

College of the Sequoias

July 3, 2008

A.G. Kawamura
California Secretary of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, California 95184-5607

Secretary Kawamura,

I would first like to personally thank you and the CDFA board for their willingness to travel the state gathering input for the California Agriculture Vision 2030 Plan. During my remarks at the Heritage Complex I was asked to document my request through the website. We all understand the importance of California Community Colleges in our role as the "Workhorse of Workforce Training" for California's New Economy.

Community colleges are being called upon to fill the gap between the increasing demand for skilled labor and the supply of qualified workers. It is estimated 75-85% of jobs today require training above the secondary level. CSU and UC institutions are turning away qualified applicants and many students coming out of high schools are under qualified. Therefore, community colleges are asked to provide the critical remedial and career technical training necessary to become successfully employed in high skill jobs where businesses are struggling to find qualified workers.

Governor Schwarzenegger is investing millions of dollars for Career Technical Education in the Strategic Priority Initiatives of the California Community Colleges Economic and Workforce Development Program. These areas include Advanced Transportation Technologies, Applied Competitive Technologies/Manufacturing, Biotechnologies, Environmental Technologies, Geographic Information Systems (GIS)/Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS), Health, and Multimedia/Entertainment. A combination of SB-70 and Economic Workforce Development (EWD) funds totaling \$58 million dollars are being distributed to community colleges and K-12 programs through the California Department of Education (CDE). These funds will be used to increase CTE training program opportunities for children through adults as part of a statewide career pathways project.

Unfortunately, agriculture is **not** one of the states strategic priority areas. Although agriculture projects could be funded under these programs, few if any of the grant dollars flow to training programs for agriculture students. The SB-70 funding Career Pathway grants are establishing pathways from elementary grade levels through community colleges. These model programs are seeking to build partnerships between K-12 and community colleges programs. Agriculture has had these model programs in place for years as demonstrated by the FFA members who spoke at the session yesterday.

I presented the panel a brochure outlining Assembly Bill 1480 (AB 1480) by Assemblyman Bill Maze of the 34th District establishing Program Standards for California Community College Agriculture Programs. These standards will ensure California Community College Agriculture Programs will be able to meet the challenges for training the future agriculturists needed to fulfill the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Vision for 2030.

We propose CDFA contact **Mr. José Millan, Vice Chancellor**, to seek assistance from **Mr. John Scheuber**, Chair, of the Community College Statewide Agriculture Advisory Committee. The committee has developed a strategic plan for funding the implementation of program standards for community college agriculture programs.

The CDFA also needs to request that agriculture be added to the list of strategic priorities. Adding agriculture as a priority will enable community college and K-12 agriculture education programs a better opportunity to request funding to enhance educational and training opportunities. Increased funding will assist individuals who seek training programs to secure employment in the agriculture industry. Agriculture is the leading economic industry in the state and should receive a fair share of the workforce training dollars being appropriated by the state legislature.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the CDFA board for holding these very valuable and informative sessions seeking input from the field as they develop the 2030 vision. All of the challenges facing agriculture, presented at the Tulare session, will only be solved by well trained and educated future leaders of tomorrow. California community colleges will be called upon to train those leaders through certificate, degree or transfer programs.

If I can be of further assistance please let me know by contacting me at larryd@cos.edu or by phone at 559-730-3808.

Sincerely,



Larry Dutto
Dean of Academic Services-CTE