
Equity in California Higher Education

The State/Regional Approach

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Photo Credit: University of California, Riverside - 2019 Graduation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Last year, Governor Newsom signed a historic \$47.1 billion higher education package aimed at addressing equity gaps and increasing opportunities for all students in the state. The state has also recently passed legislation addressing disparities in college affordability and accessibility. As California continues to make progress on equity in higher education, data show that these gains have not proceeded evenly across regions and communities of color. Importantly, education inequities are still persistent and pervasive throughout the state.

This report draws on both quantitative and qualitative data to better understand the current state of equity in higher education in California and its sub-regions. The report also focuses on the higher education advocacy infrastructure and network in the state, and how this network advocates for students. We explore the relationship between state level advocacy and regional efforts including coalition networks, coordinated activity, capacity building, and effective regional implementation. Additionally, we highlight promising initiatives and programs that are making immense progress in the higher education equity space.

Importantly, the data shows an incredible increase in Latino students attending a California State University campus over the last decade coming from Los Angeles County. This is particularly notable considering that available data on Latino students' A-G completion (coursework requirements to become eligible for admission to either the University of California or California State University) rates do not show a significant increase over time and that Latino high school senior enrollment has increased, but only slightly over the past few years for which data is available.

Currently, Southern California high schools send the overwhelming majority of students to the University of California, though the highest A-G completion rates come from Northern California high schools. This is likely due to increased international and out-of-state enrollment, whereas enrollment in the California State University system tends to be heavily local. It is important to understand that while Southern California counties also send the most Black students to the University of California system, the absolute number of Black students remains extremely low across all years for which data was analyzed.

Southern California community colleges also send large amounts of transfer students to the University of California system over all years for which the data were analyzed, which was true across all racial groups. For Black students, in particular, Santa Monica Community

College, located in Southern California, sent almost twice as many Black students to a University of California campus than the second highest enrollee institution. (It is important to note that while Southern California community colleges send the largest numbers of Black student transfers to the University of California, the raw numbers are still extremely small when compared to other racial groups, except American Indians/Native Americans.) American Indians/Native Americans were the only racial category for which sending community colleges spanned the state.

For the most part, while Southern California counties dominate where University of California students originate from, Alameda County in Northern California/the Bay Area is also a top sender for both University of California enrollments and transfers.

In terms of advocacy, qualitative data indicates that most processes tend to happen in a top-down fashion, with the feedback happening mostly at the governmental level (i.e., local educational agencies reporting data back up to the state). On the plus side, most state-level advocacy groups have the staff capacity to put significant energy into understanding various issues and the key players with which to engage, whereas most local organizations are very small and typically cannot take on large advocacy projects. On the other hand, there does not appear to be very much or very deep local involvement, which may mean that markers of improvement or success are not highlighted as much as they could be, and smaller organizations instead focusing on direct service provision..

This also ties in with the importance of capacity building and a need for information and resource sharing. Capacity building was seen as an investment in effectiveness and long term sustainability. Additionally, many organizations were keenly interested in collaborating to increase their impact. Information sharing is key to collaboration, as the flow of information between organizations helps all levels stay up to date and be able to provide key data and data “translations” to other organizations as needed.

One notable snippet was the comment by an interviewee that Southern California regions have to advocate hard; Northern California/the Bay Area already has the ear of Sacramento and Sacramento-level organizations. This is particularly interesting in light of the substantial numbers of students who originate from the Southern California region and enroll in both the University of California and the California State System, as well as the number of students who originate from Southern

California community colleges and subsequently transfer into either of the two state systems.

In large part, this report’s recommendations focus on increasing access, data reporting and availability, overall investments in higher education at all levels, and strengthening pipelines. While there is currently work being done on increasing access and which has shown promise, lessons learned from the AB705 and the SB2 process indicate that we can and should do more to help open doors for historically underrepresented students. And collecting disaggregated, longitudinal data would go a long way in understanding both the need, but also the impact of policies and programs on student success.

Investment in higher education has been a longstanding issue in California. Affordability of higher education routinely comes up as a major issue, with the cost of tuition remaining a barrier to entry for many. And while funding from the state has been tied to increasing transfer rates (transferring from a community college can be a more cost-accessible way to graduate from a 4-year institution), the University of California system has had difficulty in meeting the transfer to freshman admit ratios. Thus investment into support such as academic and non-academic counselor positions could substantially benefit students who wish to transfer, and those who have successfully transferred and need non-academic support to ensure they can graduate on time.

Finally, strengthening pipelines for both transferring as well as to the workforce can help students successfully prepare for their post-school lives. California’s higher education institutions have made the state a leader in producing a highly skilled workforce, and the state boasts an incredibly diverse economy with a high standard of living. Strengthening the workforce and career pipelines can help students be better prepared for their eventual post-college careers, including understanding the full range of job opportunities available to them.

By holding the doors to higher education as wide open as possible, we can begin to address historical and persistent equity gaps in educational attainment and access to good jobs.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA: A BRIEF HISTORY

Colleges were first established during the Gold Rush era in California (Douglass, 2022). It is important to note that the tribes and first peoples of the state had their educational systems long before the current system was established. In 1851, the University of the Pacific, first known as California Wesleyan College, was the first institution to receive a charter from the state. Similarly, Santa Clara University, then known as Santa Clara College, was founded in 1851 and received a charter from the state in 1855. California's first public university, the University of California at Berkeley, was established in 1868.

Although the California education system now has the goal of creating opportunities and education for all, the first public colleges and universities were not welcoming to women and people of color. For example, in 2020 UC Berkeley removed John Boalt's name from its law school due to Boalt's racist and anti-immigrant legacy.¹ That same year the school also removed the names "LeConte" and "Barrows" from their buildings citing ties to the Confederacy and the promotion of racist ideology.² These recent changes highlight the racist and sexist ideology of many of the early founders and influencers in higher education all across the country. It is important that all educational institutions audit which legacies they decided to lift up and memorialize and to be certain those individuals' views are aligned with the institution's set of values and principles.

During the Progressive Era (about 1900-1920), education reformers and the state legislature wanted to create new institutions that were a public good and had a meaningful purpose. California progressives faced numerous barriers, including economic and political corruption and groups that were opposed to paying taxes for social purposes (Douglass, 2022). Despite these challenges, by 1920 the tripartite system we are familiar with today was largely set in place. At the time this included the University of California, the state teachers' colleges (to become California State University), and the state junior colleges (to become the state's vast community college system). The result was a tiered, geographically dispersed post-secondary system that was meant to be both physically and financially accessible for every Californian (Douglass, 2022). From these humble beginnings, the higher education system in California would ultimately grow to be the largest and most diverse in the nation (Johnson and Mejia, 2019).

In 1960 the higher education system underwent its most expansive review to date, which ultimately produced the "California Master Plan for Higher Education"

(Douglass, 2010). The Master Plan was part of a direct response to an approaching surge of college enrollment in the state, driven largely by the Baby Boom generation coming of age.³ The GI Bill also made college more accessible for many World War 2 veterans who began pursuing education in the following years they returned from war. For example, data from the University of California show that between 1944 and 1949 undergraduate enrollment at the UCs grew immensely, especially at UC Berkeley and Los Angeles, both of which saw over 220% increases in enrollment.

In the face of growing demand, educational leaders decided a statewide plan to maintain educational quality and access was needed. The over-arching purpose of the original Master Plan was to coordinate expansion and prevent duplication and competition among the three higher education systems while maintaining universal, inexpensive access to postsecondary education for all Californians. Importantly, many of the key recommendations of the plan were written into law in the Donohoe Act of 1960 (Douglass, 2010). Since its creation, the California higher education system has undergone periodic reviews and changes, but the core goals of universal and affordable education have remained the same.

Aside from a few amendments and reviews, the Master Plan has remained largely unchanged since 1960. While the Master Plan defined a strategy that met the state's needs in 1960, today California, and the world at large, are facing new challenges including a global health crisis, drastic cultural and economic shifts, and the effects of global climate change to name a few. For example, according to a Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) study, by 2025, the state will have one million fewer college-educated workers than the economy will require (Johnson, 2010). There have been promising and positive advancements within the system, but to continue to serve all Californians well into the future, the higher education system will need to be continually refined, particularly with an equity and inclusion lens.

HIGHER EDUCATION CONTROL & OVERSIGHT

This report looks at the state of higher education equity within the state and highlights equity advocates and how their work can impact policy and legislation. To dive deeper into higher education policy, it is important to understand how the three-tiered system is governed and how it functions.

States largely have the freedom to do what they wish in matters concerning higher education; as a result, policy and practice among the states are incredibly diverse.

While some states have a higher education governing body, California is among the states that do not. Although the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) that was established in 1974 did recommend policies and advised the California Governor and Legislature on higher education priorities, in practice acting as a state planning and coordinating body (Douglass, 2022). Many saw the CPEC as ineffective and the commission was ultimately denied continued funding by Governor Brown in the 2011-2012 fiscal year, eliminating the commission permanently. The three systems (University of California, California State University, and the community college system) are controlled by different governing bodies in different ways.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (UC) SYSTEM

The University of California system (UC) is composed of 10 campuses, 5 medical centers, and 3 national laboratories. The UC serves 280,000 undergraduate and graduate students, employs 228,000 faculty and staff. The UC offers bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional degrees while engaging in theoretical and applied research and public service. Additionally, the UC admits the top 12.5% of California high school graduates. The UC system is the state's central research institution (PPIC, 2019). The UC system is independent and governed by a 26-member Board of Regents, including the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President, and the Vice President of the University's alumni associations and the President of the University; eighteen Regents appointed by the Governor; and one Student Regent.⁴

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY (CSU) SYSTEM

The California State System (CSU) includes 23 college campuses and serves 474,600 undergraduate and graduate students while employing 50,000 faculty and staff (PPIC, 2019). The CSU system includes traditional state universities and two polytechnic schools (Cal Poly Pomona and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo). These polytechnic universities focus on applied sciences and technical arts. The CSU offers bachelor's and master's degree programs and admits the top 33% of the California high school graduates. CSUs focus on applied research in its program areas and public service efforts. The CSU awards more bachelor's degrees than any other system in California, while training a majority of the state's K-12 teachers (PPIC, 2019). The CSU is governed by a 25-member board of trustees who are appointed by the California Governor and confirmed by the California Senate (PPIC, 2019). The Board is made up of appointed Trustees, CSU system officers, and ex officio Trustees.⁵

THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (CCC) SYSTEM

The California Community College System (CCC) is composed of 73 districts and 116 colleges making up the largest post-secondary education system in the nation (Foundation for California Community Colleges).⁶ The CCC serves approximately 2.1 million students per year and prepares students to transfer into four-year institutions. From 2017-to 2018, the CCC awarded 160,000 associate degrees and more than 103,000 students transferred to four-year colleges (PPIC, 2019). The CCC is governed by a 17-member board of governors that are appointed by the Governor of California.⁷ Additionally, the CCC has a local board of trustees who appoint campus presidents and oversee budget allocations for each of their 73 districts.

ADVOCACY & OVERSIGHT

Since California does not have a higher education coordinating body, the three-tier system is governed by a mix of government and independent entities. This makes it hard to set statewide goals and coordinate between the expansive systems. Additionally, because of this separation of control, many higher education advocacy organizations focus on state level policy and legislation to achieve systemic change.

EQUITY CONCERNS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA

According to demographic trends and recent research by both the Campaign for College Opportunity and PPIC, a solid majority of California's prospective college-age population will come from historically underrepresented demographics in higher education (Bustillos, Tomas, and Siqueiros, 2018; Rodriguez, Mejia, and Johnson 2019). These groups include Latino and Black students, and low-income students that may be the first in their families to pursue higher education. When compared to Whites and Asian Americans, underrepresented students are less likely to complete college in California (Bustillos, Tomas, and Siqueiros, 2018). A 2019 Campaign for College Opportunity report found that among young adults who were born in California, 58 percent of Asian Americans and 41 percent of Whites have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 25 percent of African Americans and 20 percent of Latinos (Rodriguez, Mejia, and Johnson 2019).

Underrepresented groups in higher education face significant barriers in terms of college readiness, access, and completion. There are several equity concerns within the higher education system that are detailed in the following sections of this report. In the United



From left to right: April Carmelo, Elizabeth Wilson, Dr. Vanessa Esquivido and Kenwa Kravitz at an October 8, 2019 American Indian Advisory teacher training. Photo courtesy Judy Flores.

