

**EXPLORING CANDIDATES, ELECTIONS, CAMPAIGNS, AND EXPENDITURES IN
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICTS, 2004-2010**
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ABSTRACT

Previous recommendations to eliminate the district-level, elected boards have met with strong local resistance, particularly from faculty. The findings in this report do little to strengthen the case for locally elected, community college boards, however. The highlights of our findings are as follows: (1) a very high proportion of trustees seem to choose not to run for re-election and, overall, relatively few individuals choose to compete for trustee positions; (2) nearly half of the races involve just two individuals competing for a trustee seat; (3) there are some districts where three or four election periods pass without any trustee election in the district; (4) there is evidence that public interest in community college board elections is, at best, tepid, with a general tendency for participation to decline as the voter works their way "down ballot" to the trustee contests; (5) the overall cost of community college board elections is comparatively low, but not negligible; (6) although there are individuals who contribute to community college campaigns, it is unlikely that the amounts are anything like those involved in, say, county supervisors' elections, much less those for state assembly or senate; and (7) the data on the campaign spending side reinforce the notion that there are often cases when there are no elections or no challengers to incumbents in college trustee elections and therefore little at stake. If there is a "representational" role for the community college position, then it is unclear who is being represented on these boards or what difference eliminating them would make to "democracy." These elected boards might not constitute a major fiscal burden, but there is little evidence to suggest that an accidental system of district-level, elected boards represent a significant example of representative democracy at work. Such a situation would be relatively benign, but it is far from clear that this system provides the decision-making framework necessary to move the CCC system forward to fill an important role in ensuring quality access to higher education and align the colleges with important statewide objectives.

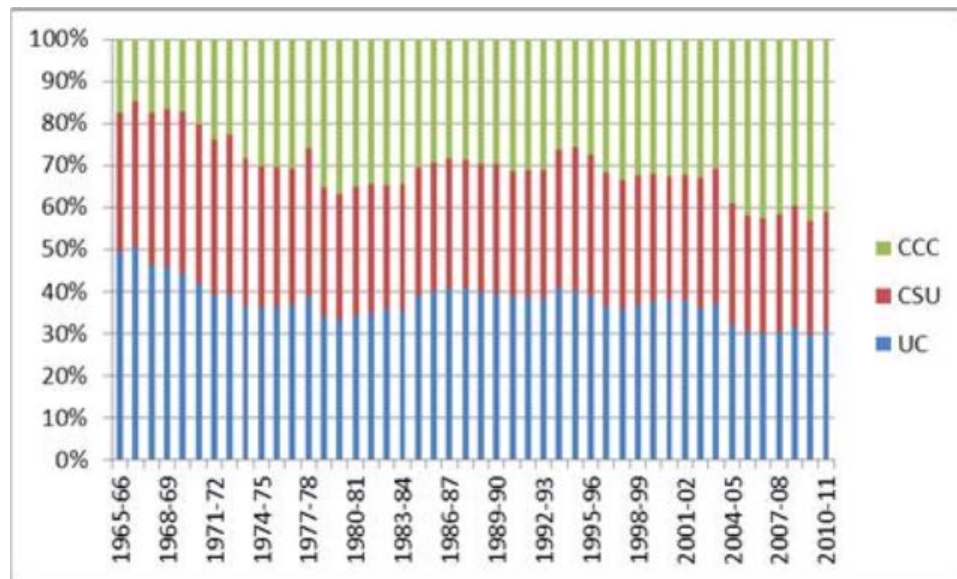
INTRODUCTION

Nearly a decade ago, a long-time scholar of American higher education, Steven Brint (2003), observed that community colleges in the United States were growing, but that dropout rates were climbing while course completion and transfers to four-year colleges were declining. The California Community College (CCC) system, which was at one time a paragon of the community college segment in higher education, is today more emblematic of all that ails community colleges in the nation and, more so, within the state. In California, the size of the community college system is reflected not only in the numbers of students involved, which is by far larger than in any other state, involving approximately 2.6 million students, but also in the scale of problems being faced by the California Community College (CCC) system: in dropout rates, declining course completion, and failure to mobilize the system adequately around key statewide goals. There is a substantial body of material that describes in detail the challenges facing the California Community College system, and we are not repeating them in this paper (Little Hoover Commission, 2012).

As with most big problems, almost all of the maladies afflicting higher education in California generally, and with respect to the community colleges, have multiple causes. An increasing proportion of the community college clientele is immigrant, poor, English-language deficient, and otherwise educationally disadvantaged in a variety of ways; these are among the many causes that are referred to in discussion about the travails of the CCC system. Our research focuses on an area that is more indirect in

its affect on CCC performance: governance. And, then, we only focus on particular aspects of the governance issue, although we also believe that how the CCC organizes to make policy and consider policy choices is a very important component in effective responses to the challenges facing the CCC. Our focus is on describing the decentralized (segmented) system that prevails in California, where there are 72 community college districts, 112 campuses, and a budget of well over \$6 billion in the 2010-11 academic year. Indeed, over time, the proportion of higher education money going into the CCC system has been growing (see Figure 1). In 1965-66, the CCC share was less than 20 percent. By 2010-11, that share has grown to 40 percent of state general higher education expenditures.

**FIGURE 1. SHARE OF STATE GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES AMONG UC, CSU, AND CCC
(MILLIONS OF NOMINAL DOLLARS)**



Source: Hans Johnson, Public Policy Institute of California, April 12, 2012

The catalog of complaints concerning community colleges is well known, growing, and contentious. This paper adds to the catalog. We conclude, on the basis of suggestive evidence, that the current CCC decentralized governance structure, with its 72 independently elected governing boards, does not contribute to advancing key statewide policy goals. Along with a number of other recommendations that are usually included somewhere in any assessment of the CCC—greater fiscal efficiency; more effective, system-wide enrollment policies; using credit caps; improved alignment of college district standards with those of the state; and so on—there is an implicit assumption that the decentralized system currently prevailing in California is a major impediment to achieving important goals.¹

This ineffective structure is symbolized by the system of local board elections by which each of the 72 districts is governed. It is these boards and their elections that are the focus of our inquiry. Most of the calls for reform of governance focus on strengthening the Chancellor's office and the Board of Governors. Such reforms do not go far enough. Our data and analysis raise serious questions about the relevance and importance of 72 separately elected boards of community college trustees. We also consider the indirect, but plausible, ways in which relying on local boards and governance already are undercutting CCC performance. We believe that our work calls for a closer view of these boards and their role in CCC policymaking and whether it makes sense to drastically reshape CCC governance from the bottom up.

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

The CCCs comprise, by far, the largest higher education system of its kind in the world. Within California's segmented higher education system, it serves the largest and most diverse student body. Moreover, in a number of ways, the CCC system also faces the most complex and difficult challenges, including providing a credible transfer route to four-year colleges, technical and vocational training, lifelong learning and personal enrichment, associate degrees and professional certification, and basic skills and remedial education.²

As the CCC system manages these multiple missions, the political and economic environments have placed an increased stress on the system. A shrinking state budget, increased student diversity, persistent remediation challenges among its students, and greater, more complex demands for workforce development make the system's goals more difficult to accomplish. These

challenges have multiplied at a time when the state is looking to the CCCs and the other state higher education systems to make a greater contribution to its economic future; California's economy requires more workers with associate and bachelor degrees than the public system is currently supplying.

The critical role that the CCCs are expected to play in the state's economic future has not gone unnoticed, yet there has been little assessment of its governing structure and, then, a subsequent assessment of its relationship to policies regarding education and training outcomes. Although researchers have investigated some elements of the system (e.g., financing, student persistence, etc.), there has been surprisingly little discussion of its unique governance structure. While a state Board of Governors and Chancellor oversee the system as a whole, day-to-day policy making of the state's 72 community college districts is primarily in the hands of locally elected boards of trustees.

