



Vision for Success: A Faculty Perspective

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely.
The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”
—Franklin D. Roosevelt

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character —
that is the goal of true education.”
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person a potential activist,
every minute a chance to change the world.”
—Dolores Huerta

California Community Colleges are where students can achieve their dreams regardless of any educational, social, or economic challenge. They provide academically robust, diverse, inclusive, and innovative learning environments that engage students of every background to develop their intellect, character, and abilities; to explore, define, and achieve their goals; and to be socially responsible community members and leaders.

Too often, policymakers constrain student hopes and dreams by narrowly defining their pathways. The very term “student success” has been undermined by demanding that students complete specific sequences to be considered successful. In this construct, the emphasis has inappropriately moved from a lifetime of engaged learning to specific markers of completion. This policy shift ultimately excludes vast numbers of students whose own life goals differ from the objectives of the policymakers, and harms the economy which demands continuous learning to stay ahead of the dual trends of globalization and technology.

Discussions of closing achievement gaps—whether by student population or by geographic region—fail to incorporate two extremely important themes. First, students remain disadvantaged in a system that does not value full-time full-service faculty and fully-supported part-time faculty. Second, academic expectations of students cannot be isolated from a recognition of their life circumstances, which in today’s California, increasingly involves food and housing insecurity.

Measuring success or performance on the single indicator of degrees or certificates attained not only ignores the crux of the problem, but actually exacerbates the very gaps the community colleges are trying to close. The FACCC Education Institute created a set of goals to both complement and challenge those established by the System as a means of sparking conversation on how best to directly benefit students and ensure that their education is not compromised by issues of race, ethnicity, nationality, income, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and zip code. The doors of community colleges should always be open to every adult Californian that can benefit from the experience.

The following goals developed by the FACCC EI Policy Committee provide direction from which our students, communities, and even the state can succeed.

Vision for Success

California Community Colleges Board of Governors

1. Over five years, increase by at least 20 percent the number of CCC students annually who acquire associates degrees, credentials, certificates, or specific skill sets that prepare them for an in-demand job. This increase is needed to meet future workforce demand in California as analyzed by the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research. This goal is consistent with the recommendations of the California Strategic Workforce Development Plan. Equally important to the number of students served will be the type of education they receive: programs, awards, and course sequences needed to match the needs of regional economies and employers.

2. Over five years, increase by 35 percent the number of CCC students transferring annually to a UC or CSU. This is the increase needed to meet California's future workforce demand for bachelor's degrees as projected by the Public Policy Institute of California. (In California, occupations requiring bachelor's degrees are growing even faster than jobs requiring associate's degrees or less college.) Meeting this aggressive goal will require the full engagement and partnership of CSU and UC. While ambitious, the pace of improvement envisioned in this goal is not unprecedented: between 2012-13 and 2015-16 (a three-year period), CCC to CSU transfers increased by 32 percent and between Fall 1999 and Fall 2005 (a six-year period), CCC to UC transfers increased by 40 percent.

3. Over five years, decrease the average number of units accumulated by CCC students earning associate's degrees, from approximately 87 total units (the most recent system-wide average) to 79 total units—the average among the quintile of colleges showing the strongest performance on this measure. (Associate's degrees typically require 60 units.) Reducing the average number of units-to-degree will help more students reach their educational goals sooner, and at less cost to them. It will also free up taxpayer dollars that can be put toward serving more students.

4. Over five years, increase the percent of exiting CTE students who report being employed in their field of study, from the most recent statewide average of 60 percent to an improved rate of 69 percent—the average among the quintile of colleges showing the strongest performance on this measure. Improvements on this measure would indicate that colleges are providing career education programs that prepare students for available jobs and offering supports that help students find jobs.

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FACCC Education Institute Board of Directors

1. Over the next five years, increase the adult population rate enrolled in the California Community Colleges by at least 20 percent.

Emphasize outreach to nontraditional students, including, but not limited to, first generation, low income, stranded workers, lifelong learners, immigrants regardless of status, un- and underemployed, formerly incarcerated, older adults, foster youth, military, and those with disabilities.

Develop and support student service programs to facilitate students achieving their goals.

Demonstrate opportunities to move in and out of college depending upon life circumstance with the ultimate goal of lifelong learning.

2. Over five years, increase the range and scale of academic opportunities between community college, four-year undergraduate institutions, graduate programs, and the workforce. Examples include pathways to law, medicine, technology, community college teaching, and short-term programs that meet student and community needs.

Expand channels of communication for community college faculty to connect with counterparts in K-12, CSUs, UCs, private institutions, and workplace settings to assure that student opportunities are both available and inclusive, and that all members of a community are empowered to pursue their goals.

3. Over five years, expand access to learning for community members at all levels of collegiate ability. From basic introductory courses to advanced topics on current events, community members should be welcomed and encouraged to continue participating in the diverse and robust offerings of our community colleges across their life span.

4. Over five years, increase the range of academic experiences for students to progress from the community college to the workforce. Expansion of such frameworks as service learning, internships, apprenticeships, contextualized instruction, online education through our existing 114 colleges, and study abroad, should be both encouraged and funded. Increase integration with other community stakeholders to assist students in their transition to the workforce.

These opportunities should be available to all students.

5. Reduce equity gaps across all of the above measures through faster improvements among traditionally underrepresented student groups, with the goal of cutting achievement gaps by 40 percent within five years and fully closing those achievement gaps within 10 years.

6. Over five years, reduce regional achievement gaps across all of the above measures through faster improvements among colleges located in regions with the lowest educational attainment of adults, with the ultimate goal of fully closing regional achievement gaps within 10 years.

5 & 6. Reduce equity gaps across traditionally underrepresented student groups and the diverse geographic regions of the state. These are fully supported goals that need attention through the development of a faculty and programmatic infrastructure.

Students need access to full-time faculty, fully supported part-time faculty, academic counselors, librarians, student service programs, tutors, labs, and library facilities. Students also need access to the full array of health, mental health, and human services programs available to them, and should be able to access these programs at their college.

Funding should reward districts that embrace equity and outreach, and those that prioritize full-time faculty hiring, part-time faculty parity, and appropriate counselor and librarian to student ratios. Additionally, funding should consider regional unemployment rates, assisting those districts in areas with consistently higher joblessness.

Hiring a world class faculty that reflects the diversity of the student body and of the state requires stable funding, professional support and outreach, and pathways that lead from the community college student to the faculty experience.

7. New goal: Over five years, improve shared governance models to train all strata of the community colleges on respective roles of trustees, administrators, faculty senates, unions, and student representatives. Increase percentage of part-time and full-time faculty, classified professionals, and student leaders to participate in shared governance activities.

8. New goal: Invest in the increased integration of communities and their community colleges.

Over five years, incentivize cultural transformation through professional development of our community colleges to increase engagement of each college with its own distinct community. This would include showcasing the talents of faculty and facilitate the colleges to become centers of innovation and professional development.

Empower and compensate all faculty to demonstrate their expertise to the community and the professionals at the community college.

A Special Thank You...

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