AB 516 EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR CULTURAL CEREMONIES OR EVENTS

An important example of how locally driven change can affect students across the state of California can be found in the story of AB 516. As noted in the Assembly Education Committee's analysis of AB 516, in Shasta County about 4% of the student population is Native American, but some school districts marked as much as 30% of their Native student population chronically absent in recent years.²³ To uncover why this inequity was persisting, Superintendent of Schools Judy Flores created the American Indian Advisory (AIA), partnering with Title VI coordinators from within the local schools, the local Indian Education Center (LIFE), native community members, community partners, and representatives from each of the four tribes in Shasta County: Winnemem Wintu, Pit River, Redding Rancheria (with members from Wintu, Achomawi, and Yana) and Wintu Tribe of Northern California, to support Native students. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AIA surveyed Native families throughout Shasta County to find out how students were doing in school, and why children were missing class and what could be done about it. The results found two of the leading causes of absences among Native students were sacred ceremonies, which happen at different times throughout the year depending on the tribe, and because of a death in the family. Through this community listening and feedback, the SCOE was now able to address this inequity.

Local Assembly Member Megan Dahle, sponsored AB 516 which was written to address one of the primary causes of Native students' chronically high rates of absenteeism, by adding "for the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event" to the list of categories of excused absences. Local government officials, including Assemblymember Dahle and Shasta County Office of Education (SCOE) Superintendent of Schools Judy Flores, helped to advocate for AB 516. Regional organizations like North State Together worked to mobilize stakeholders, advocates, and local community organizations working on the ground. Ultimately, AB 516 passed and was signed into law by the governor in September 2021. The story of AB 516 is a great example of how a regionally led initiative can ultimately affect and benefit students in the entire state.

States, there is a large body of academic research that points to highly inequitable educational outcomes across family income groups and also in terms of gender, legal status, disability, race/ethnicity, and other indicators. Moreover, on many of these indicators, gaps in outcomes are larger now than in the past (Cahalan et al. 2019). While these groups do face challenges, advocates and students understand the importance of an equitable education system that benefits all students. The California Department of Education defines “equity” as “fair outcomes, treatment, and opportunities for all students.”⁸When looking at previous academic research we find that the concept of educational equity has two distinct categories: (1) fairness - which means ensuring that personal and social circumstances do not prevent students from achieving their academic potential, and (2) inclusion - which means setting a basic minimum standard for education that is shared by all students regardless of background, personal characteristics, or location.

Aside from an increase in resources and funding, scholars also note that rethinking academic standards to be more culturally appropriate and inclusive is needed in tandem with providing extra support to students who need it. Education experts note the importance of a student-centered learning approach, which should be individually personalized and engaging for each student. An equitable education system would provide all youth with the opportunity to use their creative potential to realize the many benefits of education, which will ultimately contribute to the advancement and well-being of everyone (Cahalan et al. 2019).

STUDENTS & INTERSECTIONALITY

There are many identities that encompass the label of a “student.” The term intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1990) is the concept that individuals often find themselves at the intersection of multiple identities including factors such as race, class, and immigration status. Each of these identities may have a different relationship to power, privilege, oppression and marginalization. Due to these various identities, experiencing life as a student may differ drastically for each individual. For example, the life experiences of wealthy White students and students of color are remarkably distinct, sometimes even if they attend the same school or university. It is also important to note that even within historically underrepresented populations there can be additional disparities that can affect the availability of educational opportunities. For example, Black men, especially formerly incarcerated Black men, can have a difficult time accessing educational resources and support due to stigma and other biases.

Employing intersectionality provides a framework to better understand the progress and challenges of groups like LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities, students of color, first generation students, undocumented students and more. We highlight a few of these groups in the following sections. Using this lens, we can better understand complex social relations in our region, and advocate for improved data collection that can lead to policies and investments that are more effectively tailored to specific populations.

Current Shifts & COVID-19 Impacts

As the United States continues to shift from a national, industrial, and manufacturing economy to a global, more digital knowledge economy, higher education will continue to undergo massive changes. While some of these shifts have been reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic, the trend towards more available online/remote classes, innovation and entrepreneur focused technology, and greater connections and pipelines between education and industry (just to name a few) have been apparent for quite some time. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a situation in which these changes are happening quickly and on a scale much larger than anticipated.

While some of these changes may be beneficial (more available online classes), it is still unclear how the systems of delivering higher education will change, and how those changes may exacerbate existing inequities within the system. These shifts and trends will affect the work of advocates as they work to narrow equity gaps. As we note in this report, the state and its educational institutions have invested in a wide range of policies and programs that aim to help students make it into and through college, addressing some concerns. But promoting equity in education is not just about providing all students with access to the same educational process or resources, but ensuring equal access to the same learning outcomes, and providing students with the differential resources they require to achieve the same result. As we present in this report, further action will be needed to address these persistent gaps in higher education within the state.

ISSUE AREAS

Education equity advocates in California are diverse and come in many forms, whether it be a local parent leader, equity minded educator, or a formal network of national or state level advocates. Many organizations promote equity in education including those that represent issue areas beyond education like immigrant rights and disability rights communities, just to name a few. No matter their advocacy level and their particular focus, all advocates push for more equitable outcomes for all students, regardless of their identity and intersectionality. The following section details some of the larger

equity issue areas in higher education that advocates are working on in California.

Access

While more and more California high school graduates are ready for college, applying, and enrolling than ever before. Unfortunately, qualified candidates are still being turned away even as both the UC and CSU systems have pledged to expand access (Rodriguez, Mejia, and Johnson 2019). Further expanding college access benefits both students and the state as a whole, as workers with advanced degrees continue to play a significant role in California's economic recovery and growth. Importantly, further expanding access also offers opportunities to historically underrepresented groups in higher education, who make up a significant sect of the population in the state.

Affordability

In California, college and university tuition is now at all-time highs (For example: UC \$13,104; CSU \$5,742). Non-tuition costs are also on the rise, which is especially challenging for low-income students. Many students still need to cover the costs of transportation, books, and housing which are generally not covered by financial aid. Given that more than half of the students in California's public K-12 schools are economically disadvantaged, the affordability of higher education is crucial to the state's future (Johnson, Jackson, and Mejia, 2019).

Completion

While improving access and affordability in higher education is important, understanding the barriers to college completion is essential for graduation and the state's workforce. For example, California is projected to be 1.1 million bachelor's degrees short for economic demand by 2030 (Jackson, Cook, Johnson, 2019). The California community college system plays an important role in preparing students for future well-paying careers in terms of transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions. Advocates suggest pursuing policies that focus on preparing students for college-level courses and shortening the amount of time needed to graduate.

Representation

Equity in higher education is not just about removing barriers, closing gaps, and which student groups attend which schools. Importantly, equity also means creating a more socially competent and relevant curriculum that acknowledges aspects like the exclusion of certain voices, histories, achievements, traditions, and perspectives from existing curricula. Many advocates and reformers have called on higher education to "decolonize the

curriculum." In practice, this means not only being more inclusive of new topics and texts, but to reconsider canonical and noncanonical texts and interpretations, in light of the growth of knowledge about colonialism, slavery, and the construction of race.

Access to a racially and culturally diverse teacher and faculty workforce is beneficial for all students, particularly for students of color, who often thrive in classrooms led by teachers who share their racial and cultural background. In California, there have been improvements in faculty diversity in recent years, but serious gaps still persist. For example, at the University of California, 67% of the system's professorial ranks identified as White in 2019, as did 58% at the California State University while White students make up 21% of UC's student body and 22% of CSU's according to an EdSource analysis (Peele & Willis, 2021). In the California community college system, the percentage of White faculty has dropped 14 percentage points — from 73% to 59% — in the last 20 years, while the share of White students has dropped from 41% to 23%. More progress needs to be made to recruit faculty that better resemble the diversity of the student body in the state.

THE EFFORTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADVOCATES

The work of higher education advocates is essential for ensuring all students have the opportunity to access and graduate from California's three public systems. Advocates lift up the needs and voices of students, especially students from historically underrepresented groups like students of color and low-income first generation students. These efforts highlight student needs and voices to policy makers who have the power to promote legislation that can address these needs. Advocates at all levels also provide important feedback as policy is implemented throughout the state. Higher education advocacy organizations employ a variety of mechanisms that help promote equity, including coalition building and other forms of legislative advocacy.

LEGISLATION EFFORTS & CAMPAIGNS

There have been many policies and pieces of legislation that affect higher education equity in the state. While there have been impressive legislative wins in the past, this report focuses on the recent legislative efforts and campaigns of advocates including: (1) remedial course-work reform (AB 705), (2) the Cradle-to-Career Data System (SB 2, AB 99, AB 132), (3) Cal Grant overhaul and reform (AB 1456), and (4) dual enrollment. These were the top legislative priorities among the organizations we interviewed for this report. These policies and related bills were heavily advocated for by regional

community organizations, student groups and associations, and state level advocacy groups. Examining these legislative efforts and campaigns shines a light on the model of advocacy that was used and how important information and coordination flowed from state-level to regional partners and vice versa.

Remedial Coursework Reform

For decades, students of color have been disproportionately placed in remedial English and Math classes when entering college, often wasting their time, accumulating significant debt, and lengthening their time to graduation or transfer.

AB 705 was designed to clarify existing regulations and to guarantee that students were not placed into remedial courses that may delay or prevent their educational progress unless evidence implies that they were unlikely to succeed in the college-level course. The law states that instead of placement tests, schools must use one or more of the following: high school coursework, high school grades, and high school grade point average. Assessment instruments and placement policies can have serious consequences in terms of equity. For example, students of color are more likely to be placed into remedial courses and students placed into remediation are often less likely to reach their educational goals.

A 2019 study on the implementation of AB 705 found that while there has been substantial progress, these gains have been unevenly distributed and the implementation of AB 705 varies across the state (Hern, 2019). Since its implementation in 2019, a disproportionate number of Black and Brown students are still being placed in remedial classes (Hern, 2019). Advocates are working to highlight these inequities in terms of implementation, and to educate students about their right to be placed directly in transfer-level English and Math classes.

Cradle-to-Career Data System

Currently, California does not have a data system that tracks students' pathways from K-12 schools to college and into the workforce, unlike most other states. Although some institutions do share data across sectors for research or other purposes, these connections are mostly infrequent, incomplete, or ad hoc. Education advocates and researchers in the state have long called for a statewide longitudinal data system (Moore and Bracco 2018; California Competes 2018; Warren and Hough 2013). The lack of an integrated database hinders coordination across educational systems and limits the state's ability to track progress on specific educational goals. Having a detailed database would help educators and policymakers make evidence-based decisions, ul-

timately supporting better and more equitable opportunities for students. The database would monitor student progress from one grade to the next and measure whether students are on track in terms of high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion. In addition, it could aid in identifying important gaps in students outcomes giving decision makers the opportunity to create and implement interventions for students.

SB 2 - Longitudinal Statewide Student Database

SB 2 was a bill introduced during the 2019-2020 session. This legislation would have required the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) to convene a review committee to advise CPEC regarding the creation of a statewide longitudinal student database.⁹The committee would have advised the commission on the establishment, implementation, funding, and ongoing administration of the database. Ultimately, the hearing for this bill in the Assembly Education Committee was canceled at the request of the author (Glazer).

AB 99 - Statewide Longitudinal Database: California Cradle-to-Career Data System

The proposed Cradle-to-Career Data System in AB 99 aims to link existing education, workforce, financial aid, and social service information to better equip policymakers, educators, and the public to address disparities in opportunities and improve outcomes for all students throughout the state.¹⁰

Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin introduced AB 99, the Cradle-to-Career Data System Act, earlier this year and secured the inclusion of its main provisions in the annual budget package with the support of social justice, educational equity, and workforce development organizations. SB 2 had similar goals, but would have relied on the CPEC) to develop and implement the database, ultimately having a different governing structure.

AB 132 - Higher Education Trailer Bill

In July 2021, Governor Newsom signed AB 132, the higher education trailer bill, which officially established the Cradle to Career Data System and included a number of historic investments in higher education.¹¹ AB 132 included a \$15 million budget allocation to help launch the system. The proposal included several items that equity advocates, including the California Higher Education Equity Coalition, campaigned to include. For example, there must be ongoing and meaningful community engagement work that ensures the public and educators know to effectively use the database. According to our analysis, the Cradle-to-Career Data System had strong support from a broad group of stakeholders from throughout the state.

Cal Grant Overhaul & Reform

The Cal Grant financial aid system is the largest and most generous in the country. Unfortunately, higher education advocates point to the programs' complexity, and lack of focus on equity concerns. For example, low-income and Black and Brown students are disproportionately left out of the financial aid system and may be unable to receive a Cal Grant due to inaccurate assessments of their family's financial contributions or because the system is too complex to navigate. Additionally, the program leaves out hundreds of thousands of students each year who are older and took more than a year to get to college after finishing high school, and less than ten percent of community college students currently receive a Cal Grant.

AB 1456 - Student Financial Aid: Cal Grant Reform Act

In February 2021, representatives Medina and McCarty introduced AB 1456. This bill was designed to eliminate many of the eligibility barriers, prioritize Cal Grants for students with the greatest economic need, and streamline the program. The legislation was approved unanimously by both chambers of the Legislature and was backed by community college student leaders, the California Student Aid Commission, and the state chancellor's office overseeing California's 116 community colleges.

