Community College Student Success in Context:

Performance and State Policy

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Topics

- California higher education performance challenges

- From crisis to opportunity? The state policy perspective

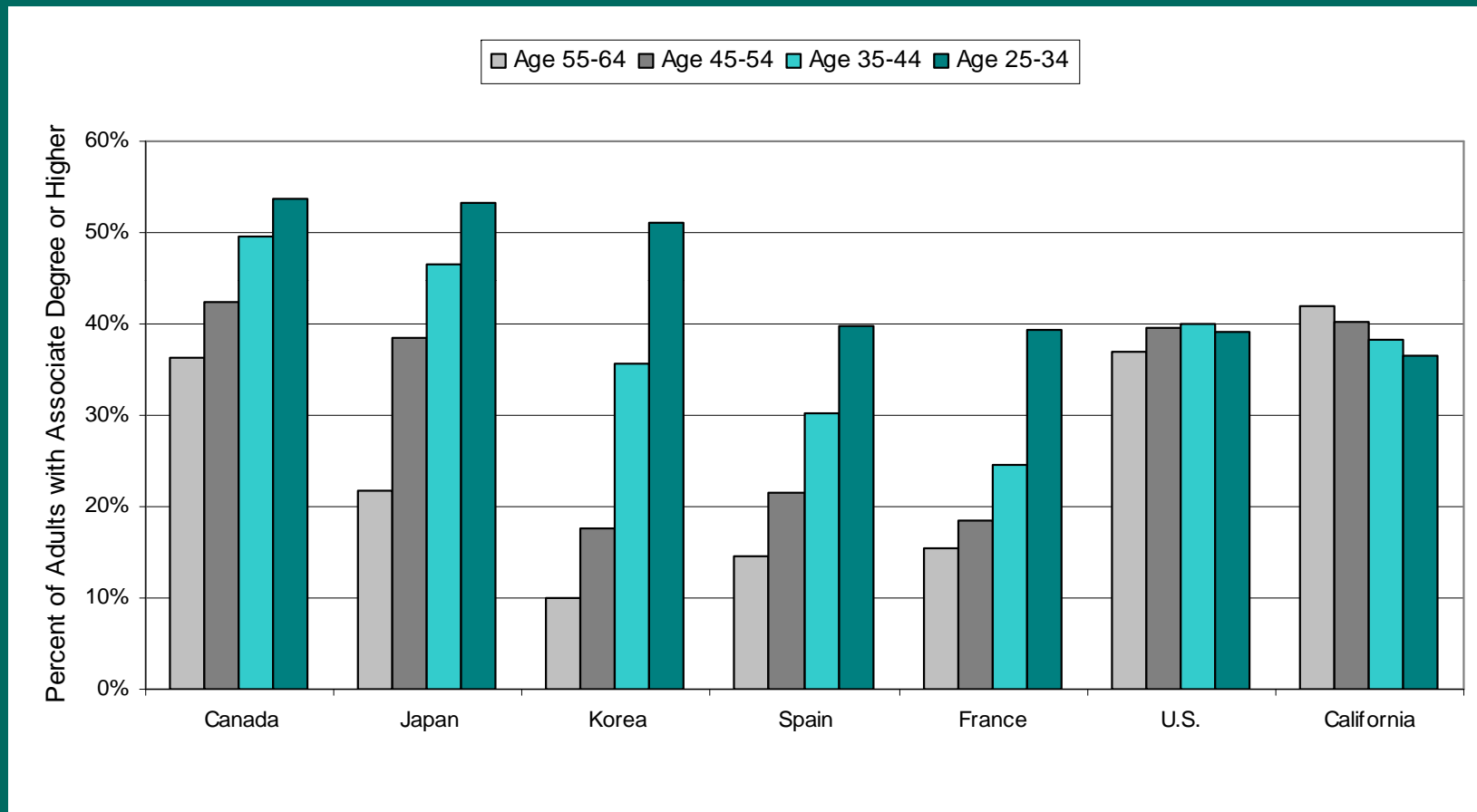- Some specific student success challenges: transfer and career technical education

Performance

California lags most other states in important aspects of higher education performance

