



# California Community College *Access & Equity Policy Brief*

## Introduction

Struggling to resolve the state budget crisis in 2004, California policymakers proposed major cuts in public higher education. Fortunately, the worst of the scenarios was avoided. College students who began the year with their educational futures hanging in the balance avoided a derailing of their educational journey and dreams. The immediate crisis was averted, but all is not well. This is the uneasy calm before a storm.

The fact that community colleges were spared deeper cuts than originally called for in the Governor's budget means that hundreds of thousands of community college students have continued to advance their academic goals at a steady pace. But for others - juniors and seniors in California public schools and low-income workers who look to community colleges for workforce training - the question remains open as to whether community colleges will continue to be a viable bridge to educational opportunity and improved job prospects. If they enroll in a community college, will the classes they need to continue on their pathway toward an Associate of Arts (AA) degree or certificate be available? Will their local community college keep the nursing program or the childcare licensing classes open? Will the college have the resources to continue to offer the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes that are so instrumental to the acculturation of immigrants, and so vital to their educational progress? Did their local community college manage to set aside sufficient resources for the support services that have become essential keys to success, particularly for students of color and immigrant students?

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## About California Tomorrow's Community College Access & Equity Initiative

Founded in 1984, California Tomorrow is a nonprofit organization that has built a strong body of research and experience supporting individual, institutional, and community change work around matters of diversity and equity in: public schools, community building organizations, family serving institutions, early childhood programs, philanthropy, and the after school/youth development arena.

California Tomorrow works with a diverse cross-section of community, civic, campus, system, and policy leaders to increase access and equity in California community colleges. We are focused on three areas of work: **Public Education and Advocacy** efforts in which we provide briefings, presentations, and workshops to share our research and policy recommendations with a wide range of state policymakers, community and civic leaders, and community college leaders; a **Campus Change Network** to provide support to four to six teams of campus leaders (presidents, faculty, staff, students) who are working to enact access and equity related reforms; and **Alliance Building** to facilitate and strengthen connections among community college access and equity advocates, the leaders of educational equity and civil rights organizations, and workforce development and business leaders.

In 2003, California Tomorrow released *California's Gold: Claiming the Promise of Diversity in Our Community Colleges*, a comprehensive study that examines how diverse students are faring in the state's community colleges. In addition to identifying promising instructional practices and support strategies for increasing access and success among our most vulnerable students, the study also identifies the challenges facing campus and system leaders who are working to ensure the state can keep its promise to provide accessible and equitable higher education for all Californians.

### Acknowledgements:

We are eternally grateful to the members of our Statewide Advisory Committee for their invaluable counsel in framing issues and priorities for this Access & Equity Initiative.

This Access & Equity Initiative is funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

For more information on ways to get involved please visit our website: [www.californiatomorrow.org](http://www.californiatomorrow.org). Or contact: Rubén Lizardo, at [rubenl@californiatomorrow.org](mailto:rubenl@californiatomorrow.org) or Ireri Valenzuela-Vergara at [ireriv@californiatomorrow.org](mailto:ireriv@californiatomorrow.org).



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Last year's budget compromise only postponed equally tough policy discussions and decisions. Despite heroic efforts—on the part of faculty, support service staff, campus presidents, and system leaders—the California Community College (CCC) system is in the midst of an unprecedented crisis that threatens its mission to provide access to higher education to all Californians. We are at the crossroads of a crisis that could drastically undermine the economic prosperity and social cohesion of our state.

Given the workforce needs of California and the persistent disparities in educational outcomes among different racial and ethnic groups at all education levels, addressing access and equity in our community college system ought to be one of the top priorities of our Governor and Legislature.

At the time of the last fast moving state budget negotiations, the people with the greatest stake in the policymaking process had little access to the data, analysis, and perspectives needed to make urgent decisions about the immediate future of California's community colleges. Students, campus presidents, and a handful of system leaders found themselves in the unenviable position of trying to make the case for adequate funding for their colleges without the support of the critical cross-section of community, civic, educational, and business leaders who are natural allies in the drive to make sure that community colleges remain accessible and equitable.

Toward the goal of reversing this situation, California Tomorrow has committed to working with a broad cross-section of community, civic, and campus leaders to put demographic data and condensed, accessible analysis into the hands of the people who influence the policy process. As part of that effort, we will publish a series of policy briefs – each designed to inform and stimulate dialogue and action to protect and strengthen California's Community College system.

This document, the first in the series, lays the groundwork for subsequent briefs that will present information, analysis, and recommendations on key issues for the CCC system. Our goal is to spread the word about programs and policies that are effective in enhancing access and equity to California community colleges, with an eye toward the students who need them the most.

