

# Reengaging stopout students at the University of California

UC Extension degree and certificate completion  
programs and the UC Reengagement Consortium



*This report was drafted by Institutional Research and Academic Planning at the University of California (UC) Office of the President and the UC Extensions at Davis, UCLA, Merced, Riverside, Santa Barbara, San Diego.*

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## Executive summary

As of 2025, approximately 81,300 University of California (UC) undergraduates who entered between 2005 and 2019 had left without earning a bachelor's degree. Stopouts were more likely to be Pell Grant recipients, first-generation students, and members of underrepresented groups compared to UC bachelor degree recipients. Although their average GPA was lower than that of graduates—2.3 compared with 3.2—70 percent had completed at least 50 UC units, and many left for non-academic reasons, including health, family, or financial challenges. More than 90 percent of survey respondents wanted to return, but nearly 80 percent were working and needed flexible online courses and advising, along with financial support. Effective reengagement therefore required both locating former students and responding to their individual academic, financial, and personal circumstances.

In 2019, the California State Budget Act appropriated \$15 million in one-time funding to help UC reengage former students. Six UC Extension operations used the funds to support degree and certificate completion, establish a reengagement consortium, and conduct market research. The pilots built advising and outreach systems, strengthened campus partnerships, supported debt relief and targeted course access, expanded community and employer relationships, and increased understanding of returning students' needs. As of 2025, the effort had resulted in 484 bachelor's degrees and 291 certificates awarded to former UC stopouts, including Lilly Uvalle, whose story is highlighted to the right.

*Table 1. Total credentials conferred by UC Extension and UCRC degree and certificate completion programs*

| Campus           | Degrees    | Certificates |
|------------------|------------|--------------|
| UC Davis         | 212        | -            |
| UC Merced        | 170        | -            |
| UC Riverside     | 102        | 6            |
| UCLA             | -          | 196          |
| UC Santa Barbara | -          | 89           |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>484</b> | <b>291</b>   |

With one-time funds expended, UC Merced will continue its degree-completion work through a new Liberal Studies B.A., supported by philanthropic and campus funding. At the other campuses, the original stand-alone pilots and consortium structure are ending because sustainable funding models were not established. Some practices, partnerships, and services are being incorporated into existing campus



### Lilly Uvalle: Stopout to staff advisor

Lilly Uvalle first enrolled at UC Merced in 2010 but withdrew after her sophomore year. Two later attempts to return were interrupted by family responsibilities, mental health challenges, and the difficulty of navigating re-enrollment without support. In 2022, the UC Merced PACE Degree Completion Program contacted her, confirmed that her credits were still valid, and guided her through the re-enrollment process. She graduated with a public health degree in December 2024 and now works as a reentry advisor in the same program, helping other students return and complete their degrees.

operations or carried forward through separately funded initiatives.

The broader analyses provide additional context for future UC efforts. Among former UC students who subsequently earn a bachelor's degree elsewhere, about half graduate from a California State University (CSU). This suggests that many stopouts remain interested in completing a degree, though they pursue pathways beyond UC, including CSU campuses, other public and private institutions in California, and universities outside the state.<sup>1</sup>

The most developed Comparison Eight initiatives<sup>2</sup> provide structured pathways for returning adults that combine flexible or online degree options with sustained advising, financial support, and clear institutional ownership. Institutions relying primarily on standard reinstatement procedures provide fewer structured completion opportunities.

Overall, the pilots showed that proactive outreach and high-touch advising can reconnect students to UC, but outreach alone is not enough. Returning students often needed degree audits, help understanding requirements, coordination across campus offices, resolution of holds or incomplete grades, financial assistance, and sustained follow-up. Certificate students also benefited from individualized support and trusted community partnerships, particularly when programs required prerequisites or in-person practica.

Students faced overlapping barriers that made returning difficult. These included limited access to fully online, asynchronous, evening, and bottleneck courses; residency, catalog, and cross-campus credit rules; registration holds, institutional debt, and limited financial aid before readmission; and complex processes involving degree audits, petitions, deadlines, and multiple campus offices. Work and caregiving responsibilities, health and housing concerns, geographic distance, and academic recovery needs further constrained reentry. Certificate students also faced prerequisite gaps and lengthy in-person practica that could be difficult to complete while working.

Future efforts should identify likely near-completers early, confirm viable academic pathways before outreach, expand flexible and cross-campus course access, reduce administrative and financial barriers, and assign a consistent advisor or success coach. Stronger data tracking and partnerships with employers, community organizations, and other institutions would further support planning and workforce connections.<sup>3</sup>

Because one-time funding can build infrastructure but not sustain ongoing case management, future programs should establish institutional ownership, staffing, data, scale, and long-term funding from the outset. The most promising model is an integrated system that combines flexible pathways, coordinated advising, financial support, trusted partnerships, and sustained institutional commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed look at where UC stopouts graduate outside of UC, see [Appendix A](#).

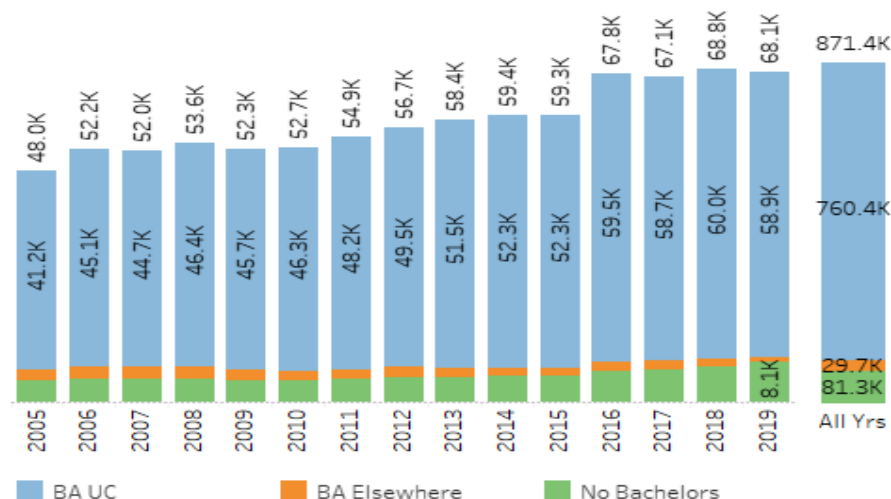
<sup>2</sup> The “Comparison Eight” institutions are the eight universities (University of Michigan, University of Virginia, SUNY Buffalo, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Stanford University, Yale University, Harvard University, and MIT) with which UC regularly compares faculty pay scales and student fees; this group is also recognized by the California Department of Finance as appropriate for comparison purposes. For a more detailed discussion of Comparison Eight institutions’ stopout degree completion efforts, see [Appendix B](#).

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see the section titled, [Barriers, potential solutions, and lessons learned](#).

## Profile of UC undergraduate stopouts

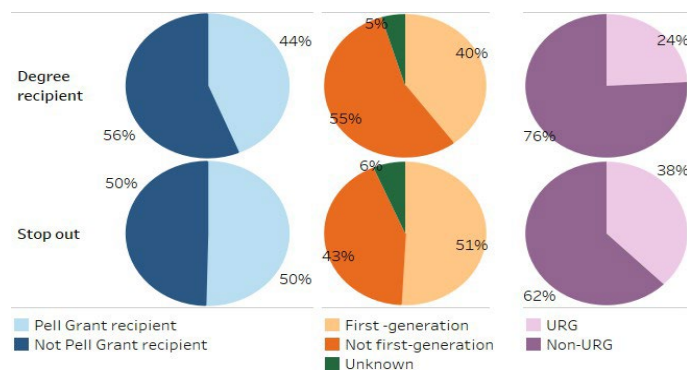
UC's six-year graduation rate (86 percent)<sup>4</sup> is higher than that of non-UC American Association of Universities (AAU) public institutions (82 percent) and reaches almost ninety percent beyond year six or when accounting for those who graduate from a non-UC institution. As of 2025, about 81,300 UC undergraduates who started between 2005 and 2019 stopped out and never completed a bachelor's degree at UC or any other institution.

Figure 1. Entering UC students and location of degree completion



When comparing students who stopped out and did not graduate with students who graduated, there was a higher proportion of Pell Grant recipients (50 percent vs. 44 percent). In addition, there were higher proportions of first-generation college students (i.e., students with neither parent having a four-year college degree; 51 percent vs. 40 percent) and students from underrepresented groups (URG; i.e., identify as African American/Black, Native American, or Hispanic/Latinx; 38 percent vs. 24 percent) among those who stopped out and did not complete their bachelor's degree.

Figure 2. Demographics and degree completion for UC entering cohorts between 2005 and 2019



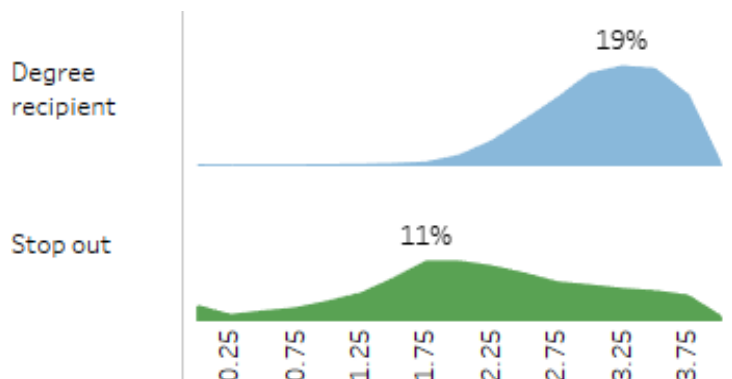
Note: URG = Underrepresented racial/ethnic group

<sup>4</sup> For more about UC undergraduate graduation rates: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/ug-outcomes>

### Academic progress before leaving UC

When compared to UC undergraduate degree recipients, students who stopped out and did not finish their bachelor's degree tend to leave UC with lower grade point averages (2.3 versus 3.2).

Figure 3. Degree completion and grade point average for UC entering cohorts between 2005 and 2019



Many stopouts nevertheless made substantial academic progress before leaving. Most students who did not finish their bachelor's degree completed at least one academic year of courses (approximately 30 to 45 units) and 70 percent completed 50 or more units at UC. In addition, students who do not finish their bachelor's degree often enroll for multiple years at UC. Less than 20 percent leave within one year, and half of students leave after completing 1 to 2 years.

Students who stop out and do not finish their bachelor's degree also major in a range of disciplines. Twenty percent were undeclared when they left UC. Undeclared students represented an even larger share of students who left with fewer than 50 units, including 33 percent of students with fewer than 15 units and 37 percent of students with 15 to 50 units.

Table 2. UC major at exit and units completed

|                               | Under 15 | 15 to 50 | 50 to 100 | Over 100 | All |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----|
| Undeclared                    | 33%      | 37%      | 28%       | 6%       | 20% |
| Social sciences               | 14%      | 13%      | 17%       | 25%      | 19% |
| Arts & humanities             | 10%      | 9%       | 13%       | 20%      | 15% |
| Biological sciences           | 13%      | 14%      | 11%       | 11%      | 12% |
| Engineering/computer sciences | 11%      | 11%      | 12%       | 13%      | 12% |
| Physical sciences/math        | 5%       | 5%       | 7%        | 9%       | 7%  |
| Business                      | 5%       | 4%       | 4%        | 4%       | 4%  |
| Other                         | 10%      | 7%       | 9%        | 12%      | 10% |

Although students may stop out and leave UC without a degree, just over a quarter complete their bachelor's degree elsewhere (see Appendix A, [Degree completion for UC students outside the UC system](#) for an in-depth analysis on this topic).

## UC stopout surveys

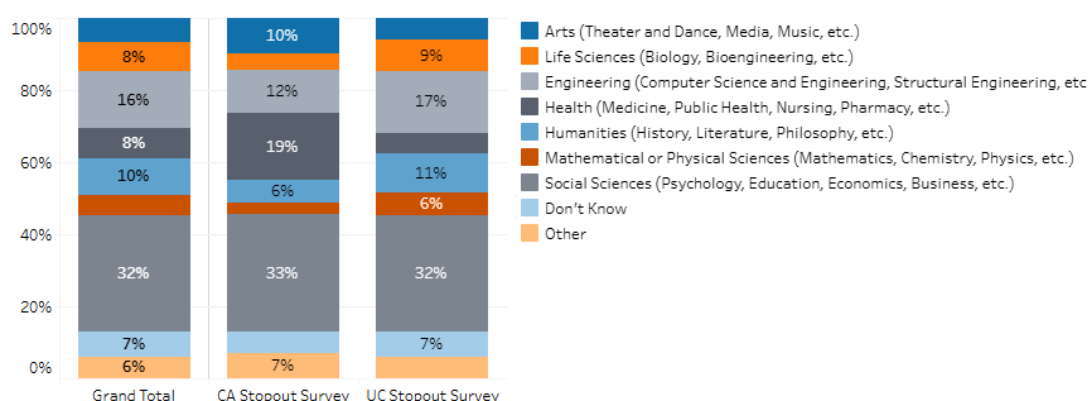
Before the UC Extension degree and certificate completion programs launched, UC conducted surveys to understand why students stopped out, their interest in returning, and their demand for alternative credentials. The findings informed program design and resource allocation across UC.

In fall 2021, UCSD Extension administered a panel of around 3,300 California adults who had attended college but had not earned a bachelor's degree and were no longer enrolled. UC's Institutional Research and Academic Planning office also surveyed approximately 131,000 former UC students who had enrolled between 2000 and 2018 but left without earning a UC bachelor's degree, with about 9,600 respondents.

### Academic progress and background

Respondents were interested in a range of academic disciplines, with around 30 percent in social sciences, followed by engineering and computer science (15 percent).

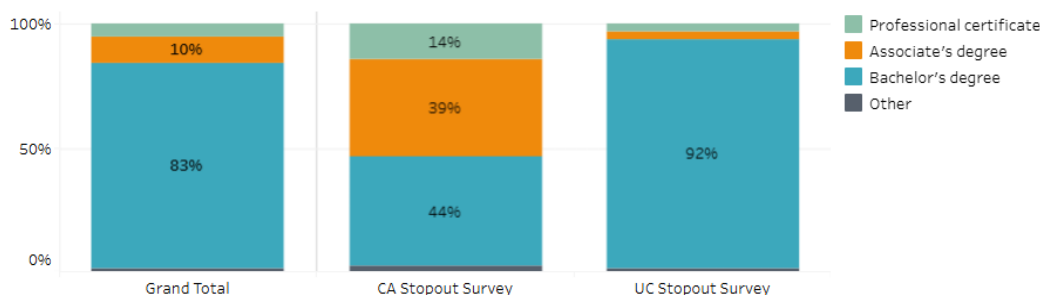
Figure 4. Prospective field of study interest



### Interest in returning and preferred credentials

More than 80 percent of respondents—and 92 percent of UC stopouts—were interested in completing a bachelor's degree (Figure 5). Among UC respondents, 87 percent said it was important to continue in their original degree program, but just over 60 percent were open to a general studies degree.

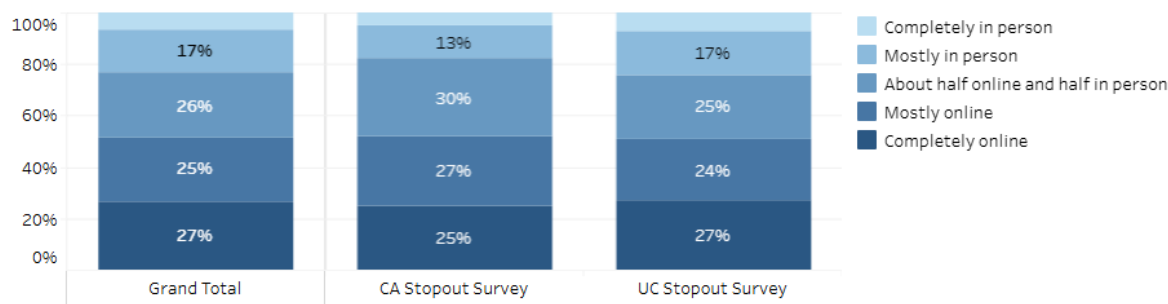
Figure 5. Primary credential of interest



## Flexibility in learning modalities is central to reentry

More than half of respondents (52 percent) preferred courses that were completely or mostly online. The preference for learning modalities that provide more flexibility is a recurring theme that is illustrated in Figures 6 and 7 and discussed in more detail in the section on [Barriers, potential solutions, and lessons learned](#).

