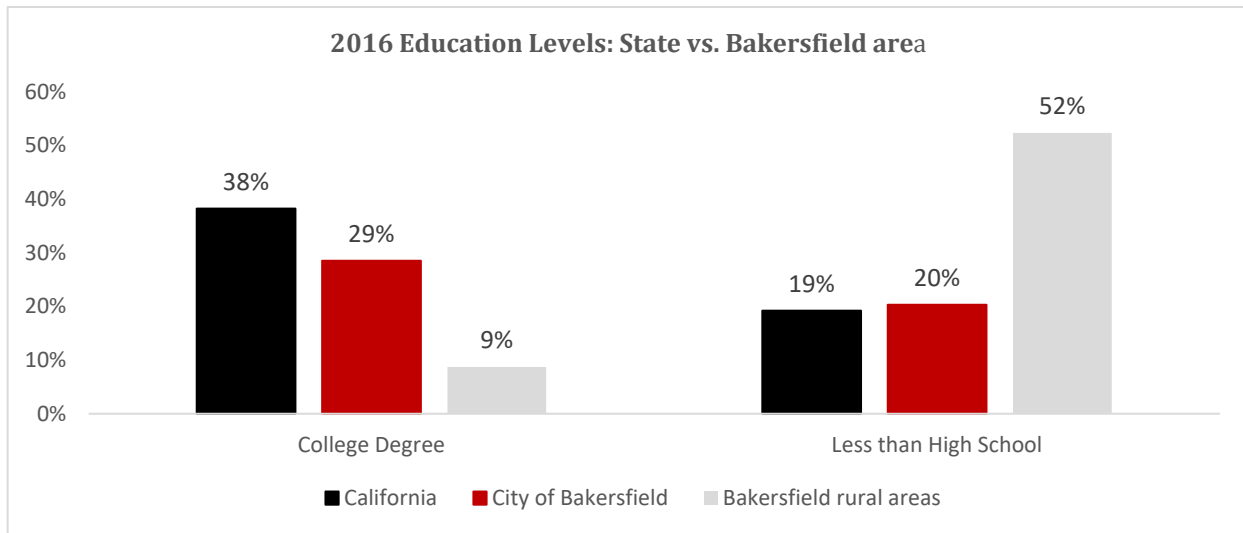


Addressing California Baccalaureate Completion

Proposed Solutions at Bakersfield College & UC Merced | September 8, 2019

Prepared by Craig Hayward, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Lesley Bonds, Director of Student Success and Equity

According to data reported by the California Department of Education, Kern County's baccalaureate attainment rates are of significant concern at roughly half the statewide rate. In rural service areas, fewer than nine in every 100 residents holds a bachelor's degree or higher. Over 28% of those in BC's service area lack a high school diploma. Low baccalaureate attainment rates in the Central Valley have a massive impact on the health of Central Valley communities. The per capita income in the area is among the lowest in California, at just \$21,094 – well below the state average of \$31,458.



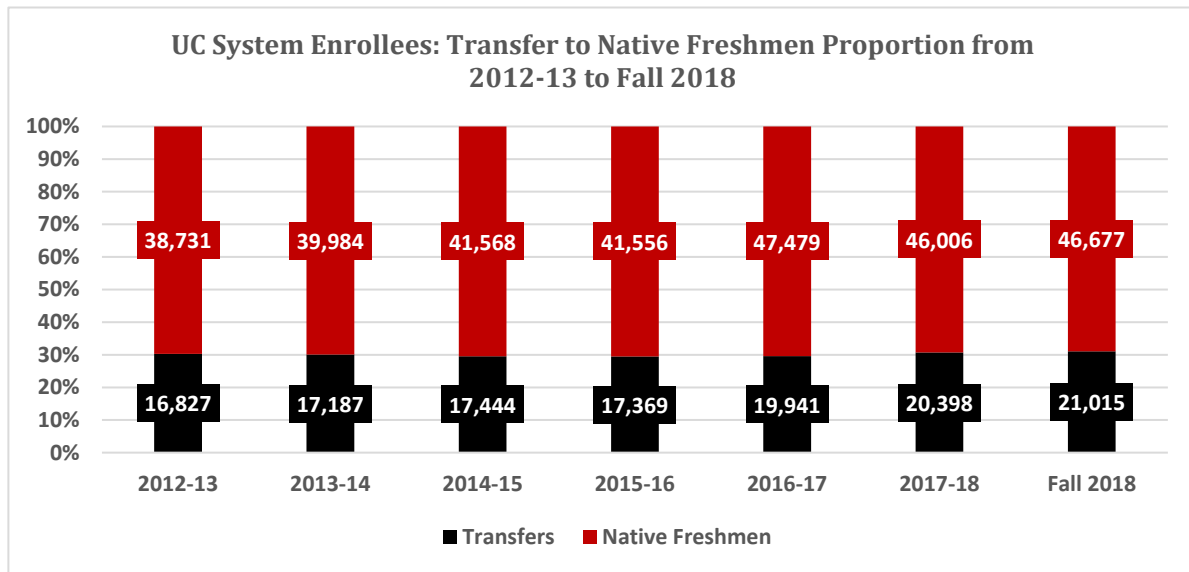
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the unemployment rate in Kern County well exceeds the national rate at 8.0% while nearly a quarter of residents live below the poverty line. In many of our service-area rural communities, residents experience poverty rates topping 35% and debilitating unemployment over double the national average.

