

# Research Brief #150

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## Degree Completion: 7 Year Trend 2010-11 through 2016-17

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As part of the Student Equity plan and the *Canyon's Completes* initiative, the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness conducted a trend analysis of degree completion over a 7-year period.

Specifically, this research is intended to answer the following questions:

- How has the number of degrees awarded changed?
- How has the number of students completing degrees changed?
- How has the racial/ethnic composition of students completing degrees changed?

### Method

To conduct the analyses, informer reports on awards was merged with student demographics data. Each academic year includes degrees (AA/AS/ADT) awarded during the summer in the beginning of the year, the fall term, and the spring term (e.g. 2016-17 includes summer and fall 2016 and spring 2017). For comparison, overall student population demographics were compared during this time period. These data were obtained from CCCCO: Data Mart.

### Results

Between 2010-11 and 2016-17, the total number of degrees awarded over the 7-year period increased by 105% (2,125 vs. 1,036) (Figure 1) and the total number of students earning at least one degree increased by 76% (1,759 vs. 1,001) (Figure 2).<sup>1</sup>

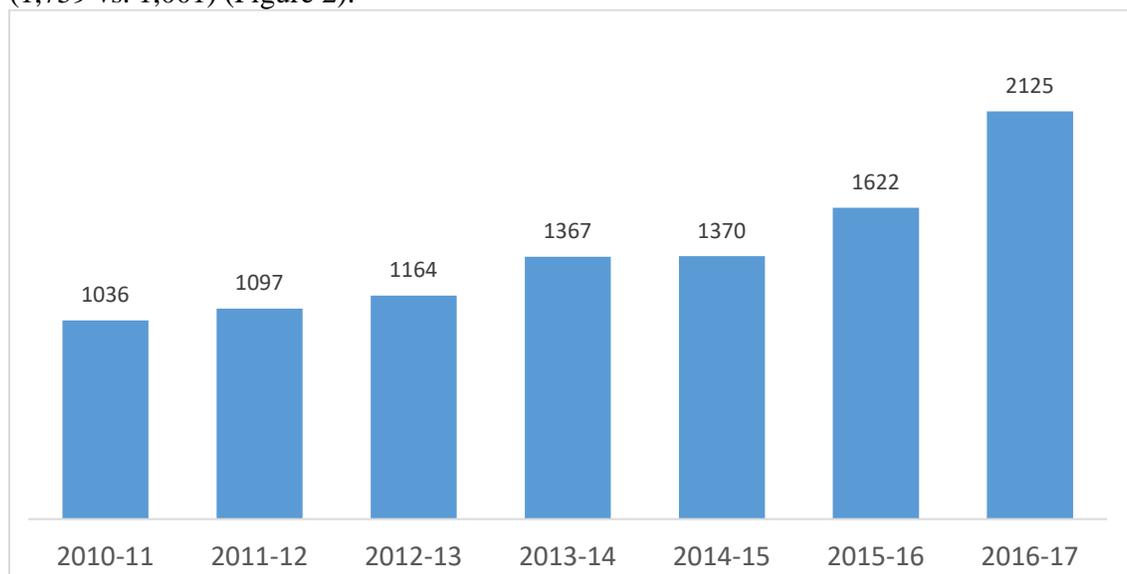


Figure 1 Number of Degrees (AA/AS/ADT) awarded by academic year\* \*Includes Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), and Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT)

<sup>1</sup> During this time-period the general student population declined by 9% (22,968 in 2010-11 vs. 20,941 in 2016-17). Source: CCCCO Data Mart Student Headcount (includes ISAs)

## Demographics

Degree recipients' race/ethnicity was examined to assess the difference in demographics of students graduating with a degree over time. The groups with the highest increase were Latinx students whose representation among degree recipients increased by 193% (754 vs. 257) and African-American/Black students whose representation increased by 157% (72 vs. 28). Although the rate in number of African-American/Black students increased substantially, the number increased by 44 students over 7 years. Asian students' numbers increased by 113% (115 vs. 54) and White students' number increased by 39% (662 vs. 474).

