

September 8, 2021 Podcast Transcript

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Welcome back everyone to another episode of the California Community Colleges chancellor's office podcasts. My name is Daisy Gonzalez, and today's topic is advancing student equity and achievement. Joining me for today's discussion are the presidents of the chief executive officers of the California Community Colleges board, Dr. Byron Breland. Hi, Byron,

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Hey, how are you doing?

and, of course, Kenneth Brown, board president of the California Community Colleges trustees board. Hi, Ken, how are you? Hi, Daisy,

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Thanks

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for the invite. I'm gonna do a little bit of framing for our time together and just want to share a little bit about your boards, and then set the context for the conversation before we get started. So let me just share with our listeners who you are, and then of course, the incredible work that your boards do on behalf of 2.1 million students. Both of your boards are a part of the California Community College League of California otherwise known as the league in our system. And the league plays a critical role in preparing students for the future and feeling California's economic recovery in partnership with the rest of the system stakeholders and of course, our office, as our colleges are preparing and certainly have been focused on the vision for success, which sets clear goals to increase the number of students transferring to UC and CSU, increasing the number of students earning degrees and certificates, and increasing completion and career education programs in order for our students to get good jobs. And then, of course, our broader framework to close regional and equity gaps across student populations. The league, and your partnership has been critical for 116 community colleges. Specifically, the league is a nonprofit public benefit corporation, whose voluntary membership consists of 73 local public community college districts in California. And your work supports elected trustees and Community College CEOs across the 73 districts and across 116 Community College's. You also do incredible work on behalf of our students in our system through your advocacy in state and federal work. And then of

course, professional development is key as a part of the work that you're leading. With respect to your current role. I want to share a little bit though about each of you. So Ken, we'll start with you. Ken Brown was elected in 2016 to the California Community College Trustees board, where he provides input to help guide decisions to serve the organization's member colleges. In 2020, Ken was elected to serve as president elect of the CCT board. KENNETH Brown is in his 10th year as a member of the Governing Board of Trustees at El Camino Community College District in Torrance, California. And he also works as an adjunct faculty at California State University Dominguez Hills, a job that he's done since 2002, and where he teaches physics. During his daytime. Ken is the operations manager at Northrop Grumman. And then, of course, our second guest for today, Dr. Byron Cliff Breelan, was appointed as the chancellor of the San Jose evergreen Community College District in 2018. After serving in the role as an interim since July of 2018. Prior to that, he was the president of San Jose evergreen Community College since 2013. Dr. Breland is a board member of a to amend an organization comprised of African American male community college administrators, working to advance innovative ways to facilitate and support African American male students. His instructional experience has ranged from working in K through 12 as an eighth grade English teacher, to serving as an adjunct instructor teaching Community College Administration, as well as in higher education graduate programs. at USC. Prior to coming to San Jose City College, Dr. William was also the Associate Vice President of the Pacific Coast campus in the Long Beach Community College District. So welcome, thank you for letting me share a little bit about each of you. But now I'm going to ask you to do most of the talking. So I hope you're ready. Ready to go. I covered high level your Biles and really want to hear more from you in terms of your current role as leaders of your boards and then more importantly the goals that you have in supporting community college students. Byron, we'll start with you.

4:45

Okay, thank you so much Daisy and also want to just say thank you for your leadership and support. They are from the chancellor's office has been very much appreciated. And also one thank you for inviting both myself and trustee brown to the podcast today. These of course have been, you know, unprecedented times, you know, we've we've heard that a lot. But this COVID-19 crisis truly is a once in a century event, I really no training or experience during previous downturns has prepared any of us for this. And it's specifically for the CEOs. And throughout all of this, I really just want to give a big shout out. And thank you to all of the CEOs, and of course, everyone who does work on behalf of the California Community Colleges, and our education system in general. But this is been in a time like no other. And in this time period, CEOs have actually had to demonstrate a long term view, while continuing to instill this whole sense of optimism and hope, when of course, be armed with short term fixes throughout this entire crisis. And as we push now to sort of reopen, and move forward and continue, we've never lost sight of our students. And so I really just want to commend all of my co colleagues for that, and managing these challenges that were out the intense scrutiny, and often over interpretation that folks have had to deal with. While CEOs have had to remain extremely thoughtful, and really sequential in their actions. And actually having to learn a new style of management, you know, as everything is moved remotely. And through that work, and that view, CEOs have really had to move forward and continue with student success goals. And I think it's presented a very unique opportunity in which, you know, I've sort of framed my goals, you know, having the privilege to serve as the president of the CEO board during this time period. And the first, you know, I'll share really is about collaboration. I mean, the

