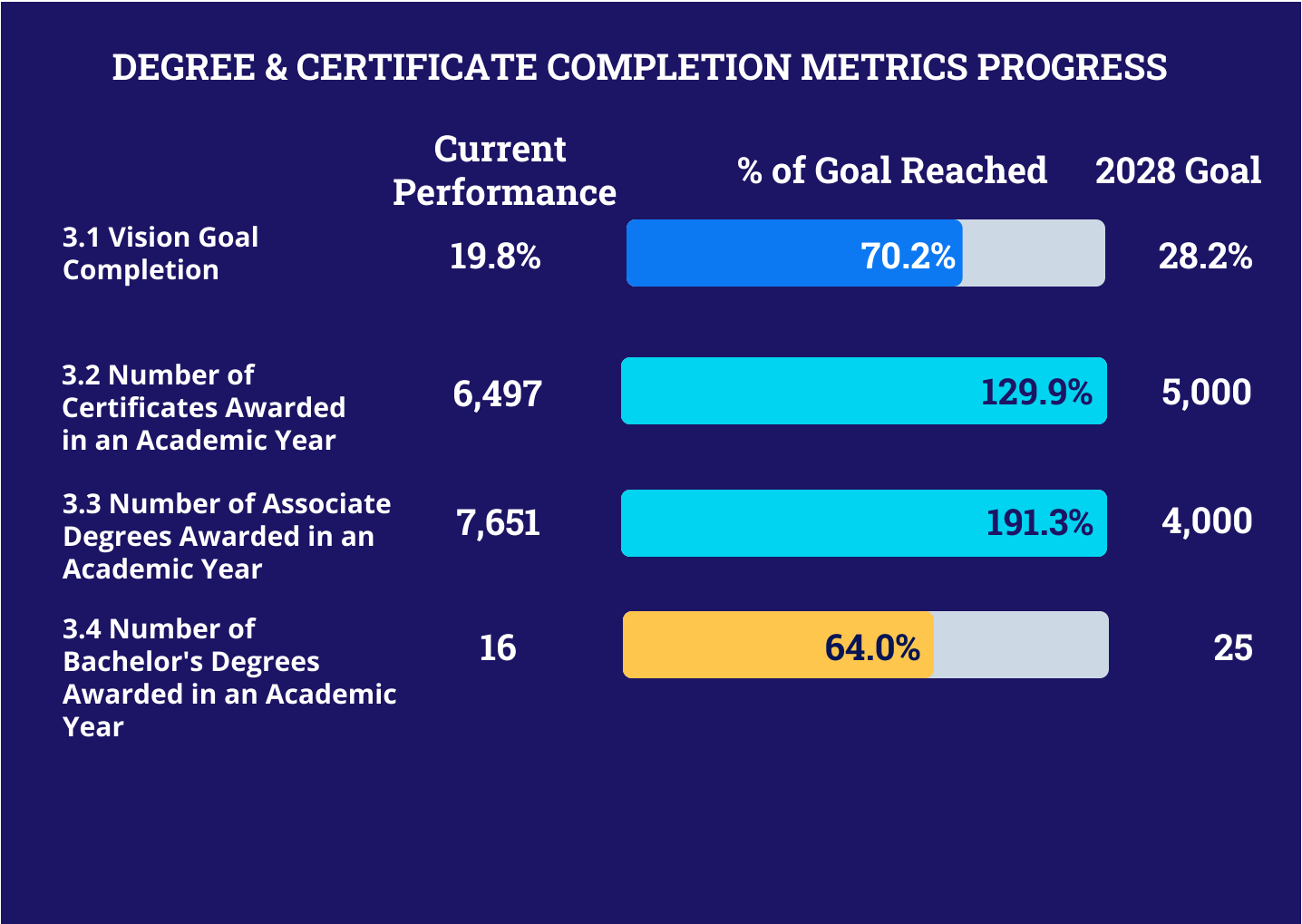# Metric Group 3:
Degree & Certificate Completion

Chapter 3: Degree & Certificate Completion

This chapter highlights the number and rate of students who complete associate degrees and certificates, providing insight into SMC's effectiveness in helping students reach their educational goals. It includes four key metrics: one uses a cohort tracking model aligned with the Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program, following first-time in college (FTIC) students over a three-year period to determine the percentage who earn an associate degree, Chancellor's Office-approved certificate, and/or a CCC baccalaureate degree (Vision Goal). The remaining three metrics present annual counts of awards conferred by type (associate degrees, certificates, and total completions), as reported to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Together, these metrics offer both a long-term and year-by-year view of student completion outcomes.

The chart below highlights SMC's most recent performance on these metrics and tracks the College's progress toward its 2028 target goals.

DEGREE & CERTIFICATE COMPLETION METRICS PROGRESS

|	Current Performance	% of Goal Reached	2028 Goal
3.1 Vision Goal Completion	19.8%	70.2%	28.2%
3.2 Number of Certificates Awarded in an Academic Year	6,497	129.9%	5,000
3.3 Number of Associate Degrees Awarded in an Academic Year	7,651	191.3%	4,000
3.4 Number of Bachelor's Degrees Awarded in an Academic Year	16	64.0%	25

3.1 Vision Goal Completion

Description: The percentage of first-time in college (FTIC) credit students who earned at least one of the following within three years of enrolling: a Chancellor's Office-approved certificate, an associate degree, and/or a CCC baccalaureate degree. To be included, students must have been enrolled in the selected year at SMC when the award was earned.

Data Source: California Community College Chancellor's Office DataVista Metric 619C

Pulled from DataVista in January 2025. As DataVista is periodically updated, data values may change in future pulls. The January 2025 dataset was used to ensure consistency with data reported in the 2025–2028 Student Equity Plan.

