



Recovery with Equity Taskforce

Taskforce Meeting

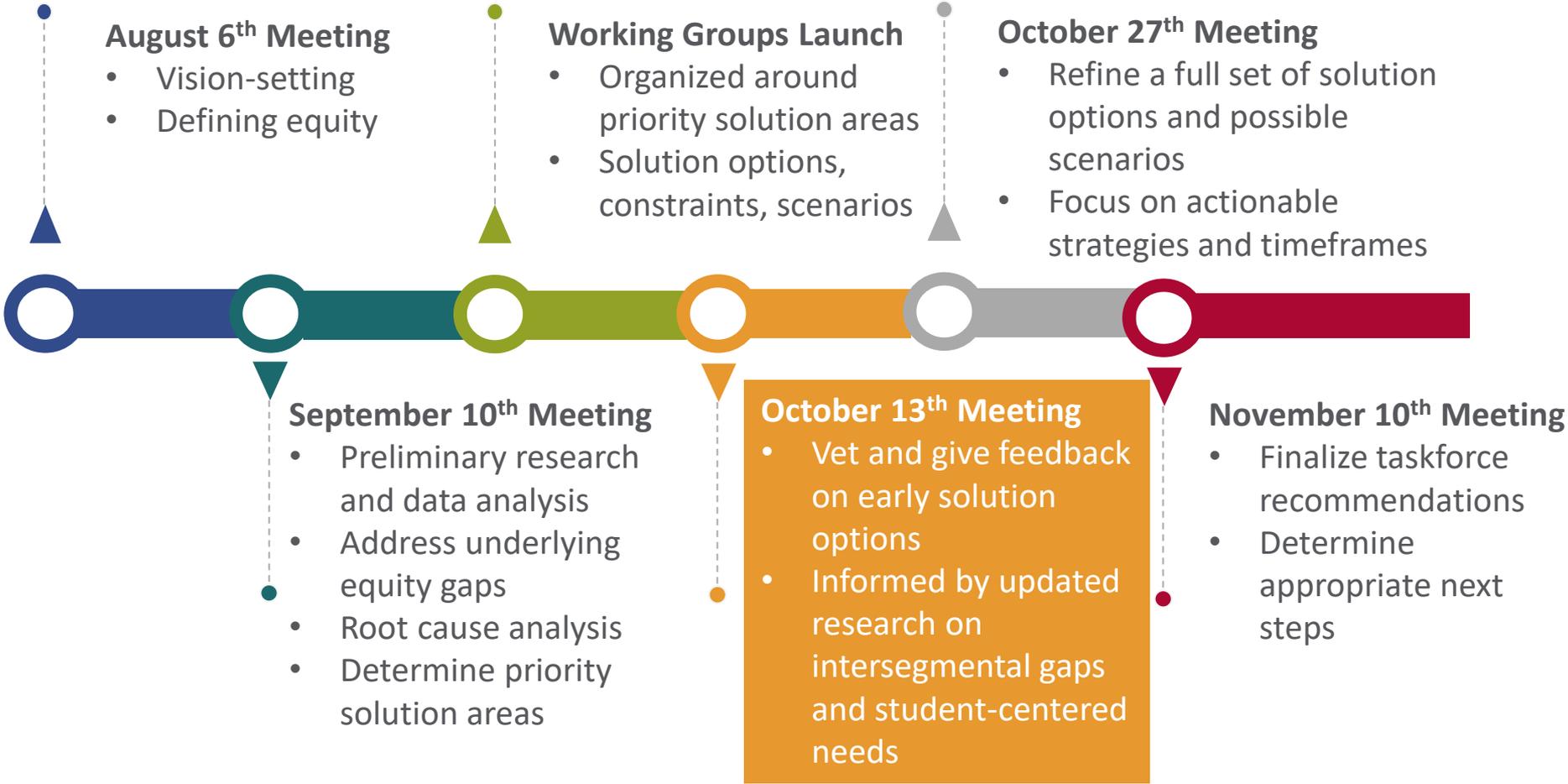
OCTOBER 13, 2020



Welcome to our virtual meeting! As you get settled:

- Please use your video so we can see you
- Please remember to mute your microphone unless you need to speak
- Reminder that this meeting is being recorded and will be made publicly available next week

Our discussion today will leverage our completed set of data analysis as a lens to begin interrogating potential solution ideas emerging from our working groups



Agenda

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| 1 | Welcome and agenda review | <i>11:00 – 11:10 am</i> |
| 2 | Taskforce member spotlight | <i>11:10 – 11:30 am</i> |
| 3 | Updated data analysis | <i>11:30am – 12:05 pm</i> |
| 4 | Break | <i>12:05 – 12:15 pm</i> |
| 5 | Feedback on emerging working group solution ideas | <i>12:15 – 1:50 pm</i> |
| 6 | Wrap-up and next steps | <i>1:50 – 2:00 pm</i> |

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Taskforce member spotlight: Bridget Burns!



