



Statement on

**ACCOUNTABILITY FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PERFORMANCE:
A FRAMEWORK FOR INFORMING STATE BUDGET AND POLICY TO MEET PUBLIC NEEDS**

At the

JOINT INFORMATION HEARING

Before

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

AND

SENATE BUDGET AND FISCAL REVIEW

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 1 ON EDUCATION

SENATORS CAROL LIU AND MARTY BLOCK, CHAIRS

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EQUITY, ACCESS, SUCCESS

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

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WHY SPECIFY EQUITY AS A POLICY GOAL?

THE MORAL ARGUMENT

In July, the United States will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act—the most ambitious attempt in American history **to repair through policy** the social and economic injustices that had been inflicted on African Americans since the Civil War. The emergence of the Civil Rights Act would not have been possible without the courage of black students in the South to peacefully break the codes of racial separation; the determination of Martin Luther King, Jr. to name the barbarity of Jim Crow apartheid that consigned blacks to a perpetual state of separate and unequal existence; the stoicism of Rosa Parks as she insisted on the right to sit at the front of the bus; and the thousands of citizens of all races who joined the march for social justice. But the enactment of the Civil Rights Act also required the willingness of two presidents of the United States—John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson—to speak openly about the ills of race and racism and to challenge members of both political parties to accept social equality as a moral imperative for the nation. In his now iconic and much quoted speech to the 1965 Howard University graduating class, President Johnson said of the Civil Rights Act and subsequent legislation, “We seek not just legal equity, but human ability; not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and equality as a result.”

The Civil Rights Act was a demonstration of moral leadership—an effort by policymakers to end racial injustice and to lay the groundwork for the nation to begin bridging the deep chasms wrought by slavery and segregation. But as Johnson noted in his Howard University commencement address, the cumulative impact of that history runs deep in our social and economic institutions. And despite much progress in eliminating the formal systems of discrimination since the 1960s, vestiges of them remain all too evident across every indicator of economic and social opportunity.

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“We seek not just legal equity, but human ability; not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and equality as a result.”

-President Lyndon Johnson

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This history is nowhere more evident than in the racially stratified patterns of higher education participation and success, including college enrollment and outcomes, access to highly selective institutions, representation in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and many other less visible forms of participatory inequality.

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Inequality will continue to grow if higher education policy fails to name racial equity as an expected and measurable outcome.

Inequality will continue to grow if higher education policy fails to name racial equity—not just as an aspirational goal but transparently as an expected and measurable outcome. Until the 1960’s, inequality was planned and intentional, engineered and reinforced through racially discriminatory policies. Today, we run the risk of perpetuating and increasing inequality not through such intentional acts but by enacting policy that in its blindness to race fails to address the underlying structures that systematically limit opportunities for African American, Latino, American Indian, and disadvantaged Asian American individuals and families.

WHY SPECIFY EQUITY AS A POLICY GOAL?

THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

Joseph E. Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics and author *The Price of Inequality: How Today’s Divided Society Endangers our Future* (2013) maintains that inequality represents a serious threat to the United States because it “stifles, restrains and holds back our growth” (NYT, January 19, 2013). As California looks into the coming decade and considers how to prepare the state’s system of higher education to meet the needs of a rapidly changing population, ensuring equity in educational attainment must be a priority. Inequity in higher education participation and attainment will reduce the proportion of college-educated adults, which in turn will have detrimental effects on the state’s economy, workforce preparation, and the quality of life of aging baby-boomers, as well as to our aspirations to be a society that provides equal opportunities regardless of race and socioeconomic status.

Currently, California’s educational system—from high school to postsecondary education—retains Latinas, Latinos, and African American students at about half the rate of whites and Asians. The disparities between groups are the greatest at the baccalaureate level. Studies show that transfer is the most popular educational goal for California community college students, but currently, very few of these students actually transfer to a 4-year institution. Because California demographic projections show that Latinas, Latinos, and Asians will comprise more than half of California’s working population (ages 25 - 64) within the next decade, efforts to increase the number of college degrees earned by these racial/ethnic groups are essential in order for the state to remain economically competitive and to sustain its tax base.

