

Keep the Community in California Community Colleges!

In the summer of 2012, when California Community Colleges were turning away hundreds of thousands of students due to budget shortfalls, regulations were passed that significantly limit access to community colleges. The regulations went into effect in the fall of 2013.

As a California voter and taxpayer, I am asking the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to modify these regulations (including the language of Title 5 section 55041, passed on July 9, 2012), which prohibit Community Colleges from allowing students to repeat classes except in very few cases.

I support:

- access to high quality transfer programs in the visual and performing arts (now limited by these regulations);
- opportunities to have a more skilled workforce (that are not always based on licensing requirements or current employment options); and
- the fostering of an engaged citizenry that creates a diverse, multi-generational component in the social and cultural fabric of our state (supported by rich visual and performing arts programs and the opportunity to successfully complete various types of classes more than once).

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Background

Under recent regulations, students can only successfully complete a class one time in most cases. Exceptions are made in areas where students demonstrate the need to repeat the course for transfer, a certificate, or employment. In that case, the student must complete a petition with attached documentation for licensing or employment requirements. (There are also some exceptions in “content related families,” more below.)

The new regulations are bad news for all kinds of students: those with inadequate preparation, learning challenges, or language competency issues; returning students who may have been away from school for several years; adult students who may not wish to complete a degree or transfer; lifelong learners; all students of the visual and performing arts and kinesiology/physical education; students that need access to skills courses with changing technology (welding, computer classes that offer upgraded versions of software, digital media, etc.); and more.

In addition to reducing access for all students/community members, these changes will have a devastating impact on visual and performing arts across the state. Without changes to these regulations, the depth and breadth of community college arts programs, which have been built for over fifty years, will crumble. (Arts and physical education students throughout the state are particularly impacted by the regulations. While students can, in the case of a “content-related family,” repeat a course up to four times, they can only take a total of four courses in a content-related family. This significantly limits the success and access for students who must repeat courses multiple times in order to become proficient.)

The election of November 2012 showed that Californians, in passing Proposition 30, (primarily a tax on the wealthy to fund education), are willing to create new revenue streams to maintain a high quality public educational system. It is time to repeal these regulations that were passed in the context of severe rationing of higher education.