

California Performance Review Hearing
September 9, 2004 – Los Angeles
Education Training and Volunteerism

Comments of John Travis, President
California Faculty Association

CPR Commissioners:

My name is John Travis, and I am President of the California Faculty Association (CFA). CFA represents the interests of 23,000 faculty, counselors, coaches and librarians of the California State University system. In presenting CFA's concerns today, our response should not be viewed as a representation of CFA's sole concerns, but should be viewed as our initial contribution to an ongoing dialogue and assessment of CPR's recommendations.

_ Restructure the Role of the Secretary for Education [ETV 01] – OPPOSE

CFA supports retaining the Superintendent of Public Instruction as a constitutionally elected position. Consolidating the Superintendent's powers within the Governor's Office would eliminate an important policy and programmatic oversight of K-University schools and place too much exclusive authority within the executive branch.

_ Consolidate Selected State Higher Education Agencies [ETV 03] – OPPOSE

CFA is opposed to consolidation of the Community College Chancellor's Office under a newly created Higher Education Division under authority of the Governor's Secretary for Education and a newly created Deputy Secretary for Higher Education. As an integral arm of the state's public higher education system serving 2.9 million students, the community colleges should retain their authority and governance as currently structured. CFA believes the governor's authority to appoint members of the community college Board of Governors is sufficient to ensure adequate oversight and accountability.

CFA is also opposed to placing the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) and California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) under the governance of the Secretary of Education's office. Such a reorganization of these state agencies places an overly excessive amount of authority in the Governor's office.

Although CFA believes creating a higher education arm of the governor's office could provide increased attention to the needs of the California Community College, California State University and University of California systems, the existing governance structure of community colleges, as well as the other state agencies cited, should be retained to address the state's policy needs and the unique and diverse needs of students.

_ Reduce Non-Instructional Costs in K-12 Schools [ETV 06] – OPPOSE

CFA is opposed to the precedent that would be set by the repeal of SB 1419. This legislation, which became effective January 1, 2003, enacted numerous safeguards regarding the outsourcing of K-12 school services to ensure contracts are awarded to qualified individuals, student safety issues are addressed, and actual savings occur as a result of the contracted out service. The components contained in SB 1419 should be given sufficient time to demonstrate their effectiveness, and not be prematurely eliminated.

_ Make it Easier for Students to Transfer to a University [ETV 15] – SUPPORT

CFA supports the goal of developing a process to improve the transfer process of community college students to our state's universities. The CSU has enacted policies in recent years that have improved this process, and CFA welcomes changes that would further enhance CCC student transfers.

_ Reduce the Cost of Higher Education Textbooks [ETV 17] – SUPPORT

CFA supports efforts to reduce the increasing costs of college textbooks, and encourage faculty to consider textbook prices when making textbook selection decisions for textbooks with equal educational content. In addition to CPR's recommendations, CFA recommends that additional emphasis be placed on textbook publishers in the controlling of such costs.

_ Improve Higher Education Accountability [ETV 21] – AMEND

CFA supports broad outcome accountability measures that address educational opportunity, student participation, student success and public benefits (as listed in SB 1331, legislation supported by CFA and referred to by the Commission). However, we believe such accountability measures are limited in both their effectiveness and their scope. In addition to outcome measures, CFA believes any accountability measure must also include an accounting of expenditures. Jane Wellman, a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (and a contributor to the Commission's analysis), stated in hearings of the task force developing SB 1331 that "how subsidies are used is almost analogous to what goals are accomplished."

CFA believes "input" measures that report on an institution's expenditures are as important as "outcome" measures. For example, even if an institution achieves specified outcome standards,

without documenting how revenues are spent the state could not assess whether an institution could have further exceeded state goals. Conversely, if an institution fails to meet designated standards, only with the providing of expenditure data can the state determine if adequate resources are being spent to achieve specified state outcomes.

Without knowing how higher education institutions are spending state funds, reported outcome measures provide little insight into how the CCC, CSU and UC are instituting state priorities (e.g. class offerings, student services, counselors, libraries). Without input measures, the state is unable to assess what portion of state funds are being spent on administrative costs versus instructional costs and other student needs – expenditures with very different state priorities. Incorporating input measures would create an accountability process that is both balanced and complete, while providing state policymakers a complete profile of the priorities public higher education institutions are implementing.

_ Use Student Loan Fund Surplus to Finance Cal Grants [ETV 24] – SUPPORT

CFA supports the use of surplus funds from the Student Loan Operating Fund to finance state Cal Grant financial aid awards to students. Any savings accrued from these transfers should be used to pay for one-time costs at community college, CSU and UC campuses.

_ Remove Statutory Impediments to Volunteerism [ETV 28] – AMEND

CFA supports efforts to increase volunteerism if measures are taken to ensure that existing jobs and employees are not displaced, and labor protections and minimum salary, health and safety standards are not violated or circumvented.

_ Pilot Volunteer Leave Program for State Employees [ETV 32] – SUPPORT

CFA supports the notion of encouraging volunteer activities by state employees, and developing a two-year pilot program that would defer payment for time off to state employees who volunteer up to four hours per month in nonprofit agencies. Under the program, employees would “bank” these hours and be paid for them once they leave state service. Included in such a program should be employee protections to ensure that state employees who choose not to volunteer are not treated punitively by employers.

CFA will provide additional responses to other CPR recommendations after we have thoroughly analyzed the full report. If you have any questions regarding CFA’s positions on the Education, Training and Volunteerism recommendations, contact the CFA Governmental Relations Office and speak with Legislative Director David Hawkins at (916) 441-4848.