The future of California depends heavily on increasing the number of Californians with certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor’s degrees. Educational attainment in California has been declining with each younger generation – a statistic that bodes poorly for the state’s economic competitiveness.

*Divided We Fail* is a report that tracked more than a quarter of a million students (255,253) who entered a California Community College in 2003-04 over six years and analyzed their progress and outcomes by major racial/ethnic population. Analyses were restricted to “degree-seekers” (students believed to be seeking a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor’s degree), defined as all new students enrolling in more than 6 credits in the first year.

In California, too many students fail to complete community college:
- Six years after enrolling, 70% of degree-seeking students had not completed a certificate or degree and had not transferred to a university.
- 75-80% of Latino and black degree-seeking students did not complete.
- Only 23% of degree seekers transferred to a university, 11% earned an associate degree, and only 5% earned a certificate.

### Key Findings for the North Coast Region

(2,047 degree-seeking students)

- The **overall completion** rate of 32% among degree-seeking community college students in the **North Coast region**, while still low, was slightly higher than the statewide rate.
- The share of degree-seeking community college students in the **North Coast region transferring to a university** was 21%, somewhat lower than the statewide figure. **Only 11% of under-represented minority students transferred to a university**, about half the share among their white peers.
- **13% of North Coast students earned an associate degree**, slightly higher than the statewide figure.
- The share of students earning a **certificate** in the **North Coast region**, 6%, was slightly higher than the share statewide.
- **Nearly half (47%) of transfers from the North Coast region enrolled in a university outside of California**, perhaps due to its geographic location and accounting for the region having the lowest share of transfer students completing a transfer curriculum (29%), defined as 60+ transferable credits (and including math and English).
Milestone Attainment and Completion within 6 Years
California Community College (CCC) System and North Coast Region

Intermediate Milestones
Completion

Milestone Attainment and Completion Within 6 Years
by Race/Ethnicity in the North Coast Region

*Figures for Asian-Pacific Islander, black, and Latino students not shown due to small numbers in the cohort; under-represented minority (URM) category includes black, Latino, and Native American students.

Intermediate Milestones
Completion

Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Degree-Seekers Compared to “Completers” in North Coast Colleges

Degree-Seekers N=2,047
Completers N=656

White 76%
Latino 12%
Other 6%
Black 3%
API 3%

White 81%
Latino 9%
Other 4%
Black 2%
API 4%
Most Transfer Students in the North Coast Have Not Completed Two Years of Credits

*Figures not shown by race/ethnicity because of the small number of non-white transfer students.

Transfer Destination of North Coast Students

*Figures not shown by race/ethnicity because of the small number of non-white transfer students.
Completion Rates Vary Depending on Students’ Enrollment Patterns

Students who followed certain enrollment patterns did much better. Passing college level English and Math within 2 years and accumulating at least 20 credits in the first year increase student chances of success. As examples, 52% of students who took and passed college-level English within two years completed a certificate, degree or transfer within six years compared to only 23% who did not; 56% of students who passed college level Math within 2 years succeeded (vs. 22% who did not); and 62% of students who accumulated at least 20 credits in the first year succeeded (vs. 22% who did not). Unfortunately, few North Coast students follow these successful patterns (see below).

Too Few North Coast Community College Students Follow Successful Enrollment Patterns

*Figures for Asian-Pacific Islander, black, and Latino students not shown due to small numbers in the cohort; under-represented minority (URM) category includes black, Latino, and Native American students.

Divided We Fail: Improving Completion and Closing Racial Gaps in California’s Community Colleges is a report by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy at California State University, Sacramento and is sponsored by The Campaign for College Opportunity.

The full report can be accessed at
www.csus.edu/ihelp
www.collegecampaign.org