

*Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice*

# College Access and Success Assessment (CASA): An Innovative Approach to Evaluate and Strengthen College-Going Culture

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# WARM UP

1. What kind of support does your school provide students for college or career readiness?
2. What do your students think about college?
3. What do your students do to prepare for college?
4. How do you know? What kind of data do you use to assess these efforts, attitudes, or behaviors?
  - What is your college-going rate?
  - Have you analyzed this rate by race or gender?
  - Are assessments tied to actual college-going rates?

# ROAD MAP

## Presentation

- Introduction to USC Center and College Access and Success Assessment (CASA)
- Data from pilot study
- Utilization of data from study
- Future of CASA

Discussion

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# CASA BACKGROUND

## The Need

- Postsecondary education is vehicle for socioeconomic mobility
- Disparities remain in college access and degree completion rates for students from lower SES and underrepresented racial/ethnic groups
- Schools currently don't have reliable measure of college-going culture

## Definition

- College-going culture: High school environment that promotes postsecondary education for every student regardless of personal background

## Instrument

- Powerful diagnostic tool to assess a high school's college-going culture through an efficient 45-minute student survey

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# CASA RESEARCH

- Builds upon solid existing research that college-going culture within high schools is linked to actual college enrollment
- Adds new research on high school variables that may predict college enrollment
- Helps build strong college-going culture, which can foster these outcomes:
  - School environment in which all students are encouraged and supported to attend college
  - Higher rates of admission to and enrollment in college

# CASA COMPONENTS

**Environmental:** Student perception of the school's commitment to college and preparation of all students to pursue college or career

- School-wide college goals, counselor advising, all students encouraged to take rigorous curriculum, create awareness of college eligibility, college/career center, college events and activities, etc.

**Attitudinal:** Student value of college degree and self-perceived capacity to pursue and complete college degree

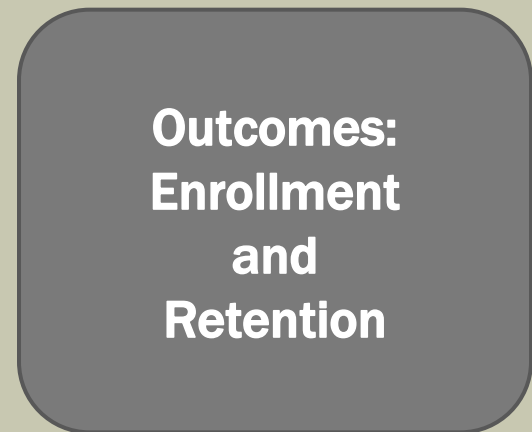
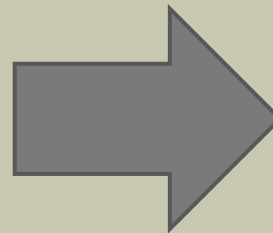
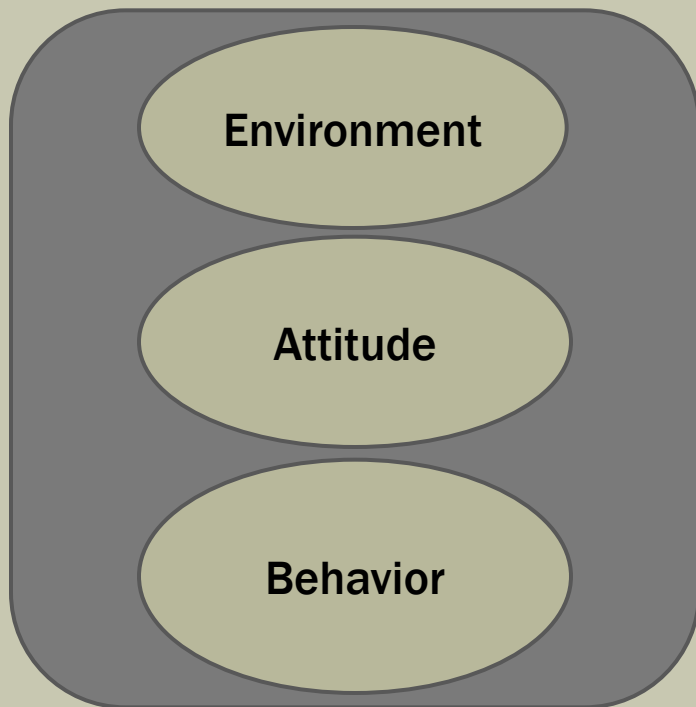
- Academic rigor, college affordable, persistence, academic potential, academic motivation, etc.

