

Credit Momentum and Transfer Students

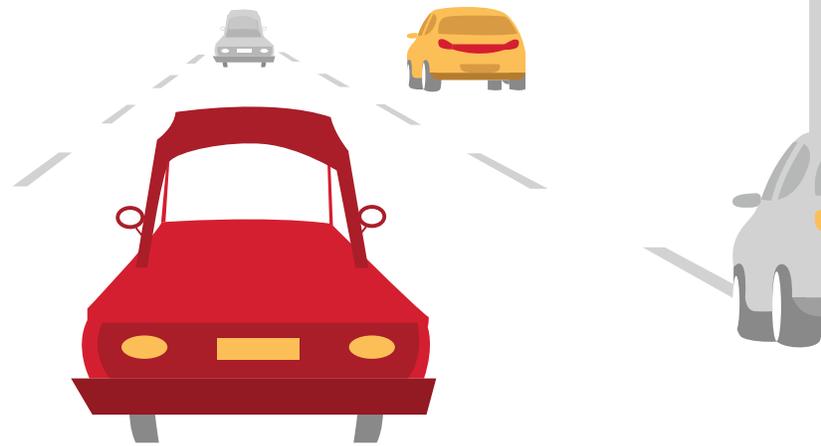
California State University, Northridge is committed to serving first-time transfer students. In a series of reports, IR is sharing data about who our transfer students are, how they are doing, and how best to help them succeed at CSUN.

This report was prepared by Dave Keating, IR Faculty Scholar and Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, and Taylor Doty, IR Intern and MA student in Psychology, in collaboration with CSUN Office of Institutional Research.

In this report, credit momentum is defined as attempting at least 15 units in the first semester. In general, credit momentum is associated with higher retention and graduation rates. For instance, [a previous report](#) from Institutional Research found that first-time freshmen who took at least 30 units their first year were more likely to graduate in four years. The positive outcomes held [across different student backgrounds](#), and most recently, they were observed among the [Fall 2019 cohort of freshmen](#).

CSUN EXIT

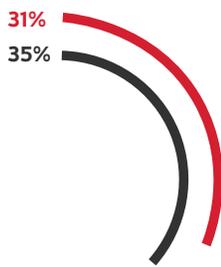
WELCOME TO YOUR COLLEGE



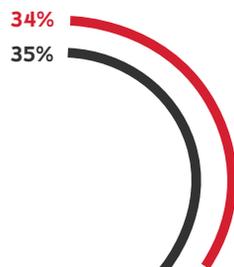
To compare outcomes for momentum and non-momentum students, we examined data from incoming CSUN transfer cohorts between 2009 and 2018.

Who Are They?

LATINX



WHITE



ASIAN AMERICAN



AFRICAN AMERICAN



INTERNATIONAL



MULTI-RACE

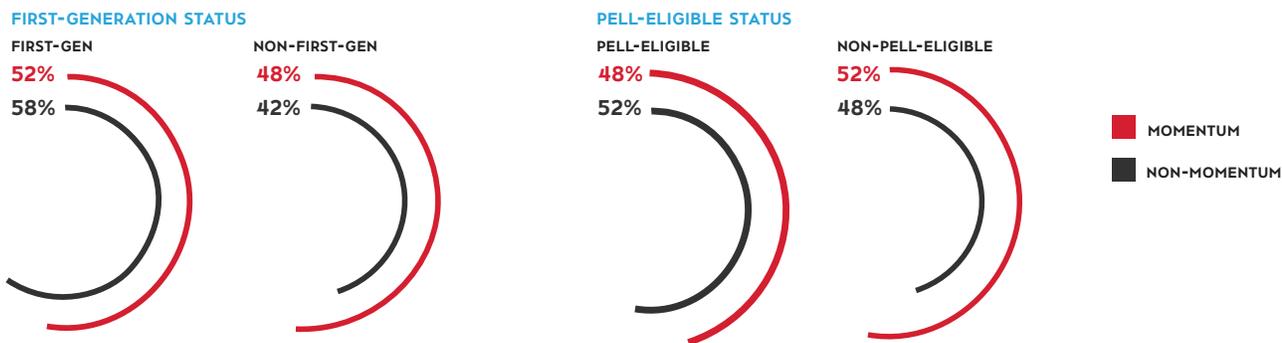


UNKNOWN



■ MOMENTUM
■ NON-MOMENTUM

Among momentum students, 4.5% are African American, 12.3% are Asian American, 31.3% are Latinx, and 34.4% are White. We can see that momentum students' demographics closely mirror non-momentum students. Some notable differences are that Latinx students are more likely to be non-momentum students and Asian American and African American students are more likely to be momentum students.

