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# Using Data for a Change: Three Conversations

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RP/CISOA Conference  
Garden Grove, CA  
March 26, 2007

California State University, Sacramento



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# Testing – 1,2,3,4

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## Why did we engage in this research?

- A. To prove that CSUS is an elite institution
- B. To provide cover for Charlie Reed's attack on the CCC
- C. To focus attention on the key role that the CCC must play in stemming the decline in education levels of the California workforce



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Why did our research separate out non-degree seekers (a full 40 percent of the cohort) *before* computing completion rates?

- A. Because we wanted to make the completion rates look better than they are
- B. Because two pie charts look more sophisticated on the page than one
- C. Because we understand that community colleges serve multiple missions and did not want to be guilty of applying completion metrics to students who are not seeking to complete a college credential



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Why did the CIO board invite me to speak at their annual conference after I briefed them at their executive board?

A. To set me up being photographed holding a bottle of wine



B. Because the meeting was in San Diego and they couldn't find anyone else to go

C. Because they share our concern about removing barriers to student success



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What is an appropriate reaction by hard working community college staff to Dan Walter's Sac Bee column that said student success is "beyond the reasonable control" of the colleges?

- A. Thank god someone finally understands that if students can't succeed then it's their own damn fault – hooray for the good press!
- B. The best kind of accountability is no accountability at all!
- C. I am insulted by the implication that student success is beyond my control – if it is, why do I work so hard?



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## Can We Agree?

- We want students to succeed
- We want to live in a healthy and prosperous California
- Whatever numbers we use, student success could be better
- We want state policy to be supportive of the CCC and student success
- What we do matters!
- Data rule! (We wish)



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## Data Rules (Not!)

### Challenges of Data-Based Decision Making:

- Getting attention of decision makers
- The greater power of stories over data
- Politics
- Having the right data to tell the story/answer the questions
- Being misunderstood (despite best efforts)





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## Three Conversations

1. How can changes to state policy help the CCC meet the state's need for an educated workforce?
2. How effective is the CCC system in performing those aspects of its mission for which it should be held accountable?
3. How can all of higher education, collectively meet the goals of the state – with each segment contributing as appropriate to its mission?



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# A Conversation About State Policy as it Affects Student Success in Community Colleges

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## Why We See A Need for Change

- Knowledge economy is creating huge demand for educated workers
- US is losing in global competition
- CA is losing in national competition
- Projected shortfall of workers compared to needs of economy (*college degrees*)
- CCC critical to reversing these trends



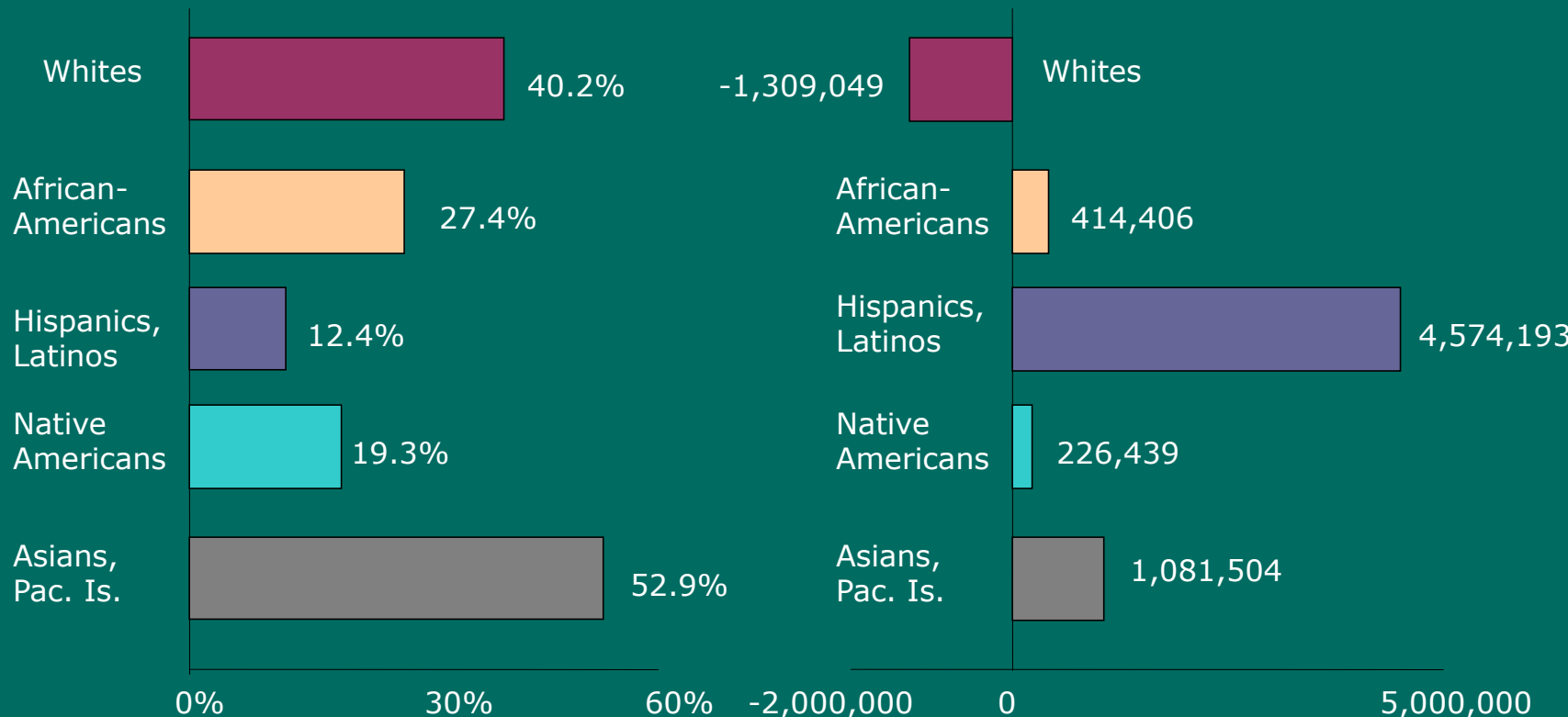
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# Race/Ethnic Gaps in Educational Attainment

