



TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Chief Instructional Officers

FROM: Marty Alvarado, Executive Vice Chancellor, CA Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Lataria Hall, President, California Community College Chief Student Services Officers
Gerardo Chavez, President, Student Senate for California Community Colleges

RE: Student Enfranchisement in Participatory Governance

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on student body associations (SBA) and the engagement of students in participatory governance processes. As institutions are preparing to reopen campus and resume in-person teaching and learning, now is the time to adopt student enfranchisement as a district and college priority by incorporating effective strategies to engage students in the participatory governance processes statewide and at local student body associations (SBAs). Student enfranchisement in participatory governance is at the core of the Vision for Success commitments, reinforcing that the student experience must remain at the center of design and decision making processes.

Beyond the commitments laid out in the Vision for Success, statute and regulations require colleges to engage student voice in college decision-making processes. [Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations 51023.7](#) requires the governing board of a community college district to “recognize each associated student organization or its equivalent within the district as provided by [Education Code Section 76060](#), as the representative body of the students to offer opinions and to make recommendations to the administration of a college and to the governing board of a district with regard to district and college policies and procedures that have or will have a significant effect on students.”

These regulations formally cement the role of students in governance processes and even precludes governing boards from taking action on any matters having a significant effect on students until it has provided students with an opportunity to participate in the formulation of the policy or procedure or the joint development of recommendations regarding the action. However, student participation can go beyond this.

Student Enfranchisement in Participatory Governance

October 4, 2021

Over the past year, the Chancellor's Office and the Student Senate for California Community Colleges have taken steps to significantly increase the scope of student engagement throughout our system and will continue to ensure that students have the opportunity to contribute and have their voices heard. In September 2020 the Chancellor's Office issued [Legal Opinion 2020-08: Student Participation in Community College Recruitment](#) that clarified that state law does not prohibit student participation in recruitment and selection processes for faculty and classified employees. The opinion also cited that recommendations of the Vision for Success Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, as adopted by the Board of Governors, support the inclusion of students participating in the hiring processes.

Successful student engagement and inclusivity requires district and college leaders to improve campus strategies and identify outcomes that will lead to equitable student success. Campus leaders must ensure the right of students to participate effectively in district and college governance, and take advantage of every opportunity to ensure students have the opportunity to express their opinions and are given every reasonable consideration. Colleges are strongly encouraged to work with their SBA to identify and remove any obstacles to student participation and find ways to better facilitate student involvement. If the college SBA is not currently meeting, campus leaders are strongly encouraged to actively recruit students and explain the importance of participating in the development of district and college policies and procedures that have or will have a significant effect on students.

If you have any questions regarding this memo or the SSCCC, please contact Gina Browne at gbrowne@cccco.edu.