Milestones, Indicators, and Student Supports for Postsecondary Success

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Key Topics

- California Community College (CCC) context, but findings are relevant for IHEs interested in recruiting a diverse student body/transfer students.
- Origin and advantages of new indicator framework.
- Closer look at gaps by race/ethnicity.
- Relevance to policy and practice.

Traditional Measures to Understand Student Progression are Insufficient

- Generally focused on persistence and graduation rates, and transfer for community colleges
- Little information about:
  - Where and why students experience problems
  - What IHEs can do to help students (particularly at IHEs with scarce resources and many students who need high touch supports)

A Framework for Better Analysis

Two components (based on literature review)

- ***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	Success Indicators

• Retention
• Complete needed remediation
• Transition to college-level coursework
• Earn one year of college-level credits
• Complete general education (GE)
• Complete a community college transfer curriculum
• Transfer from community college to university
  • Without completing curriculum
  • After completing curriculum
• Complete certificate or degree
	Remediation:
	• Begin coursework in first term
	Gateway Courses:
	• Complete college-level math/English in the first year or two
	• Complete a college success course
	Credit Accumulation and Related Academic Behaviors:
	• High rate of course completion
	• Complete 20-30 credits in first year
	• Earn summer credits
	• Enroll full-time
	• Enroll continuously w/out stopping out
	• On-time registration for courses
	• Maintain adequate academic performance

California Community Colleges Analysis

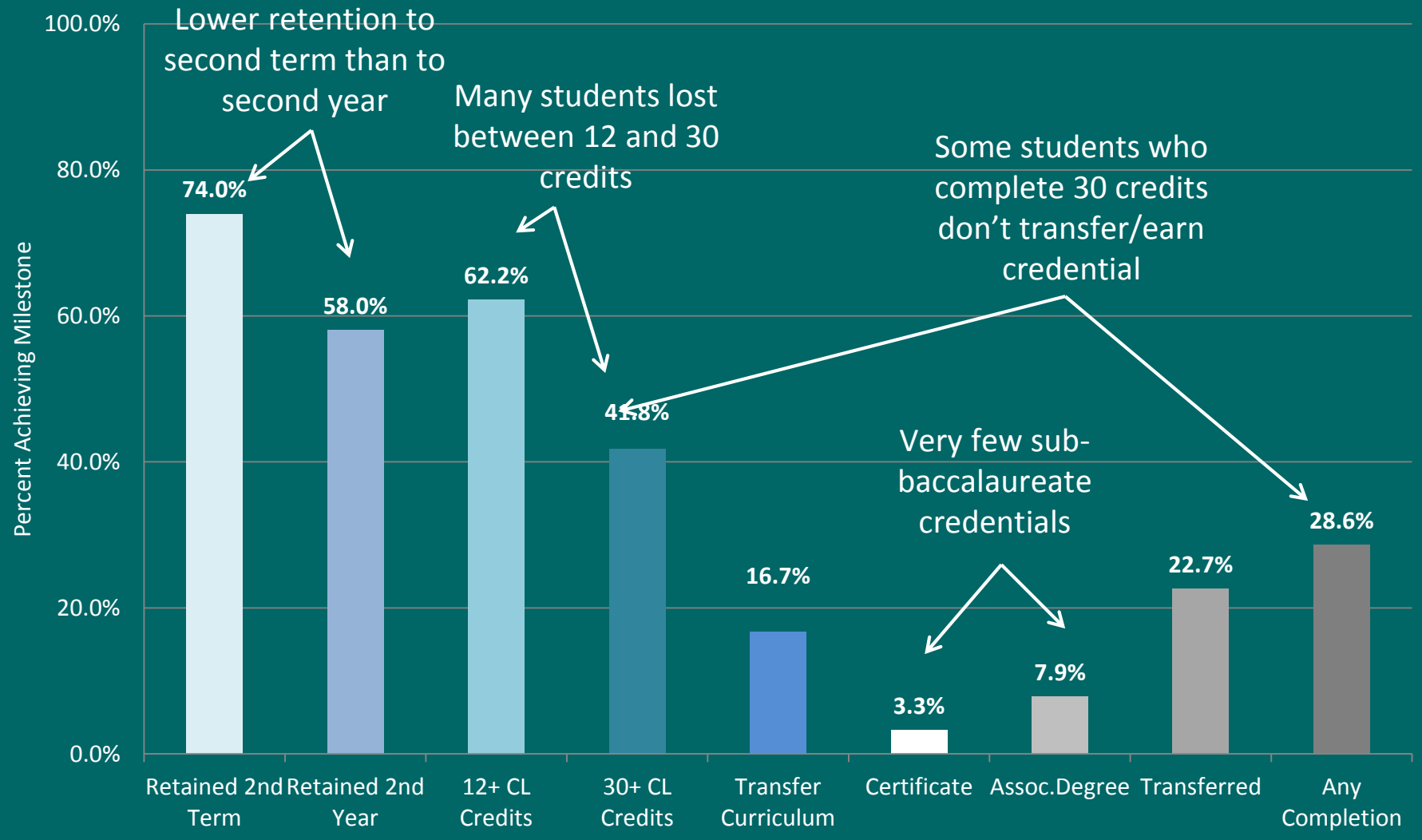
Cohort for *Steps to Success*

- All first-time credit students in 2000-01, tracked over 7 years
- Subset of "degree seekers" (> 6 units in year 1); 63% of total
- N = 247,493
- Limitations – no info on SES, academic preparation