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## “Everybody is Here”: Student Diversity in California’s Community Colleges

*Historically, community colleges have served as a central—and often the only bridge—to opportunity for Californians who would otherwise not have access to higher education.*

California’s Community Colleges (CCC) are the main gateway to higher education for a majority of Californians. For people from the demographic groups that have traditionally faced the greatest barriers to schooling—communities of color, immigrants, and low-income workers—community college is fast becoming the only gateway to educational opportunity. Currently the CCC student body is comprised of a majority of students of color (55%). A significant proportion of the students are immigrants (27%).<sup>1</sup>

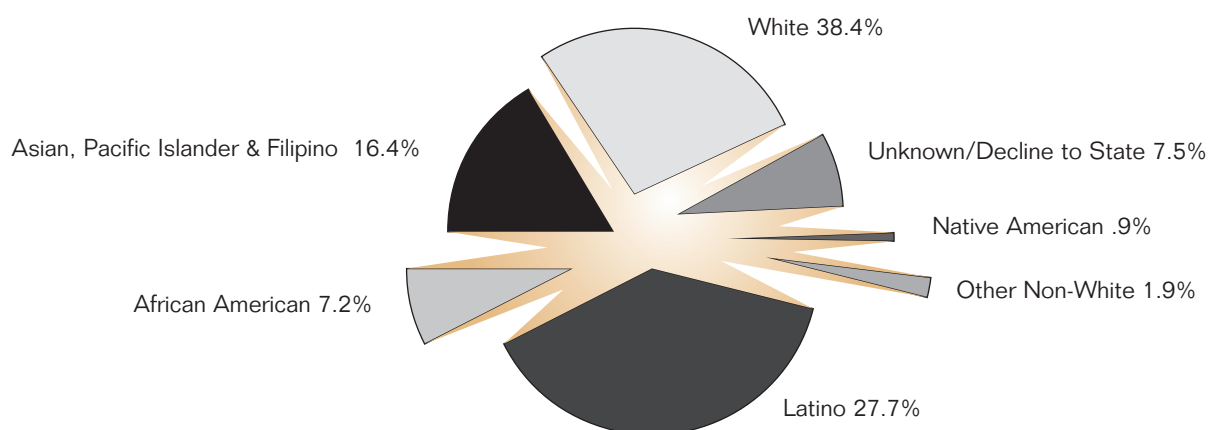
The community colleges have always served as the most financially accessible institution of higher education for low-income communities. This remains true for a majority of first generation college-goers. In California, 75 percent of all first-time Latino, African American, and Native American college students get their start in community colleges.<sup>2</sup>

The CCC student body is increasingly made up of adults that do not fit the typical image of a college student. Only one third of all community college students are between the ages of 18 and 24, unmarried, and in the process of preparing to transfer to a four-year college.<sup>3</sup> More than half of all of CCC students are working adults who shoulder significant responsibilities for the financial well-being of their families: 21% are 25-34 years old; and 30% are 35 and older.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, each year a greater number of CCC students must take basic skills courses to ensure academic success. In 2001, 20% of all students enrolled in the CCC were taking at least one basic skills course; meanwhile, some system leaders and researchers estimate that a much higher percentage—between 40% to 70%—of students are in need of basic skills classes.<sup>5</sup>

- 1 Woodlief, Blaze, et al., eds., *California’s Gold: Claiming the Promise of Diversity in Our Community Colleges*. California Tomorrow (2003), 11.
- 2 Hayward, Gerald C., et al., “Ensuring Access with Quality to California’s Community Colleges.” The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2004).
- 3 Woodlief, et al., 25-52.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 25-52.
- 5 Woodlief, et al., 29-30.

Distribution of California Community College Students by Ethnicity, Fall 2003:



Source: California Community College Chancellor’s Office (2004).





## Quick Facts About California Community College Students:

- 62% of students attend part time.
- 56% of students are female.
- Students span all age groups.
  - 19 and under: 23%
  - 20-24: 24%
  - 25-34: 21%
  - 35+: 30%
- Relatively few students receive financial aid.

In 2000, 18% had a Board of Governors' fee waiver; 7% received Pell grants; and 6% received other financial aid.
- The number of students enrolled in basic skills courses is growing significantly.

According to our 1993 Cohort Study, 51% of Asian & Pacific Islander, 51% of Latino, 43% of African American, 34% of Native American, and 28% of White first time students took at least one basic skills course.

### Excerpts from California Community College students as quoted in *California's Gold: Claiming the Promise of Diversity in Our Community Colleges*

*"Here's a typical day for me right now: I go to work from 7:30 in the morning until 4:00. I drive straight here, have my dinner, then go to class from 5:30 to 7:30. From there I go home. I say good night to my wife and study a little bit, get ready for bed. That's basically it. Saturday mornings I come to school and then Saturday evenings I'm studying. That leaves me with Sunday so I can sometimes go to church and do my own little thing, open mail and things like that. As long as nothing goes wrong, it works for me. But I tell you, I'm tired!"*

