

CALIFORNIA ONLINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



Report: Calbright College Enrollment

October 2021

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Executive Summary

Calbright College was created to serve adult learners across California who lack access to traditional forms of education and job training and to support those who are unemployed, in dead-end jobs, and/or those who, with specific new skills, could transition to higher paying roles in growing sectors. The College's mission is rooted in advancing equity, and presents significant opportunity to foster a more inclusive recovery as California's economy emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a new institution, Calbright is committed to constant iteration and improvement to identify new methods to support our students, guided by institutional and industry data. This report provides an update regarding important new policies and procedures established under Calbright's new leadership, and current figures regarding enrollment and student success as of early October 2021.

Policy and Process Improvements

During the period of July 2020 through June 2021 — which included the summer and winter waves of COVID-19 in California — Calbright implemented several new policies that strengthened enrollment management, incorporated student feedback into the College's curriculum, and created better methods for student support.

To balance our learners' need for flexible pacing with a clear structure for determining enrollment status, in July 2020 the College's new leadership established a defined term policy. Under this policy all new students, upon enrolling at Calbright, begin a six-month term during which faculty evaluate their work and progress.

From July 2020 through June 2021, the Calbright team conducted an outreach campaign to all students who enrolled before July 2020. The campaign informed these students about the new term framework and any necessary next steps to stay enrolled. Students who had been active in their programs, or who responded to the outreach by indicating they would like to re-engage, were transitioned into six-month terms. Students who were unresponsive to outreach, or who conveyed that they did not want to move forward, were withdrawn.

In addition to implementing the new term framework, in the fall of 2020 Calbright shifted to a concurrent curriculum model. This was in response to student feedback and provided the ability for learners to complete their program-specific material at the same time as the required College and Career Essential Skills course that provides critical math, reading, and writing skills.

Enrollment

Calbright students fall into two categories: “provisionally enrolled” and “actively enrolled.” Aligning with the census period at traditional community colleges, starting July 2020 all of Calbright’s new students begin as provisionally enrolled and, upon completing a substantive academic activity (SAA) in the first 30 days as a student, transition to actively enrolled. For reporting purposes, only actively enrolled students are counted.

As of early October 2021, Calbright’s active enrollment is:

Total enrollees:	518
Customer Relationship Mgmt (CRM):	46
IT Support:	351
Cybersecurity:	66
Medical Coding:	55

In the period between July 1, 2021 and October 11, 2021, 129 students enrolled at Calbright and 79 withdrew, either by their own choice or due to lack of activity. Of the above students, 389 (75%) have completed an SAA (such as completing a module or project within a course) in the past 180 days. 458 (88%) have either completed an SAA or engaged with their program in the past 180 days, but below the level of an SAA (e.g., completing one part of a multi-part course module).

Calbright's Purpose

As a new institution charged with serving Californians who have fallen through the cracks of the traditional higher education system, Calbright is constantly evaluating and refining every aspect of the student experience — from course design, to academic and career support, to student outreach and enrollment processes.

Creating education models that prepare adult learners — whose geography, schedules, and family responsibilities make traditional forms of education and training inaccessible — for in-demand jobs is an urgent need for California's economy. Public Policy Institute of California research spotlights this, projecting that by 2025, the state will [face a shortage](#) of 1.5 million workers who need skills gained through post-secondary education and training, but do not require a bachelor's degree.

Calbright, through its equity-driven mission, was created to not only serve the millions of Californians who need some post-secondary training, but to also identify solutions for how to best support adult learners who are unemployed, in dead-end jobs, and/or who, with specific new skills, could transition to higher paying roles in growing sectors. These Californians who lack access to traditional forms of education and job training are the same students who, during economic recessions, are especially vulnerable to predatory for-profit institutions.

