Graduation Gaps
July 31, 2014

Higher education is becoming more stratified: Many affluent students do very well in college, while most middle- and low-income students struggle to attend at all or, if they go, to complete a degree. College Success Arizona understands that increasing college graduation rates across the state means creating opportunities for and enhancing the chances of completion, particularly for Latino and low-income students. As stated in the Morrison Institute’s 2010 report “Dropped?”, we know that the lack of Latino success is not about ethnicity or ideology.

Simply Not Enough

Latino success is an issue of economic well being to all Arizonans. According to April 2014 data from Excelencia in Education, while the population of Arizona is 30 percent Latino, only 16 percent of Latino adults (25 years and older) had earned an associate degree or higher, as compared to 36 percent of the population as a whole.

Simply increasing graduation rates among Latinos is not enough. To hit a state target for college graduation rates, we need to bolster achievement across all racial groups. The tool below allows users to set a target for 2030 and see the implications for what’s needed in college graduation rates across racial groups.

Some additional data:

- The Latino population in Arizona continues to increase, and the state continued to move toward a “majority-minority” populace. In 1980, Latinos made up 16 percent of Arizona’s total population, compared to 30 percent today.
- Latinos largely are Arizona’s workforce of the future with the state already home to more Latinos under age 18 than any other ethnicity.
- With the trend for lower average incomes and fewer jobs for low-skilled laborers, Arizona’s unemployment and poverty rates can be expected to worsen with a greater demand on state services and less revenue to pay for them.
- Projections show by 2030 the combined average income for Latinos and whites in Arizona will drop to $32,423 (in 2010 dollars), down from its $39,667 comparable combined average, if income and education trends continue.