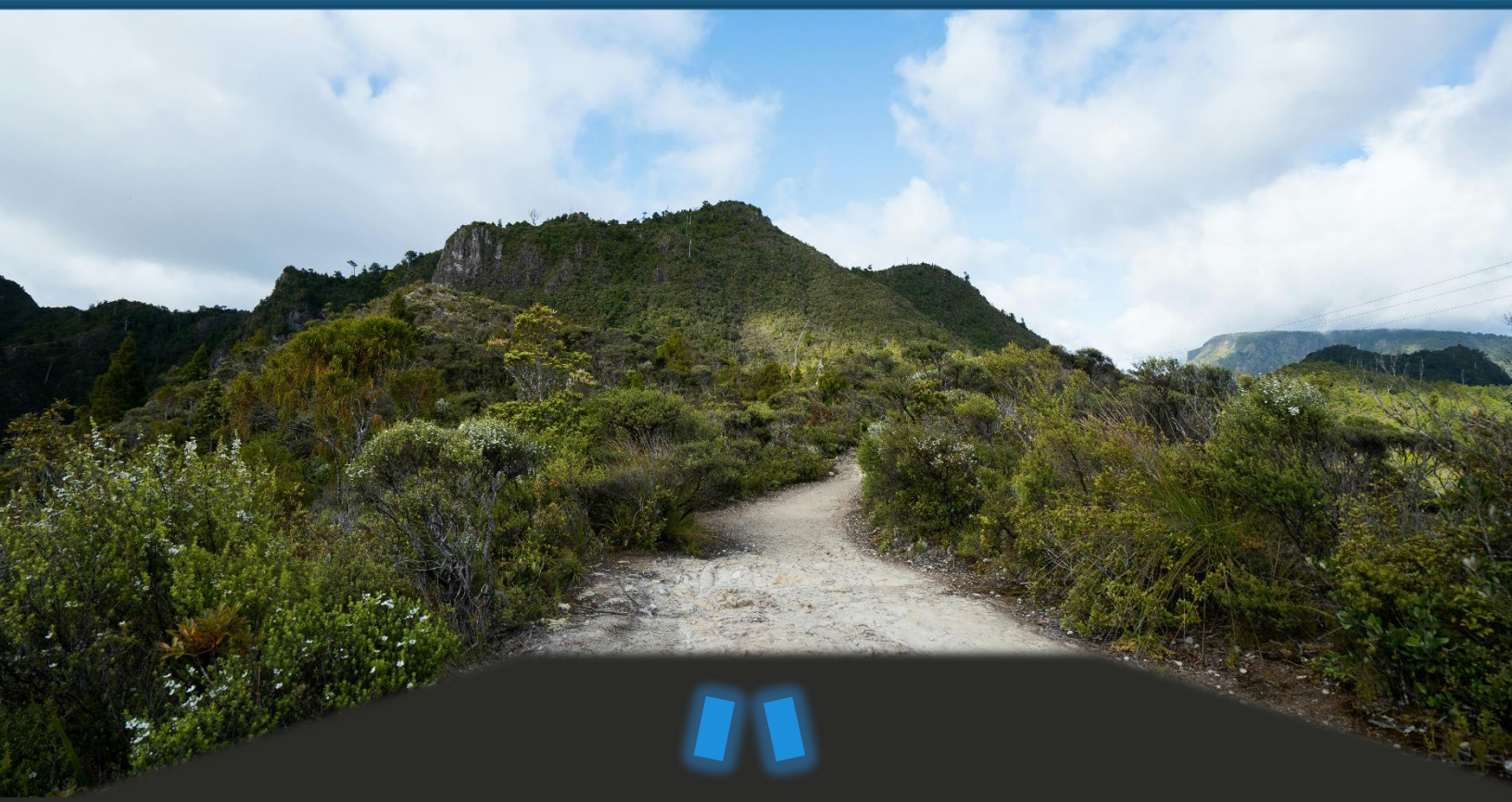
IR CORNER

June 2026 Issue 12

Blazing New Data Paths



Predicting Completion
What factors have the largest impact?

Transfer Momentum
TCC to Bachelor's Degree

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Blazing New Data Paths

Holly Stovall

inspIRe

Robert Frost penned, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." The courageousness engendered by these words is the boldness we need to *Trailblaze* into *2030*. The work of our strategic plan calls us to imagine otherwise – new ways of working and better opportunities to serve our students. While we ponder possibilities and wonder about the impact of seismic shifts such as the conversion to a new ERP, integration of AI, and ever changing higher ed legislation, we have no doubt that data will be at the forefront.

For IR, fearlessness from a data perspective means analyzing new data sets, questioning historical methods and testing new ones, challenging current definitions, and honing our research questions. We'll grow only by forging into data and methods currently unknown.

In this issue, we explore some data sets new to IR; we investigate the impact of payment plans and analyze learning styles assessed through the Online Readiness Assessment. Utilizing new geospatial software for IR, we research the relationship between single campus programs and student enrollment behavior based on campus proximity. Expanding the concept of "transfer student," we consider the behavior of summer students who are visiting from their four-year university, and we follow several cohorts of first time in college students to understand transfer momentum. Lastly, we seek to understand what factors have the largest impact on completion and could we use them for prediction.

We strive to blaze new data paths, and in doing so, perhaps we'll inspire you to push forward into your own uncertainty guided by the newest information we provide.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

**Attributed to Lao Tzu*

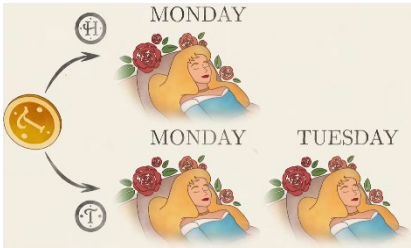
CONTENTS



Are you asking the right data question?

Consider this…

Let's start with a thought experiment. Sleeping Beauty has volunteered for a sleep study. She goes to sleep on Sunday night at which point the researcher tosses a fair coin. If the coin lands on heads, Sleeping Beauty will be awakened on Monday night and then go back to sleep. If the coin lands on tails, she will awaken Monday night, go back to sleep, and then awaken again on Tuesday night, and then go back to sleep. During the brief period she is awake, she will be given no new information, and she will never have any recollection of being previously awake.

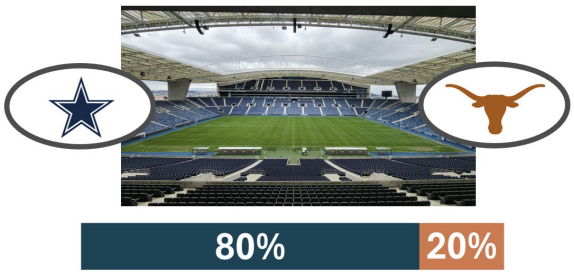


She wakes up and is asked…

What is the probability that the coin came up heads?

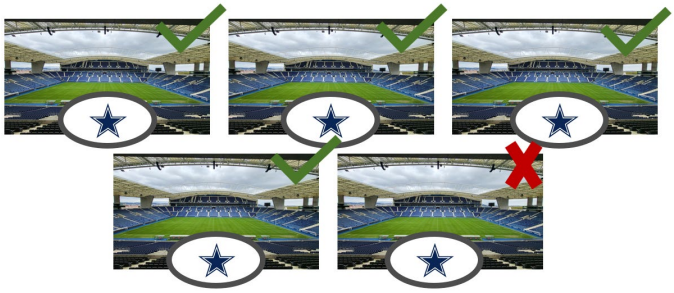
Surprisingly, you might hear two answers to this question. The "halfers" would say the answer is one-half because it is a fair coin – who cares if she is awake or asleep. The "thirders" would say the answer is one third because there are three awake possibilities – 1) Monday, heads 2) Monday, tails or 3) Tuesday, tails.

Let's take this thought experiment one step further. Say we have a football team, maybe the Dallas Cowboys, playing a less dominating football team, say the Texas Longhorns. For the sake of this example, assume the Cowboys have an 80% chance of winning.

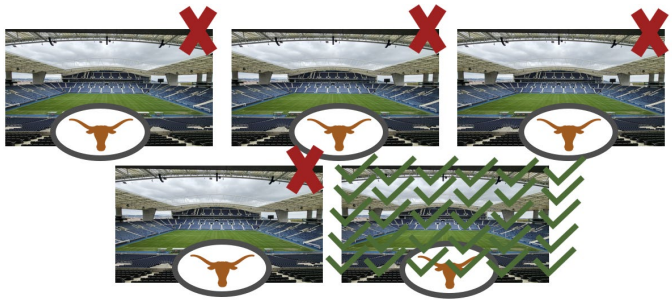


These teams play five times. Similar to Sleeping Beauty, if the Cowboys win you will be awakened once and asked who won? If the Longhorns win, you will be awakened 30 times – being asked who won each time.

You wake up… who won? If you are a halfer, you answer the Cowboys, and you would probably be correct about the winner of the game four out of five times.



If you are a thirder, you answer the Longhorns. You are probably wrong about four of the five games, but on the game that the Longhorns win, you correctly answer the question who won correctly thirty times in a row.



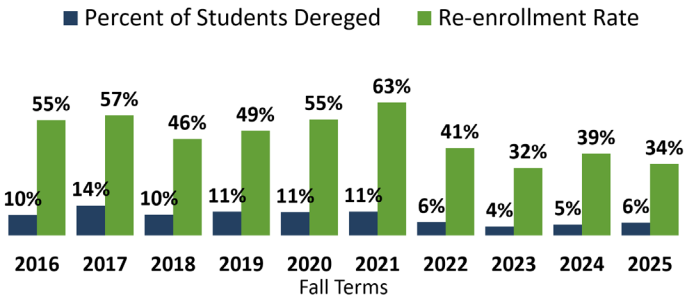
So… do you want to predict the winner of the game correctly more often or answer the question who won correctly more often? Seeing that you could be answering differing questions is the crux of the Sleeping Beauty paradox presented here. The point is that we need to decide what we want to be correct about, or in other words, make sure you are asking and answering the right data question.

