



INSTITUTE
FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION
LEADERSHIP
& POLICY

Accountability: Trends and Issues



Nancy Shulock

Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy

Sacramento State University

www.csus.edu/ihelp

NGA Policy Academy

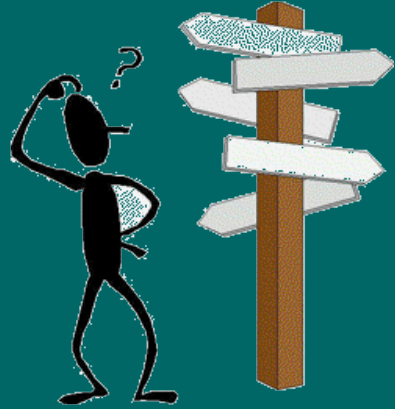
Atlanta, Georgia

November 17, 2011



Topics

- Why the shift toward new kinds of metrics
- Defining and demonstrating key terms
- Choosing the right metrics



Traditional Measures Insufficient

- Not helping institutions know how to improve
 - Who gets stuck where and why?
 - Final outcomes data – too late
- Not helping policymakers
 - Not linked to policy agendas and choices
 - Not reflective of mission differences
- Not addressing current reality – productivity
 - Outputs without regard to inputs (especially \$\$)
 - Volume independent of rates

Defining Terms: Outcomes (NGA)

- Degrees and Certificates
 - Which certificates to count?
- Graduation rates
 - Denominator?
- Completion rates (combines types of completion)
 - Denominator?
- Transfer rates
 - Numerator: unit threshold?
 - Denominator?

