

A recent report¹ by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC) tracks college students over six years and examines their outcomes by race/ethnicity, institutional type, and enrollment intensity.² Distinct trends in college enrollment, persistence, and completion emerge among Latino³ college students, including:

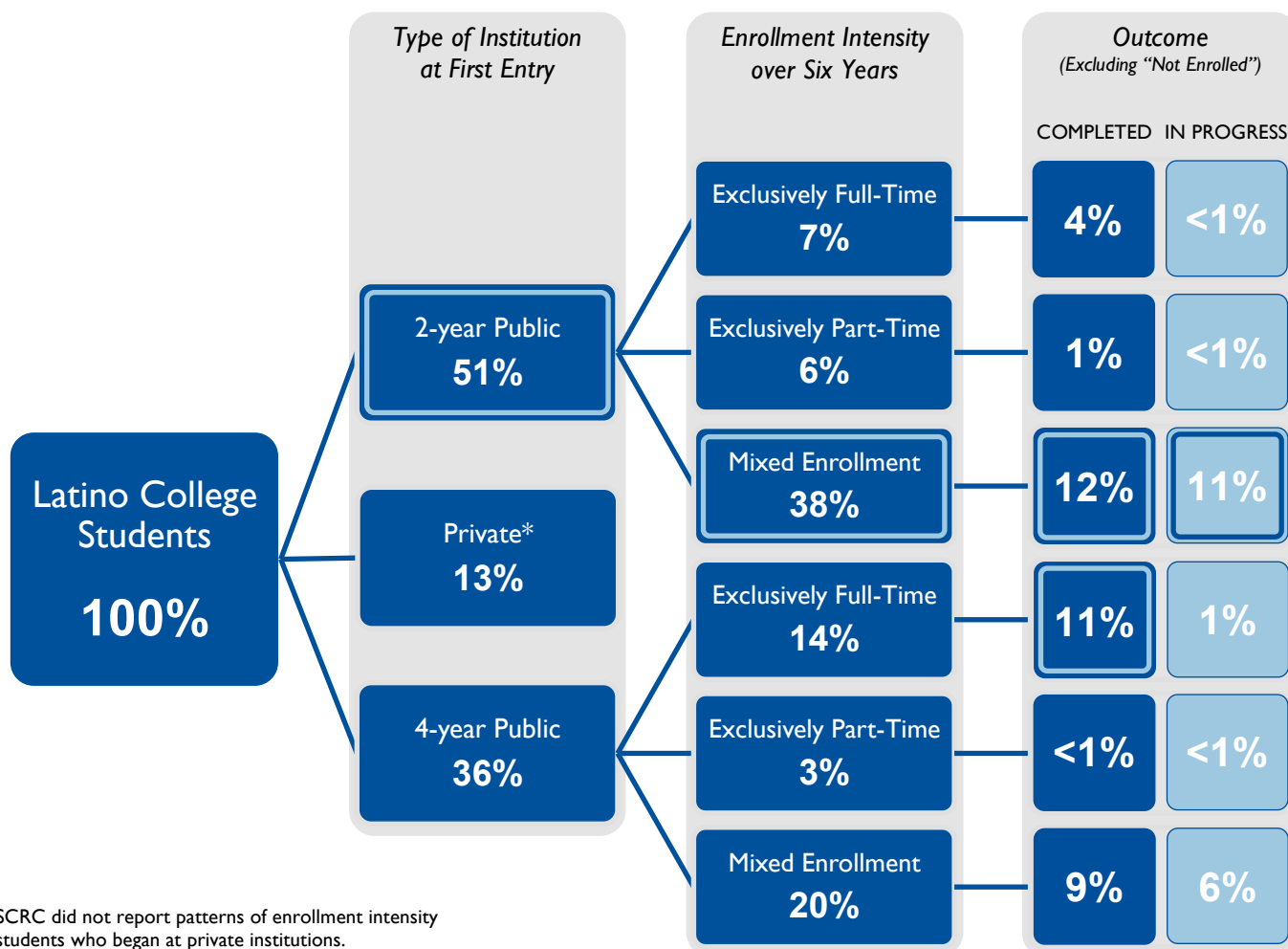
- Most Latinos persist through college with a mix of full-time and part-time enrollment status.
- Almost half of Latinos complete a degree in six years.
- Latinos are more likely than their peers to still be enrolled beyond six years on their path to a degree.

The **purpose of this brief** is to further analyze persistence and completion among Latino students. We also identify evidence-based practices that will help institutions and policymakers increase college completion.

So, how do Latino students persist through college? These were the results after six years:



The following graphic (Figure 1) illustrates students' various pathways through college and their outcomes within six years. On the next page, we further analyze the data on college completion among Latino students.



* NSCRC did not report patterns of enrollment intensity for students who began at private institutions.