The College — an active R&D laboratory for California's community college system — is creating accessible, asynchronous, and flexible online programs that build on students' experience to prepare them to transition to a new career and/or to succeed in their current role. It aims to lead the learning curve for how our higher education systems can use integrated competency-based education and supports to better serve learners otherwise shut out of opportunity.

This is an equation that the state's public higher education infrastructure has not yet solved for. As California's economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that communities across the state have access to training and education to support a more equitable recovery.

Improvements made to enrollment policies and processes in 2020-21

Calbright's model — paired with our mission of serving students who lack access to traditional forms of job training and education — presents a significant opportunity to help California ensure an equitable economic recovery. But this will require time as Calbright continues the hard work of iterating new, high-quality programs and services, identifying new and better ways

to serve its students, and expanding its operations to facilitate rapid change in response to new data.

Already, improvements are underway. The Calbright of today is a different institution than it was six months ago, and six months from now it will be a different College than it is today. We look forward to continuing to share our learnings about common challenges experienced by California's higher education sector, as well as the outcomes of Calbright's efforts.

Implementation of six-month terms

Under Calbright's original leadership, students were not required to make progress in their coursework within a defined timeframe. This practice was born out of the College's unique role as a flexible and self-paced option that students could pursue whether working one or more jobs, managing childcare, or navigating the stresses of unemployment and a rapidly changing economy. However, this practice created an environment in which students could remain "actively enrolled" without making substantive progress, and, in some cases, after being unengaged for long stretches of time.

Calbright does not operate under a traditional academic calendar, with defined semesters or quarters. To balance our learners' need for flexible pacing with a clear structure for determining enrollment status, the College established an enrollment policy centered on students beginning a six-month term when they begin at the College.

This timeframe is modeled on successful implementation by other competency-based institutions and aligns with the U.S. Department of Education's federal financial aid rules, reflecting Calbright's desire to gain accreditation and potentially to seek Title IV eligibility. It also accommodates shorter-term programs that may be established in the future and fits within guidelines for regular reporting to the state and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

However, above all else, six-month terms provide the grace and flexibility Calbright's students need to advance their education and training while also managing competing priorities like work and childcare. They also establish a baseline framework the College can use as it continues to assess and improve its programs, policies, and support services.

In July 2020, Calbright's new leadership implemented six-month terms for all newly enrolled students. The result of this model is that the College has 52 starts-of-term and 52 ends-of-term every year. A student who enrolls on October 11, 2021, for example, will have a different end-of-term date than a student who enrolls several weeks later. To remain "actively

enrolled” at the end of a term and move to a new term, students must be making progress in their program as determined by the instructor.

“Provisional” vs. “active” enrollment

Starting in July 2020, newly enrolled students also begin their Calbright journey under a “provisionally enrolled” status: a 30-day period at the start of their six-month term. This is Calbright’s version of a “student drop” or census period common at other community and four-year colleges. During this period, new students must complete one substantive academic activity (SAA) as determined by their faculty, which moves them into the “actively enrolled” category. Calbright’s Student Success team, alongside faculty, proactively monitor new student activity and, prior to the 30-day deadline, reach out to those who have not made progress to offer help (this is in addition to the College’s onboarding and new student engagement practices). If provisionally enrolled students who have not made progress are unresponsive or do not wish to continue, they will be withdrawn from the College at the 30-day mark.

Implementing six-month terms for students who enrolled prior to July 2020

Through extensive outreach to students who had enrolled prior to July 2020, Calbright was able to fully implement the new six-month term policy with these students between July 2020 and June 2021. This length of time was necessary so that the College could attempt to reach each of these students in the midst of the summer 2020 and winter 2020-21 waves of COVID-19. Calbright’s focus populations have borne the brunt of the pandemic, with higher viral exposure, death rates, and unemployment in communities of color and heavy family caregiving loads carried mostly by women.

During the summer of 2020, the first group of students who transitioned to the new six-month term policy were those who had been making progress in their curriculum. These students received a message about the new policy from their counselor, and unless they indicated that they would prefer to withdraw from the College, were placed into terms over the course of the summer.

