TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Business Officers
Chief Information Systems Officers

FROM: Valerie Lundy-Wagner, PhD, Vice Chancellor
Digital Innovation and Infrastructure

RE: Important Update: Pilot Integration of Identity Proofing into CCCApply

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The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office) remains committed to enhancing the efficiency and security of the systemwide application. The process to integrate identity (ID) proofing (or verification) into the systemwide application is underway. The purpose of this memo is to briefly review the need for ID verification, how it works, anticipated benefits, and highlight anticipated impacts of implementation as well as the revised timeline.

Evolving Fraud Mitigation with ID Verification

Since 2020, the Chancellor's Office, in partnership with the California Community Colleges Technology Center (CCCTC), has implemented multiple measures to significantly reduce system-level fraud. Bad actors continue to evolve in ways that require significant system and local attention, which diverts attention and resources from students seeking higher education and training. To reinforce the trustworthiness of our system and further protect students' personally identifiable information (PII), the CCCTC is implementing a process of ID verification during the application process.

Currently, students begin the application and ID verification occurs at various touchpoints including, but not limited to whether an application is suspected of fraud by CCCTC-managed processes, during local admission policies, upon faculty review of classroom engagement, and/or once an applicant requests financial aid after enrollment. With ID proofing, student ID will be

verified systematically as applicants begin the admission process. This constrains the opportunity for fraud by ensuring that **as students begin the application**, their identity is verified.

How it Works

The ID verification process, which is limited to the systemwide admission process, will take place after students create their OpenCCC credentials and before submitting a full application. Starting in February 2024, all students will have the option to instantly verify their identity online and use multiple identification methods including mobile apps, video selfies and uploaded documents. For new users, verification is typically completed within a few minutes.

Importantly, applicants can choose to bypass ID proofing for any variety of reasons and proceed with the existing application processes for submission and verification.

Integrating this upfront, ID proofing will systematically verify most applicants when they first engage with the admissions process. This limits opportunities for bad actors while still providing a streamlined experience for legitimate students.

Advantages for Students

The streamlined ID verification offers multiple benefits for students:

- Increased security of PII against potential identity theft
- Faster, more efficient admission application processing
- Reduced risk of fraud blocking access to classes and other support

A comprehensive accessibility review is underway. Findings will be incorporated into user experience testing and design as the pilot implementation progresses.

Benefits to Colleges

Integrating ID verification will significantly reduce the manual workload for colleges in identifying potential fraud, allowing staff and faculty to prioritize serving students, particularly those most vulnerable or in need of support. For students, this added layer of verification amplifies the safety

net against potentially fraudulent activities. It's not just about security – it's about building and reinforcing trust in the California Community Colleges' admissions process.

How Will This Impact Colleges

The Chancellor's Office understands that adding ID verification in CCCApply will have operational impacts for colleges. Here is a brief overview of what to expect:

- The Chancellor's Office technical teams will implement the ID verification process in CCCApply with minimal, if any college IT or development work needed. Colleges will receive guidance on accessing the verification results as a new data attribute in existing reporting systems. Further education will explain the process and where to view verification outcomes and metrics through current college systems and data exchanges with the CCCTC.

- Admissions and enrollment staff should familiarize themselves with the new verified identity status that will be visible on applications. Brief training materials will be provided.

- Colleges should expect a reduction in fraudulent admission applications that need manual review and follow-up. This will allow staff and faculty to focus on other priorities.

- Marketing and communications teams may want to inform prospective students of the new ID verification step. In the coming weeks, sample language and posts will be shared via email for your use.

Though applicants can opt out of this *automated* ID verification step, significantly fewer applications should reach college staff for manual admission-related verification and faculty for enrollment-related verification. Those applications that do require local review should be the highest priority - either because the applicant could not electronically verify their identity, or because the application is suspected of potential fraud.

Extensive Testing and Proven Results

To date, the Chancellor's Office team has conducted thorough testing of the ID proofing or verification system with applicant samples across diverse demographic groups. Test outcomes

have demonstrated that integrating ID proofing could significantly strengthen fraud prevention capabilities for the application process, while maintaining a positive experience for legitimate students.

As we implement this enhancement, the Chancellor's Office and CCCTC welcome your input and participation. This collaborative effort will greatly benefit our students while upholding the integrity of our application process.

For more information or questions about the ID proofing pilot, please reach out to the Digital Innovation and Infrastructure Division, edtechinquiries@cccco.edu. For technical details, review the release notes. Or reach out to the CCCTC team, staffsupportccctc@openccc.zendesk.com.

Lessons learned from this pilot will inform future security integrations as the system collectively works to reimagine a new systemwide application, a collaborative systemwide project currently underway.

Thank you for your patience, partnership, and unwavering dedication to our system and students.

cc: Sonya Christian, Chancellor
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