



Federal Priorities 2018

Background: The Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) is a 65-year-old statewide professional membership association, representing the interests of California Community College faculty. With over 11,000 members across California, FACCC is widely considered by policy makers and media representatives to be among the leading voices in the California Community College system.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA): FACCC supports continuing protection for DACA participants coupled with legislation providing them with a pathway to citizenship. Of the estimated 223,000 California DACA participants (of a total 800,000 national figure), approximately 72,000 are enrolled in a California Community College. Faculty across California work with these students and understand the incredible value they add to the learning environment in the classroom. Despite the efforts of academic counselors, classroom faculty, college presidents, local trustees and others to demonstrate support for their presence on campus, their increased vulnerability has led some to drop out and others to lose hope.

Beyond addressing basic fairness, DACA has monumental economic benefits for our country. A study by the University of California, San Diego found that the incomes of those participating in the DACA program increased by 45 percent. Moreover, the conservative-leaning CATO Institute noted that the elimination of DACA would cost the federal government \$60 billion in tax revenues with the overall economy liable to shrink by \$215 billion.

California long ago developed state legislative policy to allow undocumented students meeting specified criteria (similar to DACA) to attend public colleges and universities paying in-state tuition and qualifying for state financial aid. As such, FACCC urges Congress to include in any comprehensive immigration reform the retention of Title IV funding for colleges that provide in-state tuition or equitable financial aid eligibility to all students, regardless of immigration status.

Perkins funding: FACCC supports increasing the Perkins Basic State Grant to at least the presequestration level of \$1.123 billion in FY 2016 while also working to address the long-term funding needs of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. Our institutions utilize these funds to purchase occupationally-relevant equipment, develop vocational curriculum and materials for learning labs, develop or modify curriculum, engage in staff development, offer career counseling and guidance activities, enhance supplemental services for special populations, hire vocational staff, offer remedial classes, and expand tech-prep programs. While California has infused its community colleges with an additional \$200 million in state revenues for CTE

programs, our community colleges still rely on the federal money to keep these programs operational.

On October 1, 2017, California began receiving its revised allocation funding in Perkins which reflected a reduction from \$80,588,297 to \$79,754,207, a difference of \$834,090. Both our community colleges and K-12 systems had to adjust to the lower amount at a time when they need to be increasing their investment in career educational opportunities to meet increasing workforce demands.

Reauthorization of Higher Education Act: FACCC has significant concerns with H.R. 4508, the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act, expressed as follows:

Fiscal

- **Oppose elimination of 90/10 Rule, allowing 100 percent of proprietary school students to access federal financial aid.** This move is likely to squeeze available Pell funding, particularly in times of economic recession. FACCC would support a return to the 85/15 Rule and closing the loophole of counting G.I. benefits on the non-federal side of the equation.
- **Oppose increasing liability for unearned Title IV funds.** As open access institutions, California Community Colleges attract students from all walks of life, many of whom face both economic and family circumstance which require them to withdraw early. Penalizing the institutions for students who withdraw early by requiring a repayment of unearned federal aid will limit access and opportunity to the millions seeking higher education.
- **Oppose elimination of Title III-A strengthening institutions program.** Since many of our colleges are in rural areas—which more often than not have higher rates of unemployment—funds to assist these colleges often prove necessary to support their unique circumstances. Elimination of this program will restrict the ability of these colleges to make necessary programmatic investments that address access, success and equity.
- **Oppose reduction of financial aid resources.** Approximately 83,500 California Community College students receive Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and nearly 34,000 received subsidized student loans. Further, the proposed elimination of public service loan forgiveness will limit career choices and potentially create workplace shortages in the public and nonprofit sectors.
- **Oppose reduction of TRIO budget and imposition of a financial match requirement that would disadvantage community colleges in the grant process.** California Community Colleges rely on a combination of state and federally funded student service programs, like TRIO, serve underrepresented and vulnerable students. TRIO is an important federal program targeted at low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline. The

PROSPER Act sets an authorization level which is \$50 million below current funding, and requires a 20 percent institutional match requirement. FACCC calls upon Congress to reinstate full funding for the program and allow a waiver of the match for public community colleges.

