

ASSOCIATE DEGREE FOR TRANSFER STATUS REPORT 2025

ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT CALIFORNIA
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



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ABOUT AICCU

The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) is comprised of over 80 independent, nonprofit colleges and universities, which make up the Independent California Colleges and Universities (ICCU) sector. The ICCU sector plays a pivotal role in the development of the state's model higher education offerings and in making California a symbol of innovation across the globe. Within California, ICCU institutions award 21 percent of all undergraduate degrees and 54 percent of graduate degrees, making them the largest preparers of California's advanced workforce.

Independent California Colleges and Universities are recognized in the state's Master Plan for Higher Education as a provider of affordable college access and a partner with other sectors and the state in the preparation of future leaders and the state's workforce. Independent colleges and universities are defined in California Education Code 66010 (b): As used, "independent institutions of higher education" are those nonpublic higher education institutions that grant undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, or both, and that are formed as nonprofit corporations in this state and are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

INTRODUCTION

This report to the Legislature and Department of Finance, submitted by the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) on behalf of California independent, nonprofit higher education institutions, provides an annual update on the state of Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) applications to participating independent, nonprofit colleges and universities.

Created in 2010, the program was originally designed for California Community College (CCC) students to transfer to the California State University (CSU) system. The core pillars of the program are similar regardless of whether students on ADT pathways transfer to a CSU or a participating AICCU institution – at least a 2.0 grade point average, enrolling at the CSU (or AICCU member institution) with junior standing, and a guarantee to complete a bachelor's degree in no more than 68 units (two years) at the receiving institution.

As noted in prior years, one key distinction with the ADT at participating AICCU institutions is that students are guaranteed admission to the specific institution to which they applied, whereas students admitted to the CSU system may be redirected to a non-impacted campus.

2025 UPDATE

Since 2023, ADT targets for the ICCU sector have been determined using a dynamic methodology, which sets an annual target based on the prior year ADT admit number to AICCU institutions, adjusted by the year-over-year percentage change in new transfer student enrollment¹ from CCCs to the independent, nonprofit sector.

AICCU uses the California Community College Chancellor's Office Data Mart² as the source for determining the new student transfer population because this data is publicly available and the closest representation of students transferring into the sector specifically from a CCC. Other federally recognized data sources, such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, do not distinguish between in-state and out-of-state transfer, or between upward or lateral transfers.

¹ AICCU based new transfer student enrollment on the entire sector of private, nonprofit institutions in order to account for any fluctuations in membership.

² <https://datamart.cccco.edu>

Using this ADT target methodology, AICCU staff calculated a target number of 1,516.

GROWTH IN 2024-25 ADT ADMITS

A total of 2,367 de-duplicated ADT students were admitted to 33 AICCU participating institutions for the 2024–25 academic year—a 10% increase in ADT admits. Notably, two institutions reported receiving zero ADT applications.

Table 1 presents the number of ADT students admitted to participating AICCU institutions since ADT collection began. It also contains the number of institutions reporting during each given time period.

Table 1: ADT Students Admitted Since Collection Began

Collection Year	Academic Year	Institutions Reporting	De-duplicated ADT Students Admitted	Percentage Change over Prior Year
1	2018-19	34	869	N/A
2	2019-20	36	2,372	173.8%
3	2020-21	29	2,175	-8.3%
4	2021-22	37	2,898	33.2%
5	2022-23	36	2,163	-25.4%
6	2023-24	33	2,117	-2.1%
7	2024-25	33	2,367	10.6%

