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COLLEGE READINESS AND REMEDIATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

A Policy Brief of California Community Colleges among Hispanic/Latino Undergraduate Students in American Society

A California Distinguished School

California Community Colleges

In this policy brief:

- What are the social, historical, and political forces that have shaped public higher education in the state of California?
- How can we better prepare Hispanic/Latino students for college-level courses in American society?
- Can community colleges achieve ambitious graduation goals?
- What are the challenges for minority students taking remedial coursework in California community colleges?
- Does remedation education work for marginally ready students in California? Will it increase persistence and degree completion?

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Executive Summary

The purpose of this policy brief is to describe and analyze the recent trends of remedial and developmental education at California community colleges, highlight key research findings on college-readiness among Hispanic/Latino high school students, and describe promising best practices that can help minority find success in their journey into and beyond higher education. It is important to note that this brief does not contribute to new data. Rather it relies on and refers to past studies that have been conducted about two-year community colleges in California, with a special focus on college readiness and remedial education among minority students. In the end, this brief presents five policy options for community colleges in California: 1) Provide Adequate Funding for Remedial and Developmental Education, 2) Strengthen and Expand Student Support Services and Student Life Programming, 3) Clarify and Develop Long-term Institutional Policies, with a priority on minority students, 4) Promote Essential Outreach, Civic Leadership, and Community Education Programming, and 5) Promote additional Research on Remedial Education Programs in California Community Colleges System(CCCS).

Statement of the Issue/Question

- What are the social and historical forces that have shaped public higher education in California?
- How can we better prepare Hispanic students for college-level courses in American society?
- Can community colleges achieve ambitious graduation goals?
- What are the challenges for minority students taking remediation at community colleges?
- Do remedial courses work for marginally ready students in California? Will developmental education increase student persistence and degree completion in American society?

Supportive Evidence

Since the turn of the 21st century, many high school graduates across the nation are required to complete more college preparatory and advanced coursework in science and mathematics than previous generations as a result of college admission requirements (Zusman, 2005, p. 133). As higher education becomes central to the socio-economic growth in American society, the demand to prepare additional

students to enter and complete a bachelor's degree has drawn major attention for both the national and state government. The current fiscal relationship between the state government and public higher education have generated several concerns for many low-income students and lower socioeconomic status(SES) families in California (Altbach, 2005, p. 309). A most recent report from the White House claims that an estimate 40 percent of young American adults have a college degree (White House, 2011), of which only 9 percent of all bachelor's degree holders are African-Americans and less than 6 percent are Latinos/Hispanic students (Zusman, 2005, p. 129). In view of a national scale, the National Center for Education Statistics (2011) most recent October 2011 report in *Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the U.S.: 1972-2009* suggests that the nation high school dropout rates among Hispanic/Latino students is an estimate 19.0 percent for male and 16.1 percent for female, the highest among all ethnic groups (p. 34) (see Figure 1).

Figures

Figure 3. Status dropout rates of 16- through 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity and sex: October 2009

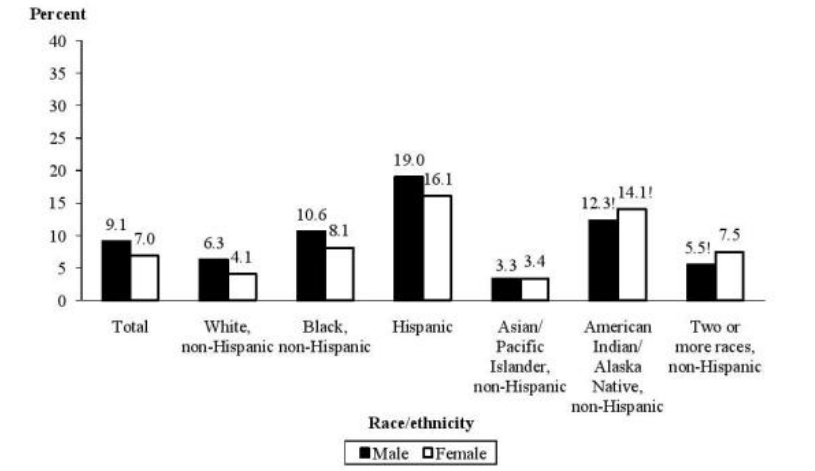

Figure 1. Status of national dropout rates of 16-24 year olds, by race/ethnicity and sex in October 2009. From "Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the U.S.: 1972-2009," National Center for Education Statistics, 2011, p. 34.

