

2017 Final Thoughts - 2018 Preview 12/21/2017

CEO Colleagues,

Thank you for all of your work and dedication in 2017. While 2017 was a very challenging year, so much was accomplished and California is grateful for your service. I am also grateful for the support, encouragement and even the “constructive” criticism you’ve given me this year. It was all appreciated. 2018 will be another year of opportunity and change for our system. From the Chancellor’s Office on down to the colleges, we will continue to change, to adapt and to seize the opportunities given to us as educators. I have captured a few thoughts about 2017 and a small preview of what I see coming in 2018. For those of you able to make the January 5th meeting at Los Rios, we will talk more about 2018. But for now, thank you and may you all have a joyous and peaceful Holiday Season!

California College Promise/AB 19: 2017 was the year that we finally realized the creation of the California College Promise. Thanks to the college and system leaders that helped make this happen. Many of you took the lead by creating your own partnerships and student incentive initiatives locally. With the passage of AB 19 our colleges now have the opportunity to leverage state dollars to better support the financial needs of students and encourage all residents to attend and complete a college credential. While I have heard from some of you that the requirements of AB 19 are onerous, I am confident that with the support of the Chancellor’s Office all of the colleges that wish to participate in the California College Promise will be able to do so. In 2018, I am confident that Governor Brown will appropriate the resources necessary to permanently fund AB 19.

Guided Pathways: Guided Pathways (GP) became part of the lexicon in our colleges and a great deal of time and energy was invested in this movement. From the three pioneer colleges that began with the AACC project to the 20 colleges that launched the California demonstration project to all of the other colleges that have adopted GP as the central organizing strategy for their college, our system became the largest adoption of the GP framework in the nation. There is tremendous promise in the system wide adoption of GP but there will also be a tremendous amount of work and systemic changes that will rattle our culture. As Chancellor, I have made the GP framework the primary vehicle for improving student success and for achieving the goals of the Vision for Success. Up and down the state I have seen passionate and committed faculty, staff and administrators pouring themselves into learning and implementing GP. As leaders of our system, we need to do everything possible to ensure the success of this tremendous effort. Our students and our state are depending on us. 2018 will see further investment in the integration of categoricals under the GP framework. We will also see further alignment of funding behind the pillars of GP and incentives to fully implement the framework. I commit to you that the Chancellor’s Office will continue to support your efforts and look for regulatory changes that will allow you the flexibility you need to implement GP and reap the improvements in student outcomes that we expect. In addition, we will see investments in innovation that will support colleges who can bring promising ideas under the GP framework to scale in regions and throughout the state.

Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program: This year demonstrated tremendous progress in advancing the baccalaureate degree program at several of our colleges. While many have

expressed concern about my support for this program, I want to clearly state that I support the successful demonstration of this innovation. I have my concerns about the process and structure of the degree program enabling legislation, but I will continue to support the ability of local leaders to respond to the needs of their communities. In 2018, my office will support ways to allow the pilot colleges to continue to enroll cohorts of students into the existing programs. I will also continue to work with state and system leaders to determine the best way to seek the authority to expand programs where workforce demand is clear and where we have colleges with the demonstrated capacity to respond.

Enrollment & Financial Stability: In 2017, our system experienced clear signs of enrollment decline. Many colleges are in stabilization or on the verge of requesting stabilization. Neighboring colleges are spending millions in marketing dollars to compete for enrollments and there are some signs that in desperation, some colleges are exploring options that may not be in the best interest of students or the system. 2017 has provided us a unique opportunity to reconsider our funding formula, which is heavily weighted on enrollment growth. In addition, the ways in which colleges are responding to the enrollment declines calls in to question how we align financial incentives behind the pillars in the Guided Pathways framework and ensure that the success of our students is the driving decision maker. In 2018, we will begin to tackle these difficult questions. Success will require leadership from all of us. Many difficult and courageous conversations will need to be had and at points in time we will need to take leaps of faith as we propose new financing and incentive structures. I am confident that we will have enough flexibility to hold colleges harmless as we take on these changes. I will need the collective thinking of this CEO group to help inform and shepherd the changes that need to happen.

Flex Learning Options for Workers: This year the Chancellor's Office took on the challenge of trying to imagine what a 21st century, fully online community college would look like. Several of you provided leadership and critical input to this process. While many of you continue to have reservations about where this might go, I can tell you with some certainty that in 2018 we will carry this discussion to the next level. One of the things that keeps me up at night is the dramatic changes occurring in the state and national workforce. The gaps in income inequality continue to grow, the shadow of recession and further displacement nears and the amazing advances in automation and Artificial Intelligence are outstripping our ability to adapt to them. It will be a priority of my office to push us to reimagine how we serve our non-traditional students and the millions of Californians that find themselves stranded in this economy. While I see great opportunity for our traditional 114 colleges through this experimentation, many of you see challenges for our colleges. Rest assured that while we expect to pursue new learning science technologies and further leverage OEI, we will continue to work with our colleges' leaders to inform the way forward.

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