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

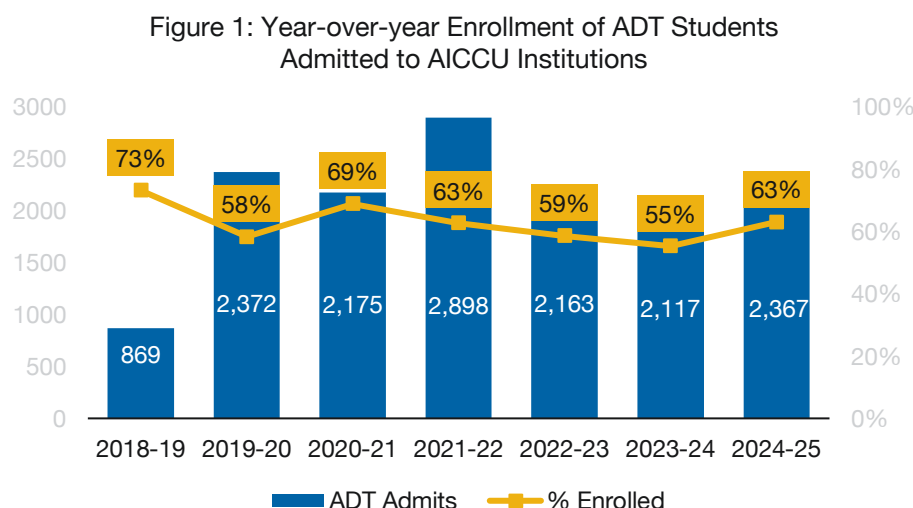
DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Each institution was provided a generic Excel workbook containing basic fields for each student record. Institutional representatives were instructed to work across departments to collect relevant student admit records, sign an MOU for data sharing between AICCU and the institution, and upload the file to a secured OneDrive folder. Once records were submitted, AICCU de-duplicated records and aggregated total ADT students admitted within the sector.

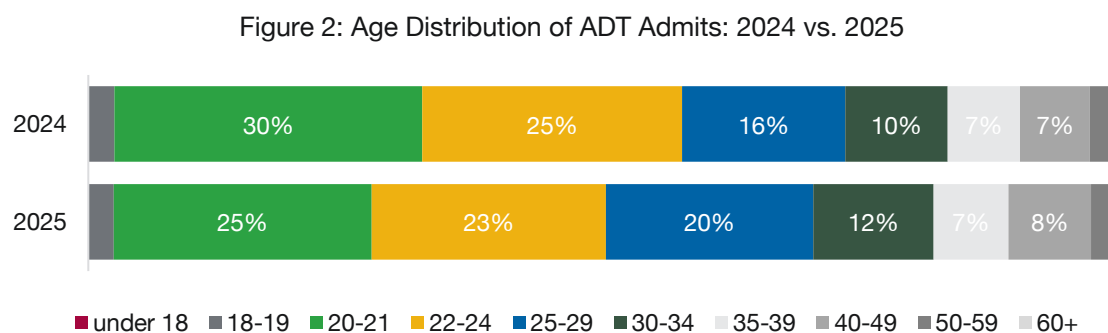
In 2022, AICCU began requesting data pertaining to the outcome measures of current and previously admitted ADT students. These additional metrics were submitted through a separate Google form.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Expanding the scope of the ADT data collection to include enrollment, demographics, and outcome measures has given AICCU a more comprehensive understanding of the program’s impact—offering insight into potential equity gaps and student progress through the educational pipeline. Since participation in the program began in 2018-19 academic year, AICCU institutions have accepted a total of 14,961 ADT applicants. Of those, approximately 62%, or nearly 9,300 students, have enrolled at a participating member institution. The annual breakdown of admits is shown in Figure 1 below.³