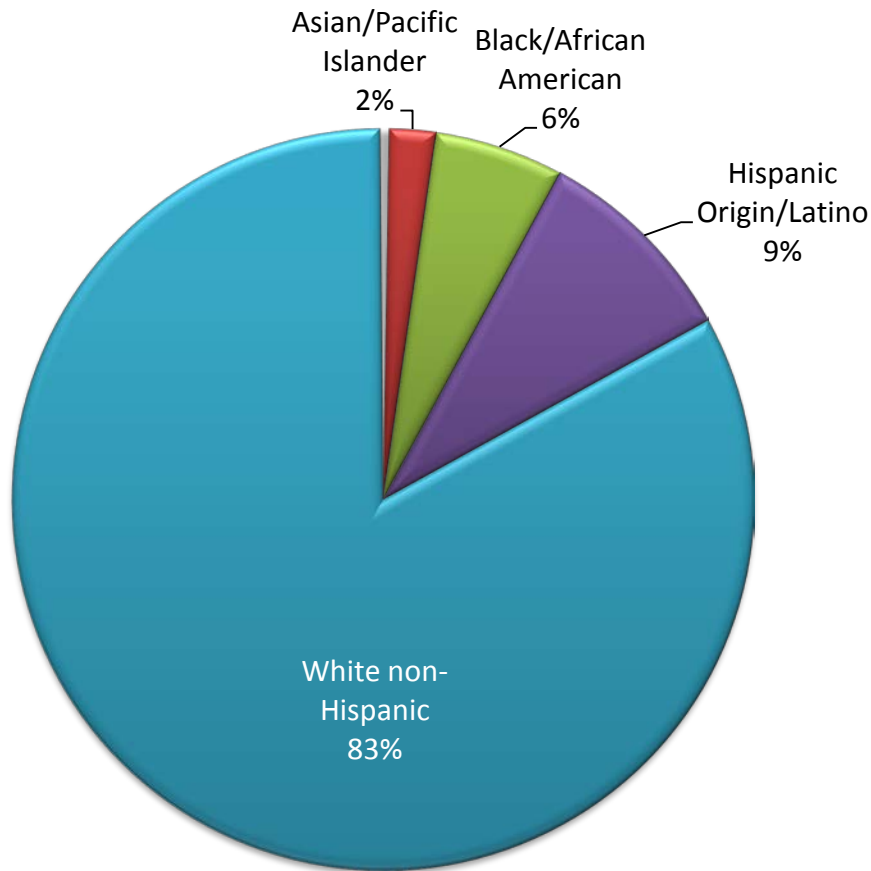
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California’s educational system retains Latina, Latino and African American students at about half the rate of white and Asian students.

While policymakers, higher education organizations, and academic researchers have all given considerable attention to increasing accountability, efficiency, and meeting workforce needs, we have yet to directly address accountability and performance metrics as a strategy of enhancing or furthering *equity in educational outcomes* for racial and ethnic groups with a history of underrepresentation in higher education, or for the low-income and first-generation college-going populations among whom students of color are drastically *over*represented. Performance accountability systems, including performance-based funding, have historically lacked robust indicators to assess equity in educational outcomes by race and ethnicity.

