

FOSTERING GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS AT A HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTION

Harold Stanislaw
California State University, Stanislaus
Turlock, CA



1

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- ☹️ Why graduate school?
 - ?? Factors impacting graduate student success
- ☹️ The CEGE program
 - ?? Impact of CEGE
- ☹️ Future directions
 - ?? No need to take notes!



2

KEY PERSONNEL

- **Project director**
 - Shawna Young, PhD
- **Activity coordinators**
 - Molly Crumpton Winter, PhD
 - Harold Stanislaw, PhD
 - Katie Olivant, PhD
- **Administrative support**
 - Jeanne Elliott



3

WHY GRADUATE SCHOOL?



4

FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

- Graduate students are rarely eligible for Pell grants
- Department of Education HSI awards (2013) 
 - Graduate: \$19.4 million (PPOHA)
 - Undergrad: \$190.1 million (STEM and Development)
- For every \$1 spent on HSI graduate programs, DOE spends almost \$10 on HSI undergraduate programs
- There are 3 graduate students in the US for every 10 undergraduates



5

WHY GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

- Compete in a global society
- Professorate values grad school
- Representation
- Train the next generation
- Promotion, money
- Lifelong learning
- Advanced training
- Social status
- Gain knowledge and give back



6

WHY GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?



- **Right brain reasons**
 - Personal development
 - Explore areas of interest more deeply
 - Avoid “the real world” for a few more years

WHY GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

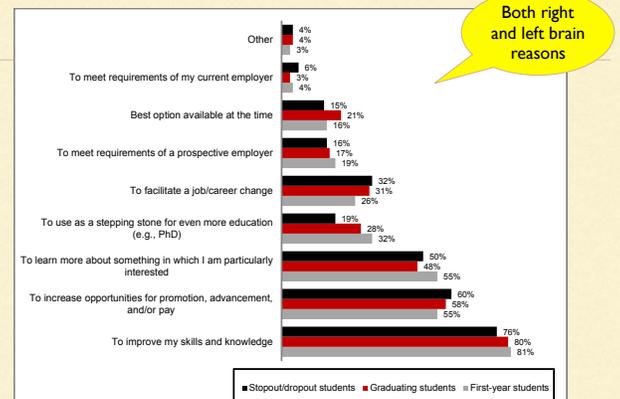
- **Left brain reasons**
 - Higher salary (true in 30+ countries studied to date, controlling for type of work)
 - More and better career options
 - Required for some careers
 - Increased prestige/power



WHY GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?



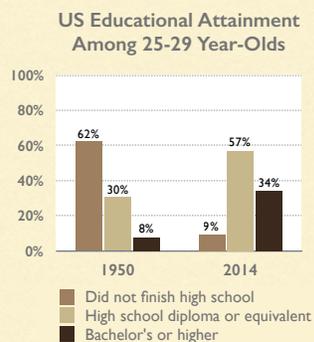
Figure 4.1. Primary Reasons for Enrolling in Master's Programs by Type of Respondent



Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Master's Completion Project

WHY GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

- **College is the new high school**
 - A bachelor's degree is becoming the norm
- **Graduate school is the new college**
 - An advanced degree is increasingly necessary



GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

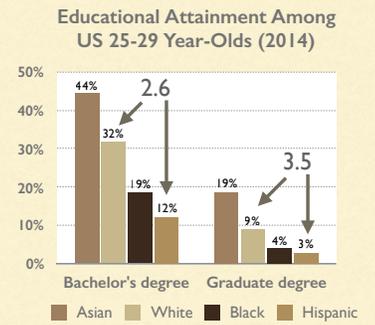
THE LITERATURE ON GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS



13

DISPARITIES IN UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE EDUCATION

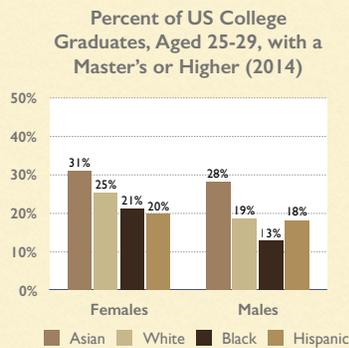
- Large disparities exist at the undergraduate and graduate levels
- Graduate disparities are even larger than undergraduate disparities