*Latino male student, 29*

*"I told one of my teachers when she did not see me with the book in class, 'I don't have money left to pay for books'. When you think about it, it is something bad. I'm in class but I don't have books because I don't have money. I understand that many people come into this country, they come with money. They are most of the time the son of a rich people. In my case I don't have family. I don't have parents. I'm trying to apply for residence now, but I know all the trouble I will go through. To have an education you have to sweat all of the blood of you. I think that maybe in the future something else should be done so students like me can have a better time trying to go to school."*

*African Immigrant Male Student, 26*

*"I thought I'd have to be a genius to transfer – I thought that it wouldn't happen for me. I had very little self-esteem when I started here, didn't even know how you would do it or how long it took. Instructors started talking to me, you know, saying, 'Later on you should start looking into a four-year university.' [I thought] is she really talking to me? It's the first time any teacher ever encouraged me or thought I was smart!"*

*Latina Student, 42*

*"In my country I was a nurse. But here, I don't have the English and I don't have the papers I need. My friend told me about community college. I work taking care of an older lady all day and come to college two nights a week to learn so I can be a nurse here too. It will take me a long time, but it's what I have to do to have a better life. It's hard to get myself to class sometimes because I have three children and I am so tired after work. Sometimes I miss, but mostly I come. It's my path to a better life."*

*Tongan Female Student*



## California's Changing Demographics: Implications for Community Colleges

*Data confirm three fundamental trends. Community colleges are facing unprecedented growth; the transition to a majority of color, immigrant, and low-income student body is permanent; and lack of preparedness among students is growing.*

California is facing unprecedented growth in the college age population. Over the next 5-10 years, the state's higher education system will need to accommodate an additional 700, 000 students—a phenomenon that demographers call Tidal Wave II.<sup>1</sup> Approximately three-fourths of these new students will begin their higher education path in community colleges.<sup>2</sup> The trends point toward greater enrollment demand, increased diversity within the student population, and a deepening of under-preparedness. With different emphasis, from region to region, these trends are playing out throughout California. Policymakers, campus leaders, and community college system leaders need viable strategies to accommodate the growth while working to improve student outcomes.

*Ensuring Access with Quality to California Community Colleges*, a recent study commissioned by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, provides good data and analysis about the nature of Tidal Wave II, and offers a useful portrait of the women and men who will be attending community colleges in the near future. Using comprehensive demographic data, the authors projected increases based on: current and future K-12 enrollments overall (students moving up through the pipeline), the number of high school graduates, and the numbers of 18-24 year old Californians that do not have a high school diploma.

### ■ Projected Increase of High School Graduates by Select Counties (2001 to 2010)<sup>3</sup>

County	2001 Graduates	2011 Graduates	Increase	Percentage
Los Angeles	78,334	101,431	23,097	29.5
Orange	27,650	38,582	10,932	39.5
Riverside	16,891	24,502	7,611	45.1
San Diego	26,504	33,803	7,299	27.5
San Bernardino	18,816	24,940	6,124	32.5
Sacramento	11,576	13,965	2,389	20.6
Contra Costa	9,261	11,565	2,304	24.9
Alameda	11,457	13,489	2,032	17.7
San Joaquin	5,873	7,759	1,886	32.1
Ventura	8,224	10,003	1,779	21.6

1 Hayward, et al., 1

2 Hayward, et al., 1

3 Hayward, et al., 76



Implications of these demographic changes for the racial/ethnic composition of the CCC student body are dramatic. According to the study, “The projected increases in high school students will be almost totally minority and 80% Latino.”<sup>1</sup>

*Ensuring Access with Quality to California Community Colleges* also suggests that the impact of this dramatic growth will be felt unevenly across the state, with the greatest increases in numbers of students occurring in a handful of districts. As the charts in this section indicate, a number of counties and districts are facing particularly steep increases in absolute numbers. But the challenge isn’t only in serving more students. The rate of change - including the need to accommodate less dramatic increases in absolute numbers over very short periods of time - also poses significant challenges to community college districts. For example, though it does not rank among the top ten districts with the steepest projected enrollment increases, the West Kern Community College District in Central California will need to develop a viable strategy to accommodate a growth spurt of 64.9 % - an additional 6,822 students over ten years. Similarly, the Santa Clarita Community College District will need to accommodate 55.6 % growth (an additional 6,689 students) during the coming decade.<sup>2</sup>

#### ■ Community College Districts Facing Steepest Enrollment Increases (2001 to 2010) <sup>3</sup>

District	2001 Enrollment	2010 Enrollment	Increase
Los Angeles	147,962	188,168	40,206
Los Rios	72,226	92,691	20,465
North Orange	61,085	79,406	18,321
Rancho Santiago	66,756	83,901	17,145
San Diego	81,706	94,779	13,073
San Francisco	62,517	74,205	11,688
Coast	48,144	57,492	9,348
Riverside	31,611	40,474	8,863
South Orange	34,979	43,424	8,445
Sonoma	33,845	42,076	8,231

