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# A LOOK AT LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS:

## Identifying Top- and Bottom-Performing Institutions

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY-SAN LUIS OBISPO
MERCY COLLEGE
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In this report, as in others that our team has done over the years, Ed Trust looks beyond national averages to understand and highlight patterns in student success at specific four-year institutions.

We identify top-performing colleges and universities from which other institutions could potentially learn a great deal, and we identify underperforming institutions that need to get far more serious about success rates for Latino students.

# A Look at Latino Student Success:

## Identifying Top- and Bottom-Performing Institutions

BY ANDREW H. NICHOLS

As the Latino population in this nation has increased over the past few decades,[1] there has been a dramatic surge in the numbers of Latino students pursuing postsecondary credentials and degrees on college and university campuses across the country.[2] During this same period, the gap between Latino and White students enrolling in college after high school has steadily declined and is now only a few percentage points.[3] This is especially the case at community colleges.[4]

While these gains in *access* to postsecondary education are noteworthy, simply attending college does not provide the personal or broader social benefits that come with *completing* a degree — particularly a bachelor's degree. Compared to high school graduates with no college degree, bachelor's degree completers (with no graduate-level training) earn nearly $25,000 more annually.[5] In addition, individuals who completed a bachelor's degree (at minimum) are two times less likely to be unemployed or out of the labor force. Given that the share of 25- to 34-year-old Latino adults with a bachelor's degree is over 25 percentage points below that of Whites in the same age group (43.7 percent vs. 17.8 percent), there is significant room for improvement.[6]

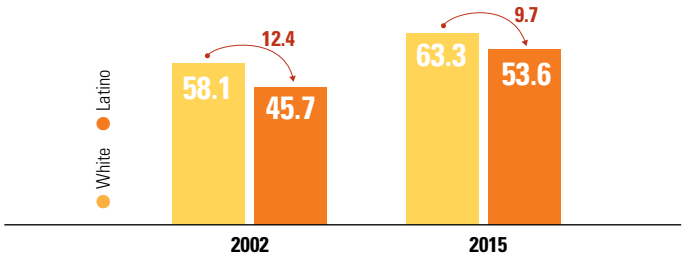
Graduation rates for Latino students at four-year institutions have been steadily increasing since 2002. Today, 53.6 percent of new Latino students who enroll full-time at a four-year institution complete a bachelor's degree within six years, compared to only 45.7 percent in 2002. This gain of nearly 8 percentage points from 2002 to 2015, which was higher than the graduation rate increase for White students during the same timeframe, has narrowed the Latino-White graduation rate gap by 2.7 percentage points *(Figure 1)*.[7]

While these gains are important to acknowledge and celebrate, it is also fair to point out that progress has been far too slow, and a 10 percentage point gap still remains between the graduation rate of Latino students and their White peers *(Figure 2)*. This gap in degree completion is partly the result of systemic disadvantages that many Latinos face in various aspects of their lives, especially in schooling experiences, which make the quest for a college degree more difficult. The challenges start early, as Latino students have the least access — of all racial or ethnic groups — to high-quality preschool, which is associated with positive education benefits.[8] In addition, Latino students are more likely to be English learners,[9] low-income,[10] and attend schools that often have fewer resources,[11] less experienced teachers,[12] and a higher percentage of low-income students.[13]

In the face of these challenges, many Latino students are beating the odds and making their way to college, but the national figures suggest that — despite progress over the years — too many are not completing bachelor's degrees in a timely manner. But national data just tell one part of the story. Absent from data at the national level is an understanding of how well individual institutions are serving the Latino students they enroll. Does the average institution have a 10 percentage point completion gap between Latino and White students? Are certain institutions performing better or worse than others?

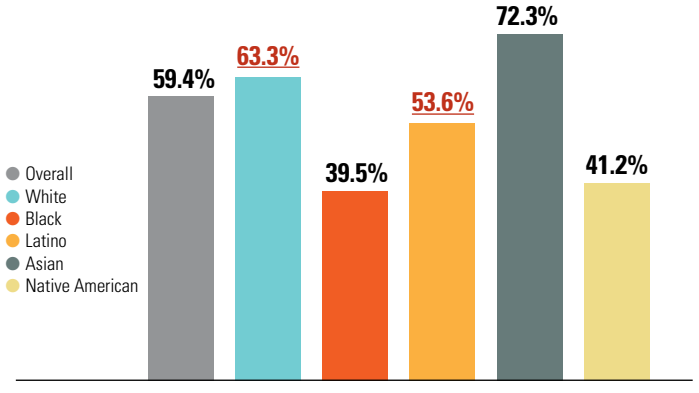
In this report, as in others Ed Trust has done over the years, we look beyond national averages to understand and highlight patterns in student success at specific four-year institutions. We identify top-performing colleges and universities from which other institutions could potentially learn a great deal, and we identify underperforming institutions that need to get far more serious about success rates for Latino students.

**Figure 1:** College Graduation Rates Up for Latinos, Gap Closing
(Six-Year Graduation Rates at Four-Year Institutions 2002-2015)




Source: National Center for Education Statistics. 2016 Digest for Education Statistics. Table 326.10

**Figure 2:** 10 Percentage Point Gap Between Latino and White Graduation Rates (Six-Year Graduation Rates at Four-Year Institutions 2015)




Source: National Center for Education Statistics. 2016 Digest for Education Statistics. Table 326.10

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## A Note on Terminology and Data Limitations

Students who are included in the Latino student graduation rate in this report are those who ethnically self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. The Hispanic category is defined as "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race."[14] This definition is extremely broad and includes students from various racial groups and countries of origin. Latino students have diverse cultural backgrounds, native languages, schooling and social experiences, and many other distinguishing characteristics.