TCC Data Question

Now let's consider a more relevant example. Should TCC change the first deregistration date? For some historical context, prior to 2022, the first drop for non-payment was a few weeks before the term started. Since then, the first drop for non-payment was a few days before the start of the term. What is our question really about?

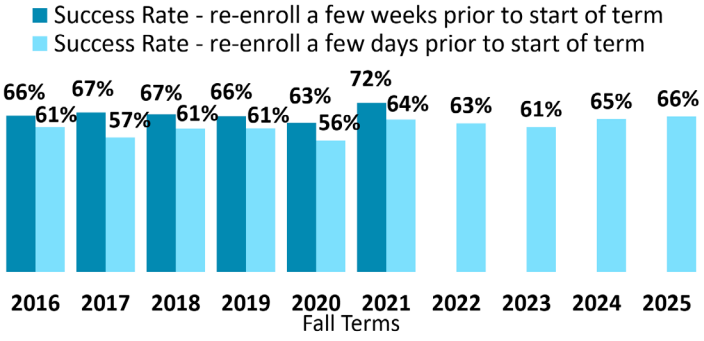
Focused on Enrollment

If our question is focused on enrollment, we could look at fall registration patterns for the last decade. Prior to 2022, roughly 10% of students were deregged, and about 50% to 60% of them re-enrolled by census day. Since 2022, roughly 5% of students were deregged, and about 30% to 40% of them re-enrolled by census day. Thus, the date change meant that we deregged a lower percentage of students but a lower percentage of them re-enrolled by census day.



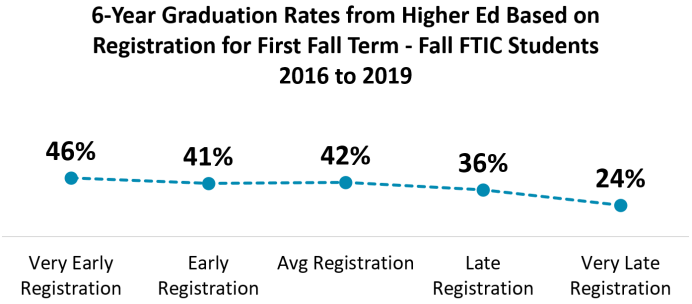
Focused on Success (A, B, C, or CR)

Perhaps our question is focused on success. We have a "before and after" comparison. Prior to 2022, we have a group of students who were dropped and re-enrolled a few weeks prior to the start of the term. These students outperformed those who were dropped and re-enrolled a few days prior to the start of the term by about 5 to 10 percentage points.



Focused on Completion

You may be thinking… shouldn't all questions be focused on completions. To track completion, we'll need to use first time in college (FTIC) cohorts. FTIC students were divided based on when they registered for their first fall term. Those who registered in the first fifth of the registration window were defined as very early registrants while those who registered in the last fifth were defined as very late registrants. First fall term registration was correlated with six-year graduation rates. FTIC students who registered very early were almost twice as likely to graduate in six years compared to FTIC students who registered late.



A natural next question is what impacts registration?

Schedule Design: FTIC students who registered very late were about 1.8 times more likely to be on multiple campuses. Data from the 2024FL Student Experience survey suggest that being on multiple campuses is more related to schedule design than personal choice.

Career Pathway: FTIC students who registered very early and completed the QEP Pre-Assessment were about 1.1 times more likely to be very confident in their chosen career pathway.

Prior Higher Ed Experience: FTIC students who registered very early were about 2.2 times more likely to have prior dual enrollment experience compared to those registered very late.

Academic Preparedness: FTIC students who registered very early were about 1.5 times more likely to start their first fall FTIC term TSI met compared to those who registered very late.

In Sum

As we refine our research inquiry, we develop a deeper understanding of the data and strengthen the insights we can use to inform decision-making. Taking action from data relies on this ability to ask the right data question and triangulate data sources to consider convergence and trends over time. Edward Tufte once said, "if the statistics are boring, then you've got the wrong numbers." We might paraphrase, if the data story isn't compelling, perhaps you are asking the wrong question.

IMPACT OF PAYMENT PLANS

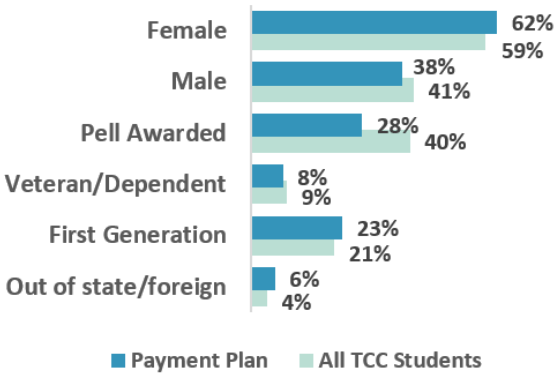
Supporting Students on the Path to Completion

Overview

From 2022FL through 2026SP, about 30% of students each term utilized payment plans to help pay their tuition. (N=273,130) This article provides a profile of those utilizing payment plans and examines the impact of payment plans on enrollment and retention.

Who's utilizing payment plans?

In general, students using payment plans are similar to TCC students overall.



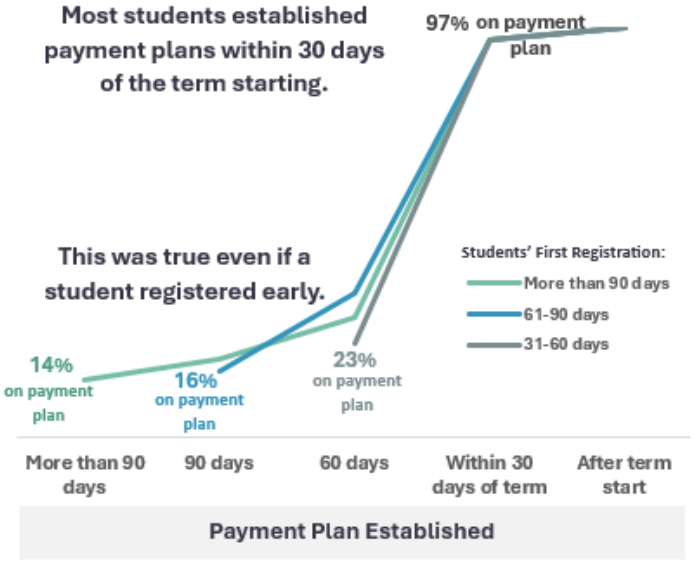
Financing

Students on a payment plan had a median total of $586 on their plan per term. For those who selected a plan with a down payment, the median down payment was $39. About 15% of students had a balance at the end of the term, with a median balance of $328. (N=80,913)

Timing of payment plans

Only about 20% of students on payment plans established the payment plan when they first registered for classes. Fewer than 10% of students on payment plans started the payment plan after being dropped for non-payment. (N=80,913) Additionally, those who utilized payment plans tended to register for the upcoming term later than those not on a payment plan.

When looking at first registration activity and establishment of a payment plan, regardless of how early students registered, the majority did not get on a payment plan until they were within 30 days of the start of the term. This suggests that payment plans are utilized primarily when payment is due. (N=80,913)



Credit Hours

Those on payment plans were enrolled in an average of 8.52 credit hours per semester. This is fewer hours than those not on a payment plan who received Pell grants (9.97 credit hours), but higher than those without a payment plan who did not receive Pell funds (8.03 credit hours). (N=273,130)

Retention and Completion

Students on a payment plan were retained at similar rates to those not on a payment plan who were not Pell awarded. Completion rates were similar for both groups as well. Students not on a payment plan who were Pell awarded had the highest retention and completion rates.

Opportunities

Payment plans are a resource that can help students avoid being dropped for non-payment, take more credit hours, and register earlier, ensuring they get the classes needed to complete their programs. The current data suggests that while students on payment plans are taking slightly more hours and are retained at similar levels to those not on payment plans who were not Pell awarded, they are not enrolling earlier which may impact the courses available to them and in turn the speed at which they complete their program.

Transfer Momentum: TCC to Bachelor's Degree

Overview

Higher education serves a diverse population of students, and community colleges play a vital role within this ecosystem. Over the years, TCC has provided students with opportunities to strengthen their academic skills and prepare for success prior to transferring to a four-year institution. This article examines a six-year window across five fall first time in college (FTIC) cohorts, ranging from 2014 to 2018, to assess students transferring from TCC to four-year institutions.

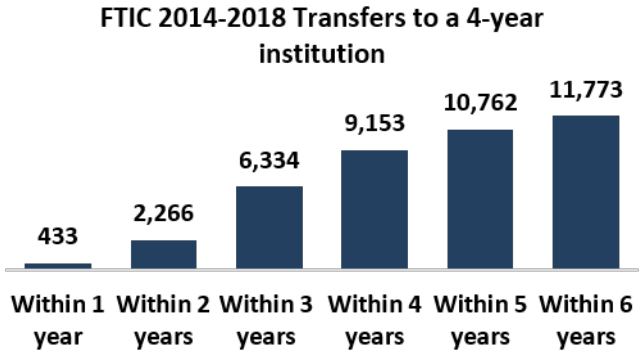
Transfer Definition

In this article, a **TCC transfer student** was defined as a student from the 2014 to 2018 fall FTIC cohorts who had an enrollment at a four-year institution within six years of their FTIC term*. This analysis strictly captures the first point of transfer to any four-year institution, which serves as the official marker of transfer in this study.