TRENDS ACROSS YEARS (3.1)
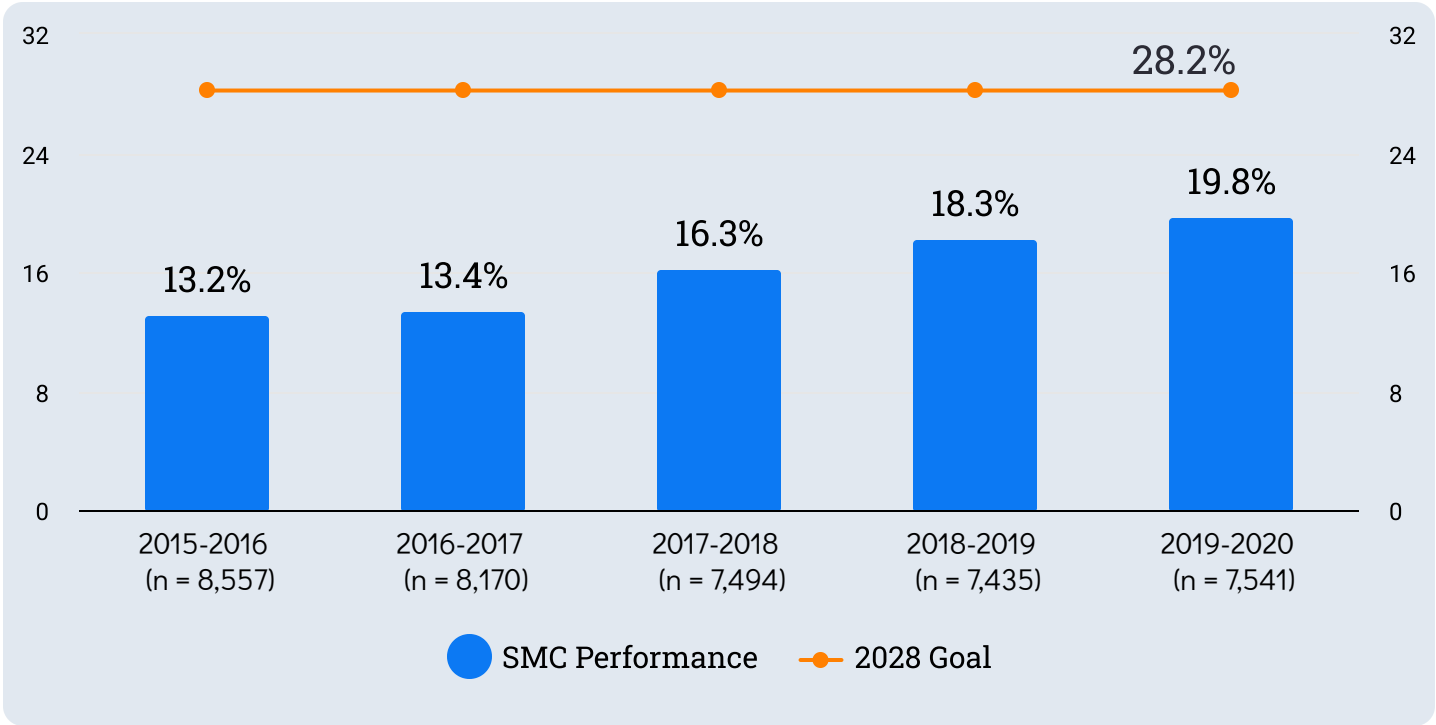
The percentage of students achieving the Vision Goal Completion metric increased steadily from 13.2% in 2015–2016 to 19.8% in 2019–2020, a 6.6 percentage point gain over five years. While this steady growth reflects progress in supporting student completion within three years, the 2019–2020 rate still falls short of the **target goal of 28.2%,** which was established by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee based on the performance of Filipino students, the highest-performing group that year. This equity-focused benchmark highlights the need for continued, intentional efforts to close the 8.4 percentage point gap and ensure more students across all groups complete degrees or certificates within a timely period.
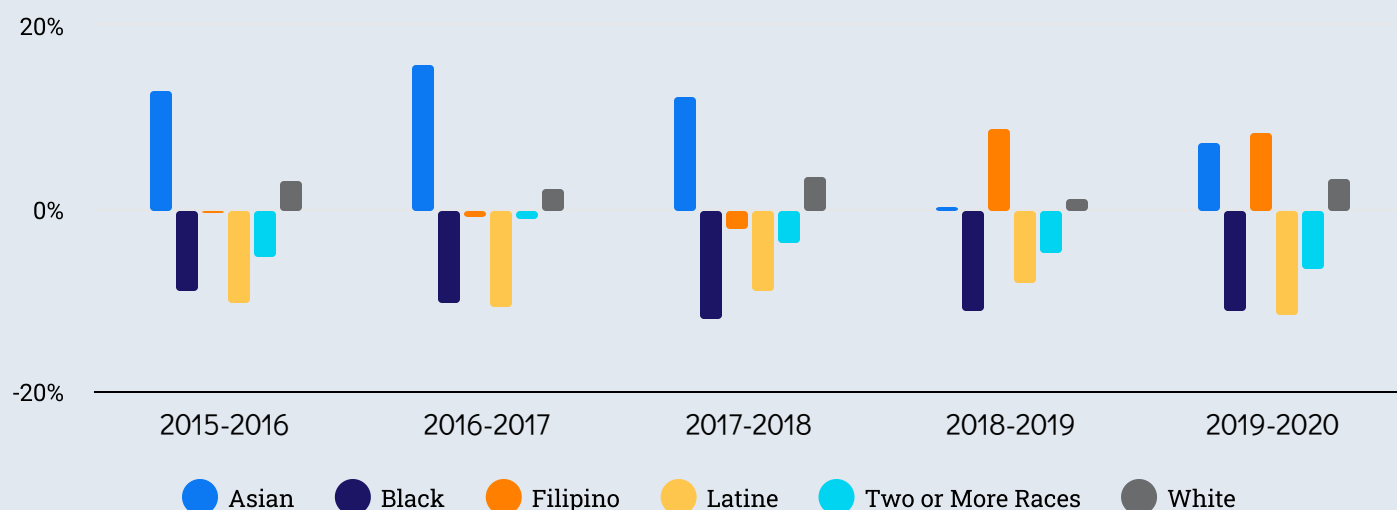
DATA DISAGGREGATED BY RACE/ETHNICITY (3.1)
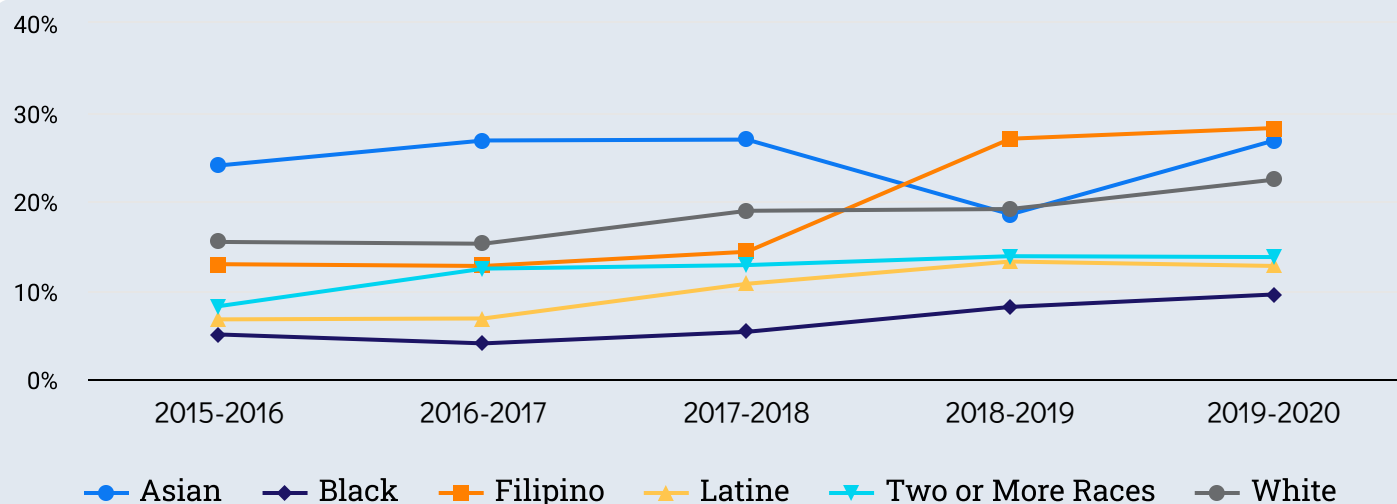
Note: Racial/ethnic groups with fewer than 10 students in the cohort are suppressed from the chart to protect student privacy. Students with unknown or unreported race/ethnicity are also excluded.