Even beyond the borders of Kern County, there is a widely recognized shortage of educated workers in California. The Public Policy Institute of California has estimated that the state will have a shortfall of 1 million workers with bachelor's degrees by 2025.¹ Based on data produced by UC Info Center, one immediately actionable solution that requires minimal financial investment is to increase the proportion of transfer students relative to first-time freshmen in the UC's incoming class.

To increase equitable baccalaureate attainment, Bakersfield College proposes that UC Merced significantly increase its proportion or transfer students to native freshmen with three key outcomes: 1) enrollment management, 2) timely completion, 3) equitable completion, and 4) financial sense.

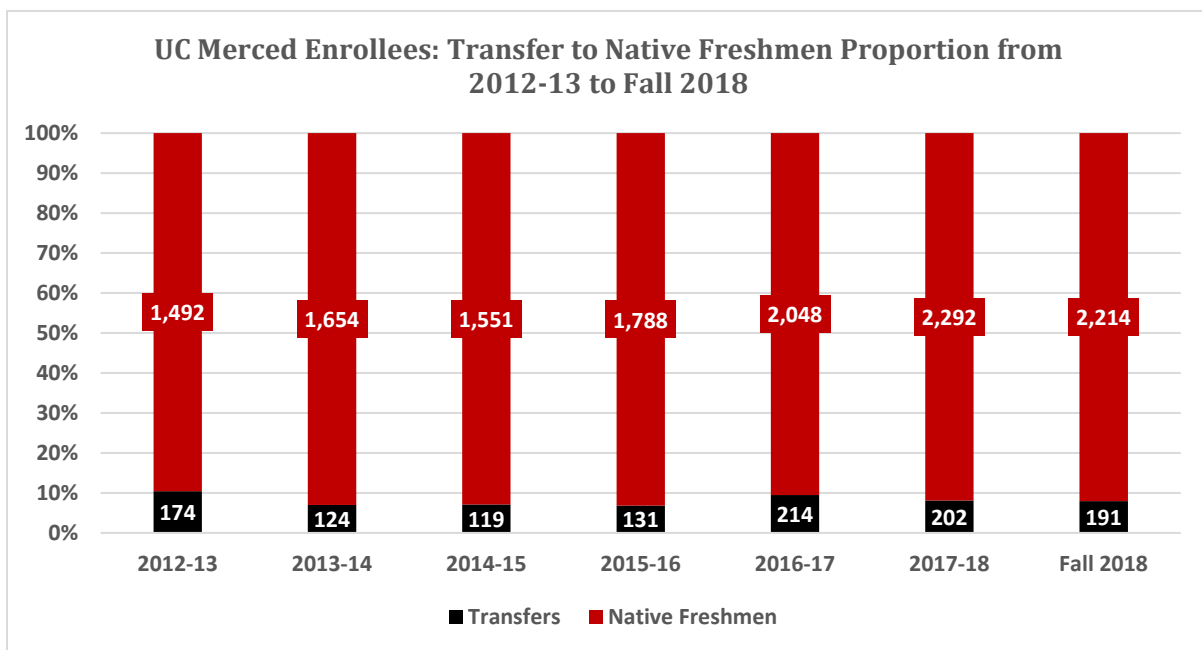
¹ <https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-need-for-skilled-workers/#fn-1>

Enrollment Management: In 2018-19, 21,015 of all UC enrollees were transfer students, a 25% relative increase in transfer enrollees since 2012-13. However, the overall proportion of enrollees has remained steady at approximately 30% system-wide.