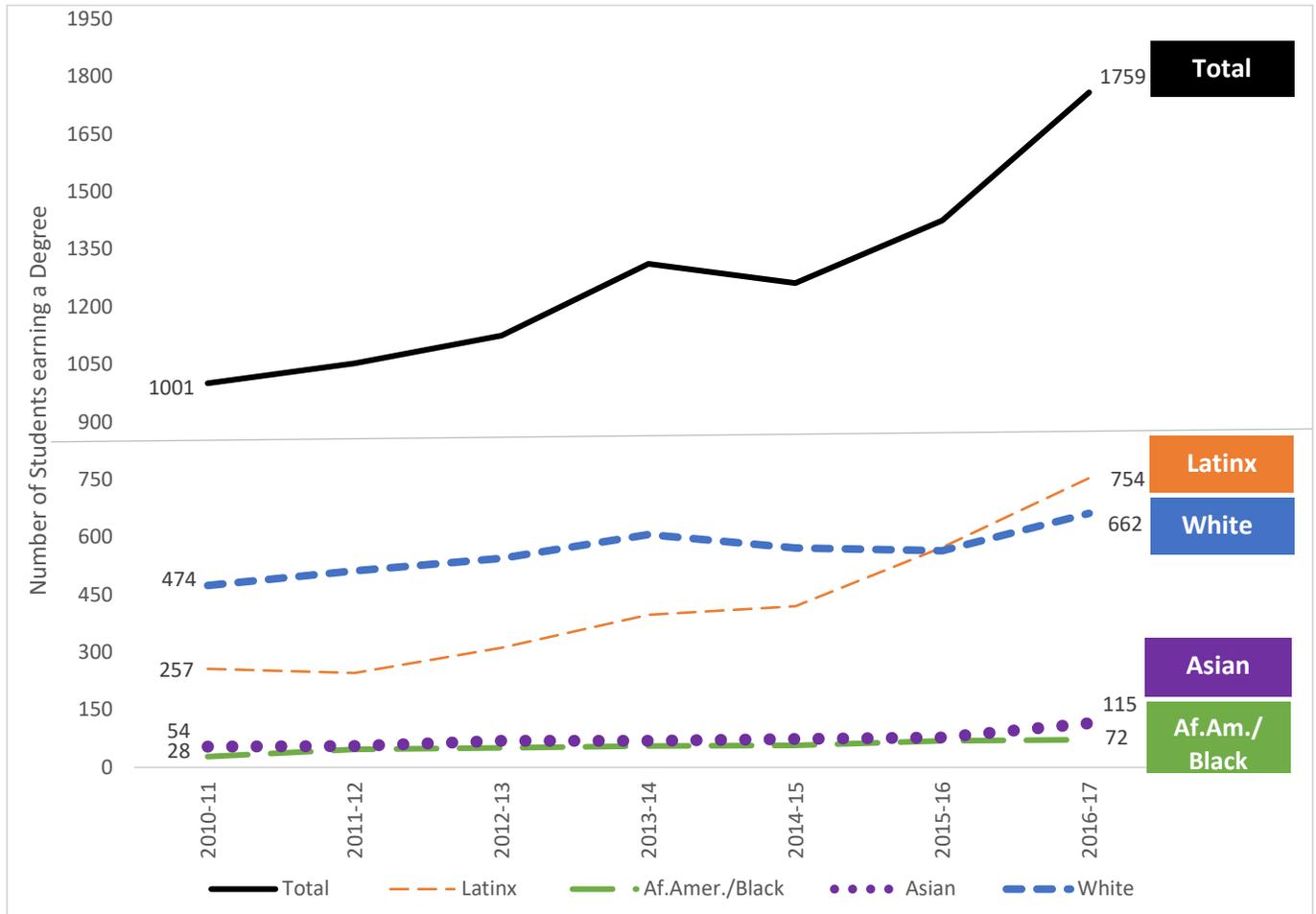


Figure 2 Number of students completing a degree by race/ethnicity

## Disproportionate Impact

Proportions of students within each race/ethnicity among degree recipients were compared to their corresponding proportions among the general student population to assess disproportionate impact based on the proportionality index (P.I.) measure. This measure compares representation of certain groups in the outcome group (degree earners) to the representation of these groups in the overall group (actively enrolled students) for each academic year. It is important to note that these numbers are not representative of the rates of completion within each group as would be more appropriate in analyses that track cohorts.

Figure 3 presents the comparisons in proportions with blue bars representing the group's proportion among degree earners and the grey bars represent the group's proportion among all enrolled students. No disproportionate impact would be indicated when the index is greater than, or equal to .8, or eliminated (PI =1) between the blue and grey bars. A proportionality index greater than 1.0 indicates that the group is overrepresented in the outcome measure (i.e. degree completion).

