

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.

Despite the rising cost of a community college education, many cc credentials do not lead to “good jobs”*...

Examine Program Completions by Associated Post-Graduation Earnings

IPEDS Completions Data & College Scorecard Data

Awards Conferred by Community Colleges in 2019-20

State: All, Institution: All

Data Notes

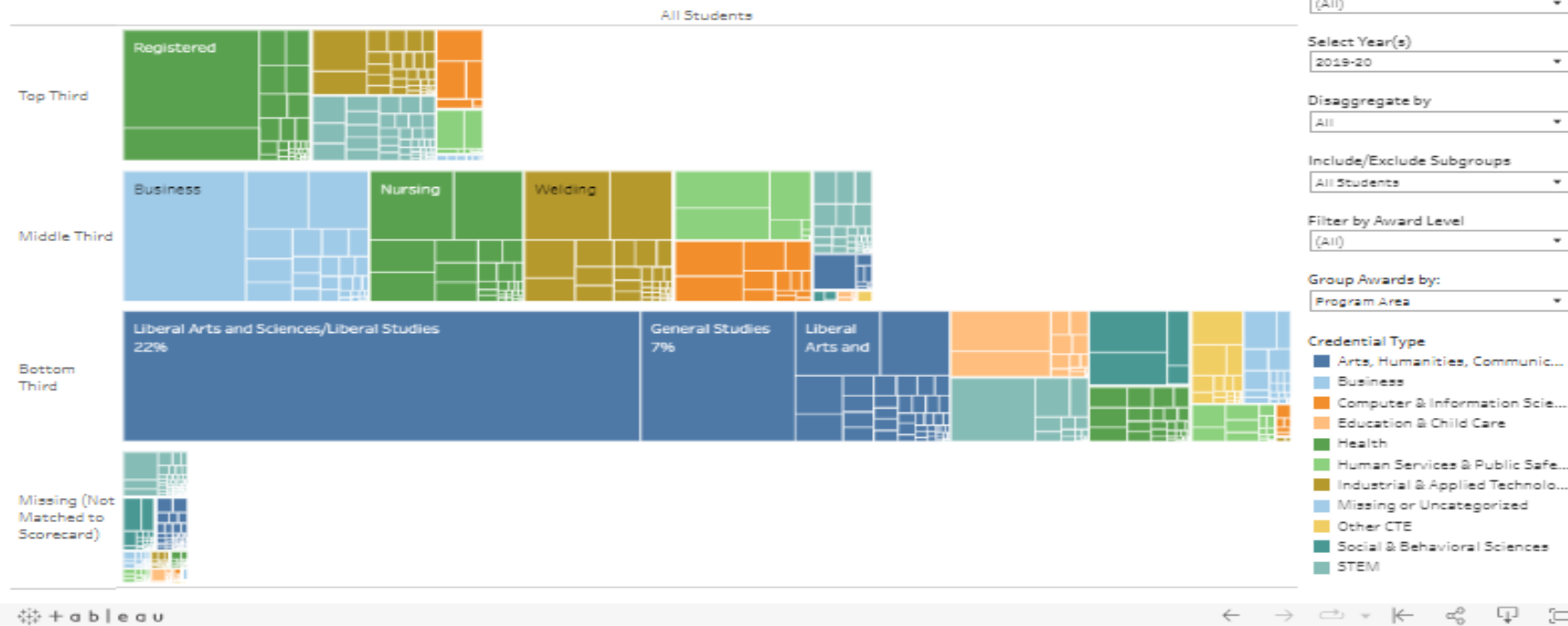


Median Earnings Two-Years Post-Graduation

Bottom Third: \$8,214 - \$28,236

Middle Third: \$28,236 - \$38,289

Top Third: \$38,289 - \$124,590



Details

☆ 4 👁 6,710

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-best-bang-for-their-buck>)

Published on: ccrc.tc.columbia.edu

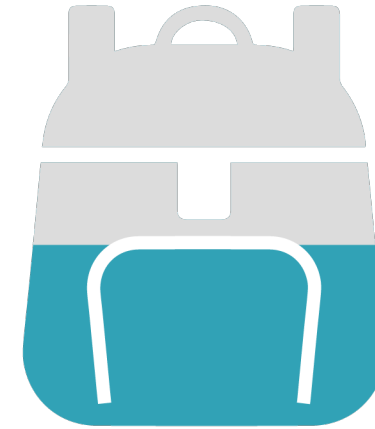
* “Good jobs” defined as those that pay a minimum of \$35,000 for workers between the ages of 25 and 44 and at least \$45,000 for workers between the ages of 45 and 64.