Though voters and the media apparently pay scant attention to these boards, they wield significant power over policy. Local board trustees appoint district presidents to serve as chief executive officers, set administrative policy, and have primary responsibility for developing and delivering curricula and programs. Districts maintain borrowing and taxing authority and develop, within the state's framework, their own relationships with foundations, external grant sources, non-governmental organizations, and the like. Elected boards also manage collective bargaining with their respective employees, including the faculty.

Despite the significant role that CCC boards play with regard to policy, there is strikingly little prior research or analysis of trustee elections in the literature. The difficulty in collecting data on these contests may, in part, explain the lack of attention. On the surface, trustee elections appear to be relatively straightforward. Elected trustees oversee community college districts in a manner similar to school boards. When a trustee's term expires, an election is held for that position, typically concurrent with other state and/or local races. All boards stagger their elections with about one-half of the members up for election every two years. Some hold their elections in even-number years, others in odd-numbered years. The relevant county election clerk/registrar is responsible for the administration of the election. After an election is held, the county bills the district for its share of the costs.

Though this relationship appears to be relatively simply, it is complicated by a number of factors. For example, each district can determine the size of its board, how terms are structured, and whether trustees are elected at large, or in single-member districts. This variation creates challenges for the analysis, as it becomes difficult to make *apples to apples* comparisons. The variation is summarized in Table 1. Appendix A lists the individual districts and their characteristics.

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARDS 2012

Characteristics	Finding
Number of trustees	Of the 72 districts, 32 had 5 member boards, 39 had 7 member boards, and Redwoods had a 9-member board.
Length of terms	All community college trustees serve a 4-year term, with no term limits.
Representation	37 districts elect trustees representing geographic (single-member) districts. In 24 districts, trustees are represented at large; the remaining 11 districts used alternative ways of allocating seats.

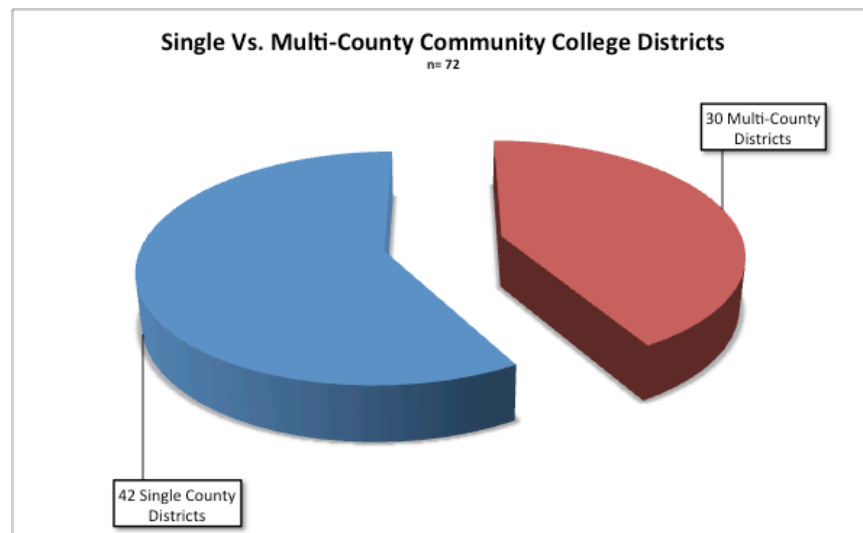
Source: See Appendix A for sources and details for each of the districts.

Further complicating any analytical effort is the fact that community college districts are not 100 percent congruent with county lines and vice versa. Therefore, there is a significant challenge to the initial data collection task. Most local election data in California is collected and reported at the county level. For community college trustee elections, however, the data must be cross-walked from the county to the districts. The lack of congruency also presents problems from an analytical perspective, as it becomes difficult to make comparisons with other elections held at the same time, since the pool of voters participating is such a unique one.

Each district, then, has a set geographical area it serves, providing education and training primarily for residents within that service area, although any given college might have significant numbers of students from other districts, since students are entitled to attend community colleges in any part of the state. Many CCC districts are also located in more than one county. Moreover, a number of counties have more than one district within a given county. The result is that it is challenging to assess the community college elections for trustees and very little is known about these elections. Indeed, until this study, there has

been no available aggregation of standard census or socioeconomic characteristics to the community college district level. Of the 72 districts, 30 districts include all or part of more than one county, while the other 42 districts do not encompass multiple counties, although they often include more than one college district within the counties' borders.

FIGURE 2. TYPES OF CCC DISTRICTS



At the time of this report, there are 442 trustees comprising community college boards. The size of CCC boards nearly always varies between five to seven members. One district, Redwoods Community College, has nine members. About 44 percent of the district boards, 32 of them, have five members. Thirty-nine of the boards (54%) have seven trustees. Since county governments carry out elections in California, county level data was used to both collect and analyze characteristics of Community College Trustee elections.

THE RELEVANCE OF CCC ELECTIONS

Data were collected on Community College Trustee Elections from 2004-2010. Additional data concerning simultaneous federal and state elections were collected utilizing election results from the California Secretary of State. We developed a database of individuals who were incumbent community college trustees for the period 2004-2010. In other words, the unit of analysis was the individual candidate or incumbent trustee. The resulting database included approximately 1500 cases. The database was constructed utilizing data provided by the California Elections Database Archive, housed at California State University.³ Additional data included in the database were derived from the various archives located at the office of California's Secretary of State. The data included variables that characterized each of the candidates (see Table 2).

A second database was constructed to analyze drop-off rates between federal and state level races and trustee elections. It is conventional to examine drop-off rates in voters' participation to infer interest in a particular office by examining the number of votes cast in a given election for the various positions on the ballot. If a ballot contains, for example, the Office of the President of the United States, the state's federal senator, governor, congressional representative, state legislative position, and local offices, then it is possible to see whether, on average, voters are casting votes for various positions at varying levels. The data would then permit an observer to conclude whether voters were more interested in some positions rather than in others. The usual assumption is that the lower-profile positions on the ballot will have fewer voters (greater "drop off"). Since registration and turnout rates are routinely reported at the county level, it is ordinarily possible to observe, in a given election, the drop-off from one elective office to another and make inferences about how interested voters are in various positions.

TABLE 2. VARIABLES INCLUDED IN THE TRUSTEES AND CANDIDATES DATABASE, 2004-2010

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In which county did the individual run • In which Community College District did individual run • Whether the district was a multi-county district • Number of trustees are on the board • Year of election • Date of election • Whether there was a simultaneous state election • Whether there was a simultaneous federal Election • Number of total trustee seats in district • Number of trustee seats open in an election • Number of candidates running in an individual's election • Last and first names of candidate • Whether the candidate was an incumbent • Total individual votes candidate received (county specific if district is multi-county) • Total votes for all candidates running (county specific if district is multi-county) • Percent of votes received by candidate (county specific if district is multi-county) • Whether the candidate won • Multi-county vote total for candidate • Multi-county vote total for all candidates • Whether the individual who won was an incumbent
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As already noted, community college districts, unfortunately, often do not follow county lines. Data regarding the number of registered voters are not reported at the community college district level, unless it happens that (a) a district is fully subsumed by and equal to the boundaries of a county and (b) that there is only one district in the county. In order to compare drop-off rates between other elective offices and community college district positions, we used county level data on federal and state races. Comparing drop-off rates by using the actual district geographical boundaries would have required an extremely time-consuming and cost-prohibitive GIS analysis and examination of aggregate voter returns by precinct in order to match community college districts to voting precincts in given elections (which also vary by election).

