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THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION for Latinx and Black Angelenos

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The City of Los Angeles—a vibrant metropolis with a diverse and dynamic population—is a critical economic and cultural hub for the state of California. California’s economy is the fifth largest economy in the world, but maintaining this dominance depends, in large measure, on the economic success of Los Angeles and its surrounding regions. Los Angeles’ success will be determined by the success of its schools, colleges, and universities in supporting students to enroll in college, complete a bachelor’s degree, and join the workforce with the skills and preparation needed to participate in a 21st Century economy.

INTRODUCTION

California is home to the nation’s largest Latinx population and the nation’s fifth largest Black population. Los Angeles County—the state’s most populous county—is home to roughly one third of Blacks and Latinx in the state.¹ **Ensuring equity in higher education access and success for Black and Latinx Californians requires building and maintaining robust pathways from LA’s high schools to its colleges and universities.** That includes ensuring Latinx and Black Angelenos are supported to graduate from high school fully eligible to enroll in the state’s public four-year systems. LA’s leaders must also ensure that Black and Latinx high school graduates enroll in college—community college or a four-year university—and provide them with the support they need to earn a bachelor’s degree and fully participate in California’s economy.

In this report, we note that California’s high schools, community colleges, and public four-year universities have increased enrollment and support for Black and Latinx students who seek associate and bachelor’s degrees. However, **the challenges associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic threaten to offset and undo years of improvements for California’s high schools and community colleges.**

Mirroring statewide trends that we noted in our 2021 reports, [*The State of Higher Education for Latinx Californians*](#) and [*The State of Higher Education for Black Californians*](#), Black and Latinx students in Los Angeles do not receive the support or opportunity needed to ensure they enroll in college and earn bachelor’s degrees at the same rates as their white peers.

Ensuring equity in higher education access and success for Black and Latinx Californians requires building and maintaining robust pathways from LA’s high schools to its colleges and universities.

THE GOOD NEWS:

- Making the A-G curriculum part of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) high school graduation requirements nearly doubled the share of Black and Latinx LAUSD graduates completing the courses required for eligibility to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) over the last decade.
- Among Latinx graduates who earned associate degrees from community colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) in 2019-2020, more than half were supported to earn an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT).
- Half of all first-time, full-time Black and Latinx students enrolling at California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA) are graduating within six years of their initial enrollment.
- Support for Latinx transfer students at Cal State LA has meant Latinx transfer students graduate in two and four years at rates exceeding those of their white peers.
- Over 80% of Black and Latinx freshmen at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) are supported to graduate in six years.
- Roughly two-thirds of Black (61%) transfer students and Latinx (68%) transfer students who enrolled at UCLA in 2016 were supported to earn a bachelor's degree in two years, with nine out of ten Black and Latinx transfer students who enrolled in 2016 graduating in four years.

THE BAD NEWS:

- The percentage of Black and Latinx students graduating from LAUSD who completed the A-G courses required for UC and CSU eligibility plummeted from 63% to 54% for Latinx graduates and from 53% to 46% for Black graduates in 2020.
- While newly released A-G completion data for the class of 2021 shows a rebound to pre-pandemic A-G completion rates, the gap between white and Latinx Graduates completing A-G has grown from three percentage points to 12 percentage points and the gap between white and Black graduates has grown from 13 percentage points to 17 percentage points.
- COVID-19 reduced first-time student enrollment at LACCD by 32% for Latinx students and 40% for Black students.
- Colleges in the LACCD have been slow to adopt and implement reforms to remedial coursework for incoming students. Only three of the nine colleges are considered strong implementers of placement reforms in English, and none are strong implementers of these reforms in math.
- Only six percent of Black students and seven percent of Latinx students earn a degree or certificate within three years of enrolling in LACCD colleges.
- Only a third of Black students who graduate from LACCD with associate degrees are supported to enroll in ADT pathways.
- Black and Latinx students are supported to transfer at far lower rates than their peers – only 13% of Black students and 13% of Latinx students enrolling in 2014-15 transferred within four years of enrolling, compared to 46% of white students.



Ensuring the residents of Los Angeles have access to a high-quality education and providing them with the support they need to succeed will require the efforts of policymakers at the state and local levels, with support from governments, campuses, and communities. Specifically, we offer the following recommendations for:



High Schools

- Ensure A-G coursework remains an integral part of LAUSD’s graduation requirements. The graduation requirement should ensure students complete A-G courses with a “C” grade or better so that LAUSD graduates will be eligible and prepared for UC and CSU admission. Schools should analyze their A-G completion data by race/ethnicity and set aggressive goals to close all gaps that persist.
- Ensure all high school seniors complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California DREAM Act Application to understand the resources they have available to attend and afford college.



Community Colleges

- Strengthen implementation of equitable placement reforms at colleges within the LACCD and ensure that students are supported to enroll in and pass transfer-level English and math coursework within one year of their initial enrollment in English and math courses.
- Improve transfer rates and close gaps by race/ethnicity by strengthening the ADT pathway to ensure students are supported to earn a degree and enroll in the CSU or UC.



Universities

- Support students to graduate in a timelier manner by improving four- and six-year college completion rates and closing all gaps by race/ethnicity.
- Expand outreach and enrollment of Latinx and Black students, ensuring a strong culture of belonging for students on campus and working to improve the representation of Black, Latinx, and Asian faculty.



State

- Increase enrollment funding for the UC and the CSU to increase the number of students who meet the eligibility requirements for the two systems and allow campuses like UCLA and Cal State LA to better serve students in their regions.



COVID-19

Challenges facing the residents of Los Angeles include educational quality and opportunity, housing, access to healthcare, and poverty rates, which vary widely by race/ethnicity. These challenges are decades old and the COVID-19 global pandemic has brought new challenges and worsened existing problems. In 2019, 20% of Black residents, 18% of Latinx residents, and nine percent of White residents were living under the federal poverty threshold.² Los Angeles and its residents have been hit hard by the COVID-19 global pandemic: 40% of LA County residents reported a loss of income during the initial year of the pandemic, and almost one in five (18%) reported losing their job during the pandemic.³ This same survey found that those who reported the most severe repercussions from the pandemic were disproportionately people without college degrees. Data from the LA County Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services Department shows the county lost close to half a million jobs in 2020 alone.⁴

Schools, colleges, and universities in the county transitioned their operations online, and students from K-12 schools to graduate schools were forced to adjust to an entirely online environment, but inequitable access to internet and technology resources has impacted opportunities for students to learn. According to the most recent US Census data, 87% of white residents had a broadband internet connection at home, compared to 81% of Black residents and 84% of Latinx residents.⁵

Nationally, community college enrollments are down—the most substantial declines in enrollment are among Black and Latinx students.⁶ Enrollments in public two-year colleges fell by nine percent from fall 2019 to fall 2020, and a further six percent decrease for fall 2021. Among Black and Latinx students, however, these declines were much steeper. Latinx community college enrollment fell 10% from fall 2019 to fall 2020, with another four percent decline the following year. Black student enrollment dropped 13% for fall 2020, driven by an 18% decline in enrollment among Black men that year. Black student enrollment fell a further six percent from fall 2020 to fall 2021. These trends are magnified in Los Angeles, where LACCD enrollments fell by over 30% from fall 2019 to fall 2020. While campuses and facilities have largely reopened, many schools and colleges began 2022 in a remote learning environment in response to the pandemic.

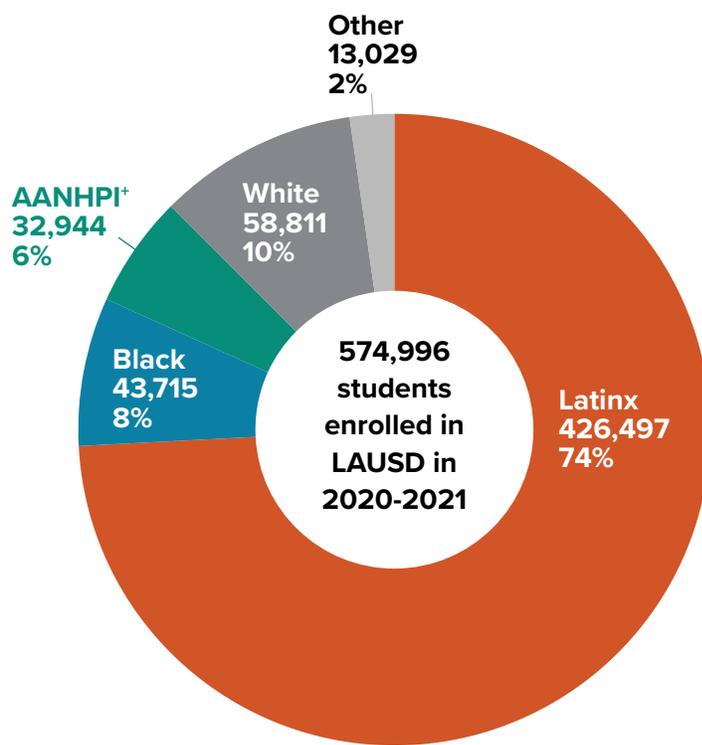
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

LAUSD serves the majority of students in kindergarten through 12th grade in Los Angeles. Educating over half a million students, LAUSD is the largest school district in the state and the second largest school district in the nation. With almost one-third of California’s Latinx population living in Los Angeles County, LAUSD is critical to the educational opportunity and pathway to college for California’s Latinx students. In 2020-21, almost one million (913,267) Latinx students were enrolled in LA County’s K-12 schools, and LAUSD alone enrolled almost half of them (426,497 Latinx students)—accounting for more than one in 10 Latinx students in California.⁷

Among the over 1,000 schools in LAUSD, 280 are charter schools—public schools that are under the district’s jurisdiction, but that offer alternative options for parents and students.⁸ In the 2020-2021 school year, 27% of LAUSD’s student population attended a charter school. Of the 155,553 charter school students, 66% were Latinx. The data shown in this report are inclusive of students enrolled in traditional public schools as well as charter schools within LAUSD’s structure.

Three out of four LAUSD students are Latinx.

Figure 1. K-12 Population by Race/Ethnicity, LAUSD, 2020-2021.



[†]Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander

Data Source: California Department of Education. (2021). DataQuest: 2020-2021 Enrollment by Ethnicity



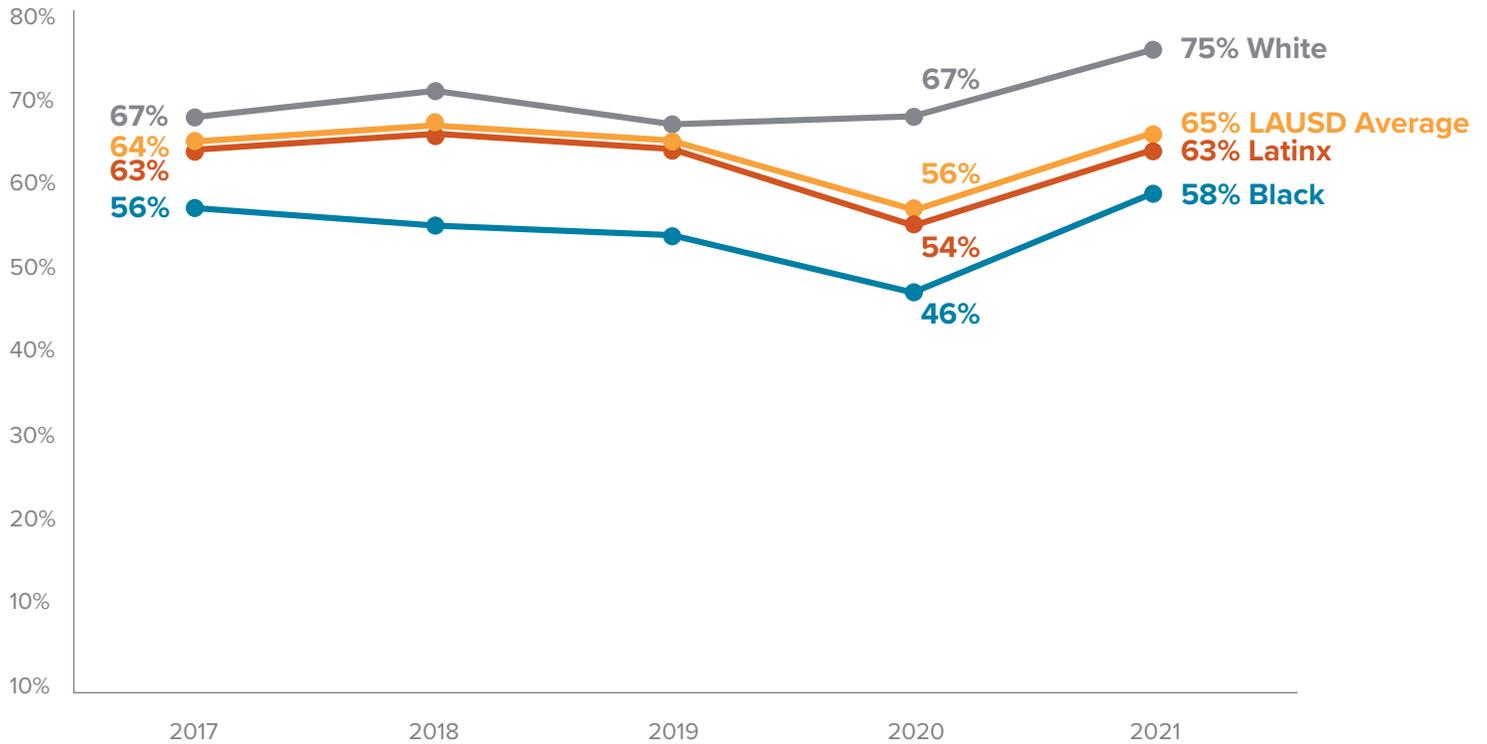
[*Alliance for a Better Community \(ABC\)*](#) recently gave LAUSD a “B” grade for Latinx graduation rates and for supporting students to complete the A-G courses required for UC/CSU eligibility, but the district earned a “D” grade for Latinx students’ enrollment in college after completing high school.⁹ In assigning this grade, ABC noted that in 2018, only 56% of LAUSD Latinx graduates enrolled in college, with White; Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI); and Black peers enrolling in college at higher rates. **Supporting Latinx students in California will require LAUSD to raise its grades.**