**Source: National Student Clearing House*

Transfer Timing

Among the approximately 40,000 students in the 2014 to 2018 FTIC cohorts, about 6% transferred within 2 years, about 16% in 3 years, and about 23% in 4 years. TCC saw 11,773 (30%) – TCC transfer students - FTIC students who transferred out to a 4-year institution within the 6-year window. These **11,773 – TCC transfer students** – are the focus of this article



Transfer Student Profile

Transfer students had an average GPA of 3.03, and an average of 47 credit hours completed (non-dev) at the time of transfer.

- 35% of students transferred to a 4-year institution with a TCC award.
- 89% of students completed 15 or more credit hours prior to transfer. *

**Credit earned through dual credit coursework was included in the total credits completed. However, not all hours earned via dual credit may count towards transfer funding.*

Courses Taken Prior to Transfer

Top courses* in which TCC students enrolled prior to transferring included the following.

- ENGL-1301: 89%
- HIST-1301: 83%
- GOVT-2305: 82%
- ENGL-1302: 79%
- HIST-1302: 75%
- GOVT-2306: 75%
- MATH-1314: 64%
- PSYC-2301: 57%
- KINE-1164: 53%
- SPCH-1311: 53%

For each of these courses, at least one in two students who transferred had taken the course prior to transferring.

Most of the courses taken before their transfer term were courses that satisfy the Texas core curriculum. However, the courses that satisfy the "Life and Physical Science" requirement were less likely to have been taken prior to transfer with only 26% of transfer students having taken BIOL-1408.

**Students can have multiple enrollments in a course.*

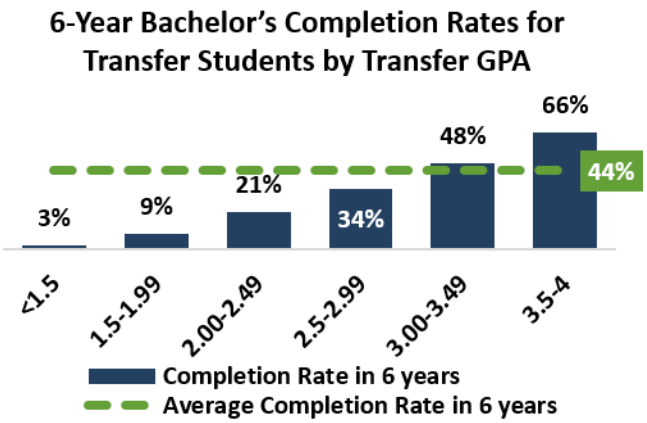
Gaining Momentum for Completion

Within this set of FTIC cohorts, higher academic momentum at the point of transfer (measured by GPA, completed credit hours) was associated with bachelor's degree attainment. Overall, 44% of students who transferred earned a bachelor's degree within six years.

GPA and Bachelor Completion

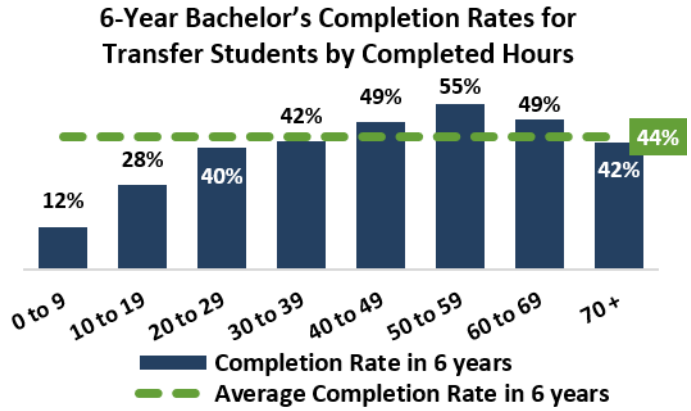
Using this 44% as a baseline, the six-year Bachelor's graduation rate improved with higher GPA groups. Students in GPA groups above 3.0 surpassed the average completion rate; with 66% of students whose transferring GPA was between 3.5 and 4.0 completing a bachelor's degree within the six-year window.

Sources: NSC, IR_EndOfTerm, IR_ODR, IR_Degrees, IR_GPA.

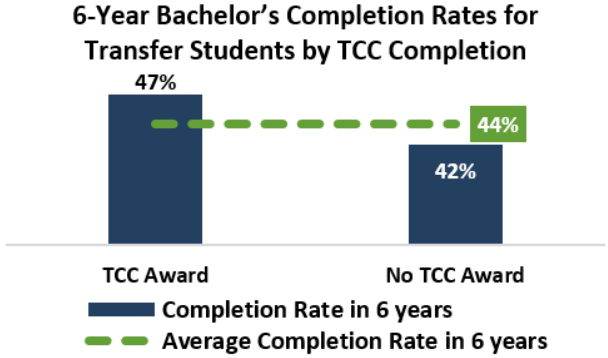


Completed Hours and Bachelor Completion

When grouping students by completed credit hours, bachelor's completion peaked among students who transferred with 50-59 credit hours, above the 44% average completion rate, with 55% completing a bachelor's degree. Having an excessive credit hour accumulation prior to transfer had an impact on bachelor's completion. For students who transferred with 70 or more completed credit hours, bachelor's degree completion rates fell below the overall average. Other factors like GPA, financial aid eligibility, and other unknown life factors could have also played a role in the decrease.



Additionally, the bachelor's degree completion rate for students who transferred to a 4-year institution with a TCC award (47%) was about five percentage points higher than students who did not transfer with a TCC award (42%).



Transferring and Completing

Among students who started in one of the top eight transfer majors, 45% graduated within 6 years of their FTIC term and 27% graduated in the same major they initially enrolled in. For example, of the approximately 1,200 students who transferred into business administration, about 44% earned a bachelors in any major within 6 years of their FTIC term, and about 20% earned a bachelor's in business administration. Thus about 4 in 10 graduated but only 2 in 10 graduated in their starting major (business administration).

Top 4-year Majors After Transfer

4-year Majors After Transfer with CIP	N	Graduated with any Major	Graduated with Starting Major
Business Administration and Management, General. (52.0201)	1,179	44%	20%
Nursing/Registered Nurse (RN, ASN, BSN, MSN) (51.3801)	805	31%	20%
Psychology, General. (42.0101)	649	51%	42%
Business/Commerce, General. (52.0101)	623	49%	8%
Biology/Biological Sciences, General. (26.0101)	470	42%	28%
Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other. (30.9999)	401	60%	39%
Kinesiology and Exercise Science. (31.0505)	362	46%	38%
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies. (43.0104)	352	59%	53%

Note: Students can have multiple CIP codes.

Conclusion

Fall FTIC cohorts from 2014 through 2018 show that approximately 30% of students became transfer students within the first six years of their academic journey. On average, transfer students had a GPA of approximately 3.0 and had completed around 50 credit hours.

Overall, the academic momentum at the point of transfer (GPA and completed credit hours) correlated with higher Bachelor's completion rates. Students who transferred with a GPA above 3.0 and between 40 and 69 completed credit hours were more likely to earn a bachelor's degree. Thus, targeted academic preparation prior to transfer plays a role in post-transfer success. Continued and expanded proactive initiatives that emphasize the impact of GPA and award completion can further support students in preparing for the next step in their academic journey and increase their likelihood of success after transfer.

Predicting Completion

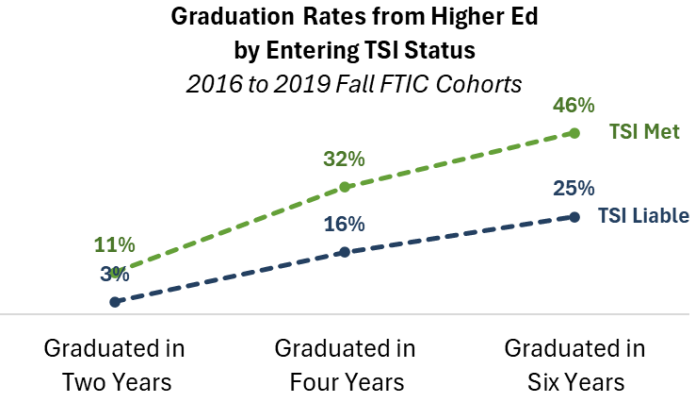
What factors have the largest impact?

Overview

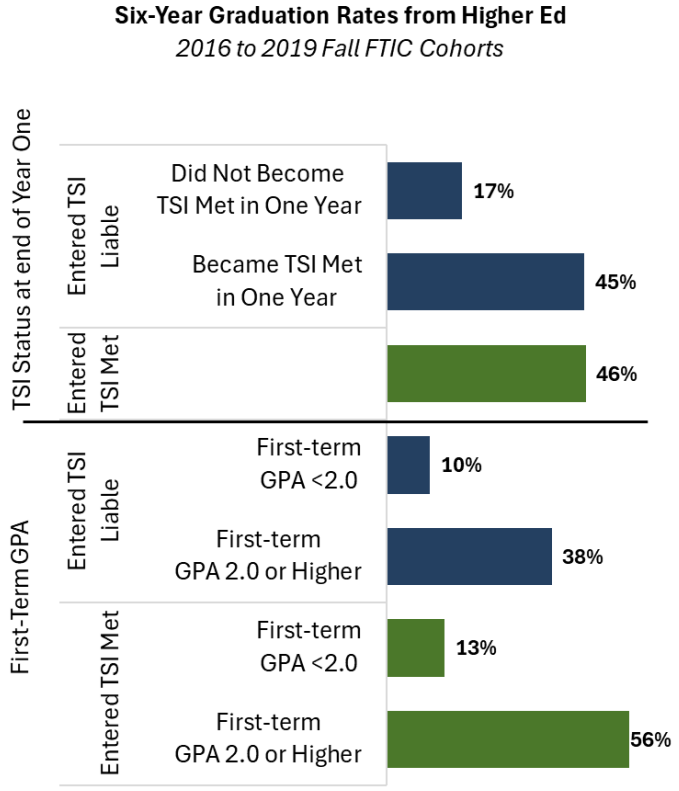
Based on the most recent first t ime in college (FTIC) cohorts with 6-year completion data (2016 to 2019 Fall FTIC cohorts: N≈31,000), just under one in three students completed a degree/certificate from any higher ed institution within six years. While students who comprise an FTIC cohort technically start college together at the same time, they are not all beginning their journey from the same place due to various factors such as academic preparedness, socioeconomic status, and prior educational experiences. In this article, we examine how these factors are correlated with long-term graduation rates.

