

Improving College Graduation Rates

A Closer Look at California State University

May 19, 2016

Jacob Jackson and Kevin Cook

Supported with funding from
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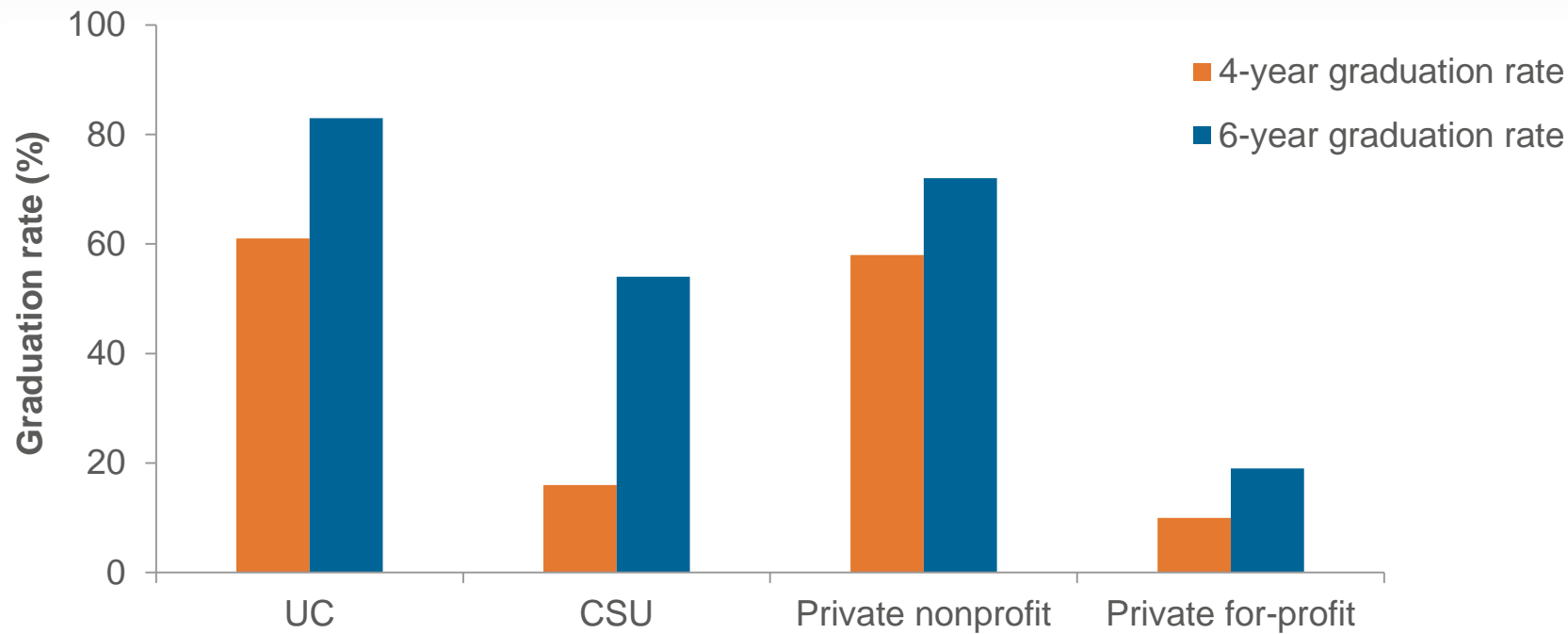
Outline

- 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)

