



**League of Women Voters of California
Education Fund**

**Community Colleges: Fact Sheet #2
For Legislators**

April 2005

**WHEN YOU VOTE ON FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES,
CONSIDER THESE FACTS:**

- ✧ California Community Colleges prepare students for transfer to colleges and universities.
- ✧ CCCs train certified workers who provide vital services such as fire and police protection; nursing, surgical, radiological, emergency and other medical skills; paralegal, computer, and business management.
- ✧ CCCs are the avenue to a brighter future for thousands of Californians, especially the two-thirds of community college students who must work while going to school and those in lower income brackets.
- ✧ CCCs succeed in moving graduates from welfare and unemployment status to self-sufficiency.
- ✧ CCCs more than pay for themselves through building expertise, earning capacity, and strong communities.



This is the second fact sheet on community colleges issued by the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund. Fact sheet #1 (July, 2004) revealed the funding plight of California community colleges and outlined their unique position in the state's educational scheme.

State funding for CCCs is based on Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES) enrollment. The colleges receive on average \$4,500 per FTES annually—with many “low income” districts receiving less—compared to roughly \$7,000 for K-12, \$10,000 for CSU, and \$20,000 for UC.

Yet according to the state's Master Plan for Education they are committed to:

- ❖ preparing students for transfer to four-year colleges;
- ❖ providing workplace skills, career development, and certification in a wide range of occupations;
- ❖ offering opportunities for lifelong learning;
- ❖ engaging in programs fostering community economic development;
- ❖ providing instruction in basic academic skills to those who lack them.

FIRST, SOME NUMBERS ON STUDENTS

- ❖ More than 2,500,000 credit and non-credit students attend California's 109 community colleges annually (2002-2003) on a full-time or part-time basis.
- ❖ Roughly 50% of community college students are 18 - 24 years old; 22% are older than 40; 56% are women; 61% attend part time.
- ❖ Over 50% seek transfer to four-year colleges or universities; about 30% seek occupational training; and 20% seek basic skills or other educational objectives.
- ❖ About one-fourth of CCC students are low-income.
- ❖ 82% of Hispanic and African-American students in California higher education are at community colleges.

Sources

California Tomorrow: *California's Gold* www.californiatomorrow.org

EdSource: *Can California's Community Colleges Do It All?* www.edsource.org

HOW WELL DO STUDENTS DO?

Students acquiring Associate and Bachelor degrees are likely to earn considerably more by the third year after graduation than those with only high school diplomas: generally *more education = greater earnings*.¹ Graduates with associate degrees earn, on average, about \$500,000 more in their lifetimes than those with only high school diplomas.²

Community college students who transfer to four-year colleges and universities do as well as, or better than, those who enter as freshmen, and their numbers are steadily increasing. Over 50,000 California community college students transfer to CSU annually, about 12,000 to UC, and estimates show that approximately 30,000 transfer to private colleges and universities in and out of the state.³ The numbers of minority students who transfer are also growing; those to UC by 18%, and to CSU by 7.9% in 2001.⁴

20% of Americans in 1959 needed some college to succeed in their jobs; today it is estimated that 80% of new jobs require post-secondary education. College credentials may have become the difference between a job that supports a family and a life of entry-level employment and poverty.⁵

¹ Jobs for the Future www.jff.org

² Community College League of California (CCLC) www.ccleague.org/pubs/pktpro04.pdf

³ Ibid.

⁴ CCC Chancellor's Office: *Transfer Counts Soar, 2002* www.cccco.edu/news/press/press2002

⁵ Institute for Higher Education Policy, *The Investment Payoff, 2003* www.ihep.com

COST CONSIDERATIONS

170,000 CCC applicants were denied entry to programs and classes they needed for their career goals in the fall of 2004 due to budget cuts and the negative impact of increased student fees. It is estimated that as the college-age population surges with children of "baby boomers" (the expected *Tidal Wave II*) 700,000 or more could be turned away by the year 2015.¹

We can see the economic advantages of community colleges to their communities by looking at averages of what these people could earn and produce annually. These figures could then be compared to income and sales taxes they would pay if employed, and savings from costs and services like welfare, unemployment and health benefits:

- ❖ AA degree: \$35,445
- ❖ College or university graduate: \$49,657
- ❖ High school diploma only: \$26,630
- ❖ Without high school diploma: \$16,044²
- ❖ On welfare: \$3,916³

THE DILEMMA

The preceding evaluation speaks only to a comparison between costs and returns to the state and not to other extraordinary benefits of self-sufficiency among California residents, such as commercial stimulation and services provided to their communities by an educated and trained workforce. These include technicians of all kinds, for whom California companies are turning to "insourcing" from, or "outsourcing" to, other countries, for lack of expertise among Americans. Bruce Chizen, Chairman and CEO of Adobe Systems, stated at a Mercury News Roundtable (April 19, 2004): "Where the government should be focusing its energy and time is improving the quality of life—in particular, the quality of education. If we invest in the kids today, then we will continue to have the best and brightest here."

AN EXAMPLE: EL CAMINO COLLEGE IN SOUTHERN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Each spring about 1400 students receive their AS degrees in sixteen different industrial and technology fields from El Camino Community College. Among specialized programs are Fire, Police, and Nursing Academies whose graduates can earn an average of \$48,000 per year.

The college maintains a Small Business Development Center which provides free one-on-one counseling and referrals for small business owners and entrepreneurs. Local employers include Honda, Toyota, Epson, and Hughes Aircraft.

In 2003-04, El Camino College transferred 922 students to state universities and 288 to University of California campuses.

¹Campaign for College Opportunity www.collegecampaign.org

²Institute for Higher Education Policy: *The Investment Payoff* www.ihep.com

³Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP): *From Jobs to Careers: How California Community College Credentials Pay Off for Welfare Participants* www.clasp.org

OPPORTUNITIES JEOPARDIZED

Community colleges are increasingly serving as the stepping stone towards independence and career proficiency for thousands of Californians, some not yet qualified or affluent enough to enter the state's university system. They are assisted with services acquainting and preparing them for these choices, including English as a second language, basic math, college applications, study skills, and resume writing.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) conducts annual surveys nationally to help community colleges evaluate and improve their programs. About 50% of entering community college students are under-prepared for college-level courses without remediation. With developmental education in reading, writing, and computational skills their ensuing academic performance "is as strong as [that] of students who never needed remediation."¹

According to a study of CalWORKs participants at community colleges by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), female students successfully completing AA degrees or certificates doubled their employment rate within two years after completion.² Essential to the success of these formerly welfare-dependent women, often mothers, is the continued availability of basic skills courses, workforce training programs, and support services that California community colleges provide.

About 45% of all college freshmen now attend community colleges nationally.³ With budgets cut and staff curtailed, the colleges are struggling to sustain programs essential to fulfilling their mission to provide access to quality, affordable, and equitable education to all who may benefit. Two million Californians, including many returning for new skills in new jobs, continue their education to become self-sufficient. They are able to perform essential services to their communities and to pay into the system through their tax dollars, rather than depend on state and federal support services. This cannot help but be a vibrant economic force in California.

"Community colleges play a transformative role in our state by preparing thousands of diverse students to transfer to universities and begin or retrain for careers. However, California's community colleges remain 46th in the nation in per-student funding. Stable, predictable funding for community colleges is critical to supplying our state with a first-class workforce."

Martha J. Kanter, Chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District

¹ Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin www.ccsse.org

² CLASP www.clasp.org

³ Hillary Pennington, Jobs for the Future www.jff.org

Further detail and information about the California Community College System is available from:

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