



# MILESTONE REPORT

California Education Code § 75009 (2018)



SUBMITTED BY:

**Ajita Talwalker Menon**

President & CEO  
Calbright College

and

**Pamela Haynes**

President of the Board of Trustees  
California Online Community College District  
Calbright College

July 30, 2021



California  
Community  
Colleges

Online Community  
College District

CALIFORNIA ONLINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



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## President's Message



Calbright College is a new kind of college — a statewide California Community College designed to meet the unique needs of working adults who have fallen through the cracks in America's existing higher education system. Calbright is dedicated to quickly and flexibly getting Californians the skills they need to secure their economic future, and to work as a part of the California Community Colleges (CCC) system to respond to an increasingly dynamic labor market.

Calbright was created because of a recognition that we, as a state, had to find new ways to provide working adults with educational opportunities tailored to their unique needs. That means options that are affordable, flexible, competency-based. These adults without degrees have been historically targeted, recruited, and left behind by predatory, for-profit colleges — especially in times of economic uncertainty.

Since we began serving students in October 2019, the global pandemic has upended the economy and the lives of the working adults in our focus population. Calbright sits at a unique nexus between the labor market and higher education, which gives us the ability to build programs that are responsive to — and predictive of — the needs of Californians as they navigate the shifting employment landscape.

As intended, we are rapidly adapting how we serve our students and stakeholders, including changes in several critical areas: making substantive improvements to the student experience, strengthening Calbright's relationship with system constituents, and taking concrete steps to support the new faculty of Calbright.

There is distinct urgency in this moment — not just for Calbright, but for the millions of Californians who are bearing the brunt of this pandemic, navigating an economic recession, and facing another recovery that leaves them stranded without a path into good jobs in the new economy.

I was working with Governor Brown when he reached a deal with the Legislature, creating a seven-year start up timeline for a college that would be the public alternative to predatory for-profits. But as this report will make clear, this work is no longer theoretical.

Today, Calbright has 500 students, and we are on a growth trajectory to serve 5,000 students within the next three years. Our students reflect the state’s tremendous racial diversity, and more than 90 percent are adults over the age of 25. They are exactly the people Calbright was created to serve, and the pandemic’s disproportionate impact on Black, Latinx, and Indigenous Californians — as well as women and rural residents — have only made our work more urgent.

It’s clear how this story goes historically: as the economy begins to open up but uncertainty lingers, predatory for-profits seize the opportunity to target, recruit, and discard students in these same communities.

We don’t have to let the story repeat itself. We can and we must step up and react nimbly on behalf of the hardest hit communities across the state, as we are already observing the effects of COVID-19 compounding inequality and impacting some regions more than others.

As a student-first institution, Calbright will always keep working adults — and their unique needs — at the forefront of everything that we do. A good example of that ethos in action is that every program we currently offer is completely free to students, part of a deep commitment among Calbright faculty and staff to provide Californians with the opportunity to have a low-to-no-cost college experience.

This new institution holds so much promise, and we all sincerely believe in the necessity of its mission and the importance of its role as a complementary part of CCC.

I am excited about the critical, collaborative work with Calbright faculty, staff, students, and system partners that has brought us to this point, and I look forward to working together to meet the challenges we have before us.

All of us at Calbright are grateful for Governor Newsom’s continued leadership, as well as key members of the state Legislature and strong advocates across the state who have tirelessly championed a path for Calbright College to reimagine the way we educate and train workers so we can rebuild as a stronger, more inclusive California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ajita Menon", with a stylized flourish above the name.

**Ajita Talwalker Menon**  
**President & CEO**

## Overview

Calbright College is a new kind of California Community College: statewide, fully digital, and dedicated to meeting the needs of working adults seeking better jobs. Calbright’s innovative, skills-based programs and wraparound supports prepare students for in-demand jobs, and they are designed specifically for adults whose lives — jobs, schedules, and family responsibilities — do not fit typical semester-based course structures and timelines.

- Calbright is a new public institution designed around the specific, career-oriented needs of working adults without college degrees.
- Our programs are all competency-based and self-paced, so students can learn and demonstrate new skills on their own schedules.
- We are an affordable, high-value alternative to costly for-profit colleges. All programs are currently free for California residents.

Amidst a global pandemic that has deepened inequities throughout California and across the country, building a state-wide public, online, skills-based college designed around the unique needs of working adults is critical to the state’s recovery. Calbright College is advancing new solutions responsive to the reality our communities face, and is meeting the challenge of helping students navigate economic uncertainty.

Calbright exists to serve working adults like Monica, a current student in our IT program. Monica is a single mother of three, born and raised in Sacramento, who is pursuing a more stable future for her family. She has “a passion to fix things” but no background in technology beyond some limited experience using computers for work and school. Before coming to Calbright, Monica had tried an online for-profit program without success. This is what she told us about Calbright:

*“I think this is one of the best things to come to Californians, especially in a time like this. I can’t wait to get my hands on a Calbright future.”*

**— Monica, Sacramento**

This Milestone Report describes how Calbright is advancing our mission so that Monica and many more Californians like her have a clear, affordable path to a brighter future for themselves




### Competency-Based Education

Competency-based education (CBE) is a flexible approach to teaching and learning based on knowledge and skills that are transparent and measurable. Progression is based on demonstrated mastery of what students are expected to know (knowledge) and be able to do (skills), rather than hours spent in class.

and their families. The report details how we met all three statutory milestones for July 1, 2021, and it summarizes the college's main activities and progress over the past 12 months. Here is a brief overview.

### Met Statutory Milestones

Calbright *met or exceeded all three milestones* that its founding statute required the college to complete by July 1, 2021.

<b>Milestone #1</b> Incorporate student feedback to improve the college's instruction, technology, and student support services.	
<b>Milestone #2</b> Design and validate at least three additional program pathways, including coordinating the creation of new content.	
<b>Milestone #3</b> Apply for accreditation from an accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education.	

### Charting a Clear Path Forward

Calbright's Strategic Vision 2021-2023 was approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2021. With 14 clear, ambitious, and achievable goals, the Strategic Vision sets our overarching direction as we shift from launch into high-quality growth. The Strategic Vision development process began in fall 2020 and included research, data analysis, and input from both internal and external stakeholders. (See Appendix B for a summary of the Strategic Vision's purpose, principles, and goals.)

The College is already making steady progress advancing its mission. We are doubling down with deliberate initiatives to train underserved Californians, teaching high-demand skills in technology, health care, and the public sector while providing tailored support to help them succeed at Calbright and in the labor market.

Strengthening the Student Journey to Success: Over the past year we have centered our efforts on understanding who our potential students are, enrolling students into high-quality courses, guiding them through their training, and positioning them for career advancement in their chosen field. Informed by feedback from graduates and enrollees and analysis of student



data, Calbright has improved the student journey so that students can master the hard and soft skills required for their program within a structure that best supports their success.

We are building and strengthening an innovative model to provide integrated learning and high-touch support online, designed specifically for our target population of working adults. Every component of Calbright’s model, from Welcome Services to Career Counseling, is regularly evaluated and strengthened, with the goal of providing a unique, intuitive, end-to-end experience guided by the student’s own goals and facilitated by appropriate technology. Calbright constantly collects and analyzes practical data so we can identify needed improvements and new opportunities, respond efficiently to changing workforce and student needs, and only scale what works.

In partnership with industry, employers, and labor organizations, Calbright faculty and staff designed and validated five new programs, exceeding our July 2021 statutory requirement by 66 percent. As we research and design flexible programs for Californians seeking in-demand jobs, we are also building a knowledge base and innovative models for collaboration and rapid program development to share within the CCC system and the larger field.

Part of that knowledge base is the research we conducted about the impact of the pandemic on our focus population, and on the barriers our own students are facing as they try to access good jobs. We analyzed labor market needs across California, and are being responsive to regions of the state where need is greatest — including the Inland Empire and Central Valley. In these areas and across the state, the College is actively engaging with prospective students and community partners through a layered outreach plan that includes, but is not limited to:

- Direct collaboration with workforce boards and community based organizations who serve similar focus populations;
- Digital/social media marketing;
- Advertisements in high-traffic areas like DMVs; and
- Partnerships with sister community colleges.

Robust Collaborations: As a system, we are rallying together to share what we know and build a more robust safety net for students in the face of challenging circumstances and unscrupulous bad actors in the higher education space.

Calbright has entered into agreements with Compton College and Bakersfield College to provide students with opportunities to potentially earn additional certifications and/or degrees. We also helped organize the Working Learner’s Innovation Alliance (WLIA) with other community college districts, which is dedicated to connecting working adults with regional workforce development boards. Those boards have additional resources, and draw upon a deep understanding of their local hiring environment to help place students into the right career pathways.

Building Operational Capacity: As Calbright shifts from its launch stage into a new phase of high-quality growth, with the goal of 5,000 enrollees and 1,200 Calbright graduates by the end of 2023, it is critical we continue to invest in our learning platforms and organizational infrastructure. To support these goals, we have been building different types of capacity including R&D, technology, innovation, faculty and staff, governance, and student representation.

In 2020, Calbright hired its first faculty members and as of July 2021 has 12 approved faculty positions, including instructional and counseling faculty members instrumental in executing the wraparound services we provide to our student body. In the past year we welcomed the California Teachers Association (CTA) as our official faculty union, and instituted robust hiring and procurement processes — including a college-wide all-day training in July — as part of our immediate and comprehensive response to the State Auditor’s recommendations.

