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What's Wrong with Student Fees?

Renewing the Commitment to No-Fee, Open-Access Community Colleges in California

THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Educational Policies Committee 2003—2004

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Abstract

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has maintained long-standing support for the no-fee, open-access concept of California's community colleges. This paper documents the history of the introduction of fees and the seemingly inevitable subsequent increases—all of which have been vigorously opposed by the Academic Senate. It makes the case that such fees have betrayed the educational vision of California's 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education—a vision that has served California well. The section on Fundamental Principles provides strong philosophical and practical reasons for the original no-fee concept and argues that it benefits all segments of California by promoting the well-being of the entire state: not just individual citizens, but small and large businesses and the state as a civic and economic institution all benefit immeasurably from community college education. Specific arguments and responses to oppose many of the commonly heard myths and misconceptions in favor of fee increases are included. The paper calls on the Academic Senate to fight for the preservation of California's visionary educational legacy and, more specifically, to press for the roll-back of existing mandatory fees, coupled with enhanced opposition to any further increases. Appendices provide a record of the Academic Senate's resolutions regarding fees and a table that correlates fee increases with the corresponding effect on enrollment.

Executive Summary

This position paper of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges argues that the vision of access and equity in California community college education is uniquely valuable to the entire state, but has been betrayed by a long series of fee increases. It provides both principled and pragmatic arguments to oppose the imposition of mandatory fees.

An opening definition specifies that the focus of the paper is mandatory student fees, set by the Legislature and required for enrollment in credit classes.

A history section describes the educational vision introduced by the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education. The community college system was charged to provide open access to all who could benefit and there were to be no mandatory student fees for class enrollment. This choice was deliberately different from the selective admissions criteria used in other states and in California's other two systems of higher education. It was designed to ensure participation by ethnic, social and economic groups not adequately represented in more traditional higher education settings. The dual commitments to universal open access and diversity through equity are as important today as they were at the Master Plan's creation. This section traces the tortuous path to the introduction of mandatory student fees in 1984 and their subsequent inexorable rise in response to state budget pressures.

With this historical background, the next section reinforces the philosophical foundations of support for fundamental principles that extol education as a private and public good vital for the success of any democracy. It emphasizes the value of education to the state in terms of civic well-being and overall economic vitality, as well as the immediate benefit to private business and to individual students and their families. It argues that the Master Plan captured a vision of this educational value and inspired the success of the open-access, no-fee community college system as an integral part of California's economic success story. In particular it opened the doors of higher education to previously under-served students. One of the most damaging effects of abandoning the open-access, no-fee concept is the differential barriers presented to exactly those students who can most benefit from a college education. This section also makes the case that the deterioration in public commitment to education is not a result of economic necessity but rather a result of political choices to spend funds elsewhere. In particular the federal policy of increased fees coupled with selective financial aid that was introduced by the Reagan administration is seen to have resulted in a decrease of general access to college and also a decrease in the diversity of those attending. It is thus reasonable to conclude that precisely those effects will occur if California community colleges continue to move down a similar path.

The next section, "Why a no-fee system is best for California: Refuting the myths and misconceptions

One of the most damaging effects of abandoning the open-access, no-fee concept is the differential barriers presented to exactly those students who can most benefit from a college education.

that promote fees," examines the same concepts from a different but related perspective. The question and answer format responds to many of the commonly heard justifications for the introduction and increases in mandatory student fees. It explains why these rationales are a fundamental betrayal of the principles in the previous section. It then provides a quick answer/ rebuttal to each question as well as additional detail or references back to material in the principles section. Some of the misconceptions considered include:

Misconception*:* "The impact of a few dollar fee increase is negligible."

Realities*:* Not true because it's often the final straw for those struggling to attend college. Enrollment declines in response to every fee increase. *(See question 1-Q)*

Misconception*:* "High fee/high aid solves the problem by targeting funds."

Realities*:* This is an attractive theory that fails to work in practice.
Both overall access and equity/diversity are reduced in high fee/high aid situations. *(See question 3-Q)*

Misconception*:* "California needs higher fees to maximize federal Pell grant awards to students."

Realities*:* This solution defies all logic.
It helps a small number of desperately needy students by imposing a penalty four times as large on students who are only slightly less needy. *(See question 4-Q)*

Misconception*:* "Isn't the Academic Senate's 'no-fees' position extreme?"

Realities*:* The recently enacted fee increases amounting to 136% in eighteen months are much more extreme.
The Academic Senate's position is based on sound principles rather than economic exigency. *(See question 10-Q)*

Misconception*:* "California community college fees should be similar to other U.S public community colleges."

Realities*:* California's higher education system was deliberately designed to be different from the rest of the nation and California has benefited from this vision.
The higher fees in other states have been shown to decrease both access and equity. *(See question 13-Q)*

Misconception*:* "The state can no longer afford the costs and taxpayers are not willing to pay more."

Realities: California now spends a smaller percentage of taxes on education than it did in the past.

Voters have never been presented with a plan that would continue a no-fee, open-access community college system, nor asked directly if they would pay for it. *(See questions 15-Q and 18-Q)*

The paper concludes that the fundamental principles behind the creation of the 1960 Master Plan and its effect on the California community college system are just as vital today as they were originally. It also concludes that both the original introduction and the recent sharp increases in mandatory fees are a stark betrayal of the educational vision in the Master Plan - a vision that has served California well. The arguments used to abandon these principles and justify mandatory fee increases are wrong on almost every count. The paper then recommends continued Academic Senate support for the original fundamental principles and thus calls for the roll-back of current mandatory fees.

Definition—What Fees?

This paper will focus on those fees that are paid by resident California community college students in order to enroll in credit classes. Since their first imposition in 1984, these fees have been set annually by the Legislature and Governor as part of the Budget Act and are commonly referred to as student fees in such budget documents. They are also often referred to as mandatory student fees, enrollment fees, registration fees or occasionally tuition fees. It should be noted that strictly speaking they are not "tuition fees" specifically designated to cover a portion of the cost of instruction. However, they play the precise role ascribed to "tuition fees" in many historical documents such as the California Master Plan for Higher Education. And in practice, from the student point of view, they essentially function as tuition fees.[1] In this paper we will use the phrase "no-fee" as a more useful portrayal of the original philosophical intent of the Master Plan and the position still advocated by the Academic Senate. It should also be noted that many additional local fees exist, for example health fees and parking fees, that contribute to the total cost of attending college. *(See 1-Q in the myths and misconceptions section.)*

1 In 2004 CSU has an annual "registration fee" of approximately $2300 while UC has an annual "educational fee" of approximately $5000 that function in a similar way. Only non-residents pay a fee that is actually named "tuition" (approximately $16,000 annually at UC).

A History of Community College Fees in California

This section of the paper traces the evolution of mandatory student fees in the California Community College System. The 2004 budget and political situation is once again raising fundamental issues about higher education in California and the role of student fees versus the long-standing commitment to open access at the California community colleges. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has taken a consistent position of opposition to both the original introduction and all subsequent increases in mandatory student fees. This opposition is recorded in many resolutions adopted at Academic Senate plenary sessions (for a complete record of such resolutions, see Appendix I). The fundamental reason for this position is the documented negative effect of fee increases on access and equity, both essential tenets of California's Community College System.

The Academic Senate's opposition to fees stems from a strong philosophical position based on California's commitment to no-fee, open-access education as articulated in the 1960 state Master Plan for Higher Education. Perhaps the best summary in favor of this fundamental position was captured by University of California President Clark Kerr, one of the architects of the Master Plan, in his January 1967 news conference: "The best investment that any society makes is in the education of its young people, and this shouldn't be looked upon myopically as a 'cost'; it should be looked upon as the best investment that any society can make" (Kerr, 2003, p. 320).

The Academic Senate wholeheartedly endorses this principle: education is a vital investment for California's citizenry—both young and old. This paper will reinforce and expand on the fundamental ideas that underpin this principle.

In the years following the development of the Master Plan, Californians and their educational leaders were clearly committed to the idea of no-fee education. Kerr has described the tremendous sense of commitment Californians felt toward fellow citizens and their need for higher education. He reported that in 1960, "as I went around the state talking about the Master Plan I never met a single word of regret that the State of California should spend whatever was necessary in terms of financial support, to take care of the children of the GIs" (Kerr, 1999).

The Academic Senate first adopted a position statement on fees in 1977, following a report from its fee committee.[2] Though this position statement was made seven years before an enrollment fee was instituted in the California community colleges in 1984, it is interesting to observe that it continues to reflect much of the current debate.

> Those who advocate tuition, whether called fees or any other euphemism, want to

[2] This position was adopted just one year after the City University of New York, the nation's other high profile free, open-access educational system, introduced its first enrollment fees. Like California's community colleges, the CUNY system had been tuition-free for more than a century.

> raise money through a selective tax and thus embrace a philosophy of education determined by fiscal considerations. To allow such a fundamental change in philosophy is to denigrate the established tradition of free education at the community college and to discriminate against a large sector of the population. (p. 1)

> Tuition is a selective tax. The affluent will not be affected. The very poor may be assisted by financial aid. The middle income family will feel the bias. The late bloomer, the re-entry woman, the senior citizen will be discriminated against. The abolition of the tuition-free concept will close the door to many. The welcome mat will no longer be out. (p. 1)

> Look around any community in the state. Many of the leaders in government, business, the professions, health, labor and education started their education at a community college. These leaders stand as vivid testimony to the tuition free community college system. If tuition is levied, it will be these leaders who will have to say, "We got ours; you pay for yours." (p. 1)

Following adoption of the Master Plan, other organizations held positions that were similar to those of the Academic Senate, but in time many of their principles seemed to erode in the face of recurring state budget crises and they gradually moved to favor the imposition of ever-increasing fees.

The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) laid the groundwork for future fee increases in all three systems of higher education in its 1982 report *Student Charges, Student Financial Aid and Access to Postsecondary Education*. The report did echo the concerns of the Academic Senate and warn of the dangers inherent in such policy changes:

> The scope and effectiveness of [California's postsecondary education system] are the heritage of the State's historic commitment to both access and quality as the overall goals for postsecondary education. Although California has maintained this balanced commitment, it is now on the verge of defaulting on that commitment as State revenues decline. All the feasible policy options available to the State inevitably entail tradeoffs between access and quality which could destroy that balance. (Executive Summary, p. 1)

However, CPEC indicated that it was willing to make some of these tradeoffs: the same report contained a suggested mechanism for the percentage of the cost of instruction that should be borne by students in each segment of California's higher education system: 40 to 50% for University of California undergraduates; 10 to 20% for California State University undergraduates; and 120 to 130% of undergraduate level for graduate and professional students (Executive Summary, p. 5).

CPEC made no suggestion for the percentage to be paid by community college students, perhaps concluding that such a formula would be ineffective, but it did conclude that in at least some cases students should bear some of the costs of instruction. It recommended that "The State should establish explicit policies to assure a combination of State *and student* support of Community College programs that, to the extent possible, continue existing no-charge practices for students enrolled in courses and programs that have greatest State priority" *[emphasis added]*. Thus, the door was opened for the implementation of fees and for the abandonment of the Master Plan's vision.

The 1982 CPEC report introduced several ideas that have reappeared often in subsequent conversations around fees. These included imposing student fees solely to benefit the state general fund; imposing differential fees for different types of courses; and providing financial assistance to those placed in jeopardy by increased fees rather than avoiding fees altogether.

The community college system weighed in against fees. In an Academic Senate response to the Governor and Legislature in May 1982, Academic Senate President Robert Silverman concluded that "any uniform, non-permissive fee applied to the community college students should be avoided to preserve the social benefit of an educated public in California" (p. 3). The Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office expressed a similar sentiment in a May 1982 position paper, *Should Community College Students Pay Tuition?*

> Although the University of California and the California State University have raised student fees to compensate for budget cuts, there is little rationale for the 107 community colleges [now 109] to follow suit. The community colleges are a different kind of system, and were never intended to be the same as UC or CSU.
>
> The community colleges enroll significantly greater numbers and percentages of lower-income, women, minority, and self-supporting students. Studies have shown that if fees were imposed, the largest proportional enrollment losses would occur among such groups. For example, women students are more self-supporting and low-income, and their drop-out rate would exceed that of males by one-third. (p. 3)

Budgetary concerns loomed, however, and ultimately guided state educational policy. Having been under discussion and debate in the late 1970s and early 1980s, fees were introduced in 1984 at a level of $5 per unit.[3]

As mentioned earlier, the Academic Senate opposed this introduction of fees in 1984 and has opposed every succeeding move to raise fees. The raises have never been as draconian as those enacted in the 2003–2005 budgets. In an eighteen month period (Spring 2003 to Fall 2004) fees rose from $11 to $26 per unit—a 136% increase. This outrageous increase underscores the urgent need to solidify the Academic Senate's opposition to fees and to refute the pseudo-rationales used to justify such increases.

With the implementation of fees has come the often unspoken assumption that State budgetary matters should—and do, and will—drive tuition levels in California. We recognize how easy it is for such an assumption to seem like "common sense" in the midst of a budget crisis—we have to cut somewhere, after all, and/or we have to raise revenue somewhere. But the Academic Senate believes that raising revenue from community college students is wrong-headed for a number of reasons and certainly not in the best interests of the state. As the Academic Senate argued in 1977, "Tuition is a selective tax," and in fact it is a tax on an entirely inappropriate population. At the very times when education and job training are

[3] For a chronology of enrollment and fee levels, see Appendix II.

most essential to the state, access to education is reduced and just when the state's population is at its most diverse, equity is reduced and underserved populations take disproportionate cuts in enrollment.

