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# STILL FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS

## REVISITING THE LATINA/O EDUCATION PIPELINE

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The first CSRC Research Report to examine the Latina/o education pipeline, *Falling through the Cracks: Critical Transitions in the Latina/o Educational Pipeline* (Pérez Huber et al. 2006), inaugurated a series of reports that have sought to address critical issues related to the Latina/o education pipeline and to provide policy recommendations to improve educational access and opportunity for Latina/o students across the United States, with a particular focus on California. For the past ten years these CSRC Research Reports and related CSRC Policy and Issues Briefs, which have been published in conjunction with the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center's annual Latina/o Education Summit, have served as an important resource for understanding current issues and policies in Latina/o education.

The 2006 report concluded that Latinas/os were indeed “falling through the cracks.” Today, although the US Latina/o population continues to grow, especially in California, gains in educational attainment have not followed suit. In fact, the policy brief published in 2014 reported that gaps in educational attainment for Latina/o students have been widening during the past decade, rather than narrowing, and that Latina/o students are still falling through cracks (Pérez Huber, Vélez, and Solórzano 2014). Research has warned us of the serious consequences to the American economy if rapidly growing communities of color do not receive adequate academic preparation (DeBaun 2012). This report revisits the points of critical transition in the Latina/o education pipeline, explores how far we have come in terms of educational equity and opportunity, and offers recommendations for continuing efforts to improve Latina/o education.

Before examining the current status of the Latina/o education pipeline, it is important to recognize the work that has been done in the past. Two early

CSRC policy briefs, published prior to the first Latina/o Education Summit, examined educational equity in K-12 schools (Solórzano et al. 2003) and doctorate production (Solórzano et al. 2005) for Latinas/os. The 2006 report, which built on these findings, focused on the factors necessary to enable more Latina/o students to successfully move through the critical transitions between elementary school, high school, college, and graduate school (Pérez Huber et al. 2006). Later reports and policy briefs addressed issues relevant to specific segments of the pipeline. For example, the 2007 report and policy brief examined the community college segment and offered recommendations for increasing the number of Latinas/os that transfer to a four-year university (Rivas et al. 2007a, 2007b). The reports published in 2008 examined the role of elected school boards and superintendents in efforts to improve Latina/o education, with particular attention to the governance of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), one of the largest districts in the nation, the largest in California, and one with a majority Latina/o student population (Fan 2008a, 2008b). The report and policy brief for the following year focused on the experiences of undocumented Latina/o AB 540 students, a population whose needs were just entering mainstream educational discourse (Guarneros et al. 2009; Pérez Huber, Malagón, and Solórzano 2009). From 2012 to 2014 the reports explored the role of legislation and policy in shaping Latina/o educational outcomes and experiences, including *Fisher v. Texas* and the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program (Pérez Huber et al. 2014; Romero and Fuentes 2013a, 2013b). Table 1 provides an overview of the topics examined in the reports and policy briefs.

Recommendations are offered for the improvement of educational conditions and outcomes for Latina/o students in each brief and report. In revisiting the critical transition points in the Latina/o education pipeline for this report, we found that much of

the research and many of the recommendations provided in past reports are still highly relevant because educational attainment for Latinas/os still falls far behind that of other major racial/ethnic groups in the United States. Figure 1 illustrates educational attainment among the five major racial/ethnic groups in the United States in 2012.<sup>1</sup> As the figure shows, out of every 100 Latina elementary students, 63 graduated from high school, 13 received an undergraduate degree, 4 graduated with a master's or a professional degree, and fewer than one (0.3) graduated with a doctorate. For Latino students these numbers were even lower. Out of every 100 Latino elementary students, 60 graduated from high school, 11 received an undergraduate degree, 3 graduated with a master's or professional degree, and fewer than 1 (0.3) graduated with a doctorate degree. Among Latina/o subgroups, Chicanas/os and Central Americans had the lowest educational attainment, as figure 2 shows. The pipeline data published in the 2006 report, nearly ten years ago, is alarmingly similar.

Improvements have been made in educational attainment during the past decade among all racial/ethnic groups. Figure 3 summarizes attainment data for the five major racial/ethnic groups in the United States in 2000. As noted, 54 Latinas and 51 Latinos out of 100 attained a high school degree or its equivalent. In 2012 these numbers had increased to 63 Latinas and 60 Latinos. However, during the past ten years the Latina/o population in the United States has increased by 18 million, or nearly five percent, the largest overall increase experienced by any racial/ethnic group (Stepler and Brown 2015). It is likely that the small gains in educational attainment for Latina/o students can be attributed to the population increase rather than a more equitable education.

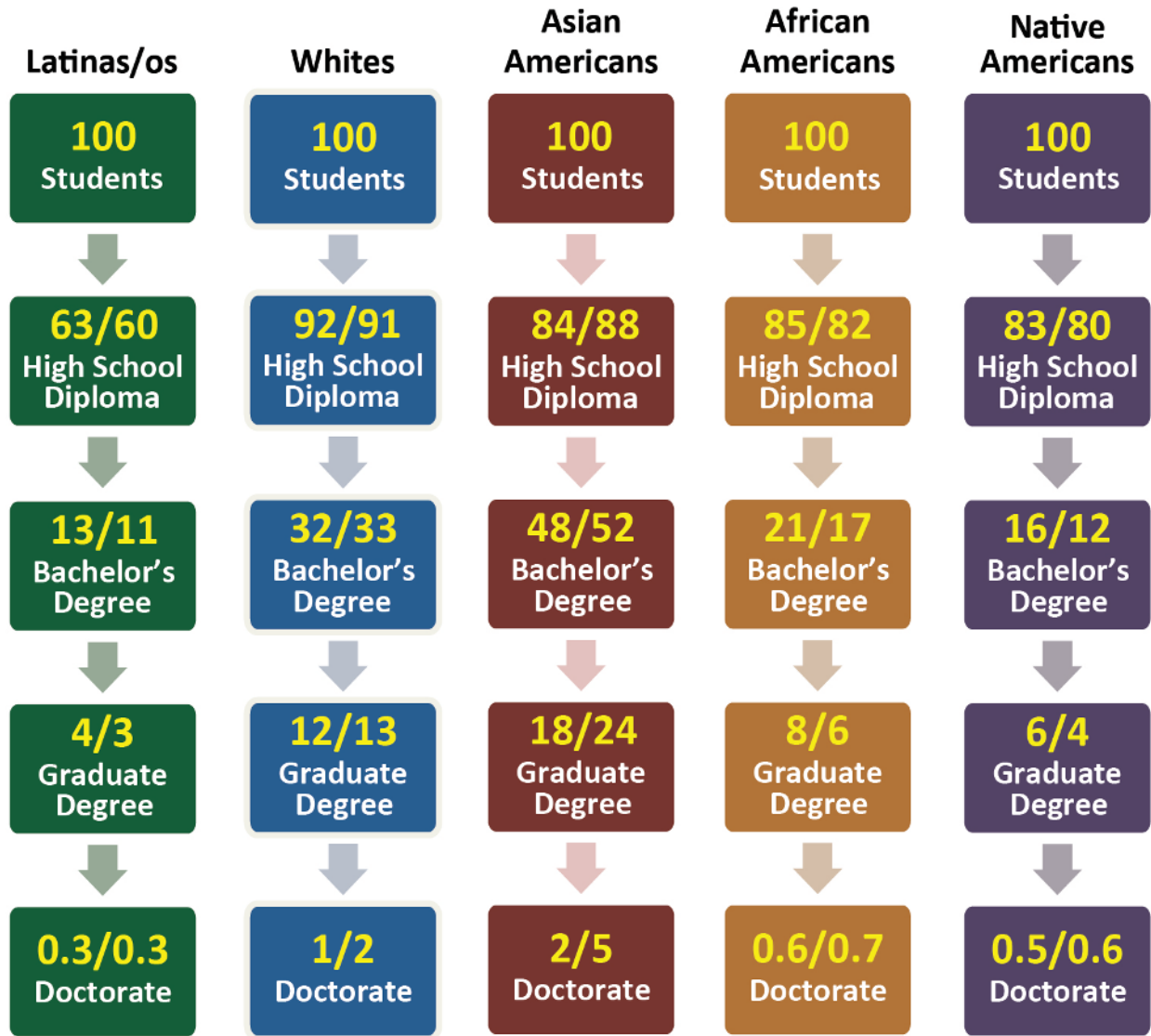
In terms of advanced degrees, attainment remained the same for Latinas and decreased for Latinos between 2000 and 2012. This was also true for master's degrees. Latina doctoral

**Table 1. CSRC Research Reports and CSRC Latino Policy and Issues Briefs Examining the Latina/o Education Pipeline, 2003–15**

| YEAR | RESEARCH REPORT   | LATINO POLICY AND ISSUES BRIEF  | PIPELINE SEGMENT           | ISSUES/TOPICS EXAMINED   |
|------|---|---|----------------------------|--|
| 2003 |   | <i>Latina Equity in Education: Gaining Access to Academic Enrichment Programs</i>                                 | K-12                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underrepresentation of Latinas in gifted programs and college preparatory courses</li> </ul>  |
| 2005 |   | <i>Community College as a Pathway to Chicana Doctorate Production</i>   | Graduate                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines US doctorate production for Chicanas</li> </ul>  |
| 2006 | <i>Falling Through the Cracks: Critical Transitions in the Latina/o Educational Pipeline</i>  | <i>Leaks in the Chicana and Chicano Educational Pipeline</i>  | K-12 to Graduate           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical factors for improving K-12 education</li> <li>• Increasing transfer rates in community college</li> <li>• Undergraduate and graduate support</li> </ul>  |
| 2007 | <i>Latina/o Transfer Students: Understanding the Critical Role of the Transfer Process in California's Postsecondary Institutions</i> | <i>An Examination of Latina/o Transfer Students in California's Postsecondary Institutions</i>                    | Community College          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing transfer rates in California Community Colleges for Latina/o students</li> <li>• Improving the experiences of Latina/o transfer students at four-year universities</li> </ul>  |
| 2008 | <i>Improving Latino Education: Roles and Challenges for Superintendents and School Boards</i>   |   | K-12                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of school boards and superintendents in the education of Latina/o students</li> <li>• Improving school governance to increase student academic achievement</li> </ul>  |
| 2008 | <i>School Governance for Latino Communities</i>   |   | K-12                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School governance in urban school districts, with a focus on Los Angeles Unified</li> </ul>   |
| 2009 | <i>Struggling for Opportunity: Undocumented AB 540 Students in the Latina/o Education Pipeline</i>                                    | <i>Still Dreaming: Legislation and Legal Decisions Affecting Undocumented AB 540 Students</i>                     | Undergraduate              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges undocumented students face in postsecondary education</li> <li>• Policies relevant to educational access</li> <li>• Critical factors for increasing access and persistence of undocumented Latina/o college students</li> </ul>                  |
| 2011 |   | <i>An Assets View of Language and Culture for Latino Students</i>   | K-12                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of bilingual education for Latina/o students</li> </ul>  |
| 2012 | <i>Law, Social Policy, and the Latina/o Education Pipeline</i>  |   | K-12 and Undergraduate     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal efforts in school finance to end the resegregation of K-12 schools</li> <li>• Challenges with meeting the needs of English language learners with disabilities</li> <li>• Impact of anti-immigrant laws on the Latina/o education pipeline</li> </ul> |
| 2013 | <i>Fisher v. Texas: A History of Affirmative Action and Policy Implications for Latinos and Higher Education</i>                      | <i>The United States Supreme Court's Ruling in Fisher v. Texas: Implications for Latinos and Higher Education</i> | Undergraduate and Graduate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race-conscious admission policies to increase Latina/o representation in postsecondary education</li> </ul>   |
| 2014 | <i>DACAmented in California: The Impact of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program on Latina/os</i>                        | <i>The Growing Educational Gap for California's Latina/o Students</i>   | Undergraduate and Graduate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of DACA on Latina/o college students and graduates</li> <li>• Improving educational and life opportunities for undocumented Latinas/os</li> <li>• Continuing inequities in educational attainment in California for Latina/o students</li> </ul>     |
| 2015 | <i>Still Falling Through the Cracks: Revisiting the Latina/o Education Pipeline</i>   | <i>Racial Microaggressions: What They Are, What They Are Not, and Why They Matter</i>                             | K-12 to Professoriate      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical issues and factors for Latina/o K-12, college, and graduate students</li> <li>• Representation of Latinas/os in higher education, including the professoriate</li> </ul>   |