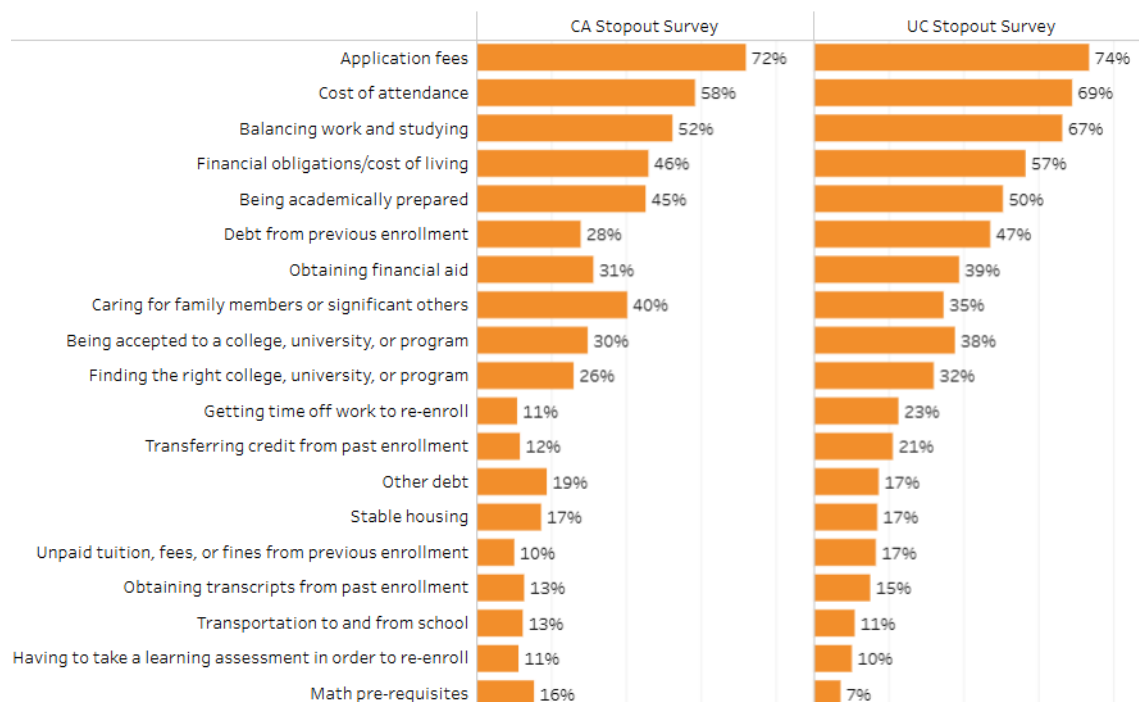
Figure 6. Preferred learning modality



## Barriers and potential supports

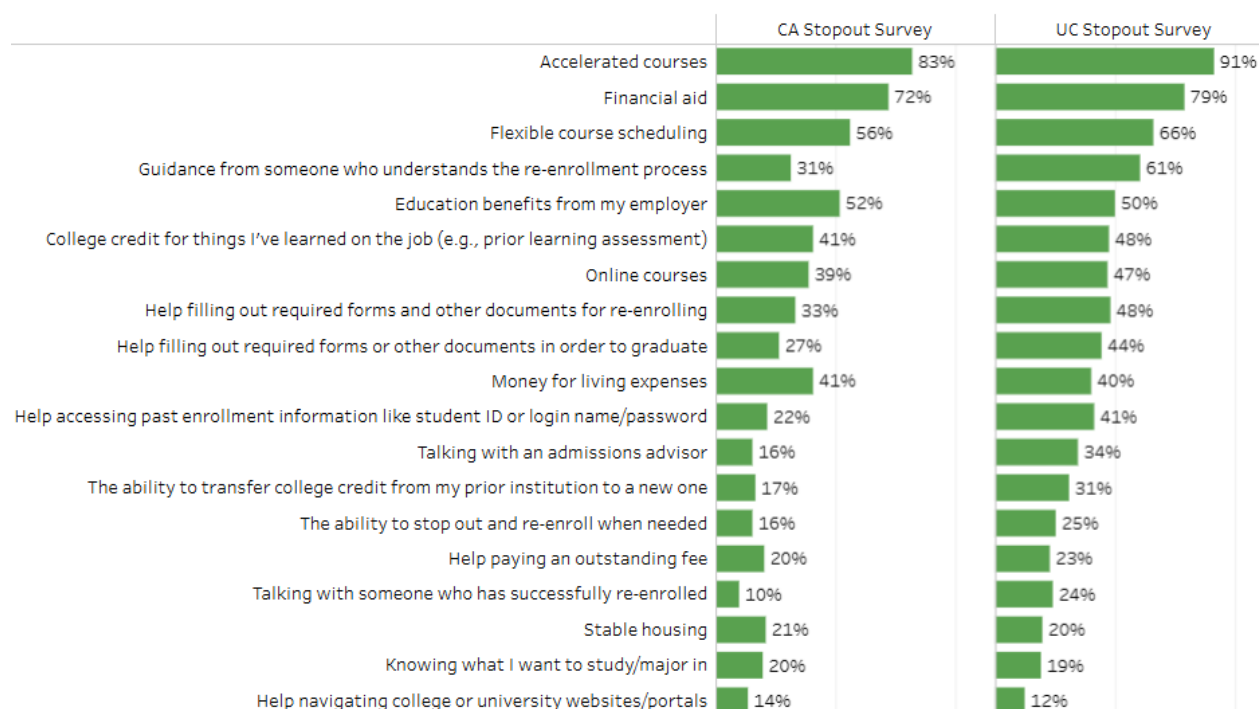
The most significant barriers to returning were financial, along with the challenge of balancing work and studying. Nearly 80 percent of UC respondents indicated they were working full or part time, needing online advising and support. More details on obstacles students face when attempting to return can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Degree completion barriers



Respondents identified accelerated courses, financial aid, and flexible course scheduling as key factors that could make returning to UC easier. Additional details can be found in Figure 8, as well as in the individual campus sections of this report.

*Figure 8. Factors that could make it easier for students to return*



The survey findings provided an important foundation for the degree and certificate completion programs described in the following sections. Across both surveys, respondents expressed strong interest in completing bachelor's degrees and preferred flexible, primarily online learning options. Financial costs, work and family responsibilities, and administrative barriers were among the most significant challenges. These findings informed UC Extension's emphasis on high-touch advising, flexible course offerings, financial support, workforce-aligned certificate pathways, and streamlined reentry processes. Many of the barriers identified in the surveys later emerged as recurring themes across campus completion initiatives.

## How state funds were used

The California State Budget Act of 2019 appropriated \$15 million in one-time funding for the University to “develop or expand degree and certificate completion programs at the University of California (UC) extension centers.” There were two requests for proposal (RFPs) rounds.

In the first RFP round, UC Merced (UCM) and UC Santa Barbara (UCSB) received funding for degree completion work, UCLA for certificate completions that support underserved communities, and UC San Diego (UCSD) to produce a California workforce market demand dashboard with skill gaps and workforce needs to support all UC Extension operations.

The second RFP round resulted in additional funds for UCM and UCSD continuing their work, along with approval of UC Davis’s (UCD) and UC Riverside’s (UCR) joint degree completion proposal and the formation of the UC Reengagement Consortium (UCRC). The UCRC consolidated degree completion efforts for UCM, UCSB, UCD and UCR.

### FUNDING

The California State Budget Act of 2019 appropriated \$15 million in one-time funding for the University to “develop or expand degree and certificate completion programs at the University of California (UC) extension centers.”

Six UC campuses were awarded funds for degree and certificate completion:

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| UC Merced             | \$5,778,498  |
| UC Davis/UC Riverside | \$4,850,000* |
| UCLA                  | \$2,910,590  |
| UC Santa Barbara      | \$967,921    |
| UC San Diego          | \$450,000    |

\*UCD and UCR submitted a joint proposal, but the funds distribution is as follows: UCD \$2,221,290, UCR \$2,628,710.

## UC Merced Extension PACE Degree Completion Program

UCM's Degree Completion Program (DCP) helps former UC students finish their first bachelor's degree through advising, curricular support, and financial assistance. Initially, it served recent UCM stopouts in good academic standing who were interested in a School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts (SSHA) major. Strong demand led the program to expand to students from any UC campus, across all disciplines, including those who left in poor academic standing or were academically dismissed.

Through a partnership between UCM's PACE<sup>5</sup> program and SSHA, goals shifted to growing core facilities and offering degree completion pathways for stopout students. The program significantly expanded degree completion opportunities in existing majors and certificate programs, with integrative support of comprehensive programming and specialized academic advising.

The main goals were: (1) enroll stopout students via transfer pathways;<sup>6</sup> and (2) grow existing major degree programs and initiate new PACE certificates for stopouts. To do so, the specific aims were:

- Design and initiate a study of UCM stopout students.
- Promote and expand major degree completion, with certificate offerings as enrichment and post-baccalaureate professionalization.
- Enhance academic support through specialized staffing and dedicated student success programming.
- Support academic capacity growth, with expansion and improvement of major and certificate course offerings.
- Develop facilities by retrofitting dedicated classrooms for synchronous learning opportunities.

This project design increased degree completion with outreach, degree pathways and comprehensive support to encourage and sustain the return of stopout students in the region.

The program provided targeted outreach and consistent contact points providing timely and accurate information on how each student could finish their degree based on their individual circumstances. The program established individualized high-touch advising plans for each student. The program also developed a partnership with the Transfer, Veterans, and Returning Center (TRV) on a mentorship network and coordinated event planning, as part of inclusion and community building for reentry students.

A Liberal Studies, B.A. was approved by the Senate and is now available as an academic reentry program for degree completion. The flexible curriculum supports an efficient pathway to re-enrollment and degree completion, particularly for undeclared students who drive stopout

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<sup>5</sup> Effective November 18, 2024, UC Merced Extension is now called UC Merced Division of Professional and Continuing Education, or UC Merced PACE.

<sup>6</sup> While reentry pathways were the priority, UCM Extension engaged with students who had started at other UCs but returned to the Central Valley and students with some college and no degree from other non- UC institutions.

patterns. Cornerstone and capstone courses in the major integrate academic advising and career services directly into the curriculum to proactively support returning students with academic planning and career coaching. Notably, the degree's design includes a partnership with CalTeach (via the Natural Sciences Education minor curriculum) to facilitate post-graduate pathways into PACE's Teacher Preparation Program and will be of particular benefit to CalTeach stopout students<sup>7</sup> who will be able to satisfy subject matter competency for a multiple-subject teaching credential and articulate coursework to accelerate their time-to-credential.

DCP also supported department chairs in developing new programs, with data from the Provost's Office. New majors in Accounting, Business Administration, Communication and Media, and History and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies—Social Sciences Education address student persistence and retention needs. For example, Business Administration offers ECON and MBE students who struggle with math requirements another major option.

Faculty also developed summer minors in Accounting, Economics, Management and Business Economics, and Sociology. These programs ensure core major courses are offered predictably each summer. Delivered primarily online, the courses provide an accessible pathway for students returning to complete their degrees.

Furthermore, Undergraduate Council approved a campus policy for undergraduate academic certificates for matriculated students. These certificates will foreground applied and interdisciplinary dimensions of major degree programs (e.g. Spanish for Healthcare), are part of the catalog, are comprised of existing undergraduate course offerings (three courses), and are noted on a student's transcript. Certificates also may be awarded for prior coursework and are stackable into minor and major programs as part of an effort to build academic momentum for returning students. Certificates also serve the persistence and retention needs of continuing students by making the career relevance of degree programs explicit. Certificates also provide a framework for building new reentry pathways with PACE via UCM Extension (i.e., XM courses).

Academic planning also identified "at-risk" courses linked to stopouts and targeted interventions. Among social science stopouts with senior standing, 21 percent had not completed required lower-division quantitative methods and statistics courses. These courses also had high DFW<sup>8</sup> rates and larger post-pandemic equity gaps, potentially compounding barriers for first-generation students and students from underrepresented groups (URGs). DCP piloted a faculty development series to integrate undergraduate learning assistants into these gateway math courses; the effort is expanding this year.

To increase access to and completion of degrees for mechanical engineering (ME) stopouts or near completers, PACE designed an articulated degree course for professionals and ME majors focused on specialized training in industrial additive manufacturing. Nearly 24 engineering students have completed their degrees with outstanding technical elective requirements fulfilled by PACE's ME X408, Introduction to Additive Manufacturing, which is taught online and, in the evenings, was facilitated by a partnership between the department of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering and the School of Engineering.

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<sup>7</sup> UCM completed 235-degree audits of CalTeach stopout students of various AYs. Of the 235, 26 students could finish in one semester, and 113 had nine or more courses remaining and identified as likely candidates for the liberal studies degree.

<sup>8</sup> DFW refers to grades of D or F, or withdrawal.

With a focus on programmatic access and equity, the degree completion program successfully piloted and adopted, as of spring 2022, an academic dismissal intervention campaign in partnership with the SSHA and School of Natural Sciences (SNS). The intervention includes revisions to dismissal language from the schools to include Degree Completion Program contacts and next steps for reentry. There were also follow-up introductory emails from a reentry advisor within two business days of dismissal, followed by email campaigns, text message campaigns, and phone call campaigns to eligible students. As a result of these interventions (389 total dismissals since Spring 2023), the program recorded an average of 38 percent reengagement of dismissed students and created reentry plans for 27 percent of the students contacted. Average number of semesters away from UCM was 2.04 with 87 percent of those reengaged enrolled at a Central Valley CA community college to complete reentry requirements. Of those dismissed with enrollment in the Central Valley, a total of 40 percent enrolled at Merced College.

### Outreach efforts and populations served

UCM conducted outreach over several years including via email campaigns, phone calls, texting, webinars/information sessions, social media, etc. Outreach targeted over 11,829 contacts (lists include duplicative contacts) through various campaign themes. Outreach campaigns were based on themes such as time to completion, online offerings, advising and personal support services, academic dismissal, debt relief, and short-term certificate opportunities focused on employability or upskilling. The students contacted included 95 percent or higher of UCM stopouts, with other campaigns focused on local adult stopouts via social media and employer connections.

In addition, UCM established a partnership with College Adult Prospect Pipeline<sup>9</sup> (APP) and collectively identified over 287,000 residents with some college and no credential and a high intent to re-enroll in the Central Valley. Additionally, as the grant period matured, UCM focused outreach with students as they left via academic dismissal campaigns. On average, nearly 100-120 students were being academically dismissed between SSHA and SNS with intent to re-enroll or complete reentry requirements.

### Location of contacted students

Prior to the initial launch of marketing, the program studied various characteristics of UCM stopouts, including identifying the geographic region for around 3,400 based on the most recent known residence at the time of leaving (see Table 3).

Table 3. Geographic regions of UC Merced stopouts

| Region                  | At Departure | Most Recent (12/21) |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Southern California     | 1,462        | 498                 |
| Central California      | 830          | 315                 |
| Bay Area                | 750          | 237                 |
| Northern California     | 199          | 11                  |
| Central Coast           | 141          | 68                  |
| Out of State or Unknown | 28           | 171                 |
| International           | 6            | -                   |

<sup>9</sup> The APP is a for profit organization that uses a consumer database to help colleges and universities identify prospective enrollees.

## Degrees and/or certificates conferred

In terms of the degrees and/or certificates reported (see Table 4), the program experienced a year-over-year increase through the first three years with stabilization into the final two years. Stabilization was the result of targeting students as they actively left via dismissal.

Table 4. Degrees conferred by major

| Major                                     | Awarded    | Under Review | Grand Total |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| Anthropology                              | 2          | 1            | 3           |
| Biological Sciences                       | 11         | 5            | 16          |
| Civil Engineering                         |            | 1            | 1           |
| Cognitive Sciences                        | 18         | 1            | 19          |
| Computer Science and Engineering          | 5          | 2            | 7           |
| Ecology                                   | 1          |              | 1           |
| Economics                                 | 3          | 1            | 4           |
| English                                   | 4          | 2            | 6           |
| Earth Systems Sciences                    | 1          |              | 1           |
| History                                   | 3          |              | 3           |
| Literatures                               |            | 1            | 1           |
| Mathematics                               |            | 1            | 1           |
| Management and Business Economics         | 26         | 11           | 37          |
| Mechanical Engineering                    | 4          | 1            | 5           |
| Management                                | 1          |              | 1           |
| Management, Info, Sust, & Technology (MM) | 1          |              | 1           |
| Materials Science and Engineering         |            | 1            | 1           |
| Public Health                             | 10         | 4            | 14          |
| Physics                                   | 1          |              | 1           |
| Political Sciences                        | 22         | 1            | 23          |
| Psychology                                | 37         | 8            | 45          |
| Sociology                                 | 20         | 3            | 23          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>170</b> | <b>44</b>    | <b>214</b>  |

During the final academic year (2025-26), the program shifted its focus to supporting stopout students with enrollment in certificate programs designed to facilitate upskilling, employment, or career advancement, with potential to stack these credentials toward future degree completion. These students (24) were enrolled and on track for completion (Table 5).

No certificates were issued during the grant period. However, the following table breaks down students with some college, but no degree who enrolled in certificate programs and are currently in progress.

Table 5. Some college, no degree students enrolled in certificate programs

| Certificate Enrollment                                 | Enrollment |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Professional Certificate in CA Government & Policy     | 10         |
| Professional Certificate in Project Management (PMP®)  | 13         |
| Associate Project Management Specialized Study (CAPM®) | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                                           | <b>24</b>  |

## Program completion rates

For the purpose of this program, success was determined by reengagement. Reengagement is defined as a student actively working with a program advisor, actively enrolled at UCM and/or degree conferral through UCM. The program has reengaged 19 percent of the total eligible students contacted between March 2022 and June 2026 and 4.1 percent re-enrolled. Less than two percent of those who received communication reported that they were not interested, however, the majority of students were unable to be supported due to lack of online course availability.

The program commenced in March 2022 and as of spring 2026 has reengaged 1,010 UCM stopouts in high-touch individualized advising. Of those reengaged, 17 percent completed their bachelor's degree at UCM, around 11 percent are actively enrolled as of the Fall 2026 semester at UCM, and 18 percent are either actively engaged in degree completion advising and/or are completing requirements at another institution.

## Demographics of students served

Table 6. Gender of students served

| Gender                   | %     |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Female                   | 34.5% |
| Male                     | 22.8% |
| Decline to state/unknown | 42.7% |

Table 7. Race and ethnicity of students served<sup>10</sup>

| Race/Ethnicity            | Race  | Ethnicity |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------|
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 12.0% |           |
| Black or African American | 7.2%  |           |
| White or Caucasian        | 21.6% |           |
| Unknown/Decline to State  | 59.2% |           |
| Hispanic or Latino        |       | 54.8%     |

## Proportion of courses taken online and changes in online course use during the program

Unfortunately, UCM does not track course modality during the fall and spring semesters, but they do know that summer terms, on average, offered 70 percent of courses online. The number of online courses increased for courses offered during the regular terms (Fall and Spring), whereas the number of online summer offerings remained constant or slightly increased.

<sup>10</sup> At the time of application, students are currently asked two separate questions, one on racial background and one on ethnicity. The ethnicity question is specific to Hispanic and/or Latino origin.

### Relationship between online course availability and re-entry

While exact correlation was not evaluated as part of this project, over half of students contacted did not return because their return was contingent on having sufficient fully online, evening, and asynchronous offerings. A noted constraint was that many online courses were still scheduled during regular work hours and during summer terms in accelerated formats and included long lectures multiple days per week. For example, Writing 101 was a common requirement for stopouts. During the summer it is offered online four days per week for four hours per day, thus creating logistical hurdles for non-traditional students. A pilot offering included some courses scheduled during evenings; however, enrollments were limited due to the total duration of class time/lecture per week.

### Future of degree and/or certificate completion at UC Merced PACE

College Futures Foundation (CFF) has invested \$550,000 in the Degree Completion Program over two years (2026-2028) as part of their [Unlocking Economic Mobility for Adult Learners](#) grant initiative with Jobs for the Future. This investment will support the launch of Liberal Studies, B.A. for reentry of adult learners via transfer pathways. The core investment in reentry admissions and academic advising staff will sustain existing DCP services for returning students while building capacity for admissions and student services associated with the Liberal Studies B.A.

The CFF award will allow DCP to expand its efforts with some college, no degree populations regionally, building on the academic reentry program now in place. Part of this effort is developing liberal studies transfer admissions policy with Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathways in early childhood and elementary education, alongside a transfer jumpstart program built around those pathways. Developed in collaboration with CalTeach and utilizing Summer Session and Intersegmental Enrollment as its delivery mechanisms, this program would build affinity with campus, provide early admissions and transition support, and significantly reduce both time-to-degree and time-to-credential. DCP is also exploring dual admission for transfer applicants to the Teacher Preparation Program's PK-3 and Multisubject credential programs, which would be a novel admissions partnership among UC PACE programs.

As legislative funding sunsets, the program has secured continuity across its core positions through 2028. The reentry specialist and two academic advising lines will continue through the foundation award, and the SSHA Dean's Office will maintain the faculty director role to administer DCP academic initiatives, including the liberal studies degree program, through matching funds as part of the Mackenzie Scott gift to campus. The Provost's office will also provide match funds through the Scott gift to support continued reentry admissions work with PACE marketing and outreach tied to the launch of the Liberal Studies, B.A. Other campus offices that received support under the legislative funding have institutionalized the relevant services going forward. For example, the registrar will maintain a contact and referral pathway with the reentry specialist.

