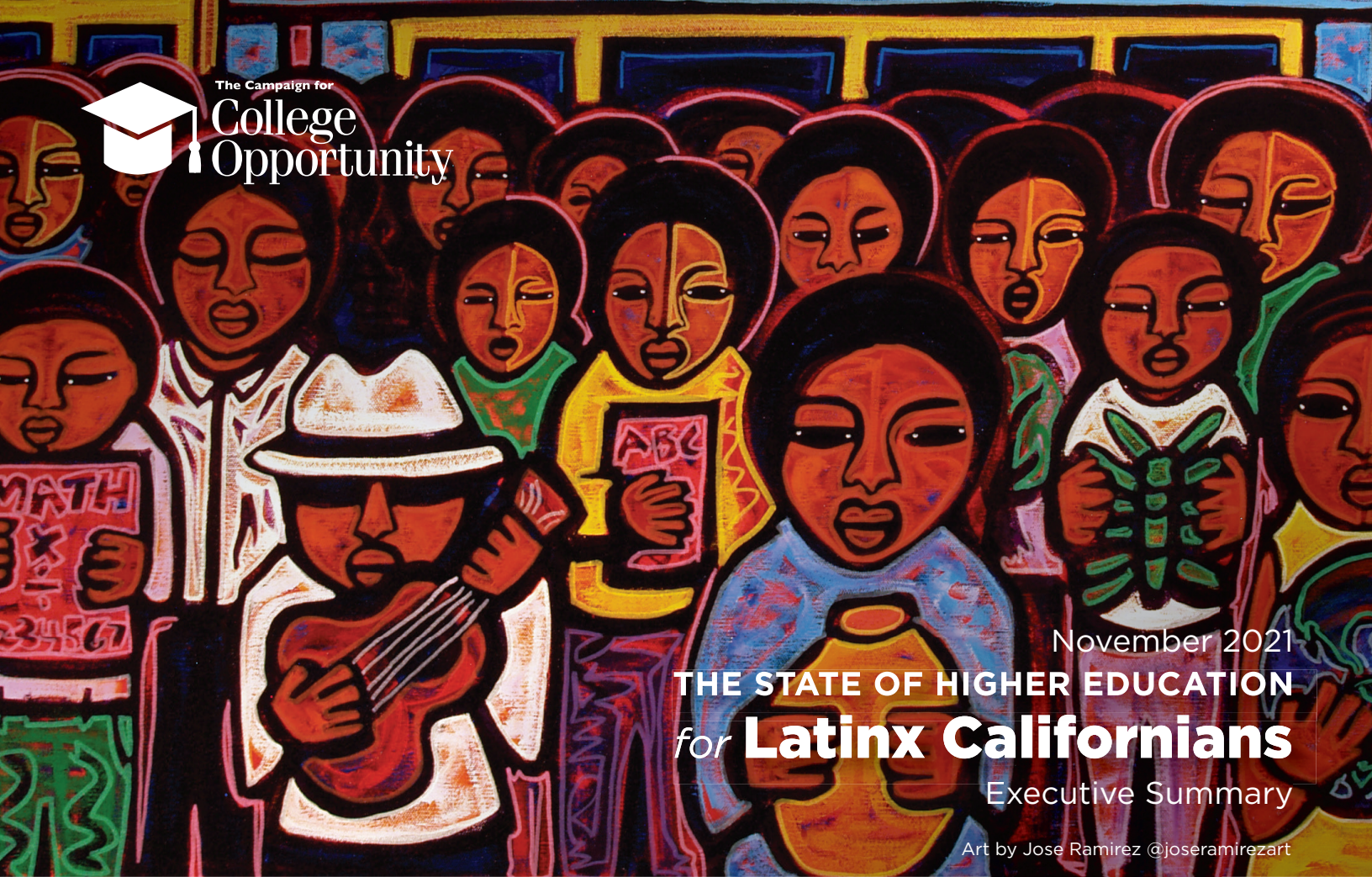




The Campaign for
**College
Opportunity**



November 2021

THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION for **Latinx Californians**

Executive Summary

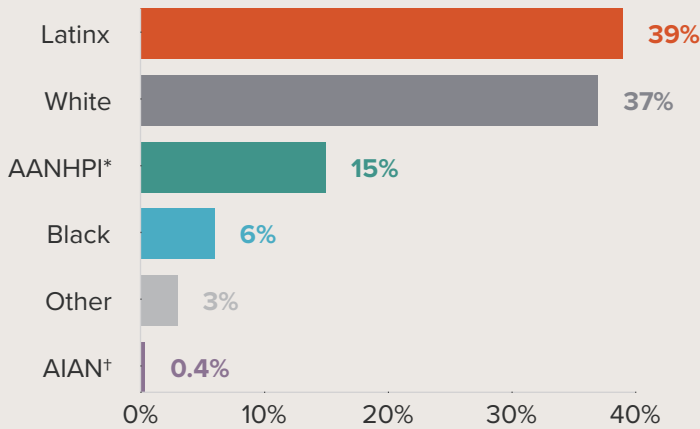
Art by Jose Ramirez @joseramirezart

The future of California will be defined by whether we ensure better educational opportunity for Latinx Californians. Of California's 39.3 million residents, nearly 40 percent (15 million) are Latinx.¹ Over half of California's K-12 students are Latinx,² and more than four in 10 college undergraduates in California are Latinx.³ And while historic numbers of Latinx students are graduating from high school prepared for college and are enrolling in higher education, these numbers are still too low. Inequitable access to college opportunity and success in graduating with a degree is very real. Today, most high schools fail to prepare the majority of their Latinx students for college. For Latinx graduates who do make it, the majority enroll in the California Community Colleges (CCC), where too few are able to find a clear path to a degree or to transfer. While both access and success for Latinx students enrolling in the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) are improving, there are still disturbing gaps by race/ethnicity and gender, with Latinos attending and completing college at rates far below their Latina peers.