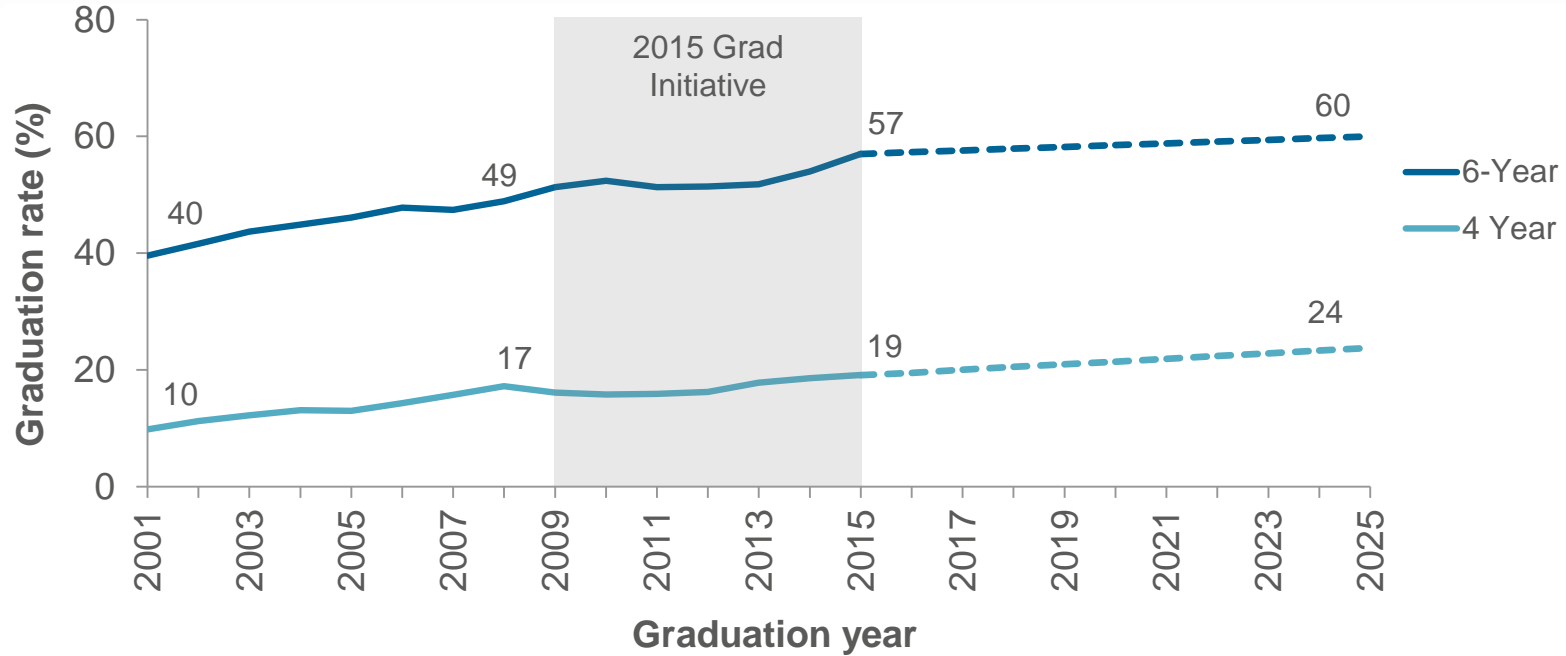
CSU has lower graduation rates than many other California institutions



