



Educational Master Plan

2026–2030



Cuesta College

Educational Master Plan 2026-2030



San Luis Obispo County Community College District

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Superintendent/ President's Message

Cuesta College Mission and Vision statements establish transformation of a diverse community of learners to advance social equity as the core of our institutional service. Our commitment to students and our community is set forth in our institutional values, which guided the development of this Educational Master Plan. The Educational Master Plan will serve as our roadmap over the next four years as we strive to meet measurable goals through action items that will transform the educational experience, enhance the institution's infrastructure and communication, support employees in professional development, and expand our community presence and impact.

Over the last seven years, I have observed first-hand the engagement of our constituency groups in integrated planning and the work to carry out the plans. Our governance structure has successfully supported the complex planning cycle and has brought forth recommendations for improvement. The development of this Educational Master Plan invited broad participation of our campus and community. The Educational Master Plan Task Force, which served as the primary author of this document, included representatives from all constituency groups. They invested considerable time and effort to synthesize the input from the numerous forums. Their work honored and valued our process and resulted in a plan that will guide decision-making, including resource allocation, while advancing our institutional evaluation of performance leading to improvement.

Cuesta College is an amazing place to teach, learn, and work. Our commitment to high quality educational programs and exceptional student support provides students with limitless possibilities upon completion. I look forward to the realization of the goals set forth in this Educational Master Plan and the transformation of student lives it will bring.

Jill Stearns, Ph.D.

Superintendent/President

Acknowledgments

Board of Trustees

Dr. Debra Stakes – President, Board of Trustees, District 2
Danna Stroud – Vice President, Board of Trustees, District 1
Patrick Mullen – Board Member, District 3
Pete Sysak – Board Member, District 4
Mary Strobridge – Board Member, District 5
Isaac Pummill – Student Trustee

College Executive Team

Dr. Jill Stearns - Superintendent/President
Dr. Jason Curtis - Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Instruction
Dr. Elizabeth Coria - Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Student Success and Support Programs
Dr. Todd Hampton - Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Administrative Services
Jennifer Burchett - Interim Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Human Resources

Educational Master Plan Task Force

While hundreds of voices are reflected in the development of this plan, a special acknowledgment goes to the Cuesta College Educational Master Plan Task Force (EMPTF) members listed below.

College Executives	Dr. Elizabeth Coria – Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Student Success and Support Services Dr. Todd Hampton – Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Administrative Services
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Classified Staff (CCCUE)	Geovany Castillo Cisneros – Coordinator, Outreach and International Student Program Madison Wethington – Financial Aid Specialist Jennifer Noriega – Student Success Support Technician; Vice President, CCCUE Rebecca Carter – Program Coordinator - Community Engagement; President, CCCUE Fatma Shihadeh – Department Assistant, Mathematics
Faculty (Academic Senate and CCFT)	Dina Hallmark – Articulation Officer/Generalist Counselor Katherine Haisch – Instructor, Nutrition/Culinary Dr. Greg Baxley – Instructor, Chemistry; President, CCFT Heather Tucker – Division Chair, Nursing and Allied Health Jen Shellhorn – Part-time faculty, Physical Sciences
Management Senate	Christopher Mutshnick – Dean, Student Success & Support Programs Gladis Villalpando – Supervisor of Student Success Center, North County Campus Lexie Bell – Director of Institutional Grants Cinda Bitz – Assistant Director of Human Resources Aaron Borgeson – Director of Outreach and Enrollment Services

Additionally, support and coordination for the EMPTF would not have been possible without the committed efforts of Dr. Elizabeth Coria, Executive Liaison, and Megan Fay-Mitchell, Logistics Coordinator.

Executive Summary

The San Luis Obispo County Community College District (SLOCCCD) Educational Master Plan (EMP) 2026–2030 sets a bold course for transformational change at Cuesta College. It envisions an inclusive, student-centered institution where diverse learners are supported through streamlined academic pathways, flexible scheduling and delivery modalities, and tailored support services that ensure timely completion of degrees or certificates. Once embarking on an Area of Study, or meta major, students can pivot with ease within the pathway through conscientiously developed, applicable coursework for transfer or gainful employment leading to upward mobility, livable wage jobs, and professional advancement. Students can reach completion milestones through stackable credentials leading to wage increases and professional advancement.

The SLOCCCD EMP 2026-2030 is a strategic roadmap designed to guide the institution in fulfilling its mission, vision, and the transformational change required to meet today's student, community, and workforce needs. Cuesta College's mission, vision, and values emphasize diversity, equity, inclusion, student-centered practices, and sustainability. The mission and vision reflect the college's commitment to social justice, equity, and its designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). The EMP outlines broad goals and supporting objectives that prioritize student success, enrollment growth, workforce readiness, operational efficiency, and community engagement.

Developed through a collaborative process involving internal and external stakeholders, the EMP aligns with the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) *Vision 2030* goals. It focuses on strengthening student access, success, equity, and workforce development while addressing institutional challenges and opportunities. The EMP articulates collegewide goals and supporting objectives that will help guide Cuesta College in establishing priorities, planning for future needs, evaluating curriculum, guiding the expansion and/or elimination of programs, developing innovative new programs, and guiding resource allocation as it focuses on strengthening student access, success, and the achievement of equitable student outcomes.

The college continues to implement Guided Pathways to streamline student experiences, improve retention, and eliminate equity gaps. Progress includes program mapping, case management, and equity-driven communication. Key initiatives such as the Caring Campus program and the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Academy aim to foster student belonging and redesign courses with equity-focused practices. Cuesta College also strengthens its partnerships with local high schools through dual enrollment programs, providing free college courses to high school students and reducing the time to degree completion. Additionally, the college has expanded its distance education offerings to meet student needs in the post-pandemic era.

Despite these advancements, Cuesta College faces challenges such as declining high school enrollment, financial uncertainty due to shifts in funding formulas, geographic isolation, and high housing costs that affect access. Balancing online and in-person course delivery remains a critical issue. However, these challenges also present opportunities for growth. The college plans to expand noncredit programs, develop stackable credentials and bachelor's degree options, and strengthen partnerships with business, industry, and educational institutions. Leveraging data-driven tools for enrollment management and scheduling will further enhance institutional efficiency and support timely completion by students.

Regional efforts are central to the EMP, with a focus on the North County Campus and South County Center. The North County Campus is undergoing infrastructure upgrades, including the construction of a new instructional building to support trades and career education. Meanwhile, at the South County Center, the college is exploring plans to establish a SLOCCCD dedicated site to expand access and offerings for area residents.

Cuesta College is committed to aligning its programs with regional labor market demands, focusing on high-growth industries such as healthcare, agriculture, aerospace, and clean energy. Institutional effectiveness initiatives include revising governance structures, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing professional development in emerging trends like artificial intelligence and project-based learning. Community engagement

remains a priority; strengthened partnerships with local businesses, government, and educational institutions will support workforce development and lifelong learning.

Cuesta College’s Educational Master Plan, along with its Facilities Master Plan, provides the overarching structure for all institutional planning and is central to the college’s integrated planning. The EMP was developed through a collegewide planning process that comprised (a) analysis of extensive internal and external data, including workforce data; (b) vision sessions with District trustees and Areas of Study Pathways; and (c) input from diverse constituent groups and community partners, including faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community leaders. A Planning and Design Retreat was held in November 2024 and a dedicated Educational Master Plan Task Force (EMPTF) met monthly beginning January 2025 to review the data, constituent and community input, trends and planning assumptions, and challenges and opportunities for the next four years. A campus forum was held in March to share the work of the project and encourage dialogue and feedback.

The EMPTF and the President’s Executive Team convened on April 29-30, 2025, for an eight-hour planning session held over two days. During this session, the groups carefully reviewed the EMPTF’s work to-date and collaboratively drafted broad college goals and supporting institutional objectives designed to achieve the highest priorities for Cuesta College over the next four years. These goals and objectives reflect a shared institutional vision and provide a roadmap for coordinated action across all areas of the college. Clusters, divisions and/or departments would be responsible for developing area goals and objectives aligned to the overall EMP Goals and Objectives. The following section delineates the finalized Goals and Objectives that will guide Cuesta College’s efforts to strengthen student success, equity, and institutional effectiveness.

Educational Master Plan – Four-Year Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Strengthen Student Outcomes.

Objective 1.1	Expand case management to increase institutional student engagement strategies by enhancing student support programs.
Objective 1.2	Increase enrollment of non-traditional students through program development and targeted outreach efforts.
Objective 1.3	Strengthen equitable access by reducing barriers for targeted student populations.
Objective 1.4	Use data analysis to innovate programs and supports to strengthen completion and post-completion outcomes.
Objective 1.5	Implement student-centered approaches to scheduling in order to increase the institution’s efficiency rate.

Goal 2: Refine and Expand Educational Pathways.

Objective 2.1	Reinforce and expand career education pathways through a culture of inquiry.
Objective 2.2	Integrate Guided Pathways as a completion strategy.
Objective 2.3	Advance Dual Enrollment as a valued pathway.
Objective 2.4	Leverage partnerships to advance the diverse and evolving needs of our students.
Objective 2.5	Implement alternative methods of awarding credit.

Goal 3: Foster a Culture that Values Individuals, Innovation, Effectiveness, and Efficiency.

Objective 3.1	Eliminate institutional barriers to student success by reviewing and updating campus processes.
Objective 3.2	Utilize proven communication strategies to promote campus-wide understanding and awareness.
Objective 3.3	Create collaborative opportunities and spaces to promote an open climate.
Objective 3.4	Integrate the principles of DEIA in campus training, communications, processes, and policies.

College Profile

About the District

Established in 1963, Cuesta College is at the heart of the scenic California Central Coast in San Luis Obispo County and welcomed its first students in the Fall of 1965. As the area's population expanded over the next several decades, the College added new programs, services, and facilities to meet the educational needs of the communities it serves and contribute to the economic vitality of San Luis Obispo County. It is highly regarded throughout the state and the country for its excellent education programs, extensive student success and support programs, and exceptional faculty and staff.

Cuesta College's primary service areas include San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles and Arroyo Grande. The college also serves the surrounding areas of San Luis Obispo County. Currently, Cuesta College offers 84 degrees and 128 certificate programs at several locations. With a focus on improving access to higher education throughout the San Luis Obispo County, educational partnerships, such as those with local unified school districts, have also allowed the College to offer classes on high school campuses. Additionally, Cuesta College collaborates with educational and workforce partners across San Luis Obispo County as a member institution in the San Luis Obispo County Adult Education Consortium, which provides programs, services, and opportunities for a diverse population of adult students.

Understanding the critical role it plays in providing students with equitable pathways to higher education and living-wage occupations, the Cuesta College Promise Program offers 2 years of tuition-free support to local high school students who graduate and enroll at Cuesta College full-time. Cuesta College is also proud to be a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and a recipient of the Title V HSI grant from the U.S. Department of Education. To strengthen the College as an HSI, these grants have assisted with increasing transfer rates and improving academic support services for Hispanic/Latino/a and first-generation college students. As it looks toward the future, Cuesta College is committed to expanding equitable educational and career opportunities that meet the needs of the diverse and vibrant communities it serves. The Educational Master Plan (EMP) serves as the foundation for the College's bright future as outlined in Cuesta College's mission, vision, and values.

Mission

Cuesta College transforms a diverse community of learners with education and empowerment to become responsible stewards and leaders in a dynamic global community.

Vision

Cuesta College will advance social equity by maximizing the human potential of all students through innovative educational programs and services.

Values

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Cuesta College values student validation, affirmation, and belonging as essential for a successful educational experience. As a Hispanic Serving Institution, we strive to create a welcoming culture that recognizes and respects these students within the complex and beautiful mosaic of intersectionality embodied in the Cuesta College community.

Student-Centered

Cuesta College values students and prioritizes them in the work of the college by creating an accessible and safe environment that promotes access, choice, opportunity, and student voice – an environment that meets students' needs, interests, and aspirations.

Student Success

Cuesta College values student success in meeting their intellectual, cultural, and personal goals. We value practices, processes, policies, and pedagogy that result in student outcomes that can no longer be predicted by structural inequalities related to race, gender, disability, or socioeconomic status.

Access and Opportunity

Cuesta College values access to education as a practice of freedom. We subscribe to the philosophy that education should not be preserved for the elite but rather must be accessible to anyone and everyone desirous of higher education. We value access to programs and services that are unimpeded by structural, procedural, or bureaucratic barriers.

Kindness, Care, and Respect

Cuesta College values a culture of compassion, empathy, respect, and collegiality, providing all students, employees, and community members with the opportunity to share space in a nurturing, respectful, caring environment in which to study, work, and thrive.

Openness and Innovation

Cuesta College values creativity as key to knowledge, production, teaching, and problem solving. We cultivate spaces where risks are encouraged and where innovative thinking is supported.

Community Partnerships

Cuesta College values deep and meaningful engagement and collaboration with community-based organizations, local and regional partners, businesses, and educational institutions.

Sustainability

Cuesta College values our commitment to practicing wisdom and discernment to sustain our fiscal, human, and environmental resources into the future.

Land Acknowledgement

Cuesta College collectively acknowledges that it occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of both the Salinan and the Northern Chumash who are the original, current, and future caretakers of the land upon which, as guests, we work, teach, and learn.

Accreditation

Cuesta College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The ACCJC reaffirmed Cuesta College's accreditation on January 13, 2021. The college is beginning work on the next Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), which will be submitted in December 2026, during this four-year Educational Master Plan cycle. In addition to the ACCJC college-wide accreditation, several Cuesta College Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are additionally accredited by external, industry-specific organizations.

College Fast Facts - Community, Students, and Outcomes

The chart that follows displays a snapshot summary of current data for Cuesta College. Data are provided about the Cuesta College community, its students, and outcomes. More detailed information can be found in the Data Portfolio section of this document, the Appendices, and the Cuesta College Office of Institutional Research.

Cuesta College Community, Student, and Outcomes Summary Data

Community	Students	Outcomes
<i>San Luis Obispo County</i> Population (280,072 in 2023) - Modest growth projected Educational Attainment - Higher than state and national averages, yet 47.3% have less than an Associate Degree - Ed Attainment is lower in Paso Robles and Atascadero, where 57-58% have less than an associate degree Age Distribution - Slightly older population Ethnicity - Majority White (66.0%) - Latino (25.2%); Asian (4.3%), Multi (3.9%), Black (1.9%), and American Indian (1.5%) Origin of Birth 9.6% are foreign born 17.2% speak a language other than English at home High Schools - Enrollment projected to be flat in the next five years - Majority of English Language Learners speak Spanish - Higher than average college-going rates Socioeconomic Status - Income and Poverty rates are comparable to state averages, but housing costs are higher Labor Market - Regionally, numerous opportunities to expand college programs leading to in-demand and higher wage jobs, with the largest potential gaps in workforce supply in Health, and Business & Entrepreneurship - Nationally, 20% of workers do remote work, and 16% of companies are fully remote, with the largest online industries being Computer/IT, Accounting, and Marketing	<i>Cuesta College (Fall 2024)</i> Headcount 12,854 FTES 3,685 FTES – Annual 2023-24 7,379 Student Unit Load Full-Time 2,887 Part-Time 8,754 Noncredit 1,175 Enrollment Status First Time 15.6% First Time Transfer 6.5% Returning 5.8% Special Admit/HS Enrich 31.2% Continuing 40.9% Students by Modality Distance Ed Only 30.7% Face to Face Only 41.5% Distance and F2F 27.8% Gender Female 48.5% Male 46.0% Other/Unknown 5.5% Ethnicity Asian 2.8% Black 1.8% Am Indian/AK Native 0.4% Latino 37.6% Multi Ethnicity 6.2% HI/Pacific Islander 0.1% White 45.9% Unknown 5.1% Age Group 19 and under 53.7% 20-24 18.7% 25-34 12.1% 35-49 9.1% 50+ 6.5% Promise, Pell, AB540 2023-2024 CPG Promise 28.7% Pell Grant 13.3% AB540/Dreamers 2.1%	<i>Student Outcomes</i> Awards 2023-2024 Associate Degree for Transfer 596 AA/AS (local degree) 1,309 Certificate of Achievement 2,013 Certificate of Specialization 337 Transfer 2022-2023 Total 118 Public 103 Private 15 Degree/Transfer Students - Fewer units accumulated upon graduation than the state or regional average - Degree completion/transfer rates are higher than the region or state - Fall to Spring Persistence is lower Career Education - Higher rates of earning 9+ units - Lower wages and earning the regional living wage Adult Ed/ESL - Although the number of students is low, outcomes are higher than average in terms of skills gain and median change in earnings Top Degrees 2023-2024 AA LA: Social & Behavioral Sci AA LA: Arts & Humanities AA LA: Science AS: Pre-Nursing AST Business Administration Top Certificates 2023-2024 CSU GE Certificate IGETC Certificate General Business Child Dev Assoc Teach Bus Career Track Core Top Transfer Destinations (4-yr) Cal Poly San Luis Obispo UC Santa Cruz CSU Sacramento UC Santa Barbara UC Davis

Note: More detailed data is included elsewhere in this report, including in the Appendices.

Sources: US Census, CA Department of Labor, CA Department of Education, CCCCO DataVista, California Community College Career & Technical Education Outcomes Survey, Internal Cuesta Data provided by Institutional Research.

State Context

Today, the California Community College system of higher education consists of 116 colleges within 73 districts, each governed by a locally elected Board of Trustees. Collectively, these institutions serve over 1.9 million students. The state context is important to the development of Cuesta College's Educational Master Plan in order to ensure alignment with the collective vision of the California Community Colleges system for providing community college services to the state as a whole. Additionally, California state laws and regulations govern all community colleges in the state, and Cuesta College receives state apportionment dollars to conduct its work within these laws and the state vision.

In the sections that follow, a brief overview of three key areas is provided to frame this Educational Master Plan: (1) Role of California Community Colleges, (2) Vision 2030, and (3) New State Initiatives. More information can be found on the [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office](#) website.

Role of California Community Colleges: Meeting the Needs of Students, Communities, and Workforce Development

The California Community Colleges (CCC) system is the largest higher education system in the nation, with an annual enrollment of approximately two million students. California's community colleges remain dedicated to advancing the state's economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that enhance workforce development. California's community colleges are also notable for attracting the most diverse student body in public higher education. As cited on the [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office](#) website, 70% of California's community college students are people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, 51% of California State University graduates and 29% of University of California graduates started at a California community college. The system is pivotal in fostering economic growth, global competitiveness, and equity in education.

Vision 2030 Foundations

In 2017, State Chancellor Eloy Oakley launched *Vision for Success*, an initiative focused on a commitment to ensure that students from all backgrounds succeed in reaching their goals and improving their families and communities to eliminate gaps once and for all. Three key elements were emphasized:

- **Guided Pathways** – Four pillars to support the student's journey from the point of entry through completion: Clarify the Path, Enter the Path, Stay on the Path, and Ensure Learning. Collaboration both across disciplines within fields of study, and between instructional and student support services is essential to the process; student access, retention, persistence, and completion are intended milestones.
- **Student Equity and Achievement** – Emphasizes equity in access, success, and support by examining disaggregated data and focusing actions to identify and eliminate disproportionate gaps among various student population subsets (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.).
- **Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF)** – Included in the 2018-19 state budget as an innovative method to allocate funding to community college districts using a formula designed to support the goals and commitment set by the *Vision for Success* plan and is aligned with the *Guided Pathways* student success metrics. The SCFF is based on three primary calculations: (1) A base allocation which largely reflects enrollment; (2) a supplemental allocation based on the number of students receiving financial aid; and (3) a student success allocation based on success outcomes for the Vision for Success metrics.

CCC Context: Key Directive Highlights



Source: Graphic created by CBT as adapted from reports of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020-2021, the *Vision for Success Reaffirmed (2021)*, the *Governor's Roadmap (2022-2027)*, and the new State Chancellor Dr. Sonya Christian's *Vision 2030 (2024-2030)* have all continued to reaffirm the commitment to the three cornerstones of Equity in Student Access, Equity in Success, and Equity in Support. From 2017 to today, the goals of each of these statewide frameworks have remained consistent, as reflected in the infographic.

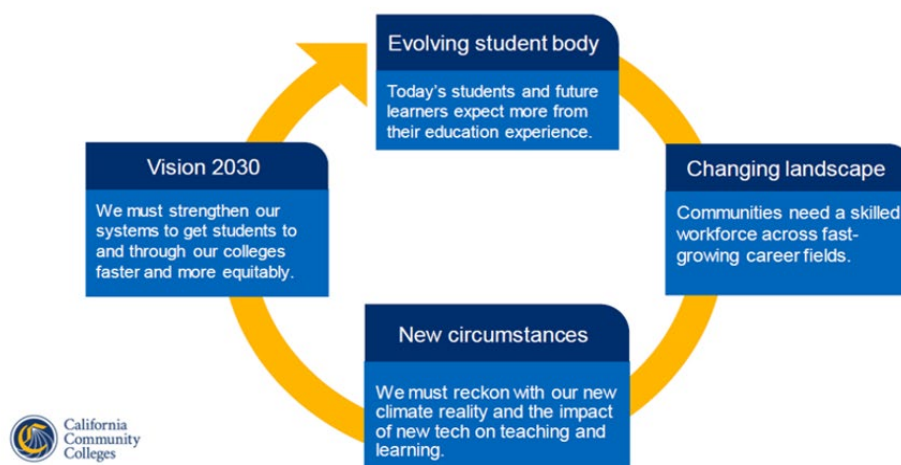
Emerging California Higher Education Priorities and Technologies

As Cuesta College embarks on its new four-year Educational Master Plan, the tenets of *Vision 2030* continue to frame the work of the college. Additional new initiatives have been developing as well, including the following:

- Refinement and expansion of the California community college baccalaureate degree.
- Collaborative work to streamline transfer among California's three public systems of higher education (UC, CSU, and the CCCs).
- California's emerging higher education priorities and technologies, including the Master Plan for Career Education and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

These new initiatives further emphasize the need to realize *Vision 2030* by addressing such key areas as the evolving student body and their increased expectations, the changing landscape of the workforce in fast-growing career fields, new technologies in teaching and learning, and the need to streamline and strengthen college systems for faster and more equitable student outcomes and completion. These concepts are depicted in the CCCCO's infographic below.

Vision 2030: Meeting the Needs of Today and Opportunities of Tomorrow



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Vision 2030, October 16, 2023

Lastly, the emphasis on Career and Technical Education in community colleges is evident in the Governor's enactment in December 2024 of California's *Master Plan for Career Education*, as depicted below.



Key College Initiatives

The above State Context provides both the foundation and framework for key initiatives that are underway at Cuesta College as it, along with 115 other community colleges in the state, seek to realize Vision 2030. Cuesta College embarks on these initiatives to uniquely serve the students, employers, and communities of the San Luis Obispo County region on a local level. Several Cuesta College key initiatives are highlighted in the sections that follow.

Caring Campus

Cuesta College has embraced the Caring Campus Initiative. Caring Campus is based on behavioral changes at an institutional level to create a college environment that increases students' sense of belonging and connectedness, and in turn, persistence and completion. The transformation for the Caring Campus Initiative emphasizes the principle of "being student-centered" in day-to-day student services and activities. There are five behavioral commitments that the college has made: the Ten-Foot Rule, Use of Nametags, Cross-Departmental Awareness, Warm Referrals, and First Week Greetings. These commitments have been

implemented on both physical campuses and virtually. In order to maintain momentum, many governance committee meetings feature an agenda item where members are asked to share how and what they have implemented or done in their respective area that is aligned with the Caring Campus behavioral commitments.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access

Cuesta College is an inclusive institution committed to creating a welcoming and supportive campus environment. We support all our students to achieve their educational goals and honor their diverse backgrounds and perspectives. As a proud designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Cuesta College is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Under the direction of the California Community College Chancellor's Student Equity and Achievement Program; Cuesta College developed an integrated three-year [Student Equity Plan \(SEP\)](#) for the college. The plan focuses on intentional programming and activities, specifically aimed at eliminating equity gaps in relation to access to the college, retention, course completion, certificate and degree completion, and transfer readiness. The SEP strives to correct disproportionate impact across the college's student body, and identifies strategies to support equity in student access, support, and success.

Guided Pathways

The Guided Pathways framework is an integrated, inclusive approach to reimagine and comprehensively transform the Cuesta student experience. This effort involves reshaping the college as an equitable institution that is more effective and efficient at serving our diverse student body with its diverse aspirations and its diverse social and academic preparations.

Using a student-centered approach and seeing the institution through a student lens, the transformation engages the college as an inquiry-based, networked community to create an equity-driven institution as competent in student completion as it is in student access.

The basis of the transformation effort is to utilize a Guided Pathways Framework to make the student experience more intentional, supported, and clear. The college is constructing processes and interventions to help guide and support each student, regardless of preparation, to reach their self-defined completion effectively and efficiently.

Overarching Goals of the Transformation

1. **Areas of Study:** All first time in college students identify an Area of Study at the time of application and select an Academic and Career Path by the end of their first academic year.
2. **Program Maps:** All instructional programs (degrees, certificates, and major preparation for transfer) have an adaptable program map with on and off ramps.
3. **Student Support:** All students receive intentional academic and non-academic support.
4. **Scheduling/Enrollment:** Course scheduling is data-driven and informed by students' availability and comprehensive educational plans.
5. **Student-Facing Technology:** All students utilize seamlessly integrated, interactive, comprehensive student-facing technology in support of their educational goals.
6. **Communication & Outreach:** The college provides interactive, coordinated, and targeted communication throughout the student experience.
7. **Professional Development:** All faculty, staff, and administrators participate in strategic, frequent, and consistent professional development to sustain Cuesta College's student-centered, equity-minded, data-driven efforts.

8. **Campus Community:** The college provides the physical and social space conducive to campus engagement and a sense of belonging.

Cuesta College Areas of Study

The following Areas of Study were identified as groups of programs that have related courses or similar employment outcomes. Students select an Area of Study rather than being required to choose a specific major, which gives them the option of guided exploration early in their college career. For current students, the Areas of Study can provide specialized support services and community-building events to help the student feel more connected. Cuesta College's eight Areas of Study continue to be refined.

- ❖ Business, Agriculture, Hospitality, and Legal
- ❖ Creative Arts, Humanities, and Communication
- ❖ Child Development, Education, and Information
- ❖ ESL and Adult Education
- ❖ Health and Wellness
- ❖ Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)
- ❖ Skilled Trades and Technology
- ❖ Social and Behavioral Sciences and Human Services

Guided Pathways

Cuesta College continues its work toward equitable student outcomes by embracing Guided Pathways as a framework for ensuring equity and eliminating institutional barriers that may have a disproportionate negative impact on students of color and low-income students. Cuesta College was a California Guided Pathways Phase Two (CAGP 2.0) institution and attended six institutes between 2020 and 2024 to help evolve the student experience. During this time, the college has fully implemented a Program Mapper and major/career exploration, redesigned the student onboarding process, implemented a case management model, and adopted equity-minded student-friendly communications.

The college has created structures and invested in technology to allow for supportive case management intervention and support to cultivate student engagement and belonging to increase retention, persistence and completion. Overall, a cultural shift is in progress to use the student voice to drive programs and services, to respond to student needs instead of creating practices based on assumptions, and to recognize the need for continued input from students to assess how we can best support them.

Expected Outcomes of the Transformation

While progress has been made with Guided Pathways, there is much work yet to be done to fully implement this initiative and bring it to scale. Work will continue in this next Educational Master Plan with the following expected outcomes of the transformation:

- Reduce/eliminate equity gaps
- Increase term-to-term persistence and retention
- Increase rates of completion and transfer
- Reduce time to completion and accumulation

Institutional Effectiveness and Transformation

Over the past three years, Cuesta College has engaged in three key initiatives to advance institutional effectiveness. These three initiatives included the review and revision of (a) the college's mission, vision, and values; (b) the institution's General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs); and (c) the College's governance structure. These initiatives are described in the following sections.

Revision of Cuesta College's Mission, Vision, and Values

The previous assessment of the Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) occurred in 2019, at which time the college decided to continue with the version adopted in 2016. Post-pandemic, a revision was needed to reflect the changes arising from the pandemic, the commitment to social justice and equity, and the college's status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The review process involved the formation of an ad hoc group to craft a feedback process and forward recommendations to College Council, Academic Senate, and the Superintendent/President. Based on the feedback, a new MVV draft was created, recommended through the governance process, and approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting in June 2024.

General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At Cuesta College, the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are the expected student learning outcomes for District students either graduating with A.A. or A.S. degrees, or who will transfer to a four-year college or university. These students will be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes contained within all six areas, based on General Education and discipline-specific courses at the lower division level.

To better support the college's Mission, Vision, and Values, it was determined that the college needed to revisit and revise the ILOs, which had been in place since 2012. The Institutional Learning Outcomes Revision Project (ILORP) was launched in Spring 2023 with a goal of completion at the end of the 2023-2024 academic year.

The college considered the ILO statements to encompass the outcomes in the General Education program. Because of that, there were no structures in place to directly, and independently, assess the GELOs. To correct this, the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of General Education courses are being mapped to the GELOs. This work is ongoing and once complete will allow the direct assessment of the GELOs.

Governance Structure Review

The College's governance has been guided by its Participatory Governance Handbook and Integrated Planning Manual, which, respectively, define the roles and responsibilities of the college's committees and stakeholder groups and ensure the timely completion of required plans. These guides and their related processes have worked as planned, as the college's accreditation status has been affirmed without issue in recent cycles. However, over the years, some stakeholders have raised concerns over the sustainability of the structures and processes. The cycle of planning is intense and requires an exceptional amount of administrative time and attention to maintain alignment with the established schedules. Further, the integrated planning process was developed in an earlier era prior to many changes at the state level, such as the CCCCO's Vision for Success, the Strong Workforce Program, the Student-Centered Funding Formula (SCFF), and an increasing emphasis on equity of outcomes and completion. While the planning process helped to ensure compliance with past ACCJC standards, it also prioritized process over outcomes.

In Fall 2020, following Cuesta College's most recent ACCJC Peer Review Team visit, the college applied for a Partnership Resource Team (PRT) under the CCCCO's Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI). An Area of Focus for the college was to conduct a comprehensive review of the participatory governance structure and committees. Using the feedback from the PRT visit, the college has continued to revise committee compositions and structure, such as the move to combine the Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committees in 2023. The college also established a new committee, the Policy and Procedure Review Committee, to ensure that Board Policies and Administrative Procedures were being reviewed on a regular cycle as well as in response to new State regulations (e.g., California Title 5).

In Spring 2024, the Planning and Budget Committee recommended that the Superintendent/President designate a task force to review college planning and governance processes and to make recommendations for revisions as a result of the ACCJC college accreditation standards revisions in 2023. In Spring 2025, the Governance Review Task Force recommendations were approved through the participatory governance process. Further work on the recommendations will begin Fall 2025.

Baccalaureate Degrees

In 2014-2015, the State of California, similar to other states, began a pilot program offering Community College Bachelor's Degrees. The program was well-received and has expanded over the past decade. As of 2025, 39 baccalaureate degrees are in place (or in progress) across California's 116 Community Colleges. Additionally, articulated 2+2 programs have also grown as students seek affordable, accessible bachelor's degrees in a streamlined and shortened time-to-degree model.

Cuesta College has been working with four-year educational partners to meet this need for its students in San Luis Obispo County. California's Central Coast has been considered a "higher education desert" by some, with limited access to affordable and accessible universities. Cuesta College has developed 2+2 programs with area universities such as CSU Monterey Bay and Cal Poly in Nursing and Teacher education, respectively. Plans are underway to expand this effort and explore the development of Cuesta College baccalaureate degrees as part of the 2026-2030 Educational Master Plan.

Distance Education

Due to the geographic limitations of the region, particularly in the Northern and Southern areas of the county, students have long commutes and transportation challenges in accessing Cuesta College programs and services. Cuesta College has worked to meet students' needs in a variety of ways, including on-site dual enrollment for high school students, courses and services at the North County Campus and South County Center, and through multiple modalities of online and hybrid course offerings.

In 2024, the data show that 30.7% of Cuesta College students are enrolled solely in distance education courses, and an additional 27.8% of Cuesta College students are enrolled in a mix of distance education and face-to-face in-person courses. While the COVID-19 Pandemic caused a shift of most instruction and services to a distance education mode, these data show that in the post-pandemic period, many Cuesta College students have continued to choose distance education modalities. This is an area for further exploration as the college strives to support student retention and improve persistence rates for students who are in a remote access mode of teaching and learning and represents an additional challenge of closing equity gaps in access, success, and support in alignment with the goals of Vision 2030.

Dual Enrollment; Career and College Access Pathways (CCAPs)

Cuesta College partners with regional high schools, offering a breadth of courses in transfer and career education pathways. Local area high school students have the opportunity to participate in Cuesta College classes through two program options. Cuesta College CCAP courses are scheduled at participating high schools during the regular high school day/class period, resulting in a high school transcript and a Cuesta College transcript for one course. Most courses are taught by the high school teachers during their high school period (referred to as High School Teacher Led CCAP). Some courses are taught by Cuesta College faculty online who work in collaboration with the high school teacher (referred to as Cuesta Led CCAP). CCAP courses are closed to the public and only available to the students attending the participating high school. CCAP courses are completely free for all students to participate, including Undocumented/Non-Resident students.

Cuesta College Planning

Planning Efforts Integral to the EMP

While many planning efforts exist at Cuesta College, the following three are integral to the Educational Master Plan (EMP). Data-informed results from these three efforts help to inform EMP development and, likewise, the goals and objectives of the long-range EMP are operationalized through program, enrollment management, and student equity planning in a cycle of continuous improvement and advancement.

North and South County Planning Efforts

In addition to the main campus in San Luis Obispo, Cuesta College has a North County Campus in Paso Robles and a South County Center in Arroyo Grande. The South County Center utilizes leased facilities in the evening through a partnership with Arroyo Grande High School. These two sites provide educational opportunities for these extended areas of the San Luis Obispo County Community College District (SLOCCCD) region. Additionally, an expanded, consistent partnership with regional high schools is vital for dual enrollment classes to be offered. The dual enrollment program provides opportunities for local high school students to complete college coursework while in high school without leaving the area and also reduces their time to certificate and/or degree acquisition.

Many students from these areas of the county also take classes on the San Luis Obispo campus or through distance education due to the distance and challenges of transportation to the main campus. Examining intentional staffing and scheduling plans, while meeting the challenges of enrollment management, will be critical components in planning for sustainable, effective, and efficient programs and services at all College sites. The ongoing development of the North County Campus and the South County Center, and the vision for their respective educational services to meet local needs within the mission of the college, will continue as a priority in this next long-range Educational Master Plan for SLOCCCD.

North County Campus

The North County Campus (NCC) provides both student support services and classes in a variety of instructional areas for local traditional and nontraditional adult students. A unique program called “ME First” has been implemented. This cohort program supports student success and the completion of Mathematics and English. The campus is undergoing infrastructure upgrades, and on February 5, 2025, Cuesta College held a groundbreaking ceremony for construction of the new North County Campus Instructional Building, a state-of-the-art facility designed to enhance educational opportunities for students in San Luis Obispo County. The newest and final building funded by Measure L, this project represents the college’s commitment to providing cutting-edge learning environments that meet the evolving needs of students and the workforce.

The new North County Campus Instructional Building will serve as a dynamic hub for trades and career education programs, offering flexible classroom and lab spaces tailored to support hands-on learning. Designed with adaptability in mind, the facility will include the following:

- An agriculture lab to enhance Cuesta College’s expanding agriculture program.
- A covered workspace for trades programs, including agriculture, auto, and engine classes, offering ample room for large vehicles, equipment, and enhanced ventilation.
- A movement classroom and locker rooms for Kinesiology programs, including a large, open space for physical education activities.
- A traditional classroom designed for lecture-based instruction.

South County Center

The South County Center (SCC) is located on the grounds of Arroyo Grande High School and operates in the evening, utilizing high school classroom facilities. Because it only has access to evening hours, the Center provides a limited number of course offerings and student services. It also serves as a resource to prospective students from the area wanting to attend Cuesta College. The current courses taught include:

- General Education Diploma (GED) classes and English as a Second Language (ESL).
- Short-term Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.
- Aviation Maintenance as part of a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Title V grant funding.
- Math, English, and Ethnic Studies.

Additionally, Cuesta College embraced the expanded opportunity to provide dual enrollment courses, made possible through AB 288 and the establishment of college and career access pathways (CCAP) agreements with local high schools. The integration of dual enrollment at Arroyo Grande High School, Nipomo High School, and New Tech High School provides high school students college experiences and an early start toward a degree or certificate. Students can graduate from high school with their first year of college complete and be well-prepared to timely earn an associate’s degree.

The success of the dual enrollment program further illuminated the challenge South County residents face in accessing courses at the Cuesta College San Luis Obispo campus. The distance of travel is an issue; moreover, it is confounded by traffic congestion and fuel costs. In consideration of increasing access to instructional programs in the South County region, Cuesta College is exploring programming and location options to meet the needs of the area residents, businesses, and agricultural community. Proposed offerings include degrees, certificates, and workshops to meet a wide variety of educational needs for credit, noncredit, and fee-based learning aligned with the Cuesta College mission.

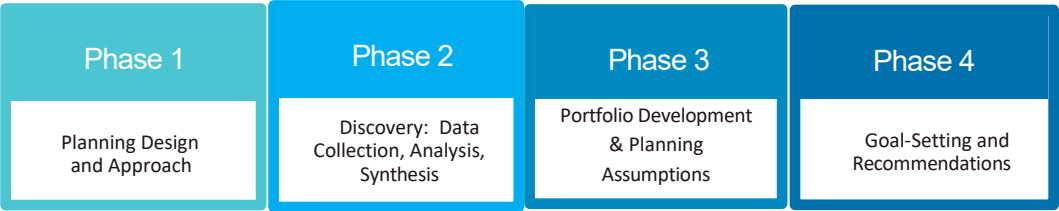
A South County Center plan has been developed which proposes establishing a SLOCCCD-operated location in the southern portion of the county to expand access to higher education in that region, providing day as well as evening courses and services.

