



# Educational Philanthrocapitalists: Threats to Faculty, Students, and Democracy

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## Terminology: Philanthrocapitalism

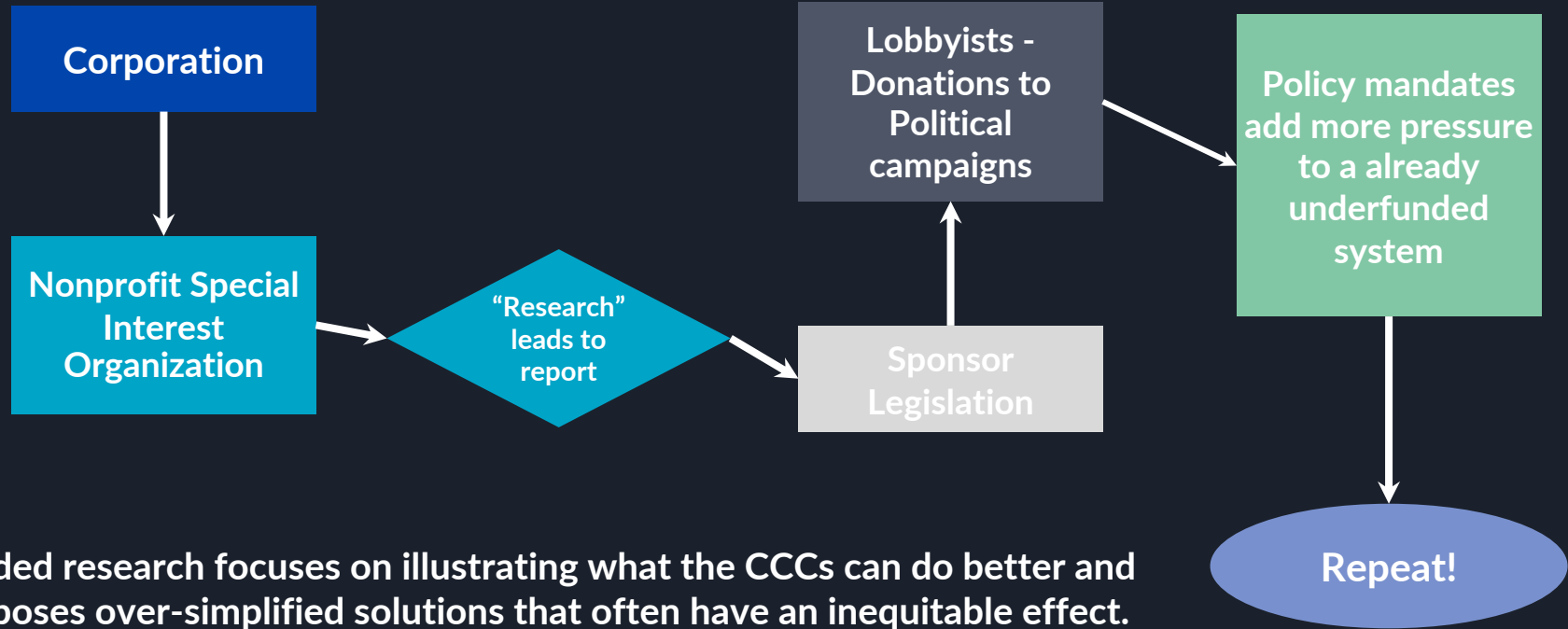
**Philanthrocapitalism** is the philanthropy practiced by corporations through foundations they create or support.

“The rapid growth of profits in the IT and finance sectors during the 1990s and 2000s brought forth the new gilded age of philanthropy, with its own buzzword, philanthrocapitalism. These capitalists believed that business methods are better able to solve social problems than the methods used in the public sector...This new group includes people like Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Michael Bloomberg, George Soros, Mark Zuckerberg, the Koch brothers, and others (representing both conservative and liberal ideologies that can live within capitalism).”

- Gus Bagakis | “Faith in Charity is Hopeless: Philanthrocapitalism Has Failed Us”

# Nonprofit Special Interest Groups

Corporations change educational policy and to divert public funds and privatize education



Funded research focuses on illustrating what the CCCs can do better and proposes over-simplified solutions that often have an inequitable effect.



