

JACK KENT COOKE  
FOUNDATION

# Persistence

The Success of Students Who Transfer from  
Community Colleges to Selective Four-Year Institutions

Jennifer Glynn, Ph.D.  
January 2019

# Understanding and Supporting the Successful Transfer of Community College Students to Four-Year Institutions

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American Association of Community Colleges

May 2, 2019



## Our Mission

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The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is dedicated to advancing the education of exceptionally promising students who have financial need.

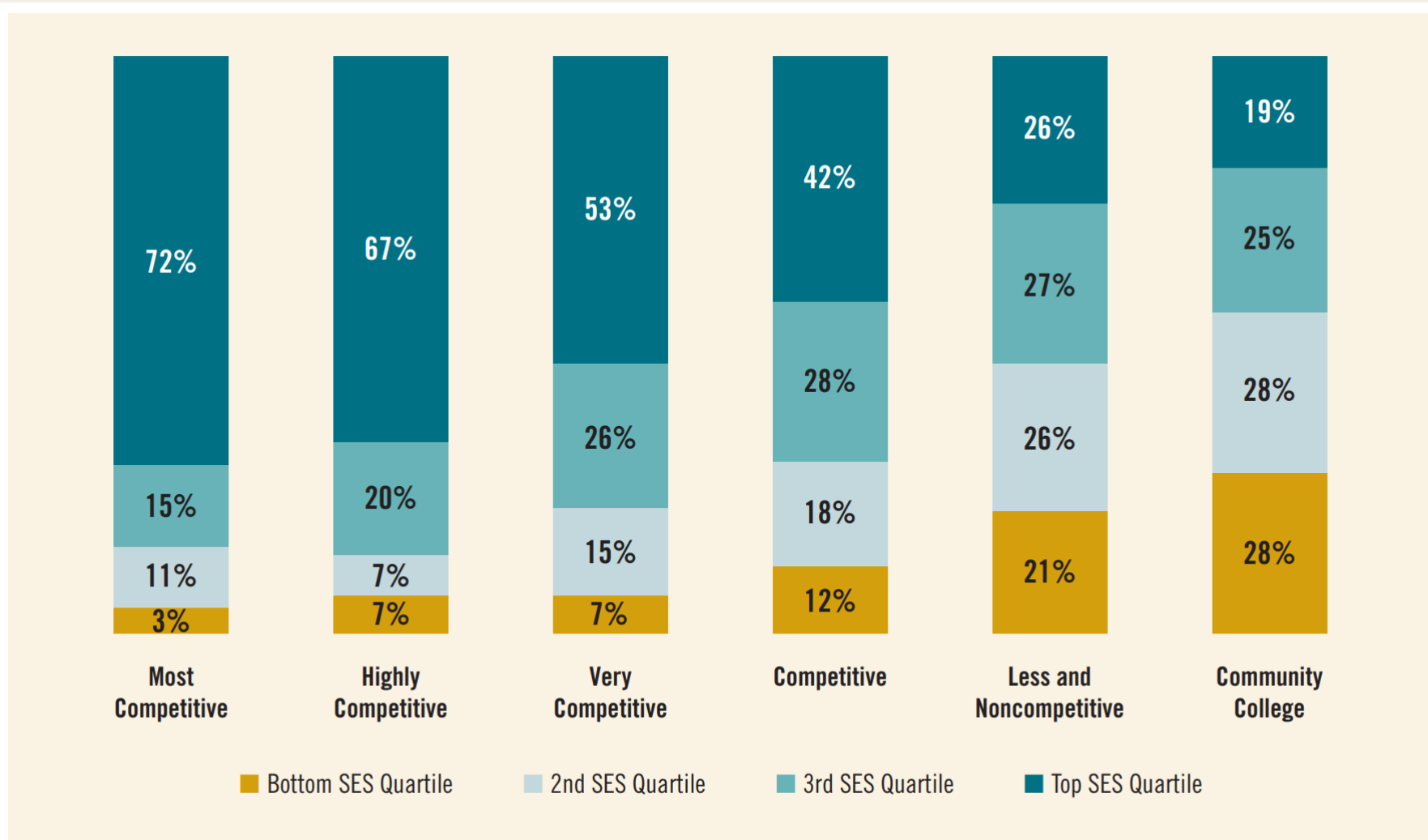
# Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship

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- **910** scholars since 2002
- **93%** earn BA
- **69%** attend a selective college



# Low-SES Students Are Underrepresented at Selective Colleges and Universities



**Source:** Analysis of data from the Department of Education, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002. Postsecondary enrollment of the high-school graduating class of 2004.

# About This Research

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- Purpose
- National Student Clearinghouse
- [www.jkcf.org/Persistence](http://www.jkcf.org/Persistence)

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## Persistence

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# Composition of the 2016 Entering Undergraduate Class

2,625,010

Students who:

- Were enrolled at a four-year institution (for the first time at that institution)
- Do not have any prior postsecondary degrees

■ **Entered from High School**

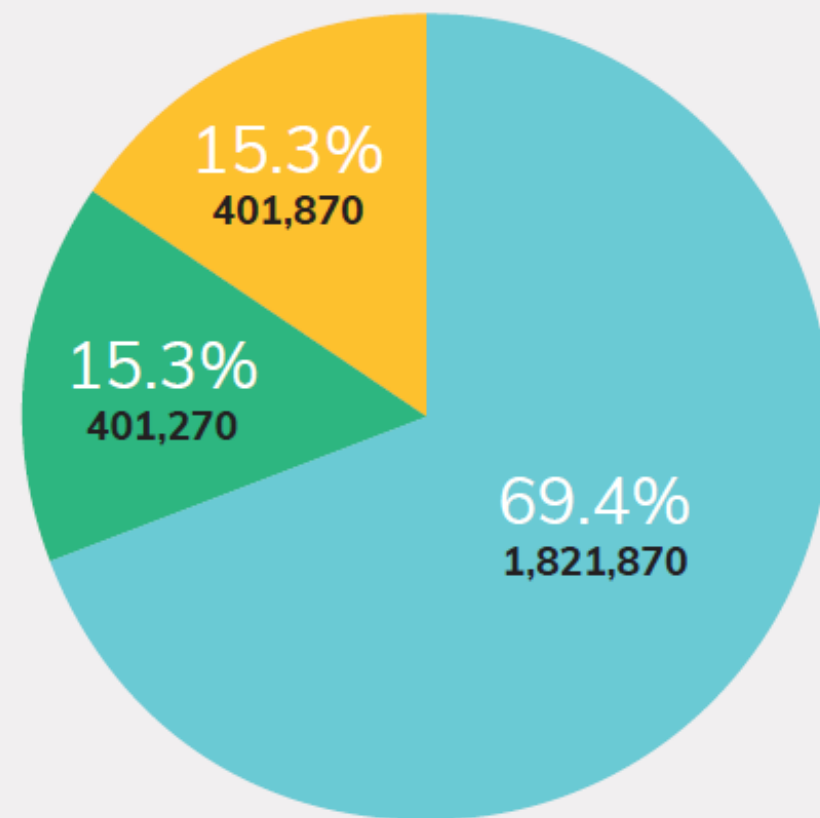
Never previously enrolled at any postsecondary institution

■ **Transferred from a Four-Year Institution**

Previously enrolled at one or more other institution(s), at least one of which was a four-year institution

■ **Transferred from a Community College**

Previously enrolled at one or more two-year public institution(s); never enrolled at another four-year institution