Educational Master Plan Development Process

The current Cuesta College Educational Master Plan 2016-2026 sunsets next year. In preparation for the next long-range planning cycle, the mission, vision, and values of the institution were reviewed and revised for contemporary times, and a four-phased development process was delineated for the next cycle.

Project Phases and Timeline

Cuesta College, with the technical support of a national community college educational consulting firm, embarked upon the four-phased project depicted below for development of its next Educational Master Plan.



Phase 1: Planning Design and Approach

The first phase of the project focused on the design, approach, and planning process for the project. On November 7, 2024, an all-day retreat, which included information and six interactive activities, was held with

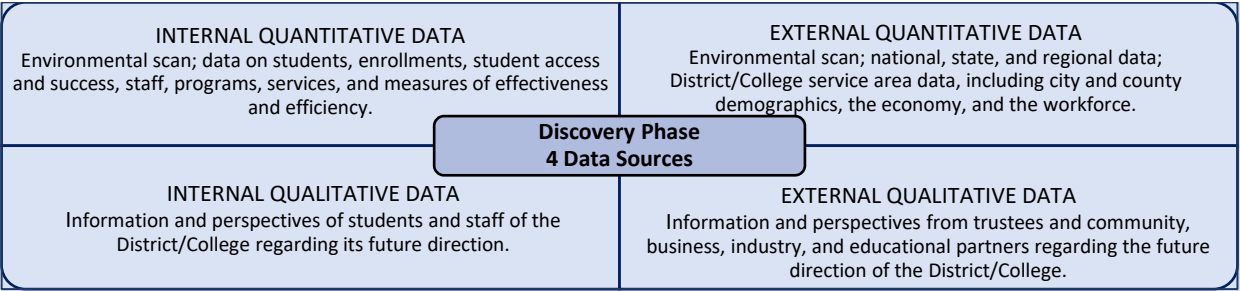
approximately 40 constituency group leaders to design and plan the EMP development process. Outcomes from this session included:

- Examination of best practices in higher education strategic and educational planning
- Identifying important aspects for this EMP’s development process
- Establishment of the EMP Task Force (purpose, role, membership, guiding principles, communication, timeline, and meeting schedule)
- Determining the length of the plan as a four-year plan
- Streamlining the plan to approximately 50 pages; moving data charts and more detailed information to the Appendix and providing hyperlinks to accommodate readers wanting more in-depth information
- Confirming college listening sessions (students, trustees, internal and external stakeholders)
- Alignment of the EMP with accreditation standards and the college’s new mission, vision, and values
- Alignment and integration of existing college planning efforts with the EMP
- Discussion of the impact of higher education and societal trends, changing demographics of the region, the role of the college in the growth and vitality of the region, and “stretch strategies” for Cuesta College in this next long-range plan

Following the Program Design and Planning Retreat, the EMP Task Force (EMPTF) was formed, and a college website for the EMP Project was established to support transparency, communication, and engagement of college constituents. Dr. Elizabeth Coria, Vice President of Student Success and Support Programs, was appointed as the Executive Liaison for the project, and Megan Fay-Mitchell, administrative assistant to Dr. Coria, was assigned to provide logistical support for the project. The website was populated with an overview of the project, its phases and timeline, the outcomes of the Program Design and Planning Retreat, the Purpose Statement for the EMPTF, including its members, and a schedule of meetings. Under the leadership of Dr. Coria and the EMPTF, Phase 2 began in January 2025.

Phase 2: Discovery Phase: Data Collection, Analysis, and Synthesis

Phase 2 of the project focused on data collection to guide plan development. Extensive quantitative and qualitative data were gathered, analyzed, and synthesized during this second phase. Document review included examining program review results, reviewing minutes from meetings and correspondence from accreditation reports and visits, and studying current planning efforts underway at the college. Both internal data on the college and its students and external data on the region and workforce were examined. Interviews and listening sessions were held internally with students and constituent groups, and externally with educational and other partners and stakeholders. A review of national, state, and regional trends was conducted, and local and regional workforce data and information were examined. The infographic below summarizes the four data sources for the Discovery Phase.



The analysis and synthesis of quantitative data revealed trends and planning assumptions for plan development. Qualitative data garnered from interviews and listening sessions were reviewed, and themes that emerged were identified.

Phase 3: Portfolio Development and Planning Assumptions

In Phase 3, the results from Phase 2 formed the Data Portfolio and framed planning assumptions for plan development. Quantitative data trends and planning assumptions, coupled with themes from the qualitative listening and vision sessions, were reviewed, and a high-level Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) analysis was conducted to identify challenges and opportunities for Cuesta College over the next four years. In March 2025, a campus forum was held to share results from Phases 1-3 and components of the Draft EMP, followed by an open discussion. Attendees were able to ask questions and provide feedback. Recognizing the evolving needs of students, employers, and communities across the region, coupled with the rapidly changing societal and technological environment, the EMPTF had an opportunity in the new four-year plan to focus on the highest priorities for Cuesta College for today and the near future.

Phase 4: Goal-Setting and Recommendations

The activities from Phases 2 and 3 provided a framework for dialogue among EMPTF members for the Phase 4 goal-setting session. The Executive Team and EMPTF met jointly in April for an eight-hour goal-setting session over two days to draft a set of goals and objectives that would provide direction and key initiatives to lead the college for the next four years. Additionally, the session provided an opportunity for everyone to examine Cuesta's alignment with the State's Vision 2030 Goals.

Phase 5: College Feedback, Participatory Governance and Board of Trustee Approval

In August 2025, the EMPTF reconvened to review the draft EMP, providing feedback to strengthen the document, clarify key elements, and ensure alignment with the college's Vision, Mission, and Values. The draft was then shared with the Cuesta College Community for a two-week period to gather broader feedback. Following this, the draft moved through participatory governance processes to ensure college-wide input, fostering transparency and collective ownership. After this comprehensive feedback cycle, the finalized plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees in December 2025 for review and approval, affirming institutional commitment to the EMP as the guiding framework for Cuesta College over the next four years.

Data Portfolio

The data portfolio developed from Phases 2 and 3 is comprised of internal and external scans, including student success data, and an analysis of the regional labor market. These portfolio components are summarized in the sections that follow, and supporting data can be found in the Appendices.

Trends and Planning Assumptions

As previously described, analysis and synthesis of information in the Data Portfolio, coupled with an examination of national, state, regional, and District trends provided a set of planning assumptions to guide development of the new four-year Educational Master Plan for the College. Highlights of the trends and resulting planning assumptions are presented in the sections that follow.

National Trends

Enrollment

The COVID-19 Pandemic prompted many changes, including at two-year colleges, where enrollment nationally decreased and teaching and learning rapidly shifted to online. According to the Research Center at the National Student Clearinghouse, national postsecondary enrollment declined during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In Fall 2023, undergraduate enrollment began rebounding from pandemic lows. However, students began gravitating to shorter-term credentials rather than longer-term degrees. Enrollment growth was attributed to increased dual enrollment and increased enrollment by Black, Latinx, and Asian students. White student enrollment continued to decrease. Postsecondary enrollment recovered to pre-pandemic levels by Fall 2024, with two-year colleges seeing the greatest increase ([reported January 23, 2025](#)).

Trends Impacting Teaching and Learning

EDUCAUSE, whose mission is to advance higher education focusing on technology, has identified national trends impacting teaching and learning in their [2024 Horizon Report: Teaching and Learning](#). Highlights from EDUCAUSE and that report include:

Social

- Public perception of the value of higher education is declining.
- Student demographics are changing.
- Students are increasingly demanding access to learning anytime, anywhere.

Technological

- Concerns about cybersecurity and privacy are increasing.
- The use of learning analytics continues to rise.
- The digital divide persists.

Economic

- The demand for and focus on workforce skills is growing.
- Challenges for employee retention are increasing.
- Student debt is increasingly impacting students' enrollment decisions.

Environmental

- Higher education institutions are increasing their commitment to sustainability.
- Concerns about the impact of big data tools on the environment are rising.
- The demand for green skills in the workforce is increasing.

Political

- Political polarization in the United States continues to impact higher education.
- Government policy is increasingly influencing education.
- The need is growing for policies that address emerging technologies.

Honorary AI Trends

- AI is changing the way we communicate.
- AI tools have growing potential to reshape pedagogy and student experiences.
- AI is increasingly having an impact on the economy and workforce.
- AI is increasingly being used to address climate change and sustainability issues.
- The potential for the use of AI in politics is growing.

State Trends

California Community Colleges (CCCs) operate within a dynamic state policy environment that shapes enrollment patterns, funding mechanisms, and strategic priorities. The following state trends and factors directly influence Cuesta College's planning and operations.

Enrollment

- Statewide, CCCs have experienced a rebound in enrollment following the pandemic.
- Dual enrollment accounted for 12% of total statewide enrollment in 2022-23 and continues to grow.
(Source: [CCRC](#))

Policy, Funding, and Student Success

- The success of CCC students will remain a top priority for statewide policymakers.
- Achieving the CCC Vision for Success and Vision 2030 goals will continue to be a priority, with expectations for CCCs to build on their successes and accelerate progress.
- Funding for student support and success measures will continue to be included in the state budget and assigned to specific activities to support student success goals.
- Reducing the cost of education and shortening the time-to-degree will continue to be a focus for students, families, and policymakers.
- Providing a range of student services and basic needs support will remain essential.
- The "hold harmless" provision for the Student-Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) metrics will expire at the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year, making it critical for CCCs to improve outcomes tied to the funding formula.
- The state of California is increasingly relying on local districts to fund new educational facilities rather than depending on statewide educational bonds.

Program Development and Guided Pathways

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) will play an increasingly significant role in community college education, as emphasized in the California State Plan for Career & Technical Education 2023, and the Governor's Master Plan for Career Education, enacted December 2024.
- Community colleges, both statewide and regionally, are expanding noncredit and credit short-term certificate programs aligned with local workforce needs.
- Regional collaboration, particularly in relation to CTE, will remain a key priority.
- Enhancing mathematics and English readiness will be essential for advancing equity and supporting student completion.
- Simplifying and integrating academic and student support pathways will be crucial to meeting students where they are and helping them complete their educational journey.

(Sources: CCCCCO DataMart, CCCCCO Website)

Regional Trends

During the Discovery Phase, data were collected and analyzed to identify the following key trends and planning assumptions. For more detailed information, refer to the Appendices.

Service Area and School Districts

(Source: California Department of Education)

The San Luis Obispo Community College District service area boundaries coincide with the San Luis Obispo County map.

- Twelfth Grade Enrollment is projected to remain flat; no majority ethnic group (47% White, 44% Latino, 9% all other).
- Approximately 90% of English Language Learners speak Spanish.
- Higher than average percentage of college-bound high school graduates choosing a community college.

Demographic Trends

(Source: US Census, California Department of Labor)

- Population is projected to increase in the coming decades, while statewide population is projected to decrease.
- Notably, the proportion of youth (under 25) and working adults (25-64) is projected to increase, as is the proportion of non-Whites.
- Educational Attainment levels are relatively high in San Luis Obispo County; yet 47.3% of county residents have less than an associate degree.
- Income and poverty rates in SLO County are similar to state averages, but the cost of housing is noticeably higher in the county.

Labor Market Trends: Key Industries to Support Economic Strategy

(Source: County of San Luis Obispo, and [REACH 2030](#))

- Aerospace + Defense
- Agriculture Technology
- Building + Design + Construction
- Healthcare + Life Sciences
- Precision Manufacturing
- Clean Tech + Renewable Energy
- Technology + Innovation

Labor Market Trends: Largest Workforce Gaps

(Source: Lightcast)

- Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
- Medical Assistants
- Nursing Assistants
- Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses

Labor Market Trends: Top Unique Job Postings, January 2023 to December 2024

(Source: Lightcast)

- Medical Assistants
- Sales Associates
- Registered Nurses
- Administrative Assistants
- Caregivers

Labor Market Trends: Top Companies (by volume) Posting Jobs

(Source: Lightcast)

- California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
- State of California
- UPMC - Mercy School of Nursing*

- Cuesta College
- County of San Luis Obispo
- Sierra Vista Regional Medical
- Adventist Health

*UPMC is not a local employer, but does post employment opportunities to our local job boards.

Remote Work Trends in 2024 (National)

(Source: [Forbes, June 12, 2023](#))

- 20% of workforce works remotely
- 16% of companies are fully remote
- The highest percentage of remote workers is 24 to 35; within this age group, 39% work remotely full-time and 25% do so part-time
- Highest in: Computer/IT, Accounting/Finance, Marketing, Medical/Health, Project Management

District/College Trends and Planning Assumptions

(Sources: CCCCCO DataVista, UCOP InfoCenter, CSU Data Analytics, Cuesta College Office of Institutional Research, and CTEOS). Detailed information is included in the Appendices.

Students

- In recent years, enrollment dipped due to the COVID-19 Pandemic but began rebounding in 2022 and has continued to increase since that time.
- The ethnic composition of the student population has shifted from majority White in the 1990s to 47% White in Fall 2024 (38% Latino, 6% Multi, and 9% all other).
- Paso Robles is the largest source of Cuesta students, followed by San Luis Obispo City, Atascadero, and Arroyo Grande. From outside the service area, Santa Maria is the largest source of students.

Measures of Efficiency

- FTES/FTEF, a statewide standard measure of efficiency, is fairly low at Cuesta College (11.55 in 2023-2024, not including dual enrollment or CMC-Prison) and has been trending slightly downward.

Special Populations

- Over one-quarter of Cuesta College students are Special Admit, meaning they are concurrently enrolled in high school.
- In 2023-2024, 28.7% of Cuesta College students received the California Promise Grant, 13.3% received a Pell Grant, and 2.1% were AB540 (undocumented) students. These rates are lower than the state rates.

Student Outcomes: Degree/Transfer

- Degree/Transfer students, when compared to their regional and state counterparts, post higher rates of:
 - Completing transfer-level English and Math in their first year
 - Transferring to a 4-year institution and/or earning an award
 - Graduating students with fewer units accumulated
- Conversely, Cuesta Degree/Transfer students post lower rates of:
 - Persisting from Fall to Spring

- UC and CSU admissions rates and yield rates (percent who enroll) are slightly lower for Cuesta College transfer students than the state average.
- Cuesta College is the top feeder community college to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

Student Outcomes: Short-Term CTE

- Short-Term Career Education students, when compared to their regional and state counterparts, post higher rates of:
 - Earning 9+ units
- Conversely, Short-Term Career Education students post lower rates of:
 - Post-training earnings
 - Earning the regional minimum wage
- The top five Cuesta College CTE programs (as measured by resulting increases in student wages) are Child Development Teacher, Audio Technology I, Graphics, Film Television and Electronic Media, and Registered Nursing.

Student Outcomes: Adult Education/ESL

- Even though the number of Cuesta College Adult Education /ESL students is small, their outcomes are higher than the California average in measures available in the CCCC DataVista for Skills Gains and Becoming Employed.

Program Award Trends

An analysis of Cuesta College's certificate and degree awards from 2019 to 2024 provides a foundation for instructional planning and program evaluation. Results from the analysis revealed significant shifts in program performance, student demand, and completion patterns. In summary, program awards peaked in 2022 across nearly all categories, followed by declines in 2023 and 2024. Strong performers included *Liberal Arts*, *Pre-Nursing*, *Psychology (AAT)*, *Business Admin (AST)*, and *ESL* certificates. Newer programs like *Communication Studies 2.0* and *Business Admin 2.0* show growth potential, while several programs (e.g., *Technical Theater*, *Drama*, *Geology*) had consistently low completions, signaling possible areas for consolidation or revitalization.

Fluctuations in program awards may reflect changes in industry demands, evolving student interest, economic pressures, institutional competition, and program accessibility. Additionally, overlapping or redundant curricula may lead to internal competition, underscoring the need for comprehensive, strategic program review and thoughtful consolidation to better align offerings with workforce needs and transfer pathways. More detailed information can be found in the Appendix.

Listening and Vision Sessions

Overview of the Sessions

During the Discovery Phase, listening sessions were held with individuals and groups of internal and external stakeholders of Cuesta College, including students. Participants provided a great deal of perspective regarding the college's future. A summary of these sessions is provided below.

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS

Session Categories	Individuals and Groups	# Sessions	Approx. # Participants
CC Internal Stakeholders	- o Trustees - o President and Executive Team - o VPI - o VPSS and Student Services - o President's Cabinet - o Management Senate – CCMS - o Classified United Employees –CCCUE - o College Council - o Academic Senate - o Teacher's Union - o North County Campus - o South County Campus - o 8 Areas of Study Vision Sessions - o Open Sessions	26	92
Student groups	- o Associated Students of Cuesta College (ASCC) - o Student Classes – English, Biology, ESL, Business - o North & South County Student Sessions	5	65

Total number of internal listening sessions = 31, participants = 157

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS

Session Categories	Individuals and Groups	# Sessions	Approx. # Participants
Foundation, Business, Industry	- o Foundation - o Business and Industry Partners	2	1
Government & Community Partners	- o Workforce and Economic Development - o Government Entities - o Civic and Non-Profit Partners	3	2
Educational Partners	- o K-12 Schools - o Universities	2	4

Total number of external listening sessions = 7, participants = 7

Total number of internal and external listening sessions =38, participants =164

Listening and Vision Session Themes

Eight overarching themes emerged from approximately 164 constituents in the internal and external listening and vision sessions. This qualitative input, coupled with trends and planning assumptions from the Data Portfolio, serves as a valuable resource in identifying the challenges, opportunities, and high priorities for Cuesta College in its four-year EMP.

The infographic below displays the eight themes that emerged from the listening and vision sessions. Subtheme descriptions are provided for each of the eight themes in the sections that follow, and a more detailed listing can be found in the Appendix.

Listening/Vision Session Themes



Student-Centered Access, Success, and Equity

Access

Ensuring equitable access to education remains a cornerstone of Cuesta College’s mission. Simplifying the registration process for both credit and noncredit students will help remove unnecessary barriers that hinder enrollment and timely completion. To meet students' diverse needs, the college must develop student-focused schedules that balance face-to-face, online, and hybrid course offerings. Data-driven scheduling tools such as Ad Astra can enhance efficiency in course offerings and facility management.

Expanding evening and in-person courses, strengthening dual enrollment opportunities, and improving coordination between dual enrollment programs and staffing will further enhance accessibility. Beyond course availability, additional challenges such as financial barriers, transportation limitations, and inconsistent financial advising must be addressed. Enhanced counseling services during peak times and expanded GED and ESL course offerings at the South County Center can provide greater educational opportunities for underserved populations.

Student Success and Engagement

Retention, persistence, and engagement are central to student success at Cuesta College. Strengthening support systems to help students define and achieve their educational goals is essential for increasing retention and completion rates. More proactive communication regarding available services, rather than relying on word-of-mouth, can help students better navigate the college experience. Dual enrollment students also require additional support to ensure their seamless transition into Cuesta’s academic and social community.

Expanded tutoring services, extended library hours, and a renewed focus on credit for prior learning (CPL) will benefit working adults, veterans, and re-entry students. Additionally, experiential and project-based learning opportunities, enhanced online instruction with live interaction, and the planned transition to a 16-week academic calendar in Fall 2026 may further streamline student progress and improve engagement through innovative scheduling models.

Equity, Inclusion, and Holistic Support

Cuesta College is committed to fostering an inclusive, student-centered environment that aligns with Diversity,

Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles. Policies and programs should reflect student diversity and prioritize the success of all student groups, including incarcerated students, distance learners, and re-entry individuals. Cultivating a sense of belonging, both on campus and online, requires strengthened support for non-traditional students, expanded disability resources, and increased access to mental health services.

In addition to academic support, students benefit from cultivating a sense of belonging, family-friendly services, revitalized campus life through diverse clubs, and greater accessibility to the gym and recreational facilities. Strengthening counseling and outreach, particularly for ESL students, can help connect underrepresented student populations to essential support networks.

Strategic Enrollment and Sustainable Growth

Enrollment

Cuesta College faces evolving enrollment challenges, requiring a proactive strategy to sustain and grow student populations. While overall enrollment growth is a priority, a clear long-term vision is needed to align enrollment strategies with institutional goals. The rise of distance education has significantly impacted on-campus enrollment, requiring a balanced approach to meet student demand while maintaining a vibrant campus presence. Additional efforts must focus on re-engaging returning students to counteract declining K-12 enrollments, particularly at the North County Campus and South County Center.

Strategic Growth

Strategic expansion must be guided by relevance, innovation, and alignment with student and workforce needs. A comprehensive development plan for each college location will ensure alignment with institutional priorities while addressing regional needs. Innovative approaches, such as flexible program delivery, workforce-aligned curriculum, and community partnerships, will help Cuesta College sustain meaningful growth.

Educational and Workforce Pathways

Academic and Career Pathways

Students at Cuesta College prioritize programs that lead to high-paying careers, underscoring the importance of a structured and dynamic academic pathway. Guided Pathways implementation requires renewed collaboration between instruction and student services to ensure full integration. Clarity around the Areas of Study (AOS) and increased interdisciplinary collaboration can help streamline students' academic journeys. Given concerns that the curriculum is too extensive and lacks comprehensive review, a data-informed evaluation process will be necessary.

Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, revitalizing advisory committees, and better aligning CTE pathways with high schools will create seamless transitions for students. Additional efforts should focus on expanded noncredit offerings, stackable credential pathways leading to livable-wage jobs, and increased 2+2 transfer opportunities, particularly in high-demand fields. The exploration of new baccalaureate degree programs also presents an opportunity to expand educational pathways.

Workforce Integration and Readiness

Aligning Cuesta College's workforce programs with industry demands is crucial for student employability and regional economic growth. Expanding visibility and accessibility for workforce offerings, integrating essential job skills training, and strengthening employer engagement will enhance workforce readiness. Developing apprenticeship opportunities and strengthening partnerships with local industries will further position Cuesta College as a leader in workforce development.

Institutional Agility, Resilience, and Operational Efficiency

Agility and Resilience

To maintain institutional strength, Cuesta College must continuously improve processes, moving beyond reliance on informal knowledge. Understanding and adapting to changes in state and federal funding formulas, enhancing financial stability strategies, and evaluating program viability through comprehensive reviews will help sustain long-term success. A proactive approach to external challenges will ensure the college remains resilient in the face of shifting educational landscapes.

Operational Efficiency

Efficient institutional operations support student success and faculty effectiveness. Streamlining administrative processes, ensuring accurate student classification for residency purposes, and improving integration across institutional plans will enhance operational coherence. Data-driven decision-making, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative measures, will foster informed institutional strategies. Optimizing DegreeWorks for accurate planning and evaluating the structure of academic divisions may further improve efficiency and coherence.

Campus Development and Resource Optimization

Infrastructure and Facilities Enhancement

A well-designed campus environment is vital for student engagement and faculty support. Expanding student access at the South County Center through a dedicated location, creating vibrant student gathering spaces, and addressing faculty resource gaps are essential improvements. Exploring innovative facility use, such as repurposing existing spaces or leveraging vacant military bases, can maximize campus potential. Expanding food service options, assessing student interest in campus housing, and enhancing sustainability initiatives will contribute to a more dynamic and resource-efficient institution.

Resource Allocation

Ensuring financial stability requires a transparent and balanced budgeting approach. A more effective resource allocation process, including an updated purchasing system, will improve financial decision-making. Long-term planning must consider anticipated funding shifts over the next four years, ensuring that core instructional programs remain strong while fostering the growth of innovative offerings.

Institutional Culture, Communication, and Professional Growth

Culture

A positive campus climate is foundational to Cuesta College's success. Employees should see a direct connection between their roles and institutional goals, building a culture of service and collaboration. Strengthening faculty-administration relationships and participatory governance processes, and assessing the need for additional full-time faculty, particularly in CTE, will contribute to a more effective and engaged campus community. Updating job descriptions will help clarify expectations and support equitable workloads. Fostering a supportive climate of trust and respect is being led by three Campus Climate Committees. These committees are committed to the values of the Caring Campus initiative and are working collaboratively to promote a sense of belonging and well-being for our students.

Communication

Effective communication is key to institutional success. While strong within departments, broader campus-wide communication remains inconsistent. Increased consistency of communication will strengthen transparency of decision-making and enhance interdepartmental collaboration. Fostering open dialogue will help bridge information gaps and build trust and positive morale. Promoting skilled trades programs more effectively will also attract a broader student base, ensuring alignment with workforce needs. A structured

implementation plan will help track the college's progress in achieving its Educational Master Plan goals to meet the needs of our evolving students.

Professional Growth

Continued professional development ensures that faculty and staff remain at the forefront of educational innovation. Training opportunities in project-based learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and data utilization will empower employees to enhance student success. Expanding faculty initiatives with strong outcomes will further cultivate student-centered pedagogy and curriculum innovation.

Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships

Community Connections and Outreach

Adapting to community needs requires sustained proactive engagement and outreach efforts. Maintaining relationships with local government, economic development agencies, and industry partners will enhance Cuesta College's role as a regional educational leader. Increased visibility of Cuesta College's programs through engagement with local industry will foster stronger community ties and promote broader access to educational opportunities.

Partnerships

Expanding industry partnerships to align with workforce demands in such key sectors as aerospace, healthcare, agriculture, and clean energy is important for supporting a strong and evolving workforce. Developing more apprenticeship programs, strengthening employer engagement, and enhancing workforce training will ensure students are well-prepared for evolving job markets. Strengthening high school partnerships and expanding transfer pathways with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and other universities will create seamless transitions for students pursuing four-year degrees.

Areas of Study Vision Session Themes and Insights

The vision sessions with Area of Study pathway groups revealed some common trends and insights across the eight pathway groups, as delineated below. Overall, they center on student career pathways, enrollment sustainability, accessibility, industry partnerships, and technological adaptation. Addressing these areas requires strategic planning, efficient resource allocation, and innovative curriculum development to align with workforce demands and foster student success.

Career Readiness & Workforce Alignment

- Continued need for clearer career pathways and certificate/degree options
- Challenges in employment preparation and job readiness support
- Internship and experiential learning gaps across multiple disciplines
- Need to expand business and industry partnerships to improve job placement

Program Growth and Sustainability

- Low enrollment concerns in multiple disciplines
- Strategic curriculum updates for evolving industries are essential
- New program development in high-demand fields is desired

Equity and Pathways

- Dual enrollment expansion is desired
- Noncredit to credit transitions and credit for prior learning (CPL) can create stronger, streamlined educational pipelines

Scheduling, Accessibility, & Student Support

- Flexible scheduling needs (e.g., short-term courses, evening classes, and online/hybrid options)

- Faculty shortages in key areas and lack of full-time faculty to lead programs
- Tracking graduate outcomes to improve student success measures

Facilities and Resources

- Funding challenges limit resources
- Facility limitations affect program growth
- Accreditation complexities for programs subject to multiple oversight bodies

Industry & Technology

- AI integration in multiple disciplines
- Data-driven decision-making needed to track student pathways and job placements
- Adapting to industry trends

Challenges and Opportunities

A high-level Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) analysis was conducted of the findings from Phases 2 and 3 to identify the challenges Cuesta College faces and the opportunities on the horizon. Though challenges exist, they also highlight areas where the college can grow, adapt, and strengthen its future. The new, shortened four-year Educational Master Plan allows Cuesta College to be nimble and pivot more easily as new challenges and opportunities arise.

Facing the challenges identified via the SOAR analysis and seizing the opportunities they present over the next four years will enable Cuesta College to support student success, workforce development, and educational needs in San Luis Obispo County within Cuesta College's mission. Additionally, this proactive, intentional approach will support the acquisition and use of resources and optimize financial sustainability. Twenty challenges and twenty opportunities for Cuesta College were identified in the analysis, as delineated below.

20 Challenges for Cuesta College

The list below delineates 20 challenges Cuesta College faces over the next four years from both external pressures and internal institutional factors.

External Environmental and Economic Challenges

1. **Shifting Economic and Political Landscape:** Ongoing changes at both the state and national levels affecting college funding and priorities.
2. **Technological Advancements:** Rapid technological change, including the mainstreaming of AI, creating challenges in keeping up with innovation and relevance.
3. **Financial Uncertainty:** Budget constraints affect staffing, services, technology, and facilities, limiting the college's ability to meet growing demands.
4. **Impact of Student-Centered Funding Formula (SCFF):** The full implementation and ongoing transition of the SCFF affecting funding allocation and resource planning.
5. **Declining Enrollment:** A drop in student enrollment due to societal perceptions that higher education may no longer be a valuable or worthwhile investment for future employment.

Student Success Challenges

6. **Mandated Initiatives Implementation:** Full implementation of initiatives such as Student Equity, Guided Pathways, and *Vision 2030* goals amid evolving expectations and goals for student success.

7. **Low Persistence and Completion Rates:** Struggling to improve student retention, degree completion, and transfer rates despite efforts and initiatives.
8. **Strategic Enrollment Growth:** Balancing the pursuit of enrollment growth with a focus on student success and equity without "chasing FTES" and wasting resources.

Enrollment, Program, and Service Challenges

9. **CTE Program Alignment:** Ensuring Career and Technical Education programs meet county economic development needs and provide job-ready skills for students.
10. **Increased Financial Aid Participation:** Raising the number of students receiving Promise, Pell, and 540 grants to enhance affordability and access.
11. **Dual Enrollment Management:** Balancing the needs of K-12 students with other district priorities while maintaining academic rigor and operational efficiency.
12. **Course Delivery Balance:** Managing the mix of online, hybrid, and in-person course offerings to meet diverse student needs and demands.
13. **Student Success and Productivity:** Achieving higher levels of institutional productivity, efficiency, and improved student success metrics.
14. **Services for Non-Traditional Students:** Expanding outreach and services for non-traditional students, including adult education and English language learners (ELL), who may have short-term career goals.
15. **Regional Program Needs:** Addressing program offerings in under-served areas, specifically North and South County, to ensure regional equity and access.
16. **On-Campus Student Engagement:** Improving campus life to foster a vibrant, engaged student community with more food options, events, and spaces to socialize.

Institutional and Operational Challenges

17. **Institutional Efficiency:** Improving resource allocation, course scheduling, and operational effectiveness to enhance institutional efficiency and meet funding targets.
18. **Leadership Transition Issues:** Adjusting to frequent changes in administrative leadership, which disrupts continuity and clarity in decision-making and college direction.

Local Contextual Challenges

19. **Geographic Isolation:** The relatively isolated location of Cuesta College within San Luis Obispo County, making commuting difficult for students and complicating access to broader opportunities.
20. **High Housing Costs:** The challenge of affordable housing, with much higher housing costs compared to regional income and poverty rates, affecting both students and staff.

20 Opportunities for Cuesta College

The list below delineates 20 opportunities for Cuesta College for the next four years related to enrollment growth, funding, partnerships, workforce development, and operational improvements, all aimed at fostering the long-term success of the college and its students. Many of the challenges described in the previous section can be viewed as opportunities in the sections that follow.

Enrollment Growth Opportunities

1. **Engage Local Adults with Less Than an Associate Degree**: Focus outreach efforts on San Luis Obispo County residents who have less than an associate degree to reach an untapped pool of potential students.
2. **Strengthen Dual Enrollment**: Ensure dual enrollment offerings in local high schools provide increased access to higher education opportunities for students and that courses are aligned with Cuesta College Areas of Study Pathways.
3. **Increase Noncredit Training and Work-Based Learning**: Promote noncredit training programs, work-based learning, and credit for prior learning to engage more diverse learners.
4. **Improve Enrollment Efficiency**: Address weak enrollment efficiency and strengthen the Program Review process to ensure better resource utilization.
5. **Create Nimble Programs for Emerging Fields**: Develop flexible and responsive programs in high-demand fields like Aviation, Agriculture, Agriculture Business, and Allied Health to meet changing technology and labor market demands.
6. **Develop 2+2 Programs and Bachelor's Degree Options**: Expand partnerships with Cal Poly to create more 2+2 programs and explore the possibility of offering bachelor's degree programs on-site.
7. **Increase Stackable Credentials**: Create more stackable credentials based on high-wage, high-growth job sectors to facilitate career advancement and lifelong learning.
8. **Integrate Sustainability into Programs**: Integrate environmental sustainability issues into micro-credentials and programs to align with growing industry and societal trends.
9. **Complete Development of Guided Pathways**: Finalize and fully implement Guided Pathways to support structured academic pathways that promote student success.
10. **Enhance Campus Accessibility and Appeal**: Improve campus amenities, such as food access and social gathering spaces, to create a more welcoming and engaging environment for students.

Funding Opportunities

11. **Increase Financial Aid Participation**: Boost the number of Pell Grant and California Promise Grant recipients to support students with financial needs.
12. **Promote Transfer-Level Math and English Completion**: Focus on increasing the number of students who successfully complete transfer-level math and English to increase student success and retention.
13. **Encourage Associate Degree Completion**: Increase the number of students who earn an Associate's Degree to improve graduation rates and workforce readiness.
14. **Boost Transfer Rates**: Develop strategies to increase the number of students who transfer to four-year institutions, promoting further educational attainment.

Partnership and Workforce Opportunities

15. **Develop Short-Term, Skill-Building CTE Programs**: Expand short-term, skill-building Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming to meet emerging workforce demands.
16. **Capitalize on Employment Growth in Emerging Industries**: Leverage projected employment growth in such fields as Aviation, Agriculture, Agriculture Business, and Allied Health to align academic offerings with high-demand career paths.
17. **Strengthen Recruitment, Retention, and Engagement**: Enhance strategies for recruitment, retention, and student engagement to improve growth and success.
18. **Use Data-Driven Scheduling Tools**: Implement data-driven scheduling tools (e.g., Ad Astra) to optimize course offerings and facility management for maximum efficiency and student success.
19. **Improve Process Standardization**: Standardize processes to reduce reliance on informal knowledge and improve operational efficiency across the institution.

20. **Expand Professional Development in Emerging Trends:** Offer professional development initiatives that align with emerging trends such as AI, project-based learning, and new pedagogical practices to enhance teaching and learning.

Cuesta College - Emergent High Priority Areas for the EMP

An examination of challenges and opportunities that emerged from analysis of findings from the project's Discovery Phase revealed the following ten high-priority areas in developing the four-year goals and objectives for the Educational Master Plan.

Ten Emergent High-Priority Areas to Consider in Developing EMP Four-Year Goals and Objectives-Priority Areas

Student Access, Support, and Outcomes	▪ Expand outreach and services for non-traditional students, including adults, working learners, and ELL populations; Expand access at South County Center via a SLOCCCD-operated site. ▪ Increase the number of students receiving Pell, AB540, and California Promise Grants to improve affordability and equity. ▪ Implement proactive strategies to improve student retention, persistence, and completion of transfer-level math and English. ▪ Enhance case management, tutoring, and early alert systems to address low completion and transfer rates. ▪ Improve student engagement by expanding on-campus activities, wellness services, and social spaces to foster community.
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Enrollment Management	▪ Use data analytics to identify enrollment trends and inform scheduling and program expansion and reduction decisions; develop collegewide, innovative, yearlong master schedule for new 16-week semester calendar ▪ Create a strategic enrollment plan that balances FTES growth with efficiency, equity, and improvements in student progression and completion. ▪ Consider local adults without postsecondary certificates or degrees for reengagement through outreach, marketing, and flexible learning options. ▪ Optimize enrollment efficiency by aligning offerings with student demand and institutional capacity.
Educational Programs and Pathways	▪ Fully implement the four pillars of Guided Pathways, including a comprehensive curriculum review, degree consolidation, career maps aligned with completion goals, and regular Areas of Study meetings. ▪ Develop and expand stackable credentials, including short-term Career Education programs responsive to workforce needs, noncredit to credit bridges, and 2+2 and bachelor's degree options for increased transfer rates. ▪ Promote completion of stackable credentials as milestones for workforce readiness and advancement to livable-wage jobs. ▪ Align dual enrollment pathways with college certificate and degree programs. ▪ Integrate concepts such as sustainability and artificial intelligence (AI) into educational programs and micro-credentials.
Maximizing Funding	▪ Strengthen SCFF performance through increased financial aid participation, degree/certificate completion, and transfer. ▪ Serve new populations by expanding noncredit and adult education with stackable credentials aligned with college degrees and certificates to generate new FTES enrollments and a career ladder approach to livable wage jobs. ▪ Increase success metrics linked to the SCFF by improving transfer-level mathematics and English outcomes and increasing retention, persistence, and completion rates through strategic scheduling and enrollment management. ▪ Continue grant-seeking strategies to support instructional innovation, wraparound services, Career Education development, and services to new populations.
Advancing North and South County sites	▪ Expand academic offerings, support services, and college-wide technology solutions (e.g., enrollment management) in these regions to strengthen access support strategic enrollment growth. ▪ Improve access and scheduling flexibility to address geographic isolation and commuting barriers. ▪ Leverage local partnerships to align offerings with regional workforce and community development priorities. ▪ Create vibrant community hubs by increasing visibility, outreach, and engagement at satellite locations.
Educational Partnerships	▪ Ensure dual enrollment programs are sustainable and aligned with college certificate and degree programs and Areas of Study Pathways. ▪ Build new 2+2 and transfer pathways in partnership with Cal Poly and other four-year universities. ▪ Strengthen alignment with adult education and regional consortia to support lifelong learning. ▪ Collaborate with local school districts on faculty development, curricular alignment, and college-going culture building. ▪ Explore shared programming models across institutions to maximize efficiency and student opportunity.

Business, Industry and Community Partnerships	- Expand employer advisory boards and work-based learning opportunities within Career Education programs. - Co-design short-term Career Education programs aligned with projected growth in sectors such as aviation, agriculture, and allied health. - Promote credit for prior learning, internships, and apprenticeships as pathways to upskilling and employment. - Deepen engagement with local chambers, workforce boards, and economic development agencies to inform programming. - Create community events and visibility campaigns that position Cuesta as a workforce and education leader.
Strategic Utilization of Data and Technology Optimization	- Adopt and utilize data-driven scheduling platforms (e.g., Ad Astra) to align course offerings with demand, improve efficiency, and maximize space utilization. - Develop real-time dashboards for enrollment, student success, and operational metrics to inform decision-making. - Expand use of AI and technology-enhanced tools in instruction, counseling, and institutional operations. - Ensure equitable access to devices, digital literacy, and online support for students and employees. - Provide professional development for faculty and staff to interpret and apply data for continuous improvement and student success.
Systems, Processes, and Operational Efficiency	- Standardize institutional processes to reduce reliance on informal practices and ensure continuity. - Improve course scheduling and enrollment management practices to enhance student retention, persistence, completion and institutional productivity. - Implement lean process improvement strategies across student services and academic operations. - Increase cross-departmental collaboration to eliminate inefficiencies and duplication of effort. - Strengthen capacity for institutional planning, change management, and agility in response to shifting conditions.
Organizational Culture, Communication, and Professional Development	- Strengthen internal communication and participatory governance to support clarity during leadership transitions. - Expand professional development in areas such as AI, emerging pedagogies, culturally responsive teaching, and project-based learning. - Foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and respect that empowers faculty, staff, and administrators and expands the Caring Campus initiative to all employees. - Develop onboarding and mentorship programs to support employee retention and institutional knowledge continuity. - Create recognition programs and platforms to celebrate contributions and encourage engagement.