The broad definition coupled with the significant heterogeneity that exists among individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino raise some concerns about how well the graduation rate data represent diverse subgroups within the Latino community. For example, the experience of a third-generation Latino student who is White and speaks no Spanish is much different than the experience of a first-generation Mexican American student who grew up in a home where the primary language was Spanish. Despite these differences, their postsecondary outcomes are counted in the same broad category. This data limitation should be considered while interpreting the findings presented in this brief.

We also note that the term "Latinx" has recently emerged as an alternative to "Latino/a." In Spanish, all nouns have a gender, with masculine nouns ending in the suffix "-o" and feminine ones ending in "-a." By substituting the gendered suffix with an "-x", "Latinx" proponents argue that the term allows for gender neutrality. Opponents argue that "Latinx" is linguistically imperialistic, imposing American values onto the Spanish language. We do not use "Latinx" in this report because the term is still under debate.

## MORE ABOUT THIS REPORT

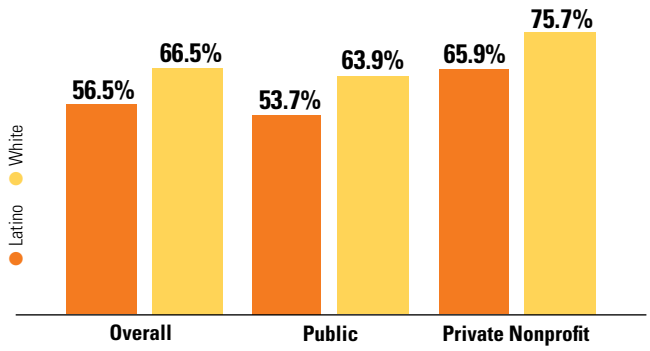
This report looks at graduation rates for Latino students and the completion or graduation rate gap between Latino and White students at four-year colleges and universities across the country. The bulk of this analysis focuses on 613 public and nonprofit private nonspecialized institutions.[15] These institutions enroll nearly 85 percent of all first-time, full-time Latino students enrolled at four-year campuses. We also compare Latino student outcomes at colleges that are similar (e.g., total number of undergraduates, average SAT scores, and number of Pell Grant recipients). In the process, we found 10 institutions that have significantly higher-than-average graduation rates for Latino students and little to no completion rate gap between Latino and White students. These institutions, like many that we have identified before, defy the notion that student outcomes are determined by the incoming characteristics of the students that colleges and universities admit.

## SUCCESS PATTERNS IN TRADITIONAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

The overall completion rate for Latino students at the 613 public and nonprofit private colleges and universities in the sample was 56.5 percent, exactly 10 percentage points below the White student graduation rate of 66.5 percent *(Figure 3)*. The gap was nearly identical at both public and private nonprofit institutions, although private colleges had graduation rates for both groups that were about 12 percentage points higher. Among Latino and Latina students, there were also key differences. Overall, Latinas had higher completion rates than Latinos (59.8 percent vs. 51.9 percent). And there was a smaller gap between Latinas and White women (9.5 percentage points) than between Latinos and White men (11.3 percentage points).

When we examined the differences in the graduation rates of Latino and White students at individual institutions, we discovered several noteworthy trends. First, completion gaps

**Figure 3:** Latino Grad Rates Are Lower at Public Institutions; Gaps Similar Across Sectors




*Source: Education Trust's analysis of the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey. Analysis includes 613 institutions. Only non-HBCU, non-specialized institutions with 30 students in both the Latino and White graduation rate cohorts were included. See "About the Data" for more details.*

varied widely among the 613 institutions in our sample *(Figure 4)*. While 17.6 percent of institutions had completion rates for Latino students that were higher than the rates of White students, well over 80 percent of institutions had some gap in completion — ranging from small (under 5 percentage points) to fairly large (exceeding 15 percentage points). Ninety-five institutions (15.5 percent) had gaps that exceeded 15 percentage points, and 136 institutions (22.2 percent) had gaps that were fairly small (i.e., between 0 and 5). Nearly 45 percent (274 colleges and universities) had gaps that ranged from 5 percentage points to just under 15 percentage points.

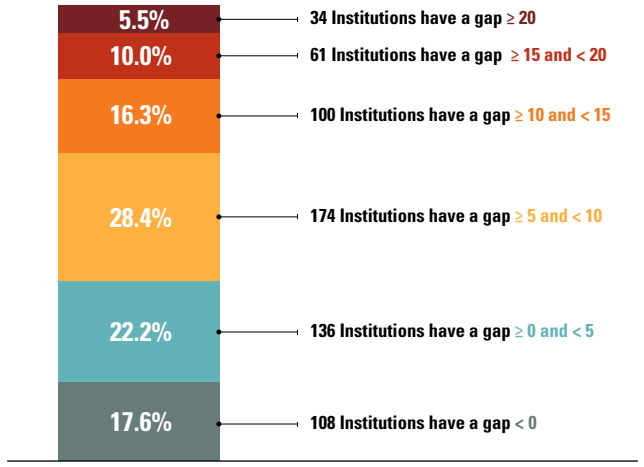
Second, the *average* completion gap between Latino and White students attending the same institutions in our sample was only 7.0 percent. That's less than the 10 percentage point national gap in completion *(Figure 5)*. As we have explained in previous reports on graduation rates for Black students and for Pell Grant recipients, the national gap is not simply the accumulation of all graduation rate gaps between groups of students at individual institutions. The national gap is also the result of inequitable enrollment patterns and the wide disparity in graduation rates across campuses. Latino students (as well as Black students and Pell Grant recipients) disproportionately attend less selective institutions with chronically low completion rates. The low completion rates at these institutions have an oversized negative impact on the national graduation rate for Latino students because disproportionate shares of Latino undergraduates (compared to Whites) attend these institutions.

