Enrollment down at California community colleges

The 1% decline reflects cutbacks in courses brought on by state budget cuts. Campuses are being asked to focus on core subjects over recreational classes, Chancellor Jack Scott says.

February 25, 2010 | By Carla Rivera

Reversing a five-year growth trend, enrollment at California's community colleges dipped 1%, or about 21,000 students, this school year as campuses pared courses because of state budget cuts, Chancellor Jack Scott said Wednesday.

The downward trend is likely to continue next year unless state funding increases, Scott said in a telephone news briefing that projected a challenging future for the nation's largest system of public higher education. California's 112 community colleges educate about 2.9 million students annually.

Demand for the colleges is still strong, fueled by unemployed workers seeking retraining and students displaced from the University of California and California State University systems, institutions that are grappling with their own funding shortages.

Scott said the slight enrollment decline was based on preliminary figures from the college districts and reflected numerous students being turned away because of fewer or overcrowded classes.

Even with the dip, the chancellor said, community colleges are serving 200,000 students for whom they receive no state funding. For example, about 3% of students are unfunded in the Los Angeles Community College District; in the Riverside district the figure is 13%, and in the Barstow district, more than 39%.

"Customers want our services but we cannot offer more classes," Scott said. "Many colleges are dipping into reserves to fund these students. They've had to reduce course offerings or they'd be facing bankruptcy."

California Community Colleges is composed of 72 districts. Two former satellite campuses of Riverside City College -- Moreno Valley and Norco -- received accreditation Feb. 1 to become the two newest independent colleges in the system.

The Legislature cut the community college budget by $520 million for the current school year. Course sections were reduced by an estimated 5%, and some districts are reporting that 50% of their new students can't gain access to classes, Scott said.

At Pasadena City College, 89% of classes for the spring semester that started this week are already closed, spokesman Juan Gutierrez said.

The campus of about 26,000 students has not had to limit access because many professors have made room for extra students, he said.

But courses in some under-enrolled subjects such as music and languages may be dropped.

"The thing about community colleges is that they have been pretty much everything to everyone," said Gutierrez.

"But we don't have the funding to offer lifelong learning and enrichment courses and we're starting to focus more on core competency," he said.

Scott said all community colleges are being asked to focus resources on basic education courses such as English and math, those that provide job training and those needed to transfer to a Cal State or UC campus. The "mission creep" that made room for flower arranging, yoga and other recreational studies is likely to be greatly reduced or eliminated, he said.

"Moving in the wrong direction in terms of educating our population could be fairly disastrous for our economy," Scott said. "We must look at the fundamental needs of California and the consequences we will be faced with if we fail to meet those needs."

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Community colleges face overhaul

Josh Francis, Online Editor | Posted: Tuesday, November 15, 2011 4:30 pm

Representatives from the statewide Student Success Task Force met with the public on Nov. 8 at Saddleback College to answer questions about recommendations that could dramatically change the culture of California community colleges.

The task force’s recommendations include a restructuring of the community college system to require centralized assessment tests rather than the current district by district assessment tests. The move will allow all community colleges in California to use the same test rather than localizing them.

Another key change recommended by the task force is to improve the basic education curriculum at the state’s community colleges because 70 to 90 percent of community college students require remediation, according to Yasmin Delahoussaye, interim vice chancellor for the Los Angeles Community College District.

“We felt that there was a need to develop a statewide initiative to relay clear college and career readiness expectations for any community college,” Delahoussaye said.

Delahoussaye added that there is a need to align community college curriculums with K-12 curriculum to ensure students are college ready.

Concerns about the proposed changes were voiced by older students who use community colleges for continuing education and by students who participate in financial aid programs such as EOPS. Many said the colleges risk being limited to students interested in career or transfer opportunities and will lose students attending the schools for enrichment classes.

Some audience members said a push to align the community college curriculum with K-12 curriculum will change the community college system into a continuation-type system controlled more by the state than by local districts. The fear is that this will eliminate non-essential classes including community education classes and classes not offered anywhere other than community colleges.