ACCESS ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT

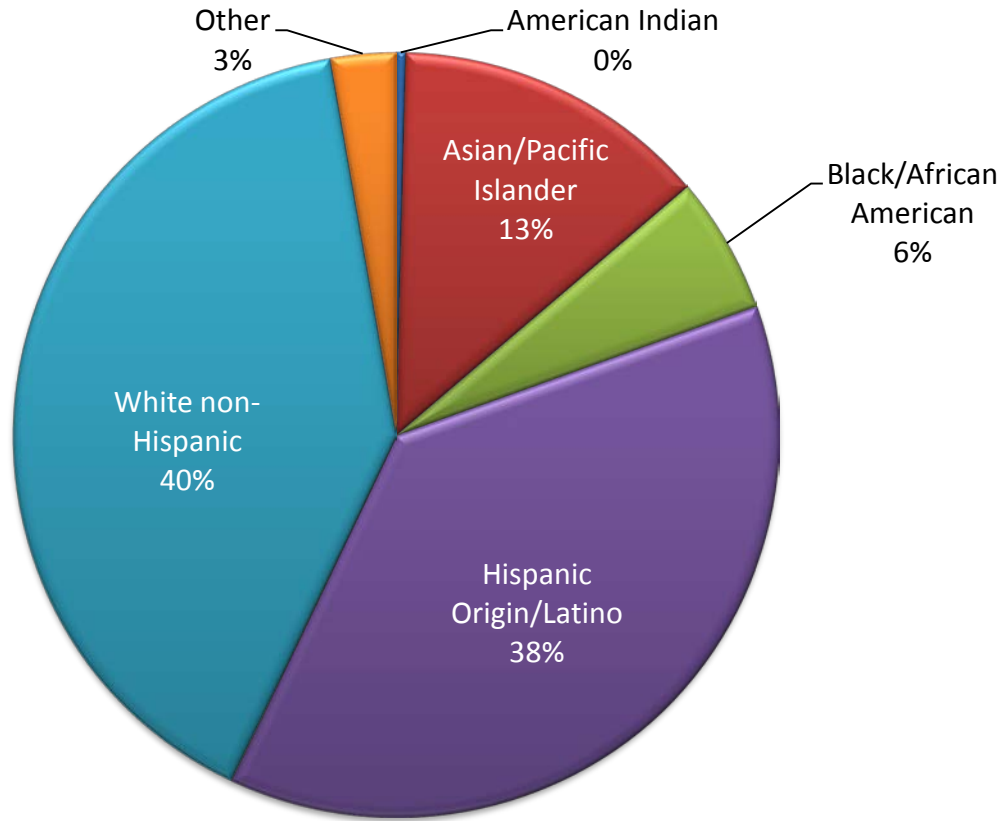
The 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education provided access and promoted social mobility for the citizens of that era (Figure 1). But given the demographic composition of California today (Figure 2) access without equity in outcomes will not provide social mobility.

Figure 1: California’s Population in 1960. ~16 million



Source: US Census Bureau; 1960 Census, Table 19. California - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1850 to 1990 and “US Census of Population: 1960 Final Report PC(2) -1B, Persons of Spanish Surname”; 2008-2012 American Community Survey, DP05: ACS 5-year Demographic and Housing Estimates

Figure 2: California's Population in 2012. ~37 million



Source: US Census Bureau; 1960 Census, Table 19. California - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1850 to 1990 and "US Census of Population: 1960 Final Report PC(2) -1B, Persons of Spanish Surname"; 2008-2012 American Community Survey, DP05: ACS 5-year Demographic and Housing Estimates

Improved models of accountability for greater effectiveness must reflect shifting demographics, variations in student preparation for college, emerging missions within and across the postsecondary system, new policies and forms of provision, historical patterns of resource allocation, and perhaps most important, incorporate safeguards to ensure equity in access, retention, and completion.

DEFINING EQUITY

Equity is an abstract concept that holds different meanings for different people. One of the most common misperceptions is that equity is a concept synonymous with equality. A definition of equity that is appropriate for the mission and goals of California’s system of higher education should focus on *representational equity*, defined as proportional participation of racial-ethnic groups in access, retention, and completion as well as in opportunity to succeed.

