

# Black Student Equity

Overcoming Barriers and  
Providing Support

**SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL COUNTIES**  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

# Acknowledgements

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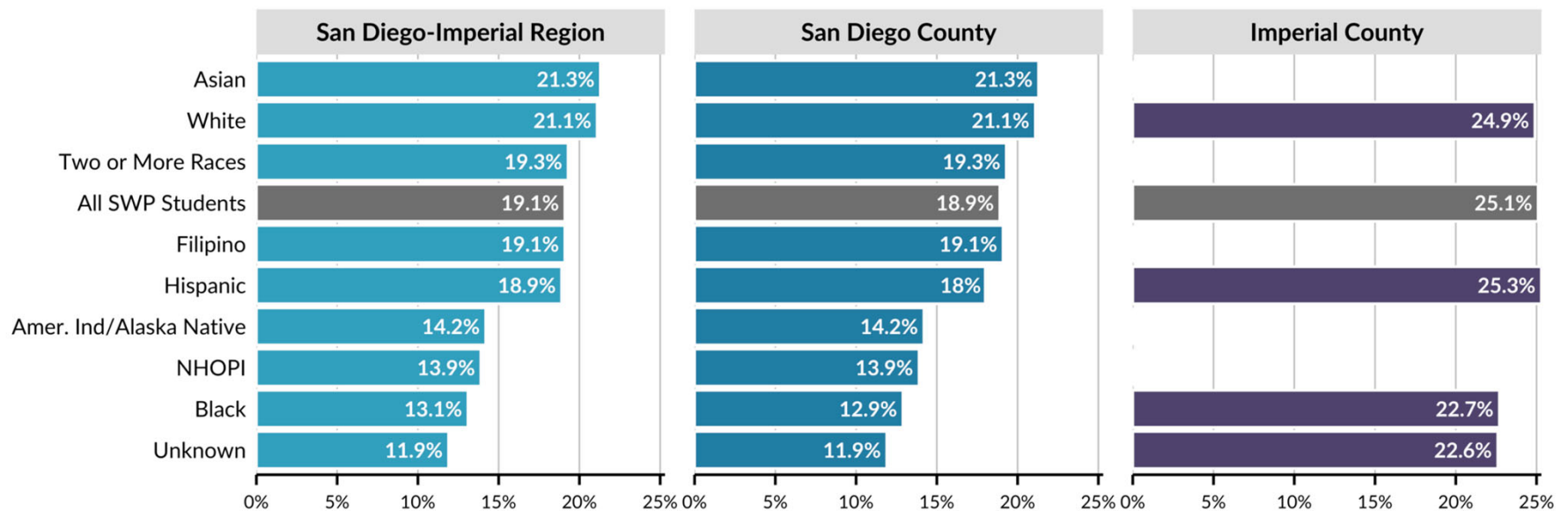
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San Diego Workforce Partnership

# Black students are least likely to achieve 9+ CTE units...

**Figure 3: Percent of SWP Students Achieving 9+ CTE Units by Race / Ethnicity and County**

Among all Strong Workforce Program students, the proportion who successfully completed nine or more career education semester units in the selected year. Denominator is total count of students within subgroup.

