

NISTS 2023

BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

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The following presentation was given at the 21st Annual Conference for the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students. Please cite responsibly and direct questions to the original presenter(s).

Research Spotlight

2784 - Identifying Factors Impacting Upward Transfer Among African American/Black Community College Students

Credits and Degree Pathways, Diversity and Inclusion

Two-thirds of African Americans who attend college in California begin at a community college, yet, over 60% wind up leaving without any degree or certificate or without transferring to a university. Decreasing racial inequities in transfer is a key strategy for increasing race and income equality. This research provides findings from a rigorous mixed-methods study designed to determine the factors that impact African American/Black students' likelihood of transferring.

Darla Cooper, *Executive Director*

Ashley Redix, *Consulting Researcher*

The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group)



The

African American

Transfer Tipping Point Study



THROUGH THE GATESM

NISTS Annual Conference

February 2023



About The RP Group

Mission: As the representative organization for Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) professionals in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, The RP Group strengthens the ability of CCC to discover and undertake high-quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

Services: Research, evaluation, planning, professional development, and technical assistance—designed and conducted by CCC practitioners

Organization: 501(c)3 with roots as membership organization



Agenda

- Overview of previous research that led to the current study
- Introduction to the current study, methodology, and key findings, with a focus on the core factors identified as impacting African American/Black student transfer
- Recommendations for how institutions can better support their African American/ Black students
- Facilitated discussion

Outcomes

We hope you will leave today:

- ***Appreciative*** of how factors that impact all transfer-motivated students uniquely impact African American/Black students
- ***Inspired*** by hearing actual experiences of transfer-motivated African American/ Black students
- ***Empowered*** with concrete strategies for supporting transfer-motivated African American/Black students

Through the Gate

An Overview

Through the Gate: The First Phase



Mapped California's transfer landscape, identifying a continuum of milestones for the student transfer journey and quantifying how many students were "near" or "at" the transfer gate

Through the Gate: The First Phase



- More than half exit without credentials
- Math is a barrier
- Time is the enemy
- Once African Americans reach key milestones, they are most likely to transfer...but too few get this far

Through the Gate: The First Phase



While African American/Black students are less likely to make it “near the transfer gate,” among those who do reach this milestone, they are significantly more likely to transfer than their peers.

When compared to White students, African American/Black students are **2.04 times more likely to transfer** than remain near the gate.

The Current Study



Study made possible with generous funding from:



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African-American Transfer Tipping Point Study

Guiding Questions

- What factors (both academic and non-academic) contribute to students' likelihood of reaching the tipping point?
- Which programs and practices are associated with greater persistence to and through the tipping point, and ultimately, the transfer gate?

African-American Transfer Tipping Point Study

Methodology

- Phase 1: Exploring **student course-taking patterns**
- Phase 2: **Interviews and focus groups** with college practitioners and transfer-motivated students at colleges having higher success with transfer among African American students
- Phase 3: A **survey** of African American/Black students across the CCC

African-American Transfer Tipping Point Study

Population

- Six first-time cohorts enrolled at a CCC between 2011 and 2016
- Tracked for six years
- Completed at least 12 transferable units with passing grades and had not yet enrolled in a university
- 69,242 African American/Black students and 778,977 non-African American/Black students

Factors Explored

Student Characteristics & Participation Predictors

- Ethnicity/Race
- Age
- Gender
- Financial aid
- First generation
- ELL
- Foster youth
- Incarceration (Ever)
- CalWorks
- Athlete
- ~~Transgender~~
- ~~LGBTQ~~
- ~~Homeless~~
- Umoja
- EOPS
- DSPS

Factors Explored

Academic Predictors

- High school diploma
- High school grad date
- Orientation participation
- Academic Counseling (in Y1, Y2)
- Use of Transfer Center
- Major
- STEM major
- Ed plan
- FT first year
- % FT
- TLE/TLM in 1st year
- Passing TLE
- Passing TLM
- Unit milestones (6, 12, 15, 24, 30)
- Unit milestones - success ratio
- Academic standing
- Transfer Characteristics
 - Terms completed
 - Time to transfer
 - Units to transfer
 - Time to 45 transferable units
 - ADT completion

College Characteristics Predictors

- % AA/B students
- % AA/B faculty (adjunct v all)
- Alignment between % AA/B students and % AA/B faculty
- College's overall transfer rate
- College's AA/B student transfer rate
- Equity gap in transfer rate between AA/B and non-AA/B students
- Urbanicity
- Size (student population)
- Umoja presence (Y/N)
- % FT faculty
- ADT completion (success)
- ADT offerings (availability)

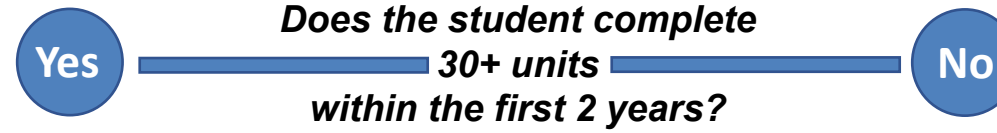
Decision Trees



An African American/Black student's overall chance of making it at least near the gate (NTG+) is 35%, but.....

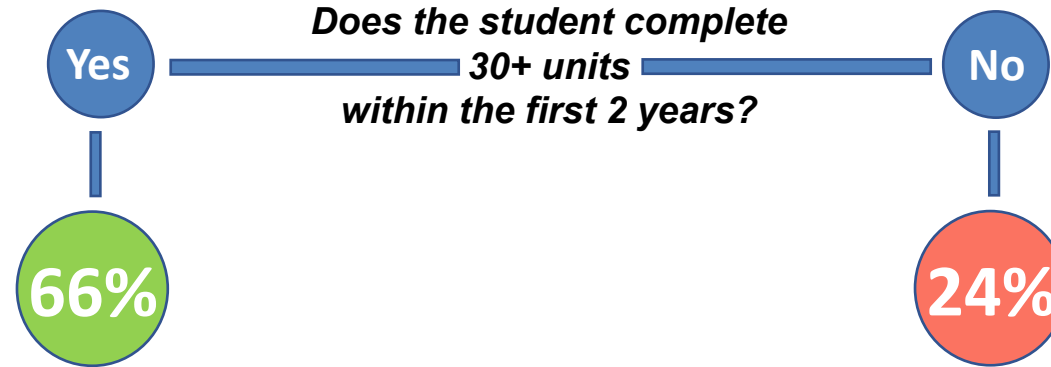
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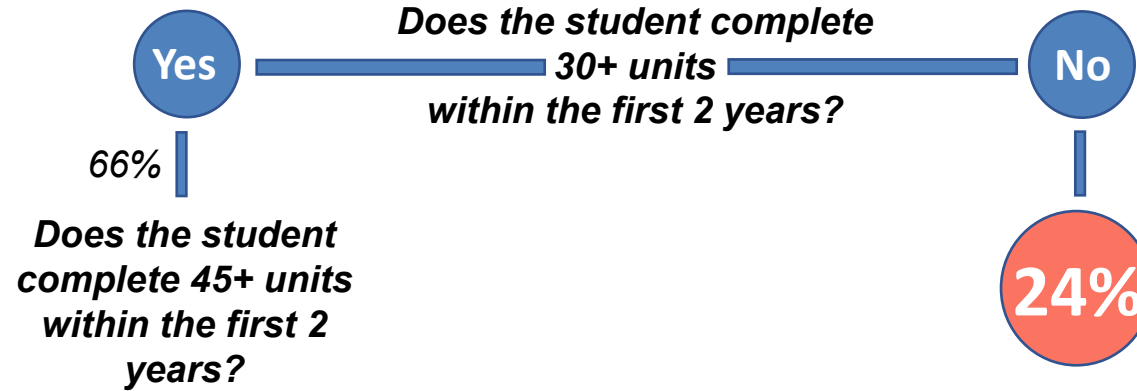
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Chances an African American/Black Student Makes It NTG+

