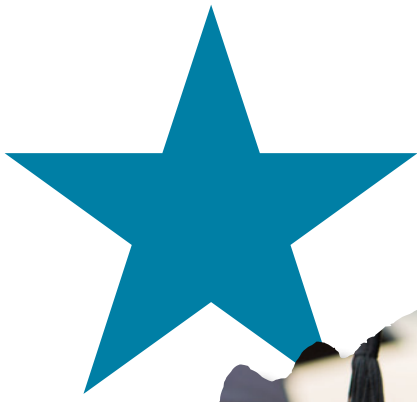


# THE STATE OF — HIGHER EDUCATION — IN CALIFORNIA



LATINOS



BLACKS



ASIAN AMERICANS  
NATIVE HAWAIIANS  
PACIFIC ISLANDERS



The Campaign for  
**College  
Opportunity**

Increasing college graduates to strengthen California

May 2015

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## THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA

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### Note about the terms "Black" and "African American"

We use the term "Black" to include both individuals who identify as African American and also individuals from the African diaspora who may not consider themselves African American because of their families' more recent immigration (usually 3 generations or less) from ethnic homelands such as Trinidad, Jamaica, and Belize, to name a few.

# INTRODUCTION

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**California is home to the fifth-largest Black population in the United States.** Roughly three-fourths of Black Californians live in six counties (Alameda, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Diego) with more than one-third residing in Los Angeles County alone.

This report finds that Black Californians have improved their educational outcomes over the last couple of decades. **Black adults today are more likely to have a high school diploma and a college degree than in 1990. Black students are also more likely to graduate from high school and college today than they were ten years ago.**

However, compared to the major four racial/ethnic groups in California, Blacks still experience significant opportunity gaps. For example, **23 percent of working-age Black adults in California have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 42 percent of White adults.** Black adults are the most likely to have attended some college but left without earning a degree. Black youth overwhelmingly attend lower performing elementary through high schools characterized by lower than average test scores, inexperienced teachers, lower levels of resources and funding, and insufficient counselors. As a result, Black high school students are less likely than students from most other racial/ethnic groups to graduate from high school and to do so having completed the sequence of A-G coursework that makes them eligible to apply to California's public four-year universities. When they do arrive in college, Black students are most likely to be placed into pre-college level coursework, the least likely to graduate from college, and the most likely to enroll in for-profit colleges which have traditionally poor rates of student success and in some cases high costs and student debt levels.

The number of Black students enrolling in college was steadily increasing up until the Great Recession when deep state funding cuts to public higher education budgets were enacted. Unfortunately, these cuts seem to have had a disproportionate negative impact on Black students for whom college enrollment rates declined sharply after 2007, especially at the California State University (CSU) system—both in freshmen and transfer enrollment. Even before these budget cuts, Black students were substantially underrepresented at the University of California (UC) system, a fact that still persists today.

The data reveals troubling gaps and disparities in student success by race/ethnicity that are often driven by funding, policy, and institutional weaknesses—and not simply the dedication of individual students. These include inadequate preparation from high school, a broken remedial education system in college, and the consequences of significant funding cuts to our public colleges and universities—institutions that play a significant role in college degree attainment for the majority of Black students in California.

**As a state, we have fallen short on our promise of offering all residents equal access to and opportunity for advancement through education. A concerted, strategic effort among California's policy makers, institutional leaders, and community-based organizations will be critical to the process of reversing these negative trends and continuing the progress that has already been made.**

## Federal reporting requirements on race and ethnicity:

In fall 2009, the way in which all colleges and universities in the United States collect and report student race and ethnicity information to the U.S. Department of Education (i.e., IPEDS) changed (see 72 Fed. Reg. 59267). After 2009, colleges were required to collect student race and ethnicity via a two-tiered process in which students were first asked if they were of Hispanic origin or if they were a Non-Resident Alien. Next, they were asked to select any one of the following racial categories: White; Black or African American; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; Two or More Races. If students first selected "Hispanic" or "Non-Resident Alien" then they were categorized as such regardless of their race category. If students selected "non-Hispanic" and did not indicate that they were a Non-Resident Alien they were categorized as their race category.

Prior to 2009, colleges reported student race and ethnicity using the following categories: Hispanic; White-non-Hispanic; Black-non Hispanic; American Indian/Alaska Native; Asian/Pacific Islander, Non-Resident Alien or Race and Ethnicity Unknown.

This reporting change may result in analysis that does not capture Black students of Hispanic descent—an issue true for all other racial groups who identify as Hispanic and are now solely captured in that category—and students who identify as Black in combination with another race. In addition, as the multi-racial population continues to grow, another layer of complexity is added to the analysis of race and ethnicity. As such, data comparing student counts over time (i.e., pre- and post-2009) should be understood in this context.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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Closing gaps in access and success across racial/ethnic groups is critical for California. As a majority-minority state, the success of all racial/ethnic groups is essential for a strong economy and vibrant civil society.

The Campaign for College Opportunity proposes the following recommendations for policymakers, college leaders, and students and families so that we can secure California's economic future by significantly improving our education system for all Californians and specifically increasing college enrollment and graduation among Black students. Our success in doing so not only strengthens the opportunity and future of Black Californians, but that of our state, and especially impacts key regions where many Blacks live.

1. [Create a statewide plan for higher education.](#)
2. [Ensure colleges successfully move students through pre-college level courses, quickly and with improved retention rates.](#)
3. [Provide clear transfer pathways to four-year degrees.](#)
4. [Identify and re-enroll adults with some college but no certificate or degree.](#)
5. [Expand college knowledge in middle and high school and invest in support services students need to succeed.](#)
6. [Fund colleges for both enrollment growth and successful outcomes.](#)
7. [Strengthen financial support options for low- to moderate- income college students.](#)
8. [Allow California's public universities to use race/ethnicity as one of many factors in weighing an applicants' qualifications for admission.](#)



# BLACK POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA

*Fifth largest in the country*

California is the most populous state in the country with an estimated 38.5 million residents.<sup>1</sup> Even though the Black population makes up a small proportion of the state's overall population (5.8 percent), there are more than 2.16 million Black residents in California—the fifth largest Black population in the country (Figure 1). California is home to a larger Black community than states with historically high proportions of Black residents such as Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Roughly three-fourths of the state's Black population live in six counties: Alameda, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Diego. Almost 800,000 Black Californians reside in Los Angeles County alone (more than one-third of the state's Black population).

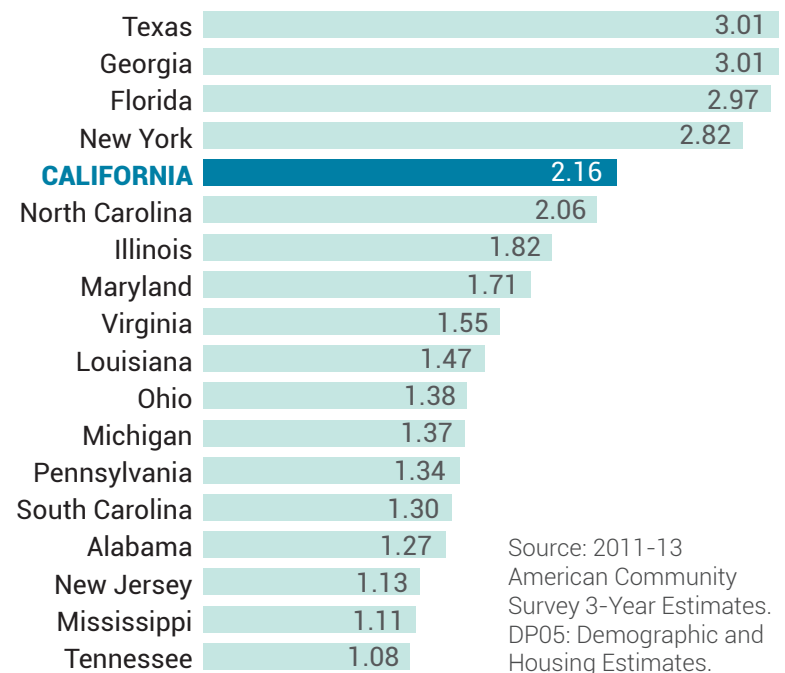
## Table 1: Los Angeles County is home to 37% of California's Black population

| County         | Black population | Percent of county that is Black | Proportion of California's Black population |
|----------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Los Angeles    | 799,895          | 8.0                             | 37.1  |
| Alameda        | 180,420          | 11.6                            | 8.4   |
| San Bernardino | 170,570          | 8.2                             | 7.9   |
| San Diego      | 150,850          | 4.8                             | 7.0   |
| Sacramento     | 139,460          | 9.6                             | 6.5   |
| Riverside      | 134,850          | 6.0                             | 6.0   |

Source: 2011-13 American Community Survey (ACS), 3-year estimates from CA Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit.

## Figure 1: California is home to the nation's fifth largest Black population

*Black population by select states, 2013 (in millions)*



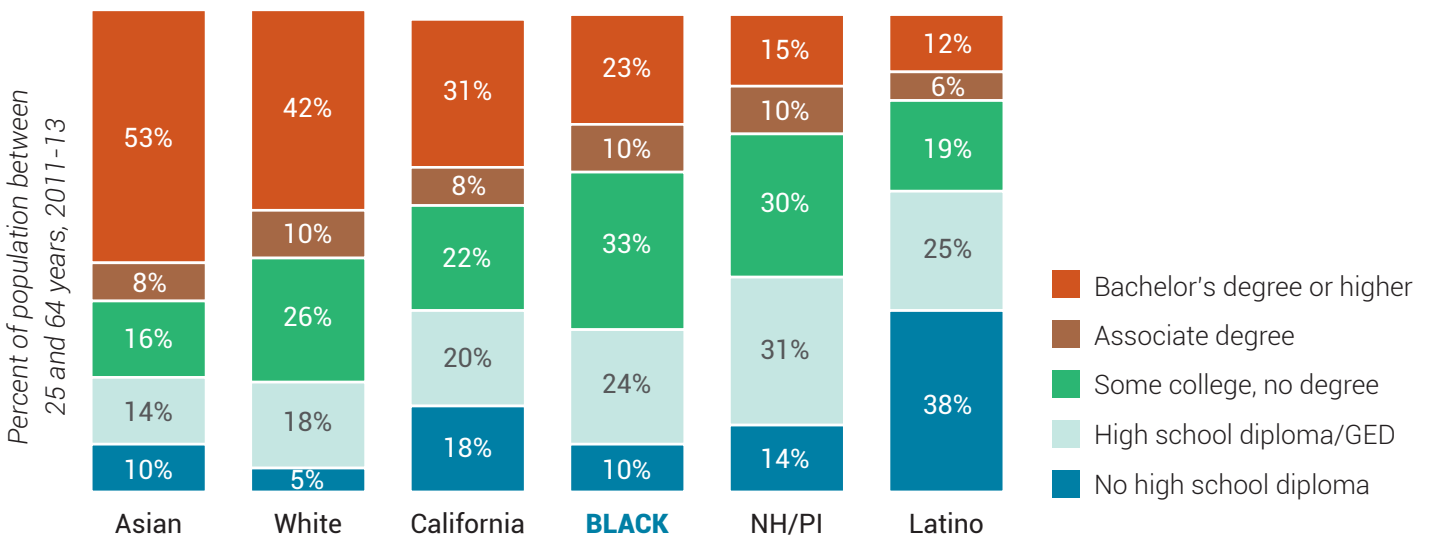
Source: 2011-13 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates. DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates.

# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Black adults between 25- and 64-years old in California are less likely to have a college degree than Whites of this same age group. While more than 90 percent of Black adults have a high school diploma, only 23 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 42 percent of White adults. **One-third of Black adults in the state have some college experience but no degree**—the highest rate of college

attendance without a degree among major racial/ethnic groups. This finding suggests that many Black students want a degree and enroll in college but do not make it to graduation day, an opportunity ripe for addressing.

**Figure 2: One-third of Black adults have some college, but no degree**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-13 ACS 3-Year Estimates - Public Use Microdata Sample

Note: NH/PI is Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Many Black students want a degree and enroll in college but do not make it to graduation day, an opportunity ripe for addressing

# SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE

Approximately 4.5 million adults in California have some college, but no degree.<sup>2</sup> According to research from the National Student Clearinghouse, California has the largest number of “potential college completers” (defined as students with two or more years’ worth of progress in the past decade)<sup>3</sup> than any other state—approximately 520,000.<sup>4</sup> This is half a million adults who could have a degree—and earn the wage premium associated with that credential—if they were to re-enroll in college and complete their studies.

