



THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

---

POSITION PAPER

# Noncredit Instruction: Opportunity and Challenge

ADOPTED SPRING 2009 | REVISED SPRING 2019

**2018 – 2019 NONCREDIT COMMITTEE**

Craig Rutan, Secretary, Chair

Wendy Brill-Wynkoop, College of the Canyons

Galín Dent, Clovis Community College

Tina McClurkin, North Orange Continuing Education

Sachiko Oates, Santa Barbara City College

LaTonya Parker, South Representative

Thais Winsome, Mission College

Jan Young, Glendale Community College

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary . . . . .	1
Introduction . . . . .	2
Understanding Noncredit . . . . .	5
Noncredit Philosophy, Pedagogical Differences . . . . .	5
Misconceptions About the Rigor and Structure of Noncredit Instruction . . . . .	6
Flexible Scheduling Options. . . . .	7
The Need for Noncredit Instruction in the California Community Colleges. . . . .	7
Changes in the Economy Due to Demographic Shifts and Technology . . . . .	7
Improved Educational Opportunities . . . . .	8
Statewide Changes in Noncredit Education. . . . .	11
Work by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. . . . .	11
Curriculum. . . . .	11
Other Academic and Professional Matters . . . . .	12
Student Services. . . . .	13
Statewide Initiatives . . . . .	14
Legislative Changes to Noncredit . . . . .	14
Adult Education Realignment. . . . .	14
Strong Workforce and Noncredit. . . . .	16
Assembly Bill 705 (2017) . . . . .	17
Guided Pathways . . . . .	18
Residency Requirements. . . . .	18
Challenges for Noncredit Programs . . . . .	19
Funding . . . . .	19
Recommendations . . . . .	20
Full-Time Faculty . . . . .	20
Recommendation . . . . .	22
Unique Workload Challenges. . . . .	22
Recommendations . . . . .	23
Effective Participation in Governance . . . . .	23
Recommendations . . . . .	23
Curriculum and Program Development . . . . .	24
Curriculum Requirements and Process . . . . .	24
CDCP vs Non-CDCP . . . . .	24
Mirroring of Credit and Noncredit Courses. . . . .	26
Noncredit as Prerequisites and Corequisites . . . . .	26
Course Repetition . . . . .	27
Competency-Based Education, Digital Badging, and Micro-Credentials . . . . .	28
Credit by Examination and Credit for Prior Learning . . . . .	28
Approval of Noncredit Curriculum . . . . .	29
Recommendations . . . . .	30
Noncredit Student Services, Assessment and Matriculation . . . . .	30
Recommendations . . . . .	31
Attendance Accounting . . . . .	31
Face-to-Face Courses . . . . .	31
Distance Education . . . . .	31
Recommendations . . . . .	32
Accreditation . . . . .	33
Recommendations . . . . .	33
Metrics and Accountability . . . . .	33
Recommendations . . . . .	34
Summary of Recommendations . . . . .	35
Recommendations to the Board of Governors. . . . .	35
Recommendations to Colleges . . . . .	36
Conclusion . . . . .	37
References . . . . .	38



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper provides information about noncredit instruction in the California Community Colleges and updates the 2009 paper *Noncredit Instruction: Opportunity and Challenge* to incorporate subsequent changes from the last decade. Since the passage of SB 361 (Scott, 2006), noncredit instruction has seen significant changes, including the equalization of funding for some areas of noncredit instruction, the passage of the Adult Education Block Grant that created adult education consortia including K-12 and community college adult education providers, and the passage of AB 705 (Irwin, 2017) that specifically encouraged colleges to use noncredit courses to support the needs of credit students. Despite noncredit's long history in the community colleges, a limited number of robust noncredit programs currently exist, and many colleges may be looking to or are beginning to offer noncredit courses for the first time. This paper is intended to provide information about noncredit instruction that will be useful to individuals with varying backgrounds and experience with noncredit and to provide recommendations that will help noncredit continue to serve the needs of diverse student populations.

Noncredit students pay no enrollment fees and normally receive no college credit. Noncredit courses are nevertheless funded entirely by state apportionment, with different rates of apportionment depending on the area of noncredit instruction. The landscape for noncredit instruction has evolved dramatically since the publication of the original version of this paper in 2009. In passing SB 361 (Scott, 2006), the California Legislature created a two-tier funding system that would eventually lead to certain areas of noncredit instruction being funded at the same rate as credit instruction. Additionally, noncredit programs are essential in the transformation of adult education that began with the passage of AB 86 (Assembly Committee on Budgets, 2013), have been an essential provider of vocational training, were specifically included in recommendations created by the Taskforce on Workforce and a Strong Economy in 2015, and were specifically mentioned in AB 705 (Irwin, 2017) to address the remediation needs of credit students.

The increasing interest in noncredit programs shown by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the California Legislature, and other professionals is not a coincidence. Several studies have focused on changing student demographics and the need to increase the number of skilled workers to meet the needs of the California economy. This paper will describe several legislative and policy developments to explain the link between noncredit history and current hopes for improved student success through enhanced funding, staffing, and academic integrity of noncredit programs.

The ASCCC has an established history of advocating for the continued development and expansion of noncredit programs to support the needs of students. To help facilitate that expansion and ensure the offering of high quality programs, the Academic Senate has advocated for equalized funding with credit (Resolution 9.02 Fall 2011), inclusion of noncredit faculty in the Faculty Obligation Number and the development of an equivalent to the 75/25 ratio goal for noncredit instruction (Resolution 7.01 Fall 2018 and Resolution 7.01 Fall 2014), equalization of statewide processes for credit and noncredit curriculum (Resolution 9.02 Fall 2018), more accurate noncredit outcomes and the design of metrics that accurately

represent the quality of noncredit programs (Resolution 14.02 Fall 2014, Resolution 13.01 Spring 2012, and Resolution 9.01 Fall 2009), and recognition that noncredit instruction meets the needs of a wide range of students (Resolution 7.03 Spring 2018, Resolution 17.01 Spring 2018, Resolution 9.07 Spring 2016 and Resolution 13.02 Fall 2011). Considerable progress has been made in some of these areas, but ongoing uncertainty remains about whether noncredit programs will be given the support necessary to allow them to flourish. Continued advocacy is vital to ensure that the progress that noncredit has experienced in the last ten years continues and that noncredit programs continue to evolve and serve the changing needs of students.

## INTRODUCTION

Noncredit instruction has provided a significant part of California community college curriculum for many years; in fact, the roots of noncredit instruction—1856 in San Francisco—predate the earliest community college—1907 in Fresno—and the opening of the first adult school (San Diego Continuing Education, 2017). The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has long been active in attempting to address issues regarding noncredit instruction through the adoption of resolutions, the publication of papers and *Rostrum* articles, the creation of the ASCCC Noncredit Committee, and the offering of institutes for noncredit practitioners. In 2006, the Academic Senate adopted the paper *The Role of Noncredit in the California Community Colleges*, which introduced readers to the world of noncredit instruction, surveyed the status of noncredit instruction statewide, and examined a range of issues related to noncredit instruction. Its approach was primarily descriptive and generally made the case for the value of noncredit programs.

Building on the attention garnered for noncredit instruction by the 2006 paper and growing interest in noncredit, the Academic Senate passed resolution 13.03 in Fall 2007:

Whereas, The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges wrote a descriptive and foundational paper in 2006 called *The Role of Noncredit in the California Community Colleges* that was used to provide basic information about noncredit courses and programs; and

Whereas, There is a need for a follow-up paper, or series of papers, addressing quality standards and unique issues in noncredit instruction;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges produce a paper about current issues concerning noncredit courses and programs within the California Community College System.

Following the adoption and publication of *Noncredit Instruction: Opportunity and Challenge* in 2009, the Academic Senate continued its work in noncredit by establishing a standing committee dedicated solely to noncredit instruction. Over the ensuing decade, noncredit instruction continued to evolve, necessitating an update to the 2009 paper. In Fall 2015, the Academic Senate approved resolution 13.02:

Whereas, Changes to regulations governing course repeatability, the recent efforts at realigning adult education (AB 86 and AB 104, Budget Committee, 2013), the recent equalization of funding for Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) noncredit class apportionment with credit class apportionment, the ongoing funding for student success efforts including Basic Skills, Equity, and Student Success and Support Programs, and the Recommendations of the California Community Colleges Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy (August 14, 2015) are all resulting in an increased focus on the use of noncredit instruction to improve student success and close equity gaps in basic skills as well as provide additional options for preparation for courses in career and technical education programs; and

Whereas, Both the Chancellor's Office document *Noncredit at a Glance*, published in 2006, and the Academic Senate paper *Noncredit Instruction: Opportunity and Challenge*, adopted by the body in Spring 2009, are outdated and require revision in order to reflect the recent changes to credit course repeatability and potential use of noncredit as an alternative to course repetition, the efforts to realign adult education, the changes to CDCP noncredit funding, and the current focus on career technical education programs and workforce development and to provide timely and relevant guidance to the field in these and other areas;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges work with the Chancellor's Office and other system partners to revise the 2006 document *Noncredit at a Glance* or create a new document on noncredit that provides timely and relevant guidance to the field on the appropriate implementation of noncredit curriculum, programs, and instruction; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges update its paper *Noncredit Instruction: Opportunity and Challenge*, adopted by the body in Spring 2009, no later than Spring 2017 to include recent developments affecting noncredit, including using noncredit to improve equity and close the achievement gap, leveraging Career Development/College Preparation equalization funding, and addressing an increased emphasis on adult basic skills and workforce education.

This updated paper identifies recent changes and argues that additional changes are necessary to respond to the evolving needs of students and the state. Its recommendations focus on a series of changes necessary to improve the availability of all services provided to noncredit students both in and out of the classroom. It builds on the 2006 and the 2009 papers and discusses a range of subsequent developments in the California economy and in noncredit instruction, including changes to the Adult Education Program, the role of noncredit in the Strong Workforce Program, and the adoption of AB 705 (Irwin, 2017).

Noncredit instruction provides access for diverse communities and students seeking educational opportunities to achieve and advance personal goals, career preparation, and professional development. Noncredit programs align to college equity goals and support the creation of educational pathways that help students achieve economic self-sufficiency by providing students with vital skills for the workforce, career education certificates, and essential education that helps students transition into associate degree programs and transfer to four-year universities.

Noncredit instruction is limited to the following areas (Education Code §84757):

1. Parenting, including parent cooperative preschools, classes in child growth and development, and parent-child relationships.
2. Elementary and secondary basic skills and other courses and classes such as remedial academic courses or classes in reading, mathematics, and language arts.
3. English as a second language.
4. Classes and courses for immigrants eligible for educational services in citizenship, English as a second language.
5. Workforce preparation classes in the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics, decision-making and problem-solving skills, and other classes required for preparation to participate in job-specific technical training.
6. Education programs for persons with substantial disabilities.
7. Short-term vocational programs with high employment potential.
8. Education programs for older adults.
9. Education programs for home economics.
10. Health and safety education.

The passage of Senate Bill 361 (Scott, 2006), codified in Education Code §84760.5, introduced increased apportionment for specific areas of noncredit instruction. This increased apportionment funding for some aspects of noncredit has changed how noncredit is viewed and has strengthened the potential for closer integration with credit instruction. The noncredit categories eligible for increased funding, known as Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP), emphasize the vocational training and college preparation aspects of noncredit programs. For colleges to receive “enhanced apportionment funding,” a course must be part of one of the four approved areas of CDCP instruction and be part of a Chancellor’s Office approved certificate program that consists of a minimum of two courses within a sequence or a set of closely related courses. The areas of noncredit instruction that qualify for CDCP funding are as follows:

1. Elementary and secondary basic skills and other courses and classes such as remedial academic courses or classes in reading, mathematics, and language arts.
2. English as a second language.
3. Short-term vocational programs with high employment potential.

4. Workforce preparation classes in the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics, decision-making and problem-solving skills, and other classes required for preparation to participate in job-specific technical training.

