



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris announces plans to retire in April 2016 *Harris' 45-year career in higher education devoted to increasing access and student success*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris today announced that he will return to retirement in April after more than three years at the helm of nation's largest system of public higher education, leading it on a course to expand educational opportunities for students and help them succeed in greater numbers.

In a message to leaders throughout the college system, Harris thanked faculty and staff for recent improvements and accomplishments. "Representing 113 colleges and more than 2 million students has been a dream job. No matter where I went as your chancellor I was greeted by people who sang your praises ... no one ever said they received anything other than a great education at one of our colleges," Harris said.

Harris, who was tapped in 2012 as state chancellor after retiring as chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District, said the timing for his departure is right because many of the college system's big initiatives will conclude later this year and the next round of strategic planning will begin next year.

"Brice Harris has been, and continues to be, a transformational leader for California Community Colleges," said Geoffrey L. Baum, president of the Board of Governors for the California Community Colleges. "From the fulfillment of the ambitious student success agenda, the expansion of transfer pathways and the introduction of baccalaureate degrees, the progress during his tenure has been breathtaking. His integrity and passion for students and the advancement of our college system is unparalleled. The board is deeply grateful for his service. We will begin immediately the process of selecting the next chancellor who can continue this trajectory of service and success."

Under Harris' leadership, the California Community Colleges implemented the Student Success Initiative, which is helping students have an easier time registering for the classes they need, developing education plans, accessing support services, completing college orientation programs, earning degrees and transferring to four-year institutions. Nearly 2,000 new Associate Degrees for Transfer, which guarantee entry to California State University, are now available, and community colleges are working with University of California on streamlined transfer.

Harris also ushered in online tools that make the California Community Colleges the most transparent system of higher education in the country. Student performance data for each college can be easily found at the [Student Success Scorecard](#), and the online [Salary Surfer](#) allows students and parents to see the actual earnings of students who complete college programs and enter the workforce. A major push to expand the reach and quality of online course offerings also is under way.

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"Brice is a trusted friend and colleague who has worked tirelessly to improve student success throughout the nation's largest community college system," said University of California President Janet Napolitano. "He has been an excellent partner with U.C. in expanding access and improving services for California transfer students. I will continue to work with him over the coming months on ways to further strengthen our state's public higher education system."

Harris partnered with the Legislature to allow some community colleges to offer the bachelor's degree for the first time in a limited number of applied career fields, and he pushed for legislation that will expand high school students' access to college instruction, providing them with early opportunities to help them succeed in college.

"I join the higher education community in recognizing the achievements of California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice Harris," said California State University Chancellor Timothy P. White. "Without question, Brice has left an indelible mark on not only the California Community Colleges but also the California State University system. During his tenure, we worked together to implement two significant reforms that have forever impacted each of our institutions, as well as current and future generations of California college students."

Regarded as a national leader in public higher education, Harris has served on the board and policy committees of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the American Council on Education (ACE). Harris has also served on a host of local, state and national boards and commissions. He was the first educator to serve as president of the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and also served as president of the Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization (SACTO).

Harris received his doctorate in education at Nova Southeastern University, his master's in communication from the University of Arkansas, and his bachelor's in communication from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. After earning his doctorate, Harris studied at the Harvard University Institute of Educational Management.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 113 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.

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