Redesigning Community Colleges for Equitable Access and Success

Lessons from six years of research on Guided Pathways reforms in Washington and nationally
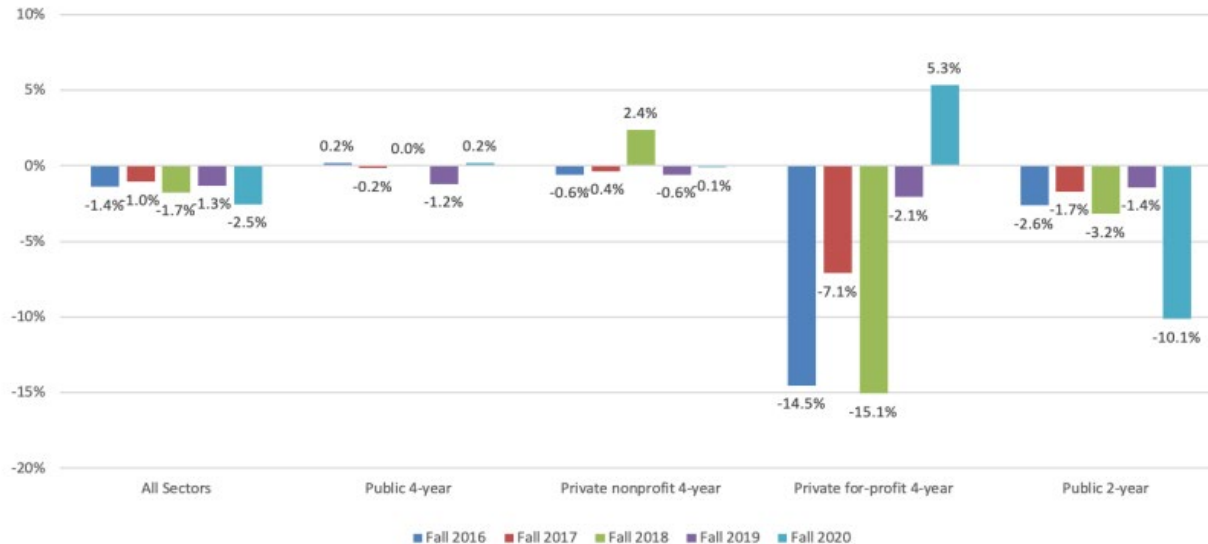
Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Scholar

WSAC Pave the Way Webinar, June 10, 2021

COVID has hit community colleges and their students hard

Figure 1. Percent Change in Enrollment from Previous Year by Institutional Sector: 2016 to 2020

In WA and nationally cc enrollment has declined since 2011

Community colleges have lost market share to public 4-years…

…especially among traditional college-age students even as older student enrollment has declined sharply

Undergraduate Enrollment Trends by Sector
IPEDS Data, 1996-2019

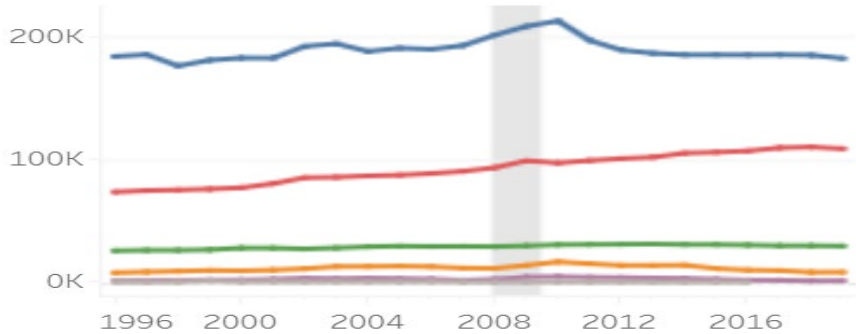CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Sector (CCRC Definition)
- Community colleges
- Public four-years
- Private not-for-profit four-years
- Private for-profits
- Other public two-years, less-tha…
- Other private not-for-profits

Select a State/Territory
Washington

Select an Institution
(All)

Fall Enrollments
All undergraduates

Undergraduate Enrollment Trends by Sector
IPEDS Data, 1996-2019

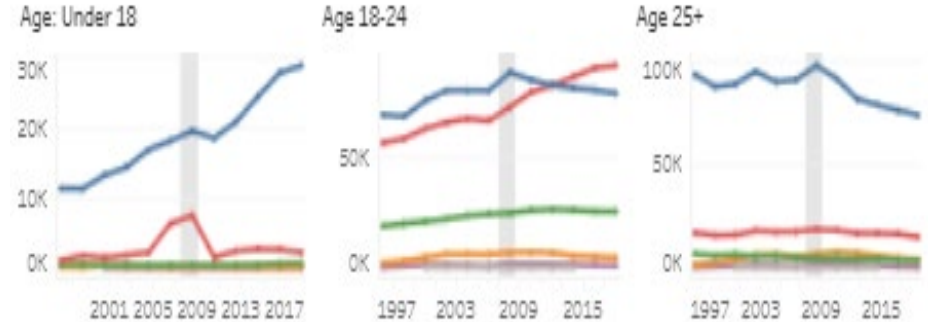CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER
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Fall Undergraduate Enrollments
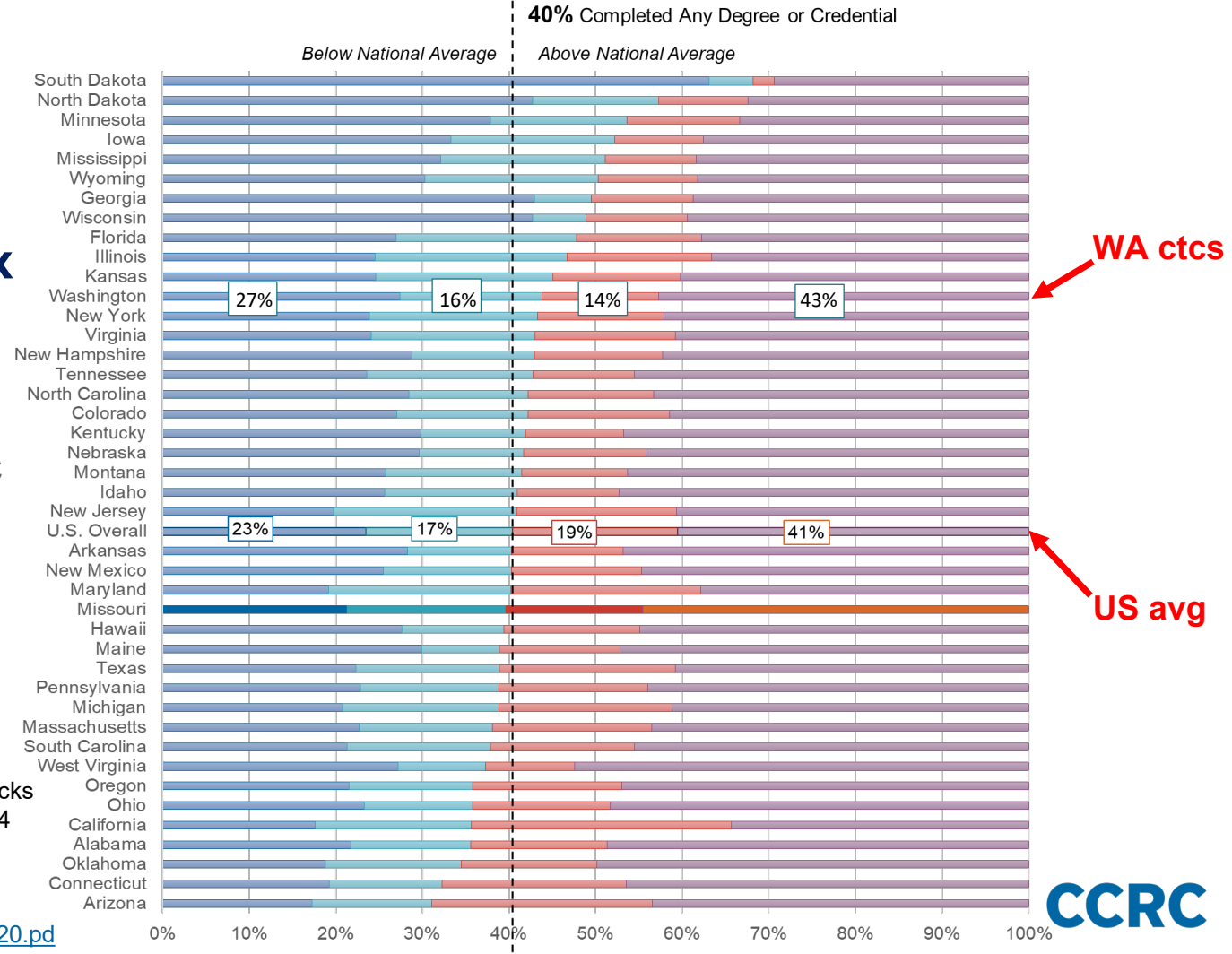*Summary for student age and race/ethnicity*

