STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION for **BLACK** CALIFORNIANS

The Campaign for College Opportunity

ONE MISSION: Making College Dreams a Reality

15 Years

The contributions of countless Black Californians have characterized the spirit of our state.

Octavia E. Butler
Author

Bridget "Biddy" Mason
Nurse, philanthropist and church leader

Angela Davis
Civil rightas activist and author

Paul R. Williams
Architect

Tom Bradley
Former Los Angeles mayor

Jackie Robinson
Major League Baseball player

Serena Williams
Tennis player

Dr. J. Luke Wood
Professor and education equity advocate

Alice Huffman
Civil rights advocate and NAACP leader

Constance Rice
Civil rights activist and lawyer

Dr. Pedro A. Noguera
Professor and education equity advocate

Dr. Shaun R. Harper
Professor and education equity advocate

Ava DuVernay
Film director and screenwriter

Florence Griffith Joyner "Flo-Jo"
Track and field athlete

Keith Curry
College president

Cassandra H.B. Jennings
President of Greater Sacramento Urban League

Shonda Rhimes
TV producer, screenwriter, and author

Misty Copeland
Ballet dancer

Bobby Seale
Co-founding chairman and national organizer of the Black Panther Party

Ryan Smith
Equity Advocate

Angela Glover Blackwell
Founder and president of PolicyLink

Ryan Coogler
Film director, producer, and screenwriter

Introduction

The California Dream envisions a place of new beginnings where hard work is rewarded, and opportunity and good fortune are available to anyone who seeks it. This dream is threatened, as is our collective future as Californians, when its promise is only achievable by a few or when a Californian's ZIP code, race/ethnicity, gender, or the amount of money in their bank account make that dream an illusion.

California's aerospace, manufacturing, technology, entertainment, and wine industries are proof of the innovation and leadership in our state. Architect Paul Williams, Jazz legend Charles Mingus, tennis champion Serena Williams, Mayor Tom Bradley, actor Dorothy Dandridge, Olympian Carl Lewis, Congressmember Maxine Waters, baseball legend Jackie Robinson, basketball star and businessman Magic Johnson, union leader Chuck Mack, and civil rights lawyers Loren Miller and Constance Rice are just a few of the Californians who have broken down racial barriers, defined excellence in their fields and made California a stronger and better place.

We have long benefited from significant contributions by Black[i] Californians who have made the state more equitable, prosperous, entrepreneurial, and democratic. Today, there are nearly 2.2 million Black residents in California, making our state home to the fifth-largest Black population in the country.[1] **The success of a highly educated Black populace equals success for California.**

Addressing persistent and growing problems throughout the educational pipeline is essential to advancing Black educational success and achieving true educational opportunity and equity for all. **California must ensure Black students receive quality educational opportunities, but racial equity gaps are leaving Black students behind.**

Black families and students know the value of an education. Our research finds that more Black high school students are graduating from high school, more are prepared for college, and many more are applying and enrolling in college than in years past. The bad news is that nearly two-thirds of Black high school graduates are still not eligible to apply to the University of California (UC) or the California State University (CSU) system because their high schools have failed to provide them with the opportunity to access and complete college preparatory courses. And the gap in Bachelor's degree attainment between Black and White adults persists. Most Black Californians who go on to college enroll in a community college where completion rates are unacceptably low.

There is good news regarding the educational success of Black Californians:

- More Black students are graduating from high school, and more are prepared for college. In 2016-17, 89 percent of Black 19-year-olds had a high school diploma or equivalent.

- 35 percent of Black high school graduates were prepared for college in 2017.[2]

- 34 percent of Black adults have an associate's or bachelor's degree.[3]

- Two-thirds of Black adults have attended college.

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i We use the term "Black" in the report as an inclusive term to refer to individuals who identify as African American, as well as individuals from the African diaspora who may not consider themselves African American because of more recent immigration (usually three generations or fewer).
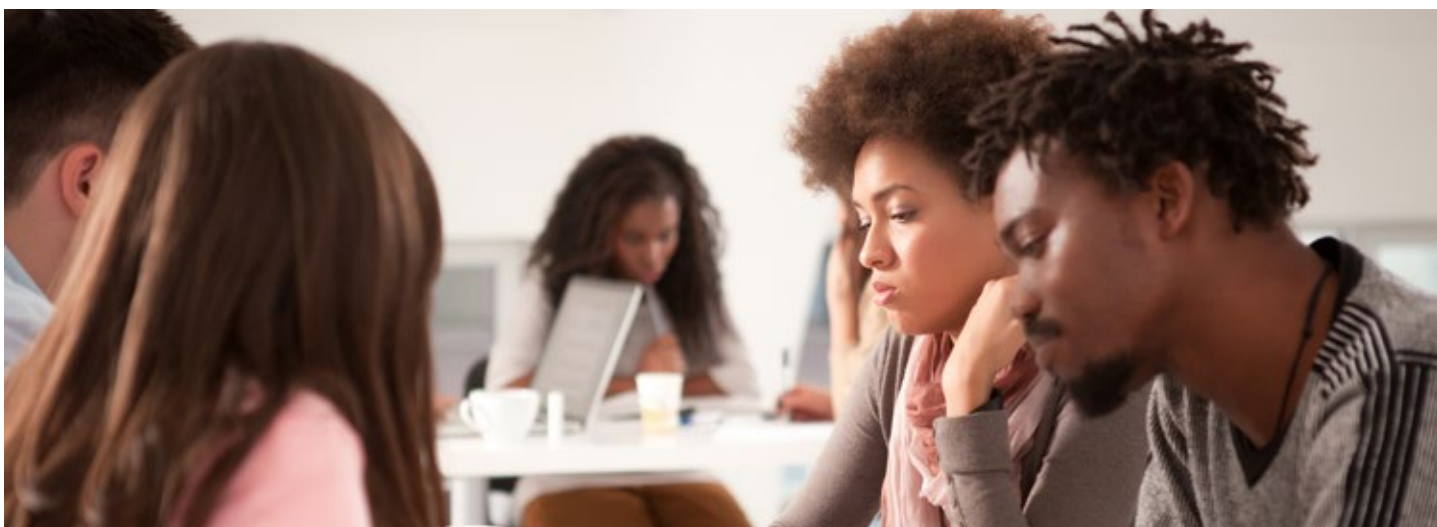
Growing racial equity gaps obstruct the promise of educational opportunity for Black students and diminish the economic potential of our state. California is losing talented Black students because of bad policies, practices, and a lack of courage and political will to tackle this challenge. Inequality in higher education goes against California's professed values and now is the time to prove that we truly care about equity in education.

While there is good news to celebrate, Black students still face significant barriers to educational success. Nearly half of California's Black families live just above or in poverty.[4] The high schools that Black students attend are more likely to be overcrowded, segregated, offer fewer college preparation courses, and have a stronger school-to-prison pipeline than a school-to-college one.[5]

This is some of the bad news:

- California high schools graduate Black students at lower rates than all other racial/ethnic groups and have failed to address the significantly lower percentages of Black students who are offered and complete the college preparatory curriculum—a 17-percentage point gap in A-G[ii] completion between Black and White students exists.

- California Community Colleges transfer only three percent of Black students within two years, and only 35 percent within six years.

- 63 percent of Black community college students do not earn a degree, certificate, or transfer within six years.

- 57 percent of Black CSU freshman do not complete a degree within six years and only nine percent do so in four years.

- 93 percent of Black for-profit college students do not complete a degree within six years.

- Almost half of all Black students who attended college left without a degree.

For California to live up to its promise of equal opportunity and success for its residents, regardless of race/ethnicity or income, improving the education we provide and ensuring racial equity in college preparation, access and success must be at the heart of our efforts. California must prepare more Black students for college and ensure they graduate.

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ii The A-G course sequence is a set of classes California high school students must take to be eligible to apply to CSU and UC campuses. Students must earn a letter grade of C or better to get credit.

Based on the findings of this report, the Campaign for College Opportunity proposes the following recommendations for policymakers and college leaders:

Set a specific statewide college attainment goal for Black students with the intention of closing persistent college preparation, access, and completion gaps. Along with setting a statewide goal that calls for 60 percent of working-aged adults to have a college degree or credential by 2030, California needs a specific goal to reduce equity gaps for Black students. California's leaders MUST be intentional about improving outcomes for Black students, and our college campuses need to articulate a specific plan for doing so.

Establish a statewide strategy targeted toward supporting the return of Black adults with some college but no degree, so they can complete their education. Since almost half of Black adults who started college left without a degree, a statewide and campus-specific strategy to re-enroll and support their ability to complete programs of study is necessary. Colleges and universities should identify former students who have some college credit, but no credential or degree and implement outreach plans to encourage former students to re-enroll and earn their degree. The state can then allocate financial aid to those in need and reward campuses with additional resources for increasing college completion of returning adults.

Increase enrollment capacity at the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) by providing additional capacity funding and ensuring improvements in time to degree by the UC and CSU. There are many college-prepared Black students who meet the admissions requirements for California's public four-year institutions but do not attend one because insufficient funding has restricted access to CSU and UC campuses. The state needs to increase capacity for qualified Californians. Recent funding to expand capacity at the UC has resulted in the increased enrollment of Black students.

Require strong implementation of community college reforms that focus on improving placement of students into college-level English and math, ensure strong transfer and degree pathways, perform degree audits that monitor students' progress toward completion, and utilize the new student success funding formula to support the success of Black students. Three out of four Black undergraduates attend a California Community College, but when only 37 percent of Black students earn a certificate, degree, or transfer—the success of these reforms is critical, and it is imperative to monitor them and ensure they work for Black students.

Provide state financial aid that helps low-income and middle-income students afford the full cost of college—not just tuition. Advocate for increases to Pell Grant aid and work study by the federal government. Forty-eight percent of Black families are just above or in poverty and Black students are more likely to experience food and housing insecurities. [6] Many aid programs only cover tuition and fees, leaving students to fund the full cost of college on their own or drop out if they are unable to do so.

Campus leaders must create a welcoming environment on campus that provides Black students with a strong sense of belonging by increasing the proportion of Black faculty and staff who reflect the experiences of students and recognize their assets and strengths. The Campaign for College Opportunity's recent report, *Left Out: How Exclusion in California Public Higher Education Hurts Our Students, Our Values, and Our Economy*, found that there are not enough Black Californians in leadership and faculty positions at our public colleges and universities. All college leaders, faculty, and staff (regardless of race/ethnicity) must be committed to supporting the success of Black students by utilizing professional development that empowers faculty with tools to improve their craft, utilizing current research, effective best practices and asset-based approaches for supporting Black student success.

Establish a strong and centralized education data system overseen by a higher education coordinating body that will identify trends facing Black students in education, identify solutions that work to improve outcomes for students, and ensure progress toward closing equity gaps. California currently does not have a data system that can be used to answer basic questions about students' progression from early education to the workforce. As a result, we cannot fully understand the barriers and roadblocks for Black students, nor the successful practices that should be scaled and replicated across the state.

State leaders should provide adequate oversight of for-profit colleges by maintaining state financial aid minimum standards and strengthening state data systems so that students and the public have clear information about college outcomes in order to make informed choices. Policymakers can also take steps to ensure that taxpayer funding is not propping up schools that have very little or no private support or funding, by instituting a stronger version of a federal rule designed to achieve the same goal. In addition, with more than 40,000 Californians enrolled online in for-profit colleges based in other states, state leaders can strengthen oversight of out-of-state for-profit schools seeking to enroll Californians by requiring they comply with the same laws California-based schools do.

Federal reporting requirements on race and ethnicity

In fall 2009, the way in which all colleges and universities 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 response to the second question. If students selected "non-Hispanic" and did not indicate that they were a Non-Resident Alien, they were categorized by their response to the second question.

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.
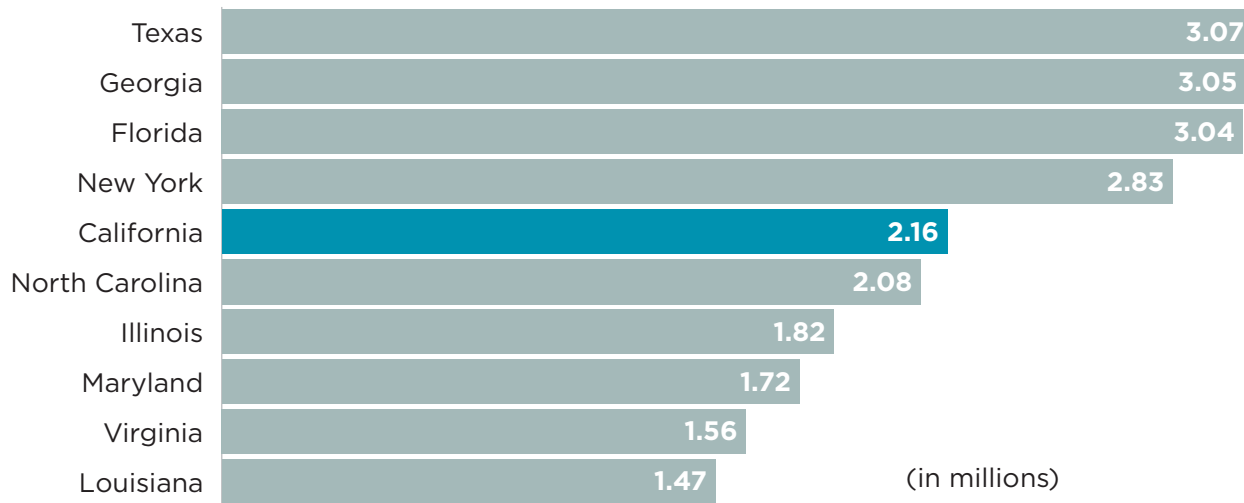
The change in reporting over time may result in analyses that do not capture Black students of Hispanic descent nor students who identify as Black in combination with another race. In addition, as the multiracial population continues to grow, another layer of complexity is added to the analysis of race and ethnicity. As such, data comparing student counts over time (i.e., before and after 2009) should be understood in this context.

