

# Big Gaps, Small Gaps: Some Colleges and Universities Do Better Than Others in Graduating Hispanic Students

BY MAMIE LYNCH AND JENNIFER ENGLE

Economists and others who think about the future are clear about one thing: The countries best positioned to succeed amid the wrenching economic changes expected over the next three decades are those that waste the least—not only in terms of their natural resources but in terms of their human resources.

Right now, however, the United States doesn't fare well at all on that measure. Our lack of purposefulness in providing high-quality education to all young Americans, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, is literally wasting the future of many of our young people, including members of the fastest growing group. Poised by 2050 to constitute nearly one-third of the workforce, Latinos\* currently are the least prepared educationally to contribute to and benefit from our rapidly changing and demanding economy. Only 13 percent of young adult Latinos hold bachelor's degrees, compared with 39 percent of whites, and 21 percent of blacks.<sup>1</sup>

It's true that lower college-going rates among Hispanics cause part of the attainment gap. But a significant portion also results from low graduation rates among those who do enter college. Currently, fewer than half of Hispanic students who enter four-year colleges and universities graduate within six years, compared with about 60 percent of white students.<sup>2</sup>

To improve degree attainment among Hispanic students, colleges and universities simply must enroll more of them. But it's just as important that these institutions also boost their graduation rates and close graduation-rate gaps.

This brief calls attention to the colleges and universities that are serving Hispanic students well, as evidenced by small or nonexistent graduation-rate gaps between Hispanic and white students. We also shine a necessary light on institutions with particularly large gaps—the institutions that are not serving these students as effectively as they should.

Why focus on gaps? Many institutions cited in this brief have demonstrated an ability to graduate relatively high proportions of white students—regardless of institutional resources or students' academic preparation. These colleges and universities ought to be able to achieve similar graduation rates for Hispanic students.

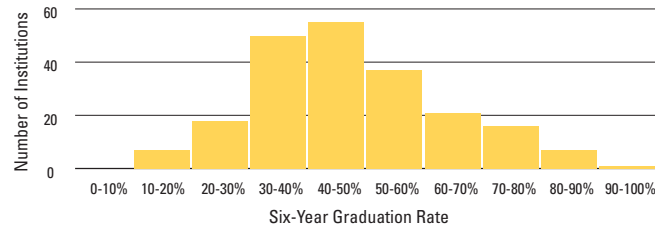
What's more, some institutions with large gaps may graduate Hispanic students at higher rates than the national average for Hispanic students. However, we know that with focused effort, such institutions can raise Hispanic graduation rates to the same level as those of whites. Indeed, the successful colleges and universities profiled here prove it's possible to do so. The promising practices they employ can help other institutions close their graduation-rate gaps.

## HOW WELL DO INSTITUTIONS SERVE HISPANICS?

Among the colleges and universities in our analysis,<sup>3</sup> private institutions graduate higher proportions of Hispanic students on average than public institutions—65.7 percent to 47.6 percent.<sup>4</sup> However, the vast majority of Hispanic students in this study—about 80 percent—attend public colleges and universities. Among these public institutions, more than 60 percent graduate fewer than half of their Hispanic students within six

\*We use the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" interchangeably throughout this brief.

**Figure 1: Hispanic Graduation Rates Vary Widely Across Public Institutions**



Source: IPEDS 2006, 2007, 2008  
 Note: Graduation rates are three-year averages (2006, 2007, 2008) for first-time, full-time freshmen. The sample of institutions includes public and nonprofit Title IV, degree-granting, non-specialty schools with graduation-rate cohorts in at least two of these years. Institutions with white or Hispanic Graduation Rate Survey cohorts of fewer than 30 in any of these years were excluded from the sample for reliability purposes. Institutions that primarily grant associate's degrees also are excluded from the sample.

years. More troubling still, almost one-quarter of public institutions graduate fewer than 35 percent of these students within six years (see Figure 1). (To check which schools fall within various graduation-rate ranges, search College Results Online at [www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org).)

Low graduation rates for Hispanic students offer even greater cause for concern when compared with the graduation rates of their white peers. In public institutions, white graduation rates surpass those of Hispanics on average by 14.9 percentage points; in private institutions, the average gap is only slightly smaller at 10.5 points.

These averages hide wide variations in graduation-rate gaps, however. About 80 percent of all colleges and universities have gaps between white and Hispanic students larger than two percentage points, and nearly 30 percent have gaps of at least ten points.