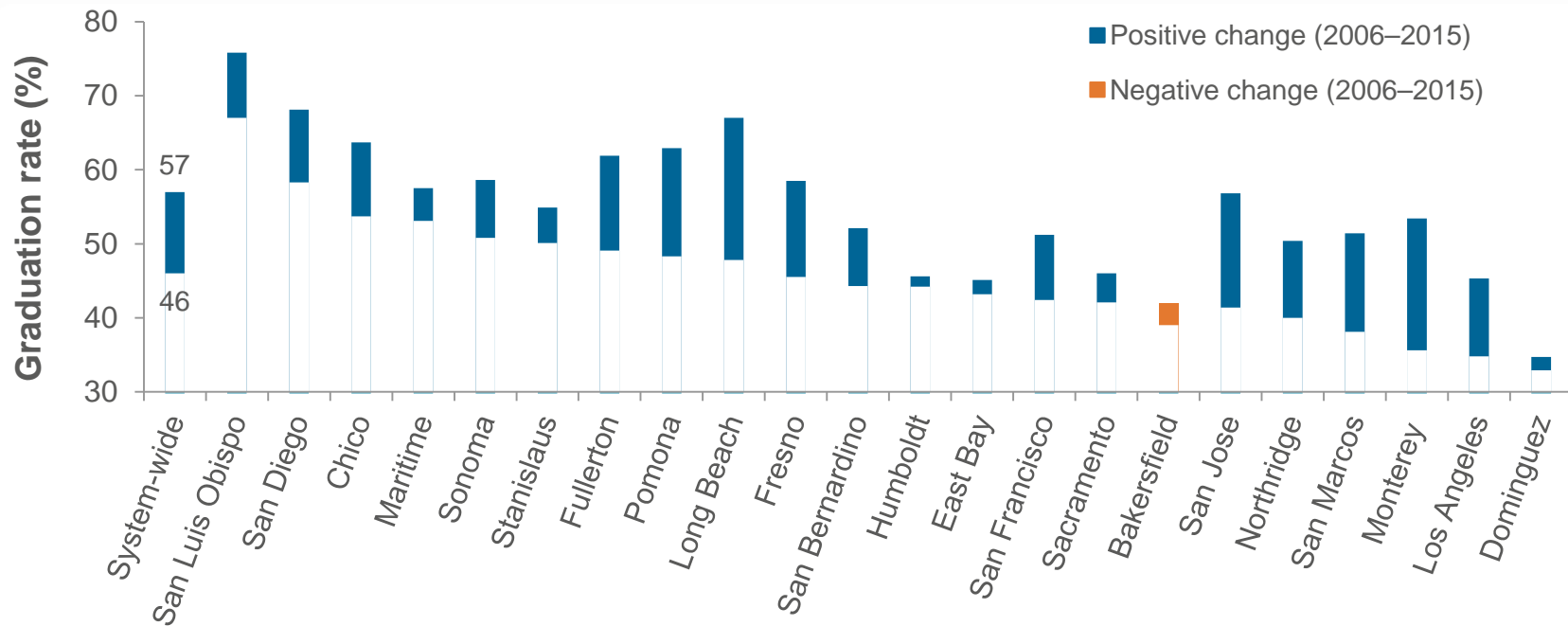
Past and current initiatives seek to boost graduation rates

