



Recovery with Equity Taskforce

Pre-Reading for October 27th
Taskforce Meeting

OCTOBER, 2020



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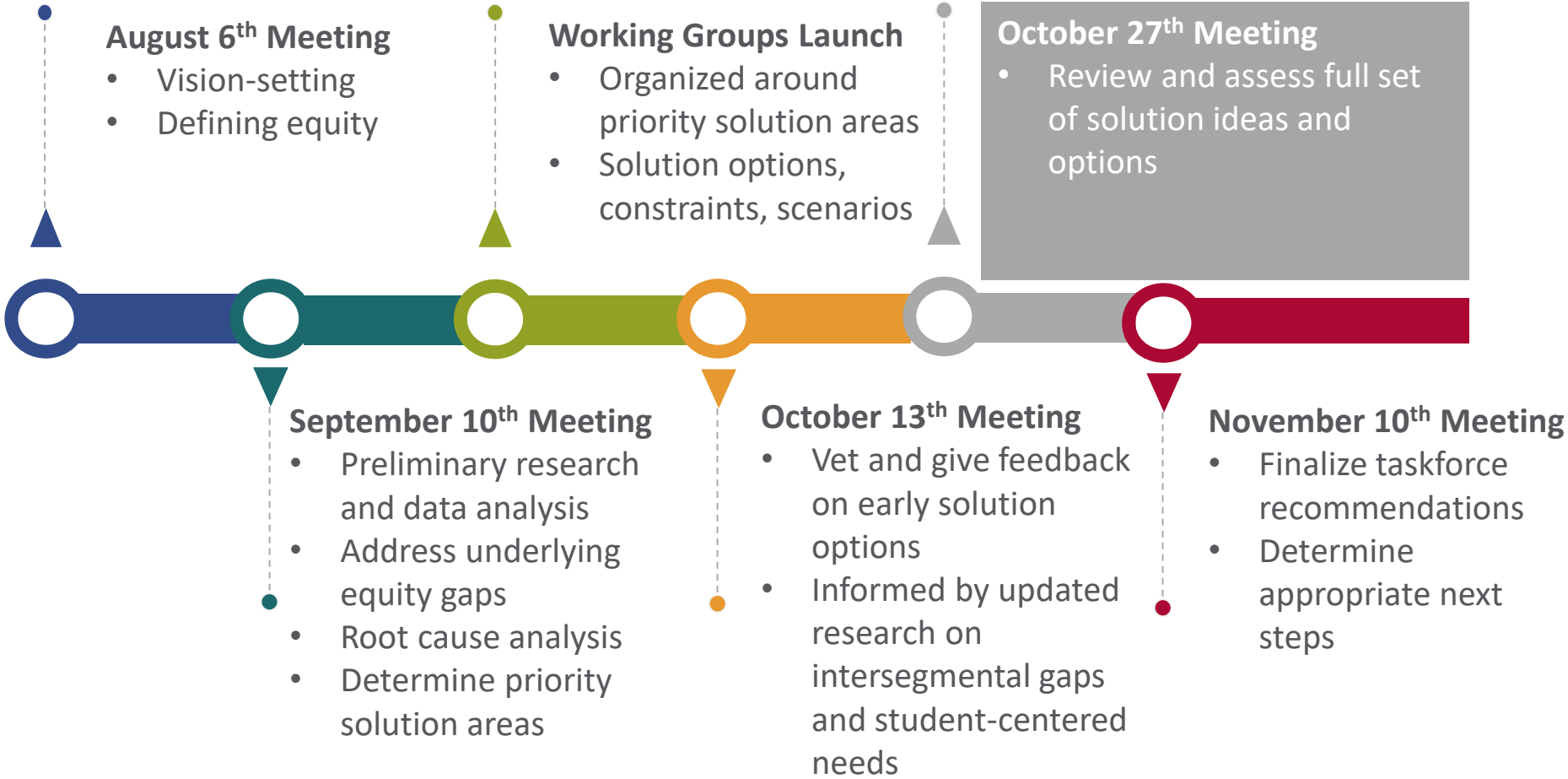
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Appendix: Summary of Research Themes



1 | Taskforce Arc and Methodology

A review and assessment of our full set of potential solution ideas will inform the final drafts of solution recommendations from our working groups



In preparation for the October 27th Taskforce meeting, please review our cumulative set of potential solution ideas to-date, with consideration for their connection to our research findings



Summary of key themes from student focus group conversations.



Comprehensive list of solution ideas generated during the Taskforce process (including “mapping” to our key research analysis implications), as well as insights from the Governor’s Council for Postsecondary Education.