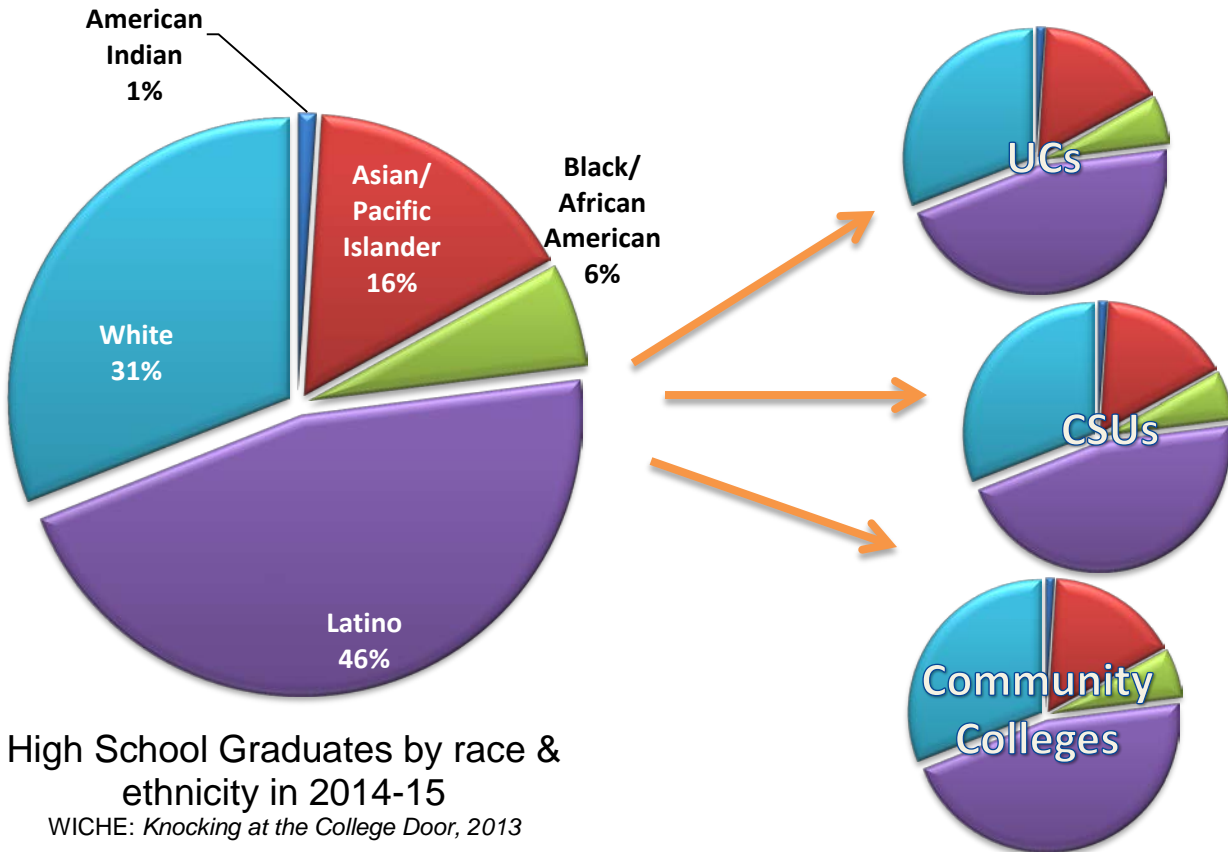
• • •
 Representational Equity is defined as proportional participation of racial-ethnic groups in higher education
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In particular, it is useful to define equity at each of the milestones through which our students must progress in order to be successful in higher education:

MEASURE EQUITY IN

Access

Proportional representation by race and ethnicity throughout UC, CSU, and CC’s



High School Graduates by race & ethnicity in 2014-15

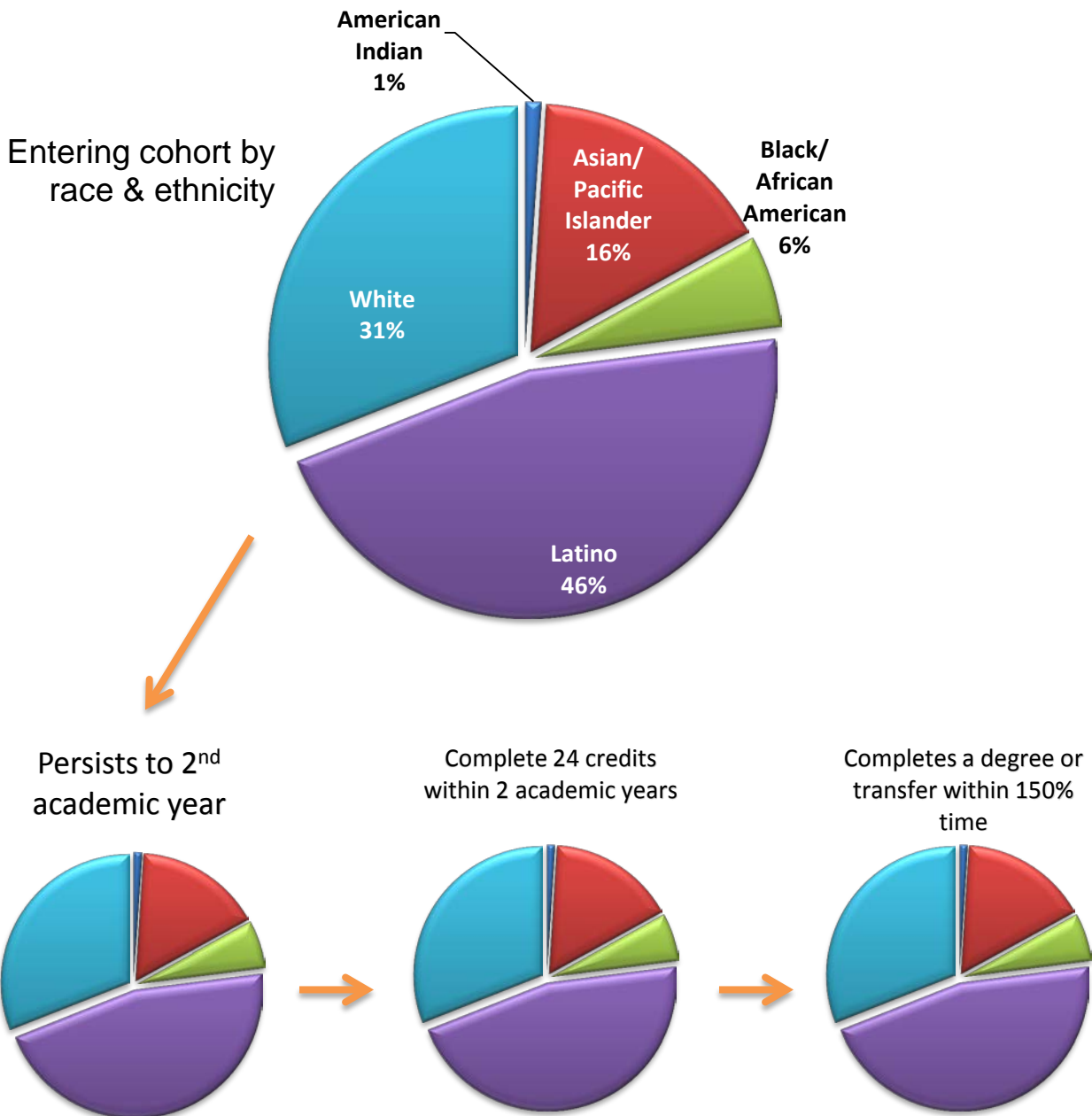
WICHE: *Knocking at the College Door*, 2013