Source: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/john.fink/viz/ExploreCollegeCompletionsbyProgramwithAssociatedEarnings/1AwardsbyProgram?publish=yes>

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

**...and too many
community college
students lose
credits when they
transfer.**

Transfer
from 2-year
public to 4-
year private
for-profit



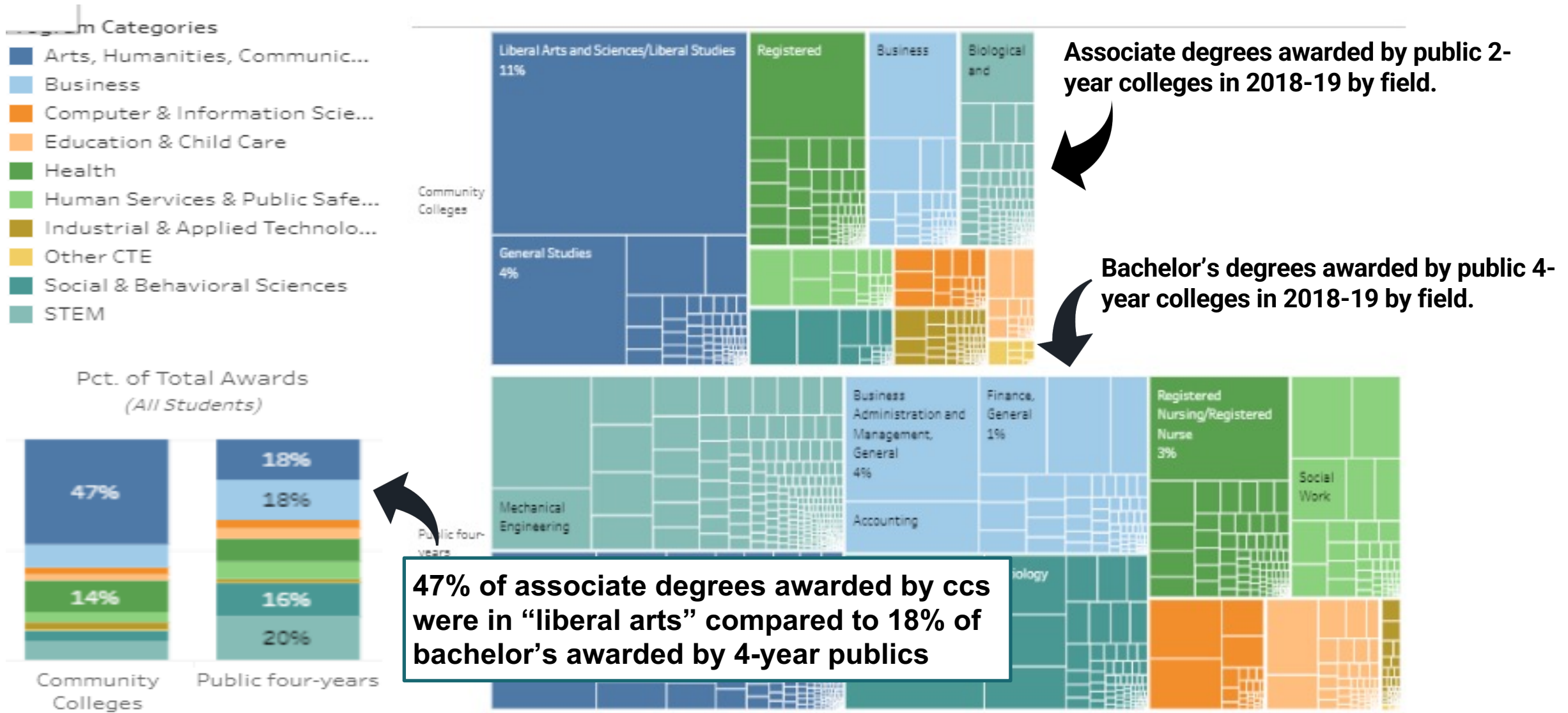
