Statement in Support of the College of San Mateo Open Educational Resources (OER) and Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Program

It has been brought to the attention of faculty at the College of San Mateo (CSM) that the remaining balance of SMCCCD District Strategic Initiatives OER/ZTC Funds at CSM have been withdrawn in advance of the Fall 2026 semester. These funds were explicitly provided to "be used to help establish an infrastructure that will support achieving a designated level of service." (10/19/21)

In 2025-2026, the ZTC Task Force was tasked with creating a three-year OER/ZTC Program spend down plan to facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategy that aligns with Free College and equity work at SMCCCD.

Warnings of placing a program on “pause” without faculty involvement circumvent the authority of Academic Senate. Board Policy 6.13 (BP 4020) stipulates that Program Review (PR) and Program Improvement & Viability (PIV) are academic and professional matters under the purview of the Academic Senate. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Academic Senate, under Administrative Procedure 6.13.1 (BP 4020 and 4022), to design and recommend to the college administration processes for conducting these evaluations of instructional programs. College of San Mateo has a PIV process that was used to assess three programs just last year. If administration has concerns about a program’s viability, they should allow for a transparent analysis of the program with all stakeholders in the room.

As our community’s college, removing over $300,000 from our accounts is short-sighted and violates our institutional priorities of strategic planning, effective communication, student-focused support, community partnerships, and (given the high rates of success and enrollment for students in this program) equity.

The Academic Senate urges President Manuel Alejandro Perez to do the following: 1) formally communicate steps that led to the College and/or Board’s decision, 2) reinstate the funds until a process has been communicated, the program has been reviewed, and the final report has been delivered to Academic Senate and relevant campus stakeholders. Until then, program coordination should continue without interruption. If the college needs to explore the viability of the program, administration must first consult the Academic Senate, and if there are true concerns, the Academic Senate expects the use of the Program Improvement & Viability (PIV) process as stated in Board Policy.

Resources

- The Assurance made in accepting CCCCO ZTC Program Grant funds to, "Develop degrees with consideration for sustainability after grant funding is exhausted, including how content is updated and presented. EDC_78052.pdf"; and
- Scaling OER and ZTC pathways advances Vision 2030 commitments; and supports the CCCCO goal of ≥70% courses use OER ($0) in all CCC courses; and
- "Pursuant to Title 5, Section 54221 the SMCCCD shall support the increase, expansion, or improvement of OER and ZTC course materials to promote cost savings, academic freedom, and student success." BP 4042 OER and ZTC Measures, AP 4042 OER and ZTC Measures (Burden-Free Access to Instructional Materials, EDC 54221; ESS 25-43 memo); and
- "[T]he Board adopted a final 2021-22 Budget that included a $6.75M initial allocation for the development of a Free Community College strategic initiative. This included $1.25M specifically for the expansion of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) pathways. … These funds should be used to help establish an infrastructure that will support achieving a designated level of service" (McVean, 9/29/21 via email).