

California Community Colleges

system strategic plan

EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY:
SHAPING CALIFORNIA'S FUTURE TODAY



Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

As California's population grows, the importance of quality education grows with it. A population lacking critical knowledge and skills cannot fully participate in the state's economy or even fully enjoy the benefits of its democracy. An educated California will advance the state's economic and political success, and the California Community Colleges are better positioned than any other entity to meet this educational and societal challenge. Our system of 109 colleges reaches into every region and offers vital programs to serve the state's diverse needs.

PURPOSE

The System Strategic Plan for the California Community Colleges provides a comprehensive road map for improving student access and success. The Plan addresses the major demographic, economic, and educational issues that California will face over the coming decades. It presents clear system goals, specific strategies and implementation

measures, as well as methods for assessing implementation and ensuring the Plan's ongoing renewal. Developed through consultation with the Colleges' educational leaders and external partners, this Plan builds on the planning and work done by individual Colleges and Districts, and provides a framework for all constituencies to work together.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Plan was developed with input from a wide range of internal constituencies of the Community Colleges system, as well as from external stakeholders and partners, including other segments of education, business and state agencies. A Strategic Plan Steering Committee, with representation from these stakeholder groups, developed recommendations for review by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS IS SUPPORTED BY A GRANT FROM THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND THE FOUNDATION FOR THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOUNDATION'S SUPPORT.

Definition of Terms

Community Colleges and Colleges —

The 109 California Community Colleges in the State that are governed by 72 districts and currently serve more than 2.5 million students annually.

System Office, also known as the Chancellor's Office —

The state agency that guides and supports the Community Colleges.

System —

The Community Colleges and System Office as a whole.

Board of Governors —

The group of individuals appointed by the Governor to oversee the System.

Plan —

The California Community Colleges System Strategic Plan.

The strategic planning process commenced with ten regional planning meetings, held throughout the state, to obtain input from administrators, faculty, classified staff, trustees, and students on major issues and challenges facing the Colleges. The meetings generated overall themes and directions regarding the future of the Colleges and were followed by additional research, analysis, and focus groups.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

California is a dynamic state with a wonderfully diverse population, an innovative business environment, and a vibrant workforce. It is also a state where change is always on the horizon and where opportunities are endless. To maximize the Colleges' role during this time of growth, the Plan has identified four major challenges and opportunities.

1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE: A NEW CALIFORNIA

In addition to expansive Latino and Asian population growth, the state will experience a doubling of the number of senior citizens

and 45 percent increase in the population of California's inland areas by 2025. Since 1980, a major cause of California's changing demographics has been new immigrants, which has significant implications for the Colleges and the future of the state.

2. EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

The educational level of many recent immigrants is lower than what is required for economic success in California. Because this population group is growing rapidly, the state's economic competitiveness is at stake. Over half of all incoming Community College students need basic skills math and English programs, and this need will increase as California's population continues to grow.

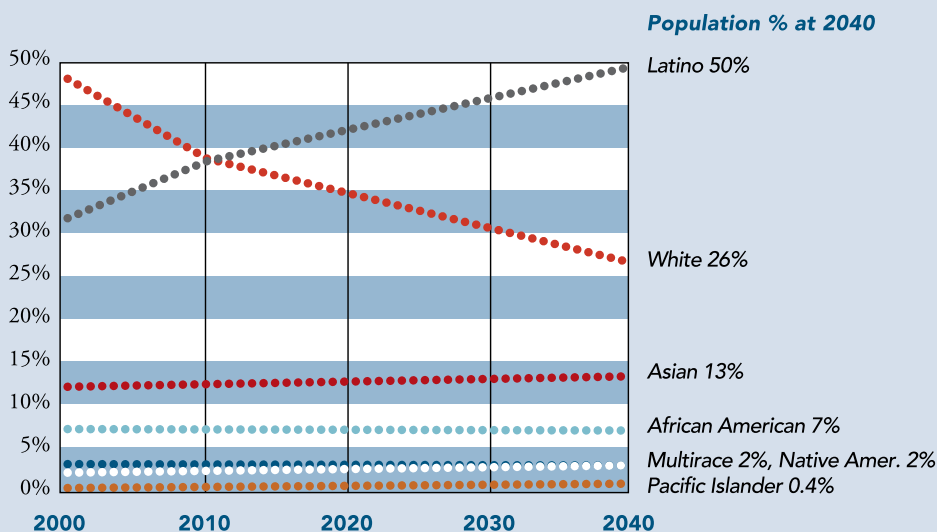
3. ALIGNING STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Each of California's five segments of education—Kindergarten through 12th Grade (K-12), Community Colleges, California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), and private/independent colleges—have separate governing structures. These disjointed systems have created unnecessary barriers between high school and college that must be alleviated if students are to succeed.

4. CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

Community Colleges stand at the center of change and innovation for education and the private sector. We must emphasize linkages between career and basic skills courses, improve the visibility and policy effectiveness of the System, evaluate proposed and existing public policy that limits the flexibility and effectiveness of the Colleges and, where appropriate, provide leadership in directing efforts to change such policy. We must also acquire additional resources to fund a growing student population.

CALIFORNIA DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS



Source: California Department of Finance

STRATEGIC GOALS

The Plan will be implemented through five Strategic Goals: College Awareness and Access; Student Success and Readiness; Partnerships for Economic and Workforce Development; System Effectiveness; and Resource Development. For each strategic goal, the Steering Committee identified key strategies which are described in more detail in the complete Strategic Plan.

Goal A COLLEGE AWARENESS AND ACCESS

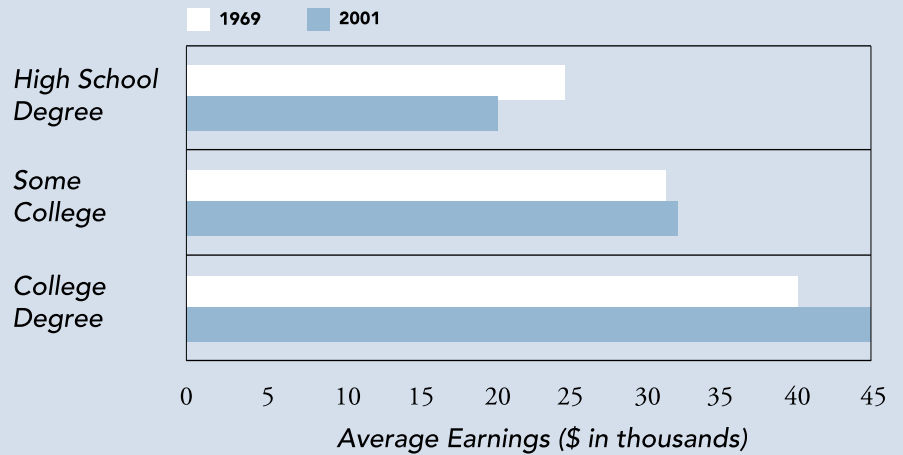
Stronger outreach to a growing population is critical to the development of the educated and talented workforce California needs to remain a competitive economic leader. The Community Colleges will ensure that Californians of any race, sex, age, color, ethnicity, economic means, and national origin have access to a college education and all the life-long benefits that come with it.

A1 Early Awareness of College as a Viable Option

Encourage early awareness of the Community Colleges as an option and the need for K-12 students and parents to prepare for college success.

Student interest in attending college is often formed in elementary school. High school students who believe college is a viable option are more likely to take college preparation classes and make plans to attend college. California's overall high school graduation rate is about 71 percent, and only about half of all high school freshmen will continue on to higher education within two years of graduation. With increased early awareness, students will have a better understanding of community college as a viable option and a stronger knowledge of application procedures, college entrance requirements, and financial aid opportunities.

