

REPRINT-- CONGRESS RECONVENES SEPTEMBER 13th and 14th and Federal Relations will be there to gather in-person updates. Look for our September/October edition.



August 19, 2010

Federal Relations Update

It's August in D.C. and setting aside the House's one day return from summer recess to vote on Medicaid and education jobs funding, Congress is out of session until the middle of September. While there is little new news to report, there is excitement to be had. This month's update begins with the exciting news about progress on the Chancellor's Office initiative **VetsConnect**, and briefly summarizes a few issues likely to be most relevant for the remainder of the year.

***VetsConnect* Pilot Funding Within Sight**

Funding to pilot the Chancellor's Office systemwide initiative to enhance student services for the increasing number of student veterans at California community colleges is now clearly in sight. On July 29, 2010 the Senate Appropriations Committee reported out its list of approved FY2011 Congressionally Directed Spending Requests. Senator Dianne Feinstein's request for \$500,000 to fund the pilot of **VetsConnect** was approved when the full Senate Appropriations Committee voted to approve the subcommittee report from the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Committee, one of several spending request reports addressed that day.

Next steps in appropriations process

The next step for the Senate FY2011 bills will not likely come until December. At that time the conference actions between the Senate and House will take place. Barring major cuts brought on by extraordinary political feuding, the earmarks should be sustained. If such feuding does occur, much more than our earmark will be at stake.

Once Congress approves a conference bill that identifies our earmark, we will work with the State Department of Finance and the California Legislature to obtain the budget authority to draw down the funds.

What will the pilot do and who will be involved?

The requested funds will be used to support the systemwide student veterans services initiative administered and guided by the Chancellor's Office which will 1) **expand** existing exemplary Veterans' Resource Centers, 2) **pilot** best practice models on selected community college campuses with the goal of eventually establishing comprehensive Veterans' Resource Centers on each of the 112 California College Campuses, and 3) **construct** a statewide data base to identify student veterans, evaluate their academic progress and support their success.

The following four campuses/districts have well-established and comprehensive programs or program components that, with minimal further investment, will be able serve as models for community colleges statewide.

- Sierra College
- Butte College
- Los Angeles Community College District
- San Diego Community College District

The remainder of the funds for the pilot phase will be used to develop a statewide Student Veterans Information Infrastructure. This enhancement of the current information system will enable us to track veterans, measure their progress and success, evaluate the effectiveness of resource centers, and establish a training and information infrastructure that will allow counselors, faculty, military and private partners to share best practices for serving veterans.

In anticipation that these funds will come through, the Student Services Division and the Technology, Research and Information Systems Divisions will soon begin to coordinate plans for moving forward with the systemwide student veterans' initiative at the beginning of next year. Thank you to all campus and Chancellor's Office personnel who have helped this initiative along thus far.

Preparations for 2011 Federal Agenda

The Federal Relations Unit is beginning to plan its 2011 Federal Agenda and welcomes input from colleagues throughout the system. We anticipate that we will continue to seek Administration and Congressional support for student veterans' services. We also expect to advocate for initiatives supporting student success and completion, financial aid, and training and development capacity of California community colleges.

Colleagues are invited to submit your thoughts about issues you would like to see Federal Relations pursue next year by contacting Assistant Vice Chancellor Valerie Purnell at vpurnell@cccco.edu.

Back to College Night on Capitol Hill

The Federal Relations Unit is committed to increasing the visibility of California community colleges in Washington, D.C. As the largest educational system in the country, our long term goal is to influence education and fiscal policy in ways that acknowledge and favor the unique complexities of our system.

We are raising our profile in two ways: 1) through direct advocacy on issues such as the Chancellor's Office systemwide initiative supporting student veterans, and 2) by participating in activities specifically designed to highlight educational institutions and the issues impacting them. For example, on September 15, 2010, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Federal Relations, Valerie Purnell will participate in the California State Society's Back to College Night on Capitol Hill. This annual event brings congressional staff and a few members of Congress together with alumni and staff from public and private higher education institutions throughout California. The evening will be an opportunity to describe the merits of California community colleges in a relaxed atmosphere.

It would be wonderful to have your college represented on that evening. If you are willing to donate a pennant or other item for our tabling display, please send the item(s) no later than September 8, 2010 to:

Valerie Purnell
Assistant Vice Chancellor, Federal Relations
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
1102 Q Street, Fourth Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

White House Summit on Community Colleges

The Federal Relations Unit is expecting an official announcement of the White Summit on Community Colleges any day now. The Summit is expected in early October and California community colleges will be represented.

August End Notes

This month's End Notes includes an attachment and link to a visual review of the federal budget and appropriations process as provided by the Congressional Research Service. This flow chart should be used only as a guideline since, as is frequently the case, the political dynamics of relationships between the chambers of Congress, and between Congress and the Administration, have resulted in significant variations from published rules.

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/34649.pdf>

For those interested in deep detail regarding influences on the federal budget and the impact on education from the perspective of the New America Foundation, see the following issue brief.

<http://education.newamerica.net/archives/policydocs/1480>