To put it differently, the California State Auditor most recent March 2012 report in *High School Graduation and Dropout Data* suggests that an estimate 54,033 Hispanic/Latino students' had dropped out from high school during the 2009-2010 academic year (Howle, 2012, p. 22) (see Figure 2).

Table 3
Dropout Rates by Socioeconomic Status for Race and Ethnicity Subgroups in the 2009–10 Cohort

RACE OR ETHNICITY	ALL STUDENTS WHO DROPPED OUT		STUDENTS WHO WERE NOT SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AND DROPPED OUT		STUDENTS WHO WERE SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AND DROPPED OUT	
	PROPORTION	NUMBER	PROPORTION	NUMBER	PROPORTION	NUMBER
Asian	7.7%	3,522	5.8%	1,358	9.7%	2,164
African-American	30.1	12,976	28.1	3,550	30.9	9,426
Not reported	23.3	1,958	21.3	970	25.7	988
Filipino	8.4	1,159	7.5	618	9.8	541
Hispanic or Latino	22.7	54,033	23.6	11,124	22.4	42,909
American Indian or Alaska Native	23.8	1,061	18.1	347	28.1	714
Pacific Islander	20.9	729	19.3	272	22.0	457
Two or more races	10.7	573	6.3	213	18.1	360
White	11.7	18,301	8.1	8,866	20.0	9,435
Totals	**18.2%**	**94,312**	**12.9%**	**27,318**	**21.8%**	**66,994**

Source: California State Auditor's analysis of data obtained from the California Department of Education's California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System as of August 2011.

Note: In the Scope and Methodology section on page 16, we discuss our use of racial and ethnic terminology and our process for defin socioeconomic status.

Figure 2. Dropout rates by socioeconomic status for race and ethnicity subgroups in the 2009-2010 cohort. From "High School Graduation and Dropout Data," by E. M. Howle, 2012, California State Auditor, p. 22.

Because past studies have claimed that higher education is both an engine of socioeconomic growth and as a gatekeeper to American society (Johnstone, 2004, p. 370), current reforms to improve and strengthen education policies for minority high school students is vastly needed to better prepare all "men and women to be desirable citizens and persons" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 434) for the global future. U.S. President Barack Obama once proclaimed in 2010: "By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world" (White House, 2011). From his speech at the "2010 White House Summit on Community Colleges", President Obama envisions that community colleges would play a vital role in training American workers to compete in the global knowledge economy. Despite recent efforts and initiatives from the Obama Administration to graduate more students from high school and improve the skills of community college graduates across the nation, most higher education goals, particularly two-year community colleges, are generally not well defined and must focus more attention on simplifying the community college system in order to foster college completion and career planning among Hispanic students in American society.

Context: Past and Present

Colleges and universities have brought profound challenges to the nature, values, and control of higher education in the United States (Zusman, 2005, p. 115). Since the early 1990s, college participation at four-year colleges and universities has remained unequal for Latino/Hispanic communities in American society. To clarify, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), the most recent August 2012 report in *Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study* suggests that Hispanic/Latinos had the highest percentage (31 percent) of parents' whose highest level of education was less than high school degree (p. 12) (see Figure 3).