**GAPS ARE NOT INEVITABLE**

Despite the troubling picture the averages paint, the evidence here and elsewhere demonstrates that large graduation gaps between student groups need not occur.<sup>5</sup> Success in serving Hispanic students varies widely even when comparing institutions that graduate white students at similar rates.

**Table 1: Smallest White-Hispanic Gaps Among Public Colleges and Universities**

Institution	Carnegie Classification	Median SAT / ACT Score, Fall '07	Full-Time Equivalent Undergrad Enrollment, Fall '07	% Hispanic, Fall '07	White Grad Rate Three-Year Average (2006-08)	Hispanic Grad Rate Three-Year Average (2006-08)	White - Hispanic Gap
Western Oregon University (OR)	Master's	955	4,057	7.9	43.0	48.9	-5.9
Florida International University (FL)	Research	1100	23,174	62.9	45.2	50.7	-5.5
Georgia State University (GA)	Research	1085	16,349	4.8	41.6	45.9	-4.3
University of North Carolina at Charlotte (NC)	Doctoral/Research	1055	15,750	3.7	50.1	54.3	-4.2
Georgia Tech-Main Campus (GA)	Research	1330	12,008	4.7	77.2	81.1	-3.9
Towson University (MD)	Master's	1080	14,860	2.4	66.7	69.6	-2.9
George Mason University (VA)	Research	1120	15,444	6.8	56.8	58.5	-1.7
University of Tennessee (TN)	Research	1185	20,385	1.6	59.8	61.0	-1.2
University of California-Riverside (CA)	Research	1040	14,693	25.7	62.4	63.4	-1.0
New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJ)	Research	1130	4,711	16.9	51.0	52.0	-1.0
Texas Woman's University (TX)	Doctoral/Research	960	5,677	17.3	43.1	43.6	-0.5
Stony Brook University (NY)	Research	1180	14,732	8.3	53.5	53.7	-0.2
Virginia Tech (VA)	Research	1200	22,684	2.5	80.0	80.2	-0.2
Western Illinois University (IL)	Master's	990	10,488	4.6	57.1	56.3	0.8
SUNY at Purchase College (NY)	Baccalaureate	1090	3,791	9.7	49.9	49.0	0.9
University of Texas at Dallas (TX)	Research	1240	7,575	10.5	53.8	52.7	1.1
University of Georgia (GA)	Research	1225	24,057	2.1	77.4	76.0	1.4
Virginia Commonwealth University (VA)	Research	1060	18,990	3.8	46.9	45.3	1.6
James Madison University (VA)	Master's	1140	15,905	2.3	82.4	80.7	1.7
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (NC)	Research	1295	17,024	4.5	85.8	83.8	2.0

Source: IPEDS 2006, 2007, 2008. Note: Because this small-gap list aims to highlight colleges and universities that are serving students well, the list excludes institutions with white graduation rates lower than 40 percent, the approximate national graduation rate for underrepresented minority students.

For example, two similar institutions—**Woodbury University** in Burbank, Calif., and **Lubbock Christian University** in Lubbock, Tex.—show marked differences in the graduation rates of Latino students. Both are fairly small universities; their students entered with an average SAT score lower than 1000;<sup>6</sup> and they each graduate 46 percent of their white students. However, Lubbock Christian, which is 15 percent Hispanic, graduates only 22 percent of these students, compared with 46 percent

of white students. This 24-point disparity puts Lubbock Christian among the 24 private colleges with the largest white-Hispanic gaps.

Woodbury University, meanwhile, enrolls a higher percentage of Latino students—31 percent—and has a much higher success rate for this population—62 percent. As a result, Woodbury tops our list of private institutions with minimal gaps between white and Latino students. Clearly, what is happening inside the walls of these otherwise

