California State University students are more successful than ever before. Graduation rates are at an all-time high with the average time to degree for first-time freshmen at 4.7 years – a completion rate consistent with the national average. With the CSU producing half of the bachelor’s degree recipients in the state, the university is committed to continuously improving graduation rates and has made closing the completion gap for underserved students its top priority.

The Facts

IN THE PAST 10 YEARS:
- Four-year graduation rates for first-time freshmen have improved by 47%.
- Six-year graduation rates for first-time freshmen have improved by 24%.
- Graduation rates for all ethnic and racial groups have increased.

TODAY:
- 57% of all first-time freshmen graduate in six years or less.
- 72.9% of community college transfers graduate in four years or less.

The Facts

Data-Driven Strategies

Many factors impact timely degree completion and the CSU is actively working to remove the most common barriers so that students graduate in six years or less.

- PREPARATION – Campuses work with K-12 feeder school districts to improve college readiness. When students are prepared for college-level work, they succeed and graduate in six years or less.
- CONNECTION – A variety of strategies give students a sense of belonging and access to experts and peers who mentor them so that they have a positive college experience.
- ACADEMIC SUPPORT – Programs and services including writing and math centers, campus-based and online tutoring are available for first-time freshmen and transfer students.
- SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS – Campuses are taking a holistic approach to student success by helping students with financial aid, college expenses and other basic needs.
- ACADEMIC PATHWAYS – Through CSU Mentor and campus-based advising, students have clear curriculum pathways that help them reach their degree goals in six years or less.
- LEVERAGING DATA – Rigorous assessments and predictive analytics ensure the CSU is making the right investments to support student success.
- ADMINISTRATIVE HURDLES – The campus community is working to improve the student experience and to remove any procedural or administrative hurdles that impede degree completion.
Winning Strategies

Here are some of the strategies the California State University is employing to boost student success and reach degree completion targets:

1. Expanding Early Start and other transitional programs to foster success among first-time freshmen.
2. Expanding cohort-based learning communities that create additional engagement among first-time freshmen and support persistence to degree.
3. Reducing the need for developmental coursework by aligning the Early Assessment Program (EAP) with the new Smarter Balanced assessments in public schools.
4. Redesigning courses to incorporate technology to improve content retention, especially in the courses with historically high failure rates.
5. Expanding the number of CourseMatch course offerings to increase degree completion rates. CourseMatch is an online concurrent enrollment program that provides full-time students enrolled at any campus with access to fully online courses offered at any CSU campuses.
6. Expanding the use of electronic academic advising tools to establish clear pathways to degrees and data analysis to improve student outcomes.
7. Expanding the Associate Degree for Transfer program to ensure that transfer students enter the university better academically prepared and ready to complete the remaining 60 credits needed to fulfill degree requirements.
8. Hiring more tenure track faculty and academic advisors to support student success.
9. Strengthening relationships with community and business partners, community colleges and K-12 school districts to ensure first-time freshmen are prepared for college.
10. Developing additional programs, which foster a sense of community, build awareness of academic support programs and services, and provide access to peer and academic mentors to help them achieve success.

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