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YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
COLUMBIA COLLEGE • MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

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Governor's Budget – Brighter for Community Colleges

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MODESTO, CA – The Governor's fiscal year 2005-06 budget proposal treats community colleges much better than in the previous two years, but improvements could still be made. That is the message that Yosemite Community College District (YCCD) leaders heard over the weekend at the Community College League of California's annual Legislative Conference held in Sacramento.

YCCD trustees Linda Flores, Delsie Schrimp, Tom Hallinan, Abe Rojas, Anne DeMartini, Pat Dean, Interim YCCD Chancellor Jim Williams and Interim MJC President Bill Scroggins heard from representatives from the State Senate and Assembly, including John Laird, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee, Dick Ackerman, Senate Republican Leader, Kevin McCarthy, Assembly Republican Leader, and Phil Angelides, California State Treasurer. All of these speakers acknowledged the fine work that community colleges do across the state by providing opportunity for every segment of California's population in the largest higher education system in the world.

After listening to the various speakers, the YCCD entourage took to the Capitol to meet with legislators face to face and get a feel for the outlook on the Governor's FY05-06 budget. YCCD area Senators Jeff Denham, Chuck Poochigian and Dave Cox and Assembly members Dave Cogdill, Greg Aghazarian and Barbara Matthews and their staff met with the YCCD leaders to discuss the budget and unresolved issues.

The budget is a good start for YCCD and the community college system as a whole. Growth funding of 3%, a Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 3.93% and no tuition increase were the highlights of the plan. The no tuition increase is especially good for Modesto Junior College and Columbia College students. Since fall 2002 community college fees have increased 136% from

\$11/unit to the current \$26/unit, negatively affecting the enrollment headcount at both colleges by 9.3% for MJC and 7.1% for Columbia College.

An unresolved issue in this year's budget is "Equalization" funds for community colleges. Equalization is a term to describe the inequities in the community college system with regard to how colleges get revenue from the State. The State provides revenue to the 72 California community college districts based on dollars per Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES). The rate the State pays to each district varies, which has been an issue with some of the lower-funded districts. For example, Los Angeles CCD and Santa Monica CCD are neighboring districts, yet LACCD receives \$4,037 per FTES and Santa Monica \$3,708 per FTES, with basically the same population base. If Santa Monica received the same as LACCD for 10,000 FTES, that would translate into over \$3 million. Currently, YCCD ranks 30th in funding per FTES, Merced College District is 41st and San Joaquin Delta College District is 48th. If equalization funds were in the Governor's 2005-06 budget, it would mean an additional \$974,000 for YCCD, \$1.407 million for San Joaquin Delta, and \$630,000 for Merced.

All of the YCCD legislators expressed their support of Equalization funds for community colleges if additional monies are available. The Governor's May Revise will indicate whether or not additional monies can be used for equalization. According to YCCD legislators, the prospects are good that the State will see greater than expected revenues, but only time will tell to what extent.

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