

26.08.23 Advancing Equity Through Traditional Healing: Expanding California Community Colleges Health & Wellness Services for Native American and Indigenous Students

Author: Lisa Brown

Sponsor: Region V

9+1 Student Rights: Area 8 - Student Services Planning and Development

WHEREAS, The Native American Student Support & Success Program (NASSSP), established through AB 1623 (2022, Ramos) and codified in Education Code §79520, exists to support the academic and cultural needs of Native American and Indigenous students; yet services and environments vary by campus and often exclude Traditional Healers, Indigenous Wellness Practitioners, and sacred or culturally safe spaces, despite research showing that culturally grounded wellness and respectful academic environments are essential for equity in student persistence, mental health, and academic success [1][7];

WHEREAS, California's CalAIM Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver recognizes Traditional Healers as legitimate Medi-Cal providers for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) beneficiaries, creating a statewide framework for traditional healing; however, many self-identified Native American and Indigenous students, including those who are not eligible for Indian Health Service (IHS) benefits, such as students from federally unrecognized tribes, lack equitable access to these supports, even though AB 1623 (2022, Ramos) and NASSSP affirm the need to serve Native students broadly, underscoring the importance of inclusive campus partnerships [2][3][5];

WHEREAS, Research demonstrates that culturally grounded environments, including sacred spaces for ceremony and wellness, as well as learning spaces that promote calm, attentiveness, and productive energy, are essential for student belonging, engagement, trauma recovery, and academic success; and Native American and Indigenous students in the California Community College (CCC) system often lack access to such environments, highlighting the need to advocate for classrooms, study areas, and testing centers designed to minimize unnecessary disruptions and support focus and flow [4][6]; and

WHEREAS, Native American and Indigenous students disproportionately experience housing insecurity, and according to the Western Center on Law & Poverty, "ending homelessness within the Indigenous community will ultimately require the allocation of land or physical space for those experiencing homelessness," which underscores the need for inclusive and equitable campus housing policies that provide culturally safe environments, spaces that respect identity, privacy, and traditions, to support displaced Native American and Indigenous students [8][9]; Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate of California Community Colleges advocate to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office for expanding campus Health & Wellness Centers to integrate Traditional Healers and Indigenous Wellness Practitioners in order to increase equity in health and wellness services through inclusive campus partnerships for Native American and Indigenous students, and advocate for CCC campuses to establish Care Coordination

Agreements (CCAs) with Tribal health programs, Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities, and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) to enable Traditional Healers to provide Medi-Cal reimbursable services for IHS-eligible students;

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate of California Community Colleges urge the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and Chancellor's Office to establish a dedicated "Native & Indigenous Wellness Track" within campus Health & Wellness Centers, in collaboration with Native American Student Support and Success Programs (NASSSP), to provide culturally grounded services, including traditional healing practices, traditional medicine, cultural workshops, educational programs, and group wellness sessions, for all Native and Indigenous students, inclusive of those who are federally unrecognized or IHS-ineligible, thereby prioritizing equitable access to holistic care regardless of federal status;

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate of California Community Colleges advocate to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office to develop and implement comprehensive strategies for the integration of multiple Traditional Healers and Indigenous Wellness Practitioners within campus Health & Wellness Centers and Native American Student Support and Success Programs (NASSSP), not only to provide traditional healing but also to serve in advisory and cultural coordination roles, such as faculty and staff development, culturally aligned wellness practices, design and maintenance of sacred and communal spaces, including residential areas, ceremony support, traditional knowledge sessions, sacred-space coordination, and other non-clinical cultural healing practices accessible to all self-identified Native American and Indigenous students; and

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate of California Community Colleges advocate future legislation which will aim for culturally responsive campus housing and shared facilities policies that respect Indigenous traditions, such as smudging, drumming, ceremony, and related cultural practices, while upholding safety standards, and supporting opportunities for all Native and Indigenous students to practice their cultural identity without punitive barriers within campus housing or communal environments.

Citations:

[1] [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, "Native American Student Support and Success Program," Educational Services and Support Division](#)

[2] [California Department of Health Care Services, "Traditional Health Care Practices," DHCS](#)

[3] [California Department of Health Care Services, "Indian Health Program – CalAIM Section 1115 Waiver," DHCS](#)

[4] [California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center, "The State of American Indian and Alaska Native Education in California," California State University San Marcos \(2024\)](#)

[5] [Center for Health Care Strategies, CMS-Approved Waivers Break New Ground for Medicaid Coverage of American Indian and Alaska Native Traditional Health Care Practices](#)

[6] [American Indian Higher Education Consortium, "Pathway to Postsecondary Success for Native](#)

Students: Literature Review, (2022)

[7] California Legislature, Assembly Bill 1623 (2022), “Native American Student Support and Success Program,” California Education Code §79520

[8] Western Center on Law & Poverty, “Addressing Disparities in Housing: Indigenous Population Solutions

[9] CalMatters, “How California is working to elevate Native American students

26.10.06* Supporting the Implementation of an Accessible Emergency Light System

Author: Erin Griepsma

Sponsor: SSCCC Region V

9+1 Student Rights: Area + 1 - Any Other District and College Policy, Procedure, or Related Matter that the District Governing Board determines will have a significant effect on students

WHEREAS, Institutions of higher education are committed to maintaining an inclusive and safe environment for all members of the campus community, including individuals who are dDeaf, Hard of Hearing (HoH), or dDeaf+, who may be unable to hear traditional auditory emergency alerts;