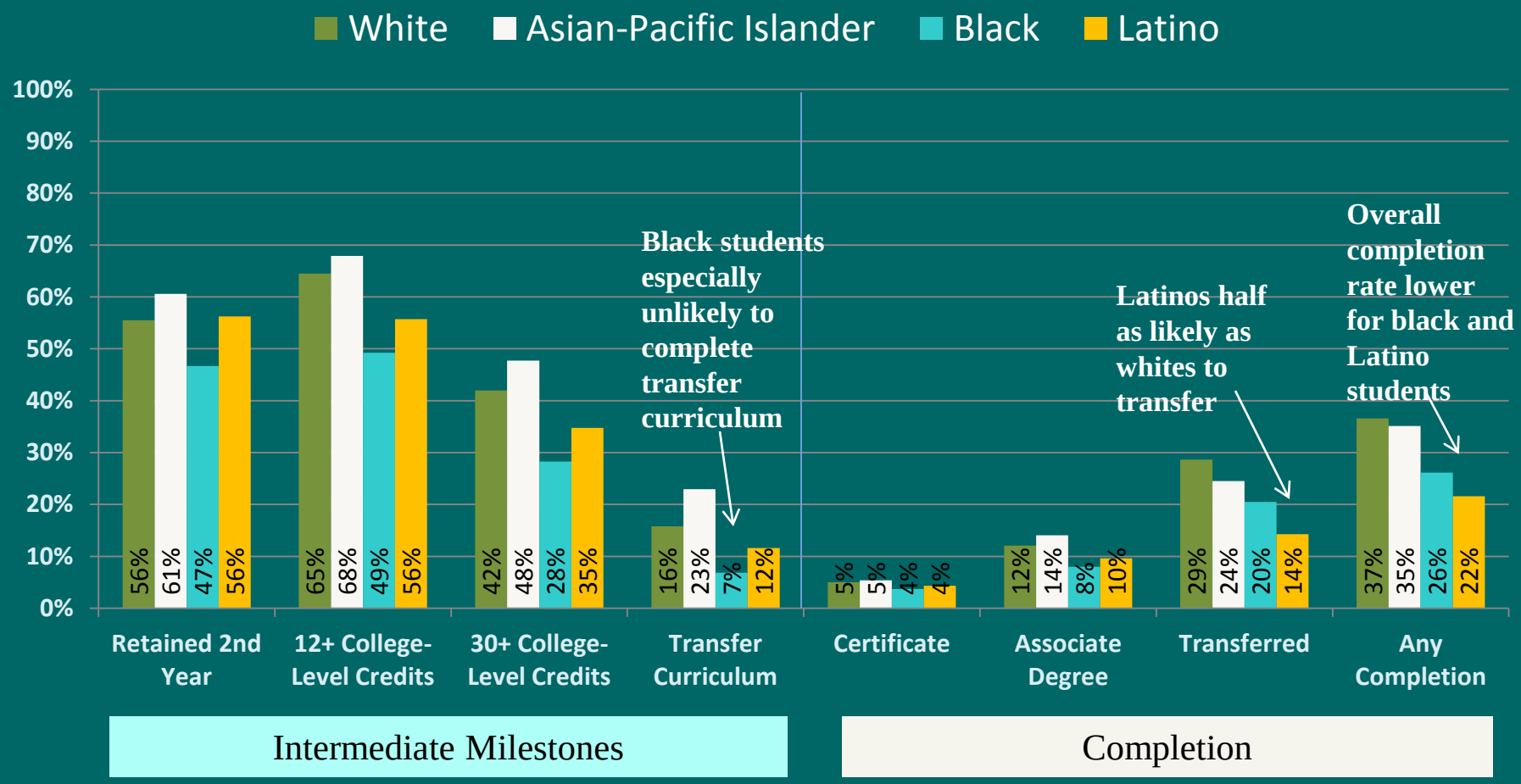
Data Files

1. Student information
2. Course enrollments over the 7 years, by term
3. Course information
4. Degrees, certificates awarded within that period
5. Transfers to universities within that period
6. Financial aid (fee waiver)