- 45th in share of HS students taking advanced math/science
- 40th in rate of HS grads going directly to college
- 47th in number of degrees/certificates awarded in relation to enrollment
- Significant region/race/ethnicity gaps at all points
- Strength in high technology in jeopardy
- Huge shortfall in degrees – PPIC: 1 million
- Percent of working-age adults with a college degree is declining with each younger age group

Percent of Adults with an Associate Degree or Higher by Age Group—Leading OECD Countries, the U.S., and California

Legend: Age 55-64 | Age 45-54 | Age 35-44 | Age 25-34

Y-axis: Percent of Adults with Associate Degree or Higher (0% – 60%)

X-axis: Canada, Japan, Korea, Spain, France, U.S., California

Source: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2007*; Not shown on the graph are Belgium, Norway, Ireland and Denmark, which also rank ahead of the U.S. on attainment among young adults (attainment is increasing for younger populations as in the other countries)

California Is Becoming Less Educated Than Other States
(Rank Among States in % with College Degrees)

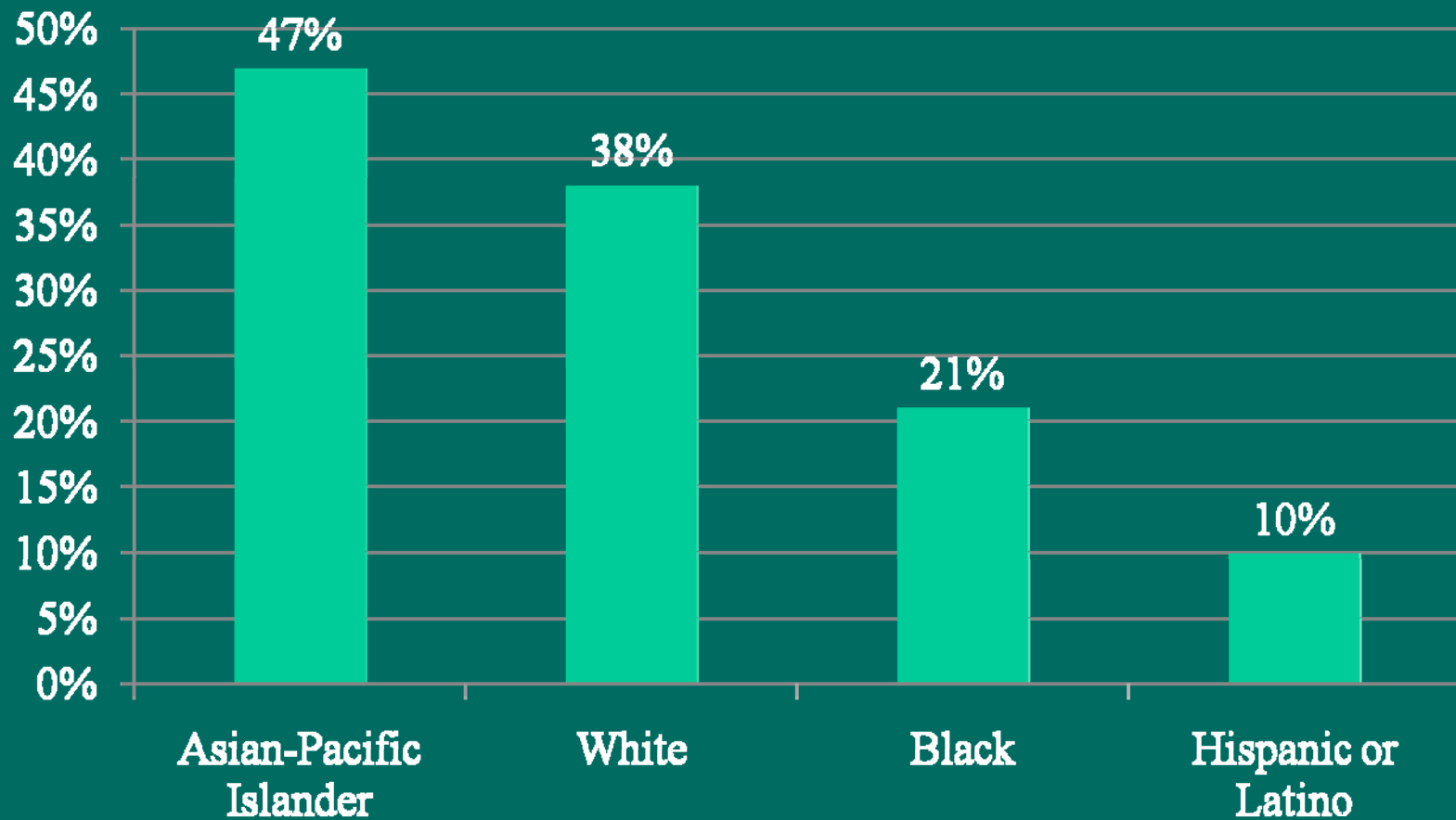| Age Group:	AA or Higher	BA or Higher
>64	3rd	4th
45-64	14th	13th
35-44	26th	17th
25-34	31st	26th