Please consider the following questions related to this pre-reading in preparation for the October 27th Taskforce meeting



- When you review our full set of solution ideas **do you see the change it will take to truly recover with equity** for Black, Latinx and adult students? Why or why not?
- Are there any **items on our list that are non-negotiable**, i.e., impossible to achieve our vision for a redesigned system without them?
- What's still **missing from our list of ideas**? What else would you love to see in-play if we didn't have to worry about funding or system constraints?



2 | Key Themes from Student Focus Groups

Demanding schedules, less faculty engagement, and a lack of basic needs are negatively impacting the student experience

DISTANCE LEARNING	<p>Students are having trouble meeting online learning demands during the pandemic—time management and scheduling are becoming more challenging</p>	<p>“Right now, things are only about completing assignments. When I began, I was really focused on learning. Professors weren’t just professors—they were also working on the things they were teaching. Right now, college is just about submitting assignments.”</p>	<p>“All of my professors assign their work to be due on Sunday night. My other two classes have assignments scattered throughout the day. Time management has always been an important part of college, but it’s being taken to the extreme of how good you have to be at managing time virtually.”</p>
FACULTY SUPPORT	<p>Successful distance education requires more flexibility and empathy from instructors, a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning is proving ineffective</p>	<p>“Professors need to be more flexible. Students have raised concerns about having to help their school-aged children in school, so it’s hard for them to do both. There are times when the student can’t be in class or be on camera because their child’s school is in session.”</p>	<p>“We can’t pretend that the expectations and rigors of learning are what they were last year because they are not and we need to set a culture around that so faculty, administrators and all stakeholders understand they are responsible for the load they are putting onto students.”</p>
BASIC NEEDS	<p>The lack of basic needs—including the tools required for online learning—prevents some students from fully participating in online learning</p>	<p>“Since COVID, I’ve lost two income streams, and have had to move back and take care of my siblings. I’ve suffered from food insecurity, so COVID has been difficult.”</p>	<p>“At home I don’t even have a desk. Expecting all students to have their camera on is not always possible, not everyone has a space. I’ve heard from friends that professors believe students aren’t engaged unless they have their cameras on. The university system has to understand that peoples’ circumstances are different.”</p>

COVID-19 dramatically altered students' emotional health, increasing the need for institutions to offer more support and services virtually

EMOTIONAL IMPACTS	<p>COVID-19 has deeply impacted students' mental and emotional health, revealing profound losses that could have lasting effects on their well-being</p>	<p>“The COVID experience for me thus far is emotional because it was our graduating year, and we lost our graduation entirely. I lost the opportunity to study abroad and I lost the scholarship that was rewarded to me. I wanted my mom to see me walk across the stage as a first-generation college student and I don't think she will.”</p> <p>Student</p>	<p>“My mental health has taken a huge hit. I'm a very social person and I love being in class and talking to friends before and after. Living alone, being cooped up in my apartment, especially with the smoke, has been hard for me. It's been hard for me to do what I love.”</p> <p>Student</p>
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT	<p>Students want more engagement with their institutions, highlighting the need for better opportunities to connect during the learning experience</p>	<p>“We don't know what to expect, but we want to know that we are supported by our family and our school. I hope the schools will be more interactive with their students and we are getting the best learning environment we can. Make sure the learning environment is as best as can be and be there when the student needs it.”</p> <p>Student</p>	<p>“For me it's about the school showing it cares more. Adding more activities to engage with students and showing investment in the students is important.”</p> <p>Student</p>
FINANCIAL AID	<p>Access to financial aid resources and information proves elusive for students during the online transition—calling for more transparency in the process</p>	<p>“There is no in-person financial aid office, so you have to call, and you are on hold for hours. Other departments don't have answers because there are no answers. The system is not efficient, but you can't blame them. It's definitely stressful pertaining to financial aid.”</p> <p>Student</p>	<p>“Financial aid is a problem. My family is considered middle class. In my first year I got a lot of financial aid, the next year I got my financial aid drastically cut. I think a lot of students face this. Schools are pulling financial aid away after you've already started your college career.”</p> <p>Student</p>



3 | Overview of Solution Ideas To-date

Our solution ideas have been developed and reinforced throughout the Taskforce process and our working group* activities

Statewide Tool for Admissions, Transfer and Articulation*

A statewide common platform to facilitate dual admissions and degree pathways that allows students to both earn an Associate’s degree and transfer at the course level seamlessly into a 4-year university.

