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Californians & higher education



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in collaboration with
The James Irvine Foundation



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The PPIC Statewide Survey provides policymakers, the media, and the public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 121st PPIC Statewide Survey. In all, the surveys have generated a database of responses from more than 256,000 Californians. The current survey, *Californians and Higher Education*, was conducted with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. Its goal is to inform state policymakers, encourage discussion, and raise public awareness about Californians' opinions on issues affecting the state's public colleges and universities. It is the fifth annual PPIC Statewide Survey on higher education since 2007.

California's public higher education system includes three branches—the University of California (UC) system, the California State University (CSU) system, and the California Community College (CCC) system—and is the third largest area of state spending after K–12 education and health and human services. The system serves more than 3.5 million students, with more than 220,000 in the UC system, nearly 412,000 on CSU campuses, and more than 2.9 million attending community colleges.

Public higher education in California has sustained considerable reductions in state funding recently. Although all state budget areas have undergone significant cuts over the past several years, higher education does not enjoy the same funding mandates and legal protections as other state services such as K–12 education or prisons and corrections. And because higher education generates revenue through student fees, it is often an easier target for budget-cutting than other programs. Consequently, the state's public colleges and universities have been forced to make difficult choices to make up for cuts, including increasing student fees significantly and eliminating courses. At the same time, PPIC research shows that the state will face a severe shortage of needed college-educated workers—approximately 1 million—by 2025.

This survey presents the responses of 2,503 adult residents throughout California, interviewed in multiple languages by landline or cell phone. It includes findings on:

- Approval ratings of the governor and legislature overall and on their handling of public colleges and universities; opinions about current conditions in the higher education system; ratings of the three higher education branches; concerns about measures being taken to deal with decreased state funding; priorities for spending on higher education, preferences for raising revenues, and perceptions about the importance of the system to the state's future.
- Perceptions of higher education affordability, financial aid, student loan debt, preparedness, and access; attitudes about the importance and purpose of college, the importance of diversity, K–12 schools' role in preparing students for college, and the role of community colleges and two-year programs; and parents' educational hopes for their children.
- Time trends, national comparisons, and variations in perceptions, attitudes, and preferences about higher education issues across the five major regions of the state (Central Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, Inland Empire, and Orange/San Diego Counties), among Asians, blacks, Latinos, and non-Hispanic whites, among parents, and across socioeconomic and political groups.

This report may be downloaded free of charge from our website (www.ppic.org). For questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org. Try our PPIC Statewide Survey interactive tools online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.

NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PST on Wednesday, November 16, 2011.

Para ver este comunicado de prensa en español, por favor visite nuestra página de internet:
<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Amid Concerns About Budget Cuts, Most Say Higher Education System Heading in Wrong Direction

BUT HALF BALK AT HIGHER TAXES, MOST OPPOSE HIGHER STUDENT FEES

SAN FRANCISCO, November 16, 2011—Most Californians say the state's public higher education system is headed in the wrong direction, according to a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. With the possibility of more cuts to the state's public colleges and universities looming, most residents say affordability and the state budget situation—rather than educational quality—are big problems.

Just 28 percent of Californians say the public higher education system is headed in the right direction, while 62 percent see it headed in the wrong direction—a view shared across political parties and regions of the state. Only 24 percent say overall educational quality is a big problem, but 61 percent say overall affordability of education for students is a big problem and an even greater 69 percent say the overall state budget situation is a big problem.

Californians (74%) say there is not enough state funding for higher education, a view held by majorities across parties (82% Democrats, 71% independents, 58% Republicans). A solid majority (65%) say that public colleges and universities have been affected a lot by budget cuts.

Californians are much more critical of the way Governor Jerry Brown is handling higher education than they are of his overall performance. His overall job approval rating among likely voters is 47 percent (38% disapprove, 15% don't know)—close to its highest point (48% July) since he took office. But just 29 percent of likely voters approve of his handling of public higher education (53% disapprove, 18% don't know). The legislature fares poorly in both areas among likely voters, with a 17 percent overall job approval rating (70% disapprove, 13% don't know) and a 14 percent approval rating on handling higher education (71% disapprove, 15% don't know).

“Most Californians say budget cuts have hurt public colleges and universities a lot,” says Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO. “Their concerns about where the system is headed are reflected in the low grades they give their leaders for handling higher education.”

Californians place an increasingly high priority on state spending for public colleges and universities. Most consider it a high (29%) or very high (41%) priority. The percentage of residents who consider spending in this area a very high priority has increased 15 points since 2008 (26% 2008, 41% today). And in the context of the state budget, most Californians (59%) favor more state spending on public colleges and universities even if this means less money for other state programs. Most (63%) say the quality of education will suffer if the state makes more cuts. Most Democrats (74%) and independents (60%) have this view, while Republicans are divided (48% quality will suffer, 47% quality could be maintained).

LESS THAN HALF WOULD PAY HIGHER TAXES TO MAINTAIN FUNDING

Despite Californians' worries about the fiscal situation in higher education, 52 percent of residents are unwilling to pay higher taxes to maintain current funding, while 45 percent would do so. Likely voters are divided (49% yes, 49% no). Most Democrats (63%) would pay higher taxes, while most independents (55%) and Republicans (71%) would not.

When it comes to other ideas for raising revenues, adults (69%) and likely voters (65%) are opposed to increasing student fees to maintain current funding. Opposition to higher fees has increased since last year, by 7 points among all adults and 5 points among likely voters. About half of Californians (52%) favor admitting more out-of-state students—who pay higher tuition—to maintain current funding. But that support drops to 20 percent if it would mean admitting fewer students from California.

One idea that does garner support: a hypothetical statewide bond measure to pay for construction projects in the state's higher education system (adults: 58% yes, 34% no; likely voters: 52% yes, 41% no). Such a measure would require a simple majority vote to pass.

RATINGS FOR THREE BRANCHES ARE POSITIVE—BUT LOWER

Residents give good or excellent marks to each branch of the state's higher education system: California Community Colleges (62%), California State University (56%), and the University of California (59%). But ratings have declined since 2007 for both CSU (down 10%) and UC (down 8 points), while ratings for community colleges have been similar over time. Majorities of parents whose children attend public colleges and universities give the system excellent or good ratings: community colleges (67%), CSU (59%), and UC (62%).

Despite these positive ratings, few Californians (4%) see the state system as the best when asked to compare it to that of other states. Less than half of residents (47%) consider the California system above average or better (16% one of the best, 27% above average, 31% average, 15% below average). Less than half of parents with children 18 or younger (48%) and parents of children now attending a public college or university (48%) say the system is above average or better. Half of alumni (50%) hold this view. Current students are more favorable: 58 percent say the system is above average or better.

MOST SAY AID IS AVAILABLE—BUT STUDENTS MUST BORROW TOO MUCH

When asked about some of the specific ways that the higher education system has dealt with decreased funding, 65 percent of residents are very concerned about increasing tuition and fees. Over half (55%) are very concerned about colleges and universities offering fewer classes or admitting fewer students (53%). Parents of children in the system are even more concerned about higher tuition and fees (77%), as are current students (70%).

Reflecting concerns about affordability, a strong majority of Californians (70%) say the price of college keeps qualified and motivated students from attending. There is widespread agreement on this question among Californians across parties, regions, and demographic groups. Nevertheless, many residents (55%) say loans and financial aid are available to those who need it, while 40 percent disagree. Those with incomes under \$40,000 (63%) and those without any college education (65%) are much more likely to say that financial help is available than those at higher income and education levels. Latinos (67%) and Asians (61%) are more likely than blacks (44%) and whites (48%) to say that financial aid is available. Among current students at public colleges and universities, 47 percent agree and 50 percent disagree that there is financial help for those who need it.

A strong majority (75%) say students have to borrow too much money to pay for college. Across parties, regions, and demographic groups, adults concur. Middle-income (81%) and upper-income (80%) residents are much more likely than those with lower incomes (68%) to feel that students must borrow too much.

College graduates (80%) and those with some college education (83%) are much more likely than those with no college experience (65%) to agree.

LESS THAN HALF SAY TWO-YEAR DEGREE OR TECHNICAL TRAINING HELPS A LOT

What value do Californians put on a college education? Most (58%) say it is necessary for success in today's work world, while 39 percent believe there are many ways to succeed without it. However, the percentage saying college is necessary has reached a low point since PPIC first began asking the question in 2007 (64% 2007, 68% 2008, 66% 2009, 63% 2010, 58% today). Latinos are the ethnic or racial group most likely to say that success depends on a college education (Latinos 73%, Asians 63%, blacks 53%, whites 46%).