At one time, the Academic Senate's philosophy was not deemed particularly radical; in at least some respects, even CPEC, which had paved the way for fees, agreed. "California's students deserve better than a fee policy driven solely by the State's annual budget deficits," CPEC suggested in an August 1994 study, *Policy Questions Related to Student Charges at California's Community Colleges*. The study went on to point out an alternate to increased student charges, suggesting that:

> California [could instead] enact fundamental reforms in its revenue and expenditure policies—in particular, repealing or modifying statutes and constitutional provisions that restrict the Governor and Legislature from changing the State's taxation and expenditure policies in order to match the growth in demand for public services. (p. 2)

Unfortunately, subsequent actions in California did not implement this notion that changes in general taxation might be a better solution than changes in student fees. The "tax" solution is certainly not considered a serious political option at present.

Inconsistent in its recommendations, CPEC next released a December 1994 draft *Recommendations for a New Community College Student Fee Policy*, which helped move California even farther away from the Master Plan promise. The report recommended that "*Students, their families*, and society *should share* the responsibility for financing the costs of a community college education" *[emphasis added]* (p. 1). The costs referred to here, however, are commensurate only with mandatory fees (registration/enrollment/tuition): they do not take into account the hidden costs of education *(see 1-Q).* Using the long-held, (but somewhat artificial), distinction of fees versus tuition, CPEC also recommended what it had avoided in its 1982 report: shifting a portion of the burden of the cost of instruction onto students and their families. "Charges at the State's community colleges … shall be less than 20% of the average prior year instructional expenditures" (p. 2). When compared to 0% prior to 1984 and 4% in 1986, this represented a significant policy shift for community colleges. Initial estimates suggest that the comparable figure for Fall 2004 is approximately 15%.[4]

Using language that had already been adopted by the Community College Board of Governors in July 1992, CPEC went on to suggest that "Every effort should be made to ensure that increases in community college student charges are gradual, moderate, and predictable" (p. 1). Despite the apparent reasonableness of this position, the Academic Senate argues that once fees were imposed, this position led—and continues to lead—to inexorable increases in both the amount and the percentage of costs that are borne by students in the shape of fees. The Academic Senate believes that the cumulative effect of

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[4] Estimate based on the Fall 2004 $26 per unit enrollment fee for resident students and a non-resident tuition fee of approximately $160 per unit (a locally determined "cost of instruction" figure).

"regular, moderate" increases paves the way for unacceptable fee levels through an accumulation or compounding effect we might name "fee creep." The "lesser of two evils" approach (a $7 increase isn't bad because it's better than a $13 increase) may hold larger increases temporarily at bay, but that's not enough, especially given the likelihood of another $7 increase, and then an $8 increase, and then another... Though some amounts are clearly worse than others, ultimately there are no acceptable fee increases *(see 11-Q).*

The Academic Senate continues to believe that the philosophy of the original Master Plan was not only profound and far-seeing but also held enormous practical benefit to the State of California. The concept of no-fee, universal access was a visionary creation in the 1960s and continues to be an ideal to fight for in every venue and on every occasion. For this fundamental reason the Academic Senate maintains ongoing opposition to all mandatory fees in the California community colleges, from their original introduction in 1984 to all the subsequent and proposed increases. For the health and wealth of the State of California, fees must not be increased, or even maintained at their current level: fees must be rolled back.

The success of California has been directly attributable to the principle of equal and open access since before statehood. Freedom of movement socially and economically and open access to the creation of wealth—civic, cultural, and economic—hinged on natural resources and then on the manipulation of natural resources for the first 100 years of its existence. Since before the Master Plan for Higher Education, the state has recognized, with ever increasing certainty, that the natural resource responsible for the future viability of the state is the people, and that the manipulation of that resource requires an outstanding open-access educational system.

Fundamental Principles: Education and Fees

This section of the paper examines the underlying philosophy and principles that support the Academic Senate's opposition to mandatory student fees in the California community College System.

WHY EDUCATION? PRIVATE GOOD(S) AND THE PUBLIC GOOD IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The current discussion of how high, how fast can/should student fees increase is founded on a mistaken image of who community college students are and what their education can mean for California. A focus on the "share of cost" is congruent with an image of students as customers, fully developed critical thinkers who are picking up a commodity at their local convenience college. This is, simply said, wrong-headed. Students at community colleges are not customers: such a corporate understanding shifts the emphasis to the individual community college student, whose gains are irrefutably great, but de-emphasizes—even omits—the other stakeholders who stand to gain each time a student enrolls in a community college course.

The education California offers its citizens through the community college system is often referred to as a bargain.[5] It is a bargain, however, not just for the individual students who are able to access higher education in the world's largest educational system at a relatively low cost, but also for the state (and the future interests of its society) and for the current and future economy (which stands to benefit from a more autonomous, productive, adaptable, and capable workforce). The concept that education is an investment for more than the individual student is hardly new: the value of education is transcendent. Ultimately, as many will agree, education is a boon and a bargain for the state: for its economy, for civil society, and for the health and well-being of all of its citizens. It represents an investment in our society's future and it constitutes a unifying and stabilizing influence in a fragmented society.

Higher education represents a significant investment—with stratospheric returns—in a number of areas and for a wide range of stakeholders, with both private and public effects.[6] These dividends are so frequently overlooked, however—so often ignored in the larger dialogues about educational policy—that we will here take a moment to sketch them out in some detail. "Investment in Education: Private and Public Returns," a 2000 document from the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) of the U.S. Congress,

[5] While recognizing the value of the "bargain," system leaders repeatedly warn against using this argument to justify chronic under-funding of the system. *(See also 6-Q.)*

[6] Clark Kerr referred to the "multiple assignments" of higher education: the good it does to the economy; the contributions to improving equality of opportunity; supporting a democratic political system; helping individuals cope with and make meaningful decisions in their lives; and "enabling more people to participate more fully in the cultural life of society" (1994).

documents some, though not all, of the benefits to be gained by increased educational levels in the U.S. Though not without limitations,[7] this report offers the frames of *private* and *public*, frames we will both utilize and expand on in this section.

PRIVATE GOOD(S)

The private good higher education offers is easily identifiable as increased personal enrichment and improved working conditions and lifetime earnings for individuals and their families. This private gain is widely recognized: census data and data from the Department of Labor clarify that a college education—including the two-year community college degree and even "some college"—has significant impact on income and occupational status for individual students (College Board, 2001, p. vi-vii). As the gap between rich and poor has grown, education's impact on earning has also grown.[8] Students who take college classes also report increased job stability (JEC, p. 5), and chances of unemployment are diminished: "Labor force participation is strongly associated with education even after controlling for other factors such as age and marital status" (JEC, p. 6).[9] June 2004 employment statistics, seasonally adjusted, indicate that workers with some college or an Associate's degree were 9.5% more likely to be employed than those with a high school diploma (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004).[10]

Focusing our understanding of higher education on private, individual gains of students is congruent with the growing trend of corporatization in education.[11] But it must be recognized, even within a neoliberal framework, that considerable private good accrues not only to individuals but also to small and large businesses and corporations, their owners and shareholders in the shape of publicly trained workers that immediately contribute to private profit margins.

This second private good—the profit gained from a trained labor force—is rarely if ever acknowledged in conversations regarding the appropriate student

[7] Chief among the report's limitations are the apparent disconnect between data provided in the report and the policy implications that follow, and the report's emphasis on market values.

[8] In 1993, the income gains to individuals, which had been increasing significantly, represented approximately 10% per year of schooling (JEC, p. 3).

[9] While this is presumably due primarily to skills, studies suggest that "more efficient job searching" contributes as well (JEC, p. 6).

[10] Of course, California's community colleges help a substantial number of students attain GED certificates, which also increases earning power and workforce participation. The same Bureau of Labor statistics show that high school completion currently increases an individual's chance of employment by nearly 20%.

[11] The student-as-customer is one component of this trend; concentrating on cost efficiency, rather than educational principles or on the premise of universal access, is another. William Tabb (2001) offers a useful overview of the neoliberal model of education and its attendant issues, including what he calls the "market mantra of 'cut, cut, cut.'" Slaughter and Leslie's study of increasing market values in higher education (1997) identifies this shift specifically: "with regard to access, higher education policies encourage greater student participation but at a lower national cost. Rather than financing student participation, all countries are raising tuition, and most systems are switching from grants to loans" (p. 24).

If taxpayers are to assume their equitable portion, and students are to pay more, then business should also share in such costs.

share of educational costs. In *Refinancing the College Dream: Access, Equal Opportunity, and Justice for Taxpayers* (2003), Indiana University's Edward P. St. John argues that one of the dimensions of equitable education funding must be a consideration of "justice for taxpayers, as measured by tax expenditures per student" (p. 17). But he simultaneously ignores the private good that accrues to business as a major beneficiary of an educated population. If taxpayers are to assume their equitable portion, and students are to pay more, then business should also share in such costs.[12]

When California businesses hire community college trained employees, they get the direct benefit of taxpayer-supported education. Economists have attempted to measure the economic growth created by the education of individual workers, and early estimates found "that 15 to 20% of the annual average growth in output for the United States was explained by increases in education levels" (JEC, p. 8). A comprehensive study on education's effect on the economy by Edward Denison, *Trends in American Economic Growth, 1929-1982,* found similar results, concluding that 16% of output growth (for nonresidential businesses) was due to the education level of individual workers (as cited in JEC, p. 8).[13] This missing part of the private good(s) conversation is particularly noticeable in light of studies that show that even in good economic times many U.S. corporations fail to pay their appropriate share of taxes.[14]

THE PUBLIC GOOD

The public good that higher education provides to the larger society has often been discussed, especially in the field of education, but this discussion is often absent from our public debates about the cost of education. The public good comes in four main areas: the civic benefit of an educated populace, the likelihood of a sustainable future for all members of society, the general positive economic effects of an educated workforce and the significant savings to society when its citizens, for example, spend less time in prison or in hospitals.

The ideal of a public education for the public good—to prepare citizens to participate fully in the democratic process, and to prepare them to be able to compete with an equal footing for the betterment of the collective—were the principles behind a free public education. These principles are being lost in the current political debate. These principles were still safeguarded as recently as 20 years ago when community colleges were free of

These principles were still safeguarded as recently as 20 years ago when community colleges were free of mandatory student fees and accessible to all.

[12] This same concept is also ignored in the prospectuses of the recently formed Campaign for College Opportunity in their February 2003 *Keeping the Promise* and the 2004 *Turning College Students Away: The Consequence of California's Broken Promise.*

[13] The Joint Economic Committee's report cites several similar examples with estimates ranging from 10–20% (pp. 8-9).

[14] The General Accounting Office in its February 2004 report Comparison of the Reported Tax Liabilities of Foreign and US Controlled Corporations, 1996—2000 reported that 61% of US corporations reported zero tax liability and 94% reported liability less than 5% of their total income.

mandatory student fees and accessible to all, and they remain the principles that predominate in the thinking that still governs K-12 funding today.

Over one hundred years ago, compulsory education was mandated for the young in order to provide the education needed for effective civic, political, and economic participation to protect and sustain a democratic society. As our society has developed, however, a K-12 grade education is no longer enough to assure that members of our society will be able to participate effectively in the social/political debate, in maintaining the economic base of the state, and in competing in a global, technologically based society. More recently, the state has fallen behind in educational attainment, in technological preparation, and in overall competitiveness in the world market, while engaging in a political debate that focuses on individualistic goals at the expense of collective ones. Not surprisingly, this has correlated with decreases in funding for public education, including community colleges and the university systems.[15]

The societal benefits of community college education were certainly not lost on the California Postsecondary Education Commission (1994) when they argued that "Providing equitable educational opportunities for [community college] students is not only a moral imperative for California but also a socioeconomic necessity, since on it will rest the continued economic and civic well-being of the State." Unfortunately, CPEC has failed to lead the state—or even, apparently, itself—to act on these principles.

An educated citizenry is more able to participate in the democratic and deliberative processes that are so integral to the U.S. and to a vital and equitable California. Literate, informed, and critical, engaged citizens contribute to the public good. "Educational attainment correlates well with those items associated with a stable and democratic society—that is, informed and interested voters. Educated people read more about the issues, watch more news programs to stay informed, and take a more active interest in public affairs" (JEC, p. 11). Chances of both voter registration and of voting increase by about 10% for individuals with one to three years of college (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001, Table 401, p. 251).[16] "Studies show that level of education influences voting more than any other socioeconomic factor" (JEC, p. 10).

Educating all members of our society contributes to the welfare of our state, our communities, and our families. The young, who are traditionally the college going-group, will be the members of society that will have the burden of responsibility for maintaining and hopefully improving the economy of the state and will be in charge to safeguard the democratic ideals of the political process. Their income levels will be directly linked to what services will be provided to the elderly and young. Their incomes will also determine to what extent

[15] We are not proposing here that compulsory education be extended beyond the boundaries of the K-12 grades; adult members of a democratic society should be able to make the decision to participate—or not to participate—in an education and all of the good it can deliver to those individuals, their families, and their larger communities. The state, on the other hand, has the responsibility to offer access to—rather than require participation in—an education, especially because it prepares its members to participate fully in the democratic process and can help them have a productive life, which will benefit the state and the larger, collective community.

[16] In 2000, California had the third lowest rate of voter registration (after Hawaii and Nevada), and the second lowest percentage who reported voting (after Hawaii) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001, Table 402, p. 252).

these members will be able to support the elderly in particular, in maintaining their current standard of living.

In a healthy society, it has been a given that adults in that society will assume the responsibility of support, nurture, and care for their elderly and their young at the micro level by the family and at the macro level by society through public policy and funding allocations (Hayes-Bautista et al, 1988). Societal actions geared towards fulfillment of that responsibility are evidenced by the provision for social services, education, health care, and other services that help improve the likelihood that the elderly will be taken care of after they have contributed to their society, and that the young receive the preparation needed to take the reigns of society, economically and politically, when it becomes their turn. This compact allows for the ongoing renewal needed to perpetuate the society.