# Why Now? Core Beliefs & Analyses

- We're in a battle with the **academic industrial complex**\* for the soul of public education.
- Education is a human right.
- Learning is a path to liberation. Education is freedom.
- The corporate agenda of privatization, anti-labor, austerity & defunding the public good is shutting out students.
- Defunding the largest & most diverse system of higher education in the nation is systemic racism & classism.
- Building a campaign could reclaim & reinvent life-affirming education & combat austerity measures.

\* Profit-driven relationship between public institutions, private companies & philanthrocapitalist organizations. The AIC transforms students into customers, administrators into CEOs, campuses into markets & colleges into degree factories.

# Threat to Democracy: Erosion of the California Community Colleges

“An attack on public education is an attack on democracy.”  
- Diane Ravitch

## Threats to Democracy ...

1

DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING &  
DISENFRANCHISEMENT

2

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY &  
LONGSTANDING SYSTEMS  
OF OPPRESSION

3

DISINFORMATION & DIVISION

4

DISTRUST IN GOVERNMENT &  
INSTITUTIONS

5

EXCESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM & LACK  
OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

6

CLIMATE CHANGE & DISPLACEMENT

7

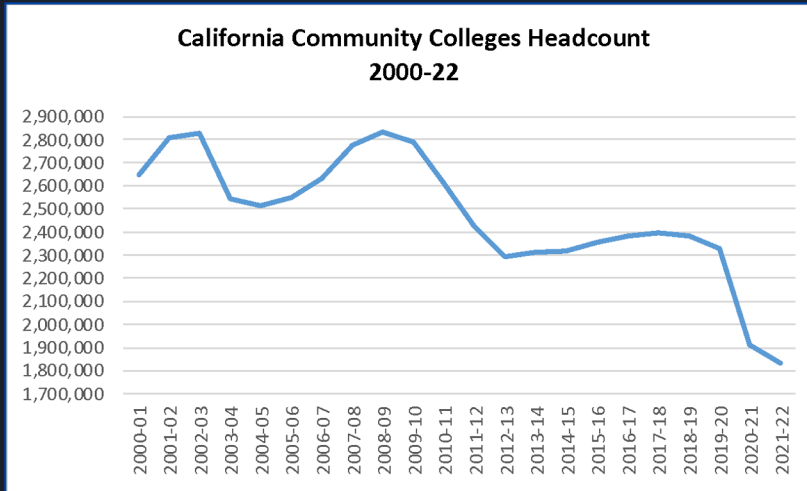
NEUTRALITY & EROSION OF  
ACADEMIC FREEDOM



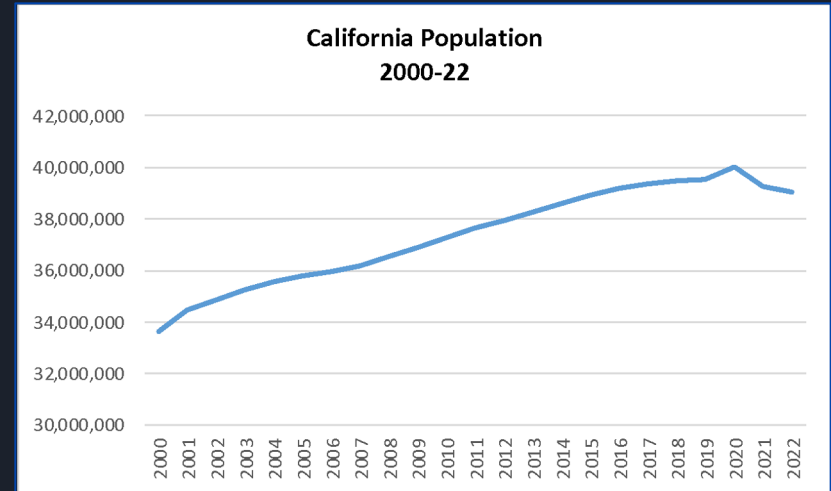
# Historical Context: From Master Plan to “Reform”

- **1960** | Master Plan for Higher Education in CA
  - Free high quality higher education for all is human right
  - CCC suffers from the lowest per-student funding but serves largest population with highest need
- **1970s** | Neoliberalism, disinvesting from public good
  - 1978: Prop 13 restricted property tax increases
- **1980s** | Reaganism, deregulation, privatization, anti-unionism, “reform” movement origin
  - 1988: Prop 98 & AB 1725 (Vasconcellos)
- **2012 & 2016** | Millionaires taxes helped but not enough
- **2020s** | FACCC, faculty unions, ASCCC & SSCCC joint advocacy