As shown in *Figure 6*, Latino students are two times more likely than White students to attend institutions with low graduation rates and average SAT scores in the lowest quartile. Nearly 15 percent of White students enroll at these institutions compared to approximately 30 percent of Latino students. On the other hand, 62.0 percent of White students attend institutions with average SAT scores in the top two quartiles, compared to just 49.9 percent of Latinos. These institutions tend to have much higher graduation rates than those institutions with SAT scores in the bottom quartile.

If you look at the data differently, you will also notice that Latinos — which make up roughly 18 percent of the United States population — are significantly underrepresented at institutions in the top three SAT quartiles *(Figure 7)*. This is particularly true at institutions with the highest SAT scores. At these institutions, Latino students only make up 8.5 percent of students.

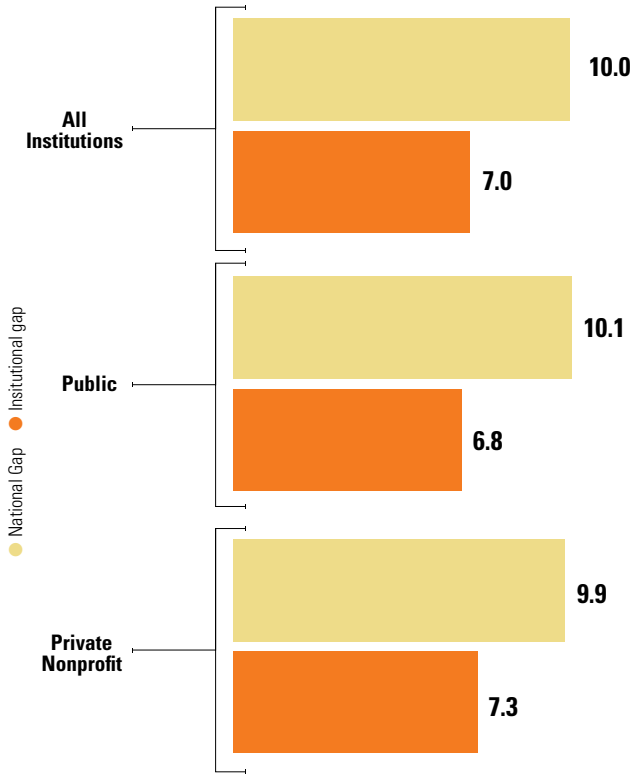
The data show that fully closing the national completion gap will require more than just addressing graduation rate discrepancies at individual campuses. Part of the equation must focus on increasing Latino student enrollment at selective four-year colleges and universities, while helping less selective, lower-performing institutions — where Latino students disproportionately attend — improve their completion rates.

**Figure 4:** Gaps Vary Across Institutions; Many Have No or Small Gaps (Percent Distribution of Six-Year Grad Rate Gaps Between White and Latino Students at Four-Year Institutions)




*Source: Education Trust's analysis of the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey. Analysis includes 613 institutions. Only non-HBCU, non-specialized institutions with 30 students in both the Latino and White graduation rate cohorts were included. See "About the Data" for more details.*
** Gaps are measured in percentage points.*

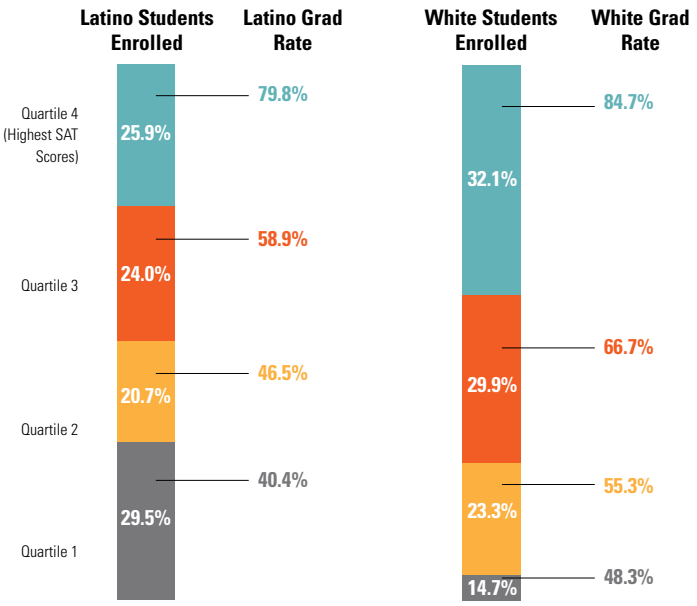
**Figure 5:** The Average Gap at Institutions ≠ The National Gap
(Gaps in Grad Rates Between Latino and White Students by Percentage Points 2015)




*Source: Education Trust's analysis of the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey. Analysis includes 613 institutions. Only non-HBCU, non-specialized institutions with 30 students in both the Latino and White graduation rate cohorts were included. See "About the Data" for more details.*

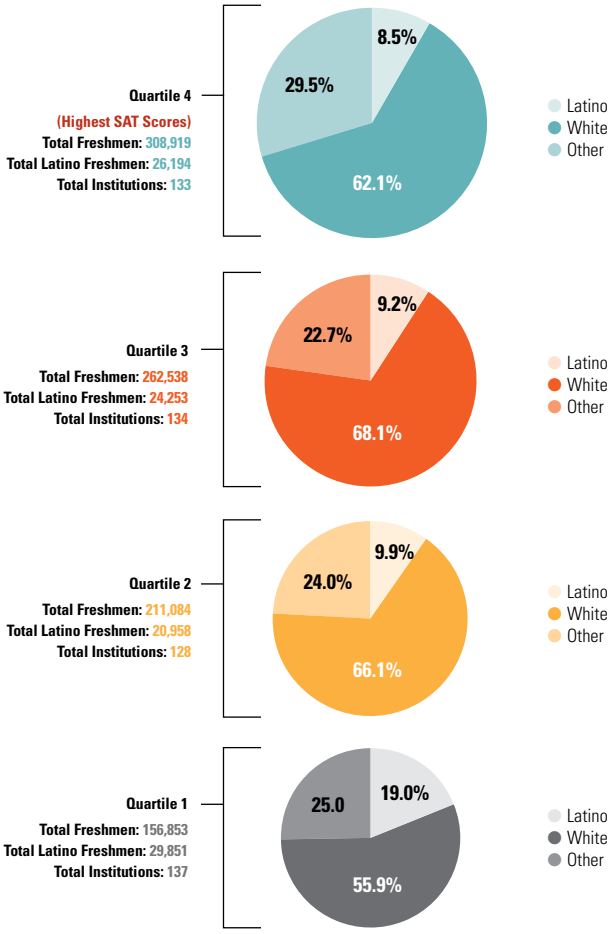
Latino Students Are More Concentrated at Less Selective Institutions With Lower Graduation Rates

