

# California Campus Compact 2018-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

In 2017, California Campus Compact (CACC) designed and implemented an intentional strategic planning process. Building on their existing strategic plan, CACC chose to continue to focus on their vision, mission and strategic directions which were crafted in 2007 and reviewed in 2013; as each clearly articulate relevant and intentional aspirations for the Compact.

A small group of diverse stakeholders including member campuses, students, program participants, campus presidents, community partners and non-member campuses provided extensive feedback; while, a later draft along with a survey was broadly distributed to CACC's constituents by email and online. Deliberations by CACC's staff and Executive Board were informed by the feedback collected and enabled CACC to focus their goals on the civic engagement fields' current issues and needs across California. In total, more than 100 stakeholders provided direct input and feedback as this strategic plan was developed. The CACC Executive Board officially approved the plan on March 2, 2018.

## ABRIEF HISTORY

California is a leader in the movement to advance the public purposes of higher education. President Donald Kennedy of Stanford University co-founded the national Campus Compact in 1985; President Kennedy and Chancellor Charles Young of UCLA co-founded California Campus Compact (CACC) three years later. The Campus Compact network now includes a national office, 30 state and regional organizations, and over 1000 college and university presidents and chancellors representing public and private, two-year and four-year campuses and some 6 million students. While most of the state and regional Compacts are formally affiliated with the national Compact and share a fundamental commitment to integrating civic and community engagement into campus and academic life, each organization operates independently, developing programs and priorities in response to its distinctive context.

CACC was one of the first state Compacts formed and since its inception CACC has offered groundbreaking initiatives and publications related to national and community service, diversity, risk management, partnerships, and college access.

Dedicated to transformational education, California Campus Compact works to strengthen the capacity of member campuses as they engage students and partners to address critical community issues.

CACC's primary activities include:

- Providing networking and professional development opportunities for college and university staff, faculty, students, administrators, and community partners;
- Communicating with college presidents about the purpose, progress and issues surrounding civic engagement on campus;
- Recognizing outstanding initiatives and strong leaders through awards programs;

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- Offering grants to support high-quality and innovative initiatives;
- Providing leadership by advocating for greater investment in community-based learning and engaged scholarship;
- Connecting and collaborating with leaders and organizations across the state and nation;
- Conducting research to advance the civic engagement field; and
- Sharing information and other resources through e-newsletters, publications, one-on-one consulting, and on-site technical assistance.

CACC's support for regional networking among its members, its student scholarships encouraging leadership, and its awards recognizing outstanding efforts have developed and demonstrated campuses' capacity to be powerful leaders in advancing civic and community engagement. The history of this organization and this movement in California highlights the change that can come through a deep and persistent commitment to the effective practice and promotion of engagement. Throughout this document the term civic engagement is used to include civic engagement, community engagement and service learning.

## ASSESSING THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Many aspects of California's context in 2017 are similar to 2013, when CACC developed its last strategic plan. A high unemployment rate, combined with a high cost of living, makes California a hard place to live for too many people. As the nation's most populous and diverse state, with the world's sixth largest economy, California wields influence far beyond its own borders—but concentration of wealth and gentrification challenge many communities. Demographic changes are creating a generation gap that could have dire consequences if the proportionately whiter aging population under-invests in education and other critical supports for youth and families. Rising tuition rates make colleges and universities less accessible, forcing students to juggle often overwhelming academic, work, family, and community responsibilities—and making alternative pathways to professional opportunity more appealing. Significant gaps by race and class already exist in enrollment, achievement, and graduation rates at all levels of education. If not effectively addressed, these gaps may contribute to even more profound economic and social disparities. Traditional colleges and universities must maximize and demonstrate their distinctive value to survive.

Fortunately, the state's tremendous cultural richness contributes to creativity, innovation, and economic growth. Many Californians are eager to address the educational achievement gap and other important issues, such as climate change and gun violence. Educational institutions with a genuine long-term commitment to the well-being of their communities can help create positive change. More and more students now arrive at colleges and universities with substantial service experiences and a commitment to cross-cultural understanding and leadership in their communities. Younger faculty have displayed great interest in engaged learning and scholarship. Community partners often feel deeply committed to serving as co-educators of the students involved in their organizations, but most face increased need with declining resources, making it as important as ever to develop reciprocal partnerships that truly build their capacity to achieve their mission. Colleges and universities have the opportunity to anchor communities by supporting community and economic development through their operations as well as their educational activities—nurturing social entrepreneurs, partnering to provide training and networking opportunities for aspiring and existing business owners, purchasing goods and services from local businesses, and more.