Although high school graduation rates for Latinx students were at 82% for students graduating in 2019-20—on par with the statewide graduation rate for Latinx students and steady relative to pre-pandemic levels—only 54% of Latinx graduates completed the A-G course requirements in 2019-20.¹⁰ **This represents a steep decline from the 63% A-G-completing students graduating in 2018-2019 school year, and it is 13 percentage points lower than the rate for white students in LAUSD, where previously the gap was three percentage points.**

While recently released data by LAUSD shows a positive rebound in completion rates for Latinx (from 54% to 63%) and Black students (from 46% to 58%), the gap to their white peers on this measure has grown significantly. Pre-pandemic, the gap was much smaller between white and Latinx students (only three percentage points); it is now 12 percentage points. For Black students the gap was 13 percentage points and is now 17 percentage points. This means that while the rebound is great news, white students in LAUSD continue to receive the type of support and college preparation that is leaps and bounds ahead of their Black and Latinx peers. Finally, while we celebrate the rebound in college preparation for the Class of 2021, we are concerned that over 2,700 Black and Latinx graduates in the Class of 2020 should have completed the A-G requirements, but were left behind.

In 2020, only 46% of Black graduates and 54% of Latinx graduates met the A-G course requirements for UC- and CSU- eligibility. Though Latinx and Black graduates in LAUSD have recovered to pre-pandemic levels of A-G completion, they are not receiving the support necessary to complete A-G requirements at the same levels as their white classmates.

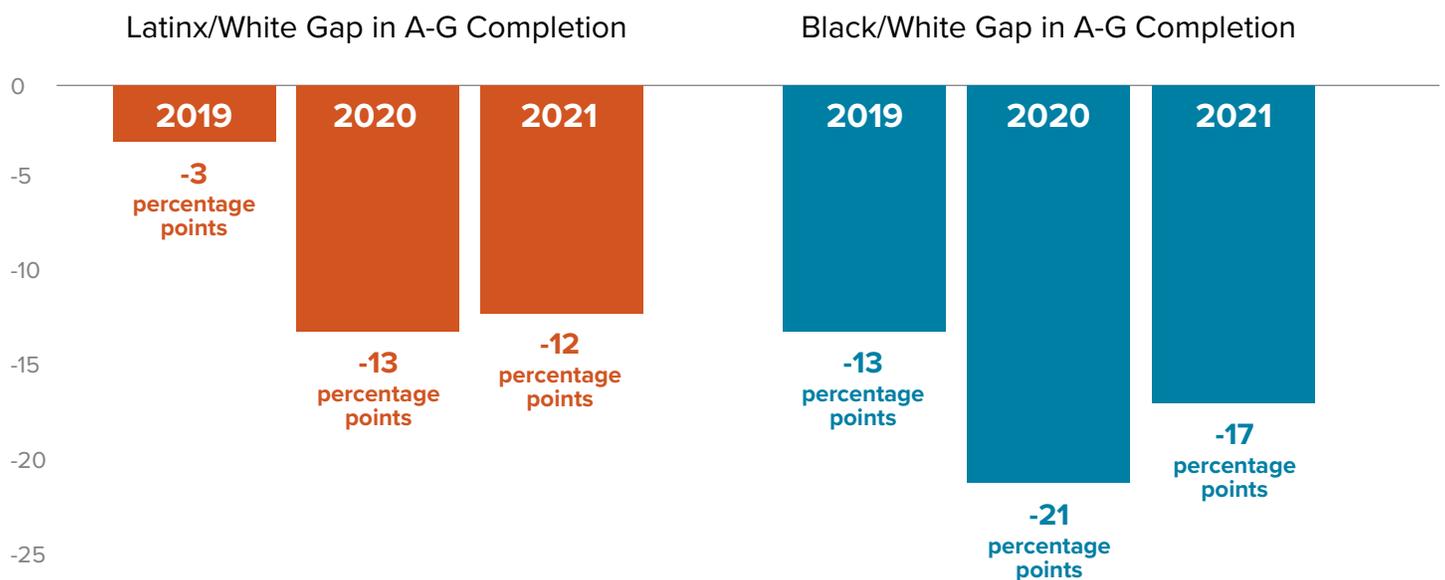
Figure 2. A-G Completion Rates for LAUSD Graduates.



Data source: California Department of Education. (2021). *DataQuest: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates & Outcomes*

Gaps in A-G completion between Latinx as well as Black graduates from LAUSD and their white peers grew dramatically from 2019 to 2021.

Figure 3. Gaps in A-G Completion Between Latinx and Black Graduates from LAUSD and Their White Peers.





Black students graduating from LAUSD have also seen declines in the rate at which they have been supported to complete the A-G course requirements. **Among Black students who graduated in 2019-2020, fewer than half (46%) were supported to complete the A-G courses students must take to apply for admission to the state’s four-year public university systems.** Initial reports for the class of 2022 are concerning, showing Black and Latinx students lagging their peers by as much as 17 percentage points in terms of A-G completion.¹¹

The pandemic has widened gaps beyond those found in A-G completion. And as Figure 2 and 3 above demonstrate, even amid a rebound in completion rates, the gap is growing for Latinx and Black students. During the remote learning periods, grades for Black and Latinx students dropped more steeply than grades awarded to white and Asian students in the district.¹² Further, the 2021 report [*Educational Recovery Now*](#) by Great Public Schools Now (GPSN) documented the impact of distance learning during the pandemic, and the increased number of LAUSD high school students that did not graduate in 2021 because of missing A-G coursework. GPSN argues that the number of students missing between 1 to 5 courses for graduation will increase beyond 20% in the coming years.¹³

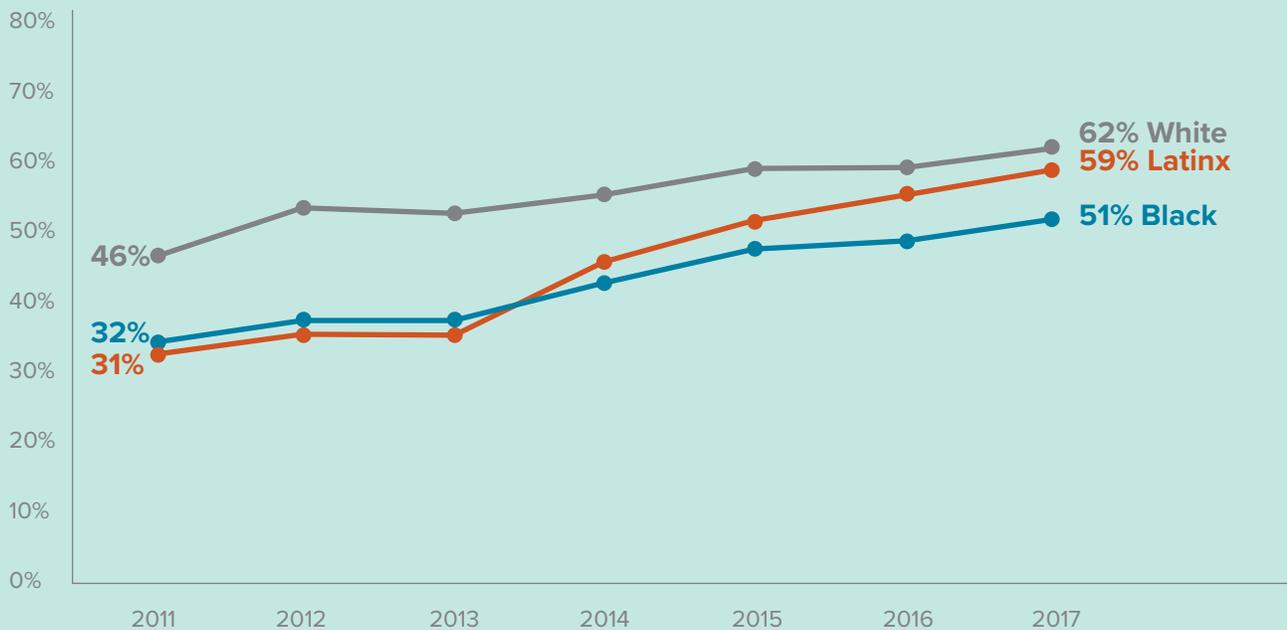


IN FOCUS A-G in LAUSD

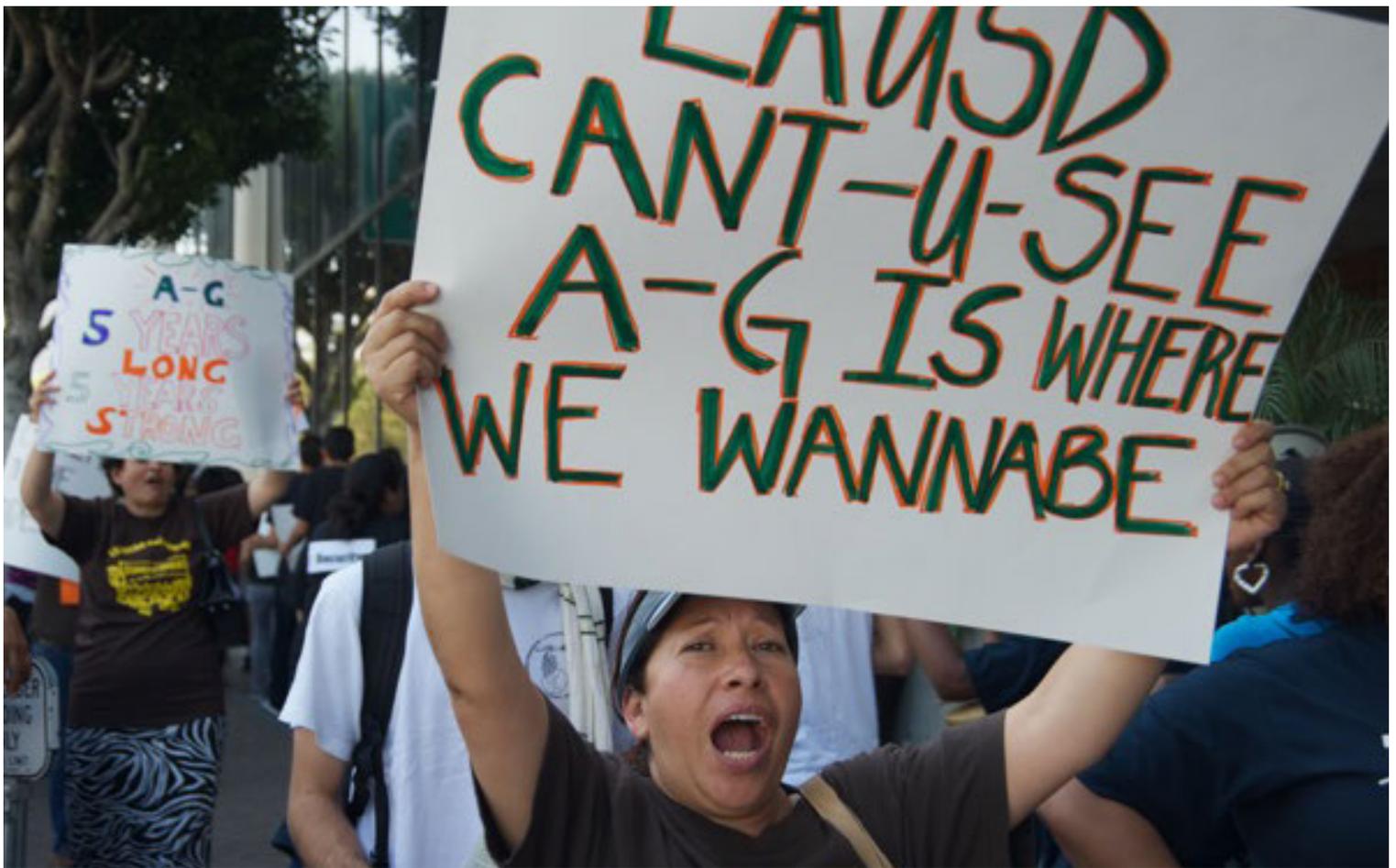
On June 14, 2005, LAUSD approved a resolution to include A-G coursework in the district's graduation requirement, with students graduating in 2016 as the first class required to complete an A-G course sequence to earn a high school diploma. This decision was momentous and has resulted in dramatic gains in the number of Black and Latinx LAUSD graduates who are eligible to apply to the UC and the CSU.