Nearly all residents (96%) say career technical or vocational education in community colleges is at least somewhat important. But Californians do not necessarily see it as the key to success. Less than half (45%) say a two-year community college degree or technical training helps a lot in achieving success in the work world, and 42 percent say it helps some (9% does not help too much, 2% does not help at all).

Parents of children age 18 or younger express high hopes for their children's educational attainment. When asked the highest grade they hope their youngest child will achieve, 45 percent of these parents say a graduate degree and 38 percent say a degree from a four-year college. Just 10 percent choose a two-year college degree or technical training, and 3 percent say high school or less. When it comes to having the resources and information needed for their child to reach this goal, most are very confident (32%) or somewhat confident (39%) that they do. But the share of parents who say they are very confident has declined significantly (56% April 2005, 32% today). Half of parents (52%) are very worried about being able to afford a college education for their youngest child. Concern is far higher among Latino parents (66% very worried) than whites (37% very worried).

Looking at the value of higher education more broadly, nearly all Californians say the state's higher education system is very important (73%) or somewhat important (23%) to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years. A plurality (49%) recognize that California faces a shortage of college-educated residents needed for the jobs of the future. But just 10 percent say they have a great deal of confidence in the state government's ability to plan for the future of public higher education (37% only some confidence, 34% very little confidence, 16% none).

MORE KEY FINDINGS

- **Plurality say purpose of a college education is to gain specific skills**—pages 17, 21-22

Californians are more likely to say that the purpose of college is gaining skills and knowledge for the workplace (46%) than to say that it is personal and intellectual growth (35%). The purpose of community college? Thirty-five percent say it is preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges, while 29 percent say it is career technical or vocational education.

- **Majority say most students unprepared academically**—pages 19, 21

Just 23 percent say most students are prepared to do college-level work, while 69 percent say most students require remediation. Most (86%) say it is very important for K-12 schools to prepare students for colleges, but only 44 percent say schools are doing a good or excellent job of doing so.

- **Support for racial, economic diversity on campus**—page 20

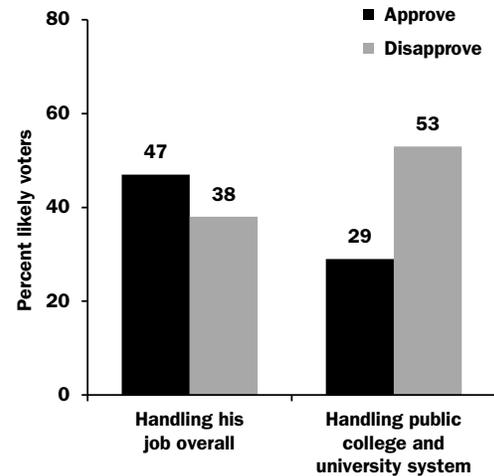
Three-fourths of residents say a racially diverse student body is very important (53%) or somewhat important (22%). Their views on the importance of an economically diverse student population are similar (54% very important, 27% somewhat important).

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND THE FUTURE

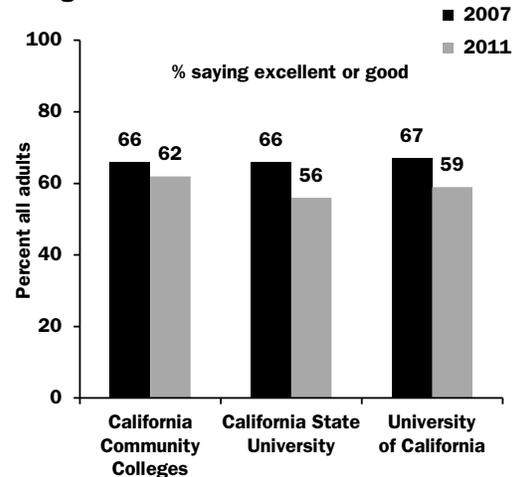
KEY FINDINGS

- Californians are much more critical of the way Governor Brown is handling the state's public college and university system than they are of the way he is handling his job as governor. The legislature receives poor marks on both counts. *(page 7)*
- Six in 10 Californians say the state's public higher education system is headed in the wrong direction. Most do not consider educational quality to be a big problem, but they do think affordability and the state budget situation are. *(pages 8, 9)*
- Majorities give excellent or good ratings to the California Community Colleges (62%), California State University (56%), and University of California (59%), although the ratings have declined over time. *(page 10)*
- Three in four residents say state funding for higher education is not enough and two in three say public colleges and universities have been affected a lot by budget cuts. They are very concerned about schools increasing fees, offering fewer courses, and reducing admissions. *(pages 11, 12)*
- Californians are increasingly likely to place a very high priority on state spending for higher education. A majority say the state should spend more in this area even if it means less for other programs. *(page 13)*
- Still, half of Californians would not pay higher taxes to benefit higher education and majorities oppose increasing student fees. A majority (58%) would support a state bond measure to pay for higher education construction projects. *(page 14)*
- A plurality of residents anticipate a shortage of college-educated workers in the state's future. Just under half trust the state government to plan accordingly. *(page 15)*

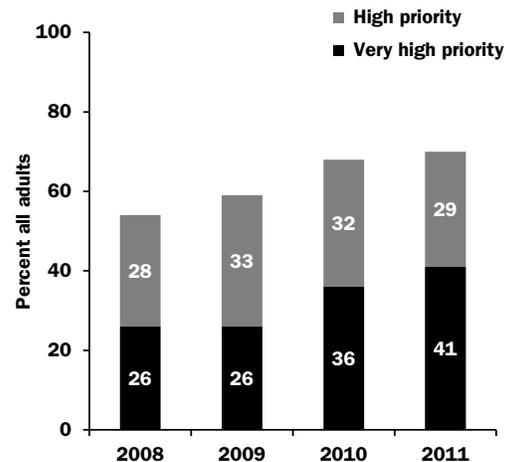
Approval Ratings of Governor Brown



Ratings of the Three Branches of Higher Education



Priority for State Spending on Higher Education



APPROVAL RATINGS OF STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

Governor Brown, who released his public pension reform plan just days after we began interviewing, has the approval of 44 percent of Californians, while 30 percent disapprove, and 26 percent are unsure how to rate the governor. Brown’s overall approval ratings in earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys include: 41 percent in January, 34 percent in February, 34 percent in March, 40 percent in April, 42 percent in May, 42 percent in July, and 41 percent in September. Today, just under half of likely voters (47%) approve and 38 percent disapprove. Most Democrats (64%) approve of Governor Brown, while most Republicans (56%) disapprove and independents are divided (36% approve, 37% disapprove, 26% don’t know). Across regions, approval of the governor surpasses 50 percent only in the San Francisco Bay Area (53%).

Findings are reversed when it comes to Governor Brown’s handling of California’s public college and university system—31 percent approve, 44 percent disapprove, and 25 percent don’t know. Among likely voters, 53 percent disapprove while just 29 percent approve. Democrats, Republicans, and independents are more likely to disapprove than approve of his handling of higher education, with Republicans (60%) the most disapproving. Residents in the Inland Empire (51%) and Orange/San Diego Counties (49%) are the most likely—and those in the Central Valley (38%) the least likely—to disapprove.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Jerry Brown is handling...”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>His job as governor of California?</i>	Approve	44%	64%	24%	36%	47%
	Disapprove	30	19	56	37	38
	Don't know	26	16	20	26	15
<i>California's public college and university system?</i>	Approve	31	36	21	27	29
	Disapprove	44	41	60	54	53
	Don't know	25	23	19	20	18

One in four Californians (25%) approve of the California Legislature; 55 percent disapprove. Likely voters are even more disapproving (17% approve, 70% disapprove). Approval has rebounded from record lows in March and November 2010 (14%), but has been below 30 percent since April 2008. Most Republicans (75%), independents (66%), and Democrats (59%) disapprove, as do at least half across regions. Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (69%) are most disapproving (59% blacks, 49% Asians, 37% Latinos).

