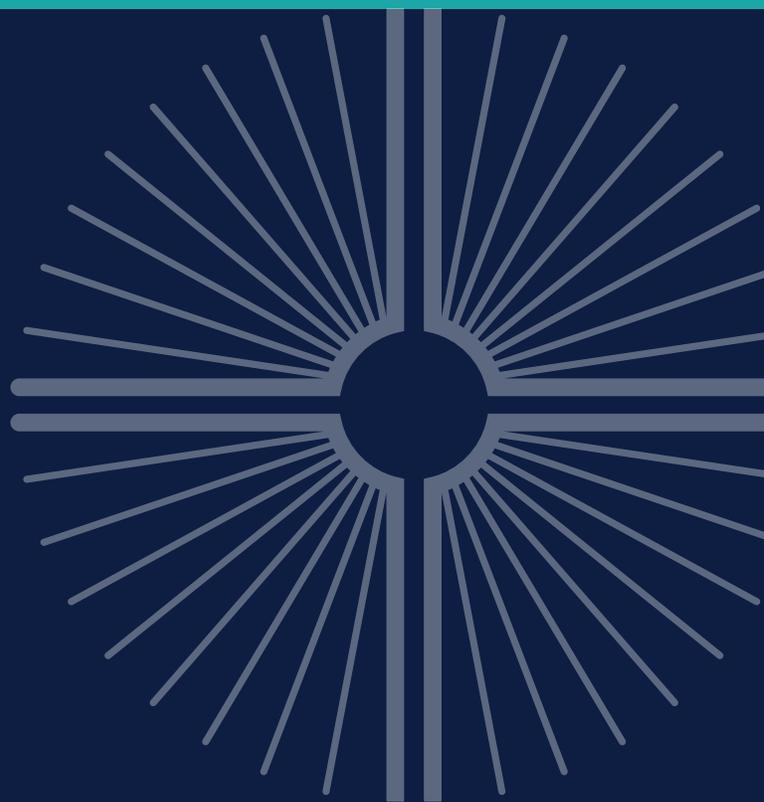


July 2021

Community College  
League of California  
**2021-24 Strategic Plan**



COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE LEAGUE  
OF CALIFORNIA

# About the Community College League of California and the 2021-24 Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup>

The Community College League of California (League) is a nonprofit public benefit corporation whose voluntary membership consists of the 72 local public community college districts and Calbright. It supports locally elected Trustees and community college CEOs serving their students and communities by advocating on their behalf at the state and federal levels, providing continued professional development, and delivering services that employ economies of scale to minimize cost.

The League is guided by two policy boards, one for CEOs, the other for Trustees, and is directed by a smaller board, The League Board of Directors, which fulfills the organizational and legal requirements of a nonprofit board including hiring and evaluating the League's President and Chief Executive Officer.

## Executive Summary

While this plan contains a series of goals and strategies, its essence is: Organizational Integration, Leadership Development, and Communication. Inheriting the mantle of those who built and developed the organization, today's leaders are devoted to maximizing the effectiveness of the League and recognize that a strong statewide, independent association benefits the California Community Colleges. Commitment to teamwork, understanding of board and staff roles, engagement in annual goal setting and evaluation, and effective communication are the keys to this success.

It should be noted that the development of the policy goals and strategies in this plan continue as a work in progress. Staff and organizational leaders should continue to develop and refine timelines, and further attention is recommended on resource allocation to correspond with specific goals and strategies.



<sup>1</sup> While this document refers to a "Strategic Plan," a more accurate term is "Strategic Management" which connects organizational outcome to a process, not a product. This report uses the terms "Strategic Plan" and "Strategic Planning" to include all aspects of the process, including implementation.

