



December 12, 2008

On behalf of the nation's 1,200 community colleges and their CEOs and trustees, the American Association of Community Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees ask you to review and consider our views on some of the most important and pressing issues facing our members. We have provided three key economic recovery proposals items totaling approximately \$13 billion that we believe will help the economy in the short-term, while also laying the groundwork for long-term economic growth and stability. As the Administration and Congress consider proposals to stimulate the economy and lay the groundwork for long-term economic growth, we urge recognition of the essential role played by community colleges. Community colleges must be at the forefront of any national effort to boost the nation's prosperity. In return for federal support, community colleges pledge to work in concert with national, state, and regional economic goals, and to be held accountable for their results.

**1. Maintaining College Access and Affordability**

- A. We urge the Obama Administration to provide an additional \$3 billion to retire the entire current estimated shortfall. The stability of the funding for the Pell Grant program is vital to millions of our neediest students.
- B. We urge the Obama Administration to increase the Pell Grant maximum by \$700. In the time of economic downturn, our nation needs to step up to help students cover their educations and expenses without incurring large amounts of debt.

**2. Enhancing Community College Infrastructure**

- A. We request \$5 billion to assist community colleges to address growing facilities and infrastructure needs. Community college attendance continues to grow, and the crisis in many state budgets has placed an extraordinary strain on our colleges, with many absorbing mid-year cuts. Many community colleges facilities are over 50 years old, and therefore lack the space or technology needed to train the burgeoning numbers of students for jobs in high-demand and high-growth industries.

**3. Preparing for High Paying and High Demand Jobs**

- A. We request \$1.5 billion to help community colleges fund job training programs to train the workers in such key areas as advanced technology, energy and health care. The nation's unemployment rate is rapidly rising, yet across the country many employers are unable to find workers with the skills required for available jobs. Effective and well-targeted workforce training programs remain essential to building the nation's economy.