# Community College Student Success: Challenges and New Priorities

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CA Collaborative on District Reform

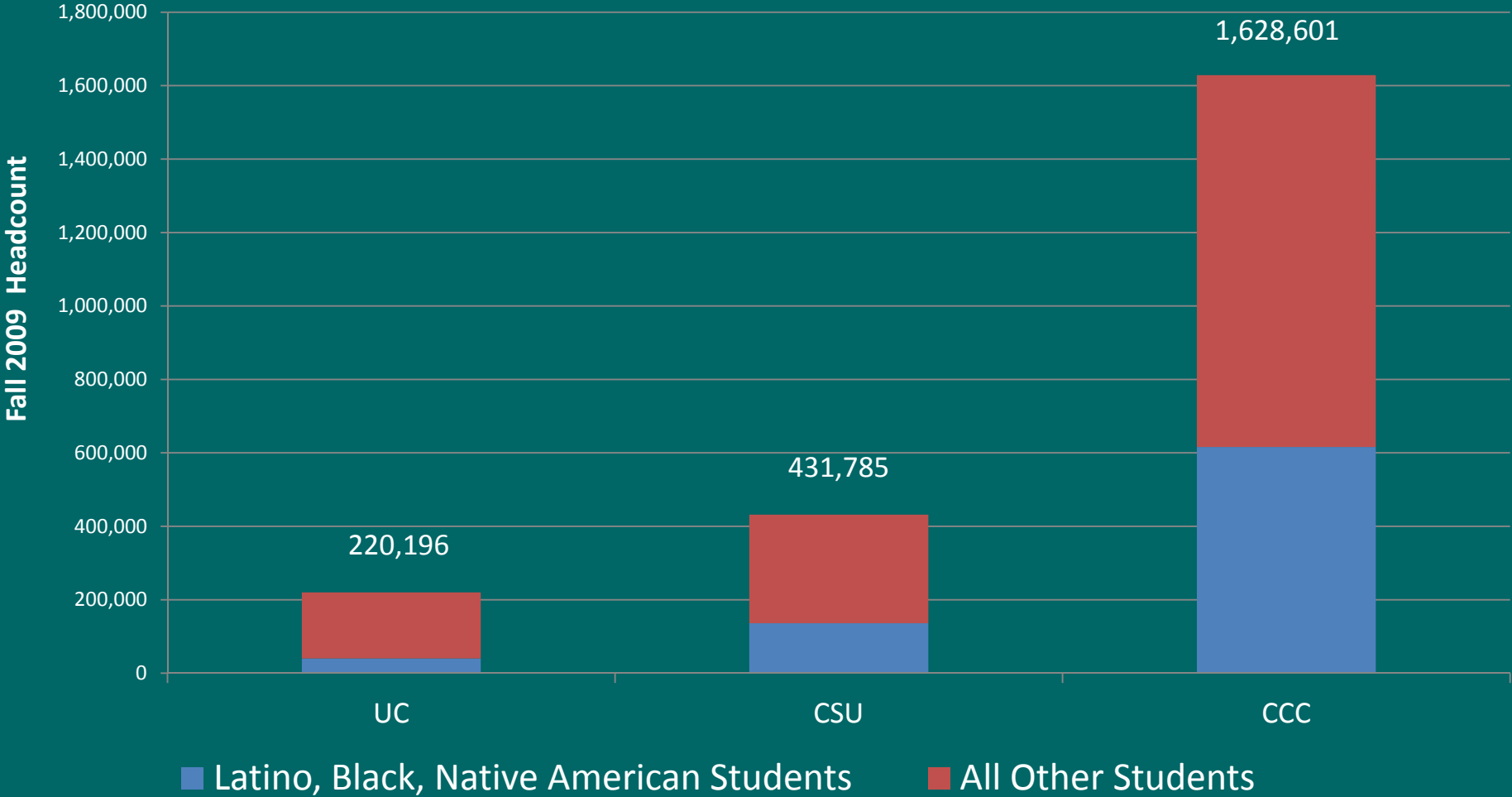Menlo Park

March 26, 2012

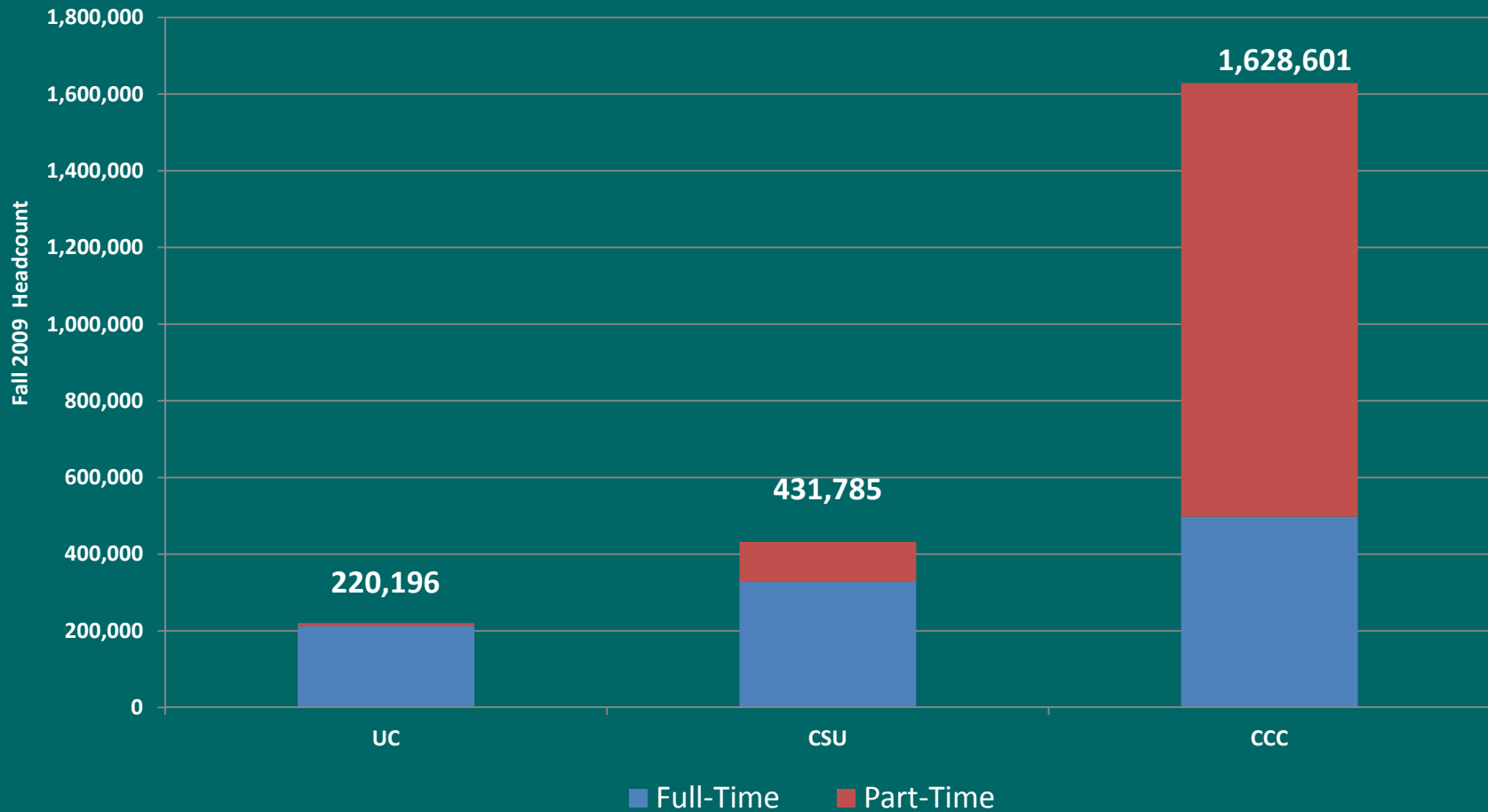# California Community Colleges: Governance, Size, Mission

- 112 colleges in 72 independent districts
- State Chancellor's Office with limited authority
- Highly regulated; highly politicized stakeholders
- 2.9 million students per year – open enrollment
  - Part-time, underprepared (~80%), first generation
  - Low-income
  - Most work – more than 20 hours/week
- Serves large portion of undergraduates
  - US average: 41%
  - CA: 66%
- Multiple missions:  ~ 65% credential-seeking

# Community Colleges Enroll Most Undergraduates – and Large Portion of Latino and Black Populations

**Distribution of Minority Students in UC, CSU, CCC**



Fall 2009 Headcount

| | UC | CSU | CCC |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 220,196 | 431,785 | 1,628,601 |