| | 2015 Goals | 2025 Goals |
|------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| 6-year rate | 54% | 60% |
| Race/ethnic gaps | Reduce to 7% | Reduce to 7% |
| 4-year rate | n/a | 24% |
| Transfer rates | n/a | 4-year: 76% 2-year: 35% |
| Income gaps | n/a | Reduce to 5% |

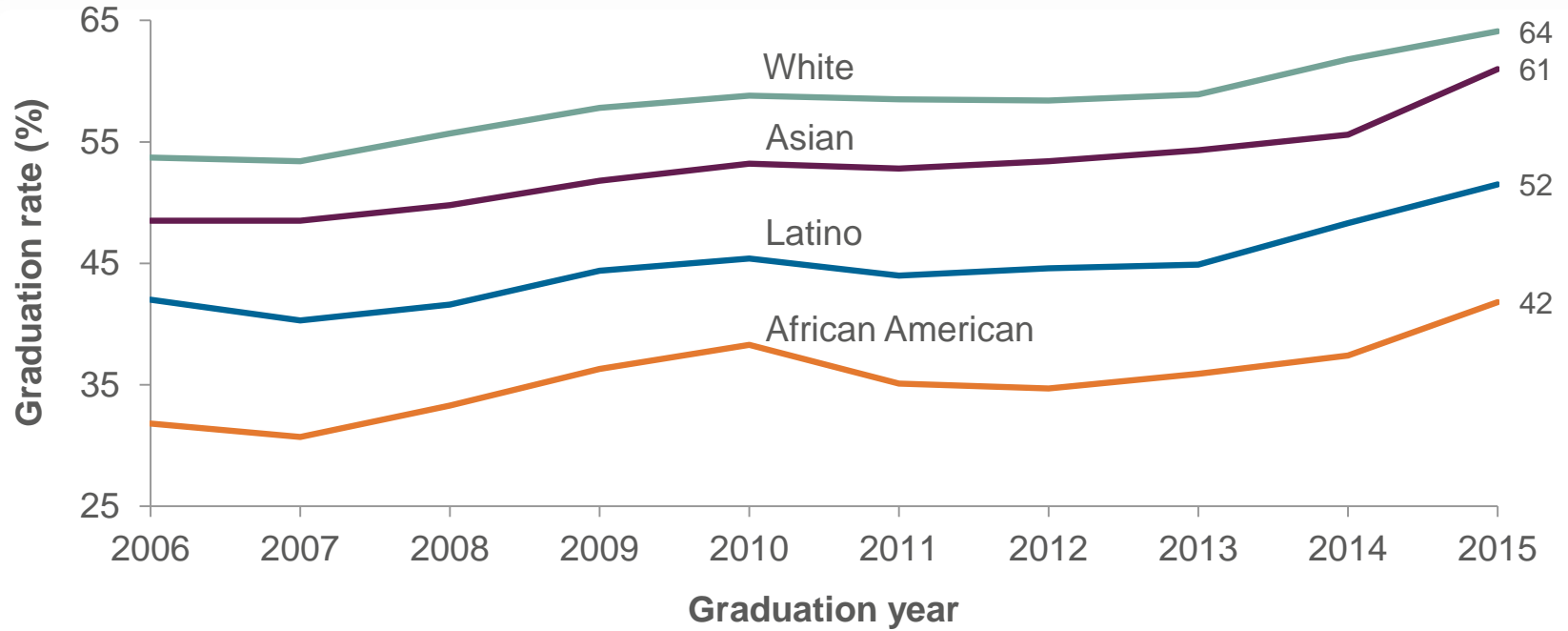
CSU's graduation rates have been rising for years



