Fact Sheet

Community Colleges Professional Development Legislation

February 2014

Issue: In 2011 the California Community College System began a historic process to improve student outcomes through the Student Success Task Force (SSTF). The work of the task force resulted in specific recommendations to identify key strategies to invest in student success. Included in these strategies were recommendations to revitalize and re-envision professional development opportunities for community college faculty and staff so that a more dynamic and effective campus environment will be created for students.

In response to the SSTF recommendations regarding professional development, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office established a 30 member system-wide committee to develop ideas and strategies to re-energize professional development in the community college system. Their conclusions, “The Report on the California Community Colleges Student Success Initiative Professional Development Committee Recommendations” was released in September of 2013 and provided recommendations to improve professional development.

Problem: Past support for professional development has been mixed. The Community College Faculty and Staff Development Fund was created in 1988 but budget shortfalls shifted money away from the fund after the year 2002. Consequently, few resources for professional development opportunities have existed in recent years. In addition, what little support there has been for professional development on campuses has been focused primarily on faculty and not all campus employees, such as classified and administrative staff, who also strive to ensure a positive environment for students.

Policy Solution: The CCCCO proposes to introduce legislation to update current statute regarding professional development and make it more inclusive of all community college employees.

The purpose of this legislation would be to:

1) Change the name of the existing fund from the Community College Faculty and Staff Development Fund to the Community College Professional Development Program to reflect the focus of the program on professional development.

2) Clarify that all employees – classified staff and administrators as well as faculty – be included in the Community College Professional Development Program.

3) Update current statute to provide that funding would be made available to districts which provide professional development opportunities to both faculty and staff if new state funding is made available.
**Arguments in support:** Legislation which solidifies in statute the importance of professional development will ensure that professional development activities will be made a priority. Improved professional development for all community college employees will help to create a more effective environment for students which will contribute to their success.

**Previous related legislation:** SB 1456 (Lowenthal) – Student Success Act of 2012 (Chaptered). SB 1456 refocused the Matriculation Act of 1986 to provide critical student support services to students on the front end of their educational experience to enhance their prospects for success. This bill was the cornerstone piece of legislation for the Student Success Task Force and included many of its major legislative recommendations.

**Possible Supporters:** The CA Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (sponsor), numerous community college districts.