



# **Toward a New Cross-Sector Partnership for Student Success**

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## **About College Futures Foundation Higher Education Finance Forum**

There is a growing consensus in California about the need to increase access and degree attainment among this generation of California residents—but there is no comparable consensus about how to pay for it. College Futures Foundation is sponsoring the Higher Education Finance Forum to provide a neutral, analytically grounded discussion about how to pay for California’s public higher education goals.

Current funding trends present one of the biggest barriers to increasing resident student access and baccalaureate degree completion. The Forum’s goal is to develop a realistic framework for examining California public higher education finance that both defines the problem and identifies options to address it. The Forum will host four invitational conversations among a small group of experts in state budgeting, public higher education finance, demographic trends, social equity, and other facets of the topic. The Forum will synthesize a summary of the proceedings and white papers at the conclusion of the planned work, toward the end of 2016. College Futures Foundation and Forum leadership will then decide whether to transition the conversation into a larger public arena.

College Futures Foundation is a private foundation working statewide to improve baccalaureate degree attainment among California students who are low-income and underrepresented in higher education. College Futures operates on the beliefs that a vibrant future for our state requires more bachelor’s degrees, and that every qualified student in California who wishes to should have the opportunity to succeed in college.

Established in 2005, the Foundation supports work in three areas: ensuring successful student transitions along the degree completion pathway; enabling cross-sector, intersegmental, and regional partnerships to drive improvements in bachelor’s degree completion; and addressing gaps between policy and practice needed to increase college access and success.

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## Introduction

California's Master Plan for Higher Education envisioned a cohesive "system." But California higher education is in fact more of a loose federation rather than a unified system.

The structures, policies, and procedures that were put in place in 1960 largely remain in place today. Sectors and institutions have worked relatively independently, with limited coordination. Institutional policies and practices were mainly designed to benefit and perpetuate institutions, without a strong emphasis on student progress or completion.

In earlier decades, this loose federation served the needs of the sectors and the state reasonably well. But since then, California's economy has changed and more students than ever are seeking college degrees. The state's college student population is now much bigger and more representative of the state's total population than it was at the time the Master Plan was written. Increasingly, the siloed structure of California higher education—and in particular its sovereignty from K-12 education—has proven to be a mismatch for a student body that is older, more mobile, and less prepared than earlier generations.

As this paper will describe, today's students face greater personal challenges and a college environment that has grown increasingly complicated. Students—many of whom are the first in their family to attend college—must navigate through a variety college options, admission requirements, course placement policies, career options, availability of courses and programs, regional constraints including impacted campuses and majors, financing options, degree or certificate requirements, the development of education plans, and multiple, misaligned layers of support programs. Institutions are not sufficiently resourced to help students navigate these factors, resulting in an experience that is unwieldy and often counterintuitive for even the savviest student.

The state has taken steps to create more coherence and transparency—through, for example, the Associate Degree for Transfer legislation. But the core problem remains: California's higher education sectors do not coordinate and rarely adopt policies that enhance cross-sector alignment. The result is a misaligned system that hinders students' ability to properly prepare for college, that creates dead-end pathways, and promotes inefficient student "wandering" and accumulation of excess units.

Just as troubling, the lack of coordination and alignment across sectors contributes to massive inefficiencies systemwide. State and student time and money is wasted as students stop and start their educational path, fall through the cracks, take courses they do not need, or fail to complete at all. The state's lack of a cohesive postsecondary infrastructure has even impeded proper diagnosis of the problem: we do not have good information on how students move to and through postsecondary education or what kinds of cross-sector student success practices could more effectively address their needs.

The first half of this paper presents an overview of the core challenges facing higher education in California, focusing on the academic and fiscal issues created or aggravated by the absence of critical building blocks for an effective policy and financing system: cross-sector coordination and the policy infrastructure and financing strategy that would support it.

The second half of the paper returns to the fiscal dimensions of the problem by offering policy recommendations for strengthening cross-sector collaboration and most importantly, options for financing this work. The paper concludes with a renewed call to forge a new cross-sector partnership that is focused tightly on student progress and success.