## Development of Plan

Work on this strategic plan began in September 2020 with a recognition that the exigencies of COVID-19 might lengthen the process. Since then, there have been five presentations before the various boards and monthly meetings with the executive staff. Each board conducted its own SWOT Evaluation and survey.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, an external survey was sent to community college stakeholders who regularly interact with the League. League President & CEO, Dr. Larry Galizio, has helped guide all phases of the process and the 2020-21 presidents of the League's policy boards, Dr. Pamela Luster and Adrienne Grey, have lent their support and expertise.

## Expectations of the Strategic Plan

The object of the strategic plan is organizational process-change as a means to improving outcomes not only for the association but for the colleges themselves. What distinguishes the League in this regard is the nature of its leaders: those with the highest-level decision-making authority at the district and campus level. Implementation of this plan with specific attention to Vertical Integration as discussed below can yield tremendous benefits to the institutions—and by extension, to the students—represented by the League.

While objective and subjective analyses confirm that the League began this process from a position of strength from the perspective of both organizational management and content achievement, its ability to move forward in a unified manner can be strengthened. This will not only enhance the organization's governance process but its ability to fulfill its mission and vision as well. With an emphasis on process, the seeds of change generated by this plan have already sprouted and will continue to grow with a continuing commitment to implementation.

At its core, this Strategic Plan emphasizes the following three overlapping areas as the key to organizational improvement: *Horizontal Integration, Vertical Integration, and Integrated Communications.*



### Horizontal Integration:

Assuring that all parts of the League are aligning in furtherance of its objectives.



### Vertical Integration:

Assuring that the work of the staff professionals aligns with that of the volunteer leaders and needs of the districts (and vice versa) in furtherance of the organization's objectives.



### Integrated Communications:

Assuring that internal and external communications reflect both horizontal and vertical integration in furtherance of the organization's objectives.



<sup>2</sup> SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

# Major Findings



## Horizontal Integration:

While the SWOT analyses and stakeholder surveys revealed a high level of confidence in the organization, specifically in the organizational management, there was limited understanding or recognition of how the different departments Government Relations, Leadership Development and Education Services, and District Services interact together to fulfill organizational goals.

## Recommendations:

It is critical that the association be clear on the development, implementation, and communication of its annual goals. Although the goals contained in this document reflect a three-year horizon, they should be evaluated each year for relevancy and strategic importance to the districts.

As a timeframe recommendation, development and/or evaluation of goals can begin as early as July and should be approved no later than the end of November. Between November to the end of January, staff should evaluate the goals and bring forward a plan for discussion reflecting the roles of each of the departments, reasonable timelines, and opportunities for leadership engagement in implementing the goals.

Since November 2020, the Management Team of Dr. Larry Galizio, President & CEO; Lisa Mealoy, Chief Operating Officer; Carmen Sandoval, Director of Education Services and Leadership Development; Andrew Martinez, Director of Government Affairs; and Sarah Kiesling, Chief Financial Officer; has been meeting on a monthly basis in discussions facilitated by Jonathan Lightman on aligning the major components of the organization to fulfill the major goals of Funding, Responding to COVID-19, and Equity, and to review and evaluate professional books and articles pertaining to association management. These meetings should continue as a means of strengthening horizontal integration of the organization.

## Vertical Integration:

The stakeholder surveys and internal evaluations showed support for the work of the directors and officers in both the CEO and Trustee boards in advancing the League's mission, while noting that these efforts were episodic in nature and not the result of specific and anticipated times of the year where volunteer leaders would be asked to participate.

Similarly, internal evaluations highlighted the need for both annual and ongoing training on the roles and responsibilities of board members to assure maximum efficiency and effectiveness of operations as well as legal compliance and risk mitigation.

## Recommendations:

As noted above, there should be a set and anticipated time in the calendar where the boards develop and approve their organizational goals following which the staff can develop a plan for discussion reflecting the roles of each of the departments, reasonable timelines,

and opportunities for leadership engagement in their implementation. With specific calendaring in mind, board members and other volunteer leaders can anticipate when they will be asked to perform key tasks outlined in the implementation plans.

