

## **IdeaScale Response from Chabot Community College Academic Senate**

### **Academic Senate of Chabot Community College, Hayward Submitted by: Kathy Kelley, Academic Senate President**

The Academic Senate of Chabot Community College appreciates the serious budgetary shortfalls of the State of California and the expense of a community college system that is open to any person over 18 years of age regardless of preparation or educational goal.

The Academic Senate of Chabot Community College fully understands the dichotomy between the budget allocated to the California Community Colleges and the level of needs of the large population utilizing our educational, enrichment and lifelong learning opportunities. Yet, at the same time as we appreciate the expense of educating such a large number of individuals, we take seriously our Mission and attempt to fulfill needs of those individuals enrolled at our college and are painfully aware of the even greater expense if we do NOT educate as many members of our community as possible.

Therefore, we firmly believe

- that the solution for economic problems should neither be shouldered by the students,
- nor reduce access to education,
- nor should it dramatically impact the focus and quality of education being provided and defined by the Mission of the California Community Colleges.

We believe that the 'Recommendations' of the Task Force, if implemented, would have the effect of doing all three, and that this is simply unacceptable. We are particularly disturbed by the possibility that the greatest negative impact would be for those individuals having the greatest need and the least resources.

Our suggestion to resolve this dichotomy is to focus on the larger scale societal importance and need of an educated electorate in order to maintain a functioning democracy in which all eligible voters exercise their right to vote in an informed and thoughtful manner. Further, we remind the Task Force that educational attainment benefits multiple generations in ways that may be inadvertently ignored by these recommendations:

Upon achieving academic success, quality of life increases in several ways, including, but not exclusive to, lowering cases of common chronic diseases which cost our state millions of dollars annually, such as: overweight and obesity, type II diabetes, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, smoking, and certain types of cancer. In particular, regardless of income, cigarette smoking, high cholesterol, and hypertension all decline as education increases.

Also the quality of parenting changes with educational attainment, improves and subsequently improves the lives and outcomes of the younger generation and, in turn, that generation's children. Whether measured in level of employment, employability or contributions to society, educated citizens contribute more than what their education cost. Thus, the benefits conferred upon the community far outreach the expense of educating any one person or generation, and calculations of cost must therefore factor in the long-term effects and benefits of such changes over decades not immediate outcomes in any one year or length of attendance.

Taking these statements as a whole – the Community College builds a better future for generations of its community members, it provides hope and motivation to improve the health, wealth and capacity of citizens to participate in community, state and national levels.

The Academic Senate of Chabot Community College believes that the definition of “student success” is different for each student, for each instructor and each administrator and has a reach far beyond the classroom. Ultimately, "student success" lives somewhere between the student's realization of their own individual goals and the institution's appreciation of the varied goals and benefits of participating in higher education, be it for goals of improved employment opportunities, scientific investigations, self-improvement, maintenance of health or of being/becoming a ‘whole person’.

We further believe that how we promote success as a college community does not always entail a degree/certificate or transfer. We receive monies from the tax-paying community to serve our whole community, by way of mere participation, a class, as well as obtaining a degree or fulfilling transfer requirements. Goals of health improvement, be those psychological, academic or physical ultimately provide fiscal savings to the ‘system’ as a whole while enriching not only the quality of the life of the individual but contributing back to the community a healthy, capable and involved citizen.

The Academic Senate of Chabot Community College, having studied the Institutional research data of our campus and of other community colleges, knows that no survey can determine the actual levels of success that each individual student is achieving in either the college setting as a whole or in any individual class. Nor do surveys predict the potential contributions of participating students. Students each have their own unique goals for their education, both in terms of a specific class, their participation in extracurricular activities as well as their overall educational track. The spectrum of these goals is as diverse as the student body itself. Additionally, the data call into question whether any particular type or description of class actually improves the chance of success of any particular student.

The 3CSN group has provided input to the Task Force separately. A leader in 3CSN is our own faculty member, Dr. Katie Hern, who has successfully designed a model accelerated ‘basic skills’ English course to a one-semester model, which more closely reflects a ‘normal’ English class than the two-semester previous ‘standard’. Statistically, students taking this class in a number of California Community Colleges are more likely to succeed in subsequent courses of college study regardless of entrance test scores. This research, with supporting data of strong statistical significance, supports a model that gears to higher, rather than lower level offerings for students and their academic attainment.

Because we are located in Hayward, one of the most diverse cities in the United States, and being a Hispanic Serving Institution, we have a particular understanding and vested interest in appreciating and adapting our offerings to the diverse population we serve. At the same time, we appreciate that all relevant findings point to a preponderance of the population of entering students who are unprepared for college-level work.

Clearly, this points NOT to the failure of the California Community Colleges to provide adequate and quality educational opportunities, but to the possible shortfalls or misdirected efforts of the education provided in the 18 years leading up to college entrance. We applaud the Task Force for suggesting that we work with the K-12 system, but are hesitant to ‘align’ our own efforts with potentially inadequate or misdirected efforts that led to our own doors.

Given the quality of the data on the educational level and achievement of incoming students, we hesitate to implement a larger focus on ‘specifically Basic Skills’ courses as this change of focus would eliminate our offerings to those students who are capable of completing certificates and degrees. In fact, this would be the necessary outcome of changing our focus and force a reallocation of our already scant resources.

However, the Academic Senate of Chabot Community College, representing our full faculty, understand that all college-level courses require, reinforce and promote the basic skills that are contextually embedded in course content, regardless of class type, level or description. Many classes even meet the same CSU transfer requirements as basic skills classes, yet are not considered “basic skills” classes. Thus, the definition of "basic skills" must be expanded in order to meet the realities of pedagogy, practice, and population.

The Academic Senate of Chabot Community College is also concerned that without this expanded definition of “basic skills”, preferably one that includes critical thinking, Colleges will be limited to teaching ONLY what is currently defined as “basic skills” classes, essentially eliminating the Liberal Arts and Community missions of Community Colleges. Directing professional educators to re-direct their efforts based on primarily economic goals and constraints also undermines and under-appreciates the expertise of educators who already include reading, writing and critical thinking embed assignments in their expectations for any college class.

The Counselors of Chabot College object to the use of faculty ‘advisors’ as advising by individuals who are not adequately educated and trained as to the fine points of counseling, transfer credit and articulation to various institutions will not best serve student needs and may undermine the professionalism of Student Services staff.

To summarize:

The Academic Senate of Chabot Community College urges the Student Success Task Force to:

- Consider the long-term societal impact of limiting or redefining the Mission of California Community Colleges,
- Consider that the long-term fiscal implications of limiting access would increase rather than save financial resources in that benefits of education are multi-generational,
- Consider that the definition of “student success” is actually a host of definitions spanning ages, capacities, personal goals and the ability to participate as an educated member of a participatory democracy,
- Consider that an integrated view of lifespan development and education would more accurately define where changes need to be made in our educational network,
- and finally ...
- That the short-term considerations of broad-based and long-term solutions to a complex of societal issues require more time, broader participation by community, academic and community members, and taking such time as a problem of this magnitude and complexity requires would provide far-reaching and more likely effective changes than a hurried and limited exploration of potential solutions to an admittedly thorny and difficult set of problems.

We, the Academic Senate of Chabot Community College, appreciate your willingness to hear our concerns, take our feedback and to reconsider those elements in your recommendations that meet objections from faculty, community and students. We look forward to participating in the next step of the process and to finding mutually satisfactory solutions.