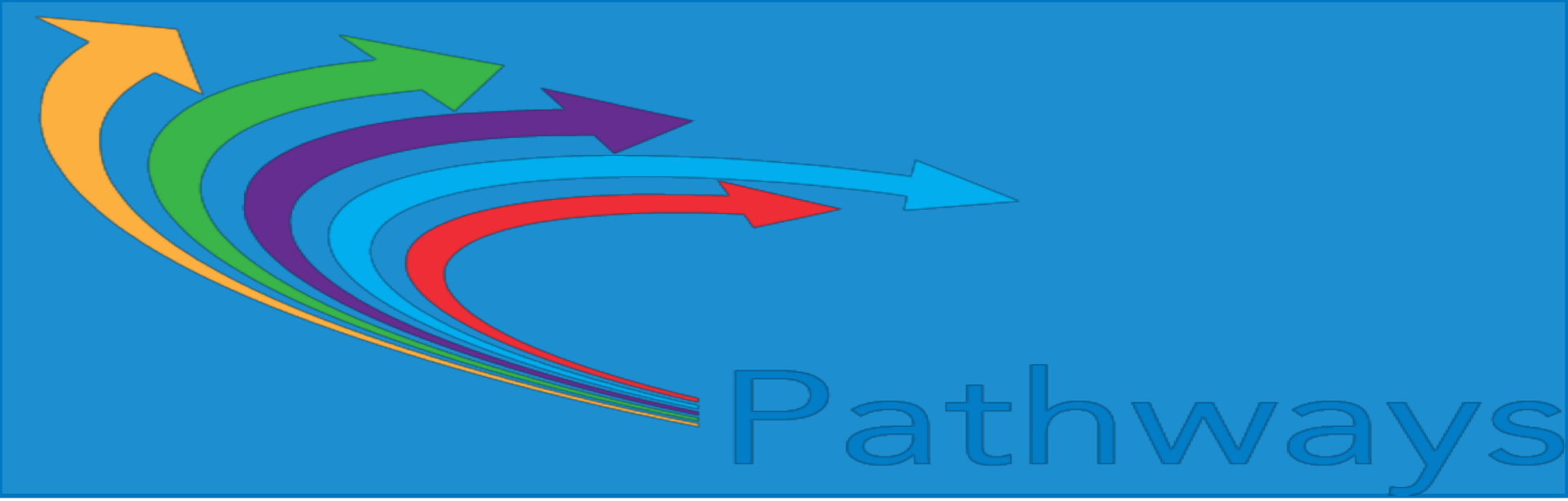
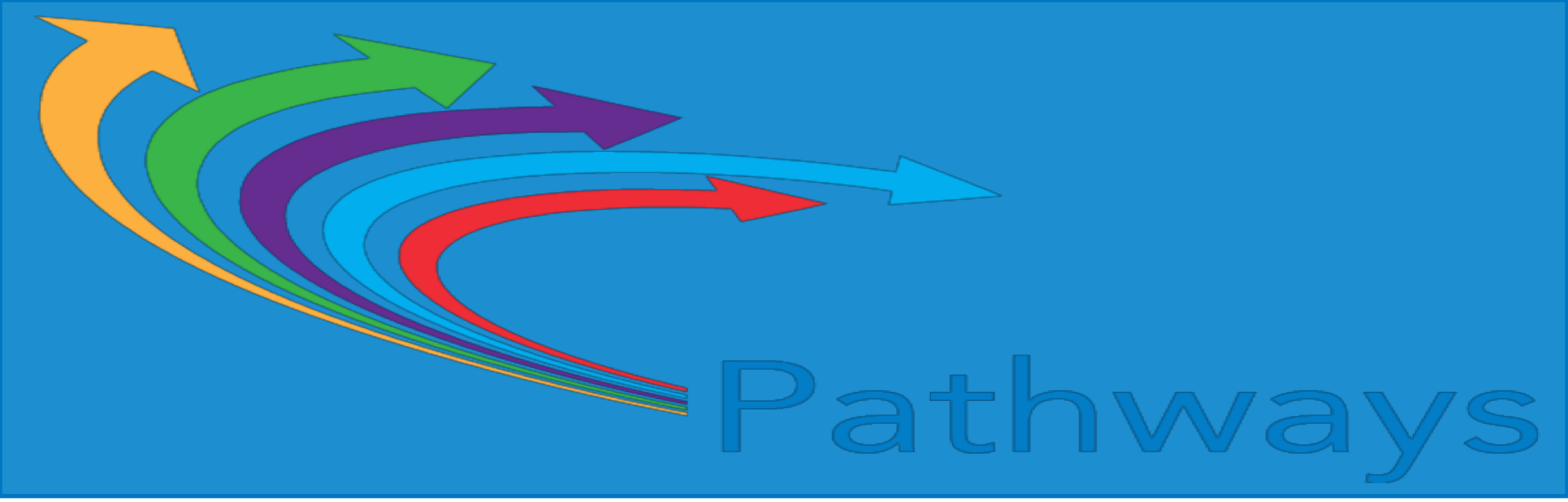


Pathways 101

Kay McClenney, Ph.D.

Texas Pathways Institute #5



GUIDED PATHWAYS
What We've Learned

Building Blocks

Student Completion & Equity

Pathways

- First Year Experience/Foundations of Excellence
- ASAP, CUNY Start
- Achieving the Dream, Completion By Design, AAC&U
- Developmental Education Reforms
- *Plentiful* Institutional and State Initiatives

…..All involving

- Examination and Use of Data,
  Especially Data Depicting Student Success and Equity
- Multiple Evidence-Based Interventions – Very Few of Them Scaled
- And now, Guided Pathways

DATA QUESTIONS

Early Momentum & Prompts for Change

- What % of entering students present at census date never complete a college credit?
- What % of entering students complete college-level gatekeeper courses (ENG, MA, other) in their first year?
- What % of students complete a full-program academic plan by the end of their first semester?
- What % of entering students complete at least 3 courses in their program of study in their first year?
- Bonus: What is the average # of college-level credits earned by an associate degree graduate?

Reviewing the Evidence

Pathways

Organizational Change

- Discrete practices will not lead to substantial improvements in outcomes at scale.
- Every college is perfectly designed to produce precisely the results it is currently getting.
- If nothing changes, nothing changes.

Reviewing the Evidence

for Pathways Reforms

Behavioral Economics and Decision Theory

- Too many choices ➔ indecision, procrastination, decision paralysis, bad choices: *BRAIN FREEZE*
- A clear and simplified set of options, with clear information on costs and benefits—or provision of a "default option" — helps people make better decisions.
- Reminders, assistance, and feedback help keep people on track

Why Pathways?

What We've Learned

Behavioral Economics and Decision Theory

"Completing college is the result of successfully navigating a multitude of smaller decisions from start to finish. But for many college students, finding a path to completion is the equivalent of **navigating a shapeless river on a dark night**—and the wider the river, the more difficult it can be to find the way."

Judith Scott-Clayton (2011)

Reviewing the Evidence

for Pathways Reforms

Cognitive Science

- Students benefit when they have clear goals and a concrete sense of how they are progressing toward those goals.

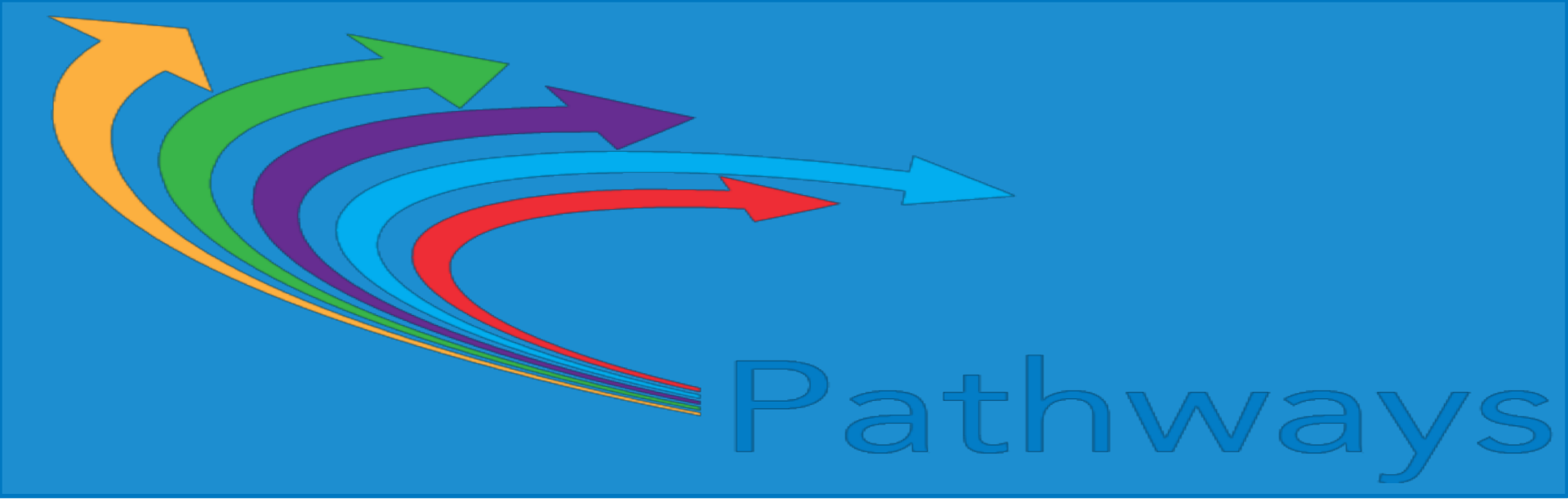
- Instructional program coherence improves learning.