Additionally, Calbright submitted its application for accreditation in February 2021 and expects to be fully accredited by the end of 2023. We are pleased to be ahead of schedule for full accreditation against the timeline in our enabling statute.

*“It was amazing to be offered the ability to get this type of certificate without cost. It enables more and more people to get into the field, instead of just the ones with money to use.”*

*“Great support from Calbright staff. Online course was convenient.”*

*“Great courses and educators are very responsive. I was well prepared for the certification.”*

— Recent Calbright Graduates

## July 2021 Statutory Milestones

Calbright met or exceeded all three milestones that its founding statute required the College to complete by July 1, 2021. As detailed below, we improved how we serve our students by incorporating their feedback; designed and validated more than the required three new programs; and applied for accreditation.

Our institution-wide commitment to student success is what drove us to reach these milestones ahead of schedule. Calbright’s students are the animating force behind all of our work, and when they succeed, the College succeeds. We are always learning and innovating to better meet our students where they are and help them get where they want to go.

Hector's experience illustrates just how important this work is. A Calbright student in San Pedro, he immigrated to California from Mexico as a child. He was excited about the IT support program when he first enrolled, but long hours at work meant that he had to pause his training. When he began working from home during the pandemic, he re-enrolled. With the help of a Calbright career coach, he updated his resume mid-program and landed a job at a robotics company when the hiring manager heard he was training for his industry-recognized CompTIA A+ certification. After completing the IT Support program, he plans to enroll in Calbright's Cybersecurity program.

*"Computers were always something I was interested in, and now I have the opportunity to really study them."*

— Hector, San Pedro

## Milestone #1

### Incorporate student feedback to improve the college's instruction, technology, and student support services.

Calbright has incorporated student feedback into college operations in a variety of ways over the past year, delivering a positive and increasingly seamless student experience. This critical work requires continual integration and improvement of instruction, technology, and support services, which student feedback and related data helped us strengthen.

Surveys and evaluations are key sources of student feedback. We collected such data at multiple points throughout the year to gauge student and alumni satisfaction and to learn from their experiences with Calbright's courses, systems, and services. A student survey completed in January 2021 found that nine in ten were satisfied with their overall experience at Calbright, including more than half who said they were "very satisfied." When asked for the most important things to improve for Calbright students going forward, "program choices" was the most common response by far. This and other valuable input from students informed our operational priorities as well as our multi-year strategic goals.

Here are some examples of the many improvements made in the past year that incorporated student feedback:

#### Expanding Program Choices

Calbright accelerated the development of new programs, which students identified as a top priority. As detailed under Milestone #2 below, five programs have already been designed and validated — including one that launched in April 2021 — and more are in the R&D pipeline. New programs are designed for students that our research found are most likely to benefit from Calbright programs, including those in industries facing an uncertain economic recovery

(e.g. front-line customer service roles such as retail, hospitality, and restaurant service), as well as changing industries that require new skills for incumbent workers (e.g., health care).

### **Making It Easier for Students to Apply, Learn, and Progress**

To learn from students' experiences applying to Calbright, we conducted an analysis that found Black and older prospective students were more likely than others to stop early in the CCCApply process. This led us to identify several ways to make the system's application process less burdensome and confusing for all students, at all CCCs, and also to create targeted resources and provide more direct support for prospective students navigating the current process.

Informed by the experiences of students in our first student cohort ("beta cohort"), Calbright completed a redesign of the Calbright Student Portal to facilitate effective communication and better guide students through their academic journey. The Portal now features high-use resources provided by Career Services, Accessibility, Academic Supports, Admissions and Records, and Instruction. These updates improved the student experience, reduced the number of help desk requests, and decreased the time to respond to student inquiries.

In the fall of 2020, Calbright also began implementing new student support measures and tools, including an Integrated Student Support Model (ISSM) to track and monitor student persistence and completion in a self-paced learning environment. These improvements are enabling counselors to better identify when students are at key junctures, and then reach out to support them in moving through — and understanding — the coursework. This model also builds trust between faculty and students, helping students stay connected to Calbright while they navigate changing life circumstances.

Student feedback also directly informed improvements to the way Calbright provides career-readiness skills development. In evaluations of our pilot Essentials course, which focused on a range of soft skills, students made clear that the career readiness component was most critical to their success. We also learned that requiring students to complete such a course before beginning any technical skills training was a barrier to progress. As a result, students are now co-enrolled in WF500 Essentials course and their program of study course, which allows full immersion in all aspects of their chosen career program from the start. We also used this feedback to create a new Career Readiness course that focuses on picking, finding, and thriving in a job, which the Board of Trustees approved in July 2021.

### **Supporting Students Through COVID-19**

Calbright surveyed students in spring 2020 to gauge the pandemic's impact on their pace and progress, and to learn more about their mental wellness; device and internet access; and housing and food security. The survey also asked about students' satisfaction with Calbright's learning management system and their awareness of student services. Students' responses informed improvements to how counselors interact with students, as well as a training for

counselors on how to guide students experiencing unemployment or underemployment through the benefits application process with the California Employment Development Department (EDD).

*“It was nice to have a human face to check in with after being so isolated. It was friendly and a relationship. It helped me get back on track. That’s the combination that I like about Calbright. It isn’t just working through the modules. Having that human interaction, even if it was on Zoom, was really helpful.”*

– David, Los Angeles

## Milestone #2

### **Design and validate at least three additional program pathways, including coordinating the creation of new content.**

Calbright exceeded this goal by designing and validating five new programs to add to the three initial programs launched in October 2019, including the creation of new content.

Our process for developing new programs brings together the expertise of the Calbright team, labor market research, and consultation with relevant industry, employer, and labor experts to identify in-demand jobs and the technical and soft skills required to be competitive for those roles. All new programs are also designed to provide integrated learning and student supports to set students on a path toward success.

The creation of new content for these programs includes coordination with industry and workforce development partners to ensure currency and effectiveness. For example, in designing the Transition to Technology programs, we worked with Salesforce and are working with Cisco to align the content with our research and with our self-paced, competency-based approach. We also worked with a range of external subject matter experts to create content for the new Upskilling for Equitable Health Impacts program.

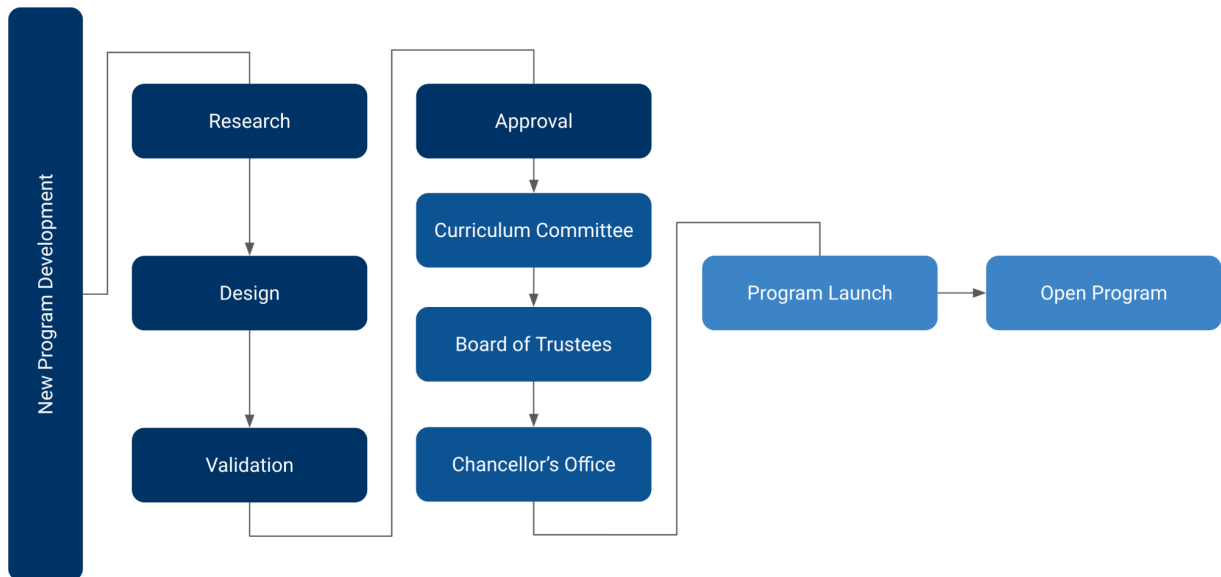
Calbright considered both where people were displaced and which industries are being disrupted when building these new programs — especially as the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will be uneven and affect different sectors to greater degrees. Responsiveness to labor market conditions allows the College to nimbly react to macroeconomic trends unrelated to the global pandemic, and sets students up for success with new opportunities in the labor market.

#### **Process for Developing New Programs**

- *Research:* Calbright is in constant contact with workforce and employer partners to identify opportunities to connect working learners with paths to good jobs.

- *Design:* Based on that research, Calbright builds programs that deliver the technical and soft skills needed to be successful in a particular role.
- *Validation:* The Calbright team then validates the design through internal review and consultation with industry partners with experience hiring and training for these roles.
- *Approval:* All new programs undergo a review and approval process that includes the Calbright Curriculum Committee, the Board of Trustees, and then the CCC Chancellor’s Office.
- *Launch:* Each new program is launched as a pilot with a small initial cohort to test systems, implement learnings, and improve on initial offerings.
- *Expansion:* Calbright then opens the program to enrollment.

Note that Calbright uses the word “program” to refer to any multi-course path toward a particular credential.



