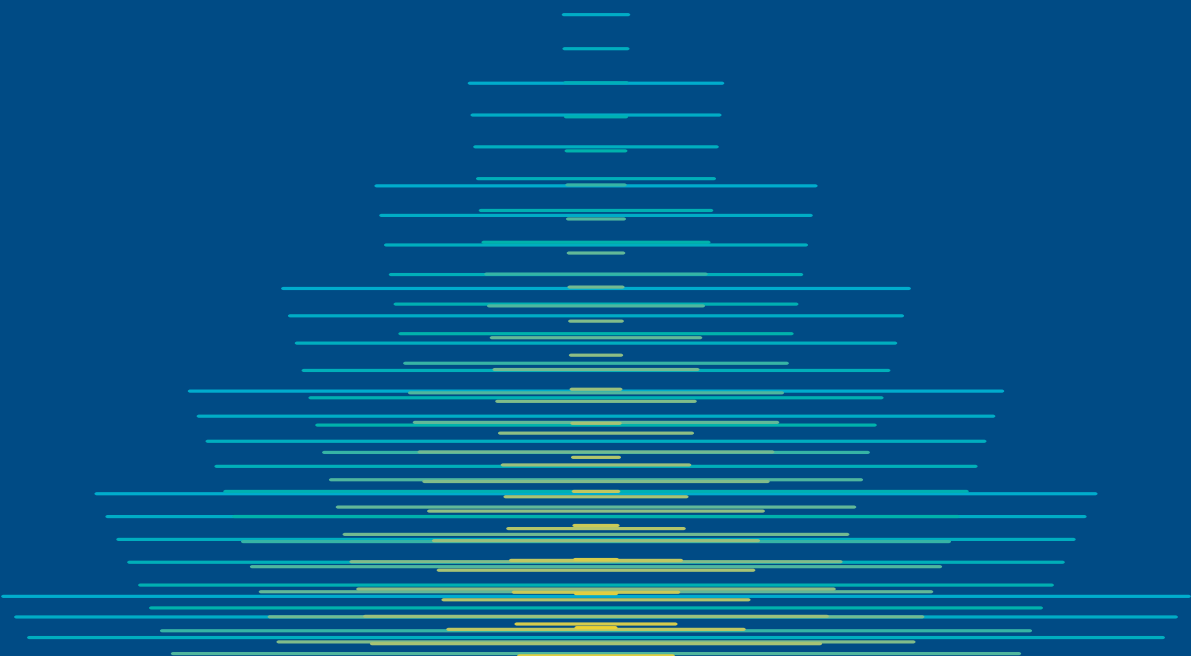




UC DAVIS
Wheelhouse
The Center for Community College
Leadership and Research



Advancing Horizons

IMPACT REPORT – AUGUST 2024

Since our founding at UC Davis in 2016, Wheelhouse has worked to strengthen leadership and practice in the California Community Colleges, the nation’s largest system of higher education. We accomplish that mission in two ways:

Leadership and Network Development

Through the CEO Institute on Leadership, Wheelhouse provides professional peer learning and network-building tailored for California Community College chancellors, superintendents/presidents, and presidents. Our Advancing Leaders Institute serves cabinet-level administrators who are aspiring CEOs or who are CEO-curious.

We support and cultivate California and national scholar networks, with attention to the development of early career researchers.

Actionable Research and Research Networks

We bring research to practice by producing timely, digestible, independent publications tailored for decision-maker audiences at the national, state, regional and local levels. We support and cultivate California and national scholar networks, with attention to development of early career researchers.

This report captures the Wheelhouse story since 2016, with special emphasis on accomplishments in 2023 and 2024.

Supporting Leaders, Building Statewide Networks

Wheelhouse Institutes

Our institutes for current and aspiring CEOs annually support 40 to 50 community college leaders to build know-how and resilience, take stock of strengths and challenges, and develop lasting peer networks. The institutes feature active learning led by expert faculty and seasoned CEOs. We tap real-time experiences in dynamic sessions that challenge assumptions and promote purposeful disruption with the ultimate goal of equitable student success. We gather at UC Davis and UCLA for 10 days annually.



Successful Launch of the Advancing Leaders Institute

In 2023, Wheelhouse selected 32 participants for our inaugural cohort of the Advancing Leaders Institute (ALI). These vice presidents and other cabinet-level administrators built new peer networks, examined cases of presidential challenges, explored the demands of the presidency and the selection process and considered the conditions necessary for their success. Three of our Cohort 1 participants have since ascended to CEOships. We welcomed 23 more leaders to Cohort 2 in July 2024.



