

# 2026 Policy Agenda

*A student-centered agenda to strengthen  
**access, affordability, and success** across  
California's higher education system.*



The Campaign for College Opportunity advances equal opportunity for all Californians to attend, succeed in college, and achieve economic prosperity through five integrated policy pillars that translate vision into measurable impact. Our 2026 policy agenda is comprised of actionable legislative, budget, and policy implementation priorities that respond to rising student demand for higher education opportunity, improve coordination between the state's higher education and workforce entities to facilitate transfer and positive workforce outcomes, address increasing college affordability costs and emergency needs of students, and respond to threats against higher education institutions to advance educational equity for our state's historically minoritized students.

## **Expand College Access & Strengthen Cross-System Coordination**

The Campaign is committed to facilitating bold, sustained coordination within and among California's higher education systems and their TK-12 and workforce counterparts. In 2026, we are advocating for policy solutions that ensure all Californians have equitable access to college preparatory courses, college advising and supports, dual enrollment opportunities, and baccalaureate degree programs within their local communities.



### Legislative Priorities

#### **AB 1871 (Fong) - Dual Enrollment: College & Career Access Pathways Partnership**

- Expands access to dual enrollment opportunities for students by simplifying the dual enrollment application process, enrollment requirements, and required annual reporting on how dually enrolled students are embarking on college and career pathways.

#### **SB 960 (Cabaldon) - Expanding California Community College (CCC) Baccalaureate Degree Programs Given California State University (CSU) Capacity Constraints**

- Allows CCCs to offer popular baccalaureate degree programs already offered at the CSU, when the CSU is unable to guarantee California students access to these programs due to persistent enrollment capacity constraints.



## Budget Priorities

- **Maintain Fifth & Final Year of University of California (UC) and CSU Compact Funding While Ensuring Accountability for Student Success** – Support the fifth and final year of compact funding for the UC and CSU systems, while holding both systems accountable for progress toward closing equity gaps in graduation rates, affordability, transfer, and enrollment.
- **Fund Enrollment Growth at the CCC While Ensuring Accountability for Student Success** – Continue a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for student apportionments via the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF), while continuing to incentivize positive student success outcomes via SCFF's student success allocation so that more Californians can embark on college pathways leading to long-term economic mobility.
- **Maintain Investments in California's Inaugural TK-16 & Workforce Coordinating Body** – Sustain ongoing funding of \$1.5 million to ensure that the state properly integrates and aligns efforts across TK-12 education, higher education, employers, and the statewide workforce system via the inaugural California Education Interagency Council.



## Policy Implementation Priorities

- **Continue Implementing the Student-Centered Funding Formula (SCFF):** Support community colleges in fully implementing the SCFF to expand community college access through adequate campus resources and student supports.
- **Strengthen Equitable Course Placement & Completion:** Uplift best practices in equitable course placement implementation within California community colleges and work in collaboration with college stakeholders and practitioners to ensure all students have the supports they need to be successful in transfer-level courses.

## Streamline Transfer Pathways & Onramps to Completion

The Campaign is committed to ensuring community college students seeking to transfer are supported by seamless transfer pathways and onramps to complete their intended program or degree of study. In 2026, we are advocating for cross-system solutions to recognize credits and degrees students have earned.



## Legislative Priorities

### **SPONSOR: AB 2236 (Berman) - Improving Mobility Across California Higher Education Institutions Through Common Course Numbering**

- Improves transfer by requiring collaboration between CCC, CSU, and UC to provide greater insight into how commonly numbered courses across the community colleges articulate to the CSU and UC systems.

## **AB 1858 (Lowenthal) - Encouraging Transfer by Awarding Associate Degrees to Stopped-Out California Students**

- Establishes onramps to the workforce and future baccalaureate degree enrollment by allowing the CSU and CCC to jointly award associate degrees to students who stopped out of the CSU, but have completed coursework equivalent to an associate degree.

## **AB 2229 (Pellerin) - Expanding College Access for Noncontinuous CSU Students**

- Creates tailored supports for, and ensure greater insight into, students formally enrolled at the CSU who are seeking to re-enroll.



### Policy Implementation Priorities

- **Expand Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) Pathways:** Expand access to the ADT to streamline transfer pathways for students, including supporting community colleges participating in the UCLA ADT Pilot Program and monitoring the development of high-unit STEM ADTs.

## **Improve College Affordability**

The Campaign is committed to ensuring that all Californians can attain a college education that is affordable when considering a student's total cost of attendance and holistic needs. In 2026, we are advocating for increased investments to the Cal Grant program, and building toward a comprehensive emergency financial aid infrastructure.



### Legislative Priorities

## **SB 1006 (Padilla) - Encouraging College Affordability by Increasing Cal Grant Awards**

- Increases college affordability for Californians by annually adjusting the Cal Grant B Access Award to inflation beginning in 2027, helping students to pay for rising nontuition costs.



### Budget Priorities

- **Address Urgent Needs of Immigrant Students via Continued State Emergency Financial Aid Investments & Set Foundation to Scale** – Advocate for a \$5 million investment to support AB 540 students in addressing immediate emergency needs through emergency financial aid grants, while leveraging impact data to best scale and implement promising emergency aid investments to wider student populations with unmet financial need.

## Intentionally Serve Historically Excluded Students

The Campaign is committed to ensuring California higher education institutions not only expand college access for students who have been historically excluded from higher education but establish institutional policies and practices that cultivate the excellence of these students. In 2026, we are advocating for a coordinated approach to ensure California's institutions are guided by a framework that intentionally focuses on access, support, and completion for historically excluded student populations.



### Legislative Priorities

#### **SB 1255 (Reyes) - Keeping California Higher Education Institutions Accountable to Successfully Serving Latinx Students**

- Encourages California's higher education institutions to produce positive student success outcomes for Latinx Californians through the creation of a state-level designation to name California public and private higher education institutions as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI), amid threats to the federal HSI designation.

#### **AB 2374 (Fong) - Keeping California Higher Education Institutions Accountable to Successfully Serving AAPI Students**

- Encourages California's higher education institutions to produce positive student success outcomes for Asian American and Pacific Islander Californians through the creation of a state-level designation to name California public and private higher education institutions as Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, amid threats to the federal Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving (AANAPISI) designation.

#### **AB 1641 (Jackson) - Ensuring California Tribal Colleges & Universities Are Included in California Higher Education Decision-Making**

- Formally includes California tribal colleges and universities into the state's Master Plan for Higher Education.



### Budget Priorities

- **Maintain State Investments Supporting Historically Minoritized Students Amid Threats to Federal MSI Funding** – Support continued state investments to sustain critical student services and programs for historically excluded and underserved students, as federal Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) grant programs face ongoing threats.

## Accelerate Economic Mobility

The Campaign is committed to ensuring that higher education attainment allows Californians to achieve upward economic mobility for themselves and generations to come. In 2026, we are advocating for statewide infrastructure to better understand high-impact workforce education programs and bolster statewide data infrastructure.



### Legislative Priorities

#### **AB 1534 (Irwin) - Creating A Student-Centered Framework to Implement Inaugural Workforce Pell Programs**

- Ensures program quality, affordability, and strong return on investment for students as California seeks to expand Pell Grants to short-term workforce programs by July 1, 2026.



### Policy Implementation Priorities

- **Advance California's Cradle-to-Career (C2C) Data System:** Support the development of the C2C data system by building out data dashboards that illuminate the trajectories of student pathways from education into careers.

