



Update to the
Vision *for* Success

Reaffirming Equity in a Time of Recovery



California
Community
Colleges

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A Message from the Chancellor

In 2017, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors adopted the *Vision for Success*. In these last four years, the *Vision for Success* has served as our collective North Star, by making clear our goals for improvement and our commitment to do better for both our students and for our state. Now, in 2021 I am pleased to present the *Update to the Vision for Success: Reaffirming Equity in a Time of Recovery*.

From the beginning, the *Vision for Success* has always been about equity. Indeed, its overarching goal (Goal 5) is to **reduce equity gaps across all measures by 40 percent within 5 years and to fully close those gaps within 10 years**. Moreover, the seven core commitments of the *Vision for Success* are designed to help us all reframe how our colleges are structured and how we behave, putting the student experience front and center. When implemented with integrity, these commitments have the power to dramatically improve outcomes for students of color and students whose income, region, or life circumstances have put them at a disadvantage. Now, at four years into the *Vision for Success*, we are beginning to see consistent progress, especially in rising completion rates across the system. Still, we can do more.

“ It is critical to chart a course to a new day when all Californians can actively participate in helping our state thrive. What is the best route to that future? Preparing everyone with the training and education necessary to engage in the high-quality, in-demand jobs that will drive a recovering, vital economy.”

— Governor’s Council for Postsecondary Education
in the 2021 *Recovery with Equity* report¹

It is clear that many of our students are suffering from the collective traumas of the past year: the pandemic and resulting financial devastation, a nationwide reckoning with systemic and institutional racism, a tumultuous election, and worsening social divisions fueled by disinformation. The multiple crises of the last year have left us all feeling untethered, but this past year has also offered us an opportunity to see more clearly the resilience of our students and the value of our institutions. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to aid in our state’s recovery. California needs an educated populace to shape the new economy, rebuild our infrastructure, fight future pandemics, and participate in our democracy as informed voters and activists. The system’s vast size and scope make it a vital instrument for achieving these ends. At the same time, community colleges are accessible and personal institutions that can also help students on an individual level to regain their hopes and rebuild their futures. Students need us and we are here to deliver for them. Simply put, **this is our moment.**

The purpose of this document is to reaffirm our goals and commitments in light of today’s challenges, reiterate our resolve to achieve equity, and show how the California Community Colleges will play a central role

in California’s economic and social recovery. The recent *Recovery with Equity* report from the Governor’s Council for Postsecondary Education calls on higher education to advance four guiding principles: Fostering inclusive institutions, streamlining pathways to degrees, facilitating student transitions, and simplifying supports for students. We are in complete agreement with these principles. They align closely with the goals and commitments of the 2017 *Vision for Success*. With the release of this update, we are doubling down on our commitments and answering the Governor’s call to help rebuild California with equity.

The *Vision for Success* is not an initiative, nor is it a “one and done” reform. I am confident that the *Vision for Success* will long outlast my tenure as Chancellor. It has gained strength over the years as leaders, faculty, staff, and allies across the state have taken ownership of its goals and commitments, listened to students, tried and refined new approaches, and continued to move forward in the face of great challenges. Collectively, we have shown that we are all invested in the *Vision for Success* and are all called to be courageous, equity-centered leaders. In particular I acknowledge and thank the district leaders who shared their experiences and success stories in the pages that follow.

Finally, to all of the hardworking community college professionals across the state, I thank you on behalf of our 2.1 million students. I know you must feel exhausted but please, keep up the good work and persevere. **Our students need you.** I invite you to join us in celebrating our collective wins, redoubling our commitment to do better, and supporting our students through anything that comes their way.

Sincerely,



Eloy Ortiz Oakley
Chancellor, California Community Colleges



5-Year Systemwide Goals

- 1** | Increase completion of degrees, credentials, certificates, and job-specific skill sets by 20% between 2017 and 2022
- 2** | Increase transfers to UC and CSU by 35% between 2017 and 2022
- 3** | Decrease the average number of units accumulated by associate's degree earners to 79 units by 2022 (down from an average of 87 units in 2017)
- 4** | Increase the number of exiting CTE students employed in their field of study to 76% by 2022 (up from 60% in 2017)
- 5** | Reduce equity gaps by 40% across all the above measures by 2022, and fully close those gaps by 2027
- 6** | Close regional gaps across all of the above measures by 2027



College of San Mateo

Our North Star Remains Unchanged

In 2017, the *Vision for Success* established a set of robust five-year goals to serve as a “North Star” in guiding the collective reform efforts of the California Community Colleges. These goals established clear targets for completion, transfer, efficiency, and employment, and most importantly, for closing equity gaps and regional attainment gaps (see sidebar on page 6). In addition to establishing systemwide goals, the 2017 *Vision for Success* also called for college districts to develop and adopt aligned local goals for student success, which all districts have now done.

Of course, when the *Vision for Success* goals were established, no one could have imagined the major disruptions and setbacks that students and colleges would face in 2020. COVID-19 ravaged our state in deeply inequitable ways, causing great harm in particular to Black and African American, Latinx, and low-income communities. Further societal damage ensued from highly visible police killings, months of acute social

unrest, and worsening political divisions and misinformation campaigns. Students in the California Community Colleges have suffered as a result of these events—personally, financially, and academically.

In response, community colleges pivoted heroically in 2020 and made rapid changes to meet students’ needs (see sidebar on page 8). With an attitude of “all hands on deck,” leaders, faculty, and staff throughout the college system stepped up to continue providing high-quality education and services despite a statewide shutdown. Student leaders were also instrumental, providing a much-needed conduit of information to and from students. All in all, the system proved remarkably nimble and resilient.

“This ladder that we hold up, community colleges as a ladder to mobility, is crumbling to dust for our Black, brown and low-income students.”

— Andrew Nickens

Student and Vice President, Legislative Affairs, Student Senate of the California Community Colleges, on a 2021 California Community Colleges System webinar²



Evergreen Valley College

Responding to COVID-19

“A piece of advice I could give to students would be explore your resources. I’ve noticed that all the resources that we would have had on campus—whether that’s tutoring for each different subject, whether it’s mental health services—those have also been translated to an online format.”

— Gurshaan Arora

student, Foothill College, on the California Community Colleges podcast³

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021, the California Community Colleges took bold action to step up for students, communities, and the State of California. Most notably, colleges moved virtually all instruction to online learning platforms in a matter of weeks, a feat of sheer resolve for the world’s largest higher education system. Just as challenging, colleges also moved virtually all student support services online in the spring, including academic counseling, library services, financial aid, tutoring, and more. Many campuses also lent their facilities to serve emergency healthcare and housing needs during the height of the pandemic and contributed ventilators, masks, and other Personal Protection Equipment from the stockpiles of college-based health training programs. Colleges also leapt into action to provide aid to students, from emergency food to housing services to cash assistance. In addition to administering and coordinating new funding associated with the federal stimulus packages, many colleges repurposed existing resources to meet the needs of students in acute financial distress during the pandemic.

To assist college leaders and employees, the Chancellor’s Office issued executive orders and guidance to provide flexibility on reporting deadlines, temporarily suspend various regulations and requirements, and take other actions to relieve administrative burdens. The Chancellor’s Office launched a COVID-19 Community on the *Vision for Success* Resource Center, providing

updates on pandemic developments and a place to ask questions and share promising response practices. It also provided weekly webinars for college leaders to support effective COVID-19 responses. To help the system transition to online learning in science-related disciplines specifically, the Chancellor’s Office purchased a virtual lab platform and expanded technical assistance for faculty using the platform. To assist students, the Chancellor’s Office enacted policy changes in March 2020 to ensure that students were not penalized academically or financially for withdrawing from classes due to COVID-19.

