

RCCD 2022 Legislative Agenda

The Riverside Community College District (RCCD) Board of Trustees, the Chancellor and leadership from the three colleges have identified legislative priorities under the themes of Access, Affordability, Student Success and District Facilities. This document outlines the collective approach, action steps and strategic opportunities.

Theme: Access and Affordability

A1. Financial Aid Reform

The Higher Education Act has not been reauthorized since 2013. The issues RCCD continues to seek support for are free college, double the Pell grant award, creation of a short-term Pell for Career and Technical Education (CTE) students, expand Pell eligibility to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and undocumented students that likely will be included in the final bill are affordability and education costs; increase funding and eligibility for Pell grant recipients, access, persistence and completion; better information for consumers; student loan programs; accreditation and oversight; innovation; and the burden of federal regulations. For Sacramento, Cal Grant Reform efforts continued and unfortunately the policy bill was vetoed by the Governor.

Proposed Activities: Support federal legislative proposals on the Higher Education Act that reduce barriers including requesting increased award amount for total cost of education in the Pell Grant and Cal Grant Awards to community college students, request additional funding for Chaffee grant program, seek support for short-term Pell grants for RCCD CTE students and additional support for expanded apprenticeship programs. In Sacramento, RCCD will also request sustainable categorical financial aid program funding for support staff to address additional federal and state regulations and grant/loan/state work study programs that continue to add to staff workloads.

A2. Student Housing

In the 1930s, Riverside City College (RCC) was the first, and likely the only junior college to experiment with cooperative student dormitories. Currently, now within the California Community College system, 11 out of the 115 colleges have on-campus housing. For the past five years, increased demand of affordable housing and rental assistance for community college students has become a yearly issue. More and more community college students are housing insecure. The state recently approved \$1 billion in student housing funding for California Community Colleges (CCC).

Proposed Activities: Support additional state funding for rental assistance programs that go through the counties for community college students. Seek additional vouchers for rapid rehousing of RCCD community college students. Expand federal, state and county housing eligibility for community college students and their families. Seek support for the District's student housing application for planning and construction of a 400-unit student housing project (100 Moreno Valley College, 100 Norco College and 200 Riverside City College).

A3. Access to Technology

According to National Student Clearinghouse Research Center report dated from September 24, 2020, community colleges have experienced, during the COVID-19 pandemic period, a trend of declining enrollment with one of the factors affecting the decline being the challenge of access

to technology and the difficulty of a first-year student to adapt to on-line learning versus in-person instruction. President Biden proposed \$2 trillion infrastructure plan includes \$100 billion for broadband access.

Proposed Activities: Continue to advocate for digital equity of federal broadband funding in the proposed Infrastructure bill that would provide \$65 billion to the states. Seek continued improvement to broadband access, funding for our broadband infrastructure needs and improvements (i.e. digital learning equipment, opportunities for exterior WIFI access, increase more cell tower infrastructure) in the RCCD service area through meetings with federal, state, county and city officials.

A4. Mental and Psychological Services

A staggering number of students with untreated mental health and behavioral health conditions illustrates the need to move beyond a one-pronged approach that focuses on providing access to high-quality mental health services. With the COVID-19 pandemic, additional steps are needed to target the students who do not seek out services provided by on-campus counseling centers. To bridge this gap, colleges have expanded prevention efforts on-line and through telehealth services, live and recorded wellness workshops, promoting the mental health of students and addressing the social and environmental risk factors that influence student mental health.

The growing need for additional on- and off-campus partnerships and increased access and utilization of counseling services is widely recognized. However, there is no one size fits all approach that will best accommodate mental health conditions and specifically address the unique needs of a diverse student body. Thus, developing an array of services and support is critical to creating an environment that allows students to academic success and overall emotional well-being (NAMI, 2018).

Proposed Activities: Communicate with elected delegations, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CA Department of Social Service and State Chancellor's office the importance to fund mental health support services for students, especially protecting funding for counseling faculty. Identify funding for telemedicine after hours to fund 24-hours with external contracts with acknowledgement that different kind of counselors are needed. Support college applications for grants. Continue to participate in the newly formed County Higher Education Consortium.

A5. Special Populations

a) Foster Youth Support Services

It is the mission of the Foster Youth Support Network (FYSN), in conjunction with dedicated on-campus programs (Guardian/Phoenix Scholars and Next Up), to provide current and former foster youth students with the resources and tools needed to access higher education and successfully complete their college goals. Programs operate with the understanding that foster youth face unique challenges, and services must go above and beyond the standard academic support in order to address the equity gaps facing this population.

Proposed Activities: Advocate for additional funding in the federal Chaffee grant program within the Higher Education Act. Continue to advocate with John Burton Youth Advocates to support legislation in Sacramento that would improve data capture of foster youth. Continue to keep the county and cities (as appropriate) apprised of RCCD student needs through the implementation of AB 1326 .

b) Veterans Education

RCCD works hard to help its 3,269 Veteran students to transition successfully from the military to college. A recent initiative focused on course articulation of military training via the regional Military Articulation Platform (MAP) project (which was endorsed by the state Academic Senate and is poised for CCC system-wide adoption) will complete its Phase 2 by the end of this calendar year and recently received \$2 million in 2021 state funds to expand state-wide as part of Phase 3. Each of the three colleges has a Veteran Resource Center with wrap-around services for Veteran students; Norco College (NC) opened its new center on November 10, 2021; RCC's Veterans Resource Center will open a larger center in January 2022; and Moreno Valley College (MVC) Veterans Resource Center is currently housed in a modular.