Age: Under 18 | Age 18-24 | Age 25+

Source: CCRC (2021). https://public.tableau.com/profile/john.fink#!/vizhome/UndergraduateEnrollmentTrendsbySector/Summary

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**Most cc starters haven't earned a credential after six years**

NSC Completing College 2020, which tracks six year highest outcomes for the fall 2014 FTIC (includes former dual enrollment) degree-seeking cohort.

https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Completions_Report_2020.pdf

Legend:
- Completed at CC
- Completed at FY
- Still enrolled
- Not enrolled

40% Completed Any Degree or Credential

Below National Average | *Above National Average*

WA ctcs

US avg

Washington: 27% | 16% | 14% | 43%

U.S. Overall: 23% | 17% | 19% | 41%

States (top to bottom): South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Mississippi, Wyoming, Georgia, Wisconsin, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Washington, New York, Virginia, New Hampshire, Tennessee, North Carolina, Colorado, Kentucky, Nebraska, Montana, Idaho, New Jersey, U.S. Overall, Arkansas, New Mexico, Maryland, Missouri, Hawaii, Maine, Texas, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Massachusetts, South Carolina, West Virginia, Oregon, Ohio, California, Alabama, Oklahoma, Connecticut, Arizona

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Dropout rates are especially high for underserved students

Highest Outcomes in Six-Years among First-Time-in-College Community College Entrants by Race
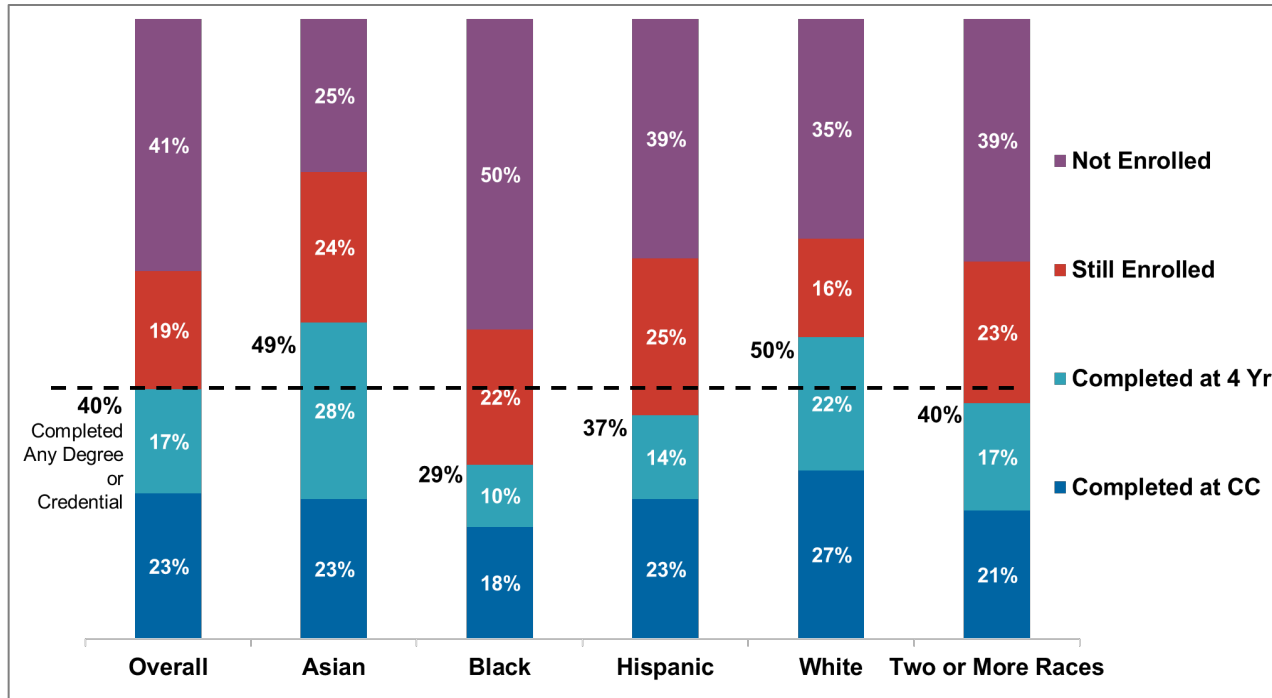
Source: NSC Completing College 2020, which tracks the fall 2014 FTIC (includes former dual enrollment degree-seeking cohorts. https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Completions_Report_2020.pdf
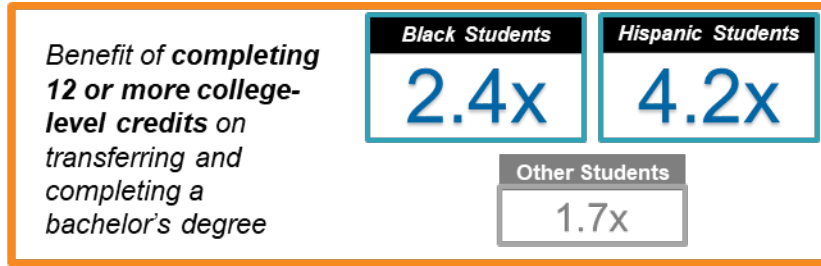
# CC students who gain "early momentum" are much more likely to complete…

