

The California Community College System

The California Community College system is the largest system of higher education in the world, with 113 colleges organized into 72 districts, serving over 2 million students.

By design, California's community college districts incorporate all of the state's territory. Virtually all Californians are within commuting distance of a community college. Districts vary in enrollment from the Lake Tahoe Community College District with 1,500 full-time equivalent students to the Los Angeles Community College District with 92,199 students.

The colleges are publicly supported and locally oriented institutions that offer associate degrees, transfer education, and workforce development programs. They are part of California's three-tiered, public postsecondary educational system – the California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California.

Governance

Each of the 72 community college districts in the state has a locally-elected board of trustees, responsive to local community needs and charged with the policy leadership for the district. Boards range in size from five to seven members who are elected by the local community either on a district-wide or area basis. Boards also have student members who are elected by the students. The role and responsibilities of local boards are described in other chapters of the *Trustee Handbook*.

The statewide California Community Colleges system is governed by a Board of Governors (BOG), which was created in 1967 to oversee the colleges comprising the system. The 17-member Board establishes policy and regulations, interacts with the Legislature and federal and state organizations, and selects the Chancellor for the system. Board members are appointed by the governor. Two seats on the Board are designated for trustees, two for community college faculty, one for classified staff and two for students. The Board of Governors is directed to maintain and continue, to the maximum degree permissible, local autonomy and control in the administration of the community colleges.

The Chancellor consults with the colleges through a formal system. The Consultation Council includes representatives from the chief executive officers, faculty members, chief instructional officers, chief student services officers, chief business officers, chief human resources officers, trustees, students, and the Community College League of California (the League). The board of the California Community College Trustees (part of the League) meets periodically with the Board of Governors to discuss topics of mutual concern.

The System Office is the administrative branch of the California Community Colleges System. The System Office implements Board of Governors' regulations and other legislation, allocates state funding, oversees the conduct of the colleges, and provides leadership for the system.

Students and Employees

Over 2 million students are served by the community colleges each year. Students come from all walks of life and all educational backgrounds. Their average age is about 27. Sixty percent of the students attend on a part-time basis.

Approximate percentages of ethnic and gender groups are:

Students	Percent CCCs (2013-14)
Male	46.7
Female	52.3
African American	7.0
Asian	11.7
Filipino	3.1
Pacific Islander	0.5
Hispanic	41.0
Native American	0.4
White	28.4
Multi-Ethnic	3.9
Non-Respondent	4.0

The community colleges employ over 85,000 people, including 18,000 full-time faculty, 26,000 support staff, and 2,000 administrators. In addition, the colleges employ 39,000 part-time faculty.

History

Community colleges are an American invention. The first institution of higher education in America, Harvard University, was established in 1636. The first junior college was founded in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois. A major impetus for the creation of junior colleges was a proposal by William Rainey Harper, then president of the University of Chicago, to shift the first two years of a university education to junior colleges.

The first community colleges in the United States were often private institutions. But by 1947, the number of public community colleges exceeded the number of private ones. The numbers of community colleges increased greatly in the 1940's and 1950's as our nation placed increased emphasis on post-high school education. Enrollment pressure in the 1960's created another boom of expansion and construction that continued through the late 1970's.

In California, the Legislature authorized junior college courses in 1907 as an extension of the public school system. Fresno was the first community to offer a post-high school course of study for students wishing to pursue a baccalaureate degree. In 1921, junior college districts were authorized to be separate from public school districts. A significant number of colleges were founded in the 1950's in response to the growing demand for higher education. The Legislature then began the study leading to the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, which still provides the blueprint for community colleges and universities.

In 1967, a review of the first Master Plan resulted in the Stiern Act, which created the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges and removed the college districts from oversight by the Department of Education. Local college districts maintained autonomous responsibility for curricula, facilities, personnel, budget, and local tax rates. During the late sixties and early seventies, the colleges expanded their offerings to today's broader community mission, and the name junior college was generally dropped in favor of community college.

Although the Master Plan originally recommended high proportions of state funding for colleges, they received the majority of their funds from local property taxes, and tax rates were established by local boards. However, Proposition 13, passed in 1978, resulted in a 60 percent reduction in property tax revenues and the loss of the board's ability to establish local tax rates. The state Legislature and System Office took on a greater role in financing and regulating the work of the colleges.