## **KEY CHALLENGES**

### **Need for Cross-Sector Collaboration**

Students need *more* guidance to navigate through and between California's public education systems, but those systems have never been well-coordinated with each other. Misaligned policies lead to inefficiency and poor student outcomes. Cross-sector coordination is more than an aspirational ideal. It is needed to address the needs of today's students and promote greater efficiency and effectiveness systemwide.

#### *Compared to Previous Generations, Today's Students Require More Guidance to Navigate Across Sectors.*

The country's college population has changed. The typical student is no longer moving directly from high school to college with guidance from college-educated family members. Today's students are older: in California, *more than one-quarter of students* (27 percent) are over the age of 30. Another 14 percent are between the ages of 25 and 29. At the California State University (CSU), older students are especially prevalent in junior and senior classes, where the majority of community college transfer students enter the university. Older students are generally shouldering more responsibilities than their younger classmates. Nationally, 58 percent of college students are working while enrolled in school and 26 percent are simultaneously raising children. Juggling jobs and families, older students are less likely to attend full time and more likely to face interruptions in their schooling.

Today's students are also more likely to be first-generation students. As a group, first-generation students need additional support and guidance that is not readily available at home. These students are also most likely to attend broad-access institutions that are less able to support them.

Collectively these challenges interfere with the completion of degrees and make students especially vulnerable at transition points, such as enrolling in postsecondary education after high school and transferring from a community college to a university. The results are dismal for disadvantaged groups. At UC Berkeley, one of the most selective public universities in the country, 45.7 percent of African American and 52 percent of Latino students admitted as freshman graduate in four years—significantly lower rates than their white and Asian American

peers (79.3 and 75 percent, respectively)<sup>1</sup>. At the CSU, even the most academically-prepared low-income students, the ones deemed college-ready by the institution, have four- and five-year graduation rates that are substantially lower than their non-Pell recipient peers<sup>2</sup>.

The CSU's own graduation goal for incoming transfer students indicates just how difficult this challenge is (or how low the expectations are for improvement): CSU aspires to graduate just 35 percent of transfer students within two years of transferring<sup>3</sup>.

### *Colleges Have Not Adapted to Students' Changing Needs.*

Despite the challenges of today's students, institutions continue to be organized much as they were generations ago. For instance, postsecondary institutions offer a dizzying array of educational options, often fueled by the persistent belief that students want and need a long menu of choices. The reality is, the more choices a student has to make, the more complicated the decisions become and the more guidance students need in order to help them make those decisions. Often with minimal guidance, students find themselves choosing an education system, campus, and academic major, while trying to compare costs and financial aid packages, determine which courses are needed to graduate in an academic major, navigate the online course registration system, and redirect themselves when a needed course is unavailable. The wrong decision can result in extra and unnecessary time on campus and the accumulation of unneeded units or student loan debt.

The complexity of federal and state student aid is another minefield for inexperienced students. More students than ever face cost barriers, burdens and pressures to attending college, which affects their choice of institution and guides their behavior on everything from the number of course units attempted, the amount of hours during the school year that they have to work and ultimately their time-to-degree. Complicated and misaligned financial aid policies result in counterintuitive systems and unintended consequences.

For example, it is more expensive for a low-income student to attend a community college than the University of California in six of the nine California regions where a UC general campus is located—a result of cost-of-living expenses that are not covered by financial aid available to community college students<sup>4</sup>. This runs contrary to students' conventional understanding of college costs and undermines accessibility to California's transfer pathway.

### *Clarity about "College Readiness" Continues to Evade Students and Institutions.*

A disproportionate number of entering college students are identified by colleges as under-prepared, reflecting a clear disconnect between how K-12 and postsecondary institutions define, measure, and communicate to students and families what it means to be college ready. In 2015, 27 percent of entering freshman at the CSU were deemed not ready for college-level math and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://accountability.universityofcalifornia.edu/2016/chapters/chapter-3.html#3.1.4>

<sup>2</sup> [http://asd.calstate.edu/doc/CSU-Undergraduate-Outcomes-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://asd.calstate.edu/doc/CSU-Undergraduate-Outcomes-Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.calstate.edu/AcadAff/Presentations/docs/2016/july/Graduation-Initiative-2025.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub\\_files/npc\\_california\\_map.pdf](http://ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub_files/npc_california_map.pdf)

about 27 percent were deemed not ready for college-level English, in spite of successfully completing A-G “college ready” coursework in high school, and maintaining mean grade point averages in those courses of 3.19 in mathematics and 3.22 in English<sup>5</sup>. The identified readiness of incoming community college students is even worse: about 74 percent of incoming students place into remedial math and 64 percent place into remedial English. There is a clear systemic problem when such large proportions of students are entering college underprepared.