Entering TSI Status

Entering TSI status serves as a measure of academic preparedness. FTIC students who entered TSI met were almost two times more likely to graduate from higher ed within six years.

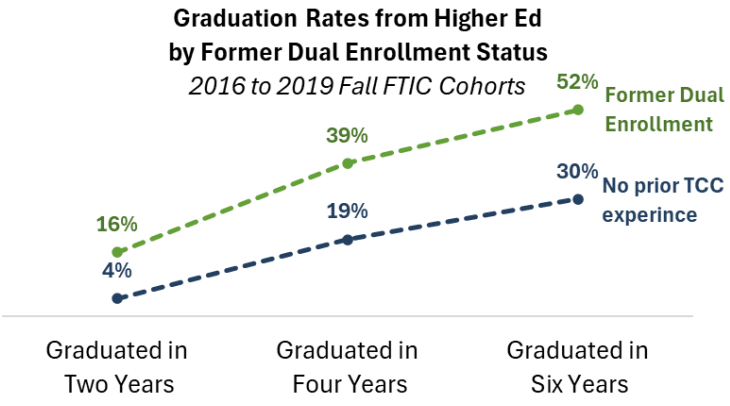


While entering preparedness seems to have a long-term impact, becoming prepared in the first year and having academic success in the first fall term substantially improves long term outcomes. FTIC students who entered TSI liable who became TSI met within their first year had a six-year graduation rate almost equivalent to those who entered TSI met, and FTIC students who entered TSI liable and had a first-term GPA of 2.0 or higher had a six-year graduation rate that was almost three times higher than those who entered TSI met but had a first-term GPA below 2.0.



Former Dual Enrollment Experience

TCC's dual enrollment program provides early college experience with about 10% of FTIC students being former dual enrolled students. FTIC students who had prior dual enrollment experience were almost 2 times more likely to graduate from higher ed within six years.



While early experience seems to foster better long-term outcomes, it also appears that a higher first-term GPA can close the gap between prior dual and non-prior dual student. When subdividing both former and non-former dual enrolled students by first term GPA, non-former dual

enrolled students with a 2.0 or higher GPA had more than double the six-year graduation rate of former dual enrolled with less than a 2.0 GPA.

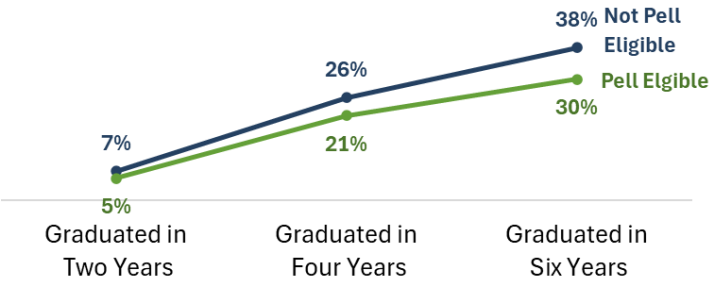
Six-Year Graduation Rates from Higher Ed	
No Former Dual Experience, First-term GPA <2.0	10%
No Former Dual Experience, First-term GPA 2.0 +	43%
Had Former Dual Experience, First-term GPA <2.0	19%
Had Former Dual Experience, First-term GPA 2.0 +	62%

Pell Eligibility

Pell eligibility provides a proxy for socioeconomic status. FTIC students who were not Pell eligible (likely higher socioeconomic status) were about 1.3 times more likely to graduate from higher ed within six years.

Graduation Rates from Higher Ed by Pell Status

2016 to 2019 Fall FTIC Cohorts



Note, however, those who were Pell eligible who had a first-term GPA of 2.0 or higher had a six-year graduation rate over 3 times that of those who were not Pell eligible and had a first-term GPA below 2.0

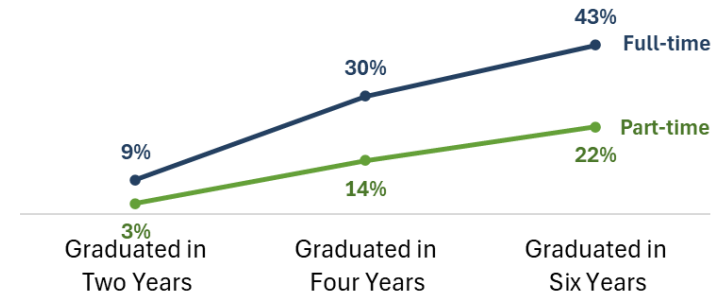
Six-Year Graduation Rates from Higher Ed	
Not Pell Eligible, First-term GPA <2.0	13%
Not Pell Eligible, First-term GPA 2.0 +	51%
Pell Eligible, First-term GPA <2.0	10%
Pell Eligible, First-term GPA 2.0 +	44%

Enrollment Intensity

FTIC students who enrolled full-time their first fall term were almost 2 times more likely to graduate in six years.

Graduation Rates from Higher Ed by First-term Enrollment Status

2016 to 2019 Fall FTIC Cohorts



Note, however, those who were part-time their first term and had a first-term GPA of 2.0 or higher had a six-year graduation rate almost three times that of those who were full-time but had a GPA below 2.0.

Six-Year Graduation Rates from Higher Ed	
Full-time, First-term GPA <2.0	12%
Full-time, First-term GPA 2.0 +	55%
Part-time, First-term GPA <2.0	10%
Part-time, First-term GPA 2.0 +	34%

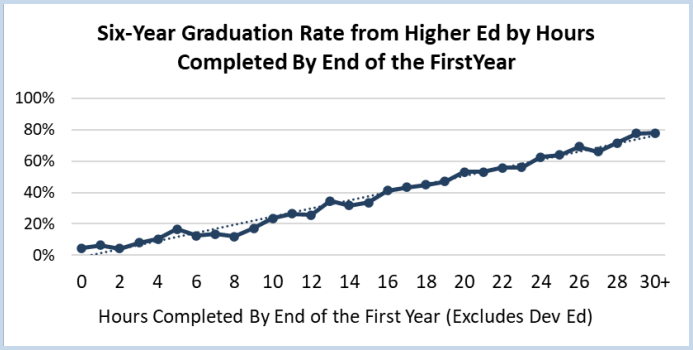
In general, students who had a first-term GPA of 2.0 or higher had a six-year graduation rate (46%) over 4 times that of those with a first-term GPA below 2.0 (11%).

Conclusion

Entering TSI status, dual enrollment experience, and first-term enrollment intensity all had about the same level of association with six-year graduation rates. TSI met, former dual enrolled, and full-time students had a six-year graduation rate that was approaching double that of their comparable counterparts. Pell status was associated with completion to a lesser extent. However, each of these "starting" factors were in some sense superseded by first-term performance. Those in the lower start group for completion rates (TSI liable, No former dual experience, Pell eligible, part-time) with a first-term GPA of 2.0 or above outperformed those in higher start group (TSI met, former dual experience, not Pell eligible, full-time) who had a first-term GPA below 2.0. Thus, first-term performance seems to have a substantial impact on completion rates and is a mitigating factor for those who "start further back" based on entering factors.

Progress to Completion

Overall, for every additional credit hour completed during the first-year, the six-year gradution rate inceased by about 2.5%.



Single-Campus Programs and Campus Proximity

Over the past four academic catalogs at TCC, **71%** of all unique undergraduate (UG) academic programs *(N=356)* were offered exclusively at one of the six TCC campuses. Since most programs were offered at a single home campus, this article will explore the relationship between single-campus programs, student enrollment behavior, and student commute distances during the 2024-2025 AY.

Single-Campus Program Counts

Each academic catalog contains a program inventory list that flags which campuses offer the courses needed to complete that given program. The current academic catalog (2024-2026) has the following breakdown of campus specific UG programs:

2024-2026 Academic Catalog		
Program Campus	**Program Count**	**%**
South (SO)	50	21.6%
Northeast (NE)	29	12.6%
Northwest (NW)	29	12.6%
Trinity River (TR)	29	12.6%
Southeast (SE)	20	8.7%
Connect (CN)	13	5.6%
Multiple Campuses (2+)	61	26.4%
***Total Unique Programs**	231	100.0%

***NOTE:** Unique programs refer to program codes (EX. AART.D001.UG) and do not account for duplicate program titles from previous or upcoming academic catalogs.

To examine all UG program enrollments during the 2024-2025 AY, the four most recent academic catalog program lists were combined and flagged as single campus or multi-campus.

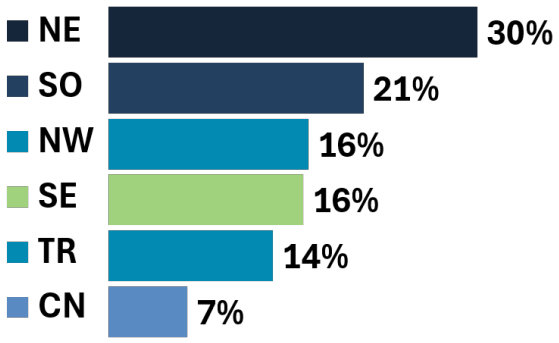
All **356** of these unique program codes were then mapped to 2024-2025 AY program/enrollment data:

Nearly one out of four *UG students enrolled in the 2024-2025 AY were enrolled in at least one Single- Campus program. *(N=52,066)*

Among *UG students **fewer than 1%** were enrolled in multiple Single-Campus programs. *(N=52,066)*

***NOTE:** UG enrollments exclude any Dual Enrolled students. Dual Credit and Early College High School (DC/ECHS) student program and campus data vary greatly due to MOU agreements across ISDs.

