

# Graduation Rates and the Achievement Gap

An Institutional Comparison Based on IPEDS Data



**OIE BRIEF**

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This brief presents the achievement gap and graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshmen over a 6-year time period utilizing the national Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The fall 2000 and fall 2005 cohorts are compared among the Fresno State comparison institutions that are also Carnegie Engaged Universities. One of Fresno State's strategic planning goals is to achieve a URM graduation rate ranking in the top 25% of public Carnegie Engaged Universities\*. Moreover, the Graduation Rate Initiative (GRI) goal is to reduce the achievement gap by half.

The achievement gap goal refers to the difference in graduation rates between URM and non-underrepresented minority students (Non-URM). For the purpose of this report, URM students include African-American, American Indian/Alaska native, and Hispanic/Latino students. Non-URM students include White and Asian American\*\* students.

IPEDS is a system of survey components that collects data from about 7,500 institutions across the United States. The system uses characteristics of institutions to create comparison groups in order to provide a context for interpreting statistics. The characteristics include Carnegie Classification of Masters Colleges and Universities (larger programs), public and enrollment of a similar size. This Fresno State comparison group (2012 IPEDS Report) was used in conjunction with the Carnegie Engaged classification to produce a cohort of 16 universities used in this brief.

## Commitment to Student Transformation and Success

Goals of the Fresno State Graduation Initiative as outlined by the Strategic Plan include:

- *Achievement gap between traditional and underrepresented students reduced by 50%*
- *Six-year URM graduation rate will rank in the top 25% of public Carnegie Engaged Universities.*

**FRESNO STATE**

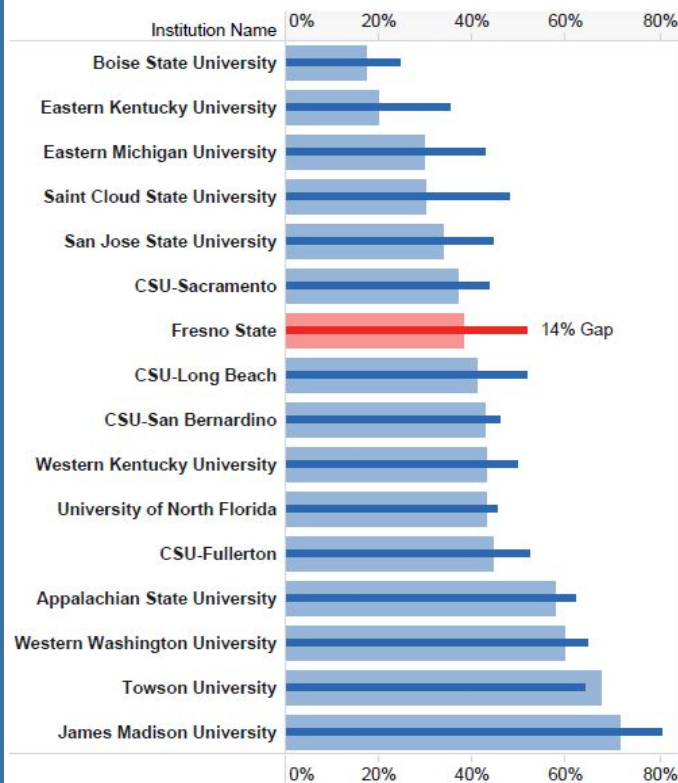
Discovery. Diversity. Distinction.

To read more about the Fresno State Strategic Plan, please visit:

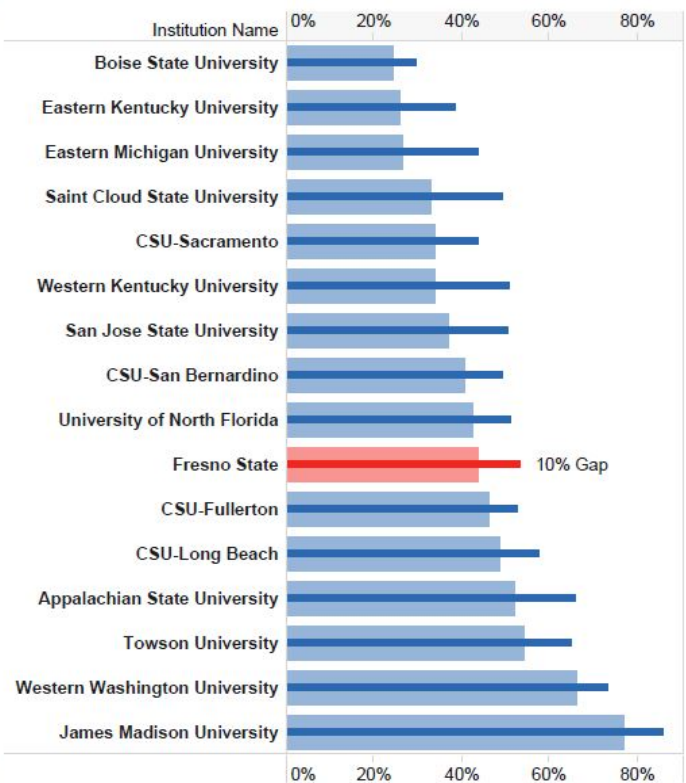
<http://fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/planning/strategic.html>

## Achievement Gap and Graduation Rates for URM/Non-URM Students Amongst Carnegie Engaged Universities in Fresno State's IPEDS Comparison Group

**2006 6-yr Graduation Rates**  
(Fall 2000 Entry Cohort)



**2011 6-yr Graduation Rates**  
(Fall 2005 Entry Cohort)



[Click here to view more charts and to access interactive data.](#)



The figure above shows how Fresno State compares to other Carnegie Engaged Universities in the IPEDS group. The most recent IPEDS 6-year URM graduation rate ranks Fresno State 7<sup>th</sup> out of the 16 universities in the comparison group. Although this does not reach the targeted top quartile goal, there has been substantial improvement since 2006. Since that time period, the URM graduation rate has increased to 44% in 2011, up from 38%, and Fresno State has climbed three ranks in the group overall. The GRI goal calls for a URM first-time, full-time freshmen graduation rate of 46% by 2015, and Fresno State is on track to meet that goal.

The Fresno State Strategic Plan also strives to cut in half the existing gap in degree attainment by CSU's URM students. The figure visually displays the achievement gap difference. In 2006, the Fresno State achievement gap was 14 percentage points for the fall 2000 entry cohort (Non-URM 6yr graduation rate of 52% minus 38% URM graduation rate). However, by 2011, for the fall 2005 cohort, the gap narrowed to approximately 10 percentage points (Non-URM 6-yr graduation rate of 54% minus 44% URM graduation rate). This represents a 30% reduction in the achievement gap at Fresno State during this period. Fresno State is on target to meet its goals.

\*Only institutions participating in the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification AND members of Fresno State's 2012 IPEDS comparison group were used in this brief.

\*\*For the purpose of this brief, Pacific Islanders were included in the Asian American category.