Calbright then launched a broader outreach campaign to engage with all remaining students who had begun prior to July 2020 and were not in six-month terms. This was done through email, text messages, and phone calls.

This campaign started with students who had shared that they had stopped making progress because they were required to complete our College and Career Essential Skills course before beginning their program-specific content (see “Creation of Calbright’s concurrent curriculum model” below). Through emails, calls, and text messages, the College shared both the new

term policy and the shift in curriculum that addressed their feedback. Students who responded and wanted to resume were enrolled into new terms. Those who did not respond, or conveyed they would not like to continue their program, were withdrawn.

The final group of students who transitioned to new terms were those who had not made recent progress in their programs but were responsive to Calbright's outreach. Many of these students were part of the College's beta cohort and had enrolled in the months before the pandemic began. From January through June 2021, Calbright's Student Success team conducted a messaging campaign for these students. Many were responsive, conveying that they had experienced notable changes in their circumstances that had required their time and focus, but would like to dedicate more of their time to their program and remain enrolled at the College under the new policy. Students who did not respond to the College's outreach, or who said they did not want to continue, were withdrawn.

For all of the above students who transitioned to a six-month term, they were not un-enrolled and then re-enrolled. Since they were students already, they moved directly to the "actively enrolled" category and did not participate in the 30-day provisional enrollment period.

This collective migration concluded in June 2021, at which time all students enrolled at Calbright were in six-month terms.

Creation of Calbright's concurrent curriculum model

One prime example of Calbright's commitment to improving based on student feedback can be seen in the College's restructuring of its curriculum model. When the College began enrolling students in the fall of 2019, programs had two main content areas. The first was a course called College and Career Essential Skills, designed to provide students with a baseline familiarity with the necessary skills (mainly reading, writing, math, and soft skills used in a business environment) needed to complete their program of choice and compete in the 21st century workplace. The second was the program-specific course content.

Student feedback conveyed a desire to dive into a program's core material faster, and that many learners had stopped making progress because of the delay caused by delivering courses in a consecutive order. In response, in the fall of 2020, Calbright refined and improved the material in the "Essentials" course and shifted to a concurrent course design. This provided students the ability to take both the "Essentials" and program-specific courses at the same time and to demonstrate mastery of reading/writing and math while engaged with the core content of their program.

July 2021 and beyond

By July 2021, the implementation of six-month terms was complete and all Calbright students, regardless of initial start date, were enrolled in a term. The “provisional enrollment” policy that accompanied this new defined-term model allows the College to easily identify students who need help early in their enrollment, and also to withdraw students who had enrolled but not progressed within their first 30 days. These implementations were critical to improving the College’s enrollment reporting and, most importantly, using data to support proactive outreach efforts.

Proactive outreach

In addition to improving enrollment management, these new policies created a regular source for feedback. Members of the Calbright Student Success team reach out to students at all stages of their enrollment, including newly enrolled students and those approaching the end of their six-month term who had not made progress. What they learn during this outreach informs practices across the College. It is critical that Calbright continues to identify patterns in both student achievements and struggles so that persistence efforts can be informed by relevant and recent information.

In many cases, students are struggling with a specific module, or are having trouble with technology and need assistance but, because of their past experience with education, do not reach out for help. Today, Calbright faculty and staff work directly with these students on curriculum-specific challenges and can connect them with tutoring and technology support. Complementing academic support, Calbright’s career services hosts regular events to connect students with individuals who hold roles similar to what they are training for. Career services also works directly with students to contextualize their coursework within the framing of a job search, and to help guide them with mock interviews and resume reviews.

Terms ending in Q4 2021

As previously discussed, Calbright has 52 starts-of-term and 52 ends-of-term every year. This means students are constantly enrolling and also, unfortunately, being withdrawn, either at their wish or by the College due to the lack of progress during a six-month term. The latter may include students who made progress during their first term but did not move forward during a subsequent term.