Our young will eventually bear the burden of support for this society. It is the obligation of the adults, as citizens and legislators, to prepare them now to be able to perform well in the near future. For our welfare and those of our grandchildren, all our young need to be assured full and free access to the college education they need to assume this responsibility. The current political debates and proposals regarding access and fees to community colleges further renege on this compact. California's young will not be prepared to take the reigns of California's economic and political processes with a high school education. We cannot afford to leave it up to chance that our young will be ready to assume the burden of support for our society. An uneducated workforce will assure that we, as the elderly of tomorrow, and our young will suffer the consequences of the breakdown of this intergenerational compact.

...the Academic Senate remains committed to truly open access and zero fees...

FOR THE GOOD OF OUR ECONOMY

In addition to the private profits accrued from education, there are clear public benefits for the state. The connection between our state's community college system and its economy has always been clear, and it was not lost on the Board of Governors in the early 1980s when they drew attention to the "multiplier effect" of community college spending, noting that "every tax dollar spent on community colleges returns four dollars to the economy. So in economic terms, our investment in tuition-free community colleges makes sense" (1982). Technology and other training at the community colleges have contributed to the economic growth of the state, and these contributions and the labor of individuals who have benefited from community college education translate into increased revenue for the state as well.

Higher education also amounts to substantial economic savings for the state. In the early 1980s, during the discussion of the first decision to impose mandatory student fees, the Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office addressed the importance of fee-free education and critics who might argue that we shouldn't give a valuable education away for free:

> For every dollar from state, federal and local sources spent on community colleges in California, more than three dollars are spent on welfare. Community colleges help reduce public assistance costs and increase the number of productive wage earners. (Board of Governors, 1982)

From the perspective of the Chamber of Commerce and other business and industry groups in California, a key to the state's future necessarily involves education. These groups often talk about the importance of two things: 1) a business friendly tax and regulation environment, and 2) a well-educated workforce. Fees for students—even what may seem to some to be low fees—act as inhibitors to educational participation much in the same way that these groups argue that high taxes and high up-front regulatory requirements act as inhibitors to business activity.

California's promise of affordable, accessible education is an investment in its citizenry that has served us well. During the past half century, California has become among the most diversely populated and successful economies in the world. California's infrastructure of nurses, construction workers, police officers, firefighters, automotive technicians, educators, dental assistants, accountants, computer technologists and more stand on a foundation of community college education. Whether they were poor, uneducated, or immigrants just learning English, they were granted access to an opportunity to build on their dreams. To this end the Academic Senate remains committed to truly open access and zero fees and to the understanding that an educated populace is not merely a pool of consumers but human beings whose educations are essential for the preservation of a free and successful society.

Ultimately, the economist's distinction between private and public good does not hold up when it comes to education. Every instance of private good results in a corresponding larger public good; the public gains, in turn, benefit individuals. This reality can be seen with clarity in two areas that blend the issues of public and private. The first is the public issue of corrections and the private impact that it has on the incarcerated and their families as well as the impact of crime on individuals. Research links the acquisition of education with a reduction in the likelihood of criminal activity (even when taking into account the higher income associated with education (p. 11); in fact, it "shows that quality education is one of the most effective forms of crime prevention" (Open Society Institute, 1997). Education, particularly literacy, also correlates strongly with reduced recidivism (OSI, 1997; National Institute for Literacy, 2001). Because the corrections system impacts low income communities and communities of color disproportionately (Justice Policy Institute, 2003), a no-fee, open-access community college system, where the vast majority of such students in higher education will be served, can play an essential role.

The second issue that is undoubtedly both public and private is health: higher education contributes to increased health, and this benefit has been shown to increase the health of family members, as well (JEC, p. 7). These benefits, clearly contributing to both the private and public good, have both long-range and immediate effects: education improves current health, even when controlling for past health (JEC, p. 7).

In the final analysis, no-fee, open-access higher education isn't a gift to students: it is taxpayer-supported education, for the ultimate benefit of all of the state's residents.

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BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS: THE CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

California is now said to be the fifth largest economy in the world. One could argue that this was in large part caused by the principles and policies put in place by the California Master Plan for Higher Education. This plan implemented the principles and dreams of an economically healthy, democratic society described in the previous section. It put the principles into effective practice. No other state enacted the same powerful, systematic combination of educational opportunities. The Master Plan, as Kerr has said, was "the first time in the history of any state in the United States, or any nation in the world, where such a commitment was made—that a state or nation would promise there would be a place ready for every high school graduate or person otherwise qualified" (Kerr, 1999).

Under the Master Plan, community colleges provide an open-access, affordable entry point to large numbers of students who are then able to move towards four-year and research level institutions. Current and future fee proposals post the danger of shutting down that successful pipeline by constricting the entry point for an unprecedented number of Californians.

California committed itself to a fundamental understanding of education's value—in both the private and public senses explicated above—taking the lead as what was at the time arguably the world's most advanced and visionary higher education system. The blueprint for this vision was the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education in California, 1960—1975. This project was, at least in large part, an attempt to accommodate the huge and imminent increase in enrollment demand—the first "tidal wave"—that California faced. Assemblywoman Dorothy Donahoe (D-Bakersfield) introduced a 1959 resolution which "asked the UC Regents and the State Board of Education to 'to prepare a Master Plan for the development, expansion, and integration of the facilities, curriculum, and standards of higher education, in junior [community] colleges, state colleges, the University of California, and other institutions of higher education of the State, to meet the needs of the State during the next 10 years and thereafter . . ."(University of California, 2002).

The effects of the 1960 Master Plan were far-reaching, and still guide California today, well beyond its "freshness" date. Not long after the completed report was provided to a special legislative session in 1960, its visionary effects became clear, and ultimately made California's higher education system a model—often cited and lauded, sometimes emulated—for the rest of the country. Though 2003 testimony to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education asserted that California can no longer afford the 1960 Master Plan, the Academic Senate believes that such cavalier dismissal of the Master Plan's vision is short-sighted and foolish in the extreme.

For our purposes here, one of the Master Plan's most important tenets was that California should maintain a fully accessible, tuition-free higher education system. It identified tuition-free higher education as a core element of California's educational plan and proposed that the three-tier educational system remain tuition-free, stating

At the core of California's community college identity has been the provision of open-access higher education to the citizenry of the state, and for the direct benefit of the state.

"that the traditional policy of nearly a century of tuition-free higher education is in the best interests of the state and should be continued" (p. 190). The Master Plan's first and last recommendations refer to tuition-free higher education, urging the state and governing educational bodies to "reaffirm the long established principle that state colleges and the University of California shall be tuition free to all residents of the state" (p. 191), and clarifying that this and other policies should "be applied to the junior [community] colleges as a matter of state policy" (p. 192).

In April 2002 the Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan for Education issued a report entitled *The California Master Plan for Education*. The community college portion of this document failed to either acknowledge or protect the vision of the 1960 Master Plan. The document appears to have had little effect on the subsequent legislative agenda and its future appears uncertain.

Failure to maintain open-access, no-fee community colleges in California is a failure to maintain the vision of the original Master Plan and correspondingly a failure to implement the philosophical principles that it enshrined.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE MASTER PLAN: CALIFORNIA'S PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY FOR ACCESS AND EQUITY

California's Community College System—the largest institution of higher education in the world—is in many senses unlike any other educational system in the world. Nearly one-quarter of the nation's community college enrollment is in California's system, which accounts for well over 10% of all of the U.S.'s undergraduate students (Hittelman, 2004). The community colleges evolved from what had been known as Junior Colleges in a period when compulsory education provided for the educational needs of California's citizens to participate effectively in all aspects of society. But the requirements to fulfill the functions of society have become more complex and a high school preparation is no longer adequate for sustainable wage careers (*see question 20-Q*). It takes increased education to move up the career ladder to high-skill, high-wage jobs. With the Master Plan for Education provision of universal access to higher education, California's community colleges "became," as Kerr said in 1999, "the most accessible community college system in the nation."

At the core of California's community college identity has been the provision of open-access higher education to the citizenry of the state, and for the direct benefit of the state. This open admissions policy has made higher education accessible to the 75% of the high school graduating classes not targeted by the selective UC and CSU systems. Community colleges have become the gateway to higher education for a large segment of low-income, minority, and other underrepresented populations who would not have attended college due to financial, geographic, and/or cultural reasons.

The student population of the community colleges—one of the most racially and ethnically diverse populations in the country—reflects the diversity of California's population. In Fall 2002, 53% of those reporting were students of color; California's community colleges have the largest non-white student population outside of Hawaii. Seventy five percent of Latino, African American, and Native American students entering public higher education in California enter a community college (Woodlief, Thomas and Orozco, 2003, p. 27).

Through the years, the community colleges have accommodated the many emerging needs of the state, addressing the educational gaps left by the selective university systems in this state, and working to remedy the under-preparation of large segments of the population in higher education. As such, their mission has become broad and comprehensive, addressing the state's many needs.

The mission statement for California's community colleges includes the primary direction to "offer academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level for both younger and older students, including those persons returning to school." But the community colleges are no longer simply "junior" versions of our four-year institutions, and the system continues to fill a series of roles that are not filled—or even always addressed—by most other educational institutions. These include "remedial instruction for those in need of it," as well as "instruction in English as a second language, adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level." Also essential is "adult noncredit education curricula in areas defined as being in the state's best interest." And finally, in 1996 a new "primary mission" was added to the mission—one that is especially consistent with the position that the state has much public good to gain from California's community colleges: "to advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous workforce improvement" (California Education Code Section 66010.4 (a) (3)).

Access to financial aid, which sets up unnecessary barriers for too many potential students, is not open access.

Fees may be the proverbial last straw for students whose families have been shut out of higher education for generations...

Under the Master Plan, the community colleges necessarily became the cornerstone of access to higher education in California. In order for California to implement the Master Plan and become "the first state (or nation) to provide universal access to higher education for all high school graduates or persons otherwise equally qualified" (Kerr, 1994), community colleges would need to be accessible to the tremendous number of students who would not be accepted to UC and CSU. CPEC noted in 1993 that the Master Plan emphasized the open-access role of the community colleges so that even if UC and CSU admission was restricted, students would have access to the community colleges and thus California would maintain its universal access (as cited in McCurdy, 1994). Kerr reported "We came out against tuition at the UC, CSU and the community colleges, but the one we really meant and strongly believed in was at the community college level, the entry level" (1999).

OPEN ACCESS: FEWER BARRIERS, NOT HIGHER AID

The open-access policy of California's community colleges has provided tremendous opportunity in two important (and often overlapping) ways. The first is in making education accessible to unprecedented numbers of students who have been traditionally underserved by higher education: first-generation college students, people of color, low-income students, older and returning students, those needing basic skills education, recent immigrants.

The open-access mission is also, in part, an acknowledgement of the importance of the principle of talent development within the educational system. This principle is applied in three ways at California's community colleges: 1) by taking students in a given course of study from whatever level of preparation (or lack of preparation) they begin with to whatever level of achievement their talent allows; 2) by having unrestricted access to courses across the curriculum offered by the colleges, thereby maximizing the opportunity to find a course of study that best matches each student's talents; and 3) by having faculty and staff who identify and foster talents and potentialities within students which may be unrecognized or under-appreciated by the students themselves.

It is precisely these students, who are unsure of the level and nature of their talents and whose economic and social background make higher education seem like a risky venture (even with no or low fees), who must be attracted to community college education in order for the state to maintain its competitive advantage in the wider world. It is precisely these students who are unlikely to venture on to higher education given higher fees, regardless of what may seem to some like generous financial aid and student loan programs.

Having no fees is the cornerstone of open access. That the trend in United States educational policy has moved toward aligning the terms "access" and "aid" should serve as a warning—not a roadmap—for California, which to date continues to maintain what is comparatively one of the least expensive—and most participatory, productive—community college systems in the country.

Access to financial aid, which sets up unnecessary barriers for too many potential students, is not open access. In *Refinancing the College Dream: Access, Equal Opportunity, and Justice for Taxpayers* (2003), Edward P. St. John, director of Indiana University's Education Policy Center, traces educational funding and its effect on access to higher education. He concludes that the creation of an equitable society relies on "the public financing of higher education" (p. 17). St. John describes how educational equity can be achieved:

- access for the majority, as measured by the overall opportunities to attend college;
- equal opportunity to enroll, as measured by the growing gap in opportunity between minorities and Whites and between low-income and high-income students [increased equity of opportunity would decrease the gap described by St. John]. (p. 17)

St. John conducts a detailed analysis of the effect of federal and state financial aid policies for the past three decades. He concludes that aid has played a useful historical role, citing "strong evidence that student financial aid played a substantial and direct role in equalizing opportunity in the middle 1970s." But he goes on to note that financial aid "was not adequate to maintain participation after 1976" (p. 98). And by the 1990s, he suggests, aid programs had a useful but sadly limited role when it came to access: "the mixture of politics—more loans plus higher tuition—worked relatively well, at least for the middle-class majority. There was a serious problem, however. This pattern of finance apparently contributed to the disparity in opportunity" (p. 114).

...students who don't register simply can't be surveyed or counted...

The goal of the community college system is to educate all who can benefit, not only those who are the easiest or least costly to educate.

St. John makes it clear that the failures of financial aid to close the equal opportunity gap are not strictly numbers issues that will be solved if more aid is made available. He points to the philosophical shift in aid funding, characterized by high fee/high aid, and argues that "the change in philosophy about student aid in the 1980s was nearly as critical as changes in amounts of federal funds available" (p. 124).

It is important to realize that the patterns of finance that St. John is describing as a failure are federal policies, entirely distinct from California's Master Plan vision. They are, however, precisely what is now being proposed for our community college system: higher fees and higher financial aid.

