

## ON THE RECORD

### Gubernatorial Candidate Gavin Newsom on Higher Education



Lieutenant Governor  
Gavin Newsom

California's future depends on its investments in educating its residents. To maintain our economic power as the fifth largest economy in the world and preserve the value of college opportunity for all of our fellow Californians, the next Governor of California will have to define a clear vision and agenda for our community colleges and public universities. This includes clear priorities to address college affordability, access and success for our students.

The Campaign for College Opportunity was proud to host three gubernatorial forums and secure responses to a questionnaire by leading California gubernatorial candidates<sup>1</sup>. Both the forums and the questionnaire were designed to inform California voters about the candidates' positions on key higher education issues.

"On the Record: California's Gubernatorial Candidates on Higher Education," presents the responses provided by each gubernatorial candidate without editorial comment, scoring, or editing. However, if the candidate's answer exceeded the 250 word limit they were given, the answer was clipped after the sentence that exceeded the limit. These answers will be marked with an asterisk (\*).

The Campaign for College Opportunity's mission has been to ensure that all eligible and motivated students in California have an opportunity to go to college and succeed. The Campaign remains committed to keeping the State of California from breaking its promise of college opportunity to its next generation of young people in order to ensure a strong state for all of us. The Campaign for College Opportunity produces research and advocates for policies that advance college preparation, access, affordability and success in California. Higher education has played a key role in California's economic and social prosperity.

"On the Record" provides Californians with an additional resource to learn about the vision California's next Governor has for higher education. Readers can also learn more about each of the leading candidates' higher education priorities by watching them discuss their ideas in our Gubernatorial Forums on Higher Education. These videos are not an endorsement and are intended to be for educational purposes only.

*The Campaign for College Opportunity is recognized as a public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and, as a result, does not endorse or oppose any candidate for elected public office.*

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Top Priorities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Goal for Degree Attainment</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Closing Racial Equity Gaps</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Higher Education Investment</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Leveraging State Investment</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6. College Preparation</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7. College Access</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8. Clearing Pathways</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>9. Supporting Undocumented Students</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>10. College Affordability</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>11. Lack of Diversity Among Faculty and Leadership in Higher Education</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>12. Statewide Leadership in Higher Education</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>13. Data Infrastructure</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>14. Higher Education Legacy</b>	<b>9</b>

## 1. Top Priorities

Please describe your top three priorities for higher education in California.



**Gavin Newsom:** The state has been flat-footed in its response to uneven income growth and Sacramento has under-invested in higher education. We can and will change that by reinvesting in public higher education and providing access to every eligible Californian as our foundational goal.

Guarantee two free years of community college tuition, create pathways to quality jobs, and reduce debt for students pursuing a bachelor's degree.

The community colleges, Cal State, and University of California segments operate in their own silos, which is why I will create a new higher education coordinating council to set bold statewide goals and hold institutions accountable to them.

## 2. Goal for Degree Attainment

Today, just under half of adults in California have a college degree or credential, yet the demand for a more educated workforce requires that 60% of adults have a degree or credential by 2030.

**If elected, will you adopt a 60% attainment goal? If yes, what is your plan for meeting this attainment goal? If no, why not?**



**Gavin Newsom:** The data is clear: we must increase access, affordability, and completion rates to ensure we have an educated workforce that can thrive in today's rapidly evolving economy. That's why when I'm Governor, our K-12 schools will make this fundamental promise: each and every student, regardless of the zip code they live in, is capable and deserving of a higher education. It's a promise that's true to California's tradition of advancing our educational system at critical junctures to give future generations better opportunities to succeed. To prepare

our kids for a quality job and successful career, I believe we have to treat education as a lifelong pursuit. We'll launch college savings accounts for every incoming kindergartener across the state, linking the next generation to the promise of higher education, promote a college-going culture in our K-12 schools, establish a new higher education coordinating council to set bold statewide goals -- including attainment-- and hold institutions accountable to them.

### 3. Closing Racial Equity Gaps

California's standing as the sixth largest economy in the world depends on producing more college graduates. Nearly 70% of students in college today and 76% of future college students are racially diverse. California cannot produce the workforce needed to meet economic demands without improving college access and success for African-Americans, Latinx and Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders.