The Foundation for California Community Colleges took action to increase awareness of CalFresh, California’s food assistance program.⁴ Additionally, the Foundation launched a relief campaign specifically for students working toward certificates or degrees in health care, delivering almost \$1 million in crucial emergency support, mobile hotspots, and laptops.⁵

These activities and others are examples of the California Community Colleges’ responsiveness and resilience in the face of a highly unpredictable working environment. The college system was able to adapt and make bold, rapid changes in service of students—an accomplishment that can serve as a foundation for facing future challenges.

Community colleges will need to continue these strong efforts in the months and years ahead, and the task won't be easy. Compared to four years ago:

- **Students are in worse shape financially.** Over half of California Community College students saw a decrease in their income in 2020 due to lay-offs, furloughs, or work reductions associated with COVID-19, with greater impacts among students of color.⁶
- **More students have become housing- or food-insecure.** Nearly 60% of California Community College students reported food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness in 2020. Students of color were 16 percentage points more likely to report at least one basic needs insecurity than white students.⁷
- **Students are experiencing fresh pain and trauma from racial injustice.** The racism and racial violence that students witnessed in the last year has compounded the existing pain felt from long-standing injustices in our society and our institutions. This can affect students in deeply personal ways, undermining their focus, self-esteem, and hope for the future.
- **Students' mental health is suffering.** Two-thirds of California Community College students report experiencing higher levels of anxiety, stress, depression, or mental distress than usual, and nearly half are having difficulty concentrating in school.⁸ Over a third are concerned about the risk of developing a substance abuse problem.⁹
- **The pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide.** Low-income students, many of them students of color, are less likely to have access to the internet, functioning laptops, and quiet study space and privacy, putting them at greater disadvantage during the shift to distance learning.¹⁰

- **Some students are stepping away from their educational paths.** For Fall 2020, California Community Colleges student headcount and full-time enrollment is down, with the most serious declines in hard-hit communities and among students of color, male students, and students over 50 years old.¹¹ Many students have had to take on new responsibilities as caretakers or breadwinners, making it unclear if and when they might return to complete their higher education.

In spite of these many difficulties, students as a whole have persevered and most are continuing their educations. While the pandemic has been a major disruption, the California Community Colleges are not abandoning the ambitious goals set in 2017. The overarching North Star remains the same: to reach the systemwide *Vision for Success* targets for completion, transfer, efficiency, workforce attainment, and above all, equity. The California Community Colleges have proven to be nimble, adaptable, and able to rise to the challenge of serving students even in the face of great challenges. As discussed in the pages that follow, forward-thinking college leaders have even been able to leverage the disruption of the pandemic and make real progress toward serving students better. Such opportunities will continue as the system rebuilds in the coming years. With continued effort, California can become a national model for equitable recovery in higher education.

“ I had to go to sleep hungry because I had to choose between gas for traveling and textbooks and food...I had to choose between buying my kids shoes and transportation, housing, food...No one should have to make these kinds of choices.”

— Marjorie Blen
*Student, on a 2021 California Community Colleges System webinar*¹²

“ The work ahead is challenging. But the post-secondary sector, in partnership with communities across the state, can build a more equitable future from this crisis. Together, Californians can make that future a reality.”

— Governor's Council for Postsecondary Education
*in the 2021 Recovery with Equity report*¹³



San Joaquin Delta College

Our System's Approach to Equity Continues to Evolve

“When we’re talking about equity it’s not just about having a program for a hundred students and saying, ‘It’s equitable.’ No, we’re saying we need to restructure our entire organization to make sure that all students, not just one hundred, are receiving all the services they need to complete their education goals.”

— Keith Curry
President, Compton College

The California Community Colleges have always been an instrument for achieving broad access to higher education. The colleges are the largest system of post-secondary education in the world and serve all applicants regardless of educational background or life trajectory. The colleges offer a quality higher education at the lowest tuition sticker price found anywhere in the country. Despite this unparalleled commitment to affordability and accessibility, the California Community Colleges—like most higher education institutions—were largely designed for traditional students, who at the time were predominantly white middle-class students who had access to a K-12 education that was sufficiently resourced and supported. As a result, the colleges’ bureaucratic structures generally reinforced the marginalization of students of color. In decades past, colleges did acknowledge inequitable outcomes among low-income students and students of color, but these were addressed through discrete programs that existed at the margins of the college, with separate funding streams and lines of reporting, rather than structural changes to the college as a whole.

As the college student population became more diverse over the latter part of the 20th century, it became increasingly clear that a traditional model with added-on supports was not a sustainable approach for achieving racial equity or success. College systems came to realize that more transformative change was needed to restructure institutions from the ground up.

With the 2017 *Vision for Success*, the California Community Colleges embarked on a series of systemic efforts aimed at building racial equity into the core infrastructure of the colleges. These reforms were conceived as an interconnected set, based on the belief that entrenched institutional problems can only be solved with a clear vision, multiple coordinated reforms aligned to that vision, and persistence over many years. No longer at the margins, these reforms mark an effort to put equity concerns front and center while improving the overall performance and success of the entire college. These major systemic reforms are still in the relatively early stages and will require many more years of persistent effort to reach full impact.

Of course, in the day-to-day work of implementing the *Vision for Success* reform strategies, it can be difficult to keep sight of how these reforms serve and support each other and are aligned toward the same end point. In summary, this is how they fit together to advance equity and student success:

- **Guided Pathways** is a framework for transformative institutional change that provides a structure for colleges to scrutinize their practices, disaggregate data to uncover opportunity and attainment gaps, and redesign college programs and policies with the aim of providing every student with a clear path to graduation and quality job opportunities. Guided Pathways is based on the idea that students need structured, cohesive support to reach their end goals and recognizes that support needs will differ from one individual student to another.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** efforts provide a roadmap to making campuses safer, more accessible, and more welcoming to students of color and underserved student groups. These initiatives promote diversity in hiring, aim to eliminate cultural bias in teaching and curriculum, and help to counteract institutional racism. They help to level the playing field and expand opportunity, helping more students reach their end goals.

- **Equitable Placement and Support** remedies past unfair practices that over-placed students into remedial education, especially students of color, creating obstacles to their momentum and success. To date, this policy has greatly expanded access to college-level coursework for students across the board and has significantly narrowed achievement gaps between white students and students of color, getting the college system closer to its goals for improved completion and equity.
- **The Student Centered Funding Formula** weights funding towards colleges that serve low-income students and English learners. Colleges receive additional dollars when students reach specified educational milestones and outcomes, plus an additional funding bump when higher-needs students reach these milestones. This change aligns fiscal resources with the systemwide goals for improved success and equity.
- **The restructuring of Career Technical Education** aims to build more career pathways that lead directly into well-paying jobs and to award credit for demonstrated competence and prior learning. These reforms are expanding opportunities, especially for adult learners, and will lead to more students reaching their end goal of a living-wage job.

“The funding formula incentives make sense and are aligned with what we as a set of colleges are doing: increasing college access and equity toward completion, especially for first-generation, low-income, adult learners and underresourced students and communities.”

— **Francisco Rodriguez**
*Chancellor, Los Angeles
Community College District*

“It used to be that the only financial incentive was for us to grow, but now we have an incentive to serve different types of students. It makes sense to tie goals to the financial underpinnings of the system.”

