



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES



September 30, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the nation's 1,200 community colleges and their CEOs and trustees, the American Association of Community Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees request your support for the proposed \$5 billion in funding for community college modernization within the President's American Jobs Act. Community colleges enroll more than 8.2 million credit course students and 5 million non-credit course students each fall, encompassing nearly half of all U.S. undergraduate students.

Community college attendance continues to grow, increasing by more than 1.6 million credit course students over the last decade. This is far more than any other sector in higher education, and widespread cuts in state and local funding have placed an extraordinary strain on our colleges. One consequence of this budget situation is that many colleges are foregoing infrastructure upgrades, retrofitting and other capital expenditures as they struggle to meet immediate student needs. Many community college facilities are over 50 years old, and therefore lack the space or technology needed to train the burgeoning number of students in high-demand and high-growth industries.

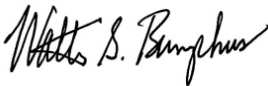
Collectively there is an estimated, and staggering, \$100 billion of unmet need for community college infrastructure and related capital costs. The benefits of \$5 billion in federal support are enormous. In the short term, federal funding to support two-year community and technical college capital will temporarily invigorate local construction business, which would serve job-starved communities. In the long term, this funding will prepare community colleges to produce workers in the key industries of the future, such as alternative energy technologies and health care, for which our colleges prepare more than half of all new workers. Given the immense backlog of projects on our campuses, facilities funds can be obligated and then spent in short order.

Recent analysis by the Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI) indicates that a \$5 billion investment in modernization of community college facilities would generate a total impact of 81,988 jobs.

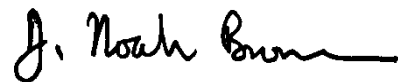
In most places, the local community college is the center of postsecondary education, job training and economic vitality. Unfortunately, community colleges are not in a position to keep up with increased growth demands and maintain their infrastructures solely with tuition and other state and local funding. At a time when our nation is seeking solutions to its economic problems, community colleges educate and train students of all ages and backgrounds to reach their potential and can help our country renew its economic strength. This investment in our institutions will help the economy in the short-term, while laying the groundwork for long-term economic growth and stability.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Walter G. Bumphus
AACC President and CEO



J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and CEO

Signed on behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges
Association of Community College Trustees

Alabama Community Colleges
Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges
Association of Florida Colleges
California Community Colleges
Colorado Community College System
Community College League of California
Delaware Technical and Community College
Illinois Community College Board
Illinois Community College Trustees Association
Iowa Association of Community College Trustees
Iowa Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation
Kansas Association of Community College Trustees
Kentucky Community and Technical College System
Louisiana Community and Technical College System
Maryland Association of Community Colleges
Massachusetts Community Colleges

Michigan Community College Association
Mississippi Community College Board
Missouri Community College Association
Montana University System--Two-Year and Community College Education
Nebraska Community College Association
New Jersey Council of County Colleges
New York Community College Trustees
North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees
North Carolina Community College System
Ohio Association of Community Colleges
Oregon Community College Association
Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges
South Carolina Association of Technical College Commissioners
State University of New York Community Colleges
Texas Association of Community Colleges
Vermont Community Colleges
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
Washington Trustees Association of Community and Technical Colleges
West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education
Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association