In 2014, SB 860 increased the CDCP funding rate to be equivalent to the credit daily apportionment rate, meaning that some noncredit courses were viewed as being equivalent to credit courses from the perspective of funding. The augmentation in the funding rate for CDCP approved courses was intended to increase the availability of noncredit instruction to meet increasing student demand, but the majority of the funding has gone to districts that already had robust noncredit programs. As of 2018, noncredit courses are still funded only through apportionment, as established in the 2018 budget trailer bill, and are not included in the metrics for the Student-Centered Funding Formula. The Chancellor's Office has indicated that noncredit instruction needs to be incorporated into the metrics within the Student-Centered Funding Formula and expects this change to occur in a future iteration.

## UNDERSTANDING NONCREDIT

While credit and noncredit instruction are both designed to meet the needs of students, fundamental differences exist between the two. Credit practitioners often have limited experience with noncredit programs, and this situation can lead to misunderstandings, myths, and misconceptions. In order to develop effective noncredit programs and help them succeed, credit practitioners need to understand how the differences in noncredit can be advantageous when developing creative strategies to serve the needs of diverse student groups.

### Noncredit Philosophy, Pedagogical Differences

Both credit and noncredit programs in the community college system aim to provide quality education in order to fulfill the mission of the California Community Colleges and to meet the needs of diverse Californians. Noncredit instruction is “an essential and important function of the community colleges” (California Education Code §66010.4), and along with credit, noncredit instruction helps “advance California’s economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous workforce improvement” (California education code §66010.4).

Education Code §84757 outlines the ten areas of noncredit instruction that qualify for state apportionment. Some of the subject areas, such as citizenship, health and safety, courses for adults with disabilities, parenting, home economics, and courses for older adults, are unique to noncredit and provide meaningful opportunities for lifelong learning that supports the development of productive members of society to benefit the state of California. The other approved areas for noncredit overlap with credit, such as pre-collegiate basic skills, ESL, short-term vocational, and workforce preparation programs. Because of the overlap, colleges can meet the diverse needs of the students and offer varied educational experiences and learning outcomes.

Noncredit courses and programs help to maintain and assure open access to California’s diverse and underserved populations (*Program and Course Approval Handbook*). These courses are flexible and highly

accessible, with a tuition-free model that may be offered on campus or at various off-site locations. Free noncredit courses offer useful alternatives to credit options for students who do not qualify for financial aid. Noncredit courses can be open entry/open exit and benefit adult students with busy work schedules, family responsibilities, and other obligations. Noncredit programs can also provide short just-in-time learning and targeted instruction to meet students' professional development needs.

Noncredit instruction supports the underserved, such as first-generation students, students who are underprepared for college-level coursework, and English language learners. The fact that noncredit courses focus on skills attainment and are repeatable can help these underrepresented students build confidence and gain both cognitive and noncognitive skills that are necessary for success in credit courses. Students with negative educational experiences in the past, with low literacy or numeracy skills, or with gaps in their education can benefit from the additional time allowed for the development of requisite skills.

In addition, noncredit courses provide entry-level career technical certificates or elementary to pre-collegiate level basic skills instruction and offer multiple accessible entry points to career and academic pathways (*Program and Course Approval Handbook*). Credit and noncredit programs can be considered as an educational continuum where the two options supplement each other to support student success and workforce development.

## **Misconceptions About the Rigor and Structure of Noncredit Instruction**

The noncredit curriculum approval process ensures that “noncredit students receive the same quality of instruction provided to other students.” Noncredit programs also ensure that noncredit instruction is effective “in helping students to transition to college, gain meaningful wage work and contribute to the community and society” (*Program and Course Approval Handbook*). In addition, recent legislative changes along with national and state initiatives are altering the face of noncredit, and increased rigor and more formal structure are being required. While noncredit courses are not applicable toward a degree, upon successful completion of a series of two or more required classes, students can earn a noncredit certificate of completion or competency. With the creation of CDCP courses, noncredit programs are providing pathways that lead directly to employment, credit career education, or transfer programs. These CDCP courses require rigorous curriculum that prepares students for credit curriculum or for the workforce (*Program and Course Approval Handbook*).

Furthermore, some colleges offer mirrored, dual-listed, or cross-listed credit and noncredit courses, meaning that a noncredit course shares the same course outline, syllabus, and class schedule with a credit course and is taught by the same faculty. A certain number of seats is reserved for noncredit students in the course, and students can take the noncredit course at no cost and work on all the same assignments as credit students but do not earn course credit. In the mirrored noncredit course, the focus remains on skills attainment, as with all other noncredit courses. Students earn a pass or no pass rather than a letter grade. This system can be an effective free, low-stakes option for students who want to explore a course, who need extra time mastering the content, or who do not qualify for financial aid.

## **Flexible Scheduling Options**

Noncredit courses can be scheduled in two different ways, allowing programs to serve the needs of all students. The majority of noncredit courses are scheduled as open-entry/open-exit. Students are allowed to enroll in these courses throughout the term, not just at the beginning of the term. This system provides students with the opportunity to begin or resume their education whenever classes are in session instead of having to wait for the next term to begin. Additionally, noncredit students are not required to finish an open-entry/open-exit course by the end of the term, so students have the flexibility to continue the course during subsequent terms until they have completed all of the course outcomes. With open-entry/open-exit courses, students may begin a course, leave for several weeks, and then return to the course and resume where they left off. This practice differs from traditional credit courses in which students would be responsible for any material that was missed and would need to complete the course by the end of the term.

Noncredit courses can also be scheduled through managed enrollment. Managed enrollment courses are scheduled in the same way as credit courses, where students attend class at the same times every week. These courses do not have open enrollment throughout the term, requiring students to enroll in the class by the census date. Even though these courses are scheduled like credit courses, students are allowed to continue the course into the next term if they are not able to complete all of the outcomes.

Colleges have the option to use both of these scheduling methods for any noncredit course and can structure their class schedules to best serve the course content and the needs of their student populations.

## **THE NEED FOR NONCREDIT INSTRUCTION IN THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

### **Changes in the Economy Due to Demographic Shifts and Technology**

For the past decade, a variety of reports have focused attention on the educational and economic impacts of demographic changes that involve race, ethnicity, and educational preparation throughout America and specifically in California. The year 2030 will mark a demographic turning point for the United States, as all baby boomers, California's most educated group, will be retirement age or older, forming 20% of the population. By 2035, older adults will outnumber children. Natural population growth due to births will be dwarfed by immigration, further increasing the diversity of the country (Vespa and Armstrong, 2018, pg. 1).

In addition to the changing demographics, the economy of California, which is particularly reliant on technology, is facing a deficit of more than one million college degree holders by 2030 (Johnson, 2016). Automation and artificial intelligence are dramatically changing the nature of work as we know it, and experts predict that most of the jobs of today may soon be obsolete. According to a 2017 Institute for the Future report, it is "estimated that around 85% of the jobs that today's learners will be doing in 2030 haven't been invented yet." For colleges to better prepare our future workforce to meet the challenges of our changing economy, increasing degree completion is imperative, retraining is essential, and

lifelong learning crucial. A 2016 Obama White House report encourages, “A key step towards preparing individuals for the economy of the future is providing quality education opportunities for all” (Executive Office of the President, 2016).

The 2007 Educational Testing Service report *America’s Perfect Storm* is one of the most cited documents on the forces that will impact the country: divergent skill distribution, a changing economy, and demographic trends. California is the poster child for the country’s current economic, educational, and demographic trends. Predictions are dire. The report states,

If we are unable to substantially close the existing skills gaps among racial/ethnic groups and substantially boost the literacy levels of the population as a whole, demographic forces will result in a US population in 2030 with tens of millions of adults unable to meet the requirements of the new economy. Moreover, a substantial proportion of these adults will be members of disadvantaged minority groups who will likely consider themselves outside the economic mainstream. This is clearly not the preferred direction for the nation to be moving. (*America’s Perfect Storm*, 2007, p.24)

More specific to the situation in California is a series of reports from the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy by Nancy Shulock and various co-authors: *Rules of the Game*, *Beyond the Open Door*, *Invest in Success*, and *It Could Happen*. Whether or not one agrees with the recommendations from these reports, the recommendations are based on two undeniable premises: that California’s future economy is at risk from a shortage of educated workers and that California’s community colleges, the largest post-secondary education system in the nation, is the primary pathway to a college education and upward mobility for many Californians. In 2017-2018, the system served 2,393,675 students. Nevertheless, some voices have questioned whether the system and its colleges are serving all of the students who need to be served.

## Improved Educational Opportunities

Many of the needs resulting from changes in the future of the economy and employment can be addressed with noncredit education. Noncredit curriculum’s primary purpose is to provide education in “skills they need to participate in society and the workforce” (Taylor, 2012). Through noncredit education, students can gain proficiency in English as a Second Language, earn a GED, study for citizenship, learn basic skills, master competency-based skills, and explore career opportunities, all of which are elements of college readiness that ultimately keep students on the pathway to a degree. Courses for upskilling and older adults will continue lifelong learning and enable adults to participate in the workforce longer. Noncredit program schedules are often more flexible than the traditional academic calendar allows. Noncredit removes financial barriers because it has little to no student fees; it allows for repeatability in coursework to accommodate mastery of skills, and noncredit courses are often offered at off-campus, community friendly locations.

The mission of California’s community college system includes providing basic skills instruction for those in need of it and advancing California’s economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous workforce improvement (Education Code §66010.4 [a]). However, California community colleges are not in all cases truly serving all students seeking

transfer, workforce training, or basic skills development. As of 2017-2018, 94.2% of the 1,182,986.30 full-time equivalent students (FTES) recorded by the system were credit, meaning that only 68, 645.28 FTES were generated through noncredit. This figure represents only 5.8% of the total FTES generated in the California Community Colleges that year. Noncredit has seldom been more fully utilized; even at its peak in 2008-2009, noncredit only accounted for 7.5% of the system's total FTES. An estimated 80,000 students were lost from noncredit during budget cuts, resulting in a loss of 31,142 noncredit FTES. Noncredit programs felt cuts more significantly because of the lower funding rate for noncredit: colleges felt less incentive to retain noncredit sections. California's community colleges, the largest system of higher education with the ability to offer needed coursework at little to no cost to the student, remain the best option to meet the demands for educated citizens in California (Aschenbach and Young, 2016).

The enormous scale of California's community colleges makes them well suited to train people for middle-skills positions such as technicians, health care professionals, and advanced manufacturing trades. Of the eight million students enrolled in credit courses and another four million in noncredit courses, nearly 40% are older than 24, and 60% attend school part-time. Compared with four-year institutions, community colleges have more minority, self-supporting, and first-generation college students (Kochan, 2012).

California needs to consider additional educational opportunities to bridge the gap for thousands of adults who need a better job, who want more education, who want a better life for themselves and their families, and who are not able or ready to take the step into the credit programs of community colleges and higher education. Moreover, to make this bridge successful, California needs to commit to resources and regulations sufficient to improve the instructional and support environment provided to noncredit students so that it becomes more comparable to the experience of credit students. The value to individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole is worth the investment from the state, and it is even more critical now in light of reports like *America's Perfect Storm*, as both noncredit and K-12 adult education can serve as a pathway to work, college, and a better life.