Analyzing the Data on Completion

Completion rate: students who receive a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award

Graduation rate: cohort of full-time, first-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students completing their program within 150% of normal time to completion

While Figure 1 provides a look into how Latino students persist through college, **the data do not tell the full story.** There is much to uncover when we further examine the data on Latino students and when we consider the outcomes of their White, Black, and Asian counterparts. By analyzing **completion rates** in addition to graduation rates,⁴ institutions and policymakers ensure that they address the needs of *all students*.



Students of *all races and ethnicities* show patterns of persistence and completion that are **post-traditional**. This means they pursue a degree part-time instead of full-time, delay initial college enrollment to work instead of enroll directly after high school, and take more than four years to complete a bachelor's degree.

The data from NSCRC's [Signature Report No. 12b](#) suggest the following trends among Latino college students:

Latino students are more likely than their peers to begin at a community college.

Half of Latino students began college at a 2-year public institution (51%). This is higher than their Black (48%), Asian (38%), and White (36%) counterparts.

One in every ten Latino students who started at a 2-year institution completed a 4-year degree within six years (11%). This is lower than their White (19%) and Asian (23%) counterparts.

ACCESS

Most Latino students attend college with a mix of full-time and part-time enrollment.

Of all Latinos students enrolled for up to six years:

- 28% were exclusively full-time students,
- 9% were exclusively part-time students, and
- 63% were mixed enrollment students.

The rate of mixed enrollment intensity among Latino students is higher than their Black (60%), Asian (57%), and White (50%) counterparts.

ENROLLMENT

Latino students are more likely than their peers to be enrolled in college after six years.

One in every five Latino students were still “in progress” of earning a degree after six years (19%). This is higher than their Black (17%), Asian (17%), and White (11%) counterparts.

The majority of Latino students who were still “in progress” had pursued their degree with mixed enrollment intensity (89%).

PERSISTENCE

Latino students demonstrate persistence and rigor toward degree completion.

Half of all Latino students who transferred and complete a 4-year degree had also completed a 2-year degree (48%). This is higher than their Asian (43%), Black (40%), and White (39%) counterparts.

Four in every five Latino students who started at a 4-year institution and earned a 4-year degree did so from the institution at which they started (80%).

COMPLETION

Institutional leaders and policymakers can apply a Latino lens to their sharp focus on college completion. In this way, they have one more tool to guide intentional strategies to decrease racial equity gaps in completion rates and, in turn, increase completion for *all students*.

Institutions as a Catalyst for Progress to Completion

Institutions of higher education have an opportunity to combine data, practice, and leadership to accelerate Latino student success. When institutions take strategic action in these **three core areas**, they ensure that Latino students graduate college and become agents of change for their communities and for the nation.

DATA

Track data that show institutional commitment against key metrics:

- Enrollment of Latino students;
- Retention of Latino students;
- Financial support for students through Pell grants, institutional aid, employment, and work study;
- Representation of Latinos in administration, faculty, and staff to further model success; and
- Graduation of Latino students.

PRACTICE

Intentionally implement and work to advance evidenced-based* practices and policies to support Latino student success.

** Evidence-based practices have data showing positive impact over multiple years and in areas research generally shows are effective in Latino student success.*

LEADERSHIP

Demonstrate leadership impact, including the quality and execution of the strategic plan and the guidance by president and board, to evaluate how institutions align data and practice with leadership.

Explicitly and publicly commit to improving Latino student success.

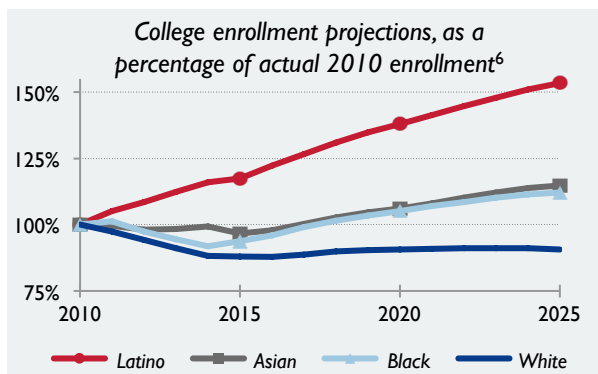
What Works for Latino Students

It is essential to highlight the transformational work of practitioners, who engage with and advocate for students every day. At *Excelencia*, we maintain a [Growing What Works Database](#) to inform institutional leaders and policymakers about the asset-based approaches that successfully serve Latino students. In the chart below, we highlight some evidence-based practices from that database that address retention, transfer, student services, and other issue areas.