In 1988, landmark legislation (AB 1725) provided new direction and support for California's public community colleges. The legislation clarified and validated the mission of the community colleges, delegated specific authority to Academic Senates, and mandated an accountability system. It also established a system for minimum qualifications for faculty hire, established goals related to staff diversity and full-time and part-time faculty ratios, created special funds for faculty and staff development and diversity, and addressed a number of other issues.

The decade of the 1990's saw a maturing of the community college mission and a political recognition of the important contributions the colleges make to the economic and social health of their communities. Proposition 98 passed and set a minimum guarantee of the state budget for K-12 and community colleges. The first decade of the 21st century brought consistent state support, along with increases in student fees.

California's 112 community colleges celebrated their centennial anniversary in 2010. The first large-scale community college system in the country continues to be the nation's leader in adult participation.

In recent years, California has fallen in rankings and now lags behind many other states in the production of college graduates. In 2006, California ranked 23rd among states in its share of 25- to 34- year olds holding at least a bachelor's degree, down from eighth position in 1960.

National attention to this issue culminated in a proposal by President Barack Obama to reclaim the lead in adults earning associate's degrees among nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. As a strategy within this effort, entitled the "American Graduation Initiative," President Obama calls upon community colleges to increase degree and certificate completions by 5 million by 2020 as a component of the larger higher education attainment goal. In 2010, the Community College League of California convened its "Commission on the Future (COTF)," comprised of 33 college leaders to identify policy and practice changes to increase meaningful completions in California Community Colleges by 2020. The complete report can be viewed at www.cccvision2020.org.

In January 2011, pursuant to SB 1143 (Ch. 409, Statutes of 2010), the California Community Colleges Board of Governors created a Student Success Task Force to identify best practices for student success. The task force report issued 22 recommendations, including several based on the League's COTF Report, which led to passage of the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012, SB 1456, (Ch.624, Statutes of 2012). Among other issues, this measure revises and recasts the matriculation program with the express purpose of increasing college access and success by providing effective core matriculation services of orientation, assessment and placement, counseling and other education planning services, and academic interventions. The complete task force report can be accessed by the Student Success Initiative link at www.cccco.edu.

In 2014, the Governor and Legislature authorized an eight-year pilot program allowing up to 15 colleges to offer one applied baccalaureate degree each that is not offered by, or duplicative of, UC or CSU degrees.

Mission and Programs

Community colleges are committed to three major values in fulfilling their mission: access, equity, and success. They provide access to higher education for all – everyone who can benefit from education may attend a community college. Equity refers to the effort to ensure that people from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds have the skills and knowledge to benefit from and succeed in the colleges – to close the "achievement gap" between students from different demographic groups. Success refers to the commitment to provide the programs and services needed to ensure that students are able to achieve their educational goals.

To further these values, California Education Code (§66010.4) establishes the following mission and functions for the community colleges:

- As a primary mission, academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level for younger and older students.
- As a primary mission, advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training and services that contribute to workforce improvement.
- As essential and important functions, remedial instruction, and in conjunction with school districts, adult noncredit education, English as a Second Language, and support services that help students succeed.
- As authorized functions, community service courses and programs and institutional research concerning student learning and retention.

The colleges offer a wide variety of programs in the liberal arts and sciences and in over 400 occupational specialties. Most classes are small (the average size is 33) resulting in personalized learning environments.

Counseling and other student service programs, including matriculation services, career and transfer planning, disabled student services, financial aid, health services, re-entry programs, child care, and programs for educationally and economically disadvantaged students are designed to ensure student success at the college level.

Many colleges have built strong partnerships with business and industry and provide contract education courses, small business assistance programs, and other educational services to the economic community. The CCC Economic and Workforce Development Program (www.cccedw.net) is a statewide resource system and training institute working with the colleges and business community to provide continuous workforce improvement, technology enhancement, and business development.

Access and Fees

Community colleges have a unique, historical responsibility to provide open admission without regard to race, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or prior educational status or any other basis for discrimination. The emphasis on access to the community colleges is one of the most basic educational values in California and is a major reason that fees have remained low over the years.

Community college enrollment in California is by law open to any person with a high school diploma or any person 18 or over who can benefit from instruction. The law also permits concurrent enrollment of high school and younger students according to agreements between college and school districts.

Many California community colleges established a number of student fees for specific services during the 1960's and 1970's. In 1984, the Legislature established a \$5 per unit fee for enrollment in credit classes for California residents (out-of-state students pay more). In 1993, the Legislature increased the fees to \$13 per unit and limited the ability of colleges to charge other fees. Since then, the Legislature has raised and lowered fees every few years; they were \$26 per unit in 2009-2010 and \$46 per unit as of Summer 2012.