MANUEL ALEJANDRO PÉREZ
PRESIDENT, COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO
(FORMERLY VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT SERVICES, CAÑADA COLLEGE)
WHEELHOUSE ALI PARTICIPANT, 2023

“The Advancing Leaders Institute (ALI) was a special experience and a valuable reminder for me of my potential, my ambition, and my readiness to lead in deeper ways. We made space for relationships, uplifted shared experiences, and actively-engaged in courageous ways. Leaving the ALI, I feel reaffirmed in the idea that leading in community, with corazón and critical consciousness is not only important, it’s necessary and I want to be a part of it.”

Statewide Leadership Impact

Community College leaders come to Wheelhouse from institutions large and small, from the Bay Area and the Central Valley to the Mexican border and the rural north.

● ALI

- Coast Community College District
- Contra Costa Community College District
- Grossmont College
- Hartnell College
- Irvine Valley College
- Los Angeles Valley College
- Modesto Junior College
- Mt. San Antonio College
- Ohlone College
- Oxnard College
- Saddleback College
- San Bernardino Community College District
- San José City College
- Santa Ana College
- Sierra College
- Skyline College

● CEO

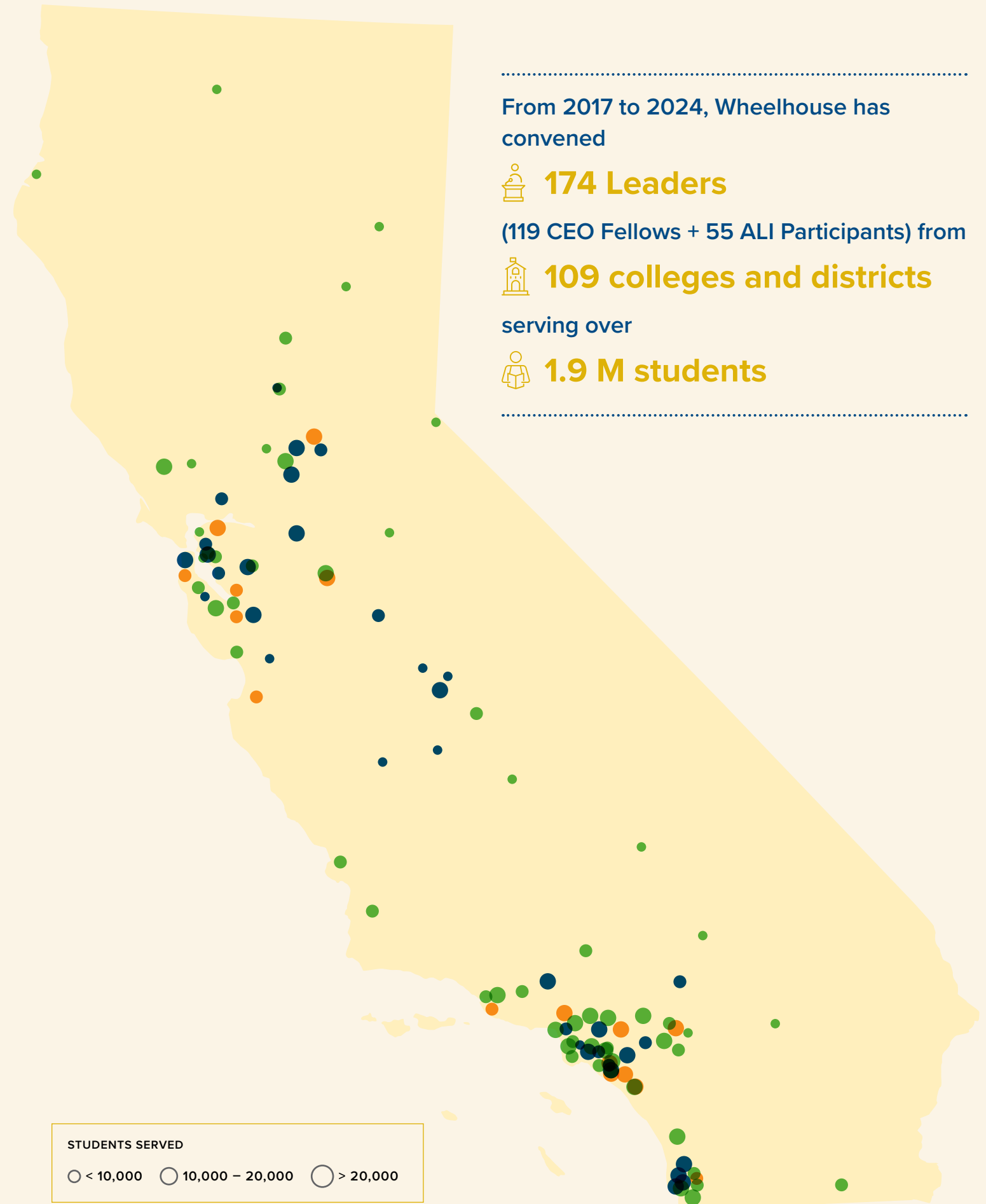
- Allan Hancock College
- Antelope Valley College
- Barstow Community College
- Butte College
- Cabrillo College
- Cerritos College
- Cerro Coso Community College
- Chaffey College
- Citrus College
- College of Alameda
- College of San Mateo
- College of the Redwoods
- College of the Siskiyous
- Columbia College
- Contra Costa College
- Copper Mountain College
- Crafton Hills College
- Cuesta College
- Cuyamaca College
- El Camino College
- Feather River College