Bridget Burns
Executive Director
The University Innovation Alliance

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A number of key stakeholder experience themes emerged from interviews and focus groups conducted across California (1 of 4)

Key findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

1. COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequities in society. This has heightened barriers to students getting their basic needs met.



Students need to meet basic needs in order to engage in education. **COVID-19 has raised additional barriers to getting these needs met, particularly for students who were already experiencing disadvantage in the system.** These needs include food, shelter, healthcare, internet, employment and mental health services. How can higher education institutions find their role in meeting these needs *and* how can higher education partner with outside organizations to meet needs?

“We cannot serve our students quickly enough. There are not enough resources to fill the gap.”

—Higher education systems leader

“This pandemic means that some jobs are permanently lost. Not coming back.”

—Higher education systems leader

“I need us to think as one ecosystem...be co-dependent and not independent.”

—Higher education systems leader

2. The digital divide—access to and cost of both devices and internet connectivity—has been fully exposed and exacerbated by COVID-19.



Particularly **for low-income students and students in more remote areas, access to internet can be extremely challenging.** In some places, connectivity is not available, and in all places, connectivity adds to family expenses. For families with children, a higher level of bandwidth is needed to accommodate K12 learning and online college classes at the same time. In addition, homes must have multiple devices to effectively accommodate multiple learners engaged at the same time. While schools and universities tried to provide connectivity through wifi hot spots by working with internet providers or extending service to school parking lots, each came with its own challenges, creating additional costs or inconvenience.

3. Funding and budget cuts due to COVID-19 exacerbate existing financial challenges and inequities in the higher education system.



Across and within the three segments, higher education stakeholders perceive that funding is inequitable between them, and that institutions serving the highest-need students get the least funding. In addition, they feel funding is not necessarily focused on students who could benefit most. For example, returning adults or students who have stopped out do not qualify for all of California’s financial aid programs. Many institutions will be losing significantly more funding from not having students on campus than they are even expecting to lose in state funding. All have additional cost pressure due to the pivots necessary for the shift to online learning. With any significant enrollment shifts—which are also expected—institutions are hit on costs from all sides.



A number of key stakeholder experience themes emerged from interviews and focus groups conducted across California (2 of 4)

Key findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

4. The connections between higher education and workforce need to be strengthened.



Pathways, internships, work-based opportunities, micro-credentials and support for working students can both **help students more easily find their way to and through postsecondary credentials, and also help them target their career and gain valuable experience** along the way. Strengthening connections between higher education and workforce is important to helping students prepare for and choose jobs that are in-demand, help their prospects, and increase the value proposition of attaining credentials and degrees that support the state’s economic recovery in an equitable and sustainable way.

5. Lack of flexibility within the higher education system (and related policies) creates barriers to equity-focused change.



Lack of coherence across segments makes it difficult for students to easily navigate from one segment to the next in predictable and smooth ways to earn credentials and degrees. Policies intended to support students—like the “50 percent rule”—can limit the flexibility of institutions to tend to student needs (e.g. advising) and limit statewide transferability.

6. The value proposition of higher education is changing due to students’ perceptions of the quality of distance learning.



The way faculty and institutions design, teach and support courses needs to be more closely aligned to student needs, especially nontraditional students. Students, especially nontraditional students, have a diverse set of needs both inside and outside of the classroom, and expressed in focus groups that their courses do not appear to be designed with those needs in mind, nor do their professors and/or institutions always provide the type of support they need to be successful in their courses. Students expressed this was true before COVID and has been exacerbated by the switch to online classes.