Additionally, UC Merced continues to work in collaboration with other regional institutions of higher education through the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium (CVHEC). CVHEC is a consortium of 18 Central Valley 2-year and 4-year, public and private colleges and universities. The UC Merced PACE Director of Strategic Initiatives is a part of the enrollment and re-enrollment workgroup and the co-lead of the joint data sharing and re-enrollment workgroups charged with establishing a regional survey of adult stopouts. Through this consortium, the intent is to create a regional ecosystem for supporting local adult stopouts through degree completion by leveraging existing pathways and programs at each regional college and university.

The DCP initiative provided a much-needed investment that bolstered institutional infrastructure and connected disjointed services for reentry students that were spread across various functional areas. In the short term, new funding provides additional and necessary financial support to maintain momentum. UC Merced remains committed to upholding and fully institutionalizing the streamlined processes and intentional reentry support that solidified as a result of this project.

## UC Davis Extension Degree Completion Program

UCD Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) launched their Degree Completion Program in October 2022 to reconnect former UCD undergraduates with viable pathways to re-entry and degree completion. The program combined proactive outreach, high-touch case management, academic and policy navigation, online and concurrent-enrollment course access, and limited financial support. It operated as part of the University of California Reengagement Consortium (UCRC) and concluded its grant-funded operations in June 2026.

The program supported three broad pathways: (1) re-entry to UCD for degree completion; (2) transfer or warm hand-off to another institution when that was the most viable route; and (3) referral to alternative credentials when a degree pathway was not feasible or not desired. In practice, student demand was concentrated overwhelmingly on degree completion. Among students who reported a motivation, 83 percent identified a desire to “finish what they started,” and observations from the advising team showed substantially less interest in certificate pathways.

The model was intentionally individualized. Advisors helped students interpret degree audits, identify remaining requirements, resolve incomplete grades and holds, locate acceptable online or Summer Session courses, navigate readmission and residency policies, communicate with faculty and college advisors, and address financial barriers. This case-management approach was effective because returning students rarely followed a single standardized pathway.

Table 8. Final program snapshot<sup>11</sup>

| Measure                                       | Final result              |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Students reached through outreach             | 4,406                     |
| UC Davis stopouts in final outcome population | 3,343                     |
| UC Davis stopouts graduated                   | 212                       |
| Filed to graduate                             | 5                         |
| Readmitted                                    | 25                        |
| Handed off to campus support                  | 45                        |
| Some-college/no-degree individuals tracked    | 469                       |
| Online University Writing Program course      | 20 enrolled; 20 completed |
| Student debt relief                           | \$53,470 for 30 students  |

### Outreach efforts and population served

The program launch required development of a customer relationship management system, import and refinement of historical student data, creation of a dedicated advising team, and a sustained outreach campaign. By June 2025, outreach reached 4,198 students. After the originally planned end date, the program shifted away from broad outreach and concentrated on

<sup>11</sup> Data are reported as of June 30, 2026, unless otherwise noted. Counts represent different operational or analytical populations and should not be added together.

students already in the advising pipeline and on new referrals from campus advisors. By the program's close in June 2026, 4,406 students had been reached.

Outreach relied heavily on email, supplemented by individualized messages, phone calls, Zoom meetings, and scheduled advising appointments. In the School of Education analytical dataset, 11,526 advisor-student contacts were documented, including 5,920 outgoing emails and 5,606 activity-log records. Approximately 90 percent of recorded contacts were email-based; 1,659 outgoing emails were classified as personalized advising communications rather than broad campaign messages. The activity log covered only part of the program period, so these figures describe the study dataset rather than the full final outreach total.

The final operational outcomes table (Table 8) includes 3,343 former UC Davis students. A separate School of Education study used a narrower analytical definition: it began with 9,873 undergraduates who stopped out between 2009 and 2018 and identified 2,171 students as a target population with outcome classifications indicating a potentially viable re-entry pathway. These counts differ because the operational report and the research study covered different time periods, eligibility rules, and reporting purposes.

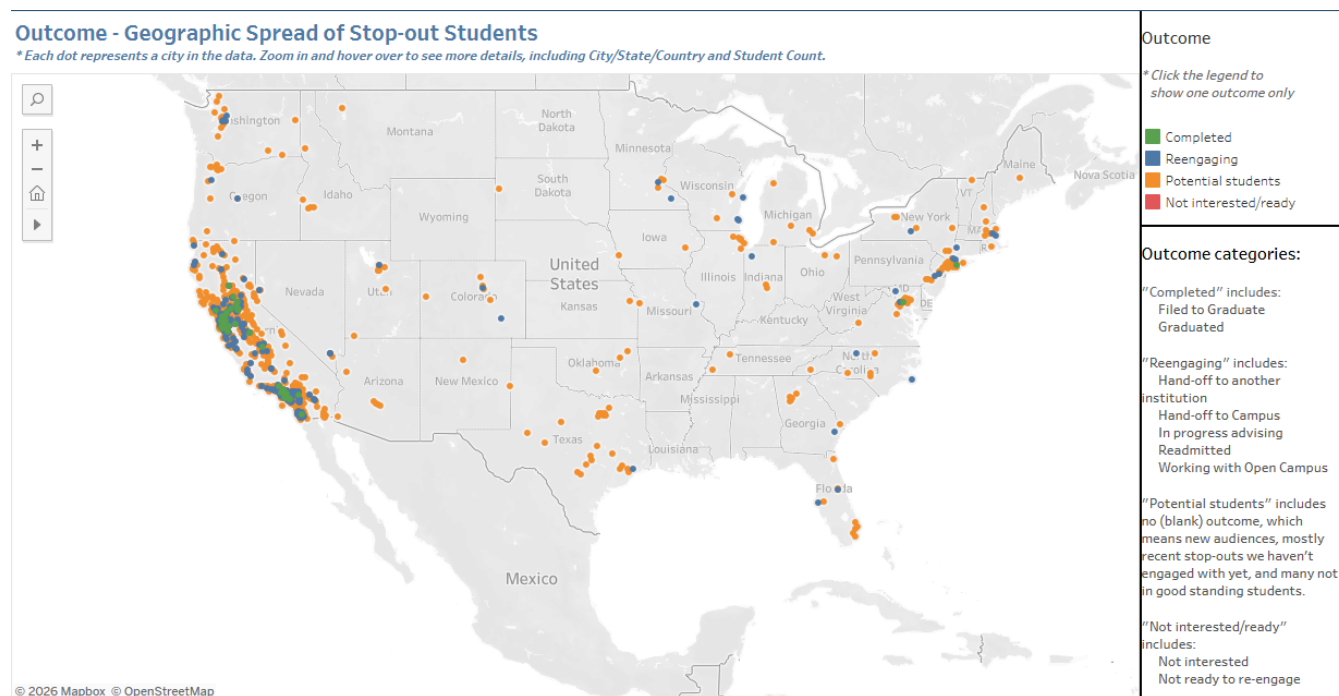
#### Location of contacted students

The majority of students are outside of Davis. Two pieces of data are pertinent here.

First, of the 3,343 former students in the database, only six were still located in the city of Davis. All six were reengaged and completed their degrees thanks to the program's support. An additional 15 students lived within a 40-minute commute of Davis. Of those, only six pursued reengagement. The rest of the nearly 3,300 students were located throughout the United States, the majority split between the San Francisco Bay Area and the greater Los Angeles region.

Second, sixty-six percent of stopouts reported that they could not return to Davis for in-person instruction. Among the 271 UC Davis stopouts who reported personal barriers, 155 (57.2 percent) identified geographic constraints. Among 55 respondents in the some-college/no-degree group, 24 (43.6 percent) identified geographic location as a barrier. These findings support the need for remote advising and flexible course delivery, but they do not support a precise statement about where all contacted students resided.

Figure 9. Geographic spread of stopout students



## Degrees and certificates conferred

By June 30, 2026, 212 former UC Davis students in the final outcome population had completed their bachelor's degrees and another five had filed to graduate. The supplied UC Davis source files do not provide a major-by-major breakdown of these degree awards. They also do not report any completed certificates attributable to the program. Four UC Davis stopouts were handed off to certificate programs, but no certificate completions are documented in the final data.

The absence of reported certificate completions is consistent with the program's advising experience: the population primarily wanted to finish an unfinished bachelor's degree rather than substitute a shorter credential. Certificate and CPE referrals remained useful alternatives for individual students, but they were not the central completion outcome at UC Davis.

## Program outcomes and completion rates

UCD final outcomes are best interpreted as a reengagement funnel rather than a conventional cohort graduation rate. The denominator includes students with widely different levels of prior credit, eligibility, responsiveness, and interest. Of the 3,343 UC Davis stopouts in the final outcome table (Table 9), 212 graduated (6.3 percent) and five filed to graduate, for a combined 217 students (6.5 percent). An additional 25 were readmitted, 45 were handed off to campus support, and 21 remained in advising. Six hundred twenty-six transferred to another university.

Table 9. Final program outcomes <sup>12</sup>

| Outcome                           | 180+       | 140-179.9  | 90-139.9     | 60-89.9    | <60        | No unit info | Total        |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Graduated                         | 149        | 38         | 9            | 3          | 0          | 9            | 212          |
| Filed to graduate                 | 1          | 2          | 1            | 0          | 0          | 1            | 5            |
| Readmitted                        | 2          | 3          | 11           | 2          | 5          | 2            | 25           |
| Hand-off to campus                | 16         | 8          | 5            | 3          | 1          | 12           | 45           |
| Transferred to another university | 5          | 69         | 320          | 172        | 58         | 2            | 626          |
| In progress advising              | 13         | 2          | 2            | 1          | 1          | 5            | 21           |
| Other                             | 493        | 540        | 740          | 342        | 271        | 23           | 2,409        |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>679</b> | <b>662</b> | <b>1,088</b> | <b>523</b> | <b>336</b> | <b>54</b>    | <b>3,343</b> |

The School of Education study provides a second analytically useful completion measure. Within its restricted target population of 2,171 students, 305 (approximately 14 percent) re-entered a supported pathway. Of those 305 re-entering students, 140 (45.9 percent) had graduated by February 2025. This 45.9 percent figure is not the final program-wide graduation rate; it applies only to the study's selected re-entry sample and an earlier outcome date.

<sup>12</sup> Final outcomes for the UC Davis stopout population as of June 30, 2026. "Other" combines nonresponsive, ineligible, not-ready, not-interested, and other statuses reported in the underlying data.

### Some college, no degree population

The regional some-college/no-degree population was substantially more difficult to engage than former UC Davis students. Among 469 individuals tracked, 356 were nonresponsive. The program made 59 hand-offs to another institution, 18 hand-offs to the UC Davis campus, 11 hand-offs to Extension, and maintained six individuals in active advising. Three applied for transfer and one reported earning a degree elsewhere. The results suggest that broad regional outreach without a preexisting institutional relationship, complete academic history, or clearly articulated online degree pathway produces a much lower yield than outreach to former UC Davis students.

*Table 10. Regional some-college/no-degree population*

| Outcome                          | Individuals |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Hand-offs to another institution | 59          |
| In progress advising             | 6           |
| Hand-offs to campus              | 18          |
| Hand-offs to Extension           | 11          |
| Not ready to engage              | 3           |
| Nonresponsive                    | 356         |
| Not interested                   | 11          |
| Applied for transfer             | 3           |
| Degree earned elsewhere          | 1           |
| Filed to graduate                | 0           |
| Ineligible-active                | 1           |
| Total                            | 469         |

### Demographics of students served

The most consistent demographic analysis comes from the School of Education study of 2,171 UC Davis stopouts. The target population was 56.2 percent female, 44.3 percent first-generation, 34.7 percent low-income at admission, and 57.6 percent enrolled in a STEM-designated college. The racial and ethnic distribution was 40.4 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 27.3 percent White, 25.6 percent Hispanic or Latino, 5.5 percent Black, and 1.2 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, among records with available data.

The 305-student re-entry sample included higher proportions of first-generation, low-income, and Hispanic/Latino students than the nonresponsive/not-interested comparison group. The study cautioned that the strength of these demographic associations was generally weak and that missing data limit generalizability. The central practical finding is that a substantial share of returning students came from populations that often face added financial, administrative, and informational barriers.

Table 11. Student demographics<sup>13</sup>

| Characteristic          | Target population (n=2,171) | Re-entry sample (n=305) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Female                  | 56.2%                       | 61.2%                   |
| Hispanic/Latino         | 25.6%                       | 36.3%                   |
| First-generation        | 44.3%                       | 56.1%                   |
| Low-income at admission | 34.7%                       | 46.2%                   |
| STEM major/college      | 57.6%                       | 46.4%                   |
| Admitted as transfer    | 40.2%                       | 49.8%                   |

### Online course use and course availability

Student demand for online access was clear, but the supplied data do not contain a complete count of all courses taken by returning students or a reliable denominator that would allow the proportion of online coursework to be calculated. The program therefore cannot report a defensible overall online course percentage or a term-by-term trend.

The strongest direct evidence concerns a University Writing Program bottleneck course developed and offered online for the target population. On the UCD campus, the majority of undergraduates are required to take an upper division writing course. This course is only taught in small class sizes and historically is a bottleneck. In collaboration with the University Writing Program, UCD developed new online versions of this course. Twenty students enrolled and all 20 completed the course. Faculty adapted the course for adult learners, and grant funding allowed it to be offered at no cost. The result demonstrates that a well-selected online course, paired with appropriate design and support, can eliminate a specific completion barrier.

Other pathways included Open Campus/Concurrent Enrollment and Summer Session. The School of Education case review of 140 graduates identified 29 Extension or Summer Session interventions and 13 Open Campus interventions. These are counts of advising interventions, not unique students or course enrollments, and should not be used as a modality rate.

### Changes in online course use during the program

The source files do not provide sufficient term-level enrollment and modality data to determine whether online course-taking increased over time. What can be stated is that online access remained a persistent unmet need throughout the program: 84 of 106 UCD students who reported an academic barrier cited lack of online course options, and 34 of 55 respondents in the some-college/no-degree group cited lack of fully online education.

Another issue students raised was their interest in taking an online course that was available at another UC that would conceptually meet their graduation requirements but wasn't offered at UCD. Securing permission from their advisors that the course from the other UC would satisfy the requirements in advance of enrolling often proved difficult, effectively limiting students to only looking at UCD online courses.

<sup>13</sup> Subgroup denominators vary because demographic fields were not complete for every student. Percentages are descriptive and should not be interpreted as causal predictors.

## Relationship between online access and re-entry

The program data show a strong descriptive relationship between limited online access and students' reported inability to return, but the supplied analyses do not establish a causal correlation between the number of online courses offered and the number of students who re-entered. Geographic constraints and lack of online options were frequently reported together. The defensible conclusion is that limited online availability narrowed the set of viable pathways for working adults, caregivers, and students who no longer lived near Davis.

## Courses that may warrant online development

The University Writing Program upper-division writing course is the only specific course identified in the supplied UCD files as a high-priority bottleneck and tested through an online offering. Its 20-of-20 completion result supports continued online availability. The materials do not provide a ranked list of other course titles or sufficient enrollment-demand data to recommend additional individual courses by name. Future course development should begin with degree audits of near-completers and identification of frequently outstanding upper-division, writing, and major requirements.

A more significant intervention would be reducing the barriers that prevent UC students from enrolling in online courses available at other UC campuses that are not their home institution.

Table 12. Barriers, interventions, and evidence of impact<sup>14</sup>

| Barrier theme                         | Available evidence                                                                                    | Program response                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Online course access</b>           | 84 of 106 academic-barrier respondents (79.3%); 34 of 55 some-college/no-degree respondents (61.8%).  | Online UWP course: 20 enrolled and 20 completed; continued use of Open Campus and Summer Session.                |
| <b>Geographic constraints</b>         | 155 of 271 personal-barrier respondents (57.2%); 24 of 55 some-college/no-degree respondents (43.6%). | Remote advising and online course options reduced the need to travel to Davis.                                   |
| <b>Work and personal obligations</b>  | Work: 136 (50.2%); personal commitments: 50 (18.5%); family care: 18 (6.6%).                          | Flexible planning, persistent follow-up, and individualized sequencing of requirements.                          |
| <b>Financial barriers</b>             | 87 of 271 personal-barrier respondents (32.1%); 12 of 55 some-college/no-degree respondents (21.8%).  | \$53,470 in debt relief for 30 students, course waivers, and financial navigation.                               |
| <b>Academic and policy navigation</b> | Academic difficulty: 23 (21.7%); residency: 22 (20.8%).                                               | Degree audits, faculty coordination, holds and petitions, course substitutions, and senior-residence exceptions. |

The analytical study found that motivation and advisor outreach were the strongest actionable predictors of re-entry. Each additional year away from UCD was associated with 17 percent lower odds of re-entry; each additional year enrolled before stopping out was associated with 14 percent lower odds; and STEM students had approximately 34 percent lower odds of re-entry.

Among students who re-entered, academic and policy-navigation interventions were the strongest predictors of graduation and were associated with approximately 42 percent higher odds of

<sup>14</sup> Students could report more than one barrier. Percentages describe respondents who supplied barrier information, not the full population.

completion. These results are associations rather than causal effects, but they reinforce the operational importance of early outreach and targeted case management.

UCD utilized a strong advising community created around this program. They drew together the Associate Deans of Advising and Directors of Advising for each College, as well as their centralized undergraduate advising Director, and held quarterly meetings to update them on progress and to seek advice. This created pathways that enabled their advisors to study a student record, identify a path to graduation, communicate with the correct advisor on the student's behalf to confirm viability, and then guide the student through that path. This intense, case-management approach was a critical factor in the program's high success rate.

### Future of degree completion at UC Davis

The grant-funded CPE Degree Completion Program fully wound down in June 2026 and will not continue as a separate outreach and advising operation in its prior form. In winter 2026, CPE partnered with Undergraduate Education to transfer knowledge, practices, research findings, and ongoing advocacy responsibilities to Academic Advising Enrichment, a centralized unit reporting to the Provost's Office.

CPE trained Academic Advising Enrichment staff in stopout outreach, high-touch advising, policy navigation, and the specific interventions that proved useful. The unit is positioned to coordinate with college advising offices, Dean's Offices, faculty, the College of Letters and Science, and other campus partners. Open Campus and Summer Session remain potential mechanisms for students who need coursework while preparing to readmit or complete outstanding requirements.

The sustainable future is therefore a campus-integrated model rather than a stand-alone Extension program. Its effectiveness will depend on four conditions: sufficient advising capacity; early and proactive identification of students leaving the university; more online and flexible course options in verified bottleneck areas; and continued willingness to resolve policy and financial barriers. Without those conditions, the campus can offer information and referrals but cannot scale degree completion outcomes.

The program established a durable evidence base and a campus home for continued stopout support. It also demonstrated the economic and institutional value of converting prior student and public investment into completed UC degrees.