Next Steps and Recommendations

Educational Plan Roll-Out Process

Production of the final Educational Master Plan will include electronic and hard-copy documents. Condensed versions may also be developed for offices across campus and used in meetings with the College's educational,

business, industry, and community partners. An intentional internal roll-out process during the 2025-2026 Academic Year with all internal constituents is critical to increase awareness and provide a unified direction for all departments at Cuesta College as they engage in program review and their annual planning processes.

Implementation Plan

The success of any Educational Master Plan is dependent upon it being effectively operationalized. As each academic year begins, the college's implementation plan will translate into action the Goals and Objectives of the *SLOCCCD Educational Master Plan 2026-2030*. These implementation/action plans will include the tasks, timelines, measurable outcomes, responsible individuals and groups, and resources needed to enact that year's priorities in the plan. Milestones and targets are essential and the alignment/re-alignment of staffing and budgets with the annual plan of work is vital to its success. The detailed action plans will provide individuals with a step-by-step approach to advancing the college's agenda and are also valuable for other annual planning processes, such as curriculum and instructional design, budget development, staffing needs, facilities, and technology planning.

As part of the implementation process, an examination of planning timelines and their alignment for today's rapidly changing world, as well as resource alignment (e.g., staffing, fiscal, facilities, technology, etc.), is warranted for planning to be dynamic, relevant, and impactful. Review and revision of the Cuesta College Model of Integrated Planning will be important to align components with the new, shortened Educational Master Plan four-year cycle.

Monitoring and Accountability Process

Establishing a consistent and transparent monitoring process is essential to assess progress and ensure accountability for the Goals and Objectives of the EMP. A regular cycle of review-such as annual or semi-annual progress report will enable the college to evaluate outcomes, identify areas requiring additional support, and make timely adjustments to strategies and initiatives. These reports will also serve as valuable tools for setting measurable targets, informing resource allocations and grant opportunities. A technology-based reporting system will enhance accessibility and transparency across all levels of decision-making. Maintaining a dynamic document and planning process will allow the college to be agile, innovative, and to respond to internal and external issues and initiatives as they arise, changes in state and federal regulations, and to address educational standards and accreditation review processes and recommendations. Embedding monitoring and accountability within the college's governance structure will ensure broad participation, shared ownership, and ongoing commitment to the success of the EMP.

Appendix A: External Environmental Scan

Service Area

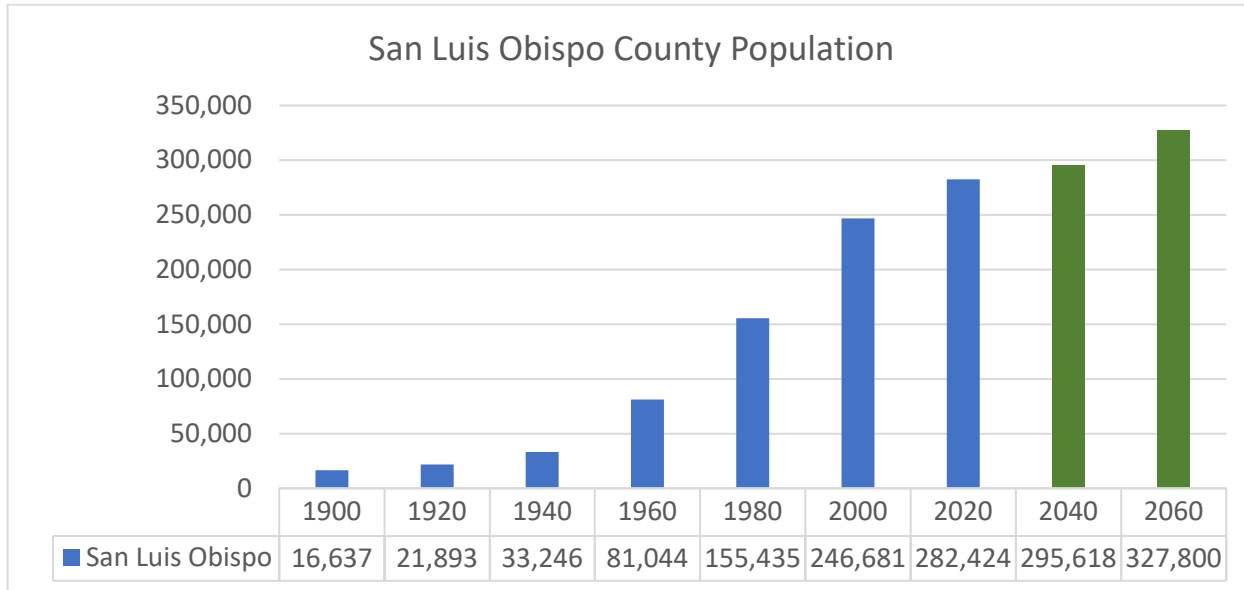
San Luis Obispo County

Cuesta College is the sole college within the San Luis Obispo County Community College District, and the service area boundaries coincide with the county.



(Map Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-San-Luis-Obispo-County-showing-topography-in-green-low-yellow-and-red-high_fig3_266100129)

County Population



(Source: CA Department of Finance, Historical and Projected Population, <https://dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/>)

The population of San Luis Obispo County grew dramatically in the past century and is projected to continue to grow at a much more modest rate in the coming decades.

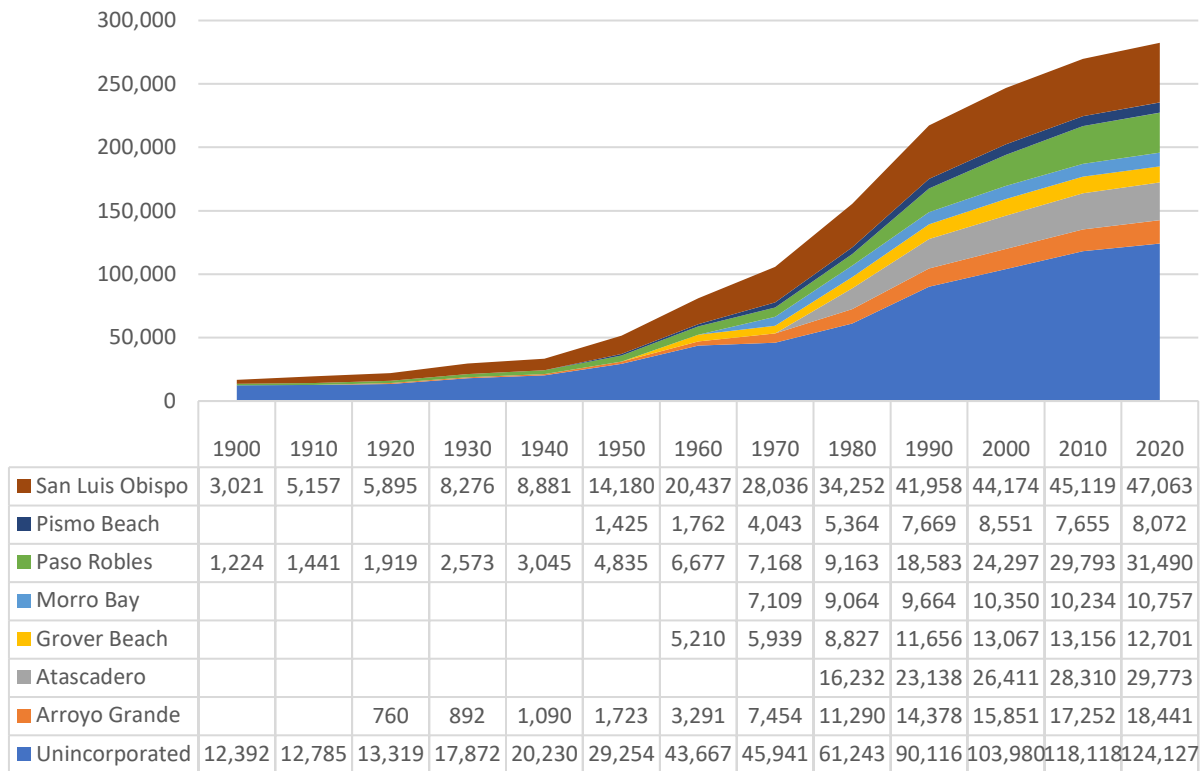
Population of SLO County, 2023

San Luis Obispo	48,084
Paso Robles	30,882
Atascadero	30,393
Arroyo Grande	18,033
Grover Beach	12,544
Morro Bay	10,339
Pismo Beach	7,914
Unincorporated areas	121,883
Total County Population	280,072

(Source: CA Department of Finance, 2023 estimate, <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates/>)

The total population of San Luis Obispo County was approximately 280,000 in 2023, with nearly half the population living in unincorporated areas. The most populated city is San Luis Obispo, followed by Paso Robles and Atascadero.

Historic Population of SLO County, by Town/City, 1900-2020

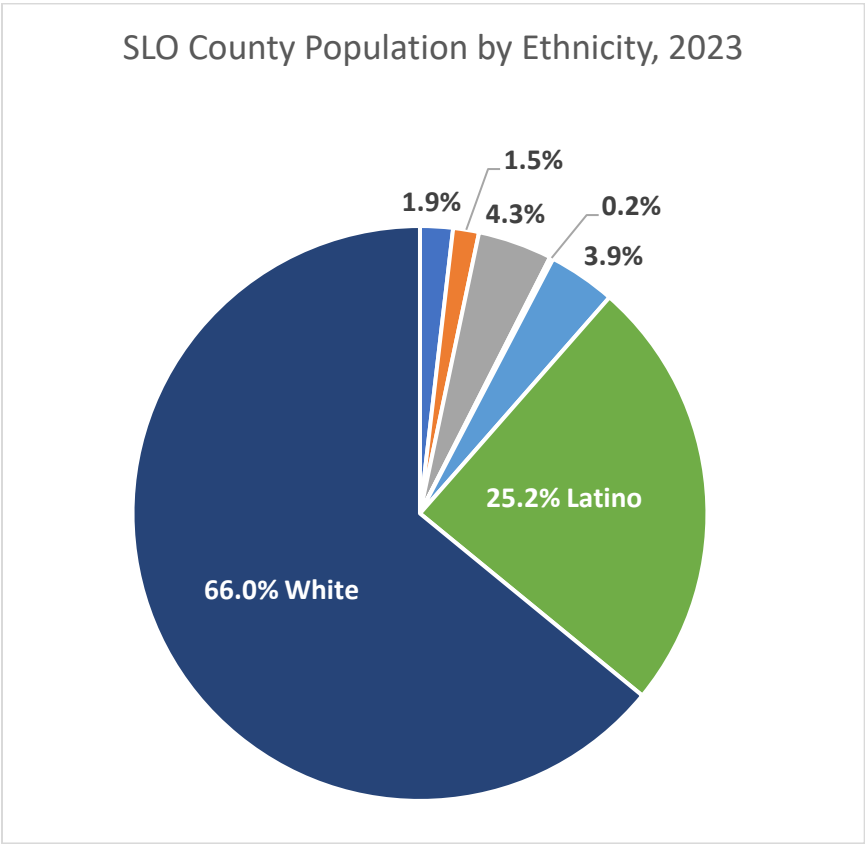


(Source: CA Department of Finance, Historical Population, <https://dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/>)

Since 1900, San Luis Obispo County has become more urban, as cities formed and grew.

Overall population grew rapidly, especially between 1970 and 2010.

Population by Ethnicity



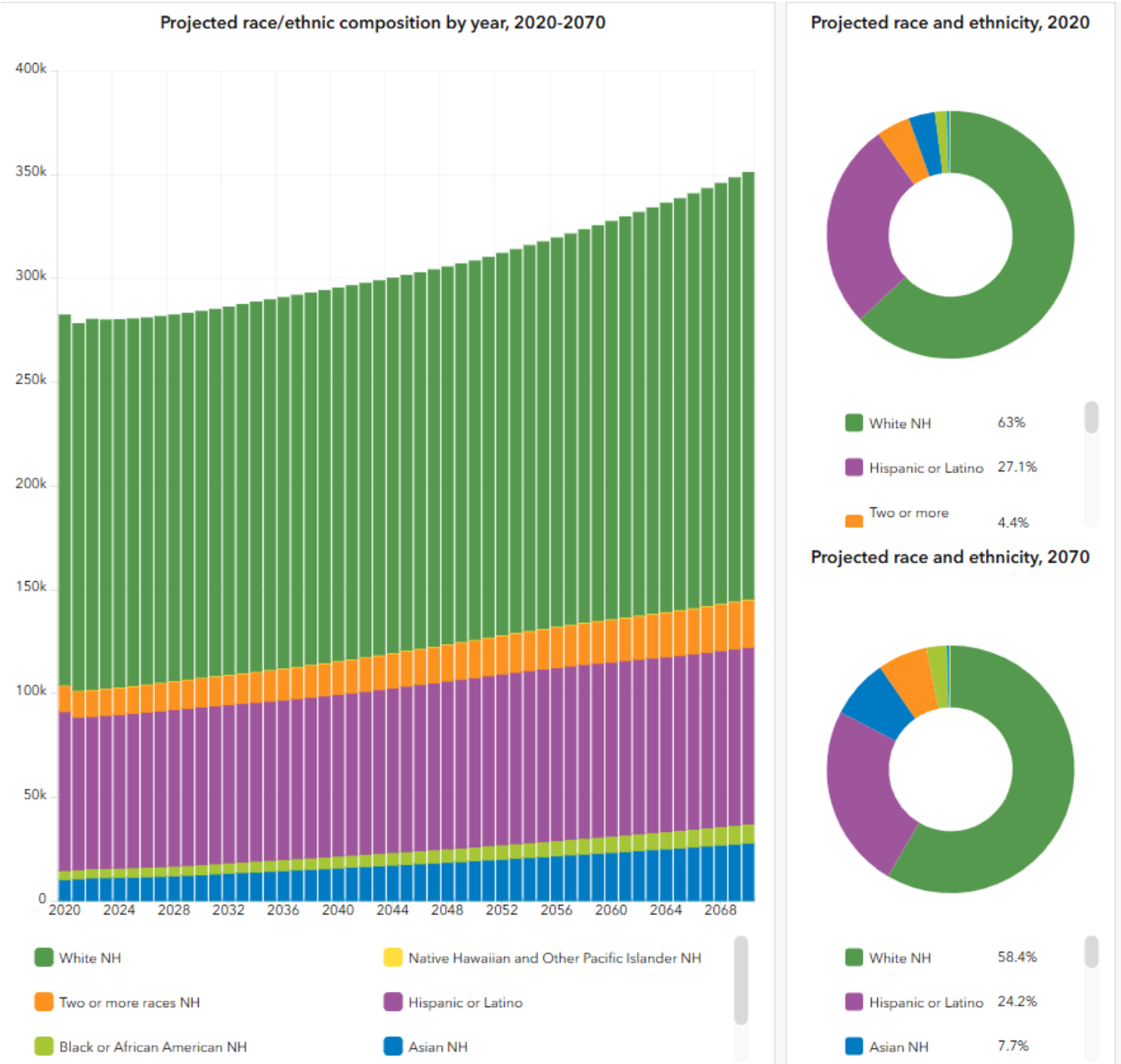
(Source: US Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanluisobispocountycalifornia/PST045222>)

The majority (approximately two-thirds) of San Luis Obispo County Residents in 2023 were White, which is down from 81% in 1990.

One-quarter of county residents in 2023 were Latino, which is up from 13% in 1990.

The next largest ethnic groups in 2023 were Asian (4.3%), Multi (3.9%), Black (1.9%) and American Indian (1.5%).

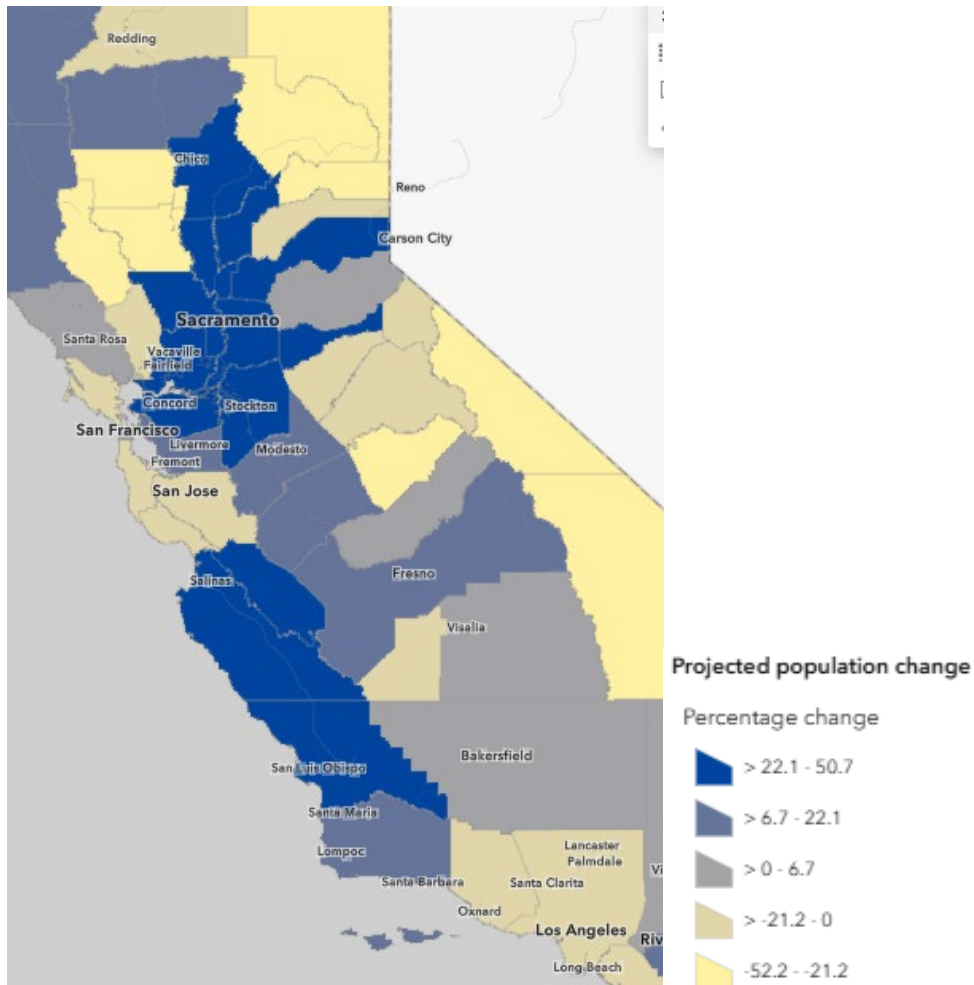
Projected Population Change in San Luis Obispo County, 2020-2070



(Source: CA Department of Finance, <https://dru-data-portal-cacensus.hub.arcgis.com/apps/eebcf24ac5e942c7b8ab7011173efdbe/explore>)

The population of San Luis Obispo County is projected to increase 26% between 2020 and 2070 (from 278.5 to 351.4 thousand). The proportions of Whites and Latinos are projected to decrease slightly, with slight proportional increases for other ethnic groups.

Projected Population Change in California, 2020-2070, by County



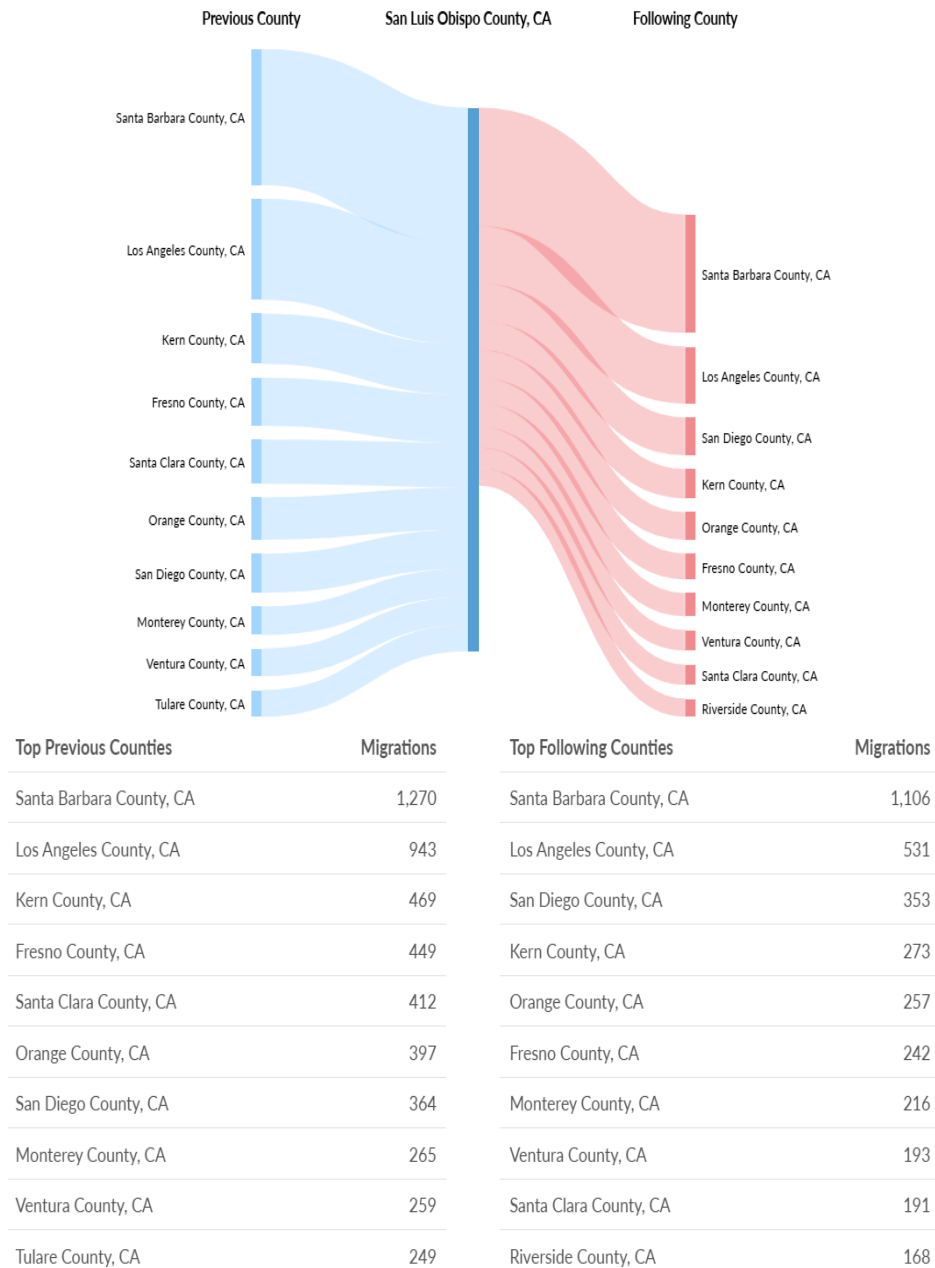
(Source: CA Department of Finance, <https://dru-data-portal-cacensus.hub.arcgis.com/apps/eebcf24ac5e942c7b8ab7011173efdbe/explore>)

Not all counties in California are projected to grow as much as San Luis Obispo County.

Counties north of SLO (Monterey, San Benito) are expected to grow significantly in the next 50 years, as is SLO County.

Counties south and east of SLO are projected to have more modest growth (Santa Barbara, Kern) or even slightly decrease (Kings).

Inbound and Outbound Migration, 2022

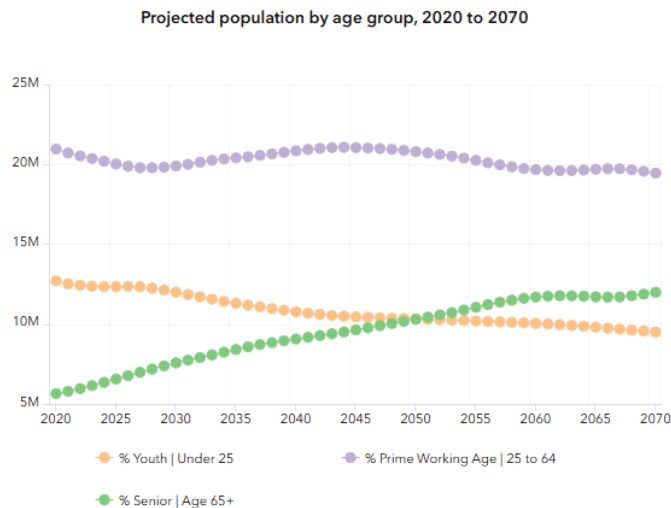


(Source: Lightcast, <https://www.lightcast.com/>)

In 2022, SLO County experienced a net loss of 390 residents, with Santa Barbara and Los Angeles Counties receiving the most transplants. Conversely, the counties from which residents moved to SLO County in the highest numbers are also Santa Barbara and Los Angeles County.

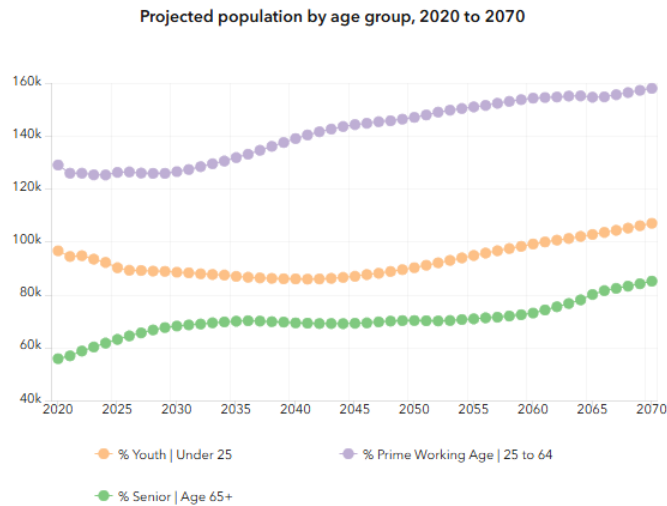
Population Changes by Age

California



(Source: CA Department of Finance, <https://dru-data-portal-cacensus.hub.arcgis.com/apps/eebcf24ac5e942c7b8ab7011173efdbe/explore>)

San Luis Obispo County



The proportion of youth, under age 25, is projected to decrease in the state of California but increase in San Luis Obispo County over the next fifty years.

Service Area Population Demographics Compared

US Census 2023 Estimates unless otherwise noted

	Atascadero	El Paso de Robles	San Luis Obispo (city)	San Luis Obispo County	California	United States
Population estimates, 2023	29,700	31,134	49,244	281,639	38,965,193	334,914,895
Percent Change from 2010	4.9%	4.5%	9.1%	4.5%	4.6%	8.5%
Percent Change from 2020	0.2%	-1.1%	4.5%	-0.3%	-1.4%	1.0%
Persons under 18 years, percent	21.0%	25.3%	10.8%	17.2%	21.7%	21.7%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	17.2%	19.6%	13.7%	22.9%	16.2%	17.7%

(Source: US Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanluisobispocountycalifornia/PST045222>)

The population of San Luis Obispo County was estimated at just over 280,000 in 2023, up 4.5% from 2010 (but down 0.3% from 2020).

San Luis Obispo County population is generally older (a lower proportion of children and a higher proportion of senior citizens) than the state or the nation. Atascadero and Paso Robles have a higher proportion of children than the City or County of San Luis Obispo.

	Atascadero	El Paso de Robles	San Luis Obispo (city)	San Luis Obispo County	California	United States
Black	0.6%	0.3%	1.2%	1.9%	6.5%	13.7%
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.8%	1.6%	0.6%	1.5%	1.7%	1.3%
Asian	4.2%	3.4%	5.4%	4.3%	16.5%	6.4%
Native HI / Other Pac Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%
Two or More Races	13.9%	18.9%	11.7%	3.9%	4.3%	3.1%
Latino	23.1%	36.6%	17.3%	25.2%	40.4%	19.5%
White, not Hispanic or Latino	66.9%	53.3%	70.5%	66.0%	34.3%	58.4%
Foreign-born persons	7.6%	16.0%	7.8%	9.6%	26.7%	13.9%
Language other than English spoken at home	13.1%	26.9%	16.6%	17.2%	44.1%	22.0%

(Source: US Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanluisobispocountycalifornia/PST045222>)

San Luis Obispo County has a higher proportion of White/non-Hispanic residents than the state or nation.

In San Luis Obispo County, as in the state and nation, the largest non-White ethnic group is Latino.

San Luis Obispo County has a lower percentage of foreign-born residents, and relatedly, a lower percentage of residents speaking a language other than English at home. That said, nearly 1 in 10 SLO County residents is foreign born, and 17.2% speak a language other than English at home.

	Atascadero	El Paso de Robles	San Luis Obispo (city)	San Luis Obispo County	California	United States
Median household income	\$88,830	\$93,098	\$66,711	\$93,398	\$96,334	\$78,538
Per capita income	\$59,728	\$43,615	\$45,462	\$49,581	\$47,977	\$43,289
Median house value	\$673,400	\$648,400	\$896,500	\$777,200	\$695,400	\$303,400
Median gross rent	\$1,855	\$1,947	\$1,906	\$1,899	\$1,956	\$1,348
Persons in poverty	9.9%	12.8%	30.0%	12.8%	12.0%	11.1%

(Source: US Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanluisobispocountycalifornia/PST045222>)

Income levels in San Luis Obispo County are comparable with the state, and higher than the national average. However, the median house value is significantly higher, particularly in the city of San Luis Obispo.

Poverty rates are also comparable to the state rate, and slightly higher than the national rate. The poverty rate in the City of San Luis Obispo is 30%, likely due to the high number of residential college students.

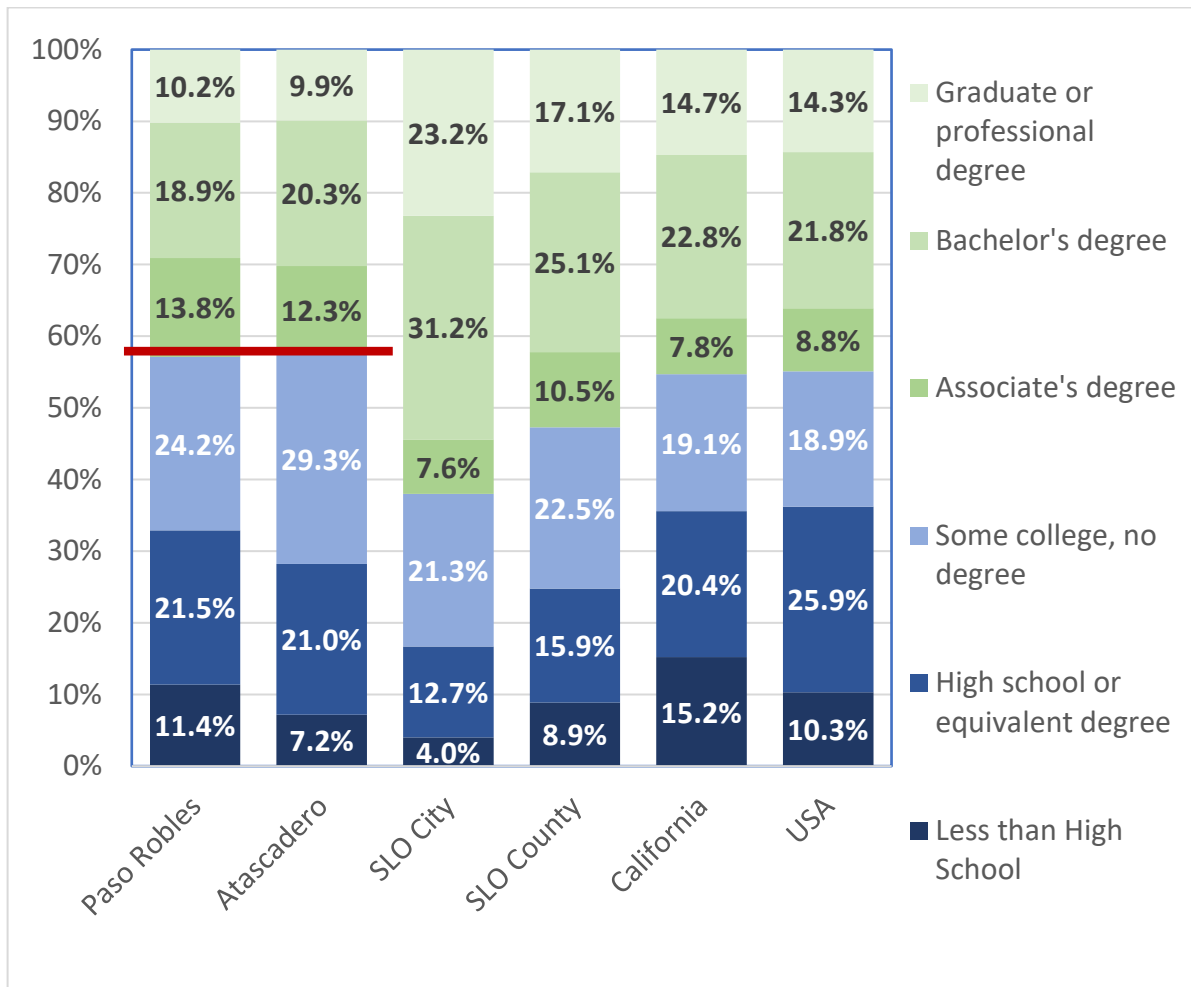
	Atascadero	El Paso de Robles	San Luis Obispo (city)	San Luis Obispo County	California	United States
Households with a computer	95.9%	97.0%	96.5%	96.6%	96.4%	94.8%
Households with broadband Internet	93.7%	94.2%	92.1%	92.4%	92.5%	89.7%
High school grad+, 25 years or older	92.8%	88.7%	96.0%	91.8%	84.6%	89.4%
Bachelor degree+, 25 years or older	30.2%	29.1%	54.4%	39.2%	36.5%	35.0%
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+	21.9	23.9	15.6	21.4	29	26.6

(Source: US Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanluisobispocountycalifornia/PST045222>)

Educational attainment rates are higher in San Luis Obispo County than the state or nation, particularly in the City of San Luis Obispo.

Mean travel time to work is less for SLO County residents than the state or national averages.

Educational Attainment



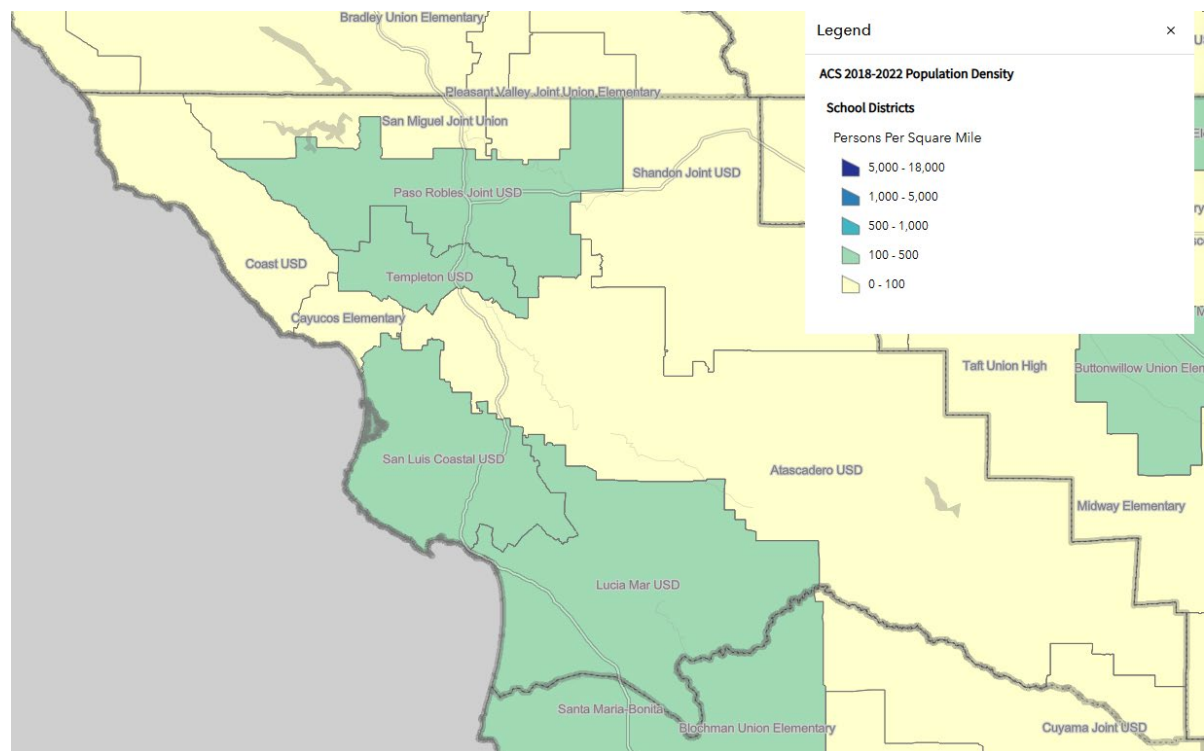
(Source: US Census [Data Profiles](#))

Overall, San Luis Obispo County and City post higher educational attainment levels than the state or nation.

That said, nearly half (47.3%) of SLO County residents have less than an Associate Degree.

Paso Robles and Atascadero have an even higher proportion of residents with less than an Associate Degree, (57% and 58% respectively).