With defined goals in place, each meeting of the respective boards should dedicate time to measure progress and assess obstacles. It is advisable to do this somewhere in the beginning of the meeting while using the conclusion to announce next steps, particularly those requiring the attention and participation of board members. At a designated point in the year, the respective boards should be able to quantify success on the specific goals, and hopefully celebrate those achievements. In keeping with the theme of measuring progress, it is advisable for each meeting agenda to list and review both primary and secondary objectives for the meeting themselves as a way of explaining the specific purpose for convening. Taking these steps will facilitate organizational progress over the course of a year and allow board leaders to evaluate the success of each meeting.

At the earliest possible opportunity following the inauguration of a new board session, there should be dedicated time for training on the Mission, Vision, and Values of the organization, along with the roles and responsibilities of board members. Training for the League board, the legal entity of the Community College League of California, should be more extensive, and include such topics as duty of care, duty of loyalty, and conflict of interest. Effective vertical integration cannot be achieved through a one-time orientation but requires ongoing training at each board meeting to introduce leaders to the League's various departments and decision-making processes. Since it is unreasonable for board members to memorize the organizational Mission and Vision statements, it is important to list them at the top of each meeting agenda.

A third element to improve vertical integration is development of a more deliberate process of leadership identification. While the League has had many experienced and talented CEOs and Trustees guiding its relevant boards, it should develop a deliberate and coherent strategy of using its various committees as training grounds for potential board candidates, and as a means for allowing former board members to continue their involvement in the organization. It is recommended that attention be paid to this area with the development of a new approach by July 2022.

### **Integrated Communications:**

While both internal and external stakeholders have praised the League for its social media and policy reports, there is not a consistent approach to defining problems, explaining strategies, and measuring progress. This has resulted in confusion over organizational achievements and understanding where volunteer effort could have been better utilized. Further, there have been specific concerns about difficulty in navigating the website, particularly on its stated goals.

### **Recommendations:**

Improving internal communications begins with the development of board agendas and reporting. Although the day-to-day work of the League is primarily focused on its standing agenda—expected activities in pursuit of its mission—and its reactive agenda—how it responds to events outside its control—each board meetings should dedicate sufficient time to discuss progress on its strategic agenda—that which it seeks to achieve pursuant to its annual goals, with other items moved to written reports. In furtherance of this strategy, each board meeting should begin with a recap of progress on the strategic goals since the last meeting and conclude with a discussion of what needs to be accomplished before the next.

Since board meeting agendas already include a report from the President & CEO, this time can be dedicated to discussing progress on strategic goals, specifically, how the departments in the League are working together and how volunteer efforts are making a difference.

The recommended template for both internal and external communications on the League's strategic agenda is as follows:

1. Define problem
2. Explain favored solution
3. Discuss how the different departments in the League are working together to solve it
4. Highlight the volunteer role
5. Review progress

As part of this process, it is essential to honor achievements and victories even if they do not meet 100 percent of the goal. Reaching a percent of a target should not be considered a defeat but inspiration to assess, regroup, and continue trying.

For the League to assert its position as the premier statewide professional association of the California Community College districts, it is essential to develop a calendar schedule of submitting op-eds to general or specialized media which provides its interpretation of the challenges facing the community colleges along with a summary of actions that it has taken (or intends to take) to address them. Further, it is incumbent to not simply update the content of the organization's website, but to ensure that it is user-friendly and prominently displays the annual goals, strategies, and opportunities for involvement.



# Elements of the Plan

## I. Vision—Inspirational and Aspirational Goal

Replace: Quality Public Community Colleges for All Californians.

***California Community Colleges as the global model for community-based public higher education with an unparalleled commitment to access, equity, and achievement.***

Discussion: In formulating the new Vision statement, the CEO and Trustee boards both requested a high level of aspiration for the California Community Colleges, accentuating their potential as an international model for higher education. The Vision statement for the League will have been achieved when the California Community Colleges reach this status.

## II. Mission—Explanation of Organizational Purpose

Replace: To strengthen California's Community Colleges through advocacy, leadership development, and district services.