"The current patterns of finance are simply no longer viable," St. John concludes, "if our goals are to expand post-secondary access and close the opportunity gap" (p. 173). The outcome of these proposals is already known from St. John's study of the national picture: they will result in reduced access and reduced equity. Why take a policy that has been a proven failure in terms of access and equity at the national level and apply it to the California community colleges, whose most important goals are access and equity? Equity is impacted even more than general access because fees impact the community college population differentially, and the most disadvantaged students are disproportionately the ones who are lost.

This predictable outcome in terms of access and equity is completely ignored in the latest study by the Legislative Analyst Office's (LAO) *A Share-of-Cost Student Fee Policy* (2004), which suggests that targeting increased fees at low income and minority students has no effective impact on access and equity. St. John's data is among the evidence that refutes the LAO's assumption that we need not take into account the complexity of student experiences or educational barriers.

For many students, especially low- and no-income students and others in what have been termed "at risk" categories, fees represent one of many obstacles to higher education. Fees may be the proverbial last straw for students whose families have been shut out of higher education for generations, and while many of these students are eligible for both fee waivers and financial aid, the multi-page applications can be a daunting and confusing process. If uninformed and/or intimidated, could-be students may not make it to the registration office, let alone financial aid. A 1993 Fee Impact Study, for instance, found that in California, basic skills students, self-supporting students, minorities, and those who had applied for (but not yet received) financial aid were among those most likely to be discouraged by fee increases (as cited in Board of Governors, March 2003, p. 6).[17]

Fees and/or tuition have a decided impact on all access, as well as on equal opportunity. While it is impossible to measure precisely how many students have been lost with each fee increase—both because increases have historically been coupled with reductions in course offerings and because students who don't register simply can't

[17] White and Asian students, those intending to transfer, and those dependant on their parents were among those who were less responsive to increases.

be surveyed or counted—drops in enrollment show a marked correlation to fee increases.[18] In Fall 1984 student enrollment dropped by 95,000 after the first fees were introduced. There were losses in enrollment of 124,000 in Fall 1993 when enrollment fees increased from $6 to $10 with a $50 dollar fee for Bachelor degreed students; subsequently there was a 26,000 enrollment drop in 1994 when fees increased from $10 to $13 and the $50 fee for Bachelor degreed students remained; and an additional 22,000 the following semester, 1995. When fees have remained stable or have decreased, enrollments have increased as demonstrated by enrollment increases from 1996 to 2002. *(See Appendix II.)*

The introduction of fees and subsequent fee increases have shown a negative impact on enrollment and participation rates.[19] In August 2002 *Postsecondary Education Opportunity* data is presented that between 1997 and 2001 college participation rates for students from low income families dropped from 30% to 22.2%. It had shown an encouraging increase during the years 1993-1997, but for the overall 1993-2001 period California ranked 18th nationwide.

Bit by bit, increase by increase, we are losing sight of the community college mission and the ideal of education for all who can benefit. The Academic Senate believes that as faculty, we need to speak out for our students, including could-be (or would-be, or should-be) students—for the open-access mission of the community colleges and the investment that taxpayer-supported education represents. The Academic Senate believes we must hold to the central principle of a broadly educated populace, and we must work harder to articulate the tremendous gains that higher education represents—not only for the individuals "who can benefit," but also for the larger society—and even its individual taxpayers—which *will* benefit. The concept of open-access no-fee education for Californians is not a pipe dream: it need not become a long-lost goal.

The goal of the community college system is to educate all who can benefit, not only those who are the easiest or least costly to educate. The main concern should not be productivity or efficiency. The main concern must be educating students. Those students who pose the greatest challenges and costs are often those where education can have the greatest impact.

[18] For a discussion of these difficulties, see Nussbaum (2003), p. 11.

[19] For a chronology of enrollment fee levels, see Appendix II.

Why a No-fee System is Best for California: Refuting the Myths and Misconceptions That Promote Fees

This section of the paper examines a number of commonly heard assertions used to justify fee increases. For each question or assertion raised, a short answer is provided, followed by an explanation and additional detail, as well as references to related parts of this paper.

Questions related to fee increases become increasingly complicated as we look at the specific details: with each new proposal for raising fees, we have heard numerous arguments about the necessity for fees and the supposed good that will come of them. In considering these arguments, a persistent pattern emerges wherein budgetary concerns supersede issues of educational equality, the base assumption being economic exigency. When viewed against California's hallmark "promise" of affordable and equitable access to higher education and the clear benefits to all that such a promise provides, all of the proposals suggest a lack of forethought and a lessened commitment to the long-term goals of an educated citizenry and a sustainable, stable economy.

It is prudent, therefore, not only to examine the individual proposals but to consider the validity of the arguments that call them into existence in the first place. While the proposals sometimes appear reasonable on the surface, within their constructs is a nagging pattern of hasty generalizations, unexplored assumptions and simplistic solutions. In this section, we address some of the many questions that have been raised over the last 25 years and take on some of the arguments and myths we have heard articulated about fee increases. These arguments, we posit, are distractions, moving California away from its commitment to equity and access to higher education, and thus away from an equitable society.

1-Q: WHAT KIND OF IMPACT CAN A SEVERAL-DOLLAR PER UNIT INCREASE—OR A $26 FEE, FOR THAT MATTER—POSSIBLY HAVE? ISN'T IT NEGLIGIBLE?

No: it's only negligible if you can afford it—not just the mandatory fees but all the other costs as well.

Even low fees have had a decided impact on enrollment: fees can make or break a student's ability to go to college. When the first enrollment fee of $5 per unit was enacted in January 1984, student enrollment for Fall 1984 was 95,000 less than the previous fall. When fees were increased to $13 per unit ($50 per unit for students with a baccalaureate degree or greater) in 1993-94, Fall 1993 enrollments dropped approximately 125,000 from the previous fall (Nussbaum, 2003). A similar trend can be seen at CSU and UC institutions, but it is not as dramatic as at community colleges.

It is prudent not only to examine the individual proposals but to consider the validity of the arguments that call them into existence in the first place.

What may seem a small amount of money—a theater ticket, perhaps—to a relatively privileged portion of the population accustomed to California's high cost of living may in fact be a tremendous barrier or represent a substantial number of work hours to working community college attendees. Under the new $26 per unit fees, a student taking a full-time course load (12 units) will have to work more than 46 hours at minimum wage to pay for fees alone—that's more than 25% of a month's income before taxes.[20]

The logic that assumes fees are ultimately negligible also assumes that they amount to the major "costs" for students going to college; a quick sampling of community college students will refute this logic by providing a much longer and more complex list of costs. There are numerous hidden fees and hidden costs that attend the educational process, and—though rarely addressed explicitly—these sacrifices are especially large for the many low-income and nontraditional students the community colleges serve.

Besides enrollment fees, students face a variety of educational costs—health fees, materials fees, technology fees, parking permit fees, and textbook costs among them—when enrolling in college courses. Typically, textbooks carry the greatest additional cost. While a scientific study of textbook prices may not be feasible, a "market basket" survey detailing the costs of books for courses commonly taken by community college students can provide an indication of the expenses students face. Oxnard College *Campus Observer* student editor Brandon Mackey (2003) conducted just such a survey of average textbook prices, by discipline, at one California community college—Oxnard College—for the Fall 2003 semester, and found that a student taking a 15-unit course load could easily be expected to spend $400 to $500 on textbooks for only required books. Multiple required texts and recommended additional texts can increase the bill dramatically, as with chemistry, for which the recommended additional texts total well over $300. Mackey estimates that an incoming full-time student taking university-parallel courses, likely to enroll in English composition, psychology, math, and chemistry, would face a minimum of $279.93 in textbook costs. The same student, taking into account the optional and suggested additional texts, would be looking at a total of $760.40 for these four academic courses.

The reality is that fees and educational expenses are only a portion of the actual cost students and their families must bear in order to attend college. When the Board of Governors broke down some of the "hidden" costs of education in 1982, it noted that two semesters of community college for a California resident totaled about $777 for "education related expenses," but that "Other living costs brought the total to over $9,000." It also noted that even in 1979, 77% of community college students were employed (p. 5). In their April 2002 document *Dispelling the Myths*, the University of California Student Association echoed this idea by showing that while the University of California had lower fees than four comparable institutions nationwide (Illinois, Virginia, Michigan, New York), when total costs including living expenses were considered, University of California became the most expensive (p. 3).

In addition to direct educational costs and living expenses, students and their families face significant indirect costs and economic effects when they choose to pursue an education. These

[20] If Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed plan to charge students with BA degrees $50 per unit had been implemented, a student who held a B.A. returning to college—perhaps to become a nurse—would need to work well over two weeks to pay for fees—more than 63% of a month's income at minimum wage, before taxes.

include transportation and childcare costs and loss of available work-time and earning opportunities.[21]

2-Q: LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS CAN GET THEIR ENROLLMENT FEES WAIVED, SO WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Fees coupled with waivers still result in reduced access and reduced equity.

Approximately 20% of California community college students currently receive Board of Governors fee waivers (Chancellor's Office briefing book). But not all students eligible for waivers receive them.

Though it is difficult by definition to collect accurate data on this aid gap, some available numbers help give a partial picture of the number of students who are missed. Students who already receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), for instance, are automatically eligible for fee waivers, yet a recent study found that one-third of TANF recipients did not have waivers (Woodlief et al, 2003, p. 47). A Fall 2003 survey of students at American River College found that only 32 of 255 students who reported a household income of up to $10,000 were receiving waivers (Murakami).

Additionally, at-risk, low income *potential* students who experience "sticker shock" may be so discouraged that they never have an opportunity to learn about Board of Governors fee waivers and other aid options that might alleviate the financial strain. There is simply no way to measure the number of students lost to the system—and to higher education—who never even attempt to enroll because of the cost of fees, and who may never return.

The Board of Governors fee waivers will remain essential as long as California's community colleges charge enrollment fees. But as with financial aid eligibility *(see 3-Q)*, this form of aid reaches a limited number of students who are eligible, and does not account for "sticker shock," or those who may find the application process daunting or lack the information or the ability to navigate the fee waiver process.

3-Q: WON'T HIGHER FEES ALLOW STUDENTS WHO NEED IT TO CAPTURE MORE FINANCIAL AID? ISN'T THIS THE WHOLE THEORY BEHIND THE HIGH FEE/HIGH AID CONCEPT?

Perhaps a good theory—but in practice access and equity are reduced.

Financial aid is sometimes touted as a kind of wealth redistribution system, but for many—especially students and potential students who already have many obstacles to overcome before they step into a college classroom—it is simply another barrier. The result of increased reliance on aid is that financially at-risk students drop out of the system—or never approach it. Desiree-Michelle Abshire, student member of the Board of Governors, has commented elegantly on the absurdity of a policy that expects entering community college students, so many of whom are coming to college for much-needed basic skills training, to navigate the long and complicated application forms required to obtain financial aid. It is much more likely, she stated, that they will simply be discouraged and not come to college (May 2004 Board of Governors meeting, Sacramento, CA).

The effects of trying to substitute aid for a no-fee system have been clear for decades: increased

[21] The Joint Economic Committee's report on "Investment in Education" (2000) emphasizes the significance of the loss of available wages: "Beyond high school, foregone wages are the largest component of [a student's] investment in education" (2).

financial aid does not reach many of those who need it most.[22] In 1980, more than 40% of students who were eligible for aid did not even apply. *Should Community College Students Pay Tuition?* suggested that this was "due perhaps to lack of information, intimidating requirements or even lack of parental cooperation." Others may simply lack the language skills: for multi-lingual students working to gain competence in written English, for example, forms like these may be precisely the reason education is needed.[23]

Because the information gap around financial aid availability is widely recognized, the Chancellor's Office has taken some steps to increase access to financial aid. The 2003–04 budget that raised community college fees from $11 to $18 a unit also allotted $38 million to publicizing aid opportunities via statewide media and outreach on the campuses. The Chancellor's Office was tasked with conducting a mandated, multi-part study of the success of this outreach.[24]

[22] One contributor is a shifting national trend in how grants, rather than loans, are awarded: low-income students are getting a smaller percentage of grants as funding increasingly earmarked for merit-based, rather than need-based, awards goes to higher-income students (Sahadi 2003).

[23] Parental knowledge (or lack of knowledge) about financial aid is a contributing factor in whether or not students access financial aid; low-income and first-generation college students are less likely to have parents with this knowledge (College Board, 2001, p. v.).

[24] There is no doubt that outreach can make a difference: at City College of San Francisco, an initiative to increase access to financial aid through outreach activities and revitalizing the Office of Financial Aid has increased the number of aid recipients by more than 40% over a five-year period. This outreach has benefited students from all ethnic backgrounds, with students identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander showing the greatest increase (up 42.3%), followed by white students (up 19.5%), African American students (up 14.1%) and Hispanic/Latino students (up 13.1%).

In 1982, the Board of Governors estimated that implementing fees along with adequate financial aid to students would likely result in little, if any, taxpayer savings. It cited City University of New York findings that after CUNY "ended its tuition-free policy, for every $1 in tuition collected, $1.20 was spent in combined city, state, and federal funds, mainly on increased student aid" (p. 3).[25] Comparisons of national financial aid data and participation rates have shown that aid does not increase in proportion to fees, and that community colleges where the high fee/high aid concept has been implemented have lower access rates (Washington State, 1993; Hittelman 2004).