Racial/Ethnic Gaps
in Share of HS Graduates Completing a-g
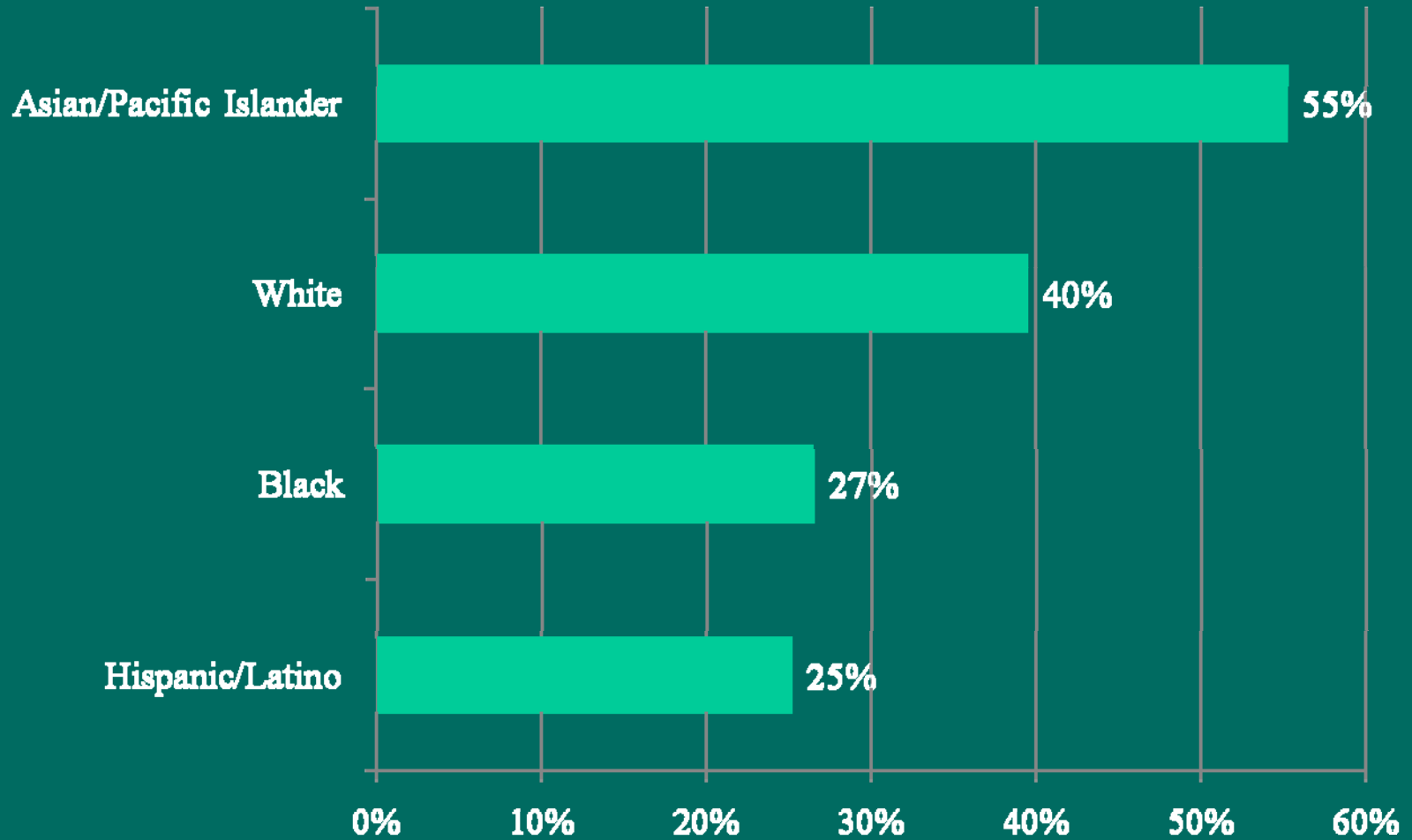
Racial/Ethnic Gaps
in College Enrollment