**If elected, will you set high school graduation, college access, and college completion goals by race/ethnicity? Do you believe California should attempt to close these gaps? If yes, what steps will you take to close racial equity gaps for student outcomes in our colleges and universities? If no, why?**



**Gavin Newsom:** As Lieutenant Governor for the past seven years, I have had the privilege of serving on the UC Board of Regents and CSU Board of Trustees, which has afforded me a front-row seat to the impacts of Proposition 209. We talk a good game about “access,” but the elimination of affirmative action has undeniably had a devastating toll on the demographic makeup of our student body. This new reality deprives students of the chance to learn among a diverse cohort of peers, robs underserved communities of the opportunity for social mobility, and shatters the economic prosperity of the entire state. As Governor, I will fight back against the inequities in our education system that have been further exacerbated by Prop 209, and my administration will prioritize improving college access for underrepresented and underserved communities and address completion gaps head on.

The current fragmented state of our higher education system has stymied efforts to effectively understand the needs of minority students. We need to end this era of inefficiency by linking early childhood, K-12, higher education, and workforce data systems, and improving communication channels between institutions, so we can more productively identify what practices are working and where our resources need to be deployed. How many Black young men are struggling to read? How are Latina middle school girls faring with math? These and many other questions are yet to be answered.

As Governor, I am also committed to appointing UC Regents and CSU Trustees that reflect the diversity of the state. Now and as Governor, equity will be the driving criterion in all of my decision-making, whether it be about education or any other issue.

### 4. Higher Education Investment

Today, California's public universities support more students with less investment per student from the state than in 2008, prior to the recession.

**If elected, will you increase investment in public universities in California? If so, how do you propose to do so? If no, why not?**



**Gavin Newsom:** It has been nothing less than devastating to watch the state's disinvestment from public higher education, and with it, stripping a generation of Californians of an opportunity those before them enjoyed. State support was slashed by one third after the great recession. We're just now achieving pre-recession funding levels but we're also educating thousands more students. We must do better than this. Over the past seven years, I'm proud to have voted against every tuition hike and since January of this year, have urged UC to postpone yet another vote on tuition until the Legislature and Governor had time to reach a budget agreement. Particularly at a time when California has achieved a \$6.1 billion budget surplus, the state must invest significantly more in higher education, not place the burden on the backs of students and their families. We have the means to effectively bolster the access, affordability, and quality of our state's educational institutions, and this will be one of my highest priorities as Governor.

## 5. Leveraging State Investment

Governor Jerry Brown's January budget proposal includes a new student success funding formula for community colleges that provides funding based on enrollment, Pell Grant eligibility, and improvements in the number of students who graduate overall, the number of students who graduate within three years, and the number of students who earn an Associate Degree for Transfer. Research suggests that incorporating student success measures into how colleges are funded can change institutional behaviors in ways that benefit all students, especially those who are disadvantaged and require higher levels of academic, financial or other support.

**If elected, do you believe California should leverage state investments to incentivize California colleges to improve student completion rates? Do you support Governor Brown's community college student success funding proposal? If yes, do you think this should apply to the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems? If no, why not?**



**Gavin Newsom:** I support the intent of Governor Brown's community college student success proposal, while also paying close attention to the suggestions being offered by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and various campuses. I do believe that the Governor should be able to leverage state investments to incentivize the continued improvement of our educational institutions. Research shows that linking funding to student performance and graduation rates, as a piece of the overall higher education budget, can be a powerful force in achieving our shared goals.

## 6. College Preparation

Fewer than half of California's high school graduates complete the courses necessary for admissions to the UC and CSU systems.

**Do you believe high schools should see their role as helping students prepare for college and not just helping them earn a high school diploma? If yes, how will you ensure more high school students are college ready? If no, why not?**



**Gavin Newsom:** Education opens the door to opportunity, yet for many students, a high school diploma is no longer sufficient for obtaining desired employment and upward mobility in California's 21st century economy.

If we want to ensure that more of our high school students graduate college and career-ready, we've got to start at the beginning, because I believe that all students should progress through their academic careers knowing that college is within reach.