***As the professional membership association of the California Community College districts, the Community College League of California empowers California Community Colleges to transform the lives of our diverse students and strengthen communities statewide through advocacy, leadership development, district services, coalition building, and policy advancement.***

Discussion: Both the CEO and Trustee boards desired a Mission statement that defined the role of the League and explained the educational and social benefit of its work.

### III. Values—Core Principles and Ideals

Replace:

Visionary: The League strives to foster creative and enterprising approaches to issues confronting California's Community College leaders through consideration of the future with imagination and rigor.

Ethical Leadership: We are committed to practicing and supporting authentic, honest, equity-minded, respectful and purposeful leadership.

Collaborative: Twenty-first century community college leadership demands effective collaboration among and between the multiple constituencies and stakeholders in California. The League is uniquely qualified to create opportunities for collaborative and integrated approaches to advance our sector's critical mission.

Service: As a member-focused organization, the League embraces the servant-leadership approach by attending to our member districts' highest priority needs first.

Inclusive: Serving the most diverse public system of higher education in the U.S. is an honor and a privilege. The League continually seeks to lead and support our members' efforts to create the conditions for equitable and inclusive communities of learning.

Deliberative: Informed and enlightened discourse and debate is a necessary condition of a pluralistic and democratic community of learners. The League seeks to foster discussion and dialogue among our diverse stakeholders to advance our understanding and support for California's Community Colleges.

***We value a transformative vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the core of our decision-making to uplift our institutions, communities, and students.***

***We value access to affordable and quality public higher education through the California Community Colleges with an unyielding commitment to equity and achievement.***

***We value local governance of the California Community Colleges where diverse trustees from locally elected communities determine institutional priorities and where the state and federal governments establish overall policies and provide critical funding.***

***We value democratic institutions in all levels of government which adhere to the highest levels of ethics and transparency, and where stakeholders can equitably and robustly participate in the election of officeholders and influence policy.***

***We value our role as the premier professional membership association of all California Community College districts, where CEOs and Trustees can collectively determine how best to represent and serve their diverse interests in advocacy, leadership development, and district services.***

***We value the diverse professionals who lead and work for the Community College League of California and we honor their commitment, service, and talent by adhering to the highest levels of collegiality and respect, and through fostering continuing opportunities for professional development to expand their potential and reach new horizons.***

Discussion: The CEO and Trustee boards supported a statement of Values for the League that recognizes both the organization and the California Community Colleges. Additionally, there was overwhelming support in prioritizing and embedding elements of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in all of the statements.

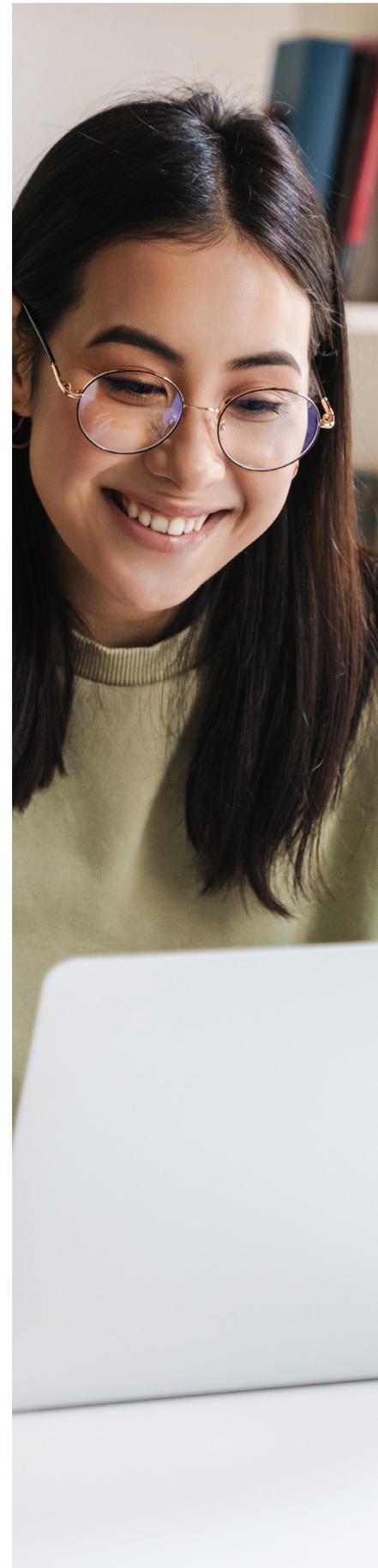
#### **IV. As noted above, there should be an annual training for board members and staff on the Mission, Vision, and Values and their role in guiding the organization forward. Substantive Goals Developed by the CEO and Trustee Boards 2021-24.**