# Shrinking of the California Community Colleges

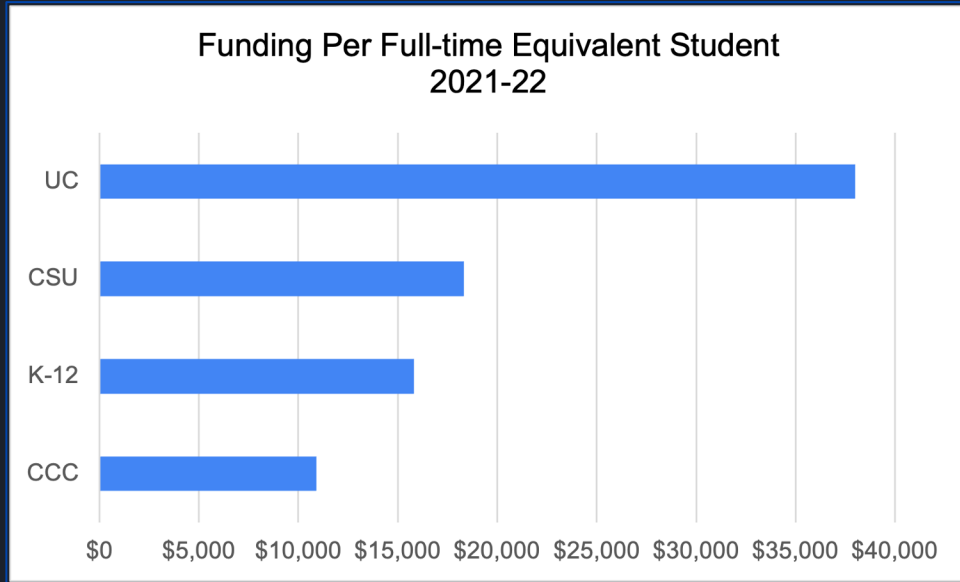


35% decrease in students (~ 997,565)  
since 2008



6.4% increase in annual CA population  
since 2008

# Chronic & Systemic Funding Inequity



Why are the California Community Colleges chronically underfunded given the system's mission to serve the largest & most diverse student body in US higher education?





# Shrinking CCC Mission: Elimination of Remedial Instruction

## Old CCC Mission

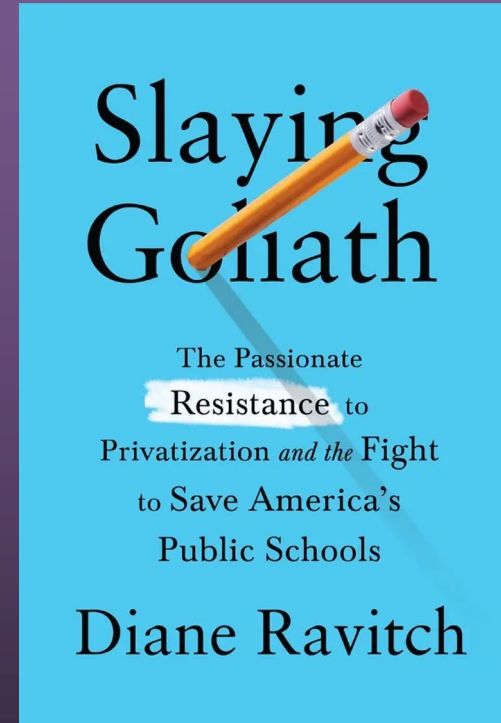
- Academic and vocational instruction
- Remedial instruction
- English as a second language
- Adult noncredit instruction & support services
- Community services courses & programs
- Lifelong learning

## New CCC Mission

- Academic and vocational instruction
- Instruction & additional learning supports to close learning gaps
- English as a second language
- Adult noncredit instruction & support services
- Community services courses & program

# Terminology: Disruption is not Reform

- “Reform” is a misnomer
- “Reform” groups have intentionally disrupted & derailed public education
- **Corporate disruptors** (Ravitch 2020)
  - Demonize faculty
  - Perpetuate a system that exploits part-time faculty
  - Aim to privatize public education
  - Aim to lower taxes
  - Aim to demolish education as a public good
  - Disrupt for sake of disrupting





## Terminology: National “Reform”

The national “reform” agenda pushed in all fifty states equates “student success” with the rapid completion of transfer, degrees, and certificates...The push for full-time attendance squeezes out students who cannot go full-time, students who are not necessarily headed toward the corporate workforce, and those who need and want education for other reasons, such as lifelong learners.