Legend: ■ Latino, Black, Native American Students    ■ All Other Students

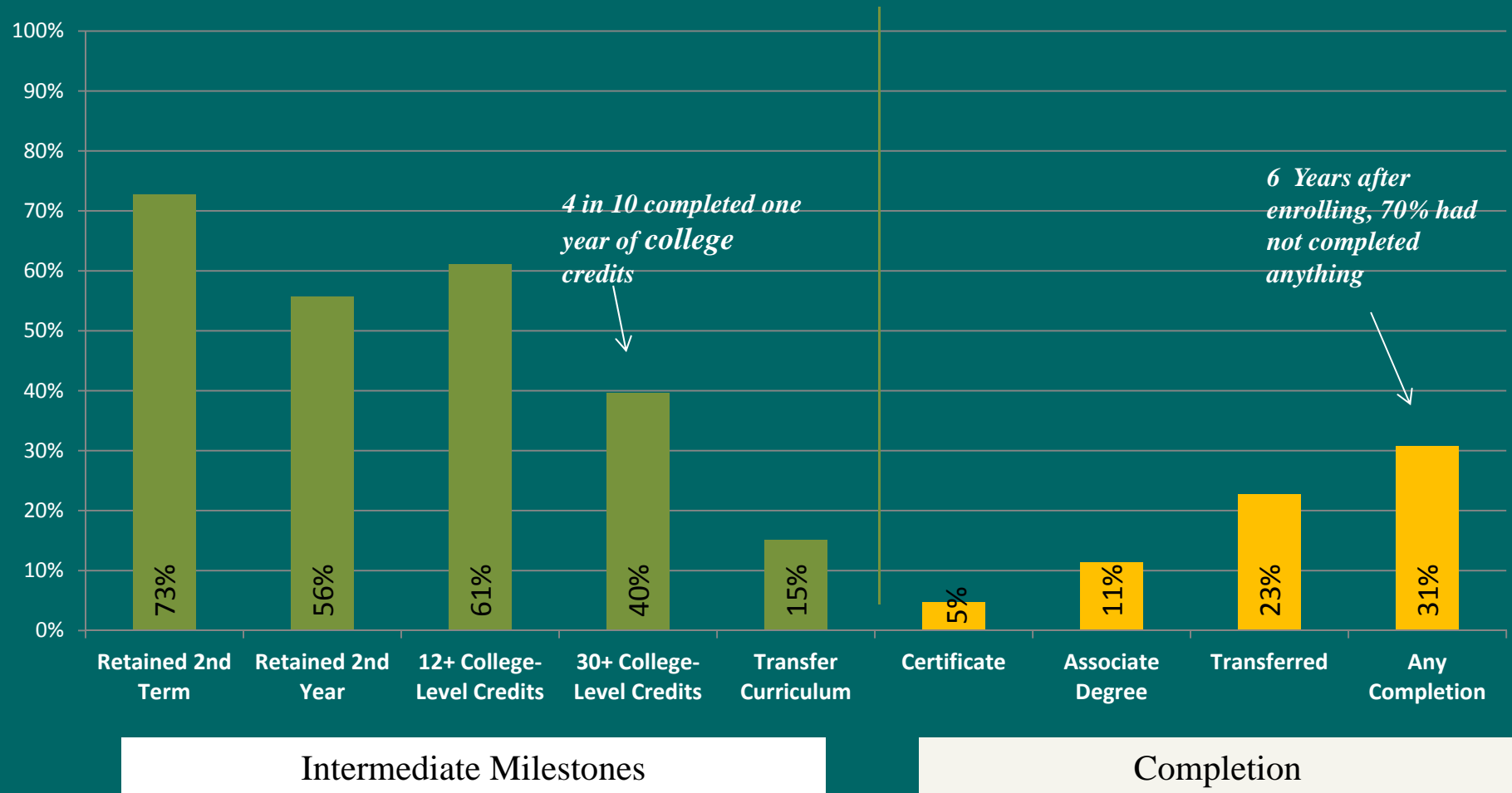Full-time and Part-time Enrollments
UC, CSU, CCC

# Completion Challenge
# for Community Colleges



- Challenging populations
- Low resources (serve the most; funded the least)
- A policy environment dominated by access focus
- CC culture of exploration – not best for today's students, who need more structure/guidance
- Course-based, not program-based management
- Policy change impeded by local control, weak system office

