

Keeping San Diego's Promise:

A Comprehensive Review of The San Diego Promise Program 2020-2021

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The SDCCD Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

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A note from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

Some information (mainly student groups with low counts of students) from the internal Promise Comprehensive report has been redacted from the web version to protect student confidentiality.

Introduction

The San Diego Promise Program was created in 2016 with the intention of providing affordable opportunities for first-time college students to attend classes at City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges ([SDCCD website – About San Diego Promise](#)). The San Diego Promise Program allows qualifying students to receive **tuition and book** waivers for their first two years of enrollment with the SDCCD.

In addition to financial resources, Promise Program students are provided with **peer mentors and a Promise counselor to assist with academic planning**. Students in the program are expected to maintain a full-time load of 12 or more units with the exception of part-time approved students who usually only comprise less than 5% of each cohort, and maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher. All Promise Students must submit a Dream Act or Financial Aid application, and meet with the promise counselor to establish their educational program to remain in the program.

The San Diego Promise Program aims to provide better outcomes for first-time college students at the SDCCD by providing resources that ease the financial burden of enrolling in college, and the SDCCD Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research consistently monitors the outcomes of Promise students to examine the efficacy of the program, making adjustments as the program continues to evolve and develop. This report provides a comprehensive review of:

1. Current literature and policies influencing the Promise Program
2. Fall 2020, Spring 2021, and fall-to-spring persistence outcomes for second-year Cohort 4 students and first-year Cohort 5 students
3. The outcomes of prior College of Continuing Education students who transition from non-credit to credit through the San Diego Promise Program
4. An update on transfer for students in Cohorts 1-3
5. Survey data from students who did not continue in Promise in Fall 2020
6. The demographic and academic profiles of Cohort 6 students in Fall 2021.

The data reviewed are then discussed, and recommendations for the continued evolution of the program are provided. Finally, future research opportunities will be considered to facilitate the continuously ongoing process of understanding, improving, and keeping the San Diego Promise.

Literature Review

Assembly Bill 19 was signed by Governor Jerry Brown in October 2017, establishing the California Promise initiative in the California Community College (CCC) system ([California Legislative Information – Assembly Bill 19](#)). This bill specifies that first-time students in CCCs who are able to maintain a 12 or higher unit load and who submit a financial aid or Dream Act application would be eligible to have their tuition fees waived. The legislation aims to close equity gaps while increasing Associate degree conferrals and transfers to four-year universities. More recent legislative initiatives have similarly aimed to further expand affordable access to college for CCC students.

Just one month before this report was written, Assembly Bill 927 was passed, removing the pilot status of CCC baccalaureate programs, expanding the potential for students to receive affordable Bachelor's degrees at community colleges ([California Legislative Information – Assembly Bill 927](#)). By allowing community colleges to offer affordable baccalaureate degrees as well as the establishment of College Promise programs, California is equipping itself to successfully chip away at the financial barriers students face to meet their educational goals and earn a living wage.

These strides are noble and important; however, recent studies on College Promise programs demonstrate that some of the requirements outlined in AB 19 may be prohibitive to students realizing their academic goals. For example, full-time requirements are generally implemented in good faith to increase student success; however, this leaves part-time students, a particularly important population for community colleges in the dust (Perna et al. 2020, Rauner and Smith 2020). Further, Perna and colleagues have demonstrated that ineligible student outcomes tend to decrease when Promise programs are implemented, further adding urgency to the question: “for whom is College Promise?” (2020).

The authors recommend that Promise Program practitioners consider the most marginalized in their community and ensure that under-resourced students who may struggle to meet all program requirements have a place at the proverbial Promise table (Perna et al. 2020). Full-time or not; ready or not, these students are nevertheless worthy of access to higher education and enhanced vocational opportunities, and are an important piece of the puzzle when attempting to close equity gaps in Promise (Rauner and Smith 2020).

While this literature review is very brief and does not include the works of many researchers who are currently studying College Promise programs, there are still important lessons to be gleaned from the two studies cited here. Namely, that the inclusion-exclusion criteria for programs are directly related to student outcomes and any resulting equity gaps observed. This is the lens through which this comprehensive report on San Diego Promise is crafted, and therefore the outcomes discussed will primarily focus on the requirements of the Promise Program.

2020-2021 Promise Student Outcomes

Student outcomes were calculated for both cohorts, and Cohort 5 outcomes are compared to first-time full-time non-Promise students to better evaluate if participation in the program generally leads to improved outcomes. Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 outcomes are provided for both second-year Cohort 4 students who continued in the program, and for new students in Cohort 5 who entered college in Fall 2020. To find information regarding the outcomes of past Promise cohorts, access the 2019 comprehensive report [here](#).

Cohort 4 Outcomes

Quick Facts!

- There were 1,540 students enrolled in Cohort 4 as second-year Promise students in Fall 2020.
- Of these students, 4% were approved to be part-time promise students.
- Half of Cohort 4 is comprised of Latinx students.
- Fifty-seven percent of the cohort receives financial aid.
- Eighty-nine percent of the cohort persisted to Spring 2021.

Overall, 52% of Cohort 4 students met both the GPA and units requirement in Fall 2020, while 44% did not.

Table 1. Cohort 4 Fall 2020 proportion of students who met or did not meet all requirements.

| All Requirements | Students | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 682 | 44% |
| Part time | 54 | 4% |
| Met | 804 | 52% |
| Total | 1,540 | 100% |

Similarly, 53% of the cohort met the unit load requirement. In contrast, nearly 70% of Cohort 4 met the GPA requirement, indicating that the units requirement is more difficult for students to successfully meet compared to the GPA requirement. This highlights not only a barrier to all Promise students in achieving their academic goals while maintaining access to Promise Program resources, but specifically to participants of color.

Table 2. Cohort 4 Fall 2020 proportion of students who met or did not meet 12+ units.

| Units Requirement | Students | Proportion of Students |
|-------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 670 | 44% |
| Part Time | 54 | 4% |
| Met | 816 | 53% |
| Total | 1,540 | 100% |

Table 3. Cohort 4 Fall 2020 proportion of students who met or did not meet a 2.0 GPA.

| GPA Requirement | Students | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 475 | 31% |
| Met | 1,065 | 69% |
| Total | 1,540 | 100% |

Seventy percent of part-time approved students are students of color, and both full-time African American and Latinx students in Cohort 4 were less likely to meet the units requirement compared to the overall cohort (African American: -14%, Latinx: -9%), highlighting a racial inequity in access to successful completion of the promise program. Further, African American students are disproportionately impacted when employing the (very imperfect) 80% rule.

Table 4. Cohort 4 Fall 2021 unit load outcomes by ethnicity/race.

| Ethnicity | Units Requirement | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| African American | Unmet | 59% |
| | Met | 39% |
| | Part Time | 3% |
| Asian | Unmet | 25% |
| | Met | 73% |
| | Part Time | 2% |
| Filipino | Unmet | 38% |
| | Met | 59% |
| | Part Time | 3% |
| Latinx | Unmet | 52% |
| | Met | 44% |
| | Part Time | 4% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Unmet | 28% |
| | Met | 71% |
| | Part Time | 1% |
| Unknown | Unmet | 45% |
| | Met | 52% |
| | Part Time | 3% |
| White | Unmet | 35% |
| | Met | 60% |
| | Part Time | 5% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

While both requirements of the program demonstrate a racial equity gap, the units requirement appears to be more of a barrier towards success in the program, especially for African American and Latinx students. Latinx and African American students in Cohort 4 also displayed gaps in achieving the GPA requirement, though the difference compared to the overall cohort is smaller compared to the gap observed in the units requirement (African American: -8%, Latinx: -7%). Further, neither Latinx nor African American students meet the threshold for disproportionate impact here, unlike the units requirement when the 80% rule is employed.

Decades of research in higher education have demonstrated this gap, and programs like San Diego Promise should consider the ways in which its requirements may be modified or its resources can be focused to better assist students from marginalized communities, as it is documented by expert Promise

Program researchers that program requirements influence equity outcomes (Perna et al. 2020). Further, lower GPAs are not indicative of lower academic ability or commitment, but generally point to deficiencies in the educational system, which cater more towards privileged students who do not have to work full-time or care for family members, or do not have access to services and technologies that better allow them to focus on schoolwork. In short, marginalized students generally face greater barriers that prevent them from achieving the same outcomes as their more resourced peers.

Table 5. Cohort 4 Fall 2020 GPA requirement outcomes by ethnicity/race.

| Ethnicity | GPA Requirement | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| African American | Unmet | 39% |
| | Met | 61% |
| Asian | Unmet | 20% |
| | Met | 80% |
| Filipino | Unmet | 26% |
| | Met | 74% |
| Latinx | Unmet | 38% |
| | Met | 62% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Unmet | 20% |
| | Met | 80% |
| Unknown | Unmet | 28% |
| | Met | 72% |
| White | Unmet | 22% |
| | Met | 78% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

Not only do these data demonstrate an equity gap in successfully completing program requirements, but these results have further implications regarding student persistence with the SDCCD. Overall, 89% (1,374 students) of Cohort 4 students who enrolled in Fall 2020 persisted to the Spring 2021 semester.

When broken down by students who met or did not meet the unit load requirement, 99% of Cohort 4 students who met the requirement and 100% of part-time approved students persisted to Spring 2021 compared to only 72% of students who did not meet the units requirement. This suggests that part-time versus full-time status does not necessarily indicate ability to persist or stay on their academic path, but that not meeting the units requirement without part-time approval

from the Promise Program may prevent students from successfully persisting to the next semester.

Table 6. Cohort 4 Fall to Spring persistence by unit load requirement outcomes.

| Units Requirement | Persistence Rate |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Unmet | 72% |
| Met | 99% |
| Part Time | 100% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

By ethnicity, most student groups persisted at or above the Cohort 4 average with the exception of Latinx students (-2%) and Filipino students (-1%). Latinx students comprise over half of part-time approved students, and only 44% of full-time Latinx students in Cohort 4 met the units requirement in Fall 2020 (-9% compared to overall cohort).

Table 7. Cohort 4 Fall to Spring persistence by Ethnicity/Race.

| Ethnicity | Persistence Rate |
|------------------|------------------|
| African American | 90% |
| Asian | 93% |
| Filipino | 88% |
| Latinx | 87% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | 92% |
| Unknown | 90% |
| White | 92% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

Further, when examining the persistence of part-time approved and (expected) full-time students, part-time approved students had higher overall persistence compared to full-time students (+11%). This supports the suggestion that providing increased opportunities for Promise students to attend college around their work and familial responsibilities while simultaneously receiving resources from the Promise Program better allows students to continue with their studies.

Table 8. Cohort 4 Fall to Spring persistence by full time and part time approved status.

| Status | Persistence Rate |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Full Time | 89% |
| Part Time Approved | 100% |

Note: Yellow cells highlight outcomes that are equal to the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

In Spring 2021, persisted Cohort 4 students had slightly higher outcomes compared to Fall 2020 outcomes (All requirements: +2%, Units requirements: +1%, GPA requirement: +6%).

Table 9. Cohort 4 Spring 2021 proportion of students who met or did not meet all requirements.

| All Requirements | Students | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 584 | 43% |
| Met | 736 | 54% |
| Part Time | 54 | 4% |
| Total | 1,374 | 100% |

Table 10. Cohort 4 Spring 2021 proportion of students who met or did not meet 12+ units.

| Units Requirement | Students | Proportion of Students |
|-------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 572 | 42% |
| Met | 748 | 54% |
| Part Time | 54 | 4% |
| Total | 1,374 | 100% |

Table 11. Cohort 4 Spring 2021 proportion of students who met or did not meet a 2.0 GPA.

| GPA Requirement | Students | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 340 | 25% |
| Met | 1,034 | 75% |
| Total | 1,374 | 100% |

When the data are disaggregated by ethnicity; however, equity gaps in achieving the requirements of the Promise Program impacting students of color are still present. Similar to observed Fall 2020 outcomes, African American and Latinx students met the Promise Program requirements at lower rates compared to the overall cohort (African American: -16%, Latinx: -8%) and African American students still faced disproportionate impact in meeting all requirements. Unlike observed outcomes in Fall 2020, Pacific Islander students also met the program requirements below the cohort average (-11%).

