Enrollment Report: August 2022*

*This report was published in November 2022 and reflects data through August 31, 2022, unless otherwise noted.
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Executive summary

Calbright College’s enrollment continues to grow – as of August 31, 2022, the College’s student body was 1,185, comprised primarily of diverse non-traditional adult learners. 22% of students identify as Black, 33% as Latinx, 13% as Asian, 5% as Native American, and 2% as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Additionally, 92% of students are at least 25 years old and their median age is late 30s.

This report provides additional details and context regarding Calbright College’s enrollment growth and initiatives focused on nurturing student success. Unless otherwise noted, data are current as of the end of August 2022.

Introduction

Calbright College is roughly halfway through the seven-year start-up period its founding legislation established. The College was created as a stand-alone community college district, the first new district in 70 years, and was not launched as a satellite campus or center within an already established institution. As such, this start-up period serves as a critical time for the College to implement and improve key systems, develop academic programs, and build a dedicated team of faculty and staff – all from the ground up.

Calbright’s first cohort of students enrolled in late 2019, only months before the pandemic began. While early struggles and a leadership change are part of the College’s history, under new leadership and guided by Calbright’s 2021-2023 Strategic Vision, substantial progress has been made, with plans for continued growth in the years ahead.

A notable area of growth is in enrollment, which increased by 146% between July 2021 and the end of August 2022. While Calbright’s student body has expanded, it comes against the backdrop of a record-breaking decline in community college enrollment across America and California specifically. According to a memo submitted to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office by Dr. John Hetts in March 2022, enrollment among California’s community colleges declined by 20% compared to 2019, with even more substantial declines among “students of color, male students, students with disabilities, and older students.” California’s decline in higher education represents 26% of the nation’s decline. Though the fall of 2022 saw some enrollment stabilization, these numbers highlight the growing need for reimagining institutional
design and the creation of programs like the kind Calbright offers: asynchronous and skills-based that work for students on their own time.

This report uses data current as of August 31, 2022 (unless otherwise noted), provides additional context and information regarding Calbright’s enrollment and student body demographics, and discusses initiatives the College has mobilized to engage with potential learners.

**Calbright College student body**

The College’s enrollment stood at 1,185 as of August 31, 2022, and continues to grow. Though this report reflects data through the end of August 2022, preliminary data through the end of October 2022 shows a student body of 1,422.

![Calbright Student Body by Month](image)

Equally critical, Calbright’s student body is overwhelmingly comprised of non-traditional learners and communities underrepresented across higher education, and reflects the charge outlined in College’s founding legislation to serve “working adults.” 34.2% of students are parents or caregivers, which is triple the California Community Colleges systemwide rate, and 92% are at least 25 years old, which is more than double the systemwide rate.

Calbright is an open enrollment institution. As it becomes better known, more students from outside the College’s focus populations may seek to enroll. While no eligible
student is ever screened out, the College does have a goal for effectively reaching the students it was created to serve, and is seeing progress and fulfillment against this goal. Through outreach, marketing, partnerships, and a laser-focus on equity, Calbright will aim to have at least 75% of our students from our focus populations:

- Age 25 and older without a college degree
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Black or African American
- Indigenous
- Women
- Immigrants
- Military veterans
- Individuals with experience in the justice system
- Parents and those who care for dependent children and/or adults
- Rural residents
- Displaced workers and those who lost jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Unemployed
- Working adults
- Members of a community currently underrepresented both in higher education and the workforce
- Unable to access traditional forms of education and job training

Age Range (July 2021-August 2022)
*Please note: students may select more than one race in the CCC application – totals may exceed 100%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Median Age by Race Groups</th>
<th>January 2022</th>
<th>March 2022</th>
<th>August 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native American or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None Stated</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the age demographics of Calbright students, some learners may already have a bachelor’s degree and are enrolling to pivot to a different career, be more competitive in the job market, or to build their skills as their position and/or employer evolves alongside the economy. This is a product of the shifting dynamics of the labor market that were already set in motion before the pandemic, but accelerated by COVID-19. As enrollment increased between July 2021 and August 2022, the percentage of Calbright students who have a bachelor’s degree has remained a stable minority. Calbright will continue to support Californians who feel stuck in the labor market and/or who may experience unemployment or a need to expand their skill set. Simultaneously, no marketing efforts target individuals who hold any form of college degree and this group is excluded as best as possible within the parameters a platform allows.

