

**Statement of Principles:
Expanding College Access and Success for All Californians**

Background

- Public higher education in California is in a crisis.
- It has become increasingly difficult for students from all racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups to access California's public colleges and universities, including groups that have historically had low enrollment numbers as well as groups that have achieved significant access to California colleges and universities.
- Due to increasing demand for seats in California's public colleges and universities, coupled with a failure to increase admissions at a pace commensurate with the growth of the state's youth population, many families have great fears about decreased opportunities for economic success if their children are not able to access California's public institutions.
- There's a clear need to increase access to higher education for all groups, and it is also important to ensure that students will succeed once they enroll in college (e.g., begin college readiness earlier in the K-12 continuum, improve access to financial aid, etc.) and to stem college student dropout due to inability to complete necessary coursework, prohibitive cost, or other factors (e.g., feelings of isolation common to many students of color and first generation college students).
- At the same time, Californians clearly understand the need to better fund public education, as evidenced by the passage of Proposition 30 to raise certain taxes to benefit public education – Prop 30 received 55 percent support in the November 2012 election (and even higher support from African Americans, Asian Americans and Latinos) and has significantly – but only temporarily – increased resources for public education in the state.
- Even as California addresses the critical need to increase capacity in higher education, additional work is necessary to level the playing field for all students in California by ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to be eligible for and admitted to the best and most appropriate higher education setting. In addition to moving aggressively toward greater equity in K-12 public schools, California must also ensure that admissions criteria to higher education at all levels are fair and non-discriminatory, and that every applicant for higher education admissions has the ability to address and have considered all matters in overcoming adversity, which may include racial, ethnic or gender discrimination or bias, that may have shaped or influenced the applicant's development.

Principles

As organizations and individuals that believe in the critical importance of quality education in creating a pathway to socio-economic success, we support the following principles regarding access to and success in public higher education.

- **Reversing disinvestment in public higher education** – In order to restore and expand access to higher education for more California students, we must reverse the long-term disinvestment in public higher education in the state and instead focus on expanding and ensuring more educational opportunities for all California youth.
- **Finding common ground amongst all affected communities** – Instead of allowing ourselves to be pitted against each other over inadequate educational opportunities, we seek

to find common ground and focus on changing the status quo so that there are more opportunities for all California students, particularly the most vulnerable students, and greater equity and fairness throughout the educational system.

- **Ensuring college admission for more California students** – We must ensure admission opportunities for all California students to enroll in the public higher education system, including those from groups who have been denied access as well as those from groups who currently have access, consistent with the state’s Master Plan for Higher Education.
 - Expand admissions to allow more California students to enroll in the University of California, California State University and California Community Colleges.
 - Ensure that qualified graduates of high schools with the highest concentration of low-income, English Learner, foster care or other vulnerable youth are admitted to UC and CSU campuses.
 - Ensure that more community college students are prepared and able to transfer to four-year colleges.
- **Better preparing more students for college in an equitable education system** – We must ensure equity of opportunity in the pre-K-12 pipeline and also better prepare all students for college, as too many California college students must enroll in remedial courses instead of fully pursuing their college degree.
 - Work with all levels of public higher education to provide support to California’s pre-K and K-12 schools in strengthening college readiness (especially at schools with the most vulnerable youth).
 - Ensure that all public high schools offer equitable access to classes required for college admissions and AP classes.
 - Address and ameliorate bias in and out of the classroom that may limit the opportunities afforded to certain students.
 - Ensure that all students – regardless of race, socio-economic status, first language, or citizenship – are provided the support and educational enrichment programs necessary to permit them to achieve to their highest potential.
- **Better retaining enrolled college students** – We must better retain the students who do enroll in our public colleges and universities, as too many leave before earning a degree.
 - Provide academic and social supports particularly to the students matriculating from the high schools with the highest concentration of vulnerable youth.
 - Providing financial assistance that enables every student to advance as far in higher education as their ability and interest determine.
- **Making higher education more affordable** – We must make public higher education more affordable for more California students, as current costs put quality higher education out of the reach of too many California youths.
 - Increase availability of student aid and/or lower tuition and fees.
 - Pilot creative approaches to financing.
- **Addressing racial discrimination** – Racial discrimination still exists and takes many forms. While there should be no racial quotas (and in fact, racial quotas are unlawful), we should consider how lawful remedies that take race into account can help level the playing field to achieve fairness and increased educational access and success for all students, especially high school students eligible for UC and CSU admission.
 - Establish equity of opportunity in the K-12 pipeline by ensuring the elimination of discriminatory systems or practices.

- Examine and eliminate all admissions criteria or admissions practices that have a discriminatory effect and are not necessary to operating an effective admissions system.
- In the context of expanding educational opportunities for all, examine impact of Prop 209 on educational access and success and identify solutions to address its effect, such as appropriate amendment or repeal.
- **Promoting diversity and inclusion** – California is a tremendously diverse state, affirming the need to nurture the leadership and skills of individuals from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. We must develop and support leaders who have the ability and commitment to build common ground across diverse communities for the benefit of all Californians.

We call on California’s elected leaders to address the issues above, by hearing from a broad range of impacted communities – students, parents, educators, business leaders, advocates – and offering specific concrete solutions to expand educational opportunities for all Californians.

We believe that this broader, bolder, and more inclusive approach will make a significant impact for a large portion of California’s students, especially the most underserved, and we commit ourselves to supporting solutions that expand public higher education opportunities for all California students.

Individual and organizational supporters

Advancement Project
 Asian Business Association
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles
 Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI)
 Asian Law Alliance (ALA)
 ASPIRE-LA
 Brotherhood Crusade
 California Federation of Teachers (CFT)
 Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
 Chinese American Citizens Alliance-Los Angeles Lodge (CACA)
 Chinese-American Elected Officials (CEO)
 Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA
 Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)
 Committee of 100
 Community Coalition
 Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamérica (COFEM)
 Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
 Japanese American Citizens League - Pacific Southwest
 Khmer Girls in Action (KGA)
 LA Urban League
 Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)
 Latino Health Access
 Little Tokyo Service Center
 Los Angeles Community Action Coalition

Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
Organization of Chinese Americans-Greater Los Angeles (OCA-GLA)
Organization of Chinese Americans-San Francisco
PolicyLink
Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA)
SEIU-ULTCW/SEIU California State Council
South Asian Network (SAN)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)
Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC)
UNITE-LA
UC Irvine Asian Pacific Student Association
UCLA Asian Pacific Coalition
UCLA Vietnamese Student Union
UCSD Asian Pacific Student Association
UCSD Coalition for Critical Asian American Studies
UNCF (United Negro College Fund)
USC Asian Pacific American Student Services
USC Student Coalition for Asian Pacific Empowerment
West Coast Asian Pacific Islander Student Union