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# UCLA–Claremont study tracks college enrollment rate of LAUSD graduates

In related report, researchers examine how Los Angeles schools prepare students for higher education

George Foulsham | August 30, 2017

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Los Angeles Unified School District

*Over 75 percent of high school counselors said they have adequate information to help students complete college applications, but just 42 percent said they have enough time to help them.*

In the first comprehensive analysis of college enrollment of Los Angeles Unified School District graduates, UCLA and Claremont Graduate University researchers found that 70 percent of high school graduates enrolled in either two- or four-year colleges, but only 25 percent of graduates went on to earn a college degree within six years.

A separate, parallel study that focused on college readiness revealed that while over 75 percent of high school counselors say they have adequate information to help students complete college and financial aid applications, just 42 percent said they have enough time to provide students with the assistance they need.

Both studies were co-directed by **Meredith Phillips**, associate professor of public policy and sociology at the **UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs**, and Kyo Yamashiro, associate professor of education at Claremont Graduate University.

“We hope these reports, taken together, contribute to a broader conversation about preparing L.A. Unified students for their postsecondary options and how the Los Angeles community can work together to ensure that more students enroll in college and complete a four-year degree,” Phillips said.



George Foulsham/UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs

*Meredith Phillips (front) with Kyo Yamashiro, Thomas Jacobson and Carrie Miller.*

Among the key findings of the enrollment study:

- Seventy percent of 2014 LAUSD students enrolled in college within one year of high school graduation; college enrollment rates were similar for the classes of 2008 and 2013.
- Most college attendees went on to a second year of college.
- Only 25 percent of 2008 graduates had earned a college degree by 2014, six years after their high school graduation.

The researchers also found that L.A. Unified graduates were more likely to enroll in two-year colleges than four-year institutions, and that most of the 2008, 2013 and 2014 graduates enrolled in public colleges and universities in California. About 8 percent of the class of 2014 enrolled in “very selective” four-year universities such as UCLA, UC Berkeley, Stanford and USC, or “selective” four-year universities such as Loyola Marymount University, UC Irvine, UC Santa Cruz and San Diego State University.

The study also revealed disparities based on gender and ethnicity, including that college enrollment, persistence and completion rates were lower for Filipino-American, African-American and Latino graduates than for white and Asian American graduate; and that women were more likely than their male classmates to enroll in, persist in and complete college.

An LAUSD official said the study's recommendations align with the district's new and ongoing efforts to ensure that students develop the skills and mindset to thrive in college and the workforce.

"We are passionate about continuing our work to foster a college-going climate in our schools and to strengthen our college planning and academic supports as we provide more robust counseling services for our students," said Frances Gipson, the school district's chief academic officer.

The college readiness study explores the prevalence of support for LAUSD high school students. Although more than 75 percent of counselors said they have adequate information to assist students with the college application and financial aid process, less than half said they have enough time to provide students with the individualized college application assistance they need. And counselors at 75 percent of schools reported that some students at their schools are not getting the help they need.

The study also found that counselors spend nearly the same amount of time coordinating academic testing and performing non-counseling activities as they do advising students about college and financial aid, and that most LAUSD schools rely on external firms to help them provide college application, financial aid and college enrollment assistance.

Learning more about disparities among students in their access to college readiness support is an important next step for improving college-going rates among LAUSD graduates, according to the study.

The researchers offer several recommendations for increasing schools' capacity to meet students' college counseling needs, including clarifying a common set of college counseling expectations by grade level, diversifying the type of school staff responsible for specific aspects of college counseling assistance, incorporating key college application tasks into required academic coursework and providing professional development specific to college counseling tasks.

Carrie Miller, a doctoral candidate at UCLA, co-authored the report on college readiness supports; Thomas Jacobson, a Luskin Master of Public Policy graduate and incoming doctoral student at UCLA, co-authored the report on college enrollment. Phillips, Yamashiro, Miller and Jacobson are all research collaborators with the [Los Angeles Education Research Institute](#). Both studies were funded by a grant

from the College Futures Foundation.

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