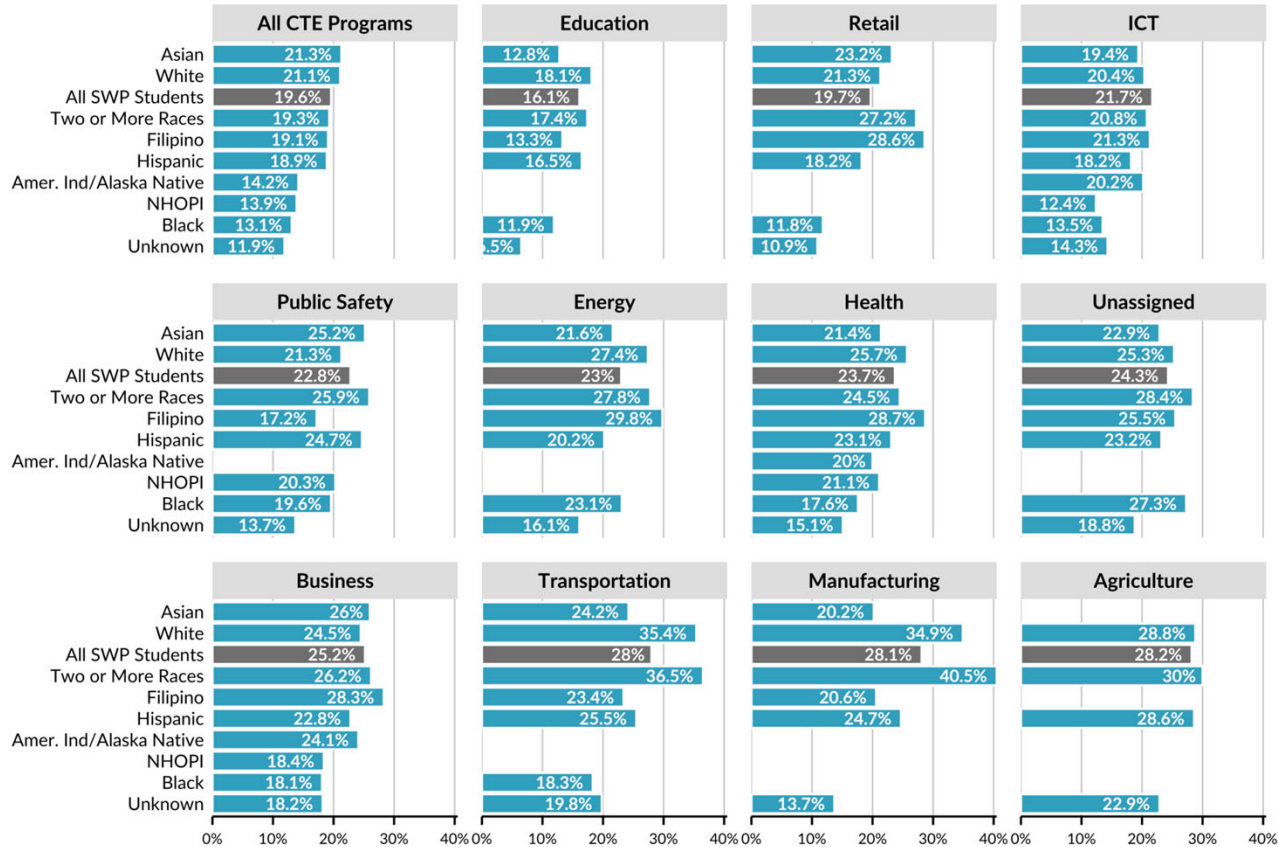


Source: Chancellor's Office Management Information System. Retrieved March 5, 2021 from CCCC LaunchBoard Strong Workforce Program Dashboard.

Note: Calculations for regionwide and San Diego County do not include data from San Diego Continuing Education, and consequently may not match published values.

**Figure 4: Percent of SWP Students in the San Diego-Imperial Region Achieving 9+ CTE Units by Race / Ethnicity and Program**