In order to analyze drop-off rates, we utilized the seven counties that are geographically congruent with a community college district, and we assessed voting for four elections: 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010. Those counties/districts were chosen through comparing our database information on which districts were multi-county with GIS map data. Even though we are only able to use seven counties for the drop-off analysis, they still provide a useful sample as they represent districts from the northern, central, and southern parts of the state as well as counties with small and large populations. County level data on federal and state elections for drop-off analysis were collected via Secretary of State election results, which are aggregated to the county level. County level data on community college district elections were collected via the Trustee District Candidate Database.

Of the 52 counties that held elections during the 2004-2010 period, 30 of those counties are split into multiple community college districts. The split into multiple districts means many counties are split well beyond two different community college districts. For example, Los Angeles County is split into 15 independent districts, San Bernardino County is split into six districts, and Riverside County is split into five districts.

If there is significant interest in community college elections and there is money spent with several candidates running, one might ask, "Well, what is accomplished by all this sound and fury?" On the other hand, if relatively fewer folks run, and there is little money spent with a lot of turnover, then that indicates a general disinterest in the governance side of community colleges.

There are no term limits for trustees on community college district boards. It is conventional to assume that, in the absence of term limits, incumbents have advantages. Yet only 35.4% of candidates during the 2004-2010 elections were incumbents, and only one percent of candidates ran uncontested. This suggests that turnover is high for trustees despite the lack of term limits (see Figure 3). Trustee elections occurred most frequently in general elections during the month of November, when voter interest is supposedly highest (see Table 3).

FIGURE 3. NON-INCUMBENT CANDIDATES GREATLY OUTNUMBER INCUMBENTS

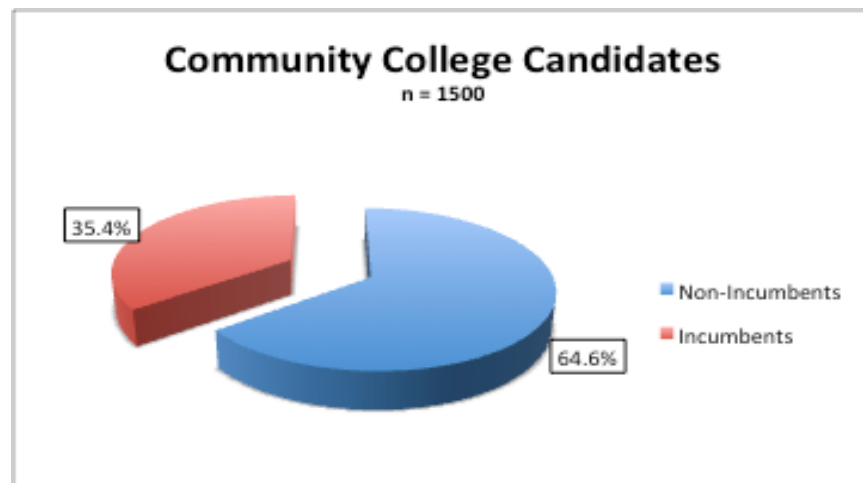


TABLE 3. WHEN DO COMMUNITY COLLEGE ELECTIONS OCCUR?

Year	General Election (Nov)	Primary Elections (June)	Other Elections (March, April, May)	Totals
On-Year Elections (2004, 2006, 2008, 2010)	467	8	9	484
	72.6%	100%	28.1%	70.9%
Off-Year Elections (2005, 2007, 2009)	176	0	23	199
	27.4%	0%	71.9%	29.1%
Totals	643	8	32	683
	100%	100%	100%	100%

The data indicate that California community college district elections occur more often when there are federal and state elections at the same time (see Figures 4 & 5). Many local elections—e.g., for mayor, city councilman, or K-12 school boards—are elected in odd years and during periods when nothing else is on the ballot. The notion is that voters can be focused purely on the local issues and not be distracted by the more partisan and contentious federal and state elections. Of course, that makes local elections fairly low-turnout affairs. Because community college district elections are scheduled during “peak” election interest periods, though, we can infer that these elections are supposed to be advantaged by the higher buzz surrounding these times. When incumbent trustees do run for re-election, they are re-elected 78.2% of the time (see Figure 6).

FIGURES 4 AND 5. MOST COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT ELECTIONS OCCUR WITH STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICES ON THE BALLOT

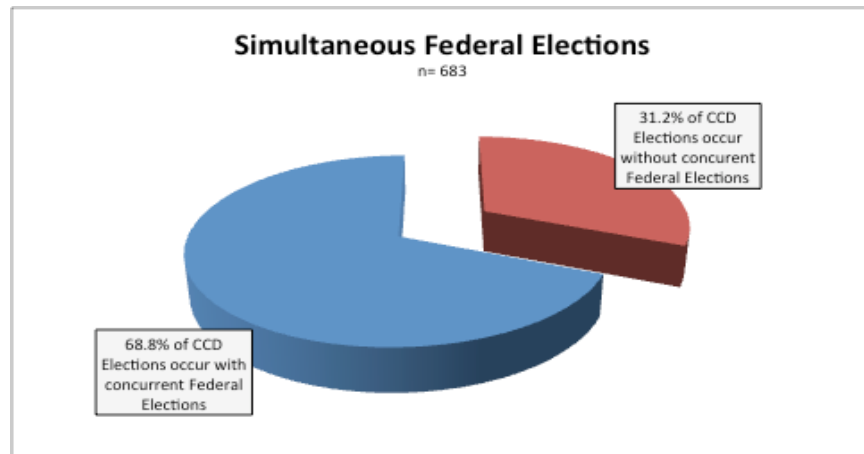
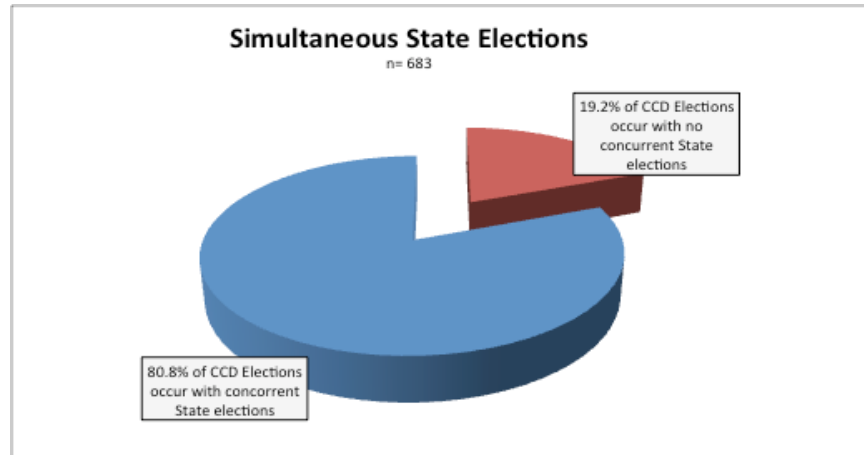
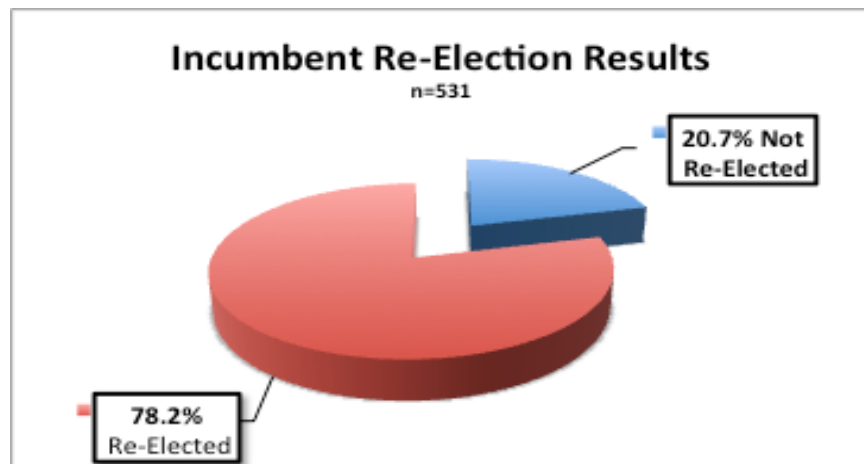


FIGURE 6. WHEN INCUMBENTS RUN, THEY WIN



As Table 4 indicates, the percentage of incumbents who win re-election does not vary much by year, nor does it vary much by whether or not the election is held during an off-year election (2005, 2007, 2009) or an on-year election (2004, 2006, 2008, 2010).