Benefit of completing 12 or more college-level credits on transferring and completing a bachelor's degree

Black Students	Hispanic Students
2.4x	**4.2x**

Other Students
1.7x

|	Benefit of Milestone (Baseline Group: White)	Effects Even Larger for…		
Transfer to a four-year institution		**Black** Students	**Hispanic** Students	**Low-income** Students
Credit Momentum (6+, 12+, or 24+ college credits)	3-5x	3-**6x**	**6-11x**	**7-8x**
Gateway English/Math (College-level)	3-4x	3-4x	**6-8x**	**4-6x**
Completed Transfer Degree	7-8x	**9-11x**	**11-18x**	**11-13x**
Transfer & bachelor's completion				
Credit Momentum (6+, 12+, or 24+ college credits)	1.7-2x	**2-3x**	**4-5x**	**7-9x**
Gateway English/Math (College-level)	1.6-3x	**2-4x**	**4-5x**	**4-5x**
Completed Transfer Degree	3-4x	**5-6x**	**5-9x**	**6-7x**

Yuxin Lin, Maggie Fay, & John Fink. (Forthcoming). CCRC analysis using statewide administrative data on 573,806 community college entrants between 2009-2018, tracked up to 10 years. Estimated odds ratios from hazard models controlling for students characteristics, college fixed effects and cohort fixed effects.

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....but nearly half of cc students generally, and majority of underserved students, drop out by year 2

Program Enrollments by Term among FTEIC Degree-seeking CC Entrants, 2009-2011
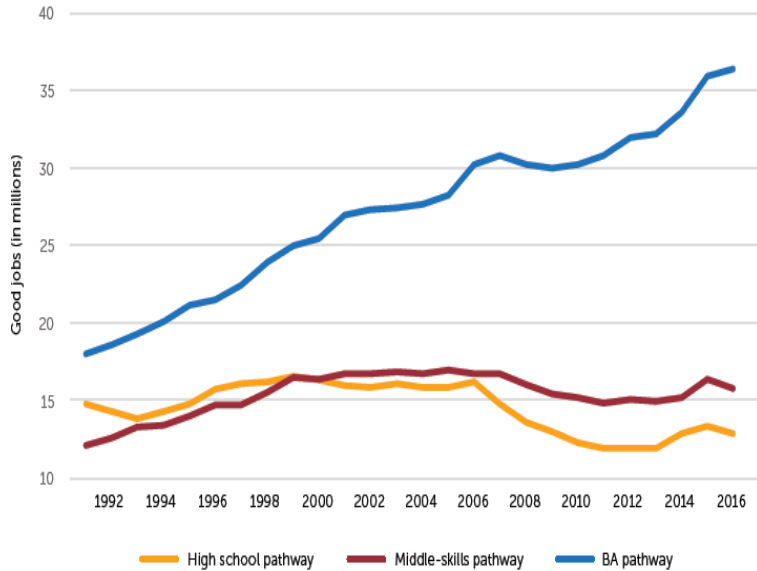

Lin, Fay & Fink (2020).

