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I. Introduction

PURPOSE
The System Strategic Plan for the California Community Colleges provides a comprehensive roadmap for restoring student access and improving student success. The Plan addresses the major demographic, economic, and educational challenges 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 its ongoing renewal. Originally developed through consultation with the College’s educational leaders and external partners, and revised by the Board of Governors in 2013, this Plan builds on the planning and work done by the individual Colleges and Districts, and provides a framework for all constituencies to work together.

PLAN FRAMEWORK
As shown in Figure 1 on the following page, the Plan includes five elements:

- **Vision.** The preferred future for the system.
- **Planning Principles.** The foundational assumptions that recognize the benefits and limits of strategic planning for a diverse “system” of autonomous colleges and districts.
- **Values.** Qualities and principles that will guide implementation of the plan.
- **Missions.** Core focus areas of the Colleges.
- **Strategic Goals.** Directions for change. The strategies under each Strategic Goal present the specific initiatives that will implement the plan.

PARTICIPATORY AND BILATERAL GOVERNANCE
California’s Education Code specifies the roles and responsibilities for governance of California’s Community Colleges. In 1988, AB 1725 established the current structure for the Colleges, including the bilateral governance structure and the role of students, faculty, classified staff and administrators in the governance process. The System Strategic Plan presents areas of collaboration and coordination between the local governance structures, the statewide governance bodies, and the system’s partners—while maintaining all existing bilateral and participating governance roles.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
The Strategic Plan was developed with input from a wide range of internal constituencies of the California Community College system, as well as external stakeholders and partners including other segments of education, businesses 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 original planning process was initiated with ten Regional Planning Meetings held throughout the state supplemented with additional input from other interested parties. The Strategic Plan, originally adopted in 2006, provided guidance to the Chancellor’s Office. In the spring of 2013 the Board of Governors revisited the original 2006 plan to revise and update the document expeditiously. As part of its annual Board retreat it updated the Plan and then asked the Consultation Council to review the revisions and provide feedback prior to their final approval.

The next chapter in statewide strategic planning is taking place in the context of the recommendations of the Student Success Task Force (SSTF).

In January 2011, the Community Colleges Board of Governors embarked on a 12-month strategic planning process to improve student success. Pursuant to Senate Bill 1143 (Chapter 409, Statutes of 2010), the Board of Governors created the Student Success Task Force composed of a diverse group of community college leaders, faculty, students, researchers, staff, and external stakeholders. It worked for seven months to identify best practices for promoting student success and to develop statewide strategies to take these approaches to scale while ensuring that educational opportunity for historically underrepresented students would not just be maintained, but enhanced.

Each month, from January through June 2011, the SSTF met to examine topics critical to the success of students, ranging from college readiness and assessment to student services, from basic skills to performance-based funding. The SSTF turned to state and national experts for the latest
**Figure 1 (Continued)**

**STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Goals</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. College Awareness and Access</strong>  &lt;br&gt; Increase awareness of college as a viable option and enhance access to higher education for growing populations.</td>
<td>A1. Early Awareness of College as a Viable Option  &lt;br&gt; A2. Removing Barriers to Access and Student Success  &lt;br&gt; A3. Innovative Programs and Outreach for Growing Populations  &lt;br&gt; A4. Multiple Delivery Methods  &lt;br&gt; A5. Institutional Capacity for Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Student Success and Readiness</strong>  &lt;br&gt; Promote college readiness and provide the programs and services to enable all students to achieve their educational and career goals.</td>
<td>B1. Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success  &lt;br&gt; B2. Assessment and Placement  &lt;br&gt; B3. Articulation with K-12  &lt;br&gt; B4. Intersegmental Transfer  &lt;br&gt; B5. Teaching and Learning Effectiveness  &lt;br&gt; B6. Degrees and Certificates  &lt;br&gt; B7. Innovative Practices in Workforce Education  &lt;br&gt; B8. Provide Students with Increased Direction and Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Partnerships for Economic and Workforce Development</strong>  &lt;br&gt; Strengthen the Colleges’ capacity to respond to current and emerging labor market needs and to prepare students to compete in a global economy.</td>
<td>C1. Coordination of Statewide Workforce Programs and Policies  &lt;br&gt; C2. Career Pathways  &lt;br&gt; C3. Curriculum and Program Development and Approval Process Improvements  &lt;br&gt; C4. Regional Collaboration Through Multi-Agency Networks  &lt;br&gt; C5. Defining Long-Range Economic and Workforce Trends  &lt;br&gt; C6. Funding and Pay Equity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
research-based findings and had frank discussions about what works to help students achieve their educational objectives.