— **Brian King**
*Chancellor, Los Rios
Community College District*



Santa Monica College

“Historically, our system has not been set up to meet people where they are. It has been set up in a way that says, if you have all the right words and you know where to go, then you’ll get what you need. It is not inclusive. The result is to exclude some versus others, whether that’s intentional or not.”

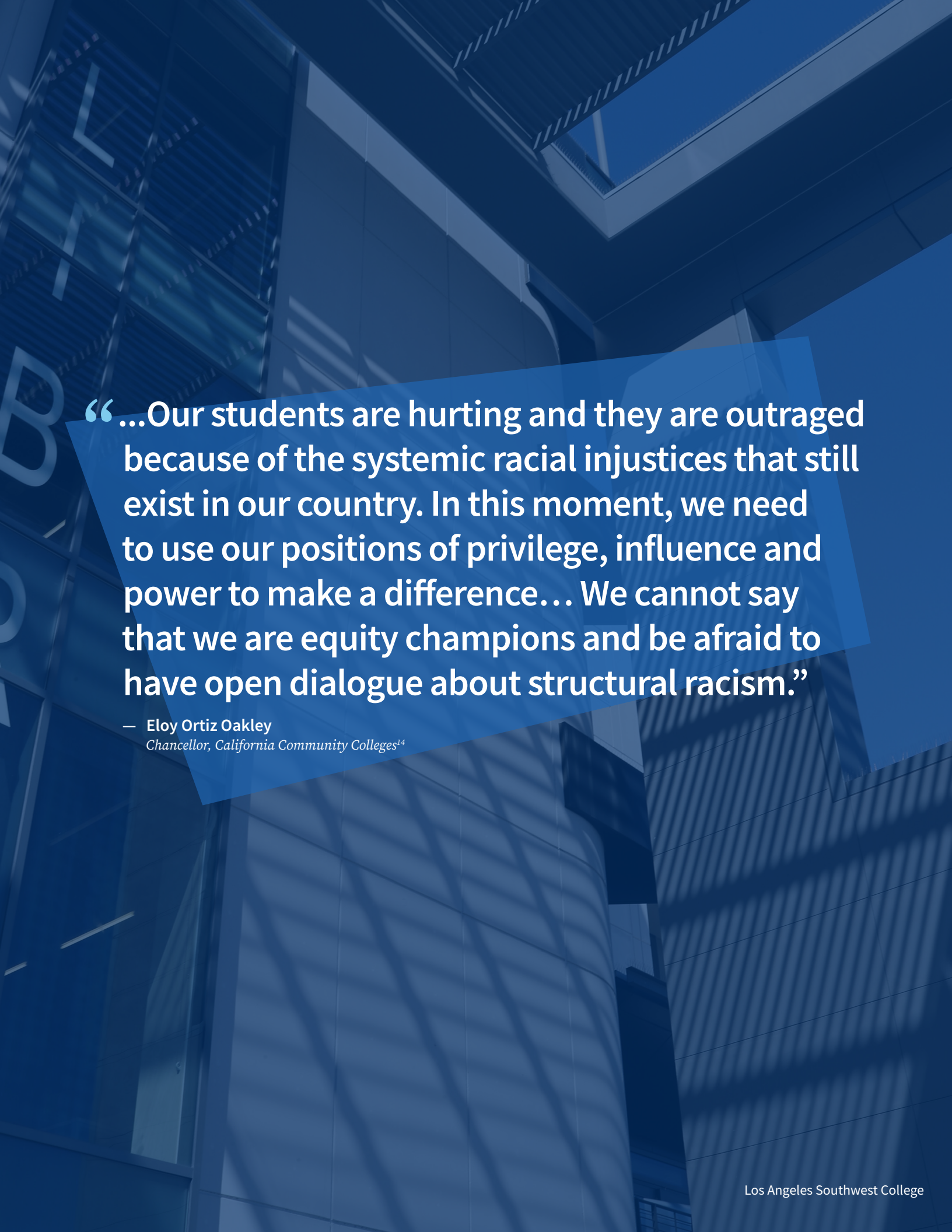
— Pamela Haynes

President of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

Heading now into the 2020s, the colleges’ approach to equity continues to evolve in response to students’ needs and the circumstances of our state and society. The California Community Colleges Board of Governors has adopted an unequivocal statement committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion that is serving as a model to other systems in California and nationally. As a system, the California Community Colleges are beginning to address institutional racism and injustice in a more explicit and intentional way. Colleges are trying to build truly diverse and inclusive colleges by encouraging frank conversations about race and institutional racism, auditing campus environments, examining curricula for cultural bias, overhauling hiring, reforming police training programs, advocating for undocumented students, and providing more direct assistance to students who

have been systemically disadvantaged. These efforts especially aim to call out and correct policies and practices that are inherently racist, while also recognizing and addressing the damaging effects of ableism, sexism, and discrimination based on gender identity, sexuality, or other characteristics.

As our society moves forward and seeks to recover from the social and health traumas of the past year, the California Community Colleges will do their part: welcoming every student individually, meeting students where they are, and providing the necessary high quality supports that will level the playing field and provide truly equitable opportunities for advancement.



“...Our students are hurting and they are outraged because of the systemic racial injustices that still exist in our country. In this moment, we need to use our positions of privilege, influence and power to make a difference... We cannot say that we are equity champions and be afraid to have open dialogue about structural racism.”

— Eloy Ortiz Oakley
Chancellor, California Community Colleges¹⁴

Reaffirming Our Commitments to Students

The 2017 *Vision for Success* articulated seven commitments that function as a set to drive improvement, success, and equity:

- 1 | Focus relentlessly on students' end goals.
- 2 | Always design and decide with the student in mind.
- 3 | Pair high expectations with high support.
- 4 | Foster the use of data, inquiry, and evidence.
- 5 | Take ownership of goals and performance.
- 6 | Enable action and thoughtful innovation.
- 7 | Lead the work of partnering across systems.

Each of these commitments is fundamentally about students: giving each student a fair opportunity, paying attention to their results, and continually making structural adjustments to serve students better, especially students of color and low-income students.

Although the ground has seemingly shifted in the years since these commitments were first made, they are just as relevant today, if not more so. They will carry the California Community Colleges through recovery. With continued adherence to these commitments and courageous, equity-centered leadership, the colleges can fulfill their role as engines of economic and social recovery. In the pages that follow, each commitment is discussed in light of this moment—both its new challenges and new opportunities.



San Joaquin Delta College

COMMITMENT 1

Focus relentlessly on students' end goals

This commitment is about getting all students to their end goals. Colleges should be designed equitably to lead all students to concrete outcomes that have personal and economic value, such as a high-quality certificate, degree, or transfer to a four-year university. This commitment is fundamental, so much so that all other commitments are designed to support it.

Given the extreme circumstances of the past year, focusing on students' end goals matters now more than ever. Many students are finding it hard to hold on to their own educational hopes and dreams. As administrators, faculty, staff, and allies, we all have a critical role to play in helping students connect or reconnect with their educational goals and supporting each of them to completion.

Of course, in the aftermath of the pandemic, the most immediate concern of many colleges will be restoring educational access. Students have been cut off from classes and support services due to a lack of technology or internet access. Many students have been forced into work or care-taking roles that prevent them from continuing their studies. As colleges reopen, it will be critical to reach out and get students reenrolled, through individualized outreach, enrollment campaigns, and by offering services and courses when, where, and how students need them. Colleges should bring students to the table to inform and co-design these efforts and to help in

encouraging their peers to return to college (a good use of one-time recovery funds, as some colleges have found). Restoring access is critical at this time. Of course, this focus needs to be paired with a steadfast commitment to student completion.