*“It is critical that we pursue the goal of reducing poverty, which we accomplish by educating the workforce, providing remediation, and getting students through the pipeline to a bachelor’s degree. If we are to achieve equity, it is essential to fund need-based financial aid, non-credit as well as credit-based instruction, and developmental as well as collegiate programs. Without such initiatives, equity will remain the elusive promise of diversity.”*

— Dr. Phillip R. Day, Jr., Chancellor, City College of San Francisco

1 Hayward, et al., 12.

2 Hayward, et al., 78.

3 Hayward, et al., 89.



*The demographic transformation we are experiencing is deepening; the diversity of the community college student body is a permanent feature.*

Even a cursory review of the current racial/ethnic makeup of K-12 public school students demonstrates the magnitude and permanence of the shift toward greater diversity. By the year 2013, California's K-12 public school student body is predicted to be 52.43% Latino, 27.25% White, 13.79% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 6.71% African American, with the remaining percentage made up of Native Americans and other ethnic minorities.<sup>1</sup>

In many cities and regions, this transformation has already occurred in quite a dramatic fashion. For example, the current 746,610 students in the Los Angeles Unified School District are 71.9 % Latino, 12.1 % African American, 9.4 % White, 6.3% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 0.3 % Native American.<sup>2</sup>

*Increasing numbers of students who enter community colleges need basic skills as a foundation for success in higher education.*

Like their counterparts in the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU), a growing number of community college students enroll without adequate preparation for pursuing postsecondary education. An increasing percentage of these students need basic skills courses like pre-collegiate math, writing/composition, and ESL classes to become successful. This is the case for all community college students, regardless of race and ethnicity.

In 2001, 20% of community college students statewide were enrolled in a basic skills course, with students of color and immigrant students enrolled in higher numbers (up to 30%).<sup>3</sup> The proportion of students who attend basic skills courses is even greater on campuses with high percentages of students of color and immigrants. For example, an internal study conducted by the City College of San Francisco found that nearly 75% of new students needed at least one pre-collegiate basic skills course.<sup>4</sup> The need for basic skills is here to stay. A recent *San Francisco Chronicle* article reported that “nearly 4 out of 5 college-bound high school juniors who took an Early Assessment Test will need remedial English and nearly half will need remedial math” to succeed in college.<sup>5</sup>



1 “K-12 Grade Public School Enrollment By Ethnicity, History and Projection - 2003 Series.” California State Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit.

2 “Fingertip Facts: 2004-2005.” Los Angeles Unified School District, Office of Communications.

3 Woodlief, et al., 25-52.

4 “Pre-Collegiate Basic Skills Accountability Report,” Office of Research, Planning and Grants, City College of San Francisco (2004).

5 Schevitz, Tanya, “Not Ready: Many of State’s High Schoolers Couldn’t Handle College Classes, Test Shows.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, (14 October, 2004), 1(A).





Education policymakers will be forced to contend with another stark indicator of the lack of preparedness among an increasing proportion of incoming students. Close to one million young adults (980, 000) – nearly one-third of all 18-24 year olds in California - have not earned a high school diploma.<sup>1</sup> Any strategy to offer these young women and men quality workforce training or the opportunity to pursue a baccalaureate degree will depend on the capacity of the CCC system to deliver accessible and effective basic skills courses and support services.

Fortunately, the community colleges are uniquely positioned to address this critical state need. But data and analysis about the academic preparedness of current high schools students makes it clear that community college leaders will need the resources and programs to accommodate the intensity of need.

1 Hayward, et al., 1.

### Preventing Poverty

A 2004 Center for Law and Social Policy study provides compelling evidence of the difference an associate degree makes in the earning capacity of CALWORKS participants. According to the study, female CALWORKS students who successfully completed a certificate or associate degree doubled their employment rate. Put differently, the more education these women received, the greater their employment rate after exiting college. By the second year out of school, the median annual earnings of CALWORKS women with associate degrees increased by 403% relative to earnings prior to college, rising from \$3,916 to \$19,690.<sup>1</sup> This study affirms that the opportunity to attend community college bears a direct relation to the prevention of poverty.

1 Mathur, Anita, et al., "From Jobs to Careers: How California Community College Credentials Pay Off for Welfare Participants." Center for Law and Social Policy (2004).

*"Through our organizing work with low-income families, we have witnessed the powerful role education plays in improving the opportunities available to struggling parents. The basic skills courses, workforce training programs, and holistic support services at community colleges are critical to moving families out of poverty. The Governor and the Legislature should expect stronger input from the people at the grassroots as we step up our demands to protect and expand quality adult education."*

— Anita Rees, Program Director, LIFETIME  
(Low Income Families Empowered through Education)



# Insufficient Funding Constrains Opportunity

*Funding for California’s community colleges has not kept pace with increasing enrollment pressures. Without adequate support, enrollments are constrained and overcrowding produces a decline in the quality of the learning experience on campuses.*

Every year, community college administrators, staff and faculty struggle to accommodate the increasing numbers of students who show up to enroll. Class sizes have mushroomed, and waiting lists have become routine sources of frustration. On many campuses, new support programs have been developed, faculty have adapted instruction to meet the needs of their students, and the system has stretched wherever it could to provide access. But in many places, the strain has reached a breaking point.