Beginning in July 2011, the SSTF spent three months forming the recommendations contained in its report. Recommendations were chosen based on their ability to be actionable by state policymakers and college leaders and to make a significant impact on student success, as defined by the outcome and progression metrics adopted by the SSTF.

To foster public input, during October and November 2011, the Task Force held four public town hall meetings, made presentations to numerous community colleges stakeholder groups, and hosted a lively online dialogue.

The Board of Governors adopted the SSTF Report on January, 2012. Excerpts from the SSTF Report have been inserted into the 2013 Strategic Plan revision. A complete copy of the SSTF Report is available at:

II. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The California Community Colleges face four major challenges that will be addressed through this Strategic Plan and the updates that will follow:

- Demographic Change: A New California
- Educational Challenges
- Aligning State Educational Policies
- Capacity for Change

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE: A NEW CALIFORNIA

California is home to a diverse population. By 2025, the state’s multicultural character will expand dramatically, as the state adds between 7 and 11 million residents increasing the state’s population of 37 million to almost 48 million will change California:

Latino and Asian Growth. The Latino population will grow dramatically. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, Latinos are the State’s largest ethnic group, the majority population in public schools by 2013, and the overall majority by 2040. The Asian population will grow from its current level of 13 percent in 2040. Latino population growth will be greatest in Southern California, while Asian population growth will be greatest in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Older Age Profile. Due to increasing longevity and the size of the baby boom generation, by 2030 the number of seniors will double—one in every six Californians will be 65 or older and 22 percent of California’s adults will be age 60 or older. The distribution of older Californians will also vary by region.

Inland Growth. The population of the inland parts of the state will increase because there is available land for growth. Coastal areas will grow more slowly. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, the highest rates of growth will occur in the San Joaquin Valley, the Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino counties), and in the Sacramento metropolitan area.

California’s Newcomers. Newcomers to California come from over 60 countries and represent a wide range of economic and educational backgrounds. Immigrants from Asia, Canada and Europe tend to have relatively high levels of education and income. Southeast Asian immigrants differ from this general pattern, having among the lowest educational attainment and income among California’s immigrant groups. Immigrants from Mexico and Central America, which contribute the greatest number of newcomers,

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### Figure 3
**IMMIGRANTS’ COUNTRY OF BIRTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Number of Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>4,288,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>806,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>724,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>473,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>415,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>334,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>334,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>255,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>193,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>130,246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2010 Census*
also have lower educational attainment and incomes. The ten countries listed in Figure 3 account for approximately 74 percent of the immigrants living in California.

Unlike some states, California’s newcomers have settled throughout the state. (In contrast, New York City and Chicago serve as the primary destination in their states.)

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

The educational levels of many recent immigrants are lower than required for economic success in most regions of California. However, as noted in a recent analysis: “The low educational attainment of Hispanic adults is not simply a result of recent immigration. U.S.-born Hispanics, particularly those of Mexican descent, have consistently lower high school and college completion rates than do African Americans, Asians, or whites.”

The significance of this is explained in the report:

Educational attainment has a much greater impact on wages than it had in previous decades. With Latinos on the verge of becoming the largest single population group in the state, these patterns portray a major challenge to the sustainability of California’s economic competitiveness and the promise of social mobility.