A significant number of students who meet the economic thresholds for financial aid are nonetheless ineligible to receive it; these students are more likely to access the community college system and are often likely to be the students most able to benefit from higher education. These include students who can only attend college part-time: most forms of financial aid require students to maintain a full-time course load. This restriction can be particularly difficult for students with substantial household and/or work responsibilities; for basic skills students who sometimes need tremendous focus and large amounts of time in their first semesters at college in order to bring their communication and math skills up to the college level, this requirement can also be especially prohibitive. Immigrants without required documentation are ineligible for aid.[26] And under the amended Higher Education Act, many students (or would be students) previously convicted of

[25] Charging or raising enrollment fees in New York, California and elsewhere includes attendant—and largely unacknowledged—costs, as the CUNY figures imply. In addition to financial aid and fee waivers, other hidden costs include the cost of fee collection (2%), the collection of delinquent fees (which contribute to district deficits), and outreach to students about aid options.

certain drug offenses (including possession) in federal or state courts are ineligible for aid—even if they have served their time in prison.[27]

Even after applying for financial aid, many students are unable to make ends meet.[28] In extensive student interviews conducted by California Tomorrow, inaccessible or inadequate financial aid was the second most frequent challenge to schooling. These issues were most often cited by vocational students, students seeking Associate degrees, and African Americans (Woodlief et al, 2003, p. 45). A national study conducted by National Center for Educational Statistics cites an average gap of $4,598 between aid and overall living expenses and costs of attendance for community college students (as cited in Woodlief et al, 2003, p. 46).

Undoubtedly, community college students need financial aid. But the aid available—when it is available and accessible—is already insufficient: increased student fees must simply be added to the amount that financial aid does not cover. *(See also 2-Q.)*

[26] Woodlief et al, (2003) also note that some immigrants, regardless of legal status, may be "suspicious of becoming part of any federal database" (p. 49).

[27] The abundance of data connecting education to reduced re-incarceration and reduced strain of reentry into society (including employment) after incarceration, as well as the differential rates of arrest and conviction in many communities of color, should certainly give pause for thought about the barriers posed by high fees and reduced educational access.

[28] In a national study on early exit from college, the National Center for Education Statistics (2002) found that financial reasons (including the need to work or work more) were cited at more than four times the rate of any other reasons for departure from college (p. 54, Table 13).

4-Q: BUT DON'T WE NEED TO INCREASE STUDENT FEES AT LEAST A FEW MORE DOLLARS SO THAT STUDENTS CAN MAXIMIZE THEIR PELL GRANTS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

This illogical solution helps only a small number of needy students by forcing a much larger number of students to subsidize the general taxpayer.

This myth has received considerable recent media attention. It is a classic case of the tail wagging the dog. It is true that because of the federal regulations governing Pell grants a small number of students would receive more federal aid if California community college fees were raised. However, the main result would be that the large majority of students would have to pay a vastly greater total in fees than would be "saved" or gained through federal grants. For example, for 2003-04, if fees had been $26/unit instead of $18, the most severely disadvantaged full-time students would have received an additional $112 in federal Pell aid. The Chancellor's Office estimates that there might be 135,000 such students. So an additional total of as much as $15 million might have been received from federal funds. However, in order to achieve this, all the remaining students who did not receive Pell grants would have contributed an additional $8/unit directly to the state's general fund. This figure was estimated by the Chancellor's Office at greater than $65 million—a net cost to students of $50 million. (Additionally, the likelihood of changes in Pell Grant limits would negate even the smallest gains from this misplaced strategy.) Undoubtedly our most disadvantaged students need more financial assistance, but this is not a sensible mechanism to achieve it. This mechanism does not subsidize students by increasing Pell Grants; ultimately, it subsidizes the general taxpayer, who may or may not be a student. *(See 6-Q.)*

5-Q: STUDENTS DISCOURAGED BY FEES PROBABLY AREN'T SERIOUS ENOUGH ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION ANYWAY, AND ARE LESS LIKELY TO SUCCEED. SHOULDN'T WE CONCENTRATE ON THOSE WE KNOW WILL BENEFIT?

The effect of fee increases is to reduce student access to higher education, not increase student commitment. All students can benefit from community college education—and all should have the opportunity to do so.

Proponents of fees have argued that fees and tuition are what would be called a "price-point" issue in the marketing world: if students pay enough, these arguments suggest, they'll take their courses more seriously and will be more committed to their education. But the effect of fees is in fact to limit access, not increase commitment. There is no data to support the idea that cost equates with seriousness.[29] The Board of Governors was aware of such arguments in 1982, and it answered:

Analytical studies have shown fees would reduce enrollments, but primarily of lower-wealth students, not necessarily "non-serious" students. However, because community colleges reflect the economics and demographics of their local areas, the impact of tuition would vary greatly. Although students in a few better-off districts might be able to pay, districts with high refugee populations, for instance, would be much harder hit by tuition. (p.5)

To suggest that students are not serious about their education—because they are poor and cannot afford the costs of a college education, because they face significant risk factors beyond those of traditional college students, because they are less prepared for the college environment than other students, or because they have substantial responsibilities beyond those of their classmates—reflects a troubling disconnect from the realities of many students and the obstacles they face. A disproportionate number of community college students are victims of poverty, unemployment, and underemployment; they are struggling to make ends meet and to succeed and their lives are destabilized by fee increases and the political "ping pong" debates surrounding them.[30]

Regardless of income level, most high school graduates want to go to college—and presumably want to succeed, as well.[31] But community college students generally experience more stressors that put them at risk of dropping out of higher education institutions, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (1999). Several of these stressors are directly related to student income: i.e. working full-time, attending school

[29] If this were true, students in states with high fee community college systems would show higher success and retention rates after controlling for other factors. Instead, as tuition rises at colleges around the country, the corporate student-as-customer model is increasingly labeled as an issue, including at Ivy League universities, where students are said to argue that they are paying enough that they ought to do well and/or should not be financially punished by having to repeat courses. It may be that higher educational costs lead, in fact, to grade inflation rather than more committed students.

[30] One study found that in California, basic skills students, self-supporting students, minorities, and those who had applied for (but not yet received) financial aid were among those most likely to be discouraged by fee increases (as cited in Board of Governors, March 2003, p. 6). More recently at American River College, for instance, a study of the effects of the Fall 2003 fee increase found that Calgrant and CalWORKS recipients were more likely to have dropped classes (Murakami).

[31] Ninety seven percent of all high school graduates planned to continue their education and 76% expected to earn at least a Bachelor's Degree, NCES found (1999). Among low-income high school completers, 94% planned to continue their education. However, the same report indicates that income is related to college attendance, suggesting that fees play an important part in limiting access.

part-time, being financially independent from parents, being a single parent, or being an older student.[32]

The effects of fee increases have been consistent and systematic. Every fee increase corresponds to a significant drop in enrollment.[33] *(For a more complete overview of fees and enrollment, see Appendix II.)*

FALL SEMESTER	FEE INCREASE	ENROLLMENT DECREASE
1984	↑ $5	↓ 95,000
1991	↑ $1	↓ 16,000
1993	↑ $7 + $46 for BA holders	↓ 124,000
2003	↑ $7	↓ 90,000
2004	↑ $8	↓ ?

To address the second part of the question—how do we know which students will benefit?—we must turn to the open-access mission of the community colleges. In the history of the community colleges, myriad and amazing stories surface among the people who have attended, persisted against all odds, and succeeded. Among them are some of our own leaders, as some of the case studies in Appendix III testify.[34] To pre-judge someone as unable to benefit because of economic legacy is classist and exclusionary. The Academic Senate believes that all students and potential students, regardless of income or academic preparation, should have the opportunity to discover what education can contribute to their lives. Ultimately, we cannot know in advance which students will benefit from higher education.

The narrowed options that accompany high fees deny students the right to explore a range of majors and courses, and require strict and unfaltering adherence to a prescribed academic track. To veer from the plan and change academic tracks is to exact a penalty and to pay the full cost of the class, to risk losing aid, to jeopardize the opportunity to transfer to a chosen university, or to be denied retraining in today's ever-changing world. In contrast, the case studies in Appendix III illustrate the value of second chances and changes of plan.

6-Q: CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE GROSSLY UNDER-FUNDED. WON'T INCREASING FEES HELP TO IMPROVE THEIR FUNDING?

No—increased fees are not returned to the colleges; they simply shift the burden of payment to the student.

The question of under-funding and the question of enrollment fees may seem synonymous at first glance, but a closer look clarifies that this is not the case.[35] In the 2001—04 time period, student fees increased by 136% and the total state revenue collected in student fees more than doubled, from $156 million to $334 million; simultaneously, the state's funding per student declined by 9% (Turnage, 2004b). As California Community Colleges Chancellor Mark Drummond (2004) has remarked, the students are paying more and getting less.

[32] NCES findings (1999) showed that about 22% of community college students nationally have three or more drop-out risk factors.

[33] In some cases in which fees were implemented mid-year or retroactively, impact on enrollment has been delayed until the following fall.

[34] Other inspiring (and more contemporary) stories and challenges can be found in Woodlief et al, (2003).

[35] The disconnect between fees and the community college budget is simply further indication that fees, unlike tuition, were never intended to cover the cost of instruction.

Fees are not a reasonable solution for funding woes because California community college enrollment fees are, in fact, a hidden form of general fund taxation. Unlike tuitions in the UC and CSU systems, community college enrollment fees have never been part of the system's budget; with the exception of a small percentage set aside for the colleges to cover the cost of processing fees (2%), revenue from fees (with the few exceptions noted in 8-Q) has always reverted to the state's General Fund. The colleges basically serve as tax collectors for the state: funding to the colleges is reduced in proportion to the fees collected. In other words, the "profit" from fees goes to the state's General Fund, and can just as easily be used for prisons as it can for schools.

By all available measures, it is true that California's community colleges are indeed grossly under-funded. The 2003—04 statewide average was just under $4,200 per full-time equivalent student enrolled in the system.[36] California lags well behind the national average in per-student community college funding, and the program-based funding model put in place by AB 1725, the Community College reform bill of 1989, has always called for funding levels approximately double those that have ever been achieved. More recently, the Board of Governor's March 2003 study document "The Real Cost Project" used a completely different methodology to produce a "credible and robust estimate of the real cost of assuring a quality education for every student." This resulted in an average required funding level of $9,200 per full-time equivalent student—a figure that turned out to be remarkably close to that produced by the original program-based funding model.

While it is true that California's community colleges are under-funded, the funding problem needs to be solved in a different way—not on the backs of the state's most needy students, the very students the system is here to serve. The principle of no-fee, open-access education should not change and should not be thrown over for the sake of increased apportionment: those committed to the community college mission must recognize that these are not competing priorities.

7-Q: IF ENROLLMENT FEES COULD BE RETURNED TO THE SYSTEM'S BUDGET, WOULDN'T IT MAKE SENSE TO INCREASE THEM IN ORDER TO SUPPLEMENT AVAILABLE FUNDING?

No—this would merely provide an incentive to increase fees even further.

Some argue that funding mechanisms should be changed so that fees could be captured as part of the community college budget, but the Academic Senate disagrees, as do other faculty organizations. Fees are a tax on those who can least afford it. Maintaining the principles and the mission of California's community colleges necessitates that, just as we should not seek to raise state revenues on the backs of students, we should not seek to pay college utility bills, raise salaries, or build facilities on their backs, either. Coupling fees with system funding takes the

[36] The Chancellor's Office has estimated funding at an average of 60-70%. In 1998-99, California's average was $4,017 as compared to the national average of $6,300—a difference of nearly $2,300. This figure does not attempt to take into account the system's large number of unfunded FTES, which would represent an additional gap. (Nussbaum, Sept. 2003, p. 22) Additionally, it should be noted that non-credit funding rates are substantially lower. Within California, community college students are funded at a lower per-student rate than UC, CSU, and K12 students.

...voluntary fees increase inequity and benefit colleges located in affluent communities.

pressure off the state to fulfill its commitment to provide equitable access to higher education.

Additionally, it would be difficult to say with certainty where revenues from any fee increases actually end up. California's community college system is funded by a proportional split of Proposition 98 monies for K-14 education, a proportion that has nonetheless typically remained below the percentage of the split required by statute *(see 16-Q)*. Because this proportional split is unstable, there is no accurate way to ensure that funds from any student fee increases, routed through the General Fund, would amount to an *actual* increase in the system budget: overall system apportionment might or might not be reduced to cover the supposed income or loss of income from changes to the fee structure, and any tenuous connection made by legislators would in fact be an arbitrary—and potentially inconsistent—one.

8-Q: SOME FEES DO STAY WITH INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS/COLLEGES: PERHAPS THESE COULD BE INCREASED LOCALLY?

No—voluntary fees increase inequity and benefit colleges located in affluent communities.

Giving fee authority to locally elected boards of trustees might have certain surface attractions, but it is a dangerous recipe because it would allow the state to further ignore its responsibilities by reducing General Fund appropriations and expecting local boards and their communities to make up the difference with increased fee revenue. What board could resist raising fees in difficult budget times? This effect of transferring funding from the state to the student has been very clearly seen in the UC system in recent years, and is completely inappropriate for the community college system, which has enrollment fees rather than tuition, and which must be available to serve students who don't currently have the option to access a university education.

Historically, as budget pressure grew, colleges introduced all kinds of "permissive" fees, such as late application, add, drop, or mandatory student activities fees. As statewide tuition/enrollment fees were raised, the use of other miscellaneous fees was tightly regulated by the Chancellor's Office, in part by Legal Opinion M01-40 issued in December 2001. Because increased enrollment fees revert to the state General Fund and do not benefit the college *(see 6-Q)*, there has been increasing discussion of whether colleges could allow students to vote for voluntary fees to improve specific services. A technology fee is a much-quoted example.

The Academic Senate is opposed to such voluntary fees on three grounds. Such fees simply increase the total cost of college attendance that has already been described as a significant barrier. In addition, voluntary fees raise an important equity issue. The likely effect would be that students in affluent districts would vote in favor of such fees and further increase their advantage over colleges in economically disadvantaged areas. This would further disenfranchise those students with below-average economic profiles for their communities. Particularly when the issue of funding equalization is receiving considerable political attention, this is an unacceptable effect. Finally, the Academic Senate believes that granting local fee-raising authority is an extremely dangerous precedent because local boards with fewer alternative resources would have even more difficulty than the state in resisting fees increases in difficult times. Local fees would soon supplant state revenue, and the state would have easy opportunity to further abdicate its responsibility for accessible community college education.

