

# ***Office hour, health insurance categorical budget items could be augmented by growth funds***

*– Phyllis Eckler*

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, the Community College Board of Governors (CC BOG) voted to support the allocation of some leftover growth money from this year (2005-2006) to increase the part-time categorical budget items for next year. In particular, health insurance rebates and office hour pay were approved as the line items most in need of increased funding.

The categorical funds for office hour pay and part-time faculty health insurance were established several years ago to offer rebates from the state to districts that provide these programs to their part-time instructors, but these line items in the state budget for community colleges have always been underfunded.

The “growth money” is the revenue from the state general fund that gets allocated to public education districts based on enrollment growth. The CC BOG is the highest governmental liaison between state legislators and the many entities in the community colleges. Their recommendations are very important, and they came to an agreement through a vote that their highest priority for the leftover growth funds are these two part-time line items. This is great news!!

However, this leftover money can be used by legislators for ANYTHING, and while we are trying to keep it in the community college budget, your elected representatives can take it out and use it for other pet projects from Kindergarten through the community colleges. Therefore it is imperative that we contact our legislators and let them know that this money is very important to community college part-timers.

At the moment the committees that deal with education finance in both the assembly and senate are waiting to find out exactly how much growth money from this year will be left over. Estimates range from \$50,000,000 to \$69,000,000. Once the Department of Finance receives the reports on the student population growth from all the different community college districts, a clearer picture will emerge. Then these budget committees will decide where to recommend that this money be allocated.

Your letters to the committee members (listed in the e-mail link above) and to your individual legislator will help swing the votes toward increasing part-time line items. Then we have to make sure that the governor carries the will of the legislature forward by signing a revised budget that, for the first time in six years MAY include increases to the part-time categorical budget items.

Below is link to do that (courtesy of the LA Guild). The letter is pre-written but you can change it to make it more personal. You don't need to fill in the name or e-mail address of your state representatives the system finds this info and inputs it automatically once you put in your address on the right side of the webpage. It also signs the e-mail with your name. The only thing you need or can change is the body of the letter. Your sending this alert can make a big difference.

[http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/stand\\_up\\_sound\\_off](http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/stand_up_sound_off)