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Key Issues Facing California Higher Education



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Overview

- Caveat: can only cover some key points - apologies in advance for omitting important aspects
- The segment leaders will speak to specific initiatives that address many of these issues
- Issues are organized under two broad themes
 1. Jobs/economy
 2. Efficiency (better outcomes for our investments)

1. Jobs and the California Economy

- We must reject the false dichotomy of higher education versus career education
- Each segment has a unique role in powering the California economy – in helping prepare Californians for meaningful and productive careers

– UC

- Key role: *research and advanced graduate study*
- Key challenge: how much to invest in research? Danger of overlooking role of research amid “completion agenda”

– CSU

- Key role: chief producers of *bachelor’s degrees* among California’s diverse populations
- Key challenge: balance between “high need” degrees (STEM, teacher education, business) and degrees that lack immediate connection to a career

– CCC

- Key roles: transfer and “**career technical education.**” CTE getting much needed attention as data document the strong value of some one- and two-year credentials in today’s economy.
- Key challenge: supporting high cost/high need programs as system moves to give priority to industry sectors, by region

Fundamental Prerequisite to Fueling Economy Through Higher Education.....

- Access and Affordability
 - Key challenges:
 - *Capacity* – getting in versus getting courses
 - Who gets shut out?
 - *Cost* – Governor is committed to ending cycle of using tuition to backfill economic downturns
 - Who gets priced out?
 - *Equity* – continue strong commitment to protecting access among growing diverse populations
 - But access to success?

2. Efficiency – Better Outcomes for Investments

- Huge needs in California will be met only by finding ways to get better outcomes for any level of investment
- Governor has been clear that current outcomes and cost structures are unsustainable
- LAO has largely agreed with that diagnosis

Increasing Efficiency – Has Different Implications in Each Segment

- UC Key challenge: *reduce the cost of delivery*
 - Technology (but cost impact unknown)
 - Changes to organizational roles in teaching and research
 - Reductions in non-instructional cost centers
- CSU Key challenge: *get student through more quickly*
 - Stronger K-16 connections to improve college readiness (common core assessments could help)
 - Streamline programs and program requirements
 - Optimize scheduling
- CCC Key challenge: *increase completion rates*
 - Stronger K-14 connections to improve college and career readiness
 - Improve developmental education
 - More structured program pathways
 - More proactive support for students (education planning, orientation)

Cross-cutting Efficiency Issues

- Transfer
 - An especially critical function in California
 - SB 1440 transfer degrees – potentially a huge step toward efficiency
 - Next challenge – extend concept to UC
- College and Career Readiness
 - Well-prepared students do well in all three segments
 - This is not “a K-12 issue” – it’s on everyone’s agenda
- Most Important Outcome is Learning
 - How to measure?
 - How to protect quality while improving completion and reducing cost?

Cross-cutting Efficiency Issues – cont.

- Financial incentives – to invest in desired outcomes
 - Incentives for students to engage in successful behaviors
 - Priority registration at CCC if attend orientation and have educational plan
 - CCC fee waiver made contingent upon academic progress
 - CSU considering disincentives to “excess” credits
 - Surcharge for excess units at all three segments (phased in)
 - Incentives for institutions to improve outcomes – the next frontier?
 - Governor suggested base funding for all segments contingent upon improved outcomes
 - Governor proposed shift of CCC enrollment funding to courses completed
 - LAO recommended broader approach: fund colleges and universities for “enrollment and achievement” – not just enrollment

Leadership, Planning, Coordination

- Void with end of Commission for Postsecondary Education (CPEC)
- Must consider *collective and interrelated* efforts to meet state needs
 - Increase education levels
 - Close performance gaps
 - Keep workforce and economy competitive
 - Promote healthy society
- Need to develop a “public agenda” – with goals and a plan
 - Progress in each sector in data, scorecards, accountability – understanding student progress and obstacle points
 - Need an overall framework around it and entity to coordinate, including a cross-segment data system to monitor progress
 - Segments can work together fruitfully, and they are – but leading states in targeting postsecondary investments to public purposes have better coordination

