

Policy Brief

COLLEGE PROMISE

FEBRUARY 2022

Postsecondary Impact Is Leveraged When Promise Programs Unite

BY MEREDITH CURRY MBA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COLLEGE PROMISE COALITION (NCCPC)

The Problem

Across the U.S., students of color, those from low-income families, and those first in their families to go to college face many barriers as they navigate complex systems to: 1) apply to college, 2) complete college, and 3) launch their careers.



The problem is layered, as statistics have revealed:

#1 Low Enrollment

Our most vulnerable students need support to apply to and enroll in college.

#2 Inadequate Financial Access

The students who need financial aid most experience the most obstacles to accessing and completing the steps to get the aid they qualify for.

#3 College Is Not Affordable

College costs regularly exceed financial aid offers, leaving students in debt or exhausted from working to cover their balance.

#4 They Enroll But Do Not Complete

Persistence and completion are the challenges students face once they overcome the initial obstacles of access and matriculation.

#5 The Economic Return Of A Degree Isn't Guaranteed Or Equitable

A college degree is critical to lift one's self and family out of the cycle of poverty and even then, it is a long road to economic security.

To receive a monthly update about Promise news, events, and publications, sign up for our newsletter at www.collegepromise.org

#6 Students Believe that Aspirations For College and Careers Are Attainable, But Reality Proves Otherwise

Students wrestle with a mindset of lack and imposter syndrome when what they need most to pursue their dreams and make plans are agency and affirmation.

Of the 300+ college promise programs across the nation recorded by College Promise, 90+ programs have been implemented in California [1,2]. Several of those programs in Northern California asked themselves:

- What would it take to grow our collective problem-solving results by an order of magnitude?
- How do we band together to quickly scale up those results?
- How do we strategically focus our collective impact leading to broad, long-term systemic change?
- How might we leverage our combined efforts to increase resources and opportunities for these programs to access?

The Solution: Meet the Coalition

"When we band together, we can leverage the power of the investments in each of our individual promise programs. We can secure essential funding from the state. We can break down barriers that are there because of policy when we work together. So this is a great way to leverage your investment in each of our promise programs, amplify and spread it and make it go a lot further."

~ Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, March 2021



2021 NCCPC Org Chart

The Northern California College Promise Coalition

Founded in November 2019, the Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC) is a regional effort to bring together leaders, practitioners and resources and share leadership over the shape of college success efforts in the region [3]. NCCPC was formed in order to leverage the collective impact of local programs, support the scaling of those programs, and work on broad systemic change in California. As of January 2022, the Coalition collectively serves over 58,000 students and has 32 active members, representing college promise and access programs, nonprofit organization, city and mayoral offices.



David Silver
Director of Education for Office of the
Oakland Mayor
NCCPC Steering Committee Chair

In addition to the Steering Committee, an Advisory Council was established, consisting of renowned community leaders who lend their name and expertise to the movement. There are currently 3 members of the Advisory Council:

1. President Dr. Michael Drake of the University of California Office of the President with delegate Sandra Williams-Hamp, Executive Director of Outreach and Educational Partnerships.
2. Chancellor Eloy Oakley of the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office with delegate David O’Brien, Vice Chancellor of Government Relations.
3. Michael Tubbs, Founder and Board Chair, Reinvent Stockton Foundation

The Steering Committee is chaired by David Silver, Director of Education for the Office of the Oakland Mayor. In addition to a governing Steering Committee, select coalition members staff working committees based on these four 4 key pillars:

1. Policy

Advocate for policies promoting college access, affordability, persistence, and success.

2. Campus Partnerships

Partner with colleges and enter student-level data-sharing agreements for on- and off-campus coordinated care.

3. Workforce

Partner with employers and programs to develop students’ career clarity and provide targeted internship and job placement.

4. Communities of Practice

Co-create best practices, solve shared challenges, and implement solutions TOGETHER.

Highlights from 2020-21

Over a six-month span, NCCPC led the Steering and sub-Committees through goal setting exercises. These goals were finalized in Q4 2020; strategies deployed and progress reviewed in Q1 2021. NCCPC achieved significant goals in 2021. You’ll find a sampling of these milestones listed below, find more in the 2020-21 Year-End Report [4].

2020-21 Coalition Achievements

- 85% Average goal attainment across committees
- 51,000+ High school and college students served by members across 12 counties
- 1,600 Individuals reached by 40+ campaigns
- 1,500 Students participated in workforce programming
- 440 Students and practitioners convened around with workforce and postsecondary partners
- 10 Collaborations established



Meredith Curry, MBA
Executive Director of the Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC)

2020-21 Sub-Committee Achievements

Governance

- Received 100% of Steering Committee renewals for 2021-22.
- Exceeded the annual fundraising goal by twice the target amount all while remaining within budget.
- Growth and staffing strategy set for 2021-22 with scale and impact goals set for 2021-2024. [4]

Policy

- Partnered with 2 Legislative Champions: Assemblymember (now Attorney General) Rob Bonta and Assemblymember Lisa Calderon.
- Completed a Policy Landscape Analysis that informed advocacy at state and federal levels, policy campaigns, and impact papers.
- Sponsored one bill, AB 288 CA Ban on Scholarship Displacement, now a 2-year bill which has passed out of the Assembly.
- Submitted 10+ support letters for policies that advanced education access, affordability, equity, and completion [4,5].