### Data notes and source documents

This report synthesizes the June 2025 School of Education descriptive study and final program results pulled from Salesforce on June 30, 2026. The operational and research datasets use different populations and dates. Final operational outcomes are reported through June 30, 2026. The School of Education study examined a restricted analytical population and outcomes through February 2025. Barrier data were available only for subsets of respondents and permitted multiple selections. Regression findings describe associations and do not establish causation.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Martin, R. & Choi, J. (2025). CPE Degree Completion Program: A Descriptive Study. UC Davis School of Education.

## UC Riverside Degree Completion Program

The UCR Degree Completion program provided degree and certificate completion to UCR stopouts, stopouts who wish to transfer from other UC campuses, and California residents with some college and no attainment living in or around Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange and Los Angeles counties. The program offered three primary pathways for student reengagement: 1) readmission/transfer; 2) pre-readmission eligibility coursework via concurrent enrollment (open campus enrollment) or XR courses; and 3) alternative credentials/career certificates.

The UCR Degree Completion program paired personalized, proactive advising with coursework to address curricular gaps and academic readiness. Advisors built personal connections with prospective returning students, serving as their advocates and connecting them with academic, financial aid, and basic-needs resources—including housing, childcare, and health services. Partnerships with the Academic Resource Center and a designated financial aid counselor helped address two key barriers identified by UC stopouts: cost and academic preparedness.

UCM and UCR actively partnered as members of the UC Reengagement Consortium (UCRC) through shared operations models, splitting the financial costs of an Associate Director of Degree Completion to manage day-to-day operations of the program until the Associate Director left the position in March 2026. That position was not refilled due to a planned sunseting of the program. UCR and UCM also split a CRM Manager to clean up data reporting and structures in Salesforce through the performance period and UCR absorbed that FTE after the close of the fiscal year FY 26 as this position was still needed for organizational operations at UCR.

### Data driven and market aligned program design

At the onset of this program, UCR understood the importance of tying the program to regional labor and market needs and committed to being data driven in planning and decision making. They utilized research on UC stopouts from UCSD Extension, as well as the Skillscape Workforce Dashboard created by UCSD Extension in partnership with UCSD Center for Research and Evaluation. These tools were central to understanding regional workforce needs across California, as well as understanding UC students who do not complete their undergraduate degrees and how to best serve them.

Thanks in large part to UCR's partnership with Growing Inland Achievement (GIA),<sup>16</sup> a regional K-16 collaborative that works to achieve education and economic equity in the Inland Empire region of Southern California, UCR was able to access a database, provided by CollegeAPP free of charge, of California residents in Riverside and San Bernardino counties who have "some college and no degree" and a strong interest in returning to complete their degrees at a university within the next two years. In the Inland Empire, 51 percent of the population is Hispanic, yet only ten percent of that population have a degree.<sup>17</sup> The Inland Empire produces about 12 percent of California's college-ready graduates but accounts for only six percent of the State's bachelor's degrees. One in four adults in the Inland Empire started college but did not finish. Census data indicate that among adults 25 or older, only 22 percent of them living in the Inland Empire have

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<sup>16</sup> [Growing Inland Achievement](#) (GIA) brings together partners from education, community, and industry across Riverside and San Bernardino counties to advance toward a shared vision of 70 percent of working-age adults with a postsecondary degree or credential of value.

<sup>17</sup> Growing Inland Achievement, 2020 provided statistics in this paragraph.

bachelor’s degrees or higher (compared to 34 percent at the state level). Fourteen percent of the Inland Empire population live below the poverty level.

The Inland Empire Regional Workforce Development Plan for 2025-2028 indicates a growing need for training to address skills gaps in the healthcare, manufacturing, public administration and transportation and logistics industries. Research conducted in 2023 by HCM Strategists and EDGE Research, working on behalf of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, found that high school students and 18 to 30-year-old adults who were not enrolled felt that certificate courses and micro-credentials were more valuable than a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college.<sup>18</sup>

Although professional certificates are the core educational offering of UCR Extension and are a crucial component of their Degree Completion program, the UCR Degree Completion program’s primary focus has been on reengagement for the purpose of bachelor’s degree completion. Although few students who have engaged with the program staff are interested in certificate pathways, the Degree Completion advisors maintain a student-led approach to advising and guide students toward their own self-identified goals with workforce needs in mind.

### Outreach audience and outreach efforts

Phase 1 target population: UCR stopouts from 2008-2020

In November 2022, UCR Institutional Research (IR) initially identified 14,092 who left UCR between 2008-2020 and were not on the “no-contact” list. In winter 2023, UCR IR removed students who were deceased or judicially deemed ineligible to return with a revised list of 13,865. Of those, 9,905 had not yet completed a degree (see Table 13). Phase one program outreach focused on students who left in good academic standing (i.e., UCR GPA of 2.0 or higher).

*Table 13. Phase 1: UCR stopout students who left between 2008-2020*

|                                                                 | Initial IR Counts Used in<br>Manual Audits | Corrected IR Counts Used for<br>Outreach |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Total UCR stopouts who left<br>between 2008-2020                | 14,092                                     | 13,865                                   |
| Total UCR stopouts who did not<br>finish at another institution | 10,112                                     | 9,905                                    |
| Total UCR stopouts who did finish<br>in good standing           | 3,580                                      | 3,405                                    |
| 180+ units                                                      | 395                                        | 295                                      |
| 140 - 179.9 units                                               | 508                                        | 444                                      |
| 105 - 139.9 units                                               | 736                                        | 739                                      |
| 60 – 104.9 units                                                | 860                                        | 856                                      |
| <59.9 units                                                     | 1,081                                      | 1,071                                    |
| <b>Total Phase 1:</b>                                           | <b>3,580</b>                               | <b>3,405</b>                             |

<sup>18</sup> HCM + Edge Research release Follow-Up Learner Research: Continuing to Explore the Exodus from Higher Education,” HCM Strategists, 2024

## Phase 1 outreach efforts

Audits of 1,639 student records revealed common pathways to completion and identified seven students who had met all degree requirements but needed to file for graduation. Advisors contacted them by phone and email; four responded and filed, while three did not respond. For students who still needed coursework, UCR launched a comprehensive digital marketing with targeted ads on Facebook, Instagram, and Google. In addition, UCR launched an email campaign inviting 3,405 students in good standing to an informational webinar entitled “Reengage your degree journey- a how to webinar” with the Degree Completion Program director and Degree Completion and Financial Aid advisors. Of 114 registrants, 66 attended one of two sessions on March 1 and 9, 2023. Attendees could then schedule individual advising appointments with Degree Completion Advisors to discuss their completion options.

UCR was conscious of the language used in communication materials leveraging terms like “re-entry,” “reengage,” and “return” in student communications, reserving “stopout” for internal use. From November 2022 through March 2023, the program’s two advisors held 153 appointments.

## Phase 2 outreach – UCR stopouts who left between 2020-2023

Initially, UCR staff expected access to the College APP to be crucial to addressing regional and labor market needs through their Degree Completion program. They knew less about the individual academic histories of this target population but suspected this population might also be highly interested in professional certificate pathways. After UCD’s pilot demonstrated challenges in effectively reengaging this population, UCR opted not to pursue outreach with limited resources to the non-UC affiliated “some college, no degree” population. Instead UCR opted to focus primarily on the UCR and UC stopouts that had the most viable pathways to completion.

Phase 2 (see Table 14) outreach began in March 2025 and consisted of students who stopped out and left in good standing between 2020-2023 (or were last enrolled in fall 2022). Students were contacted via email and webinars and were provided information on readmission, financial aid, and program support.

*Table 14. Phase 2 – UCR stopouts in good standing who left between 2020 and fall 2022*

| Unit totals       | Student count |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 180+ units        | 7             |
| 140 - 179.9 units | 24            |
| 105 - 139.9 units | 34            |
| 60 – 104.9 units  | 41            |
| <59.9 units       | 114           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>220</b>    |

Additionally, since the inception, campus colleges and schools have been providing direct referrals of academically dismissed students with viable pathways to UCR’s program for support. Support from the academically dismissed direct campus advisor referrals has been a significant part of their program efforts in 2025-26 and thus, the program has served as a retention model for newly dismissed students. Between July 1, 2024, through March 31st, 2025, the advising team had a total of 456 advising appointments, primarily with academically dismissed students.

Academically dismissed students are less challenging to engage since they are typically eager to continue their studies as soon as possible. However, these students require more labor from advising staff due to the need for long-term planning, a year or more of outside coursework to show academic progress and personal coaching to address the issues that contributed to their dismissal. The program's work with academically dismissed students has surged due to referrals from campus partners, but their outcomes (readmission and graduation) are less immediate and successful than a stopout who left in good standing.

### Phase 3 - Winding down program

In the final 18 months of the program's performance period, with no additional funding or philanthropic support planned and no viable pathway to a self-sustaining model, no additional outreach was conducted to new lists of former UCR students. This was, in part, due to a fear that reengagement without longer term staffing support would result in reputation damage for the campus and the program. Focus remained on engaging and stewarding the Phase 1 & 2 students through pathways to completion. Significant energy was also spent on supporting academically dismissed students who were directly referred to UCR's program from their campus advising staff. The direct referrals account for new student counts during the final phase of the program reported in the data collection template. Between April 2025-July 2026, the DCP advisor had a total of 435 advising appointments.

### Geographic location of students served

Among program participants with known addresses who graduated, filed to graduate, were readmitted, or applied for readmission, county representation included 41 students from Riverside County, 28 from Los Angeles, 19 from San Bernardino, 14 from Orange, six from San Diego, four from San Francisco, three each from Alameda and Santa Clara, two from Ventura, and one each from Nevada, Sacramento, Sonoma, Stanislaus, and Tulare counties.

Among students seeking eligibility to apply for readmission via concurrent enrollment whose origins were known, 35 students were from Riverside County, 14 from Los Angeles, eight from San Bernardino, six from Orange, three each from San Diego and Santa Clara, two from Alameda, and one each from Fresno, Kern, and Ventura counties, alongside one student from Honolulu County, Hawaii, and two international students from Taiwan and Costa Rica.

Among students who had no viable pathway to return or needed to go to another institution to complete whose origins were known, 11 students were from Los Angeles County, six each from Orange and Riverside; two each from Contra Costa, San Bernardino, and Santa Clara; and one each from Kern and Yolo counties, alongside one international student from China.

Among students who were not interested or not ready to engage whose origins were known, 26 students were from Riverside County, 20 from Los Angeles, 11 from San Bernardino, eight from Orange, six from San Diego, five from Alameda, two each from Sacramento and San Joaquin, and one each from Contra Costa, Fresno, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Tulare, and Ventura counties.

In summation, geographic proximity was associated with student engagement: Riverside, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties consistently accounted for the largest share of students across categories. But proximity alone did not predict students' outcomes. These counties

accounted for 88 students who completed or returned, as well as 57 who were disengaged or not ready to return, suggesting that other factors shape students' paths to completion.

## Degrees and/or certificates conferred

Among the 102 students who completed degrees, students completed degrees across more than 30 distinct major tracks – ranging from engineering specialties to ethnic studies and performance arts. The vast majority of completions clustered around business administration, broad social science programs, and core biological sciences (see Table 15).

*Table 15. Degrees conferred by major*

| Major                            | Awarded    |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Business Administration          | 16         |
| Economics/Administrative Studies | 5          |
| Business Economics               | 3          |
| Media and Cultural Studies       | 7          |
| Psychology                       | 6          |
| Public Policy                    | 6          |
| Sociology                        | 5          |
| Political Science                | 5          |
| Biology                          | 5          |
| Anthropology                     | 4          |
| Computer Science                 | 3          |
| Biochemistry                     | 3          |
| Other                            | 34         |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>102</b> |

Three students completed Professional Certificates in Business Management. Two completed Professional Certificates in Human Resources. One completed the Advanced Teaching & Administration in Early Childcare Settings Certificate.

## Demographics of students served

UCR serves a diverse population of students. Although information on age, ethnicity and gender was available for most students, a significant number of students' demographic information was either unavailable in Banner<sup>19</sup> or not reported. Income or socio-economic status was not available in reports provided by UCR Institutional Research.

## Student body diversity & ethnic breakdown analysis

An analysis of student body diversity reveals a rich, highly diverse student population, led by significant Hispanic and Chicano/Latino representation, as well as a sizable Asian student population.

<sup>19</sup> Banner is the UCR student information system and system of record for the course catalog, schedule of classes, registration and academic history.

- Hispanic and Chicano/Latino: Students identifying as Hispanic (17.4 percent) and Chicano/Latino (16.4 percent) together represent 33.8 percent—over one-third—of the total student body, forming the largest combined ethnic presence among reported groups.
- Asian: Asian students constitute 12.2 percent of the student population, making them the third-largest reported ethnic group at the institution.
- White and Black/African American: White students account for 9.7 percent of the student body. Black and Black/African American students represent a combined 4.8 percent (comprising 3.1 percent listed as Black and 1.7 percent as Black/African American).
- Additional Demographic Groups: The remainder of the student population includes students classified as Other (5.9 percent), Two or More Races (1.7 percent), International (1.3 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (0.8 percent), Race/ethnicity unknown (0.6 percent), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.2 percent), Domestic Unknown (0.2 percent), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.2 percent).
- Unreported Data: A substantial portion of the population—28.6 percent—consists of students whose ethnicity was not provided or reported in the original source records, representing the single largest individual entry in the dataset.

### Key takeaways regarding ethnicity of students served

#### 1. High Engagement Among Underrepresented Minorities

This significant concentration (33.8 percent) not only reflects the general population of UCR students but indicates that degree completion programs serve as critical re-entry pathways for underrepresented minority adult learners. Minorities historically face higher rates of stopouts due to systemic financial, familial, or employment pressures; their large presence here suggests a strong willingness to return when accessible completion avenues are offered.

#### 2. Diverse Demand Across Multiple Demographic Groups

Program outreach cannot rely on a one-size-fits-all model; support services must address diverse cultural backgrounds, varying academic support needs, and distinct career goals.

#### 3. Institutional Challenges in Tracking Disengaged Students

In reengagement research, missing demographic data frequently signals a broader data hygiene challenge. When students stop out, their institutional files often become stagnant, inactive, or incomplete over time.

### Gender distribution analysis

An analysis of student body representation by gender reveals a nearly equal balance between female and male participants, alongside a notable segment of unreported data and smaller non-binary/female-identifying categories.

- Female Representation: Students identifying as Female make up 44.1 percent of the analyzed student population, constituting the largest single identified gender segment.

- Male Representation: The Male student population closely mirrors the female group at 42.8 percent, representing a difference of 1.3 percent between the two primary identified gender categories.
- Not Reported Data: A significant portion of the population—13.1 percent—did not provide gender identification in the dataset.

### Key findings regarding gender of students served by degree completion program

#### 1. Parity in reengagement drive between men and women

In national higher education trends, men stop out at significantly higher rates and are far less likely to re-enroll than women. The fact that men represent nearly half of the identified participants here demonstrates that this program successfully breaks typical national barriers to re-engaging male stopout students.

#### 2. Equal opportunity for career and economic mobility

The near-equal balance underscores that both men and women experience life interruptions (such as financial strain, work obligations, or family responsibilities) and share a strong, mutual demand for accessible completion pathways to advance their careers.

#### 3. Data collection gaps across all identifiers

With 13.1 percent of students having unreported gender data, the data highlights the need for modernized, inclusive demographic tracking. For disengaged or stopout populations, missing or legacy profile data often complicates targeted outreach, proving that institutional record updates are essential when bringing adult learners back to complete their degrees.

### Age distribution & data availability analysis

An analysis of student age demographics reveals that among reported records, the population served by the degree completion program is primarily concentrated in their early-to-mid-twenties, though the dataset is heavily impacted by missing age data.

- Prevalence of unreported data: Over half of the total population—58.6 percent (comprising 310 entries recorded as blank fields or "0" values)—did not have an age reported in internal institutional records, forming the largest single category by a significant margin.
- Core concentration (Ages 22 to 25): Among students with reported ages, 17.6 percent were between 22 to 25. Students aged 25 make up the single largest reported group at 5.3 percent, closely followed by age 23 (4.9 percent), age 24 (4.0 percent), and age 22 (3.4 percent).
- Secondary concentration (Ages 26 to 28): Young adults in their mid-to-late twenties follow closely at 7.9 percent, with age 27 (2.8 percent), age 28 (2.6 percent), and age 26 (2.5 percent) forming a steady secondary tier of participation.

- Broader age distribution: The remaining reported population spans traditional college-age students (ages 19 to 21; 5.1 percent) as well as mature/returning adult learners (ages 29 and older; 10.8 percent).

### Key findings on relationship between age and returning degree completers

#### 1. The "near-term" window for reengagement is critical

The strong clustering of reported students in the 22–25 age range (representing the largest reported cohort) suggests that stopout students are most receptive to re-engaging shortly after leaving higher education. Students who leave college in their late teens or early twenties often seek pathways to return within one to four years while their previous coursework, momentum, and career aspirations remain relatively fresh. This finding also reflects the high number of direct campus referrals of newly dismissed students to the program.

#### 2. High demand among early-career working adults

The steady presence of students aged 26 to 33 highlights a distinct phase where career progression or life changes create renewed motivation to finish a degree. Adult learners in their late twenties and early thirties frequently encounter workplace ceilings or credential requirements that incentivize returning to complete their education.

#### 3. Broad potential across non-traditional age brackets

While younger cohorts dominate the reported data, the presence of students spanning ages 34 to 52 demonstrates that degree completion programs serve as vital entry points for mid-career and mature adult learners. These students often balance work and family commitments, requiring flexible scheduling or specialized completion pathways.

#### 4. Data tracking & record challenges with stopout populations

The unusually high proportion of missing age data (58.6%, comprising blank fields and "0" entries) is itself a significant finding. In institutional settings, missing demographic records often correlate with legacy stopout files, inactive student profiles, or fragmented data systems. Re-engaging adult learners successfully often requires first addressing these data gaps to ensure accurate tracking, outreach, and academic advising.

### First-generation students

An analysis of available student data on first-generation status reveal 79.4 percent (or 420 students) were non-first-generation and 20.6 percent (or 109 students) were first-generation.

### Key takeaways for re-engaging first-generation stopouts

Elevated Risk and Targeted Support: First-generation students historically navigate higher education with fewer familial blueprints for institutional processes, making them particularly vulnerable to stopping out when life or academic hurdles arise. Serving 109 first-generation returning students demonstrates that specialized reengagement pathways offer a critical second chance for equity-focused completion.

**Complex Re-entry Dynamics:** Returning first-generation adult learners often balance higher rates of financial strain, full-time employment, and dependent care compared to their peers. Their presence underscores the need for proactive academic advising, simplified administrative re-enrollment procedures, and clear degree-mapping tools tailored for non-traditional students.

**Intergenerational Mobility:** Re-engaging and graduating this 20.6 percent cohort carries a magnified impact beyond individual degree acquisition, driving long-term economic mobility and establishing educational precedents within their families and communities.