The purpose of this report is not to simply highlight the statistics that too few of us in education will find surprising. Instead, it is to recognize that the problem has never been Latinx students or their families, but the choices we have made as a society, as institutions, and as government. At best, we have ignored the choice to do better for Latinx Californians and, at worst, intentionally excluded them and dismissed their potential. As a diverse state, neither serves our collective future. We call on policymakers, college leaders, and the public to be intentional in demanding and removing unnecessary barriers and in providing equitable opportunities for Latinx students to succeed. As proud Californians, we all stand to benefit.

Latinx Californians are the state's largest racial/ethnic group.

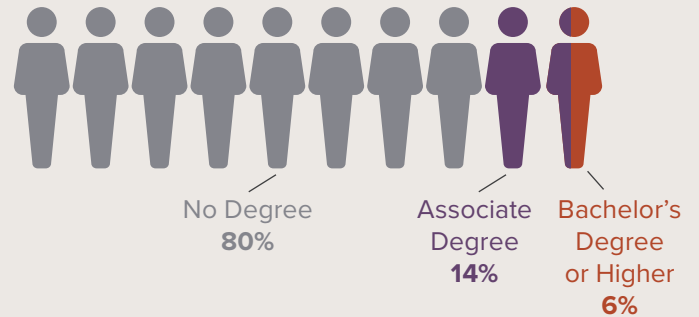
California Population by Race/Ethnicity



* Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander
 † American Indian and Alaskan Native
 Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Public Use Microdata Sample

Only 14 percent of Latinx adults have a bachelor's degree, reflecting the lowest rates of degree attainment of any racial/ethnic subgroup in California.

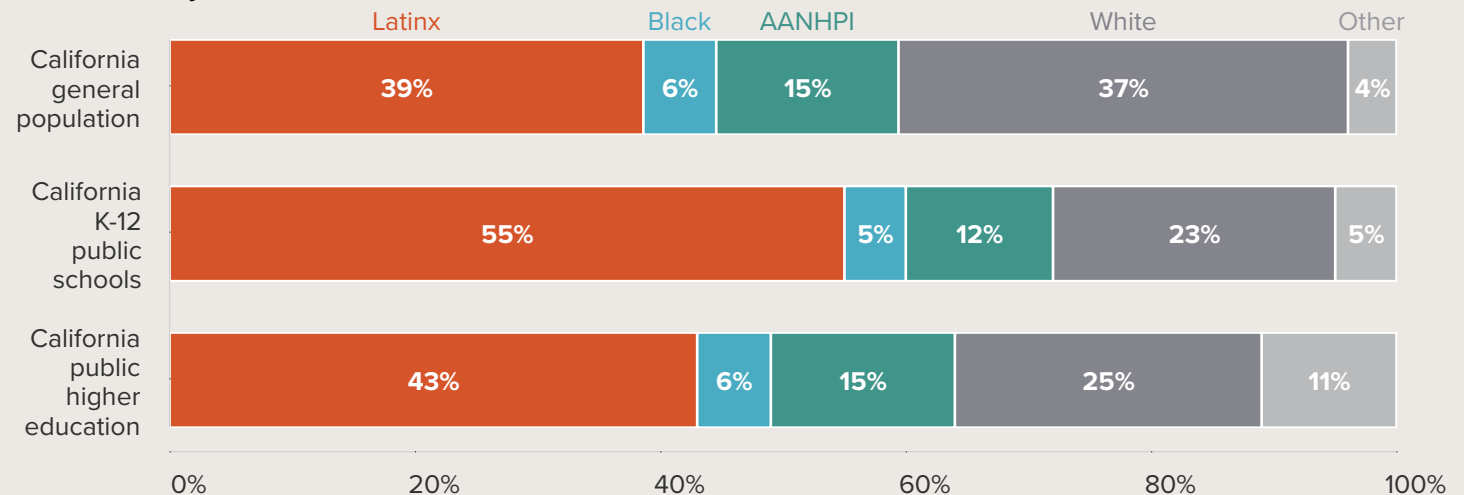
Degree attainment among Californians ages 25-64 by race/ethnicity



Source: US Census Bureau. (2021) American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Public Use Microdata Sample

Over half (55 percent) of California's K-12 students are Latinx, compared to 43 percent of public higher education students, reflecting the youth of the state's population.

California Population, California K-12 Population, and California Public Higher Education Populations by Race/Ethnicity



Sources: California Department of Education. (2021). 2018-19 Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade; US Census Bureau. (2021). American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2015-2019, Public Use Microdata Sample; National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2021), 12-month enrollment component (2018-2019), Table: EFFY2019

More Latinx Californians are graduating from high school, enrolling in college, and succeeding than ever before.