A number of key stakeholder experience themes emerged from interviews and focus groups conducted across California (3 of 4)

Key findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

7. California needs a statewide data system.



Without a statewide data system it is extremely difficult to know how students are moving through the education pipeline and how best to understand both regional and statewide needs. While California approved the Cradle-to-Career Data System Act in 2019 and that work is still moving forward, ensuring ample funding and an accelerated timeline could be important considerations. California needs a data system that both protects student privacy, supports intrusive advising and can illustrate students movement from K12 to postsecondary, as well as across the three postsecondary segments. Data that track completion in an on-time and cost-efficient manner and that allow for measuring both persistence and success in degree and workforce engagement are critical tools for supporting students at scale and throughout their K12-postsecondary-workforce journey.

“Getting people to believe that this is possible. I think when you have large issues that go back hundreds of years (systemic racism, closing opportunity gaps, etc.) there is this hopelessness...like ‘well, we’ve tried everything.’ We need to look much deeper.”
—K12 education systems leader

8. The impact of racial injustice is real. And if not addressed, the long-term impact of inequities and racial injustice could be even more dramatic going forward.



Racial injustice—which was present pre-COVID-19—combined with economic uncertainty and the removal of students from school and college environments where they have relationships and support, is taking a toll on students’ sense of belonging. **Students in focus groups wondered aloud, “What is my place in the world? Am I going to be welcome at college?”** It will take ongoing and consistent action to support students along the path to and through college, as well as a mindset shift for some, from “college is only for some kids” to the belief that it is truly for all.



A number of key stakeholder experience themes emerged from interviews and focus groups conducted across California (4 of 4)

Key findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

9. Some industries may not fully recover, which will disproportionately impact Black and Latinx students.



The pandemic impacted industries dominated by Black and Latinx workers (e.g., hotel, tourism, construction, agriculture, manufacturing, etc.). Workforce partners believe that some of these industries may not fully recover to pre-pandemic levels due to the state’s reliance on technology and automation. **The demand shift has created the need for speedy and agile programming to retrain and upskill the workforce.**

“We build on the concept of doing the uncommon uncommonly well. Essential skill sets are what our professional educators need and what our students need, because those will drive us through whatever change that will happen. We can all develop our own playlist for education or whatever that looks like in the future.
—K12 education systems leader

10. The unpredictable nature of COVID-19 is a major factor limiting recovery efforts.



The unpredictable nature of the virus causes leaders to hesitate about timelines for systemwide recovery. **The availability of a vaccine, public health responses to COVID-19 outbreaks, and the flu season's onset, influence recovery efforts across the state.** Some institutions are choosing to maintain distance learning exclusively until conditions improve. However, for those institutions operating on hybrid schedules, student compliance with social distancing guidelines is a key determinate of recovery timelines.



Interviewees highlighted barriers students face within California’s postsecondary education system

EQUITY	<p>There is broad support across stakeholder groups for a commitment to equity in the postsecondary education system—the system currently works for some, not all</p>	<p>“What has kept our colleges and universities from doing this work many years ago? It comes down to structural racism. The white supremacy permeates every policy. The task force needs to look at why this system in 2020 is talking about equity and what has prevented us from doing it before.”</p> <p>Nonprofit Leader</p>	<p>“Because it’s such a large system, I feel like we didn’t address highest needs first and then systemwide. We didn’t adopt a human-centered design, around the extreme users, because we didn’t have time to discuss equity-centered approaches to designing the system, and that’s really disappointing.”</p> <p>Local Civic Leader</p>
BASIC NEEDS	<p>COVID-19 diminished students’ access to or stability of their most basic needs: food, housing, employment, transportation, mental health services, and the basic tools for online learning</p>	<p>“The perception of the division and exclusion of certain groups and individuals from being fully enfranchised has led to stronger voices around what we call system basic needs. Those who didn’t have food banks 6–7 years ago now have them.”</p> <p>Higher Education Leader</p>	<p>“Students are not going to be able to participate and be productive learners until those basic needs are met. Schools must help with that. There must be recognition that some of the students that we’re committed to serving—first generation students, students from immigrant families, and students from African American families—have several other issues facing them.”</p> <p>Higher Education Leader</p>
FUNDING AND BUDGET CUTS	<p>System partners want more flexibility in funding models, suggesting a deeper examination of their capacity for flexibility</p>	<p>“Being a resource-constrained institution, we didn’t have the reserves or the philanthropic base to pull on to support our work. We need a way to put more grant dollars in the hands of students.”</p> <p>Higher Education Leader</p>	<p>“The way we fund education sucks. Even if you have the leadership, how are you going to do all of these things? At the end of the day, we just didn’t have the resources we needed because of decades of not fully funding the needs of our communities.”</p> <p>Nonprofit Leader</p>

Full group reflection



- What in the findings, if anything, surprised you? Why?
- When you look at the data, what do you think is left “unsaid” or “unaddressed”? What questions do you still have?
- What will be possible in California if we change the overall paradigm and proactively solve for the challenges presented here?