##### **A. Increase and Stabilize Funding to California Community College Districts**

- Advocate for complete buy down of deferrals—Government Relations (GR)
- Advocate for COLA to match that of K-12 or supplemental increase to base funding to match at least 70% of K-12 COLA—GR
- Advocate for longer term relief on pension obligations—GR
- Advocate for investments in district infrastructure, including scheduled maintenance and instructional equipment—GR
- Advocate for strategies to rebuild enrollment with emphasis on equity, including reform of Cal Grant—GR
- Advocate multi-year spending window for one-time funding—GR
- Advocate 100% of federal funding to be based on headcount instead of FTES—GR
- Advocate for the strategic use of state dollars to complement, not replicate, federal funding—GR
- Advocate \$4 million per year for three-years in one-time funds for Ex Libris Integrated Digital Library—GR and District Services (DS)
- Develop messaging campaign to position California Community Colleges as the key to an equitable recovery—GR
- Engage external stakeholders in education and other interests in longer-term solutions to funding crisis, (tax legislation, ballot initiatives)—GR
- Convene community college stakeholders in ongoing budget discussions—GR and Leadership Services (LS)
- Initiate collaborative budget advocacy with other community college stakeholders on common budget priorities—GR
- Facilitate discussion on connecting districts to online energy/solar projects as a way of reducing energy bills—DS
- Integrate training on budget, statutory construction, state/federal alignment, legislative process, and advocacy in regularly scheduled conferences and workshops, as well as board meetings and other webinars—GR and LS
- Create best practices speaker series on advocacy—LS

##### **Specific Strategies on Funding to be Incorporated into Ongoing Practice**

- By September 30, President & CEO to identify at least three board meetings during the year to include a legislative training.
- By October 31, Leadership Services and Government Relations to identify at least three events (conferences, workshops, webinars) in the year to include discussions of the community college budget.
- By October 31, Leadership Services and Government Relations to identify at least two opportunities per year for districts to hear from outside experts on maximizing resources through advocacy, fund raising, or other.
- Expectation each year of a specific engagement-ask of board members and district leaders to engage in budget advocacy (to be discussed an annual orientation or training):
  - a) By Jan 30
  - b) By one week following May Revise
  - c) Third at discretion of Government Relations Director (should be no later than April 15)



## B. COVID-19

- Advocate one-time flexible use COVID-19 block grant of at least \$50 million from either state government or fifth round of federal assistance—GR
- Advocate strategies to rebuild enrollment with emphasis on equity, including reform of Cal Grant—GR
- Advocate continuing support for Career Education and Workforce Development in areas deemed critical for support of local communities during the pandemic—GR
- Ensure that CEOs and Trustees have access to the latest legal and public health information on reopening—GR
- Provide forums on information and best practices on reopening—LS
- Create best practices speaker series—LS

## C. Equity/DEI/Anti-Racism

- Develop baseline understanding of Equity with CEOs and Trustees as a way of creating new curriculum—LS
- Launch Aspiring CEO Program as a way of fostering greater diversity and exercise more cultural proficiency—LS
- Advocate additional funding for new training and hiring of diverse faculty—GR
- Support efforts toward a new form of Prop .16 to reinstate equity in public hiring, university admissions, and public contracting—GR
- Update Excellence in Trusteeship certificate to ensure cultural competence is embedded in the curriculum—LS
- Create best practices speaker series—LS