Looking ahead, the California Community Colleges must ensure that the relentless focus on outcomes is really about equitable outcomes. Student success cannot be achieved without equity. Guided Pathways is becoming more established as a normal way of doing business, and colleges typically disaggregate program results and completion data to understand how different student groups are faring. Now is the time for colleges to move beyond data analysis and take the next step of experimenting with bold program improvements that have the potential to advance equity in meaningful ways. See sidebar for a leading example from Cosumnes River College.

How Cosumnes River College is Focusing Relentlessly on Students' End Goals



Cosumnes River College

Cosumnes River College (CRC) has been advancing a rigorous set of reforms under the Guided Pathways framework, all aimed at improving student outcomes while closing equity gaps and upholding rigor. Based on the research literature and their own data analysis, CRC leaders made a decision to substantially increase the number of students enrolled full time and the number taking college-level English or math in their first term—two behaviors known to build momentum and help students complete a degree or transfer.

To make this happen, CRC began providing all students who are recent high school graduates with a “default” first-term schedule that includes a 15-unit course load and enrollment in college-level math and English. The default schedule is specific to the student’s area of study and guaranteed to be available in the student’s first academic term. (It is not required, however—students who are unable or uninterested in that schedule can still opt out and enroll in other courses or at a lower level of intensity.)

As part of its comprehensive Guided Pathways work, the college also developed two-year program pathways, a case management approach to counseling, and Student Success Teams aligned with specific career and academic areas. They adopted new technology to support the default scheduling and provided professional development to both classified staff and faculty to assist them in adopting Guided Pathways reforms. CRC also leveraged its existing outreach activities at area high schools, using those opportunities to fully enroll students in their first term classes, not merely fill out college applications.

CRC’s hard work paid off, with the default schedule in particular showing immediate results. In the initiative’s first year, the share of all new CRC students enrolling full time in their first term nearly doubled. **Completions** of transfer-level math and English also

jumped, with the greatest gains among Latinx and Black and African American students, resulting in reduced equity gaps. College-wide, enrollment increased by 3.85 percent while headcount increased by only one percent, gains that benefitted the college financially while making more efficient use of facilities and resources. CRC has now expanded its default schedule to cover a student’s first full year and ultimately plans to have students enroll with default two-year plans.

While progress has slowed in the face of the pandemic, the college continues to take deliberate steps to ensure success and equity. In the last year, CRC has expanded eligibility for its English supports and math centers, expanded online tutoring, and leveraged its case management infrastructure and call centers to reach out to students who are not attending class. “We are really trying to be high tech and high touch in this environment,” says CRC President Ed Bush.

In 2020, the college also launched a “We Won’t Fall” initiative with 13 goals for addressing institutional racism and improving outcomes for Latinx and Black and African American students. The initiative brings an equity emphasis to all of CRC’s institutional reforms, its professional development, its efforts to change teaching and learning in the classroom, and even its faculty evaluation procedures.

The initiative’s targets were very ambitious, aiming to increase full-time enrollment even in the midst of the pandemic, and ultimately, says Bush, the college did not quite make it—the external realities were simply too great to overcome. But one intention of the goals was met, he says. “Part of it was to make sure that no group fell off the cliff during this time. Those goals are going to stay in place until we hit them. It is going to be the same goals we set every fall until we hit those goals for those target populations.”

COMMITMENT 2

Design and decide with the student in mind

This commitment is about two things: 1) Designing all institutional programs, policies, and investments with the student experience in mind, particularly the experience of students of color and other underserved groups, and 2) “Erring” on the side of students whenever possible in individual administrative and classroom decisions that have the power to either move students forward toward their end goals or hold them back.

In the process of enrolling, registering, and accessing aid or services, students typically interact with community colleges through multiple offices, programs, and digital platforms, often with little guidance. Says Pamela Haynes, President of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, “Students often have to go from building to building, or make phone call after phone call. There’s rarely a ‘warm handoff’ with someone following through and saying ‘We spoke last week. Did you get what you need?’ That’s the kind of coordination we need.”

Other problems occur when students are penalized for missing deadlines or misunderstanding policies that were poorly communicated in the first place, or perhaps were designed in a different era for a different type of student. Unfortunately, campus policies and gatekeepers sometimes stop students’ progress; a better approach would be to give administrators permission and flexibility to err on the side of moving the

student forward toward their goal. Says Haynes, “We’ve got to give our institutions agency and permission to ‘get to yes’ for students. Our purpose is to move folks forward.”

One of the surest ways to fulfill this commitment is to bring students to the table and authentically engage them to shape programs and set guidelines for decisions. With a representative group of students as co-designers, reform efforts are much more likely to work for everyone. Moreover, once students are invested in a reform initiative, they can play a critical role in advocating for it. “Governance is healthier when students are involved in the decisions,” says Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley. For example, he notes, once student advocates understood the objectives of Equitable Placement and Support (AB 705), they were among its loudest supporters. “AB 705 wouldn’t be here without the students organizing and pushing to be at the table.”

“ I’ve entered into the community college system three different times and every time that I’ve come back, the [student] dynamic has changed, the [student] culture has changed. You need to continue to keep your ear to the ground on what that student perspective is, what that student culture is, to be able to set students up for success, because they’re constantly changing.”

— **Stephen Kodur**

Student and President, Student Senate for California Community Colleges



Sacramento City College

When engaging with students, it is important to reach out to students from a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, and life circumstances—not just those who are financially able to participate or those in campus leadership roles. Students may also need time and training to engage in complex planning processes. Some forward-thinking colleges are experimenting with paying students to bring authentic student voices to the table and support their deep engagement in reform work. Cosumnes River College, for example, is considering adding students as paid advisors to its career-themed student success teams.

Looking ahead, this commitment will be critical as California recovers from the pandemic and rebuilds its higher education system as called for in the *Recovery with Equity* report from the Governor’s Council

for Postsecondary Education. That report’s first recommendation is to “Listen carefully to the voices and expectations of Black and African American, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian Pacific Islander, and adult learners—those student groups experiencing the widest equity gaps today—in determining priorities for redesign of the post-secondary system.” Community colleges also need to get ahead of changing demographics and start revamping policies, practices, and services to best serve the populations that are growing and will continue to grow as the traditional “college age” population shrinks. This will include working adults, displaced workers, and incarcerated/formerly incarcerated students, among others. As the student body evolves, authentic and representative student engagement will be essential for designing community colleges that work for everyone.

COMMITMENT 3

Pair high expectations with high support

This commitment is about knowing that all students are capable of learning and achieving their end goals. It requires colleges to provide robust and wide-ranging supports to meet students where they are and help them achieve those goals.

As a system, community colleges have become more knowledgeable about the kinds of academic expectations that will help students stay in school and reach their educational goals, such as attending full-time, taking college-level classes in their first year, and getting on a degree pathway right from the start. More and more, colleges are becoming more intentional about how to encourage and support these behaviors, including by building these expectations into core policies and practices. A leading example of this is Equitable Placement and Support (AB 705), a reform that has shown impressive results to date (see sidebar on page 30) and has the potential for greater returns in the future if colleges can continue to build and strengthen equitable supports for students enrolled in college-level courses. Even during these challenging times, it is crucial to keep academic expectations high for all students regardless of their background, so that each one has a fair shot at successfully completing college.