9-Q: THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HOLDS THE POSITION THAT "ANY INCREASE IN STUDENT FEE LEVEL BE GRADUAL, MODERATE, AND PREDICTABLE." WOULDN'T THIS APPROACH SOLVE MANY OF THE PROBLEMS THAT FEE INCREASES CREATE?

No—routine small fee increases compound to produce large increases over time.

Any discussion of gradual, moderate, and predictable fee increases should be cautiously approached as an attempt to lessen the initial impact of a damaging, worst-case scenario, but we must recognize that this does not fix the problems created by fees. Dramatic increases can cause "sticker shock," but even "gradual" or "moderate" increases are cumulative, and we should expect the losses they create to be cumulative as well.

It is true that *predictable* increases would allow more time for planning: time for students to work to budget for increases as well as time for districts, which must inform students, to make plans for collecting increases, and to adjust course offerings to account for the likelihood of decreased enrollments. Certainly students and the system would benefit from forewarning and the opportunity for outreach and information. Outreach is also necessary in order to inform current and potential students about financial aid and fee waivers, as well as to help alleviate the "sticker shock" economically disadvantaged students are likely to have when fees are increased.

It does not follow, however, that moderate or predictable increases will counter the effective lack of access that increased fees represent. Statistics from the "moderate" 1991 increase of $1 (from $5 to $6 per unit) showed a 1.1% drop in enrollment (Nussbaum 2003, p. 22).

After the initial imposition of fees in 1984, the Board of Governors moved toward their current position of "gradual, moderate, and predictable" increases adopted in July 1992 and reaffirmed in 2003. A January 1987 policy position adopted the following principles:

- Community college fees should be low, reflecting an overall policy that the state bears the primary responsibility for the cost of community college education.
- Community college fees should be predictable, change in a modest fashion in relation to the cost of education, and their burden should be equitably distributed among students.
- Financial aid should be sufficient to offset fees that may pose a barrier to the access of low income students.
- Fee and financial aid policies should be consistent with fiscal and academic policies in supporting the dual objectives of access and excellence.

The Academic Senate remains opposed to any fee increases—and, in fact, to fees in general. California must recognize the tremendous societal benefits provided by truly accessible post-secondary education for its residents, and ultimately bear the cost of educating students in its community college system, as it did until 1984. Instead of using student fees to tax those who can least afford it, the state should return to the system it supported only two decades ago: a no-fee community college system.

10-Q: ISN'T THE ACADEMIC SENATE'S "NO FEES" POSITION EXTREME?

No—though the recently enacted fee increases certainly are.[37]

The Academic Senate's long-standing position in opposition to fees is certainly at one end of the current political spectrum on this issue. However, it is based on the fundamental principles articulated in the preceding principles section of this paper. It would be much more appropriate to characterize the current fee increases of $26/unit (and the failed proposal for a $50/unit differential for BA-holders) as extreme. Current increases represent a rise of 136% (from $11/unit just 18 months ago). This constitutes a tax on students that goes directly to the state General Fund. Any other tax increase of this magnitude would cause immediate civic uproar throughout the state.

Some might describe the Board of Governors' "gradual, moderate and predictable" position as middle-of-the road. We will go a step further, however, and note that in the mid- to long-term, fees are simply not an issue of degree: there are fees—which will continue to increase and accumulate, as they have for the past two decades—or there are no fees. We argue for no fees. *(See 9-Q.)*

[37] An alternative proposal—one which might be labeled extreme by some and considered ethically appropriate by others—would be to pay all educational expenses plus a stipend to cover living expenses for all students in the California community colleges.

...suggesting that we ought to admire the cost of quality education because relatively speaking it is "not as high" is wrong-headed: it amounts to arguing that Californians are "less excluded," and that less exclusion is enough.

11-Q: WHY DOES ONE FEE INCREASE NECESSARILY MEAN THERE WILL BE OTHER FEE INCREASES?

Because history tells us that it is so.

All experience with mandatory fees suggests that once they are established, they inexorably rise in the long term—even if there are momentary declines or periods of stability. This can be seen throughout higher education and particularly in the California community colleges. The Academic Senate wants to see California commit to reversing this trend. *(See also 9-Q.)*

12-Q: ISN'T AN ADDITIONAL FEE FOR STUDENTS WHO HOLD BA/BS DEGREES REASONABLE?

No—this experiment was tried ten years ago and was judged a resounding failure by all concerned.

Community colleges are not only intended for students just entering higher education. As a matter of fact, many students with baccalaureate degrees return to the community colleges for retraining, second career exploration, and job advancement.[38] Community colleges can react to industry and business needs more quickly than four-year colleges and universities and can focus on more practical curricular applications. Student headcount in the community colleges (Fall 2003) with BA degrees totaled 135,871 or 8.5% of total enrollment.

While the community colleges are certainly an essential access point for first-time college students, they also function as a primary point for job retraining and career path changes, a function that is particularly important in periods of high unemployment and economic changes.

[38] Community colleges are also charged with providing lifelong learning, which includes courses for community members of all ages, including programs for seniors.

Unemployed workers seeking new opportunities are by no means limited to students without prior higher education experience. Over 50% of BA holders in the Los Angeles District consistently enroll in occupationally oriented classes (2004). One popular choice for retraining is nursing, a field for which there continues to be substantial need and for which California's community colleges are responsible for a significant proportion of training. Fall 2003 data from Nursing Directors at various community college nursing schools indicates that a high percentage of students already hold BA degrees or higher. College of Marin and Ventura College reported applicants holding prior degrees at 52% (46/88) and 26% (39/151) respectively. Approximately 30% of nursing students at Glendale College and 15% at Palomar College hold BAs (Vogel, 2004).

Enrollment statistics from the $50 fee differential that was implemented for three years (1993-94 to 1995-96) offer a telling narrative about its effects. In 1993–94, when the differential was coupled with a $4 per unit fee increase, fall enrollment dropped 8.2% over the previous fall, and then another 1.9% the following fall when fees increased an additional $3 per unit. In Fall 1995-96, with fees holding steady at $13 with the $50 differential, and despite increased funding to the system overall, enrollments continued to drop another 1.6% (Nussbaum, 2003).

13-Q: ISN'T IT REASONABLE TO RAISE CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEES TO A LEVEL COMPARABLE TO THE U.S.'S OTHER PUBLIC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES?

No: California deliberately chose for its educational system to be different from the rest of the country—for reasons that remain valid today.

And no: suggesting that we ought to admire the cost of quality education because relatively speaking it is "not as high" is wrong-headed: it amounts to arguing that Californians are "less excluded," and that less exclusion is enough.

The primary effect of increased fees—even when coupled with increased financial aid—is to reduce participation, which violates the primary universal access goal of the Master Plan. By the late 1990s, California's participation rates had been significantly reduced from previous years, as documented by the Chancellor's Consultation Council (1997):

> It is evident that by any reasonable measure, California Community Colleges are currently providing California adults their lowest level of access since the late 1960s, even though the state still ranks among the access leaders in community college education across the country. California's access needs, however, are not defined by other states, but rather, by the California Community Colleges mission, and by the social and job skills required by Californians. (p. 1)

The whole point of the Master Plan for Higher Education was that California had deliberately chosen a different course from other states—no-fee, universal access.

Participation rates help California measure access and the extent to which its population is benefiting from the community colleges. Participation rates increased significantly during the 1960s and 1970s, when the state's no-fee policies were still in place, "to a high of 88 fall enrollments per 1,000 adult Californians—until the passage of Proposition

Community college fee increases do not share the pain—they impose it on those least able to afford it.

13. Since then, a series of policies and events reduced the overall rate to 57 per 1,000 by 1995" (Chancellor's Consultation Council, 1997, p. 9).

Even in 1993, at the very time California's community colleges were experiencing their largest enrollment decrease in the system's history, two studies from the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board found that California ranked number one in terms of low fees and number four in terms of participation as a percentage of total population. This is a sad comment on the state of higher education access and participation across the nation, and we should not be satisfied with the "less exclusion" that it represents. California's goal should not be to "catch up" with the restricted access policies of other states, but to set an example that is appropriate to its own needs.

In addition to having a clear effect in the history of California community college enrollments and participation *(see Appendix II and 1-Q)*, the correlation between fees and participation rates is borne out by national data. The states with the lowest two-year public college fees also have the highest rates of participation within the population. The 10 states with the lowest community college fees in Fall 1999 had a participation rate of nearly twice that of the 10 with the highest fees (Hittelman, 2004).

Though California's community colleges do offer students a relatively low-cost education when compared to other higher education options nationwide, comparison with national fee data is ultimately of limited use. In creating this open-access system for the state's residents, the state dedicated itself to providing access to higher education, and committed itself to assuming responsibility for that access. Seeking to provide more than "less" exclusion, California set out to provide its residents with unprecedented access to higher education, recognizing that all in society would benefit from such a commitment. California's community college system is unlike any other educational system in the world, and it should be proud to be so.

14-Q: THE STATE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF A BUDGET CRISIS; DON'T WE ALL HAVE TO "SHARE THE PAIN"?

Community college fee increases do not share the pain—they impose it on those least able to afford it.

The funds raised from fees increases—even a drastic three- or four-fold increase—are minimal compared to the state's budgetary problems. The Governor's recent reversal of the Vehicle License Fee is costing the state approximately $2.7 *billion*; his proposed enrollment fee increase would raise about $91 million. This sort of budget management amounts to a tax on California's community college students—ultimately, a tax on the poor.

The impetus of budget woes as just cause for increasing fees and limiting the educational options of our citizenry is given with almost mantra-like repetitiveness, but the denial of readily affordable access to a diverse population is not sufficiently factored into the deficit column—an incalculable loss of human potential and essential liberties. California would also be diminishing a valuable resource—an educated workforce. Increasing student fees for the sake of the budget crisis would have negligible impact on the budget and is poor long-term fiscal policy for our students, our communities, and the state.

15-Q: WASN'T THE 1960 MASTER PLAN A FANTASY THAT THE STATE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD?

No. Despite our state's difficult fiscal picture, what we are seeing is a shift in political priorities rather than an economic necessity.

The January 2002 *Postsecondary Education Opportunity* compared nationwide appropriations of state tax funds for operating expenses in higher education per $100 of personal income. At $8.65, California's expenditure ranks only 22nd (p. 3). This is a drop of $2.79 from 1978 and a reflection of changing priorities (p. 4). Although California has the lowest fees, it does not have anything close to the highest expenditures. We must consider, also, where those spending priorities have shifted to. The 2002 report from the Justice Policy Institute *Cellblocks or Classrooms*? notes that in 1985 California spent $6.5 billion on higher education but by 2000 that figure had dropped 16% to $5.4 billion. In contrast, California state expenditures on corrections rose 164%, from $1.7 billion in 1985 to $4.7 billion in 2000 (p. 5, Table 2).

To claim that the educational engine that drove California's economic expansion of the last forty years is no longer a worthwhile investment would be short-sighted financial irrationality, but that is the conclusion that seems to have been drawn. It's not that the state can't afford it; it's that voters or policy makers have apparently made other choices, either explicitly or implicitly, by overt action or by passive complicity. The Academic Senate does not support these other choices.

16-Q: WHY IS FUNDING SUCH A PROBLEM IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES? DOESN'T PROP 98 GIVE CALIFORNIA EDUCATION THE MONEY IT NEEDS?

No. Community colleges have never received their statutory share under Proposition 98—and even that share would provide a bare minimum.

Though Proposition 98 specifies a minimum school funding guarantee,[39] the notion that it solves education funding problems in general or community college funding in particular is false. It mandates that a minimum amount of money (based on complex formulae) be earmarked for education, and that 10.93% of that go to the community colleges (EdSource, 1996). In practice, however, the minimum has become the maximum. Legislators have been reluctant to "over fund" the Proposition 98 guarantee, and the community college system does not see the minimum funding levels promised.

The community college proportion of Proposition 98 is not funded at the statutory rate of 10.93%: this so-called "statutory ratio" has been routinely set aside in funding bills every year since 1990-91, averaging 10.12% over the last 14 budget years (Turnage, 2004a, p. 9). That percentage does not accommodate the range of needs of institutions of higher learning in a world of ever-increasing costs: the gap for the 2004-05 budget year, with Prop 98 funded at 10.25%, represents a $330 million loss to the system for that year alone (Turnage, 2004a, p. 8).

[39] The Proposition 98 guarantee, a linchpin of the mechanism for funding education in California, applies to K–12 education, community colleges, and county offices of education, as well as child development programs administered through the state Department of Education, and educational programs administered through the California Youth Authority and Department of Mental Health (CPB). Education is also supposed to share in any windfall revenues.

...statistics show that college—not just high school—is what it now takes to participate in a democratic society and to access a sustainable high-growth, high wage career.

17-Q: AND WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE LOCAL BONDS THAT HAVE BEEN PASSED—DON'T THEY GIVE DISTRICTS ALL THE FUNDING THEY NEED?

No—most bonds only fund facilities, not operating costs.

The matter of local bonds has become a two-edged sword for community colleges. In the last few years many community college districts, anticipating a dearth of revenue in the years ahead, have passed bond measures to secure funds for capital construction. In approving such bond measures for community colleges, voters have recognized the need for facilities and have given a vote of confidence to their community colleges. However, colleges are not permitted to use bond money to defray operating costs (such things as custodial services, electricity, and ventilation) in those newly-constructed facilities (or to hire personnel, including faculty, to staff those facilities). As a result, community colleges face a Hobson's choice: either forego a bond issue or seek one with the hope that necessary operating funds will materialize somehow. It is therefore possible that numerous community colleges around California will have new buildings that will sit empty because no funds exist to light, heat, clean—or staff—them.