Governor Newsom vetoed AB 1456 in October 2021, citing that while he agrees that the Cal Grant program should be made simpler to navigate, AB 1456 would "result in significant cost pressures to the state, likely in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Future changes to the financial aid system of this magnitude should be considered as a part of the annual budget process."¹²

The 2021-22 state budget deal already partly overhauled the Cal Grant program by eliminating the maximum age requirements for students seeking awards, a change that will expand eligibility to an estimated 133,000 students. AB 1456, which was set to take effect in 2024-25, would have further expanded eligibility by getting rid of GPA requirements for community college students and lowering GPA requirements for students attending a CSU or UC campus.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment provides the opportunity for high school students to take college courses and earn college credit. This has been an important mechanism to help expand educational opportunities and improve economic mobility, especially for underrepresented groups in higher education. Issues like limited access to course offerings and fiscal missteps capped the

growth of dual enrollment in California (Mathias and Reed, 2021; Faulkner, Vargas, and Hooker, 2019). Citing these challenges, there have been a number of recent initiatives designed to expand dual enrollment in the state. For example, Assembly Bill (AB) 288 established the College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) partnership, allowing community college districts to partner with K-12 districts in offering college classes to high school students on high school campuses. The goal of AB 288 is to provide dual enrollment opportunities to students that may not already be college bound or who are underrepresented in higher education.

Participation in dual enrollment has been steadily increasing in California, partly fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic and an increase in support from state leaders (Rodriguez & Gao, 2021). For example, all community colleges in the state offer some form of dual enrollment, and the number of high school students that participated during 2019-20 increased by 56 percent from 2015-to 2016 (Rodriguez & Gao, 2021). A 2021 Public Policy Institute of California report found that in general, White and Asian students are overrepresented in dual enrollment, and Black and Latino students are underrepresented—although both groups are equitably represented in some formal programs. The same study also highlights that dual enrollment participants enroll in two- and four-year colleges at relatively high rates. Considering this impact, is it especially important that dual enrollment participation, and success be promoted among underrepresented groups.

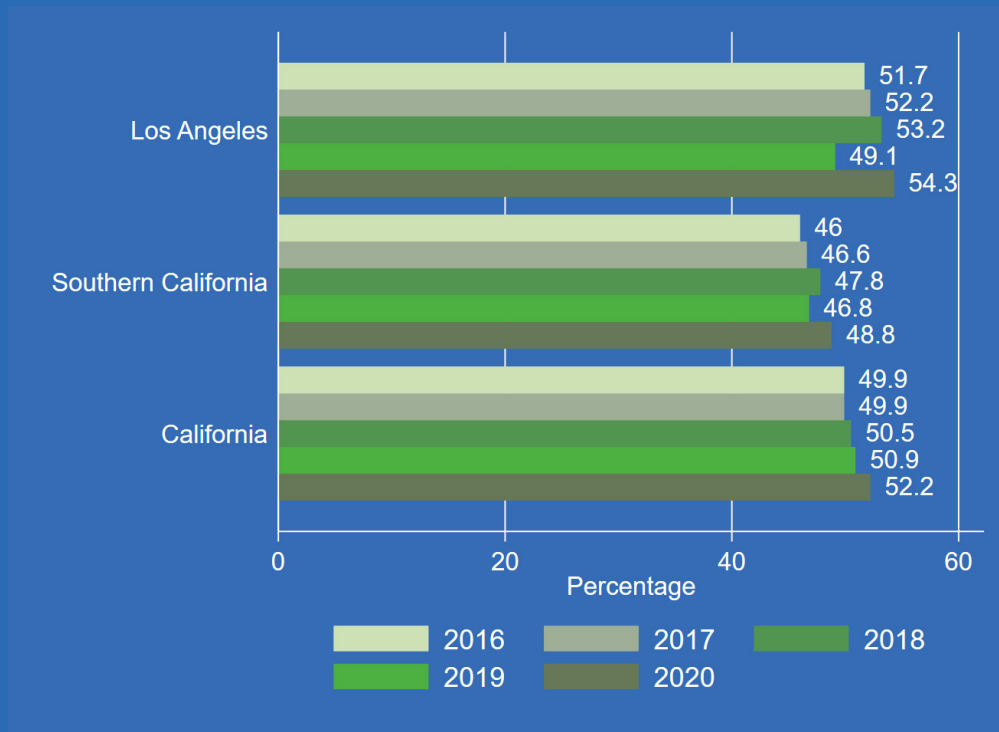
ANALYSIS OF PUBLICLY AVAILABLE QUANTITATIVE DATA

A major part of the story of higher education access is understanding who is admitted to and who ultimately enrolls in institutions of higher education. This data section works to understand the composition of incoming classes, both in terms of who they are (race) but also where they come from (high school or community college of transfer). While there are a variety of higher education institutions in California, this section primarily focuses on public institutions because of the role public institutions were established to play in California. Additionally, this section analyzes admissions data as well as A-G completion rates (part of the minimum requirements for admission to a UC or a CSU) but focuses more heavily on enrollment, transfer, and time to completion, since we were most interested in where students ultimately enroll, and to what extent they are able to graduate in 6 years or less.

Our analysis uses publicly available data to better understand trends at 2- and 4-year institutions, including

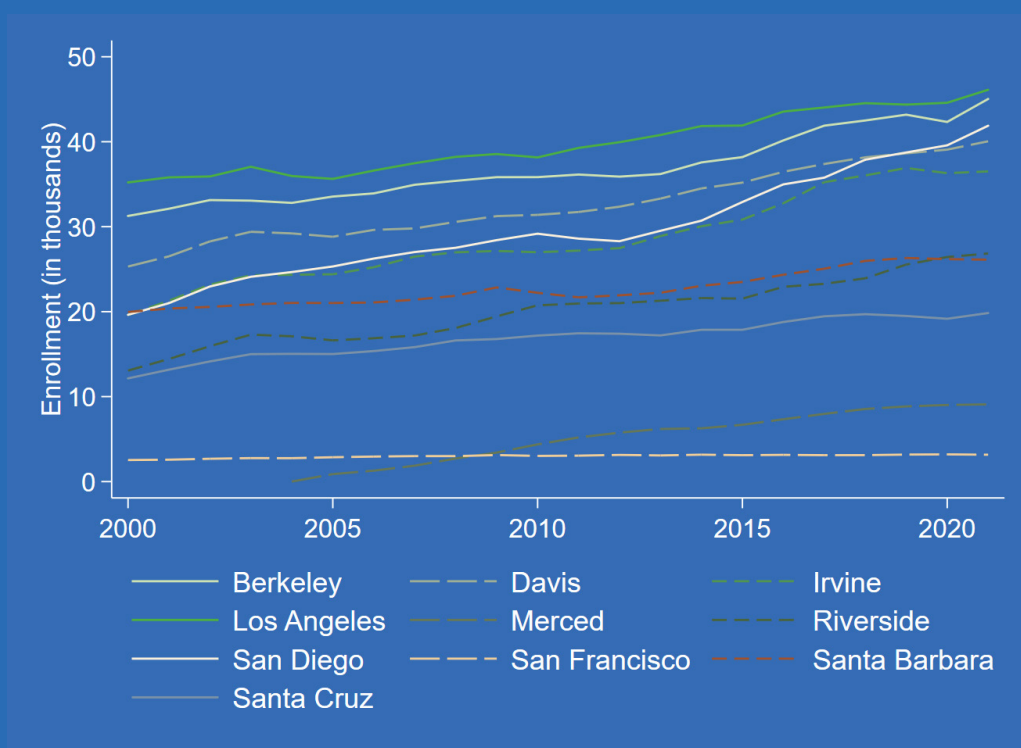
Data Snapshot

FIGURE #1 - A-G HISPANIC/LATION COMPLETION RATES AS PERCENTAGE OF HS DIPLOMAS AWARDED



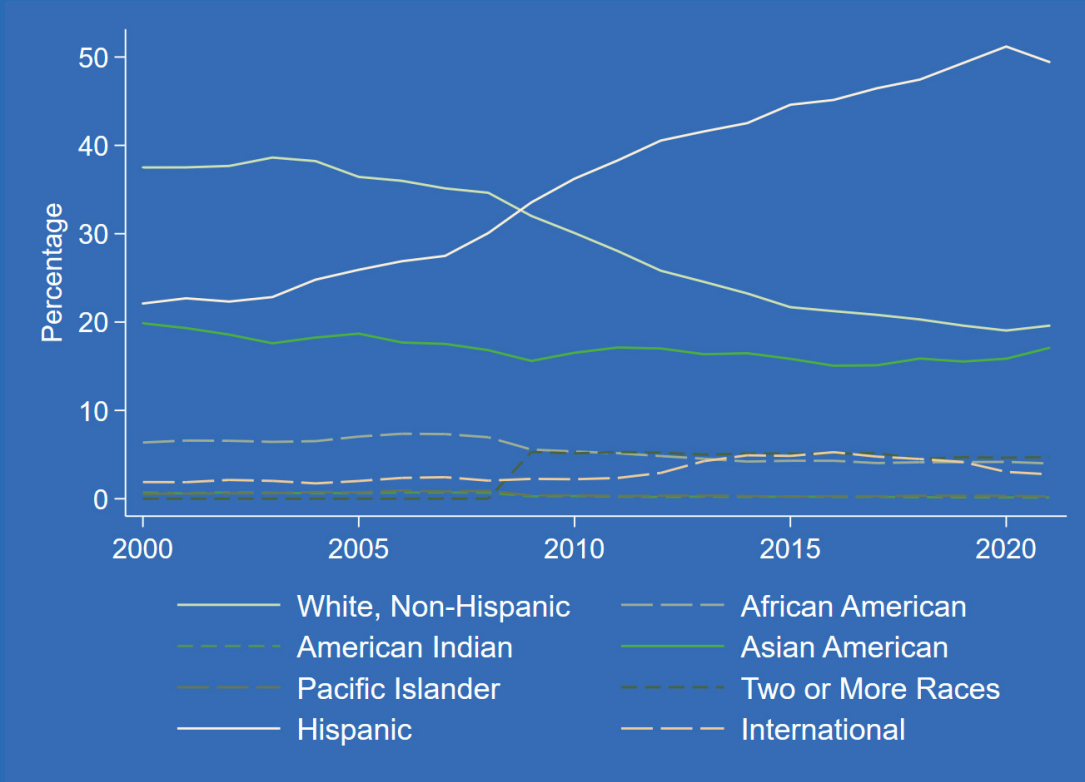
Source: California Department of Education, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesacgr.asp>

FIGURE #2 - UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT BY CAMPUS



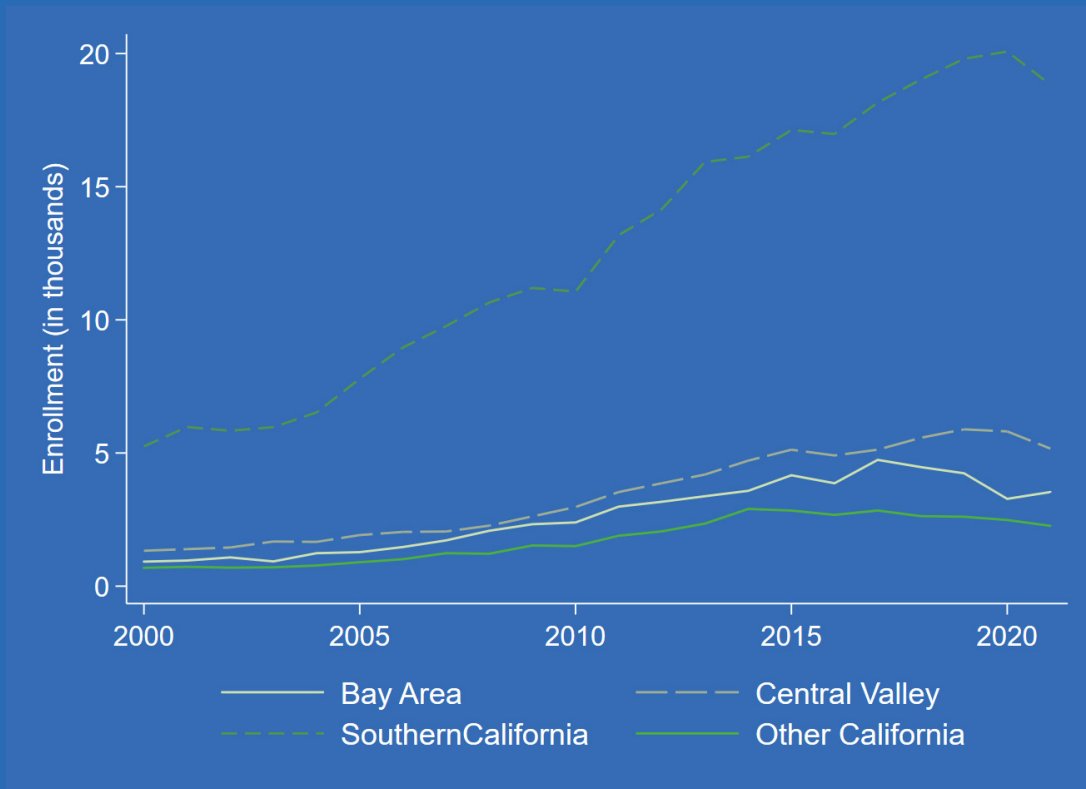
Source: University of California, <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/historical-enrollment>

