

# *Our* California

A Call to Action and  
Blueprint to Increase  
College Graduates  
and Keep Our  
Economy Strong







## California has always been more than a place; it is an idea . . . a place where your dreams can come true.

California is where people from all over the world come to pursue their dreams, whether in Hollywood, Silicon Valley or the fields of the Central and Napa valleys. Our Golden State holds the vision of possibility – invention, innovation, and advancement.



Together, California's leaders and its people locked arms to dream big for themselves and their children – making the investments and the sacrifices necessary to turn those big dreams into reality. One of the most important investments our state made in the last half-century was in education, as we broke the mold and created, arguably, the best public higher education system in the world.

We aspired to greatness – establishing a Master Plan that would create a continuum of educational opportunity for all Californians, from community colleges to universities. This groundbreaking plan catapulted the Golden State into world leadership in gross domestic product (GDP), higher education, and workforce development. From research universities to accessible, affordable four-year public state universities and community colleges, we paved the way for innovation and entrepreneurship that made our state famous and held our position as one of the strongest and largest economies in the world.

# A New Day Dawns



**Since the creation of the California Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960, California has boomed, spearheading internationally competitive industries such as software and information technology, financial services, aerospace, entertainment, advanced manufacturing, and wine.**

These industries have evolved as they have exploded, now requiring advanced education, technical know-how and global savvy. The demand of these new industries will soon outgrow the supply of California's current workforce.

As other states, and even other countries, have witnessed California's meteoric rise, they too have positioned themselves to compete. With the leadership of the next Governor, a new day must dawn in the Golden State. The next Governor of California must act to address the realities we face.

The good news is that we have an abundant population of passionate, diverse people who want to realize their dreams.

But to help them and our state, we must expect better results from higher education, with more residents accessing and completing some type of college degree.

It is no longer just other states that we compete with for talent and resources, but nations abroad that have doubled down on their efforts to prioritize education and workforce development.

California is at a crossroads. Our public higher education system serves us well, but as a state we have never rested on our laurels . . . we dig in and strive toward the next goal. We must embrace our ethnic and regional diversity and leverage the power of our people to once again reimagine what higher education can achieve for us all.

# The Realities We Face



**Our people's standard of living is declining – and will continue to decline without improvements in educational attainment.** Today, per capita income in California is only 6 percent above the national average, with our state ranking 16th nationally. However, income is not equitably distributed. When California's high cost of living is considered, one in five of us lives in poverty; this is the highest poverty rate in the nation.



**Our talent pipeline is aging and our future workforce is not prepared.** California will experience an unusually large loss of intellectual talent as older adult populations retire and fewer young adults are educated enough to replace these well-educated workers.



**Our future economic prosperity is jeopardized if large education disparities by race and ethnicity continue to be ignored.** If you are Black, Latinx, or from certain communities within the Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander population, you are less likely than Whites to earn a college degree. In fact, California "leads the nation" in the size of the college attainment gap between Whites and Latinx – an unacceptable place to lead when half of the children in our state's public schools are Latinx.



**Californians do not have access to the college opportunities they need to improve their families' lives and contribute to the state's wealth.** In California, 68 percent or more of Black, Latinx, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander adults do not have a college degree.



**Our future Golden State will lose employers and jobs without urgent attention to increasing attainment of a college credential.** We are simply not graduating enough people with college degrees or vocational training to meet the current and projected job market demand. To meet workforce demand, close racial equity gaps, and maintain California's economic standing in the world, 60 percent of adults in the state must have a college credential – that's 1.65 million more college degrees and credentials than we are on track to produce.



## Our Vision

**We envision a highly educated, diverse workforce that keeps California economically viable and competitive with the nation and world.**

All Californians, regardless of race, ethnicity, income or ZIP code, have the skills and education they need to be upwardly mobile, participate in the workforce and contribute to civic life. California thrives because it has a robust democracy and healthy civil society.