Education Policy

- **Oppose single definition of higher education to include proprietary institutions in the same code section as public and non-profit colleges and universities.** As educators in the nation's largest segment of public higher education, FACCC believes strongly in the principle of education as a public good. Proprietary schools, as distinct from both public and private-non-profit, are in business to make a profit and should not be wholly reliant on federal subsidies. While FACCC is supportive of the proposed continued exclusion of proprietary schools from accessing funds in both Title III and Title V (Minority Serving Institutions), we do not believe this change supports the public good.
- **Oppose elimination of the Gainful Employment rule.** As California has increased its investments in Career Technical Education (CTE), its community colleges are also mindful that students emerging from their programs should meet or exceed the income to debt ratio mandated by the Gainful Employment rule. There is no compelling public policy to exempt proprietary or other institutions from this requirement.
- **Oppose elimination of State Authorization rules for distance education.** Through its Online Education Initiative, California Community Colleges are increasing their investment in online education. The State Authorization requirement ensures that institutions offering distance education are legally authorized and monitored by states. Elimination of this rule would allow for unscrupulous operators to compete with legitimate public and private institutions that offer legitimate distance education.
- **Clarify changes to accreditation standards to prevent misuse of sanctioning.** While the PROSPER Act provides general guidelines to accreditors to judge institutional outcomes based on their mission, FACCC urges Congress to clarify these standards in light of recent history with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Our institutional missions are all derived from California state law which provides for an open access institutional segment of higher education. While our segment continues to focus on improved outcomes, accrediting agencies should not sanction colleges for outcomes that are unrealistic for their state-mandated purpose.
- **Oppose changes to campus investigation of sexual assault standards that de-emphasizes the focus on victims.** While FACCC supports due process rights, it is concerned that the direction of the PROSPER Act moves too far from a focus on protecting victims and seeking justice on their behalf. FACCC supports those parts of the Act which mandate the collection of survey data and require colleges to contract with qualified sexual assault counselors.

Student Support

- **Support Pell Grant eligibility for short-term programs.** FACCC has long considered this to be a major failing of federal policy and is encouraged by this direction. California Community College students often look to short-term skill or credential programs as a means to upgrade skills, and federal financial aid should be available for this effort.
- **Support connecting distribution of federal work study funds to distribution of Pell Grants.** FACCC supports changing the federal allocation formula of work study funds to the number of Pell Grants served by a college. This change aligns with the needs and profiles of students in the California Community Colleges.

Support continuation of year-round Pell Grants; Oppose diverting Pell Grant surplus: FACCC supports the current policy of year-round Pell Grant eligibility as it aligns with the needs of our students. An estimated 500,000 California Community College students receive Pell Grants with roughly 5-10 percent taking summer courses. FACCC was opposed to the \$1.3 million cut to the Pell Grant surplus and calls upon Congress to restore those funds. The reserve should be used to boost the size of the grants, anticipate more students, and serve as a hedge for the next economic downturn.

Active military/Veterans: For the past seven years, FACCC has cosponsored a major statewide summit on improving educational services to active military and military veteran students in the California Community Colleges.

An estimated two million veterans reside in California, more than any other state. In 2012-13, more than 44,000 veterans utilized education benefits at a California Community College. In addition, there were an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 active duty personnel enrolled annually at community colleges across the state, not including dependents. More than half of California veterans receiving GI educational benefits attend a community college.

With state and national attention increasingly focused on connecting funding to outcomes, FACCC is concerned that the needs of the veteran population have not been adequately addressed by the federal government which could result in a decline in their participation. FACCC calls upon the federal government to honor those who bravely served our country with funds for veterans-resource offices, veterans centers, veterans lounges, and veteran-success centers. Institutions with these tools are noted as veteran-friendly and can make the difference for student success.

Campus safety: Since 2013, there have been at least 279 school shootings in America, an average of nearly one a week (see accompanying list). While Oregon's Umqua Community College captured national headlines, Santa Monica College, Santa Barbara City College, and Sacramento City College have also experienced shootings. FACCC is supportive of continuing implementation of the Clery Act and it calls upon Congress to respond more vigorously to campus violence, in particular, violence against women. Similarly, FACCC opposes any federal effort to allow firearms on campus in contravention of current California state policy.

Eliminate WEP and GPO (Support H.R. 1205/S.915): FACCC strongly supports the elimination of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO), two highly punitive provisions of Social Security pension eligibility. These two offsets unfairly reduce or eliminate earned Social Security benefits for California Community College faculty, among others, and have a particularly detrimental effect on our part-time faculty. These dedicated public employees lose out on federal benefits earned by their own or their spouses' contributions because the California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) has them opting out of ongoing Social Security contributions.

FACCC regularly hears that the WEP costs CalSTRS retirees approximately 55 percent of their vested Social Security benefits. With the GPO targeting spousal benefits, CalSTRS retirees have seen 100 percent of these wiped out in the calculation. Both of these punish not only the retirees but their families in the process.

In the prior state legislative session, the California Legislature approved Senate Joint Resolution 1 [(Beall) of 2015] putting the state on record as supporting a federal repeal of the WEP and GPO. There is an expectation of a similar resolution this year. Public employees, particularly teachers and peace officers, in many other states are equally affected and will benefit from a federal repeal.