**Behavioral:** Student engagement in activities important college-going

- Financial plan for college, application for scholarships, entrance exam prep, statement of purpose, FAFSA, co-curricular activities, etc.

# CASA FRAMEWORK

## College-Going Culture





# PILOT OVERVIEW

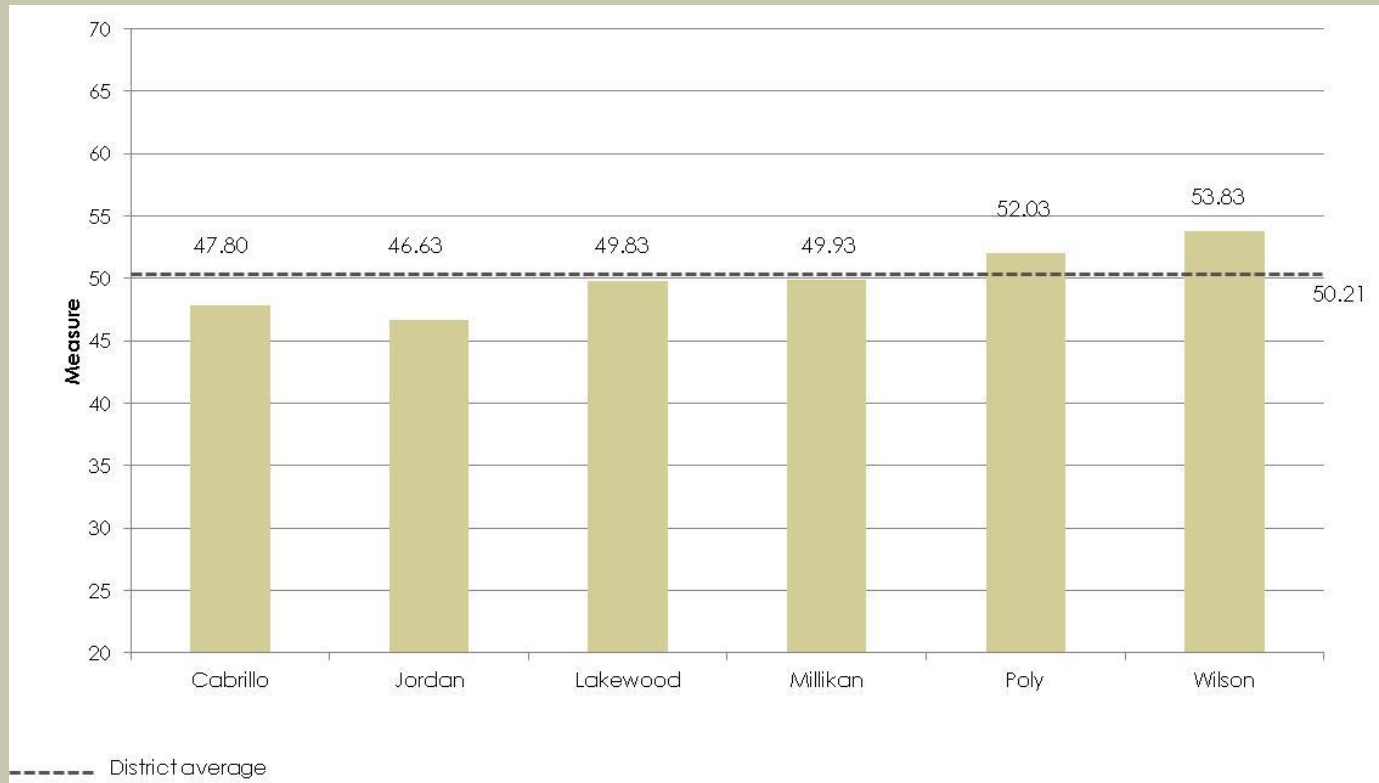
- **CASA pilot administered in April 2010 at eight high schools within two CA districts**
- **CASA student responses merged with Fall 2010 National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) outcomes**
- **Descriptive analyses**
- **Factor analyses**
  - **Component and sub-component scores standardized and centered at a mean of 50**
- **Logistic regression of outcomes**

