Sacramento, CA – The Community College League of California (League) hosted its 2017 Legislative Conference at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, January 29-30, 2017 in Sacramento. The League's Annual Legislative Conference provided a unique opportunity for chancellors, presidents, trustees, and community college advocates to connect and learn the latest news about California higher education. Sessions focused on topical issues impacting colleges, best practices such as guided pathways, proposed resources in the 2017-18 budget, and advocacy strategies for the current legislative year, among others. To read the League’s full press release, click here.

Below are highlights of the 2017 Legislative Conference, as well as helpful links to session materials and notes.
Crafty Integrated Planning: Promising Practices to Better Position Colleges to Braid Initiatives and Resources – Integrated Planning is key to the successful implementation of new initiatives by ensuring efforts build on existing activities and cultivate collaboration. This session explored the Integrated Planning Model and the related resources and tools to help institutions achieve integrated planning for student success. The session also focused on the Chancellor’s Office initiative, the Integrated Program Redesign of the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP), Student Equity Program (SEP), and Basic Skills Initiative (BSI). Conference attendees learned key features of Chancellor’s Office Innovation and Effectiveness Plan and the redesign process.

Materials included:
- Integrated Planning: ASK - Applied Solutions Kit
- CCCCIO Integration: Program Redesign
- IEPI's Response: Peer's Helping Peers

Promoting Civic Engagement and Global Citizenship: Next Steps – Community colleges have a responsibility to foster an environment that encourages advocacy and civic engagement among students. This session shared case studies for improving civic engagement amongst faculty, staff and students, and provided ways to increase participation. Every college is different and should create its own campus strategy for civic engagement efforts. Speakers encouraged conference attendees to start by creating a space for open dialogue to gauge where faculty, staff and students stand on issues, and then decide how they want to take action.

Materials included:
- CE Presentation Notes
- College of the Canyons, Civic Engagement Initiative Key Points

An Editorial Perspective on the Current Political Landscape – League Board Chair Doug Otto engaged in a conversation with Political Cartoonist and Pulitzer Prize Winner Jack Ohman discussing his take on the current political climate. Ohman emphasized the number one issue community colleges should focus on right now is civic education. Jack Ohman shared his experiences in covering several “hot button” topics throughout his extensive career, and said he believes the future of journalism will mean that first, content isn’t free, and second, freedom isn’t free. The general session luncheon also featured highlights of Ohman’s political cartoons.
Supporting Immigrant Students and Creating a Safe Campus Environment Under a New Presidential Administration – Under the Trump Administration faculty, staff and students have shared concerns about the future of undocumented students and their safety on-and-off campus. This session addressed questions regarding student enrollment and immigration, and provided an overview of state and federal immigration laws. In addition, conference attendees learned about recent efforts taken by California’s post-secondary institutions to support undocumented students and discussed ways community colleges can maintain a safe campus environment for all students.

A Discussion on the Future of Accreditation and California’s Community Colleges – In response to concerns about the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges’ process and approach, California’s 113 colleges created working groups to craft recommendations to reform the accrediting model in California in both the short and long term. Representatives from both of these working groups and the commission discussed plans to help make the commission more responsive to its membership. The session focused on the goals set by Workgroup I & II and provided an update on the timeline and achievement of those goals.

Materials included:
• California Community Colleges Accreditation History: Update on Workgroups I & II

Community College Budget and Fiscal Update – Key legislative staff, community college fiscal experts, and Brown Administration representatives discussed the proposed 2017-18 Budget and addressed any potentials anxieties of the current proposal. Panel participants engaged in a discussion about the fiscal priorities of the Community College System and the State Legislature, as well as opportunities and challenges facing state and local decision makers.
League Advocacy and Talking Points Training – League staff led a session to provide an opportunity for attendees to gain more in-depth information about the League budget and policy talking points in advance of advocacy visits with legislators. The talking points addressed the following: a community college base augmentation to ensure colleges can continue to offer a quality education for all Californians, giving community colleges a fair share of proposition 98, funding capital projects through the state bond approved by California voters in a 2016, and supporting a Integrated Library Systems that gives access to all students. Materials included:

- 2017 Talking Points
- Fast Facts 2017
- A Fair Share: Why the Spilt Matter To Colleges
- Community College Base Augmentation

A Conversation With Key Capitol Staff – Legislative staff play a critical role in the legislative process, not only do they research potential bills, draft reports and briefing, but also they serve as the gateway to collaboration with legislators and policy committees. This session provided an insightful discussion with key legislative staff close to higher education policymakers. Staffers agreed when meeting with legislators don’t just tell your members positive anecdotes about your community college, also share the challenges that your campus is facing. They also agreed that the only way for legislators to know if policies are effective is for their constituents to share real stories of policy implementation, whether good or bad. Chief Consultant to the Assembly Higher Education Committee provided insights as to what the legislature is interested in this year. She outlined three topic areas: (1) the online education initiative (2) guided pathways—if they’re working and what are the successes and challenges of its implementation and (3) the basic skills and accelerated model of learning to avoid remediation.

Strategies for Effectively Supporting Veteran Students – California’s higher education system lacks a statewide strategy for assisting veterans in college. This session shared information and effective practices for college leaders who work with student veterans. Speakers recommended community college officials to create a dedicated space on campus for veteran students and provide an orientation tailored to their specific needs. Conference attendees discussed the need for a coordinated system among the UC’s, CSU’s, and community colleges, as well as the need for data collection among Veteran Resource Centers and Counselors. This session also explored the idea of funding for Veteran counselors. Materials included:

- Effective Strategies for Serving Student Veterans
- Veterans Caucus Membership Guidelines
A Conversation with State Treasurer John Chiang – Brian King, CEOCCC President and Chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District sat down with State Treasurer John Chiang for a discussion about California’s community colleges and funding higher education. “When it comes to getting the most bang for your buck, it’s hard to beat the value provided by California’s community colleges,” said Chaing. “The 113 colleges which make up the nation’s largest system of higher education provides Californians with the skills, knowledge, and preparation to excel in today’s global economy.”

Legislator Town Hall Meetings – Conference attendees joined Assemblymember and Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee Jose Medina and Senator Richard Pan for town hall meetings to discuss the Legislature’s 2017 higher education priorities and to reinforce their support for California’s community colleges. The town hall meetings provided an intimate setting opportunity for conference attendees to ask questions and share ideas or concerns regarding the implementation of current policies that impact student outcomes.