**Education Preparation.** California’s educational challenge has many dimensions, including factors outside the effects of immigration. For example, across California’s higher education system, a significant proportion of students start their college education in need of additional basic skills education in English, math, or both. California ranks far below top-performing states in the percentage of students taking rigorous math courses. Over half of the incoming community college students need basic skills programs. Many teens and young adults leave the education system before attaining necessary skills.

According to California statistics from 2010-11, based on a ninth-grade enrollment of 461,606 students, 23 percent, or 115,687 students did not graduate from high school. The proportion of working-age adults in California without some credential of high school completion has been about 20 percent since the late 1970s.

Many people who have had problematic experiences with formal education may not have sufficient knowledge, skills, or motivation to return later to augment their educational and career skills. The challenge of providing access to people who have become disconnected from education is real, especially among low-income students and first-generation Americans who achieved low levels of education in their home countries. Returning to school and increasing educational attainment has a much greater impact on wages than in previous decades.

**Implications: Significant Increase in Need for Basic Skills Education.** New Californians and their children, as well as long-time citizens with low educational attainment, will increasingly look to the Community Colleges as the gateway to educational and career opportunities. As a result, there will be a dramatic increase in the need for enhanced basic skills programs and associated academic support services.

The Colleges will need to implement a range of strategies to meet the State’s growing educational needs over the next decades. California’s workforce will increasingly be drawn from groups with low levels of educational attainment. While college participation and completion will increase for many groups, this growth will fall far short of the demand for college-educated workers.
In many ways, California’s future economy will depend on the children and grandchildren of recent immigrants. Their education will determine whether the state’s income and tax revenues will grow rapidly or slowly. All residents have an interest in providing access to higher education for all eligible students, and many will begin their higher education at California’s Community Colleges.

—Stephen Levy, Director
Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy

ALIGNING STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

California’s five segments of education—the K-12 system, the California Community Colleges, the California State University system, the University of California, and the private/independent college sector—have separate governing structures. Any coordinated planning is voluntary, and there are few incentives for collaboration. A policy analysis of broad-access institutions evaluated the fractured relationship between schools and colleges across the nation (The Governance Divide: A Report on a Four-State Study on Improving College Readiness and Success). While the analysis focused on four states other than California, the results are relevant:

Currently, K-12 and postsecondary education exist in separate worlds in the United States. Policies for each system of education are typically created in isolation from each other—even though, in contrast to the past, most students eventually move from one system to the other. Students in K-12 rarely know what to expect when they enter college, nor do they have a clear sense of how to prepare for that next step. Particularly now, in the 21st century, when more students must complete some postsecondary education to have an economically secure life, the need for improved transitions from high school to college is urgent...

The report cautions against seeking one-size-fits-all solutions, but does identify four “policy levers” that the states should evaluate in the context of state culture and history:

Alignment of Courses and Assessments. States need to make sure that what students are asked to know and do in high school is connected to postsecondary expectations—both in coursework and assessments. Currently, students in most states graduate from high school under one set of standards and face a disconnected and different set of expectations in college. Many students enter college unable to perform college-level work.

Data Systems. States must create high-quality data systems that span the K-16 continuum. K-16 data systems should identify good practices, diagnose problems, provide information about all education levels, provide students with diagnostic information to help them prepare better, assess and improve achievement and track individual students over time across levels. Without such systems, it is impossible to assess needs effectively, understand where the problems are, gain traction for changes needed and evaluate reforms.

Accountability. States need to connect their accountability systems to span both K-12 and postsecondary education. Currently, accountability systems are usually designed for either K-12 or postsecondary education without much attention to the interface between the two. Accountability systems need to better reflect the reality of students’ educational paths.

CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

The Strategic Plan will facilitate continued experimentation at the local, regional and state levels to respond to emerging needs. Some of the key institutional challenges and opportunities facing the Colleges and the System are outlined below.

