

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Data Tools to Help Ensure Students Are Enrolled in 'High-Opportunity' Programs They Will be Motivated to Complete

Davis Jenkins Hana Lahr

NCII Rural Guided Pathways Initiative September 30, 2022

# To improve recruitment + retention, community colleges must ensure that their programs are worth completing



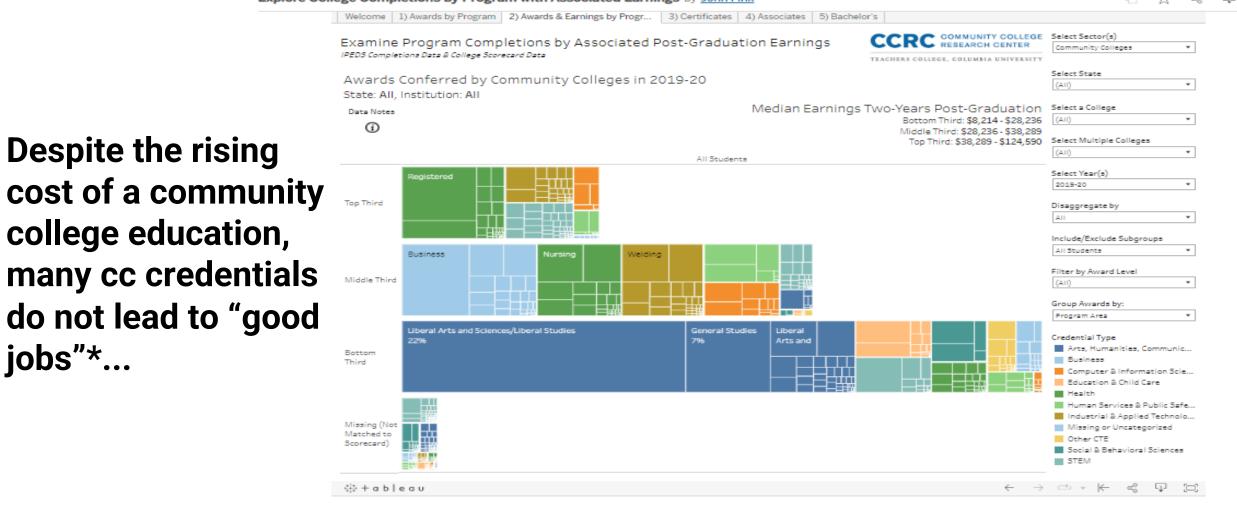
To Build Back Enrollment, Community Colleges Must Ensure That Their Programs Are Worth Completing

Essays • Multiple Authors • Wednesday, 29 September 2021

By Davis Jenkins and John Fink

- CCRC estimates that less than 40% of long certificates and 25% of associate degrees are associated with median earnings of \$35,000 or more two years after graduation.
- About half of associate degrees awarded by ccs are AAs in liberal/general studies, which have little labor market value and too often include credits that students are not able to apply toward their desired bachelor's major.
- In general, too many community college students are not able to apply cc credits toward a bachelor's in their major field of interest.
- Relatively few students who earn cc certificates go on to earn an associate or bachelor's degrees.

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Details

jobs"\*...

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IPEDS Completions data linked to College Scorecard, compiled by Michael Itzkowitz at Third Way (see https://www.thirdway.org/report/which-college-programs-give-students-the-bestbang-for-their-buck)

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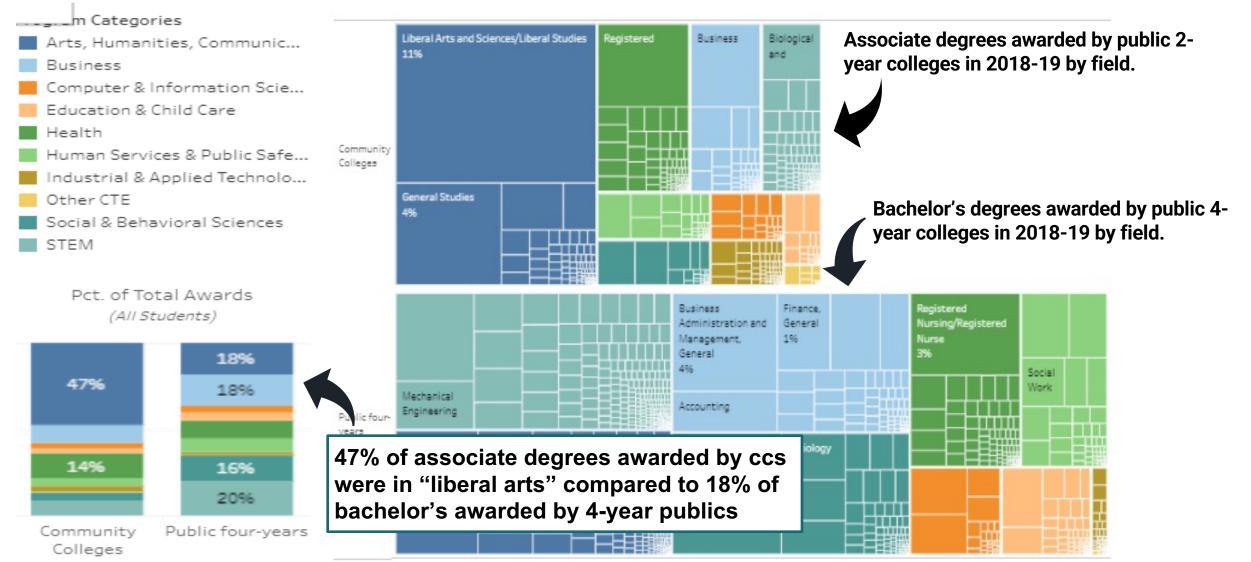
\* "Good jobs" defined as those that pay a minimum of \$35,000 for workers between the ages of 25 and 44 and at least \$45,000 for workers between the ages of 45 and 64.

