The State of Higher Education in California

There are 15 million Latinos in California, the largest racial/ethnic group in the state.

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California college-age population (18–24 years) that is Latino

- CA Community Colleges: 46%
- California State University: 40%
- University of California: 35%
- For-profit colleges: 22%
- Private, nonprofit colleges: 22%

Bachelor's degree or higher

- California average: 31%
- Foreign-born Latinos: 7%
- Native-born Latinos: 18%

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Where do Latinos go to college?

About 815,000 Latino students are enrolled in college in California.

- **California Community Colleges**
  - Almost 7 in 10 Latino undergraduates attend a California Community College.
  - 529,300 students.
  - 8 out of 10 are placed into pre-college level courses.

- **California State University**
  - Almost 2 in 10 Latino undergraduates attend a California State University.
  - 136,300 students.
  - Almost 6 out of 10 are placed into pre-college level courses.

- **University of California**
  - 30% transfer within six years.
  - 39% complete within six years.
  - The 4-year graduation rate gap between Whites and Latinos almost doubled between 1998 & 2007 cohorts.

- **Graduation Rates**
  - Almost 39% graduate within six years.
  - 10% graduate within four years.
  - Almost 45% graduate within six years.
  - 30% transfer within six years.

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Why don’t more Latinos finish college?

Latinos face significant barriers on their pathway to a college degree

Before college, students carry challenges beyond their control

- Low-income
- First generation college student
- Low-performing high school

Only 9% of Latinos attend the top 20% highest-achieving K-12 schools

Once in college, students face institutional hurdles

The amount that CA’s public colleges and universities receive from the state per full-time equivalent student has decreased by 21% in 10 years
What policies can ensure more Latinos go to college and graduate?

Closing access and achievement gaps among racial and ethnic groups is critical for California. As a majority-minority state, the success of all ethnic groups is essential for a strong economy and vibrant civil society. The Campaign for College Opportunity proposes the following recommendations for policymakers, college leaders, and students and families so that we can secure California’s economic future by significantly improving our education system for all Californians and specifically increasing college enrollment and graduation among Latino students.

1. Create a statewide plan for higher education.

A statewide plan would allow California to be intentional about closing persistent educational gaps among racial/ethnic groups and improve rates of college readiness, enrollment, and graduation for all groups, particularly Latinos.

2. Ensure colleges successfully move students through pre-college level courses, quickly and with improved retention rates.

Pre-college level work is one of the biggest determinants in whether students graduate from college. Given that the majority of Latino students test into pre-college level coursework, this is a critical issue in college completion.

3. Provide students with clear transfer pathways to four-year degrees.

Only 30 percent of Latino California community college students transfer to a four-year university within six years. Given that the majority of California’s students begin at community college and that those who do transfer graduate at high rates, improved transfer rates would substantially increase the number of Latino college degree-holders in the state.

4. Expand college knowledge in middle and high school and invest in support services students need to succeed.

Underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income students, the majority in California today, often face numerous challenges related to college enrollment and graduation. Research indicates that supporting these students before and through college vastly improves their success rates.

5. Fund colleges for both enrollment growth and successful outcomes.

California should keep its promise to provide adequate funding so all eligible students have a spot to enroll in a public college or university. The state should ensure that its funding policies require improved outcomes from our college leaders, so that more students have the supports they need to earn a certificate, degree, or transfer and that equity gaps by race are eliminated.

6. Strengthen financial support options for low- to moderate-income college students.

Ensure that all California students learn about the availability of financial aid and apply, while simultaneously increasing the availability of state financial aid through the Cal Grant program.

7. Allow California’s public universities to use race/ethnicity as one of many factors in weighing an applicants’ qualifications for admission.

Latinos are substantially underrepresented in higher education, especially at the University of California—the state has broken its promise to provide quality education for all of its residents. Given California’s racial/ethnic diversity, if the state plans to keep our economy strong by meeting the growing demand of businesses for educated workers, we must significantly increase diversity in our universities.

To read the full report and find infographic notes and data sources, please visit our website at www.collegecampaign.org.