

RESEARCH NOTE
**CURRICULUM PRIORITIES IN TIMES OF FINANCIAL SHORTAGE-A CASE
STUDY OF AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the reported curriculum priorities from the diverging perspectives of three groups; staff and faculty, students, and community members. The survey was distributed during a state financial shortage. The respondents were polled using an open-ended questionnaire to gather suggestions for cost-saving and priority setting at Austin Community College. Student and community members were found to be the stronger advocates of tuition hikes and increased class size while staff and faculty recommended restructure, increase of online services, and other internal strategies.

The current financial crisis affecting Austin Community College is not isolated to Austin or to schools in Texas. It is, in fact, a national crisis. In a lagging national economy, most states are facing serious financial shortages this fiscal year. Legislators have now voted to cut millions (in some cases billions) of dollars from school and university budgets, an area of spending that most had vowed to protect or even expand while they campaigned for office. This research report describes self-reported curriculum priorities from the diverging perspectives of three groups; staff and faculty, students, and community members.

In December 1972, Austin voters approved a measure creating Austin Community College by legislative charter, and less than a year later, ACC opened its doors to 1,900 students. ACC provides a wide variety of academic transfer, workforce education and continuing education programs, as well as adult basic education, developmental education and several programs for high school students. Austin Community College,