Among these potential completers: 94 percent maintained their enrollment within California, 63 percent exclusively attended two-year colleges, 54 percent are women, and 50 percent are between the ages of 24 and 29.<sup>5</sup> Although data by race/ethnicity was not available in this study, data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that one in three Black adults has some college education but no degree—the highest rate of the major racial/ethnic groups. Students who discontinue their studies face real challenges as a result:

- **Higher unemployment rates.** Unemployment rates for California adults with a bachelor’s degree is 4.5 percent compared to 11.3 percent for those with some college but no degree.<sup>6</sup>
- **Lower wages.** National research shows that full-time workers with a bachelor’s degree earned a median of \$16,100 more per year compared with full-time workers with some college, no degree (\$56,500 and \$40,400, respectively).<sup>7</sup> Over a lifetime, bachelor’s degree holders will earn \$1.3 million more than adults without degrees.<sup>8</sup>
- **Increased likelihood of student loan default.** Students who have taken students loans but do not complete college are less likely to repay those students loans compared with college graduates,<sup>9</sup> and they are four times as likely to default on their student loans.<sup>10</sup>

Re-enrolling students who have some college but no degree is one of the best ways to increase the state’s educational attainment rate and improve the lives of the 4.5 million

Californians who fit this category.<sup>11</sup> Research indicates that there are four main barriers to re-enrolling adults with some college:

1. **Insufficient information.** Adults with some college education may not realize how close they are to a degree or that they have already met requirements, and may be under the false impression that a college degree is too far out of reach.<sup>12</sup> Another issue is that adults may not have sufficient information to begin the process of re-enrolling in college after they left their studies. For example, in one study of adults who were considering attaining their college degree, only one in five adults received information about college through a guidance counselor or an interactive website that compared colleges and most obtained information from their personal social network or through advertisements.<sup>13</sup> Further, more than half of those with some college but no degree did not understand the difference between for-profit and nonprofit colleges,<sup>14</sup> and more than half over-estimated the cost of college.<sup>15</sup>
2. **Inadequate college/university practices.** Many colleges and universities do not have policies or practices in place to fully support adults who have attended college before and now want to complete their studies. Institutions may utilize the same assessment tools and pre-college level course sequences for these adults as they would for a student who is a recent high school graduate.<sup>16</sup> This process is problematic because it disregards prior learning these adults may have as a result of their previous academic endeavors or work experience.<sup>17</sup> Another challenge is that colleges and universities may not accept all previously-earned credits or offer flexible course schedules or online programs most adults need if they were to re-enroll in college.<sup>18</sup> This is a real concern for students as one study found that nearly six in ten respondents expected to take pre-college level coursework should they reenroll, which was a significant deterrent to re-enrolling due to the cost and time such courses would require.<sup>19</sup>

3. **Lack of financial resources.** Research has shown that the number one reason students give for discontinuing their studies in the first place is the need to work and not being able to balance this reality with their academic pursuits.<sup>20</sup> This issue of cost and affordability continues to be a barrier for adults who want to return to college to earn their degree.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, most scholarships and financial aid opportunities are only available to “traditional” students who enroll full-time or are first-time students.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, students who have defaulted on previous debt are ineligible for additional Federal financial aid.<sup>23</sup>
4. **Limited time.** Returning adults are generally older than first-time students and have significant obligations outside of school, such as work and family, and may not have time to balance all three priorities.<sup>24</sup> In one study of adults who were considering enrolling in college, two-thirds of adults worried about balancing work and family commitments with the demands of school.<sup>25</sup>

some cases, such as Georgia’s Adult Learning Consortium and Texas’ Grad TX program, these Adult Re-entry programs are coordinated by the state higher education body and in the case of Indiana’s Ivy Tech Community College Adult Degree Completion Project and Graduate Minnesota, they are led by the state’s college or university system.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, California currently does not have a statewide funding or policy strategy targeted towards Returning Adults,<sup>27</sup> and all efforts appear to be led individually by specific college and university campuses. For example, California community colleges with dedicated Adult Re-entry programs with targeted counseling, workshops, and resources for Returning Adults include (but are not limited to): Cypress College in North Orange County, College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, Orange Coast College in San Diego, Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, El Camino College in Torrance, and Cerritos College in Norwalk. The California State University system has a number of campuses with Adult Re-entry centers such as Fullerton, Long Beach, Monterey Bay, Sacramento, and San Bernardino (list not exhaustive). The University of California at Berkeley also has a dedicated programs for Returning Adults. Services for Returning Adults vary by initiative but include a range of support services including a website with helpful links, student success workshops/classes, mentorship programs, scholarships, a dedicated lounge for this student population, etc.

California has a significant opportunity to identify students who may be close to completing with a degree, also known as Returning Adults, and to re-enroll and support them so they can achieve their dream of earning a college degree. In



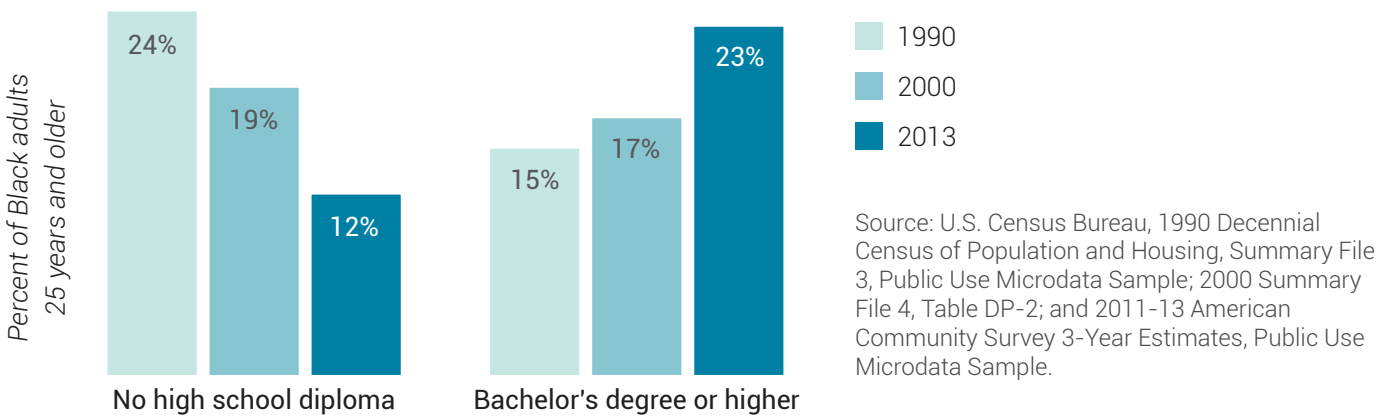


Black Californians are more educated today than they were 25 years ago (Figure 3). The proportion of Black adults without a high school diploma has declined by 13 percentage points from 24 percent in 1990 to 11 percent in 2013. The proportion of Black adults with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased eight percentage points to 23 percent in 2013 from 15 percent in 1990.

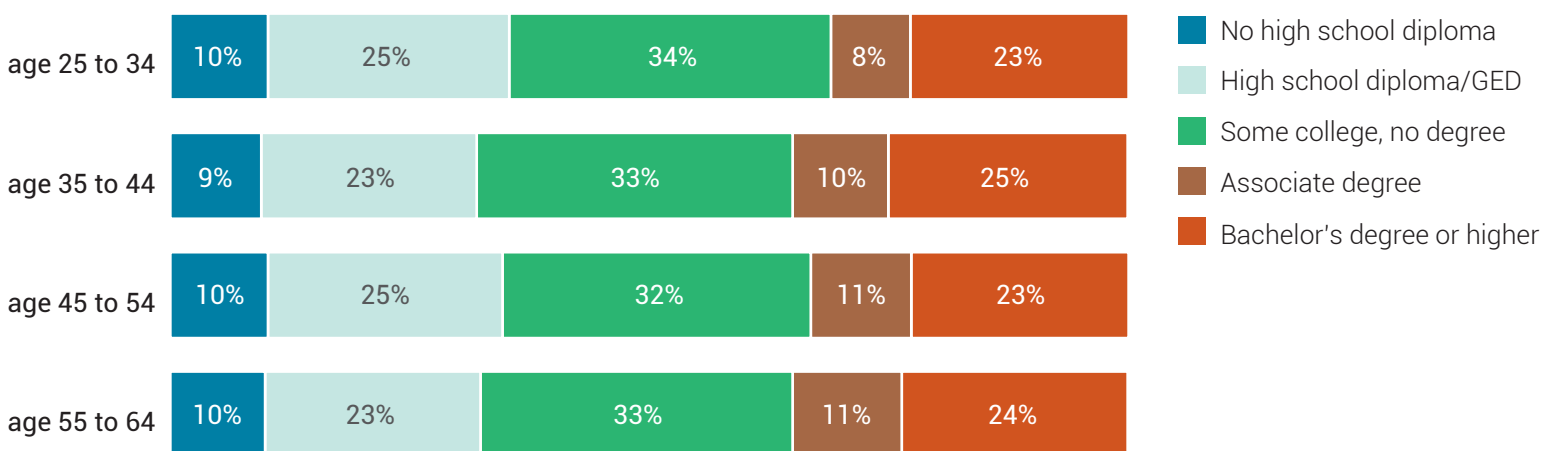
While Black Californians have made positive strides in educational outcomes since 1990, the data below highlights one troubling finding that suggests that young Black adults

in California may not be experiencing the same levels of academic success as the generation that preceded them.<sup>28</sup> For example, in 2013, about 31 percent of 25- to 34-year olds had an associate degree or higher compared with 35 percent of 35- to 44-year olds and 34 percent of 44- to 54-year olds (Figure 4). While these differences are slight, they are cause for concern if the trend continues—or worsens—and threatens the notion of the American Dream that future generations should have greater opportunities to be more successful than their parents.

**Figure 3:** Black adults today are more likely to have a bachelor's degree compared with 20 years ago



**Figure 4:** Black 25- to 34-year olds are less likely to have a college degree than 35- to 44-year olds



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-13 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Public Use Microdata Sample.

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

# COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

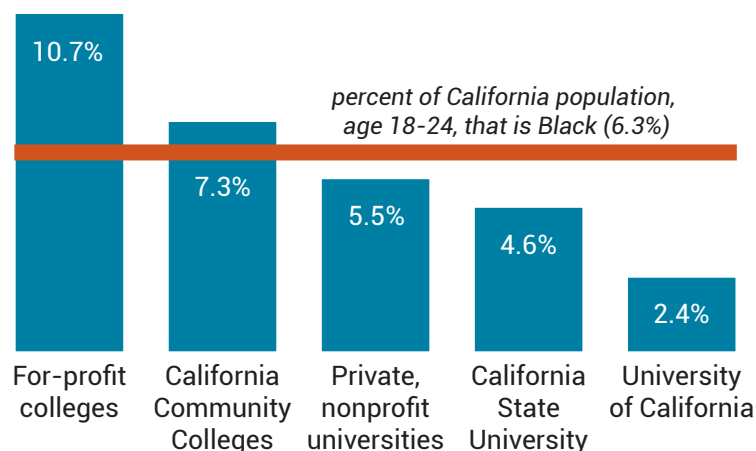
*Not enough Black students enroll in four-year universities*

There are approximately 150,000 Black students enrolled in college in California. However, they are not represented equally within each system of higher education. For example, about 6.3 percent of the traditional college-going-age population (18- to 24-years old) in California is Black.<sup>29</sup> As a result, we would hope to see a similar proportion of Black students enrolled within each system of higher education—but we do not. In fact, relative to their proportion of the traditional college-going-age population, Black students are

underrepresented within the California State University (CSU) system, the University of California (UC) system, and private nonprofit universities and overrepresented at California's community colleges and for-profit colleges.<sup>30</sup> The share of the undergraduate population that is Black is 10.7 percent at for-profit colleges, 7.3 percent at California's community colleges, 5.5 percent at private nonprofit universities, 4.6 percent at the CSU, and 2.4 percent at the UC (Figure 5).

**Figure 5:** Black undergrads are underrepresented at four-year public and nonprofit universities and overrepresented at community colleges and for-profit colleges

*Percent of undergraduate student body that is Black, fall 2013*



Source: Data for 18- to 24-year olds from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-13 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Public Use Microdata Sample. Higher education data from U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Note: Data from University of California Office of the President indicate that Black students made up 3.7 percent of all undergraduates in fall 2013. Source: University of California. (2015). *Accountability Report 2014*. Indicator 8.3.1 Racial/ethnic distribution of students, Universitywide and by campus, Fall 2013. Retrieved from <http://accountability.universityofcalifornia.edu/index/8.3.1>.

For-profits include Title IV eligible four-year, two-year, and less than two-year colleges. Private, nonprofits include Title IV eligible four-year universities.

Even though the number of Black undergraduates enrolled in a college or university in California is 33 percent higher today than it was a decade ago (from 127,000 in 2004 to 150,000 in 2013), this growth has been concentrated at for-profit and community colleges. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, the proportion of Black undergraduates in California has actually decreased in each sector in the last decade *except* at the for-profit colleges. Black students are less likely to enroll in a four-year public or nonprofit university today than ten years ago.

## First-time college freshmen enrollment

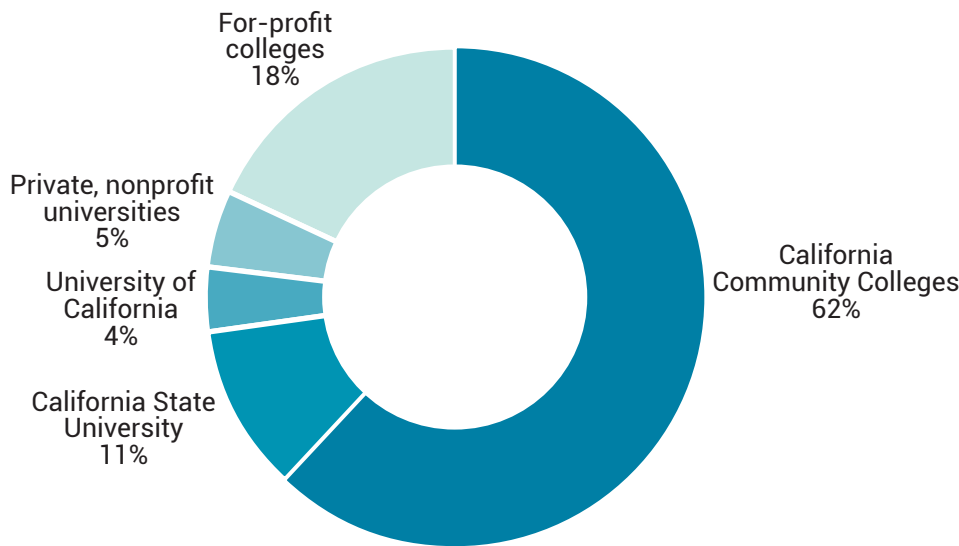
Not enough Black students enroll in college directly from high school. In 2012, 40 percent of Black high school graduates went directly from high school to one of California's three public higher education systems, compared with an average

of 53 percent of all students.<sup>31</sup> The college-going rate for Black high school graduates (particularly at four-year universities) over the past ten years peaked at 52 percent in 2007 and has since declined.<sup>32</sup> This enrollment drop after 2007 was experienced by other groups as well and is likely the result of severe higher education state funding budget cuts that occurred after 2007. In fact, **the college-going rate for all groups was lower in 2009 than it was at any time in the last 25 years.**<sup>33</sup>

Figure 6 shows where Black college freshmen in California enrolled in 2013. Presently, the majority of Black first-time freshmen enroll in one of California's 112 community colleges (62 percent). About 11 percent enroll in the CSU, and fewer than four percent enroll at a UC campus. Private nonprofit universities enroll five percent of first-time Black students while private for-profit colleges and universities enroll 18 percent.<sup>34</sup>

## Figure 6: The majority of Black college freshmen enroll in community colleges

*Distribution of Black first-time freshmen enrollment, by sector, fall 2013*



Source: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Note: For-profits include Title IV eligible four-year, two-year, and less than two-year colleges. Private, nonprofits include Title IV eligible four-year universities.

