



California Community Colleges

Institutionalizing the Design of Equitable Student Outcomes

December 2021



Dear Colleagues,

As we wind down another year of being in the front lines of building California's future, I would like to take a moment to thank you, the economic and workforce development community, for your efforts in advancing economic mobility, increasing equity, and being focused on student-centered learning. Together, we have taken many concrete and actionable steps across our system in removing barriers to student success, which is really about meaningful employment outcomes that allows our students the opportunity to thrive in the new digital economy.

We have all been through another incredibly difficult and challenging year, managing and maintaining continuity of education, balancing between the need for caution to keep everyone safe, and minimizing interruptions to student learning. Community colleges' critical role in providing open access to everyone, second chances to those who are not welcomed elsewhere, and addressing inequities through education has been recognized with high levels of funding in this year's Governor's budget. Let us continue to work together to keep our focus on the Vision for Success goals, and on implementing student centered learning environments. There is much road before us, yet we have also covered much ground.

I am grateful for your continued commitment to students, to continuous improvement, and steadily advancing what matters for our students to be successful in college and career.

This issue highlights a couple of efforts underway that will be priorities for the Workforce and Economic Development Division in 2022 and forward.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

Sheneui Weber, *Vice Chancellor*
Equitable Student Experience and Impact Office
Workforce and Economic Development
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office



Equity in Action

Equity has been at the core of four colleges' prototyping journey with an exciting new Invention and Inclusive Innovation initiative. One of the main goals of the i3 initiative is to instill an "entrepreneurial mindset" in all learners through an experiential learning model and interdisciplinary approach.

The [Invention and Inclusive Innovation \(i3\) initiative](#) is about meeting students where they are, particularly women and students of color and other underrepresented groups, to seed and grow an entrepreneurial mindset that will empower them to build their lives on their own terms and take their dreams and careers into their own hands.

This experience so far has seen faculty involved transform teaching and learning approaches and their roles from "instructors of information" to "facilitators of thought", where faculty not only impart knowledge but also create space for students to share their unique perspectives in solving challenges and problems, learning to communicate effectively with their peers, while building confidence and social capital via peer learning and community networks. These are key skills all learners need to be successful in navigating 21st century job opportunities.

In the classroom, an entrepreneurial mindset is built through teaching invention education which harnesses the entrepreneurial spirit in all of us. Invention education is rooted in proven practices that tap into the creative problem solvers within us, drawing from our expertise and knowledge from multiple disciplines, diverse cultural perspectives, and our range of lived experiences to construct innovative solutions to real-world challenges and problems. Most importantly, invention education is experiential learning for those involved, engaging learners and building confidence in students, which directly impacts student retention.

California's competitive advantage is the state's culture of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. Our innovators and entrepreneurs fuel many segments of our economy, including manufacturing, healthcare, and e-commerce, and continues to be net new creators of jobs. At the same time, today's employers require workers at all levels to be problem solvers in a collaborative team environment. For California to maintain its competitive edge, our education and training systems must adopt new models of teaching that enable learners to acquire lifelong skills.

Just as California leads the nation and the world in entrepreneurial innovation, building a rich entrepreneurial ecosystem within our faculty, administrators, and staff can serve to better engage our diverse student population and attract new participants to our campuses. Our partners on this journey includes the Lemelson MIT program within the MIT School of Engineering and the National Association for Community College.

Funding Opportunity

We have learned much through the past year and are expanding this initiative via a funding opportunity that will be released in January 2022. I hope more colleges will join the four initial colleges on this impactful learning journey.

California Community College Chancellor's Office and California Labor and Workforce Development Agency Collaboration

The state's two largest workforce development systems, the California Community College Chancellor's Office and the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, are implementing an aggressive new effort to shift how our two agencies work collaboratively to create a workforce and jobs recovery with equity strategy. The primary objectives are to create quality jobs, prepare Californians for those jobs, ensure access for those too often left behind, and support employers who are investing in their workforce.

Our collaboration has resulted in \$143 million in one-time funds in this year's budget to support coordination of funding, services, and data between the two agencies. Funding categories include the following:

- \$25M investment to fund High Road Training Partnerships (H RTP)
- \$25M investment to enhance Regional Equity Partnerships
- \$20M investment for capacity building to support H RTP and Regional Equity Partnerships, particularly in expanding work-based learning, "earn and learn" models, and credit for prior learning
- \$8M investment in data infrastructure to align and share employment outcomes between the systems
- \$15M investment to reskill and upskill employees and support small businesses new hires

These investments will be made in regionally proven workforce training programs and partnerships that will support the equitable reskills and upskills of workforce to close skills, employment, and equity gaps. Specifically, these investments are targeting the expansion and enhancement of the following:

Learn and Earn Models

Programs that allow adult learners to gain critical skills while also earning income, which comes in many forms. (For example apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training)

Comprehensive Supports for Participants

Support services that assist in removing learning barriers, such as basic needs, as well as ongoing coaching to help individuals, particularly people of color, immigrants and first-generation students navigate our complex systems and programs, often delivered in partnership with community-based organizations, social justice and equity groups, employment social enterprises, and others

Increase Credit for Prior Learning

Creation and establishment of infrastructure and processes for assessing prior learning knowledge and skills gained outside of the classroom for non-traditional students that allow for the blending of external learning with college learning for micro-credentials that stack up to a degree.

Resilient 21st Century Digital Skills and Literacy

Digital skills necessary to increase the resiliency of workers with increasingly technological advancement, boosting competencies such as evaluating and synthesizing information, media, and technology, communicating and collaborating with others using technology, detecting and avoiding cyber threats, and other skills that are commensurate with digital literacy and intelligence.

Targeted Regional Investments Informed by Data

Employment, higher education, and training participation rates among other data points, should be used to prioritize investments and resources to address regional needs and gaps.

Funding Opportunity

Request for Applications are expected to be released jointly in spring of 2022 to build strong partnerships between community colleges, local workforce boards, employers, and other key stakeholders at the regional level. These investments are intended as a starting point for permanent systemic change and together they prioritize equity, and building impactful relationships between education and the workforce training systems to serve communities most affected by the pandemic. System leaders and frontline providers are being asked to think differently about outcome expectations, try new approaches and methods that will deepen partnerships across systems, intermediaries, and community-based organizations, all with a lens towards equity.