

Joint Informational Hearing
Senate Committee on Education and Assembly Committee on Higher Education

The State of Public Higher Education Coordination and Collaboration

In the 2011–12 budget, Governor Brown vetoed funding for the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), citing the agency's ineffectiveness in overseeing higher education. The governor, in his veto message, acknowledged the well-established need for coordination and guiding state higher education policy. He further called upon stakeholders to consider alternative ways these functions could be fulfilled. Following CPEC's closure, the Legislative Analysts' Office cautioned in its 2012 higher education oversight report that no office or committee has the resources to devote to reviewing degree programs to identify long-term costs, alignment with state needs and institutional missions, duplication, and priority relative to other demands. This statement still holds true more than a decade later.

What is higher-education coordination? Higher education coordination involves structures and processes that guide public and private educational institutions toward collectively meeting state needs and realizing state goals. It involves the development and implementation of policies, initiatives, and practices that facilitate seamless communication, resource sharing, and intersegmental cooperation among California's universities, colleges, and relevant state entities. ¹Coordinated higher education efforts aim to maximize the use of resources, improve, for example, the transferability of credits, promote research collaboration, and ensure that academic programs align with the evolving needs of students, the workforce, and California's citizenry. There are many possible coordination functions:

- **Planning**—monitoring demographic and economic trends, advising state policymakers on how to respond, and articulating state goals and objectives.
- **Advising on Resource Allocation**—advising policymakers on mission differentiation, program development, campus development, and budgeting.
- **Data Collection and Analysis**—assessing system performance in meeting state goals, and recommending policy solutions.
- **Collaboration and Innovation**—promoting articulation and transfer functions, outreach, and college readiness efforts; supporting efforts to improve outcomes including productivity, student learning, and success of underrepresented groups; advancing partnerships with business, industry, and other constituencies; and providing incentives for intersegmental collaboration. (Course articulation is the formal recognition of specified courses at one institution to meet equivalent course and program requirements at another institution.)

¹ Legislative Analyst's Office. 2010. The Master Plan At 50: Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts—Coordinating Higher Education in California.

Why is it important? ²A coordinated approach can help policymakers consider the higher education system as a whole, and develop policies and budgets that maximize the system's value to the state. If the segments' activities are complementary and they operate as an integrated system in which each part adds value that is unique to its role, then their combined efforts may add up to more than what the institutions could achieve independently. Examples include:

- ***A Smooth Intersegmental Pathway to Obtaining a Baccalaureate Degree***—robust preparation of students in the K–12 system, a solid base of general education and major preparation courses in community college, and focused upper–division coursework at senior institutions. Each segment performs its mission effectively, minimizing the need for overlap.
- ***Regional Planning***—considering the educational needs in a region of the state and identifying how the community colleges, public university campuses, and private colleges and career schools in the region will contribute to meeting these needs.
- ***Joint Degrees***—combining the strengths of more than one university without duplicating programs.

In contrast, if there is significant overlap of mission, duplication of effort, or lack of curricular alignment across segments, their combined efforts will be less valuable—and more expensive—to the state. Some evidence of this includes:

- Remedial courses required for students unprepared for college–level work due to lack of alignment between high school curricula and college expectations.
- Excess course units resulting from inconsistent course articulation between community colleges and universities, or lack of effective academic advising.
- Competition for specialized faculty among duplicative programs.
- Building new capacity in one part of the system while facilities are underutilized in another part.
- Separate data and accountability systems that do not allow policymakers to aggregate results.

² Legislative Analyst's Office. 2010. *The Master Plan At 50: Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts—Coordinating Higher Education in California*.

Higher Education Coordination Timeline

1932: Commission of Seven

Seven out-of-state experts commissioned by Legislature to make recommendations on California's higher education system. Commission submitted recommendations in 1932 report.

1933: Coordinating Council

Nine members comprised of UC President, State Superintendent of Education, and seven lay people. Council commissioned one study that was not completed. Members last met in 1941, but council remained formal coordinating body in state law until 1960.

1945: Liaison Committee

Informal committee comprised of representatives from UC and the State Board of Education. At Legislature's request, committee implemented major higher education planning reviews and new campus studies throughout 1940s and 1950s, including the 1960 Master Plan.

1960: Coordinating Council for Higher Education

Twelve member board comprised of three representatives each from UC, the state colleges, the community colleges, and the independent colleges. Throughout the 1960s, the council recommended the locations of new campuses and program, missions of each segment, and higher education finance.

1973: California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)

Sixteen member board comprised of members of the public appointed by the Governor and Legislature, student representatives appointed by the Governor, and representatives from each education segment. Throughout the years, CPEC reviewed new campus and program proposals, recommended new guidelines for capital outlay guidelines, gathered key higher education data, and studied workforce issues.

1980s-2000s: CPEC Reviews

Legislative studies of the Master Plan in 1987, 1989, and 2002; a white paper commissioned by the Legislature in 2003; and a series of Assembly hearings in 2005 identify several weaknesses with CPEC's effectiveness.

2011: CPEC Eliminated

State eliminates funding for CPEC due to longstanding concerns with commission's effectiveness.

Present: Ad-Hoc Continuation of CPEC Tasks

New campus studies, freshman eligibility studies, and data gathering functions carried out by different state agencies.