

Recruiting Teachers of Color
A Research Brief for CSU's Teacher Education Leaders
July 2018

As California educators and policy makers work to solve the shortage of qualified PK-12 teachers, they must also address the diversity gap between its teachers and students. In 2014-15, California had the largest gap in the country (40 percentage points) between non-White students and teachers.¹ A 2016-17 breakdown of data by race shows:

- the portion of Hispanic and Latinx students outnumbered Hispanic and Latinx teachers by 2½ times;
- the portion of Asian students outnumbered Asian teachers by 1½ times;
- similar imbalances existed between African American students and African American teachers; and
- male teachers of color were particularly scarce. Only 1 in 10 fell into that category.

Closing the teacher-student diversity gap will produce several academic and social benefits. It will help close the achievement gap, reduce high school dropout rates, and lead more students to pursue college degrees.² Teachers of color also serve as strong role models because, as studies have shown, they often have higher expectations than their peers for students of color; they often develop more trusting relationships with students; and, they are often better able to mitigate tensions arising from racism.³ Teacher diversity will also improve the educational experiences of White students who often miss opportunities to learn from the culturally diverse perspectives that non-White teachers bring to the classroom.⁴

The good news is that the students enrolling in CSU's teacher preparation programs are becoming increasingly diverse, in large part because of steps many campuses have already taken to achieve this goal. In 2015-16, 58% were students of color,⁵ which is significantly higher than the portion of teachers of color in the state, which was 33%.⁶

¹ California Department of Education, Dataquest. <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

² Thomas Dee (2004). "Teachers, Race, and Student Achievement in a Randomized Experiment." *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86, pp 195 -210 ; Anna Egalite, Brian Kisida, and Marcus A. Winters. (2015). "Representation in the Classroom: The Effect of Own-race Teachers on Student Achievement," *Economics of Education Review*, 45; S. Gershenson, C. M. D. Hart, C. A. Lindsay, & N. W. Papageorge (2017). "The long-run impacts of same-race teachers." Bonn, Germany: IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Discussion Paper Series.

³ Jason Grissom and Christopher Redding (2016). "Discretion and Disproportionality: Explaining the Underrepresentation of High-Achieving Students of Color in Gifted Programs," *AERA Open*, 2 1–25; Ana María Villegas and Jacqueline Jordan Irvine (2010). "Diversifying the Teaching Force: An Examination of Major Arguments." *The Urban Review*, 42 175–192.

⁴ Melinda D. Anderson (August 6, 2015). "Why Schools Need More Teachers of Color—for White Students." *The Atlantic*; Ali Michael and Eleonora Bartoli (Summer 2014). "What White Children Need to Know About Race," *National Association of Independent Schools*, <https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/summer-2014/what-white-children-need-to-know-about-race/>

⁵ California Commission for Teacher Credentialing data dashboard on student enrollments in CSU teacher preparation programs for 2015-16. <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/reports/data/titleii-prog-info>

⁶ California Department of Education, Dataquest report on statewide student enrollment by ethnicity and grade. <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

To accelerate the closure of California's diversity gap, institutions of higher education that prepare teachers, including the CSU which prepares over half of them, must find ways to further strengthen the pipeline of students of color earning teaching credentials and entering California's teacher workforce.⁷ One way to accomplish this is to expand on the programs described below and the proven strategies they have employed.

In 2016, the California State University launched **EduCorps**⁸ to create communities of support for students interested in becoming teachers. EduCorps recruits candidates by asking high school educators and college professors to nominate students, preferably those of color, who possess qualities that would make them effective teachers.⁹ Nominees have shown up in large numbers at Celebration of Teaching events on their campuses, where they have interacted with PK-12 teachers, learned about credential programs and financial aid, networked with fellow nominees, and become inspired about joining the teaching profession. Many have already obtained teaching credentials and been hired by school districts.

Undergraduates participating in the **Teaching Fellows Program**¹⁰ at Fresno State are paid to work 15 hours per week leading after school enrichment activities. They also attend monthly professional development sessions to develop basic pedagogical skills. Eighty-five percent of the teaching fellows are students of color, virtually matching the demographics of the K-12 students in the Fresno region. Since 1999, when the program began, hundreds of fellows have obtained their teaching credentials and been hired by local schools, often the same ones in which they worked as teaching fellows.