- Marcy Rein, Mickey Ellinger, Vicki Legion | *Free City!*



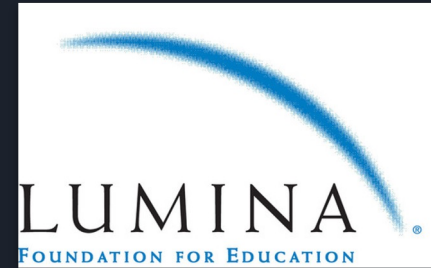
## Terminology: Neoliberalism

**Corporatizing** higher education is socially unjust and morally unethical...**Neoliberalism** plays a major role in corporatizing higher education. Neoliberalism is a form of global capitalism based on the deregulation of free markets and the privatization of wealth...The basic purpose of neoliberalism is to allow private interests to own and control every aspect of the human, social and natural world. Things like food, water, farmland, forests, health care, prisons, militaries, political processes, mass media, and of course, education, are targets of neoliberal control...While most colleges are still nonprofit institutions, their primary function is to serve the neoliberal enterprise.

- Jason Del Gandio | “Neoliberalism and the Academic-Industrial Complex”

## “Reform” Takeover

- The education “reform” movement has been defunding & shrinking the California Community Colleges for decades.
- The Chancellor’s Office, BOG & CA legislators are heavily influenced by the “reform” agenda.
- Example | New CCC Chancellor [Sonya Christian](#) is currently vice chair of the Campaign for College Opportunity’s board, having served on their board since 2017.



BILL &  
MELINDA  
GATES  
*foundation*

# Lumina & Gates Foundations

- **Lumina Foundation for Education**
  - Founded in 2001
  - Largest foundation focused on US higher education
  - Entirely funded by Student Loan Marketing Corporation, Sallie Mae
  - Funded Student Success Task Force (2012) & ACCJC
- **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**
  - Largest private foundation in the world
  - Chief architect of Common Core, K-12 standardized testing & online modalities creating demand for microsoft products
  - “Gates Effect”: echo chamber of like-minded ideas among government & foundation worlds



“Pay less for college”



“All students deserve equitable access to education”



## Austerity: Dominant “Reformer” Ideology

- ❑ **Shrinking** CCC mission from lifelong learning, basic skills, strong workforce & transfer to narrow form of “get in, get out” transfer, catering to 20% of students.
- ❑ **Shrinking** enrollment: prioritizing first time, full-time students.
- ❑ **Shrinking** educational & course options: education is for developing human capital/workers not growing in knowledge, critical thinking, character & civic engagement.

# Policy Network Driving Education “Reform”

US Department of Education (DOE)



Think Tanks,  
Advocacy Organizations &  
Professional Associations



Government Officials  
(eg. Gov. Jerry Brown)