Table 12. Cohort 4 Spring 2021 all requirement outcomes by ethnicity/race.

| Ethnicity | All Requirements | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| African American | Unmet | 59% |
| | Met | 38% |
| | Part Time | 3% |
| Asian | Unmet | 32% |
| | Met | 66% |
| | Part Time | 2% |
| Filipino | Unmet | 31% |
| | Met | 66% |
| | Part Time | 3% |
| Latinx | Unmet | 50% |
| | Met | 46% |
| | Part Time | 4% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Unmet | 31% |
| | Met | 67% |
| | Part Time | 2% |
| Unknown | Unmet | 42% |
| | Met | 54% |
| | Part Time | 4% |
| White | Unmet | 34% |
| | Met | 61% |
| | Part Time | 5% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, yellow cells indicate outcomes that are equal to the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

African American and Latinx students faced barriers to attaining both the units and GPA requirements when examined separately in Spring 2021, though the gaps were larger for the unit load requirement, staying consistent with Fall 2020 trends. Additionally, Pacific Islander students faced more barriers in attaining the

GPA requirement compared to the units requirement in Spring 2021 than they did in Fall 2020. African American students met the units requirement at a rate 14% lower than the cohort average for the term, meeting the criteria for disproportionate impact. Latinx students met the units requirement at a rate that was 8% lower than the cohort average. Unlike what was observed for overall program requirements, Pacific Islander Promise students met the units requirement at a rate 3% above the average.

Table 13. Cohort 4 Spring 2021 unit load requirement outcomes by ethnicity/race.

| Ethnicity | Units Requirement | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| African American | Unmet | 57% |
| | Met | 40% |
| | Part Time | 3% |
| Asian | Unmet | 30% |
| | Met | 68% |
| | Part Time | 2% |
| Filipino | Unmet | 30% |
| | Met | 67% |
| | Part Time | 3% |
| Latinx | Unmet | 50% |
| | Met | 46% |
| | Part Time | 4% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Unmet | 29% |
| | Met | 69% |
| | Part Time | 2% |
| Unknown | Unmet | 42% |
| | Met | 54% |
| | Part Time | 4% |
| White | Unmet | 33% |
| | Met | 61% |
| | Part Time | 5% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, yellow cells indicate outcomes that are equal to the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

African American students met the GPA requirement at a rate 10% below the Cohort 4 average for Spring 2021, and Latinx students met the requirement at a rate 6% below the average. Pacific Islander students met the GPA requirement at a rate that is 4% below the average for Spring 2021. None of these students groups meet the criteria for disproportionate impact using the 80% rule.

Table 14. Cohort 4 Spring 2021 GPA requirement outcomes by ethnicity/race.

| Ethnicity | GPA Requirement | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| African American | Unmet | 35% |
| | Met | 65% |
| Asian | Unmet | 12% |
| | Met | 88% |
| Filipino | Unmet | 19% |
| | Met | 81% |
| Latinx | Unmet | 31% |
| | Met | 69% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Unmet | 20% |
| | Met | 80% |
| Unknown | Unmet | 12% |
| | Met | 88% |
| White | Unmet | 18% |
| | Met | 82% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

Cohort 5 Outcomes

Quick Facts!

- 2,047 students were enrolled in Cohort 5 as first-year Promise students during Fall 2020.
- Three percent of Cohort 5 students are part-time approved.
- Over half (51%) of Cohort 5 students are Latinx.
- Sixty-four percent of Cohort 5 students receive financial aid.
- Eighty-seven percent of Cohort 5 students persisted to Spring 2021.

When the proportions of students in the table below are adjusted by removing part-timers entirely to work around the much lower proportion of full-time students in the comparison group, Cohort 5 met all requirements at a rate of 60%, compared to 98% of full-time students in the comparison group, a gap that leaves Promise full-timers nearly 40% below their non-Promise peers. Fifty-seven percent of Cohort 5 Promise students met both the GPA and units requirements in Fall 2020. In contrast, only 28% of the comparison group of full-time first-time students in Fall 2020 sustained a 12+ unit load and a 2.0 or greater GPA.

Table 15. Cohort 5 Fall 2020 proportion of students who met or did not meet all requirements.

| All Requirements | Cohort 5 Students | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Part-Time | 63 | 3% |
| Unmet | 815 | 40% |
| Met | 1,169 | 57% |
| Total | 2,047 | 100% |

Table 16. Non-Promise Fall 2020 proportion of students who met/did not meet all requirements.

| All Requirements | Comparison Group Students | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 18 | 1% |
| Met | 783 | 28% |
| Part Time | 2,026 | 72% |
| Total | 2,827 | 100% |

Similar to the pattern observed in Cohort 4, students in Cohort 5 were more able to meet the GPA requirement (71%) compared to the unit load requirement (59%). This pattern is also observable in the comparison group, where 65% of students met a 2.0 or higher GPA, but only 28% were able to maintain a 12+ unit load.

Table 17. Cohort 5 Fall 2020 proportion of students who met or did not meet a 2.0 GPA.

| GPA Requirement | Cohort 5 Students | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 596 | 29% |
| Met | 1,451 | 71% |
| Total | 2,047 | 100% |

Table 18. Cohort 5 Fall 2020 proportion of students who met or did not meet 12+ units.

| Units Requirement | Cohort 5 Students | Proportion of Students |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Part-Time | 63 | 3% |
| Unmet | 782 | 38% |
| Met | 1,202 | 59% |
| Total | 2,047 | 100% |

While the trend between ability to meet the unit load versus GPA requirements is consistent between Promise and non-Promise students, Cohort 5 students met the GPA requirement at a rate 6% higher than the comparison group. Cohort 5 students were also able to maintain a full-time load at a rate 31% above the comparison group.

Table 19. Non-Promise Fall 2020 proportion of students who met or did not meet a 2.0 GPA.

| GPA Requirement | Comparison Group Students | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 986 | 35% |
| Met | 1,841 | 65% |
| Total | 2,827 | 100% |

Table 20. Non-Promise Fall 2020 proportion of students who met or did not meet 12+ units.

| Units Requirement | Comparison Group Students | Proportion of Students |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Full Time | 801 | 28% |
| Part Time | 2,026 | 72% |
| Total | 2,827 | 100% |

When the data are disaggregated by ethnicity, equity gaps are observable in both Cohort 5 and comparison group student outcomes. African American (-19%), Latinx (-8%), and Pacific Islander students (-2%) met both requirements at lower rates compared to the overall cohort. African American students in Cohort 5 meet the criteria for disproportionate impact using the 80% rule, much like their peers in Cohort 4.

These student groups were similarly impacted in meeting the unit load requirement (African American: -20%, Latinx: -8%, Pacific Islander: -4%). African American students in Cohort 5 still meet the criteria for disproportionate impact like their peers in Cohort 4.

Students were more able to meet the GPA requirement compared to the unit load requirement, though gaps were still present for African American (-12%) and Latinx (-7%) students compared to the overall cohort.

The GPA requirement will be the main subject of the ethnicity outcomes comparison for non-Promise students due to the high proportion of part-time students in the comparison group. **While Cohort 5 students in most student groups were better able to meet the GPA requirement compared to non-Promise students, the rate of GPA attainment for African American students is exactly the same between Cohort 5 and the comparison group (59%).**

Latinx students in Cohort 5 met the GPA requirement at a rate that is 6% higher compared to non-Promise students, though they still reached the GPA requirement at a lower rate than the overall cohort. The comparison group also displays equity gaps between multi-ethnic students and Pacific Islander students and the comparison group, even though these students achieved the GPA requirement at a higher rate compared to the overall cohort in Cohort 5.

Table 21. Cohort 5 Fall 2020 all requirement outcomes by race/ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | All Requirements | Proportion of Cohort 5 Students |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| African American | Part-time | 12% |
| | Unmet | 50% |
| | Met | 38% |
| Asian | Part-time | 0% |
| | Unmet | 19% |
| | Met | 80% |
| Filipino | Part-time | 1% |
| | Unmet | 25% |
| | Met | 74% |
| Latinx | Part-time | 2% |
| | Unmet | 49% |
| | Met | 49% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Part-time | 4% |
| | Unmet | 33% |
| | Met | 64% |
| Pacific Islander | Part-time | 18% |
| | Unmet | 27% |
| | Met | 55% |
| Unknown | Part-time | 3% |
| | Unmet | 39% |
| | Met | 58% |
| White | Part-time | 4% |
| | Unmet | 31% |
| | Met | 65% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, yellow cells indicate outcomes that are equal to the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

Table 22. Cohort 5 Fall 2020 unit load requirement outcomes by race/ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | Units Requirement | Proportion of Cohort 5 Students |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| African American | Part-time | 12% |
| | Unmet | 49% |
| | Met | 39% |
| Asian | Part-time | 0% |
| | Unmet | 18% |
| | Met | 81% |
| Filipino | Part-time | 1% |
| | Unmet | 21% |
| | Met | 78% |
| Latinx | Part-time | 2% |
| | Unmet | 47% |
| | Met | 51% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Part-time | 4% |
| | Unmet | 30% |
| | Met | 67% |
| Pacific Islander | Part-time | 18% |
| | Unmet | 27% |
| | Met | 55% |
| Unknown | Part-time | 3% |
| | Unmet | 39% |
| | Met | 58% |
| White | Part-time | 4% |
| | Unmet | 29% |
| | Met | 67% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, yellow cells indicate outcomes that are equal to the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