Equitable Enrollment by race & ethnicity

MEASURE EQUITY IN

Outcomes

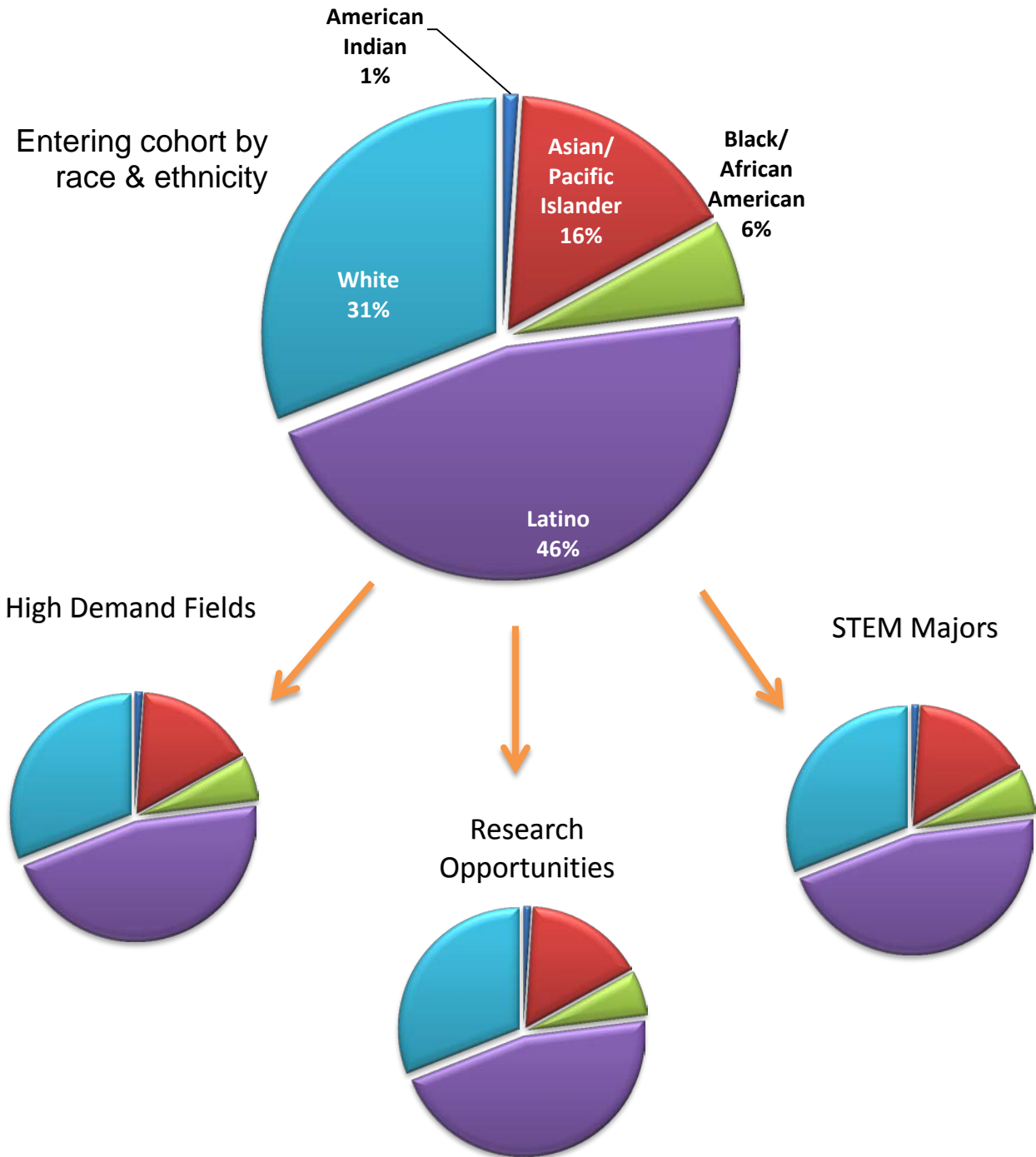
Proportional representation in progress (e.g., credit accumulation semester by semester) within academic pathways and proportional attainment of degrees, certificates, and transfer



Equity in Student Progress and Success

MEASURE EQUITY IN

Excellence Proportional representation in fields and programs from which low income and racial and ethnic groups have been historically underrepresented



Equity in Educational Excellence

THE GOVERNOR’S PROPOSED PERFORMANCE MEASURES OVERLOOK EQUITY

The governor’s proposed budget bill language requiring the UC and CSU governing boards to report their performance on enrollment, student progress, graduation, degrees awarded, funding per degree, and efficiency, with several of the measures reported separately for undergraduate and graduate students, community college transfer students, low-income students, and students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines. These measures are a promising step towards enabling policymakers and institutional leaders to better understand the patterns of postsecondary achievement in the state’s public universities.

But based on our work for more than a decade with hundreds of institutions and systems of higher education, the Center for Urban Education has the following concerns:

1. The UC and CSU systems are not directed to report their measures of performance by race and ethnicity.

Given California’s growing economic dependency on a significant larger number of college educated African Americans, Latinos, American Indians, as well as disadvantaged Asian American populations, leaving race and ethnicity out of the performance measures is a serious oversight. The following figures show graduation rates in the aggregate (Figure 4) and then again disaggregated (Figure 5). As Figure 5 makes clear, aggregate data hide very large disparities in graduation rates for African Americans and Latinos/as. Aggregate data defeat the main purpose of performance measures, which is the assessment of institutional effectiveness.