K-12 School Districts

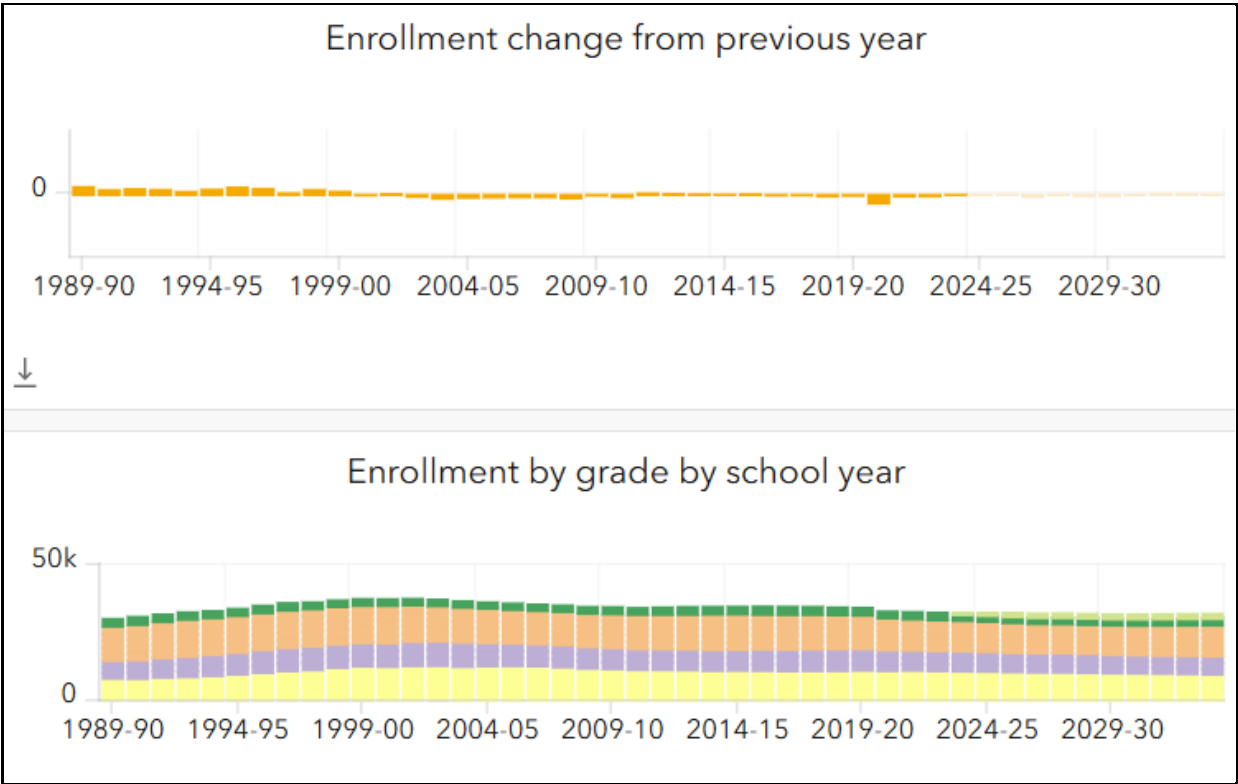


The following school districts are located in San Luis Obispo County:

- Atascadero USD
- Cayucos Elementary
- Coast USD
- Cuyama Joint USD
- Lucia Mar USD
- Paso Robles Joint USD
- San Luis Coastal USD
- San Miguel Joint Union
- Shandon Joint Union
- Templeton USD

(Source: CA Department of Finance ACS Population Density [Map](#) by School Districts)

County K-12 Enrollment, Historic and Projected

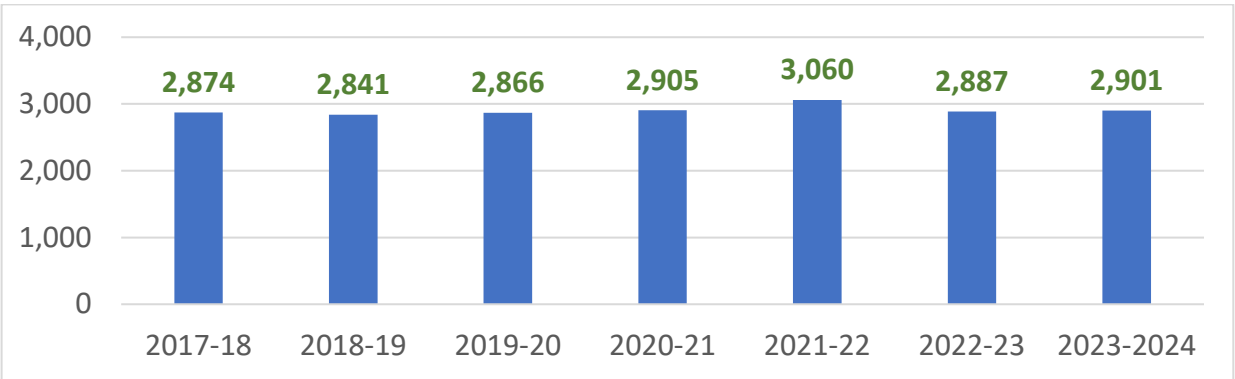


(Source: [CA Department of Finance](#), *School Enrollment Projections*)

Enrollment in county schools is projected to be relatively flat in the next decade, decreasing 1.3% from 32,607 in 2023-24 to 32,181 in 2033-2034

Statewide, enrollment is projected to decrease 10.0% in the same time period

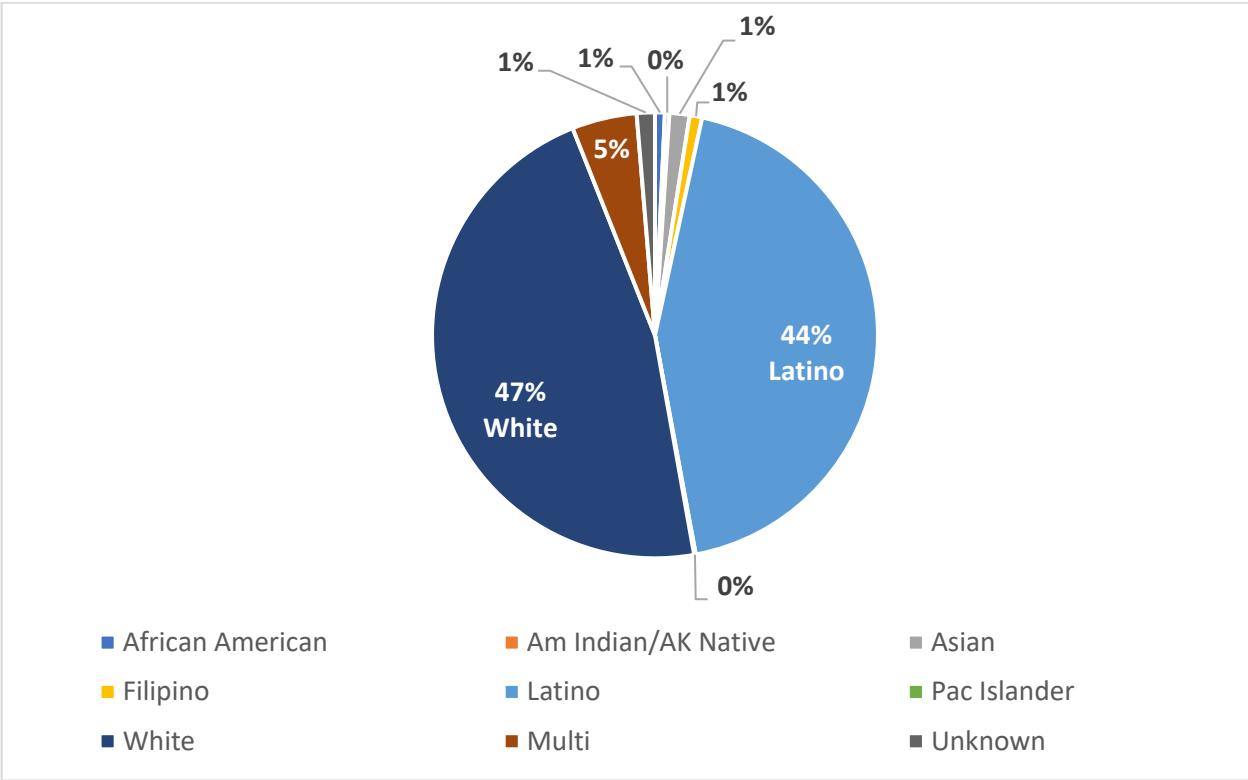
County Twelfth Grade Enrollment



(Source: [CDE DataQuest](#))

Enrollment in Twelfth Grade has remained relatively flat in recent years.

County K-12 Enrollment, by Ethnicity, 2023-2023



(Source: CDE [DataQuest](#))

The ethnic breakdown of students enrolled in SLO County schools is 47% White (compared to 66% White for the County population overall). There are nearly as many Latino students (44%) as White (47%). After White and Latino students, the next largest group is “Multi.”

County K-12 English Language Learners

One-quarter (25.7%) of K-12 students are currently or were formerly designated ELL.

Of those students, 90.1% speak Spanish as their first language, and 3.2% speak Otomian languages (Mixteco).

Fifty-two different first languages are reported for ELL and former ELL students, but all besides Spanish and Mixteco are below 1%.

(Source: CDE [DataQuest](#))

County High School Graduation and College Going Rates, Compared

District	N	Cohort Graduation Rate	% Meeting UC/CSU Requirements	College Going Rate	% of grads going to college choosing a CCC
Atascadero	370	92.2%	54.6%	57.5%	72.3%
Coast	58	98.3%	42.1%	81.0%	61.7%
Lucia Mar	871	94.3%	51.3%	66.1%	63.7%
Paso Robles	619	90.5%	22.5%	55.4%	68.1%
San Luis Coastal	646	95.8%	63.2%	82.6%	53.5%
San Luis County Office of Education	204	83.8%	0%	19.5%	94.9%
Shandon	22	90.9%	5.0%	60.0%	100%
Templeton	206	97.6%	48.8%	71.2%	48.6%
<i>California Statewide Average</i>		<i>87.0%</i>	<i>51.4%</i>	<i>62.0%</i>	<i>52.4%</i>

) Notes: **BOLD** indicates higher than the state average; Data from 2021-22

Source: CDE [DataQuest](#))

Overall, most San Luis Obispo County High Schools have graduation rates than the state average, but lower rates of meeting UC/CSU requirements upon graduation.

College going rates in SLO County range from a high of 82.6% at San Luis Coastal to a low of 19.5% at the County Office of Education.

For all county high schools with the exception of Templeton, the rate of high school graduates going to college who choose a California Community College is notably higher than the state average.

Economic Development and Labor Market Information

County Economic Strategy

San Luis Obispo County and the Regional Economic Action Coalition (REACH) have identified seven Key Industries to promote economic growth “in pursuit of inclusive economic prosperity”:

- Aerospace + Defense
- Agriculture Technology
- Building + Design + Construction
- Healthcare + Life Sciences
- Precision Manufacturing
- Clean Tech + Renewable Energy
- Technology + Innovation

(Source: County of San Luis Obispo, and [REACH 2030: 10 Year Action Plan for Central Coast job creation-- includes both San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties](#))

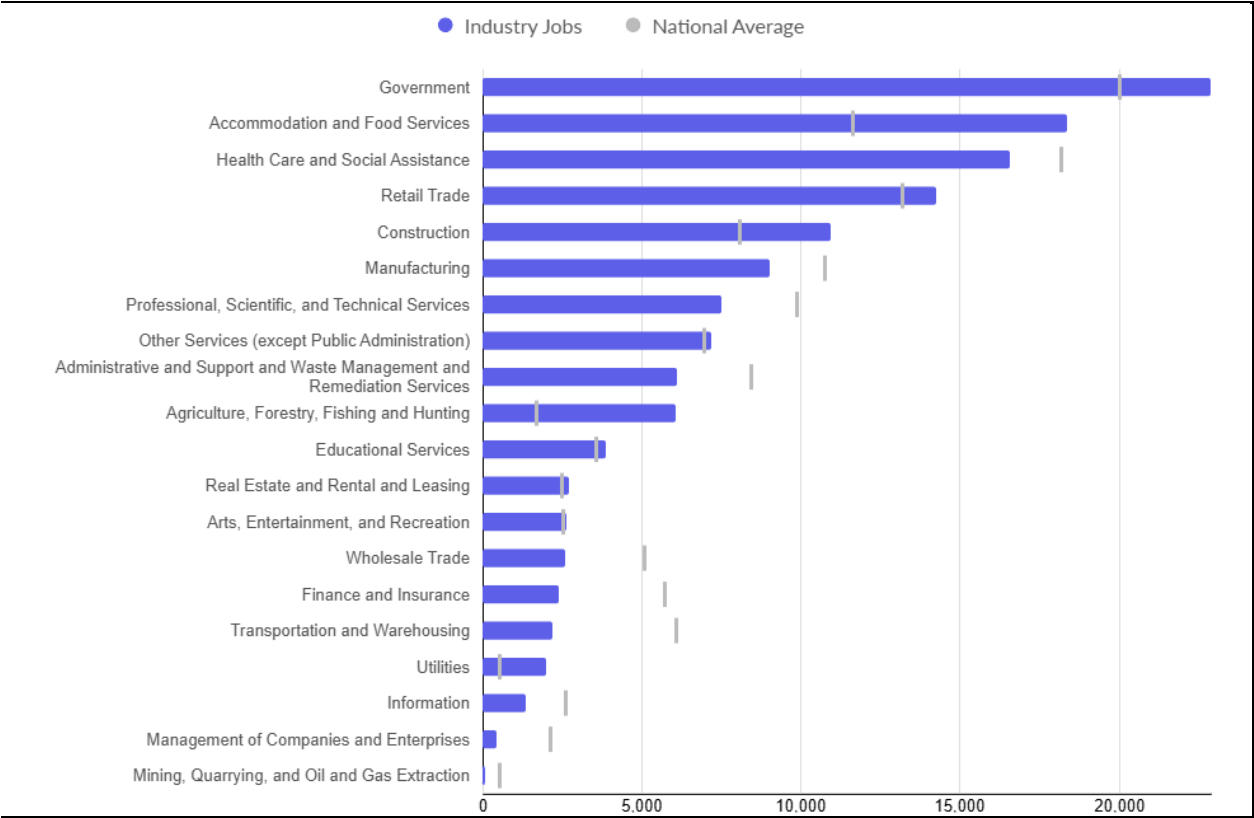
Strong Workforce Priority Sectors

The California Community Colleges’ South Central Coast Regional Consortium has identified Priority Sectors with in-demand, high wage jobs:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Advanced Transportation
- Agriculture, Water and Environmental Tech
- Business and Entrepreneurship
- Energy, Construction and Utilities
- Education
- Health
- Information and Communication Tech and Digital Media
- Life Sciences and Biotechnology
- Public Safety
- Retail Hospitality

(Source: South Central Coast Regional Consortium [Strong Workforce Program 4-Year Plan 2024](#))

Top Industries, SLO County, 2023

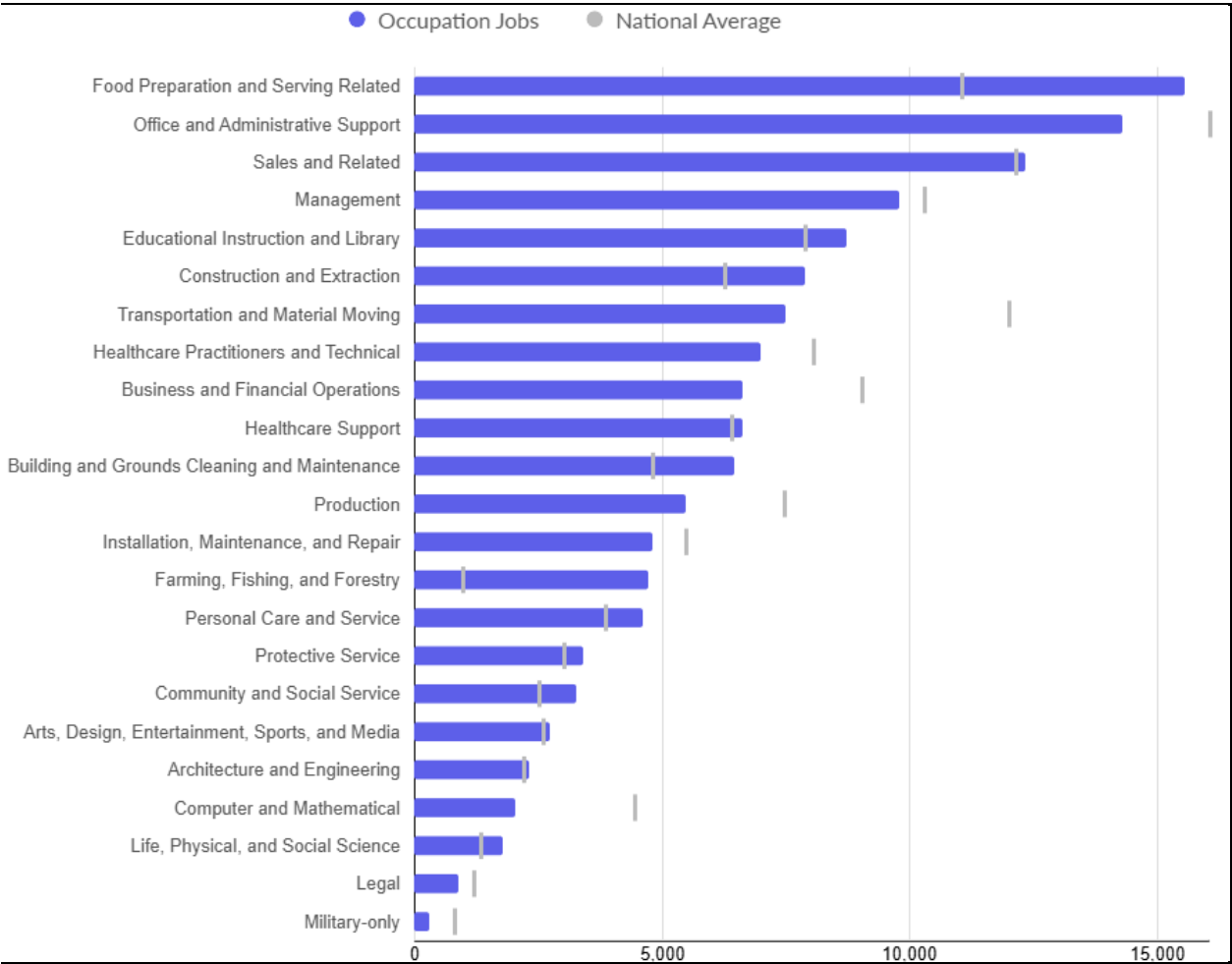


(Source: Lightcast)

Compared to national averages, San Luis Obispo County has higher proportions of industry jobs in Government, Accommodation and Food Service, Retail Trade, Construction, Agriculture, and Utilities.

Conversely San Luis Obispo County has lower proportions of industry jobs in Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Professional/Scientific/Technical Services, Admin Support Waste Management and Remediation Services, Wholesale Trade, Finance and Insurance, Transportation and Warehousing, Information, and Management of Companies and Enterprises.

Top Occupations, SLO County, 2023



(Source: Lightcast)

Compared to national averages, San Luis Obispo County has higher proportions of Food Preparation and Serving Related, Educational Instruction and Library, Construction and Extraction, Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance, Farming Fishing and Forestry, Personal Care and Service, Community and Social Service, and Life/Physical and Social Sciences.

Conversely, San Luis Obispo County has lower proportions of Office and Administrative Support, Management, Transportation and Material Moving, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical, Business and Financial Operations, Production, Installation Maintenance and Repair, Computer and Mathematical, Legal, and Military.

In-Demand Jobs

Job Postings, January 2023 to December 2024

Top Companies	Unique Postings	Top Job Titles	Unique Postings
State of California	767 	Medical Assistants	389 
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	754 	Sales Associates	316 
UPMC Mercy School of Nursi	750 	Registered Nurses	311 
California State University	509 	Administrative Assistants	303 
Cuesta College	494 	Caregivers	277 
County Of San Luis Obispo	483 	Housekeepers	245 
Cal Poly State University	461 	Retail Sales Associates	237 
California Polytechnic State U	429 	Baristas	234 
Sierra Vista Regional Medical	416 	Servers	213 
Adventist Health	367 	Retail Merchandisers	209 

(Source: Lightcast)

Job postings are one measure of in-demand jobs, and they also indicate who the largest employers are.

In San Luis Obispo County, the employers with the most job postings in the prior two calendar years were Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, State of California, UPMC Mercy School of Nursing, Cuesta College, County of San Luis Obispo, Sierra Vista Regional Medical, and Adventist Health.

The most posted job titles generally are in the service and healthcare industries.

Gap Analysis: Associate Degree Earners

Job Category	2025 Jobs	2023 - 2025 % Change	Avg. Annual Openings	Cuesta College Completions (2023)	Gap	Median Hourly Earnings
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	425	3%	52	48	4	\$18.71
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	244	3%	27	16	11	\$27.18
Dental Hygienists	232	4%	19	0	19	\$59.58
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	164	1%	11	0	11	\$48.62
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	144	6%	17	0	17	\$21.67
Architectural and Civil Drafters	140	1%	14	17	(3)	\$31.41
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	107	1%	6	0	6	\$37.61
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	106	3%	7	0	7	\$50.63
Food Science Technicians	103	6%	16	1	15	\$23.95
Forest and Conservation Technicians	98	1%	12	0	12	\$29.40
Physical Therapist Assistants	85	6%	14	0	14	\$39.20
Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians	82	4%	9	10	(1)	\$36.74
Electrical and Electronic Engineering Techs	71	3%	8	1	7	\$32.29
Computer Network Support Specialists	71	(2%)	5	38	(33)	\$34.27
Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other	61	3%	8	21	(13)	\$28.12

Note: **Blue** denotes above living wage (\$26.45) for one adult no children (Source: MIT) and **yellow** denotes a gap (Source: Lightcast)

The table above shows the undersupply of Cuesta College students completing Associate Degree programs to meet the county job demand (in order of number of 2025 jobs and job openings). The yellow-shaded cells show the undersupply, or gap.

Gap Analysis: Certificate Earners

Job Description	2025 Jobs	2023 - 2025 % Change	Avg. Annual Openings	Cuesta College Completions (2023)	Gap	Median Hourly Earnings
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	1,560	6%	249	0	249	\$17.15
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,089	1%	121	0	121	\$26.42
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	870	4%	91	21	70	\$23.67
Medical Assistants	860	2%	117	7	110	\$22.55
Nursing Assistants	599	4%	95	1	94	\$21.19
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	504	2%	43	22	21	\$35.96
Firefighters	439	3%	38	167	(129)	\$32.88
Dental Assistants	420	3%	63	0	63	\$23.30
Manicurists and Pedicurists	402	4%	54	0	54	\$15.08
Massage Therapists	392	4%	58	0	58	\$17.42
Psychiatric Technicians	383	(0%)	31	74	(43)	\$44.20
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics	320	1%	30	0	30	\$27.46
Skincare Specialists	187	6%	29	0	29	\$18.99
Barbers	175	7%	24	0	24	\$15.15
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	174	9%	19	0	19	\$36.74

Note: **Blue** denotes above living wage (\$26.45) for one adult no children (Source: [MIT](#)) and **yellow** denotes a gap (Source: Lightcast)

The table above shows the undersupply of Cuesta College students completing Certificate programs to meet the county job demand (in order of number of 2025 jobs and job openings). The yellow-shaded cells show the undersupply, or gap.

Gap Analysis: Bachelor Degree Earners

Job Description	2025 Jobs	2023 - 2025 % Change	Avg. Annual Openings	Cuesta College Completions (2023)	Gap	Median Hourly Earnings
Managers, All Other	2,598	3%	225	2,873	(2,648)	\$29.96
Personal Financial Advisors	2,463	10%	257	0	257	\$56.85
General and Operations Managers	2,177	3%	202	2,563	(2,361)	\$48.12
Registered Nurses	2,132	3%	140	44	96	\$63.57
Management Analysts	1,464	3%	136	1,024	(888)	\$38.83
Accountants and Auditors	1,274	1%	104	312	(208)	\$39.96
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	1,250	4%	121	68	53	\$29.84
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	1,065	2%	103	2,658	(2,555)	\$32.89
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,015	2%	76	51	25	\$46.67
Property Appraisers and Assessors	943	8%	109	0	109	\$25.97
Construction Managers	856	2%	72	715	(643)	\$38.19
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	795	4%	84	400	(316)	\$28.94
Chief Executives	760	4%	65	2,557	(2,492)	\$60.43
Civil Engineers	747	3%	55	7	48	\$47.71
Project Management Specialists	724	2%	58	2,635	(2,577)	\$48.45

Note: *Blue* denotes above living wage (\$26.45) for one adult no children (Source: [MIT](#)) and *yellow* denotes a gap (Source: [Lightcast](#))

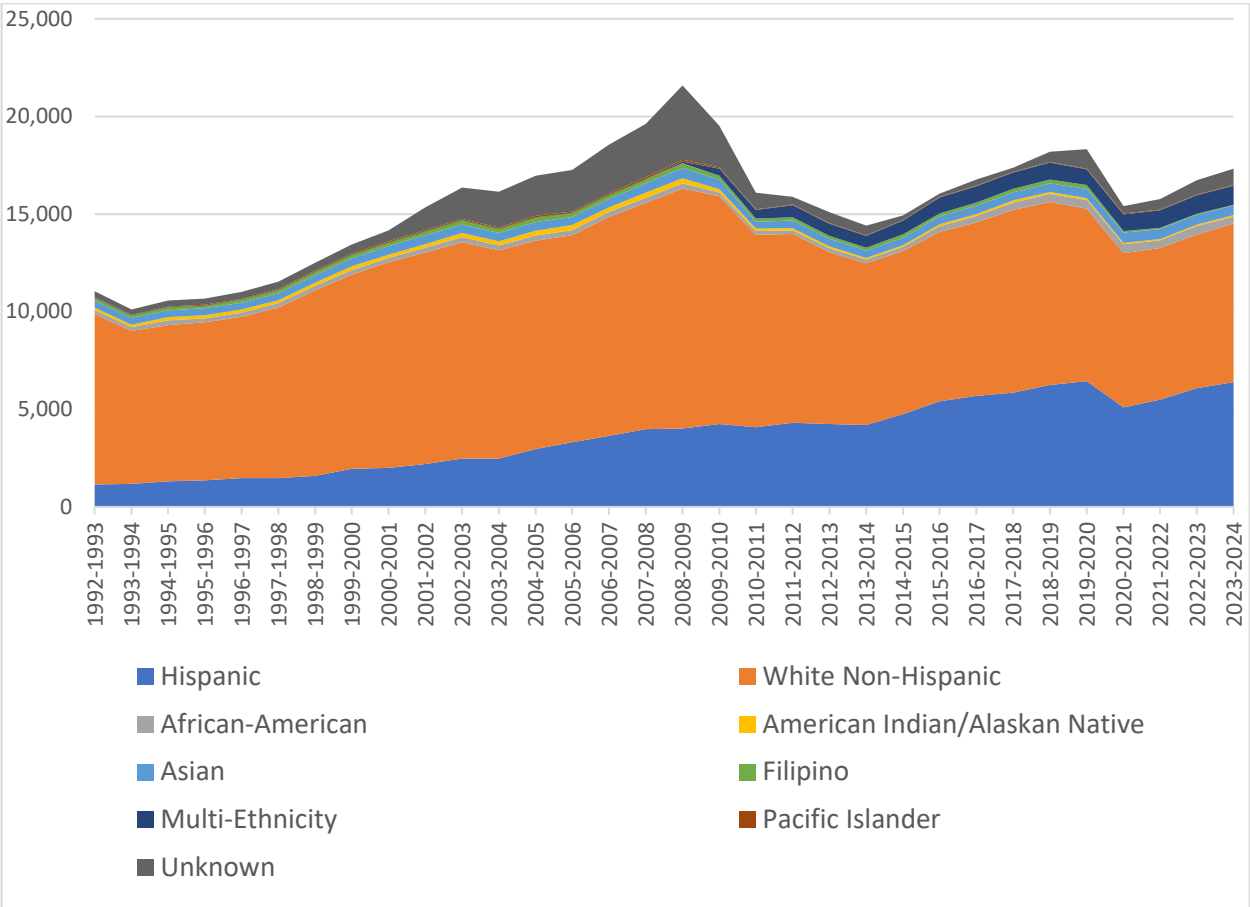
While Cuesta College is not in the business of awarding Bachelor Degrees, the College does transfer many students to four-year colleges and universities, so it is instructive to look at and the supply and demand for occupations requiring a Bachelor Degree.

The table above shows the undersupply of Cuesta College students completing Degree Certificate programs to meet the county job demand for jobs requiring a Bachelor Degree (in order of number of 2025 jobs and job openings). The yellow-shaded cells show the undersupply, or gap.

Appendix B: Internal Environmental Scan

Enrollment

Historic Enrollment, by Ethnicity

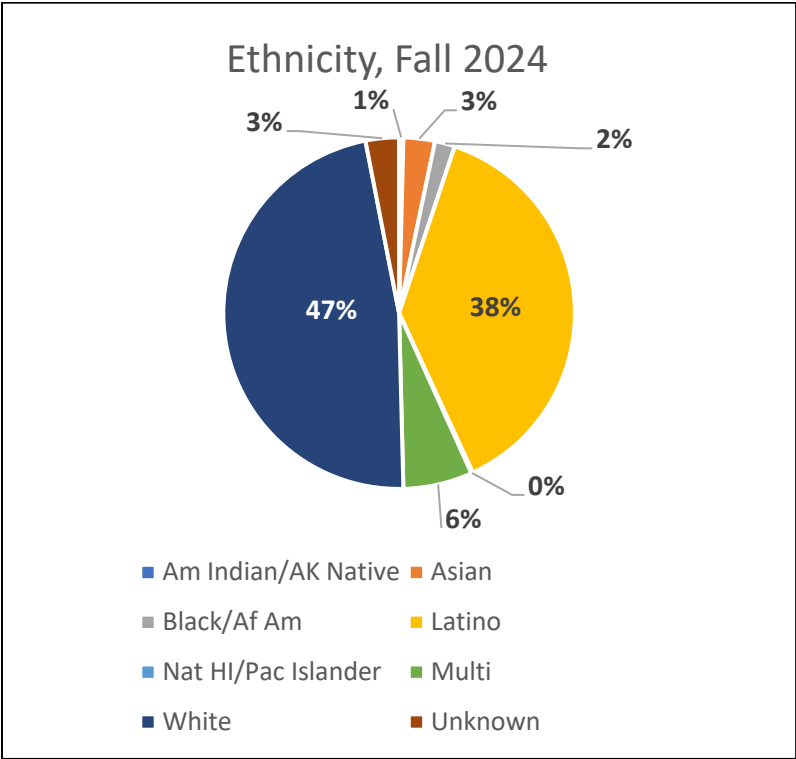


(Source: CCCCO [DataMart](#))

In the early 1900's, Cuesta College enrollment hovered around 10,000 students and then grew to a peak of over 20,000 around 2009. Enrollment then decreased (as it did statewide after policy changes around repeatability), rebounded, then decreased again during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and is currently on an upward trajectory.

Over these years, the ethnic proportion of the student population has shifted. In the early 1900s, the Cuesta student population was majority White (as represented by orange in the chart above). Over time, the number and proportion of Latino students grew, to where it now almost equals the enrollment of White students. All other ethnic groups show much smaller proportions.

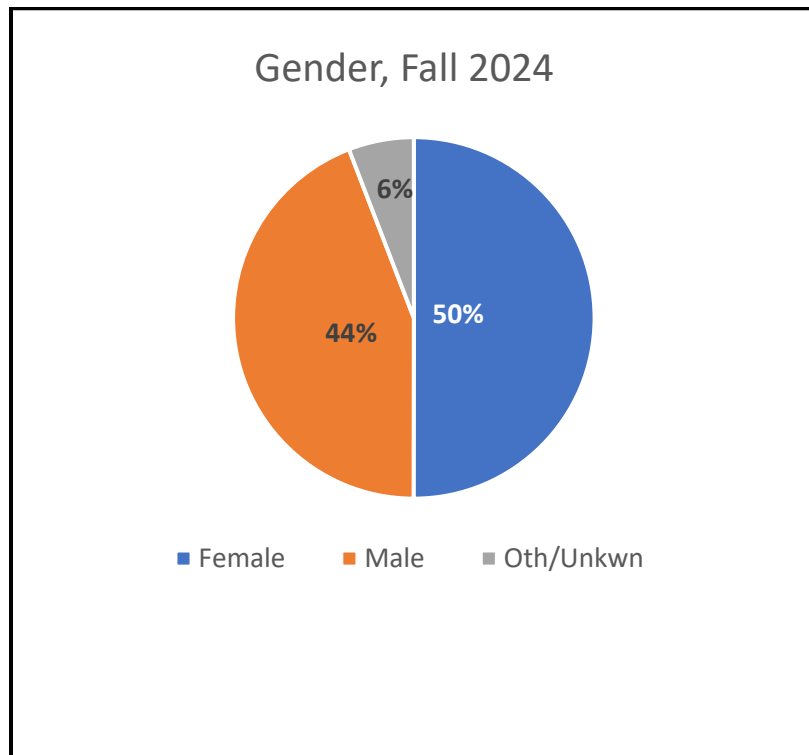
Demographics (Ethnicity, Gender, Age)



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR Tableau)

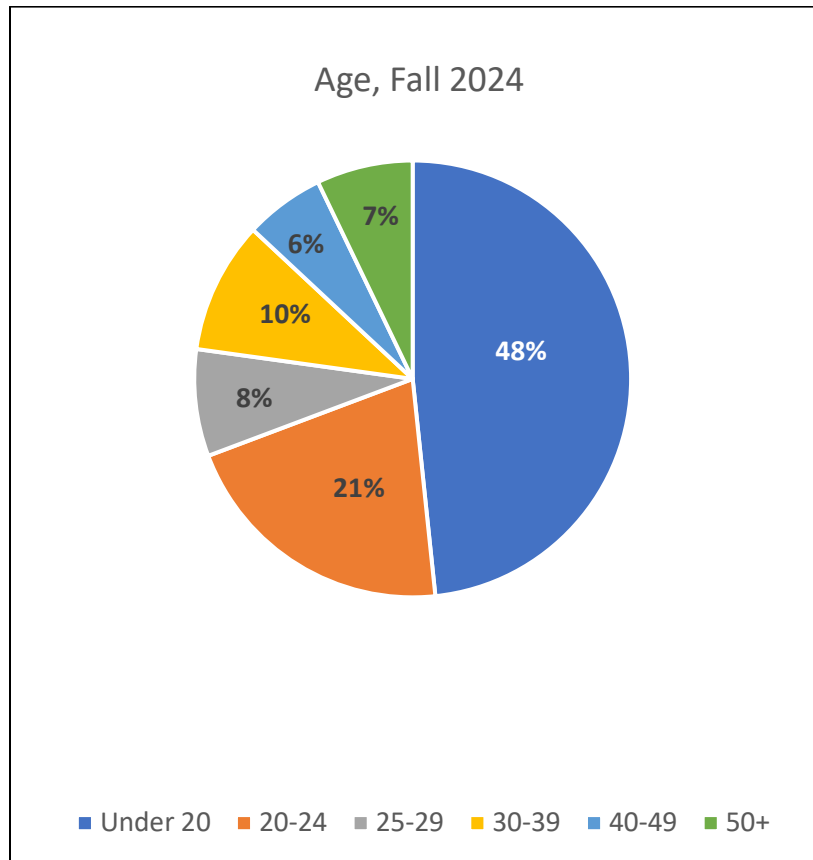
Overall, Cuesta College students are more ethnically diverse than the County Population (likely due to the age factor).

While there is no ethnic majority at Cuesta College, the largest ethnic group is White (47%), followed by Latino (38%). All other ethnic groups are much smaller



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR [Tableau](#))

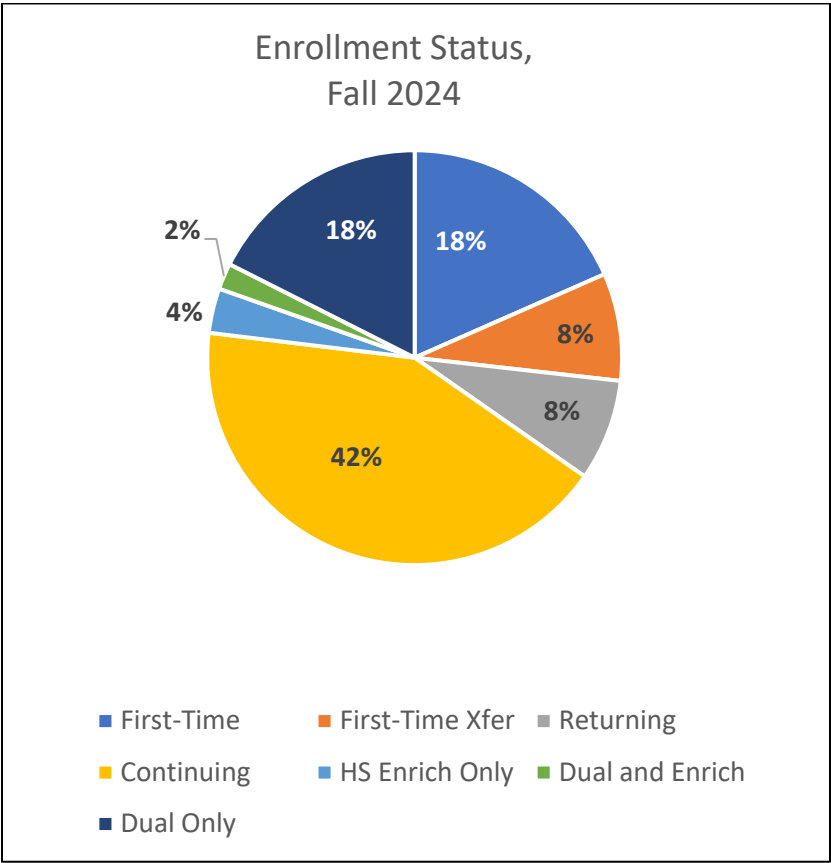
Half of Cuesta College students (50%) identify as female, less than half as male (44%), with a small proportion of other/unknown (6%).