## Transfer student enrollment

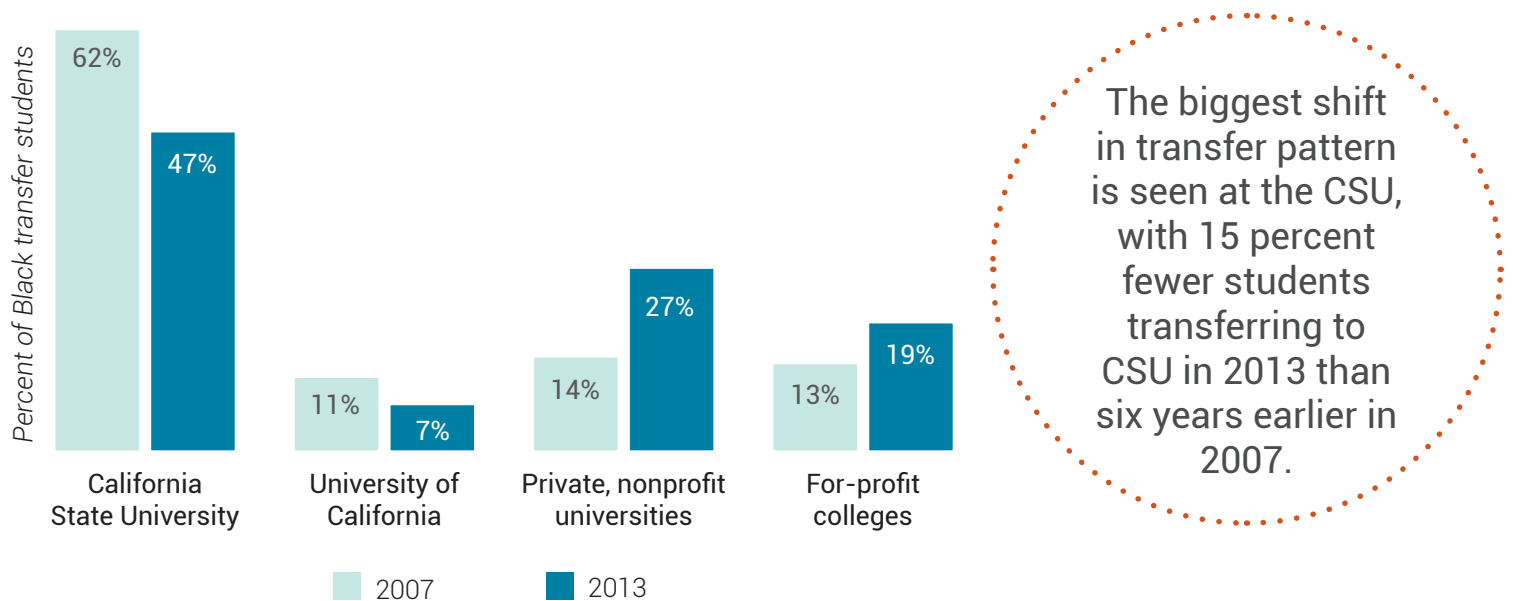
The effectiveness of California's community colleges is critical to the educational success of California as 31 percent of UC and 52 percent of CSU graduates started at a California community college.<sup>35</sup> Transfer remains an important pathway for Black students since almost two-thirds of Black college students begin their higher education at a California community college.

In 2013, approximately 4,800 Black students transferred to a four-year university in California, up 18 percent from 4,000 in 2007.<sup>36</sup> Figure 7 shows where Black transfer students enrolled in California in 2007 and 2013. In 2013, among Black undergraduates who transferred to a four-year university, about 47 percent transferred to the CSU, 27 percent continued their studies at private nonprofit institutions, about 19 percent transferred to a four-year for-profit college, and seven percent enrolled in the UC.

The transfer landscape has shifted substantially since 2007 when a larger proportion of Black students transferred to the public segments like CSU and UC rather than the private sector. The biggest shift in transfer pattern is seen at the CSU—in 2007, 62 percent of Black transfer students enrolled in the CSU, but in 2013 that proportion dropped by 15 percentage points to 47 percent. While the number of Black transfer students has remained relatively flat at CSU and UC between this timeframe, the data suggest that Black undergraduates are more likely to turn to the private sector, both nonprofit and for-profit, to continue their studies after community college. This decline in the proportion of students who enroll in California's public universities has been noted in previous research and is likely related to the severe decline in state funding the public segments experienced in the aftermath of the Great Recession, which officially started at the end of 2007.<sup>37</sup>

### Figure 7: Black transfer students are more likely to enroll in private nonprofit and for-profit universities today than they were six years ago

*Distribution of Black transfer students at four-year universities in California, by sector*



Source: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Note: For-profits include four-year colleges located in California. Private, nonprofits include Title IV eligible four-year universities.

Previous research has found that **among Black community college students who transfer, about 42 percent transfer to out-of-state universities**—a higher proportion compared to Whites (32 percent), Asian Pacific Islanders (17 percent) and Latinos (15 percent).<sup>38</sup> In 2014, approximately 200 California community college students transferred out of state to Historically Black Colleges and Universities

(HBCUs).<sup>39</sup> This figure will likely increase in the future as a result of an agreement between the California community college system and nine HBCUs that was signed in March 2015. This agreement, called HBCU Transfer Project, will allow community college students who complete certain academic requirements guaranteed transfer to one of the nine participating HBCUs.<sup>40</sup>

# BARRIERS TO COLLEGE ACCESS

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Not enough Black students are going to college and among those who do, the vast majority enroll in community colleges and for-profit colleges—open access institutions that do not turn away students at the undergraduate level. Part of the reason for this enrollment pattern is that many Black students face significant obstacles in accessing traditional four-year universities, many of which they have no control over. These barriers include: their family's level of income and education, and the quality of early, primary, and secondary education they receive, and access to A-G courses that are necessary to apply for CSU and UC admissions. These obstacles are difficult enough to overcome alone but when compounded with institutional pressures such as budget cuts, college enrollment reductions, and disproportionate impacts of certain admissions policies, the roadblocks can be extraordinarily difficult to surmount. Understanding the context around higher education in California and how it has affected Black students' access to college is critical to changing the narrative and creating a more promising future for all of California's students.

## Challenged from the start

Levels of parental education and income have a significant effect on whether students successfully obtain a college degree. In one study, low-income, first-generation students were nearly four times more likely to leave their studies after the first year than students who came from educated and wealthier families. After six years, only 11 percent of low-income, first-generation students had earned bachelor's

degrees compared with 55 percent of their more advantaged peers.<sup>41</sup> Further, low-income Black students are still much less likely to attend more selective universities than low-income White students,<sup>42</sup> and high-scoring Black students are still less likely to graduate than high-scoring White students.<sup>43</sup>

More than one in five Black families in California is living in poverty (21 percent)—more than three times the rate of White families (6 percent).<sup>44</sup> One national study of Black college students found that 65 percent were financially independent compared to 49 percent of White undergraduates.<sup>45</sup> Nationally, about 45 percent of Black college students have parents whose highest level of education is a high school diploma or less compared with 28 percent of White students.<sup>46</sup>

The cost of college and concern about paying for it can be major barriers for Black students. One study found that simply the perception of not being able to afford college negatively affected Black college enrollment.<sup>47</sup> However, **students who are knowledgeable about financial aid are more likely to go to college, enroll in a four-year university, and attend full-time.**<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, research indicates that Black students and their families do not receive enough or accurate information about financial aid in a timely manner or are deterred by the application process altogether.<sup>49</sup>

The reality is that many low-income and first-generation students start at a disadvantage in their pursuit of accessing and completing higher education; students who fit this profile

generally lack the “college knowledge” or social capital and access to resources that are typically available to students from higher-income or better-educated families. Many must also work to finance their academic endeavors and to support themselves and oftentimes, their families.

Given the barriers the majority of Black students face and these statistics, it comes as no surprise that educational outcomes for Black students are not higher. However, the good news is that students who fit these characteristics do not have to be destined to continue the cycle of low educational outcomes and poverty. A substantial amount of research indicates that interventions that are designed to prepare students for college early in their academic trajectory and provide support along their college careers have a significant positive effect on student enrollment, persistence and graduation.<sup>50</sup> Guidance and support help students determine the universities they should apply to, show them how to navigate the application process and supply information about the various financial aid options that might be available to them. One study in particular found that high-achieving low-income students who received information about colleges and financial aid were actually more likely to enroll in selective universities than their more advantaged counterparts.<sup>51</sup>

Without this kind of support, the process can be too complex to navigate alone and many first-generation, low-income students fall through the cracks. **This is why our state funding and policy priorities, along with the practices at colleges and universities are critical. We can create an environment in which the most American value of all—that everyone should have an equal opportunity to improve their lives—is actually realized for a greater number of Black residents in our state.**

## K-12 Academic preparation

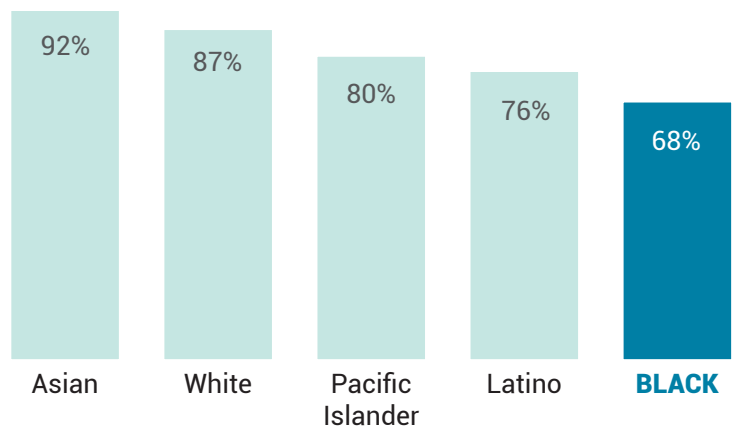
Black students are significantly more likely to attend schools (from elementary through high school) with lower academic quality, as measured by Academic Performance Index (API) scores.<sup>52</sup> In a study conducted by The Civil Rights Project by the University of California Los Angeles, almost half of Asian (49 percent) and 40 percent of White students attend the top 20 percent of schools in the state as determined by API ratings, compared with only 12 percent of Blacks and nine percent of Latinos.<sup>53</sup> Black students are also more likely to attend schools that do not offer high-level math and

science, Advanced Placement or honors-level courses,<sup>54</sup> that employ less qualified and less experienced teachers,<sup>55</sup> have fewer counselors,<sup>56</sup> and that have higher rates of expulsion, dropout, and poverty.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, Black students are more likely to receive a low standard of education and, as a result, are less likely to be college ready.

Given that the majority of Black California youth receive a lower-quality education from elementary through high school compared to White youth, it follows that California public high schools graduate Black students at lower rates than other racial/ethnic groups. Data from California's Department of Education show that in 2013-14, 68 percent of Black students graduated from high school within four years (Figure 8), an improvement of seven percentage points from 2009-10 (61 percent).

**Figure 8:** California public high schools graduate 68 percent of Black students within four years—19 percentage points lower than Whites

*California four-year high school graduation rates, 2013-14*



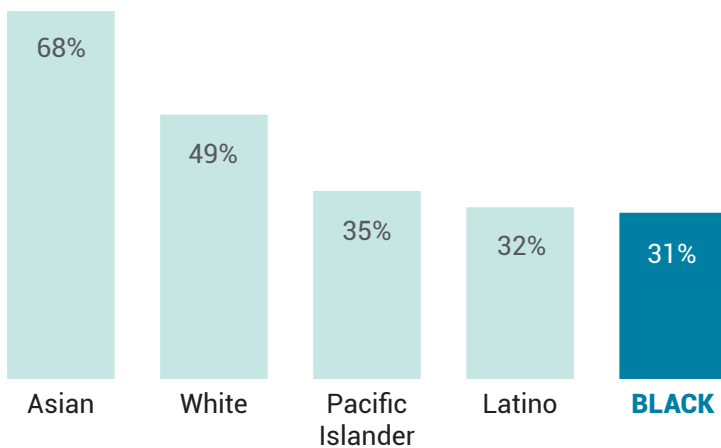
Source: California Department of Education, Cohort Outcome Data for the Class of 2013-14, Retrieved from Dataquest

Note: Data for Asian category includes Filipinos.

