Improving College Graduation Rates
A Closer Look at California State University

May 19, 2016

Jacob Jackson and Kevin Cook

Supported with funding from
The Sutton Family Fund
Outline

- Graduation Rates at CSU
- CSU in a National Context
- Campus Strategies
- Looking Forward
CSU is the nation’s largest university system

- 23 campuses, serving over 418,000 students
- Mostly bachelor’s and master’s degrees
- Tuition: $5,472/year
- Top third of high school students
- 42% Hispanic, 25% White, 15% Asian, 5% African American (2015 Freshmen)
CSU has lower graduation rates than many other California institutions

![Graduation rate comparison chart]

- UC
- CSU
- Private nonprofit
- Private for-profit

- 4-year graduation rate
- 6-year graduation rate
Past and current initiatives seek to boost graduation rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015 Goals</th>
<th>2025 Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-year rate</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnic gaps</td>
<td>Reduce to 7%</td>
<td>Reduce to 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year rate</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer rates</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4-year: 76% 2-year: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income gaps</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Reduce to 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CSU’s graduation rates have been rising for years
Nearly all campuses showed gains despite different starting points.
Gaps persist as rates rise for all racial groups
Outline

- Graduation Rates at CSU
- CSU in a National Context
- Campus Strategies
- Looking Forward
Compared to similar universities, CSU has higher six-year graduation rates…
...but lower four-year graduation rates
Changes in campuses’ students affect expectations for graduation rates…

![Graduation rate change graph](image-url)

- **Long Beach**: Predicted change (2008–2014) is 4%.
- **Dominguez**: Predicted change (2008–2014) is 0%.
- **Northridge**: Predicted change (2008–2014) is -2%.
- **Bakersfield**: Predicted change (2008–2014) is -4%.
Changes in campuses’ students affect expectations for graduation rates…
Outline

- Graduation Rates at CSU
- CSU in a National Context
- Campus Strategies
- Looking Forward
Campuses relied on high-impact practices to improve graduation rates

- Designed to promote student engagement, support, and inclusion in campus culture
- Focused on underrepresented minority and first-generation college students
- Examples include:
  - Proactive advising
  - First-year student seminars
  - Learning communities
  - Peer mentoring
  - Undergraduate research
Campuses used many of the same strategies

- Advising: 134
- Academic engagement: 88
- Curriculum pathways: 72
- Research and evaluation: 70
- Leadership: 31
- Support services: 31
- Faculty development: 24
- Degree requirements: 18

PPIC
Campuses developed effective solutions for common barriers to graduation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student preparation</td>
<td>Supplement Early Start with intensive summer bridge program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottleneck courses</td>
<td>Increase course offerings, reduce requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess units</td>
<td>Restrict major changes, standardize requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outline

- Graduation Rates at CSU
- CSU in a National Context
- Campus Strategies
- Looking Forward
Looking Forward

- **CSU:**
  - Set more ambitious goals
  - Facilitate more rigorous evaluation

- **State policymakers:**
  - Support identification and replication of successful practices
  - Support efforts to improve four-year rates
Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Jacob Jackson (jackson@ppic.org; 415-291-1128)

Thank you for your interest in this work.
Improving College Graduation Rates
A Closer Look at California State University

May 19, 2016

Jacob Jackson and Kevin Cook

Supported with funding from
The Sutton Family Fund
Most campuses had more graduation growth than predicted.