FIGURE #3 - CSU FIRST-TIME ENROLLMENT BY RACE, 2000-2021



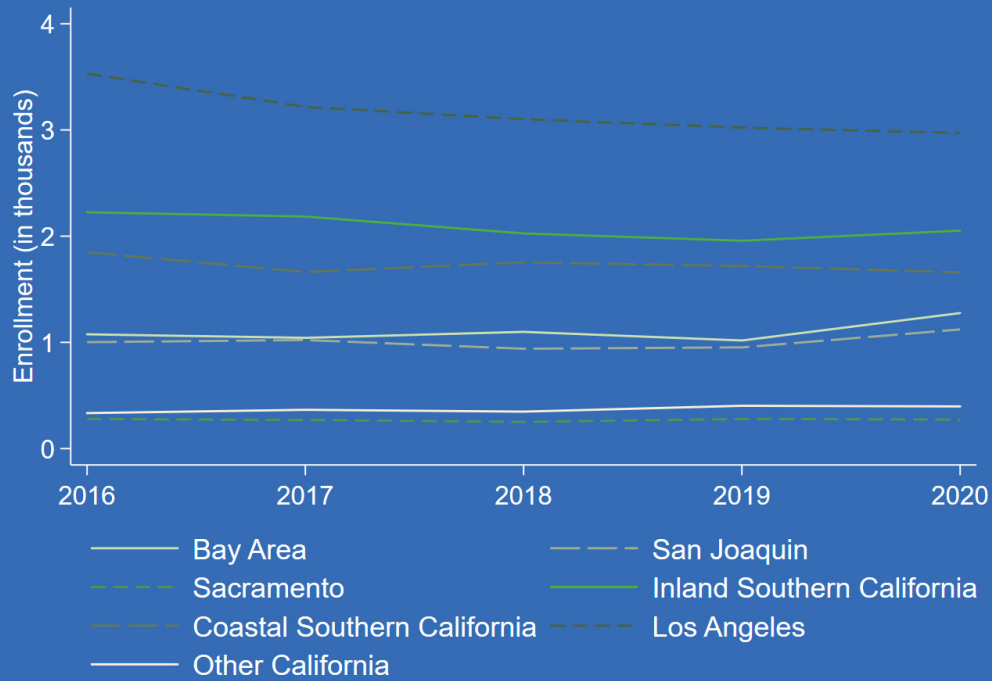
Source: California State University, <https://www.calstate.edu/data-center/institutional-research-analyses/Pages/enrollment.aspx>

FIGURE #4 - LATINO/HISPANIC ENROLLMENT AT A CSU ORIGINATING HS REGION



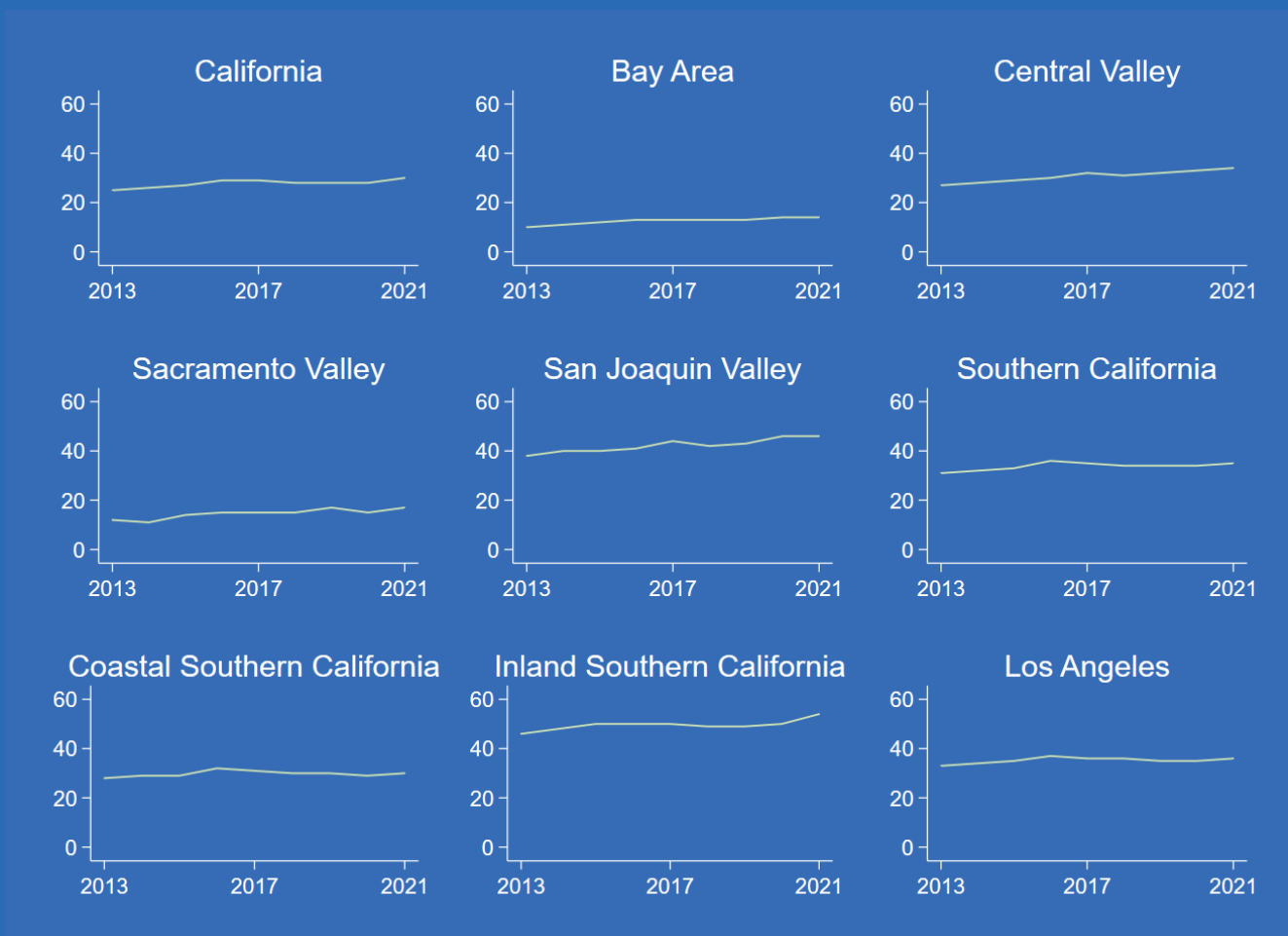
Source: California State University Database

FIGURE #5 - LATINO/HISPANIC ENROLLMENT AT A UC ORIGINATING HS REGION



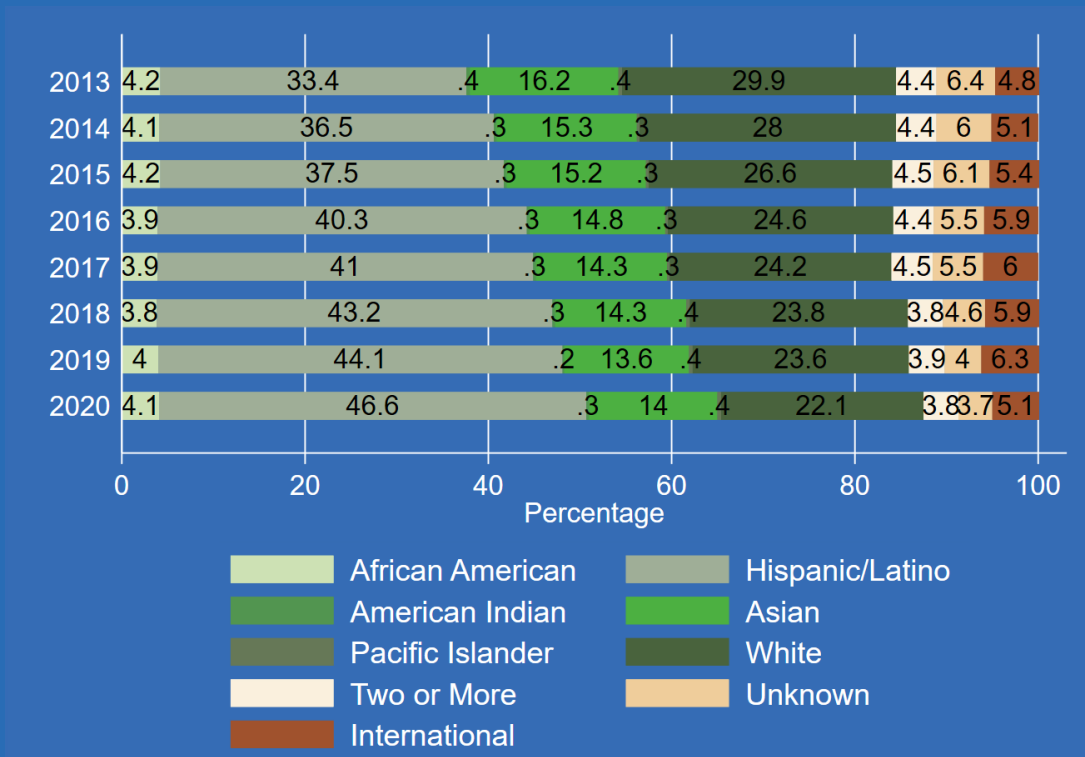
Source: University of California Database

FIGURE #6 - HISPANIC/LATINO FIRST-TIME ENROLLMENT AT A UC BY ORIGINATING HIGH SCHOOL REGION (2014-2020)



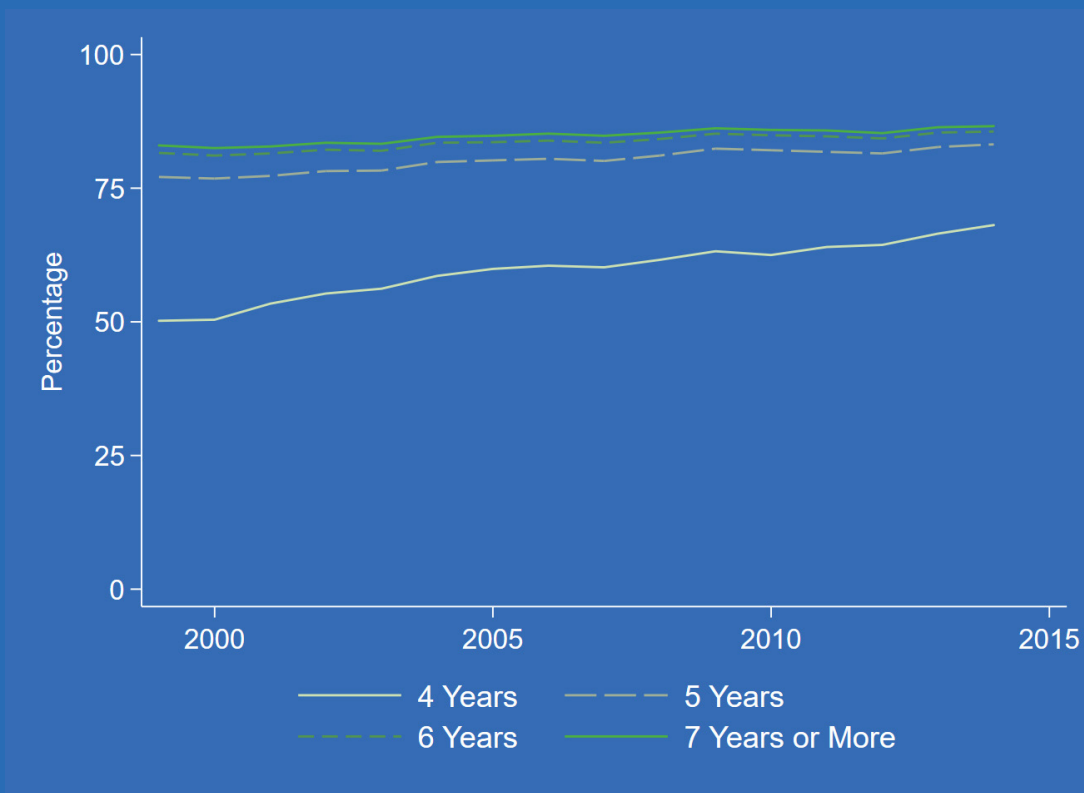
Each figure represents the percentage of first time UC Hispanic/Latino students that are coming from each specific California sub-region. I

