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**College  
Opportunity**

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October 25, 2011

Dear California Community College Stakeholders,

The Campaign for College Opportunity is proud to **endorse the recent draft recommendations of the California Community Colleges Task Force on Student Success.**

Improving college completion is an economic imperative for the state of California and community colleges play the most critical role in meeting future workforce needs with over 2.6 million students enrolled in one of the 112 colleges across our state.

By any measure, community college completion rates are unacceptable. A study by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy found that only 3 in 10 students earned a certificate, degree, or transferred after six years and these rates were even lower for black and Latino students.

Last year, legislation enacted by former Governor Schwarzenegger called upon the community college system to convene a task force of system representatives and external partners to develop a plan for increasing student success. While the Campaign for College Opportunity regrets that the Task Force missed an important opportunity to recommend an alternative funding formula that includes some reward for college completion, **we strongly believe that the bulk of the Task Force recommendations are ambitious and demonstrate a commitment to eliminating barriers to student success.** In fact, the recommendations highlight strategies that have long been proven to work in helping students reach their college goals and will help move us from boutique best practices to the type of scalable student-centered changes that our state desperately needs.

In particular, the most promising recommendations:

1. **START STUDENTS OFF RIGHT:** Adopt common assessment, placement, mandatory orientation, education plans, and declaration of a program of study for all incoming community college students, including a mandatory student success course for underprepared students;

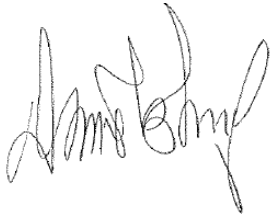
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2. **MAKE PROGRESS TO COMPLETION EASIER:** Prioritize enrollment that supports students on pathways to transfer, CTE, and basic skills;
3. **SHARE INFORMATION:** Implement and publicize a student success score card offering transparency on progress across milestones and toward degree, certificate completion or transfer—with data disaggregated by race for each college;
4. **PUT STUDENTS FIRST:** Innovate basic skills delivery to accelerate progress for students and redirect existing resources through consolidating categoricals and calling for the allocation of new resources to support student success.

The Public Policy Institute of California projects that by 2025, the state will be one million baccalaureate degrees short of meeting workforce demands. Along with full implementation of historic transfer reform legislation through SB 1440, signed into law in 2010, these reforms will significantly increase community college completion rates and help us stave-off this staggering projected shortage ensuring the state's future economic prosperity and allowing students the opportunity to reach their goals.

We commend the Task Force members and the courage they have demonstrated to propose significant reforms. It is now time for policymakers to join them, stop tinkering at the edges of higher education reform, and start supporting policies and practices that will truly put student success first.

Sincerely,



David Wolf  
Board Chair



Thomas Saenz  
Board Vice Chair



Michele Siqueiros  
Executive Director

cc: Chancellor Jack Scott, California Community College Chancellor's Office  
State Senator Carol Liu  
Peter MacDougall, Chair, Task Force on Student Success  
Members of the Task Force on Student Success  
Board of Governors for California Community Colleges  
Erik Skinner, Vice Chancellor, California Community College Chancellor's Office  
Amy Supinger, Executive Director, Task Force on Student Success