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

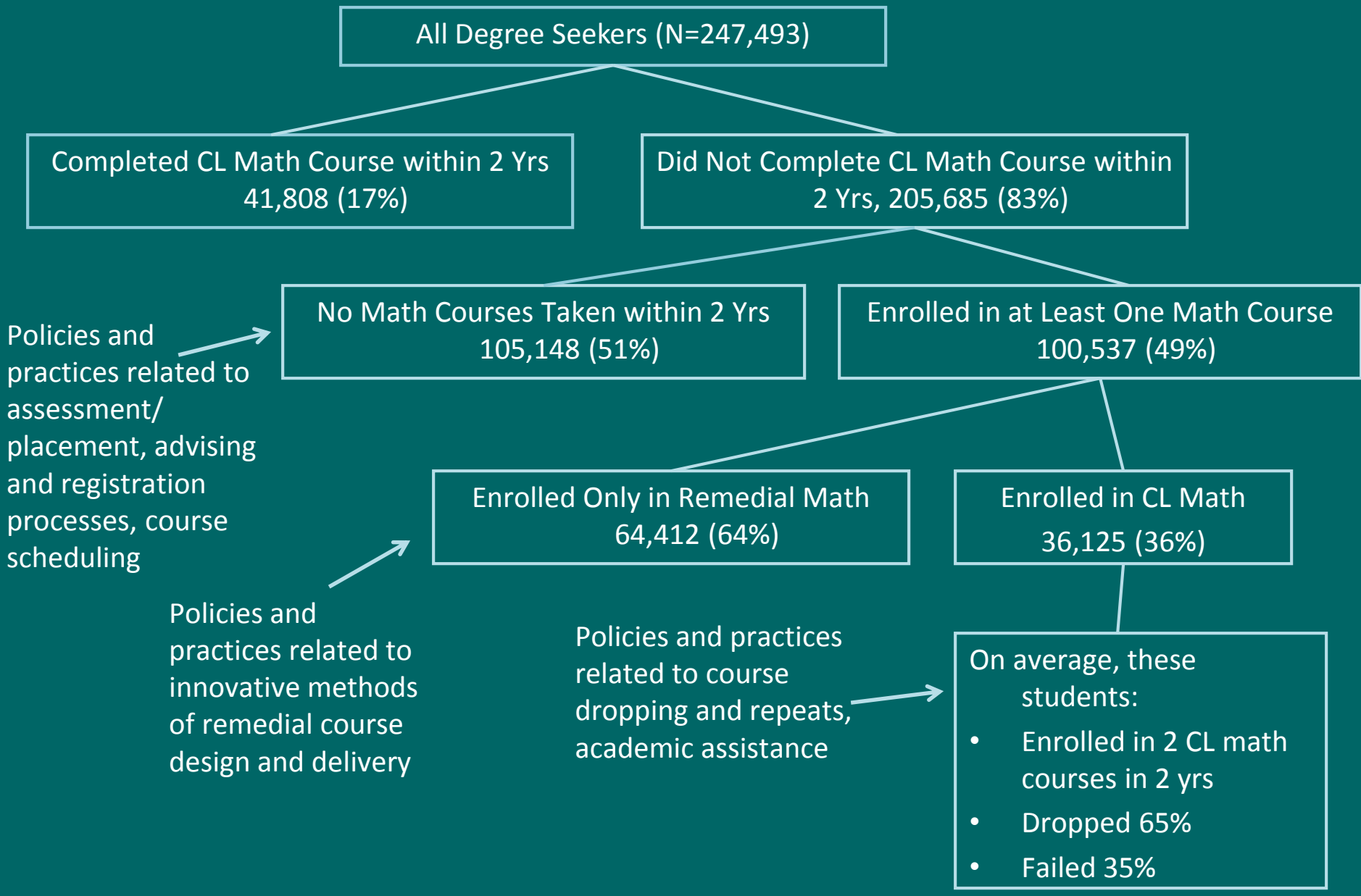
Student Success Course Completion

	College Success Course?	
Milestone:	Yes	No
Retention to 2nd year	73%	54%
Earn 12+ college-level credits	77%	58%
Earn 30+ college-level credits	59%	37%

Regression Analysis Confirms Relationships

- Success indicators predict completion after controlling for:
  - Age, gender, race/ethnicity
  - Academic preparation
  - Financial aid receipt
  - Institutional effects
- Significant predictors when applied just to specific groups (older students, racial/ethnic groups)
- *IHEs can affect these academic and course-taking patterns.*

Digging Deeper into Problems Can Point to Solutions



Some Examples of Applying Results to Changing Policy and Practice

Problem Identified	Possible Changes
Low percentage of developmental education students completing remediation	• Require early enrollment in remedial coursework • Redesign developmental courses • Contextualized developmental ed for career technical programs
Low percentage of students completing math early	• Partner with high schools to improve college readiness • Early advising that focuses on importance of taking math early • New approaches to math instruction
Low percentage of students reach a threshold of credit accumulation in the first year	• Increase financial aid to encourage full-time attendance • Increase use of college success courses, early advising, etc. • Charge lower per-credit fees for enrolling in a full-time credit load
Relatively low rate of completing courses (i.e., many course drops and failures)	• Allocate portion of funding on course completion in addition to census enrollment • Early alert systems and improved tutoring services • Limit course drops and repeats and late registration

Experimentation with Student Support-related Practices

- Integrating students supports into academics
- Accelerating/modularizing developmental education
- Creating more structured programs of study with embedded supports
- Providing early alerts to students
- Mandatory services

IHELP Contact Information

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