



October 14, 2014

Wow, 90 days goes by fast! As you may know, I took a few months off this summer to get a reset after 8 years as President/CEO and nearly 20 with the League. I spent some time on California's beautiful central coast, did lots of reading and am quite rested as I return to work with the League's great team to advocate for the students and communities served by our community colleges. As an anonymous citizen over the summer, I can't tell you how many times I heard people talk about how wonderful our community colleges. They are really talking about the hard work that **you** do.

I'd like to thank Dr. Thelma Scott-Skillman for serving as the League's interim President/CEO during this time, and she has done a fantastic job working with the League's boards and staff. Thank you Thelma!

If you have moved or know anyone who has, don't forget to register to vote at [registertovote.ca.gov](http://registertovote.ca.gov) by **midnight on October 20** for the November 4, 2014 general statewide election.

On the budget front, California's economic rebound continues. California's unemployment rate is now 7.4%, well below the 12.4% high last seen in October 2010. Single-family and multi-family housing permits have increased significantly off their lows, and the median home price has increased by 7.1% over last year.



The State Controller's office last week reported that state revenues exceeded the Budget Act projections by \$671.4 million in September, bringing the first quarter receipts \$645.2 million above budget projections. Each of the "Big 3" revenue sources--personal income, corporate, and sales taxes--exceeded projections in September, suggesting a broad-based recovery, rather than just the one-time impacts of stock market gains.

While the first quarter news is good, it's too early to project what it means for the overall 2014-15 budget and Proposition 98's guarantee for K-12 schools and community colleges. We would expect a continued rebound of property taxes, which will help the state meet its school funding guarantee as well as other "non-98" priorities.

Of course, California's economic rebound is highly unequal. Our state is home to some of the greatest wealth generation in the world, while also that of huge inequality. County unemployment rates range from 4.2% (Marin) to 25.1% (Imperial). And, within counties like San Francisco (4.7%), there is great angst by those who feel that they are not benefiting equally from the economic expansion. Walk around the block of Market Street that is home to Twitter, and you'll be surrounded by both millionaires and people for whom the safety net has failed.

That's why I'm so happy to be back to work to advocate for community colleges. While we can't solve all of society's problems, there is no greater institution of socioeconomic transformation than the community college. The doors remain open to all with a passion to learn, and you are working hard to close the success gaps that have too often led to disproportionate results for students.

We have an exciting year of advocacy and policy contemplation ahead, with a focus on equity, K-12 connections, and continued access and quality restoration for our colleges. Thank you for being an advocate for California's community colleges and our students.

Sincerely,

Scott Lay  
President and Chief Executive Officer, The League  
Orange Coast College '94