



**2022–26**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**



Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education

## MESSAGE FROM THE BUREAU CHIEF

It is my pleasure to present the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education's 2022–2026 Strategic Plan.

The postsecondary education landscape has never been more complex, nor more essential to the future of California and Californians. At current rates, educational attainment levels are insufficient to fuel the state's future workforce and economy. They are also insufficient to close gaps in postsecondary education access and success by race/ethnicity, wealth, and region.

Private postsecondary institutions play an important role in fostering a prepared, nimble, and inclusive workforce. The Bureau supports this role by ensuring institutions comply with laws established by the California Legislature, and ensuring accountability for institutions and support for students when the promise falls short.

Reflecting dozens of conversations with internal and external stakeholders, the roadmap articulated in this Strategic Plan gives the Bureau the direction needed to achieve its vision: to be the national leader in regulating private postsecondary institutions and promote a landscape of postsecondary educational opportunities that maximize Californians' opportunity to receive a quality education.

**Deborah Cochrane**



## ABOUT US

Effective January 1, 2010, Assembly Bill 48 (Portantino, Chapter 310, Statutes of 2009) established the California Private Postsecondary Education Act (Act) and created the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau or BPPE) within the California Department of Consumer Affairs to provide oversight of private postsecondary educational institutions operating in California.

Specifically, the Act directs the Bureau to:

- Create a structure that provides an appropriate level of oversight, including approval of private postsecondary educational institutions and programs.
- Establish minimum operating standards for California private postsecondary educational institutions to ensure quality education for students.
- Provide consumers a meaningful opportunity to have complaints resolved.
- Support past, current, and prospective students in making informed decisions about college enrollment, including facilitating access to financial relief when students experience economic loss.
- Ensure that private postsecondary educational institutions offer accurate information to prospective students on institutional and student performance.
- Create opportunities for stakeholders to have a voice and be heard in the operations of and rulemaking process by the Bureau.
- Proactively combat unlicensed institutions.

The Bureau oversees and has statutory authority over private postsecondary educational institutions operating with a physical presence in California, except for those specifically exempted by the Act. The Bureau registers specified out-of-state institutions enrolling Californians without a physical presence in California.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Diana Amaya**, *Public Member*

**Kansen Chu**, *Public Member*

**Melanie Delgado**, *Consumer Advocate*

**Leigh Ferrin**, *Consumer Advocate*

**Joseph Holt**, *Institutional Representative*

**Assemblymember Jose Medina**, *Ex Officio Member*

**Margaret Reiter**, *Consumer Advocate*

**Senator Richard Roth**, *Ex Officio Member*

**David Vice**, *Institutional Representative*

*Members at time of Strategic Plan adoption.*

## LEADERSHIP

**Gavin Newsom**, *Governor*

**Tomiquia Moss**, *Secretary, Business, Consumer Services  
and Housing Agency*

**Kimberly Kirchmeyer**, *Director, Department of Consumer Affairs*

**Deborah Cochrane**, *Bureau Chief, Bureau for Private  
Postsecondary Education*



## MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

### Our Mission

The Bureau protects students and consumers in California and beyond through the oversight of California’s private postsecondary educational institutions by conducting qualitative reviews of educational programs and operating standards, proactively combating unlicensed activity, impartially resolving student and consumer complaints, and providing support and financial relief to harmed students.

### Our Vision

To be the national leader in regulating private postsecondary institutions and promote a landscape of postsecondary educational opportunities that maximize Californians’ opportunity to receive a quality education.

### Our Values

- **Consumer Protection.** The Bureau will make effective and informed decisions in the best interest and for the safety of consumers.
- **Accountability and Effectiveness.** The Bureau will take ownership and responsibility for its actions and results.
- **Quality and Integrity.** The Bureau will deliver consistently high-quality service, information, and support that reflects excellence and professionalism.
- **Inclusivity and Transparency.** The Bureau will be open to all voices and perspectives, actively encouraging the sharing of ideas and information throughout the organization and with the public and being receptive to new ideas.

## GOAL 1: LICENSING

Educate institutions and other stakeholders on the statutes and regulations governing private postsecondary education and ensure institutions meet minimum operating standards through the comprehensive review and processing of applications.

- 1.1** Streamline applications and processes to facilitate a swifter licensing turnaround time and clearer communication with institutions.
  - 1.2** Build out the online application system and update related policies and procedures to better support its utility.
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## GOAL 2: ENFORCEMENT

Protect the interests of students and consumers by monitoring colleges' compliance with relevant laws and regulations, taking enforcement actions when necessary, and conducting impartial, thorough, and efficient investigations of complaints submitted against approved, unapproved, and contracted institutions.