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of 18-24 Year Olds Enrolled in College
White	45%
Black	35%
Hispanic or Latino	27%

Racial/Ethnic Gaps
in Percent of Adults with a BA

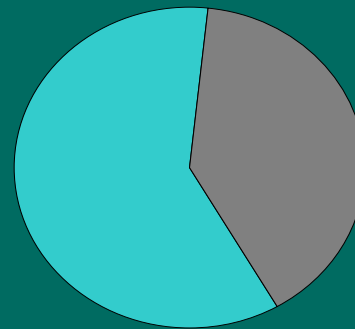Community Colleges are Key to Improving Education Levels

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

CCC: 1,094,650
CSU: 344,472
UC: 162,975

Incoming CCC Students
1999-2000
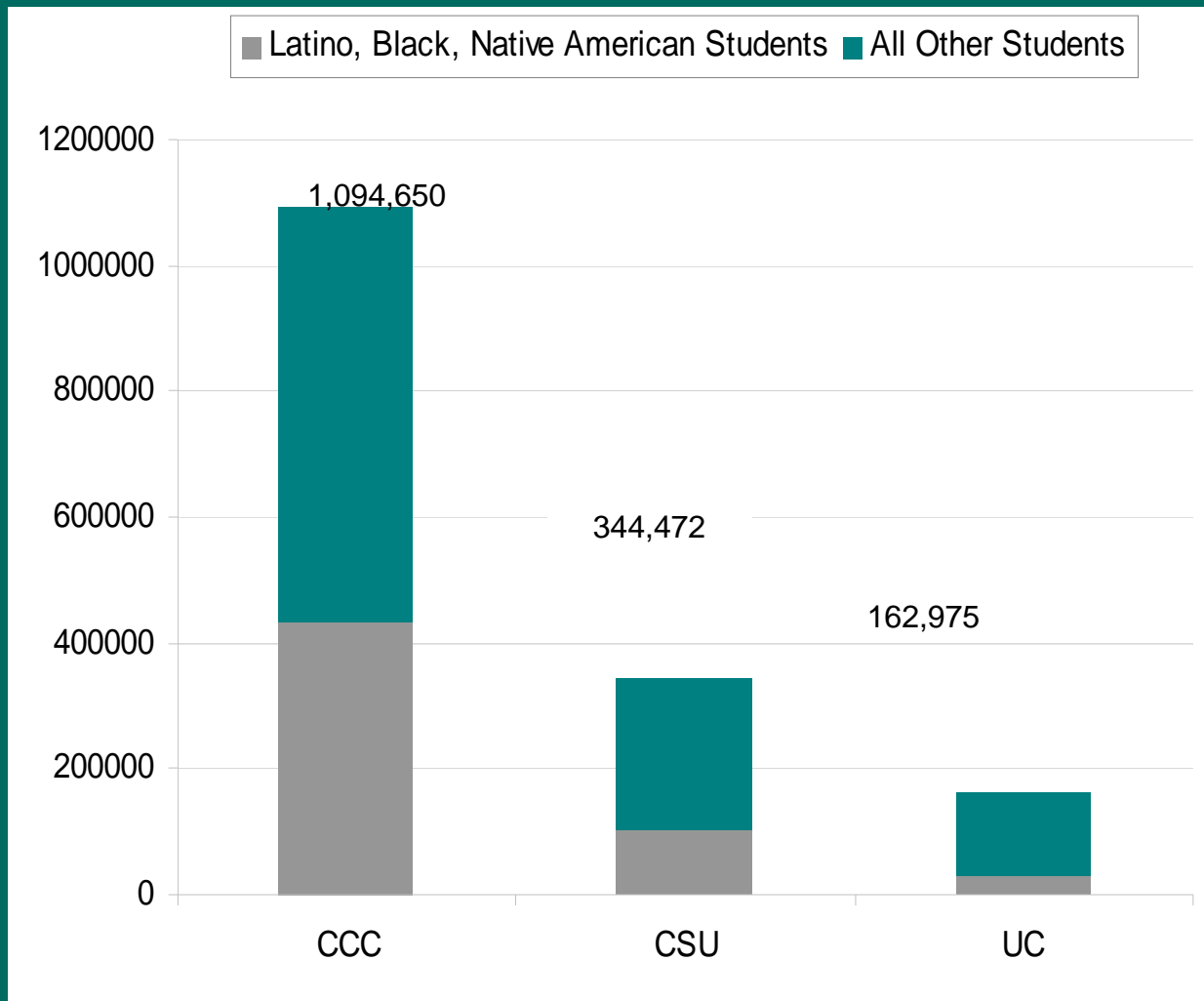
Policies to
Promote Access

