Assemblymember Nancy Skinner

Elihu Harris State Building

1515 Clay Street, Suite 2201

Oakland, CA 94612

February 10, 2014

Dear Assemblymember Skinner:

I am writing as a community college adjunct professor to ask you to help restore state funding this year for the part-time faculty categoricals (office hours; medical benefits; and the part-time equity fund). Recent cuts to these programs have hurt our students and faculty. We need your help.

Student success is linked, to a great extent, on student access to faculty --- office hours are an essential component to student completion rates and college productivity rates. Office hours are face-2-face opportunities for students to meet individually with their professors to discuss classwork, career planning, recommendations to four-year colleges, referrals and for guidance counseling. Office hours also provide group training opportunities: for example, I regularly use office hours to teach students how to use our online classrooms; use technology; perform research using the Library; and write academic papers. But contingent faculty cannot do what full-time faculty do, because part-time faculty either have no office, have no paid office hours or teach at multiple colleges and cannot afford to offer free office hours.

I teach part-time at Contra Costa College and Diablo Valley College where the majority of classes in my departments at both colleges are taught by part-time faculty. Students who take their classes are at a real disadvantage, because part-timers are not accessible enough outside of class. Our full-time faculty hold five office hours a week, but part-timers are only offered ½ an office hour for every class they teach (1.5 hours per week maximum). This just isn’t fair to students!

Cuts to the part-time equity fund have had a similar negative effect, since many of our part-timers are so poorly paid that they over-extend themselves by teaching in several districts, so they are not able to offer students the level of access and support they deserve.

The over-reliance on part-time teachers and the lack of support they receive weaken our whole community college system. Making changes to improve student succes at the colleges in our district has become even harder since the State cut the part-time categoricals.

Please help us restore and expand this funding now that there is money in the budget that help our colleges and students recover and improve.

Sincerely,

Douglas Dildine

Contra Costa College - Drama Department Coordinator

Diablo Valley College - Lecturer