In the decade leading up to the implementation of LAUSD's A-G based graduation requirement, A-G rates climbed among graduates of all races and ethnicities, with Latinx students nearly closing the gap to their white peers.

Figure 4. Graduates from LAUSD Meeting the A-G Course Requirements for Eligibility to Apply to the UC and the CSU.



Data source: California Department of Education. (2021). DataQuest: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates & Outcomes



A decade ago, only 31% of Latinx graduates and only 32% of Black graduates in the class of 2011 met the A-G requirements.¹⁴ In 2015, the year prior to the full implementation of the requirement of the A-G course sequence, roughly 50% of Latinx graduates and 45% of Black graduates in the class of 2015 had completed the A-G requirements.¹⁵ For the class of 2016, the first cohort of LAUSD graduates required to complete the A-G course sequence, 54% of Latinx graduates completed A-G coursework, and 48% of Black graduates had completed an A-G sequence.¹⁶

In 2017, LAUSD updated its reporting to account for student mobility in calculating graduation rates and rates of A-G completion, making it difficult to compare the data in Figures 2 and 4.ⁱ In Figure 4 however, we see a clear upward trend in the percentage of LAUSD graduates who completed the A-G requirements, and a substantial reduction in equity gaps for both Latinx and Black students.

Unfortunately, the latest data also shows a growing gap in completion rates following a drastic decline amid the COVID-19 global pandemic.

ⁱBeginning with the 2016-17 academic year, the California Department of Education began reporting the number of graduates meeting the A-G requirements who were members of the adjusted cohort (the set of students expected to graduate in that academic year), rather than the number meeting these requirements independent of their starting year.

Aligning the K-12 curriculum with postsecondary preparation forces LAUSD to ensure students have access to a rigorous curriculum that puts them on a path to college and increases college-going rates for students.¹⁷ Providing access to these courses and support to complete them will ensure more students—in particular more Latinx and Black students—will be on the pathway to college and graduate from high school eligible to apply to the state’s four-year university systems. Additionally, support for this graduation policy reinforces the importance of high academic expectations and access to A-G coursework for all students, including historically underserved students who are most often tracked out of college-preparatory pathways.¹⁸

Requiring A-G courses for graduation, however, will only reduce equity gaps if LA’s Black and Latinx students have access to this rigorous curriculum and the support required to earn a “C” or better in these courses.¹⁹ The resolution passed in 2005 allowed students to graduate if they earned a “D” or better in their A-G courses, but it specified that the class of 2017 would need a “C” or better in these courses to graduate. In 2015, however, the district reverted to a “D” or better standard. **This means that LAUSD students can still earn a high school diploma but not be eligible to apply to the UC and CSU since both systems require students to earn a “C” or better in their A-G courses.**²⁰ Among the graduating class of 2021, 81% of students received a high school diploma, meaning students completed the A-G courses and met the “D”-grade requirement. Only 58% of these graduates, however, met the UC/CSU eligibility requirements by completing these courses with “C” grades or better. **This means over 10,000 graduates from LAUSD’s Class of 2020 were not eligible to apply to a CSU or UC campus, despite receiving a high school diploma.**²¹

And while new data demonstrates a promising rebound in completion rates for the Class of 2021, the rebound has not closed gaps by race/ethnicity. Meaning that white students are being significantly better prepared for college by LAUSD than Black and Latinx students are.

Students must be supported to complete the A-G requirements with the grades required for UC and CSU eligibility. Additionally, efforts for long-term progress in academic achievement for Latinx and Black students must also address other systemic factors that impact success, including increasing the breadth of course offerings, strengthening classroom instruction, and providing equitable institutional support to achieve meaningful change.²²



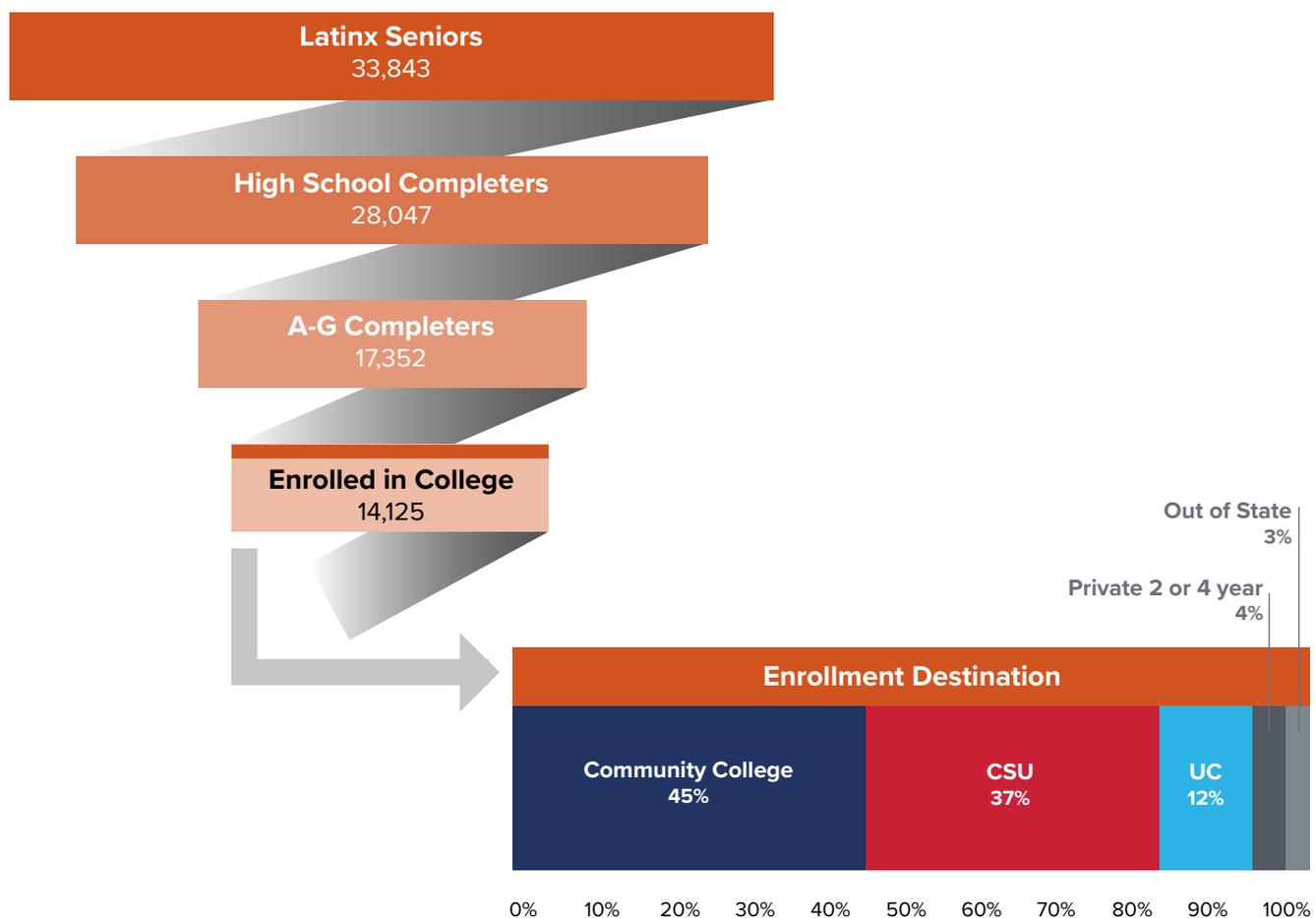


College Attendance

Ensuring A-G completion does not guarantee college enrollment, and Black and Latinx graduates from LAUSD who complete the A-G requirements enroll in college at rates below their white peers who complete the A-G requirements. In 2018, 63% of Latinx graduates who completed the A-G requirements enrolled in college within 12 months of graduation. This means about one-third of the state's Latinx high school graduates who were eligible to apply to the UC and the CSU did not enroll in college.

Only half of Latinx high school completers in LAUSD are sufficiently supported to enroll in college.

Figure 5. Outcomes for LAUSD Latinx Seniors, 2017-2018.

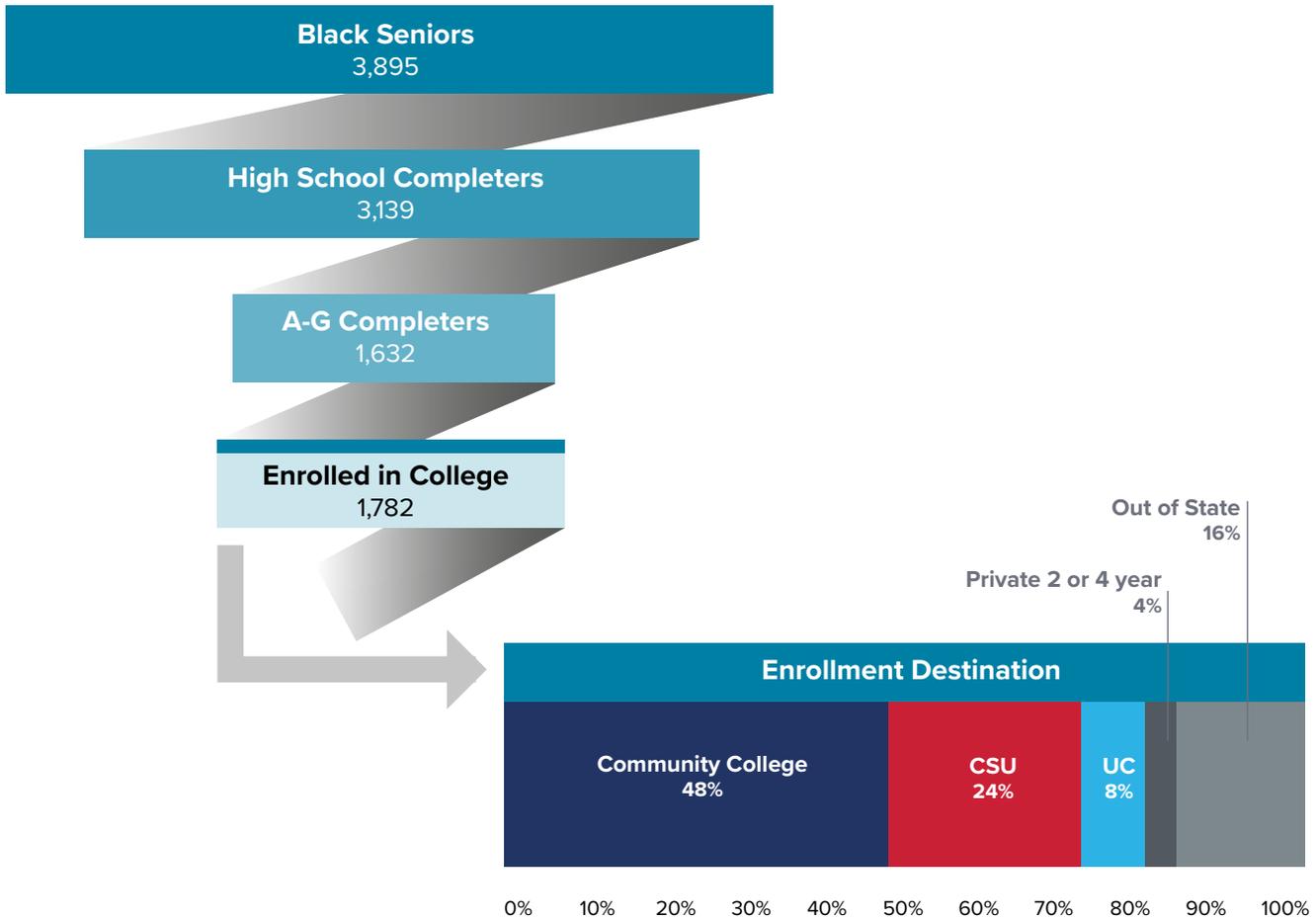


Data source: California Department of Education. (2021). DataQuest: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates & Outcomes; California Department of Education. (2021). DataQuest: College Going Rate for High School Students

Of the Latinx LAUSD students who enrolled in higher education after high school completion in 2018, 45% enrolled at a community college, 37% enrolled at a CSU, only 12% enrolled in the UC, and four percent attended a private two- or four-year institution.²³

More Black seniors from LAUSD enrolled in colleges outside of California than enrolled in the UC.