At the same time, it is clear that high academic expectations and academic supports are not enough. Even before the pandemic, the

California Community Colleges had some of the highest rates of food and housing insecurity among colleges nationwide. California community college students have limited access to financial aid to cover living expenses, despite facing some of the highest costs of living in the country.¹⁵ Students' social and emotional health is also fragile. Highly visible racial violence and injustices over the past year have brought additional anxiety and trauma to a student body that was already frayed by the stresses of the pandemic.

Recognizing these complex needs, colleges have dramatically stepped up to serve students in expansive and creative ways, including food pantries (now commonplace), food delivery, emergency housing arrangements with local hotels, clothing closets, shower facilities, and emergency cash aid. It is important for colleges to ensure these services are accessible, inclusive, and dignified. Colleges are finding many ways to do this, such as making services highly visible and accessible rather than waiting for students to ask for help, or making services available on an "opt out" basis

“Students shouldn’t have to perform their poverty. We’ve centralized all our services so that students only have to go to one place...We put it in the middle of our campus where a new quad is and we’re going to put out picnic tables, because nobody should have to be ashamed of going in.”

— Pamela Luster

President, San Diego Mesa College



American River College

“ I have a job 35 hours a week. I [frequently] have to sacrifice one over the other: work or school. I always have to debate this.”

— **Rodrigo Velazquez Angel**

Student, on a 2021 California Community Colleges System webinar¹⁶

rather than “opt in.” Establishing a culture where the utilization of support services is the norm rather than the exception goes a long way in making a student feel comfortable and welcome. For financial aid services specifically, colleges should design processes and procedures such that students do not need to repeatedly verify their low-income status.

Looking ahead, colleges need to keep up the good work with Equitable Placement and Support while expanding and improving academic supports equitably to help all students succeed in their college-level coursework. Implementing this reform with fidelity will continue to yield better results in course completion, college completion, transfer, and equity. Authentic student engagement and input can help colleges refine academic services and supports for maximum effectiveness.

In the realm of basic needs services, the greatest upcoming challenge for colleges will be the efficient coordination of services, which will require support from and close partnership with governmental entities. Colleges need to be resourced properly to coordinate and administer multiple streams of state and federal money and coordinate services with counties. Student eligibility for income-based resources should be automated across programs, and the processes and technology to make this possible should be developed centrally at the state level. The Chancellor’s Office will continue to work with the Governor and the Legislature on these issues and to advocate for resources to build better infrastructure and capacity for coordination of services on campuses.

COMMITMENT 4

Foster the use of data, inquiry, and evidence

This commitment is about establishing a culture that examines student data on a regular basis and uses it to improve instruction and services, from the top levels of the college down to interactions with individual students. This is especially true for data related to students of color and other underserved groups.

Over the past decade, most colleges have come to embrace the use of data for institutional improvement. More recently, colleges are investing in data systems and practices that help individual students stay on track and provide tools for staff and educators to assist them. In the midst of COVID-19 and the resulting enrollment loss at many colleges, the most pressing use for data right now is determining which students have left the college and using the information to get them back. A closely related priority is identifying and deploying additional resources to students who are at risk of dropping out, or whose grades signal a problem. Colleges are becoming more and more sophisticated in how they do this (see sidebars on page 22 for two examples).

Some colleges have made significant investments in their data systems and research personnel while others have not. Still, it's not necessary to acquire a new data system to fulfill this commitment. Sometimes it is enough to just use existing data differently: changing who looks at it, when, and why. Colleges should be identifying students who have missed deadlines, failed to re-enroll, and following up to help students get back on track. These practices are a win for everyone: they lighten the burden on students and help them reach their goals while making efficient use of advising resources and boosting institutional completion rates.

At the leadership level, data, inquiry, and evidence can and should be a normal part of college business. At a minimum, the Board of Trustees, college leadership, and department and division leaders should regularly review data on course and program enrollment and outcomes, loss points, and student satisfaction, all disaggregated by demographic factors to identify what is working or not working, and for whom. “We have structured and facilitated

conversations to engage our board with relevant outcomes data,” says Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez of the Los Angeles Community College District, “including regular study sessions and board retreats, with dashboards to help make the data easy to access, monitor, and understand our progress towards closing equity gaps.”

San Diego Mesa College President Pamela Luster also emphasizes the importance of not just looking at data “for data’s sake,” but rather to investigate the “whys, what ifs, and so whats” of the data. In other words, colleges can use data to examine problems—identifying, for example, points where students are consistently struggling or dropping out—then make program or policy changes that will advance, rather than block, student success. Analyses of quantitative data can be supplemented with feedback from representative focus groups of students to fill in the picture of what is and isn't working. Students' participation in the redesign process is crucial.

Looking ahead, the state's emerging Cradle-to-Career Data System will change the landscape by providing tools and resources that contribute to educational planning and help educators advise students. California's next challenge is to provide all campus users with access to timely data. Luster explains that administrators need on-the-ground information systems, particularly to manage their enrollments strategically. “We need disaggregated data in real time, not at the end of three years, because by then the students are gone,” says Luster. Robust student management systems are also important for creating equitable course-taking opportunities. “Setting the schedule is everything,” says Luster. Students would also benefit from better access to data—their own as well as their school's—to help them become more informed customers and make better educational choices.

Compton College Is Using Data to Serve Students Better



Compton College

Compton College has adopted an enterprise resource planning system to maintain integrated, real-time data on students, and it has proven to be essential for helping the college reach out to students during the devastation of COVID-19. Compton College has used this system to identify students who did not return to school during the pandemic and to craft proactive strategies for getting them back. “We know all the characteristics [of these students], everything,” says President/CEO Keith Curry. “With our call center, we can be able to follow back up with them and provide them with the support they need.”

Critically, Compton is able to disaggregate all of its data by students’ Guided Pathways Divisions—meaning the academic/career cohort they belong to—making it easier to provide more targeted outreach and connect students to the right staff members. The system can also disaggregate students by program eligibility and participation, making it easier to identify students who aren’t accessing resources that might help them, such as CalFresh.

Compton College is located in one of the hardest-hit cities in the state, with extremely high COVID-19 case rates and disproportionately low access to vaccines. “Our enrollment is down 20%,” says Curry. “It’s going to push us back.” He anticipates that the COVID-19 pandemic will have an impact on his community and college for the next five years. Still, he says, the college will not abandon its commitment to students. Using its robust data system and implementing aggressive outreach strategies, Compton College is beginning the long process of helping students return to college and rebuild their lives and educational dreams. “We will continue to do it,” says Curry. “We’re not going to stop...We have to continue to try to hit those targets.”

Golden West College Is Boosting Completion through Better Data Use

Golden West College is using available transcript data to increase graduation numbers. College personnel regularly review student progress and auto-award degrees or certificates when students are eligible. Using this method, the college awarded 5,711 degrees and certificates in 2018-19—the most of any college in the state that year—and held a special graduation ceremony for those students. The result is a win for everyone: students gain an

award and the benefits that come with it. Meanwhile, the college boosts its graduation rates and gets a better understanding of where students get hung up and why. “Auto-awarding well-earned degrees enhances our unique place in the education marketplace,” says Golden West College President Tim McGrath. “It shows we really are making a difference in our community and in the lives of our students.”



Golden West College

COMMITMENT 5

Take ownership of goals and performance

This commitment is about colleges taking responsibility for their current performance and setting authentic local goals that the campus community can embrace and coalesce around. Goals and performance can and should be part of a college’s institutional culture and identity.