Philanthrocapitalist  
Foundations



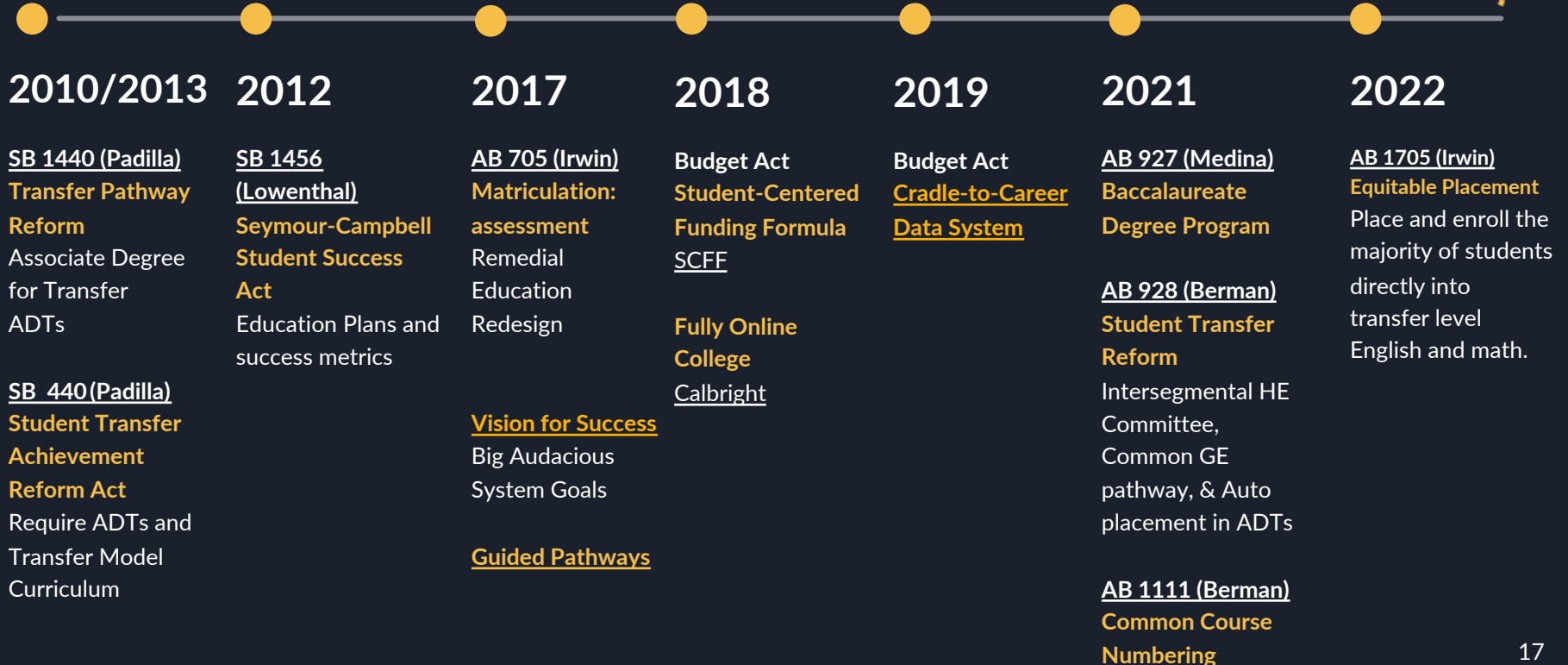
American Legislative  
Exchange Council  
(ALEC)



Republican & Democratic  
Parties & Corporate Media



# Over a Decade of Policy “Reform” from Sacramento



# “Reform”-Influenced Philanthropist Organizations



# Philanthrocapitalist Foundations: Decoding Their Missions



Prepare people for informed citizenship & success in a global economy



All lives have equal value, impatient optimists working to reduce inequity



A California where all low-income workers have the power to advance economically



Lower student loan default rates, sponsor college access & success initiatives

# Philanthrocapitalist Foundations: Decoding Their Missions



Turn schools into places that empower & equip every student for a lifetime of learning, expand access to OER



More graduates for a thriving California



Expanding opportunities in America's cities



**GRANTEE:** Benefits, supports & enhances the missions of the California Community Colleges

# Philanthrocapitalists Co-Created CCC Vision

## California Community Colleges Vision for Success

- Amy Supinger

“higher education  
policy wonk” (Twitter)



- 2011–present

Student success consultant for the  
Foundation

- 2012-18

CA state policy consultant for  
**Lumina** & ED of Student Success  
Task Force

- 2017

Co-author & project manager of  
Vision for Success

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- **Dolores Davison**, *Professor, F... College, and Secretary, Academ... for California Community Co*



# “Reformer” Ideology: “Get in, Get Out” to Cut Costs Cloaked in the Language of Success & Equity

## “Reformer” Dominance

- 9 philanthropist organization boards: 98 members
- CCC practitioners: 15%
- Non-CCC practitioners: 85%
- 85% of decision makers have no direct experience in the CCCs

## “Reformer” Hegemony

- “Reformer” v. practitioner ideologies of the public good oppose each other
- We need a counter-hegemonic plan for reclaiming & reinventing the California Community Colleges



# Who **gains** from the shrinking of the CCCs?

→ **Student loan industry**

Push for full-time attendance drives students into debt

→ **Education Technology**

Long game is to eliminate need for faculty

→ **Private and for-profit colleges and universities**

For-profits cost up to x17 as much as CCCs

→ **Anti-labor movement**

Long game is to eliminate unions

→ **Individuals** who do not believe in investing in public education



## Who **loses** from the shrinking of the CCCs?

The largest and most diverse student body in US higher education. Our students become empowered to transform their lives & participate in democracy when they are able to...