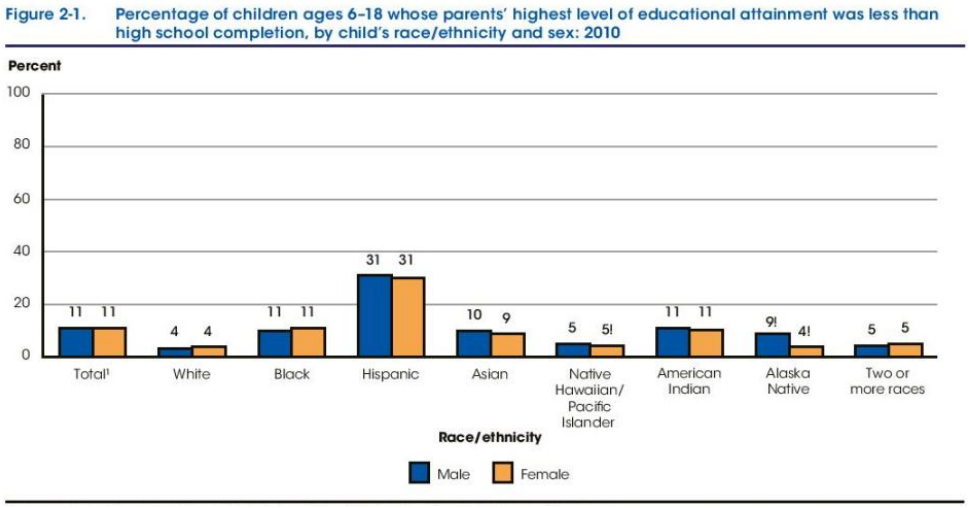

Figure 3. Percentage of children ages 6-18 whose parents' highest level of educational attainment was less than high school completion, by child's race/ethnicity and sex in 2010. From "Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study," National Center for Education Statistics, 2010, p. 12.

Numerous past studies have argued that low-income families and those parents who did not obtain a college degree were three times less likely to have their son or daughter enroll in college than parents with a bachelor's degree (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2012). A recent study by Long (2011) suggests that only 20 percent of Blacks and 16 percent of Hispanic/Latino students leave high school ready to study college-level material. Similarly, Chingo (2011) suggests that where a minority student goes to college would have enormous consequence for his or her chances of earning and completing a bachelor's degree. Because college education is necessary to social and economic mobility of American society, public K-12

education and community colleges must take on larger roles to ensure that minority students' receive extra counseling and mentoring needed to complete college-level courses on-time prior to graduation.

a) Brief history of community college

Historically, a community college, once referred to as "junior college" or "general college", was viewed as an "upward extension" of high school (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 256). Previously coined by President William Rainey Harper of the University of Chicago, a "junior college" would provide secondary education for non-traditional students in American society. Ernest Boyer and R. Eugene Rice once described community college as institutions that provided "the integration of knowledge, the application of knowledge, and the transmission of knowledge" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 420). To point out, the University of Minnesota saw community colleges as an institution for those "individuals who had some distance to go in their knowledge" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 260). Because of the large number of students attending community colleges, several junior colleges would be forced to expand quickly as a result of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education proposal for an "open door" policy (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 260). The "open admission" policy during the "open admissions" movement of 1970s would transform junior colleges from once a privilege to a right for all high school graduates in American society (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 261). By 1991, the total number of community colleges would reach more than 1,300 in the United States (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 419). Eventually, the demand for community colleges would force a mass expansion at several adult education programs in order to meet the diverse needs of American people. Despite the merits of the "open door" policy, higher education stakeholders, such as, academics and senior officials would criticize community colleges for being "an elaborate self-perpetuating system of social and economic class that systematically grants advantages to those of privilege" students' in American society (Zusman, 2005, p. 130).

b) Challenges of cost and price in higher education

To clarify, Zusman (2005) highlights that the financial burden, misaligned academic goals, and lower expectations in K-12 education and two-year community colleges would contribute to negative outcomes for several minority groups, particularly African-American and Latino/Hispanic students (p.

150). The complexity in higher education, once described by William Baumol as the "cost disease" (Johnstone, 2005, p. 377), would force federal and state governments to shift the financial burden from taxpayers to now students and families. For example, community colleges in California would experience sharp rise in tuition that would affect public and student attitudes about higher education (Mingle & Epper, 1997, p. 523). Likewise, the ongoing cost at two-year community colleges and at four-year public institutions would force higher education into greater centralization and decentralization, or as Riesman suggest, a "meandering procession" (Altbach, 2005, p. 296). Consequently, the financial constraints and budget cuts in American society would result to significant increases in college tuition, enrollment uncertainties, and confusion about academic goals (Altbach, 2005, p. 287). Past research by Gladieux, King, and Corrigan (2005) suggest that the average tuition rate between 1980 and 2003 had risen to almost 145 percent at both private and public institutions (p. 177). According to the 2008-2009 *Grapevine* report from the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University (2009), their recent finding suggests that the State Tax Appropriations for "State-Aided Community Colleges" had changed to dramatically by 4,688,638, a 5.3 percent change from the previous year. Clark Kerr and Marian Gad once noted twenty years ago that the crisis and change in public higher education "have been the rule, not the exception" (Altbach, 2005, p. 115). Because of the rising cost and price in American public higher education, several Hispanic/Latino students, quite unfortunately, would become ineligible to receive merit aid when entering or completing a two-year community college institution.