In 2017 the *Vision for Success* established broad systemwide goals. Districts followed suit by adopting their own aligned goals that are appropriate to their local context. However, goal-setting is not a one-time event. It is the beginning of an investigation into how the college can do better, particularly in serving students who are disadvantaged by the structures of traditional higher education and society at large. “The goals themselves should be ambitious,” explains California Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley, “but it’s the nature of the conversations about those goals that is most important. Those conversations will lead to the “ah-ha” moments.”

Now is the time for districts and colleges to drill down into their goals and performance with a particular emphasis on diversity and equity. While there are plenty of circumstances beyond the control of the college, there are also plenty of factors that colleges can control, particularly around equity of opportunity. Despite the setbacks of 2020, many colleges are determined to adapt and innovate their way back, never losing sight of their goal of helping every student reach their educational goals. (See sidebar for a leading example.)

Now is also the time to bring students authentically into the conversation about goals and performance. This strategy benefits everyone: students get a rich learning experience and greater sense of agency while colleges ensure that discussions of goals and performance are about students, not just numbers.

Looking ahead, the next frontier is for colleges to realign resources—fiscal, personnel, facilities—in support of their goals. The Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) required all districts to adopt performance goals and ultimately to align district budgets to those goals. As San Diego Mesa College President Luster says, “We have to ask ourselves: Where’s our agency? Are we putting our money where our mouth is? Are we spending our resources to actually close equity gaps?” These questions should be at the center of all resource discussions and decisions happening now, especially as the system manages an influx of one-time dollars from the state and federal government.

“The goals themselves should be ambitious, but it’s the nature of the conversations about those goals that is most important. Those conversations will lead to the “ah-ha” moments.”

— Eloy Ortiz Oakley
*Chancellor, California
Community Colleges*



San Diego Mesa College

San Diego Mesa College Drills Down into Equity and Owns Its Performance

San Diego Mesa College exemplifies the *Vision for Success* Commitment 5: “Take ownership of goals and performance.” Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on enrollment in the spring of 2020, the college’s leadership team wasted no time in analyzing which students left. Most importantly, they were unafraid to own their findings and ask whether the college itself played a part in students’ departure. “We sat down and started looking at who left us,” Says President Pamela Luster, “[We asked], who did we not serve well? They loved us once, and they wanted to go to college—what happened? Was it an interaction with a college staff member? Was it just too hard to navigate?”

The college then took action. “We called every single student,” says Luster, deploying peer navigators, student ambassadors, tutors, and others to get the job done. Although this was primarily an effort to get students to return, the college also used the opportunity to collect survey data and now has a full report detailing students’ top reasons for leaving. The college used this information to design a Black and African American student retention program in the fall of 2020 and to inform other recruitment and retention efforts during COVID.

San Diego Mesa College is also leading the way in encouraging faculty to own their goals and performance. Each semester the college sends each faculty member a data file with their course outcomes,

disaggregated by student demographics. These data are strictly for the faculty member’s use; no one else looks at them. Says Luster, “It wasn’t popular when we first did it, but now faculty ask, ‘When are we going to get our data?’” The practice has changed how faculty members evaluate themselves, says Luster, and has brought a greater equity focus to department meetings. The college has also developed data dashboards at the program level, and each year requires departments to analyze equity gaps in writing, describe how those gaps are being addressed, and request campus support for doing so. These program level data are public and cover every department on campus, even operational units such as accounting.

San Diego Mesa College also looks at its data in comparison to other colleges serving similar populations, always asking “Are we cutting it? Are we doing what we need to do?” The college’s actions are admirable, but more remarkable is its attitude. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, the college owns its performance. “We’re committed to not saying that ‘Life happens to students,’” says Luster. “That’s certainly a fair statement right now, but that lets us off the hook.”

COMMITMENT 6

Enable action and thoughtful innovation

This commitment is about being bold in adopting new policies, programs, and processes that will help students reach their end goals. Not every idea is a good one, but it is important that colleges experiment, track results, make adjustments, and keep moving forward. Innovators should be supported when experiments fail, not blamed.

Large, long-standing systems like the California Community Colleges are built to be stable and risk-averse. They are not places that naturally foster action and innovation, but in 2020, the COVID-19 crisis necessitated both. Seemingly overnight, the California Community Colleges were forced to move almost entirely to distance learning and online services, with no playbook to follow. It was an enormous task, but colleges rose to the occasion and proved themselves to be far more adaptable and innovative than many thought possible.

As California slowly emerges from the pandemic and begins to rebuild, now is the time to analyze what aspects of the great shift online actually worked for students and consider making some of those changes permanent. For example, some colleges like Cosumnes River College are thinking of adding hybrid classes as permanent additions to their catalog in order to be more accessible and flexible for students. In another example, Shasta College is considering keeping some new 8-week Career Technical Education courses that

were developed out of necessity to squeeze in as much instruction as possible before an expected pandemic surge in November of 2020. These short courses were particularly helpful to working students so the college is thinking of making them permanent, albeit with some adjustments to make the workload more manageable for students and faculty.

Faculty members have also made positive changes that can outlast the pandemic. “The work that the faculty have done during the pandemic has been extraordinary,” says Dolores Davison, President of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. “They really rose to the challenge,” she says, by making changes to teaching methods, assignments, policies, and deadlines in order to accommodate students attending class from a distance while maintaining high academic standards. Many faculty members also learned to use new technologies to teach and stay in touch with students. Says Davison, “Learning to use new tools and applications was an essential part of this work and again, faculty embraced the need

“ In the past we were hesitant about the implications of using technology and how it might undermine live instruction. But we’ve actually found places where it helped quite a bit. So let’s not lose that momentum. This is an opportunity to reach more students, to make it easier to meet students where they’re at. Let’s continue to improve it and push it forward to focus on the end goal. We need to hold on to those gains that we’ve made.”

— **Eloy Ortiz Oakley**
*Chancellor, California
Community Colleges*



De Anza College

“If a student’s childcare plan breaks down or they are not feeling well one day, does it mean they have to miss instruction? Our students’ needs are fluid. They may need to take a class online one week but also want to go take the same class face-to-face the next. Students might want to come to campus to see a counselor face-to-face, but they should also be able to add and drop courses or apply for financial aid without ever having set foot on campus.”

— Ed Bush

President, Cosumnes River College

for change and in doing so improved their own skill sets.” Though forged in a time of distress, these new skills can ultimately make courses more accessible to students and improve the classroom experience. At the same time, there is much more to learn and try. “We don’t understand everything that we need to know about online pedagogy,” says Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley. “We’ve just scratched the surface.”

Looking ahead, many colleges are thinking hard about how to use a one-time influx of state and federal money strategically. “We’ve been working on guiding principles of how to use those resources in the best possible way,” says Shasta College President Joe Wyse, keeping in mind that future expenses will rise again, potentially just as the extra funds are drying up. Much of this funding is required to go directly to students and colleges can use it very intentionally to rebuild student enrollment and support students in moving toward their end goals. One college, for example, is considering giving students tiered cash awards for enrolling in 12 or 15 units to encourage full-time enrollment. Other colleges are paying students to contact fellow students who have left and help recruit them back. Students can also be paid for other contributions to the college’s rebuilding efforts, such as providing input or helping to co-design program improvements.

