



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

June 30, 2020

Dear LACCD Colleagues,

I hope this message finds you and your families well and safe.

Last night, Governor Gavin Newsom signed California's 2020-21 state budget approved by the State Legislature. California's \$202.1 billion spending plan was [signed June 29](#).

The 2020-21 state budget demonstrated continued protection to the 115 California community colleges, including the Los Angeles Community College District, by sustaining support for our students and the vital programs that the District's nine colleges provide. The Legislature and the Governor adopted an approach that protects these vital programs through "deferrals" to buy time for our economy to improve, and defers funding moving forward.

We applaud the Governor and the Legislature for reaching an agreement that protects critical programs for our most vulnerable students. We also join with this Administration and Legislative leadership in calling upon Congress to provide much-needed financial support and flexibility to institutions of higher education to help ease our budget uncertainties, to navigate our institutions, and to mitigate the impact of this global pandemic.

BUDGET SUMMARY

To highlight a few key areas, the approved 2020-21 budget:

- Contains no cuts to apportionments
- No COLA or enrollment growth funding
- Sustains support to the Strong Workforce Program
- Sustains support to the Student Equity and Achievement Program
- Sustains support to the Adult Education program
- Sustains support for the College Promise Program
- Provides emergency aid to undocumented students

The budget maintains program funding through deferrals totaling nearly \$1 billion through Fiscal Year 2021-22. Additional deferrals and/or budget reductions may be required if California does not receive additional funding assistance from the federal government. Although the deferrals may cause some temporary cash-flow issues, the strategy allows the programs to continue providing key services intended to meet the needs of our local economy and institutions. The funding also provides fiscal stability and the supports that our students need in order to be successful in their coursework for career advancement or transfer to a four-year college or university.

KEY FUNDING AREAS

The Administration and the Legislature also included \$150 million in emergency aid to community colleges to cover COVID-19 expenses. With this funding, we can better serve our student population and provide more mental health services, emergency aid for food and housing, purchase technology and equipment, and develop online courses and capacity, and other student supports. This critical funding will also help us to engage our most vulnerable student populations and reengage those who may have dropped classes in the Spring of 2020 due to COVID-19.

The 202021 budget also protects the statewide College Promise Program that has been so critical to the success of many of our students by providing tuition-free education to all first-time, full-time students. As the District which sponsored both AB 19 and AB 2, authored by Assemblymember Miguel Santiago, to create and fund the Promise Program, we applaud the life-changing commitments by Governor Gavin Newsom, Governor Jerry Brown and the State Legislature to the College Promise Program, as well as to the sustainability of other student support services that have been spared from further cuts in this budget.

Importantly, this budget also provides emergency aid to our undocumented students that have, thus far, been left out of access to federal CARES Act funding. The Legislature and the Administration have provided funding that will support our more than 10,000 undocumented students in our District alone to get the assistance that they need and deserve.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LACCD

Two words: fiscal prudence.

We are not anywhere near “out of the woods” with the COVID-19 public health emergency, as evidenced by the significant recent surge in positive cases and deaths in California and the nation. The uncertainties and eventual recovery related to COVID-19 remain and are expected to be so for several years. Since March, we have expended over \$10 million in COVID-19 related expenses to maintain our academic and business continuity. The draw from our District reserves are expected to continue as we prepare for the “long haul.”

Our colleges and District office have engaged in important budget reduction strategies and, while not all of them will have to be enacted this year, we will continue to strictly monitor hiring by maintaining all non-critical position vacancies. We will also monitor our cash flow and reduce expenses to the level necessary to sustain critical operations and deliver educational services. More detailed information about the budget and the impact for LACCD will be discussed at the next Board of Trustees meeting on July 8.

STAY THE COURSE

In moving forward as one District, the goal has been to prioritize the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff while maintaining the integrity of our teaching, learning and business environments, and sustaining operational continuity of a very large and complex organization.

Our community colleges are key to this state’s and nation’s economic recovery. LACCD will be at the forefront of this effort, and our District will leverage every resource to ensure that our voice and influence are present to continue the investment in higher education when it is needed the most.

We will get through this. We will be stronger and more unified as a result of working together. Thank you all for your uncommon dedication to our students, your resilience and your patience. Please stay safe.

LACCD Proud. You are the best of us.

With admiration and respect,



Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Los Angeles Community College District