



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CALIFORNIA

December 16, 2014

Dear LWVC League President,

Public Higher Education in California is at a crossroads. Almost daily, there are news articles about public higher education and the need for reform in terms of accessibility, which includes funding, affordability, preparedness, equity, and opportunities & barriers for success. Unfortunately, because LWVC does not have a position on public higher education in California that includes the CSU and UC systems, the League cannot comment on or advocate for or against any legislation. This study was proposed and approved in order to remedy this situation and in recognition of the fact that education is the bedrock upon which democracy is built and sustained.

As Chair of the LWVC Education Foundation Study of Public Higher Education in California, I am writing to you for three reasons:

1. First and foremost, I want to encourage your league to participate in the study process.
2. If your league intends to participate in the study, I would like to encourage you to bring together your local education study committee by mid-February 2015 or, if that is not possible, within the next three months.
3. I want to inform you and the chair of your local study committee of some changes to the study process that the state committee is undertaking in response to member feedback.

LWVCEF is interested in making sure that the geographic diversity present in our state is well represented by broad-based participation of our local League communities. There are 10 UCs, 23 CSUs and 112 CCs in the California Community College System. It is important that our study reflect citizen involvement and the diversity of opinion from all these regions within California. We strongly encourage you and your League to participate. If you do decide to participate, we'd like to encourage you to form your local education study committee and select a chair by mid-February 2015.

In response to feedback given after other studies were completed, the State Committee has decided to approach the study process a little differently. In the past, local leagues have stated that little or no information had been forthcoming for a long time after a study had been approved. Then, once the information was provided, the time frame for the committee members to study and understand the material prior to communicating it to their membership in preparation for the consensus meeting was too short. In order to address these concerns, the State Committee has decided to do the following:

1. Suggest local Leagues form their study committees early so that pertinent and relevant articles can be sent to them prior to the publication of the Study Guide. At least two articles related to an aspect of the study will be posted monthly on the study website (<http://lwvc.org/study/education-0>) and sent out electronically to League presidents and local committee chairs starting in mid-February 2015 and continuing through June 2015. Local committee members should read and discuss the articles, as well as any suggested questions related to the area, in order to develop and enhance their own knowledge base as a committee.
2. The Study Guide is scheduled to be posted to the website and sent out electronically in August 2015. At that time, local Leagues should begin educating their membership about each of the aspects related to the overall topic of accessibility: funding, affordability, preparedness, equity, and opportunities & barriers for success. Consensus meetings should be scheduled by March 2016, as results will need to be submitted electronically by April 2016.
3. Another concern that has been expressed relates to the Consensus Questions, which are extremely difficult to develop, trial test and agree upon. Feedback confirms that many have felt the consensus questions were leading and did not really solicit fully formed opinions. The Study Committee is considering a new model of Consensus Questions wherein responses to specific, provocative questions are crafted into agreed upon paragraphs by local leagues and submitted in that format. In order to do this successfully, the Study Committee needs access to robust Text Analysis Software, which we are in the process of exploring. Whether or not we are successful in obtaining that software will dictate the final format for the Consensus Questions.

In closing, I would like to request that you:

1. Please let me know as soon as possible, via email (egyick@icloud.com), whether or not your League intends to participate in the study. If you have any questions before making a decision, please feel free to contact me (or a member of the Study Committee) via email or phone.
2. If yes, please send me the name of your study committee chair and her/his email address as soon as the decision has been made. Another goal of the State Study Committee is to keep in close communication with all participating Leagues.

Thank you so much,

Eleanor Yick
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