56% of
credits lost

Transfer
from 2-year
public to 4-
year public

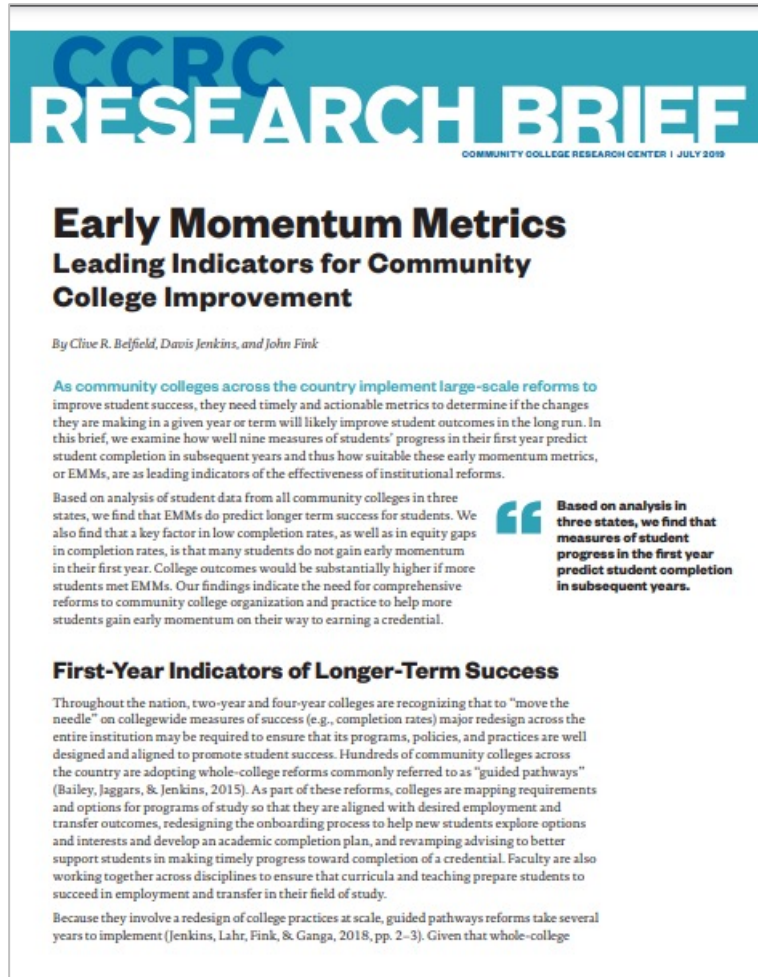


22% of
credits lost

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



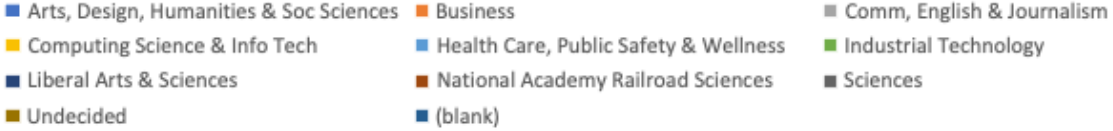
Motivate students to enroll and persist by helping them find a direction and build momentum in a field of interest



- 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.

