

Date of Hearing: April 9, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 3142 (Jones-Sawyer) – As Amended April 4, 2024

SUBJECT: Los Angeles Community College District: California Center for Climate Change Education

SUMMARY: Authorizes the creation of the California Mobile Unit for Climate Change Education for the purpose of promoting hands-on learning opportunities in climate action career fields for community college students. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the California Center for Climate Change Education (Center) located at the West Los Angeles College in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD).
- 2) Clarifies the mission of the Center is to promote climate change education at the California Community Colleges (CCC) and to establish opportunities for students to participate in internships and other learning opportunities.
- 3) Specifies the Center is do all the following:
 - a) Serve as a resource for community colleges on climate change education with the understanding that at its core, climate change is a global issue of equity and social justice;
 - b) Build a clear climate change pathway that leads to appropriate certificates, degrees, and employment opportunities;
 - c) Enhance partnerships with nonprofit organizations that encourage the development of student internships and work-based learning opportunities;
 - d) Explore and expand internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, other work-based learning opportunities in the equity, environmental justice, and green jobs sectors;
 - e) Partner with local and regional entities to support the workforce training needed in the greening of the energy grid, and other industries; and,
 - f) Develop and sustain an urban climate change sustainability conference.
- 4) Requires the Center to consult with various entities when establishing a clear climate change pathway as described above. Requires the Center to consult with the relevant faculty and administrative groups, as defined, of the CCC, the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC).
- 5) Requires LACCD to prepare a summary report that includes an evaluation of the Center in accomplishing the mission as established in (2) and (3) of this analysis, recommendations for improving the programs offered by the Center, and an accounting of how the funds appropriated in Budget Act of 2022 were used in the furtherance of (2) and (3) above.

- 6) Establishes as part of the Center a California Mobile Unit for Climate Change Education (Mobile Unit) located at West Los Angeles College for the purpose of providing learning opportunities throughout region.
- 7) Clarifies the mission of the Mobile Unit is to assist the Center in fulfilling its duty to explore and expand internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, other work-based learning opportunities by creating opportunities for students to engage in hands-on internships and other learning opportunities.
- 8) Authorizes the Mobile Unit to do the following, in collaboration with the Center:
 - a) Provide students with the opportunity to actively participate in the development of exhibits, hands-on learning experiences, and outreach programs; and,
 - b) Partners with local and regional entities to support the workforce training needed in greening the energy grid band other industries.
- 9) States the intent of the Legislature is for the Mobile Unit to provide students with the ability to gain proficiencies in research, prostration skills, and a better understanding of the interdisciplinarity of climate change.
- 10) Requires the Center in developing the mission of the Mobile Unit to consult with the relevant faculty and administrative groups, as defined, of the CCC, CSU, and UC.
- 11) Appropriates \$1.5 million from the general fund to the Center for the development and initial operations of the Mobile Unit. The funds will be encumbered for up to three years and will be used to hire staff and to purchase equipment and materials needed for the development of the Mobile Unit and for the development of curriculum. The subdivision containing the appropriation of funds will be repealed on January 1, 2032.
- 12) Deletes from AB 183 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 54, Statutes of 2022, the provisions regarding the mission of the Center, and the reporting requirement for the Center.
- 13) Makes findings and declaration on behalf of the Legislature pertaining to climate change including, but not limited to:
 - a) The immediate threat global climate change poses to the United States' national security, public health, national economy, and the legacy we will leave our children;
 - b) The most vulnerable communities, as defined, face even greater health risks due to climate change;
 - c) In 2002, the Board of Trustees of the LACCD adopted the Clean Energy and Sustainability Resolution, which directs staff to develop a plan to establish a pathway to achieve the 100 percent carbon-free energy goal by 2030;
 - d) The people of the United States overwhelmingly support teaching students about the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to global climate change; and,
 - e) The Budget Act of 2022 established the Center at the West Los Angeles College in the LACCD.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the CCC under the administration of the Board of Governors of the CCC, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. The CCC shall be comprised of community college districts (Education Code (EDC) Section 70900).
- 2) Establishes that CCC districts are under the control of a board of trustees, known as the governing board, who has the authority to establish, maintain, operate, and govern one or more community colleges, within its district as specified (EDC Section 70902).
- 3) Authorizes the Regents of the UC to establish the California-China Climate Institute in partnership with the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at Tsinghua University and other entities and institutions in China and California (EDC Section 92687).
- 14) Appropriates \$5 million to the Board of Governors of the CCC for distribution to LACCD for the purpose of developing and for the initial operations of the Center, which is to be located at the West Los Angeles College. Establishes the mission of the Center to be the mission of the Center is to promote climate change education at the CCC and to establish opportunities for students to participate in internships and other learning opportunities. Specifies the Center is do all the following:
 - a) Serve as a resource for community colleges on climate change education with the understanding that at its core, climate change is a global issue of equity and social justice;
 - b) Build a clear climate change pathway that leads to appropriate certificates, degrees, and employment opportunities;
 - c) Enhance partnerships with nonprofit organizations that encourage the development of student internships and work-based learning opportunities;
 - d) Explore and expand internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, other work-based learning opportunities in the equity, environmental justice, and green jobs sectors;
 - e) Partner with local and regional entities to support the workforce training needed in the greening of the energy grid, and other industries; and,
 - f) Develop and sustain an urban climate change sustainability conference.

