PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Higher Education

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November 2011
Outline

- PPIC Statewide Surveys
- Current Conditions and the Future
- Overall Perceptions and Attitudes
- Conclusions
PPIC Statewide Survey Mission

- Provide timely, relevant, nonpartisan data on political, social, and economic opinions
- Inform and improve state policymaking, raise awareness, encourage discussion
- Provide a voice for all Californians in important state policy debates
  - 256,000+ Californians since 1998
  - 120+ general, issue, and regional surveys
Californians and Higher Education

- Fifth survey in higher education series since 2007
  - Funded this year by The James Irvine Foundation
- Ratings of the system, funding concerns, ways to raise revenues, planning for the future
- Importance of college, affordability, access, community colleges, parents’ views
- Telephone interviews, October 25–November 8
  - 2,503 adults; 1,161 likely voters; 1,059 parents of children 18 or younger
    - ± 3.1% margin of error for adults
    - ± 3.6% for likely voters
    - ± 5% for parents
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Approval Ratings: Governor Brown

Handling his job overall

- Approve: 47%
- Disapprove: 38%

Handling public college and university system

- Approve: 29%
- Disapprove: 53%

Likely voters
Approval Ratings: California Legislature

Likely voters

- Handling its job overall
  - Approve: 17%
  - Disapprove: 70%

- Handling public college and university system
  - Approve: 14%
  - Disapprove: 71%
Direction of Higher Education System

Thinking about the public higher education system overall in California today, do you think it is generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

- All adults: 28% right direction, 62% wrong direction
- High school or less: 40% right direction, 48% wrong direction
- Some college: 19% right direction, 71% wrong direction
- College graduates: 17% right direction, 76% wrong direction
- Parents of children 18 or younger: 33% right direction, 60% wrong direction

Labels:
- Right direction
- Wrong direction
I’m going to read you a list of issues people have mentioned when talking about California’s higher education system today. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem.

- **Overall quality**: 36% big problem, 24% somewhat of a problem
- **Overall affordability**: 61% big problem
- **Overall state budget situation**: 69% big problem
Ratings of the Three Branches

Overall, is the ... system doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job?

% saying excellent or good

- California Community College: 66% (2007), 62% (2011)
- California State University: 66% (2007), 56% (2011)
- University of California: 67% (2007), 59% (2011)
Level of State Funding

Do you think the current level of state funding for California’s public colleges and universities is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% saying not enough</th>
<th>All adults</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Rep</th>
<th>Ind</th>
<th>Likely voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific Concerns

There are a number of ways California’s public colleges and universities have dealt with decreased funding. Please tell me if you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about each of the following.

- Increasing tuition and fees: 65% concerned
- Offering fewer classes: 55% concerned
- Admitting fewer students: 53% concerned
Given the state’s current budget situation, on a scale of 1 to 5—with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority—what priority should be given to spending for California’s public colleges and universities?
State Budget Choices

Do you favor or oppose the state government spending more money on public colleges and universities, even if it means less money for other state programs?

Democrats

- Favor: 65
- Oppose: 27
- Don't know: 8

Republicans

- Favor: 49
- Oppose: 45
- Don't know: 6
Effects of Budget Cuts

Which comes closer to your view? If the state government makes budget cuts in higher education, the quality of education will suffer, or the state government could make budget cuts in higher education and still maintain a high quality of education.

![Bar chart showing responses to the question about the effects of budget cuts on the quality of education. The chart includes data for All adults, Dem, Rep, Ind, and Likely voters. The percentages indicate the number of respondents who believe the quality will suffer or could be maintained.]
Willingness to Raise Taxes

What if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for this purpose, or not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities. Would you be willing to increase student fees for this purpose, or not?

- All adults: 28% Yes, 69% No
- Dem: 29% Yes, 68% No
- Rep: 38% Yes, 60% No
- Ind: 28% Yes, 69% No
- Likely voters: 32% Yes, 65% No
If there was a bond measure on the state ballot in 2012 to pay for construction projects in California’s higher education system, would you vote yes or no?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
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</table>
In thinking ahead 20 years, if current trends continue, do you think California will have more than enough, not enough, or just enough college educated residents needed for the jobs and skills likely to be in demand?

% saying not enough

- All adults: 49%
- Dem: 59%
- Rep: 41%
- Ind: 55%
- Likely voters: 53%
Confidence in Future Planning

How much confidence do you have in the state government’s ability to plan for the future of California’s higher education system?

- A great deal: 16
- Only some: 37
- Very little: 34
- None: 10
- Don't know: 2

All adults
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Importance of College

Do you think that a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today’s work world, or do you think that there are many ways to succeed in today’s work world without a college education?

% saying necessary

- All adults: 58%
- Asians: 63%
- Blacks: 53%
- Latinos: 73%
- Whites: 46%
- Parents: 65%
Student Affordability

The price of a college education keeps students who are qualified and motivated to go to college from doing so.

Students have to borrow too much money to pay for their college education.

All adults

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

27 Agree, 70 Disagree, 3 Don't know
Student Access

Do you think that currently, the vast majority of people who are qualified to go to college have the opportunity to do so, or do you think there are many people who are qualified to go but don’t have the opportunity to do so?
**Importance of Racial Diversity**

How important do you think it is for public colleges and universities to have a racially diverse student body — that is, a mix of blacks, whites, Asians, Hispanics, and other minorities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>% saying very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of adults saying very important.
**Importance of Economic Diversity**

How important do you think it is for public colleges and universities to have an economically diverse student body — that is, a mix of students from lower, middle, and upper-income backgrounds?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>% Saying Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $40,000</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $80,000</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Role of K–12 Public Schools

How important to you is it that California’s K–12 public schools prepare students for college?

- Very important: 86%
- Somewhat important: 11%
- Not too important: 2%
- Don’t know: 1%

And are California's K–12 public schools doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job in preparing students for college?

- Excellent: 5%
- Good: 36%
- Not so good: 33%
- Poor: 8%
- Don’t know: 2%
Career Technical Education

How important to you is it that community colleges include career technical or vocational education?

% saying very important

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Whites</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Two-Year Degrees

How much does a two-year community college degree or technical training help a person to be successful in today’s work world?

% saying a lot

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<td>29</td>
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<td>39</td>
</tr>
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<td>Latinos</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Parents’ Educational Hopes

What do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve?

- 38: Four-year college graduate
- 10: Two-year degree or technical training
- 3: High school or less
- 3: Don't know

Parents of children 18 or younger
How worried are you about being able to afford a college education for your youngest child?

% saying very worried

- All parents: 52%
- Latino parents: 66%
- White parents: 37%
- Under $40,000: 65%
- $40,000 to $80,000: 53%
- $80,000 or more: 32%
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Conclusions

- Amid concerns about budget cuts, most say higher education system heading in wrong direction
- Californians more critical of governor’s handling of higher ed than of his job overall
- Positive ratings for three branches, but showing declines since 2007
- Higher ed a high priority, but voters split on paying higher taxes, oppose raising fees
- College viewed as necessary; many believe qualified candidates lack opportunity to go
- Most parents want children to get college or postgraduate degree, but worry about affording it
Upcoming PPIC Statewide Surveys

- December
  - Californians and Their Government

- January
  - Californians and Their Government
    (state budget focus)

- March
  - Californians and Their Government
Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Mark Baldassare or Sonja Petek: surveys@ppic.org

Thank you for your interest in this work.

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