520,407
Students

Degree-
Seekers: 60%

Non-Degree-
Seekers: 40%

206,373
Students

Basic
Skills: 9%

Job Skills:
49%
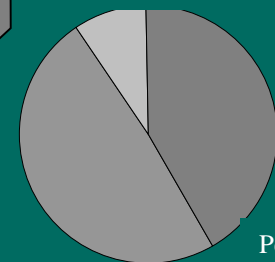
314,034
Students

Personal
Enrichment:
42%

Policy Barriers
to Completion
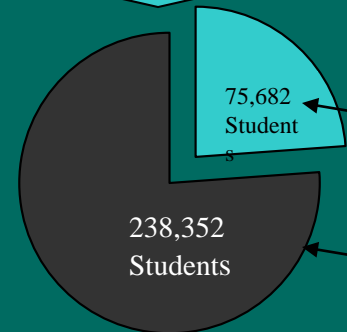
75,682
Student
s

Complete
Certificate, Degree
or Transfer within
6 Years: 24%

238,352
Students

Do Not Complete
within 6 Years: 76%
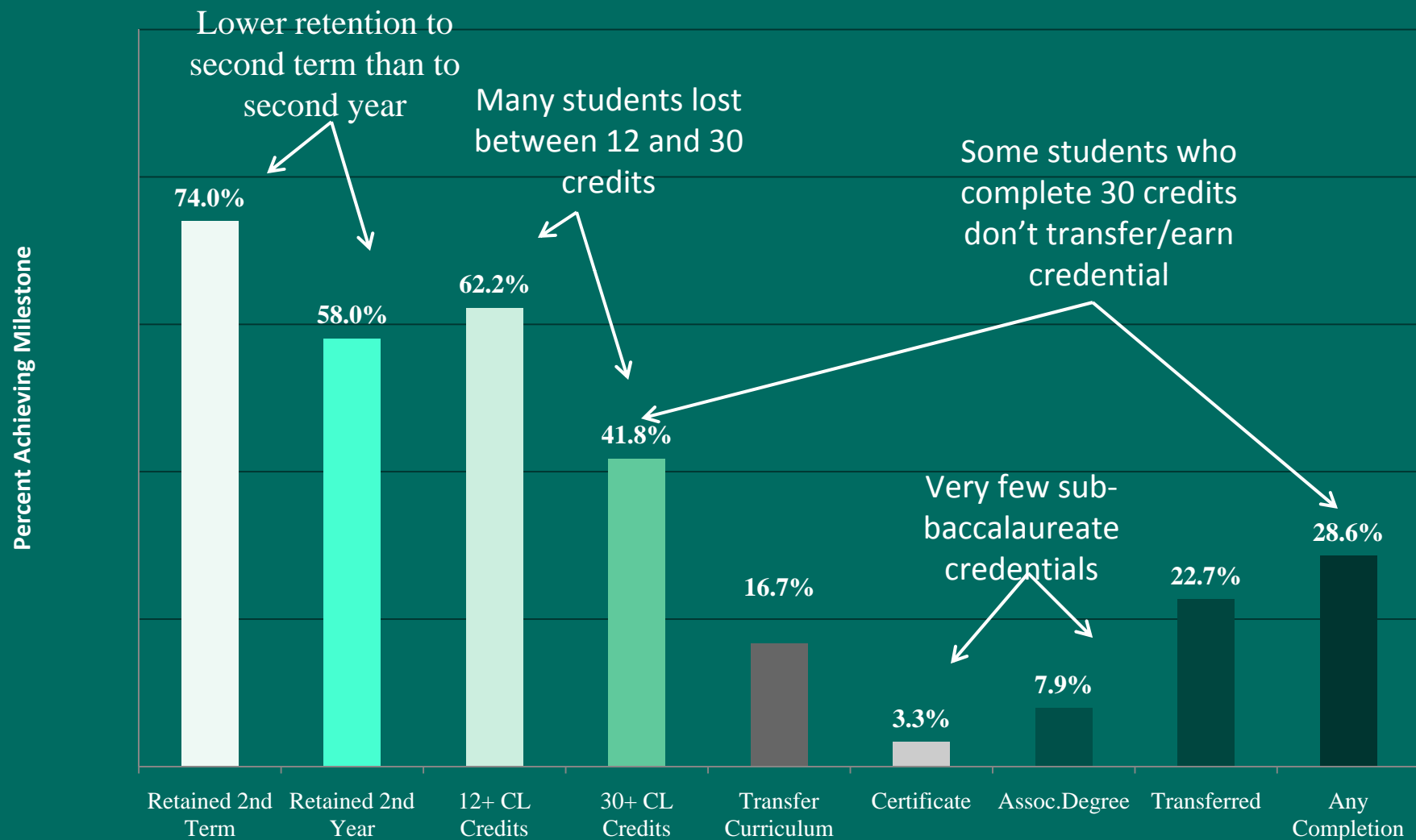
Completion Rates Worse for Certain Groups