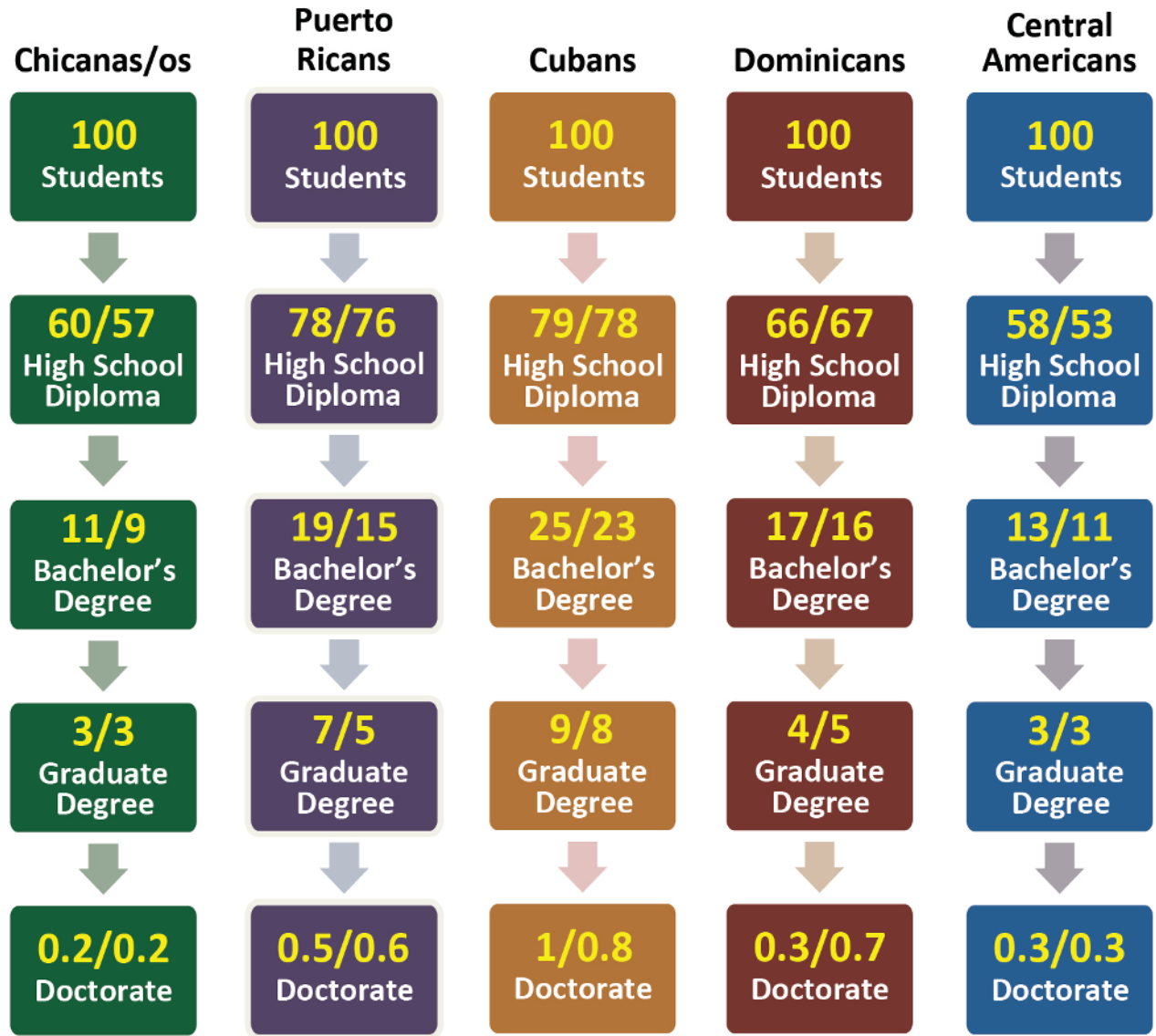
Note: The publications in 2003 and 2005 predate the Latina/o Education Summit series, which began in 2006. In some years only one type of document was published for the conference; no documents were published for the conference in 2010.

**Figure 1. The US Education Pipeline, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2012**



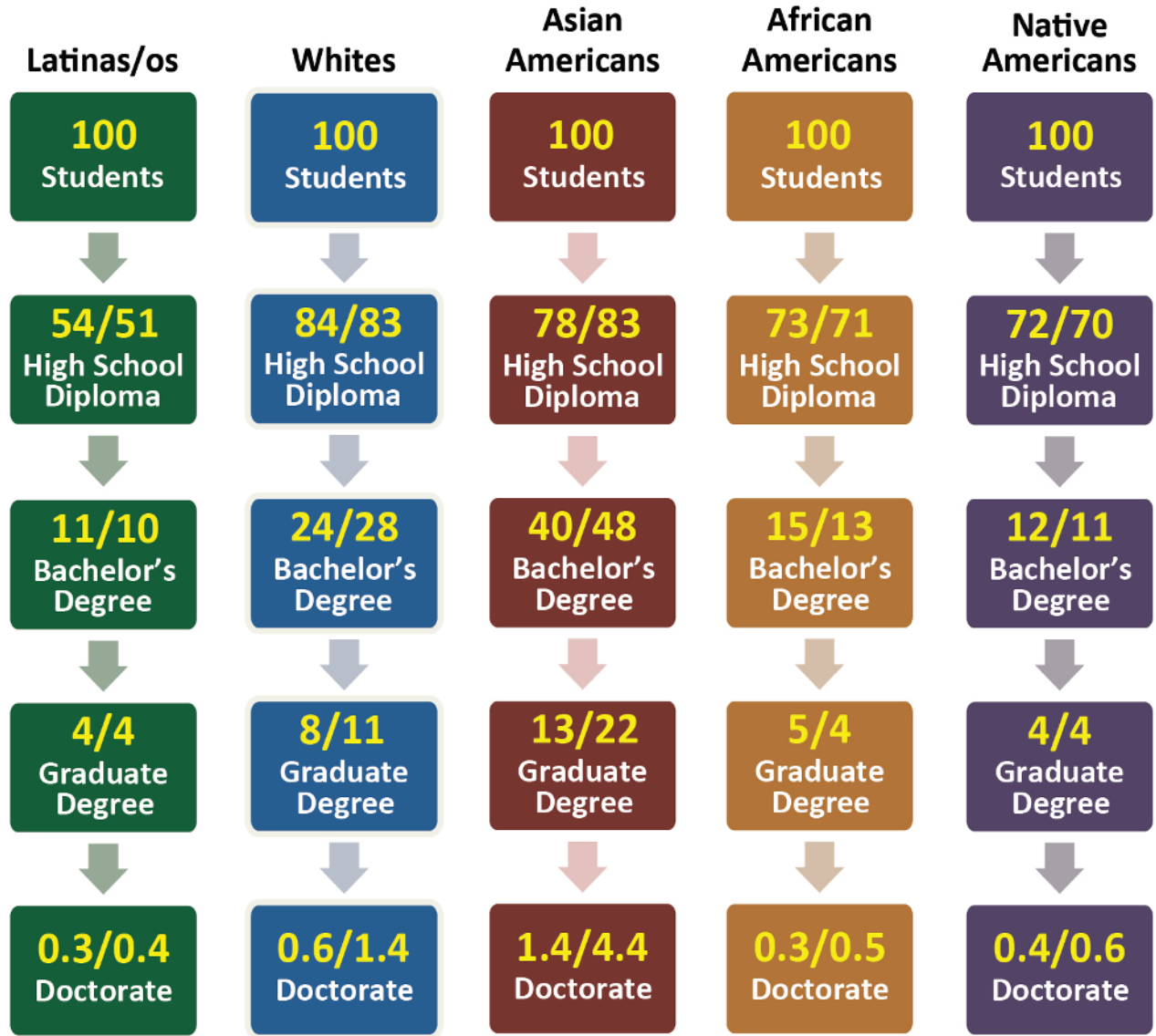
Source: Drawn from American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2012, compiled by the US Bureau of the Census.  
 Note: The first number represents females, the second, males.

Figure 2. The US Education Pipeline, by Latina/o Subgroup and Gender, 2012



Source: Drawn from American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2012, compiled by the US Bureau of the Census.

Figure 3. The US Education Pipeline, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2000



Source: Drawn from American FactFinder data for 2000, compiled by the US Bureau of the Census.



attainment remained the same, but Latinos were slightly less likely to attain a doctoral degree in 2012. Again, an accurate assessment of Latina/o educational gain must take into account the overall increase in population, and to accurately contextualize data trends, comparisons must be made across other major racial/ethnic groups (Pérez Huber, Vélez, and Solórzano 2014).

The pipeline data show that in terms of Latina/o degree attainment, little improvement has been made. This indicates that the recommendations made throughout the series of CSRC reports and policy briefs are still applicable. This report builds on that previous research and provides some guidelines for important issues that have emerged in recent years.