Nearly all campuses showed gains despite different starting points



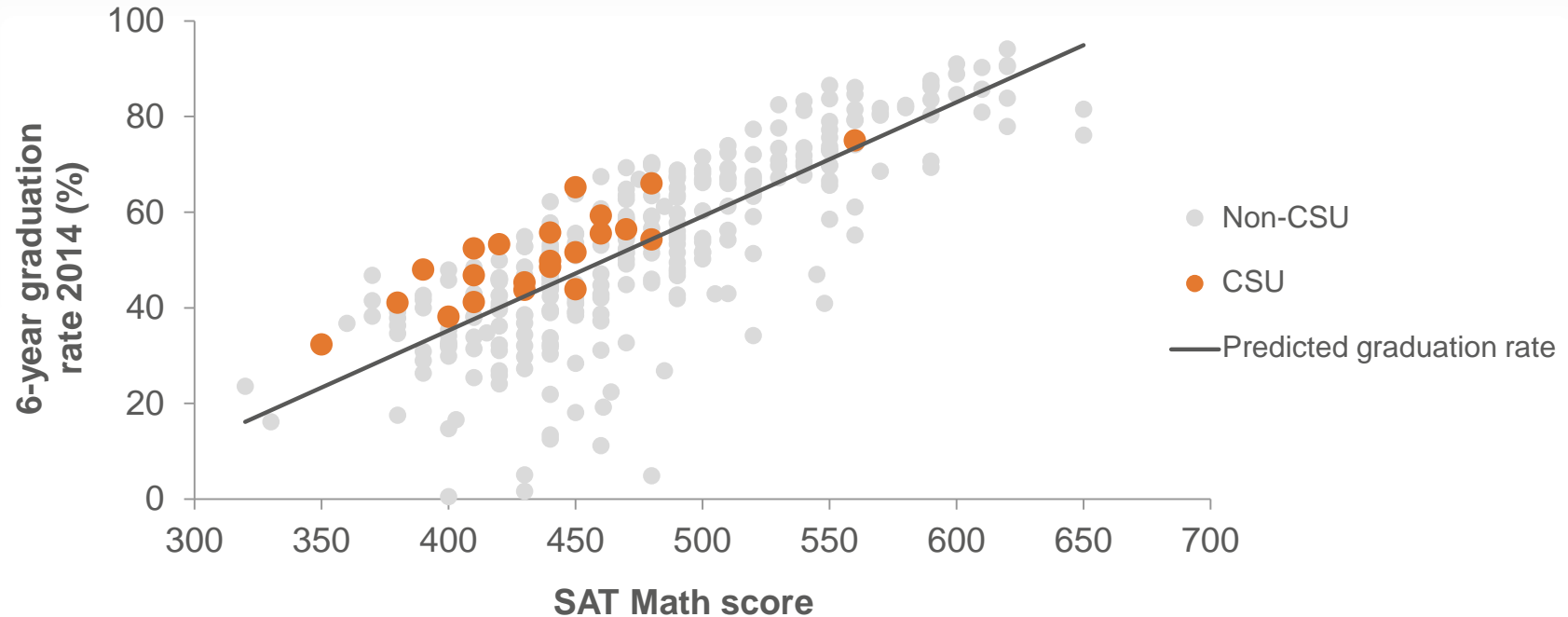
Gaps persist as rates rise for all racial groups