# Rate at Which Students Reach Milestones on the Road to Degree Completion

## Binder: *Divided We Fail*

*4 in 10 completed one year of college credits*

*6 Years after enrolling, 70% had not completed anything*

| Retained 2nd Term | Retained 2nd Year | 12+ College-Level Credits | 30+ College-Level Credits | Transfer Curriculum | Certificate | Associate Degree | Transferred | Any Completion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 73% | 56% | 61% | 40% | 15% | 5% | 11% | 23% | 31% |

**Intermediate Milestones** — **Completion**

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

# Some Enrollment Patterns Correlate Highly with Success but Few Students Follow Them

| Pattern | Completion Rate | | % Following Pattern |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Pattern Followed | Pattern Not Followed | |
| Pass college math w/in 2 years | 61% | 22% | 29% |
| Accumulate 20+ credits in year 1 | 58% | 19% | 25% |
| Pass college English w/in 2 years | 51% | 21% | 36% |
| Earn credits in summer terms | 45% | 15% | 45% |
| Complete 80%+ of credits | 39% | 15% | 66% |
| Attend full time (in first term) | 39% | 21% | 42% |
| Enroll continuously | 36% | 29% | 39% |
| Take college success course | 35% | 27% | 19% |
| Register on time for 80%+ of courses | 32% | 24% | 56% |

## College Readiness – Policies

- Every college has its own assessments – lax enforcement
- Placement is advisory only
- Orientation not mandatory
- Education plans not emphasized
- Remedial coursework often delayed
- Few prerequisites for college level courses

## Less Work/More School – Policies

- Fiction of low fees = affordability
- Few students seeking federal aid (Pell grants)
- Low application for Cal Grants
- No policies or messaging to encourage full-time

## Program Pathways - Policies

- Minimal counseling or educational planning
- Emphasis on courses – not programs – no majors declared
  - Binder: *Sense of Direction*
- Weak emphasis on credentials (transfer or career)

## Intensive Student Support – Policies

- 50% law  - limits spending on student support
- Optional: orientation, student success courses, counseling
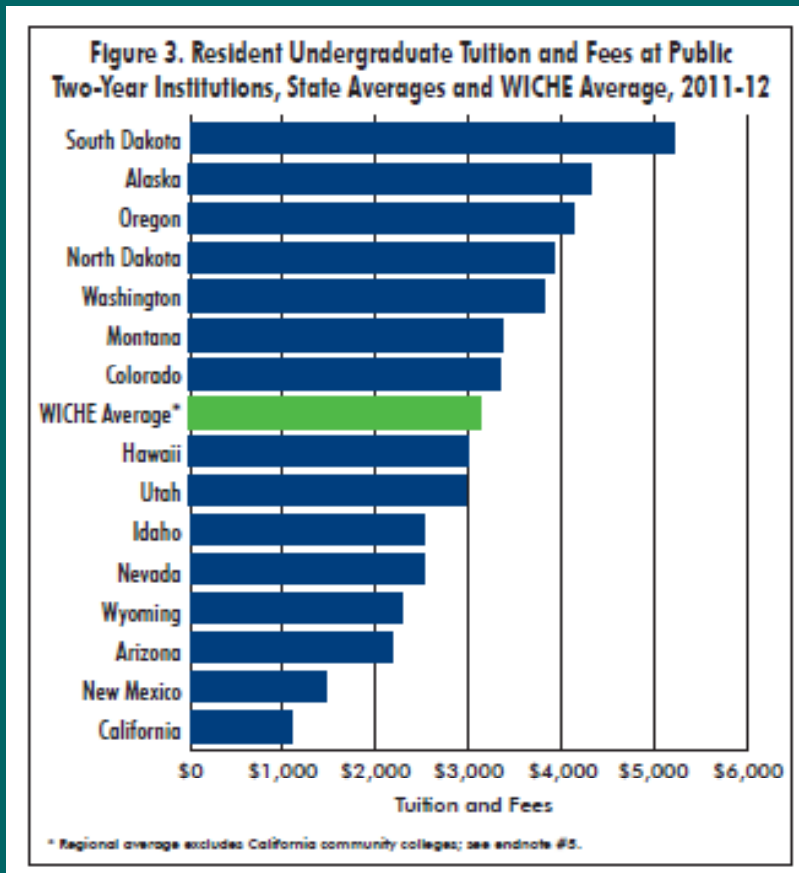- Student services outside the "core" - categoricals

## Use of Data- Policies

- No monitoring of students with <12 units
- No breakdowns by race/ethnicity
- No data on outcomes by program