14

DISPARITIES IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

- Females are more likely than males to have a graduate degree
- Graduate disparities exhibit different trends for males and females



15

CAUSES OF DISPARITIES IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

- Undergraduate disparities lead to graduate disparities
 - Fewer Hispanic Bachelor's degrees = Fewer Hispanic graduate school applicants
- Factors associated with undergraduate disparities may also create graduate disparities
 - First generation, low income, etc.
 - Factors may differ; due to more selective entry criteria for graduate programs

16

FACILITATING GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

- Instead of examining disparities from a deficit perspective, consider a focus on facilitating graduate student success
- Facilitation can occur at three stages
 - Increase the number of students applying to graduate school
 - Increase graduate school acceptance rates
 - Increase the likelihood of graduate program completion

17

FACILITATING GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

- Instead of examining disparities from a deficit perspective, consider a focus on facilitating graduate student success
- Facilitation can occur at three stages
 - Apply
 - Get in
 - Get out

18

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICANTS

- Advertise graduate degree benefits
- Help students resolve conflicts with family, work, etc.
- Help students realize they are capable of entering and completing a graduate program
- Encourage students to apply
- Demystify the application process
- Resolve financial barriers to applying (standardized test expenses, application fees, etc.)



19

INCREASING THE QUALITY OF GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

- Two elements
 - Improve the quality of the applicant
 - Improve the quality of the application
- Help applicants become more competitive
 - Help students excel in their undergraduate preparation
 - Help students identify graduate programs that fit their interests, skills, and abilities



20

INCREASING THE QUALITY OF GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

- Help applications better communicate the applicant's qualities
 - Allow students to practice standardized tests; teach test-taking strategies
 - Provide feedback on personal statements
 - Role-play the application interview
 - Inform students how to obtain strong letters of support



21

INCREASING PROGRAM COMPLETION RATES

- Help students resolve conflicts with work, family, etc.
- Teach students to adjust to greater independence
- Train students in the quantitative skills appropriate to their discipline
- Help students develop graduate-level writing skills
 - Especially important for ESL students



22

THE CSU STANISLAUS CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE EDUCATION (CEGE)



23

THE CEGE PROGRAM

- Funded in 2010 by a Dept of Education 5-year PPOHA grant (Title V, Part B, Award P031MI05016)
 - Currently on a no-cost extension
- A broad variety of services targets each major component of graduate student success
 - Increase the number and quality of graduate school applications
 - Increase completion rates and decrease time to completion
- Policy decisions made by faculty governance



24

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

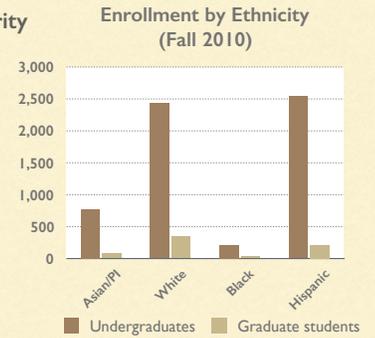
- CSU Stanislaus is a public university in California's Central Valley
- Enrollment is ~7,800 undergrads and ~1,200 grad students
- 7 credential, 31 Master's, and 2 EdD programs



25

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

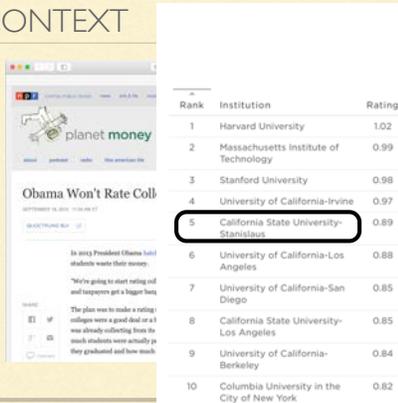
- CSU Stanislaus is a minority majority institution
- Over 90% of students are first generation and/or low-income
- When the grant began, URM's were much less likely than Whites to enter graduate school



26

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- We're Number 5!
 - Fifth (after Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and UC Irvine) in a national ranking of institutions that promote social mobility
 - Most other Cal State and UC campuses are also ranked in the top 50



27

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING APPLICATION RATES

- U of Illinois at Chicago medical school recruits students (and their families) in high school