The task of educating and training students who take noncredit classes is perhaps the most challenging, as noncredit students are, as a whole, generally less prepared than credit students and have significant work commitments and life responsibilities that can affect their path to student success. Ironically, these students receive fewer college resources, particularly in student services, resulting in programs for noncredit students that lack adequate numbers of full-time faculty, counselors, and other services. Noncredit faculty commonly teach more hours than their credit counterparts, resulting in reduced availability for class preparation, grading and student feedback, office hours, and program development. These factors are precisely the program characteristics that research has shown enhance student success. Community colleges need to invest equitably in all of their students by providing, at the least, equivalent instruction and services to credit and noncredit students alike. Little difference exists in the cost of delivering credit versus noncredit courses, yet noncredit instruction plays "a critical role in contributing to the human capital of the state's labor force" (Murphy, 2004, pg. 65). The California Community Colleges System's *Vision for Success* agrees:

The CCCs are also a major provider of adult education, apprenticeship, and English as a Second Language, offering thousands of valuable work and life skills courses to adults seeking to improve their lives or reenter the education system. Finally, the colleges are a source of lifelong

learning, offering recreation, enrichment, and exercise to California's diverse communities. These opportunities for learning, training, and civic engagement together make the CCCs a rich source of opportunity for all Californians. (*Vision for Success*, 2017, Page 5)

The recent equalization of funding for Career Development and College Preparation noncredit certificates has created an opportunity for colleges to consider the maintenance and development of noncredit courses without the disincentive of lower funding. In addition, the initiatives of Doing What Matters and Strong Workforce as well as the California Community Colleges' *Vision for Success* have highlighted the need for parity and provided additional incentives for districts to respond to the growing skills gap and to further support and develop career education programs and pathways. As CDCP noncredit certificate programs are expanded at the local level, districts need to reinvest the funds generated from these programs into support services for both students and faculty in noncredit programs so that support is equal to that of credit programs. Legislative changes allowing for local approval of noncredit curriculum, increased funding for all areas of noncredit, and the census roster accounting method for all noncredit managed enrollment courses, including courses offered through distance education, would allow districts to be nimble enough to develop and offer programs to meet the diverse training and educational demands for the growing state of California.

Thousands of adults need a high school diploma: in California, 12.3% of 18 to 24 year olds and 17.5% of adults over 25 have less than high school completion, and 24.4% of adults over the age of 25 without a high school diploma are below the poverty level, compared to just 10.5% that have completed some college (United States Census Bureau, 2017). Although one does not need a high school diploma to enroll in a community college, students lacking such preparation are also more likely to lack the basic skills needed to be college ready. Overall, workers who complete high school have better job prospects and earn higher wages than their counterparts who lack a diploma (Liming and Wolf, 2008, p.22). If more community colleges offered noncredit basic skills, including noncredit adult high school diploma programs to fill this gap, and if more community colleges designed pathways to support students transitioning into college credit programs, then an entirely new cohort of residents and students might be served.

Offering noncredit instruction at community colleges can be advantageous to both credit and noncredit students because credit students often utilize noncredit to initiate and support their credit journey. Noncredit programs are an important portal to credit higher education, offering proximity and built-in linkages and transitions. However, even colleges that offer noncredit instruction have difficulty developing sufficient collaboration, linkages, and articulation between noncredit and credit. Effectively connecting to K-12 adult education is an even greater challenge. Nevertheless, these opportunities must be available as a seamless educational continuum for those adults who need such pathways to higher education, jobs, and retraining (Shulock, 2007a, p.1).

Even as noncredit programs meet these and other educational needs, they can also be the magnet to draw into the community college system new adult learners who might not otherwise think of themselves as college students or as able to access advanced vocational training. Sometimes colleges need to help students reach this realization and increase their confidence as they become successful in their educational endeavors. Students must have the encouragement and support of transitional programs to help them make that leap. Noncredit basic skills, English as a Second Language (ESL), and career

technical education are the noncredit programs from which students would be most likely to transition into credit programs.

## **STATEWIDE CHANGES IN NONCREDIT EDUCATION**

### **Work by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges**

The Academic Senate has consistently taken a strong position to recognize noncredit courses and programs as an integral and respected component of higher education and to encourage their inclusion in the community college curriculum. To further these goals, in 2010 the ASCCC adopted Resolution 1.03, “Noncredit Standing Committee,” which increased the status of the Senate’s ad hoc Noncredit Committee to that of a standing subcommittee of the Academic Senate. The ASCCC followed up in Spring 2015 with the passage of Resolution 17.05, “Establish Local Noncredit Liaison Position,” to encourage local senates to establish a noncredit liaison position at each college to facilitate communication among local noncredit faculty, local academic senates, and the ASCCC.

#### **Curriculum**

An ongoing issue with noncredit instruction is where it fits with existing credit curriculum and how best to incorporate it into the rapidly changing landscape of basic skills and other below transfer-level curriculum. The Academic Senate has consistently taken positions affirming the need for all types of instruction and encouraging colleges to use pedagogy and not apportionment as the basis for decisions governing the placement of courses into credit versus noncredit. For example, Resolution 9.14 F15, “Resolution in Support of Credit ESL,” affirmed that the right to decide the credit or noncredit status for any class is an academic and professional matter and hence under the purview of local academic senates. Resolution 9.02 F11, “Defining Credit and Noncredit Basic Skills and Basic Skills Apportionment,” also affirmed the role of pedagogy in making curricular decisions about noncredit courses but urged the 2011 Board of Governors Student Success Task Force to include in its recommendations apportionment rates that would not penalize colleges for developing noncredit basic skills courses.

Another challenge noncredit courses and programs have faced, especially in times of state and local budget cuts, has been the decision on the part of many colleges to convert these courses and programs into fee-based community education programs. The Academic Senate has consistently opposed this practice because disadvantaged students may be deprived of access by fee-based courses and programs due to their cost and because noncredit faculty in many districts have little or no input in the decision-making processes at their colleges (Resolution 9.06 SP10, “Curricular Priorities Versus Budget-Driven Priorities”).

The ASCCC has also cautioned against transferring noncredit courses and programs to adult education programs without first ensuring that the appropriate transition pathways are in place to assist student progress from adult education into the community colleges (Resolution 13.01 F11, “Supporting Student Access”).

In terms of curricular issues surrounding coding and other matters, the Academic Senate has worked to develop and apply rubrics to bring noncredit courses into alignment with credit courses wherever possible. For example, Resolution 9.08 SP10, “Application of Rubrics to Recode Noncredit Courses Prior to Transfer (CB 21 Rubrics),” established CB21 tracking rubrics for noncredit courses similar to those previously adopted for below transfer-level credit courses.

Distance education carries its own set of challenges and opportunities. Primary among these challenges are a number of regulatory and fiscal barriers to offering noncredit courses via distance education, but over the past several years the ASCCC has worked with the Chancellor’s Office to address many of these issues and to educate colleges about online noncredit and its potential for students. Resolution 7.02 F17, “Identify and Remove Barriers to Offering Noncredit Distance Education Courses,” directed the ASCCC to work with the Chancellor’s Office and other system partners to identify and eliminate regulatory and fiscal barriers to offering noncredit courses via distance education. Even with this progress, colleges struggle to collect apportionment for online noncredit courses given the required changes to local student information systems.

In Fall 2017, the Chancellor’s Office implemented a streamlined process for approval of credit courses. The new process relies on a college providing a document certifying that the college complies with all Title 5 regulations with respect to its curriculum. Noncredit instruction was excluded from this new process, primarily because of Title 5 language that requires a full review by the Chancellor’s Office to ensure the curriculum meets the criteria for one of the allowable categories of noncredit and is eligible for apportionment. However, this review process can delay the implementation of noncredit curriculum, and therefore the Academic Senate adopted Resolution 9.02 F18, “Equalize Noncredit Curriculum Processes to Align with Local Approval of Credit Curriculum Processes,” to direct the ASCCC to work with the Chancellor’s Office to revise Title 5 language and create a process that aligns noncredit approval processes with those of credit curriculum.

### **Other Academic and Professional Matters**

Noncredit faculty are overwhelmingly part-time, are generally paid less than their credit counterparts, and, in some districts, are considered non-faculty fee-for-service employees and are thus not included in the local faculty bargaining unit. In recognition of these issues, the Academic Senate has taken a number of positions in support of noncredit faculty.

The ASCCC took a significant step forward in support of noncredit faculty in Spring 2010 by calling for the placement of minimum qualifications for noncredit faculty into the Disciplines List instead of in Title 5 §53412 (Resolution 10.01 SP10, “Noncredit Minimum Qualifications,” and Resolution 10.03 SP10, “Removing Faculty Minimum Qualifications from Title 5”). Including noncredit minimum qualifications with credit minimum qualifications in the Disciplines List establishes noncredit faculty as faculty in every sense of the term. The efforts of the Academic Senate to make this goal a reality were successful: beginning in 2014, the ten state-approved noncredit subject categories were incorporated into the document *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in the California Community Colleges*, commonly known as the Disciplines List. One major advantage of placing noncredit faculty minimum

qualifications on the Discipline List is that districts now have much more difficulty continuing to exclude noncredit faculty from participation in faculty bargaining units.

The Academic Senate has also adopted resolutions calling for support for the hiring of full-time noncredit faculty and the adjustment of the Faculty Obligation Number (FON) to include noncredit faculty (7.01 F14, “Restructure the FON to Include Noncredit Faculty”; 6.04 S15, “Support Legislation on Full-time Faculty Hiring, Full-Time Noncredit Hiring, and Part-Time Office Hours”; 7.01 F18, “Redefine the Faculty Obligation Number to Include Noncredit Faculty”). Given that noncredit courses and programs are likely to increase in number due to legislation such as AB 705 (Irwin, 2017) and other state initiatives, creating a place for noncredit faculty in system-wide faculty accounting metrics would facilitate districts’ progress toward meeting the requirements of mandates and goals such as the 50% law, the 75/25 ratio, and the FON.

The increased role of noncredit in community college curriculum has also contributed to a renewed interest on the part of the Academic Senate in providing support for districts seeking to eliminate the practice of differential load between lecture and laboratory hours (19.02 S16, “Career Technical Education and Laboratory/Activity Faculty and College Governance”). This practice prevents many faculty from participating fully in shared governance because their workloads are higher than those of faculty who teach lecture-only courses. Differential loads are also highly detrimental to students in that they provide a disincentive for faculty to adopt activity-based and noncredit course modalities because of the increased teaching load. The ASCCC recommends that local academic senates work with their bargaining units to investigate this potential issue and determine whether it may be addressed during contract negotiations.

In acknowledgment of the complexity of noncredit instruction and the need for faculty to have access to up-to-date training materials, the Academic Senate adopted Resolution 12.01 S17, “Professional Development College Modules on Noncredit,” that called for the ASCCC to design and implement a Professional Development College module that provides training on recent developments affecting noncredit.

### **Student Services**

The ASCCC has taken a number of positions in support of expanded access and better outcomes and opportunities for students who enroll in noncredit courses and programs. One barrier to access for many noncredit students is the application process itself, as the CCCApply Standard Application is designed for students pursuing credit certificates and degrees and is a significant deterrent for students who only wish to take noncredit classes. Academic Senate Resolution 16.02 F16, “Modification of the CCCApply Standard Application for Noncredit Students,” called for the development of a streamlined application process designed for noncredit enrollment. Another issue is that Title 5 §58003.3 includes language that prevents districts from collecting apportionment for noncredit enrollments by undocumented students, which is not aligned with the criteria of AB 540 (Firebaugh, 2001) that allows undocumented students to enroll in credit programs. Resolution 7.06 F17, “Access to Noncredit Courses for Undocumented Students,” affirmed the ASCCC’s position of support for access to noncredit instruction for all students and directed the Academic Senate to work with the Chancellor’s Office to repeal Title 5 §58003.3.

The tracking of student progress in noncredit courses has been a challenge, as Title 5 language did not allow for sufficient flexibility in this regard. The ASCCC took steps to rectify this situation with Resolution

14.02 SP14, “Local Use of Available Noncredit Progress Indicators,” working with the Chancellor’s Office to elevate the priority of a Title 5 change to allow for the use of satisfactory progress, or SP, as a viable progress indicator; however, many colleges do not have the financial resources necessary to incorporate this new progress indicator into their student information systems.

A number of colleges are expanding noncredit offerings to include programs that mirror credit programs in many respects, but barriers to full integration exist at both the local and statewide levels. One such barrier is the fact that colleges may not collect apportionment for noncredit internship opportunities that might otherwise be of benefit to students in certain noncredit programs. Resolution 7.04 F17, “Internship Opportunities for Students Enrolled in Noncredit Courses and Programs,” called upon the ASCCC to work with the Chancellor’s Office and other system partners to identify and eliminate state-level barriers to providing internship opportunities for students enrolled in noncredit courses and programs.