2024-2025AY Single Campus Program Enrolls *(*N=12,618)*



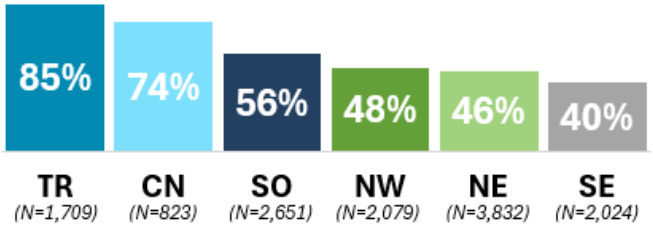
***NOTE:** Programs included are from 2021-2022 through the 2024-2026 academic catalogs. Excluding Dual Enrolled students (No DC/ECHS) Students may be enrolled in multiple programs; therefore, single campus program percentages may be duplicated from total.

Enrollment Behavior

Due to how programs function at TCC, many students may have an "active" single-campus program but have not ever enrolled, registered, or completed any coursework at that program's campus during a given term or AY.

For students with an "active" single-campus program during the 2024-2025 AY *(N=12,618)*, roughly **56%** *completed a course at that program's campus during the 2024FL, 2025SP, or 2025SU UG terms. The breakdown by campus is shown below:

% Completed Course at Program Specific Campus



***NOTE:** Attempted course enrollments exclude Credit Type N and Verified Grades of AU, WA, W, I, and missing values. Students may be enrolled in multiple programs.

Around **40%** *(N=2,024)* of students with a SE program attempted a course at the SE campus throughout the 2024-2025 AY.

Meanwhile, **85%** *(N=1,709)* of students with a Trinity River program attempted a course at the Trinity River campus during the 2024-2025AY.

55% of all single-campus program students attempted all courses at only **one** campus during 2024-2025 AY. The remaining **45%** attempted a course at two or more campuses. *(N=7,040)*

Mapping Programs

To explore the relationship between single-campus program students and their proximity to each TCC campus, the following maps include data from students who had *valid address data and attempted a course at their program's campus during the 2024-2025 AY. **Less than 5%** of address data was considered invalid and was not included in commute data. *(N=7,040)* The maps below display the relative density of students enrolled across each campus within Tarrant County.

The SO campus students had the shortest average commute distance with just under **11 miles** compared to NW with the longest average commute distance of **12.7 miles**.

***NOTE:** To map a student's residence, their address geocoded into GPS map coordinates. Student PIDs were anonymized before processing through any third-party software.

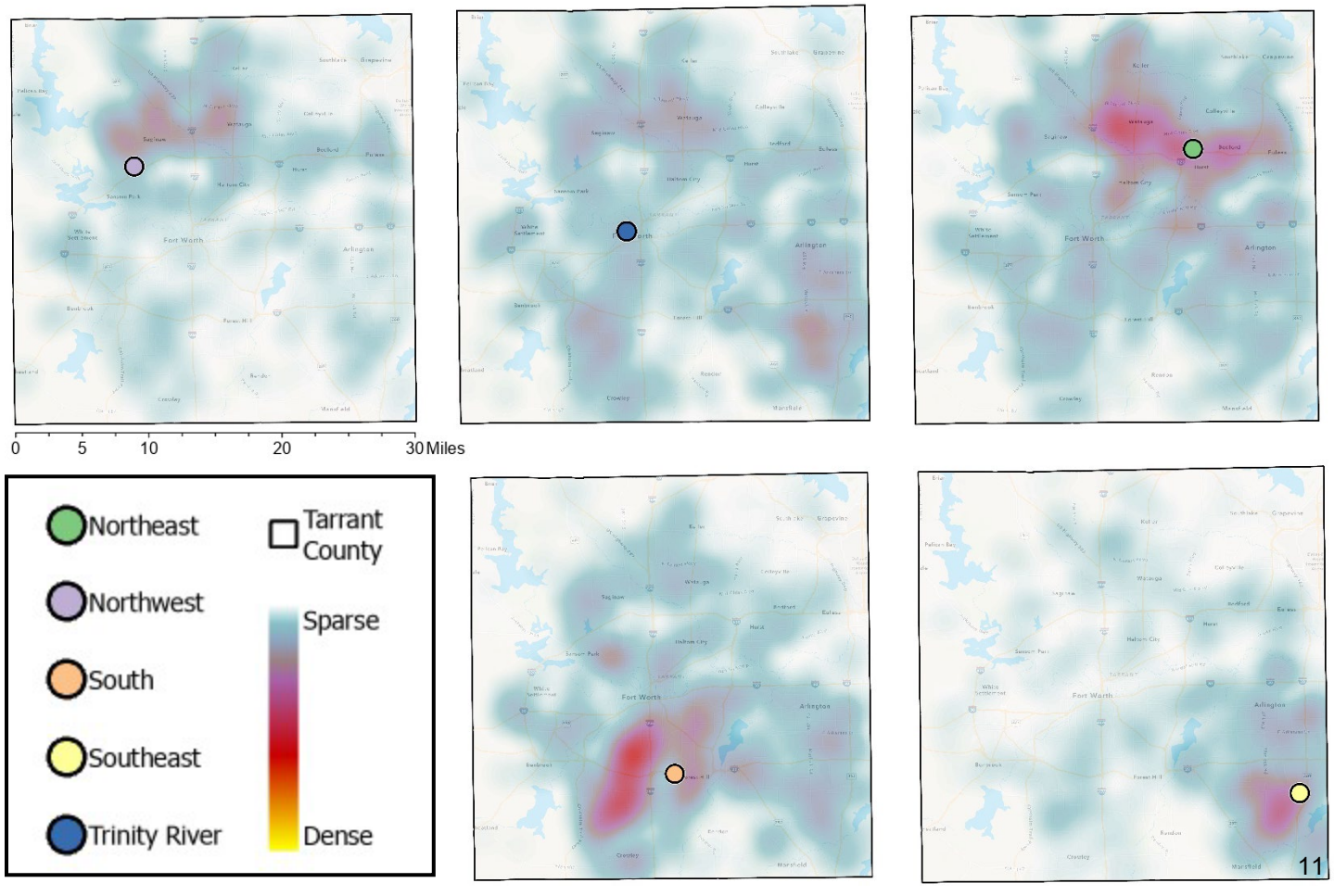
Around 50% of students with an active SE only program and completed an SE course during the 2024-2025 AY had SE as their closest campus. *(N=656)*

Conversely, **about 15%** of TR program students completed a TR course during the 2024-2025 AY and had TR as their closest campus indicating they were primarily commuting for their coursework. *(N=1,150)*

Due to the central location of the Trinity River campus, **0%** of single campus program students had TR as their furthest campus from home. *(N=1,150)*

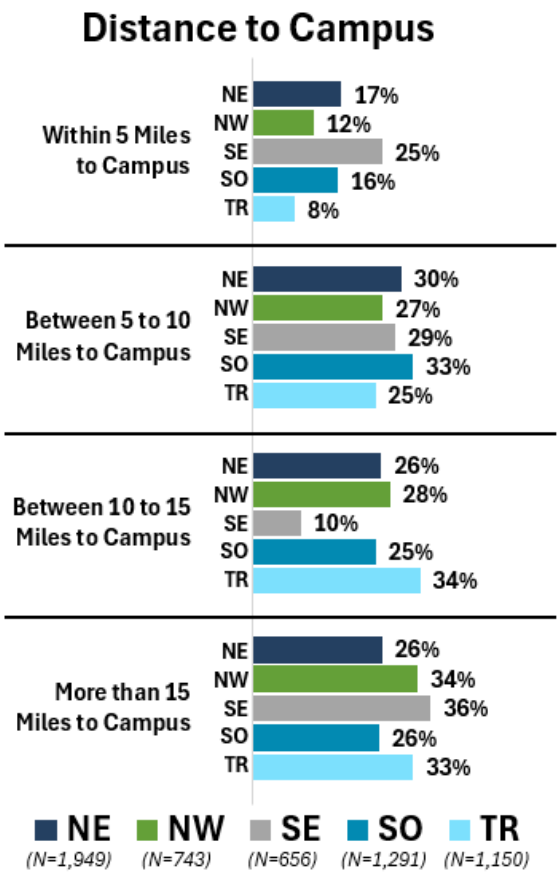
Campus	*Average Distance	% Closest Campus	% Furthest Campus
NE *(N=1,494)*	11.1	46.4%	5.6%
NW *(N=743)*	12.8	33.0%	13.3%
SE *(N=656)*	12.5	51.7%	27.7%
SO *(N=1,291)*	10.8	36.1%	2.9%
TR *(N=1,150)*	12.5	15.1%	0%

***NOTE:** The commute distance represents routes along major highways and roads. Distance calculated is not Euclidean/straight line distances between student addresses and TCC campuses.



Analysis of commute distances presented on the previous page reveal the following information about single-campus program students and their proximity to campuses across Tarrant County:

- Roughly **1 out of 3** TR students live more than 15 miles away from campus, while **fewer than 10%** live within 5 miles. *(N=1,150)*
- **About half** of South campus students live within 10 miles of campus, with a higher concentration visible along the east side of the I30 South corridor. *(N=1,291)*
- The Southeast campus had the highest percentage of students living within 5 miles (25%) as well as the highest percentage living more than 15 miles (36%) away. *(N=1,150)*



***NOTE:** The commute distance represents routes along major highways and roads. Distance calculated is not Euclidean/straight line distances between student addresses and TCC campuses

- **Over 60%** of Northwest campus students live more than ten miles from campus, the remaining 40% live north of the I820 loop. *(N=1,150)*
- The NE campus has the most evenly distributed student density within Tarrant County with **25%-30%** of students living in zones greater than 5 miles away. Students within 10 miles live primarily along the HEB region. *(N=1,150)*

Conclusion/Considerations

Most programs offered at TCC over the past four academic catalogs are directly tied to a single-campus, and students who declare those specific programs must consider campus proximity when enrolling at TCC. **Nearly one out of four** students enrolled at TCC during 2024-2025 AY were associated with a single campus program, and among students attempting courses at their program's campus, **more than 25%** were traveling distances greater than 15 miles to attend courses at each physical campus. As a result, **around 45%** of single-campus program students attempted courses across multiple campuses during 2024-2025 AY.