Meeting the GPA Requirement: Cohort 5 compared to Non-Promise Students Fall 2020

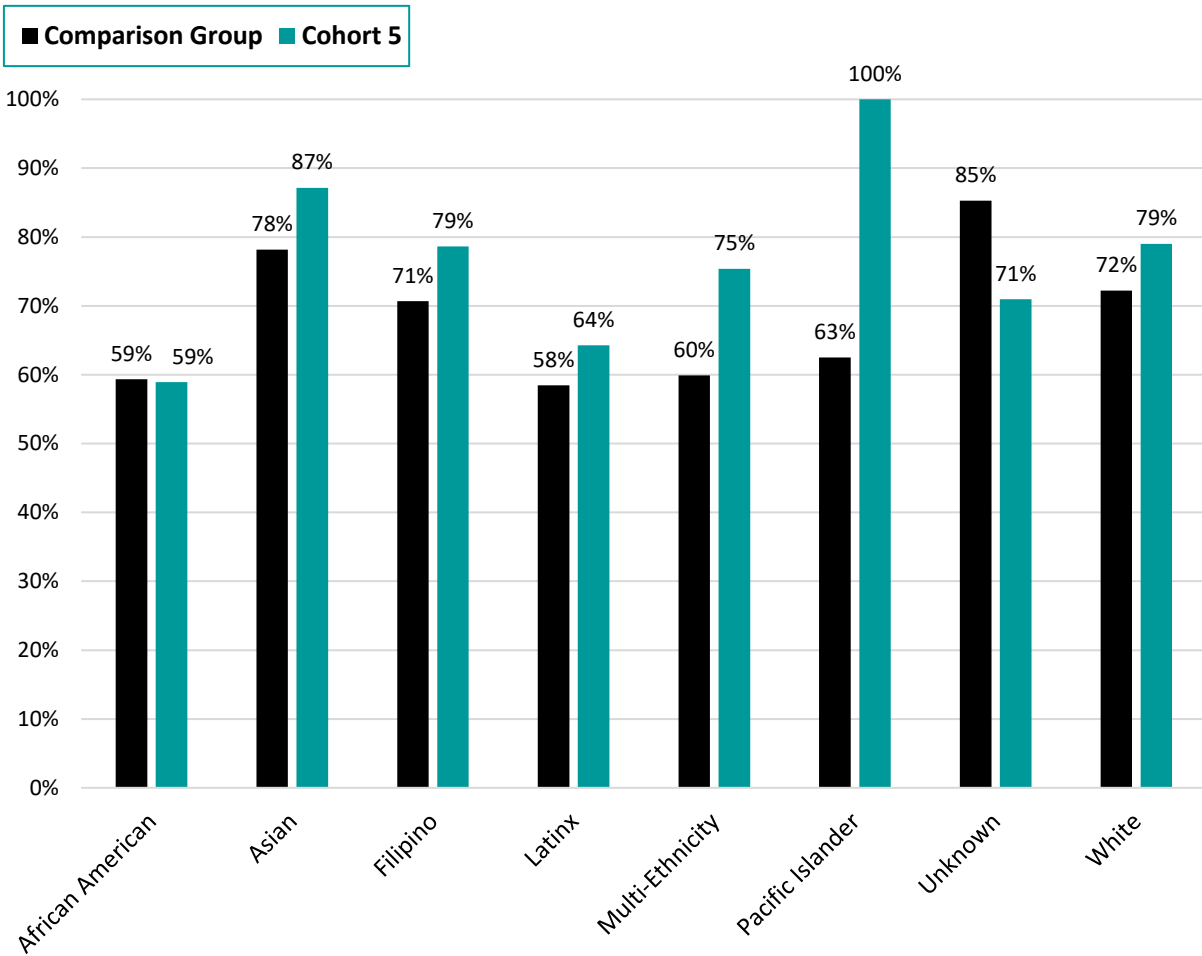


Figure 1. Cohort 5 Fall 2020 GPA outcomes compared to Non-Promise group.

Eighty-seven percent of Cohort 5 students who enrolled in Fall 2020 persisted to Spring 2021 compared to 69% of the comparison group, which is a rate 18% above non-promise students. When persistence is examined by ethnicity, Latinx students in Cohort 5 persisted at a 3% lower rate compared to the overall cohort; however, **equity gaps in persistence were much more present in the non-Promise comparison group than in Cohort 5, suggesting that participating in the Promise program allowed students to persist to the spring semester at a higher rate.** For example, African American Promise students persisted at the same rate as the overall cohort (87%) while non-Promise students who identified as African American persisted at a rate 8% below the comparison group, which is also 26% below the persistence rate of African American students in Cohort 5.

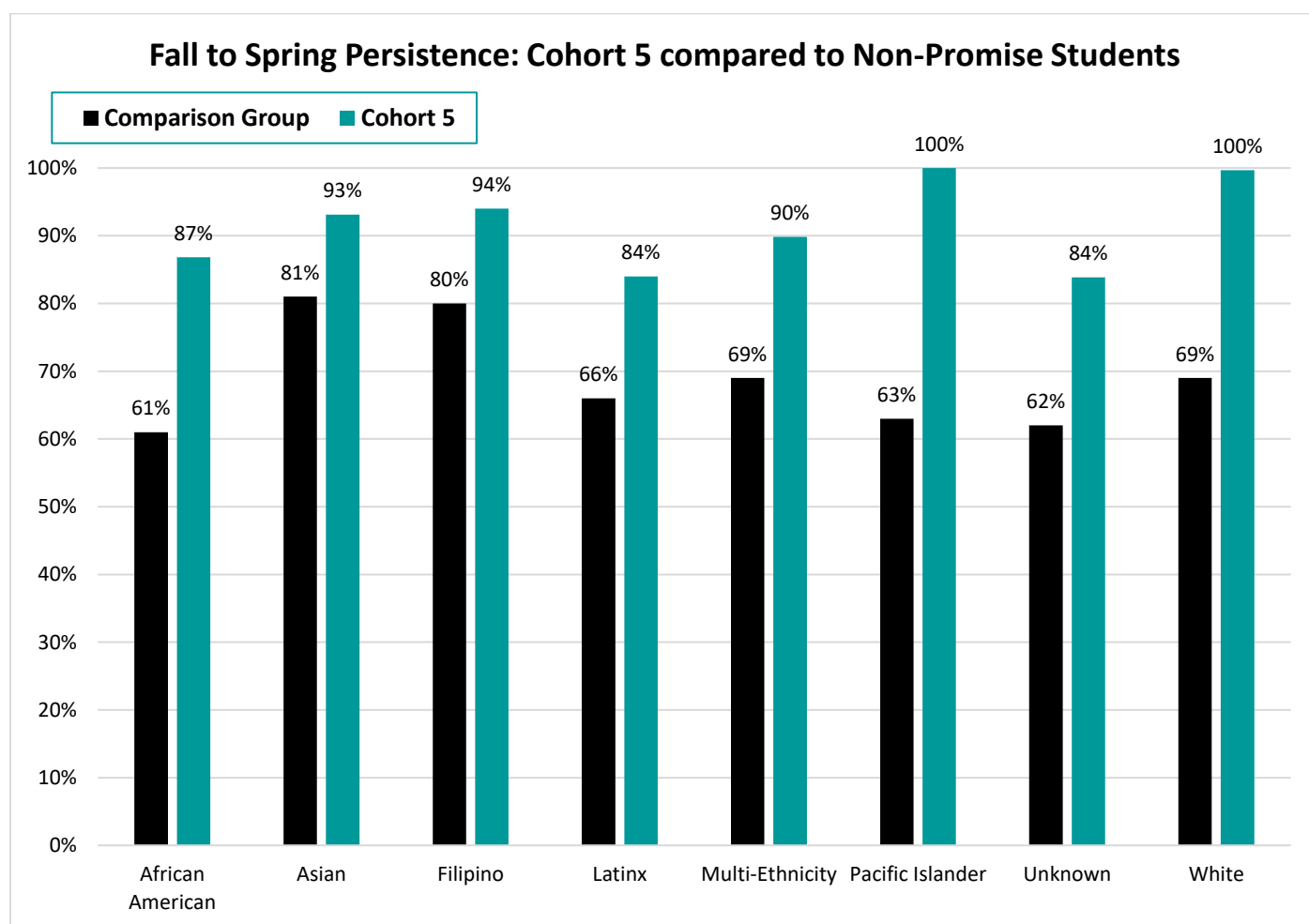


Figure 2. Cohort 5 Fall to Spring persistence compared to Non-Promise group by race/ethnicity.

Seventy percent of Cohort 5 students who were unable to sustain a full-time load in Fall 2020 persisted to Spring 2021 compared to 98% of students who met the unit load requirement (-28%). This trend is similar, though slightly more disparate in the comparison group, where 59% of part time students persisted compared to 93% of full time students (-34%). While (non-approved) part-time students in both the Promise and non-Promise student groups persisted at lower rates compared to their full time counterparts, part time students in Cohort 5 persisted to Spring 2021 at a rate 11% higher compared to non-Promise students.

Interestingly, Cohort 5 students who were approved to be part-time persisted at nearly the same rate (88%) as students who were not part-time approved (87%). This is a departure from students in Cohort 4 who were part-time approved as they had a much higher persistence rate than their peers (+11%). **The Cohort 5 part-time approved persistence rate is also 18% higher than the persistence rate for students who did not meet the units requirement.**

In Spring 2021, about the same proportion of Cohort 5 students met both requirements (56%) as in Fall 2020 (57%). In comparison, when the comparison values are adjusted to examine the proportion of only full-time students who met both requirements, 97% of non-Promise full-timers met both requirements.

Table 23. Cohort 5 Spring 2021 proportion of students who met/did not meet all requirements.

| All Requirements | Cohort 5 Students | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 731 | 41% |
| Met | 995 | 56% |
| Part Time | 56 | 3% |
| Total | 1,782 | 100% |

Table 24. Non-Promise Spring 2021 students who met/did not meet all requirements.

| All Requirements | Comparison Group Students | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Unmet | 24 | 1% |
| Met | 691 | 35% |
| Part Time | 1,256 | 64% |
| Total | 1,971 | 100% |

Similar to trends observed in Fall 2020, a higher proportion of Cohort 5 students were able to meet the GPA requirement (71%) than the unit load requirement (57%). This trend was also observed in the comparison group of non-promise students, 70% of whom met the GPA requirement compared to 36% who were able to take a full class load. **It is also important to note that the proportion of Promise students who were able to take a full unit load is 21% higher than the comparison group, but the proportions of students who were able to meet the GPA requirement are similar between Cohort 5 and the comparison group, suggesting that the promise program has more of an impact on its participants' ability to maintain a full-time load than to achieve a 2.0 or higher GPA.**

When the outcomes data are disaggregated by ethnicity, equity gaps present in Fall 2020 were maintained in the spring term. African American and Latinx students met both Promise program requirements at lower rates than the overall cohort. Further, no Pacific Islander students (a smaller group of students) in the cohort met both requirements in Spring 2021, a wider gap than was observed in Fall 2020 for this community. These gaps were also present for students in the unit load and GPA requirements for the program. **In fact, when compared to other first-time non-Promise students, there were larger equity gaps present for most groups of racially marginalized students in Promise compared to non-Promise students.**

Table 25. Cohort 5 Spring 2021 all program requirement outcomes by race/ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | All Requirements | Proportion of Cohort 5 Students |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| African American | Part Time | 14% |
| | Unmet | 56% |
| | Met | 31% |
| Asian | Part Time | 0% |
| | Unmet | 20% |
| | Met | 79% |
| Filipino | Part Time | 1% |
| | Unmet | 31% |
| | Met | 68% |
| Latinx | Part Time | 2% |
| | Unmet | 51% |
| | Met | 47% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Part Time | 3% |
| | Unmet | 33% |
| | Met | 63% |
| Pacific Islander | Part Time | 18% |
| | Unmet | 82% |
| Unknown | Part Time | 4% |
| | Unmet | 50% |
| | Met | 46% |
| White | Part Time | 4% |
| | Unmet | 27% |
| | Met | 68% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

Table 26. Cohort 5 Spring 2021 unit load requirement outcomes by race/ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | Units Requirement | Proportion of Cohort 5 Students |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| African American | Part Time | 14% |
| | Unmet | 54% |
| | Met | 32% |
| Asian | Part Time | 0% |
| | Unmet | 19% |
| | Met | 80% |
| Filipino | Part Time | 1% |
| | Unmet | 30% |
| | Met | 69% |
| Latinx | Part Time | 2% |
| | Unmet | 49% |
| | Met | 49% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Part Time | 3% |
| | Unmet | 32% |
| | Met | 65% |
| Pacific Islander | Part Time | 18% |
| | Unmet | 73% |
| | Met | 9% |
| Unknown | Part Time | 4% |
| | Unmet | 50% |
| | Met | 46% |
| White | Part Time | 4% |
| | Unmet | 27% |
| | Met | 68% |

Note: Student counts are excluded to protect student confidentiality. Red cells highlight outcomes below the cohort average, and green cells highlight outcomes above the cohort average.