Due to the transition to six-month terms for a large number of students during the spring of 2021, many who have been inactive for 180 days or more will soon conclude their current term: 45 in October, 20 in November, and 30 in December.

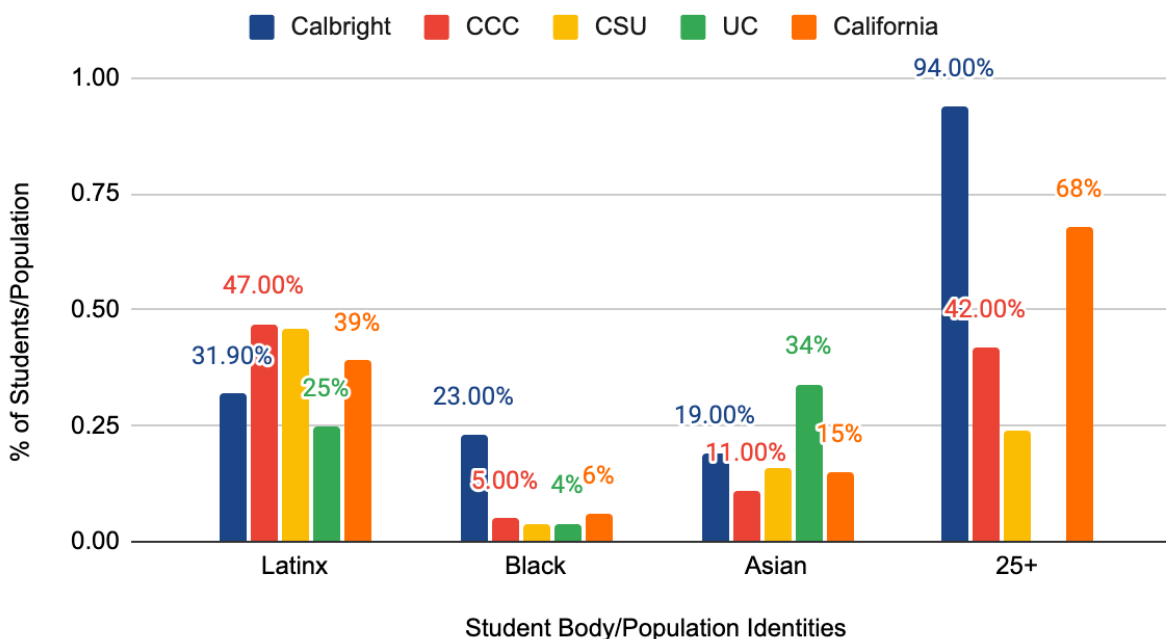
Calbright’s goal is for all of its students to be successful, which is why faculty and staff now proactively reach out to all students throughout their enrollment, not just during the 30-day “provisional enrollment” period and as terms come to an end. In many cases, an offer of help to a student who feels stuck can make a difference in their journey and help them re-engage in their coursework before their end-of-term grades are due.

Unfortunately, many of the roughly 100 students who have not made progress in the past 180 days and whose terms conclude during the fourth quarter of 2021 have not responded to our outreach to date. If they do not re-engage before the end of their current term, they may likely be withdrawn as part of Calbright’s normal enrollment management processes.

Current enrollment

As noted above, Calbright students fall into two categories: “provisionally enrolled” and “actively enrolled.” A student is provisionally enrolled during the first 30 days of their time as a student, and when they complete a substantive academic activity (SAA) during that period, they automatically transition to “actively enrolled” status. For reporting purposes, Calbright only uses the “actively enrolled” category.

Demographics of Calbright, CCC, CSU, UC, and CA



Calbright College data as of 8/31/21. CSU, CCC, and UC as of Fall 2020 (most recent available). CA population as of 2020.

