



# CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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## CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

### PRESS RELEASE

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### **California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris Attends White House Summit on College Access for Low-Income and Disadvantaged Students** *President Obama convenes meeting of more than 100 higher education leaders*

SACRAMENTO – California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris spent today in Washington as an invited guest of President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama for a college accessibility summit at the White House. More than 100 higher education leaders from across the country participated in the summit that focused on getting more low-income and disadvantaged students into college.

At the Summit, Chancellor Harris shared the vision and commitment the California Community Colleges [Student Success Initiative](#) and its [Student Success Scorecard](#) that was launched in April 2013. Harris oversaw the development of the web-based accountability tool that establishes system-wide and college-level goals for closing achievement gaps for students of color, and improving completion rates for all students in remedial math, English and English as a Second Language courses.

“It’s an honor when you’re invited to attend a meeting such as this one with my colleagues in higher education, but especially when the president and first lady call,” Chancellor Harris said. “It’s also an honor to tell the summit attendees how the California Community Colleges are leading the way in accountability, accessibility, assessment and remediation. All of the hard work that has been done through our Student Success Initiative directly benefits low-income students, and helps them to complete their educational goals faster and at a lower cost. It’s a win-win for everyone and nice to be able to share our best practices with higher education leaders from around the country.”

Chancellor Harris added that community colleges continue to be the most affordable option for students wanting to earn a certificate on an associate degree to enter the workforce or to transfer to a four-year university. And with the availability of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors Fee Waiver, low-cost can become no-cost.

“President Obama knows that community colleges are critical partners in preparing our nation’s workforce,” Chancellor Harris said. “He continues to emphasize the goal of making America the most educated country in the world by 2020 and our system is doing everything it can to make that happen.”

The summit's focus on improving college access for low-income students closely aligns with that of first lady Michelle Obama's recent outreach to underprivileged students encouraging them to apply for and attend college. Both President Obama and the first lady spoke to the summit attendees at the daylong event.

At the summit, Chancellor Harris committed the California Community Colleges system to make strides in its efforts to implement system-wide policies that incentivize all incoming students to complete orientation, assessment for placement and prepare and education plan with priority registration to ensure they get the courses they need to complete their educational goals. This effort is designed to assist new students but it is anticipated that the policies will have greatest impact on students who are the first generation in their families to attend college. This initiative will guide students to support services, provide for more accurate placement and orient them toward an educational goal by declaring a program of study early in their academic careers.

*The [California Community Colleges](#) is the largest system of higher education in the nation. It is composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills courses in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.*

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