REPORT TO THE OHLONE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Ohlone Community College District Board of Trustees

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INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Annual Legislative Conference of the Community College League of California took place on January 31 – February 1, 2016 at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento in California.

The Annual Conference was organized in General Sessions for all attendees, and Concurrent Sessions representing specific topics that attendees self-selected. This report will outline the sessions I specifically attended during the conference.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31:

CONCURRENT SESSION

Exploring Innovation in Basic Skills -- This session will cover two evidence-based strategies that support Basic Skills students and have the potential for significant long-term impact by addressing various aspects of a student’s experience. Accelerated Study in Associated Program (ASAP), a program model that targets multiple barriers to timely degree completion, has almost doubled graduation rates. The Carnegie Foundation’s Quantway/Statway programs, two research-based programs designed to accelerate students to-and through college-level mathematics, have more than tripled student success in half the time and significantly closed the gap for minorities and women. Findings from Carnegie’s and MDRC’s research will be discussed, including the impact on future practice and implementation in California and an examination of the institutional return on investment for participation in these programs. Chris Thorn, Senior Associate, Director of Knowledge Management, The Carnegie Foundation; Michelle Ware, Operations Associate, Young Adults and Postsecondary Education, MDRC; Karen Klipple, Executive Director, Community College Pathways Program, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Application for Ohlone: The presenters discussed their findings in evidence based completion rates for the above programs [triple success rates in half the time as regular classes]. The goal is to make sure under-represented students are successful [e.g. in Quantway and Statway programs]. They are in eight colleges in California. The ASAP program model raises the three year graduation rate in the CUNY system [New York]. Discussions about staying on track and impact on student responsibility, student services/advising, and enrollment. Tutoring required in some cases, and some campuses use incentives, such as students receiving a free monthly Metro Card. In California many of these issues are the purview of faculty. Free bus passes can make a huge difference for many students.

GENERAL SESSION

The California Promise: Working Together to Reduce Financial Barriers to College -- Last year, President Barack Obama announced the America’s College Promise initiative and he reiterated this goal as a key priority for 2016. It was a proposal to make community college free and universal for all responsible students. At the national level, this has started a conversation about
college affordability and the importance of making the first two years of college accessible to everyone. Through experience, California has learned that tuition is only a small part of a student’s total cost of attendance. A conversation about affordability must include financial aid for students to cover cost of living, including books, food, and other critical expenses. Using the national framework, the California College Promise will take advantage of our unique student financial aid funding model and connect to other initiatives to increase student success.

Moderator: Helen Benjamin, Chair, California College Promise Campaign Leadership Team, and Chancellor, Contra Costa CCD
Speakers: Martha Kanter, former Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Education and Executive Director, College Promise Campaign; Christopher Cabaldon, Mayor of West Sacramento, and Executive Director of the Linked Learning Alliance; Debbie Cochrane, Research Director, The Institute for College Access and Success

Application for Ohlone: The presenters discussed some possibilities within financial aid that could be changing with upcoming HEA Reauthorization.

CONCURRENT SESSION

Accreditation and California’s Community Colleges: A Discussion Regarding the Future of Collegiate Accreditation in California -- This session will include a discussion of the 2015 Chancellors Office Task Force on Accreditation regarding the evaluation of accreditation in California and nationally, ideal attributes of a regional accreditor and a course of action for the future of peer evaluation in higher education. Steve Blum, Trustee, Ventura CCD; David Morse, Faculty Senate President, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges; Cindy Miles, Chancellor, Grossmont/Cuyamaca CCD; Pam Walker, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services, California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office; Belle Wheelan, President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Application for Ohlone: The presenters discussed the previous task forces in recent years leading to the most recent third 2015 Task Force efforts. Some people believe the current accreditation efforts are not working for California Community Colleges. Whatever happens here could affect Hawai'i, etc. [other western region schools]. Some believe that the process has gone from quality to fault finding as an overall mission. Some believe that there is not enough transparency to the current process / group. Would any other agency really welcome us [California has so many CC’s], we might want to be careful with what we wish for – and yet, California is uniquely different from the other regions.