fact that we're, you know, having this discussion in the podcast, we've been looking at goal alignment, we've been looking at the big picture of some of the DEI work is going on throughout the system, we've been looking at how we're going to increase transfer, we've been looking at strengthening relationships, again, as I mentioned with one another. And so it's, of course, a pleasure to be here with trustee Kim Burrell, who I know shares, you know, my passion for education and doing the work that matters with the students at the center of what we do. And through that connection relationship. You know, I know that I'm looking forward to continuing to build working relationships with the trustees in the system, extremely important. Agents and actors, as we move towards our student success goals. It really the second goal that I will share, is being in a position to be supportive, as I mentioned, of the CEOs, and making sure that we have platforms to discuss best practices, to provide support for one another, and to make sure that we give that sense of encouragement, and that's often needed, and certainly sometimes require, you know, as we all push through these times, I thought that, you know, shutting down was a challenge. And and really, it is in reopening eyes. Many of our districts have considered vaccine requirements or mandates and looking at the policies and procedures as the surrounds testing, storing the medical records, contact tracing, and so on, and so forth. Again, new territory that we've all had to be supportive of one another. And then lastly, I'll mentioned, you know, a goal of continuing to support the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work, something that's always been near and dear to me, and the work that I've done as a professional, the things that I've been engaged in, throughout my career and education. And just something that I feel is extremely long overdue, and looking at giving people opportunities to be successful, starting with our students. And, of course, the fantastic staff that support the great work done to really push forward the educational journey for the 2.1 million students to serve by the California Community Colleges. And so I'll stop there and just say, you know, thank you again, for the question, Basie and it's a pleasure to be here.

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Thank you, Byron, for centering us in the reality of our time of our day would love to hear the same from you can tell us a little bit about your role as the president of the CCT. And then of course, what are the goals that you have?

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Absolutely. Well, thank you again, for the invitation. This doesn't even seem like work. It seems like getting together with some old friends, frankly, you know, the chancellor's office, the CEO board and Chancellor Breelan. They've been so supportive and so open. To me personally, that like I said, efforts like this doesn't seem like an effort, it seems like effortless. And so the first thing is that, you know, I do represent the 73 districts and the multiple trustees of the state. And the one thing about the trustees, right, is that their elected officials, and no two districts are alike. And so that's our strength. And that's also our challenge. We have a number of goals that align directly with what Byron just outlined. But from my perspective, I'll give you kind of my high level goals, and you'll see how much it overlaps right, you know, so the first one, the, you know, the reason why we're on a podcast and podcasts are so popular is because of the COVID times we're living in a pandemic world. And we're just starting to kind of see the light at the end of the tunnel. And so returning to a campus in a post pandemic world, you

know, what exactly does that look like? You know, I'm in Los Angeles County. I'm currently in Inglewood. And I'm a stone's throw from, you know, multiple k 12. community colleges as well as four years, and each one of them has a different process. And so just getting our hands around what is the best for our community. That's the one thing that I want our trustees to take seriously and to, again, work with, with their local CEOs to move forward as a goal. Another large goal that has popped up in the last maybe a year and a half our diversity, equity and inclusion. And so advancing not only the identification of holes, and D II, whether it's, you know, our student population, or whether it's faculty hiring, or whether it's unconscious bias, you know, identifying those holes under the umbrella, but also the implementation of fixes. And the true meaning of equity, I think is my second main goal. The third goal is a common goal, I'm laughing because this is a goal that doesn't matter what year it is, whenever we look at our budget, because we rely on state funding, we're always pushing to maximize and advocate for equitable budget for community college students and for our districts. And what I mean by that is looking at the per person funding for our students versus Cal State versus UC, versus k 12. And to make sure that we're a voice in the room when these decisions are being made. And so I think those are my top three other goals include, you know, personal goals include making sure that we have participation with the Triple C. T. 's statewide as well as nationally, you know, understanding what the political winds are in the state. You know, so those are some of the top tier goals. When I first took the seat, as President of the triple CT, I addressed our board and I gave an analogy of the A-Team. I believe were the 18.A-Team You know, for all those young people who are listening to the podcast, go look it up on YouTube. But the A-Team had very diverse individuals coming together for a common good. And it sounds a little hokey. But that's exactly what we do. Right. And so I think if you look at those areas that I described, you'll see direct crossover and direct, I guess, merging or overlapping with the CEO goals, as well as the goals that the chancellor's office in the Board of Governors has put out. So I'll stop right there as well.

