

PRESS RELEASE

The Campaign for

College
Opportunity

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CALIFORNIANS GIVE FRONTLINE TESTIMONY ON COLLEGE-ACCESS CRISIS, PROPOSE SOLUTIONS, IN NEW STATEWIDE “LISTENING TOUR” REPORT

On Compact's Anniversary, Report Includes New Forecast: By 2013, Annual Enrollment Demand at CA's Community Colleges & Universities Will Grow by 837,000 Students

(Oakland and Los Angeles, CA) – In response to California's looming college-access crisis, the Campaign for College Opportunity released a new report today documenting the results of an unprecedented five-month, statewide “listening tour” to hear what Californians had to say about the challenges facing higher education and their ideas for solutions. The report includes new state figures on undergraduate enrollment projections for the state's community colleges, the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) through 2013.

The report, *“Listen Up: Californians Respond to the College-Access Crisis,”* gathers the ideas of more than 1,600 Californians representing more than 400 organizations across the state. Through more than 100 one-on-one meetings and 66 events in every major region of California, the Campaign met with parents, students and educators, as well as business, community, labor and religious leaders.

The report also includes profiles of current students who are already feeling the effects of an overcrowded college system. These students face waitlists for classes, travel to

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multiple campuses to get the courses they need, or have been turned away from full campuses.

To provide a valid portrait of the projected enrollment demands on California's community colleges and universities, the *"Listen Up"* report includes new research by the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the state's higher education planning agency.

These figures, which represent the growth in projected demand from Fall 2003 to Fall 2013, conclude that California will likely need to serve 672,489 additional students in the state's community colleges, an 119,044 additional students in the CSU, and 45,560 additional students in the UC. Regions such as Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County, the Inland Empire, the Central Valley and the Bay Area will experience significant growth. The report also shows that California high schools are likely to set new records for the largest graduating class of seniors in each of the next several years, with 45,000 additional high school graduates by 2008.

The report was released on the one-year anniversary of the Governor's Higher Education Compact with the CSU and UC.

"The Compact is a very important starting point in looking to the future. We need to build on the Compact to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure college access in California," said Abdi Soltani, Executive Director for the Campaign for College Opportunity.

"Californians strongly believe in providing college opportunity," Soltani added, "Whether these young people will have the opportunity to go to college depends entirely on the choices we make as a state."

According to the report's findings, older Californians who have benefited from the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education spoke of an "intergenerational responsibility" to solve the college-access crisis. Representatives of many businesses spoke to the importance of community colleges and universities preparing the workforce of the future.

Californians also agree that more state funding is essential, but that it won't solve the

problem alone. The state's colleges and universities need to make better use of existing resources, while tuition revenue and improved financial aid also have to play a role.

Some of the recommendations the Campaign proposes are:

- Developing a comprehensive, 10-year College Opportunity Plan, building on the Compact, that includes the state's universities, community colleges, private colleges, K-12 and financial aid.
- Making funding for higher education a top priority by developing a long-term financing plan.
- Encouraging higher education leaders, at the campus level and across systems, to share resources and streamline services to increase efficiency.
- Setting a predictable fee policy, matched with additional financial aid, and better education of parents and students beginning in middle school about the availability of aid.

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. The Campaign was co-founded by the California Business Roundtable, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Community College League of California.

If you would like more information on the Listening Tour report, or want to interview additional students or participants in your area, please contact Elisa Bongiovanni, Communications Director, at 510-645-1362 or elisa@collegecampaign.org. You can also visit the Campaign's website to download this release, the executive summary and the Listening Tour report at <http://www.collegecampaign.org>.

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