

May 8, 2008 Letter to AZ Legislature

Governor Napolitano, Senate and House Representatives;

Coconino Community College (CCC) provides educational and workforce development training to more than 7000 students each year throughout the Coconino County district. CCC proudly provides an affordable, high quality education to our students – be they high school students preparing for college or adult students wanting to enhance their employment skills. Our students go on to study at the University, to have careers in local industries, and to contribute to our community. Please take a moment to review the Coconino Community College economic impact data presented on attached sheet – it is quite impressive, especially when compared to national community college statistics.

In FY06-07, AZ community colleges served over 350,000 students (unduplicated headcount). Proposed cuts to the community colleges are too severe (Chairman's option list outlines 17%). The current State funding per student is less than it was 10 years ago on a State-wide level (dropped from \$1,482 in FY99 to \$1,389 in FY08 and comprises 2% of State's general fund budget). Unfortunately, community colleges have no avenue to make up for this loss other than massive tuition and fee increases (CCC has increased by \$7.00 per credit hour for FY09) due to property tax revenue limitations in the State constitution (primary property taxes are limited by constitution to 2% plus new construction).

These proposed cuts unfortunately will lead to the elimination of academic and career programs, eradication of important student support services, the continued utilization of outdated instructional equipment, dilapidation of buildings, and may force the closing of facilities.

AZ university system serves approximately 115,000 students annually and would be unable to absorb the vast numbers of students that would need higher education services if the community colleges were devastated to such a degree.

We implore you to reconsider the overall economic impact, both short and long term that these kinds of cuts would have on our State, particularly in light of our existing educational conundrum.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Dr. Leah L. Bornstein

President