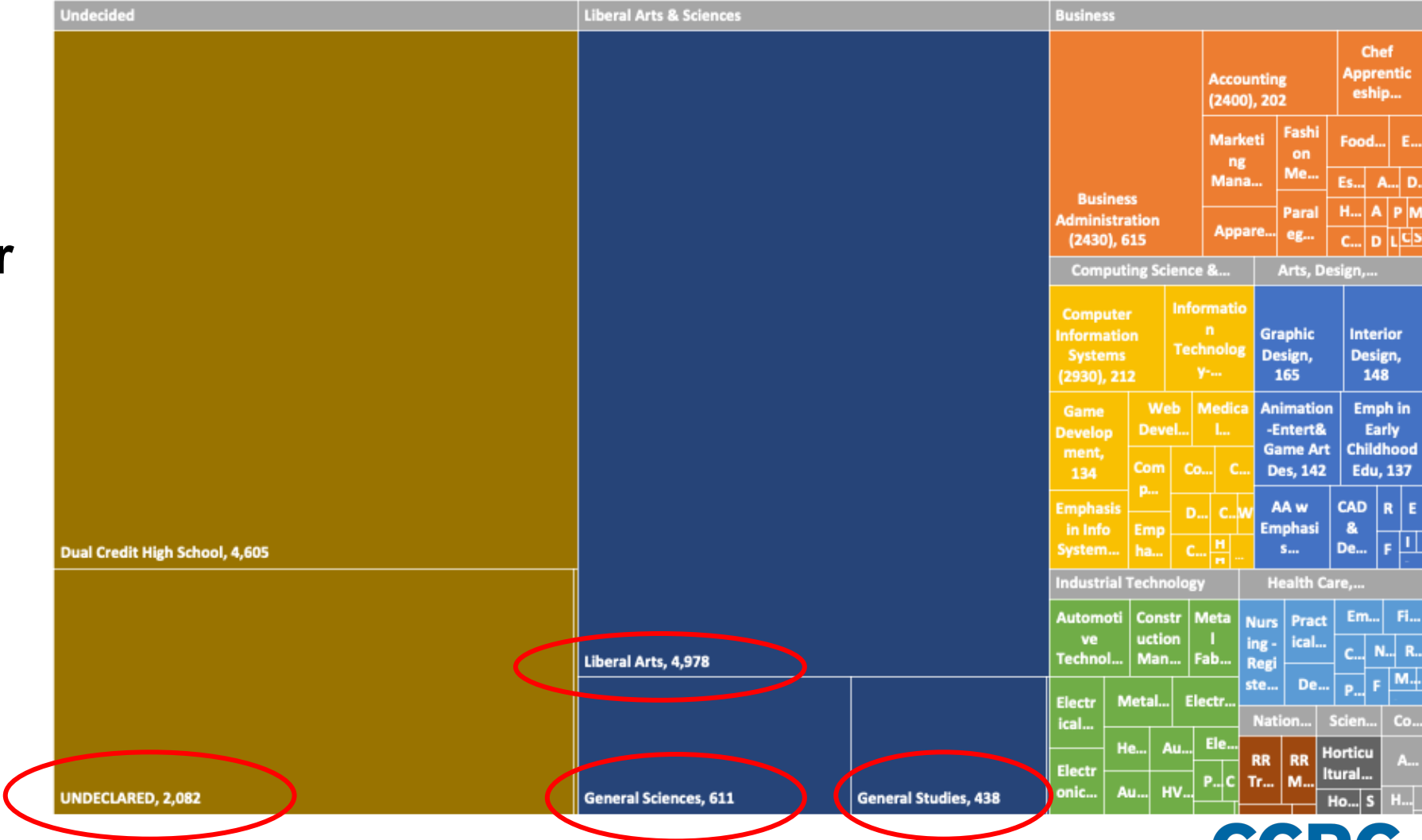
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PROGRAM ENROLLMENTS WITHIN CATEGORIES