87%
 of Latinx 19 year-old Californians have a high school diploma

44%
 of Latinx high school graduates were supported to meet the A-G courses required for UC and CSU eligibility

77%
 of Latinx high school graduates who met the A-G course requirements enrolled in college within 12 months of graduation

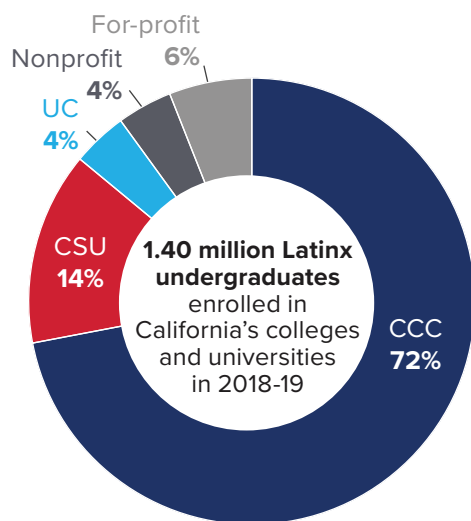
Sources: US Census Bureau. (2021) American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Public Use Microdata Sample. California Department of Education. (2021), Adjusted Cohort Outcomes.



COLLEGE ACCESS

Nine out of 10 Latinx undergraduates in California attended a public college or university in 2018-2019.

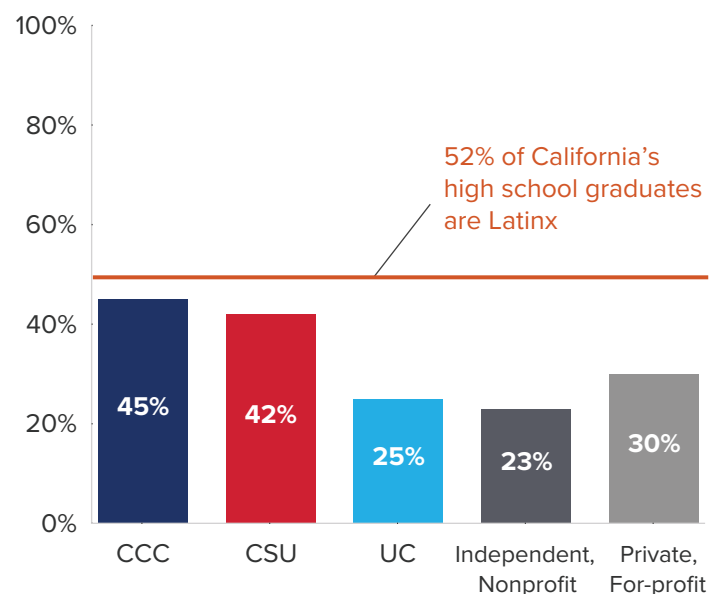
California Latinx Undergraduate Enrollment by Sector, 2018-19



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) (2021), 12-month enrollment component (2018-2019), Table: EFFY2019

Latinx students are underrepresented across all sectors of higher education in California.

Latinx Share of Enrollment by Sector, 2018-19



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2021), 12-month Enrollment Component (2018-2019), Table: EFFY2019; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Public Use Microdata Sample.



COLLEGE COMPLETION

California Community Colleges

The California Community Colleges is the largest higher education system in the nation, with over two million students—of whom 1,002,127 (45 percent) are Latinx.⁴

Of Latinx students enrolling in 2013-14:

2% transferred in two years

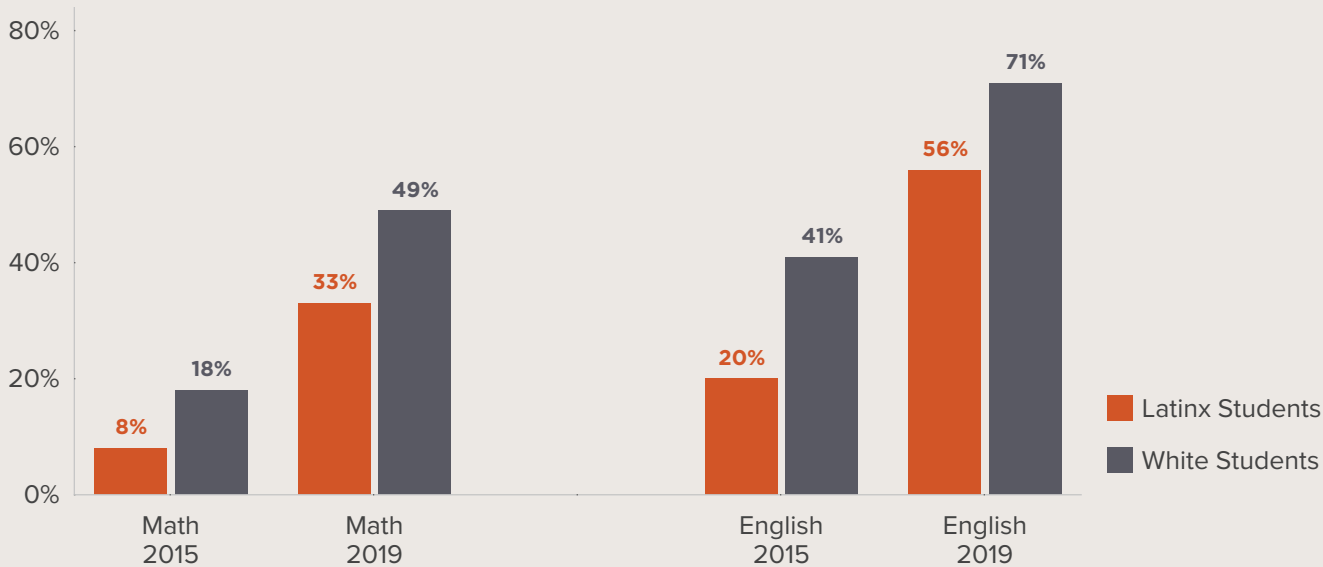
17% transferred in four years

32% transferred in six years

Source: CA Community College Chancellor's Office. (2021). Management Information Systems Data Mart.

The percentage of Latinx students completing transfer-level math increased four-fold following community college placement reforms (AB 705) and almost three-fold in English.