### Five New Programs Designed and Validated

#### **Transition to Technology: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Platform Administration**

Researched, designed, validated, and then approved by the Calbright Board of Trustees on February 16, 2021. The pilot for this program was launched April 1, 2021.

#### **Upskilling for Equitable Health Impacts: Interpersonal Skills**

Researched, designed, validated, and then approved by the Calbright Board of Trustees on March 22, 2021.

### **Upskilling for Equitable Health Impacts: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Researched, designed, validated, and then approved by the Calbright Board of Trustees on March 22, 2021.

### **Transition to Technology: IT Helpdesk Technician**

Researched, designed, validated, and then approved by the Calbright Board of Trustees on April 21, 2021.

### **Transition to Technology: Introduction to Networks**

Researched, designed, validated, and then approved by the Calbright Board of Trustees on May 24, 2021.

## **Milestone #3**

### **Apply for accreditation from an accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education.**

In February 2021, Calbright's application for accreditation was submitted to and accepted by an accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education, several months earlier than required by statute. Calbright is next required to be in candidate status (or its equivalent) by the end of 2022 and fully accredited by 2025. We are well ahead of schedule on both milestones, and expect to meet them in 2021 and 2023 respectively.

## **Student Journey to Success**

In mapping out the student journey below, Calbright demonstrates its commitment to learner success — starting with an understanding of who we aim to reach, and how to best serve our target population.

### **Discovering a Path**

Supporting adult Californians on a path to economic success requires meeting prospective learners where they are, understanding their needs, and building strong relationships and experiences to help them pursue their goals.

In the summer of 2020, we commissioned a statewide study of Calbright's focus population: adult Californians without degrees. This research deepened our understanding of their varied aspirations, motivations, strengths, and needs; and we have incorporated our learning into all aspects of the college's work.

This research included a survey of 1,200 low-income adults without degrees and eight online focus groups in different economic regions. The findings identified three types of underserved adult learners that stand to benefit the most from Calbright’s unique model.

### **1. Balancing Caregiving**

Many potential learners have previously pursued a degree, but found their formal education cut short in order to care for children, elderly parents, or other family members. These Californians include both stay-at-home parents and people currently working in industries such as healthcare, food, and customer service.

#### **Quotes**

- “I am excited by the possibility of being able to learn online”
- “I learn best setting my own path and pace”
- “My greatest achievements are ahead of me”
- “A woman can work and be a good mother”

### **2. Working in Vulnerable Industries**

Some learners recognize that economic shifts are changing their employment prospects and are open to gaining skills they need to get ahead or stay afloat. They are especially likely to work in retail, construction, or customer service.

#### **Quotes**

- “I am open to starting over”
- “It is important to find work that challenges my mind”
- “I would prefer to find work that challenges me to think even when I’m not on the job”
- “Education just needs to give me the ability to succeed”
- “I am considering changing jobs based on the COVID-19 situation”

### **3. Experience with the Justice System**

For Californians who have had experience in the justice system, education can be a necessity for advancement. However, they typically lack support, struggle to make ends meet, and face high barriers to getting additional training. They often do gig work, or work in construction, shipping, or the food industry.

#### **Quotes**

- “Education is necessary to succeed in life”
- “Education is a means to achieve my goals”
- “I enjoy having a structured work schedule”
- “I struggle to make ends meet”
- “I do not have a strong support system in my life”
- “I do not feel like I am living a fulfilling life”



- “I do not face the same struggles as the average person”

### **Reaching Our Focus Students: Marketing and Outreach**

Research-driven insights into our potential students anchored the development of a new marketing and outreach strategy, which entered the implementation stage in summer 2021.

Regionally, Calbright is utilizing targeted campaigns that leverage relationships with workforce boards and community-based organizations as well as a complementary and overarching digital and on-the ground outreach strategy that seeks to engage specifically with our focus populations and meet them where they are, both in-person and online. As part of this outreach, Calbright is also engaging in earned media strategies to reach the markets identified as having significant need, such as the Inland Empire and Central Valley.

Statewide, Calbright is building a network of strategic enrollment partners made up of community-based organizations and leaders who serve the same populations, including religious faith organizations, health clinics, libraries, community centers, food pantries, homelessness outreach and recovery centers, veterans services, and local advocacy groups such as chambers of commerce and urban leagues.

## **Setting Up for Success**

Calbright’s Student Services and Success Team offers support throughout a students’ journey, from the enrollment support of Welcome Services and ongoing Academic Success Counselor advising, to the focused work of Career Services, Tutoring Services, and other student support offerings. Incorporating student feedback is integral to informing the actions and changes needed to better support our students and has been a pillar of the team’s operations since its inception. As we help guide students towards success, we strive for consistency across all services.

### **Listening and Learning to Better Serve Students**

At the heart of effective support for students is Calbright’s work to better systematize a learner-centered, active listening approach that goes beyond formal surveys. This work includes:

1. Proactive positive communication,
2. Active listening and questioning, and
3. Documentation and analysis

Proactive positive communication means ensuring that outreach goes well beyond student re-engagement reminders when they haven’t been active in the system for weeks or months. These are not reactive, deficit-focused texts and calls. By reaching out when students accomplish tasks and milestones, we can encourage positive behavior and celebrate progress.

This proactive outreach includes encouragement after completion of modules or courses. Active listening and tracking is a skill that allows us to listen to our students and consider the logical questions to dig deeper, and can be practiced from enrollment to orientation to course progress to completion.

*“There was always somebody there to help me set my goal and keep track of my goal. I was trying to shoot for a lesson a week, and I was doing pretty good there for a while until my wife had surgery. Then I kind of hit a lump and I had to slow down, and in that time I'd still get an email reminding me of my goal and to keep on track and if there's anything that I needed there were people there to help me out.”*

— Michael, Calbright Student, Los Angeles

For example, if a student has just re-engaged with us to continue their studies, we may ask them about some of the factors that kept them away and what support we could have provided to shorten the delay of their studies. Upon the completion of a module, we may ask our students to discuss a factor that helped them complete the module or what could have helped them complete it more easily. These types of questions help inform how we design Calbright's student supports and make improvements to our services.

To learn from our active listening activities, we document these interactions for analysis, which provides insights into how to better support our students.

### **Welcome Services**

Calbright College Welcome Services provides students with onboarding support six days a week by telephone, text, and email. Welcome Services works closely with students to address their unique needs, and identifies trends and opportunities to further advance their success.

Welcome Services:

- Uses various technology systems to track student inquiries, referrals, and document resolutions.
- Tracks all incoming requests to ensure students receive timely responses and analyzes them to identify trends.
- Notifies additional cross-functional teams as needed to provide further support.
- Categorizes all inquiries to identify and share trends over time so that support teams can learn and adapt their offerings.
- Incorporates insights from regularly reviewing the case data to add to the student support FAQs and create internal protocols for new challenges identified as students contact them.
- Monitors drop-off rates at various stages of the application and orientation process to identify new resources and strategies to support students through these points when applying to Calbright.
- Created an application tutorial to help address application and orientation pain points and has worked cross-functionally to improve information and response time.

## **Digital Access & Equity**

Calbright offers a Device Lending program designed to meet students' technology needs, providing access for all students to the technology required for participation in Calbright programs. Through the lending library, eligible students may borrow a laptop and/or mobile broadband internet hotspot to gain internet access, and use it for the duration of their enrollment. Already, 192 Chromebooks and 155 wi-fi hot spots have been loaned to students.

## **Integrated Student Support Model (ISSM)**

In 2020, the College focused on refining a collaborative and integrated student support approach. The College partnered with the Community College Research Center (CCRC) to develop high-quality frameworks to inform the development of the Integrated Student Support Model (ISSM). They identified best practices in developing a support model that incorporates cross-functional efforts including:

- Clarifying roles and functions in an integrated model
- Avoiding redundancies
- Monitoring pace and progress at scale (persistence and completion)
- Optimizing systems/platforms for effective use (with consistent protocols)
- Using equity-informed data to offer personalized student supports that increase student success

As part of this integrated approach, the College's academic success counselors and instructional faculty meet weekly to discuss students' progress and identify additional support and touchpoints throughout students' learning experience. They analyzed pace and progress data throughout the programs and any additional analytical information to enhance student interventions.

The College continues to monitor and enhance processes by identifying training opportunities for student support teams. The College refines its touchpoints and reporting in collaboration with the Technology Team by collecting regular feedback from academic success counselors and instructional faculty to improve this model.

## **Customized Support**

The College's academic success counselors proactively contact students to support them through their program. For the first four weeks in the program, academic success counselors meet weekly with students to ensure they respond to questions, offer guidance, and provide tips for academic success in completing competency-based education programs. Following the first four weeks, the academic success counselors understand how to best support students and personalize their communication for the remainder of their enrollment in the program.

Additionally, academic success counselors use various forms of communication with students to offer flexibility in their approach to accommodate students' needs and learning preferences. Teams test various student touchpoints to determine whether one is more effective on improving outcome metrics to further refine individual communications. Instructional faculty regularly engage with students on academic questions to provide personalized support. They also offer forums where students can interact with them to seek further clarification on coursework in an informal setting that strengthens relationships with students.

### **Library and Tutoring Services**

Once students enroll at Calbright, they have access to various support services via the college's web-based portal, including library resources and tutoring services. Library resources are designed to further support students' studies in their chosen program and are freely available online — the library also provides access to textbooks at no charge. Tutoring services offered by NetTutor are available to supplement class instruction with 24/7 tutoring support in reading, writing, math, or subject-specific support.