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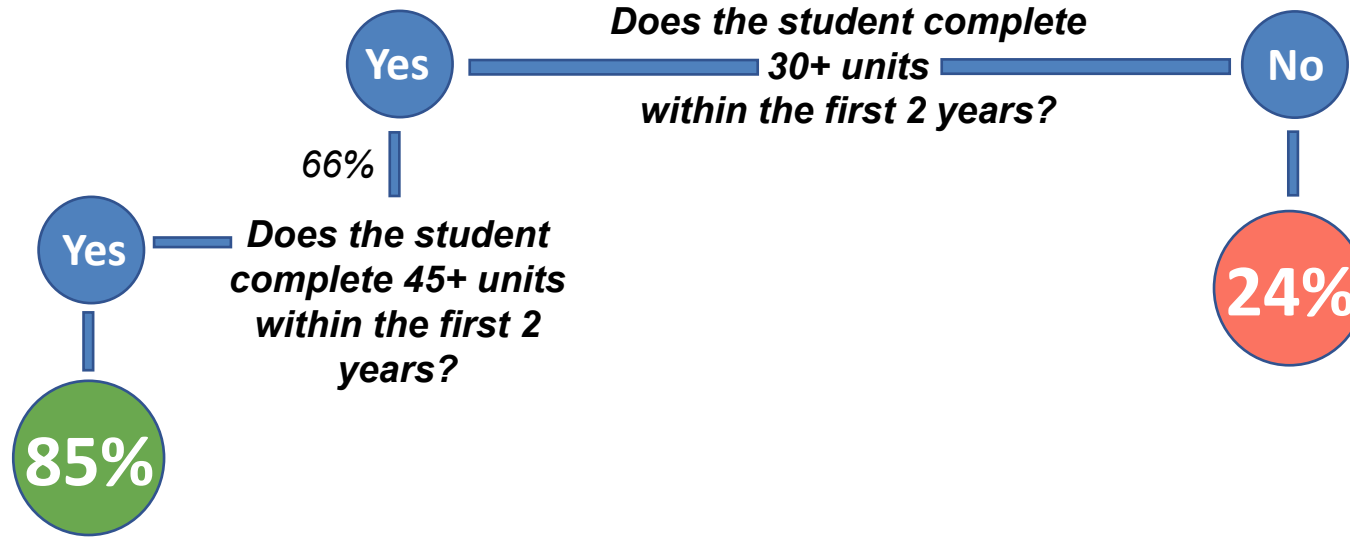
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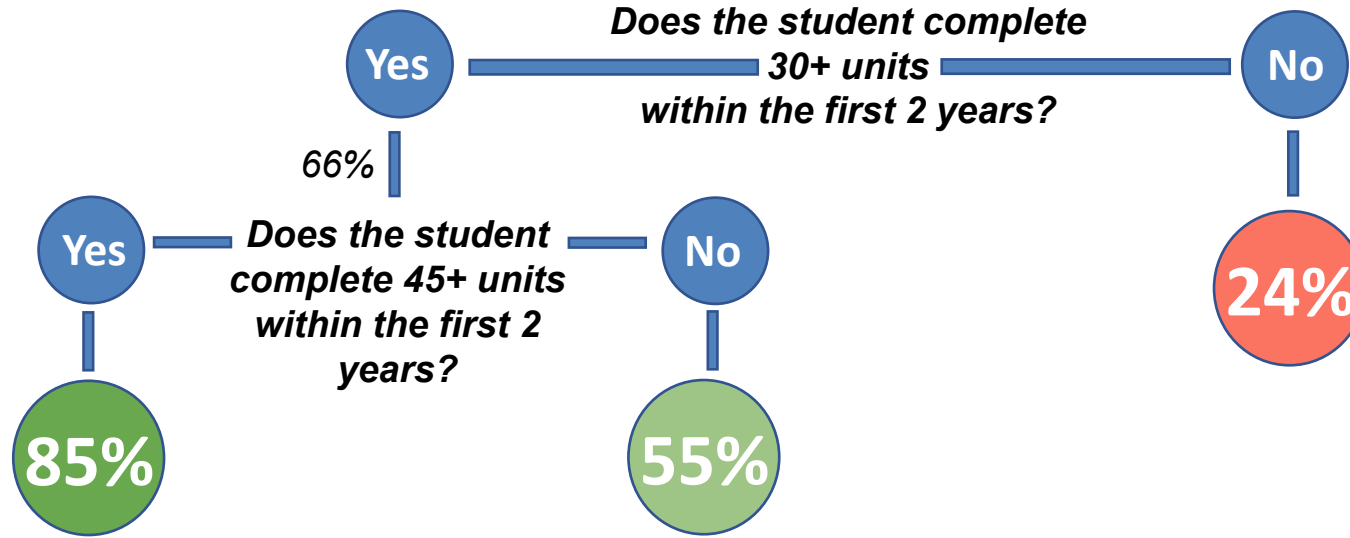
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