13:19

Thank you can so I actually didn't look it up the a team. And wanted to share a little bit about what I just heard, because I think across the board, absolutely a lot of synergy with the chancellor's office. And as I think about what Byron shared around optimism, flexibility, collaboration, and then the two of you talked about strengthening relationships, we have so much to be proud of. And I'm so grateful that you started the conversation because we're the 18, the B team and the C team, right? Like we're all of it, our students depend on us. And very happy and excited to hear you talk about di work as one of the main priorities for each of you. So in the spirit of things that we are proud of, I want to talk about the report that our office put out that share that our system continued to make progress. So when we shared the system update with our board, we share that certificates degrees Transfer Success had increase. And of course, this is prior data data before the pandemic. And However, while those things increase, we continue to see gaps gaps in the seven California geographical regions that we measure, as well as very slow closing racial equity gaps that are slowly closing right when you look closely, but there are two key populations of students that are being consistently left behind. Those are African American students and Latino students at greater rates, of course than all other groups, but specifically in comparison to white students. As you think about your goals that you just shared with me, what are your thoughts on the collective work? The strengthening relationships that we need to work on to reduce those equity gaps, I

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can take a shot. Go ahead, Byron, no one else, I want to thank trustee brown for his comments, sharing the goals. And thank you for kind of summarizing everything there, Daisy as well with you know why we are here and what we're doing. And I believe that this is the very reason why we're here. And that is student success and using data to show what we're not doing well, but also to use that data and say where we are doing well. We work in a system that has many, many players, many team members, as part of this, you know, building on a team analogy here, there are folks that are either, you know, elected officials, they're CEOs, they're students, there's unions, there's the chancellor's office, there's the cclc. You know, we can go on and on board of governors, I mean, it's it's a large, very complex system. It's a system also made up of well, smart people, all right, and what we know about folks who are smart or well educated or even over educated in some places, that they're risk averse. And we're at a place now where we have an opportunity to take some risk. And we have to take some risk in order to do things differently in order to set a new standard of expectation for our students. And we've been able to do some things to kind of begin, you know, one having those conversations. I know, we've had the the town halls and partnership with the trustees, as I know, Trustee Brown has been leading that effort, as well as myself with the CEO board, we've had opportunities to do some big picture things like I know, the chancellor's office has been sponsoring there with the undocumented student action week along with black student success week, things that have popped up over the last couple of years, and in particular, utilizing the the strength of having access through, you know, zoom, or other virtual formats, to engage more folks. So I think that's been really successful, and also want to just acknowledge, you know, some of the more on the ground programming that we know has been successful. But we need to take that next step in order to, you know, build more sustainable funding streams for programs like you moja dream centers, coleus, quinti, lpns. And just to make sure that those programs have the opportunity to to be scaled up to support the success of more students. And also want to mention, as you did share a daisy in my introduction, you know, a two men programs like that, which I've had the pleasure of serving as a board member for the last 16 years. And we've been able to do some really unique creative things to support African American males in the system in partnership, of course, with the chancellor's office, and of course, our trustees. But I want to make sure that we talk about these programs success, and what they do on a day to day basis, really tapping into the strength of what students from underrepresented communities in higher education, the strengths that they bring to their educational journey, and what we need to do in order to build off of them. And I think these programs give us the opportunity to cultivate relationships with these students, pushing them towards success, whether it is to transfer or to support them, and degree attainment. And of course, you know, job training, I know here where our district is located in Silicon Valley, being able to get an acquiring meaningful workplace skill set is vital for all students of particular underrepresented Latin x and African American students in the workforce here in Silicon Valley. So our community colleges really serve a vital function and making sure that that training is assessable relevant, and actually connects students to a job. And I think being able to build off what those programs offer in terms of the learning communities that I described earlier, in addition to being able to provide budget and support and working together to really strengthen these programs and build off of that are going to be key moving forward. And particularly as we continue to come out of the pandemic, and I'm always reluctant to say come out of it, as you know, we continue to learn more about it. And just realize that the important work that we do is

even more critical. In particular, for populations who already are struggling in their access to higher education and job training. The community colleges are clearly positioned to provide an open door of opportunity for those students in the communities that we serve, are really going to need that opportunity, that boost coming out of the pandemic.