With the rising cost of transportation and a larger industrial shift to online instruction, it is interesting that there is a noticeable pattern in student commuting distances for single campus programs.

Students appear to more often attend single-campus programs that are offered closer to their residential address, and this presents a potential bottleneck for program accessibility and growth in the future.

Overall, the relationship between TCC students and campus proximity highlights the opportunity cost that students must consider when choosing their program and subsequent "home" campus. Future IR Corner articles can continue to explore campus proximity as a factor that impacts student enrollment behaviors as well as explore any relationships to student outcomes and time to completion.

Advisory Committees

Preparing the Future Workforce

Overview

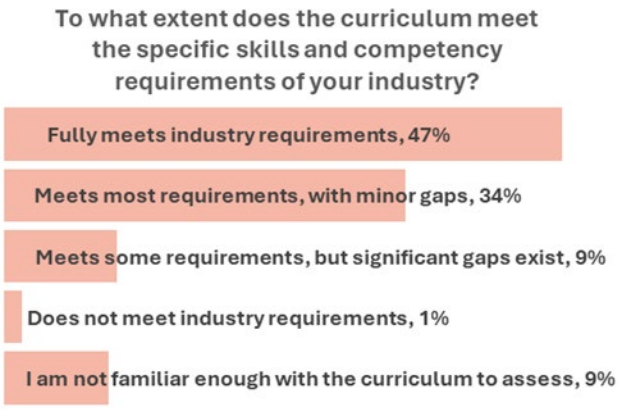
Industry-based advisory committees are required for each workforce education program by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). These committees help the institution ensure that programs are well-designed and relevant to current industry needs and that students have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for employment. Committees are comprised of members from the occupational field representing the service area. In this article, we examine feedback collected from TCC advisory committee members in academic year 2025-2026.

Advisory Committees

More than 100 advisory committee members provided feedback regarding almost 40 TCC programs. While most respondents had been in their industry for more than five years, tenure on the advisory committees ranged from less than one year (26%), 1 to 5 years (45%), to more than 5 years (29%), which highlights a variety of perspectives and experiences.

Curriculum

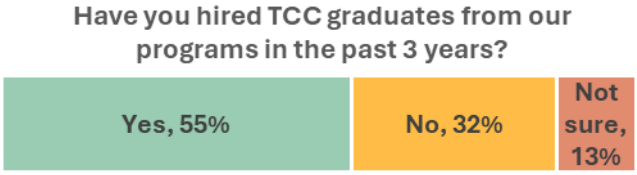
Most respondents agreed that the curriculum meets most or fully meets industry requirements. (N=137)



92% report the program's courses and credentials are extremely relevant (70%) or moderately relevant (22%) to their hiring needs. (N=122)

Recent Graduates

More than half of respondents reported hiring TCC graduates in the past 3 years. (N=96)



Of those who had hired recent graduates, 36% indicated the graduates were fully prepared for immediate employment, and 60% indicated the graduates were prepared with minimum on-the-job training. Very few employers (4%) indicated that graduates required significant training on-the-job. (N=53)

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

About 6 in 10 respondents reported their organization offers work-based learning opportunities. (N=118)

Work-based opportunities offered through their organizations (N=69) include:

- Internships – 68%
- Clinical Experiences – 48%
- Practicums – 20%
- Cooperative Education – 14%

Many advisory committee members indicated they would be willing to participate in activities to support these programs. Of those willing to participate (N=93), more than half indicated interest in:

- Guest lecturing or speaking engagements – 67%
- Participating in mock interview or career days – 63%
- Serving on curriculum review task force – 56%
- Offering site tours or job-shadowing opportunities – 55%

The support and feedback of these advisory committees help enhance employment prospects for students in their respective industries through relevant curriculum and hands-on experiences.

In the minds of some 4-year college students, summer months are an opportunity to continue making progress towards graduation. For many of these students, TCC serves as a convenient option to maintain momentum towards their bachelor's degree. This population of summer students who are visiting from 4-year institutions is a relatively unexplored subset of transfer students. The following article seeks to ask and answer some basic questions regarding their behavior and TCC's place in their educational journey.

Methodology – *The data utilized in this report makes use of both National Student Clearinghouse data and internal enrollment data. The time studied runs from 2008SP to 2025FL. A "*visiting summer student*" was defined as a TCC student who enrolled in a summer term and has 4-year enrollments in both the preceding spring and the following fall and was not dual enrolled in the summer.*

Why Choose a TCC Summer?

It is fair to ask why each summer between **3,000** and **5,000** visiting summer students gave up a break after spring finals to go back to school at TCC and take **5.1** credit hours during a summer term at TCC, on average. Some visiting summer students (about 2,700 each summer) were enrolled for their very first summer term ever at TCC (first time visiting summer students). First time visiting summer students from 2008SU to 2020SU were tracked for five years.

Note: A first time summer student who attended TCC every summer in the tracking window would be enrolled in a total six summers.

According to the data, it turns out that many first time visiting summer students *don't* choose to give up their summer break more than once. Within the tracking period, **72%** attended **once**, **22%** attended **twice** and **5%** attended **three or more** times. After first time visiting summer students return to their 4-year institution in the fall, a natural question that arises is: *"When might we see that student again at TCC?"* If they visit again in the summer, overwhelmingly, the answer to that question is, *"probably next summer."* For those students who came multiple times in the 5-year tracking period analyzed, around **80%** came back the next summer after the student's first summer visit.

Those who are visiting multiple terms are stacking up credit hours. On average, first time summer students earned about **4.9** credit hours during their first summer term at TCC. If we assume a typical path through a 4-year institution (i.e., enrolling in the fall, then graduating in the spring 4 years later), students have the opportunity to take summer classes over three summer terms. Extrapolating the number of hours to three terms shows that first time visiting summer students would earn roughly **14** credit hours on average – indeed, when looking at the students who *did* attend for 3 summers within 5 years, the average number of hours earned was about **14.3**

To put this in perspective, in 2024FL, the average cost of a credit hour at a public university in Texas was about **$357.73**, while the cost of a credit hour at TCC was **$67.33**. If we assume that the price of tuition stays the same for 4 years, then earning those 15 hours at **TCC results in a discount on a bachelor's degree** of about **10% for Texas residents.** [1]

[1] *THECB reports on tuition & fees*

As is shown here, TCC's reputation for affordability extends beyond students who primarily call it home in the fall and the spring – students who have a 4-

year alma mater for the fall/spring stand to benefit as well. This being the case…

Where Are Summer Students Coming from and What are they Studying?

Overall, most of the Summer Students were coming directly from a spring semester at the University of Texas at Arlington, however the rest of the top 15 schools show that this group is studying at 4-year schools all over, and in some cases outside of, the state of Texas.

Top 15 Universities of Incoming Summer Students	N
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ARLINGTON	23,084
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS	8,498
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY	6,800
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN	3,897
TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY	3,885
TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY	3,231
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY	2,874
TEXAS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY	2,477
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY	1,959
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY - SAN MARCOS	1,840
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA	1,737
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS	1,449
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY	1,338
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS	1,335
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY	1,189

Note: College counts are unduplicated by Student ID and Term. Also, several students were concurrently enrolled in multiple 4-year institutions during the spring and fall terms surrounding their summer term.

The top 15 universities for *outgoing* Summer Students (i.e., the school students returned to the following fall) are the same as those shown above. This trend of students returning to the same university that they had come from holds true for the vast majority of Summer Students – in **96%** of cases, Summer Students returned in the fall to *at least one* of the 4-year universities they had come from in the spring.

Regarding the courses Summer Students enrolled in, intuition would suggest that as an aggregate, they took core "basic" classes at TCC – this is mostly shown in the data when ranking the top 15 courses taken by TCC Summer Students. The top course was HIST-1302 followed by GOVT-2306 and HIST-1301.

All Summer Students	N
HIST-1302	6,274
GOVT-2306	5,940
HIST-1301	5,774
GOVT-2305	4,431
MATH-1342	4,303
ENGL-1302	4,208
MATH-1314	3,681
ACCT-2301	**3,676**
ACCT-2302	**3,614**
ECON-2302	2,580
ECON-2301	2,544
MATH-2414	**2,278**
MATH-1325	2,234
SPAN-1412	**2,225**
BIOL-2401	2,166

Note: Course counts are unduplicated by Student ID, Term, and Course Name

All top 15 courses taken by TCC Summer Students are part of the TCC core curriculum with the exception of ACCT-2301, ACCT-2302, MATH-2414, and SPAN-1412. An interesting follow-up to this is to ask whether these students are taking courses that are related to their 4-year major. To this end, the most common single 4-year majors were identified and mapped to summer enrollments.

Top 10 4-year Majors	N
Business Administration and Management, General	4,555
Biology/Biological Sciences, General	3,949
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	3,946
Psychology, General	2,903
Exercise Science and Kinesiology	2,674
Business/Commerce, General	2,419
Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	2,096
General Studies	1,743
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies	1,337
Social Work	1,125

Note: Major counts are unduplicated by Student ID and Term

Summer Students were then grouped by their incoming 4-year major, after which their classes were ranked by number of enrollments. Summer students with a 4-year major of Nursing (as indicated by their incoming CIP code) had Microbiology, Anatomy and Physiology 2, and Introductory Chemistry for their top three classes. In contrast, Mechanical Engineering majors took Physics 2, Calculus 3, and Physics 1 for their top three classes. Similar trends exist for Summer Students with other 4-year majors. While the data presented is not comprehensive, it provides some evidence to suggest that after the most

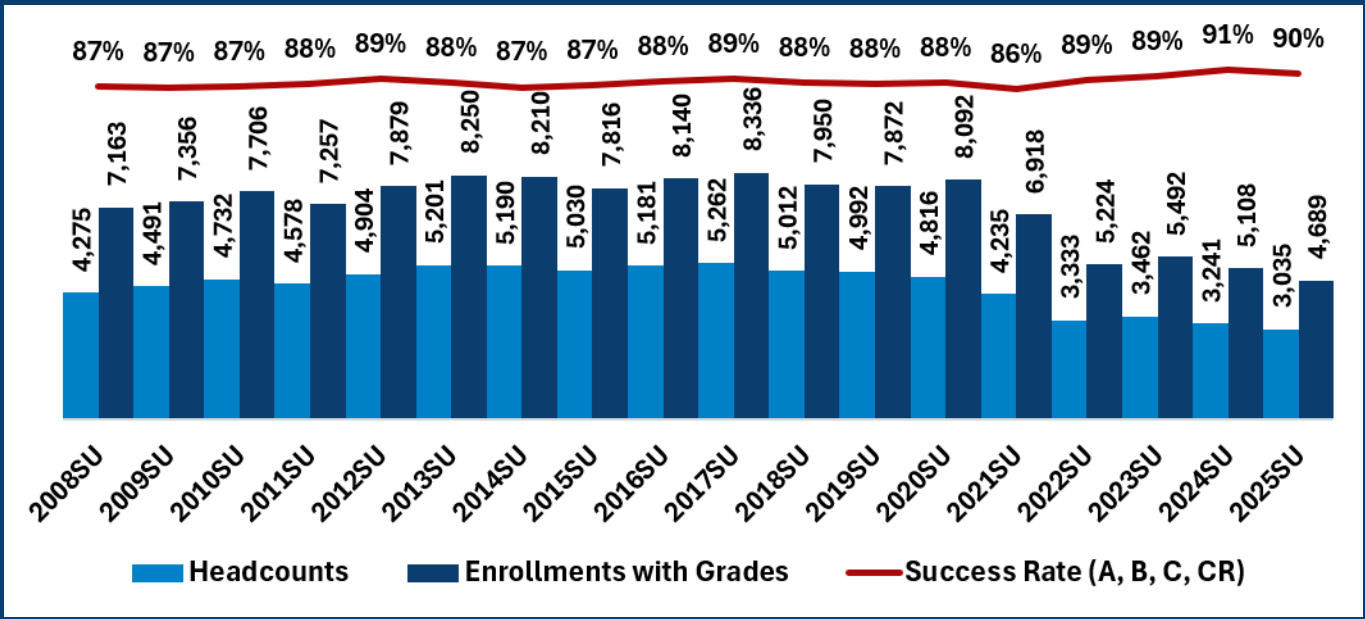
Top 15 Summer Enrollments by 4-Year Major			
Nursing	Mechanical Engineering	Business	General Studies
BIOL-2420	PHYS-2426	MATH-1324	SOCI-1301
BIOL-2402	MATH-2415	SPCH-1311	PSYC-2301
CHEM-1406	PHYS-2425	PHIL-1304	ENGL-1301
SOCI-1301	MATH-2413	ARTS-1301	SPCH-1311
ENGL-2311	ENGL-2311	BCIS-1305	SPCH-1315
HECO-1322	CHEM-1411	ENGL-1301	MATH-1324
PSYC-2314	CHEM-1412	SPCH-1321	PHIL-1304
ARTS-1301	ENGL-1301	BUSI-2301	GEOL-1403
PSYC-2301	PHIL-1301	MUSI-1306	SOCI-1306
SPCH-1311	MATH-2320	GEOL-1403	ARTS-1301
CHEM-1411	MUSI-1306	SPAN-1411	MATH-2413
RNSG-2213	MATH-2412	BCIS-1405	HECO-1322
KINE-1164	ARTS-1301	PHIL-1301	PHIL-1301
ENGL-1301	MATH-2318	ENGL-2311	MUSI-1306
MATH-1332	MATH-2315	PSYC-2301	CHEM-1412

*** Classes were ranked **after** removing the top 15 courses for all students to clarify distinctions.*

common courses are removed from consideration, Summer Students at TCC are likely to take classes that align well with their area of study at their home institution.

Conclusions

Overall, summer enrollments at TCC are an economically attractive option that many students – including some students who attended a 4-year in other parts of the state – have taken advantage of over the years. The behavior of visiting summer students indicates that, by and large, they are using TCC courses as would be expected of students whose main home is a 4-year University: They tend to return to that same school the following fall, those who attend more than one summer tend to do so consecutively, and they are, as a group, most likely to take courses that fulfill core requirements. On this last point, it is worth emphasizing that these students are *also* taking coursework that is directly relevant to their major and taking these hours back to apply to their bachelor's degree. All in all, it would appear that to many students who choose a summer studying at TCC, it is a summer well spent.



Visting Summer Students headcounts were historically between 3,000 and 5,000 annually, with between 4,500 and about 8,000 course enrollments each year. The success rate for this group of students was consistently very high – between 86% and 91% for all years considered. Compared to other TCC summer students (i.e. non-dual enrollment students enrolled in summer but not enrolled in 4-year schools pre and post summer), "Summer Students Visting from 4-year" had success rates of about 5 to 10 percentage points higher. In recent years, the Summer Student headcount decreased from its prior average of about 5,000 to closer to 3,000 per year, with the sharp decline starting in 2021SU. Future research may seek to understand what has prevented headcounts from returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Data Governance: The Importance of Definitions

By: Yesenia Martinez Vela

OVERVIEW

For institutions like TCC with approximately 5,500 employees, consistency across data definitions is critical. As an institution, we rely on data to support student success initiatives, internal and external reporting, and strategic planning. Therefore, we cannot have data lose its value because it is not consistently defined. The same field name does not always carry the same meaning as different departments may interpret data elements differently. Being aware of these variations and working toward aligned definitions is key to maintaining accuracy and consistency. To understand the importance and impact of data definitions, we will discuss the variable "campus", a simple but critical data variable at TCC.

CAMPUS

At first glance "campus" seems simple. However, determining a student's campus is more complex. Depending on how it's defined, the same data can produce different results. To illustrate this challenge, we will explore three different definitions of campus and show how each one leads to a different outcome.

Home Campus

Students self-report their home campus during the application process or through profile updates.

Advantage*: Students are assigned to only one campus - a useful definition for resource allocation where double counting a student creates a challenge.*

Disadvantage*: A student's self-reported campus may not reflect their course enrollments or program. For example, a student who never took a course on South campus can still report South as their home campus.*

Note: the sum of the campus headcounts equals the District headcount.

Majority Campus

Students are assigned to a campus based on where they take the majority of their classes, measured by credit hours.

Advantage*: Students are assigned to only one campus which reflects the majority of their course enrollments.*

Disadvantage*: This definition can lead to ties - meaning some students are in an ambiguous category.*

Note: the sum of the campus headcounts plus "tied" equals the District headcount.

Enrolled Campus

Students are counted at a campus if they are enrolled in at least one course there; students may be counted at multiple campuses.

Advantage & Disadvantage*: Students are assigned to multiple campuses which reflects all their course enrollments.*

Note: The sum of the campus headcounts does not equal the District headcount. The District headcount must be calculated such that each student is counted once even when they are counted in multiple campus headcounts.

Fall 2025 (UG) Headcount By Campus:

	Home Campus	Majority Campus	Enrolled Campus
CN	3,882	12,444	18,957
NE	11,115	8,519	10,926
NW	7,631	6,296	8,262
SE	9,648	7,697	10,418
SO	8,240	6,561	8,774
TR	8,382	5,210	7,092
Tie		2,714	

None of the campuses have the same share of students across the different definitions. For example, TCC Connect's (CN) headcount based on home campus was approximately 4,000 students, while its headcount based on enrolled campus was about 19,000 students.

TAKEAWAYS

Data governance is not only about compliance, access, and security, but also about data quality; establishing a shared understanding of data definitions is a foundational element to the quality of data. When displaying data, it is important to give context to your variables. Stating clear definitions, identifying data sources, usage guidance, and business rules are just a few ways you can increase trust and credibility to your report by reducing confusion in conflicting numbers.

Sources: IR Data Hub-Employee dashboard, IR_EOT_Enrolls (UG only, excludes credit type N & contact hours= 0)

How Do Learning Styles Differ Across TCC Students?

Introduction

To better understand student learning styles as part of the Online Readiness Assessment, students indicated how closely statements reflected their own learning styles by selecting either: *very much like me, partially like me, or nothing like me across a total of 35 statements.* N=37,694 (2025 Cal. Year Respondents)

Learning Styles

There were 5 statements per 7 learning subscales. Examples from each category are shown below:

SOCIAL: You like being a mentor or guide for others. You communicate well with others and act as a mediator.

SOLITARY: You like to do some things alone and away from others. You prefer to study or work alone.

LOGICAL: You put together detailed lists such as to-do lists. You use examples to support your point of view.

VERBAL: You like to read books, newspapers, magazines, etc. You have a great vocabulary.