Program Focus	Practices	Examples
First Year Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide credit-bearing coursework to engage students as active and self-reflective members of the learning process • Ensure that students utilize resources to become aware of and achieve academic milestones • Educate students in a way that is culturally responsive, including language, customs, and values • Establish mentoring relationships and peer networks that support students to persist and graduate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Assistance Migrant Programs • Encuentro Hacia el Exito (Encounter to Excellence) at CSU-Dominguez Hills • Focus on Student Success (FOSS) at Laredo CC • Center for English Language Acquisition and Culture at Saint Peter's University • GANAS (Gaining Access 'N Academic Success) at CSU-East Bay • Math Jam at Pasadena CC
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemize approaches that amplify parent and family investment in students' on-time degree completion • Emphasize parent understanding of higher education and institutional resources as a lever for student success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program at Arizona State University • Parent Institute for Quality Education • Spanish Language Family Orientation at University of North Texas
Pathway & Pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease financial barriers—especially costs <i>aside</i> from tuition—to enable students to enroll with full-time status • Form partnerships among early college high schools, 2-year institutions, and/or baccalaureate institutions to streamline articulation and time to degree completion • Advocate for system-wide change in advising structures and curriculum alignment to facilitate ease in transfer • Assess students' expected level of education at entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at CUNY Bronx CC • DirectConnect at Valencia CC • Imperial Valley University Partnership at San Diego State University • Long Beach College Promise at Long Beach City College • Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program at Northern Virginia CC • Reverse Transfer Program at UTEP
Summer Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create structured bridge programs with involvement from administrators and faculty of 2-year institutions • Prepare students to succeed in “gateway” coursework through aligned and intensive developmental education • Build community and support through a cohort model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge Program at Mt. San Antonio College • Students Transitioning in Academics & Reaching Success at Cabrillo College • Student Success Center at Northern Essex CC

Future Directions to Accelerate Completion

Latinos will comprise one-fifth of all college students by 2025.⁵ Latinos are the fastest-growing population of college students and therefore deserve the attention of institutional leaders and policymakers. By focusing on the following trends, we expect efforts to ensure that *all students*, including Latinos, are supported in completing a college degree.



Leverage Latino Networks

There is great opportunity to engage Latino family and community members as partners for college completion. Recently, Pew Research Center found that 86% of Latino parents (in comparison to 67% of white parents) believe it is important for their children to earn college degrees.⁶ When leaders build trust and engagement within the Latino community, they not only increase the likelihood of college completion, but they create a culture of shared responsibility among Latino college students and the institutions that serve them.

Assess Post-Traditional Students' Experiences

While Latino students are more likely to begin at a 2-year institution, attend college with mixed enrollment intensity, and remain in school for longer than six years, our current policy strategies rarely focus on these student populations. However, recent reports from [NSCRC](#), [Center for American Progress](#), and [Education Commission of the States](#) examine pathways of students who intend to transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution, students who take longer than six years to complete a degree, and students who enroll in school part-time, respectively. Institutions should engage students in dialogue about how to better provide resources and support that will lead to students' degree completion.

Engage Campus Leadership in Strategic Planning

Leadership is an essential component in accelerating Latino college completion. Campus leaders must **strategically consider data** to inform their leadership, practices, and institutional priorities. *Excelencia's Presidents for Latino Student Success* (P4LSS) are examples of college presidents who have committed to a collective goal of making our country stronger with the talents, skills, and contributions of Latino college graduates. Institutions must act quickly and use their collective expertise to implement strategies that increase completion for *all students*.

Compiled by Deborah Santiago & Matthew Cuozzo

¹ Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Huie, F., Wakhungu, P., Yuan, X., Nathan, A & Hwang, Y., A. (2017, April). *Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates by Race and Ethnicity, Fall 2010 Cohort* (Signature Report No. 12b). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

² "Enrollment intensity" refers to a student's college enrollment status throughout six years. The options for this are: exclusively full-time, exclusively part-time, or mixed enrollment.

³ Although NSCRC reported data on *Hispanic* students, we use the term *Latino* in this brief.

⁴ National Center for Education Statistics. *IPEDS Glossary*. Retrieved from <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/Downloads/Forms/IPEDSGlossary.pdf>

⁵ Hussar, W. J., and Bailey, T. M. (2017). *Projections of Education Statistics to 2025* (NCES 2017-019). U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

⁶ Stepler, R. (2016, February 24). Hispanic, black parents see college degree as key for children's success. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/24/hispanic-black-parents-see-college-degree-as-key-for-childrens-success/>

Excelencia in Education accelerates Latino student success in higher education by promoting Latino student achievement, conducting analysis to inform educational policies, and advancing institutional practices while collaborating with those committed and ready to meet the mission. Launched in 2004 in the nation's capital, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leadership.

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1156 15th St., NW, Suite 1001 | Washington, DC 20005
(202) 785-7350 | www.EdExcelencia.org