California's Black Population

California is home to the fifth-largest Black population in the United States

California is home to the fifth largest Black population in the nation with 2.16 million Black residents. Only Texas, Georgia, Florida, and New York have more Black residents than California (Figure 1).
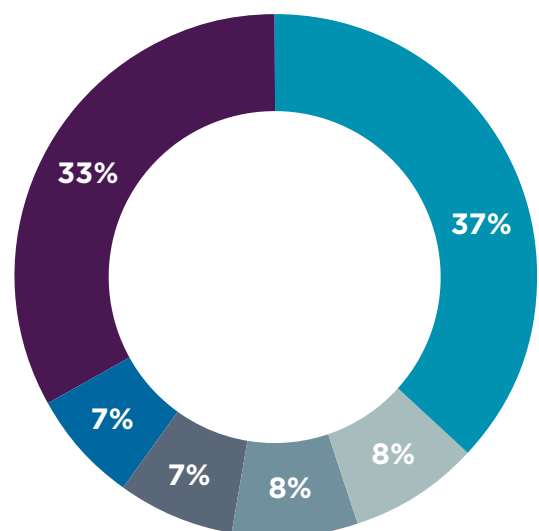
Figure 1. There are nearly 2.2 million Black residents in California

State	Population (in millions)
Texas	3.07
Georgia	3.05
Florida	3.04
New York	2.83
California	2.16
North Carolina	2.08
Illinois	1.82
Maryland	1.72
Virginia	1.56
Louisiana	1.47

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016

A highly educated Black populace improves the quality of life for Black families and strengthens California's economy by helping to meet 21st-century workforce demands while adding political, technological, and entrepreneurial talent. Roughly two-thirds of California's Black population live in five counties: Los Angeles, Alameda, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Sacramento (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Los Angeles County is home to 37% of California's Black population

- Los Angeles 37%
- Alameda 8%
- San Bernardino 8%
- San Diego 7%
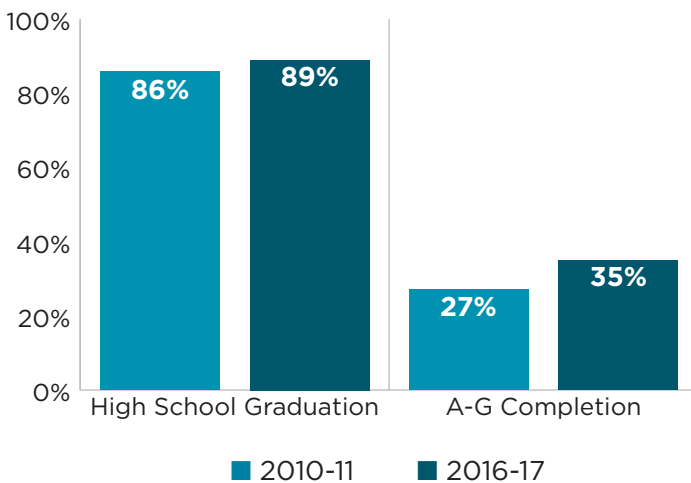- Sacramento 7%
- Rest of CA 33%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016

College Preparation

More Black students are graduating from high school prepared for college than ever before.

In 2016-17, 89 percent of Black 19-year-olds in California (263,436 adults) had a high school diploma, and over one-third of Black high school graduates (35 percent; 8,979) met the course requirements to be eligible for admission to a UC or CSU campus (A-G requirements; Figure 3).

Figure 3. More Black students are graduating from high school and completing college prep courses

Source: California Department of Education, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016

Figure 4. The college preparation gap between Black and White high school students has not changed since 2010-11
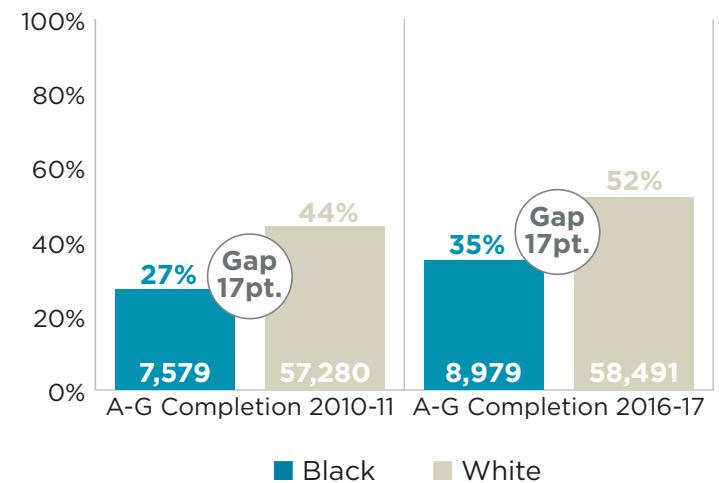
Source: California Department of Education, 2017

However, almost two thirds of Black high school graduates are not prepared for college by their schools, and the gap in college preparation[iii] compared to White students has not changed. **California high schools prepare over half (52 percent) of White students, compared to just over one-third (35 percent) of Black students for UC/CSU eligibility.** This represents a 17-percentage point equity gap, that has not changed since 2010 (Figure 4).

High schools are failing to provide equitable access and support to ensure that Black students complete A-G courses, with a C or better, at the same rate as their White peers. Of the 25,000 Black high school graduates in 2017, only 9,000 completed the coursework necessary to be eligible for California's public four-year universities. This means that **over 16,000 (65 percent) Black high school graduates were ineligible for application to CSU and UC campuses.**

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iii College preparation: defined here as whether or not a student completed the A-G course sequence in high school, with a C or better.

These barriers perpetuate inequity in education. Black students are more likely to attend high schools that are overcrowded, segregated, and have fewer college preparatory course offerings (Table 1).

Table 1. Black students are more likely to attend overcrowded, segregated high schools with less college preparation

50 HIGH SCHOOLS WITH THE LARGEST BLACK ENROLLMENT	50 HIGH SCHOOLS WITH THE LARGEST WHITE ENROLLMENT
Average **84%** underserved racial minority student enrollment	Average **34%** underserved racial minority student enrollment
Average enrollment — **2,452 students**	Average enrollment — **1,562 students**
Average of **15 AP courses** available	Average of **19 AP courses** available
Average A-G completion rate — **40%**	Average A-G completion rate: **65%**

Note: URM: Underserved Racial Minority — Black, Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native, and some Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander groups
Source: Civil Rights Data Collection, 2015-16

In 2015-16, the average A-G completion rate for the 50 public high schools with the highest concentrations of Black students was **25 percentage points lower than schools with the highest numbers of White students.**

Policies that support the completion of A-G course requirements and ensure that all students have access to college information will help improve the college preparation of Black students. For example, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which enrolls nearly 53,000 Black students, aligned its high school graduation requirements with the CSU and UC eligibility requirements (A-G courses).[7] This means that more Black high school graduates from LAUSD will also meet the coursework requirements to apply to public four-year universities in California.

> **"**No one talked with me about A-G requirements, so I didn't complete them. My high school counselor Mrs. Sims was the only person who talked to me about college. She was one of the few people who believed I was college material.**"**
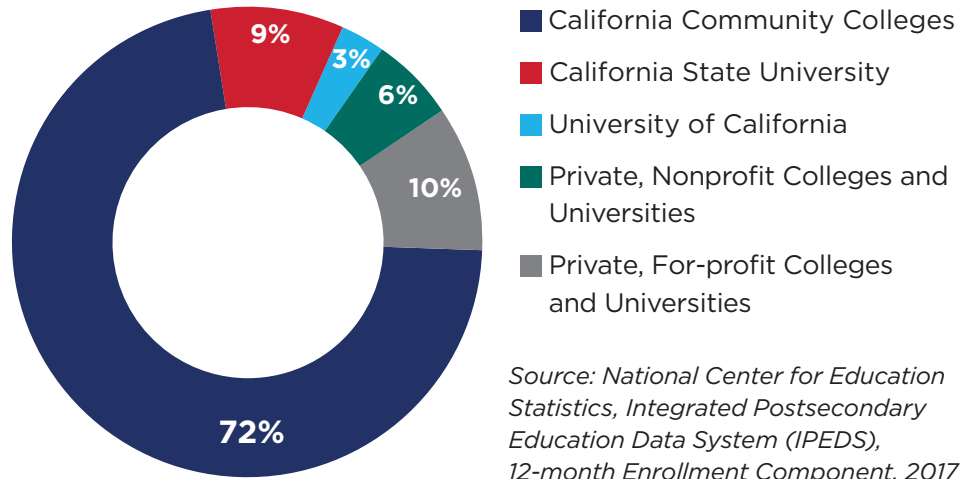>
> **— DON'ANDRE ADAMS,** High School Graduate, Former ITT Tech Student

Access

Black students depend on California's public colleges and universities

Eighty-four percent of all Black undergraduates who go to college in California enroll in a California public college or university, with nearly three-quarters enrolling in community colleges (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Nearly three-quarters of Black undergraduates in California attend a community college

- California Community Colleges
- California State University
- University of California
- Private, Nonprofit Colleges and Universities
- Private, For-profit Colleges and Universities

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 12-month Enrollment Component, 2017

California Community Colleges

Among the more than 204,000 Black undergraduates in the state of California, nearly 147,000 attend a community college (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Nearly two-thirds of Black first-time *freshmen* enroll at a community college.
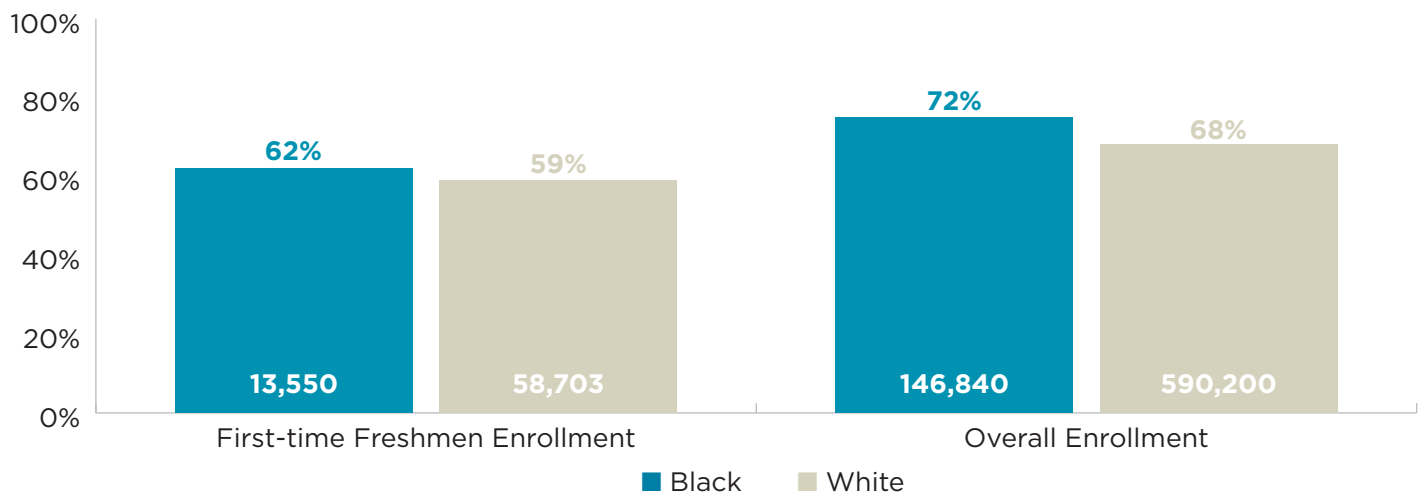
Note: The total 100 percent for each column is the total number of Black and White first-time freshmen in fall 2016; all Black and White undergraduates in 2016-17.
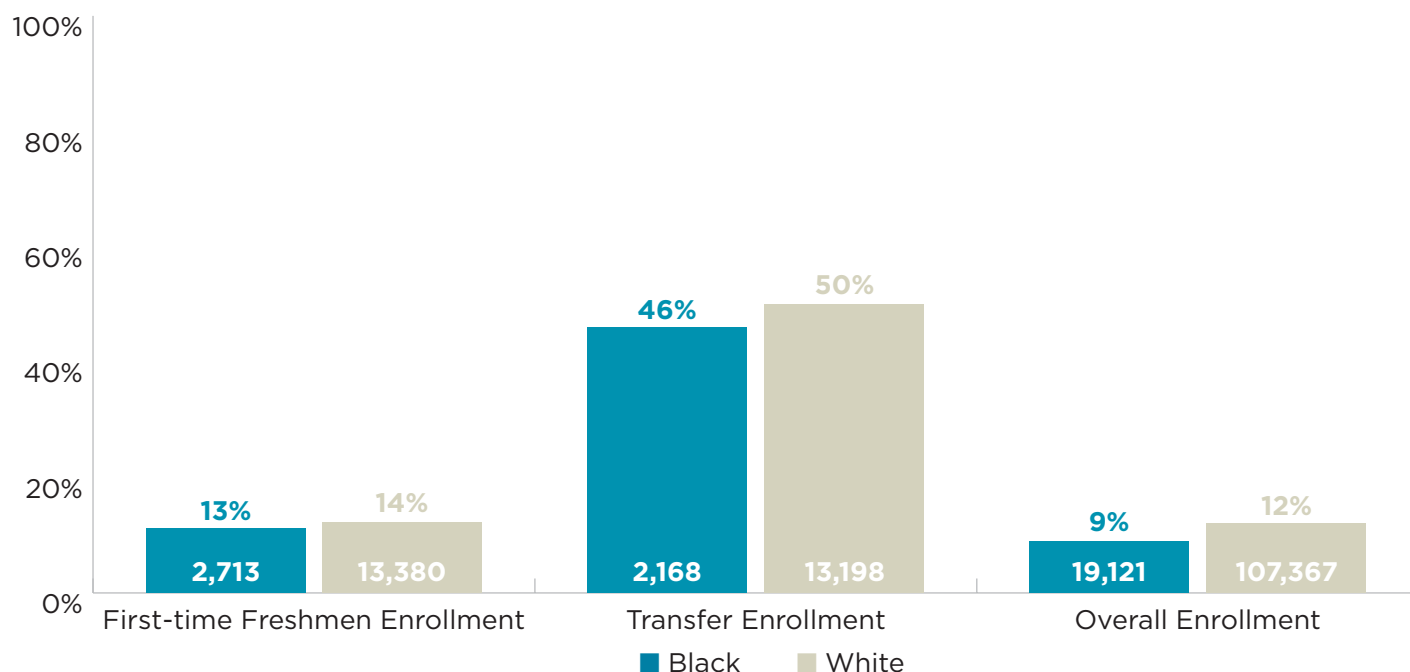
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 12-month Enrollment Component, Fall Enrollment Component, 2017

Among all Black first-time freshmen in 2016, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) enrolled at one of 114 California Community College campuses (Figure 6). While community colleges also serve a large proportion of White first-time freshmen, a larger percentage of Black freshmen rely on community colleges for their first college experience. This is a similar pattern for overall undergraduate enrollment as well, where nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of Black undergraduates attend a community college, which is a slightly higher percentage than White undergraduates, at 68 percent.