FIGURE #9 - CSU TRANSFERS BY RACE, 2013-2020



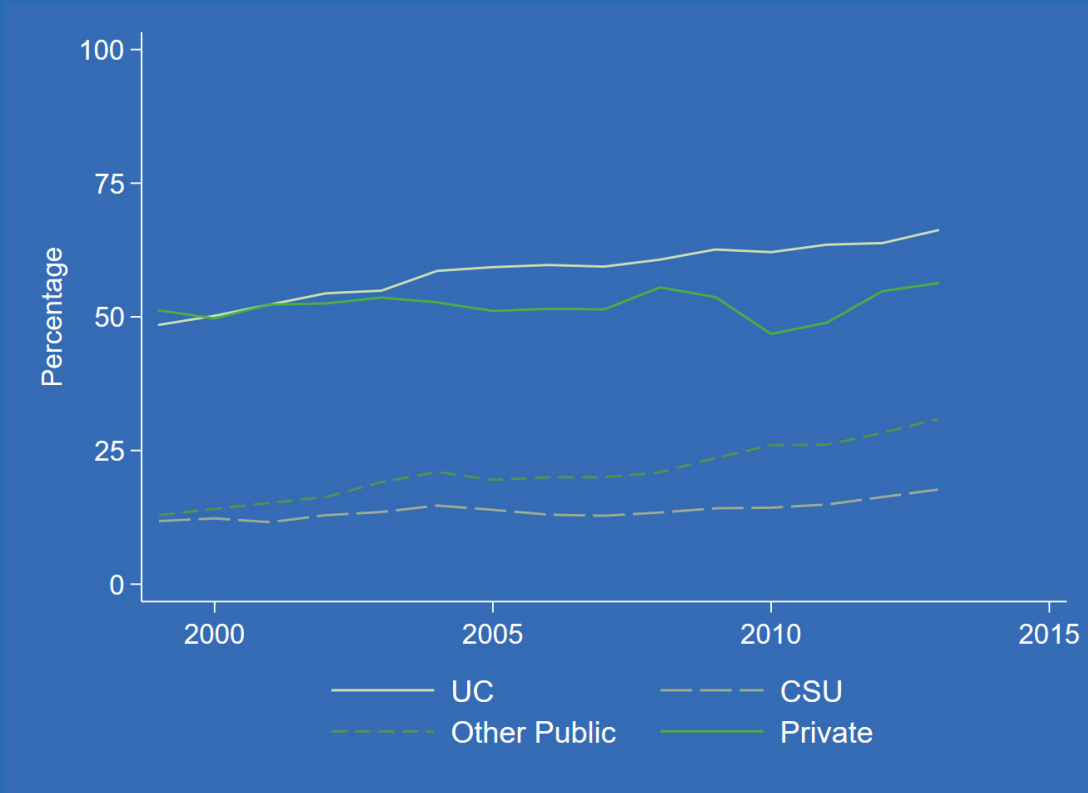
Source: California State University Database:

FIGURE #10 - UC TIME TO COMPLETION RATES, 1999-2014



Source: University of California via <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/ug-outcomes> I:

FIGURE #11 - TOTAL 4-YEAR COMPLETION RATE, PUBLIC & PRIVATE SCHOOLS, 2000-2015



Source: IPEDS:

FIGURE #12 - TOTAL 6-YEAR COMPLETION RATE, PUBLIC & PRIVATE SCHOOLS, 2000-2015



Source: IPEDS:

the transfer process between them. It takes a deeper dive into access by race, focusing on Latino and Black students who are enrolled in 2- and 4-year institutions. This section also examines students' originating high school counties, to examine which regions are sending the most students on to some form of higher education. A detailed definition of the regions we analyzed can be found in the data appendix. Major regions that were analyzed include: the Bay Area, Central Valley, and Southern California. Those regions were further disaggregated by sub-regions and some specific counties of interest. The regions were chosen due to the roles they play in policy spaces, as well as their weight as centers of the state's population.

All of the data used to do the analysis below came from publicly available sources such as the California Department of Education, the US Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the University of California, and the California State University system.

A-G RATES

A-G requirements are a set of high school courses that students must complete with a grade of C or better in order to meet the minimum eligibility requirements for admission to either the University of California or California State University system. A-G rates can shine a light on certain aspects of the high school to college pipeline.

When controlling just for region, A-G completion rates were highest in Northern California/Bay area across the years for which data were available (2016-2020). However, when controlling for race, the geographies become more diverse. It is important to note that some of the data has been suppressed depending on sample/cohort size, and so this analysis includes suppressed counts as 0.

When controlling for race, A-G Hispanic/Latino completion rates for Los Angeles County, Southern California, and California showed a general upward trend as noted in Figure #1. In 2019, there was an observed dip in both Los Angeles County and Southern California overall, though the 2020 numbers show gains that effectively continue the trend from 2016-2018. Data show that the Inland Empire region (Riverside County & San Bernardino County) has also experienced a slight increase in A-G rates over time as well.

Notably, when just controlling for region, Imperial County (within the Inland Southern California region) comes in at 149/289 counties. However, when controlling for race, Asians from the 2017 cohort had the second

highest A-G completion rate out of the entire dataset, of 93%. In general when controlling for race, all cohorts within the Asian/Filipino categories scored high, and were the predominant race within the top 40 counties, and also accounting for a fairly large regional range.

A-G rates in the state have remained relatively consistent since 2016, with the Bay Area region showing the highest rates of completion across all years for which the data are available.¹³ It is important that future research digs deeper into some of the racial and regional disparities to better support underserved and underrepresented students on their journey from high school to higher education.

ADMISSIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Southern California region makes up the overwhelming majority of admissions to the University of California system, according to our analysis of publicly available data. Los Angeles County was the top originating high school region for admissions to the University of California system across all years. Inland Southern California (Riverside County) and Coastal Southern California (Orange and San Diego counties) were among the top parts of the larger Southern California region. The Bay Area region (Alameda and Santa Clara counties) was also a top admissions region.

When analyzing originating admittance regions by race, Southern California regions account for the top admitting sub-regions/counties for Black students, with some representation from the Bay Area (Alameda) and Sacramento Valley (Sacramento). For Hispanics/Latinos, all of the top sub-regions for admittance are from the larger Southern California region.

Because the California State System tends to be very regional (see further description in the enrollment section), admissions data was primarily analyzed in terms of race. Hispanics/Latinos make up the overwhelming majority of admissions to the California State System, accounting for over 40% of the admitted population since 2013. While the System's admissions numbers have generally increased over the time period for which data are available, 2000-2021, the absolute numbers of Hispanic/Latino admissions has also increased.¹⁴

Admissions in both the UC and CSU system have increased since 2013. In terms of race, both Black and Hispanic/Latino students largely come from the Southern California region.

ENROLLMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

Total undergraduate enrollment in the University of California (UC) system has increased over the past two decades.

As depicted in Figure #2, the Los Angeles Campus has the highest total undergraduate enrollment, followed (in order of 2021 total enrollment numbers) by Berkeley, Davis, San Diego, Irvine, Riverside, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Merced. Over the 2000-2021 period, all campuses (with the exception of Merced, which is the newest campus and opened in 2005; and excluding San Francisco because it is not a general education campus) showed a substantial increase in total undergraduate enrollment, with the lowest increase at Santa Barbara, and the largest increase at San Diego. Additionally, first-time entering student enrollment in the UC system has remained relatively steady over the time period for which detailed data is available, with modest gains over time.

Similarly, the California State University (CSU) system has seen a general increase in undergraduate enrollment and a similar increase in first-time enrollment. If we look across the same time period as the available UC data, total first-time enrollment for the CSU system shows slightly more variation, with an increase from 2017 to 2019 and a subsequent decrease in 2020, but relatively steady enrollment numbers.

CSU enrollment by race shows an increase in Hispanic/Latino enrollment and a decline in White enrollment, as shown in Figure #3.¹⁵ Other races held relatively constant across the data collection period (2000 to 2021).

Of note, CSU Enrollment tends to be fairly local. With the exception of a few campuses, most students enroll in a campus within 50 miles of their school of origin. This is a generally different enrollment trend than that of the UCs, so a regional comparison of origin high school region and UC was not as applicable here. The CSU campuses that do recruit from a wider geographic area tend to have relatively unique features. In the case of the Humboldt and Chico, the campuses are in largely rural communities. They draw heavily from their surrounding areas with over half of their student body being local, but these campuses also attract students from Southern California. Situated on the central coast and relatively remote from major metropolitan areas, Cal State San Luis Obispo (better known as California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo) draws students from a much broader section of California than its Southern California counterpart, the Pomona campus. The local nature of the Pomona campus student body is most likely due to its close proximity to the industries it trains students for as well as a large urban population, as opposed to the San Luis Obispo campus which is a feeder to tech industries in the Bay Area but is located in a low population area. The Humboldt campus is in a largely rural area, and thus the local population alone is not enough to support a full student

population. The Maritime Academy is unique within the system in that it focuses on shipboard and waterfront training that prepares its students for life in a maritime career. One major component of the Maritime Academy campus is a 500ft. long ship called the Golden Bear which is the “primary training platform on which cadets apply technological skills introduced in the classroom and leadership skills acquired from their work assignments and responsibilities with the Corps of Cadets.”¹⁶

When examining UC enrollment by race, the data show that enrollment has remained relatively constant over the period data was available, with a slight increase in Asian enrollment, and a slight decrease for Hispanic/Latino and White. Table #1 shows the raw numbers of UC undergraduate enrollment disaggregated by race between 2014 to 2020.

As depicted in Figure #4, there has been a notable increase in Latino student enrollment in the CSU system, when examining the data at the regional level. In comparison, the Hispanic/Latino enrollment from Los Angeles County high schools to the UC system (Figure #5) has declined slightly over the data period.

To put this within regional context, Hispanic/Latino senior enrollment in Los Angeles County high schools has remained relatively constant over the past several years for which data is available. Additionally, A-G completion rates for Latino students from Los Angeles County high schools have remained similar across the four years of available data. They were trending up slightly over the first three years of data available, fell in 2019, and then rebounded in 2020 to over the 2018 rate.

For the UC system, the Los Angeles and Inland Southern California regions sent the most students (i.e., they enrolled) to a UC campus. Additionally, the Los Angeles and Inland Southern California regions sent the most Black and Hispanic/Latino students to a UC campus. The regions that sent the most Black students to a UC campus are: Los Angeles, Inland Southern California, Coastal Southern California, Bay Area, and the Sacramento Valley. It is important to note that the absolute numbers of Black students at the UCs has remained extremely low over the years, and has been a point of criticism about the system. The most recent incoming class showed the greatest proportion of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in the system’s history, and was also the first incoming class that did not require SAT or ACT scores.¹⁷ The regions that sent the most Hispanic/Latino students to a UC campus are: Los Angeles, Inland Southern California, and Coastal

Southern California. See the data appendix for a more fine-grained comparative breakdown within the regions mentioned in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 6 highlights different regions in the state and what percentage of Hispanic/Latino first-time UC enrolled students come from each region between 2013 and 2021. For example, in 2013, 45 percent of first time Hispanic/Latino UC students came from Inland Southern California, in comparison to 31 percent from the larger Southern California region (which includes the Inland Southern California region) and 25 percent from California as a whole (inclusive of all regions). In 2021, 54 percent of first time Hispanic/Latino UC students came from Inland Southern California, in comparison to 35 percent from the larger Southern California region (which includes the Inland Southern California region) and 30 percent from California as a whole (inclusive of all regions). All of the regions we analyzed have increased the percentage of first-time Hispanic/Latino students since 2014.

A few notes about this particular analysis. We focused on Hispanic/Latino enrollment here for a few reasons. Like Blacks and American Indians/Alaska Natives, this racial group has traditionally been underrepresented in higher education. However, unlike Blacks and American Indians/Alaska Natives, there have been higher enrollment numbers over time. Additionally, we wanted to understand if there had been any significant gains in Hispanic/Latino enrollment at the UCs within the time period we were analyzing. Future work would entail a longer date range to get a better comparative picture with the CSU data, to better understand if gains were similar across California public systems.

Overall, enrollment in both the UC and CSU system has increased over the past several years. While CSU Hispanic/Latino enrollment has increased significantly in the Los Angeles area, A-G completion rates for this group from Los Angeles area high schools has remained relatively flat. When considering race, the data show increases of Hispanic/Latino and Black students, although the absolute number of Black students still remains low. Additionally, the absolute number of Native American students remains very low in comparison to all other races.

TRANSFERS

An important component of higher education access is the transfer pipeline between 2- and 4-year institutions. Because this report focuses on the impact of advocacy on higher education access, we wanted to better understand what impact, if any, messaging had on public opinion and/or influencing related legislation. However, higher education legislation is not something that necessarily garners a lot of traditional or social media

attention and engagement (and was something that one interviewee specifically mentioned as part of our qualitative data collection), as compared to more highly politicized topics like immigration reform. In light of this, we opted to do a scan of legislation that several of the known statewide advocacy organizations sponsored, and based on this decide to focus on AB 705 due to its recent nature (e.g., it would most likely show up in social media) and that it was written to directly impact the pipeline of students who wished to transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution.

