

Project 1: Describing Who Enrolls and Completes Community College Degrees

Research Team: Jessica Gottlieb, Jacob Kirksey and Jon McNaughtan (all Texas Tech)

This research team will provide descriptive statistics of students who attain desirable credentials or reach certain milestones of the higher education pathway, such as: 1) Attending college, 2) Certificates or workforce credentials, 3) Associates degrees, 4) Baccalaureate degrees, 5) credit accumulation with no credential (30, 60, 90+), and 6) initial enrollment (2-year, 4-year, public, and private). They will focus on several characteristics of students to develop these profiles including, demographic information of the students, proximity to educational institutions, college exposure, academic performance, and student financial situation.

Project 2: Under-matching among Community College Students

Research Team: Camilla Morales and Kalena Cortes (UTD and TAMU, respectively)

This research team will look at demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, race, parental income, foreign-born, primary language); and academic student profiles (e.g., test scores, course completion) focusing specifically on under-matching (i.e., students capable of attending a highly selective institution who instead attend a much less selective one) and the demographic characteristics of students who under-match. (Note: variables used to identify under-matching – college readiness; SAT/ACT; GPA/course grades; Number of AP/IB/Honors classes). This team will also examine the predictors of application and enrollment into community colleges in Texas, and the outcomes of students who enroll in community colleges in Texas. Again, an area of emphasis will be examining under-matching and over-matching among those who transfer to 4-year institutions?

Project 3: Identifying STEM-CTE Course-taking Patterns in Community College and Their influence on Outcomes

Research Team: Jessica Gottlieb, Jacob Kirksey and Jon McNaughtan (all Texas Tech)

Along with describing community college student profiles, the team will identify clusters of students within community colleges who participate in the same set of focal courses that differentiate them from other students. They will focus on course-taking patterns specific to STEM and CTE degrees and certificates, though not limited to these pathways, and use a network algorithm to identify 'local positions' in a set of community colleges (Frank et al., 2018). Then, they will employ multilevel models to explore how the local positions uniquely influence students' educational (e.g., degree completion) and labor market outcomes (e.g., attained a STEM career).

Project 4: Evaluating the relationship between tuition changes and community college attendance behaviors using data on the impact of Senate Bill 2118.

Research Team: Jessica Gottlieb, Jacob Kirksey and Jon McNaughtan (all Texas Tech)

This project will evaluate the impacts of SB 2118 on total and changes to enrollment in early childhood two-year and four-year degrees, evaluating both shifts in enrollment between institutions and net growth. The team will focus on the two initial adopters of early childhood four-year degree programs: Midland College and Dallas College Brookhaven Campus. They will compare post-policy trends in enrollment for the service areas of the two community colleges to what one would have expected to observe had the policy not occurred.

Project 5: Describing the Current State of Workforce Demand and Skills Gaps in Texas

Research Team: Dennis Jansen, Tim Gronberg and Andy Rettenmaier (all Texas A&M)

One question regarding the work of community colleges is: to what extent do they help fill the workforce gaps in their local communities. This project will examine the extent to which community college behaviors (program offerings, enrollments and graduations) correspond with the TWC employment growth projections by region and occupation.

Project 6: What's up with Dual Credit?

Research Team: Lori Taylor and Ishara Casellas Connors (both TAMU)

How are dual credit programs funded, what are the costs to provide dual credit, and what are the challenges associated with dual credit? Part of this project will update the quantitative analysis from the UT system Dual Credit Study by Troutman et al. (2018) to encompass community colleges and IHEs outside of the UT System. Another piece of the project will explore the extent to which access and uptake for dual credit programs varies by student demographics.

Project 7: Understanding Community College Resilience

Research Team: Ishara Casellas Connors and Lori Taylor (both TAMU)

Nearly all community colleges suffered a substantial enrollment shock as the result of COVID-19. Some have bounced back while others continue to struggle. This project uses a mixed methods approach to examine the efficacy of interventions designed to keep teaching in the face of COVID. One point of emphasis will be to examine the extent to which dual credit enrollment losses explain recent enrollment trends.

Project 8: Modeling Costs of Course Pathways in Texas Community Colleges

Research Team: Bruce Baker and Jesse Levin (Rutgers and American Institutes for Research, respectively)

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) will be working collaboratively with Professor Bruce Baker (Rutgers University) to conduct a study of the costs of specific prescribed course pathways necessary to meet degree or certificate requirements in popular Texas community college programs. The team will provide descriptive statistics on pathways and their corresponding costs within and across academic programs/institutions. Additional analyses will cost out how these pathways vary by a number of student characteristics (e.g., age, income, preparation). Finally, regression analyses will be employed to explore how these costs vary by program, institution, and student characteristics