California State University

Just over 2,700 Black freshmen enrolled at a CSU campus, out of more than 21,600 first-time freshmen starting college in fall 2016.

Figure 7. Of all California Black undergraduates, only 9% are enrolled in the CSU

Note: The total 100 percent for each column is the total number of Black and White first-time freshmen in fall 2016; Black and White transfer students in fall 2016; all Black and White undergraduates in 2016-17.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 12-month Enrollment Component, Fall Enrollment Component, 2017

In 2016 Black student enrollment at the CSU shows that Black students enrolled at CSU campuses in lower proportions than their White peers (Figure 7). Among all Black freshmen, only 13 percent began their college career at a CSU, which is only slightly lower than White freshmen at 14 percent.

Among Black transfer students, just under half (46 percent) transferred into a CSU campus, compared to half (50 percent) of White transfer students. In terms of overall undergraduate enrollment, only nine percent of all Black undergraduates in California are enrolled at one of the CSU campuses.

University of California

Among the more than 223,000 UC students, there are fewer than 6,000 UC Black undergraduates.

Figure 8. Black students enroll at the UC in significantly lower proportions than White students
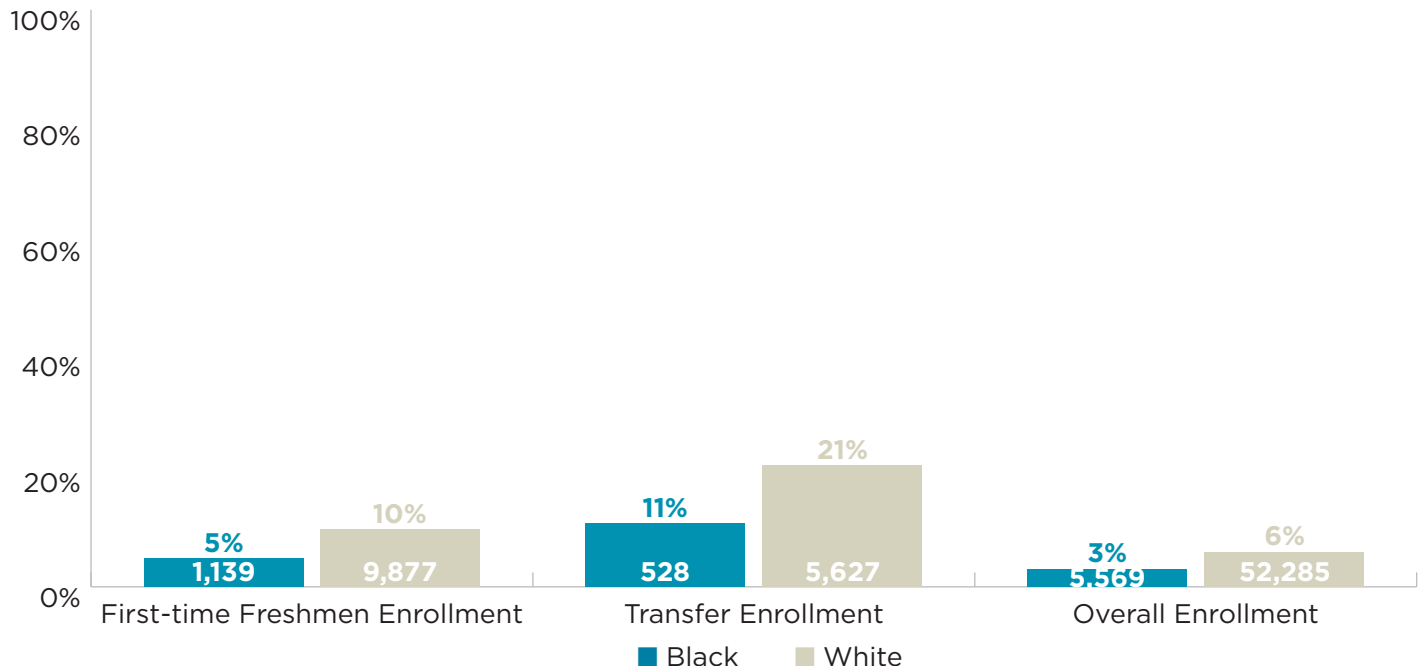
Note: The total 100 percent for each column is the total number of Black and White first-time freshmen in fall 2016; Black and White transfer students in fall 2016; all Black and White undergraduates in 2016-17.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 12-month Enrollment Component, Fall Enrollment Component, 2017.

Among Black first-time freshmen, only five percent enrolled at a UC campus in the fall 2016 (Figure 8). However, among White freshmen, UC enrollment was double this percentage, at 10 percent. This same pattern occurs for transfer enrollment and overall undergraduate enrollment as well. Only 11 percent of Black transfer students enrolled at a UC, compared to 21 percent of White transfer students. Finally, among all Black undergraduates in California, only three percent are enrolled at a UC.

To maintain consistency and the ability to compare across sector, the data in this report includes only those students who were categorized as "Black alone" in 2016 according to the U.S. Department of Education categorization (see note earlier in the report on page two that refers to "Federal reporting requirements on race and ethnicity" for a more detailed explanation on racial categories used by the federal government). The UC and CSU may include multiracial Black students in their counts, which we did not (Black and Hispanic and Black in combination with another race). This may result in different numbers reported by the UC and CSU. The establishment of a strong statewide longitudinal data system as proposed by Governor Newsom in the 2019-20 budget proposal is critical to improving educational analysis.

Despite having received over 9,000 applications for the fall 2016,[8] the admit rate for Black students was only 47 percent (Figure 9). This means that out of the over 9,000 applications submitted by Black freshmen, only 4,300 were admitted, and of these, only 1,139 enrolled. This represents only a 26-percent yield rate with a majority of admitted Black students not choosing to enroll at UC campuses.

Figure 9. UC Admission rates for applicants, 2006-2016
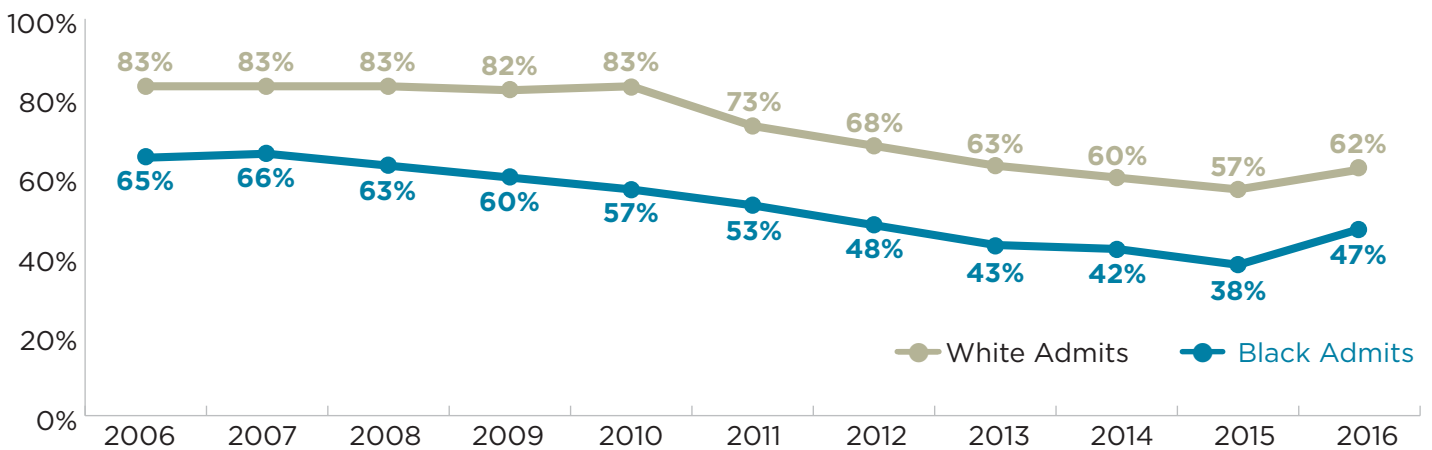
Source: University of California's Office of the President, Department of Institutional Research and Academic Planning, 2017

UC admit rates across all racial/ethnic groups has declined over the years. This is partly due to a growing number of applications from an increasing number of young high school graduates who want to go and are eligible for college. This increased demand has been met with insufficient expansion of enrollment spots as we noted in an earlier report *Access Denied*.[9]

UC admit rates of Black freshmen are much lower than other racial groups. In 2015, fewer than four in 10 Black applicants were admitted to UC campuses (38 percent). Insufficient state funding to expand enrollment spots in the UC, admissions practices, and the ban on Affirmative Action are contributing factors to the decrease in Black admit rates.

In 2016, Governor Brown's budget allowed the UC to increase capacity by nearly 14,000 seats. This had a positive impact on admit rates overall and, more specifically, for Black students (Figure 9). **The added capacity corresponded with a nine-percentage point increase in Black admit rates between 2015 and 2016, compared to only a five-percentage point increase for White students.** This means that 989 more Black students were admitted to a UC campus in 2016 than the year before, for a total of 4,358 admitted Black students. Additionally, the racial equity gap between Black admit rates and White admit rates is shrinking. In 2015, the admit gap between Black and White applicants was 19 percentage points, yet the following year, with the increase in enrollment capacity, the gap shrunk to 15 percentage points. **State funding that increases capacity at our UC campuses results in increased access for Black students.**

California's Proposition 209
Banning the Use of Affirmative Action in Admissions Decisions

The effects of California's Proposition 209 continue to be felt across the UC system. In 1997, California voted to ban the use of race/ethnicity in admissions decisions by passing Proposition 209, which we describe in our brief *Affirming Equal Opportunity and Access in the University of California so California Prospers.* At that time, Black UC admit rates were 65 percent and have not reached that level in the 20 years since. Even though admission rates for all students have been declining since 1998, Black and Latinx students have experienced the greatest declines in and lowest rates of admission to the UC system in general. Because of the continued increase in the number of students applying to UC campuses, as well as insufficient funding for enrollment growth, admission to UC campuses has become significantly more competitive, as illustrated in our 2015 report *Access Denied*. We support the repeal of Proposition 209 to re-introduce race and ethnicity as one of many factors in admissions to achieve greater equity and diversity within our universities. We also support significant expansion in enrollment funding to ensure that the growing demand for educated workers by our 21st-century economy matches the growing demand by students and families for a college education.

Private, Nonprofit Colleges and Universities

In 2016, the number of Black freshmen enrolling in private, nonprofit institutions in California was just over 1,500 students, representing seven percent of all Black freshmen (Figure 10). White freshmen enroll in these types of institutions at higher rates, with 12 percent.

Among all Black transfer students, over one-quarter transfer to a private, nonprofit college or university, which is a slightly higher percentage than their White classmates, at 23 percent.