Race/Ethnicity	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Asian	24.0% (n = 1,407)	26.8% (n = 1,270)	26.9% (n = 1,040)	18.5% (n = 541)	26.8% (n = 482)
Black/African American	5.0% (n = 657)	4.0% (n = 674)	5.3% (n = 565)	8.1% (n = 569)	9.5% (n = 515)
Filipino	12.9% (n = 132)	12.7% (n = 126)	14.3% (n = 112)	27.0% (n = 122)	28.2% (n = 110)
Latine (Hispanic)	6.7% (n = 3,173)	6.8% (n = 3,114)	10.7% (n = 2,729)	13.2% (n = 2,761)	12.7% (n = 2,888)
Two or More Races	8.2% (n = 305)	12.4% (n = 323)	12.8% (n = 320)	13.8% (n = 311)	13.7% (n = 315)
White	15.4% (n = 2,264)	15.2% (n = 2,138)	18.9% (n = 2,035)	19.1% (n = 1,801)	22.4% (n = 1,642)

The disaggregated data for the Vision Goal Completion metric reveal persistent equity gaps among some racial/ethnic groups. Filipino students showed the most significant improvement, reaching 28.2% in 2019–2020, the highest rate across all groups and the basis for the college's 2028 target goal. Asian and White students also performed above the college average, with steady gains over time. In contrast, Latine students, who represent the largest cohort, improved from 6.7% to 12.7% but remain one of the group who complete at the lowest rates. Black students had the lowest rates overall, increasing modestly from 5.0% to 9.5%. **These trends underscore the need for intentional, race-conscious strategies to close gaps in degree and certificate completions, particularly for Black and Latine students.**

EQUITY GAPS (PPG-1 VALUES) (3.1)

Note: Racial/ethnic groups with fewer than 10 students in the cohort are suppressed from the chart to protect student privacy. Students with unknown or unreported race/ethnicity are also excluded.

Race/Ethnicity	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Asian	12.9% (n = 1,407)	15.9% (n = 1,270)	12.3% (n = 1,040)	0.3% (n = 541)	7.4% (n = 482)
Black/African American	-8.8% (n = 657)	-10.2% (n = 674)	-11.9% (n = 565)	-11.0% (n = 569)	-11.0% (n = 515)
Filipino	-0.3% (n = 132)	-0.7% (n = 126)	-2.1% (n = 112)	8.9% (n = 122)	8.5% (n = 110)
Latine (Hispanic)	-10.2% (n = 3,173)	-10.5% (n = 3,114)	-8.8% (n = 2,729)	-8.0% (n = 2,761)	-11.4% (n = 2,888)
Two or More Races	-5.2% (n = 305)	-1.0% (n = 323)	-3.7% (n = 320)	-4.6% (n = 311)	-6.4% (n = 315)
White	3.1% (n = 2,264)	2.4% (n = 2,138)	3.5% (n = 2,035)	1.1% (n = 1,801)	3.3% (n = 1,642)

The PPG-1 values reveal persistent equity gaps in completion, especially for Black and Latine students, who consistently had the largest negative gaps, approximately -11% in 2019–2020. In contrast, Asian and Filipino students had strong positive gaps in the most recent year (+7.4% and +8.5%, respectively), while White students remained slightly above parity. **These trends highlight continued disparities and the need for race-conscious strategies to improve completion outcomes for Black and Latine students.**

For more information on how equity gaps are calculated using the PPG-1 method, refer to the guide "CCCCO Percentage Point Gap Method Minus One".

3.2 Number of Certificates Awarded in Academic Year

Description: The total number of Chancellor's Office-approved credit and noncredit certificates awarded to students in the selected year, regardless of enrollment status. Each certificate is counted separately, and students are counted multiple times if they earned more than one certificate.

Data Source: SMC Office of Institutional Research/Chancellor's Office MIS

TRENDS ACROSS YEARS (3.2)
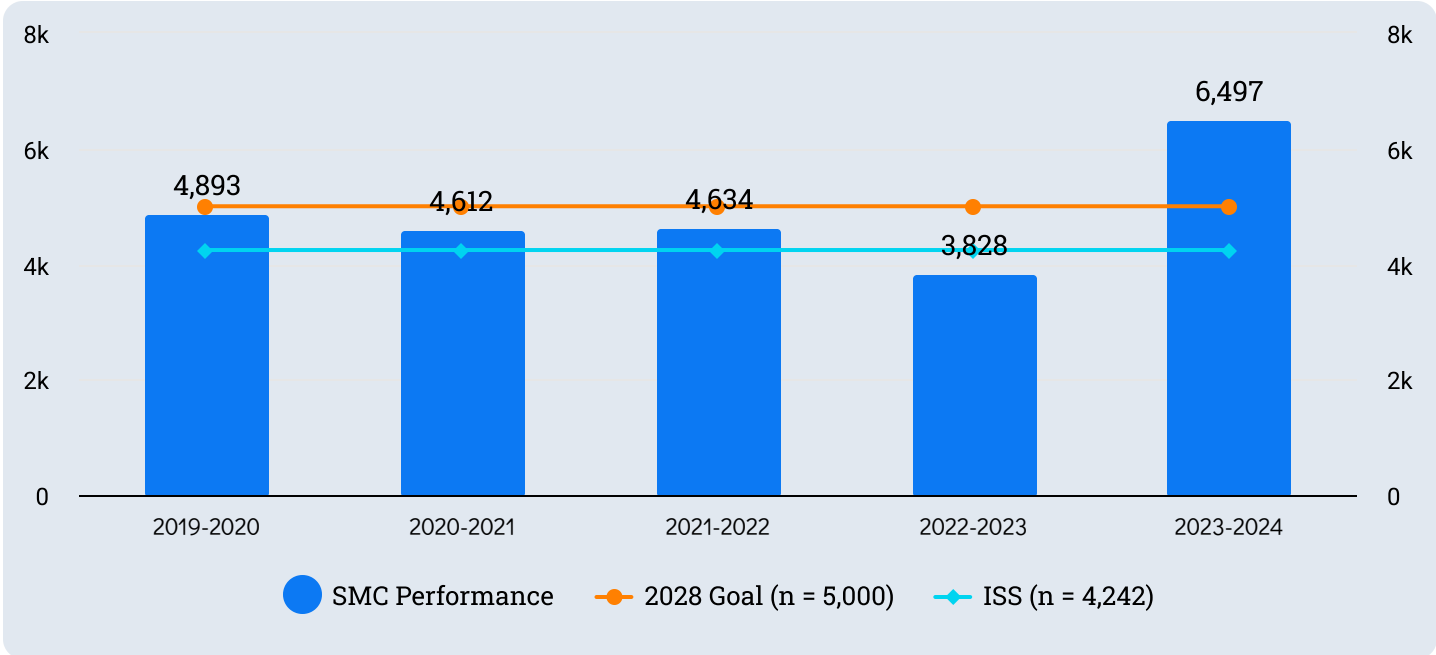
The number of Chancellor's Office-approved credit and noncredit certificates awarded annually at SMC has fluctuated over the past five years, declining from 4,893 in 2019–2020 to a low of 3,828 in 2022–2023, before rising sharply to 6,497 in 2023–2024. This significant increase exceeds the institution-set standard required by ACCJC, which establishes both a floor level of satisfactory performance. In addition, SMC's performance exceeds the 2028 target goal of 5,000 certificates. While this growth is a positive indicator, it is likely due in large part to the college's expanded efforts to automatically award certificates without requiring students to petition, rather than reflecting a sudden surge in completions. Looking ahead, we do not anticipate sustained ceiling-level certificate counts, as the IGETC Certificate of Completion will be phased out in response to AB 928, and there may be a temporary decline before the CalGETC Certificate is fully implemented. The College will continue to monitor these impacts closely during this transition period.

Certificate Type	2019-2022	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Credit Certificates	4,815	4,456	4,491	3,609	6,105
Noncredit Certificates	78	156	143	219	392
Total Certificates	4,893	4,612	4,634	3,828	6,497

The number of noncredit certificates awarded at SMC has quadrupled over the past five years, reaching a record high of 392 in 2023–2024—the most in the college's history. This growth is largely attributed to the expansion of Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) programs, which are designed to prepare students for workforce entry or transition into credit-bearing pathways. Notable CDCP programs include Bicycle Maintenance, Business Essentials, Early Care & Education, and Rehabilitation Therapy Aide. SMC's first noncredit certificate was approved in 2017, marking the beginning of a growing commitment to accessible, workforce-aligned education.
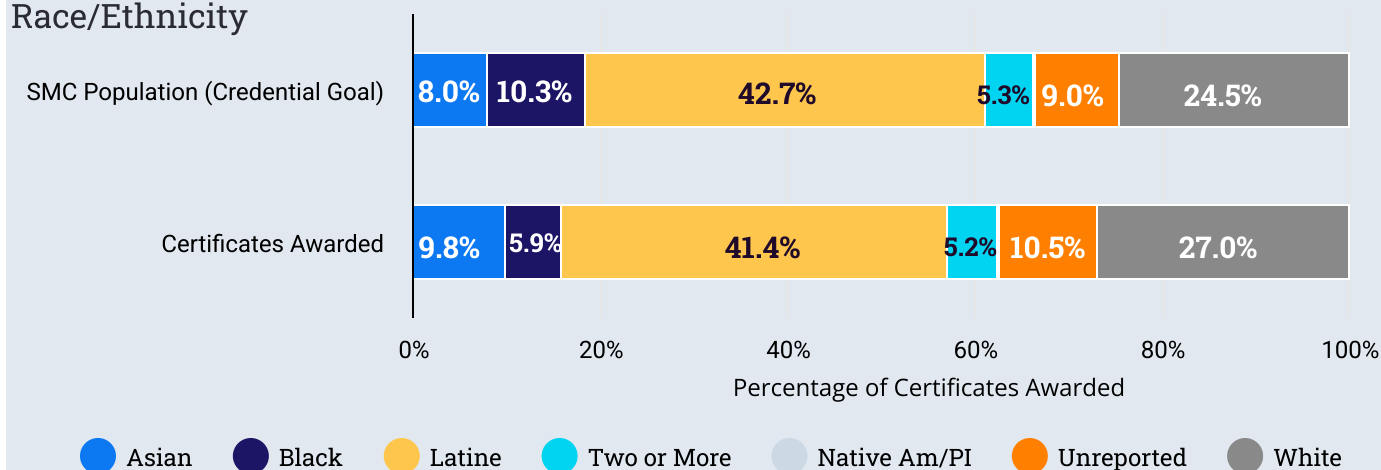
PROPORTION OF OUTCOME COMPLETION BY RACE/ETHNICITY (3.2)
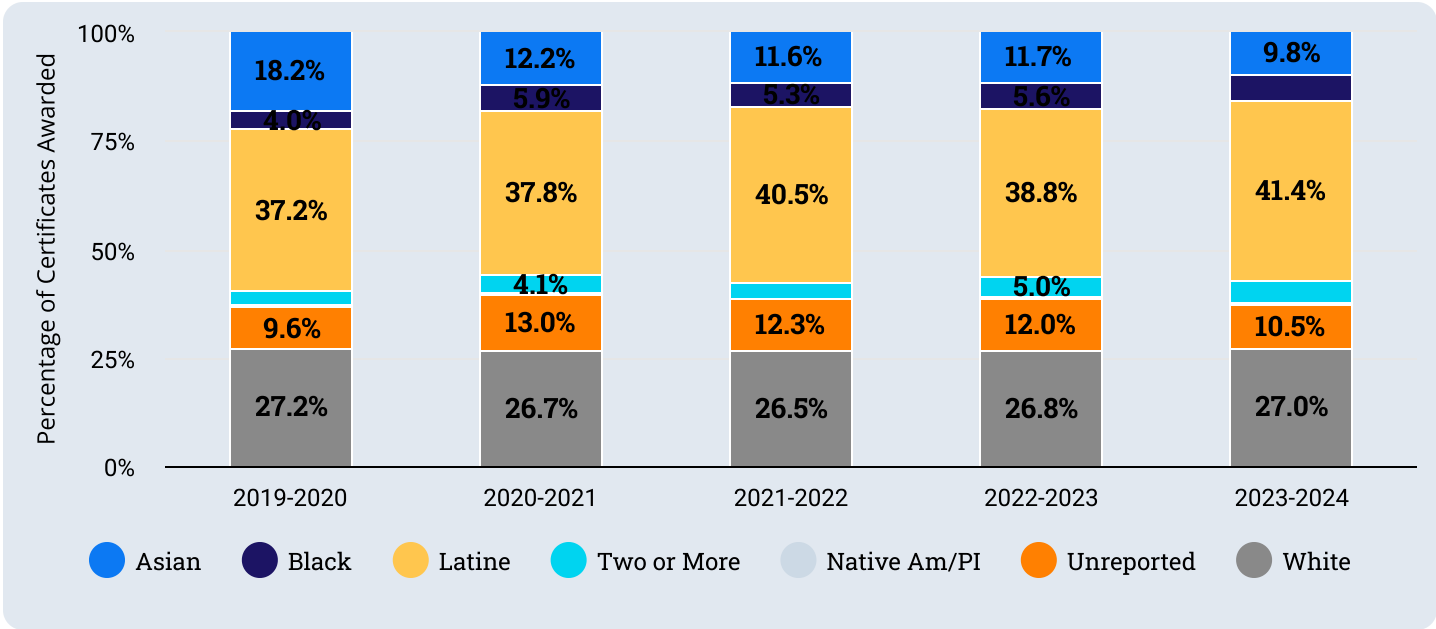
Disaggregated data reveal that, on average, Latine students have received the largest share of Chancellor's-Approved certificates over the last five years, followed by White students. In contrast, Native American, Pacific Islander (PI), multi-racial, and Black students have consistently represented the smallest share of certificates conferred.

In 2023–2024, Black students were underrepresented among certificate recipients compared to their share of students with a credential goal. Although they made up 10.3% of students pursuing a certificate, degree, or transfer, they accounted for only 5.9% of Chancellor's Office-approved certificates awarded that year.

2023-2024 Comparison of Students with Credential Goals vs. Certificates Awarded by Race/Ethnicity

	SMC Population (Credential Goal)	Certificates Awarded
Asian	8.0%	9.8%
Black	10.3%	5.9%
Latine	42.7%	41.4%
Two or More	5.3%	5.2%
Unreported	9.0%	10.5%
White	24.5%	27.0%

Percentage of Certificates Awarded

Legend: Asian • Black • Latine • Two or More • Native Am/PI • Unreported • White

Latine students were only slightly underrepresented among certificate recipients compared to their share of students with credential goals. In contrast, Asian, White, and students with unreported race/ethnicity were slightly overrepresented among those awarded certificates. **These disparities highlight the continued need for race-conscious strategies to ensure equitable certificate attainment for Black and Latine students.**
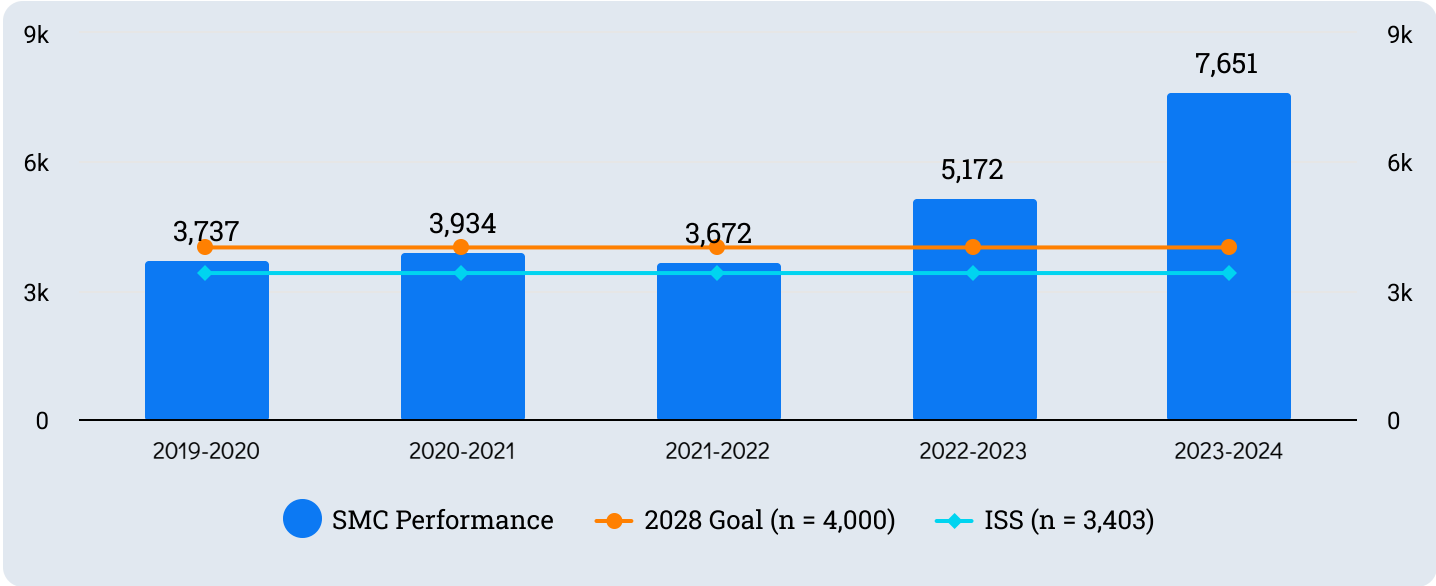
3.3 Number of Associate Degrees Awarded in Academic Year

Description: The total number of associate degrees (local and transfer) awarded to students in the selected year, regardless of enrollment status. Each degree is counted separately, and students are counted multiple times if they earned more than one degree.

Data Source: SMC Office of Institutional Research/Chancellor's Office MIS

TRENDS ACROSS YEARS (3.3)

Bar chart showing SMC Performance, 2028 Goal (n = 4,000), and ISS (n = 3,403):
- 2019-2020: 3,737
- 2020-2021: 3,934
- 2021-2022: 3,672
- 2022-2023: 5,172
- 2023-2024: 7,651

The number of associate degrees awarded at SMC has steadily increased over the past five years, rising from 3,737 in 2019–2020 to a record high of 7,651 in 2023–2024. This far exceeds both the institution-set standard (floor threshold) of 3,403 and the aspirational target of 4,000 degrees. The sharp increase in recent years is largely attributable to expanded efforts to award degrees without requiring student petitions, particularly to students who had already met degree requirements. In 2023–2024, 64% of degrees were awarded without petition, up from 54% in 2022–2023 and just 31% in 2021–2022.

While this policy change has effectively increased completions and recognized students' achievements more efficiently, the current swell in degrees is not expected to continue indefinitely. As the backlog of eligible past students is cleared, the number of degrees awarded will likely level off. Going forward, most degrees awarded without petition will likely be conferred to currently enrolled students, making future trends more stable and reflective of ongoing enrollment and completion patterns.

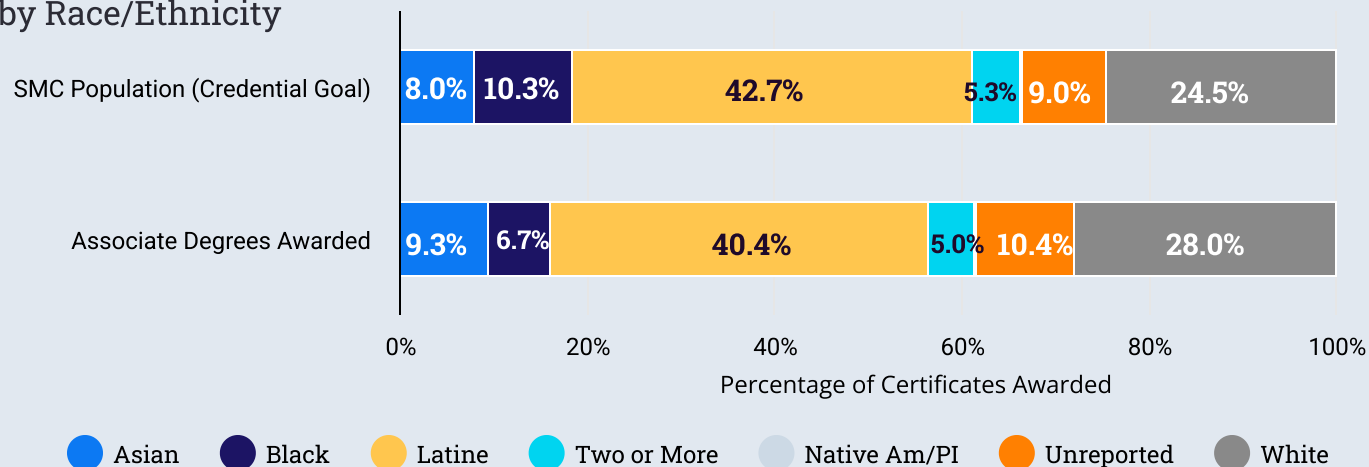| Associate Degree Type	2019-2022	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Associate in Science for Transfer (A.S.-T)	358	405	397	304	395
Associate in Arts for Transfer (A.A.-T)	796	855	768	770	948
Associate of Science (A.S.)	517	591	531	593	681
Associate of Arts (A.A.)	2,066	2,083	1,976	3,505	5,627
Total Associates	3,737	3,934	3,672	5,172	7,651

This growth in associate degrees has been driven primarily by a sharp rise in Associate of Arts (A.A.) degrees, which surged from 2,066 to 5,627 during the last five years. In contrast, the number of Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT), particularly the A.S.-T degree, has remained relatively stable, with a slight decline in 2022–2023 before rebounding. These trends suggest that the recent increases are largely due to expanded awarding practices for local A.A. degrees rather than growth in transfer-oriented degrees.

PROPORTION OF OUTCOME COMPLETION BY RACE/ETHNICITY (3.3)
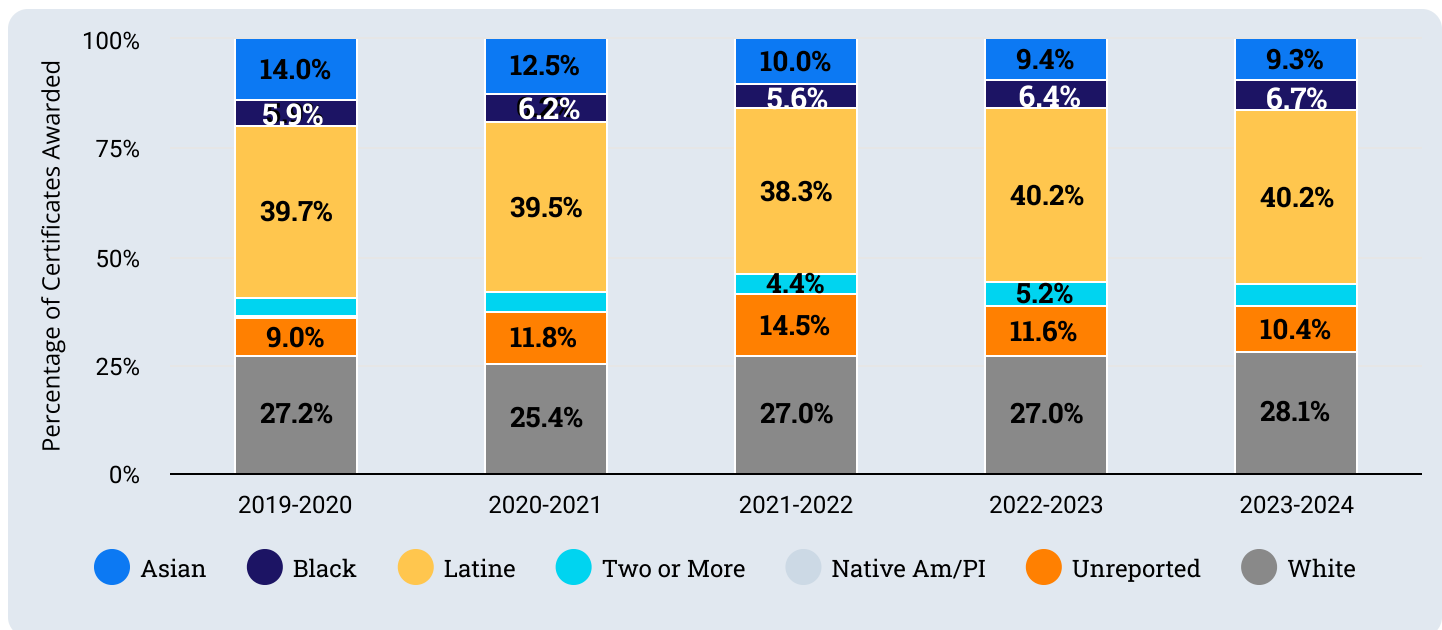
Disaggregated data reveal that, on average, Latine students have received the largest share of associate degrees over the last five years, followed by White students. In contrast, Native American, Pacific Islander (PI), multi-racial, and Black students have consistently represented the smallest share of associate degrees awarded.

2023-2024 Comparison of Students with Credential Goals vs. Associate Degrees Awarded by Race/Ethnicity

SMC Population (Credential Goal)	8.0%	10.3%	42.7%	5.3%	9.0%	24.5%
Associate Degrees Awarded	9.3%	6.7%	40.4%	5.0%	10.4%	28.0%

0%　　20%　　40%　　60%　　80%　　100%

Percentage of Certificates Awarded

● Asian　　● Black　　● Latine　　● Two or More　　● Native Am/PI　　● Unreported　　● White

In 2023–2024, Black students were the most underrepresented among associate degree recipients, comprising 10.3% of students with a credential goal but only 6.7% of degrees awarded, a gap of 3.6 percentage points. Latine students also experienced underrepresentation, making up 42.7% of the credential-seeking population but accounting for just 40.4% of associate degrees, a 2.3-point gap.

In contrast, White students were overrepresented by 3.5 percentage points, while Asian students and those with unreported race/ethnicity were slightly overrepresented, by 1.3 and 1.4 points, respectively. **These disparities highlight the continued need for race-conscious strategies to ensure equitable degree attainment for Black and Latine students.**

3.4 Number of Bachelor's Degrees Awarded in Academic Year

Description: The total number of community college bachelor's degree awarded to students in the selected year, regardless of enrollment status. SMC currently offers one bachelor's program: B.S. in Interaction Design.

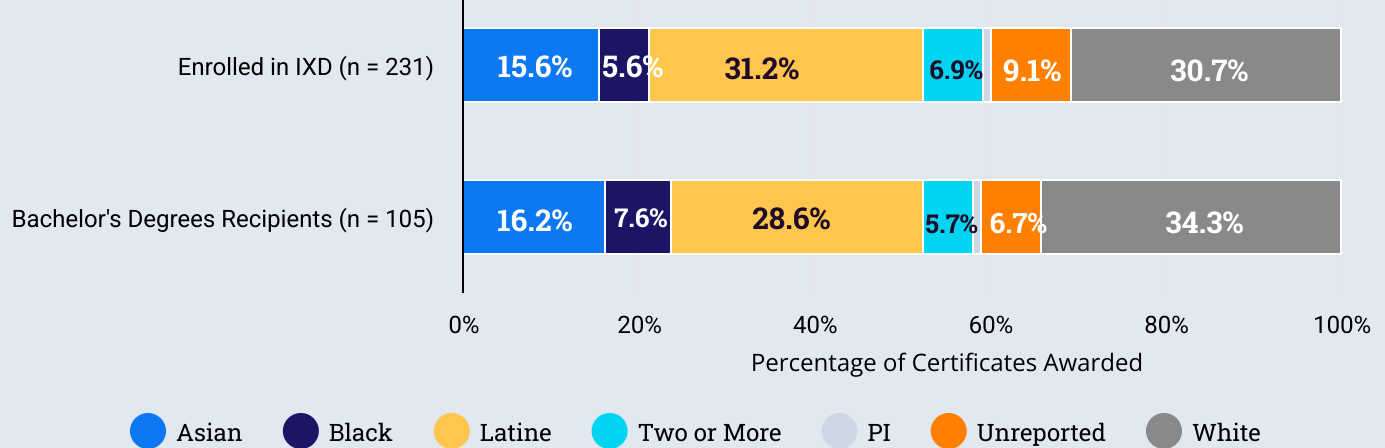**Data Source:** SMC Office of Institutional Research/Chancellor's Office MIS

TRENDS ACROSS YEARS (3.4)
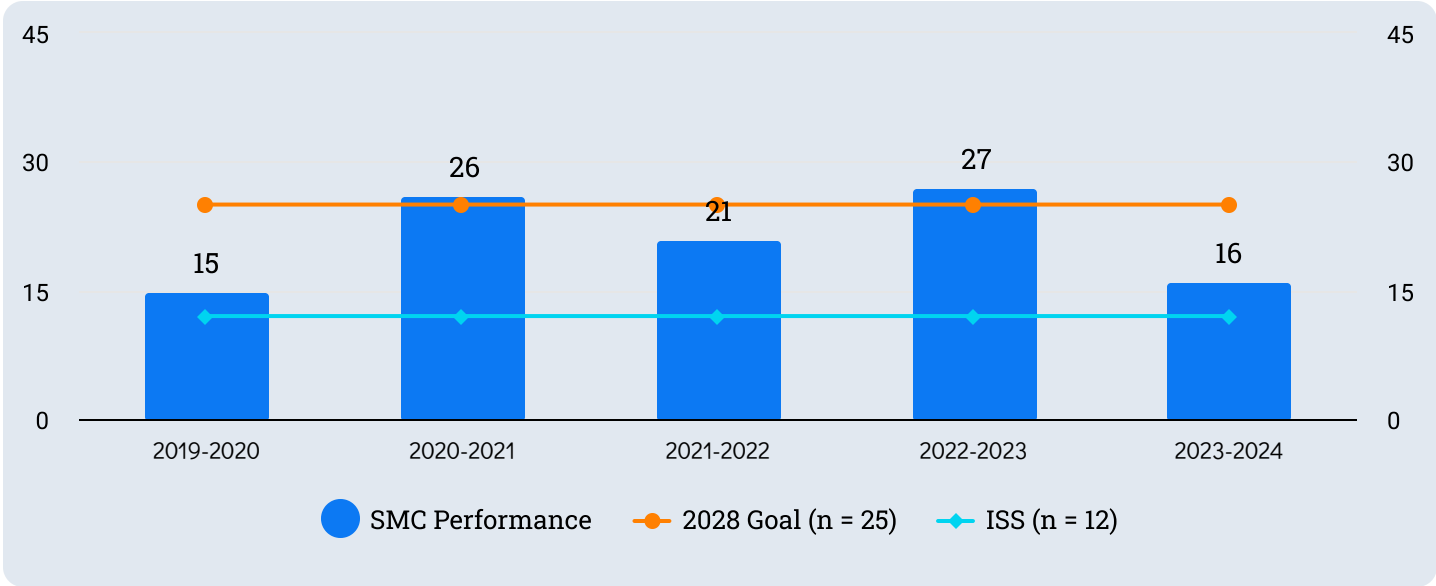
Graduation data for SMC's Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Interaction Design program show that the number of degrees awarded annually has remained relatively small and stable, consistent with the program's cohort-based structure. Between 2019–2020 and 2023–2024, annual completions ranged from a low of 15 graduates to a high of 27, with 16 degrees awarded in 2023–2024. This exceeds the institution-set standard of 12, ensuring the college meets the minimum threshold for satisfactory performance.

While the most recent year fell below the target goal of 25, the program has met or surpassed that goal in two of the past five years. The bachelor's degree awards trends reflect the selective and specialized nature of the Interaction Design program, which typically admits around 20–25 students per cohort.

Comparison of 2019-20 to 2023-24 Interaction Design Enrolled Students vs. 2019-20 to 2023-24 Bachelor's Degrees Recipients by Race/Ethnicity

	Asian	Black	Latine	Two or More	Unreported	White
Enrolled in IXD (n = 231)	15.6%	5.6%	31.2%	6.9%	9.1%	30.7%
Bachelor's Degrees Recipients (n = 105)	16.2%	7.6%	28.6%	5.7%	6.7%	34.3%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Percentage of Certificates Awarded

● Asian   ● Black   ● Latine   ● Two or More   ● PI   ● Unreported   ● White

Due to small annual cohort sizes in the Bachelor of Science in Interaction Design program, data are not disaggregated by race/ethnicity on a yearly basis to protect student privacy. However, an aggregate breakdown of graduates over the past five years is provided to offer a more comprehensive view of student representation in the program.

Over the past five years, Latine students were the most underrepresented, comprising 31.2% of those enrolled but only 28.6% of graduates, a gap of 2.6 percentage points. Students with unreported race/ethnicity also experienced underrepresentation, making up 9.1% of enrollment but only 6.7% of graduates, a 2.4-point gap.

In contrast, White students were overrepresented among graduates by 3.6 percentage points, and Black students by 2.0 points. **These disparities underscore the continued need for race-conscious strategies to ensure equitable bachelor's degree attainment, particularly for Latine students, in this selective and high-impact program.**