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**California Community College  
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
TENURE AND RETENTION STUDY**

2013 – 2014

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA**

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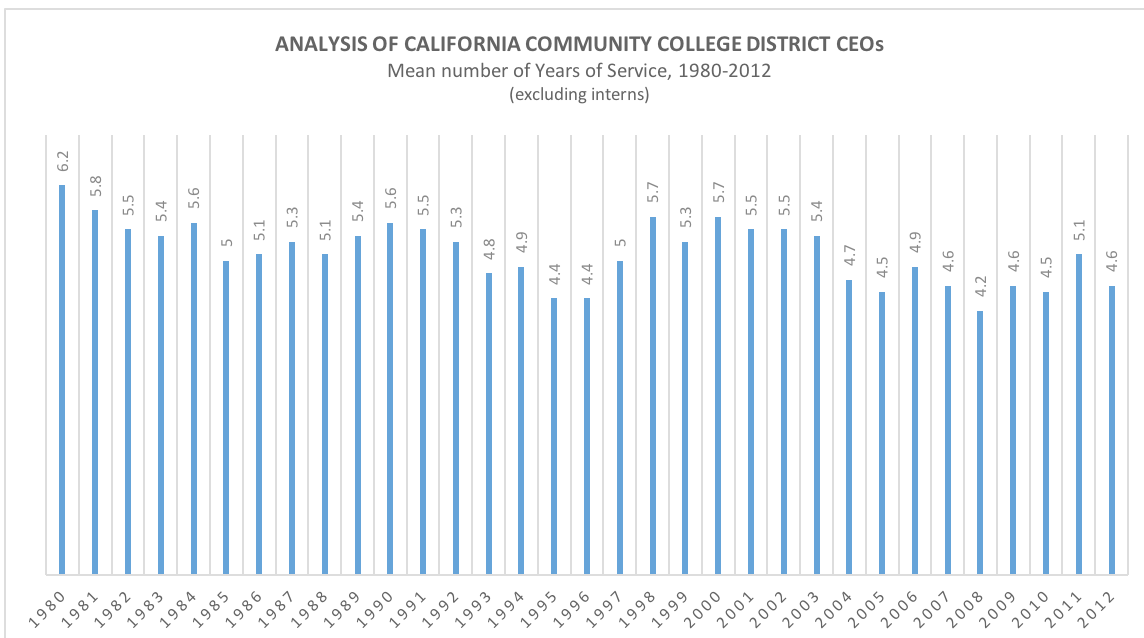
In Spring 1995, as the chancellor positions at Chabot-Las Positas, Contra Costa, Foothill-DeAnza, Los Rios and San Francisco Community College Districts were either vacant or about to be vacated, the leadership of the Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges (CEOCCC) noted that many CEO positions in the California system had turned over between July 1, 1994 and April 21, 1995. In response to this information, the California Community College Trustees (CCCT) board of the League held a mini-retreat to discuss these concerns with a panel composed of a new CEO (Tim Dong), a long-experienced CEO (George Boggs), and a CEO who moved from a presidency to a chancellorship (Jeanne Atherton), with the panel moderated by Jack Randall (a retired CEO). As a result of this discussion the CCCT board initiated several activities, including a staff study to determine the extent of turnover and its possible consequences, with a goal to improve the recruitment and retention of effective CEOs at all levels in the California Community Colleges.

To obtain basic data for this study, League staff contacted every district and asked for the names plus starting and ending dates of every CEO since the inception of that district. These were then forwarded to a group of current longtime CEOs who provided their assessment of the reason for each CEO leaving the district. (The alternatives were: retired, left under “fire,” left to take a position with greater responsibilities in California, or left to take a position out of state. These alternatives have continued to be the major categories to explain turnover.)

Due to continuing interest in this issue, the League has issued an update of this study biennially so that the League has a complete set of names and dates of employment for every CEO from every college in the California Community College system since the origin of each college.