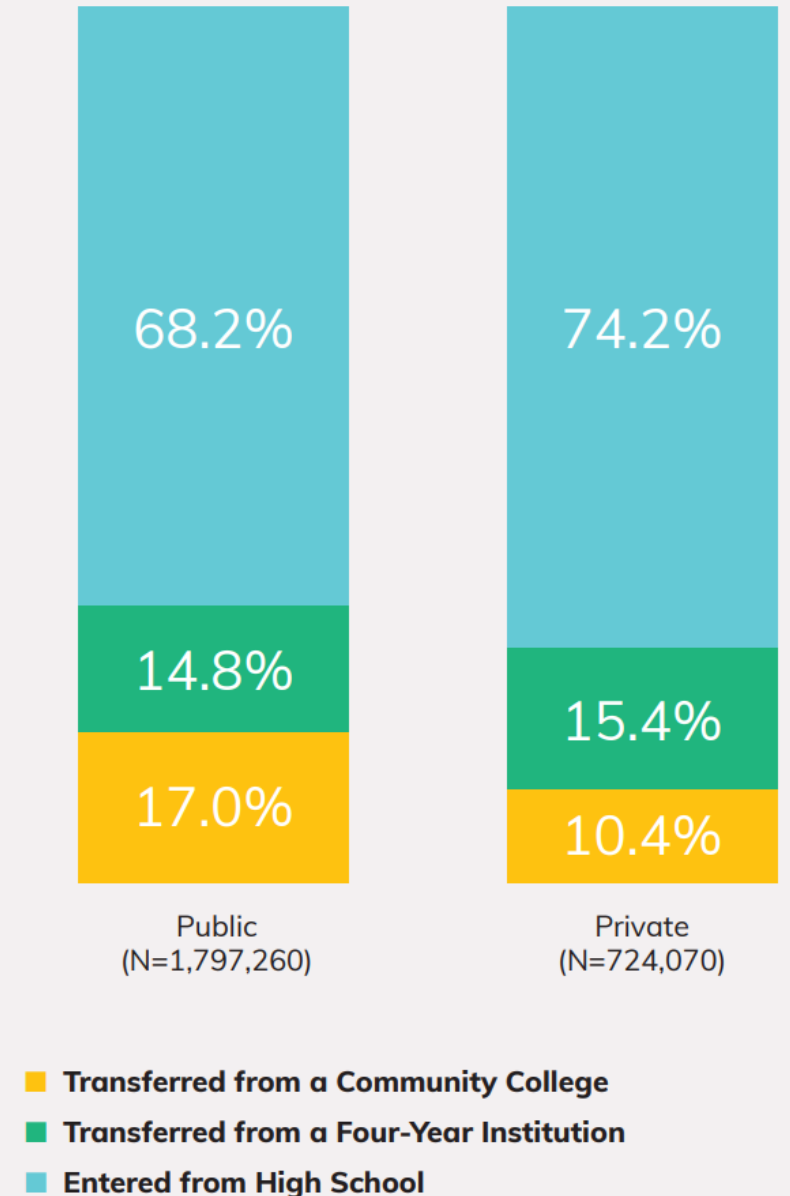


*Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10s place. The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data also contains 4,780 students who were previously enrolled at either a two-year private or two-year for-profit institution, which equals 0.2 percent of all students. As these types of institutions vary widely in scope and program type, these students are excluded from this report.*

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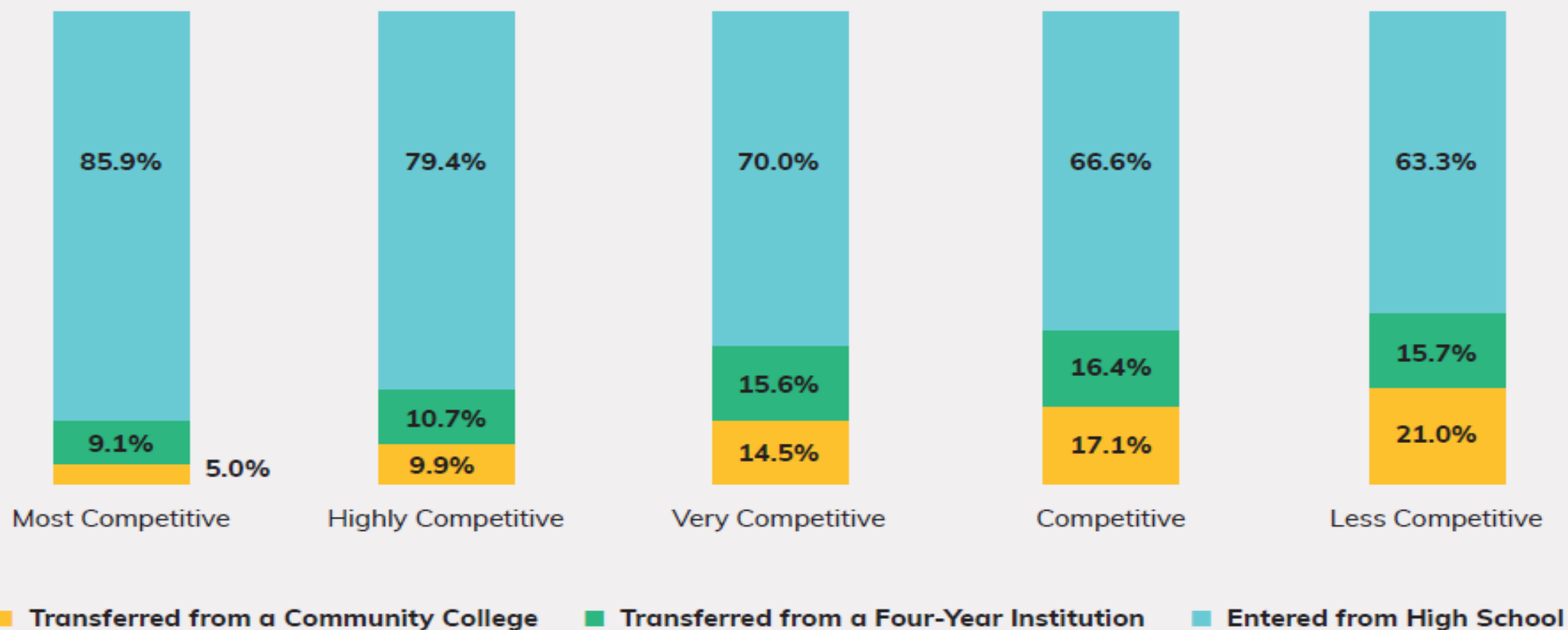
**Public institutions enroll  
four times as many  
community  
college transfer students  
as private institutions:**

**305,730 versus 75,190**



*Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10s place.*

# Few Community College Students Transfer to Selective Institutions



*Note: Reporting on 2,517,030 students enrolled at 1,237 institutions in the NSC database.*



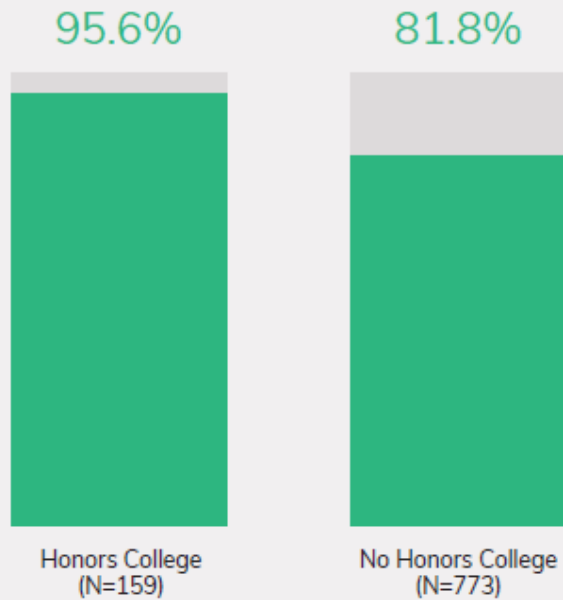
## Great news!

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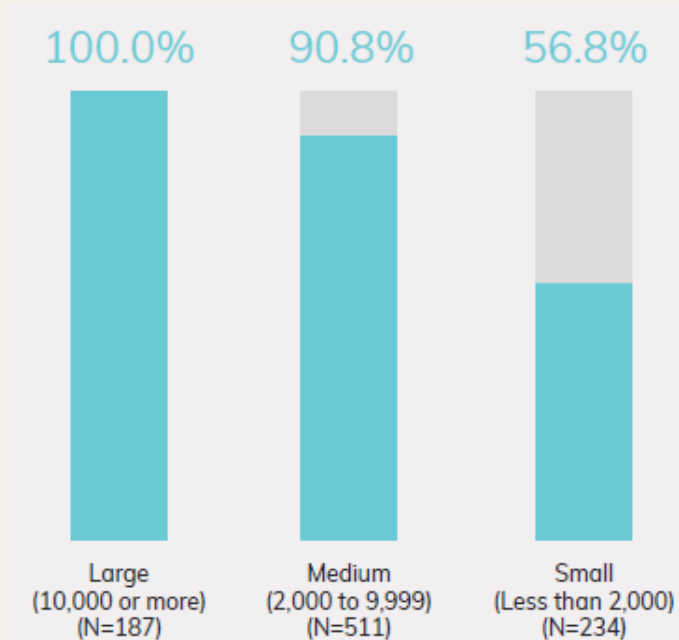
4 in 5 (84%)  
community colleges  
sent one or more  
students to a  
selective institution

# Community colleges are more likely to transfer students to selective institutions that...

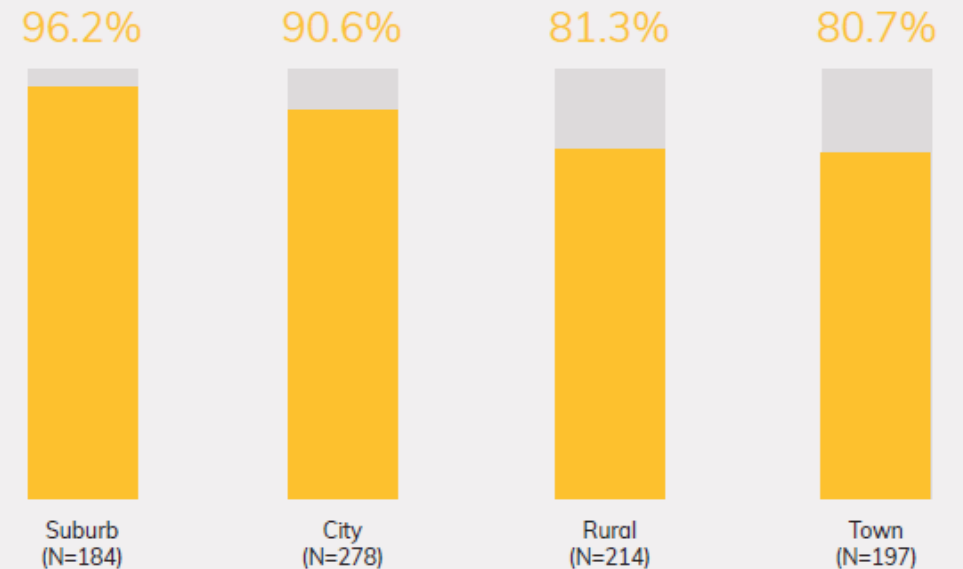
... have honors colleges...



