

Mind the Gap: Delivering on California's Promise for Higher Education

Executive Summary

In 2012 California Competes called for the state to articulate specific degree attainment goals to advance our regional economies and local communities. In this new report, *Mind the Gap*, California Competes finds that the state now faces a degree attainment gap of 2.4 million by 2025.

This figure, which is a 100,000 degree increase from California Competes' 2012 analysis, presents a significant challenge to the state that becomes even more pressing when one looks at the disparities underneath the total, at who completes degrees and where. With three fewer years to address the shortage, the situation has become more dire; it would take increases in the number of degrees of nearly 10 percent per year, every year, to close the 2.4 million degree gap by 2025. The state must take an active, prescriptive role in higher education to help alleviate the gap and underlying inequities and, ultimately, remain economically competitive.

In addition to presenting updated data on the degree attainment gap, the report explores trends and changes in bachelor's degrees and sub-baccalaureate degrees over the last decade. The report also examines the top producers of specific degrees as well as how the various segments (including the UC, CSU, etc.) in higher education look by race and ethnicity. The report concludes with a set of policy recommendations that seek to address the gap by promoting access and equity for students in the context of a state higher education public agenda.

Key Findings

California needs 2.4 million more degrees than it is on track to produce. For California to remain economically competitive, the state will need to produce 11.9 million

degrees and credentials by 2025. However, we are only slated to produce 9.5 million degrees, creating a degree gap of 2.4 million.

There has been a surge in the number of students obtaining degrees in the health professions. While Business and Marketing is still the dominant major for bachelor's degrees, at four-year colleges the health professions tripled in popularity over a 10 year period, while at two-year colleges they constituted 32 percent of all majors. Though the job outlook for many health professions is growing faster than average, salaries can change greatly based on specific majors (i.e registered nurses compared with vocational nurses).

There has been a significant uptick in the number of degrees produced by for-profits. Over the last decade, the dominant producers of bachelor's degrees has remained largely the same, with CSU producing just under half of all degrees awarded, UC producing about a quarter, and the nonprofits about a fifth. Though the for-profits only awarded seven percent of all bachelor's degrees, in just one year there was a nearly 70 percent increase in the number of associate's degrees and, especially, certificates conferred by California's for-profit institutions.

The racial makeup of degree recipients varies greatly across the various higher education segments. At UC, 68 percent are White and Asian compared with 20 percent that are Black and Latino. At CSU, Latinos represent a larger share of the bachelor's degrees with 27 percent, yet Blacks only increase one percentage point (4 percent) compared to their representation at UC. Sub-baccalaureate recipients tend to be more diverse in racial/ethnic makeup. For example, Latinos are represented in numbers virtually equal to Whites at community colleges, but they have much greater representation than Whites at nonprofits and for-profits.

Our Recommendations

The objectives of our recommendations are three-fold. First, they are intended broadly to increase the number of students obtaining degrees. Second, these recommendations are meant to ensure that, as California produces more degrees, those degrees more closely align with educational, workforce, and civic needs — both regionally and statewide. Third, our recommendations compel the state to pay special attention to students who are traditionally underrepresented but increasingly defining the landscape of our colleges.



1. DEVELOP A SYSTEM FOR REACHING OUT TO ADULT LEARNERS.



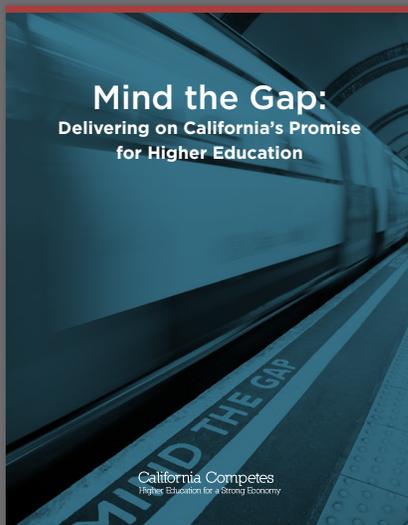
2. PROVIDE FUNDING TO PILOT TEST MORE 3 YEAR BACHELOR DEGREES.



3. CREATE A STATEWIDE HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING ENTITY.



4. INCENTIVIZE FULL TIME ENROLLMENT, PARTICULARLY AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE CSU.



Read more about the recommendations and access the full report at californiacompetes.org

View the digital report at californiacompetes.org/degree-gap

2001 Center Street, Suite 500
Berkeley, CA 94704
Phone: (510) 556-3582
info@californiacompetes.org