California

is the land of

**OPPORTUNITY**

# Our Challenge



**While making incremental progress toward our vision, California is not on track for producing the educated workforce our economy demands.**

A higher education performance report card released in 2018, by the Campaign for College Opportunity, shows that California earns merely average grades and overall is far from reaching a 60 percent college attainment goal by 2030 – producing an additional 1.65 million college degrees and credentials - that is required for our economy.

## California Higher Education Report Card

Metric	Grade
<b>College Preparation:</b> Are Students Prepared for College?	<b>B+</b>
<b>College Access:</b> Are Enough Californians Going to College?	<b>D</b>
<b>College Completion:</b> Are Californians Completing College?	<b>C</b>
<b>College Affordability:</b> Is College Affordable for California Families?	<b>C</b>
<b>Overall GPA</b>	<b>⚠️ 2.07</b>

# Our Opportunity



The people of our Golden State have the opportunity to come together now to ensure that the next Governor leads the changes and makes the investments we need to make this vision a reality.

## We need a public higher education system that prepares all of our residents for more highly skilled jobs by ensuring 60 percent of California’s adults have a college credential by 2030.

California needs to establish a statewide attainment goal of 60 percent – that is 1.65 million more college degrees and credentials - by 2030. That level meets workforce demand, closes racial equity gaps, and maintains our economic standing as fifth-largest economy in the world.

Our future cannot coast on our past accomplishments: Two out of three projected jobs in our state will require some

training and certification beyond high school. Today, only 48% of adults in California have a college credential. To get to 60% of adults with a college credential by 2030, the status quo of incremental improvement simply is not enough. The state needs to produce 200,000 additional credentials annually by 2030 over the 380,000 credentials produced last year in order to meet workforce demand, close racial equity gaps, and maintain our economic standing.

## We need equal opportunities for all Californians.

### Race matters

We are the most racially and ethnically diverse state in the nation. It is mathematically impossible for us to achieve our college attainment goal without directly addressing and closing the gaps that persist in educational attainment by race and ethnicity. California’s next Governor needs to be a tireless advocate for improving California’s ability to deliver results for its people. Half of the children in K-12 schools are Latinx, and 69 percent of college students are Black, Latinx, Asian-American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

### Adults Need to Be College Graduates, Too

California must see its adult workers who have only high school diplomas as college students – and college completers. An estimated 5 million adults in California started college but never earned a degree. Getting just 10 percent of them (500,000) to complete would contribute significantly toward the results our state needs.

### No Region Left Behind

California must ensure that all of its regions have the opportunity to participate in and earn a college degree. The San Joaquin Valley and Inland Empire are our fastest-growing regions in the state, but their educational attainment lags way behind others. Fewer than one in five Inland Empire residents have a bachelor’s degree, and the San Joaquin Valley has the lowest rate of baccalaureate degree attainment in the state. Our entire state will be more prosperous and financially stable when all regions have the talent they need.

69 percent of college students are racially diverse.



# Our Opportunity

## We must improve college accessibility, affordability, and completion.

**It is impossible to reach a 60 percent college attainment goal and close racial equity gaps without significant improvements in accessibility, affordability, and completion.**

- California needs a **new statewide higher education plan** that aligns opportunities in our public colleges and universities with the workforce we need. Specifically, the 58-year-old Master Plan for Higher Education establishes strict enrollment caps at the state's public four-year universities, which severely constrains access to four-year degrees (a major factor in our largest-in-the-nation racial equity gap between Whites and Latinx). The outdated plan also provides no means to align higher education with careers that are in high demand today, such as those in the health care industry.
- California needs its public colleges and universities to engage in a strategic and coordinated fashion with K-12 on the **college preparation** of our schoolchildren. That includes aligning curriculum, data, counseling, and financial aid.
- California needs **to expand the number of spots in our public universities**, so that all prepared students are served. Each year, thousands of students are denied admission because there is not enough capacity in our public universities to serve them.
- California needs **to expand the number of students on the Associate Degree for Transfer pathways** between the state's 114 community colleges and all campuses of the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems. Without the Associate Degree for Transfer, students starting their education at a California Community College are transferring with 20-40 excess credits, on average (costing one to two years of additional time and money) – or they never transfer at all.