Californians hold similar opinions of the legislature for its handling of the state’s public college and university system (21% approve, 59% disapprove), with likely voters once again more disapproving (14% approve, 71% disapprove). Solid majorities across parties disapprove, as do majorities across regions.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling...”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>Its job?</i>	Approve	25%	26%	11%	16%	17%
	Disapprove	55	59	75	66	70
	Don't know	19	15	14	18	13
<i>California's public college and university system?</i>	Approve	21	20	11	12	14
	Disapprove	59	64	72	69	71
	Don't know	20	16	17	19	15

OVERALL OUTLOOK

When it comes to the direction of the public higher education system in California today, most Californians say it is heading in the wrong direction (62%), while 28 percent say it is heading in the right direction. Six in 10 or more across regions say the system is heading in the wrong direction, with residents in the San Francisco Bay Area most negative (68% wrong direction). More than seven in 10 across parties hold this view (71% Democrats, 73% independents, 75% Republicans). Solid majorities of Asians (60%), blacks (61%), and whites (74%) say the system is heading in the wrong direction, while Latinos are divided (42% right direction, 48% wrong direction).

More than seven in 10 of those with at least some college education say the state's higher education system is heading in the wrong direction compared to far fewer of those with a high school education or less (48%). Women (67%) are more likely than men (58%) to say wrong direction. Six in 10 California parents of children 18 or younger say the system is heading in the wrong direction and parents with children currently attending a California public college or university are even more pessimistic (69% wrong direction). The perception that the higher education system is heading in the wrong direction is even higher among current students (73%) and alumni (76%) of California public colleges and universities.

“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	Education			Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		High School or Less	Some College	College Graduate	
Right direction	28%	40%	19%	17%	33%
Wrong direction	62	48	71	76	60
Don't know	10	12	10	7	7

When asked to think about California's higher education system compared to other states, just one in five say it is among the best in the country (4% best, 16% one of the best). Another 27 percent think it is above average, 31 percent consider it average, and 15 percent below average. Likely voters hold similar opinions. Likely voters hold similar opinions. Democrats (54%) are more likely than independents (47%) or Republicans (42%) to say the system is at least above average. Across regions, only in the San Francisco Bay Area does the perception that the system is at least above average garner a majority (56%). Just under half of parents of children 18 or younger (48%) or parents with children currently attending a California public college or university (48%) say the system is at least above average. The perception that the higher education system is at least above average is higher among its current students (58%), while half of alumni (50%) hold this view.

“Compared with other states, how would you rate the quality of the public higher education system in California today? Do you think it is the best in the country, one of the best in the country, above average, average, or below average?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
The best in the country	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%
One of the best in the country	16	20	15	15	18
Above average	27	30	24	29	29
Average	31	27	29	31	27
Below average	15	13	23	16	17
Don't know	6	6	7	5	5

PROBLEM SERIOUSNESS

With the possibility of more cuts to California’s higher education system looming, most Californians continue to call the overall affordability of education for students and the overall state budget situation big problems—but far fewer say so about the overall quality of education. Seven in 10 Californians (69%) say that the state budget situation is a big problem (down 5 points from 2010 and similar to 2009). Sixty-one percent of Californians call the overall affordability of education for students a big problem. Findings about affordability today are similar to 2010 (60%) and 2009 (57%), but higher than in 2008 (52%) and 2007 (53%). Twenty-four percent of Californians say the quality of education is a big problem, up slightly since 2007 (18% 2007, 18% 2008, 21% 2009, 22% 2010, 24% today).

“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. How about...”

	The overall state budget situation?	The overall affordability of education for students?	The overall quality of education?
Big problem	69%	61%	24%
Somewhat of a problem	17	25	36
Not much of a problem	8	11	34
Don’t know	5	4	6

More than seven in 10 across parties and at least two in three across regions think the state budget situation is a big problem for higher education. Whites (81%) and blacks (79%) are much more likely than Asians (64%) and far more likely than Latinos (54%) to hold this view. Those with at least some college or who live in a household making at least \$40,000 annually are more likely than others to hold this view. The affordability of higher education is viewed as a big problem by more than six in 10 across parties, and majorities across regions agree. Differences emerge across racial/ethnic groups, with blacks (67%) and whites (66%) the most likely to say big problem followed by Latinos (56%) and Asians (50%). Majorities across income groups consider affordability a big problem, as do six in 10 parents of children 18 or younger and two in three parents of children now attending a California public college or university.

When it comes to the overall quality of education, fewer than three in 10 across parties, regions, and demographic groups say this is a big problem, but some differences do emerge. Asians (18%) are the least likely racial/ethnic group to say big problem, while more educated and affluent Californians are less likely than others to hold this view. One in four parents of children currently attending a California public college or university and students currently attending one of these branches say quality is a big problem.

<i>Percent saying big problem</i>		Overall state budget situation	Overall affordability	Overall quality
All Adults		69%	61%	24%
Likely Voters		78	65	24
Parents of Children 18 or Younger		65	59	24
Race/Ethnicity	Asians	64	50	18
	Blacks	79	67	29
	Latinos	54	56	26
	Whites	81	66	23
Household Income	Under \$40,000	60	59	26
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	77	66	26
	\$80,000 or more	80	61	18

RATINGS OF THE THREE BRANCHES

Californians give positive ratings to each branch of California’s higher education system: California Community Colleges (10% excellent, 52% good), California State University (6% excellent, 50% good), University of California (11% excellent, 48% good). Since 2007, there has been a slow drop in positive ratings of the CSU system (down 10 points) and UC system (down 8 points), while ratings of the CCC system have been similar over time.

“As you may know, California’s higher education system has three branches—the California Community College system, the California State University system, and the University of California system. Overall, is the ... doing an excellent, good, not-so-good, or poor job?”

	California Community College system	California State University system	University of California system
Excellent	10%	6%	11%
Good	52	50	48
Not-so-good	21	25	23
Poor	8	6	6
Don’t know	9	13	12

Solid majorities of Californians (62%) and parents of children attending a California public college or university (67%) consider the CCC system to be excellent or good, as do more than six in 10 across parties. Residents in the Inland Empire (68%), Orange/San Diego Counties (64%), and the Central Valley (63%) are more likely than adults elsewhere to hold positive views. Whites (66%) are the most likely racial/ethnic group to give positive ratings (58% Asians, 59% Latinos, 52% blacks).

Majorities of adults (56%), voters across parties, and parents of children attending a California public college or university (59%) give excellent or good ratings to the CSU system. Orange/San Diego residents (62%) are the most likely—and San Francisco Bay Area residents (51%) the least likely—to give positive ratings. Findings are similar across racial/ethnic groups and positive ratings rise with increasing income.

Majorities of Californians (59%) and parents of children attending a California public college or university (62%) rate the University of California system as excellent or good. Democrats (66%) are more positive than independents (58%) and Republicans (55%). Majorities across regions and racial/ethnic groups give positive ratings, with residents of Los Angeles (62%) and Asians (69%) most likely to do so.

<i>Percent saying excellent or good</i>		California Community College system	California State University system	University of California system
All Adults		62%	56%	59%
Likely Voters		66	59	59
Parents of Children Attending California Public College or University		67	59	62
Race/Ethnicity	Asians	58	57	69
	Blacks	52	56	52
	Latinos	59	53	56
	Whites	66	58	58
Region	Central Valley	63	54	58
	San Francisco Bay Area	59	51	54
	Los Angeles	57	58	62
	Orange/San Diego	64	62	59
	Inland Empire	68	59	58

LEVEL OF STATE FUNDING

When it comes to the level of state funding for California’s public colleges and universities, Californians continue to say state funding is not enough. Today, 74 percent of Californians say funding is not enough, while far fewer say it is more than enough (7%) or just enough (14%). The view that there is not enough funding was the same last year (74%), but was much lower in 2007 (57% not enough, 28% just enough).

Today, Democrats (82%) are the most likely to say there is not enough funding, followed by independents (71%) and Republicans (58%). More than two in three across regions and demographic groups think there is not enough funding, but some differences do emerge. Inland Empire (79%) and San Francisco Bay Area residents (78%) are the most likely—and Central Valley residents (67%) are the least likely—to say that state funding is not enough. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (85%) are the most likely to say that there is not enough funding, followed by Latinos (78%), Asians (74%), and whites (69%). Among those who are currently students in one of California’s public colleges or universities, most (84%) say that funding is not enough. Most parents of children 18 or younger (79%) and those with children currently attending a California college (72%) also say that funding is not enough.