Figure 6. Outcomes for LAUSD Black Seniors, 2017-2018.



Data source: California Department of Education. (2021). DataQuest: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates & Outcomes; California Department of Education. (2021). DataQuest: College Going Rate for High School Students

In 2018, 71% of Black LAUSD graduates who completed the A-G requirements enrolled in college within 12 months of high school graduation. While this is 30 percentage points higher than the 41% of Black graduates who enrolled in college without completing the A-G requirements, this means that roughly three of the ten Black graduates eligible to apply to a UC or CSU did not enroll in college. Of the Black graduates who did enroll in college, 48% enrolled at a California Community College, 24% at a CSU, 8% at a UC, four percent at a private two- or four-year institution, and 16% enrolled out of state.

LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

In fall 2020, LACCD enrolled a total of 133,128 students across nine campuses, making up more than nine percent of the total community college population in the state. As noted above, the largest share of LAUSD students who attend college enroll in a community college as a first-time student. LACCD's student population is predominantly Latinx (59%), while white students account for about 16% of LACCD students.

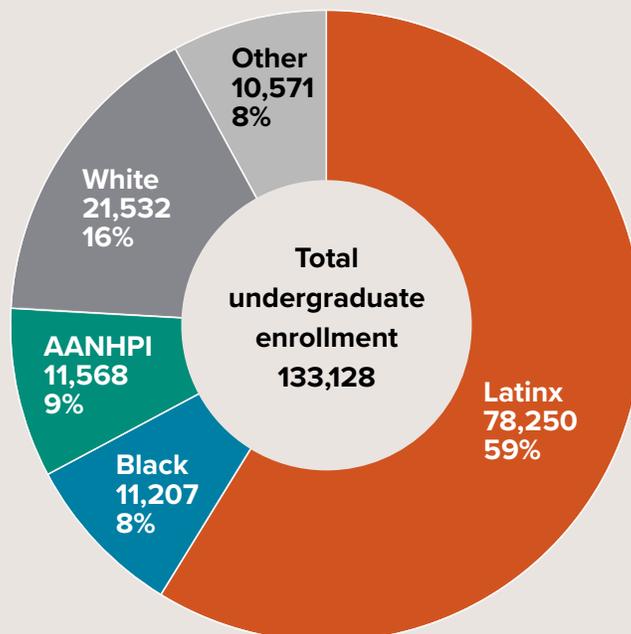
15% of Black students
15% of Latinx students
30% of White students

enrolling in LACCD in Fall 2017 earned an award or transferred within three years.

Data Source: Los Angeles Community College District. (2022) Momentum Points [Data Dashboard]

More than half of Los Angeles community college students are Latinx.

Figure 7. Los Angeles Community College District Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2020.



Data Source: California Community College Chancellor's Office. (2021). *Management Information Systems Data Mart.*



COVID 19 and LACCD Enrollments

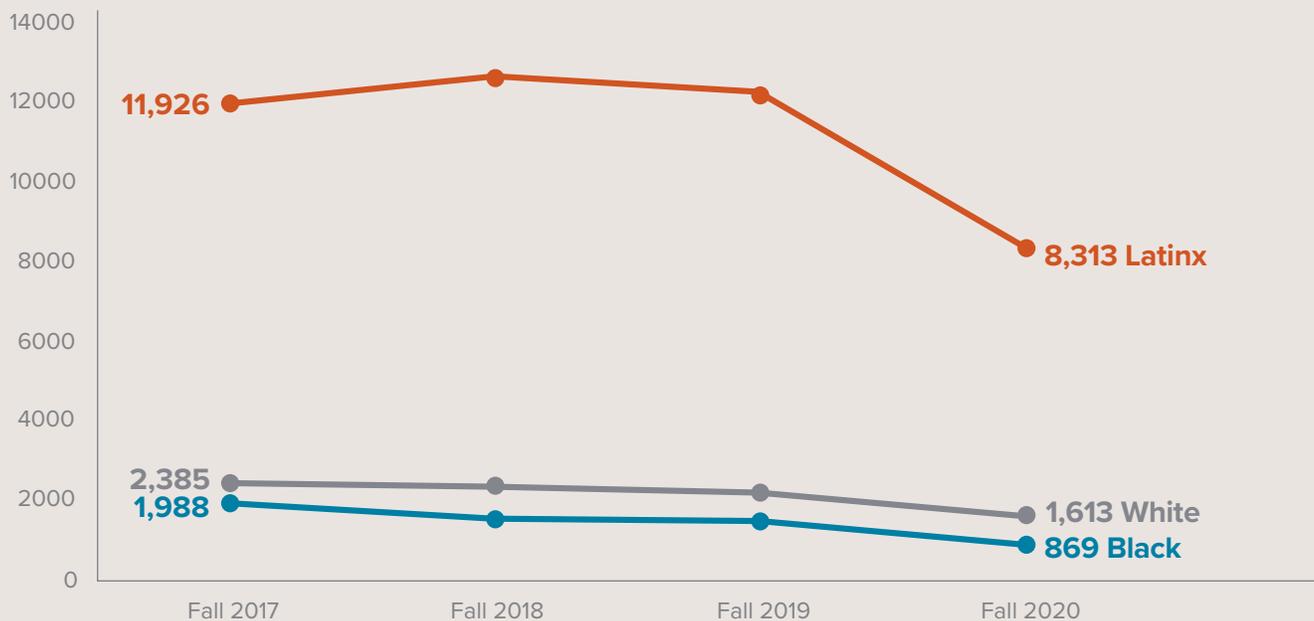
Nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant decline in community college enrollments, with the greatest declines among Black and Latinx students—in particular amongst Black and Latino men.²⁴ The decline in enrollment was evident in Los Angeles as well.

In fall 2019, prior to the onset of the pandemic, 18,161 students enrolled at a LACCD campus as first-time students. In fall 2020, the number of first-time students enrolling fell to 12,408 – a decline of 31%. Declines for Black and Latinx students have been particularly steep. Figure 8 shows the enrollment of first-time Latinx, Black, and white students in LACCD for the past four fall semesters. **Between fall 2019 and fall 2020, Black student enrollment fell 40%, while Latinx student enrollment was down by 32%.**



The number of Black students enrolling in LACCD fell by over 40% from fall 2019 to fall 2020, while the number of Latinx students enrolling as first-time students dropped by almost a third (32%).

Figure 8. Enrollment Counts for Students Enrolling as First-Time Students in LACCD.



Data Source: Los Angeles Community College District. (2021). Characteristics of First-Time Students Entering LACCD in Fall Terms [Data Dashboard]
Photo: Cmorozco, CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>, via Wikimedia Commons.

Remedial Education Placement Reforms and LACCD

Prior to significant legislative reforms, a majority (75%) of California students, disproportionately Black and Latinx, were placed in remedial college courses upon entry at community colleges.²⁵ Only one in five of these students would ever earn a degree, but studies have shown that all students have a higher chance of completion when enrolled directly into college-level courses – especially with the right supports in place. **Bold reforms to the way community colleges place and support incoming students, thanks to the passage and implementation of Assembly Bill 705 (AB 705), have had significant positive impacts on students all over California, but LA’s community colleges have been slower to embrace these changes.**

The [California Acceleration Project](#) examined course catalogues at California’s community colleges to determine the degree to which colleges were implementing AB 705’s reforms. Colleges were classified as strong implementers in a subject if more than 90% of their introductory course sections were transfer-level. **Only three LACCD colleges were identified as strong implementers in English— Los Angeles Mission, Los Angeles Southwest, and West Los Angeles. No LACCD campuses were identified as strong implementers in math.** This means that too many LACCD community college students are still being placed in remedial courses, instead of receiving the opportunity and supports to succeed through placement in college-level English and math courses — courses required to begin the journey to transfer and degree.

There are no LACCD colleges where more than half of students took and passed transfer-level math within one year of their initial math enrollment. Furthermore, East Los Angeles, Los Angeles Mission, Los Angeles City, Los Angeles Valley, Los Angeles Harbor, and Los Angeles Pierce colleges all have large equity gaps in the passage of transfer-level math within one year of their initial math enrollment between Latinx students and their peers.²⁶



The California College Promise was established through Assembly Bill 19 (AB 19) in October 2017. Administered through the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, the California College Promise provides funds to community colleges to provide one year of free tuition for first-time, full-time students. Though not required, each community college district or campus is encouraged to intentionally contribute to addressing access and support for first-time, full-time students within their local context to be eligible to receive funds.²⁷ In 2019, Assembly Bill 2 (AB 2) authorized community colleges to cover tuition for students in their second year who met the requirements their first year and maintained their first-time, full-time students in their second year.²⁸

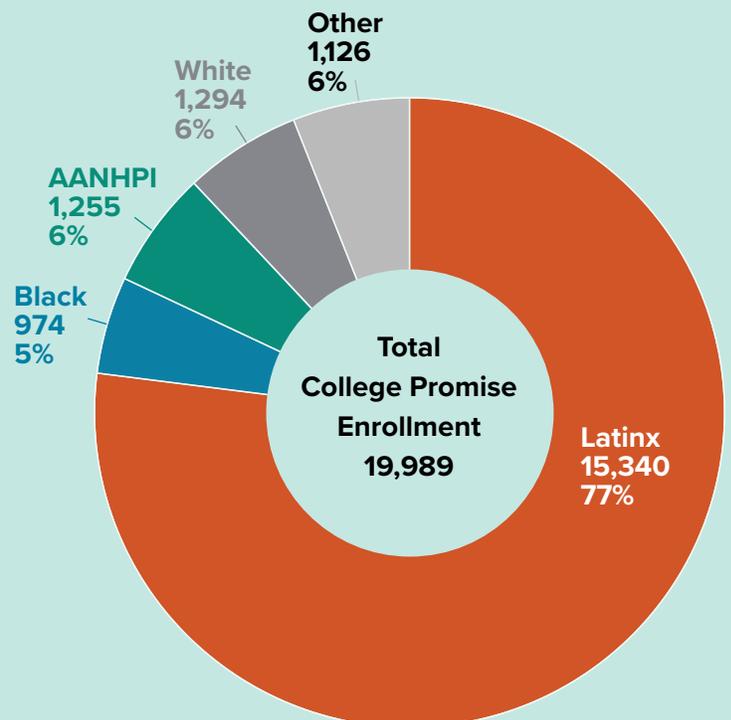
In September 2017, the LACCD, LAUSD, and the City of Los Angeles began the LA College Promise. The LA College Promise is part of Los Angeles' commitment to addressing equity in college access within local communities. The LA College Promise guarantees admission for first-time, full-time students within one of the nine colleges in the LACCD, up to two years of free tuition, a free summer transition program, and priority enrollment for math and English coursework.²⁹

Within Los Angeles, the LA College Promise has supported 19,989 students across the 2017-2020 entering cohorts, the initial four years of the

existence of the LA College Promise. The majority of LA College Promise students are Latinx (77%), with 15,340 Latinx students supported by the program in its initial four years. White students make up seven percent of the LA College Promise student population, followed by AANHPI (Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander) students at six percent, and Black students at five percent.³⁰

The majority of Los Angeles College Promise students are Latinx.

Figure 9. Los Angeles College Promise Total Students by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-2020.



Source: Los Angeles College Promise Dashboard, 2017-2020

LA College Promise cohorts had been growing since the start of the program in 2017, yet there was a 21% drop in LA College Promise students between the 2019 and 2020 cohorts that is likely, in part, due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact on community college enrollment. A closer look indicates Latinx, and Black students experienced the largest drop, 24% and 34%, respectively, in LA College Promise participation between 2019 and 2020.³¹

There was a significant drop in Latinx and Black Student LA College Promise participation between 2019 and 2020.

Figure 10. Los Angeles College Promise Students by Race/Ethnicity Across Cohorts, 2017-2020.