## Bode Poorly for California's Workforce

Percent of Adults Ages 25 to 64 With an  
Associates Degree or Higher

Projected Change in the Number of 25 to  
64 Year Olds from 2000 to 2020



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# California Is Becoming Less Educated Than Other States

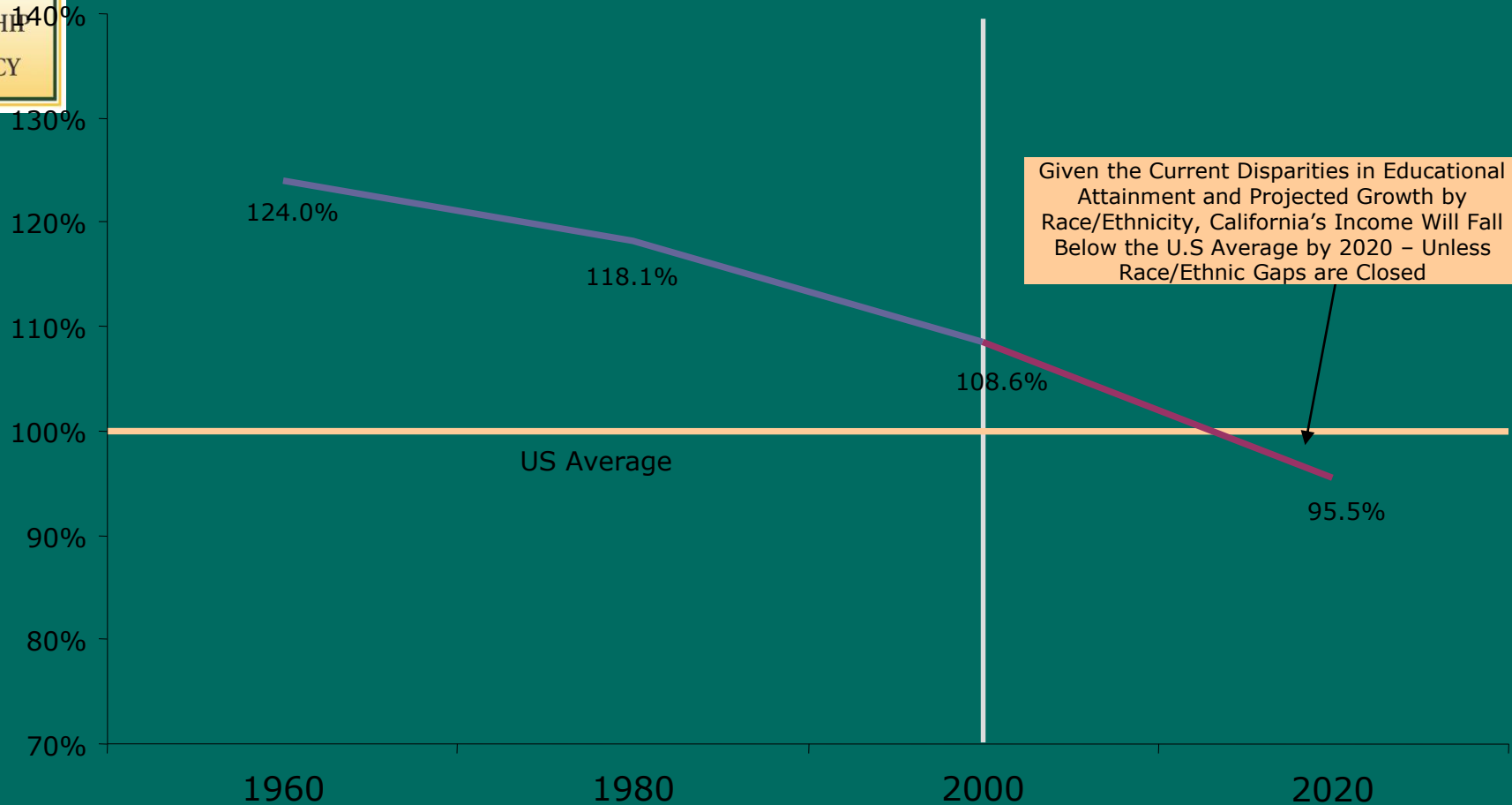
(Numbers in Table Show Rank Among States in  
Percent of Population with College Degrees)