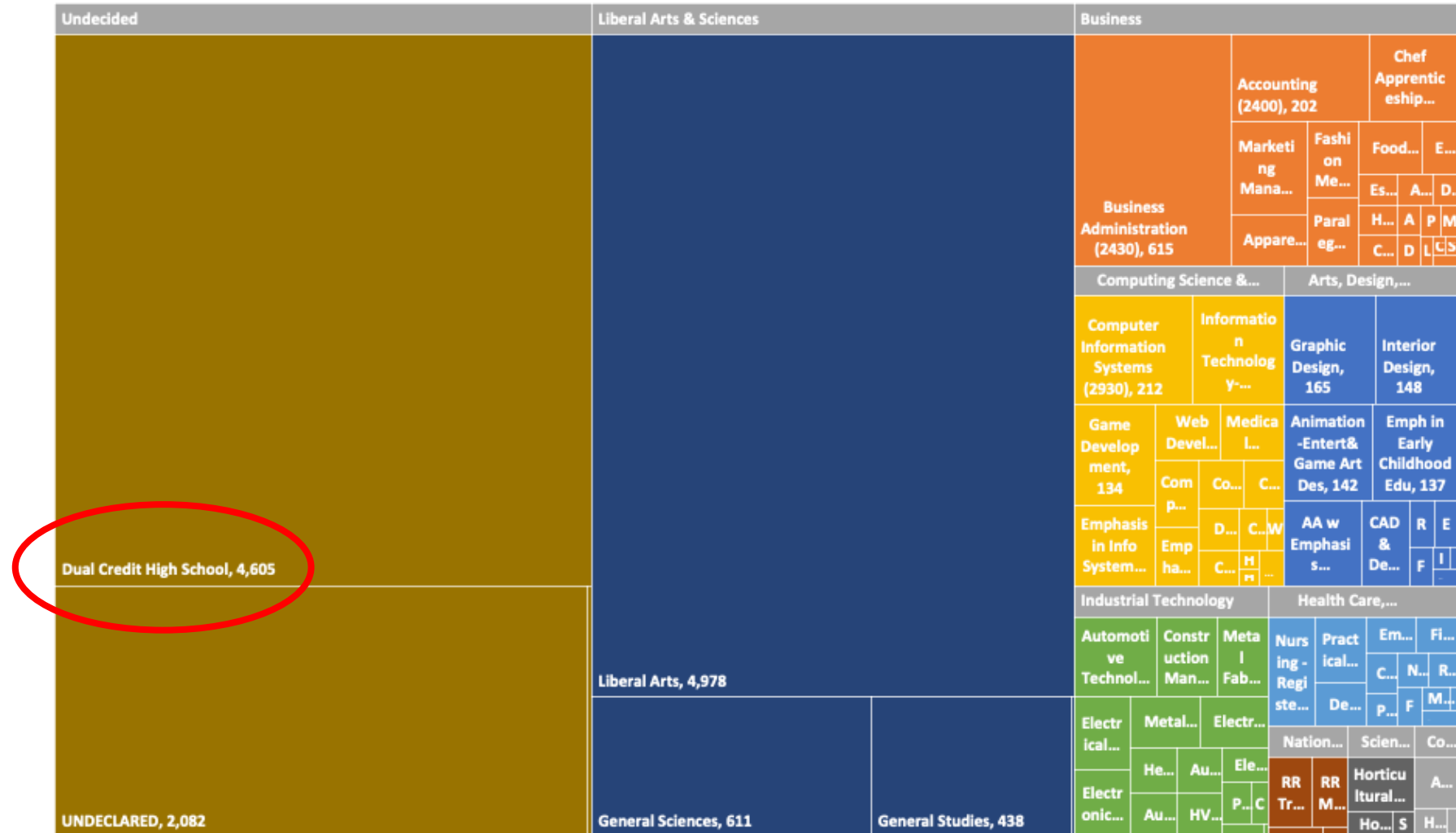
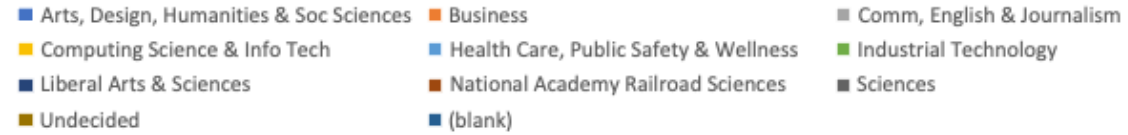
Many students are not enrolled in a program that clearly leads to a job or transfer in their major field of interest.

What motivation do these students have to complete?