## Resources– Policies

- No fiscal incentives for completion
- Excessive regulations, categoricals, reporting
- Restrictions on hiring
- Fee waivers without conditions
- Subsidy for high-income, personal enrichment
- Low fees – main factor in low funding per student

# CCC Tuition Lowest in West (and US)



Figure 3. Resident Undergraduate Tuition and Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions, State Averages and WICHE Average, 2011-12

- CCC tuition: about one-third of national average
- Tuition/fee revenue as percent of total revenue: about one-third of national average
  - CCC – about 6%
  - National Avg. – about 19%

# Transfer Challenges – (addressed by SB 1440)

### CA relies on transfer more than other states

- **What is the problem?**
  - Excess units – that don't count
  - "Transfer" doesn't mean junior status
    - Only 43% of transfers complete 60 units
  - Growing number of transfers to for-profits
    - 19% of black transfers; 16% of Latino transfers
  - Only 27% earn associate degree prior to transfer
- **Why?**
  - Misalignment with associate degree
  - Hugely complex system – not student-centered
  - No statewide general education pattern
  - No consistency in lower division major prerequisites set by UC and CSU campuses

# Career Technical Education

**Binder: *Road Less Traveled; Career Opportunities***

- Marginalized from core academic program
- Credentials not valued – relatively few awarded
- No provision for high cost/high need
- Poor pathways from high school
- Excessive program offerings – most have few students and few completions
  - Systemwide: 12,500 local programs in 142 fields
  - Average per college: 113 programs in 25 fields
  - 7% of fields enroll 50% of enrollment
  - 6% of fields produce 50% of completions
- Variability in similar programs devalues credentials

# Abundance of Short-term Certificates of Questionable Value

- Two-thirds of programs are short-term certificates of less than one-year (30 units)
- Reported completions:

| | |
|---|---|
| Associate Degrees (voc) | 40% |
| Certificates 30+ credits | 19% |
| Certificates < 30 credits | 41% |

- Research on short-term certificates
  - Limited value as only credential
- Can serve as building blocks – "stacked"
- Potential to align with industry-recognized certification

# Chancellor's Office Role for CTE Needs Enhancement

- Largely compliance and grant administration
- Opportunity for strategic leadership to:
  - Promote coherent sector strategies
  - Leverage and maximize available grant funding
  - Establish skill and competency standards
  - Ensure access to quality labor market data
  - Expedite program approval/sharing; minimize program duplication
  - Lead transition from course-based to program-based CTE
  - Develop robust accountability
- Reliance on lead campuses
  - Responsibility exceeds authority
  - Potential conflict of interest

# Accountability for CTE Outcomes is Inadequate



- No *program* data
  - Students do not enroll *in programs* (a few exceptions)
  - Course outcomes ≠ program outcomes
- No *systematic* link to labor market outcomes
- State accountability reporting (ARCC)
  - Annual counts of activities and enrollments
  - Aggregate credentials and earnings (not by program)
- Ineffective program review and discontinuation policies

# New Policy Directions for Student Success

| Elements of Success From Research Findings | Student Success Task Force Recommendations Adopted by Board of Governors |
|---|---|
| College readiness | • Collaborate with K-12 on common standards<br>• Mandatory assessment/common assessment<br>• Mandatory orientation<br>• Require first year start of needed basic skills<br>• Support innovative basic skills curriculum |
| Less work/more school | • Provide information on full-time financial aid |
| Clear goals/pathways | • Require educational plan<br>• Require declaration of program of study - early |
| Intensive student support | • Require support resources for those lacking readiness<br>• Require assessment, orientation, educational planning |
| Use of data | • Student success score cards for each college<br>• Race/ethnicity breakdowns<br>• Intermediate measures<br>• Not limited to students having completed 12 units |
| Efficient resource use | • New systemwide enrollment priorities – core mission<br>• Conditions for fee waiver receipt<br>• Priority to offer courses students need to make progress |

# IHELP Contact Information

Reports and presentations: www.csus.edu/ihelp

ihelp@csus.edu

Reports on community college student success:

*Rules of the Game*, February 2007

*Beyond the Open Door*, August 2007

*Invest in Success*, October 2007

*It Could Happen*, February 2008

*Crafting a Student-Centered Transfer Process in CA*, August 2009

*Steps to Success*, October 2009

*Divided We Fail*, October 2010

*The Road Less Traveled,* February, 2011

*Sense of Direction,* August, 2011

*Career Opportunities-Parts I and 2,* January-February, 2012

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