- California's community colleges must build **guided pathways to graduation**. The longer students take to earn a credential, the less affordable it is. And the longer a student takes, the fewer spaces open up to serve more of our residents. Guided pathways create clear maps to graduation with the necessary academic support to ensure students cross the graduation stage.
- California must realize that low tuition alone does not make our higher education system affordable. Today, the cost to attend a public four-year university is 77 percent of the total income of our lowest-income families. That is unrealistic.



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## We need the state to adopt the structures and harness the data to produce the results we need.

**To get more than incremental progress and be fiscally responsible, the state needs basic leadership and management tools to ensure that the billions its taxpayers invest in higher education deliver much better results.**

- California must have the capacity to manage coordination of the three public segments of higher education. We are the only state besides Michigan that does not have a statewide entity to monitor and facilitate improved results from the state's higher education system.
- California must have the statewide, student-level data system to understand and improve how taxpayer dollars are used and how institutions serve students and regions equitably. We are one of just six states nationally without that critical tool.
- Californians must have accessible annual reports on how our state is doing to realize our vision. What gets measured gets done, but California taxpayers can't track how their higher education investments propel progress toward the state attainment and equity goals.

# Our Call to Action



Producing 1.65 million more college degrees and credentials by 2030 requires that the next Governor put these four actions in place within the first year of a new Administration.



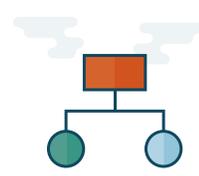
Establish a statewide attainment goal in the first 100 days of a new Administration that by 2030, 60 percent of Californians have some college degree or credential and that racial equity gaps are closed. Develop a statewide plan for achieving the attainment and racial equity goal.



Implement a set of policies to achieve the attainment goal and eliminate racial equity gaps.



Create a strong data system.



Establish a central coordinating body in higher education.

Our Call to Action



**California**

**is counting on**

**US**



# Our Call to Action



## Implement a set of policies to achieve the attainment goal and eliminate racial equity gaps

### Expand Access

**Increase the enrollment targets** for the UC and CSU so that 40 percent of qualified high school students can directly enroll in a four-year university.

- The current Master Plan permits just the top 12 percent to attend a UC campus and just the top 33 percent to attend a CSU campus.

**49** California's rank nationally for four-year public university enrollment within the college-age population

### Fix Transfer

**Redouble efforts to increase Associate Degree for Transfer earners across the state.** Students need one clear pathway for transfer to both the CSU and UC systems with guaranteed admission and guaranteed junior standing.

- Of the 2.3 million students enrolled in one of the 114 California Community Colleges, only 4 percent today transfer after two years, 25 percent after four years, and 38 percent after six years. Even with higher four-year enrollment caps, transfer will still be vital to producing bachelor degrees in the state.

**4%** of students transfer after two years  
**25%** of students transfer after four years  
**38%** of students transfer after six years

### Re-engage Adults

**Reach adults who have earned some college credit but who never completed a certificate or degree.** Make it easy and straightforward for them to overcome time and location barriers (such as work and family obligations); to avoid having to repeat credits they have already earned simply because time has passed; and to access our Cal Grant program.

- Approximately 5 million Californians who started their college education have not earned a credential. The state cannot reach its 60 percent attainment goal without stronger pathways for adults. Setting a goal to attract back 10 percent of those former students would yield half a million more degrees.



# Our Call to Action

## Improve Remedial Education

**Invest in and scale proven practices that improve the likelihood that students will enroll in college-level courses within their first year.**

Colleges and universities must utilize a student's high school performance to determine college-level English and math placement rather than an unreliable high-stakes assessment test. As colleges work to implement reformed delivery of remedial education, attention must be paid to improving teaching and practice.

- Nearly 80 percent of all students entering community college are assessed into pre-college-level English, math or both. Despite knowledge that most assessment tests are either invalid or flawed, community colleges still rely too heavily on them to place students into English or math. Inaccurate placement leads students to remedial education courses that cost time and money but do not count toward degree attainment or transfer. If a student does need remediation, the delivery of instruction must improve so that students are accelerated toward college-level courses and receive the co-curricular support they need to succeed.