**Table 2: Smallest White-Hispanic Gaps Among Private Colleges and Universities**

Institution	Carnegie Classification	Median SAT /ACT Score, Fall '07	Full-Time Equivalent Undergrad Enrollment, Fall '07	% Hispanic, Fall '07	White Grad Rate, Three-Year Average (2006-08)	Hispanic Grad Rate, Three-Year Average (2006-08)	White-Hispanic Gap
Woodbury University (CA)	Master's	955	1,129	31.1	46.0	62.0	-16.0
University of St. Thomas (TX)	Master's	1150	1,421	29.5	47.6	56.1	-8.5
University of San Francisco (CA)	Doctoral/Research	1121	5,249	13.8	61.4	67.2	-5.8
Biola University (CA)	Doctoral/Research	1115	3,704	10.9	69.7	75.1	-5.4
University of Miami (FL)	Research	1275	9,911	21.6	74.1	79.0	-4.9
Whittier College (CA)	Baccalaureate	1073	1,244	30.2	55.9	60.4	-4.5
Loyola Marymount University (CA)	Master's	1155	5,557	20.0	75.8	79.3	-3.5
University of Redlands (CA)	Master's	1140	2,737	13.8	70.9	74.0	-3.1
Smith College (MA)	Baccalaureate	1265	2,578	6.4	85.9	89.0	-3.1
Manhattanville College (NY)	Master's	1105	1,753	15.4	59.6	62.6	-3.0
Loyola University New Orleans (LA)	Master's	1165	2,450	11.9	63.2	66.0	-2.8
Saint Edward's University (TX)	Master's	1125	3,674	31.9	56.1	58.4	-2.3
Santa Clara University (CA)	Master's	1215	5,198	12.3	85.3	87.1	-1.8
Duke University (NC)	Research	1435	6,372	6.2	94.4	95.9	-1.5
Seattle University (WA)	Master's	1163	4,052	7.3	68.6	70.1	-1.5
Johnson & Wales University (RI)	Master's	NA	8,470	6.7	54.3	55.7	-1.4
Rollins College (FL)	Master's	1165	2,507	10.6	68.4	69.4	-1.0
College of Mount Saint Vincent (NY)	Master's	940	1,383	30.0	52.4	53.2	-0.8
University of Tampa (FL)	Master's	1065	4,648	9.3	55.7	56.4	-0.7
Pepperdine University (CA)	Doctoral/Research	1230	3,089	9.8	80.7	81.0	-0.3
University of La Verne (CA)	Doctoral/Research	1005	2,991	37.1	56.5	56.6	-0.1
Washington University in St. Louis (MO)	Research	1450	6,512	2.8	92.9	92.9	0.0
Stanford University (CA)	Research	1445	6,543	11.5	94.7	94.7	0.0
Marymount Manhattan College (NY)	Baccalaureate	1060	1,684	10.3	46.5	46.4	0.1
University of San Diego (CA)	Doctoral/Research	1180	4,813	14.1	75.2	75.1	0.1
Barnard College (NY)	Baccalaureate	1350	2,310	8.7	87.8	87.3	0.5
University of the Incarnate Word (TX)	Master's	945	3,499	58.8	42.3	41.7	0.6
Nova Southeastern University (FL)	Doctoral/Research	1000	4,264	27.0	44.7	44.0	0.7
St. Mary's University (TX)	Master's	1040	2,297	69.8	58.4	57.1	1.3
Southern Methodist University (TX)	Doctoral/Research	1230	5,959	7.5	73.5	71.7	1.8
University of Southern California (CA)	Research	1365	15,917	12.8	85.9	84.1	1.8
Southwestern University (TX)	Baccalaureate	1235	1,276	13.7	73.5	71.6	1.9
University of Notre Dame (IN)	Research	1405	8,363	9.3	96.3	94.3	2.0
University of Pennsylvania (PA)	Research	1425	10,734	5.5	95.0	93.0	2.0

Source: IPEDS 2006, 2007, 2008. Note: Because this small-gap list aims to highlight colleges and universities that are serving students well, the list excludes institutions with white graduation rates lower than 40 percent, the approximate national graduation rate for underrepresented minority students.

similar institutions has a dramatic impact on Hispanic student achievement.

Are there other schools like Woodbury University where Latino students are thriving, and if so, what can we learn from them? In fact, we do see evidence of success at a variety of other colleges and universities. Tables 1 and 2 list 54 public and private institutions that graduate Hispanics and whites at similar rates.<sup>7</sup>

These institutions differ in a number of ways. They range in selectivity—with the median SAT score of entering freshmen ranging from 940 at the **College of Mount St. Vincent** in Bronx, N.Y., to 1450 at **Washington University in St. Louis**. They vary in size—from small private colleges enrolling fewer than 1,200 students to large public universities with 24,000. And they range in the diversity of their student body—with 11 designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) because at least 25 percent of their students are Hispanic (see the sidebar on this page). Although many of these colleges are located in areas with large Latino populations, such as California, Florida, and Texas, the rest are scattered across the country—from **Johnson & Wales University** in Providence, R.I., to **Western Oregon University** in Monmouth, Ore.