### *Student Supports Are Siloed Within Systems, Limiting Effectiveness*

Within institutions and systems, numerous efforts exist to clarify college readiness expectations, identify students’ educational deficiencies, and provide support. Yet most of these efforts are campus or sector based, with minimal cross-over.

Education sectors and institutions try hard to support their students; the problem occurs when the student is in transition, between sectors and campuses, and do not clearly fall into the jurisdiction of any one sector or campus. Our current system of student services—including academic preparation programs, counseling, guidance, advising—is campus specific. When a student leaves a particular campus, either by transferring to another campus or sector or simply enrolling in additional courses at a community college (or sometimes multiple community colleges), they fall off the campus radar and lose access to those much-needed services. For underprepared “nontraditional” students—now the norm in California higher education—the lack of cross-sector collaboration leads to a disjointed experience and too often, dropping out or “swirling” through excessive units. The result is an ineffective and inefficient higher education system.

Two notable exceptions to the state’s siloed policy approach are the Early Assessment Program (EAP) and the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT). The EAP is an exam given in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and currently used by the CSU and community colleges to determine college readiness. The exam can also trigger a 12<sup>th</sup> grade intervention for students who test below the “college-ready” level—typically a math or reading class intended to accelerate their skills before they matriculate into college. Recently the EAP was aligned with the state’s new Common Core-aligned assessments—an important step forward in aligning expectations between the state’s K-12 and postsecondary systems. But colleges can still layer on additional placement tests and requirements for incoming students, limiting the signaling power of the EAP. Moreover, students do not take the EAP until 11<sup>th</sup> grade, limiting the time and options for helping students get academically ready for college.

Greater “buy-in” and alignment to the Common Core State Standards from postsecondary institutions would pave the way for more consistent messaging to students, better college preparation, and a more consistent educational experience as students progress from K-12 into postsecondary. If higher education institutions formally accepted the Common Core standards and assessments as adequate college preparation, they could also reduce testing and repetitive course-taking for students, leading to greater efficiency for the state—which has invested

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<sup>5</sup> [http://asd.calstate.edu/performance/remediation/15/Rem\\_Sys\\_Final\\_Fall2015.htm](http://asd.calstate.edu/performance/remediation/15/Rem_Sys_Final_Fall2015.htm)

heavily in its Common Core strategy in K-12—and for students<sup>6</sup>. Without greater alignment, student time and state resources will continue to be wasted.

Another notable attempt at cross-sector collaboration is the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT). Community college transfer students have long faced problems transferring credits when they enter UC or CSU. The tradition of academic freedom in all sectors has perpetuated a confusing system of campus-specific degree requirements, and thwarted efforts to make the transfer process simple and predictable for students. After generations of failed attempts to fix this problem through better outreach and informational campaigns, in 2010 the Legislature stepped in to mandate that the community college and CSU sectors, and their respective faculties, work together to align discipline-specific curriculum. The result was the ADT—a set of discipline-specific associate degrees that can be transferred to any CSU institution, coupled with limits on the number of credits that school can require of ADT transfer students to complete a bachelor's degree.

But even with legislative intervention, the ADT has not eliminated all barriers. While the state mandated the sectors to communicate about curriculum, it did not force other critical cross-sector conversations, such as those between sector or campus student services personnel—including registrars, financial aid officers, and counselors. Many community college students are not aware of the ADT options at their campus. Also, because ADTs are offered alongside similar-looking traditional associate degrees, students are sometimes confused about the differences and advantages of the ADT. Students are unclear about which campuses will honor their ADT, and CSU campuses lack a cross-sector data infrastructure to inform them of which incoming students have earned ADTs. Students themselves sometimes don't know which kind of associate degree they received.