- 33% for Asian students
- 27% for white students
- 18% for Latino students
- 15% for black students

- 27% for students age 17-19
- 21% for students in their 20s
- 18% for students in their 30s
- 16% for students age 40 or older
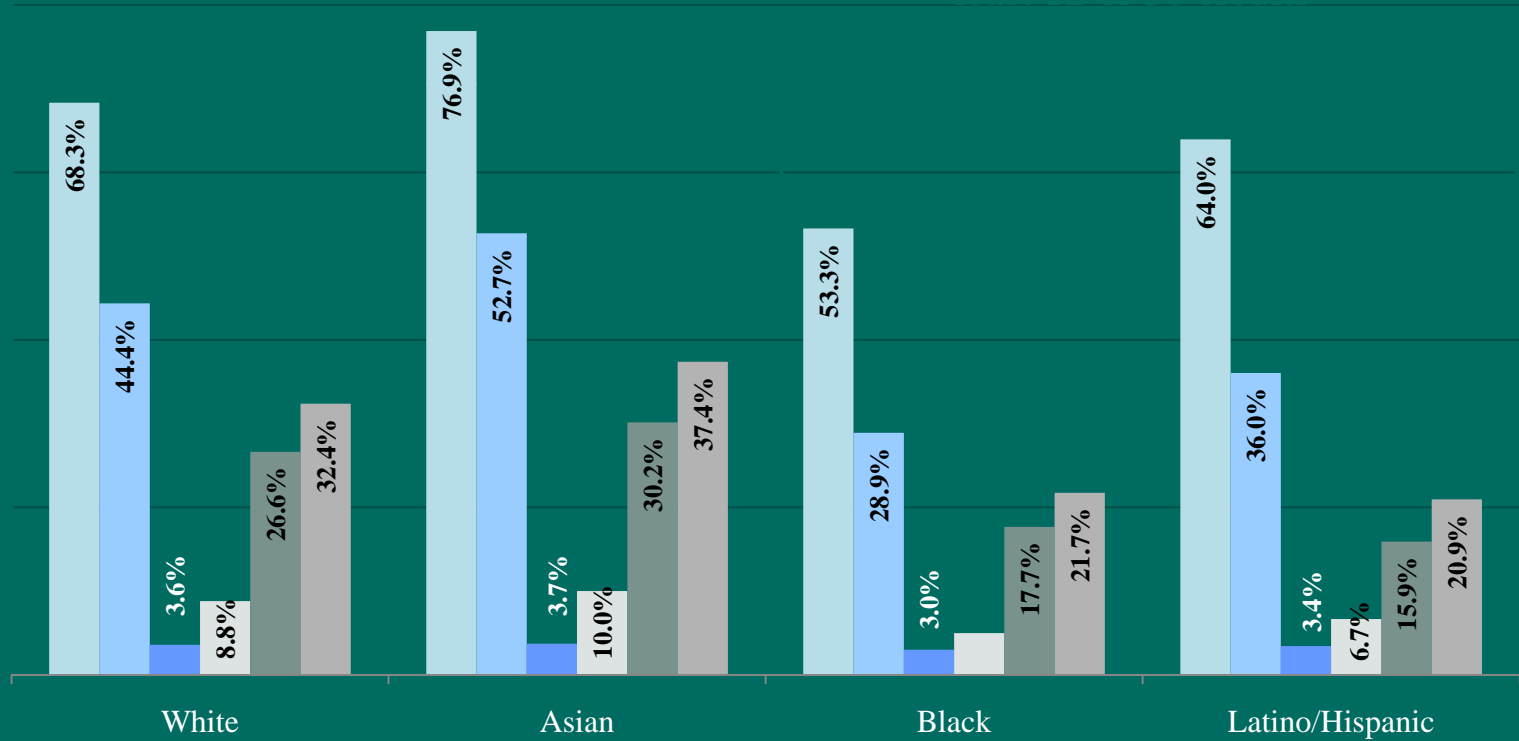
Milestones Point to Where Student Progress Stalls