Source: Los Angeles College Promise Dashboard, 2017-2020

Across the 2017-2020 cohorts, approximately 68% of LA College Promise students completed entry-level English and 44% completed entry-level Math, both of which are required for transfer.³² Further expansion of the LA College Promise is contributing to a higher proportion of full-time students, a requirement to be eligible for the Promise program.³³

Currently, most College Promise programs in California, including the LA College Promise, only support full-time, first-time students.³⁴ The full-time enrollment requirement to participate in and benefit from College Promise programs is a significant barrier for part-time students, who make up a vast majority of California's community college student population.³⁵

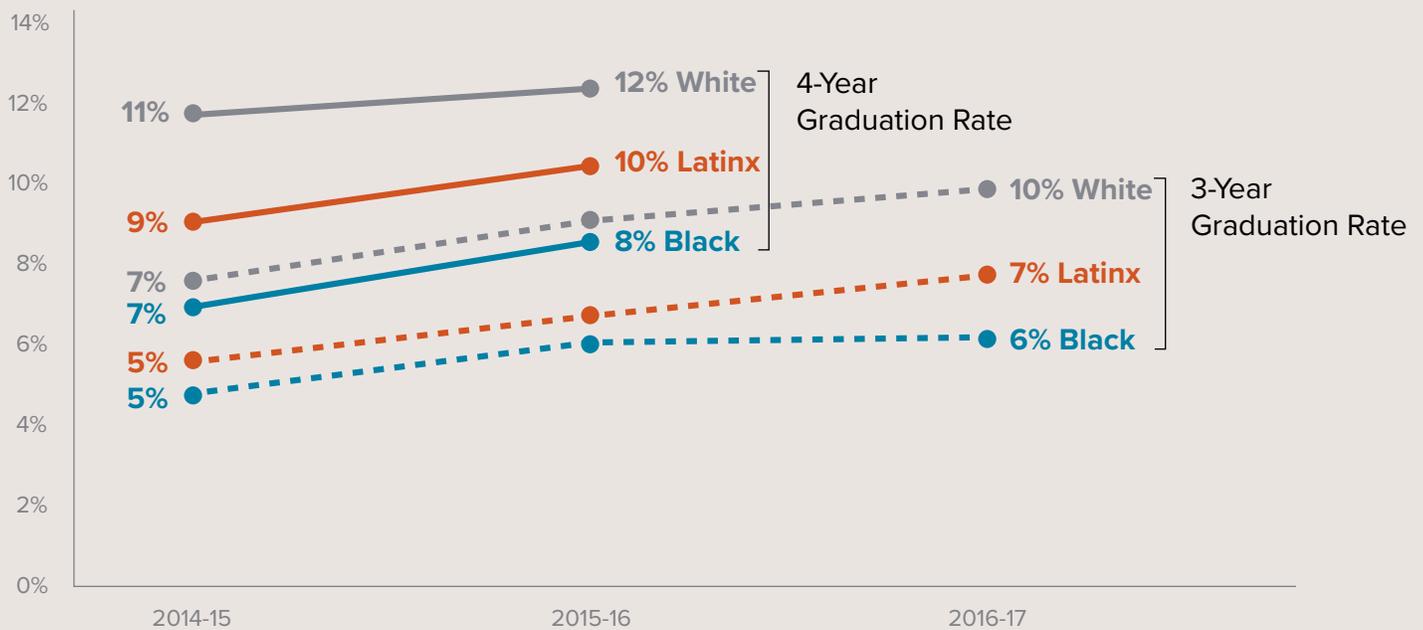


Degree- and Certificate-Completion at LACCD

The percentage of students earning an associate degree or certificate has increased by just one or two percentage points across LACCD over the most recent sets of students who have enrolled, but substantial equity gaps persist in outcomes. As can be seen in Figure 11, 10% of Latinx students and eight percent of Black students are earning associate degrees or certificates within four years. White students are supported to complete degrees and certificates within four years at two percentage points above Latinx students and four percentage points above Black students.

Only eight percent of Black students and only 10% of Latinx students are supported to earn a degree or certificate from LACCD within four years of their initial enrollment.

Figure 11. Three- and Four-Year Graduation Rates for Black, Latinx, and White Students at LACCD.



Data Source: CalPass Plus. (2021). Student Success Metrics: All Students - Cohort View [Data Dashboard]

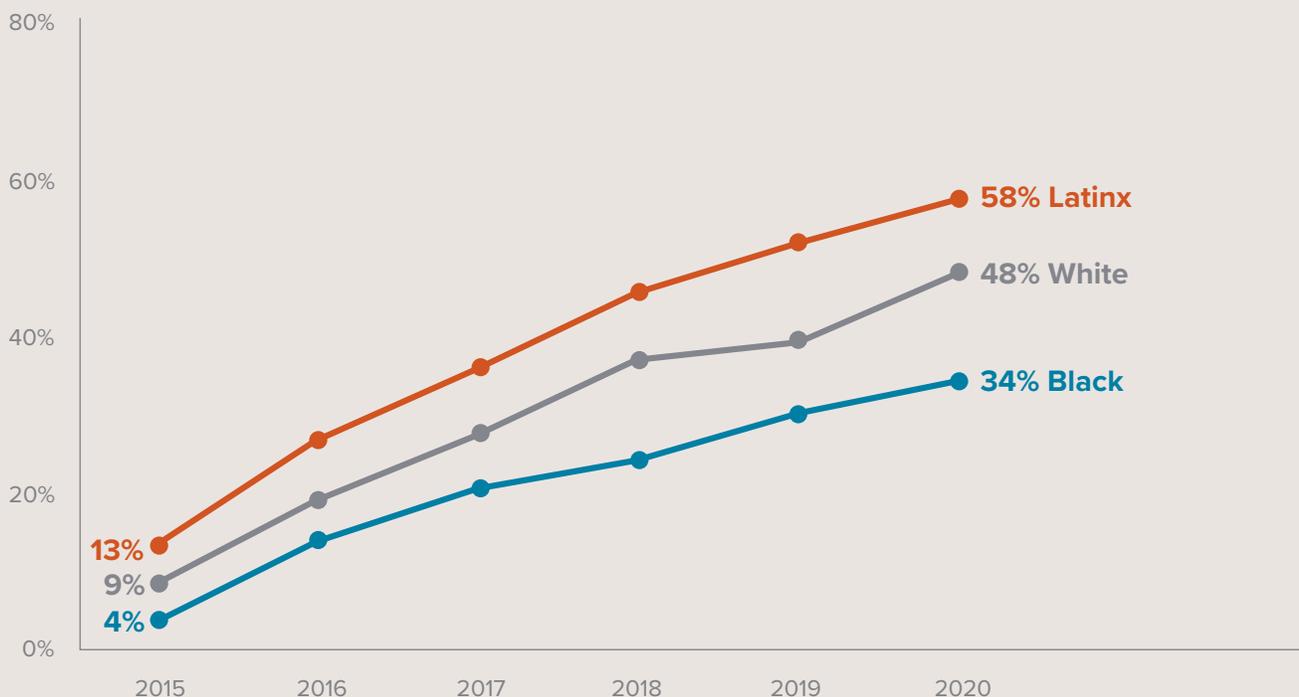
Associate Degree for Transfer

In 2010, California created the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) to strengthen the transfer pathway and decrease time-to-degree. A student on an ADT pathway earns 60 units at the California Community Colleges, then transfers to a CSU with guaranteed admission and junior standing, where they earn their B.A. after 60 upper-division units. Importantly, even when there are capacity constraints, the ADT still guarantees admission to the CSU system and provides a GPA bump to make ADT candidates more likely to be accepted to their campus of choice. During the aftermath of the Great Recession of 2007-2009, when state support for California's public colleges and universities was dramatically reduced and competition for university seats was fierce, this guarantee ensured that ADT students were not turned away.

The preferred pathway for LACCD students is now the ADT pathway. Among students earning an associate degree in 2019-2020, 53% were supported to earn an ADT. There are, however, deep disparities by graduates' race/ethnicity. As can be seen in Figure 12 below, 58% of Latinx students who earned associate degrees in 2019-2020 earned ADTs. Only one-third of Black associate-degree-earners, however, had been supported to complete an ADT pathway.

More than half (58%) of Latinx associate-degree-earners earn ADTs, but only a third (34%) of Black graduates with associate degrees are supported to earn ADTs.

Figure 12. Associate Degree-Earners Awarded ADTs at LACCD.



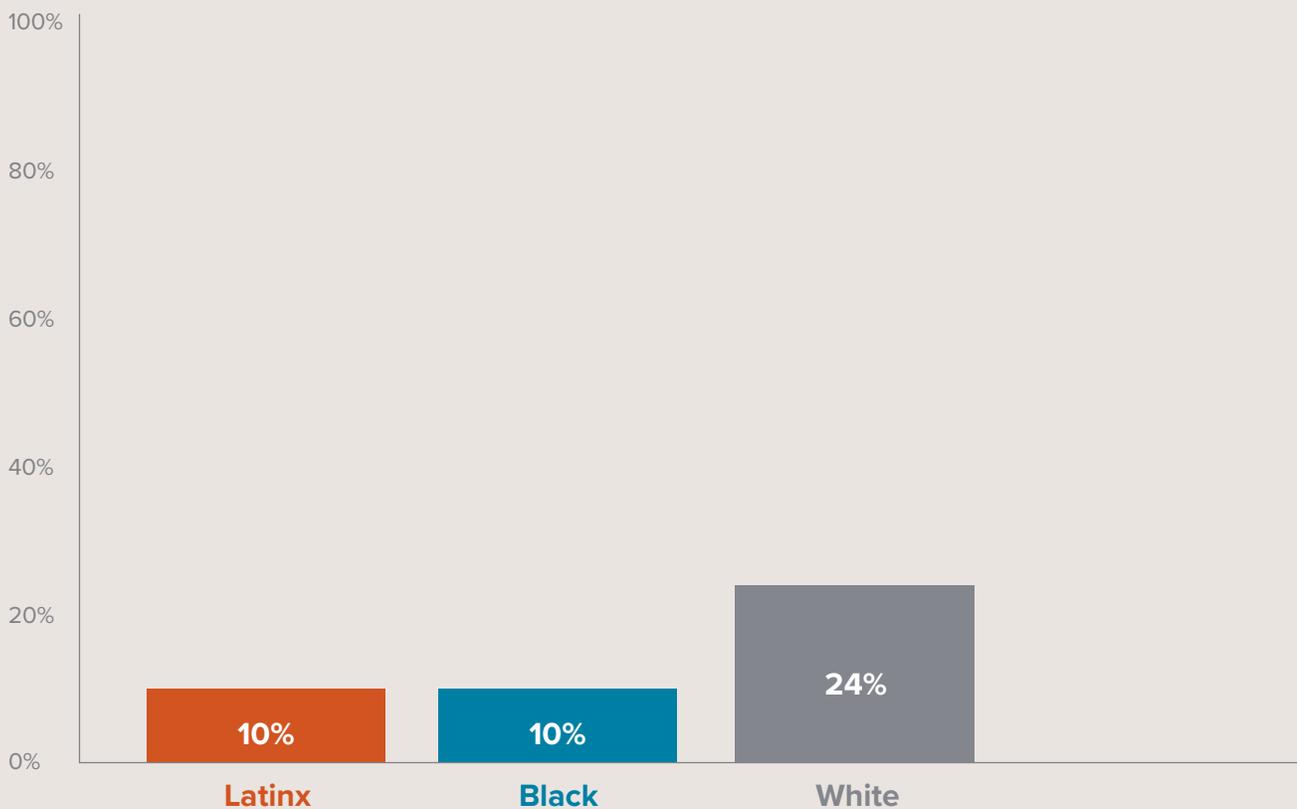
Data Source: CalPass Plus. (2021). Student Success Metrics: All Students [Data Dashboard]

Transfer from LACCD to Four-Year Universities

Fifteen percent of students who enrolled in an LACCD campus in 2014-2015 transferred to a four-year college or university within four years, but dramatic equity gaps persist among students by race/ethnicity. Thirteen percent of Latinx students who enrolled in 2014-15 were supported to transfer within four years, as were 13% of Black students, compared to 23% of white students entering LACCD that year who transferred within four years.

Only 10% of Black and Latinx students enrolling in Fall 2017 transferred to a four-year university within three years.

Figure 13. Three-Year Transfer Rates for Students Enrolling in LACCD, Fall 2017.