# CASA REPORTS

CASA provides data, analysis and guidance on the school/district level to improve college-going culture through:

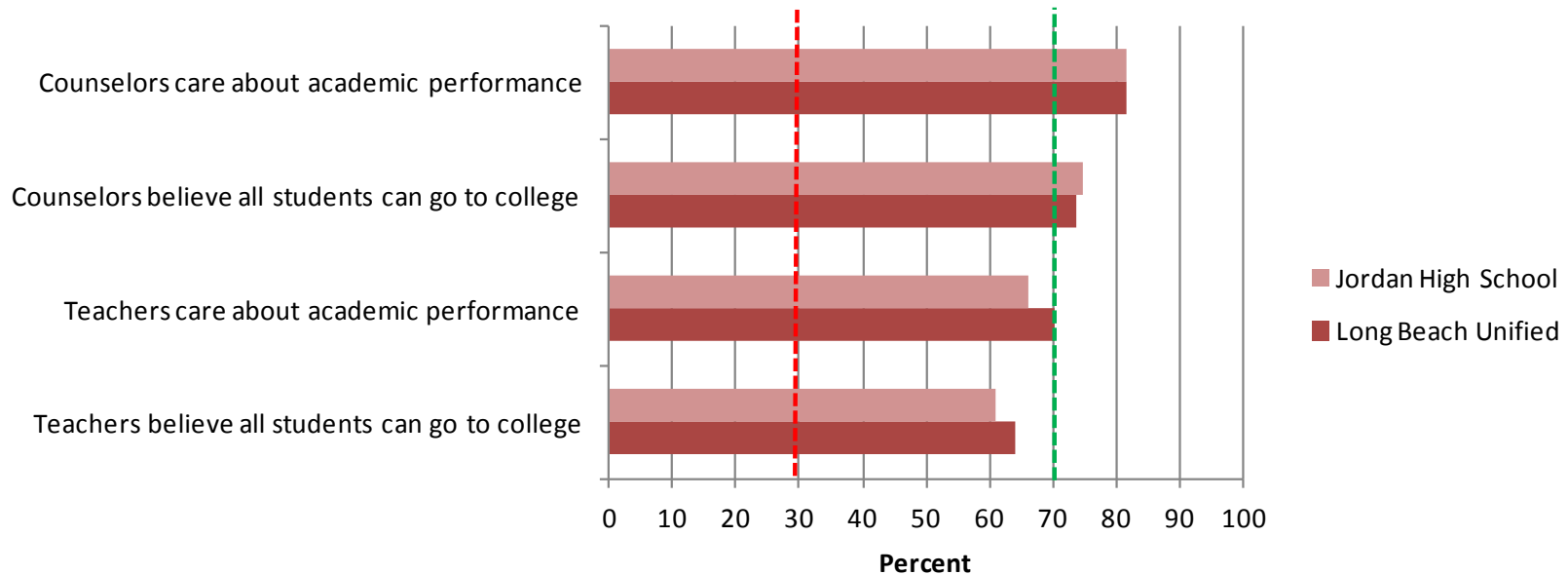
- Comparison within and across districts
- Descriptive Data
  - Frequencies of student responses by component
  - Disaggregated data by demographic backgrounds
- Modeling Scenarios
  - Predicted gains on college outcome based on improvements to each component

