



CALIFORNIA COMPETES
HIGHER EDUCATION FOR A STRONG ECONOMY

Build Pathways to Prosperity for More Californians: Modernize Our Higher Education System

The time is now. California's leaders must advance higher education policy.



Higher education has unmatched power to advance equity, prosperity, and economic growth. A modernized higher education system is one that is fueled by accurate and transparent information, driven by coordinated leadership that puts students at the center, and responds to the needs of our economy. Capitalizing on this moment, California's leaders can enact key changes to close the state's degree gap and increase economic mobility. Together, we can deliver the benefits of a college credential to all Californians who want to learn, contribute, and succeed.

California Competes recommends strategic, smart, and bold solutions to make our higher education system more accessible, coordinated, and transparent.

We made the case in 2018. We urge California's leaders to act in 2019.

Expand opportunities for adults

to return to college, removing the structural barriers that prevent too many of them from completing their intended college goals.

- » Improve support services for returning adults, most of whom are working full-time and have dependent children
- » Reduce institutional roadblocks to reentry caused by administrative policies and lack of coordination between institutions
- » Minimize restrictions on student financial aid that disproportionately increase the cost of college for adults
- » Better connect education to work by incentivizing employers to invest in their employees' degree completion efforts

Learn more in our *Back to College* series.

Develop a longitudinal education

data system spanning P-Workforce to provide timely, accurate, and transparent data to all stakeholders.

- » Connect early childhood through workforce data systems at the individual level
- » Drive and support statewide education and economic goals
- » Be the primary repository for up-to-date and historical data
- » Overcome historical independence challenges that limit the use of existing data

Learn more in *Out of the Dark: Bringing California's Education Data Into the 21st Century*.

Create a statewide coordinating entity

across higher education institutions to establish statewide leadership.

- » Address inequities in access to educational and workforce opportunities
- » Set goals for higher education
- » Align available programs with those demanded by students and the economy
- » Improve transparency by managing a statewide longitudinal data system

Learn more in *The Case for a Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Entity*.

The link between higher education and economic opportunity has never been clearer.

- » Within two years, 65 percent of jobs in the U.S. will require a college credential.¹
- » The creation of new jobs is outpacing the number of California workers qualified to fuel our innovation economy.²
- » In California, adults with some college but no degree are less likely to own homes or have health insurance than those with a college degree and primarily work in jobs that pay below the state's median wage.³

The risks of ignoring needed policy reforms have never been greater.

- » Between the CSU and UC, around 40,000 qualified students are turned away from public universities each year due to capacity limitations resulting from a lack of investment.⁴
- » Just over half of California's college students complete their associate's degree in three years or bachelor's degree in six years, and this rate is lower still for Black, Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islander populations, and for men compared to women.⁵

A modernized higher education system is the key to preparing our workforce for jobs in the innovation economy and preserving California's leadership in the global economy.

About California Competes

California Competes: Higher Education for a Strong Economy is a nonprofit, nonpartisan project funded through support from philanthropic foundations. We focus our higher education work at the intersection of equity and economic growth, because in our richly diverse state, we cannot thrive without both being present. To learn more about California Competes and our priorities for California's future, we invite you to visit our website and follow us on social media.

California Competes benefits from an esteemed Leadership Council that provides statewide breadth and depth of expertise.

- » (Chair) Elizabeth Hill, Former California Legislative Analyst
- » Aida Alvarez, Former Administrator, US Small Business Administration
- » Bill Bogaard, Former Mayor, City of Pasadena
- » Steven Koblik, Former President, Huntington Library
- » Carol Liu, Former State Senator
- » Julia Lopez, Former President & CEO, College Futures Foundation
- » Roger Niello, Co-Owner, The Niello Company
- » Mike Roos, Founder & Chief Consultant, Mike Roos & Company
- » Libby Schaaf, Mayor, City of Oakland
- » Jack Scott, Former Chancellor, California Community Colleges
- » Ashley Swearingen, President & CEO, Central Valley Community Foundation
- » Peter Weber, Founder, Fresno Bridge Academy



California's higher education institutions, together with state and local governments, have the power to support more students through degree completion so they can achieve individual prosperity and help grow the state's economy. Change will come as the result of a shared commitment to collaboration and innovation.



–Elizabeth Hill
Chair, Leadership Council
Former California Legislative Analyst

¹ Carnevale, A., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2013, June). Recovery: Job growth and education requirements through 2020. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

² California Competes. (2015). Mind the gap.

³ California Competes. (2018). Back to college. Part one: California's imperative to re-engage adults.

⁴ Rose, A. (2018, May). California stands to lose billions in future economic returns by continuing to underfund CSU and UC. California Budget and Policy Center.

⁵ California Competes. (2018, February). Opportunity imbalance: Race, gender, and California's education-to-employment pipeline.