Some institutions on these lists, such as the **University of San Francisco** and **Florida International University** (FIU) in Miami, have drawn attention for their success with Hispanic students.<sup>8</sup> For example, the University of San Francisco's Latino graduation rates have remained above the national average for at least the past seven years, and during this period the institution has never had a gap larger than positive 2.6 points. And FIU—an HSI with a strong commitment to access, as evidenced by a student body that is nearly two-thirds Hispanic—has maintained graduation rates for Hispanics that are higher than those for whites for every one of the past seven years. These institutions—which routinely win recognition for their success—show that concerted and sustained efforts can help all students achieve at high levels.

On the other hand, some schools have not always succeeded with Hispanic students but have made significant improvements over time. For example, **Western Oregon University**, where 8 percent of undergraduates are Latino, has greatly improved the graduation rates of such students during the past decade. In 2002, 36 percent of Latino students who had entered Western Oregon six years earlier had graduated, but in 2008, more than half completed their degrees, more than closing the gap with their white

## WHAT IS AN HSI?

Accredited, degree-granting institutions where at least 25 percent of the full-time-equivalent undergraduate student body is Hispanic are designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) under Title V of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. These institutions constitute about 8 percent of public and nonprofit degree-granting institutions and enroll approximately half of Hispanic undergraduates in the United States, according to Excelencia in Education.

Eleven colleges and universities on our list of institutions that graduate Latino students at rates equal to or higher than those of white students are at least 25 percent Hispanic and are listed by Excelencia in Education as being HSIs.

classmates. This improvement is the result of deliberate, purposeful work by the university.

Western Oregon's success in improving graduation rates and eliminating gaps can serve as inspiration for the institutions on our "big gaps" list (see Tables 3 and 4). These colleges and universities all have gaps that are larger than the national average. Some gaps reach almost 30 percentage points, and some graduate Hispanic students at less than half the rate of white students.

Although these institutions vary widely in mission, selectivity, size, and diversity, they all have large graduation-rate gaps. Some have low graduation rates for all students; others educate white students well but serve Hispanic students poorly. Still others exhibit large gaps between white students and both their Hispanic and African-American peers.

For example, institutions such as **Columbia College Chicago** and **University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee** have low graduation rates for white students—41 percent and 46 percent, respectively—but even lower rates among Hispanics—29 percent and 26 percent. Other institutions, such as **Michigan State University**, serve white undergraduates relatively well but do not show the same success with Hispanic students. At Michigan State, 78 percent of white students graduate within six years, compared with 57 percent of Hispanics, resulting in a substantial gap of 21 percentage points.

Besides having sizeable gaps between white and Hispanic students, several institutions in Tables 3 and 4 also are listed in a companion brief on African-American students (see Table 5). These "big gap" institutions have much to learn from the "small gap" schools about how to improve achievement among all minority students.

**Table 3: Largest White-Hispanic Gaps Among Public Colleges and Universities**

Institution	Carnegie Classification	Median SAT / ACT Score, Fall '07	Full-Time Equivalent Undergrad Enrollment, Fall '07	% Hispanic, Fall '07	White Grad Rate, Three-Year Average (2006-08)	Hispanic Grad Rate, Three-Year Average (2006-08)	White-Hispanic Gap
Millersville University of Pennsylvania (PA)	Master's	1050	6,814	3.7	67.1	37.4	29.7
Rowan University (NJ)	Master's	1105	8,087	7.1	69.5	44.3	25.2
Cleveland State University (OH)	Doctoral/Research	950	7,792	3.3	35.5	13.7	21.8
Michigan State University (MI)	Research	1145	34,083	2.8	78.4	57.1	21.3
Auburn University Main Campus (AL)	Research	1125	18,703	2.0	65.6	45.2	20.4
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (WI)	Research	1030	21,592	3.9	46.1	26.1	20.0
CUNY Brooklyn College (NY)	Master's	1040	10,152	11.9	53.3	33.5	19.8
Wayne State University (MI)	Research	970	15,478	2.5	43.5	24.4	19.1
University of Nebraska-Lincoln (NE)	Research	1145	17,189	3.3	64.2	45.1	19.1
Rhode Island College (RI)	Master's	970	6,171	5.9	47.3	28.3	19.0
SUNY College at Plattsburgh (NY)	Master's	1050	5,407	4.1	54.7	36.2	18.5
Kansas State University (KS)	Research	1045	17,082	2.9	60.7	42.3	18.4
University of Toledo (OH)	Research	NA	14,438	2.8	49.0	30.7	18.3
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania (PA)	Master's	970	5,634	5.2	53.8	37.1	16.7
Purdue University-Main Campus (IN)	Research	1145	31,002	2.9	71.0	54.3	16.7
University of Massachusetts Amherst (MA)	Research	1135	19,135	3.6	69.0	52.6	16.4
California State University-Chico (CA)	Master's	1025	14,654	12.6	57.5	41.5	16.0
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (IL)	Research	1280	30,435	6.9	84.9	68.9	16.0
Ramapo College of New Jersey (NJ)	Master's	1155	4,994	8.6	69.3	54.3	15.0

