The State of
AMERICAN INDIAN & ALASKA NATIVE

Education in California
Executive Summary
2014

California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center

CICSC

Education is the Path to Self-Determination
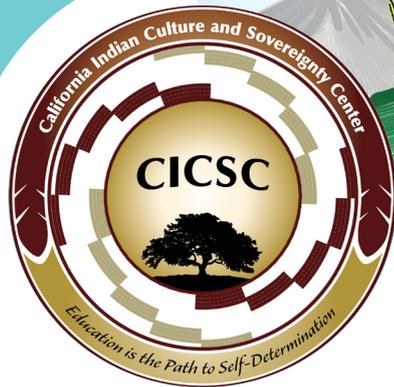
OVERVIEW

The findings from the CICSC'S 2012 State of AI/AN Education in California Report confirmed the need for greater efforts to prepare, to recruit, to retain, and to graduate Native youth from institutions of higher education.* In particular, the realization that AI/AN enrollment rates are declining across the CSUs was alarming. These results provided the basis to delve deeper into the program, outreach, and support at postsecondary institutions in the 2014 report to determine where enrollment and transfer numbers are decreasing or increasing; to determine what the best practices at state colleges and universities to attract, retain, and graduate AI/ANs are; and correspondingly to determine where we, as educators of AI/AN students in the state of California, need to improve.

BROKEN PIPELINE

K-12

The majority of K-12 students in California are overwhelmingly of color while the majority of teachers and classified staff are not. This is an alarming fact when we compare the ratio to the student body demographics in the state.** AI/AN students in 9th-12th-grade continue to fall disproportionally below state achievement levels for graduation and completion of UC/CSU requirements for college entry.

- Nearly 30% of AI/AN do not graduate high school (5% lower rate than other groups)

- Dropout rate is almost 20% (6% higher rate than other groups)

- 75% of AI/AN high school graduates do not meet UC/CSU admission requirements (13.4% lower rate than other groups)

- White teachers and classified staff are 67% and 43% respectively of the State's K-12 employees, while all other minority teachers and staff combined make up less than 30% of California teachers but over 80% of classified staff.

- White students represent 26% of the state's student body and all other ethnic groups comprise 63%.

PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

AI/AN student enrollment across postsecondary educations continued to decline between 2012-2013.

- In 2013, the CCCs continue to report a decrease in AI/AN enrollment with 6,715 students; and the total number of AI/AN in the CSU further declined in 2013 with a reported overall enrollment of 1,481 students.

- However, out of the 1,481 total AI/AN students in the CSU's 1,258 are undergraduates with 217 admitted as first-time full-time freshman.

- The UC reported the following data for California Resident Freshman for Fall 2013: 709 applications, 388 admissions, and 176 AI/AN enrollments, which is a decline campus-wide of approximately 34 students from 2012 to 2013 students.

10-YEAR COMPARISON BETWEEN CSU & UC AI/AN FTF ENROLLMENTS

When looking at the enrollment data side-by-side of first-time full-time freshman, the CSUs enrolled more AI/AN FTF than the UCs 7 out of the last 10 years. We see a decline in the FTF enrollment at the CSUs from 2008-2011; there is also a large dip in enrollment at the UC between 2010-2012.
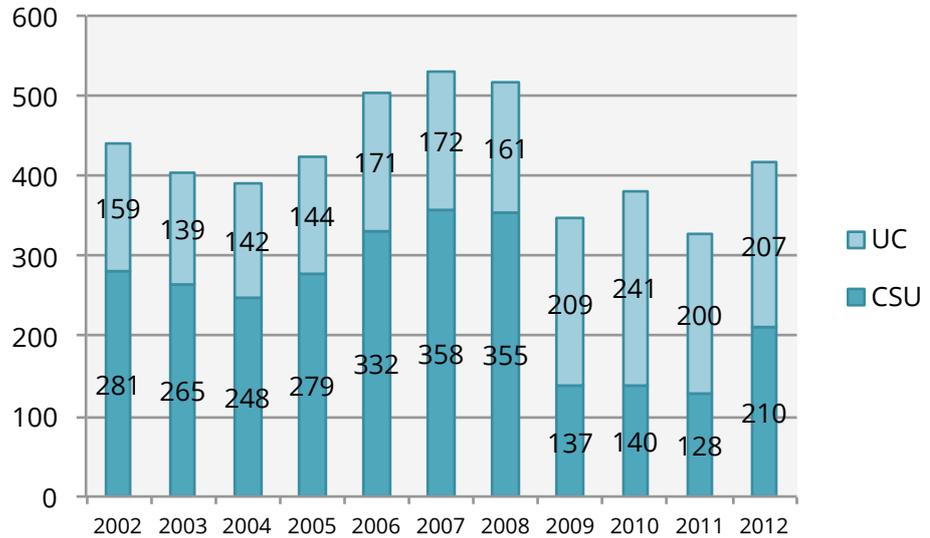