Already, Calbright’s student body is exceptionally diverse and skews heavily toward populations that are under-enrolled in higher education. This is especially critical as the California Community Colleges system [experienced a decrease](#) in enrollment of more than 250,000 (16%) in the fall of 2020.

In the period between July 1, 2021 and October 11, 2021, 129 students enrolled at Calbright and 79 withdrew, either by their own choice or due to lack of activity.

As of October 2021, Calbright’s “active enrollment” is:

Total enrollees:	518
Customer Relationship Mgmt (CRM):	46
IT Support:	351
Cybersecurity:	66
Medical Coding:	55

Of the above students, 389 (75%) have completed an SAA (such as completing a module or project within a course) in the past 180 days. 458 (88%) have either completed an SAA or engaged with their program in the past 180 days, but below the level of an SAA (e.g., completing one part of a multi-part course module).

For context, data from the [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#) shows that the 2019 persistence rate (percentage of students who return to college at any institution for their second year) across all institutions of higher education for students who are 25 years old and older was 44.5%. The persistence rate for all part-time students enrolled in public community colleges was 45.8%, and at private for-profit institutions it was 43.4%. Across the entire higher education sector, persistence and retention rates for Black and Latinx students were the lowest of any population. Graphic representation and additional details regarding these data are available in this report’s appendix.

Persistence rate is, of course, not a perfect comparison for Calbright’s competency-based model, but what data clearly illustrates is that student success, especially for the students Calbright is focused on serving, is a challenge that has not yet been solved by any institution of higher education.

Calbright program specific enrollment (as of October 2021)

CRM, SAA <180 days:	45
CRM, >180 days:	1

Cybersecurity, SAA <180 days:	53
Cybersecurity, >180 days:	13
IT Support, SAA <180 days:	254
IT Support, >180 days:	97
Medical Coding, SAA <180 days:	39
Medical Coding, >180 days:	16

Cumulative students academically dropped by program (as of October 2021)

CRM:	9
Cybersecurity:	69
IT Support:	378
Medical Coding:	113
TOTAL:	569

Calbright certificates issued (as of October 2021)

Cybersecurity:	21
IT Support:	40
Medical Coding:	7
*CRM:	0
TOTAL:	68

Industry certificates issued (as of October 2021)

AAPC Medical Coding:	7
CompTIA A+ Core 1:	26
CompTIA A+ Core 2:	19
CompTIA Security+:	13
*Salesforce:	0
TOTAL:	63

*Calbright's CRM program was launched as a pilot during the spring of 2021 and opened for non-pilot enrollment in August 2021.

Snapshot: student activity (as of October 2021)

Calbright's programs are flexible and asynchronous and designed to fit into students' lives and schedules. This allows students to move ahead in their programs when they have time. As noted in this report, students have the ability to move ahead at any time during their 6-month term, but are encouraged to make weekly progress.

Program	*SAA within past 30 days	**AA within past 30 days	Last SAA > 30 days	Last AA > 30 days	Last SAA > 60 days	Last AA > 60 days	Last SAA > 90 days	Last AA > 90 days
CRM	25	30	10	7	5	5	10	8
Cyber	9	26	16	18	9	7	31	14
IT	64	159	58	68	42	20	187	104
Med Coding	12	28	12	6	3	4	27	16

Calbright student activity changes hour-to-hour - this chart reflects a moment in time on October 14, 2021.

*SAA, or substantive academic activity, is a metric used by Calbright faculty to determine student progress. An SAA, for example, is taking a quiz, responding to an interactive discussion question, completing a project, and/or earning a badge in CRM

**AA, or academic activity, is another metric used by Calbright faculty to determine student progress and could include, for example, completing a portion of a multi-part module in a course, meeting with a tutor or counselor, and/or attending a career services event.