# COMPARISON ACROSS SCHOOLS WITHIN A DISTRICT

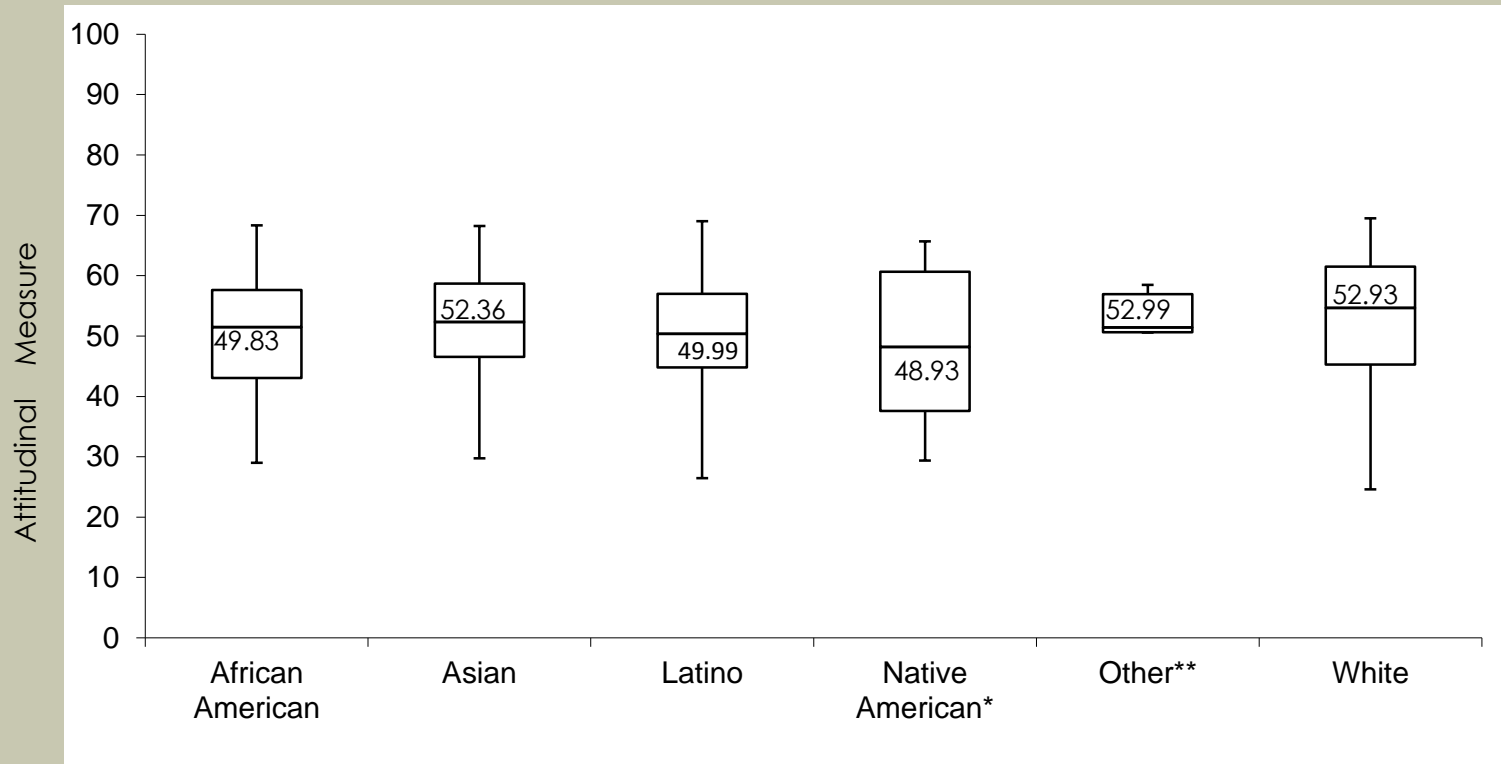


# FREQUENCY OF STUDENT RESPONSES

## Positive Item Responses within School Climate Rank-Ordered

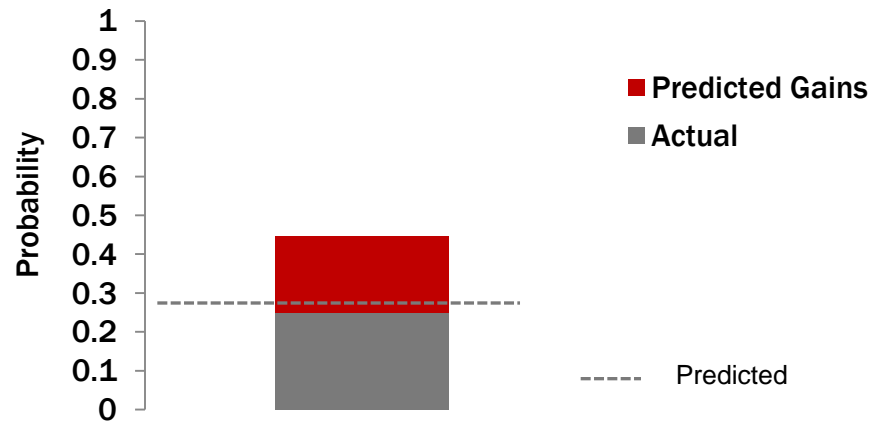


# DATA DISAGGREGATED BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS



# PREDICTIVE MODELING FOR SCHOOLS

Predicted Gain in 4-year College Enrollment by Increasing Behavioral Component



# LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## ■ Basic Information

- Approximately 85,000 students
- 72% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 68% Hispanic or African American
- 25% English Learners

## ■ Academic and Career Success For All Students Initiative

- Increase college and workforce readiness

## ■ An Award-Winning School System: The Broad Prize in 2003

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# WHY WE VALUE CASA DATA

- Provided well-informed survey, methodology, and presentation of data
- Captured information on student perceptions of college-going culture
- Offered insights into the key drivers of college access and preparation



# INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING INITIATIVES

## ■ District-level

- Strategic Plan
- GEAR UP Grant
- Small Learning Community Grant
- Linked Learning Initiative

## ■ School-level

- Accreditation Process
- Qualitative Data for Professional Learning Communities

*Fiscal Decisions*

# CASA DATA COMPARATIVE AND TIMELY

- Allows for benchmarking with other districts
- Track graduating students outside of two main feeder postsecondary institutions (50% of population)
  - NSC data national
- More recent data than CA Department of Education (2009)