Proposed Activities: Continue to work with Congressman Calvert and Congressman Takano on the implementation of HR 182 and also work with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Department of Education (ED), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) on accessing a new protocol for JST from U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). Work with the CCC State Chancellor, CA Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Education to expand this MAP program state-wide and have the program housed at RCCD. Continue to work through the consortium, for Universities of California (UC) (California State Universities (CSU) has opened their access) to work with the CCC system and U.S. DOD to honor military instructional experience reflected on the Joint Service Transcript. Support grant submittals for Veterans Resource Centers, including Centers of Excellence and program funding for support services.

c) Education for Justice Involved Students and Formerly Incarcerated

The California Rehabilitation Center houses thousands of inmates within the RCCD service area, many of whom are seeking higher education. Through education, RCCD strives to reduce the recidivism rate and provide a clear path towards upward social and financial mobility. In 2021, the state approved \$10 million in on-going funding for the creation of the Rising Scholars program.

Proposed Activities: Continue to work with the California Department of Corrections, State Chancellors Office, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) on a process to access transcripts of current and formerly incarcerated students, including those who may move prisons while serving one's sentence. In addition, monitor AB 1187 Community College Tutoring – 2-year bill. Finally, seek additional partnerships (i.e. county and cities) for program funding support as needed.

d) Undocumented Students and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

“Faculty and college leaders support continuing protections for DACA students as well as establishing a pathway to citizenship. Of the 223,000 DACA participants in California (out of 800,000 nationally), approximately 72,000 are enrolled in a CCC institution. In addition to its social and humanitarian imperatives, DACA has vast economic benefits for the country. A study

by CATO Institute notes that, “the elimination of DACA would cost the federal government \$60 billion in tax revenues, with the overall economy likely to shrink by \$215 billion.” (Direct quote from Community College League of California; link referenced below.) The Biden Administration has a proposed DACA rule to codify DACA which was published in the Federal Register and comment period is currently open.

Proposed Activities: Continue to express legislative and funding support for a comprehensive Immigration bill for RCCD undocumented and DACA students with RCCD congressional and state delegation; joint advocacy efforts with coalitions like President’s Alliance on Immigration and Higher Education; prepare for the Farm Bill reauthorization to expand eligibility for SNAP/CalFresh program or DACA and undocumented students; continued support for college funding applications for legal counsel with California Department of Social Services. Continue to provide Dreamer Centers at each of the RCCD colleges, per mandated/unfunded state law.

*Source: California Community Colleges Federal Priorities, February 2019: https://www.ccleague.org/sites/default/files/pdf/federal-advocacy/2019_ccc_federal_talking_points.pdf

e) LGBTQ Student Program

California law (AB620) requires the CCC to collect aggregate demographic information regarding the sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression of students. It also requests annual transmittal of summary demographic reporting to the legislature and posting summary information on the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office web site. RCCD and its colleges strive to provide a welcoming and safe educational environment for students. Due to the privacy of this data, it is difficult to provide accurate numbers of students to justify the support service needed.

Proposed Activities: Continue to request federal and state funding to support these support service programs. Work on finalizing and implementing the MOU with TruEvolution. Support grant application which supports Ally trainings and seek additional partnerships for support services.

Theme: Success

B1. Guided Pathways

RCCD is committed to the transformation of institutions through the full-scale adoption and implementation of Guided Pathways. Guided Pathways provides program maps and comprehensive support structures to guide students in order to achieve academic success, career and transfer goals. To fully employ this innovative model there is critical need for integrated wrap-around services to improve student success, access and equity.

Proposed Activities: Continue to advocate for legislative and funding support of services, including new or reintroduced legislative proposals. In addition, work with California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office on the Attendance Counting Method in order to change to legal accounting to apportionment. Address Disabled Student Services and Programs (DSPS) funding deficit as there are not enough funds to meet the mandated needs that annually categorical fund

allocation falls short. Also, seek grant opportunities to support implementation of RCCD's fifth year of the Guided Pathways 5-year plan.

B2. High School Partnership Program, Dual-Enrollment, CCAP and Middle/Early College

In collaboration with high school partners, RCCD has developed multiple middle college/dual enrollment (AB 288) programs that will help to address the low college-going rate in the area. RCCD plans to expand the pipeline of students entering college through dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, Summer Bridge, Upward Bound and other programs that specifically target this population.

Proposed Activities: Continue to communicate the success of these programs to elected officials. Seek policy and funding support for these "K-14" programs through federal and state legislation. Coordinate with County Office of Education and K-12 feeder districts on messaging to support joint grant applications.