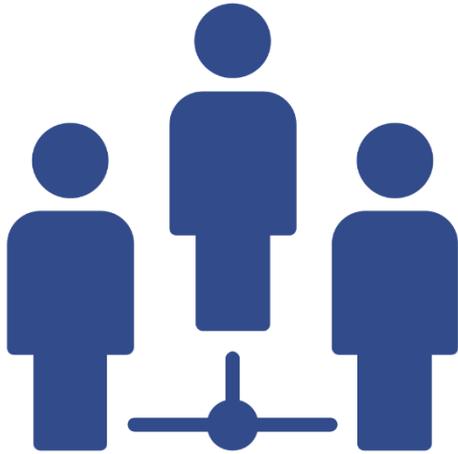
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A reminder about our Taskforce expectations



- Equity driven
- Student-centered
- Commitment to intersegmental coherence
- Leave institutional hats at the door
- Ongoing interrogation of our expertise and assumptions
- Embrace a “coalition of the willing” spirit
- **Recommendations that are small in number but big on impact**

As we transition to review emerging solution ideas from our working groups, it is important that we do so remembering the potential of a redesigned postsecondary education system

A redesigned system that...

1

...is designed to graduate students that reflect the population of California's rich and diverse communities, heritage and enterprise.

2

...allows students to choose flexible pathways to a credential or degree by investing in instruction and training that is high-quality, meaningful, affordable and appropriate for their career of choice.

3

...prioritizes the completion of Black, Latinx and adult students, and adapts to their needs by providing convenient entry, seamless navigation and comprehensive supports within and across segments.

4

...values racial equity and social justice, and that accepts those priorities as essential to its business model and its obligation to its students and alumni.

Proposed solution (working draft): *Adult Learners*

THE SOLUTION(S)

- Expand credit-earning options for adult learners in the postsecondary education delivery model to include the integration of life experiences and workforce education
- Give adult learners the same level of a wrap-around support that are typically provided for traditional pathway students, where life burdens and barriers to persistence and completion are eased and addressed

Course delivery/flexibility/pathways/access

Adult learners need access to, and accommodating entry points for, **flexible learning opportunities that are offered in a variety of settings and that leverage their existing knowledge and experience** because they have limited time and resources to commit to their educational pursuits, and prioritize efficiency and relevance to their career goals.

What we heard

Stakeholders believe they don't have the **flexibility to meet student needs for access and convenience** that could make students' experiences more **streamlined, relevant and affordable**.

What it will take

- **Mindset shift** for staff, faculty and administrators to understand, support and champion the adult student experience
- **Technology as an enabler** of flexibility, access and data-informed course navigation and student success accountability

Proposed solution (working draft): *Intersegmental Collaboration*

THE SOLUTION(S)

- Common platforms— e.g., shared course numbering system, shared course mapping tool
- Regional approach to encourage faculty collaboration across segments/institutions
- Funding incentives aimed at strategically-aligned majors/degrees

Dual admissions/degree pathways/stable revenue

Institutions that serve high populations of Black and Latinx students need **predictability in planning for enrollment** because it helps them **better manage revenue streams**, but current admissions and transfer systems don't provide the **data, tools and processes** that allow them to effectively do so.

What we heard

Lack of coherence across segments makes it **difficult for students to easily navigate from one segment to the next** in predictable and smooth ways to earn credentials and degrees.

What it will take

Governance to support adoption and accountability; data infrastructure; faculty leadership and collaboration; legislative engagement (possibly); technology and training resources

Proposed solution (working draft): *K12-Higher Ed Alignment*

THE SOLUTION(S)

- Re-design junior and senior year of high school to incorporate early college credit opportunities – and specifically, dual enrollment - for *all* students as a standard practice
- Merge the work between high school and postsecondary to seamlessly support students - particularly Black and Latinx students – to and through postsecondary completion

Early college credit/articulation/transfer

High school students – particularly Black, Latinx and low-income students – need a **system for earning early college credit that is free and fully scaled** to seamlessly bridge them to postsecondary education because the current system doesn't serve all the students who could benefit from it.