## **Learning for Career Advancement**

All of Calbright's programs and services focus on learning for career advancement. Our programs are carefully designed with the learner and their career goals in mind. As we seek to support the learning and career development for our focus population we need to tightly connect our understanding of how our learners experience the labor market, and design programs and experiences that fit for employers and workers.

This approach is reflected in the way our newest programs are designed and launched. For example, understanding the need to support career transitions for individuals currently in industries and roles with uncertain economic recoveries, we designed a program to help learners transfer skills from frontline customer service roles into new careers in technology.

Calbright's new programs integrate innovative teaching, learning, and student supports, based on evidence of what works, and led by talented faculty and staff. This goes far beyond putting content online: it is a transformative change in the way faculty and staff engage with adult learners. Programs are built around students' needs, lowering common obstacles so they can focus more on learning and less on navigating institutional processes. For example, students can get help when they need it, not just during standard business hours

### **Case Study**

The first in the college's Transition to Technology series supports Californians with backgrounds in industries like retail, hospitality, and restaurant work who want to transition into various roles in digital customer relationship management. In this program, launched April 1st, learners gain skills needed to gain a credential as a Salesforce Certified Administrator and succeed in a tech-oriented workplace.

when they are most likely to be busy with jobs and/or caregiving. And students who have to take weeks off because of a family illness can pick up where they left off, instead of having to start over at the beginning of another semester.

*“Teaching at Calbright is a process of constant iteration. At faculty meetings we’re always looking at where our students are, what they’re struggling with, and realizing hey, we could add this and make it a little better. We can offer this new thing to help them. We never stop looking at what we deliver and how to improve it. When we conduct a student survey and ask students who are further along in the course about what areas need improvement, or what was lacking, or how they enjoyed it, we can make immediate adjustments to improve the experience for students who are behind them.”*

— **Michael Stewart, President, Calbright Academic Senate**

All Calbright programs fill gaps in the availability and accessibility of high-quality, high-value training programs, providing working adults with an affordable, public alternative to for-profit colleges. Each program provides a specific skill set that employers want, which students can instantly apply in the working world. These programs are modular, not just stackable: this means students can combine them in different ways to position themselves for different roles within and across industries. For many students, Calbright’s programs can also serve as stepping stones to continuing their education at other higher education institutions.

### **Piloting Innovative Strategies**

Creating a strong student community in an all-digital environment is challenging, which is why Calbright has taken an innovative approach. Calbright is currently piloting a “digital quad” where students can interact with instructors and each other using a technology software app called Slack.

Slack is an online collaboration hub, designed to facilitate work between functional groups in technologically savvy businesses. Knowing how to use this kind of software is a valuable skill in the employment market, so while students are getting to know each other and their instructors they’re also learning how to succeed in a modern workplace. Within this environment students can chat with each other, solve problems, receive feedback on their work, take surveys about their experiences, join video conferences and webinars, receive timely information, and interact at a personal level with Calbright faculty and staff. At the same time, they will be practicing these key communication skills for the workplaces they eventually join, increasing both their value to potential employers and their ability to hit the ground running at work.

### **Providing Enhanced and Integrated Career Services**

Calbright improved our Career Services program to offer students more targeted online resources as well as high touch connections, which give them access to new fields and support their career goals. Services include career coaching, industry-related job preparedness events, mock interviews, virtual panels with employers, workshops to build professional skills,

and hands-on support to search for jobs and internships. Importantly, we ensured that career services were available — and that students were encouraged to use them — throughout students' Calbright journey, not just at the end of their program.

*"I was reluctant to contact (Career Services) until after I was close to my certification. But I was going through the recordings of the webinars that Career Services had, and they were super interesting, and so I reached out to (Calbright staff). And then it was just 'oh, gosh, thank goodness I did!' Career Services ended up helping me connect with so many other people who could shed insight on what I was doing, on ways to navigate my path and goals and then help me out. So many lights started turning on once I started going."*

— Michael, Calbright Student, Los Angeles

Calbright supports both current students and alumni in pursuing their career goals by providing career navigation skills and strategies that are current to industry trends. Students also connect with industry professionals to further their career awareness and job readiness skills, and to help build their professional networks. Examples of support services include:

- Professional Skillbuilding Workshops
- Webinar Panels with Industry Experts
- Virtual Career Fairs
- Mock Interviews
- 1:1 Career Coaching
- Access to an online job search marketplace platform

## Partnerships

Collaboration is a core value for Calbright and is built into how the College does its work, adds value, and fulfills its mission. Calbright engages in beneficial partnerships with sister community colleges, regional and state entities focused on economic development, employer and industry associations, labor organizations, and individual employers, including new and ongoing collaborations during the past year.

Partnerships enable Calbright to tap into the different types of knowledge, expertise, and relationships we need to successfully meet both learners' and employers' needs and add value to the CCC system. Partnerships enable Calbright to contribute to a range of efforts beyond our virtual walls, by collaborating with others committed to equitably expanding educational and economic opportunity for adults without degrees. That is why a key goal in our Strategic Vision is to have engaged 20 external stakeholders in meaningful partnerships by the end of 2023. We already have several in place, including with other CCCs, and more in development.

Such partnerships involve a variety of collaborative work, from short-term research projects to longer term relationships and programs.

Calbright actively shares the knowledge, strategies, and tools that emerge from our innovation and research, adding value to the CCC system and to our external partners. Such shared gains include, but are not limited to, CBE program design, faculty and staff development, technology to improve the learner experience, and models for collaboration.

## Partnering with Economic Development Efforts, Industry, and Labor

Statewide and regional partnerships inform Calbright’s programs, create enrollment and employment pathways for students, and/or enhance labor market outcomes. By engaging with employment-related partners, we identify gaps in skills, jobs that are unfilled, and needed training that is either not currently offered or not available statewide. These partnerships help Calbright stay informed about important developments in a rapidly changing labor market, and provide insights into the hiring process that help us better support job-seekers without degrees. Such collaborations are already helping Calbright ensure that new programs build the essential skill base for key jobs and sectors.

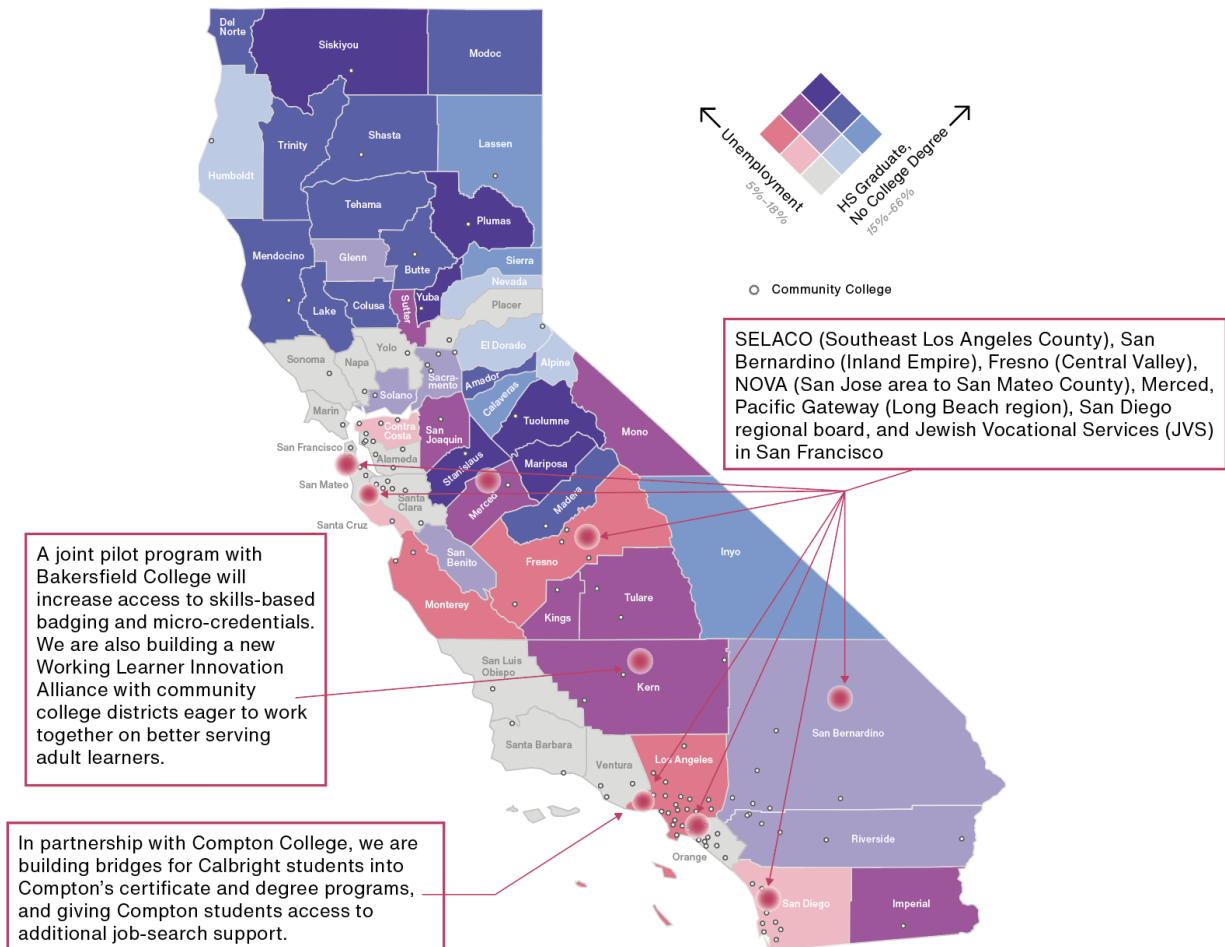
For example, we have been working with Cognizant, a rapidly expanding technology consulting employer, in developing our new Transition to Technology program series (see case study below). As we build these programs, we are integrating our learnings and finding new ways to engage and support our students through their training programs and into the employment market, including through partnerships with regional workforce development agencies.