2013-14 Data for Chancellors and Superintendent/Presidents

The mean tenure length of chancellors and superintendent/presidents of 4.3 years in 2013 is close to the previous low for tenure length of 4.2 years in 2008; however, the mean for 2014 is above the average for the last 19 years at 4.9 years. And the two-year average of 4.6 years is within the band of tenure length for earlier years which, as the table shows, has ranged from 4.2 to 5.5 years in California.



These California averages compare with a national mean tenure length of seven years with a median of five years, as of 2012<sup>1</sup>. Data from earlier years often have shown that, if there are an unusually large number of retirements in a particular year or if those who retire in a particular year are at either extreme of the distribution, the average tends to return to the mean. (From 1990 through 2010, the mean was 5.3 years.)

The median tenure length for Chancellors and Superintendents in 2013 was 2.5 years, and 3.5 years in 2014.

A total of six chancellors/superintendent-presidents left their positions in 2013, while 4 left in 2014. Those who left in 2013 were divided among the reasons, i.e., two retired, three left “under fire,” while one took a position at a larger in-state community college. 2014 was an equally difficult year for district-level CEOs as three left “under fire” while one took a position at a larger institution and none retired.

#### 2013-14 Data for Presidents in Multi-College Districts

For presidents in multi-college districts, the mean tenure length was 4.5 years in 2013 and 3.8 years in 2014; with a median of 3.6 years in 2013 and 3.5 years in 2014.

The reasons for turnover were: in 2013 – 5 retired, 1 left under fire, 7 took positions at larger institutions including one whose new position is outside California; in 2014, 2 retired, none left under fire, and 3 took positions at larger institutions. These 18 individuals follow the pattern in California in which presidents of colleges in multi-campus districts most frequently leave those campuses to “take the reins” at districts where they will report directly to the board of trustees rather than to a chancellor as in a multi-campus district.

## **Other Information on Both District and College CEOs**

#### Turnover Rate for California Community College CEOs

In 2013, a total of nineteen California CEOs left their positions; in 2014, an additional nine left, for an average rate of 10.2%, which is actually below the average turnover rate (which has ranged from 10 – 15% in recent years) for community college CEOs nationally.

#### Recruitment of Out-of-State Candidates

When this study began, there was concern about the perceived lack of candidates for California positions from among administrators working outside California. For the years 2013-14, seven new CEOs accepted positions from out of state, while two CEOs left California to take positions in other states. (However, both of these two individuals had entered their final California position from out-of-state institutions.) Of the seven who were serving in out-of-state positions immediately before their appointment in California, four had previously worked in the California Community College system so they were actually returning to California. Consequently, we conclude that there is neither a rush of leadership out of California, nor has there been a significant influx of CEOs entering from other states.

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<sup>1</sup> *Compensation and Benefits of Community College CEOs: 2012*. American Association of Community Colleges. [www.aacc.nche.edu/AboveCC/Trends/Documents/](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboveCC/Trends/Documents/)

### 2013-14 Data by Gender

In December 2014, 38.2% of California CEOs were female, while 61.8% were male. (The national figures are 28% female and 72% male CEOs.)<sup>2</sup> This is a drop from the earlier “high-water” mark of 41.6% female CEOs in 2002. These figures are problematic for both California and the nation since the national percentage of Ed.D. or Ph.D. recipients who are female increased to 67% of the doctoral degrees awarded in education by 2010.<sup>3</sup>

### 2013-14 Data by Race/Ethnicity

As mentioned in earlier study updates, California employed a greater percentage of women and non-white individuals as CEOs in its community colleges than other states. This is appropriate since the diversity of the California population is estimated to be approximately twenty years ahead of diversity in the rest of the country.<sup>4</sup> Following are comparative data for California and the nation:

<b>Community College CEOs Race/Ethnicity (%)</b>		
<b>California Community Colleges vs. National CC Data, January 2015</b>		
	<u>California</u>	<u>National</u> <sup>5</sup>
African American, non-Hispanic	12%	8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8%	1%
Hispanic	14%	6%
White	66	81%
Unknown/Other	0%	4%