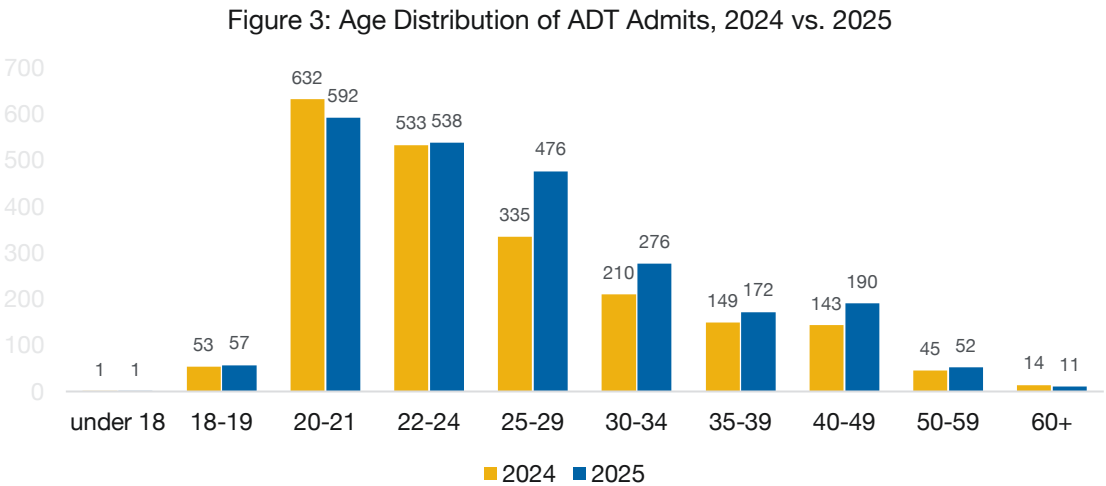


Similar to last year, roughly 80% of the 2024–25 ADT admit population falls within the 20–34 age range. However, a shift in the age distribution is evident (Figure 2), with 32% of this year’s ADT admittees now in the 25–34 range, compared to 26% last year. Conversely, only 48% are in the 20–24 age range, down from 55% last year. This shift may suggest that students are either taking time off before beginning their postsecondary education or spending more time at community colleges before transferring to an AICCU institution.

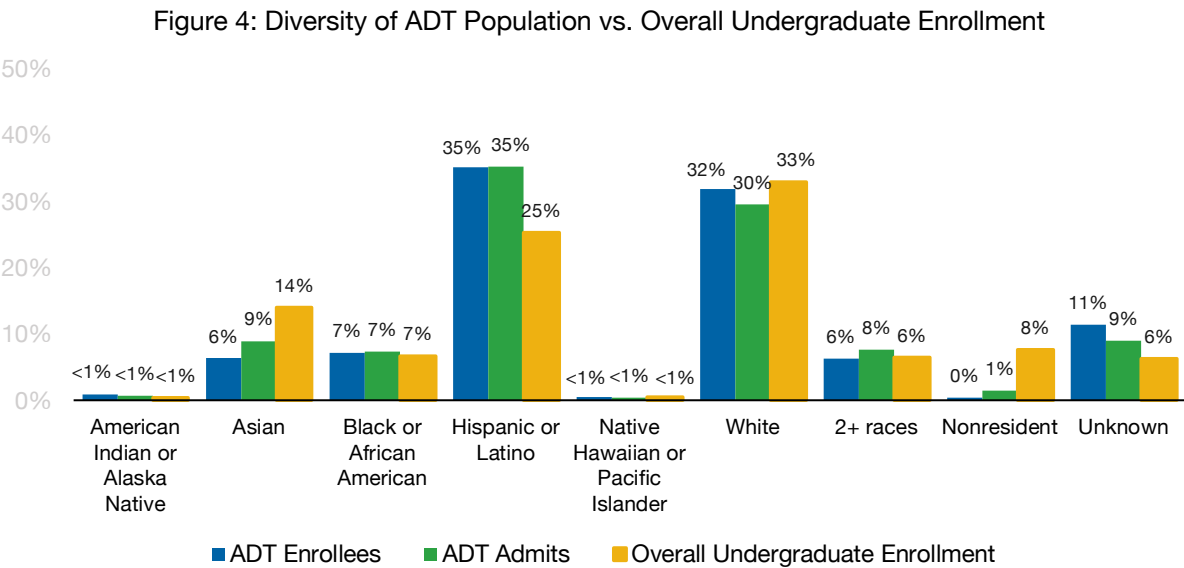


³ Source: AICCU ADT Data Collection, 2018-2025

Building on this trend, the median age of this year’s ADT admitted student population rose to 24, up from 23 in 2024. Among those who enrolled, the median age was 25, with over 55% classified as nontraditional learners over the age of 25—an increase from 48% last year.