Next steps

As Calbright continues to solve for the equation of providing accessible, asynchronous, and flexible online job training and education programs, the College must continue to iterate and evolve. With an equity-focused mission, the College is designed to serve, support, and empower populations across California who are underrepresented in higher education and over-represented in metrics such as unemployment, underemployment, and COVID-19 rates. Many of Calbright's students have had mixed experiences with education, having dropped out of college, enrolled at predatory for-profit institutions, struggled through high school, and/or been out of school for a long period of time. Our students are Californians who are not enrolling or staying at other public institutions, and who are aggressively targeted by for-profit colleges. Our task is to design programs and services that meet their needs and goals while reflecting the needs of employers and industry.

Informed by data, new proactive outreach efforts have already been implemented by the College's Student Success team. New community-building practices, including weekly discussions with faculty, counselors, and students on program-related topics—known as

Calbright Cafe—began in the late spring of 2021. In July 2021, Calbright hired a Student Engagement Specialist who is focused on fostering community within the College’s online platforms, so that students develop a deeper connection not only with their course material, but also with one another. As we continue to build the college and establish governing procedures to ensure faculty, staff, and students have the ability to participate effectively in governance of the college, one of Calbright's goals is to recognize the establishment of a student organization that puts students’ voice, feedback, and representation at the forefront.

Through the end of 2021, a major area of institutional focus will be on hiring appropriate staff to build out the College’s operations and expand capacity. This is critical as new programs are identified and designed, and already-existing programs are refined and improved upon, creating simultaneous work streams and growth mechanisms. At the center of all of Calbright’s activities will be our students, who come to the College with exceptional stories and backgrounds and who seek a better future not only for themselves, but their families and communities.

All of this, of course, requires time and the flexibility to be able to try new things. Part of Calbright’s role within the state’s public higher education system is to be an R&D laboratory. We are on the leading edge of innovation within the public higher education sector, and will continue to share what we learn about serving this underserved population of learners in an effort to open the doors of opportunity to every learner across the state.

Appendix

Higher education persistence and retention rates

Calbright’s model is unique within California’s public higher education sector. It is the state’s only fully online community college and offers competency based curriculum focused on adult learners and workforce development.

A July 2021 National Student Clearinghouse Research Center [report](#) provides some context for national enrollment and student activity trends, with additional context provided in a [summer of 2019 report](#).

Persistence and Retention rates for all higher education institutions

Figure 1a. Persistence Rates by Starting Enrollment Intensity: All Institutions

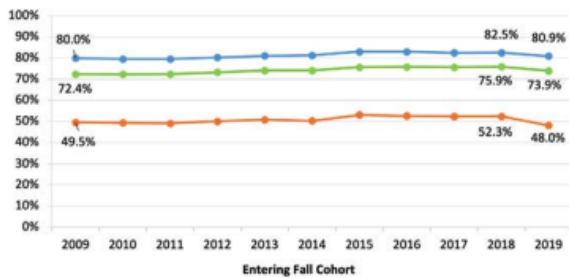
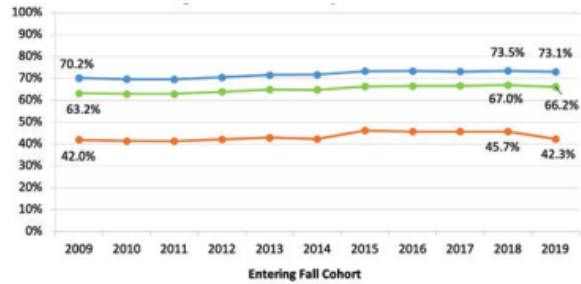