**K-12 SEGMENT**

In California, Latina/o students are now the largest major racial/ethnic group in public K-12 schools, comprising 54 percent of all K-12 students in the state in 2014–15. The proportion of Latina/o students at county and local levels is significantly higher. Latina/o

students account for 65 percent of K-12 students in Los Angeles County and 74 percent of the students enrolled in LAUSD, as figure 4 indicates. An opposite trend is evident for White and Asian American students. White students make up 25 percent of all K-12 students in California, yet only 10 percent attend schools in LAUSD. Asian American students comprise 12 percent of students in California but only 6 percent of students are enrolled in LAUSD. Similar findings described in the 2006 report were attributed to a historical pattern of white flight (Pérez Huber et al. 2006), but the persistence of the trend over time points to demographic change.

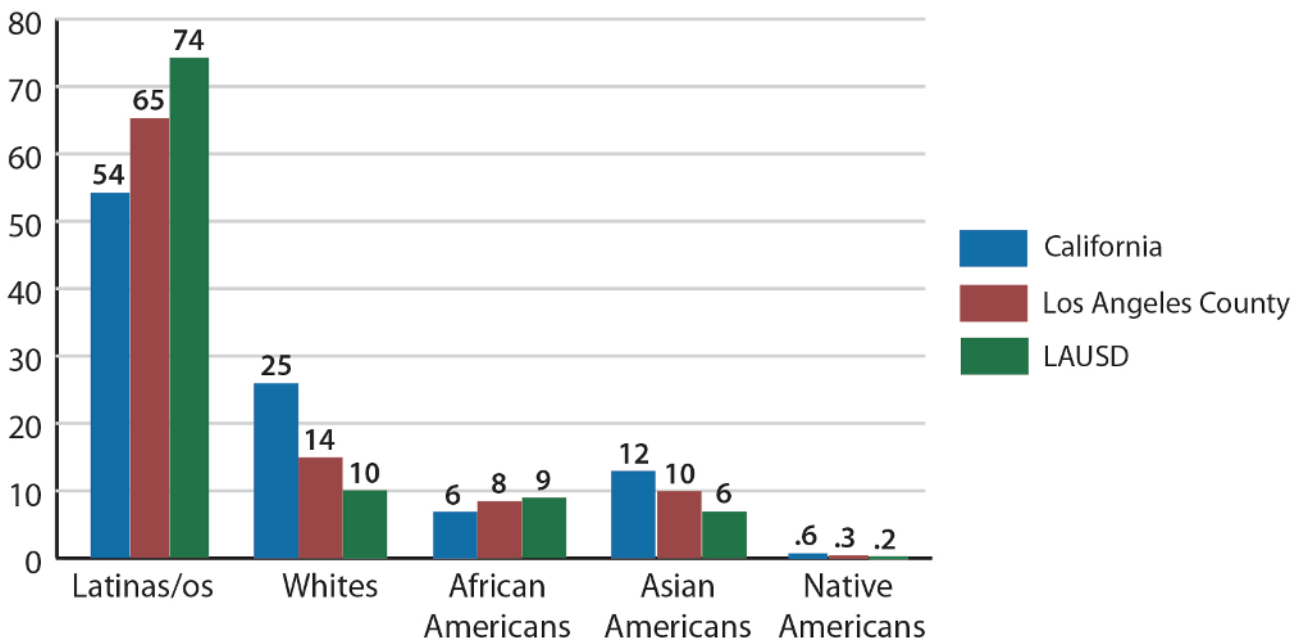
Orfield and Ee (2014) found that Latina/o K-12 students are more segregated in California than in any other US state. These researchers suggest that as state demographics continue to shift, the alarming pattern will continue and the segregation of K-12 students in California will increase. Moreover, compared to White and Asian American students, Latina/o and African American students attend

significantly lower-performing schools that are located in significantly lower-income communities. White and Asian American students are concentrated in the highest-performing schools in the state (Orfield and Ee 2014). It is no surprise that California’s Latina/o students have experienced only limited gains in educational attainment.

**K-12 ETHNIC STUDIES CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

The 2006 report called attention to seven critical issues in K-12 schools that would have to be addressed before the flow of students through this segment of the pipeline could improve: 1) safe and adequate school facilities; 2) a college-going school culture; 3) rigorous academic curriculum; 4) qualified teachers; 5) intensive academic and social support; 6) opportunities to develop a multicultural, college-going identity; and 7) family-neighborhood-school partnerships focused on college going. In a policy brief published in 2008, Gándara, Hopkins and Martínez called for an “asset view” of Latina/o culture and language in K-12 to increase student connection

**Figure 4. Percentage of K-12 Students Enrolled in California, Los Angeles County, and Los Angeles Unified School District, by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–15**



Source: Drawn from California Department of Education data for the 2014–15 school year.



and engagement in schools. These factors continue to be relevant, particularly in low-income and highly segregated schools.

The transition to the Common Core State Standards may prompt California's school districts to consider strategies for creating a more engaging curriculum that will meet the needs of diverse student populations, produce multicultural college-going identities, and develop local partnerships to enhance learning opportunities. Some districts have developed promising policies that support the creation of a more inclusive curriculum that provides students with the opportunity to understand structural subordination and the historic contributions of people of color (Ceasar 2014).<sup>2</sup>

Research has shown that a K-12 curriculum that reflects the experiences of students of color can positively influence academic engagement and achievement (Sleeter 2011). Tintiango-Cubales et al. (2015) explained that a K-12 ethnic studies curriculum can promote high-quality education through content that serves as a bridge to community advocacy and histories. Latinas/os and other students of color have the opportunity to identify and engage more closely with curricular content, while all students benefit from the multiple perspectives that the curriculum brings to the classroom. Efforts to implement a required ethnic studies curriculum for K-12 students in California have already begun. In 2014, Rancho High School in Pico Rivera, where Latinas/os comprised 98 percent of the student body, became the first high school to require students to complete and pass an ethnic studies course for graduation (Ceasar 2014). LAUSD soon followed with a plan to implement ethnic studies as a graduation requirement in all its high schools by 2019. New ethnic studies courses are being offered at twenty-five of LAUSD's high school campuses this year. As of September 2015, an additional four California school districts had made high school ethnic studies courses a graduation requirement, and

six more offer these courses as electives (Posnick-Goodwin 2015).<sup>3</sup>

Simply offering these courses will not be enough to increase academic engagement and achievement. Training teachers to effectively teach ethnic studies is also needed (Tintiango-Cubales et al. 2015). To address educational inequities among students of color, Ladson-Billings (1995) introduced the concept of engaging "culturally relevant pedagogy." This challenges inequality by allowing students to affirm their cultural identities and develop critical perspectives. Paris offered the concept of "culturally sustaining pedagogy," which focuses on the development of practices that will sustain the "cultural and linguistic competence of communities [of color] while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence" (2012, 95). These pedagogical concepts offer important possibilities for implementing truly effective ethnic studies programs for Latina/o students in California specifically, and K-12 students of color generally.

Any discussion of ethnic studies in K-12 schools must recognize the important shift toward a more inclusive curriculum in California, but it is just as important to take heed of the direct challenge to ethnic studies occurring in other states. In Arizona, legislation passed in 2010, HB 2281, effectively ended the Tucson Unified School District's Mexican American studies (MAS) program, although it was found that high school students who participated in the program had increased academic achievement and graduation rates (Palos 2011). HB 2281 also led to the banning of books that had served as key texts in the MAS curriculum (Delgado 2013). Efforts to continue to shift education in California toward a model of inclusiveness are necessary, but we must also be prepared to respond to challenges that can impede efforts to move forward.

***Recommendation: Create, implement, and require ethnic studies courses in California high schools for all students.***

We should ensure that the teachers of ethnic studies courses are adequately trained in ethnic studies and have a deep understanding and commitment to these courses. Teachers must be able to develop critical perspectives of social inequities, allow opportunities to build relationships with local communities, and empower Latina/o students and other students of color. In addition, teachers should be trained to apply pedagogical practices that align with these purposes.

#### **LATINOS IN K-12**

Yet another concerning trend pertains to gender disparities in educational attainment. Figures 2 and 3 indicate that Latinos are falling further behind Latinas at each segment of the pipeline. Several studies have documented an increasing crisis in Latino educational attainment (Noguera, Hurtado, and Fergus 2012; Sáenz and Ponjuan 2009). Apart from having lower high school graduation and college enrollment rates when compared to their white male and Latina counterparts, Latino students experience other factors that may block their educational pathway. Latinos are more likely than their white counterparts to be suspended from school and to be given a disability classification, and they are half less likely to be identified for talented and gifted programs (Torres and Fergus 2012). Research also shows that young Latinos consistently report that they are less likely to seek help at school, including assistance offered by teachers, staff, and peers (Ponjuan, Clark, and Sáenz 2012).

Although Latina and Latino students share a structural position, each group experiences the effects of inequities in different ways. An intersectional analysis (Collins 2000) can identify dimensions of difference that are encountered particularly by men of color (Hurtado, Haney, and Hurtado 2012). For example, the rigid constructions of Chicano/Latino masculinity that

are held in broader society frequently translate into discursive schooling practices. Young Latinos are more likely than their White counterparts to be viewed with suspicion and placed under surveillance in schools and other public arenas, and they are often perceived as threats in the classroom while simultaneously encountering low educational expectations from their teachers and school administrators. Criminalization of Latinos in the education pipeline is closely connected to their presence in what Rios (2009) calls the criminal justice pipeline (see also Figueroa and Garcia 2006). In a study on Chicano/Latino students in continuation high schools, Malagón (2011) noted that Latinos experience racial microaggressions—everyday slights that communicate a negative message to the recipient—in daily curricular and pedagogical practices and that these microaggressions can begin as early as elementary school. The cumulative impact of these microaggressions can weaken or prevent the attachment and engagement that help

students shape educational and occupational aspirations.