Year after year, funding for community colleges has not kept pace with growth. Unless these daunting challenges are addressed at the system level, eager students will get left behind, boxed out of the opportunity for an affordable higher education in their communities. Those who are able to attend will find themselves with fewer resources to guide their progress.

According to a recent study by Patrick Murphy for the Public Policy Institute, California ranks 45 in the nation in per student funding for community college students.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, since the early 1990s, the state’s community colleges have suffered a loss of nearly \$4 billion in resources originally promised through Proposition 98.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the college students in California who need the most are actually receiving the least.

## ■ Community Colleges Receive Far Fewer Dollars Per Student

\$ 20, 037	University of California
\$ 10, 708	California State University
\$ 6, 788	K-12 Public Schools
\$ 4, 470	Community Colleges

*\* Data excerpted from “California Community Colleges: Pocket Profile 2004.” Community College League of California (2004).*

1 Murphy, Patrick, “Financing California’s Community Colleges.” Public Policy Institute of California (2004).  
2 “Promises Unkept: Community Colleges Under Prop 98” (Chart). Community College League of California (2004), [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org).

*“Access to community colleges is threatened by budget cuts and higher fees. Community college faculty and students have only recently awoken to the need for mobilization. They recognize that protecting opportunity can only be achieved through political action.”*

— Jonathan Lightman, Executive Director,  
Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC)



Insufficient funding detracts from the quality of the educational experience at community colleges in a number of significant ways. Community colleges up and down the state report the following:

- With counselor to student ratios ranging from 1:1200 to 1:1900, students are not getting necessary access to information, guidance and support. Many are first-time college students with little experience navigating higher education.
- Larger class loads and increasing system reliance on part-time faculty mean students are less and less able to get even minimal contact with faculty outside of classroom time.
- A growing number of students are finding it increasingly difficult to gain access to the courses they need to continue their progress because of overcrowding and cuts in course offerings.
- In 2003, approximately 175,000 students were “lost” (turned away) due to a combination of factors, including sharp increases in fees and sharp reductions in the number of classes offered.<sup>1</sup>

These levels of support are key factors in understanding the outcome trends among different groups of community college students. When one considers the fact that most students—regardless of race or ethnicity—are shouldering significant work and family obligations, it should not come as a surprise that the average number of years needed to complete a community college program ranges from 3.2 to 3.5.<sup>2</sup> A third of all students take more than four years to complete their program.

Unfortunately, the data also demonstrate racial disparities in achievement. For example, while Latino student enrollment increased by 10% between 1989 and 1999, bringing the overall Latino proportion of the student body to 25%, the numbers of Latinos in the transfer pools to the CSU and the UC grew by just 7% and 3%, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, African American students actually declined as a share of the transfer pool during the same decade, from 5.7% to 4.7% of transfers to CSU, and from 3.2% to 2.5% of transfers to UC.<sup>4</sup> The fact that these two groups were losing ground even prior to the implementation of measures mandated by Proposition 209, the ballot initiative that ended affirmative action in California, should be cause for great concern. Since Latino students are currently 27% of the overall community college student body and African Americans are 7%, it is increasingly apparent that these are not issues isolated to one “minority” group or another.

These numbers indicate that improving educational outcomes for students of color is fast becoming a systemic issue that needs to be addressed if the CCC system is to prepare Californians to be successful in the 21st Century.

1 “CA Community Colleges Fall 2003 Preliminary Enrollment Report.” California Community College Chancellors Office, (November 2003).

2 Woodlief, et al., 213.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*



## Support Programs Can Make the Difference

*Study after study confirms the positive role that support services play in bolstering the success of students who are motivated to achieve their educational goals, but face practical obstacles to completion. A number of promising models already exist for strengthening the support services needed to serve California's increasingly diverse student body.*

Despite the strains on the system, many community college campuses have managed to piece together programs and services that make education accessible. The results speak for themselves.

Studies consistently indicate that students with access to a comprehensive set of holistic supports—including tutoring, childcare, peer support, financial aid, and positive faculty interaction—are more successful than those without. These templates for success are replicated in model program after model program, from the Puente Program to many of those associated with CALWORKS. These and other effective model efforts are highlighted in California Tomorrow's study, *California's Gold: Claiming Diversity in Our Community Colleges*, and have been documented by many researchers.

### Support = Success

Low-income students receiving Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) are 6% more likely to fulfill requirements and successfully transfer to four year colleges than students who were not part of EOPS—and they are twice as likely to earn AA degrees or certificates (Woodlief, et al., 215).

