

California Higher Education Recovery with Equity Taskforce

Meeting Agenda & Summary Notes

Friday, January 29, 2021 | 12-2pm PT/3-5pm ET

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- *Discuss feedback on the Taskforce final report draft*
- *Review post-release dissemination and engagement plans for the final report*
- *Share reflections and appreciation*

<p>12:00-12:10 PM PT</p> <p>Welcome and Agenda</p>	<p>Attendees:</p> <p>Taskforce Members: Lande Ajose, Loren Blanchard, Nathan Brostrom, Bridget Burns, Keith Curry, Bryan Daley, Daisy Gonzalez, Michal Kurlaender, Monica Lozano, Tim Renick, Judy Sakaki, Deborah Santiago, Michele Siqueiros, Gabriella Starr, Haley Weddle, Michael Wiafe</p> <p>Education First & Team (supporting Taskforce efforts): Ria Bhatt, Susan Bodary, Carl Christopher, Ellie Feder, Mario Jackson, Jaci King, Meghan Kraley, Hilary McLean, Meg Ramey, Varsha Sarveshwar</p> <p>Lande welcomed Taskforce members to the final meeting. Expressed gratitude to the Ed First team. Announced that Michelle Asha Cooper will be joining the Biden administration in a role in the Dept. of Education. Expressed thanks to the Taskforce for sharing their feedback on the draft of the report. Wants to make sure we have all the feedback prior to finalizing the report. Working with Alza/Williams on report dissemination. Will spend time during the meeting talking about next steps.</p> <p>Carl reviewed the agenda, stressed a focus on reviewing feedback. Reviewed the timeline and current state.</p> <p>Mario stated we were able to conduct three focus groups with 13 students in priority demographics: Asian Pacific Islander students and Native American/Indigenous students. Across the central valley, community colleges, CSUs and UCs. Updating the analysis and the data deck in support of the final report.</p> <p>Lande congratulated Loren Blanchard about his new role as President at University of Houston.</p>
<p>12:10-12:45 PM PT</p> <p>Summary of Taskforce feedback on final report</p>	<p>Carl reviewed four areas related to feedback from Taskforce members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiasm for the quality of the report and its representation of the priorities and recommendations elevated throughout the Taskforce process • Executive Summary that grabs the readers attention and reflects the bold recommendations within the report • Leveraging Existing Assets and finding ways to capitalize on existing assets like A-G and ADT • Post-Release Plans and calls to action for key stakeholders to ensure the report is one piece of a broader set of engagement tools

Taskforce feedback on the final report

- So glad to see the ADT issue here. This is something I wanted to highlight today. Very supportive of this feedback and encourage us to direct the ADT to the outcomes we need to see. What I mean by this is how do we center equity outcome as the key strategy NOT the initiative.
- Appreciate the opportunity to review. In the Diversity section we don't talk about state and local boards. Hopes it will be explicit in the report and has stronger language for leaders.
- Thanks for including me. Integrating student quotes into the Executive Summary. The piece about high tech and the chatbot could be more equity focused. Explain why that is an equity-focused approach. Want to see the call to action more explicitly called out in the final paragraph of the report. State who is actually responsible for following up on stakeholder action-put it in writing.
- Second being explicit and bold in the Executive Summary section. Be much clearer about the "why" of all the work-an opportunity to lead the nation in recovery efforts. Not clear to me what the goal is. Around the how and the what, that was too much of an overview. Want to call out the how and the what for each stakeholder group. What accountability will link to budget and policy. There's an opportunity to build on the ADT lever, not emphasized enough in the report.
- +1 on goal... it supports the budget where we ask for systems to close equity gaps.
- Research states that mandated training doesn't work. Want to plug incentivized training.
- I'm wondering if the frame is, here's the goal, expected outcomes, and the date. Rather than being overly prescriptive. Lay it out for everyone and they can figure out the path they want to take.
- There was one recommendation that called for legislative action. Are we all comfortable asking that the legislature mandate something like that? I prefer not.
- We need legislative buy-in on the report, especially from the Ed leaders in both chambers - and there will be some legislative policy changes to make some of these recs possible.
- The Council can take up the issues of legislation. How long will we wait for all 3 segments and all the colleges to do this work?
- I want to draw attention to the organization of the recs. When I was reading the report, my excitement came toward the end. The 1,2,3,4, maybe something 1 is the boldest thing that people have never heard before, it shows that the Taskforce really means business. Cater to all readers including students who may only spend 5 min on it, and we want it to be something they're proud about and excited for the future about.
- Identify how this can be replicated? How could this be a model for other states to follow? I think there's a different audience than just CA. Examine how you are thinking about the questions so we can leave breadcrumbs for other audiences to follow.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could there be a comment in the appendix that gives words that encourage other states? • Framing from a broader zoom out perspectives could be helpful. Thinking as a nation and globally. Helps people understand the broader view and the mindset. Getting people to think this way gets them into the right mindset. • I really like the breadcrumbs idea... wondering if we could think through 3 essential questions to ask yourself for each priority area? <p>Carl transitioned to Hilary McLean from Alza Media and Meghan Kraley from Williams Group and their plan to socialize the report. Report is part of a bigger package that's used to leverage a broader set of folks to get involved.</p>
<p>12:40-1:15 PM PT</p> <p>Post-release dissemination and engagement</p>	<p>Hilary congratulated the Taskforce for the work it took to get to this point. Want to give you a little sneak peek about how the report is organized and discuss key engagement strategies.</p> <p>Meghan gave a demo of the report. Content is still being finalized. Will skim through some pages to give you a flavor of what's to come. Still a work in progress.</p> <p>Hilary stated that we consider the work as in-progress. The comments are being worked into the final product. Compliments to the William's group for the work on the website. Will be the key place for locating the report. Gave a high-level overview of the dissemination plan. Final draft as a pre-release for the Council next week. Feb 16th is the public release. Gave an overview of the list of critical stakeholders. We're tapping key stakeholders in each of the audiences to develop support for the report. Gave an overview of communication strategies. Reviewed dissemination assets—developing a toolkit to support communication and engagement. Opened the floor for comments about the dissemination plan.</p>
<p>1:15-1:45 PM PT</p> <p>Reflections and appreciation</p>	<p>Carl asked the Taskforce members to take a pause, appreciate the people in this community. Would love for you all to think about reflecting on what made this effort different. This broke the mold of how we think about taskforces and change for higher ed. How has this experience with your colleagues helped you think bigger, bolder, and different?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation for all of you, Lande has convened a great group of folks, I love that we had national experts, heroes and heroines in higher ed on this taskforce, big appreciation to every one of you. It's challenging to do what we've (nearly) accomplished with this taskforce, and that couldn't have been done without you all facilitating the process. • Echo appreciation to Lande. Nothing could be more gratifying than getting to think about inequalities we want to address. Love Daisy's idea and think that when you dream big, taking action idea could be filled out: what could faculty do in their classrooms tomorrow? What could counselors do? There is so much out there in academic literature and beyond about how to take action right now and see yourself as part of the movement forward. • Wanted to share my gratitude. When Lande and I first started talking about higher ed in a pandemic and that we were in triage mode and we knew that wouldn't be forever and it opened an opportunity for us to reimagine and reinvent and Lande's lightbulb went off and the idea of putting together a

