



# California Community Colleges

## A Plan for An Equitable Recovery

- Addressing the hardship community college students face due to the pandemic has required tremendous effort by students, faculty, administrators, and the system overall to respond swiftly and effectively in order to continue on.
- Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have left lingering social and economic consequences that disproportionately affect individuals and families of color and continue to threaten long-elusive equity in higher education, as evidenced by preliminary enrollment decline statistics.
- Strategic investment in the irreplaceable California Community Colleges can play a critical role in supporting a primary road to recovery leading to a more equitable and resilient California.
- The ensuing health, economic, and civic crises also reinforce the need to advance our work to end systemic racism and double-down on student-focused policies. As budget conversations evolve, we want to partner with you to prevent the loss of an entire generation of students and contributors to our workforce.
- The budget proposal lays out several positive investments – A paydown of nearly 80% of deferrals, emergency aid, resources for our online infrastructure, and a proposal for a dual admission process that could transform, transfer and intersegmental collaboration.
- However, given federal investments and the potential for more resources at May Revisions, more can be done to truly advance an equitable recovery.

Adopted by the Board of Governors in 2017, the Vision for Success guides our efforts to continuously improve student outcomes, with a focus on closing equity gaps, reducing excess unit accumulation, increasing degree and certificate attainment and transfers to four-year institutions, and securing gainful employment for our graduates. Today, as the state grapples with national social unrest and an economic crisis propelled by an unprecedented global health pandemic, we must focus relentlessly on advancing the goals of the Vision for Success.

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### WE ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT:

**Restore College Resources.** Community colleges shouldered \$1.5 billion in deferrals this year. Prioritize paying down the full balance of deferrals and providing parity between the K-12 and community college COLA.

**Re-envision Financial Aid and Basic Needs.** There are still many student financial and basic needs that remain unmet. Therefore, along with our student leaders, we are interested in exploring ways to look at financial aid and basic needs access more holistically to more intentionally focus on increasing FAFSA completions, CalFresh enrollment, and other critical supports. Specifically, by investing in Financial Aid & Basic Needs Centers all in one place, we can meet needs without repeatedly asking students to prove they are poor.

**Community Colleges Are Workforce Engines.**

The Governor is putting an emphasis on workforce development and support for small businesses. California Community Colleges are key to these efforts and stand ready to get Californians back to work. Our colleges can lead employer engagement in growing and emerging industries and advance credit for prior learning and skills.

**Foster Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.** In the last year, we've not only experienced the effects of the pandemic but also continued to grapple with deeply entrenched social issues and racist systems. Investing in the implementation of the our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) recommendations can foster an inclusive, anti-racist campus culture and state.

### LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

**Equitable Financial Aid and Basic Needs Reform**

Prioritize and support legislation that advances equity-minded reforms to state financial aid and basic needs programs, and that centers the needs of California Community Colleges students, including:

- Reform the state Cal Grant program to better address the total cost of attendance (not just tuition) and to provide equitable access to aid, by making the program an entitlement for low-income community college students.
- Expand access to culturally competent mental health services on campus and in coordination with county providers.

**Equitable Campus & Classroom Environment**

Support efforts to ensure an equitable campus and classroom environment for all students, and to actively advance anti-racist policies in higher education.

- Continue to examine on-campus policing and the role community colleges play in peace officer training and education, to reduce implicit bias and systemic racism
- Advance the recommendations of the DEI Taskforce to diversify community college faculty and staff
- Strengthen and expedite implementation of the mandate to equitably place all students in transfer-level coursework, consistent with Assembly Bill 705 of 2018.