*Please note: In the summer of 2022 Calbright updated its data report methodology, which is why the August 2022 category includes “no response” while data from previous months does not. Prior to August 2022 the “no response” category was excluded from the total.*
Serving working-aged Californians

Nearly nine out of ten (88%) Calbright students cite the College’s model as the reason their program was accessible. Students are fitting learning into their busy lives. As of October 31, 2022:

- 38% of Calbright students are unemployed
- 56% have one job
- 6% have two (or more) jobs

The majority of students are either unemployed (38%) or working 30 or fewer hours per week (16.6%). In addition, roughly 38% of students work 31-40 hours per week and 8.4% work more than forty hours per week.

Unemployed student demographics

Of the 38% of Calbright students who are unemployed:

- 53% are female
- 40.3% are male
- 6.4% are either non-binary or declined to state their gender
- Roughly 45% of unemployed students are between 25-39 years old
- 43% are 40+ years old

Additionally, 9.8% of unemployed students identified as Asian, 21.2% as Black/African American, 27.8% as Latinx, 6.4% as either Native American/Alaskan/Hawaiian, and 42.8% as White. Similar to the demographic graphs published earlier in this report, students are able to select the races they identify with, and so the total may add to more than 100%.

Lastly, 41.0% of unemployed students reported that they have no college degree, 7.5% hold an associate degree, 26.4% have a bachelor’s degree, and 25.1% declined to provide a response. While further examination of education level trends over time will be necessary, these figures support anecdotal evidence provided by students like Yvette, in which some older students, who completed a bachelor’s degree decades ago, are now seeking to re-skill to adapt to an evolving economy.

Initiatives supporting enrollment growth

Building Calbright College, and its unique education model, from the ground up requires collaboration and synergy across the institution. There isn't one specific action
the College has taken to catalyze enrollment growth, but instead, a series of initiatives that act in a cohesive symphony to nurture student success and create a more seamless student experience.

Improving digital assets

In order to support a more informative and engaging online experience for interested learners and other external stakeholders, Calbright has focused on reimaging digital assets like the College’s external website, program-specific pages, and landing pages that complement marketing activities.

In the spring of 2022, Calbright launched a new website. In addition to updated and improved content and user experience, the renovation also provided the opportunity to update the back-end data integrations to ensure incoming data like form submissions are being processed in the most efficient and secure manner.

Since launch, organic search traffic for Calbright has increased by 26%, and through continued improvement in areas like Search Engine Optimization (SEO), it is anticipated that organic traffic and conversion rates will continue to increase. As of the end of August 2022, 10% of organic visitors to Calbright’s “Apply” page completed the interest form on the page, which is the first step toward completing the California Community Colleges enrollment application.

Below, the leading image is Calbright’s original homepage. It provided minimal information regarding the College’s model, and, due to technical limitations, was difficult to update as new programs launched. The second image is a snapshot of Calbright’s current homepage. The layout and messaging are informative and approachable. In addition, an explainer video is embedded into the images to further support the College’s storytelling.
A flexibly paced program that fits your life’s priorities

Prepare
We prepare some of the 8 million Californians who feel stuck in “go-nowhere” jobs for careers with a

Promote
We support and promote our adult learners. From pre-registration and classes, through career preparation,

Position
Calbright positions students who have demonstrated job competency and readiness for successful

Start Here, Succeed Anywhere
With programs geared to help you develop skills for in-demand jobs, Calbright prepares you for a better career, on your timeline, with tuition and fees currently free for adult Californians. A proud member of the California Community Colleges system.

Designed For You
Get personalized support, from career coaching to academic counseling, when you need it. Connect with faculty when and how you want.

Start Your Next Chapter
Calbright helps you build on the skills you already have and prepares you to earn industry-valued certifications in growing fields.