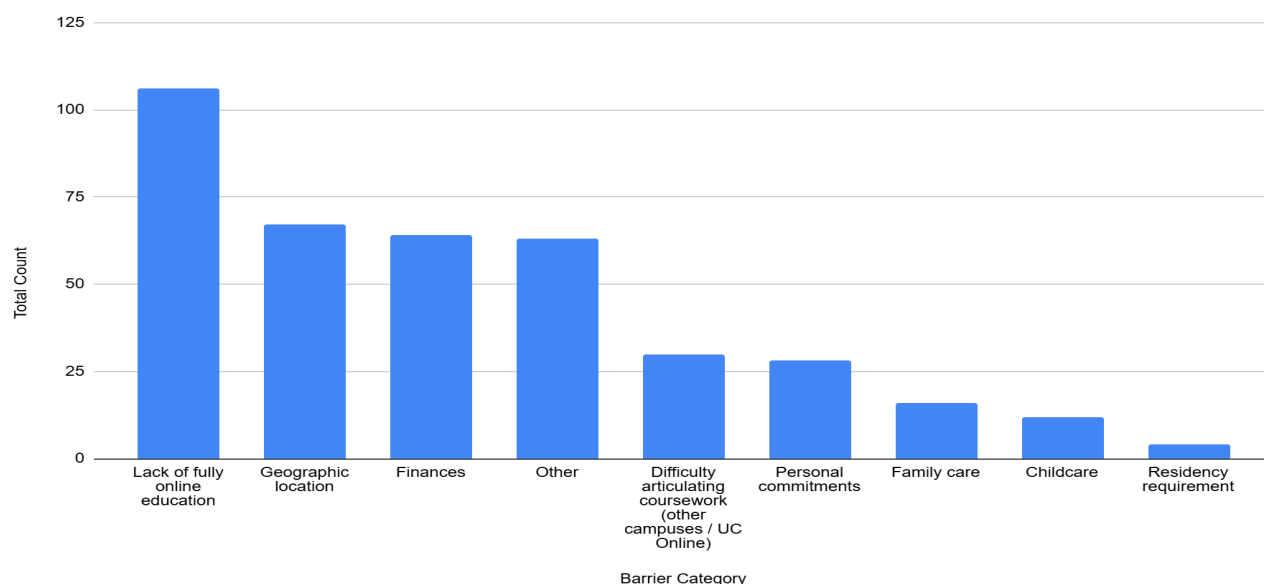
### Key findings for online education

#### Course delivery modality & student enrollment barriers reported<sup>20</sup>

During the reporting period, students enrolled in 257 concurrent courses: 234 (91.1%) in person and 23 (8.9%) online. This distribution largely reflects the formats departments offered, rather than students' preferences or needs.

Advising data (Figure 10) show that limited online options were the most frequently cited barrier to completion (106 mentions), followed by geographic location (67) and finances (64). Other barriers included personal or medical circumstances (63), difficulty articulating coursework from other campuses or UC Online (30), personal commitments (28), family care (16), childcare (12), and residency requirements (4). Together, the findings point to the need for more flexible online pathways, alongside support for students' financial, academic, and personal barriers.

Figure 10. Barriers reported during advising appointments



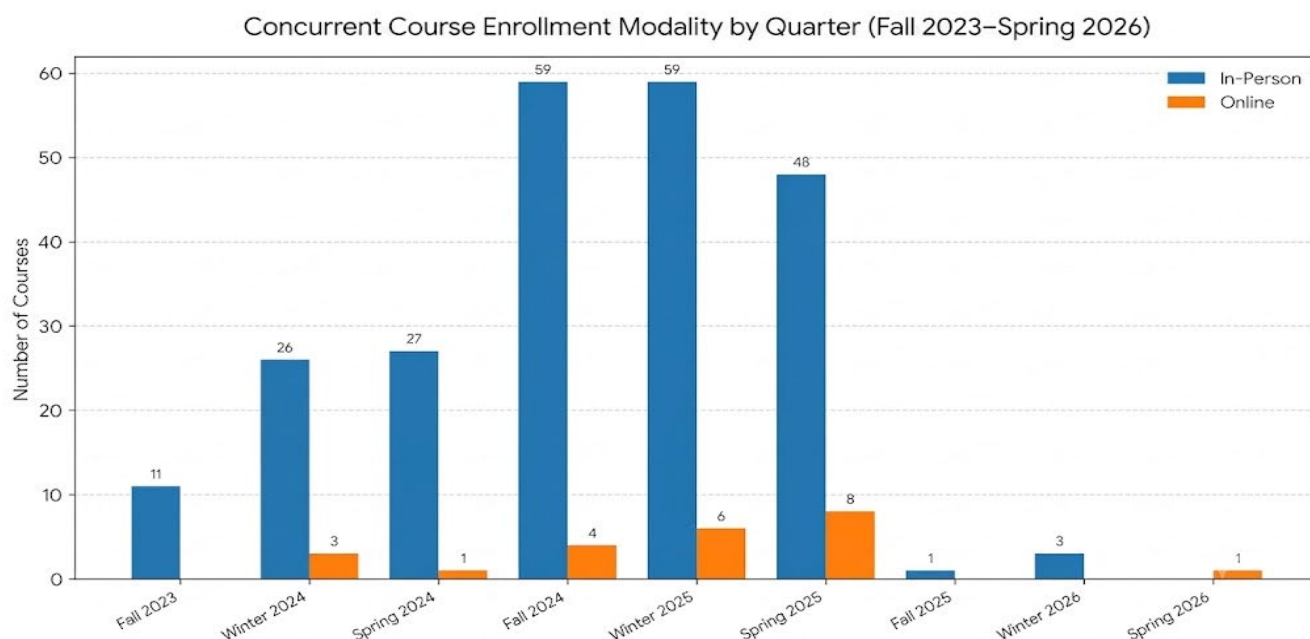
<sup>20</sup> The modality breakdown below reflects only the concurrent enrollment coursework tracked while students were active in the degree completion program prior to matriculation. The program does not maintain records of course modalities taken by students after they matriculate back into standard UCR degree programs.

## Online courses taken

During the core operational window of the program (Fall 2023 through Spring 2025), the number of online courses taken by returning students demonstrated a steady overall upward trend, starting at 0 in Fall 2023 and reaching a peak of 8 in Spring 2025.

However, looking across the full duration of the dataset through 2026, total course enrollments drop off significantly in the final three terms (2025 Fall–2026 Spring), resulting in near-zero online course counts (0, 0, and 1, respectively).

Figure 11. Concurrent course enrollment modality by quarter

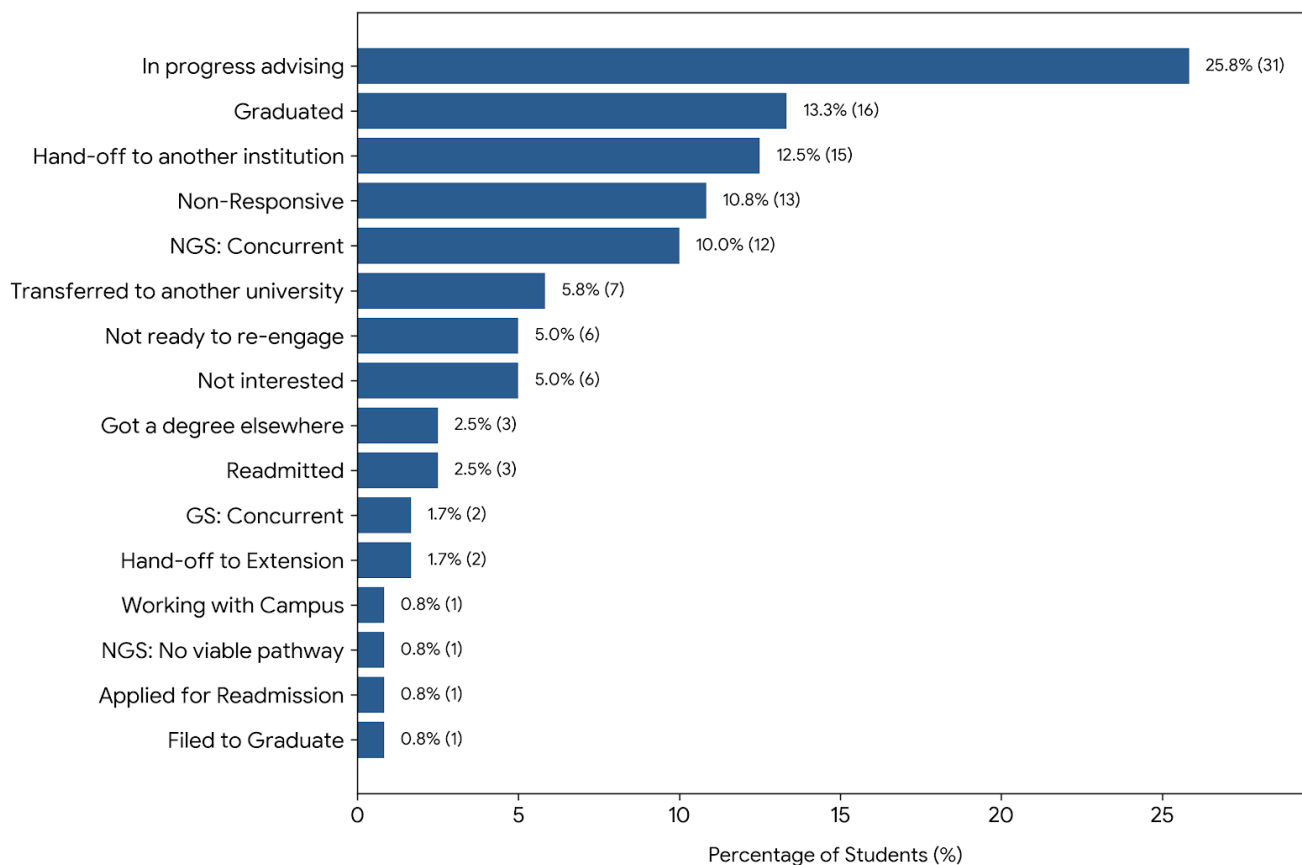


## Relationship between online courses and reengagement

Among the 120 students who cited limited online course offerings as a barrier, 25.8 percent remained actively engaged through advising, while 20.8 percent became disengaged or nonresponsive. Another 20.8 percent left UCR: 12.5 percent were referred to another institution, 5.8 percent transferred, and 2.5 percent earned a degree elsewhere. In addition, 14.1 percent graduated or filed to graduate, and 3.3 percent re-enrolled through readmission or application.

“In-progress advising” is a broad category that includes students still seeking a viable path to completion; online course availability and other barriers may affect their progress. These outcomes underscore the value of flexible course options, though they do not establish that limited online offerings caused students to leave.

Figure 12. Outcomes of students reporting lack of online courses as a barrier (N=120)



### Course enrollment demand trends

Enrollment after matriculation to UCR was not tracked; however, analysis of student concurrent enrollment data for students seeking eligibility for admission reveals concentrated demand within foundational lower-division and high-impact core coursework, led most frequently by Ethics & Law: Business/Society and Management Writing & Communication. Additional highly frequent needs clustered heavily around lower-division writing (*Beginning Composition* and *Intermediate Composition*), foundational computing (*Discrete Structures*), upper-division engineering (*Fluid Mechanics*), and business fundamentals (*Marketing & Distribution Management*).

Although these repeating course needs highlight specific subject areas required for degree progression, this data alone is insufficient to justify creating standalone online course offerings. Because the dataset only captures students who successfully enrolled through the program, it inherently excludes prospective "stopout" students who might have attempted readmission and degree completion had flexible online options been available. Consequently, current course frequencies reflect available campus capacity rather than the true latent demand or modality preferences of the broader stopout population.

In addition to concurrent enrollment, at the start of the program, initial audits were conducted of UCR stopouts with 105+ units or more to identify potential bottleneck courses. Below is a

frequency table of those courses. The top three high-need courses include foreign language 3-4 level, ethnic studies requirements, and upper division courses.

*Table 16. Bottleneck course areas identified in manual audits of 105+ unit UCR stopouts from 2008-2020*

| Bottleneck course areas     | Student count |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Foreign Language 3-4 Level  | 503           |
| Ethnic Studies*             | 382           |
| Upper Division Courses Only | 346           |
| Social Science/Humanities*  | 218           |
| World History*              | 215           |
| Biological Science          | 208           |
| English Composition         | 191           |
| Natural Sciences            | 161           |
| Economics/Politics*         | 93            |
| Literature*                 | 87            |
| Units Only                  | 72            |
| Statistics                  | 34            |

### The future of degree completion at UC Riverside

Following the use of one-time funds, UC Riverside will conclude active, standalone operations for the UCR Degree Completion Program and will no longer conduct proactive outreach to returning adult learners or stopout populations in the absence of any potential future funding from the state, our campus, grants, or philanthropic gifts.

This transition stems from significant, systematic structural barriers that prevent the creation of a self-sustaining program at scale within the current UC framework:

- **Pervasive Modality Gaps:** The non-traditional adult learner population overwhelmingly requires fully online pathways to balance work and caregiving responsibilities. However, structural limitations—including strict residency requirements (which exclude Extension coursework), last-priority course registration for concurrent enrollment, and an inability to scale online XR course offerings—render degree completion at scale unviable without policy and institutional reforms.
- **Financial Aid Restrictions:** Stopout students needing pre-readmission eligibility coursework via UCR Extension or concurrent enrollment remain ineligible for federal financial aid, placing an unsustainable financial burden on returning learners.
- **Capacity & Institutional Barriers:** Strict catalog year expiration policies, rigid major requirements, and retired academic programs frequently add requirements for returning students rather than accelerating their path to graduation.

Despite securing regional partnerships and leveraging rich labor-market and stop-out data (such as identifying thousands of UCR stopouts in good standing), multiple years of implementation

demonstrated that institutional barriers make scaling reengagement outcomes unrealistic without systemic shared-governance reform.

### Continuing student support & next steps

While proactive outreach, dedicated advising "champions," and digital marketing campaigns will sunset alongside our external funding, UCR remains committed to supporting returning students within our existing institutional structures.

In the absence of guaranteed funding sources, grants, or philanthropic gifts, UCR will continue moving forward by leveraging the approaches below:

1. Passive direction to readmission & enrollment: Prospective returning adult learners, direct campus referrals, and former stopouts who reach out independently will be guided toward standard campus resources, including the Registrar's readmission process and UCR Extension's concurrent enrollment (Open Campus) offerings.
2. Dissemination of best practices: The operational insights, cross-campus collaboration frameworks, and advising practices developed alongside our University of California Reengagement Consortium (UCRC) partners—including data and collective lessons learned—will be archived and shared across the system to inform future institutional retention and re-entry initiatives.

## UC Santa Barbara Extension Degree Completion Program

UC Santa Barbara's (UCSB) Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) degree completion program, locally branded as GROW, was established to create viable pathways for re-engaging stopout students and supporting workforce development. Initially focused on financially distressed transfer-eligible students from regional city colleges, the program rapidly adapted to meet the needs of a broader student population that included UC stopouts. To maximize reach and impact, UCSB partnered with the UCR, UCD, and UCM extensions through the University of California Reengagement Consortium (UCRC). While collaboration with the Division of Undergraduate Education was initiated to identify former students, progress in degree completion was ultimately constrained by limited data access and overlapping institutional policies.

### Key strategic interventions

Leveraging GROW funding, PaCE implemented high-impact strategies to foster workforce readiness and support adult learners launching specialized programs designed to address regional skill gaps. Notable successes include:

- **Management training for public administrators:** In collaboration with the City of Santa Maria, PaCE developed a customized 15-week curriculum. Following the inaugural cohort in 2023, the program successfully trained four subsequent cohorts, establishing a model for affordable, sustainable workforce training beyond the grant period.
- **Semiconductor Manufacturing & Cleanroom Training:** Addressing a niche, high-demand sector, PaCE partnered with Santa Barbara City College and the Robert Mehrabian College of Engineering to provide hands-on cleanroom and microchip fabrication training, serving as an indispensable resource for the local economy.
- **Accessible learning model:** To lower barriers to entry, PaCE adopted a flexible enrollment policy that did not require formal commitment to full program completion. This strategy allowed students to enroll in individual courses tailored to their immediate career or educational needs, significantly broadening programmatic access.
- **Foundational career support:** In partnership with UCSB Career Services, PaCE established a career advising program. This provided students with personalized support, including resume refinement, interview preparation, and access to professional advising tools, intended to be a sustainable service beyond the initial funding timeframe.
- **Affordable cost structure:** PaCE significantly reduced financial barriers by setting attendance costs for professional programs at 10-20% of standard market rates and established a per-unit cost of \$56 for undergraduate units for degree completion students.

### Outcomes and institutional constraints

While professional development programs saw steady enrollment growth, the degree completion initiative faced persistent institutional hurdles. The program identified several primary constraints that limited the success of re-entry efforts:

- **Policy and residency barriers:** The growth of re-entry programming was limited by stringent residency requirements. Furthermore, a post-pandemic university policy restricting the application of online course units toward graduation significantly hindered the viability of degree completion for non-traditional, working students.

- Data and collaboration challenges: Despite efforts to engage with campus administration and academic departments via the UCRC, progress on degree completion was hampered by systemic policy constraints and the difficulty of navigating overlapping campus initiatives.

### Sustainability and future direction

While the degree completion initiative encountered significant headwinds, PaCE established professional programs have proven to be durable and responsive to community needs.

- Institutionalized success: The professional training models—particularly in public administration and semiconductor manufacturing—have successfully demonstrated their value and are being sustained through partnerships with local government and industry stakeholders.
- Strategic outlook: PaCE remains committed to supporting the regional workforce. Plans are underway to expand career advising services beyond the original funding timeframe. Looking forward, UCSB PaCE continues to advocate for system-level policy changes that would allow for greater flexibility in online course credit, which is essential to any future reengagement strategy for the region's adult learners.

### Location of contacted students

UCSB PaCE's target audience was potential and returning students in Santa Barbara North County. UCSB reached out to:

- North Santa Barbara County: Including Santa Maria, Lompoc, Vandenberg Village (proximate to Vandenberg Space Force Base), Guadalupe, Solvang, Buellton, Los Alamos, Los Olivos, Ballard, and Santa Ynez.
- San Luis Obispo County: Spanning Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo, and associated unincorporated territories.
- Kern County: encompassing Arvin, Bakersfield, California City, Delano, Maricopa, McFarland, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi, Wasco, and surrounding unincorporated sectors.

### Degrees and/or certificates conferred

Students received a total of 89 certificates and badges through the programs, with the Management Training for Public Administrators being the most popular, accounting for 45 percent of all credentials awarded. Other significant certifications included Paralegal Studies at 11 percent, along with Human Resource Management Essentials and Emergency Medical Technician training, each at nine percent. No degrees were conferred.

