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LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT WELCOMES MOST AMBITIOUS AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATION BUDGET IN HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA

Funding for low-income students, LGBTQ+ Centers and ethnic studies funding will set new standard for community colleges

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles Community College District ([LACCD](http://laccd.edu)) wholeheartedly supports the education funding proposals put forth by the California State Legislature, which represents the most innovative, ambitious and forward-thinking investment in community colleges in the history of California.

LACCD recognizes and thanks the Legislature for its investment and focus on students most in need at a time of unprecedented resources as a result of California's unexpected tax windfall. This provides a unique opportunity to provide support to students deserving of aid, including low-income students who are housing and food insecure, LGBTQ+ students seeking greater connectivity to their campus community, and levels the playing field for low-income community college students' access to financial aid. The forward-looking proposal also improves quality of instruction by including funding for ethnic studies courses.

These budget proposals will supercharge our community colleges, a key element of the economy of the future and a building block for a more just and inclusive society. LACCD's top budget priorities included funding for the District's most vulnerable and previously underserved students, funding for ethnic studies faculty, increased funding for student employment, and making sure that our colleges are safe and healthy environments for in-person instruction and student services.

"COVID has presented California with a generational opportunity to identify the inequities that exist for our students, and it's our responsibility to provide the resources to combat those inequalities, immediately and effectively," LACCD Board of Trustees President Steve Veres said. "I enthusiastically endorse the budget agreed to by our legislators, which will provide an immediate impact for our current students and lay the groundwork for a cutting-edge, equitable system of community colleges in the long term."

The budget proposals put forth by the Legislature—and the vision displayed by Governor Gavin Newsom—would put California's community colleges on a path to become the most equitable education system in the country. It is a generational opportunity to put in place a foundation for economic recovery, sustained success, and to demonstrate the tremendous potential of community colleges as a path to getting our workforce retrained, upskilled and back to work.

"This has been a uniquely challenging year for all of us, with COVID-19 transitioning our colleges to almost complete remote learning and services," LACCD Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D., said. "To have this windfall of resources and the imagination and diligence of our legislators in pushing to fund programs that target our neediest students is a real testament to their leadership, and we are thankful for their confidence."

The joint legislative agreement would approve \$100 million proposed by the Administration to address community college student housing and food insecurity. There are a significant number of LACCD students who are housing insecure, with 68 percent identifying as low income and more than 50 percent living below the poverty line. This aid would provide the funds students need to participate in innovative and inclusive community-based housing partnerships that the LACCD has entered into, creating safe and clean living environments where students can live, study and thrive.

LACCD commends the Legislature for including dedicated funding for ethnic studies courses. With nearly eight out of every 10 students at LACCD coming from communities of color, these resources will provide a more culturally competent and inclusive experience for all students. LACCD calls on the Governor to increase funding for ethnic studies faculty in light of the Legislature's passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 1460 [Chapter 32; Section 19844.2, Statutes of 2020] authored by former Assemblymember Shirley Weber. LACCD is the sponsor of AB 1040 (Muratsuchi) related to ethnic studies. A bill that will require all community college students to complete at a minimum one three-unit course in ethnic studies as a requirement for graduation.

"California's strength is in its diversity, and our story only becomes more powerful when all of its elements are told," LACCD Board of Trustees First Vice President Gabriel Buelna, Ph.D., said. "As a longtime Chicana/o Ethnic Studies professor, I have seen firsthand how these courses inspire the next generation of leaders, and I am pleased the Legislature has provided dedicated funding for this important area of study."

LACCD is also strongly encouraged by an increase in proposed funding for targeted programs like Umoja, Puente, MESA and EOPs, which serve vulnerable populations that often require wraparound support services to persist and complete community college. With the available resources and a commitment at the highest levels of the state to build a more equitable society, increasing these supports aligns with LACCD's values. The District's advocacy for LGBTQ+ Centers is central to this goal to support all students in an individualized fashion.

"I understand what it is like to be an LGBTQ+ student figuring out how to navigate campus life, and how helpful one of these LGBTQ+ Centers would have been for my college experience," LACCD Board of Trustees Second Vice President David Vela said. "I am proud of California for being a leader in inclusivity and educating all of our students with the care they deserve."

The budget proposals will provide \$155.4 million to eliminate the age and time out of high school Cal Grant eligibility requirements for California community college students starting in the 2021-22 school year and an additional \$487 million to eliminate the age and time out of high school eligibility requirements for all students the following year. It would also provide \$44.6 million to increase the Cal Grant B Access award to \$1,876 for community college students in the 2021-22 school year, and an additional \$125.2 million to increase the award to \$2,000 for all students the following year. LACCD is calling on the Governor to eliminate the proposed Grade Point Average (GPA) requirement, this will bring in a significant amount of new and nontraditional students, who often make an outsize impact on campus.

LACCD is also strongly in support of the \$486 million for scheduled maintenance—a necessary investment to get students back to campus and ensure safer and more comfortable learning environments going forward. In addition, LACCD supports the Legislature's proposal of an increase of \$40 million for Strong Workforce funding, as well as a change in the allocation process allowing for more local control.

“California’s economy has been and will continue to be a world leader as long as our education system continues to innovate,” LACCD Legislative and Public Affairs Committee Chair and Board Trustee Mike Fong said. “We welcome this Strong Workforce funding that will keep us on the cutting edge of workforce development and career technical education programs and pay major dividends for our state.”

The Legislature has a constitutional requirement to reach agreement with the Governor and pass a balanced budget by June 15, 2021.

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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, <https://www.facebook.com/LACCD>, @LACCD, and on Twitter, <https://twitter.com/laccd> @laccd and Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/laccd_edu/ @laccd_edu.

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