Study On Your Schedule
Our programs are online, self-paced, and can be accessed anywhere, anytime. Work as fast as you want while taking the time you need.
The site also features new program description pages, providing prospective students with detailed information about course structure, key topics covered, industry opportunities, and testimonials from Calbright students. Marketing landing pages distill similar information and include information about Calbright’s unique and flexible model, seeking to take advantage of interest and intent driven by paid and social media campaigns.

Lastly, more than 70% of traffic to the College’s website comes from mobile devices. The new website is mobile-friendly and designed for a seamless user experience whether a visitor is on a phone, tablet, or computer.

Marketing and outreach

As a new institution, it is critical Calbright continues to test and experiment with its marketing and outreach activities – the College lacks decades of institutional data that inform optimized marketing campaigns. During Calbright’s seven-year start-up period, the Marketing and Communications team has been and will be focused on developing a brand narrative and marketing framework that can serve the College well into the future and flatten the learning curve for future leadership and members of the team.

Calbright’s curriculum and learning takes place online and in a digital environment, and so the College predominantly invests in digital marketing to grow brand awareness and support new enrollment. Digital marketing is complemented by on-the-ground outreach, which is a proven tactic in higher education admissions and community affairs.

On-the-ground outreach

Below are the events Calbright has attended to engage directly with interested students and to meet potential new partner organizations:

- Reentry Conference and Resource Fair - San Francisco 09/2021
  - Focused on justice-involved individuals in the Bay Area and those who support them
- LTX Quest - Virtual 09/2021
  - Focused on California’s the Latinx community
- Reentry Conference and Resource Fair - Virtual 10/2021
  - Focused on California’s justice-involved individuals and those who support them
- The Black College Expo - Los Angeles 02/2022
The Black College Expo - Oakland 02/2022
LA County Fair CEEM Event - Pomona/Inland Empire 05/22
  ○ Activation at the LA County Fair with specific focus on academic success and the Black community in the region
Soboba Tribal TANF Resource Fair - Riverside 08/2022
  ○ Engagement with the Soboba tribe in the Inland Empire
Univision Back To School/Community Health and Resource Fair - Los Angeles 08/2022
The Latino College Expo - Cal Poly Pomona 09/2022
Univision Feria de Educación - Sacramento State University 10/2022
Taste of Soul Family Festival - Los Angeles 10/2022
  ○ This is the largest street festival in South Los Angeles
The Black College Expo - Sacramento State University 11/2022

Digital marketing
In-person outreach is a precision tactic – designed to meet Californians at events they actively sought out. While specific events and geographic regions are prioritized in Calbright’s outreach (certain neighborhoods in Los Angeles and the Inland Empire as a whole, for example), digital marketing provides complementary coverage that is both statewide and focused on priority regions.

As the College continues to test messaging and marketing strategies and platforms to identify the most effective tools, early indications demonstrate progress:

- Between July 2021 and October 2022, enrollment has grown from 481 students to 1,422 – a 194% increase
- 92% of students are 25+ years old
- 44 of California’s 58 counties are represented in the College’s student body, including 25 rural counties
- Latinx and Black enrollment has remained high (33% and 22% respectively)
- Female student body has increased from 41% to 46% between July 2021 and August 2022

To achieve the above results, the College has focused on Google paid search as a key tactic to support enrollment growth, as it nurtures a user experience in which Calbright is elevated when a Californian who fits within one of the College’s target demographics searches for something like “online training certificate” or “IT training.” Paid search is used statewide, in an effort to enroll students from every county in California.
In general, Calbright’s marketing targets individuals who meet the below criteria:

- Age range: 25 - 45 years
- Gender identity: All gender identities, but leads prioritize women
- Race: a focus on leads who are Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian
- Education level: High school diploma or partial college education/credits, but no college-level degree
- Professional background: Homemaker/caregiver, unemployed, employed full-time in health care, customer service, food service, construction, or retail
- Income level: $0 - $48,000

In addition to paid search, Calbright utilizes social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to reach interested learners on platforms they frequent. These campaigns are more regionally focused and prioritize engagement in the Central Valley and Inland Empire, with the intention to not only provide an opportunity for someone to learn more about Calbright, but also with the intention to familiarize them with the brand so that if they search for something like “Salesforce Training” later on, they’ll have an understanding of what Calbright is.