ADT applicants and enrollees continue to be more likely to be Hispanic or Latino than the overall undergraduate population at AICCU institutions, whereas the breakdown of other racial/ethnic categories of ADT students largely mirror those of the general undergraduate student population (Figure 4).⁴



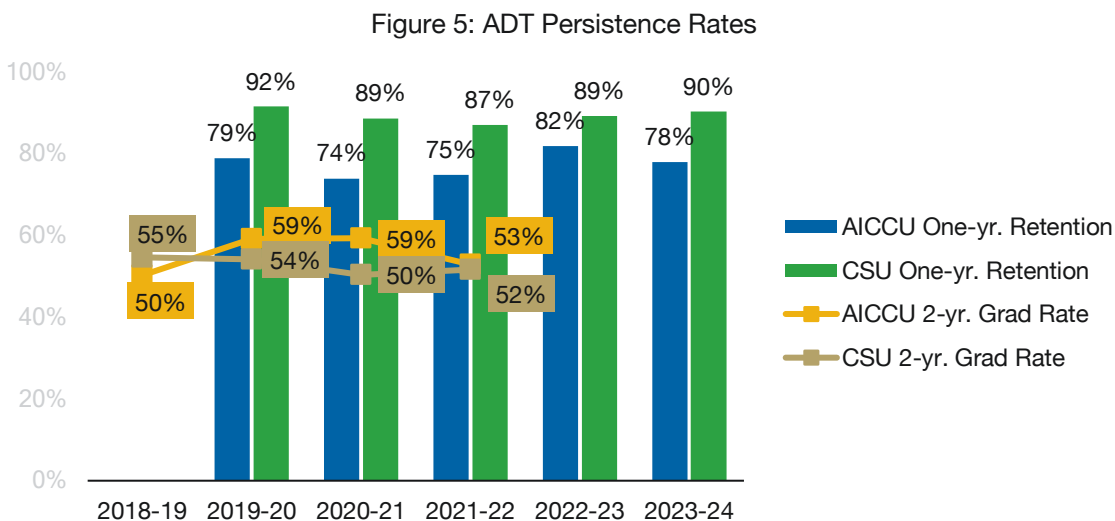
For 2024-25, 44% of students who enrolled at AICCU institutions through the ADT pathway were from underrepresented backgrounds.

⁴ Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS, 2023-2024, 12-month enrollment

TRENDS IN STUDENT PERSISTENCE

AICCU once again collected data on one-year retention⁵⁶ and two-year graduation⁷ rates for ADT pathways. Figure 5 compares these metrics for AICCU alongside ADT students on guaranteed pathways at the CSU system.

AICCU has now collected outcome measures for four cohort years. There appears to be consistency in student persistence with two-year graduation rate for ADT enrolled students being within the 50-60% range, and one-year retention rates 75%-85% range.



TRANSFER IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

ASSIST.ORG INTEGRATION UPDATE

The 2022-23 State Budget provided \$1.5 million to the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) to integrate AICCU member institutions into the ASSIST platform. Since then, AICCU staff have worked diligently with staff from member institutions and ASSIST to develop plans for system integration and memorandums of understanding.

In March 2024, a cohort of 28 member institutions officially signed MOUs to onboard to the ASSIST platform. In December 2024, an additional eight member

⁵ One-year retention was measured as students who enrolled during the indicated year and continued to enroll one year later.

⁶ Note: one-year retention was not requested from the 2018-2019 AICCU ADT admit cohort

⁷ Two-year graduation rates were used as the measurement of 100%-degree completion, as the assumption is that four-year degrees typically require 120 units, and at least 60 units would transfer for students admitted with an ADT guaranteed pathway.

institutions signed MOUs. The integration process is a time intensive effort by both the individual institutions and ASSIST and, while a few of the original 28 institutions have deferred their participation until Cohort 2 or 3, we are encouraged by the strong commitment to ASSIST. AICCU staff will continue to work with ASSIST and member institutions to increase participation and articulation of transfer agreements.

CALIFORNIA PRIVATE COLLEGE IS POSSIBLE INITIATIVE

In March 2023, AICCU and nine member institutions launched the California Private College is Possible Alliance with the goal of increasing access to private higher education institutions by expanding coordinated outreach to students, families, and counselors. The effort also aims to provide easily accessible, centralized information on admissions, financial aid, and other basic but important information for students, families, and counselors. Since its inception, AICCU staff have worked to expand participation across the sector. What began with an initial cohort of nine institutions has now grown to include all AICCU member institutions.