*Table 17. Certificates conferred by program*

| Certificates                                  | Count     | %           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Business Leadership                           | 2         | 2%          |
| Digital Marketing                             | 1         | 1%          |
| Applied Behavior Analysis                     | 2         | 2%          |
| Project Management                            | 2         | 2%          |
| Human Resource Management Essentials          | 8         | 9%          |
| Leadership & Strategy Badge                   | 4         | 4%          |
| Leadership Essentials Badge                   | 3         | 3%          |
| Marketing & Branding Badge                    | 2         | 2%          |
| Project Leadership Badge                      | 6         | 7%          |
| Emergency Medical Technician                  | 8         | 9%          |
| Management Training for Public Administrators | 40        | 45%         |
| Professional Accounting                       | 1         | 1%          |
| Paralegal Studies                             | 10        | 11%         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                            | <b>89</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### Program completion rates

Overall, the program completion rate was 60 percent. The available data are insufficient to calculate individual program completion rates.

### Demographics of students served

*Table 18. Gender of students served*

| Gender             | Count      | %           |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Female             | 208        | 70.0%       |
| Gender Variant     | 2          | 0.7%        |
| Male               | 83         | 27.9%       |
| Other/No Answer    | 4          | 1.3%        |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>297</b> | <b>100%</b> |

*Table 19. Race and ethnicity of students served*

| Ethnicity                         | Count      | %           |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Asian or Pacific Islander         | 11         | 3.7%        |
| Black or African American         | 8          | 2.7%        |
| Hispanic or Latino                | 145        | 48.8%       |
| Multiracial or Biracial           | 25         | 8.4%        |
| Native American or Alaskan Native | 5          | 1.7%        |
| White or Caucasian                | 100        | 33.7%       |
| Ethnicity not listed              | 3          | 1.0%        |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                | <b>297</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### Proportion of courses taken online<sup>21</sup>

Total number of courses taken: 69 courses of which 95 percent (66) were online

### Changes in online course use during the program

Most professional courses during the evaluation period were delivered online, with no significant change in the proportion of online offerings over time. After the pandemic, UCSB discontinued online academic-credit course offerings,<sup>22</sup> although many professional courses continued to be offered online.

### Relationship between online course availability and re-entry

While offering degree completion was a key priority, institutional constraints restricted access to this initiative. During this period, one student enrolled in a degree-completion course, providing an opportunity to evaluate processes and identify areas for future program development. UCSB is not currently offering any regular online courses following the pandemic. However, additional online course availability may improve access for returning students.

### Future of degree completion at UC Santa Barbara Extension

Building on the workforce development success of the GROW program, future degree completion at UCSB will transition toward a more integrated, campus-wide partnership. With UCSB's planned transition toward broader online offerings and successful professional workforce development models, PaCE is well-positioned to serve as an operational hub for reengagement, provided that academic policy supports credit flexibility for returning learners.

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<sup>21</sup> Online courses were only offered for professional courses, not for academic credit.

<sup>22</sup> Not including Summer Sessions, which was outside the scope of the grant.

## UC Reengagement Consortium (UCRC)

UCM, UCR, UCD, and UCSB comprise the UCRC. The UCRC is led by the UCRC Leadership Committee. Their innovative consortium model extends beyond programmatic and audience expansion to include shared operational services and a multi-level community of practice that supports the success of all four partner campuses in the pursuit of reengagement, re-entry, and completion.

UCRC has established communities of practice at the advising, director, and dean levels and each of these groups meets weekly or monthly to collaborate and share promising practices around degree completion program implementation. Each of their campuses also engages representatives from their campuses' undergraduate education units (Registrars, Financial Aid Officers, Advisors, Housing, etc.) to work collaboratively to address barriers to reengagement and re-entry.

Given the vast territories the four UC Extensions cover, their combined and collaborative efforts serve most of the state of California, including the most underserved regions and populations of the state. Having adjacent territorial boundaries and similarly large and heterogeneous markets allow them to think beyond the boundaries of each institution to identify viable pockets of need that might not achieve economies of scale within a single region.

### Reentry/reengagement pathways

Reengagement efforts focused on two populations: 1) UC stopouts, and 2) California resident adults with some college, and no degree or certificate attainment. Leveraging the concurrent enrollment mechanism or, when sufficient demand exists, offering dedicated XR/XM courses are an important part of reentry/reengagement efforts to meet academic readiness issues (e.g., grade improvement, refreshers and financial support).

### Transfer pathway

Similar to reentry, there are systems and structures on UC campuses to support transfer students. For students who are academically ready to transfer, the UCRC is not duplicating this work but rather providing warm hand-offs to existing transfer programs/advisors. Some portions of this population have academic gaps in their preparation that the UC Extensions are well poised to fill using XR and XM courses and concurrent enrollment to help students earn transferable credit.

### Curricular and operational supports for partnering campuses, including UCM and UCSB

A key aspect of this collaboration is the commitment of all four campuses to share strategies, practices, curricula, and even operational staff to support the success of each campus. This approach will serve not just the current UCR/UCD programs but will also augment the capacities at UCM and UCSB to promote success of the entire UC Extension Degree Completion Pilot.

### Operational sharing

The UCD, UCM, UCR and UCSB partner campuses are among the smaller UC Extensions. Thus, the commitment to sharing personnel and existing technologies has allowed the Consortium to

achieve maximum economies of scale and operational efficiencies and is crucial to sustainability of this program long-term. UCRC is building on this successful and flexible model allowing individual Extensions to leverage strengths across the system, save resources, and scale quickly. Specifically, UCR and UCD are sharing instructional design and IT support for systems integration and UCR and UCM are sharing a CRM Manager, Assistant Director, and a Campus Advising Liaison. They aggregate their data and provide it to UCD who then add the data to Tableau for the purposes of UCRC collective reporting.

Advising is also being shared across campuses. The academic advising pools, although split and housed at both UCR and UCD, act as agents of the overall UCRC mission; connecting students with the program and supports (tutoring, etc.) at the partner campus that fits their needs. This helps to facilitate a smooth transition of students between campuses and provides continuity of service for the students as they proceed through the funnel from identification to outreach and from intake and advising.

### Key lessons learned about multi-campus partnerships

#### 1. Multi-level shared governance and communities of practice

- Lesson: Building structured, recurring collaboration at every organizational level—from academic advisors up to directors and deans—fosters alignment and rapid problem-solving.
- Application for future partnerships: Rather than relying solely on high-level administrative oversight, establishing weekly or monthly "communities of practice" across functional levels allows teams to share promising implementation practices, troubleshoot operational friction, and maintain continuity of service.

#### 2. Strategic operational and resource sharing

- Lesson: Partnering institutions do not need to duplicate infrastructure; sharing personnel, technology, and back-end administrative functions generates economies of scale and allows smaller divisions to scale rapidly.
- Application for future partnerships: Future consortia can maximize resources by sharing specialized roles—such as CRM managers, instructional designers, IT support, and assistant directors—as well as centralizing data management and analytics (e.g., aggregating campus data into a shared reporting platform). It is highly recommended that a common data field dictionary is pre-set prior to program start and that efforts are made to maintain data integrity.

#### 3. Integrated, shared advising pools

- Lesson: Cross-campus academic advising pools act as neutral agents for the consortium's broader mission rather than competing for individual campus enrollments.
- Application for Future Partnerships: Deploying a shared advising model provides a "continuity of care" for students. Advisors can seamlessly guide students to whichever partner institution offers the specific courses, tutoring, or scheduling options that best fit the student's unique completion needs.

#### 4. Cross-institutional cooperation beyond regional boundaries

- Lesson: Aggregating student demand across adjacent or regional territories makes it possible to identify niche student needs that would not achieve economies of scale within a single isolated institution.
- Application for future partnerships: Collaborating across a network allows institutions to offer dedicated coursework or specialized support pathways that become financially and operationally viable only when drawn from a combined, multi-campus population.

#### 5. Proactive identification of institutional & policy bottlenecks

- Lesson: Operational partnerships frequently hit administrative roadblocks—in the case of UCRC, these included rigid residency requirements, lack of financial aid eligibility for extension courses, and cross-campus credit articulation barriers—that disproportionately impact target student populations.
- Application for future partnerships: Multi-institutional partnerships must engage key campus stakeholder units (e.g., Registrars, Financial Aid Officers, Academic Senates) early on. Key strategies learned from the UCRC Degree Completion Programs include:
  - Policy flexibility: Advocating for blanket or Senate-approved residency waivers for returning students.
  - Modality alignment: Actively incentivize faculty to build and offer upper-division online courses to match the scheduling realities of non-traditional or working adult learners.
  - Systemic articulation: Creating clear cross-campus articulation mechanisms for general education and bottleneck breadth courses.

### The future of degree completion at the UCRC

While the formal operational structure of the UC Reengagement Consortium (UCRC) has come to a close, the impact of this one-time allocation pilot extends far beyond the lifespan of the consortium itself. The universities that comprise the UCRC are deeply grateful for the one-time allocation and the unique opportunity to pilot this innovative, cross-campus framework. The initiative demonstrated the immense potential of multi-campus collaboration in re-engaging stopout students and removing systemic barriers to degree completion.

Rather than marking an endpoint, the dissolution of the UCRC serves as a foundation for ongoing innovation across UCRC campuses. The key lessons learned—particularly around operational resource-sharing, cross-campus advising alignment, and identifying policy bottlenecks like residency requirements—have fundamentally shaped the way the participating universities approach non-traditional student support. Moreover, the strong professional networks and inter-campus relationships established among deans, directors, advisors, and registrar partners remain fully active. These connections will continue to serve as a vital pipeline for communication and joint problem-solving as the participating universities design future student-serving programs.

Looking ahead, the UCRC leaders remain deeply committed to the mission of adult reengagement and look forward to learning from the ongoing insights, best practices, and outcomes generated by the Degree Plus<sup>23</sup> pilots at UCSB and UCSD. Campuses are actively seeking and securing additional funding to continue serving students with some college, no degree. By carrying forward both the collaborative spirit and the actionable data from the UCRC experience, participating universities are better positioned than ever to build sustainable, flexible, and scalable pathways for degree completion across the University of California system.

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<sup>23</sup> Degree Plus is a two-year pilot program that combines undergraduate education with tuition-free professional certificates and paid work experience.

## UCLA Extension Certificate Completion Program

**UCLAxCareerBridge** (CareerBridge) is the Los Angeles Extension program providing adults from diverse communities access to professional training that prepares them for in-demand careers. The goal is to extend access to education by removing financial barriers, through partnership and the grant funding provided by the state of California. Each training program covers a specialized field and provides the educational background needed to attain gainful employment and career pathways for advancement. CareerBridge addresses three areas of high need and growth in the workforce, aligning with the following certificates (also see Table 20).

The **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling Certificate** (ADAC) provides training to meet a critical need in treating substance use disorders (SUD). Approximately 5.6 million Californians (17 percent) age 12 and older have a substance use disorder (reported 2022-2023).<sup>24</sup> In addition, 10.4 percent reported symptoms that met the criteria for abuse of alcohol or alcohol dependence, and about 10.2 percent reported meeting the criteria for abuse of, or dependence on, legal or illicit drugs.<sup>25</sup> Yet, in 2022 more than 80 percent of individuals classified as needing substance abuse treatment did not receive it versus 76 percent nationally. California is undertaking a major effort to expand SUD services, and well-educated and certified counselors are in demand. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects historic 17 percent employment growth for substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors between 2024 and 2034—more than five times the average growth rate across all occupations. The BLS also estimates approximately 48,300 job openings annually, driven by both new positions and retirements.<sup>26</sup> Successful completion of the ADAC program creates a career pathway into one of healthcare's fastest growing and much needed professions. The California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals (CCAPP) approved curriculum and integrated fieldwork practicum help students gain employment in substance use disorder treatment facilities, residential treatment centers, prisons, juvenile detention centers and government agencies.

Graduates of the **Early Childhood Education–Associate Teacher Certificate** (ECE) are in high demand due to continued growth in the field and the Governor's budget priorities, which recognize that access to high-quality early childhood education is essential for supporting young children's development and enabling parents and caregivers to participate in the workforce. In 2020, it was projected that 200,000 new early-learning teachers would be required in the state.<sup>27</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this issue, with California permanently losing 10% of the ECE teaching force.<sup>28</sup> This certificate provides the foundational knowledge needed to become an Associate Teacher in a preschool or childcare setting for children aged from birth to five years. It meets the 12 ECE/CD units needed for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Associate Teacher permit. Students who were funded by the grant were required to take a

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<sup>24</sup> [Substance Use in California Almanac, 2025](#), Kelleher C., Rozier K, California Health Care Foundation, September 30, 2025.

<sup>25</sup> [California Health Care Foundation, Feature Story: Community Health Centers Find New Ways to Bring Lifesaving Care to Patients with Substance Use Disorder](#), Boyd-Barrett, C., Leshnov, M., October 10, 2025.

<sup>26</sup> [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors](#), August, 2026.

<sup>27</sup> [Early Edge CA EECA Workforce Policy Summary 2020](#), *Strengthening and Advancing California's Early Learning Workforce: Recommendations for the Master Plan*, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> [Cal Matters Newsletter](#), *Child Care in California Hasn't Rebounded — Why Many Workers Aren't Coming Back*, Grace Gedy, October 29, 2021.

prerequisite course, five core courses and a practicum. Courses were also being offered in Spanish to Spanish-speaking students.

The **Data Science Certificate** offers students technical skills that are marketable and in high demand, so they can start careers in data science. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts data scientist jobs will experience 36% growth between 2021 and 2031, significantly faster than the average job growth rate. This certificate provides hands-on experience in data management, programming, statistics and machine learning to extract, analyze, and communicate findings. Students learn to leverage the power of big data to gain insights and improve decision-making related to real-world problems.

Table 20. Enrollment summary by fiscal year

| Program                                  | Year 1<br>2021-2022 | Year 2<br>2022-2023 | Year 3<br>2023-2024 | Year 4<br>2024-2025 | Year 5<br>2025-2026 | Total<br>Enroll | Enroll<br>Goals |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Early Childhood Education (ECE)          | 24                  | 22                  | 33                  | 37                  | 112                 | 228             | 100             |
| Data Science (DS)                        | 30                  | 23                  | 42                  | 23                  | 3                   | 121             | 120             |
| Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling (ADAC) | 27                  | 16                  | 11                  | 2                   | 0                   | 56              | 100             |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>81</b>           | <b>61</b>           | <b>86</b>           | <b>62</b>           | <b>115</b>          | <b>405*</b>     | <b>320</b>      |

\*26% above enrollment goals.

## Outreach efforts

The primary outreach strategy was to work through trusted community, education, workforce development, and employer partners that could connect CareerBridge with prospective students and priority populations.

Over the course of the program, UCLA Extension conducted outreach through more than 30 organizations, including Crystal Stairs, Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles County Office of Education, UCLA Early Care & Education, First 5 LA, STEM Advantage, CodeTalk, South Bay Workforce Investment Board, Los Angeles Urban League Head Start Consortium, West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs, UCLA Veterans Initiatives and Partnerships, Asian American Drug Abuse Program, Homeboy Industries, Downtown Women's Center, Para Los Niños, Children's Institute, and other community-based and workforce organizations throughout the region.

Outreach methods included direct referrals and communications through community partners, participation in recruitment and workforce events, and targeted engagement with organizations serving populations aligned with the three CareerBridge certificate pathways. In-person outreach included the annual Stand Down event for veterans at the West Los Angeles VA campus, the Valley Industry Conference Association, a Los Angeles County Office of Education recruitment event, and the BizFed Career Fair at UCLA.

In addition to recruiting students through the UCLA Veteran’s Initiatives and Programs for the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling pathway, UCLA Extension also conducted targeted outreach to substance use disorder treatment and recovery facilities that participate in the program’s required fieldwork practicum and employ UCLA Extension graduates. This employer-based outreach helped connect prospective students not only to the certificate program but also to organizations providing fieldwork and potential employment opportunities.

Overall, CareerBridge demonstrated that community-based outreach was an effective strategy for reaching prospective students who may not otherwise engage with traditional UCLA Extension recruitment channels. Partnerships with organizations that already had trusted relationships with their communities were particularly valuable for student recruitment, engagement, and, in some cases, continued support through certificate completion.

### Potential population of students who may want to obtain a certificate

The following analysis estimates the potential population of prospective students—defined as individuals who are reasonably likely to pursue each certificate based on workforce demand, educational requirements, and the size of the existing workforce that requires initial or continuing education.

Table 21. Estimated potential student population in California

| Certificate                                   | UCLA Extension Estimate - Potential Student Population (California)                     | Basis for Estimate                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Key Evidence                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Early Childhood Education – Associate Teacher | Approximately 40,000–70,000 (8,000–14,000 annually) over the 2026–2031 planning period. | This estimate is based on California's expansion of Universal Transitional Kindergarten, ongoing demand for Child Development Permit coursework, workforce replacement needs, and new entrants into the early childhood education profession. | California Department of Education. <sup>29</sup> |

<sup>29</sup> California Department of Education. (2025). *Budget Act for 2025–26: Information*. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/Fg/fr/eb/ba2025-26.asp>

| Certificate                       | UCLA Extension Estimate - Potential Student Population (California)                     | Basis for Estimate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Key Evidence                                                               |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling | Approximately 12,000–18,000 (2,400–3,600 annually) over the 2026–2031 planning period.  | This estimate is based on California's projected shortage of approximately 3,000 additional Substance Use Disorder (SUD) counselors by 2029, the state's goal of supporting approximately 3,000 additional students through scholarships and workforce development initiatives over five years, continued investments in behavioral health workforce expansion, and the broader population of incumbent behavioral health workers, peer support specialists, recovery coaches, case managers, community health workers, bachelor's degree graduates, and career changers who seek certificate-based preparation for employment in the SUD treatment workforce. | California Department of Health Care Access and Information. <sup>30</sup> |
| Data Science                      | Approximately 30,000–50,000 (6,000–10,000 annually) over the 2026–2031 planning period. | This estimate reflects California's position as the nation's largest technology labor market, with approximately 1.47 million technology workers, strong employer demand for data science and AI-related skills, and the growing need for continuing education among professionals across technology, healthcare, finance, government, education, and other data-intensive industries. The estimate represents the addressable market for continuing education rather than projected UCLA Extension enrollment.                                                                                                                                                | CompTIA. <i>State of the Tech Workforce</i> . <sup>31</sup>                |

These estimates represent the potential addressable market rather than projected enrollment. They were developed by considering:

- State and national workforce demand projections.
- Existing workforce size and anticipated retirements.
- Educational and credentialing requirements.
- Career changers and incumbent workers seeking advancement.

<sup>30</sup> California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI). *Special Health Workforce Education and Training Council Meeting Pre-Read Materials* (2024).

<sup>31</sup> CompTIA. *State of the Tech Workforce* (Cyberstates 2025).

- California policy initiatives expanding workforce demand.
- The target populations served by UCLA Extension's open-enrollment certificate programs.

This methodology aligns with workforce planning practices commonly used in higher education and economic development and provides a reasonable estimate of the population that could benefit from each certificate program.

