AFFORDABILITY, FOOD & HOUSING ACCESS TASKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

NEED

Across California concerns about college costs and affordability are widespread. Most research identifies community college students as a population particularly Impacted by unaffordable college costs. Unfortunately, 7 in 10 students have experienced food insecurity or housing insecurity or homelessness in the previous year. Therefore, college leaders came together to collaborate around best practices, to remove policy barriers, and to establish effective partnerships.

BACKGROUND

The CEOCCC Affordability, Food & Housing Access Taskforcehas met with college and community stakeholders, and is now recommending actions based on data-informed, research driven, promising practices, as cited from the following reports:

- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Basic Needs Survey Report;
- Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice;
- College Ready, Hungry, and Homeless Report
- Struggling to Survive – Striving to Succeed: Food and Housing Insecurities in the Community College;
- United States Government Accountability Office: Food Insecurity - Better Information Could Help Eligible College Students Access Federal Food Assistance Benefits Report;
- California Community Colleges #RealCollege Survey;
- Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL)/ CEOCCC Affordability, Food & Housing Access TaskforceCommunity College Food and Housing Inventory.
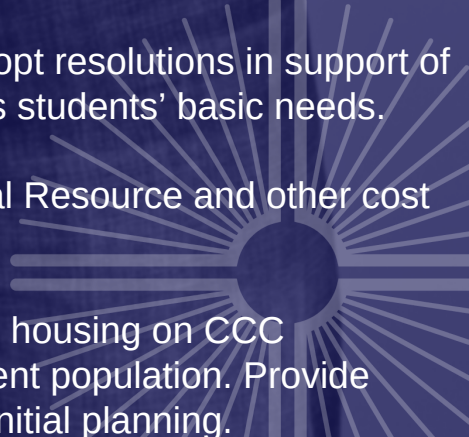
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expand state financial aid to address the inequities California Community College (CCC) students face in accessing resources and aid to cover the total cost of attending college.

2. Expand and increase funding for Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program to allow for support of hunger-free campuses, mental health services, and basic needs professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, and emergency financial grants to students.

3.   Provide new staffing resources for the Chancellor's Office to support colleges in addressing students' basic needs. This funding would facilitate statewide partnerships and collaboration with external agencies; promote increased awareness, professional development, and integration of statewide services for CCC students' basic needs.

4.   Establish a "Basic Needs Single Point of Contact" on each California community college campus. The point of contact will be tasked with linking students to campus financial and other basic needs resources and community services. We recommend that the point-of-contact positions be funded through the California Community Colleges Chancellors Office via the currently-restricted Student Equity and Achievement allocations. Colleges will have the ability to decide where to operationalize this position on their campuses.

5.   Create a space or single hub on CCC campuses for county and community-based organizations to provide their services to students. Establish and/or strengthen formal partnerships with federal, state, and county entities that provide resources for basic needs.

6.   Establish a seamless system to connect students to services they are eligible to receive without having to complete multiple applications. For example, the California College Promise grant could be revised to not only determine eligibility for that program but also identify the basic needs resources that are available on campus, and in local, regional and federal programs.

7.   Establish a committee or team of campus experts to examine and reorganize existing CCC structures to better serve students' basic needs, and to ensure diverse representation from students, faculty, and administrative leaders.

8.   Recommend CCC districts Boards of Trustees adopt resolutions in support of programs and activities at their campuses that address students' basic needs.

9.   Continue to support and expand Open Educational Resource and other cost reduction efforts at CCC to reduce textbook costs.

10. Commit new resources to build student residential housing on CCC campuses to address the needs of the homeless-student population. Provide substantial one-time funding for colleges to begin the initial planning.

11.   Establish baseline ongoing funding for deferred maintenance, and allow CCC to utilize scheduled maintenance funding to support ongoing maintenance costs for student residential housing.

12.   Create a permanent allocation of dollars for hunger-free campuses. Create a data gathering process to measure impact. Tie resources to a campus-wide resource system so that students gain access to all resources and community referrals.

13.   Increase allocations to the Student Equity and Achievement program to support additional direct services, e.g., hiring Master of Social Work or Bachelor of Social Work interns or contracting serving with local agencies, to help student's access resources on campus and in community.

14.   Create a system to identify students who qualify for free and reduced lunch in the K-12 system, create a new statewide program to offer students who qualified under the National Free and Reduced Lunch program similar services at CCC.

15.   Create a community college system-wide EBT/Restaurant Meal Program (CSU was able to sign-on to the Restaurant Meals Program MOU as a whole system) and increase coordination with counties on Cal Fresh.