28

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING APPLICATION RATES



29

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING APPLICATION RATES

- Targeted social media
- Recognizing the need
- Online info sessions (multiple languages)
- Self-efficacy
- Understanding the options
- Mentoring (and understanding fit)
- Teaching students and families about educational pathways in the area



30

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING ACCEPTANCE RATES

05:00



31

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING ACCEPTANCE RATES

- Personal statements
- Soft skills development
- Holistic review in admissions
- “What really matters”
- Engage faculty in outreach
- Connect with students about reasons to apply



32

CEGE SERVICES TARGETING THE NUMBER AND QUALITY OF APPLICATIONS

- Graduate school admission workshop
 - Overview of campus graduate programs, including admission requirements and deadlines
 - Federal, state, and local financial aid opportunities for graduate students
 - Resources available to help graduate students succeed, including the CECE program
- Students must apply to the University and to the graduate program



33

CEGE SERVICES TARGETING THE NUMBER AND QUALITY OF APPLICATIONS

- GRE writing skills workshop
 - Overview and introduction to the GRE
 - Test-taking and writing strategies
 - Practice in responding to a sample prompt in a timed environment, with constructive feedback
- Some disciplines offer subject-specific standardized test workshops



34

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING COMPLETION RATES

05:00



35

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING COMPLETION RATES

- Ensuring funding
- Designated academic advisor; warning system
- Supplemental instruction
- Peer tutoring
- Student mentoring evaluation



36

CEGE SERVICES TARGETING PROGRAM COMPLETION

- Significant barriers to completing graduate school
 - Financial challenges (often more important for graduate students than for undergraduates)
 - Completing the project, thesis, or dissertation
- Financial assistance is provided by graduate assistantships, mini-grants, and travel grants, and always involves a faculty sponsor
- Completion of the project, thesis, or dissertation is facilitated by writing residency program and individualized writing and quantitative assistance

Fosters mentoring



GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

- Competitive awards of \$2,000-\$4,000
 - One award may be shared by 2 or 3 students
- Students propose a project that will assist a faculty member in their teaching or in their research, scholarship, and creative activities (RSCA)
- Award decisions are based in part upon relevance of the proposal to the student's academic or professional goals
- Priority is given to students not previously awarded



MINI-GRANTS AND TRAVEL GRANTS

- Mini-grants are \$300 awards to help students with their RSCA work
- Students can present their proposals at an annual Research Colloquium (Fall semester), and their results at an annual Student Research Competition (Spring semester)
 - Cash awards (up to \$500) to the top three presentations in each category
- Travel grants are \$1,000 awards to support presentation of the student's RSCA work at conferences, exhibits, etc.



RELATED RESOURCES

- Additional supports for student RSCA include IRB workshops (one per semester), and financial resources provided by some programs
 - Psychology provides graduate students up to \$700 in resources needed to complete the thesis
 - CEGE services complement other campus resources, filling holes that exist across graduate programs



GRADUATE WRITING RESIDENCY PROGRAM

- An intensive writing community of up to 10 students, overseen by a faculty writing coach
- Students must have advanced beyond the stage of searching for a project/thesis/dissertation topic
- Four 4-hour meetings over a period of 6-8 weeks (16 hours total)
- Some general instruction is provided, but most of the time is spent writing, with the coach and fellow students answering questions as they arise



GRADUATE WRITING RESIDENCY PROGRAM TOPICS

- Time management
- The project/thesis/dissertation as product and as process
- Searching and citing the literature
- Formatting (University guidelines and graduate program requirements – usually APA)
- Figures, tables, and statistics
- Organization is the most common student concern
- Assistance in mechanics is provided, but not the focus

Template D or E?