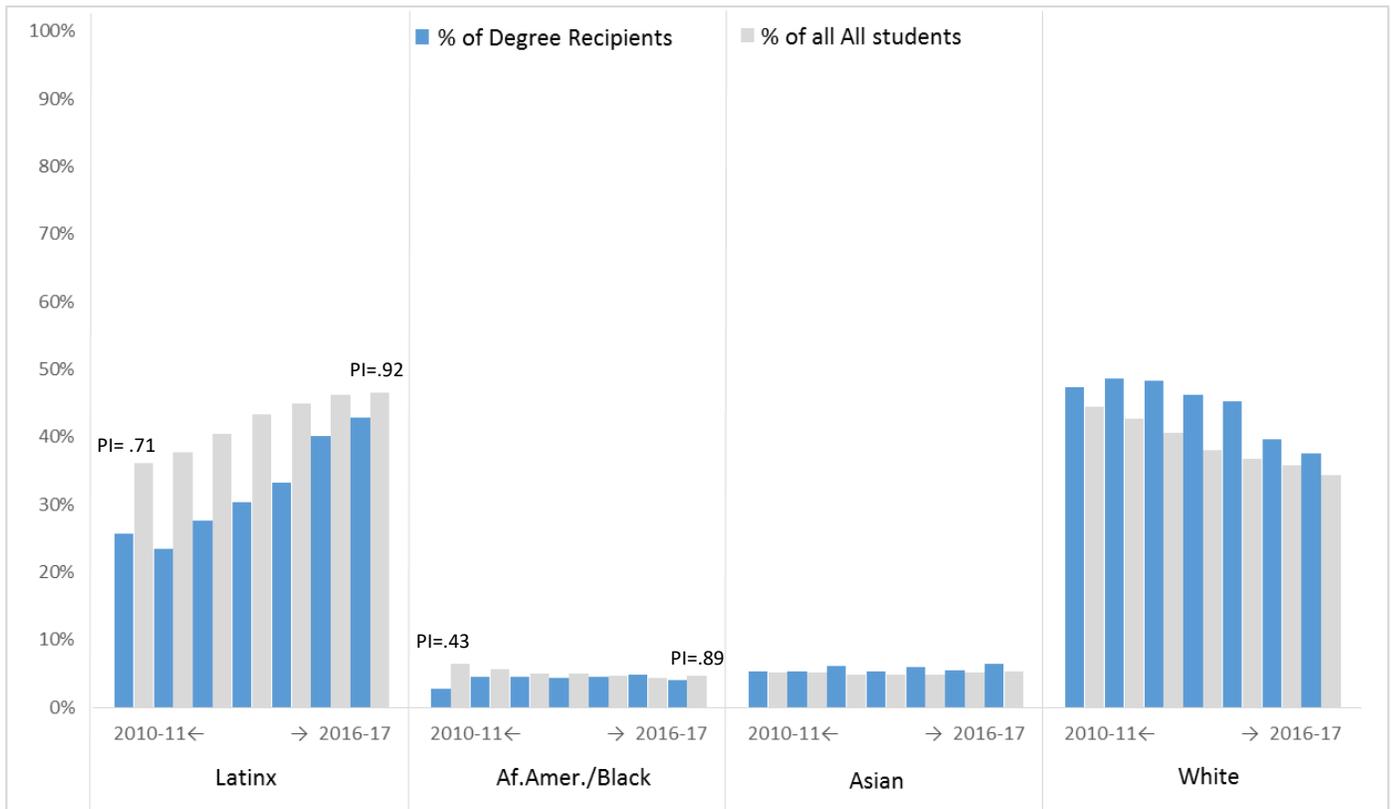


Figure 3 Rate in degree completion vs. rate in student population for each racial group

Latinx and African-American/Black students' representation among degree earners is less than their representation in the general student population. Inversely, for Asian and White students, representation among degree earners is higher than their representation in the general student population. Percentages are provided in Tables 1 and 2.

The gap has decreased the most over the 7 year period for Latinx students from the gap being 10.5% in 2010-11 to being 3.6% in 2016-17 (PI .71 vs. .92). African-American/Black students' disproportionate representation has also been reduced with the gap being 3.7% in 2010-11 and .5% in 2016-17 (PI .43 vs. .89). Using the benchmark of PI greater than, or equal to .8, disproportionate impact has been eliminated for Latinx and African-American/Black students with regard to degree completion.

Table 1 Race/Ethnicity rates among degree recipients by academic year

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Latinx	25.7%	23.4%	27.7%	30.3%	33.3%	40.2%	42.9%
African Am./ Black	2.8%	4.5%	4.5%	4.3%	4.5%	4.8%	4.1%
Asian	5.4%	5.3%	6.1%	5.3%	5.9%	5.5%	6.5%
White	47.4%	48.6%	48.4%	46.3%	45.3%	39.6%	37.6%

Table 2 Race/Ethnicity rates among total enrolled students for the given year

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Latinx	36.2%	37.7%	40.5%	43.4%	44.9%	46.3%	46.5%
African Am./ Black	6.5%	5.7%	5.0%	5.1%	4.6%	4.4%	4.6%
Asian	5.1%	5.2%	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%	5.1%	5.4%
White	44.4%	42.7%	40.7%	38.0%	36.7%	35.8%	34.4%

## **Recommendations**

Upon review of the 7-year trend in degree completion and demographic data of degree earners, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Given that the proportionality index measure of disproportionate impact does not lend itself for per-group completion rate comparisons (cohort analyses), examine degree completion rates for first-time, first-year students who indicate a degree as their educational goal and then conduct disproportionate impact analyses using additional measures (e.g. 80% rule).
- Use the results to inform planning and decision-making processes for the (IE)<sup>2</sup> Committee.
- Conduct analyses to examine contributing factors to the increase in completions and the elimination of disproportionate impact.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness office located in BONH-224, or contact Preeta Saxena, Senior Research Analyst at 661.362.3072, or Daylene Meuschke, Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.5329.