Reviewing the Evidence

for Pathways Reforms

My Lessons

- Connection
- What's provided vs. what's experienced
- *Students don't do optional.*



Guided Pathways to Completion and Equity:

An Overview

THE GUIDED PATHWAYS MODEL

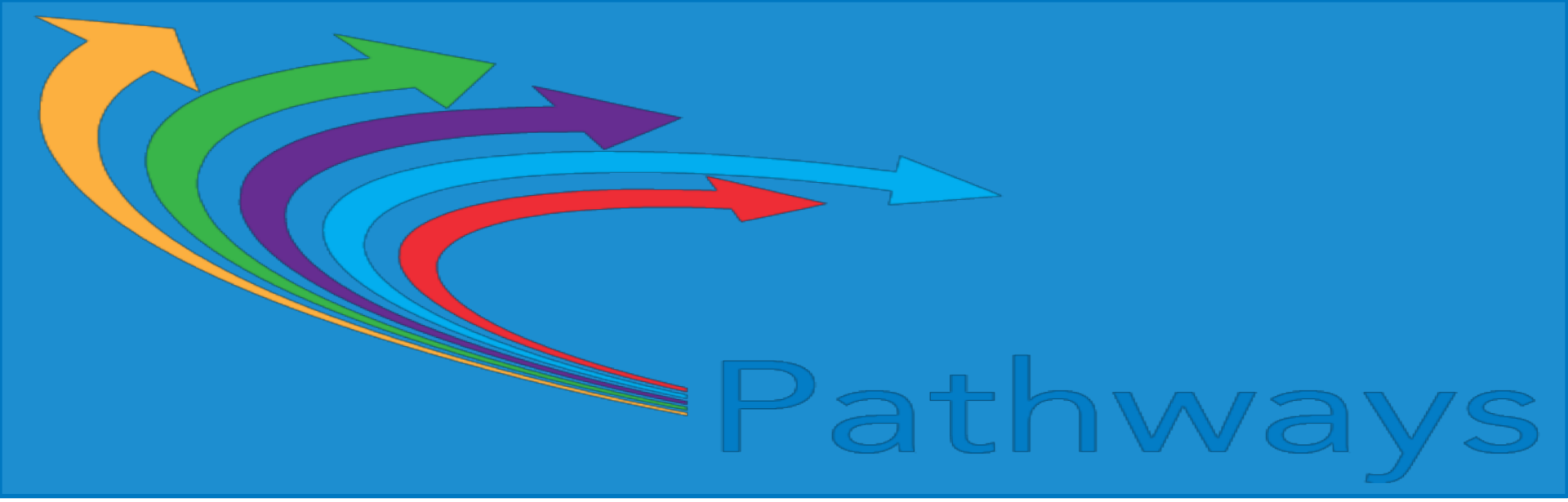
Pillars of
The Pathways Model

CLARIFY THE PATH

HELP STUDENTS CHOOSE AND ENTER A PATH

HELP STUDENTS STAY ON THE PATH

ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE LEARNING



Central to the pathways model:

- **clear, educationally coherent program maps**
- —which include **specific course sequences, progress milestones, and program learning outcomes**
- —that are **aligned** to what will be expected of students upon program completion in the **workforce and in education at the next level** in a given field.

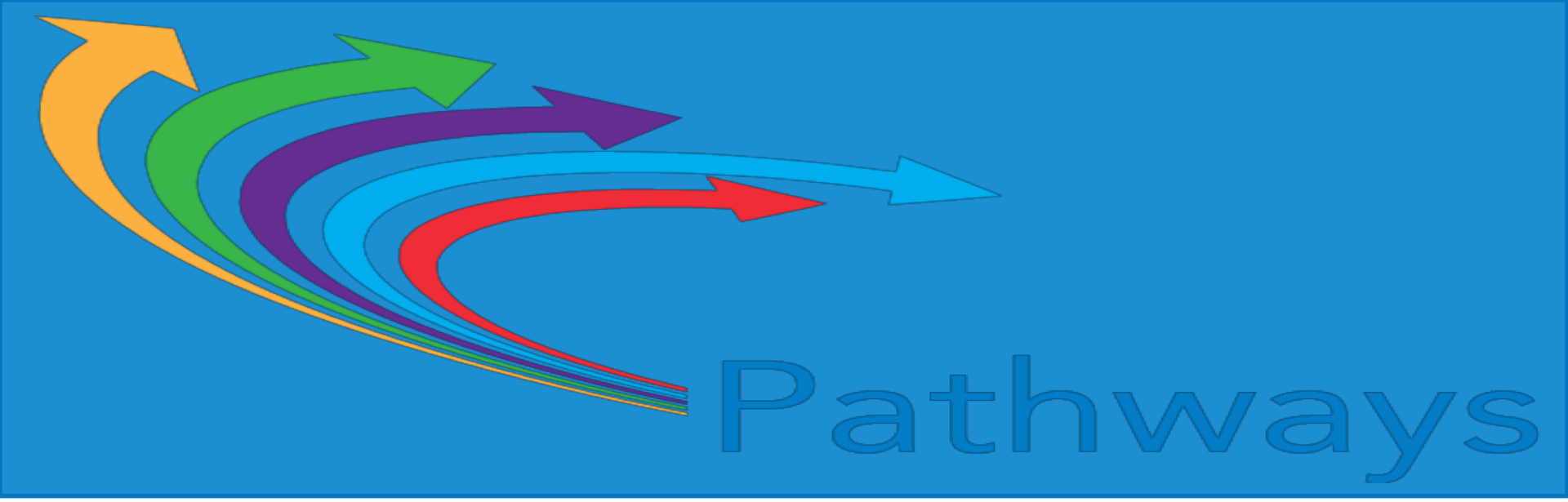
Essential Practices

1. Clarify paths to student end goals

- Simplify students' choices with **default program maps** developed by faculty and advisors that show students a **clear pathway to completion, further education and employment** in fields of importance to the region.

- Establish **transfer pathways** through alignment of pathway courses and expected learning outcomes with transfer institutions, to optimize applicability of community college credits to university majors.

- Align **high school pathways**, including dual credit courses and student learning outcomes, with community college certificate and degree programs.



PROGRAM MAPPING

Plan with the end in mind.

–paraphrasing Davis Jenkins, CCRC

Essential Practices

2. *Help students choose and enter a pathway*

- **Redesign traditional remediation** to integrate academic skill building into students' pathways, **aligning math** and other foundation skills development with a student's program of study, **integrating/ contextualizing instruction** to build academic and non-academic foundation skills throughout the college-level curriculum, and **ensuring that students complete college-level math and English in the first academic year**.

Essential Practices

3. Help students stay on path

- Support students through strong **advising**, embedded and ongoing in the pathway experience and **supported by appropriate technology**, to help students make **informed choices**, strengthen **clarity about transfer and career opportunities**, ensure they develop an **academic plan with predictable schedules**, **monitor their progress**, and **intervene when they go off track**.

- Embed **academic and non-academic supports** throughout students' programs to promote learning and persistence.

Essential Practices

4. Ensure that students are learning

- Establish program-level **learning outcomes** aligned with the requirements for success in employment and further education in a given field; apply results of learning outcomes assessment to improve the effectiveness of instruction across programs.
- Integrate **experiential/applied learning and other active/collaborative learning approaches** to enhance instruction and student success in courses across programs of study.
- Ensure incorporation of **effective teaching practice (*student engagement*)** throughout the pathways.

Essential Pathways Practices

- Organize programs into “meta-majors,” map programs to career-path jobs and transfer in majors
- Help all students explore career/academic options and develop a full-program plan by end of term 1
- Make schedules and monitor progress based on students’ plans
- Integrate academic support into college program gateways
- Integrate experiential learning into every program
- Build pathways into high schools, starting with dual enrollment

Essential Capacities

for Pathways Reforms

- **Leadership** demonstrating skills for managing and sustaining large-scale transformational change.

- Broad and authentic **engagement** of college faculty and staff—particularly advisors—in the design, implementation, evaluation, and ongoing improvement of pathways for students.

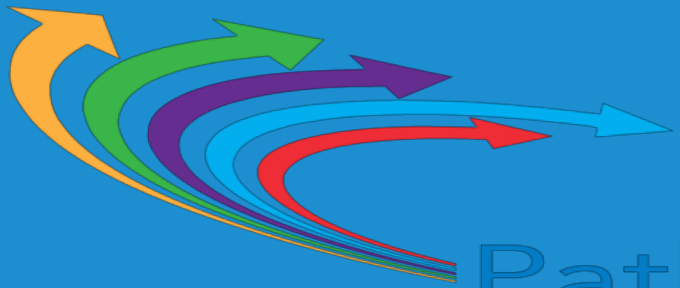
- **Institutional will and capacity to use data and evidence** to design academic and career pathways, monitor student progress, and implement needed improvements over time.

Essential Capacities

for Pathways Reforms

- **Technological tools and infrastructure** appropriate to support student progress through guided pathways.

- Commitment to the level of **strategically targeted professional development** that will be required to design and implement pathways at scale.