Even when Black students graduate from high school, only a small proportion are able to apply directly to a public four-year university because so few have had the opportunity, guidance and support to enroll in and pass the A-G courses. The A-G course sequence is a set of courses California high school students must take to be eligible to apply to four-year public universities like the California State University and the University of California systems. As open access institutions, California community colleges do not require prospective students to complete the A-G sequence for admission. In 2013-14, only 31 percent of Black high school graduates completed the A-G sequence, meaning only 8,100 Black high school graduates could apply to California's public four-year universities (Figure 9). Ten years ago in 2004-05, that figure was 25 percent. Progress has been very slow.

## Figure 9: Only three out of ten Black students complete A-G course sequence

California A-G completion rates, 2013-14



Source: California Department of Education, 12th Grade Graduates Completing all Courses Required for U.C. and/or C.S.U. Entrance, All Students, State of California 2013-14. Retrieved from Dataquest.

Note: Data for Asian category includes Filipinos.

Only 8,100 Black high school students completed the A-G course sequence in 2013-14

According to research presented in *Average Won't Do* from the Institute of Higher Education Leadership & Policy (IHELP)<sup>58</sup> at California State University Sacramento, California is among the lowest performing states in the country in terms of college preparation. Less than 25 percent of all 8th graders scored at or above the proficiency level on each of the four subjects of the National Assessment of Education Progress standardized test.<sup>59</sup> In 2014, only 25 percent of juniors who took the California State University Early Assessment Program (EAP) test were designated as "college ready" in English and 10 percent as "college ready" in math.<sup>60</sup> Proficiency rates are even lower for Black students who take the EAP, with 15 percent demonstrating readiness in college-level English and two percent demonstrating readiness in college-level math.<sup>61</sup>

## Decline in state funding

California's public colleges and universities experienced unprecedented budget cuts in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Between Fiscal Years 2006-07 and 2013-14, California's General Fund expenditures per student declined by 29 percent at CSU and 34 percent at UC.<sup>62</sup> According to a 2013 report from the Public Policy Institute of California, between 2007-08 and 2011-12, state funding per full-time equivalent student fell by 24 percent at California's Community Colleges.<sup>63</sup>

In response to these higher education budget cuts, California's colleges and universities increased tuition/fees and reduced enrollment/capacity, the effects of which resulted in many students being both priced out of and unable to access California's public higher education system.

## Increased tuition/fees

As a result of the decline in funding, tuition and fees increased substantially over the past decade. The average total tuition and fees paid by resident undergraduate students at UC, CSU, and CCC (for a full-time course load of 30 units per year) increased by approximately 150 percent between 2003-04 and 2014-15. Tuition/fees have increased from \$5,530 to \$13,200 at UC, and from \$2,572 to \$6,612 at CSU during this time period. The enrollment fee at California's community colleges increased from \$18 per unit in 2003-04 to \$46 per unit in 2014-15.<sup>64</sup>

While the total amount spent on each full-time equivalent student today is relatively the same as that spent about ten years ago, the simultaneous decrease in state funds per student and increase in tuition and fees mean that students and their families now share a larger burden in funding their education than they used to. Data from the State Higher Education Executive Officers 2013 report shows that in 2003, students and their families contributed 11 percent of total higher education funding through tuition and fees. By 2012, the students' share of total funding had increased to 25 percent. In 2013, that amount was reduced slightly to 23 percent.<sup>65</sup>

Research suggests that tuition increases can have a negative effect on college enrollment but that Black students are particularly sensitive to changes in tuition and access to financial aid,<sup>66</sup> and that students of color are *disproportionately* priced out by tuition increases, possibly as a result of "sticker shock" or insufficient access to financial aid.<sup>67</sup> A survey of more than 1,100 students in spring 2010 at one of CSU's largest campuses, Northridge, revealed students of color felt a disproportionate burden in their search for funding as a result of tuition/fee increases. For example, 53 percent of Blacks described significant efforts securing additional income compared to 32 percent of Whites; and 55 percent of Blacks reported needing to stretch financial aid compared to 33 percent of Whites.<sup>68</sup>

### **Reduced enrollment/capacity**

Because of the significant reduction in funds from the state, California's colleges and universities were also forced to cut costs by reducing their capacity in a number of different ways.

#### California Community Colleges

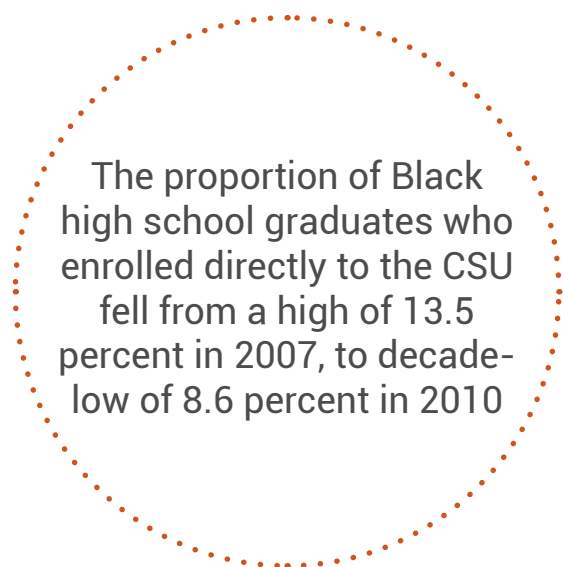
As an open-access institution, California's community colleges are unable to reduce enrollment targets. However, given this significant budget shortfall the community colleges responded by cutting the number of course section offerings by 21 percent between 2008-09 and 2011-12, reducing the number of full-time equivalent instructors, and increasing class sizes.<sup>69</sup> Because students couldn't access

the courses they needed, total enrollment at the community colleges declined by almost half a million in total (16 percent) and Black enrollment declined by 17 percent between 2008-09 and 2011-12.<sup>70</sup>

#### California State University

In response to budget cuts, the CSU declared systemwide "impaction" in 2008, claiming insufficient funds to serve the growing number of students who were applying, and announced that fewer students would be admitted in fall 2009.<sup>71</sup> California State University's policy of "impaction" negatively affected the number of students who were admitted and CSU leadership even expressed concerns about how "impaction" would affect students of color.<sup>72</sup> According to analysis from the Assembly Budget Committee, CSU campuses have denied admission to 109,500 eligible California residents since 2009.<sup>73</sup>

It is difficult to determine how "impaction" has directly affected enrollment beyond eligible students being denied for admission. Students may have decided not to apply after hearing of the policy. For example, between 2008 and 2009, application numbers declined by 15 percent for all groups combined (from 142,000 in 2008 to 121,100 in 2009) and by 38 percent for Blacks (from 10,800 in 2008 to 6,700 in 2009).<sup>74</sup> Moreover, students may have applied but were denied admission even though they were eligible, they may have been admitted but not to their campus of choice and thus, decided not to enroll altogether.<sup>75</sup>





An examination of the proportion of high school graduates who enroll directly in the CSU reveals a potentially troubling finding around the same time as the budget cuts and declaration of “impaction.” Enrollment rates to CSU directly from high school declined for all groups after 2007, but Blacks experienced the sharpest decline—the proportion of Black high school graduates who enrolled directly to the CSU fell from a high of 13.5 percent in 2007, to decade-low of 8.6 percent in 2010, and then increased slightly to 8.9 percent in 2012, the latest data available (Figure 10).

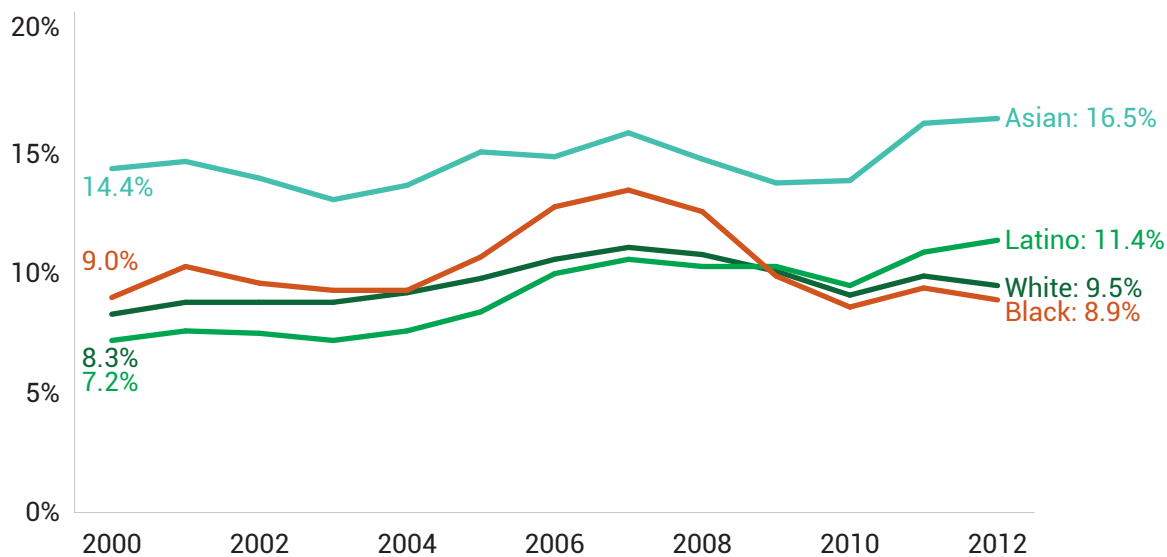
The number of Black freshmen enrolling in the CSU between 2004 and 2013 has remained relatively flat (only increased by four percent) while enrollment for all groups combined has increased by 50 percent.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, Black students composed 6.6 percent of CSU’s freshman class in 2004, then increased to a decade-high of 7.4 percent in 2007, and has

now fallen to 4.6 percent in 2013.<sup>77</sup> Freshman enrollment for Black students has declined in the past decade at nine out of CSU’s 23 campuses—Dominguez Hills, Fresno, Fullerton, Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Jose, San Francisco, and Stanislaus—which happen to be among the largest campuses in the system and are located in areas with the largest numbers of Black residents.<sup>78</sup>

In light of the federal changes in reporting student race and ethnicity, it is possible that the decline in Black enrollment at the CSU could be partially attributed to Blacks being able to self-identify as multi-racial or Hispanic. Additional research is needed to fully understand the effects of the reporting changes in race and ethnicity on Black enrollment figures at CSU.

**Figure 10:** Black enrollment from high school to CSU peaked in 2007 and then sharply declined

*Percent of high school graduates who directly enroll in the CSU*



Source: California State University, Division of Analytic Studies. Statistical Reports: CSU New Student Enrollments, Fall 2013 Profile.

## University of California

In the case of the University of California, while the UC has managed to maintain *overall* enrollment levels during the recession, in the past five years California-resident enrollment has remained flat, while the number of nonresidents has increased by 337 percent from almost 1,800 in 2009-10 to 7,700 in 2014-15.<sup>79</sup> As a public system of higher education, UC's tuition for non-California residents is significantly higher than it is for residents. Therefore, the more out-of-state and international students that enroll translates into additional revenue for the cash-strapped system.

At the time of publication, Governor Brown had just released his May Revise of the 2015-16 Budget. Following negotiations with UC President Napolitano, the budget proposal offered more funding to the UC in exchange for a freeze on tuition through 2016-17 and an improvement in accepting transfer students from community colleges, among other issues. The proposed budget did not provide for additional enrollment funding and debates on resident enrollment levels are pending.<sup>80</sup> While it is difficult to predict how potential budget scenarios might affect Black students in particular, if additional California residents are not served by the UC there would certainly be cause for concern given that Black students are already significantly underrepresented within the system.

## Ban on affirmative action

Black students are significantly underrepresented at the University of California system relative to their population and this underrepresentation is most pronounced at UC Berkeley, UC Los Angeles (UCLA), and UC San Diego (UCSD), regions where most of the Black population is concentrated.

Proposition 209 was a California ballot proposition approved by voters in November 1996 that amended the state constitution to prohibit state government institutions from considering race, sex or ethnicity in the areas of public employment, contracting and education. An examination of two decades of data from the UC system from 1994 to 2014 revealed some troubling findings and patterns of decreasing

opportunity and participation of Black students at the UC after Prop 209 was implemented.<sup>81</sup>

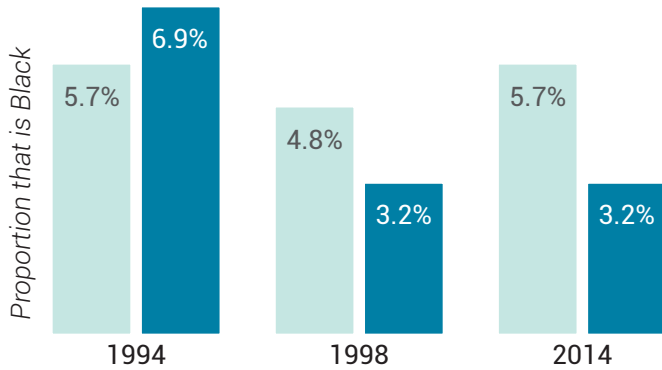
- Admission rates<sup>82</sup> for Black applicants from 1994 to 2014 have declined by:
  - » 41 points at UC Berkeley, compared with 25 points for all applicants combined
  - » 46 points at UCLA, compared with 34 points for all applicants combined
  - » 44 points at UCSD, compared with 35 points for all applicants combined
- In 2014, at least two-thirds of Black applicants were denied admission to six of UC's nine undergraduate campuses: Berkeley, Los Angeles, San Diego, Davis, Irvine and Santa Barbara. For comparison, at least two-thirds of White applicants were denied admission to only *three* campuses.<sup>83</sup>

Black representation at the UC has not increased from where it was twenty years ago: in 1994 Blacks made up 4.4 percent of all freshmen at the UC compared to 4.0 percent in 2014.<sup>84</sup> At the campus level, prior to Prop 209, in 1994, Blacks made up 5.7 percent of all applicants to UC Berkeley but 6.9 percent of all admits—they were overrepresented in the admission pool relative to their application numbers (Figure 11). However, in 1998, the first freshman class that was admitted under Prop 209, we see a reversal—Blacks made up 4.8 percent of all applicants but only 3.2 percent of all those who were admitted—they are now *underrepresented* in the admission pool relative to their application numbers. In 2013, that gap widened further. This same phenomenon of the proportion of Blacks decreasing from the application to admission pipeline between 1994 and 1998 is also witnessed at UCLA.

