

From: Scott Lay [mailto:scottlay@cleague.org]
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2009 7:02 AM
To: Kathleen Hodge
Subject: Glimpse of hope from Washington?



June 18, 2009

Dear Kathleen,

Most of the news from Sacramento has been downright depressing. While there are a few things to celebrate in the Budget Committee's action this week (rejecting Cal Grants, providing community colleges with federal funds, and minimizing cuts to poor and disabled students), the fact is that we're cutting enrollment by 172,000 students (6%--through the elimination of growth and apportionment funds) at a time of four converging enrollment demands: record high school graduations, newly unemployed, four-year redirects and returning veterans. Further, the Legislature cut fees when per capita personal income was increasing 7%, and is now raising them 30% when personal income is dropping for the first time since the Depression.

Legislative leaders said yesterday that a budget deal will be approved next week, although there is a fight over \$1.9 billion in new oil and tobacco tax revenues supported by the Democrats but opposed by the governor and Republican leaders. If you want to read more about yesterday's developments, this [L.A. Times story](#) provides a good recap.

While Sacramento continues to be mired in the budgetary morass, yesterday gave us a glimmer of hope for community colleges.

Last night, I attended a reception at De Anza College to wish Dr. Martha Kanter well as she heads to Washington, D.C. to serve as President Obama's Undersecretary of Education (pending confirmation). I have worked with Martha on many issues, as she has rolled up her sleeves for equalization of funding among community college districts, textbook affordability for students and our efforts for a long-term funding and fee policy for community colleges.



And, we couldn't be saying a temporary farewell to Martha at a better time.



Yesterday, White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel spoke to the Democratic Leadership Council about education reform and the need to overhaul our nation's job training and retraining system, and said that the focus will be on community colleges.

In his remarks, Emanuel describes shifting the focus of federal higher education policy to community colleges, something that the President did when he

selected Martha Kanter, the first community college leader to serve, as Undersecretary. This will be a historic time for community colleges, and we are going to play a direct role in it.

From the [Chicago Tribune](#):

"In the next couple of weeks, you will see a major announcement by the president on community colleges and job training and the rewriting of all the legislation related to job training and community ed. in the country - but, most importantly, in the area of community colleges," Emanuel told the DLC.

The administration will be proposing a redirecting of funding - "going from subsidies in higher education to a direct lending of the federal government," Emanuel said. "There are more resources now."

The goal is to get five million more workers through the community college system than might otherwise be the case in the next 10 years.

"What's been forgotten is how important our community college system is" to the economy," Emanuel said today. "As a competitive advantage for the United States, the community college system is essential," he said, and the administration is intent on boosting funding for growth of the system.

Half of all high school graduates continue schooling in the community colleges, he says, but they haven't gotten the funding they deserve.

"We all do what we're supposed to do at the public universities and the state universities, etc. This has not gotten attention," Emanuel said of the plan for boosting community college funding. "The community college system will be getting major resources to compete."

"This will be the next stage in going forward" with economic development and recovery from the recession, he said. Healthcare reform also will help, as will a new energy policy, Emanuel told the DLC. "Third, is that our education system is producing the kind of workers and students that we need for a system to compete."

You can see a [video of the session](#).

I have enjoyed your great feedback on what we can do in California for a more efficient and effective community college system. Now I'll ask, [what would you like to see the federal government do?](#)

The League will be very engaged in the federal effort, as will the national council of state community college associations, which I chair. I look forward to bringing your ideas to your colleagues from across the country as we find ways for Washington to work better for California's community colleges.

Thank you,



Scott Lay

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