c) Trends among high school graduates and college dropouts

Numerous past research has suggested that the high cost in American higher education have led to greater proportion of Hispanic/Latino dropout rates than middle-class White students (Zusman, 2005, p. 132). Zusman (2005) claims that less than half of Hispanic/Latino students who do attend two-year institutions would complete and enter into four-year institutions compared to nearly two-thirds of White community college graduates (p. 129). According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2008), the most recent *2008 Measuring Up Report Card* suggests that college opportunities for California residents was rated fair, in which 45 percent of Caucasian were enrolled at a four-year

institution compared to 27 percent of Hispanics. Normally, college access and degree completion for low-income students and first-generation students have remained traditionally low in American society. Of the current 4,000+ higher education institutions in the United States today, a quarter of them are identified as community colleges (Altbach, 2005, p. 290). A recent study from Bailer (2012) suggests that more than 5 million students who do attend community colleges would neither complete nor graduate with an associate's degree. The author claims that an estimate 15 percent of Hispanic students in community college had left with between 30 and 59 credits (National Education Longitudinal Study, 2011). The high number of Hispanic/Latino dropouts from past research may suggest that high school graduates who do enter community colleges are not academically well prepare for college-level work.

As of today, both the federal and state government in California has poured heavy investments on developing and strengthening college readiness and remediation programs in an effort to foster minority students' completion within the community college system. To what extent remedial education affects minority students' plan to complete higher education in American society continues to receive heated and mixed reviews by academic scholars and civic communities. This policy brief will highlight the historical/social forces, current/recent policies, and the current challenges surrounding college readiness and remediation programs in higher education with particular emphasis Hispanic/Latino undergraduate students at two-year community colleges in the state of California.

Social, Historical, and Political Forces

In the early years of the Colonial period, 1636-1789, colleges and universities in the United States were established to "lay the foundation for superior education" (Geiger, 2005, p. 48) and to serve as "sanctuaries" for free expression (Guttmann, 1987, p.174). Ever since the founding of Harvard College in 1636, higher education institutions were established on Old World models to serve different types of students that reflect medieval European ancestry (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 5). Most students who did graduate would serve as ministers, physicians, teachers, lawyers, or public servants of which American society emphasized "egalitarianism of the common man" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 300), or as Kerr (2005) asserted "the creation of gentlemen" (p. 35). Colonial and antebellum colleges would serve as

recognizable symbols of community pride for the democratic good in American society as Richard Rorty once phrased, "democratic self-creation" (Rorty, 1999, p. 126). Eventually, higher education institutions would become a place where students advance knowledge and engage in services that would benefit individuals, states, the nation, and the world (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2010, p. 74). It was not until the Mass Higher Education Era, 1945-1974, or as Bender (1997) classify as the "golden age" era (p. 1), that would bring massive changes to a number of higher education institutions in American society. Most notably, several two-year community colleges would expand exponentially when four-year institutions weren't able to fully accommodate all working part-time students (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 419).

To enumerate, returned World War II soldiers and veterans would begin to enroll at higher education and to seek part-time employment outside of school as many college campuses would provide "service to the government of the nation-state" (Scott, 2006, p. 21) that would "maximize social value, welfare, or utility" of the individual (Guttmann, 1987, p. 181). Historical and social forces, such as, the National Youth Administration of 1935-1943, Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill), the President's *Higher Education for American Democracy* report, and the formation of the National Science Foundation would prompt colleges and universities to undergo the largest expansion in U.S. history that encouraged citizens to pursue "knowledge for the sake of serving society and knowledge for the sake of serving social demands" (Guttmann, 1987, p. 188). Eventually, higher education institutions would be transformed into either community colleges or comprehensive research universities as institutions that would serve as gatekeepers to valuable social offices and professions in American society.

