

The Campaign for

College Opportunity

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Campaign for College Opportunity?

The Campaign for College Opportunity is a nonprofit organization devoted to ensuring that the next generation of Californians has the opportunity to go to college as promised by the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education.

Why is the Campaign for College Opportunity needed?

In 1960, California leaders made a commitment through the Master Plan for Higher Education to provide a place in college for every student who seeks the opportunity. That promise is now at risk. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of Californians between the ages of 18 and 24 is expected to increase by more than one million. **According to the Department of Finance, 640,000 additional California students are likely to seek college over current capacity by 2014.** At the same time, there is no commitment or plan on the part of the state to provide adequate space and funding in our community colleges and universities for this expected growth.

Are students being turned away from California colleges now?

California's college-age population is growing faster now than at any time since 1970. Our demographics are changing, with a growing Latino population and growing numbers of students who will be the first in their family to go to college. **Students have to drive to multiple campuses to get courses they need, endure waiting lists for high-demand programs, and take courses they don't need because they can't get into courses they do need.** These problems are felt in the CSU and UC, but most acutely in the state's community colleges. In 2003, 11,000 students who were eligible for admission to UC and CSU were initially redirected to community college. The CSU system reported a 10.8 percent increase of first-time freshman applications in fall 2005 compared to the previous fall; and the UC system said that the number of applicants for the fall of 2006 freshman class has increased 8.8 percent, compared to only 2.8 percent in 2005.

Why is college access so important to California?

According to a landmark study by researchers at UC Berkeley, titled "Return on Investment," obtaining a higher education not only has "quality of life" benefits for the individual, such as having a more secure career, but it benefits the state as well. One major finding of the study is that **for every new dollar California invests to get more students in and through college, it will receive a net return of three dollars.** College education will also prepare California's future workforce. Over the next two decades, according to a recent report by Dr. Robert Fountain at Sacramento State University, the growing demand for educated workers and the need to replace retiring Baby Boomers means that **we need 3.2 million new college-educated workers – nurses, teachers engineers and others – to keep our competitive edge.**

What solutions does the Campaign propose to address the college-access crisis?

In October 2006, the Campaign for College Opportunity will begin "Practices with Promise," calling on California educators to submit their working solutions to expand college opportunity in our state. These practices will then be shared with other educators and policymakers for wider implementation. In addition to "Practices with Promise," the Campaign for College Opportunity is currently conducting visits with legislators and **in early 2007 plans to introduce legislation to ensure access to California's community colleges and universities.** In 2006, the Campaign for College Opportunity introduced a comprehensive bill (SB 1709), authored by [Senator Jack Scott \(D-Pasadena\)](#) with support from a bipartisan group of co-authors, including [Assemblywoman Carol Liu \(D-La Canada Flintridge\)](#), [Senator Jeff Denham \(R-Merced\)](#) and [Assemblywoman Lynn Daucher \(R-Brea\)](#), to ensure access to California's community colleges and universities. The College Opportunity Act of 2006 called for an increase in involvement by the state, parents, students and the higher education community to maintain the promise of the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education. Unfortunately,

the bill did not make it out of the Senate Appropriations Committee, but the Campaign for College Opportunity plans to reintroduce a new bill in early 2007.

What is the Campaign for College Opportunity working on right now?

- **“Practices with Promise: A Call for Working Solutions for College Opportunity,”** to identify well-practiced ideas on expanding access and success; with a February 1, 2007 submission deadline.
- **“Save Me a Spot in College” scholarship contest,** to give youth a chance to tell California leaders why they and their peers deserve access to higher education, to be launched in October 2006 (with a deadline for entries of March 15, 2007). In 2005-06, the first year of the written word/poster/digital media contest attracted more than 9,000 entries, and the Campaign awarded \$70,000 in college scholarships to 107 middle school and high school students across the state of California. For more information, visit the “Save Me a Spot in College” portion of the Campaign’s website, <http://www.collegecampaign.org/contest>.
- **Study by researchers at Sacramento State University’s Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy (IHELP),** to break down higher education’s performance by race and regions of the state, in October 2006.
- **“Road to College: Information and Action for California Families,”** to help families learn the benefits of higher education, prepare their children for college and empower them to be a voice for college access; from January-June 2007.
- **New legislation,** to ensure access to California’s community colleges and universities, to be introduced in early 2007.

What is the Campaign for College Opportunity’s opinion about student fees?

Luckily for California students, our state has some of the lowest student fees in the country. However, because of our lack of a long-term fee policy, student fees are slashed during good economic times and then raised substantially during recessions, exactly when families can afford it the least. **The Campaign for College Opportunity is advocating for a set fee policy of predictable and very moderate fee increases so students and families can plan for their futures in higher education.** In addition, the Campaign for College Opportunity would like to see financial aid increased for students in need through use of campus, state and federal programs.

Didn’t Governor Schwarzenegger sign the Higher Education Compact in 2004 to ensure quality, access and affordability at California’s colleges?

Yes, and the Compact is an important starting point. However, there is still work to be done. **The limited length of the Compact, from 2005-2011, combined with the high projected growth in enrollment, will require additional solutions both in the near term and in the future.** Additionally, community colleges, which are also set to experience rising enrollment rates, and independent colleges, which enroll many California students, are not covered under the terms of Compact: only the CSU and UC. If we act now to build on the successes of the *Higher Education Compact* we can ensure that our colleges will continue to meet current levels of quality, access and affordability in the future.

What can I do to help?

The Campaign for College Opportunity is made up of concerned citizens, teacher, parents and students like you. **Join us by visiting the Campaign’s website (www.collegecampaign.org) or by calling one of the Campaign’s offices at 510-645-1362 (Oakland), 213-817-6034 (Los Angeles) or 209-549-2441 (Modesto).**

Who is involved in the Campaign for College Opportunity?

The Campaign for College Opportunity was co-founded in 2003 by the California Business Roundtable, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and the Community College League of California. The Executive Director of the Campaign is Abdi Soltani, and the board is chaired by Bill Hauck, President of the California Business Roundtable. Other board members include Roberta Achtenberg, Economic Development Consultant; Herb Carter, a California State University Trustee; James Doti, President of Chapman University; Mary Lyons, President of the University of San Diego; Scott Lay, President and CEO of the Community College League of California; Chuck Mack, Secretary of Teamsters Local 70; David “Mas” Masumoto, farmer and author; Frederick Ruiz, Chairman of the Board of Ruiz Food Products; Van Ton-Quinlivan, Chair of the San Mateo County Biotech Workforce Project; and Steve Weiner, Co-Founder, Campaign for College Opportunity.