

**For Immediate Release:**

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**New Report Finds Persistent Gaps and Disparities in College Access and Success for California's Black Students**

***Study by The Campaign for College Opportunity Recommends Strategic, Coordinated Effort to Reverse Negative Trends and Continue Progress***

**Los Angeles (May 28, 2015)** – The Campaign for College Opportunity today released “**The State of Higher Education in California: Black Report,**” which examines how the state’s 2.16 million Black residents, which are almost 6 percent of California’s population, are faring in higher education attainment compared with other racial/ethnic groups.

California is home to the nation’s fifth largest Black population, and though Black students today are more likely to graduate from high school and college than a decade ago, persistent opportunity gaps exist. Black high school students are less likely to graduate from high school than students of other racial/ethnic groups and to have completed the college preparatory curriculum needed for admission to the University of California and California State University systems compared to other major racial/ethnic groups (White, Latinos and Asians).

Black students who do make it to college are the most likely to be placed into pre-college level coursework, the least likely to graduate from college, and the most likely to enroll in for-profit colleges – some of which have traditionally poor rates of student success and high tuition costs and student debt levels.

These troubling findings are a result of funding, policy, and institutional weaknesses rather than individual student dedication. Inadequate high school preparation, a broken college remedial education system, and significant funding cuts to the state’s public colleges and universities are playing a major role in the ability of Black students to both enroll in and complete college.

“To secure California’s economic future, action is needed now to significantly improve our education system for all Californians and specifically increase college enrollment and graduation among Black students,” said Michele Siqueiros, President of The Campaign for College Opportunity. “Improving Black Californians academic success will not only strengthen the opportunity and future of Black Californians, but that of our state.”

The report calls for a concerted, strategic effort to produce better educational outcomes for Black students including a new statewide plan for California higher education, a redesign of pre-college level

courses, re-enrollment of adults with some college but no degree, and allowing public universities to use race/ethnicity as one of many considerations in their admissions process.

The report also seeks clear transfer pathways to four-year degrees for all students, increased financial aid for students, an expansion of college knowledge in middle and high school so that students will know how to access higher education and funding colleges for both enrollment growth and successful outcomes.

"The fact that vast educational disparities are still pervasive along racial lines proves we have done too little to change outcomes for California's students," said Ryan Smith, Executive Director of The Education Trust-West. "Our public schools, colleges, universities, and the state have the responsibility to respond to this important research. It is time our elected leaders address these facts with urgency."

Other key findings in the report include:

- Only 23 percent of working-age Blacks in California have bachelor's degrees, compared to 42 percent of their White counterparts.
- One-third of Black adults aged 25-64 attended college but earned no degree.
- Black undergraduates are underrepresented at four-year public and private, nonprofit universities and overrepresented at California Community Colleges and For-Profit colleges.
- Only 37% of Black students who started at the California State University system as freshman will complete after six years.
- At least 2/3 of Black applicants were denied admission to six of the University of California's nine undergraduate campuses.

"As a state, we have fallen short on our promise of offering all residents equal access to and opportunity for advancement through education," said Siqueiros. "A concerted, strategic effort among California's policy makers, college leaders, and community-based organizations will be critical to reversing these negative trends and making much needed progress."

The full report is available May 28, 2015 at 12:01 am EST

<http://collegecampaign.org/our-publications/>

***About The Campaign for College Opportunity:***

*The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit research and advocacy 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://www.facebook.com/CollegeCampaign) or follow [@CollegeOpp](https://twitter.com/CollegeOpp).*