Recommendation: *Require that all performance measures be disaggregated by race and ethnicity.*

Figure 4: Proposed Completion Measures for UC System-wide Graduation Rates

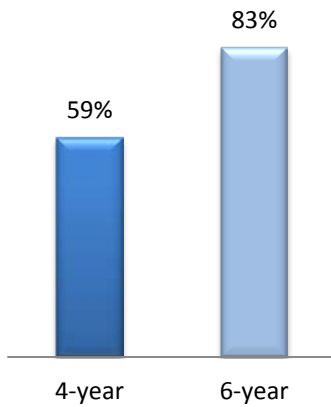
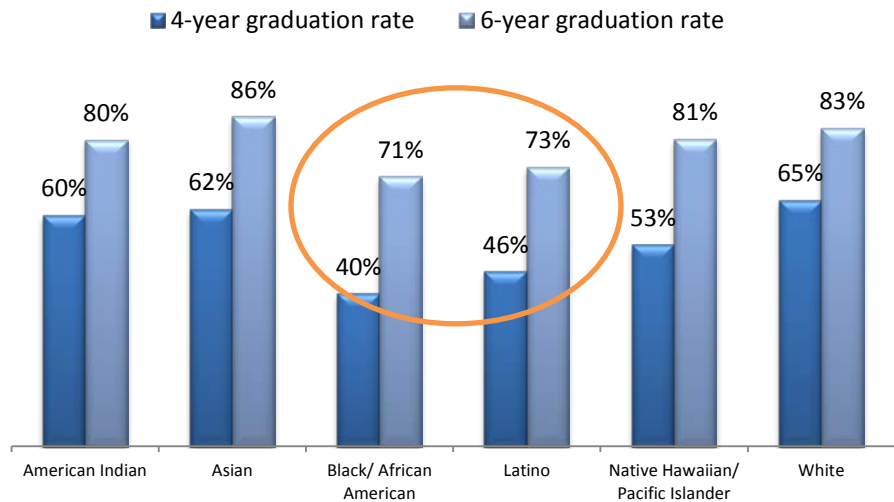


Figure 5: UC System-Wide Graduation Rates, Disaggregated



2. The UC and CSU systems are not required to set improvement targets.

The only expectation of the two systems is that they report on enrollment, graduation, student progress, transfers, and degrees conferred in STEM once a year. Without improvement targets California runs the risk of continuing a ten-year trend of limited progress in increasing the number and percentage of college-educated racial and ethnic minority groups. For example, proportionally, Latino enrollment from high school to CSU and UC has remained low and there have been minimal gains in the past decade (The Campaign for College Opportunity, The State of Latino in Higher Education in California, November 2013). Improvement targets are needed to break the ten-year trend of no progress for all racial and ethnic underserved groups.

Recommendation: *Require equity improvement targets for all student outcome measures.*

3. The UC and CSU system performance measures are not connected to resource allocation.

The disconnect between resource allocation and performance measures, along with the lack of required improvement targets, severely weakens achieving “the expressed state policy goals for higher education of quality, educational equity, employee diversity, student transfer, and student retention” (Senate Bill No. 195, Chapter 367, September 26, 2013, p. 93).

Recommendation: *Link equity improvement targets to incentive funding.*

4. No performance measures are proposed for the California Community Colleges.

The community colleges are not included in the Governor’s proposed measures. Latinos, African Americans, and other minority and low-income groups are disproportionately enrolled in community colleges. In 2012, out of slightly more than 800,000 Latinos and 169,000 African Americans enrolled in the public, private, and for-profit sectors, 68% and 65% respectively were in community colleges (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). California’s future is inextricably linked to the upward mobility of its community college students. Too few of them persist to graduation and even fewer transfer to earn a BA degree.

Recommendation: *Integrate the Community College System’s Student Success Scorecard and Student Equity Plans into one statutorily mandated annual tool for campuses to use for planning, responding, and improving.*

5. Adopting rigid measures that are applied to all sectors and institutions overlooks system differences.

The proposed measures for the UC and CSU ignore sector differences in mission, strengths, and alignment with the state’s workforce needs. California can learn from the experience and example of other states. For example, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), performance funding system includes a variety of optional indicators from which its campuses may choose based on their own priorities. We believe that this approach has significant promise as a strategy for creating meaningful measures and increasing buy-in.