Foothill College

- Fullerton College
- Golden West College
- Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
- Imperial Valley College
- Lake Tahoe Community College
- Laney College
- Las Positas College
- Lassen College
- Los Angeles City College
- Los Angeles Harbor College
- Los Angeles Southwest College
- Merritt College
- Mission College
- Moorpark College
- Moreno Valley College
- Napa Valley College
- North Orange Continuing Education
- North Orange County Community College District
- Palomar College
- Pasadena City College
- Porterville College
- Rancho Santiago Community College District
- Reedley College
- Riverside City College
- Sacramento City College
- San Bernadino Valley College
- San Diego College of Continuing Education
- Santa Monica College
- Santa Rosa Junior College
- South Orange County Community College District
- Southwestern College
- Ventura College
- Ventura County Community College District
- Woodland Community College
- Yosemite Community College District
- Yuba Community College District

● ALI and CEO

- American River College
- Berkeley City College
- Cañada College
- Chabot-Las Positas Community College District
- Chabot College
- City College of San Francisco
- Clovis Community College
- Coalinga College
- Coastline College
- College of the Canyons
- Compton College
- Cosumnes River College
- Cypress College
- Folsom Lake College
- Fresno City College
- Gavilan College
- Long Beach City College
- Madera Community College
- Merced College
- Norco College
- Orange Coast College
- Peralta Community College District
- Rio Hondo College
- San Diego City College
- San Diego Community College District
- San Diego Mesa College
- San Diego Miramar College
- San Joaquin Delta College
- San José-Evergreen Community College District
- Santiago Canyon College
- Solano Community College
- Victor Valley College
- West Hills Community College District
- West Los Angeles College
- Yuba College