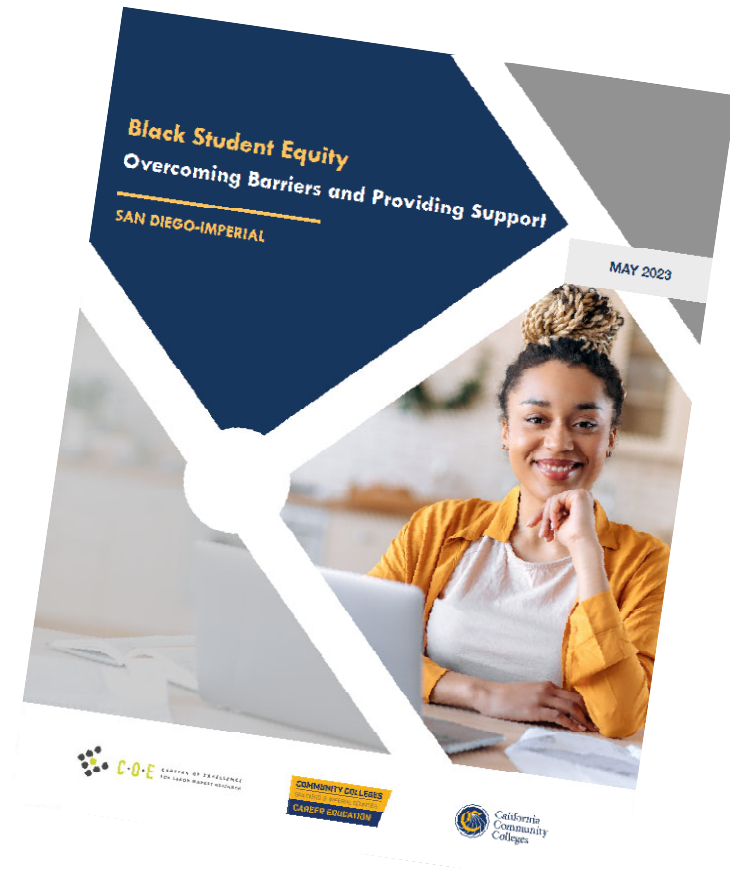
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## Two research questions:

- What should each of the region's community colleges provide in the classroom and on campus to retain Black students?
- What barriers prevent Black students from completing community college programs or courses?



# Research Project

Commissioned San Diego Workforce Partnership to conduct research with current and former Black students

Between March and September 2022, 200 Black students identified by the colleges participated in:

- focus groups (n=46)
- survey (n=154)

Triangulated with faculty and staff interviews

# Participant Overview

## 46 Focus Group Participants

Gender	%
Women	74%
Men	26%
Non-binary or Other	0%

Age	%
Younger than 25	23%
25-34	29%
35-44	23%
45-54	23%
55+	3%

## 154 Survey Participants

Gender	%
Women	64%
Men	27%
Non-binary, No response or Other	8%

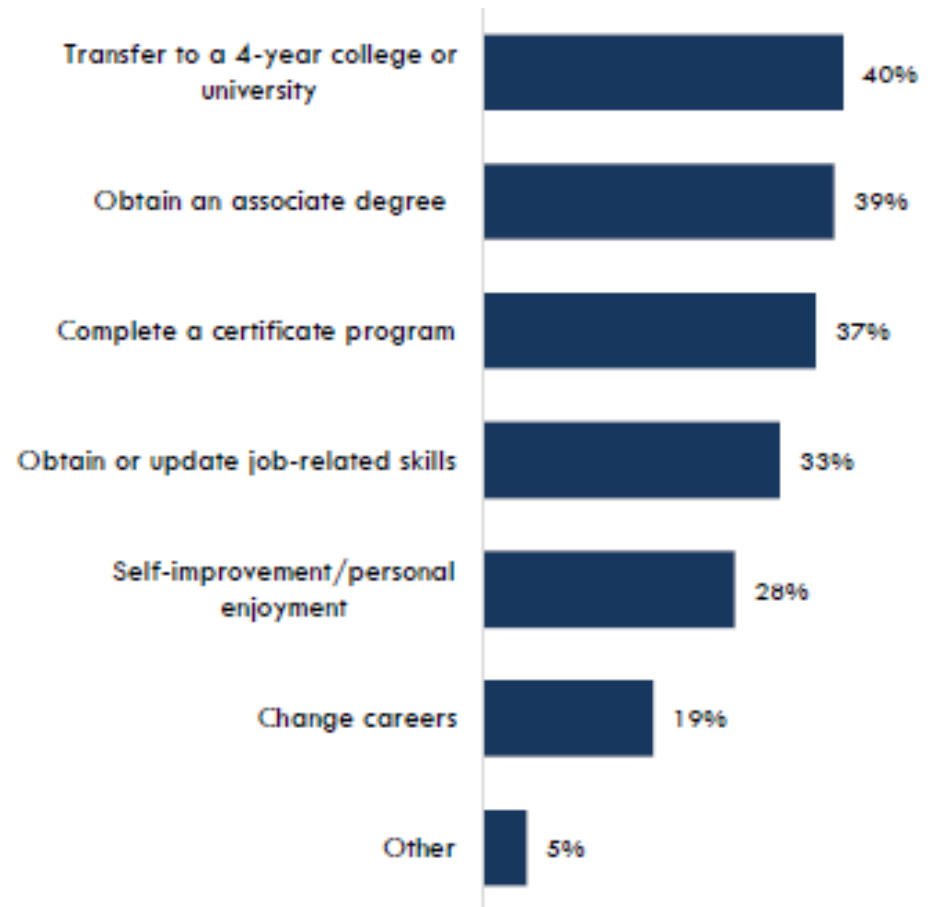
Age	%
Younger than 25	8%
25-34	47%
35-44	25%
45-54	0%
55+	12%