We conducted an analysis of Twitter data to get a better idea of what the public facing “messaging” was for AB 705. In large part, the word cloud that was generated highlighted the importance of centering students in the conversation, and the impact of reform on remedial education requirements. Additionally, a google trend search of AB 705 found that there were three time points where it saw an uptick in search queries: October 2018, November 2019, and August 2020. While these late fall/early summer time points could correspond to when students start thinking about transferring to a 4-year institution, the October 2018 time point corresponded with a California gubernatorial election, during which higher education was again in the news. A 2018 Tufts study also showed an increase in student voting in the 2018 election cycle, possibly indicating that students were becoming more civically involved.¹⁸ The google trend search also identified a related search topic - “Bachelor of Arts - Degree”, which may also indicate that students were considering options to pursue a 4-year degree.

The following section takes a deeper dive into transfer numbers and rates by race for the University of California and California State University systems, as both have funding from the state tied to admitting more transfer students.

Transfers to the University of California System

The University of California system has a stated purpose to admit transfer students. As part of this effort, the system has created several programs/initiatives to help students through the process of applying while in community college, including determining coursework and a major. Three of these programs include: Transfer Pathways, Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG), and Pathways+. In large part, these programs are meant to help ease the transition between a students’ current 2 year institution, and make it easier to ensure that credits get transferred over. A notable component of the TAG program is access to a UC TAG advisor who can help navigate the process. This is particularly key considering that many community colleges either do not have counselors or have extremely high student-to-counselor

ratios. According to data from the University of California, transfer totals to the UC system have increased steadily over the 2013-2020 period.

Transfers to the California State University System

Similarly, the California State System provides pathways for three types of transfer students: CCC-Associate Degree for Transfer, Upper-Division Transfer, and Lower-Division Transfer. Both the upper-division and lower-division transfer are requirements for minimum transferable units to be able to transfer into a California State campus as either a lower-division (<59 transferable semester, <89 transferable quarter), or an upper-division (60 semester or 90 quarter transferable units) transfer applicant. Notably, the California State System webpage that outlines the transfer requirements notes that due to high enrollment demands, most campuses will either restrict or outright prohibit lower-division transfer students who have fewer than 60 transferable semester (90 quarter) units.

The CCC-Associate Degree for Transfer program, sometimes referred to as a Degree with a Guarantee, allows those who have an Associate in Art for Transfer and Associate in Science for Transfer from the California Community Colleges and meet the CSU minimum eligibility requirements, to get guaranteed priority admission to a CSU campus and earn two degrees - the associate's degree and the bachelor's degree. Similar to the UC system, transfer totals have steadily increased by year for the CSU system over the period 2013-2020.

Transfers by Race - UC System

The breakdown of transfers to the UC system by race remains relatively consistent from 2016-to 2020. The majority of transfers to the UC system are Hispanic/Latinos, Asians, and Whites. While the transfer rates for Black and American Indian students remain relatively steady, an examination of the actual numbers of transfers illuminates a huge gap between the numbers of Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and White students, and that of Black and American Indian students. It should be noted that the low UC enrollment generally (i.e., not necessarily just transfer numbers) by Black and American Indian students is a known issue.

Top Community Colleges for Transfers to the UC system by Race

An examination of the top sending community colleges (i.e., the students from these community colleges enrolled) to the UC system found that Southern California community colleges dominated almost all lists. Berkeley City College was a notable Bay Area community college that is a top sender for Black students transferring to the UC system. When selecting for American Indian

transfers, transfers came from community colleges all over California, and represented a greater level of geographic diversity than any other race. However, it should be noted that American Indian students make up a very small percentage of the total transfer population and that many values for AIAN students in the dataset overall were indicated as "N/A".

Transfers by Race - California State University System

The breakdown of CSU transfers by race shows a steady increase in the percentage of Hispanic/Latino students and a steady decrease in the percentage of White students since 2013, according to data from California State University. Rates for all other races have remained relatively steady over the data period.

Similar to the UC system, African Americans and American Indian students make up a very small part of the transfer student body in terms of absolute numbers enrolled. The CSU system breaks out Pacific Islanders (the UC system most likely combines them with Asian), though they also comprise a very small proportion of the transfer student body.

Transfer rates have increased in both the UC and CSU system since 2013. The majority of transfers to the UC system come from Southern California community colleges. Additionally, in both higher education systems the data show that Hispanic/Latino students are transferring more and White students are transferring less over time. Black and Native American student transfer rates remain low in both systems, with little variance over time.

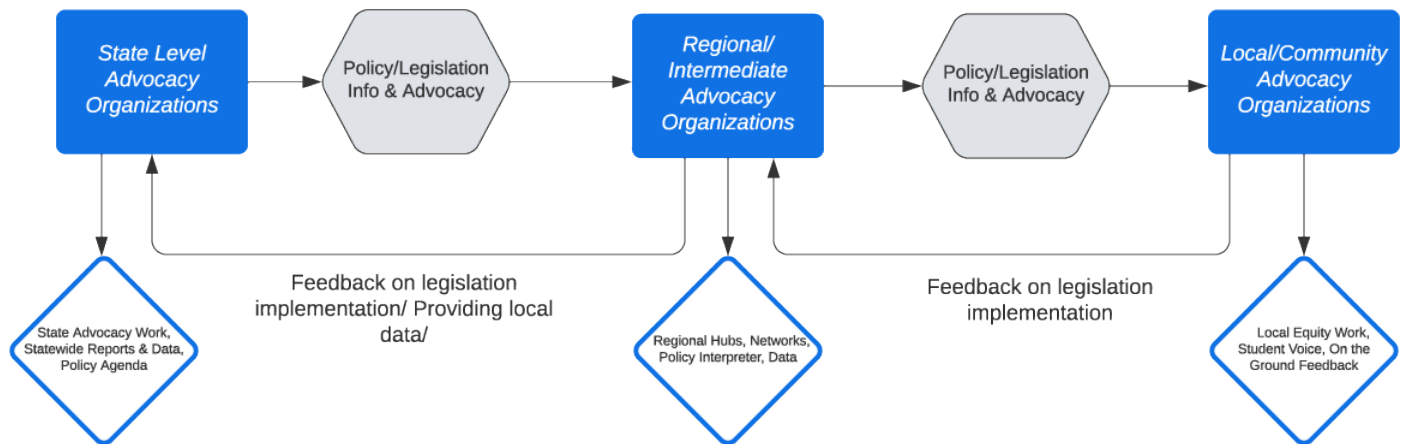
TIME TO COMPLETION

Another important indicator is the time to degree completion rate. This rate is the percentage of students that graduated from a 4-year university at the 4th, 5th, and 6th+ year marks. For context, undergraduate degrees are obtained through 4-year programs. Some factors that may contribute to a student taking longer may be a lack of school funding, taking a part-time course load due to other obligations, and struggling academically to meet the degree requirements.

Depending on the source dataset, completion rates can be tracked in a variety of ways. UC time to completion data suggests that the 4-year completion rate has been increasing over time, whereas the 5, 6, and 7 year rates remained the same across the 1999-2014 time period.

The US Department of Education's Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) dataset, which includes private institutions as well as the public University of California and California State University system, categorizes completion into 4, 6, and 8 years.

CHART #1 - HIGHER EDUCATION ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION RELATIONSHIPS



Source: Center for Social Innovation, qualitative analysis 2022

In terms of the 4- year rate, completion rates increased over time for all systems and types.

For the 6-year rate set, the UC system showed no change, whereas the Other Public and CSU systems both saw an increase. Only the privates showed a slight dip in 2010, though had recovered to their prior rate within the next few years.

For the 8- year set, there was a gradual upward trend for all institutions, with the exception of the privates which saw a dip in 2010, similar to the 6-year set.

In general, four-year completion rates have generally increased across all institutions. Six-year completion rates have also generally increased across all institutions, with the exception of a dip around 2010 for private institutions.

INTERVIEW & SURVEY SUMMARY FINDINGS

In addition to the quantitative data analysis we have presented, this report relies on in-depth interviews with higher education advocacy stakeholders to better understand the advocacy system, and the state of equity in higher education in the state. These interviews were conducted remotely between 2021 and 2022, with stakeholders from throughout the state of California representing a diverse group of organizations within the education equity space. We asked interviewees about their specific organizations and any coalitions and partnerships they were involved in. We asked them how they viewed the relationships and roles of higher

education advocacy organizations in the state, and how the system functions. Interviewees were also asked about their involvement with legislation advocacy. Additionally, several organizations responded to a supplemental survey form which detailed the information flow(s) between local, regional, and state level advocacy organizations and noted additional coalitions and partnerships throughout the state.

We aggregated the findings from the survey and interviews to create broad themes that emerged through the data. The model of higher education advocacy that we present in this report was also based on these analyses.

Summary Findings and Themes

The section below details the common themes and findings from the in-depth interviews that were conducted for this report. We spoke to a wide range of higher education stakeholders throughout the state. Their insights and experience provide a comprehensive perspective on the current state of higher education equity both throughout the state and regionally.

One of the strongest themes that emerged from the interviews was focus on capacity building. This theme was the most common in conversations with smaller local advocacy organizations. Interviewees saw capacity building as an investment in the effectiveness and future sustainability of their organization. Linked with this theme was the notion of the importance of investing in coalition and network capacity. Organizations in the education advocacy space

want to collaborate and partner to have a larger and more efficient impact locally and throughout the state.

The importance and need for information and resource sharing was another strong theme. The information flow between organizations is essential for the advocacy system to function. Smaller organizations rely on state level organizations for up-to-date legislative and policy information. Both the regional and state level organizations we interviewed noted that they see part of their role in the system as an information hub and “sense maker” of policy. Our conversations around information sharing included highlighting the increasing importance of data in the work these organizations do. All interviewees shared with us the necessity of having good and accurate data, that is disaggregated as much as possible to highlight inequities.

The last common theme involved smaller community organizations that often provide direct services as part of their missions. These organizations can feel limited in what they can do in terms of legislative and policy advocacy, due to things like budget and capacity constraints and not wanting to wade too deep into politics.

THE MODEL OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADVOCACY IN CALIFORNIA: LOCAL, REGIONAL & STATE LEVEL RELATIONSHIPS

To better understand the state of the current model of higher education advocacy in the state of California, we conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders from across different parts of the state and at different levels of advocacy - from state level advocacy organizations to local community level organizations. Based on these conversations, and our interview and survey analysis, we have created a model which details the relationship between these advocacy organizations in terms of policy advocacy, data and data sharing, partnerships and coalitions, and networks.

It is important to note that this model reflects the current state of affairs and simplifies complex relationships, distilling them into an easily understood visual representation. This model should be refined further to highlight both the attributes of the model that are working well and other areas that may be improved. This is a general model of how the advocacy system works in action and does not claim to represent any specific relationships between organizations.

The flowchart on page 21 depicts the relationships and roles between higher education advocacy organizations in the state of California, based on our analysis. We broadly break down advocacy organizations into three different categories shown in the blue squares: (1) state level, (2)

regional/intermediate, and (3) local/community advocacy organizations. It is important to note that not all advocacy organizations will fit neatly into these categories, as each organization is unique and plays a distinct role in their respective regions. The gray hexagon describes the flow of policy and legislative information and advocacy between the organizations. Lastly, the diamonds outlined in blue represent each advocacy category’s role in the advocacy system as it currently functions. There is not a strong feedback loop between the state level organizations and local/community level organizations, which is why the flowchart is linear and not circular. Much of the relationship between state level organizations and local organizations is mediated through the regional/intermediate level organizations.

State Level Organizations

State level advocacy organizations (e.g. Campaign for College Opportunity, Ed Trust West, etc.), work on policy and legislative advocacy, largely at the state level in Sacramento. They provide information about specific policies and legislation to regional intermediate organizations (e.g. Growing Inland Achievement, North State Together, OneLA, Central Valley Higher Education Consortium). They also prepare statewide research and reports and other advocacy materials that can be used by higher education advocates throughout the state.

State level organizations tend to set the policy agenda and interface with policy makers, government officials and representatives, and state level government agencies. These organizations have relationships with lawmakers that help them influence policy and legislation.

State level organizations also play a crucial role in relaying up to date policy and legislation information down to the regional/intermediate level organizations, who are not as involved in the legislative process. This information flow is really important because regional level organizations often act as a policy/legislative “sense maker” for smaller local organizations, so it is essential that regional organizations have accurate and up to date information. In addition, this flow of information keeps the entire system informed so they can mobilize and engage statewide networks when needed. Often, state level organizations will ask regional organizations for “sign on” support for a piece of legislation, ultimately promoting the legislation via the regional organizations networks to attempt to get broad, statewide support. Using feedback from the local and regional organizations that arise after implementation, state level organizations will often lobby for updates or clarification for certain pieces of legislation.

