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**New Research: “The State of Higher Education For Black Californians”  
California Must Do More To Ensure Black Students Are Supported To Earn College Degrees**

*Targeted support for Black students is needed to counteract the devastating effects of COVID-19 and historic racial injustice in our state.*

**Los Angeles, CA** – Today, the Campaign for College Opportunity released “The State of Higher Education for Black Californians,” a landmark report that details the current state of college preparation, access and success for Black residents and offers a series of concrete action steps to increase college opportunity.

California is home to the fifth-largest Black population in the United States, with just over 2.1 million Black residents living in the state. Black Californians are a significant part of the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the state contributing to everything from our aerospace industry, Hollywood, the fight for civil rights, to our political institutions. But in many ways, California has excluded Black Californians from full citizenship and freedom through racist policies providing inadequate public funding to predominantly Black schools, ensuring too many Black Californians lack access to high-quality schools and college preparation, and contributing to generations of poverty, mass incarceration, and limited social mobility.

Black students and their families understand the importance of a college education and there is good news to share:

- 88 percent of Black 19-year-olds in California have a high school diploma.
- 80 percent of Black high school graduates who meet the state’s A-G course requirements enroll in college within a year of finishing high school.
- Two-thirds of Black Californians between the ages of 25 and 64 have enrolled in college.
- 26 percent of Black Californians have a Bachelor’s degree and 10 percent have an Associate Degree.
- The four-year graduation rate for Black students at the CSU has doubled over the past decade and now stands at 20 percent.
- More than 50 percent of Black students entering the UC since 2012 have graduated in four years or less and 75 percent in six years, the highest graduation rate across any of the higher education systems.

Legislators, college and university leaders, and advocates have been responsible for some historic reforms that are having a significant impact on Black student success. The decision by the UC Board of Regents to end the use of the SAT/ACT in admissions contributed to a surge of 20% in the number of Black applicants to the UC; UCLA and UC Berkeley saw a 50% surge. Reforms to remedial education at the California Community Colleges and the CSU have dramatically increased the percent of Black students enrolling in and completing transfer-level math and English putting significantly more Black students on a much faster track to degree.

There is, however, bad news in college access, completion and attainment for California's Black community that stems from chronic underinvestment, racist policies and practices across educational institutions, implicit bias and unwelcoming campuses, and most recently, the effects of a global pandemic.

Nationwide, Black college enrollment fell 7.5% from fall 2019 to fall 2020; enrollment in the nation's community colleges during that period fell 19.2% among Black men. In California, out of 60 community colleges that examined enrollment data specific to Black students, 43 colleges noted enrollment declines among Black students over the same time frame.

Ways in which California is systematically losing Black talent include:

- 60% of Black high school graduates are not prepared by their high schools to meet the A-G course requirements for admission to the UC and CSU.
- Only 60% of Black graduates are enrolling in college within a year of finishing high school.
- Only one-third of Black community college students earn a certificate or degree, transfer to a four-year institution, or are transfer-prepared within six years.
- Black students make up only four percent of the CSU undergraduate student body, and only 2.5% of the UC's undergraduate population, despite accounting for six percent of the state's 18-to-24-year-old population.
- The gap in four-year graduation rates between Black students and white students at the CSU has increased from 21 to 25 percentage points.
- The four-year graduation rates at the UC are roughly 20 percentage points lower for Black UC students than their white peers.
- Black students are dramatically overrepresented in the state's for-profit colleges and universities, where 15 % of students are Black. These institutions have higher costs, higher student debt and student loan default rates, and some of the lowest completion rates across all colleges and universities.
- Among Black students who transferred in fall 2018, 38% enrolled in a for-profit university.

"Years of research and advocacy at the Campaign for College Opportunity consistently shows us that race matters," said Michele Siqueiros, Campaign for College Opportunity President. "Race should not be substituted for income, location, or any other buzzwords often used when speaking about equity. Ensuring Black student success requires our state and education leaders work explicitly and deliberately to remove barriers to college degrees for Black students and close racial equity gaps."

A series of recommendations for federal and state government, colleges and universities, and high schools are offered in the report to improve Black student success. A top recommendation includes establishing an ambitious statewide goal to ensure 60 percent of Black adults hold a degree or high-value credential by 2030. The intentionality of such a goal would trigger a series of other critical reforms and practices that are deliberately meant to improve Black student success including rethinking public university enrollment caps, ending financial aid for low to no-value for-profit institutions, improving transfer, equitizing financial aid, ensuring all Black high school students are prepared for college, and ensuring faculty and campus leaders are representative of the Black community.

"This report reminds us that closing racial equity gaps is not achieved by a single silver-bullet policy but by investing in the ecology of postsecondary systems," said Peter Taylor, ECMC Foundation President.

“From improved K-12 connections to co-requisite remediation to the hiring of more diverse faculty, we know that the challenges our African American students are facing have intersegmental roots and so they require intersegmental solutions,” concluded Taylor.

To view the full report, please click [here](#).

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*The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit bipartisan policy and research organization focused on a single mission: to ensure all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college in order to build a vibrant workforce, economy and democracy. For more information, visit [www.CollegeCampaign.org](http://www.CollegeCampaign.org)/[Facebook.com/CollegeCampaign](https://Facebook.com/CollegeCampaign) or follow @CollegeOpp on Twitter and Instagram.*