taskforce focused on equity as a core principle was born. It has to do with the brilliant people in this room - what I loved most about the report is that it's bold and assertive and challenges and it's not patient, it has a sense of courage and urgency. When I read the first draft I was completely blown away. The ideas put forward. It is about the most progressive, bold, courageous amazing piece of work I've seen for a very long time, maybe even ever. Extraordinary.

- This Taskforce helped me think about students longitudinally from cradle to career. I always saw students on our doorstep, but the work you've done, what I've learned from Keith and Daisy on the community college side, and the experts you brought in on high school advising, it helped me better understand the pathways and barriers for students. Much richer sense. Our goal is to make sure from the minute a student starts school we are here for them through undergrad and grad.
- Thanks to the staff behind this work. Thanks to Lande for clear vision, the moonshot talk she gave. Move beyond excuses and confines we often get stuck in in our segments. Thank you to others for helping us push the boundaries. Dibs on recruiting Varsha and Hayley for coming to work for California community colleges-- they were amazing.
- Also, our first meeting still stands out as really inspiring. Everyone was open to thinking big and bold and no one came with excuses or reasons as to why we couldn't be ambitious, courageous and thoughtful.
- For me in my professional careers, it's all about relationships and partnerships. New relationships because of this Taskforce. My faculty is reading a book about Georgia State this spring for example. Gabi, our teams met to talk about partnership. When Loren got the job, I felt I got the job! I told my friends in Texas that they have a good president coming. I'm avid about, once the report comes out, how do we make sure this is a living document? Push it and make it a reality. I don't want this to sit on the shelf after all this work. I don't want that to happen here. Let's hold each other accountable to make sure this is a living document.
- I often think about my privilege as a young person to get to learn from you all, some of the most incredible minds in CA higher ed. I'm starstruck by who is on this call. I'm looking forward to how we all take this out into the world and remember the time energy work effort and sacrifices we made to do this to improve systems for students, for myself and my peers, for my children to be able to say their dad worked on this. I want to echo what Hayley said earlier that this is part of the most meaningful work I've ever done in my life and I look forward to this making an impact for decades. The work ethic, the ideas, the thoughts, this has set the standard for me of how people should work together in general. Lastly, thank you for all reassuring me, it can be hard to speak up sometimes, my response when I was invited was "absolutely but are you sure you emailed the right guy?" so thanks for answering my questions and this process will make me feel at home in spaces like this in the future.
- This might provide a little levity, but I wrote a 200-page dissertation on collaboration and it's really hard to do. I'm proud and I hope you are as well, the level of trust, the respect for expertise including student expertise.

Michael, you were an expert, and I learned a lot from you. I'd be remiss not to say that I would love to stay in touch with folks, please reach out if you'd like someone to be a thought partner, to make good trouble together.