TABLE 4. INCUMBENT TRUSTEE CANDIDATE WINS BY YEAR

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Totals
Non-incumbent Wins	139	91	192	99	248	93	219	1081
	66.5%	64.1%	71.4%	72.3%	76.1%	73.8%	75.3%	72.1%
Incumbent Wins	70	51	77	38	78	33	72	419
	33.5%	35.9%	28.6%	27.7%	23.9%	26.2%	24.7%	27.9%
Totals n = 1500	209	142	269	137	326	126	291	1500
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Since we know that incumbents win nearly 80% of the time (Figure 6 above), Table 4 suggests that apparently *many incumbents choose not to run*. Moreover, this trend is increasing over time. If being a trustee for a community college district were an attractive position, one would not expect to see these kinds of trends. It is possible that higher proportions of trustees have been anticipating difficulty getting re-elected, and choose not to run, although there is no hint of why that might be the case.

Attractive elective positions will draw more numerous candidates and have higher numbers of incumbents. Figure 7 and Table 5 suggest the there are not many races with multiple candidates running for a given office. Although it would be good to have more systematic comparisons of trustees on K-12 boards with community college board trustees, we find it surprising to see so few races with three or more candidates vying for given trustee positions. It is not at all surprising to see that the winning margin for a college district trustee candidate will decline with the number of opponents on the ballot (see Table 5).

FIGURE 7. WINNING MARGIN BY NUMBER OF COMPETITORS PER TRUSTEE SEAT

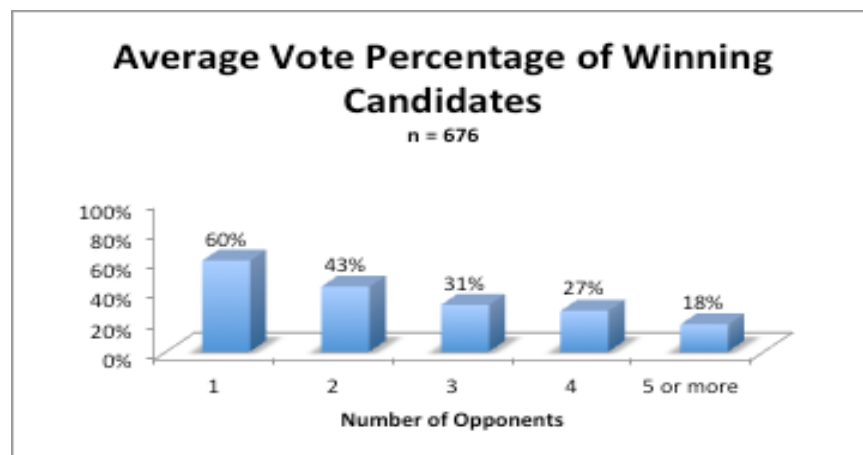


TABLE 5. NUMBER OF OPPONENTS RUNNING AGAINST WINNING CANDIDATE*

	With 1 Opponent	With 2 Opponents	With 3 Opponents	With 4 Opponents	With 5 or More Opponents	Total winning Candidates with Opponents
Winning Candidate	320	134	90	50	74	668
Total n = 668	47.9%	20.1%	13.5%	7.5%	11%	100%

*If winning candidate had one opponent, then there were two candidates for the position. If she/he had two opponents that means there were three candidates for the position, and so on.

Table 5 indicates that nearly half of the contests for trusteeships involved a winner with only one opponent (48% of them). Certainly if the community college trustee position is a desirable position that interests voters or that provides political, material, or ideological rewards for the office-holder, one might expect to see more competition for trustee positions and less, apparently voluntary, turnover. Table 6 also suggests that there is a modest tendency for non-incumbents to be more in evidence in multi-county community college districts (about 6% more), rather than those contained entirely within a single county. Table 7 further suggests that non-incumbents are somewhat more likely to win in multi-county districts.

TABLE 6. TYPE OF COMPETITOR FOR TRUSTEE POSITION DIFFERS SOMEWHAT BY WHETHER DISTRICT IS SINGLE OR MULTI-COUNTY

	Non-Incumbent	Incumbent	Total
Single-County District	377	240	617
	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%
Multi-County District	592	291	883
	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%
Total n = 1500	969	531	1500

TABLE 7. NON-INCUMBENTS SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY TO WIN IN MULTI-COUNTY DISTRICTS

	Non-Incumbent Wins	Incumbent Wins	Total
Single-County District	421	196	617
	68.2%	31.8%	100.0%
Multi-County District	660	223	883
	74.7%	25.3%	100.0%
Total n=1500	1081	419	1500

These data further underscore the relative paucity of incumbents running for office. The explanation for these patterns is not obvious. It could be because the identities and community attachments in districts contained fully within a county are greater and provide incumbents with more of a community identity. Alternately, incumbents who know they are in trouble politically may simply choose not to run. Or, it may simply be a manifestation of the possibly unspecified unattractiveness of the community college trustee position.

It is interesting to note that six counties did not have any trustee elections during the 2004-2010 period: Alpine County, Amador County, Inyo County, Mariposa County, Mono County and Sierra County. Of these counties, three (Alpine, Amador and Mariposa) are not represented by any trustees on any community college district board nor are they officially served by any community college district. These three counties have a combined population of 57,517 people. These constituents, while possibly enrolling in nearby colleges, do not vote for trustees on any community college board—indeed, cannot vote, even if they want to—although there seems to be no evidence of any concern among residents in those counties about their not having that option.

Voter Drop Off. Table 8 addresses the question of drop-off rates for community college trustee elections. It is conventional that elective offices located lower down on the ballot show lower turnout rates among national and state positions. We could not actually assess individual ballots because of the many issues associated with not having published databases that conform to community college boundary lines. As a result, we could only assess seven counties. We chose elections for the President of the United States, the U.S. Senate, the House of Representatives, Governor, and State Assembly to compare with the community college district elections. We reviewed election data between 2004 and 2010. Specifically, we looked at the average turnout for the election of these different offices and compared them to the rates for the trusteeship elections.