Guided Pathways Design and Implementation: EQUITY BY DESIGN

ACHIEVING EQUITY

- **Won't happen by itself.**

- **Is accomplished through change in the educational experience designed for students – as it incorporates the best of what we've learned about what matters.**

- **Requires getting well past disaggregation of data…to the difficult work of uncovering and the addressing sources of institutional racism and unconscious bias.**

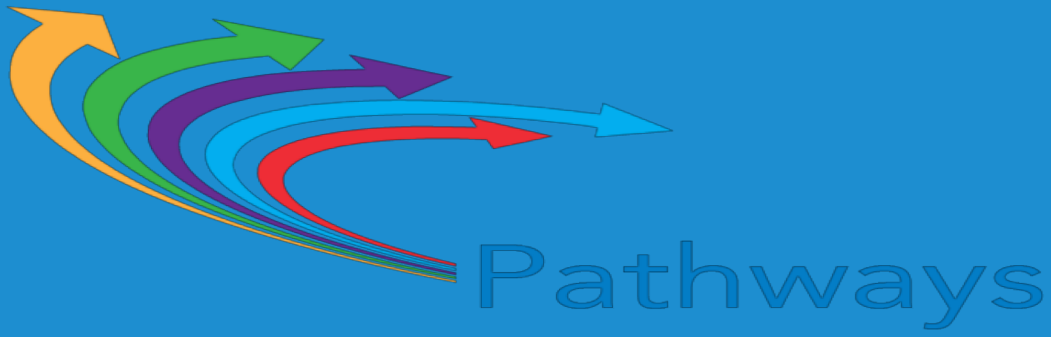
- **Equality**  **Equity**

ACHIEVING EQUITY

- **Examining program mix**
- **Reviewing processes through which we support students in exploring options and making choices.**
- **Integrating dramatically redesigned developmental education into pathways.**

ACHIEVING EQUITY

- Embedding academic support within courses
- Attending to financial stability/collective impact
- Strengthening culturally responsive teaching; addressing unconscious bias across campus community
- Diversifying faculty/staff/administration

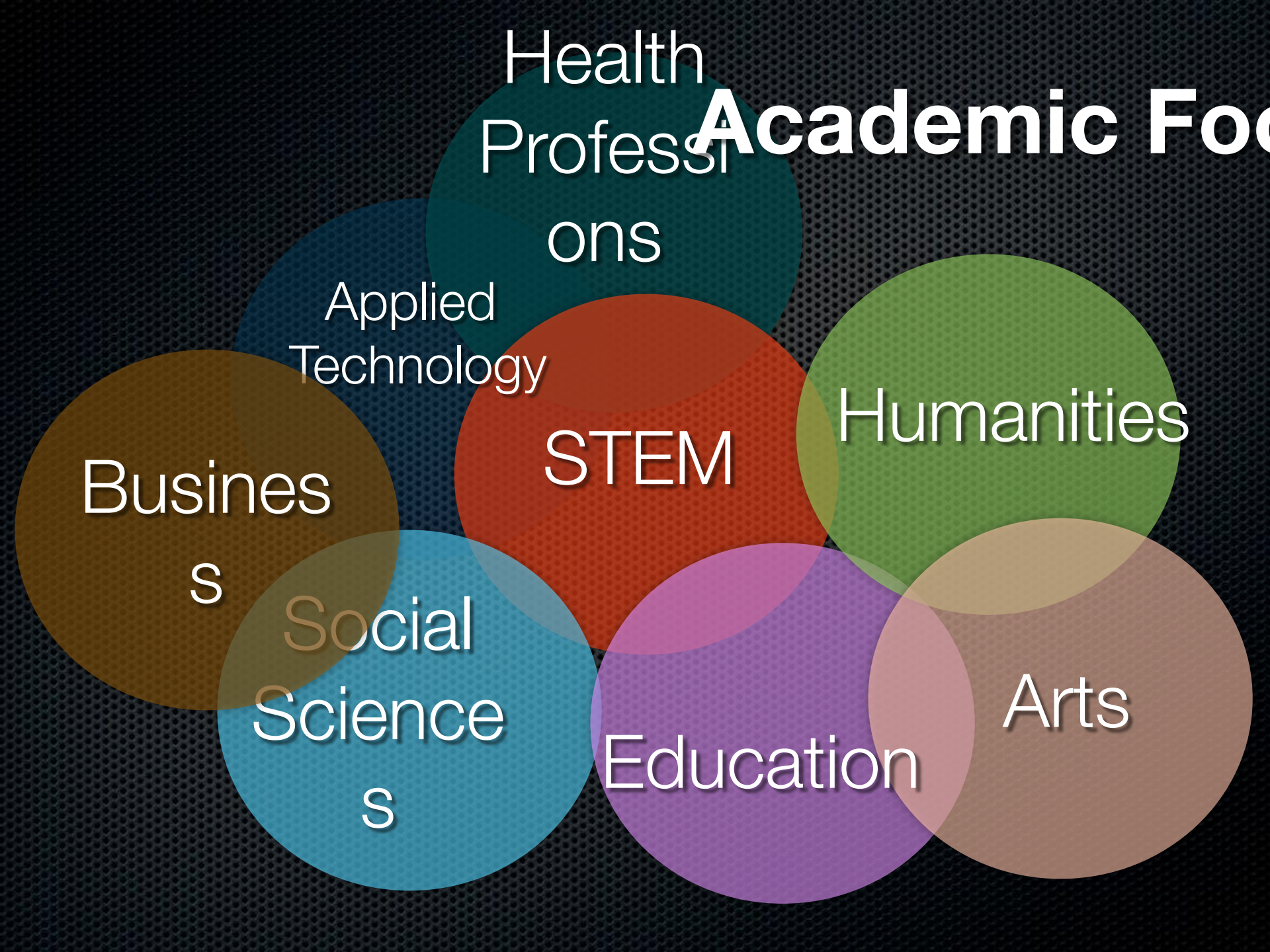


Guided Pathways Implementation: Early Institutional Outcomes

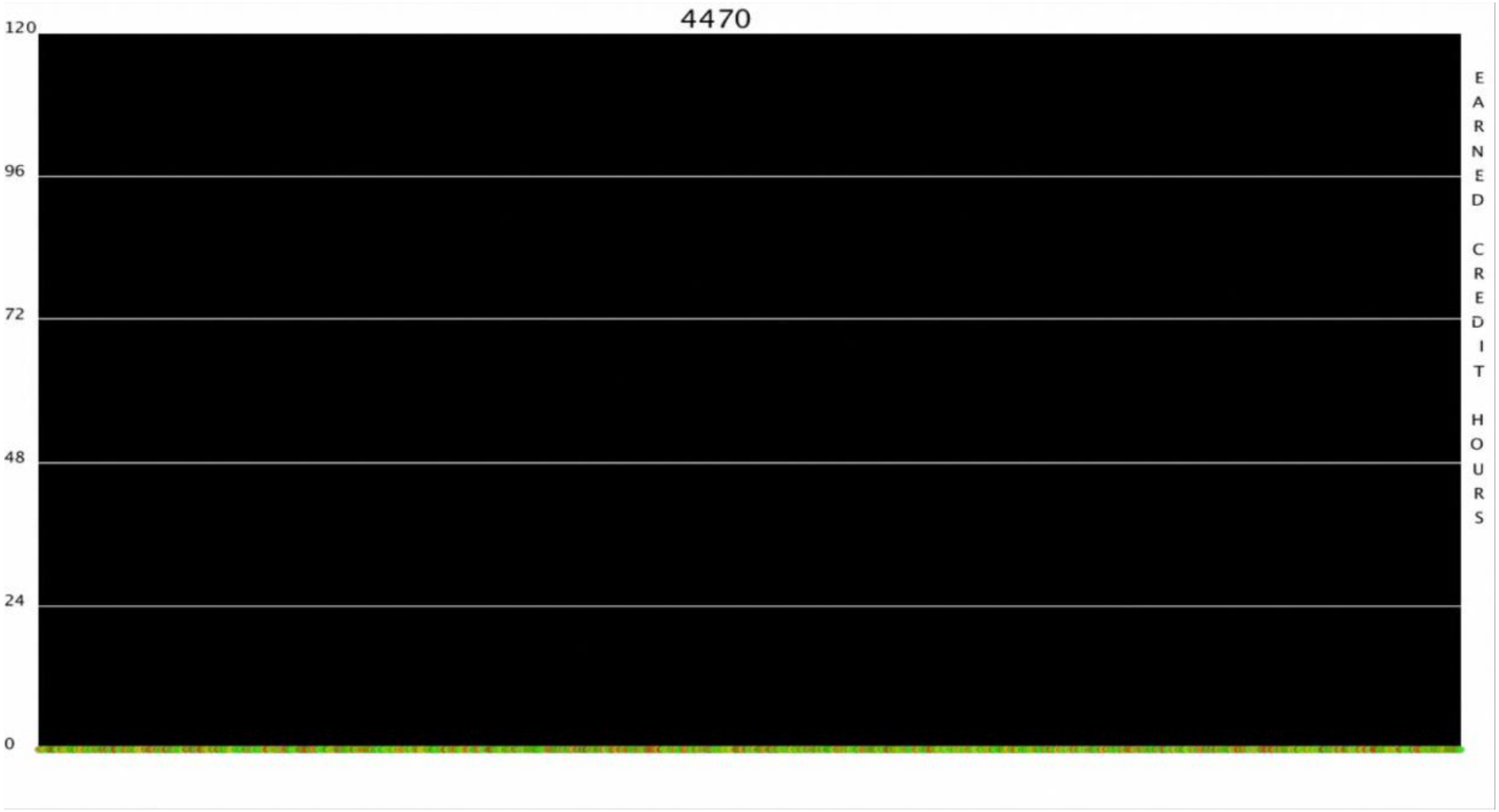
EARLY MOMENTUM KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Number of college credits earned in first term
- Number of college credits earned in first year
- Completion of college-level math and English courses in the student's first year
- Number of college credits earned in the program of study in first year
- Persistence from term 1 to term 2
- Equity in outcomes

