

**MEMORANDUM**

July 14, 2025

ESS 25-39 | Via Email

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

**FROM:** Rowena Tomaneng, Deputy Chancellor  
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Stacey Shears, President  
California Community Colleges Chief Student Services Officers Association

Ivan Hernandez, President  
Student Senate for California Community Colleges

**RE:** Student Participation in College Governance

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Student involvement in college governance is both a legal right and a critical equity issue. Students face ongoing challenges related to affordability, basic needs, mental health, academic success, and civic engagement. Their voices must be centered in campus and district decision-making.

Title 5, Section 51023.7 of the California Code of Regulations requires governing boards to recognize each associated student organization as the official representative body of students and to provide students with the opportunity to make recommendations and offer input on college and district policies and procedures that have or will have a significant effect on students.

Recent updates to Education Code § 76061 expand access to student leadership by establishing that students with disabilities and students in adult education cannot be excluded from student government participation based solely on unit enrollment. Colleges may not rely solely on unit enrollment as the determining factor for excluding students from participation in governance, especially in cases where students are enrolled in academic programs—such as noncredit, adult education, or those receiving DSPS accommodations—that may necessitate reduced course loads. This ensures that eligibility requirements do not unintentionally exclude students from historically underrepresented populations and promotes a more inclusive and equitable approach to student leadership.

The Chancellor's Office and the SCCC are committed to advancing practices that amplify student voice. Their input improves decisions and reflects the real needs of our diverse student body.

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College and district leaders are urged to:

- Partner with student body associations (SBAs) to eliminate participation barriers.
- Recruit and mentor diverse student leaders.
- Include students early in all governance discussions.
- Offer training and compensation where appropriate to support effective participation.

If an SBA is currently inactive, colleges should take immediate steps to rebuild student governance structures and reinforce its importance.

For questions about this memo or the SSCCC, please contact Julie Adams, Executive Director at [JAdams@SSCCC.org](mailto:JAdams@SSCCC.org).