Correspondingly, the large number of college enrollments after the National Defense Educational Act of 1958, an era often defined as "Shock Wave I" (Kerr, 1995), would force both the federal and state governments to set strict criteria and guidelines. For instance, the California Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960 would be established to set the core functions and missions of the University of California(UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community College(CCC). Often described as the 'tripartite' or 'three-tier system', the Master Plan would create the core principles of differentiation and the concept of universal access for all youths seeking to obtain a bachelor's degree

in American society. Gumport and Chun (2005) define universal access as "educational opportunities that are extended to those who, for numerous reasons, have been excluded from the system of higher education" (p. 413). Likewise, Johnstone (2005) defines access as "the search for social equity in who benefits from, and who pays for, higher education" (p. 369). Because access to higher education became essential during the 1960s, former U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson once declared in 1965 that: "A high school senior anywhere in this great land of ours can apply to any college or any university in any of the 50 States and not be turned away because his family is poor" (Johnson, 1965). Despite the merits of the California Master Plan, the total number of students enrolling in California public higher education would exponentially increase from once 420,000 in 1948 to over 1,000,000 in 1975 during the Free Speech Movement of 1964-1965 (Strayer Report, 1948). Two-year community colleges, in particular, would witness the largest growth in American society from the 1950s to the 1990s, from once 217,500 students to now more than ten million students at the end of the twentieth century (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 419). As of today, California community colleges have now more than two billion students enrolled during the 2011-2012 academic year, with an estimate of 870,566 Hispanic students (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2012) (see Figure 4).

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Enrollment Status Summary Report

	Annual 2011-2012 Student Count	Annual 2011-2012 Student Count (%)
State of California Total	2,423,964	100.00%
African-American	180,972	7.47%
American Indian/Alaskan Native.	12,786	0.53%
Asian	279,802	11.54%
Filipino	71,498	2.95%
Hispanic	870,566	35.91%
Multi-Ethnicity	67,344	2.78%
Pacific Islander	12,943	0.53%
Unknown	171,395	7.07%
White Non-Hispanic	756,658	31.22%

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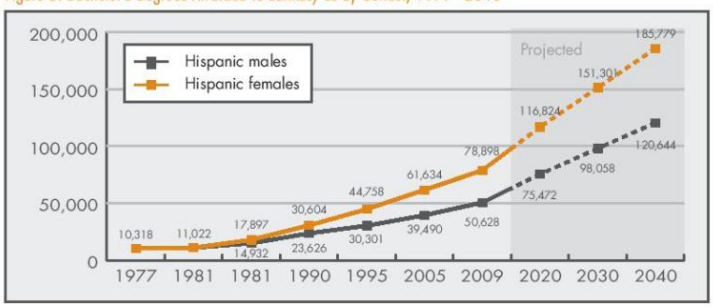
Figure 4. Enrollment status summary report of total students in California community colleges for the 2011-2012 academic year. From "California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office," 2012.

The vast number of minority students enrolled at two-year community colleges has created tensions in finance, access and completion, faculty issues, and accountability in higher education, especially for low-income students in California. Zusman (2005) suggest that more than 40 percent of public high schools in California are now identified as Hispanic/Latino (p. 124). Likewise, Carnoy (2010) suggests that the Latino population have grown by more than 186 percent over the years from 1980 to 2010 in the state of California (p. 5). With a growing population of over 37 million people and an economy ranked 7th in the world, experts have predicted that the large number of minorities enrolled in higher education will continue to outpace traditional White students throughout the 21st century, a period often called as "tidal wave II" (Johnstone, 2005, p. 374).

In the long run, two-year community colleges will continue to play a major role in increasing our nation's higher education attainment rates. Assisting and mentoring underprepared college students, particularly Hispanic/Latino students at two-year community colleges, will continue to become an urgent priority for our country as we aspire to generate more than 5 million community college degree holders by the year 2020 (White House, 2012). The main challenge will continue to revolve around higher education attainment for minority students in California. A recent study by Sáenz and Ponjuán (2012) suggests that Latino males are among the lowest high school graduates and the lowest college enrollment and completion rates of any subgroup nationwide (p. 2). According to the Center for Research and Policy in Education (2012) at the University of Texas – San Antonio, scholars from *Perspectivas* project that Hispanic/Latina females will continue earn a bachelor's degree three times more than Hispanic males nationwide by the year 2040 (p. 5) (see Figure 5).