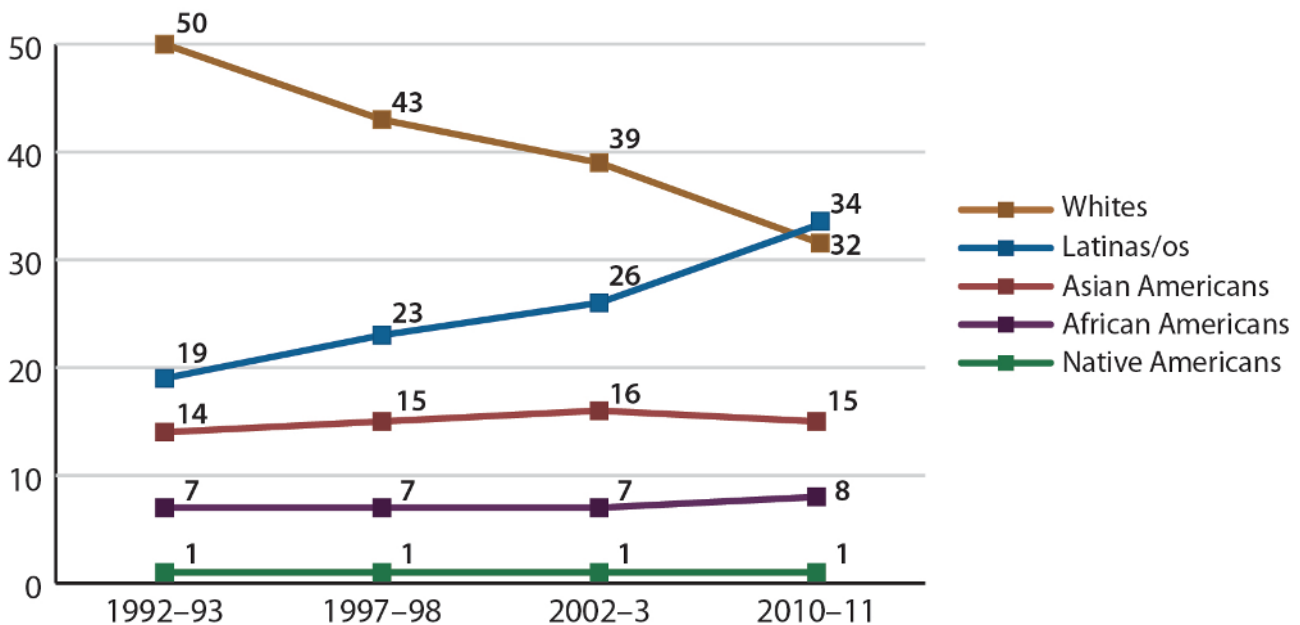
**Recommendation: Promote high-stakes engagement for Latino students.**

Since young Latinos are less likely to be engaged in school, administrators, teachers, and staff should be trained to provide an educational space in which students feel safe and comfortable. Schools must create an ethos that encourages Latino students to believe that their schools care about their academic needs and their aspirations to be successful. This includes establishing advising programs that focus on strategies for success and providing relatable services such as mentorship programs, college campus visits, and workshops that can help students understand the realities of educational attainment and occupational opportunities. Schools must provide role models and mentors, primarily by recruiting and retaining effective and inspirational Latino teachers and staff who openly encourage young Latinos to be classroom and community leaders.

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE SEGMENT**

The California Community College (CCC) system is central to maintaining the state’s commitment to higher education access. Through its certificates, degrees, workforce programs, and transfer pathways, these institutions open the doors of higher education to millions, serving more students than any other type of postsecondary education institution in the state. The CCC is especially critical for Latinas/os, as these institutions represent a vital entry point into postsecondary education. In California, Latinas/os surpassed white students as the largest racial/ethnic group in the CCC system in 2010 (Solórzano, Santos, and Acevedo 2013). Figure 5 illustrates the rapid growth of the Latina/o population in the CCC system. Between 1992–93 and 2010–11, the proportion of Latina/o students in community colleges statewide increased from 19 to 34 percent, while the proportion of white students fell from 50 to 32 percent (Solórzano, Acevedo-Gil, and Santos 2013). The California Community College Chancellor’s Office

**Figure 5. Percentage of Students Enrolled in California Community Colleges, by Race/Ethnicity, 1992-93 through 2010-11**



Source: Solórzano, Acevedo-Gil, and Santos (2013).

reports that in 2015, Latina/o students comprised 47 percent of first-time freshman in the CCC system.<sup>4</sup>

For many Latinas and Latinos, community colleges serve as the gateway to a four-year college or university. The CRSC report published in 2006 demonstrated that a primary factor for successful transfer to a four-year university was the implementation of a transfer culture at each community college campus. Authors of the report recommended that community colleges increase accessibility to the information necessary for transfer, provide rigorous curriculum, and boost support programs and services by establishing learning communities. These recommendations remain critical for efforts to improve transfer rates because research shows that Latinos continue to face more bumps on the path to transfer—and to degree completion—than their peers in other racial/ethnic groups.

Relatively few Latina/o community college students persist to transfer, obtain a certificate, or complete a degree. On average, out of 100 Latinas/os in California who enrolled in a CCC in 2010, 4 completed a career and technical degree and 14 transferred to a California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) campus (Solórzano, Acevedo-Gil, and Santos 2013). In spite of the increasing number of Latina/o students enrolling in community colleges, this segment of the education pipeline is where the greatest number Latina/o students is lost (Moore and Shulock 2010). Research indicates that the state's economic health is dependent on increasing Latina/o student achievement, and this achievement is closely tied to their success in community college. After six years, from 2003-04 to 2009-10, 80 percent of Latino/a students had not completed a certificate or degree or transferred to a university. Moreover, to have a beneficial economic impact, students must earn at least thirty college-level credits—credits that count toward a community college degree or certificate—yet only 35 percent

of Latino students had reached this milestone after six years (Moore and Shulock 2010).

In a study titled *Steps to Success*, Moore, Shulock, and Offenstein (2009) found that students are more likely to make progress and complete a certificate or degree or transfer to a four-year institution if they follow certain patterns. These include passing college-level math and English as part of their college coursework, taking a college success course, maintaining full-time enrollment, earning credits during summer terms, and avoiding excessive course withdrawals and late registration. The development of basic skills instruction is pivotal, since many Latina/o students do not progress to college-level coursework as community college students.<sup>5</sup>

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges defines basic skills as “those foundation skills in reading, writing, mathematics and English as a second language, as well as learning skills and study skills, which are necessary for students to succeed in college-level work” (2009, 4) After they enroll, community college students take placement exams to measure their knowledge in these core subject areas and are then placed into course sequences designed to build basic skills. Once placed, they must complete these sequences before they are eligible to enroll in the college-level coursework that is required for a degree or certificate or the transfer-level coursework that can be applied to degree completion at a four-year university. Figure 6 presents typical course sequences in reading and mathematics. Specific placement thresholds—“cut scores”—vary by college, as do course sequences (Melguizo, Bos, and Prather 2011).

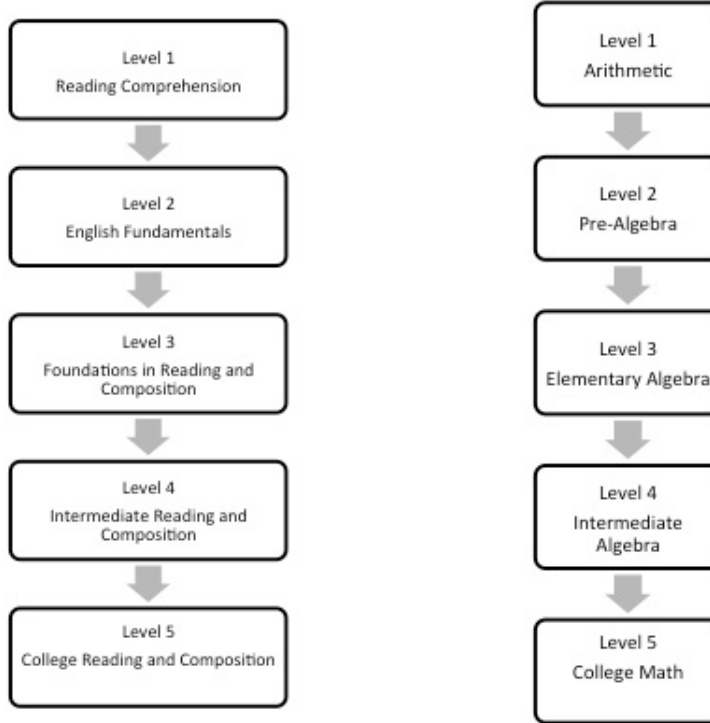
Students who are placed in developmental coursework most often do not go on to complete transfer-level courses (Bailey 2009; Grubb et al. 2011; Hern 2012; Long 2005; Solórzano, Acevedo-Gil, and Santos 2013). Nevertheless, remediation serves a critical purpose at the community college. Success for Latinas/os in developmental

English coursework is related to their initial placement level. The majority of Latina/o students are placed in developmental English classes that are one or two levels below the transfer-level classes. The data in figure 7 show that between 2009 and 2012, students at all assessment levels had trouble completing transfer-level English within three years of enrollment. Out of 100 Latina/o students who were placed in developmental English, only 34 passed a transfer-level course within a three-year period (Solórzano, Acevedo-Gil, and Santos 2013). For Latina/o students who were placed four levels below transfer-level English, only .5 (17 percent) passed a transfer-level course. Students at the other end of the spectrum did much better. Twenty-two of the 51 students (43 percent) who were placed one level below completed the requirement within three years. In other words, students who were placed one level below transfer-level English were 2.5 times more likely to pass a transfer-level English course than students placed four levels below. It is evident that starting at a lower assessment level is an especially serious impediment to timely progress.

Latina/o students have even greater difficulty advancing through basic skills math sequences, and success is again related to initial placement. Out of 100 Latina/o students who were placed into basic skills math between 2009 and 2012, only 14 successfully completed a transfer-level course in three years, as shown in figure 8. Of the 14 out of 100 students who were placed four levels below transfer-level math, only .4 (3 percent) completed a transfer course in a three-year period. For those 27 students who tested one level below, 8 (30 percent) passed a transfer-level course. Thus, students who were placed one level below transfer-level math were 10 times more likely to pass a transfer-level math course than students placed four levels below.

Students' ability to complete developmental coursework presents a significant challenge for the California Community Colleges. Since there

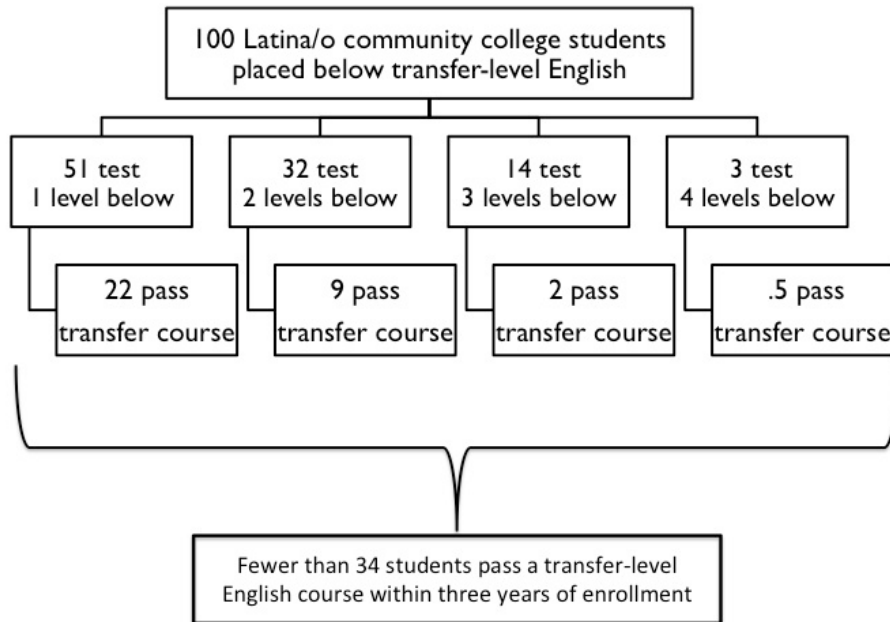
**Figure 6. Typical Course Sequences for Basic Reading and Math**



Source: Malagón et al. (2013).