Age Group:	AA or Higher	BA or Higher
>64	2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
45-64	11 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
35-44	21 <sup>st</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
25-34	30 <sup>th</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>



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# California's Per Capita Income will Fall Below U.S. Average if Race/Ethnic Education Gaps Remain



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# California's Performance is Lagging

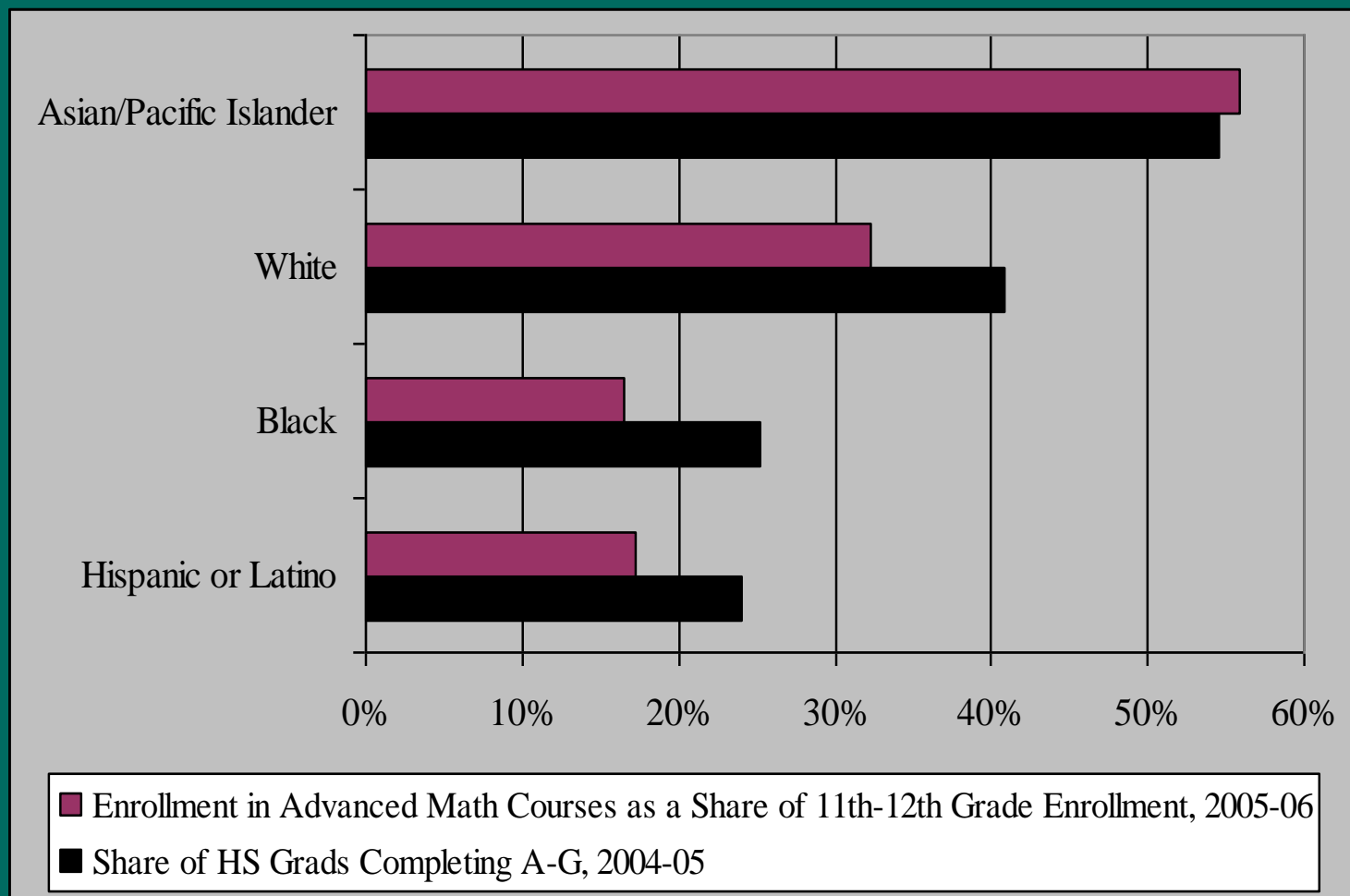
- Preparation
  - 35<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> in high school students taking advanced math and science
  - Bottom 1/5 in 8th graders scoring “proficient” in *all* subject areas of the NAEP
- Participation
  - 40<sup>th</sup> in direct to college from high school
  - 48<sup>th</sup> in full-time college enrollment
- Completion
  - 47<sup>th</sup> in BA degrees per 100 undergraduates enrolled
  - 46<sup>th</sup> in degrees/certificates awarded per 100 students enrolled in 2-year colleges
- Latinos lag at each point in the pipeline

