

# Education Matters: LACCD Advocacy Brief

Vol. 1 No. 1



## *From the Chancellor's Desk*



Welcome to our inaugural issue of **Education Matters: LACCD Advocacy Brief**. This quarterly e-publication is designed to engage and inform you of the Los Angeles Community College District's policy agenda, advocacy efforts and direct action on behalf of our over 250,000 students, staff and faculty.

The timing of this newsletter is not by accident! Coming off a historic election with over 150 million national voters, addressing the racial reckoning that is occurring across the country, and navigating a worldwide pandemic presents new and extraordinary challenges and opportunities. Yet, I remain incredibly hopeful as I

witness the resilience of our communities and the strength of our democracy.

We have much to look forward to as we enter 2021. First, my heartfelt congratulations to our incumbent LACCD Board Members, Board President Andra Hoffman, Trustees David Vela, Mike Fong, and newly elected Trustee Nichelle Henderson. On the national front, with the election of United States Senator Kamala Harris, we will have the first female Vice President and woman of color to serve in that role. In the White House, I believe that we will have in President-elect Joseph Biden's administration – support for the community colleges – especially with First Lady Jill Biden. Locally, we will have for the first time ever an all-female Board on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors with the election of State Senator Holly Mitchell.

Colleges and universities have been essential partners in our nation's defense against the community spread of COVID-19 by essentially transitioning our courses and services to online education and remote learning, since mid-March 2020. There is a close interdependence between education, the economy and equity. If our community colleges are to be essential to this state's and nation's equitable economic recovery, our system must leverage every resource, including robust and coordinated advocacy

efforts locally, in Sacramento and in Washington, D.C., to ensure that our role as regional economic drivers is understood and resourced, and that our voice and influence are present to continue the investment in higher education when it is needed most to serve the most vulnerable student populations.

This newsletter is intended to help you do just that – to keep you informed and engaged, to continue the good fight, so that our students can receive the support that they need to achieve their dreams. Together, we can erase the racial and educational inequalities, and economic disparities that impact our underserved and under-resourced communities today. Thank you for your interest and future engagement.

**¡Si Se Puede! – Yes We Can!**



Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D.



Despite a challenging federal landscape, LACCD has achieved a number of successes at the federal level this year. A few highlights:

- **Coronavirus Relief Funding:** Working in coalition with other key higher education stakeholders, we helped secure \$14.250 billion for higher education emergency relief for institutions of higher education to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus in CARES Act funding. Funds may be used to defray expenses for institutions of higher education, such as lost revenue, technology costs associated with a transition to distance education, and grants to students for food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care.
- **Basic Needs:** In July, the FY 21 Labor-HHS-Ed spending bill passed the House as part of a minibus package. The bill includes a \$5 million basic needs pilot program championed by Congressman Schiff and strongly supported by LACCD.

It would allow higher education institutions to use funds to carry out or expand at least two of the following activities to fund basic needs programs that support temporary housing, secure sleeping arrangements, provide free or subsidized food, access to on-campus childcare, and/or other basic needs to eligible students; construct housing on community college campuses; conduct outreach to students to encourage participation in basic needs programs and services; help eligible students apply for and enroll in local, State, and Federal public assistance programs; or coordinate and collaborate with government and/or community-based organizations.

- **Workforce Development:** We have continued to strongly advocate for Apprenticeship funding in partnership with our delegation. In FY 20, we helped secure \$175 million for Department of Labor apprenticeship funding. The House FY 21 package, which was adopted in July, includes \$185 million.
- **DACA:** We have continued to strongly advocate for a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients and have opposed the Administration's efforts to end this critical program. We have drafted resolutions supporting H.R. 6, The Dream and Promise Act, as well as sent letters to the President supporting our DACA students. In June, we helped LACCD host a roundtable with key congressional leaders on DACA. Over 200 people participated via Zoom.

---

## ***First Lady Jill Biden Stands with Community Colleges***



We are excited to renew our relationship with President-Elect Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden, who was instrumental in helping LACCD to begin its LA Promise program. In 2015, Dr. Biden came to LA City College and was the keynote speaker at the kick-off for the LA College Promise.

As a community college professor, she understands the critical role that community colleges play in educating the nation's workforce and we anticipate that community colleges, including LACCD, will be the focus of policy and funding for the new Administration.

---



This year, the Los Angeles Community College District, like many other organizations, had to make a quick pivot on budget priorities with the onset of COVID-19 and the impact that it had on the budget. The state quickly went from a surplus to a \$54 billion deficit. LACCD's priorities quickly changed to advocate for solutions that would best help students deal with the immediate crisis. Two of the top priorities championed in the budget committees were a \$120 million COVID-19 block grant and \$11 million dollars in funding to assist undocumented students.

The COVID-19 block grant enabled LACCD to purchase laptops for students, provide mental health services, reengage students that dropped out, and more. Additionally, funding for emergency grants for undocumented students was critical for the District when federal guidance determined that CARES Act funding could not be used to support undocumented students. Of those funds, the District received approximately \$10.7 million from the COVID-19 block grant and will receive over \$1 million from the fund for undocumented students.

In spite of a shortened legislative session due to the pandemic, we were successful advocating in support of number of legislative initiatives:

- The passage of **AB 1460-Weber**, which requires CSU undergraduate students complete a 3-unit ethnic studies course in order to graduate and receive a BA degree.
  - The passage of **AB 2416-Gabriel** which allow students to appeal their loss of financial aid if they fail to meet "satisfactory academic progress" due to homelessness.
  - The passage of **AB 2884-Berman** to authorize the use of Proposition 20 lottery funds to support students experiencing food insecurity and/or homelessness.
  - The passage of **AB 3137-Voeppel**, which allows a student who is called into military service to withdraw from participation in the CA College Promise Program and resume their participation in the program when they return from duty without penalty.
-



In partnership with the City of Los Angeles Personnel Department, Los Angeles Community College District is excited to launch the LACCD City Connect Program, an innovative workforce development program aimed at equipping students with the required knowledge and skills to apply and compete for employment opportunities. The intent of LACCD City Connect is to produce training and custom-tailored educational curricula through which students will receive a competitive advantage when applying for jobs with the City of Los Angeles and City vendors. In return, City employers will be reassured that LACCD City Connect referrals are highly qualified.

The District is set to officiate the program with Mayor Eric Garcetti and the City of Los Angeles early next year. We look forward to witnessing the career opportunities that arise for our students from LACCD City Connect, especially in these unprecedented times of record high unemployment. Long-term, the goal is that the LACCD City Connect program will serve to establish credit, non-credit, not-for-credit short-term job training coursework, as well as mutually agreed upon short-term certificates and degrees that make LACCD students more competitive to fill City of Los Angeles jobs. Workshops will be offered in collaboration with the recently launched Los Angeles College Promise Works Program, and other partners including the Los Angeles County WorkSource Centers, LA City Workforce Investment Boards, Los Angeles City YouthSource Centers, and the College Career Centers.



In 2016, the LACCD commissioned a formal study in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin HOPE Lab and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT),

where LACCD students voluntarily completed a survey on food and housing insecurity among community college students. Fifty-five percent of students who responded indicated that they are experiencing housing insecurity. Housing insecurity could be attributed to students struggling to pay their rent or mortgage and utility bills, couch surfing, and/or had to endure substandard housing conditions in unstable neighborhoods.

In response to this study, the LACCD made student basic needs a top priority. This year, the LACCD Board approved a formal partnership with two non-profit organizations - Shower of Hope (SOH) and Los Angeles Room and Board (LARNB) to address the student homelessness situation. These two nonprofit organizations have established a stable and safe living arrangement for thirty-one homeless students, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and once the pandemic is over, these two homes will be able to serve up to sixty-five students. The homes provide the students with meals, counseling, tutoring, and financial assistance. In addition, students are provided with the technology, books, and tools that they need to succeed in school. The District is currently advocating for more funding to scale up these two programs. Click here for more information on the LARNB Opportunity House: [LARNB Opportunity House](#).

---

Interested in receiving future newsletters? [Sign up here](#).

No longer interested in receiving the newsletter? [Opt out here](#).