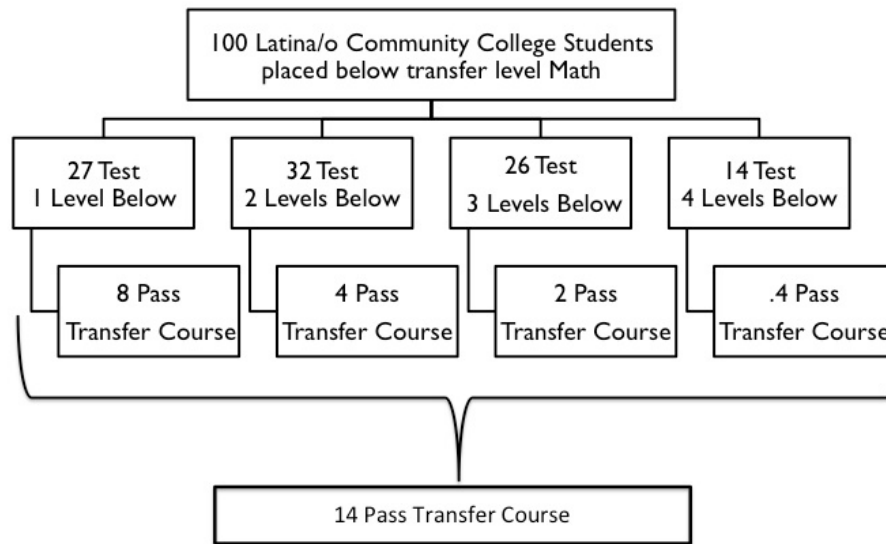
Note: Course sequences vary by campus; some colleges require additional courses. For ELL students, additional courses are often required before advancing to level 1.

**Figure 7. Education Pipeline for Latina/o Community College Students Taking Basic English**



Source: Drawn from Basic Skills Progress Tracker data, Fall 2009–Spring 2012, compiled by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office.



**Figure 8. Education Pipeline for Latina/o Community College Students Taking Basic Math**

Source: Drawn from Basic Skills Progress Tracker data, Fall 2009-Spring 2012, compiled by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

is little chance that students who are placed three to four levels below college level will complete a developmental sequence and move on to transfer-level courses, the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) was established to provide supplemental funding to improve basic skills courses and professional development for faculty and staff as well (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges 2009; California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2007). In this and many other efforts, however, the focus has been placed largely on broad institutional trends and on feedback from faculty and administrators. Basic skills courses also present other factors that affect community college students in adverse ways. Students typically do not receive graduation or transfer credits for developmental courses, which increases the time needed to accumulate credits for transfer or for degree or certificate completion. This can cut into financial aid packages, creating an additional financial burden, particularly for low-income students (Burdman 2012).

Recent legislation in California has been implemented to improve success for Latinas/os in the state's 112 community colleges. The Student Success Act of 2012 (SB 1456) was signed into law

by Governor Jerry Brown on September 27, 2012, and took effect on January 1, 2013. The legislation initializes implementation of recommendations made by the Student Success Task Force. These recommendations address linkages with K-12 schools, student intake and support, instructional programs, and accountability. Taken as a whole, the task force recommendations provide a road map for improving the way that community colleges help students identify and achieve their educational goals, which will enable them to move through the education pipeline in a timely manner. The structures created by the legislation should increase student success for Latina/o students who aspire to earn a degree or certificate or transfer to a four-year university.

These structures, however, may also present challenges for Latina/o students. Students are required to identify an education goal either after completing fifteen semester units that can be applied to a degree, or before the end of their third semester, and students who do not comply may not be allowed to register. This new policy is designed to assist students with their planning, but it can place pressure on first-year students. This is especially true for Latina/o students, who are more likely

to be placed in developmental courses and may have a limited knowledge of the college process.

Another factor that can impede community college success is the quality of instruction that students receive. In their study of low-income community college students in basic skills courses, Malagón et al. (2013) found that students often complained about poor instructional practices and that professors often approached course material from an assumption of deficiency. Many students also stated that they had not been given the opportunity to "test out" of a course when they felt that it was not challenging or engaging. Several institutions have implemented or piloted accelerated courses to help students move faster through basic skills sequences.<sup>6</sup> While many colleges have done this successfully, these efforts should be implemented with caution so as to not sacrifice the quality of instruction.

**Recommendation: Improve student outcomes through institutional data collection.**

Since completion rates and levels of disparity vary across campuses, colleges need to find ways to be more effective at helping students. While the CCC's

Student Success Scorecard prompts institutions to collect some student data, colleges should also start performing a cohort analysis of students' progress through academic milestones that will assess their holistic experiences—for example, faculty and peer interactions and non-academic responsibilities—in addition to individual characteristics such as race/ethnicity and preparation level. This richer analysis will allow stakeholders to identify where students get stalled along their community college trajectories and will provide a more complete evaluation of a college's effective practices.

**Recommendation: Students should learn about the importance and content of placement exams as early as possible.**

Studies show that many students are not aware of the purpose or importance of the assessment exam (Malagón et al. 2013). High school students should be provided with a course sequence map that explains placement in relation to the amount of time to needed to complete college-level math and English. Community colleges should also

provide resources that allow students to prepare for these exams, including posting online sample tests and offering short refresher courses.

**Recommendation: Improve classroom instruction in basic skills.**

Students should have opportunities to take rigorous, relevant, and engaging coursework. Faculty who teach these sequences should come to the courses with the understanding that their students are capable of advancing from developmental to college-level coursework. Professional development should also be offered to instructors to improve curriculum and pedagogy. This is especially critical for adjunct instructors who teach the majority of basic skills courses (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2008). These instructors face a number of challenges, as they often carry heavy course loads, and they should be fairly compensated for the time needed to improve their instructional practices.

#### UNDERGRADUATE SEGMENT

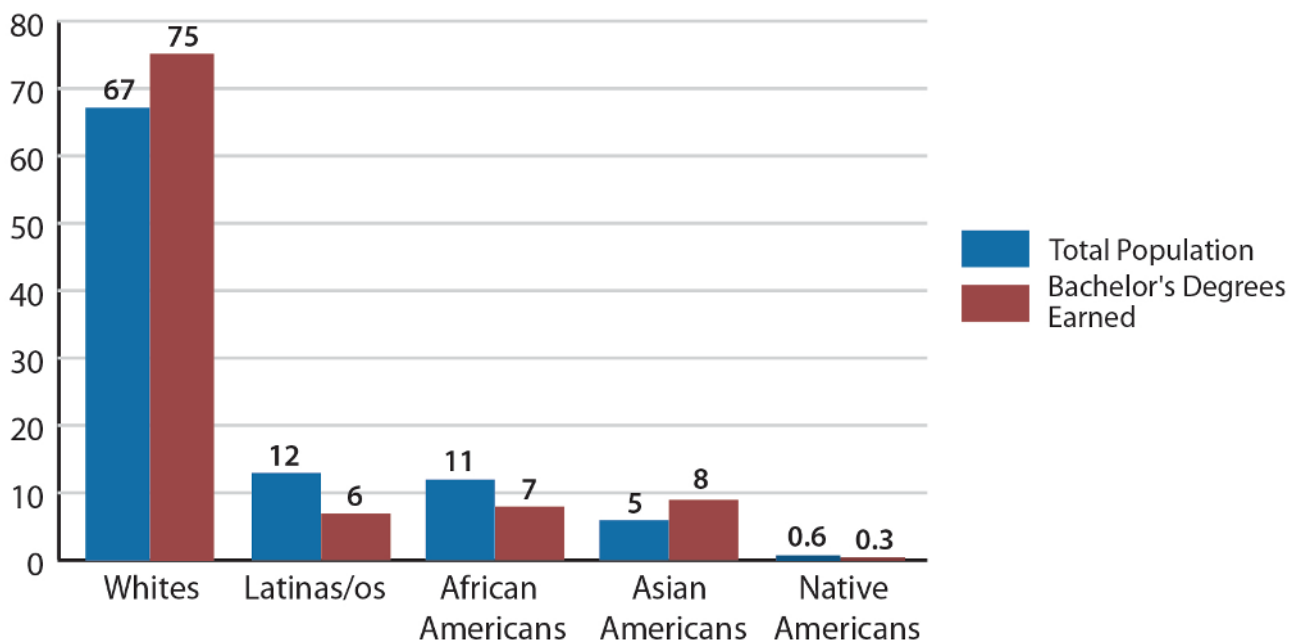
Latina/o enrollment in higher education has increased during the past

decade, yet Latina/o students are still severely underrepresented in this segment of the pipeline when compared to the overall population. Figure 9 illustrates this trend using a parity measure that compares bachelor's degree attainment for US residents aged twenty-five and older by major racial/ethnic group. In order to reach parity, the total proportion of the population for each group should be equal to the proportion of the population earning a bachelor's degree.

Figure 9 shows that in 2012, Latinas/os comprised 12 percent of this population, but they represented only 6 percent of those earning bachelor's degrees that year. In order to reach parity, Latinas/os would have to earn 12 percent of bachelor's degrees—they would have to increase attainment almost twofold. In comparison, whites made up 67 percent of this population and earned 75 percent of bachelor's degrees. Whites are overrepresented in bachelor's degree attainment, as are Asian Americans.<sup>7</sup>

The 2006 report identified several important factors for successful transition

**Figure 9. Percentage of Students Aged Twenty-Five and Older Attaining a Bachelor's Degree, by Race/Ethnicity, 2014**



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2012, compiled by the US Census Bureau.

to and through the undergraduate segment of the education pipeline. The role of the family, campus climate, role modeling and mentorship, and financial aid continue to be significant in the pursuit of a college degree for Latina/o students. Campus climate is a factor that has gained notable attention in recent years, as institutions grapple with addressing racism and discrimination.

#### CAMPUS CLIMATE

Research has found that students of color on college and university campuses continue to face incidents of racial/ethnic harassment, bias, and discrimination (Hurtado and Ruiz, 2012; Rankin & Associates 2014; Yosso et al. 2009). Campus climate “is a part of the institutional context that includes community members’ attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and expectations around issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity” (Hurtado et al. 2008, 205). Researchers have explored the impact of campus climate, including its connection to college transition and retention in postsecondary education, and have found that it contributes to transition and success rates for Latinas/os in postsecondary education (Hurtado et al. 2008; Locks et al. 2008). Furthermore, discrimination and bias in the campus context have been linked to a heightened awareness of racial identity among students of color (Hurtado, Alvarado, and Guillermo-Wann 2015).