Figure 10. Black students transfer to private, nonprofit colleges and universities at higher proportions than White students
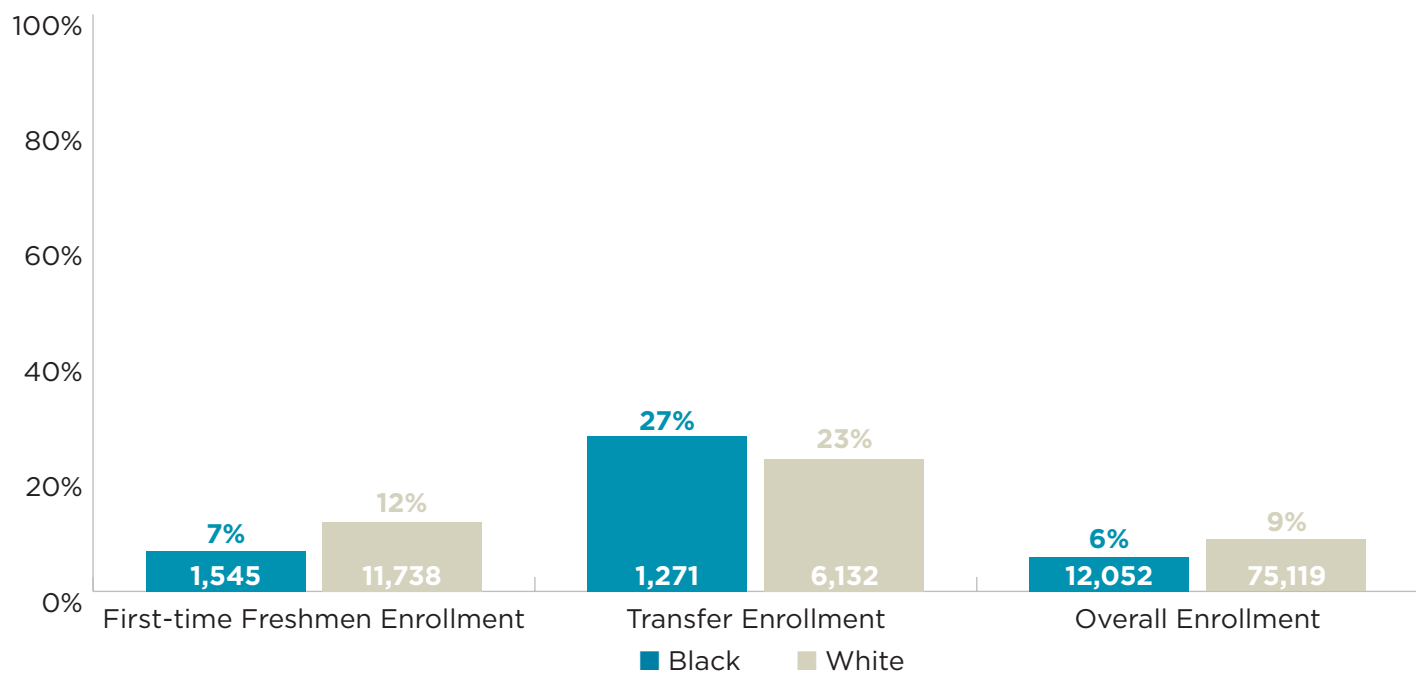
Note: The total 100 percent for each column is the total number of Black and White first-time freshmen in fall 2016; Black and White transfer students in fall 2016; all Black and White undergraduates in 2016-17.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 12-month Enrollment Component, Fall Enrollment Component, 2017.

Private nonprofit colleges and universities are institutions where all funds that are raised by the college or university are used to cover costs or to improve the institution.[10] They are governed by a Board of Trustees, not shareholders who expect a profit.

Recently, there has been a resurgence of Black students enrolling at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).[11] Even though there are no HBCUs in California, some students choose to go out of state to attend one of these unique institutions that were founded to provide a college education to Black Americans who were generally denied admission to traditionally White colleges and universities.[12] "At a time when many schools closed their doors to Black Americans, these colleges offered the best, and often the only, opportunity for a higher education."[13] HBCUs have been shown to provide strong learning environments and support systems for Black students which has led to positive outcomes.[14] While it is unclear how many of them were Black, in 2016 over 1,000 California freshmen enrolled at an HBCU.[iv] Given that roughly eight out of 10 freshmen at HBCUs are Black,[15] applying the same percentage to California freshmen would mean that in 2016 just over 800 California freshmen who enrolled at an HBCU were Black.[v]

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iv Due to data limitations, it is unclear how many of these California students are Black.

v Without more comprehensive and available data, this is just an estimate.

Private, For-Profit Colleges and Universities

Thirteen percent of Black students (2,700) enrolled at for-profit colleges as first-time freshmen (Figure 11). In contrast, only five percent of White freshmen enroll in a private, for-profit college or university, which is more than half the percentage of Black students. There is a similar enrollment pattern and comparison among Black and White transfer students and overall undergraduate enrollment. Even though only 10 percent of all Black California undergraduate students attend a for-profit institution, this represents nearly 21,000 students.

Figure 11. Black students enroll at private, for-profit colleges and universities at significantly higher proportions than White students
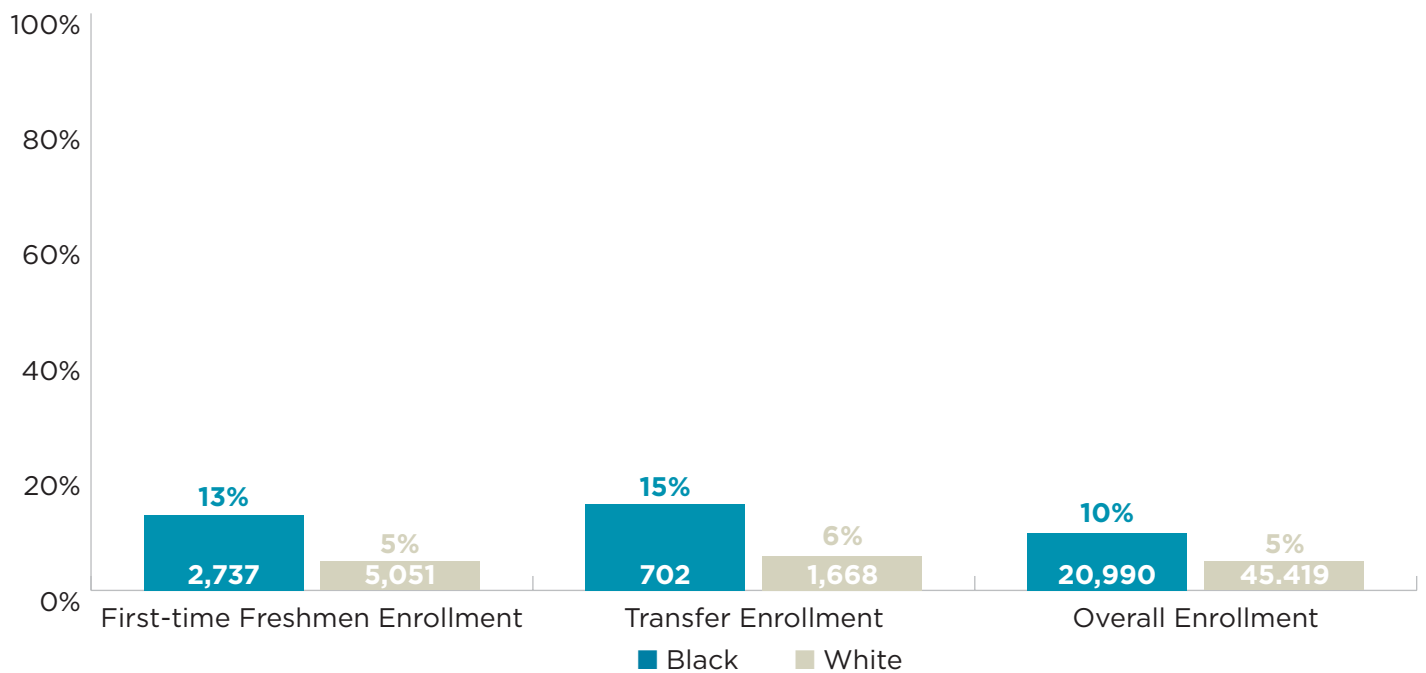

Note: The total 100 percent for each column is the total number of Black and White first-time freshmen in fall 2016; Black and White transfer students in fall 2016; all Black and White undergraduates in 2016-17.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 12-month Enrollment Component, Fall Enrollment Component, 2017

Nationally, for-profit colleges were the fastest-growing sector of higher education in the 1990s and 2000s, and the students who enroll are disproportionately older, Black, female, and single parents.[16] For-profit colleges and universities are owned and usually run by private companies with investors or shareholders who expect a profit. In California, nearly two-thirds of students who attend for-profit colleges are older adults (25 years or older), which means that older first-time and returning learners are enrolling at these types of institutions in higher numbers.

Black students are overrepresented at for-profit colleges, where almost one in ten students at for-profit institutions is Black (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Black students are underrepresented at the CSU and UC, and are significantly overrepresented at for-profit colleges
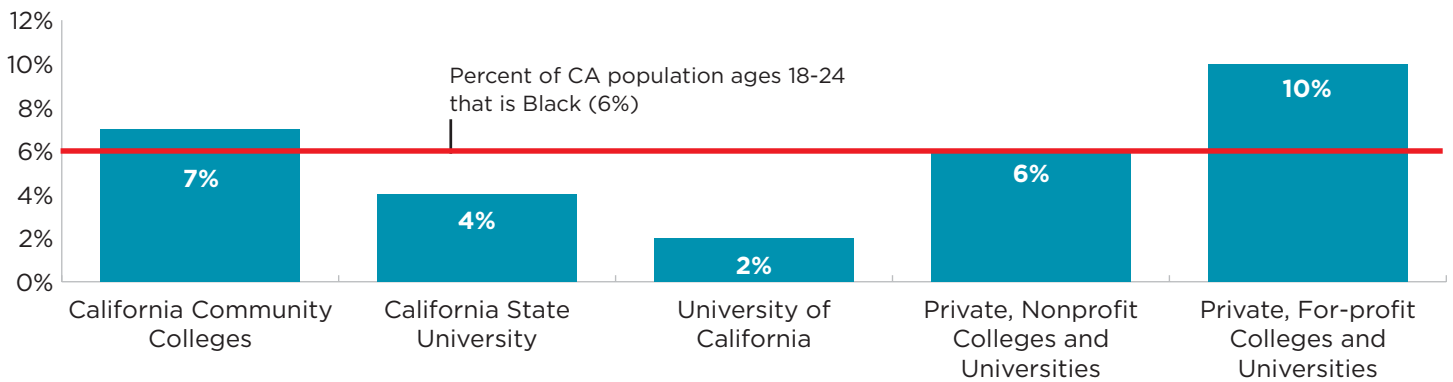
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall Component, 2017

The overrepresentation of Black students at for-profit colleges is especially disturbing given that graduation rates at many for-profit institutions are notoriously low.[17] California's for-profit colleges only graduate seven percent of Black students with a bachelor's degree in six years, compared to 43 percent at the CSU and 75 percent at the UC.[18]

For-profit colleges also have the lowest graduation rates, lengthier times to degree completion, and the lowest retention rates for undergraduates pursuing a bachelor's degree in California compared to other sectors.[19] Students who attend for-profits—whether they earned a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree— tend to have poorer labor market outcomes relative to other college students.[20] And students who attend for-profit colleges have some of the highest loan default rates in the nation.[21] **While students at for-profit colleges make up 11 percent of all enrolled students in California, 58 percent of students in default on their student loans attended for-profit institutions.**[22]

"My last semester at ITT TECH, the institution closed down suddenly. We were notified a week prior by the US Department of Education. This came as a complete shock to me, it made me never want to go back to school again. The fear crippled me for a while, but after three years, I will be enrolling in community college this year to earn my AA. I remembered the commitment I made to myself and the generations after me that I must never give up despite adversity.**"**

— **DON'ANDRE ADAMS,** High School Graduate, Former ITT Tech Student

For-profit colleges tend to have higher costs, while their graduation rates result in poor outcomes for their students. In 2017-18, the average costs for full-time students at for-profit institutions nationwide was about four times higher than the average price at public two-year colleges and 1.4 times higher than the average in-state price at public four-year institutions.[23] Low-income students face higher out-of-pocket costs at for-profit colleges compared to their peers in other sectors.[24] Nationally, average net costs after grant aid in 2015-2016 for students from families with incomes below $35,000 were $27,860 at for-profits compared to $19,960 at private not-for-profits, and $14,550 at public four-year institutions.[25]

Consequently, students at for-profit colleges in California are more likely to combine state and federal financial aid with loans in order to cover the full costs of attendance. Seventy percent of students at for-profit colleges take out loans compared to half of UC and CSU students, and students at for-profits tend to borrow more than students attending public and not-for-profit institutions.[26]

Students may also be expending their financial aid eligibility[vi] such that if they do not complete a degree at their for-profit institution, their ability to re-enroll at another college or university later may not be financially possible as they would have used up all their federal and state financial aid.[27] With the recent closures of the Brightwood Colleges, in addition to the Corinthian Colleges and ITT Tech, students are also faced with questions about how to continue their education or deal with the debt they assumed without earning a degree.[28]

Further examination of practices by for-profit colleges is necessary to understand how these institutions serve students. In California, this information is collected by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), which is a regulatory body housed in the Department of Consumer Affairs in the state of California. The purpose of the BPPE is to regulate private colleges and universities especially related to protecting students against fraud and misrepresentation, and to enforce minimum standards for ethical business practices and instructional quality.[29] California leaders must ensure that all colleges and universities, whether public, private, or for-profit serve our students well and do not exacerbate racial inequality.

