

MEDIA ADVISORY
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TICAS Vice President to Testify at Monday's Assembly Hearing on College Affordability New Research Shows Free Community College Tuition Won't Fix Affordability Problems

Debbie Cochrane, vice president at The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS), will provide expert testimony on college affordability before a [joint hearing](#) of the California Assembly's Higher Education Committee and Budget Subcommittee on Education Finance this coming Monday, February 27. Her testimony will describe which students face the greatest affordability barriers, and it will include new TICAS research showing the severity of the affordability problem for California's low-income students, and why free tuition is not the solution.

The state's very low-tuition community colleges have long been tuition-free for all students with financial need. Yet [TICAS' new analysis of nine California regions finds that low-income students have to spend more—sometimes several thousands of dollars more—to attend a community college than a public four-year university](#). In seven regions the University of California, the highest-tuition school, is also the most affordable. And in seven regions, the community college is the *least* affordable. That's because community college students get much less aid than four-year college students to help cover essential college costs beyond tuition, including textbooks, transportation, housing, and food.

Cochrane's testimony will also highlight the disproportionately high [student debt burdens](#) carried by low-income graduates from the state's four-year schools, as compared to middle- and upper-income graduates. And she will discuss ways to address the state's college affordability problems and improve student outcomes, including by [strengthening](#) the need-based Cal Grant program in ways recommended by student, workforce, civil rights, and higher education advocacy groups across the state.

WHAT: TICAS' Debbie Cochrane testifies at "College Affordability – Hitting or Missing the Mark?" a joint oversight hearing of the California Assembly Higher Education Committee and Budget Subcommittee on Education Finance. Her testimony will include findings from [new TICAS research](#). Students are expected to testify about their experiences as well.

WHEN: Monday, February 27, 2017 (the hearing is expected to begin at 2:00 pm Pacific Time)

WHERE: California State Capitol, Room 447

ONLINE: For live audio of the hearing, go to <http://assembly.ca.gov/listen/447-audio>. A video will be posted to <http://www.calchannel.com/video-on-demand/>, typically within 24 hours.

Debbie Cochrane will be available for comment in Sacramento on Monday. For questions or to schedule an interview, please contact Shannon Serrato at sserrato@ticas.org or 510-318-7915.

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An independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan research and policy organization, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) works to make higher education more available and affordable for people of all backgrounds, nationally and in California. Our Project on Student Debt works to increase public understanding of rising student debt and the implications for our families, economy, and society. For more information see www.ticas.org or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).