Black  
representation at  
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where it was  
twenty years ago

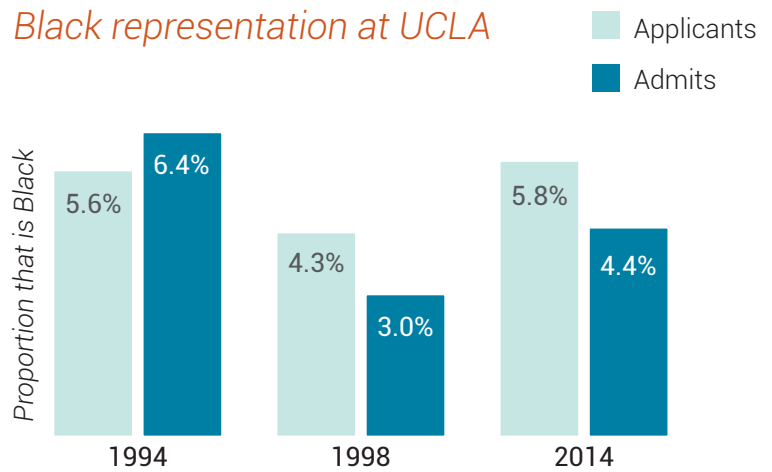
## Figure 11: After implementation of Prop 209, Blacks make up a larger proportion of applicants than admits at UC Berkeley and UCLA

*Black representation at UC Berkeley*



Source: University of California Office of the President.

*Black representation at UCLA*



Source: University of California Office of the President.

This history of underrepresentation at the University of California and the ban on affirmative action have contributed to a negative campus experience for many Black students at the UC. In general, Black students, more than any other group, reported feelings of isolation and discrimination at their respective UC campuses. The UC surveyed students in spring 2012, most recent data available, about campus climate and culture. The findings for Black students are especially troubling:

- Only 45 percent of Black students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that “students of my race/ethnicity are respected at this campus” system wide.<sup>85</sup>

- Overall, 79 percent of the UC community feels comfortable with their campus climate compared with 65 percent of Black respondents (includes faculty, staff, undergraduate students, and graduate students)—the lowest rate except for American Indian students.<sup>86</sup>
- Almost 40 percent of Black respondents (includes faculty, staff, undergraduate students, and graduate students) experienced exclusionary behavior within the last year compared with 24 percent of the overall UC community.<sup>87</sup>



# COLLEGE COMPLETION

California's colleges and universities graduate Black students at low rates

## California Community Colleges

According to the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard, fewer than half (47 percent) of all students complete a degree, certificate or transfer to a four-year university within six years. For Black students, that rate is 37 percent (Figure 12). Unfortunately, data within the traditional two-year or even the four-year timeframe is not available. Completion rates for all groups combined and for Black students have not improved over the past five years.

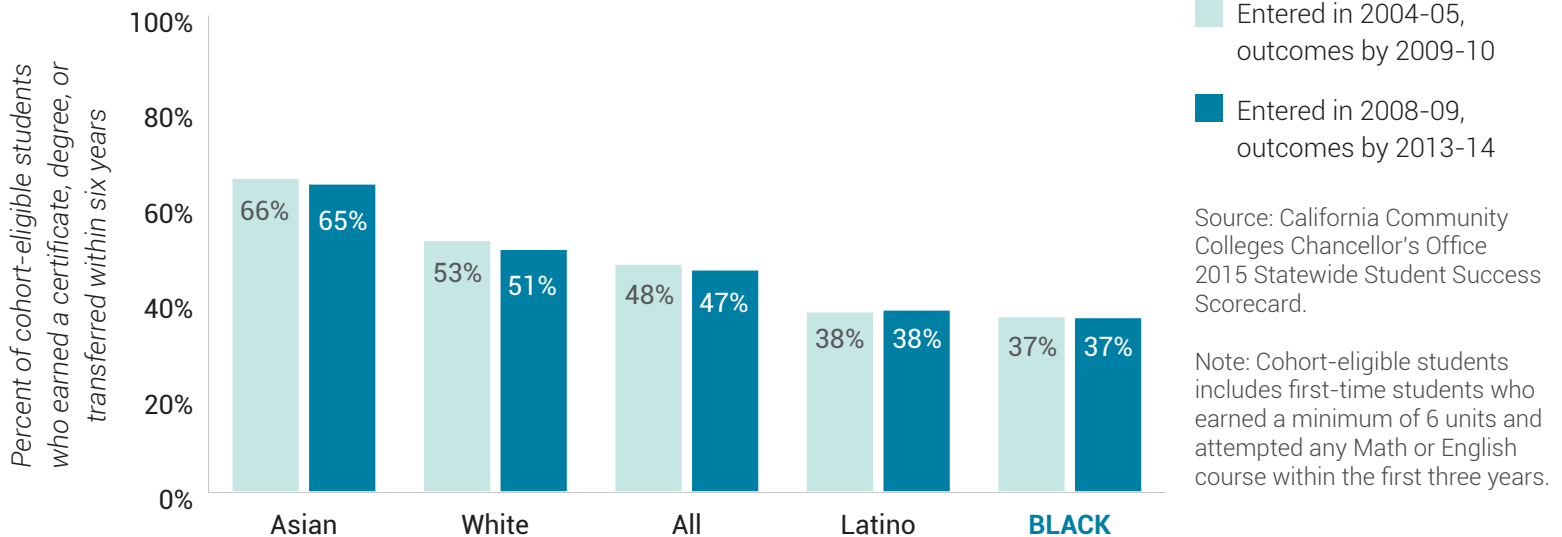
As reported in *Average Won't Do*, the number of credentials and degrees produced per 100 undergraduates enrolled in California's community colleges is among the lowest in the country. On average, about nine certificates and degrees were awarded per 100 enrolled undergraduates in 2012. For

Black students, that figure is 8.2—the same level from ten years ago, indicating that no progress has been made.<sup>88</sup>

National research indicates that more than 80 percent of community college students intend to earn at least a bachelor's degree.<sup>89</sup> However, data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office reports that only about 38 percent of all California community college students—and 34 percent of Black students—actually transferred to a four-year university within six years.<sup>90</sup> Given that California's community colleges are the first step for many students who want a four-year degree, and, according to the Master Plan, one of the community college system's most critical missions is to serve as a transfer pathway so students can earn bachelor's degrees—the promise of transfer is failing.<sup>91</sup>

**Figure 12:** California Community Colleges award a certificate, degree or transfer to 37 percent of Black students

### California Community College six-year completion rates



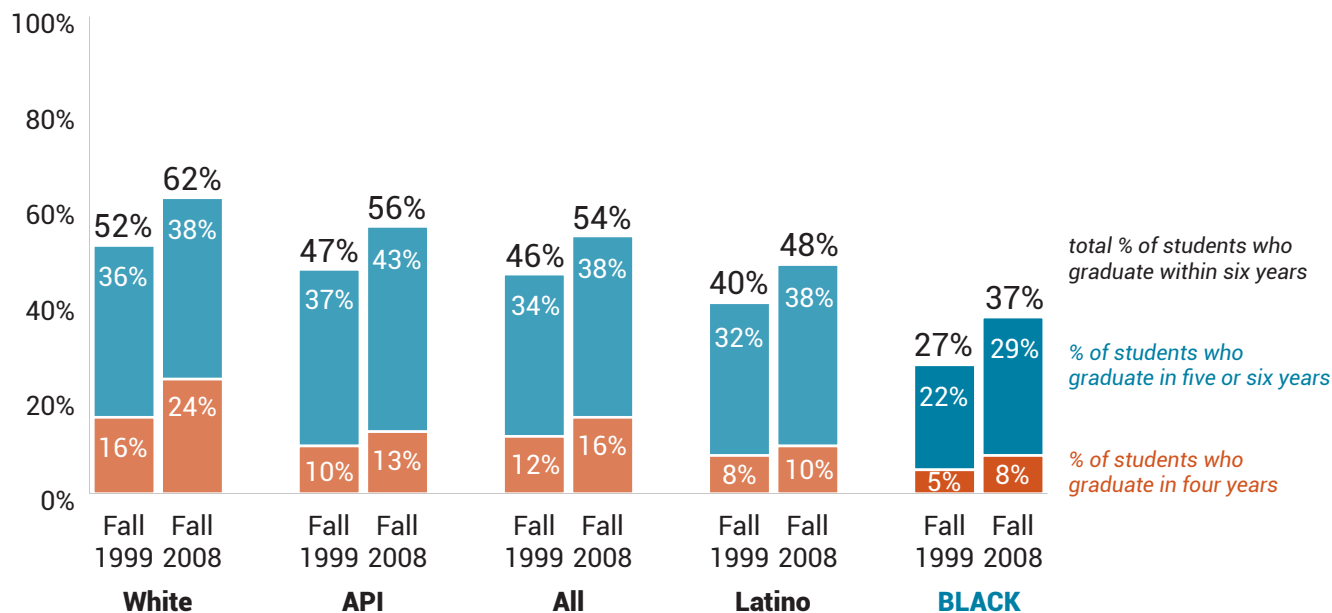
## California State University system

The California State University system (CSU) has gradually improved its graduation rates in the past decade. Both four- and six-year graduation rates for freshmen are higher for all groups today than they were a decade ago. While progress has been made, there is still much work to do. Four-year graduation rates are too low for all groups. CSU graduated fewer than two out of ten freshmen who enrolled in fall 2008 within the traditional four-year timeframe and only eight percent of Black freshmen from the same cohort (Figure 13).<sup>92</sup> Six-year graduation rates are higher, but CSU will still graduate only about 37 percent of Black freshmen within that timeframe.

In addition to CSU's low graduation rates for all groups, gaps across racial/ethnic groups persist. The four-year graduation rate gap between White and Black students increased by five percentage points to a 16-point gap for the cohort enrolling in fall 2008 from an 11-point gap for the freshman cohort enrolling in fall 1999. The six-year graduation rate gap between White and Black students decreased slightly from a 25-point gap among the freshman cohort enrolling in fall 1999 to a 24-point gap for the cohort enrolling in 2008.

**Figure 13:** CSU graduates 8 percent of Black freshmen within four years; 37 percent within six years

*CSU freshmen four- and six-year graduation rates*



Source: Author's analysis of data from CSU Division of Analytic Studies. Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange.

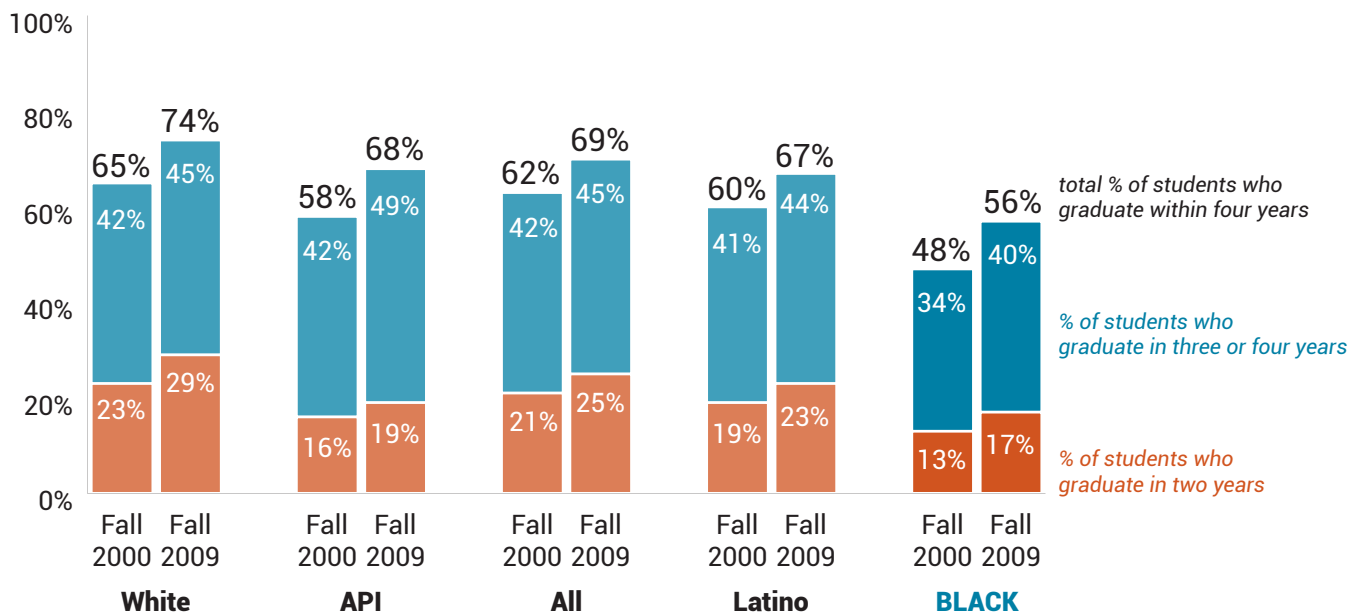
Note: The horizontal axis notes the entering year of a cohort. For students who entered in fall 1999, four-year outcomes are by 2002-03 and six-year outcomes are by 2004-05. For students who entered in fall 2008, four-year outcomes are by 2011-12 and six-year outcomes are by 2013-14. Figures may not sum to totals because of rounding.