Local Collaboration and Coordination. At regional planning meetings held as part of the original strategic planning process, College representatives identified opportunities for increasing the coordination between college units to better meet community, student and business needs. For example, participants suggested that partnerships between career/technical faculty and academic faculty could link career and basic skills courses. Such “career pathway” approaches effectively aid basic skills acquisition, because the skills are connected to students’ near-term goals. Additionally, the Colleges can work with industry to develop contextualized basic skills curriculum.
The career pathway concept recognizes that people frequently shift between education and work throughout their lives. A pathway approach can be the most appropriate avenue for attaining a bachelor’s—or even a master’s or doctoral degree—for the community college student who must work full time or nearly full time to meet family obligations. As working students’ levels of educational attainment increase and their effectiveness in managing the educational/career process improves during their lives, they can achieve successes that might have seemed impossible based on standard assumptions about the necessity of continuous, full-time engagement in successful postsecondary education.

The Colleges can enhance relationships with their community partners in business/industry, labor and the non-profit sector. Colleges can respond to community and student career education expectations, while maintaining academic standards. There are several examples of multi-agency regional partnerships that can provide models of effective collaborations. For colleges that have small noncredit offerings, partnering and collaborating with local adult schools can facilitate student transitions between K-12, Adult Education and the Colleges.

**Advocating for Students.** This Strategic Plan focuses on issues of statewide significance and long-term impact. The Plan assesses the role of the community college system in relation to California’s other education segments, state agencies and policy makers. This analysis identifies the changes with the greatest potential benefit for students—improving incentives, standards and resources of the system at the level of state policy. As noted in the *The Governance Divide*: “Changes in statewide governance policies and structures can enable deep, classroom-level effects.”

The Community Colleges can provide leadership within the state policy arena on behalf of the needs of current and future students. A clear opportunity is the high level of public support for education expressed by the public in opinion polling.

**The Colleges’ Role in State Government and Public Policy.** In important areas, public policy regarding the Colleges is akin to that governing the K-12 system, i.e., requiring high degrees of scrutiny and control. Some laws and regulations limit the flexibility, autonomy, effectiveness and efficiency of the Colleges without clear benefit to students, the state, or due process.

Some compliance procedures also create barriers to innovation at the local level, but can be evaluated and improved without changes to the underlying law.

**Resources.** The challenges facing the State and the Colleges will require assessing resource needs and strategies. The overall level of need will rise dramatically with population growth, and the educational needs of the new Californians could require even higher levels of funding to support the practices and support services known to be effective for students needing basic skills.

Voter approval of Proposition 30 in November of 2012 provided some stabilization of funding for California community colleges and the probability of modest funding improvements in coming years. However, the tremendous demands on the system will continue to cause the colleges to face financial challenges in coming years.

Assessing resource needs will be especially important given current funding levels. The California Community Colleges are near the bottom nationally in per-community college student revenue. Despite recent improvements, each full-time student still receives substantially less than the national average for community colleges.

The challenge of addressing the needs of California’s fastest growing student groups—who will become the majority of the state’s workforce—will involve a large increase in the sheer volume of education and in experimentation with new approaches.

Providing leadership in meeting California’s educational and workforce needs is also a significant opportunity. The Colleges have a deep reservoir of effective practices and program models that can be adapted and institutionalized to meet the growing needs. This, combined with a shared vision and effective advocacy, can mean expanded opportunity and achievement for students, the Colleges and the State.
As explained in the SSTF Report: “The California Community Colleges have a strong record of benefiting our students and the communities we serve:

- The California Community Colleges are the state’s largest workforce provider, offering associate degrees and short-term job training certificates in more than 175 different fields.
- The California Community Colleges train 70 percent of California nurses.
- The California Community Colleges train 80 percent of firefighters, law enforcement personnel, and emergency medical technicians.
- Twenty-eight percent of University of California graduates and 55 percent of California State University graduates transfer from a community college.
- Students who earn a California Community College degree or certificate nearly double their earnings within three years.”

The California Community Colleges can and should take pride in these positive impacts. For the students who successfully navigate our colleges, we provide tremendous opportunity for self-improvement and economic benefit.