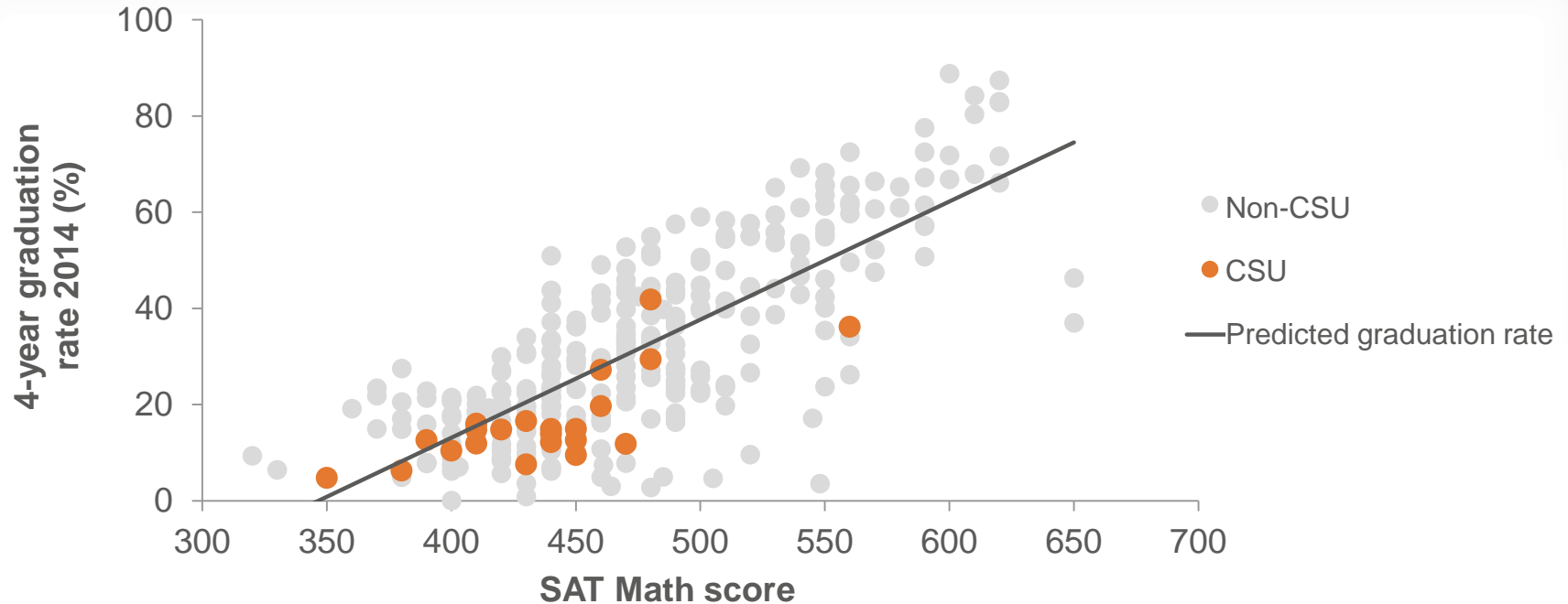
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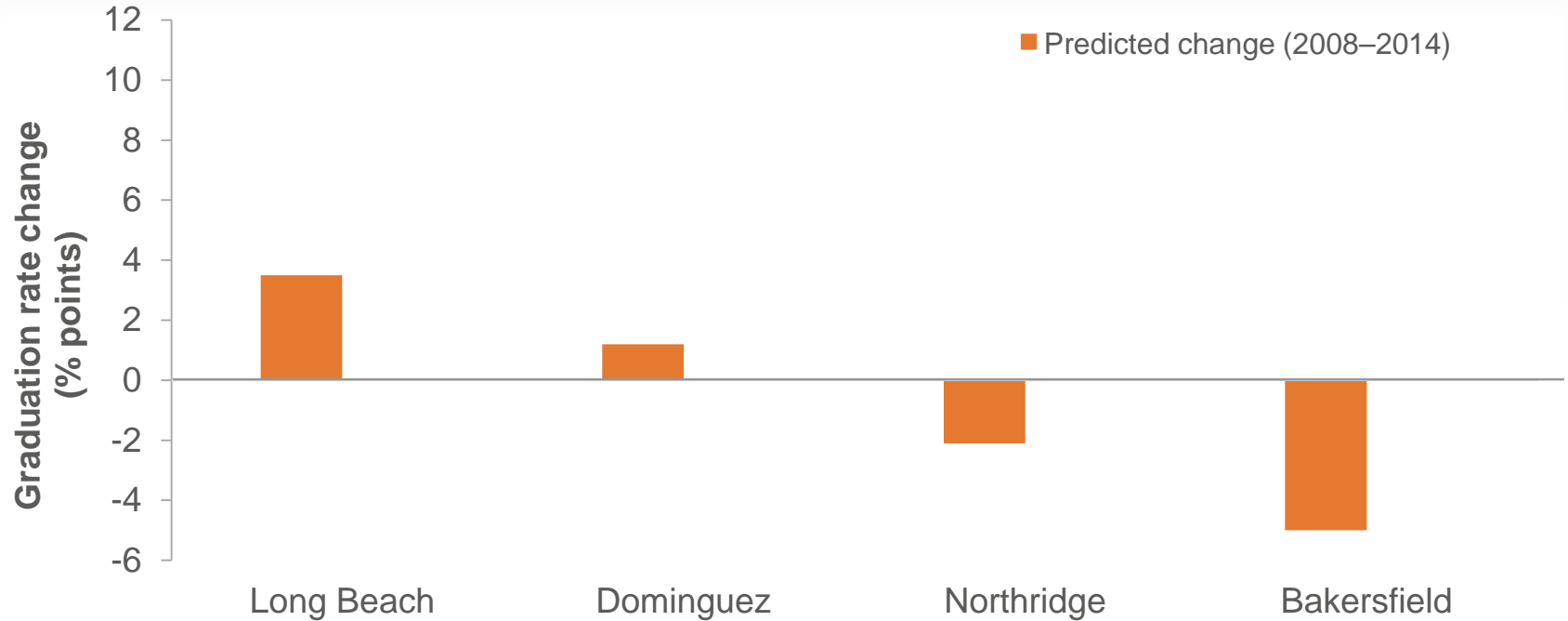
Compared to similar universities, CSU has higher six-year graduation rates...