# CASA DATA IMPORTANT FOR DECISION-MAKING

- Value-added nature of project is compelling
- Data helped make hard decisions on tight budget
  - Identifies top predictors of college enrollment within each component
  - Modeling scenarios show which components can make most impact
  - Data disaggregated by race/ethnicity complements other district-wide information

# CHALLENGES

- Logistical aspect of surveying all students
- Lag time of NSC data
- Technical aspect of reports difficult to understand at times

# CASA'S FUTURE

- Fundraising for wide-scale implementation in California
  - 3-year timeframe (March 2013 to Feb 2016)
  - Survey 2 cohorts of seniors, track enrollment, and 2<sup>nd</sup>-year retention
- Survey refinement with item paneling and student focus groups
- Development of electronic version in addition to paper version

# CASA IMPACT

- Impact over 260,000 high school students
  - 5 CA Partner Districts: Long Beach, Fresno, Clovis, Garden Grove, Los Angeles, including Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools
  - Majority of students are underrepresented race/ethnicity and low-income
- Annual convening of leaders from partner districts
  - USC will distribute CASA reports and benchmark data
  - Forum for partner districts to share promising practices
- USC will publish and present on findings
- CASA ready to be used more widely in high schools

# DISCUSSION

- How would you implement changes based on data?
- What challenges do you foresee acting on data?
- What changes could you make in three years?

# Contact Information

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Presentation available:

<http://www.usc.edu/programs/cerpp/presentations.html>