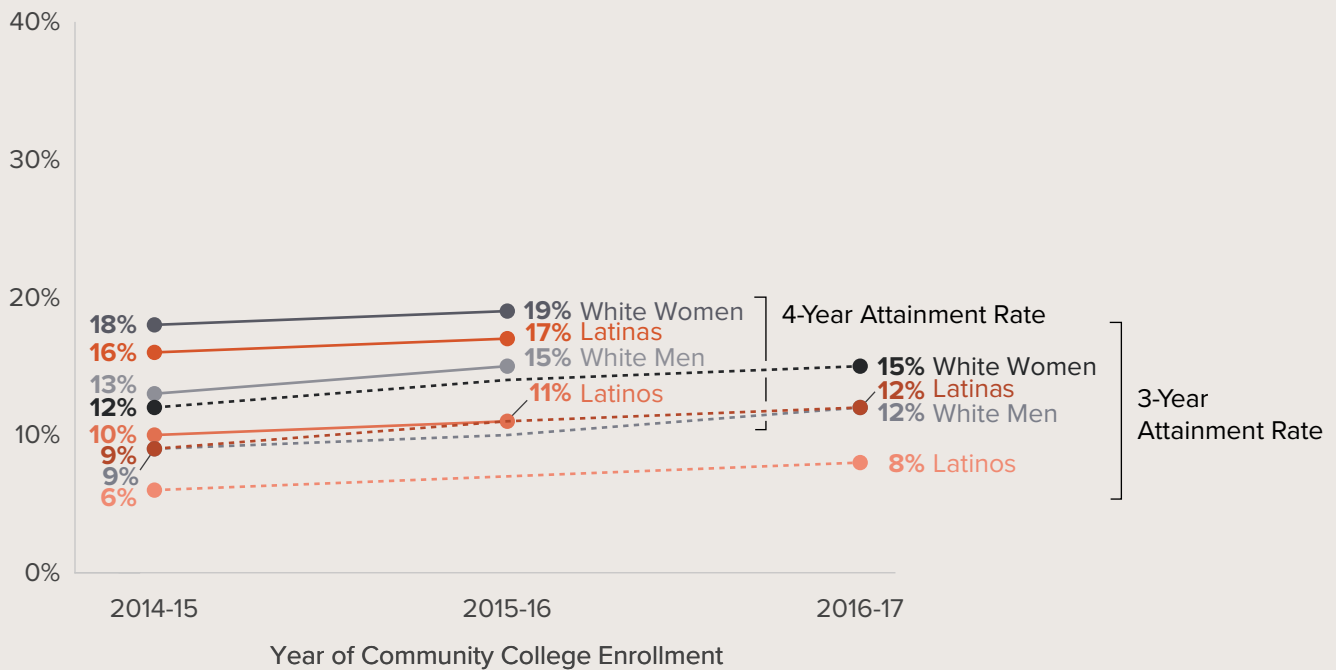
California Community Colleges, Percentage of First-Time Students Completing Transfer-Level Coursework in First Semester



Source: Meija, M. C., Rodriguez, O., & Johnson, H., (2020) A New Era of Student Access at California's Community Colleges [Report]. San Francisco, CA: Public Policy Institute of California.

Latinx students are not supported to earn associate degrees and certificates at the same rates as their white peers at the California Community Colleges, and only one out of ten (11 percent) Latino students enrolling in 2015-16 graduated within four years.

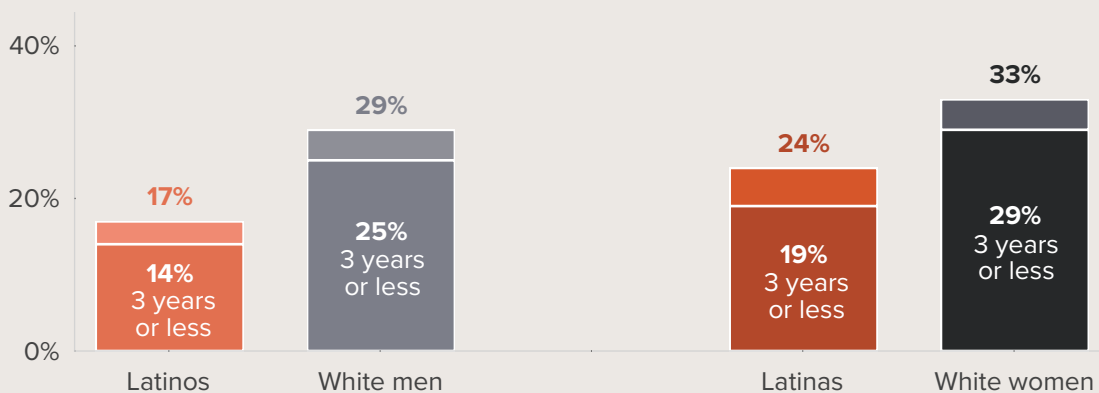
California Community Colleges, Three- and Four-Year Cohort Completion Rates by Race and Gender



Source: Cal-PASS Plus. (2021). Student Success Metrics (all students—cohort view) [Data Dashboard]

While more Latinas are transferring than Latinos, there is still a significant gap between success rates among Latinas and white women.

