



SHEEO

STATE HIGHER EDUCATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

**COMPLETE
COLLEGE
AMERICA**

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New report from SHEEO, CCA highlights success data across races and ethnicities, points to need for systemic reforms in postsecondary education

The State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and Complete College America (CCA) today released [*Serving the Equity Imperative: Intentional Action Toward Greater Student Success*](#), a policy brief that utilizes the CCA data from 30 states to look at student success across race and ethnicity categories through the postsecondary education pipeline and highlights strategies for boosting success and closing achievement gaps.

Analysis of the CCA dataset revealed that there is little difference in performance, including among different races and ethnic categories, for those who actually earn a postsecondary credential. Black and Hispanic students who complete their degrees take about as much time and earn about as many credits as white and Asian students.

However, at each step in the postsecondary pipeline, from enrollment in postsecondary education to success in remediation and first-year, credit-bearing courses, black and Hispanic students are slightly less likely to succeed. For example, black and Hispanic students are more likely to place into remedial coursework and less likely to move past this phase into college-level coursework. Over time, these gaps compound and create the equity gaps that we must address.

SHEEO is focused on increasing postsecondary education attainment and student success through an ambitious goal: 60 percent of adults from every socioeconomic and demographic category completing a

postsecondary degree or credential of quality. In order to meet this attainment goal and the attainment goals of our members, states and institutions must close equity gaps between underserved black and Hispanic students and their better served white and Asian peers. There is a clear imperative to close these gaps—not just in order to reach attainment goals but to ensure economic opportunity for all Americans.

The CCA data suggests that underrepresented populations do not necessarily require more time or flexibility to be successful; rather, states and institutions should look to systemic changes in areas along the postsecondary pipeline—such as traditional remediation—where underserved students are disproportionately represented.

CCA promotes five policies, the Game Changers, that support innovation at postsecondary institutions and seek to boost completion rates: *Performance Funding*, *Corequisite Remediation*, *Full-Time is 15*, *Structured Schedules*, and *Guided Pathways to Success (GPS)*. Based on the early results in states implementing these programs, there is optimism that these approaches can be used to not only increase student success but also close achievement gaps. In states such as Tennessee, Hawaii, Colorado, and Georgia, these policies are helping underserved students succeed in postsecondary education and, if these early results continue, equity gaps should begin to close.

“The Game Changers are leading to dramatic results around the country—two, three and four times the success rates of traditional approaches,” said CCA president Stan Jones. “These reforms—focused on decreasing the time to a degree, providing informed choice for students, and adding necessary structures that enable success—are powerful tools in our efforts to close achievement gaps and ensure many more Americans are able to earn a degree.”

“For any state to meet its college attainment goals or to address the needs of its people, it must erase the gaps that have kept students from many communities from succeeding in college,” said Peter Blake, chair of the SHEEO Executive Committee and the director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. “Helping students to enroll full time and to persist until they finish is essential for every state.”

Russ Deaton, the interim executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, stressed the value of the outcomes-based funding efforts that Tennessee has used in its *Drive to 55* campaign to raise the education attainment level of Tennessee adults.

“We in Tennessee have worked hard to make sure that more of our residents can attend college and those who do complete valuable degrees and credentials,” said Deaton. “We have aligned our state funding with the outcomes we seek, providing incentives for our colleges, technical colleges, and universities to serve more Tennesseans from every community in the state and to help make sure they enroll, persist, and complete.”

Hank Huckaby, the chancellor of the University System of Georgia said, “The results in Georgia for corequisite remediation have been positive: passage rates for remedial students going on to enter and pass a credit-bearing course within a two-year span of time were at 21 percent. Now (using corequisite remediation), passing rates have jumped to 71 percent (in English) and 64 percent (in math).”

These early results from the states and institutions implementing the Game Changers did not happen overnight. They are the result of intentional and committed action to change how student supports are delivered and improve success for underserved student populations. As such, they can serve as examples for how other states and institutions can address achievement gaps and improve overall degree completion.

For further information, please contact SHEEO at 303-541-1605 or at sheeo.org.