Additionally, ADTs were only mandated at the CSU, not UC. In 2014, the UC recommended several actions for improving transfer from community colleges, most of which centered on messaging to students, increasing UC's presence on community college campuses, and providing a set of services to transfer students once they arrive on a UC campus. While the report did recommend creating new or aligning existing systemwide pre-major pathways, it fell short of actually aligning those pathways with the community college-CSU work, instead saying that pathways should correspond “where possible<sup>7</sup>.” Since then, UC has adopted 21 community college transfer pathways that are “similar,” but not the same as the ADTs. Given that these new pathways have yet to be reconciled with older transfer pathways (such as campus-to-campus transfer options or the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC)), it remains unclear if the confusion facing community college transfer students will actually be resolved by these new pre-major requirements.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/WhereToBegin\\_ExSumm\\_082712.pdf](http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/WhereToBegin_ExSumm_082712.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://ucop.edu/transfer-action-team/transfer-action-team-report-2014.pdf>

## Need for A Cross-System Infrastructure

### *Outreach Programs, Though Plentiful, Do Not Add Up to a Systemic Approach.*

Generations of programs have been created at the system and campus level to help students understand college requirements and get ready for college. But frequently, new programs are piled on top of old ones, creating more options and, sometimes, inefficient duplication of efforts.

California's many college readiness and K-12 outreach programs include about 10 at the UC system totaling some \$23 million, and 21 at the CSU summing to more than \$65 million. Most programs—such as the federal GEAR UP, UC's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) and CSU's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)—seek to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared for and succeed in college. In 2012 CSU began its new Early Start program requiring underprepared students to begin their pre-collegiate level coursework during the summer preceding their freshman year.

Community colleges offer dual and concurrent enrollment options for high school students to take college courses as well as the Puente Program and Middle- and Early-College high schools. K-12 schools offer Advanced Placement courses, which grant college credit upon demonstration of proficiency, provide college counseling and advising (at a counselor-to-student ratio of approximately 945:1, according to the California Department of Education), and participate in the AVID (Advanced Via Individual Determination) program, among other activities.

Anecdotally, most of these programs and efforts aren't well coordinated between colleges, universities, and the K-12 students they serve. Multiple programs will target the exact same student resulting in unnecessary programmatic overlap and expense with limited gains. To exacerbate matters, existing programs tend to focus on population-specific sub-groups, further perpetuating a siloed and ad hoc model that is no longer an appropriate solution for what has become a much larger and systemic student pipeline problem.

The well-funded programs are frequently institutionalized within a higher education sector. But the ability to work across education systems is often delegated to the campuses, and tends to rely on the sheer will of one or two people who, in spite of sector politics and siloed financing, are able to coordinate with one another and ensure that a particular program provided the needed services to students. When those individuals move on to other jobs or retire, the program loses its champion and may face an uphill battle to thrive. In other scenarios, the success of cross-sector programs is reliant on individuals who do not get along and are in frequent conflict, making the smallest and easiest hurdle insurmountable.

The *number* of purportedly cross-sector programs in California is admirable, but too often these efforts are piecemeal and ad hoc without a cross-sector infrastructure to support them. Too many discrete programs are not a strategic deployment of resources, nor a good way to serve students.

## **Need for a Financing Strategy**

The current system for financing higher education further exacerbates sector-based silos. Despite some limited initiatives to force cross-sector collaboration, the state's longstanding approach to financing higher education reinforces self-interested actions on the part of sectors and institutions. Without proactive change, the current siloed approach will continue to discourage collaboration and hurt students.

### *Collaboration Is Not Core to Institutional Operations*

For decades, college and university programs and budgets have been constructed primarily for institutional stability, driven by an enrollment or Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES) model. This practice has encouraged institutions to focus more on enrolling students and providing discrete courses than on ensuring that students move seamlessly across multiple colleges or sectors, and that they eventually succeed.

When connections do exist between sectors, campuses, or programs, they are frequently viewed as "add-on" or "stand-alone" programs rather than part of the core operations of the institution. This lack of ownership makes programs easy targets at budget crunch time. Additionally, educational outreach and pipeline programs do not reliably generate FTES at a specific institution and thus do not carry the same currency as general education or major-level coursework at the campus level. This fiscal instability could be mitigated with financial incentives for cross-sector work or outcomes.