TABLE 8. AVERAGE TURNOUT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICTS COMPARED TO FEDERAL AND STATE OFFICES, NOTING THAT SAN MATEO HAD NO TRUSTEE ELECTIONS BETWEEN 2004-2010*

Contra Costa	President	U.S. Senate	House of Rep	Governor	Assembly	Comm College
2004	81.9	80.8	78.8	N.A.	73.4	10.3
2006	N.A.	61.7	55.4	62.2	57.8	52.6
2008	85.7	N.A.	80.1	N.A.	74.8	57.2
2010	N.A.	64.7	62.9	65.2	61.0	57.9
Napa	President	U.S. Senate	House of Rep	Governor	Assembly	Comm College
2004	81.7	80.4	79.3	N.A.	77.3	75.1
2006	N.A.	64.1	63.6	63.3	47.1	50.1
2008	83.4	N.A.	79.3	N.A.	75.8	N.A.
2010	N.A.	66.8	66.4	67.1	62.7	49.3
Plumas	President	U.S. Senate	House of Rep	Governor	Assembly	Comm College
2004	78.6	77.2	75.1	N.A.	74.9	66.7
2006	N.A.	68.4	68.2	69.3	65.0	N.A.
2008	80.2	N.A.	78.2	N.A.	73.6	67.9
2010	N.A.	70.2	68.8	70.5	67.6	NA
San Francisco	President	U.S. Senate	House of Rep	Governor	Assembly	Comm College
2004	73.4	68.9	67.8	N.A.	63.4	33.1
2006	N.A.	55.7	54.4	58.4	52.5	24.6
2008	80.2	N.A.	72.5	N.A.	70.1	31.6
2010	N.A.	57.7	55.7	60.2	52.9	26.2
San Mateo	President	U.S. Senate	House of Rep	Governor	Assembly	Comm College
2004	77.3	75.5	73.4	N.A.	71.5	N.A.
2006	N.A.	58.0	56.4	58.4	55.5	N.A.
2008	77.8	N.A.	73.4	N.A.	70.5	N.A.
2010	N.A.	63.6	62.6	64.1	59.7	N.A.
Sonoma	President	U.S. Senate	House of Rep	Governor	Assembly	Comm College
2004	88.6	87.5	86.5	N.A.	84.3	16.4
2006	N.A.	73.3	72.1	73.9	65.4	15.2
2008	92.4	N.A.	89.5	N.A.	87.1	17.0
2010	N.A.	73.4	72.0	73.2	69.4	N.A.
Ventura	President	U.S. Senate	House of Rep	Governor	Assembly	Comm College
2004	78.6	77.0	75.4	N.A.	63.2	61.8
2006	N.A.	60.8	59.6	61.3	57.4	39.4
2008	79.8	N.A.	75.4	N.A.	73.6	N.A.
2010	N.A.	61.0	59.6	61.3	57.4	51.7

*Cell values are percentages, and N.A. means that there was no election for that position in that year.

Based on this evidence, our conclusions about drop-off rates are as follows:

- Elections for various offices decline as expected with “higher” offices having higher turnouts; trustee elections are notably lower.
- Elections for community college trustees in Contra Costa, San Francisco, and Sonoma counties indicate that the turnouts are consistently and dramatically lower than for the other elective offices in Napa, Plumas, and Ventura counties; the elections for community college trustees are mostly much lower than the other elections, but sometimes quite close. In Napa County, the trustee election in 2006 had a slightly *higher* turnout than the vote for the assembly candidate. In smallish Plumas County, the trustee election turnout was less than 10 percent lower than the assembly vote.
- Apparently San Mateo County had no trustee elections between 2004 and 2010.

THE COSTS OF CCC ELECTIONS

There are two ways of estimating how much it costs to run community college elections. The first method would be to use the district as the unit of analysis and then ask them to simply report what they have spent in prior years on elections. Identifying the amount within the district budget should be relatively straight forward, assuming we can contact the appropriate individual.

We have chosen an alternative, and we think, more efficient approach. We contacted individuals in all of the county election offices (typically starting with the election clerk) and asked how much they bill the CCC district for prior years' elections. Given that counties administer elections for multiple districts (school, fire, hospital, etc.) in addition to the community colleges, one would suspect that they have developed a relatively precise system for the calculation of each participant's share.⁴

The advantage of contacting the counties is that there are fewer of them and it is possible to identify the person responsible for tracking billable costs. Given the lack of complete congruency with district boundaries, however, we were required to reconcile the reported amounts with the relevant districts. In response to our data request, we received responses from 44 of the state's 58 counties, accounting for 88 percent of California's population. These clerks provided election cost information on 62 of the state's 72 community college districts.

The clerks were asked to provide data on bills sent to community college districts for elections in 2008, 2009, and 2010 (see Table 9).⁵ It is important to note that if a county did not bill a college district in any given year, that fact may be interpreted one of two ways. First, it may simply be the case that the given year was an "off" year and no seats were up for election. Alternately, it may have been that the seat was uncontested. Many of the counties do not calculate bills for uncontested races. Others, however, do charge a nominal amount (a few hundred dollars) in races where a candidate is running unopposed. To further complicate the picture, some county billing formulae calculate a district's share of the election cost regardless of the number of candidates in the race.

**TABLE 9: COUNTY ELECTION CLERK BILLINGS TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICTS
2008-2010 (IN NOMINAL DOLLARS)**

District	2008	2009	2010	3-year Total
Allan Hancock CCD	10,036	0	0	10,036
Antelope CCD	0	368,867	0	368,867
Barstow CCD	15,000	0	0	15,000
Butte CCD	1,085	0	105,682	106,767
Cabrillo CCD	35,152	0	72,367	107,519
Cerritos CCD	0	616,764	0	616,764
Chabot-Las Positas CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Chaffey CCD	0	899,000	0	899,000
Citrus CCD	0	200,867	0	200,867
Coast CCD	388,870	0	301,803	690,673
Compton CCD	0	302,918	0	302,918
Contra Costa CCD	108,577	0	175,456	284,033
Copper Mountain	23,000	0	12,000	35,000
Desert CCD	347,821	0	20,893	368,714
El Camino CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Feather River CCD	16,624	0	0	16,624
Foothill CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Gavilan CCD	1,265	0	78,433	79,698
Glendale CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Grossmont CCD	96,281	0	64,546	160,827
Hartnell CCD	0	184,532	0	184,532
Imperial CCD	0	0	36,992	36,992
Kern CCD	0	0	44,350	44,350
Lake Tahoe CCD	0	16,214	0	16,214
Lassen CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Long Beach CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Los Angeles CCD	0	3,223,858	0	3,223,858
Los Rios CCD	830,134	0	218,931	1,049,065
Marin CCD	0	209,202	0	209,202

Mendocino CCD	0	20,804	0	20,804
Merced CCD	--	--	--	n/a
MiraCosta CCD	116,822	0	80,041	196,863
Monterey CCD	0	39,525	0	39,525
Mt. San Antonio CCD	3,664	874,495	0	878,159
Mt. San Jacinto CCD	0	156,480	0	156,480
Napa CCD	0	0	14,320	14,320
North Orange CCD	445,246	0	351,559	796,804
Ohlone CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Palo Verde CCD	0	0	736	736
Palomar CCD	206,860	0	100,641	307,501
Pasadena CCD	0	431,852	0	431,852
Peralta CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Rancho Santiago CCD	228,789	0	0	228,789
Redwoods CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Rio Hondo CCD	0	306,616	0	306,616
Riverside CCD	719,891	0	589,333	1,309,224
San Bernardino CCD	249,000	0	141,234	390,234
San Diego CCD	310,187	0	48,722	358,909
San Francisco CCD	247,161	0	241,414	488,575
San Joaquin Delta CCD	345,388	0	1,202,607	1,547,995
San Jose CCD	712	0	443,232	443,944
San Luis Obispo CCD	139,354	0	116,435	255,789
San Mateo CCD	0	0	528,444	528,444
Santa Barbara CCD	0	0	51,427	51,427
Santa Clarita CCD	0	280,901	0	280,901
Santa Monica CCD	67,751	0	0	67,751
Sequoias CCD	16,198	0	46,064	62,263
Shasta Tehama CCD	0	97,803	0	97,803
Sierra CCD	364,706	0	339,933	704,640
Siskiyou CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Solano CCD	233,425	0	0	233,425
Sonoma CCD	82,202	0	0	82,202
South Orange County CCD	527,830	0	417,291	945,120
Southwestern CCD	77,886	0	79,063	156,949
State Center CCD	424	0	0	424
Ventura CCD	--	--	--	n/a
Victor Valley CCD	0	0	76,907	76,907
West Hills CCD	0	39,049	0	39,049
West Kern CCD	3,241	0	3,812	7,053
West Valley CCD	250,912	0	366,271	617,183
Yosemite CCD	15,362	0	4,120	19,481
Yuba CCD	3,952	979	31,769	36,701
Total	6,530,809	8,270,726	6,406,827	21,208,363