### **Statewide Initiatives**

Noncredit instruction is likely to become an important component of curriculum designed to meet the requirements of recent statewide mandates and initiatives such as Guided Pathways and AB 705 (Irwin, 2017). In recognition of this probability, the ASCCC adopted Resolution 7.03 SP18, “Including Noncredit in All Student Success Statewide Initiatives,” which directed the Academic Senate to work with the Chancellor’s Office and system partners to identify noncredit programs as integral components of all current and future student success efforts, including Guided Pathways, to ensure the inclusion of noncredit allocation in the initial release of statewide initiatives and to support colleges and districts in their efforts to include noncredit programs in their planning and implementation efforts. The ASCCC also adopted Resolution 17.01 SP18, “Noncredit Instruction in Guided Pathways Efforts,” to acknowledge the importance of CDCP noncredit instruction as a valuable bridge for underprepared students as they transition into college. This resolution further directed the ASCCC to provide guidance to local senates on how best to use CDCP instruction in guided pathways implementation efforts.

## **Legislative Changes to Noncredit**

### **Adult Education Realignment**

In 2013-14, California sought to restructure adult education by creating a clear and cohesive alignment for the delivery of adult education programs and services between the California Community Colleges System and the K-12 system. This initiative came on the heels of two reports from bodies outside the community college system, *Restructuring California’s Adult Education System* by the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) in December 2012 and the Little Hoover Commission’s *Serving Students, Serving California* in February 2012. Both reports compared the similarities and disconnects between the community college and K-12 systems and concluded that their separate structures for statewide services were not adequately meeting the educational needs for adult learners. Based upon recommendations from the LAO and discussions between the two systems, Assembly Bill 86 was signed into law by Governor Brown in 2013. A March 2014 ASCCC *Rostrum* article, “AB 86: A Brief History and Current State of Affairs from the Noncredit Task Force,”<sup>1</sup> provides a comprehensive summary of the history and driving forces behind

---

1 This article is available at <https://asccc.org/content/ab-86-brief-history-and-current-state-affairs-noncredit-task-force-0>

the realignment of California adult education along with the ASCCC recommendation for local senates' participation and that of the ASCCC itself.

In the present day, significant policies have emerged beyond AB 86 and the creation of the regional plans and consortia. The 2015-16 Budget Act allocated \$500 million in ongoing Proposition 98 dollars to fund adult education, and AB 104 (Committee on Budget, 2015, Chapter 13) created the Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG). Funding was thus established to move forward the restructuring that began in 2013 and was then subsequently identified in the regional consortia 3-year plans. Under the restructuring, consortia would implement plan goals to improve coordination and better serve the needs of adult learners within each region.

The 71 consortia throughout the state are comprised of adult education providers within boundaries that coincide with community college district service areas. Consortia membership is clearly defined as school and community college districts, county offices of education, and joint powers agencies. Each official member is required to be represented by a designee named by the member's governing board. The consortia are also stipulated to have partners in other adult education and workforce service providers, such as local libraries, community organizations, and workforce investment boards, to provide input on implementing the regional plan. Funding is only allocated to official consortia members.

State law authorized five program areas under AB 86, but as part of AB 104 program areas were expanded to seven. The list below reflects existing program areas for which consortia can use AEBG funds:

- Elementary and secondary reading, writing, and mathematics (basic skills).
- English as a second language and other programs for immigrants.
- Short-term career technical education with high employment potential.
- Pre-apprenticeship training activities coordinated with approved apprenticeship programs.
- Programs for adults with disabilities.
- Workforce preparation for adults (including senior citizens) entering or re-entering the workforce.
- Programs designed to develop knowledge and skills that enable adults (including senior citizens) to help children to succeed in school.

The final two areas are the newest programs that were added to the list under AB 104.

Initial AEBG funding was allocated based on two criteria: 1) \$375 million for K-12 adult education providers based on their 2012-13 funding base, and 2) \$125 million for need-based funding. The statute designated needs to be determined within each region by the measure of the adult population, employment, immigration, educational attainment, and adult literacy. Community college allocations have been derived from the need-based funding portion and determined by each consortium's governing board. The statute also ensured that for subsequent years individual consortium members would not receive less than the previous year's funding. AB 104 also contains language directed at member effectiveness, which has led to an emphasis on defining what constitutes an effective member.

The governor's 2018-19 budget brought the most significant changes to adult education since AB 104 was signed into law in 2015. The changes included an increase in the fund from \$500 million to \$527 million, primarily due to a 4.3% COLA increase. The budget also provided \$5 million in ongoing funding for data projects to track student outcomes. Another important addition to the budget was the inclusion of a trailer bill that set a cap of 5% on the indirect rate that may be charged by a K-12 district or community college. Further, the budget package renamed the Adult Education Block Grant as the "California Adult Education Program" (CAEP), which came as a result of consortia members needing to dispel the myth that AEBG funds were categorical and not ongoing. Some member institutions had been limited regarding investment in permanent staffing or expanding program offerings until the type of funding was clarified. Finally, the 3-year regional plan update was delayed until 2019 so that consortia could reflect on their outcome data and current progress as well as member effectiveness.

One of the most significant impacts on the regional consortia and adult education was the establishment of statewide adult education metrics that reconciled the disparities between the K-12 and community college data systems used to collect these data elements. In summer 2017, field teams comprised of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the California Department of Education, workforce agencies, and community college and K-12 practitioners convened for several meetings to identify and establish data elements that would adequately and consistently represent progress for adult education students across the state. From these discussions emerged a decision to create data elements within community college management information systems (MIS) so that colleges would not be required to use K-12 data collection systems. Beginning in 2018-19, adult education outcome data from community college students accessing noncredit instruction and services is now being collected through the MIS. The Chancellor's Office has established the majority of the data elements, but the process is still evolving. Colleges are working to create capacity within their own data systems to accurately collect CAEP student data. Important faculty work is still needed in order to update CB 21 levels for noncredit English, math, and reading and to ensure that measurable skill gains can be collected for noncredit students in the MIS.

Related to the metrics, AB 2098 (McCarty and Thurmond), which focuses on immigrant integration, was signed by the governor in September 2018. The intent of this bill is to address the lack of metrics for immigrant students by incorporating into the CAEP immigrant integration metrics consistent with English Language Civics and associated Civic Objectives and Additional Assessment Plans that are already in use for federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reporting purposes. Doing so will help preserve and ensure access and support for students who are most in need of the programs and services and will demonstrate outcomes and progress for these students. Moreover, reporting these types of outcomes will also show the scope and diversity of services delivered by noncredit and K-12 adult education programs. Consortia members have the flexibility of choosing whether to collect such data, as the policy is not mandated nor did the bill include additional funding.

### **Strong Workforce and Noncredit**

In June 2016, the California Legislature and the governor approved Strong Workforce Program (SWP) funding for the purpose of improving the skills of low-wage workers and increasing the numbers of middle-skilled employees. To achieve this goal, funds of up to \$250 million annually have been directed

to colleges and regions in order to collect economic and workforce data, develop curriculum in high demand areas, promote professional development, and ensure regional collaboration and coordination.

The majority of regional and local SWP funding is allocated annually to credit career technical education (CTE) programs in order to achieve regional outcomes. Although some regions and colleges have allocated funding specifically for noncredit projects, this practice has not occurred frequently. In those regions that have committed funds to noncredit programs, projects are focused on creating pathways to credit and employment. Further, unique noncredit SWP metrics are achievable by noncredit CTE or short-term vocational (STV) programs and students. These metrics include the completion of 48 hours of attendance in noncredit STV courses, achievement of local noncredit vocational certificates and state career development and college preparation certificates of completion, and attainment of employment and wage increases.

With the onset of the Chancellor's Office Guided Pathways Award Program, noncredit vocational coursework is an increasingly viable way to prepare students for credit CTE coursework and then support students in credit career education programs. This progress can be achieved by faculty through the development and offering of mirrored noncredit courses and pre-CTE courses, along with collaboration with high schools and K-12 adult schools faculty.

### **Assembly Bill 705 (2017)**

The signing of AB 705 (Irwin) in October of 2017 fundamentally changed placement and instruction in mathematics, English, and English as a Second Language for credit and noncredit students. The law requires colleges to maximize the likelihood that students enter and complete a transfer level course in mathematics and English composition within one year of enrolling at a college and that ESL students should complete a transfer level composition course within three years. While these timelines do not apply to noncredit students, the implementation of the law will directly impact noncredit programs.

One potential impact for noncredit programs is the need to offer basic skills and lower-level ESL courses to a greater number of students, with many of the additional students coming from the colleges' credit programs. With new limitations on the length of credit ESL sequences and on the placement of students into below transfer-level courses in mathematics and English, some colleges are offering far fewer sections, and in some cases no sections at all, of such courses. While some observers believe that these courses are no longer needed, many students will still want to access them and would benefit from completing them. The availability of noncredit versions of these courses would allow these students to enroll in the courses that they feel best meet their needs while not having to pay additional course fees. The noncredit versions of these courses could be scheduled through managed enrollment to make the structure more familiar for credit students, or they could be scheduled as open entry/open exit to allow students greater flexibility in how they access the course content. While noncredit students are not subject to the timeline restrictions created by AB 705, credit students may only be placed into a noncredit course if the college can demonstrate that the placement aligns with the new legal requirements.

An additional impact on noncredit programs is the use of noncredit corequisites to support the needs of credit students. AB 705 specifically states that a "community college district or college shall minimize the

impact on student financial aid and unit requirements for the degree by exploring embedded support and low or noncredit support options.” The use of noncredit corequisite support courses can have some significant advantages for students and colleges. Noncredit courses can be regularly scheduled and mirrored with an equivalent credit course, but the noncredit version would not have any enrollment fees, and students would be able to retake the support course even if they had successfully completed it previously. Noncredit support courses could also be offered as open entry/open exit, allowing students to enroll in the course after the typical enrollment period for credit courses, and students would be allowed to attend the course only for the skills regarding which they require additional assistance.

For colleges that do not currently offer noncredit instruction, utilizing the flexibility that noncredit offers may require a significant investment of institutional resources. One of the possible advantages of AB 705’s adoption is that it will encourage colleges to develop noncredit curriculum even though they had previously decided not to explore noncredit options. While the expansion of noncredit into more colleges was not the primary intent of AB 705, it is a very likely consequence of the legislation.

### **Guided Pathways**

Exploring new noncredit options, including tutoring, and repurposing existing noncredit course offerings present new opportunities for colleges and students in the era of AB 705 and local guided pathways implementation (Beach & Freitas, 2018). Both AB 705 and guided pathways aim to close achievement gaps. Noncredit courses can serve as bridges to various career technical and other credit courses. In addition, some colleges are utilizing noncredit courses as prerequisites or corequisites for credit English and math courses in order to comply with the AB 705 and guided pathways requirements (Beach & Freitas, 2018). When modularized, these noncredit developmental courses qualify for CDCP certificates.

Credit and noncredit programs should work together to provide students, instructors, and counselors with a clear understanding of all of the career and academic pathways available at the college. On one hand, noncredit students, who often come from underrepresented groups, should be introduced to and encouraged to pursue more advanced career credentials or degree programs that lead to family-sustaining jobs or careers in high-demand fields when appropriate. Noncredit students can be exposed to varied career and academic pathways, set goals, and start preparing for credit options early in their academic journey. On the other hand, students who are on a pathway to a credit career technical certificate, an associate degree, or transfer should be presented with the support options noncredit can offer to build basic skills at no cost to the students without affecting their financial aid status when such support is beneficial.