GENERAL SESSION

Community College Budget and Fiscal Update -- Governor Brown’s proposed budget plan builds upon colleges’ efforts to create a strong California workforce through responsive educational programs. While fewer major policy changes were presented in this year’s January budget proposal than last, workforce, basic skills reforms, and textbook affordability appear as high priorities. Hear from key legislative staff, community college fiscal experts, and administration representatives as they discuss the pragmatic approach to implementing and embedding the
programmatic reforms of the past few years into the Governor’s 2016-17 budget. Engage in a
discussion about the fiscal priorities of the community college system and the Legislature; and
the opportunities and challenges facing state and local decision makers. Dan Troy, Vice
Chancellor for Finance and Facilities, California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office;
Chris Ferguson, Education Systems Unit, Department of Finance; Mark Martin, Higher
Education Budget Consultant, Assembly Committee on Budget

Application for Ohlone: Reminding everyone how unpredictable the budget process can be
from year to year and how outside factors can change and alter our situation seemingly
overnight. Several budget points were noted: expanding access; ongoing investment in
basic skills and creating no textbook cost degrees; quality issues [COLA], restoring
mandate claims; promoting institutional effectiveness; infrastructure upgrades in
maintenance and instructional equipment, as well as, data security enhancements; creating
and investing in a strong workforce [Task Force on Workforce], and continuing ongoing
resources for career technical education pathways. Overall policy points: meet demand
for classes; support our faculty; support the success of all students; improve college
affordability; advance a strong workforce; and invest in capital facilities.

EXTRA SESSION

An Hour with Belle Wheelan on Accreditation -- Understand the process of accreditation from
an in depth perspective of peer evaluation and and ongoing program of improvement by Belle S.
Wheelan, president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on
Colleges for 2- and 4-year colleges and universities in 11 southern states. Belle Wheelan,
President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Application for Ohlone: Additional discussion on how the southern states believe their
processes work well for them.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1:

GENERAL SESSION

Community Colleges and Federal Policy: How Are We Faring? -- This is an important year for
community colleges. Congress is currently in the process of extending and modifying the Higher
Education Act (HEA), which will have enormous implications for community colleges. Further,
America’s College Promise continues to top news headlines, bringing the importance and value
of community colleges to the forefront of American political dialogue. What can community
colleges expect from Capitol Hill in this 2016 election year? David Baime, a key architect of
federal policy and strategy, will address some of the most relevant policy topics at play in
Washington, D.C. Baime will discuss efforts to reinstate the year-round Pell Grant to better
reflect today’s student population, and provide a national perspective on policies impacting
California community colleges. David Baime, Senior Vice President for Government Relations
and Research, American Association of Community Colleges
**Application for Ohlone:** An overview of how HEA Reauthorization can affect / change the affordability issues and impact our CCC’s.

**CONCURRENT SESSION**

A Conversation With Key Capitol Staff -- Legislative staff plays a critical role in the legislative process. Not only do they research potential bills and draft reports and briefings, but they also serve as the gateway to collaboration with legislators and policy committees. This session provides a forum for an insightful discussion with key legislative and administration staff. Hear their perspectives on the higher education priorities of members of the Senate, the Assembly, and the Governor. Learn about ways to effectively engage with legislators, the administration and their primary policy advisors. Monica Henestroza, Higher Education Consultant, Office of the Speaker; Lark Park, Senior Advisor for Policy, Office of the Governor; Kimberly Rodriguez, Education Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León

**Application for Ohlone:** Discussed the everyday life and happenings for a couple legislative staff members, and how important their research is on future bills / reports / briefings. We were encouraged to get to know legislative staff and educate them on what our needs are.

**LEGISLATOR TOWNHALLS**

Conversation with Senator Connie Leyva Senate District 20, Member, Senate Education Committee

**Application for Ohlone:** An additional discussion with a Senator directly and how she sees her impact within the Education Committee, and again the encouragement to get to know key members / staff on the committees that affect us.

**GENERAL SESSION**

Cultivating Engagement: A Look at the Road Ahead and the Role for Higher Education -- The California Civic Engagement Project (CCEP) is a non-partisan civic engagement research and outreach initiative established to engage public dialogue on representative governance in California. Founder and director Mindy Romero will discuss how civic engagement is critical to addressing disparities in state and regional patterns of opportunity, including outcomes in education, health and employment. A key focus of CCEP data analysis is identifying inequalities and providing solutions for civic participation across place and population in the state. Explore non-traditional measures of civic engagement, particularly among groups historically underrepresented in our civic and political institutions, and the important role of higher education in cultivating a healthy democracy. Mindy Romero, Founding Director, California Civic Engagement Project
Application for Ohlone: This session gave an overview of the above topics.

CONCLUSION

As per usual, it was announced that many handouts from the presentations should be available online shortly at the CCLC web link. I brought back a couple handouts and provided them to our Board Chair and President with notes on some. If anyone is interested in further details regarding any of these sessions, I would highly recommend that you attempt to contact the presenters as listed.

Other CCLC Conferences that will be held in 2015-2016 include:

- Annual Trustees Conference - Apr. 29-May 1, 2016 in Desert Springs
- Student Trustees Workshop - August 12-13, 2016 in San Francisco
- 2016 Annual Convention - Nov. 17-19, 2016 in Riverside

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