### Location of contacted students

CareerBridge served California participants from communities across the state, with the largest concentration residing in Los Angeles and surrounding Los Angeles County communities. Los Angeles accounted for the greatest number of participants, with additional concentrations in Hawthorne, Long Beach, Gardena, Inglewood, Carson, El Monte, Huntington Park, Lakewood, Lancaster, Pomona, Rosemead, and South Gate. Participants also came from communities outside the Los Angeles region, including Oakland, San Francisco, San Diego, Riverside, Bakersfield, and other areas throughout California. Overall, the geographic distribution demonstrates CareerBridge’s broad reach while reflecting the program’s strong focus on serving students from Los Angeles and surrounding communities.

### Certificates conferred over CareerBridge funding period<sup>32</sup>

Table 22. Certificates conferred<sup>33</sup>

| Certificates conferred                        |            |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling             | 17         |
| Data Science                                  | 56         |
| Early Childhood Education - Associate Teacher | 123        |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                            | <b>196</b> |

### Program completion rates and data

Table 23. Certificate completion rates

| Certificate                                   | Total Enrollment | Certificates Conferred | Completion Rates |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Early Childhood Education – Associate Teacher | 228              | 123                    | 54%              |
| Data Science                                  | 121              | 56                     | 46%              |

<sup>32</sup> Students were awarded a “Certificate” issued by the University of California. The certificate bears the UC gold seal and was awarded in accordance with the policies established by the UCLA campus Committee on Courses of Instruction of the Academic Senate, as authorized under Senate Regulation 811 (SR 811) of the UC Academic Senate Regulations. The award was also recorded on the student's official UCLA Extension academic transcript.

<sup>33</sup> Table 22 shows the number of certificates conferred during the funding period for CareerBridge. See discussion under Program Completion rates below.

| Certificate                       | Total Enrollment | Certificates Conferred | Completion Rates |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling | 56               | 17                     | 30%              |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>405</b>       | <b>196</b>             | <b>48%</b>       |

### Improving student success – program completion

Many students served by this program had complex challenges and barriers to success that led to students pausing or discontinuing their studies for medical emergencies, employment and financial issues, homelessness, family and personal health challenges, and work inflexibility or change of work responsibilities.

The primary barriers to completing the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling Certificate are not academic in nature but rather the significant time commitment required to complete the program. This program is the longest of the three certificates, requiring completion of 13 courses over approximately 18 months. In addition to the coursework, students must complete a supervised practicum at an approved agency, which includes 255 hours of direct field experience. Students enrolled in this certificate have consistently demonstrated strong academic performance throughout the coursework. However, many stopped out before enrolling in the required practicum because balancing a supervised 255-hour field placement with existing work and personal responsibilities is often not feasible. In effect, completing the practicum requires students to manage the equivalent of a second job while maintaining their regular employment and other commitments. The program manager consistently worked with students who stopped out to encourage and support their return to complete the remaining program requirements; however, these efforts had limited success. To address the financial and time-related barriers associated with the practicum, the program is exploring opportunities to leverage additional resources that could provide students with a stipend or paid field placement, helping to offset lost income while they complete the required practicum experience.

Students enrolled in the Data Science Certificate were supported in numerous ways to help increase completion rates. Support included more flexible schedules that allow students to take breaks between enrollment quarters, receive additional strengths-based advising and coaching through the UCLA Extension Center for Advising and Student Services (CASS) which offers academic planning, student success coaching, and career development resources as well as optional office hours with instructors to support their learning. Other support strategies included communicating with referral partners to gain insights about student challenges and partnering with them to provide additional support and problem-solving strategies. It is important to note that data science can be a challenging field for some students without basic pre-requisite coursework.

Students enrolled in the UCLA Extension's Early Childhood Education Certificate have historically demonstrated strong academic performance and high completion rates. Many students enter the program with prior experience working in childcare or early education, providing a strong foundation that supports their academic success. In addition, strategic partnerships with organizations such as Crystal Stairs' African American Providers Network (AAPN) and the Los Angeles County Office of Education contributed to positive student outcomes. These partners provide comprehensive wraparound services, academic advising, and student support, helping

participants successfully complete the certificate while preparing a highly qualified workforce to meet the growing demand for early childhood educators.

## Demographics of students served

Table 24. Race/ethnicity of enrolled students

| Fiscal Year            | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | Total | % of Total |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|------------|
| African American/Black | 0       | 14      | 11      | 11      | 37      | 33      | 106   | 26%        |
| American Indian        | 0       | 3       | 2       | 3       | 0       | 0       | 8     | 2%         |
| Hispanic/Latinx        | 0       | 34      | 34      | 50      | 16      | 5       | 139   | 34%        |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 0       | 11      | 8       | 9       | 0       | 1       | 29    | 7%         |
| White                  | 0       | 5       | 2       | 1       | 2       | 0       | 10    | 2%         |
| International          | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0     | 0%         |
| Unknown                | 0       | 3       | 0       | 4       | 3       | 72      | 82    | 20%        |
| Two or More            | 0       | 11      | 3       | 7       | 3       | 2       | 26    | 6%         |
| Other                  | 0       | 0       | 1       | 1       | 1       | 2       | 5     | 1%         |
| <b>Total</b>           | 0       | 81      | 61      | 86      | 62      | 115     | 405   |            |

## Proportion of courses taken online

Two of the three CareerBridge certificate programs—Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling and Data Science—offered courses online through live Zoom instruction, with Canvas serving as the learning management system. Early Childhood Education (ECE) courses were delivered online in an asynchronous format also using Canvas. Although coursework was offered online, the ADAC and ECE programs included required fieldwork practica, which students completed in person at participating facilities.

## Changes in online course taking during the program

In response to the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic at the launch of CareerBridge, all coursework was initially offered online. Online instruction remained available throughout the program’s implementation, and most students continued to complete their coursework online. As noted above, the ADAC and ECE programs also included required fieldwork practica, which students completed in person at participating facilities.

## Relationship between online course availability and certificate completion

This metric was not tracked separately because most CareerBridge students were enrolled in fully online coursework from the beginning of the funding period. However, program experience suggests that in-person fieldwork requirements, rather than the online course format, presented a significant barrier to certificate completion for some students.

This was particularly evident in the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling Certificate, which requires students to complete a minimum of 255 hours of supervised, on-site agency internship experience in addition to an 11-course curriculum. The ADAC certificate completion rate was 30 percent, with the time commitment associated with the fieldwork practicum emerging as an important factor affecting persistence. Many students found it difficult to balance employment, personal and family responsibilities, academic coursework, and the additional internship hours

required for completion. Even when paid internship opportunities were available, the combined demands of the practicum and the length of the certificate program remained challenging for some students and contributed to attrition.

In contrast, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program benefited from the strong, individualized support provided by Crystal Stairs and its African American Provider Network (AAPN). Their established relationships with students and the early childhood education community helped participants navigate practicum requirements and complete required fieldwork hours. This experience reinforced a key CareerBridge lesson – providing access to online coursework alone may not be sufficient to support certificate completion. For programs with substantial experiential learning requirements, trusted community partners, individualized wraparound support, and assistance navigating fieldwork placements can play an important role in helping working adult learners persist through completion.

### Courses that may warrant online development

All courses within the three CareerBridge certificate programs had already been developed for online delivery as part of UCLA Extension's regular course offerings. As a result, most CareerBridge students completed their coursework online, and no individual high-enrollment course was identified as requiring additional online course development to expand access or scale certificate enrollment. The existing online infrastructure provides UCLA Extension with the capacity to continue offering and scaling these certificate programs without significant additional investment in online course development.

### Future of certificate completion at UCLA Extension

UCLA Extension is applying lessons learned from CareerBridge to strengthen future initiatives that expand access and improve certificate completion for under-resourced communities. A key lesson is the importance of partnering with trusted community-based organizations that can provide individualized, wraparound support to help students successfully integrate education into their work and personal lives. Building on this approach, UCLA Extension has partnered with the SoLa Foundation<sup>34</sup> in South Los Angeles to implement UC Excelerator, supported by philanthropic funding from Scott Galloway's \$6 million investment<sup>35</sup> in expanding access to a UC educational experience. This model combines UCLA Extension's educational offerings with SoLa's strong community presence and student support services, creating a promising framework for improving persistence, course and certificate completion, and pathways to high-demand occupations that offer competitive wages, long-term career sustainability, and opportunities for continued advancement.

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<sup>34</sup> The SoLa Foundation is the nonprofit affiliate of SoLa Impact, working to end intergenerational poverty by expanding access to education and economic opportunity in LA's under-resourced and under-invested communities.

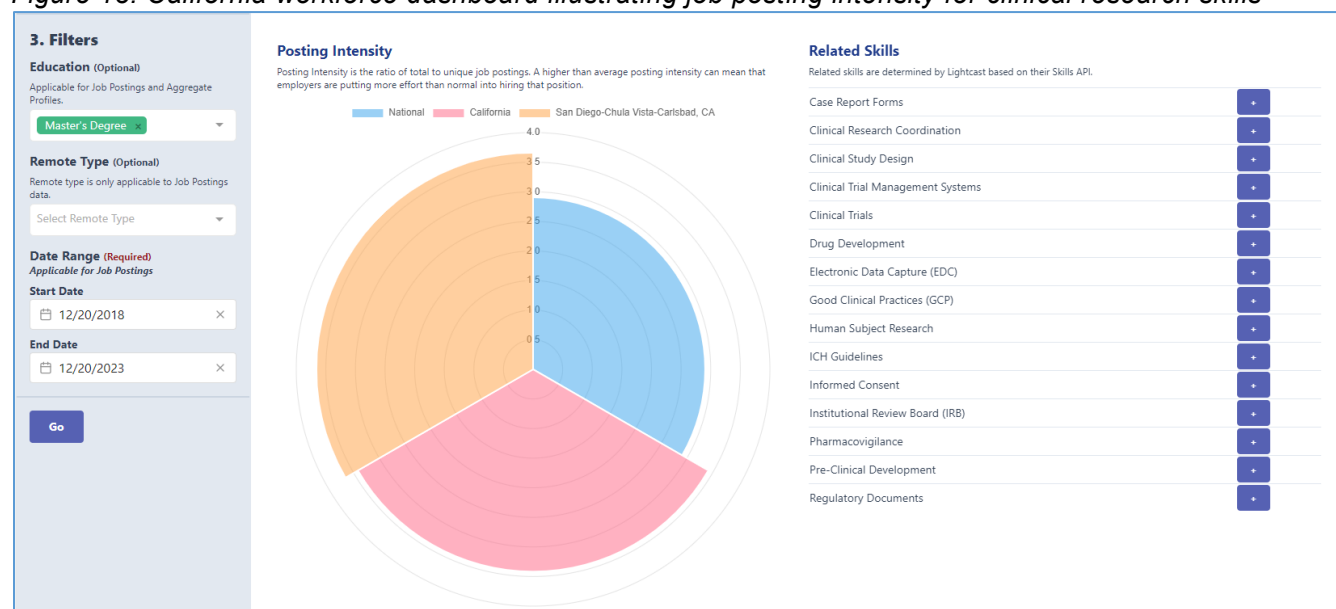
<sup>35</sup> <https://newsroom.uclaextension.edu/magazine/news-fall-2024>

## UCSD Extension Center for Research & Evaluation (CR+E) Degree Completion Analysis and Workforce Market Demand

The UCSD Division of Extended Studies Center for Research and Evaluation (CR+E) built a labor market research tool to support the UC system. CR+E worked with a web developer, Mackey Creative Labs, to build a dashboard user interface that presents live labor market data from the labor market data company Lightcast. This data, accessible via API, includes job postings, labor profiles, projected occupation growth and projected skills growth. In addition, the data includes Standard Occupation Classification (SOC),<sup>36</sup> Occupational Information Network (O\*NET)<sup>37</sup> and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) mapping.<sup>38</sup>

The dashboard supports data analysis and visualization for each of the UC campuses and includes both analytical tools and access to raw data directly from Lightcast. The data analysis tools allow the user to analyze labor market data from different vantage points, including specific skills, occupations, regions and job postings. In addition, the dashboard includes a tool to explore how skills relate across occupations and an easily searchable skill database. The dashboard generates graphics that make the data easy for the user to interpret.

Figure 13. California workforce dashboard illustrating job posting intensity for clinical research skills



In addition to the labor market data from Lightcast described above (job postings, skills, etc.), the dashboard developed by CR+E also incorporates UC San Diego alumni data. The alumni data was purchased from Lightcast through UCOP and obtained by CR+E through the UC San Diego

<sup>36</sup> Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code is a six-digit federal system used by government agencies and employers to categorize workers into distinct occupational categories.

<sup>37</sup> The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) is a free, comprehensive database funded by the U.S. Department of Labor that details worker attributes and job characteristics for over 900 occupations across the United States.

<sup>38</sup> The Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) is a taxonomic coding system created by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to track, categorize, and report fields of study and program completions across higher education institutions uniformly.

Institutional Research Office. This data allows the user to examine UC alumni outcomes relative to the regional workforce and could be expanded to include alumni data from the entire UC system.

Figure 14. Alignment of UC San Diego alumni skills with in-demand occupational skills



One example of the dashboard's utility was CR+E's use of the dashboard data to develop a customized Market Research Brief on the pharmacy industry. The brief was presented to the UC Pharmacy Deans convening at UC San Diego in spring 2024. The report provided an overview of the pharmacy industry, and labor market supply and demand for pharmacists across California.

The data in the dashboard developed by CR+E can be used for a variety of purposes including the development of new programs, identification of regional workforce needs, understanding UC alumni outcomes, and identifying skill gaps in existing programs.

## Challenges and potential solutions and the future of the California Workforce Dashboard

One potential path for sustaining the California Workforce Dashboard is a shared funding model across participating UC campuses. A collaborative approach would distribute licensing and maintenance costs while expanding access to labor market intelligence throughout the UC system. Long-term sustainability, however, will depend on systemwide commitment to incorporating labor market data into planning, program development, and strategic decision-making.

The Center for Research & Evaluation welcomes the opportunity to continue discussions with UCOP regarding the future of the dashboard. The project has generated valuable technical expertise and implementation lessons that position the team to help guide the next phase of development. Working collaboratively, UCOP and campus partners could develop a sustainable roadmap for expanding and enhancing this resource for the benefit of the entire UC system.

## Barriers, potential solutions, and lessons learned

Across the UC Extension degree and certificate completion initiatives, including the UCRC, the same central findings emerged. Proactive outreach and individualized support can reconnect adult learners to the University, but advising alone cannot overcome the structural, financial, curricular, and personal barriers that determine whether a viable completion pathway exists. The pilots also showed that degree and certificate completion require somewhat different strategies. Returning degree-seeking students often need policy exceptions, access to specific remaining courses, and coordination with their home campuses, while certificate students may need sustained support through lengthy programs, prerequisite gaps, and required fieldwork.

### Barriers to degree and certificate completion

#### Limited access to flexible coursework

The most consistent barrier was the shortage of fully online, asynchronous, evening, and otherwise flexible courses. Many former students had relocated or were balancing employment, caregiving, and other responsibilities that made regular daytime or in-person attendance impractical. Even when online courses existed, accelerated schedules or long synchronous class meetings could remain inaccessible. Returning students also encountered required or bottleneck courses that were unavailable online, full, or offered only at another UC campus without a clear advance determination that the credit would apply.

For certificate students, required in-person practica created a comparable structural barrier when students could complete online coursework but could not accommodate extensive fieldwork hours.

#### Residency, catalog, and credit policies

Campus residency rules sometimes exclude Extension or online coursework from degree requirements. Catalog-rights changes, discontinued majors, course substitutions, and cross-campus articulation problems can add to the requirements or make a previously straightforward pathway uncertain. Case-by-case petitions and exceptions occasionally resolved these issues, but they required substantial staff coordination and were difficult to scale.

#### Financial constraints

Before readmission, students taking courses through concurrent enrollment or Open Campus generally could not access federal financial aid and often had to pay out of pocket. Institutional debt and registration holds could prevent reentry even when a student was academically ready. Grant-funded debt relief, scholarships, reduced fees, course support, and financial-navigation assistance helped individual students, but available resources were smaller than the level of need. Certificate students also faced the opportunity cost of lengthy unpaid or underpaid practica.

#### Administrative complexity and timing

Returning learners had to navigate readmission deadlines, registration windows, degree audits, holds, academic standing requirements, unfamiliar systems, and coordination among Extension,

colleges, departments, registrars, financial aid offices, and faculty. Delayed readmission decisions could leave students unable to register for the courses needed. Students frequently arrived with detailed, highly individualized questions that could not be answered through general websites or handbooks.

### Life circumstances and academic readiness

Work schedules, family care, health concerns, housing instability, geographic distance, and changing job responsibilities affected persistence in both degree and certificate programs. Some returning students also needed prerequisite coursework, academic recovery after dismissal, or renewed preparation for technically demanding subjects. Recently dismissed students were often motivated to return, but their pathways could require multiple terms of outside coursework and intensive coaching before readmission.

### Program capacity, data, and sustainability

High-touch advising produced meaningful results but depended on skilled staff who could interpret records, coordinate exceptions, and remain engaged through multiple administrative steps. Campuses also lacked common data definitions and complete information on outreach, engagement, barriers, interventions, course modality, reentry, and completion. Finally, one-time funding did not provide a durable business model for labor-intensive services, and institutional barriers made it difficult to demonstrate the scalability often expected by external funders.

## Potential Solutions

### Build viable pathways before launching broad outreach

Degree audits and historical enrollment data should be used to identify near-completers, common outstanding requirements, and verified bottleneck courses. Outreach should be paired with a clearly articulated pathway, including predictable course availability, timing, modality, cost, and the policies that will govern returning students. Regional outreach to people with some college but no degree is most promising when an institution able to award the degree can offer an immediate, well-defined route to completion.

### Expand flexible and cross-campus course access

Campuses should develop online and asynchronous sections in demonstrated bottleneck areas, reserve or create seats for returning students, and align course schedules with working adults. UC should also consider multi-campus articulation arrangements and clearer advance approval processes so that students can use appropriate online courses offered elsewhere in the system. Residency definitions should be reviewed to determine when Extension, Summer Session, concurrent enrollment, or cross-UC coursework can satisfy degree requirements.

### Reduce policy and administrative friction

Priority reentry deadlines, expedited conditional decisions, priority registration based on class standing, fee scholarships, catalog protections, standardized substitution rules, and broader authorization for justified residency exceptions could reduce delays and repetitive petitioning. Campuses should distinguish between formal policy barriers and local procedures, identify who

has authority to revise or waive each requirement, and engage registrars, financial aid offices, colleges, departments, and Academic Senate partners early.

#### Provide a dedicated reentry advisor or success coach

A consistent, knowledgeable point of contact can translate university processes, complete or interpret degree audits, coordinate with campus offices, develop individualized plans, and provide repeated follow-up. Services should be available outside traditional business hours when possible and should include culturally responsive and strength-based advising. Shared advising pools and cross-campus communities of practice can extend expertise and preserve continuity when students move among institutions or pathways.

