

AB 1038 (Bonta) – Blue Ribbon Commission for Post-Secondary Education

Summary

AB 1038 calls for the creation of a Blue Ribbon Commission to develop a plan to grow the funding, enrollment slots, and number of community college, CSU, and UC campuses so that public higher education in California has the capacity to be fully affordable, universal, and tuition-free by the year 2030.

The Commission's plan will address the needs of California's diverse population and issues of equity. The Commission will submit its report to the Governor and the Legislature by March 2019.

Background

The State of California has one of the most well-regarded public higher education systems in the country.

However, for too many families college has become less affordable and less accessible. Tuition and other costs have outpaced inflation and wages, and funding for public higher education including enrollment slots and growth in college campuses lag behind demand. In addition, despite outreach programs and other efforts, historically disadvantaged communities remain under-represented.

This has occurred while the demands of the 21st century economy have made it increasingly critical for California residents to obtain post-secondary education in addition to acquiring a high school degree.

The Need for the Bill

California is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse states in the nation with historically disadvantaged communities now comprising the new majority. In 2012, high school graduates in California were 46.2% Latino, 30.5% white, 13.6% Asian or Pacific Islander, 6.7% African American, and 0.7% Native American.

However, overall college enrollment figures have not kept pace with the demographic changes. For example, African-Americans, Latino, and Native American students made up almost 54 percent of California's high school

graduates in 2012, but only 27 percent of all first-year students in the University of California.

Though there is a need for a long-term public post-secondary education plan to meet the affordability and accessibility of the entirety and diversity of the state's population, California does not have an entity that provides comprehensive and coordinated planning for California Community Colleges, CSU, and UC.

Solution

This bill would:

- Create a Blue Ribbon Commission
- Consult California Community Colleges, CSU, and UC and other experts and stakeholder groups
- Engage diverse communities of interest through public hearings
- Develop a plan to ensure that public universities and colleges in California have the capacity to be fully affordable, tuition-free and universal by the year 2030
- Submit plan to Legislature and Governor by March 2019