Table 27. Cohort 5 Spring 2021 GPA requirement outcomes by race/ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | GPA Requirement | Proportion of Cohort 5 Students |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| African American | Unmet | 41% |
| | Met | 59% |
| Asian | Unmet | 12% |
| | Met | 88% |
| Filipino | Unmet | 18% |
| | Met | 82% |
| Latinx | Unmet | 38% |
| | Met | 62% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Unmet | 23% |
| | Met | 77% |
| Pacific Islander | Unmet | 45% |
| | Met | 55% |
| Unknown | Unmet | 38% |
| | Met | 62% |
| White | Unmet | 15% |
| | Met | 85% |

Table 28. Non-Promise Spring 2021 GPA requirement outcomes by race/ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | GPA Requirement | Proportion of Comparison Group Students |
|------------------|-----------------|---|
| African American | Unmet | 33% |
| | Met | 67% |
| Asian | Unmet | 18% |
| | Met | 82% |
| Filipino | Unmet | 20% |
| | Met | 80% |
| Latinx | Unmet | 37% |
| | Met | 63% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | Unmet | 33% |
| | Met | 67% |
| Pacific Islander | Unmet | 10% |
| | Met | 90% |
| Unknown | Unmet | 18% |
| | Met | 82% |
| White | Unmet | 23% |
| | Met | 77% |

Now that the overall outcomes of Cohorts 4 and 5 are established, the next section of the report dives into the demographic profiles and outcomes of former San Diego College of Continuing Education students in Cohorts 4 and 5.

Spotlight on Former College of Continuing Education Students

The San Diego Promise Program has made a concerted effort to connect non-credit students at the College of Continuing Education to an accessible pathway to a college degree. This section of the report dives into the characteristics and outcomes of prior non-credit students in Cohorts 4 and 5.

Prior non-credit students comprised 2% of Cohort 5 and 1% of Cohort 4 in Fall 2020, and 2% of both cohorts in Spring 2021. **In both cohorts, a higher proportion of students identified as students of color or multi-ethnic (Cohort 4: 91%, Cohort 5: 97%) compared to their overall respective cohorts (Both Cohorts: 82%).**

Prior non-credit students in their first year (Cohort 5) were more likely to meet both the unit load and GPA requirements (Fall 2020: +20%, Spring 2021: +10%) when part-time approved students are excluded compared to full-time Promise students who did not attend SDCCE.

This trend was not observed amongst prior SDCCE students in Cohort 4 during their second year of the Promise Program. A smaller proportion of prior CE students in Cohort 4 met both requirements in both Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 than students who did not previously attend CE (Fall 2020: -23%, Spring 2021: -17%). It should be noted; however, that a higher proportion of prior non-credit students in Cohort 4 were approved to be part-time, and therefore a smaller number of prior non-credit students were evaluated in this analysis for Cohort 4, potentially impacting these data.

Table 29. Fall 2020 Prior SDCCE Cohort 5 students who met/did not meet all requirements.

| Former CE Student | All Requirements (Fall 2020) | Proportion of Cohort 5 Students |
|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| No | Unmet | 41% |
| | Met | 59% |
| Yes | Unmet | 45% |
| | Met | 79% |

Table 30. Spring 2021 Prior SDCCE Cohort 5 students who met/did not meet all requirements.

| Former CE Student | All Requirements (Spring 2021) | Proportion of Cohort 5 Students |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| No | Unmet | 43% |
| | Met | 57% |
| Yes | Unmet | 33% |
| | Met | 67% |

Table 31. Fall 2020 Prior SDCCE Cohort 4 students who met/did not meet all requirements

| Former CE Student | All Requirements (Fall 2020) | Proportion of Cohort 4 Students |
|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| No | Unmet | 46% |
| | Met | 54% |
| Yes | Unmet | 68% |
| | Met | 32% |

Table 32. Spring 2021 Prior SDCCE Cohort 4 students who met/did not meet all requirements.

| Former CE Student | All Requirements (Spring 2021) | Proportion of Cohort 4 Students |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| No | Unmet | 44% |
| | Met | 56% |
| Yes | Unmet | 61% |
| | Met | 39% |

Future reports for the San Diego Promise Program will continue to detail the success and demographics of prior non-credit students in the program to better inform Promise Program personnel of the challenges and successes faced by this important subset of Promise students. In the upcoming section of this report, the attention of the analysis will pivot to earlier Promise Program cohorts to examine their success in transferring to four-year universities, a goal of Promise that was set by AB 19.

Where are they now? Transferring Out of Promise

Now that the outcomes of the most recent Promise Program cohorts have been established, it is important to revisit Cohorts 1-3 to examine how many Promise students have transferred and where they choose to attend to better understand if and how the program impacts the transfer outcomes of its students. While it is also critical to examine the degrees conferred amongst Promise students, a forthcoming examination of Promise student graduates will be launched in Spring 2022 and provided every Spring term after.

To accomplish this, students from the first three cohorts of the Promise Program were identified and matched to transfer data from the National Student Clearinghouse. **A total of 106 students have transferred to four-year institutions from Cohorts 1-3.**

When examined by cohort, students from Cohort 1 make up 42% of all Promise student transfers. The overall transfer rate for Cohort 1 is 38%. Cohort 2 comprises the second highest proportion of Promise transfers (40%) for an overall transfer rate of 14%. Finally, 19 students from Cohort 3 have transferred thus far, for an overall proportion of 18% of Promise transfers and a current transfer rate of 2%. Recall that Cohorts 1 and 2 have had 1-2 years longer to transfer compared to students in Cohort 3, and the transfer rate for this cohort will likely increase in future years.

Table 33. Current transfer rates for Promise cohorts 1-3.

| Cohort | Students | Transferred | Transfer Rate |
|--------|----------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | 117 | 45 | 38% |
| 2 | 304 | 42 | 14% |
| 3 | 1,057 | 19 | 2% |

Note: Counts may not perfectly match prior reports for Cohort 3, as the 2019 Promise Comprehensive only contained first-year Cohort 3 data, while this analysis looks at Promise students who completed the program in both years.

Promise student transfer rates were compared to the transfer rates of non-Promise students who have educational objectives that include transfer to a four-year university, and maintained a full-time unit load (Cohort comparison groups 1 and 2) or 9 or more units (Cohort 3 comparison group). The change in units for Cohort 3 comparison students are to better capture students who have similar unit loads to part-time approved Promise students. **The results show that Promise students are transferring to four-year universities at lower rates than non-Promise students in the comparison groups for each cohort (Cohort 1: -8%, Cohort 2: -13%, Cohort 3: -2%).**

Table 34. Current transfer rates for Promise cohorts 1-3 compared to Non-Promise students.

| Student Group | Students | Transferred | Transfer Rate |
|---------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|
| Cohort 1 (began 2016-17) | 117 | 45 | 38% |
| Cohort 1 Comparison Group | 1,110 | 516 | 46% |
| Cohort 2 (began 2017-18) | 304 | 42 | 14% |
| Cohort 2 Comparison Group | 1,121 | 299 | 27% |
| Cohort 3 (began 2018-19) | 1,711 | 36 | 2% |
| Cohort 3 Comparison Group | 1,001 | 42 | 4% |

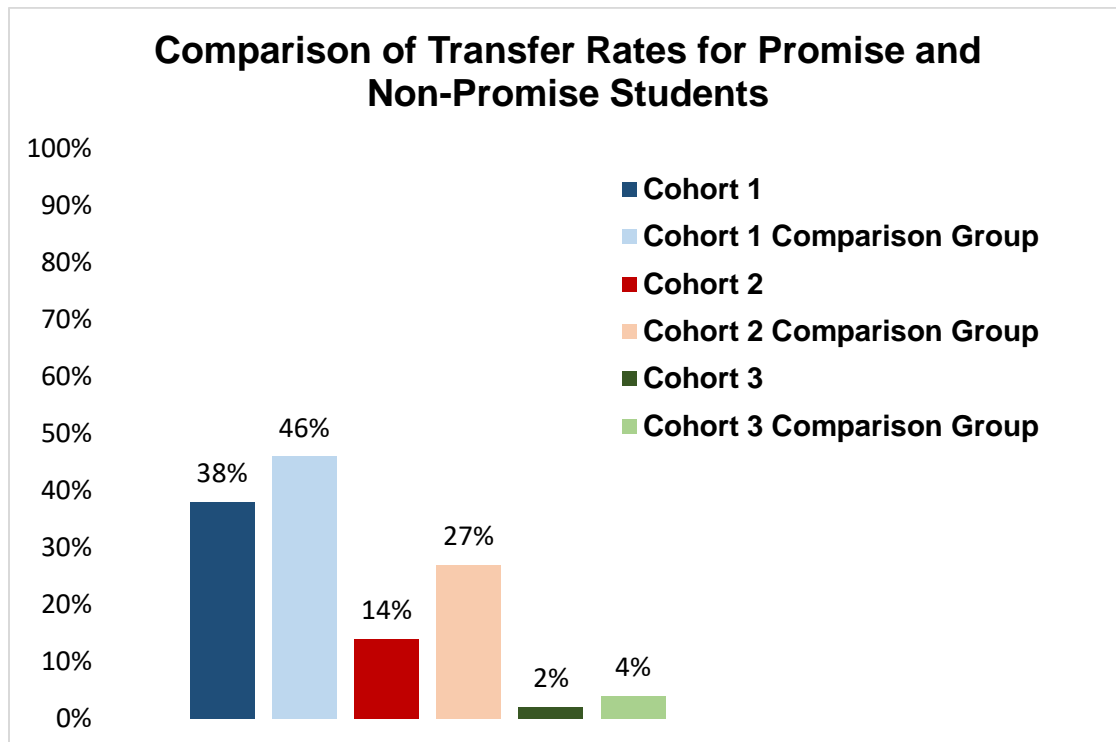


Figure 3. Current transfer rates for Promise cohorts 1-3 compared to Non-Promise students.

The majority of Promise students who have transferred are attending public institutions in all cohorts, though the proportion of students transferring to public institutions has decreased by 6% with each cohort.

Table 35. Transfer rates by cohort and university type (public or private).

| Cohort | University Type | Transfer Rate |
|--------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Private | 4% |
| | Public | 96% |
| 2 | Private | 10% |
| | Public | 90% |
| 3 | Private | 16% |
| | Public | 84% |

A similar trend is observed when examining the systems into which Promise students tend to transfer. While the majority of Promise students in each cohort are attending school with the California State University system, the proportion of students transferring into CSUs have declined by 9% with each cohort. Students in Cohort 2 were more likely to transfer to a University of California institution compared to Cohort 1, but students in Cohort 3 were more likely than Cohorts 1 or 2 to transfer into a school outside of either the CSU or UC systems. Whether this will remain true after more Cohort 3 students transfer will be evaluated in future reports.

Table 36. Transfer rates by cohort and university system (CSU, UC, Other).

| Cohort | University Type | Transfer Rate |
|--------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Other | 11% |
| | CSU | 71% |
| | UC | 18% |
| 2 | Other | 14% |
| | CSU | 62% |
| | UC | 24% |
| 3 | Other | 32% |
| | CSU | 53% |
| | UC | 16% |

When the top ten transfer schools are examined, nearly half of all students who transferred out of the Promise program attend San Diego State University. The second most popular school is the University of California San Diego, followed by CSU Long Beach, UC Berkeley, and CSU San Marcos. While the top five transfer schools are all part of the UC or CSU systems, 3% of Promise transfers went to National University and Arizona State University each. Finally, California State University Chico and San Francisco State University comprise 2% each of Promise student transfers.