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Thank you, Byron. Those are really good points. Can the question was What are your thoughts on collective efforts that we can lead to close equity gaps for our students?

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No, I appreciate that. And I honestly echo everything that Byron has said as he was speaking. I was thinking Brian was really nice. Because, you know, without these programs, he listed a few right he listed a few of the high impact ones, you know, a moja at men point day, he opns. I mean, these programs has shown success measurable success, right. And I think our job, my job sitting in the seat right now is to make sure that the public writ large, our trustees, the CEOs, they know that we have identifiable and measurable stories and numbers that we can see and put efforts behind what is working. We know those programs are working. Right. What I'd like to do as a trustee is I want to, you know, scale those up, right? We're already talking about, you know, black African Americans and Latin x students. These are the canaries in the coal mine, how those students do, the rest of the state of California does as far as their students. And I'm not just talking about community college, right. And so for me, where I'm sitting, I'm very passionate about scaling these things, these programs up to not only help African American students in Latin x students, but that's helping the entire community that's helping the entire campus. And so I'm energized by when I see those numbers. Now, this past 18 months, it's been a crazy challenge, not only have we had a drop in enrollment in general, but you know, our African American numbers look really, really, really bad. And so the work comes from, you know, we got to get those students back, right, we got to get that population back up, because this is the time and our campuses are going to be a focal in to the state of California recovering, whether it's, you know, the workforce after four years, or whether it's, you know, training the CTE workforce, we know that the community colleges and the products they provide are going to be integral to California's recovery. And so, you know, to your question, I think the league is doing a very good job at identifying what has been working, I think it's our job, and I'm advocating to my colleagues, and to the districts, is that, okay, we know what works, we need to make sure we implement, we know that a to men is a game changer. We know that point A makes a difference for first year, not only our first year, but our families and the community. So we need to make sure that we get behind those efforts. And give them the range, give them the support the funding to do their job and to actually expand on those jobs. Because you know, those programs that Byron named, you know, those are the front lines, but they have a success rate that's working.

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Right? You guys can't see me. But I'm over here saying yes. And yes, Byron is very nice. But what I heard was taking risk, this idea of taking these transformations up to scale, and I want to hit in the direction more closely around demystifying diversity, equity and inclusion, I hope you knew that I was going to head here because I don't think it's a mistake, that we are in the middle of a pandemic, that the three of us believe that just because we are the first doesn't mean that we will be the last in these roles, and that we are committed to transformations. And so I want to take off in this direction are asking you questions around the AI. More importantly, why is it important, either to you in your current role as presidents of your organizations? And then what is the unfinished work? What is the urgent, unfinished work that we need to stay laser focused on as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion in the largest system of public higher education? Well, let you go first. Can no pressure

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no pressure? Thanks. Well, you know, for me, I didn't start last year, right, my exposure to the advantages of diversity, equity, and even inclusion, you know, started when I grew up, I tell people, I've been black all my life. Right. And growing up I had in my family, teachers, and engineers, and lawyers, I was lucky. My cousin lived down the street, and he was an engineer. He's one of the first black engineers for Hughes Aircraft. And he taught me about computers. And he taught me what the word of engineering meant. I know I'm lucky, right? And when I go into the classroom, as a black male physicist, I know that probably my students have never seen one of those. A black male physicist. And so exposure is key. And it was key for me. Right exposure gave me a window to the possibility, right? And that's why I do what I do. Right? It's not, you know, yes, you know, we're trying to make our lives better. But looking back, it's like, Okay, how many people are you bringing with you? Right? And so, as I translate that, or as I adapt that into the role that I'm in the seat that I'm sitting in, we have to do the same thing right? We can't just have our campuses that are serving minority students, mostly minority for my district. We can't just have our campuses. Look Lillywhite, right, we have to have our campuses reflect the community that they're serving. And that's with the administration. That's what the staff, that's with our graduation rate. But if we're not paying attention, or we don't care, right, those numbers and that success is going to go down. And so, you know, to your question, I think we had over the last summer and through the spring, we had a series of D townhall series, and that not only again, identified touch points, or focus areas or challenges that our trustees may have. But again, strategies for how to work with a gap. And again, not every district is the same, right? I'm in Los Angeles County. You know, I live in Inglewood. That's certainly different than Imperial Valley, right. And so we're going to have different focuses and different ways of as my professor would say, there's more than one way to skin a cat. And I'll help you don't get me angry emails for that one. But there's more than one way to solve a problem, right? And not everybody has the same problem. So when we look at this D AI effort, it's not just one dimensional, right. And so I'm very lucky that we had some great minds, some great thinkers come through with the training in our D Town Hall, you know, locally, my CEO, my president has a DUI subcommittee, a presidential panel, that is looking at all aspects of DEA as it affects our students in our community. So those are some of the things that are on the top of my mind. But again, we can't just sit there and say, Oh, look at these numbers, we need to make sure that we are able to implement a plan of action and make sure we have measurements that are not after five years, I need measurements as a trustee, I'm looking for measurements after six months, no more than so again, that's the impatient trustee in me. But that's where I start. And that's I think we're a trustee should start.

