

CCCEOPSA Position on Student Success Task Force Recommendations

Mission statement

It is the mission of the California Community College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, EOPS to encourage the enrollment, retention and transfer of students handicapped by language, social, economic and educational disadvantages, and to facilitate the successful completion of their goals and objectives in college.

It was the vision of Senator Al Alquist who pioneered Senate Bill 164 in 1969 by introducing the state funded program whose roots originated from the civil rights movement of that same decade. It is that same vision that sustains these programs today in all community colleges across California – a vision of social justice coupled with student success.

While we find some of the recommendations favorable to the EOPS mission and intent as prescribed by the aforementioned legislation, we have grave concerns with some of the proposed recommendations. We oppose any proposal that challenges the foundation of providing access to higher education to those with the greatest economic needs.

The CCCEOPSA opposes any proposal that includes EOPS and block grant categorical funding, flexibility of program mandates and opening of Title 5 regulations leading to the dismantling of programs intended to facilitate academic success to those students with the greatest needs.

Block grant funding would cycle the residents of California back to an era plagued with educational access for the privileged not the poor.

Our position is that there is no evidence or assurances that if block grant funding, flexibility and opening up Title 5 is implemented that protected groups of students would receive sufficient services or achieve student success. Block grant funding allows districts to shift dollars to where the greatest needs are located at a respective district (e.g., staffing priorities) and dollars earmarked to the neediest students are therefore utilized to balance district budgets.

The EOPS legislative intent was born from the California Master Plan to ensure that all of California's people have equal access to advancing their lives through education and employment.

CCCEOPSA specific concerns in the following areas:

Chapter 8

8.1 Consolidate select categorical programs.

Position: No flexibility for EOPS and no block grant categorical funding. Flexibility severs the categorical funding from its legislative intent defined in statutory Ed Code requirements. It also eliminates Chancellor's Office oversight of the implementation of Title 5 regulations at the local level. This oversight is essential for program integrity and fiscal accountability.

Chapter 3

3.1 *The Community College will adopt system-wide enrollment priorities that: (1) reflect the core mission of transfer, career technical education and basic skills development; (2) encourage students to identify their educational objective and follow a prescribed path most likely to lead to success; (3) ensure access and the opportunity for success for new students; and (4) incentivize students to make progress toward their educational goal.*

1. Are placed for two consecutive terms (G.P.A. below 2.0 after attempting 12 or more units) or Progress Probation (failure to successfully complete 50% of their classes).

Position: Academic dismissal policies are already in place therefore this language is unnecessary and more punitive than what is in place. Do not deny registration priority to students in academic or progress probation.

3.1 (continued)

2. Accrue 100 units (not counting basic skills and ESL courses)

Positions: We are concerned with this proposal because this will affect our high unit major students. Students in high unit majors need more than 100 degree applicable units to complete their programs of study. These high unit majors include nursing, engineering, engineering technology and mathematics; all of the STEM major areas of study.

3.2 *Require students receiving Board of Governors (BOG) fee waivers to meet various conditions and requirements, as specified below.*

(A) Require students receiving a (BOG) fee waiver to identify a degree, certificate, transfer or career advancement goal

Position: 60% of our students are entering college as undecided majors. To penalize incoming students contradicts the basic principle of the California master plan in making the California Community College system open access to all students.. The counseling-to-student ratio has to be reduced 900:1 (agreement with) and properly funded.

(B) Require students to meet institutions satisfactory academic standards to be eligible for the fee waiver renewal.

Position: The consequences of this recommendation will be that students that can afford to pay the tax being levied on them as fees increase will remain, while low-income students requiring the BOGFW will be pushed out. We already have academic probation dismissal policies in place that require students to maintain a 2.0 grade point average and now follow the newly enacted Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards for Federal Student Aid as of July 1, 2011. These students cannot be held to this standard given that 60% of them enter

college basic skills deficient. This will also impact any reverse transfer student attempting to get a second chance when redirected from the university.

(C) Limit the number of units covered under the BOG fee waiver to 110 units

Position: Students in high unit majors should not be included, nor ESL and basic skill courses. Unemployed students and under-employed students --- (THE WORKING POOR), need financial access to community college courses to improve their skill sets even after they have completed 110 units.

If these recommendations were to go into effect, approximately 200,000 students would be disenfranchised. This would allow students that have financial resources and not in need of BOGW's to continue in college. The 89 million cost savings to the system would come from the backs of the poor and most vulnerable students. We are extremely concern of the unintended consequence this recommendation will bring for low-income students at the community college system in California.

Chapter 5

5.2 *The state should develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing basic skills education in California that result in a system that provides all adults with the access to education in mathematics, English, and English as a Second Language (ESL)*

Position: Do not restrict basic skills instruction to non-credit classes. Students taking non-credit classes do not qualify for financial aid, EOPS, scholarships, and other services that are tied to credit enrollment.

Conclusion:

The end result of taking all of these recommendations added together is to slam shut the “open door” in the faces of low-income, educationally dis-empowered students who stand to gain the most benefit from a community college education for themselves, their families, and for the economy of the state of California.