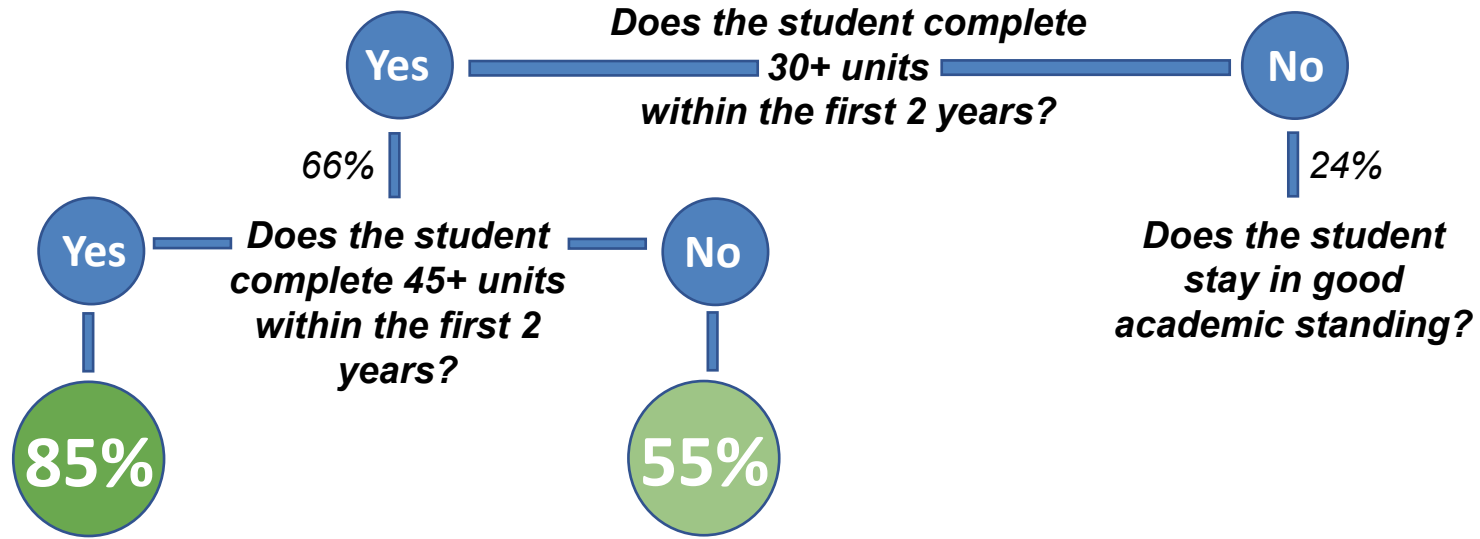
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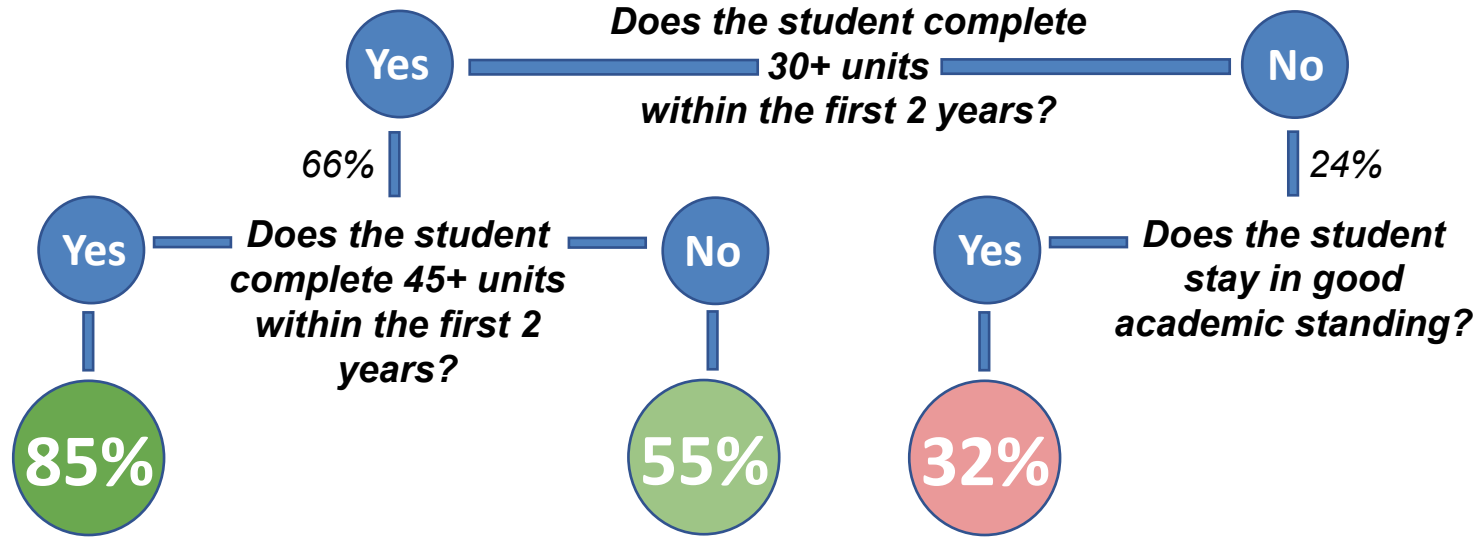
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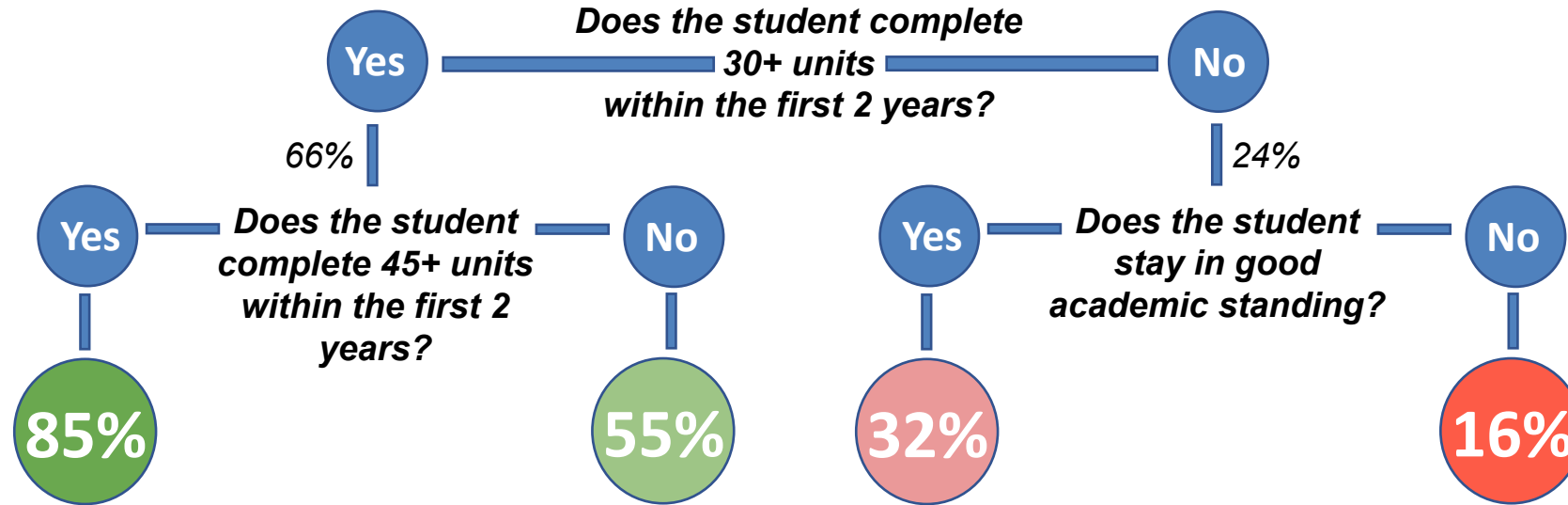