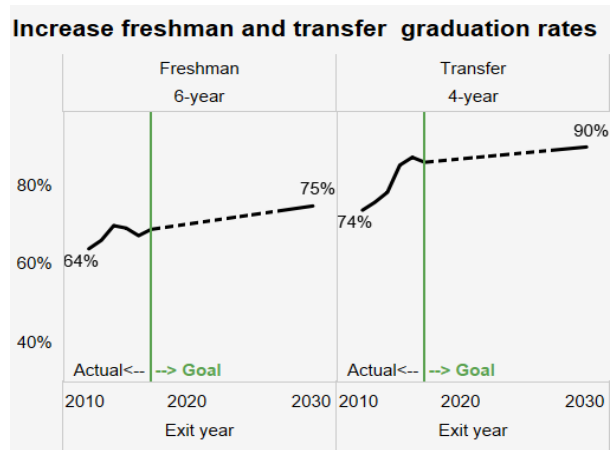
According to the UC Info Center, UC Merced’s entering class includes only 10% of accepted transfer students. In 2018-19, UC Merced saw 191 transfer enrollees. While this represents a 9.7% relative increase in transfer enrollees since 2012-13, transfers still represent just 7.9% of the incoming class at the university.

The lion share of transfers hail from the California community college system, yet only nine Bakersfield College students have enrolled at UC Merced upon transfer in the past six years.²



² <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/transfers-major>

Timely Completion: According to the UC 2030 Dashboard, students who transfer complete at a higher rate and in a shorter amount of time. The average for the last five years of data shows that native UC freshmen have an 81% six-year graduation rate which is 3 points lower than the 84% four-year graduation rate for transfer students³.

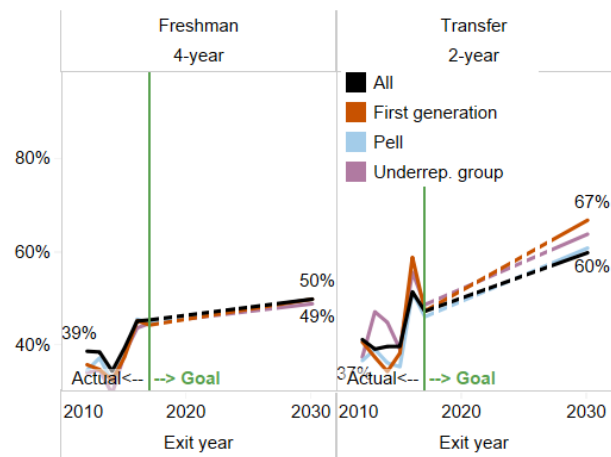


At UC Merced, transfer students have higher graduation for comparable periods of time. The average six-year graduation rate of native freshmen at UCM over the past years is 69%, while the average four-year graduation rate of transfer students to UCM is 83%, a 14-point difference. The difference in average 4-year native freshmen graduation rates and 2-year transfer student graduation rates is 41% vs. 44%.

If the UC shifts its mix of upper/lower division students to a 50/50 mix by 2020, the system will be able to produce 150,000 or more BA recipients by 2025 than it would otherwise without any need for significant new funding. By shifting to a 50/50 mix of native freshmen and transfer students for its 2020 incoming class, UCM could leverage these differences in rates to realize a gain of 1,793 more graduates by 2025 than it would have under its current 10/90 split, a gain of 40%.

Equity: Students who transfer to UC Merced show a reduction in the completion gap by race and other marginalized student indicators, including Pell eligibility and First Generation status. Currently, UC Merced transfer students are performing at the 2030 goal graduation rate for native UC Merced freshmen and are set to significantly outpace their peers by 17 points in 2030, according to the UC 2030 Dashboard.

Close graduation rate gaps by 2030



Financial Sense: Improving completion rates at the UC will be a boon to the local and statewide economy by improving the productivity and economic outlook of industries that are reliant on educated workers. Additionally, from a student perspective, students will save tuition dollars by completing the first two years of the baccalaureate at the community college where tuition is just \$46/unit and recent legislation offers colleges the opportunity to ensure full-time enrollees free tuition for the first two years.

To increase graduation rates and close equity gaps UC Merced could take action in 2019-20 to:

1. Increase the proportion of transfer students in the incoming class to at least 50%. The greater the shift, the greater the increase in graduates.
2. Focus on expanding masters-level programs and enrollments at UC Merced.

³ <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/uc-2030-dashboard>