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vi Students can receive the Federal Pell Grant for no more than 12 semesters (roughly six years) and has a lifetime maximum limit per student (Federal Student Aid Office). In California, Cal Grant recipients may receive funding for the equivalent of four years of full-time attendance (California Student Aid Commission).
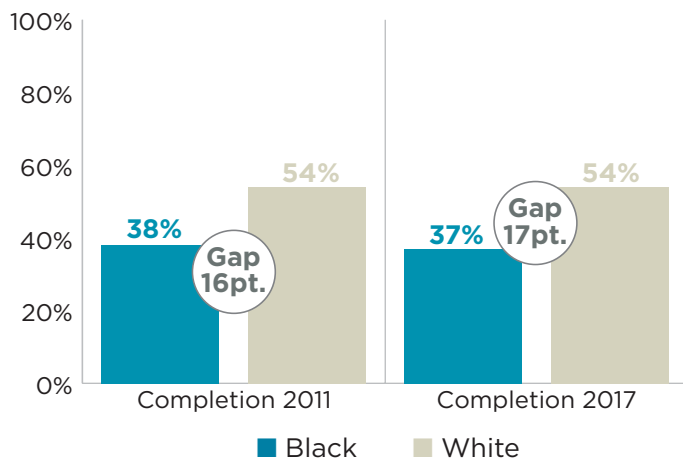
Completion

Major improvements in supporting college completion for Black undergraduate students is necessary. While the UC and private, nonprofit colleges and universities do a significantly better job at graduating Black students, most Black undergraduates do not attend these campuses. Our analysis finds that private, for-profit colleges and universities have the worst outcomes for Black students, with only seven percent completing a degree in six years. And while most Black undergraduates choose a community college, only 37 percent complete within six years, with the CSU performing just slightly better with a 43 percent graduation rate for Black students.
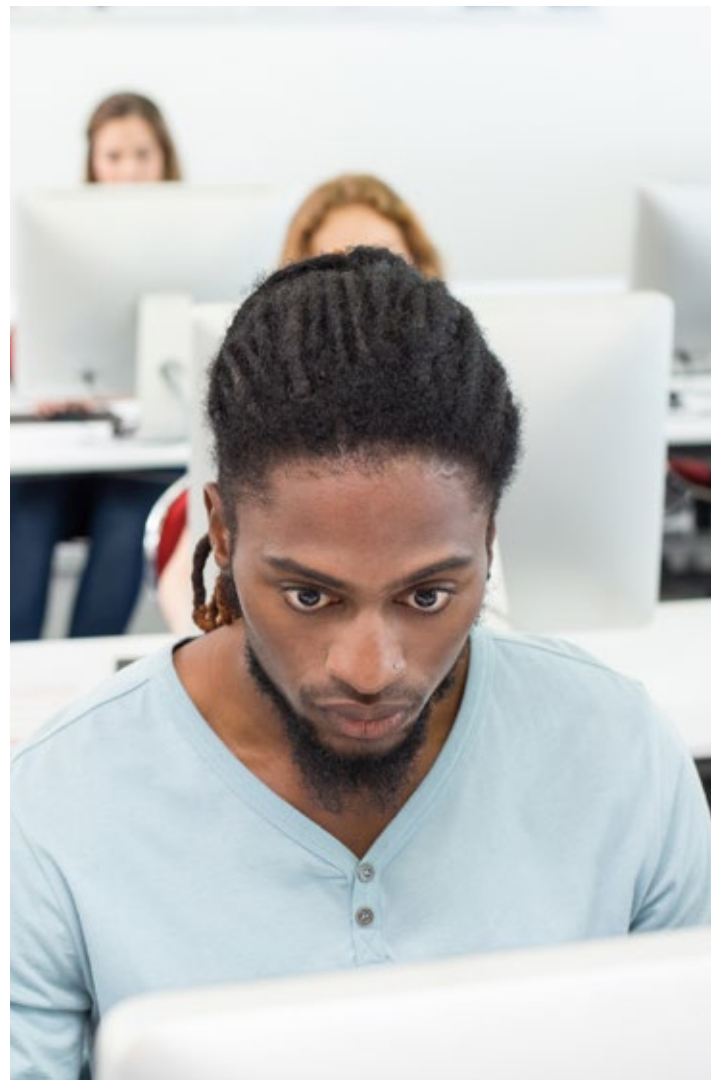
California Community Colleges

In 2016-17, only 37 percent of Black community college students were awarded an associate degree or certificate or were eligible to transfer (within six years), a rate that is one percentage point lower than in 2010-11.[30]

Figure 13. Community colleges have lower completion rates for Black students than White students, and these completion rates are not improving

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, DataMart, 2017

Completion rates for Black students at California Community Colleges are among the lowest rates of any race/ethnic group and have gotten worse over time (Figure 13). As Black completion rates decline, the equity gap between Black students and their White peers grew, from 16 percentage points in 2011 to 17 percentage points in 2017.
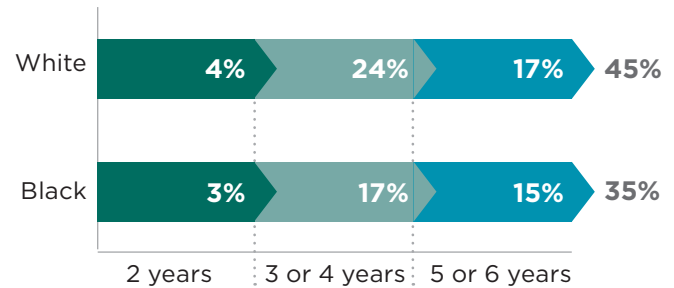
Transfer

The promise of transfer from a California Community College to a CSU or UC is broken. Only three percent of Black students transfer within two years and only 35 percent transfer to a public university within six years. This is about 10 percentage points less than the six-year transfer rate of White students (Figure 14).

The implementation of Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathways that guarantee transfer students admission to the CSU should lead to increased numbers of Black students transferring to CSU campuses, yet this is not happening. **In 2016-17, only 364 Black students took advantage of these established pathways.** This means that of the 2,100 Black students who transferred into CSU campuses, only 17 percent did so via an ADT pathway.[31]

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were one of the first out-of-state systems to voluntarily adopt a guarantee for California transfer students. Transfer students with an ADT are guaranteed admission into the specific campus to which they apply or to the major they want to pursue.[32] Subsequently, Western Governors University (a fully online university) and select independent not-for-profit colleges that are member institutions of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) have participated in a guarantee for ADT earners.[33]

On April 11, 2018, the UC system signed a memorandum of understanding with the California Community College system that will guarantee admission for students who complete one of the UC pathways and achieve the minimum GPA required.[34] This agreement should result in more Black students transferring to UC campuses as well.

Figure 14. Only 35% of Black students transfer in six years, compared to nearly half of White students

	2 years	3 or 4 years	5 or 6 years	
White	4%	24%	17%	45%
Black	3%	17%	15%	35%

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, DataMart, 2017

"If you don't walk in and have a great counselor or know how to begin, transferring can be pretty confusing. I was enrolled in a geology course without realizing I needed to take a lab. No one told me this. This delayed me from being able to transfer for an entire semester."

— ALEXANDER WALKER-GRIFFIN,
Former Community College Student

California State University

At the CSU, only 9 percent of Black first-time freshman earned their degree in four years, and 43 percent within six years. In addition, the completion gap between Black graduates and White graduates is significant (Figure 15). For the student cohort entering in 2010, the Black/White four-year completion gap was 20 percentage points, and the six-year completion gap was 24 percentage points. This means that among 2,550 Black students who began as freshmen in 2010, only 1,100 received the support and services they needed in order to complete their degree.

The racial equity graduation gap between Black and White students who transferred into the CSU is also significant (Figure 16). The two-year completion gap for the cohort that transferred to a CSU in 2012 was eight percentage points, compared to 13 percentage points for the four-year completion rate. This means that of the 1,630 Black transfer students, nearly 600 did not receive enough support to finish their degree.

Figure 15. The racial equity gap in first-time freshman graduation rates is more than 20 percentage points between Black and White first-time freshmen
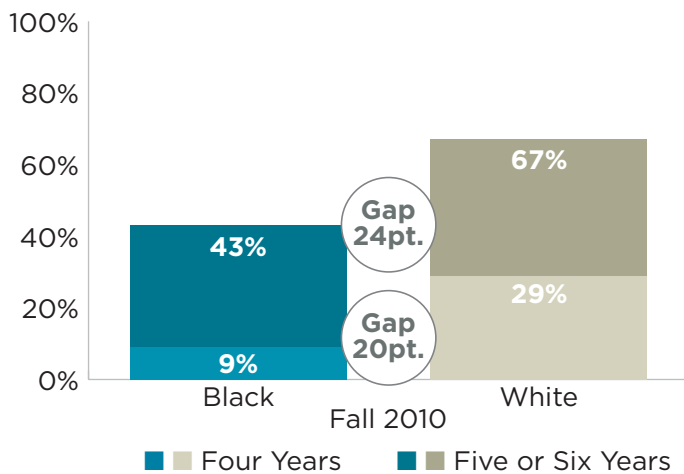
Source: California State University Office of the Chancellor, Division of Institutional Research and Analyses

Figure 16. There are significant racial equity gaps in CSU graduation rates for Black and White transfer students
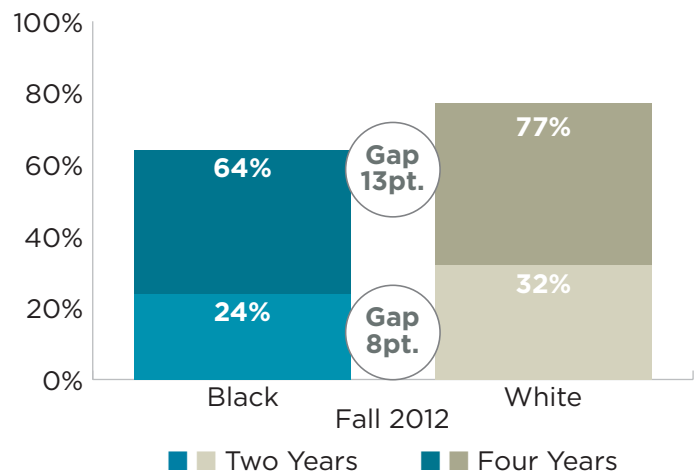
Source: California State University Office of the Chancellor, Division of Institutional Research and Analyses

The CSU reiterated its commitment to supporting all students in achieving their higher education goals by re-launching the "Graduation Initiative 2025" in 2016. Building on the first Graduation Initiative which launched in 2009, the new initiative aims to raise graduation rates and eliminate equity gaps for underserved students of color and Pell Grant recipients. The initiative emphasizes the CSU's responsibility to remove barriers that hinder student success by improving academic preparation, enrollment management, financial need, data-driven decision making, and eliminating administrative barriers.[35] The CSU is working to expand course availability, increase student advising resources, expand the Associate Degree for Transfer program, improve college readiness, and eliminate enrollment in developmental coursework.[36] By initiating efforts to address equity gaps, the CSU system is taking a proactive approach to better serving its diverse student body and recognizing the critical role that university practices can play in closing or exacerbating gaps. Addressing these gaps and identifying challenges for Black students while proactively addressing areas where gaps are widening is a necessary and positive step in the right direction.
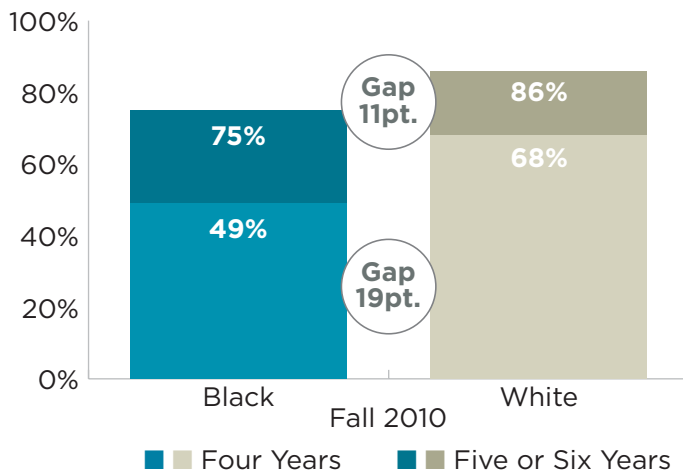
University of California

At UC campuses, nearly half of the Black freshmen who entered in the fall of 2010 graduated on time (within four years) and three-quarters of them graduated within six years (Figure 17).

Despite these high success rates for Black freshmen at UC campuses, there are still equity gaps between Black and White students. The racial equity gap for four-year completion between Black and White freshmen was 19 percentage points, and six-year completion was 11 percentage points. This means that while Black students are experiencing significantly higher rates of completion success at UC campuses, there is still a need to decrease equity gaps and ensure that all Black students have the support they need to finish their degree.

For Black students who transferred into the UC, despite high percentages of completion, there are still significant racial equity gaps. While 57 percent of White UC transfer students earned their degree in two years, only 43 percent of Black UC students did—a gap of 14 percentage points. After four years, 82 percent of Black UC transfer students graduated with their degree compared to 89 percent of White UC transfer students—a smaller gap of 7 percent. (Figure 18).

Figure 17. Despite higher rates of success at the UC, there are still significant racial equity gaps

Source: University of California's Office of the President, Department of Institutional Research and Academic Planning

Figure 18. The racial equity gap between Black and White transfer students is smaller than the one for first-time freshmen
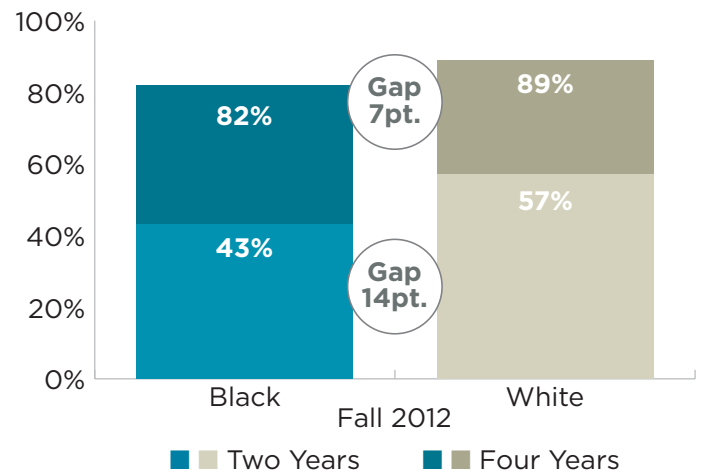
Source: University of California's Office of the President, Department of Institutional Research and Academic Planning

At California's public four-year universities, there are persistent racial equity gaps between Black and White students that must be closed. **Graduation rates of Black students are substantially lower than White students. It is troubling that racial equity gaps are significant for Black CSU and UC students who began as freshmen and who transferred into these systems.**

Educational Attainment

Two-thirds of Black adults have attended college, yet half of those who started did not leave with a degree

To maintain California's position as the fifth-largest economy in the world and reach the 60 percent college attainment goal necessary to meet workforce demand, we need to close racial equity gaps and improve educational outcomes for all students. This starts with providing more Black students and adults with the opportunity to earn a college degree.