Figure 3. Bachelor's Degrees Awarded to Latinas/os by Gender, 1977–2040



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Projections from 2011–2040 are based on authors' linear interpolation calculations. The projections are estimates and are meant for illustrative purposes only.

Figure 5. Bachelor's degrees awarded to Latinas as by Gender, 1977-2040. From "Perspectivas," by Center for Research and Policy in Education, University of Texas – San Antonio, 2012.

More specifically, Carnoy (2010) suggests that Hispanic/Latino male students will complete higher education at a rate of only 18 percent in California (p. 10). As the gap between male and female Hispanic students continues to widen, addressing college completion and persistence must remain a central priority for the Obama Administration. Although recent evidence suggests that more Hispanic students are now completing two-year community colleges at a higher rate than ever before (Fry, 2011), more research is needed to further understand how educators can design effective remediation programs that may reduce the future inequality among Hispanic/Latino students over the next 5-10 years in American society.

Current and Recent Policies

Remedial Education in Community Colleges

In recent years, California has placed heavy emphasis on increasing the number of Hispanic/Latino students pursing higher education by fueling additional resources on remedial education programs within the California Community College System (Long, 2012). Remedial courses, which normally do not count towards completion, are intended to help underprepared students to acquire and gain the skills needed for successful progression toward their academic and professional goals (Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012). Not surprisingly, most community colleges today measure student success by looking at the graduation and transfer rates among each ethnic group. Most University of California(UC) and California State University(CSU) campuses now require high school graduates to demonstrate college-level skills in English and mathematics as a condition of admissions. Minority students who do enter higher education typically register at a two-year community college taking at least one or two remedial courses. Most Hispanic/Latino students in community colleges are lower-income, often non-native English speakers, usually work part or full-time, and are typically older than traditional college student at four-year institution. Despite current efforts to increase minority students' presence in higher education, past research has suggested that fewer than half of Hispanic/Latinos enrolled in

developmental education would ever complete the remedial sequence at their community college (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

Generally, Hispanic/Latino students are considered the least educated racial or ethnic group in terms of completion of a bachelor's degree (Fry, 2011, p. 5). According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (2012), achievement rates for Hispanic/Latino students were among the lowest, with 43 percent of Hispanic/Latino students graduating from a community college (see Figure 6).

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
ARCC Performance Indicators Rate Summary Report

	2012
	2005-2006
State of California	63.53%
Student Progress & Achievement Rate Total	53.59%
African-American	41.76%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	46.19%
Asian	69.14%
Filipino	57.71%
Hispanic	43.24%
Pacific Islander	50.55%
Unknown/Non-Respondent	55.85%
White Non-Hispanic	58.05%

Figure 6. ARCC performance indicators rate of student progress and achievement rate. From "California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office," 2012.

Similarly, Carnoy (2010) suggests that an estimated 40 percent of both native born and immigrant Hispanics would eventually complete and transfer into a four-year institution. Yet, currently all UC campuses do not offer remedial courses as a result of current financial cutbacks and budget constraints (Long, 2012). However, a small number of CSU's offer remedial courses during the summer semester. Students who do not complete the required remedial courses on-time were subject to disenrollment and referred to a community college. Because a large number of high school graduates are considered not "college ready", current policies that address the effects of remediation programs on Hispanic/Latino students is widely needed to ensure that underprepared students can enter and complete an associate's degree in California.

Current/recent policies on remediation at California Community College

Current studies on remedial education programs at two-year community colleges have presented mixed findings (Long, 2012; Scott- Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012). Long (2012) defines remedial education "as a way to address academic deficiencies and prepare students for subsequent college success" (p. 184). She claims that remedial and developmental courses may provide minority students an inclusive learning environment for those seeking to easily transfer into a four-year bachelor's degree program. A more recent study by Boatman and Long (2010) suggests that remedial courses have a positive effect on the level of student preparation. Similarly, Bettinger and Long (2009) suggests that remedial education can help improve the learners chance to complete and persist early in college. Despite the merits of remediation at two-year community colleges, several researchers have noted that remedial education programs had little effect on student persistence and degree completion (Martorell & McFarlin, 2011).