From 2017 to 2024, Wheelhouse has convened

174 Leaders

(119 CEO Fellows + 55 ALI Participants) from

109 colleges and districts

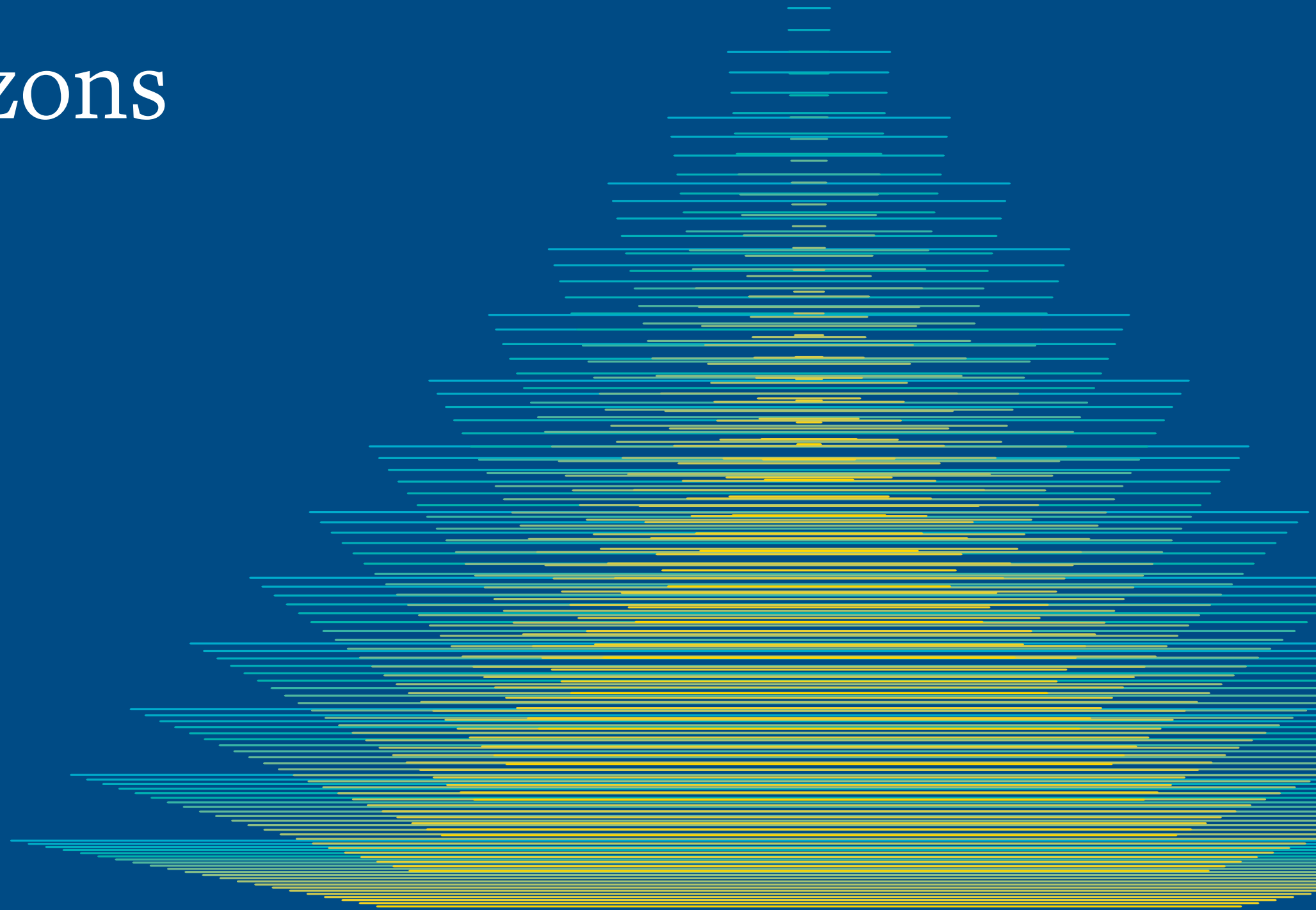
-serving over

1.9 M students

Advancing Horizons Since 2016

Our story

is one of partnership,
persistence and collaboration –
people joining forces
to support one of the nation's
most important engines of
opportunity, equity and innovation:
the California Community Colleges
and the students they serve.



Advancing Horizons Since 2016

🗣️ A series of conversations between Harold Levine, then-dean of the UC Davis School of Education, and Brice Harris, then-chancellor of the California Community Colleges, hatches a new initiative to support CCCs through leadership development and independent research for decision making



👥 CEO Cohort 2 convenes at UC Davis



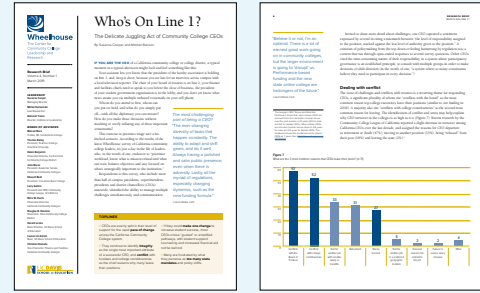
📊 Influential analysis of wide variability in financial aid take-up statewide: [Money Left on the Table: An Analysis of Pell Grant Receipt Among Financially-Eligible Community College Students in California](#)

💰 UC Davis and the Hearst Foundations provide seed funding for what becomes Wheelhouse: The Center for Community College Leadership and Research

James Irvine and College Futures foundations invest in Wheelhouse

CA Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative) invests in Wheelhouse

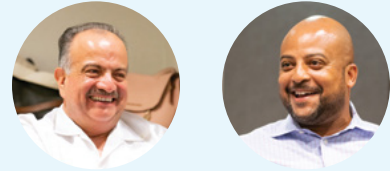
🗣️ Susanna Cooper joins as founding executive director, Michal Kurlaender as lead researcher, and Deborah Travis as director of the new CEO Institute on Leadership



🗣️ [Who's on Line? The Delicate Juggling Act of Community College CEOs](#)



👥 CEO Cohort 3 convenes at UC Davis

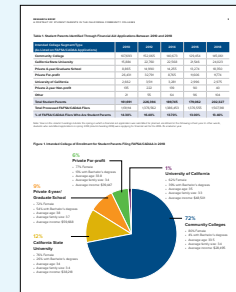


🗣️ Los Angeles Community College District Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez joins Wheelhouse to direct CEO Institute as Chancellor-in-Residence (left); Cosumnes River College President Edward Bush joins Wheelhouse as senior fellow