Tennessee Community Colleges GPS

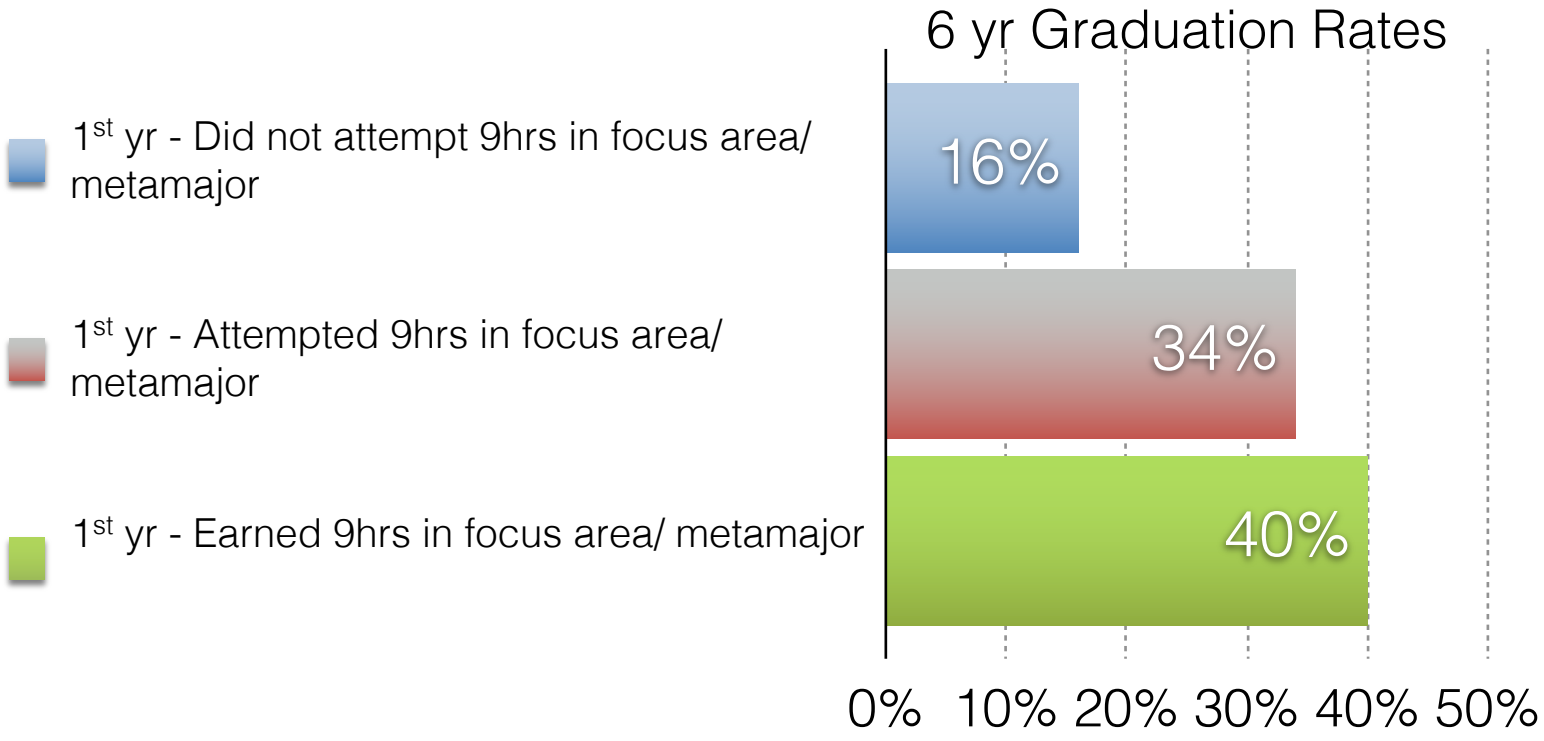

Academic Foc
Health Professions
Applied Technology
Business
STEM
Humanities
Social Sciences
Education
Arts