INCREASING IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON EARNINGS



Source: Public Policy Institute of California

A2 Removing Barriers to Access and Student Success

Ensure that the Community Colleges remain affordable and fulfill their primary mission of providing open access to all Californians.

Community Colleges must remain an affordable option and take measures to ensure student success. Many high school and college students are not aware of financial aid options while others are not able to access the information, read forms, or understand procedures. Strategies must be developed that address financial and other barriers facing community college students.

A3 Innovative Programs and Outreach for Growing Populations

Increase college access among growing population groups that will emerge from current demographic trends.

There is a need to increase college access among California's under-served groups. By 2015, an estimated 600,000 additional students will enroll in Community Colleges (Tid-

One year's worth of high school dropouts costs the state \$14 billion in lost wages.* By enhancing early awareness of college as a viable option we can keep more students in school.

*Source: UC, Santa Barbara

al Wave II), and many of these students will be low-income and/or first-generation college students. There is also a second Hidden Tidal Wave of more than 750,000 students who are not high school graduates but could still benefit from a Community College education. Strategies will be developed to improve access for key groups: Tidal Wave II students, Hidden Tidal Wave students, adult learners, workforce participants, and unskilled/under-skilled workers.

**A4
Multiple Delivery Methods**

Expand and sustain an appropriate range of delivery methods to enhance access while maintaining and promoting high standards of academic rigor and excellence.

An appropriate range of delivery methods is needed to improve access while maintaining

high academic standards. The use of technology can bridge gaps that may be caused by income or geographical disparities. The Plan calls for the development of strategies to expand the use of distance education, on-line and hybrid courses.

**A5
Institutional Capacity for Diversity**

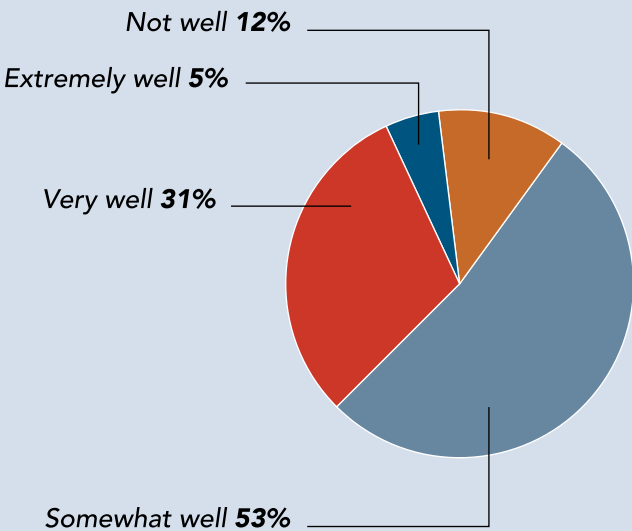
Support equity and diversity at the Community Colleges to build a strong society and enable a multicultural democracy.

The Community Colleges strive to provide equal opportunity to a diverse student population in order to build a stronger society and enable a multicultural democracy. The Colleges must also work to strengthen their employees' capacity to demonstrate sensitivity to all groups and provide equal opportunity in recruitment efforts.

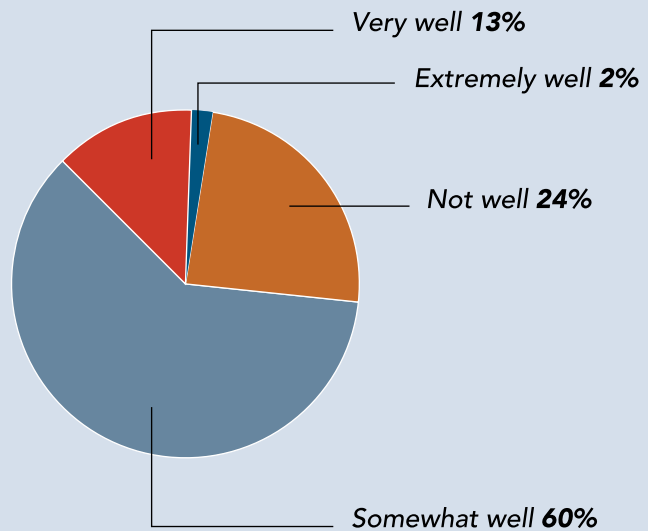
VIEWS OF TEACHERS AND PROFESSORS ON STUDENTS' PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE

HOW WELL PREPARED ARE YOUR STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL WORK?

HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHERS



COLLEGE PROFESSORS



Not well—large gaps in preparation, struggling.
Somewhat well—there are some gaps.
Very well—students are generally able to do what is expected.
Extremely well—they are prepared for almost anything.

Source: *The Chronicle of Higher Education* March 2006

Goal B STUDENT SUCCESS AND READINESS

Readiness programs and services must be strengthened to increase student success, especially for students lacking basic math and/or English skills. In addition, there must be greater consistency between high school curriculum, assessments, and standards, and those of the Colleges. This strategic goal will address the transfer process, career pathway models, and the collaboration between the Colleges and their own noncredit programs.

B1 **Basic Skills as the Foundation for Student Success**

Ensure that basic skills development is a major focus and an adequately funded activity of the Community Colleges.

To successfully participate in college-level courses, many Community College students need pre-collegiate math and/or English skill development. The goal is to identify model basic skills and English as a Second Language programs and their key features and, given availability of funds, to facilitate replication across the Colleges. In addition, best practices in classrooms and labs and descriptions of effective learning environments will be collected and disseminated widely to inform and assist both credit and noncredit programs. However, noncredit basic skills courses are funded at approximately 60 percent of the rate provided to credit basic skills courses, which is a disincentive for colleges to offer those courses. The Colleges need to gather practices with high effectiveness rates, such as innovative program structures, peer support, and counseling, and acquire funding to implement these approaches to reach all students needing basic skills education.

B2 **Assessment and Placement**

Develop methods to more effectively assess student preparedness levels and to place students in appropriate courses.

Students are more likely to succeed when they enroll in courses appropriate for their preparation levels. The difficulties with assessment and placement range from the stigma attached to basic skills math and English courses to the student's desire to immediately take classes that can be applied toward degrees, transfer, or career advancement. Strategies will be developed to identify, fund, and disseminate effective assessment and placement practices.

B3 **Articulation with K-12**

Enhance alignment of K-12 and Community College standards, curriculum, and assessment processes.

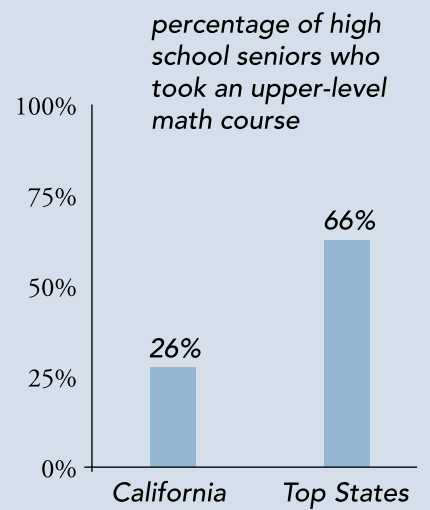
More than half of entering Community College students require some sort of basic skills education, due in part to the fact that K-12 curriculum and assessments do not always adequately prepare students for college level work. The Plan recommends that College requirements be reflected in high school curricula, that high school students and their parents have clear understandings of what it takes to succeed in college, and that the Colleges work toward increased alignment with K-12, noncredit programs, and adult schools.

B4 **Intersegmental Transfer**

Ensure that the Community Colleges System and their partners are maintaining and improving the transfer function to meet the needs of students and the State.

Many students are frustrated by the myriad of complexities and challenges of the transfer process. Streamlining and consolidating

LACK OF PREPARATION



Source: California Department of Education

Articulation is the process where the institutions develop a formal, written agreement that identifies courses that are transferable for credit from one college to another.

