TO: ACCJC Commissioners

FROM: Dr. Daisy Gonzales, Deputy Chancellor

RE: California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Report to ACCJC

Key updates from California’s Community Colleges:

- **COVID-19 Response:** Following statewide orders, on March 17, 2020 community colleges and the Chancellor’s Office transitioned to teleworking. Currently, districts are making locally informed decisions around essential personnel and those who cannot complete their work off-site. Within a period of three weeks, all 115 California Community Colleges mobilized to transition courses online. The system’s focus has been to ensure continuity of instruction for 2.1 million students. A number of statewide technology resources have been deployed at no additional cost to colleges through December 31, 2020. Our office also released a number of executive orders and guidance memos to provide procedural and regulatory flexibility during the COVID-19 emergency. This flexibility includes lifting grant maximum amounts to allow colleges to urgently purchase technology for students, flexibility to allow student contact in a virtual environment to meet state funding requirements and streamlined processes. We are thankful to President Stephanie Droker for working with our office to coordinate around the release of a distance education guidance memo and correspondence education guidance memo. Dr. Droker also joined our statewide system webinar to answer ACCJC questions from more than 2,500 participants who logged in that day.

- **CARES Act.** Guidance released by the U.S. Department of Education indicated that only students who are or could be eligible for Title IV or FAFSA may receive emergency CARES Act grant dollars. The Secretary’s actions denied eligibility to more than 800,000 California Community College students. Students excluded include: students who do not have a high school diploma or GED; dual enrollment students; 26,000 students who have one or more disabilities; 12,000 veterans; more than 1,700 active duty service members; more than 150,000 low-income students; nearly 100,000 students training for
essential work in health; over 80,000 who are training to be first responders; and 70,000 DACA and undocumented students. On May 11, 2020 the California Community Colleges Board of Governors filed suit against the Secretary of Education for her arbitrary exclusion of hundreds of thousands of California Community College students from access to CARES Act emergency student aid. The Board of Governors was joined by five community college districts as plaintiffs: Foothill-DeAnza, Los Rios, State Center, Los Angeles, and San Diego. California Attorney General Xavier Becerra will represent the plaintiffs.

- **State Budget at a Glance.** On May 14, 2020 California Governor Newsom released his [May Revise](#). Several major reductions are expected for California’s Community Colleges including: 25% reductions to categoricals, a decrease in funding for strong workforce programs from $248 million to $100 million, and 10% across the board reduction to all districts. As the state legislature convenes to make final changes and negotiate a final budget, California’s Community College system will focus on reminding state leaders that the California Community Colleges system has proven critical to the state’s fight against COVID-19 – from training first responders to donating desperately needed medical supplies and equipment. In fact, California Community Colleges educate 70 percent of the state’s nurses and 80 percent of firefighters, law enforcement personnel and emergency medical technicians.

- **State of the System Report:** At its May 18th meeting the Board of Governors heard an [update](#) on their strategic plan, the Vision for Success. The report demonstrated that in 2018-19 the system made significant improvements. Specifically, California’s Community Colleges increased the number of students earning credentials by 20%; increased the number of students who transfer to a 4-year public institution; made significant progress to increase the number of students who get jobs in their field of study; and made gradual progress to reduce equity gaps among underrepresented students- with major improvements for American Indian/Alaskan Native students and Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian students.

- **Fiscal Health Monitoring.** As of May 2020, two districts have been assigned fiscal health monitors by the Chancellor’s Office. The Peralta Community College District provided a [report](#) to the Board of Governors at their May meeting. The Palomar Community College District will provide an update at a summer meeting of the Board of Governors.