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## Racial/Ethnic Gaps in Preparation



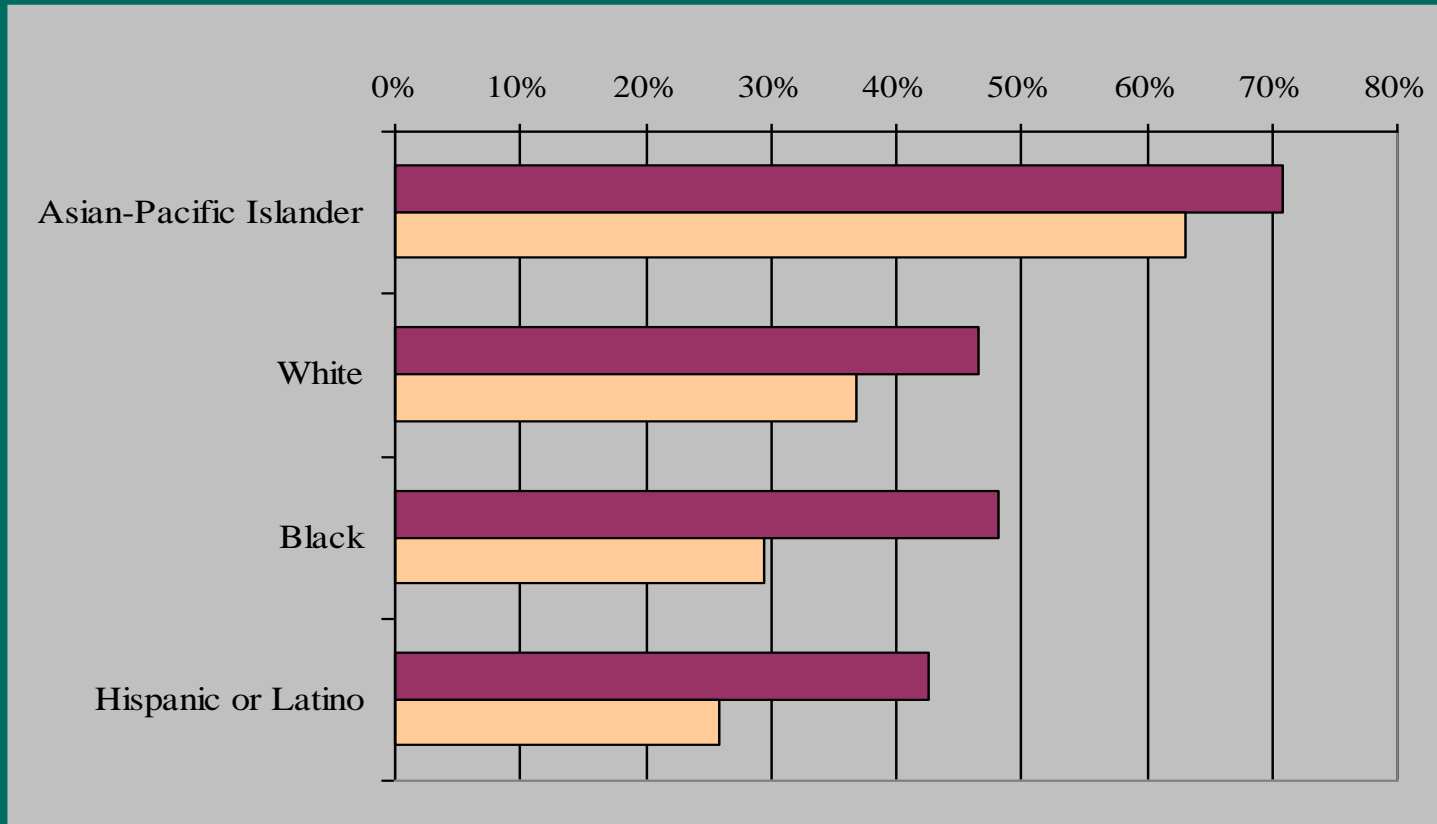
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# Racial/Ethnic Gaps in Participation