Requires the Center to consult with various entities when establishing a clear climate change pathway as described above. Requires the Center to consult with the relevant faculty and administrative groups, as defined, of the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC).

Specifies the funding for the Center will be used for developing curriculum, providing hands on internships to students, and the hiring of staff.

The funding will be encumbered for a five year period.

Requires LACCD to prepare a summary report that includes an evaluation of the Center in accomplishing the mission as established in (2) and (3) of the summary section of this analysis, recommendations for improving the programs offered by the Center, and an

accounting of how the funds appropriated in Budget Act of 2022 were used in the furtherance of (2) and (3) of the summary section of this analysis (Section 61 of Chapter 54 of the Statutes of 2022).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, but appropriates \$1.5 million from the general fund for the development and initial operations of the Mobile Unit.

COMMENTS: *Purpose of the measure.* In 2022, Governor Newsom and then Chancellor of the CCC, Eloy Oakley agreed to a set of metrics and goals the CCC would accomplish to meet the demands of future workforce needs and in return the State would make significant investments in the CCC¹. One of the strategic goals was to establish or expand programs that address workforce needs in climate action. The roadmap would act as measurement for success for the CCC over a five year period and they annually report their accomplishments in fulfilling the metrics and goals set by the Governor in collaboration with the previous Chancellor. In September 2023, Chancellor Sonya Christian, along with the Board of Governors of the CCC, published the Vision for 2030, which built upon the Governor’s roadmap, in turn building out goals and metrics the CCC would meet by 2030². Included, as part of the equitable workforce and economic development goals listed in Vision 2030, is the goal of advancing community college engagement in addressing climate change by providing workforce development and curriculum reflective of the ongoing needs to address climate change. AB 3142 (Jones-Sawyer) builds upon the Governor’s Roadmap for the CCC and Vision for 2030, by establishing the California Mobile Unit for Climate Change Education (Mobile Unit) as part of the California Center for Climate Change Education (Center) located at West Los Angeles College within the LACCD.

As contended by the author, “California has led the charge in addressing climate change, from setting ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals to investing in actionable climate science and research. Millions of dollars have been directed to the University of California and the California State University to fund climate-focused initiatives and research. Still, the California Community Colleges remains an underutilized tool in our state’s plans to tackle climate change. Under AB 3142, the California Mobile Climate Change Education Center in West Los Angeles College will advance the state’s climate change education efforts and focus on training and workforce development for the clean energy industry.”

AB 3142 (Jones-Sawyer) builds upon the work of the Center at West Los Angeles College by providing additional funding to the California Center for Climate Change Education for the purpose of creating a mobile unit to reach students in the community with hands-on learning and internships opportunities that the Center is unable to reach. Furthermore, the measure codifies the Center to ensure the mission and purpose of the Center are anchored in the Education Code in a similar fashion as previous community college-based centers that were adopted in the Budget.

California Center for Climate Change Education (Center). In 2022, AB 183 (Committee on Budget) appropriated \$5 million to the LACCD for the purpose of creating a Center. In addition

¹ <https://dof.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/352/Programs/Education/CCC-Roadmap-May-2022.pdf>

² <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/Vision-2030-A-Roadmap-for-California-Community-Colleges.pdf?la=en&hash=3B83F5221C4A7A8BEFA7E94D5BCBF540D2718013>

to the \$5 million provided by the State of California, LACCD was also awarded \$1.3 million from the Federal government for the same purpose.