CSU has also improved its graduation rates for transfer students over the past decade (Figure 14). CSU graduated 25 percent of California community college students who transferred to CSU in fall 2009 within two years and about 69 percent within four years. Black students in this same cohort still had lower outcomes than the average, with 17 and 57 percent, graduating within two- and four-years,

respectively.<sup>93</sup> The two-year graduation gap between White and Black students increased from a 10-point gap for the transfer cohort enrolling in fall 2000 to a 12-point gap for the cohort enrolling in fall 2009. The four-year graduation gap between White and Black students increased slightly from 17 points to 18 points for the same cohorts.

**Figure 14:** CSU graduates 17 percent of Black transfer students within two years; 56 percent within four years

*CSU two- and four-year transfer graduation rates*



Source: Author's analysis of data from CSU Division of Analytic Studies. Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange.

Note: The horizontal axis notes the entering year of a cohort. For students who entered in 2000-01, two-year outcomes are by 2001-02 and four-year outcomes are by 2003-04. For students who entered in 2009-10, two-year outcomes are by 2010-11 and four-year outcomes are by 2012-13. Figures may not sum to totals because of rounding.

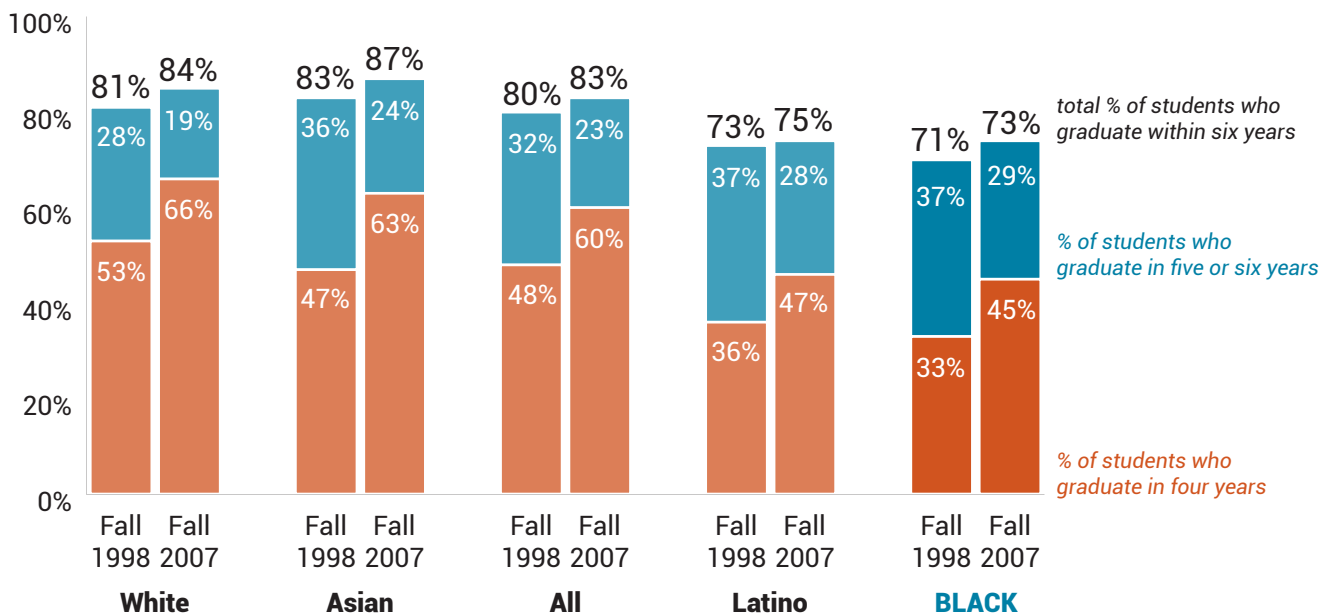
## University of California system

The University of California system (UC) has also improved its four- and six-year graduation rates for all freshmen over the past decade.<sup>94</sup> UC graduated 60 percent of the freshmen who enrolled in fall 2007 within four years and 83 percent within six years (Figure 15).<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, UC graduated its Black freshmen at lower rates—45 and 74 percent within four and six years, respectively. While graduation rates for

Black students have improved in the past ten years, **the gap between Black and White students, has increased slightly from 20 points among the cohort enrolling in fall 1998 to 21 points among the cohort enrolling in fall 2007 and the six-year graduation gap has barely budged** from 10 points to 11 points for the cohorts enrolling in fall 1998 and fall 2007, respectively.

**Figure 15:** UC graduates 45 percent of Black freshmen within four years; 73 percent within six years

*UC freshmen four- and six-year graduation rates*



Source: Author's analysis of data from UC Office of the President.

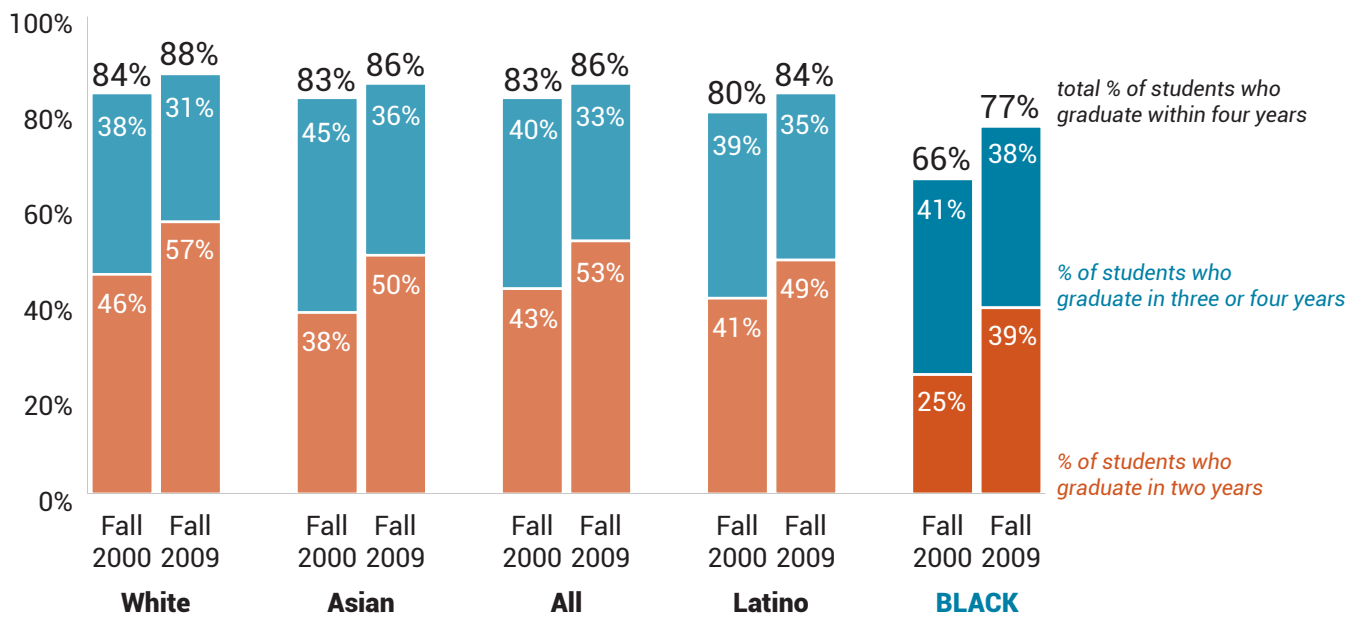
Note: The horizontal axis notes the entering year of a cohort. For students who entered in 1998-99, four-year outcomes are by 2001-02 and six-year outcomes are by 2003-04. For students who entered in 2007-08, four-year outcomes are by 2010-11 and six-year outcomes are by 2012-13. Figures may not sum to totals because of rounding.

UC graduated slightly more than half (53 percent) of transfer students enrolling in fall 2009 within two years and the vast majority, 86 percent, within four years (Figure 16).<sup>96</sup> The UC graduates Black transfer students at rates lower than the average—39 percent within two years and 77 percent within four years. The good news is that the two-year graduation

rate gap between White and Black transfer students has decreased slightly from a gap of 21 points among transfer students enrolling in fall 2000 to 18 points among the cohort enrolling in fall 2009 and the four-year gap has decreased from 18 points to 11 points for the same cohorts.

**Figure 16:** UC graduates 39 percent of Black transfer students within two years; 77 percent within four years

*UC two- and four-year transfer graduation rates*



Source: Author's analysis of data from UC Office of the President.

Note: the horizontal axis notes the entering year of a cohort. For students who entered in fall 2000, two-year outcomes are by 2001-02 and four-year outcomes are by 2003-04. For students who entered in fall 2009, two-year outcomes are by 2010-11 and four-year outcomes are by 2012-13.



# BARRIERS TO COLLEGE COMPLETION

While some progress has been made in improving graduation rates for Black students, issues still remain. The first major hurdle to attaining a college degree is enrolling. The second is to persist through to graduation day. Unfortunately, the fact that Black adults are most likely to have some college education but no degree and have lower graduation rates than other groups is testimony to the fact that the dream of a college degree is not realized for many Black students—even for those who have crossed the first hurdle and arrived on campus.

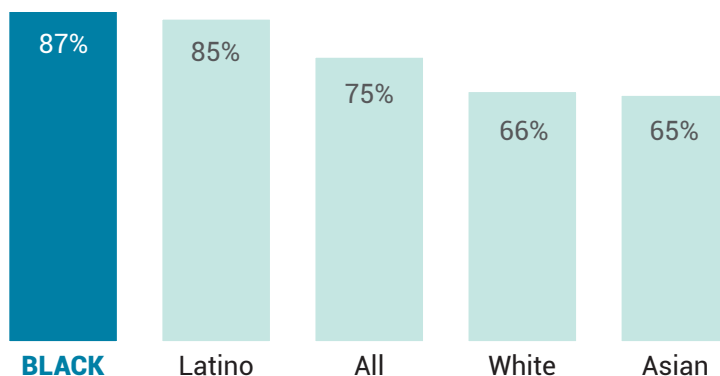
A number of interrelated issues contribute to students leaving college before crossing the graduation stage. In order to ensure that more Black students complete college with a degree, significant barriers to graduation must be addressed: (1) the current method of assessing college readiness and bringing students to college-level proficiency; (2) part-time college enrollment; (3) insufficient levels of financial aid; and (4) inadequate guidance to help students succeed.

## Pre-college level coursework

When students apply to a community college in California they are required to take assessment tests in English and math, the results of which determine their level of proficiency or college readiness in that particular subject.<sup>97</sup> If students do not demonstrate college readiness on these assessment tests, they are required to take pre-college level courses (also known as basic skills, remedial, or developmental education). Depending on the campus, students can be placed from one to four levels below college-level and are required to take each course level sequentially before they can begin college-level coursework in that subject. For example, if a student is placed four levels below college-level they will have to take four courses, one per semester, before they can begin to earn college credit in those subjects, the equivalent of two years on a semester calendar.

Federal data indicate that 68 percent of community college students nationwide take at least one pre-college level course.<sup>104</sup> Within California's community colleges, where nearly two-thirds of California's undergraduate students are enrolled, 75 percent of incoming students overall and 87 percent of incoming Black students are required to take pre-college level courses (Figure 17).<sup>105</sup> In one cohort of students who first enrolled in 2008-09, 157,400 California community college students overall—13,525 of them Black—were placed into pre-college level coursework.<sup>106</sup>

**Figure 17:** Almost nine out of ten Black community college students are placed in to pre-college level coursework



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard

Note: Cohort includes first-time students with minimum of 6 units earned who attempted any Math or English in the first three years.

# ASSESSMENT TESTS

Currently, California community colleges are not required to prepare students for assessment tests, the tests generally vary by campus, and students are not allowed to retake tests within a one-year period.<sup>98</sup> Unfortunately, many students are not aware of the importance of these tests or the impact that they have on their ability to earn a certificate, degree, or transfer in a timely manner.<sup>99</sup> Worst of all, research from the Community College Research Center at Columbia University found that assessment tests inaccurately place students into pre-college level coursework.<sup>100</sup>

In order to address the issues associated with these placement tests, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office developed the Common Assessment Initiative (CAI).<sup>101</sup> This initiative will develop a Common Assessment System (CAS) for all California community colleges, contain test preparation, test delivery, test administration, data collection, and course placement guidance. The goal is ultimately to increase the effectiveness and accuracy of test placement, lower remediation rates, increase awareness of importance of assessment tests and improved student participation, and reduce the cost of assessment-related activities. For more information, please visit the Common Assessment Initiative website at <http://cccassess.org/>.

Thus far, individual California community college campuses have been leading their own initiatives to redesign the assessment process. One innovative campus in particular, Long Beach City College, began experimenting with using multiple measures such as Grade Point Average (GPA) or high school transcripts to assess students' level of proficiency instead of placement tests alone. The results are impressive,<sup>102</sup> and indicate that use of multiple measures is a better indicator of how well students will perform in college-level work.<sup>103</sup> As part of systemwide efforts to redesign the assessment process, Educational Results Partnerships' system Cal-PASS Plus and the RP Group, with support from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, are leading an initiative called the Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP). This initiative will create a data warehouse that collects, stores and analyzes multiple measures, including high school transcript and test data. Additionally, placement test data for each community college will be stored. For more information, please visit the MMAP website at <http://rpgroup.org/projects/multiple-measures-assessment-project>.

