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April 12, 2023

The Honorable Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5230
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 1142 Postsecondary education: Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education - INPUT

Dear Chair Fong,

While the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) has not taken a position on Assembly Bill 1142 at this time, we do have some feedback for your consideration.

For the California Community Colleges, Education Code §70902(b)(7) "ensures the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards." Following approval of curriculum, including certificates and degrees, by the college district governing board, all curriculum goes through established processes within the Chancellor's Office for review and chaptering.

The text proposed by AB 1142 for Education Code §66010.82(f)(1) (as of April 10, 2023) states, "The commission shall review and evaluate legislative proposals and proposals by the segments of public postsecondary education for new degrees, majors, and certificate programs." It is unclear in the entirety of AB 1142 and, more specifically, within this section, whether the proposed Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education will offer recommendations on selected certificate and degree proposals, to what degree recommendations will or must be followed, or will have the ability to approve or deny proposals.

We are concerned about the potential for the Commission to review and evaluate proposed new degree, majors, and certificate programs. This potentially interferes with a primary responsibility of academic senates. Further, the 116 California community colleges add hundreds of new certificate and degree programs annually to meet the needs of students, communities, and workforce through credit and noncredit opportunities. A majority are career education/workforce-related in an effort to be responsive to local workforce needs. If new degrees, majors, and programs must be reviewed by the commission in addition to regional consortium review (for CTE-related majors), local board approval, and Chancellor's Office review and chaptering, it could significantly delay the implementation of new programs. If the Commission will be making recommendations, we would like to see amendments that more clearly indicate in what cases review and evaluation will occur, what criteria will be used during evaluation, who recommendations are made to, and how binding recommendations will be.

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The composition of the Commission called for in AB 1142 §66010.81 is five members appointed by the Senate, Assembly, and Governor, and intentionally excludes anyone currently employed within public or private postsecondary education. Members are proposed to be appointed for inaugural four-year terms, with two additional six-year terms possible to a maximum of three consecutive terms totaling 16 total years.

While we recognize the role of an advisory board of postsecondary administrators, faculty, and students is proposed, we are very concerned about the composition of the Commission and the duration of service possible. Experienced practitioners will give the Commission the breadth and depth needed to help shape and decide policy that will benefit the higher education system of the state. The Commission potentially loses that insight and expertise by purposefully excluding those currently employed within public or private postsecondary education. The Commission would benefit the most with differing perspectives and range of experience represented and we suggest that the current terms and length of service be re-evaluated to ensure members provide the most up-to-date perspectives in higher education.

We thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,



Virginia "Ginni" May
President

Cc: Senator Josh Newman
Olgalilia Ramirez, Principal Consultant, Senate Committee on Education
Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy, Senior Consultant, California State Assembly