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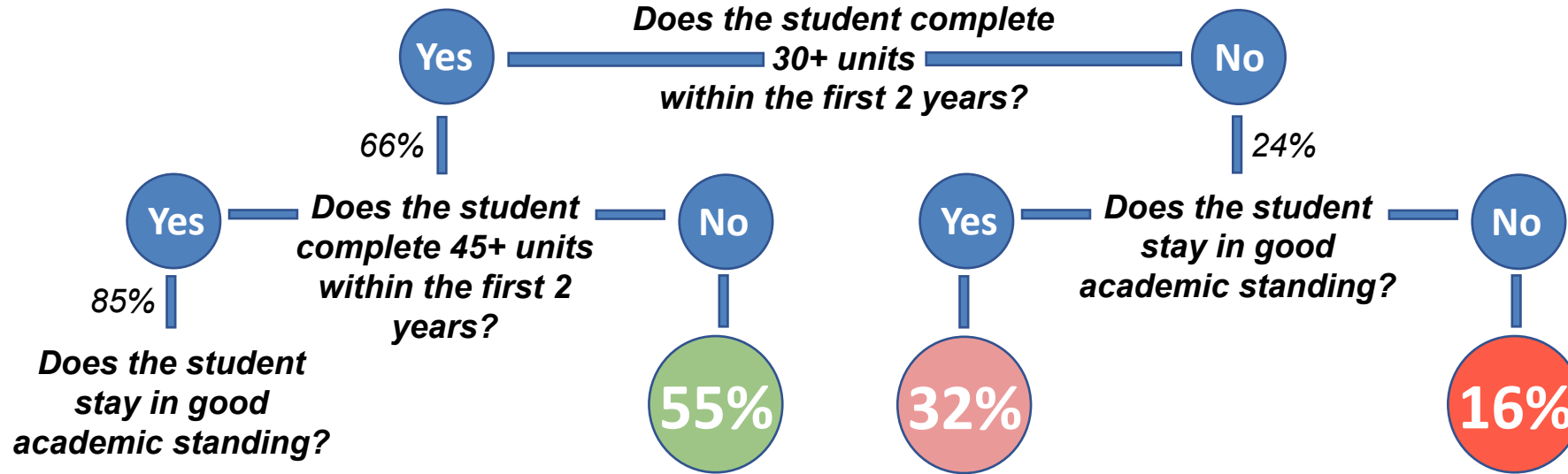
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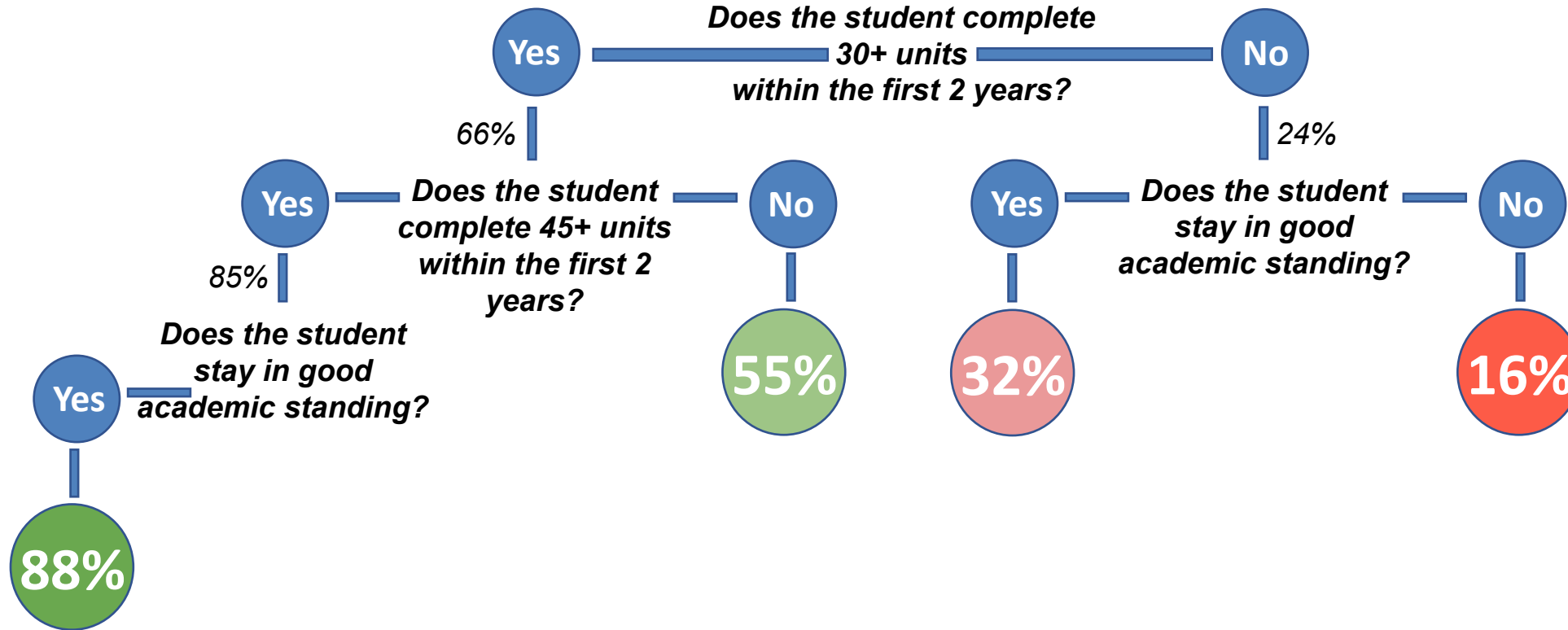
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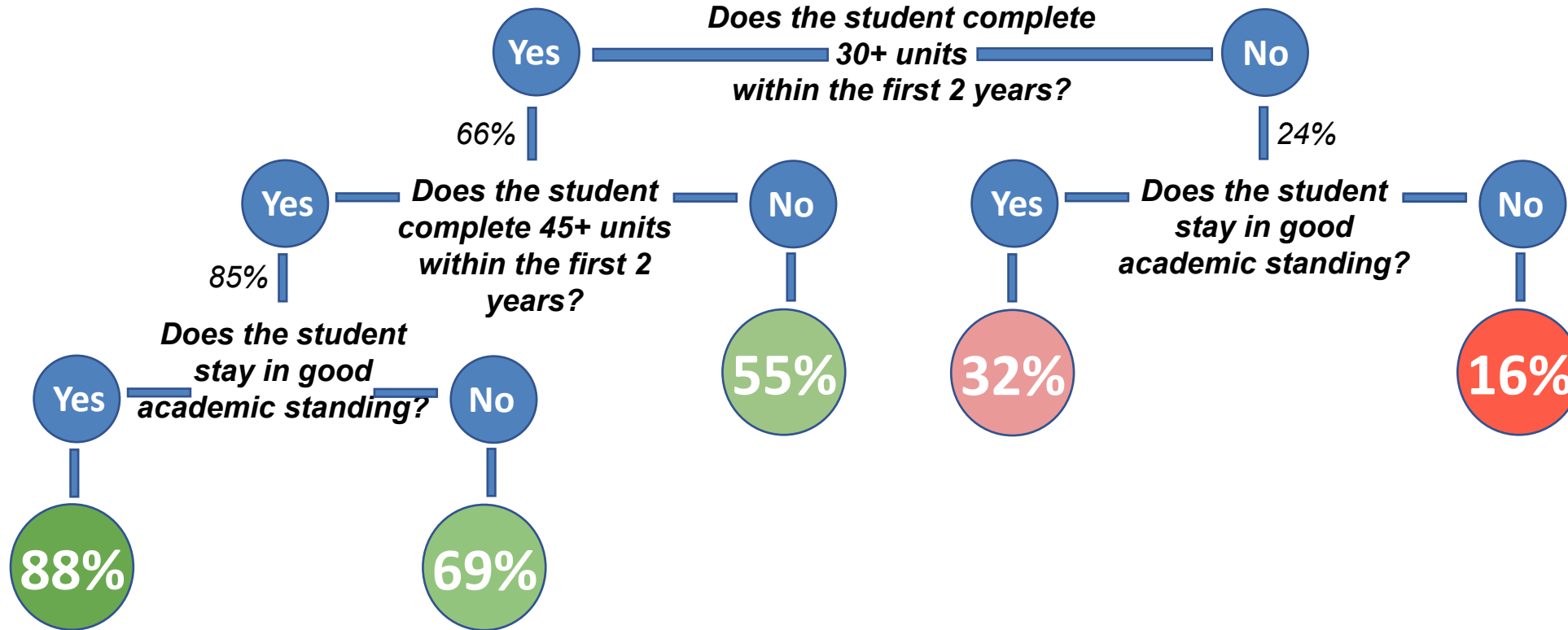
