



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
BRIEFING
2019



Overview

OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The California Community Colleges are the backbone of higher education in the state and the leading provider of career and workforce training in the country. More than 2.1 million community college students – one in four community college students in the nation – are enrolled in what is the largest higher education system in America and the one with the lowest tuition.

Most students who attend our community colleges say they aspire to move on to a four-year college or university, and nearly half of University of California bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics follow transfer from a California community college campus. In all, 29 percent of University of California and 51 percent of California State University graduates started at a California community college. Others attending a California community college are immigrants learning how to improve their English, mid-career professionals looking to boost their skills as they move up the career ladder, entrepreneurs looking to start a small business, and retirees looking to take up a new interest in their golden years.

Despite such successes, shortcomings abound. Those shortcomings are fueling significant change, including a change in strategic vision and a change in funding. The *Vision for Success* is creating a new North Star for the system. The *Vision for Success*, adopted by the Board of Governors in September of 2017, is a call to action that lays out several ambitious goals and a set of comprehensive commitments to achieve those goals. *The Vision for Success*, which you can read about in more detail in the following pages, is a clear-eyed, honest look at our performance as a system. And it is focused squarely on our students and ensuring our efforts zero in on getting students to their destination, whether that be securing a certificate, skills, and training needed to get a better job or transferring to a University of California or California State University campus.

Key to reaching the ambitious agenda spelled out in the *Vision for Success* is the Guided Pathways framework, highly structured course-taking patterns that will lead students, in as an expedient manner as possible, to a defined goal based on their interests. Both the *Vision for Success* and the Guided Pathways framework are designed to improve student achievement and transfer, sharply curtailing the number of unnecessary classes students take to reach their goal.

Combined with these reform efforts is a new method of financing the California Community Colleges – the Student Centered Funding Formula. Under forward looking protocol, general apportionment funding will no longer be based solely on a college's enrollment. From here on, allocations will also reflect how well colleges are serving low-income students and how colleges are faring on outcomes related to student success.

The stakes are enormous. A leader in combating income inequality and a trailblazer in supporting social and economic mobility for California residents, ours is a system that is leading the state's efforts on workforce development by partnering with industry and labor to create innovative skills-building initiatives such as the Strong Workforce Program, a \$412-million annual investment to support and expand career education efforts and increase pathways to upward social mobility.

Most students do not pay enrollment fees; the California College Promise Grant (formerly the Board of Governors Fee Waiver) provides approximately 1 million students with free tuition, and the new California College Promise program waives enrollment fees for one year for all first-time, full-time students who do not qualify for the California College Promise Grant. And overall, Californians with a community college degree will earn \$400,000 more over their working lifetime than their peers who only have a high school diploma.

Which is why we must not fail our students.

Colleges are governed locally through 73 community college districts from Southwestern in Chula Vista to College of the Siskiyous some 50 miles south of the Oregon border with a new district governing the California Online Community College. The 17-member Board of Governors sets policy and provides support; the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office administers the system, allocates state funding; provides leadership and technical assistance to the colleges, and brings policy recommendations to the Board of Governors.

This is a legacy moment for the California Community Colleges. Our system is committed to remaining the backbone of higher education in the state and the leading provider of career and workforce training by keeping up with the changing needs of California and its residents.