## V. Substantive Goals Developed by the League Board 2021-24

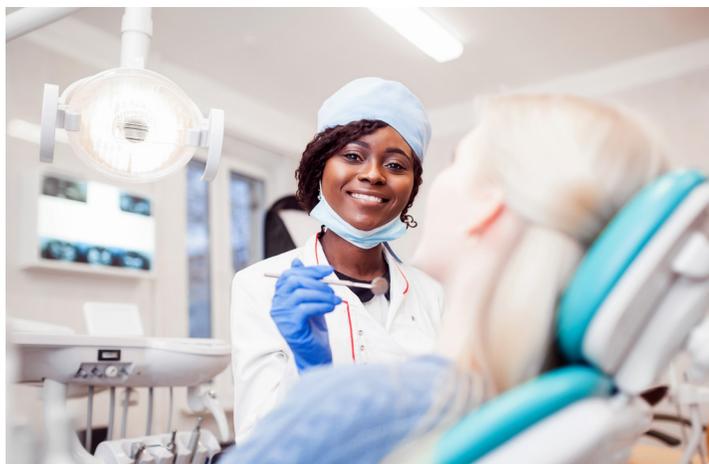
### A. Maximize Funding to Districts (see Goal #1 above)

### B. Launch Aspiring CEO Program (see Goal #3 above), specific strategies:

1. Launch annual program starting April 26.
2. By February 2021, ask members of each Caucus to promote program.
3. By March 30, LS and DS to investigate feasibility of corporate sponsorship.
4. By March 2021, promote program in numerous listservs in the CCCs.

### C. Strengthen Ties with CCCBOG

1. By September 30 of each year, President & CEO to determine two board meetings of the League (inclusive of the policy boards) in which a member of the CCCBOG will be invited to speak.
2. Before each meeting of the CCCBOG, League to connect with at least one member of the CCCBOG on League concerns.
3. By October 2021, explore possibility of hosting the CCCBOG at a special dinner each year.
4. By January 2023, sponsor legislation creating a dedicated CEO seat on the CCCBOG.



#### **D. Strengthen Ties Between League Policy Boards and Organizations Representing Students**

1. By September 30 of each year, President & CEO to identify League board meeting in which the executive committees of the policy boards will extend an invitation to jointly convene with the executive committee of the Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC).
2. By September 30 of each year, President & CEO or CCCT President to ask student trustee to attend SSCCC board and present back to CCCT.
3. Annually share the agenda of the Student Trustee workshop with the policy boards
4. By March 15 of each year, Government Relations Director to invite the SSCCC to participate in an annual collaborative advocacy day.

#### **E. Engage More Trustees and CEOs in League Events**

1. By March 1, 2022, Leadership Services Director to create evidence-based understanding of who is not participating and why.
2. By April 30 of each year, Leadership Services Director to complete a data analysis of participation. Report to be made at following policy board meetings.
3. By September 30 of each year, Leadership Services Director to create a semi-annual phone call outreach campaign to subset of those not participating.
  - a) Each year, members of the policy boards to invite at least three colleagues who have not attended to a League event.
  - b) In May and July, President & CEO to work with policy board chairs on identifying a training for board members to conduct this outreach.

**Structural Recommendations on Implementation:** Each part of this plan requires a point of contact. Where one or more are not listed in the recommendations, these are works in progress and need to be developed. With overall responsibility for the implementation of the plan vested in the President & CEO, it is recommended that the policy boards adopt the practice of assigning to their vice chairs the task of ensuring that the plan moves forward and remains an organizational priority. This year's vice chairs, Dr. Byron Clift Breland and Kenneth Brown, started this process and provided important feedback along the way.