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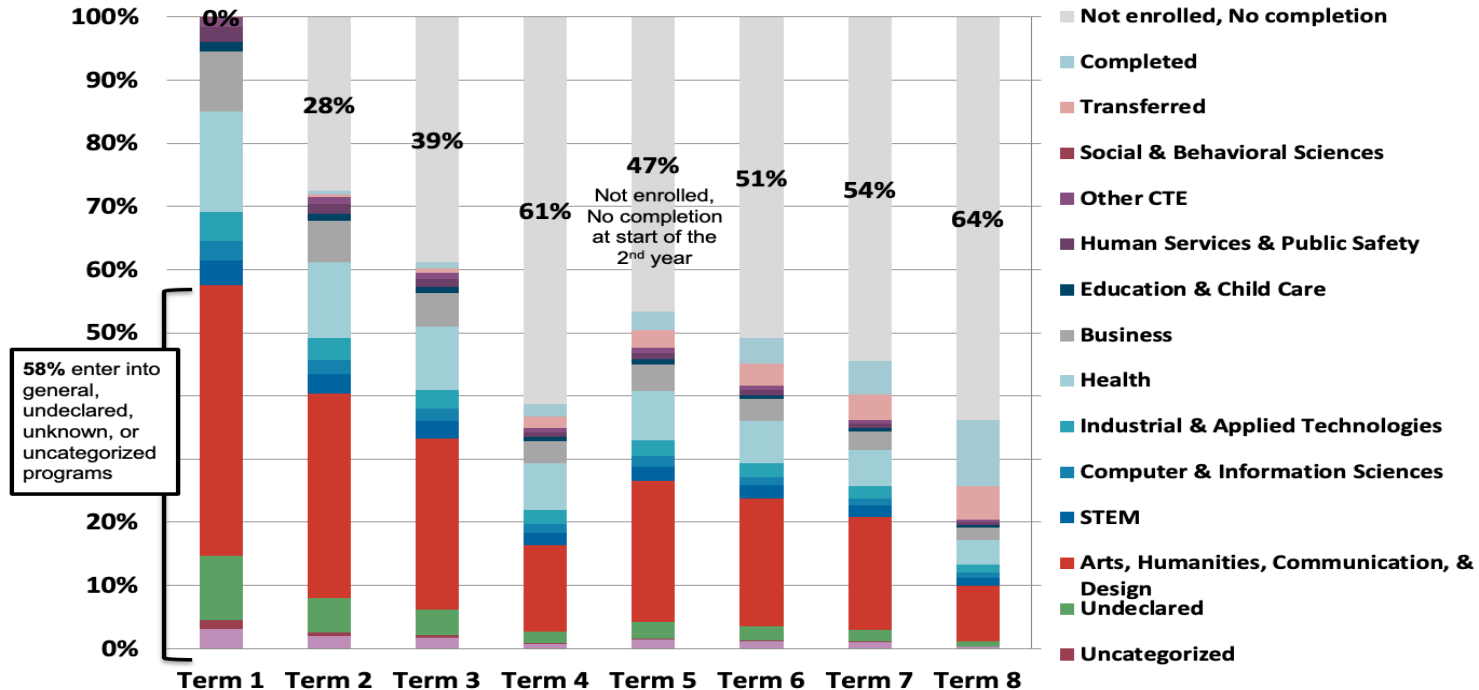
Despite rising costs of even a cc education, many cc credentials do not have strong labor market returns…
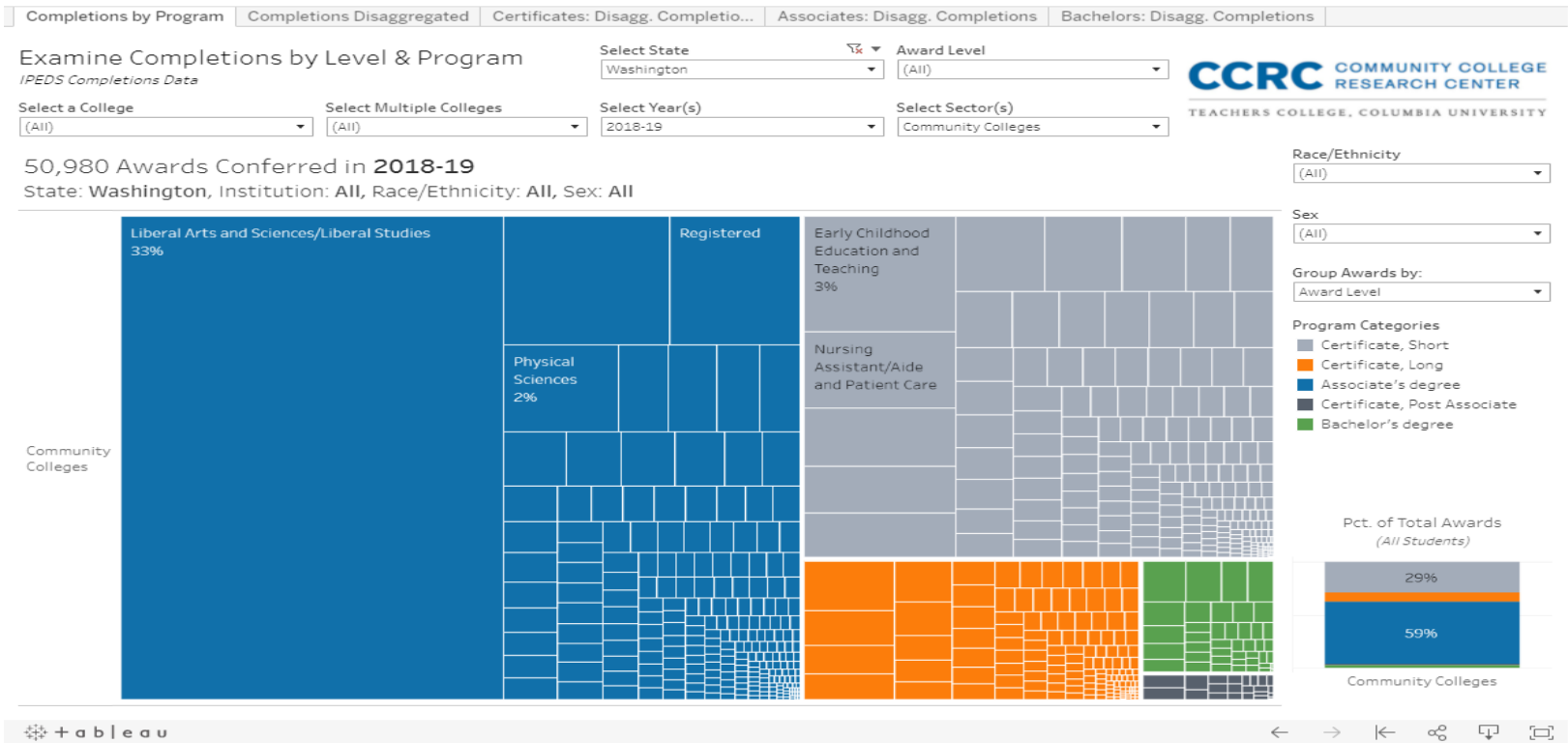
Returns to bachelor's+ continue to be strong, while value of sub-baccalaureate credentials has stagnated


Figure 4. By 2000, the middle-skills pathway surpassed the high school pathway in providing good jobs.

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, 1992–2017.

Source: Carnevale, et al., *Three Educational Pathways to Good Jobs*. Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, 2018.

Figure 1: Cumulative Change in Real Weekly Earnings of Working-Age Adults Ages 18-64
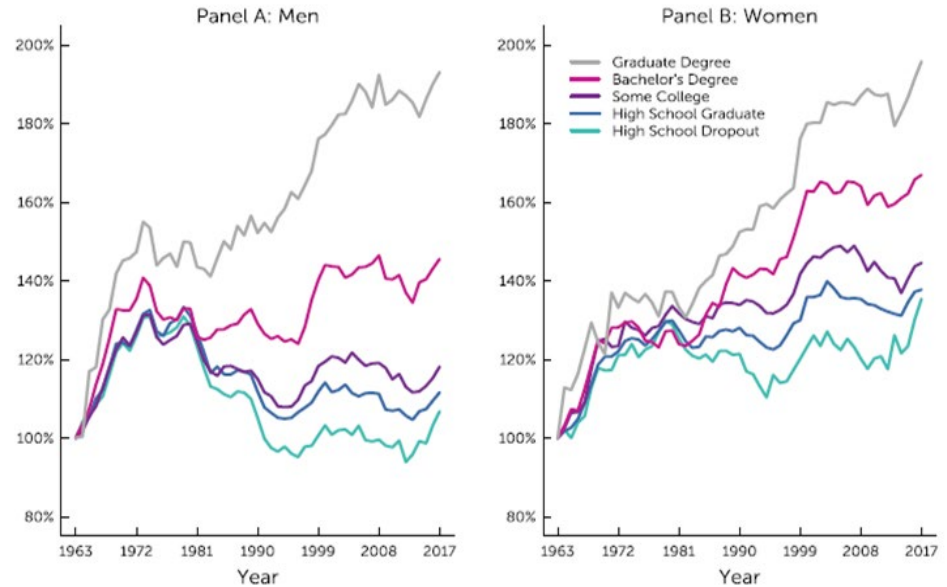
Source: Autor (2019, Figure 1). Series are calculated from March Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement data for earnings years 1963 to 2018. Each series depicts the percentage change in real hourly earnings relative to its value in 1963 for the indicated education and sex group.