AICCU works to advance the goals of the alliance through the California Private College is Possible initiative, which provides programming events, workshops, and other engagement with community-based organizations that bring together admissions, financial aid, and student affairs staff from member institutions to meet with students, their families, and counselors from both high schools and community colleges. For example, on May 1 AICCU is hosting a free college fair event at Northeastern University Oakland with 20 member institutions.

RETURN OF AICCU REGIONAL COUNSELOR CONFERENCES

As part of AICCU's work through the California Private College is Possible initiative, in September 2023 AICCU organized a series of regional counselor conferences throughout the state. These regional counselor conferences invite high school and community college transfer counselors to learn more about opportunities for their students at AICCU institutions.

In September 2024, AICCU again offered this programming, free of charge to attendees. Five regional events were held throughout the state at AICCU institutions, including Santa Clara University, University of the Pacific, University of Redlands, University of San Diego, and Westmont College. AICCU also offered one virtual session. In total, over 400 counselors attended these events.

Each event featured sessions on admissions, financial aid, and student services that were designed to connect counselors directly with institutional staff. Each in-person event ended with a college fair, allowing counselors to meet with different campuses. Thirty member institutions participated in these events, and AICCU will again offer this programming in September 2025.

NEXT STEPS FOR ADT GROWTH

We are now seven years removed from the ICCU sector's initial adoption and acceptance of ADT pathways. While we celebrate the nearly 15,000 students who have utilized the pathway to attend an AICCU institution, we believe it is time to revisit some specific items and processes that can potentially expand ADT pathways within our sector.

The lack of visibility of ICCUs on the California Community Colleges' [ICanGoToCollege](#) website is problematic. This tool is prominently marketed through radio, print, and television advertising. It is supported financially by the state, which in 2021 allocated approximately \$11.9 million to support the campaign.

Currently, only eight of ADT-participating institutions from AICCU membership are listed on the transfer tool. This presents a lack of complete or accurate information to community college students about their transfer options to our institutions. This is disappointing, given that the transfer tool lists all HBCUs and fully online, out-of-state institutions like Southern New Hampshire University and University of Maryland Global Campus.

In order to do this, AICCU likely requires at least things to occur. First, ICCU must work with CCCCCO leadership to update and sign a new master MOU. A new, updated MOU should reflect the changed higher education landscape since the pandemic and lessons learned since the time when the original ADT MOU was adopted. This updated master MOU would then become the basis for our institutions to sign MOUs with the Chancellor's Office regarding joint marketing and outreach. Signing this MOU has previously been a condition for our institutions to be listed on the CCCCCO websites, but divergences from the prior master MOU prevented many schools from signing.

Additionally, the state should standardize state financial aid support for nontraditional students seeking to transfer to a four-year institution.

CONCLUSION

AICCU continues working to improve visibility and understanding of member institutions through programmatic efforts, including ASSIST, the California Private College is Possible initiative, AICCU regional counselor conferences, and partnership with the CCC Chancellor's Office. Additionally, AICCU remains an active participant in the AB 928 Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Committee and the Common Course Number Council and looks forward to the continued focus on expanding ADT offerings to STEM degree programs.

AICCU and member institutions remain deeply committed to the ADT program as an important pathway for community college students to continue their educational pursuits at an independent, nonprofit college or university. While we continue to have some concerns about downward trends to overall transfer enrollment from CCCs to AICCU institutions in recent years, we are encouraged by the slight increase of ADT admit numbers this year. It is also encouraging to see that students of color, particularly Hispanic and Latino students, are availing of the ADT pathway to enroll at AICCU institutions.

AICCU is greatly appreciative of state investments that supported ASSIST integration, including the ongoing funding to UCOP to maintain and update that information.

To further remove barriers to transfer, AICCU encourages the Legislature and Newsom Administration to fund the expanded portability of the California Community College Expanded Transfer Entitlement award so that nontraditional students seeking to transfer from a community college can use their remaining Cal Grant entitlement award at an AICCU institution. This arbitrary policy barrier is financial deterrent for students, and funding the expansion of the award portability would help compliment ongoing efforts to increase transfer to the ICCU sector.

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