



March 28, 2022

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Committee on Budget, Chair  
1021 O Street, Suite 8230  
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Kevin McCarty, Chair  
Assembly Sub-Committee on Budget #2  
1021 O Street, Suite 4250  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Vice Fong  
Committee on Budget, Vice Chair  
1021 O Street, Suite 8230  
Sacramento, California 95814

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**KEITH CURRY, Ed.D.**  
President/CEO

**RE: SUPPORT - Continued Funding For California Online  
Community College Act, Calbright College**

Dear Chair Ting, Chair McCarty and Vice-Chair Fong,

Compton College and Compton Community College District respectfully request that you **support** funding for the California Online Community College Act - known as Calbright College - as laid out in Governor Gavin Newsom’s January budget proposal.

Our state’s economy is best served by a higher education system that is equitable and accessible to all Californians. This includes the 6.8 million Californians ages 25-54 with a high school diploma but no college degree whose employment prospects are increasingly limited — particularly given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately disrupted plans for future education, employment, and more.

The Legislature provided Calbright College with a seven-year startup timeline, and - just 29 months after launching initial courses - Calbright has met every statutory milestone and is making significant strides to provide accessible, flexible, and high-quality programs to California’s working adults. Current enrollment has grown 110% in the last fiscal year to over 1,000 students from all corners of the state, including 21 rural counties. Calbright’s efforts to reach its focus population are working thanks to a proactive mix of student success, marketing, and operations strategies led by a growing team focused on continuous improvement. A snapshot of Calbright’s student body:

- 92% are over 25 (approx. 42% system-wide)
- 75% identify as BIPOC, with 24% Black/African American & 33% Latinx
- 32% are parents or caregivers (approx. 10% system-wide)
- 31% experienced a recent job loss or hours reductions

Notably, Calbright was found to be non-duplicative by the state auditor, has

adopted and is delivering on all audit recommendations and is ahead of schedule on accreditation. Calbright newly announced a partnership with SEIU-UHW to create an LVN pathway in addition to Calbright's existing five programs in Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Intro to IT, Cybersecurity, Medical Coding, and Equitable Health Impacts.

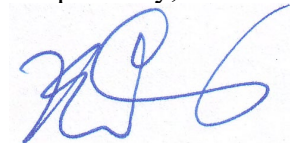
As California's only statewide, digital community college, Calbright's mission also includes the research and development of models and practices to inform not only Calbright's own work, but also to create best practices in online education for the California Community College system, workforce development programs, and others invested in creating maximum postsecondary opportunity. To that end, Calbright's partnership with the University of California, Irvine School of Education harnesses behavioral science and data analytics to inform support activities across the student lifecycle and is one of nine nationally selected sites partnering with Teachers College at Columbia University and SRI to explore technology's impact on self-directed learning.

The COVID-driven economic recession and uncertainty mean Californians need an even more flexible and affordable postsecondary learning option that offers a faster track to better jobs and higher wages, allowing traditionally underserved adults to succeed in our higher education system. A recent survey of Calbright students found that 90% were drawn to the College's fully online medium and flexible learning environment, and 78% chose Calbright because of its workforce-specific programs. Our current system of higher education is failing to serve these adult learners. Calbright was specially designed to serve the needs of this population and it should continue to be given the chance to do so.

Calbright presents a significant opportunity to provide a pathway to and through higher education by being an innovative partner in reimagining online learning that is affordable and accessible. It offers the convenience on which many of our for-profit institutions have been capitalizing for years, yet for-profit institutions provide mixed outcomes with a big price tag, often leaving students worse off than if they had simply not enrolled. Calbright is poised to help California rebuild and recover more equitably, and its new leadership has shown what it can accomplish when given the opportunity to build capacity and focus on smart growth tailored to students' lived experiences. By making Calbright inoperative, the Legislature takes away a critical tool from the California Community College system and risks repeating the mistakes of past eras of economic uncertainty and denying these Californians this flexible, accessible pathway to good jobs.

For the above reasons, Compton College and Compton Community College District respectfully request the Committee **support** the Governor's proposed funding for Calbright. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact me at [kcurry@compton.edu](mailto:kcurry@compton.edu) or at (310) 900-1600 ext. 2000.

Respectfully,



Keith Curry  
President/CEO  
Compton College

cc: Compton Community College District Board of Trustees  
Members of the California Assembly and Senate  
Ben Chida, Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom  
Chris Ferguson, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance  
Jennifer Pacella, Deputy Legislative Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Mark Martin, Consultant, Assembly Committee on Budget  
Casey Dunn, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus  
Dr. Christopher Francis, Consultant, Senate Budget Committee  
Jean-Marie McKinney, Consultant, Senate Fiscal  
Andrew Medina, Senate Pro Tempore Toni Atkins  
Mónica Henestroza, Special Assistant, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Ajita Talwalker Menon, President & CEO of Calbright College  
Pam Haynes, President, Calbright College