WHEREAS, Accessible emergency communication is essential to the safety and well-being of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors, particularly individuals who rely on visual cues during emergency situations;

WHEREAS, Multiple colleges and universities such as Cuesta College [1] and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln [2], which utilizes the Alertus Beacon system [3] have successfully implemented color-coded visual emergency alert systems to enhance preparedness and campus-wide accessibility; and

WHEREAS, Many institutions primarily rely on auditory alarms and announcements, which do not fully address the accessibility needs of dDeaf, HoH, and dDeaf+ individuals and may limit equitable access to critical emergency information; Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate of California Community Colleges encourage California community colleges safety and emergency management bodies collaborate with relevant departments, accessibility services, and representatives from the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf+ communities to review, adopt, and implement a multi–color-coded visual emergency light system as part of campus emergency protocols;

RESOLVED, That Student Senate of California Community Colleges encourage California community colleges develop and distribute training and informational materials to ensure that all campus members understand the meaning of each emergency light color, know appropriate response actions, and that the system be evaluated regularly and updated as needed for continued effectiveness; and

RESOLVED, That Student Senate of California Community Colleges advocate that the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and the Chancellor’s Office develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address and implement these new inclusive emergency alerts amongst all

California Community Colleges and be forwarded to the institution's safety committees, facilities committees, emergency management leadership, and student services leadership for review and action.

Citations:

[1] <https://www.cuesta.edu/community/publicsafety/emergency/lights.html>

[2] Service - Desktop Emergency Alerts - ...

[3] <https://www.alertus.com/alertbeacon>

[4] <https://a1props.com/product/over-door-patient-status-light-rainbow/>

[5] Alpha Communications 4-LED DOME LAMP-TC400–NON SUP

26.10.06.01* Amend 26.10.06 Supporting the Implementation of an Accessible Emergency Light System

Author: Erin Griepsma

Sponsor: SSSCC Region V

9+1 Student Rights: Area + 1 - Any Other District and College Policy, Procedure, or Related Matter that the District Governing Board determines will have a significant effect on students

Amend fourth Resolved to read:

WHEREAS, Many institutions primarily rely on auditory alarms and announcements, do not include a dedicated, campus-wide, multi color-coded-emergency indicating lighting system or wall mounted message alert boxes that are installed in classrooms, offices, common areas, and entrances which do not fully address the accessibility needs of dDeaf, HoH, and dDeaf+ individuals and may limit equitable access to critical emergency information; Now, therefore, be it

Amend first Resolved to read:

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate of California Community Colleges encourage California community colleges safety and emergency management bodies collaborate with relevant departments, accessibility services, and representatives from the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf+ communities to review, adopt, install, and implement a multi–color-coded visual emergency light system as part of campus emergency protocols utilizing an approach similar to that implemented at Cuesta College while incorporating a broader array of color indicators comparable to the A1-Medical Integration Over Door/Patient Status [4] wall unit, the 4-LED Dome Lamp (TC400—Non-Sup) [5], and the Alertus Beacon used throughout classrooms, offices, common areas, and building entrances at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in order to enhance accessibility, improve clarity of emergency communication, and remain consistent with campus safety and emergency preparedness protocols;

26.10.07* Student Representation on Safety Committees

Author: Erin Griepsma

Sponsor: SSSCC Region V

9+1 Student Rights: Area + 1 - Any Other District and College Policy, Procedure, or Related Matter that the District Governing Board determines will have a significant effect on students

WHEREAS, Campus safety policies, procedures, and practices including emergency response, law enforcement practices, crime prevention, threat assessment, and safety communications have a significant effect on students and directly shape the learning environment at California Community Colleges;

WHEREAS, Title 5 §51023.7 [1] requires that students be provided the opportunity to participate effectively in the formulation and development of district and college policies and procedures that have a significant effect on students, and campus safety decisions are inherently such areas;

WHEREAS, Safety Advisory Committees or equivalent bodies currently exist at many colleges but vary significantly in transparency, composition, and student participation, and are not consistently governed by the open-meeting requirements established under the Ralph M. Brown Act (California Government Code §54950 et seq.) [2]; and

WHEREAS, Students are primary stakeholders in campus safety yet are not always granted voting representation or a dedicated agenda space to express student concerns, and meaningful student participation increases accountability, supports equitable outcomes, and strengthens trust in institutional safety processes; and

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate for California Community Colleges advocate that California community college districts formally establish Safety Advisory Committees or equivalent bodies with ongoing jurisdiction over campus safety policies, procedures, and practices;

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate for California Community Colleges advocate that these Safety Advisory Committees be recognized and treated as Brown Act bodies consistent with California Government Code §54950 et seq. [2], including compliance with open-meeting requirements such as publicly posted agendas, open and accessible meetings, and opportunities for public comment; and

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate for California Community Colleges advocate that students be granted at least one voting seat on each Safety Advisory Committee, with student representatives appointed by the recognized student body association or its designee; and

RESOLVED, That the Student Senate for California Community Colleges advocate that the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office recommend that California Community College Safety Advisory Committees include on its agenda a standing item titled "Student Concerns / Student Voice on Safety Issues" to ensure regular and ongoing student input regarding campus safety matters.

Citations:

[1] California Code, Government Code - GOV § 54950 | FindLaw

[2] California Government Code section 54950 (2025)