## Estimated Percentage of Credits Lost in Transfer, on Average, Academic Years 2003-04 to 2008-09

Transfer ...and too many from 2-year 56% of public to 4community college credits lost year private for-profit students lose credits when they transfer. Transfer 22% of from 2-year public to 4credits lost

year public

# Half of community college associate degrees are general AAs, which are not well-aligned with bachelor's major requirements.



Source: https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/john.fink/viz/IPEDSCollegeAwardsdev/CompletionsbyProgram

# Motivate students to enroll and persist by helping them find a direction and build momentum in a field of interest

## RESEARCH BRIEF

#### Early Momentum Metrics Leading Indicators for Community College Improvement

By Clive R. Belfield, Davis Jenkins, and John Fink

As community colleges across the country implement large-scale reforms to improve student success, they need timely and actionable metrics to determine if the changes they are making in a given year or term will likely improve student outcomes in the long run. In this brief, we examine how well nine measures of students' progress in their first year predict student completion in subsequent years and thus how suitable these early momentum metrics, or EMMs, are as leading indicators of the effectiveness of institutional reforms.

Based on analysis of student data from all community colleges in three states, we find that EMMs do predict longer term success for students. We also find that a key factor in low completion rates, as well as in equity gaps in completion rates, is that many students do not gain early momentum in their first year. College outcomes would be substantially higher if more students met EMMs. Our findings indicate the need for comprehensive reforms to community college organization and practice to help more students gain early momentum on their way to earning a credential.

#### First-Year Indicators of Longer-Term Success

Throughout the nation, two-year and four-year colleges are recognizing that to "move the needle" on collegewide measures of success (e.g., completion rates) major redesign across the entire institution may be required to ensure that its programs, policies, and practices are well designed and aligned to promote student success. Hundreds of community colleges across the country are adopting whole-college reforms commonly referred to as "guided pathways" (Bailey, Jaggars, &, Jenkins, 2015). As part of these reforms, colleges are mapping requirements and options for programs of study so that they are aligned with desired employment and transfer outcomes, redesigning the onboarding process to help new students explore options and interests and develop an academic completion plan, and revamping advising to better support students in making timely progress toward completion of a credential. Faculty are also working together across disciplines to ensure that curricula and teaching prepare students to succeed in employment and transfer in their field of study.

Because they involve a redesign of college practices at scale, guided pathways reforms take several years to implement (Jenkins, Lahr, Fink, & Ganga, 2018, pp. 2–3). Given that whole-college

- Students who gain early momentum are more likely to complete and transfer successfully, with added benefits for students of color and low-income students.
- But many students who apply do not enroll or drop out before the census day, and 45 percent of students generally (and 60% of most underserved students) have dropped out of college by year 2.
- Of those who persist, many are not enrolled in a program that clearly leads to a job or efficient transfer in their major field of interest.
- Most colleges do not actively build bridges to credit programs for hs dual enrollment/credit and adult basic skills, noncredit workforce students.

