

REVITALIZE AND RE-ENVISION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Policy Statement:

The community college system will develop and support focused professional development for all faculty and staff.

Need for Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is a fundamental component of supporting systemic change that will improve student success. Without a sustained and focused approach to professional development, individual institutions, let alone an entire educational system, cannot expect to change attitudes, help faculty and staff rethink how their colleges approach the issue of student success, and implement a continuous assessment process that brings about iterative improvement. This type of change will not happen overnight. The end result envisioned by the Task Force will need to emerge through years of recommitment.

History of Professional Development

Support for professional development in the California Community Colleges has been mixed. While recognition was given to the important role of professional development in the landmark community college reform by the California Community College Board in 1975, the 1990s and 2000s have seen a decline in support for professional development. The landmark community college reform by the California Community College Board in 1975, the 1990s and 2000s have seen a decline in support for professional development.

Recommendation 6.1

Community colleges will create a continuum of strategic professional development opportunities, for all faculty, staff, and administrators to be better prepared to respond to the evolving student needs and measures of student success.

To accomplish major changes in the California Community Colleges, professional development must be at the center of the discussion. In many cases, the changes necessary to increase student success and completion require building new skills or honing existing skills. Faculty, staff, and administrators need consistent, thoughtful, and productive professional development activities that are linked to a state agenda for student success.

The Board of Governors and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office should embrace a statewide, highly visible leadership role related to professional development. As California prepares to address key issues, whether they are instructional, fiscal, safety, or intersegmental, professional development of community college personnel is key. Given the level of responsibility granted to the Academic Senate on instructional matters, the Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office should work with the Academic Senate to identify and put forth best practices related to the use of professional development for faculty.

Requirements for Implementation

- s The Chancellor's Office, in partnership with the Academic Senate on issues related to faculty, will identify best practices related to the use of professional development and encouraging colleges to link locally-mandated professional development activities to a set of statewide objectives and then measure movement towards those objectives.
- s Authorize the Chancellor's Office and/or the Board of Governors to recommend specific professional development purposes for flex days.
- s Ensure that professional development is equitably focused on part-time faculty.
- s The Chancellor's Office should explore the use of myriad approaches to providing professional development, including regional collaboration and expanding of the use of technology.

Recommendation 6.2

Community Colleges will direct professional development resources for both faculty and staff toward improving basic skills instruction and support services.

In addition to the flexible calendar program for the community colleges, there are allocations directed by the Legislature specifically toward basic skills professional development. These allocations should not only continue but be expanded to provide continuous and thorough support for faculty and staff in the issues related to basic skills instruction and student support services. The pedagogical approaches to be included should respond not only to discipline issues but also within the context of economic and cultural differences of students.

In addition to the specific professional development funds available through the annual Budget Act, California should continue to direct and coordinate special programs in vocational education, economic development, science, mathematics, categorical areas, and others in order to integrate basic skills improvement throughout the entire community college system.

Requirements for Implementation

- s The Chancellor's Office will organize the Basic Skills Professional Development funds to align with the recommendations of the Task Force.
- s The Chancellor's Office will include the improvement of basic skills instruction within the various funding sources available for professional development, including vocational education, economic development, and appropriate categorical programs.
- s Part-time faculty should be equitably supported by college professional development activities related to basic skills improvement.