Funds not going directly to students can also be used strategically to help students and advance equity. For example, Cosumnes River College is planning to make a major investment in professional development to improve students’ classroom experience, complementing its core reform work of encouraging full time enrollment and completion. Compton College, through their work with Achieving the Dream, is also making a major investment in professional development, with an emphasis on supporting faculty teaching and learning. These ideas and many others can help to advance equity and student success, even as colleges engage in the slow work rebuilding and recovering. As always, it will be important for local leaders to track data on the impacts of any new strategies and make continual adjustments to ensure that students are being served well and equitably.

COMMITMENT 7

Lead the work of partnering across systems

This commitment is about colleges reaching out to K-12, CSU, UC, and workforce agencies—setting aside any “us versus them” mentality—and working collaboratively to help students reach their end goals.

Of all the resources needed to rebuild California’s education systems and economy, effective partnerships may be the most important. As emphasized in the recent *Recovery with Equity* report from the Governor’s Council for Post-Secondary Education:

Recovery with Equity will take the efforts of Californians across disciplines: from post-secondary institutions to K-12 schools, from human services agencies to local healthcare providers, from business partners to learner-focused nonprofit organizations. Working together, Californians can change the trajectory of the state so that all its residents have the support they need to qualify for the high-wage, high-quality, high-demand jobs that will drive California’s economy.

Although partnering across educational systems is always a complex endeavor, the pandemic has shown that remarkable progress can be made in a very short period of time. As an example, the California Community Colleges, UC, and CSU all acted quickly and in alignment with one another

to reform grading and admissions policies so that students would be held harmless for withdrawing from classes or not earning a letter grade as a result of the pandemic. Says Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley, “We changed grading policy by working with the other segments in ways that transcended our previous partnership. We accomplished a lot that wouldn’t have seemed possible a year ago. We need to continue to build on that.”

At the same time, there is much room for improvement. Students transitioning from K-12 schools to community colleges are often surprised—and disadvantaged—by the unfamiliar instructional approaches and academic expectations of college. To better prepare students for this transition, “our faculties need to talk to each other and work together,” says Pamela Haynes, President of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. Some forward-thinking campuses have partnered with feeder high schools to develop programs that boost students’ readiness for college, including dual enrollment courses and partnerships anchored in student services. For example, Cosumnes River College sends

“In order to ensure our state recovers equitably from COVID-19, higher education segments and institutions [must] take strong action that will require coordination and collaborations across segments and within each region in our state.”

— Lande Ajose

Senior Advisor to Governor Gavin Newsom, in Recovery with Equity, a report from the Governor’s Council for Post-Secondary Education



Antelope Valley College

“I’ve already reached out to the Superintendent of the [local] school district to initiate conversations about the impact of COVID-19 on the students who will be coming to us in the coming year. Let’s start working on how to overcome these recent challenges together, rather than waiting for the issues to show up on our doorstep.”

— **Tim McGrath**
President, Golden West College

counselors to its feeder high schools and actually registers 12th grade students into their first full year of college classes, getting them started on career/degree pathways early.

Students transferring from a community college to a four-year university also face frequent obstacles. Many transfer students find themselves shut out of local campuses or popular majors due to overcrowding. “The system will only work,” says Haynes, “if our students who plan to transfer have a seat waiting for them. Yet historically, these systems have always seen themselves as autonomous, not part of a linear system that needs to work for students.”

Community college students transitioning into the workforce also face difficulties when colleges are not well connected to industry and employers. Many colleges are working to strengthen pathways into the workforce, through “learn and earn models” with employer participation, supports for part-time students and adult learners, credit for prior learning, and reskilling of incumbent workers for job retention. Pilot baccalaureate programs are also showing promise as points of entry. For example, Solano Community College is partnering with leading companies as part of its Biomanufacturing Bachelor of Science degree program. Academic Senate for California Community Colleges President Dolores Davison describes the program this way: “Students do internships and go straight to Genentech, which is literally across the

road,” she says. “It’s a fantastic program, especially for students who are place-bound and can’t commute to a UC or CSU. There are opportunities out there and the colleges are trying to take advantage of those.”

Looking ahead, there are state-level efforts afoot to forge better connections across the education segments and the workforce. The creation of the new Cradle-to-Career Data System will make cross-sector data more transparent and accessible for student advising, institutional planning, and statewide policy. The Chancellor’s Office continues to work with UC and CSU and advocate for expanded transfer opportunities and is working with the state’s Labor and Workforce Development Agency to launch a workforce recovery initiative together. The California Community Colleges Board of Governors has issued a resolution calling for coordination across state agencies to meet students’ basic needs, and the Chancellor’s Office will continue to advocate for these changes. Of course, while these state-level actions can set the stage for better coordination and alignment at the local level, they are no substitute for local partnerships, leadership, and relationships. Now more than ever, community college districts can help incoming and outgoing students by advocating boldly with leaders in adjacent systems and working collaboratively on solutions.

Making Progress One Step at a Time

The 2017 *Vision for Success* established five-year goals with a 2022 endpoint. The goals remain in place and there is interim progress to report. In particular, **California Community Colleges have shown an impressive increase in completion and have already met the *Vision for Success* completion goal, two years ahead of schedule.**

Completion gains have been realized across all student demographic groups, with particular progress among American Indian/Alaskan Native and Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian students. (See the annual *State of the System* report for details and statistics on progress toward all *Vision for Success* goals.)

These gains aside, there is still much more room for improvement. Particular areas for concern are completion rates of Latinx and Black and African American students specifically—these rates are improving, but not as fast as needed to reach the ambitious systemwide goals for closing equity gaps. Transfer rates have improved steadily, but very slowly. Progress toward reducing unit accumulation has been minimal, signaling that students, on average, are still taking too long to reach a concrete outcome. One bright spot is the excellent results seen from implementing Equitable Placement and Support (AB 705): more students are enrolling in transfer-level English and math across the board, with the greatest gains among Latinx and Black and African American students. (See following sidebar for details.) Over time, these trends are expected to increase degree completion and transfer, shorten time to completion, and narrow equity gaps significantly.

Despite notable progress in some areas, it is clear that there is still much work to be done, especially given the recent unprecedented challenges of COVID-19. The years ahead offer challenge, but also great opportunity. The pandemic has been a major disruption, but disruptions can have a net positive effect when they dismantle old beliefs and behaviors that were an obstacle to progress. They can set the stage for major change and rapid gains.



San Jose City College

Advancing Equity through Improved Course Placement and Support

“What we in the field know is that, if we can connect with students and get them through transfer-level math and English, they’re going to be successful in college; they will soar. Everything else is secondary.”

— Tim McGrath

President, Golden West College

“Using grades for placement instead of placement tests is a big change for us, but it’s the biggest positive change we’ve ever seen in a single year and one of the most impactful things we’ve done in over 20 years. We’ve made the shift away from the notion that if students are prepared, they’ll succeed, but if they’re not prepared, it’s not our problem.”