Data and accounts of the impacts of support services on student progress and campus diversity strategies can be found in the following recent publications:

Golonka, Susan and Lisa Matus-Grossman, “*Opening Doors: Expanding Educational Opportunities for Low Income Workers.*” Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MRDC), May 2001.

Kazis, Richard and Marty Liebowitz, “*Changing Courses: Instructional Innovations That Help Low-Income Students Succeed in Community College.*” Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), July 2003.

“*Ladders of Opportunity: A Board of Governors’ Initiative for Developing California’s New Workforce.*” Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, July 2001.

Mathur, Anita, et al., “*From Jobs to Careers: How California Community College Credentials Pay Off for Welfare Recipients.*” Center for Law and Social Policy, May 2004.

Gabriner, Robert, et. al., “*We Could Do That! A Users’ Guide to Diversity Practices in California Community Colleges.*” City College of San Francisco, Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Grants, 2004.

A synthesis of evaluation data derived from the studies above will be featured in a future California Tomorrow policy brief.



*"As a young man, community colleges opened the door to educational opportunity for me. To a significant degree, I attribute my progress to a project at the College of San Mateo called the College Readiness Program. Today's community college students are facing even greater challenges than my generation. The need for innovative, creative student support programs has never been greater."*

— Warren Furutani, Trustee, Los Angeles Community College District

Many campus and system leaders are well aware of the need to align instruction and support services around the needs of their increasingly diverse student bodies. But the programs and models that currently exist are capable of serving only a small proportion of the students who need them. And these programs are vulnerable.

Where one campus might pull together the energy and resources to launch an innovative program, others are not able to do so. Policy mandates in place that address the role of support services in advancing access and equity are not matched with the financial resources, leadership, and staff needed for success. Effectively, they are unfunded mandates. As a result, attention and action to address access and equity dilemmas at the campuses are at best uneven, and at worst sorely lacking. Where campus administration, faculty, and staff make access and equity issues a priority, the resulting progress is clear and measurable. Where campus leaders have neglected to examine and prioritize equity, opportunity continues to be lost.





## Planning for Tomorrow Today: The Growing Significance of Access and Equity

Strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of community colleges to meet the needs and aspirations of increasing numbers of students is essential to bolster California's workforce overall and to enact the basic values of equality of opportunity and inclusion that are required in a diverse state.

*"We cannot ignore that our community college students are becoming more diverse and less 'traditional,' and that their needs are more complex. We at Mt. San Antonio College believe that the opportunities afforded by diversity outweigh the challenges by a long shot. But without an investment in faculty learning and development commensurate with the pace and spans of change, we will be unable to take full advantage of the new opportunities. Such an investment is critical if we are to live up to our commitment to helping non-traditional students transition to college."*

— Phillip D. Maynard, *Faculty Member & President, Academic Senate*, Mt. San Antonio College

An additional implication related to the demographic shifts has yet to garner significant awareness in policy and budget debates is that California's communities of color—with their larger numbers and younger median ages—will bear the *burden of support* for maintaining California's infrastructure.<sup>1</sup> This is the case for both public sector institutions, which will be dependent on the tax contributions and leadership of the emerging majority, and private sector companies, which will rely on these communities' labor, talent, and consumer dollars for sustainability and growth.

Strengthening public investment in the community college system is also a prudent acknowledgement of the central leadership role this generation of students will be asked to play to ensure that all Californians maintain a good quality of life and that our state's business sector is able to remain competitive.

<sup>1</sup> The term "burden of support" was first used in this manner by researchers David E. Hayes-Bautista, Werner O. Shink, and Jorge Chapa in the groundbreaking book, *The Burden of Support: Young Latinos in an Aging Society*, Stanford University Press (1988).

*"Business and community leaders are increasingly finding common ground in the notion that community colleges, with their proven capacity to deliver accessible workforce training, can be powerful engines for community development and regional business development. This will not happen without increased support for taking promising workforce development and basic skills education models to scale in community colleges across the state."*

— Dr. Denise G. Fairchild, *President*,  
Community Development Technologies Center (Los Angeles)



Tomorrow's Demographics

According to a recent US Census Department paper, by the year 2025, Latinos will be 43.1% of California's population, Whites will comprise 33.7% of the population, Asians and Pacific Islanders will be 17.4%, and African Americans will be 5.4% of Californians.<sup>1</sup> Projections for the year 2040 are even more dramatic. According to the California State Department of Finance's Demographic Research Unit, Latinos will be on the verge of becoming the outright majority of California's overall population, and will form the majority population in all but one of the state's largest urban areas.<sup>2</sup> (Asians will be the largest racial/ethnic group in the Bay Area's Alameda and San Francisco counties).

