

Dear Campus Community,

As we quickly approach the end of the Spring semester and the 23-24 academic year, I wanted to take a moment to provide a brief update on the status of the development of the 24-25 college budget and fiscal projections. In general, earlier this month, fiscal services projected the college will need to mitigate a twenty million-dollar (\$20,000,000) deficit for the fiscal period encompassing 7/1/23-6/30/25 and an additional twenty million-dollar (\$20,000,000) deficit for the 7/1/25-6/30/26 fiscal year. To assist in the facilitation of this process and to ensure broad constituent participation in decisions being made regarding this matter, I have worked with the Executive Cabinet to convene a representative leadership group, now commonly known as “The Budget Leadership Strategies Team”. This group of college leaders has come together to collect and convey ideas, as well as develop potential strategies to address these massive projected deficits. The Team will then provide me with recommendations to consider for possible implementation. These recommendations will also be shared with the College Council and the Executive Cabinet for review and feedback.

The work of the Team originally started late in the Fall semester with Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Services as co-leads, as well as, the Academic Senate President, AFT President, ECCE President, and ASO President. The initial objective of the team was to draft principles which would serve as a framework as we considered budget reductions. The principles agreed upon by the Team are as follows:

- Protect Students from Budget Reductions
- Communicate Clearly and with Integrity
- Operate Collaboratively and with Transparency
- Retain Employees to Extent Possible
- Review All District Expenditures for Potential Reduction and Develop Revenue Generating Strategies
- Advocate for Funding at the State/Federal Levels and Pursue Extramural Funding

In the new calendar year, each representative group added an additional member to the Team. Currently the Team structure is as follows:

Co-Leads: VP Lopez and VP Stephenson

Executive Team: VP Miyashiro and VP Suppelsa

Academic and Student Services Deans: Dr. Chris Gold and Dr. Kristina Martinez

ECCE: Roy Dietz and Lissette Marquez

El Camino College Federation of Teachers: Dr. Kelsey Iino and Dr. Darcie McClelland

Academic Senate: Charlene Brewer-Smith and Joshua Troesh

Police Officers Association: Officer Oscar Castro and Officer Erika Solorzano

Associated Students Organization: Jose Merino and Mia Wroe

With the foundational principles in place, the focus of the expanded Team shifted to ensuring a shared understanding of the budget and the deficit the College is facing. The Team spent several meetings asking questions and gaining insight into various budget scenarios. The next step the Team took was brainstorming ideas on how to reduce the budget deficit. They openly and actively solicited for the submission of any and all

ideas. No item was too big or small to consider. From the budget reduction ideas that were collected, a list was generated, and the Team separated the items into various categories which included:

- Items already in formal discussion for action or implementation
- Items potentially inconvenient but seem reasonable and appropriate, as soon as possible
- Items that might be difficult
- Items that are probably difficult (Worst Case Scenario)
- Potential revenue generating strategies

Vice President Suppelsa continued to add estimated cost savings/revenue data to the list to aid in projecting potential cost savings or possible increases in revenue that may be realized from implementing a specific strategy.

After extensive discussion, recommendations from the Budget Strategies Leadership Team were forwarded to me for review. Given the urgency of the budget situation, I had already worked with the Executive Cabinet to identify and implement some initial reduction strategies. Several of these strategies also appeared on the list of recommendations provided by the Team. This provided confirmation that this initial work was reflective of and in alignment with constituent perspectives and expectations. The list below represents initial strategies that have already been implemented or will be implemented in alignment with the recommendations received:

1. Review and cancel or remove 37 positions from Position Control
2. Realize savings from unfilled positions – 7/1/23 – 12/31/23
3. Transfer labor costs to Measure E
4. Utilize Categorical Funds to support appropriate Fund 11 expenditures
5. Reduce the number of sabbaticals from 12 to 4 for 2024-2025
6. Reduce the number of faculty recruitments for 2024-2025 by three (3): Computer Science, Sign Language, and Theater
7. Reduce unplanned/uncommitted non-essential travel from Fund 11
8. Review and modify or cancel specific positions due to retirements or vacancies
9. Implement modified Zero Based Budget and/or discretionary funds reductions for 2024-2025 budget Year
10. Reduce Temporary Non-Classified budget allocations (based on projected unused funds from 2023-2024 budget year)
11. Delay the 2% salary increase for Management/Supervision until FY 26/27

Furthermore, all open positions are currently being reviewed at the Cabinet level. Only mission critical positions are being filled at this time. This practice is reflected in several of the cost reduction strategies listed above.

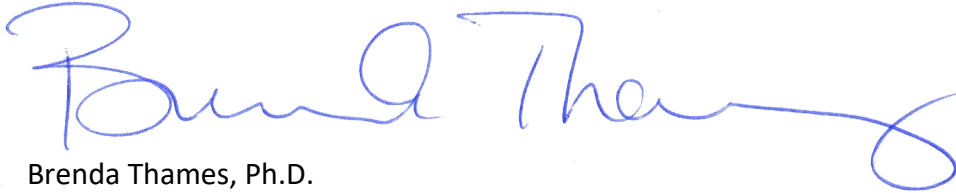
In addition to the cost reduction strategies above, the Budget Strategies Leadership Team is working on recommendations that may generate additional revenue for the District. Any additional revenue generated will be used to offset additional reductions that may need to be implemented.

Per fiscal services, this list is currently estimated to save the District approximately \$18.8 million between reductions to the budget and savings from 23-25 FY budgets. This is not an exhaustive list, rather, these are strategies that have been or will be implemented to help mitigate the budget deficit. This is just the first of a series of strategies that will be used to help decrease the budget gap. I am confident through continued collegial communication, consultation, and participation we can continue to reduce the deficit we are facing. As reductions in current spending are made, any savings will be carried forward to reduce subsequent gaps in FY 24/25 and FY 25/26.

The work of the Budget Leadership Strategies Team, Planning and Budget Committee, and Executive Cabinet will continue as we monitor developments with the State Budget as well as with changes within the College budget. I, along with the Executive Cabinet and the Budget Leadership Strategies Team invite you to visit the [Budget Strategies Leadership Team](#) website which provides additional information and details about the work I have outlined in this message. Please contact individuals from the Team to share additional ideas on how we can reduce spending or generate income. Additionally, the Team is currently developing a process via the College website that will allow faculty and staff to submit ideas related to reducing spending or generating revenue. Please look for a message and the link in the near future.

As colleagues and a campus community, El Camino College has a long tradition of responsible fiscal stewardship. We have a shared interest in the investment and management of our resources to acknowledge the value of our employees; DEIA+; and providing high quality teaching, learning, and holistic support services to our students while ensuring institutional sustainability. I look forward to working with you in continuing to prioritize these values through this budget reduction and strategic management process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda Thames". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brenda Thames, Ph.D.
President/CEO