Data Source: Los Angeles Community College District. (2022) *Momentum Points* [Data Dashboard]

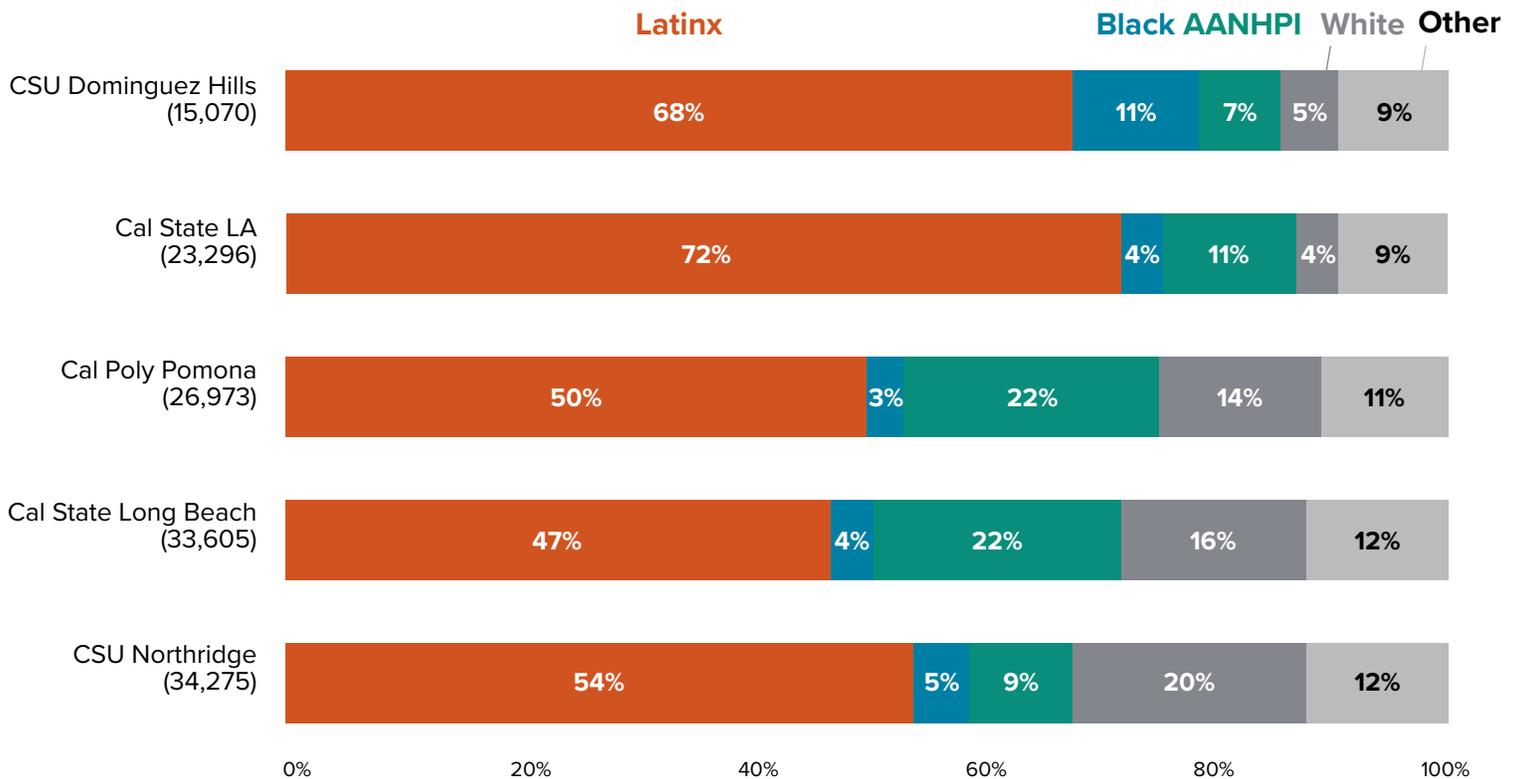


CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

There are five CSUs in Los Angeles County, enrolling a combined 133,219 undergraduate students in fall 2021. Of these students, 74,765 were Latinx. Black students accounted for 6,147 students, with California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSU Dominguez Hills) enrolling the largest Black population with 1,648 Black students.

Latinx students are the largest demographic group at all Los Angeles County CSUs. Only CSU Dominguez Hills has a population where Black students account for more than 10%.

Figure 14. Fall 2021 Total Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity at LA County CSUs.



Data Source: California State University. (2021) State-Supported Enrollment [Data Dashboard].



A comparison of graduation rates across these CSU campuses by racial/ethnic groups indicates inequities in supporting students towards graduation within and across institutions. Of the CSUs in Los Angeles County, California State University, Long Beach (Cal State Long Beach) supports Black students to earn a bachelor's degree in six years at a slighter higher rate than any other CSU in the county, with 65% of Black undergraduates who enrolled in fall 2015 graduating within six years. California State University, Northridge (CSUN) supported fewer than one in ten Black students to earning their degrees within four years (nine percent), with only seven percent of Black students enrolling at CSU Dominguez Hills supported to complete their degrees within four years.

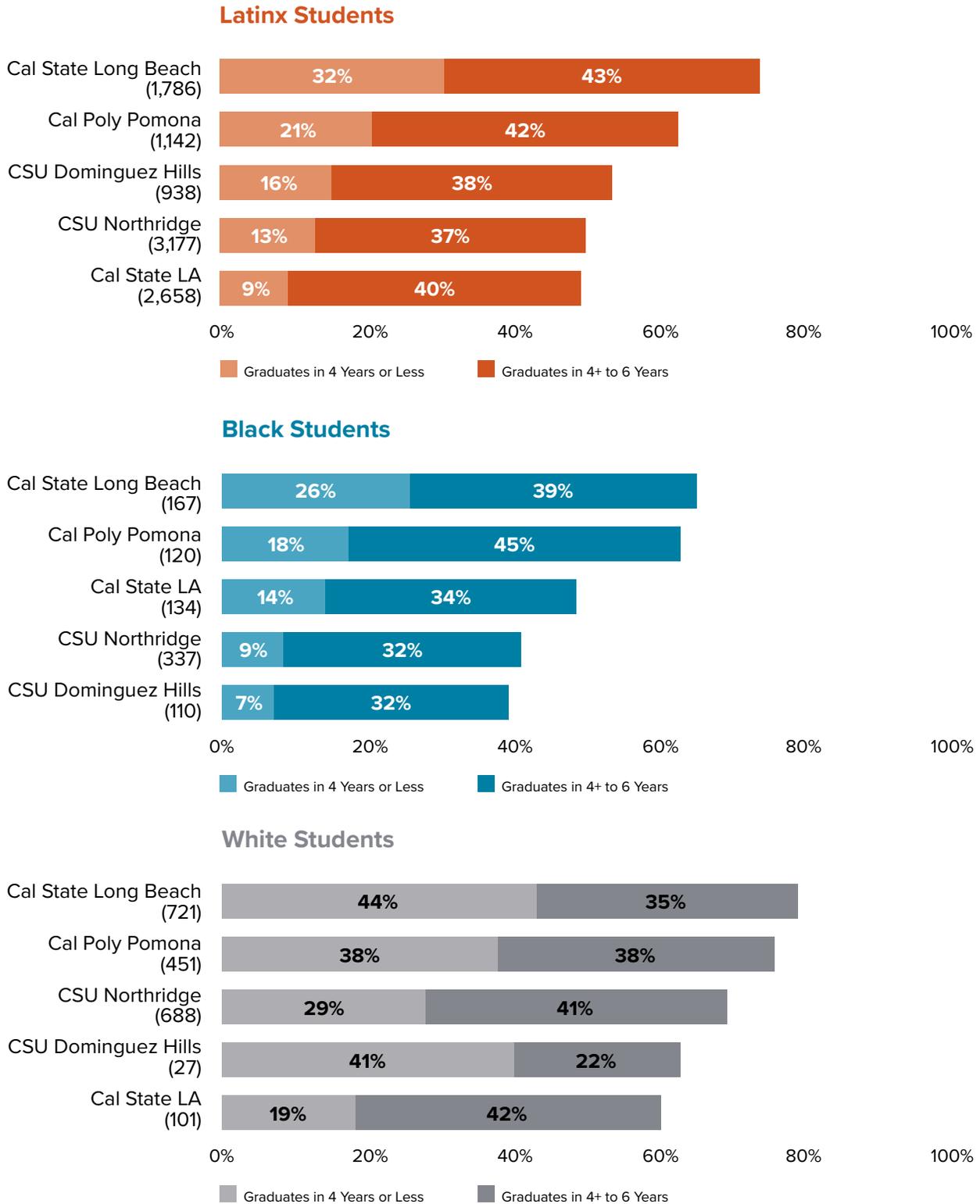
Cal State Long Beach graduates Latinx students at the highest rate of all the CSUs in Los Angeles County (74%), followed by the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona) with a 63% graduation rate by six years for Latinx undergraduates. CSU Dominguez Hills is graduating Latinx students at a rate of 54%. CSUN and Cal State LA, the two campuses with the highest Latinx enrollments, graduate Latinx students at a rate of 50% and 49%, respectively. These are the lowest rates of the five area-CSU campuses.

White students have the highest graduation rates across the CSUs in Los Angeles County compared to their Black and Latinx peers. Cal State Long Beach graduates 79% of white students within six years, followed by Cal Poly Pomona at 76%. Cal State LA has the lowest graduation rates for White students (61%), which is nearly 13 points higher than the graduation rates for their Black and Latinx students.

Across all the CSU campuses in this analysis, white students are supported to graduate in both four and six years at higher rates than their Black and Latinx peers.

Across the Los Angeles-area CSUs, Black and Latinx students are not supported to graduate in four or six years at the rates of their white peers.

Figure 15. Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates for First-Time, Full-Time Students, Fall 2015 Cohort at LA County CSU Campuses.



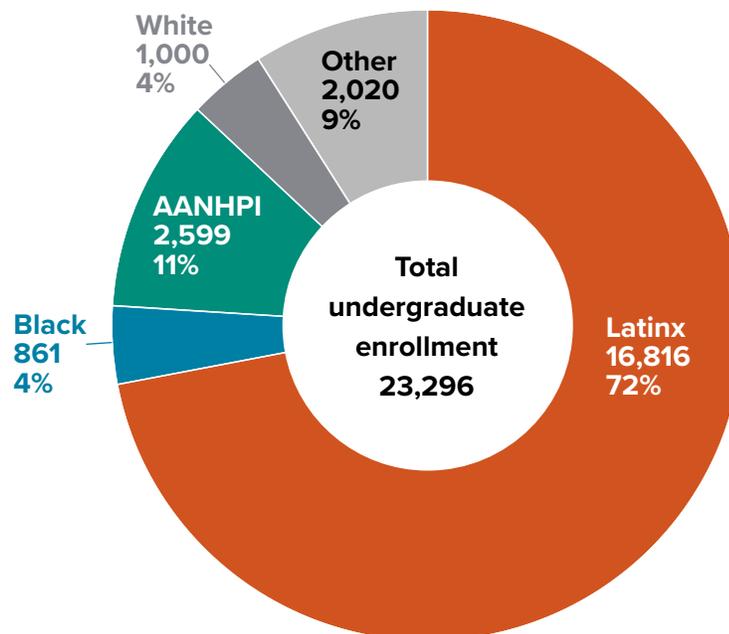
Data Source: California State University. (2021) Graduation and Continuation Rates [Data Dashboard].

Cal State LA

Cal State LA, the only CSU in the City of Los Angeles, has been recognized as one of the top campuses in the nation for economic mobility. The campus, though, has low graduation rates relative to other CSUs in Los Angeles County for all racial/ethnic groups in our analysis. Of the five CSUs, Cal State LA ranks third in the graduation rates for Black students (48%) in Los Angeles County. Cal State LA ranks last for Latinx (49%) and White (59%) graduation rates among CSUs in the county. To further understand Cal State LA's graduation rates, we take a closer look into longitudinal graduation rates by race/ethnicity for first-time freshmen and transfer students.

Almost three-quarters of Cal State LA's undergraduate population is Latinx.

Figure 16. Cal State LA Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, Fall 2021.



Data Source: California State University. (2021) State-Supported Enrollment [Data Dashboard].