The Black Teachers Project,¹¹ founded in 2015, helps to sustain the work of Black teachers in New York City and California's Bay Area through communities of practice and professional learning events. Leaders of this organization also collaborate with schools and districts to ensure that Black teachers are well supported and have a voice in school operations. In addition, they help universities recruit Black teachers to their programs by helping them create the conditions that will attract Black teachers and that will ensure they are successful when they graduate.

The Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program,¹² created in 2007 at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County campus, recruits talented candidates into its STEM-focused teacher preparation program. Close to 40% of its participants have been students of color. Unique components of the program include: a summer bridge program to help candidates meet program requirements; in-field internships in diverse classroom settings with faculty mentors; and, membership in a community of future teachers who share a common purpose.

⁷ School districts must also take steps to reduce the high attrition rates for teachers of color. See U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Current and Former Teacher Data Files," Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) 2012–13.

⁸ The website for this project is <http://www.calstate.edu/educorps>

⁹ Suggested criteria: they are knowledgeable of their subject(s) and enjoy learning; they are well-organized, persistent, and capable of multi-tasking; they have had rich life and work experiences and may have followed an untraditional path to the university; they have had out-of-school experiences with children of diverse backgrounds; they have experienced poverty or have been disenfranchised and/or have the capacity to empathize with the challenges of living in poverty and being disenfranchised, and; they believe all children can be successful if appropriately taught.

¹⁰ The website for this project is <http://fresnostate.edu/kremen/about/centers-projects/teach/programs/teachingfellows.html>

¹¹ The website for this project is <http://www.blackteacherproject.org>

¹² Freeman A. Hrabowski, III and Mavis G. Sanders (Winter 2015). "Increasing Racial Diversity in the Teacher Workforce: One University's Approach," *Thought and Action*, pp 101-116.

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The projects described below are focused specifically on recruiting male teachers of color

Educators at CSU Northridge recently launched the ***Future Minority Male Teachers of California Project***¹³ with four other large, urban CSU campuses to address California's severe shortage of male teachers of color. Each campus has committed to increasing the enrollment of this underrepresented group by at least 50% within two years. To achieve this goal, CSU recruitment specialists and their counterparts from nearby school districts are promoting careers in teaching at diversity forums, graduate school fairs, and career development events for paraprofessionals, and they are providing mentors to candidates who show an interest in teaching. In three years, CSU project leaders expect all CSU campuses to adopt these recruitment strategies.

In 2014, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) created ***The Black & Hispanic/Latino Male Teachers Initiative Networked Improvement Community***¹⁴ to help teacher education institutions increase the number of Black and Hispanic/Latino men earning teaching credentials. AACTE selected CSU Fullerton and 9 other institutions across the country to participate in this work. At CSU Fullerton, recruiters are reaching out to students in high schools; providing a mentorship program with undergraduate males of color and local veteran educators; offering financial aid options; and preparing candidates for the state tests needed to enter their credential programs.

Call Me MISTER¹⁵ (acronym for Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models), first developed at Clemson University, now operates on over 20 colleges in South Carolina, with national partner schools in nine other states. The project is designed to expand the pool of male teachers with diverse backgrounds. Participants, who are recruited from underserved, at-risk communities, receive financial aid to tuition; academic, social, and cultural support during their preparation; and assistance in obtaining employment after graduation.

Project IMPACT¹⁶ (acronym for Increasing Male Practitioners and Classrooms Teachers) was developed at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey to increase the number of male teachers with diverse backgrounds. Many of its participants come from underserved communities and return to help transform them after completing their programs. The project enlists incoming freshmen and provides extensive academic, social, and financial support (including annual stipends of \$4,000 for 4 years) throughout their undergraduate and professional programs.

MenTeach¹⁷ was founded in 1979 by Bryan G. Nelson in Minnesota as a non-profit clearinghouse of resources for men who are thinking about becoming teachers or who are already serving as teachers. The MenTeach website also provides resources about male teachers to researchers, universities, and education policy makers. MenTeach has published a comprehensive report on male teachers titled, "The Importance of Men Teachers: And Why There Are So Few," that describes the challenges male teachers face and strategies that have been used to recruit males

¹³ The website for this project is <https://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/future-minority-male-teachers-of-california>

¹⁴ A description of this initiative is available at: <http://theinnovationexchange.net/networked-improvement-community/>

¹⁵ The website for this project is <https://www.clemson.edu/education/callmemister/index.html>

¹⁶ The website for this project is <https://academics.rowan.edu/education/ESP/impact/index.html>

¹⁷ The website for this project is <http://menteach.org>

into the profession.