Other Systems and Agencies

California State University (CSU)

The California State University consists of 23 campuses serving over 382,332 students. About 55 percent of CSU graduates have transferred from community colleges. In the Master Plan for Higher Education, the CSU is authorized to grant baccalaureate and master's degrees as well as teaching credentials. It admits the top one-third of high school graduates. Community college transfers have priority for admission. The CSU is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor.

University of California (UC)

The University of California consists of 10 general campuses and a medical campus, plus a number of professional schools. Undergraduate enrollment at the University is over 188,290, and there are approximately 54,000 graduate and professional students. The University is authorized to grant baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, and professional degrees and credentials. It is constitutionally separate from the Legislature and is governed by an appointed Board of Regents. About 28 percent of UC graduates transferred from community colleges. In the Master Plan, the University has primary responsibility for research and graduate education.

Private Institutions of Higher Education

There are approximately 110 private, accredited colleges and universities in California, over 70 of which are represented at the state level by the Association of California Independent Colleges and Universities.

Public Schools

There are over 1,000 school districts in California attended by more than 6.2 million children. Since many community colleges were created by the public school districts, the systems have a number of connections and similarities. Both have districts governed by locally-elected boards and are subject to the funding provisions of Proposition 98. State-authorized adult education programs may be offered either by a public school district or a community college.

Future

There will continue to be an increasing demand for higher education from a growing and increasingly diverse population. However, the state may not be able to provide major increases in state funding. Therefore, community colleges face continuing challenges to deliver high quality educational programs.

Many governmental, educational, and business groups continue to study the role and mission of the community colleges as well as other segments of higher education. Questions about governance, structure, educational delivery systems, relations with business, funding, fees, and mission priorities will continue to be discussed throughout the coming years and beyond.

Governance of the Community Colleges

The California community colleges are governed both by a statewide Board of Governors appointed by the Governor and local boards of trustees elected by the people. In September 1999, the state Board of Governors and California Community College Trustees Board adopted a joint statement of principles regarding this complex, bilateral governance structure. The statement was intended to lead to improved working relationships and common understandings between the state and local boards. It describes the roles and responsibilities of the governing entities.

Joint Statement of Principles

Given the broad and comprehensive mission of the California community colleges, the people of the State and their local communities are best served by a bilaterally-governed system of community colleges with locally-elected boards of trustees and a gubernatorially-appointed board for the system.

The broad responsibilities of each of the governing components within the bilaterally-governed system should be established by the Legislature and be clear, consistent with the mission, and support a unified system meeting distinct local and state needs.

The Board of Governors should exercise general supervision over the system of community colleges and provide leadership and direction through planning and policymaking, technical assistance, positive incentives, enforcement of laws and regulations, and accountability in support of student success. The work of the system board should be directed to maintaining and continuing, to the maximum degree permissible, local authority and control in the administration of the community colleges.

Board of Governors responsibilities should include:

- Employing a chief executive officer who shall be responsible for recommending system policy to the board following consultation with local districts, their representatives, and community college organizations, and implementation of system board policy, and who shall act as the primary spokesperson for the system on system issues.
- Establishing, consistent with the mission of the system, minimum standards for the operation of each local district and minimum conditions entitling districts to receive state aid and conducting periodic reviews of each district related to the minimum standards and conditions.
- Reviewing and approving academic and facilities plans for each district.
- Conducting necessary system-wide research, evaluating and issuing annual reports on the educational and fiscal effectiveness of the districts based on indicators of performance.
- Providing technical assistance and support when districts encounter severe management or fiscal difficulties; and in cases where fiscal difficulties worsen despite assistance and support, appointing a fiscal monitor according to prescribed criteria.
- Providing representation, advocacy and accountability for the system before state and national legislative and executive agencies.
- Overseeing the administration of state and federal support programs, including: preparing and adopting the proposed system budget; determining the formulas for computing and allocating the state general apportionment; establishing a uniform budgeting and accounting structure and procedures; and establishing space and utilization standards for facilities planning and funding allocations.