“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?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
More than enough	7%	3%	18%	11%	12%
Just enough	14	12	18	14	14
Not enough	74	82	58	71	71
Don’t know	5	2	6	4	4

Solid majorities of Californians (65%) and likely voters (68%) say that the state’s public colleges and universities have been affected a lot by recent state budget cuts. Democrats (77%) are far more likely than Republicans or independents (56% each) to say so. Residents in the Inland Empire (71%) and Los Angeles (69%) are the most likely to say colleges and universities have been affected a lot, followed by those in the San Francisco Bay Area (64%), Orange/San Diego Counties (61%), and the Central Valley (59%). More than 60 percent of men, women, and all age, education, and income groups say that colleges and universities have been affected a lot. Among those who are current students of California public colleges or universities, 77 percent say that schools have been affected a lot, while 70 percent of parents of current students hold this view.

“Would you say the state’s public colleges and universities have or have not been affected by recent state budget cuts? (if they have: Have they been affected a lot or somewhat?)”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Affected a lot	65%	77%	56%	56%	68%
Affected somewhat	25	17	33	34	24
Not affected	5	3	7	6	4
Don’t know	5	3	4	4	4

SPECIFIC CONCERNS ABOUT STATE BUDGET CUTS

Californians are concerned about a number of ways that public colleges and universities have dealt with decreased funding, but they express the most concern about increasing tuition and fees for students. Two in three Californians are very concerned about increasing tuition (65%), compared to just over half who are very concerned about schools offering fewer college classes (55%) or about admitting fewer students (53%). The share very concerned about increasing tuition and fees and offering fewer classes has been similar since 2009. There has been a decrease since last year in the percentage who are very concerned about admitting fewer students (57% 2009, 62% 2010, 53% very concerned today).

“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. How about...”

	Increasing tuition and fees for students?	Offering fewer college classes?	Admitting fewer college students?
Very concerned	65%	55%	53%
Somewhat concerned	24	31	31
Not too concerned	5	7	8
Not at all concerned	5	5	6
Don’t know	1	1	2

Democrats (73%) are more likely than independents (62%) and Republicans (53%) to be very concerned about rising tuition and fees for students. More than six in 10 across regions and demographic groups are very concerned about increasing tuition. Among parents of current students at California public colleges or universities, 77 percent are very concerned, as are 70 percent of current students.

When it comes to offering fewer college courses or admitting fewer college students, majorities of parents of children attending a California public college or university are very concerned about colleges offering fewer classes (64%) and about admitting fewer students (57%). Current students are more concerned about class offerings (71%) than student admissions (58%). Blacks are the most likely to be very concerned about class offerings, while Latinos are most likely to be very concerned about student admissions. Central Valley residents are the least likely to be very concerned about either issue.

Percent saying very concerned		Increasing tuition and fees for students	Offering fewer college classes	Admitting fewer college students
All Adults		65%	55%	53%
Likely Voters		66	57	54
Parents of Children Attending California Public College or University		77	64	57
Race/Ethnicity	Asians	66	53	53
	Blacks	81	67	75
	Latinos	68	62	53
	Whites	62	51	50
Region	Central Valley	61	47	49
	San Francisco Bay Area	70	59	53
	Los Angeles	65	59	52
	Orange/San Diego	64	53	56
	Inland Empire	61	51	53

STATE BUDGET CHOICES

Seven in 10 Californians place a high (29%) or very high (41%) priority on state spending for higher education. The percentage who consider spending in this area to be a very high priority has risen 15 points since 2008 (26% 2008, 26% 2009, 36% 2010, 41% today). Although majorities across parties say spending on higher education is a high or very high priority, Democrats (50%) are the most likely to say this should be a very high priority for the state (36% independents, 31% Republicans).

Reflecting the importance they place on higher education, most Californians (59%) and likely voters (57%) favor the state government spending more on public colleges and universities, even if it means less for other state programs. Support was similar last year (57% adults, 57% likely voters). Most Democrats (65%) favor spending more on higher education, while Republicans are divided (49% favor, 45% oppose). Independents are more likely to favor (52%) than oppose (39%) this idea. Asians (70%) are more likely than Latinos (60%), whites (56%), and blacks (54%) to favor increased spending even at the expense of other programs. Among parents of children attending a California public college or university, 67 percent favor this idea. Among students now attending one of these schools, 71 percent express support.

“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?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	59%	65%	49%	52%	57%
Oppose	33	27	45	39	35
Don't know	8	8	6	9	8

If the state government makes budget cuts in higher education (which could happen again as soon as January), most Californians (63%) say the quality of education will suffer. Far fewer (32%) say the state could make cuts and still maintain a high quality of education. Results were similar last year (66% quality will suffer, 29% quality could be maintained). Solid majorities of Democrats (74%) and independents (60%) say quality will suffer under budget cuts, while Republicans are divided (48% quality will suffer, 47% quality could be maintained). Majorities across regions and racial/ethnic and other demographic groups believe educational quality will suffer if more cuts are made. This concern is especially pronounced among students currently attending one of the state's public colleges or universities (76%).

“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.”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Quality will suffer	63%	74%	48%	60%	62%
Quality could be maintained	32	23	47	35	34
Don't know	5	2	5	4	4

To improve educational quality significantly, most Californians (50%) say the amount of state funding needs to be increased and that existing funds need to be used more wisely. Thirty-four percent say just using funds more wisely would improve quality, while only 12 percent say increasing funding alone is the key. Results were similar last year. This issue continues to divide voters along party lines: Democrats (63%) say both things are needed; Republicans (58%) say existing funds need to be used more wisely.

RAISING REVENUES

Although most Californians express deep concerns about the fiscal situation of the higher education system, half say they are unwilling to pay higher taxes to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities. Meanwhile, there is widespread opposition to increasing student fees for this purpose.

Fifty-two percent of Californians would not pay higher taxes to maintain current funding levels for higher education; 45 percent would. Likely voters are divided (49% yes, 49% no). Last year, Californians and likely voters were evenly divided (49% yes, 49% no); in 2009, adults (41% yes, 56% no) and likely voters (43% yes, 54% no) were more likely to oppose than favor the idea. Most Democrats (63%) would pay higher taxes; most Republicans (71%) would not. Independents are opposed (41% yes, 55% no).

Strong majorities of Californians (69%) and likely voters (65%) oppose increasing student fees to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities. Each branch of the higher education system has significantly increased student fees over the past several years. Opposition has increased 7 points among all adults since last year (from 62% to 69%) and 5 points among likely voters (from 60% to 65%). At least six in 10 across parties, regions, and demographic groups oppose increasing student fees.

“What if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities. Would you be willing to...”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
Pay higher taxes for this purpose, or not?	Yes	45%	63%	29%	41%	49%
	No	52	35	71	55	49
	Don't know	3	2	1	4	2
Increase student fees for this purpose, or not?	Yes	28	29	38	28	32
	No	69	68	60	69	65
	Don't know	3	2	2	3	3

To maintain current funding for higher education, Californians favor admitting more out-of-state students who pay higher tuition, but support declines if that would mean fewer California admissions (20% yes, even if fewer in-state students, 32% yes, but not if fewer in-state students, 42% no). Support for out-of-state admissions at the expense of California admissions has declined slightly (26% 2010, 20% today).

One idea that generates majority support among Californians is a hypothetical bond measure to pay for construction projects in the state’s higher education system. Fifty-eight percent of all adults would vote yes and 34 percent would vote no. Among likely voters, 52 percent would vote yes and 41 percent no. This type of statewide bond would require a simple majority vote to pass. Support for a hypothetical bond measure among all adults was higher in 2007 (64%), but slightly lower in 2009 (53%). This idea divides voters along party lines (68% of Democrats would vote yes and 55% of Republicans would vote no) and independents are about evenly split (47% yes, 45% 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?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes	58%	68%	39%	47%	52%
No	34	25	55	45	41
Don't know	8	8	6	8	7

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Nearly all Californians say that the state’s higher education system is very (73%) or somewhat (23%) important to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years. Results have been similar since this question was first asked in 2007. More than six in 10 across parties, regions, and demographic groups say the higher education system is very important to the state’s future. Democrats, at 82 percent, are the most likely party group to express this view (70% independents, 64% Republicans). Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (84%) and Latinos (80%) are more likely than whites (70%) and Asians (64%) to say the system is very important to the state’s future. Across education groups, those with college degrees are the most likely to consider the system very important.

A plurality of Californians (49%) also recognize that the state will face a shortage of college-educated residents needed for the jobs of the future. About one in three think the state will have just enough college-educated workers and 13 percent think it will have more than enough. PPIC research has shown that the state will have a shortage of 1 million college-educated workers by 2025. The percentage who say the state will face a shortage is down 7 points from last year (56% 2010, 49% today), but is similar to 2009 (49%), 2008 (47%), and 2007 (52%). Across parties, majorities of Democrats (59%) and independents (55%) anticipate a shortage of college-educated workers, compared to 41 percent of Republicans. Across regions and demographic groups, pluralities say there will not be enough.