That begins with doubling down on the readiness gap by emphasizing prenatal care and the first three years of a child's life when nearly 85% of brain development occurs. We'll provide college savings accounts to every entering kindergartener and foster a college-going culture in our K-12 schools. We'll support K-12 community schools that anchor our neighborhoods with the comprehensive opportunities kids need to stay in school and prepare for higher education, including arts, after school programs and STEM education.

Today, only a quarter of California's high schools offer computer science. And sadly, that disparity is punctuated by striking racial gaps. Computer Science for All is an economic and equity imperative, and as Governor, I will proudly lead the push to provide access to computer science in all California public high schools.

And perhaps most significantly, we will support high schools across the state to equip students with the A-G curriculum they need to be eligible for admission to the UC and CSU systems.

## 7. College Access

California is ranked 49th in the nation in providing direct access to the state's public four-year universities for its residents. The California Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960 reserves seats at the CSU and UC systems for the top 33% of high school students, however, today more students are qualified to attend a CSU and UC resulting in thousands of qualified students being turned away and an overly competitive admissions environment for Californians hoping to attend the UC.

**If elected, will you revisit the admissions caps for CSU and UC to increase access for qualified students and, if so, how? If no, why not?**



**Gavin Newsom:** The vision laid out in the California Master Plan for Higher Education was one of the smartest investments our state ever made. A degree from a public college or university is not just about securing a job. It's about building lasting relationships, an exchange of ideas, exposing young people to the world around them, and opening their minds to realize there are no limitations to their own possibility. However, things have changed, and the impact of withering state funding for higher education has rendered the initial goals set almost 60 years ago untenable in 2018. As Governor, I will immediately work to reverse this unfortunate development by significantly increasing funding for public higher education to increase access and affordability, and working with the segments to ensure no eligible student is turned away.

## 8. Clearing Pathways

Only 40% of California's Community College students earn a degree, certificate or transfer after six years. Many of the barriers students face, which preclude them from reaching their college goals, are put in place by the colleges themselves. A broken remedial education system, a confusing transfer maze, a lack of structured major pathways, and limited student supports are largely responsible for low completion rates.

**If elected, what priorities do you have for improving pathways through community college? How do you plan to support colleges to improve their pathways?**



**Gavin Newsom:** I'm passionate about community colleges, and believe they are the backbone of our economy and one of our most effective tools for upward mobility. That's why my California Promise initiative will guarantee two free years of community college tuition, create pathways to quality jobs and reduce debt for students pursuing a bachelor's degree. The sad reality is that many students leave college with debt levels that would finance a home mortgage. Many don't finish college at all because of the cost our education system puts in front of them. The California Promise will help the next generation to become college-ready and bolster efforts to improve our educational institutions, because enrolling students is only half the challenge: graduating is the key.

I applaud the leadership of Chancellor Oakley, Chancellor White and President Napolitano who have all committed to the important work of streamlining the transfer process. I am a firm supporter of the Associate Degree for Transfer, which the Campaign championed, and look forward to partnering with the CSU and UC systems to build upon that work. I have also publicly supported the reforms Chancellor White pushed at CSU to eliminate unfair remedial education requirements, which disproportionately impacted completion rates for Black and Latino students. As Governor, I will embrace these kinds of pragmatic, equity driven solutions that improve student pathways and tear down unnecessary barriers to success for California's students.



## 9. Supporting Undocumented Students

California is home to approximately two million undocumented immigrants. A conservative estimate finds that California's public higher education segments enroll about 74,000 undocumented students.

**If elected, will you support access to college for California's undocumented students, as well as financial aid? If so, how? If no, why not?**



**Gavin Newsom:** California is a state that doesn't just tolerate its diversity. We celebrate it, and that includes all Californians regardless of their immigration status. After the 2016 election, I sat down with understandably anxious high school students and DREAMers and called on the heads of the University of California, California State University and California Community Colleges to protect undocumented students by moving quickly to affirm campuses as sanctuary campuses. We have both a moral and economic imperative to protect our students – the future workforce and families of California – from Mr. Trump's stated intentions. That commitment includes my continued support to defend the financial aid programs undocumented students are legally entitled to under AB 540 and The California Dream Act, and to provide the resources necessary to ensure undocumented students are aware of the opportunities available to them.