*“I feel [Calbright] was divine intervention. Back in September the non-profit I currently work for and have been there for the last 18 years came close to having to shut its doors. Is Calbright the right fit for me? Yes, please know it is. My goal is to become some sort of IT / Cybersecurity customer support.”*

**– Trinidad, Calbright Student, Riverside**

## Partnering for Economic Development

Calbright engages in statewide and regional efforts led by entities such as economic development agencies, county and local governments, Workforce Development Boards, and CCC Districts' regional networks to serve students across the state, as indicated by the student population in each county below.



These efforts are designed to help people obtain jobs and employers receive skilled employees. With economic development leaders both statewide and in specific critical regions, we are exploring where and how Calbright can best add value now and over the next three years. This includes finding innovative ways that workforce-focused entities and community colleges can work together to increase equitable access to good jobs.

For example, we have been working with Workforce Development organizations in priority regions to help them better assess the value of skills their clients already have, and offer training through Calbright for good jobs in their area. This partnered approach is being piloted in eight regions: SELACO (Southeast Los Angeles County), San Bernardino (Inland Empire), Fresno (Central Valley), NOVA (San Jose area to San Mateo County), Merced, Pacific Gateway



(Long Beach region), San Diego regional board, and Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) in San Francisco.

### **Business Partnership Case Study: Cognizant**

To build successful, innovative programs, Calbright seeks deep insights into what specific skills are required for working learners to make the jump to better jobs. That is why we take a human-centered approach to researching workforce skills. The value of this research applies to employers across industries that rely on related skill sets.

After confirming that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform administration skills are sought after in the job market, Calbright set up a partnership with Cognizant — a consulting company that has a large CRM practice. For six weeks, Calbright’s faculty and staff listened to and observed employees, their managers, and subject matter experts to understand what it really takes to do the job well. After all, who would know what skills were needed better than successful employees?

This collaborative research partnership shaped the concept and design of an innovative series of new programs that Calbright is launching this year. In April 2021 we launched the first one: Transition to Technology: Customer Relationship Management Platform Administration. This program is for learners who have no previous technology experience. It integrates an industry-recognized certification with essential workforce skills like communication and time management, as well as career preparation support, such as for resume writing and interviewing. Some learners will also have the opportunity to transition into an earn-and-learn program with Cognizant as they expand their Salesforce skills with Calbright, further integrating their learning and career development progress.

We will also be engaging with the advanced manufacturing sector to explore strategies for developing needed skills in this field, supported by a new grant from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, funded by the U.S. Department of Defense (see more in the R&D section below).

### **Partnering with Labor Organizations**

We have identified some exciting new programs that respond to urgent statewide needs. For example, in the past year we started working with Service Employees International Union - United Healthcare Workers (SEIU UHW) to respond to an acute need in the healthcare industry. The purpose of this new partnership is to support a more diverse pipeline of critical healthcare professionals, and we are currently in the process of finalizing the timeline for research, design, and the validation of new programs. We also recently conducted research with the SEIU UHW-West & Joint Employer Education Fund, and have used the findings to inform the program design of our Upskilling for Equitable Health Impacts programs.

## Partnering within the CCC System

Calbright identifies and solves common challenges faced by working learners and community colleges. As a statewide institution, Calbright is uniquely positioned to surface and collaborate on solving problems affecting focus learner populations and community colleges across the state. Doing so is part of both Calbright’s mandate and its strategy for high-quality, student-centered growth.

For example, after Covid-19 forced a sudden shift to remote learning, Calbright helped rural sister colleges meet their technology needs. Our first partnerships with other community colleges, described below, are finding shared ways to better meet the needs of working learners. Calbright has also identified and proposed solutions to equity issues with CCC Apply, the system-wide enrollment application.

### Working Learner Innovation Alliance (WLIA)

As a key statewide operational partner, Calbright has joined forces with local community college districts to develop, test, and implement innovative skills-based strategies for economically disconnected adult learners in California. Together, these partnerships will help bring to scale the capacity of the CCCs to build an equitable economic future, and leverage the strength of districts’ regional networks to advance our mutual equity mission.

This is one important way that Calbright and other community colleges can work together with a common purpose to solve shared challenges and build greater opportunity for economically dislocated Californians. Calbright’s research has already resulted in practical applications relating to strategic enrollment management, with staff sharing best practices relating to specific enrollment groups, as well as the data and high-quality supports needed to implement these practices for successful student outcomes. Through WLIA, this spring partner districts were able to explore how to build systemic, sustained, equity-centered, and data-informed practices that successfully engage students from interest to enrollment in an online, competency-based learning environment.

Calbright’s partnerships with sister colleges take different forms, but all help model and expand opportunities for students — and colleges — throughout the CCC system.

### Compton College and Bakersfield College Partnerships

In partnership with Compton College, we are building bridges for Calbright students into Compton’s certificate and degree programs, and giving Compton students access to additional job-search support. And a joint pilot program with Bakersfield College will increase access to skills-based badging and micro-credentials.

## Improvements to CCCApply

Because Calbright is data-driven, we follow our learners from their first contact with Calbright. And because we always have equity in mind, we discovered that we were disproportionately losing Black and adult prospective students early in the application process. We then conducted a deep, user-centered analysis of CCCApply. After identifying specific, practical ways to make the application process less burdensome and confusing, we shared our findings<sup>1</sup> with the whole system. The changes we recommend would both support the system-wide goal of narrowing equity gaps and benefit all students and the colleges that want to enroll them. In the meantime, we have been sharing our findings — and workarounds we developed to help prospective students navigate the current application process — with other interested CCCs.

## Strengthening Operations and Building Capacity

Calbright's ability to innovate and grow depends on a combination of people, expertise, systems, and technology, all working together to build a new kind of community college and serve working adults in more effective ways. These are the main, interrelated ways that Calbright operationalizes innovation to drive student success and high-quality growth. Organizational development is building different types of capacity, including R&D, innovation, faculty and staff, governance, and student representation.

## Research and Development

Calbright's research and development (R&D) opens doors to innovation at other colleges, and informs workforce and economic development efforts. At Calbright, everything first happens in an R&D setting to determine if it is worth investing in for students and the state. Calbright's R&D function includes documenting and disseminating what we learn to help build the currently scant knowledge base about what works best — and not so well — for working learners. This includes sharing lessons learned about the labor market, hiring practices, and focus learner populations in ways that aim to strengthen employer engagement activities across the system. As Calbright continues to develop and launch new programs, it will use those lessons learned from just-in-time research to decide not whether to grow but how best to grow.

Calbright designs our programs using labor market insights to demonstrate employability and demand. Burning Glass Labor Insights and Economic Modeling Specialists International (Emsi)

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<sup>1</sup> "Memorandum re CCCApply and OpenCCC Issues and Opportunities," Ari Bader-Natal, Chief Technology Officer, Calbright College, October 2020 <https://cccapply-memo.calbright.org/>

help us to determine the following:

- Total job postings in California for roles most related to the program in question;
- Regional demand, demonstrating a state-wide need that transcends urban, rural and suburban distinction;
- Expected job growth within the state over the next decade;
- Top defining and distinguishing skills for the role (to align with our curriculum) as well as whether the role in question is a gateway role to advanced opportunities;
- Determining ‘supply’ — the amount of graduates with credentials produced by other institutions across the state;
- Determining the ratio of job postings to eligible graduate who could fill them (looking for a high ratio gap); and
- Determining median and range salaries and identifying if they are at levels that will improve outcomes for economic mobility.

Calbright’s R&D function garnered new fuel and national recognition in July 2021, when we were selected to participate in a national research program examining how technology can improve students’ skills for managing learning on their own. The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Services awarded \$10 million to the Community College Research Center at Columbia University’s Teachers College, SRI Education, and Achieving the Dream to conduct the study. They and the nine participating colleges will be a part of a new center that focuses on creating a national engagement and professional learning program to help higher education leaders and instructors adopt teaching strategies and use online course tools to help students develop these self-directed learning skills.

## Faculty and Staff

### Hiring

Faculty, staff, and students all have a voice in shaping how Calbright fulfills its shared commitment to student success, and in building and maintaining an equitable and inclusive work environment. Calbright’s fully realized governance structure will reflect its unique model and build on the strong tradition of participatory governance in the CCC system. Furthermore, it will honor the leadership, contributions, and perspectives of faculty and staff across the institution, ensure student representation, and support collaboration across roles and divisions.

An anonymous staff and faculty survey conducted in fall 2020 included an open-ended question about Calbright’s top three strengths. The three most common themes were colleagues’ commitment to and passion for Calbright’s mission, innovation, and resilience. These strengths will be reflected in a dynamic and collaborative approach to participatory governance.

## Faculty Profiles

In 2020, Calbright hired its first faculty members and as of July 2021 has 12 approved faculty positions, including instructional and counseling faculty members instrumental in executing the wraparound services we provide to our student body. As part of Calbright's Strategic Vision Plan, the number of faculty is expected to grow in proportion to new programs and student population size.