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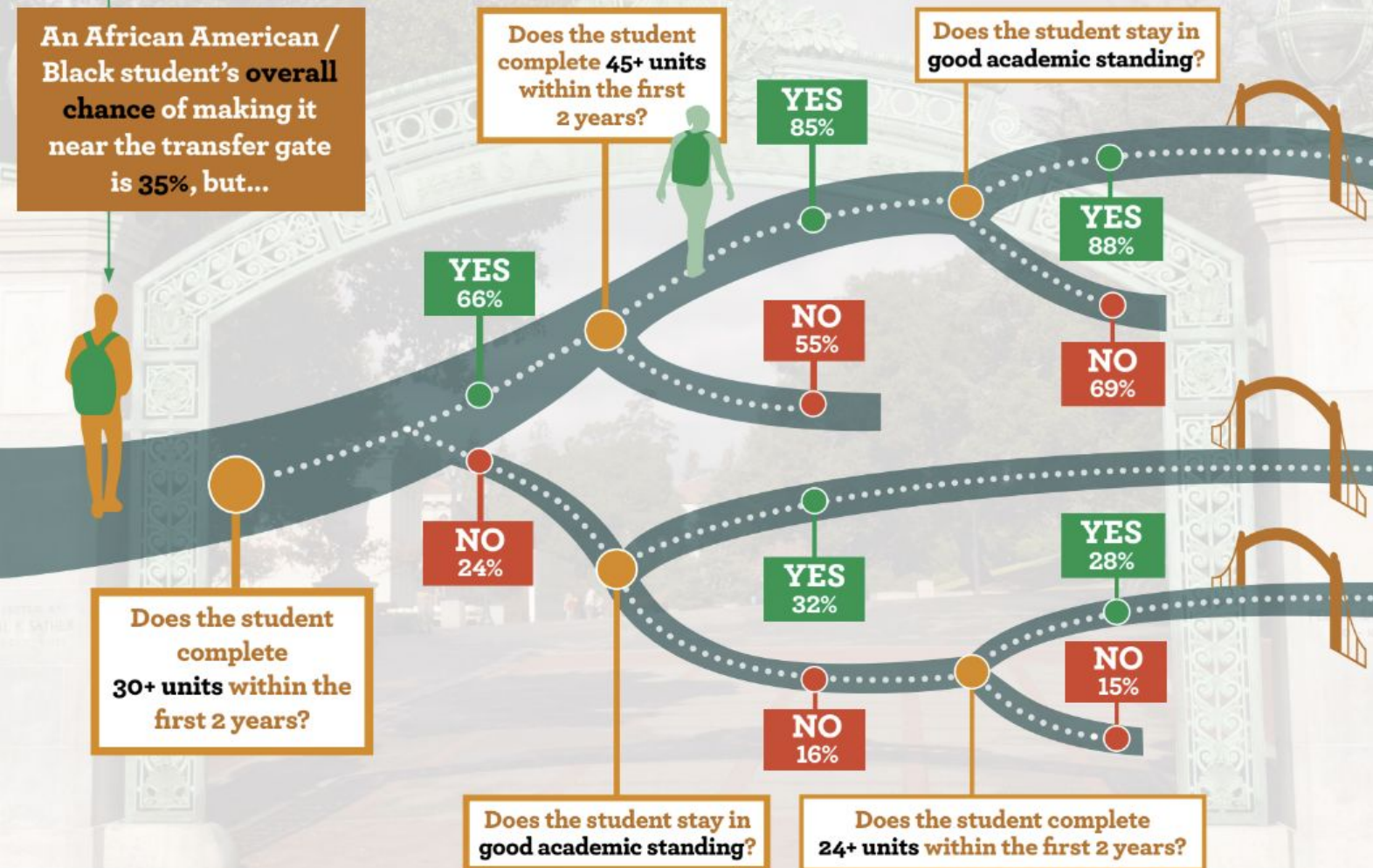
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Chances an African American/Black Student Makes It NTG+