Transfer AAs are valuable only if students apply credits toward a BA *in their major field of interest*…

Just **58%** of students successfully transferred 90% of their credits.
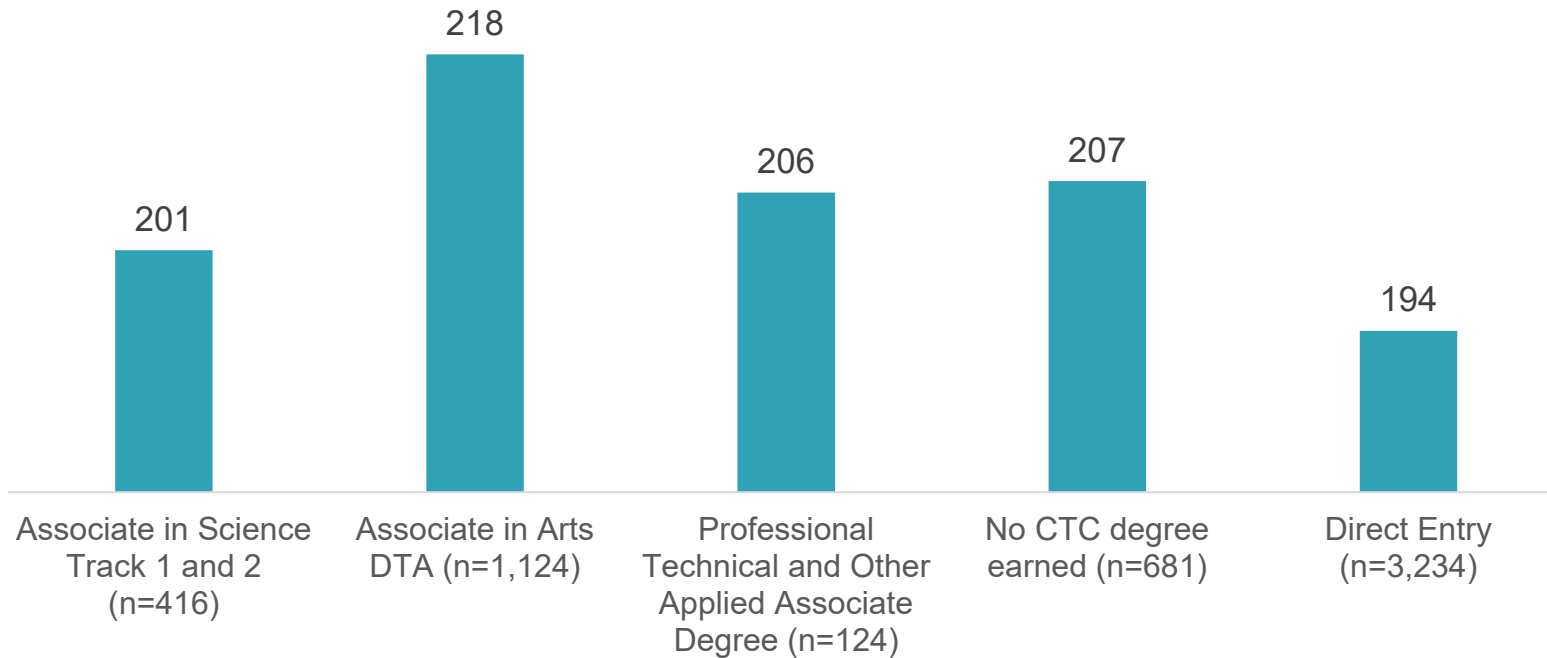
And **15%** can't transfer any credits at all.

Students who can transfer 90% of their credits were **2.5x** more likely to get their bachelor's degree, compared to those who transfer half or less.

Source: Monaghan & Attewell, 2015.

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…But more than half of WA ctc associate degrees are general DTAs, which are not well-aligned with major requirements
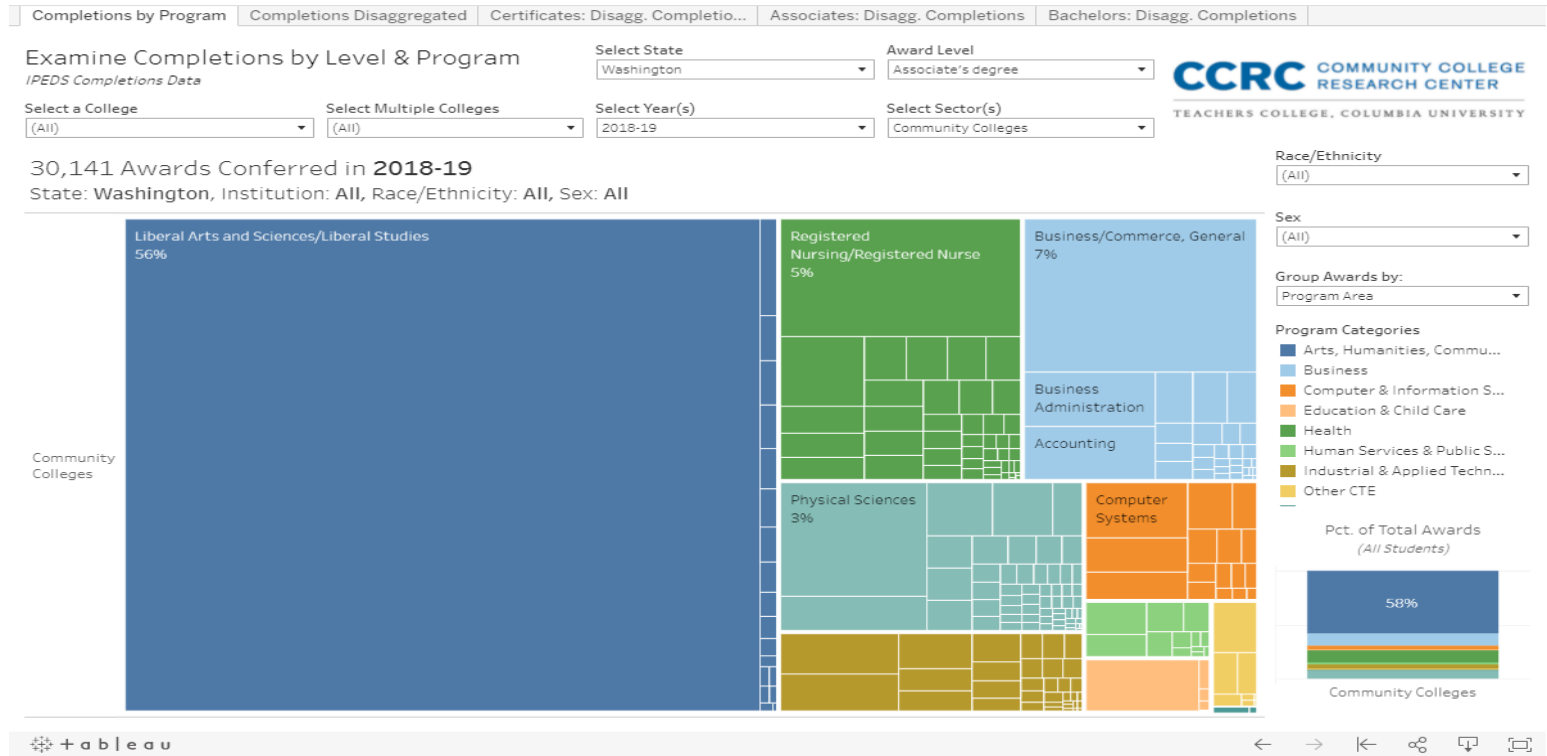
Median Credits Earned Toward Bachelor's STEM Degree
WA CTC Transfers by CTC Degree Type vs Direct Entry