Regional/Intermediate Level Organizations

Regional/intermediate level organizations mainly focus on providing regional data, and cultivating and maintaining advocacy networks largely made up of community organizations working on the ground, local government agencies, and other representation from regional colleges/universities. Regional organizations are the essential link between local community organizations and state level organizations. For example, state level organizations may occasionally directly interface with local community organizations through listening sessions or other forms of feedback, but this mechanism is infrequent and is not a regular and open line of communication. Because regional organizations are convenors and hubs for local organizations to partner and collaborate, they are seen as a more open and direct source to provide feedback on implementation and to lift up local issues and barriers to education equity in their respective regions.

When it comes to the implementation of bills and legislation, the intermediate organizations play a very important role. They are seen as “sense makers” providing best practices to local districts, schools, and other organizations working on implementation, largely because they both interface with the state level organizations and they often hold the aggregate data in the region. Whether it is publicly available data, data collected through regional data sharing agreements, independent research, or a combination all intermediate level organizations we interviewed saw themselves as a hub for local data. In addition to holding the data, these organizations often produce their own research and materials through mechanisms like data dashboards and policy brief reports. Importantly, these regional data hubs allow smaller organizations to access regional specific data so they can better advocate for local higher education equity. Similarly, state level organizations also can request regional data from intermediate organizations depending upon what they are advocating for.

Local/Community Level Organizations

Local/community level organizations are important because they lift up the voices of groups like students, parents, and teachers that have little advocacy power by themselves. This is particularly important for groups like students of color and other historically marginalized populations and communities, pushing for more equity in higher education. These organizations interface with many of the people that will be directly impacted by higher education legislation. Due to their proximity, local organizations have the best view to understand what is happening on the ground in their communities. They know how the implementation of legislation is affecting the populations they serve, and they understand the other barriers and issues their

communities face even outside of the higher education equity space. Local organizations may not solely be focused on higher education equity, but many understand the connection between equity in education and other areas, so there may be a large amount of cross sectoral advocacy. In addition to providing community level feedback and lifting up student voice, local organizations help to “ground truth” the research and policy decisions that are being made at the regional and state level.

Flow of Information & Feedback

While information and data flow down from the state level organizations to regional intermediate organizations, and ultimately to local community organizations, there is important feedback on the implementation of legislation and regulations that flows from the bottom up. This feedback flow is mediated through the regional/intermediate organizations, who can consolidate and aggregate regional feedback and provide the local data to make the case further. Ideally, this feedback would then inform legislative changes and updates, ultimately making the legislation more likely to achieve its intended goals.

Data

Data is an integral part of the model for higher education advocacy. Accurate data can be used to shine a light on inequities that may be hidden in large aggregate data. Additionally, data can be used to further illuminate student experiences, outcomes, and the different challenges certain groups may face. In this model, data is important in the feedback process on legislative implementation.

Networks

In terms of networks, the model includes formal networks and coalitions often housed within the regional hub organizations. These networks can be activated for advocacy purposes from the top down, but also from the bottom up, although that scenario is more rare. These formal networks include attributes such as action networks, coalitions, cooperatives, consortiums, and other local and regional partnerships (which can be cross sectoral, outside of education advocacy). There are also informal networks that are active, although it is difficult to quantify the impact of these networks, we do know from our interviews that information is transmitted through these lines as well. For example, these informal networks could include informal conversations, meetings, or events in which the focus is not on higher education advocacy per se, but information is still happening between each organization level.

Other Aspects Not Depicted in the Model/Limitations

TABLE #1 - UC UNDERGRADUATE NEW ENROLLMENT BY DISAGGREGATED RACE
2014-2020

Broad Category	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
African American & Black	9,250	9,576	10,436	11,163	11,659	12,099	12,659
American Indian/Alaska Native	3,076	3,056	3,125	3,297	3,296	3,277	3,380
Asian	102,758	105,982	111,558	115,555	119,087	121,112	122,520
Hispanic/Latino	50,885	53,019	58,251	62,039	64,635	66,854	68,225
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	1,659	1,695	1,809	1,940	2,120	2,269	2,369
Southwest Asian/North African	10,028	10,476	11,379	11,796	12,224	12,688	12,969
White	85,371	84,631	87,118	89,478	89,971	90,437	89,765

Source: University of California Database - <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/disaggregated-data>

TABLE #2: THE MODEL OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADVOCACY IN CALIFORNIA: REGIONAL & STATE RELATIONSHIPS

Organization	Advocacy Role	Relationships
State Level Advocacy Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating w/policy makers in Sacramento • Providing current policy/legislation information to regional level orgs. • State level data, policy information • Relaying implementation feedback - advocating for bill updates/clarification 	<p>Regional/Intermediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing current policy/legislation information to regional level orgs. • Asking for sign on support for legislation/ promoting legislation via regional networks <p>Local/Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for legislation at the state level that benefits local community organizations
Regional/Intermediate Level Advocacy Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregating and holding regional data; research on implementation • Communicating current policy/legislative information to community orgs • Gathering feedback on implementation from organizations on the ground • Being a regional hub for organizations to collaborate and partner 	<p>State Level Orgs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering feedback on implementation from organizations on the ground • Keeper of regional data, local student voice • State orgs. can utilize the networks of regional hub orgs for advocacy & information dissemination <p>Local/Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating current policy/legislative information to community orgs • Gathering feedback on implementation from organizations on the ground • Regional hubs that local groups can use to collaborate and partner
Local/Community Level Advocacy Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the ground organizations, directly interfacing with students, parents, teachers, faculty, other education stakeholders at a local level • Lifting up student voice, other local equity issues/barriers • Communicating important feedback about implementation of legislation to regional/intermediate organizations 	<p>Regional/Intermediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local orgs provide implementation and community level feedback on legislation • Local orgs lift up student voice and concerns to regional orgs. <p>State Level Orgs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local orgs provide implementation and community level feedback on legislation, through regional orgs • Ground truthing on research and policy

This advocacy model focuses on the relationships between state, regional, and local higher education advocacy groups and their distinct roles. This model simplifies a very complex system of relationships, and is a generalizable model for how advocacy happens in the education equity space in California. There are some stakeholder groups that are not depicted in this model but that do have roles in advocacy. These groups were mainly excluded to keep the model simple and to focus attention on just advocacy organizations. For example, lawmakers and government officials directly impact the education policy agenda, which is influenced by state level advocacy organizations, but how much influence these organizations have is very dependent on the specific relationship with the lawmaker and what the piece of legislation happens to be.

Other important groups that are not depicted overtly in the model are government regulatory agencies, school districts, local government entities, and the universities and colleges themselves. Each one of these groups has a role in the advocacy and legislative process, and they interface with advocacy organizations at different levels. For example, school districts and other local government entities may be a part of a higher education coalition at the regional hub level.

Funding organizations are another active player within this space. While they are not always technically directly advocating, as an interviewee mentioned, because they do have funding priorities, they effectively end up backing specific initiatives via who they fund and what those grantees do with the money.

STRENGTHS OF THE MODEL

Within this model each organizational level has a crucial role in the higher education advocacy system. To function effectively, communication and collaboration between organizations is essential. While there are improvements that could be made to this model that we will discuss in the following section, the current model does function well. For example, implementation feedback and regional data are filtered up to the state level advocacy organizations, who in turn advocate for changes and updates to legislation based on this information. In addition, the model provides a way for smaller organizations, especially local advocacy groups (who often have very few staff and resources), to be able to have input into the process.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following suggestions include items that came directly from the in depth interviews we conducted, and through sketching out the function of the current model and uncovering areas for greater effectiveness.

State level organizations do engage directly with local community organizations and partners, but this engagement is often infrequent and not an open line of communication. This type of engagement, typically through a mechanism like a community listening session, is generally conducted around a specific issue or piece of legislation. Several interviews suggested that state level organizations invest more into this direct engagement with community organizations, whether it be mediated through regional hubs or a direct line of communication. Considering the limited capacity of organizations at each level and their specific roles, expanding the communication and collaboration between each level would help all organizations be better informed and aligned on policy goals and advocacy work.

While there is some crossover between state level and regional hubs, the majority of regional hubs are responsible for maintaining local organization relationships. These hubs also hold regional data. Throughout the state, there are only a handful of these types of organizations. Often they represent very large areas within the state, which tend to have a variety of interests and educational issues. Increasing the capacity of these regional hubs and funding new regional hubs and partnerships in underrepresented areas of the state, would increase efficiency in the current model. Increasing the capacity of regional hubs could also improve the function of local organizations, through funding and other mechanisms.

PROMISING PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

In the following section we highlight several promising programs and initiatives that help promote equity in higher education throughout the state. This is not an exhaustive list, but a sample of the different impactful programs and initiatives that work in this space. Due to our center's proximity and partnerships, we have done a deep dive in the Inland Empire region on organization's that impact equity in higher education. In future research we hope to lift up more community organizations in other regions of the state, doing this important work.

North State Together

North State Together is a great example of a regional hub network, based in Northern California. They are a regional network of cross-sector partners working to strengthen educational outcomes from cradle to career for all students in Northern California. They cover a 5 county region in Northern California, with communities that face barriers like poverty and a lack of infrastructure. North State Together

also provides important regional data that is used by local and state advocates.

Central Valley Higher Education Consortium

The Central Valley Higher Education Consortium is a 29-member consortium, based in the Central Valley region. The Central Valley has been leading the state as a region taking on difficult and complex initiatives, including piloting the Guided Pathways program and the California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI). The Central Valley Higher Education Consortium (CVHEC) speaks on policy issues that affect their region. The organization also serves as a regional hub for education data. An important goal of the consortium is to increase Central Valley's certificate and degree attainment rates. CVHEC is often described as a regional convener on post-secondary equitable work.

UNITE- LA

UNITE-LA is a nonprofit organization, based in the Los Angeles region, that works on education policy, promotes business-education partnerships, and provides workforce development opportunities for underserved youth. UNITE-LA's mission is to ensure the continuous improvement of effective and aligned cradle-to-career public education and workforce development systems in Los Angeles, resulting in all children and youth having access to a high-quality education. UNITE-LA is an important regional partner, promoting equity in higher education.

Growing Inland Achievement (GIA) - Action Network Teams (ANTs)

Growing Inland Achievement (GIA) is a regional, collective impact organization that works to achieve educational and economic equity in the Inland Empire region. GIA's Action Network Teams (ANTs) are an essential component of GIA's collective impact model. ANTs bring together community leaders that combine expertise to work toward a vision of student success. ANTs are composed of staff and faculty from regional K-12 districts, community colleges, four-year colleges, nonprofit organizations, government, and other leaders in education management. This network of practitioners and experts collaborate to guide regional initiatives and craft tactical plans that will help student populations in the Inland Empire. GIA's Action Network Teams are a great example of collective impact work promoting equity in higher education at the regional level.

Inland Empire Higher Education Engagement Hub via The Campaign for College Opportunity

The Inland Empire Higher Education Engagement Hub is a group of education advocates who work directly with or on behalf of students and institutions of higher education in the Inland Empire region. The hub was convened via the Campaign for College Opportunity, a state-level education advocacy organization. The CCO conducts listening sessions throughout the state on various topics and policies, and these types of regional partnerships are essential for policy implementation feedback and gathering data on local barriers to education equity. The broad purpose of the hub is to ensure campuses support Californians on their paths to and through college.

Inland Empire/Desert Colleges Regional Consortium

The Inland Empire/Desert Regional Consortium (IE-DRC) serves as a regional framework to communicate, coordinate, collaborate, promote and plan career and technical education and workforce and economic development in the Inland Empire/Desert region. The region includes nine community college districts comprising 12 community colleges, two county offices of education, 56 public school districts, four regional occupational centers/programs, and more than 50 charter schools. The consortium represents the regional community college system, which provides regional workforce development programs, and aiding in transfers to 4-year colleges and universities.

Inland Adult Education Consortium

Adult education is often overlooked in the conversations surrounding education equity. Recently, more education equity advocates have been lifting up the voices and challenges that adult learners face. Adult learners are typically classified as older students who typically do not enter postsecondary education the same year they graduate high school. Adult learning is very common in the United States, and these students may sometimes be called non-traditional students in some colleges or universities.

The Inland Adult Education Consortium helps adults in the San Bernardino region learn academic and employment skills that are needed to improve their job opportunities and to set new career goals. The consortium comprises a network of community colleges, school districts, adult schools, adult education community providers, and workforce development and social services partners. Their primary goal is to connect adults to educational programs that empower them to overcome past challenges, gain in-demand skills, and increase their earning capacity, ultimately contributing to the general economic health of the region.

OneFuture Coachella Valley

OneFuture Coachella Valley is a 501c3 organization, based in the Coachella Valley. They partner with the valley's three K-12 school districts, local colleges, nonprofits, cities, and businesses to provide students with meaningful career explorations, work experience, and scholarships, as well as other college success support. Since 2009, OneFuture Coachella Valley and its nonprofit partners have awarded more than \$16 million in scholarships to 2,600 students from the Coachella Valley. Key to their success is the partnership and engagement from the region's employers, ensuring student preparation is aligned with the local workforce needs.