The following points summarize the main observation that one can make with regard to Table 9:

- ***Total annual billings*** are not relatively large. Total reported billed costs for trustee elections for the state were \$6.5 million in 2008, \$8.3 million in 2009, and \$6.4 million in 2010. Given that our respondents represent such a large share of the state's population, we feel confident that these figures provide a sense of the order of magnitude of the cost of electing community college trustees.
- The ***range of costs*** across districts is enormous, from \$424 for State Center CCD in 2008 to \$3.2 million for Los Angeles CCD in 2009.
- The ***median charge*** for a district—when a district was billed—in each year was: \$102 thousand in 2008, \$209 thousand in 2009, and \$79 thousand in 2010.

Putting costs in perspective. Overall, the costs of trustee elections are relatively low, compared to the scale of the system. With reported total spending about \$6-8 million per year, the figure looks modest compared to the several billion dollars spent annually on California's community colleges. Nevertheless, \$6 million still falls into the category of "real" money. A back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that the funds spent reimbursing counties for elections would pay for the cost for more than 1,100 additional students in 2010-11.¹

Attempting to understand the variation in costs yields few important insights from a policy perspective. We did attempt to normalize the cost figures by taking an average over the years 2009 and 2010 and then calculating the annual per-student cost. These metrics showed an equally dramatic degree of variation that had little to do with any obvious policy decisions. At the low end, one calculates a cost of less than a dollar per student for such diverse districts as Yosemite (0.11/FTES/year) to San Diego (0.58/FTES/year). At the high end is the San Joaquin Delta District at over \$35/FTES/year. There is little about the San Joaquin Board's characteristics or elections that would explain such high dollar amount. Of the districts that were billed over this period, the average annual per student cost was about \$7.

Instead, it would appear that the cost of trustee elections is a function of a district's population, the number of other races in a given year, and the size of the district relative to the county or counties with which it overlaps. In other words, county election-cost-allocation formulae drive much of the cost variation. Most counties have a calculation that takes the number of voters (either registered or participating) and then divide the total costs relative to the different participants on the ballot per their share of the voters. As a consequence, a CCD with a large population but few other offices from other districts (e.g., school districts, fire districts, county offices, cities, etc.) on the ballot will be billed a relatively large share of the total cost. Conversely, a small population district with a relatively large number of other districts on the ballot can expect a relatively small bill.

It becomes even more complicated when a single community college district overlaps with different counties and receives multiple bills. The San Joaquin Delta CCD was billed by four different counties in amounts ranging from just over \$1,000 to \$1.1 million for the 2010 election, reflecting, in part, the different number of district voters that resided in each of the different counties.

We feel fairly confident that our method of collecting data provides an accurate estimate of the cost of community college elections. As a check on our data, we compared the figures with a survey conducted by the League of California Community Colleges. The League surveyed their members and asked them how much they spent on elections, though they did not specify a year. The figures reported to the League ran in the tens of thousands to a few hundred thousand (see Appendix B).

CAMPAIGN FINANCING

The previous two sections of this report attempted to estimate the public's interest in the election of community college trustees as well as the cost of those contests. Campaign financing, in some ways, lies at the intersection of those two issues. One could argue that contributing to a campaign is a significant measure of the saliency of and public interest in the election. Individuals will give money to candidates whom they support, particularly if they feel the stakes are high. Many have decried the influx of money into politics as, at best, skewing the democratic process, and, in the worst case, contributing to corruption of elected officials.

The analysis above suggests that community college elections are not exactly competitive. Therefore, one could conclude that it is unlikely that money would distort the process. There are, however, numerous examples of candidates who are unopposed or face challengers with little real chance of winning, yet these races still attract significant amounts of financial support. One only has to look as far as California's Assembly and Senate races, where incumbents are almost never defeated when they chose to run, and still impressive sums are raised for their re-election bids.

So, it is worth asking: Are community college trustee campaigns an avenue where interests seek disproportionate influence as a result of financial contributions?

Unfortunately, campaign finance data for elections are notoriously difficult to collect, particularly for local elections. Campaigns can still submit their financial reports on paper and although third parties have worked hard to make that information accessible, searchable databases typically are limited to federal races and some state contests. In California, we are aware of only two counties that provide access to campaign finance information online, San Francisco and San Diego. Some other counties do make it possible to search their the filings electronically, but once again, we run into the issue of district boundaries and county lines. And, in some cases, community college districts apparently are not enough of a priority to merit including the information in an online format. In Los Angeles, for example, the Ethics Commission does provide online reports for campaigns for city offices and for the school board, but not for the community college districts. To collect information from other counties would require visits to their offices and hours spent combing through hardcopy records.

¹\$6,000,000 divided by the the average amount spent on a full-time student in the community college or \$5,300 equals 1,132.

We did, however, spend some time examining the reports from campaigns in San Francisco and San Diego to get a sense of the order of magnitude of the resources changing hands. In general, the contribution to candidates for a seat on a community college board was typically \$100 - 250 from individuals. Some candidates gave or loaned their campaigns amounts of \$1,000 to \$5,000. Total contributions of a contest ranged from a few hundred dollars to about \$50,000. The sums are not at all impressive compared to federal, state, or local offices, such as county supervisors.

We were able to perform a more systematic analysis with the aid of the San Francisco Ethics Commission's campaign finance database. Using that data, we were able to focus on what was one of the most competitive elections that emerged for community college trustee seats in the period covered by our analysis above. In 2004, six individuals ran for four seats on the San Francisco City College Board of Trustees. In an unusual development, all four incumbents stood for re-election. And, finally, five of the six candidates filed their campaign financing information in a matter that was searchable online.

TABLE 10. MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE ELECTION 2004

Name	Incumbent	Elected?	Monetary Contributions		SFCC Share	
			Number	Total	Number	Total
Berg	Yes	Yes	206	53,498	31%	21%
Juhl-Darlington	No	No	30	6,790	0%	0%
Marks	Yes	Yes	223	46,015	2%	2%
Ramos	Yes	Yes	56	55,870	20%	4%
Rodis	Yes	Yes	269	35,920	34%	30%
Schiff	No	No	**	**	**	**
TOTAL			784	198,093	22%	13%

** Candidate Schiff did not electronically file her financing reports and therefore is not part of the online database.

Source: San Francisco Ethics Commission, Campaign Finance Database, accessed April, 2012.

The result was a database of almost 800 contributions to the campaign totaling just under \$200,000. For most of the contributions, the campaigns reported the employer of the individual who gave the money. In Table 10, we provide a summary of the campaign financing in that election, and we include the share of contributions made by individuals who were identified as working at San Francisco City College.

The campaign finance data for the SFCC race in 2004 suggest:

- Incumbents raised considerably more money than challengers, though the amounts are relative;
- The average contribution was \$253; and
- One out of five contributors was an employee of the College and in total, they gave about \$26,000 to the four incumbents.