## Ensure Strong Implementation of the Community College Student Success Funding Formula

California Community Colleges serve approximately 2.3 million students. The 114 colleges serve a diverse student body with multiple missions including university transfer, career technical education, and basic skills. These open access institutions promise an affordable path for students to reach their college and career goals. However, too many students fail to cross the finish line with a majority (52 percent) of degree-seeking students unable to complete a certificate, degree or transfer to a university after six years of entering these two-year institutions. Completion rates are even more alarming for students of color, with community colleges failing to graduate six out of ten Black and Latinx students and leaving most low-income students far from reaching their college goals.

**A student success funding formula for California's Community Colleges passed in 2018 puts value on both college success and access.** The formula provides additional funding for colleges serving low-income students, for graduating and transferring students, and for reaching key progression milestones. The funding formula, if implemented well, has the power to be one of the most transformative policies in the history of community colleges by incentivizing not just enrollment but student success.

## Expand Access to Financial Aid and Prioritize Aid for Low-Income Families

**Promote the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) statewide so California leads the nation in FAFSA completion and financial aid dollars are accessed.** Consolidate multiple aid programs into a single, need-based aid program without the verification requirements that lock adults out of financial aid.

- The cost of college is one of the reasons students cite most for choosing not to attend. However, every year Californians leave more than \$250 million in Pell Grants on the table because one-third of California's more than 400,000 high school graduates did not complete the FAFSA. Students who do not complete it are ineligible for a Cal Grant.
- While California is one of the most generous states in terms of financial aid (nearly two-thirds of all community college students pay zero fees/tuition), low-income families still face a disproportionate cost burden. The cost to attend a public four-year university for the state's lowest-income families is 77 percent of their total income, compared with just 14 percent for high-income families. For community college, the cost is 50 percent of total income for our lowest-income families, compared with just 8 percent for high-income families.