Direct college-going rate



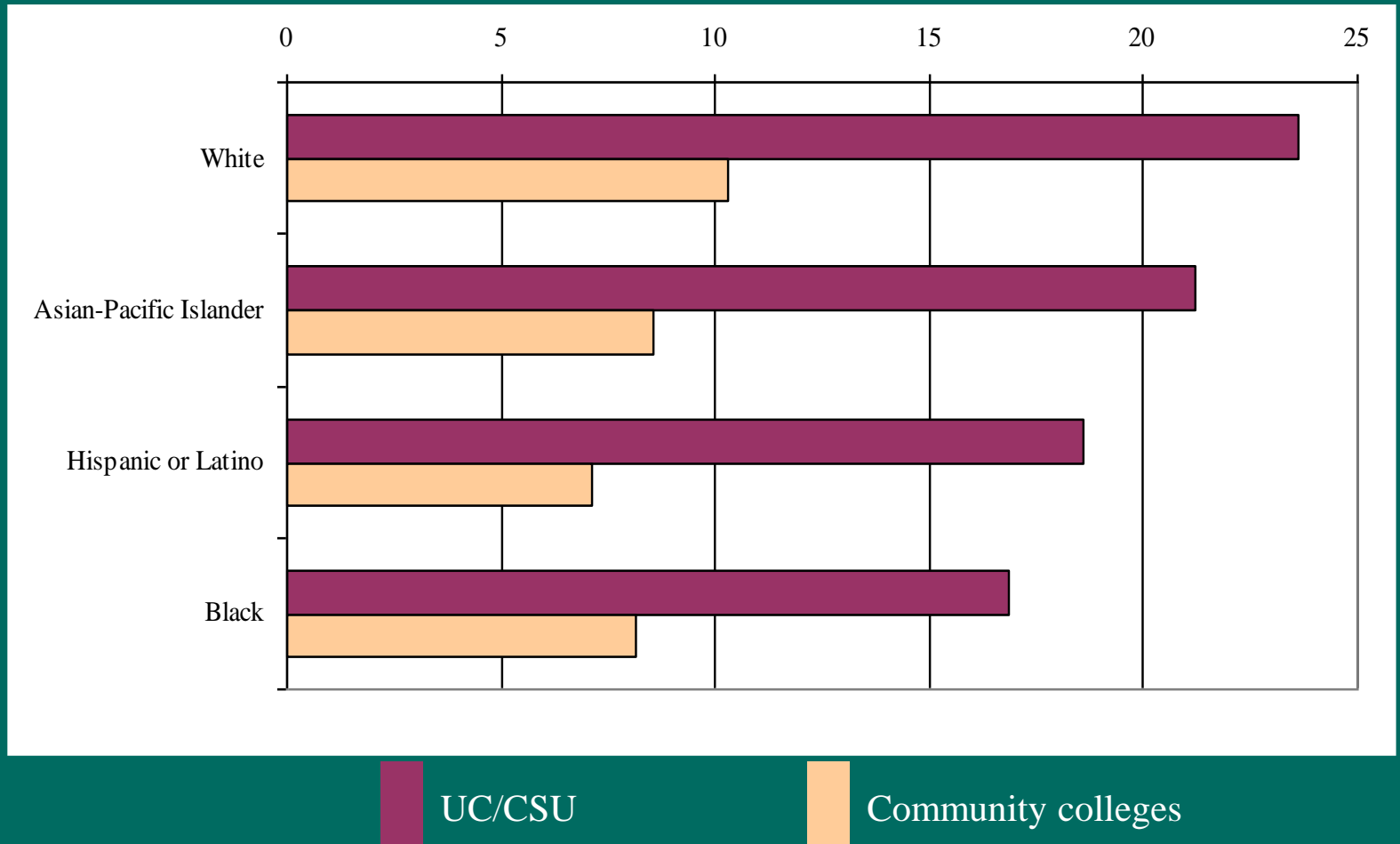
9<sup>th</sup> graders enrolling in college within 4 years

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# Certificates and Degrees Awarded per 100 Undergraduates Enrolled, 2005