“It doesn’t work folks — let the local community decide for themselves,” Nathan Rosenblad, 90, a Saddleback College Emeritus Institute student said about what classes should be offered at local
districts. Rosenblad added that he is a former teacher in the Saddleback Valley School District K-12 system and said, “They visited upon us the same medicine you’re visiting upon the community college level.”

More than 4,000 letters were hand delivered to the task force from the California Community College Educators for Older Adults.

“We are concerned…with the Student Success Task Force’s intention of changing the mission of the California plan for higher education and the California community colleges from serving the entire population’s needs to narrowing educational opportunities to only students who are pursuing career development and college preparation courses,” Laura Bronson, a representative of CCCEOA said.

The organization’s main concern was the “elimination of non-credit courses for older adults,” Bronson said.

The panel responded by saying they would look at the letters and would address the concerns the CCCEOA had in a later meeting.

The task force’s change could result in a restructuring of the community college system to more closely resemble the centralized Cal State system, which offers classes essential to career development and earning a degree.

“We know that we are not meeting student demand,” Melinda Nish, president of California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers and vice president of instruction at Orange Coast College said.

Nish said that with data gathered, colleges could offer more classes that students would require to “succeed.” Success thus far has been described as transferring to a four-year university, receiving an associate degree or a career certificate.

The plan also would create incentives for students who are successful in their educational endeavors by providing priority registration and offering successful students more full-time opportunities at the community college level.

“[The task force] supports a stronger statewide coordination and a more robust chancellor’s office,” Erik Skinner, a task force representative said. The task force was also in favor of creating a more longitudinal student record system much like the record systems of the Cal State, UC and K-12 institutions, Skinner said.

Student success was also a talking point at the meeting as well as at Academic Senate and students government meetings at OCC.
Task force members said there will be no performance-based funding in its plan but that, if the plan is approved, it will include combining several student support programs such as basic skills, financial aid, CalWORKs, foster care, matriculation, the physical plant and instructional equipment, Fund for Student Success, and child care tax bailout and will convert it into one category of funding.

This idea called “categorical flexibility” generated several questions from students who participated in one or more of these programs.

“These programs helped me get through community college and transfer to a university,” Eucina Florentino, a former community college student said. “I oppose categorical flexibility.”

Faculty support programs would also be combined with programs including Equal Employment Opportunity, part-time faculty office hours, part-time faculty health insurance, and part-time faculty compensation.

“This additional flexibility will allow districts to craft student success strategies that best fit their students and institutions,” the Student Success Task Force’s draft recommendations document said.

Other programs, including disabled student service and extended opportunity programs, would remain separate, according to the task force’s plan.

“This proposal does not mandate that districts shift their categorical resources, and districts may choose to maintain categorical programs consistent with past practice. However, districts wishing to restructure categorical programs in a more coordinated and unified manner will now have greater authority to do so,” the draft said.

After a restructuring, colleges would be able to allocate funds from these combined categories to the different sub-categories within each new category with more discretion and in concordance with student needs.

A final plan for approval by the state’s board of governors and the legislature will be ready no later than March 2012.
Late Budget Costing Community Colleges Millions and Unmet Demand Mounts

Students Pour on to Community College Campuses as the Great Recession Continues

Sacramento, Calif. – California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott today along with California State University Chancellor Charles Reed and University of California President Mark Yudof held a media briefing at the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce to discuss the impact of continued budget cuts on higher education in California.

“Crowded classrooms, waiting lists of thousands and fewer course offerings are some of the conditions students face as they arrive on campus ready to begin the fall semester,” said Chancellor Jack Scott. “You know things are bad when there are more students on our waiting lists than sitting in many of our classrooms.”

In the 2009/10 academic year, the California Community Colleges sustained $520 million in budget cuts which equates to roughly 8 percent of its overall budget. The cuts forced campuses to reduce course offerings by as much as 20 percent at a time when more students than ever were seeking admission. This resulted in a greater number of students squeezing into fewer classes and waitlisted seats soaring in to the thousands.

