

July 17, 2017

Board of Governors
Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley
California Community Colleges
1102 Q Street, 6th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE: Future Strategic Vision for the California Community Colleges

Dear Chancellor Oakley,

I want to thank you for inviting me to attend today's Board of Governor's meeting to learn more about the strategic planning recommendations outlined in the *Vision for Success (Vision)* and to participate in what I anticipate will be a very active discussion. I also want to thank you again for serving on the Fair Shake Commission which I formed two years ago to analyze the issue of income inequality in California. As you know, the Commission recently released their report and deepening concerns about access, affordability, and time to completion issues in our higher education system. The report also details the increasing need for the public and private sector as well as the foundation world to support the vital engine of social and economic mobility that our California Community College (CCC) system represents. Unfortunately, my schedule does not allow me to attend today's Board of Governor's meeting but I did want to provide this letter to share my thoughts on the *Vision for Success*.

The *Vision* unequivocally describes the indispensable role that the CCC system plays in the California economy and the overall welfare of our state. The system clearly functions as a key academic and workforce training ground for millions of Californians from all walks of life seeking to further their educational attainment; matriculate to a four year institution; and/or obtain a professional certificate or credential. The *Vision* also clearly elevates the role the system plays as an incubator for innovative ideas and as an administrator of proven programs that consistently advance and propel our state forward.

I would also note that the *Vision* openly assesses the current performance of our CCC system and lays out a strategic roadmap, complete with goals and accountability measures, for how the system can build, refine, and refresh its efforts to identify the job skills needed in our economy, how CCC students and the system are performing, and how the system and its students achieve success. Specifically, the *Vision* lays out six ambitious goals for the CCC system including: increasing the number of CCC students



who annually earn degrees, credentials and certificates to reducing educational equity gaps among traditionally underrepresented groups to decreasing regional achievement gaps across the state. The goals delineated represent a markedly profound commitment to improving the system as a whole and a dedication to truly support each individual student attending or planning to attend a community college.

I commend the Chancellor and the Board for taking an honest look at the CCC system's challenges, clearly outlining and communicating your strategic plan to improve the system, and establishing specific milestones to measure success. Californians care deeply about the future of their community colleges and the goals and principles recommended in the *Vision* are an important declaration to our state, its residents, and to our collective future.

Broadly, the mission of the organization I founded, NextGen California, is to promote the social and economic prosperity of every American across a range of policy areas, including fighting climate change, fostering a more inclusive democracy, and addressing the access, affordability, and remediation issues facing students in our higher education systems. Having visited many community colleges throughout our state and having actively interacted with numerous CCC students, faculty, and administrators, I clearly recognize the incredible role that CCCs play in shaping the dreams of so many Californians and I look forward to partnering with each of you in implementing this grand strategic vision in the months and years ahead.

Sincerely,

Tom Steyer
President, NextGen California