Here are two profiles of current faculty members:

### **Ashley Odell**

Ashley Odell has spent nine years in career services and instruction, including stints at the University of California at Davis and the Tri-Valley One Stop Career Center, where she helped support career readiness in un- and underemployed adults.

At Calbright, she has developed the new Workforce Readiness program that prepares students to access new fields, find the jobs they want, and thrive in new work environments.

"Students need to be prepared to successfully secure employment after completing their educational program by developing strong job-search approaches, which are covered in depth in the curriculum," she says. "Technical skills are not enough to get a job and succeed in the workplace, students must also understand and apply their own values, strengths and skills to their work, work collaboratively with others, find motivation, take initiative, set goals, make decisions, manage stress, be resilient in the face of setbacks, manage their time appropriately and apply a growth mindset and self-compassion when things get hard."

She says Calbright is particularly positioned to support working adults because its model is more flexible and more focused. "We support the student in reviewing the content and repeating the assessment until they are able to demonstrate the skill, because the courses are designed to apply directly to the workplace and content has been chosen specifically because of the clear relationship to success as an employee."

### **Elizabeth Biddlecome**

Originally a college drop-out who went into technology, Elizabeth spent over 20 years successfully working in the tech industry as an engineering consultant, technical lead, security researcher, and more. While working as a corporate software engineer she began volunteering with MissionBit, teaching coding to high school students a few nights a week, and discovered a deep passion for teaching. She became especially passionate about teaching to underserved populations, where learning about code could potentially end generational cycles of poverty.

Changing their lives changed hers. She had already gone back to college, studying cybersecurity, and had decided that she wanted to teach full time. She quit her corporate

career and worked with MissionBit and Microsoft to build an educational experience for 18-25 year old adults that would prepare them for careers in tech.

Since then she's taught technical concepts to a diverse population of adult learners, including executives from around the world. At City College of San Francisco, she coached an award-winning team of students who achieved record-breaking wins against teams from institutions including Stanford, Cal Poly, and the University of California.

Now she's teaching at Calbright. "Calbright represents the possibility for innovation," she said. "We have the ability to radically change the landscape of higher education for students who are currently underserved. As with my very first teaching job, we can deliver life-changing experiences, confront the digital divide, and support the ending of intergenerational cycles of poverty for our students. With our modes of instruction, we have the opportunity to exercise the parts of the old educational model that don't work anymore, in favor of methods that are more relevant and useful to our student base."

## Academic Senate

Calbright's governance honors the tradition of participatory governance to allow for the inclusion of diverse perspectives. "Academic Senate" means an organization whose primary function, as the representative of the faculty, is to make recommendations to the administration of a college and to the Board of Trustees with respect to academic and professional matters. "Faculty" means those employees of a community college district who are employed in positions that are not designated as supervisory or management.

*"Calbright is different from other colleges, which is reflected in faculty roles. We don't just teach how to do a particular task or pass an industry certification exam: we make sure students can take what they've learned at Calbright out into the world to reach their goals. That's why we're building a non-traditional model for how faculty and administration collectively deliver for our students. There's an established, open-door relationship, and we work to keep it that way, with information flowing in both directions. Student success is what's driving us all, and that makes it easier to lead together."*

**— Michael Stewart, President, Calbright Academic Senate**

Calbright College's Academic Senate members serve on its governance committees, including:

- Governance Council
  - Administrative Procedure (AP) Committee
  - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Taskforce
  - Budget Committee
- Academic Senate
  - Curriculum Committee
  - Student Success and Equity Committee

## Student Representation

We are committed to establishing governing procedures that ensure faculty, staff and students have the ability to participate effectively in the governance of Calbright. Education Code section 76060 et seq., permits community college governing boards to authorize students to organize a student body association for the purposes of encouraging students to participate in the governance of the college.

Based on an interest petition submitted by the students of Calbright in 2021, there are a significant number of Calbright students who have indicated interest in participating in activities to strengthen the student experience and to increase the involvement of students in the governance process at Calbright.

On July 12, 2021, the Calbright Board of Trustees affirmed its commitment to establishing a Student Body Association (SBA) by January 2022, and directed Calbright staff to consult with the Chancellor's Office to determine whether certain provisions of the Education Code related to establishment of a student body organization can be waived due to the unique nature of our programs.

## Procurement

Calbright is committed to transparent, ethical, and open procurement practices that adhere to all applicable state and local laws. Earlier this year, the California State Auditor made specific recommendations relating to our procurement and contracting processes, and Calbright has already made significant progress toward fulfilling those requirements as we reach a more advanced stage of organizational maturity. To date, we have:

- Completed the development of a Procurement, Purchasing, and Contracting Handbook that aligns with state law, regulations, and to the extent practicable, the State Contracting Manual. These newly developed procurement processes include policies and procedures around setting clear expectations of the work performed by contractors and steps to ensure contractors perform that work satisfactorily before receiving payment.
- Engaged in hiring for a full-time Procurement Coordinator (authorized by the Board of Trustees on April 21, 2021), whose job is to plan, organize, direct, and evaluate a variety of purchases for goods and services. The coordinator will work with the Controller/Executive Director of Finance and the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer to manage the procurement, purchasing, and contracting process. They will also

be responsible for ensuring Calbright is in compliance with all appropriate laws, regulations, and policies.

- Provided training on relevant laws, policies, and procedures related to procurement to all staff involved in approving or managing contracts.

## Budget Cut Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented financial uncertainty for state revenues during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, which resulted in budget cuts to higher education institutions across the state and to Calbright.

While Calbright continues to build its functional capacity, the \$5 million reduction in annual funds (from \$20 million to \$15 million) serves as a notable constraint to the College's future growth and ability to fulfill its mission. These funds are critical for the College to be able to build upon itself during its seven-year start-up period and to support Calbright's students, faculty, and educational infrastructure. Faced with this decreased funding, the College prudently adjusted its budget and re-evaluated staffing levels so that we were able to meet legislative requirements and continue to expand technological and staffing infrastructure, develop new revenue models, and implement new growth strategies to withstand economic changes.

Calbright's budgets reflect its mission-driven operations as well as important accomplishments, including hiring faculty, creating and validating programs, enrolling students, and applying for accreditation. These milestones were funded by both one-time funds (part of the \$80.2 million in start-up funds received through its founding) as well as ongoing funds (\$20 million during FY 2019-2020 and \$15 million during FY 2020-2021) administered through the state's annual budget.

## Accreditation

Accreditation is a federally recognized form of quality assurance in higher education. It is a key milestone that will set Calbright up for both faster growth and long-term sustainability. That is why Calbright has prioritized reaching it as quickly as possible, and we expect to remain ahead of schedule. Once Calbright is accredited, we will be able to start the process of seeking U.S. Department of Education approval to provide students access to federal and state student aid. Pell Grants and Cal Grants can help working adults pay for childcare and limit the number of jobs they have to work while advancing their education, so they can afford to spend time on coursework and make more progress towards completion. Accreditation also opens the door to new funding sources for Calbright itself.



Calbright’s application for accreditation was submitted to and accepted by an accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education ahead of schedule in February 2021, and will be in the equivalent of candidate status within 2021, which is not required by statute until 2022. Calbright’s goal is to be fully accredited ahead of schedule by the end of 2023; full accreditation is not required by statute until 2025.

## Student Data

### Current Active Enrollment

As of the most recent monthly data available for reporting (June 30, 2021), Calbright’s total enrollment consists of 487 students, broken down here by program:

<b>Cybersecurity Program</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>IT Support Program</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Medical Coding Program</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Transition to Technology: CRM Program</b>	<b>25</b>

Calbright’s strategic goals for high-quality growth include that 5,000 students will be enrolled at the end of 2023, with 75% from focus populations. This goal has enrollment rising tenfold during the Strategic Vision period, from 500 at the start of 2021 to 5,000 at the end of 2023. Calbright’s growing programs and partnerships will both drive and support this growth, as the college simultaneously builds out its systems, faculty, and staff to support more students.

For context, Calbright will expand much faster than the most comparable example of early growth. Western Governors University, which was also built from the ground up to provide CBE online, took nearly seven years to go from launching its first program to enrolling 5,000 students. Calbright plans to accomplish this in just over four years.

Calbright is an open enrollment institution. As we become better known in the state, more students from outside focus populations may seek to enroll. While Calbright will not screen any eligible students out, we do have a goal to effectively reach the students we were created to serve.

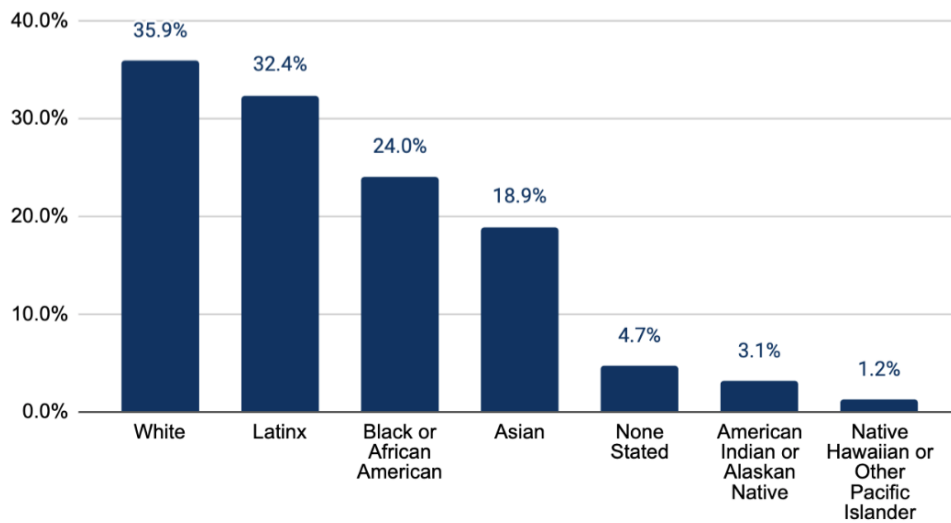
Through outreach, marketing, partnerships, and a laser-focus on equity, Calbright aims to have at least 75% of its students from focus populations: Californians who are age 25 and older without a college degree, who are Latinx, Black, or Indigenous, and others currently underrepresented both in higher education and in good jobs.

