Summary of Recovery with Equity: Roadmap for Higher Education After the Pandemic

Full Report
Recovery Framework

Based on twelve key findings, the CA FWD Taskforce developed a set of recommendations framed within four guiding principles to address the challenges post-secondary students and institutions face in recovering with equity from the pandemic.

All learners have been affected, but this report focuses on those most severely impacted: Black, Latinx, Asian Pacific Islander, and Indigenous Californians, as well as adults without post-secondary credentials or those who need to return to post-secondary learning to upskill or re-skill for a different job or industry.

Four (4) guiding principles that comprise the recommendations:

1. **Fostering Inclusive Institutions** - Institutional cultures and approaches to teaching and learning that work for all learners, especially those left behind.
2. **Streamlining Pathways to Degrees** - An integrated statewide system for admission and transfer to provide clear, easy-to-navigate pathways to degrees.
3. **Facilitating Student Transitions** - High-touch, high-tech guidance and improved academic preparation for college access and success.
4. **Simplifying Supports for Student Stability** - Resources and structures packaged and simplified to help students meet basic, digital, and financial aid needs.

99% of the Black labor force with a high school degree or less filed for unemployment in 2020. [10]

The Full report includes the following four components for each guiding principle:
- The Problem –what is the issue, why does it matter, and how will addressing the issue impact priority student groups?
- The Goal – what is the end state to be achieved, for whom, and within what timeframe?
- Strategies– what policy, practice, and resource allocation are needed to reach the goal?
  - Policy Changes at the State, Segment, and Institutional Levels
  - Practice Changes at the Segment and Institutional Levels
  - Resources Needed

Black and Latinx residents face disproportionately high unemployment rates, at 8.2% and 7.9% in 2020, compared to 7.0% total unemployment that year. [8]

The Taskforce believes California needs a recovery that courageously addresses inequities in post-secondary education that have created and exacerbated wealth gaps.

California will thrive when income inequality and disparities of credential and degree attainment by race and geography are eliminated.

1. Fostering Inclusive Institutions

Institutional cultures and approaches to teaching and learning that work for all learners, especially those left behind.

THE PROBLEM: Institutional cultures and classrooms are not shaped around the experiences of students of color and adult students—and this impacts student success.

THE GOAL: By 2030, learners of all backgrounds will report that they are valued, supported, and affirmed at their institutions; that faculty are adept at creating courses that are responsive to and build upon the unique experiences, needs, and talents of all learners; and that post-secondary institutions actively support their academic success and career readiness

MEASURES OF EQUITY:
- Student surveys on campus climate
- Student retention
- Changes to academic programs and course descriptions
- Faculty and department chair survey on curricula and teaching and learning

RECOMMENDATIONS:

See for specific policy, practice, and resource allocation strategies needed to support these recommendations
1. Improve Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Diversity
2. Cultivate Inclusive, Engaging, and Equity-Oriented Learning Environments
3. Retain Students through Inclusive Supports

2. Streamlining Pathways to Degrees

An integrated statewide system for admission and transfer to provide clear, easy-to-navigate pathways to degrees.

THE PROBLEM: Historically, the process of applying to college has been unnecessarily complex and time-consuming, creating immense challenges for families and learners, particularly those without prior college experience.

THE GOAL: By 2030, learners will have clear, easy-to-navigate pathways into and through post-secondary education, as well as admission and transfer processes facilitated by an integrated technology platform, dual admission, and common course numbering.

MEASURES OF EQUITY:
- Enrollment and retention rates
- Dual Enrollment and transfer
- Time and credits to degree
- Graduation Rates

RECOMMENDATIONS: *See for specific policy, practice, and resource allocation strategies needed to support these recommendations*
1. Establish an Integrated Admissions Platform
2. Streamline and Unify the College Admission Process
3. Develop a Common Course Numbering System

3. Facilitating Student Transitions

High-touch, high-tech guidance and improved academic preparation for college access and success.

THE PROBLEM: For K–12 learners in California, inadequate college preparation, limited advising and access to college information, and constrained access to early college experiences are key contributors to equity gaps.

THE GOAL: By 2030, learners in all public schools will have access to college preparatory coursework; early college experiences; and a high-tech, high-touch advising system that supports their success from middle school and high school into and through higher education and into the workforce

MEASURES OF EQUITY:
- A-G Course Completion
- Early college credit participation
- College enrollment and success rates of recent high school graduates

RECOMMENDATIONS: *See pages 54 - 57 for specific policy, practice, and resource allocation strategies needed to support these recommendations*
1. Provide High-Tech, High-Touch Advising
2. Support College Preparation and Early Credit

4. Simplifying Supports for Student Stability

Resources and structures packaged and simplified to help students meet basic, digital, and financial aid needs.

THE PROBLEM: One of the greatest challenges during the pandemic is that learners cannot adequately focus on learning because they must focus on meeting their basic needs.

THE GOAL: By 2030, learners will receive support to meet basic needs through a simplified, integrated system that enables qualified college students to access California's social services, subsidized internet and technology, and increased financial aid.

MEASURES OF EQUITY:
- Student participation in social services programs
- Student reports of food and housing insecurity and digital access
- Unmet financial need and student indebtedness

RECOMMENDATIONS: *See pages 60 - 65 for specific policy, practice, and resource allocation strategies needed to support these recommendations*
1. Integrate Platform of State Services for Students
2. Subsidize Internet Access for Eligible Students
3. Improve College Affordability

Twelve (12) Key Findings:

For details on each finding, see pages 25 - 33 of the full report.
1. The prevalence of racial injustice in higher education is a major barrier to student success.
2. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities in society, heightening barriers to students meeting their basic needs.

3. The digital divide—access to and cost of both adequate devices and internet connectivity with sufficient bandwidth—has been fully exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic.
4. The pandemic has deeply impacted students' mental and emotional health.
5. Some California industries may not fully recover from the pandemic, which will disproportionately impact students prioritized in this report.
6. The unpredictable nature of the pandemic is a major factor that limits recovery efforts.
7. Decreased enrollment and budget cuts due to the pandemic exacerbate existing financial challenges and inequities in the higher education system.
8. Connections between K–12 and post-secondary education are not strong and pervasive enough to support successful transitions for all learners.
9. Connections between higher education and the workforce are insufficient to meet the economic and workforce needs of California.
10. Lack of flexibility and coherence within the higher education system creates barriers to student success.
11. The completion and implementation of the statewide longitudinal data system will be critical to system redesign.
12. Because of the challenges and limitations of remote instruction, some students have come to believe that higher education is no longer worth the time, expense, and effort.

RECOVERY FRAMEWORK:
[Direct link to full recovery framework and definitions](#)

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	LEVERS
Californians' desire to:	Will require a post-secondary education system that:	Requiring investments in a system redesigned around:
Recover with long-term viability and prosperity through the eradication of income inequalities based on race and geography	Graduates learners that reflect California's rich diversity, heritage, and enterprise	Predictive Technology and Data Tools
	Allows flexible pathways that are high-quality, affordable, and appropriate for careers of choice	Asset-Based, Equity-Centered Resources
	Leverages the assets of diverse learners, and provides supports that adapt to their needs	Flexible Opportunities and Comprehensive Supports
	Values racial equity and social justice, and accepts those priorities as essential to its purpose	Interdependent, Collaborative Partnerships