

CSAC



CALIFORNIA
STUDENT AID
COMMISSION

How undocumented students enroll and persist in college

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Undocumented students face significant challenges in transition to college

- Financial costs exacerbated by lack of federal aid (Abrego, 2006; Gonzales, 2010)
- Uncertainty about legal work may diminish value of degree
- Enrollment gap of 8-20% between documented and undocumented students (Amuedo & Sparber, 2014; Kaushal, 2008)
- In-state-resident tuition, DACA impact post-secondary enrollment (Amuedo-Dorantes & Antman, 2017; Conger & Turner, 2017; Hsin & Ortega, 2018; Darolia & Potochnick, 2015)

CALIFORNIA DREAM ACT Apply by March 2

The California Dream Act Application allows students interested in attending eligible California Colleges, Universities and Career Education Programs to apply for state financial aid. This application is unrelated to the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.



California began offering Cal Grant to undocumented students in 2013, in an era of increased rights

1. How do the college-going patterns of state-aid eligible undocumented high school students differ from their peers?
2. Do we observe “mismatch” (i.e., students who attend more selective institutions have worse academic outcomes than their peers?)



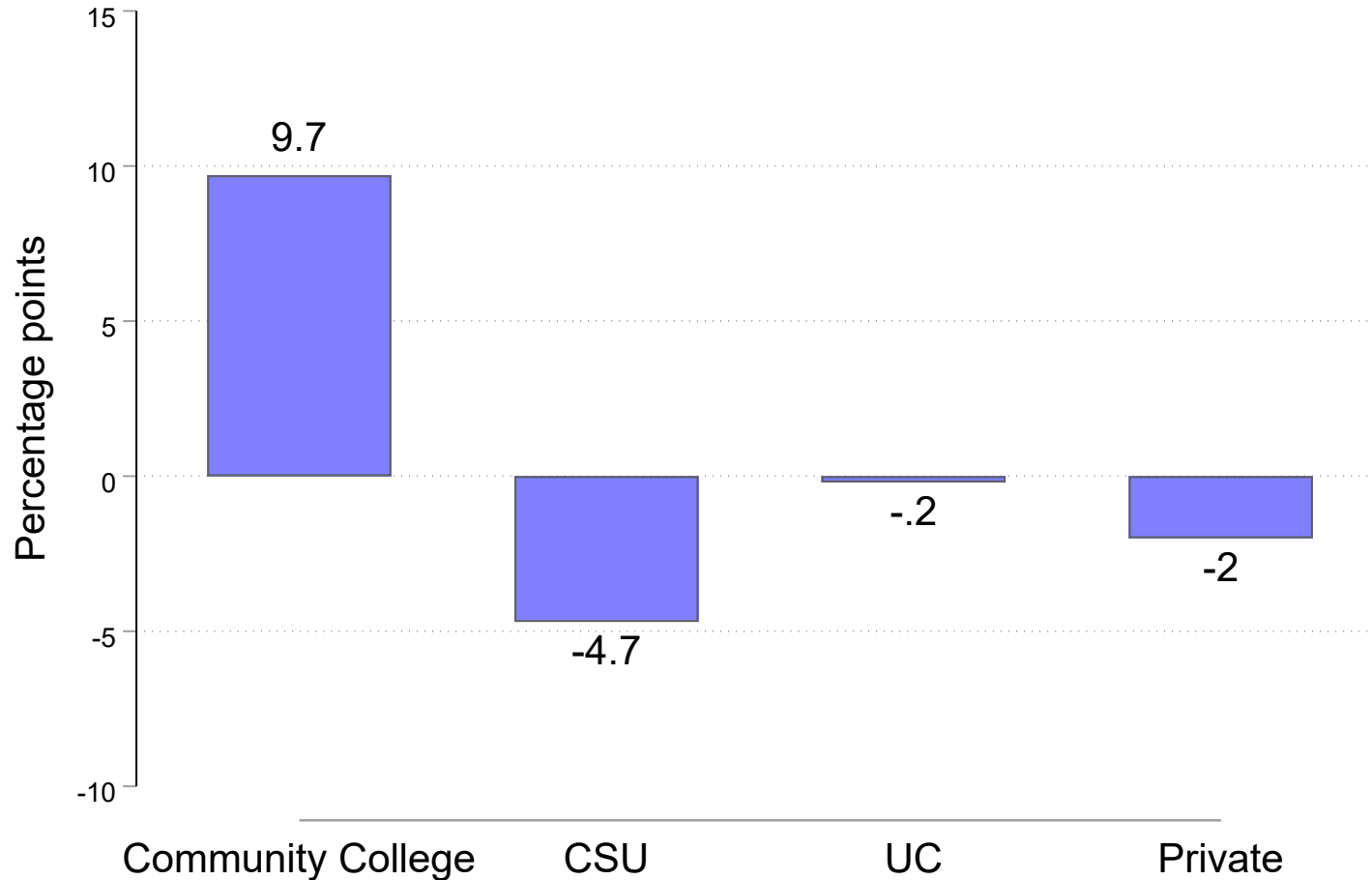
California DREAM Loan Program Opens to Undocumented Students

No green card? No problem -- undocumented immigrant can practice law, court says

Data and Methods

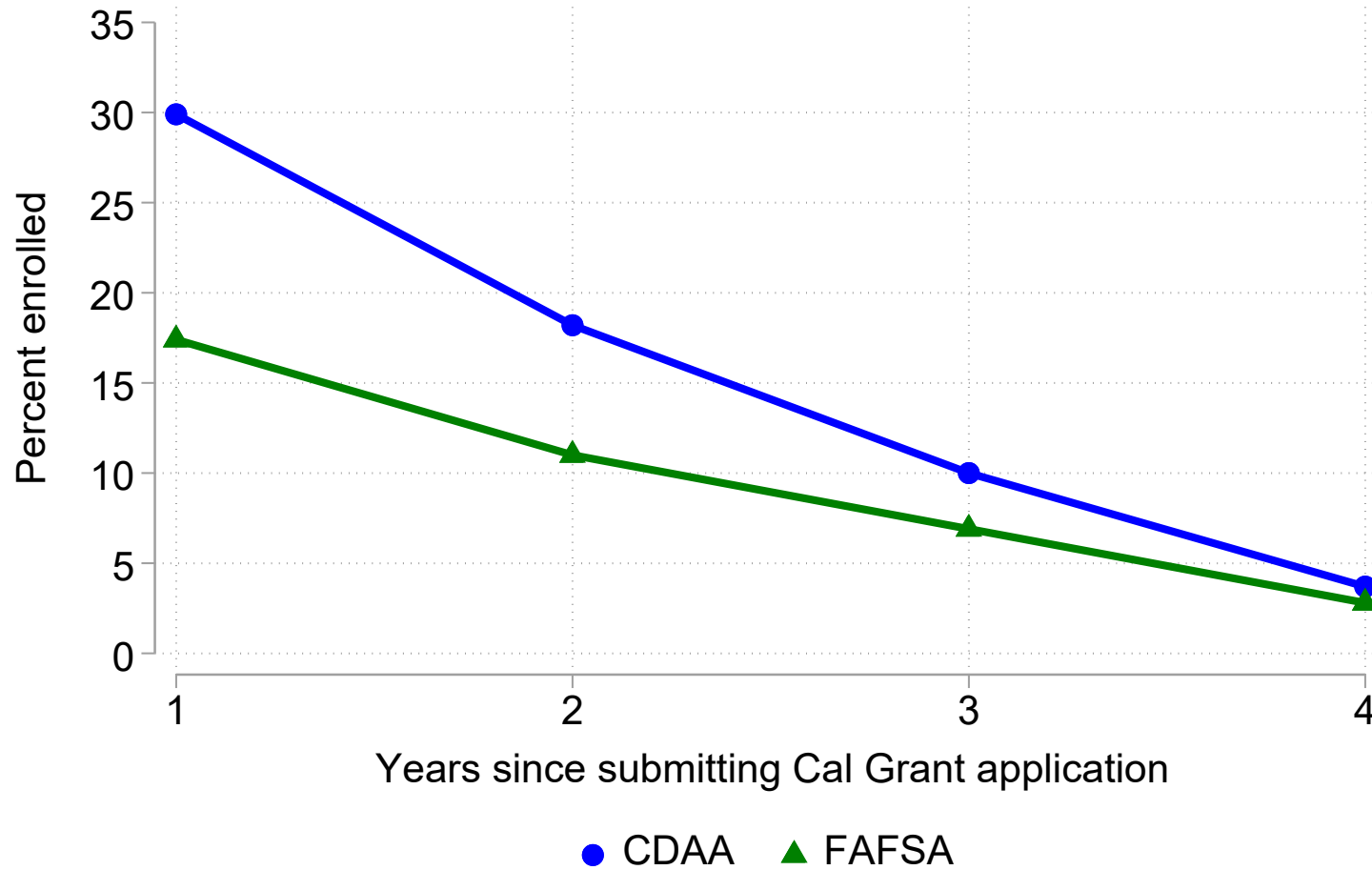
- Purely “descriptive” study of enrollment patterns
 - Compare ‘similar’ CDAA and FAFSA submitting Cal Grant eligible students in first three cohorts
 - Observe Cal Grant receipt and enrollment records up to 4 years
- Big improvement over prior studies that:
 - Cannot really identify undocumented students
 - Often have less interesting outcomes
 - Have weaker coverage (e.g., limited to one college)

Adjusted Difference in Cal Grant usage between CDAA and FAFSA students



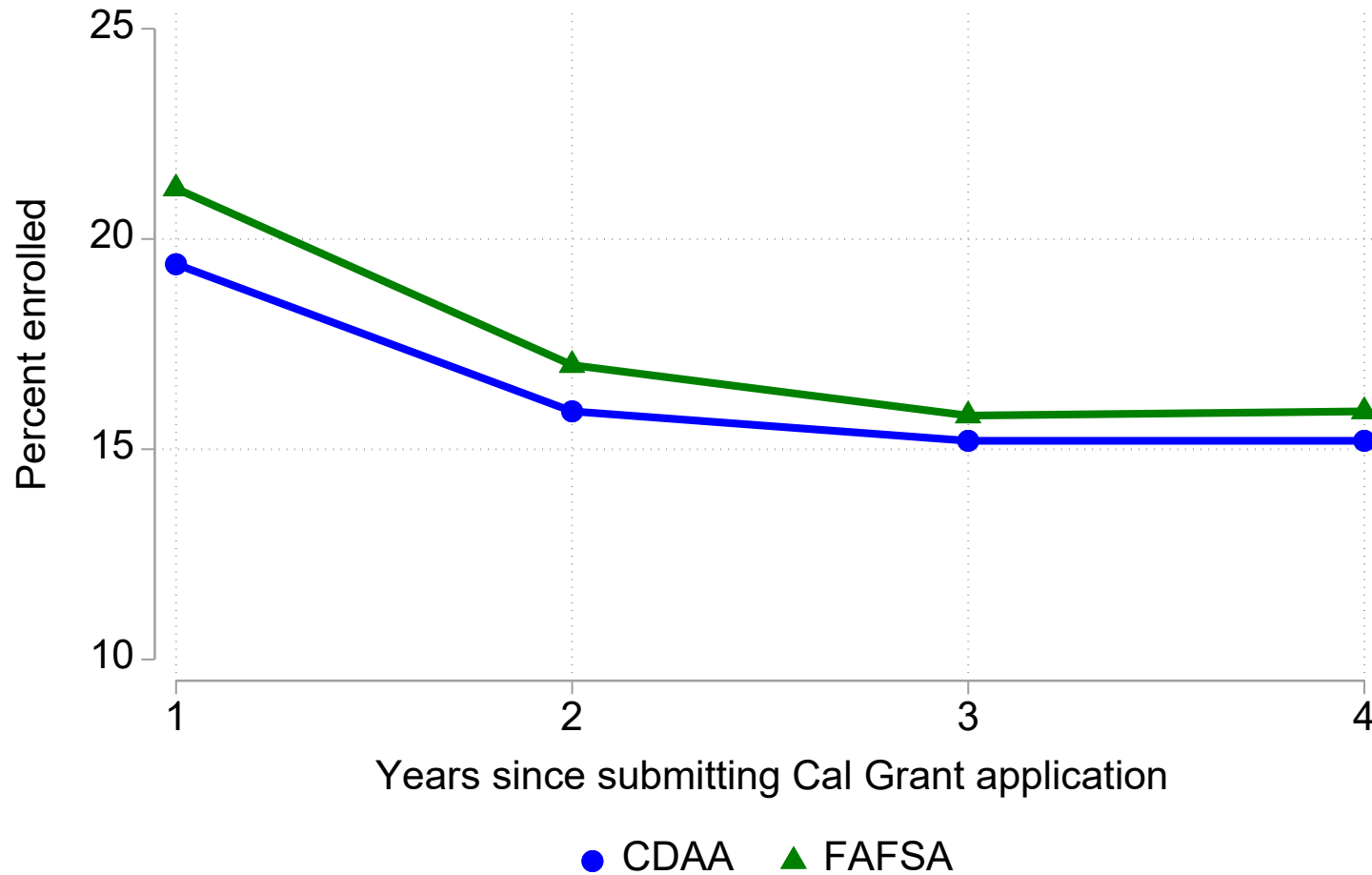
- 2 percentage points more likely to use Cal Grant
- Big shift from CSU to CC
- Equally likely to attend UC

Difference in Cal Grant usage at California State University



- CDAA students exit community colleges at higher rates

Difference in Cal Grant usage at California State University



- CDAA students who enroll persist at equal rates
- Similar pattern at UC

Additional topics in paper

- Differences in enrollment likely driven at application stage, not at acceptance
- Patterns appear similar for degree completion
- No outsized “growth” in CDAA usage over first few years
 - Program may draw in more lower-income students over time
 - What does this imply about outreach?

Key Conclusions

- CDAA students more likely to attend – but exit – community college
- CDAA students in four-year colleges perform well (no “mismatch”)
- Prior research finds large enrollment gaps for undocumented students, though we cannot claim Cal Grant caused changes
- Questions:
 - What aspect of CSU specifically is less appealing?
 - How can we improve CC persistence?