**Figure 6:** Enrollment and Six-Year Grad Rates by SAT Quartile (2015)




*Source: Education Trust's analysis of the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey. Analysis includes 532 institutions from the sample of 613 that had SAT/ACT scores. The quartiles were Q1) ≤ 1010 (n=137), Q2) >1010 and ≤ 1082 (n=128), Q3) >1082 and ≤ 1192 (n=134), Q4) >1192 (n=133).*

**Figure 7:** Enrollment Within SAT Quartile (2015)




*Source: Education Trust's analysis of the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey. Analysis includes 532 institutions from the sample of 613 that had SAT/ACT scores. The quartiles were Q1) ≤ 1010 (n=137), Q2) >1010 and ≤ 1082 (n=128), Q3) >1082 and ≤ 1192 (n=134), Q4) >1192 (n=133).*

## SIMILAR COLLEGES WITH DIFFERENT RESULTS

The data presented thus far show that there is considerable variance in graduation rates and gaps for Latino students at four-year colleges and universities. Without question, some of the variation can be attributed to differences in the types of students institutions enroll. Factors like academic preparation, socioeconomic background, and other student characteristics account for some of the differences in student completion rates, but — as shown in Ed Trust reports over the years — the policies, practices, leadership, and culture at each institution play a critical role in promoting student success. Nothing illustrates this point better than comparing colleges and universities that enroll similar types of students.

We used our College Results Online (CRO) database to compare graduation rates for Latino students at similar types of institutions.[16] The CRO algorithm takes into account 12 institutional characteristics, including undergraduate enrollment, standardized test scores, and the percentage of first-time, full-time students that are low-income. The following four examples show how similar colleges can have very different completion rates for Latino students *(Figure 8)*.

**University of Texas San Antonio and California State University Fullerton:** Even though Cal State Fullerton has a larger undergraduate enrollment than UTSA, both are large, public, Hispanic-serving institutions with comparable levels of Latino and low-income students. Additionally, both institutions are moderately selective and have average SAT scores that are similar. But UTSA has a graduation rate for Latino students (33.7 percent) that is nearly 24 percentage points below that of Cal State Fullerton (57.5 percent). UTSA also ranks last in completion rates for Latino students among its 13 CRO peer institutions.

**Metropolitan State University of Denver and Montclair State University:** Both state universities are public institutions with undergraduate enrollments over 15,000. On average, students at these institutions have comparable SAT scores, and the institutions have nearly identical percentages of low-income and Latino students. A look at their graduation rates, however, reveals considerable differences in completion rates for Latino students. The graduation rate for Latino students at Metropolitan State is only 23.7 percent, putting it near the bottom of its peer group.

At Montclair State, the Latino student graduation rate is much higher – 59.7 percent, a difference of 36 percentage points.

**University of Texas at Dallas and University of North Carolina Wilmington:** Both UT Dallas and UNC Wilmington are public institutions with similar numbers of undergraduates and similar levels of low-income students (28 percent vs. 24 percent). UT Dallas, however, does have a higher percentage of Latino students (nearly 14 percent vs. nearly 5 percent). On average, students at UT Dallas score higher on the SAT, and the institution's graduation rate (66.3 percent) is about 5 percentage points lower than the rate at UNC Wilmington (71.2 percent). The difference between the Latino graduation rates, however, is much larger. At UT Dallas, the graduation rate for Latinos is 54.2 percent; at UNC Wilmington it is 72.2 percent, an 18 percentage point difference.

**Hofstra University and the University of San Francisco:** Both are private, nonprofit institutions where the average SAT score and the percentage of first-time, full-time students receiving Pell Grants are nearly the same. The University of San Francisco, however, serves twice as many Latino first-year students as Hofstra. It also has a graduation rate for Latino students (72.4 percent) that is 27 percentage points higher than Hofstra's 45.2 percent — a rate that is lower than all of its 15 CRO peer institutions.

These examples of peer institutions with different outcomes suggest that student characteristics aren't the sole factors that drive student success. What institutions do for (and with) the students they serve is a critical element. To illustrate this point further, we have identified several over- and under-performing institutions that have unusually high or low outcomes for Latino students compared with peer institutions *(See Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix)*.[17] In order to be eligible for the lists, institutions had to have at least 100 Latino and 100 White students, at least 10 institutional peers in CRO, and a graduation rate cohort that was at least 10 percent Latino. Other key characteristics of over-performing and under-performing institutions include the following:

- For over-performing institutions …
    - o A completion gap between Latino and White students that was 3 percentage points or less
    - o A graduation rate that was at least 10 percentage points above its CRO peer group average
- For under-performing institutions …
    - o A completion gap between Latino and White students that was 10 percentage points or more
    - o A graduation rate that was at least 10 percentage points below its CRO peer group average

## Why We Compared Latino and White Student Graduation Rates

In K-12 education, there is a fairly robust set of indicators for monitoring results for all groups of students, including indicators of achievement (e.g., test performance, advanced courses completed) and graduation rates. Looking at both turns out to be important, especially to make sure that test performance isn't going up simply because more students are being pushed out. In higher education, publicly available data are much more limited. There are no consistent measures that show how much students learn or what competencies they acquire while enrolled at colleges and universities. What we do have is a less-than-perfect database called Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) that reports year-to-year persistence and four-, five- and six-year degree completion rates for "first-time, full-time" students. (Just recently, the federal government released graduation rate data for students who enroll part-time or transfer in from another institution.) Although the imperfections of federal graduation rates are well chronicled,[18] these rates provide the best and most comprehensive insights into how effective institutions are at helping students persist from matriculation to degree completion.