- 2.1** Enhance training to ensure consistent, efficient, and effective investigations and investigation reports that maximize opportunities for student relief and consumer protection.
- 2.2** Review and update investigation procedures to ensure they apply to all types of institutions that are approved by or contracted with the Bureau to facilitate appropriate complaint resolution.
- 2.3** Update disciplinary guidelines and protocols to ensure that discipline is appropriate, current, and all the tools necessary are available for efficient disciplinary actions.
- 2.4** Increase the frequency of high-quality, consistent compliance inspections to promote institutional compliance with laws and regulations and increase student protection.

## GOAL 3: QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Promote education quality through the review of proposed and existing educational programs, the monitoring of accreditation plans and progress, and the evaluation of the efficacy of instructional methods and modes of delivery.

- 3.1** Leverage opportunities for education specialists to learn from and contribute to the evolving distance-education field and keep up with changing technology.
  - 3.2** Explore opportunities to promote best practices related to the delivery of a quality distance-education program across platforms and approaches.
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## GOAL 4: REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION

Identify, pursue, and implement legislative, regulatory, and procedural changes that strengthen and support the Bureau's mandates and mission to protect consumers.

- 4.1** Bolster communication channels to identify areas where statutory and regulatory changes are warranted and keep stakeholders, including staff, informed about relevant policy debate and progress.
- 4.2** Identify opportunities to address commonly misinterpreted sections of the statute and regulations to promote consistency and streamlined processes.
- 4.3** Enhance internal processes to help facilitate streamlined processes for drafting and finalizing regulations, including the solicitation of stakeholder input.
- 4.4** Update the Bureau's regulations to align with contemporary higher education policies, procedures, and laws.



## GOAL 5: CONSUMER EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Assist California students and address the needs of those students attending private colleges, through the Office of Student Assistance and Relief (OSAR) and beyond.

- 5.1** Expand statewide awareness of the Office of Student Assistance and Relief and the services it provides to increase student protection.
- 5.2** Evaluate frequency and modality of workshops to ensure all students who could benefit from OSAR services receive the information they need.
- 5.3** Provide timely relief and support to students harmed by school closures to relieve financial stress and allow for the pursuit of new postsecondary educational opportunities.
- 5.4** Increase the number and diversity of outreach partners to expand visibility and influence within the higher education community.
- 5.5** Leverage data collected through institutions' annual reports to provide prospective students with comprehensive information to enable them to make better-informed decisions when selecting a school.
- 5.6** Explore opportunities to enhance the accessibility of information, resources, and activities on the Bureau's website.





## GOAL 6: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Promote organizational success through efficient and productive engagement, collaboration, and coordination internally and with external information and stakeholders.

- 6.1** Cultivate an organizational culture that is supportive, reflective, inclusive, fair, empowered, and accountable, in order to maintain a high-functioning team focused on fulfilling the Bureau's mission.
- 6.2** Improve internal connection, staff development, and performance management through cross-functional education, communication, and collaboration.
- 6.3** Improve the Bureau's capacity to gather and use data and evidence to shape Bureau operations, support student choice, and inform policy.
- 6.4** Enhance workshops and alternative, cost-effective opportunities to educate the industry on licensing and compliance requirements to reduce noncompliance and promote consumer protection.
- 6.5** Evaluate staffing needs and structure to ensure the Bureau is appropriately positioned to fulfill its mission to protect students and consumers.
- 6.6** Leverage the expertise and partnership of key stakeholders, including the Advisory Committee and other state entities, in understanding how the Bureau can best protect consumers while supporting quality postsecondary education offerings.
- 6.7** Streamline administrative operations to facilitate remote work and collaboration, simplify institutional compliance, and enable timely and complete reporting of Bureau activities and outcomes.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To understand the environment in which the Bureau operates and to identify factors that could impact the Bureau's success, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID Planning Unit conducted an environmental scan of the internal and external environments by interviewing staff leadership and surveying managers, staff, and external stakeholders.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the Bureau chiefs and managers during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID Planning in September 2020. This information guided the Bureau in defining its goal areas while directing the objectives outlined in its new strategic plan.

Goals were further refined through individual interviews with Bureau chiefs and managers between June and August 2021. The resulting plan was brought to the Bureau's Advisory Committee and the public at the August 27, 2021 Advisory Committee meeting.



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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF  
**CONSUMER**  
AFFAIRS