### *No Cross-Sector Budget Item*

The state budget appropriates dollars via discrete budget items that match up with each of the education sectors. As a result, dollars are held by the sectors and used primarily for sector-specific programs and activities. Without a central state higher education agency, coordinating board, or commensurate multi-sector budget item, it is difficult for the Legislature to even envision a holistic financing model that would support students' movement across sectors. A cross-sector budget item could create a consistent financing mechanism that provides the programmatic "ownership" and incentive needed to formally align programs over the long term.

### *Varied Funding Sources for K-16 Education Present Further Complications*

Further complicating the financial picture is the Proposition 98 General Fund, the primary funding source for K-12 and community colleges. Proposition 98 funding comes with its own legal protections and parameters, with lawsuits settled in the early 1990's imposing further restrictions on the use the dollars. UC, CSU, and other state entities (including cross-sector activities like the California Education Round Table and the Intersegmental Coordinating Council) have traditionally been excluded from accessing this funding source, even while operating programs that meet the constitutional definition to "support school districts and community college districts."

Even within Proposition 98 itself, the original statutory split of dollars between K-12 and community colleges, whereby 89 percent goes to K-12 and 11 percent to community colleges,

has proven to be a barrier to cross-sector collaboration. Each sector wants the full amount of its share for its specific sector programs and services, regardless of the need to support student transitions between the sectors.

While the legal settlements and subsequent statute allow the Legislature some flexibility in the authorization and appropriation of Proposition 98 dollars, Legislators have been reluctant to question the status quo or upset the current financing scheme—whereby K-14 education gets Proposition 98 funding and UC and CSU do not—and have continued to perpetuate the siloed financing currently in place.

The letter of the law—including specific language in the *California Teachers Association, et al., v. Russell S. Gould, et al.*, legal settlement—and the subsequent codification of that settlement clearly empower the Legislature to authorize and appropriate Proposition 98 dollars to entities other than local educational agencies. College readiness programs, student transition programs, and other efforts to support students as they move between institutions meet the constitutional definitions of Proposition 98. There is substantially more flexibility in allocating these resources than current practices suggest.

#### *Lack of Cross-Sector Personnel Leads to Program Instability and Limited Effectiveness*

As previously discussed, each of the education sectors house outreach, college preparedness and student support programs. Yet these programs are rarely part of the core institutional structure, often do not have fiscal stability or highly placed internal champions, and sometimes become a political bargaining chip with the Legislature and gubernatorial administrations.

Frequently, cross-sector issues are handled by mid-level personnel who have minimal portfolio or institutional authority to scale programs or resolve conflicts between sectors. Cross-sector collaborations are generally loose and voluntary, with minimal high level buy-in. The sectors point to the California Education Round Table and the Intersegmental Coordinating Committee as evidence of cross-sector collaboration, but the Round Table has not met for years and the Coordinating Committee exists largely to foster networking and information sharing. While these organizations have their place, neither is equipped to develop or implement cross-sector policy, or resolve thorny cross-sector issues that require compromise or policy change. Left to their own devices, the sectors tend to collaborate only on issues benefitting their institutions or their students and do not prioritize the success of students in other institutions or those moving between and within systems.

In the end, with no clear infrastructure or budget, and absent creative options to incentivize and finance meaningful collaboration, the Legislature does nothing on this critical task.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

This paper presents a host of challenges, none of which have simple solutions. The recommendations below do not attempt to address all of the problems raised above, but rather offer creative approaches to cross-sector collaboration and the financing of cross-sector work so

that California’s higher education system can function better as a whole and begin to address collectively the systemic problems it faces.

The Legislature and Governor have shown a willingness to engage on these issues. As discussed above, the Legislature mandated the Associate Degrees for Transfer in 2010. It also has made repeated attempts, without success, at creating a replacement agency for the

California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC). In recent years, Governor Brown also has tried various “work arounds” related to college readiness and the movement of students between higher education institutions. He launched the Higher Education Innovation Awards, which were budgeted in a separate and single budget line item (to avoid favoring any one sector) and administered by the Department of Finance. He also has supported the public-philanthropic partnership of the California College Guidance Initiative focused on K-12 college readiness by providing guidance tools to school counselors, students, and families, budgeted through the Riverside County Office of Education. Another strategy Governor Brown has

deployed is to cross-pollinate higher education governing boards with leaders from other sector institutions, as illustrated by the appointment of Long Beach City College President (and incoming community college system chancellor) Eloy Oakley to the UC Board of Regents.