A promising opportunity is that **two-thirds (66 percent) of Black adults in California, ages 25-64 years old, have attended college.** This is the highest proportion of college attendance among other underrepresented racial minority groups (Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander; Figure 19).

Figure 19. Two-thirds of Black adults have attended college
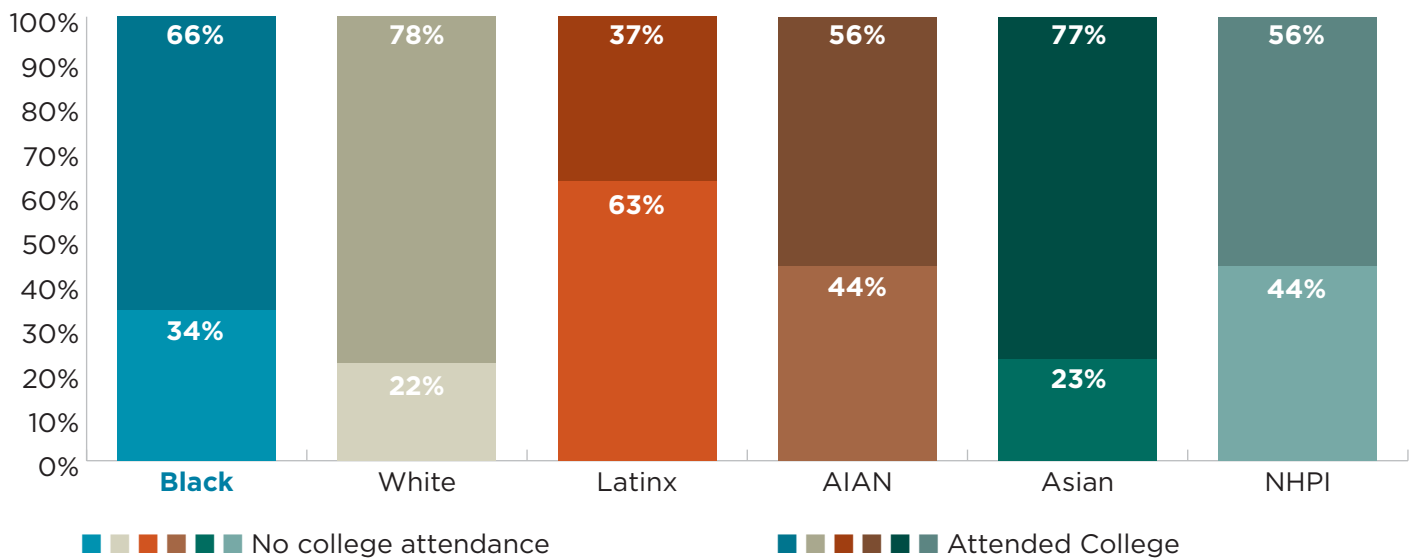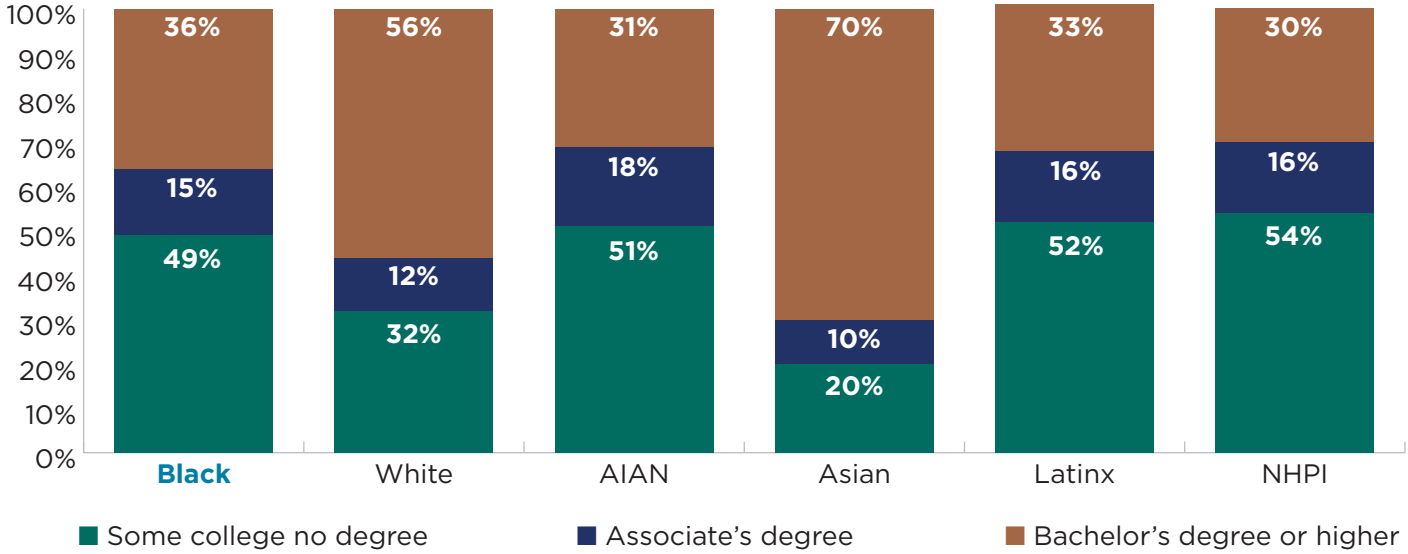

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016; includes adults 25 – 64 years old

Despite high levels of college attendance, almost half of Black adults who went to college do not have a degree, and that is not good news. **In 2016, nearly 385,000 Black adults 25-64 years of age attended some college but do not have a degree** (Figure 20) — and this number is increasing. In the last decade, the number of Black adults with some college, but no degree has increased 18 percent (from 325,000).
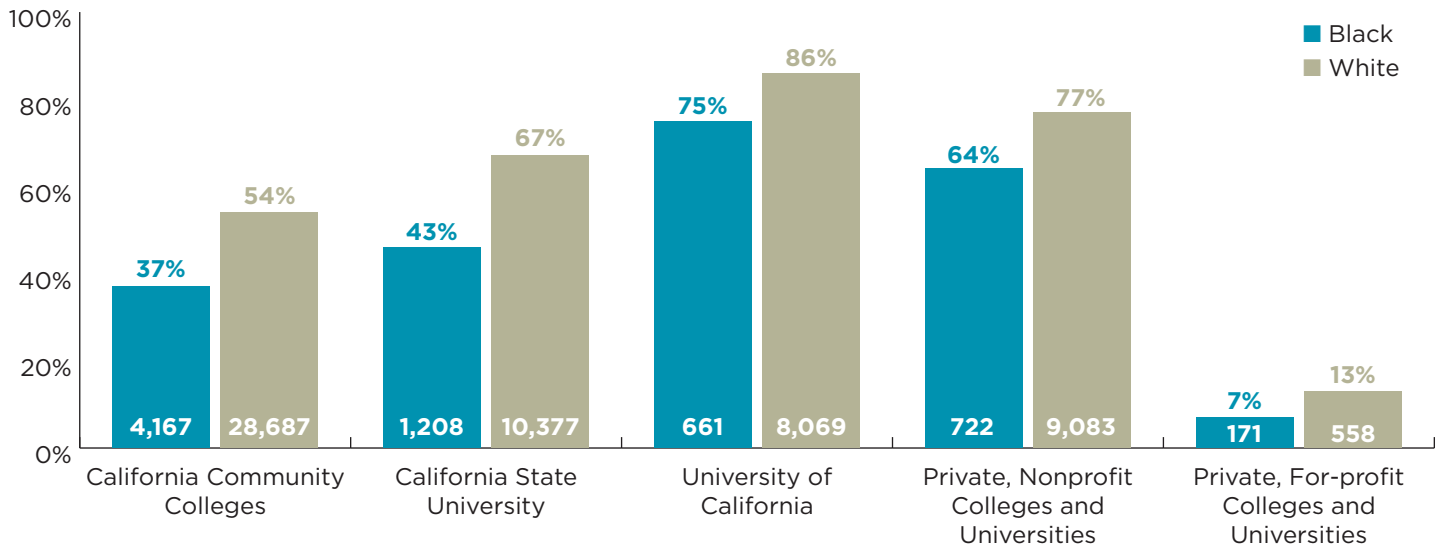
Figure 20. Nearly half of Black students who attended college left without a degree

	Black	White	AIAN	Asian	Latinx	NHPI
Bachelor's degree or higher	36%	56%	31%	70%	33%	30%
Associate's degree	15%	12%	18%	10%	16%	16%
Some college no degree	49%	32%	51%	20%	52%	54%

■ Some college no degree　■ Associate's degree　■ Bachelor's degree or higher

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016; includes adults 25 – 64 years old

Completion rates across all sectors of higher education provide a clearer picture of racial inequity in our colleges and universities (Figure 21). All sectors of higher education in California graduate Black students at much lower rates than White students. While the completion equity gap is most pronounced at the CSU (24 percentage points), **for-profit institutions only graduate seven percent of Black students.**

Figure 21. California colleges and universities do not graduate Black students at the same rate as White students (six-year graduation rate)

Legend: ■ Black ■ White

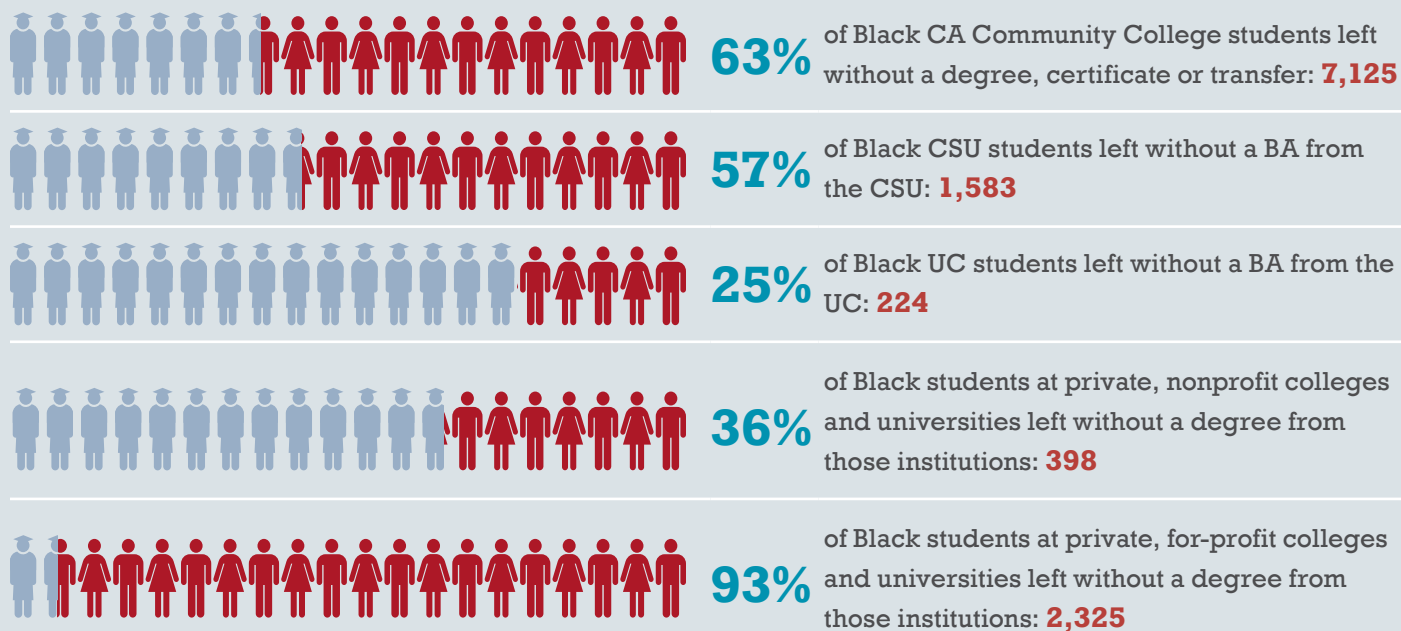|	California Community Colleges	California State University	University of California	Private, Nonprofit Colleges and Universities	Private, For-profit Colleges and Universities
Black	37% (4,167)	43% (1,208)	75% (661)	64% (722)	7% (171)
White	54% (28,687)	67% (10,377)	86% (8,069)	77% (9,083)	13% (558)

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall Component, 2018; California Community College Chancellor's Office, DataMart, 2017

"For a returning nontraditional student, student service hours are not as accommodating. Being on disability afforded me the time and flexibility to navigate through administrative resources like three-hour long counseling wait times. My injury turned out to be the catalyst that allowed me to academically excel. When it was time to return to work, I resigned from my full-time position so I could focus entirely on school. I cashed out my pension and 401K and sacrificed what financial security I finally had to go back to school."

— **SEQUOIA THOMPSON,** former Chaffey College, Pasadena City College, and UCLA Student.

