

PARTICIPANTS

Lande Ajose is the governor's senior policy advisor for higher education. She is responsible for developing and shaping the governor's higher education policy agenda, which is focused on protecting college affordability, preserving college access, and increasing system efficiency. She previously served as executive director of California Competes, which works to equitably boost California's postsecondary degree attainment. Her experience in higher education also includes college admissions work at Vassar College, education and workforce development funding at the James Irvine Foundation, and research and evaluation at MDRC. She serves on the advisory council for the PPIC Higher Education Policy Center and on the Board of Trustees at Occidental College. She was a Brown appointee to the California Student Aid Commission and served as chair for two years. She also served on boards of the Institute of College Access and Success, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, and as a WASC senior college and university commissioner. She has a bachelor's degree from Occidental College, a master's degree from the School of Public Affairs at University of California, Los Angeles, and a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Loren J. Blanchard is executive vice chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs at the California State University. He develops and oversees educational policy for the 23-campus system; guides and supports campus administrators on curricula, program design and student affairs; and serves as the chancellor's designee to the CSU's Academic Senate. He leads the CSU's Graduation Initiative 2025, an ambitious effort to increase graduation rates for all students while eliminating equity gaps. Prior to joining the CSU, he was provost and senior vice president of Academic Affairs at Xavier University in Louisiana. He also served as provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs and vice president for Accreditation, Leadership, and Accountability within the University of Louisiana System. He holds a bachelor's degree from Xavier University, a master's degree in education from McNeese State University, and a Ph.D. in education psychology from the University of Georgia.

Marlene Garcia is executive director of the California Student Aid Commission, where she oversees a budget of close to \$3 billion and a team of 125. She is passionate about expanding educational opportunity by removing financial barriers to college success. She has 25 years of experience working on education policy issues for a variety of governmental and higher education institutions, including more than six years as a national leader in Apple Inc.'s Education Strategic Initiatives Group. She has also served as vice chancellor of government relations for the California Community College System, deputy state policy director for the California State University System, senior policy consultant in the Senate Education Committee, and as a senior higher education advisor to former Assembly Speaker Willie L. Brown, Jr. She was also a fellow with the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education in 2004. She earned a bachelor's degree in Spanish literature from University of California, Los Angeles and a master's degree in public policy from Claremont Graduate School.

Hans Johnson is director of the PPIC Higher Education Center and a senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, where he holds the Thomas and Marilyn Sutton Chair in Higher Education Policy. As center director, he works with a team of researchers to identify policies that can make higher education policy more successful and sustainable. His own research focuses on improving college access and completion. He frequently presents his work to policymakers and higher education officials, and he serves as a technical advisor to many organizations seeking to improve college graduation rates, address workforce needs, and engage in long-term capacity planning. His other areas of expertise include international and domestic migration, housing in California, and population projections. Previously, he served as research director at PPIC. Before joining PPIC, he worked as a demographer at the California Research Bureau and at the California Department of Finance. He holds a PhD in demography and a master's degree in biostatistics from the University of California, Berkeley.