### ***Characteristics of Effective Cross-Sector Collaboration***

Establishing better cross-sector collaboration in California will require a shift in mindset. The following characteristics should be a part of any campus-, system-, or state-level effort to improve cross-sector collaboration:

- ✓ **A student-centered orientation that drives policy and practice.** Education leaders should consider students’ mobility, enrollment patterns, academic readiness, and financial status to develop pathways that work.
- ✓ **Authentic involvement of leadership.** Cross-sector matters cannot be handled effectively if the individuals involved lack sufficient authority.
- ✓ **Financial stability.** Cross-sector efforts need predictable, dedicated funding to mitigate turf battles and foster true collaboration in service of students.
- ✓ **Integration with the core education functions of the sectors.** California’s higher education system is built on the premise of students moving between sectors; cross-sector programs should not be mere add-ons.
- ✓ **Out-of-the-box thinking.** Education leaders need to think beyond current sector structures and boundaries when devising new policy or fiscal solutions.

### **Recommendations**

There are a variety of actions, both large and small, that the Governor, the Legislature, and education sector leaders can take to foster greater cross-sector collaboration.

✓ Investigate the Role of Regions in Fostering Effective Cross-Sector Collaboration

While the bulk of this discussion has centered on the state's role in fostering collaboration between the sectors, there is a critical role for regions. Several regions have already built more robust cross-sector programs than currently exist at the statewide level. Long Beach, Coachella, Santa Ana, and Fresno, among others, offer a glimpse into the "bottom up" college pipeline programs that are working to serve diverse student populations where the population is relatively place-bound.

The 2016-17 Budget Act appropriates \$15 million<sup>8</sup> and will use pending legislation<sup>9</sup> for the implementation of regional K-12 Partnership Programs using the College Promise Model. This appropriation and accompanying statute will provide a good opportunity to incentivize collaboration between K-12 districts, community colleges, and public universities in a given region in support of improved college readiness. Ideally, it will strengthen transfer pathways between community colleges and four-year institutions. To be successful, the program's administrators in the community college chancellor's office should examine successful regional models, identify the elements that have made these collaborations successful, and use their findings when developing eligibility requirements for cross-sector partnerships applying for funding.

✓ Insist on Greater Policy Alignment across K-12 and Postsecondary Institutions

California postsecondary education remains relatively unchanged in the face of major K-12 curricular reform. While the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Smarter Balanced Assessment Exam had been modified to be the new Early Assessment Program (EAP) instrument, K-12 students still face inconsistent messages about what it means to be "college ready." Students graduating high school may think they are "college ready" under several different criteria—meeting Common Core standards, proficiently completing the A-G course pattern, or meeting the EAP threshold. But these students still may face additional testing, review, and remedial coursework at postsecondary institutions.

The K-12 and higher education systems should be aligned to provide students and families with consistent, predictable information about college readiness. This will require compromise and a willingness to put students' needs first, ahead of institutional or departmental autonomy in determining course placement policy. For instance, colleges and universities could consider dropping the use of placement exams altogether for students coming directly from K-12 (regardless of where they place on the EAP) and instead use high school transcripts—which have been shown to be stronger predictors of success in college courses—to determine placement in collegiate level courses. Taking it one step further, the UC and CSU could consider any regularly admitted student (proficiently completing the A-G course pattern and gaining admission to a UC or CSU institution) as being "college ready" and not subject them to additional placement exams or remedial-level instruction. Students having difficulty in collegiate-level courses should

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<sup>8</sup> Item 6870-113-0001, Budget Act of 2016

<sup>9</sup> AB 1741, Rodriguez

be given robust campus or departmental level support through tutoring, mentoring and other services to ensure their success.

✓ Cross-Pollinate Governing Boards

The Legislature could consider statutory changes to the governing board structures of the educational sectors by mandating that each governing board have at least one member of the other sectors. It is important to ensure that appointees be institutional leaders who are authentically engaged in cross-sector policy matters.