18-Q: ARE TAXPAYERS WILLING TO PAY?

They haven't been asked directly to pay for no-fee community colleges. But when they have been asked more limited questions, they have been willing to pay, as recent local and statewide bond initiatives have shown.

During their 2003 hearings, the Assembly Higher Education Committee seemed poised to dismantle the fundamental goals of the 1960 educational Master Plan. Two dangerous, but unspoken, assumptions formed the background to their activities. They seemed to be basing their research and proposals on the twin assumptions that 1) the California taxpayer is no longer willing to fund education the way we have known it in the past, and that, 2) as an immediate consequence, the proportion of the costs borne by the state must decrease. These assumptions should cause outrage, but instead seem to have been barely noticed amongst discussions of increased student fees and performance outcome measures and revised funding formulas.

The notion that California taxpayers who personally benefited from the state's provision of higher education for themselves and their children are now unwilling to provide the same educational support to the current generation of students is moral bankruptcy at its most odious. All Californians —not just the Academic Senate—should be outraged by such moral bankruptcy.

The Academic Senate testified in opposition to these two pernicious assumptions. The Academic Senate believes that, if asked, the California public would say:

- we believe that the California taxpayer should continue to fund the state provision of quality higher education for all who can benefit;
- we believe it's the right thing to do for all the people of California;
- and in addition we believe it's the right thing to do for the economy of California.

Without such a fundamental statement we're doomed to the ever-quickening treadmill of budget cuts, fee increases, and compromised quality. Students will pay an ever-increasing proportion of their own education, and participation rates will fall.

Master Plan architect and spokesperson Clark Kerr has described the tremendous sense of commitment Californians and their elected leaders felt toward fellow citizens in the years following the Master Plan's creation: "it was a commitment that called for billions and billions of dollars of investment and a commitment which at the time not everybody thought we could keep. But it was kept," Kerr reiterates, noting that "nobody was turned away" in the first 15 years of the Master Plan's existence. "[W]e no longer feel the same debt of obligation to the incoming students today," Kerr lamented in 1999, "as we did toward the children of the GIs in the 60s."

19-Q: WHY SHOULD STUDENTS GET A FREE RIDE AT THE TAXPAYER'S EXPENSE?

They don't. Such a question assumes that everybody else pays taxes and students don't. It also implies that only students benefit.

As described in the principles section, the vast majority of community college students work and pay taxes while they attend college. But more importantly, the result of investment in their college attendance will be improved salaries and a lifetime of higher tax payments.

Interestingly, the alternative case can be made: that it is California business that is getting the free ride. Businesses pay taxes along with everyone else, including students, but they benefit enormously from the job training and skill enhancement received by community college students.

There is no such thing as a free ride for college students. The expectations for an educated workforce will be to bring California to the number one place in a world economy, to improve the living conditions of our elderly, and to improve educational environments for our young. These will be byproducts of a strong intergenerational compact in which the adult members of our society and our legislators make the commitment to free access to a college education to prepare our young adults to take care of us when we get old, and to take care of our grandchildren.

In all likelihood the individuals asking this question have personally benefited from California's low fee open-access education—and so have their children and families. But these same individuals now wish to deny those very benefits to the next generation. In particular, consider the large number of legislators and business leaders who began their meteoric rise to success by taking advantage of California's community college system in the days when it was tuition free. One recent, informal study found that at least 70% of California's Republican legislators had attended college in California's public higher education system, most of them during the days when the Master Plan's promise of no-fee education was still intact.[40]

20-Q: PUBLIC K-12 EDUCATION IS FREE; WHY SHOULD A COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION ALSO BE FREE?

Because statistics show that college—not just high school—is what it now takes to participate in a democratic society and to access a sustainable high-growth, high wage career.

Over one hundred years ago, our civic leaders ensured that members of our American society acquired the values and skills to fully participate

[40] Source: Linda Cushing, personal communication. Data on Democrats in the Legislature was not collected, but one might conclude that the statistics would be similar.

in a democratic society civically and economically. By offering an education that was both free and compulsory they assured that every member of our society not only had the opportunity but also the responsibility to develop literacy and numeracy (Gutmann, 1999). As society has become more complex, as technology has evolved, and as the requirements for political deliberation have increased, compulsory K-12 education has become obsolete as an educational threshold that this society must provide to protect and support its democracy. Simultaneously the requirements for economic success in a sustainable high-wage career have increased.[41]Already by 1960, emerging jobs were requiring much more education and/or training, but a person graduating from high school still had a good chance of earning a family-supporting wage. However, recent predictions by the California Employment Development Department (2003) of the top ten fastest growing family-supporting jobs for the period 2000 to 2010 include eight calling for a minimum of an Associates Degree.

Community colleges have played an increasing role in educating the public for the public good. Their role in the process of citizenship, basic skills, and workforce preparation has been evidenced by the evolving mission statement espoused by the California Community Colleges in Title 5 and the Educational Code *(see Principles: Why education? Private good(s) and the public good in a democratic society).*

As the requirements to fulfill the functions of society have become more complex, and as we have moved towards a global economy, a high school diploma as the threshold to prepare our citizens has become obsolete; a high school preparation is not enough for the citizens of the state to assume responsibility for its workforce nor to prepare our citizens to participate effectively in the political and democratic process. It is not acceptable to permanently trap people in entry-level subsistence-wage jobs

[41] For a more thorough discussion of how college can impact access to jobs and workforce development, see *Ladders of Opportunity*, the 2001 California Community College Board of Governors' Initiative for Developing California's New Workforce.

Conclusion

This position paper has examined the issue of mandatory student fees in the California community colleges from a variety of perspectives. It has laid out a reasoned position in support of the fundamental philosophy and principles that drove the educational vision of the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education. The Academic Senate endorses the practical implementation of this vision through the open-access, no-fee configuration of the community colleges and therefore opposes the introduction and all subsequent increases in mandatory fees as a fundamental betrayal of that vision. This paper has documented that the fee concept is bad for the state as a whole and for its individual citizens and businesses. In the question and answer section it has reinforced those fundamental arguments by examining and refuting commonly heard justifications for fees.

In 1994 Clark Kerr encapsulated the Academic Senate's position in words that are even truer today than when he spoke them:

Can we maintain the Master Plan in general, and access and quality in particular, into the future? I assume that the almost universal answer is that we *should* if we possibly *can*. Access was a promise to the people of the state on which millions of parents and hundreds of thousands of young people have counted. It was a promise made by the Legislature, by the Governor, by the UC Board of Regents, and by the new CSU Trustees. Access is even more important now, not only because a promise was made but also because the labor force requires more education than in 1960, and because equality of opportunity is even more important. To slam the doors now would be a moral, economic and political tragedy for this state.

This leads to the following recommendations that the Academic Senate continue its principled position in support of open-access, no-fee community colleges and therefore work towards the reduction and elimination of existing mandatory fees.

Recommendations

That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommit to its philosophical position of opposition to all mandatory student fees in the California Community Colleges because of their negative impact on access and equity.

That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges sustain its practical position of opposition to all increases in the existing mandatory student fees in the California Community Colleges, and work to reduce and ultimately eliminate existing fees.

That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges continue to advocate for the fundamental role of the California Community College System to provide education to all Californians who can benefit, not limited to those who can be served most easily or at the least cost.

That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges work with other statewide faculty groups to educate state policy makers on the fundamental reasons for its opposition to mandatory student fees and the significant civic and economic benefits to the state of adopting a no-fee policy.

That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges work with local academic senates to educate all faculty on the reasons for the Academic Senate's position on fees and encourage them to communicate this to their local legislators.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Academic Senate Resolutions on Fees and Financial Aid

FALL 1990 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

12.1 F90 STUDENT FEES

Jackie Reza, DeAnza College

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges take the following position: Although the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges disagrees with the concept of "enrollment fees" for community college students, we acknowledge the current need for them, and

Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reluctantly recommend to the Board of Governors and the legislature that they adopt the proposal of the Chancellor's Office to maintain the current student fees of $5 a unit to a maximum of $50 with a cost of living adjustment provision, and

Be it finally resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reaffirm its ultimate goal that, when political and economic circumstances permit, general student fees for community colleges should be reduced and ultimately eliminated. (See Appendix D -attached).

12.4 F90 STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Executive Committee, Susan Quatre, Gavilan College

Whereas the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges represents the faculty of the largest postsecondary educational system in the world, with 107 colleges serving 1.4 million students, and

Whereas the mission of the California Community Colleges is to provide open access to quality academic and vocational instruction to all who enter our doors, many of whom are low—income, disadvantaged and underrepresented, and

Whereas all California Community Colleges are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges; governed both by locally elected boards of trustees and a state Board of Governors appointed by the Governor; and regulated by state law and accountability mechanisms, and

Whereas the calculation in the proposed U.S. Department of Education regulations concerning how students qualify for financial aid would increase the number of the hours of instruction to three times the normal instruction requirement of an academic program and have a detrimental effect on vocational students, and

Whereas enforcing these regulations would keep students enrolled in many vocational programs from receiving federal student financial aid and would redirect them to high cost proprietary (private, for-profit) institutions,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge that standards for determining full-time status for students set by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education not discriminate arbitrarily against vocational students, and

Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to withdraw the proposed federal regulations of October 1, 1990 addressing "34 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 668" of the Student Assistance General Provisions.

FALL 1991 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

12.1 F91 TUITION AND ACCESS

Area C, Gordon Purser, Glendale College

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to examine the relationship between tuition and access to community colleges.

SPRING 1992 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

12.6 S92 STUDENT FEES

Executive Committee, Evelyn "Sam" Weiss, Golden West College

Whereas all community college students currently pay an enrollment fee of $6 per unit up to $60 a semester, and

Whereas proposed legislation would limit enrollment of some students by requiring those with a large number of units or a Bachelor's degree to pay differential fees, and

Whereas many students return to community colleges for retraining, upgrading of skills and continuing education needed to obtain or maintain employment, and

Whereas a well educated work force is necessary for the economic growth and stability of California, and

Whereas many districts are establishing priorities for registration of students, and

Whereas the Board of Governors has established the Commission on Innovation to make recommendation on the optimal use of community college resources, and

Whereas the effects of implementation of charging the full cost of instruction has not been assessed,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges oppose the principle of imposing higher fees for any student before the full implications of such actions are understood and discussed.

2.9 S92 MASTER PLAN

Mary Rickman, West Hills College

Whereas the California Community College system is unique in its commitment to an "open door" policy, and

Whereas there are many students who enroll for purposes other than vocational education and transfer, and

Whereas the importance or relevance of those purposes cannot be quantified, and

Whereas learning is a lifelong endeavor, especially given the complexities of a rapidly changing society and world,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reaffirm the importance of the Master Plan and its commitment to all those desiring to enhance their knowledge by attending one or more classes at a community college.

FALL 1992 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

13.2 F92 FINANCIAL AID

Area D, Dana Brown Klein, Cypress College

Whereas the newly increased fees may well be prohibitive to low income students, and

Whereas current financial aid is very limited for part-time students, and

Whereas many low income students are working full-time and are only able to pursue their education on a part-time basis,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to seek legislation and regulations which ensure that financial aid be more available to part-time students at the community college.

13.3 F92 $50 FEE

Executive Committee, Sally Flotho, Golden West College

Whereas the new $50 fee for Bachelor's degree holders may adversely affect the large number of California Community College students in need of job retraining and job skills,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge local senates to work with their governing boards to collect data on the impact of the $50 fee for Bachelor degree holders at their colleges and to submit such data to the Academic Senate for a possible position paper.

13.4 F92 $50 FEE

Dwight Lomayesva, Riverside College

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge the Legislature to rescind the $50 fee for bachelor's degree holders.

SPRING 1994 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

19.1 S94 STUDENT FEE OPPOSITION

Paul Setziol, De Anza College

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges oppose the concept of student fees as the source of funds for state financial aid.

19.4 S94 REFUND OF FEES

Paul Setziol, De Anza College

Whereas the recent increase in student fees has produced a shift in student drop patterns, and

Whereas this shift has been in the direction of dropping early in terms when a full refund is available, and

Whereas the first week or two, especially for unconfident or otherwise at risk students, is an insufficient amount of time for instructors to give conclusive feedback such that students could determine their viability for courses,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to propose a change in Tithe 5 regulations to change the refund deadline from its current single point to a declining percentage or a later date.

19.7 S94 FEE INCREASES

Area D, Bobbi Paul, San Diego Continuing Education Centers

Whereas Governor Wilson is proposing another increase in fees from $13 to $20 per unit, and

Whereas California Community Colleges serve as an entry point to higher education and vocational training for all economic levels, and

Whereas California Community Colleges have experienced a significant decline in enrollment as a result of the increase in fees during the past three years, and

Whereas an additional increase in fees could further restrict student access to California Community Colleges,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reaffirm its position to oppose any further student fee increases.

19.8 S94 STUDENT FEE FREEZE

Paul Setziol, DeAnza College, Executive Committee

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend to CPEC that it include in its recommendations on student fee policy, and call for a freeze on student fee increases pending a study of the effects of fee increases on equitable access to community colleges.

FALL 1994 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

20.1.0 F94 OPPOSE CPEC PROPOSAL REGARDING STUDENT FEES (SEE APPENDIX C)

Paul Setziol. DeAnza College

Whereas the high school class of 2000 is expected to be the largest graduating class in the history of the State of California. and

Whereas the economic and civic well-being of California is dependent upon an equitably educated citizenry. And

Whereas increases in fees have proven to reduce access to higher education so that 67% of community college students already qualify for financial aid, and

Whereas the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC). in its work on student fees at UC and CSU. has identified an appropriate relationship between a fee level and the percentage of students requiring financial aid at that level (50% of UC students require financial aid with the fee level set at 40% of the cost of instruction and 50% of CSU students require financial aid with the fee level set at 30% of the cost of instruction).