- I want to piggyback on something Susan said - that we take for granted that people know what equity work means, that there is a distinction between diversity, equity and inclusion, and how pivotal the equity work really is. This report can be even more consequential than what we think, in that it is serving as a means for education about equity. My father used to say all the time: You always make time for that which matters, so Lande thank you. This matters so much. Think about all the busy people we've got here. This is so important to get it right and build on what many campuses are engaged in. I have to shout out: when we got the small groups, I worked with Michal and Tim, and we really bonded with the trio of us, it was powerful and enlightening, and I consider myself all the better because of that small group.
- Brought wisdom to the table to solve problems, that reflects the best of what California can be. From the beginning it was a profound challenge and idea, Lande and Carl and the whole team, I hope others will follow your lead. You have modeled what it's like to be true stewards of the future of your state and thinking about the voices who need you to be thinking about them. My hope is that others will replicate this. It's an honor to be part of this, not living in California.
- I live 3 miles from DC, 6 miles from the Capitol. I've been reflecting that so much of the work we do is so caustic, to have to make the case why we have to pay attention to our students, it's not a given to look at race and equity and have a safe space for traction and action - we spend too much time often marking off territory. How much of my time and effort can I spend, I wondered, and was it worth it, will it make a difference? And we try to listen and learn, and I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this and see if we can add value. We were critical but without malice, we had healthy tension and got to something different than what you expect. Reminds us that there are people and things that can make a difference. I'm committed to making sure this advances, because this is why we do the work to give back to others the things we have that they don't have.

Lande stated: How I feel in my body in this moment, it feels like the culmination of a career aspiration to bring together the smartest people you know to do this work: not just the outcome but the process itself mattered. That reverberates in my body. I am grateful to you for that, to feel like, oh my God, this really matters. To be in government you can feel like a cog in a big system, but this experience showed that we are stewards. I also want to start by saying to Varsha and Ellie who see my crazy every morning and night and have been right there by my side to make sure the small pieces don't get lost. Thank you to them. When you heard Hilary and saw what Megan presented, there is a huge team of people putting this work to move it forward. Thank you to Carl, Susan, Meg, Jaci, Mario, I'm so glad you didn't quit. We pivoted so much, and you stuck with us. Thank you to Alza and Williams, the rollout of the website was "fire" as my kids would say. There is so much more to come. Special shout out to our national partners - to have national partners come in and wade through our familiarity/jargon and stick with us and find ways to be additive is huge. I think CA is

	<p>the best state in the union and I'm so grateful to live here, but we can also get in our own way because we assume we have nothing to learn from others, and the truth is that we do. You all brought so much perspective and practical tangible ideas about the what and the how, there is no skin in it for you, you didn't have to be here, but you all have been so steadfast in your commitment. For the in-state Taskforce members, I feel buoyed that these relationships will continue, I reached out to many of you to have 1:1 discussions to make sure what we're building is robust and elastic and it will go further than just right now. It's amazing to me that we did this whole Taskforce by Zoom. Lastly, the most important thank you is to Monica. From the moment I started in this job Monica has been a steadfast thought partner, we think about the Council, the taskforce, COVID shock and grief and recovery, Monica has been there at every step and always thinking three steps ahead, and all the work it takes to support Alza and Williams and Ed First and the website, it's all due to the generosity of the CFF. I worked for a foundation and we never partnered with people like this. To have the CEO sitting in these meetings like this, it's a model of what this partnership can look like. Thanks for supporting all of this, I hope you feel like this is your next child. We are the midwives to change. We will see on the other side of this report what we have all birthed together. Thank you all for your wisdom. You will hear from me again.</p> <p>Monica asked what made this work, from Ed First's perspective?</p> <p>Susan: A cross-system and cross-institution, existing and recent students, external experts outside of states. The notion of centering things on equity is not what everybody does and that made all the difference and allowed us to design a human-centered approach to the process and spend a lot of time on the ground to interview people who experience the work. Counting on the experts who are experiencing higher ed themselves or working in higher ed. Each of you on the taskforce took ownership for the recs, spent time outside of these meetings to connect the dots between your own practice and experience and the research, to put all these things together. You hardly ever get all of those things in one project. One more thing: Nobody blamed a student in this group, no one said it was the students' fault, it's a mindset and a shift each of us needs to embrace - we embraced it from day 1. It's been a pleasure to do this work. It was hard work and you all have been doing the hard work too.</p> <p>Carl: Extended his appreciation for the ability to get feedback that we could use to shift/change things along the way, it was timely and thoughtful, and you were ready to respond. We made pivots to keep the process in your hands to make sure your expertise was being maximized while also respecting the expertise of students and stakeholders. Not every group is ready to do those things, to be flexible and make process shifts along the way. Helped us get across the finish line with more fidelity and representation of what you all brought to the table. You made adjustments along the way and that put more on your plates and you were heroes in stepping up to that.</p>
<p>1:45-2:00 PM PT</p> <p>Wrap-up and adjourn</p>	<p>Carl adjourned the meeting 8 minutes early!</p>