**Based on analysis in** 

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progress in the first year

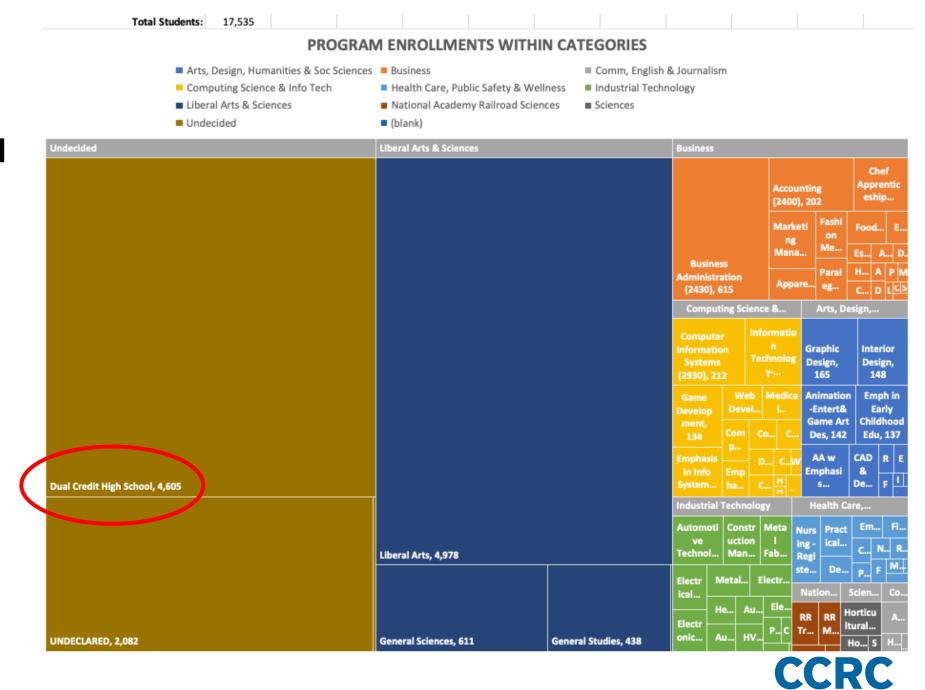
predict student completion

ent vears.

17,535 Total Students: PROGRAM ENROLLMENTS WITHIN CATEGORIES Arts, Design, Humanities & Soc Sciences Business Comm, English & Journalism Computing Science & Info Tech Health Care, Public Safety & Wellness Industrial Technology Liberal Arts & Sciences National Academy Railroad Sciences Sciences Undecided (blank) Undecided Liberal Arts & Sciences Business Chef Apprenti Accounting eship.. (2400), 202 Fash Marketi Food... on Me. Mana. Es... **Business** . A P Para Administration Appare. eg... (2430), 615 C.... D Computing Science &... Arts, Design,... Graphic Interior Technolog Design, Design, 165 148 (2930), 212 Web Medic Animation Emph in -Entert& Early Game Art Childhoo Des, 142 Edu, 137 AA w CAD R Emphas in Info Emphasi De... Dual Credit High School, 4,605 System. s.... ndustrial Technology Health Care. Automoti Constr | Meta Em... Nurs | Pract uction ve ing ical. Technol Man... Fab. Liberal Arts, 4,978 Reg ste... De Metal... Electr. Electr ical.. Au... lorticu RR RR Electr ltura Au.... HV. onic... UNDECLARED, 2,082 **General Studies**, 438 General Sciences, 611

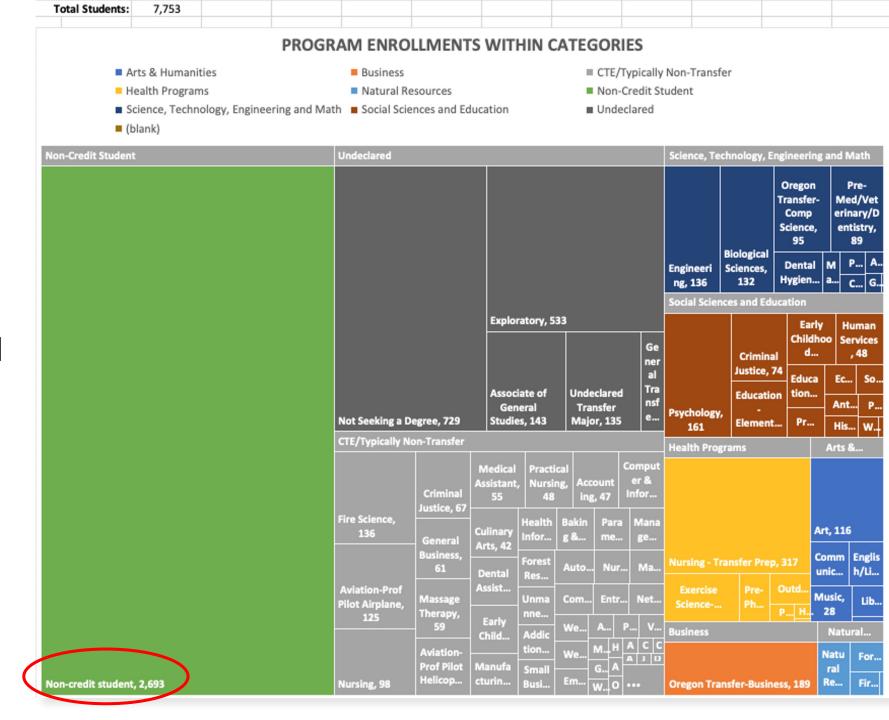
Many students are not enrolled in a program that clearly leads to a job or transfer in their major field of interest.