## 10. College Affordability

By offering the generous Cal Grant program and the California College Promise Grant (formerly known as the Board of Governors fee waiver), California has been a leader on college affordability. However, there is still significant unmet financial need for California's lowest-income students. The "real cost of college" includes far more than tuition and fees, but also the expense of meeting basic needs, such as housing, food and transportation, during the college years.

**If elected, how will you help our lowest-income and middle-income students afford the "real cost of college?" Will you take steps to expand financial aid for California's lowest and middle-income families to cover costs of going to college beyond just tuition? What is your position on debt-free college?**



**Gavin Newsom:** I have voted against every tuition increase, fought to solve the student debt crisis, and helped lead the charge for Promise Programs across the state, beginning with the San Francisco Promise we launched when I was Mayor.

I understand that once the total cost of attendance and all available financial aid is taken into account, it's more expensive for a financially needy student to attend a community college than a UC or CSU campus. Non-tuition expenses like books, transportation and housing can make up 90% of the total cost of attendance. That's why I advocated for legislation to expand the Cal Grant B Access Awards, supporting community college students with these costs.

As Governor, I will ensure high schools do all they can to make students aware of their financial aid options. I'll ground all conversations about tuition and financial aid in the full cost of attendance to reflect the actual cost of postsecondary education. We'll boost financial aid by increasing the amount of competitive Cal Grant awards and expanding award amounts, and we'll offer two years of free community college tuition.

I'm also alarmed by the staggering number of college students who confront food and housing insecurity. We'll provide the resources necessary to address these crises. Moreover, 75% of serious brain illness manifests before age 25, meaning our college-aged youth are at particular risk. We'll work to ensure every college adopts comprehensive strategies for raising awareness of symptoms of mental illness, identifying students at risk, and providing support services.

## 11. Lack of Diversity Among Faculty and Leadership in Higher Education

Today, California's higher education leadership is predominantly White and male, while our student body is majority female (54%) and overwhelmingly racially diverse (70%). Over 60% of UC Regents and over 70% of CSU Trustees and Community College Board of Governors are White. And, although 54% of college students are female, nearly 70% of Regents, Trustees, and Board of Governors Members are male.

**Do you believe our colleges and universities should be more reflective of the student body they serve and California's diverse population? If yes, what is your plan for promoting greater equity in representation in higher education? If elected Governor, will you commit to appointing more women and racially diverse individuals to key positions in your Administration and on the UC Board of Regents, CSU Board of Trustees, the Community College Board of Governors, and the California Student Aid Commission? If no, why not?**



**Gavin Newsom:** As outlined earlier, I believe Proposition 209 took a devastating toll on the diversity of our student body -- and I also believe that a lack of diversity among faculty constrains unique perspectives and hinders students' educational experience. As Governor, I will work to ensure that the UC, CSU and CCC systems institute admission and hiring policies and practices that yield diverse faculty and student bodies. I am also deeply committed to appointing Regents, Trustees and Board of Governors Members that both bring experience in higher education, and reflect the diversity of the state. It's critical that the folks making decisions that impact access, affordability and educational goals understand the unique life experiences of California's students.

## 12. Statewide Leadership in Higher Education

California has no coordinating body for higher education to provide oversight or guidance to the 146 public college campuses which include UC's, CSU's and the Community Colleges. We believe the lack of a coordinating body has inhibited the state's ability to effectively develop long-term plans, ensure the segments are working together, and ultimately hold our public colleges and universities accountable.

**If elected, will you establish a coordinating body with oversight the authority and capacity to engage in goal setting, oversight and coordination to help ensure seamless integration and accountability of California's UC, CSU and community college systems? Will you appoint a Secretary of Education? Undersecretary of Higher Education? Will you have a higher education expert within your senior leadership team? Explain your answers.**



**Gavin Newsom:** Yes, as previously mentioned, I will call for a new higher education coordinating council to set bold statewide goals and hold institutions accountable to them. We need to expand access, improve affordability, bolster transfers and completion rates. It's not fair to the CSU, UC, or to any segment to operate in its own silo; it's time for a new era of communication and collaboration. Higher education will be a top priority for my administration, which is why I will appoint a higher education expert as a key member of my senior leadership team.