#### Address financial and experiential-learning barriers

Potential approaches include debt relief, application-fee support, subsidized bridge courses, financial-aid-eligible pre-readmission options, and reserved course support. For certificates with substantial practica, students should receive early information about fieldwork expectations, placement assistance, and, where feasible, stipends or paid placements. Trusted community and employer partners can help students navigate practica and connect training to employment.

#### Create integrated campus ownership and common data infrastructure

Degree completion should be connected to undergraduate retention, advising, and readmission operations rather than treated solely as an external Extension initiative. Programs should establish common definitions and data fields at launch and track unique contacts, barriers, interventions, modality, engagement, reentry, and completion. Shared staffing, technology, instructional design, and reporting can reduce duplication across campuses, but sustained results still require stable campus or external investment.

### Lessons Learned

#### Outreach is necessary, but a viable academic pathway is decisive

Early, proactive contact can reengage students before their connection and academic momentum erode. However, outreach without accessible courses, affordable enrollment, and policy flexibility can raise interest without producing completion.

#### High-touch support works because returning students do not follow a standard path

Successful cases often required a combination of academic planning, policy interpretation, faculty coordination, financial navigation, encouragement, and repeated follow-up. This model is effective but labor-intensive and should be staffed and funded accordingly.

#### Online access is core infrastructure, not an optional enhancement

For working adults, caregivers, and students living far from campus, flexible delivery often determines whether returning is possible. At the same time, online coursework alone is insufficient when residency rules, seat availability, cross-campus credit, or in-person fieldwork remain unresolved.

### Policy flexibility can matter as much as curriculum

Residency exceptions, catalog protections, course substitutions, grade resolution, and holds management frequently converted a technically possible pathway into an actual completion. Lasting scale will require institutional and shared-governance support rather than reliance on one-off exceptions.

### Trusted partnerships improve persistence

Cross-campus communities of practice, campus advising networks, and community-based organizations helped programs solve problems, share specialized capacity, and provide wraparound support. Certificate initiatives especially benefited when partners had established relationships with learners and could assist with fieldwork, career preparation, and challenges outside the classroom.

## Conclusion

The \$15 million in one-time funding appropriated through the California State Budget Act of 2019 enabled UC Extensions to develop and test new approaches to degree and certificate completion. With those funds now expended, the original stand-alone operations that did not secure continued funding will largely wind down, although some practices, partnerships, and services will continue within existing campus structures or separately funded initiatives.

Although much of the infrastructure developed through the pilots will remain, proactive outreach, high-touch advising, promotional campaigns, and individualized case management require continued staffing and resources to operate at scale.

The funding period also made clear that advising and outreach cannot, on their own, overcome the institutional barriers facing returning students. Residency requirements limited financial aid options for non-matriculated students, insufficient online and asynchronous course offerings, cross-campus credit issues, and other administrative constraints continued to limit viable completion pathways for adults balancing work, family, and other obligations. Addressing these barriers will be necessary if UC seeks to create durable and scalable degree and certificate completion opportunities.

At the same time, the pilots produced meaningful results. Across the programs, UC Extensions supported the awarding of 775 credentials, including 484 bachelor's degrees across UC Davis, UC Merced, and UC Riverside and 291 certificates across UCLA, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Barbara (Table 1). UC Merced plans to award an additional 24 certificates during the 2026-27 academic year to students currently on track for completion. These outcomes demonstrate that UC can improve degree and certificate completion when flexible academic options are combined with policy alignment, financial support, proactive advising, trusted partnerships, and sustained institutional commitment.

Sustainability must be designed from the outset. One-time funding can build infrastructure and demonstrate proof of concept, but future initiatives should define institutional ownership, policy readiness, staffing, expected scale, data requirements, risks, and a long-term funding plan before implementation or external fundraising. The most promising future model is not a stand-alone outreach campaign, but an integrated system in which campuses identify students early, offer transparent and flexible pathways, coordinate responsibility across units, and maintain support through completion. The pilots created a foundation for this work by establishing promising practices, building advising and data infrastructure, strengthening cross-campus relationships, and identifying the policy and operational changes needed to serve returning learners. The degrees and certificates awarded represent tangible progress and show what sustained investment and institutional commitment could make possible across the University of California.

## Appendix A. Degree completion for UC students outside the UC system

Although students may stop out and leave UC without a degree, just over one-quarter ultimately earn a bachelor’s degree elsewhere (Figure A1). Among students who began at UC between 2005 and 2019 and exited without a degree, 27 percent went on to earn a bachelor’s degree at another institution, about half at a California State University (Figure A1) and half at other four-year institutions, including University of Southern California, Arizona State University, and West Coast University – North Hollywood (Figure A2).

Figure A1. Bachelor’s degree completion status for UC students leaving without a degree by entrance year

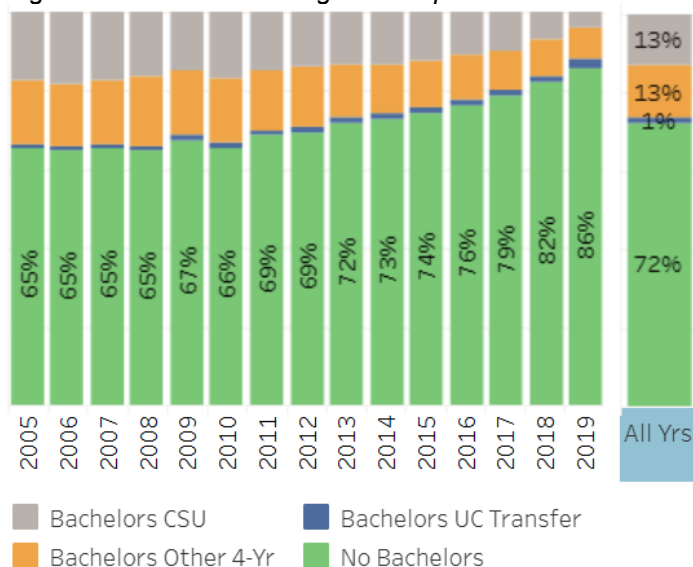
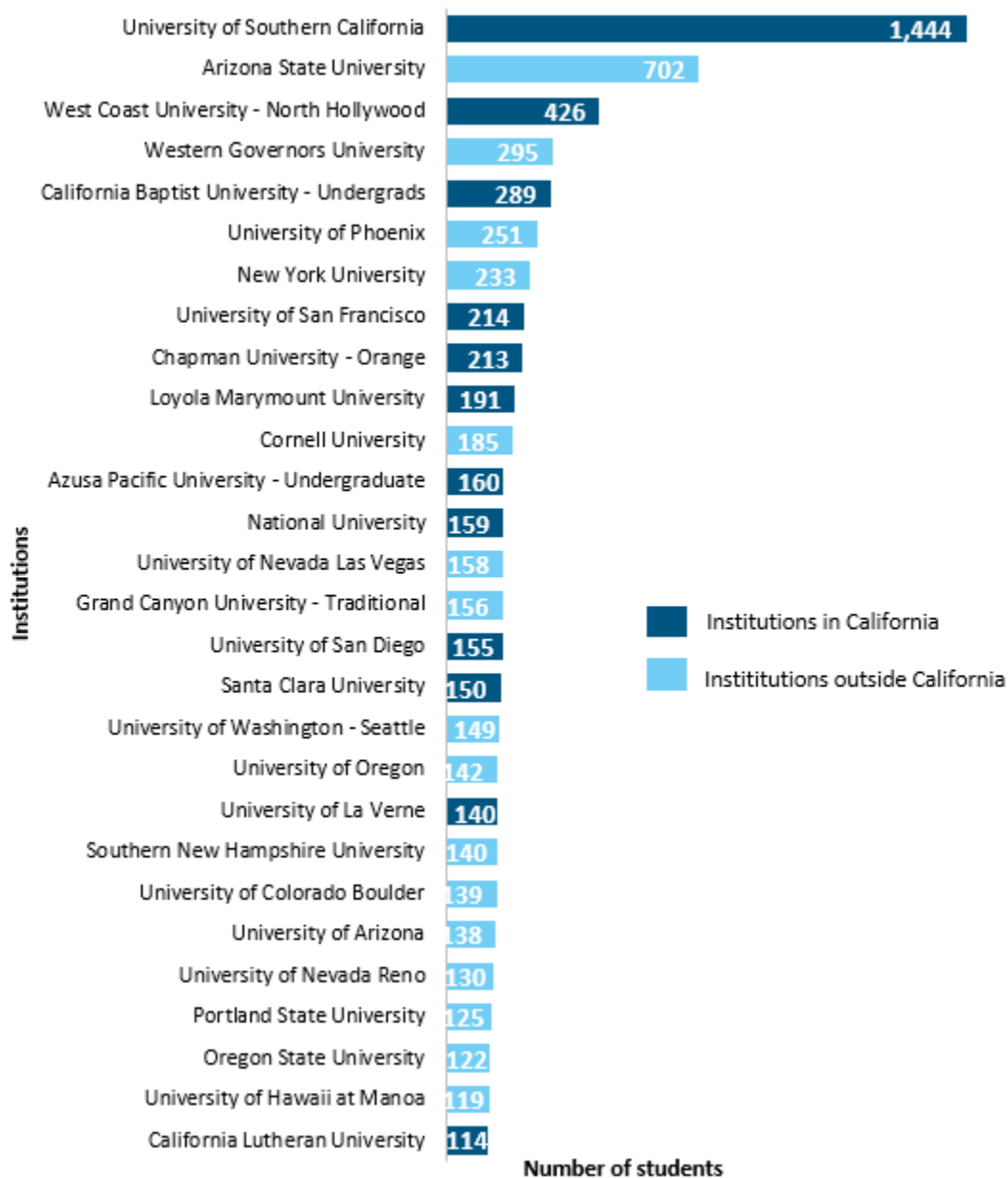


Figure A2. UC stopout degree attainment at universities outside UC (2005-2019 entering cohorts) not including CSUs.



## Appendix B. Stopout re-enrollment and degree completion efforts at “Comparison Eight” institutions

Approaches to stopout degree completion vary significantly among Comparison Eight institutions. The public institutions like the entire SUNY system and the University of Virginia are far more active in stopout outreach and degree completion than the private universities. Harvard is a notable exception among the privates, with a long-established degree completion vehicle through its Extension School. Yale’s Eli Whitney Students Program also provides a genuine pathway for non-traditional adults.<sup>39</sup> (See Table B1)

### University of Michigan

The University of Michigan’s (UM) degree completion activity sits primarily at its regional campuses rather than Ann Arbor.

UM-Flint — Accelerated Online Degree Completion (AODC): UM-Flint offers an AODC program specifically tailored for working adults with at least 25 previously earned college credits, featuring fully asynchronous seven-week courses. The program was launched in fall 2022 and graduated its first cohort in spring 2023.

UM-Dearborn — Focus on the Finish: UM-Dearborn’s initiative guarantees 60 percent of tuition funded by scholarships and grants for all Pell-eligible students. Participants can enroll full- or part-time, and a key differentiator is that students who need to step away mid-program for a semester do not lose eligibility.

Statewide ReUp Partnership: The Re-enroll with Reconnect (RWR) program was established in 2024 and is a partnership between ReUp Education and the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential (MiLESP). They have reached out to 50,656 students, engaged 7,458, enrolled 5,357, and graduated 83 students.<sup>40</sup>

### University of Virginia

The University of Virginia (UVA) has one of the most developed and long-running degree completion programs among the C8 public flagships.

Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS) — School of Continuing and Professional Studies: The BIS is designed for working adults who wish to complete their undergraduate degree while balancing work and family commitments. Concentrations include business, cybersecurity analysis, healthcare management, history and politics, psychology, and more. The program has been serving adult learners for over 25 years.

On average, students take two courses per semester and complete the degree in three to four years, with up to seven years permitted. About 45 percent of new BIS students are first-generation college students. UVA SCPS reports graduating students at more than twice the

<sup>39</sup> See Table B1 for a summary of Comparison Eight institutions’ degree completion and reengagement efforts.

<sup>40</sup> Michigan’s Re-Enrollment Marketplace Impact Report, ReUp Education, March 2026.  
[https://www.gongwer.com/public/ReUp\\_Michigan\\_Impact\\_Report-March\\_2026.pdf](https://www.gongwer.com/public/ReUp_Michigan_Impact_Report-March_2026.pdf)

national average for this population. A dedicated concentration for public safety professionals (law enforcement, fire, EMS) is also available as a pathway within the BIS.<sup>41</sup>

### SUNY (University at Buffalo / System)

SUNY operates the most aggressive systemwide stopout reengagement effort of any C8 institution. Come Back to Finish (formerly Re-Enroll to Complete): This systemwide initiative spans 32 SUNY campuses. In a recent year it re-enrolled 19,250 students out of 64,278 identified stopouts — a 30 percent re-enrollment rate compared to a national average of less than two percent. SUNY Chancellor King has prioritized reinvigorating and expanding the program for 2024–25.

University at Buffalo — Finish in 4: UB launched this on-time completion initiative in 2012, with 63% of the first enrollees graduating — far exceeding the national average of 34 percent for public institutions.<sup>42</sup>

### University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) is comparatively less active in targeted stopout outreach. No dedicated stopout reengagement initiative comparable to UVA's BIS or SUNY's Come Back to Finish was identified.

Their degree completion pathway exists but is more administrative than programmatic. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences maintains a formal Re-Entry Application process for students who voluntarily withdrew or stopped out, with re-entry contingent on academic standing. The university participates in the Illinois Articulation Initiative for community college transfer credit alignment. UIUC also appears on curated lists of institutions offering online degree completion pathways in Liberal Arts and Sciences and select engineering disciplines, suggesting some online flexibility for returning students.

### Harvard University

Bachelor of Liberal Arts (ALB) — Harvard Extension School: The ALB program is designed for working adults who graduated from high school at least five years ago and wish to earn a degree part-time without disrupting their career. The program accepts up to 64 transfer credits, leaving a minimum of 64 credits to complete at Harvard. It is offered nearly entirely online with a minimal on-campus residency requirement (available in two- or four-weekend options).

The program uses a performance-based admissions model — students take three prerequisite courses and must earn a grade of B or higher before formally applying. This approach values demonstrated academic ability over standardized test scores or prior transcripts, making it well-suited for adult stopouts. Concentrations include business, computer science, economics, international relations, psychology, data science, cybersecurity, and more. Students take two to

<sup>41</sup> UVA School of Continuing and Professional Studies. "Advance your Future, Advance your Career, Advance your Goals." <https://www.scps.virginia.edu>

<sup>42</sup> "UB's 'Finish in 4' helps students realize the dream of a college degree," *UB News*, May 17, 2016, <https://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2016/05/022.html>

three years on average to complete the degree. As of 2026, Harvard Extension School enrolls approximately 850 admitted ALB degree candidates.<sup>43</sup>

### Yale University

Yale has two relevant pathways for non-traditional and returning students.

**Eli Whitney Students Program:** Launched in 2008, this program offers non-traditional students (they include stopouts in this category) with high academic potential the opportunity to pursue a B.A. or B.S. at Yale College on a full- or part-time basis. It is a genuine degree-completion pathway for adults who have never finished a bachelor's degree, not a continuing education certificate. Yale seeks applicants with strong academic backgrounds, work experience, and community involvement.

**Reinstatement for Former Yale Students:** For former Yale undergraduates who have been away for more than four terms, students are required to complete two courses at another accredited four-year institution with grades of A or B before returning. This is a reinstatement requirement rather than a proactive reengagement program.<sup>44</sup>

### Stanford University

Stanford does not operate a bachelor's degree completion program for external stopouts.

Stanford Continuing Studies offers enrichment courses to the general public, but these carry their own Continuing Studies units of credit that cannot be applied toward any Stanford degree. The program serves more than 18,000 lifelong learners annually but is explicitly not a degree-completion pathway.<sup>45</sup> For former Stanford undergraduates specifically, the university allows discontinued students to submit a Request to Return and Register — even after years or decades away — through a reinstatement process. However, this is available only to former Stanford students, not to external adult learners.

### MIT

MIT similarly lacks a dedicated stopout or adult bachelor's completion program for external learners.

MIT's leave of absence and return policy allows undergraduates to come back through Student Support Services, but no application for return will be considered from an applicant who has received a bachelor's degree or equivalent from another institution. MIT has no continuing education pathway that leads to an undergraduate degree for external adult learners. MIT OpenCourseWare and edX offer non-credit learning opportunities, but these are not pathways to a degree.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Harvard Extension School, "Undergraduate Degree Program ALB Fast Facts Sheet," *Harvard Division of Continuing Education*, 2024–2025, <https://extension.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2024/08/ALB-Fast-Facts-Sheet.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> Yale University, "Eli Whitney Students," *Yale University Handbook for Instructors of Undergraduates*, 2025–2026, <https://catalog.yale.edu/handbook-instructors-undergraduates-yale-college/eli-whitney-nondegree-students/>.

<sup>45</sup> Stanford University, "Reinstatement," *Stanford University Bulletin*, accessed July 2026, <https://bulletin.stanford.edu/academic-polices/enrollment/reinstatement>.

<sup>46</sup> Massachusetts Institute of Technology Office of the Registrar, "Leaves of Absence & Returns." MIT Registrar. Accessed July 2026. <https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/student-status/leaves-absence-returns>.

*Table B1. Summary of Comparison Eight degree completion and reengagement efforts*

| Institution | Program Name                                                         | Format                     | Open to External Stopouts? | Notable Feature(s)                                                                                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| U Michigan  | AODC (UM-Flint); Focus on the Finish (UM-Dearborn); ReUp partnership | Online / hybrid            | Yes                        | Statewide ReUp partnership; asynchronous completion program at UM-Flint; substantial tuition support at UM-Dearborn |
| U Virginia  | Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS)                          | Online                     | Yes                        | 25+ years running; graduates students at 2x the national completion rate                                            |
| SUNY        | Come Back to Finish (systemwide)                                     | Varies                     | Yes                        | 32 campuses; 19,250 re-enrollments in one year; 30% return rate vs. 2% national avg.                                |
| UIUC        | Re-entry/transfer pathways                                           | Online available           | Partial                    | No dedicated stopout initiative identified; relies on standard re-entry processes                                   |
| Harvard     | Bachelor of Liberal Arts (ALB) — Extension School                    | Online + minimal residency | Yes                        | Performance-based admission; up to 64 transfer credits accepted                                                     |
| Yale        | Eli Whitney Students Program                                         | Full or part-time          | Yes                        | Full B.A./B.S. at Yale for non-traditional adults; highly selective; active since 2008                              |
| Stanford    | None (degree-bearing)                                                | N/A                        | No                         | Continuing Studies courses non-transferable to any Stanford degree; reinstatement only for former Stanford students |
| MIT         | None (degree-bearing)                                                | N/A                        | No                         | Return policy exists for former MIT undergraduates only; no external adult completion pathway                       |