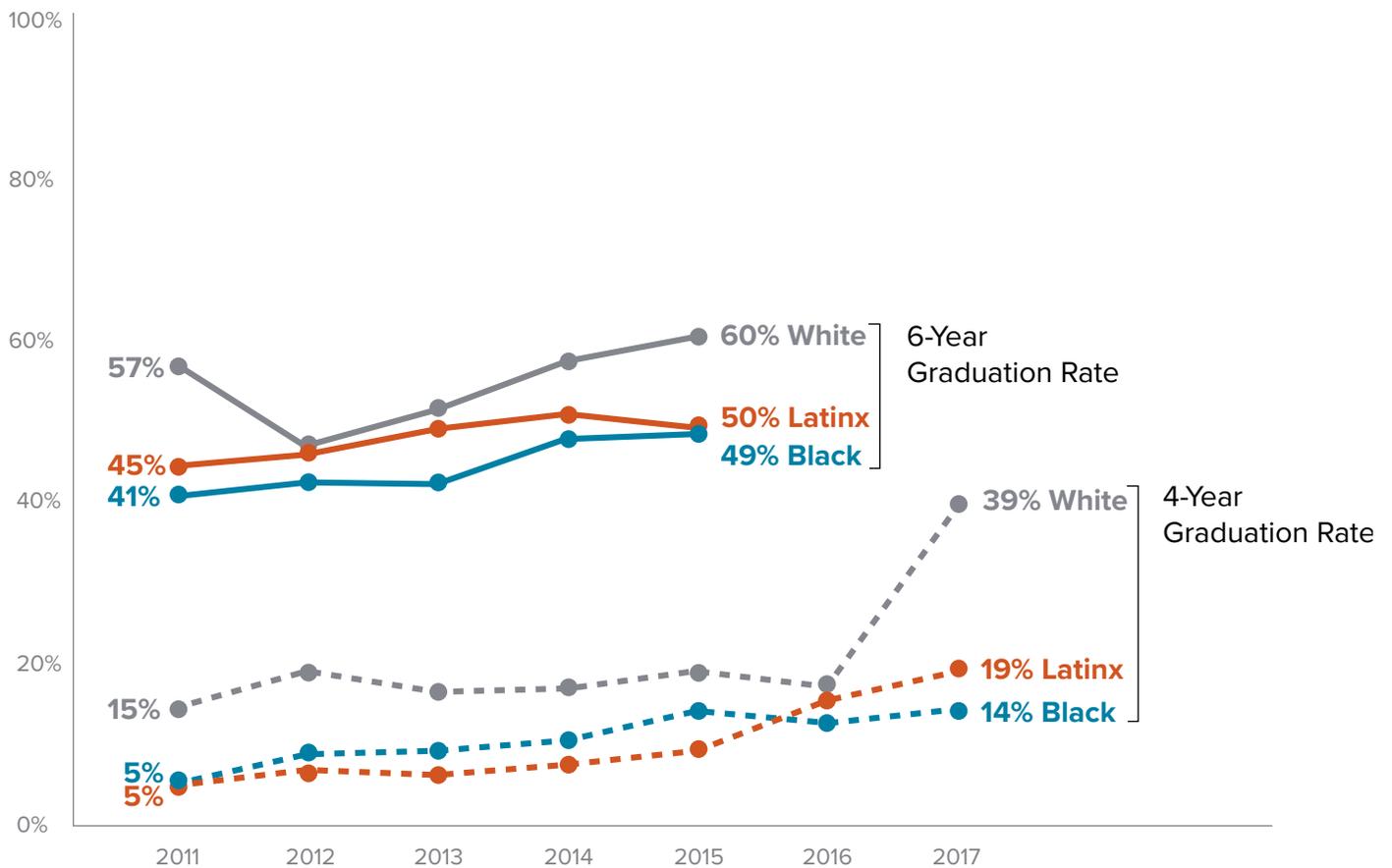


Graduation at Cal State LA

Cal State LA has made major improvements in supporting first-time Black and Latinx students to complete their degrees. Across the system, the [CSU Graduation Initiative 2025](#) has helped build support for Latinx and Black students to complete their degrees in fewer years. The program sets graduation targets for first-year students of 40% graduating in four years and 70% in six years. As Figure 17 makes clear, Cal State LA has substantial work to do, especially as equity gaps in outcomes for students enrolling as first-time students have remained or grown over the past several years. Among students enrolling in 2011, only five percent of Black and Latinx students earned their bachelor's degrees in four years. Among students enrolling in 2017, these numbers had risen to 19% of Latinx students, and 14% of Black students. It is important to note that students enrolling in 2017 would have graduated in 2021—a full year into the pandemic.

Four-year graduation rates for Latinx students at Cal State LA have risen almost four-fold, while those for Black students almost tripled. Four-year graduation rates for students enrolling in 2017 show the dramatic impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic on Cal State LA's campus.

Figure 17. Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates for Latinx, Black, and White First-Time, Full-Time Students, Cal State LA.



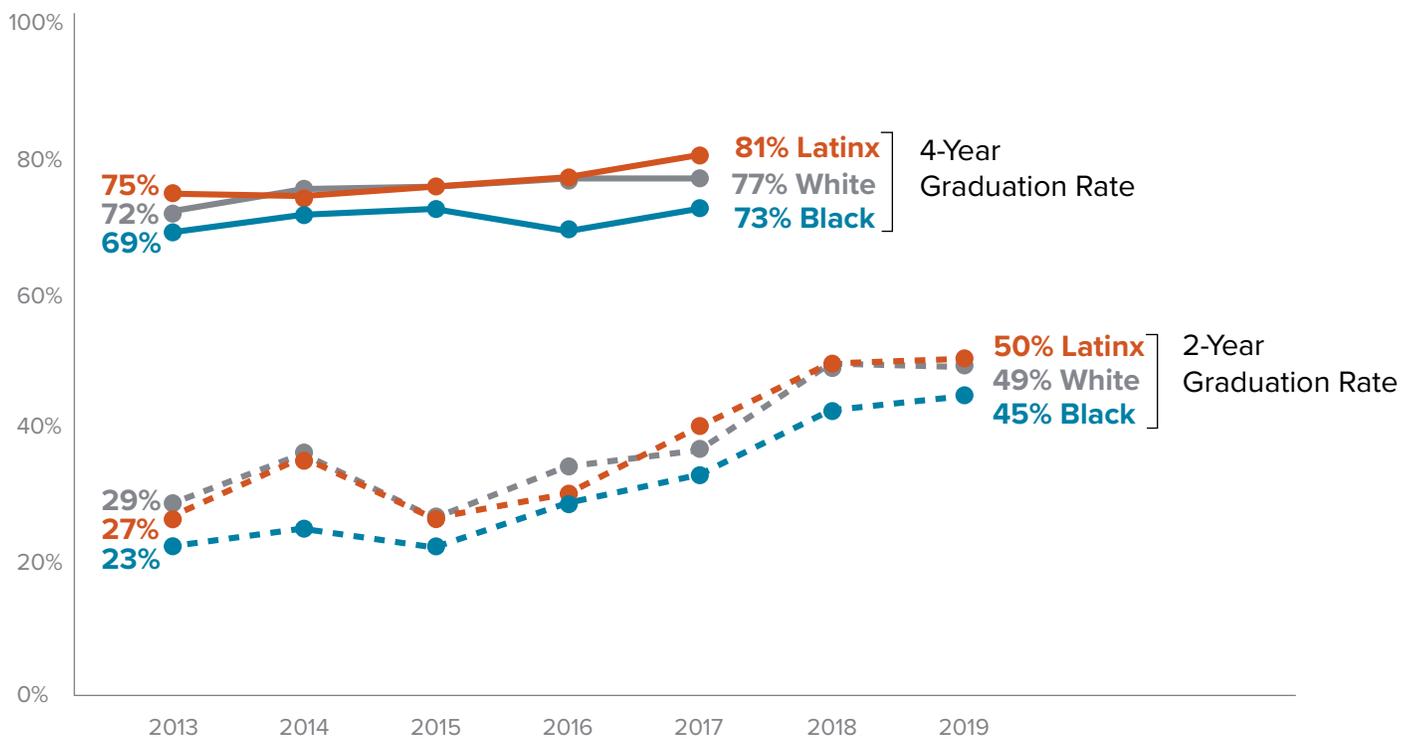
Note: Due to the relatively small number of white students enrolling in Cal State LA as first-time, full-time freshmen (56 white students enrolling in 2017, compared to 105 in fall 2016), variations in this rate should be interpreted with caution—a small increase in the number of white graduates may cause large swings in graduation rates.

Data Source: California State University. (2021) Graduation and Continuation Rates [Data Dashboard].

Cal State LA has made substantial progress in supporting transfer students to complete their bachelor's degrees in less time. Among students enrolling in 2013, 27% of Latinx students and 23% of Black students transferring to Cal State LA graduated in two years. **Among transfer students enrolling in 2019, half of Latinx students graduated in two years, compared to 45% of their Black peers and 49% of white transfer students.** More than four out of every five Latinx transfers to Cal State LA in 2017 earned their degree within four years, compared to 77% of white students and 73% of Black students transferring that year.

Cal State LA supports Latinx transfer students to earn their degrees in both two and four years at higher rates than their white peers. Black transfer students are not as well supported as their peers.

Figure 18. Two- and Four-Year Graduation Rates for Latinx, Black, and White First-Time Transfer Students, Cal State LA.



Data Source: California State University. (2021) Graduation and Continuation Rates [Data Dashboard].

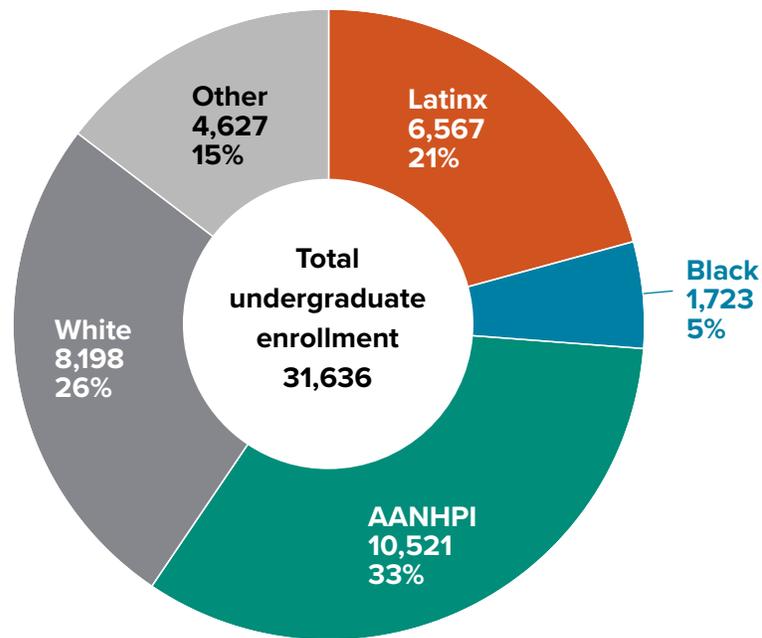


UCLA

In fall 2020, 31,636 undergraduates were enrolled at UCLA. **UCLA is one of the three UC campuses, including UC Berkeley and UC San Diego, that are not designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) which means the undergraduate enrollment at these institutions is less than 25% Latinx.** Despite being in the City of Los Angeles, where Latinx students account for 74% of the K-12 population and in the State of California where Latinx are the largest ethnic group at 39%, UCLA has not met the 25% Latinx undergraduate enrollment necessary for HSI status. In December 2020, UCLA leaders committed to becoming an HSI by 2025.³⁶ In September 2021, UCLA Chancellor Gene Block and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Emily A. Carter committed to enrolling and supporting Latinx students at UCLA through several efforts, including hiring faculty and researchers who consider Latinx experiences in their scholarship, hiring Latinx student support staff, and expanding funding for Latinx-centered research.³⁷

Latinx students make up only 21% of undergraduate enrollments at UCLA.

Figure 19. UCLA Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, Fall 2020.

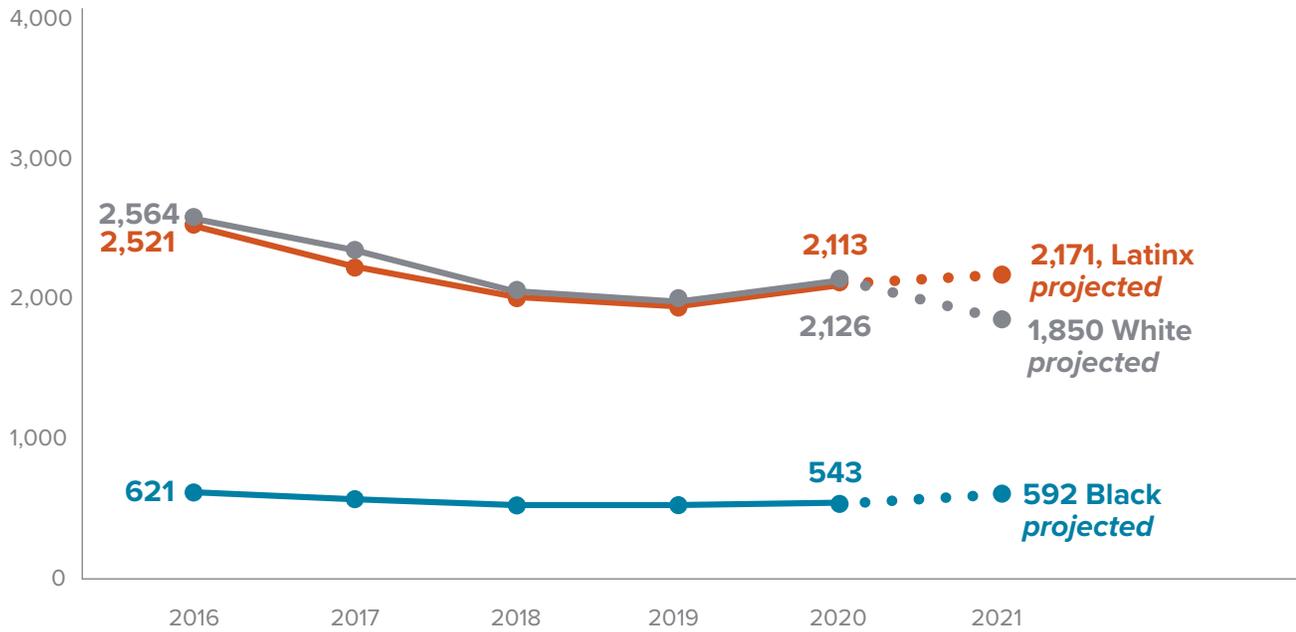


Data Source: University of California. (2021). Fall Enrollment at a Glance [Data Dashboard]

In fall 2020, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students were the largest racial/ethnic group enrolled at UCLA, accounting for a third of enrolled undergraduates. White students were 26% of the undergraduate population, followed by 21% Latinx students, five percent Black students, and less than one percent American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) students.³⁸

After declining substantially since 2016, the number of Latinx students admitted to UCLA from California high schools has shown modest increases in the last two years.

Figure 20. UCLA Admits from California High Schools by Race/Ethnicity.