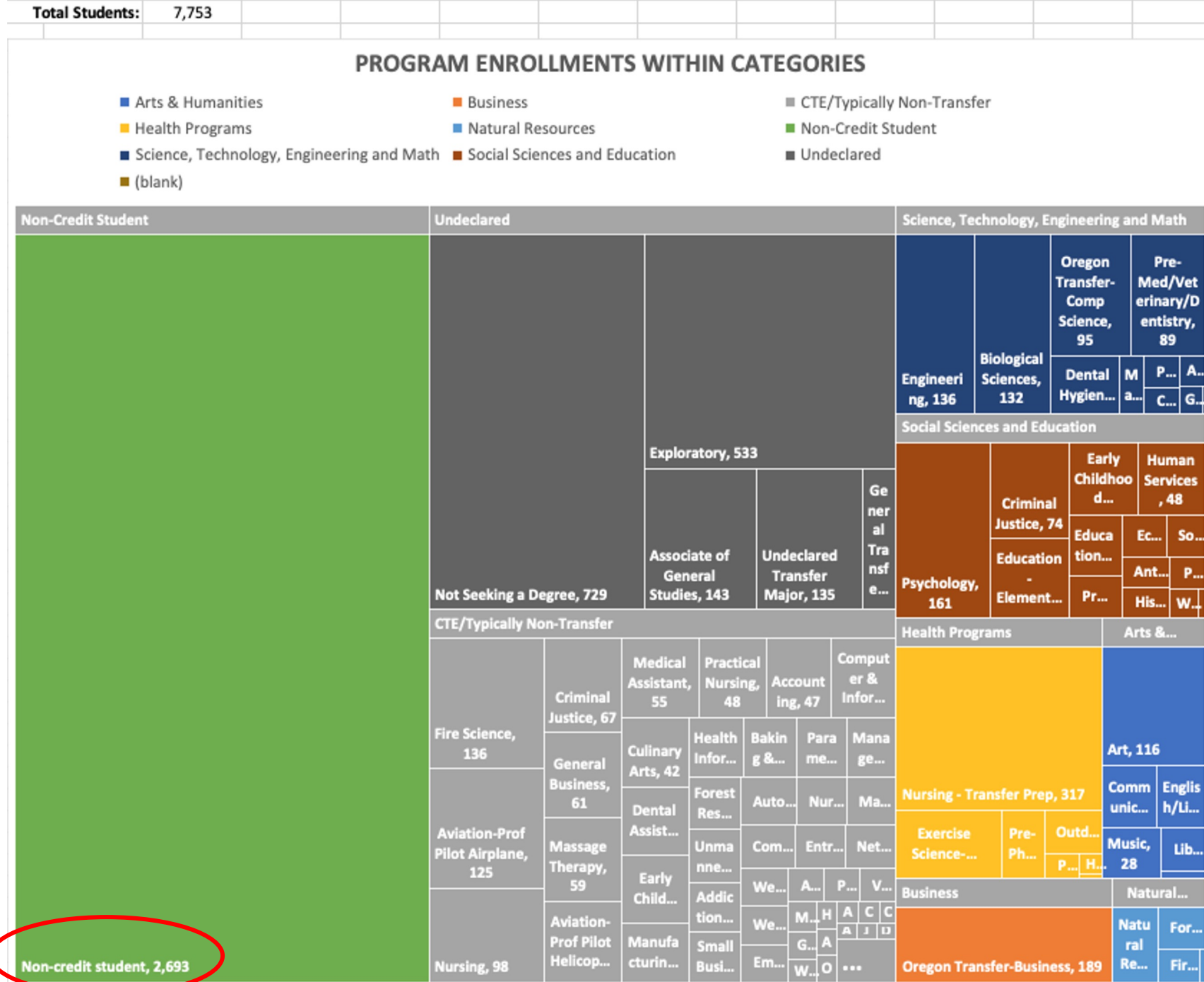
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PROGRAM ENROLLMENTS WITHIN CATEGORIES

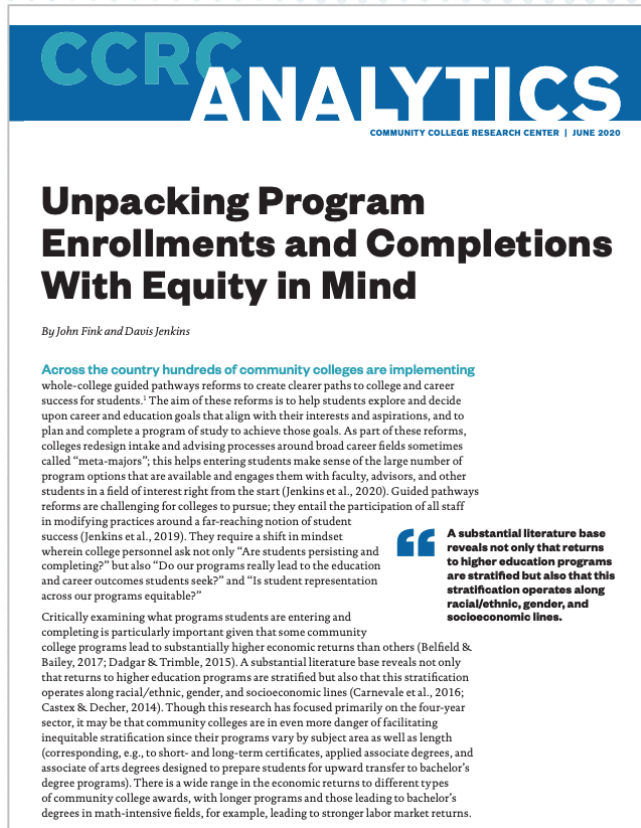


Colleges could build a supply of new students by rethinking dual enrollment/credit as an on-ramp to affordable college CTE and transfer pathways for students after high school...

...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



1. 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?*
2. Which programs lead to greater or lesser opportunity?
3. Is student representation across programs proportionate?

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	
Uncategorized or Other	Non-degree seeking, ESL, ABE, dual enrollment	Basic Education, ESL, Running Start	

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?



For more information, contact us at:

John Fink, john.fink@tc.columbia.edu

Davis Jenkins, pdj2102@tc.columbia.edu

Hana Lahr, lahr@tc.columbia.edu



ccrc.tc.columbia.edu



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ccrc@columbia.edu



212.678.3091