Significant efforts have been made to improve campus climate in recent years, as incidents of racial discrimination have become more visible through social media and national news coverage. One event that gained significant media attention was in February 2010, when students at UC San Diego held an off-campus party to mock Black History Month. Students invited to the “Compton Cookout” dressed in stereotypical attire. Later that week a noose was found hung in one of the university libraries (*Los Angeles Times* 2010). In March 2015 national news called attention to a cell phone video of members of a University of Oklahoma fraternity performing a chant that

included racist epithets. Other incidents have pushed discussions of race and racism into mainstream discourse. In 2014 the killing of African American teenager Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri, sparked outrage and political protests. In 2015 nine African Americans were murdered at a church in Charleston, South Carolina; the murders were categorized as a federal hate crime because the white male assailant confessed his desire to ignite a race war. Campus climate is influenced by such events, and it must be addressed to create inclusive higher education institutions.

Efforts to improve campus climate have been initiated by the University of California (UC) Office of the President. In 2010 the UC implemented the Campus Climate reporting system, a twenty-four-hour hotline and an online form for reporting incidents of discrimination, hate, and intolerance; the report can be made anonymously. In June of that year, in response to incidents of racial intolerance on UC campuses, the President’s Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture, and Inclusion was created to evaluate, identify, and implement efforts to improve the climate on all campuses (University of California 2015).

Although these efforts are a step in the right direction, comprehensive changes and policies at the system and institution level are still needed. Beginning in 2012 a system-wide campus climate survey was conducted in an effort to understand experiences and perceptions of the campus environment among students, faculty, and staff at UC campuses. This was the largest campus climate survey to be administered in higher education, and it captured student and faculty perceptions of campus climate efforts and initiatives. The survey determined that students and faculty of color across the UC system continue to experience a negative climate. Students identified effective faculty mentorship and increasing opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue among students, faculty, and staff as having the most positive

influence on campus climate (Rankin & Associates 2014).

To more effectively assess campus climate, Hurtado et al. (2012) developed a model that calls for a holistic approach that connects campus climate to educational practices and student outcomes. This model, Diverse Learning Environment (DLE), aims to capture the complexities of campus climate by explicitly acknowledging not only the multiple contexts and actors that shape the campus environment but also how the campus environment influences those contexts and actors. In comparison to previous models, the DLE is unique because it calls attention to the role of faculty and staff, whose daily practice can either advance diversity or reproduce inequality. The DLE is also intended to be inclusive of multiple and intersecting social identities, which acknowledges the fact that if the goal is to improve campus climate for diverse environments, it is critical that models expand their definition of diversity.

***Recommendation: Institutions must conduct holistic climate assessments that consider the complexities of the campus climate, and they must put the results of climate assessments into action.***

Campus climate assessments, such as the UC system-wide survey, are essential, but they require a holistic appreciation of the campus environment. Particular attention should be placed on developing specific initiatives to address climate improvement. Moreover, initiatives for improving campus climate must consider the complexity of student identities, which play a role in the interactions that students have inside and outside the classroom.

***Recommendation: Institutions of higher education should practice targeted forms of inclusion across a range of identity groups.***

Campus climate should be addressed both broadly and specifically across institutions. Striving for inclusivity of diverse groups is important, but practices should be developed to address



climate issues for specific groups according to group identity membership. For example, institutions should exemplify the inclusive and humane treatment of undocumented students in campus climate efforts. The same should be done for students from specific racial/ethnic, gender identification, sexual orientation, and religious backgrounds.

#### UNDOCUMENTED COLLEGE STUDENTS

To create colleges and universities that are more inclusive, the needs of undocumented college students must be addressed. In California and across the United States, the majority of the undocumented population is Latina/o, and most Latinas/os are of Mexican origin (Pew Research Center 2015). State and federal legislation has led to greater access to higher education for undocumented students during the past decade. In 2001 the California legislature passed AB 540, which gave undocumented students access to in-state tuition if they had graduated from a California high school and met other specific requirements.

Since the enactment of AB 540, and as a result of years of undocumented student activism and organizing, there have been additional legislative gains for undocumented college students in California. In 2011, roughly ten years after the passage of AB 540, AB 130 and AB 131 were implemented, providing eligible students with access to private, state, and institutional financial aid programs. In 2014, SB 1210 was passed and will soon be implemented. This law will expand access to financial aid by providing need-based loans to undocumented college students. These “DREAM Loans” will be tied to the federal interest rate and will follow federal requirements for repayment. This funding is expected to increase access and retention in higher education for undocumented college students, but it is only a partial solution because undocumented students continue to be excluded from access to federal financial aid programs. In other states undocumented students receive little or no state financial support for higher education. Some states, such as

South Carolina and Alabama, explicitly exclude undocumented students from attending a postsecondary institution (Educators for Fair Consideration 2012).

At the federal level, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program gives recipients temporary relief from deportation and provides a temporary work permit. DACA has improved the lives of recipients by increasing their prospects for jobs, housing, and transportation (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, and Suárez-Orozco 2015). Despite the progress made by DACA, the program fails to provide either financial support for higher education or adequate job opportunities (Martinez 2014; Pérez Huber, Pulido Villanueva, Guarneros, Vélez, and Solórzano 2014).

The political climate for undocumented immigrants in the United States remains hostile. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has recently announced his plans for a federal immigration policy that would force the deportation of the 11 million undocumented immigrants currently residing in the United States (McCarthy 2015). Such antagonistic positions will continue to be a significant obstacle in creating equity for the undocumented immigrant population generally, and undocumented students specifically.

Support for undocumented students varies between and within the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems. In the UC system, some forms of institutional support, including academic, financial, and legal assistance, are available for undocumented students on all campuses. For example, all nine UC campuses have a designated contact person who is responsible for supporting undocumented students. Some UC and CSU campuses have established resource centers specifically to meet the needs of this student population. The CSU campuses in Fullerton, Los Angeles, Northridge, Long Beach, and Fresno have these centers. In addition, CSU Sacramento will soon open a center, and there are plans to develop centers

at the CSU campuses in San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, and Dominguez Hills.<sup>8</sup> These centers provide academic counseling, legal assistance, financial aid advising, and ally training.

Some campuses provide other services. For example, UC Berkeley has an on-campus food pantry, and the campus’s Haas Dreamer’s Resource Center provides on-site mental health services to support the well-being of undocumented students. CSU Long Beach has a laptop loan program to help students’ academic success. The mission of these student resource centers is to increase awareness and advocate for the undocumented students on their campuses.

***Recommendation: All California public institutions of higher education should provide institutional resources for undocumented student populations.***

In order to create a more inclusive environment, UC, CSU, and CCC should designate staff and/or faculty on each campus who can serve as a contact for undocumented students. Campuses must establish student resource centers that explicitly support undocumented students. Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, and Suárez-Orozco (2015) suggest creating an “undocufriendly campus” that publically advocates for undocumented students. Undocumented students should have a space on campus where their legal rights and privileges are understood.<sup>9</sup> Financial information and counseling tailored to the needs of undocumented students should also be available and accessible. Specific campuses can provide additional financial support. In addition, institutions must seek to support undocumented students’ academic needs and emotional well-being. Providing these forms of institutional support would ensure that undocumented students feel more supported, validated, and welcomed on college campuses. Forms of support should acknowledge and model the contributions of undocumented students on California’s college campuses.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL SEGMENT AND BEYOND**

In comparison to the overall population, very few Latina/o students make it through the education pipeline to receive a graduate degree. In figures 10 and 11, we use parity measures to show that a disproportionately low number of Latinas/os earn graduate degrees.

Figure 10 shows that in 2012, Latinas/os comprised 12 percent of the US population, yet only 4 percent earned a master's degree.<sup>10</sup> This means that Latinas/os would have to increase master's degree attainment more than two-fold to reach parity. Whites, again, are overrepresented, earning 76 percent of master's degrees while comprising 67 percent of the total population. Asian Americans are also overrepresented in degree attainment at the master's level. Similar to Latinas/os, African Americans are underrepresented, with 8 percent receiving a master's degree while comprising 11 percent of the total population in 2012.

Latinas/os have made some important gains in the attainment of doctoral degrees during the past decade. The

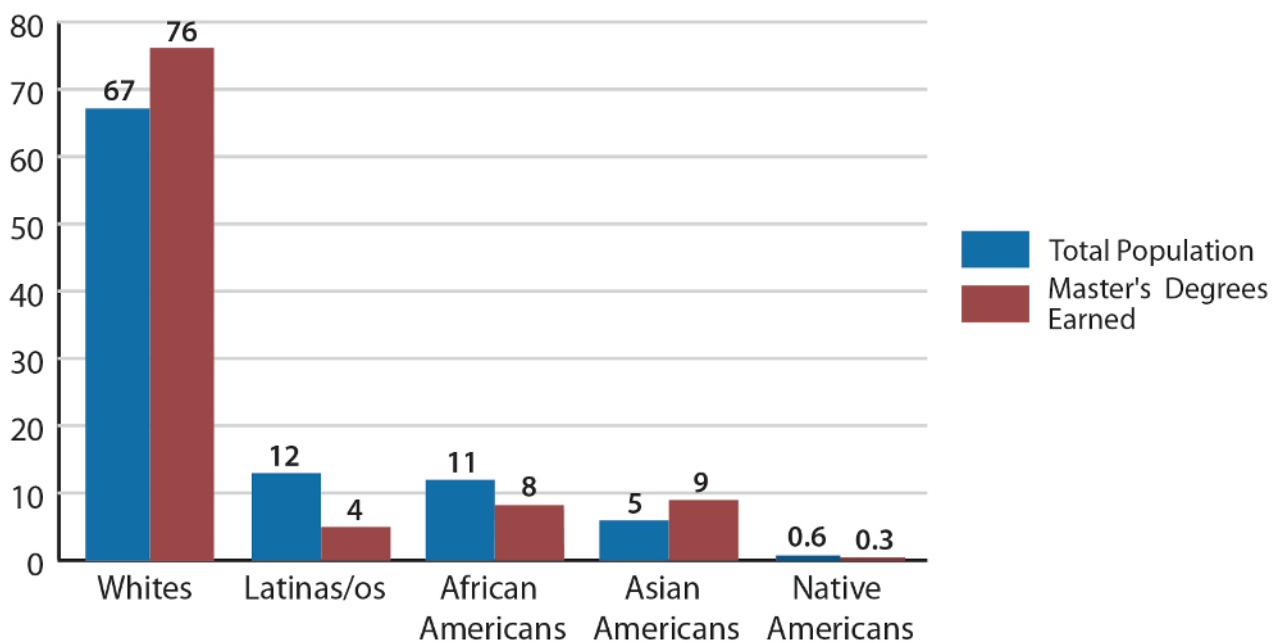
percentage of doctorates conferred to Latinas/o students grew substantially between 2000, when only 0.4 percent of Latinas/os earned a doctoral degree (Pérez Huber et al. 2006), and 2012, when 3 percent earned a doctorate. This change is especially notable given the fact that the percentage of those receiving master's degrees remained unchanged and the percentage receiving bachelor's degrees increased only slightly.<sup>11</sup> Yet parity measures show that the disparity between Latinas/os and other groups has widened, as figure 11 reveals. To reach parity, Latinas/os would need to increase their attainment of doctorates almost fourfold. These parity measures show that educational attainment is nowhere near what it should be based on the population of Latinas/os aged twenty-five or older.