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR Tableau)

Nearly half (48%) of Cuesta College students are under 20, one-fifth (21%) aged 20-24, and roughly one-third of students are 25 or older.

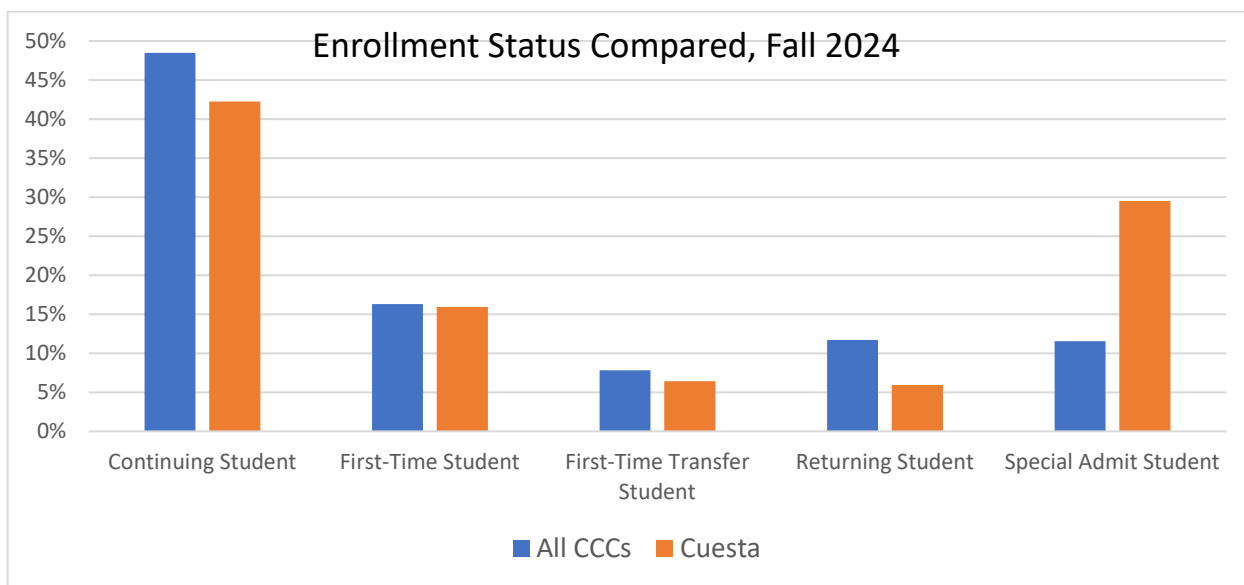
Enrollment Status



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR [Tableau](#))

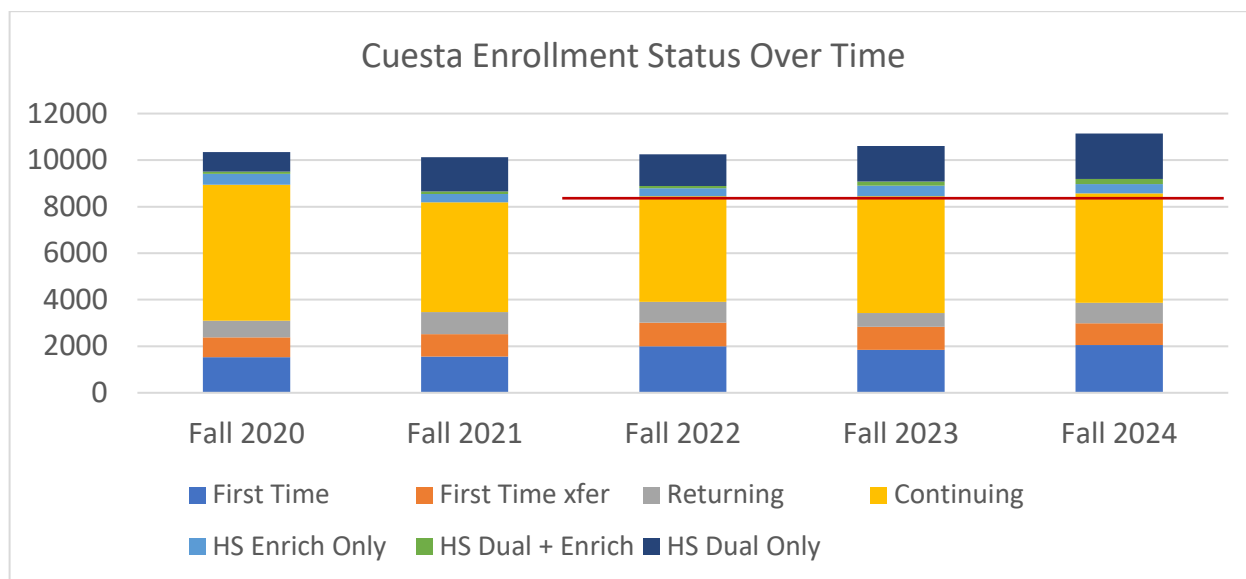
Nearly half (42%) of Cuesta College students are continuing students, meaning they were enrolled the prior semester.

Nearly one-quarter of Cuesta College students are high school students who are categorized as Dual, Enrichment, or both.



(Source: CCCCO [DataMart](#))

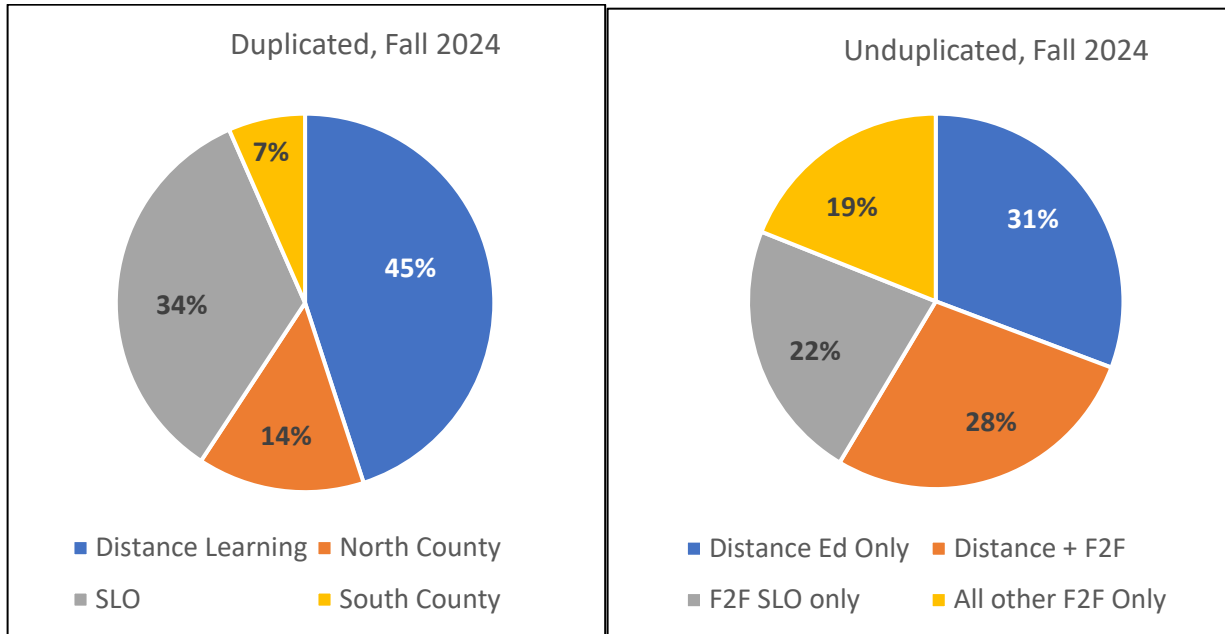
Compared to the statewide average for all California Community Colleges, Cuesta has a much higher proportion of enrolled high school students (“Special Admit”) – more than double.



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR [Tableau](#))

Between Fall 2022 and Fall 2024, the growth in Cuesta College enrollment has been due to high school students.

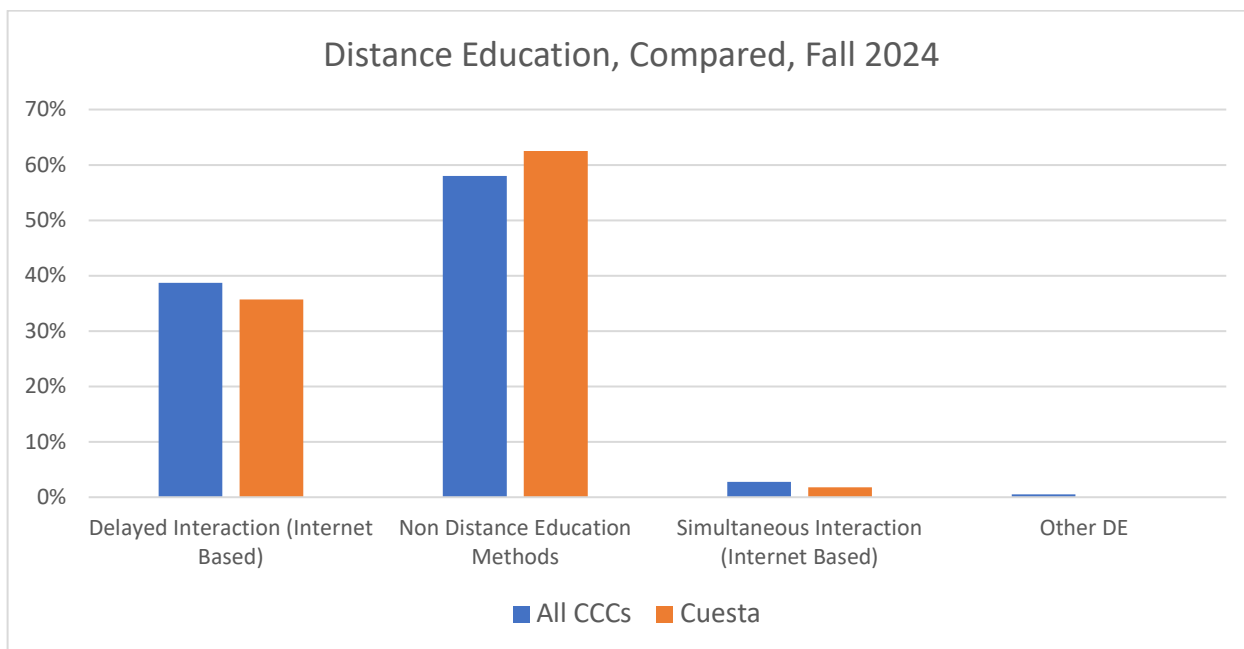
Enrollment by Locale, Including Distance Education



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR [Tableau](#))

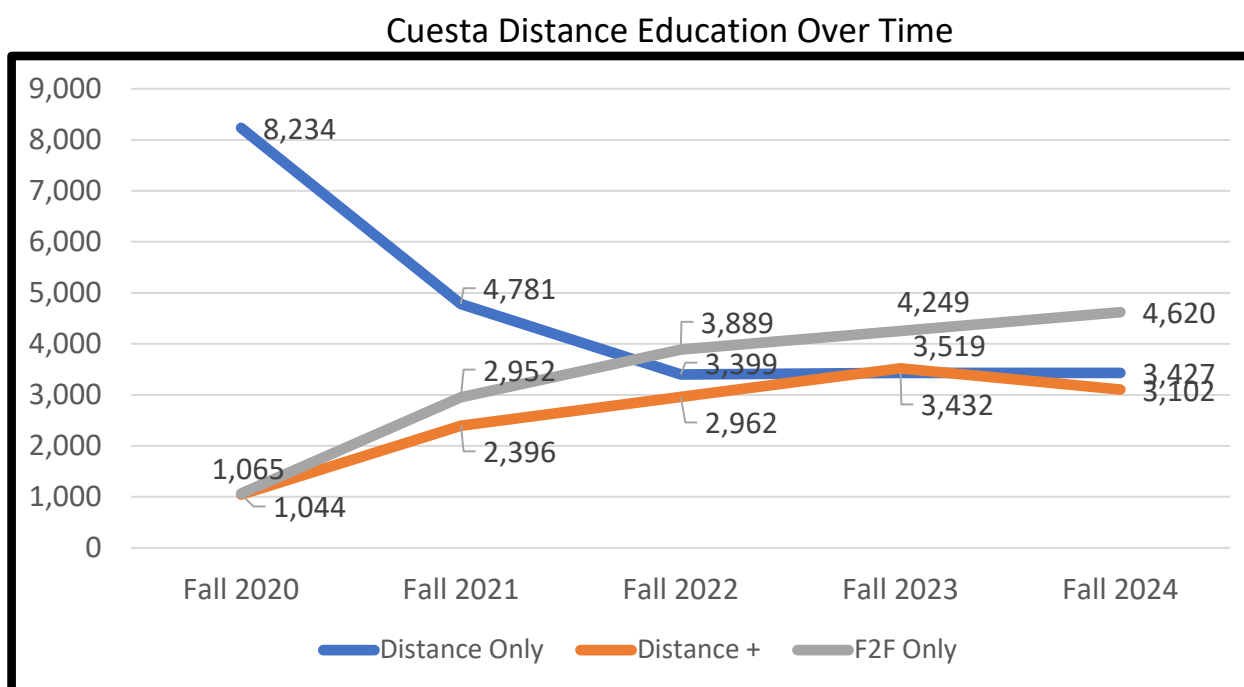
Duplicated Enrollment (all course enrollments by all students) occurs primarily online (45%) and at the San Luis Obispo Campus (34%). North County accounts for 14% of duplicated enrollment, and South County 7%.

Unduplicated Enrollment (headcount of individual students) is split more evenly. Just under one-third of students take their classes online only. An additional 28% take their courses both online and in person. One-fifth of students (22%) take their courses face-to-face only, and only on the SLO campus. All other face-to-face students account for the remaining 19%.



(Source: CCCCO [DataMart](#))

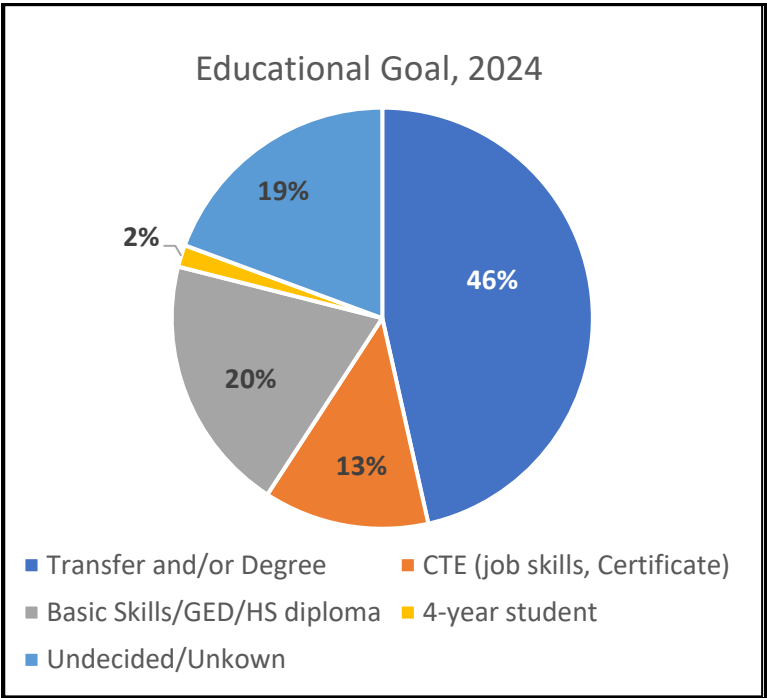
Compared to the state average for all California Community Colleges, Cuesta offers slightly fewer courses online and slightly more in person.



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR [Tableau](#))

Like all colleges nationally, Cuesta College pivoted to teaching online during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Since Fall 2022, Distance only has remained relatively flat and face-to-face has increased.

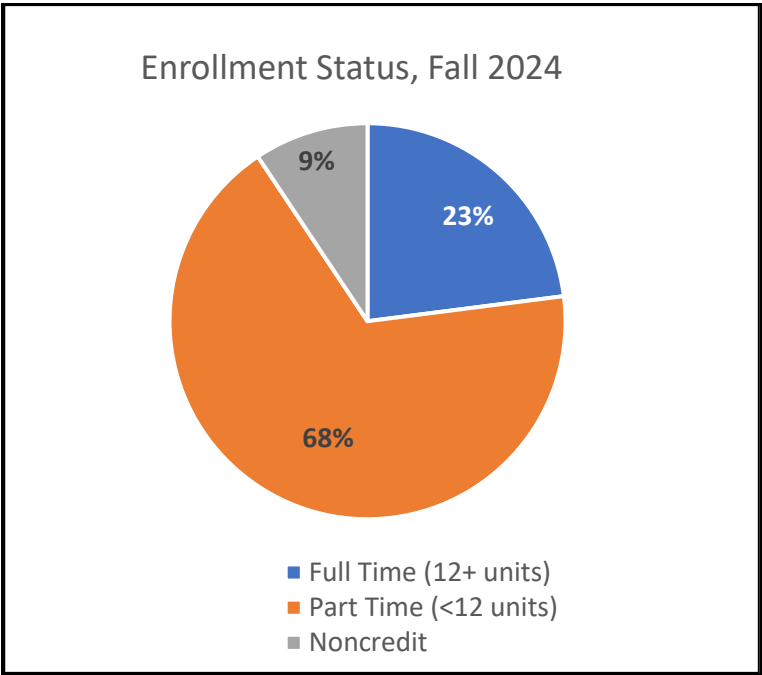
Educational Goal



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR Tableau)

Nearly half (46%) of Cuesta College Students have Transfer and/or Degree as their educational goal, and one-fifth (20%) have the goal of Basic Skills/GED/High School Diploma. Another nearly one-fifth of Cuesta College students are unsure of their goal. A smaller proportion, 13%, have a CTE-related goal, and two percent are university students.

Enrollment Status

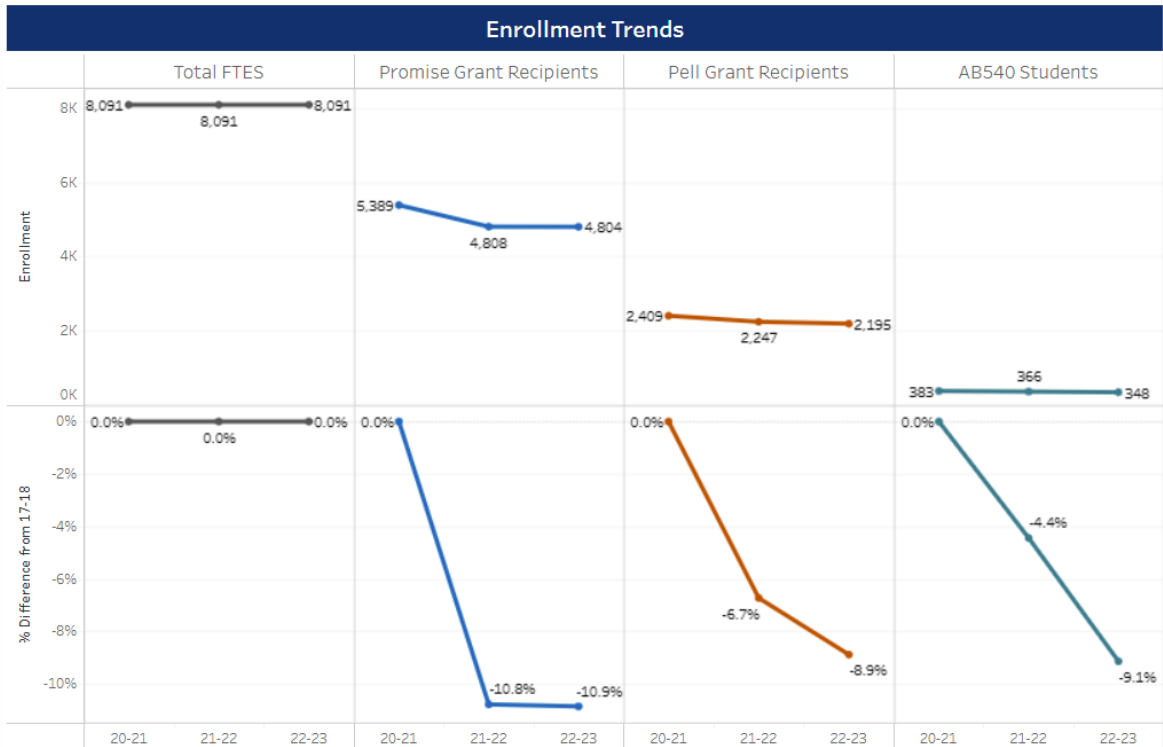


(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR Tableau)

Similar to other community colleges, the majority of Cuesta College students attend credit courses part-time.

Dreamers, CPG, Pell Grant Recipients

The charts below show total enrollment at SAN LUIS OBISPO for All Students (FTES), Promise Grant Recipients, Pell Grant Recipients, and AB540 Students, as well as the percent changes from 2020-2021.



Source: [SCFF Dashboard](#)

This graphic is taken directly from the Chancellor’s Office website (Student Centered Funding Formula Dashboard).

Cuesta College has experienced a decrease in Promise, Pell, and AB540 students in recent years, which can negatively impact funding.

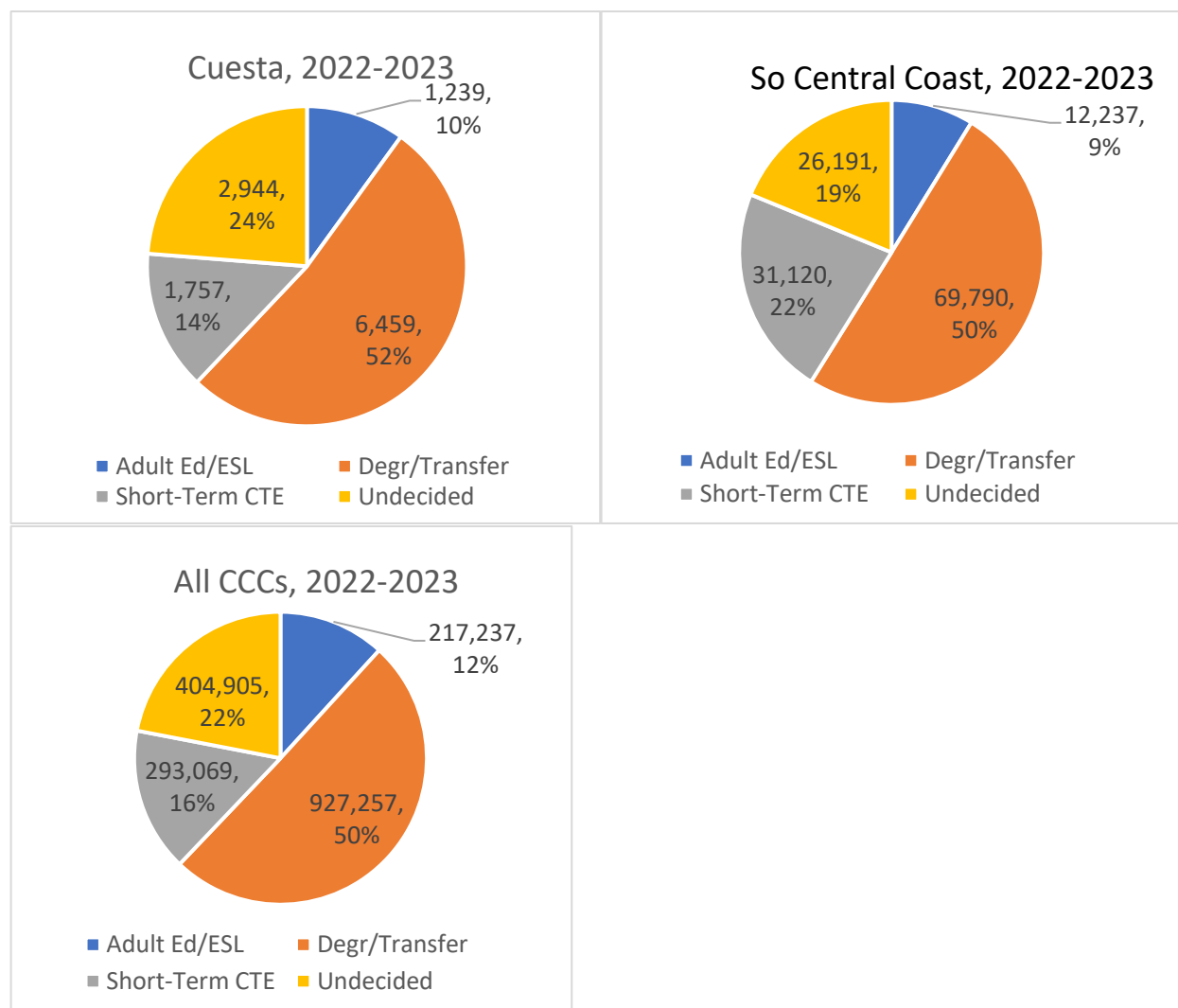
Statewide averages can be found on the same website, providing comparison information
In 2023-2024, 28.7% of Cuesta College Students received the CPG – the statewide average for California Community Colleges was 36.7%.

In the same year, 13.3% of Cuesta College students received a Pell Grant – the statewide average for California Community Colleges is 19.3%.

In the same year, 2.1% of Cuesta College students were classified as AB540 (Dreamers) – the statewide average was similar, at 2.3%.

Student Outcomes

Students by Educational Journey, Compared



(Source: CCCC DataVista)

Notes:

- Data are from the Chancellor's Office, and include Non-Special Admit Students only (approximately ¼ of Cuesta students are Special Admit)
- Cuesta has a higher percentage of Undecided and a lower percentage of Short-Term CTE
- South Central Coast includes Cuesta, Alan Hancock, Antelope Valley, Canyons, Moorpark, Oxnard, Santa Barbara, and Ventura

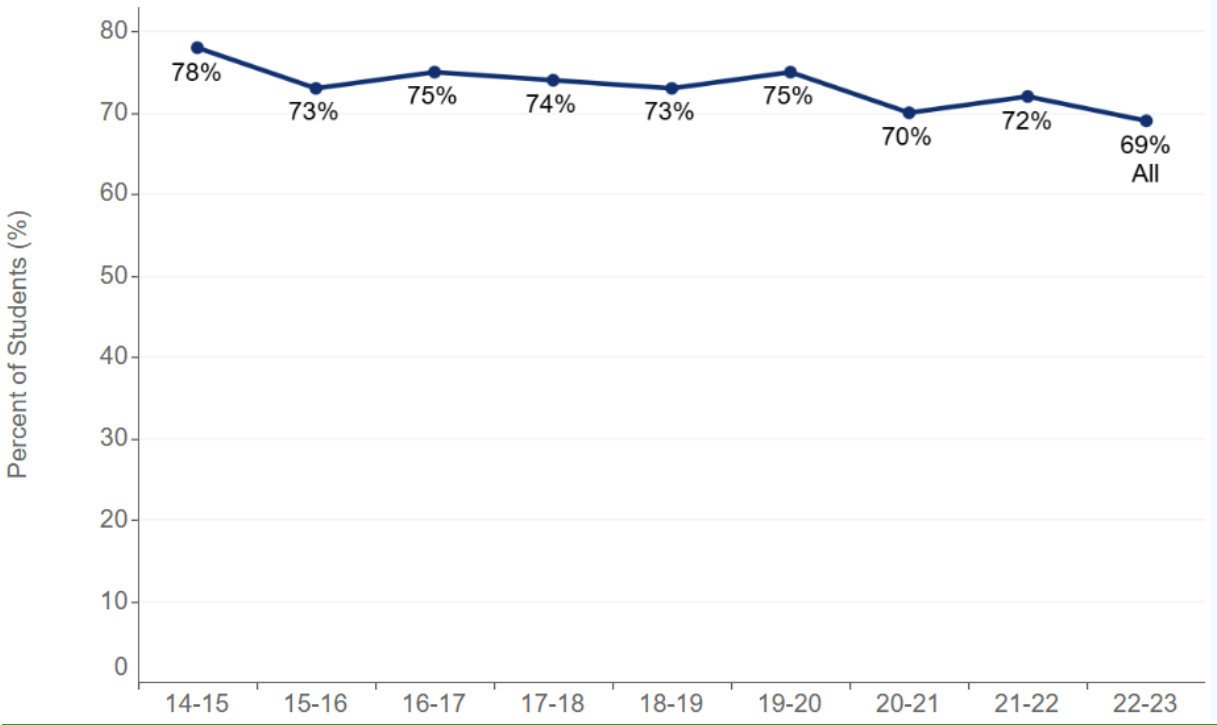
At Cuesta College, as with the South-Central Coast Community Colleges and Community Colleges statewide, about half of students have Degree/Transfer as a goal, and another 20-25% are Undecided. Cuesta College has a slightly lower proportion of Short-Term CTE than the region or the state.

Degree/Transfer Student Outcomes

Persisted from Fall to Spring: At the Same College

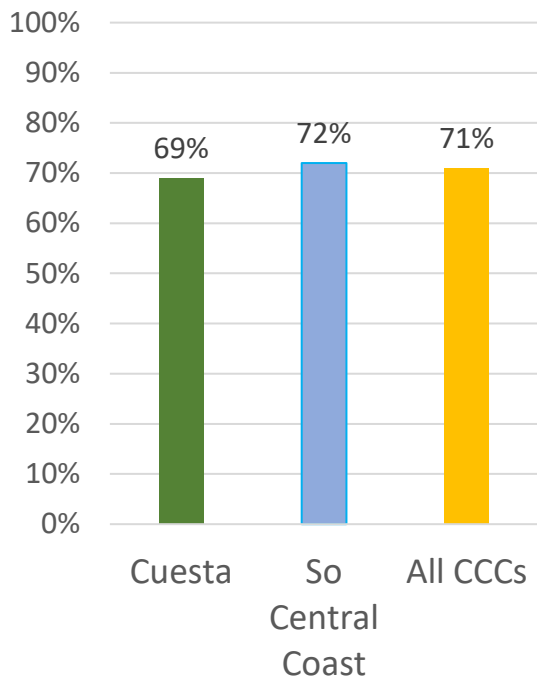
Degree/Transfer Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

Percentage of students who did not earn an award, who did not transfer, and who enrolled in fall and spring terms of the selected year at the selected college

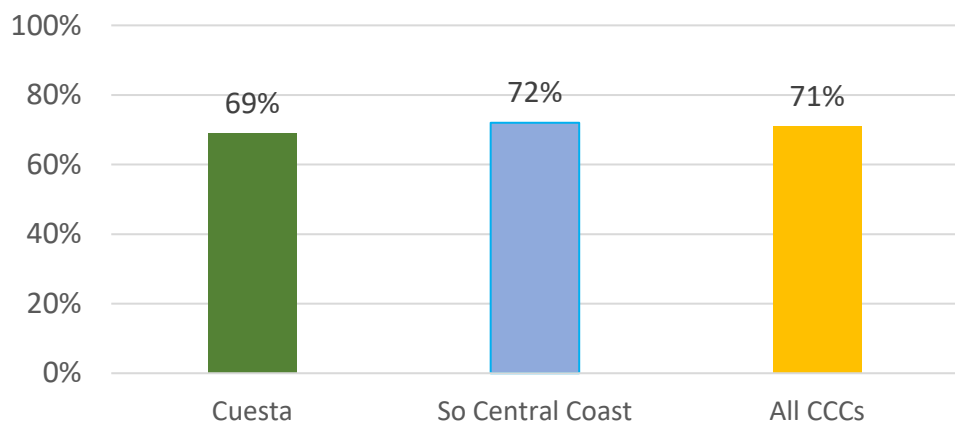


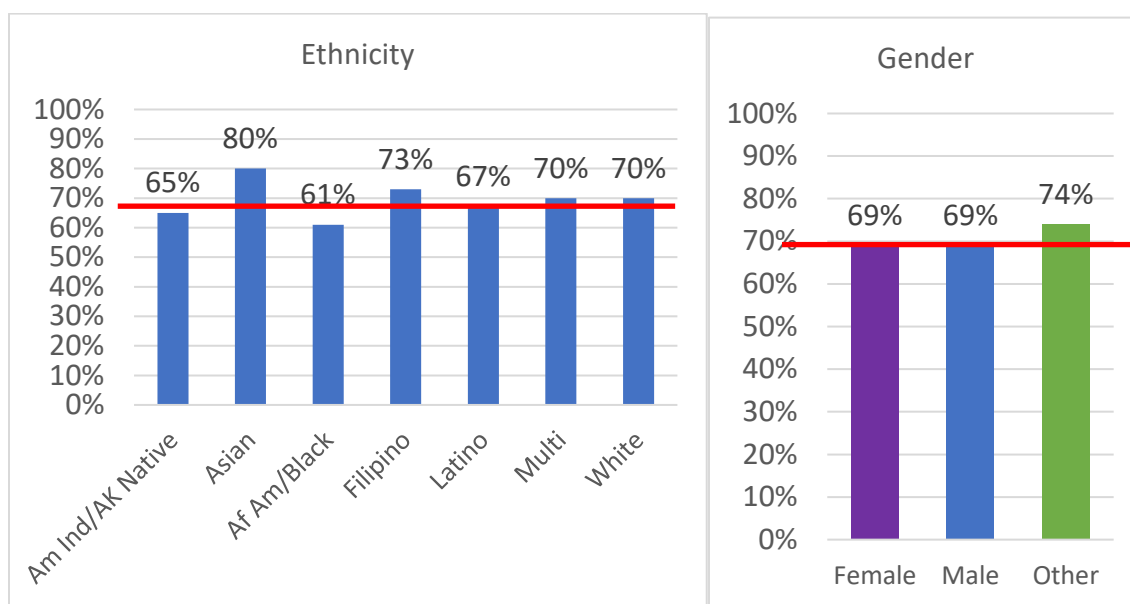
Persistence

Cuesta Compared, 22-23



Cuesta Compared, 22-23





Note: Cuesta Average = 69% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCCO [DataVista](#), most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall persistence for Degree/Transfer students at Cuesta College has been declining in recent years, from a high of 78% in 2014-2015 to a low of 69% in 2022-2023.

Compared to the region and the state, Cuesta College's rate is lower.

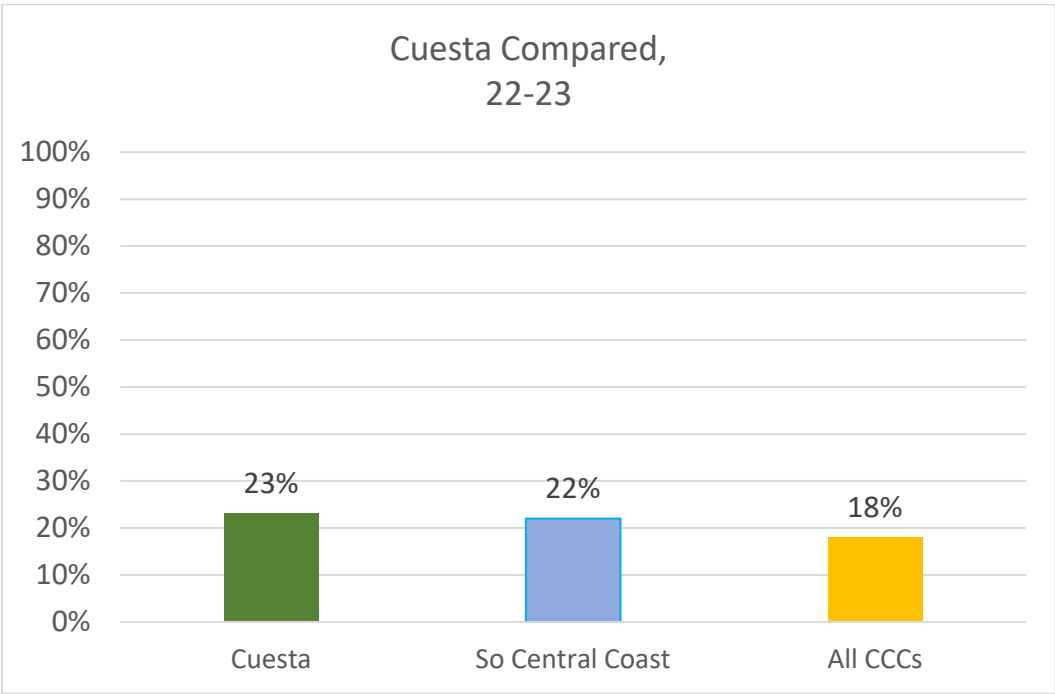
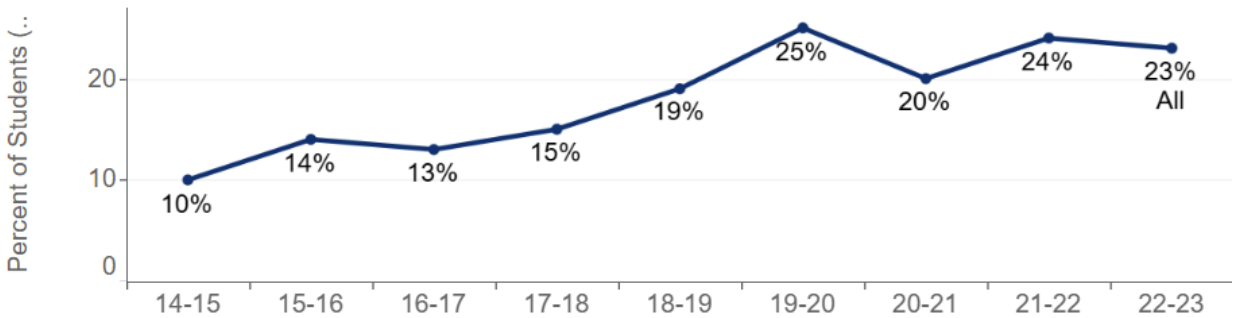
Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Black and American Indian/Alaska Native students.