Table 37. Top ten transfer institutions for Promise students.

| Rank | University | Transfer Rate |
|------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | San Diego State University | 46% |
| 2 | UC San Diego | 9% |
| 3 | CSU Long Beach | 5% |
| 4 | UC Berkeley | 5% |
| 5 | CSU San Marcos | 4% |
| 6 | National University | 4% |
| 7 | Arizona State University | 3% |
| 8 | California Polytechnic University | 3% |
| 9 | CSU Chico | 2% |
| 10 | SFSU | 2% |

These data may serve as an indicator of how former students may face roadblocks on their way to transfer after the Promise Program, potentially justifying increased attention to supporting Promise students through the transfer process. Considering that non-Promise students are more likely to transfer, or at least more able to transfer swiftly, Promise Program employees should consider providing strategic transfer support to Promise and former Promise students. To better understand the experiences of Promise students as they attempt to transfer to a four-year university, focus group or survey methods should be considered to better contextualize transfer outcomes in addition to better comparisons with the SDCCD student population in the future.

Surveys: Fall 2020 Non-Continuing in Promise

Towards the end of each Fall term, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (OIER) disseminated a survey to all students who either: a) were in Cohort 4 but stopped out between their first and second years with the program or b) applied to the Promise Program to begin in Cohort 5, but did not enroll. The survey was designed to provide the Promise Program with information regarding why Promise students do not continue with the Program so that enhanced support may be provided to prevent future stop-outs. A full report detailing the results of the Fall 2020 non-continuing in Promise survey was provided to SDCCD leadership and Promise Program personnel in March 2020, and a brief summary of the findings are provided here.

Quick Facts!

- An invitation to take the survey was sent to 407 students on the Promise Program dismissal list in Fall 2020.
- A total of 71 students participated in the survey (Cohort 4: n=46, Cohort 5: n=25) for a response rate of 17%.
- Latinx students comprised the highest proportions of survey respondents in both Cohorts (Cohort 4: 44%, Cohort 5: 60%).
- All Cohort 4 students who participated in Promise reported having a positive experience in the program due to the kindness of staff, their willingness to help, and the financial support provided by the program.

Summary of Results: Cohort 4

Almost half (47%) of Cohort 4 respondents listed the COVID-19 pandemic as a reason why they did not enroll in Fall 2020. About 25% of respondents listed personal or work obligations as reasons they could not enroll, and 22% reported that they enrolled in a different institution in Fall 2020. Over one quarter of the participants listed other reasons for not enrolling, and their responses included mental health issues, dislike of or hesitancy to try the online learning environment, concern over meeting enrollment requirements, and transfer to a four-year university.

Students who discontinued in Cohort 4 and responded to the survey listed other supports as the most popular intervention (42%) that may have helped them enroll in Fall 2020, which suggests that Promise students have diverse needs and challenges to remaining in the program. Other interventions students recommended include a pathway to temporary discontinuation in the program due to the pandemic, mental health support, in-person class options, and more rigorous and responsive academic supports in the online environment. Other popular selections to this question

include career counseling, assistance selecting classes, and heightened financial support as missed interventions that would have assisted students enroll in Fall 2020.

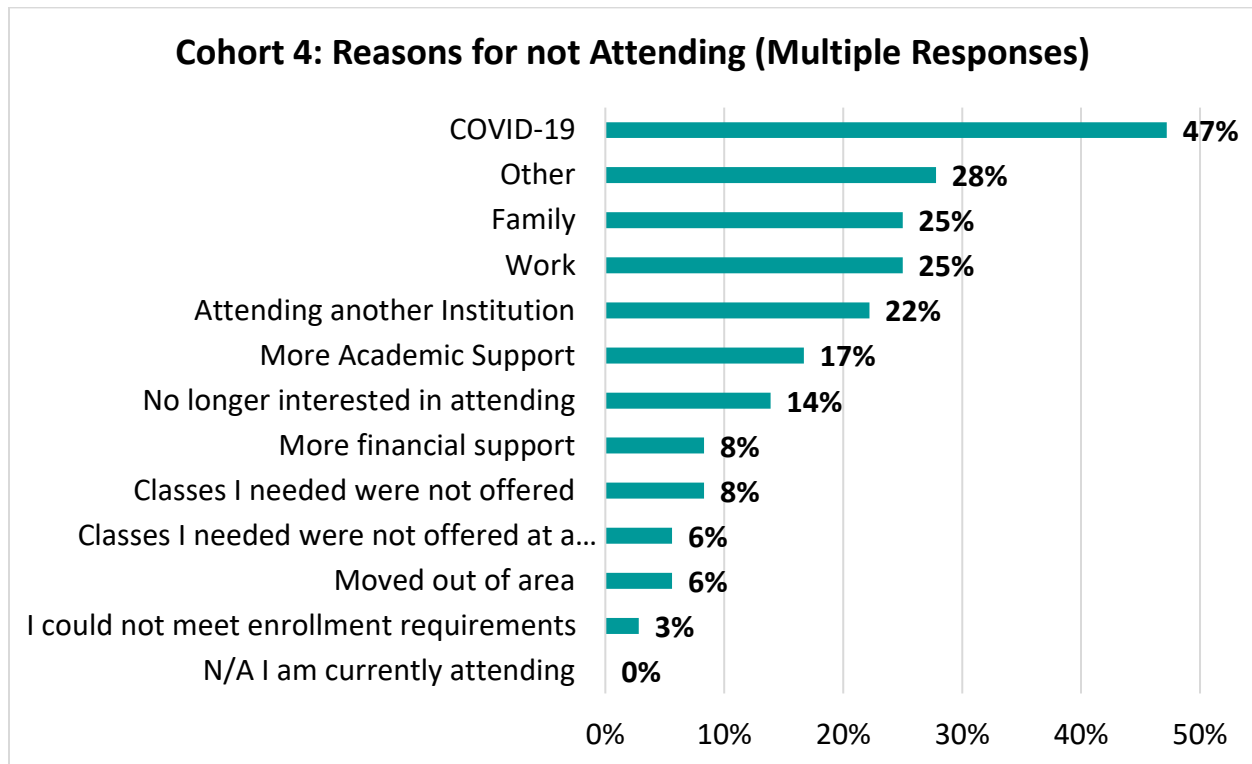


Figure 4. Reasons Cohort 4 students reported not enrolling in Fall 2020.

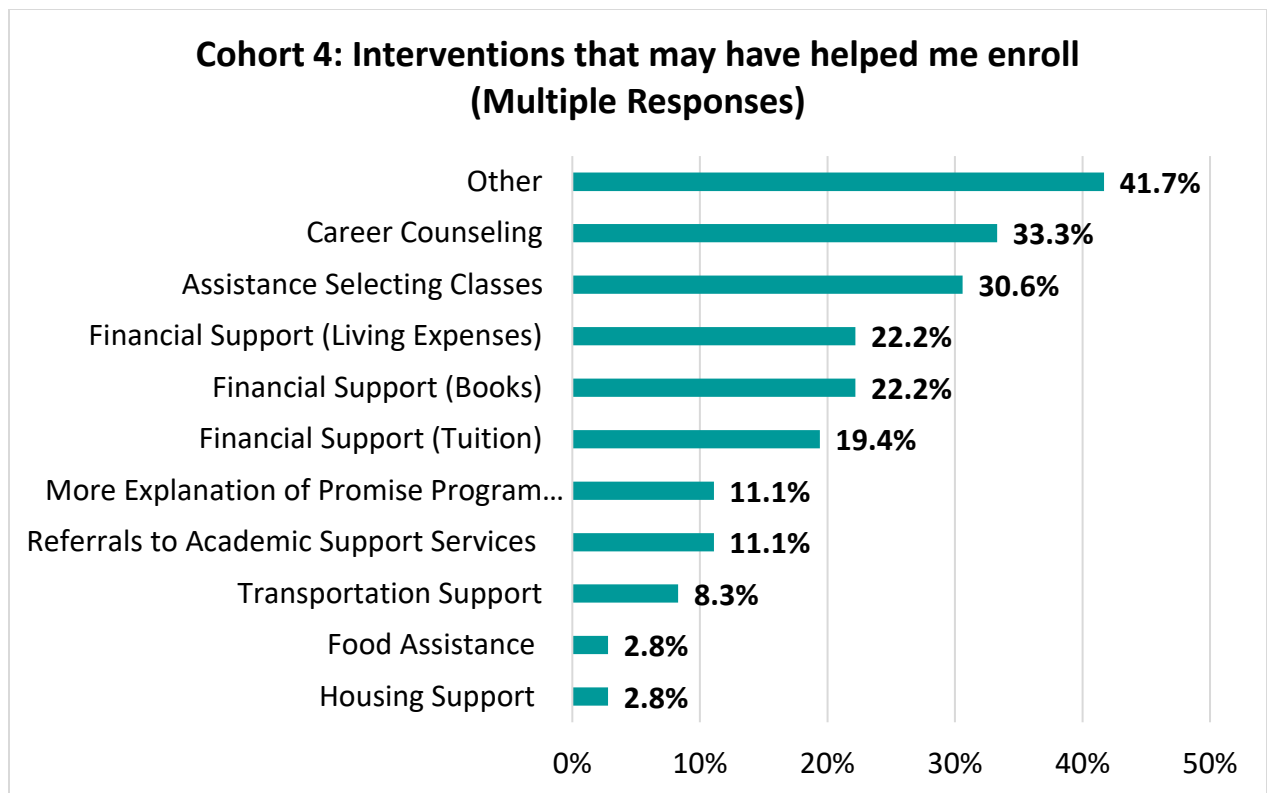


Figure 5. Interventions that Cohort 4 students reported would have helped them continue.

Summary of Results: Cohort 5

Half of the students in Cohort 5 who responded to the survey listed the COVID-19 pandemic as a reason they chose not to enroll in Fall 2020. Other reasons for not enrolling in the Promise Program include lack of registration or academic support, family obligations, and work obligations. Students who responded that there were other reasons for their choice not to enroll noted diverse reasons such as acceptance to a four-year university, lack of follow-up from the program, and feeling that they would not succeed in a virtual learning environment.