“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?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
More than enough	13%	8%	20%	10%	11%
Just enough	32	28	33	30	30
Not enough	49	59	41	55	53
Don’t know	6	5	6	5	7

Just under half of Californians (47%) express at least some confidence in the state government to plan for the future of higher education: 10 percent have a great deal of confidence and 37 percent only some. The other half of Californians have very little (34%) or no confidence (16%) in the state government to plan. Confidence was much higher when we first asked this question in 2007 (57%), but had dropped significantly by 2010 (52% 2008, 41% 2009, 40% 2010). Today, confidence has inched back up to 47 percent. Among those who believe the state will face a shortage of college-educated workers, 58 percent have very little or no confidence in the state to plan accordingly. Across parties, Democrats (56%) are much more likely to express confidence than independents (39%) or Republicans (38%).

“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, only some, very little, or none?”

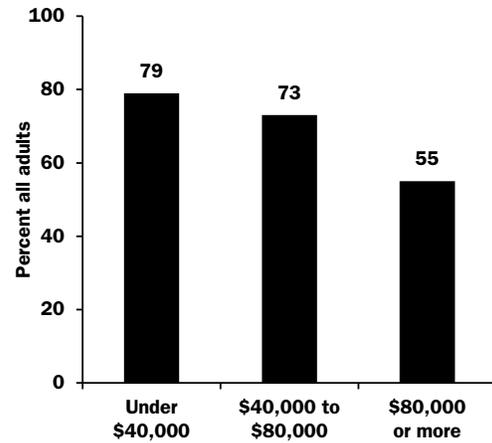
	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
A great deal	10%	9%	6%	7%	6%
Only some	37	47	32	32	37
Very little	34	32	37	36	35
None	16	10	26	24	21
Don’t know	2	2	–	–	1

OVERALL PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

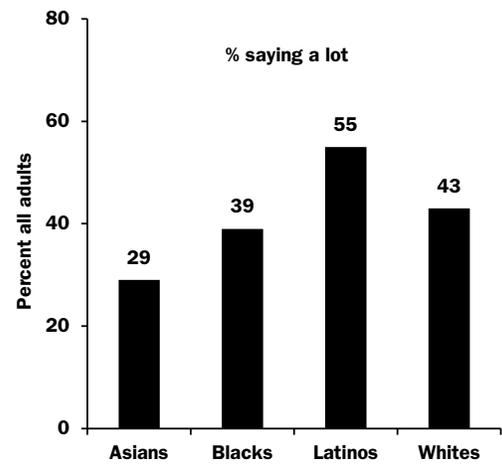
KEY FINDINGS

- A majority of Californians say that a college education is necessary for success in today's work world; Latinos are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to say this. *(page 17)*
- Solid majorities of Californians—including those across racial/ethnic, income, and education groups—agree that the price of college limits access and that students have to borrow too much to pay for college. *(page 18)*
- Seven in 10 Californians say that many qualified people lack the opportunity to go to college. The share of residents holding this view declines with rising income and education levels. *(page 19)*
- Although 86 percent of Californians consider it very important for the state's K–12 public schools to prepare students for college, only 44 percent say they are doing an excellent or good job of it. *(page 21)*
- Seven in 10 Californians say it is very important for community colleges to include career technical or vocational education, but less than half say a two-year degree can greatly help a person to be successful in the work world. *(page 22)*
- Most parents would like their children to obtain a four-year or postgraduate degree; however, many are worried about being able to pay for that education, with concern especially high among Latino parents and lower-income parents. *(page 23)*

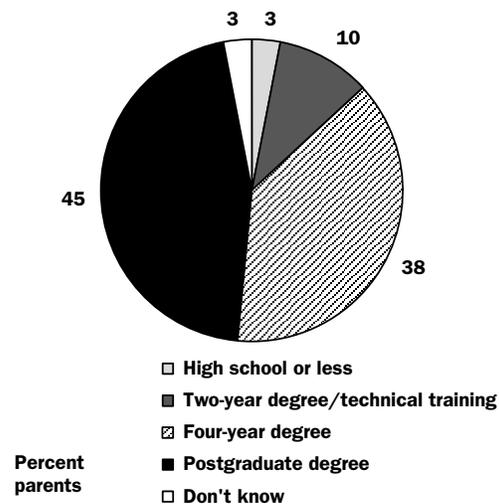
Percent Who Say Many Qualified People Lack the Opportunity to Attend College



How Much a Two-Year Degree Helps a Person Be Successful



Parents' Educational Hopes for Their Children



IMPORTANCE AND PURPOSE OF COLLEGE

Most Californians (58%) believe that a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today's work world, while 39 percent believe there are many ways to succeed without a college education. Since we first asked this question in 2007, the percentage saying college is necessary has hit a low point (64% 2007, 68% 2008, 66% 2009, 63% 2010, 58% today). There are considerable differences across demographic groups about the perceived necessity of college. Nearly three in four Latinos (73%) say success depends on a college education, compared to fewer Asians (63%), blacks (53%), and whites (46%). Women are much more likely than men (64% to 52%) to consider college a necessity. Los Angeles (63%), San Francisco Bay Area (62%), and Inland Empire (61%) residents are more likely than those in the Central Valley (53%) and Orange/San Diego Counties (51%) to express this view. Two in three parents (65%) view college as a necessity.

“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?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
College is necessary	58%	63%	53%	73%	46%	65%
Many ways to succeed	39	34	47	25	50	32
Don't know	3	3	–	1	4	3

Californians offer mixed opinions about the purpose of college. A plurality (46%) say that the main purpose of college is to teach specific skills and knowledge that can be used in the workplace, while 35 percent say the main purpose should be to help an individual grow personally and intellectually. Another 18 percent volunteer that the main purpose of college is both of these goals. This question was asked in a nationwide survey by the Pew Research Center in March. Results were similar among adults nationwide (39% personal/intellectual growth, 47% skills/knowledge, 12% both).

Across most regions and demographic groups, greater shares choose skills and knowledge for the workplace over personal and intellectual growth. There are some exceptions, however. College graduates are somewhat more likely to value personal and intellectual growth over specific skills and knowledge for the workplace (43% to 37%). A plurality of Asians (48%) choose personal and intellectual growth, while pluralities in other racial/ethnic groups (49% blacks, 48% whites, 45% Latinos) choose skills and knowledge that can be applied in the workplace. Those aged 18 to 34 are more divided between the two goals but residents who are older believe it is more important to learn skills for the workplace. Those with incomes of \$80,000 or more are divided about evenly between these goals, while those with lower incomes name workforce skills.

“Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right? The main purpose of college should be to help an individual grow personally and intellectually, or to teach specific skills and knowledge that can be used in the workplace.”

	All Adults	Education			Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		High school or less	Some college	College graduate	
Personal, intellectual growth	35%	32%	33%	43%	34%
Specific skills, knowledge	46	53	44	37	46
Both equally (volunteered)	18	14	22	19	17
Don't know	1	2	1	1	2

HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY

Reflecting their belief that affordability is a big problem, a strong majority of Californians (70%) say that the price of college keeps students who are qualified and motivated to go to college from doing so; 27 percent disagree. Since 2007, at least two in three Californians have said that the price is a barrier to entry (66% 2007, 69% 2009, 73% 2010, 70% today). There is widespread agreement among Californians, with more than six in 10 across parties, regions, and demographic groups saying the price of college is keeping qualified students out. Republicans (61%) are less likely than independents (74%) and Democrats (75%) to express this view, as are Latinos (64%) compared with other racial/ethnic groups (72% whites, 75% Asians, 79% blacks).

“Please say if you agree or disagree with the following statements. The price of a college education keeps students who are qualified and motivated to go to college from doing so.”

	All Adults	Household Income			Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Agree	70%	70%	73%	69%	68%
Disagree	27	28	25	30	30
Don't know	2	2	2	2	2

Although most Californians perceive the price of college as a barrier to attendance, many (55%) believe that loans and financial aid are available to those who need it; 40 percent disagree. Results have been similar since this question was first asked in 2008. Democrats are somewhat more likely to disagree (50%) than agree (44%) that loans and financial aid are available to those who need help. Most Republicans (57%) and independents (51%) think financial help is available. Nearly two in three of those with incomes under \$40,000 (63%) and those without any college education (65%) say financial help is available, compared to about half of other groups (49% \$40,000 or more, 47% some college, and 49% college graduates). Latinos (67%) and Asians (61%) are much more likely than whites (48%) and blacks (44%) to agree that financial help is available. Among current students, 47 percent agree and 50 percent disagree that there is financial help for those who need it.