## Student Demographics

Calbright's open enrollment policies combined with student-determined length of programs means demographic data fluctuates during what would be conventional academic semesters. A majority of our students, however, are consistently students of color, at least 25 years old, and without a college degree. The following charts reflect actively enrolled students as of June 30, 2021:

### Race of Active Enrollees\*

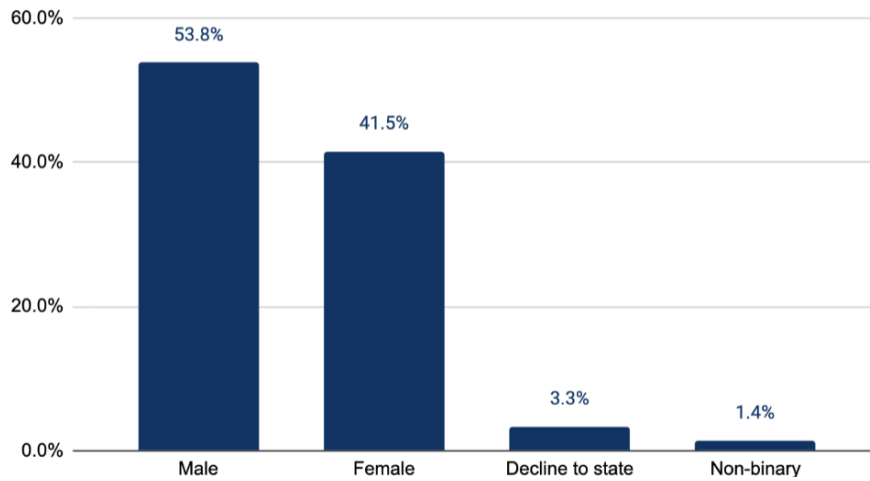
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*\*Enrollees who selected multiple ethnicities are counted in all categories they selected*

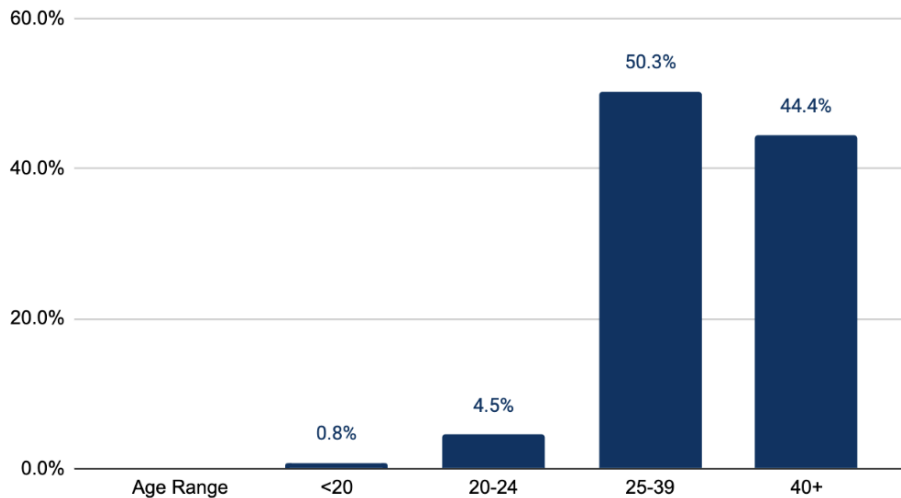
## Gender Identity of Active Enrollees

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## Age of Active Enrollees

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## Outcomes

Economic mobility and equity are the core of Calbright’s mission: we only succeed if our students succeed and at equitable rates. For us, success means that students complete Calbright programs and, more importantly, that they are better off in the labor market as a result. These goals are our top priority and will be achieved by learning and improving as Calbright scales up.

How quickly the economy recovers from the pandemic will affect the labor market for Calbright students and all Californians. Given high economic uncertainty, our Strategic Vision sets a range — 250 to 550 — for the cumulative total of students who will have attained a positive labor market outcome within six months of completing a Calbright program.

*“My experience with Calbright so far has been amazing. It is a user-friendly program and they have provided all the necessary books and manuals for studying. I have had routine follow-up phone meetings with student advocates wanting to know how my studies are going and how they can improve my experience.”*

— Deborah, Madera County

Together, Calbright’s faculty, staff, and leadership will do everything we can to prepare and support students for success in the labor market, whatever it looks like at the time. The positive outcomes we will track will include, but are not limited to: moving from one job to another with higher compensation; moving from un- and underemployment into a good job; transitioning to a new role and/or industry with career potential; and keeping a current job that now requires new skills.

## Program Completion

By June 30, 2021, 43 students completed their studies and received 51 Calbright certificates in one or more programs:

<b>Introduction to Cybersecurity (Security+):</b>	14
<b>Introduction to Information Technology (A+):</b>	30
<b>Medical Coding for Professional Services:</b>	7
<b>Transition to Technology: CRM Platform Administration:</b>	N/A*

\*Program launched in April 2021; program completion will take longer.

## Graduate Data Availability

Over the past year, we conducted research and analysis, built systems, and developed relationships that will enable us to capture key data on Calbright graduates’ labor market outcomes as our alumni base grows. We expect much of that data will become available in 2022.

For example, the College participates in Cal-PASS Plus, a free statewide clearinghouse of longitudinal data following learners through their California public education into the workforce. Data formatted for the statewide Management Information System (MIS) is submitted to Cal-PASS Plus. This data merges with statewide employment data in a reporting center called LaunchBoard, supported by the CCC Chancellor’s Office. LaunchBoard provides CCCs with data on student progress, employment, and earnings outcomes. Because of a built-in lag in

verifying and providing access to data, LaunchBoard does not yet include graduate employment and wage information for Calbright.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on California's Employment Development Department (EDD), our plans for working with EDD to gather data and build systems around student wage gains were delayed until at least into 2022, as their resources for interagency work are severely limited.

In the meantime, Calbright is working with the CalJOBS Analysis and Operations Group to set up a tailored program that will track some graduates' outcomes. Students' employment status before they start at Calbright is requested and recorded in supplemental questions we added to CCCApply. And we developed, tested, and implemented an alumni survey with questions on employment status, wages, and whether respondents have seen an increase in income since starting their program. Though data is limited for the first cohort of graduates, Calbright has found that most are satisfied with the administrative, educational, and support services provided.

# Appendix A

## Detailed Program Descriptions

### Open Programs

Calbright offers four programs as of July 1, 2021:

- Introduction to Information Technology Support (A+)
- Introduction to Cybersecurity (Security+)
- Medical Coding for Professional Services
- Transition to Technology: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Platform Administration

Each program consists of two courses in compliance with program standards established by the Chancellor's Office. Students focus on the reading, writing, and math skills needed to be successful within an academic and professional environment, contextualized to their core study focus, and receive career readiness training throughout their programs.

Students will develop awareness and competency of the 21st century skills identified by employers as essential to career success through self-directed learning modules, self-exploration, and practiced-based exercises.

### **Introduction to Information Technology Support (A+)**

This skills-based, noncredit, program is designed to prepare students to successfully complete the CompTIA A+ certification, an industry recognized certification. It will include study of the content found in the CompTIA A+ Exams (Exam 220-1001 & 220-1002), including practice examinations, as well as application of the material on the job.

Subjects include hardware, operating systems, software, mobile devices, basic networking, basic security, operational procedures, printers, and troubleshooting. Students will gain a working familiarity with the concepts of documentation, safety procedures, and small office/home office (SOHO) technologies. Students will understand how to assemble components based on customer requirements, and also master the installation, configuration, and maintenance of PCs and Mobile devices.

The basics of networking and security forensics will also be covered. Other subjects include application of troubleshooting methodology and provision of appropriate customer support. Networking and security forensics will be introduced along with the basics of scripting,

virtualization, desktop imaging, and deployment, as well as basic cloud technology and deployment.

### **Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes**

- Demonstrate the ability to identify issues across a broad range of computing skills, both in software and hardware.
- Implement solutions to common problems and issues raised by customers.
- Apply a wide variety of skills in customer support and troubleshooting, ranging from installation and configuration, to networking, operating systems, mobile devices, and security.

### **Introduction to Cybersecurity (Security+)**

This skills-based, noncredit, program prepares adult students for employment in the Information Security field. Students will progress through the program by mastering a working knowledge of the fundamental principles and topics of information security and risk management, and demonstrate appropriate diagnostic, risk management, and solution application at the organizational level.

This includes hardware, software, processes, communications, applications, and policies and procedures with respect to organizational cybersecurity. Students in this program will be prepared to successfully complete the CompTIA Security+ certification exams (SY0-501), which is an industry-recognized certification.