Undecided University Freshmen - Fall 2010

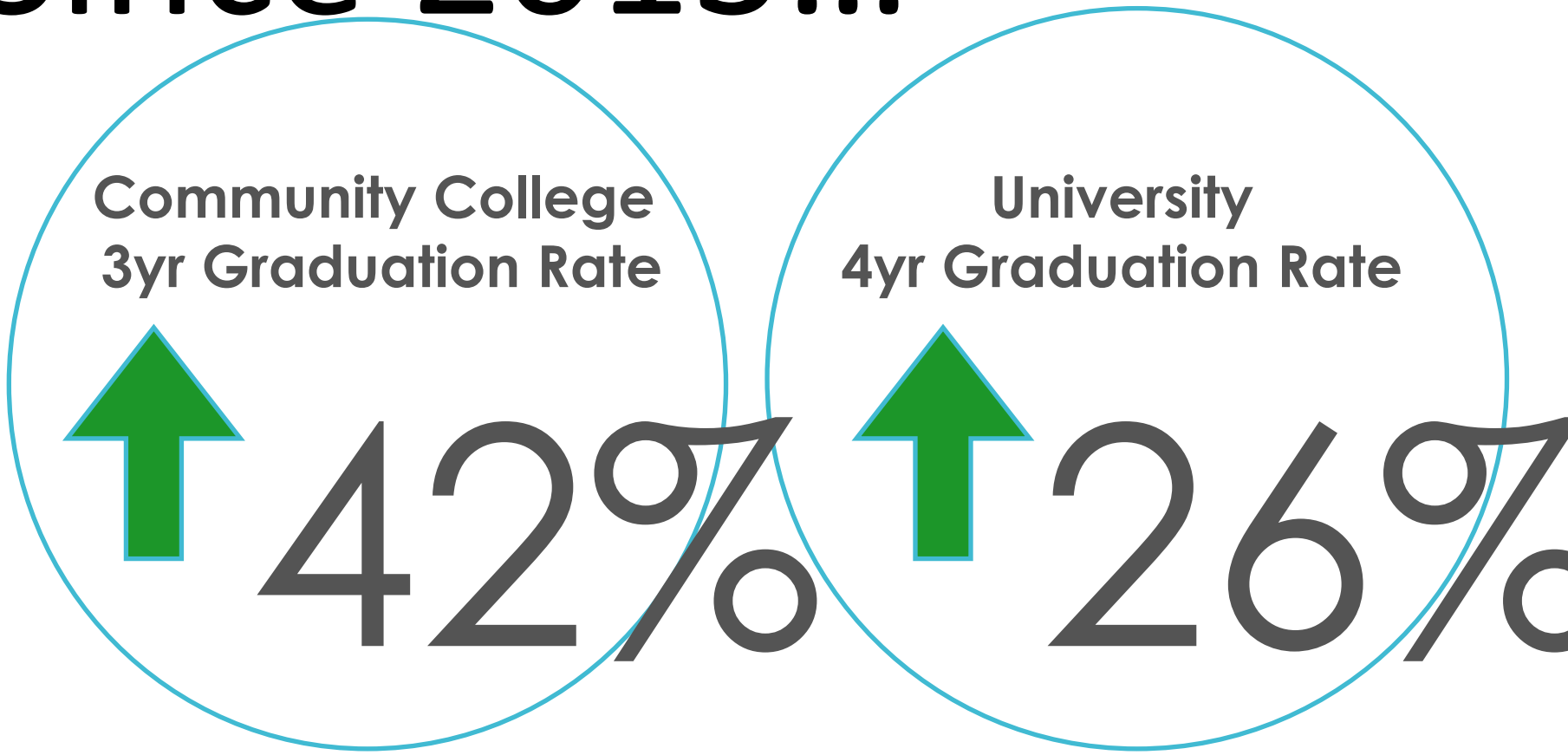


Now watch them decide a major…

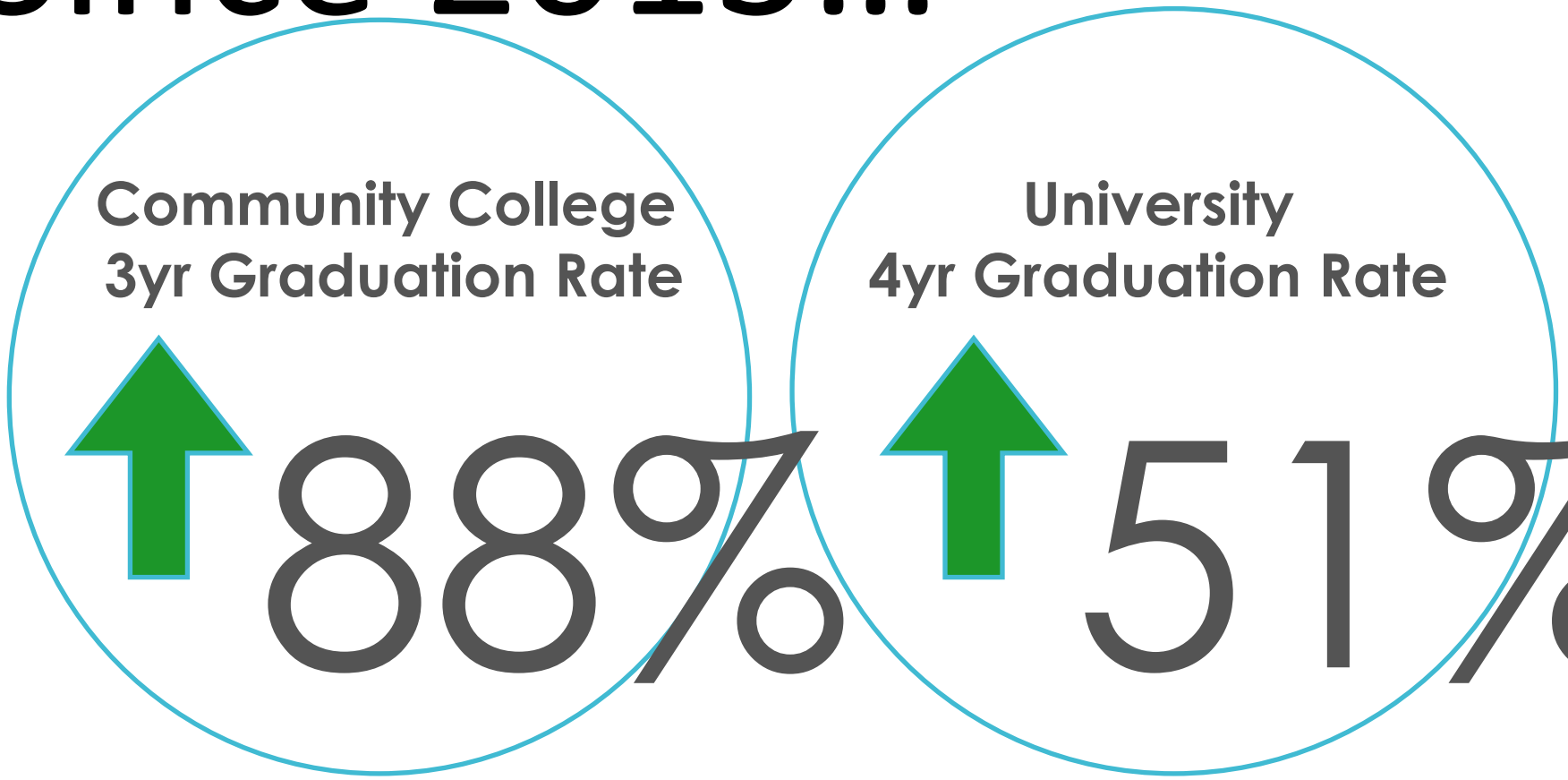
Community College Graduation Rates



Since 2013…


Community College
3yr Graduation Rate
42%
University
4yr Graduation Rate
26%

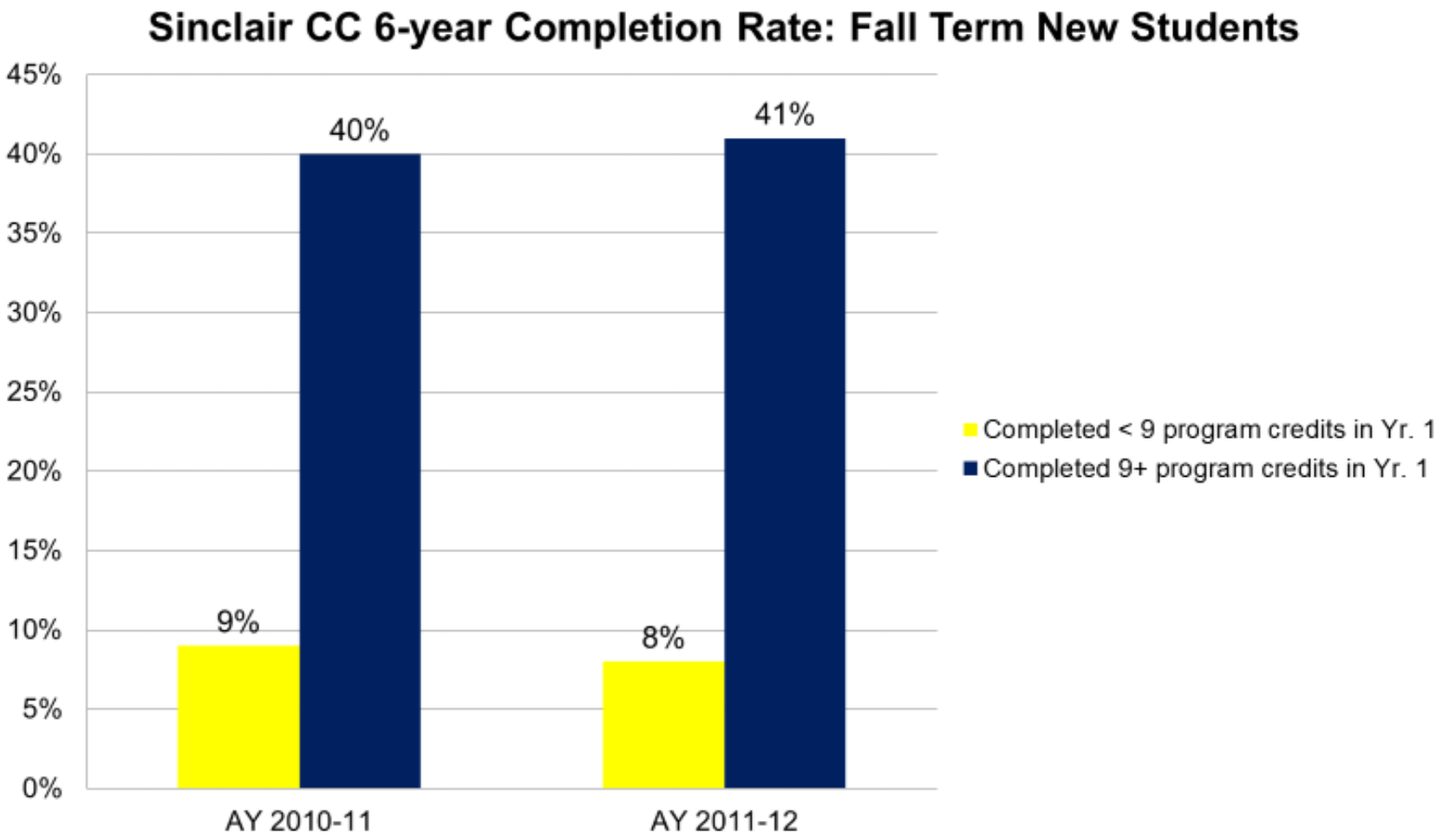
Since 2013…



ler-represented Minority Stude

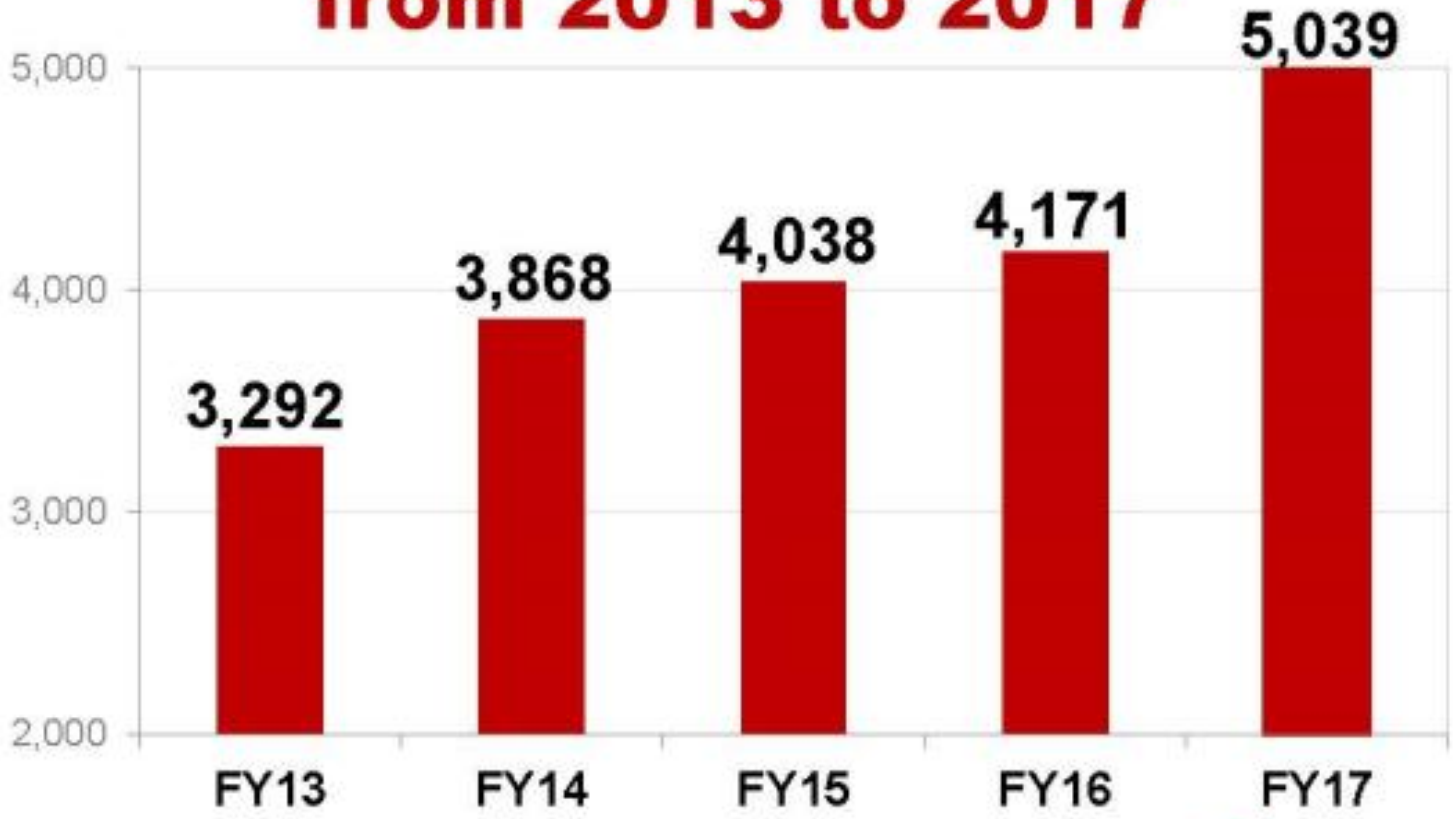
Sinclair Community College (Ohio)

Promising Evidence from Ohio



Source: Sinclair Community College.

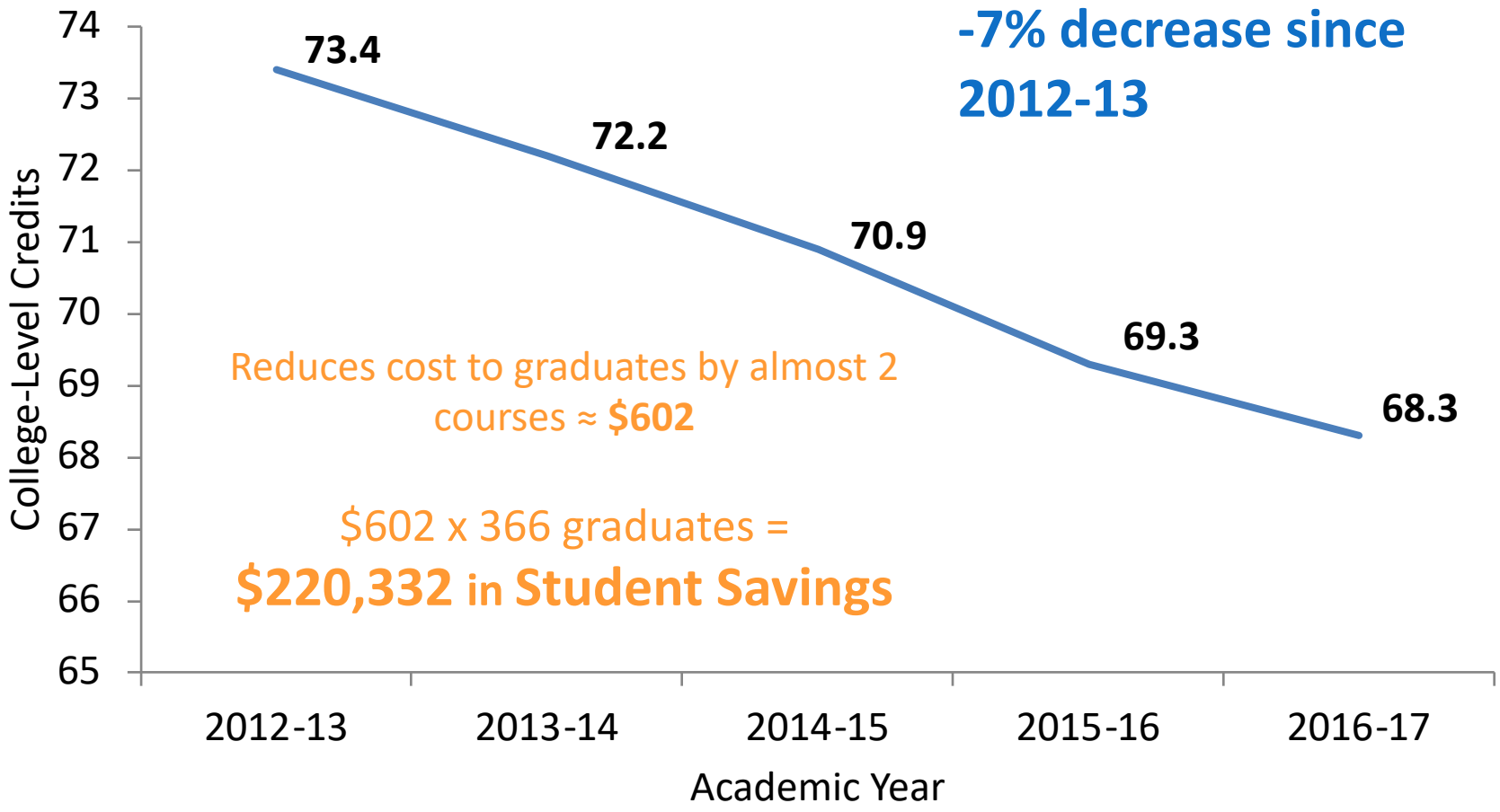
52% Increase In Degrees and Certificates Earned from 2013 to 2017



SINCLAIR COLLEGE

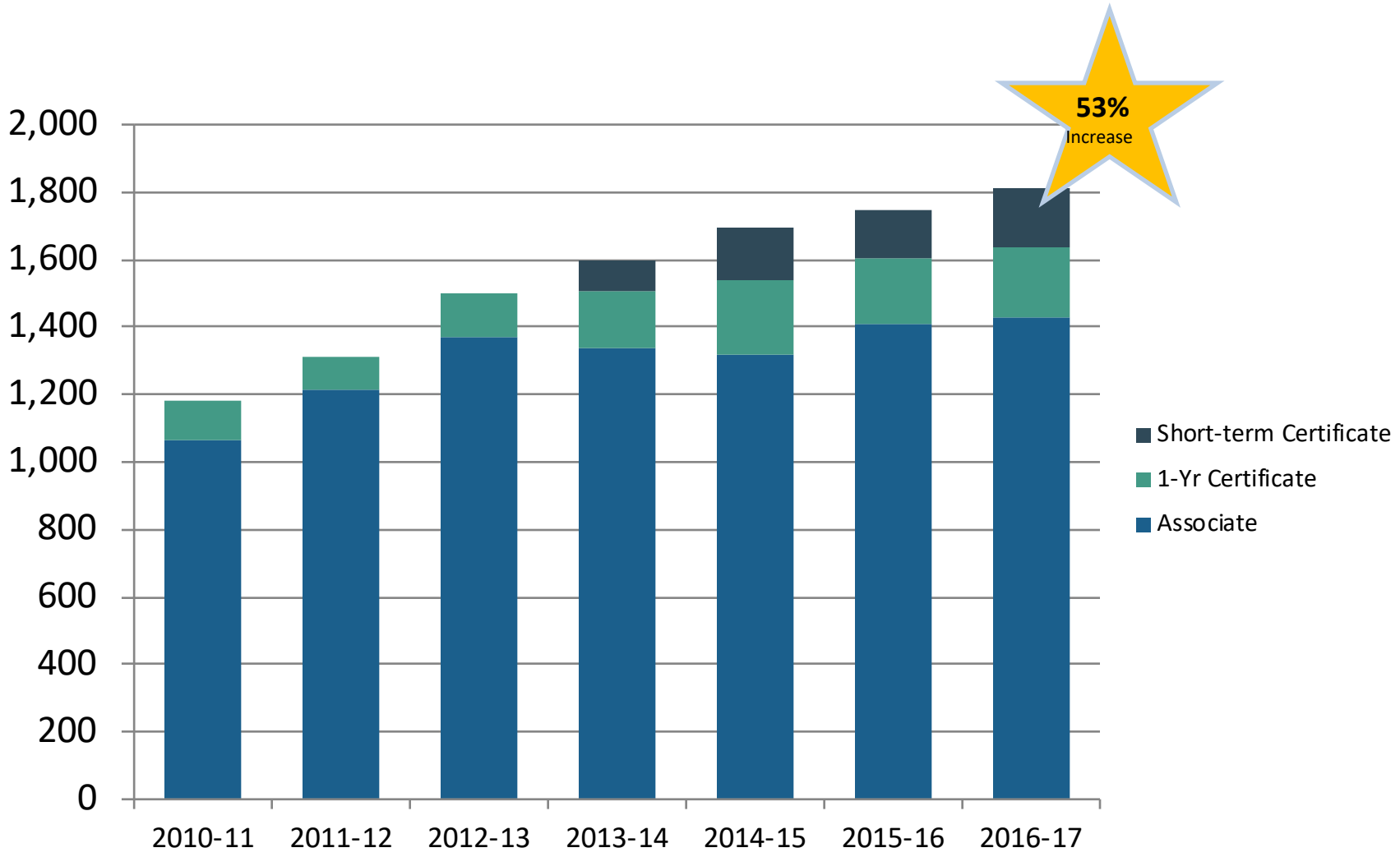
Lorain County Community College (Ohio)

Decreased Credits to Degree

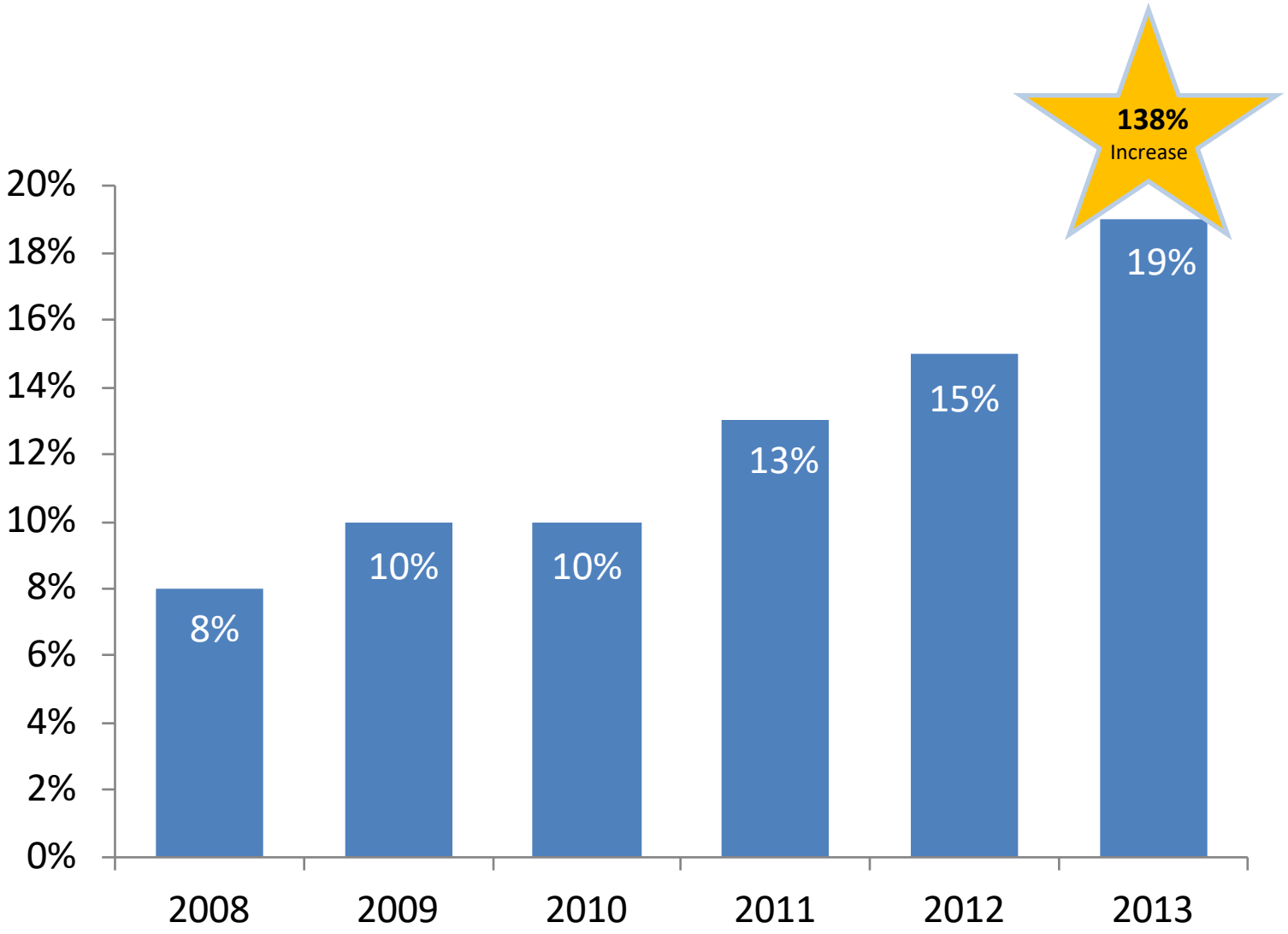


Note: First Associate degree completers within 4 years with 15 or fewer transfer-in credits