While community college officials continue the struggle to meet student demand and do more with less, other budget issues are also causing concern. The 58 day delay in the California budget has resulted in a blockage of all state payments to the community colleges including $116 million that was due in July and $277 million due in August.

Deep budget cuts and more than $1 billion in funding deferrals have left the colleges vulnerable. The state’s September payment, scheduled to go out on September 28, is one of the largest payments of the year at nearly $450 million. If this payment is missed, it will bring the cumulative funding delay to $840 million, or roughly 15 percent of districts’ total annual funding.

As a direct result of the delayed and deferred payments, community colleges have been forced to borrow money at a system-wide cost estimated in excess of $5 million. This is money that the colleges could be using to educate students.

- more -
This fall, students are pouring on to community college campuses seeking many different types of services. The unemployed are in search of career training. Displaced students from the University of California and California State University are seeking general education courses to transfer. Returning veterans are hoping to supplement their skills with a college degree or certificate.

In 2010, California’s largest graduating class of high school seniors hit the streets. Many are turning to community colleges to begin their higher education plans. Data from fall 2009 indicates first-time community college student enrollments decreased by 12 percent. This means many recent high school graduates wanting to attend a community college will not be able to do so due to space constraints exacerbated by their lack of priority registration.

Community college leaders are encouraged by Chancellor Scott to protect core programs and preserve classes in the areas of career technical education, transfer and basic skills.

“Our colleges are doing the best they can to educate hundreds of thousands of students for which the state is providing no remuneration,” said Scott. “But the reality is with the delayed budget things are getting worse. The community colleges and California’s college students are at a greater risk than ever before.”

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.9 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit www.cccco.edu.

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**Note to Reporters/Editors:**
- Enrollment data for fall 2009 is available upon request.
- **For one-on-one interviews at the Chamber event:**
  Contact: Terri Carbaugh
  Cell: 916.801.8300
  E-mail: tcarbaugh@cccco.edu
An Early Look Around the State:
Here’s what our colleges are reporting today about fall 2010 as compared to fall 2009 –
(Please note this information is intended to provide a ‘snapshot’ in time. The enrollment numbers are very fluid and can change frequently throughout the first couple of months of each semester.)

- **Bakersfield College**
  - Fall semester *started* August 23
  - Enrollment is *up* 5.8 percent
  - Course sections *increased* - 27 additional classes added
  - Waitlisted seats *increased* by 13.1 percent - 12,903 waitlisted seats

- **Cerritos College**
  - Fall semester *started* August 16
  - Enrollment is *up* 5.1 percent
  - Course sections *increased* by 1.1 percent - 27 additional classes added
  - Waitlisted seats *increased* - number of seats not available - it does not fully demonstrate demand as lists are capped at 10 students per class or 10 percent of entire class size

- **Coastline Community College**
  - Fall semester *starts* August 30
  - Enrollment is projected to be roughly the *same*
  - Classes *decreased* – 250 classes were cut primarily in the area of non-credit emeritus
  - Waitlisted classes account for 30 percent of all credit sections - 168 classes are waitlisted with approximately 1,500 students on the lists

- **Contra Costa Community College District (Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College, Los Medanos College)**
  - Fall semester *starts* September 6
  - Enrollment is *down* by 7.6 percent
  - Course sections *decreased* by 7.7 percent
  - Waitlists are not formally kept in this district
- **Cypress College**
  - Fall semester **started** August 16 – late semester classes start August 30 and October 18
  - Enrollment is **DOWN** by 0.4 percent
  - Course sections **DECREASED** by 4.3 percent – 63 sections cut
  - 6,219 waitlisted seats - waitlists were not formally kept in 2009/10 academic year

- **El Camino College**
  - Fall semester **starts** August 28
  - Enrollment is **UP** by 0.5%
  - Course sections **DECREASED** by 10 percent
  - There are 13,659 waitlisted seats

