

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 310 178

UD 026 830

TITLE A Declaration of Policy. The Role of the Commission in Achieving Educational Equity.

INSTITUTION California State Postsecondary Education Commission, Sacramento.

REPORT NO 88-42

PUB DATE Dec 88

NOTE 9p.; For related document, see UD 026 831.

AVAILABLE FROM Publications Office, California Postsecondary Education Commission, Third Floor, 1020 Twelfth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-3985 (free).

PUB TYPE Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS \*Access to Education; Demography; \*Educational Change; \*Educational Policy; \*Equal Education; Higher Education; \*Policy Formation; Position Papers; State Departments of Education; \*State School District Relationship

IDENTIFIERS \*California

ABSTRACT

The California Postsecondary Education Commission adopted a declaration of policy in 1988 in order to clarify and communicate its responsibility to advance educational equity in the context of the demographic changes occurring in California. A committee on educational equity examined the Commission's past actions and activities relating to educational equity and found no insights into ways the State can achieve equity given the changes in demographics. This lack of insight created a sense of urgency which led to the declaration of policy. The major parts of the declaration are the following: (1) a definition of educational equity which includes quantitative and qualitative dimensions; (2) four reasons that educational equity is a critical issue in the State; (3) the principles which guide the achievement of educational equity; and (4) eight interrelated roles which the Commission will assume so that educational equity will be integrated within all of its statewide policy and program review and coordinative functions. (VM)

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# THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION IN ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

## A Declaration of Policy

CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY  
EDUCATION COMMISSION



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## Introduction

On December 12, 1988, the California Postsecondary Education Commission adopted this declaration of policy in order to clarify and communicate its responsibility to advance educational equity in the context of the demographic changes presently occurring in California. The statement stems from the September 1988 report of the Commission's Special Committee on Educational Equity, *The Role of the California Postsecondary Education Commission in Achieving Educational Equity in California*.

During 1988, that committee examined the Commission's past actions regarding equal educational opportunity and access with the intention of developing a plan for its future actions in this area. It found that many of the Commission's past activities with respect to issues of educational equity have been reactive and post hoc, in that they had focused on documenting the status of education in the State and evaluating State-funded programs. That documentation has helped create a sense of urgency among California educators to adapt to the dramatic changes occurring in the population and to hasten the progress that has, thus far, resulted from statewide responses to these demographic shifts; but the committee concluded that these activities had not provided insights into ways by which the State can plan for and take advantage of opportunities to accelerate progress in achieving educational equity.

In its report, the special committee presented a plan that identifies specific roles and responsibilities for the Commission as a policy body that focuses on planning and action strategies that it has the greatest potential to influence State policy in enhancing equitable educational opportunities and outcomes.

This present declaration contains a vision of California in the future, a definition of educational equity and a discussion of its importance to the State, an enumeration of the roles that the Commission expects to assume in contributing to the achievement of this goal and the principles that will guide Commission action in this area, and an expression of intention to reconsider this policy when the projects outlined in the special committee's report are completed.

Questions about the substance of this statement may be directed to Penny Edgert of the Commission staff at (916) 322-8028. Additional copies of the statement may be obtained from the Library of the Commission at (916) 322-8031. Copies of the report of the special committee may be obtained from the Library by asking for Report 88-31 (September 1988).

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**COMMISSION REPORT 88-42 PUBLISHED DECEMBER 1988**

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# The Role of the Commission in Achieving Educational Equity: A Declaration of Policy

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The Commission envisions a California of tomorrow as one in which the characteristics of Californians -- ethnicity, race, language, socioeconomic status, gender, and home community -- do not determine educational accomplishments and achievements. This vision is one in which *all* Californians have an expanded opportunity to develop their talents and skills to the fullest, for both individual and collective benefit. The Commission believes that the State should demonstrate that one of its highest educational priorities is realization of this vision through a commitment of adequate resources, including both new and existing funds.

Flowing from this vision, the Commission defines educational equity as a goal with quantitative and qualitative dimensions that are inextricably interwoven:

- Quantitatively, the goal of educational equity is achieved when the composition of individuals at all educational levels, from elementary school through college faculties and administrative ranks, mirrors the demography of the State. Realizing this goal requires enhanced success at all educational levels such that there are similar achievement patterns among all groups.
- Qualitatively, the goal of educational equity is achieved when pluralism and excellence are equal partners in a quality educational environment, especially with respect to curriculum, teaching, research, and public service.

The Commission views the appropriate standard for measuring progress as documented movement toward the previously defined goal of educational equity.

