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 Orange County
(25,131 degree-seeking students)

• The overall completion rate of degree-seeking community college students in Orange County, while still low at 32%, was slightly higher than the statewide rate.

• The share of degree-seeking community college students in Orange County transferring to a university was 24%, slightly higher than the share statewide.

• 13% of Orange County students earned an associate degree, slightly higher than the statewide figure.

• The share of students earning a certificate in Orange County, 4%, was slightly lower than the share statewide.

• Black and Latino transfer students in Orange County were more than twice as likely to transfer to the for-profit sector (14% and 13% of transfers, respectively) as their white (6%) and Asian-Pacific Islander (5%) counterparts.
Half of Transfer Students in Orange County Have Not Completed Two Years of Credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Transfers</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>API</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed Transfer Curriculum</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Associate Degree</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transfer Destination of Orange County Students Varies by Race/Ethnicity

White Transfer Students
- Out-of-State Private: 9%
- Out-of-State Public: 19%
- In-State Private: 15%
- CSU: 42%
- UC: 10%

API Transfer Students
- Out-of-State Private: 4%
- Out-of-State Public: 12%
- In-State Private: 9%
- UC: 20%
- CSU: 50%

Black Transfer Students
- For-Profit: 14%
- Out-of-State Private: 17%
- Out-of-State Public: 30%
- In-State Private: 9%
- CSU: 28%
- UC: 3%

Latino Transfer Students
- For-Profit: 13%
- Out-of-State Private: 4%
- Out-of-State Public: 9%
- In-State Private: 11%
- UC: 10%
- CSU: 54%
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, 55% of students who took and passed college-level English within two years completed a certificate, degree or transfer within six years compared to only 19% who did not; 59% of students who passed college level Math within 2 years succeeded (vs. 21% who did not); and 64% of students who accumulated at least 20 credits in the first year succeeded (vs. 20% who did not). Unfortunately, few Orange County students follow these successful patterns (see below).