Many Californians may believe that loans and financial aid are there for those who need it, but a strong majority (75%) also believe that students have to borrow too much money to pay for their college education; 23 percent disagree. Findings have been nearly identical each year since 2007. Majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups believe students have to borrow too much to go to college, but there are some interesting differences. For example, middle- (81%) and upper-income (80%) residents are much more likely than lower-income residents (68%) to think students have to borrow too much. College graduates (80%) and those with some college education (83%) are much more likely than those without any college education (65%) to hold this view. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (57%) are the least likely to consider this a problem (82% Asians, 83% whites, 90% blacks).

“Please say if you agree or disagree with the following statements. Students have to borrow too much money to pay for their college education.”

	All Adults	Household Income			Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Agree	75%	68%	81%	80%	71%
Disagree	23	30	17	17	27
Don't know	3	2	2	3	2

STUDENT PREPAREDNESS AND ACCESS

Underscoring their views of affordability as a barrier to entry, seven in 10 Californians (70%) say that many qualified people do not have the opportunity to go to college; one in four (26%) say the vast majority of those who are qualified and motivated have the opportunity to go. Since 2007, strong majorities have expressed the view that many qualified people lack the opportunity to go to college (65% 2007, 68% 2008 and 2009, 71% 2010, 70% today).

Majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups say that there are qualified candidates who have no access to college, but there are some key differences. Those who are not college graduates (77% high school or less, 73% some college) are much more likely than college graduates (56%) to say there is an access problem. Along similar lines, more than seven in 10 of those with incomes under \$40,000 (79%) or between \$40,000 and \$80,000 (73%) hold this view, compared to 55 percent of those making \$80,000 or more. Democrats (75%) are much more likely than independents (62%) and Republicans (60%) to consider access a problem for qualified potential applicants. Across regions, San Francisco Bay Area residents (64%) are the least likely to hold this view (69% Orange/San Diego Counties, 72% Los Angeles, 73% Inland Empire, 74% Central Valley). And across racial/ethnic groups, whites (61%) are the least likely to say that many qualified people lack the opportunity to go to college (68% Asians, 76% blacks, 82% Latinos). Among those who view college as necessary for success in the workplace, 74 percent believe many qualified people lack the opportunity to attend.

“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?”

	All Adults	Education			Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		High School or Less	Some College	College Graduate	
Majority have the opportunity	26%	20%	24%	39%	24%
Many don’t have the opportunity	70	77	73	56	72
Don’t know	4	3	4	5	3

Californians believe there are many qualified people who do not get the chance to go to college, but they also think that many of those who do enter college are unprepared. Just 23 percent say that most students are prepared for college-level work when they enter college, while 69 percent say that many students require basic skills and remedial education when they enter college. Seven in 10 voters across parties believe many students need remedial help. Across regions, Inland Empire residents (81%) are the most likely to hold this view, followed by those in the San Francisco Bay Area (73%), Orange/San Diego Counties (69%), Los Angeles (66%), and the Central Valley (65%). Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (84%) are much more likely than Latinos (70%), whites (69%), and Asians (57%) to say many students need remediation. Among those currently attending a California public college or university, 75 percent think many students require basic skills and remedial education.

“Do you think that most students are prepared for college-level work when they enter college, or do you think that many students require basic skills and remedial education when they enter college?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Most are prepared	23%	32%	13%	23%	23%	23%
Many require remediation	69	57	84	70	69	69
Don’t know	8	11	3	8	8	8

IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT DIVERSITY

Three in four Californians believe that it is very (53%) or somewhat important (22%) for public colleges and universities to have a racially diverse student body, with one in four saying it is not too important (11%) or not at all important (13%). Results have been nearly identical in past years (55% very, 23% somewhat 2008; 54% very, 23% somewhat 2009; 54% very, 23% somewhat 2010). Californians' views on economic diversity are similar. Eight in 10 say that it is very (54%) or somewhat important (27%), while one in five say it is not too important (10%) or not at all important (9%). Findings have been similar each time we asked this question (57% very, 25% somewhat 2008; 54% very, 26% somewhat 2009; 57% very, 26% somewhat 2010).

“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?	An economically diverse student body—that is, a mix of students from lower-, middle-, and upper-income backgrounds?
Very important	53%	54%
Somewhat important	22	27
Not too important	11	10
Not at all important	13	9
Don't know	1	1

Half of likely voters (50%) and about six in 10 parents of children 18 or younger (58%) say that a racially diverse student body is very important. Blacks (83%) are by far the most likely racial/ethnic group to say that racial diversity is very important; a solid majority of Latinos agree (63%) while fewer Asians (50%) and whites (44%) hold this view. The perception that racial diversity is very important declines with income. Democrats (67%) are far more likely than independents (45%) and Republicans (33%) to have this view. Just over half of current students, parents of current students, and residents across age groups consider this very important.

About half of likely voters (52%) and 56 percent of parents of children 18 or younger say economic diversity is very important. An overwhelming majority of blacks (80%) and six in 10 Latinos (60%) say economic diversity is very important, compared to fewer Asians (50%) and whites (48%). Those earning \$80,000 or more (47%) are less likely than others (59% under \$40,000, 55% \$40,000 to \$80,000) to say an economically diverse student body is very important. Democrats (67%) are far more likely than independents (47%) and Republicans (39%) to hold this view. Six in 10 current higher education students (60%) say economic diversity is very important, compared to 49 percent of parents of current students.

<i>Percent saying very important</i>		A racially diverse student body	An economically diverse student body
All Adults		53%	54%
Likely Voters		50	52
Parents of Children 18 or Younger		58	56
Race/Ethnicity	Asians	50	50
	Blacks	83	80
	Latinos	63	60
	Whites	44	48
Household Income	Under \$40,000	61	59
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	52	55
	\$80,000 or more	44	47

ROLE OF K–12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

An overwhelming majority of adults (86%) say that it is very important for California’s K–12 public schools to prepare students for college, while 11 percent say it is somewhat important and 2 percent not too important. In surveys on K–12 education, strong majorities held this view (81% April 2007, 76% April 2009). Blacks (96%) and Latinos (94%) are more likely than whites (84%) and Asians (72%) to say so.

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

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Very important	86%	72%	96%	94%	84%	90%
Somewhat important	11	25	2	5	13	9
Not too important	2	3	2	1	2	1
Don’t know	1	1	–	–	1	1

Californians consider college preparation very important, but 51 percent say the K–12 public schools are doing a not-so-good (33%) or poor job (18%) at this. Forty-four percent say excellent (8%) or good (36%) job. Parents hold a more favorable view than all adults (11% excellent, 43% good, 29% not so good, 15% poor). In surveys on K–12 education, about half have given negative ratings to K–12 public schools when it comes to preparing students for college (53% April 2006, 48% April 2009, 53% April 2010, 52% April 2011). Latinos are much more likely (62%) than Asians (48%), or whites (31%) and blacks (30%) to have a favorable opinion. Among those who say many college students require remediation, just 37 percent say K–12 public schools are doing an excellent or good job preparing students for college.

“Are California’s K–12 public schools doing an excellent, good, not-so-good, or poor job in preparing students for college?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Excellent	8%	6%	2%	17%	3%	11%
Good	36	42	28	45	28	43
Not-so-good	33	33	46	25	37	29
Poor	18	7	22	10	26	15
Don’t know	5	12	2	3	5	3

ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A plurality of Californians (35%) say the most important goal of the state’s community colleges is preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Three in 10 (29%) say career technical or vocational education and 17 percent say lifelong learning. Far fewer say providing basic skills or remedial education (7%) or providing associate degrees (6%). In 2010, 41 percent said transfer preparation was the most important goal and 25 percent said career technical or vocational education. Today, pluralities across parties and regions favor transfer preparation, and this view rises with income. Residents age 55 and older are less likely than younger Californians to have this view. Asians are more likely to choose career technical or vocational education over transfer preparation (38% to 31%), while pluralities of whites (35%), Latinos (39%), and blacks (38%) view transfer preparation as the main goal of community colleges.

ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES (CONTINUED)

Almost all Californians say that it is very (73%) or somewhat (23%) important that community colleges include classes that prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The percentage saying this is very important has declined somewhat since 2007 (81% 2007, 78% 2010, 73% today). Democrats (76%) are more likely than independents (68%) and Republicans (66%) to hold this view. Blacks (87%) and Latinos (80%) are more likely than whites (70%) and Asians (60%) to view transfer preparation as very important. Solid majorities across regions and demographic groups say including classes to prepare students to transfer is very important. About three in four adults currently attending (77%) and those who attended (75%) a California public college or university share this view.

Nearly all residents say including career technical or vocational education in community colleges is very (72%) or somewhat (24%) important. A similar share thought this was very important in past years (76% 2007, 73% 2010). Majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups say this is very important. Still, blacks (83%) are more likely than Latinos and whites (74% each), and are far more likely than Asians (54%) to hold this view. Seven in 10 current higher education students (70%) and 76 percent of alumni say including career technical or vocational education is very important.

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

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Very important	72%	54%	83%	74%	74%	74%
Somewhat important	24	41	14	23	22	22
Not too important	3	3	3	2	3	2
Not at all important	1	2	-	1	1	1

How do Californians view a two-year community college degree or technical training when it comes to helping a person be successful in today’s work world? Fewer than half say it helps a lot (45%), 42 percent say it helps some, while just one in 10 say not too much (9%) or not at all (2%). Latinos (55%) are much more likely than whites (43%) or blacks (39%) and far more likely than Asians (29%) to say a two-year degree helps a lot to be successful in the workplace. Inland Empire residents (52%) are the most likely to say a two-year degree helps a lot, followed by those in Orange/San Diego Counties (46%), the San Francisco Bay Area (46%), the Central Valley (43%), and Los Angeles (42%). The view that a two-year community college degree or technical training is very helpful for the workplace declines with income and education. Among those who believe that it is very important for community colleges to include career technical or vocational education, 52 percent say that a two-year degree helps a person a lot to succeed in today’s work world.

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

	All Adults	Household Income			Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
A lot	45%	49%	45%	38%	49%
Some	42	37	43	50	40
Not too much	9	10	7	10	9
Not at all	2	2	3	1	1
Don’t know	2	2	2	2	1

PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Parents of children age 18 or younger express high hopes that their youngest child will be a four-year college graduate (38%) or have a graduate degree (45%). Fewer parents hope their child will achieve a two-year college degree or technical training (10%), or a high school education or less (3%). In eight surveys since 2005, at least 83 percent have said a four-year college graduate or a graduate degree. In this survey, we used the “two-year community college graduate or career technical training” category, for which the response is higher (10%) than in November 2010 (5%) when we used “some college or career technical training” or in surveys from April 2005 to April 2010 (less than 5%) when we used “some college.” Latino parents (44%) are somewhat more likely than whites (35%) to say four-year college graduate, while white parents (55%) are far more likely than Latinos (29%) to say graduate degree. (Sample sizes for Asian and black parents are too small for separate analysis.) Regardless of whether they graduated from college themselves, the vast majority of parents would like their children to obtain a four-year or graduate degree. Still, parents who are college graduates (73%) are more than twice as likely as those who are not (35%) to hope their youngest child completes a graduate degree.

“What do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve: some high school; high school graduate; two-year community college graduate or career technical training; four-year college graduate; or a graduate degree after college?”

Parents of Children 18 or Younger Only	All Parents of Children 18 or Younger	Race/Ethnicity		Education	
		Latinos	Whites	Not a college graduate	College graduate
High school or less	3%	5%	1%	5%	–
Two-year college graduate/technical training	10	17	6	14	1%
Four-year college graduate	38	44	35	43	26
Graduate degree after college	45	29	55	35	73
Don't know	3	5	3	4	1

About seven in 10 parents say they are very (32%) or somewhat confident (39%) that they have the resources and information needed for their child to reach the grade level they hope for. The share saying they are very confident in having the needed resources and information has declined since 2005 (56% April 2005, 50% April 2009, 46% April 2010, 32% today). White parents are far more likely to say they are very confident (50%) than are Latino parents (20%).

About half of parents say they are very worried about being able to afford a college education for their youngest child, down 5 points since last year, but higher than in earlier years (43% 2007, 46% 2008, 51% 2009, 57% 2010, 52% today). Concern is twice as high among Latinos (66% very worried) than whites (37%). Parents earning \$80,000 or more (32%) are far less likely than those earning less to be very worried (53% \$40,000 to under \$80,000 and 65% under \$40,000). Still, those with high incomes are far more likely to say they are very or somewhat worried (67%) than not too or not at all worried (33%).

“How worried are you about being able to afford a college education for your youngest child?”

Parents of Children 18 or Younger Only	All Parents of Children 18 or Younger	Race/Ethnicity		Household Income		
		Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
Very worried	52%	66%	37%	65%	53%	32%
Somewhat worried	29	22	34	25	25	35
Not too worried	10	9	13	5	15	15
Not at all worried	9	4	16	4	7	18

REGIONAL MAP



METHODOLOGY

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance from Sonja Petek, project manager for this survey, and survey research associates Dean Bonner and Jui Shrestha. This survey was conducted with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. We benefited from discussions with Irvine program staff and PPIC staff; however, the methods, questions, and content of this report were determined solely by Mark Baldassare and the survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 2,503 California adult residents, including 2,003 interviewed on landline telephones and 500 interviewed on cell phones. Live interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days from October 25–November 8, 2011. Interviews took an average of 20 minutes to complete.

Landline interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All landline telephone exchanges in California were eligible for selection and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender.

Cell phone interviews were included in this survey to account for the growing number of Californians who use them. These interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. Once a cell phone user was reached, it was verified that this person was age 18 or older, a California resident, and in a safe place to continue the survey (e.g., not driving).

Cell phone respondents were offered a small reimbursement to help defray the potential cost of the call. Cell phone interviews were conducted with adults who have cell phone service only and with those who have both cell phone and landline service in the household.

Landline and cell phone interviewing was conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Korean, according to respondents’ preferences. We chose these languages because Spanish is the dominant language among non-English-speaking adults in California, followed in prevalence by the three Asian languages. Accent on Languages, Inc. translated the survey into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Abt SRBI Inc. translated the survey into Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean, and conducted all telephone interviewing.

With assistance from Abt SRBI we used recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2006–2008 American Community Survey (ACS) for California to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was comparable to the ACS figures. Abt SRBI used data from the 2008 National Health Interview Survey and data from the 2006–2008 ACS for California, both to estimate landline and cell phone service in California and to compare the data against landline and cell phone service reported in this survey. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party affiliation of registered voters in our sample to statewide party registration. The landline and cell phone samples were then integrated using a frame integration weight, while sample balancing adjusted for any differences across regional, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, telephone service, and party registration groups.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ± 3.1 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total sample of 2,503 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.1 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 1,618 registered voters, it is ± 3.3 percent; for the 1,161 likely voters, it is ± 3.6 percent; for the 1,059 parents of children 18 or younger, it is ± 5 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Throughout the report, we refer to five geographic regions that account for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents from other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populated areas are not large enough to report separately.

We present specific results for non-Hispanic whites and for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asians, who make up about 14 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic blacks, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in another party are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated by their responses to survey questions on voter registration, previous election participation, and current interest in politics.

The percentages presented in the report tables and in the questionnaire may not add to 100 due to rounding.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to results from a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. Additional details about our methodology can be found at <http://www.ppic.org/content/other/SurveyMethodology.pdf> and are available upon request with an email to surveys@ppic.org.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

CALIFORNIANS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

October 25–November 8, 2011

2,503 California Adult Residents:

English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese

MARGIN OF ERROR $\pm 3.1\%$ AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

1. First, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?

44% approve
30 disapprove
26 don't know

2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Brown is handling California's public college and university system?

31% approve
44 disapprove
25 don't know

3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?

25% approve
55 disapprove
19 don't know

4. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling California's public college and university system?

21% approve
59 disapprove
20 don't know

5. 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?

28% right direction
62 wrong direction
10 don't know

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. First...

[rotate questions 6 to 8]

6. How about the overall quality of education in California's public colleges and universities today?

24% big problem
36 somewhat of a problem
34 not much of a problem
6 don't know

7. How about the overall affordability of education for students in California's public colleges and universities today?

61% big problem
25 somewhat of a problem
11 not much of a problem
4 don't know

8. How about the overall state budget situation for California's public colleges and universities today?

69% big problem
17 somewhat of a problem
8 not much of a problem
5 don't know

As you may know, California's higher education system has three branches—the California Community College system, the California State University system, and the University of California system.

