

What Is California's Master Plan For Higher Education?



The Master Plan Lays Out Basic State Policies On Higher Education

- **Assigns Missions to the Different Higher Education Segments.** The Master Plan envisions the University of California (UC) as the state's primary public research university and directs it to grant baccalaureate, master's, doctoral, and other professional degrees. The California State University (CSU) is to focus on instruction in the liberal arts and sciences and grant baccalaureate and master's degrees. The California Community Colleges (CCC) are to offer lower-division instruction that is transferable to four-year colleges, provide remedial and vocational training, and grant associate degrees and certificates.
- **Specifies Eligibility Targets.** According to Master Plan goals, the top 12.5 percent of all graduating public high school students are eligible for admission to UC, the top 33.3 percent are eligible for admission to CSU, and all persons 18 years or older who can "benefit from instruction" are eligible to attend CCC.
- **Expresses Other Goals for Higher Education.** The Master Plan includes a number of other statements concerning the state's higher education goals and policies. For example, it expresses the state's intent that higher education remain accessible, affordable, high-quality, and accountable.



The Master Plan Was Originally Adopted in 1960

- The original Master Plan was developed by a group convened by UC and the State Department of Education, as requested by an Assembly Concurrent Resolution in 1959. The Master Plan was completed in 1960, after which the Legislature has periodically authorized reviews of the plan that included recommendations for statutory changes. Major reviews were completed in 1973 and 1987.

- Most recently, in 2002, the Legislature's Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan for Education completed a report recommending various policy changes for a comprehensive kindergarten-through-university educational system. The Legislature is still considering how these recommendations might be enacted in statute.



Some Master Plan Principles Exist in Statute; Some Do Not

- The original 1960 Master Plan report and subsequent reviews are not themselves in state law. Instead, they are reports that were commissioned by the Legislature.
- Many significant principles expressed by the Master Plan, however, have been adopted in statute. In 1960, the Donohoe Higher Education Act (Chapter 1010 [SB 33, Miller]) codified many Master Plan recommendations, such as defining the distinct missions of the three public segments, establishing a Board of Trustees for CSU, and creating a coordinating council for higher education.
- Over the years, individual parts of the Donohoe Act frequently have been modified or expanded by legislation. These modifications have not always stemmed from a formal review to the Master Plan.
- Significant principles from the original Master Plan remain uncoded. For example, the Master Plan eligibility targets for UC and CSU are *not* in statute. Neither are the Master Plan's recommendations about student tuition levels and facility utilization standards.



The Master Plan Is More Than Any One Document

- The original 1960 Master Plan retains considerable authority as an expression of the state's higher education goals. However, additional state goals and policies for higher education are expressed elsewhere—such as in subsequent reviews of the Master Plan and in statute.
- For these reasons, the Master Plan can be thought of more as the major higher education policy goals embraced by the state, rather than a single written document.