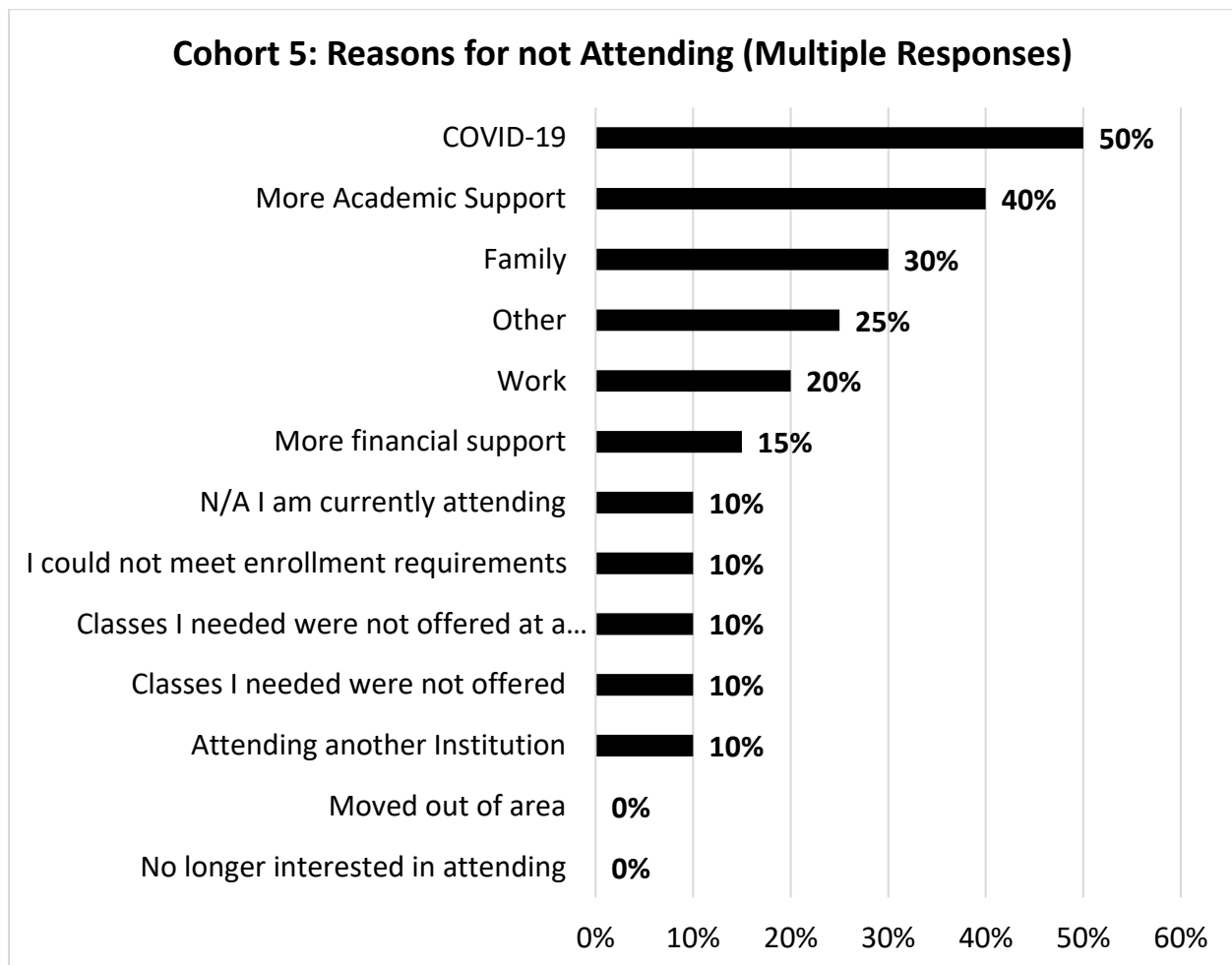


Figure 6. Reasons Cohort 5 reported they could not enroll in Fall 2020.

Fifty-five percent of respondents listed assistance choosing their classes as a support that would have helped them enroll in Fall 2020. Half of the respondents also suggested that enhanced explanations of Promise Program services, benefits, and requirements and financial support for books would have allowed them to enroll. Other popular support services that respondents selected as potentially helpful to their ability to enroll include referrals to academic support services, career counseling, and basic needs support such as finances for housing, food assistance, and transportation.

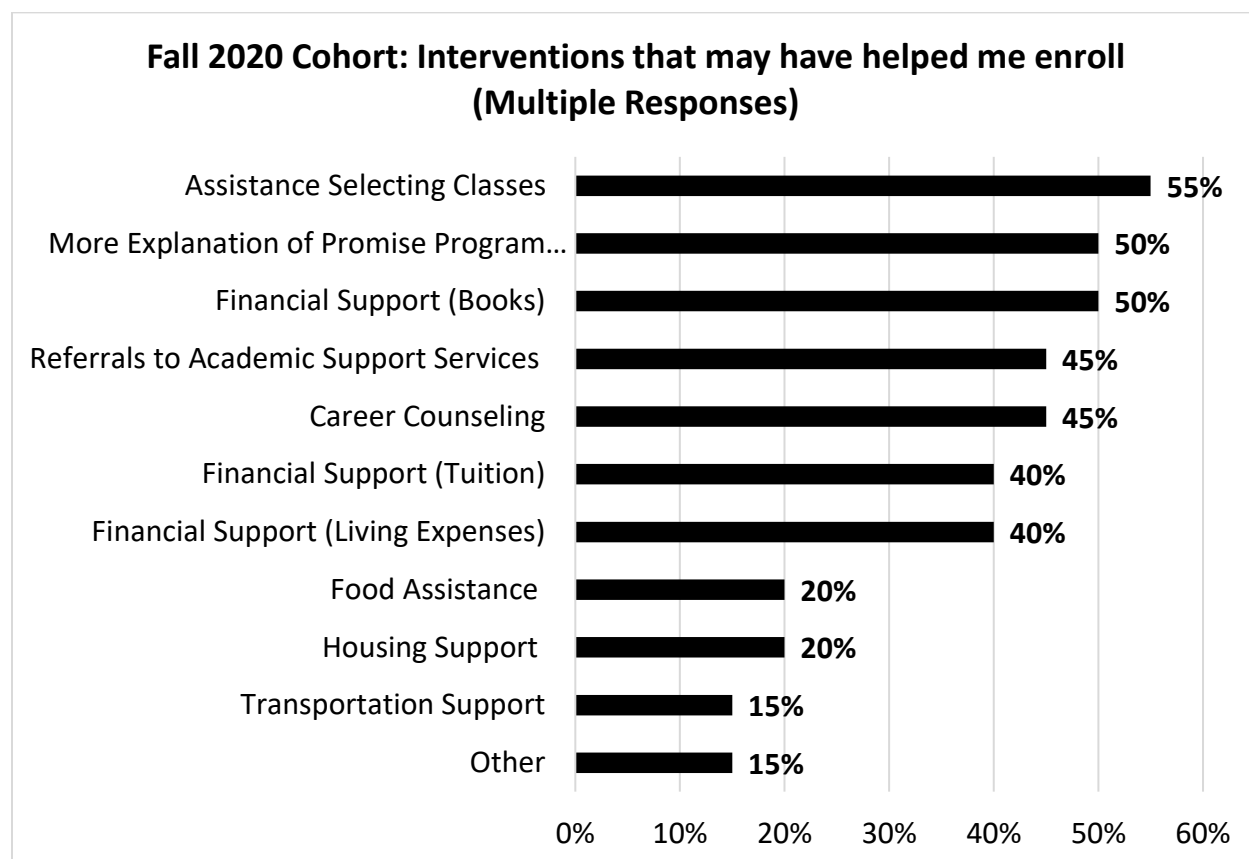


Figure 7. Cohort 5 reported interventions that may have helped them enroll in Fall 2020.

Students who responded to the survey from Cohort 5 did not all have extensive knowledge of the Promise Program. Only 55% of respondents knew that they could receive financial support for tuition and books by participating in the Promise Program. Forty percent of respondents did not know about either financial supports, and 5% knew about tuition support but not about finances for book costs. Further, 55% of participants did not know that they could appeal their dismissal from the program. Only 35% of respondents knew they could appeal, and another 10% stated that they were just unsure what an appeal meant or that they only found out about the appeals process after the deadline had passed.

Final Thoughts from Both Cohorts

Almost 70% of participants responded that they were likely to participate in the Promise Program in the future. Students suggested establishing clear educational plans (53%), ensuring 1-1 meetings with counselors (51%), and more flexibility with the unit load requirement (43%) to make the Promise Program more accessible to students (see Perna et al. 2020 to read a study supporting the notion that more flexible requirements will increase Promise student success).

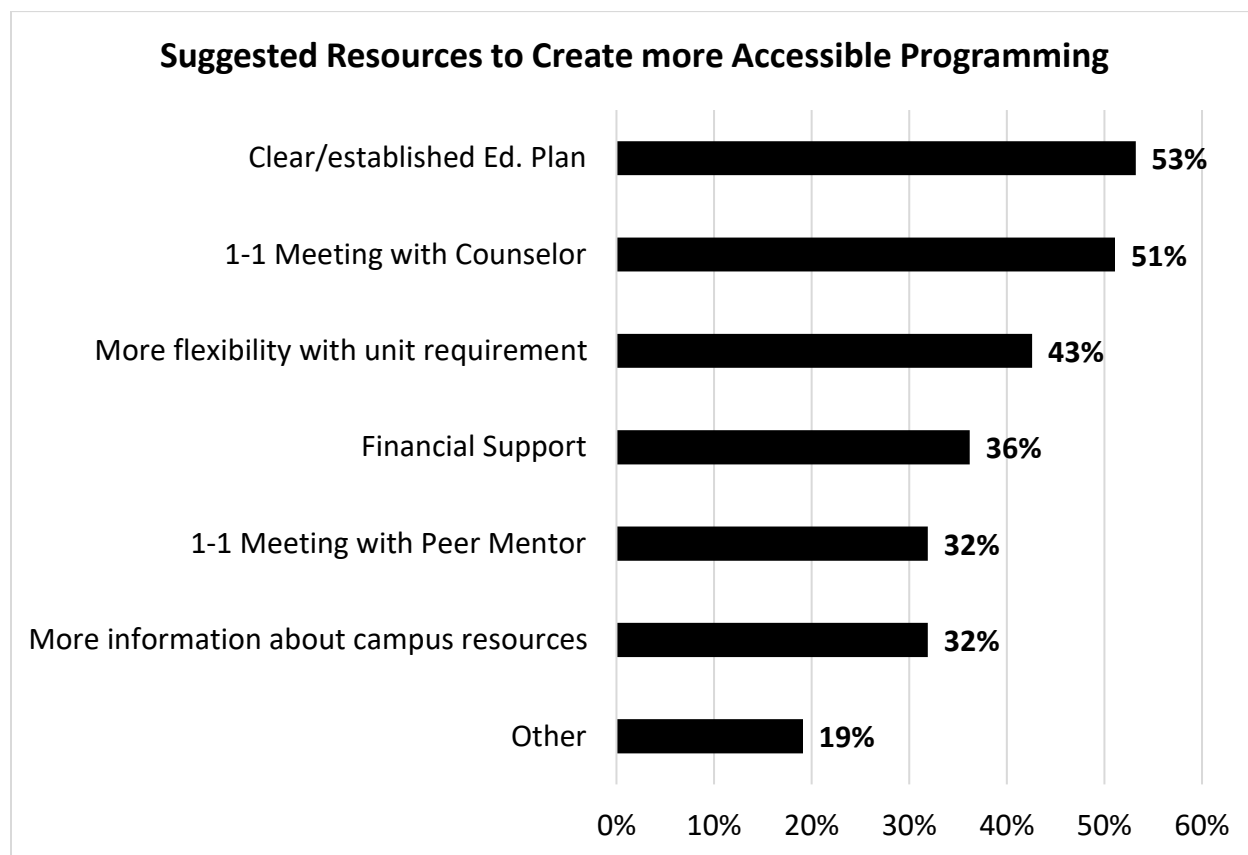


Figure 8. All survey participant suggestions for more accessible programming.

Welcome, Cohort 6! Get to Know SDCCD's Newest Promise Students

This section of the report provides a first look into the demographic makeup, educational objectives, majors, and popular subjects of enrollment for Cohort 6, who began their studies in the San Diego Promise Program in Fall 2021. These data are provided with the intention to equip Promise Program practitioners at City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges with insight into who their newest program participants are so that they can strategically focus their support efforts and resources. More information on Cohort 6 Fall 2021 academic outcomes will be provided in Spring 2022.

Quick Facts!

- A total of 1,670 students are enrolled in Cohort 6 across the credit colleges.
- Thirty-nine percent of Promise students are enrolled at Mesa College, 32% are enrolled at Miramar College, and 30% are enrolled at City College.
- Fifteen percent of Cohort 6 students do not have a declared major.
- Almost half (46%) of Cohort 6 students intend to earn a BA or BS after completing an Associate degree.

Cohort Demographics

Approximately 78% of Cohort 6 students identify as students of color (imperfectly defined here as all student groups with the exception of white students and students with unreported ethnicities). The highest proportion of students identify as Latinx (47%), followed by white students (21%), and Asian students (10%). Indigenous and Pacific Islander students are present in the cohort, though the data for these groups is removed from the web version to protect student confidentiality.

Table 38. Breakdown of Cohort 6 students by race/ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|------------------------|
| African American | 6% |
| Asian | 10% |
| Filipino | 8% |
| Latinx | 47% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | 7% |
| Unknown | 1% |
| White | 21% |
| Total | 100% |

When the data are disaggregated by college, City College Promise students were more likely to identify as Latinx or African American compared to the overall cohort. Mesa College Promise students are more likely to identify as Latinx or white compared to the overall cohort, and Miramar College Promise students are more likely to identify as Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI), multi-ethnic, or white.