# Findings





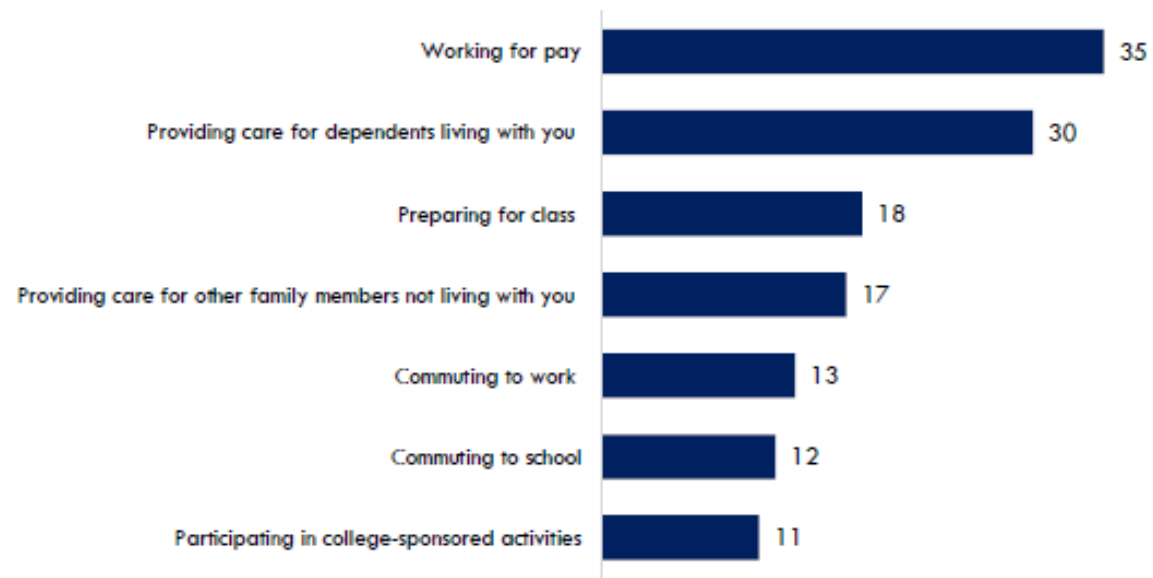
# Student Motivations & Goals



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**“Community college was more affordable than just going straight to a Cal State. So it just gave me more time to figure out what I wanted to do exactly. And what field I wanted to get into.”**