As our work has repeatedly shown throughout the years, graduation rates vary for different subgroups of students. Though the rates for each group — and their progress over time — are intrinsically important, readers often want to know how they compare for students from different racial and economic backgrounds. Typically, we do this by comparing the graduation rates of Latino, Black, and American Indian or Alaskan Native students (when their data are available) to those of White students.

Some critics have argued that this approach reinforces Whiteness as the standard, focusing less on the need to improve outcomes for people of color regardless of how well White students are doing. We certainly appreciate that perspective. But the truth is that we haven't found a more viable alternative.

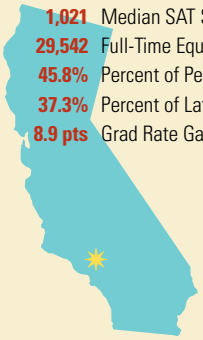
If, for example, graduation rates for Latino students were compared to the graduation rates of all students at an institution (i.e., the overall graduation rate), the gap or difference could be understated, since completion rates for Latino students are often lower and would be included in the institution's graduation rate for all students. An approach like this also includes (in the overall graduation rate) the graduation rates for Black students and Native American students, who are also traditionally underrepresented and underserved populations. This, too, can have the effect — especially in institutions with large numbers of underrepresented students — of understating differences and making those institutions look better than they actually are.

## Figure 8: Similar Colleges, Different Results

### Latino Student Graduation Rates (2015)

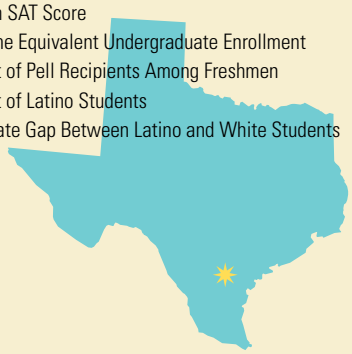
#### California State University - Fullerton (CA)

1,021 Median SAT Score
29,542 Full-Time Equivalent Undergraduate Enrollment
45.8% Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen
37.3% Percent of Latino Students
8.9 pts Grad Rate Gap Between Latino and White Students



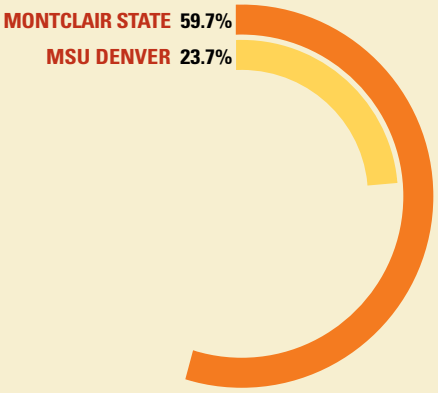

#### The University of Texas at San Antonio (TX)

1,037 Median SAT Score
21,940 Full-Time Equivalent Undergraduate Enrollment
45.0% Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen
38.2% Percent of Latino Students
-5.86 pts Grad Rate Gap Between Latino and White Students



#### Montclair State University (NJ)

975 Median SAT Score
15,200 Full-Time Equivalent Undergraduate Enrollment
42.0% Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen
19.24% Percent of Latino Students
9.5 pts Grad Rate Gap Between Latino and White Students

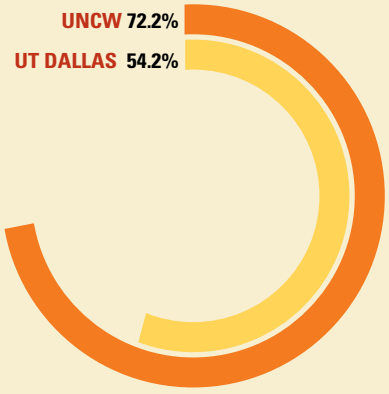



#### Metropolitan State University of Denver (CO)

973 Median SAT Score
15,490 Full-Time Equivalent Undergraduate Enrollment
40.5% Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen
17.9% Percent of Latino Students
3.0 pts Grad Rate Gap Between Latino and White Students

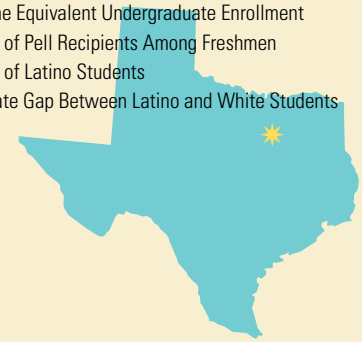
#### University of North Carolina - Wilmington (NC)

1,145 Median SAT Score
13,235 Full-Time Equivalent Undergraduate Enrollment
23.6% Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen
4.63% Percent of Latino Students
-1.0 pts Grad Rate Gap Between Latino and White Students