🏠 COVID-19 pandemic begins in March



👥 CEO Cohort 4 convenes both remotely and at UC Davis



🗣️ [A Portrait of Student Parents in the California Community Colleges: A New Analysis of Financial Aid Seekers with Dependent Children](#)



👥 During the pandemic, Wheelhouse supports CEO Cohort 4 across a two-year period

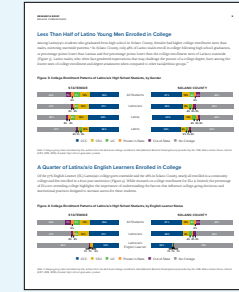
💰 Lumina Foundation invests in Wheelhouse

💰 Funder base expands through individual donations and contracted research/evaluation
Institute for Education Sciences (US Department of Education) awards Wheelhouse \$3 million for pandemic recovery research (partnership with California Education Lab, CCCCO and PPIC)



👥 CEO Cohort 5 convenes at UC Davis and UCLA (above)
Wheelhouse establishes Advancing Leaders Institute to support diverse pipeline of future CCC CEOs

🗣️ Research Collaboration Council of 12 California Community College CEOs established to inform recovery research and dissemination strategy



🗣️ [Enlace Comunitario: Identifying Opportunities to Enhance Community College Outreach and Recruitment of Latinx/a/o Students](#)

💰 California Community College Chancellor's Office and ECMC Foundation invest in Wheelhouse's Advancing Leaders Institute



👥 Inaugural Advancing Leaders Institute convenes

💰 Lumina Foundation invests in Accelerating Recovery in Community Colleges (ARCC) Convening and Latinx and AANHPI Affinity Groups



👥 AANHPI CEOs convene for 3-day learning retreat at UC Davis

👥 Early-career researchers gather at UCLA for tailored professional development, research collaboration/consultancies, and network building

2016-17



👥 Inaugural cohort of CCC presidents and chancellors – self-named the “Wheelhouse Warriors” – convene at UC Davis for the first annual CEO Institute on Leadership

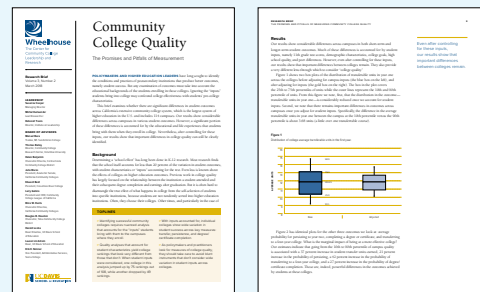
🗣️ First research brief, [Tough Job if You Can Keep It](#), explores CEO tenure and challenges to institutional leadership stability across the CCCs

[Associate Degrees for Transfer: Early Effects on Degree Completion in CA Community Colleges](#)

[Talk to Me: What Community College Trustees Want From Their CEOs](#)

👥 Wheelhouse Scholars Network is born as 15 CCC-focused research affiliates convene in Berkeley for first annual collaboration retreat

2018



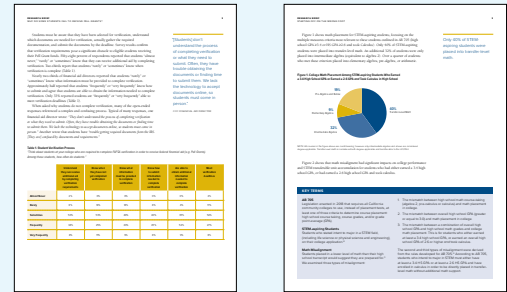
🗣️ [Community College Quality: The Promises and Pitfalls of Measurement](#)



👥 Scholars Network expands and convenes at UCLA to share research and explore collaboration on transfer and financial aid

2019

💰 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation invests in Wheelhouse



🗣️ [Why do Some Students Fail to Receive Pell Grants? Survey Evidence from California Community College Financial Aid Directors](#) (left)
[Starting off on the Wrong Foot: Math Misalignment and STEM Outcomes in California Community Colleges](#) (right)

👥 26 scholars gather in Berkeley to share research on guided pathways implementation, barriers to financial aid receipt and efficacy of co-requisite courses



2020

🗣️ Wheelhouse adapts leadership development and research in response to the pandemic and national racial reckoning