What we heard

- Earning early college credit can **ease the transition to college** and promote success in college (affordability, credits, career pathways, persistence) but is currently not accessible to all
- Earning early college credit may **increase students' confidence** in pursuing postsecondary education
- Dual enrollment numbers have risen in CA, but **funding, faculty and credit between K12 and higher ed need to be better articulated** at a systems level
- Early college credit should lead students on a **clear postsecondary pathway** of study

What it will take

- **Governance** structures at CC/CSU/UC (academic senates) and K12 need to be restructured to balance equitable access to higher education coursework for all secondary students
- **Funding** sources (like Prop 98) and funding structures between K12 and higher ed
- **Course offerings** to ensure each dual enrollment course is college-credit earning and would articulate and transfer to all CC/CSU/UC campuses. Also ensure alignment with local industry and career needs.
- **Outreach**, including promotion and understanding of dual enrollment
- **Data analysis** to track progress of equitable access, outcomes, success of students in credit bearing courses once full-time postsecondary students
- **K12 student preparation and support**
- **Teacher workforce preparation and support**



Proposed solution (working draft): *Persistence & Completion*

THE SOLUTION(S)

California commits to making college more affordable* for all qualifying postsecondary students by coordinating and streamlining delivery of a full package of supports in response to the student financial aid application. Notification of financial aid and scholarships will be packaged with:

- basic needs support
- new tools for learning

so that all students have what they need to access, persist and complete credentials and degrees that link to the field of their choice.

California will prioritize designing this approach to meet the needs of Black, Latinx and adult students, to increase the diversity of those completing postsecondary credentials and degrees. In doing it this way - designing the solution for priority students on the margins, but delivering for all - it is likely to help students who require basic needs and learning tools that we have not specifically prioritized.

Basic needs/new tools for learning

Students experiencing poverty **need** postsecondary education to partner with local, state, federal and private agencies to support student basic needs and new tools for learning **because** the “real costs” associated with attending college take up a greater proportion of their income and students must have a holistic picture of how to afford it to persist and complete credentials and degrees.

What we heard

- Students need **expanded basic needs support** - food and housing assistance, mental health services, transportation and childcare access and/or subsidies
- Students cite the need for **new tools for learning**, citing a massive digital divide and need for reliable internet access, technology devices and skill building for navigating online learning platforms, focused location to study; these constitute an expanded definition of what is necessary for postsecondary learning)
- **Any one of these unmet needs can cause a student to drop out**
- **Value proposition for higher ed is changing with online instruction**
- Higher ed can't solve the challenge alone; **need support from state agencies and local partners**

What it will take

- **Governance and/or Partnerships:** to streamline packaging and delivery of supports where resources already exist; do business differently
- **Funding:** Using what exists and streamlining delivery; more may be needed
- **Data analysis:** To proactively identify student needs/what they qualify for; measure progress, outcomes

*There are many factors - and moves the Taskforce could make - that influence college affordability; supporting and streamlining delivery of basic needs is just one. Others include: increasing and focusing financial aid, lowering tuition and fees, limiting time and credits to degree, opportunity to earn early college credit while in high school, granting competency-based credit for work experience/previous learning, etc.



We will now breakout into small groups to provide feedback on emerging solutions ideas through the lens of levers, adopters and incentives (45 minutes)

SMALL GROUP NOTES: In your small group, your note-taker will capture takeaways from your conversation

GROUP #1: Adult Learners (Facilitator: Carl; Note-taker: Mario)			
Solution idea(s)	Levers [Policy, Talent, Resources, Governance, Other]	Adopters [Segment Leaders, Students, Policymakers, Faculty, Other]	Incentives [Financial, Political, Flexibility, Autonomy, Professional Advancement, Other]
Idea	•	•	•
Idea	•	•	•
Idea	•	•	•

Additional group discussion

- As you take stock of the range of solution ideas emerging from our working groups, do you think we have enough on the table to get the job done?
- Do our ideas reflect the change it will take to truly recover with equity?



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Immediate next steps

- Complete feedback survey
- Send out notes and next steps from this call



Upcoming activities



Working groups and solution development



Consulting with technical advisors/resources



Feedback from regional and statewide stakeholders

Preview of our October 27th meeting

Agenda focus:

1

Review formal solution recommendations from working groups

2

Discuss action/impact potential, timing and risk mitigation

Tuesday, October 27th, 11am-2pm PT/2-5pm ET

Thank you!
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