Figure 1b. Retention Rates by Starting Enrollment Intensity: All Institutions



		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Overall	Retention	63.2%	62.9%	62.9%	63.9%	65.0%	64.9%	66.3%	66.5%	66.7%	67.0%	66.2%
	Persistence	72.4%	72.3%	72.3%	73.2%	74.1%	74.1%	75.6%	75.8%	75.6%	75.9%	73.9%
Full-Time	Retention	70.2%	69.7%	69.6%	70.5%	71.5%	71.7%	73.3%	73.4%	73.2%	73.5%	73.1%
	Persistence	80.0%	79.6%	79.5%	80.2%	81.0%	81.3%	83.0%	83.0%	82.4%	82.5%	80.9%
Part-Time	Retention	42.0%	41.4%	41.3%	42.1%	42.9%	42.3%	46.2%	45.7%	45.7%	45.7%	42.3%
	Persistence	49.5%	49.3%	49.1%	50.0%	50.8%	50.2%	53.1%	52.6%	52.3%	52.3%	48.0%

Persistence and Retention rates by age of student for all higher education institutions

Figure 3a. Persistence Rates by Age Group at Entry: All Institutions

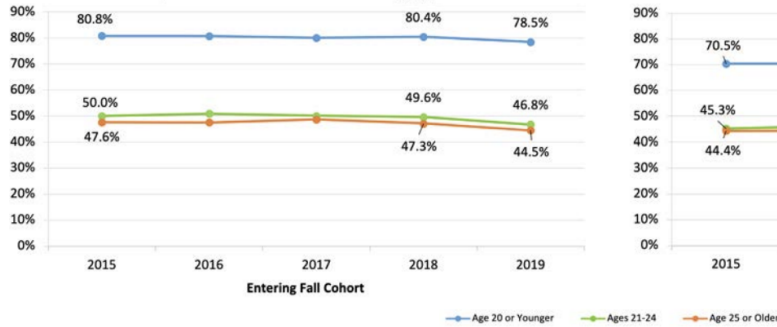
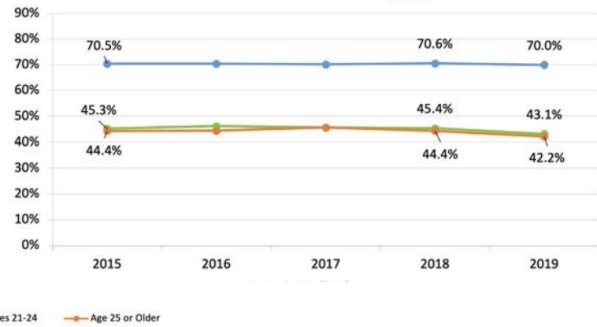


Figure 3b. Retention Rates by Age Group at Entry: All Institutions



		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Age 20 or Younger	Retention							70.5%	70.4%	70.2%	70.6%	70.0%
	Persistence				Unavailable			80.8%	80.7%	80.1%	80.4%	78.5%
Age 21-24	Retention	Reliable credential-level information became available in 2015. From 2015 onwards, students with identified graduate enrollments were removed, and dataset only accounts for undergraduate students. Therefore, information from Fall 2009 to Fall 2014 is not directly comparable to subsequent cohorts, and is not shown.						45.3%	46.2%	45.6%	45.4%	43.1%
	Persistence							50.0%	50.9%	50.2%	49.6%	46.8%
Age 25 or Older	Retention							44.4%	44.4%	45.7%	44.4%	42.2%
	Persistence							47.6%	47.6%	48.8%	47.3%	44.5%

Persistence and Retention rates for public two-year institutions

Figure 6a. Persistence Rates by Starting Enrollment Intensity: Public Two-Year Institutions

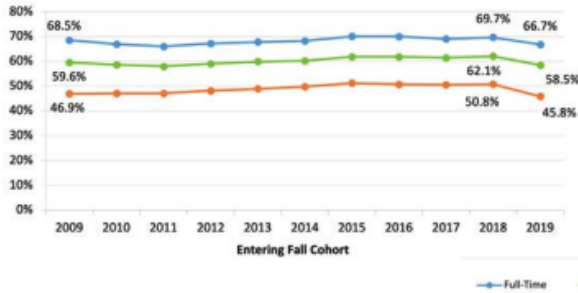
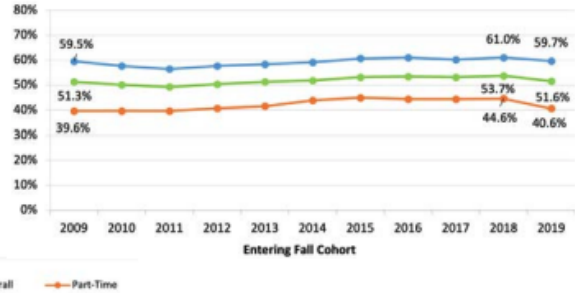


