Peter R. MacDougall
Superintendent/President
Santa Barbara Community College District
721 Cliff Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93109-9990

Dear Peter:

In response to your recent letter concerning our report on the Implementation of Budget Act Language for the $30 million reduction, let me respond directly to your questions and then comment more generally.

Your first question deals with our statement on page 13: "Even with the course reclassification, the relative portion of state-supported instructional workload in physical education and fine arts disciplines remains greater at the Community Colleges than at any of the other public segments." You ask for data on this conclusion. The University and the State University estimate that physical education and fine arts constitute roughly 7 to 9 percent of their course activity. This compares to 19 percent of the contact hours for the Community Colleges. More important from a fiscal standpoint, however, is the fact that the four-year segments are funded for credit hours generated, not for contact hours as are the Community Colleges. The typical physical education course will generate one hour of credit for three hours in class per week, thus diluting the reimbursement for that course in an FTE credit system compared to a contact hour system.

Second, you question our supposed assumption that it is inappropriate for the Community Colleges to offer more courses in physical education and fine arts than do the four-year segments. We do not assume this. A reading of all the comments on page 13 indicates that we are not attacking the Community Colleges for offering many courses in these areas but are challenging the assertion of the Chancellor's Office that the $30 million reduction has seriously hampered the transfer function of the Community Colleges. We have never suggested that instructional activity in any area of the Community Colleges should be limited to corresponding levels in any other segments.

Let me turn to the larger issue of whether it was appropriate for the Legislature to direct the Board of Governors to identify courses that should not be funded. This issue is cast often as a debate over State versus local control. The issue should be: "when there are not enough funds for all activities, how can the people of California best be served by the Community Colleges?" In making its budget decision, the Legislature considered several alternatives: charging a fee to all students, reducing funds across-the-board for all districts, or cutting special programs like EOPS or deferred maintenance. We believed that none of these alternatives
was appropriate as long as districts received State support for numerous credit courses in areas where there was little State interest. Moreover, we believed that charging a fee to all students should be a last resort because of the "open door" policy of the Colleges and that an across-the-board cut was not equitable because it would apply to districts with many questionable courses and to districts with few. As you know, the Legislature's decision to reduce the $30 million in the specific areas came after considerable discussion and passed several committees without a dissenting vote.

For the future I believe the most constructive activity is for districts to work with the Board of Governors to develop a clear policy statement, within the broad parameters established by the Legislature, on the function, scope, and priorities of the Community Colleges in view of the State's fiscal circumstances. I agree with you that it has been unfortunate that recent initiatives to conform the Community Colleges to fiscal realities have not come from the Colleges themselves. This year presents an opportunity to change that.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Callan
Director

PMC:ts

cc: Senator Gary Hart
    Assemblyman Jack O'Connell
    Mr. Gerald Hayward
    Mr. Eli Luria
November 4, 1982

Dr. Patrick M. Callan, Director
California Postsecondary Education Commission
1020 12th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Pat:

I received today a copy of your report entitled, "Implementation of Budget Act Language to Reduce State Appropriations to Community College Districts by $30-Million." In your cover letter, you mentioned you would be "glad to answer questions you might have about this report."

There are many questions. I will restrict them to one area. On page 13 of the report, the following statement is made: "Even with the course reclassification, the relative portion of state-supported instructional work load in physical education and fine arts disciplines remains greater at the community colleges than at any of the other public segments."

I would appreciate it if you could provide me with background data for that conclusion; e.g., the proportion of state supported undergraduate instructional work load for UC and CSU campuses in the areas of: (a) Physical Education; and (b) Fine Arts with a breakdown within the Fine Arts categories as contrasted with California community colleges.

Though the community college's mission differs from that of CSU and UC, some idea as to the relative distribution of such classes would be helpful.

Assuming the portion of work load in these areas is greater at the community colleges than the other public segments, I would be interested in CPEC's position re: the proportion of classes that should be provided in these areas by community colleges. The assumption from your statement is that providing an amount greater than the other segments in inappropriate. The question then arises as to what level is appropriate. Your response and rationale will be appreciated.

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I feel very strongly that both the method followed to defund these classes and the end result is not in the best interest of community colleges. However, it is an action that is history. Your answer to my questions may help us to better anticipate and thus prepare for the future.

Sincerely yours,

Peter R. MacDougall
Superintendent/President

cc: J. Hayward
    G. Hart, State Senator - Elect
    J. O’Connell, Assemblyman - Elect
    E. Luria