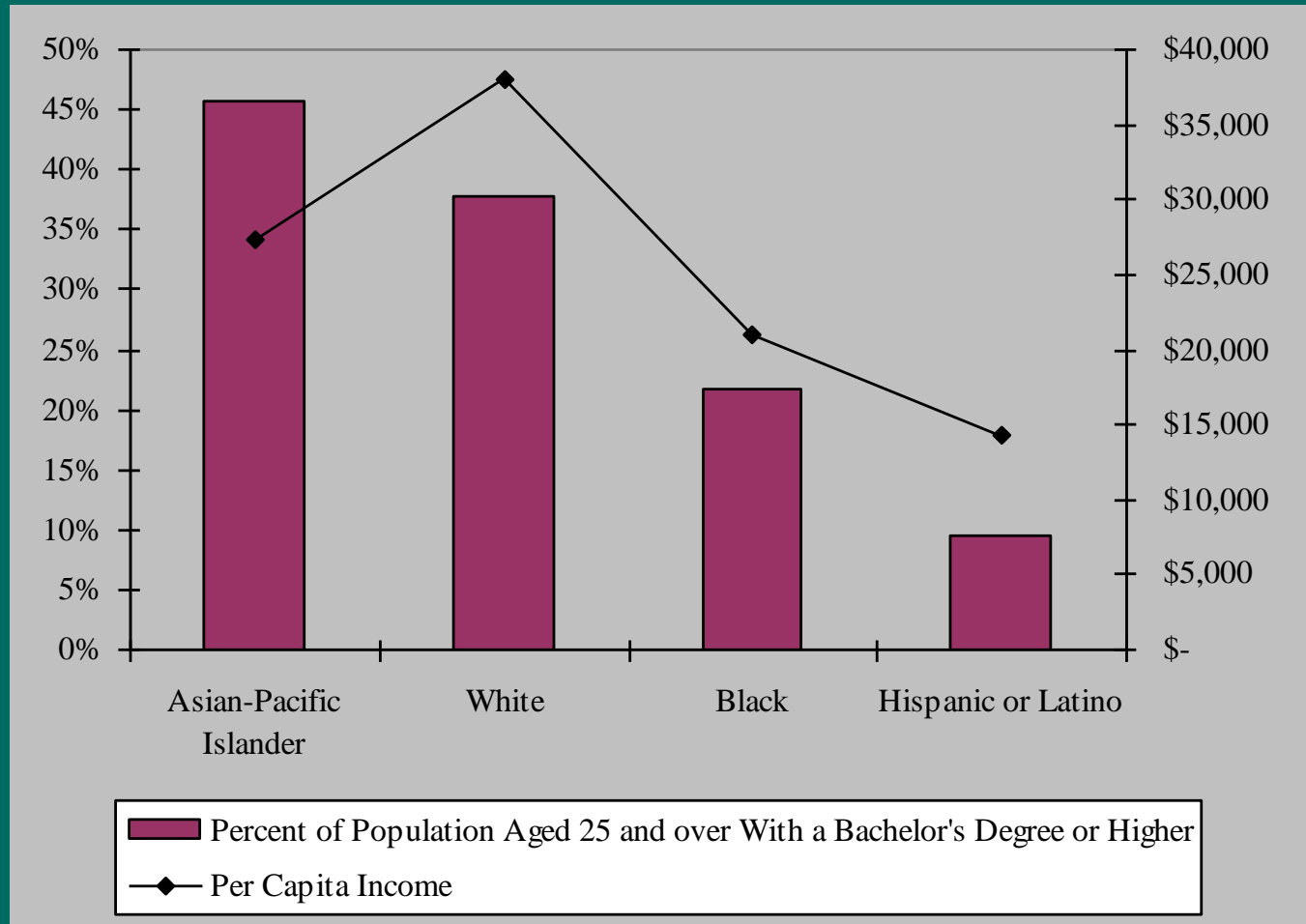


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# Racial/Ethnic Gaps in Educational Attainment and Per Capita Income



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## Why We Looked At the Role of Policies

- 2004 study: *Ensuring Access with Quality to the CCC*
  - Finance policies appear to present barriers to student success
  - Called for a comprehensive policy review
- WICHE *Changing Direction* project
- Grants from Hewlett and Irvine foundations to pursue state policy issues



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## No Barriers to Access:

- Minimal entrance requirements
- Low fees
- Fee waivers
- Enrollment-based funding

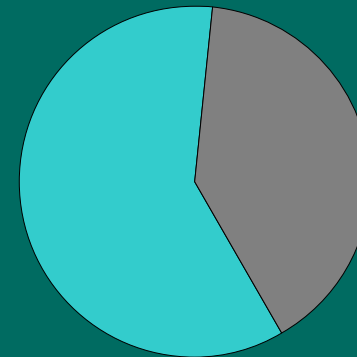
Incoming CCC Students  
1999-2000

520,407  
Students

## Barriers to Completion:

- Finance system that lacks incentives for student success
- Regulation of college expenditures that limits spending on student support
- Restrictions on hiring to meet student and workforce needs
- Fee and aid policies that leave colleges and students with inadequate resources
- Institutionalized reluctance to provide needed guidance to students