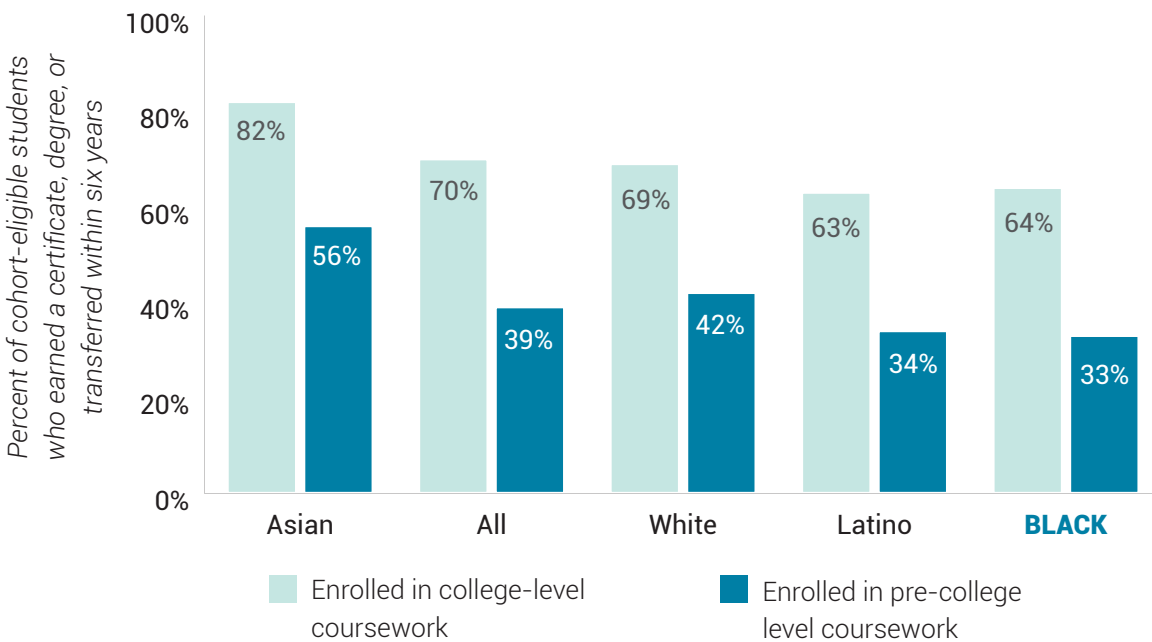


These numbers are concerning for many reasons. The most significant is that the probability of students completing their pre-college level course sequence to go on to college-level coursework is very low. For example, of Black students who attempted a pre-college level English and math course, only 28 and 17 percent, respectively, persisted through the entire pre-college level coursework sequence to complete a college-level course in the same subject within six years.<sup>107</sup> In other words, **among the approximately 19,600 Black students who attempted a pre-college level English course for the first time in 2008-09, 14,000 of them never made it to a college-level English course; and among the 20,600 students who took a pre-college level math course for the first time, nearly 17,000 of them never made it to college-level math.**<sup>108</sup>

Even worse, students who begin their higher education studies in pre-college level work are less likely to ever make it to the graduation stage. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard shows that 64 percent of Black students who enrolled in college-level courses upon entry in college finished a degree, certificate or transferred within six years compared with only 33 percent who enrolled in pre-college level courses (Figure 18).<sup>109</sup> As noted earlier, 87 percent of Black students at California's community colleges enroll in pre-college level coursework. Among them, approximately two-thirds will not earn an award or transfer within six years—for one cohort tracked through 2014 that was the equivalent of 9,075 Black students. If Black students who took pre-college level courses graduated at the same rate as those who did not, an *additional* 4,150 Black community college students (within one cohort alone) would have earned a degree or certificate or transferred to a four-year university in 2014.<sup>110</sup>

## Figure 18: The majority of students who enroll in pre-college level coursework do not complete

*California Community College six-year completion rates for 2008-09 cohort, by enrollment in pre-college level coursework*



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard

Note: Cohort-eligible students includes first-time students who earned a minimum of 6 units and attempted any Math or English course within the first three years.

This challenge of assessing college readiness and bringing students up to college-level is not just an issue at the community colleges. CSU policy requires incoming freshmen demonstrate proficiency in English and math before they can enroll in credit-bearing college-level courses in those subjects. Proficiency is based on performance on standardized tests or on the CSU placement tests.<sup>111</sup> At the CSU, 43 percent of all incoming freshmen in fall 2013 were tested as not proficient in math, English, or both, compared with 65 percent of Black freshmen.<sup>112</sup> Students at CSU are also required to take pre-college level courses before they can begin college-level coursework in that subject—and they must pass the courses within one year or risk being disenrolled.<sup>113</sup> While data by race/ethnicity is not provided, the CSU reports that 85 percent of all students who needed remediation in fall 2013 gained proficiency before their second year, 11 percent did not complete remediation and were disenrolled, three percent did not complete remediation but were still allowed to enroll, and one percent left campus without completing remediation.<sup>114</sup>

Credits earned in pre-college level coursework at both the community colleges and CSU are not counted toward a degree, extend the time students are enrolled in college and costs both students and the state money. National research estimates that remedial coursework costs \$7 billion annually.<sup>115</sup> Given the significant cost, the low likelihood of completion and placement tests that do not consistently or accurately assess student proficiency, it is imperative that the entire system of assessment and delivery of pre-college level coursework be redesigned. The current method is not working and is quite costly to both the state and students.

## Part-time enrollment

A significant barrier to graduation is the practice of enrolling in college less than full-time (fewer than 15 credits per semester or 30 credits per year). Complete College America found that graduation rates for students who attend college part-time are lower than for students who enroll full-time, even when given twice as long to graduate.<sup>116</sup> At California's community colleges, only eight percent of Black students enroll in 15 credits or more per semester—slightly lower than the rate for all students combined (nine percent).<sup>117</sup> At CSU, approximately 16 percent of Black students take at least 12 credits per semester (data on 15 or more credit enrollment is not available)—a rate that is consistent with all other groups.<sup>118</sup>

The combination of the increase in tuition/fees, insufficient financial aid, poor college guidance/advising, and higher rates of poverty all contribute to students enrolling in college less than full-time in order to work,<sup>119</sup> and in general, Black students are more likely to be enrolled part-time than their White counterparts.<sup>120</sup> Essentially, students are forced to “choose” between either working to earn money to take care of themselves and their families or taking additional courses to move along in their degree programs. Students who work may spend less time on campus attending classes and studying. Research suggests that working excessive hours while enrolled in college can significantly extend the time it takes to earn a degree,<sup>121</sup> and it is widely established that the longer students take to complete their degree programs, the less likely they are to ever graduate.<sup>122</sup>

## Insufficient financial aid

As a result of higher education budget cuts after 2007, colleges and universities increased tuition and fees in order to make up for lost state funding. Higher tuition and fees for students means that a larger number and proportion of students require financial aid to fund their college education. Financial aid comes in the form of grants and loans. Grants come in the form of need-based and merit-based aid and do not need to be repaid, whereas loans do. In order to access Federal and most state-funded grants and loans, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

In the state of California, the California Student Aid Commission serves as the principal agency responsible for administering the many state financial aid programs, including the Cal Grant program. Students must complete the FAFSA in order to receive Cal Grants.<sup>123</sup> Cal Grants provide \$1.8 billion in need-based grants to students. Award amounts for students vary by the type of college attended, as well as the type of Cal Grant program for which students qualify. There are three types of Cal Grant awards: Cal Grant A is used for tuition and fees, Cal Grant B is used for indirect higher education costs such as books, housing, transportation; and Cal Grant C is for students who attend occupational or career colleges. Competitive Cal grants are awarded to students who miss the Cal Grant filing deadline or enroll in college more than one year after completing high school. These awards are not guaranteed and only a limited number are available each year.

The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) reports that among those who file a FAFSA, only 16 percent of very low-income Black students receive a Cal Grant award, compared to the California average of 23 percent. This low receipt rate is likely due to the fact that there is a significant shortage of the number of competitive Cal Grant awards relative to the number of eligible applicants who apply for them. For example, in 2014-15, there was only one competitive Cal Grant award available for every 17 eligible applicants.<sup>126</sup> Since almost two-thirds of Black students attend community colleges, where competition for Cal Grant awards is greatest, it is no surprise that not all Black students who need Cal Grants receive them. Further, 82 percent of Black students who do receive a Cal Grant get the Cal Grant B award, the value of which has not kept up with inflation and which is now one-seventh the size of the maximum Cal Grant A award.<sup>127</sup>

Unfortunately, many students, particularly Blacks, do not complete the FAFSA and file for a Cal Grant award, even though they are eligible. A national study found that while 62 percent of Black students receive some Pell support, only 14 percent of independent Black students receive the maximum Pell Grant award.<sup>128</sup> According to TICAS, 45 percent of California community colleges students completed the FAFSA in 2012-13 compared with 54 percent of community college students nationally.<sup>129</sup> These low application rates come at a cost to students: in 2009-10 about half a million California community college students eligible to receive federal or institutional grant aid left almost \$500 million on the table in Pell grants alone.<sup>130</sup>

## Insufficient guidance

Attaining a college degree can be complicated and many students require guidance navigating the process. Students may need assistance with determining a clear degree plan; understanding the number of required credits to complete each semester in order to graduate and to do so in a timely manner; and—in the case of most students—how to successfully transfer from a community college to a four-year university, and to do so without losing valuable credits.<sup>131</sup>

Quality advising is vital to these processes and to student success yet remains a rarity for most students. The median student-counselor ratio among the CSU campuses is 2,691 to 1—at California State University Los Angeles the ratio is 7,900 to 1—significantly above the recommended ratio of 1,500 to 1.<sup>132</sup> The median student-counselor ratio at California's community colleges is 756 to 1,<sup>133</sup> significantly above the recommended ratio of 370 to 1.<sup>134</sup> This limited counseling can leave students feeling confused and without a clear understanding of degree requirements and without a clear pathway to degree.<sup>135</sup>



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Closing gaps in access and success across racial/ethnic groups is critical for California. As a majority-minority state, the success of all racial/ethnic groups is essential for a strong economy and vibrant civil society.

The Campaign for College Opportunity proposes the following recommendations for policymakers, college leaders, and students and families so that we can secure California's economic future by significantly improving our education system for all Californians and specifically increasing college enrollment and graduation among Black students. Our success in doing so not only strengthens the opportunity and future of Black Californians, but that of our state, and especially impacts key regions where many Blacks live.

## 1. Create a statewide plan for higher education.

*A statewide plan would allow California to be intentional about closing persistent educational gaps among racial/ethnic groups and improve rates of college readiness, preparation, and graduation for all groups, particularly Blacks.*

- Establish an independent higher education coordinating body to focus on developing and gaining broad commitment to long-term equity goals for the state and to monitor progress toward benchmarks and completion goals in a public and transparent way.
- Establish statewide goals for improving college readiness: proficiency tests, high school graduation rates, and A-G curriculum with targeted campaigns/efforts specific to racial/ethnic groups. For example, efforts for Black students could revolve around improved outreach on A-G completion, increased college knowledge on the types of colleges/universities available (i.e. the pros and cons of for-profit colleges), financial aid education, etc.

- Establish statewide and college-by-college benchmarks for increasing graduation rates and decreasing the number of students and amount of time spent in pre-college level courses with targeted campaigns/efforts specific to racial/ethnic groups.

## 2. Ensure colleges successfully move students through pre-college level courses, quickly and with improved retention rates.

*Pre-college level work is one of the biggest determinants in whether students graduate from college. Given that the majority of Black students test in to pre-college level coursework, this is a critical issue in college completion.*

- Use comprehensive and consistent assessment practices, including multiple measures to appropriately place incoming students in pre-college level coursework. Research has shown that standard assessment tests may not be effective in gauging how well a student will perform or their level of readiness.<sup>136</sup> Instead, some colleges are beginning to use high school GPA or SAT or AP test scores as a more accurate indicator of college readiness.
- Redesign pre-college level course delivery to help more students successfully persist through to college-level work; including scaling promising accelerated, contextualized and compressed delivery methods. The more pre-college level courses students must take, the less likely they are to ever complete college-level English or math, much less graduate. Innovative delivery methods allow students to complete requirements faster than in traditional sequence and connect pre-college level courses to specific degree programs so they serve as “on ramps.”

### 3. Provide clear transfer pathways to four-year degrees.

*Only 35 percent of Black California community college students transfer to a four-year university within six years. Given that the majority of California's students begin at community college and that those who do transfer graduate with a bachelor's degree at high rates, improved transfer rates would substantially increase the number of baccalaureate degree-holders in the state.*

- Implement all major/concentration pathways under the Associate Degree for Transfer program at each community college and California State University campus. Doing so will streamline the process of transferring from a California Community College to the California State University System by only requiring 60 credits and awarding an associate degree. It is estimated that this program will save approximately \$160 million and increase enrollment by 40,000 community college students and 14,000 California State University students annually.<sup>137</sup>
- Expand Associate Degree for Transfer program to include access to the University of California system. In 2012-13, 20 percent of UC's 14,000 incoming transfer students came from only five community colleges and just over half came from 17 of the 112 community colleges in the state.<sup>138</sup> Additionally, incoming transfer students are generally less diverse than incoming freshmen, which is counterintuitive given the racial/ethnic composition of California's community colleges.<sup>139</sup> More students, from every region of California, should have a clearer pathway and equal opportunity to attend California's premier public research university.