👥 Wheelhouse Wednesdays convene CEOs during crisis leadership period – Constance Carroll, Eddie Cole, Michael Crow, Monica Lozano, Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Eduardo Padron lead sessions



🗣️ [Turning on a Dime: California Community College Transformation in Response to COVID-19](#) (left)
[Toward a More Perfect Institution: Reflections from California Community College Leaders on Racism, Anti-Blackness and Implicit Bias](#) (right)

👥 45 scholars and funders gather remotely in multi-day research retreat featuring new inquiry on Associate Degrees for Transfer, Student Equity Plans, incarcerated students and student parents

2021

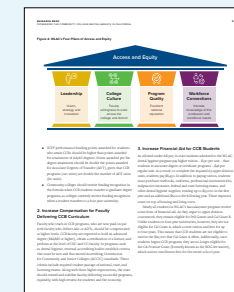


👥 38 researchers, funders and CEOs gather at UCLA for 5th annual Scholars Retreat with focus on transfer and financial aid



🗣️ [Leading as Myself: California Community College CEO Reflections on Personal and Institutional Growth Across a Year of Racial Reckoning](#) (left)
[A Foot in the Door: Growth in Participation and Equity in Dual Enrollment in California](#) (right)

2022



🗣️ [Pioneering the Community College Baccalaureate in California: The Experience of West Los Angeles College](#) (left)
[Pandemic-Period Enrollment and Persistence in California Community Colleges](#) (right)
[Funding Incentives for California Community Colleges: Impacts of the SCFF on Financial Aid Receipt](#)

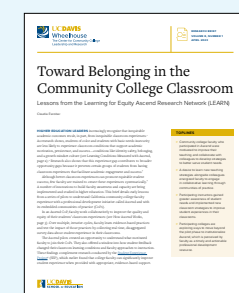
👥 45 academic and CC institutional researchers convene at UC Davis for professional development and research collaboration focused on AB 705 implementation
First annual Wheelhouse Summer Scholar awards made to support CCC-related research by 12 doctoral students; symposia convened to feature their scholarship

🗣️ Wheelhouse partners with Community College Research Center and National Student Clearinghouse Research Center to convene national Accelerating Recovery in Community Colleges network

2023



👥 First CEO affinity group convening of 18 Black CCC CEOs



🗣️ [Toward Belonging in the Community College Classroom: Lessons from the Learning for Equity Ascend Research Network \(LEARN\)](#) (above)
[More than just money? Early outcomes of Lake Tahoe Community College \(LTCC\) College Promise Program in New Directions for Community Colleges](#)

👥 CEO Cohort 6 convenes at UC Davis and UCLA

2024

👥 CEO Cohort 7 and ALI Cohort 2 convene at UC Davis and UCLA
Three participants from ALI Cohort 1 ascend to CEOships. Several others are finalists in presidential searches.



👥 Wheelhouse, the Community College Research Center and National Student Clearinghouse host the ARCC Network, convening 50 researchers to share their latest findings

Five community college students join a panel to share their experiences navigating community college during the pandemic

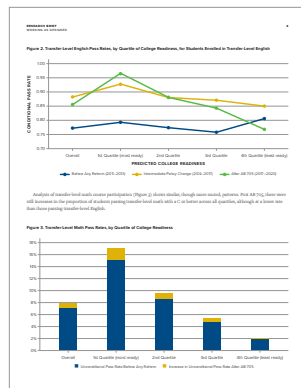
🗣️ [From the Disruption of the Pandemic: A Path Forward for Community Colleges](#)
[Portraits of Resilience: Southern California Community College Students Navigating Challenges Amid the Pandemic](#)

KEY 🗣️ General information 💰 Investments in Wheelhouse 🗣️ Research publications and developments 👥 Research convenings 👥 Leadership development items

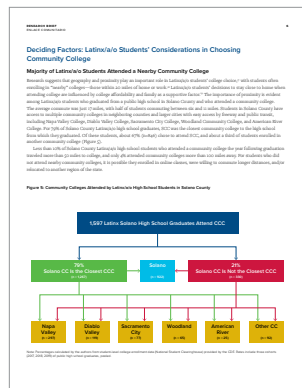
A Growing Body of Research

Wheelhouse publishes digestible and actionable briefs, blogs, articles and infographics for statewide and national decision-maker audiences at all levels of the system, from state and federal policymakers to regional and local college leaders and administrators. In addition to our ongoing bodies of research on financial aid, dual enrollment, leadership practice and COVID-19 impacts, recent work published in 2023 and 2024 includes:

- Mini-case studies of presidential derailments for curriculum use in our institutes
- The first causal analysis of California’s landmark developmental education reform (AB 705)
- Partnership research with Solano Community College to support efforts to improve enrollment outreach and with Lake Tahoe Community Colleges to examine and improve the College Promise Program
- An article in *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* that articulates “[A Path Forward for Community Colleges](#),” informed by data and the reflections of CEOs whose colleges were transformed by the pandemic
- *Portraits of Resilience: Southern California Community College Students Navigating Challenges Amid the Pandemic* features the voices of five community college students who found ways to stay connected to college despite the pandemic



Working as Designed
A Causal Analysis of AB 705 Shows Increased Rates of Transfer-Level Course Taking and Passage



Enlace Comunitario
Identifying Opportunities to Enhance Community College Outreach and Recruitment of Latin/a/o Students



From the Disruption of the Pandemic
A Path Forward for Community Colleges
Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning



CELIA ESPOSITO-NOY
SUPERINTENDENT/PRESIDENT EMERITA, SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
WHEELHOUSE SENIOR FELLOW

“When we needed data about what informed Latino/a/x students in their decision to attend college and where to attend, we asked Wheelhouse to conduct the study. Not only did they design and implement the survey tools and focus groups, they provided us a thoughtful narrative that informed our outreach strategy. The recommendations were so successful that we asked Wheelhouse to conduct the same study with our African American/Black students. Partnering with Wheelhouse has expanded our research capacity and provided us with much-needed data.”



MAYRA NUÑEZ MARTINEZ
WHEELHOUSE RESEARCH FELLOW

“At Wheelhouse, I have had the incredible opportunity to engage in action-oriented research in partnership with community college leaders. This experience has underscored for me the importance of researcher-practitioner collaborations and centering students’ voices and experiences to inform and enhance outreach and recruitment efforts at community colleges. Engaging in this work has empowered me to continue advocating for practices and policies that are intentional, community-driven, and grounded in the experiences and needs of historically disenfranchised students and communities.”

Building and Supporting an Impact Network of CCC-devoted Scholars

Wheelhouse convenes national and state networks of researchers whose work connects to our mission. Together with the Community College Research Center (CCRC) and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), we are co-conveners of the Accelerating Recovery in Community Colleges Network (ARCC). This network of research teams from eight states explores strategies for community colleges to bring back students who left during the COVID-19 pandemic and support their learning and success.

To cultivate the next generation of CCC scholars, we support the professional development of early career researchers who are part of the ARCC Network. We’ve also established the Wheelhouse Summer Scholars Fellowship, a funding and mentoring opportunity for doctoral students whose research furthers equitable CCC opportunities and outcomes.

Expanding Our Reach with Research Partnerships

Our Research Collaboration Council, comprised of 12 accomplished CCC CEOs, sharpens our research questions, informs our analysis, and grounds us in the needs and realities of the nation’s largest system of higher education. 2024 and 2025 will deepen our partnership with CCRC and NSC as the research projects in the ARCC Network come to fruition. Future work includes documenting efforts to improve success and belonging for Black students in community colleges, mapping the new geography of enrollment in a post-pandemic landscape, new analyses of financial aid and dual enrollment trends, and more.

2024 Wheelhouse Summer Scholars



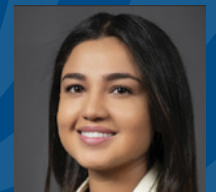
Esteban Alcalá Aguirre
University of Pittsburgh



Austin Barraza
Northeastern University



Jennifer Ferrero
San Diego State University



Teresita Martinez
University of California, Davis



Glenda Palacios-Quejada
University of Southern California



Ivan Valdovinos Gutierrez
University of California, San Diego

Meeting New Demands and Opportunities

We are proud that in 2023, we expanded our leadership development to aspiring leaders and CEO affinity groups. Wheelhouse hosted the first Black CCC CEO learning retreat at UC Davis, creating a holding environment for a powerful convening shaped by and for the 18 leaders who participated. Our Advancing Leaders Institute welcomed its inaugural cohort of 32 aspiring CEOs, and our CEO Institute on Leadership served 14 sitting CEOs.

In July 2024, we welcomed 23 cabinet-level administrators to Cohort 2 of the ALI and 19 CEOs to the Institute on Leadership. We extended our affinity group work to curate needed space for urgent conversations and network cultivation among an affinity group of 14 AANHPI CEOs and are preparing to welcome 30 Latinx CEOs. Topics for these retreats range from equitable faculty hiring and student success to Sacramento know-how, leadership innovations and well-being for sustainability in the CEO role.