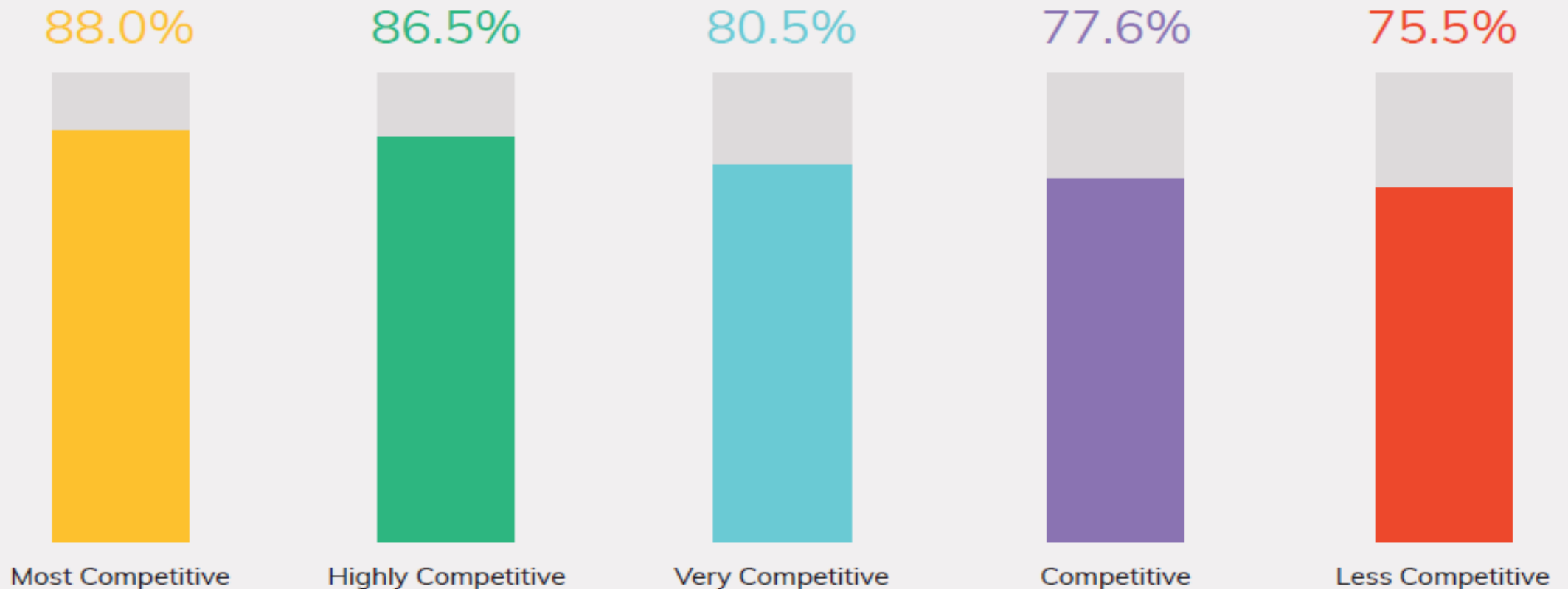
... are larger ...



... and are located in suburban or urban settings.

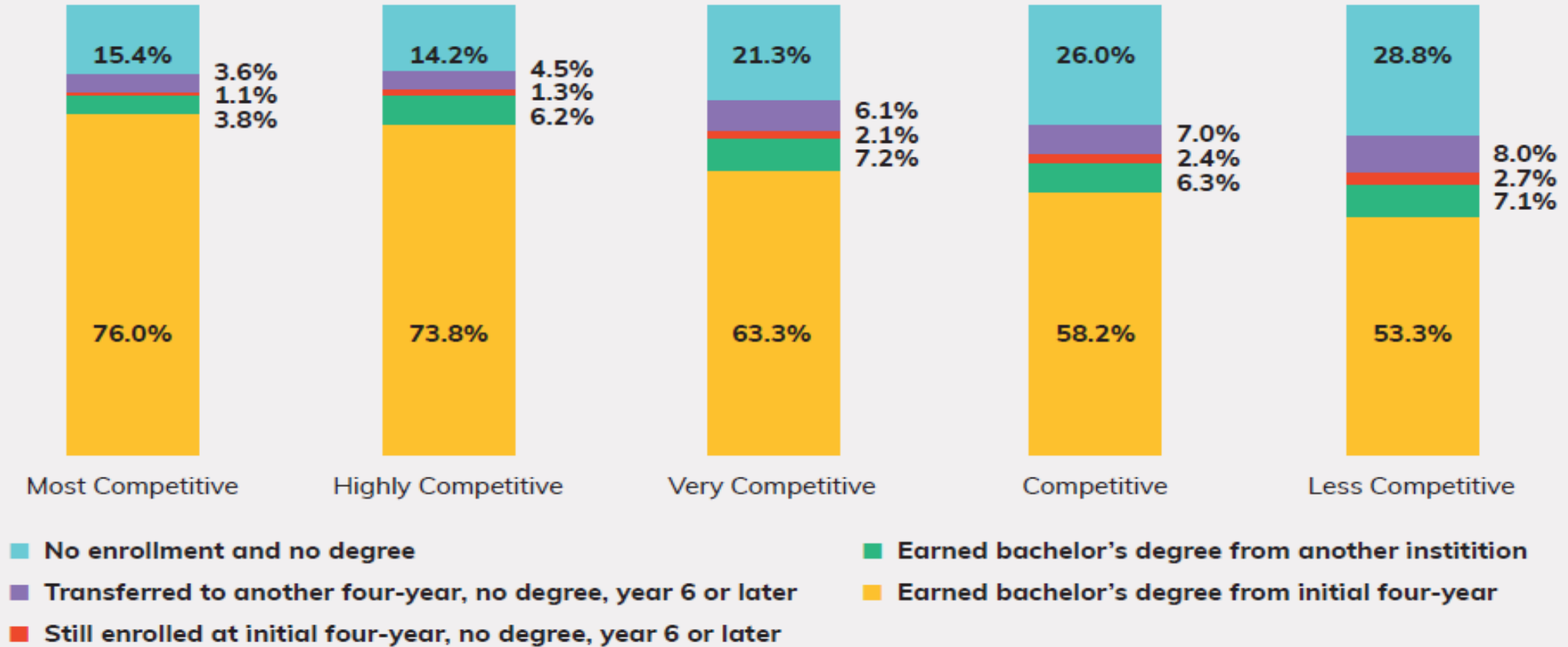


# One-Year Retention Rates of Community College Transfer Students, by Institutional Selectivity



*Note: Reporting on 342,780 students who transferred from a community college to a four-year institution in fall 2010. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10s place.*