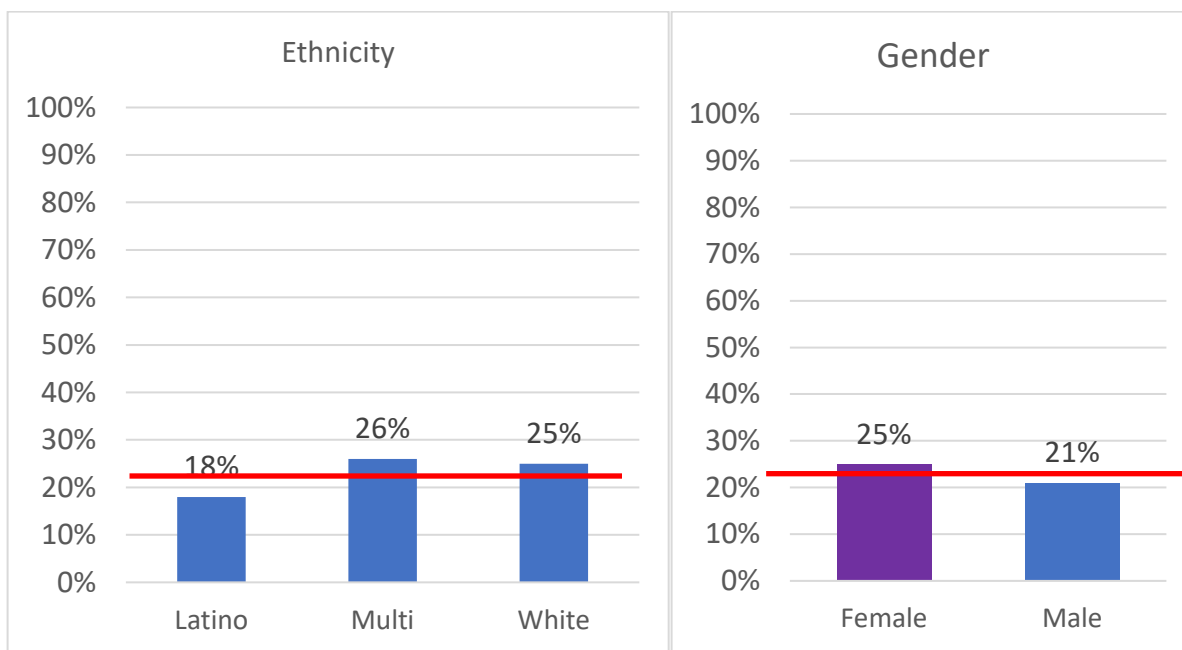
Completion of Transfer Level Math and English in Year 1

Completed Transfer-Level Math and English: Aligned with Student Centered Funding Formula

Degree/Transfer Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

Percentage of students who successfully completed transfer-level math and English within the district in selected year





Note: Cuesta Average = 23% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCCO [DataVista](#), most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall Transfer Level Math and English Completion in Year 1 for Degree/Transfer Students at Cuesta College has been increasing in recent years and has more than doubled since 2014-2015.

Compared to the region and the state, Cuesta College's rate is higher.

Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Latinos and Males.

Completion/Transfer

Earned an Award or Transferred: Vision for Success Goal or Transferred to a 4-Year Institution

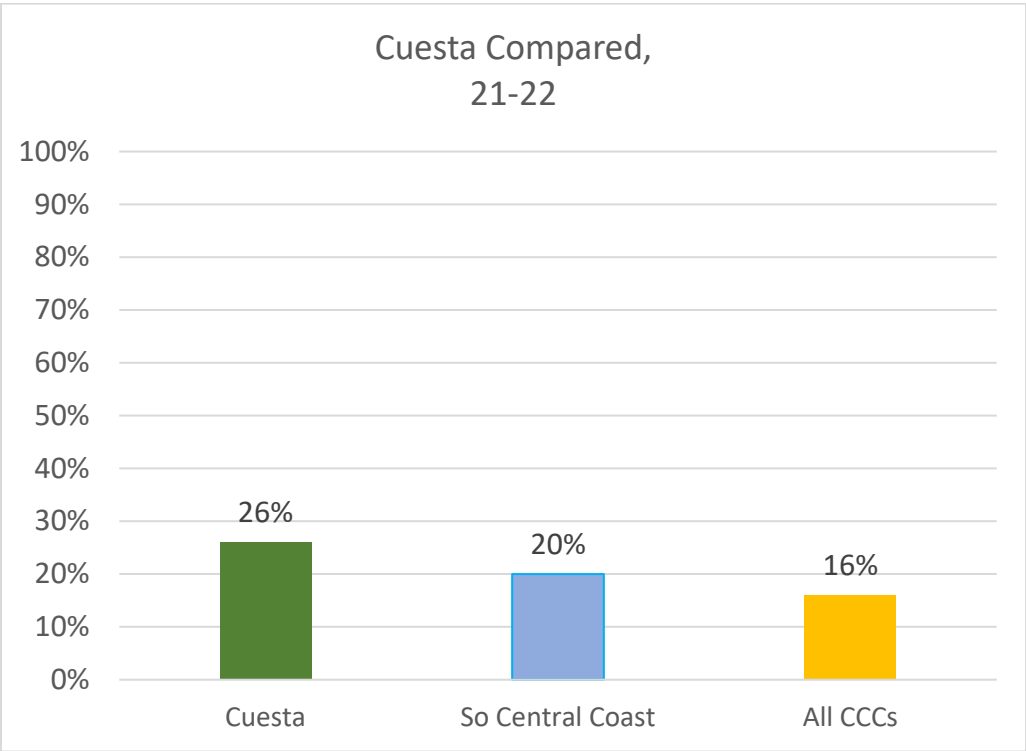
Degree/Transfer Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

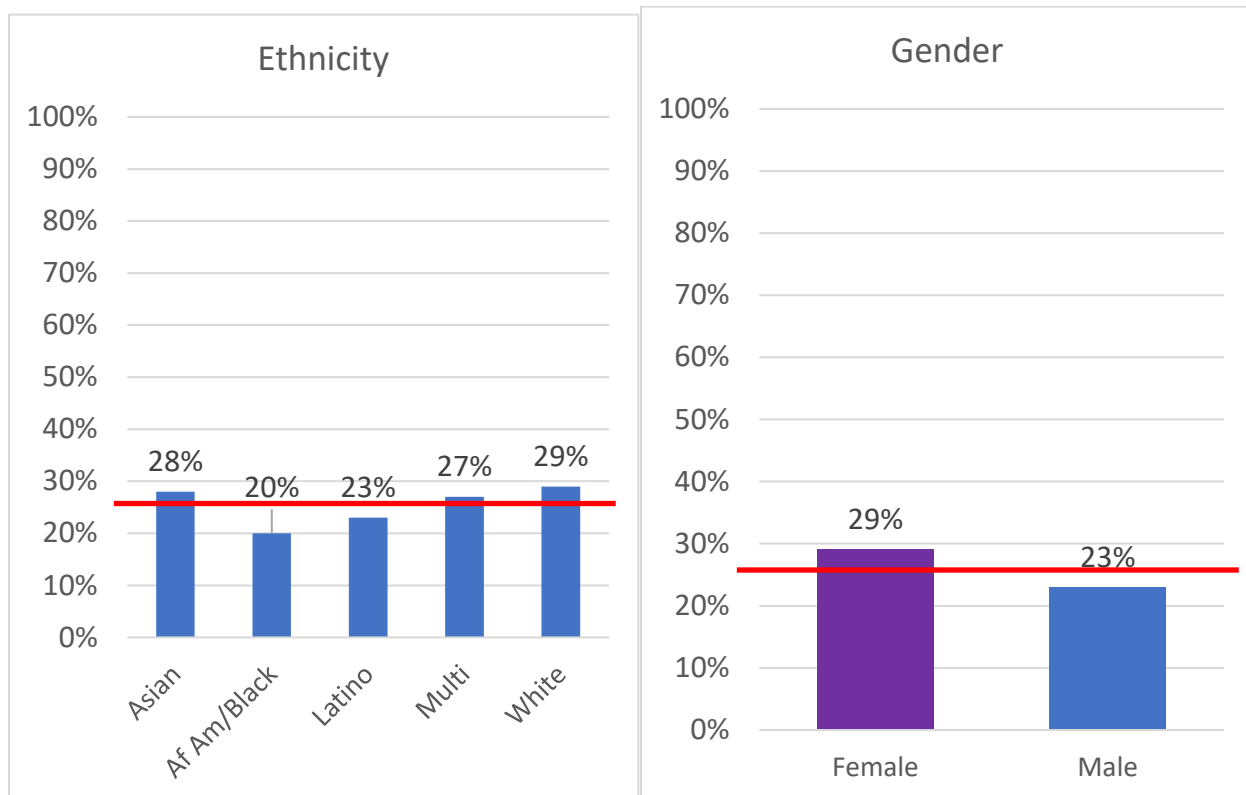
Number of students who were enrolled in the district and earned an award in selected year or who exiters who transferred to a 4-year college in the subsequent year



Source: Chancellor's Office Management Information System, National Student Clearinghouse, CSU/UC Cohort Match

Notes: Transfer metrics are only displayed for exiting students who are no longer enrolled at any California community college. Therefore, these outcome metrics are not available for the latest year.





Note: Cuesta Average = 26% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCCO [DataVista](#), most recent data from 2022-2023)

The overall number of Degree/Transfer Students earning a degree and/or transferring at Cuesta College has been increasing in recent years.

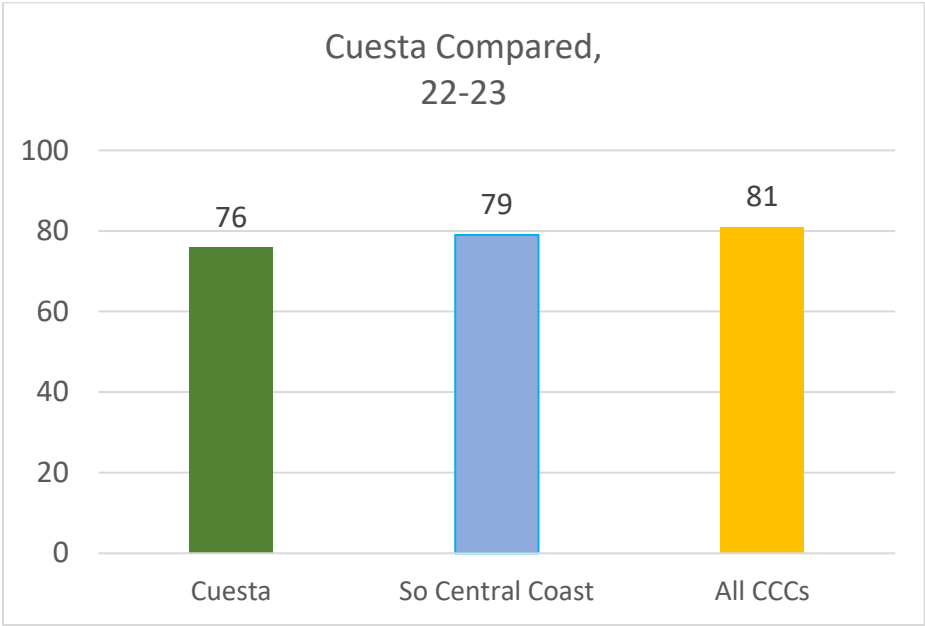
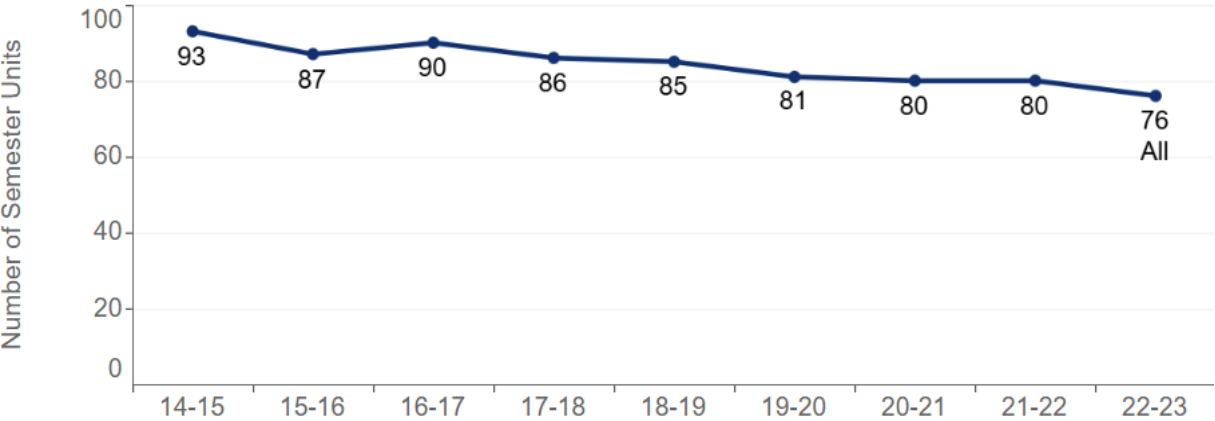
Compared to the region and the state, Cuesta College's rate is higher.

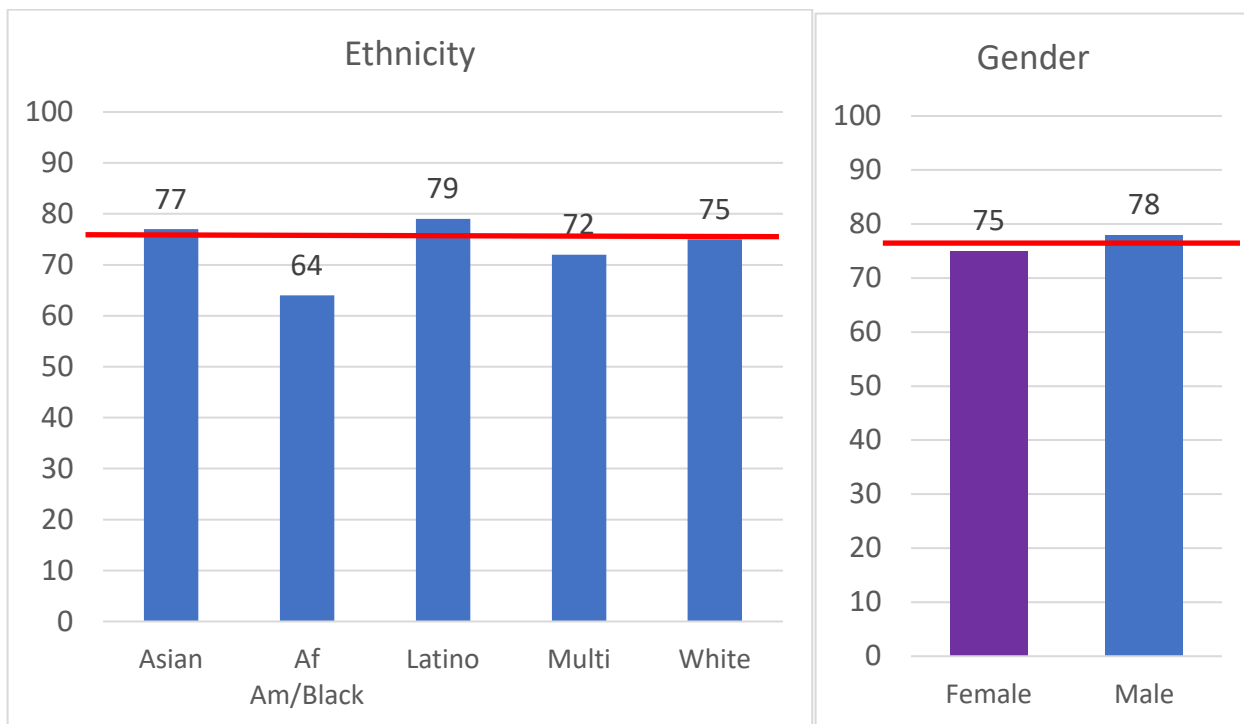
Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Blacks. Latinos and Males.

Units Earned Upon Graduation

Average Number of Semester Units Accumulated: Associate Degree Earners Degree/Transfer Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

Average number of semester units earned at any college up to and including the selected year by first time associate degree earners in selected year





Note: Cuesta Average = 76 (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCC [DataVista](#), most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall total Units Earned Upon Degree Conferral for Cuesta College students has decreased in recent years.

Compared to the region and the state, Cuesta College's number is lower.

Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Blacks.

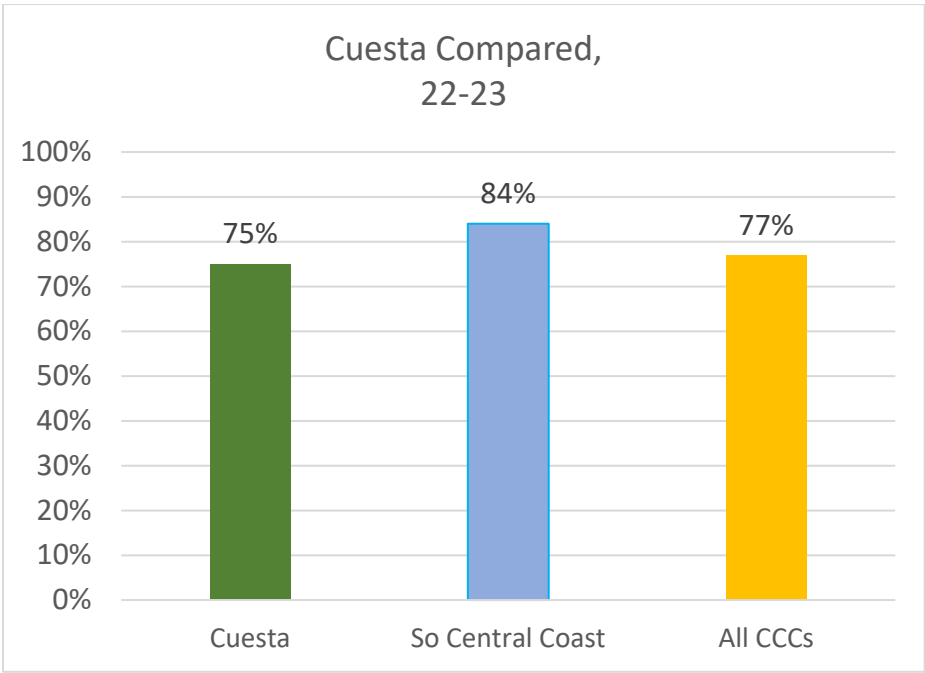
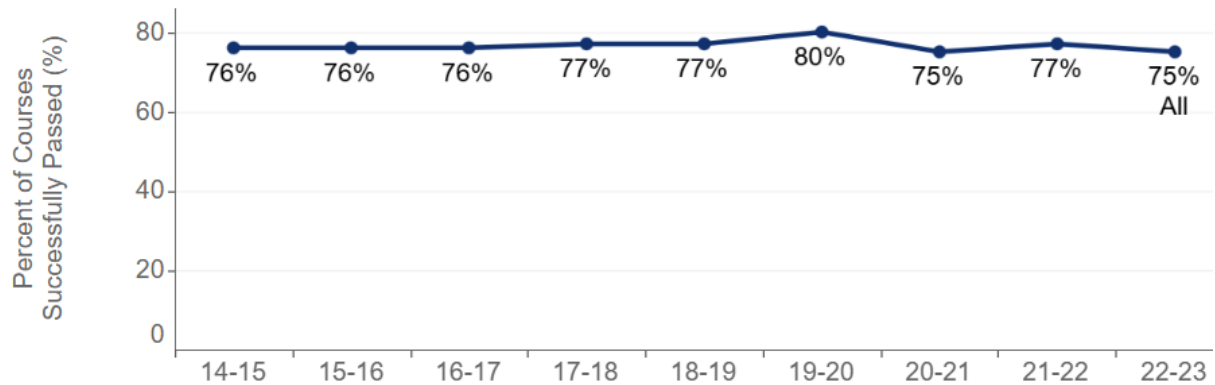
Short-Term CTE Student Outcomes

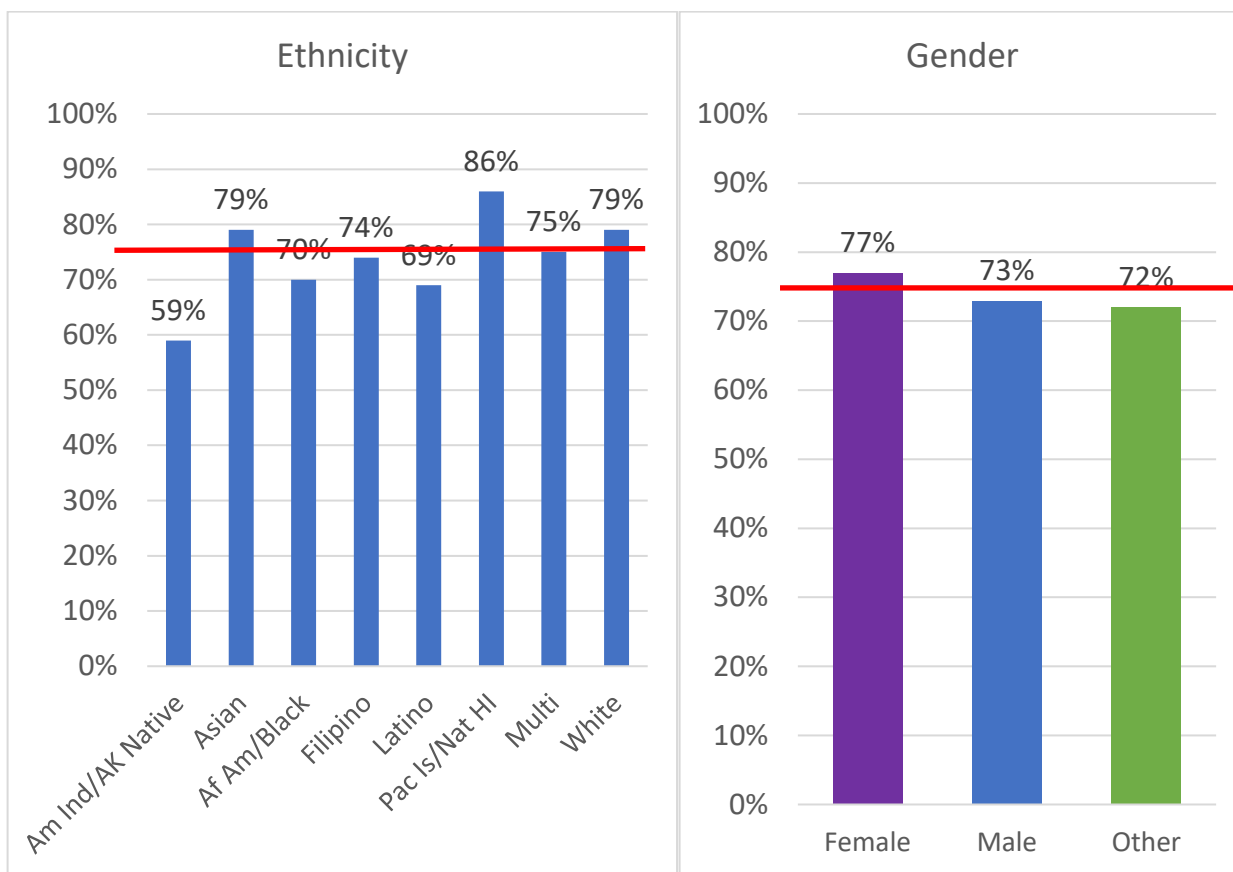
Course Success Rate

Course Success Rate

Short-Term Career Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

The course success rate in selected year





Note: Cuesta Average = 75% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCC DataVista, most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall, the number of units completed upon degree conferral for Degree/Transfer Students at Cuesta College has been decreasing in recent years, from a high of 93 in 2014-2015 to a low of 76 in 2022-2023.

Compared to the region and the state, Cuesta College's number is lower.

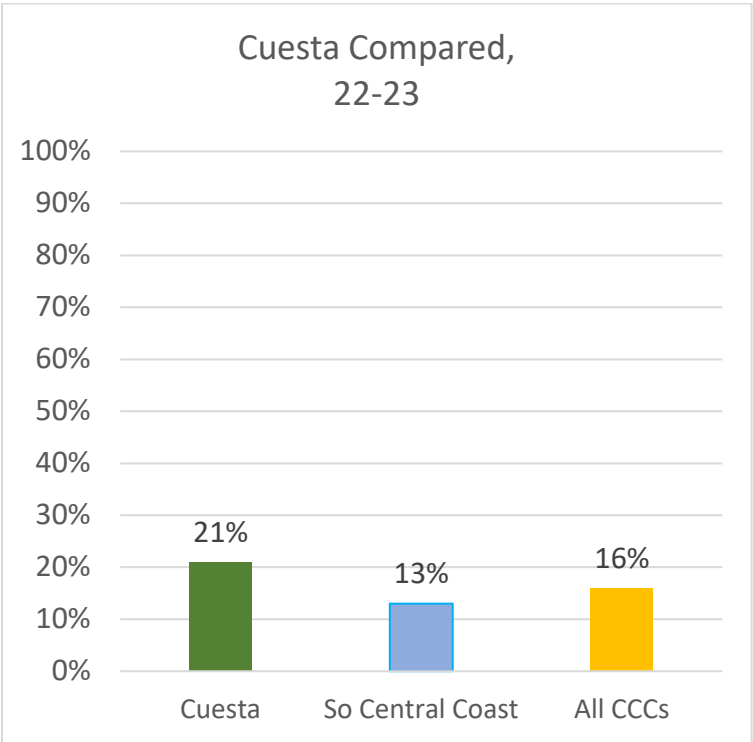
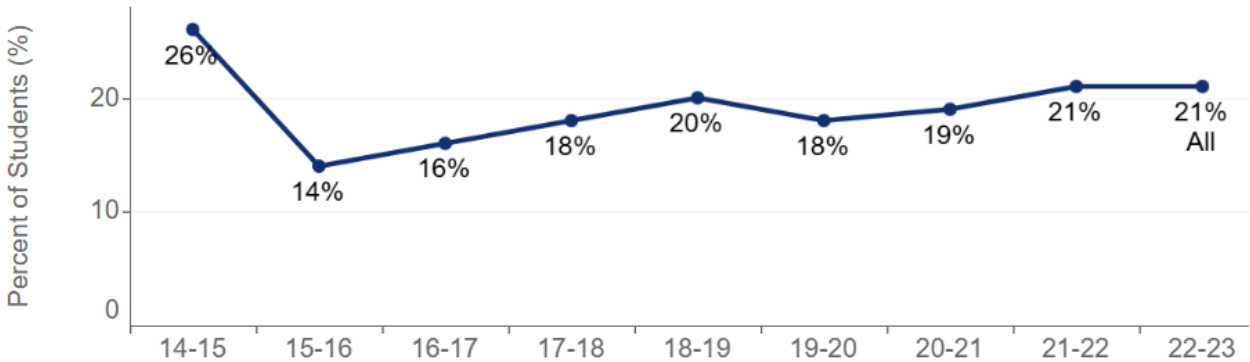
Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Blacks.

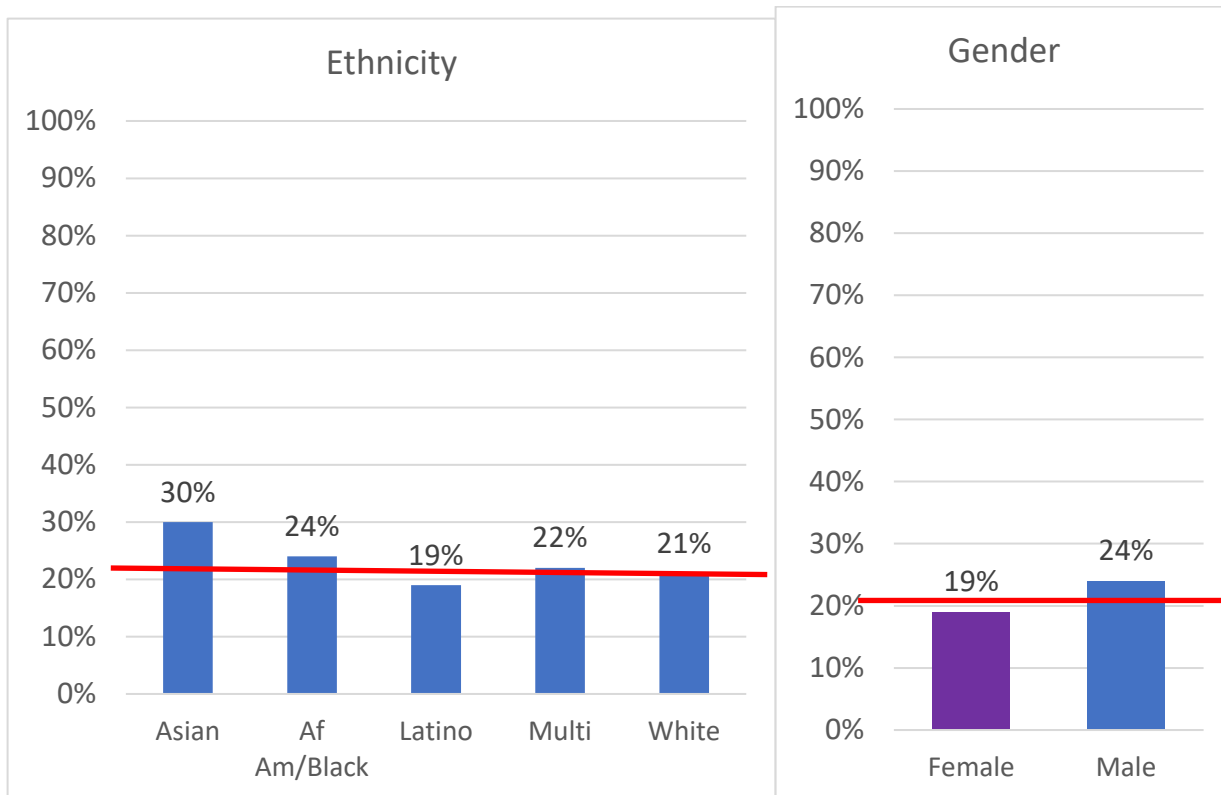
Nine or More CTE Units Earned

Earned 9+ Career Education Units

Short-Term Career Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

Percentage of students who successfully completed nine or more career education semester units within the district in selected year





Note: Cuesta Average = 21% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCCO [DataVista](#), most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall rates of CTE students at Cuesta College earning 9+ units has increased in recent years after a drop in 2014-2015.

Compared to the region and the state, Cuesta College's rate is higher.

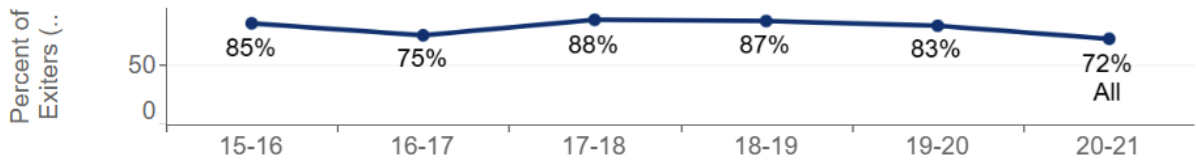
Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Latinos and Females.

Job Closely Related to Field of Study

Job Closely Related to Field of Study

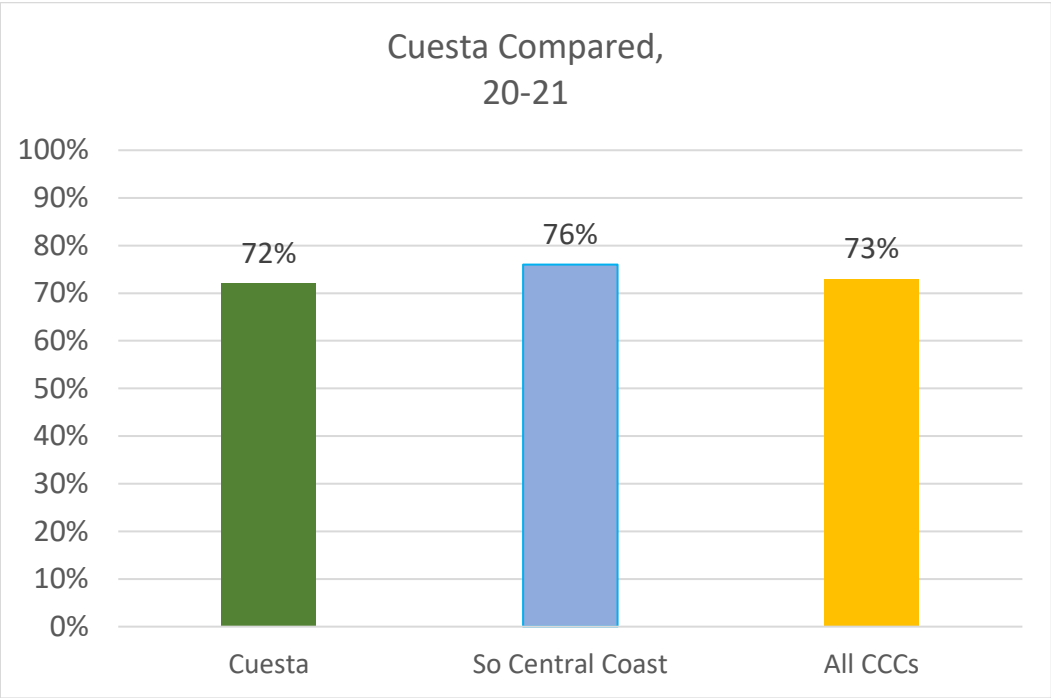
Short-Term Career Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

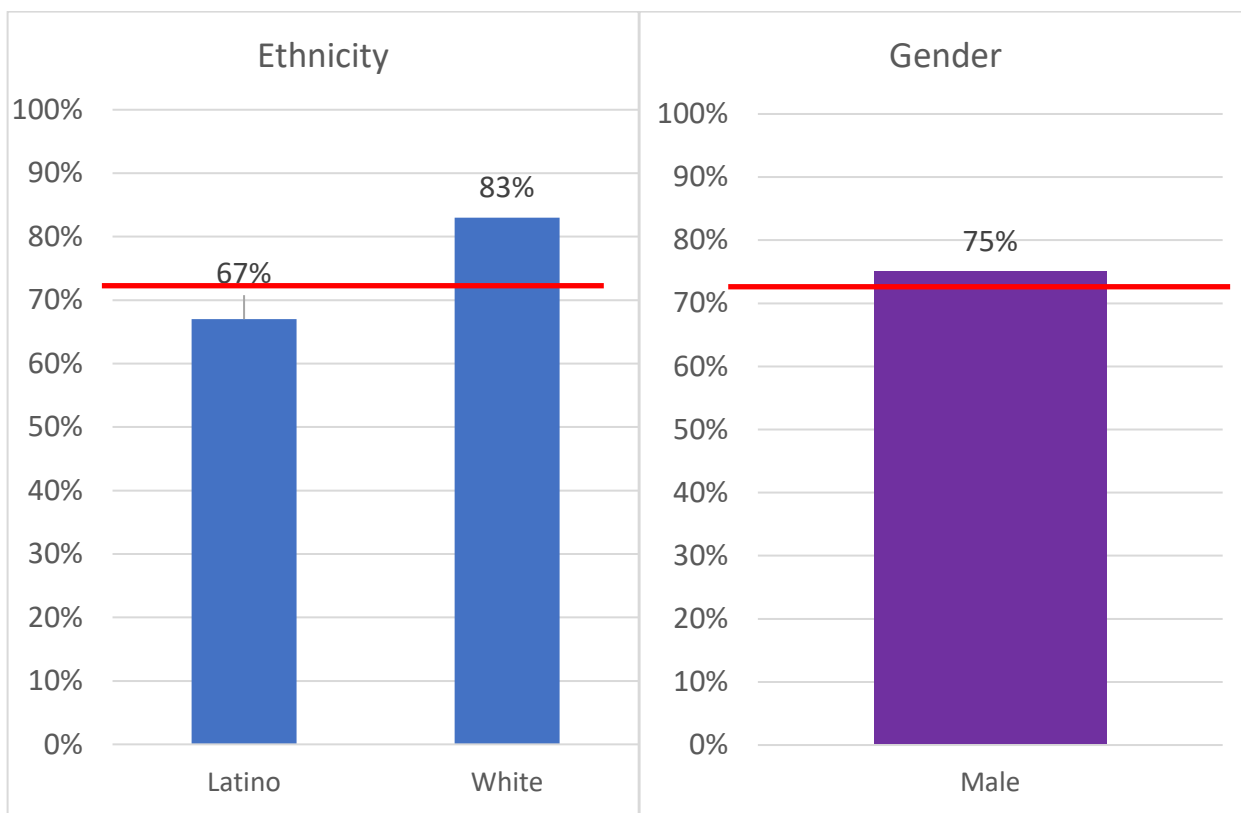
Percentage of respondents to the CTEOS question who exited all postsecondary and who reported working in a job closely related to their field of study in selected timeframe



Source: Chancellor's Office Management Information System, CTE Outcomes Survey, National Student Clearinghouse, CSU/UC Cohort Match

Notes: Employment and earnings metrics are only calculated and displayed for students who are no longer enrolled in any postsecondary institution. This metric is based on self-reported CTE Outcome Survey (CTEOS) data and relies on student responses to survey questions. Therefore, the data is not available for the two latest years.





Note: Cuesta Average = 72% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCCO [DataVista](#), most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall rates of CTE students at Cuesta College working in jobs closely related to their field of study has decreased in recent years.

Compared to the region and the state, Cuesta College's rate is slightly lower.

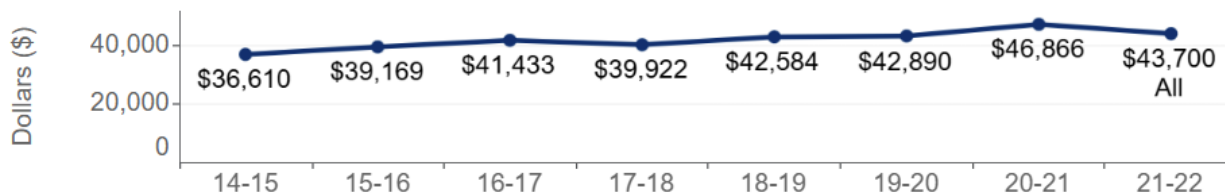
Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Latinos.