Decision Trees

Chances the student makes it at least near the transfer gate



Unit completion clearly rose to the top, but there is more....

Results: Units Matter

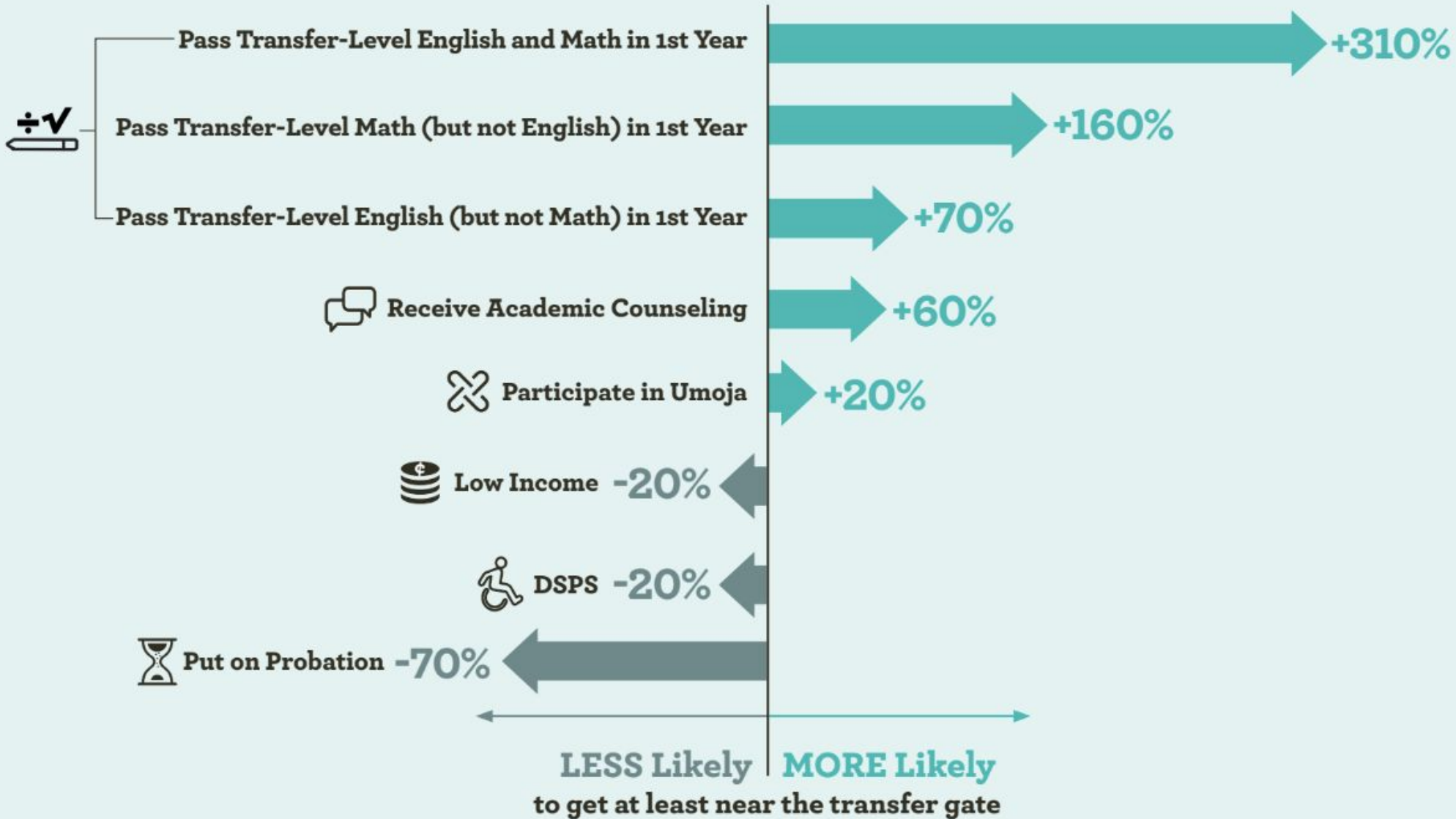


Of the 42 predictors put into these models, 17 appeared at least once across all four unit completion models.

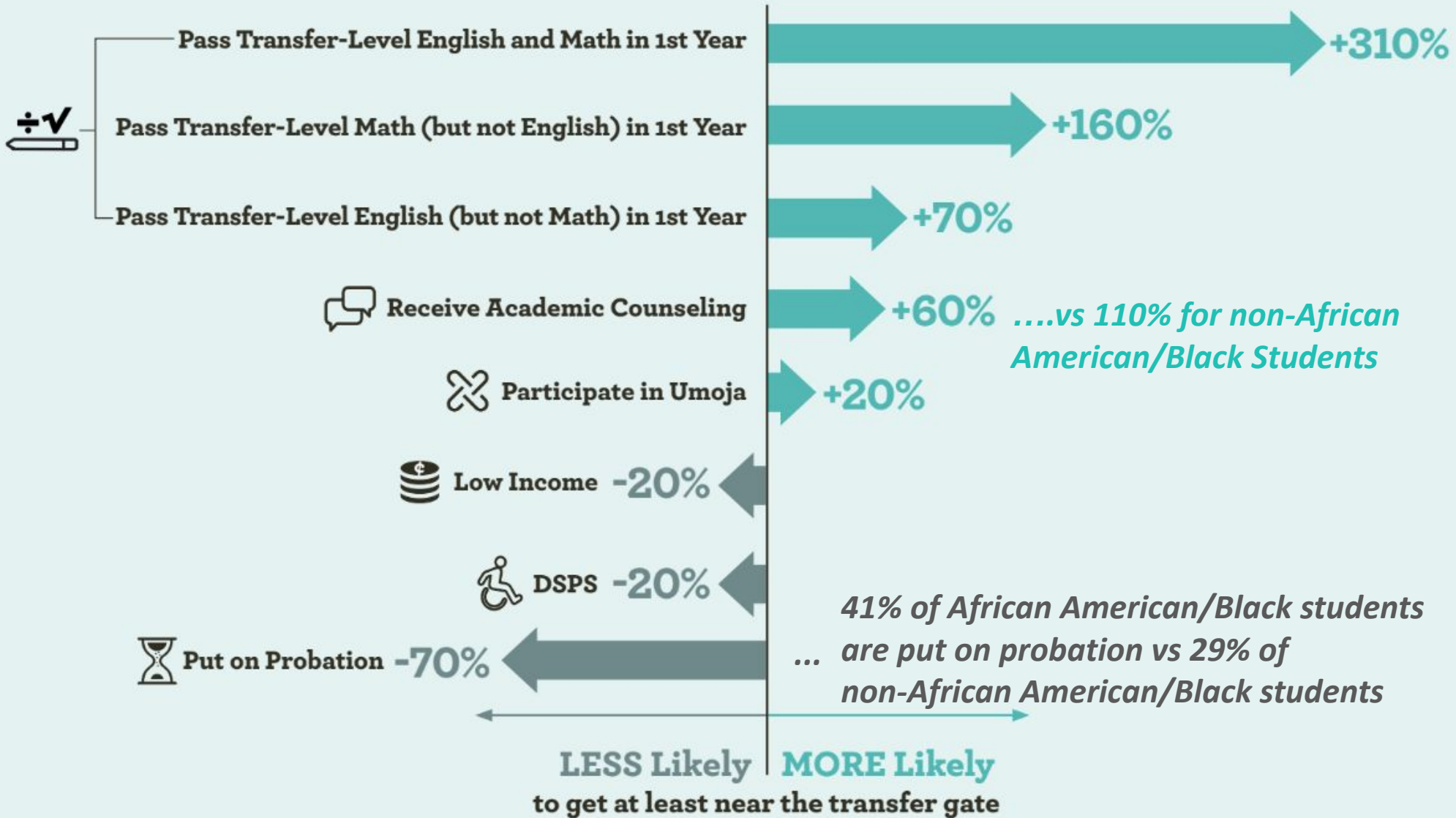
- ***Passing both TLE & TLM***
- ***Passing TLE only***
- ***Passing TLM only***
- ***Probation***
- ***Academic Counseling***
- ***Low income (negative relationship)***
- ***DSPS (negative relationship)***