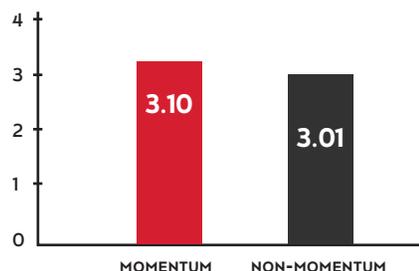


About 52% of momentum students are first-generation students and about 48% are Pell eligible. In general, first-generation students and Pell-eligible students are less likely to take 15 units during their first semester.

Transfer GPA

Students' transfer GPA tends to predict student success outcomes, such as retention and graduation rates. Given this, we first examined whether transfer GPA was associated with momentum status (momentum vs. non-momentum), and we found that it was.

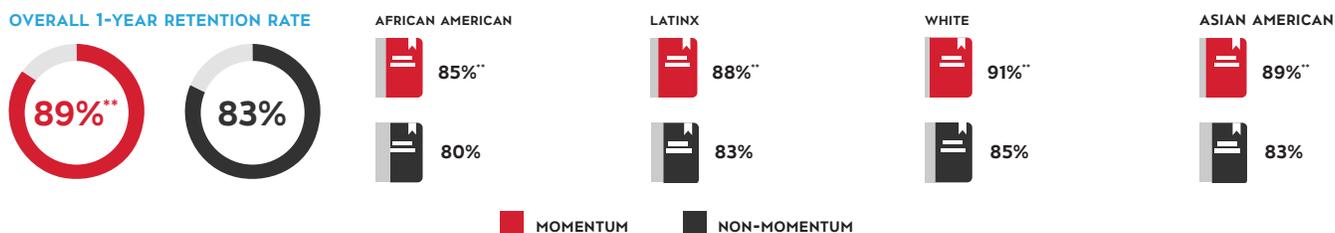
Therefore, we statistically controlled for the effect of transfer GPA in order to evaluate whether momentum status predicts student success outcomes when transfer GPA is held constant.



Retention Rates

In general, momentum students were more likely to continue into their second year (88.7%) compared to non-momentum students (83.4%).

Among Latinx transfer students, one-year continuation rates were higher for momentum students (87.6%) than for non-momentum students (83.1%). This trend was also observed for African American, Asian American, and White students.

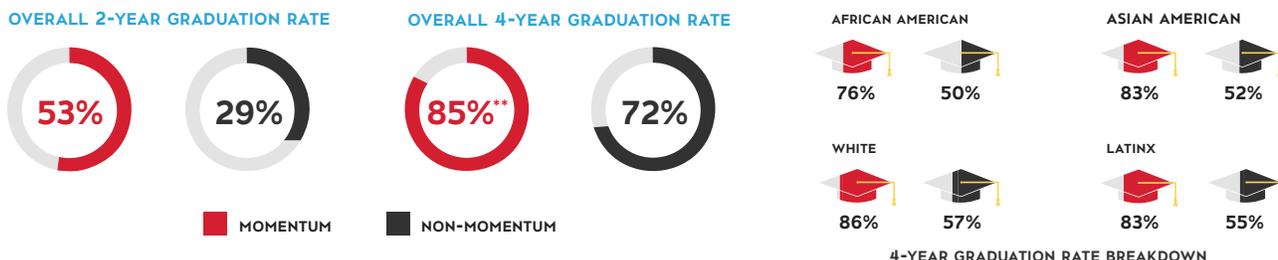


Note: **p < .05 indicates a statistically significant difference between momentum and non-momentum students

Graduation Rates

4-year graduation rates were higher for momentum students than non-momentum students. Among African American transfer students, 4-year graduation rates were higher for momentum students (76.3%) than non-momentum students (50.0%). This trend was also observed for Asian American, Latinx, and White students.

Overall, the 2-year and 4-year graduation rates were higher for momentum students. In fact, momentum students have met CSUN's 2025 goals of helping 85% of transfer students graduate in 4 years and 45% of transfer students graduate in 2 years.