# Six-Year Graduation and Retention Outcomes for Community College Transfer Students, by Institutional Selectivity



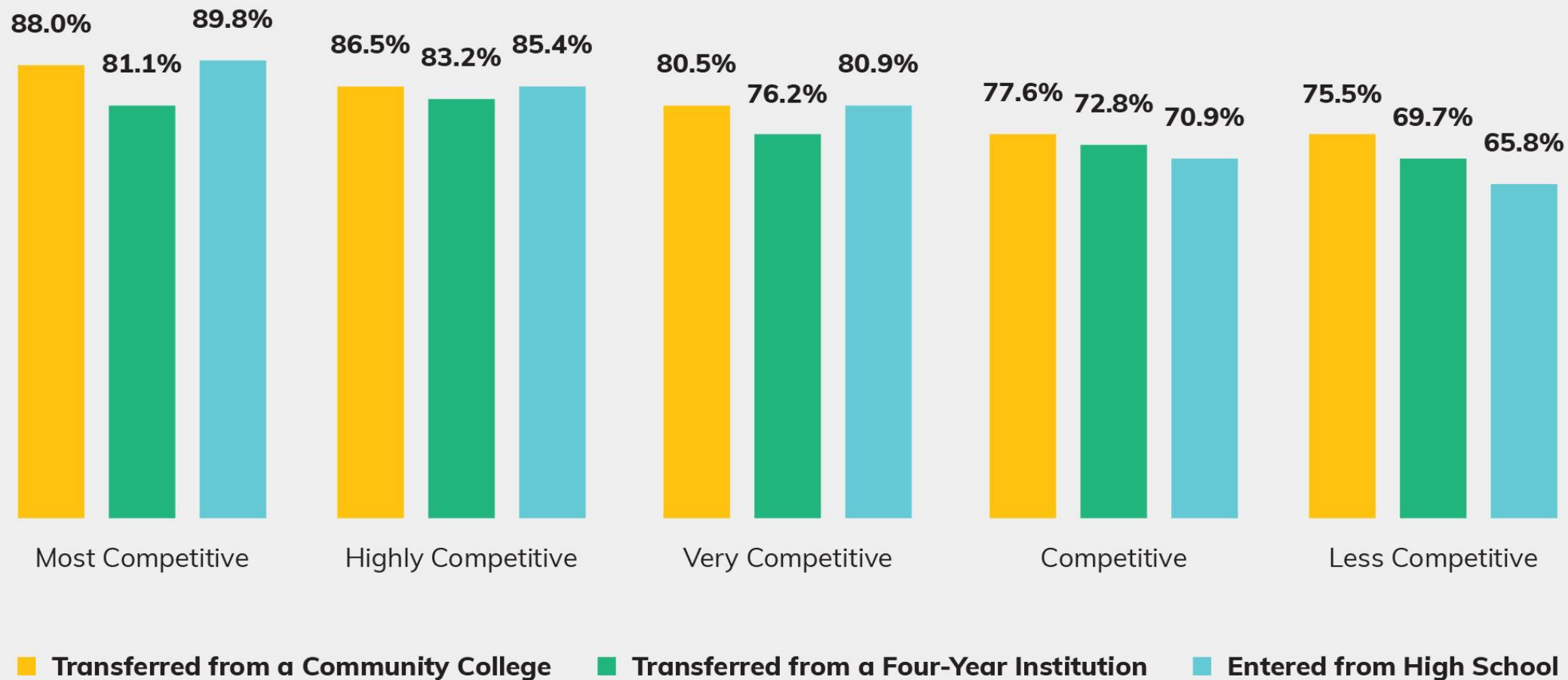
Note: Reporting on 342,780 students who transferred from a community college to a four-year institution in fall 2010. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10s place.

**How do transfer  
students compare to  
other students?**

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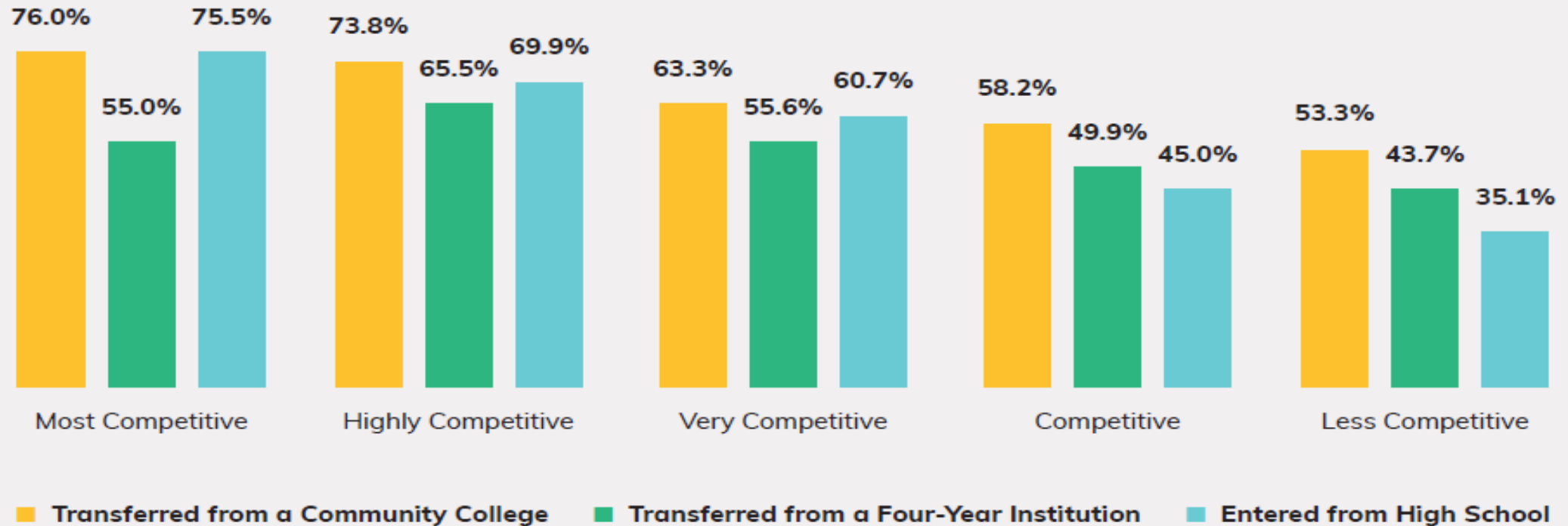


# One-Year Retention Rates, by Student Type and Institutional Selectivity



*Note: Reporting on the retention outcomes of 2,238,570 students who enrolled at a four-year institution in fall 2010.*

# Six-Year Graduation Rates, By Student Type and Institutional Selectivity



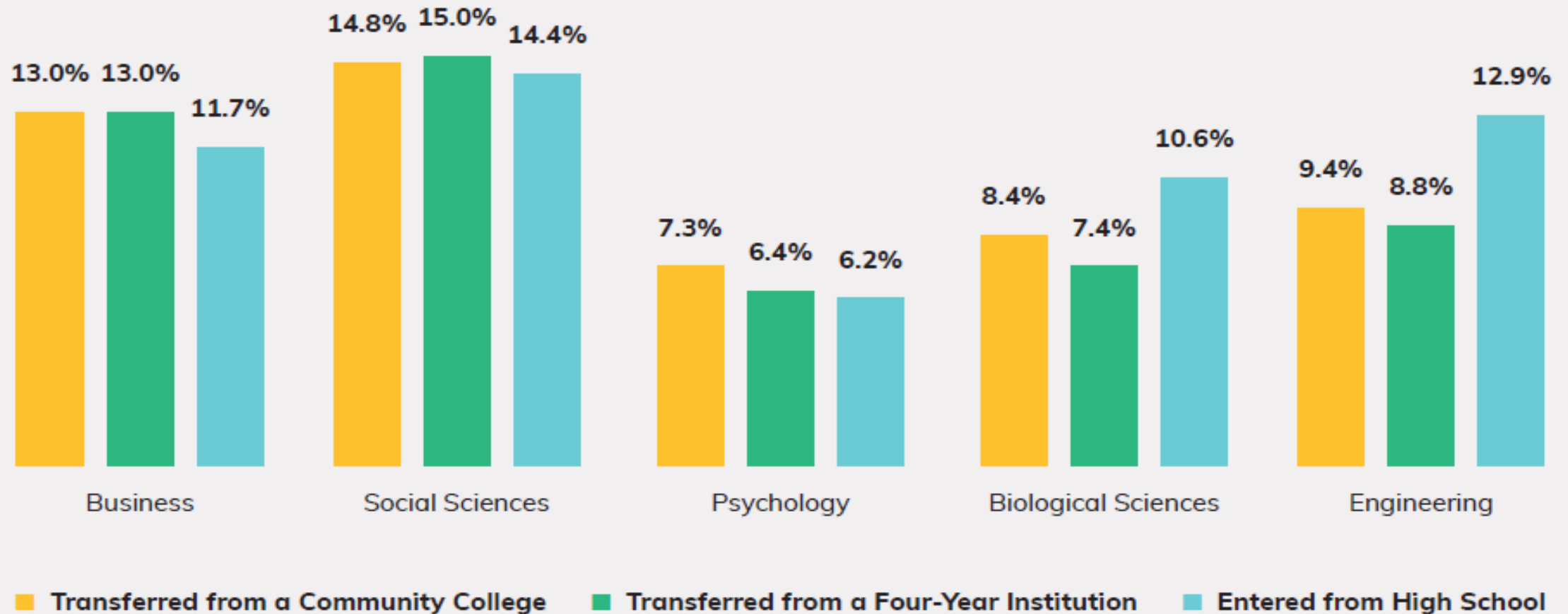
*Note: Reporting on the retention outcomes of 2,238,570 students who enrolled at a four-year institution in fall 2010. For a discussion of the methodology of calculating these graduation rates and how they compare to other graduation rates reported by institutions to the Department of Education, please see Appendix A.*

# Average Time (Years) to Degree for Community College Transfer Students Graduating from the Receiving Institution



*Note: Reporting on 205,710 students who transferred from a community college to a four year institution in fall 2010 and subsequently earned a bachelor's degree from that institution. Time to degree calculated as number of days between first date of enrollment at the four-year institution and graduation date (divided by 365). Time to degree only calculated for students who earned the bachelor's degree.*

# Discipline of Earned Bachelor's Degree, Selective Institutions



*Note: Reporting the top five reported degree disciplines among 255,390 students who received a bachelor's degree from the Most Competitive or Highly Competitive institution they first entered in fall 2010.*

# Key Takeaways

@ Selective Colleges:

- Low Transfer Rates
- High Success Rates



# Pathways to Transfer



American Association of Community Colleges  
May 2019

# Front Range Community College

- Three campuses – North Denver, Boulder County, and Fort Collins
- Various transfer institutions
- 29,000 annual credit headcount
- 40% first gen; 27% students of color; 80% part-time
- Colorado Community College System



# Guided Pathways



“An integrated, institution-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence, that guide each student effectively and efficiently from point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market.”