Differences in Achievements Among Groups

Policy Environment:
Good News/Bad News

Good News First…

- **New mood**
  - Growing lawmaker awareness
  - New, energized leadership – new conversation
  - Budget crisis provides opportunities
- **New activities**
  - Futures commission UC and CCC
  - CSU goal to increase graduation rates
  - Transfer task force
- **New ideas**
  - We know what works – research consensus
  - Lots on the table
  - More openness to learning from other states

What Works – and What's Happening - some examples

1. Increased readiness for college
   - EAP, common assessment
2. Early success/basic skills
   - Assessment, prerequisites, contextualized basic skills
3. Effective enrollment patterns
   - More emphasis on FAFSA => less work/more school
4. Clear goals and pathways
   - Interest in transfer associate degrees, focused mission
5. Intensive student support
   - Many small-scale programs
6. Using data to inform decisions
   - BRIC project

Now the Bad News….

- Lost time = lots of catching up to do
- Huge deficit in state planning capacity and political will
- External funders skeptical (at best)

Lots of Catching Up –
Trail other states in more than performance

Other states' cultures more amenable to reform:

- Accept completion as measure of student success
- Fewer rules and regulations
- More able to consider statewide approaches
- More willing to impose structures on students

Other states making more progress on policy reforms:

- Financial incentives for progress and success
- Common assessment/placement; early remediation
- Clearer pathways toward certificates and degrees

Lack of Capacity for Postsecondary Planning

- Weak executive leadership tradition
- Master Plan strength is weakness -segmental
- No statewide goals
- No meaningful accountability for policy and resource decisions
- No will to confront reality of budget constraints

What would effective planning and coordination look like?

- Strong leadership from governor
- Begin with needs of CA – not institutions
- A "public agenda"
- Diagnose gaps and set goals
- Design policies and investment strategies
- Accountability – for meeting goals
- Entity to coordinate planning
- Some models: Ohio, Tennessee, Illinois, Washington, Indiana

The Worst News – on the outside looking in

- The price of lagging other states has grown
- Potential funders are very reluctant to invest in California:
  - Gates, Lumina, Hewlett, Irvine….
  - Feds, State

They are not convinced California can change

Two Routes to College Completion

- Transfer
- Career Technical Education

Transfer: What's the Problem?

- Most who seek to transfer never do so
  - Rates low/vary by method: 20-40%
- Those who transfer take "unnecessary" courses
  - Waste of students' and taxpayers' money
  - Reduces access - takes up space for others
- Most transfers (80%) don't earn associate degree
- Huge increase in transfers to proprietaries
- Additional obstacles to CTE transfer

Hugely Complex Transfer System

- No statewide approach
    - Institution-to-institution arrangements
    - Works well if you stay local but…
- No common general education pattern
    - No assurance that courses will transfer
- No consistency in lower division major prerequisites
    - Almost guarantees students will have to take > 60 units
- Institution-centered, not student-centered
    - Choice over structure
    - Local autonomy over statewide solutions

