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New Legislation Removes Barriers to Success for California Community College Students

MOORPARK– Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks) held a press conference this morning at Moorpark Community College to highlight the passage of AB 1705 and AB 1187, as well as \$64 Million secured in the 2022-2023 State Budget for the California Community College Equitable Placement and Completion Grant Program.

“Breaking down systemic barriers to student success is never easy, but today we proved that is possible,” said **Assemblymember Irwin**. “I am incredibly proud and thankful for the broad coalition of support that helped me push AB 1705, AB 1187, and the \$64 million budget investment across the finish line. Together we will continue to put the success of our community college students first so that every student can achieve their educational goals.”

In 2017, AB 705 (Irwin) was signed into law, ushering a new era of access and success as California Community Colleges were required to maximize the likelihood that students complete transfer-level courses in English and math within one year. Since its implementation, data has shown that AB 705 has contributed to significant reductions in racial equity gaps in access to, and completion of, transfer-level courses. However, systemic barriers persisted as implementation of AB 705 was uneven across California Community Colleges.

AB 1705 authored by Assemblymember Irwin addresses the misapplication of AB 705, and ensures community colleges continue to place students directly into transfer-level courses with additional support when needed. In addition to AB 1705, Assemblymember Irwin authored AB 1187, which expands the eligible courses campuses can provide students with state funded tutoring, and championed a \$64 million budget allocation for students and faculty to receive the support and resources they need to make community college students successful.

With the signing of AB 1705, AB 1187, and the \$64 million budget ask, California finally turns the page on antiquated practices in higher education, removing barriers to success for all California Community College Students.

What supporters of AB 1705 are saying

“California is increasing resources, adding services, and advancing equity to boost graduation and transfer rates throughout our higher education systems,” said **Governor Gavin Newsom**.

“AB 1705 is a critical piece of the pipeline to social mobility and student success... A major win for our California students!” said **Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis**.

“On behalf of the largest system of higher education in the United States, we are grateful to Assemblymember Irwin for championing both AB 1705 and AB 1187, and the budget investment necessary to ensure this legislation is carried out with fidelity,” said **California Community Colleges Chancellor Daisy Gonzales**. “For too long, our broken system of assessment and placement held back students of color and students from lower-income and first generation backgrounds. Thanks to an incredible coalition of advocates and stakeholders, led by students, we are now moving past that era and embracing the idea that when we believe in our students and give them the tools they need to succeed, they will thrive, both in our community colleges and beyond.”

“California prospers when more students cross the graduation stage. AB 1705 gives our students the ability to do just that, removing barriers that disproportionately trapped Black and Latinx students into an endless cycle of remedial courses, and setting them on a path to reach their college dreams,” said **Michele Siqueiros, President of Campaign for College Opportunity**. “By enacting AB 1705 into law, California is sending a message to students that we are a state that prioritizes making their college dreams a reality, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or zip code.”

"As a faculty member, I am thrilled that AB 1705 has become law," says **Dr. Katie Hern, Professor of English at Skyline College and Cofounder of the California Acceleration Project**. "The evidence is unequivocal that remedial courses don't help students succeed. AB 1705 means that these courses won't continue to derail students' dreams."

“Black and Latinx students deserve to be welcomed to community colleges with transfer-level coursework and effective types of support that signal a sincere belief that they are talented, capable, and ready to succeed. That’s why we couldn’t be prouder to have championed AB 1705 alongside Assemblymember Irwin and our coalition partners. We came together out of a conviction that community college students of color have the potential to thrive in rigorous English and math courses. AB 1705’s signing into law is, at its heart, a victory for California.” said **Christopher Nellum, Executive Director of The Education Trust–West**.

"I am pleased that Governor Newsom signed the companion bill to AB 705—AB 1705—into law. It is consistent with the California Community Colleges Vision for Success goal of reducing units to earn a degree, time to completion or transfer, and, importantly, the cost of college,” said **VCCCD Board Chair Dianne McKay**. “We are especially grateful to Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, who authored both AB 705 and AB 1705, because data shows that many more students, especially young men of color, will finish college and successfully reach their goals.”

"At Public Advocates, our motto is ‘making rights real’—and we have been fighting to make the rights of low-income, Black, Indigenous, and Brown students real for over 50 years,” said **Jetaun Stevens, Senior Staff Attorney at Public Advocates**. “Despite the success of AB 705, too many

colleges continued to enroll students in remedial courses and too many Black and Brown students continued to be left behind. So, we joined the fight to ensure that the rights of Black and Brown students to enroll in transfer-level college courses was real. Now, thanks to Assemblymember Irwin and Governor Newsom's commitment to student success and equity, thousands of Black and Brown community college students will no longer be trapped in high-school level remedial courses. AB 1705 brings the California Community College system one step closer to closing persistent racial equity gaps and students one step closer to realizing their dreams."

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Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin represents California's 44th Assembly District, which includes the communities of Camarillo, Moorpark, Oak Park, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Thousand Oaks, and Westlake Village. Visit Assemblymember Irwin's website: <http://asmdc.org/Irwin>.