Although moving beyond an undergraduate degree is an important accomplishment, Latinas/os face increased pressures and significant barriers in graduate school environments (Reyes and Rios 2005). These negative factors also affect Latina/o faculty. In exploring the research on

Latina/o graduate students and faculty in academia, we found that students and career professionals encounter similar experiences, as life in academia is in many ways an extension of the graduate student experience. Before beginning a discussion of these experiences, it is important to understand the severe underrepresentation of Latina/o faculty in higher education. Latinas/os represented only 4 percent of faculty at the national level in 2011. In comparison, whites comprised 74 percent of faculty, African Americans 7 percent, and Asian Americans 6 percent (Santiago, Galdeano, and Taylor 2015).

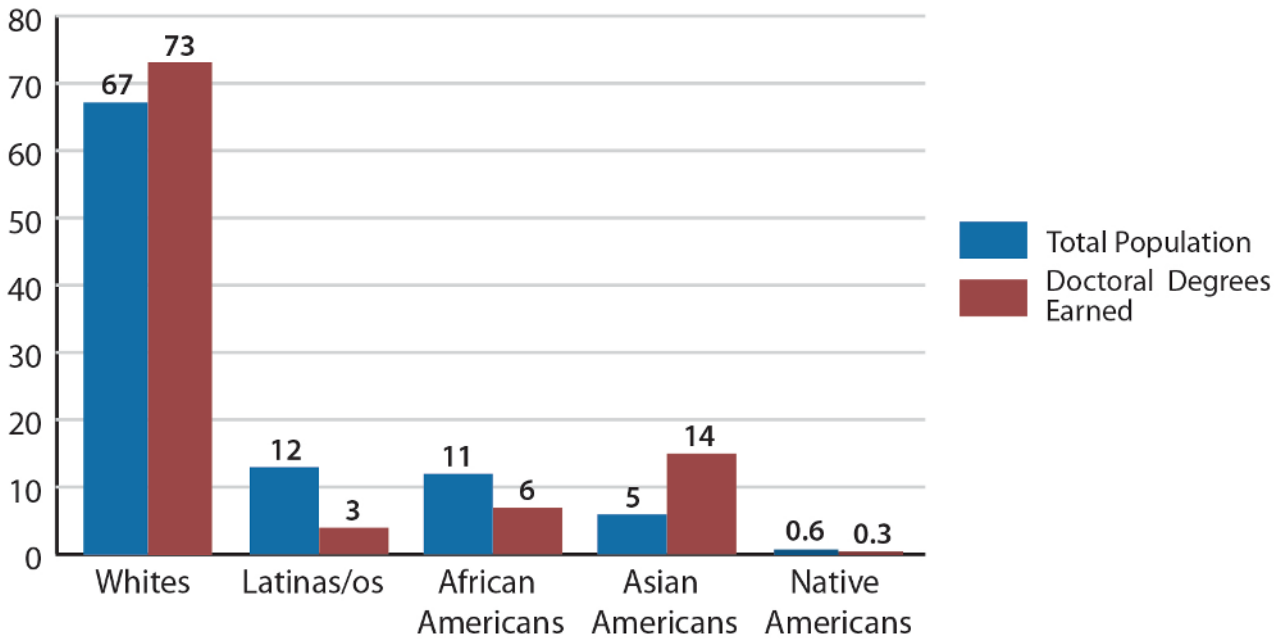
In California in 2013, Latina/o academic faculty comprised 14 percent of faculty in the CCC system, 9 percent in the CSU system, and 6 percent in the UC system, as figure 12 shows. White faculty, in contrast, made up the vast majority of the faculty within each of these systems. These data also show that Latina/o faculty are much more likely to be employed at teaching institutions rather than research institutions. Research has also found that when compared to white faculty,

**Figure 10. Percentage of Students Aged Twenty-Five and Older Attaining a Master's Degree, by Race/Ethnicity, 2012**



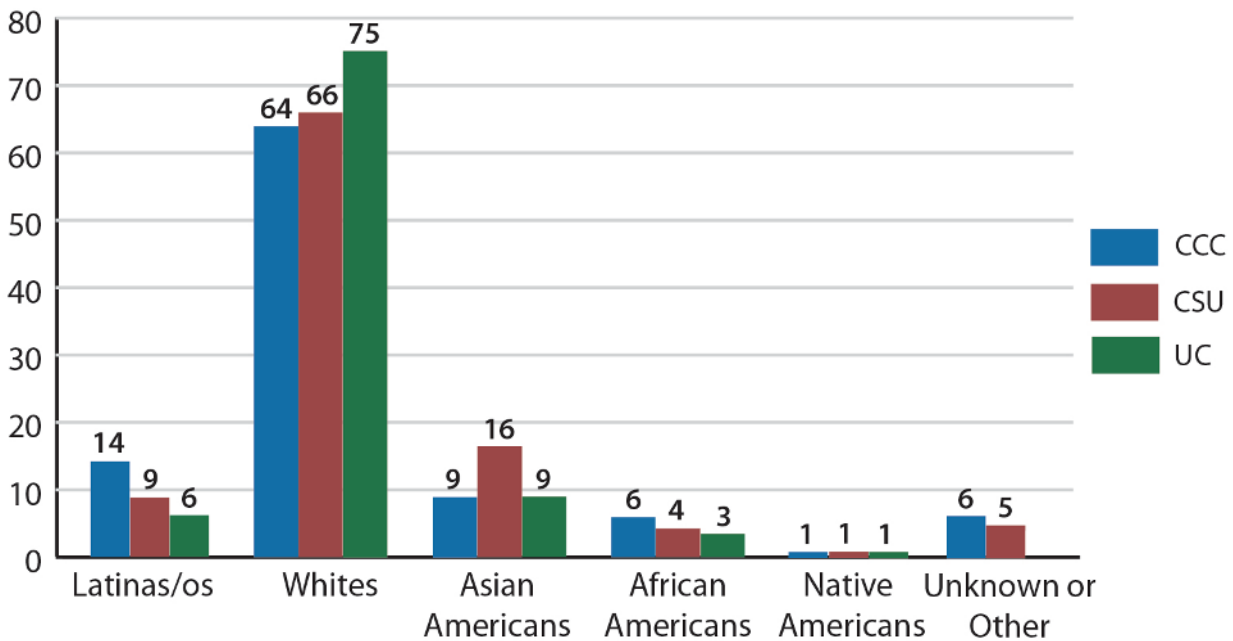
Source: American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2012, compiled by the US Census Bureau.

**Figure 11. Percentage of Students Aged Twenty-Five and Older Attaining a Doctoral Degree, by Race/Ethnicity, 2012**



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2012, compiled by the US Census Bureau.

**Figure 12. Percentage of Ladder-Rank Faculty in the California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU), and University of California (UC) Systems, by Race/Ethnicity, 2013**



Source: CCC data drawn from Management Information Systems Data Mart, compiled by California Community College Chancellor's Office. CSU data drawn from Employee Profiles Archived Reports, compiled by the CSU Office of the Chancellor. UC data drawn from Ladder and Equivalent Rank Faculty, compiled by the UC Office of the President.

Note: "Other and Unknown" includes those who did not report race/ethnicity data or who identified as multiracial (two or more races). UC did not report an "Other" category. The CCC, CSU, and UC data reported here do not disaggregate racial/ethnic groups by domestic and international categories.

Latina/o faculty, on average, spend more time per week on research activities, reflecting on their teaching, and advising students (Johnson, Kuykendall, and Laird 2005).

Many of the Latinas/os who have found faculty positions in public colleges and universities encounter a “wall of isolation” in their academic careers (Gonzales, Murakami, and Núñez 2013). The underrepresentation of Latina/o faculty hinders socialization in terms of cultural norms, expectations, and sense of belonging. For example, Ponjuan (2011) found that isolation and alienation results in hostile work environments for Latina/o faculty. In addition, the small number of Latinas/os in the ranks of advanced degree programs and the professoriate increases the likelihood that Latina/o graduate students and faculty members will be targeted for their group identity by, for example, racial microaggressions (Urrieta and Chávez Chávez 2010).

#### ACADEMIC SOCIALIZATION

If Latina/o graduate students are not socialized and are not encouraged to pursue a career in higher education, patterns of inequity in postsecondary education will continue to repeat, increasing the likelihood that the number of Latinas/os receiving doctorates will remain low (Espino 2014). The transition to graduate education is a critical point for Latina/o students, many of whom are the first in their families to attain an undergraduate degree. Socialization is important in this transition, and it continues to be important throughout graduate school.

For graduate students, socialization includes forming mentor relationships with faculty and peers and having a sense of belonging within the often highly competitive graduate school environment. A sense of belonging is largely influenced by student interaction with other Latinas/os, whether in classrooms or the institution more broadly (Gildersleeve, Croom, and Vasquez 2011). Students’ perceptions of the larger campus environment and their graduate program specifically are less positive if they do not identify with

their department faculty or peers (Williams 2002). Research has shown that race/ethnicity plays a salient factor in the interactions and relationships that doctoral students of color have with faculty and advisors (Gildersleeve, Croom, and Vasquez 2011).

Latina/o faculty often confront pressures to accommodate to academic policies and practices that were created from the beliefs, values, and perspectives of the dominant group (Oliva et al. 2013). In her seminal work on Latinas/os in academia, Montoya (1994) stated that “academic success traditionally has required that one exhibit the linguistic and cognitive characteristics of the dominant culture” (8). Over two decades later, Montoya’s argument continues to ring true, as Latina/o scholars are often perceived as “outsiders” within mainstream academia (Daniel 2007).

For Latina/o faculty, socialization is also connected to tenure and promotion. The research documenting Latina/o experiences with tenure is especially alarming. In several studies, Latina/o faculty (and other scholars of color) report unclear and/or inconsistent tenure review processes that place them at a disadvantage (Arriola 2012; Niemann 2012; Urrieta and Chávez Chávez 2010). The University of California’s campus climate survey confirms these findings. Survey data from 2013 found that 38 percent of Latina/o faculty at UC campuses reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “I believe the tenure standards/promotion standards are applied equally to all faculty.” A significant portion of UC Latina/o faculty feels that tenure and promotion processes are not equitable. Research has also established that racialized and gendered perceptions of Latina/o faculty can negatively influence student evaluations, which can impact tenure review decisions (Niemann 2012; Smith and Anderson 2005).

