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LACCD 2021 STATE LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGET PRIORITIES ANNOUNCED

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) is pursuing an ambitious state legislative and budgetary agenda in 2021. The District is prioritizing solutions to systemic issues impacting student success across all nine colleges and supporting measures and budget items to implement equitable programming reflective of its diverse student population.

There are six legislative policy priorities and seven budget priorities which focus on issues such as housing insecurity and homelessness; funding for Ethnic Studies programs to meet associate and bachelor's degree requirements in LACCD and the CSU system, and four years of tuition-free education at CSU campuses for some students.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled and exacerbated long-standing gender, occupational, racial and socioeconomic inequalities," LACCD Board President Steven Veres said. "Our 2021 advocacy agenda is student-centered and addresses the immediate basic needs and educational supports of our most vulnerable students so they can complete their educational goals."

"There is a clear connection between education, the economy and equity," LACCD Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D., said. "With the skills garnered from effective degree programs and the independence gained from a debt-free education, California will see a more responsive and innovative workforce that better resembles our diverse state. Students with non-traditional or historically underserved backgrounds will bring an expertise that is imperative to the equitable economic recovery success of our communities."

LACCD Trustee Mike Fong, who chairs the Board's Legislative and Public Affairs Committee, said the District "is working to serve as a foundational aspect of a student's academic success, whether it be through traditional degree programs, technical certifications or high-growth sector training programs."

"The items prioritized in this legislative plan will create opportunities for individuals with non-traditional backgrounds, empowering those who may have otherwise been unable to finish school to complete their education so that they can move into the workforce with increased earning potential afforded by a certificate or diploma," Trustee Fong added.

"As students, we faced high rent costs and reduced access to essential services even before COVID-19, which has exacerbated student needs even further," East Los Angeles College student Leonardo Gonzalez said. "I was honored to participate in this year's Legislative Day with Chancellor Rodriguez and our LACCD Board. I was able to share the struggles that students face about their lack of access to affordable housing, reliable broadband and affordable textbooks."

Throughout 2021, LACCD will highlight its various advocacy priorities, leading a dialogue to create meaningful change for students underserved by the current educational systems. In the next few weeks, the District will also begin its federal advocacy efforts. A detailed listing of the state priorities is attached.

The LACCD colleges include: [Los Angeles City College](#); [East Los Angeles College](#); [Los Angeles Harbor College](#); [Los Angeles Mission College](#); [Los Angeles Pierce College](#); [Los Angeles Southwest College](#); [Los Angeles Trade-Technical College](#); [Los Angeles Valley College](#) and [West Los Angeles College](#).

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About the Los Angeles Community College District

We are the Colleges of Los Angeles! LACCD (www.laccd.edu) is the nation's largest community college district, educating about 250,000 students annually at its nine colleges that serve the residents of more than 36 cities and communities from 900 square miles of Los Angeles County. Since 1969, the District has been providing an important learning pathway for students seeking transfer to four-year colleges or universities while also offering two-year degrees and certificated training programs to Southern California's diverse workforce in many specialized trades and professions. Follow us on Facebook, [@LACCD](https://www.facebook.com/LACCD), and on Twitter, [@laccd](https://twitter.com/laccd) and Instagram, [@laccd_edu](https://www.instagram.com/laccd_edu).

Members of the Board

Steven F. Veres, President | Gabriel Buelna, Ph.D., Vice President | David Vela, Second Vice President
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2021 State Legislative and Budget Priorities

January 2021

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- 1. Community College Ethnic Studies Graduation Requirement:** Mandates that community colleges offer ethnic studies commencing with the 2022-2023 academic year. Requires that courses shall be eligible for transfer and meet the California State University graduation requirement. Commencing with the 2024-2025 academic year, districts shall require the completion of, at minimum, one three-unit course in ethnic studies as a requirement to obtain an Associate degree. States that Districts shall not increase the number of units required to achieve an AA degree by the enforcement of this new requirement.
- 2. Four Year Degree Tuition Free:** This bill provides two years of tuition free education at any California State university (CSU) campus for students over 28 years of age that have received an associate degree for transfer (ADT) from a California Community College (CCC) and have participated in the California College Promise Program.
- 3. Joint Occupancy for Development of Affordable Community College Student and Workforce Housing:** This bill will provide flexibility to community colleges and districts wishing to enter into joint occupancy agreements with a private party to develop and operate affordable housing for students and employees. The bill will reduce the cost of a ground lease of real property to the private developer for construction of affordable housing options, and in return, will enable developers to lower the monthly rental rates to the occupants.
- 4. Student Transitional Housing:** This bill will provide funding to enable community colleges to enter into partnerships with local government, four-year educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and other entities, to provide transitional housing for homeless students. The bill allocates funding for college districts to conduct housing feasibility studies and grants up to \$10 million in competitive grants to fund housing for full time community college students, for up to two years. This is also an LACCD State Budget priority.
- 5. Broadband:** Support for AB 14 (Aguiar-Curry) Broadband Funding for Community Colleges. The bill prioritizes the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's most vulnerable and underserved rural and urban communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to provide communities with grants necessary to bridge the digital divide. The measure specifically states that community colleges will be able to compete for these funds. Last year, LACCD adopted a support position on an identical measure (AB 570).