A recent multi-year initiative by the Lumina Foundation on *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count* suggests that remedial education at two-year institutions have revealed no changes in student outcomes during the past seven years from 2004-2011 (Rutschow, E., Richburg-Hayes, L., Brock, T., Orr, G., Cerna, O., Cullinan, D., Kerrigan, M. R., Jenkins, D., Gooden, S., & Martin, K., 2011). Likewise, Long (2012) suggests that Pell Grant recipients in remediation experience negative outcomes in terms of persistence, completion of associate's degrees, transfer credits, and credits earned (p. 187). Comparatively, Calcagno and Long (2010) suggests that men in remediation programs experience more negative outcomes, and that remedial courses do not provide learners with the skills needed to increase their chances for college completion. Because current research on remedial and developmental education at two-year community colleges are still in their infancy, outlining current education policies and recommendations is vastly needed to better inform higher education stakeholders the "value-added" remedial programs may have for Hispanic/Latino students in the state of California.

Policy Options

There are numerous hypotheses on how to make remediation work for minority students at two-year community colleges. Some past studies have examined ways to improve instruction, give students additional support, or accelerate the remediation process so that students are not prevented from earning

college credits. In this section, I present five key policy options that I believe state policymakers should consider for Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in remediation at a California Community College System.

a) Provide Adequate Funding for Remedial and Developmental Education

California community colleges should receive funding by the state that adequately funds, sustain, and expand remedial and developmental education programs for minority students. Both the legislature and the governor should give California Community Colleges System(CCCS) extra funding to assist underprepared remedial students towards completing and transferring into four-year institutions. If four-year colleges and universities can provide funding for athletes and scholars, I believe that two-year community colleges should be able to do the same for minority students in remediation. California must shift its focus from enrollment-based funding to completion-based funding. Moreover, California community colleges should receive funding from the national government to assist current English-Language Learner(ELL) students who desire to transfer into a four-year institution. Additional financial incentives should also be given to at-risk California high schools for mentoring and training college-ready Hispanic/Latino students to possibly enter and pursue a bachelor's degree.

b) Strengthen and Expand Student Support Services and Student Life Programming

Student support services in community colleges, such as, financial aid, tutoring, child care, counseling, and bus passes can significantly increase minority students' chances for college completion. College counselors and mentors should invest more time matching and tutoring Hispanic/Latino students to a four-year institution as well as possible financial aid opportunities. Moreover, college counselors and mentors should provide Hispanic/Latino students a "roadmap" that outlines their term-by-term course of completion within two-years. Institutions should provide clearer information for underprepared or marginally prepared students to enroll in college-prep courses that are transferrable to UCs and CSUs. California community colleges should also provide meaningful student life opportunities for minority students enrolled in remedial courses, particularly those who are the first person in their household to ever attend college. Increasing student life activities at two-year institutions can promote positive learning

environments, foster on-campus study communities or groups, and create additional support networks for Hispanic/Latino students that may need extra help to complete remedial coursework on-time.

c) Clarify and Develop Long-term Institutional Policies, with a priority on minority students

Long-term institutional policies at two-year community colleges are greatly needed in California. Institutional policies can consist of redesigning financial aid policies or tightening academic policies, such as, mandatory academic advising for at-risk Hispanic/Latino students. Generally, most academic goals at two-year community college are misaligned or misrepresented. Numerous stakeholders have strongly advised for the need for creative leadership at the top to help resolve complex institutional problems in higher education, such as, difficulties in communication from one college to the next, or the inconsistencies across course content and delivery. Developing long-term feasible institutional policies that focuses on establishing sustainable commitments among minority students is vastly needed to increase higher education attainment and degree completion in American society.

d) Promote Essential Outreach, Civic Leadership, and Community Education Programming

