



## CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

### Environmental Scan:

# A Summary of Key Issues Facing California Community Colleges Pertinent to the Strategic Planning Process

July 2005

As part of the Statewide Strategic Planning Process for California Community Colleges, the Center for Student Success, the research and evaluation organization of the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP/CSS) was asked to develop a series of overview documents that would outline both internal and external trends that are shaping the future of the System and its 72 community college districts. The RP/CSS Panel broke the task into two major components. The first component was a review of the national and state literature pertinent to education policy. This includes a review of recent studies in higher education, community colleges and K-12 schools to identify key issues and opportunities with implications for California Community College System Strategic Planning. The second component, a review of System-wide trends, looks at State MIS data for the past five years, as well as California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) and Department of Finance (DoF) trend data, with the purpose of identifying issues related to system performance, including access, progression of students, workforce development, graduation, basic skill development and transfer to other California segments. The most important findings of this review are:

1. If the system is to add some 478,000+ students over a ten year period ending in 2013, operational and capital funding needs must be realistically evaluated by the state and stabilized to support this growth, giving consideration to regional variation in terms of general growth and special student needs. Current funding mechanisms result in unstable budgets at the district level. A look at equity of funding across different systems and states reveals that California Community Colleges (CCC) are drastically under-funded when compared to peers in other states, to K-12 and to 4-year public institutions of higher education.
2. Studies show that the lack of resources and preparation at the K-12 level have serious implications for higher education in general, but particularly for community colleges that are on the front line of serving under-prepared students. The continuing trends of low K-12 performance, lack of college readiness, and growing numbers of high school dropouts will oblige increasing attention to community college access, offerings in basic skills, and implications for workforce preparation as an important entry point for K-12 students who otherwise drop out of education completely.
3. Community colleges will be challenged to serve the growing numbers of traditionally underrepresented minority students, many of whom are considered to be at-risk for non-completion of their programs of study. As recently as 2003, 40% of CCC freshmen were from these groups, compared to 31% at CSU and 19% at UC.
4. More than one of every three students in California Community Colleges enrolls in a basic skills class and the proportion of students enrolling is ever-increasing. Basic skills students traditionally require high levels of student support services. There is likely to be a need for increased support services and for alternative approaches to basic skill education to further enhance student success.
5. A set of perennial weaknesses plague California education and inhibit responsiveness and reform: weak linkages across education sectors, from public schools to community colleges and universities; little incentive for collaboration across sectors; and, at all levels, few incentives and little accountability for local and regional collaboration among educational institutions. The CCC needs to focus attention on building such collaborative partnerships. Intersegmental partnerships should be a top priority for the system, with particular attention to preparation of secondary school students for college level coursework.
6. The analytical capacity of the system office is important to providing the infrastructure for data analysis that will diagnose the critical community college needs of the state. The system will need to find ways to assure that research will occur in both the near and distant future, by assuring for long term investment in both data and staffing at the college/district and system office levels.

These findings are detailed on the following pages.

## **I. Higher Education for California Residents: A Changing Picture of Demand, Enrollment and Financing**

Community colleges are one of several important sectors of higher education charged with preparing citizens for work, higher levels of education, and for civic and community responsibility. Understanding the changing needs for higher education in general and the role of community colleges within the broader higher educational context is important to meaningful strategic planning that will drive the efficient and effective utilization of resources in meeting statewide needs. Key to understanding current community college needs in the broader higher educational context are the following strategic issues:

- There is a strong overall enrollment growth projected for public higher education in California. The CA Department of Finance's March 2005 projections suggest that over a ten-year period through 2013: the University of California enrollment will grow by 28.5%, adding 40,145 new students; California State University enrollment will grow by 26.3%, adding 84,824 new students; and community colleges will grow by 29.2%, adding 478,009 new students. This growth has important implications for state funding of higher education, adequacy of facilities to serve growing numbers of students, recruitment of faculty, and the need to understand the needs of a changing mix of students.
- All California colleges and universities are seeing demographic shifts in the students they are serving, with large increases in Latino students, first-generation college students and students from low-income families who are graduating from high school and seeking enrollment in college. These are groups with traditionally low participation rates in postsecondary education that are likely to need additional support systems to enhance learning.
- Moreover, cross-state comparisons show that although California ranks fairly high in terms of the educational attainment of its adult population, its eighth grade students rank much lower in their math and English proficiency levels. The preparation levels of many new high school graduates are likely to demand continued remediation and expansion of support services by colleges and universities.
- Financial resources are not keeping pace with demand for higher education, shifting more of the burden for financing higher education to the student. This is happening at a time when the economy demands better educated citizens.
- Budget constraints of recent years have affected all sectors of public higher education in California, creating classroom overcrowding that is continually increasing. Interviews with CCC officials indicate that budget cuts resulted in the following actions to reduce the size and cost of the class schedule: reduced frequency of course offerings; reduced or eliminated electives; made disproportionate reductions to noncredit courses; reduced low-enrolled courses by raising the required minimum enrollment or by applying existing minimum enrollment requirements more evenly; reduced sections of multiple section courses through consolidation; and reduced courses taught by adjunct faculty.
- In California community colleges alone, an estimated 175,000 students were denied access in Fall 2003, due to reductions in course offerings and lack of resources. In addition, from 2002-2003, the number of course sections offered across the California Community College system declined an estimated 9%, with some colleges cutting offerings by as much as 25%. Classroom overcrowding also increased system-wide. Similar cuts were initiated at all sectors of public higher education in California.
- There is great disparity in the funding of public higher education in California. Over the past 30 years, funding per FTES grew 4% for community colleges. Growth for the UC over the same time period was 23% and 24% for CSU. The funding gap between K-12 and community colleges went from 24% in 1988 to 44% in 2001. The California Community College System ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in per FTES funding nationally. The national average for community colleges is 23% higher than FTES funding in California.
- Enrollment demand in all segments is expected to far outstrip capacity before 2012 if there is not a large scale building program, even assuming near-term improvements in space utilization of existing facilities. Though CPEC and DoF projections vary, both indicate that there will be a difference between who can be served, given current and projected facilities constraints, and who wants to be served. By 2013, 30% to 40% of the increased demand for Community College enrollment will not be able to be met due to capacity and facility limitations.

- Differential revenues currently exist across districts, with significant variation from the average per FTES allocation. The formula-based approach to funding community colleges does not provide adequate resources needed by districts to meet state benchmarks.
- And finally, there will be a need for increasing faculty recruitment in all California higher education segments, due both to faculty retirement and to the projected enrollment growth that will create the need for new positions.

## II. K-12 Education in California: A Changing Picture of College Readiness

The changing conditions of California's K-12 education system represent significant inputs to the state's community colleges and to higher education in general. Current and mid-term projections for enrollment, demographic diversity, student achievement, and K-12 educational resources are key trends that should inform strategic planning for future access and student success in the California community colleges.

- According to Department of Finance figures from their October 2004 K-12 projection update, the slightly more than 6 million K-12 students enrolled in California are expected to expand by an additional 4.0% by 2013. The rate of growth in high school graduates will peak by 2008-09, and then experience moderate declines and rises over the following five years. Between 2003-04 and 2008-09, California will see an average 10,000 additional high school graduates per year. Patterns of growth or decline are expected to vary widely by county.
- K-12 enrollments continue to demonstrate a wide spectrum of diversity. Over two-thirds of students are non-white, with Latinos comprising the largest group statewide (46.0%). More than 25% of current students are English learners, and this percentage is climbing. Additionally, about 47% of public school children come from low-income families. Regional geographic variations between schools in urban, suburban and rural settings introduce an additional local element of diversity.
- In general, studies show that resources available for public K-12 education in California do not compare favorably to those provided in many other states. Per-capita expenditures per pupil have been consistently below national averages, and the percentage of state and local spending on K-12 education is low compared to the rest of the nation. Considerable need exists to modernize and expand facilities, but expenditures have not kept pace with this need. California also has the second-highest student-to-teacher ratio in the nation, and ranks last in numbers of librarians and counselors per student.
- By most state and national metrics, California's K-12 outcomes are below national standards. California schools rank near the bottom in performance on nationally standardized tests, and recent publicity has highlighted concerns for differential outcomes among racial/ethnic groups, as well as for students attending inner city vs. suburban schools. Although statewide graduation rates have improved slightly in recent years, California still ranks 38<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- Recent studies conclude that approximately 47% of the state's entering ninth graders will graduate from California high schools without satisfying the course eligibility requirements for transfer to public four-year universities. An additional 30% of this age cohort will drop out prior to graduation, leaving less than one-quarter of students qualified to enter the UC/CSU system based on course completions. Concerns continue to be raised that these statistics are even lower for historically under-represented groups, such as Latinos and African Americans.
- The number of 18 – 24 year olds in California without a high school diploma is approaching 1 million. This condition represents a loss of individual opportunity and earning power, and is an economic liability for the state economy. If these individuals are to participate in a state workforce increasingly requiring advanced knowledge and skills, many will access additional training and education through the community college system.
- The continuing trends of low K-12 performance, lack of college readiness, and growing numbers of high school dropouts will oblige increasing attention to community college access, offerings in basic skills, and workforce preparation. The significant needs of the K-12 system can also be expected to draw public and political support, including potential K-12 advantage in the allocation of competitive state funding streams.