- 6. Extension of Involuntary Leave for Academic Employees:** Current law requires community colleges to complete its investigation of the employee accused of misconduct within 90 days. This bill will amend current law to extend the involuntary leave period by requiring that the 90 days only include workdays (excludes weekends, holidays and approved vacation days).

STATE BUDGET PRIORITIES

- 7. Reduce Text Book Costs:** The Administration has proposed an increase in the number of Competitive Cal Grant awards by 9,000 to a total of 50,000 awards. Community college students disproportionately access competitive Cal Grant awards. Increasing the number of awards will dramatically impact access to higher education. The competitive award provides student funding for access costs that include costs associated with textbooks and tools.

Additionally, the Administration has proposed \$15 million in funding for Zero-Degree Textbook Program. The Zero-Degree Textbook program provides access to programs that do not have costs associated with textbooks, meaning that students can take courses that lead to a degree or transfer without incurring textbook costs.

Both of these programs can reduce barriers for students enrolling in both academic and workforce training courses. LACCD supports comprehensive financial aid reform that will bring additional funding to community college students, but as we work toward that goal, these two initiatives are a good start.

- 8. Support for Student Housing:** Governor has proposed \$100 million to be used for student food and housing insecurity. This budget request will provide funding for Student Transitional Housing (see Legislative Item #4 above). The bill will enable community colleges to enter into partnerships with local government, four-year educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and other entities, to provide transitional housing for homeless students. The bill allocates funding for college districts to conduct housing feasibility studies and grants up to \$10 million in competitive grants to fund housing for full time community college students, for up to two years. This is also an LACCD State Budget priority.
- 9. Support for Umoja Funding:** The Umoja Program is a critical resource dedicated to enhancing the cultural and educational experiences of African American Students. The program actively promotes student success. Currently, approximately 9% of Los Angeles Community College District students are African American, however we are experiencing a steep drop of African American male enrollment. LACCD is seeking to scale the Umoja program to improve educational services to this student population.

- 10. Support for LGBTQ Students:** This one-time budget request of \$10 million would provide additional funding to colleges to establish a Pilot Program that would provide additional services to LGBTQ students. The Los Angeles Community College District currently serves a significant population of LGBTQ students, but there is little state funding that is provided for districts to provide the necessary services for these students. This pilot project would provide funding for up to 20 pilots of \$500,000 each at various colleges throughout the state. These grants would help to bolster supports for LGBTQ students. Funds could be used to establish “Pride Centers” and other safe spaces, create learning communities so that LGBTQ students could feel more connected to the campus and to each other, as well as to bolster pride events such as “Lavender Graduations” or supportive events and activities during LGBTQ month.
- 11. Support to implement AB 1460, the CSU Ethnic Studies Bill:** Last year, the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, AB 1460 (Weber) which requires students graduating from a California State University (CSU) to complete a course in ethnic studies. The CSU has implemented this policy by making the course a lower-division course, this means that community college students that are seeking to transfer will need to take the course at the community college. The LACCD is requesting \$50 million to assist community colleges to implement AB 1460. These funds are critical to access to these very important social justice programs.
- 12. Funding to Strengthen Workforce Placement:** The Governor has proposed \$250 million in one-time general fund to provide for funding for future projects that will promote segment alignment and better connections to the workforce. Under the Los Angeles Community College District proposal, funding from the \$250 million would be used to create a regional infrastructure connecting allied health employers with community colleges. The program would provide funding for faculty to upgrade skills and learn the newest trends in the industry. The program would also provide incentives to industry partners that hire students to serve as interns that lead to employment. LACCD is requesting \$10 to \$15 million for a Los Angeles regional pilot program. The community college would be required to partner with industry, labor, and local governments to advance the implementation of the program.
- 13. Strong Workforce Funding Formula:** Advocate for the reversion to the prior Strong Workforce funding formula. The Strong Workforce Funding has traditionally been distributed based on the number of unemployed as an indicator of need. Recently the formula was changed to fund based on unemployment rate. The impact of this formula change resulted in a revenue loss to the Los Angeles/Orange County Consortium. Funding shifted to serve more rural communities and fewer individuals.