✓ Consider Revising the Proposition 98 Statutory Split

California could minimally reconfigure the statutory split of Proposition 98 to be used for college readiness and transitional programs. Currently, K-12 districts receive 89 percent of Proposition 98 resources and Community College districts receive 11 percent. The state could allow as little as 0.1 percent of the total Proposition 98 pot for cross-sector purposes and provide approximately \$50 million annually to support the transition of students from K-12 to community colleges.

✓ Create a Formal Infrastructure for Cross-Sector Collaboration and Programming

In order to make sure that students moving through and between educational sectors don't slip through the cracks, the Legislature and Governor should consider creating an organization that can stabilize and scale college readiness and cross-sector programs. Policymakers should consider other options besides reviving the CPEC, instead devising a different type of organization that is student centered and not governed or overly influenced by the institutional interests that have contributed many of the problems discussed here. The organization could provide a forum for sectors to negotiate and collaborate on student-centered solutions and could also manage and run transitional programs.

## Financing Options

Creating a formal infrastructure requires the state and the educational sectors to think more creatively about how to finance both the organization and the coordinated programs and activities over which it would have jurisdiction.

✓ Fund the Organization with a Zero Appropriation Using a Pro-Rata Model

Similar to state operations such as the State Controller's Office, Treasurer's Office, Department of Finance and Office of Administrative Law, a Pro-Rata shared funding model would essentially pay the costs of running the organization and delivering the programming from funding derived by a charge against the education sector's budgets. An "off-the-top" percentage charge to each sector's state appropriation has the potential to provide significant financing for cross-sector collaboration. If sectors paid a modest 0.1 percent from the K-14 Proposition 98 base as well as the base General Fund appropriations of the UC and CSU, some \$77 million would be generated annually for college readiness and other cross-sector programs.

✓ Consider Multiple Funding Sources

Alternatively, the state could fund the organization by appropriating funds from Proposition 98 and also making a new General Fund appropriation specifically for that purpose. Adding in workforce-related dollars would further help align the services with the needs of career-technical education oriented students. The agency would essentially be treated as an educational institution with responsibility for students who need college readiness assistance or are falling into the gaps between the sectors.

✓ In the Short-Term, Consider Using an Influx of One-Time General Fund Dollars

The state could also support the organization initially through a one-time investment. Meted out over a multi-year period, an infusion of one-time funding would provide support for ramp-up of the new organization and a coordinated set of programs. Long-term financing options (including the ones noted above) could be considered in this planning phase to ensure fiscal stability and programmatic longevity.

### **Toward a New Cross-Sector Partnership**

The Governor, legislative leaders, and educational leaders from California's K-12 and higher education sectors must work together to forge a new partnership in support of student success. A new era of intentional, systematic cross-sector collaboration could help ensure that students are college ready, and can move with seamless ease between separate and distinct education systems.

Today's students have different needs than those of a generation ago, yet public education institutions and systems have not reformed their policies and practices to reflect these changes. Students require services that target them and their needs. Effective programs and activities require stable funding so they do not fall prey to institutional-centered priorities. To realize this vision, policy leaders must prioritize the success of the student above the interests of each education sector.

## **About the Author**

Amy Supinger is a Sacramento-based consultant focused on California fiscal and policy matters, with an emphasis on higher education policy and finance. Ms. Supinger brings more than 20 years of experience and skills to her work with philanthropic and nonprofit clients.

A former consultant with the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review and the Assembly Higher Education Committee, Ms. Supinger served for more than a decade as a trusted advisor to the California Legislature on all matters related to postsecondary education policy and finance.

Since starting her consulting business in 2009, Ms. Supinger has worked extensively with the California Community Colleges, including the Chancellor's Office, where she served as the Executive Director of the 2011 Student Success Task Force. Other Supinger Strategy clients include The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) where she provides policy and political guidance on state financial aid issues and the Foundation for California Community Colleges, where she leads the organization's work around student success. Ms. Supinger also serves as the California State Policy Consultant for the Lumina Foundation, where she helps craft and guide Lumina's college completion work in California.

Ms. Supinger earned a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Administration from the California State University, Sacramento, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara.