



California's Transfer Degrees: For Whom and For Where?

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BACKGROUND

Transferring from a community college to a four-year institution is often a complicated process. Without clear pathways sometimes students are confused and frustrated, spending more time than necessary in the system.

The Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (SB 1440) was signed into legislation in 2010, to enable the California Community Colleges (CCC) and California State University (CSU) to collaborate on the creation of Associate Degrees for Transfer (AA-T/AS-T) programs.

Students with an AA-T or AS-T are guaranteed to transfer into similar majors in the CSU system with a junior standing, without having to repeat similar courses.

As of February 2015, a total of 1,674 AA-T/AS-T degrees in designated 25 disciplines were offered in 112 CCCs, the number is expected to reach 1,967 in August of 2015. The AA-T/AS-T degrees became available to students in some colleges for the first time in 2011/12, and since then the number of recipients are increasing.

PURPOSE

An important question in the context of such a rapid implementation is about how accessible this new degree has been to various groups of the students seeking to transfer. There has been a concern that many students who intend to transfer are not yet fully informed of the AA-T/AS-T, or they misunderstand that they earned an AA-T or AS-T after earning a regular associate degree (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2015).

The main goals of this study are;

- To show whether the program is reaching students in an **equitable** manner by identifying disadvantaged subpopulations
 - The subpopulations examined for equity in the participation in the AA-T/AS-T program are by **race/ethnicity** and **financial aid status**
- To examine whether outcomes intended by the program are observed among AA-T/AS-T recipients
 - Time to degree** is examined to see if students received AA-T/AS-Ts in a shorter time than those who received traditional degrees
 - Transfers to CSU** and other types of four-year institutions

DATA & METHODOLOGY

Data source is California Community Colleges Management Information System (COMIS).

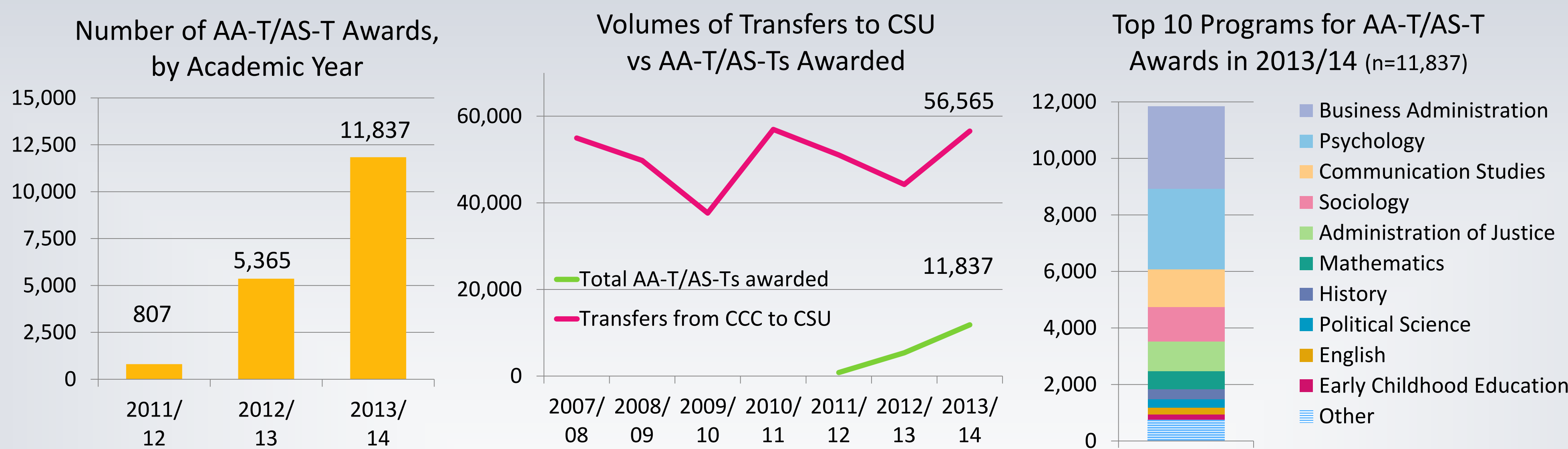
- Race/ethnicity is based on student's self-report
- The types of financial aid used to determine students' financial aid status included the California Community Colleges Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver and Pell Grant
- Time-to-degree was defined as the number of years since the student enrolled in any CA community colleges for the first time
- Transfer outcomes are based on the match to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data. Only for 2013/14, CSU data were used for identifying transfers to CSU in addition to the NSC data.

For comparisons between AA-T/AS-T recipients and students who received an AA/AS before the AA-T/AS-T degrees became available;

- AA-T/AS-T recipients are those who received an AA-T/AS-T degree in 2011/12, 2012/13, and 2013/14
- The comparison (or reference) group is a group of students who received traditional associate degrees (AA or AS) in 2010/11 in the same programs that awarded AA-T/AS-Ts in 2011/12 – 2013/14

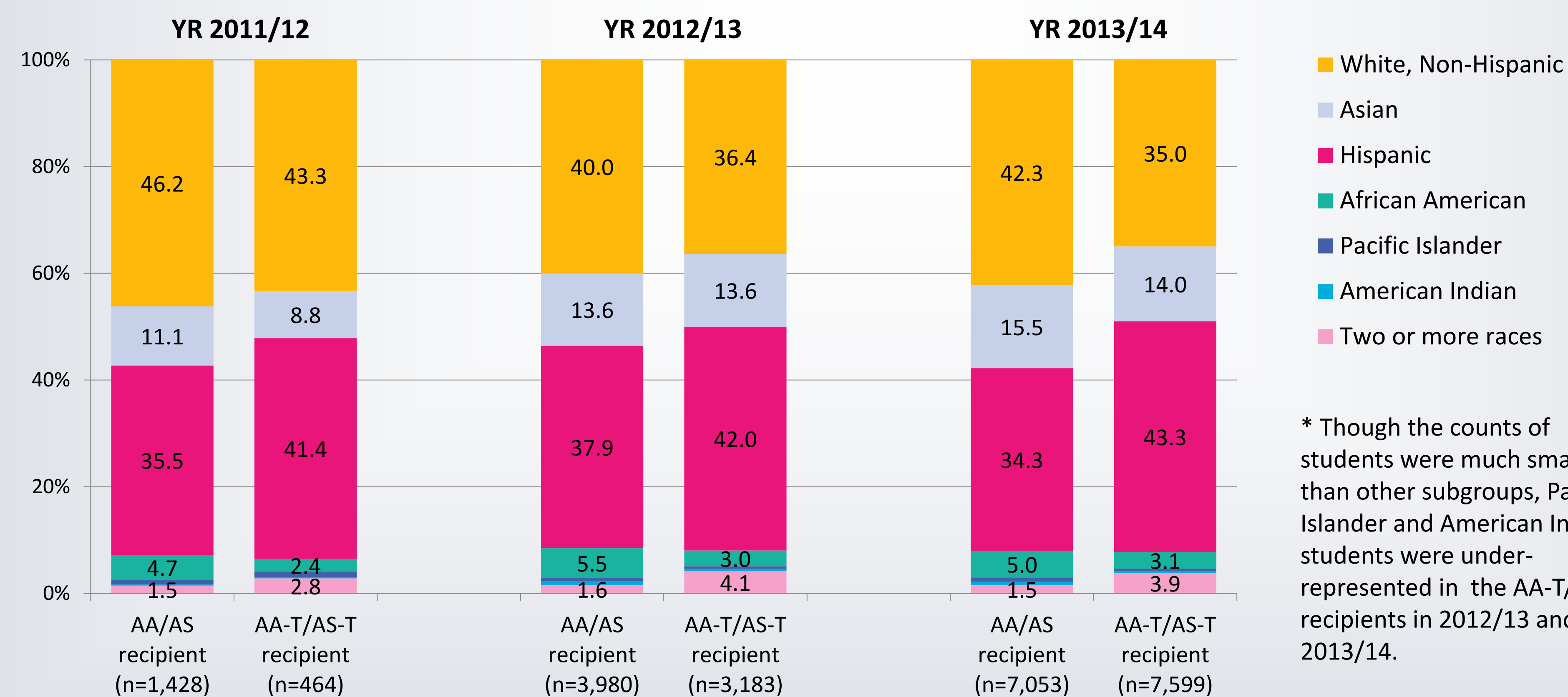
RESULTS

Overview of Program Implementation

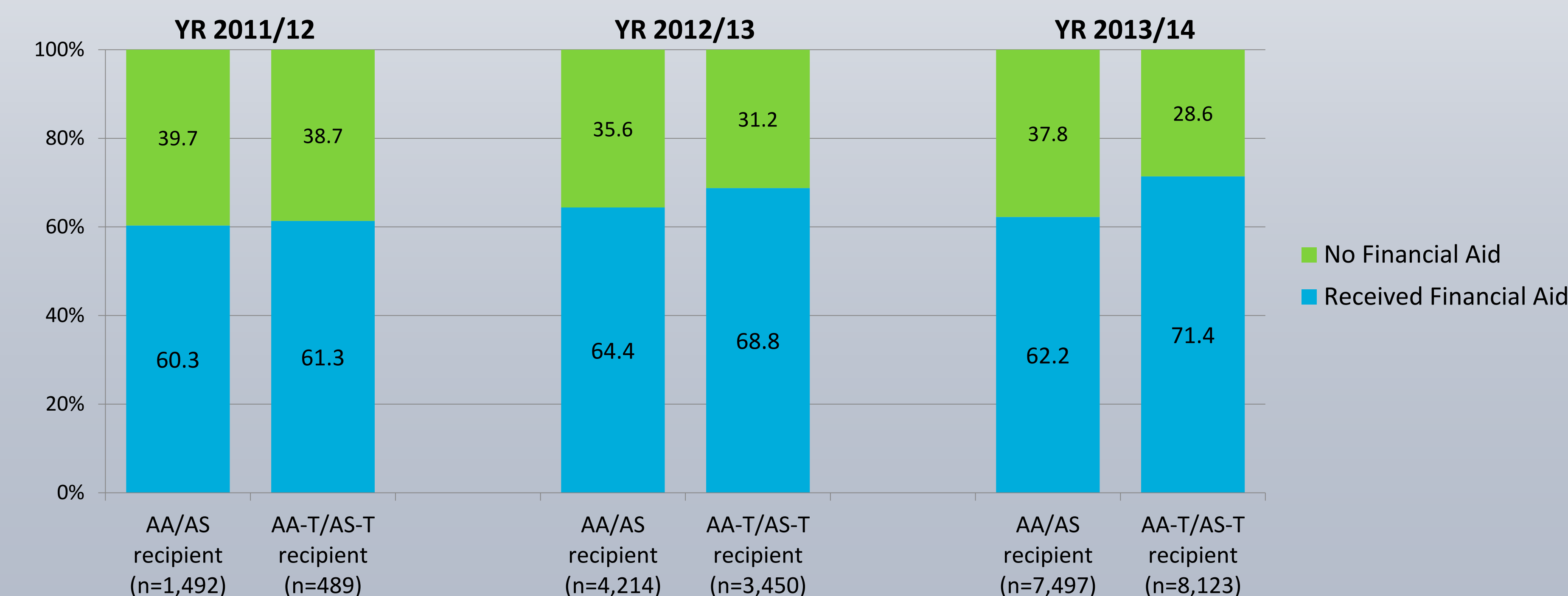


Equity in Program Participation

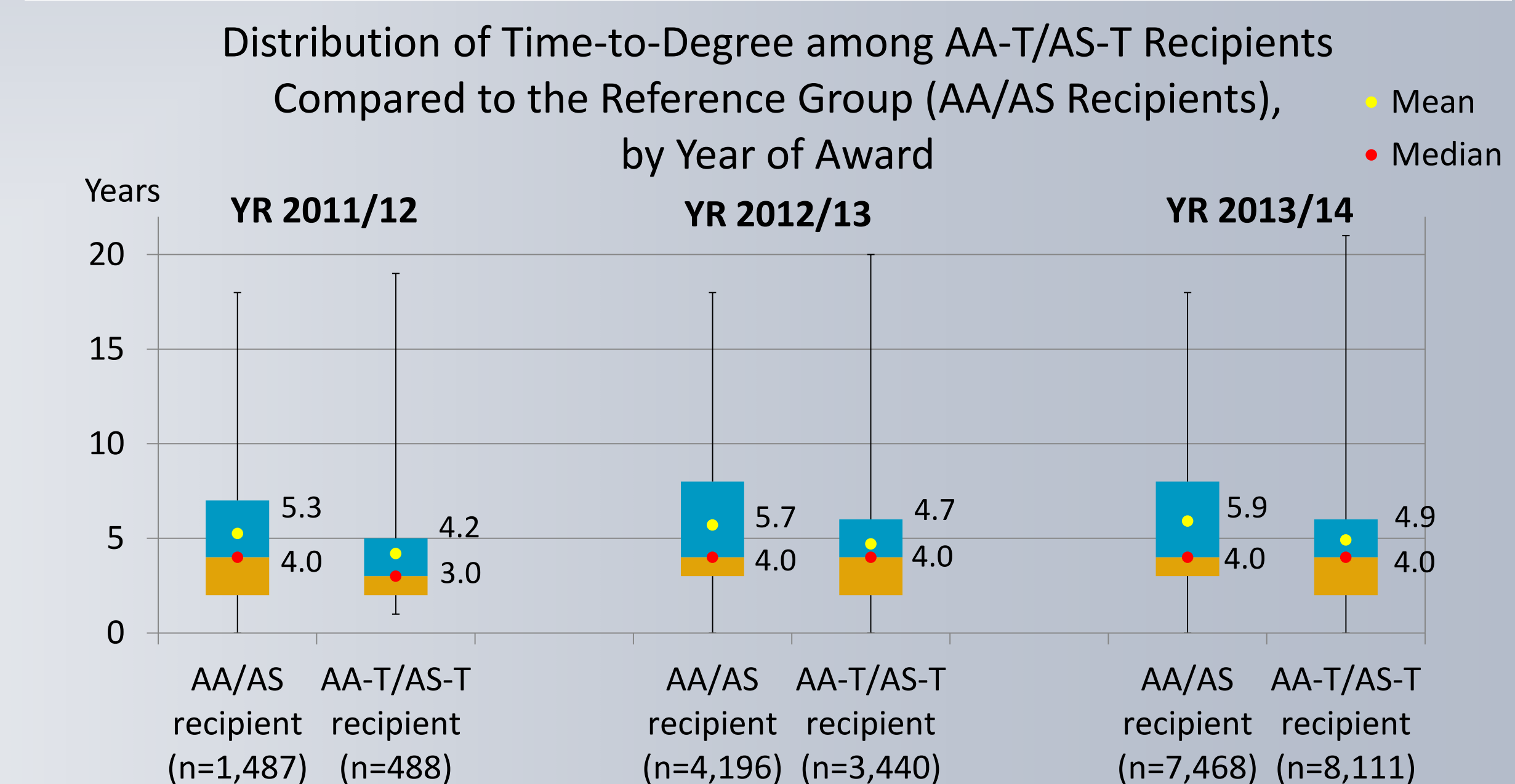
Race/Ethnicity Composition of AA-T/AS-T Recipients Compared to the Reference Group (AA/AS Recipients in Comparable Programs), by Year of Award



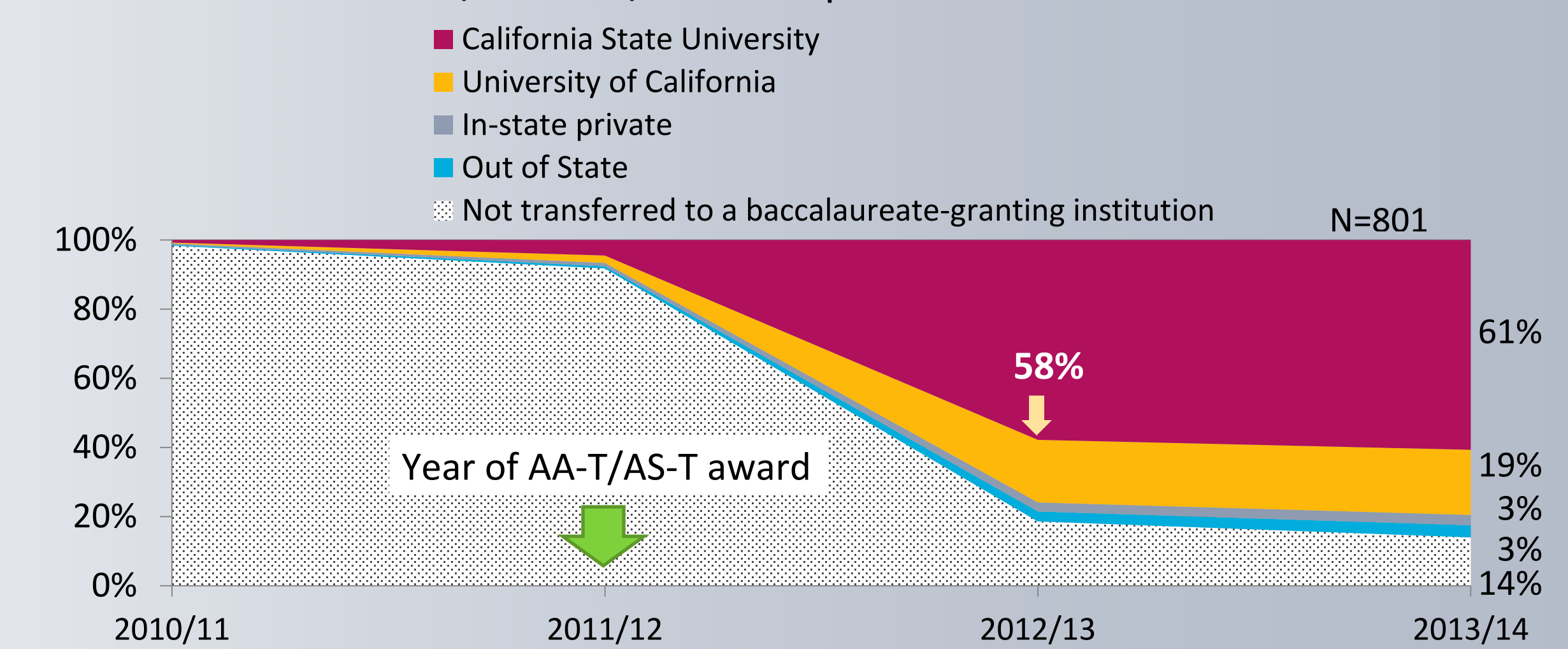
Financial Aid Status of AA-T/AS-T Recipients Compared to the Reference Group (AA/AS Recipients in Comparable Programs), by Year of Award



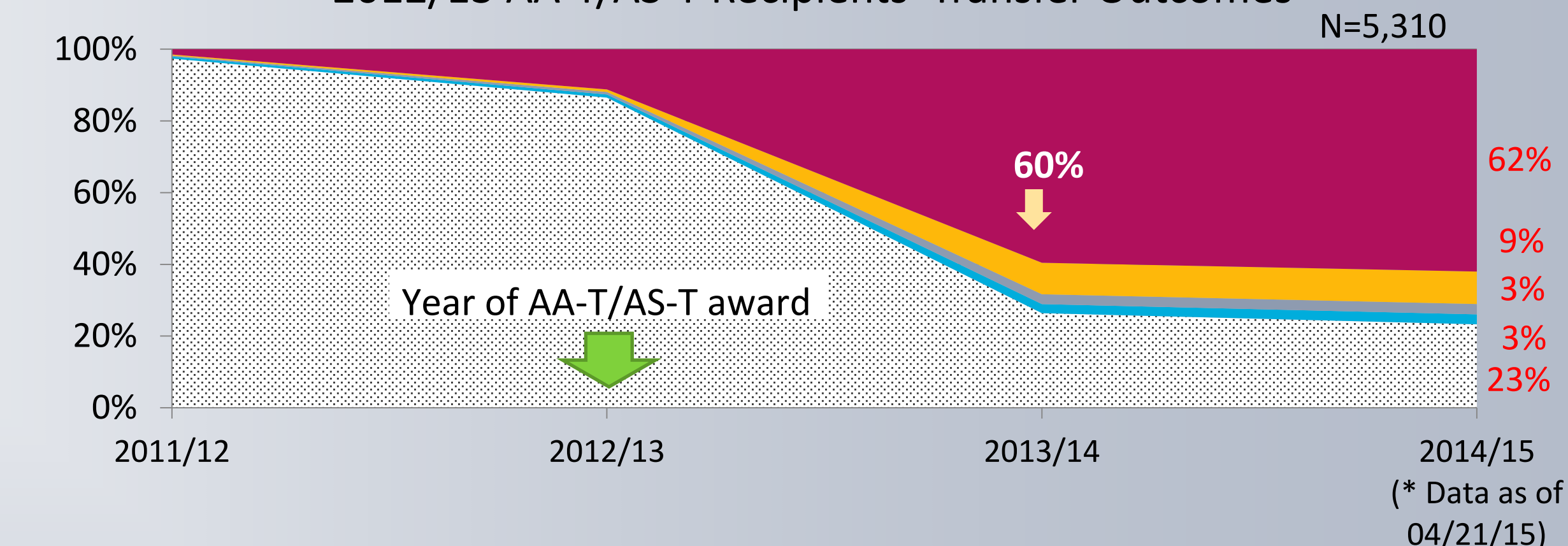
AA-T/AS-T Recipients' Outcomes



2011/12 AA-T/AS-T Recipients' Transfer Outcomes



2012/13 AA-T/AS-T Recipients' Transfer Outcomes



CONCLUSIONS

- In terms of equity in the program participation among subgroups, findings were mixed. Hispanic students and those receiving financial aid were overrepresented in the students receiving AA-T/AS-Ts while African American, Pacific Islander, and American Indian students were not.
- Students received AA-T/AS-Ts with less time than those who received traditional AA/AS degrees on average.
- A larger proportion of students who received AA-T/AS-Ts transferred to UC in the initial year. The benefit of AA-T/AS-Ts may have been better communicated in subsequent years.

REFERENCES

- Legislative Analyst's Office. (2015). Implementation Update: Reforming Transfer From CCC to CSU.