



**YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE • MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

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## ***NEWS Release***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### COMMUNITY COLLEGES DOWN, BUT NOT OUT

MODESTO, CA – August 22, 2001 –As a result of the Governor's inequitable budget cuts to the California community college system, the Yosemite Community College District (YCCD), which includes Modesto Junior College and Columbia College, could lose over \$1.4 million in project funding. However, the uproar from the cuts has prompted a bi-partisan effort in the state legislature to restore \$98 million in funds for necessary scheduled maintenance and instructional equipment.

On July 26, the Governor vetoed \$126 million from the state budget related to community colleges. Of that amount, the \$98 million slated for scheduled maintenance and instructional equipment was unexpectedly cut. Columbia College and Modesto Junior College were scheduled to receive 50% of the costs of over \$1.4 million of scheduled maintenance projects. These projects include energy efficiency, and health and safety improvements such as HVAC replacement, energy related roof repairs, and other electrical systems projects. In addition, \$668,911 was earmarked for instructional equipment at both colleges. This includes items such as computers, library materials,

and equipment for a wide variety of vocational programs. The cuts were unexpected because the funds have been part of the colleges' base funding for almost 20 years.

On August 22, new legislation (SB 284) was introduced by Senator Jack Scott (D-Pasadena) to restore \$98 million to the community college system budget, from the Governor's veto pen. Senator Scott's bill is co-authored by Assembly Member Robert Pacheco (R-City of Industry), who earlier in the week authored the Assembly community college restoration bill, AB 1159.

Community colleges still have to share in the cuts of the state government. The \$126 million in cuts that the community college system suffered, however, was excessive. Community colleges receive 3.02% of the overall state budget (\$3.117 billion), yet the community colleges share of the Governor's cuts was 23% of \$554 million cut. Some community colleges wonder if the \$98 million cut in scheduled maintenance and instructional equipment was an oversight. Regardless of whether it was an oversight or not, community colleges throughout California have banded together on the issue of restoration of funds with broad, bi-partisan support of the state legislature. Community colleges and students would not be the only ones affected by the cuts in scheduled maintenance and instructional equipment. In addition, these projects are typically awarded to contractors with unionized labor, which creates a multiplier effect in the community in lost work, wages, and employment.

The Yosemite Community College District has discussed the severity of the budget cuts with valley legislators and senior level staffs of Senator Dick Monteith, Assemblyman

Dennis Cardoza, and Assembly Dave Cogdill. All have declared their strong support of the need to restore the \$98 million and plan to make it a public priority.

Community colleges are the most accessible institutions of higher education in the country, if not the world. California's community colleges serve over 2.5 million students. Yet California's community colleges are funded at about \$4,500 per student annually compared with the national average of about \$8,200. California lawmakers have come together on this issue because it makes sense. Learning is the essential product that the community college delivers. It defies logic to cut an on-going 20 year commitment to provide instructional equipment and maintain facilities which provides opportunity for so many, with the most efficient and accessible environment in which to learn.

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