However, there is another set of statistics that are a cause of concern. These figures relate to the large numbers of our students who never make it to the finish line:

- Only 53.6 percent of our degree-seeking students ever achieve a certificate, degree, or transfer preparation. For African-American and Latino students, the rate is much lower (42 percent and 43 percent, respectively).
- Of the students who enter our colleges at one level below transfer-level in math, only 46.2 percent ever achieve a certificate, degree, or transfer preparation. Of those students entering four levels below, only 25.5 percent ever achieve those outcomes.
- Of our students who seek to transfer to a four-year institution, only 41 percent are successful. For African Americans, only 34 percent succeed. For Latinos, the figure is 31 percent.”
This Strategic Plan brings all of the issues and opportunities facing the Colleges into a cohesive view, recognizing the major changes that have occurred during the past 40 years and building on the planning and work the individual colleges have done over the past decades. In developing the Plan, the Steering Committee first laid the foundation—the essential guiding elements of the framework (see Figure 1, Strategic Plan Framework, on page 2):

- Planning Principles
- Values
- Missions
- Vision

Those elements led directly to the strategic goals and strategies outlined in Chapter IV.

### PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Plan is grounded in six key planning principles, developed by the Steering Committee.

**Principle 1: Access to Quality Higher Education**
Ensure that the California Community Colleges continue to provide affordable, quality educational experiences, with the support services necessary to facilitate student success.

**Principle 2: California’s Social, Civic, and Economic Development**
Reflect and address the wider needs and values of a democratic California and the State’s people.

**Principle 3: Shared Goals, Ideas and Resources**
Frame a shared strategic agenda for collaboration across the Colleges and with our partners in education, business, industry, government and labor.

**Principle 4: Existing Governance Processes**
Implement the Plan through the established processes of bilateral and participatory governance.

**Principle 5: Regional and Local Circumstances**
Recognize and include the flexibility to address the broad diversity of community circumstances and institutional responses across California.

Develop systems that recognize that the most productive solutions will be based in effective coordination within the Colleges, across educational segments, and with external partners in civic, employer, and community groups.

### VALUES

The Steering Committee also reaffirmed the values that the Colleges adhere to—the fundamental and unequivocal beliefs that California Community Colleges represent.

- All people have the opportunity to reach their full educational potential
- An educated citizenry is the basis for democracy
- 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
- Lifelong learning benefits individuals and society

### MISSIONS

The mission of the Colleges has evolved and expanded over time in response to the changing needs of students, communities and the state. The Colleges provide:

- Associate degrees and certificates shown to increase earnings and enable students to move forward in their professional development;
- Transfer education to public and private colleges and universities;
- Basic skills and English language proficiency for increasing numbers of students;
- Economic and workforce development to meet the ever-increasing demands of career-oriented young people, adult learners and incumbent workers; and
- With adequate funding, lifelong learning and educational opportunities for all Californians.

### VISION

The vision presents the preferred future of the Colleges:

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.
The elements of the Guiding Framework will be implemented through five Strategic Goals:

A. College Awareness and Access
B. Student Success and Readiness
C. Partnerships for Economic and Workforce Development
D. System Effectiveness
E. Resource Development

For each Strategic Goal, the Steering Committee identified key strategies. Each strategy is further described in terms of Needs and Issues, Desired Outcomes and Initiatives:

- **Needs and Issues.** For each strategy, these sections provide the rationale for the strategy and an overview of the issues, highlighting the most compelling findings using the environmental scan to describe critical needs and challenges.

- **Desired Outcomes.** These sections outline the desired future and describe what success will look like for each strategy.

- **Initiative.** These sections outline a broad direction and a range of opportunities to be considered in the strategy development process.

Throughout this chapter, brief sidebar descriptions of recent achievements or innovations illustrate key concepts of the Strategic Plan.

The SSTF Report provides support for these strategies. The SSTF also goes further and takes many of the strategies to a higher level of analysis and application. Specific recommendations contained in the SSTF are incorporated in this updated Strategic Plan.
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The California Community Colleges are equal opportunity institutions