

From C. Lee and R. Pabello
California taxpayers, part-time community college students

1. Student success definition should be student completion of class, not transfer or AA.

Granted if you want to prioritize a student plan to make sure that we get job retraining classes when we need them, then the Task Force Recs should make that a SEPARATE AND NARROWLY DEFINED objective.

Job skill upgrades for working adults is key to our economy and one of the essential missions for the community colleges. This is especially true now that we work even longer in our careers WITH daily technology changes which add requirements to the job.

I graduated from the UC system 20 years ago. All of my post-bac education has been through the community college. When my apparel industry job ended in the late 90's, I took computer programming classes. When the internet boom happened, I took web programming classes, when the tech bust happened, I took advanced business classes with advanced Microsoft and Adobe software. When my job began to require new tech skills as part of my job, I took digital video editing classes (which BTW - had many prereqs to take a digital editing class, so I took those: not complaining about the extra time, since I calculated that learning digital editing is a long-term skill benefit worth the time).

When the state of CA stopped paying my firm for the our invoices because California had a budget crisis, I got laid off. Since all the jobs I began applying to required a communications or journalism degree, I started taking journalism classes. When I got a new part time job, it was in part because I was enrolled in journalism classes that I was hired. Luckily, my technical editing and publishing work pays \$25/hour so I have been able to complete all the journalism classes while I worked part time.

The types of classes that have enabled me to reinvent my career multiple times were not the math and science courses. My biggest gains in income have come from learning Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, and Final Cut Pro and my journalism portfolio of published articles.

2. The emphasis on full-time students is a red-herring and a useless change in direction for the community colleges.

SO many students seem to agree that they're splitting work and school and family... the push to full-time students is really for the ~50+ percent who seek an AA or transfer, which albeit is the majority but not a super majority. A very large number of students access the community college as part-time students for so many reasons, it is presumptuous for the Task Force Recs to suggest that full-time is "better."

To devalue the pursuits of the part-time students seems like an excessive value judgment, one that favors completion over learning, especially for those students who choose to take only 1 or 2 classes at a time over a longer period so they can do well.

The Task Force does not need to apply a false screen of "full time is better" to have more successful outcomes - it needs to acknowledge the superb value of classes that fit into a part-time

student's objectives. If a part-time student is getting more responsibilities and kudos at work because they're bringing new skills in from their part-time studies, does the Task Force count that as success? No, because no data on self-reported student success from part-time students is collected.

3. Data on why students do not complete classes is not collected. You should not be changing the community college mission without hard facts. The task force is filled with vague assertions about why students fail classes. You cannot know this because the community colleges do not collect this data.

You might have it in a few surveys, but without knowing whether students drop out because the teacher is bad, or the material is too easy, or if the class time conflicts with a change in work or daycare schedules, you should not make Task Force Recs based on your anecdotal information.

4. The Task Force Recs need a significant amount of refinement and input from the local level. The recs are too broad, too vague, underfunded and too loaded with value judgments out of sync with the student population. The Task Force Recs should have more data behind each recommendation and the recommendations need to be both narrower and properly funded. If you want to start spending the foundation money more wisely - do the surveys and get the right data in addition to outright hiring enough education and career counselors to serve the needs of the student community - adults, post-bacs, seniors, immigrants, new parents, disabled learners, veterans, etc.

5. Local control of the community colleges is essential. The state is way too big and the CCCCCO too sprawling to efficiently understand and implement what is successful at the local level. Revise focus to emphasize that recommendations are for the local community college board to accept, edit, revise, and implement but do not mandate.

Sincerely,
C. Lee and R. Pabello
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