The Commission regards the achievement of educational equity, in a sustained environment of quality, as the critical issue for the State in maintaining its economic, technological, political, and social prominence nationally and internationally for the following reasons:

- California requires a strong economic base. Because of the relationship between education and employment, the Commission believes that the extent to which all Californians are educated enhances the likelihood that they will make a reasonable living and contribute to the economic stability of the State.
- California increasingly depends on the scientific and technological expertise of a skilled workforce. Because these skills are developed through education, the Commission believes that the extent to which all Californians are prepared to benefit from advanced training, particularly in scientific and technological areas, will ensure the continued vibrance of California's economy and its capacity to compete with other technologically sophisticated states and nations.
- California requires an educated and active electorate. The Commission believes that education provides the opportunity for all Californians to learn the participatory skills required to become actively involved in the democratic process and to provide leadership for the State in the future.
- California is part of a world that is becoming increasingly international, interdependent, and multicultural. Because these trends require heightened understanding, awareness, and respect for societies other than ours, the Commission believes that education provides opportunities for all Californians to enhance the quality of life within its borders and its relations with neighboring nations through learning about diverse cultures and interacting with individuals of various backgrounds and experiences.

The Commission views two principles as its guide in achieving educational equity:

1. The Commission considers essential the development of an educational system that is structured as an integrated and articulated continuum through which students flow from kindergarten to postgraduate training and from which students earn a quality education. Because of the nature of the educational system, the Commission shall acknowledge an essential dependence on elementary and secondary schools to prepare students for higher education and the responsibility of postsecondary education to cooperate with schools in this effort.
2. The Commission considers educational equity integral to the mission, goal, and purpose of the educational system and each of its component parts. The Commission shall assess and make recommendations on the extent to which the system's priorities, resource allocations, and policy decisions reflect the centrality of educational equity.

The Commission believes its actions in the area of educational equity should be integrated within all aspects of its statewide policy and program review and coordinative functions. In serving these functions, the Commission will perform eight interrelated roles:

*Statewide Policy and Program Review Function*

1. The Commission shall continue to serve the Governor and Legislature by reviewing, recommending, and, when requested, prioritizing (for resource allocation purposes), strategies and programs to achieve educational equity.
2. The Commission shall focus on the effect of State and institutional policies, and their resultant implementation, on the achievement of educational equity. To determine these effects, the Commission shall review evaluation studies of established programs, policies, and practices conducted by their administrative agencies or external evaluators.
3. The Commission shall focus on the evaluation of experimental programs and practices to determine their effectiveness and potential as statewide models to achieve educational equity.
4. The Commission shall conduct research, policy, and program reviews with a view toward identifying and optimizing opportunities for change that enhance educational equity.
5. The Commission shall solicit resources and coordinate an intersegmental program to encourage the creation and adoption of innovative strategies to enhance educational equity that would link experimental concepts, successful implementation processes, and programs.
6. The Commission shall conduct a public information campaign, in conjunction with its information clearinghouse responsibilities, to communicate with the Governor, Legislature, educational systems, policy makers, and the general public on the policies, programs, and practices that have demonstrated a positive effect on achievement of that goal.

*Coordinative Function*

1. The Commission shall advocate and promote the importance of educational equity to the State's future in order to generate the commitment and resources necessary to achieve this goal. In this regard, the Commission

shall encourage all Californians -- those from the private sector, community organizations and agencies, clergy, local and State government, the media, private citizens -- to join with educators to achieve this goal.

2. The Commission shall cooperate with established coalitions and develop new collaborations that act effectively to achieve educational equity, including but not limited to, the California Education Round Table and the California Business Roundtable. Because other than educational factors contribute to educational outcomes, the Commission shall collaborate with appropriate bodies to develop a global and integrated approach to eliminate barriers to achieving this goal.

The Commission expects to communicate, through development of its annual Plan of Studies and management of staff resources, its specific priorities related to educational equity. Periodically, the Commission anticipates reconsidering the direction delineated in this declaration by assessing its effectiveness in implementing its priorities and by charting future courses designed to provide the State with policy leadership to achieve educational equity and to make its vision of California a reality.

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# CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

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THE California Postsecondary Education Commission is a citizen board established in 1974 by the Legislature and Governor to coordinate the efforts of California's colleges and universities and to provide independent, non-partisan policy analysis and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

## Members of the Commission

The Commission consists of 15 members. Nine represent the general public, with three each appointed for six-year terms by the Governor, the Senate Rules Committee, and the Speaker of the Assembly. The other six represent the major segments of postsecondary education in California.

As of December 1988, the Commissioners representing the general public are:

Mim Andelson, Los Angeles  
 C. Thomas Dean, Long Beach, *Chairperson*  
 Henry Der, San Francisco  
 Seymour M. Farber, M.D., San Francisco  
 Helen Z. Hansen, Long Beach  
 Lowell J. Paige, El Macero  
 Cruz Reynoso, Los Angeles, *Vice Chairperson*  
 Sharon N. Skog, Palo Alto  
 Stephen P. Teale, M.D., Modesto

Representatives of the segments are:

Yori Wada, San Francisco; appointed by the Regents of the University of California

Claudia H. Hampton, Los Angeles; appointed by the Trustees of the California State University

Borgny Baird, Long Beach; appointed by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

Harry Wugalter, Thousand Oaks; appointed by the Council for Private Postsecondary Educational Institutions

Kenneth L. Peters, Tarzana; appointed by the California State Board of Education

James B. Jamieson, San Luis Obispo; appointed by California's independent colleges and universities

## Functions of the Commission

The Commission is charged by the Legislature and Governor to "assure the effective utilization of public postsecondary education resources, thereby eliminating waste and unnecessary duplication, and to promote diversity, innovation, and responsiveness to student and societal needs."