West Los Angeles College was selected as the location for the Center, as the college was an early implementer of a climate change education. In 2018, West Los Angeles College became the first community college to have Climate Change and Environmental Studies Associates degree. Furthermore, West Los Angeles College was originally thought to be the best location for the Center as the college is adjacently located to one of the largest oil fields in the state. As a mark of social justice and environmental equity, the Center was established on West Los Angeles College in order to help the workforce and community upskilling to transition from fossil fuel related jobs to green jobs as California transition towards cleaner energy.

In the Spring of 2023, the Center opened its doors on the West Los Angeles College campus and has since been working diligently to fulfill its purpose enumerated by the AB 183 (Committee on Budget), which is listed in the existing law section of this analysis under (14). Since Spring 2023, the Center has accomplished several milestones including:

- 1) Hired a director for the Center;
- 2) Hosted a conference on climate change in October 2023: Climate Change Palooza; and,
- 3) Started offering internships for students in climate action related jobs.

LACCD has contended the need to expand the reach of the Center through a Mobile Unit as it would enable the Center to connect with high school students and other community college students with climate change internships and educational opportunities. Currently, the Center offers 20 internships opportunities for students, all of which pay \$20 an hour and range from part-time to full-time.

Committee comments. As mentioned above, the Center has only been operational for a year and the report on the effectiveness of the Center in fulfilling its mission has not been produce as it is not required by the Legislature until January 1, 2027. It is unclear if the Center has built a clear climate change pathway that leads to appropriate certificates, degrees, and employment opportunities. In a Yale Newsletter on Climate Connections, it is stated that West Los Angeles College's Associated Degree in Climate Change and Environmental Studies has produced eight graduates since 2020.³ Of those who graduated only two are highlighted as continuing their education in climate action related fields of study.

LACCD elected to spend the federal funding of \$1.3 million first, due to the encumbrance timeline. LACCD has five-years to spend the funding the State allocated in 2021 equating to \$5 million. Based on the suggestion that the Mobile Unit is meant to provide hands-on learning opportunities and internships to the greater West Los Angeles Community, the Center would be fulfilling its mission to establish a Mobile Unit with the already allocated funds.

Furthermore, LACCD has local control over its own budget and the creation of centers within its district boundary. Once the funding was appropriated as long as the decision for how to use the funds is aligned with the mission of the Center, such as the decision of whether a Mobile Unit

³ <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2023/10/college-campuses-launch-new-climate-studies-majors/>

should be created, entirely lies with the LACCD governing board. In a budgetary year with potentially extreme fiscal constraints on State General Funds, the Author may wish to examine whether the already appropriated \$5 million can be used for the Mobile Unit; especially, since the Unit would be help in fulfilling the mission of the Center and is not expressly prohibited by AB 183 (Committee on Budget).

The Committee may wish to explore if this measure is premature.

AB 3142 (Jones-Sawyer) will not be heard in the Budget Committee as a budget letter was not submitted for this proposal. While budget trailer bills and policy bills follow the same legislative pathway, the contents of the budget trailer bill are carefully considered and negotiated over by the Budget Committees. This measure will not be considered as a proposal within the budgetary context, specifically, how allocated \$1.5 million to LACCD may impact other projects or budgetary requests.

As budget staff have suggested in the past, policy bills are for future budget considerations not in the given fiscal year; therefore, moving forward the Author may wish to delay the apportionment of funds by making the measure contingent upon the Legislature apportioning the \$1.5 million instead of automatically having the funds appropriated.

Arguments in support. As highlighted by LACCD, “a s the Center matures in its programs, the importance of educational outreach has accelerated as we learn more about the paucity of exposure to climate change issues in public schools—and, in particular, in schools located in under-resourced communities. Multiple studies have revealed that a lack of resources and teacher training are one of the most significant contributors to the absence of climate change education. With the passage of AB 3142, the Mobile Climate Change Education Center can provide significant support to K-12 schools including LAUSD as it implements its Climate Literacy Resolution (February 2022). Through a partnership with the LAUSD and other regional school districts, the virtual reality capabilities of the Mobile Education Center, along with hands-on experiences, demonstrations, exhibits, and internships, will provide more opportunities for students to engage with the issue of climate change. Of significant importance is the long-term impact of the programs provided by the Mobile Education Center, especially in partnership with school districts, for research has shown a correlation between comprehensive climate change education and reduction in carbon emissions (Cordero, Centeno, Todd: February 2020).”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Altasea At the Port of Los Angeles
Climate Registry; the
Los Angeles Community College District

Opposition

None on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960