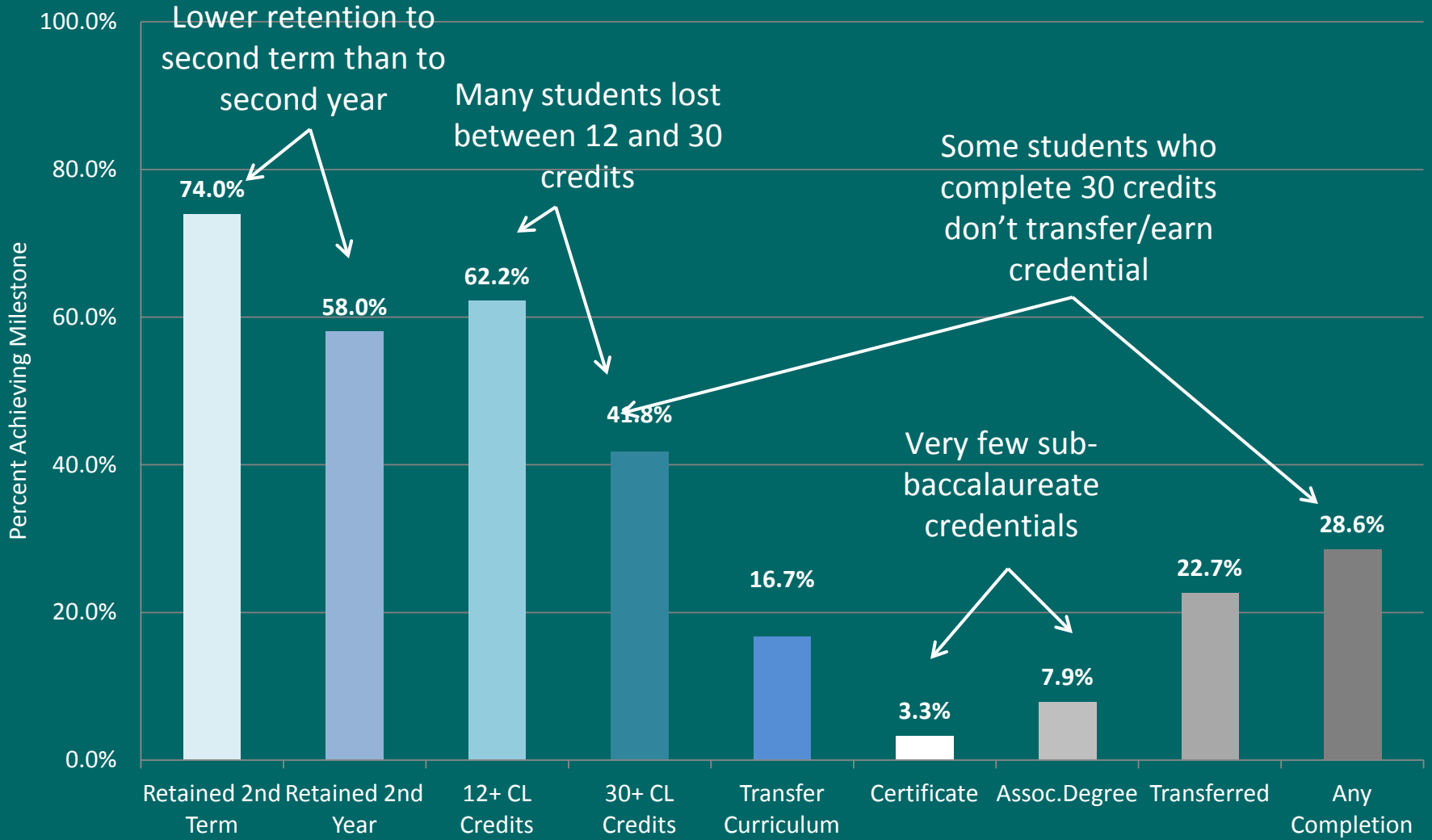
Defining Terms: Intermediate Outcomes

- Milestones (ATD, A2S, CCA,...)
 - *measurable, intermediate educational achievements that students reach along the path to degree completion*
- Why monitor milestones?
 - To better understand the problem
 - Identify where student progress stalls
 - Disaggregate by groups to show different patterns
 - Highlight achievements short of completion
 - Use milestone achievement in funding models

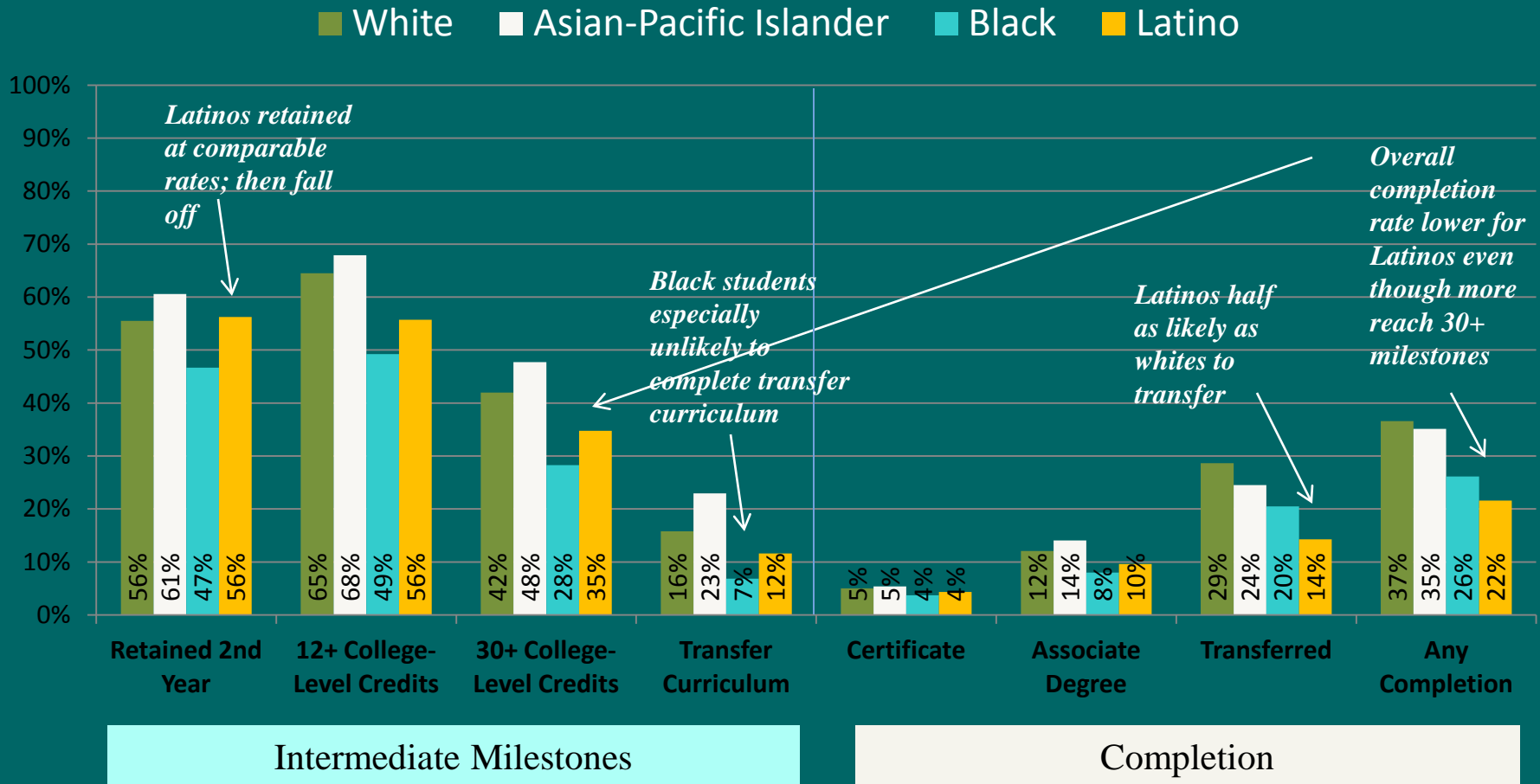
Defining Terms: Success Indicators/Leading Indicators