### **Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes**

- Describe key principles of information and risk management at the organizational level.
- Analyze a wide variety of technical issues in Information Security from networking, operating systems, mobile devices to various technical systems.
- Recommend and/or apply appropriate solutions at the policy, procedure communications, applications levels for hardware, software, and processes.

### **Medical Coding for Professional Services**

This skills-based, noncredit, program prepares adult students for employment in the medical coding field. Students will progress through the program by mastering entry-level competencies in medical law and ethics as related to medical billing and coding; medical terminology; pharmacology; anatomy and physiology for healthcare coding; disorders of the human body; diagnostic tests; treatment modalities; and CPT (Current Procedural Terminology), ICD-10-CM (International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification), and HCPCS (Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System) Level II coding.

Students mastering these competencies will achieve a broad knowledge in reviewing and assigning the correct procedure and diagnosis codes for professional (physician) services. Upon completion, students will be prepared to take a national medical coding exam including, but not limited to, the AAPC CPC\* exam to achieve an industry-recognized certification.

\*American Academy of Professional Coders Certified Professional Coder

### **Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes**

- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate legal and ethical issues that apply to healthcare billing and coding.
- Analyze medical documentation and define medical terminology, diseases/disorders, procedures & treatment to identify appropriate CPT®, ICD-10-CM Code Set and HCPCS Level II codes.
- Distinguish the rules and procedures to effectively navigate and code from the CPT®, ICD-10-CM Code Set and HCPCS Level II books.
- Adapt principles of medical coding related to the three main code books: CPT®, ICD-10- CM Code Set and HCPCS Level II.
- Apply skills and knowledge needed as a professional medical coder to take a national certification exam.

### **Transition to Technology: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Platform Administration**

This competency-based, noncredit, program is designed to introduce adult learners to the concepts and skills necessary for their transition into Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Administration careers. In this course, students will learn best practices for working in a distributed team, effective communication skills for workplace interactions, and techniques to navigate the job interview process. Students will gain a basic understanding of the components and processes involved in a CRM platform. Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to either enter into an employer-sponsored training opportunity where they will continue to build their skills, or to continue additional coursework where they will prepare to earn an industry-recognized CRM administrator credential.

### **Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes**

- Demonstrate knowledge, skills, abilities, and intellectual behaviors necessary for working as an individual contributor within a distributed team.
- Demonstrate understanding of CRM platform basics.
- Demonstrate the ability to perform basic CRM-related functions.



## Approved New Programs

In addition to the four open programs described above, Calbright's Board of Trustees has approved four additional programs which will be launched in the second half of 2021. These four programs are:

- **Transition to Technology: IT Helpdesk Technician**
  - This competency-based, noncredit, program provides a comprehensive overview of computer fundamentals and an introduction to advanced concepts. It is intended for individuals who want to pursue careers in IT and gain practical knowledge of how a computer works. Students who complete this program will be able to describe the internal components of a computer, assemble a computer system, install an operating system, and troubleshoot using system tools and diagnostic software. They will also be able to connect computers to the Internet and share resources in a networked environment. This program will help students prepare for entry-level IT help desk positions within various work settings. It will also help students develop greater skills and confidence in working with desktop and laptop computers. IT Essentials is an entry point to building additional skills for higher level professional IT certifications.
  
- **Transition to Technology: Introduction to Networks**
  - This competency-based, non-credit, program introduces the networking architectures, models, protocols, and hardware elements that connect users, devices, applications and data through the Internet and across modern computer networks. Students will learn to build out network infrastructure and troubleshoot, configure, and manage common network devices. This program will help prepare students for an industry-recognized networking certification. Introduction to Networks serves as an entry point to necessary technical skills for students who want to move into careers as network technicians or those who want to work in other technical roles in IT.
  
- **Upskilling for Equitable Health Impacts: Interpersonal Skills**
  - This competency-based, noncredit, program is designed to facilitate the acquisition of a set of interpersonal skills, traditionally known as "soft skills," necessary for the success of those currently employed or planning a career in the healthcare setting. Attainment of and proficiency in these skills is fundamentally necessary for any position in the healthcare setting.
  
- **Upskilling for Equitable Health Impacts: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
  - This competency-based, noncredit, program is designed to give students the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors needed to promote inclusive and equitable working environments where individual and group differences are

welcomed and valued. Students will learn to embrace diverse perspectives and communities by intentionally practicing personal reflection and the acceptance and respect of others. Students will be able to apply their understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion to facilitate and advocate for community health equity and justice.

## Appendix B

### Executive Summary: Strategic Vision 2021-2023

The Strategic Vision sets Calbright's overarching direction for 2021 through 2023, clearly defining and conveying our strategy and three-year goals. It directly informs internal decisions and priorities during this crucial stage of institutional development, in a very unpredictable environment. In the second half of 2020, Calbright was already using what we'd learned in our initial launch period to inform our growth. By spelling out what success in three years will look like, the Strategic Vision increases transparency and supports accountability for Calbright's progress in meeting both our statutory milestones and our own additional strategic goals.

Development of the Strategic Vision began in fall 2020. It included research and data analysis to inform goal development; and individual interviews, facilitated group discussions, and surveys to gather input from both internal and external stakeholders. There were also monthly discussions with Calbright's Board of Trustees and opportunities for public comment as the vision took shape, as well as an in-depth study session with the full board.

Stakeholders with a wide range of perspectives shared their hopes and concerns for Calbright, how they see the challenges and opportunities ahead, and what success in three years looks like to them. They included Calbright trustees, faculty, staff, and students; the CCC Chancellor; labor organizations; employer associations; philanthropic foundations; and both the executive and legislative branches of state government. Stakeholders pictured Calbright's success primarily in terms of student success, both completion and jobs. There was broad agreement about Calbright's potential to increase the CCC system's capacity to better serve working learners, along with some differences about how to do so. And we found wide variation in awareness and accuracy of Calbright's operating model, progress, and statutory requirements, and how our programs and design differ from our sister colleges.

# Principles

These are the principles guiding Calbright’s work as we fulfill the Strategic Vision. These principles are grounded in Calbright’s founding mission and unique role, contribute to the CCC system’s Vision for Success, and are informed by stakeholders’ hopes and expectations.

### Add Value

Benefit Calbright’s students, the CCC system, employers, and the state.

### Support the Learner

Design to meet the specific needs of adults without degrees.

### Focus on Good Jobs

Prepare learners to secure and succeed in available jobs with career potential, in stable or growing industries.

### Advance Equity

Narrow opportunity gaps by race and ethnicity, gender, income, region.

### Be Responsive

Keep improving in response to relevant changes in economic conditions, research, policy, workforce needs, and learners’ lives.

### Align Quality and Growth

Grow enrollment while strengthening outcomes through high-quality teaching, learning, and student experience, consistent with available resources.

# Goals for 2023

At the core of the Strategic Vision are goals that define what success in three years looks like for Calbright as a whole. Both ambitious and achievable given limited resources, the goals are grouped into 7 strategic focus areas: High-Quality, Scalable Growth; Student Success; Collaboration; Innovation; Shared Gains; Accreditation; and Positioned for Acceleration and Influence.

In researching relevant benchmarks and comparison points for our Growth and Student Success goals, we found that very little was available or directly applicable to our mission, model, and focus populations. This paucity of relevant, high-quality data underscores just how different Calbright is: we are doing something that has not been done before. It also confirms Calbright’s essential role in elevating the importance and capabilities of working learners and building the evidence base for how to serve them well.

Together, our interrelated goals:

- Set Calbright’s strategic direction for high-quality growth through 2023;
- Preserve the flexibility needed to stay on course in unpredictable conditions;

- Directly inform internal decision-making and priorities;
- Meet statutory milestones, and exceed them as well as other self-determined milestones; and
- Assume a base of stable state funding at \$15 million/year through 2023.

The Strategic Vision’s three-year goals are both ambitious and achievable, assuming stable state funding of \$15 million per year. By the end of 2023, we expect to have achieved the following goals:

### **High-Quality, Scalable Growth**

**Programs:** Calbright has launched 10 new programs, including at least one developed with another CCC.

**Enrollment:** 5,000 students are enrolled, and 75% are from focus populations.

### **Student Success**

**Completion:** 1,200 students have completed a Calbright program.

**Labor Market Outcomes:** Between 250-550 students (depending on pace of economic recovery) have attained a positive labor market outcome.

### **Collaboration**

**Partnerships:** Calbright has engaged 20 external partners.

**Governance:** Calbright’s participatory governance structure is in place.

### **Innovation**

Calbright has operationalized innovation to drive student success and high-quality growth.

### **Shared Gains**

**CBE:** Calbright shares our growing expertise in designing and delivering online, competency-based education (CBE) programs for working learners.

**Research and Development:** Calbright’s R&D opens doors to innovation at other colleges, and informs workforce and economic development efforts.

**Common Challenges:** Calbright will identify and solve common challenges faced by working learners and community colleges.

### **Accreditation**

**Candidacy:** Calbright will have completed the accreditation application process by the end of 2021.

**Accredited:** Calbright will be fully accredited ahead of schedule by the end of 2023.

### **Positioned for Acceleration and Influence**

**Acceleration:** At the end of 2023, Calbright is ready to scale enrollment by 50% (to 7,500) the next year and keep growing, resources permitting.

**Influence:** Calbright has become a nationally recognized model for innovation and equity in serving adults without degrees.

[Click here to read the full report.](#)