### 4. Identify and re-enroll adults with some college but no certificate or degree.

*California currently does not have a statewide funding or policy strategy targeted towards Returning Adults and Black adults are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to have some college but no degree. As a result, they are more likely to have higher levels of unemployment, lower wages, and higher rates of default on student loan debt.*

- Colleges and universities should use their data collection system along with the National Student Clearinghouse StudentTracker service to identify former students who have some college credit but no credential or degree. Furthermore, colleges and universities should develop and implement outreach plans with information specific to student needs in order to encourage former students to re-enroll and complete their program of study.
- Colleges and universities should develop targeted programs that support this student population as they return to their studies. Interventions can include shortening degree programs appropriately, providing clear credit transfer agreements, and offering evening and weekend classes at the times (e.g. evenings and weekends) and in formats (e.g. in six-week courses) consistent with the needs and preferences of working adults.

### 5. Expand college knowledge in middle and high school and invest in support services students need to succeed.

*Underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income students, the majority in California today, often face numerous challenges related to college enrollment and graduation. Research indicates that supporting these students before and through college vastly improves their success rates. California Community Colleges' Education Planning Initiative (EPI), which will develop a student services portal, is an excellent start to ensuring more students are guided in their education goals and progress.*

- Scale proven and successful efforts to improve college knowledge among students and their families. Efforts should educate students and their parents, as early as middle school, about financial aid options, college eligibility criteria, the differences among colleges, and the college application process.
- Evaluate the implementation of the EPI program to ensure that all students are aware of and have access to this tool and are using it consistently for educational planning, degree tracking, and transfer.

## 6. Fund colleges for both enrollment growth and successful outcomes.

*Some California residents who are eligible for admission to the CSU and UC are denied spots as a result of insufficient state funding.*

- The state must provide additional funding for the CSU and UC to ensure all eligible Californians have a spot in college and so that students today do not face tougher admissions standards than previous generations.
- Monitor and evaluate Awards for Innovation in Higher Education program which seeks to promote student success (e.g., reducing time-to-degree, increased retention and graduation rates) to determine if their effectiveness in closing racial/ethnic gaps in student success.

## 7. Strengthen financial support options for low-to moderate-income college students.

*Significant budget cuts to higher education have resulted in increased costs for students and their families. Many Californians are unaware of their financial aid options and do not apply, despite being eligible, leaving money on the table.*

- Increase the number of students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by educating middle and high school students and their parents early and often about financial aid and the FAFSA. Ensure students maximize their federal and state financial aid and work-study offers by completing the FAFSA and filing for a Cal Grant.

- Serve more Cal Grant eligible students. In 2014-15, there was only one competitive Cal Grant available for every 17 eligible students.<sup>140</sup> California community college students are the least likely to receive a Cal Grant but they are the ones who often need it the most.<sup>141</sup>

## 8. Allow California's public universities to use race/ethnicity as one of many factors in weighing an applicants' qualifications for admission.

*Black students are substantially underrepresented in higher education, especially at the University of California—the state has broken its promise to provide access to a quality higher education for all of its residents. Given California's racial/ethnic diversity, if the state plans to keep its economy strong by meeting the growing demand of businesses for educated workers, we must significantly increase the diversity among our universities.*

- Ask voters to modify Proposition 209 to allow for the consideration of race/ethnicity as one of many factors for admission to California's public universities.

*California's public universities should:*

- Target recruitment and outreach to underrepresented students to help ensure undergraduate enrollment reflects the racial/ethnic composition of the state's young adult population.
- Adopt an institutional policy that states racial/ethnic diversity is an important component of providing a high-quality education with significant benefits to student-learning and development.<sup>142</sup>

## Want to be a part of the solution?

In the coming months, the Campaign for College Opportunity will release a ***Transforming Higher Ed Toolbox*** that offers specific policy and college campus strategies and tactics that higher education stakeholders (policymakers, college leaders, advocates, civil rights activists, business leaders, and students) can employ to actively work to make these recommendations a reality.

Continue to check our website or sign up for our newsletter at [www.collegecampaign.org](http://www.collegecampaign.org) for more information.





# CONCLUSION

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Much of the Black population in California experiences pervasive systemic disadvantages that frequently impede educational, economic, and social progress. These include: low-quality schools found in predominantly low-income and Black communities,<sup>143</sup> a poverty rate that is three times that of Whites in California,<sup>144</sup> and an unemployment rate that is double that of Whites.<sup>145</sup>

Education has the power to transform this narrative. Significant research has already established that bachelor's degree holders are more likely to be employed, less likely to rely on social services, less likely to be incarcerated, and more likely to have children who will also earn bachelor's degrees.<sup>146</sup> Education has the potential to lift people out of poverty and improve their lives—not just for themselves but also for future generations.

California was once a leader in higher education, intentionally designing and faithfully investing in the largest public higher education system in the world; and operating with the fundamental belief that an educated citizenry is not only critical to the economic success of the state but also to individual achievement of the American Dream. While this belief is still true today, California is falling behind as it fails to align critical budget and policy solutions with a more intentional agenda for our higher education system.

California faces a potentially grim future as our once innovative and successful system of higher education is now only average. The state's disinvestment in education—the one area in which one dollar of investment returns \$4.50 for each graduate<sup>147</sup>—will threaten our collective future if we fail to meet our workforce demands and provide the educational opportunities the next generation deserves.

Where once there was opportunity for any Californian, today an above-average social network, wealth, and know-how is required to navigate our system of higher education. And those on the margins of society—our most vulnerable—are the communities that are most likely to be left behind as California's education system falls to average. The ones who are left with reduced access and opportunity are the ones who need it most.

**We hope the data and recommendations put forth in this report inform and inspire policy makers and college leaders to enact and implement the type of funding, policies, and practices required to improve outcomes for Black students. We have the power to address the challenges facing higher education and to live in a strong California that works for all of its residents. This type of change must begin now.**



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

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The *State of Higher Education in California* is a series of reports that provide comprehensive data on the current state of college access and completion for our state and what it means for our economy. This report provides information on demographics, levels of educational attainment, and rates of college readiness, enrollment and graduation for Blacks in California. These in-depth reports analyze California's public colleges and universities and recommend actions that our policymakers and college leaders can take in order to improve college enrollment and graduation rates.

This report on Blacks is the second in the *2015 State of Higher Education in California* series.

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Nadia Valliani, Research and Policy Analyst with the Campaign for College Opportunity, was the principal researcher and author of this report, with contributions from Michele Siqueiros and Audrey Dow.

# METHODOLOGY

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Data for this report were collected from a variety of sources. Primarily, demographic and social characteristics were collected from the U.S. Census Bureau using data from the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS, annually published by the U.S. Census Bureau, provides a detailed socioeconomic and demographic profile of the U.S. population. The ACS replaces the “long form” of the Decennial Census; the advantage of the ACS is annual collection, as opposed to collection once every ten years through the Decennial Census. Since 2000, the ACS is conducted nationwide with an annual sample of 3 million households. Data indicators are based on the 2011-13 ACS three-year estimates collected and analyzed through tools provided by the U.S. Census Bureau: Factfinder and DataFerrett using Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data sets. Data for Hispanic/Latino includes those of any race. Data for White, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Black/African American excludes persons of Hispanic origin and multiple races. In some cases data for the Asian category is reported alone and in other cases, in combination with the Pacific Islander category. This reflects the difference in data provided by the original source.

Data was also collected through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database, available at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website, the California Department of Education, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, the California State University Division of Analytic Studies, and the University of California Office of the President.

# INFOGRAPHIC NOTES AND SOURCES

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**High school graduation rate:** California Department of Education, Cohort Outcome Data for the Class of 2013-14. Retrieved from Dataquest. **A-G Completion rate:** California Department of Education, 12th Grade Graduates Completing all Courses Required for U.C. and/or C.S.U. Entrance, All Students, State of California 2013-14. Retrieved from Dataquest. **Educational Attainment:** Data for adults between 25- and 64-years old from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-13 ACS 3-Year Estimates - Public Use Microdata Sample. **Educational Attainment:** Data for 1990 is for adults 25-years and older from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Decennial Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3, Public Use Microdata Sample. Data for 2013 is for adults 25-years and older from 2011-13 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Public Use Microdata Sample. **Black undergraduate representation graph:** Data for 18- to 24-year olds from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Public Use Microdata Sample. Higher education data from U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Note: For-profits include Title IV eligible four-year, two-year, and less than two-year colleges; private, nonprofits include Title IV eligible four-year universities. **One-third some college, no degree:** Data for Black adults between 25- and 64-years old from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-13 ACS 3-Year Estimates - Public Use Microdata Sample. **CSU Enrollment:** Data for percent of California high school graduates who directly enroll into CSU as first-time freshmen by race/

ethnicity from California State University, Division of Analytic Studies. In light of the federal changes in reporting student race and ethnicity, it is possible that the decline in Black enrollment at the CSU could be partially attributed to Blacks being able to self-identify as multi-racial or Hispanic. **UC admission:** Data for 2014 first-time freshmen from University of California Office of the President. Final summary of freshman applications, admissions and enrollment, fall 1995-2014.

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**CCC Remediation Rate:** This figure (87%) is the percent of those who were placed into pre-college level coursework from the cohort of students who entered in 2008-09 and earned at least six credits and attempted a math or English course within first three years of enrollment. Data from California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard. Completion rates (64% and 33%) note the percent of students who completed an associate degree, certificate or transferred to a four-year university among the cohort of students who entered in 2008-09 and earned at least six credits and attempted a math or English course within first three years of enrollment for those who were placed into pre-college level coursework (33%) and those who were not (64%). Data from California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard. **Freshmen Completion Rates:** CCC - This figure is the percent of students who completed an associate degree, certificate or transferred to a four-year university among the cohort of students who entered in 2008-09 and earned at least six credits and attempted a math or English course within first three years of enrollment. Data from California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard. CSU – Data for first-time freshmen cohort entering in fall 2008 from California State University, Division of Analytic Studies. UC – Data for first-time freshmen cohort entering in fall 2007 from University of California Office of the President.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>71</sup> California State University Office of the Chancellor. (Nov. 20, 2008). *California State University Declares Systemwide Impaction*. Retrieved on 4/14/15 from [http://www.calstate.edu/pa/news/2008/systemwide\\_impaction.shtml](http://www.calstate.edu/pa/news/2008/systemwide_impaction.shtml).

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<sup>82</sup> An admission rate is the percent of applicants who were admitted to a college or university.

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<sup>90</sup> California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Transfer Velocity Cohort Report. Retrieved from Datamart, This measure is derived from a cohort of first-time students who entered CCC in 2008–09 and completed twelve credit units and attempted transfer-level math or English within six years.

<sup>91</sup> Geiser, Saul, and Richard C. Atkinson. (2010). *Beyond the Master Plan: The Case for Restructuring Baccalaureate Education in California*. Center for Studies in Higher Education, University of California at Berkeley. Retrieved from <http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/beyond-master-plan-case-restructuring-baccalaureate-education-california>.

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<sup>95</sup> Among freshmen enrolling in 2009–10, the most recent data available, 63 percent of all students and 47 percent of Black students graduated within four years. Source: University of California Office of the President.

<sup>96</sup> Among transfer students enrolling in 2011–12, the most recent data available, 55 percent of all students and 47 percent of Black students graduated within two years. Source: University of California Office of the President.

<sup>97</sup> The exception to this rule is if students pass AP Exams with a score of "3" or above, if students have already taken a placement test at a different California Community College, or if students have already passed a college-level course in that subject.

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<sup>107</sup> This figure is for the cohort of students who attempted a pre-college level course for the first time in 2008-09. Data from California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard. Retrieved from <http://scorecard.cccco.edu/scorecard.aspx>.

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<sup>109</sup> Data from California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard. Retrieved from <http://scorecard.cccco.edu/scorecard.aspx>.

<sup>110</sup> Author's calculations are based on the 13,525 Black first-time freshmen who entered California's community colleges in 2008-09 who enrolled in pre-college level coursework, multiplied by the 63.6 percent success rate of Black students who did not enroll in pre-college level coursework (result = 8,602). The number of pre-college level students who did complete (4,450) was then subtracted from the first figure (8,602) in order to find the *additional* number of students who could have completed (result was 4,152). Data from California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard. Retrieved from <http://scorecard.cccco.edu/scorecard.aspx>.

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- <sup>118</sup> California State University, Division of Analytic Studies. CSU Full-time Students by Ethnic Group, Residents Only, Table 12 for fall 2011, fall 2012, and fall 2013.
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- <sup>139</sup> In fall 2014, Asian students made up 39% of freshmen, 31% of transfer; Black students made up 4.1% of freshmen, 4.4% of transfer; Latino students made up 30% of freshmen, 25% of transfer; and White students made up 23% of freshmen, 35% of transfer. Source: University of California Office of the Presidents. *Student/Workforce Data*. Retrieved from <http://www.ucop.edu/news/factsheets/2014/fall2014sir.html>.
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- <sup>144</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table S0201: Selected Population Profile in the United States.
- <sup>145</sup> Unemployment rate for Whites is 4.7 percent compared to 9.6 percent for Blacks. Source: U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Economic New Release: Table A-2 Employment status of the civilian population by race, sex, and age*, May 08, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t02.htm>.
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# ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The Campaign for College Opportunity is a broad-based, bipartisan coalition, including business, education and civil rights leaders that is dedicated to ensuring that all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college in order to build a vibrant workforce, economy and democracy. The Campaign works to create an environment of change and lead the state toward effective policy solutions. It is focused upon substantially increasing the number of students attending two- and four-year colleges in California so that we can produce the 2.3 million additional college graduates that our state needs.

For more information, visit: [www.collegecampaign.org](http://www.collegecampaign.org).

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