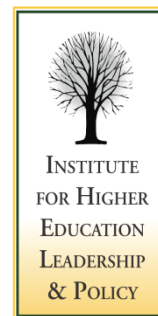




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Testimony to the Joint Legislative Hearing on the Recommendations of the
California Community College Chancellor's Task Force on Student Success
February 1, 2012

As a researcher on community college student success, I strongly support the recommendations of the Student Success Task Force.

They reflect the consensus of researchers and practitioners that community colleges must provide more structure, support, and encouragement for students to succeed. Some key recommendations that reflect the research are to:

- require students to participate in assessment and orientation, and to develop an educational plan
- encourage students to declare a program of study early in their educational careers
- ensure that colleges offer the courses that students need.

You have heard, and will continue to hear, several arguments against the plan. Let me address three of them.

First - that the system is turning its back on vulnerable populations.

To the contrary - the research behind the recommendations is about helping precisely those vulnerable populations whose success is critical to the future of the country - nowhere more than in California.

Second - that if you provided more funding, the system would not have to set these priorities.

To the contrary - these changes are needed under any fiscal circumstances. This is not about being forced by budget cuts to do a lot of bad things. It is about using public funds - at whatever level - in smart, effective ways to serve the needs of today's students. It makes no sense for students to go through college without a plan or for colleges to deliver ineffective remedial instruction - regardless of funding level.

Finally - that the system is forcing a one-size-fits-all view of success by putting a priority on college credentials instead of encouraging enrollment for enrollment's sake.

To the contrary - the system is responding, sensibly and responsibly, to the urgent need for more Californians to hold college credentials of value. The certificates and degrees earned in the California Community Colleges are good for students and are vital for California and I commend the Board of Governors for setting this priority.