WRITING AND QUANTITATIVE ASSISTANCE

- A faculty member from English provides one-on-one assistance in writing mechanics
- A faculty member from Psychology provides one-on-one assistance in quantitative issues
 - Issues range from “Help! What do I do with these scores I just gathered?” to “How can I conduct a repeated measures ANOVA in SPSS and report the results in APA format?”
- Assistance is provided on a drop-in basis



43

RELATED RESOURCES

- The University Library provides workshops and on-line tutorials on project/thesis/dissertation formatting, as well as drop-in hours specifically for formatting
- Timing is important
 - Writing residency program begins in the second half of each semester
 - The library's formatting workshops take place 2-4 weeks before each semester's cutoff date for project/thesis/dissertation submission



44

OTHER ELEMENTS OF CEGE

- Community-based curricula and research projects
 - Now institutionalized by several of the original participating graduate programs
 - Provide real-world, pre-professional experience
 - Help remind students why their graduate education is valuable
 - Provide students with useful networking opportunities



45

OTHER ELEMENTS OF CEGE

- Assessment of graduate student learning
 - Ensures that students in all graduate programs can attain common, desired outcomes
 - Especially important with adoption of a comprehensive exam option by some graduate programs
- Calculation of graduate student program completion rates and time to completion
 - Challenging, because graduate programs differ widely in the number of units, culminating experience, etc.



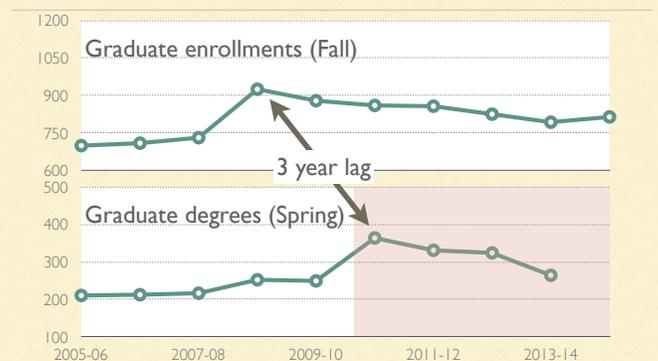
46

IMPACT OF CEGE



47

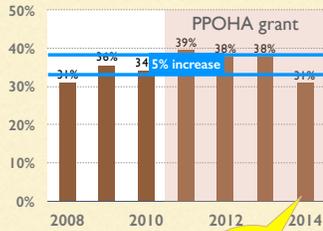
CSU STANISLAUS GRADUATE ENROLLMENT AND DEGREE TRENDS



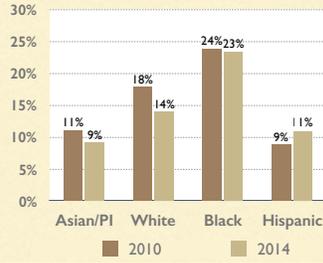
48

CSU STANISLAUS TRENDS IN GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED

Graduate Degrees as a Percentage of Enrollments (3 year lag)



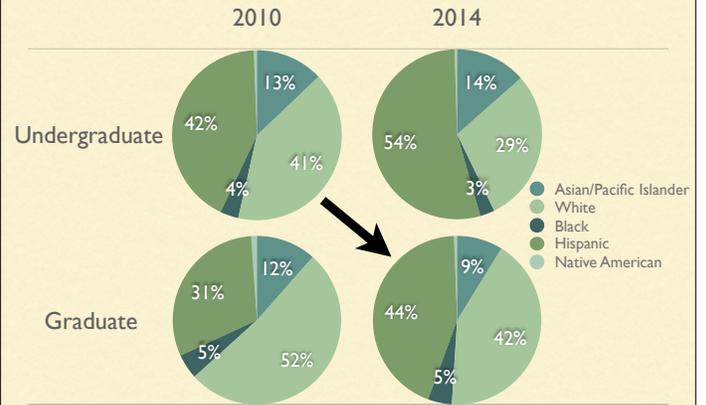
Percent of CSU Stanislaus Degrees Conferred at the Graduate Level



Anomaly!

49

CSU STANISLAUS ENROLLMENTS



50

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



51

ACCELERATING ENROLLMENT GROWTH

- Graduate enrollments have been declining, but are back to their historical growth rate



- How can we encourage enrollment growth similar to that triggered by the recession?



52

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Improve advising, outreach, and recruitment of undergraduates into graduate school
 - Especially important for first generation students
- Make the application process as seamless as possible
 - Do not require separate University (online) and program (paper) applications
- Provide graduate students with a comprehensive set of services similar to undergraduate TRIO services



53

THANKS FOR PARTICIPATING!

PLEASE COMPLETE THE PAPER OR ONLINE EVALUATION

CEGE web site
csustan.edu/cege

Questions?
HStanislaw@csustan.edu



54