Chart values:
- Associate in Science Track 1 and 2 (n=416): 201
- Associate in Arts DTA (n=1,124): 218
- Professional Technical and Other Applied Associate Degree (n=124): 206
- No CTC degree earned (n=681): 207
- Direct Entry (n=3,234): 194

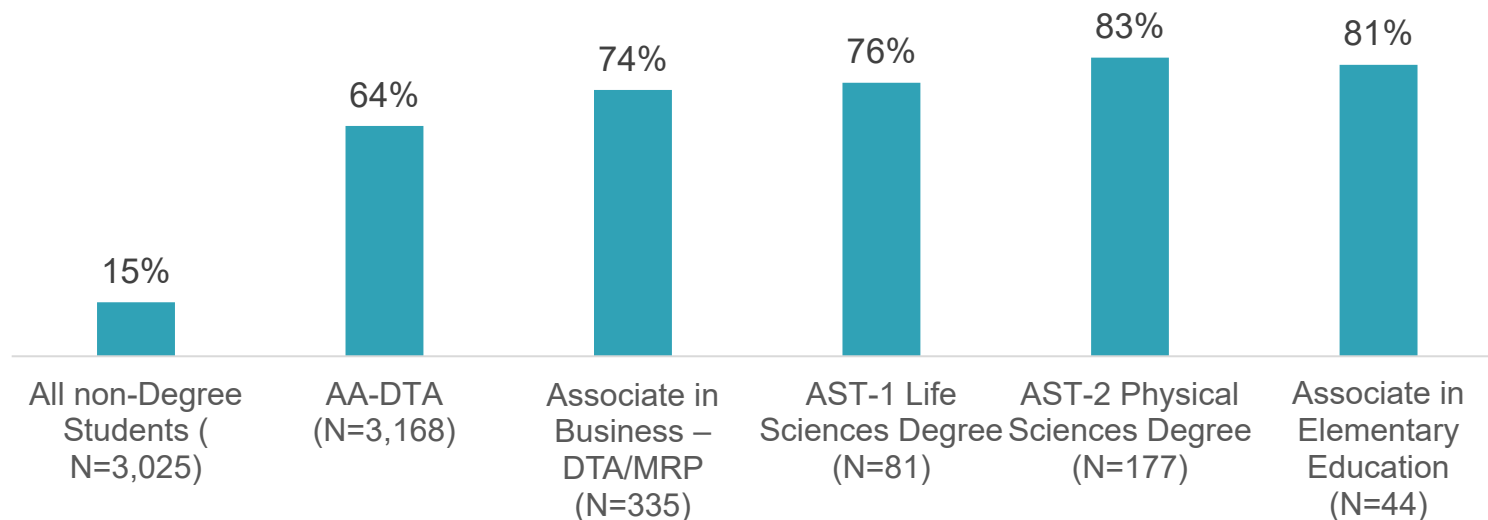Median Credits Earned Toward Business Bachelor's Degree
WA CTC Transfers by CTC Degree Type vs. Direct Entry

- Business DTA (n=478): 185
- Associate in Arts DTA (n=535): 196
- No CTC Degree earned (n=193): 193
- Direct Entry (n=1,392): 186

Source: David Prince, WSBCTC, 2019.
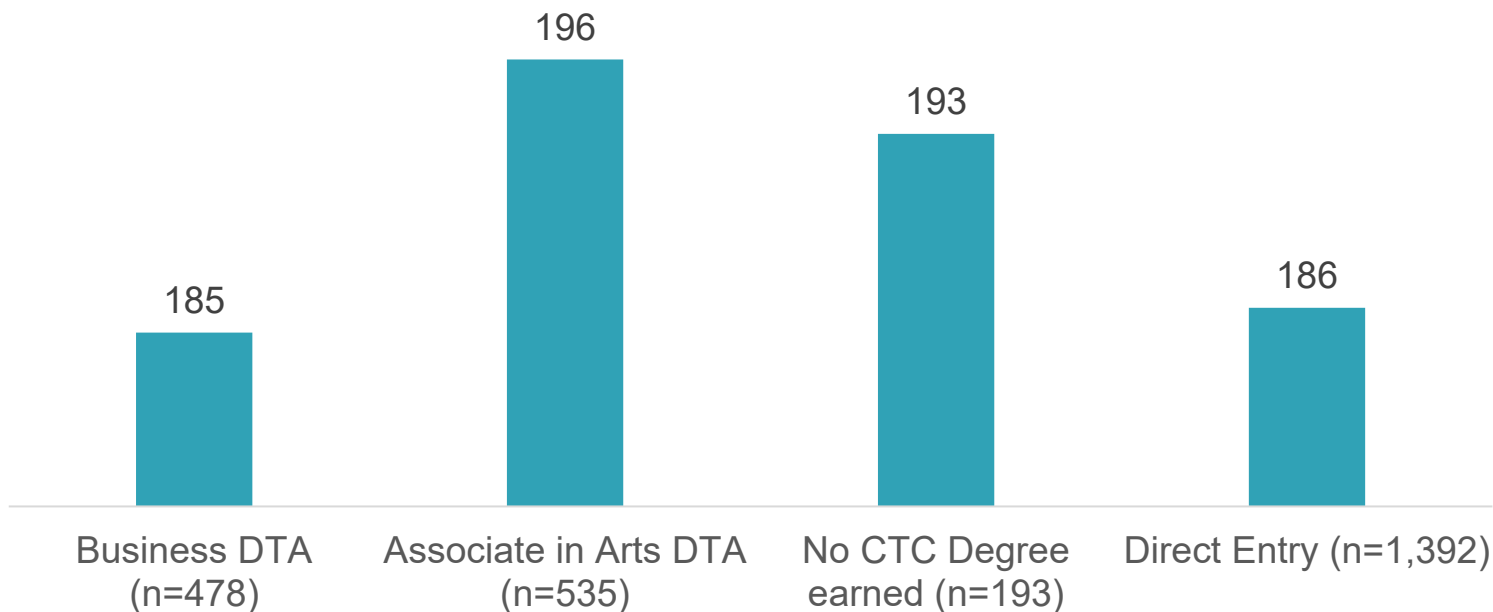
Too many transfer intending students earn DTA, but don't transfer