- Coordinating and encouraging interdistrict, regional, and statewide development of programs, facilities, and services; and coordinating interdistrict attendance of students.
- Facilitating articulation with other segments of education.
- Exercising general supervision over the formation of new districts and the reorganization of existing districts.
- Establishing and implementing a consultation process to ensure that local governing boards, their representatives, and community college organizations have an opportunity to participate effectively in the review and development of system policy.
- Establishing standards for local district consultation processes that provide faculty, staff and students the right to participate effectively in district and college governance and Academic Senates have primary responsibility for formulating recommendations on academic and professional matters.

Each locally-elected governing board should exercise general supervision over its local district and provide leadership through planning and policymaking to assure local education programs and services meet the education needs of the communities the district serves, as well as regional and state needs. The work of the local boards should be consistent with law and the regulations and policies of the Board of Governors.

Local board responsibilities should include:

- Employing a district chief executive officer who is responsible for recommending district policy to the board in consultation with the Academic Senate, faculty, staff and students and implementation of local board policy and who acts as agent of the board.
- Establishing the educational priorities of the district, consistent with the legislatively established mission of the California community colleges; and, in so doing, local boards shall also respond to regional and statewide needs within the mission in concert with the goals established by the Board of Governors.
- Establishing policies for current and long-range academic and facilities plans and programs; for the approval of courses of instruction and educational programs; and for determining the academic calendar.
- Establishing academic standards, as well as probation, dismissal and readmission policies; graduation requirements; and policies for governing student conduct.
- Assuring the employment and assignment of all personnel and establishing employment practices, salaries, and benefits for all employees.
- Determining the district's operational and capital outlay budgets; determining the need for elections for tax levies and bond measures; establishing policies for student fees where permitted by law; and establishing policies for the receipt and administration of gifts, grants, and scholarships.
- Assuring the management and control of district property.
- Monitoring effectiveness and efficiency in the use of public resources and in meeting and addressing student needs and concerns.
- Participating in the review and development of system policy through the system's consultation process.

In furtherance of the mission of the community colleges within the bilateral governance functions specified in statute, it is appropriate for the local boards and Board of Governors to establish understandings and protocols for the exercise of governance functions. Although these understandings and protocols do not have the force of law and regulations, they set forth expected behaviors and rules of conduct which may be established, reviewed, and revised over time. The initial understandings and protocols are the following:

- Mission: In fulfilling the mission of the California Community Colleges, local boards recognize their responsibility not only to serve the needs of their respective communities, but also to respond to regional and statewide needs. The Board of Governors, recognizes its role to work in partnership with local boards to ensure that community, regional and statewide needs are addressed.
 - ♦ Primary authority to address community needs resides with local boards.
 - ♦ Primary authority to coordinate and assure that regional and statewide needs are addressed resides with the Board of Governors.

- **Accountability:** With the legislatively established bilateral structure of governance, the authority and responsibility of local boards and the Board of Governors flow from statute, and each local board and the Board of Governors therefore remain accountable to the State (Legislature and Governor) for the performance of their respective functions. However, except as provided by law, the Board of Governors is not legally responsible for the actions of local boards, and local boards are not legally responsible for the actions of the Board of Governors.

When conflicts arise about the appropriate exercise of legal or governance responsibilities, both the Board of Governors and local boards have an interest in resolving these conflicts without having to resort to legislative review or adjudication.

- ♦ The Board of Governors is accountable, not only to the State and the general public, but also to local governing boards.
 - ♦ Local boards are accountable, not only to the state and their local publics, but also to the Board of Governors.
- **Local District Assistance:** In fulfilling its role of leadership and assistance the Board of Governors and Chancellor should be prepared to support local districts.
 - ♦ As concerns arise that may require assistance, the Chancellor first should seek the advice and counsel of relevant parties, which, given the concern, would include: the state association of community colleges trustees and chief executive officers, the Academic Senate, the student association, the accrediting commission and other relevant parties. The Chancellor should work with these relevant parties in shaping the assistance to be provided. When this need for informal assistance is identified, local boards and their chief executive officers should be responsive to inquiries and offers of technical assistance from the Chancellor and should recognize that all districts within the system are prepared to help fellow districts.
 - ♦ If formal intervention into fiscal or management matters becomes necessary, and given the responsibility of the Board of Governors to maintain, to the maximum degree permissible, local authority and control in the administration of the community colleges, the Board of Governors should proceed deliberately and cautiously. Formal intervention should be predicated on the basis of established criteria and standards.
 - **Legislative Representation:** Local boards recognize that the Board of Governors has a responsibility to represent the collective interests of the system before state and national legislative and executive agencies. At the same time, the Board of Governors recognizes that local boards will remain respectful of the Board of Governors' role only if it provides for meaningful involvement of the local boards in the formulation of system priorities that are articulated before state and national legislative and executive agencies, and if it provides information to the local districts to help them advocate on statewide and national issues.
 - ♦ Local boards retain legal authority to represent their local communities' particular interests in these arenas.
 - ♦ Local boards will remain respectful of the Board of Governor's role to represent the best interests of all districts, the students, and the State.