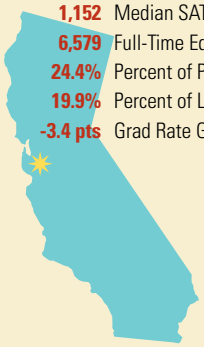

#### The University of Texas at Dallas (TX)

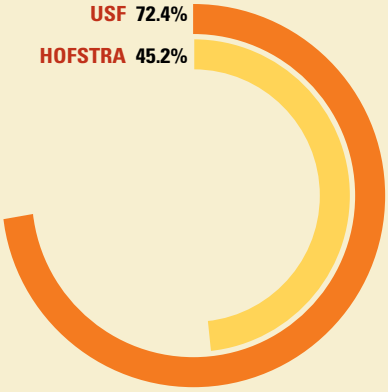
1,259 Median SAT Score
15,575 Full-Time Equivalent Undergraduate Enrollment
28.1% Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen
13.84% Percent of Latino Students
10.8 pts Grad Rate Gap Between Latino and White Students



#### University of San Francisco (CA)

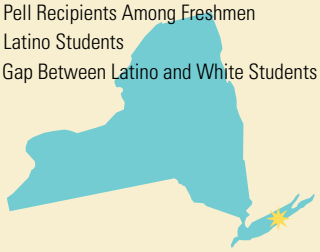
1,152 Median SAT Score
6,579 Full-Time Equivalent Undergraduate Enrollment
24.4% Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen
19.9% Percent of Latino Students
-3.4 pts Grad Rate Gap Between Latino and White Students






#### Hofstra University ( Long Island, NY)

1,146 Median SAT Score
6,576 Full-Time Equivalent Undergraduate Enrollment
24.1% Percent of Pell Recipients Among Freshmen
10.0% Percent of Latino Students
20.6 pts Grad Rate Gap Between Latino and White Students



## Graduation Rates at Four-Year Hispanic-Serving Institutions

The federal government defines Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) as public or nonprofit private, degree-granting institutions where at least 25 percent of the undergraduates identify as Latino.[19] Although these institutions only account for 14 percent of postsecondary institutions, HSIs play a critical role in postsecondary education, educating nearly two-thirds of all Latino undergraduates.[20] According to *Excelencia* in Education and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, in 2015-2016, there were nearly 472 HSIs, and slightly more than half of HSIs were four-year institutions.

In our sample of 613 public and nonprofit colleges, there were 103 HSIs. Despite accounting for slightly less than 17 percent of the institutions we studied, these institutions enrolled nearly 44 percent of first-time, full-time Latino undergraduates in the 2015 graduation rate cohort (students who started in 2009). The data show that HSIs are enrolling and serving an oversized share of Latino students, but how well are these institutions graduating the Latino students they serve?

The analysis below examined completion rates for HSIs and non-HSIs within the same SAT quartile. We had SAT data for 91 HSIs, but the analysis only included the 89 HSIs in the bottom three SAT quartiles since only two HSIs (compared to 131 non-HSIs) were in the fourth quartile.

When you look at the three quartiles, HSIs served much larger percentages of low-income students. In addition, HSIs enrolled first-time students with slightly lower SAT scores. But despite serving students that were more likely to be low-income and slightly less academically prepared, HSIs on average had higher graduation rates for Latino students (see the figure below). The difference between HSIs and non-HSIs was essentially negligible among institutions in the first, or lowest, quartile, but in the second

**Higher Grad Rates and Smaller Grad Gaps for Latino Students at HSIs**

Average (unweighted) six-year graduation rates and graduation gaps for Latino students at HSIs and non-HSIs by institutional SAT quartile

| SAT Quartile | Non-HSI vs. HSI | Percent Latino (2015) | Average SAT (2015) | Percent Pell Among First-Time, Full-Time Students (2014-15) | Latino Student Grad Rate (2015) | White Student Grad Rate (2015) | Latino Student/ White Student Grad Rate Gap (2015) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quartile 4 | *Note: We did not examine completion rates for HSIs and non-HSIs in the 4th SAT Quartile because only two HSIs were among the most selective institutions.* | | | | | | |
| Quartile 3 | non-HSI (116 colleges) | 9.8 | 1131 | 27.0 | 58.4% | 66.9% | 8.6 |
| | HSI (18 colleges) | 32.2 | 1120 | 41.6 | 61.9% | 64.9% | 3.0 |
| Quartile 2 | non-HSI (109 colleges) | 9.4 | 1047 | 36.6 | 45.8% | 54.8% | 9.0 |
| | HSI (19 colleges) | 38.6 | 1040 | 44.8 | 50.9% | 57.7% | 6.8 |
| Quartile 1 | non-HSI (85 colleges) | 11.5 | 971 | 43.2 | 40.2% | 48.8% | 8.5 |
| | HSI (52 colleges) | 39.7 | 942 | 55.3 | 40.6% | 47.6% | 7.0 |

Source: Education Trust's analysis of the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey. Analysis includes 399 institutions from the sample of 613 that had SAT/ACT scores. The quartiles were Q1) ≤ 1010 (n=137), Q2) >1010 and ≤ 1082 (n=128), Q3) >1082 and ≤ 1192 (n=134), Q4) >1192 (n=133).

quartile, Latino students at HSIs were 5.1 percentage points more likely than Latinos at non-HSIs to complete a bachelor's degree in six years. In Quartile 3, the difference was 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to having higher completion rates for Latino students, HSIs had smaller completion gaps between Latino and White students. The average completion gap at HSIs in the first quartile was 7.0 percentage points, 1.5 percentage points smaller than the average gap at non-HSIs. Similarly, the HSIs in quartile two had an average completion gap that was 2.2 percentage points smaller than the gap at non-HSIs. And in quartile three, the average completion gap at HSIs was 5.6 percentage points smaller than the average gap at non-HSIs. Moreover, in each of the three quartiles we examined, the completion gap at HSIs was equivalent to or below the average gap between Latino and White students (7 percentage points) at the 613 institutions we examined in this report.