Table 39. Breakdown of Cohort 6 students by college and race/ethnicity.

| College | Ethnicity | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| City College | African American | 9% |
| | Asian | 5% |
| | Filipino | 3% |
| | Latinx | 69% |
| | Multi-Ethnicity | 3% |
| | Unknown | 1% |
| | White | 10% |
| Mesa College | African American | 6% |
| | Asian | 8% |
| | Filipino | 2% |
| | Latinx | 49% |
| | Multi-Ethnicity | 7% |
| | Unknown | 1% |
| | White | 26% |
| Miramar College | African American | 3% |
| | Asian | 17% |
| | Filipino | 19% |
| | Latinx | 26% |
| | Multi-Ethnicity | 10% |
| | Pacific Islander | 1% |
| | Unknown | 1% |
| | White | 24% |

Over half (52%) of Cohort 6 students identified as female on their application, and 47% identified themselves as male. Less than 1% of students identified as non-binary, and 1% did not disclose their gender. Eighty-seven percent of non-binary students also identify as students of color on their application, with the highest proportion (63%) identifying as Latinx.

Table 40. Breakdown of Cohort 6 students by reported gender.

| Gender | Proportion of Students |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Non-binary | <1% |
| Female | 52% |
| Male | 47% |
| Undisclosed | 1% |

Two percent of Cohort 6 are former students of San Diego College of Continuing Education. Importantly, 90% of prior SDCCE students in Cohort 6 are students of color. There are also higher proportions of Latinx (63%) and African American (13%) prior SDCCE students compared to the overall cohort (Latinx: 47%, African American: 6%). Former SDCCE students were also more likely to attend City College compared to Mesa and Miramar Colleges, potentially due to the proximity of ECC to City College.

Table 41. Breakdown of Cohort 6 prior SDCCE students by ethnicity/race.

| Status | Ethnicity | Proportion of Students |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Prior SDCCE Student | African American | 13% |
| | Asian | 10% |
| | Filipino | 3% |
| | Latinx | 63% |
| | White | 10% |

Table 42. Breakdown of Cohort 6 students by prior SDCCE status and college.

| College | Prior Non-Credit Student | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| City College | No | 97% |
| | Yes | 3% |
| Mesa College | No | 99% |
| | Yes | 1% |
| Miramar College | No | 99% |
| | Yes | 1% |

Three percent of Cohort 6 identified as current or former foster youths on their applications. The highest proportion of current foster youths identified as Latinx (67%). This proportion is higher than the overall proportion of Latinx students in Cohort 6 (47%). Former foster youths also identified primarily as Latinx (54%), as well as African American (15%), and Asian (12%), all of whom have higher proportions of former foster youths in Cohort 6 compared to their composition of the overall cohort.

Table 43. Breakdown of Cohort 6 students by foster youth status.

| Status | Proportion of Students |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Current Foster Youth | 1% |
| Former Foster Youth | 2% |
| Not a Foster Youth | 89% |
| Unreported | 9% |

Table 44. Breakdown of Cohort 6 current and former foster youth students by race/ethnicity.

| Status | Ethnicity | Proportion of Students |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Current Foster Youth | African American | 8% |
| | Latinx | 67% |
| | White | 25% |
| Former Foster Youth | African American | 15% |
| | Asian | 12% |
| | Latinx | 54% |
| | Multi-Ethnicity | 4% |
| | White | 15% |

Twenty-nine percent of Cohort 6 students identified as first generations students, though it should be noted that a high proportion of Cohort 6 students did not report their first generation status on their application (14%), therefore this number could be underreported. First generation students in Cohort 6 were majority Latinx students (71%), followed by Asian students (11%). Both student groups have higher proportions of first generation students than their representation in the overall cohort (Latinx: 47%, Asian: 10%). By college, the highest proportion of first generation students in Cohort 6 attend City College.

Table 45. Breakdown of Cohort 6 students by first generation status.

| Status | Students | Proportion of Students |
|----------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unreported | 240 | 14% |
| Not first generation | 944 | 57% |
| First generation | 486 | 29% |

Table 46. Cohort 6 first generation students disaggregated by race/ethnicity.

| Status | Ethnicity | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| First generation | African American | 4% |
| | Asian | 11% |
| | Filipino | 3% |
| | Latinx | 71% |
| | Multi-Ethnicity | 2% |
| | Unknown | 1% |
| | White | 8% |

Table 47. Cohort 6 students broken down by first generation status and college.

| College | First Generation | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| City College | Unreported | 20% |
| | No | 36% |
| | Yes | 44% |
| Mesa College | Unreported | 12% |
| | No | 60% |
| | Yes | 27% |
| Miramar College | Unreported | 12% |
| | No | 71% |
| | Yes | 17% |

Another 8% of Cohort 6 reported that they are single parents on their applications for admission.

Table 48. Proportion of Cohort 6 students who identify as single parents.

| Status | Students | Proportion of Students |
|------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unknown | 36 | 2% |
| Not a Single Parent | 1,495 | 90% |
| Reported Single Parent | 139 | 8% |

Three percent of Cohort 6 identified themselves as unsheltered on their applications. By college, unsheltered students are more likely to attend City College compared to Mesa and Miramar Colleges.

Table 49. Proportion of Cohort 6 students who reported that they are unsheltered.

| Status | Students | Proportion of Students |
|----------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Unknown | 34 | 2% |
| Not Unsheltered | 1,578 | 94% |
| Reported Unsheltered | 58 | 3% |

Table 50. Proportion of Cohort 6 students who reported they are unsheltered by college.

| College | Reported Unsheltered? | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| City College | Unreported | 1% |
| | No | 93% |
| | Yes | 5% |
| Mesa College | Unreported | 3% |
| | No | 94% |
| | Yes | 3% |
| Miramar College | Unreported | 2% |
| | No | 96% |
| | Yes | 2% |

Six percent of Cohort 6 receive support from Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS). Students who receive DSPS services are more likely to be white and to attend Miramar College.

Table 51. Cohort 6 students by DSPS status and race/ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | Receiving DSPS? | Proportion of Students |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| African American | No | 96% |
| | Yes | 4% |
| Asian | No | 98% |
| | Yes | 2% |
| Filipino | No | 97% |
| | Yes | 3% |
| Latinx | No | 95% |
| | Yes | 5% |
| Multi-Ethnicity | No | 96% |
| | Yes | 4% |
| Unknown | No | 95% |
| | Yes | 5% |
| White | No | 90% |
| | Yes | 10% |

Note: Pacific Islander students also receive DSPS in higher proportions, but this is due to low counts of Pacific Islander students in the cohort.

Table 52. Cohort 6 students by DSPS status and college.

| College | Receives DSPS? | Proportion of Students |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| City College | No | 94% |
| | Yes | 6% |
| Mesa College | No | 95% |
| | Yes | 5% |
| Miramar College | No | 93% |
| | Yes | 7% |

Cohort Academic Characteristics

Students from Cohort 6 who have a reported high school of origin on their application were more likely to have graduated from Mira Mesa High School, followed by Mt. Carmel High School, and Hoover High School. The top ten reported high schools are provided below. Due to the high proportion of students with an unknown high school of origin, the OIER is attempting to collect better high school of origin data in the Promise Welcome Survey, which was piloted in Fall 2021 and is mentioned in the discussion section of this report.

Table 53. Top ten high schools of origin for Cohort 6 students.

| Rank | Reported High School | Students |
|------|----------------------|----------|
| --- | Unknown | 149 |
| 1 | Mira Mesa High | 122 |
| 2 | Mt. Carmel High | 64 |
| 3 | Hoover High | 51 |
| 4 | Westview High | 51 |
| 5 | University City High | 50 |
| 6 | Point Loma High | 44 |
| 7 | Scripps Ranch | 41 |
| 8 | Mission Bay High | 39 |
| 9 | Poway High | 39 |
| 10 | Clairemont High | 36 |

Almost half of the cohort (46%) reported that they plan to transfer to obtain a BA or BS degree after graduating with their Associate degree. Another 15% have not decided, and 11% planned to transfer without receiving an Associate degree. The remaining 28% of Cohort 6 selected educational objectives that are not considered transfer pathways by the CCCCCO definition.

While 168 students in the cohort did not have an academic plan code that was matched to a major, the top ten majors excluding students with unknown academic plans are provided. **The most common major amongst Cohort 6 is undeclared, followed by Business Administration for Transfer, and IGETC for the CSU system.**

Table 54. Top ten academic plans for Cohort 6 students.

| Rank | Major | Students | Proportion of Cohort |
|------|--------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | Undeclared | 244 | 15% |
| 2 | Business Admin for Transfer | 92 | 6% |
| 3 | IGETC CERT - Cal State Univ | 74 | 4% |
| 4 | Psychology for Transfer | 68 | 4% |
| 5 | IGETC CERT- Univ of California | 57 | 3% |
| 6 | Engineering | 54 | 3% |
| 7 | Biology - Allied Health | 56 | 3% |
| 8 | Cert of Achievement-CSU Gen Ed | 48 | 3% |
| 9 | Business Management | 30 | 2% |
| 10 | Business Administration | 26 | 2% |

Cohort 6 students made up 7,486 total enrollments in Fall 2021. When the top ten subjects of enrollment for Cohort 6 students in Fall 2021 are examined, English and Math take the top two slots with over 1,000 enrollments in both subjects. Personal Growth and Development, Communication Studies, and Psychology were also highly popular subjects for Cohort 6 in Fall 2021. Considering the popular major pathways alongside enrollments, it appears that many Cohort 6 students focused their efforts on general education requirements in their first semester.

Table 55. Top ten subjects of enrollment for Cohort 6 in Fall 2021.

| Rank | Subject | Enrollments |
|------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | English | 1,538 |
| 2 | Math | 1,072 |
| 3 | Personal Growth and Development | 458 |
| 4 | Communication Studies | 391 |
| 5 | Psychology | 385 |
| 6 | Exercise Science | 299 |
| 7 | Fine Arts | 251 |
| 8 | Chemistry | 246 |
| 9 | History | 223 |
| 10 | Biology | 189 |

Summary and Discussion of Key Findings

This section of the report serves to recap the most important findings of the report in one place. The subsequent discussion in this section aims to provide Promise Program personnel with potential avenues for advocacy and action to improve programming and services for current and future Promise students.

Summary of Findings

Students who have transitioned out of Promise and into four-year universities from Cohorts 1-3 did so at lower rates than other comparable non-Promise students when they are tracked using National Student Clearinghouse data.

Students transferring out of Promise tend to go to public CSUs, but this trend is changing. More students appear to be transferring to schools in the UC system as well as private institutions with each cohort.

Cohorts 4 and 5 both struggled to meet the Promise Program requirements in both Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. The units requirement was more of a barrier to student success in the program compared to the GPA requirement, and this was reflected in persistence rates. Students who met the units requirement or were part-time approved in Fall 2020 were generally more likely to persist to Spring 2021 regardless of cohort.

Further, racial inequities are apparent when examining *who* is succeeding in meeting the program requirements. Black and Latinx students in both cohorts (and Pacific Islanders and Indigenous students in some cases) were less likely to meet both requirements compared to other student groups in their respective cohorts, and the unit load requirement was a larger barrier to success compared to the GPA requirement. This is critical since Black and Latinx students are more likely to not meet the unit load requirement, they are at greater risk of being dismissed from the program and losing critical financial and academic benefits from the program, which puts these students at greater risk of dropping out of school considering the observed impact of meeting the unit load requirement or receiving part-time approval on student persistence.