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Thank you can reminds me of something Byron mentioned earlier around, we have a lot of smart people. And the important thing is that we're all problem solvers. Thank you for highlighting that. Byron,

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I will echo everything there that Ken just stated. And also want to, you know, simply just bring up the fact that, you know, yeah, you know, we've we've got engaged everyone in this effort. And that's part of what's important. As we move forward, you know, the the tug of war, you know about the data, right? Is the data even relevant about hiring practices about qualifications, you know, because I think one of the biggest things that we're faced with is diversify our faculty, we've not done a very good job at accelerating that. And I know recently, the state has awarded, or allocated additional funding and the line item for full time faculty hires. And I think it's going to be important to be able to move that part of the equation of diversifying our workforce. And in particular, it's been our full time faculty, it has been a challenge. And I know, here and in oil, say, nice guy and quiet, but our district has been able to move forward, increasing on diversity, as we were actually ranked four and five, by The Chronicles of diversity index for the last two years. And the things that we implemented, you know, again, very nicely and quietly, but effectively, and I think that's going to be key moving forward with so many different things happening in a system, where we're managing issues around undocumented students around the treatment of immigrants around the Black Lives Matter movement. And we've looked at hate crimes Rise Against Asians significantly since the start of the pandemic as well. So everyone's kind of dealing with something in one way or another. And I think within all of that there's sort of a tug of war, for which problem can we solve this week, next month. And that was more evident when the previous national leadership was sort of fanning the flames a little bit, but with all the different incidents that were happening, or just being non responsive to the pain that people were feeling? And I think, you know, we've been able to look deeply into that and start, you know, healing, if you would, but I think we have to continue that process. And part of it is making sure that everyone is educated on the dei work and finding a way to include people who typically have not been engaged in the work. And in particular, finding a place where if they're passionate about it, you know, there's room because we need everybody working, because I think some people just sit on the sidelines and wonder what can they do? We've been able to implement a few things here in our district that I'll just quickly share, just making sure we had the reps on hiring committees, doing outreach and promotion for job openings, utilizing a wide range of publications. As a website's updating job descriptions and qualifications that include, you know, more interdisciplinary collaboration that tends to attract diverse candidates as well, making specific references to diversity in the job description and looking at it as a core competency in having that background or skill set or expecting that somebody is going to be able to understand the student population that they're working with. And then also just making sure that the criteria for the job in general is very broadly defined, and so that the search pools will actually bring in and attract more candidates. And I think one of the things that the system is going to have to continue to work on in that regard is looking at, you know, what we do with education requirements for certain teaching areas, in particular, allowing a masters of education to actually count, you know, as an academic disciplines, we do have many folks of color who have master's degrees and would love to be able to come in and teach.

But currently, that is a qualification that continues to elude us in terms of having the master's degree in education.