DENISE WHISENHUNT
PRESIDENT, GROSSMONT COLLEGE
WHEELHOUSE BLACK CCC CEO CONVENING PLANNER AND PARTICIPANT, 2023

“The Black CEO retreat created a professional development opportunity in which presidents, superintendents, and chancellors from throughout the state were able to contribute and learn how to enhance our skills to be influential leaders in the community college system. It created a space in which we could learn more about each other and strategize how our shared skills and talents can contribute to uplifting our students and greater communities. It was an honor to share space with some of the most noted thought leaders from throughout the country. Wheelhouse played an essential role in cultivating this space, and I was honored to be a part of this effort.”



TAMMEIL GILKERSON
CHANCELLOR, PERALTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
WHEELHOUSE AANHPI CCC CEO CONVENING PARTICIPANT, 2024

“The AANHPI retreat offered a unique professional development opportunity where community college leaders could deepen and expand our connections within a more intimate and supportive setting. This retreat facilitated an environment where we could share our cultural backgrounds and professional experiences, fostering authentic relationships and a sense of community. The retreat not only helped us understand our roles and challenges as AANHPI leaders but also emphasized the importance of creating a supportive network to enhance our resiliency and support our work on student success and equity.”



KELLY FOWLER
VICE PRESIDENT OF INSTRUCTION, MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE
WHEELHOUSE ALI PARTICIPANT, 2023

“My participation in the Wheelhouse Advancing Leaders Institute (ALI) has been an extraordinary journey towards becoming an equity-focused community college leader in California. ALI’s commitment to developing a diverse, innovative, and data-driven cohort of leaders was evident throughout their activities, sessions, and workshops. The program’s emphasis on equity and inclusion, coupled with the guidance of seasoned professionals, has expanded my knowledge and skills and ignited a passion for shaping the future of California community colleges.”



KELLIE BUTLER
SUPERINTENDENT-PRESIDENT, SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
(FORMERLY VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT SERVICES, FOLSOM LAKE COLLEGE)
WHEELHOUSE ALI PARTICIPANT, 2023

“The ALI experience provided insights from behind the curtain of the CEOship to which I don’t think we have access, even with our own presidents. ALI ignited a fire inside me to explore the CEOship with intention. Before ALI, I was looking from the sidelines, but now I know I am in the game and equipped to make change as a VP ... and as a future CEO/president. I have gained a network of equity allies who are passionate about this work, and I know that I can call on them in the future!”





VANIETHIA HUBBARD
 VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT SERVICES,
 SANTA ANA COLLEGE
 WHEELHOUSE ALI PARTICIPANT, 2023

“The Wheelhouse Advancing Leaders Institute was a transformational journey of moving from an individual mindset and advancing to interconnected experiences. The Institute challenged me to self-reflect on my abilities and skill level, identify my personal and professional strengths, and bridge gaps in knowledge. Through the Institute I discovered more about myself than any leadership development program. As a result, I am confident and prepared to join the next generation of college presidents.”



DAVID WILLIAMS
 VICE PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AFFAIRS,
 SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 WHEELHOUSE ALI PARTICIPANT, 2023

“The focus is on taking great leaders and preparing us for probably the most daunting role in higher education: that of a community college president. The privilege of learning from experienced presidents is invaluable, but equally important is the opportunity to forge professional and personal relationships with others in the cohort. Many of us have progressed through the CCC system together, and we will continue together in our current roles or as we advance to higher leadership. Having that group identity is comforting as we encourage and support each other. Even if I never become a President, I feel I have more confidence and better tools to be an even more impactful leader now.”



UC DAVIS
Wheelhouse

A Program of the School of Education

University of California, Davis
 School of Education, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616

education.ucdavis.edu/wheelhouse

WHEELHOUSE TEAM

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 Executive Director

Francisco C. Rodriguez
 Chancellor in Residence

Michal Kurlaender
 Lead Researcher and Professor

Edward Bush
 Senior Fellow and President,
 Cosumnes River College

Aidan Johnson
 Student Assistant

Robbie Linden
 Research Fellow

Mayra Nuñez Martinez
 Research Fellow

Hilary Strain
 Associate Director

Kairo Weber
 Project Manager

TEAM

Elizabeth Friedmann
 Research Fellow

Karina Jimenez
 Administrative Assistant

Jacqui Zuniga-Dunkin
 Events Manager

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 Distinguished Faculty, Higher Educational Leadership Program,
 College of Education, California State University Fullerton

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 Yuba Community College District

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