



California
Community
Colleges

Case for Change: CCCC Common ERP Executive Summary

“Every student in our state deserves the same level of protection, the same level of service, the same quality of experience, the same ease of access to opportunity that every other student in the state has.”

-CCC Stakeholder

Case For Change: A California Community Colleges Common ERP

Executive Summary

Introduction

In response to the Governor's [Roadmap](#) between his office and the California Community Colleges (the "Colleges" or the "System") and his commitment to develop a phased approach to implement a common statewide system, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (the "Chancellor's Office") is building upon past efforts to develop the case for such a system. In doing so, the Chancellor's Office recognizes the important value of engaging stakeholders from across the system, almost all of whom will be impacted by this type of change.

The Chancellor's Office partnered with Accenture to understand the current challenges that the system and its colleges, faculty, staff, and students face with existing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, and to explore the potential benefits a common ERP would provide to mitigate these challenges, enable new capabilities, increase transparency, and build trust.

Interviews with stakeholders across the 116 colleges and 73 districts were conducted to help understand the opportunities of transitioning from their existing ERP systems to a common ERP across the California Community Colleges as it relates to student information, administrative services, and data collection. The purpose of the engagement was to provide a voice to and showcase the experiences of the students, staff, and faculty that make up the entire system, and to capture the diversity of our colleges within their local contexts.

This report explores the case for California Community Colleges to modernize and unify its ERP technology to build institutional resiliency, provide a uniform experience and equitably support all students statewide in reaching their learning goals. A common ERP may help provide systemwide solutions to many critical challenges that the system currently faces and create a far better experience for students, faculty, and staff. This case for change is rooted in careful engagement with the system's stakeholders as well as national research and the in-depth experience of the team who have worked with higher education and public sector clients.

Importantly, this report is not designed to include evaluations or recommendations of technology vendors, nor does it seek to provide implementation costs or timeline. It represents only an initial phase of work focused on documenting the needs and challenges the system is currently facing and what might be possible through a common

systemwide ERP platform. Ongoing systemwide engagement with larger groups of stakeholders will continue as these efforts progress.

Stakeholder Engagement

To capture the full spectrum of stakeholder voices of the California Community College system, representative students, staff, and faculty were engaged through their stakeholder groups during the interview process. Accenture worked with the Chancellor's Office of Innovation, Data, Evidence, and Analytics and the Division of Digital Innovation and Infrastructure to identify key stakeholder groups selected to systematically represent the system's experiences and needs.

Over the course of two months, interviews were conducted with 67 participants, identified from 11 different stakeholder groups, and representing more than half of the system's colleges. The opportunities identified were recurring themes in the stakeholder synthesis and were drawn across stakeholder groups, district type (multi or single), and college contexts (region, urban, suburban, or rural, and/or small, medium, large).

Definition of a common ERP

When an ERP system is managed centrally and incorporates consolidated business data and organization processes, it is considered a "common ERP" solution. It can be a single platform, several platforms, or systems working in tandem which share a common system of record for the collection of data.

In the context of California Community Colleges, a common ERP is a technology solution that is centrally managed and potentially encompasses ERP and SIS functionality, which may include student information, human capital management (HR), and finance and accounting management that would unify the colleges through the same system(s), processes, and data architecture. Currently, the ERP systems (human capital management/HR and finance) and Student Information System (SIS) across the system's colleges are all locally managed at the college or district level and are distinct and separate from ERP and SIS systems at other colleges, leading to divergent experiences and qualities.

Case for change

The system is at a technology crossroads. The current ERP technology and processes in place at each college exacerbate many of the challenges that the students, faculty, and staff face across the system, including:

- Labor-intensive management of disparate and/or outdated systems
- Challenges in reporting accurate and consistent data in a timely manner
- Hiring and retaining IT talent
- Unequal student, staff, and faculty experiences

- Ongoing security vulnerabilities

Modernizing and unifying ERP technology would help build resiliency across the diverse local contexts of the system’s colleges and better support all students across the system. This report highlights the five most frequent challenges identified through engagement with system stakeholders listed above as well as the potential ways a common ERP approach could mitigate these challenges and provide benefits across the system, as documented in the following table:

Challenges identified with current ERPs	Potential value enabled by a common ERP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current levels of disparate processes, procedures, and systems, lead to manually intensive work, hindering colleges' ability to focus on strategic activities that support student success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unified solution enables faculty and staff to optimize their bandwidth and allow for communities of practice to flourish across the system to solve systemwide challenges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent management of data and inaccurate reporting limit colleges’ ability to correctly represent and fully serve students and faculty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single, reliable source of information standardizes data and streamlines reporting to enable timely, accurate, and consistent information, and eliminates massive reporting burdens for the colleges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current technology landscape exacerbates existing hiring and retention challenges for IT staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern system would reduce barriers to attracting and retaining local IT talent, allowing them to work on more interesting and strategic projects, while also allowing for greater sharing of resources and institutional knowledge across the system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students, faculty, and staff across the system face unequal experiences related to technology, creating an environment that reduces institutional mobility, limits visibility into data, hinders communities of practice, and increases barriers to success for students, faculty, and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A common ERP provides a more equitable technology solution that supports all students, faculty, and staff across the system in pursuit of their goals, regardless of which college(s) they are a part of.