Recommendation: *California should replicate the strategy of allowing systems/colleges to choose equity metrics and connect them to incentive funding. These metrics could include equity improvements in student success rates in particular fields or programs (e.g., nursing or STEM fields).*

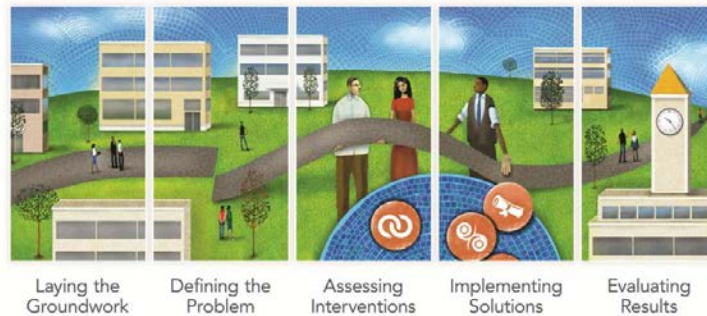
6. Data and metrics are akin to a thermometer, they show the “temperature.” But just as a thermometer cannot change the temperature, data are not self-acting.

Research conducted by the Center for Urban Education demonstrates that substantial changes in outcomes for all students will not be obtained, no matter how many policies are adopted or how many performance reports are produced, *if faculty, staff, and system and institutional leaders do not change themselves: their practices, their implicit biases, and their beliefs about student success.* Even those faculty members and staff who truly care about producing good results, and proudly embrace the diversity of their student body, do not, as a matter of habit, examine the racial/ethnic patterns that give shape to structural inequality. The goals of accountability as an incentive to improve student outcomes stands a greater chance of being realized if faculty members and academic managers acquire the skills to use data to assess, not just their students, but also their own practices and those of their institutions.

Recommendation: *Designate resources to develop institutional capacity to use data strategically for continuous improvement of student outcomes.*

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

The Center for Urban Education (CUE), located at the University of Southern California in the Rossier School of Education, works with campuses and systems to involve practitioners from across departments, divisions, and areas of responsibility in processes of deliberate examination of student outcomes data disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Since its beginning in 1999, CUE has worked with over eighty institutions in ten states. CUE's outcomes based model of institutional change, known as the *Equity Scorecard* has been implemented in collaboration with large systems of higher education, universities, and community colleges in California, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Nevada. Find out more at cue.usc.edu.



The Center for Urban Education engages practitioners in a facilitated action research process. Through our process, practitioners learn to reframe low rates of college completion as a problem of institutional effectiveness in serving students. By focusing on what they can and need to change in themselves and their institutions, rather than on the deficits that prevent underrepresented students from succeeding, it is possible for faculty, staff, and leaders to approach the challenge of improving equity in college attainment, as a *solvable problem of professional practice*.

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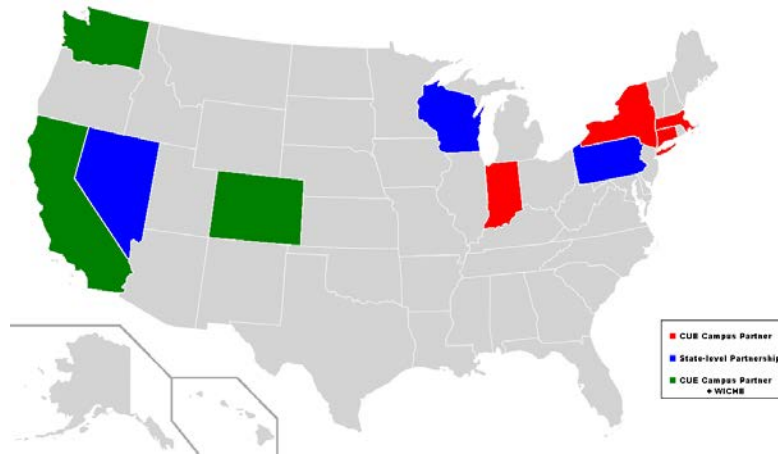
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