California Community Colleges, Four-Year Transfer Rates for Latinx and White Students



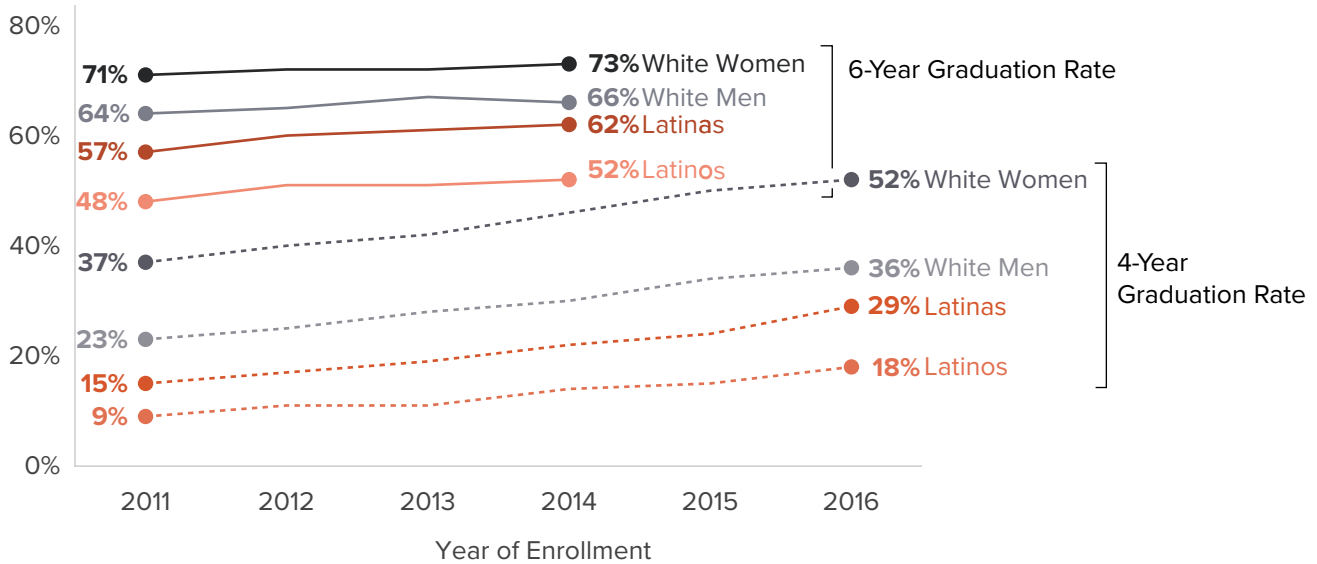
Source: Cal-PASS Plus. (2021). Student success metrics (all students—cohort view) [Data Dashboard].

California State University

The CSU enrolled 198,636 Latinx students (41 percent) of the total 432,264 undergraduates across 23 campuses in the fall of 2020.⁵

At the CSU, only 62 percent of Latinas and only 52 percent of Latinos graduate in six years.

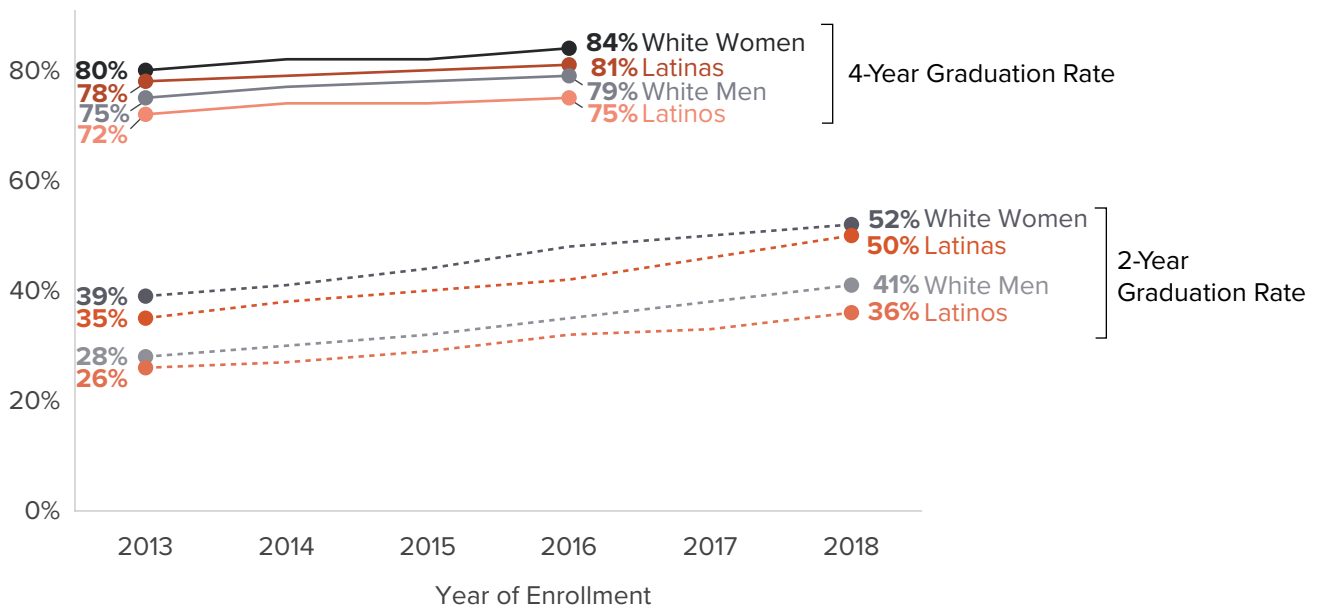
California State University, Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates for First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen



Source: California State University. (2021) *Graduation and Continuation Rates* [Data Dashboard].

Support for Latina transfer students ensures they graduate at rates approaching those of white women transferring to the CSU. Latinos transferring to the CSU are not as well supported to timely completion, with just over one in three (36 percent) graduating within two years of transferring.