■ California's Ethnicity: Demographic Projections for 2040 <sup>3</sup>

25, 959, 527	Latino (50%)
13, 435, 378	White (26%)
6, 464, 398	Asian & Pacific Islanders (12.5%)
3, 363, 142	African American (6.5%)
1, 107, 850	Multi Racial (2.1%)
982, 073	Native American (1.9%)
51, 538, 596	Total

Meanwhile, as the Baby Boom generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) reaches retirement over the next 20 to 40 years, the percentage of elderly within ethnic/racial groups in 2040 will be highest among White Californians: 26% compared to 12.9% for Latinos, 14.8% for African Americans, and 24.8 % among Asians and Pacific Islanders.<sup>4</sup> California's "dependency ratio" - the combined number of youth and seniors per 100 working adults between the ages of 20 and 64 - could rise dramatically, to 83.5%.<sup>5</sup> The convergence of these demographic trends will place an unusual burden on those who make up the bulk of California's population of working adults.

State and local government depend on revenue from three tax bases—personal income taxes, property taxes (based on assessed valuation), and sales taxes. All three of these tax bases will increasingly depend on the earning potential of women and men who are entering or are poised to enter our higher education system—community colleges in particular. Whether or not they are able to successfully complete a community college program, however, is dependent upon proactive policy reform and investment now.

1 "California's Population Projections 1995-2025." Population Paper Listing #47, Population Electronic Product #45, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of Census.  
2 "Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Age for State and Counties 2000-2050." California State Department of Finance, Sacramento (2004).  
3 Source: "Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Age for State and Counties 2000-2050." California State Department of Finance, Sacramento (2004).  
4 Ibid.  
5 "California's Population Projections 1995-2025." Population Paper Listing #47, Population Electronic Product #45, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of Census.

*"To achieve its overall goal of offering all Californians the opportunity for a quality higher education, the League of Women Voters of California believes the system must have adequate, stable resources and greater control over its own affairs, with local districts making key decisions about the mission priorities they will emphasize to meet the economic and social needs of their communities."*

— Jacqueline Jacobberger, President,  
League of Women Voters of California



## Recommendations: Policy Imperatives and Principles for Change

### Policy Imperatives

California Community Colleges are in the midst of a heroic struggle to respond to Tidal Wave II, which is presenting campuses and districts with the dual challenges of responding to unprecedented growth and accommodating the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse student body. Any policy or system reform to improve the capacity and efficacy of the colleges must begin with a full understanding of who the students are and what we know to be the keys to ensuring their success. Responding to this growth amidst the dramatic demographic shifts in the community college student body will require state resources and leadership commensurate with the task at hand. As California Tomorrow works with others to engage community, civic, and business leaders in working to strengthen community colleges, we offer the following set of policy imperatives:

**Ensure Adequate Funding.** Community colleges need significantly more resources. We support recent leadership efforts to address “unfunded growth,” with particular emphasis on campuses and districts most impacted by Tidal Wave II. The costs of providing quality instruction and support services far outstrip current per pupil levels of support. If community college leaders are to succeed in their efforts to align instructional and support services around the needs of their changing student bodies, they will need all the resources promised them under Proposition 98 and more. They will also need the flexibility to undertake and sustain innovative campus efforts to serve more community members in their regions.

**Expand Effective Support Programs.** All students, but especially those who face the greatest obstacles to education, succeed in school when they have a comprehensive and holistic set of basic supports—financial aid, tutoring, counseling, positive interaction with faculty, and childcare. Cohort support programs like Puente, CALWORKS, CARE, and others have proven effective in significantly improving outcomes for students of color, immigrants, and low-income women and men. These programs offer “best practices” templates for reorganizing campus support services. At present, only a small percentage of the students who most need these supports are covered by these model programs. Campus and system leaders need the resources and leadership to make use of these models to transform institutional practices.

**Increase Financial Aid.** Balancing work and family obligations while attending school is cited by the overwhelming majority of community college students as the top challenge to their progress. Increasing access to financial aid, including child care assistance, is essential for low-income students. To improve completion rates among students who rely the most on Community Colleges, it is imperative that campus, system, and state leaders find ways to increase financial support and publicize its availability in order to increase the numbers of students who apply for assistance.

**Protect Gateway Courses.** Basic skills courses are proven boosters of success for students of color, immigrants, and working students, and are essential to maintaining an open pipeline to higher education. Unless the trend toward under-preparedness among entering students is magically



reversed in the near future, policy decisions that result in severe cuts to basic skills classes will severely constrain the pipeline at the very moment the need to expand it is greatest. Reducing the number of years students take to achieve their academic objectives requires that entering students be able to get the courses they need to embark on intensive skill building during their first year. To maximize their success, the skills curriculum must be augmented by the orientation, counseling, and peer support programs that have proven invaluable in facilitating students' success. The costs saved by reducing the number of failed attempts at classes students are unprepared for and improving student planning are likely to be substantial over the long haul.

