



Talking Points

*Focus on Results:
Accountability Reporting for the Community
Colleges (ARCC)*

The Report:

- The ARCC report sets a new standard for accountability and results for California's community colleges.
- Growing educational demands and increased emphasis on career technical education in our state require system accountability and a focus on results. The ARCC report is an important step forward.
- The report was created using a panel of national experts in concert with an elite team of researchers from the state's community colleges to design the system of performance measurement. Advisory groups representing college administrators and faculty, as well as state agencies (i.e., the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office) also participated in preparation of the report.

Report Findings:

Overall, the news released in the ARCC report is good:

- Community college students who earned a vocational degree or certificate saw their wages jump from \$25,600 (for the last year before receipt of the award) to \$47,571 three years after earning their degree, an increase of 86%.
- A large number of Californians access and use the CCC system; participation rates are high, with 66 out of every 1,000 people in the state enrolled in a CCC in 2005-2006.
- The system enrolls more than one-third of all 18-19 year olds in California, with participation rates of 352.5 per 1,000 for 2005-2006.
- In 2005-2006, the system transferred more than 94,000 students. The California State University (CSU) system continues as the most frequent transfer destination for community college students with the enrollment of 52,642 students from the community colleges. More than 13,000 community college students enrolled in the University of California (UC) system, the state's most selective public higher education system. This figure continues a three-year trend of increasing transfers to the UC system.
- Transfers to in-state-private institutions and all out-of-state institutions account for 15,466 and 12,848 transfers in 2005-2006, respectively.

- In 2005-2006, the system contributed to the state's critical health care labor force, as more than 7,000 students earned degrees or certificates in nursing.
- The system's contribution in 2005-2006 to the state's workforce included more than 63,000 associate degrees and certificates in vocational/occupational areas.

Indicators for Individual Campuses:

- The ARCC study focuses on overall system accomplishments and accountability.
- There is no ranking of campuses in the report, nor was that the intention of the research.
- Peer groups were used in the study to determine specific needs and accomplishments of colleges with similar environmental circumstances.
- Peer groups compare what works well and what doesn't in schools with similar student populations, demographics and economic factors. In turn, this information will work to increase effectiveness and accountability of the overall community colleges system.
- Comparing campuses of dissimilar circumstances (as a system wide ranking would) does not provide useful information or meaningful triggers for local research and policy changes.
- Peer groupings in the ARCC report used data-based and research-based approaches for identifying colleges with similar environments.

Background on Community Colleges:

- Currently more than 70% of all California students pursuing higher education attend community college.
- California community colleges play a critical role in our state's economic success. The community colleges system is the largest provider of higher education and workforce training in the nation.
- California community colleges have the lowest fees in the nation with open access to all.

What the future holds:

- By 2013, California will have an additional 600,000 students enrolling in higher education and 80% are projected to enroll in California community colleges.
- Many future community college students will be first generation college students, low-income students, and students of diverse ethnicities.
- To address these challenges, the Board of Governors adopted a system strategic plan in January 2006. This plan, now being implemented by the Chancellor's System Office, focuses on promoting college awareness and access, supporting student success and readiness, strengthening partnerships for workforce and economic development, improving overall system effectiveness and enhancing resource development.
- California's community colleges are committed to meeting the educational needs of our larger, more diverse population but resources are needed to meet the changing needs of our state.

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