

## GETTING TO GRADUATION



*CALPIRG's student advocates and volunteers have pressed for affordable education in Sacramento.*

### RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ARE THE FIRST STEPS

CALPIRG will tackle the problem by conducting research about community college student attitudes toward work and college and actively reaching out to tens of thousands of students in California to educate them about state and federal financial aid programs.

### HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

The best ways to get involved are by helping to conduct a statewide survey of students or reaching out to community college students directly about their financial aid options.

You can also help educate and involve our state senators, assembly members, and local campus administrators.

You can tackle any aspect of this project for course credit, working directly with the CALPIRG campus organizer to take a lead role.

# CALPIRG

## EDUCATION IN ACTION

College students today will face big problems when they graduate—global warming, escalating health care costs, the plight of the hungry and homeless. Most students care deeply about these problems, but what college course teaches us how to solve them?

The California Public Interest Research Group, or CALPIRG, gives students a crash course in effective citizenship.

With the help of a professional staff of advocates and organizers, students involved with CALPIRG have learned not only how to investigate a problem and develop practical solutions—they've also learned how to promote those solutions and make them a reality. They've stood up to society's big problems, and won concrete changes for students, the environment and the community.

To find out more about our campaigns, internships and volunteer opportunities, drop by our campus office or contact us at the phone numbers or addresses below.

**CALPIRG Student Chapters**  
3435 Wilshire Blvd  
Suite 385  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

**CALPIRG State Office**  
1107 9th Street  
Suite 601  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Tel (213) 251-3680

Tel (916) 448-4516

[www.calpirgstudents.org](http://www.calpirgstudents.org)



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## HOW EASY IS IT TO GET THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE?

A college degree is an accomplishment. And the vast majority of students in California enroll in one of the 110 community colleges not only to succeed personally, but also to improve their communities through their education.

But now more than ever, paying for college poses a significant challenge. While campus fees at the California community colleges are some of the lowest in the nation, these fees are only 5 percent of the total cost of attendance. A typical full-time community college student faces over \$16,000 in costs!

Four out of 5 California community college students work 30 hours or more each week to make ends meet even though doing so cuts their chances of graduating in half. But 70 percent of the students working full-time say that they couldn't afford college without their jobs.

**Only 24 percent of California community college students who intend to complete a certificate, degree, or transfer actually graduate within 6 years.**

### Community College Students Are Working Too Hard To Graduate

Studies show that students who work too much (more than 20 hours per week) have lower grades than those who don't. Their work schedule limits the choices they can make about which classes to take, or which academic path to pursue. When students work full time, they cut their odds of completing college in half.

That's a risk that California can't afford to take. For California to remain economically competitive in the future, community college students will need to graduate at much higher rates.



*Too few community college students in California accomplish their main goal: to graduate.*

### More Aid Can Increase Students' Ability To Graduate

Financial aid can help ease the burden of having to work so many long hours for students and give them time to study. Shifting students' focus from work to school will substantially increase their chances of succeeding and graduating. Students need to know about the availability of financial aid, and more need to apply. Only one out of three California community college students applies for financial aid, meaning that California students miss out on millions of aid dollars each year.



*To maintain its economic standing, California must substantially increase the number of students earning degrees.*

### We Must Expose The Problem To Students And To The Public

Thanks to low fees at the community colleges, students as well as the public think it is easy to pay one's way through community college. This false impression leads to little investment in the state and federal grant programs that could directly benefit students. Worse, it leads community college students themselves to expect to work long hours, and not even consider applying for financial aid, even if it undermines their education.



*If students had the means to work less and study more, they would be far more successful at accomplishing their college goals.*