- Strategic opportunities exist for improved collaboration between community colleges and K-12 partners, to the mutual advantage of both systems. Improved communication of college-level expectations, early outreach to parents and students, and enhanced systems for data sharing and coordination all have potential to improve both student- and system-level outcomes for both segments.

### III. Challenges for the System of California Community Colleges

#### A. Access Trends: Who Will Rely upon California Community Colleges?

As the number of adults in the population and graduates from K-12 schools change, so does the eventual pool of students to be served by California community colleges. A changing ethnic mix and increasing numbers of foreign-born persons among the adult population could have implications for our colleges. Understanding the changing demands for education that will be placed upon the system is important to ensuring adequate facilities for teaching and support services to enhance learning and program completion.

- A second “Tidal Wave” of students will be arriving at California public institutions of higher education. Over a ten year period through 2013, the Department of finance projects that there will be over 600,000 additional students seeking public higher education in California. Almost 80% are projected to be community college students. There is also a “hidden tidal wave” of nearly 1 million students between the ages of 18 to 24 who have less than a high school education.
- The bulk of Tidal Wave II and the hidden tidal wave will be relying on community colleges as their point of access to a higher education. Two-thirds of California’s “first time” higher education students begin their academic career at a community college. The pool of potential higher education students increasingly consists of Latinos and other minority groups. Most students from minority demographic groups take their first college classes at a local community college.
- In 2003, 19% of incoming freshmen at the UC were underrepresented minorities and 31% of CSU freshmen were underrepresented minorities, whereas 40% of California community college freshmen were underrepresented minorities. In raw numbers of underrepresented students, this is 8,880 at the UC, 12,009 at the CSU and 330,970 at the California community colleges.
- Demand for higher education will show strong regional variation. The following counties will experience over a 50% increase in their 2000 population of 18 to 19 year olds by 2010: Lake, Placer, Merced, Calaveras, Nevada, El Dorado and Riverside. These seven counties account for 16% of the projected growth in 18 to 19 year olds; in Riverside County, most of this growth will be among the Latino population.
- Regional variation will also be impacted by the several counties that will experience large growth in the actual *numbers* of 18 and 19 year olds between 2000 and 2010, even though their rates of growth are lower. These counties include Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento and San Bernardino where the numbers will grow by 14,000 or more; Riverside is one of the counties growing by 14,000 or more, in addition to having a growth rate of 57%. These five counties will account for 56% of the projected growth in 18-19 year olds.
- Some data trends suggest that the student base at community colleges has been shifting toward a younger clientele. Students with a goal of transfer, degree or certificate increased from 39% to 43% of students from Fall 2000 to Fall 2004. In addition, the percentage of California community college students between 18 to 24 years of age increased from 48% to 52% of all students from Fall 2001 to Fall 2004. These two trends suggest that today’s average community college student is slightly younger than in the recent past, with long-term educational goals. Numbers of young students are increasing due to the second “Tidal Wave” within the population. They may also be increasing as a result of relative access constriction and/or pricing pressures at the CSU and UC.
- California has a large proportion of residents who are foreign born (26.2%), much higher than the national average (11.1%), according to the U.S. Census. Likewise, California has many non-English speaking persons with 39.5% of the population speaking a language other than English in the home, compared to 17.9% in homes across the U.S. Moreover, 20.0% of Californians responding to the U.S. Census claim to speak English less than “Very Well” compared to only 8.1% nationally. Since community colleges serve as the gateway to higher education for many new immigrants, pressures for support programs for limited English speaking students may grow.

- Budget cuts to the California Community Colleges have resulted in restricted access. Across all community colleges, reductions in course offerings have been concentrated so as to protect “core” offerings such as those needed for transfer, degrees and vocational certificates, as well as “gateway” basic skills courses. Recent increases to Community College budgets (e.g., growth money, equalization and greater noncredit compensation) do not benefit all colleges and only partially restore the monies that had previously been cut.
- California Community Colleges have suffered a “double whammy” of reduced budgets and fee increases and accordingly have not only failed to accommodate the anticipated growth in demand, but have lost some students who would have otherwise persisted in their studies.

