





The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

DATE: March 4, 2013

SUBJECT: Governor's Online Education Proposal		Item Number: 3.8	
		Attachment: No	
CATEGORY:	Academic Affairs	TYPE OF BOARD CONSIDERATION:	
Recommended By:	 Barry Russell, Vice Chancellor	Consent/Routine	
		First Reading	
Approved for Consideration:	 Brice W. Harris, Chancellor	Action	
		Information	X

ISSUE: On January 10, 2013, Governor Brown presented his proposed state budget for 2013-2014. A highlight of his budget is a proposal to expand online instruction to support student success and completion in California public colleges and universities. The Governor proposed separate initiatives for the California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California. The Board of Governors will be updated on the current proposal for the California Community Colleges.

The proposed **California Community College Online Initiative** is a multi-faceted system-wide distance education (DE) delivery program designed to improve the access, retention, degree completion, time to degree, and transfer of community college students, while concurrently reducing costs of attendance for students and costs of delivery for colleges. The proposal was developed with input and assistance from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Key elements of the initiative include:

- A "Virtual Campus" to increase statewide student access to DE courses.
- A single, common, and centralized DE delivery and support infrastructure
- Expanded options for students to access instruction in other environments and earn college credit for demonstrated knowledge and skills through credit by exam.

RECOMMENDATION: This item is presented to the Board for information and discussion.

BACKGROUND: Today in California, community college students face a wide range of challenges and barriers to completing degrees and certificates. These include the following:

- Deep cuts in state funding have forced colleges to significantly reduce the number of course sections offered, causing community college enrollments to shrink by 485,000, or 17 percent, since fall 2008.
- These reductions come just as colleges face an unprecedented demand from high school graduates, unemployed workers, and returning veterans.
- As a result, there are not enough courses to complete General Education, transfer, and discipline requirements at the community colleges, the California State University, or the University of California.
- Students unable to enroll at a community college due to constrained access are often driven to high tuition proprietary institutions.
- High textbook and support materials costs add to the fiscal strain on students, causing students to borrow and work more.

DE presents an opportunity to deliver education to large numbers of students in a convenient way, and potentially with significant economies of scale. While roughly 10 percent of all courses in the California Community Colleges are currently delivered via DE, there is still vast untapped potential in this educational model. Significant growth in DE has occurred over the past decade, but further growth has been limited for the following reasons:

- Delivering DE requires a large, up-front technology investment by a local campus; community colleges are also unable to support 24/7 technical support to these local DE enterprises. 112 campuses each making a unique, local choice produces no economies of scale in the purchase of DE hosting and support services.
- Insufficient student support systems exist to ensure success in the online environment (tutoring, supplemental instruction, and counseling). Students drop online classes at higher rates because they are ill-prepared and supported for the online experience.
- Instructional design is often not at a level to deliver information in a clear and engaging manner.
- Since DE course delivery systems vary from one institution to the next, students must relearn the online environment and navigation; there is not a single, uniform DE experience in the California Community College system.
- Students don't know where to find online classes; there is not a single source of all available online courses or programs; they must shop all 112 campuses individually to find them.

ANALYSIS: The **California Community College Online Initiative**, having been proposed by the governor, will now undergo public review and consideration in the state legislative process. In addition, the proposal will be vetted and considered in our system's consultative process. These public review processes will provide an opportunity to gather additional perspectives, ideas, and suggestions to help strengthen the proposal.

The public dialogue that will occur around the governor's proposal, and the eventual implementation of the **California Community College Online Initiative**, will position our system to continue its strong tradition of exploring and leveraging the benefits of DE to help our students achieve their educational objectives.