LCCC Conferred Highest Number of Degrees and Certificates in 2016-17 at 1,810 - 53% Increase

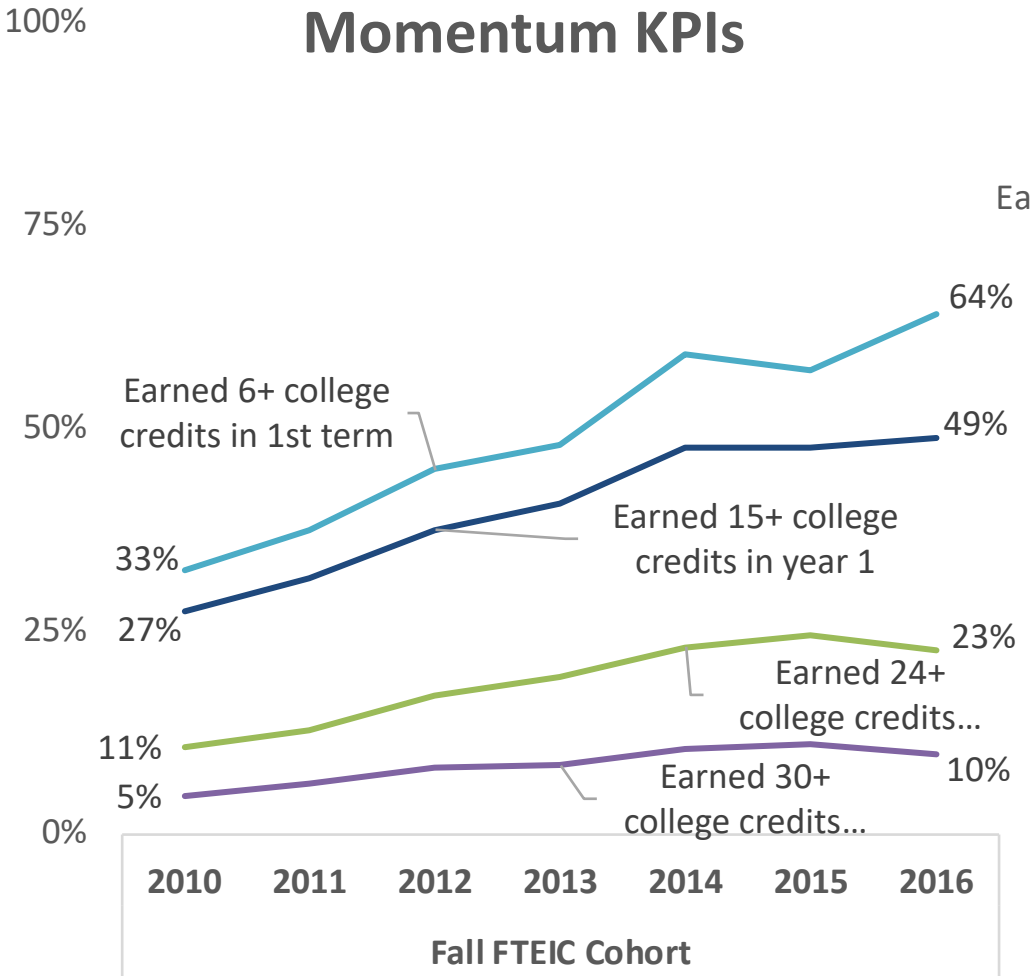


138% Increase
IPEDS First time, Full Time Graduation Rate
2008 to 2013 Cohorts (3 year grad rate)

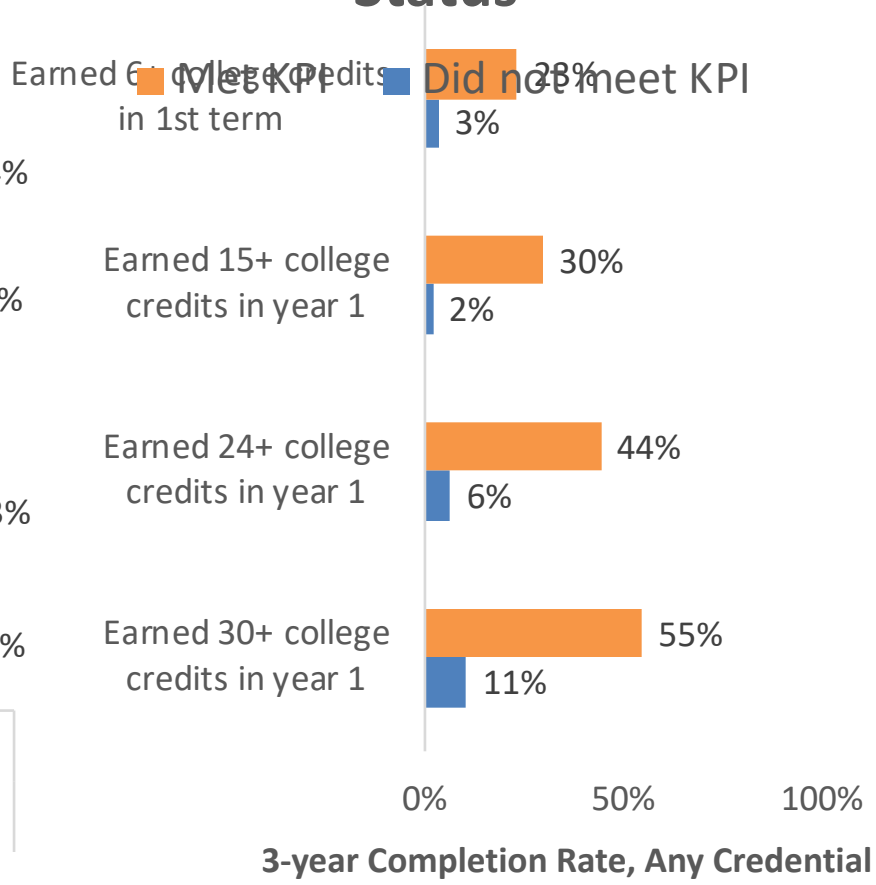


Alamo Colleges (Texas)

