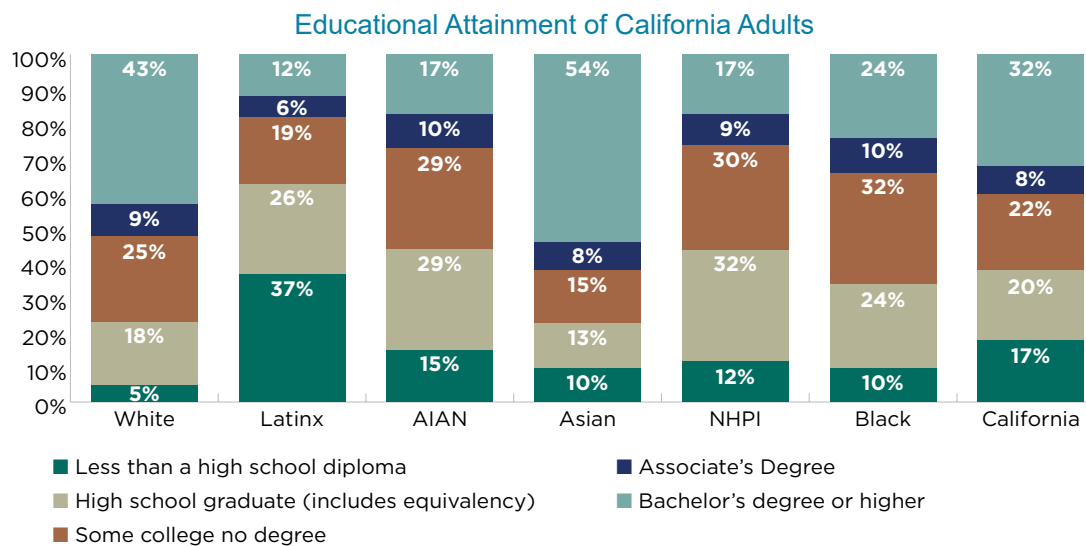


Embedding Racial Equity into a Statewide Attainment Goal

Setting a college degree attainment goal has the potential to dramatically increase college access and success, but the efficacy and impact of states' efforts to increase attainment will depend significantly on the extent to which they prioritize racial/ethnic equity. Longstanding disparities in college enrollment and completion have resulted in large gaps in degree attainment by race/ethnicity, with just 18 percent of Latinx adults and 34 percent of Black adults holding an associate degree or higher, compared to over half (53 percent) of White adults in California.¹



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016; includes Latinx 25 - 64 years old

Since 2000, California's White population has declined by 8 percent while the Asian and Latinx populations have grown by over 50 percent and the Black population has grown by 6 percent. **By 2030, 65 percent of California's population will be people of color.**² In the next 25 years, people of color will account for half of the U.S. population and over half of the working age population.³

Addressing racial/ethnic equity is necessary for fulfilling workforce needs. As the Campaign for College Opportunity points out in the *Our California Blueprint for Higher Education*, half of the children in the state's K-12 schools are Latinx, and 69 percent of California college students are Black, Latinx, Asian-American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.⁴ Meanwhile, 60 percent of jobs in California will require some form of postsecondary credential by 2030, at which point only 35 percent of the state population will be White.⁵

69%
of college students are racially diverse.



There is simply no way for the state to meet industry demand for educated workers without more educated Latinx, Black and Asian American, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders.

As state leaders in California work to increase college attainment and meet workforce demand, they must take responsibility for addressing racial/ethnic equity gaps. These gaps did not come to exist

by chance – they were enacted and reinforced through centuries of discriminatory policymaking and an unwillingness to ensure educational pathways for all Californians regardless of race/ethnicity at the state and federal level – and they will not close on their own. **Although Black and Latinx students are earning degrees at higher rates than a decade ago, the degree completion gaps between White students and students of color at California’s public universities are growing.** In California, the Black-White degree attainment gap grew by 0.6 percentage points between 2000 and 2016, while the Latinx-White attainment gap grew by 1.8 points. ⁶

Using income as a proxy for race/ethnicity is insufficient and ineffective, as racial gaps persist even after controlling for income and other relevant characteristics. When considering students from the same family income bands, Black and Latinx students are significantly less likely to earn a college degree than their White and Asian peers. ⁷

California’s ban on the use of Affirmative Action via voter approved Proposition 209 does not prevent the state from affirming the importance of racial/ethnic equity in higher education. Nationally, four out of the five states that have affirmative action bans AND have set attainment goals, mention race in their attainment goal and two – Washington and Oklahoma – out of the five have explicit racial targets. In Washington’s Strategic Action Plan, racial equity goals have been laid out and extensive data on racial gaps in access and outcomes are reported in an online interactive dashboard. In Oklahoma, the executive order creating an attainment goal requires metrics and benchmarks that track progress toward reducing “ethnic and racial achievement gaps and increasing equity in post-secondary enrollment.”