Intercollegiate Council of the Inland Empire (ICCIE)

The Intercollegiate Council of the Inland Empire (ICCIE) is a region-wide effort to unify the student leaders and recent alumni of the IE's Colleges and Universities by establishing a robust network that aims to meet regularly to discuss challenges, share resources, collaborate on initiatives, identify solutions and actively engage with stakeholders to pursue a systems change agenda that would advance a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable region that retains the IE's talent.

Parents and Communities Engaged in Education (P-CEE) via Congregations Organized for Prophetic Change (COPE)

Parents and Communities Engaged in Education (P-CEE) is a project of Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE) that organizes parents and community stakeholders to become effective education advocacy leaders who create meaningful change in schools throughout the Inland Valley region. Parents and community members are invited to become leaders in P-CEE. They serve on steering committees to help shape and develop various advocacy campaigns. P-CEE Leaders also participate in monthly leadership training to develop their skills in public speaking, data and policy analysis, and community mobilization. Parent and community leaders often represent the concerns of other parents in various public meetings and decision-making tables. P-CEE tackles issues like equity in school funding, school discipline reform, and closing the achievement gap for students of color, just to name a few. The work of P-CEE has already led to district-wide investments to strengthen academic achievement among African American students.

BLU Educational Foundation - College & Career Access Programs

BLU Educational Foundation is a community organization based in the Inland Empire that provides educational and human services programming to youth, adults and

organizations, with a mission to build healthy productive communities. Their initiatives focus on education, health & wellness, civic engagement, leadership development, advocacy, and the Arts. Additionally, BLU convenes groups around issues impacting communities of color. BLU has a number of programs and initiatives aimed at addressing the problem of low college attendance among students with limited income and opportunities. For example, BLU's Black Educator Pipeline is a pathway program designed to support, guide, and mentor Black students in their journey to become an educator, with a focus on changing the narrative surrounding the educational field and increasing awareness about opportunities for Black educators. BLU also hosts a number of scholarship and internship opportunities, including the College Exodus Project (CEP).

Black Equity Initiative (BEI) & Inland Empire Black Education Agenda

The Inland Empire Black Education Agenda report is a collaborative effort led by BLU Educational Foundation, in partnership with the Center for Social Innovation at the University of California, Riverside, and the Inland Empire Black Equity Initiative. This report uses a mixed methods approach with quantitative data analysis and in-depth qualitative interviews with Black students and their parents/guardians in the Inland Empire. The report flags several policy options and recommendations, including Black student leadership development. Local efforts like Youth Mentoring Action Network's Black Girls (EM) Power Program help to support the next generation of Black leaders, educators, and equity advocates. SBX Youth & Family Services also works in this space focusing on mentoring, education, and community organizing in the region.

POLICY OPTIONS

The following section includes different policy options that would promote greater equity in higher education in California.

UPDATING THE MASTER PLAN GOALS

The state of California has not updated its higher education system goals in almost 60 years. With rapid technological and workforce changes and uncertainty surrounding the global pandemic, it is essential that the Master Plan be updated and consistent with these new changes and challenges. While there has been some progress, setting new and measurable goals is necessary to better promote educational equity and for the future of the state as a whole.

BETTER INSTITUTIONAL DATA

Fully disaggregating data helps to expose hidden trends, it can enable the identification of underrepresented populations, or it can help establish the scope of

existing issues and can make underrepresented groups more visible to decision makers. In terms of higher education, disaggregating student data into subpopulations can help colleges and universities create and plan appropriate and targeted programs, decide which evidence-based interventions to use, direct resources where they are needed most, and uncover important trends in student outcomes and achievement. Better data also helps education equity advocates highlight regional inequities and come up with solutions to address those inequities.

Currently, the state of California is working to develop a statewide longitudinal data system for students called the Cradle-to-Career Data System. Ideally, this system will help policymakers better understand the educational pipeline and the real impact of education on future work and income. In addition, data tools will be available for parents, students, researchers, advocates, educators, and policy makers. An important by-product of this system could be stronger collaboration and partnership between educational institutions across the state as they share data more freely.

FURTHER EXPANDING COLLEGE ACCESS

With the implementation of Common Core State Standards in California's K-12 system, along with recent college readiness legislation (AB 705/ EO 1110), there may be an increase in the number of high school graduates ready for college coursework. The college system in California will need to be ready to accommodate this influx of students. This also means expanding access to four-year colleges. The current economy and the composition of good jobs necessitate more highly educated workers than in the past. Expanding access to both UCs and CSUs for high school graduates would improve the pipeline between high schools and the colleges in the state. Importantly, improving transfer rates from community colleges to four year institutions would increase access among historically underrepresented groups in the state.

INCREASING FUNDING FOR STUDENT COUNSELING, COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNSELORS, NON-ACADEMIC COUNSELING AND OTHER RELATED STUDENT-SPECIFIC SUPPORTS

Counseling is an increasingly important component of the student success story. This could include topics like financial planning, how to manage a schedule, but also how to access basic support services such as housing or food assistance. Particularly at the community college level, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated already existing housing and food insecurity and having counselors who could help students navigate various

systems and programs that existed could have gone a long way toward providing a more stable learning environment.

There is an urgent need to increase all levels of college and career counseling, i.e., at both the 2- and 4-year levels. The idea is to provide sufficient support to be able to keep students on track toward graduation (i.e., address time to completion goals), but also provide support in the transfer process from a 2- to a 4-year institution. In particular, there is an acute need for community college counselors; a 2021 CalMatters article noted that the average counselor to student ratio in 2017 was 1 counselor for every 563 students, with the most disparate ratio being closer to 1 counselor for every 1,500 students.¹⁹ Because these advisors can play key roles in helping students understand the process needed for transfer early on in the student's academic career, these positions can play crucial roles in supporting student transfer and success.

IMPROVING COLLEGE COMPLETION RATES

While access is essential, improving college completion rates is just as important. One strategy is to shorten the time it takes a student to graduate. Recently, both UCs and CSUs have taken steps to expedite the process of graduation, and better inform students what they need to do to graduate on time. In addition, expanding financial aid to cover more costs for students could also help students with transferring and ultimately graduating with a degree.

PROMOTING AND INCREASING EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Over the past decade there has been an important shift in the racial and ethnic demographics that make up the United States. This trend exists in California as well, which has seen an increase in racial and ethnic diversity. As this shift continues, colleges and universities in California need to prepare for a more diverse student body. Diversity brings with it a number of educational benefits, including improved racial and cultural awareness, enhanced critical thinking, higher levels of service to the community, and a more educated citizenry, just to name a few.²⁰

Both equity and inclusion are essential for delivering California's promise of higher education for all. This means supporting and lifting up historically underrepresented and marginalized populations on campuses. Inclusion means that all students have a valued voice, can see themselves represented in both leadership and curriculum, and know that they belong and are valued at their educational institution. In terms of equity, this means parity in educational

outcomes regardless of a student's ethnicity or race, or intersectionality.

In terms of policy options, some specific actions that would encourage and promote equity and diversity in higher education in California include:

1. Improving college preparation - "promise programs", HS counselors providing up to date and accurate information, etc.
2. Monitoring the effect of recently implemented reforms and regulations - Efforts, including remediation reform (fully implemented in fall 2019 at CCC and fall 2018 at CSU) and several initiatives (the Associate Degree for Transfer, Guided Pathways, and the California Community Colleges' Vision for Success) are promising.
3. Addressing the total financial burden of college - Addressing the total cost of college for community college students as well as initiatives to address student hunger and housing insecurity could help low-income students focus more fully on academic achievement.

INVESTING MORE IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Public higher education in California and throughout the United States is becoming increasingly important when considering trends in the workforce, the future of work (automation, more remote work), and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that we still have not fully understood. As a response to some of these recent challenges, last year Governor Newsom signed a historic \$47.1 billion dollar higher education package aimed at closing equity gaps and increasing opportunities for disadvantaged students.²¹ While this investment will most certainly have a positive impact, more work is still needed. For example, if some funding were linked to clear goals and student outcomes, rather than enrollment targets and previous year's expenditures it may facilitate more equitable outcomes for students. A similar funding model is about to be implemented at the community college level called the Student Centered Funding Formula.²² This new formula would tie state allocations to student outcomes, enrollment, and student demographics.

On the education advocacy side, investing more in local community organizations and regional hub networks doing education equity work would strengthen the advocacy system in the state and help to facilitate greater feedback from local communities about legislation implementation and other challenges to education equity certain groups face.

EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY

With the rising costs of housing, transportation, and educational materials, students still must cover significant costs even if they have financial aid that pays their tuition. Part of cost reduction could be expanding grant aid to include costs of housing and books, which could help students who may not be able to afford to enroll and complete college. Expanding aid would also help reduce loans and student debt, an increasingly salient issue.

During economic downturns, many colleges and universities may be more reliant on students from outside states and countries to generate revenue and cover costs. Creating a dedicated state funding stream for higher education in California could help bring down costs and make higher education institutions more resilient during times of economic uncertainty.

ALIGNING WITH CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE NEEDS

Better aligning the education-to-employment pipeline could help drive both inclusive economic recovery and future resiliency in the state. It is important that the state's higher education system meet the needs of the economy. Students also want to know that if they invest time and money into their education that it will ultimately lead them to stable, well-paying jobs. When higher education and workforce needs are aligned, workers get better paying jobs, employers get qualified candidates, and the state further builds a skilled and diverse workforce, helping to drive an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery.

STRENGTHENING CAREER EDUCATION AND PIPELINES

Career education and pipelines help students develop the skills that they will need to explore potential career paths. These types of programs and certifications often include some kind of hands-on learning to master a craft. Career education can provide students with the skills, knowledge, and encouragement they need to get the most out of their desired career path. Importantly, students should make well-informed decisions about their choices, rooted in data and collaboration. For example, the Community College Chancellor's office offers various online tools that highlight the earnings potential of different career education options. To further strengthen these programs and pipelines, education institutions can collaborate with entities like local employers, industry groups, and workforce agencies to ensure these efforts lead to well-paying jobs.

Having a clear career pathway is helpful, especially for non-traditional student groups. For example, the Guided Pathways program is intended to give students clearer

ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2020/11/18/uc-berkeley-strips-the-names-of-professors-with-racist-views-off-3-buildings>
- 2 <https://news.berkeley.edu/2020/11/18/uc-berkeleys-leconte-and-barrows-halls-lose-their-names/>
- 3 California State Department of Education (1960). A Master Plan for Higher Education in California: 1960-1975. Chapter IV - Students: The Problem of Numbers, p. 46. Retrieved: 02-15-2022.
- 4 <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu>
- 5 <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/board-of-trustees>
- 6 More information on CCC: <https://foundationccc.org/About-Us/About-the-Colleges/Facts-and-Figures>
- 7 <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Board-of-Governors>
- 8 More on CDE and equity: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/qs/ea/>
- 9 More on SB 2: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=2019202005B2
- 10 More on AB 99: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billAnalysisClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB99
- 11 More on AB 132: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2021/07/27/governor-newsom-signs-legislation-to-make-college-more-affordable-and-accessible-in-california/>
- 12 More on AB 1456: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/AB-1456-1082021.pdf>
- 13 It is important to note that there are gaps in the data due to data suppression by the state.
- 14 The absolute peak for both overall admissions numbers and Hispanic/Latino admissions was in 2017, with an observed decrease in both overall admissions numbers and Hispanic/Latino admissions numbers in subsequent years. Absolute admission numbers for all other reported racial groups either decreased slightly or remained about the same over this same time period.
- 15 "White" is the White/Non-Hispanic category
- 16 More information: <https://www.csum.edu/marine-programs/index.html>
- 17 For more information: <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2021/07/26/u-california-admits-more-diverse-freshman-class-without-sats>
- 18 2018 Tufts study: <https://now.tufts.edu/news-releases/exclusive-analysis-college-student-voting-doubled-2018>
- 19 CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org/education/higher-education/2021/08/california-community-college-transfers-uc-cal-state/>
- 20 https://web.stanford.edu/~hakuta/www/policy/racial_dynamics/Chapter5.pdf
- 21 Higher Education Bill: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2021/10/06/governor-newsom-signs-college-affordability-and-accessibility-legislation-highlights-47-1-billion-higher-education-package/>
- 22 More on the Student Centered Funding Formula: <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/College-Finance-and-Facilities-Planning/Student-Centered-Funding-Formula>
- 23 Legislative Analysis of AB 516: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB516

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The Center for Social Innovation at UC Riverside provides a credible research voice that spurs civic leadership and policy innovation. We also aim to integrate researchers, community organizations, and civic stakeholders in collaborative projects and long-term partnerships that strengthen inclusion, sustainability, and equity. Importantly, the Center seeks to shift away from a “problem” narrative to an “opportunity” narrative for marginalized communities and localities.

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We alone remain responsible for the analysis and claims made in this report.

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