California State University, Two- and Four-Year Graduation Rates for Transfer Students



Source: California State University. (2021) *Graduation and Continuation Rates* [Data Dashboard].

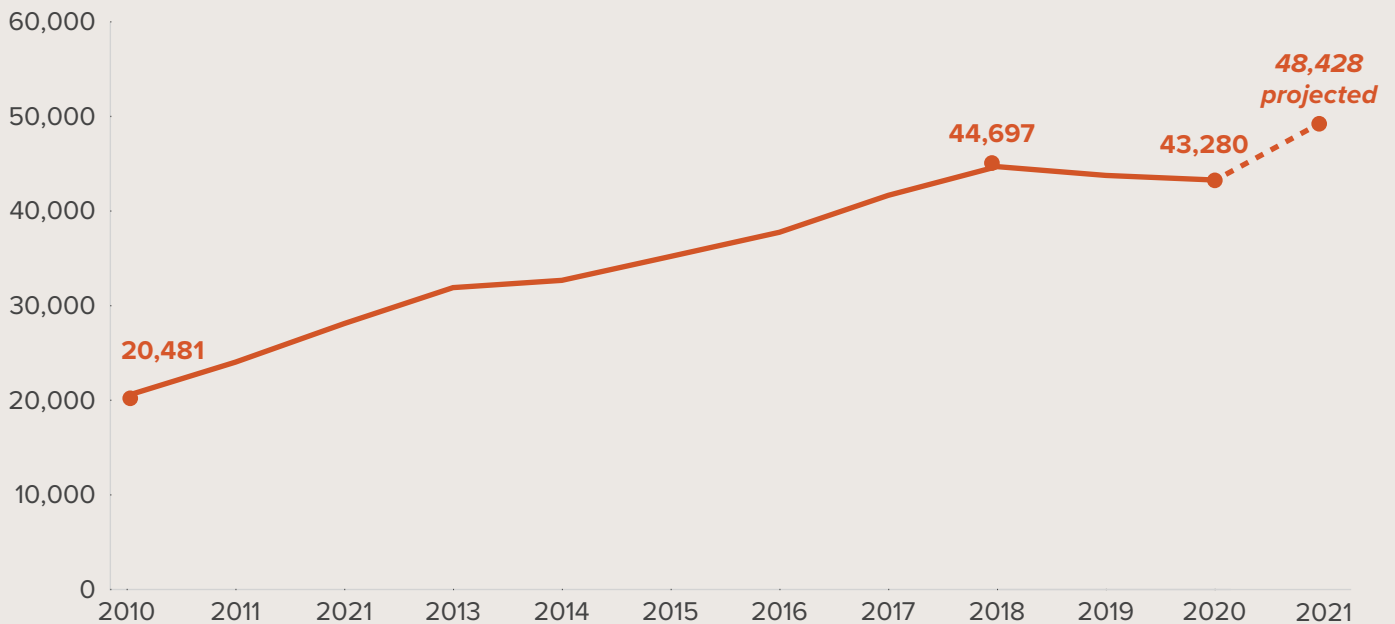


University of California

Of the roughly 226,121 undergraduate students enrolled in Fall 2020, 25 percent (56,667) were Latinx.⁶

The number of Latinx students has been rising over the past decade.

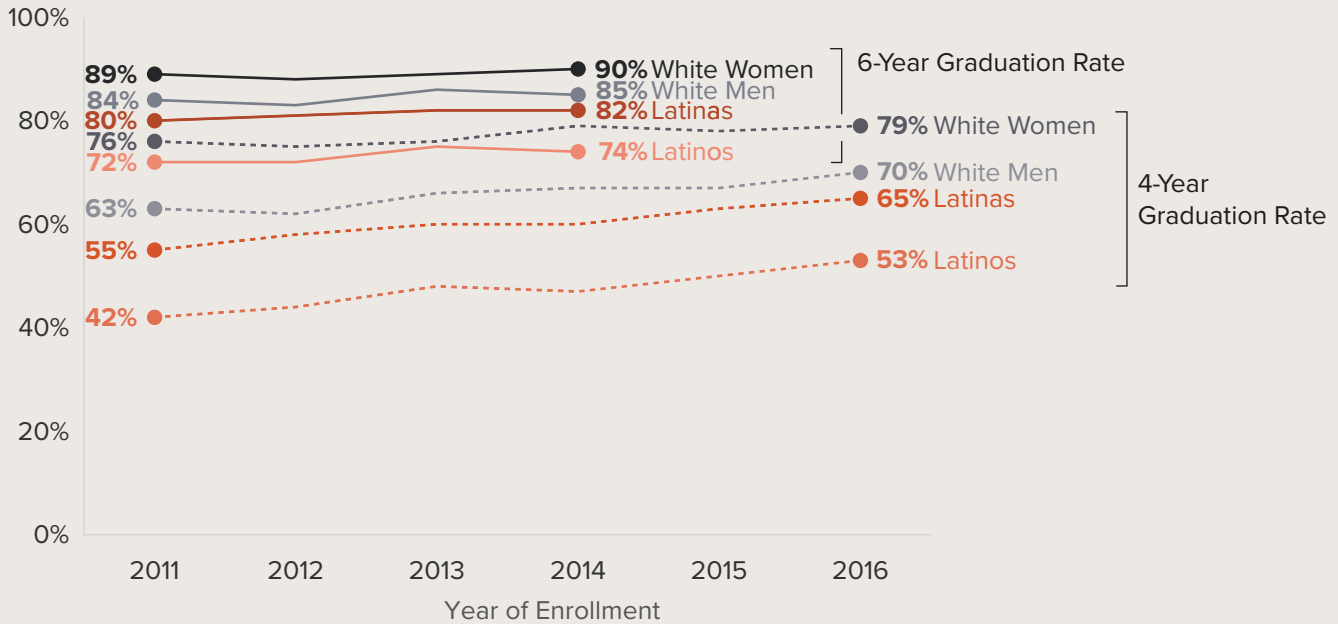
Latinx Applicants to the UC



Source: University of California. (2021). California Freshmen Applications by Campus and Race/Ethnicity (Table 2.1); University of California Information Center. (2021). Undergraduate Admissions Summary [Data Dashboard].