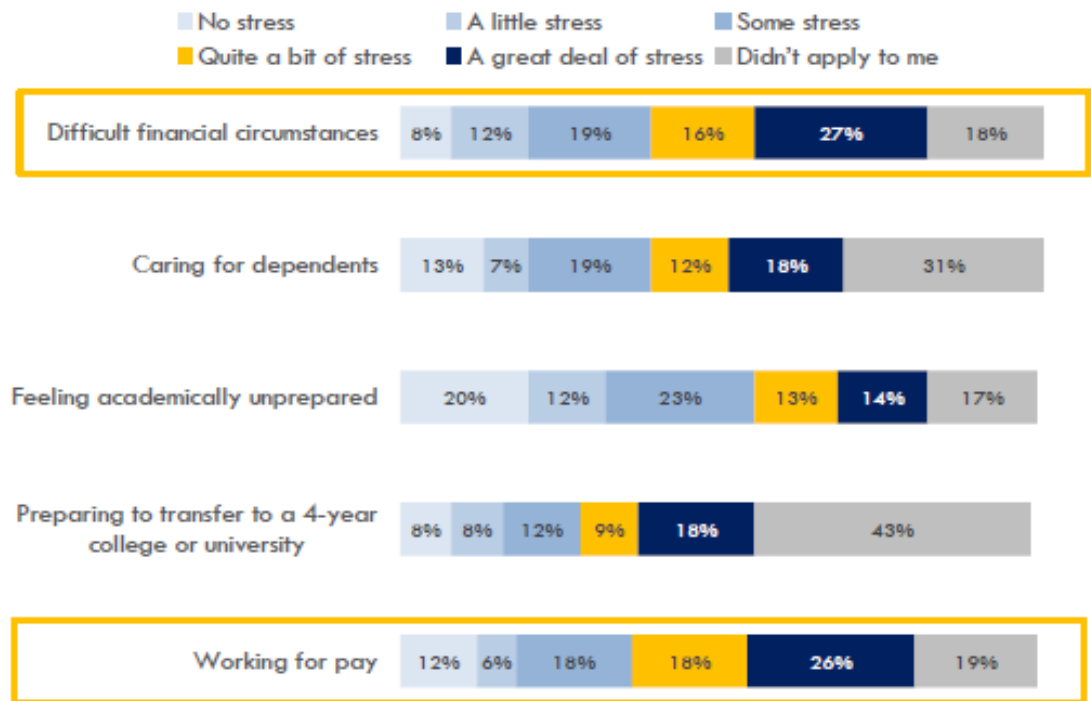
# How Students Spend Their Week



# Six Key Barriers

1. Finances
2. Caregiving
3. Residual impacts of COVID-19
4. Microaggressions
5. Fatigue and mental health challenges
6. Lack of guidance

