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YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
COLUMBIA COLLEGE • MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

NEWS Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RECENT POLL: OVERWHELMING SUPPORT TO RESTORE \$98 MILLION TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES

MODESTO, CA – August 29, 2001 –According to a survey of 600 likely voters in California by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (FMM&A), 86% indicated that funding should be restored to community colleges as a result of the Governor's 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 for scheduled maintenance and instructional equipment if the funding is not restored.

As of August 29, at least four bills have been introduced by Democratic and Republican Senators and Assembly Members to restore the \$98 million to the community college system budget. Over 80 legislators have submitted requests to be co-authors of at least one of these four bills. The results of the FMM&A survey indicate that in addition to the state's legislators having broad, bi-partisan support for the restoration effort, so do the voters.

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Among the twenty-three general questions and numerous sub-questions posed to the voters was whether the state should restore the \$126 million in funding for the community colleges that was cut from the budget. An overwhelming 86% indicated that these cuts should be restored. Other key opinions derived from the survey include that 81% think community colleges need additional funding beyond the maintenance status quo, and 71% say they would be more likely to vote for their local legislator if the elected official voted to restore the cuts and fully fund the community colleges.

The restoration bills introduced by legislators single out only the \$98 million for scheduled maintenance projects for health and safety improvements such as leaky roofs, energy efficiency, and HVAC replacement; and funds earmarked for instructional equipment purchases. Because of the fiscal situation of the state, community colleges expected to share some portion of the budget cuts, but were surprised by the \$126 million cut. Community colleges receive 3.02% of the overall state budget, yet the community colleges share of the Governor's cuts was 23%.

It is apparent from the reaction of the state's 108 community colleges, the support of state legislators, and now the public support of voters, that the restoration effort makes sense. According to YCCD Chancellor Pamila Fisher, "we are encouraged by the degree of support that our community and state have for community colleges. We are cautiously optimistic that this support will result in a budget restoration." The survey was commissioned by the Community College League of California and presented to Governor Davis and his senior staff. (ATTACHMENT INCLUDED)

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