Earnings

Median Annual Earnings

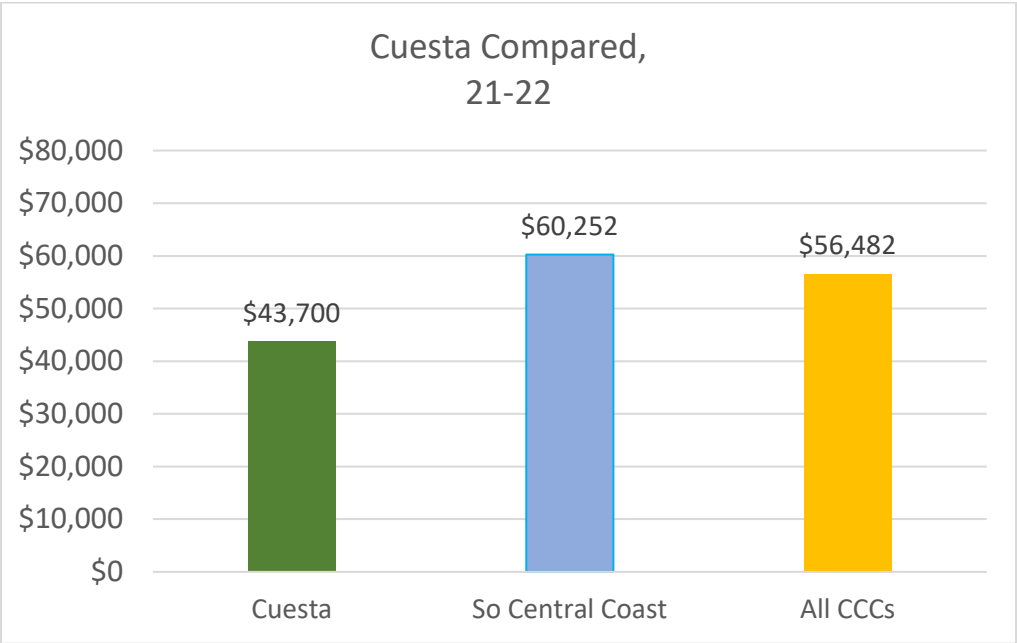
Short-Term Career Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

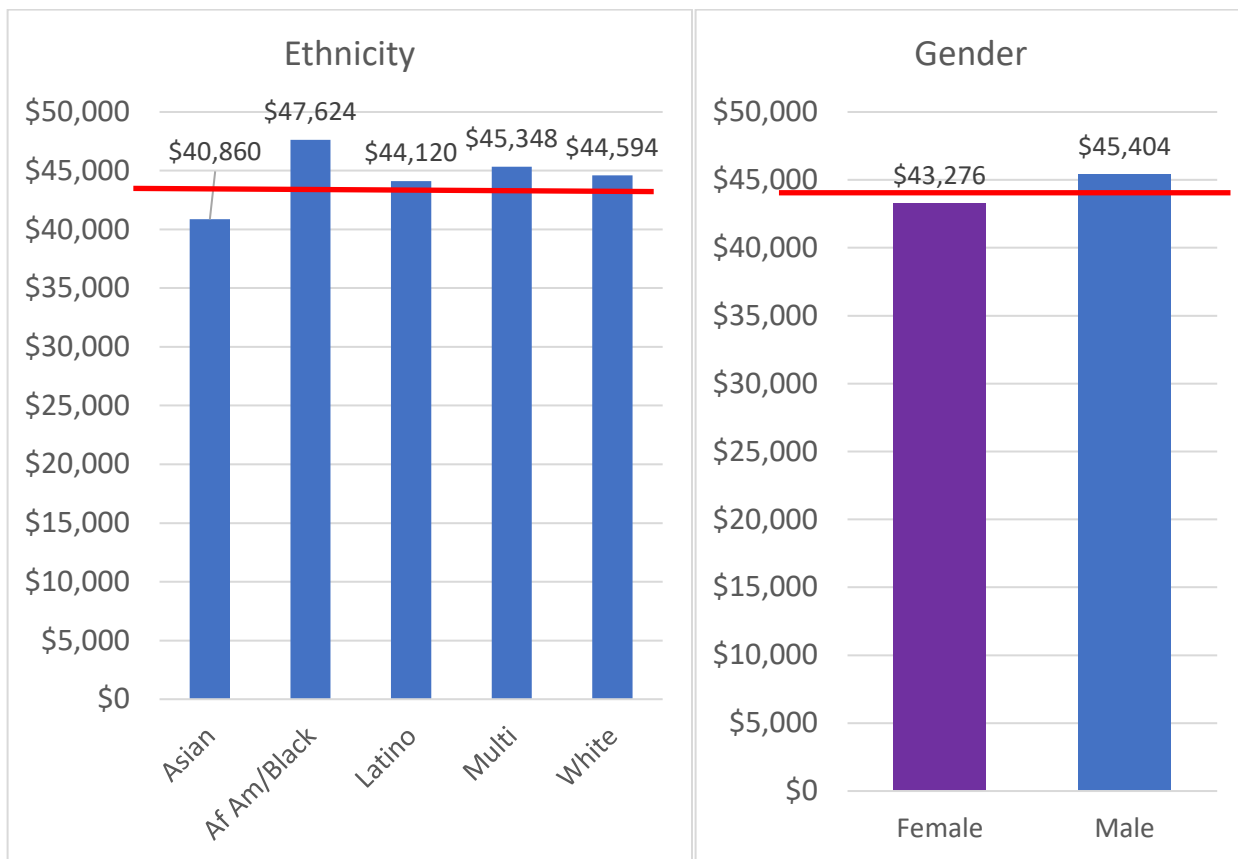
Median annual earnings of students who exited all postsecondary who were employed 2 fiscal quarters after exit



Source: Chancellor's Office Management Information System, Employment Development Department Unemployment Insurance Dataset, National Student Clearinghouse, CSU/UC Cohort Match,

Notes: Employment and earnings metrics are only calculated and displayed for students who are no longer enrolled in any postsecondary institution. Therefore, these outcome metrics are not available for the latest year.





Note: Cuesta Average = \$43,700 (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCC DataVista, most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall Earnings of former CTE students at Cuesta College has generally increased in recent years.

Compared to the region and the state, former Cuesta College CTE student earnings are lower.

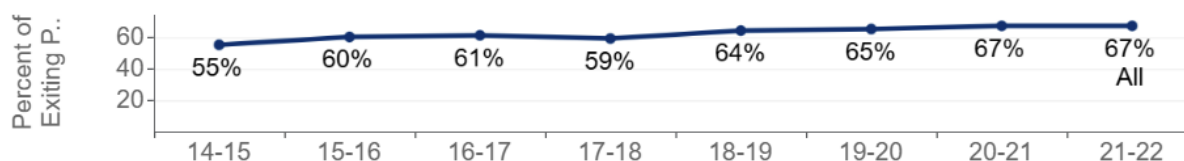
Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Asians and Females.

Attainment of Living Wage

Attained Living Wage

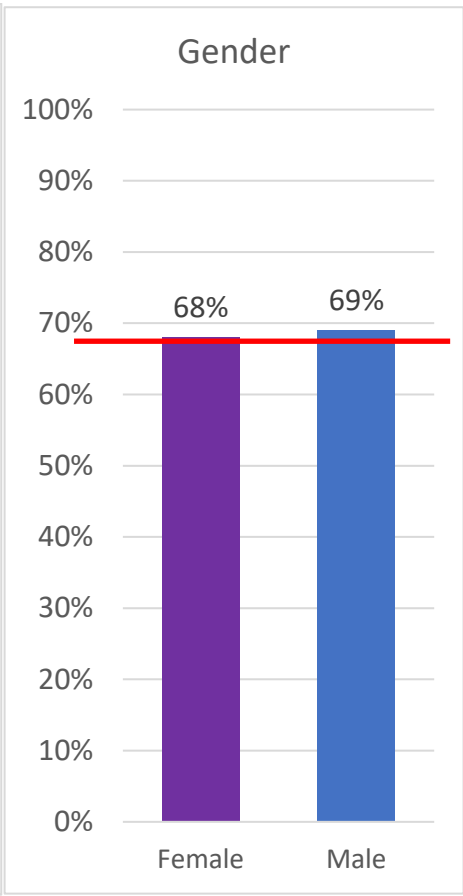
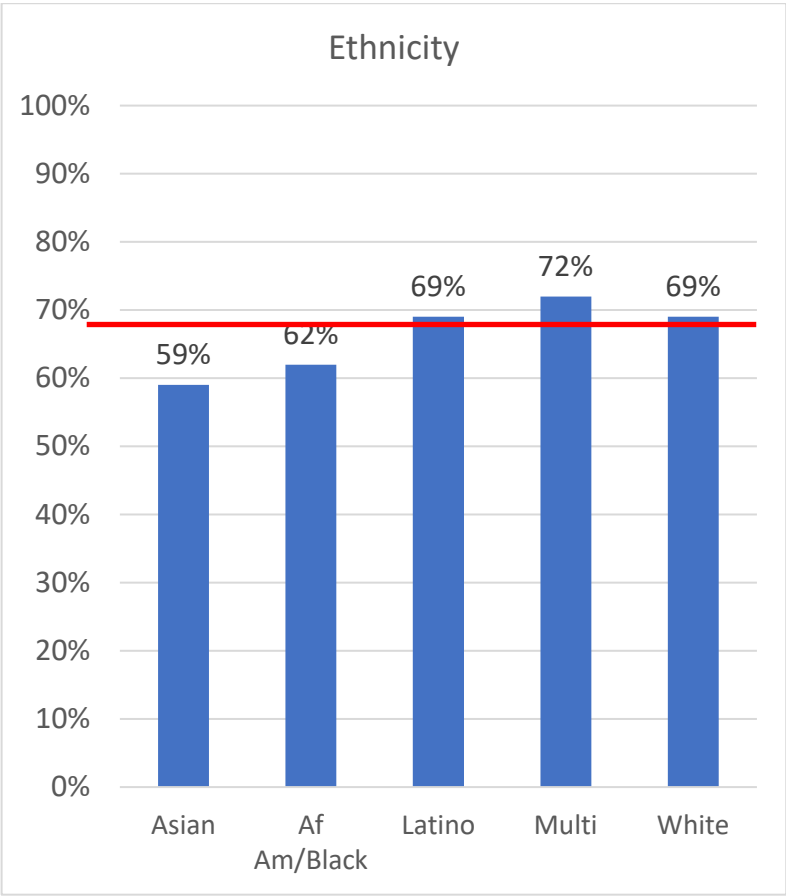
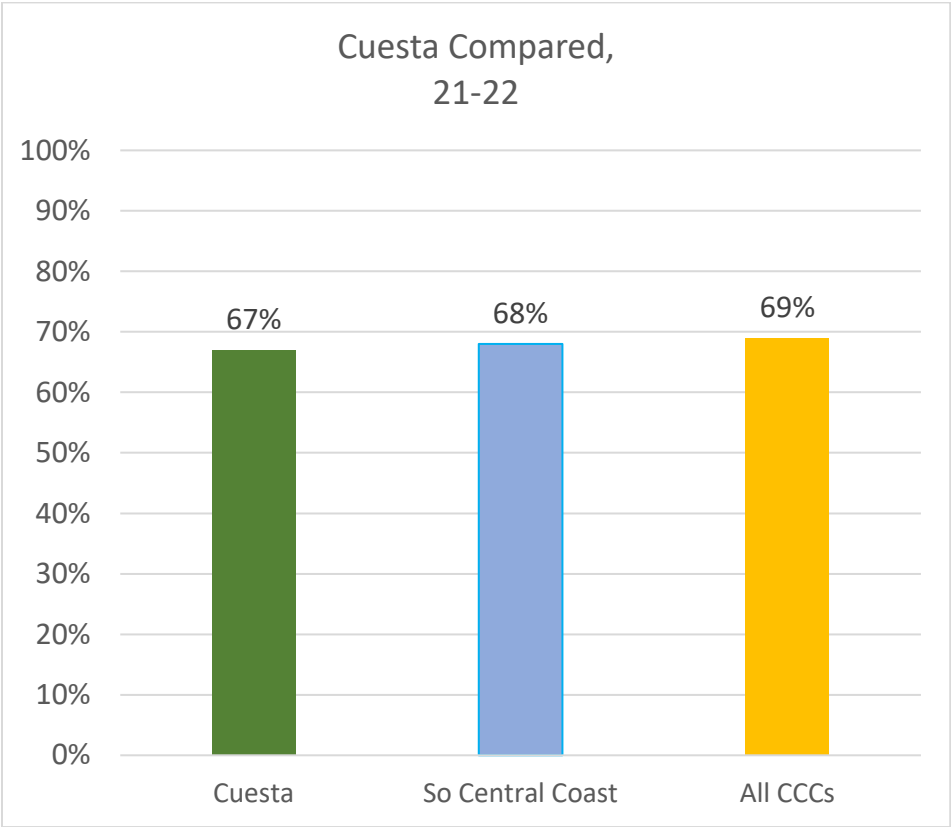
Short-Term Career Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

Percentage of students who exited all postsecondary and were employed 2 quarters after exit and attained the living wage for a single adult in the district county



Source: Chancellor's Office Management Information System, Employment Development Department Unemployment Insurance Dataset, National Student Clearinghouse, CSU/UC Cohort Match, Insight Center for Community Economic Development, Living Wage Table

Notes: Employment and earnings metrics are only calculated and displayed for students who are no longer enrolled in any postsecondary institution. Therefore, these outcome metrics are not available for the latest



Note: Cuesta Average = 67% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCC DataVista, most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall Attainment of the Living Wage for former CTE students at Cuesta College has generally increased in recent years.

Compared to the region and the state, the rate for former Cuesta College CTE students is slightly lower.

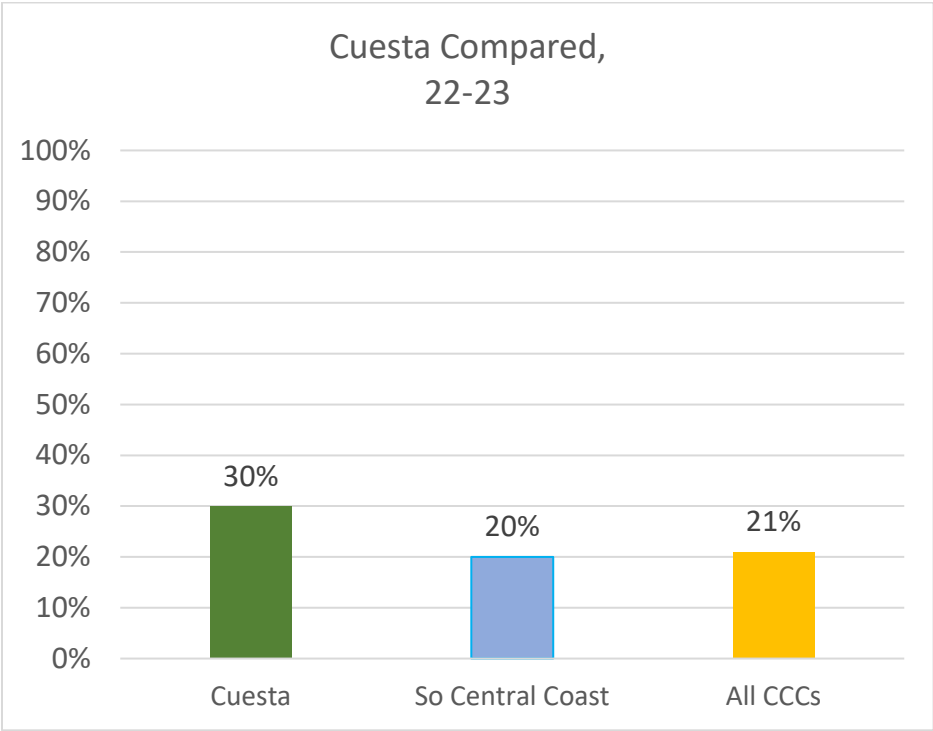
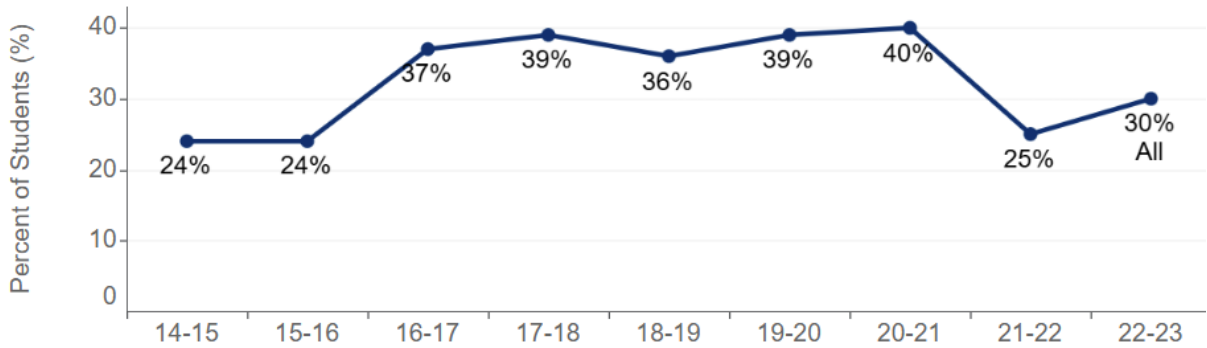
Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Asians and Blacks.

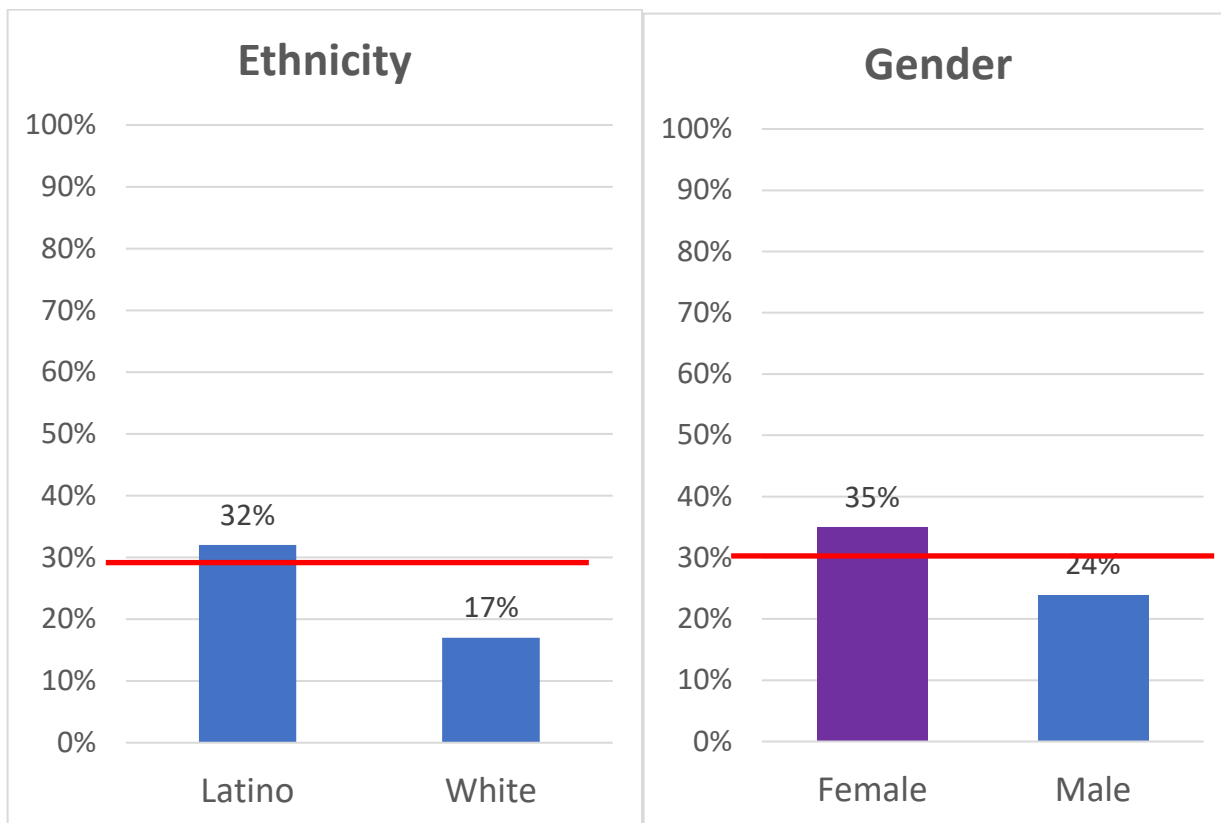
Adult Education/English as a Second Language

Skills Gain

Skills Gain

Adult Education or English as a Second Language Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall
Percentage of students who improved skills by one or more educational functioning levels or by course progression in selected year





Note: Cuesta Average = 30% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCC DataVista, most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall rates Skills Gains for Adult Ed/ESL students at Cuesta College have fluctuated in recent years.

Compared to the region and the state, the rate for Cuesta College Adult Ed/ESL students is higher.

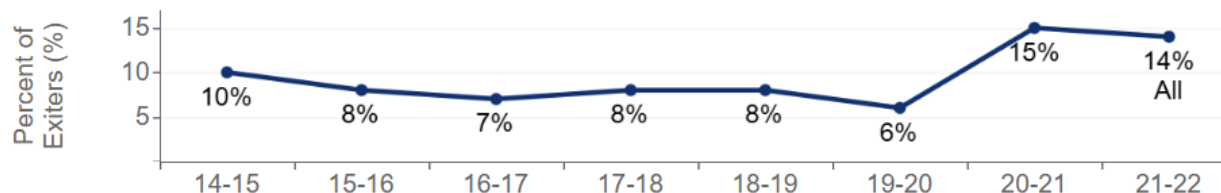
Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Whites and Males.

Became Employed

Became Employed

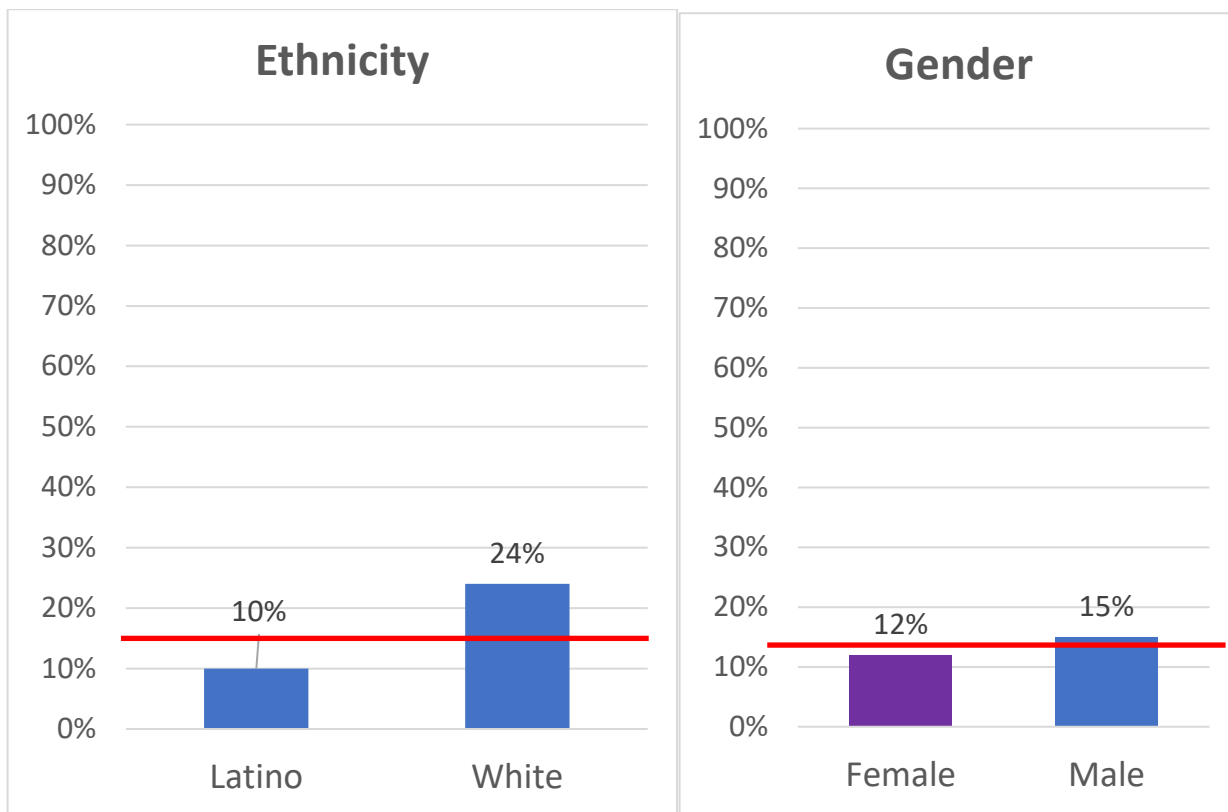
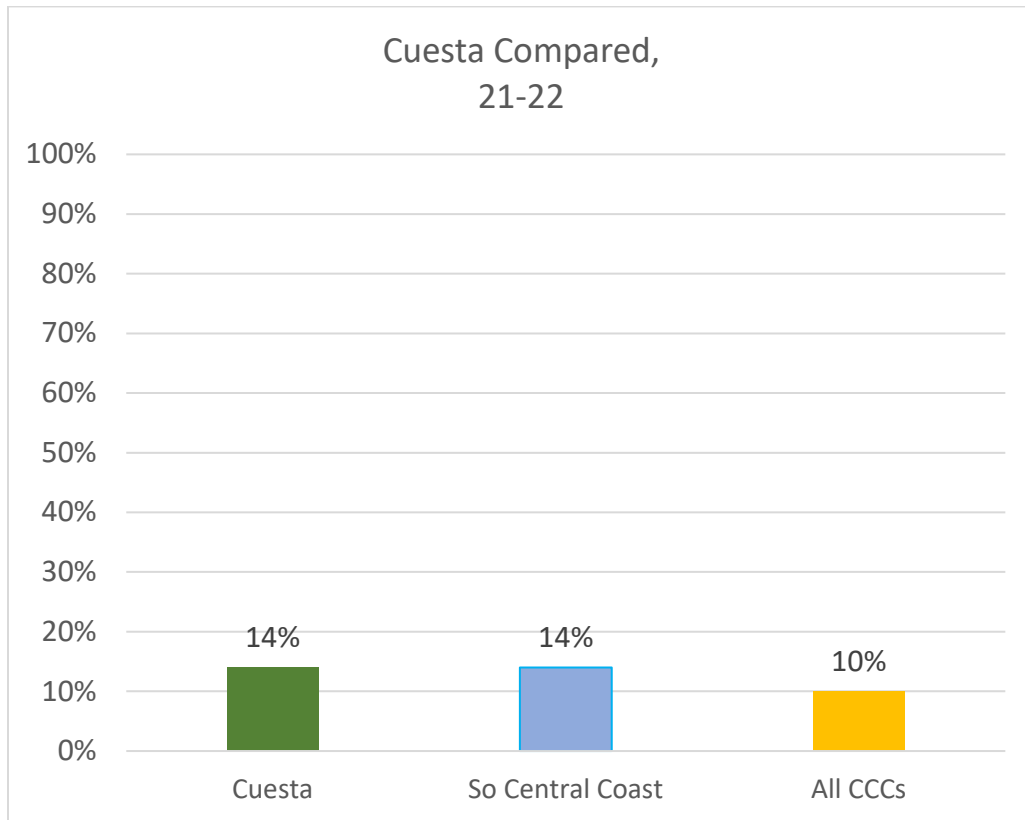
Adult Education or English as a Second Language Students in All Programs at Cuesta College disaggregated by Overall

Percentage of students who exited all postsecondary and who were unemployed 2 quarters before entry or re-entry and became employed 2 quarters after exit



Source: Chancellor's Office Management Information System, Employment Development Department Unemployment Insurance Dataset, National Student Clearinghouse, CSU/UC Cohort Match,

Notes: Employment and earnings metrics are only calculated and displayed for students who are no longer enrolled in any postsecondary institution. Therefore, these outcome metrics are not available for the latest year.



Note: Cuesta Average = 14% (red line)

Data for categories are suppressed if N<10

(Source: CCCC DataVista, most recent data from 2022-2023)

Overall rates of Employment for Adult Ed/ESL students at Cuesta College have fluctuated in recent years but have been higher in the past two years.

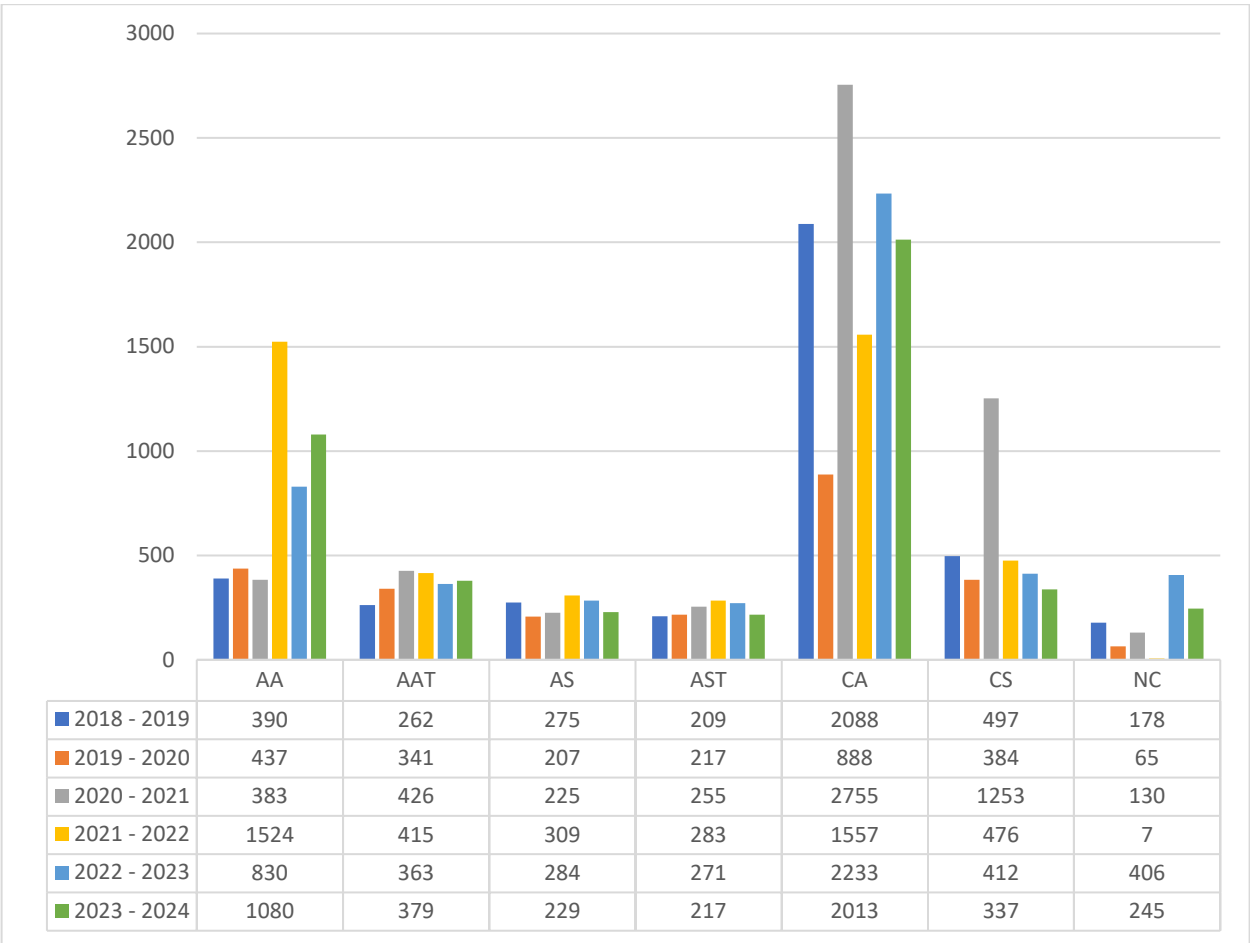
Compared to the region and the state, the rate for Cuesta College Adult Ed/ESL students is higher than the state but the same as the region.

Disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, the greatest gaps appear for Latinos and Females.

Other Student Outcomes

Annual Awards

Annual Awards, 2018/19 – 2023/24



(Source: Cuesta OIR Internal Banner Data)

The largest grouping of Cuesta College awards is Certificates of Achievement, followed by local Associate of Art Degrees.

Top Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Top AA/AAT Degrees Awarded, 2023-2024

Associate of Arts	N	Associate of Arts, Transfer	N
LA: Social & Behavior Sci (AA)	481	Psychology (AAT)	81
LA: Arts & Humanities (AA)	252	Economics (AAT)	79
LA: Science (AA)	132	Communication Studies 2.0 (AAT)	37
Psychology (AA)	47	Sociology (AAT)	32
Bus Admin - Career Track (AA)	28	Child and Adolescent Dev (AAT)	24
Human Services (AA)	19	Studio Arts (AAT)	21
Art Studio (AA)	12	English (AAT)	15
Lgl St: Business Option (AA)	12	History (AAT)	15
Addiction Treatment Studies (AA)	11	Political Science (AAT)	11
Criminal Justice (AA)	11	Communication Studies (AAT)	10

Top AS/AST Degrees Awarded, 2023-2024

Associate of Science	N	Associate of Science, Transfer	N
Pre-Nursing (AS)	102	Business Administration 2.0 (AST)	84
Nursing, Registered (AS)	15	Business Administration (AST)	27
Psychiatric Technician (AS)	13	Mathematics (AST)	22
Architectural Technology (AS)	10	Admin of Justice (AST)	14
Computer Science (AS)	10	Biology (AST)	14
Engineering (AS)	10	Agriculture Business (AST)	12
Library/Information Tech (AS)	10	Film, TV and Elect Media (AST)	9
Computer & Network Tech (AS)	9	Early Childhood Educ. (AST)	8
Electrical Technology (AS)	9	Agriculture Plant Sci (AST)	6
Culinary/Hospitality (AS)	7	Public Health Science (AST)	6

Top Certificates Awarded, 2023-2024

Certificate of Achievement	N	Certificate of Specialization	N
CSU General Ed. Breadth (CA)	578	Emergency Med Technician (CS)	80
Intersegmental GE Trnsfr (CA)	453	Phlebotomy (CS)	64
General Business Concen (CA)	426	Weld Tech Struct Steel (CS)	44
Child Dev Assoc Teach (CA)	115	Culinary Arts Foundation (CS)	37
Bus Career Track Core (CA)	95	Search/Research Strat (CS)	25
Psychiatric Technician (CA)	57	Welding Technology Pipe (CS)	15
Parapro Educator/PreTeach (CA)	54	Computer Networking Supp (CS)	14
Aviation Mech - General (CA)	23	EMT - Refresher (CS)	14
Child Development Teacher (CA)	20	Comp Supp Spec (CS)	8
Audio Technology I (CA)	17	Lib Services to Children (CS)	8

Top Noncredit Awards, 2023-2024

Noncredit Certificate	N
ESL Level 2 (NC)	70
ESL Level 1 (NC)	52
ESL Level 3 (NC)	45
ESL Level 4 (NC)	26
Employability and Transit (CC)	21
ESL: Beg Conversation (NC)	9
ESL Grammar (NC)	8
Listening and Speaking (NC)	7
Auto Refinish Repair (NC)	4
Auto Body Coll Repair (NC)	3

(Source: Cuesta OIR Internal Banner Data)

Career Education Outcomes

Awards (Major or Certificate) with Highest Wage Gains, 2013-2023
CHILD DEVELOPMENT TEACHER
AUDIO TECHNOLOGY I
Graphics
Film Television and Electronic Media
Nursing, Registered
Electronics and State Electrician
CHILD DEVELOPMENT MASTER TEACHER
Interior Design
PRE-NURSING
Paramedic
Agriculture Business
Business Administration - Career Track
ADDICTION TREATMENT STUDIES
Engine Performance Specialist
Psychiatric Technician

(Source: California Community Colleges Career & Technical Education Employment Outcomes Survey (CTEOS))

Cuesta College participates in the annual statewide CTE Employment Outcomes Survey. Aggregated survey results from 2013-2023 show the Cuesta College awards with the highest wage gains, an important outcome for CTE students.

Career Education Outcomes Compared – CTE Outcomes Survey

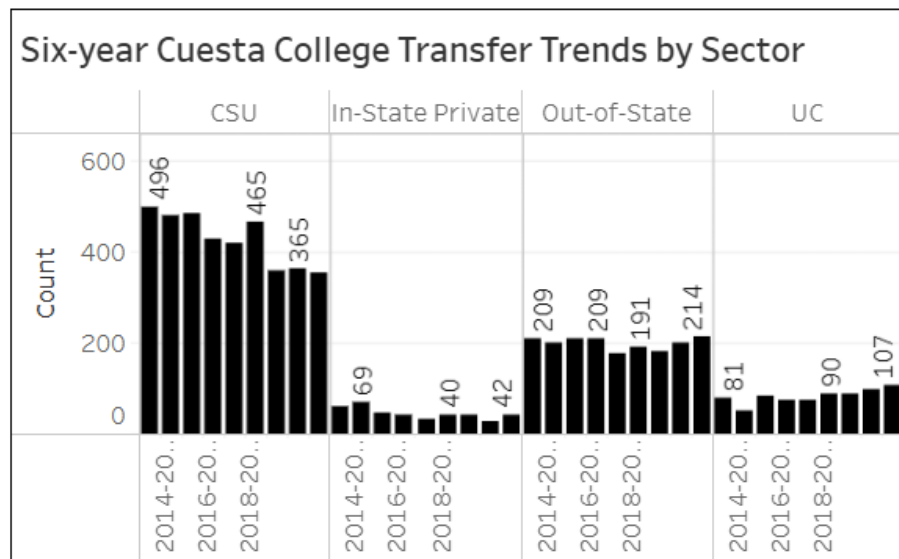
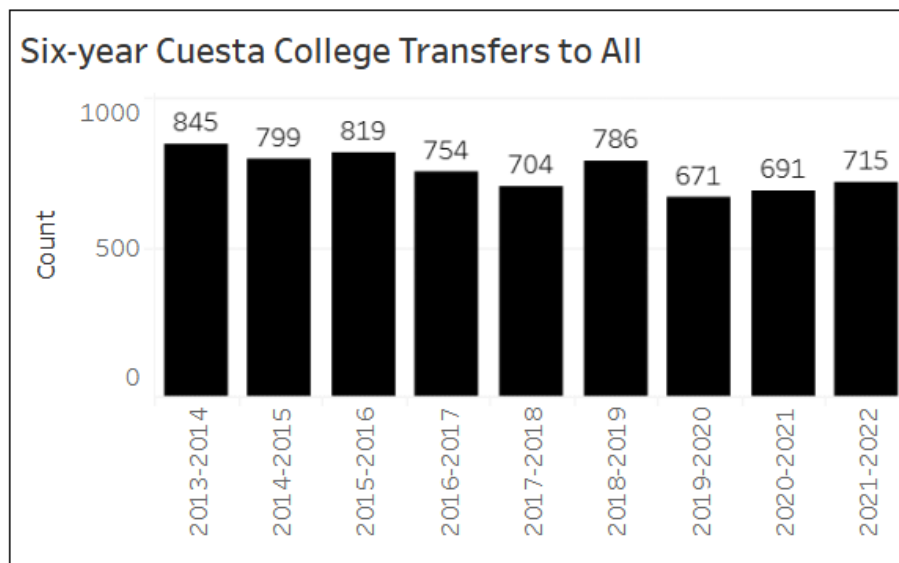
	Cuesta College	All CCCs
N	1,724	38,733
Response Rate	21%	23%
% Employed for Pay	84%	81%
Job Closely Related to Studies/Training	73.0%	71.3%
Program Satisfaction	90.9%	90.4%
Wages Prior to Studies/Training	\$17.00	\$18.00
Wages After Studies/Training	\$28.03	\$29.50
Change in Wages	\$11.03	\$11.50
% Change in Wages	65%	64%

(Source: California Community Colleges Career & Technical Education Employment Outcomes Survey ([CTEOS](#)))
SLO County Living Wage for (\$26.45) for one adult no children (Source: [MIT](#))

Cuesta College students, and CCC students statewide, show an increase in earnings after participating in career education programs.