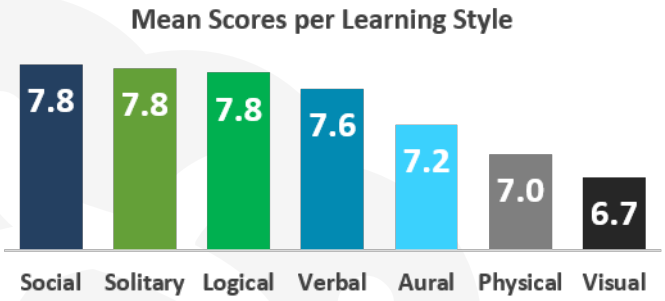
AURAL: Jingles, themes/parts of songs pop into your head at random. You can play a musical instrument/sing on key.

PHYSICAL: You love sports and exercise. You use lots of hand gestures or body language.

VISUAL: In school, you enjoyed art, technical drawing, and geometry. You like textbooks with lots of diagrams or illustrations.

Mean Scores

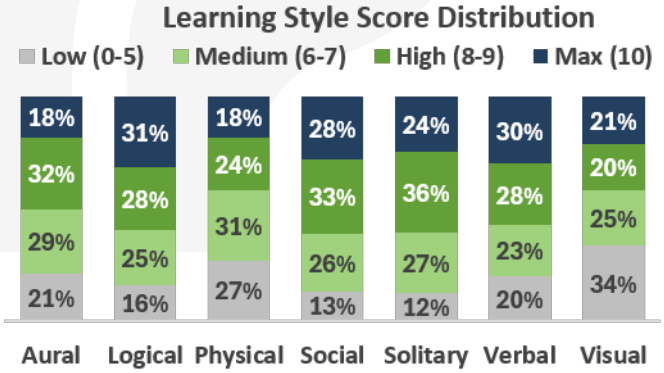
To simplify interpretation, response options were assigned point values: *Very much like me* (2), *Partially like me* (1), and *Nothing like me* (0). Scores for each of the seven learning style categories ranged from 0 to 10.



Social, Solitary, and Logical learning had the highest mean scores (7.8). The lowest mean scores were found in Physical (6.9) and Visual learning (6.7). N=37,694

Distribution of Scores

Individual learning style scores were grouped into four categories: Low - 0 to 5, Medium - 6 and 7, High - 8 and 9, and Max – 10.



- *Logical* and *Verbal* learning styles had the highest max scores at **31%** and **30%**
- Visual and Physical learning styles had the largest share of low scores at **34%** and **27%**

Primary Learning Styles

Primary learning styles are any learning style(s) in which students scored their highest. N=37,694

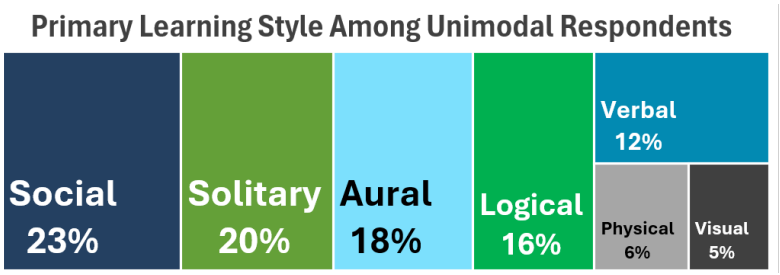
43% had one primary style (***Unimodal***)

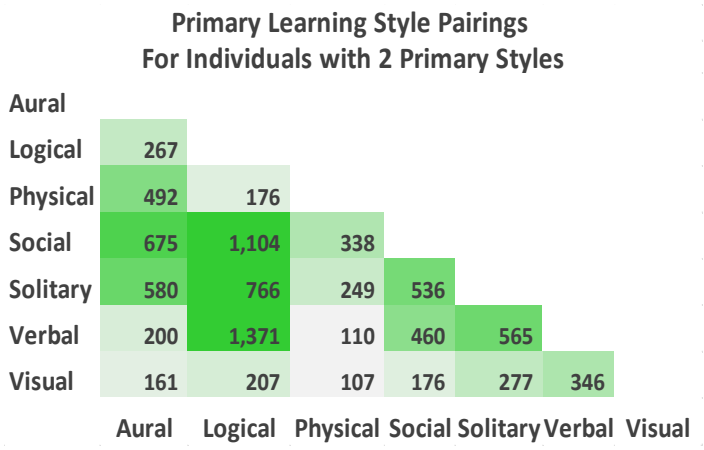
24% had 2 primary styles

33% had 3 or more primary styles

Among Unimodal respondents (N = 16,261), Social learning was the most common, representing **23%** of respondents. Solitary (**20%**) and Aural (**18%**) were the next most frequent. Physical (**6%**) and Visual (**5%**) were least common.

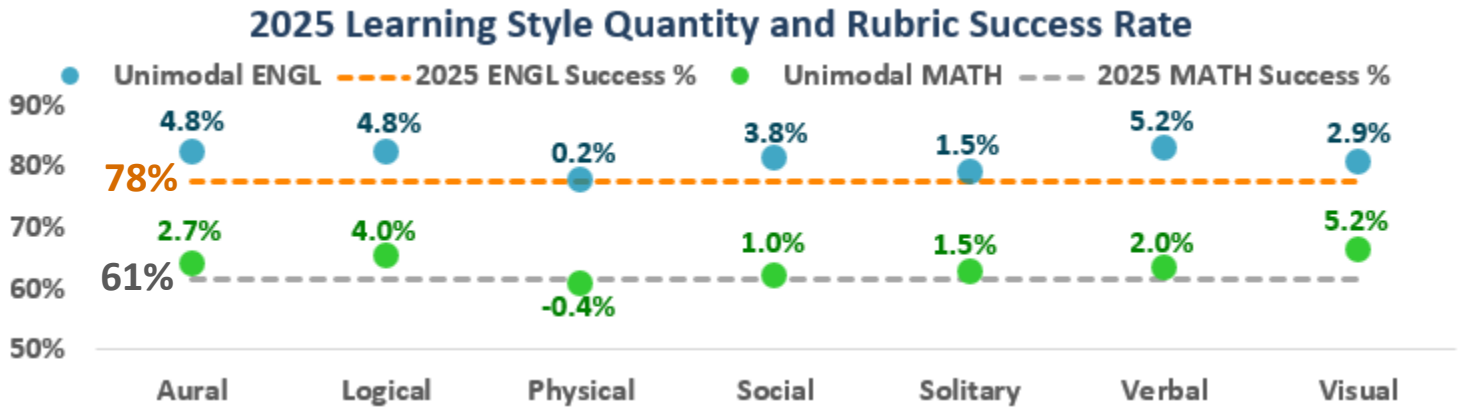
Of the Multimodal respondents with two primary styles (N=9,163) the most common combination was *Verbal–Logical* (**15.0%**), followed by *Social–Logical* (**12.0%**) and *Solitary–Logical* (**8.4%**).





2025FL Success Rates by Primary Learning Style (Unimodal)

Success rates were compared among **7,695** respondents enrolled in ENGL and/or MATH in Fall 2025 across learning styles for *Unimodal* (1 Primary Style) students. The Fall 2025 districtwide success rate for each rubric is indicated via respective dotted lines.



In ENGL, the highest success variance occurred in the Unimodal Verbal Group with a **5.2**-point higher success rate than the 2025 district-wide average of **78%**. The remaining learning style groups were also moderately higher, with physical learners just slightly above the overall average.

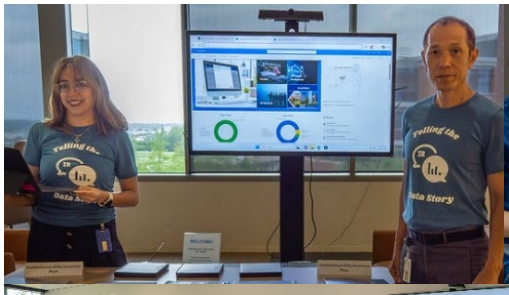
Across MATH, Visual learners had a **5.2** percentage point higher success rate than the 2025 average. Differences among the remaining learning style groups were generally slightly or moderately higher than the 2025 average success rate of **61%** apart from Physical learners, with a **0.4%** decrease.

Considerations

TCC faculty and staff can explore how these findings can inform instruction and programming by highlighting opportunities to support diverse learning preferences and bridge in-person and online learning experiences. This context can help students, faculty, and staff consider how instructional approaches align with student needs. Future analyses may examine how learning preferences intersect with instructional methods, course modalities, rubrics, academic pathways, and other factors influencing the student experience.

IR OUT AND ABOUT

The Institutional Research team values opportunities to engage with our colleagues across the college through presentations, workshops, and data discussions. Over the past several months, we have partnered with teams and departments throughout the district while also sharing our work and insights at national conferences.



Connections Week

SGA Leadership Workshops

Student Affairs Professional Development Day

Educational Partnerships Professional Development Day

T3 Professional Development Day

AIR Forum Discussion Group: *Igniting Curiosity through a Data Summit*

SACSCOC Summer Institute

If you would like to collaborate with IR, please reach out to
Institutional.Research@tccd.edu

FROM DATA TO DECISIONS

Throughout the Spring term, our office has made significant strides in advancing a data-informed culture. Through targeted professional development, collaborative events, system enhancements, and expanded responsibilities, we continue to support faculty and staff with the tools and insights needed to drive effective decision-making and institutional success.

Data Literacy Workshops

IR hosted four online sessions serving almost 200 TCC employees. These sessions provided foundational knowledge and shared language to support data literacy.

IR Data Summit

The 2026 IR Data Summit was a college-wide event highlighting how data informs decisions, strengthens institutional effectiveness and advances student success across TCC. This year's summit included a keynote, eight break-out sessions, two workshops, and a panel discussion.

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional Effectiveness implemented a new 16-month cycle using a streamlined system, achIEve. Plans include mission, goals, targets, and measures for 42 units representing the College's functional areas. Phase 2 of the cycle is currently underway with results, goal ratings, and continuation plans being submitted.

State Reporting

The integration of State Reporting into the IR office allows for stronger coordination across institutional reporting efforts.

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