- Milestones – to better understand the problem
 - *measurable, intermediate educational achievements that students reach along the path to degree completion*
- Success Indicators – to point to solutions
 - *academic patterns that predict the likelihood that students will reach milestones*

Milestones Point to Where Student Progress Stalls



Latino and Black Students Less Likely than White and Asian Students to Reach Milestones

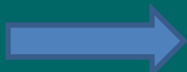
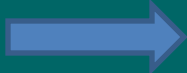
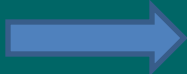
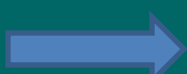
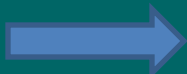
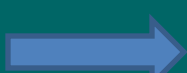


Note: students can be double-counted in the certificate, associate degree, and transfer measures

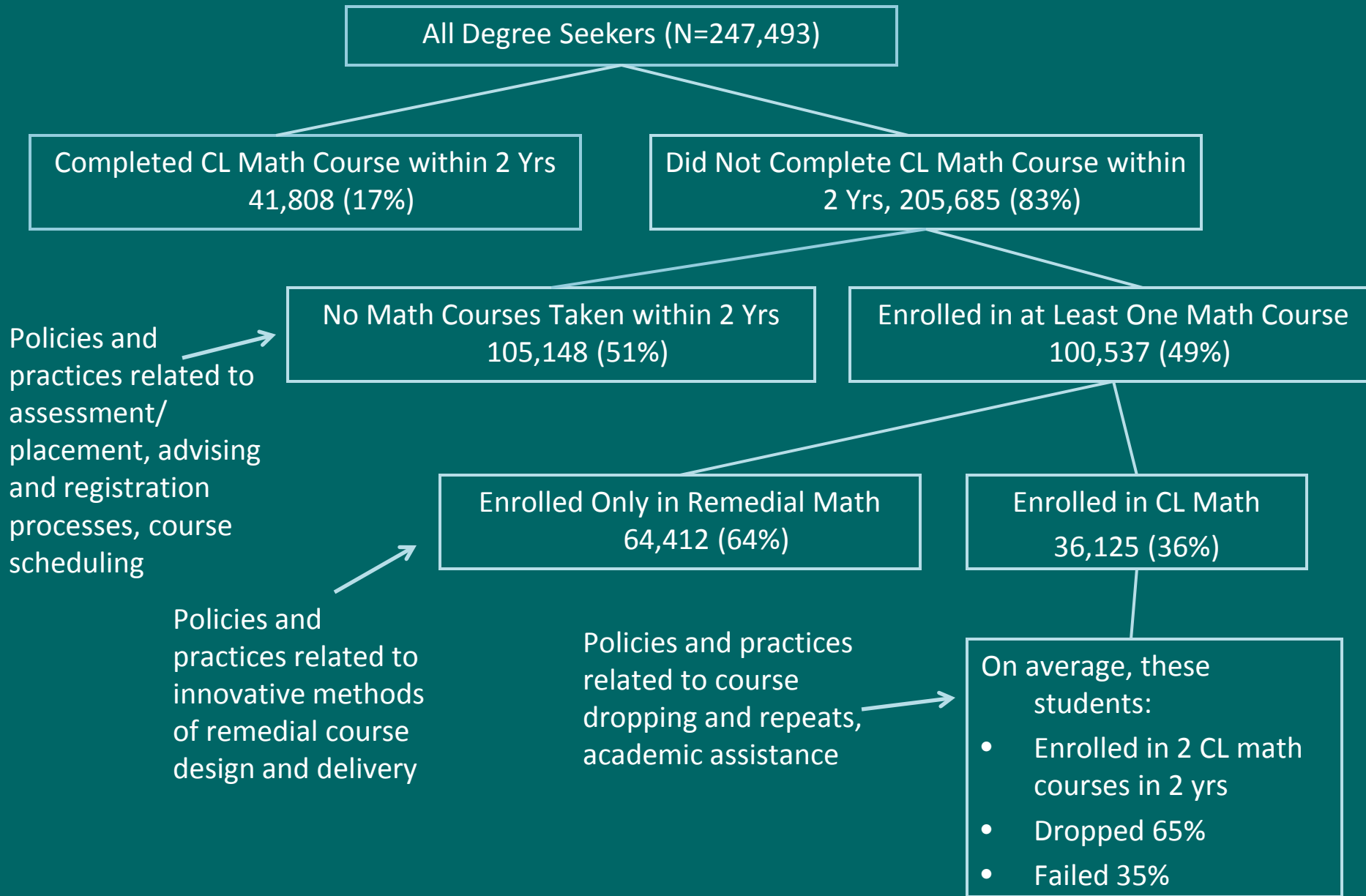
Success Indicators/Leading Indicators Validated through Research