- ***Age***
- ***Full-time in 1st year***
- ***% AA/B adjunct faculty***
- ***% AA/B students at the college***
- ***AA/B proportionality Index***
- ***Special admit status***
- ***Nearest university***
- ***College FTES***
- ***EOPS***
- ***Orientation***

Results



Results



But Why?



Why Counseling Matters

Students avoided general and Transfer Center counseling, as they were not heard, seen, valued, or respected and did not see themselves reflected

More likely to indicate benefiting more from academic counseling support from special population programs such as EOPS or Umoja

“

For Black and African American students, they are starting at a different point than most students would be – and so it would be more difficult for Black students to gain something because their relationship with their counselor is starting at a different point. The student has to become more comfortable with a person digging into their life, and that can feel a little bit intrusive. And for a Black student, that can be possibly a little triggering. Having to open up to a stranger and divulge certain things about themselves can be a little bit off-putting for a Black student versus another student who has possibly been conditioned by society to believe that they are a bit safer in society and they have a place in society and that they are valued.

”

Why Probation Matters: Student Perspective

Receiving a notice that they are on probation can be devastating

Significant challenge of needing to meet additional requirements (e.g., seeing a counselor)

Negatively impacted their financial aid eligibility

“

When you get on academic probation, it's like the school said, "Now fend for yourself." Because you don't get financial aid. You don't get support programs, because nobody trusts you ...but then nobody wants to ask what happened. No one ever wants to ask the question of "What happened that semester? Did anything happen with the [student's] family?"

”

Why Probation Matters: *Student Perspective*

A resounding sentiment for African American/Black students was the triggering nature of the term “probation” itself – its association with the criminal justice system and the loss of benefits.

“

When we think of probation, half the time, we think of something bad. Usually in the African American community, a lot of that is “Oh, if someone is on probation, they just got out of jail and now they still have to keep being put through trials until they can be actually freed.” So when we do academic probation, in a Black student’s mindset, that’s the same thing – “I’m being held until I can be set free to continue on.” And a lot of times they reduce your financial aid if you’re on academic probation so if that’s what you’re counting on to get classes, now that’s another deterrent to staying in school.

”

“

Perspective matters. If you tell an African American you’re on probation... they think of prison... and now you tell them they have probation again in school. So it doesn’t sit well with them and... that will be one reason why they would want to give up.

”

Why Probation Matters: *Practitioner Perspective*

Probation provides critical and just-in-time support to students struggling academically

A safety net to ensure students did not get so far behind that they would not be able to recover

“

It's almost like a fail safe, right?... The specialized programs have the ability to implement, “Hey, you have below a 2.0... come to meet with us once a semester if you want to stay in the program.” Then you have to come and meet with us maybe twice a month,... and now you have to do this many hours. You have to come to tutoring or at least explain to us why you can't come and do tutoring... So from a school standpoint, we have set failsafes in place where you have to come and see a counselor.

”

Why Umoja Matters

Mandatory, dedicated, and proactive counseling offered by Umoja allows the time and space for counselors who reflect students' backgrounds to build relationships with them where they feel heard, seen, and valued

“

I'm going to say that [the Umoja counselors] really care about you and have your best interest at heart. They're trying to provide resources to better help you through your process and they actually want to know more about you, about your life, and not just about school, but about just everything in general to better help you. I think it's very important that I can always shoot my counselor an email and she'll respond, even if it's not related to school, because it shows how much they care about us.

”



Why Instructional Faculty Matter

Faculty help students build their confidence as students, increase their mastery of key subjects (notably transfer-level math and English), and support their success

“

Luckily, the third time around, I had a better teacher for my English 1A class and I took... the critical thinking equivalent... and that teacher was very helpful. He happened to be an African American teacher... he was very nice... He was very accommodating, very understanding, and very helpful... And so, it was easy for me to approach him when I had a question for essays or if I was having trouble. And he would... write notes on all my papers so I knew what I was doing wrong or what I needed to correct. And so, that was really helpful with my transferring and being on track to transfer.

”

Now What?



Strong Leadership and Integrated, Intentional Partnerships and Supports Demonstrate a Commitment to African American/Black Student Success



Partnering and Coordinating with Universities Is Key to Transfer Preparedness, Readiness, and Support Strategies



Counseling Is Critical, Yet Colleges Need to Consider the Unique Perspectives and Experiences of African American/Black Students



Academic Probation Needs to be Re-Envisioned from the Students' Perspective (and Renamed)



Instructional Faculty Must Recognize the Critical Role They Play in Students' Transfer Journeys

Now What?



Strong Leadership and Integrated, Intentional Partnerships and Supports Demonstrate a Commitment to African American/Black Student Success

- Leadership that is supportive of and committed to African American/Black student transfer
- Active efforts to create a sense of community among African American/Black students
- Numerous intentional, integrated, and coordinated supportive student services
- Celebrating students' success as part of awards, African American/Black student graduations, and transfer luncheons
- Partnering with IRPE offices to prioritize continuous reflection on disaggregated student academic success and support usage data

Now What?



Partnering and Coordinating with Universities Is Key to Transfer Preparedness, Readiness, and Support Strategies

- Providing students with information on potential transfer destinations, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
- Regular visits to university campuses and workshops hosted on community college campuses by university partners that allow students and the college to build relationships with and learn more about potential transfer institutions
- University campus tours to help students develop a sense of what life might be like as a student at a new institution
- College fairs with university partners in attendance, allowing students to ask questions and potentially receive acceptance on the spot

Now What?



Counseling Is Critical, Yet Colleges Need to Consider the Unique Perspectives and Experiences of African American/Black Students

- Ensure timely and accurate information about steps needed to stay on track to transfer
- Whenever possible, students should see the same counselor over time
- Recruit, hire, and retain more African American/Black counseling faculty and staff
- Create a more welcoming environment with attention to spaces and programming that help African American/Black students feel respected, represented, and seen
- Leverage techniques employed by special programs (EOPS, Umoja) that are more likely to address students' academic and personal factors and are reported to be more effective by students (e.g., trauma-informed care)

Now What?