**Strengthen Instruction.** Students of color, immigrants, and low-income students cite access to talented, approachable faculty as the most influential source of motivation and engagement to remain in college when the going gets rough. The effectiveness of the system is dependent upon faculty who understand the needs of their diverse students. If the achievement numbers are to be significantly improved, campus and system leaders will need to invest resources and leadership in improving faculty capacity to teach ever more diverse students. Efforts to diversify and evaluate faculty, create standards for cultural competency, and implement new instructional methodologies need to be viewed less as matters of “racial entitlement” and more as matters of institutional efficacy. Like professionals in any industry, those in the teaching profession need to be encouraged and supported to adapt their approaches to new realities.

**Strengthen Workforce Training & Preparation.** Across the state, community colleges are key providers of workforce training for California's business sectors and the growth industries that will ensure on going economic health. The colleges offer low-income working adults a lifeline to transition to new employment sectors during difficult economic times. Strengthening the capacity of community colleges to partner with regional business leaders and public sector employment training resources is critical, as is the need to leverage resources across these systems. At the same time, the success of these efforts is dependent on the availability of the basic skills courses and support services that are so often targeted when budgets are cut. Workforce training is an integral part of the mission of CCC, and it should be strengthened and expanded.

**Strengthen System Level Support for Efforts to Address Access & Equity.** Community colleges, like any other institution in our society, will not change without clear vision, leadership, strategies, plans, and resources. Vigorous leadership to understand and address access and equity issues is vitally needed at this juncture if community colleges are to increase the success rates of our most vulnerable students - now the majority of students enrolled. In 2002 the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopted Student Equity guidelines that faculty and administration leaders could use to undertake comprehensive campus change efforts to improve access and success for our most vulnerable students. Unfortunately, the modest resources originally allocated to further these efforts have disappeared—as a result of budget cutbacks. Resources must be restored so that campus leaders can proceed with building the consensus and the leadership for a comprehensive response to the access and equity needs of each college's diverse student body.

## Principles to Guide Policy Change

The preceding imperatives constitute a proactive access and equity agenda for community college policy. But moving these specific policy priorities forward in a state facing financial difficulties and competing priorities will be a challenge. Therefore, in addition to the policy recommendations and priorities, we also propose a set of principles to be used to frame policy dialogue about the future of California's community colleges.

**Commit to Open Access Enrollment.** Seek an agreement that the historic promise of open access to higher education is critical to California's social well-being and economic competitiveness, and will not be compromised.

**Preserve the Broad Mission of the Community Colleges.** Given the pivotal role community colleges play in preparing Californians for the workforce and for four year colleges, it is essential that the goal of improving the transfer function and the goal of expanding workforce training be viewed as equally important priorities.

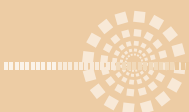
**Do Not Resolve Funding Problems On the Backs of Students (No Fee Increases).** Improving the financial position of the community colleges is a key to increasing their effectiveness in meeting the needs of their changing and growing student bodies. Resolving the financial challenges must not fall to the students, however. In the last two years, students have been forced to absorb a 136% increase (from \$11 to \$26 per unit). Raises in fees constitute new barriers to access.

**Don't Pit K-12 Against Community Colleges.** Solutions that invest in both systems are essential to an open pipeline and a strong California. Efforts to improve outcomes in K-12 public education and community colleges are of critical importance to the low-income communities of color our state will increasingly depend on. Resolving the financial challenges of the K-12 system should not come at the expense of the community colleges. Similarly, addressing the financial needs of the community college system should not come at the expense of the K-12 system.

**Success Requires Not Just Access, But Support.** Efforts to require students to move through the community colleges in shorter time frames without the supports needed for success will fail. Cuts in counseling and holistic support services will erect new barriers to student progress.

**Remember Who the Students Are, and Their Unique Needs.** Knowledge of the needs and circumstances of students, including cultural and linguistic considerations, income status, and employment responsibilities should be the starting point for policy deliberations.

**Take the Long View.** The future of California requires a long view on state funding. Community colleges will need to count on stable funding to engage in the long-term planning needed to become more effective in meeting the needs of their changing student bodies. Funding public education is an investment with a huge return in a strengthened economy.





## Conclusion:

These are remarkable times. Our state is undergoing a demographic transformation that tests our commitment to democracy, our values of inclusion, and our understanding of our interdependence. As the first state with no single ethnic group as a numerical majority, we face new urgency and opportunity to create education policies and learning institutions that work for us all. Solutions that are designed to benefit one ethnic group while ignoring the needs of others are no longer viable. Investments that target just one portion of the population serve to deepen inequality and undercut all aspects of life in multicultural California. Emphasizing and promoting our interconnection to one another is essential to our efforts to renew the commitment necessary to build a more dynamic, accessible, and effective community college system. A thriving multicultural California is not possible without a strong community college system.

*"In the end, if the State's quality of life diminishes, if communities are left to languish, and if there is a large and growing underclass, future economic prospects will be undermined. That will, in turn, have a direct and negative effect on the finances of state government and on the State's investment portfolios."*

— Phil Angelides, *California State Treasurer*, *The Double Bottom Line: Investing in California's Emerging Markets*.



## California Tomorrow

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*"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

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