The increase in wages brings Cuesta College students, on average, above the living wage (which is \$26.45 for San Luis Obispo County)

Transfer Outcomes

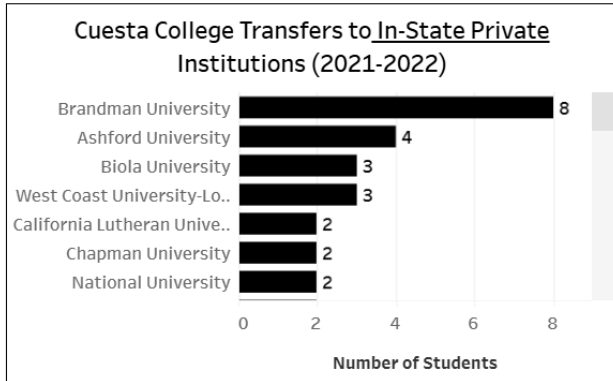
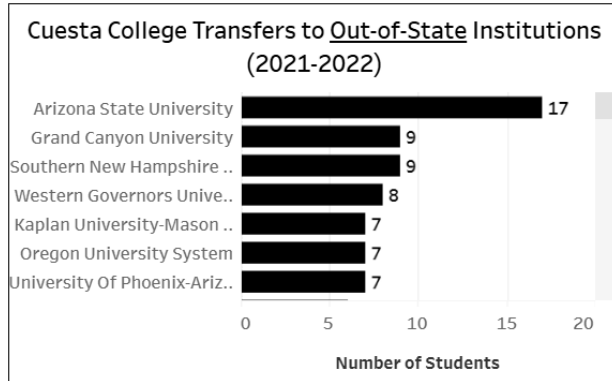


(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR [Tableau](#))

Overall, the total rate of Cuesta College transfers to all Colleges and Universities has trended slightly downward in recent years.

By postsecondary sector, CSU transfer rates have trended down while UC transfer rates have trended up.

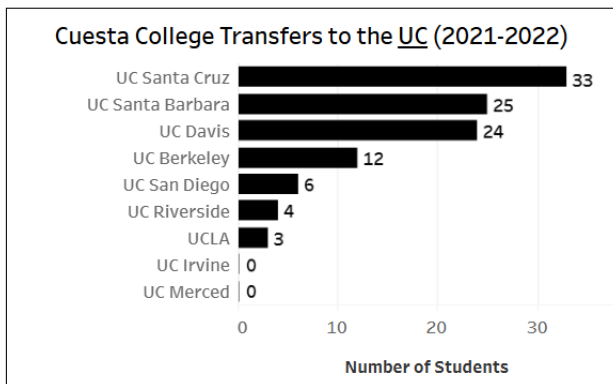
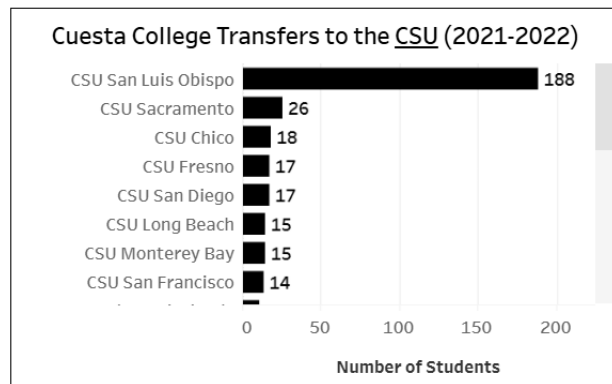
Transfers to Private and Out of State Colleges and Universities



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR [Tableau](#))

Out-of-State and In-State Private destinations for Cuesta College students are primarily on-line programs.

Transfers to the CSU and UC



(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR [Tableau](#))

By far, the primary transfer destination for Cuesta College students choosing a California public university is Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

UC and CSU Acceptance Rates

UC, Fall 2023	Cuesta College	All CCC Transfers
Acceptance Rate	74.9%	76.8%
Yield Rate	51.9%	73.1%

CSU, Fall 2024	Cuesta College	All CCC Transfers
Acceptance Rate	89.2%	91.0%
Yield Rate	62.4%	64.6%

(Source: [UC InfoCenter](#), [CSU Data Dashboard](#))

The CSU and UC Acceptance and Yield Rates for Cuesta College transfer students are slightly lower than the state averages for all California Community Colleges.

Top Feeder California Community Colleges to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Fall 2024

	Applied	Admitted	Enrolled	Acceptance Rate	Yield Rate
Cuesta College, San Luis Obispo	545	298	234	54.7%	78.5%
Allan Hancock College, Santa Maria	337	220	157	65.3%	71.4%
Santa Barbara City College, Santa Barbara	337	74	31	22.0%	41.9%

(Source: [CSU Data Dashboard](#))

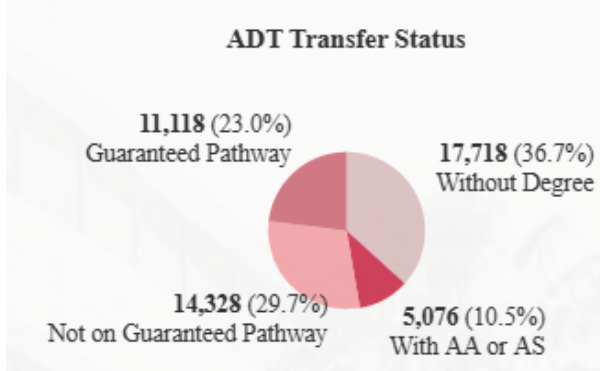
Note: overall CCC Transfer Acceptance Rate to Cal Poly SLO is 21.3%

Cuesta College transfers more students to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo than any other community college in the state.

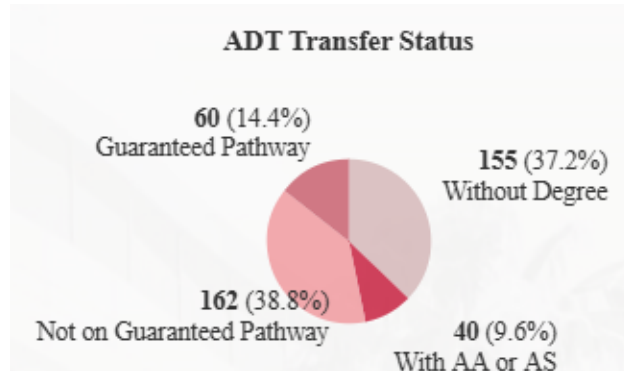
Of the top three transfer sources for Cal Poly SLO, Allan Hancock College has the highest acceptance rate to 65.3% (compared to 54.7% for Cuesta College).

Associate Degree for Transfer to the CSU, Fall 2024

All Community College Transfers:



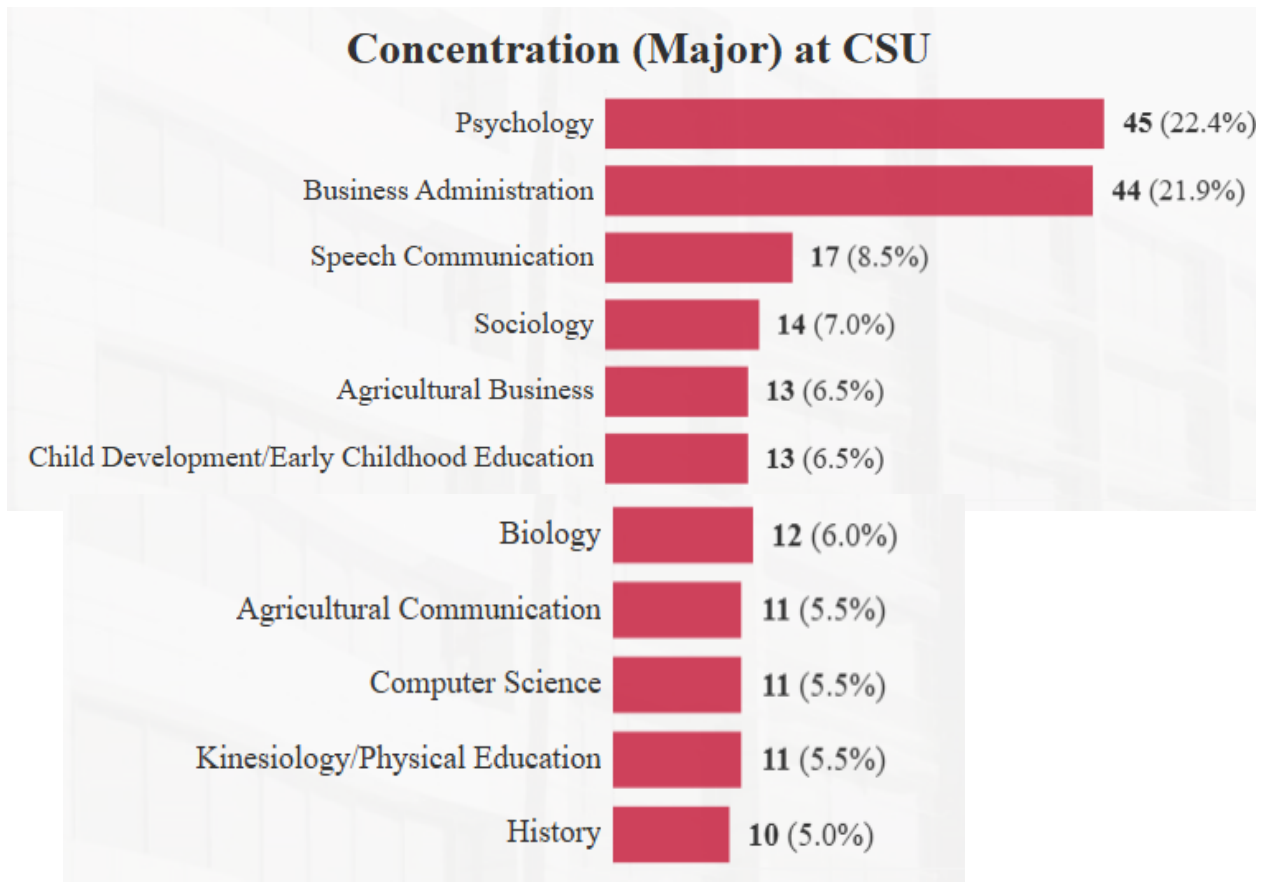
All Cuesta College Transfers:



(Source: CSU, Transfers by Institution [Data Visualization](#))

Statewide, 23% of California Community College Students transfer to the California State University on a Guaranteed Pathway. The same is true for 14.4% of Cuesta College transfer students.

Top CSU Concentrations for Cuesta College Transfer Students, Fall 2024



(Source: CSU, Transfers by Institution [Data Visualization](#))

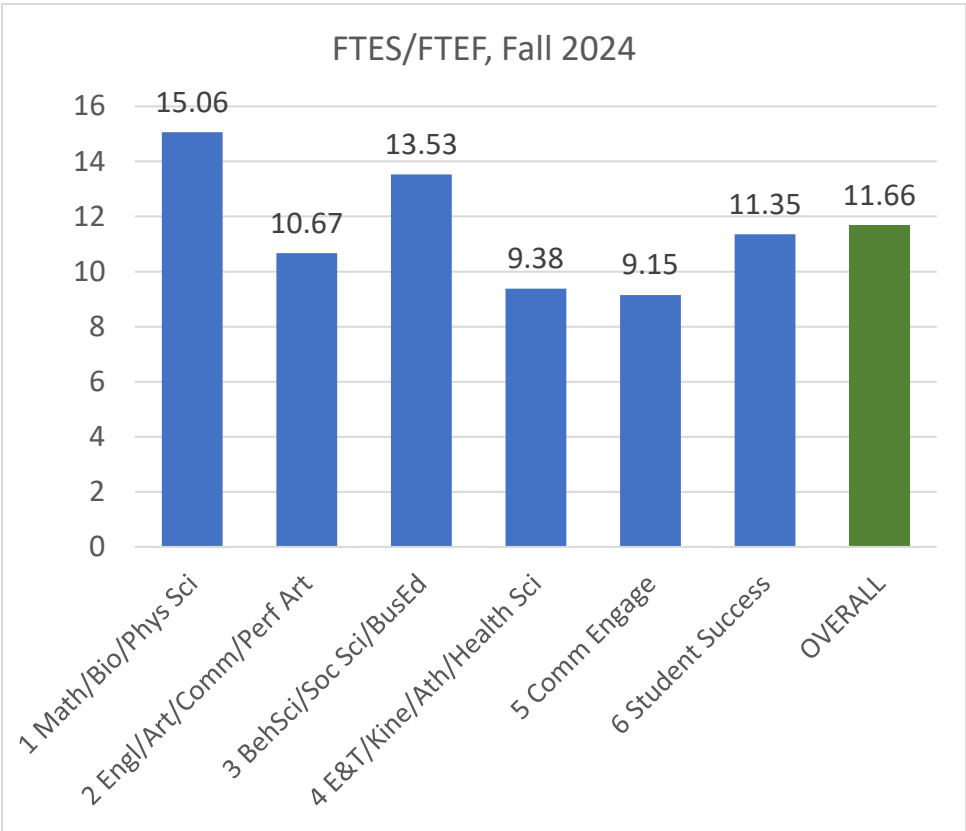
Top Majors for Cuesta College Transfer Students to the UC, 2023/24

Research and Experimental Psychology
Political Science and Government
English Language and Literature, General
Fine and Studio Arts
History
Psychology, General
Anthropology
Communication and Media Studies
Design and Applied Arts
Economics
Film/Video and Photographic Arts
Mechanical Engineering
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other
Sociology

(Source: UC Office of the President InfoCenter, Transfers by Major)

Measures of Efficiency

Full-Time Equivalent Students Divided by Full-Time Equivalent Faculty



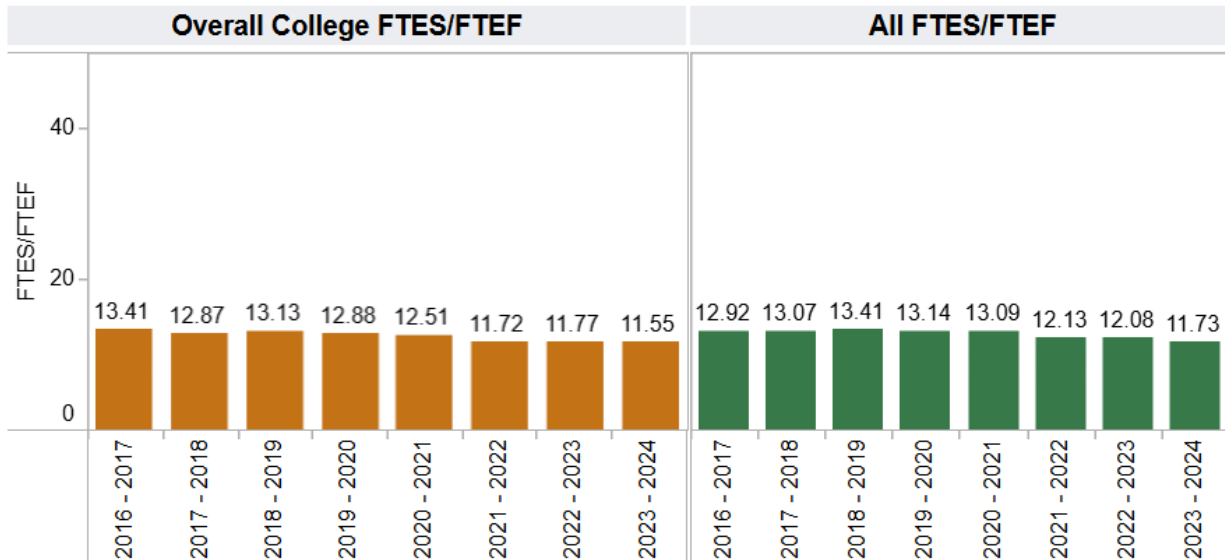
(Source: Internal Data, Cuesta OIR Tableau)

The overall Efficiency Rate at Cuesta College is notably below the commonly accepted CCCC goal of 16.

Efficiency Over Time

SLOCCCD Program Review Data - Efficiency (FTES/FTEF)

Department:	Course:	Dual Enrollment:	Prison:
(All) ▼	(All) ▼	Not Dual Enrollment ▼	Not CMC:Prison ▼



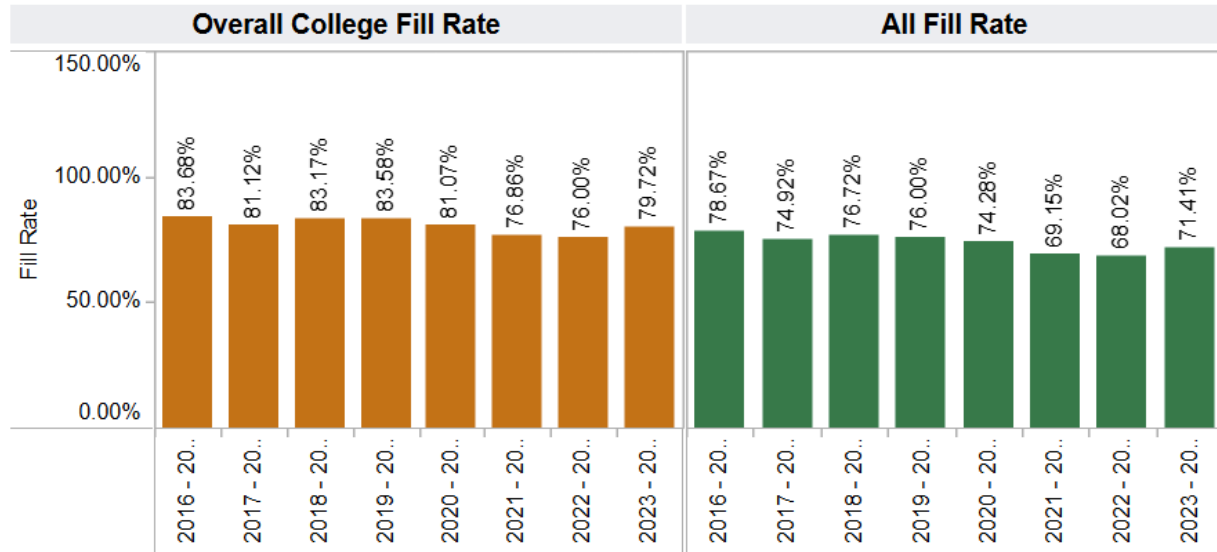
(Cuesta College IR Program Review Data Visualization)

Cuesta College Efficiency (as measured by FTES/FTEF) has been decreasing in past years.

Fill Rates Over Time

SLOCCCD Program Review Data - Student Demand (Fill Rate)

Department:
 Course:
 Dual Enrollment:
 Prison:



(Cuesta College IR Program Review [Data Visualization](#))

Cuesta College Fill Rates have been decreasing in past years.

Appendix C: Cuesta College Program Analysis

The following information was obtained from Cuesta College's Tableau data and provides a valuable foundation for instructional planning and program evaluation to streamline and align offerings with student demand and workforce relevance.

Program Award Trends

Between 2019 and 2024, award data across associate degrees and certificates reveal significant shifts in program performance, student demand, and completion patterns.

Associate Degrees

Among Associate of Arts (AA) degrees, Liberal Arts: Social & Behavioral Sciences, Arts & Humanities, and Science consistently led in awards, peaking in 2022. Conversely, fields such as Broadcast Communications, Drama, and Journalism recorded minimal completions throughout the years. Overall AA awards surged in 2022, followed by moderate declines, reflecting possible institutional or external influences.

Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT) degrees showed strong, stable performance in Psychology, Economics, and Sociology, while Global Studies and Social Justice Studies remained low performing. Newer programs like Communication Studies 2.0 began gaining traction.

Associate of Science (AS) degrees were led by Pre-Nursing and Registered Nursing, with the former experiencing the most notable growth until 2022 before declining. Several technical programs, consistently remained low in awards. The AS category also saw a notable drop in completions post-2022.

Associate in Science for Transfer (AST) degrees were dominated by Business Administration, although this program saw a sharp drop in 2024. In contrast, Business Admin 2.0 emerged as a new high performer. Mathematics, Administration of Justice, and Biology maintained relatively stable outcomes, while Hospitality Management and Environmental Sciences consistently underperformed.

Certificates

The most awarded Certificates of Achievement (CA) were CSU GE Breadth and Intersegmental GE Transfer, though both declined in recent years. Business-oriented certificates saw a spike in 2022 but trended downward by 2024. A few programs, such as Technical Theater and Viticulture, had minimal awards throughout the period.

Certificates of Specialization (CS) were led by General Business Specialization, Emergency Medical Technician, and Phlebotomy. Some programs experienced volatility—General Business Specialization had a major spike in 2021 but declined sharply afterward. Others, like Culinary Arts Foundation, showed steady growth.

Non-credit certificates focused largely on ESL and workforce skills. ESL Level 1, 2, and 3 were top performers with consistent completions, while technical areas like Auto Repair and basic digital skills had minimal awards. Total non-credit completions peaked in 2022 and have declined since.

In summary, 2022 marked a high point for completions across nearly all categories, followed by declines in 2023 and 2024. Strong performers remained consistent across the years, while a handful of emerging programs showed growth potential. Also, several low enrollment or stagnant programs may warrant reevaluation to better align with student interest and workforce needs.

Factors Affecting Program Awards

Shifts in program awards may warrant further exploration and strategies to address them by instructional administrators and faculty. Common contributing factors can include the following.

1. Shifts in Industry Demand

- If certain industries experience reduced demand for specific skills, students may opt for programs aligned with growing fields.
- 2. **Changes in Program Offerings**
 - Programs may be discontinued, restructured, or have limited availability, leading to fewer completions.
- 3. **Student Interest**
 - Trends in student preferences may shift toward newer or more in-demand programs, causing declines in older or less popular ones.
 - Excessive units to degree, pre-requisites, and impacted programs with waitlists can cause students to choose a different program or institution to fulfill their educational goals more quickly and transfer or enter the workforce sooner.
- 4. **Economic Factors**
 - Economic downturns, loss of grants, and/or changes in funding for education can impact enrollment and completion rates.
- 5. **Competition from Other Institutions**
 - Students may choose similar programs offered by other institutions with better resources or reputation.
- 6. **Curricular Redundancy and Internal Competition**
 - The presence of multiple, overlapping degree or certificate options within the same discipline can lead to curriculum proliferation and internal competition. In such cases, strategic consolidation or clearer program differentiation and streamlined offerings will clarify student pathways. Additionally, redundant and overlapping options reduce efficiency, increase cost, and can be confusing for students.
- 7. **Program Accessibility**
 - Factors like scheduling conflicts, lack of online options, and geographic limitations can reduce enrollment.

Program Award Trends (2019–2024)

This summary highlights award trends across degrees and certificates from 2019 to 2024, offering insights into high-performing, low-performing, and emerging programs.

Associate of Arts (AA) Degrees

- **Top Performers**
 - LA: Social & Behavior Sci (AA) – Peak of 666 awards in 2022; 481 in 2024
 - LA: Arts & Humanities (AA) – 428 awards in 2022; 252 in 2024
 - LA: Science (AA) – 190 awards in 2022; 132 in 2024
- **Lowest Performers** - Broadcast Communications, Drama, Journalism, Manufacturing, Political Science, Marketing, and others had 1–4 awards across all years
- **Trends**
 - Awards peaked in 2022 (1,522 total)
 - Programs like Psychology (AA) showed growth

Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT) Degrees

- **Top Performers**
 - Psychology (AAT), Economics (AAT), and Sociology (AAT) consistently had high awards.

- **Lowest Performers** -Global Studies, Social Justice Studies, Journalism, and Law, Public Policy & Society had low or sporadic completions
- **Trends**
 - AAT awards peaked at 426 in 2021; 379 in 2024
 - Communication Studies 2.0 (AAT) emerged with 37 awards in 2024

Associate of Science (AS) Degrees

- **Top Performers**
 - Pre-Nursing (AS): Peaked at 152 awards in 2022; 102 in 2024
 - Nursing, Registered (AS): Stable until 2023, then dropped to 15 in 2024
- **Lowest Performers** - Library Technology, Geology, and Auto Body Technician, had consistently low awards
- **Trends:**
 - Peak year: 2022 with 309 awards
 - Steady decline in 2023 (283) and 2024 (229)
 - Programs like Culinary/Hospitality showed uninterrupted growth

Associate in Science for Transfer (AST) Degrees

- **Top Performers**
 - Business Administration (AST), Mathematics, Admin of Justice, Biology.
- **Lowest Performers** -Hospitality Management, Environmental Sciences, Geology, Physics
- **Trends**
 - Many peaked in 2021–22, followed by decline
 - Business Administration 2.0 (AST) surged to 84 awards in 2024

Certificates of Achievement (CA)

- **Top Programs**
 - CSU GE Breadth (CA): Peaked at 1,630 in 2019; 578 in 2024
 - Intersegmental GE Transfer (CA): Peaked at 789 in 2021
 - General Business Concentration (CA) peaked at 701 in 2022
- **Lowest Performers** - Technical Theater, Viticulture, Nursing (CA), Exercise Science Fitness Pro – all had 1–3 awards
- **Trends**
 - Overall growth from 896 in 2020 to 2,232 in 2023
 - Notable declines in programs like Business Administration and LVN

Certificates of Specialization (CS)

- **Top Programs by Total Awards**
 - General Business Specialization (913 total)
 - Emergency Medical Technician (609 total)
 - Phlebotomy (293 total)
- **Lowest Performers** - Acute Care NA, Water Distribution, Audio Technology

- **Trends**
 - EMT (CS) peaked in 2023 with 158 awards
 - General Business Specialization spiked in 2021 then declined
 - Strong showing for Culinary Arts Foundation and Search/Research Strategies

Non-Credit Certificates

- **Top ESL Programs**
 - ESL Level 2 (NC) peaked at 84 awards in 2022; 70 in 2024
 - ESL Level 3 and Level 1 also showed consistent performance
- **Lowest Performers** - Read Write Grammar, Beginning Computer Skills, Auto Refinish and Collision Repair
- **Trends**
 - Awards peaked in 2022 at 371; declined to 224 in 2024
 - Academic ESL had no completions after 2022

Key Takeaways

- Strong performers include Pre-Nursing, Psychology (AAT), Business Admin (AST), EMT (CS), and ESL Level 2
- 2022 marked the peak year for awards across many categories
- Declines in 2023–24 may indicate shifting student interest or external factors
- Many newer or niche programs show potential but need growth (e.g., outreach, marketing, etc.)
- A comprehensive curriculum evaluation, the full implementation of all four pillars of Guided Pathways, enrollment management (master scheduling and delivery modalities), and contemporary and innovative program deliveries can assist with completion rates and awards.

Appendix D: Listening and Vision Session Themes Further Delineated

Student-Centered Access, Success, and Equity

Access

- Simplify the registration process to reduce barriers for students, both credit and noncredit
- Develop student-focused schedules to improve access and timely completion
- Create a plan to effectively balance face-to-face and online course offerings for maximum accessibility and impact
- Employ data-driven tools (e.g., Ad Astra) to optimize course offerings, efficiency, and facility use
- Expand hybrid, in-person, and evening course options to meet diverse student needs
- Address challenges associated with dual enrollment scheduling, staffing, and program coordination
- Maintain and enhance dual enrollment opportunities for early college access
- Strengthen counseling services, especially during peak times
- Expand conversational ESL courses and GED offerings at the South County Center
- Address financial challenges related to textbooks, food, parking, and inconsistent financial advising
- Transportation barriers create challenges in accessing courses across various district regions

Student Success and Engagement

- Provide stronger support for students in defining and achieving educational goals
- Desire to increase student retention, success, and completion
- Strengthen retention efforts and enhance student engagement strategies, including campus involvement, to improve persistence and academic success
- Improve awareness of support services through proactive, official communication rather than relying on word-of-mouth information
- Enhance support services for dual enrollment students to ensure seamless integration into Cuesta's academic and campus community
- Growing need for expanded tutoring services, particularly at the South County Center, along with extended library hours to support student success
- Strengthen credit for prior learning (CPL) for veterans, working adults, and re-entry students
- Expand experiential and project-based learning opportunities
- Enhance quality and live interaction in online instruction
- Determine transition to a 16-week academic calendar Fall 2026 to enhance efficiency and success

Equity, Inclusion, and Holistic Support

- Expand Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and equity planning to align with student diversity and needs, integrating them into the Educational Master Plan
- Ensure policies and programs reflect student diversity and success priorities
- Be inclusive of all student types, current and future, in services and support (e.g., dual enrollment, incarcerated, distance ed, rising scholars, re-entry, etc.)
- Foster a sense of belonging for all students, both on campus and online
- Strengthen support for non-traditional students (e.g., re-entry, justice-impacted, CTE, and noncredit)
- Expand capacity to support students with disabilities through comprehensive efforts beyond classroom accommodation
- Improve access to tutoring, health, and mental health services; expand gym/recreational facilities
- Expand and enhance family-friendly support services to better accommodate students with children
- Revitalize campus life with diverse student clubs and engagement opportunities
- Reestablish counselors visiting ESL classes to provide support services

Strategic Enrollment and Sustainable Growth

Enrollment

- Overall enrollment growth is a priority
- Clarify the long-term vision regarding enrollment, growth, and future programming
- Rise in distance education is affecting on-campus enrollment
- Enrollment remains a challenge at the North County Campus and South County Center
- Focus on re-engaging returning students to offset declining K-12 enrollment

Strategic Growth

- Establish relevance and support out-of-the-box expansion
- Development of a comprehensive plan for each college location is desired to ensure strategic development and alignment with institutional goals

Educational and Workforce Pathways

Academic and Career Pathways

- Students prioritize programs that lead to high-paying careers
- Reset of Guided Pathways implementation, ensuring comprehensive collaboration between instruction and student services to fully implement all aspects at scale
- Create a clearer understanding of the Areas of Study (AoS), along with regular opportunities for AoS interdisciplinary collaboration, discussion, planning, and refinement
- There is a sense that the curriculum is too extensive and not reviewed comprehensively
- Strengthen and expand relevant Career and Technical Education (CTE) and skilled trades programs to better support the workforce
- CTE advisory committees need revitalization to enhance engagement and effectiveness
- Align CTE programs between the college and local high schools for seamless pathways
- Develop noncredit and credit stackable credential pathways for seamless academic/career progression
- Expand, integrate, and promote noncredit courses to better meet community needs
- Pursue additional 2+2 transfer programs
- Continue exploration of the development of in-demand bachelor's degree programs

Workforce Integration and Readiness

- Enhance the visibility and accessibility of noncredit and workforce offerings
- Improve alignment between workforce programs and industry demands (e.g., apprenticeships, employer engagement)
- Address workforce readiness gaps by incorporating essential job skills training

Institutional Agility, Resilience, and Operational Efficiency

Agility and Resilience

- Seek progress and improvement instead of status quo
- Excessive reliance on informal knowledge instead of standardized processes
- Enhance knowledge of and adaptation to funding formula changes and financial stability challenges
- Evaluate and enhance program review processes to support data-informed decisions on program viability, new program development, and resource allocation aligned with institutional priorities
- Remain proactive in addressing state and federal challenges

Operational Efficiency

- Increase efficiency in processes and the ability to move things forward at a quicker pace (e.g., students miscategorized with “out of state” designation)
- Ensure seamless integration of all college plans for greater alignment and effectiveness
- Leverage data and demographics to guide decision-making and transform the institution
- Need to recognize that both qualitative and quantitative data are essential for informed decision-making
- DegreeWorks needs to be fully optimized with accurate data to enhance scheduling and planning effectiveness
- Consider reorganizing the academic division structure to improve alignment and logical coherence

Campus Development and Resource Optimization

Infrastructure and Facilities Enhancement

- Expand student access at the South County Education Center through a dedicated location
- Enhance campus by creating vibrant, dedicated student gathering spaces
- Address faculty resource gaps, including office space and outdated equipment
- Explore innovative facility use, such as repurposing campus spaces and utilizing vacant military bases
- Enhance food service options with more affordable, diverse choices, and reconsider cafeteria opening
- Evaluate student and faculty interest in campus housing and explore development opportunities through university partnerships or public-private collaborations
- Strengthen sustainability initiatives and renewable energy partnerships

Resource Allocation

- Need for a more effective budgeting process
- Increase clarity in resource allocation
- Update the purchasing process to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- Establish a balanced and sustainable approach to instructional program support, ensuring core programs remain strong while fostering the growth and sustainability of innovative new programs
- Create a plan for anticipated funding shifts over the next four years to ensure financial stability

Institutional Culture, Communication, and Professional Growth

Culture

- Improve campus climate and create an overall service attitude among employees
- Expand knowledge and understanding of “Caring Campus” for implementation to include all employees
- Employees do not necessarily see the connection between their work and institutional goals
- Strengthen collaboration between faculty and administration to enhance governance effectiveness
- Update outdated job descriptions and clarify role expectations
- Clarify and establish expectations and policies for remote work
- Need to address inequitable workloads among divisions
- Enhance shared governance (e.g., outcomes and reporting)
- Assess the need for additional full-time faculty, prioritizing key programs such as CTE (e.g., Automotive)

Communication

- Effective and streamlined campus communication needed to keep everyone informed and engaging broader constituents (e.g., EMPTF)

- Foster campus clarity to address concerns about communication and transparency
- Communication is strong within academic departments and the Senate but lacks consistency across the broader campus community
- Increase transparency in decision-making and resource allocation
- Enhance communication across college departments to break down silos and create more opportunities for open, informal discussions beyond committee meetings
- Enhanced promotion of skilled trades programs is essential to attract more students
- Need for a well-structured implementation plan is needed to keep the college on track in achieving the goals and objectives of the Educational Master Plan

Professional Development

- Enhance professional development opportunities to stay aligned with educational and workforce trends (e.g., Project-Based Learning, Artificial Intelligence, etc.)
- Increase opportunities for employees to develop skills in data utilization and interpretation
- Further enhance faculty professional growth through initiatives like the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Academy on Curriculum and Teaching, promoting student-centered pedagogy and continuous curricular review and redesign

Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships

Community Connections and Outreach

- Adapt to evolving community needs
- Improve responsiveness to the community and workforce needs
- Improve outreach efforts to better inform the community about Cuesta's programs and opportunities
- Increase engagement with local government and economic development agencies

Partnerships

Industry and Workforce Partnerships

- Expand partnerships and collaboration with local and statewide industries, including aerospace, healthcare, agriculture, and clean energy
- Recognize regional economic constraints when considering new programs
- Consider implementing new CTE programs aligned with county projections for new/growing industries
- Address barriers to developing and approving workforce-focused initiatives
- Enhance employer partnerships to expand student internships, hands-on training experiences, and job placement opportunities
- Increase government and economic development agency engagement to secure support and funding
- Expand employer engagement on campus
- Expand apprenticeships, dual enrollment, and workforce training to better serve regional needs
- Potential for further industry engagement

Educational Partnerships and Transfer Pathways

- Strengthen partnerships with high schools to promote Cuesta College as a valuable educational option
- Continue the success of the dual enrollment program, which is well-regarded by the K-12 community
- Transfer is a challenge as there is no local 4-year institution with easy access
- Expand 2+2 partnerships with Cal Poly SLO and other universities, particularly business and psychology
- Consider further workforce development efforts to align with Cal Poly SLO's industry initiatives, especially in Allied Health and Agriculture Science

Glossary

- AB540 – Exemption for certain students from paying nonresident tuition.
- ACCJC – Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
- CCAP(s) – Career and College Access Pathways
- CCC – California Community Colleges
- CCCCCO – California Community College Chancellor’s Office
- CCPG – California College Promise Grant
- CPL – Credit for Prior Learning
- CTE – Career and Technical Education
- ELL – English Language Learner
- EMP – Educational Master Plan
- EMPTF – Educational Master Plan Task Force
- ESL – English as a Second Language
- FTES – Full Time Equivalent Students
- GED – General Education Diploma
- GELOs – General Education Learning Outcomes
- HSI – Hispanic-Serving Institution
- IEPI – Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative
- ILOs – Institutional Learning Outcomes
- ILORP – Institutional Learning Outcomes Revision Project
- ISER – Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
- MVV – Mission, Vision, and Values
- NCC – North County Campus
- SCC – South County Center
- SCFF – Student Centered Funding Formula
- SEP – Student Equity Plan
- SLOs – Student Learning Outcomes
- SLOCCCD – San Luis Obispo County Community College District
- SOAR – Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results