January, 2003

The Honorable
California State, Room
P.O. Box
Sacramento, CA

Dear Senator/Assembly Member (Name):

The budget proposed by Governor Davis is outrageous! The cuts to community colleges are really out of line compared with those expected of other segments of education. San Joaquin Delta College is making preparations for the worst-case scenario, which has already included canceling hundreds of classes, cutting all expenditures to the bare minimum, and making plans for layoffs. As a legislator, you are obligated to do the least harm to your constituents. I am writing to encourage you do the right thing and reduce the impact on community colleges from “extreme” to “severe.”

Our students returned to school January 13, 2003, only to find that their classes had been cancelled over the winter break. Over 50 percent of my students receive some sort of financial aid. Their basic survival money is in jeopardy if they cannot sustain enough units. Those of us with resources understand that it is not appropriate to write checks against money that you don’t have, but these students often struggle with the pressure of going to school, jobs with low paying and long hours, and families of their own, so they do what is necessary to survive.

Community colleges are resources for the entire community. By making “extreme” cuts to community colleges, you are cutting off the lifeline for the most economically disadvantaged. Thousands of students come to Delta College each year to get vocational training, complete their first two-years of college and transfer on to universities, or upgrade their skills. In the last two years, we have seen a tremendous influx of people who have college degrees, get laid off from their Bay Area jobs, and need to come to Delta College to gain new skills to re-enter the job market.

As your constituent, I urge you and other legislators to implement the community college system proposal in the final budget. Community colleges are the best investment for a hemorrhaging economy. We provide the education and training that gets people to work quickly with programs that address the needs of the local economy. Do not destroy the primary resource and access to those with the greatest need.

Sincerely,

Your name