Merging K12/Postsecondary with Early College Credit*

Re-design junior and senior year of high school to incorporate early college credit opportunities at scale – and specifically, dual enrollment – for all students as a standard practice. Expand transfer/articulation of core courses across postsecondary and within created academic/workforce aligned pathways.

Package Financial Aid and Basic Needs*

Postsecondary students will receive coordinated, streamlined delivery of a full package of supports as a result of applying for financial aid, including basic needs support they qualify for (food, housing, mental health, childcare, transportation, and tools for learning like internet and devices).

Teaching and Learning

Academic leaders will design an educational experience that meets students’ unique needs by providing flexibility, support, and access to resources that promote effective teaching and learning.

Statewide Coordinating Body*

Create a statewide entity that leverages longitudinal data to improve alignment and coordination across the education ecosystem, so that students’ transitions follow a smooth, unified process.

High Touch, High Tech Advising from K12 to Postsecondary Completion*

Match students with a professionally trained “champion” who will coach them one-on-one on their academic, career and personal goals and pathways, including helping students proactively navigate support services they qualify for, using predictive analytics to support each student’s success, and completing degrees across California colleges and universities.

Connection to Workforce*

Pathways, internships, work-based opportunities, micro-credentials and support for working students that both help students more easily find their way to and through postsecondary credentials toward their targeted career of choice, and also nimbly respond to the needs of employers to keep pace with workforce demands.

Higher Ed Finance Structure

A redesigned business model for higher ed institutions, where expenditures and internal budgeting practices, fixed costs, and academic cost structures are re-aligned around student priorities and predictability, and where funding incentives are established around (timely) degree completion outcomes.

Digital Equity*

Addressing the massive digital divide by providing reliable and affordable high-quality internet access, technology devices, focused locations to study, and skill building for navigating online platforms, thus expanding the definition of the tools necessary for a postsecondary education.

Holistic Adult Learning*

Clearly defining the “adult learner” in order to redesign institutional structures, processes, partnerships and services that ensure holistic wrap-around supports and flexible learning opportunities that leverage adults’ existing knowledge and skills.

Seamless K12 through Postsecondary Support*

Merge the work between high school and postsecondary to seamlessly support students – particularly Black and Latinx students – with a warm hand-off from institution to institution (K12 to CC to CSU or UC) and through postsecondary completion to career.

Attainment Goal

Reorient our education ecosystem to focus on increasing the number of credential and degree holders - particularly for Black, Latinx and adult learners - aligned to California's workforce needs.

Statewide Data System: Already in development, a statewide longitudinal data reporting system will help education partners track students through the education pipeline and measure outcomes, which will play a key role in all of the solutions listed above.

These solution ideas address the findings from our research with stakeholders

Statewide Tool for Admissions, Transfer and Articulation*

Stakeholder need(s):



5. Flexibility and coherence

Merging K12/Postsecondary with Early College Credit*

Stakeholder need(s):



4. Higher ed-workforce connections

5. Flexibility and coherence

Package Financial Aid and Basic Needs*

Stakeholder need(s):



1. Basic needs



2. Digital divide

Teaching and Learning

Stakeholder need(s):



6. Value proposition of higher ed

10. COVID-19 unpredictability

Statewide Coordinating Body*

Stakeholder need(s):



4. Higher ed-workforce connections



5. Flexibility and coherence



7. Statewide data system

High Touch, High Tech Advising from K12 to Postsecondary Completion*

Stakeholder need(s):



1. Basic needs



4. Higher ed-workforce connections



8. Racial justice

Connection to Workforce*

Stakeholder need(s):



1. Basic needs



4. Higher ed-workforce connections



9. Industry demand shift

Higher Ed Finance Structure

Stakeholder need(s):



3. Funding inequities



10. COVID-19 unpredictability

Digital Equity*

Stakeholder need(s):



1. Basic needs



2. Digital divide

Holistic Adult Learning*

Stakeholder need(s):



1. Basic needs



6. Value proposition of higher ed

Seamless K12 through Postsecondary Support*

Stakeholder need(s):



4. Higher ed-workforce connections



8. Racial justice

Attainment Goal

Stakeholder need(s):



7. Statewide data system



8. Racial justice

The Governor's Council for Postsecondary Education has also been a strategic thought-partner, offering valuable guidance on important considerations

Governance
Structures

Indigenous
Students

HBCU's as a Model
for Replication

System Alignment
Across Segments

Prop 209 and
Priority Student
Populations

Affordability in
Light of Limited
Resources



| Appendix

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.



Thank you!
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