California can be a national leader on closing racial/ethnic equity gaps by taking the following six steps:

Six Steps to Embedding Racial Equity in a Statewide College Attainment Goal

1.

Set a specific, separate, and trackable attainment goal for Latinx, Blacks, American Indian/Alaska Natives, and marginalized groups within the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities.

Set interim benchmarks to track annual progress toward the attainment goals and require robust longitudinal data analyses to track the closure of racial/ethnic equity gaps.

Establish an overarching goal based on an attainment rate (60 percent of all adults in California should have a college degree or credential) and translate that goal into the number of new degrees needed to reach that rate for all racial and ethnic groups. In this way, California can have both an overarching goal for attainment and specific numeric targets for annual degree production to reach the goal which can be more directly influenced using policy and budget levers and interventions like financial aid, college and university funding models, increased capacity at the state’s four-year universities, and completion efforts like the Associate Degree for Transfer and reforming remedial education.

States including Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Oregon have conducted and published **data-driven analyses of racial/ethnic equity gaps along the educational pipeline to help identify the factors that contribute to disparate outcomes for students of color.** Examples of data analyses includes: attainment for each degree level, fourth and eighth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) proficiency scores, remediation rates, ACT readiness, college enrollment for each sector of higher education, and graduation rates. There are also states that examine differences in post-college outcomes by race/ethnicity: Massachusetts tracks racial/ethnic differences in licensure

exam passage rates and employment outcomes in their Time to Lead report, while Oregon's Higher Education Progress Indicators includes data on earnings among completers by race/ethnicity.

Through executive action, the Governor can establish a statewide attainment goal and racial/ethnic equity goals that can be strengthened by a higher education coordinating body and longitudinal data system for oversight and accountability.

2.

Be public and transparent about closing racial equity gaps.

Students, families, community members and advocates have a right to know how well campuses are serving students and whether campuses are making progress on closing racial/ethnic equity gaps. If gaps in access and success are found to be larger within certain colleges and universities, policymakers and administrators can work to identify causes and target interventions. Policymakers can also explore what's happening on campuses with smaller racial equity gaps to identify and scale promising practices.

- **Develop interactive data tools** that allow the public to view statewide and individual college/university campus progress, or lack thereof, toward racial/ethnic equity goals. These could include a dedicated state website centered on the completion goal or a statewide dashboard that is searchable via race/ethnicity and other metrics such as Pell eligibility.
- **Publish progress reports annually** on statewide and individual college/university campus level progress toward reaching the racial/ethnic equity goals. Progress would include both the 2030 goal and interim benchmarks.

The Governor can allocate resources for data tools and annual reporting through the statewide budget process and can direct a newly formed coordinating body, the Legislative Analyst's Office, or any of the public higher education segments to produce a data tool. The Governor can require colleges and universities to report annually on progress toward closing racial/ethnic equity gaps.

3.

Prioritize racial equity in planning and policy development.

- Through a **set of explicit goals and guidelines** in an executive order, direct California's public colleges and universities to address racial/ethnic equity and publicly report on outcomes with a racial/ethnic equity focus.
- Set the stage for the consideration of **state funding formula changes** that include funding incentives and weights for serving and improving outcomes for underrepresented students of color.
- **Audit implementation of existing California policies** designed to close racial/ethnic equity gaps to ensure implementation is occurring equitably across the state and that gaps are closing. Policies should, at minimum, include:
 - The Student Equity and Achievement Program which includes the former Student Equity fund, Basic Skills Initiative (BSI), and the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP)
 - Associate Degree for Transfer

- AB 705 – Utilizing High School performance for English and math placement in California’s Community Colleges
- Student-Centered Funding Formula for California Community Colleges
- The California State University Graduation Initiative
- SB 1456 – the Student Success Act
- AB 19 – California College Promise
- **Direct California’s public colleges and universities to develop plans** to increase the racial/ethnic diversity of students, faculty and staff; promote cultural competence; increase enrollment, retention, and graduation; and foster a culture of racial/ethnic equity and inclusion. Include performance targets on select goals, and annual progress towards ensuring admissions and hiring practices do not discriminate against people of color and women.
- Through the establishment of a new higher education coordinating body, convene community and business leaders representing racial diverse communities together with campus presidents and system diversity officers to monitor and **produce an annual State of Racial Equity in Higher Education** report that lists each institution on key metrics and benchmarks.