Community colleges in American society cannot transform themselves without the support from the broader community and government. California community colleges must communicate directly or indirectly to outside colleges and universities, families, local communities, and nonprofit organizations that may foster academic success, degree completion and employment opportunities for minority students in remedial programs. Community colleges should partner with adult education programs so that students are more prepared to enter a four-year institution after obtaining an associate's degree. Community, civic, and business leaders should also be consulted frequently to inform state policymakers the current issues and problems facing community colleges in California. For instance, public education campaigns, such as, the "California EDGE Campaign," the "Campaign for Quality Education," and the "Campaign for College Opportunity" should consulted by both K-12 schools and community colleges to better educate individuals on-campus to embrace and lobby for a better higher education system for Californians.

e) Promote Additional Research on Remedial Education Programs in California Community Colleges

Since the turn of new century, California has placed heavy emphasis to create, establish, and initiate remedial programs that would better prepare minority students to complete and transfer into four-year institutions. Numerous past studies, however, have presented contested issues surrounding the effects of remediation programs on minority students. Additional research is required to further understand the complexities of remediation policies in California. More specifically, studies should be conducted to assess the impact of remediation policies on student aspirations and college choice. Until more research is conducted, the effect of remedial education on student persistence and college completion will not be fully understood for Hispanic/Latino students at two-year community colleges in California.

Policy Recommendations

This brief fully outlines specific recommendations to strengthen K-12 education and community colleges in California, and to ensure that promising collaborations between the two systems are expanded to improve college readiness and remediation programs for minority students in higher education. This policy brief did not, however, suggests that California should either end or reduce the number of students enrolled in remedial programs.

From the five policy recommendations outlined in the previous pages (12-13), I argue that 'Strengthen and Expand Student Support Services and Student Life Programming' is the most urgent recommendation needed for Hispanic/Latino students at California community colleges. I believe that:

- State policymakers should provide the leadership and resources needed to strengthen student support services and student life programming at K-12 education and community colleges. State leaders should ensure that college counselors are active participants in the solutions for students.
- State policymakers should fund student support services at two-year community colleges by partnering and collaborating with public high school schools and local communities that target college-ready minority students through innovative programs in California. Similar programs by the National Partnership for Educational Access(NPEA), such as, "Let's Get Ready", "SMART," "Breakthrough Collaborative", etc., should be established and receive additional funding for guiding and counseling at-risk Hispanic/Latino high school graduates in California.

- State policymakers should work with student support services at two-year community colleges to ensure that all college counselors, mentors, and tutors receive adequate resources needed to successfully assist and guide Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in remedial programs.
- State policymakers should carefully monitor current remediation policies in student support services and student life programming, and further conduct studies to assess the impact of remediation policies and student support services on Hispanic/Latino students in California.

Conclusion

In essence, the urgency to invest more funding at two-year community colleges is greatly needed to better "prepare all citizens for the highly complex, technological advanced U.S. society" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 422) as once declared by the American Council of Education in 1992. Too many students in California arrive at two-year community colleges academically unprepared for college-level work. Higher education must "make possible the invention of new forms of human freedom, taking liberties never taken before" (Rorty, 1999, p. 126) by helping at-risk high school students towards a path in higher education. Effective remediation programs at two-year community colleges are essential for Hispanic to persist and succeed towards transferring into a four-year bachelor's degree program. American society will continue to lose talent or "human capital" unless the legislature and the governor work with low-wealth public high schools and two-year community colleges in California. President Andrew Dickson White of Cornell University once asserted that American's higher education "must be adapted to the American people, to American needs, and to the requirements of modern times" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 161). The social, historical, and political forces facing higher education must continue to be adopted by the changing needs of American society in order to better "level the playing field for underserved students" in California (Zusman, 2005, p. 133). The wonderful privilege for students to embrace and support higher education is "the delight of experiencing the world about us in its varied qualities and forms" (Dewey, 1997, p. 108).

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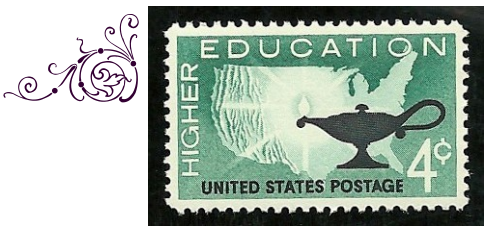

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