Other concerns are related to workload and productivity. On the one hand, the workload can be especially heavy for Latina/o faculty who

devote much time to community service work, which can inhibit research productivity (Ponjuan 2011). On the other hand, responding to community needs can also provide “inspiration and passion” and serve as motivation for Latina/o faculty to persist in their academic careers (Turner, González, and Wood 2008). Urrieta and Chávez Chávez (2010) similarly report that community service can be disproportionately distributed among Latina/o faculty and that the institutional value placed on service to the community can be ambiguous.

Research has found that challenges related to academic socialization occur frequently for Latina/o faculty generally, but that greater challenges exist for women (Võ 2012). Latina faculty often do not align with dominant expectations of who fits the role of an “intellectual” (Sulé 2011). Thus, their abilities are consistently questioned by colleagues and students, who often perceive Latina (and African American women) professors as less capable—or even incompetent (Gonzalez, Murakami, and Núñez 2013; Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012). These skewed perceptions of capability and competence are often shaped by the multiple identities of Latinas/os.

#### MICROAGGRESSIONS

Research has found that Latina/o graduate students and faculty frequently encounter racial microaggressions (Ramirez 2014; Solórzano 1998). Racial microaggressions are a systemic form of everyday racism that is based on race/ethnicity, often in combination with gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname. The effects of racial microaggressions are cumulative, and they function to keep people of color in their place (Pérez Huber and Solórzano, 2015).

In one of the first empirical studies on racial microaggressions, Solórzano (1998) found that Chicana/o graduate students and faculty experienced everyday racial slights from colleagues and other faculty. His data revealed that racist and sexist comments were



frequently directed toward these scholars in what his participants called “slips of the tongue.” For example, one Chicano participant was often told by colleagues at his institution, “You’re not like the rest of them,” referring to other “Mexicans.” In later work, Solórzano and his colleagues determined that racial microaggressions had a negative impact on campus climate for Latina/o students (Yosso et al. 2009). For example, Yosso et al. (2009) found that racial microaggressions often took the form of “racial jokes” about one’s racial/ethnic group that were perpetrated by white students (669). This type of racial microaggression is particularly dangerous because the comedic overtone makes confronting these comments difficult, as they are often dismissed as “just a joke” (670).

A separate study of Latina/o graduate student experiences identified that the low expectations of professors constitute another form of racial microaggression. Gildersleeve, Croom, and Vasquez (2011) found that low expectations discourage many Latina/o graduate students. Students internalize these perceptions, which leads to lowered self-expectations. Turner, González, and Wood (2008) found that faculty of color often experience racial tokenism and, for those whose first language is not English, “accent discrimination.” It is particularly significant that these experiences emerged consistently throughout the twenty years that this research spans.

Yet another example of racial microaggressions in academia is the devaluation and delegitimation of research conducted by Latina/o scholars (and other scholars of color). Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) explained that research is often viewed as “biased” when studies by Latinas/os focus on Latina/o groups and that colleagues are more critical of the quality of journals in which Latina/o scholars publish their work. Similarly, Gildersleeve, Croom, and Vasquez (2011) found that professors often devalued Latina/o graduate students’ research approaches that are drawn from non-Western perspectives.

Turner, González, and Wood (2008) confirmed these findings, identifying the undervaluation of research as a common experience among faculty of color. These negative perceptions of scholarship can lead to significant barriers to advancement in graduate studies and professoriate careers. For students, it can deter degree completion (Gildersleeve, Croom, and Vasquez 2011), and for faculty it can mean the denial of tenure (Arriola 2012).

Apart from these professional consequences is the emotional and physical toll that racial microaggressions can take (Pierce 1974). Microaggressions often trigger a sense of self-doubt and not belonging. Gildersleeve, Croom, and Vasquez (2011) found that racial microaggressions often lead Latina/o graduate students to self-censor, question their self-efficacy, adopt or refuse the rules and norms of their discipline, or feel stifled in their scholarly pursuits. Urrieta and Chávez Chávez (2010) explained that Latina/o faculty experience significantly higher levels of stress due to their experiences with racial microaggressions. Latinas in particular experience excessive stress due to this everyday form of racism (Urrieta and Chávez Chávez 2010). Arriola (2014) offered another insight into the consequences of microaggressions, arguing that how one responds to microaggressions can also take a toll. She observed that Latinas/os can engage in “self-sabotage”—the act of dismissing one’s self-care—in order to prove oneself in academia (327).

Research has established the negative consequences of racial microaggressions, but it is important to note that productive responses have also been documented. In response to everyday racism and marginalization, Latina/o scholars have developed strategies to find validation and support in academia. Telling one’s story with an intentional purpose to pass down knowledge—what many call *testimonio*—is one of these strategies (Espino et al. 2012; Urreita and Villenas 2013). *Testimonios* of Latina/o graduate students and faculty in academia have

served as a powerful tactic not only to reveal practices of subordination in academia but also to create a space that allows Latinas/os to heal from those experiences (Latina Feminist Group 2001). Latina/o faculty, and Latinas specifically, have developed another tactic for countering racial microaggressions: working collaboratively to create spaces of support and mentorship that challenge the everyday racism (and sexism) encountered in the academy (Ek et al. 2010; Latina Feminist Group 2001; Oliva et al. 2013).

Responses to racial microaggressions are also being developed at the institutional level. The UC Office of the President has developed the Faculty Leadership Seminar Series, which can serve as a model for effective diversity training across campuses. The seminars provide campus leadership with institutional data on faculty diversity at their respective campuses; interactive theater presentations designed to promote dialogue about microaggressions; an overview of research on racial microaggressions within academic contexts; and resources to disrupt microaggressions and other forms of discrimination on UC campuses.<sup>12</sup>

***Recommendation: Hire more faculty of color who are committed to the mentorship of Latina/o graduate students.***

Forming positive relationships with faculty is crucial for Latina/o graduate students. Research has shown that race/ethnicity plays an important role in the relationships that students forge with faculty and advisors. Having a greater presence of faculty of color will increase opportunities for Latina/o graduate students to find the support they need.

***Recommendation: Institutions should make tenure and promotion policies transparent and provide adequate support throughout the process.***

Institutions should respect the significance of research on group membership and the teaching and service contributions made by Latina/o faculty. Departments should implement formal

mentorship structures that will ensure that Latina/o faculty receive adequate support during review processes. Department deans and chairs should take the initiative to participate in the preparation of Latina/o faculty for review processes in consistent and meaningful ways.<sup>13</sup>

**Recommendation: Create and implement diversity training within academic departments and require graduate students and faculty members to participate.**

Institutions should develop campus-wide diversity training programs, conducted across academic departments, that will give students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to understand racial microaggressions and other forms of discrimination experienced by Latinas/os and other people of color. Training should provide opportunities for faculty and students to explore how power and privilege operate within higher education policies, processes, and practices and how they shape the experiences of people of color. The seminars provided by the UC Office of the President can serve as one model for institutional diversity training for faculty and administration.<sup>14</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This report shows that small gains have been made in educational equity for Latinas/os during the past decade. In K-12 schools in California, more opportunities for Latina/o students to learn about their histories and communities are emerging through the availability of ethnic studies courses. In the California Community College system, Latinas/os are becoming a significant proportion of students. In the state's public colleges and universities, more Latinas/os are earning undergraduate and graduate degrees. This report also shows, however, that educational attainment for Latinas/os is nowhere near where it should be. Latino K-12 students are falling further behind their female counterparts in schools. Latina/o community college students continue to struggle to earn a degree or certificate or to transfer to a four-year college or university, and most

Latinas/os will not earn a college degree. There is much work to be done by researchers, educators, policymakers, and community members to improve the Latina/o education pipeline. Thus, the scholarly contributions and policy recommendations provided in past reports and policy briefs continue to be relevant. The CSRC continues to support research, devise strategies, and engage discussions that provide a strong foundation for creating greater educational equity for Latina/o students today and in the future.

## NOTES

1. Data for this figure were drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), which provides data for various Latina/o communities by ethnicity and country of origin. For this report, ACS data on Latinas/o represent information on individuals who identify as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Costa Rican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Salvadoran, or other Central American. It is important to note, that in the ACS and other Census Bureau databases, persons who report themselves as Latina/o can be of any race and are identified as such.

2. There are also promising programs. For example, the California Conference for Equality and Social Justice (CCEJ) is a nonprofit organization that provides programs for K-12 schools that work with students to examine discrimination based on a range of student identities (race, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, and so on) and the systemic oppression that influences those forms of discrimination. CCEJ currently works with high schools in Los Angeles Unified and Long Beach Unified School Districts (see <http://www.cacej.org>).

3. School districts that have made ethnic studies courses a graduation requirement are Los Angeles, El Rancho, Montebello, Woodland, El Monte, and Sacramento City. School districts that currently offer ethnic studies courses as electives are San Francisco, Santa Ana, San Diego, Lynwood, Garden Grove, and Anaheim.

4. Data drawn from Management Information Systems Data Mart, compiled by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. [http://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Enrollment\\_Status.aspx](http://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Enrollment_Status.aspx).

5. The terms *basic skills education* and *developmental education* are used interchangeably in this report.

6. Accelerated developmental education involves curricular restructuring and reconsideration of curricular content that reduces sequence length of basic skills courses. Successful accelerated basic skills courses can potentially help students transition more quickly to college and transfer level work.

7. It is important to note that the CPS data provided here do not disaggregate its data on Asian American educational attainment. Research has shown that there is a substantial range in degree attainment among Asian Americans in the United States, with Southeast Asians having significantly lower educational attainment than other Asian ethnic groups (Pang, Han, and Pang 2011).

8. Edgar Romo, personal communication with authors, August 17, 2015. Romo is the coordinator of the DREAM Success Center at California State University, Long Beach.

9. For example, California State University, Long Beach has implemented the AB 540 Ally Training Project, which provides training to university staff and faculty who wish to increase their awareness about the experiences of undocumented students and their knowledge of relevant policies and programs for them. Those who complete the voluntary training receive a decal to display in "his/her immediate work area," which informs others that "the professional is sensitive to and informed about the educational needs of undocumented students." See <http://web.csulb.edu/president/government-community/ab540/handbook/index.html>.

10. Master's degree attainment includes professional school.

11. A report published by the National Science Foundation in 2015 provides further evidence of a Latina/o doctoral growth rate but does not provide reasons and rationales as to why. Further research is needed to explain this growth. See <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2013/digest/nsf15304a.pdf>.

12. For more information on these seminars, see <http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/programs-and-initiatives/faculty-diversity-initiatives/faculty-leadership-seminars.html>

13. For additional recommendations to improve Latina/o faculty experiences in higher education institutions, see Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. (2012).

14. For more information on these seminars, see <http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/programs-and-initiatives/faculty-diversity-initiatives/faculty-leadership-seminars.html>.

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