When Cohort 5 outcomes are compared to the non-Promise comparison group, the Promise Program seems to better allow students to maintain a full-time load, considering that only 28% of the comparison group was full-time. Students in both Promise and non-Promise were better able to meet the GPA requirement of a 2.0 or higher compared to the full-time unit load requirement. When Cohort 5 GPA outcomes are compared to the non-Promise group by ethnicity/race, students in Promise tended to do better in Fall 2020 except for Black students who achieved the GPA requirement at the same rate in both groups. In Spring 2021; however, racially marginalized students in Promise tended to have lower outcomes than the comparison group.

For students who attended the College of Continuing Education prior to enrolling in the Promise Program, they tended to do better in their first year compared to other Promise students in Cohort 5. While this was not the case in former SDCCE students in Cohort 4, these data are promising for students who are trying to make the transition from non-credit to credit especially because the high count of part-time approved students in Cohort 4 and generally lower counts of former non-credit students may influence the analysis of their outcomes.

In the results from the Non-Continuing in Promise Survey, students in Cohorts 4 and 5 reported that while they had generally good experiences in the program the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting online schedule, and work or personal obligations prevented them from continuing in the program. Importantly, students suggested that assistance with enrolling and choosing classes, better information regarding Promise Program benefits and procedures, and referrals to academic support services and basic needs services would have allowed them to enroll in Fall 2020. They also advocated for clear academic pathways and education plans, 1-1 meetings with counselors, and more flexibility with unit load to make the program more accessible for students. Finally, participants were also largely unaware that Promise could cover book fees and that they could appeal their dismissal from the program.

Moving on to San Diego Promise's newest cohort, students in Cohort 6 are majority students of color, with the highest proportion of students identifying as Latinx. Cohort 6 is roughly equally distributed between the credit colleges when college size is considered, though the makeup of Promise students at each college is different. Students in City College's Promise are more likely to be Black, Latinx, unsheltered, prior SDCCE students, and first generation compared to the overall cohort. Mesa College Promise students are more likely to be Latinx or white, and Miramar College Promise students are more likely to belong to the AAPI community, identify as white, and receive DSPS services compared to the overall cohort. Students in Cohort 6 are extraordinarily diverse, encompassing gender non-conforming people, many ethnic and racial backgrounds, single parents, unsheltered people, current and former foster youth, and former SDCCE students. About half of Cohort 6 aspires to transfer with or without an Associate degree, though 15% do not have a declared major.

What is Working Well in San Diego Promise

Students who responded to the Non-Continuing Survey in Cohort 4 all reported having a good experience in the program. Students commented on the extraordinary kindness and attentiveness from Promise Program personnel as important to their positive view of the program, and the importance of invested staff who care for each of their students cannot be understated.

Persistence rates are also higher for students in the Promise Program compared to the comparison group, and part-time approved students and students who successfully meet the unit load requirement have especially high persistence rates. Further, students in the Promise Program are more likely to maintain a full-time

unit load compared to non-Promise first time students who overwhelmingly enrolled as part-time students.

San Diego Promise serves a massively diverse population of students, many of whom are among the most marginalized people in the San Diego community.

Unsheltered people, single parents, people of color, gender non-conforming people, foster youth, first generation students, and students with disabilities are all important recipients of the Promise Program benefits, which certainly increase access for students who would not otherwise be able to attend college without free tuition and enhanced support services.

These successes likely have a deep impact on Promise Program recipients, and the good work being done by Promise Program staff has certainly been seen in outcomes and student survey feedback. That being said, even the best of programs have room for new and even better successes.

Opportunities for Improvement in San Diego Promise

Students who are transferring out of the SDCCD from the Promise Program have lower rates compared to non-Promise students. While transfer is a lagging¹ indicator and transfer rates may improve for Cohorts 1-3, students would likely benefit from additional assistance with transfer. Whether this is a service that can be provided by Promise Program staff, or in collaboration with existing transfer support services within the District is up to the capacity and strategy of the Promise Program team. Additionally, the fact that almost half of Cohort 6 is seeking to transfer illustrates the importance of assisting Promise students with getting through the transfer gate. Transfer is an important goal for many Promise students, and they may require more assistance to realize it in a timely manner. Further, considering that AB 19 specifies that College Promise programs aim to close equity gaps and increase transfer rates, these data demonstrate that the intent of the bill may require more action to fully realize itself.

Students in Promise are more likely to stay full-time; however, part-time students make up the majority of SDCCD's first time to college population, and students who do not meet the unit load requirement or receive part-time approval status have lower persistence rates. Even further, full-time students in the comparison group may be a smaller group, but they are able to meet both the unit load and GPA requirements at a higher rate than Promise students, suggesting that non-Promise full-time students are probably not facing the same barriers to success as Promise students who are expected to be full-time. While San Diego Promise does not have full control over the requirements set out by Assembly Bill 19, the success of part-time approved

¹ Lagging indicators are the long-term goals such as outcomes. Lagging indicators can be helpful, but are generally not actionable because they have already happened by the time you see the outcomes (think transfer rates or degrees conferred). Leading indicators on the other hand, such as retention, are actionable because practitioners are able to intervene to improve retention, which will then improve the outcomes of lagging indicators such as transfer (Phillips and Horowitz 2017).

students in Promise is undeniable, and the benefits of the Promise Program extended to part-timers could have a greater impact on equity gaps than if they are restricted to students who are able to maintain a full-time load.

Further, because part-time students are more likely to be students of color, working students, and students with familial responsibilities or other barriers to full-time status, the equity issue that is created by a majority full-time College Promise program is unquestionable. Allowing a higher volume of part-time approved students into the program would also better serve the first-time to college population at SDCCD, considering almost three-quarters of the non-Promise comparison group were enrolled as part-time students. Part-time students are the primary constituents of the SDCCD, and while the benefits of being full-time are clear in the higher education literature, the reality for many marginalized students is that without substantially changing their life circumstances, a full-time unit load is likely incongruent with their daily lives.

While equity gaps exist for other students of color in the Promise Program, African American students are facing the brunt of disproportionate impact. African American students met the criteria for disproportionate impact in meeting Promise Program requirements (with the exception of GPA) consistently between both Cohorts 4 and 5. To better address challenges facing African American Promise students, the Promise team should establish or continue to strengthen their involvement with SDCCD's Black Student Success Workgroup, which aims to improve the experiences of Black students and dismantle the barriers they face while they navigate inherently racist systems of higher education.

Another issue of racial equity in Promise is the very low representation of Indigenous students in the program. Enrollment of Indigenous students is startlingly low across the credit colleges, and particularly in the Promise Program. While this can also be attributed to the history of genocide and violence perpetrated against Indigenous peoples in what is currently called North America, a concerted effort to ensure Indigenous students have access to affordable educational opportunities and supports needed to succeed in college on their unceded ancestral lands is critical to achieving true equity in the program. A strategic and intentional outreach effort is encouraged to recruit (and support!) Indigenous students into the Promise Program, as is the involvement of Promise Program personnel with ongoing efforts to learn, develop relationships, and address issues facing Indigenous peoples and students in the San Diego community. These efforts include an emerging workgroup of the District Committee for Community, Inclusion, and Diversity and the Community of Inquiry learning group currently housed at San Diego Miramar College.

Survey participants have advocated for increased assistance with enrolling in and choosing their classes, academic support referrals, individualized counseling appointments, and flexibility with the unit load requirement. Students in the survey hope to see more individualized outreach and better communication about program expectations, deadlines, and appeals processes. Further, 15% of Cohort 6 has an

undeclared major, and survey participants noted the urgency of creating understandable academic pathways and connecting Promise students to counselors to establish a clear educational plan. More rigorous support services and guidance for Promise students would also likely improve transfer rates, an important direction for improvement already discussed in this section. Establishing learning communities specifically for Promise students could be a positive step in building peer support and a strong academic foundation that would assist students stay in school as well as successfully transfer out of Promise.

The rich diversity of Cohort 6 students illustrates the importance of connecting Promise students to other supports on campus. Cohort 6 includes single parents, unsheltered people, students with disabilities, racially marginalized students, and LGBTQ+ students², among others. Further, these groups are not static boxes and overlap! For example, the highest proportion of non-binary identified students in the cohort are also Latinx. With this understanding, Promise practitioners should be prepared to assist Promise students with basic needs, child care resources, DSPS referrals, and other support services that exist on campus and within the San Diego community to ensure that they are able to continue their educations. While the Promise Program cannot solve all of their students' problems, understanding the challenges they face arms practitioners with the ability to connect students to services they need to the best of their ability.

Finally, the demographic breakdown of Cohort 6 shows that City College Promise is more often home to Black and Latinx students, unsheltered students, first generation students, and former SDCCE students. This is important when considering how to strategically focus resources towards students in these communities, and the Promise team should consider how they can provide additional support to the City College program, which supports the highest proportion of these marginalized populations.

Directions for Future Research

There are many opportunities to enhance SDCCD's understanding of Promise Program students. While the data from CCCApply and Campus Solutions can certainly provide insight into how Promise students are faring, insight into *why* observed outcomes are as they are is more elusive. The best way to find out what Promise students need and to connect the dots between outcomes and life experience is simply to look to the students themselves. The OIER recommends that qualitative methods be employed to provide context to quantitative data, better equipping Promise Program practitioners with the resources they need to create interventions and supports that better tether Promise students to their colleges, potentially increasing their success both with the SDCCD and beyond. While focus groups with Promise students were conducted in 2018, and the 2019 Promise Comprehensive report found that four of the [six student support factors](#)

² Future reports will include enhanced data on Cohort 6 LGBTQ+ students, both from application data and the Promise Welcome Survey.

released by the RP Group were identified amongst participants, much has changed since 2018, and more updated research that examines these factors among other research questions is recommended.

In addition to qualitative methods, the OIER recommends continuing to refine and employ the recently piloted Promise Program Welcome Survey to future cohorts before the beginning of their first semester. The information in the survey allows Promise Program students to voice their needs, concerns, and challenges they are facing in their lives. Further, the survey provides the Promise team with students who consent to be contacted with information regarding needed supports and students who consent to participate in marketing or panels for the program.

To better allow Promise practitioners to monitor their students' progress while in the program, the OIER will work with the Promise team to develop a dashboard specifically for Promise. This would allow practitioners to access the data on demand within the data refresh schedule determined between the Promise team and OIER. This could potentially help practitioners identify students who are at risk of stopping out or not meeting the program requirements so that they can provide services, interventions, or supports that may increase the likelihood that they will continue with the program. The exact specs of this dashboard are yet to be determined, but will be decided in collaboration with Promise Program staff to ensure its usefulness and efficacy.

Finally, the OIER will continue to provide staple reports and surveys on Promise such as the non-continuing survey and Fall outcomes reports. As data in Campus Solutions improves, more data disaggregations will be provided to ensure that more marginalized student populations are represented in program evaluations data. Additionally, more intersectional analyses will be employed to provide more nuanced information to Promise Program staff regarding the success of students across various identities. The OIER will continue to work closely with the Promise team to ensure that these reports continue to be useful, and will collaborate with practitioners to improve survey instruments and data briefings as needed.

Conclusion

The San Diego Promise Program is an incredibly important access initiative that has demonstrated success, especially in regards to student persistence. While there are still equity gaps impacting marginalized students in Promise and programmatic barriers to student success in the program such as the full-time requirement, the steps made to increase access to college for first-time students in the San Diego community is laudable. Through the continued commitment of the Promise team at the credit colleges and the use of data to improve programming and services, and drive advocacy efforts, there is great potential to continue improving access, affordability, and success for Promise students; better positioning the SDCCD to keep the San Diego Promise.

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