### Background on Data and Changes since 1998

The tenure and retention study has been drafted biennially since June 1998 (the date of the first study.) In general, the reports (<http://www.ccleague.org/publications>) indicate that the average tenure length for California CEOs is consistently lower than for CEOs in other states and that turnover appears to be high. However, that “high” turnover is a function of the large number (136) positions in California, and the fact that frequently, boards choose presidents from multi-campus districts to ascend/move up to a larger campus or position (i.e., a superintendent/presidency or a chancellorship, depending on whether the new district is a single or multi-campus district) in which that CEO reports directly to the local board of trustees. When available, staff compares these data to the national turnover and tenure rates for community college CEOs; the turnover rate is generally consistent with the national turnover rate, and hovers around the 10 - 15% level.

In addition, staff has added information on the ethnic diversity of CEOs in California and has compared it with the most recently-available national data. However, since California has a more diverse ethnic distribution in the general population and among educators than other states, we expect that there will be significantly greater ethnic and cultural diversity among California CEOs.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/ABoutCC/Trends/Pages/ceocharacteristics.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://chronicle.com/article/In-Terms-of-Gender/135304>

<sup>4</sup> Manuel Pastor, Director, USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/ABoutCC/Trends/Pages/ceocharacteristics.aspx>

In the area of diversity, staff notes an additional element which has not been captured in the past – specifically, the immigration of individuals born and often raised in various non-European cultures. Specifically, we note that the current group of CEOs in California Community Colleges includes those born in Eritrea, Haiti, India, Lebanon, and Mauritius. Until now, League staff has continued to use the standard US Census Bureau and Chancellor’s Office categories (African-American, Native American, Asian, Filipino, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and White) for the 2013-14 table. The presence of CEOs from Middle Eastern countries, however, has prompted staff to ask about how the Chancellor’s Office categorizes these individuals – they indicated that they categorize them as “white” since this is the category used by the United States Census Bureau.

Because of the richness of the diversity and culture among California CEOs, staff proposes that, for future determinations, new CEOs be contacted and asked about their preferred racial/ethnic identity. Among the options which could be provided would be an “other/diverse” category with space to indicate the cultural heritage of the newest CEOs, rather than merely trying to fit them into the current census categories of “white,” “African-American,” “Asian,” etc. which do not reflect the richness of experience and talent brought to California by these individuals.<sup>6</sup>

### Conclusions

These data indicate the following:

- The average tenure length for California CEOs follows a pattern consistent with 20 years of California data revealing shorter average tenures in California than nationally for both district and college CEOs.
- While the average California tenures remain shorter than the average national tenures, the rate of CEO average annual turnover remains within the “band” of the national turnover averages. As mentioned earlier, the turnovers in California appear to be more extensive because of the extraordinarily large number of college and district CEOs in this state and the informal use of college presidents as a pool of candidates for district-level CEO positions.
- California’s appeal to administrators appears to be solid as there is no serious “outflow” of CEOs to other states. In fact, it appears that “inflow” is more common and those who entered California recently from out-of-state positions were most frequently CEOs who had served in CEO or in other administrative positions in California earlier in their careers. And, the single CEO who left the state in 2013-14 to take a position elsewhere had come directly from out of state to that California position.
- Also of concern are the data on the underrepresentation of women in the ranks of California Community College CEOs and the fact that that percentage has been dropping since 2002, while the percentage of women earning doctorates in education is increasing.

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<sup>6</sup>As this paper is written, the local community college Student Equity Coordinators have been discussing a similar issue due to our diverse student bodies and are proposing to establish a task force to consider improved alternatives for describing ethnicity. League staff will follow this conversation and hope to be able to use data categories consistent with those developed by this task force.