It is difficult to generalize on the basis of one race; however, given that this 2004 contest was one of the most competitive contests in our election database, one could argue that it would overstate the influence of money in trustee campaigns. In that regard, it does suggest that incumbency presents a clear money-raising advantage since, in this race, the four incumbents raised anywhere from five to eight times more money than the one challenger for which we have data. Even in this case, however, one would not call it a "big money" contest. Slightly more than 160,000 residents cast votes in the community college district race in 2004 while candidates spent just under \$200,000, translating into approximately \$1.25 per participating voter. Considering that our above analysis of elections suggests that there is, at best, limited interest in these elections among voters, we would expect to find many races where even smaller sums are involved.

We would caution, however, that there might be a small number of races with high stakes (i.e., large districts) that would merit closer scrutiny. It would be particularly interesting to look at whether financing patterns shift when the trustees are expected to oversee a new collective bargaining agreement or allocate funds from a bond issue. Unfortunately, collecting the information is an extremely costly and time-consuming process.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is true that if there were currently more “action” and “sound and fury” at the community college district level, and if there were hotly contested elections, then such activity might indicate that critical matters were at stake in the election of trustees. It is also true that more concrete data and comparisons to other elected offices will help place community college board elections in a more complete context. Still, even if local elections were found to be detrimental to achieving state objectives, it might indicate a wider array of vested and local interests who would have important stakes to protect. Is it fair to ask, given the exploratory findings here, whether the lack of sound and the absence of fury imply an arena of little electoral significance? Must every elected body be preserved, even if there is a general indifference to its election and campaign rituals, if not its responsibilities? Is it time to design more visible regional institutions of community college governance that align more adequately with a mobilized state system, where districts and California are pulling in the same direction?

The current community college governance system is a by-product of a time when schools were seen as two-year extensions of the K-12 public education system (Knoell, 1997). Although integrated into the state’s Master Plan of higher education, decades have passed since the CCC system has been substantially redesigned to reflect increasing needs for cost controls and serving broader state objectives such as workforce training and economic development.

In any representative democracy, there is an inherent tension between providing a voice to the governed while, at the same time, administering government efficiently. There are many examples where societies are willing to sacrifice a degree of efficacy in their public programs, if that inefficiency is a by-product of democracy in action. Our initial examination into the characteristics of community college trustee elections offers little evidence to suggest these contests are shining examples of representative government. They often are uncontested. They rarely are competitive. And, when they are held, the public appears to have only a minimal interest in their existence. While the structures of democracy are present—campaigns that culminate in free and fair elections—there is little to suggest that the spirit of representation is present.

This minimal level of democratic participation would be acceptable if it was producing a dynamic education system capable of effectively meeting the higher education needs of Californians in the twenty-first century. It is not clear, however, that the current system of governance, which fragments decision making into 72 separate arenas, is capable of accomplishing that. In fact, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the state has difficulty assessing even basic information about the cost of community college operations.⁶ It is also true that a fragmented system is likely to have purchasing redundancies and could fail to achieve economies of scale regarding legal services, lobbyists, accounting, and personnel administration. And, past performance has suggested that this decentralized model mostly fails to make strategic decisions about the allocation of resources in tight budgetary times.

The need for a responsive, focused, and efficient system of accessible higher education services has never been greater. Recently, there has been considerable discussion about the needs of the new and ever-evolving economy and the role that community colleges will play in state’s future. Frequent references have been made to the venerable need to have transfers successfully migrating from community colleges to four-year colleges, but also to a host of other putatively critical job categories—e.g., nurses, various health care assistants (dental, radiological, physical therapy), public safety workers, carpenters, metal workers, automotive technicians, and “new energy”-related jobs. Yet community colleges are not making significant progress in contributing such workers. “California and many other states now face a future in which, we believe, collaboration within higher education is likely to be much more critical to meeting state needs than in the past (Bracco and Callan, 2002).” The impact of the Great Recession has brought this need into sharp focus.

What is the institutional framework that is most likely to achieve the important statewide objectives for post-high school education in California? Structural change in the governance structure of the CCC system is not likely to involve wholesale replacement of the current 72 districts with a single centralized system, nor is such a consolidation necessarily desirable. Our report and findings, however, are consistent with those who call for more integration of the CCC system and greater authority for a state-level governing body. We suggest that the following principals guide reform of the governance system:

- **Consolidation.** The current 72 community college districts should be reorganized at an intermediate level of organization, with a more regional focus. For example, in the field of economic development, California uses ten regions for the purpose of economic planning.⁷ These might provide a more suitable starting point around which to organize higher education districts, thereby providing the potential for reorganizing community college districts along regional lines. Essentially, the existing districts would be consolidated into larger regional bodies.
- **Representation.** If these new, larger districts are to retain their current taxing and revenue-raising powers, they will likely still need to have elected boards with some authority to make decisions about how that revenue is spent. The

public's attitude may continue to be blasé, but the regional model holds the promise of more strategic decision-making. And, at a minimum, it opens the door to increased economies of scale.

- **Centralization of goals.** Although each of the regional community college districts might be governed by elected boards, these districts should still be accountable to an independent state office—ideally a more robust version of the current California Community College Chancellor's Office and more comparable to those central bodies governing the California State University or the University of California systems. This reinvented Chancellor's Office should be committed to a set of statewide community college objectives, which can then be tailored to individual regional factors relating to labor markets, four-year college transfer objectives, and other education and training objectives. The state agency, moreover, should have complete authority to hold districts accountable for their performance and allocate state resources.

In other words, we envision a system where decisions about state priorities will be made in Sacramento and the resources allocated to the districts. Then, individual districts, run by elected trustees, are responsible to determining the array of services and emphases that are the best fit with the state goals and their region.

The imperative to improve the governance structure and, in turn, the performance of California's community colleges is more than a theoretical debate. We live in a time when even the best designed and accountable public programs are faced with a politically dangerous environment. There are those who are engaged in a war on the public sector. It is a fact, and no assessment of any public program, much less one as large and as important as that of the CCC system, can evade the inhospitable environment for reasoned public discourse. Any candid admission of serious public sector failure, opens the door to those who, rather than improving programs or seeking to better public service delivery, would use the criticism of programs and institutions as opportunities to advance an aggressive agenda of demolishing and discarding programs.

Our data strongly suggest that the current college district boards involve a mostly unengaged election system for college trustees. If mobilizing California's community colleges on behalf of state goals is to be taken seriously, at a minimum, a serious discussion should occur that considers moving away from, if not displacing, a fragmented system of 72 separately elected district boards as the key policy making arena.

APPENDIX A: TRUSTEE BOARDS IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICTS

District	No. Trustees	SMD	At Large	Other	Notes	Sources
Allan Hancock CCD	5	✓				Website: www.hancockcollege.edu/
Antelope CCD	5		✓			Website: www.avc.edu/
Barstow CCD	5		✓			Website: www.barstow.edu
Butte CCD	7	✓				Website: www.butte.edu
Cabrillo CCD	7	✓				Website: www.cabrillo.edu
Cerritos CCD	7		✓			Website: www.cerritos.edu
Chabot-Las Positas CCD	7	✓				Website: www.clpccd.org
Chaffey CCD	5		✓			Website: www.chaffey.edu
Citrus CCD	5		✓			Website: www.citruscollege.edu
Coast CCD	5	✓				Website: www.cccd.edu
Compton CCD	5			✓	3	Website: district.compton.edu
Contra Costa CCD	5	✓				Website: www.4cd.edu
Copper Mountain	5		✓			Website: www.cmccd.edu
Desert CCD	5	✓				Website: www.collegeofthedesert.edu
El Camino CCD	5		✓			Website: www.elcamino.edu
Feather River CCD	5	✓				Website: www.frc.edu
Foothill CCD	5		✓			Website: www.fhda.edu
Gavilan CCD	7	✓				Website: www.gavilan.edu
Glendale CCD	5		✓			Website: www.glendale.edu
Grossmont CCD	5		✓			Website: www.gcccd.edu
Hartnell CCD	7	✓				Website: www.hartnell.edu
Imperial CCD	7	✓				Website: www.imperial.edu
Kern CCD	7			✓	4	Website: www.kccd.edu
Lake Tahoe CCD	5		✓			Website: www.ltcc.edu
Lassen CCD	7			✓	5	Website: www.lassencollege.edu
Long Beach CCD	5	✓				Website: www.lbcc.edu
Los Angeles CCD	7		✓			Website: www.laccd.edu
Los Rios CCD	7	✓				Website: www.losrios.edu
Marin CCD	7		✓			Website: www.marin.edu
Mendocino CCD	7	✓				Website: www.mendocino.edu
Merced CCD	7	✓				Website: www.mccd.edu
MiraCosta CCD	7	✓				Website: www.miracosta.edu
Monterey CCD	5	✓				Website: www.mpc.edu
Mt. San Antonio CCD	5		✓			Website: www.mtsac.edu
Mt. San Jacinto CCD	5	✓				Website: www.msac.edu
Napa CCD	7	✓				Website: www.napavalley.edu
North Orange CCD	7			✓	6	Website: www.nocccd.edu
Ohlone CCD	7			✓	7	Website: www.ohlone.edu
Palo Verde CCD	7			✓	8	Website: www.paloverde.edu
Palomar CCD	5		✓			Website: www.palomar.edu
Pasadena CCD	7	✓				Website: www.pasadena.edu
Peralta CCD	7	✓				Website: www.peralta.edu
Rancho Santiago CCD	7			✓	9	Website: www.rscdd.edu
Redwoods CCD	9	✓				Website: www.redwoods.edu

District	No. Trustees	SMD	At Large	Other	Notes	Sources
Rio Hondo CCD	5	✓				Website: www.riohondo.edu
Riverside CCD	5		✓			Website: www.rcc.edu
San Bernardino CCD	7		✓			Website: www.sbccd.cc.ca.us
San Diego CCD	5	✓				Website: www.sdccd.edu
San Francisco CCD	7		✓			Website: www.ccsf.edu
San Joaquin Delta CCD	7	✓				Website: www.deltacollege.edu
San Jose CCD	7	✓				Website: www.sjeccd.org
San Luis Obispo CCD	5	✓				Website: www.cuesta.edu
San Mateo CCD	5		✓			Website: www.smccd.edu
Santa Barbara CCD	7	✓			2	Website: www.sbccc.edu
Santa Clarita CCD	5		✓			Website: www.canyons.edu
Santa Monica CCD	7		✓			Website: www.smc.edu
Sequoias CCD	5	✓				Website: www.cos.edu
Shasta Tehama CCD	7	✓				Website: www.shastacollege.edu
Sierra CCD	7	✓				Website: www.sierracollege.edu
Siskiyou CCD	7	✓				Website: www.siskiyou.edu
Solano CCD	7			✓	10	Website: www.solano.edu
Sonoma CCD	7			✓	11	Website: www.santarosa.edu
South Orange County CCD	7	✓				Website: www.socccd.edu
Southwestern CCD	5		✓			Website: www.swccd.edu
State Center CCD	7	✓				Website: www.scccd.edu
Ventura CCD	5	✓				Website: www.vcccd.edu
Victor Valley CCD	5		✓			Website: www.vvc.edu
West Hills CCD	7	✓				Website: www.westhillscollge.com
West Kern CCD	5		✓			Website: www.taftcollege.edu
West Valley CCD	7			✓	12	Website: www.wvm.edu
Yosemite CCD	7			✓	13	Website: www.yosemite.edu
Yuba CCD	7	✓			1	Website: www.yccd.edu

Table Notes	
1	Currently areas 1, 2, and 3 have two trustees; area 4 has one.; will shift to SMD in 2012.
2	Beginning 2012 SBCC will move to SMD; prior to that, 7 trustee seats were spread over 4 areas.
3	Compton has 2 seats; others are single-member districts.
4	Areas 1 and 3 have two seats; other areas have one.
5	Area 1 has three members; areas 2-5 have 1 member each.
6	Areas 1, 3, and 4 have two members. In 2012, the Board has indicated its intent to move to 7 SMDs.
7	Area 1: City of Newark (two seats); Area 2: City of Fremont and Union City precincts designated as within the boundaries of the District (five seats).
8	Five of the trustees are elected at large from the part of the District in Riverside County. Two of the trustees are elected at large from the part of the District in San Bernardino County.
9	Three trustees shall represent Area 1, one trustee Area 2, and three trustees Area 3.
10	Two members from Areas 1, 2, and 3; one from Area 4.
11	One member from Areas 1, 2, 6 & 7; Three members from Santa Rosa (areas 3,4, 5).
12	Seven seats are distributed across 4 areas.
13	Areas 1-4 have one trustee; area 5 has three.

Sources: Websites accessed during March and April, 2012.

APPENDIX B: LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES' SURVEY OF ELECTION COSTS

Partial Description of Community College Election Cost	
District	Election Cost
San Joaquin Delta	\$400,000
Glendale	\$85,000
San Mateo	\$400,000
Santa Clarita	\$340,800
El Camino	\$1,000,000
Shasta	\$100,000
San Francisco	\$350,000
San Diego	\$119,000
North Orange	\$400,000
Butte	\$106,000
Solano	\$250,000
Rancho Santiago	\$400,000
Kern	\$20,000
Coast	\$302,000
Desert	\$360,000
Long Beach	\$428,643
Imperial	\$45,000

Source: League of California Community Colleges

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ENDNOTES

¹ Community Colleges operate within a governance structure designed decades ago that concentrated power at the local level, leaving the Board of Governors and Chancellor's Office little actual authority to create or drive system-wide priorities. The ability to set funding and policy goals, the authority to collect and distribute money, and the ability to address an individual college's unique problems lie largely outside of the current governance structure. The current decentralized structure of the community college system makes it difficult to prioritize overarching goals, implement system-wide initiatives, coordinate efforts or reward innovation."

² In assessing California's adult population's views on the relative importance of the state's CCC system, a statewide survey conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California in October, 2010 indicated that 41% of respondents said that preparing students to transfer to a four-year college was the most important goal of the CCC; 25% claimed that career technical or vocational education was the most important goal; 15% reported that personal enrichment and lifelong learning courses were the most important; 8% asserted that providing associates degrees was the most important goal; and 5% stated that remedial training and basic skill acquisition were the most important objectives, with 6% unable to specify which goal was most important.

³ http://www.csus.edu/calst/cal_studies/CEDA.html

⁴ Though all counties seek reimbursement for the cost of an election, they do not necessarily use the same formula in calculating a district's share.

⁵ Clerks were also asked, when possible, to differentiate between election costs related to trustee elections and those elections held for ballot measures.

⁶ According to a *Sacramento Bee* story, for example, "perks and retirement benefits vary tremendously among the state's community college districts. Compensation for chancellors of the state's 15 largest community college districts ranges from \$228,000 in Ventura County to more than \$390,000 for Sacramento's Brice Harris. Car allowances range from zero to \$950 a month. Two Southern California chancellors receive housing allowances of at least \$2,000 a month, while most don't receive any at all. But that information is only available by requesting it from 72 independent college districts. No one in state government can say how much the colleges spend on executive compensation because the state doesn't collect the information." http://blogs.sacbee.com/capitolalert/latest/2011/08/state-asks-community-colleges.html#mi_rss=Capitol%20Alert#storylink=misearch

⁷ The ten regions are defined at the following website: <http://business.ca.gov/RelocateorExpand/SiteRegions.aspx>