Alamo Colleges Credit Momentum KPIs

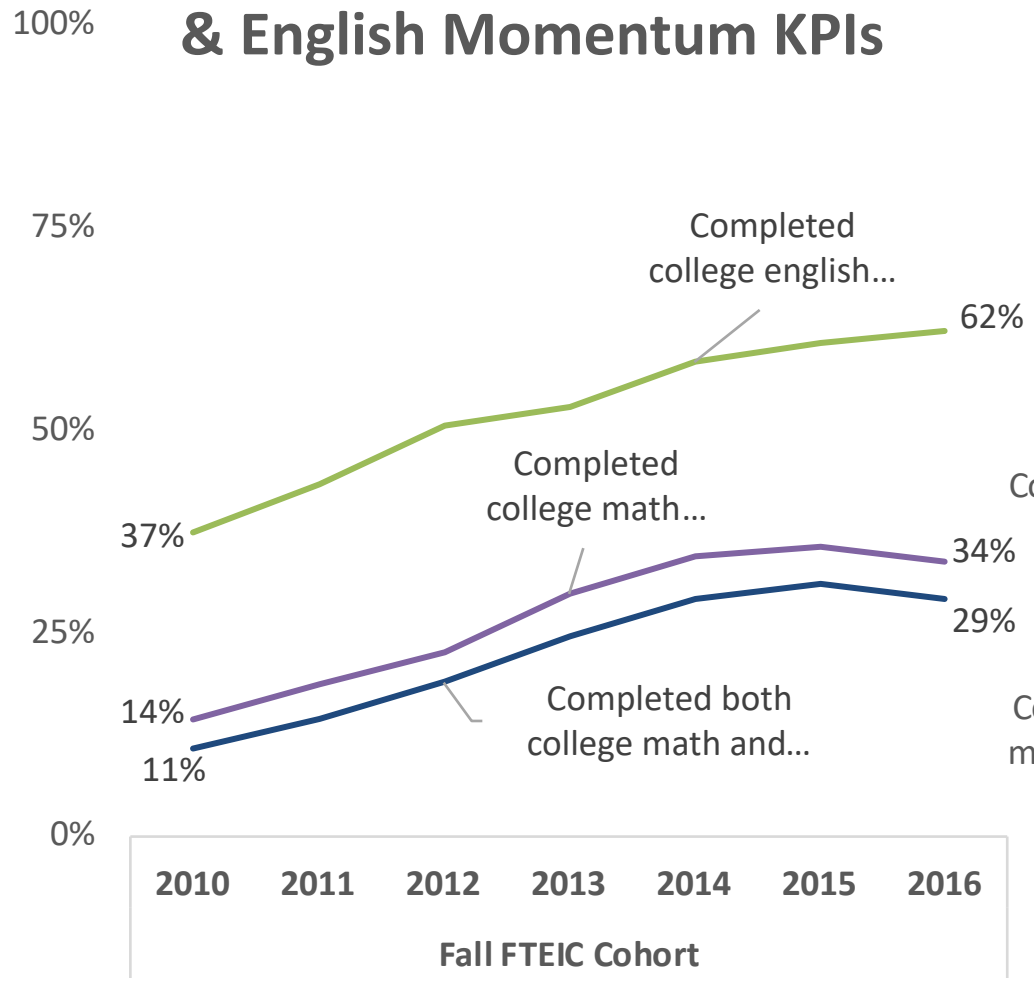


Alamo Colleges 3-year Completion Rates by KPI Status

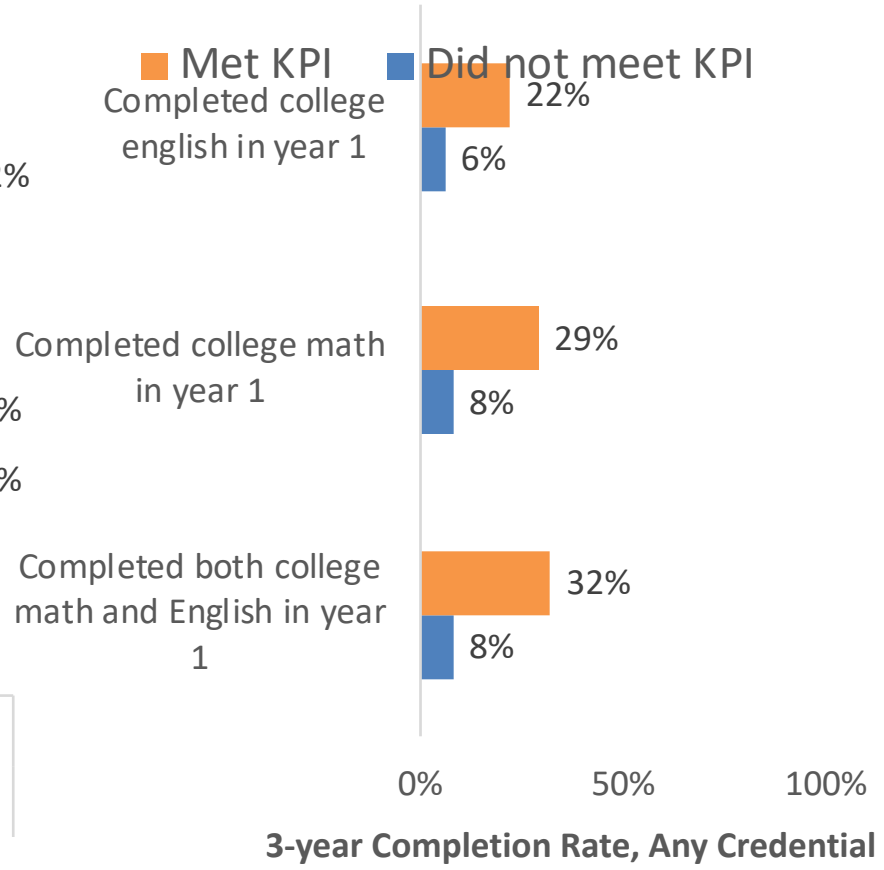


Note. Trends in Alamo Colleges Credit Momentum KPIs are shown in the left panel. The right panel shows completion rates for fall 2014 FTEIC entrants at Alamo Colleges who completed any college credential (from any institution) within three years, disaggregated by whether or not students met the particular KPI definition in their first year.

Alamo Colleges Gateway Math & English Momentum KPIs



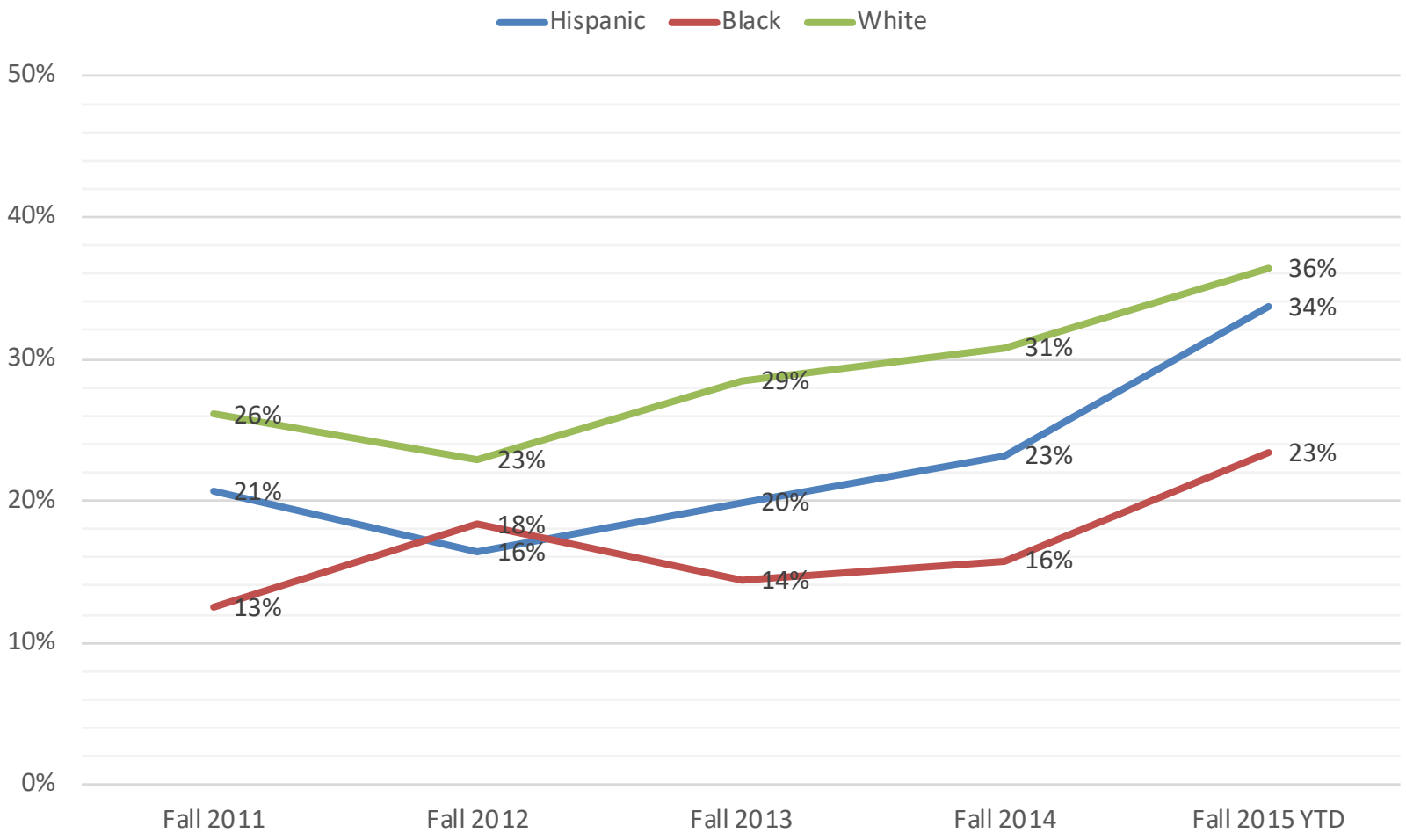
Alamo Colleges 3-year Completion Rates by KPI Status

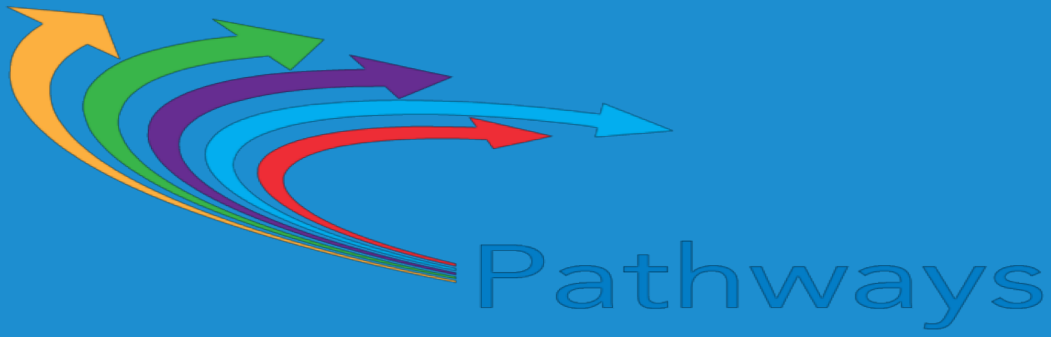


Note. Trends in Alamo Colleges Gateway Math and English Momentum KPIs are shown in the left panel. The right panel shows completion rates for fall 2014 FTEIC entrants at Alamo Colleges who completed any college credential (from any institution) within three years, disaggregated by whether or not students met the particular KPI definition in their first year.

Indian River State College (Florida)

Indian River State College (FL) Full Time FTIC 2-Year Graduation Rate by Ethnicity





Guided Pathways Design and Implementation:

So, what do we stop doing?

Re-Thinking the Way We Work

- Best practices should become institutional practices. *Don't keep doing what you know does not work.*
- "Pockets of excellence" do not serve students equitably. Every institutional touch point should be a touch of excellence. *Stop doing things that cannot be scaled effectively.*
- Pilots should be short-term and lead to institutional change. *Stop doing pilots when evidence supports change.*
- No change for change's sake. *Change should be intentional and based on what you know about students.*

Re-Thinking the Way We Work

- Too many meetings / committees are not examples of time well used. *Re-examine committee structures and agendas.*
- Siloed work is ineffective and inefficient. *Establish short-term, cross-functional work groups, each with a clear charge and an end date.*
- Collecting “shiny objects” through grant funding has become a normative pattern for community colleges. *Do not seek grants or develop new projects that do not further the limited number of strategic priorities identified for the college.*