Figure 1 | AI/AN First-Time Freshmen at CSU & UC (2002-2012)

10-YEAR COMPARISON BETWEEN CSU & UC AI/AN TRANSFER ENROLLMENTS

The CSU transfer enrollment rate was greater 9 of the 10-year period surveyed and, in 2010, both CSU and UC systems enrolled the same number of transfer students.
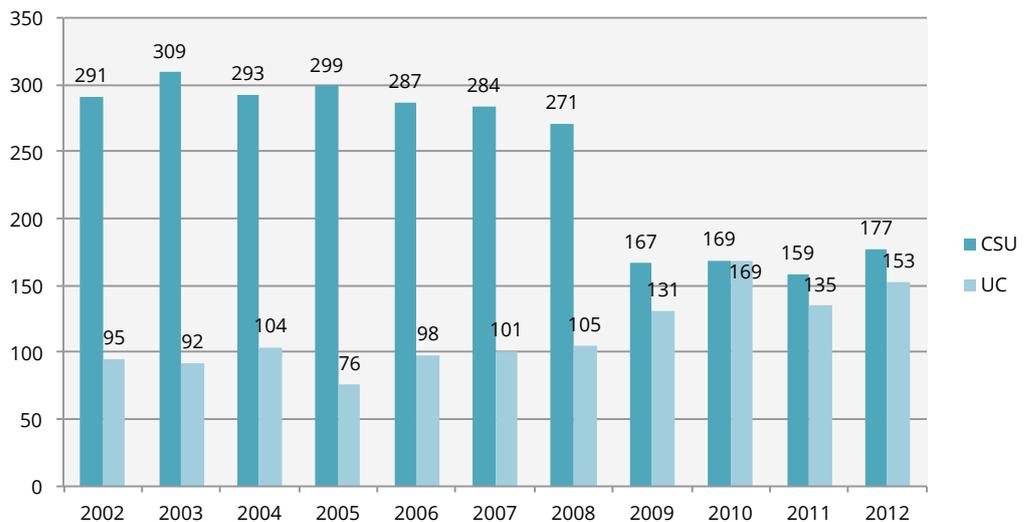

Figure 2 | AI/AN Transfers to CSU & UC (2002-2012)

PROMISING PRACTICES

The institutional profiles revealed five promising practices gleaned from an analysis of the resources offered at the colleges featured in our state's three-tier postsecondary systems.

- Formalize educational relationships that support tribal sovereignty and self-determination through Tribal-University Memorandums of Understanding or other means.

- Tailor coursework for AI/AN students based on the student's specific educational strengths and areas in need of assistance.

- Create a sense of "kinship" to strengthen communication between faculty, staff (advisors), and students.

- Build specific AI/AN "gathering grounds" for students, the community on and off campus, to meet, study, and network.

- Design, offer, and deliver courses to directly serve the needs of the AI/AN community at tribal sites.

NEXT STEPS

- Collaborate between institutions to create long-term studies, comparative analysis of promising and innovative practices, enrollment, retention, and graduation trends, and the impact of economic/cultural variables on the AI/AN achievement rates in postsecondary education.

- Allocate resources for funding research, outreach opportunities, and continued reporting for tribes and educational partners.

- Institutionalize accountability because public institutions are mandated to service their regional population and that service needs to be measured and evaluated annually.

- Advocate for mandatory reporting about AI/AN educational data at public institutions in the state.

- Intervene at a local, state, and national legislative levels to institutionalize reporting about AI/AN educational achievement and develop policies to address the gaps and inequities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTACT

Comments, suggestions, and other inquiries should be directed to California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center, CSUSM, (760) 750-3535 or to jproudfi@csusm.edu and tgregor@csusm.edu.