### 13. Data Infrastructure

California educates 1 out of every 10 K-12 students in the nation and has millions of students in our higher education institutions. While California touts itself as the hub of innovation, the state has an embarrassing relationship with using educational data to increase transparency and improve practice. Education leaders today cannot follow students from kindergarten through the workforce because California lacks the data to match students' records to their college records and to the workforce. Each of the California public university and college systems use different data systems that seldom connect to each other, which limits the type of publicly available data on how students are doing and where challenges may exist in the educational pipeline.

**If elected, what would you do as Governor to improve our education data systems?**



**Gavin Newsom:** Our state's higher education system has operated in silos for too long, and it's time to link data systems and talk to one another so that we can see where we're serving – and where we're failing – our children. As Governor, I will reassert California as an education data leader. The public deserves to know whether all students, regardless of background, have access to good schools and equitable funding. I know this transparency will enable educators to better tailor supports and remove barriers to opportunity. I will connect our early childhood, K-12 and higher education data systems so that we can best serve California's students as they progress through their education.

### 14. Higher Education Legacy

**If elected governor, what would you like your higher education legacy to be? What measurable progress do you want to see accomplished by the time you leave office as Governor?**



**Gavin Newsom:** In many ways, the UC, CSU, and California Community Colleges serve as the gold standard for public higher education not just within the United States, but for the entire world. However, the status quo just isn't working for enough Californians today, which is why I believe we need to enhance our commitment to preparing our children for college, and reform certain elements within the higher education system that currently limit our state's potential.

As Governor, I'm calling for the California Promise, a new way of thinking about education as a lifelong pursuit, where our role in setting a foundation for student success begins when babies are still in the womb and doesn't end until we've done all we can to prepare them for a quality job and successful career. As Governor, I will realize this bold vision by expanding prenatal care, adopting universal pre-k, launching college savings accounts for every incoming kindergartener across the state, investing in community schools, increasing incentives to attract more high quality teachers, setting bold statewide higher education goals, and connecting our early childhood, K-12 and higher education data systems to improve student outcomes.

My vision is simple: every California student, regardless of their background, will have access to a high-quality and affordable public higher education, no eligible student will be turned away, and our state's public colleges and universities will once again be the envy of the world.

<sup>1</sup>The Campaign for College Opportunity invited all gubernatorial candidates who raised a minimum of \$4 million as reported in the Los Angeles Times (2/26/18) and who had polled at/or above an averaged 8% among California voters in the most recent surveys conducted by the USC Dornsife/LA Times (11/17); UC Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies (12/17); the Public Policy Institute of California (1/18) polls, to be included in On the Record. This meant that State Treasurer John Chiang, businessman John Cox, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, and former Mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa were invited to submit responses for On the Record on 4/6. Three candidates responded by the April 27th deadline. Businessman John Cox was invited but unable to schedule a forum or respond to our questionnaire within the time frame allotted to all candidates.



---

[www.collegecampaign.org](http://www.collegecampaign.org)

---

**LOS ANGELES OFFICE**

1149 S. Hill Street, Ste. 925

Los Angeles, CA 90015

Tel: (213) 744-9434

Fax: (877) 207-3560

**SACRAMENTO OFFICE**

1510 14th Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

Tel: (916) 443-1681

Fax: (916) 443-1682

**WASHINGTON DC OFFICE**

1825 K Street

Suite 720

Washington DC, 20006



@CollegeCampaign



@CollegeOpp



@CollegeOpp

---

**Board of Directors**

---

**Thomas A. Saenz (Chair)**

**Robert Lapsley (Vice Chair)**

**Rory O'Sullivan (Secretary)**

**Lisa A. Smith (Treasurer)**

**Estela Bensimon**

**George Boggs**

**Camila Chavez**

**Connie Conway**

**Pamela H. David**

**Paul Granillo**

**Vincent Pan**

**Darline Robles**

**Irma Rodriguez Moisa**

**David Wolf**