Despite serving undergraduates who are — on average — less academically prepared and more likely to have financial need, HSIs, at least some of them, are slightly better than non-HSIs at promoting Latino student success. As we noted in our blog for the Huffington Post,[21] campus leaders may want to think critically about what they can learn from HSIs. Research shows that success for Latino students can be enhanced when institutions 1) enroll a "critical mass" of Latino students; 2) hire diverse staff and faculty; and 3) emphasize culturally relevant programs, policies, and curricula. While HSIs compared favorably to non-HSIs on Latino graduation rates, it is important to note that further improvement is still needed, since fewer than 5 out of every 10 Latino students (48.3 percent) completed a degree at the 103 HSIs in our analysis.

## WHAT INSTITUTIONS DO FOR THEIR STUDENTS MATTERS

Our findings suggest that every institution, regardless of the students they serve, can raise graduation rates for Latino students. Far too often, institutional leaders attempt to justify low completion rates by highlighting what they perceive to be inadequacies of the very students they choose to enroll and have a responsibility to support. Yes, some students arrive at institutions with better academic preparation than others, and this explains some graduation rate differences among institutions, but the wide variation in graduation outcomes among similar types of schools enrolling the same types of students implies something else must be at work.

We believe this "something else" is what institutions do for (and with) the students they serve. This is essential for student success. And it is why we continue to encourage institutional leaders to refine their practices and develop strategies that optimize the use of their resources. For a detailed look at what campus leaders have done to improve outcomes for students of color, please take a look at the following publications (available at www.edtrust.org):

### Using Data to Improve Student Outcomes: Learning From Leading Colleges

This report highlights leading universities that have drastically improved student success by consistently reviewing and using their own data to launch campuswide initiatives, focus the entire college community on student success, and remove obstacles that impede large numbers of low-income students and students of color from graduating college.

### Higher Education Practice Guide: Learning From High-Performing and Fast-Gaining Institutions

In this guide, we examine the practices at eight institutions that have improved outcomes in both access and success and sustained them over a significant period of time. We also share 10 of the analyses that leaders at these institutions found to be particularly powerful in provoking discussion and action on college completion.

### Leading the Way in Diversity and Degrees: Rutgers University-Newark

For years, Rutgers University-Newark struggled with its nontraditional student population. As recently as the 1990s, students reported feeling unwelcome based on their race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual preference. Fast-forward two decades, and Newark has become a haven for nontraditional students of all types, leading to increased overall completion rates and a graduation rate gap among Black and White students that is almost negligible. This profile shares the institutional practices that led to this turnaround.

## About the Data

The data used in this report come from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, which is a publicly available database that includes information colleges and universities are required to report annually to the U.S. Department of Education. Our analysis specifically uses institution-level graduation rate data for White and Latino full-time, bachelor's degree-seeking students who enrolled at an institution for the first time in the fall of 2009 and completed a bachelor's degree within six years (2015) at that institution. The 2015 graduation rates are the most current rates that are available in IPEDS (as of November 2017).

The sample of 613 institutions includes institutions that met the following criteria:

- Classified as public or private nonprofit degree-granting institution
- Recipient of Title IV funds
- Enrolls first-time, full-time students
- Not considered a historically Black college or university
- Located in the 50 states or Washington D.C.
- Reported 2014-15 six-year graduation rates for Latino and White students
- Enrolled 30 or more Latino or 30 or more White students in the 2009 entering graduation rate cohort
- Classified as Doctoral Universities, Master's Colleges and Universities, or Baccalaureate Colleges by 2015 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education

The sample of 613 institutions includes 344 public institutions and 269 nonprofit private institutions. The public institutions enrolled roughly 77.5 percent of the first-time, full-time Latino students in the 2009 entering cohort, while the nonprofit private institutions enrolled 22.5 percent.

# ENDNOTES


1. The Latino population has been the fastest growing population in the United States, increasing from 14.8 million in 1980 (6.5 percent of the U.S. population) to 56.6 million in 2016 (17.6 percent of the population). See, Antonio Flores, Gustavo López, and Jynnah Radford, "Facts on U.S. Latinos, 2015: Statistical portrait of Hispanics in the United States," September 18, 2017, http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/04/19/statistical-portrait-of-hispanics-in-the-united-states-trends/

2. John Gramlich, "Hispanic dropout rate hits new low, college enrollment at new high," Pew Research Center, September 29, 2017, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/29/hispanic-dropout-rate-hits-new-low-college-enrollment-at-new-high/

3. National Center for Education Statistics, Table 302.20. Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges, by race/ethnicity: 1960 through 2015, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_302.20.asp

4. "Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education: Key Data Highlights Focusing on Race and Ethnicity and Promising Practices," (Washington, D.C.: Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Education, November 2016), https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf

5. Jennifer Ma, Matea Pender, and Meredith Welch, "Education Pays 2016: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society," (Washington, D.C.: The College Board, 2016), https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/education-pays-2016-full-report.pdf

6. Ed Trust analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

7. During this same time frame, the number of first-time, full-time Latino students nearly doubled, increasing by approximately 95 percent.

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9. Lauren Musu-Gillette, Angelina KewalRamani, et. al., Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2016 (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics and American Institutes for Research, August 2016), https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016007.pdf

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11. Natasha Ushomirsky and David Williams, "Funding Gaps 2015," (Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust, 2015), https://edtrust.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/09/FundingGaps2015TheEducationTrust1.pdf; 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection A First Look, U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, October 28, 2016, https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf; Robert Crosnoe, "Double disadvantage or signs of resilience? The elementary school contexts of children from Mexican immigrant families," American Educational Research Journal, 42, no. 2 (2005): 269-303; Robert Crosnoe, "The diverse experiences of Hispanic students in the American educational system," Sociological Forum, 20, no. 4 (2005): 561-588.