### **Residency Requirements**

AB 540 (Firebaugh, 2001) granted access to in-state tuition for undocumented and other eligible students at California’s public colleges and universities. This bill allowed undocumented students that are residents of California to qualify for the \$46 per unit fee for credit instruction. Unfortunately, noncredit programs were not given this type of flexibility. For many years, Title 5 §58003.3 restricted colleges from collecting apportionment for any hours of noncredit instruction provided to undocumented students. Because of this restriction, many colleges chose to collect information about a student’s immigration status, which forced some students to forgo their education.

On May 14, 2018, the Board of Governors approved the following new language for §58003.3:

Notwithstanding section 68062 of the Education Code, for the purposes of crediting community college attendance for apportionments from the State School Fund, a community college district may claim the attendance of students living in California enrolled in noncredit courses in the district.

With the passage and chaptering of this revised regulation, colleges are now able to collect apportionment for any student wishing to enroll in a noncredit course, and they are no longer required to collect information about the student's immigration status. This change provides a huge benefit to students because they will not have to fear possible deportation simply because they are trying to better themselves through education, and colleges will not be required to collect information about students that has no impact on the educational services the college provides.

## **CHALLENGES FOR NONCREDIT PROGRAMS**

If noncredit instruction is to help meet the needs of adult learners in California, the state must provide noncredit students, faculty, and programs with resources that permit the same level of instruction and support enjoyed by credit students. Current funding for noncredit programs is inadequate despite the improvement provided by SB 361 (Scott, 2006), staffing levels of full-time faculty are even more inadequate, student support services are missing or minimal, faculty workload expectations discourage effective class preparation and monitoring of student work let alone impromptu interactions, faculty struggle to participate in program development and local governance, and peer review as provided for through Education Code, Title 5, program review, or accreditation is not always adequate.

### **Funding**

Noncredit enrollments have a long history of being funded at a level substantially below that of credit instruction, although prior to implementation of the 1981 Behr Commission report, they received equal funding (San Diego Continuing Education, 2017). In 2006, Senate Bill 361 (Scott) established an enhanced rate of CDCP funding that gradually increased to matching the equivalent credit rate of funding in 2015. Noncredit CDCP courses, however, still maintain the positive attendance accounting model that inevitably leads to lower apportionment dollars. In addition, courses are defined as CDCP only if they are included in a sequence of courses leading to a certificate of completion for programs that lead to improved employability or job placement opportunities or a certificate of competency in a recognized career field by articulating with college-level course work, completion of an associate degree, or transfer to a four-year degree program. These CDCP certificates include classes and courses in elementary and secondary basic skills, workforce preparation, short term vocational programs with high employment potential, English as a Second Language, and Vocational English as a Second Language. Funding for the other noncredit categories remained—and still remains—at approximately 60% of the credit rate. This two-tier funding model is confusing for colleges and provides little incentive to support areas such as adults with substantial disabilities, older adults, and parent education programs. These specialized populations are not eligible for CDCP funding via certificates of competency or completion.

An additional challenge facing noncredit programs is securing an appropriate share of local general fund income. Noncredit programs are not categorically funded and are paid for with a part of the general fund revenue a district receives. The allocation of general fund expenditures is a purely local decision; thus, considerable statewide variation exists regarding the amount of resources different districts allocate to their noncredit programs. Furthermore, with the merging of grant programs under the Student Equity Achievement Program, funds are no longer earmarked specifically for noncredit, such as the Noncredit Student Services Support Program. Additionally, noncredit programs are increasingly vulnerable to limited resources, as their students are not included in the metrics for many of the major statewide initiatives and funding sources. Noncredit practitioners have frequently experienced what occurs when separate funds are not specifically allocated to noncredit. Since the introduction of the Student Equity Grant in 2014, colleges have primarily used grant funds for programs targeting credit students, although the original allocations were based on demographic information that included noncredit students. In fact, a strong case could be made that all noncredit students are disproportionately impacted.

In the spring of 2018, a new performance-based funding formula for California community colleges, labeled the Student Centered Funding Formula or SCFF, was created through legislation. Colleges' apportionment will now be determined by base allocations as well as performance metrics relating to equity and student success. At this time, noncredit courses, both CDCP and other noncredit classes, are not included in the success metrics for the SCFF and are funded based solely on hours accrued. While this exclusion from performance-based funding initially appears favorable for college revenue, risks are associated with being outside of the student performance metrics. Not allowing college funding to reflect the success of noncredit students demonstrates a potential inequity for students and does not promote noncredit instruction as critical to the California Community Colleges' mission.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to revise regulations and the Student Attendance Accounting Manual to provide noncredit attendance accounting options in addition to positive attendance in a manner similar to those available for credit courses.
2. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and system partners to develop noncredit measures for the Student Centered Funding Formula in order to ensure that noncredit students are included in the access and equity metrics.

### **Full-Time Faculty**

The extremely low ratio of full-time to part-time faculty in noncredit is perhaps the most glaring symbol of the inferior status accorded noncredit programs by some funding and policy makers. The ASCCC has long cited research showing that full-time faculty are the best investment a college can make in its students' success and showing correlation between instruction by full-time faculty and measures such as student completion and graduation (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2017). While part-time faculty may be excellent classroom teachers, promoting long-term student success means providing faculty who are available to students outside of the classroom and for program assessment and development.

In noncredit instruction, unique challenges exist for classes taught in an open-entry/open exit environment, with students entering the class at different points without the benefit of developing earlier foundational skills. Because adult students have varying gaps in their academic knowledge, a wide spectrum of ability is commonly present in a given class. Thus, pedagogy becomes increasingly important, with instructors scaffolding lessons for different groups in the same classroom. Given that many of the students have failed traditional basic skills classes in mathematics and English, faculty must employ different teaching strategies to enable students to succeed.

Full-time faculty identify with, commit to, and serve their colleges, their programs, and their students in ways that cannot be expected of part-time faculty. An absence of full-time faculty is likely to mean that no meaningful faculty voice is available to advocate for noncredit students and programs and that faculty responsibilities such as curriculum development are carried out by program staff or administrators. In the landmark legislation AB 1725 (Vasconcellos, 1988), the legislature set a goal of 75% of hours taught in credit instruction to be provided by full-time faculty. This goal was reaffirmed by the California Assembly in 2017 (ACR 32), and the Chancellor's Office was called on to establish "goals for full-time faculty and compensation parity for faculty teaching noncredit education." Unfortunately, many districts interpret this number as a maximum—a ceiling rather than a floor—although the original Education Code language clearly stated "at least" (Walton, 2014). No corresponding goal is established for noncredit instruction, and often colleges feel justified in not providing more full-time noncredit instructional faculty because noncredit faculty do not count toward the Faculty Obligation Number.

Few districts have reached the 75% goal for credit instruction. The average for districts across the state has decreased in recent years and is now below 60%. Many districts are below 50%. However, from the perspective of full-time noncredit faculty, the circumstances of full-time credit faculty look remarkably good. A survey conducted for the Academic Senate's 2006 noncredit paper determined that full-time faculty provide only 5% of noncredit instruction statewide; this figure means, of course, that the level is even lower at many colleges, and at some colleges noncredit is taught entirely by part-time faculty. Because noncredit instruction historically was funded at a lower rate than credit, some administrators have claimed that their institutions could not support full-time noncredit faculty.

The ASCCC has never disputed the idea that exigencies like enrollment fluctuation and the need for faculty with current expertise in technical fields create legitimate reasons for institutions to employ part-time faculty in certain areas. However, the current 5% figure for the percentage of noncredit instruction taught by full-time faculty goes far beyond any justifiable need for flexibility. Many of the problems and solutions identified in this paper echo the conclusions and recommendations in the Academic Senate's 2002 paper on the use of part-time faculty in general, *Part-Time Faculty: A Principled Perspective*. However, these issues take on a new urgency in the noncredit area given its much higher use of part-time faculty and the complete lack of regulation or goals for improvement.

Decisions affecting the academic integrity of a program are made in the local budget allocation process and should not be based exclusively on economic grounds; for example, colleges would not commit to many high-cost career and technical programs if the reimbursement for such programs were the sole criteria for offering them. The state's rationale for increasing the CDCP funding rate to 100 percent of the credit rate was three-fold:

- **Program Costs.** A subset of noncredit programs may have above-average costs due to expensive equipment, supplies, and facilities, as well as lower student-to-faculty ratios.
- **Program Quality.** An increased funding rate could facilitate the hiring of more full-time faculty. Colleges typically have a low share of full-time faculty in their noncredit programs compared with their credit programs. The lack of full-time faculty can hamper course and program development, faculty coordination, and program oversight.
- **Financial Incentives.** Equal funding rates would remove the incentive to emphasize degree and transfer programs over noncredit programs.

Given this rationale, enhanced funding for CDCP and the increased funding for noncredit has hopefully provided incentive to hire more full-time noncredit faculty.

### **Recommendation**

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to establish both interim and final goals for a noncredit full-time to part-time faculty ratio, perhaps by amending regulations to mandate that a portion of any additional noncredit funds be used to hire additional full-time noncredit faculty.

### **Unique Workload Challenges**

While working conditions do not generally fall under the purview of the Academic Senate, the circumstances in which noncredit instruction takes place raise significant concerns about the broader quality of instruction being provided to students. Despite the excellence of individual instructors, the overall academic environment for noncredit students is deficient in several ways because of the direct effects of faculty workload. Full-time noncredit faculty are generally, but not always, on the same salary schedule as their full-time credit counterparts. However, noncredit faculty almost always have a higher workload in terms of direct classroom contact hours. This situation is particularly pernicious because the automatic underlying assumption behind teaching more classroom hours is that noncredit faculty do not need time to prepare for class, to evaluate and respond to student work, or to provide feedback in broader ways that are important to student success. In certain noncredit classes, this assumption may be valid, but it is not the case in CDCP classes, and the calculation of appropriate faculty load should therefore be carefully considered. In addition, part-time noncredit faculty are often paid on a lower salary scale than their part-time credit counterparts, which can create higher turnover as well as difficulty recruiting talented and industry specific faculty.

In part because noncredit instruction is commonly based on the fundamentally different enrollment model of open entry/open exit, faculty often do not have the same student population from the beginning to the end of the class, and student work performed outside of class—a Title 5 requirement in degree-applicable credit instruction—is treated differently in noncredit. These factors combine to require appreciably more contact hours for noncredit faculty than would be required of a credit faculty member teaching the same load. For individual faculty members, spending more time in the classroom means less time available to prepare for class, assign and evaluate student homework assignments, or participate in

program planning, development, or assessment. In addition, many CDCP classes are offered on a standard entry/exit model, and students are assessed and receive grades. The rigor of the class is comparable to the credit side; the students have the same experience but do not receive credits, and thus expectations on the faculty member are also comparable to credit instruction. Most noncredit faculty, in part because of the heavy use of part-time faculty, also have fewer available facilities and fewer requirements to make office hours available to students.

Increased workload also creates more difficulty for noncredit faculty who wish to involve themselves in the academic and professional life of their colleges. While credit faculty sometimes question the burden imposed by institutional service when half to a third of faculty are part-time, the burden of institutional service is much heavier on full-time noncredit faculty, who comprise less than 5% of the faculty in noncredit instruction.

All of these problems are exacerbated under compressed calendars. While matching credit and noncredit calendars can facilitate student transitions, noncredit programs should seriously consider the potential detrimental effects on their programs of any decision to change the calendar without first resolving the issues of excessive faculty load.

### **Recommendations**

1. Local academic senates and bargaining units should collaborate to ensure that equitable working conditions for noncredit faculty are used to provide equitable services to noncredit students in an effort to ensure quality and effective programs and services.
2. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to investigate and address calendar issues impacting noncredit faculty.

### **Effective Participation in Governance**

The enormous over-reliance on part-time noncredit faculty also raises significant problems for effective participation of noncredit faculty in governance. Since both "Educational program development" and "Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success" are areas in which governing boards and academic senates must consult collegially, the lack of full-time noncredit faculty available within a college means that local senates may lack faculty expertise in an area in which they themselves must act as expert advisors to their governing boards. This situation clearly has undesirable consequences for the quality of program development, curriculum development, practices supporting student success, the ability of the local senate to create educational policy, and ultimately the quality of noncredit instructional programs.

