Assemblymember Nancy Skinner

Elihu Harris State Building

1515 Clay Street, Suite 2201

Oakland, CA 94612

March 3, 2014

Dear Assemblymember Skinner:

I am writing as a community college professor to ask you to help make sure that the bulk of any new money available in this year’s budget for community colleges come to us as COLA rather than “growth” or “restoration.”

As you know, we have never been a well funded system, and our revenues were cut severely over the past five years when the economy was struggling. We lost more than 16% in buying power! Now that Proposition 30 has passed and there is some money to help us restore, please make sure that the funds don’t depend on our attracting new students and building new programs. We need to restore funding for the students we have! We need to restore good programs that were cut during the crisis, like our writing center and EOPS.

Simply put, we need more money per student, not funds to serve additional students. Like most community colleges, we tend to grow slower when the economy improves. So we are not seeing the excess demand we saw just a couple of years ago. But we are still struggling to serve our students well with the funding we have. So a larger COLA this year would make a huge difference for our students and our colleges.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Michels, Ph.D.

English Department Chair

Contra Costa College