12. Civil Rights Data Collection Snapshot: Teacher Equity Issue Brief No. 4, U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, March 2014, (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-teacher-equity-snapshot.pdf; Dan Goldhaber, Lesley Lavery, and Roddy Theobald, "Uneven playing field? Assessing the teacher quality gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students," Educational Researcher 44, no. 5 (2015): 293-307

13. National Equity Atlas, School Poverty Indicators By Race, http://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/School_poverty/By_race~ethnicity%3A35576/United_States/false/ Year%28s%29%3A2014/School_type%3AAll_public_schools; Gary Orfield, John Kucsera, and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, "E pluribus... separation: Deepening double segregation for more students," (The Civil Rights Project, Los Angeles, CA: 2012).

14. https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/Section/definitions

15. We use the term "nonspecialized" to refer to institutions that are not designated as "special focus" institutions in Carnegie Foundation's Basic Classification for the 2015 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

16. http://www.collegeresults.org/aboutthedata.aspx

17. Colleges were identified using graduation rate data for 2013, 2014, and 2015. These data were used to create weighted, three-year average graduation rates and gaps that were less susceptible to influence by annual fluctuations in graduation rates for institutions with low cohort enrollments.

18. Bryan Cook and Natalie Pullaro, "College Graduation Rates: Behind the Numbers," (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, September 2010), http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/College-Graduation-Rates-Behind-the-Numbers.pdf

19. Undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment is used to define 25 percent threshold.

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21. Andrew H. Nichols, "Standing Up Fro and Supporting Latinx Students on America's College Campuses," Huffington Post, September 27, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/standing-up-for-and-supporting-latinx-students-on-americas_us_59cbd34de4b0b99ee4a9c9b2

# Appendix

**Table 1:** Top-Performing Institutions for Latino Students

| Institution Name | Institutional Control | Median SAT (2015) | Percent Pell Among First-Time, Full-Time Students (2014-15) | Percent Latino in Grad Cohort (2015) | Grad Rate for Latino Students (3yr Weighted Average: 2013, 2014, 2015) | Grad Rate for White Students (3yr Weighted Average: 2013, 2014, 2015) | **Grad Gap** Between Latino/ White students (3yr Weighted Average: 2013, 2014, 2015) | CRO Peer Differential for Grad Rate Among Latino Students (3yr Weighted Average: 2013, 2014, 2015)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Whittier College | Private Nonprofit | 1061 | 29% | 34% | 71.2% | 65.6% | -5.5 | 20.3 |
| University of San Francisco | Private Nonprofit | 1152 | 24% | 20% | 72.2% | 67.7% | -4.4 | 10.2 |
| Loyola Marymount University | Private Nonprofit | 1218 | 18% | 20% | 80.2% | 77.1% | -3.1 | 10.2 |
| University of South Florida-Main Campus | Public | 1162 | 36% | 17% | 66.2% | 65.6% | -0.6 | 13.1 |
| Sam Houston State University | Public | 1000 | 51% | 18% | 52.9% | 52.4% | -0.5 | 11.1 |
| University of Florida | Public | 1273 | 27% | 17% | 87.3% | 88.2% | 0.8 | 12.6 |
| Salem State University | Public | 984 | 40% | 10% | 46.7% | 48.2% | 1.5 | 10.4 |
| University of California-Riverside | Public | 1128 | 52% | 32% | 66.4% | 69.1% | 2.7 | 16.4 |
| SUNY at Albany | Public | 1098 | 37% | 11% | 63.9% | 66.6% | 2.7 | 12.0 |
| University of California-Irvine | Public | 1168 | 43% | 14% | 81.1% | 84.1% | 3.0 | 11.1 |

*Difference between the institution's grad rate among Latino students and the average rate for the institution's CRO peer group. Three-year weighted averages were used.
Source: Education Trust's analysis of IPEDS and College Results Online database

**Table 2:** Bottom-Performing Institutions for Latino Students

| Institution Name | Institutional Control | Median SAT (2015) | Percent Pell Among First-Time, Full-Time Students (2014-15) | Percent Latino in Grad Cohort (2015) | Grad Rate for Latino Students (3yr Weighted Average: 2013, 2014, 2015) | Grad Rate for White Students (3yr Weighted Average: 2013, 2014, 2015) | **Grad Gap** Between Latino/ White students (3yr Weighted Average: 2013, 2014, 2015) | CRO Peer Differential for Grad Rate Among Latino Students (3yr Weighted Average: 2013, 2014, 2015)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mercy College | Private Nonprofit | N/A | 62% | 35% | 29.9% | 52.3% | 22.4 | -10.8 |
| LIU Brooklyn | Private Nonprofit | N/A | 71% | 12% | 22.9% | 42.1% | 19.2 | -11.5 |
| Hofstra University | Private Nonprofit | 1147 | 24% | 10% | 50.5% | 65.1% | 14.6 | -15.9 |
| Baylor University | Private Nonprofit | 1227 | 20% | 16% | 62.9% | 76.0% | 13.0 | -10.1 |
| California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo | Public | 1234 | 13% | 13% | 63.5% | 75.7% | 12.2 | -10.6 |
| Northeastern Illinois University | Public | 890 | 62% | 44% | 17.9% | 29.3% | 11.4 | -18.9 |
| Adams State University | Public | 955 | 49% | 33% | 20.2% | 31.4% | 11.3 | -16.0 |

*Difference between the institution's grad rate among Latino students and the average rate for the institution's CRO peer group. Three-year weighted averages were used.
Source: Education Trust's analysis of IPEDS and College Results Online database

## ABOUT THE EDUCATION TRUST

The Education Trust promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels — pre-kindergarten through college. We work alongside parents, educators, and community and business leaders across the country in transforming schools and colleges into institutions that serve all students well. Lessons learned in these efforts, together with unflinching data analyses, shape our state and national policy agendas. Our goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that consign far too many young people — especially those who are Black, Latino, American Indian, or from low-income families — to lives on the margins of the American mainstream.

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