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**Op-Ed**

## Invest in Community Colleges by Trustee Jim Moreno, Board President

*Costa Mesa, Ca.* -- After a trip to Sacramento to hear from our legislators on the state of California's fiscal health, it is clear that Sacramento is broken. The proposed state budget for next year will impose more deep cuts and mandate an increase in fees for our students. We are facing a \$7.7 million mid-year cut to our colleges with an expectation from the State to reduce services and classes for our students in excess of a total \$15 million for the upcoming fiscal year.

Throughout higher education, our students are feeling the pain of these cuts. Our colleges have already cut classes and essential services, while the State of California imposes higher fees on our students. Our students will pay more while we will be forced to offer less. This is not acceptable. At Coast Colleges, we believe that investing in higher education is critical to the economic recovery of our communities and State.

As a Trustee you elected, I must consider the impact of each decision our board is forced to make and to implement policy changes that will impact the opportunities for your children and grandchildren. It's simple – California's budget is balanced on the backs of our students. Students and their families will pay more for fewer class offerings which will significantly delay their achievements toward their life plan. While we must abide by the laws implemented in Sacramento, I pledge that our colleges will continue to do everything in their power to provide as many classes and services as financially possible.

What can you do? You can let the public officials in Sacramento know that this is unacceptable. Now is the time to invest in the California Community College System, not the time to shut out thousands of students and disable our future workforce under the guise of "fixing" the State's fiscal health. It jeopardizes the future of our students, our community and our State. I want to hear from you and welcome your comments at [JMoreno@mail.cccd.edu](mailto:JMoreno@mail.cccd.edu).

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