Figure 6b. Retention Rates by Starting Enrollment Intensity: Public Two-Year Institutions



		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Overall	Retention	51.3%	50.2%	49.3%	50.4%	51.3%	51.9%	53.2%	53.4%	53.2%	53.7%	51.6%
	Persistence	59.6%	58.7%	57.9%	59.0%	59.9%	60.2%	61.9%	61.8%	61.4%	62.1%	58.5%
Full-Time	Retention	59.5%	57.7%	56.5%	57.7%	58.4%	59.1%	60.7%	61.0%	60.2%	61.0%	59.7%
	Persistence	68.5%	66.9%	66.0%	67.2%	67.8%	68.3%	70.1%	70.0%	69.0%	69.7%	66.7%
Part-Time	Retention	39.6%	39.6%	39.6%	40.7%	41.6%	43.8%	45.0%	44.4%	44.4%	44.6%	40.6%
	Persistence	46.9%	47.1%	47.1%	48.1%	48.9%	49.8%	51.2%	50.7%	50.6%	50.8%	45.8%

Persistence and Retention rates for private for-profit institutions

Figure 10a. Persistence Rates by Starting Enrollment Intensity: Private For-Profit Four-Year Institutions

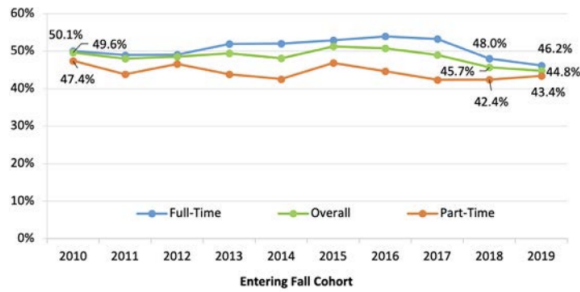
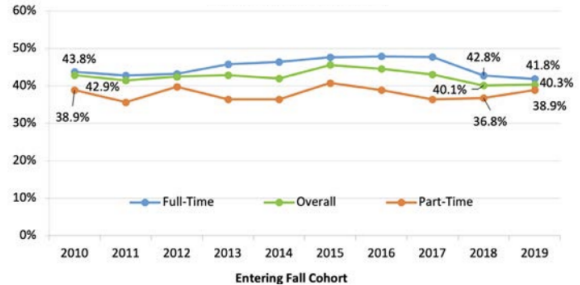


Figure 10b. Retention Rates by Starting Enrollment Intensity: Private For-Profit Four-Year Institutions



		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Overall	Retention	42.9%	41.4%	42.4%	42.8%	42.0%	45.6%	44.5%	43.0%	40.1%	40.3%
	Persistence	49.6%	48.0%	48.6%	49.4%	48.1%	51.3%	50.8%	49.0%	45.7%	44.8%
Full-Time	Retention	43.8%	42.7%	43.2%	45.7%	46.3%	47.6%	47.8%	47.7%	42.8%	41.8%
	Persistence	50.1%	48.9%	49.1%	51.9%	52.0%	52.9%	53.9%	53.2%	48.0%	46.2%
Part-Time	Retention	38.9%	35.6%	39.7%	36.4%	36.4%	40.7%	38.9%	36.4%	36.8%	38.9%
	Persistence	47.4%	43.8%	46.6%	43.9%	42.5%	46.9%	44.6%	42.4%	42.4%	43.4%