— Brian King

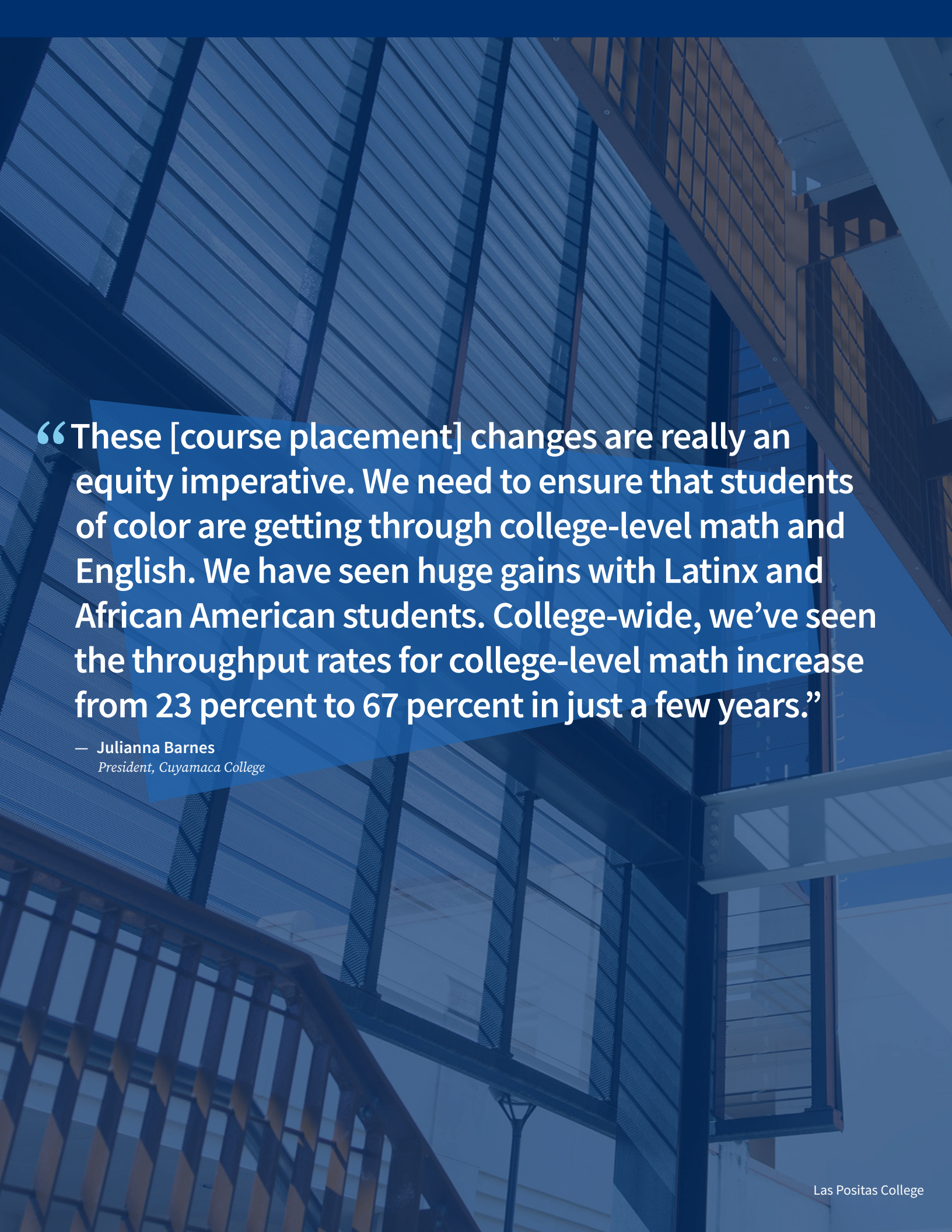
*Los Rios Community College
District Chancellor*

In prior years, students’ academic placement was based predominately on high stakes placement exams. Though well intentioned, this practice led to the over-placement of students into remedial coursework, which often consisted of years-long course sequences that did not count toward a degree or transfer outcome. This matters, says Pamela Haynes, President of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, because students lost precious time and many never made the transition from remediation into college-level coursework. “For community college students,” she says, “Time is a killer. It is a killer of dreams. It is a killer of opportunity.” These practices of under-placement and remediation disproportionately affected students of color.

To reverse these damaging practices, AB 705 was signed into law in 2017 in conjunction with the *Vision for Success*. That law established Equitable Placement and Support, requiring that student academic placement be based on other factors such as prior course-taking and grades, which are better predictors of academic success and also less likely to result in remedial placement. Colleges made corresponding changes: expanding the number of college-level courses offered, adding co-requisites, and building out academic support services like tutoring and math centers.

Early research on Equitable Placement and Support has shown truly remarkable results: enrollment in transfer-level courses has skyrocketed and by and large, students have succeeded in those classes. Students of color have made particularly impressive gains and equity gaps in course completion have narrowed. Specifically, direct enrollment in transfer-level English by Black and African American students increased the largest amount, by 40% between fall 2017 and fall 2018, the first year of implementation. Enrollment of Latinx students grew nearly as much, by 39%. Along with enrollments, completion rates are also rising. In the first year, 80% more students completed transfer-level English, 116% more completed transfer-level statistics/liberal arts math, and 103% more completed transfer-level Business-STEM courses. These completion data also revealed a narrowing of gaps between ethnic/racial groups, though not as dramatic as what was seen in enrollments.¹⁸

Best of all, the data also showed that across all groups, there were only minor changes in the distribution of letter grades and course withdrawals, despite the fact that many more students had enrolled directly in a transfer-level course. According to The RP Group report on first-year implementation, “Despite a substantial influx of students into transfer-level English and math courses, student success has not declined—students, it seems, are rising to the occasion.”¹⁹



“These [course placement] changes are really an equity imperative. We need to ensure that students of color are getting through college-level math and English. We have seen huge gains with Latinx and African American students. College-wide, we’ve seen the throughput rates for college-level math increase from 23 percent to 67 percent in just a few years.”

— Julianna Barnes
President, Cuyamaca College



On the Horizon

There is hope ahead as California rebuilds. The California Community Colleges have always provided opportunities for economic and social advancement and today they are more committed than ever to fulfill this mission equitably.

In the face of great challenges, the community colleges have shown incredible resilience, adaptability, and perseverance. Coming out of this terrible time, our system can continue to be a model of recovery by embracing hope and finding new opportunities for progress.

As we move forward, our next steps are clear. Collectively, we must:

Keep our eyes on the ambitious goals we set for ourselves in 2017

Our students need us more than ever to invest in their futures and pursue equity and success with great determination. We won't back away from our ambitious *Vision for Success* goals.

Hold fast to our commitments

The *Vision for Success* commitments will help us stay focused on what matters, clear barriers that stand in the way of student progress, develop new innovations to close equity gaps and fuel success, and create robust partnerships that can endure through future challenges. These commitments can guide us through policy and practice decisions at every level and help us to reach our goals.

Take reform strategies to the next level

Coming out of the distraction of the pandemic, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office plans to accelerate its *Vision for Success*-aligned reform strategies, providing renewed support and guidance in the following areas:

- Using the Guided Pathways framework to identify opportunity gaps and develop innovative solutions aimed at greater equity.
- Expanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work to build more inclusive and anti-racist institutions, diversify faculty, and foster more culturally competent curricula.
- Strengthening Equitable Placement and Support, including expanding student supports to reach equity of opportunity.
- Fully implementing the Student Centered Funding Formula, including alignment of expenditures to goals for success and equity.
- Reshaping Career Technical Education to foster equity and prepare students for the new post-pandemic economy.

The Chancellor's Office will also embark on new strands of work in the months ahead that align closely with the *Vision for Success* goals and commitments and supplement the major reforms implemented to date. We will work closely with our partners in state government and other education systems to make good on our promise of equitably supporting all students in reaching their end goals. Some of this will require difficult conversations and changes to longstanding practices. It may be challenging to set aside old beliefs and behaviors and try doing things differently. As difficult as this work may be, we will press on in service of our students and our state. Together we will build back better than ever.

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