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for California Community Colleges

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March 18, 2015

The Honorable Carol Liu
Chair, Senate Education Committee
Senate Education Committee
State Capitol Room 2083
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 42 (Liu) Postsecondary Education: California Commission on Higher Education Performance and Accountability. (A-12/02/2014)
Position: Watch with Concern
Hearing Set: March 25, 2014

Dear Senator Liu,

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is writing to express its concerns, but also its interest in collaborating on SB 42 (Liu), which would establish a new Commission on Higher Education Performance and Accountability.

The Academic Senate would welcome a replacement for the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), which performed a significant role in providing data and coordination for higher education in California. CPEC was an asset to the state and has been missed since it was defunded by the governor in 2011.

However, the language of SB 42 proposes to expand the functions of CPEC under the new Commission on Higher Education Performance and Accountability into matters that are cause for significant concern. SB 42 would authorize the Commission on Higher Education Performance and Accountability to take on responsibilities that can best be managed at local levels and indeed cannot be performed effectively at the state level. This bill appears to empower the new commission with a level of oversight that could be intrusive and detrimental to all of California higher education.

In addition, the proposed composition of the Commission on Higher Education Performance and Accountability is cause for grave concern. This commission would be comprised of no representation from the segments of California higher education and indeed explicitly excludes representation from the higher education segments. Instead, the commission would be comprised of individuals who are not connected to the segments they would oversee and who may lack understanding of the ways in which their decisions might impact our educational systems.

For these reasons, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is deeply concerned with SB 42 in its current form and would likely oppose the bill as written. However, because we recognize the potential benefits of a replacement for the California Postsecondary Education Commission, **we offer our assistance in revising the bill to create a commission that would more effectively serve California higher education and the citizens of the state.** Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

David Morse
President, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

cc: Members, Senate Education Committee