- Access low-cost, high quality community college education.
- Return to college to gain new skills, train for a new career, and explore their passion.
- Learn and interact with their community in an educational environment.
- Explore options as they embark on an educational path.



# Who Are Our Community College Students?

## Students Served by California Community Colleges



**74%**  
**Part Time or  
Noncredit**



**41%**  
**Adult  
Students**



**64 %**  
**Working  
Learners**



**70%**  
**Students  
of Color**



**35%**  
**First  
Generation**



**11%**  
**with an  
Associate Degree  
or Higher**



**66%**  
**Economically  
Disadvantaged**

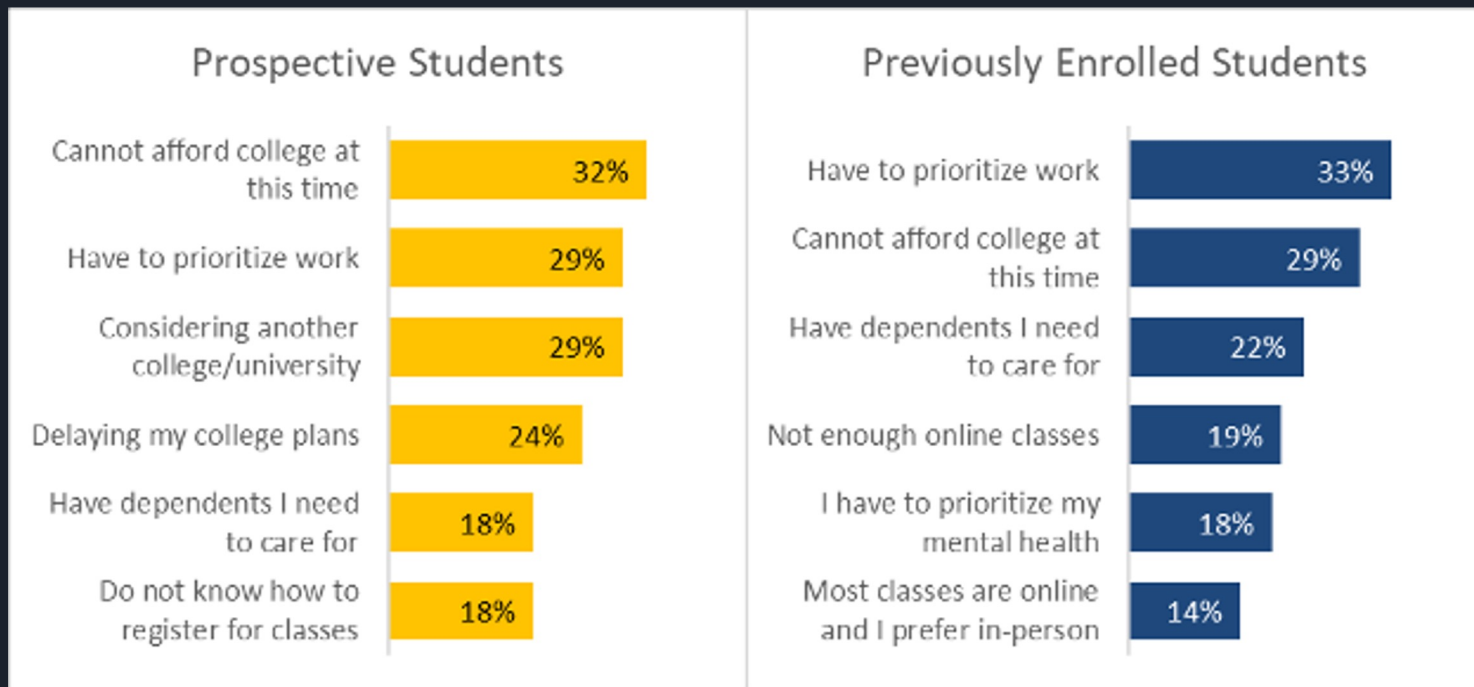


**14%**  
**Noncitizens**

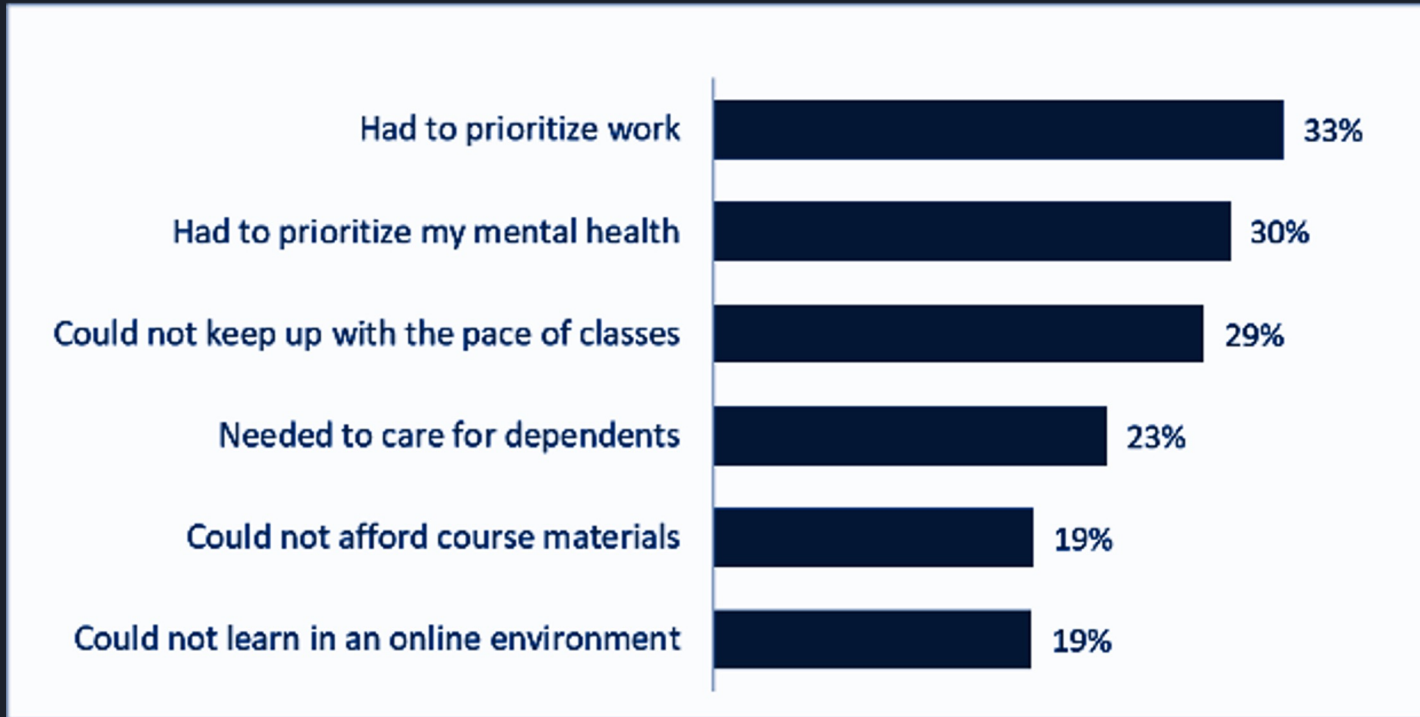


**9%**  
**Dual  
Enrollment**

# Top Reasons Affecting Students' Decisions Whether to Attend



# Top Reasons Previously Enrolled Students Dropped Class(es)



\* *Statewide College Attendance Survey* (2022, p. 12)

# CCC Student & Practitioner Coalition Stronger Together!

- ~ 1,800,000 students
- ~ 52,628 faculty
- ~ 27,728 classified professionals
- ~ 2,289 administrators



## Next Steps: Research, Organize, Strategize, Build a Campaign

- ❑ How do we frame our story?
- ❑ What counter-narrative will win against the “reformer” narrative of austerity?
- ❑ What would equity look like if we decoupled it from the drive to cut per-student costs?
- ❑ What are some strategies to build back the California Community Colleges?
- ❑ How do we influence the state budget and legislation?
- ❑ What else?



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