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These issues may not be new, but their context has changed significantly. On many policy issues, the State of California is at odds with the federal government. A polarized political environment is producing more harsh and hateful rhetoric and action. While social media can inform and mobilize people beyond a particular place, people with different political views tend to see very different information—and to disagree on what is true. Immigrants, Muslims, and LGBTQ people fear violence and discrimination, while Republican students on campus feel marginalized on many campuses. Rural/urban divides reflect mutual perceptions of disrespect and unfair distribution of resources. Fewer people trust major institutions, including higher education, and more criticize colleges and universities for liberal indoctrination, elitism, or unaffordability.

Civic engagement efforts remain critically important—and the times require even more deliberate, principled, high-quality work. With good support, civic engagement experiences can contribute to students' sense of belonging and agency; when not done well, they can alienate, discourage, even harm. Our collective capacity for critical thinking and democratic deliberation matters. Individuals and institutions can lead by being courageous yet humble, attentive to structural injustices and willing to change themselves, clear about their values and open to others. Fostering more equitable and inclusive educational communities must be a central goal. Campuses can demonstrate their public purpose and value by addressing the ways in which institutional policies and cultures create an opportunity gap when there is no aspiration gap. This is not a partisan commitment, but a recognition that developing diverse human talent is essential to California's economic, social, and political vitality.

Support for civic engagement has continued to grow in recent years, fueled in part by funders' expectation for social impact, demands for public return on investment, students' interest, research on "high-impact educational practices," and pedagogical trends toward "learner-centered" classrooms and interdisciplinary study. However, donors are increasingly defining the challenges, the strategic approaches, and the impact without as much input from colleges and communities. Similarly, some campuses are highlighting the ways in which they address "grand challenges," though communities are not always involved in defining the challenges or their solutions. Employers have advocated for colleges and universities to support more applied learning, in order to graduate students with the skills critical for professional as well as civic life, such as communication, problem solving, and teamwork. Campus-community partnerships are thus increasingly seen as a strategy to be integrated with other initiatives to enhance educational success, workforce development, and other priorities. The field now needs more longitudinal and large-scale research to capture (and inform improvements in) the results of civic engagement, plus more storytelling to convey the ongoing possibility of working across differences to create a better world.

Even with the expansion of the civic engagement field, academic reward structures and habits still tend to value traditional forms of scholarship. Tight budgets have led to an increased reliance on adjunct faculty, heavier teaching loads, and limited infrastructure to develop and sustain effective partnerships. Interest in expanding online learning offers an opportunity to innovate with non-place-based partnerships, but developing them and the skills for facilitating online learning requires intention and time. In communities with multiple higher education institutions, many partner organizations would appreciate more coordination across campus civic engagement efforts; closer collaboration could also generate more relationships and pathways for students interested in transferring between two-year and four-year institutions. Joint planning and work is not easy, given variations in schedule, language, constituency, philosophy, and programming. Yet it is an opportunity to shape a better common future. California Campus Compact is always committed to exploring ways we can best advance our mission while fully supporting our members across the state. We look forward to engaging a wide range of stakeholders in that process, as well as the strategic directions identified here.

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### CALIFORNIA CAMPUS COMPACT'S VISION

In 2023, California colleges, universities, and communities are contributing to a healthy, just, and democratic society through ongoing dialogue and collaboration, with a strong shared commitment to the development of socially responsible individuals and institutions.

### CALIFORNIA CAMPUS COMPACT'S MISSION

California Campus Compact builds the collective commitment and capacity of colleges, universities, and communities to advance civic and community engagement for a healthy, just, and democratic society.