## B. Inputs into the Community College System

Composed of 109 colleges that are organized into 72 districts, California’s community college system is the largest not only in the U.S., but in the world. Serving 2.5 million students annually, California’s community colleges have multiple and diverse missions that include degrees, certificates, transfer, continuing education, remedial and English language education and programs for students still in high school. Community colleges are the state’s largest provider of workforce education and a large provider of adult education, including courses in ESL, ABE, GED, citizenship, as well as special programs for disabled adults, older adults, parent education, health and safety, and home economics. With such a multitude of roles and missions, ours is indeed a system of complexity, charged with meeting the needs of a very broad and diverse population base. As the system plans for the future, understanding its potential student clientele is critical.

- The California community college student body differs substantially from that of a four-year institution of higher education: 22% are over 40 years of age, some are second career, minimum wage earners, homemakers and immigrants. Large percentages are working, raising families and attending school part-time. Community colleges serve far more low- and middle-income families than their senior partners, and far more underrepresented groups.
- National studies show that socioeconomic status (SES), which is a composite variable built from family income, parents’ highest level of education, and prestige rating of parents’ occupations, significantly predicts college attendance patterns. The higher the socioeconomic status, the less likely the student will start in a community college.
- These national studies further show that for older beginning students, (those starting out at age 24 or older), over 60% first enter community colleges. These students are more likely to think of themselves as employees rather than students. Over half of the older students have children and are far less likely to transfer anywhere than those who start in community colleges before they are 21. For the most part, *the primary potential transfer universe is that of traditional-age students.*
- At the national level, 60% of traditional-age undergraduates attend more than one institution and 40% of traditional age students who entered postsecondary education in the 1990s started out in community colleges
- Though the new high school graduates of Latino descent are expected to grow dramatically, a large proportion of these students will not enter California community colleges, unless interventions are implemented to encourage higher going-to-college rates. In 2010, Latinos are projected to represent approximately 42% of total high school graduates, but only 30% of community college enrollments, even though they will represent almost 80% of the increase in high school graduates. Conversely, Whites are projected to represent 35% of the high school class in 2010, but 44% of the community college enrollments.
- At the national level, 44% of those who started in community colleges in the 1990s did not reach Algebra 2 in high school, compared to 11% of those who entered four-year colleges. In addition, 55% of these students must take two or more remedial courses and 72% of those who take two or more remedial courses earn no credential whatsoever. *The extent to which community colleges, working with high schools, can move more secondary school students to the level of Algebra 2 and beyond will signal a major change in academic momentum, and substantially reduce remediation at the postsecondary level.*

- Many California high school students are largely unaware of subject requirements to succeed in college-level work. K-12 needs more information about community college admission/placement, and community colleges need better alignment with K-12 standards/assessments. Site-specific placement exams at community colleges hinder systemic action. The intersegmental data sharing consortium, Cal-PASS, may help with information sharing and assessment of college preparation of entering students. Dual enrollment programs are growing, and may also help.

### C. Basic Skills

Many students entering the California Community College System are in need of developmental or remedial coursework in English, in math or in both. This has serious consequences for the ability of students to succeed in other college level courses, requires devoting significant resources to support services, and extends the time to program completions and to transfer. And, unfortunately, it also decreases the likelihood of such outcomes. Critical to the success of many students in their programs of study is attention to finding ways of enhancing the skill development necessary for college work.