### **Recommendations**

1. Local academic senates should work with their bargaining units to ensure that the workloads of full-time noncredit faculty include institutional service and that bargaining agreements and college policy provide the ability for noncredit faculty to participate in a manner comparable to credit faculty.

2. Local academic senates should encourage the inclusion of noncredit faculty in collegial governance to ensure that the noncredit voice is fully engaged in participatory governance processes.

## Curriculum and Program Development

### Curriculum Requirements and Process

Colleges are permitted by legislation to develop and offer noncredit courses in ten instructional areas. Nine of the noncredit instructional areas are defined in Education Code §84757 and the tenth in Title 5 §55151. The ten areas are as follows:

1. English as a Second Language.
2. Immigrant Education.
3. Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills.
4. Health and Safety.
5. Substantial Disabilities.
6. Parenting.
7. Home Economics or Family and Consumer Sciences.
8. Courses for Older Adults.
9. Short-Term Vocational Programs.
10. Workforce Preparation.

Colleges with approved apprenticeship agreements have the ability to offer noncredit apprenticeship programs. In addition to the ten areas, noncredit programs may offer supervised tutoring and learning assistance in support of another course or courses (Title 5 §58172). For open entry/open exit courses that provide supplemental learning assistance, “the COR for the supplemental open entry/open exit course must identify the course or courses it supports, as well as the specific learning objectives the student is to pursue . . . the supplemental COR must be prepared in light of the primary course objectives, but the hours for the supplemental COR will then be based on the objectives and related assignments specified in the supplemental COR” (*Program and Course Approval Handbook*, 2017, p. 115).

### CDCP vs Non-CDCP

All noncredit courses and any connected programs that qualify for state apportionment must be approved by the Chancellor’s Office. “The Chancellor’s Office reviews community college proposals within the context of Title 5. Community college noncredit course and program approval must be submitted electronically using the Chancellor’s Office Curriculum Inventory” (*Program and Course Approval Handbook*, 2017). The five criteria used by the Chancellor’s Office to approve noncredit programs and courses are as follows:

1. Appropriateness to Mission.
2. Need.
3. Curriculum Standards.
4. Adequate Resources.
5. Compliance.

At the local level, the noncredit curriculum development and approval process is similar to that of the credit process and requires local curriculum committee and district governing board approval. Some colleges include approval of noncredit curriculum under the purview of the local credit curriculum committee. Colleges can create a local curriculum guide to address any questions about credit purview over noncredit curriculum.

Districts are responsible for ensuring that the submitted Course Outline of Record (COR) contains all required elements (*Program and Course Approval Handbook*, 2017). The COR is a legal contract between the faculty, students, and the college and must contain certain required elements that are outlined in §55002 of Title 5. The following five elements are required in noncredit CORs:

1. Number of contact hours normally required for a student to complete the course.
2. Catalog description.
3. Objectives.
4. Content in terms of assignments and/or activities.
5. Methods of evaluation for determining whether the stated objectives have been met.
6. Methods of instruction.

Additionally, the *Program and Course Approval Handbook* (2017) recommends that the following fields be included in noncredit CORs:

1. Course number and title.
2. Status (noncredit versus credit or others).
3. Contact hours.
4. Catalog description.
5. Prerequisites, corequisites, advisories on recommended preparation, or other enrollment limitations (if any).
6. Field trips.
7. Assignments and/or other activities.

The local curriculum committee, which must be “established by the mutual agreement of the college and/or district administration and the academic senate” (Title 5 §55002), is responsible for ensuring that any course recommended for approval “covers the appropriate subject matter, and uses resource materials, teaching methods and standards of attendance and achievement that the committee deems appropriate of the enrolled students” (*Program and Course Approval Handbook*, 2017).

### **Mirroring of Credit and Noncredit Courses**

Mirroring existing credit classes with noncredit class offerings can address the unique college and career goals of adult education noncredit students who are interested in exploring the rigor and expectations of credit courses without the pressures of the credit coursework, such as tuition fees, unit concerns, and course repeatability restrictions. Additionally, students are able to achieve career development and college preparation certificates of completion in the CTE discipline and certificates of competency in ESL.

A mirrored class COR includes the exact same content and required fields as the credit class COR and goes through a similar approval process. Mirrored courses are listed in the schedule of classes and usually have credit faculty as the instructor of record. Noncredit students register for the noncredit course, but colleges often limit how many noncredit students may enroll. The number of seats available to noncredit students is decided discipline by discipline. Noncredit students attend the course lectures or labs throughout the given semester and are required to complete the same work and assignments as the credit students enrolled in the dual-listed credit course. The significant difference is that the noncredit students earn a pass/satisfactory progress/no pass grade while the credit students earn a letter grade after completing the course.

Mirrored courses provide an opportunity for institutions to bridge pathways for adult noncredit learner populations to achieve academic success in credit courses. Such courses also provide an opportunity to build new, and strengthen existing, relationships across campus and with industry partners. Areas of growth related to mirrored courses may promote effective articulation agreements and incorporate more accurate metrics and analytics to support institutional student-focused Guided Pathways and meta-major frameworks from college to career.

### **Noncredit as Prerequisites and Corequisites**

Prior to 2019, the use of noncredit courses to serve as prerequisites or corequisites to credit or noncredit courses was not explicitly addressed in Title 5 §55003, but the Chancellor’s Office maintained that such use of noncredit was permissible. Initially, the Chancellor’s Office stated that noncredit courses could be used to satisfy prerequisite or corequisite requirements but that a student, whether credit or noncredit, could not be required to take a specific noncredit course.

In August 2018, the Chancellor’s Office and the Academic Senate released a set of frequently asked questions related to the local implementation of AB 705 (Irwin, 2017). This document stated that colleges could require students to enroll in a noncredit prerequisite or corequisite if the requirement was validated. This change is a significant shift in interpretation that has been codified in the 2019 revisions to Title 5 §55003.

Colleges have the ability to use noncredit courses to meet prerequisite requirements. This practice would allow colleges to shift basic skills courses out of the credit program and offer them as noncredit courses for which students would not be required to pay fees. Advantages to offering basic skills instruction through noncredit include reduced unit accumulation, no course fees, more flexible scheduling options, and courses based on outcomes rather than grades. Colleges considering this option should remember that many credit students are required to take a minimum number of units to maintain financial aid eligibility.

The use of noncredit corequisites allows colleges to offer support courses for credit courses in mathematics, English, and English as a Second Language through which students are able to re-enroll in the support course until they are able to successfully complete the parent course. These courses can be scheduled as open entry/open exit, allowing students to drop in when they need additional support but not be forced to attend support every week if they do not need it. The courses could also be offered via managed enrollment and as a mirrored course where students can be enrolled in either a credit or noncredit version of the support course. With the recent changes to Title 5, colleges will be able to require students to enroll in noncredit corequisites, just as they would a credit corequisite, but the student will not be forced to pay any additional course fees.

### **Course Repetition**

Since the modifications to Title 5 §55041 in 2012, community colleges have been exploring different options to address the loss of most course repeatability. While noncredit courses cannot replace all of the repeatable classes lost in the fine and performing arts because those courses do not typically fit within the allowed areas of noncredit instruction, students are permitted to re-enroll in noncredit courses without petition.

Many colleges have encountered challenges accessing the course repetition options available in Title 5 §55040 because students do not want to complete the required petition necessary to retake a credit course. In some cases, a college can create equivalent noncredit courses, particularly in vocational programs where recertification may be required, and students can enroll in those courses as many times as they choose. This option is effective for students that do not require units but simply need to complete a course that allows them to demonstrate competency. These repeated enrollments have no course fees.

In the fine and performing arts, colleges could create courses for older adults that would allow some students to participate in activities like theatrical productions or choir, but these courses would only be allowable under the older adults category of noncredit instruction and would be funded at the traditional, lower noncredit rate. Open access courses that are equivalent to existing credit courses in areas like music, art, theater, and dance are not likely to fit within any of the allowed areas of noncredit instruction and would be rejected by the Chancellor's Office when submitted for approval.

While noncredit does give access to courses that can be repeated, not all credit courses that lost repeatability in 2012 are appropriate for noncredit instruction. Those that are appropriate may not in all cases be a better solution than having students complete a petition to retake the existing credit course.

## **Competency-Based Education, Digital Badging, and Micro-Credentials**

Competency-based education has become an important concept that directly aligns with noncredit instruction. Noncredit courses are an effective and convenient way for busy working adults to gain employability skills, to upskill for career advancement, and to update their knowledge to meet ever-changing job demands. However, colleges have had difficulty recognizing and validating student learning in noncredit, as students do not earn letter grades or credit units (Radionoff, 2016). Noncredit allows students to attend courses when they are available through open entry/open exit scheduling, provides students with the ability to continue a course from one term into the next, and provides students with the flexibility to attend only classes on topics that the students have not already mastered. Noncredit courses can be offered online or face-to-face and can be offered in various scheduling formats including full semester, intensive short courses, modules, and courses that span multiple terms. Students have the flexibility to re-enroll in noncredit courses to ensure that they have mastered all of the skills in a course or to refresh the skills that they previously mastered.

One way that colleges are recognizing achievement in competency-based education is with digital badges. Instead of being awarded units for completion, students may be awarded badges to indicate that they have mastered particular topics. Digital badges are an innovative and practical way to recognize and share student achievement, especially in noncredit. Many California community colleges are beginning to utilize the digital badging system to validate student skill attainment in their workforce preparation programs, short-term vocational courses, and, in some cases, credit courses (Wollenhaupt, 2018). Digital badges can lead to employment and support lifelong learning (Foundation for California Community Colleges, 2018). By clearly indicating and showcasing the skill sets students have achieved and demonstrated, digital badges may help employers understand the abilities of students, employees, and applicants (Wollenhaupt, 2018).

As students acquire skills and collect digital badges, they may eventually demonstrate completion of all of the skills necessary for a certification. Certifications often include several different skill areas, and each skill area might include several different digital badges. To help students identify the different skill areas required for a credential and to help them document their progress, some colleges have begun exploring the idea of micro-credentials. Micro-credentials represent a collection of digital badges that make up a skill area within a larger credential. This concept is similar to stackable certificates, for which colleges break a certificate that could require several years to complete into smaller certificate programs that students can complete more quickly. Each stackable certificate is designed to build upon the previous one until the student has completed the full certificate program. Noncredit programs may begin exploring micro-credentials more frequently as new educational options are brought into the community colleges with the development of the California Online Community College.

## **Credit by Examination and Credit for Prior Learning**

California community colleges are exploring new ways to facilitate the degree acquisition process. Credit for prior learning is one method gaining attention in recent years (Davison, 2016), and the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has passed a number of resolutions in support of offering

students credit-by-exam options for prior learning.<sup>2</sup> Prior learning experience can be attained through various sources, such as military training, noncredit coursework, work experience, and employer training programs. While colleges should already have clear credit-by-exam policies in pursuance of California Education Code, these policies can include other sources and measures of prior learning assessment (Valenzuela & Karandjeff, 2016). For example, students who have taken a noncredit basic skills course or short-term vocational course can be awarded college credits by passing an exam or another form of assessment.

The credit for prior learning system can also incentivize noncredit student populations to enter and stay on the path to higher education and meaningful careers. Research shows that students who earn prior learning assessment (PLA) credit have higher graduation rates than their peers who do not earn PLA credit (Valenzuela, MacIntyre, Klein-Collins, & Clerx, 2016). Studies done in university settings demonstrate that PLA can benefit underrepresented students, especially Hispanic students (Klein-Collins, 2010, as cited in Valenzuela et al., 2016). In California's community colleges, the West Hills Community College District is currently piloting a prior learning assessment program with the hope that awarding credit for prior learning such as work experience in a trade can open doors to higher education for non-traditional students and help them persist in a community college program (Ono, 2017). In this pilot model, students will submit a digital portfolio to showcase their knowledge of a given subject. A faculty panel will review the portfolio and determine whether the student has demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes of the course (Ono, 2017). In order to support underrepresented and non-traditional students, colleges should explore PLA options and further solidify their policies around credit by exam, multiple measures assessments, and other PLA systems. Successful completion of noncredit courses can also be a part of these assessments. Noncredit and credit faculty should collaborate to articulate and communicate clear sets of competencies required to earn credit by exam.

