



# Teresa Tarazi

**TO:**

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**FROM:**

Teresa Tarazi  
English Instructor  
Fresno City College  
State Center Community College District  
*Teresa.tarazi@fresnocitycollege.edu*  
(559) 999-8128

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**SUBJECT:**

**Support for Gov. Brown's proposal for a fully online community college**

I would like to follow up on my comments made during the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee hearing on February 8, 2018, about Gov. Brown's proposed online community college.

As an instructor, I see the need for an online community college.

There are many reasons California must invest in an online community college now, and by considering only some of these advantages, we can see the overwhelming benefits it can bring to California.

- 1) Students who complete their certificate or degree have a greater chance of financially contributing back to their local communities and to California as a whole through a stronger tax base. More students in our college system, who may take 5-10 years to graduate, means more people needing to use valuable resources. More students who can graduate in a timely manner, who can earn the necessary certificate or degree to gain long-term employment or promote within their career, means less people needing valuable resources. Instead, these students are able to contribute to California's resources.

Additionally, these same students' morale also rises significantly with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction knowing they have earned the necessary certificate or degree to move up in their careers or find another opportunity.

- 2) Some may argue that the other 114 community colleges can meet the online need. Unfortunately, in the basic scales of economy, one can see that those 114 different ways of doing trying to do same thing with its own unique niche is not the best and most efficient or effective way of doing things.

One online community college does not mean local colleges cannot have online courses or programs, but it does mean that valuable resources will be used in a focused, most efficient and effective way because we know, like the private sector has shown, specialty areas know their audience and are experts in their specialty fields, which means that the client is well-taken care of and the need is met.

Currently, community colleges do and must stay focused on A.A. and A.S. degrees, transfer students, and hands-on work force students. Each of these areas is inundated in terms of class schedule need and class availability. In other words, programs like Nursing are backlogged with students waiting to get into the Nursing Program to finish their coursework and get out into the work force full-time. Unfortunately, many of these students have difficult work schedules that also collide with course availability. With an online community college, these students would have better access and be able to complete the Nursing Program in record time.

However, Nursing is not the only impacted program. When you have limited classrooms with limited capacity, your community college has limited ways of meeting all of their students' needs. An online community college has the ability to

offer unlimited classes. If one class fills up, another class can easily open to accommodate more students. Thus, the online community college has advantages. In fact, the online community college can be a source of support for the other 114 community colleges that find themselves in need of offering their students more access but simply cannot for various reasons. The online community college will not have the same physical limitations the other community colleges have, and the online community college can be much more flexible to work independently and in support of its sister community colleges.

- 3) Additionally, one may argue that local community colleges will lose funding. The idea that an online community college is taking away money from the local community college is an old and outdated idea.

For example, an online community college can charge an extra fifty dollars, for example, that could be sent to the local community college the student lives near. This would help offset some costs of the student's use of the local college library database or other resources. Moreover, the local college economy is enhanced because the student, who was once unable to finish their coursework, can now finish school in a timely manner and support the local economy. They may even find that the student can now enjoy and pay for the local community college sporting events, theatre shows, and music festivals.

- 4) However, since online work is very different than face-to-face teaching, administration, and function, it is imperative that online students have the best online access that is consistent and uniform.

Students move and when they do, they will not have to drop one college for another. In the Central Valley, for example, students may move from Visalia to Fresno for a job opportunity. In this case, 45 minutes means having to change colleges, from the College of the Sequoias to Fresno City College. Once a student has to reinvest all the initial time it takes to begin college again and learn how the new "environment" works, many students put off returning to college or decide they do not have the time to figure everything out again and they give up. With an online community college, students can remain in college no matter where they move.

Moreover, while they are in online classes, they are innately learning many sought after skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They will be able to navigate online platforms and programs, communicate effectively through written work or by use of video meeting programs like Join.me. The students will also be more competitive globally. China, India, and the Philippines have more people who are working online. These countries see the gap in online services and are filling the gap with online workers who can fill online services, from answering phones to billing to customer relations.

There are also conferences like “The Global Society of Online Literacy Educators First International Online” that are preparing for full online education. We’ve already seen how for-profit online programs have taken many of our students away from the community college. We can’t afford to fight amongst ourselves. Instead, we must have an online community college that can respond to and compete as one against the for-profits and now global education on the horizon.

- 5) Most importantly, once we have students in the system, they will not have to worry about disrupting their education because of a loss of job, finding a new job, unexpected death in the family, a divorce, moving, or anything else.

The sooner a student graduates with a certificate or degree, the sooner that student can earn a higher income and contribute to California’s economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to share why I support an online community college and how it can only help educate and offer the great benefits of success we want for all Californians.

Respectfully,

Teresa Tarazi  
English Instructor  
Fresno City College  
State Center Community College District