- **Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District (Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College)**
  - Fall semester **started** August 23
  - Enrollment is **UP** by 5 percent district-wide
  - Course sections **DECREASED** by 6 percent district-wide – 158 classes cut
  - Waitlisted seats **INCREASED** by roughly 100 percent - 15,200 waitlisted seats

- **Los Rios Community College District (American River College, Cosumnes River College, Folsom Lake College, Sacramento City College)**
  - Fall semester **started** August 23
  - Enrollment is **DOWN** by roughly 3,000 students
  - Course sections **DECREASED** – 850 classes cut
  - 80,000 waitlisted seats in the district - waitlists for all classes are full.
  - Unmet demand is estimated at 12,000 to 13,000 students for the semester.

- **Pasadena City College**
  - Fall semester **starts** August 30
  - Credit enrollment is **UP** 3.3 percent
  - Credit classes **DECREASED** by 0.7 percent
  - Waitlisted seats **INCREASED** by 23.2 percent - 5,154 waitlisted seats

- **Rio Hondo College**
  - Fall semester **started** August 23
  - Enrollment is **UP** by 18 percent - units enrolled is also **UP** by 3 percent
  - Classes offered is the **SAME**
  - 2,500 waitlisted seats – *this does not necessarily fully demonstrate demand as waitlists are capped at 20 students.*
- **San Bernardino Valley College**
  - Fall semester *started* August 16
  - Enrollment is **UP** by 16 percent
  - Course sections **DECREASED** by 10 percent
  - Waitlists are not formally kept - Faculty members in English, math and science reported turning away an equal or greater number of students waiting to add than are already seated and registered in the class (i.e. 35 students in the class and 35+ looking to add).

- **San Diego Community College District (San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College)**
  - Fall semester *started* August 23
  - Enrollment is **UP** by 6 percent at City, nearly 10 percent at Mesa, more than 2 percent at Miramar.
  - There are 7,700 waitlisted seats at City, more than 8,600 at Mesa, more than 4,800 at Miramar.
  - 64 percent of the classes at City and more than 67 percent of the classes at Mesa and Miramar are waitlisted.

- **San Mateo Community College District (Canada College, College of San Mateo, Skyline College)**
  - Fall semester *started* August 18
  - Enrollment is **DOWN** by 2.4 percent at Canada, 4.8 percent at College of San Mateo, more than 2.5 percent at Skyline.
  - There are 17,947 waitlisted seats in the district

- **Santa Monica College**
  - Fall semester *starts* August 30
  - Enrollment is **DOWN** by 0.68 percent
  - Course sections **REDUCED** by roughly 3 percent
  - Waitlists are not formally kept - officials projecting 45 additional students waiting to get in to each class already closed – they will have more than two times the number of students for each class.

- **Santiago Canyon College**
  - Fall semester *started* August 23
  - Enrollment is **DOWN** by 2 percent
  - Course sections **REDUCED** by 6.1 percent
  - There are roughly 1,900 waitlisted seats
Victor Valley College
- Fall semester starts August 30
- Enrollment is UP by 22 percent
- Course sections are DOWN by 2 percent
- Waitlists are not formally kept

2010/11 Budget Breakdown:
- The Governor’s May state budget revision and the Senate budget plan both proposed 2.2 percent enrollment growth funding ($126 million) for the California Community Colleges. The Assembly budget proposal includes $128 million for enrollment growth as well as $100 million for job training to get Californians back to work.
- California community colleges are currently educating significantly more students than the state is funding. The system sustained $520 million in cuts, or approximately 8 percent of its overall budget in 2009-10. This translates to more than 200,000 unfunded students attending a community college campus.
- The $126 million proposed growth augmentation would fund approximately 60,000 of the 200,000 currently unfunded students (headcount) and will help the colleges respond to the tremendous enrollment demand they are experiencing.

Enrollment Demand:

![Community College Enrollment Demand](image)