Lower Division Major Preparation – e.g., BA in Psychology

San Jose State	Sacramento State	Sonoma State
•General Psychology •Intro Psychobiology •Elementary Statistics •Human Biology or Human Anatomy •Any psychology elective	•Intro. Psych.: Basic Processes •Intro. Psych.: Individual and Social Processes •Methods of Psychology	•Statistics •Two psychology electives
UC Davis	**UC Santa Cruz**	**UC Merced**
•General Psychology •Research Methods in Psychology •Elementary Statistics •Sociology or Cultural Anthropology •One of several options: (1) Intro. Biology or (2) Essentials of Life on Earth or (3) General Biology *and* either Human Evolutionary Biology or Human Heredity or Exercise and Fitness: Principles and Practice	•Intro. to Psychology •Research Methods in Psychology •Intro. to Psychological Statistics •Precalculus •Intro. to Developmental Psychology	•Intro. to Psychology •Two natural science or engineering courses, at least one with a lab, field or studio component •Cultural Anthropology or Intro. to Cognitive Science or Intro. to Economics or Intro. to Political Science or Intro. to Public Policy or Intro. to Sociology •Analysis of Psychological Data and Research Methods could be done after transfer

Many Reform Efforts, But Little Improvement

Time to Change the Discussion:

how to get students and counselors to understand a complex transfer system

how to design a simpler system that works for students and honors and protects curricular diversity of the major
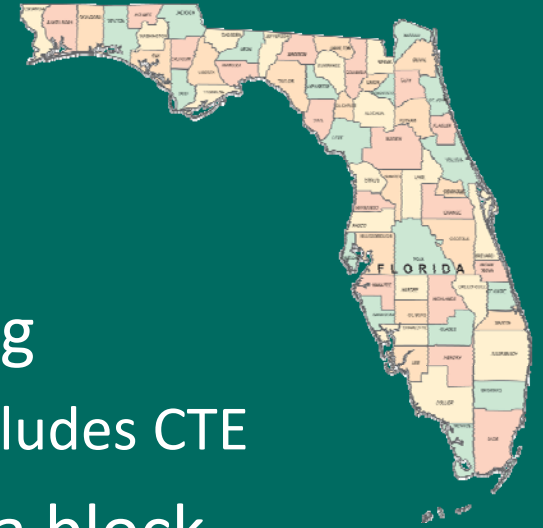
Requires New Set of Principles

Status quo assumptions:

1. *Choice* for students serves them better than *structure*

2. *Local* autonomy should always be safeguarded against *statewide* approaches

New Student-centered principles:

1. *Structure* aids students in meeting their goals

2. *Statewide* solutions make sense for transfer

Student-Centered Example: Florida

- Statewide common course numbering
  - colleges, universities, some privates, includes CTE
- Universities accept completed GE as a block
  - no extra courses can be required
- AA degree designed expressly as a transfer degree
  - guarantees admission with junior status
- Common lower div. prerequisites for each major
  - Some unique prereqs can be required after admission
- Statewide structure for CTE certificates/degrees
  - All GE requirements transferable

Career-Technical Education: more questions than answers

- Need to educate lawmakers
- Need smoother, more structured pathways
- Can certificates and degrees send clearer signals to employers (as in other states)?
- Can we improve data on who is enrolled in what programs?
- Why so dependent on external funding?
- What policy changes would better support CTE?

Where Does that Leave Us?

Across all California Higher Ed:

- New Core Principles
- Policies
- Resources - productivity
- Political Will

From Assumptions that Preserve Status Quo to Principles that Promote Change

Assumptions

1. Inputs/FTE
2. Rules
3. Student choices
4. Local option

Principles

1. Outcomes/Success
2. Flexibility for leadership
3. Structure/guidance
4. Statewide solutions

With the Right Policies….
(from insert from IHELP report: "*It Could Happen*")

What You Can Do

- Commit to principles

- Look at the data

- Support corresponding policy reforms – faster

- Take the initiative at your campus – with or without policy changes

- Put student success at the center of everything

We must send a message to the skeptics that we can and will change

IHELP Contact Information

Reports and presentations available at: www.csus.edu/ihelp

Printed copies available upon request:

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Selected 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