[rotate questions 9 to 11]

9. Overall, is the California Community College system doing an excellent, good, not-so-good, or poor job?

- 10% excellent
- 52 good
- 21 not so good
- 8 poor
- 9 don't know

10. Overall, is the California State University system doing an excellent, good, not-so-good, or poor job?

- 6% excellent
- 50 good
- 25 not so good
- 6 poor
- 13 don't know

11. Overall, is the University of California system doing an excellent, good, not-so-good, or poor job?

- 11% excellent
- 48 good
- 23 not so good
- 6 poor
- 12 don't know

12. Next, 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?

- 7% more than enough
- 14 just enough
- 74 not enough
- 5 don't know

13. To significantly improve California's higher education system, which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

[rotate responses 1 and 2] (1) We need to use existing state funds more wisely, **[or]** (2) We need to increase the amount of state funding, **[or]** (3) We need to use existing state funds more wisely and increase the amount of state funding.

- 34% use funds more wisely
- 12 increase state funding
- 50 use funds more wisely and increase funding
- 3 don't know

14. Which comes closer to your view? **[rotate]** (1)

If the state government makes budget cuts in higher education, the quality of education will suffer, **[or]** (2) the state government could make budget cuts in higher education and still maintain a high quality of education.

- 63% if state makes cuts, quality will suffer
- 32 state could make cuts and maintain quality
- 5 don't know

As you may know, in an effort to close the gap between state spending and revenues over the past few years, the governor and legislature have made cuts in all major budget areas, including higher education. 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.

[rotate questions 15 to 17]

15. How about increasing tuition and fees for college students to deal with decreased state funding?

- 65% very concerned
- 24 somewhat concerned
- 5 not too concerned
- 5 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

16. How about admitting fewer college students to deal with decreased state funding?

- 53% very concerned
- 31 somewhat concerned
- 8 not too concerned
- 6 not at all concerned
- 2 don't know

17. How about offering fewer college classes to deal with decreased state funding?

- 55% very concerned
- 31 somewhat concerned
- 7 not too concerned
- 5 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

Next, please say if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

[rotate questions 18 to 20]

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

- 70% agree
- 27 disagree
- 2 don't know

19. Almost anyone who needs financial help to go to college can get loans or financial aid.

- 55% agree
- 40 disagree
- 5 don't know

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

- 75% agree
- 23 disagree
- 3 don't know

21. Next, do you think that most students are prepared for college-level work when they enter college, or do you think that many students require basic skills and remedial education when they enter college?

- 23% most students are prepared
- 69 many require basic skills and remedial education
- 8 don't know

22. Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right? The main purpose of college should be **[rotate]** (1) to help an individual grow personally and intellectually **[or]** (2) to teach specific skills and knowledge that can be used in the workplace.

- 35% to help an individual grow personally and intellectually
- 46 to teach specific skills and knowledge that can be used in the workplace
- 18 both equally (*volunteered*)
- 1 don't know

[rotate questions 23 and 24]

23. 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?

- 58% college is necessary
- 39 many ways to succeed without a college education
- 3 don't know

24. 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?

- 26% majority have the opportunity
- 70 many people don't have the opportunity
- 4 don't know

[rotate questions 25 and 26]

25. 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? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 53% very important
- 22 somewhat important
- 11 not too important
- 13 not at all important
- 1 don't know

26. 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? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 54% very important
- 27 somewhat important
- 10 not too important
- 9 not at all important
- 1 don't know

Next, please think about the state's kindergarten through 12th grade public schools.

27. How important to you is it that California's K–12 public schools prepare students for college—very important, somewhat important, or not too important?

- 86% very important
- 11 somewhat important
- 2 not too important
- 1 don't know

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

- 8% excellent
- 36 good
- 33 not so good
- 18 poor
- 5 don't know

29. On another topic, California's community colleges have several important goals. From among the following, which do you think is the most important goal? **[read list, rotate responses]**

- 35% preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities
- 29 providing career technical or vocational education
- 17 providing courses for lifelong learning and personal enrichment
- 7 providing basic skills or remedial education
- 6 providing associate degrees
- 5 don't know

[rotate questions 30 and 31]

30. How important to you is it that community colleges include career technical or vocational education—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 72% very important
- 24 somewhat important
- 3 not too important
- 1 not at all important
- don't know

31. How important to you is it that community colleges include classes that prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 73% very important
- 23 somewhat important
- 2 not too important
- 1 not at all important
- 1 don't know

32. How much does a two-year community college degree or technical training help a person to be successful in today's work world—a lot, some, not too much, or not at all?

- 45% a lot
- 42 some
- 9 not too much
- 2 not at all
- 2 don't know

33. On another topic, 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?

- 3% very low priority
- 5 low priority
- 21 medium priority
- 29 high priority
- 41 very high priority
- 2 don't know

34. 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?

- 59% favor
- 33 oppose
- 8 don't know

35. Would you say the state's public colleges and universities have or have not been affected by recent state budget cuts? (*if they have*: Have they been affected a lot or somewhat?)

- 65% affected a lot
- 25 affected somewhat
- 5 not affected
- 5 don't know

Next, what if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities.

[rotate questions 36 and 37]

36. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for this purpose, or not?

- 45% yes
- 52 no
- 3 don't know

37. Would you be willing to increase student fees for this purpose, or not?

- 28% yes
- 69 no
- 3 don't know

38. Would you be willing to admit more out-of-state students paying higher tuition for this purpose, or not? (*if yes*: Would you still support this even if it meant admitting fewer in-state students?)

- 20% yes, even if it meant admitting fewer in-state students
- 32 yes, but not if it meant admitting fewer in-state students
- 42 no
- 6 don't know

39. 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?

- 58% yes
- 34 no
- 8 don't know

40. Changing topics, compared with other states, how would you rate the quality of the public higher education system in California today? Do you think it is **[rotate order]** (1) the best in the country, (2) one of the best in the country, (3) above average, (4) average, **[or]** (5) below average?

- 4% the best in the country
- 16 one of the best in the country
- 27 above average
- 31 average
- 15 below average
- 6 don't know

41. In general, how important is California's higher education system to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 73% very important
- 23 somewhat important
- 2 not too important
- 1 not at all important
- 1 don't know

42. In thinking ahead 20 years, if current trends continue, do you think California will have **[rotate 1 and 2]** (1) more than enough, (2) not enough, **[or]** just enough college-educated residents needed for the jobs and skills likely to be in demand?

- 13% more than enough
- 49 not enough
- 32 just enough
- 6 don't know

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

- 10% a great deal
- 37 only some
- 34 very little
- 16 none
- 2 don't know

44. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

- 65% yes [ask q44a]
- 35 no [skip to q45b]

44a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

- 44% Democrat [ask q45]
- 32 Republican [skip to q45a]
- 3 another party (specify) [skip to q46]
- 21 independent [skip to q45b]

45. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- 55% strong
- 42 not very strong
- 3 don't know

[skip to q46]

45a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 55% strong
- 41 not very strong
- 5 don't know

[skip to q46]

45b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 20% Republican Party
- 46 Democratic Party
- 28 neither (volunteered)
- 6 don't know

46. Would you consider yourself to be politically:

[read list, rotate order top to bottom]

- 12% very liberal
- 20 somewhat liberal
- 29 middle-of-the-road
- 23 somewhat conservative
- 13 very conservative
- 3 don't know

47. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?

- 24% great deal
- 34 fair amount
- 32 only a little
- 10 none
- don't know

D4d. [parents of children 18 or younger only]

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

- some high school
- 3% high school graduate
- 10 two-year community college graduate or career technical training
- 38 four-year college graduate
- 45 a graduate degree after college
- 3 don't know

D4e. [parents of children 18 or younger only] How

worried are you about being able to afford a college education for your youngest child? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?

- 52% very worried
- 29 somewhat worried
- 10 not too worried
- 9 not at all worried
- don't know

D4f. [parents of children 18 or younger only] How

confident are you that you have the resources and information needed for this child to reach that grade level?

- 32% very confident
- 39 somewhat confident
- 28 not too confident
- 1 not at all confident (volunteered)
- don't know

[d1-d4c and d4g-d16: demographic questions]

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The institute's research focuses on the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including economic development, education, environment and resources, governance, population, public finance, and social and health policy.

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Mark Baldassare is President and CEO of PPIC.

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