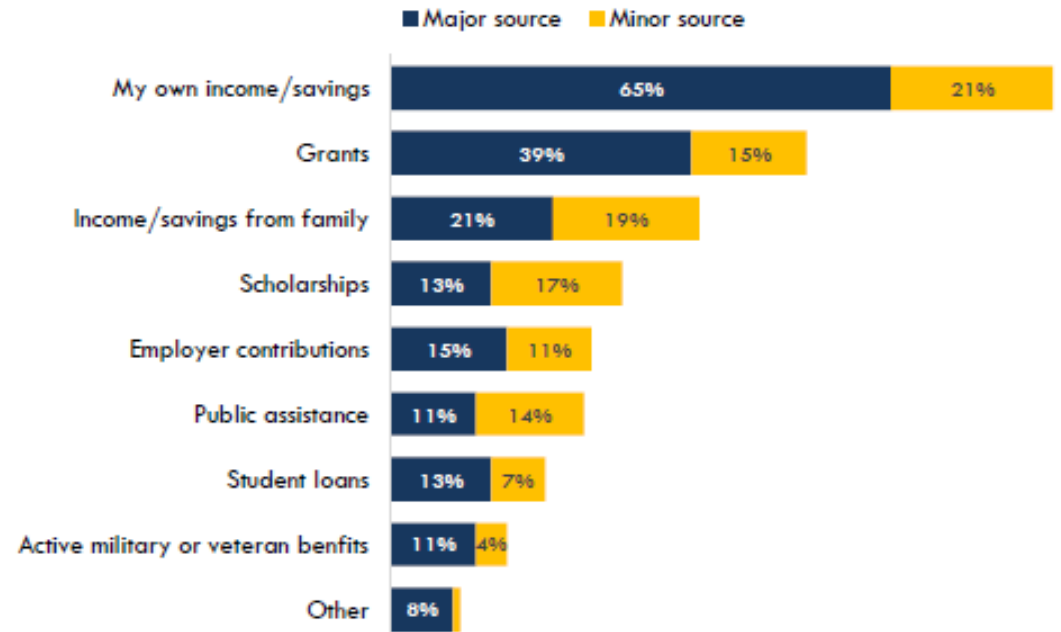
# Barrier #1: Finances



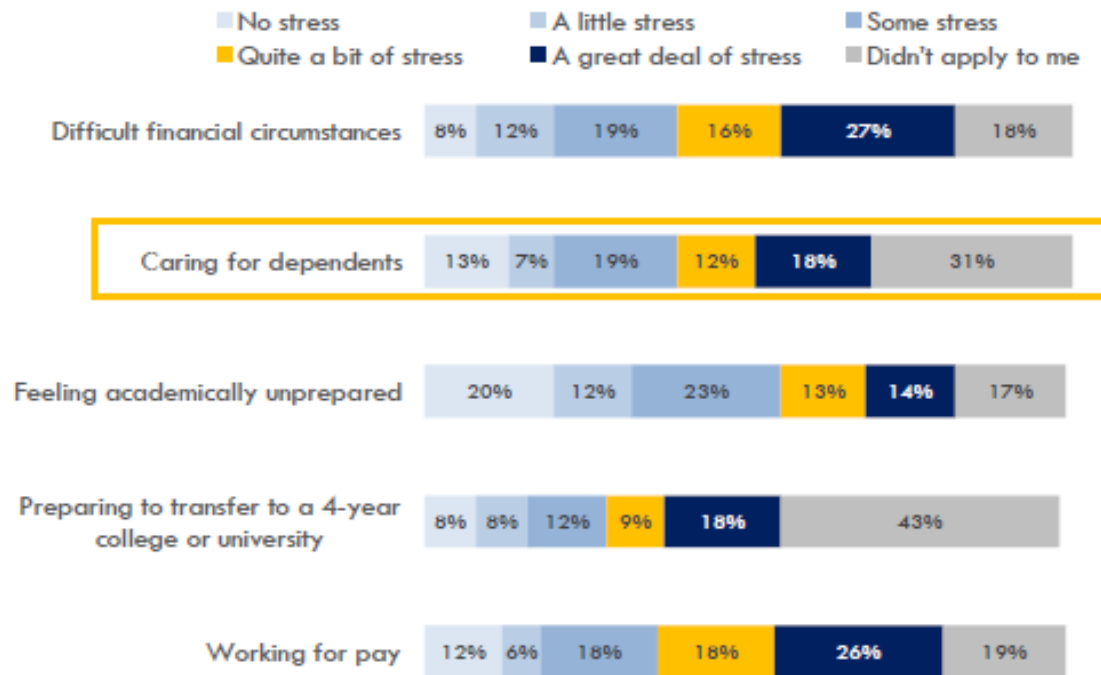
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**“What really made me make  
that decision [to drop out]  
is that I lost my aid.  
So I had to pay for classes,  
which was like another thing  
plus work at the same time.”**