Source: IPEDS 2006, 2007, 2008. Note: Institutions listed here have white-Hispanic gaps that are greater than the average gap size at public colleges and universities in this study.

## LESSONS FROM TOP PERFORMERS

Institutions on the “small gap” list usually do not land there by accident. Often, they have developed a strong commitment to student success, and they have implemented strategies to promote equity and high academic achievement as well.

Two Catholic, mission-driven institutions—**St. Edward’s University** in Austin, Tex., and **Loyola Marymount University** in Los Angeles—enroll sizeable percentages of Hispanic students and subsequently graduate them at high rates. Both universities are located in regions with large and growing Latino populations, and they realize the importance of serving their local communities. Moreover, as religious institutions with a commitment to social justice, they have missions that embrace educating traditionally underserved students.

At St. Edward’s University—an HSI where about one-third of undergraduates are Hispanic—58 percent of Hispanic students graduate within six years, compared

with 56 percent of white students. The university’s mission to serve “a wide variety of students” drives its efforts toward equity, says Sister Donna Jurick, the provost. In the admissions process, she says, St. Edward’s works hard to identify and admit ambitious, talented students whose secondary education left them at a disadvantage. “We want to provide access to students who are highly motivated but didn’t have the same opportunities in high school [as others],” Jurick stresses. “We see their potential.”

The institution sets high expectations for all students it admits, teaches them that “they have the right to the best education possible,” and helps mitigate their academic problems, says Jurick.

St. Edward’s identifies struggling students early. Three weeks into the first semester of freshman year—around the time of the first exam—professors send progress reports to students’ advisers. The advisers then reach out to students who could benefit from academic support services such as tutoring or visits to the writing center. Staff in

**Table 4: Largest White-Hispanic Gaps Among Private Colleges and Universities**

Institution	Carnegie Classification	Median SAT / ACT Score, Fall '07	Full-Time Equivalent Undergrad Enrollment, Fall '07	% Hispanic, Fall '07	White Grad Rate 3-Yr Avg (2006-08)	Hispanic Grad Rate 3-Yr Avg (2006-08)	White - Hispanic Gap
La Salle University (PA)	Master's	1055	3,526	6.4	75.4	50.8	24.6
Southern Adventist University (TN)	Baccalaureate	1025	2,243	13.3	52.3	27.8	24.5
Lubbock Christian University (TX)	Master's	970	1,504	15.1	46.0	22.4	23.6
McMurry University (TX)	Baccalaureate	970	1,276	15.7	47.4	26.9	20.5
Saint Xavier University (IL)	Master's	1030	2,807	14.3	61.5	43.9	17.6
Dominican University (IL)	Master's	1045	1,463	21.6	71.5	54.1	17.4
Adelphi University (NY)	Doctoral/Research	1070	4,513	8.0	69.0	51.7	17.3
Saint Thomas Aquinas College (NY)	Master's	935	1,580	14.1	59.9	43.0	16.9
Mercy College-Main Campus (NY)	Master's	NA	3,976	26.2	40.9	24.5	16.4
University of Dayton (OH)	Research	1165	7,041	2.0	76.9	61.2	15.7
University of Dallas (TX)	Master's	1200	1,210	16.0	66.1	50.9	15.2
Florida Institute of Technology (FL)	Research	1145	2,471	5.5	58.8	45.0	13.8
Drexel University (PA)	Research	1195	11,453	3.1	63.1	49.4	13.7
Long Island University-Brooklyn Campus (NY)	Master's	915	3,612	14.1	31.3	17.9	13.4
Felician College (NJ)	Baccalaureate	885	1,535	15.7	45.1	31.8	13.3
Texas Christian University (TX)	Doctoral/Research	1160	7,160	7.4	70.4	58.2	12.2
Brigham Young University (UT)	Research	1240	28,854	3.3	79.3	67.1	12.2
Rochester Institute of Technology (NY)	Master's	1195	11,528	4.1	64.1	51.9	12.2
Seton Hall University (NJ)	Doctoral/Research	1060	4,792	10.5	62.4	50.3	12.1
Columbia College Chicago (IL)	Master's	NA	10,505	9.0	40.9	28.9	12.0
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (TX)	Master's	1015	2,315	12.0	44.5	32.5	12.0
Pace University-New York (NY)	Doctoral/Research	1070	6,590	11.3	58.2	47.0	11.2
Dowling College (NY)	Master's	NA	2,597	11.2	41.1	30.1	11.0
St. John's University-New York (NY)	Doctoral/Research	1070	12,785	13.9	66.6	56.0	10.6