- A recent survey of California community college placement test results indicated that only about 9% of students place in transfer level math and about 27% of students place in transfer level English. Over 70% of students place in remedial math and 42% of students place in remedial English.
- The California Community Colleges have had nearly one-half million enrollments in basic skills courses in English and mathematics in recent years, with additional enrollments in basic skills reading courses and in English as a Second Language courses.
- More than one of every three students in the community colleges enrolls in a basic skills class and the percentage of students enrolling in a given term has been increasing over recent years. Asian, Pacific Islander and Latino students are over-represented in basic skills courses.
- The need for basic skills education in the California Community Colleges is growing and the colleges have responded by providing additional access and offering more classes. But success rates have not significantly improved, particularly in mathematics.
- The statewide course success rate in basic skills (60%) is about 10% lower than that of other courses. Course success in elementary algebra is particularly poor, with a statewide average of less than 50% (49.6%), and ethnic minority groups that are generally considered under represented in higher education are lower still. At a rate of 46.9%, Latino students are below the systemwide average, as are African Americans at 40.2%.
- With an increase in the number of students needing remediation, overall success rates may begin to decline unless there is a commensurate increase in support services and/or improved methods of basic skills education.
- While students in the sequence of basic skills English courses face significant obstacles in achieving successful outcomes, it is apparent that elementary algebra is the major gatekeeper course in student progression and success.
- Students who begin their community college education in basic skills are less likely to progress through the sequence of courses required to achieve transfer level status in math and English, with the likelihood of successful outcomes declining as the levels below transfer increase. Students who begin the basic skills math sequence in arithmetic have a 10% probability of attempting transfer level mathematics, while students who begin the basic skills English sequence in reading fundamentals have a 25% probability of attempting transfer level English.
- Empirical evidence suggests that those who begin at the lowest levels of basic skills are unlikely to achieve a degree or transfer to a university. Both the demographic characteristics of those students and the demographic changes in the fastest growing areas of the state suggest that this problem will grow in the near future.

## **D. Workforce and Economic Development**

According to EdSource, the California Community College system is arguably the largest provider of workforce training in California. Although the system is effective at providing training in many career and technical fields, many issues will influence the system's capacity to continue to meet the ever changing demands for workforce and economic development training in the future. Understanding the changing patterns of jobs within the California economy as well as current patterns of workforce training in California Community Colleges, has important implications for future training demands upon the system.

- Occupational associate degrees are effective preparation for the workforce. Attaining an Associate's degree is positively related to continuity of employment. Students earning associate degrees are more likely to be employed full-time than are students who earn 60 or more credits but have not earned a degree.
- Students earning occupational associate degrees are more likely than other students to be employed in their field of study. According to a national study, 61% of students earning an occupational associate degree were employed in their field of study, compared to 35% earning an occupational certificate and 29% earning an academic associate degree.
- According to standard measures, California Community College career and technical education students are successful. About 75% of these students each year are classified as program completers, exceeding the systemwide goal of 61%. Roughly 80% find employment within a year of leaving the community college and remain employed for at least nine months.
- According to state projections, occupations in medical fields dominate the list of highest-growth jobs requiring associate degrees or postsecondary vocational education. California is projected to have almost 57,000 new positions for Registered Nurses between 2002 and 2012. Some researchers predict a ten-year nursing shortage. The number of Associate of Science (AS) degrees awarded in nursing is increasing, but the number of AS degrees awarded in nursing each year is considerably smaller than the projected annual number of new RN positions. This disparity is higher in some regions of California than in others.
- The jobs with the highest growth requiring bachelor's degrees or higher will be in business, computer technology, and education. About 9% of California's job market is in technology and research fields, well above the national average of 5.6%. However, only about 20% of community college transfers seek further study in a science or engineering field. Within the CSU, only 25% of students starting in science or engineering actually complete a degree in that field.
- Continuous education, training, and skill building are viewed as important factors in California's workforce preparation. Studies have shown specific skills deficiencies in the labor force, across many different job categories. Future work force preparation will require continuous training to address rapidly changing technology and skills needs. It will also require focusing on specific skills rather than general certification.
- California is under-investing in workforce training. Investment in training by the state government and by employers has declined, despite the consensus that the future workforce will require more rather than less education.

## **E. Student Transfer**

Because the baccalaureate degree is becoming the entry point into the workforce for many fields, it is making the community college transfer function more and more important. Understanding transfer performance and the issues that both inhibit and enhance not only student preparation for transfer, but also issues that affect the number of students who actually transfer to senior institutions of higher education are important to ensuring that the public and private sectors employers whose jobs are becoming increasingly technical have an adequate employee base from which to draw.

- National studies show that the variables that have a positive impact on both transfer and terminal associate degree attainment are: entering the community college directly from high school; successfully completing more than four credits in college-level mathematics; earning more than four credits during summer terms; and continuous enrollment. A sign that a student will be less likely to transfer or attain a terminal associate degree is receiving more than 20% of all grades in no-penalty withdrawals or in "no credit" course repeats.