### **Approval of Noncredit Curriculum**

Currently, all noncredit courses and certificate programs require approval by the Chancellor's Office. The state-level curriculum approval process can be long and often becomes a roadblock to offering innovative and current curriculum that responds to the needs of an evolving workforce and the community. As was done with credit curriculum in 2017-18, approval of noncredit curriculum should be transferred from the Chancellor's Office to local curriculum committees, academic senates, and governing boards. Shifting to local approval of noncredit curriculum will streamline processes and allow colleges to better address the changing needs of students, such as those related to the implementation of AB 705 and the alignment of curriculum with guided pathways. The ASCCC and other system partners have recommended Title 5 language changes to allow for local approval of noncredit course outlines and programs (Beach, R. & Young, J., 2018).

---

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Resolutions 9.05 F08, 9.08 F10, 18.04 SP11, 7.01 SP 16, 7.02 SP16, 9.02 F17, and 9.03 F17 as well as the ASCCC papers *Alternative Methods for the Awarding of College Credit: Credit by Examination for Articulated High School Courses* (2013) and *Awarding Credit Where Credit is Due: Effective Practices for the Implementation of Credit by Exam* (2104).

## **Recommendations**

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, through the California Community Colleges Curriculum Committee, to shift the approval of noncredit curriculum from the Chancellor's Office to local curriculum committees, academic senates, and governing boards.

## **Noncredit Student Services, Assessment and Matriculation**

The challenge of providing effective counseling and other services to noncredit students is daunting. The transition to the Student Support Services Program metrics provided funding for noncredit assessment and counseling services that were similar to credit, but many of the services offered to noncredit students are either provided by credit practitioners or by noncredit counseling faculty that are usually greatly outnumbered by their credit counterparts. How the shift to the new Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program from SSSP and Equity will impact noncredit programs is unclear, but concerns have been raised because the funding for noncredit services is no longer separate from that for credit. The Chancellor's Office is currently developing the details regarding how the SEA Program will be implemented, but a push exists to continue tracking noncredit services and outcomes separate from those of credit to ensure a means to guarantee that SEA Program funds will be allocated to support noncredit students.

The onboarding process for noncredit students includes similar components to those used when onboarding credit students, but many of the tools used for credit students are not designed to meet the needs of noncredit students. For example, CCCApply includes many questions that do not directly apply to noncredit students and could discourage students during the enrollment process. Assessment for noncredit students is often a moving target, but the recent changes to Title 5 §55003 could allow colleges to place students into a specific noncredit course instead of simply providing information about which course a student should take. Many noncredit students will need to go through some form of guided placement with a counselor to help them reach their academic goals; however, unlike with many credit students, noncredit students may have limited experience with formal education or may not have identified their educational or career goals. Unfortunately, noncredit students generally receive fewer counseling services than their credit counterparts. To achieve significant student success in noncredit programs, colleges will need to commit resources to dedicated noncredit counselors or counselors with significant experience in working with noncredit students.

Financial resources are necessary not only for noncredit programs and to hire teachers and counselors but also for noncredit students themselves who may need greater financial support. In spite of the fact that noncredit programs do not have enrollment fees as credit programs do, noncredit students still may face all of the other financial hurdles that could be barriers for educational participation and progress: the need to work full-time, transportation costs, child care expenses, and class textbook and supplies costs. However, few noncredit students receive financial aid because to be eligible noncredit students must be enrolled in a program with a minimum of 600 hours. Mechanisms to increase the amount of financial aid available to noncredit students should be explored.

## **Recommendations**

1. Colleges should use noncredit matriculation Student Equity and Achievement Program funds to provide noncredit students with counseling and other services equivalent to those provided to credit students.
2. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to ensure that noncredit student support services continue to be funded adequately and that noncredit-specific outcomes are developed to ensure that noncredit services are properly funded.

## **Attendance Accounting**

### **Face-to-Face Courses**

One of the areas in which noncredit instruction most varies from credit instruction is attendance accounting patterns. Credit instruction is largely designed around units, hours of instruction listed in the COR, and the assumption that the student will participate for the entire term. In contrast, noncredit instruction frequently uses the open entry/open exit format in which students come and go throughout the term. This difference creates a very distinct educational philosophy, as noncredit students may complete a short-term goal and leave the class, and it affects both the educational relationship between teacher and student and the funding of noncredit programs. Both credit and noncredit faculty are aware that student attendance varies as students are often prevented from class attendance for a wide variety of reasons, including jobs, family responsibilities, health, and other matters.

However, in noncredit this situation may have significant unintended consequences on program funding because almost all noncredit apportionment is calculated on a positive attendance model, which means that colleges are only funded for the hours during which students actually attend class. In contrast, credit courses can be funded using a variety of models, with full-term census being the most common. Numerous problems are created by positive attendance being used for almost all noncredit funding. More options are needed. For example, this limitation creates difficulty for faculty in developing programs with long-term educational potential that do not lend themselves to positive attendance. Colleges also offer noncredit courses through managed enrollment, where students who are able to commit to a more structured schedule enroll in a class, but these courses are still funded through positive attendance despite being scheduled like most credit courses.

### **Distance Education**

Increasingly, more students are taking distance education (DE) courses as part of their educational programs. In 2016-2017, approximately 28% of credit students had completed at least one DE course, with DE completion rates now within 4% of traditional face-to-face instruction (Larson, 2018). Unfortunately, noncredit has not seen the same increases in access to DE instruction, with only 1% of all noncredit students having taken any form of DE course. In 2016-2017, noncredit students were more likely to complete a DE course than a face-to-face course by 10%. While such data could be misleading because

noncredit online courses are usually managed enrollment classes that tend to have higher completion rates than a mix of open-entry/open-exit and managed enrollment face-to-face classes, the higher completion rate of noncredit DE courses is worth additional exploration.

The disparity between the number of credit students taking DE courses versus noncredit students can partially be attributed to colleges' mistaken belief that noncredit DE courses are not financially viable given the accounting formula outlined in Title 5. Many colleges still believe that noncredit DE courses are not cost effective, and they choose not to offer the option to students; however, upon closer examination of the DE noncredit formula, opportunities exist for colleges to earn additional apportionment from these classes.

First, as with all noncredit classes, apportionment is based on positive attendance. Unlike most noncredit classes that collect attendance based solely on contact hours in the classroom, noncredit DE classes can augment these hours in two ways:

1. The number of hours expected for any outside-of-class work.
2. Any instructor contact as defined by Title 5 §55204(b), which “includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, and among students, either synchronously or asynchronously, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities.”

These extra hours must be noted on the course outline of record or a distance education addendum. With these increased student contact hours, most noncredit classes will receive additional apportionment dollars versus a traditional face-to-face course.

Unlike credit classes that use census-based accounting to record the number of students after the first two weeks, noncredit DE classes are required to capture positive attendance both at the 20% mark and at the 60% mark of the class. In theory, capturing this MIS data should be straight-forward, but most colleges do not have the resources necessary to modify their MIS systems to accommodate these two noncredit benchmarks; therefore, colleges that offer noncredit DE courses have often had to collect the data manually. While the manual collection of noncredit DE apportionment data is feasible on a small scale, few colleges have the ability to collect this data at the scale of DE course offerings that are present in credit.

## **Recommendations**

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the Chancellor's Office to modify regulations and the Student Attendance Accounting Manual to ensure that noncredit online courses are funded at the same rate as those offered by the California Online Community College.

## Accreditation

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) accredits both credit and noncredit programs, but some colleges may have another option for the accreditation of their noncredit programs. The ACCJC's accreditation standards do not specifically mention noncredit programs, but many colleges choose to include their noncredit offerings as part of their Institutional Self Evaluation Report. Colleges will often include examples from their credit and noncredit programs when responding to questions about instructional, student services, and support programs. Additionally, colleges may include how noncredit fits into decision making, college administration, budget allocation, and collegial governance.

Some noncredit programs satisfy the eligibility requirements to be recognized as an approved adult school by the Adult Schools Division of the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC). In order to qualify for ACS WASC accreditation, a noncredit program must enroll a minimum of six full time students or the equivalent and must offer a minimum of two grade levels (Accrediting Commission for Schools). Because this type of accreditation is intended for adult schools, it has only been sought by noncredit programs that offer an adult high school diploma, but noncredit programs with multiple levels of coursework in multiple areas of basic skills might also qualify to be accredited by ACS WASC. Currently, two noncredit programs in the California community colleges are accredited solely by ACS WASC, one noncredit program is accredited by both ACS WASC and ACCJC, and the remaining noncredit programs are accredited by ACCJC. Obtaining accreditation for a noncredit program involves a significant amount of work by both ACCJC and ACS WASC, but a noncredit program with an adult high school diploma program needs ACS WASC accreditation to have those courses satisfy the University of California's A-G requirements for admission.

## Recommendations

1. Colleges should ensure that their noncredit programs receive effective inclusion in their Institutional Self Evaluation Reports, preferably in ways that promote integration with other programs including the transition of noncredit students into the college's credit offerings.
2. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should investigate the alignment of ACS WASC and ACCJC expectations for noncredit programs to ensure effective inclusion and integration of noncredit programs into each college's accreditation work, including the identification of institutional goals, improvement plans, and the quality focus essay, whether the noncredit programs are organizationally part of a college or are a separate institution within a district.

## Metrics and Accountability

Along with all other areas of the California Community College System, noncredit programs must respond to requests from accreditors and legislators to effectively demonstrate accountability for student success. The extreme range of student and state goals for noncredit means that particular care must be taken to design measures of success that are not overly narrow or simplistic; however, metrics that truly reflect the range of successful outcomes for noncredit students will only be possible if the data collected by the Chancellor's Office is accurate and complete.

If promoting increased noncredit-to-credit integration implies a bifurcation of noncredit courses and programs, then SB 361 made that division explicit with the two tiers of funding in noncredit. Along with the higher funding came increased scrutiny and accountability expectations. Most faculty are aware that teachers at all levels, from preschool to advanced professional schools, are being asked to meet ever-increasing levels of accountability. To conduct the research necessary to document the effectiveness of increased funding, noncredit measures were added to the system-wide Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC). When the ARCC Report was replaced by the Student Success Scorecard, a specific metric for career development and college preparation students was created. Unfortunately, the metric's design only tracks students that are part of CDCP programs, and the six-year cohort creates difficulty in using the metric to inform institutional change.

Beginning with the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative, the Chancellor's Office has been working with system partners to develop a set of comprehensive metrics that accurately reflect the good work done in California community colleges. In 2019 the Chancellor's Office will release a set of new metrics, the Student Success Metrics, that include adult education and ESL and include success measures similar to those in the Student Success Scorecard, such as transition from noncredit to credit or the completion of an approved noncredit certificate. In order for these new metrics to be accurate, colleges must do a better job of tracking the progress of noncredit students and submitting accurate noncredit data into the Chancellor's Office Management Information System.

Many noncredit programs do not track student progress in their colleges' student information systems and do not offer transcripts for students. To develop accurate metrics, including noncredit success metrics for the Student Centered Funding Formula, colleges must collect all student progress data possible, including the use of the satisfactory progress indicator. Additionally, to ensure that students enrolled in noncredit programs are not negatively impacted, noncredit programs should develop and provide noncredit transcripts that contain a record of all courses and certificates that a student has completed.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, constituency groups, and local colleges to ensure that the data being submitted to the Chancellor's Office Management Information System accurately reflects the progress and outcomes of noncredit students and that newly developed metrics provide accurate information to colleges, the legislature, and members of the public.
2. Colleges should collect and report accurate data on student progress and success at the course and program level and should explore developing transcripts for their noncredit student populations.

# NONCREDIT INSTRUCTION: OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE

Adopted Spring 2009 | Revised Spring 2019

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges makes or restates the following recommendations for changes to support the continued growth and success of noncredit programs.

### Recommendations to the Board of Governors

1. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to revise regulations and the Student Attendance Accounting Manual to provide noncredit attendance accounting options in addition to positive attendance in a manner similar to those available for credit courses.
2. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and system partners to develop noncredit measures for the Student Centered Funding Formula in order to ensure that noncredit students are included in the access and equity metrics.
3. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to establish both interim and final goals for a noncredit full-time to part-time faculty ratio, perhaps by amending regulations to mandate that a portion of any additional noncredit funds be used to hire additional full-time noncredit faculty.
4. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to investigate and address calendar issues impacting noncredit faculty.
5. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, through the California Community Colleges Curriculum Committee, to shift the approval of noncredit curriculum from the Chancellor's Office to local curriculum committees, academic senates, and governing boards.
6. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to ensure that noncredit student support services continue to be funded adequately and that noncredit-specific outcomes are developed to ensure that noncredit services are properly funded.
7. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to modify regulations and the Student Attendance Accounting Manual to ensure that noncredit online courses are funded at the same rate as those offered by the California Online Community College.

8. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should investigate the alignment of ACS WASC and ACCJC expectations for noncredit programs to ensure effective inclusion and integration of noncredit programs into each college's accreditation work, including the identification of institutional goals, improvement plans, and the quality focus essay, whether the noncredit programs are organizationally part of a college or are a separate institution within a district.
9. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges should work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, constituency groups, and local colleges to ensure that the data being submitted to the Chancellor's Office Management Information System accurately reflects the progress and outcomes of noncredit students and that newly developed metrics provide accurate information to colleges, the legislature, and members of the public.

### **Recommendations to Colleges**

1. Colleges should ensure that their noncredit programs receive effective inclusion in their Institutional Self Evaluation Reports, preferably in ways that promote integration with other programs including the transition of noncredit students into the college's credit offerings.
2. Colleges should collect and report accurate data on student progress and success at the course and program level and should explore developing transcripts for their noncredit student populations.
3. Colleges should use noncredit matriculation Student Equity and Achievement Program funds to provide noncredit students with counseling and other services equivalent to those provided to credit students.
4. Local academic senates should work with their bargaining units to ensure that the workloads of full-time noncredit faculty include institutional service and that bargaining agreements and college policy provide the ability for noncredit faculty to participate in a manner comparable to credit faculty.
5. Local academic senates should encourage the inclusion of noncredit faculty in collegial governance to ensure that the noncredit voice is fully engaged in participatory governance processes.
6. Local academic senates and bargaining units should collaborate to ensure that equitable working conditions for noncredit faculty are used to provide quality programs and services to noncredit students.

## CONCLUSION

Noncredit instruction has continued to evolve and expand, but challenges remain that must be addressed before noncredit can achieve its full potential. The California Legislature clearly sees value in using noncredit instruction to support the needs of adults in basic skills and workforce education and has attempted to encourage colleges to expand the use of noncredit by increasing the funding rate to be the same as credit.

In spite of all of the progress in noncredit, noncredit faculty are still not part of the Faculty Obligation Number, the majority of noncredit instruction takes place in a handful of colleges across the system, noncredit curriculum must still be approved by the Chancellor's Office, and noncredit was not included in the success metrics of the Student Centered Funding Formula. Noncredit programs have demonstrated that they are essential to meeting the needs of a wide variety of students, and the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges must continue to advocate for noncredit programs and faculty to be treated fairly and have access to the same options as credit.

## REFERENCES

- Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges. (n.d.). "ACS WASC Affiliation Conditions of Eligibility." Retrieved from <https://www.acswasc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ACS-WASC-Conditions-of-Eligibility.pdf>.
- America's Perfect Storm*. (2007). Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from [https://www.ets.org/Media/Education\\_Topics/pdf/AmericasPerfectStorm.pdf](https://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/AmericasPerfectStorm.pdf).
- Aschenbach, C. and Young, J. (2018, March). "The Reemergence of Noncredit in the California Community Colleges." *Rostrum*. Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. Retrieved from <https://www.asccc.org/content/reemergence-noncredit-california-community-colleges>.
- Beach, R. & Freitas, J. (2018, April). "Guided Pathways and AB 705: What's Noncredit Got to Do, Got To Do with It?" *Rostrum*. Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. Retrieved from <https://www.asccc.org/content/guided-pathways-and-ab-705-what%E2%80%99s-noncredit-got-to-got-to-do-it>.
- Beach, R. & Young, J. (2018). "Curriculum Processes, Laws, and Regulations for Noncredit." *Academic Senate for California Community Colleges*. Retrieved from <https://asccc.org/sites/default/files/Curriculum%20Processes%2C%20Laws%20and%20Regs%20for%20Noncredit.pptx>.
- Bustillos, Leticia Tomas. (2014). "Rethinking Remedial Education: The Role of MSIs in Serving Under-Prepared Students in the 21st Century." *Institute for Higher Education Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.ihep.org/research/publications/rethinking-remedial-education-role-msis-serving-underprepared-students-21st>.
- Davison, D. (2016, May). "Prior Learning Experience for Credit: A Faculty Question." *Rostrum*. Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. Retrieved from <https://www.asccc.org/content/prior-learning-experience-credit-faculty-question>.
- "Decoding Digital Badges." (2018). *California Community College Association for Occupational Education*. Fall Conference. Retrieved from <https://www.cccaoe.org/sites/default/files/2.5-Decoding%20Digital%20Badge%20Panel.pdf>.
- Executive Office of the President of the United States. (2016). "Artificial Intelligence, Automation, and the Economy." Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/Artificial-Intelligence-Automation-Economy.pdf>.
- Foundation for California Community Colleges. (2018). "21st Century Skills Badging." Retrieved from <https://foundationccc.org/What-We-Do/Workforce-Development/Workforce-Services/21st-Century-Skills-Badging>.
- Institute for the Future and Dell Technologies. (2017). "Emerging Technologies' Impact On Society & Work In 2030." Retrieved from [https://www.delltechnologies.com/content/dam/delltechnologies/assets/perspectives/2030/pdf/SR1940\\_IFTFforDellTechnologies\\_Human-Machine\\_070517\\_readerhigh-res.pdf](https://www.delltechnologies.com/content/dam/delltechnologies/assets/perspectives/2030/pdf/SR1940_IFTFforDellTechnologies_Human-Machine_070517_readerhigh-res.pdf).
- Johnson, Hans. (2016). "Testimony: Closing California's Workforce Skills Gap." Retrieved from <https://www.ppic.org/blog/testimony-closing-californias-workforce-skills-gap/#anchor>.
- Kochan, Thomas A. (2012). "Who Can Fix the "Middle-Skills Gap?" *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2012/12/who-can-fix-the-middle-skills-gap>.
- Larson, E. (2018), "Noncredit Distance Education Series: Topic 1 – Curriculum Planning." *California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office*. Retrieved from [http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/Noncredit/Noncr1stFridayWebinar\\_DERev11-1-2018.pdf](http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/Noncredit/Noncr1stFridayWebinar_DERev11-1-2018.pdf).
- Legislative Analyst's Office. (2017). *Effects of Increases in Noncredit Course Funding Rates*. Retrieved from <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/report/3635>.
- Moreno, M. V., & Chian, J. (2018). "Best Practices for Noncredit CDCP Programs." *California Community College Association for Occupational Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.cccaoe.org/sites/default/files/2018-Fall-Noncredit-SBCC-CCCAOE-Breakout.pdf>.
- Murphy, Patrick. (2004). "Financing California's Community Colleges." *Public Policy Institute of California*. Retrieved from [https://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R\\_104PMR.pdf](https://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_104PMR.pdf).

Ono, N. (2017). "Program Awarding Credit for Experience Helps Fast Forward College for Working Californians." Retrieved from <http://caeconomy.org/reporting/entry/program-awarding-credit-for-experience-helps-fast-forward-college-for-worki>.

*Program and Course Approval Handbook*. (2017). 6th edition. California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Retrieved from [http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/Credit/2017/PCAH6thEditionJuly\\_FINAL.pdf](http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/Credit/2017/PCAH6thEditionJuly_FINAL.pdf).

Radionoff, K. (2016). "Digital Badges Transforming Non-Credit Education: Credit-Bearing Programming Next."

*The EvoLLLution*. Retrieved From <https://evollution.com/programming/credentials/digital-badges-transforming-non-credit-education-credit-bearing-programming-next/>.

San Diego Continuing Education. (2017). "The Past, Present, and Future of Noncredit Education in California." Retrieved from [https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Awards/2018/CCC\\_Noncredit\\_Project\\_Summary.pdf](https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Awards/2018/CCC_Noncredit_Project_Summary.pdf).

Shulock, N. & Moore, C. (2007a). *Beyond the Open Door: Increasing Student Success in California Community Colleges*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy. Retrieved from <http://edinsightscenter.org/Portals/0/ReportPDFs/beyond-the-open-door.pdf?ver=2016-01-15-155402-113>.

Shulock, N. & Moore, C. (2007b). *Rules of the Game: How State Policy Creates Barriers to Degree Completion and Impedes Student Success in California Community Colleges*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy. Retrieved from <http://edinsightscenter.org/Portals/0/ReportPDFs/rules-of-the-game.pdf?ver=2016-01-15-155407-347>.

Shulock, N. & Moore, C. (2007c). *Invest in Success: How Finance Policy Can Increase Student Success at California Community Colleges*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy. Retrieved from <http://edinsightscenter.org/Portals/0/ReportPDFs/invest-in-success-executive-summary.pdf?ver=2016-01-15-155405-160>.

Shulock, N., Moore, C. Offenstein, J., & Kirlin, M. (2008). *Could Happen: Unleashing the Potential of California's Community Colleges to Help Students Succeed and California Thrive*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy. Retrieved from <http://edinsightscenter.org/Portals/0/ReportPDFs/it-could-happen-insert.pdf?ver=2016-01-15-155405-160>.

Taylor, M. (2012). *Restructuring California's Adult Education System*. Legislative Analyst's Office. Retrieved from <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2012/edu/adult-education/restructuring-adult-education-120412.pdf>.

United States Census Bureau. (2017). "2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates." Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

Valenzuela, I., MacIntyre, D. J., Klein-Collins, B., and Clerx, J. (2016). "Prior Learning Assessment and Competency-Based Education: An Overview of Programs, Policies, and Practices." Research and Planning Group, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, and Moran Technology Consulting. Retrieved From <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED570321.pdf>.

Vespa, Jonathan (2018). "Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections for 2020 to 2060." Retrieved from [https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/P25\\_1144.pdf](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/P25_1144.pdf).

*Vision for Success: Strengthening the California Community Colleges to Meet California's Needs*. (2017). Foundation for California Community Colleges. Retrieved from [https://foundationccc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Vision/VisionForSuccess\\_web\\_2019.pdf](https://foundationccc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Vision/VisionForSuccess_web_2019.pdf).

Walton, I (2004, March). "75/25-the Faculty Obligation Number or Why Are We Not All There Yet?" *Rostrum*. Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. Retrieved from <https://asccc.org/content/7525-faculty-obligation-number-or-why-are-we-not-all-there-yet>.

Wollenhaupt, J. (2018). "Digital Badges Give Learners a Competitive Edge in Hiring and Career Advancement." *New World of Work*. Retrieved from [https://www.newworldofwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/21st-Century-Skills-Badging\\_Article.pdf](https://www.newworldofwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/21st-Century-Skills-Badging_Article.pdf).



This publication is printed on recycled paper. Please recycle your copy when done.

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges  
One Capitol Mall, Suite 230, Sacramento, CA 95814  
916.445.4753 [www.asccc.org](http://www.asccc.org)