



INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP & POLICY

IHELP BRIEF

Highlights of Findings on Latino Student Success*

Among degree-seeking students initially enrolling in the California Community Colleges (CCC), Latino students were less likely than white students to reach a set of intermediate milestones on the pathway to college completion, and to complete a certificate or associate degree or transfer to a university:

- While Latinos were about as likely as white students to persist to a second term and second year, they were less likely than white students to:
 - Complete at least 12 college-level credits (“college pathway status”) – 56% vs. 65%
 - Earn one year of college-level credits (30 semester credits), the minimum that research has found to correlate with a significant increase in earnings – 35% vs 42%
 - Complete a transfer curriculum, defined as 60 transferable credits including at least one course each in math and English – 12% vs 16%
 - Reach one of the “completion” outcomes, which include earning a certificate or associate degree or transferring to a university – 22% vs 37%.
- The low completion rate for Latino students was largely related to their low rate of transfer. Latinos were only a little less likely than white students to earn a certificate (4% vs 5%) or associate degree (10% vs 12%), but were *half as likely to transfer* to a university (14% vs 29%).
- Latino students face more bumps at the end of the road. The 30 credit threshold can provide “momentum” for completing an educational program. However, fewer Latinos who reached that point completed a certificate, degree or transfer (47%) compared to white (60%), Asian/Pacific Islander (58%), and black (53%) students.

- Because of their lower rates of success, Latino students made up a much lower share of community college “completers” (23%) than they did of incoming degree seekers (34%).

Among CCC students who transfer to a university, patterns vary across racial/ethnic groups:

- While Latinos were the least likely to transfer, those who did were actually more likely than most others to have first completed a transfer curriculum or associate degree at the CCC.
- Latino transfer students were the least likely to leave California, with only 15% transferring to out-of-state institutions, compared to nearly one-third of white transfer students.
- Latino transfer students were twice as likely as white transfer students to enroll in a for-profit university (16% vs 8%).

Some enrollment patterns are associated with a greater likelihood of completing a college program, but Latino students are less likely than white students to follow successful patterns:

- Among degree-seeking Latino students, 33% passed a college-level English course within 2 years of enrolling in the CCC and 25% passed a college-level math course within that time, compared to 39% and 30%, respectively, among white students.
- Twenty-one percent of Latino students earned at least 20 credits in the first year of enrollment, compared to 27% of white students.
- On average, Latino students completed 58% of attempted credits, meaning they dropped or failed more than 40%. White students completed 67% of attempted credits.

*Data and analysis excerpted from IHELP’s report
Divided We Fail: Improving Completion and Closing Racial Gaps in California Community Colleges

For the full report, visit www.csus.edu/ihelp