Academic Probation Needs to be Re-Envisioned from the Students' Perspective (and Renamed)

- Probation must be seen by students as a hands-on intervention to support students, instead of the college throwing up its hands and giving up on students
- Re-examine academic probation, including the use of the term “probation,” to reframe this status as an opportunity to provide timely and comprehensive support to African American/Black students
- Consider alternative terms such as “Academic warning” or “Academic notice”

Now What?



Instructional Faculty Must Recognize the Critical Role They Play in Students' Transfer Journeys

- Offer culturally responsive curriculum with assignments and readings that are reflective of African American/Black students' experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds, as well as African American/Black history and culture
- Faculty should be open to recognizing, understanding, and addressing how their personal biases and prejudices affect how they interact with and are perceived by African American/Black students
- Professional development for faculty (and others) on trauma-informed practices that can be incorporated into teaching and learning


What's Next?

- Phase 3: A **statewide survey** of African American/Black students across the CCC at key points in their transfer journey to explore the variables identified in the first two phases
 - Heard from over 7,000 transfer-motivated African American/Black students from over 115 community colleges across California!

Let's Discuss...



Three-Brief Series



The African American Transfer Tipping Point:
Identifying the Factors That Impact Transfer among African American/Black Community College Students

Brief 1 of 3

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Research • Planning • Professional Development
for California Community Colleges

theRPgroup
African American
Transfer Tipping Point Study

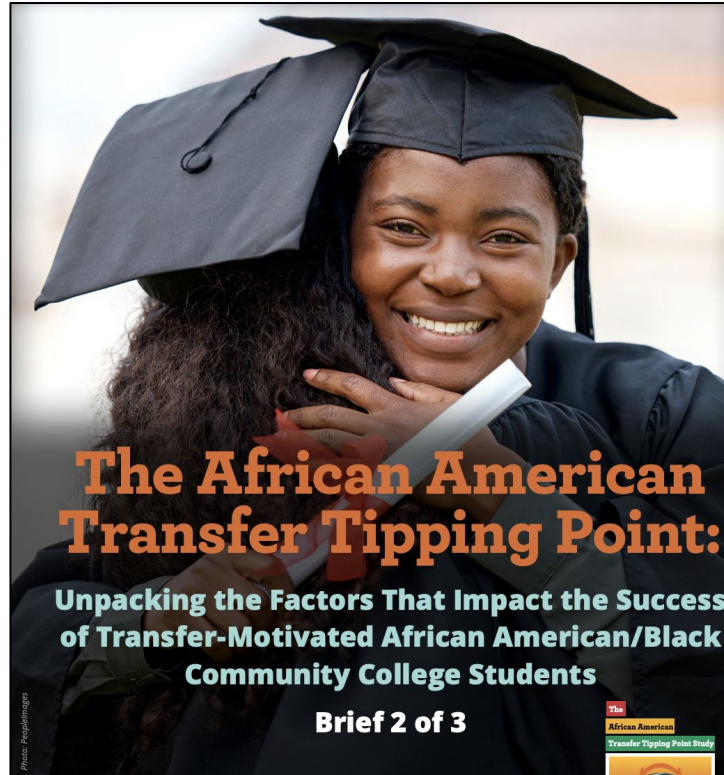
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October 2022



The African American Transfer Tipping Point:
Unpacking the Factors That Impact the Success of Transfer-Motivated African American/Black Community College Students

Brief 2 of 3

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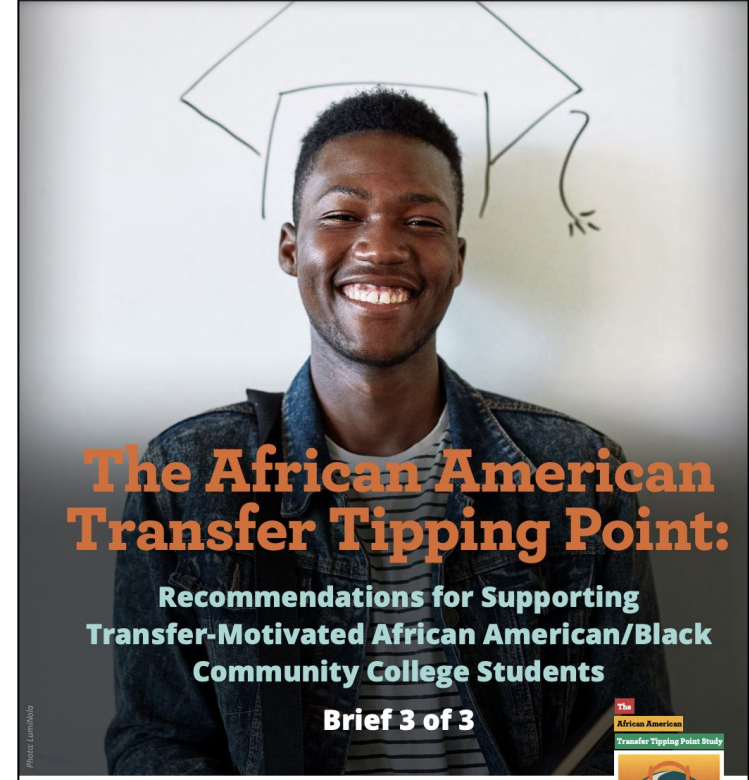
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October 2022



The African American Transfer Tipping Point:
Recommendations for Supporting Transfer-Motivated African American/Black Community College Students

Brief 3 of 3

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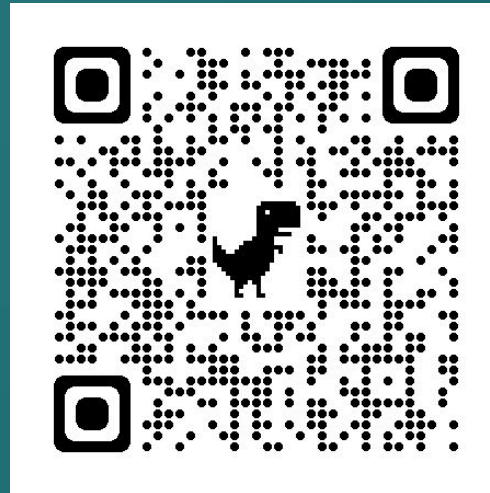
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October 2022

THANK YOU!

Dr. Darla Cooper
dcooper@rpgroup.org

Click on the QR Code to access the project webpage. Click on Resources tab to access briefs.



Project Leads

- Darla Cooper, EdD
- Katie Brohawn, PhD

Project Team

- Alyssa Nguyen, MA
- Rogéair D. Purnell, PhD
- Ashley Redix, PhD
- Daisy Segovia, PhD

Analytic Advisor

- Terrence Willett, PhD