Partnerships

- Formal data-sharing partnership established with Cal State East Bay.
- Formal partnership established with the UC Office of the President and informal partnerships started with four UC campuses.
- Workshops coordinated with campus and postsecondary partners including a “State of the CSU” and “Financial Aid Packaging with the UC” [4,6].

Workforce

- Formal partnerships established with Management Leadership for Tomorrow and Gap Inc.
- Student-facing workforce events coordinated with partners that include the Golden State Warriors Community Foundation, Oakland Athletics, Salesforce, and the San Francisco 49ers [4,6].



2022 NCCPC Org Chart



"NCCPC is changing the odds.

It's more than a coalition- it's a demonstration and a **MOVEMENT** that brings community-rooted expertise to drive policy and partnerships that will shape trajectories of opportunity for students and communities for generations to come.

It's a privilege to be part of it!!"

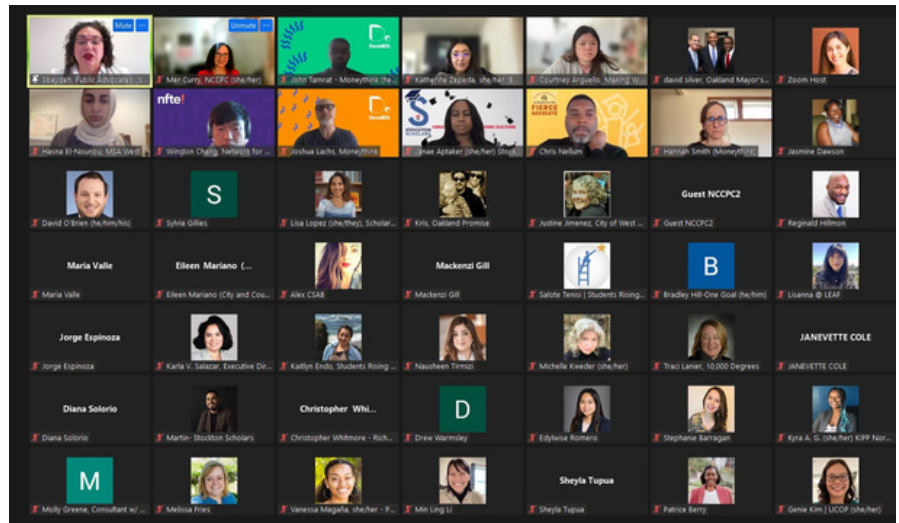


Jessie Stewart, Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships, UC Berkeley Cameron Institute for Student Athlete Development

Next Steps

With a solid foundation in place, the coalition is in a position to expand its reach, turn new partnership arrangements into tangible programs, and establish a strong data and evaluation system. This system would accurately measure the coalition's impact on low college enrollment, college affordability, college completion rates and translation of college degrees into economic return. We'll incorporate the following lessons learned:

- Leadership, communication, vision, implementation, and staffing are critical. The coalition's ability to deliver results is a direct reflection of smart committee leadership and membership choices. Though tempting to place people into leadership positions because they are available and willing, the combination of commitment, skills, and connections are needed to advance the work.
- Set SMART Goals and Measure progress. Establishing a process for goal-setting at the start of committee work served as a critical focusing tool to keep committees on track. Goals were not always set realistically and had to be focused and reduced over time. Continual monitoring and self-assessment of goal progress was key to success. Simply setting goals was not enough.
- Dedicated staffing. Having a full-time leader of the coalition is critical. Capacity is required to support all coalition-building activities and resulting programs and initiatives. Before January 2022 it was inadequate, leading to missed opportunities.
- Meaningful Meetings Matter. Active facilitation and scheduling support for committee meetings paid off in coalition productivity [7].



NCCPC All Member Meeting February 11, 2022

Conclusion

We are proud of and pleased with the results of the first ("start up") phase of the Coalition. We continue to expand and scale our impact to more students as we grow our collective power. If you are interested in getting involved or have questions, visit our website at www.norcalpromisecoalition.org or email Steering Committee Chair David Silver at dsilver@oaklandca.gov or Executive Director Meredith Curry at mer@norcalpromisecoalition.org.

College Promise is a national, non-partisan, non-profit initiative that builds broad public support for funding the first two or more years of postsecondary education for hard-working students, and ensuring those students have access to quality educational opportunities and supports.

Learn more at: collegepromise.org or email info@collegepromise.org

References

1. College Promise (2022). Find Promise Programs Near You. <https://www.collegepromise.org/>
2. College Promise Project (2022). College Promise in California. <https://californiacollegepromise.wested.org/what-is-ca-college-promise/>
3. Northern California College Promise Coalition (2022). About Us. <https://www.norcalpromisecoalition.org/about-us>
4. Curry, Mer. (2021) Year-End Report 2020-21: A coalition formed to serve students, a strategy to empower the whole field. <https://bit.ly/nccpc2020-21Yereport>
5. Northern California College Promise Coalition (2022). Policy. <https://www.norcalpromisecoalition.org/policy>
6. Northern California College Promise Coalition (2022). Partners. <https://www.norcalpromisecoalition.org/partners>
7. Northern California College Promise Coalition (2022). NCCPC Presents at SON's Activate Your Impact. <https://www.norcalpromisecoalition.org/member-highlights/nccpc-at-svcn>
8. Northern California College Promise Coalition (2022). College Promise Brief. www.norcalpromisecoalition.org/member-highlights/collegepromise