Transfer to Washington Public/Private 4-year Institution Within 2 Years after Leaving CTCs by CTC Type Degree/No Degree

Category	Percentage
All non-Degree Students (N=3,025)	15%
AA-DTA (N=3,168)	64%
Associate in Business – DTA/MRP (N=335)	74%
AST-1 Life Sciences Degree (N=81)	76%
AST-2 Physical Sciences Degree (N=177)	83%
Associate in Elementary Education (N=44)	81%

Source: David Prince, WSBCTC, 2019.

CCRC's 2015 book examined why, despite extensive reforms, cc student success rates haven't improved
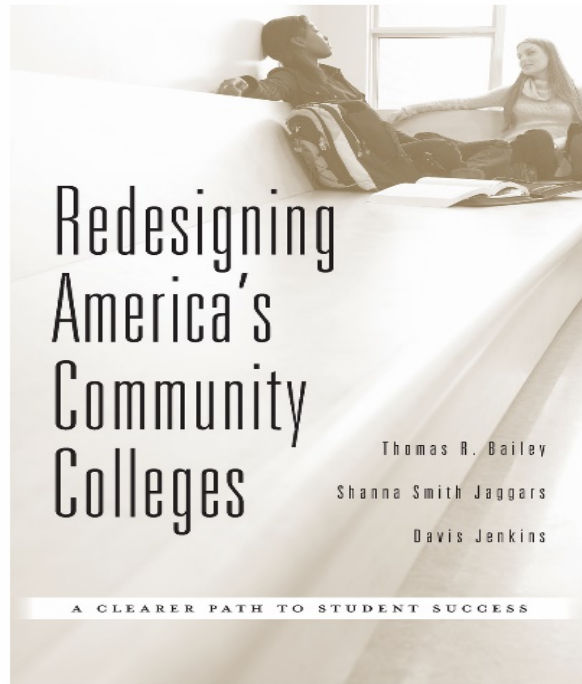
Bailey, Jaggars and Jenkins argued that to substantially improve student outcomes, colleges must abandon the "cafeteria college" model of the 1960s and redesign programs and student supports at scale following "guided pathways" principles.

Cafeteria college is well-designed for access, but not for success in programs aligned with good jobs or transfer in a major

- **Program paths to degrees, good jobs and transfer unclear**
  - Many CTE programs lead to low-wage jobs; few students "stack" credentials
  - Most AA programs do not prepare students for transfer in a major field of interest
  - Websites often unclear re: program requirements, career and transfer outcomes

- **New students not helped to explore interests, develop a plan**
  - Few opportunities for students to engage with faculty, others in a field of interest
  - Prerequisite remediation prevents students from taking courses of interest

- **Students progress isn't monitored**
  - Students typically self-advise yet can't monitor their progress toward completion
  - Colleges often fail to schedule courses students need, when they need them

- **Too few students experience active teaching/learning**
  - Most students lack opportunities to gain program-relevant experience
  - Many students poorly prepared to succeed in fully online courses
  - Instructors not systematically helped to learn effective teaching practices

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Guided pathways is framework for redesigning colleges for access and success

Clarify paths to student end goals

- Backward map all programs from good jobs and/or transfer in a major
- Organize programs by field (meta-major) to facilitate exploration and engage students in an academic and career community

Help students get on a path

- Help all new students (including high school dual enrollment and adult ed students) explore options and interests, connect with an academic/career community, and make a purposeful program choice
- Replace prerequisite remediation with teaching students to be effective learners in college-level program foundation courses
- Ensure all new students have a term 1 "light the fire" learning experience
- Help all new students develop a full-program learning and financial plan by end of term 1

Keep students on path

- Redesign advising to allow case management by metamajor
- Schedule courses and monitor students' progress based on plans

Ensure students are learning along their path

- Introduce students to practice of the field through active learning in classes
- Ensure every student gains program-relevant experience

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Guided pathways has become a national movement for institutional transformation *at scale*

Nearly **400 community colleges** are part of formal state and national guided pathways reform initiatives. Others are implementing pathways reforms on their own.
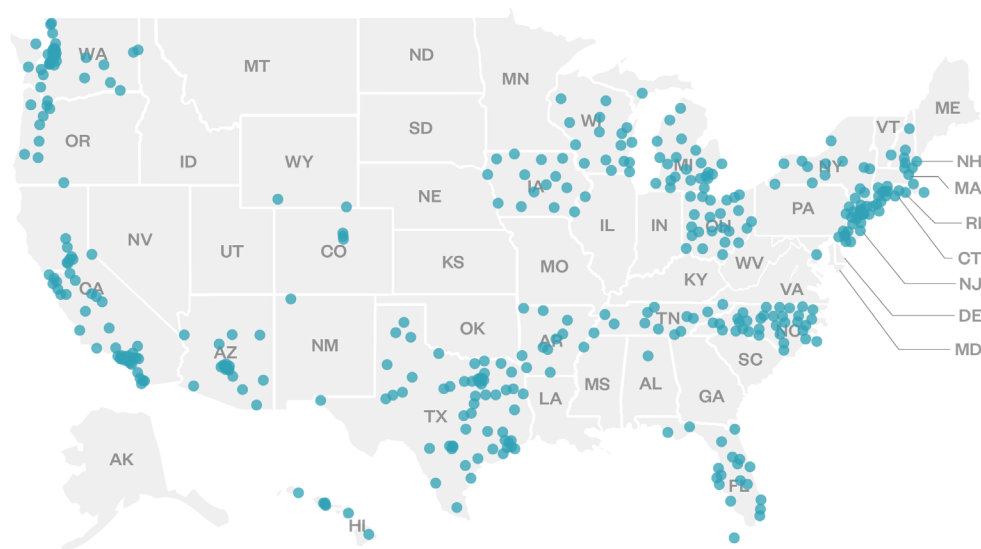
Updated December 2020

CCRC's count of colleges involved in guided pathways initiatives as of December 2020

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Since *Redesigning America's CCs*, CCRC has studied guided pathways in 120 colleges nationally

