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February 19, 2020

FEB 1 9 2020

The Honorable Rudy Salas, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
1020 N Street, Room 107
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request to Audit Calbright College

Dear Assemblymember Salas:

I along with my colleagues, Assemblymember Quirk-Silva and Senator Wiener, respectfully request the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) approve this request to audit California Online College, which is also known as Calbright College. We would like the audit to review the current status of Calbright College's efforts to meet its goal of providing economic mobility for working adults who lack easy access to traditional forms of high education. We would also like the audit to review the status of key milestones, such as accreditation, as well as expenditures of appropriated funds to ensure Calbright College is progressing effectively and efficiently towards meeting its goal. Finally, we would like the auditor to review the revised approach being proposed by the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) as it relates to the 1) accreditation path 2) collaboration with community colleges and 3) efficiency of innovative solutions to meet the needs of skilling up adults to immediately enter the workforce. We hope the State Auditor finds that the establishment of Calbright College is proceeding in an effective and efficient manner. If changes are needed, we believe it best to identify these needed changes as soon as possible.

Calbright College intends to be a "new kind of California Community College, designed to deliver career preparation that is fast, focused, and free or very low cost to leaners." It was created in 2018, when then Governor Brown signed it into law. At the 2018 State of the State address, Governor Brown stated "Even with so many of our students attending college, there are still 2.5 million Californians between 25 and 34 who are in the workforce, but lack a postsecondary degree or certificate. These men and women often go out of state or pay high tuition at for-profit institutions to improve their skills and employability. For this group, we want to create the California Online College so these overlooked Californians can get the training they need conveniently and at very low cost."

We have some concerns regarding Calbright College, including concerns regarding the duplication of programs already offered by California's community colleges, and Calbright College's ability

to reach important milestones. California Education Code §75001(d)(1) clearly states: "The college shall offer at least three program pathways within the first three years of program implementation, developed exclusively to serve the population of students not yet accessing postsecondary education or without their first industry-valued credential. The college shall create new programs that are not duplicative of programs offered at other local community colleges." Calbright College has announced its three programs: (1) medical coding, (2) information technology, and (3) cyber security. Some researchers have found examples of these programs already existing in community college districts.

We are also concerned that Calbright College may not be achieving important milestones. My office specifically, has been unable to confirm with Calbright College that it has successfully achieved all or most of the below milestones, which Education Code §75009(a) states were expected to be achieved by July 1, 2019.

(1) Fully develop a seven-year implementation plan, validate a business plan, and develop three program pathways designed in partnership with employers and industry groups.

(2) Develop internal business processes and personnel policies, such as hiring, salaries, and evaluations, and establish outcomes goals including the classifications necessary to support instructional development, and activities and other elements of the student experience.

(3) Map the student experience, including, but not necessarily limited to, recruiting, onboarding, transcriptions, instructional experience, billing, entry into internship if applicable to the student's programs, and entry into jobs.

(4) Develop an accreditation plan.

(5) Create a statewide outreach plan, which includes working with immigrant groups and community-based organizations to reach the target population of working learners and help design educational opportunities that work for these learners.

(6) Define the duties for instructional support, program development, and other student experience activities.

(7) Establish a process for the recognition of prior learnings into the student onboarding experience.

(8) Plan to begin enrolling students by the last quarter of 2019.
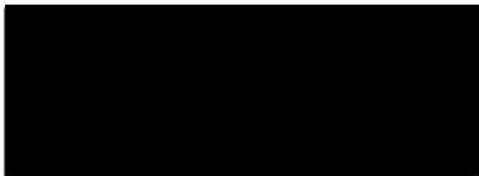
Proposed Scope of Audit

Together we therefore respectfully request that the Joint Legislative Audit Committee approve this request to have the State Auditor review Calbright College and its efforts to train or educate otherwise overlooked Californians. Specifically, the audit should cover the following scope:

1. Identify and analyze the following information—obtained via survey or other means—regarding students at Calbright College:

    a. The number of enrolled students and the number of students in course offerings and programs.

    b. Demographic information for enrolled students, including ethnic diversity, age, household mix and income, previous educational experience and/or degrees, and career path/reason for enrolling with Calbright College as opposed to a local community college.

    c. Whether these are the students Calbright College was created to serve, including whether the students already had access to affordable educational opportunities.

    d. Whether students are satisfied and successful, and progressing in courses and programs.

2. Determine whether Calbright College's courses and programs are duplicative of courses and programs already offered by California's community colleges.

3. Compare and contrast the efficiency and effectiveness of resources spent at Calbright College to resources spent at California's community colleges or other worthwhile initiatives and programs. Highlight any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.

4. Determine whether Calbright College has complied with applicable laws and regulations, including but not limited to whether it complied with California employment laws, procurement laws, and Education Code 78032 (c), which places limitation on recruiting students.

5. Review and assess efforts to create and implement an inclusive outreach plan to recruit students throughout the State. Determine whether outreach efforts are specifically targeted to those Californians that the Calbright College was intended to train and educate, and will result in Calbright College meeting its enrollment goals.

6. Determine whether Calbright College has met key milestones, including but not limited to milestones set forth in Education Code §75009(a). Further, evaluate Calbright College's efforts to meet these key milestones and fulfill its mission.

   a. Review and assess Calbright College's efforts to become an accredited college.

   b. Review efforts to facilitate internships and job placements, and to work in partnership with employers and industry groups.

   c. Review Calbright College's preparedness for receiving and educating students, including efforts to recruit qualified faculty and staff.

7. Review and audit Calbright College's expenditures and controls for reasonableness and appropriateness, including but not limited to expenditures and controls related to salaries, office and satellite campus space, electronic devices, online technologies, consulting contracts, and timekeeping.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact Rita Medina in Assemblymember Medina's office at (916) 319-2061 should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

ASSEMBLYMEMBER JOSE MEDINA (AD-61)

ASSEMBLYMEMBER SHARON QUIRK-SILVA (AD-65)

SENATOR SCOTT WIENER (SD-11)