Table 2. Lost talent: California colleges and universities did not follow through to confer degrees to over 11,000 Black students who started college in 2010

63% of Black CA Community College students left without a degree, certificate or transfer: **7,125**

57% of Black CSU students left without a BA from the CSU: **1,583**

25% of Black UC students left without a BA from the UC: **224**

36% of Black students at private, nonprofit colleges and universities left without a degree from those institutions: **398**

93% of Black students at private, for-profit colleges and universities left without a degree from those institutions: **2,325**

Total Lost Talent = 11,655 Black Students

Note: These are all six-year completion rates.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall Component, 2018; California Community College Chancellor's Office, DataMart, 2017

While more Black Californians are earning a college degree, the racial gaps in education attainment between Black and White adults is significant (Figure 22).

Figure 22. More Black Californians are earning a college degree, but racial gaps persist
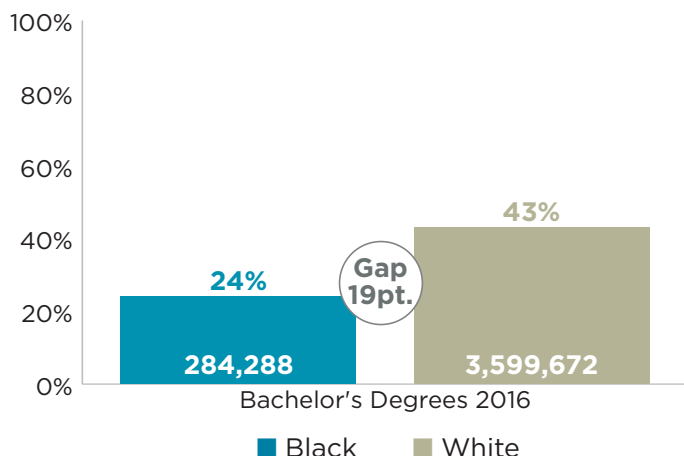
Although a higher proportion of Black adults are attending college, institutions are not doing enough to ensure that their Black students successfully graduate. Despite these lower rates of college degree conferrals, Black adults are returning to school in large numbers. **In 2016, nearly 90,000 Black adults (ages 25-64) were enrolled as undergraduates in colleges in California.**[37]
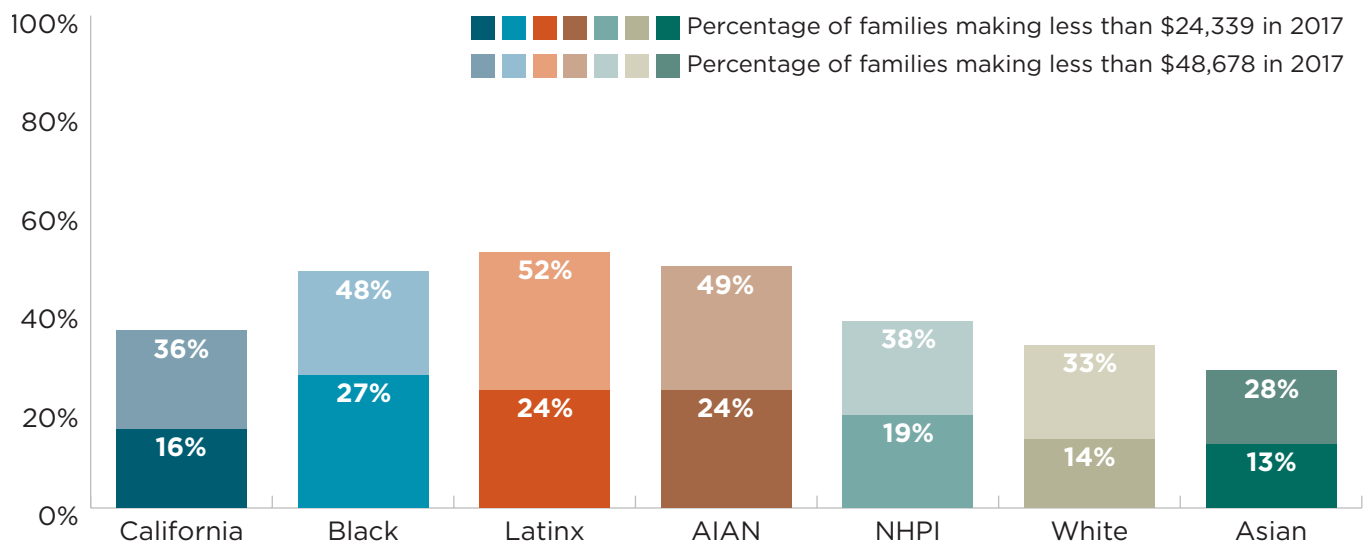
Bachelor's Degrees 2016
- Black: 24% — 284,288
- White: 43% — 3,599,672
- Gap 19pt.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016; includes adults 25 – 64 years old

Barriers to Black Student Success

High Poverty Rates.

Nearly half of California's Black families earn less than $49,000 per year (within 200 percent of the federal poverty line; Figure 23).[38] The federal poverty line is an estimate of the minimum level of income necessary to meet basic living needs and in 2016, the poverty line was $24,339 for a family of four. This means that 200 percent of the poverty line was $48,678 for a family of four.[39] As the cost of college increases for California's lowest and middle-income families, financial aid is not enough.[40] The high proportion of low-income Black students means that this population is greatly affected by rising college costs and dependent on federal and state financial aid in order to attend college.

Figure 23. Nearly half of all Black families in California are earning less than $49,000 annually

Percentage of families making less than $24,339 in 2017
Percentage of families making less than $48,678 in 2017

	California	Black	Latinx	AIAN	NHPI	White	Asian
Less than $48,678	36%	48%	52%	49%	38%	33%	28%
Less than $24,339	16%	27%	24%	24%	19%	14%	13%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016; The Working Poor Families Project, 2018.

> **❝**I came from a very low-income family. Most of my tuition was covered by grants and loans but the cost outside of the tuition was unbearable, not even loans could help. After five years of working full time I had managed to save enough to return to my local community college because it was a cheaper alternative. After enrolling and starting to further my education it was apparent that it in fact was not a cheaper alternative. Yes, tuition was affordable but textbooks, supplies, and basic needs were just as costly as they were when I had been a student five years prior.**❞**
>
> — **IIYSHAA YOUNGBLOOD,** community college student, President of the Student Senate for California Community Colleges

California is one of the most generous states in terms of financial aid—nearly two-thirds of all community college and CSU (63 percent)[41] students, and nearly half of UC students[42] pay zero tuition and fees. But, the cost of college includes more than just tuition and fees; it also includes housing, food, books, transportation, health care, and other related expenses. Even after financial aid, low-income students in California face a major cost burden. Students need almost $7,000 to pay for an education at one of the community colleges and at least $5,000 for a four-year institution per year.[43]

College affordability is further compounded by the rising rate of food and housing insecurity experienced by students across California. According to a recent report from the Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL), nearly one-third of community college students experienced housing insecurity and 12 percent experienced food insecurity.[44] African American and Southeast Asian students were most likely to be affected by both food and housing insecurities.[45]

Remedial Placement.

Black students are disproportionately placed into remedial education courses (in math and English) that do not count toward a degree. Of the students who entered a community college in California in the 2011-12 academic year, nine of every 10 Black students were placed into remedial courses. This means that out of 11,000 Black students, over 10,000 of them were placed into remedial coursework (Figure 24).
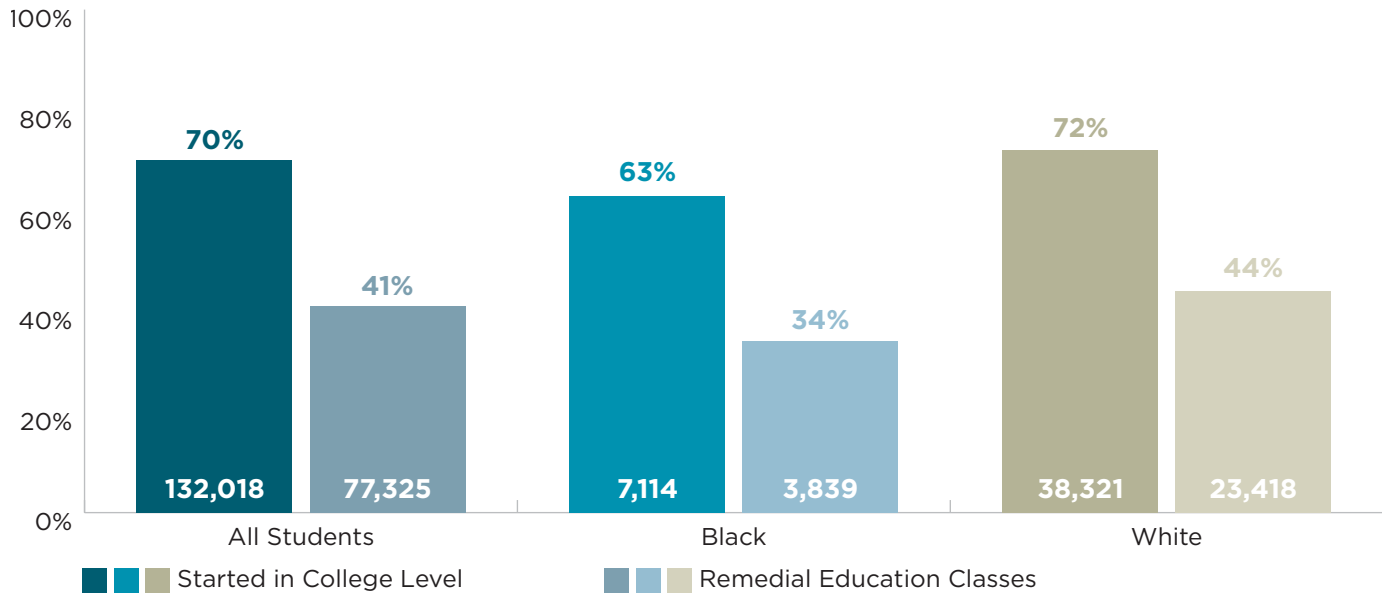
Figure 24. Nine out of 10 Black students at the community colleges are placed in remedial education classes
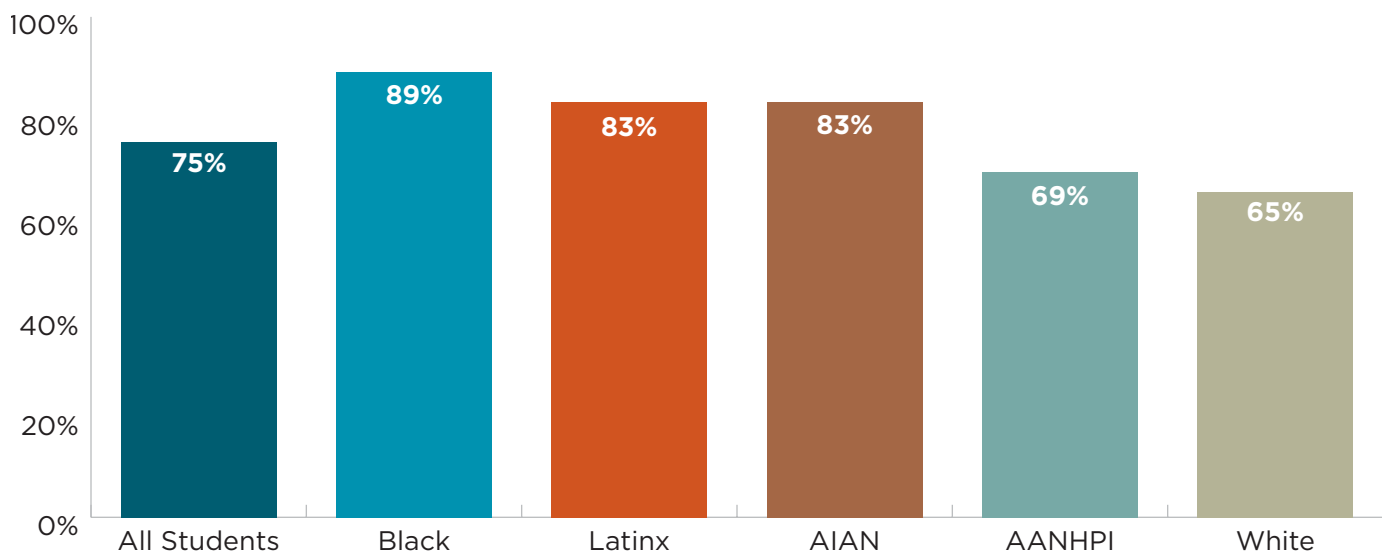
Source: California Community College Chancellor's Office Student Success Scorecard, 2017

Remedial education placement is associated with lower rates of completion.[46] Among all students who started in remedial coursework at the community colleges in 2011-12 only 41 percent finished a degree, certificate, or transferred within six years, compared to 70 percent of students who started in college-level coursework. **For Black students beginning in remedial courses, only one-third complete in six years,** which means that nearly 7,500 Black students who started in remedial classes did not complete in six years (Figure 25).

Figure 25. Two-thirds of Black students who started in remedial courses did not complete community college in six years

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Student Success Scorecard, 2017

Nearly 80 percent of all students entering community college are assessed into pre-college-level English, math, or both. Despite knowledge that most assessment tests are either invalid or flawed,[47] community colleges still rely too heavily on them to place students into English or math. Inaccurate placement leads students to remedial education courses that cost time and money but do not count toward degree attainment or transfer. If a student does need remediation, the delivery of instruction must improve so that students are accelerated toward college-level courses and receive the co-curricular support they need to succeed.

With newly passed legislation, by the fall of 2019, community colleges in California are required to use high school performance to place students, such as high school grade point average or grades in specific courses, which are better determinants for how students will perform in college courses.[48] The goal of this new policy is to allow students to enroll directly into college-level courses from the start, thus reducing time to degree and accelerating community college students' pathways. Moving forward, it is important to monitor these reforms to ensure they benefit and increase Black student success.