A growing percentage of UC Latinx freshmen are supported to earn their degrees in four years, but Latinos and Latinas are not as well-supported as their white peers.

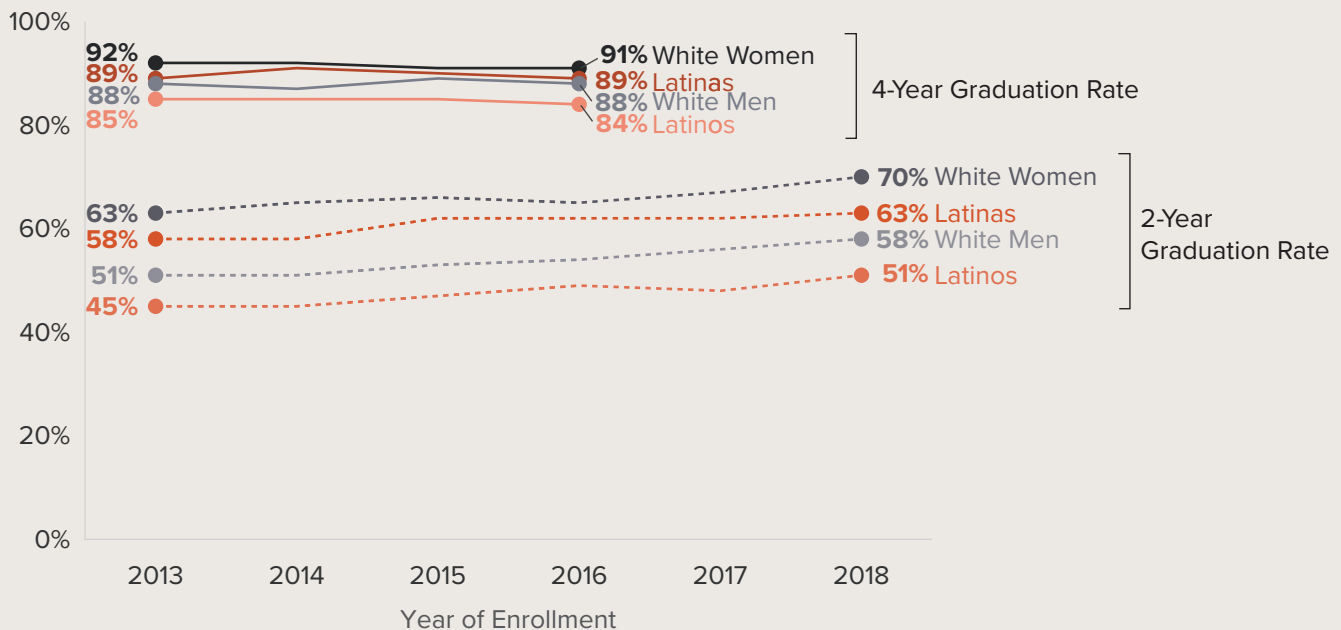
University of California, Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates for First-Time Freshmen



Source: University of California Information Center. (2021). Undergraduate Graduation Rates [Data Dashboard].

Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of Latina transfer students and more than half (51 percent) of Latino transfer students are graduating within two years of enrolling in the UC. Gaps between Latinx students and their white peers close considerably on a four-year time horizon.

University of California, Two- and Four-Year Graduation Rates for Transfer Students



Source: University of California Information Center. (2021). Undergraduate Graduation Rates [Data Dashboard].

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

At all three public systems of higher education, there are too few Latinx faculty.