Challenges identified with current ERPs	Potential value enabled by a common ERP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The slow and uneven adoption of modern technology systemwide contributes to security vulnerabilities that put students, faculty, and staff at risk, as well as increases system hardware failures that can impact delivery of education and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive, centralized system reduces the local security burden, improves the overall systemwide security posture, improves the ability to respond quickly to threats, and provides resilience and redundancy in the case of emergencies and natural disasters, especially for small colleges.

Table 1: Current Challenges & Benefits Unlocked by a Common ERP

Key dependencies

Robust change management, project management, staffing support/resource availability, and transparency throughout the process will be needed to support the system in planning for, designing, and transitioning to a common ERP. While a common ERP will begin to address the many challenges that California Community Colleges face it is not a cure-all. A transition will not only represent a technology change but also a cultural change affecting business processes and ways of working, offering new opportunities to collaborate and work together across the system. A successful transition will additionally need to carefully attend to business process design, data model development, and a comprehensive review of roles and responsibilities.

Next steps

This case for change encapsulates the first step in moving to a common ERP (shown in figure 1). In continuing to respond to the commitment in the Governor’s Roadmap, the Chancellor’s Office’s next steps will include:

- Stand up of a common ERP task force to provide input into the decisions that California Community Colleges needs to make to support the transition.
- Building a comprehensive understanding of the current state of technology platforms across the colleges from a people, process, technology, data, security, and experience lens.

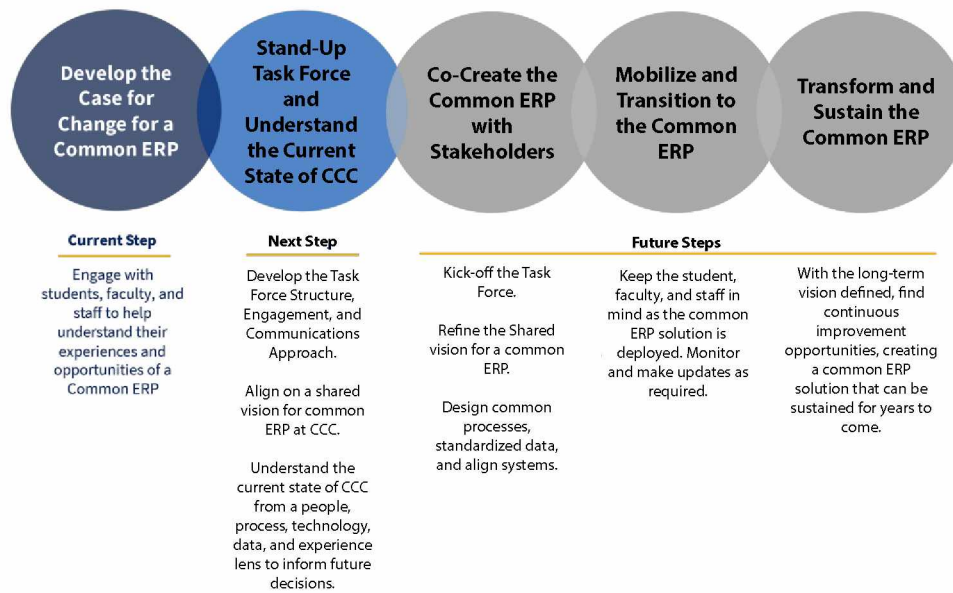


Figure 1: California Community Colleges Stages of Moving to a Common ERP

The current state assessment will provide the system with the information the task force needs to:

- Evaluate potential alternatives in implementation of a common ERP.
- Understand the alternative structures that could be used to support the change initiative.
- Develop an implementation roadmap based on the identified alternatives.

Conclusion

Drawing on stakeholder interviews across the system, national data, and other higher education and public sector examples, the evidence suggests that the adoption of a common ERP would potentially create meaningful benefits, including:

- A unified faculty and staff technology experience.
- A single, timely, and reliable source of data.
- Modernization that reduces barriers to attracting and retaining IT talent.
- Improved and equitable technology experiences for all stakeholders.
- Comprehensive centralized security and resiliency to reduce local vulnerabilities.

A comprehensive change management and communication strategy, project management discipline, systemwide commitment of resources, and transparency throughout the transformation journey are critical factors to success. As next steps, the Chancellor’s Office will stand up of a common ERP task force and project team that will begin to build a comprehensive understanding of the current state of technology platforms across the colleges across key dimensions: people, process, technology, data, security, and experience.