B3. Future of Workforce Development

Support funding and resources for college-based workforce development, regional apprenticeship systems that integrate with the community college system and provide students and workers with pathways leading to higher paying careers along with portable higher educational certificates and degrees. By incorporating registered apprenticeships into its pathways, RCCD seeks to increase the percentage of degree holders in the region by providing accredited work-based learning while concurrently addressing regional industry talent needs. In partnership with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, MVC offers basic and advanced level courses in peace officer, corrections and dispatch education and training accredited by Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) and Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). In addition, continue to advocate for access, affordability and equity for community college students enrolled in the Nursing program to prevent future decreased access to social mobility and a career as a registered nurse. Regular coordinated communication with state legislators, CA Board of Registered Nursing and Departments of Labor and Education.

Proposed Activities: Share information on RCCD workforce program alignments with Vision for Success, county, city and business workforce needs. Communicate with the RCCD elected delegation, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and prospective employers on career pathways offered at colleges in the credit, non-credit and not-for-credit courses. Support legislation that funds expansion of apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs. Specifically, support funding for early capacity building projects that create sustainable and scalable apprenticeship programs embedded into the K-14 system. This includes funding for adult worker/learner apprenticeship programs, youth apprenticeship and scaled pre-apprenticeship programs. The state of California provides methods of funding apprenticeship instruction through the community colleges, but leaves the development and coordination of programs to private organizations and businesses. This model has been effective in building trades, where state public works taxes and codes provide substantial public funding and accountability for these organizations, but it has not worked in other industries that lack the same infrastructure. Community colleges can serve as intermediaries in the apprenticeship system to connect career-builders with apprenticeship opportunities and to aggregate the

workforce needs of local economies. Seek continued support for the planning for the Inland Empire Technical Trade Center (IETTC). Priorities should include funding for coordination of new apprenticeship systems that institutionalize services as program enrollment grows. Track state of California efforts to update plans required by 2018 Reauthorization of Perkins Act. To fund all the advanced offer training courses at Ben Clark Training Center (BCTC), in addition to the courses RCCD have started sponsoring, would be an estimate cost of \$1.5 million. This includes the classroom space, instructors, supplies and at least a part-time coordinator to work as a liaison between the college and Sheriff's Department. Watch for California Board of Registered Nursing's (BRN) annual report from AB 1015 implementation and also see what the impact of the nursing shortages are in the RCCD area hospitals who hire travel nurses and who are not allowing RCCD nursing students to work with the travel nurses at this time.

Theme: Facilities

C1. RCCD Capitol Construction Plan (Proposition 51 Project Process)

California Community College Chancellor's Office limits each district to submit one final project proposal (FPP) per college per year. Each district is competing with 72 districts and it is difficult to verify whether the district's project funding proposals will be approved timely, rejected or deferred to another year. The approval of the FPP depends on scoring methodology that is adopted by the Board of Governor. The state changed the scoring methodology, which was approved by the Department of Finance in August 2020. The new scoring methodology changes the hardship provisions that impacts the district ability to submit successful project proposals without a local matching. Due to full commitment of Measure C and unsuccessful results of Measure A, the District will have no chance to have any project approved by the state moving forward. This definitely results in delays to repair and modernize college facilities that could be available for student instruction.

C2. Physical Plant and Instructional Support (Deferred Maintenance)

The state Physical Plant and Instructional Supplies funding allocation has been declined and diminished. Therefore, unsubstantial funds are dedicated for deferred maintenance/scheduled maintenance projects for the RCCD colleges, while these deferred maintenance projects budget are being increased yearly due to aged facilities, infrastructures and systems. RCCD deferred maintenance projects for 2020-2024 is estimated in the total amount of \$22 million. The same applies for instructional support including ageing equipment and technologies that need to be replaced and is estimated in the total amount of \$7 million for 2020-2024.

C3. Student Housing

In the 1930s, RCC was the first, and likely the only junior college to experiment with cooperative student dormitories. For the past five years, increased demand of affordable housing and rental assistance for community college students has become a yearly issue. More and more of community college students are housing insecure. The District is currently working on a student housing strategic planning framework to address the student housing issues at RCCD colleges and is also applying for state grant funds for the planning of on campus student housing.

C4. Inland Empire Technical Trade Center

Partnering with the Inland Empire Labor Council, Building Trades Council, SW Carpenters, IBEW and others, RCCD will continue to plan for a regional Inland Empire Trade Technology Center to meet the current and future workforce plans in the region with funding from federal, state and local resources.

Proposed Activities: Advocate for annual increase of Physical Plant and Instructional Support's funding allocation in order to provide reasonable annual budget for scheduled maintenance projects that are desperately needed by RCCD colleges. Streamline the capital outlay process in order to expedite the approval process and provide a balance in the requirements within the new scoring methodology that could serve the region with high needs such as Inland Empire. Beyond Proposition 51, staff will look at any federal and state funding opportunities to address deference maintenance projects, support community college student housing on and off campus planning grant application, advocate for rental assistance program; the IETTC in partnership with Inland Empire Labor Council, Building Trades Council, SW Carpenters, IBEW and others; and implementation of federal and state broadband funds.