To this end, the Commission conducts independent reviews of matters affecting the 2,600 institutions of postsecondary education in California, including Community Colleges, four-year colleges, universities, and professional and occupational schools.

As an advisory planning and coordinating body, the Commission does not administer or govern any institutions, nor does it approve, authorize, or accredit any of them. Instead, it cooperates with other State agencies and non-governmental groups that perform these functions, while operating as an independent board with its own staff and its own specific duties of evaluation, coordination, and planning.

## Operation of the Commission

The Commission holds regular meetings throughout the year at which it debates and takes action on staff studies and takes positions on proposed legislation affecting education beyond the high school in California. By law, the Commission's meetings are open to the public. Requests to address the Commission may be made by writing the Commission in advance or by submitting a request prior to the start of a meeting.

The Commission's day-to-day work is carried out by its staff in Sacramento, under the guidance of its interim executive director, Kenneth B. O'Brien, who is appointed by the Commission.

The Commission publishes and distributes without charge some 40 to 50 reports each year on major issues confronting California postsecondary education. Recent reports are listed on the back cover.

Further information about the Commission, its meetings, its staff, and its publications may be obtained from the Commission offices at 1020 Twelfth Street, Third Floor, Sacramento, CA 98514; telephone (916) 445-7933.

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# The Role of the Commission in Achieving Educational Equity

## California Postsecondary Education Commission Report 88-42

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ONE of a series of reports published by the Commission as part of its planning and coordinating responsibilities. Additional copies may be obtained without charge from the Publications Office, California Postsecondary Education Commission, Third Floor, 1020 Twelfth Street, Sacramento, California 95814-3985.

Recent reports of the Commission include:

**88-27** Proposed Construction of Off-Campus Community College Centers in Western Riverside County: A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to a Request of the Riverside and Mt. San Jacinto Community College Districts for Capital Funds to Build Permanent Off-Campus Centers in Norco and Moreno Valley and South of Sun City (June 1988)

**88-28** Annual Report on Program Review Activities, 1986-87: The Twelfth in a Series of Reports to the Legislature and the Governor on Program Review by Commission Staff and California's Public Colleges and Universities (June 1988)

**88-29** Diversification of the Faculty and Staff in California Public Postsecondary Education from 1977 to 1987: The Fifth in the Commission's Series of Biennial Reports on Equal Employment Opportunity in California's Public Colleges and Universities (September 1988)

**88-30** Supplemental Report on Academic Salaries, 1987-88: A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51 (1965) and Subsequent Postsecondary Salary Legislation (September 1988)

**88-31** The Role of the California Postsecondary Education Commission in Achieving Educational Equity in California: The Report of the Commission's Special Committee on Educational Equity, Cruz Reynoso, *Chair* (September 1988)

**88-32** A Comprehensive Student Information System, by John G. Harrison: A Report Prepared for the California Postsecondary Education Commission by the Wyndgate Group, Ltd. (September 1988)

**88-33** Appropriations in the 1988-89 State Budget for the Public Segments of Higher Education: A Staff Report to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (September 1988)

**88-34** Legislation Affecting Higher Education Enacted During the 1987-88 Session: A Staff Report to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (October 1988)

**88-35** Meeting California's Adult Education Needs: Recommendations to the Legislature in Response to Supplemental Language in the 1988 budget Act (October 1988)

**88-36** Implementing a Comprehensive Student Information System in California: A Recommended Plan of Action (October 1988)

**88-37** Proposed Establishment of San Jose State University's Tri-County Center in Salinas: A Report to the Governor and Legislature in Response to a Request by the California State University for Funds to Create an Off-Campus Center to Serve Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties (October 1988)

**88-38** Progress in Implementing the Recommendations of the Commission's 1987 Report on Strengthening Transfer and Articulation: A Staff Report to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (October 1988)

**88-39** Proposition 98 -- The Classroom Instruction Improvement and Accountability Act: A Staff Analysis for the California Postsecondary Education Commission (October 1988)

**88-40** The Fourth Segment: Accredited Independent Postsecondary Education in California. The Fifth in a Series of Reports on the Financial Condition of California's Regionally Accredited Independent Colleges and Universities (December 1988)

**88-41** Beyond Assessment: Enhancing the Learning and Development of California's Changing Student Population. A Report in Response to the Higher Education Talent Development Act of 1987 (Assembly Bill 2016; Chapter 1296, Statutes of 1987) (December 1988)

**88-42** The Role of the Commission in Achieving Educational Equity: A Declaration of Policy (December 1988)

**88-43** Education Needs of California Firms for Trade in Pacific Rim Markets: A Staff Report to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (December 1988)

**88-44** Distribution of Revenue from Concurrent Enrollment at the California State University: A Report to the Legislature in Response to Supplemental Language to the 1988-89 Budget Act (December 1988)

**88-45** Prepaid College Tuition and Savings Bond Programs: A Staff Report to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (December 1988)