



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

November 13, 2017

Contact: Paul Feist
Office: 916.327.5353
E-mail: pfeist@cccco.edu

California Community Colleges Present Three Options for Fully Online College *Strategy to reach “stranded workers” responds to Gov. Brown’s Request*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Community Colleges, responding to Gov. Jerry Brown’s request for the development of options for a fully on-line college, today unveiled three approaches aimed at reaching adults who need additional skills to succeed in the economy but whose personal or work circumstances prevent them from attending brick and mortar colleges.

All three options, presented to the Board of Governors, are designed to assist older adults and so-called “stranded workers,” who need sub-associate degree credentials or short bursts of additional training to move ahead in today’s economy.

Dubbed Flex Learning Options for Workers, or FLOW, the project strongly aligns with the California community colleges system’s [Vision for Success](#) goal of better serving older adults who need non-traditional approaches to improve their skillsets. The options developed do not compete for students already being served by community colleges, and all options build on the work of the system’s existing Online Education Initiative. The proposals, along with the input from people who spoke in favor and in opposition to the approaches, will be provided to the governor for consideration.

“The Californians we seek to reach cannot stop working to get the education they need to get ahead, and many of them juggle multiple jobs to feed their families,” said state Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley. “As much as we would like to, we cannot will them onto our campuses. We need to rethink traditional delivery models and pedagogies and meet this population where and when they are ready to gain skills and credentials.”

Oakley and the working group tasked with responding to Brown’s request in May identified the target population as the 2.5 million Californians who have had some college but no degree or certificate as a core group. Language can be a barrier for this group, as 48 percent from Spanish-speaking households.

“With shifting student needs, the FLOW initiative provides community colleges with a direct way to deliver services to a critical population of students that have been unable to benefit from higher education,” said Cerritos College President Dr. Jose Fierro, who served as co-chair of the group that developed the three options. “We are hopeful that the proposed online models will finally give more Californians another pathway to education.”

All options would use a flexible schedule rather than a traditional one, and students would access content through a subscription model, taking as many, or few, courses as they like. Support would be technology enabled with human contact. Online education would be coupled with hands on or work-based training in many cases.

-more-

“The approaches envisioned in FLOW leverage the high quality educational and student support services offered by the California Community Colleges and have the potential to create powerful collaborations with industry partners to help address the problem of economic stratification in our state,” said James P. Mayer, president and CEO of California Forward, a bipartisan public interest effort to bolster democracy and improve the performance of government in California.

Under the approaches presented to the Board of Governors today:

Option No. 1 would use an existing campus to create a statewide delivery system with campus faculty and campus instructional designers creating content. College employer partnerships would be used and new ones developed statewide.

Option No. 2 would use an existing community college district to host a consortium of colleges that opt-in to collaborate on FLOW, with faculty coming from the participating colleges. The host district would employ or contract with instructional designers as well as develop employer relationships.

Under option No. 3, a new community college district would be formed and operate under the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, which would hire leadership for the competency-based program. Selected faculty would work with the new district’s instructional designers, and customize student services.

After the comment period ends, a full report containing all of the options will be presented to Gov. Brown for consideration and additional direction. To read a full description of the options or to make a comment by the Nov. 22 deadline, please visit the [FLOW website](http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/ForCollegeLeadership/FlexLearningOptionsforWorkers.aspx) (doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/ForCollegeLeadership/FlexLearningOptionsforWorkers.aspx).

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 114 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year universities. 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 <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.

###