

April 9, 2018

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 1 on Education
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento CA 95814

Support: Online Community College

Dear Chairman Portantino and Senate Budget Subcommittee 1 Members:

On behalf of the School for Integrated Academics and Technologies (SIATech) I wish to express our support of the Governor's proposal to establish an Online Community College. SIATech offers a public high school diploma opportunity along with Department of Labor career technical education. We serve young men and women aged 16 to 24 who are predominately very low income and who are unemployed or in low paying jobs with families to support.

There are an increasing number of alternative schools serving adult learners who find online courses to be an effective way of improving educational outcomes for those working and raising families. Bringing California's Community College system into this network will have a positive outcome for low-income workers seeking college level courses and credentials to improve their lives and the futures of their children.

In addition to serving population demographics similar to that proposed for the Online Community College, our pedagogy is competency based as proposed for the Online Community College. Since opening our school in 1998, we have awarded 10,000 fully WASC-accredited diplomas. In the past four years, we have provided an option where hundreds of formerly out of school students have earned those diplomas exclusively with online curriculum.

We have developed a range of practices supporting these students and have begun a dialogue to share our experience with the California Community College. We find that the use of technology and online instruction can be tailored to engage and support adult learners seeking to improve their economic situations and gain both academic and career skills.

SIATech's work in providing high quality on-line curriculum coupled with customized student supports is resulting in accredited, public school diplomas for Californians who never thought they'd have access to these credentials *and* career technical certificates. We welcome California Community Colleges to the increasing network of on-line education options for adult learners overcoming barriers in accessing traditional education.

We support the Online Community College initiative to provide our graduates and others with the opportunity to use their online skills to access college level courses and credentials.

Sincerely,



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