# Guided Pathways: Planning, Implementation, Evaluation

Creating guided pathways requires managing and sustaining large-scale transformational change. The work begins with thorough planning, continues through consistent implementation, and depends on ongoing evaluation. Colleges should assess their readiness for intensive, broad-based change before beginning this work.

## PLANNING

### ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS

Make sure the following conditions are in place – prepared, mobilized, and adequately resourced – to support the college's pathways effort:

- Strong leadership throughout the institution
- Faculty, staff, and student engagement
- Commitment to using data
- Capacity to use data
- Technology infrastructure
- Professional development
- Favorable policy (state, system, and institutional levels)

### PLANNING/PREPARATION

Understand where you are and prepare for change by:

- Engaging stakeholders and making the case for change
- Establishing a baseline for key performance indicators
- Developing flowcharts of how students choose, enter, and complete programs
- Developing an implementation plan with roles and deadlines

### SUSTAINABILITY

Commit to pathways for the long term and make sure they are implemented for all students by:

- Determining barriers to sustainability (state, system, and institutional levels)
- Redefining the roles of faculty, staff, and administrators as needed
- Identifying needs for professional development and technical assistance
- Revamping technology to support the redesigned student experience
- Reallocating resources as needed
- Continuing to engage key stakeholders, especially students
- Integrating pathways into hiring and evaluation practices

### EARLY OUTCOMES

Measure key performance indicators, including:

- Number of college credits earned in first term
- Number of college credits earned in first year
- Completion of gateway math and English courses in the student's first year
- Persistence from term 1 to term 2
  - Rates of college-level course completion in students' first academic year

Revisit conditions, sustainability, and implementation. Continuously improve pathways by building on elements that work and adjusting or discarding elements that are not serving all students well.

## EVALUATION

## IMPLEMENTATION

### CLARIFY THE PATHS

Map all programs to transfer and career and include these features:

- Detailed information on target career and transfer outcomes
- Course sequences, critical courses, embedded credentials, and progress milestones
- Math and other core coursework aligned to each program of study

### HELP STUDENTS GET ON A PATH

Require these supports to make sure students get the best start:

- First-year experiences to help students explore the field and choose a major
- Full program plans based on required career/transfer exploration
- Contextualized, integrated academic support to help students pass program gateway courses
- K-12 partnerships focused on career/college program exploration

### HELP STUDENTS STAY ON THEIR PATH

Keep students on track with these supports:

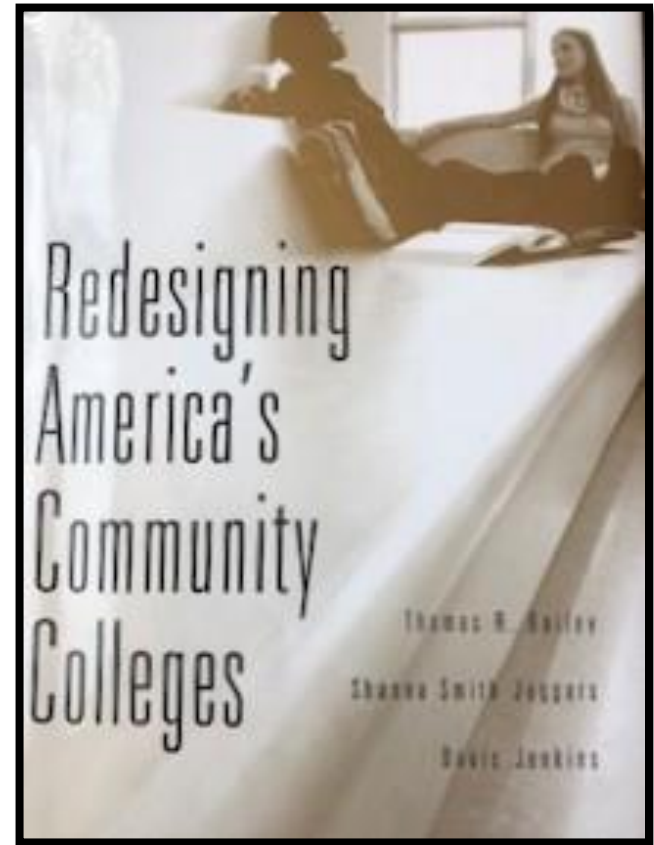
- Ongoing, intrusive advising
- Systems for students to easily track their progress
- Systems/procedures to identify students at risk and provide needed supports
- A structure to redirect students who are not progressing in a program to a more viable path

### ENSURE STUDENTS ARE LEARNING

Use these practices to assess and enrich student learning:

- Program-specific learning outcomes
- Project-based, collaborative learning
- Applied learning experiences
- Faculty-led improvement of teaching practices
- Systems/procedures for the college and students to track mastery of learning outcomes

- No clear path to a bachelor's degree.
- Credits don't transfer.
- Poor alignment between two- and four-year programs.
- The transfer process can often be perplexing.



# The Transfer Playbook



- Communicate Transfer
- Share Data
- Dedicate Resources

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/>

# Colorado State University

- One main campus in Fort Collins, CO
- Land Grant Institution
- 74 degrees, 250 concentrations, 10 online degrees
- 25% First Generation
- 25% Students of Color
- 25% Adult Learners/Veterans
- 25% Transfer Students
  - of those, more than 50% come from CCs
- Front Range Community College is CSU's biggest "feeder" school.



# Major Transfer Partners Measures

| # of Transfers | Percent of transfers<br>CSU students who<br>earned a CC award<br>before transferring | Bachelor's degree<br>completion rate<br>among students<br>who transferred to<br>this university |
|----------------|--|---|
| 1,732          | 34%  | 63%   |

**Source:** Davis Jenkins and John Fink, *Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institution and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students attain Bachelor's Degrees*, Community College Research Center, Teachers College Columbia University, Aspen Institute and National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, January 2016.

Bridge: *n.* **1** a structure built over a river, railroad, highway, etc. to provide a way across for vehicles or pedestrians

**2** a thing that provides connection, contact, or transition ...

Webster's Dictionary



# Bridges to Baccalaureate (B2B)



National Institutes  
of Health



Colorado  
State  
University



FRONT RANGE  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Colorado  
State  
University



# Four key components

- Deep focus on transfer efficiency
- Attention to momentum metrics
- Building the “Scientific Résumé”
- Reducing transfer shock

# Transfer Efficiency

- “Does this class transfer?”
- Instead: “Do I need it?”
- How B2B addresses this

# Momentum Metrics

A Newton's cradle with five spheres. The word "MOMENTUM" is spelled out using the spheres. The 'M' is tilted to the left, while the other letters are straight. The background is a light gray gradient.

**M O M E N T U M**

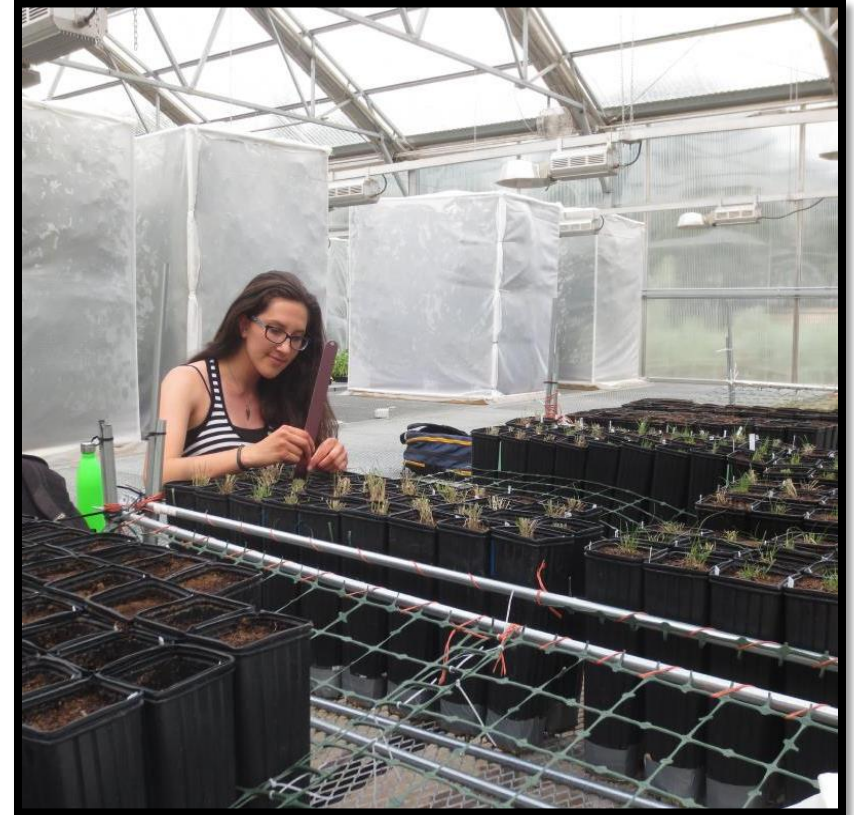
# Momentum Metrics

- Course development as an example of Program Momentum
  - PSY 200 (Research Methods) and PSY 258 (Neuroscience)
  - BIO 211 (cell biology)
  - BIO 224 (genetics)

# Momentum Metrics

- Course sequencing as a Momentum Metric
  - 6-7 semesters of Chemistry for a bachelor's degree
  - Chemistry should be taken as early as possible.

# The “Scientific Résumé”



# Reducing transfer shock

- Learning community
- Custom transfer orientation session
- Peer mentors
- Coaching support
- Workshops and community building
- The promise of a B2B graduation cord

# Assessment



**CCRC** COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
RESEARCH CENTER

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



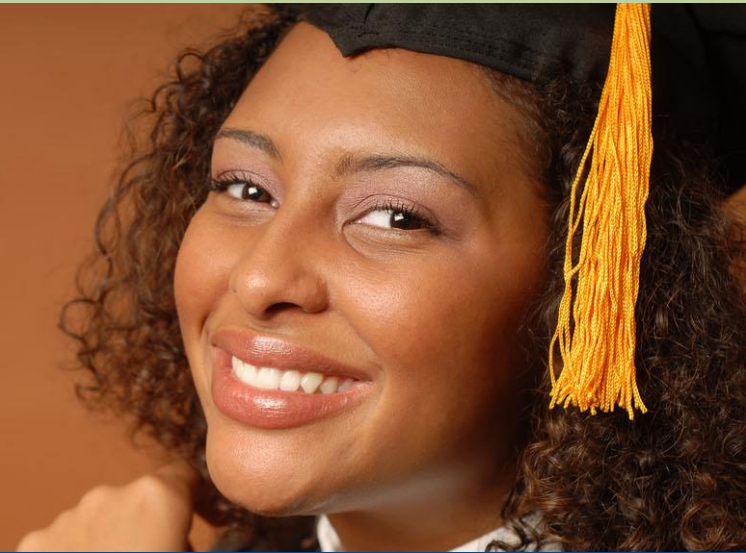
THE ASPEN INSTITUTE  
COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

*Tool for Assessing Progress Toward Adoption of  
Essential Transfer Practices for Community Colleges*

# By “The Playbook”

1. Prioritize transfer.
2. Create clear, rigorous program pathways.
3. Provide tailored transfer advising.
4. Implement strategies for building effective transfer partnerships.

**“...from point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market.”**



# Pathways to Transfer

# Observations on Transfer

KENT A. PHILLIPPE

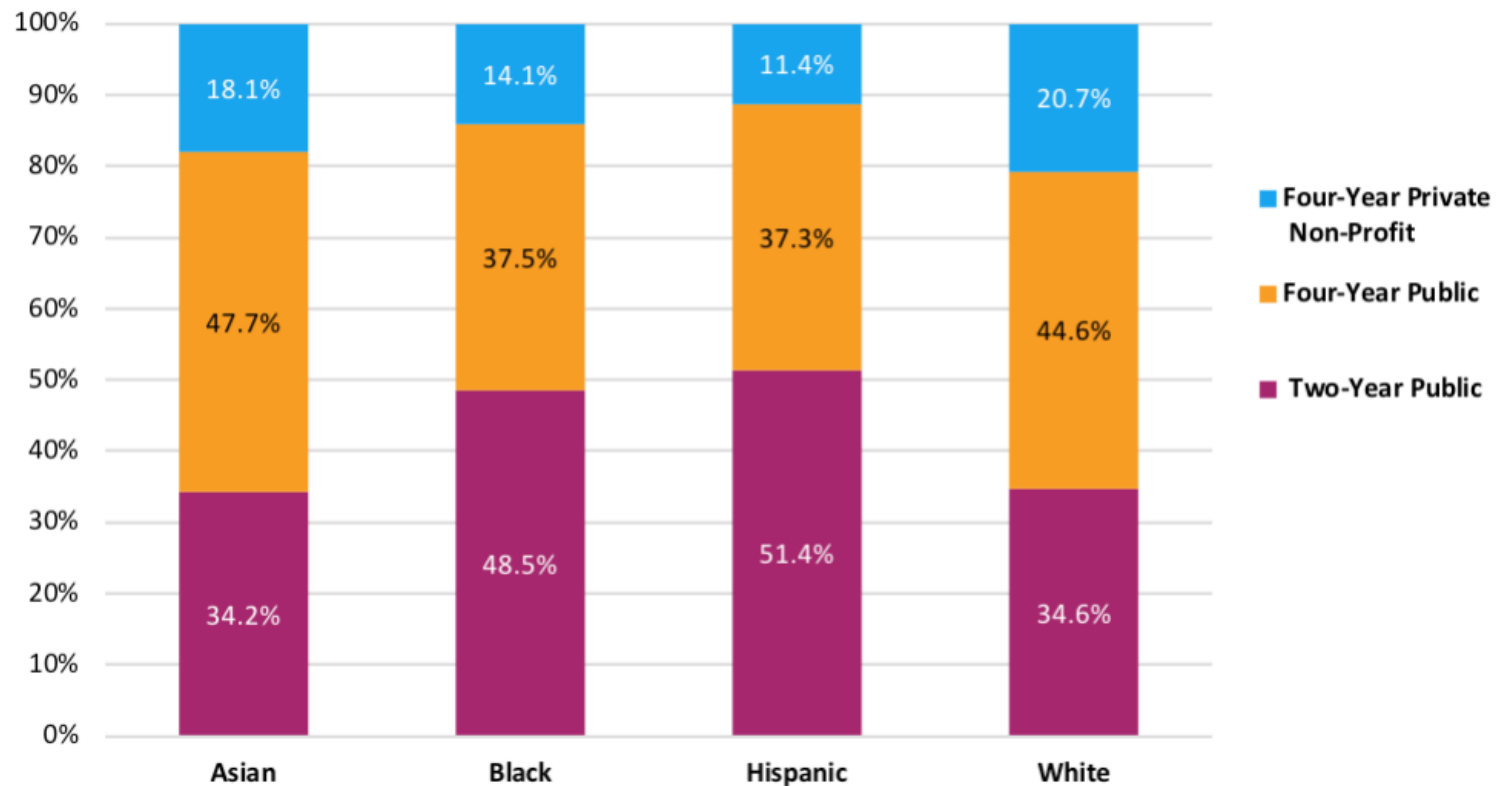
AVP, RESEARCH & STUDENT SUCCESS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

# Barriers (non-financial)

- ▶ Structural barriers
  - ▶ Competition for students
  - ▶ misaligned incentives
  - ▶ resource constraints
- ▶ Poor or inconsistent articulation agreements
  - ▶ Credit loss
  - ▶ Program variation
- ▶ Lack of Information on transfer process
- ▶ Location

**Figure I2. Total Initial Enrollments by Sector and Control of Starting Institution by Race and Ethnicity, Fall 2011 Cohort**

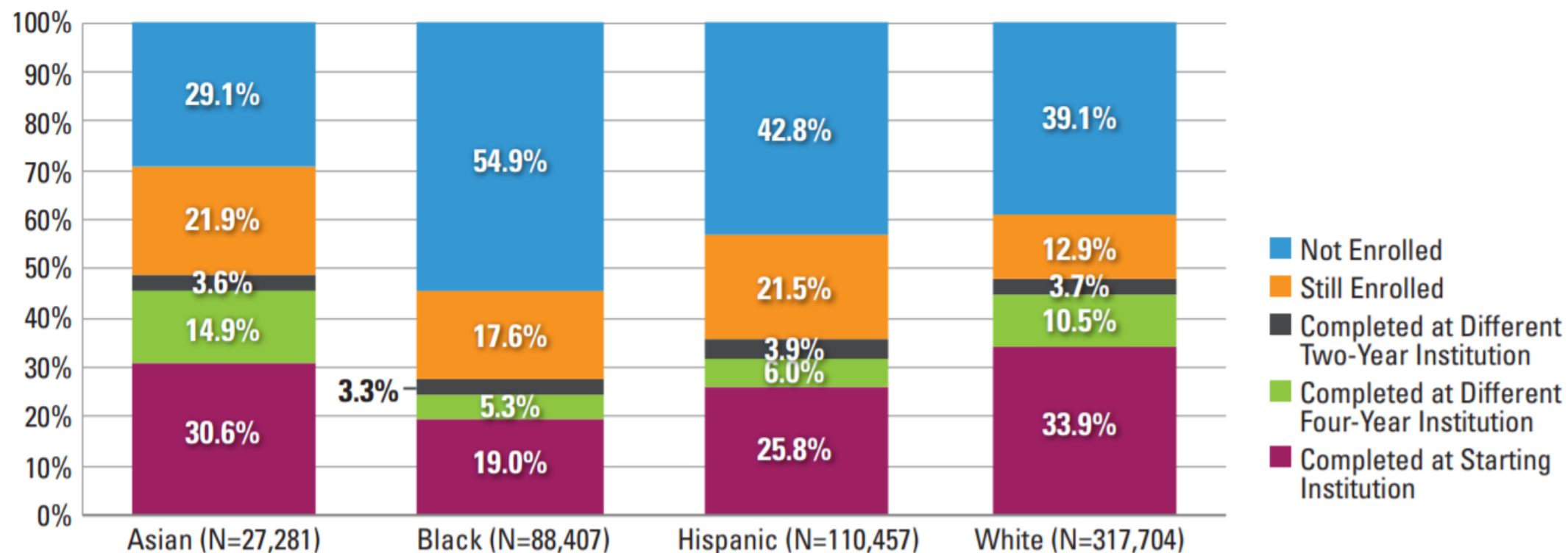


*\*This figure is based on data shown in Appendix C, Table 1c.*

*\*\*Due to low coverage, race and ethnicity transfer statistics are only reported for students who started at a two year public non-profit, and four year public and four year private non-profit institution.*

Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center *Completing College* report

**Figure 16. Six-Year Outcomes and First Completion for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Race and Ethnicity (N=543,849)\***



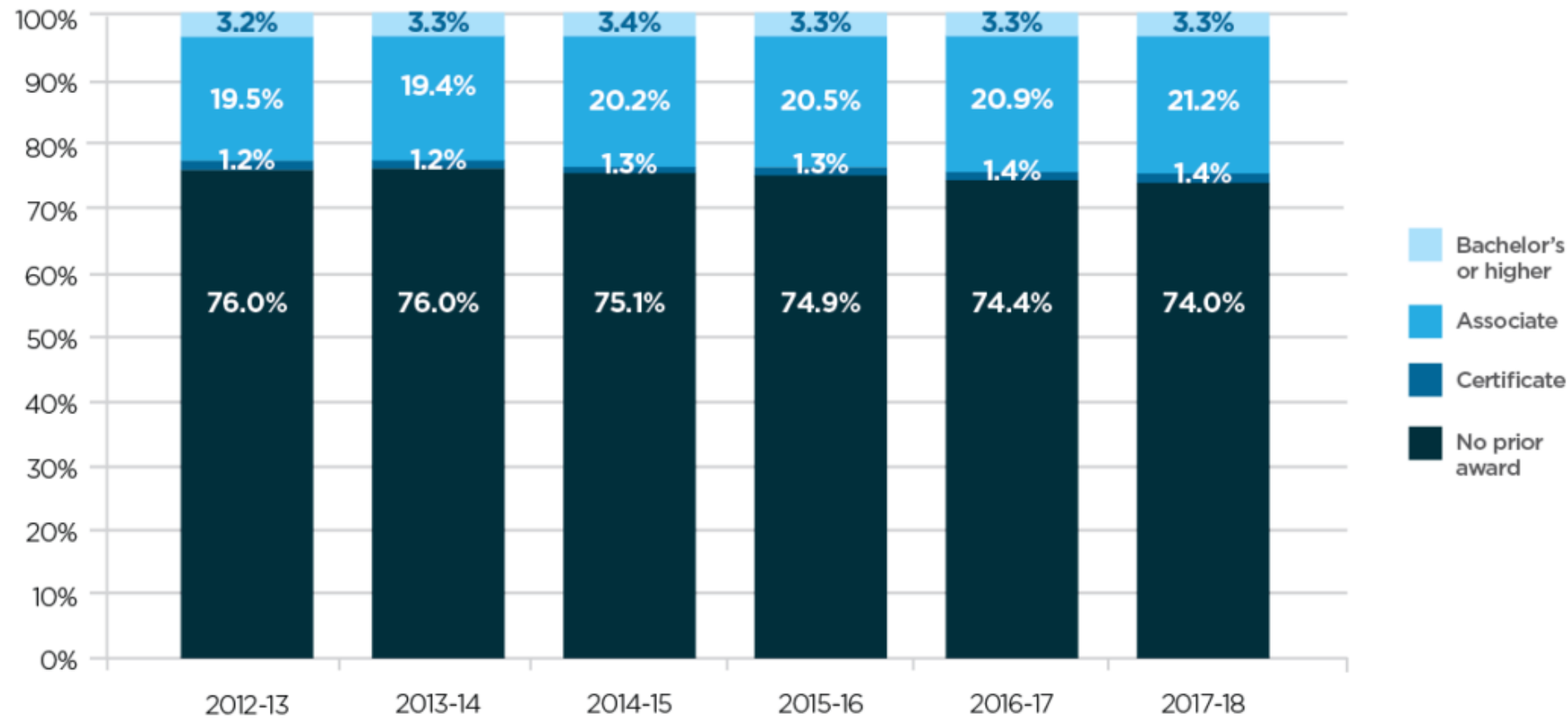
\*This figure is based on data shown in Appendix C, Table 41a.

\*See Appendix C, Table 41b for completion outcomes of other race and ethnicity categories (e.g., non-resident alien, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander).



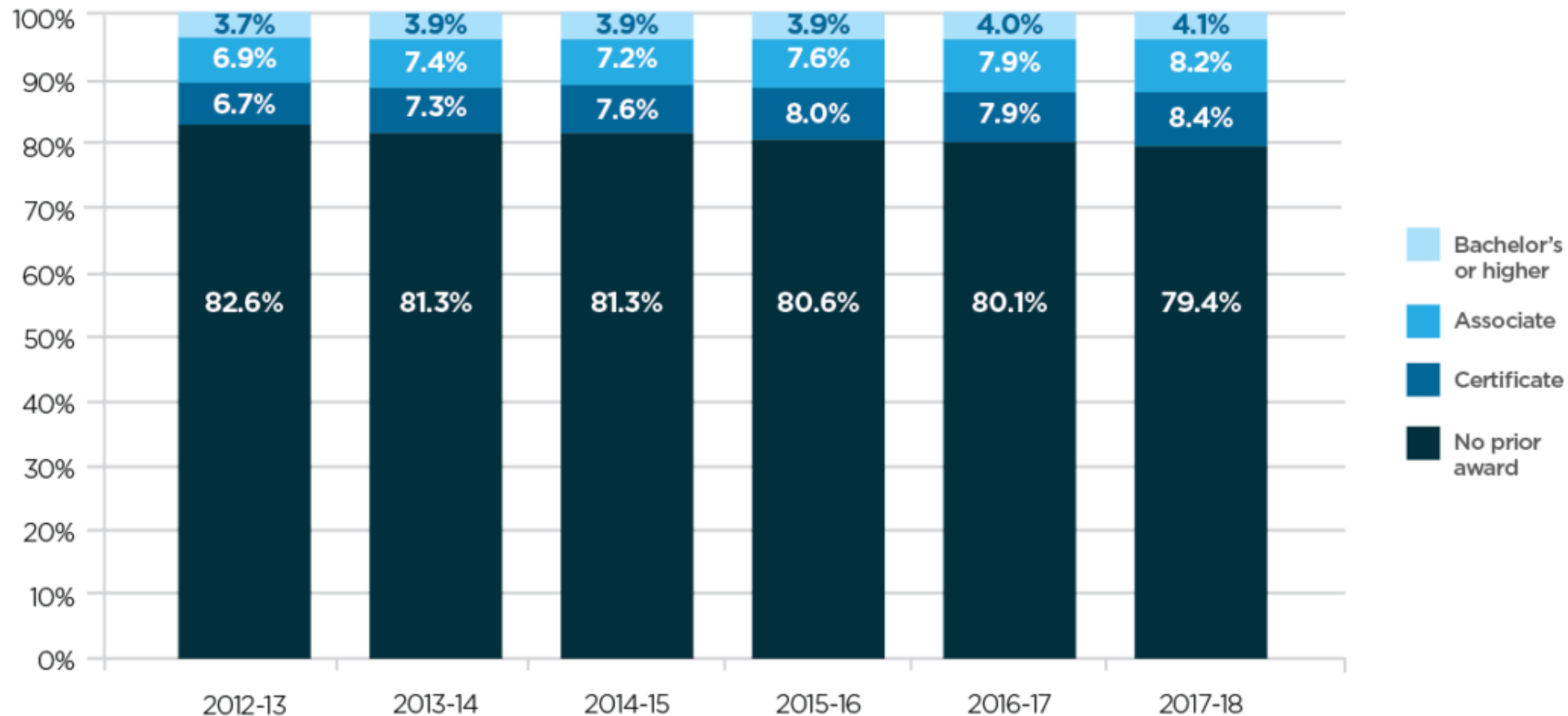
Prior Credentials:  
another way of looking at transfer