In general, marketing campaigns are evaluated every month to identify areas for optimization and increased efficiency, and to also find components that aren’t working well so that dollars are spent in the most judicious manner.
For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, Calbright will utilize the power and seamless user experience of its new website and digital assets to iterate new marketing materials and continue to track their effectiveness. Campaigns, as the image below indicates, will lean into the College’s strengths, guided by the fact that 88% of students indicate that Calbright’s model is one of the leading reasons their program was accessible.

**Lean into our strengths**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start next semester</th>
<th>Commute to campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start right now</td>
<td>Learn from where you are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigid schedules</td>
<td>Go to school OR go to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibly paced</td>
<td>Learn between shifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicated financial aid forms</td>
<td>Parents can’t attend college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No tuition or fees</td>
<td>1-in-3 Calbright students are parents or caregivers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ads built on this theme will play mainly in the Central Valley and Inland Empire, which continue to lag on higher education attainment as well as economic recovery as compared to more affluent regions like Los Angeles and the Bay Area. In addition, attention and focus will remain on growing the percentage of the College’s student body that identifies as Latinx, Asian, Black, Native American, and female, and establishing a more prominent downward trend for students who have an associate’s and/or bachelor’s degree(s). Lastly, small test campaigns to engage with populations like active duty military and veterans—running ads in places in areas like Oceanside or Barstow, CA—may provide an indication of the effectiveness of such a tactic and whether additional investment in this area is warranted.

**Proactive outreach, streamlined onboarding, and live information sessions**

Complementing a redesigned website and prospective learner user experience, Calbright has launched several new programming endeavors to cultivate a welcoming
experience for students. 92% of Calbright students are at least 25 years old, and the median age is late 30s, which means many students are returning to education after notable time away. A recent graduate, Denise, for example, was last enrolled in traditional education in 1984.

In the fall of 2021, Calbright launched a proactive outreach initiative. Though an online college, human-powered support systems are part of the foundation of student engagement. As part of this initiative, members of the team reach out to students, sometimes even before they have formally enrolled, to connect with them, answer any questions they might have, and discuss Calbright’s programs and services. Students meet with their instructors and counselors prior to, or early on, in their program, providing an overview but also an opportunity to connect and become familiar with key resources. This relationship then carries throughout a student’s journey. Counselors and other faculty members reach out regularly, via text, email, and phone calls, to help circumvent any issues a student might experience, or to help solve a problem—whether academic or technical—that is delaying progress.

In addition to the College’s proactive outreach, Calbright improved and streamlined its onboarding process during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Today, the College’s onboarding is holistic and not program-specific, which increases capacity for both students and faculty so learning can begin more quickly than in previous years and students no longer need to wait for a program-specific onboarding session.

In the spring of 2022, and complementing proactive outreach efforts, Calbright began live information sessions that are held every other week. Already, 137 interested learners have attended a session, with 58% of attendees moving forward in the enrollment process immediately following. Roughly 40% of those who have attended a session are now current Calbright students.

The College has also incorporated information about these sessions into its email outreach efforts. Through the summer of 2022, sessions averaged roughly 12-16 students, and continued to increase to an average attendance closer to 20 students as of October 2022.

Expanded capacity of Calbright’s student support team

Calbright is roughly halfway through its legislatively mandated seven-year start-up. During this time, a key priority has been building the team necessary to support this unique model of education and a growing student population.
This expanded capacity now includes student support specialists, counselors, instructors, and other support like tutors and Career Services, and provides the opportunity to reimagine holistic student support and to iterate and test interventions that nurture learner success.

From this student-centered focus, Calbright faculty and staff created heat maps that student-facing members of the team can use to quickly reference student progress. This informs student outreach and can help identify common hurdles within a curriculum and understand who is moving forward and who may need additional support.

While this specific tactic is nascent, early results indicate that the College’s efforts are on the right track, and that early and consistent outreach is effective. In the month of September 2022, Calbright’s counselors reached out to students who had been inactive for 21-30 days, and 42% of students, after connecting with their counselor, re-engaged with their curriculum. In October 2022, the re-engagement rate for students who had been inactive for 21-30 days increased to 52%.