Source: IPEDS 2006, 2007, 2008. Note: Institutions listed here have white-Hispanic gaps that are greater than the average gap size at public colleges and universities in this study.

these centers subsequently report back to faculty members about student progress. This campuswide commitment to student success derives from the common belief, Jurick says, that “any student we accept can graduate.”

The faculty, administration, and staff of Loyola Marymount University—the most diverse of the nation’s Jesuit colleges—exhibit a similar commitment to student success, particularly for Latino students. Like St. Edward’s, Loyola Marymount carefully assembles a class each year with an intentional focus on recruiting minority students. As a result, 20 percent of undergraduates are Latinos, and almost 80 percent of these students graduate within six years—a rate higher than the national average for any racial or ethnic group of students and similar to the university’s white graduation rate.

To ensure these high rates of success, explains Ernest Rose, Loyola’s chief academic officer, the university uses leading indicators of success to track students—particularly Latino students. These indicators then trigger a

number of support mechanisms when the data show that students are falling behind. For example, the institution found that students who have a history of dropping one or two classes each semester are highly likely to quit school. The dean’s office now uses this information to notify faculty and advisers and encourages them to intervene. As a result, Rose says, “Students understand that we do care and want to keep them on track.”

Not only small private universities are helping white and Hispanic students succeed at equal rates. The **University of California, Riverside** (UCR) is a large public research university with small graduation-rate gaps. Its student body is about one-quarter Latino, qualifying it as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Riverside’s data show the institution is committed to students of color: White and Latino students graduate at approximately the same rates, 62 percent and 63 percent, respectively. Furthermore, about two-thirds of all students graduate within six years, a rate higher than at the average

college or university and at most of UCR’s peer institutions as well. Maintaining these high success rates for all students, say Riverside leaders, results from strong leadership at the top, an intentional focus on data, and retention efforts carried out by each of the university’s colleges.

Riverside leaders consider student success a “core value” that has become a part of the culture of the campus, according to Provost Dallas Rabenstein. “When we admit students, we feel an ethical obligation to do what is necessary for them to succeed,” he says. To ensure this success, university leaders base their decisions on data. They track student data and use it in an “ongoing feedback loop so empirical lessons are used to improve strategies,” Associate Executive Vice Chancellor Bill Kidder explains.

The individual colleges implement and manage these strategies, though top Riverside leaders monitor the results. Each college tracks student data, designs learning communities, advises students, and links them to support services. The chancellor meets quarterly with the cabinet of vice chancellors to discuss retention and graduation, and Kidder says the university maintains “an unusually robust relationship between academic affairs and student services, like you see in a small, private liberal arts college.” This approach won praise in a recent accreditation review.

This combination of programming at the college level, focus on data throughout the institution, and strong campus leadership combine to create an institution, Kidder says, that is “proving you can have a large, diverse student body and expectations of success for all students.” Citing UCR’s mission to serve low-income and Hispanic students, Kidder sums up the school’s charge: “High achievement for all groups is part of our DNA.”

## LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Other colleges and universities can learn from the promising practices that St. Edward’s University, Loyola Marymount University, and UC-Riverside use to narrow their white-Hispanic graduation-rate gaps and promote equally strong results for students of all ethnic backgrounds:

- **Committed leadership.** Strong leadership from the president and other high-level administrators is important in driving student success efforts and creating a campus culture in which all faculty and staff take responsibility for helping students succeed.<sup>9</sup>
- **Intentional recruiting.** With clear intentionality, these institutions recruit Hispanic students from local, predominately Latino areas in order to foster a diverse student body that is representative of their communities.
- **Early intervention.** These institutions closely monitor data to identify struggling students early and intervene to help them get back on track.<sup>10,11</sup>

All higher education institutions can attain educational equity when they recognize their moral and demographic imperatives and dedicate themselves to ensuring that all students achieve at high levels. As these institutions show, what a college or university does to promote student success has a tremendous impact, especially for Hispanic students.

**Table 5: Institutions With Large Gaps and Small Gaps Between White and Hispanic Students AND White and Black Students**

Institutions With Small White-Hispanic AND White-Black Gaps	Institutions With Large White-Hispanic AND White-Black Gaps
George Mason University	California State University-Chico
Georgia State University	Columbia College Chicago
Loyola Marymount University	Felician College
Loyola University of New Orleans	Kansas State University
Stony Brook University	Millersville University of Pennsylvania
SUNY at Purchase	Rowan University
Towson University	University of Toledo
University of California at Riverside	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
University of Miami	Wayne State University
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	
University of Tampa	

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Young adults are defined as 25 to 34-year-olds here. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey, 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement." Internet release date April 2010.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Spring 2008, Graduation Rates component.
- <sup>3</sup> Our sample of institutions includes public and nonprofit Title IV, degree-granting, non-specialty schools with graduation-rate cohorts in at least two of the past three years (2006, 2007, and 2008). We excluded institutions with white or Hispanic Graduation Rate Survey cohorts of fewer than 30 in any of the past three years from the sample for reliability purposes. Institutions that primarily grant associate's degrees also are excluded from the sample.
- <sup>4</sup> All graduation rates referenced in this brief refer to average graduation rates across three years (2006, 2007, and 2008). This three-year average is intended to smooth one-year data abnormalities.
- <sup>5</sup> The American Enterprise Institute's recent report, "Rising to the Challenge: Hispanic College Graduation Rates as a National Priority," documents in detail the range in Hispanic graduation rates at colleges and universities with varying levels of selectivity. The report also lists a series of key institutional practices that help improve Hispanic student success. The full paper is available at [www.aei.org/paper/100093](http://www.aei.org/paper/100093).
- <sup>6</sup> For colleges and universities that primarily report SAT scores, we calculate the median SAT score, and for institutions that primarily report ACT scores, we calculate SAT equivalency scores and then calculate the median equivalency score. For more details, see [www.collegeresults.org/aboutthedata.aspx](http://www.collegeresults.org/aboutthedata.aspx).
- <sup>7</sup> All institutions on this list also have average three-year white graduation rates of at least 40 percent, which is approximately the average graduation rate for underrepresented minority students nationwide. Because this list aims to highlight schools that are serving students well, we have excluded schools with white graduation rates lower than this 40 percent threshold.
- <sup>8</sup> Carey, Kevin. "One Step From the Finish Line." Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust, 2005.
- <sup>9</sup> Engle, Jennifer and Christina Theokas. "Top Gap Closers: Some Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities Have Made Good Progress in Closing Graduation-Rate Gaps." Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust, 2010.
- <sup>10</sup> Engle, Jennifer and O'Brien, Colleen. "Demography Is Not Destiny: Increasing the Graduation Rates of Low-Income College Students at Large Public Universities." Washington D.C.: The Pell Institute, 2007.
- <sup>11</sup> Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J., & Associates. *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.



### About College Results Online

College Results Online ([www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org)) is an interactive tool designed to provide information about graduation rates for most four-year colleges and universities. CRO allows users to:

- Examine graduation rates and see how these rates have changed over time.
- Compare graduation rates of similar colleges serving similar students.
- Learn about colleges' track records in graduating diverse groups of students.

Some colleges do a much better job of graduating students than others. At many colleges, significant gaps exist in graduation rates between white students and students of color. But some colleges are proving that low graduation rates—especially for minority students—are not inevitable.



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### ABOUT THE EDUCATION TRUST

The Education Trust promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels—pre-kindergarten through college. We work alongside parents, educators, and community and business leaders across the country in transforming schools and colleges into institutions that serve all students well. Lessons learned in these efforts, together with unflinching data analyses, shape our state and national policy agendas. Our goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that consign far too many young people—especially those who are black, Latino, American Indian, or from low-income families—to lives on the margins of the American mainstream.