- Accumulate credit early, e.g., 20+ in first year
- Pass college English/math within 2 years
- Attend full-time (or close to it)
- Take “college success” course
- Enroll continuously (don’t stop out and restart)
- Earn summer credits
- Few course withdrawals
- On-time registration

Value in Monitoring Patterns (Success Indicators) as Well as Progression (Milestones)

- Passed college-level English within 2 years?
 - Yes  50% completed
 - No  20% completed
- Passed college-level math within 2 years?
 - Yes  55% completed
 - No  21% completed
- Accumulated at least 20 credits in first year?
 - Yes  59% completed
 - No  21% completed

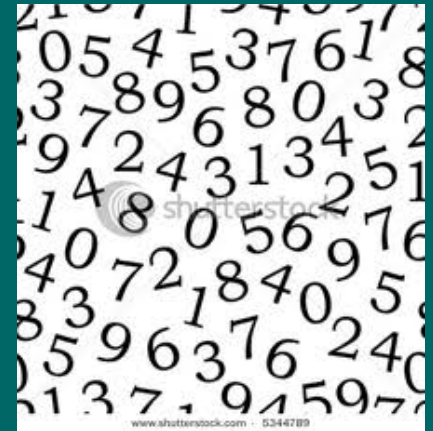
Why Aren't the Better Patterns Followed?



Choosing the Right Metrics

Four Considerations

- State goals
- State policy context
- Different audiences
- Data systems capability



Align Metrics with State Goals

State Goal:	Relevant Intermediate Outcomes:
Increase reliance on two-year sector for bachelors degree production	Transfer with/without transfer curriculum completed; completion of lower division general education
Increase employability of under-educated adult population	Skill gains in adult basic education; completion of one-year's worth of credit + credential
Revamping economy toward high-skill, knowledge-based industries	Completion of gateway math; transfer in STEM fields; major declaration by field
Reduce racial/ethnic performance gaps	Progress through developmental education and into college-level, by subgroup
Improve use of private postsecondary capacity	Destination of transfers, by subgroup

State Policy Context Affects Metrics

- Is transfer aligned with associate degrees?
- Is adult basic education provided by community colleges?
- Are incoming students required to be assessed for college readiness?
- Do universities have the same college readiness standard?
- Do universities offer applied baccalaureates?
- Are short-term certificates “stackable”?

Different Audience have Different Uses for Outcomes Metrics

Actor	Principal Interest	Type of Measure	Primary Use
Institutional leaders	Where is student progress stalling and how can campus practices be changed to improve success?	Milestones and success indicators	Institutional improvement
Postsecondary system leaders	How can the system's institutions collectively deliver the results that the state wants and needs?	Milestones and success indicators	Institutional improvement State accountability State and system policy
State-level policymakers	How well are the state's investments and policy design delivering the results that the state needs?	Milestones	State policy Productivity

Data Capacity Issues

- Start with goals and questions to be answered
- Cohort tracking – important for relating outcomes to interventions
- Student-level transcript data
- Disaggregated data
 - College ready vs need remediation
 - Demographics
 - Full-time/part-time
- Track students across institutions and into workforce

Summary

- Lots of different metrics but all about:
 - Outcomes – final and intermediate
 - Behaviors and patterns that predict achievement of outcomes
 - Diagnose problems/barriers of policy and practice
- Different audiences need different data
 - State policy – don't overburden
 - Institutional effectiveness – don't under-supply



INSTITUTE
FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION
LEADERSHIP
& POLICY

IHELP Contact Information

Relevant Reports:

- *Divided We Fail: Improving Completion and Closing Racial Gaps in California's Community Colleges*, October 2010
- *Taking the Next Step: The Promise of Intermediate Measures for Meeting Postsecondary Completion Goals*, September 2010
- *Advancing by Degrees: A Framework for Increasing College Completion*, April 2010
- *Steps to Success: Analyzing Milestone Achievement to Improve Community College Student Outcomes*, October 2009
- *Student Flow Analysis: CSU Student Progress Toward Graduation*, September 2009

Reports and presentations: www.csus.edu/ihelp

(916) 278-3888; ihelp@csus.edu; nshulock@csus.edu