### CRITICAL BARRIERS TO THE VISION

Key barriers to California Campus Compact's vision include:

1. The dominant U.S. American culture is individualistic and assumes nearly everyone starts life on an even playing field;
2. Political polarization and violence undermine confidence in our democracy and the foundation for civic and community engagement;
3. Gaps exist between higher education institutions' stated civic engagement missions, the nature of institutional structures, and their implementation of civic engagement;
4. Effective community-campus partnerships vary widely throughout the state;
5. Community knowledge and the contributions of community partners and students may be undervalued;
6. Public is unaware or suspicious of the role higher education plays in preparing people to collaborate and lead in communities;
7. Higher education is facing increased fiscal challenges;
8. Advanced technologies promote communication that lacks depth; and
9. Faculty reward systems do not consistently recognize or value engaged teaching and research.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND GOALS

To address the barriers listed above, CACC will focus on four strategic directions for 2018-2023:

- Making the case that community engaged research, teaching, and learning are integral to the excellence of California higher education;
- Convene diverse stakeholders to shape the future of the civic engagement field
- Serving as a resource to CACC members as they address critical issues facing California; and
- Strengthening the capacity of CACC to contribute to the civic engagement field.

#### Strategies for Moving Beyond the Critical Barriers

Strategic Direction	Critical Barriers Addressed
Making the case that community engaged research, teaching, and learning are integral to the excellence of California higher education	1, 2, 3, 6, 9
Convene diverse stakeholders to shape the future of the civic engagement field	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8
Serving as a resource to CACC members as they address critical issues facing California	2, 4, 5, 7, 9
Strengthening the capacity of CACC to contribute to the field	All. Strengthening the Compacts' professional bandwidth enables the staff to move beyond each barrier

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Under each strategic direction, several five-year goals were identified, which are outlined below. Annual measurable accomplishments and specific action steps, timelines, and assignments will be developed by the CACC staff through ongoing implementation planning.

### **Making the Case That Engaged Research, Teaching, and Learning Are Integral to the Excellence of California Higher Education**

Goal a: Build members' capacity to be strategic about their engagement activities and promote results in ways that benefit campuses and communities.

Goal b: Honor and recognize exemplary practices and the contributions of multiple stakeholders through highly visible awards.

Goal c: Promote CACC, the work of its member campuses, and the idea and evidence that engagement is integral to the excellence of higher education.

Goal d: Develop and strengthen opportunities for college and university presidents to take a leadership role on issues involving civic and community engagement.

### **Convene Diverse Stakeholders To Shape The Future Of The Civic Engagement Field**

Goal a: Lead dialogues to address critical issues in the field.

Goal b: Create opportunities to network, reflect and share best practices.

Goal c: Connect diverse leaders with opportunities to publish, speak, serve on boards, etc. with national Campus Compact and other organizations in the field.

### **Serving as a Resource to CACC Members as They Address Critical Issues Facing California**

Goal a: Design and lead programs that contribute to the civic engagement field.

Goal b: Promote civic engagement activities that address critical issues.

Goal c: Develop diverse leadership for civic engagement among faculty, staff, students and administrators.

Goal d: Create opportunities for partnerships among campuses to address critical issues.

### **Strengthening the Capacity of CACC to Contribute to the Field**

Goal a: Sustain current membership and explore strategies for increasing membership.

Goal b: Gather input from diverse stakeholders to inform CACC's work.

Goal c: Develop a diversified revenue portfolio.

Goal d: Document, analyze and celebrate CACC's impact on the field.

Goal e: Participate in the national Campus Compact visioning process.

Goal f: Review, reflect and assess CACC's strategic plan with the Board and staff.

## **CONCLUSION**

California Campus Compact is dedicated to promoting a transformational higher education experience that inspires student to change our world. CACC will continue to reflect, plan and work in partnership with others committed to a similar vision while investing in our member institutions. As CACC achieves the strategic directions and goals laid out in this plan, we will advance the public purposes of higher education. California Campus Compact recognizes that this is a critical time in higher education and they will lead the charge to shape a better future for our democracy.

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For more information, please see [www.cacampuscompact.org](http://www.cacampuscompact.org) or contact California Campus Compact at 510-885-7620 or visit us at 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., SF312, Hayward, California 94542.