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Thank you, Byron. I love where you guys were headed in and just want to say thank you for leading the way and really utilizing all the different tools and supports that your own communities are developing and really thinking about how you institutionalize the AI. Because I think it's a really big system to move, right. But I love the messaging around, there's room for everyone at the table. We need everyone to get to work. I want to just ask you two more questions, and then give you some time back. This next question is really around funding and all the different investments that we're seeing. And I heard, Ken and Byron, I heard you say this as well, right, that it's about recognizing who we serve. In this moment, you know, we seem to be thinking that declining enrollment is somehow new. I think we all know that it's been an issue. But more importantly, it's about understanding who we serve. And I often talk about, we don't have an enrollment problem, we have a poverty problem. And what you're seeing nationwide are what everyone is calling historic investments in community colleges, we will play a critical role, we know that we have seen that happen historically, community colleges, particularly in California, will play a critical role in closing equity gaps and expanding educational opportunities for all. And in our own state, we've seen new proposals to expand Cal Grant to help us with that. And in recognizing who we serve. At the federal level, we're seeing two years of free tuition, which is not new to California, but new to some other states. And we're also seeing proposals to increase Pell particularly to address non tuition cost. I'm wondering about what you find most promising in either state or federal advocacy, and then what you think will actually make a difference for our students who would like to go first.

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I mean, I can hop in as an elected official, I really like going into a room with the smart people in the room. I think I'll echo some of the words that I said earlier about the state, right? We're always happy when you know, we're not getting cut. And so that's, you know, so don't get me wrong, right? I'm not Pooh poohing the budget. But many times the budgets come with strings attached. Or they come with instructions that tie the hands of my financial people on my local district or the trustees. And so, you know, like, for instance, we got the 150 5 million investment in financial aid, right, you know, for our high school students to access Cal Grants. So thank you, my hope is that we would have liberty to apply that with how we feel is best serving our community. And so as these initiatives come through, as you know, these pockets of money, you know, there's there's a whole difference between one time and ongoing funding, that I had to learn real early as a trustee, but as these have different pockets of funds come in, you know, whether it be from the state or from the federal. And that's where the advocacy comes in, right, making sure that we have control local control of how that money is to be used. And, you know, I'm not saying we're gonna throw it away. But I'm saying again, we have 73 different districts. Not every district is the same. And so the way we apply a lot of these funds needs to be unique as well. And so, you know, again, I'm hoping I'm answering your question, but yes, the first thing is thank you that we are getting some funding for this recovery. But we as local electeds, and local trustees, we want

to be smart and we want to make sure that our CEOs like bye and are able to be smart about the application of that funding.

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Thank you can Byron Yeah. so

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quickly? I'll say, I agree. I just want to add that, you know, the League has been fairly aggressive, you know, about supporting financial aid reform. And I think that having that front and center has been key in and, you know, as you both know, you know, we've reached a call at historic levels of funding recently in the state budget to support our students. And, you know, again, we're also grateful for that, but we need to continue to push and move forward. Now, with that said, there's also accountability in terms of where will we be as a system in a couple of years based on that investment. And I know, for a fact I mean, you know, we stay, you know, high level, when we talk about how these, these policy efforts and reforms are going to impact students, you know, day to day experience, and ultimately, their education success. But what we need to do is really take a hard look at, you know, how we need to educate the folks who continue to not get through, you know, we talked about the equity gaps, and how the use of that funding is actually helping us close those equity gaps, you know, we have to look at what some of their specific challenges are, and does the funding actually help them meet their challenges, right, you know, getting books in hand early, making sure that basic needs are taken care of looking at issues such as childcare, looking at issues such as you know, parent care, transportation, any other competing demands with getting an education, we have to look at the full scope of what the total cost of education is. And we know that those who have to work multiple jobs, have less time, to travel to school, to travel to class, to spend the time, extra time needed to study talk to an instructor, if we know all of these things, how are we actually directing the funding to help those students meet those needs, and help them develop an academic self concept, where they know that if they applied themselves, they're actually going to get the assistance that they need. And I think that is going to be critical as we move forward and talk about getting funding, you know, are we actually directing this funding to where it needs to go and doing it in a timely, efficient, and you know, effective manner, sometimes more money floating around, you know, doesn't necessarily get you there, because you're not as efficient and being able to actually get it to the students when they need it. And I think we have to really work on tightening up the system to get that money into the students hands as quickly as possible. And that's an area that we need to continue in, particularly those students that are struggling with regional educational goals, man, I think that will help us close some of the equity gaps. And then finally, I'll say, it's always great to have, you know, people learning and staying in the state of California, in their community, you know, to get a job and move on. But in reality, there's other opportunities to pursue higher education, I want to speak about in particular as HBCU, where students could, you know, if we could award them financial aid and have them take, what aid they have remaining, and apply that to their education out of state. You know, that would be in I think, one of the things that we'll continue to look at. And I think that will help our students find additional ways to reach their educational goals, even if it is not in the state of California. And that would be for other students as well.

