a New College Has Significant Drawbacks Compared to Working Within our Existing System.** Compared to making changes within the existing CCC system, creating a new college requires greater upfront spending and takes longer for programs to get started. By starting a new college, initial programs would not be accredited. Students enrolled in the college’s programs prior to accreditation would be unable to receive federal financial aid and would not be able to transfer credits to other colleges.
- **The budget allocation for this proposal exceeds the annual budget of 55 out of 73 (75%) of our existing Community College Districts.**

May 15, 2018

Page Two

Fully-Online Community College Proposal – **Oppose**

- **This proposed college would be run by an appointed Board, with no local control, no electoral accountability, and absolutely no community involvement or participation whatsoever,** the antithesis of the founding principles of our community college system.
- **The LAO has recommended that the legislature *reject* this proposal in its entirety,** and instead recommends “exploring systemwide improvements to existing programs for working adults.” We fully concur with this recommendation.
- **Unclear How Statewide Industry Partnerships Would Be Developed.** Proposal lacks detail regarding how the new college will develop statewide industry partnerships. This is especially problematic given the regional nature of many industries. Without partnerships in all areas of the state, students may not have access to hands-on experiences critical to program completion.
- **The State Would Likely Need to Contract Out** these instructional services as there would not be enough time and human resource available to build this from the ground up.

At your hearing, the Legislative Analyst Office cautioned, "Governor's problem statement and proposed solution are not well defined. The administration does not provide a clear rationale for why a new community college is needed to address these problems, rather than making systemwide improvements through existing community colleges." We concur with this assessment.

For these reasons, we ask that you reject this proposal, and redirect the funds allocated for this purpose to strengthen existing resources within the colleges, such as the Online Education Initiative, and other college specific online initiatives.

Sincerely,



Jim Mahler, President

Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers

JM:eeb-opeiu29:afl-cio

cc: Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 1
The Honorable Toni Atkins, Senate President Pro Temp
Kimberly Rodriguez, Office of Senate Pro Temp Atkins
Anita Lee, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Lark Park, Office of Governor Jerry Brown
Chris Ferguson, Department of Finance