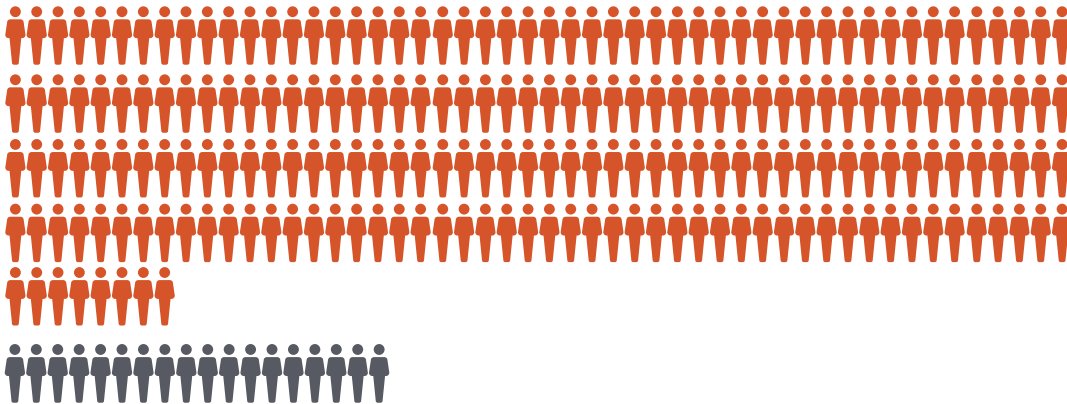
California State University




304 Latinx Students per
Latinx Faculty Member


48 White Students per
White Faculty Member

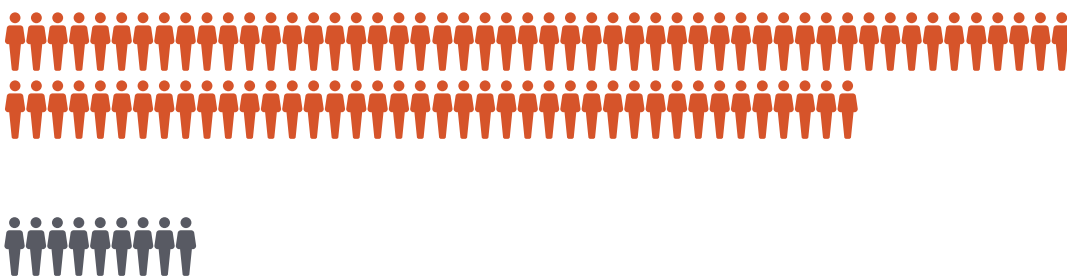
California State University





208 Latinx Students per
Latinx Faculty Member


18 White Students per
White Faculty Member

University of California




90 Latinx Students per
Latinx Faculty Member


9 White Students per
White Faculty Member

Source: National Center for Education Statistics; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS); *Full-time instructional staff by academic rank, faculty and tenure status, race/ethnicity, and gender (Fall 2018) and 12-month unduplicated head count by race/ethnicity, gender, and level of student (2018-2019).*

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Campaign for College Opportunity proposes the following recommendations for policymakers and college leaders to improve Latinx educational success in California:



High School Recommendations

- Increase high school graduation rates for Latinx students to 90 percent and make the A-G coursework the default curriculum for all high school students in California, so that a significantly larger number of Latinx students will be eligible to apply to the UC and CSU.
- Ensure that all high school seniors complete either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a California Dream Act Application, so that every talented Latinx Californian can pursue college, regardless of income status.



Community College and University Recommendations

- Ensure strong implementation of California Community Colleges and CSU reforms that focus on equitable placement of students into college-level English and math, and support Latinx students to succeed in these courses. Identify strategies for intentionally closing racial/ethnic and gender gaps in enrollment and completion to degree, certificate, and transfer.
- Continue support for strong implementation of the community college Student-Centered Funding Formula, which provides additional resources to colleges based on enrollment, number of low-income students, number of first-generation students, and success of students who earn a degree, certificate, or complete the transfer requirements.
- Strengthen the CSU Graduation Initiative to improve graduation rates and close racial/ethnic and gender gaps for Latinx students who enroll as first-time freshmen and who transfer to the CSU.
- Strategically identify efforts to make sure the UC increases the number of Latinx students who enroll and successfully graduate, so that its student body and every campus is more reflective of the diversity of California's high school population.
- College presidents, campus leaders, and governing bodies must commit to identifying, hiring, retaining, and promoting Latinx faculty at California's public colleges and universities.



State Recommendations

- Commit to the ambitious statewide goal of ensuring that at least 60 percent of Latinx Californians in the workforce hold a degree or high-value credential by 2030.
- Revise and expand the eligibility requirements established under the California Master Plan for Higher Education, so that additional state funding is provided to increase enrollment of Latinx students at the CSU and UC.
- Recommit to strengthening transfer and to ensuring equitable access and success to the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) for Latinx community college students and support the new Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee.
- Develop a strong California Cradle-to-Career Data System to better enable policymakers and institutions to understand the data and to address gaps for Latinx students in college access and success.
- Modernize California’s financial aid system by building on recent expansions to Cal Grant and by shifting to a state aid model based on student need—rather than on outdated rationing devices, like age and time out of high school—to create a more inclusive and accessible financial aid system for Latinx students.
- Support the growing number of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) to become Hispanic-Graduating Institutions by investing additional resources specifically tied to closing racial/ethnic and gender gaps in completion of college degrees.



Federal Recommendations

- Expand federal Pell Grant access to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipients to guarantee that DACAmented students in California’s colleges and universities have access to an important source of financial support.
- Establish a pathway to citizenship for all undocumented individuals and create permanent solutions to make sure undocumented students can access the financial and social resources needed to support a college education.

ENDNOTES

1. US Census Bureau. (2021) *American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2015-2019, Public Use Microdata Sample*.
2. California Department of Education, Data Reporting Office. (2021). DataQuest: Cohort Outcome Data for the Class of 2009-10. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
3. National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) (2021), 12-month enrollment component (2018-2019), Table: EFFY2019. Available at: <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>
4. National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2021), *12-month enrollment component (2018-2019)*, Table: EFFY2019 Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>
5. Cal State University (2021). *State-Supported Enrollment*. [Data Dashboard]. Retrieved from: https://tableau.calstate.edu/views/SelfEnrollmentDashboard/EnrollmentSummary?iframeSizedToWindow=true&:embed=y&:showAppBanner=false&:display_count=no&:showVizHome=noplaceholder
6. University of California. (n.d.) *Fall Enrollment at a Glance*. [Data Dashboard]. Retrieved from: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/fall-enrollment-glance>

In this report, we use the term Latinx as an inclusive term to refer to people of Hispanic and Latin American descent. While many other sources use terminology such as Hispanic, Chicano/a, or Latino/a, we intentionally use this word to be inclusive of all people who identify with one of these terms. Latinx is a gender-neutral term that includes men, women, and individuals who do not identify within the gender binary of masculinity and femininity. Where the data allow us to examine differences in educational experience by gender, we refer to Latino (male) and Latina (female) students.



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