**Cost of College as a Percent of Income for Lowest-Income Families**

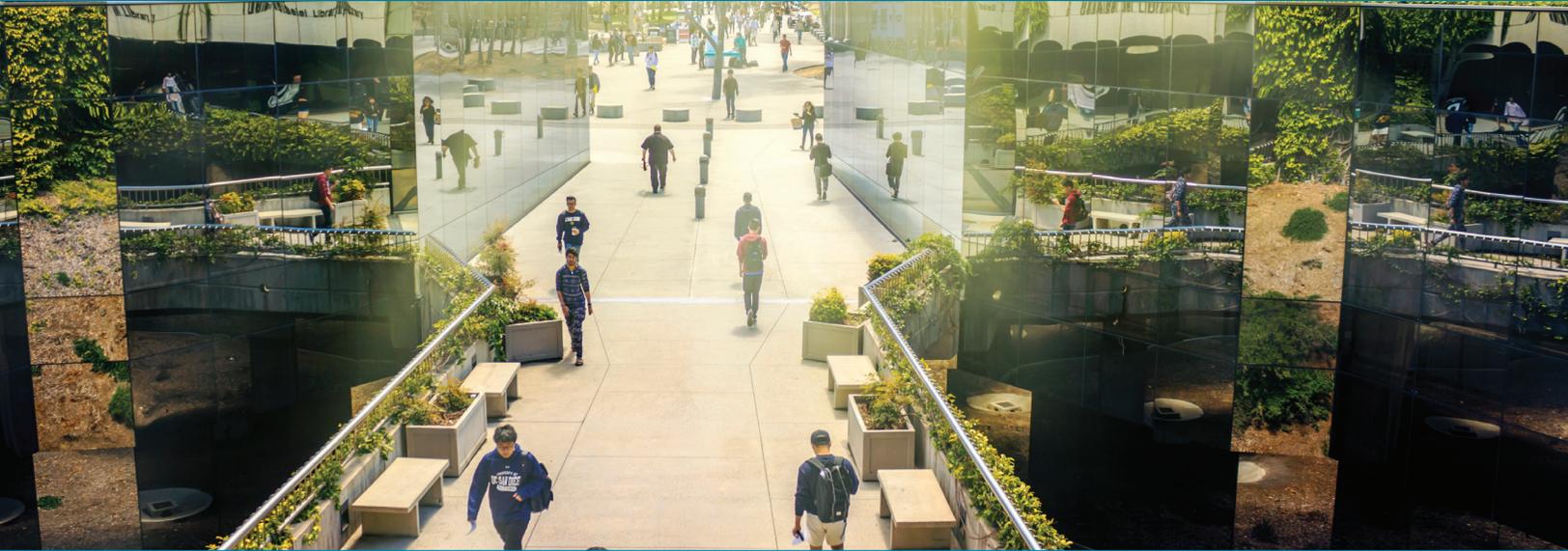


**Cost of College as a Percent of Income for High-Income Families**



**\$** Four-year public university expenses

**\$** Community College expenses



### Create a strong data system

**Build a strong data system that follows students from early education through to the workforce.** Without good data, California cannot answer key questions about the performance of our students, our colleges, and our universities. A strong data system would capture where roadblocks to student success exist, where intervention is necessary, and where investment will pay off. A strong data system keeps our schools, colleges, and universities accountable for better serving students, reaching the 60 percent college attainment goal and closing racial equity gaps.

Today, our higher education data is siloed across the three systems – UC, CSU, and community colleges and is not easily accessible or transparent. The data is not linked to our K-12 schools from where our students come, nor is it linked to the workforce where our students will go. California needs a centralized, longitudinal data system that links with K-12 and the workforce, that prioritizes data disaggregation by race/ethnicity, to measure and assess the success of our higher education system and where intervention is imperative.



### Establish a central coordinating body in higher education

**California serves over 2.8 million students in its 146 public colleges and universities, but it has no coordinating body between the California Community Colleges, CSU, and UC systems.** California is only one of two states in the country without a higher education coordinating body. California must create and utilize an independent, authoritative, statewide coordinating entity responsible for ensuring that the California Community Colleges, CSU, and UC use the public funding they receive to meet the statewide attainment and racial equity goals and collect and report on data.

- Pursuing a bold, new vision for higher education with goals requires an entity with the responsibility, authority and capacity (staff and financial) to do the job. California recognized that when it established the Coordinating Council for Higher Education, which subsequently was reinvented as the California Postsecondary Education Commission. Unfortunately, neither of those entities could succeed in pursuing a stated and student-focused agenda because they held little power and oversight, and they faced strong opposition from more powerful system leaders. A new entity must be envisioned that puts our students and state interest first.

# Our California

## Dream With Us

The future of California – and our economic standing in the world – will be shaped by how our next Governor prioritizes and addresses deep challenges in higher education.

We envision a California where all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, income or ZIP code, have the skills and education they need to be upwardly mobile, participate in the workforce and contribute to civic life.

The next Governor of California must make the necessary investments and be committed to implementing bold reforms to California's higher education systems to ensure that all students can succeed and that our state thrives.

### The next Governor of California must:

#### Establish a statewide attainment goal

- Adopt a degree attainment goal of 60 percent by 2030
- Close racial equity gaps in college opportunity by 2030

#### Implement a set of policies to achieve the attainment goal and eliminate racial equity gaps

- Expand access
- Fix transfer
- Re-engage adults
- Improve remedial education
- Ensure strong implementation of the community college Student Success Funding Formula
- Expand access to financial aid and prioritize aid for low-income families

#### Create a strong data system

#### Establish a central coordinating body in higher education

**California needs a Governor who will dream with us and for us.**

## Join Us



Visit [www.collegecampaign.org/OurCalifornia](http://www.collegecampaign.org/OurCalifornia) to add your name.



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# Education has always been the way forward.

This is our California, and college matters.

The children who will enter kindergarten this year - the class of 2030 - are counting on us. So are the teens making their way through high school. The students navigating the path to a degree. And the workers who need the skills and training to compete. Their future is our future. Together, we must rise to meet the challenges of the new day. We need a Governor who will dream with us and for us . . . because California is counting on us.

Join Us.

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