## Recommendations

1. The continued shorter mean tenure length continues to be problematic for California's community college districts. The League and other groups in the system must continue to focus on activities and programs to support and strengthen CEOs in these very difficult and complex positions. It will also be important to engage boards of trustees in supporting these efforts to provide mentorship, professional development and other supportive activities for their CEOs.
2. Local boards of trustees, leaders within the California system, and search consultants must continue to seek capable female appointees. While there may be some "lag" time before the percentages are equivalent to their percentages in advanced degree attainment, there certainly should not be a drop in the percentages in the meantime, especially in a state as visionary as California. At a bare minimum, the percentages of females in these positions should be increasing.
3. Search firms, boards, and those serving on search committees should consider every appointment to be an opportunity to pursue gender and ethnic parity.
4. Interim appointments should be seriously considered as possible opportunities to increase gender and ethnic parity.
5. California appears to have less diversity in its CEO population than it should. This is not acceptable given that the population of California – and most likely the recipients of graduate degrees in California – reflect a far more diverse population than the national pool of candidates. This is another important area where additional vigilance and diligence are required for boards of trustees, leaders within California and search consultants. California's richness in cultural and ethnic diversity is unique and must be recognized and celebrated.

## Appendix

Since the review of this draft by the League's CEOCCC and CCCT boards, staff has found additional information which may be useful in consideration of the tenure length and diversity among community college CEOs. Specifically, we have information on a more complex ethnicity determination, as well as a new program by the American Council on Education's campaign entitled *Moving the Needle*, and more in-depth data on the tenure of long-time CEOs in California's community colleges.

### Ethnicity

Upon surveying the data over the past twenty years and seeing the trends, staff recommends use of a survey similar to the very detailed one developed by the CSU system for their Application for Undergraduate Admission. It includes a "first-pass question" in which one can indicate that one is Hispanic or Latino; White; Black or African American; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Then, there is a branching question allowing for more detailed follow-up. For example, there are 25 subcategories under "Asian" and 24 subcategories under "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander." Finally, CSU asks the incoming student to choose the one category that the student wants reported when CSU can only report a single ethnicity. This extensive survey can be viewed at: <https://www.calstate.edu/AcadAff/codedMemos/AA-2009-07att.pdf>

### Gender

Since the review of this report by the CEOCCC and CCCT boards, the American Council on Education (ACE) has established a new campaign entitled *Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education*. This is the ACE response to national data which shows that only 26% of the nation's college and university presidents are women and that the rate of change has stalled since the late 1980s. (While the percentage of female CEOs in California's community colleges – 38% – exceeds this, the movement for women college CEOs has also stalled in California. In the middle years of this study, women comprised over 42% of the CEOs for California's community colleges and districts.) And, this is occurring even though, as ACE notes, "...women now earn the majority of all college degrees and are well represented in entry- and mid-level positions in most sectors of the economy..."

Specifically, ACE convened a group of women-presidents who committed to advance one of the specific goals of the initiative:

1. Generate a national sense of urgency elevating the need for advancing women in higher education leadership positions.
2. Encourage governing boards and other higher education institutional decision- and policy-making bodies to consider practices for recruiting and hiring women to chief executive offices.
3. Achieve women's advancement to mid-level and senior level positions in higher education administration for building capacities in women and in institutions.
4. Suggest practices and models that recognize success in advancing women in higher education.



ACE is currently asking that more CEOs sign their pledge and commit to working with their initiative. Further information on this initiative is available at: <http://www.acenet.edu/leadership/programs/Pages/Moving-the-Needle.aspx>

#### Thoughts on CEO Longevity after 20 years

This study was intended to determine the average length of time a CEO serves in a district within California. The annual calculation has measured the average time that a CEO serves in each district and averages this number. However, it has not measured the fact that there are a number of long-time CEOs in California who are not known as the longest-serving because they have come to their latest position relatively recently. However, review of the data indicate that some actually have a longer track record of service when their entire tenure – including service at more than one district – is considered.