Associate Degrees (AA, AS and AAS) are two-year Community College degrees awarded for the completion of a course of study equivalent to the first two years in a four-year college or university.

Certificates of Completion or Achievement are awarded by Community Colleges to students who complete specific vocational and work-force training programs.

transfer requirements between the Community Colleges and four-year institutions will allow more students to reach their educational goals with less difficulty.

B5 Teaching and Learning Effectiveness

Support effective teaching and learning.

In order to provide students with the highest quality instruction available, Community College faculty members and counselors should be able to meaningfully interact with students both inside and outside of class. Student success can increase with more full-time faculty positions, facility improvements, and funding for program innovation and professional development.

B6 Degrees and Certificates

Identify effective practices for enhancing students' ability to attain degrees and certificates.

Many students do not seek associate degrees or certificates, even though they have been shown to be highly valuable in terms of

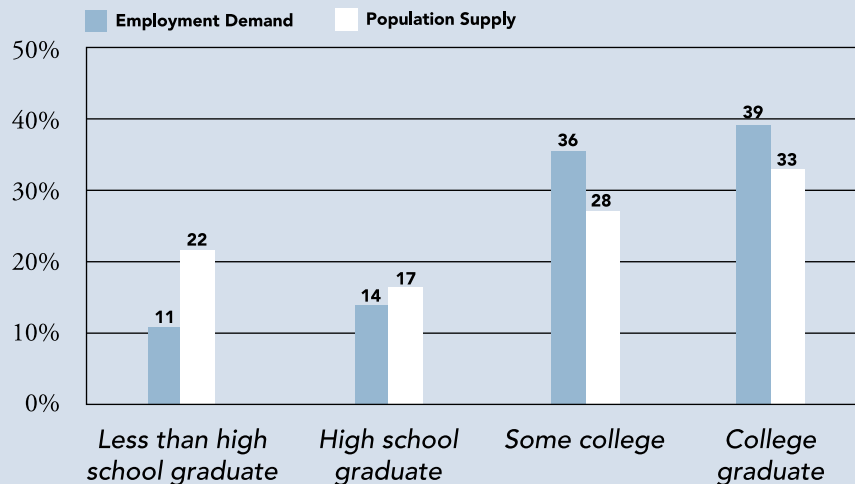
increased earnings and career enhancement opportunities. Strategies need to be developed to increase awareness of the value of degrees and certificates, to help students understand their degree status, and to increase the number of students petitioning (applying) for degrees.

B7 Innovative Practices in Workforce Education

Support innovation in workforce education.

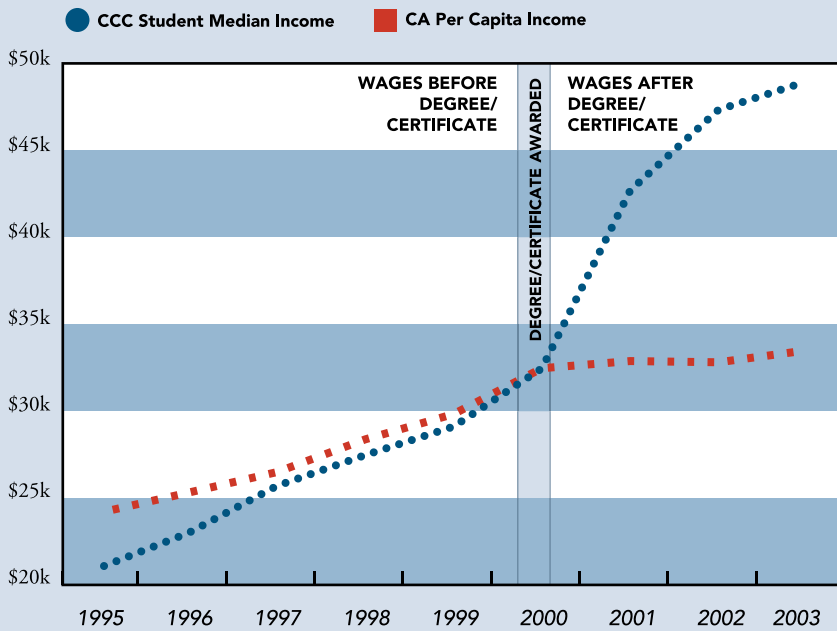
Community Colleges provide workforce education and training to workers and those seeking employment. In addition to the many challenges facing students, older learners must deal with the challenges of returning to school after a long hiatus and lack of assessment. The Colleges should provide a full range of instructional and support services in all workforce programs that meet the needs of this specialized group.