Prior to advancing a local interest before state and national legislative and executive agencies, the local boards recognize the value of following these protocols:

- ♦ If the interest advances a new system policy or has an effect on other districts generally, the local board should first seek to have the matter addressed through the system's established consultation process. If the local board's interest is not incorporated or accommodated by a system position, the local board should strongly consider refraining from advancing the interest. If the local board determines it necessary to proceed, it should inform the Board of Governors or its Chancellor before proceeding.
- ♦ If the interest appears to only affect the local district and does not establish any system policy or put system policy in detriment, the local board should inform the Board of Governors, or its Chancellor, before proceeding.

- **Resolution of Conflicts Between Districts:** In a system as large and diverse as the California Community Colleges it is inevitable that there occasionally will be conflicts among or between districts, whether it be the duplication of programs, the location of facilities, or the primary right to serve students in certain areas. The practice of the Board of Governors should be to allow and enable a full opportunity for resolution of these disputes at the local level. At the early stages, the system should refrain from intervention unless a law has been broken, unless the system has a legal responsibility to act, or unless all parties to the dispute ask the Chancellor to assist. If, after reasonable opportunities for local resolution, the conflict persists, local boards should be responsive to offers of the Chancellor to provide assistance or otherwise mediate the conflict.

In order for a unified and bilaterally governed system to be fully effective, the Board of Governors must be enabled to fulfill its functions.

In order to fulfill its delineated leadership responsibilities, the Board of Governors should be granted authority to:

- ♦ Select the Chancellor and senior management, and determine the compensation levels for these employees.
- ♦ Determine the appropriate organizational structure for the agency.
- ♦ Determine the level of funding necessary for operation of the System Office.

The Legislature and Governor should allow the Board of Governors and local boards an opportunity to perform their respective governance roles before intervening in the governance and management of the colleges.

- ♦ The Legislature and Governor should give due weight to the system recommendations that attempt to balance the interests of all districts and further the best interests of students, the system and the State.
- ♦ The Legislature and Governor should refrain from approving legislation that advances narrow or district-specific issues to the detriment of the system.

While the system should be entrusted, enabled, and provided the opportunity to perform its delegated functions, the Board of Governors and local boards recognize that they exercise these responsibilities in response to the overall direction and oversight of the Legislature and the Governor. The Board of Governors and local boards recognize that there are a number of policy determinations and functions appropriate for the Legislature and Governor.

- ♦ Establishing the broad mission of the colleges.
- ♦ Establishing who is entitled to access to the colleges.
- ♦ Establishing the major functions of the Board of Governors and its membership.
- ♦ Establishing the major functions of the local boards, and provisions for election.
- ♦ Determining the amount of funding for the system through the annual state budget process.
- ♦ Establishing the general parameters for determining the apportionment formulas.
- ♦ Approving state-funded capital outlay projects.
- ♦ Determining mandatory student fees.
- ♦ Determining necessary categorical programs.
- ♦ Establishing policies for the employment of college staff.
- ♦ Establishing intersegmental education systems relationships.
- ♦ Determining policies for the sale, lease, and use of real and personal property.
- ♦ Establishing provisions to assure nondiscrimination.
- ♦ Establishing provisions for uniform residency determination.
- ♦ Determining mandatory holidays for colleges.

- ◆ Determining general policies regarding territory of districts and district reorganization.
- ◆ Determining broad policies on student rights and responsibilities.

Education governance ought to have as its main goal helping students achieve their educational goals. Those functions and responsibilities that reside at the state level in the Board of Governors and the System Office should reside there because doing so creates the best possibility of meeting student needs and insuring student success. Similarly, those functions that are in the hands of local boards of trustees should be there because those local boards are best positioned to perform those functions in the best interests of students and student success.

All systems and structures are imperfect. However, this statement does indeed attempt to place specific functions and responsibilities with those, who in exercising those responsibilities, may best be able to meet the needs of the students.