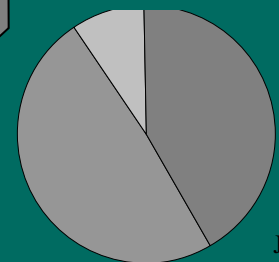
Degree-  
Seekers, 60%



Non-Degree-  
Seekers, 40%

206,373  
Students

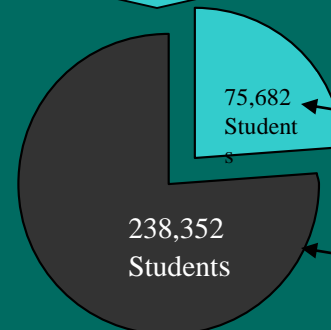
Basic  
Skills, 9%



Job Skills,  
49%

Personal  
Enrichment,  
42%

314,034  
Students



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

Do Not Complete  
within 6 Years, 76%

75,682  
Student

238,352  
Students

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## Completion Detail: Degree-Seekers

	% of Degree Seekers
2 <sup>nd</sup> year retention	50%
Course completion	61%
Completion:	
Certificate	3%
Associate	11%
Transfer	18%
Any completion	24%



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## Latinos and Blacks See Less Success

	White	Latino	Asian	Black
2 <sup>nd</sup> term retention	62.3%	62.6%	70.2%	52.2%
2 <sup>nd</sup> year retention	49.7%	50.4%	58.3%	38.9%
Complete:				
certificate	3.1%	3.2%	4.1%	2.8%
associate	11.6%	9.6%	13.2%	6.8%
any award	13.4%	11.5%	15.4%	8.5%
Transfer	20.8%	12.5%	25.1%	10.7%
Any completion	26.9%	18.0%	32.7%	15.2%

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## Older Students See Less Success

	Rates of Completion	
Age at Entry:	<u>Any Completion</u>	<u>Transfer</u>
17-19	27%	22%
20-24	22%	15%
25-29	20%	12%
30s	18%	9%
40 or over	16%	6%

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## Gender Gap

	All Students		Latino Students	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Certificate	4%	3%	4%	3%
Assoc. Degree	13%	8%	12%	7%
Transfer	19%	17%	14%	11%
Any Completion	26%	22%	20%	15%

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## Enrollment Patterns Matter

	Yes	No
<b>Continuously Enrolled</b> Completion	35% 40%	65% 24%
<b>Enrolled FT Majority of Terms</b> Completion	35% 47%	65% 12%
<b>Took an Orientation Course</b> Completion	16% 32%	84% 23%
<b>Dropped &lt; 20% of Courses</b> Completion	58% 35%	42% 9%
<b>Registered Late &lt; 20% of Courses</b> Completion	54% 27%	46% 21%



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# Policy Matters!

## Five Sets of Policies Inhibit Completion: *“Rules of the Game”*

- Enrollment-based funding
- Regulation of expenditures
- Restrictions on hiring
- Student fees and financial aid
- Guiding students' course-taking choices

### Key points:

- Variations across colleges
- Across all policies, there are few incentives for student success



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# Consultations and Interviews

- Chancellor's cabinet (two meetings)
- Vice Chancellor for Finance
- Vice Chancellor for Technology, Information Systems, Research
- Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Community College League of California (Board)
- Community College League of California (President)
- Association of Chief Business Officials (Board)
- Chief Student Services Officers (Board)
- Chief Instructional Officers (Board)
- Chief Instructional Officers (invited to annual conference)
- Academic Senate President and Vice President
- Phone interviews with fifteen college vice presidents
- Interviews with IR Directors
- Contract with Center for Student Success



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## Enrollment-based Funding

- Colleges receive most funds based on enrollment early in the term
- Incentives for “FTE Chase”
- Buying college enrollments
- **Solution**: incorporate incentives for colleges to help students succeed, e.g.,
  - Funding for students enrolled in next higher course level
  - Funding for students completing remediation
  - Align categorical formulas with purposes



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# Regulation of Expenditures

- 50% rule
- Categorical programs – elaborate rules about *how* funds are spent, extensive documentation
- Outmoded model of public accountability
  - All about *inputs*
- Limit colleges' ability to meet students' needs
- “One size fits all” for 109 diverse colleges?
- ***Solution***: flexibility *and* incentives for success



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## Restrictions on Hiring

- 75% of instruction by full-time faculty
- 60% limit on part-time faculty workload
- Two semester limit on temporary faculty
- Well-intentioned efforts to ensure quality
- Limit colleges' ability to offer courses in best interest of students and employers
- "One size fits all"
- ***Solution:*** flexibility *and* incentives for success



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## Student Fees and Financial Aid

- “Affordability” defined as low fees/fee waivers
  - Fees are only 5% of total cost
  - Forgo financial aid
  - Students work too much; attend part-time
- Colleges have little access to fee revenues
- ***Solution:***
  - Increase financial aid for non-fee costs of college
  - Provide financial incentives for full-time enrollment
  - Increase fee revenue without harming needy students
  - Allow campus based fees to encourage success