# Barrier #1: Finances



# Barrier #2: Caregiving

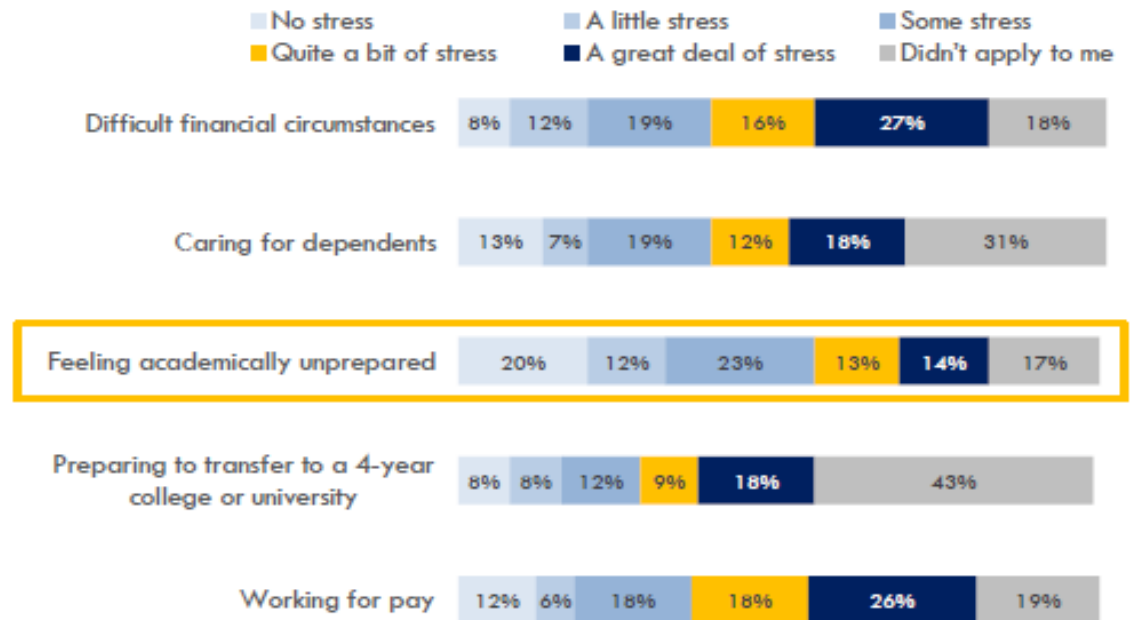




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**“Who’s going to pick up my child  
for daycare who’s gonna watch  
my child after, you know,  
three o’clock from eight o’clock  
while I study or, that was a  
huge barrier.”**

# Barrier #3: COVID-19



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**“I felt like I lost a lot of exposure, by not being able to have access to quality labs ... trying to apply for jobs, it is very difficult for me to go on a job interview and speak with a potential employer and not have physical hands-on experience that I can relate to.”**

## **Barrier #4: Micro- aggressions**

**“I was often the only, obviously, Black person in the class ... I was asked questions more than others. And I had to, often I would say, give my perspective as if I was speaking for all Black people. So that was pretty annoying.”**

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**“One of the reasons I left was because I was feeling so much negativity there ... I try not to always go straight to be like, Is this because I’m Black? ... maybe it’s because I’m young, or maybe it’s because I’m a woman, or maybe because I don’t have enough experience. But when I felt like, Okay, this is because I’m Black, then I just try to advocate for myself or remove myself from the situation.”**

## Barrier #5: Fatigue & Mental Health

“And I think for me, my mental health issues have been a really big issue for me to overcome. So getting connected with health services, having the Black student support group available. I never even knew that they got free counseling sessions ... Until I had a meltdown.”

## Barrier #6: Lack of Guidance

“I wasn’t really guided in the right direction. So I took many classes that I didn’t need to take. So I think ultimately, that’s why I quit going because it was just I felt like I was spinning in circles and getting nowhere.”

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**“So trying to schedule things  
around kids and a full-time job,  
and just really, really wanting  
to get more education.  
And so that was a challenge ...  
I want this class, but it’s only  
available on this date this time.”**