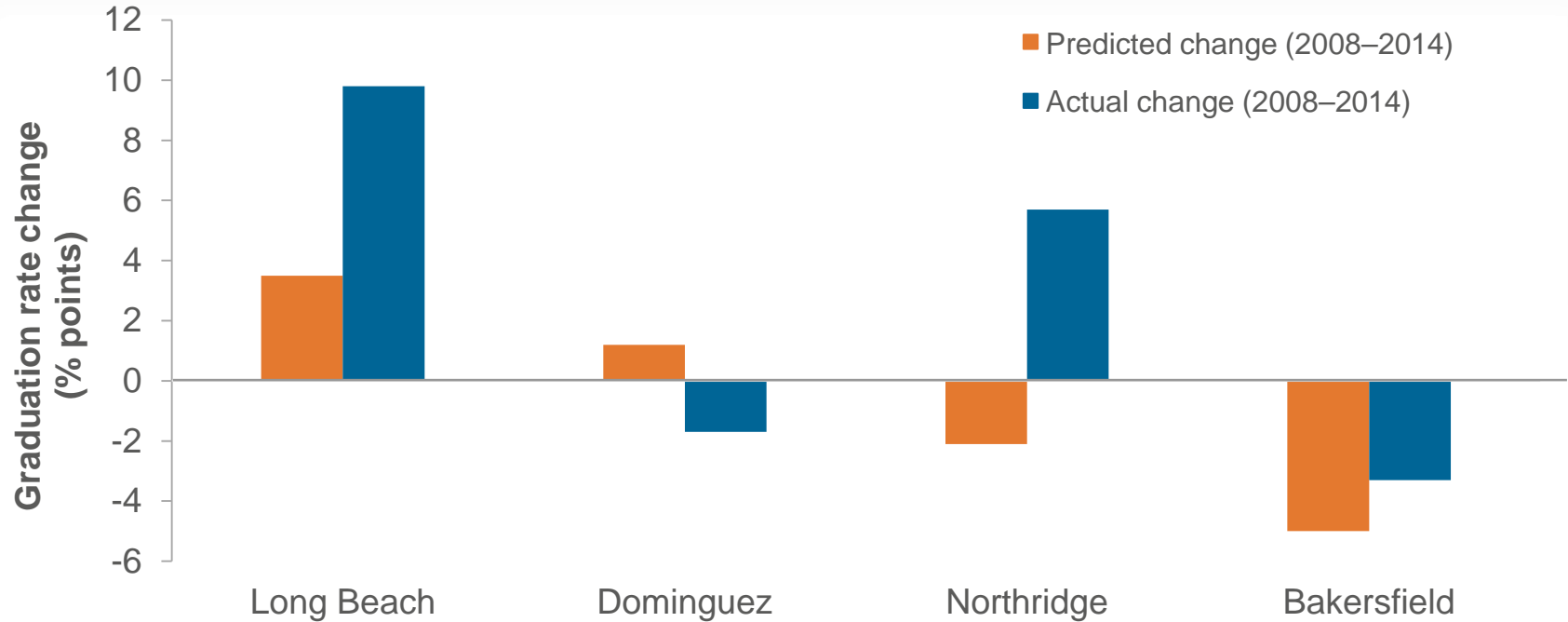
...but lower four-year graduation rates



Changes in campuses' students affect expectations for graduation rates...



Changes in campuses' students affect expectations for graduation rates...



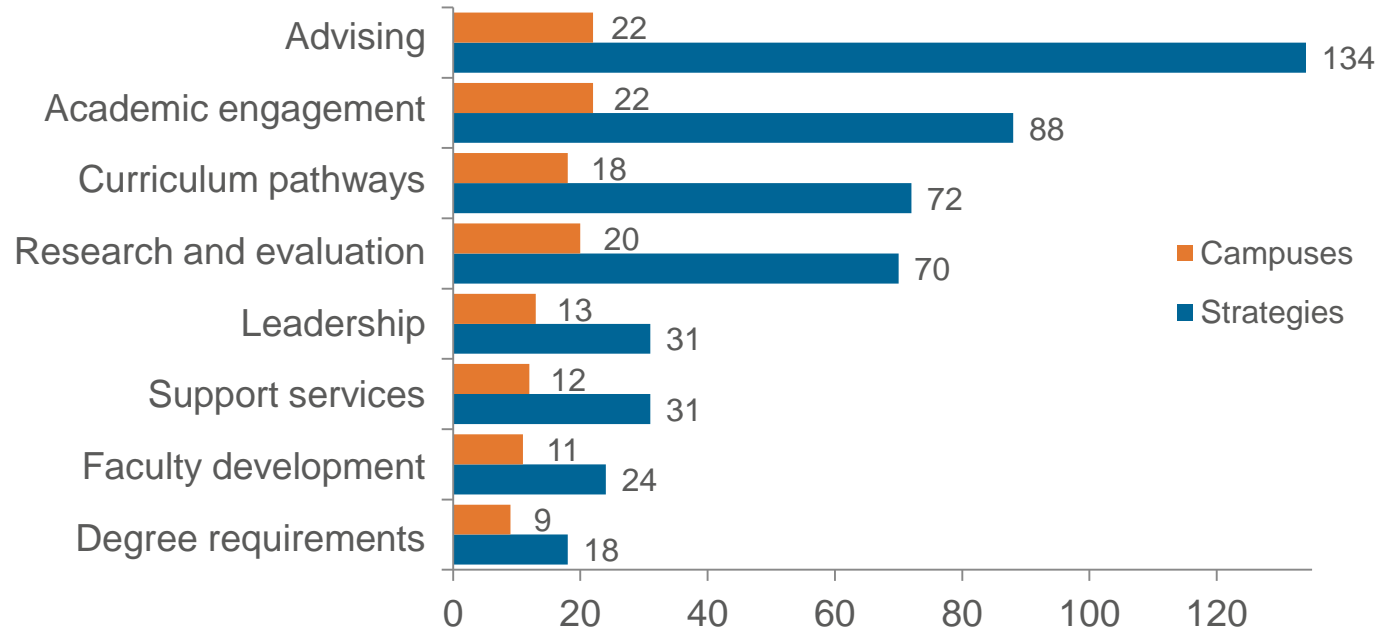
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Campuses relied on high-impact practices to improve graduation rates

- 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



Campuses developed effective solutions for common barriers to graduation

| Problem | Policies |
|---------------------|---|
| Student preparation | Supplement Early Start with intensive summer bridge program |
| Bottleneck courses | Increase course offerings, reduce requirements |
| Excess units | Restrict major changes, standardize requirements |

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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:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.



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Most campuses had more graduation growth than predicted