2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021
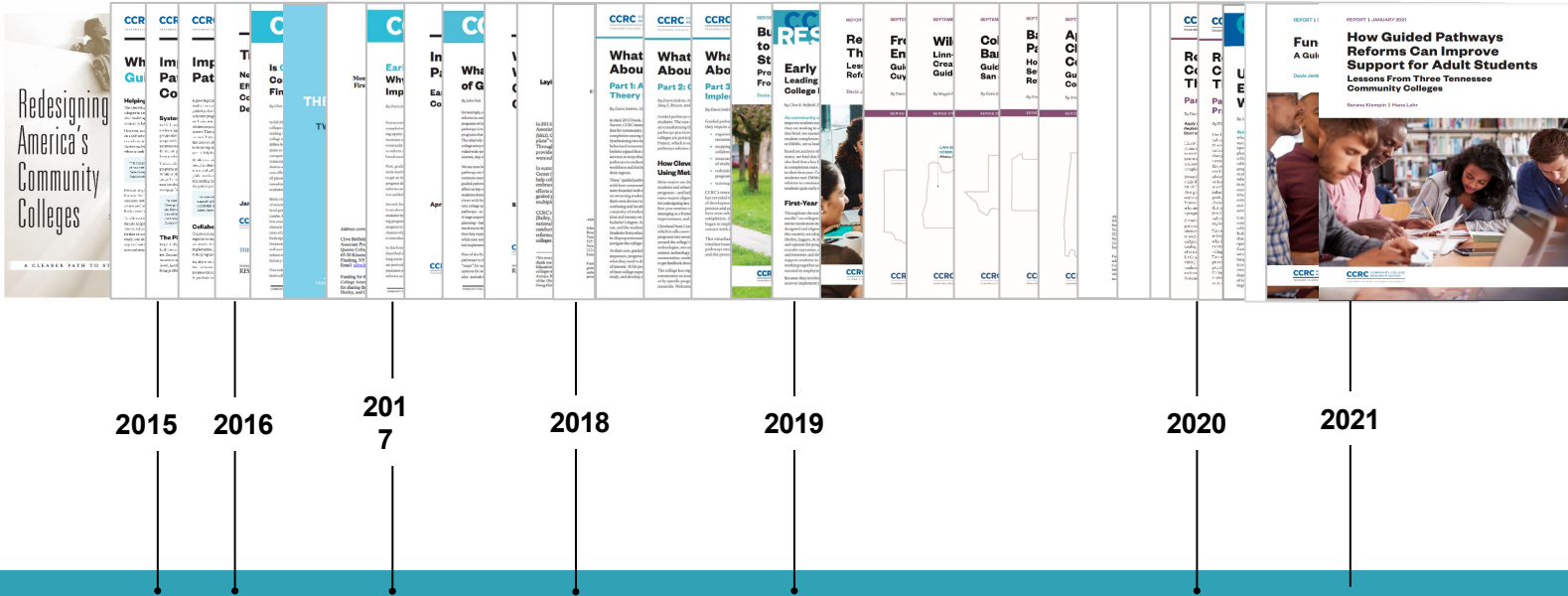
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Our thinking about how to improve student outcomes has evolved through this research

Redesigning America's CCs (2015)	CCRC's Current Thinking
Meta-majors and default program maps	Academic/career communities and individualized education plans
Enhanced career and transfer information and advising	Conversations about interests, strengths, aspirations and connections with communities of interest
Multiple measures placement and "corequisite" remediation	"Light the fire" learning experience in credit coursework starting in term 1 (with diagnostic assessment)
Holistic advising with "wrap-around" student supports	Case management advising by meta-major; and class scheduling and progress monitoring using plans
Program learning outcomes and faculty development through collaborative inquiry	Field-relevant active and experiential learning integrated throughout programs
[PATHS FROM HIGH SCHOOL/ NON-CREDITNOT DISCUSSED]	On-ramps to credit programs for high school dual enrollment, tech prep, and non-credit workforce training and adult basic skills students

Given the substantial variation nationally in access to and success in dual enrollment,

What can be learned from high schools and colleges that are more effective in serving students of color through dual enrollment?

The Dual Enrollment Playbook

A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
EDUCATION & SOCIETY PROGRAM

CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE
RESEARCH CENTER
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The core _equity focus_ of Guided Pathways:

Ensure that students who have been poorly served by our education system are (like privileged students) enabled to:

- ❑ Explore options and interests

- ❑ Gain confidence as college learners

- ❑ Connect with an academic and career community

- ❑ Plan and complete at a reasonable time and cost a "high-opportunity program"—one that enables them to secure a good job directly and/or transfer efficiently in a field of interest

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Advanced GP adopter colleges do the following

- ❑ **Organize programs by meta-major** to facilitate exploration and engage students in an academic and career community

- ❑ **Backward map all programs** to good jobs and/or transfer in a major

- ❑ Help _all_ students **explore options and interests** and **connect with "peeps"**

- ❑ Ensure _all_ students have a **"light the fire" learning experience in term 1**

- ❑ Replace prerequisite remediation with **teaching students to be effective learners in college-level program foundation courses** (not just math and composition)

- ❑ Help _all_ students develop a **full-program plan in term 1**

- ❑ Organize advising to allow **case-management by field**, and **schedule courses and monitor progress based on students' plans**

- ❑ Help **high school** (and **adult basic skills**) students to **explore interests and options, develop a plan, take plan-related college courses**

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Findings from CCRC research on efficacy and costs

Effects on student success and equity

- Promising descriptive evidence from early GP adopter colleges of improvements in early momentum, IPEDS graduation rates, excess credits, transfer success, perceived program value, COVID responsiveness
- Improved outcomes for underserved students also observed, but equity gaps remain

Cost of GP

- GP requires estimated +3% extra resources (price-adjusted)
  - *Biggest implementation costs*: Engagement, planning, training, new/upgraded info systems
  - *Biggest operating cost*: Additional advisors for case management by meta-major

Funding strategies

- GP colleges use grant funding for start-up engagement, but rely more on reorganization, reassignment, and reallocation than on new income for ongoing costs
- Guided pathways represents a new community college business model based on program value and affordability rather than low-cost access to courses

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Guided Pathways next frontier: Creating regional cross-sector talent pathways partnerships

Partnerships of community colleges, K-12 schools, and universities working with employers and economic development entities to build cross-sector education pathways to good jobs in economically important fields by:

✓ backward-mapping educational program paths from high-opportunity jobs

✓ helping all students, starting in middle school, explore career and academic interests and develop plans for completing college credentials

✓ ensuring all students have opportunities for active and experiential learning across programs

✓ providing instruction and support services using technology and on schedules to facilitate access by working adults

Thanks!

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