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Report Finds Rate of Latino College Achievement in California Not Keeping Pace with Needs of Workforce

***Findings reveal higher education system not working for all, future
competitiveness of state economy in jeopardy***

Los Angeles (November 5, 2013) – The Campaign for College Opportunity (CCO) today released the first in a new series of research reports, ***“The State of Latinos in Higher Education in California: The economic and social imperative for advancing Latino college achievement,”*** detailing how progress in Latino higher education is stalled, how the state’s higher education system has failed to work for all students and the potential impact on California’s competitiveness as a global economy.

The Latino population in California is large, growing rapidly and on its way to attaining majority status by 2050, but college degree attainment is low in spite of a significant increase in college-going rates, the study found. The attainment gap between native-born Whites and Asians and native-born Latinos is wider in California than in most other states, yet California could produce an additional 790,000 four-year degrees if gaps in enrollment and achievement were to be closed.

The trend has significant implications for the California workforce and development of the state’s economy. California is forecasted to face a shortage of 2.3 million college graduates by 2025. The study concludes that given the large and increasing size of the Latino population, the college-degree gap cannot be bridged without addressing the issue of degree completion by Latinos.

“The math is clear,” said Michele Siqueiros, Executive Director of the Campaign for College Opportunity, the organization that produced the study. “If the California economy is to have the college-educated workforce it needs, we must find ways to build a higher education system that boosts degree attainment among Latinos. There is no other reasonable solution given the population dynamics of California today.”

“The *State of Latinos in Higher Education in California* report underscores the need for our education system to better prepare students for the 21st century workplace,” said Rob Lapsley, President, California Business Roundtable. “Ensuring Latino students achieve academic success is critical to building and maintaining a workforce that can compete in the global economy. It’s an economic imperative that will help ensure the future success of Latino students and our state.”

The state of educational attainment for Latinos in California raises questions about equality and fairness in our society, but on a practical, dollars-and-cents level, it also raises concerns about our collective future and the strength of our economy and workforce if we do not act now to strengthen our most critical resource: our human capital.

“The good news is that this report confirms the incredible willingness and desire among Latino youth to go to college,” said Siqueiros. “Enrollment is high and growing. But too few Latino college students are completing a certificate or college degree. We are falling into a pattern of improved college access, without success.”

“The large enrollment of Latinos in community colleges also demonstrates the system’s critical role in serving students and the work that needs to be done to reverse the current rate of success for Latinos in community colleges, which is less than 40%, and to significantly increase the number who are able to earn a degree and/or transfer to a four year university,” said Siqueiros.

Nationally, Latinos are projected to contribute 5.5 million higher education degrees by 2020. In order for the United States to reach a goal of 60 percent higher education attainment in the next seven years, Latinos will need to earn an *additional* 3.3 million degrees and certificates—almost 25 percent of the total.

There are actions that California education officials, along with students and their families, can take immediately that can close this education gap and get the state’s workforce growing in the right direction. Among the recommendations of the Campaign for College Opportunity are:

- **Create a statewide plan for higher education** -- Establish statewide and college-by-college benchmarks for increasing Latino enrollment and completion rates, and for decreasing the number of students and time spent in remedial education courses.
- **Fund colleges for both enrollment and success** -- Establish a new funding mechanism that creates incentives for increasing graduation and completion rates.
- **Get everyone on the same page** -- Improve coordination between high schools and colleges on college preparation and assessment.
- **Invest in services students need to succeed** -- Prioritize resources that support student success and completion, including orientation, counseling and services to close information gaps for low-income, first-generation Latino students.
- **Strengthen financial support options for students** -- Ensure that all eligible students apply and receive federal and California student aid for which they qualify.

“Like any segment of our student population, when Latinos go to college and complete a certificate or degree, California wins,” added Siqueiros. “Despite the clear benefits of college attendance and completion for Latinos and for the state of California, we are off track and this should ring an urgent alarm to all of us.”

For the complete “***The State of Latinos in Higher Education in California: The economic and social imperative for advancing Latino college achievement***” report, visit <http://www.collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/>

About Campaign for College Opportunity:

The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit organization focused on a single mission: to ensure that the next generation of California students has the chance to attend college and succeed in order to keep our workforce and economy strong. For more information, visit www.collegecampaign.org/ [Facebook.com/CollegeCampaign](https://www.facebook.com/CollegeCampaign) or follow [@CollegeOpp](https://twitter.com/CollegeOpp).

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