Figure 6: Bachelor's Degree Earners – Distribution of Prior Awards



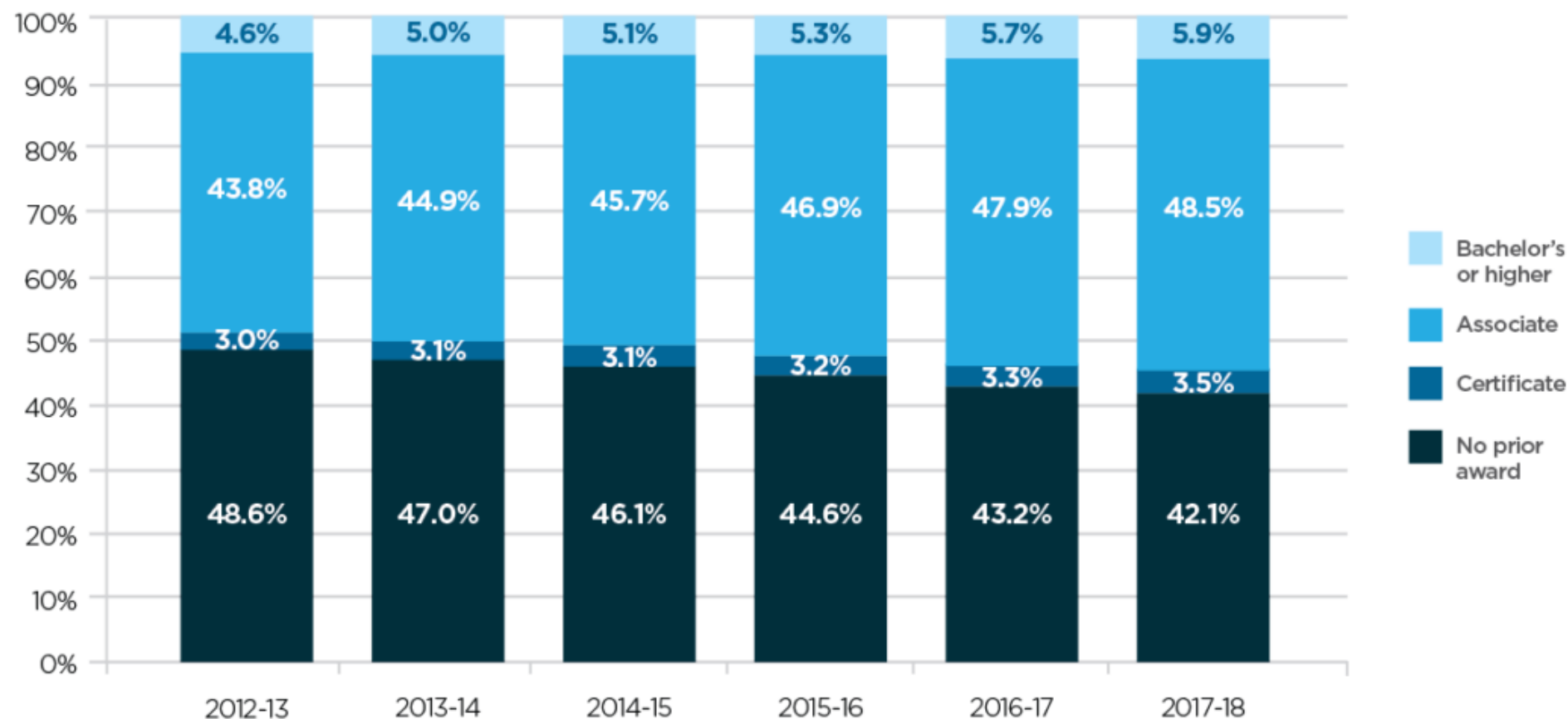
**Figure 6** shows the percentage distribution of prior awards for students who earned a bachelor's degree in each of the last five academic years. In 2017-18, 74 percent were first-time graduates (had no prior award), 3.3 percent had previously earned a bachelor's degree or higher, 21.2 percent had previously earned an associate degree, and 1.4 percent had previously earned a certificate.

Figure 7: Associate Degree Earners – Distribution of Prior Awards



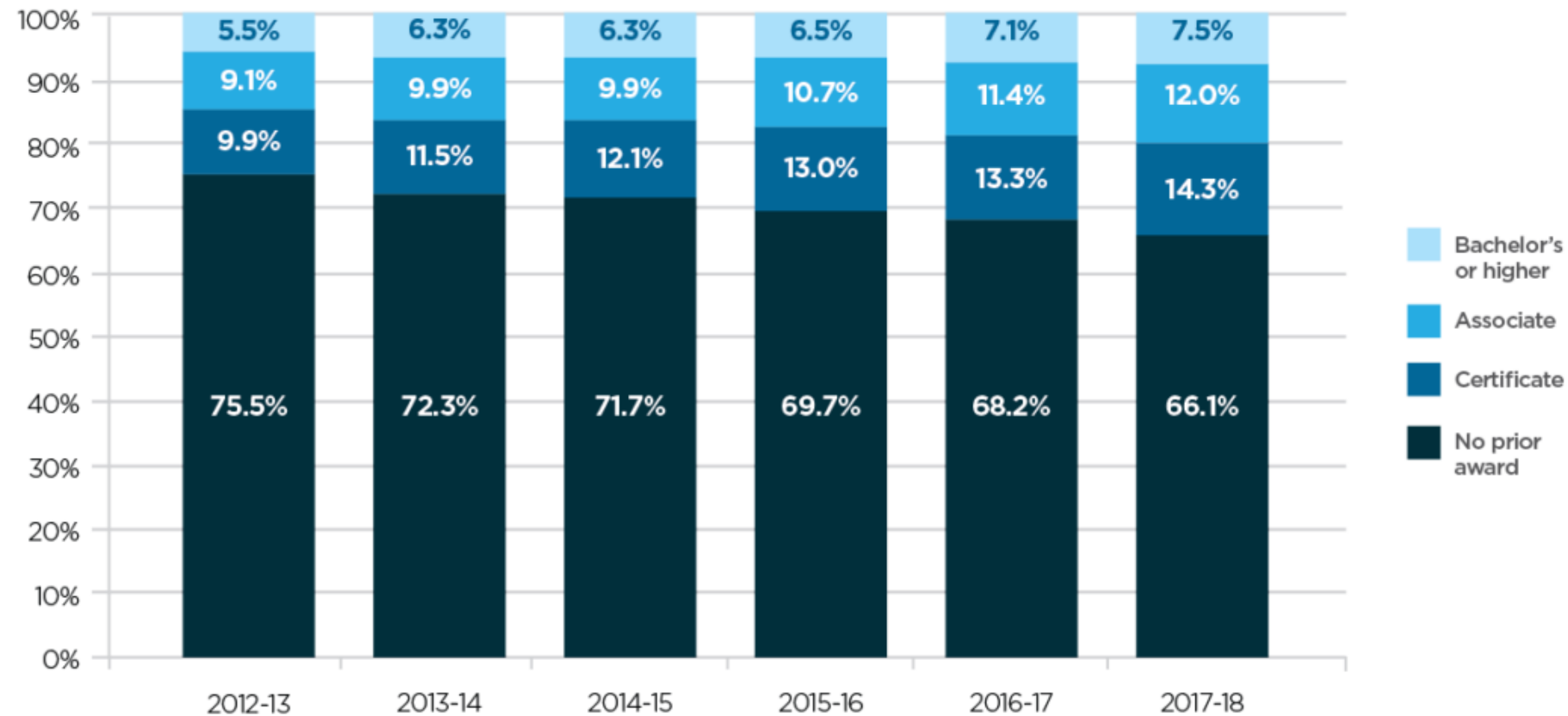
**Figure 7** shows the percentage distribution of prior awards for students who earned an associate degree in each of the last six academic years. In 2017-18, 79.4 percent were first-time graduates (had no prior award), 4.1 percent had previously earned a bachelor's degree or higher, 8.2 percent had previously earned an associate degree, and 8.4 percent had previously earned a certificate.

Figure 8: Bachelor's Degree Earners Aged 40 and Above – Distribution of Prior Awards



**Figure 8** shows the percentage distribution of prior awards for students who earned bachelor's degrees at age 40 or older in each of the last six academic years. An increasing number of graduates had prior credentials in each year since 2012-13. In 2017-18, 42 percent of bachelor's degree recipients aged 40 and above did not have a prior credential, which is a drop from 48.6 percent in 2012-13.

Figure 9: Associate Degree Earners Aged 40 and Above – Distribution of Prior Awards



**Figure 9** shows the percentage distribution of prior awards for students who earned associate degrees at age 40 or older in each of the last six academic years. An increasing number of graduates had prior credentials in each year since 2012-13. In 2017-18, 66.1 percent of associate degree recipients aged 40 and above did not have a prior credential, which is a drop from 75.5 percent in 2012-13.

A large, diverse group of young people, likely students, are shown in a celebratory mood. They are outdoors, with green foliage in the background. Many have their arms raised in the air, some are clapping, and several are smiling or shouting with their mouths open. They are wearing casual clothing like t-shirts and jeans. The overall atmosphere is one of excitement and joy.

# Questions?

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