If Black students who took pre-college level courses graduated at the same rate as those who did not, an *additional* **2,948 Black community college students (within one cohort alone) would have earned a degree or certificate or transferred** to a university in 2016-2017.[49]

The CSU has also eliminated remediation requirements for its students beginning with the fall 2018 term (see box below). This is a welcome step for Black students who had been disproportionately placed into remediation courses at the CSU for many years. Of the 2,542 Black first-time freshmen in the fall 2016 cohort, 50 percent (1,268) were identified as needing remediation in mathematics while 35 percent (901) were identified as needing remediation in English.[50] These figures are well above the average remediation rates of 28 percent and 23 percent respectively and the highest among all racial and ethnic groups. The consequences of being placed into remediation can be severe. For the fall 2016 cohort, **12 percent of all CSU students who needed remediation but did not complete it within a year were forced by their campus to drop out.**[51] With the elimination of remediation at the CSU, we should expect an increase in the number of Black students who complete a degree in a timely fashion as they are now being enrolled in college-level courses with additional supports.[52] However, it will be important to monitor the effect of the CSU's remediation reforms to ensure that Black students are indeed succeeding.

CSU Executive Orders

In 2017, the CSU Chancellor's Office issued Executive Order 1110 which halted the systemwide use of placement exams and phases out noncredit remedial courses. In order to determine students' academic readiness for college-level English and math courses, the CSU system now uses Advanced Placement test results, SAT and ACT scores; Early Assessment Program scores; and grades earned in transferable, college-level courses that satisfy CSU General Education requirements.[53] In addition, students who need support and skill development will be allowed to enroll in college-level courses that count toward their degrees and concurrently enroll in a credit-bearing class that provides additional academic supports.[54] When CSU campuses fully implement these changes in Summer 2019, we anticipate that the policy will allow more Black students to enroll directly in college-level courses and thus lead to decreased time to degree and improved completion rates. Through implementation, there will be a need to continue to monitor the impact of this executive order to ensure that placement leads to improved success for Black students.

Sense of Belonging on Campus.

There is a large body of evidence that a sense of belonging on campus improves student outcomes. If a student feels like they belong to a campus community, they will be more likely to return term after term and more likely to graduate.[55] There are a number of ways colleges and universities can cultivate students' sense of belonging. One of the most important ways is to make sure that the campus climate and culture is one of inclusivity and that students feel as though they can identify with mentors, faculty, staff, and campus leaders. Black students have also identified that having someone on the college campus who cares about their success is instrumental to their progress.[56] These relationships matter to Black students and campuses need to do more to foster these types of connections.

One key area where sense of belonging is vital to the success of Black students is within the classroom. Instructional methods, curriculum, pedagogy, and teaching styles all shape the in-class experiences for students. Unwelcoming classroom environments influenced by racism and stereotypes by faculty and fellow students lead to lower levels of academic engagement for Black students.[57] Validation in the classroom is crucial to fostering an increased sense of belonging on campus.[58] Without explicitly addressing and reforming the in-class experiences of Black students, increasing students' sense of belonging on college campuses will not become reality and outcomes will not improve.

Umoja Community Education Foundation Supporting Black Student Success

Umoja means "unity" in Swahili and in some California community colleges it signifies a community of people working to improve the educational experiences of Black students through evidence-based practices and professional development for colleges. Frustrated with the continual low success rates of Black community college students, in 2007, 23 college faculty, staff, and administrators from across California came together to create meaningful change. The Umoja Community Education Foundation partners with campuses across California to enhance the cultural and educational experiences of African, African American, and other underserved students. Students engaged in campus-based Umoja programs participate in college orientation and assessment process, individual counseling, enroll in academic pathways that accelerate their progress to transferring, and receive wraparound support services. The Umoja Community model promotes a learning community model, a cohort model, and additional programming that offers individualized assistance. Sixty California Community Colleges and two California State University campuses host Umoja programs.[59] An external program evaluation that compared the educational outcomes of Umoja and non-Umoja Black community college students found that Umoja students outperformed non-Umoja students in a variety of areas including the average number of units earned, transferable units earned, course success rate, progression from basic skills to transfer-level courses, persistence, and retention.[60] The Umoja Community Foundation partnership is an example of the type of programming and strategies that increase Black student success.

Black Representation in Higher Education Leadership

Nearly three-quarters of Black undergraduates in California attend a community college, yet among the over 18,400 tenured faculty members at the community colleges, just over 1,000 (six percent) are Black. This means that **for every Black tenured faculty member, there are 131 Black students.** Compare this ratio to White students, where **for every White tenured faculty member at the community colleges, there are only 55 White students** (Figure 26).

Figure 26. Black community college students do not have many Black professors at their campuses
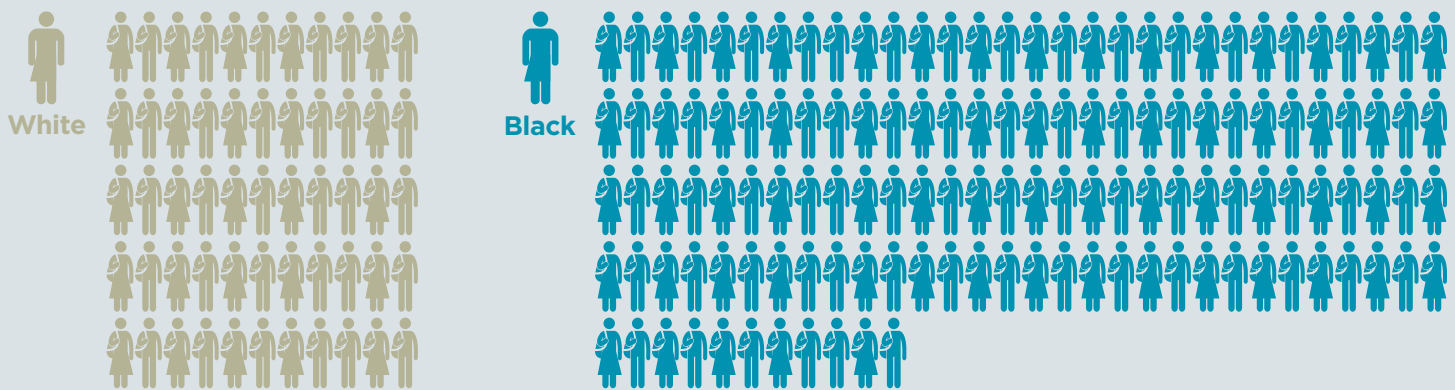
Source: California Community College Chancellor's Office, Data Mart, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2017

At the CSU campuses, the ratio is somewhat better, but still unacceptable. **For every Black tenured faculty member, there are 46 Black students, compared to only 16 White students for each White faculty member.** This means that among the nearly 9,600 tenured faculty members at CSU campuses, only 372 are Black, compared to nearly 6,000 who are White (Figure 27).

Figure 27. Black CSU students do not have many Black CSU professors

Source: California State University Office of the Chancellor, Division of Institutional Research and Analyses; National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2017

At the UC, there are over 8,700 tenured faculty members, of which 256 are Black and over 6,000 are White. **This means that there are 32 Black students for every Black tenured faculty member and eight White students for each White faculty member** (Figure 28).

Figure 28. The student-to-faculty ratio at the UC is the best among our public colleges and universities, but only because there are so few Black students in the UC

White

Black

Source: University of California's Office of the President, Department of Institutional Research and Academic Planning; National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2017

Beyond numerical representation among leadership and faculty positions at our public colleges and universities is the training and preparedness of these leaders to work effectively with Black students. Faculty members and college leaders need to have the cultural competence to successfully engage with Black students in order to support their success.[61] Implicit bias, historical stereotypes, and deficit-frameworks from leaders inhibit student achievement,[62] thus signaling the need to not only hire diverse faculty and leaders, but ones who have the competence, training, and asset-based frameworks to contribute to the success of Black students regardless of their own race/ethnicity. **In other words, all faculty can and should be equity champions that nurture Black student success.**

High-achieving Black students attribute family encouragement and mentors as sources of strength in achievement.[63] Furthermore, many Black students seek out meaningful relationships with faculty, administrators, staff, and peers on college campuses where these relationships are key factors in their academic success.[64] Black students' strong resilience in the face of institutional racism are also strong assets of the Black community that foster academic success.[65] **Centering policies and practices that build on the strengths of Black students is key for educational success.**[66] California's elected and educational leaders must draw on the cultural strengths of Black students to meet the educational and economic goals of our state.

"My first African American Studies course was also the first time I had a professor whom I felt I could identify with since middle school. Having a Black male professor allowed me to visualize myself as an intellectual with the capacity to reach beyond the physical limits of my own conditions.**"**

— TYLAR CAMPBELL, University of California Los Angeles, '19

Conclusion and Recommendations

California has not fulfilled the promise of the California Dream for all its residents. More than any other aspect of our society, education will have the most immediate and long-lasting impact on economic mobility for Black Californians, which in turn strengthens our economy.

California must do better for Black students. The decisions California's leaders make, and the practices and solutions colleges put into place can drastically improve outcomes for Black students. This can only happen if there is the political will, courageous leadership, and intentionality by our policymakers and campus leaders that prioritizes Black academic success.

Specifically, we need our state and college leaders to:

1. **Set a specific statewide college attainment goal for Black students with the intention of closing persistent college preparation, access, and completion gaps.** Along with setting a statewide goal that calls for 60 percent of working-aged adults to have a college degree or credential by 2030, California needs a specific goal to reduce equity gaps for Black students. California's leaders MUST be intentional about improving outcomes for Black students and our college campuses need to articulate a specific plan for doing so.

2. **Establish a statewide strategy targeted toward supporting the return of Black adults with some college but no degree, so they can complete their education.** Since almost half of Black adults who started college left without a degree, a statewide and campus-specific strategy to re-enroll and support their ability to complete programs of study is necessary. Colleges and universities should identify former students who have some college credit, but no credential or degree and implement outreach plans to encourage former students to re-enroll and earn their degree. The state can then allocate financial aid to those in need and reward campuses with additional resources for increasing college completion of returning adults.

3. **Increase enrollment capacity at the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) by providing additional capacity funding and ensuring improvements in time to degree by the UC and CSU.** There are many college-prepared Black students who meet the admissions requirements for California's public four-year institutions but do not attend one because insufficient funding has restricted access to CSU and UC campuses. The state needs to increase capacity for qualified Californians. Recent funding to expand capacity at the UC has resulted in the increased enrollment of Black students.

4. **Require strong implementation of community college reforms that focus on improving placement of students into college-level English and math, ensure strong transfer and degree pathways, perform degree audits that monitor students' progress toward completion, and utilize the new student success funding formula to support the success of Black students.** Three out of four Black undergraduates attend a California Community College, but when only 37 percent of Black students earn a certificate, degree, or transfer—the success of these reforms is critical, and it is imperative to monitor them and ensure they work for Black students.

5. **Provide state financial aid that helps low-income and middle-income students afford the full cost of college—not just tuition. Advocate for increases to Pell Grant aid and work study by the federal government.** Forty-eight percent of Black families are just above or in poverty and Black students are more likely to experience food and housing insecurities.[67] Many aid programs only cover tuition and fees, leaving students to fund the full cost of college on their own or drop out if they are unable to do so.

6. **Campus leaders must create a welcoming environment on campus that provides Black students with a strong sense of belonging by increasing the proportion of Black faculty and staff who reflect the experiences of students and recognize their assets and strengths.** The Campaign for College Opportunity's recent report, *Left Out: How Exclusion in California Public Higher Education Hurts Our Students, Our Values, and Our Economy,* found that there are not enough Black Californians in leadership and faculty positions at our public colleges and universities. All college leaders, faculty, and staff (regardless of race/ethnicity) must be committed to supporting the success of Black students by utilizing professional development that empowers faculty with tools to improve their craft, utilizing current research, effective best practices, and asset-based approaches for supporting Black student success.

7. **Establish a strong and centralized education data system overseen by a higher education coordinating body that will identify trends facing Black students in education, identify solutions that work to improve outcomes for students, and ensure progress toward closing equity gaps.** California currently does not have a data system that can be used to answer basic questions about students' progression from early education to the workforce. As a result, we cannot fully understand the barriers and roadblocks for Black students, nor the successful practices that should be scaled and replicated across the state.

8. **State leaders should provide adequate oversight of for-profit colleges by maintaining state financial aid minimum standards and strengthening state data systems so that students and the public have clear information about college outcomes in order to make informed choices.** Policymakers can also take steps to ensure that taxpayer funding is not propping up schools that have very little or no private support or funding, by instituting a stronger version of a federal rule designed to achieve the same goal. In addition, with more than 40,000 Californians enrolled online in for-profit colleges based in other states, state leaders can strengthen oversight of out-of-state for-profit schools seeking to enroll Californians by requiring they comply with the same laws California-based schools do.

About This Report

The State of Higher Education in California is a series of reports by the Campaign for College Opportunity 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 analyzes the state of Black Californians in education. Specifically, this report reviews preparation, enrollment, and success in college for Black Californians. It also recommends actions that our policymakers and college leaders can take in order to improve college enrollment and graduation rates. This report on Black Californians is the second in the 2018-19 *State of Higher Education in California* series.

Acknowledgements

Methodology

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. Data indicators are based on the 2012-16 ACS five-year estimates collected and analyzed using Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data sets. Data was also collected through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database, available at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website. IPEDS data excludes public less-than-two-year institutions. California-specific data were also collected from the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the California State University Office of the Chancellor, Division of Institutional Research and Analyses, and the University of California's Office of the President, Department of Institutional Research and Academic Planning.

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