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges oppose the CPEC staff proposal that California community college students pay 20% of the cost of instruction (currently S22 per unit).

20.2.0 F94 TUITION (SEE APPENDIX C)

Linda Webster. Santa Monica College. Area C

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges oppose the shift of the burden of the cost of education from the state to the students as proposed in the CPEC staff recommendation #8 that calls for mandatory student charges to be called 'tuition' rather than 'fees' to permit their use to support the direct cost of instruction.

20.3.0 F94 OPPOSE INCREASE IN STUDENT FEES

Paul Setziol. DeAnza College

Whereas only one in five students entering California community colleges, though eligible, receive financial aid and often do not have the funds to pay the myriad of sometimes uncounted costs associated with education such as parking, health, materials and other fees (catalogs, schedules. etc.), child care and transportation, and

Whereas California State University and University of California systems have over the last 3 years raised student fees by over 65% despite the State's policy that increases be gradual, moderate and predictable,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges reaffirm its position of no student fees, and

Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge the Legislature to abolish all student fees.

20.6.0 F94 DIFFERENTIAL FEES

Gary Carroll. Santa Barbara City College, MidCoast Area C

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reaffirm Resolution 5.2 S 94 opposing differential fees.

20.10.0 F94 SURVEY OF MATERIALS FEES

Beverly Shue. L.A. Harbor College

Whereas community college students are paying higher fees. and

Whereas college budgets for reprographics have been cut. and

Whereas many faculty are financing materials used in their classes.

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge the Chancellor's Office to conduct a survey of "materials" fees charged.

SPRING 1995 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

20.1.0 S95 DIFFERENTIAL FEE

Tony Gamble, West Los Angeles College

Whereas California's economic recovery depends on ready access to education, and

Whereas economic studies show that workers often need to be re-educated every five years for new positions,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reaffirm its opposition to the differential fee, and

Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges support the sunset of the differential fee on January 1, 1996.

20.2.0 S95 CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT FEES

Jim Higgs, Modesto Junior College

Whereas the Governor has proposed an increase in California community college student enrollment fees to $15.00 a unit, and

Whereas CPEC has considered a proposal that California community college student enrollment fees be fixed at 20% of the cost of instruction, a proposal which would raise enrollment fees, and

Whereas the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should not support increased enrollment fees to fund financial aid as is in the Governor's proposal, and

Whereas California's economic recovery depends on ready access to education,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reaffirm its historical position opposing enrollment fees for California community college students, and

Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge the legislature to support an enrollment fee rollback.

20.7.0 S95 SBI300 - 15% REDUCTION OF STUDENT FEES

Paul Setziol, DeAnza Community College

Whereas high student fees hinder access to the California Community Colleges, and

Whereas SB 1300 requires that California community college districts reduce student fees by 15% effective January 1, 1996,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges support the concepts in SB 1300 as they exist on April 2, 1995.

20.8.0 S95 SB919 - FAIRNESS IN TAX/FEE REVENUE S95

Dwight Lomayesva, Riverside Community College

Whereas student fees may be construed as an education tax on students who often are economically disadvantaged, and

Whereas it could be considered to be unfair to burden students with fees in an environment where income tax rates are being reduced, and

Whereas SB 919 requires that for every percentage reduction in income tax rates, an equal percentage reduction in California Community College student fees would occur,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges support the concepts in SB 919 as they exist on April 2, 1995.

20.11.0 S95 ABI 642 STUDENT FEES

Jim Higgs, Modesto Junior College

Whereas AB 1642 requires California Postsecondary Education Commission to report by January 1, 1997, to the Legislature and the Governor on the impact of student fee increases on California community college enrollments,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges support the concepts in AB 1642 as they exist on April 2, 1995.

FALL1998 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

20.01 F98 FEES IMPACT STUDY

Janis Perry, Santiago Canyon College, Executive Committee

Whereas the political rhetoric of higher education reform focuses on the need to increase fees for community college students, and

Whereas the "2005: A Report of the Task Force for the Chancellor's Consultation Council" document indicates substantial disparate effects on student enrollment when fees are increased, and

Whereas additional political rhetoric suggests through anecdotal accounts that the balance to the impact of high fees is high student financial aid, and

Whereas the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has historically opposed fees for California community college students,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reaffirm its commitment to no fees for students, based on studies proving a disparate effect of high fees on student enrollment and access, and

Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges oppose the high fee /high aid concept being touted as a solution to funding community colleges, and

Be it finally resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to study the effects of increasing fees on student access and success, including the concept of high fee / high aid, and publish a document reporting the results.

FALL 2002 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

20.03 F02 STUDENT FEES

Lacy Barnes-Mileham, Reedley College

Whereas, The California Master Plan for Education recommendations *50,* 50.1 and 50.2 call for the Legislature and Governor to formally study the possibility of increasing student fees at California community colleges;

Whereas, California Community Colleges have historically opposed any recommendations to increase student fees;

Whereas, These increased fees do not become part of the general fund of the local college, but instead go directly into the state general fund as supplemental monies to the overall state budget;and

Whereas, A Chancellor's Office report has shown that increased fees reduce student access, especially for those students from underrepresented groups;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges continue to oppose any California Community College student fee increases, either mandated by the state or locally imposed.

SPRING 2003 ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

20.01 S03 STUDENT FEES

Nancy Silva, American River College

Whereas, The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has consistently opposed student fees over the years (e.g., F90 12.1, 12.2; F92 13.4; S94 19.1, 19.4, 19.7,19.8; F94 20.1.0, 20.2.0, 20.3.0, 20.6.0; S95 20.1.0, 20.2.0, 20.7.0, 20.8.0,20.11.0; F98 20.01; F02 20.03);

Whereas, The 1960 Master Plan for Education committed California to provide tuition-free higher education to anyone who could benefit there from, recognizing in this promise the expression of a democratic ideal of universal opportunity and sound economic policy in the prospect of developing an educated workforce;

Whereas, The California community colleges remain today the primary gateway to higher educational opportunities for its citizens who are economically and educationally disadvantaged, the other two public segments of higher education having imposed fees and entrance requirements that exclude the vast majority of California's citizens who could benefit from higher education; and

Whereas, Fees currently collected in the community colleges are, by statute (Education Code §84750),offset by reductions to the colleges' general apportionment and are therefore direct tax on students, and if, as is currently being proposed by some, fees were instead to supplement community college revenues, the community colleges would likely follow the other two public higher education segments down the path of ever higher fees that restrict educational opportunity to the elite;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges reaffirm its opposition to student fees, call upon the Governor and the Legislature to re-commit to the 1960 Master Plan's promise of tuition-free higher education for every California citizen who can benefit therefrom and recognize the value to California of fulfilling this promise, both in terms of social justice and the realization of democratic ideals, and in terms of economic benefits to the state in the form of higher productivity and an increased tax base; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges oppose any proposals that would use student fees to augment community college revenues and that would thus increase the likelihood that fees would continually be used to compensate for inadequate state funding, with the result that a community college education would become priced beyond the means of most.

Appendix II: Chronology of Fees and Enrollment Changes in the California Community Colleges[42]

- Prior to Fall 1984: no fees
- 1984–85: $5/unit, with $50 per semester cap

  Statewide enrollment drops 7.7% (95,000) over the previous fall
- 1991–92: $6/unit, with $60 per semester cap

  1.1% enrollment decrease (16,000)
- 1992–93: $10/unit, cap eliminated; $50/unit for B.A./B.S. holders (implemented in spring semester)

  0.8% increase (12,000)
- 1993–94: $13/unit; $50/unit for B.A./B.S. holders—no cap

  Enrollment drops 8.2% or 124,251
- 1995–96: fee for degree holders reduced to $13/unit (spring semester)

  Fall enrollment drops by 1.6% (22,000)
- 1996–97: $13/unit for all students—no cap

  Enrollment jumps 5.4% (72,000)
- 1997–98: $13/unit—no cap

  Additional increase of 2.9% (41,000)
- 1998–99: $12/unit—no cap

  3.2% increase (47,000)
- 1999–2000: $11/unit—no cap

  3.6% increase (53,000)
- 2000-Fall 2002

  Add an average 4% for each year as fees hold steady at $11/unit

  Spring 2003: 90,000 missing students compared to Fall 2002 (40,000 actual decline and 50,000 failures to enroll based on projections from Department of Finance)[43]
- Spring 2003–04: $18/unit—no cap

  Fall 2003: 175,000 missing students compared to Fall 2002 (90,700 actual decline and 84,300 failures to enroll based on department of Finance Projections)
- Fall 2004 : $26/unit—no cap

[42] Data from Nussbaum (2003), and Board of Governors, California Community Colleges (March 2003).

[43] Chancellor's Office, Fall 2003 Preliminary Enrollment Report. (Nov. 2003)

Appendix III: California Community College Students: Profiles of Success

This section contains four personal testimonies to the opportunities provided by California's open-access, no-fee community college system. Other inspiring (and more contemporary) stories and challenges can be found in Woodlief et al. (2003).

Case study #1: Greg Gilbert, Community College English instructor with 20 years of service.

I was fortunate enough to attend college before fees increased. My education was accompanied by full-time employment and the raising of my children. I changed majors four times and stopped attending school for several lengthy timeouts. My grades dipped and soared according to my circumstances, and because of the affordable flexibility in our system, I eventually succeeded in accruing sufficient skills and transferred to a university. If my own path was so difficult and circuitous, how much more difficult must it be for a non-native speaker of English who is an impoverished single parent, or a recent immigrant from a family with no prior college attendance.

Case study #2: Angela Caballero de Cordero, Community College Counselor.

At nineteen years of age, I started college with a capital of $40 and the burden of responsibility to help my family financially to help pay the rent and buy the basics for my siblings. My mother and I were working at the fields and we made a good team in sharing the responsibilities of the family. My father, back in Mexico, would send us money to help us with the support of the family too, but earning pesos would not give him a large enough salary to support a family with expenses in dollars. My mother felt overburdened and abandoned by me because she knew that she could not pay for the basics of the family without me. All I knew was that I wanted to go to college and went for it.

I entered college highly motivated but naïve as to the financial and educational demands. Going to college had never been considered as a possibility, not because we did not aspire to a better life, but because we did not know this opportunity existed. I had a sixth grade education and was still learning English.

Although college fees at that time were very low, my forty dollars ran out within the first week of school and I was disheartened. I found that I needed money for books, I had transportation needs, as well as clothing and food needs specific to school, in addition to my responsibility to help my family. Financial aid programs at the time were somewhat more in tune with the financial aid packages at the time and with a part time job I was able to stay in school, although the family struggled to make ends meet. All of us kids who could work, would go pick crops on Saturdays to complete the budget we needed on a monthly basis.

Going to college showed me a new life that up to that point had been totally inexistent for me, my siblings, and many of our young friends. My family and I were very excited about my discoveries and we shared them with a sense of awe and adventure. We were dirt poor and this other world had not been visible to us.

With hardships, my father bought me a car that cost him about $200. It needed wheel alignment and when I drove on the freeway, the two lane road seemed narrow because the car appeared to weave from side to side of the freeway, so every trip I took to college was a stressful one; but I was so excited to have my "new" car. As one might expect, the car broke down soon, and the saga continued…

Case Study #3: Student identity withheld by request (Contributed by a CC local academic senate president)

In the early eighties I had reached a stage in life during the midspan of my roaring twenties where my best thinking, planning and general emotional perspective had gotten me to a place where I was living in a "Dewey" dumpster on cold nights, on the beach on warm nights, eating out of any dumpster on any night, while using all my skills and craftiness to gain access to inebriation.

In mid '84 an incredibly wonderful person somehow saw talent in me and hired me to work for them. Through the next three years I repetitively got better for a while, and then would crash back down into the deep morass of alcoholism. In the late eighties, after a particularly severe bought of delirium tremens I was blessed with a way to sobriety and have remained there since.

But after a few years of living the good, clean life I began to realize that I was severely under prepared, and would not be able to realize anything close to my full potential if I didn't get help. I was mentally itchy and bored, looking for a place to get into trouble.

Since I was a High School Throw-out I had no access to education other than through the Community Colleges. Although I was working and could afford the tuition, I could not have afforded the proposed tuitions of today. I was simply not capable of earning that much money and paying today's rents, food costs, etc..

As result of my Community College degree I was then able to achieve higher degrees and have now found a career teaching others, in a discipline to which I have always loved, but never knew, until I took a random elective course that seemed like it would be fun.

Now, not only do I get paid for having fun, but I am blessed with the ability to professionally participate in our society and I am engaged in a number of volunteer institutions where I am a positive participant within our communities. This list of communities includes the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges.

The pathway I have taken never would have happened without the low cost access I had available during the beginning of my college education.

Please consider carefully the choices you make about Community College fees.

Thank you.

(A gratefully indebted fan of the California Community Colleges)

Case study #4: Yula Flournoy, Community College Instructor.

My California community college success story is a family success story rather than a personal one. My mother attended Santa Ana College as a returning student in her thirties, after divorcing. She went on to earn a bachelors degree at CSU Fullerton and then work as an elementary school librarian.

My oldest sister attended Saddleback College, went on to CSU Long Beach, and now teaches elementary school. My brother attended Saddleback as well, finished his bachelors degree at National University, and is now a pharmaceuticals representative for a major manufacturer. My other sister is, at this moment, finishing her Associate degree at Copper Mountain College. She started a career as a beautician, but is trying to retrain as an ASL interpreter in public schools.

I, the youngest child, started my higher education in the California Community College system. My father refused to give me any financial information, so I was unable to apply for financial aid. I attempted to support myself while attending college, but the cost of living was too high. I moved to Texas, where tuition was much higher, but the living costs were not. I finished my education in Texas, and, by chance, have ended up back in my native California, teaching in a system I couldn't afford as a student.