Data Sources: University of California. (2021). Undergraduate Admissions Summary [Data Dashboard]; University of California, Office of the President. (2021). California Freshmen Admission by Campus and Ethnicity

UCLA admissions data for the past five years indicates that the racial/ethnic composition of admits has remained relatively constant, with Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students admitted in greater numbers than their peers. As a public institution that intends to become an HSI, the Latinx admissions picture at UCLA is concerning. The number of Latinx students admitted from California high schools was higher in fall 2016 (2,564) than fall 2020 (2,126), as was the number of Black students admitted (543, down from 621 four years prior). **Projections from the UC indicate an increase in the number of Latinx and Black students admitted from California high schools for fall 2021, but the number is still far too low to ensure UCLA reflects the community and larger state it serves. While UC-wide admissions numbers may have been unprecedented,³⁹ the figure above shows UCLA still has work to do to ensure Latinx and Black students are better represented on its campus.**

Graduation at UCLA

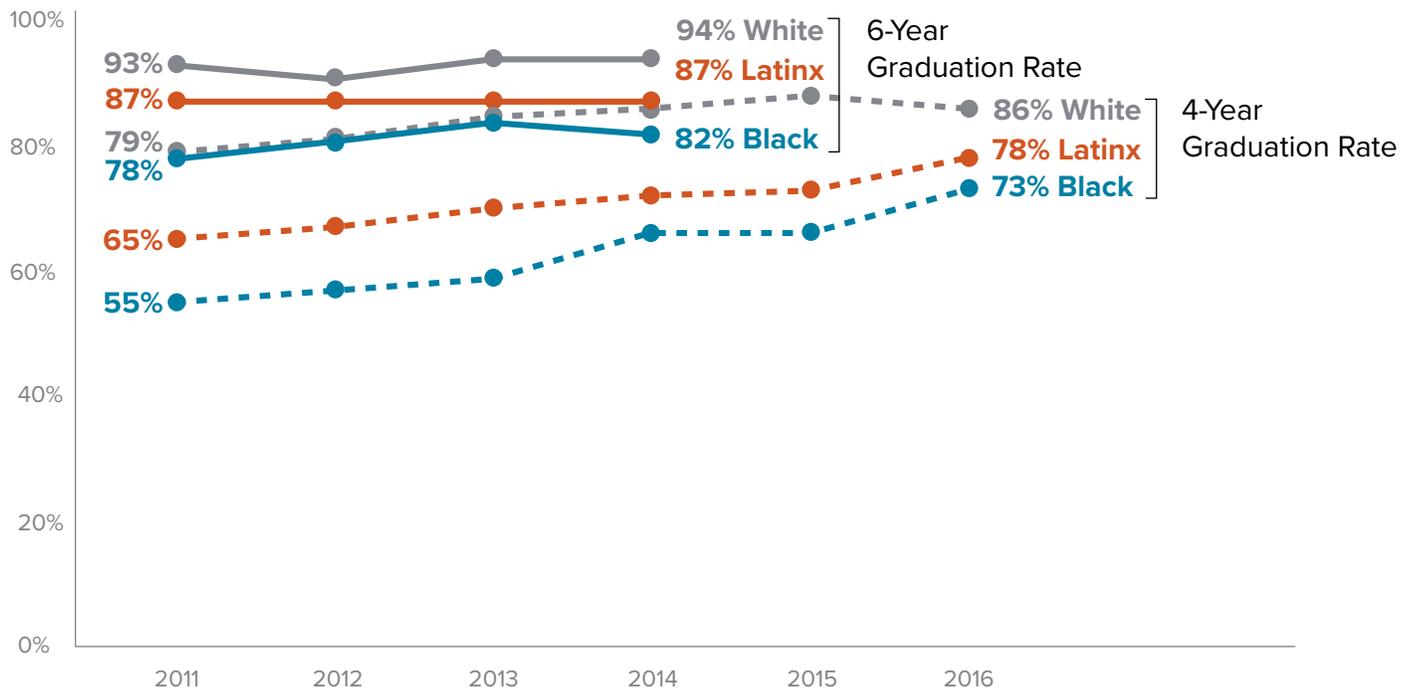
Statewide, the UC system boasts the highest graduation rates for students enrolling both as first-time students and those transferring to its campuses. At the regional level, UCLA does support students to complete their bachelor's degrees at higher rates than the CSU campuses in the area, but equity gaps between Black and Latinx students and their white peers are evident at the campus.

UCLA has made considerable progress in supporting Latinx and Black students to completing bachelor's degrees, both among students enrolling at the university as first-time students, as well as students transferring to the university. Roughly three-quarters of Black (73%) and Latinx (78%) students who enrolled as first-time students in fall 2016 completed their degrees in four years. This is compared to 86% of their white peers, **but the gaps seen here (13 percentage points for Black students and eight percentage points for Latinx students, vis-à-vis their white peers) are substantially reduced over those seen among students enrolling in fall 2011 (24 percentage points for Black students and 14 percentage points for Latinx students).** Outcomes data for students enrolling in fall 2017 has not yet been published by the university.



Roughly three-quarters of Black (73%) and Latinx (78%) first-time students at UCLA graduated within four-years—a substantial improvement that has dramatically narrowed the equity gap in UCLA’s four-year graduation rates.

Figure 21. Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates for Latinx, Black, and White First-Time Students, UCLA.



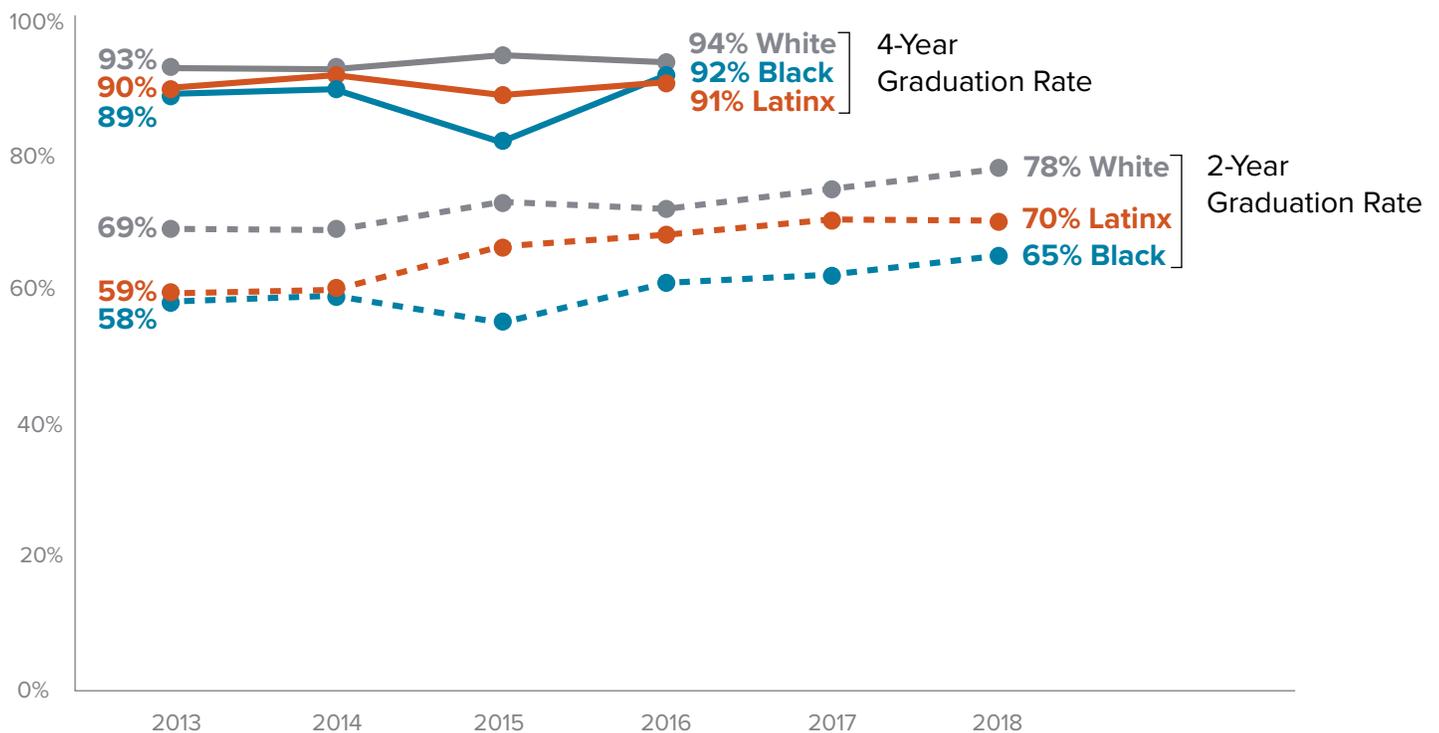
Source: University of California. (2021). Undergraduate Graduation Rates [Data Dashboard]



More than nine in ten students transferring to UCLA finishes their degree within four years, with gaps between white students and their Latinx and Black peers at three and four percentage points, respectively. Figure 22 also shows, however, that UCLA needs to do more to ensure Black and Latinx transfer students receive the support they need to graduate in two years at the same rates as their white peers. While two-year graduation rates have improved for all three group of students, the gap between Latinx students and their white peers has grown to eight percentage points, and the gap between Black students and their white peers has grown to 13 percentage points.

Black and Latinx transfer students to UCLA are not supported to graduate in two-years at the same levels as their white peers.

Figure 22. Two- and Four-Year Graduation Rates for Latinx, Black, and White Transfer Students, UCLA.



Source: University of California. (2021). Undergraduate Graduation Rates [Data Dashboard]

CONCLUSION

California remains an economic force and global leader. The state's success, however, is intimately connected to the economic and social health of its most populous region—Los Angeles. The schools, colleges, and universities in LA and its immediate surroundings have the critical task of educating a diverse set of students and preparing them to assume their place in the state's economy as teachers, doctors, nurses, artists, engineers, scholars, and other professionals who can ensure a bright future for themselves and the collective wellbeing for all of us who call California home.

While strengthening educational opportunity and expanding access to higher education is critical for our entire population, specific attention to California's Latinx and Black populations is essential. And since roughly a third of Latinx and Black Californians live in Los Angeles County, there is no path to broader prosperity without ensuring access to a high-quality education for Black and Latinx Angelenos.

A historic community-led movement to expand access to college prep courses almost 20 years ago has significantly grown the number of LAUSD graduates who are eligible to apply to a four-year university and grown the number who enroll in a university or community college. However, too few Black and Latinx students are enrolled in the flagship campuses in their own city, such as UCLA. Community colleges remain a beacon of opportunity and access for all students, but too many LA community college students are still enrolled in ineffective remedial courses and not sufficiently supported to complete a degree, certificate, or transfer.

Significantly improving and increasing the preparation of LA students to go to college and graduate will only happen with intentional attention to the data shared in this report and addressing the full impact of the pandemic on educational opportunity, much of which remains unknown. We know policymakers, community leaders, and educators alike must champion our ability to support students better than we have in the past and must specifically and unabashedly address the racial/ethnic gaps that persist and close them once and for all. Our city will be stronger, our region will thrive, and our state will benefit from our efforts.



RECOMMENDATIONS



High Schools

- Ensure A-G coursework remains an integral part of LAUSD’s graduation requirements, and ensure the requirement includes passing these courses with a “C” grade or better so that LAUSD graduates will be eligible and prepared for UC and CSU admission. Schools should be analyzing their A-G completion data by race/ethnicity and set aggressive goals to close all gaps that persist.
- Ensure all high school seniors complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California DREAM Act Application to understand the resources they have available to attend college.



Community Colleges

- Strengthen implementation of equitable placement reforms at colleges within the LACCD and ensure that students are supported to enroll in and pass transfer-level English and math coursework within one year of their initial enrollment in English and math courses.
- Improve transfer rates and close gaps by race/ethnicity by strengthening the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway to ensure students are supported to earn a degree and enroll in the CSU or UC.



Universities

- Support students to graduate in a timelier manner by improving four- and six-year college completion rates and closing all gaps by race/ethnicity.
- Expand outreach and enrollment of Latinx and Black students, ensuring a strong culture of belonging for students on campus and working to improve the representation of Black, Latinx, and Asian faculty across the university.



State

- Increase enrollment funding for the UC and the CSU to ensure the growing number of students who meet the eligibility requirements for the two systems and allow campuses like UCLA and Cal State LA to better serve students in their regions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to Great Public Schools Now for their support of this report. We are also grateful to funders that support our work statewide to identify systemic barriers to college access and success for Black and Latinx students, promote reforms to close racial/ethnic equity gaps in California higher education, and invest broadly in strengthening Los Angeles including: The Angell Foundation, The Ballmer Group, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The California Community Foundation, The College Futures Foundation, The ECMC Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Lumina Foundation, The Mayer and Morris Kaplan Family Foundation, The Stuart Foundation, and The Yellow Chair Foundation.

Vikash Reddy, PhD., Brianna Ramirez, and Michele Siqueiros were the co-authors of this report with research and data assistance from David Salman.

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