New York City Men Teach,¹⁸ created in 2015, partners with local education agencies and seeks to recruit and retain 1,000 male teachers of color for New York City’s public schools by 2018. According to its website, “...NYC Men Teach builds individual leadership capacity, and promotes educator effectiveness through professional development, personal growth, and a village of support to help male educators of color thrive and stay in the profession.” A key aspect of this support comes from NYC Men Teach Mentors—K-12 educators who meet regularly with their teachers-in-training and often participate with them in professional development activities.

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To strengthen the pipeline of new teachers entering the profession, several states, including California, have adopted several types of *grow-your-own programs*. Some, like **Educators Rising** described below, encourage high school students to consider teaching as a career. Many of these students, often ones of color, later return to the same schools and communities after earning their teaching credentials. A growing number of districts and universities have also adopted recruitment programs that enable paraprofessional teaching assistants to obtain their bachelor’s degrees and teaching credentials.¹⁹ Because these educators typically reside in the communities in which they work, their demographics usually resemble the demographics of students they teach.

Educators Rising California²⁰ is part of a national network with chapters on several California high school campuses. Student participants meet regularly to learn about the teaching profession and are given opportunities to create lesson plans, collaborate with elementary teachers, visit teacher preparation programs at local universities, and develop leadership skills needed in educational settings. Many are now teaching in the same schools they attended as students.

To attract paraprofessionals into teaching careers, California recently adopted the **California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program**, which has provided funding over the past two years to 56 local education agencies. Participants are eligible to receive grants of \$4000 per year for 5 years. One program participant, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), created **Step Up and Teach** in 2014 to provide career ladder support to paraprofessionals through tuition reimbursement, textbook stipends, and exam vouchers. As of fall 2017, the program had 260 participants and had produced over 100 new teachers for the district. Quoting Bryan Johnson, an LAUSD recruitment administrator, author Linda Jacobson writes, “[M]any paraprofessionals come from the communities where they work, which in diverse school districts can help to increase the numbers of educators who share the same race, ethnicity and home language as the students they serve.”²¹

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The programs described in this report rely on a number of recruitment strategies described below and may be helpful to CSU campuses as they expand their efforts.

¹⁸ The website for this project is <https://nycmenteach.org>

¹⁹ Jenny Muñiz (2018). “Diversifying the Teacher Workforce with ‘Grow Your Own’ Programs,” New America, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/diversifying-teacher-workforce-grow-your-ownpathways/>

²⁰ The website for this program is <http://www.tomorrow.org/educatorsrising/>

²¹ Linda Jacobson (2017). “Districts tap paraprofessionals to meet demand for special ed teachers,” [Education Dive](https://www.educationdive.com/news/districts-tap-paraprofessionals-to-meet-demand-for-special-ed-teachers/507582/), <https://www.educationdive.com/news/districts-tap-paraprofessionals-to-meet-demand-for-special-ed-teachers/507582/>

1. They remove barriers that prevent candidates from seeking and completing credential programs. Grow your own programs like LAUSD's **Step Up and Teach**, offer \$4000 state grants to paraprofessionals. A summer bridge program offered by **The Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program** helps candidates of color meet credential program requirements.
2. They rely on a variety of outreach methods, including social media and face-to-face events, to identify and engage with candidates of color. EduCorps relies on educators to nominate promising candidates; the **Future Minority Male Teachers of California Project** promotes careers in teaching at diversity forums, graduate school fairs, and career development events for paraprofessionals.
3. They cultivate strong relationships and communities of support for teachers before and during their credential programs. The **Black Teacher Project** regularly holds networking and professional development events for its members. High school students who have joined **Educators Rising** meet regularly with educators to learn about careers in teaching.
4. They provide mentors from PK-12 schools and offer early field experiences along with professional development to ensure these experiences are successful and fulfilling. The **Future Minority Male Teachers of California Project** provides mentors to all of their participants. Fresno State's **Teaching Fellows Program** provides paid internships and pedagogical training to undergraduates working with children in after school programs.

CSU's recent efforts to diversify the thousands of teachers it prepares annually is already paying off. As noted above, 58% of those enrolling in its teacher preparation programs were students of color in 2015-16. That figure was 25 percentage points higher than the state average for employed teachers that year, and as more campuses adopt the kinds of programs and recruitment strategies described above, the CSU can virtually eliminate the diversity gap among the teachers it produces in the coming years. It will take time for the shifting demographics of new teachers to affect California's overall teacher workforce demographics, but these changes will produce significant educational benefits for all of California's K-12 students.

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