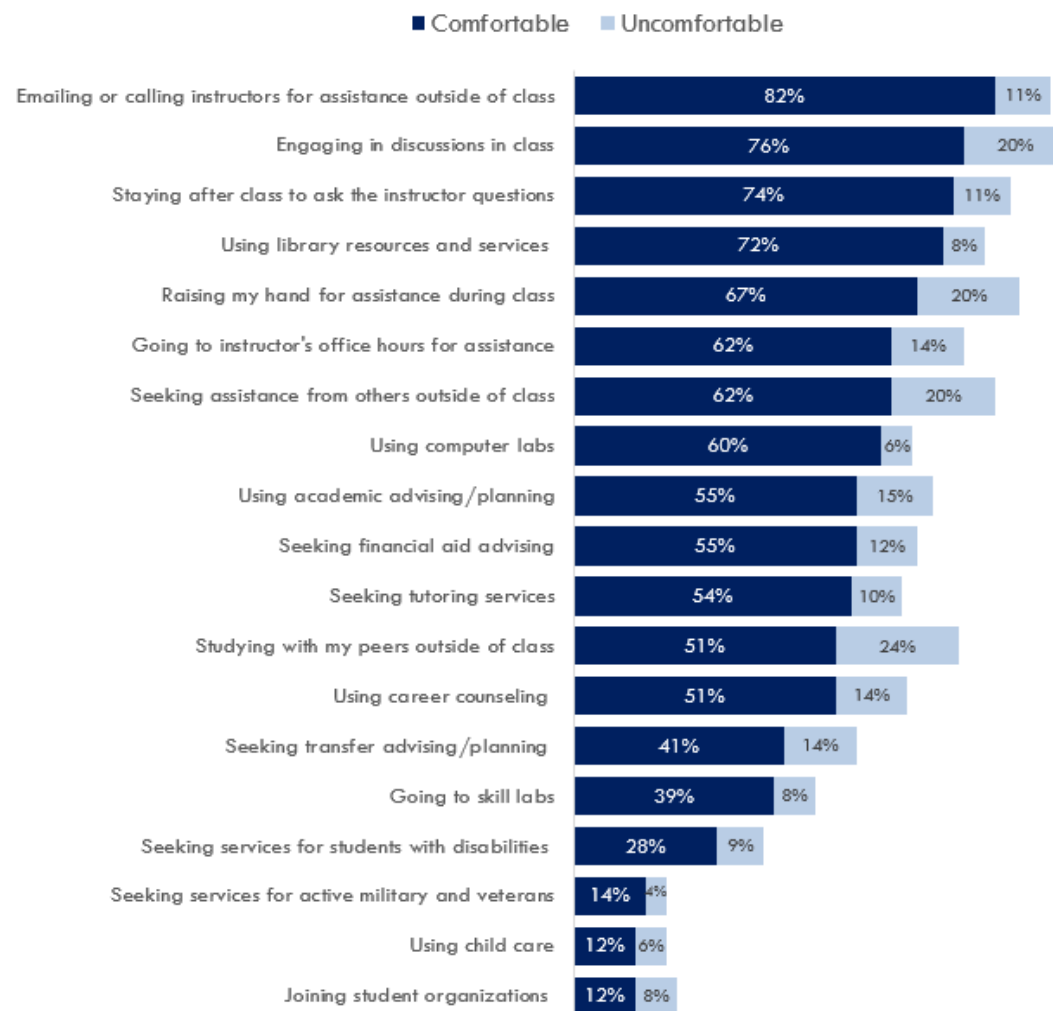
# Two Support Factors

1. Supportive instructors
2. Student support services

## Support #1: Encouraging Instructors

“I had one ... African American teacher. And she was in the Child Development department. Just the way she related to you and she, you know, some teachers like to tiptoe around the fact that you’re Black, and, you know, you are underserved. And she didn’t do that..”

# Support #2: Support Services



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**“I actually had a good experience  
at [college]. It’s been great.  
And the times that I did disappear  
when just life in general  
got too much, I did have  
my counselor reach out to me  
because I was a part of Umoja.”**

# Insights & Recommendations



# Three Insights

1. Students Need Inclusive Learning Environments
2. Students Need Flexible Course Schedules for Adult Learners
3. Students Need Transformative Employment Opportunities

# Students Need Inclusive Learning Environments

Increase equity-mindedness  
and data literacy

Colleges should support local  
integration of the Faculty  
Institute

Create inclusive curriculum

Cultivate inclusive  
pedagogy/andragogy

Increase representation in  
the classroom

# Students Need Flexible Schedules Designed for Adult Learners

Review local Career  
Education program paths

Review local scheduling  
practices



# Students Need Transformative Employment Opportunities

Educate industry and  
employer partners

Empower race conscious  
and equity-minded industry  
and employer partners

Develop measurable  
diversity and inclusion goals

THANK YOU

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