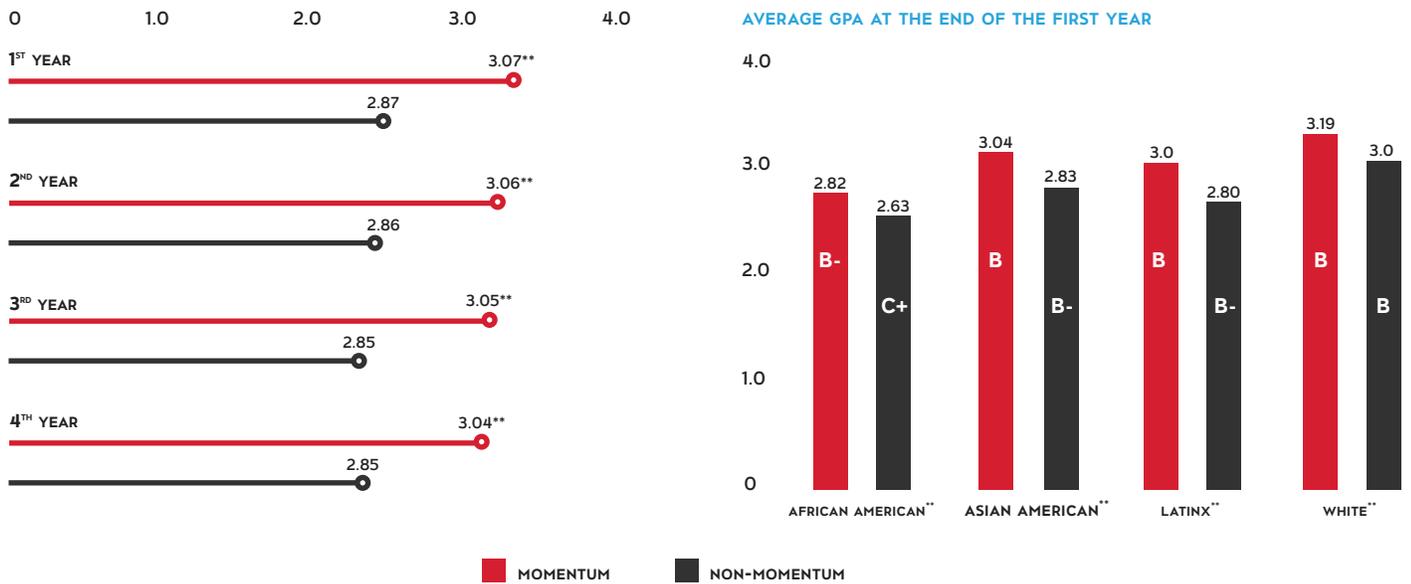
4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE BREAKDOWN

GPA

At the end of each year on campus, momentum students tend to have higher cumulative GPAs than non-momentum students. For instance, at the end of their first year on campus, momentum transfer students had a higher GPA (3.07) than non-momentum transfer students (2.87).

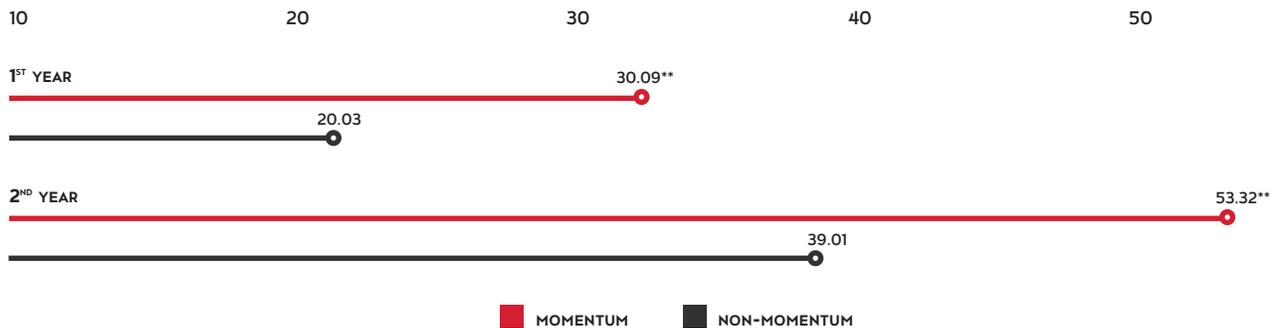
Across African American, Asian American, Latinx, and White students, the average GPA for momentum students is higher than the average GPA for non-momentum students.

Note: ** $p < .05$ indicates a statistically significant difference between momentum and non-momentum students



Unit Accumulation

Momentum students tend to earn more units than non-momentum students. By the end of the second year, momentum students successfully completed about 53 units whereas non-momentum students successfully completed about 39 units.



Note: ** $p < .05$ indicates a statistically significant difference between momentum and non-momentum students

Conclusion

Taking 15 or more units in the first semester is associated with a variety of positive outcomes among our transfer students. Even after accounting for their transfer GPA, credit momentum students are more likely to continue to their second year at CSUN, have higher GPAs, accumulate more units, and are more likely to graduate within four years. These positive trends can be found across race and ethnic groups. These findings echo previous reports on CSUN's first-time freshmen, and the campus should similarly encourage transfers to take 15 or more units in each of their first two semesters.