What motivation do these students have to complete?



Colleges could build a supply of new students by rethinking hs dual enrollment/credit as an on-ramp to affordable college **CTE** and transfer pathways for students after high school...

...and by building bridges to college credit programs for adult basic skills and non-credit workforce students.



## Planning Guide and Data Tool for Unpacking Program Data with Equity in Mind



#### **Unpacking Program Enrollments and Completions** With Equity in Mind

By John Fink and Davis Jenkin

whole-college guided pathways reforms to create clearer paths to college and career access for students.1 The aim of these reforms is to help students explore and decide upon career and education goals that align with their interests and aspirations, and t plan and complete a program of study to achieve those goals. As part of these reform esign intake and advising processes around broad career fields sometime called "meta-majors"; this helps entering students make sense of the large number of rogram options that are available and engages them with faculty, advisors, and other udents in a field of interest right from the start (Jenkins et al., 2020). Guided pathways eforms are challenging for colleges to pursue; they entail the participation of all staff in modifying practices around a far-reaching notion of studen success (Jenkins et al., 2019). They require a shift in mindset wherein college personnel ask not only "Are students persisting and completing?" but also "Do our programs really lead to the education and career outcomes students seek?" and "Is student representation cross our programs equitable?'

Critically examining what programs students are entering and completing is particularly important given that some community college programs lead to substantially higher economic returns than others (Belfie Bailey, 2017: Dadgar & Trimble, 2015). A substantial literature base reveals not only that returns to higher education programs are stratified but also that this stratificat perates along racial/ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic lines (Carnevale et al., 2016 Castex & Decher, 2014). Though this research has focused primarily on the four-yes ector, it may be that community colleges are in even more danger of facilitating neguitable stratification since their programs vary by subject area as well as length corresponding, e.g., to short- and long-term certificates, applied associate degrees, an associate of arts degrees designed to prepare students for upward transfer to bachelor's degree programs). There is a wide range in the economic returns to different types of community college awards, with longer programs and those leading to bachelor's ees in math-intensive fields, for example, leading to stronger labor market retu

A substantial literature bas reveals not only that returns o higher education program are stratified but also that this stratification operates along racial/ethnic, gender, and

What programs are our students currently enrolled in?

How many students are not in a program that clearly leads to jobs or transfer in specific majors?

Which programs lead to greater or lesser opportunity?

Is student representation across programs proportionate?

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Download: https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/unpacking-program-enrollments-completion-equity.html

### Is it clear to our students where their programs lead?

Category	Description	Examples	Clear to students what this program leads to?
Workforce: Low	Program places students into jobs with low average earnings (e.g., less than \$14/hour)	Criminal Justice, Automobile Technology, Early Childhood	
Workforce: Medium	Program places students into relatively middle- paying job (e.g., between \$14-\$17.55/ hour)	Accounting, Welding, Business Management, Dental Assistant	
Workforce: High	Program places students into a relatively high- paying job (e.g., more than \$17.55/ hour)	Nursing, Radiology Technology, Sonography, Dental Hygiene	
Transfer: Structured	Program designed to prepare students for a particular baccalaureate major/meta-major and/or a specific four-year destination	AA-Business (DTA), AS-T (Engineering)	
Transfer: Unstructured	Program designed for general transfer (no pre-major or university destination necessarily specified)	AA-General Studies, "General Transfer"	
Undeclared or Unknown	Listed as undeclared or missing program information	Null, Missing Program, Undeclared	Ŵ
Uncategorized or Other	Non-degree seeking, ESL, ABE, dual enrollment	Basic Education, ESL, Running Start	

CCRC

### **Guiding questions for program review**

- 1) Have we worked with employers and university partners to ensure that every program clearly leads to jobs and/or efficient major transfer in fields of value to students and your local economy?
- 2) Have we supported faculty to ensure that students in each program have opportunities for career-relevant active and experiential learning in and outside of the classroom?



- 3) Are our programs are offered on schedules and through media designed for students with many competing obligations
- 4) Are all entering students helped to explore options, connect with people and programs, gain confidence as college learners and develop a full-program plan by the end of their first term?



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