4.

Target institutions serving a large share of students of color.

Nearly 70percent of California’s undergraduate student body are students of color. Over 40 percent of California’s college students are Latinx. It is not surprising then that 54 out of the 114 community colleges, 21 out of the 23 CSU campuses, and five out of the 12 undergraduate UC campuses are Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) – meaning that at least 25 percent of their student body is Latinx. Likewise, 51 California Community Colleges, 12 CSU’s, and five UC’s are designated Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) where at least 10 percent of their enrollment is Asian American and/or Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI).

But enrolling Latinx and AANHPI is not enough, California campuses need to be graduating these students.

Supporting these institutions to improve the success of Latinx and AANHPI is key to closing racial/ethnic equity gaps and can be done by:

- Investing additional resources to **ensure access to the public four-year university** HSI’s and AANAPISI’s to enroll even more Latinx and AANHPI students.
- Partner with Excelencia in Education to **establish a state equivalent to the Seal of Excelencia**, a framework where colleges and universities can be recognized for their efforts to effectively serve Latinx students by demonstrating they have reached benchmarks in data, practice and leadership that improves Latinx student success, and create financial incentives to encourage institutions to obtain this new state certification.
- Direct a new Secretary of Education or **Higher Education Coordinating Body** to work with AANHPI scholars such as Dr. Robert Teranishi or Dr. Karthick Ramakrishnan to develop a comparable state certification to the **Seal of Excelencia for AANAPISI’s in California** and then incentivize California AANAPISI’s to earn this new state certification.

- Create a **statewide HSI taskforce** to identify supports needed to best serve their student body and work with emerging HSI's to receive federal designation and access federal HSI funding.
- Create a **statewide AANAPISI taskforce** to identify supports needed to best serve their student body and work with emerging AANAPISI's to receive federal designation and access federal AANAPISI funding.

5.

Set a standard for racial/ethnic diverse college and university leadership.

Through legislation or the statewide budget, the Governor can incentivize the implementation or expansion of the following strategies:

- **Expand and rigorously monitor state investments** to California Community Colleges for faculty hiring to ensure greater representation of Black, Latinx and Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander faculty. Require that these state investments also be utilized for efforts to retain Latinx, Black and AANHPI faculty and staff. Invest new resources for the UC and CSU to follow suit.
- Require and invest in statewide, consistent **professional development of campus personnel to restructure hiring and retention practices** to focus on candidates that are Latinx, Black, Native American and Asian by reputable entities such as the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education.
- Require the **training of California's public college and university faculty and staff** on how to facilitate conversations about race, use course completion data constructively, qualitatively assess instructional quality in a multicultural setting, and build buy-in at their campus for specific changes.
- **Appoint racially/ethnically diverse individuals** to the UC Board of Regents, CSU Board of Trustees, California Community Colleges Board of Governors, the California Student Aid Commission, and the **Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education** to ensure these bodies reflect the population diversity of California.

6.

Consult with racial/ethnic equity experts to implement the above five strategies.

- [Campaign for College Opportunity](#)
- [Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education](#)
- [Excelencia in Education](#)
- [Community College Equity Assessment Lab](#)
- [USC Race & Equity Center](#)
- [The Education Trust](#)

ENDNOTES

¹ The Education Trust “Degree Attainment for Black Adults: National and State Trends” and “Degree Attainment for Latino Adults: National and State Trends” at <https://edtrust.org/the-state-of-higher-education-equity/>.

² California Department of Finance. Demographic Research Unit. January 2018.

³ Ani Turner, “The Business Case for Racial Equity,” W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2018, https://altarum.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-publication-files/WKKellogg_Business-Case-Racial-Equity_National-Report_2018.pdf

⁴ The Campaign for College Opportunity, “Our California: A Call to Action and Blueprint to Increase College Graduates and Keep Our Economy Strong,” <https://files.acrobat.com/a/preview/09d66607-7d61-43e6-aca7-f85cb85e62af>

⁵ Ibid.; National Equity Atlas Data Summary for California, PolicyLink and the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, <http://nationalequityatlas.org/data-summaries/California/>

⁶ The Education Trust’s analysis of the United States Census Bureau’s 2016 American Community Survey and the 2000 Decennial Census.

⁷ “Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education,” U.S. Department of Education, November 2016, <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf>

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