- First-time California community college admits have roughly the same racial/ethnic distribution as high school graduates, but transfers are characterized by under-representation of African American (5% of all transfers) and Latino (20% of all transfers) transfer students.
- The transfer rate for California community colleges (40% of those intending to transfer do so within six years) is slightly above the national average (39%). More capacity at public four year institutions is necessary to significantly increase this rate. Various initiatives are underway to improve articulation. Annually, approximately 120,000 California Community College students become transfer prepared, yet approximately 60,000 California Community College students transfer to the UC or CSU each year.
- Of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders who started in academic programs at community colleges, 60% transferred to four-year colleges, and 70% of the transfers earned baccalaureate degrees across the U.S.
- Likewise, nationally many 12<sup>th</sup> graders who started in vocational programs at community colleges also transferred (22%), and 53% of those who transferred earned bachelor's degrees.
- The total number of transfer students from California Community Colleges depends on many factors, including the capacity of senior institutions to accept transfer students. The total number of transfers from community colleges to UC and CSU institutions each year is more highly correlated with total UC and CSU budgets than with the number of students becoming transfer prepared by the community colleges.
- California community colleges prepare 58% of all CSU graduates and 28% of all UC graduates.
- Over the past decade, Science/Math/Engineering degree production has declined. Engineering degrees alone have dropped by 13%. Only about two out of ten community college transfers seek further study in science or engineering. Within CSU, only one in four students who start in sciences/engineering actually completes a degree in that field. This deficit is leading to significant importation of talent, expected to worsen if not addressed.

**F. California Community College System:  
Capacity for Strategic Planning and Responding to Statewide Needs**

Identification of systemic issues related to the research and planning capacity of the 109 community colleges, their 72 districts and their system's Chancellor's Office is critical to the success of the system's strategic planning process. What follows are system issues to be considered and addressed so that effective strategies can be designed to meet the current educational and training needs of California adults seeking community college education and for the private and public sector communities that employ them.

- A set of perennial weaknesses plague California education and inhibit responsiveness and reform: weak linkages across education sectors, from public schools to community colleges and universities; little incentive for collaboration across sectors; and, at all levels, few incentives and little accountability for local and regional collaboration among educational institutions.
- Credible and timely information and analyses are necessary conditions for public awareness, advocacy, and policy change. Because effective advocacy will rely on data and analysis, both the analytic agency and the source of information should be independent and accessible to all parties of the policy debate.
- In general, local capacity for data analysis and information use is somewhat limited. With some notable exceptions, there is little evidence of information use in assessing the effectiveness of programs. Leaders in the colleges vary in their concern about this limitation. Some seem to operate from a political model that reacts to current conditions and opportunities rather than from one driven by outcome data or quantitative analysis.
- The funding mechanism for community colleges, which is enrollment-driven, causes a certain amount of unpredictability in the annual budget. The annual budget for community colleges is also subject to budget cuts that can interrupt ongoing programs and services, and can undermine the morale of program personnel.
- A policy vacuum has been created over the past decade as the state abdicated its responsibility to plan effective strategies that would meet the widely forecast increased demand for higher education.



- Public opinion research has always demonstrated strong public support for higher education and for college opportunity. However, the magnitude of the current crisis in college opportunity has received little public attention, and public support has not been mobilized. A strategic effort to inform the public of the need for action and to build coalitions is essential. The Campaign for College Opportunity, already supported by the Hewlett Foundation, appears to be a promising vehicle for public leadership. Nonetheless, the ultimate responsibility for college opportunity resides with the State of California—specifically with the governor and Legislature.
- The following elements are critical to building and fostering an effective statewide policy agenda:
  - Good data and data analysis to diagnose the state's most critical needs
  - Leadership for building and sustaining consensus around a statewide agenda
  - System to monitor performance and report progress in meeting the agenda
  - Institutionalized processes for continually revisiting and updating the state agenda
- The analytical capacity of the system office is important to providing the infrastructure for data analysis that will diagnose the critical community college needs of the state. The system will need to find ways to assure that research will occur in both the near and distant future, by assuring for long term investment in both data and staffing at the college/district and system office levels
- Higher education policy experts have suggested that states will be more effective at accomplishing statewide priorities to the extent that their governance environments:
  - Provide an ongoing forum in which stakeholders come together to advocate for state educational needs, as opposed to single sector needs
  - Produce cross-institutional initiatives
  - Authorize an entity to direct state investment towards identified state priorities and give it the resources to do so
  - Cultivate and sustain an audience of state policymakers to consider and act upon a statewide policy and resource allocation agenda

The compilation of the *Resource Handbook for Strategic Planning* and this *Summary of Key Issues Facing California Community Colleges, Pertinent to the Strategic Planning Process* which was developed from it, were prepared by a Panel of the Center for Student Success of the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP/CSS).

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