38:30

Thank you, Byron, I think it's about creating those pathways from our community colleges to that next level of education. I want to also thank you both in this podcast because you were very supportive and making sure that our colleges were not negatively impacted by the way the federal government was thinking about, you know, full time enrollment, or different ways of apportioning dollars to states and the league was critical in that advocacy. Want to ask you the final question. And that's really thinking around how we started by renew started the conversation by talking about crises and a pandemic. I want to end here. We're facing so many crisis and First I'll say want to end on a good note, why don't give people hope, as we're ending with this idea of facing multiple crises in any given day, and we know that there were many before this pandemic, but now we have pandemics fires, other natural disasters. So in addition to ensuring continuity of instruction, many of our colleges are actually serving as vaccination centers, evacuation sites, food banks, you name it. So I want to end here on the work that we can do collectively together. So the question is, what should we be doing collectively to help our colleges continue to be the heart and the hope of their communities? Biron want to start?

39:52

Well, sure. That's a big question. So what should we continue to do together to help our colleges continue to be The whole heart of our communities purged correctly? Wow. Well, I'll start out by basically just, you know, framing this in a way that allows us to think about what we actually do, right? You know, we're all looking at this from different perspectives, right, we've got the chancellor's office, we've got a number of CEOs, Trustee Brown is one of a number of Trustees. And everyone's got their perspective. And even I think if we all sat in a room together and tried to find, you know, the one or two or three things even that we should be focused on, there will be multiple opinions about what we focus on how we would focus on it, who would be doing the work, and how we would partner. And so we just had to be realistic about the system that we work in. And I think part of beginning to realize that we have more in common by alignment, then we believe is actually doing what we're doing now, taking the time to have those conversations across the system, whether it be with our Board of Governors, whether it be again ongoing town halls, conversations with our students, and finding out you know, how our efforts can be more student centered, and making sure that those efforts are sustainable, and continuing to look at continuous quality improvement efforts across the system. You know, I also think that, you know, while we remain the heart or maintaining that presence in the community, as I guess the lifeblood of changing intergenerational poverty, given where community colleges are situated, and who they serve, you know, we really got to take advantage of the opportunity that we have that window of opportunity to kind of create this roadmap of transformation, and to continue to really sort of navigate questions. And I would say there's a couple of critical questions that we should be engaged in, when we all come together, you know, looking at this from our different perspectives, that just kind of lay out a couple questions. I mean, the first one would be to me, you know, what do our students expect in our current students and future students? Right, because we're talking about enrollment, we're talking about the job market continuing to change, you know, but what to our current and future students expect from their college experience? You know, what do they expect? What kind of support would they expect? You know, what do they need? What is the endgame? You know, what is their

expectations? And the next question I'd ask is, you know, how do we support our students, really, across their entire education journey? You know, what is it that we're doing as a system? And we really just break that down and have some real conversation about that? And lastly, I guess, I'll add is, you know, how do we take advantage of the opportunities that have been presented to us through technology, and kind of having that ecosystem that can adapt to the student needs as they change? But what can we do we look at, you know, how we teach things, you know, humanizing the curriculum, you know, it's what we're teaching, but it's also how we're teaching it and meeting students where they are, instead of the traditional model of, you know, if you're, if they can't come and sit in a lecture and study and go see their instructor, or register, then college isn't for this particular student, but how do we have multiple entry points? How do we set that up, to start to look at really changing the system to meet today's needs? And I think we have that window of opportunity right now, to have those discussions about who we are, and how we can continue to serve students, and how are we creating, you know, a better experience so that they can reach their educational goal? And how are we leveraging technology in order to be able to do that, and I think that these opportunities don't present themselves that often. And again, this is a once a century, kind of a crisis opportunity here that we have. And as we come out of it, I think we'd be remiss if we don't look at how we can reach adult learners in a different way, how we can help folks upskill digital credentials, you know, utilizing degrees and certificates in a way that are stackable, short term training, to really meet the needs of industry industry is moving a lot faster than us. And I think this is a great opportunity for us to have that real conversation about, you know, how we're applying that funding and why it's important for us to work well together. And be laser focused about where that puts us in serving our students, particularly students who fallen behind. I have folks who have been looking for opportunities and closing those equity gaps, particularly most African American and Latinx API students.