EDUCATION PROJECTIONS FOR 2020
EMPLOYMENT DEMAND AND POPULATION



Source: Public Policy Institute of California, 2005

STUDENTS WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEGREES/CERTIFICATES SURPASS CALIFORNIA'S PER CAPITA INCOME



Source: California Community Colleges System Office

Pathways to Success

When 21-year-old Cecilia Rios moved to Azusa from Mexico, she couldn't speak a word of English. Three years after entering Citrus College, Cecilia received her associate's degree in social and behavioral sciences and will transfer to Cal Poly Pomona. "Citrus College changed my life tremendously," Cecilia said. "It became my second home. This school has so many great teachers."

In addition to mastering English, Cecilia received several scholarships from the Citrus College Foundation. She plans to earn a bachelor's degree in political science and become a high school teacher. Ultimately, she would like to attend law school and become an immigration attorney. "I had a lot of obstacles such as the language barrier and the financial barrier. The key to success is in how you face these obstacles. You always need to have courage and remain positive."

Goal C PARTNERSHIPS FOR ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Career training geared toward students who are seeking to learn a trade or skill has long been a mission of the Community Colleges. With high growth and emerging fields as the backbone of California's economy, a skilled labor pool is necessary to meet employer needs and ensure California's long-term economic vitality. Through workforce training, the Colleges play a critical role in the state's economic development efforts.

C1 Coordination of Statewide Workforce Programs and Policies

Ensure that Community College programs are aligned and coordinated with state and local economic and workforce development needs.

As the largest provider of workforce training in the state, Community College programs must be aligned with state and local workforce development needs. Key steps toward this goal are to improve collabora-

tion of workforce development and education programs throughout the state; explore ways to leverage traditional college resources with noncredit programs, K-12, adult schools, and other public workforce agencies to support a market-responsive workforce system; develop alternative sources of funding; and expand existing College Economic and Workforce Development Program initiatives to attract additional investment in workforce training.

C2 Career Pathways

Create links between academic and career fields to provide clearly defined career pathways that encourage and support a lifetime of educational career opportunities.

The career pathways approach creates links between academic and career fields. In California's economy, high-wage and high-growth employers require a workforce with proper levels of basic skills as well as the ability to adapt quickly to changing technology. To meet these goals the Community Colleges will build on existing models, disseminate best practices, and develop new programs for enhancing the career pathways approach.



VISION

California's Community Colleges provide upward social and economic mobility through a commitment to open access and student success by delivering high quality, affordable and comprehensive higher education.

GUIDING FRAMEWORK

Planning Principles

Access to Quality Higher Education

California's Social, Civic, and Economic Development

Shared Goals, Ideas, and Resources

Existing Governance Processes

Regional and Local Circumstances

A Systems Approach to Management of Higher Education in California

Values

All people have the opportunity to reach their full **educational potential**.

The Colleges embrace **diversity** in all its forms.

The Colleges strive for **innovation and creativity**.

All people have a right to access **quality higher education**.

All people have access to **lifelong learning**.

An **educated citizenry** is the basis for democracy.

Missions

Transfer Education

Basic Skills and English Language Proficiency

Economic and Workforce Development

Lifelong Learning

Associate Degrees and Certificates