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## Students' Course-taking Choices

- Policies for assisting under-prepared students
  - Confusion about MALDEF legal challenge
  - Reluctance to set requirements for
    - Assessment
    - Placement in appropriate courses
    - Proper course sequences (prerequisites)
    - Advising and orientation
- ***Solution:***
  - Mandatory assessment, placement, orientation, prerequisites
  - Help students set program goals and pathways



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# Data-Related Barriers

- No clear data on student program objectives
- No data to tell a story about remediation
- Complex debate to have in the media
- Misunderstood because of another conversation



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# A Conversation About Institutional Accountability

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## Defending Against a Non-Attack

- IHELP research blamed public policies
- CCC defended institutional performance
- The case of the dueling numbers:
  - 24% v 52%
- Different Purposes - Equally Valid Measures



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# Denominator

## Accountability talk:

- CCC should not be held accountable for under-prepared students.
- It is not our fault.
- Measure: limit to 12 units + English/math attempt

## State-policy talk:

- Agreed. But we are not talking about fault. The state needs more of these students to get degrees.
- We must track their progress in order to improve it.
- Measure: all degree-seekers regardless of # units



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# Numerator

## Accountability talk:

- CCC should not be held accountable for transfer-ready students who don't transfer.
- We have done our part and it's not our fault if they don't transfer.
- Measure: include transfer-ready

## State-policy talk:

- Agreed, but the state needs more college degrees and these students aren't getting them.
- We need to find out why and do something about it.
- Measure: include only transfers



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# A Conversation About *The Public Agenda* for Higher Education

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## In Search of the Big Picture

- CA lacks statewide approach to planning for higher education
- No goals; no public agenda
- *An Accountability Framework for California Higher Education: Informing Public Policy and Improving Outcomes* (2002)
- SB 1331 – vetoed
- SB 324 (Scott) - new



# Shortcomings of Current Accountability Efforts (In CA and Elsewhere)



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- Too little focus on statewide goals
- Too much focus on individual institutions
- Obsession with comparing institutions
- Confusion of role => micromanagement
- Punitive basis/fear => resistance
- Lack of guidance to state policymakers
- “Data dumps”



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## Principles for Effective Accountability (Contained in SB 325)

- Accountability framework supports Strategic Plan
- Designed to help policymakers assess collective contribution of higher education to state goals
- Guide for segments – consistent with state goals
- Policymakers and governing boards are *collectively* accountable
- Policymakers: monitor progress toward state goals
- Governing boards: monitor performance of individual colleges and universities
- Only data that helps policymakers with policy and funding decisions



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## Different Roles: Policymakers v Boards

### Policymakers:

- Set state goals
- Ask for data relevant to budget/policy decisions
- Hold boards accountable for setting institutional goals that align with state goals
- Let boards manage institutions

### Governing Boards:

- Align institutional goals with state goals
- Review institutional data
- Address issues of institutional performance



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## SB 325 – Six Questions

1. Are enough Californians prepared for postsecondary education?
2. Are enough Californians going to college?
3. Is the system affordable to all Californians?
4. Are enough Californians successfully completing certificates and degrees?
5. Are college graduates prepared for life and work in California?
6. Are California's people, communities, and economy benefiting?



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# “Tiered Accountability”

**State Policy Goals**



**State Reporting System**

**State  
Social and  
Economic  
Data**



Statewide Indicators

Regional Indicators

System Aggregate Indicators  
for State Goals

Annual System Reports on  
Contributions to State Goals

**K-12  
Data**



System  
goals

State  
goals

**CCC Reporting  
System**



Campus Data

System  
goals

State  
goals

**CSU Reporting  
System**



Campus Data

System  
goals

State  
goals

**UC Reporting  
System**



Campus Data

System  
goals

State  
goals

**Independents  
Reporting System**



Campus Data

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## Our Agenda

- Continue to work toward SB 325
- Detailed reports forthcoming
  - Finance policy incentives and recommendations
  - Enrollment and course-taking patterns; more detail and recommendations
- Keep the focus on aggregate outcomes and state needs
- Push for new data that can answer key questions



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## What Can You Do?

- Support new accountability efforts – educate anyone who will listen about good v bad approaches
- Push for better data to answer key questions
  - New data fields
  - More accurate data (because it will be used)
- Continue to support system efforts to learn from data
  - Basic Skills literature review is key!
  - Push, when you can, for data that really answers important questions



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## Final Exam: What Are the Rules of the Game?

- A. No blood, no foul
- B. All's fair in love, war, and use of data
- C. State public policies that, if changed, could help the CCC better meet the needs of their students and keep our state Golden