



California Community Colleges
Extended Opportunity Programs & Services Association
Since 1970



March 20, 2015

Honorable José Medina, Chair
Assembly Committee on Higher Education
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 490 (Alejo)/As Amended**
Position: **SPONSOR**

Dear Assemblymember Medina:

The California Community College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Association (CCCEOPSA) seeks your support for AB 490, legislation restoring critical funds to the **EOPS** and **CARE** programs.

CCCEOPSA is a non-profit advocacy organization that represents the 112 Community College EOPS programs across the state. EOPS was established in 1969 as a social, educational, and civil rights program to increase the number of college bound students who are poor, face numerous educational barriers and who are under-represented students of color on college and university campuses.

Background

In fiscal year 2009-10, funding to the entire California Community College (CCC) system was reduced by 12 percent. Categorical programs that serve students with disabilities (DSPS), single parent county TANF recipients (College CalWORKs) and poor educationally disadvantaged students (EOPS) were cut by 40 percent. These cuts were devastating to the most vulnerable communities on our campus.

These severe and inequitable reductions in funding came at a time when the number of students being served in EOPS and CARE statewide was increasing. Today, the demand for EOPS enrollment continues to be great especially because of changes in federal financial aid. The combination of reduced funding and increased demand has seriously compromised the ability of the California Community Colleges to meet the needs of poor educationally disadvantaged students. These are the students that research has showed EOPS helping enroll in college, stay in college, excel in college and move on to be contributing Californians.

In 2014, the EOPS program received partial restoration, but the Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE which is the combined effort of three agencies: the Department of Social Services, the Department of Employment and California Community Colleges which serves single parents enrolled full time in EOPS) program received none. The lack of full restoration to EOPS and CARE programs has caused delays, reductions and even the elimination of some services. The reduction of required services and accommodations denies equal educational access and opportunity to low-income students of color. Our student population includes students with disabilities, veterans, single parents, foster youth, DREAMers/AB 540, re-entry, students reintegrating

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back into the community, new immigrants, and students who are at the highest risk of leaving the CCC system in the first semester.

As you know, the Governor's Budget for 2014-15 provided new funding for community colleges. We thank and applaud you, the Legislature and the Governor for your support of California Community Colleges. These funds are greatly appreciated and needed; however, they were designated for specific purposes none of which was to restore funding to EOPS and CARE programs.


Action

In the 2015-16 budget, the Governor proposes a \$125 million increase to the base allocation, \$106.9 million growth, \$200 million Student Success/Student Equity, and \$92.4 million COLA as well as increases in other areas for the community colleges. Once again, there are no dollars earmarked specifically for EOPS and CARE. The Governor will leave the decision about how to allocate these funds to local trustees. With no specific language carving out funding to EOPS and given the wide range of competing demands on college campuses and districts, this would lead to a fierce battle within the system with the same result--little if any money would be provided for restoration of EOPS and CARE programs. Poor educationally disadvantaged California students will go without once again and be pushed to the back of the funding bus.

In order to address this problem, Assembly Member Alejo has amended AB 490 to appropriate \$40 million for the EOPS and CARE in order to address the urgent need for restoration. Unless this situation is resolved, we will continue to lose ground to provide access and retention interventions to the most educationally disadvantaged students on our college campuses. This outcome hurts individual students as well as the social, political, and financial economy of California.

For these reasons, the California Community Colleges Extended Opportunity Programs & Services Association supports this bill and urges your aye vote. Please contact me with any questions regarding our position on this important legislation.

Cordially,



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cc: Hon. Luis Alejo
Assembly Higher Education Committee
Ted Blanchard, Republican Consultant
Vince Stewart, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
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