

Vision 2030 Strategic Transformation Planning Workshop (May 2, 2025)

Summary of Major Themes and Insights

Introduction

The Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) Vision 2030 Strategic Transformation Planning Workshop brought together nearly 50 participants, including students, vice presidents, faculty, staff, and managers, to engage in a meaningful and forward-looking dialogue about the College's future direction. This session was particularly important given the extensive insights gathered throughout the 22 listening sessions conducted with internal and external stakeholders earlier this spring, as well as the demographic data indicating a declining and aging population within the College's service area.

Participants dedicated considerable time and attention to reviewing these listening session findings, carefully considering forecasted demographic shifts, and reflecting thoughtfully on firsthand insights shared by a panel of Tri-C students. The students' candid discussions about their personal challenges and hopes for the College provided valuable context and urgency to the conversation.

The workshop's central purpose was to begin identifying strategic directions for Tri-C that are responsive to evolving community needs, student expectations, and demographic realities. Participants approached these discussions with openness, sincerity, and a shared sense of responsibility, acknowledging both the complexities involved and the necessity of actionable, practical solutions. The following summary captures the key themes and insights from this important day of collective reflection and strategic thinking.

1. Commitment to Agility and Adaptability

A clear priority throughout the workshop was the College's need for greater agility and flexibility. Participants repeatedly stressed the urgency of adopting a more responsive posture to effectively address changing community demographics and evolving student expectations. They recognized that institutional resilience and readiness for continuous change must become core strengths, emphasizing that Tri-C must embody **"flexibility, be nimble,"** and clearly articulate **"actionable items—not just grand visions."** Participants highlighted the necessity for a profound **"mindset change for the new strategies to be**

successful,” stressing that the institution “must remain responsive to shifting student and community needs.”

2. Centering the Student Experience

Placing students at the heart of strategic decisions emerged as a critical imperative. Participants articulated that every initiative must explicitly enhance student success and well-being, ensuring that services are easily accessible and empathetically delivered. It was underscored that strategies should aim to “make sure all students can easily get the help they need to succeed,” advocating specifically for “accessible support services at all levels.” Participants reinforced that addressing foundational needs is non-negotiable: “We must include meeting basic needs as a priority, not an afterthought,” and highlighted the necessity of facing challenging truths directly, stating, “We need to be able to discuss the uncomfortable realities students face.”

3. Holistic and Personalized Student Support

Participants strongly endorsed broadening support frameworks to holistically address non-academic barriers faced by students. The concept of a comprehensive care model—“Tri-C Cares”—gained significant support, with advocates pointing out that “personalized care models must include housing and childcare.” The rationale for this holistic approach was articulated clearly: “Student success is about more than academics—it’s about eliminating barriers.” This recognition led to affirmations that “holistic support is critical; it’s not optional anymore,” and practical suggestions such as “mandatory check-ins keep students supported and engaged from start to finish.”

4. Strengthening Community and Employer Relationships

Participants expressed enthusiasm about deepening relationships with local employers and community organizations. A strategic focus emerged around creating explicit, meaningful partnerships ensuring graduates find stable, local employment opportunities. They advocated for the necessity to “redefine higher education’s role and how it engages in the community,” and viewed concrete commitments such as an “employer pledge to hire Tri-C graduates” as genuinely transformative. The importance of “authentic, reciprocal partnerships” was a consistent theme, reflecting the need to strengthen the community integration of Tri-C. As one group summarized effectively, “We meet students where they are—on campuses and in the community—through employer partnerships.”

5. Realistic Innovation and Practical Implementation

A central insight was finding the appropriate balance between aspiration and practicality. Participants acknowledged the necessity of ambitious strategies but insisted that

innovation must be realistic, manageable, and effectively operationalized. There was strong agreement around simplicity, with one participant succinctly stating, “We need to keep it simple; overly complicated strategies fail.” This pragmatic approach advocated clearly for a “balance [of] convenience with traditional proven methods,” ensuring that innovations were grounded and manageable. Reflecting a realistic view of implementation, participants remarked, “Our strategies need to be affordable and realistic, not just ambitious,” and emphasized that “innovative thinking needs to be clear and straightforward so staff feel empowered to act.”

6. Building Stackable, Lifelong Learning Pathways

Given the demographic shifts towards an aging population and declining youth enrollment, participants urged investment in flexible educational models such as stackable credentials and lifelong learning programs. Participants noted, “We must support lifelong learners through flexible, stackable credentials,” recognizing these programs’ vital role in responding effectively to shifting economic and employment realities. There was clear consensus that “clear pathways to employment are critical for every learning initiative.” Participants also connected stackable credentials directly to employment, stating, “Stackable credentials align closely with changing employment demands,” and emphasized longevity and relevance, noting, “Lifelong learning programs will make Tri-C more resilient and relevant.”

7. Proactive and Comprehensive Communication

Throughout the discussions, participants emphasized communication as essential to successful strategic transformation. Clear, consistent, and proactive messaging across the institution was viewed as fundamental to fostering alignment, reducing uncertainty, and ensuring broad understanding of transformation initiatives. Participants strongly affirmed that “effective communication will ensure alignment around new initiatives,” highlighting transparency as crucial, stating, “Transparency in how we communicate change is critical to build trust.” Recognizing the complexities and inevitable discomfort of change, one group noted, “Clear messaging will help us navigate discomfort and uncertainty,” urging the need to reinforce messages continually: “We must articulate the vision repeatedly—communication must be continuous, not episodic.”

Conclusion

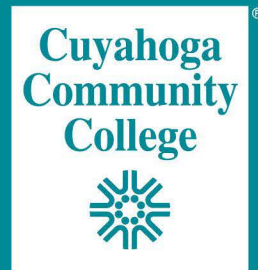
The Tri-C Vision 2030 Strategic Transformation Planning Workshop offered a thoughtful, candid exploration of the future directions essential to advancing Tri-C’s mission in alignment with the evolving realities of the community it serves. Participants brought

valuable perspectives and commitment to an open, rigorous discussion that will significantly shape the College’s approach in the years ahead.

The insights from this meeting will serve as a foundational element in crafting strategic initiatives that meaningfully address stakeholder priorities, demographic trends, and the lived experiences of students. Looking forward, the intention is to reconvene this group for a half-day session at the beginning of Fall Semester 2025, providing participants an opportunity to review a draft summary of strategies developed in response to this workshop’s rich dialogue, extensive stakeholder feedback, detailed institutional data, and college leadership input. This next step underscores the College’s commitment to an inclusive, evidence-informed, and purposeful transformation.

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For any questions regarding these listening sessions or this document, please reach out to [Gregory Stoup](#), Vice President of Institutional Progress and Effectiveness.



STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION
PLAN
2025 - 2030

Vision 2030 Strategic Transformation Plan Listening Sessions

Summary of Findings

Overview of Listening Sessions

- A total of 22 facilitated sessions in 7 weeks
- Over 600 participants
- Over 8,000 artifacts collected (300+ pages)



5 Themes + 1

1. Embracing Transformational Change and Agility
2. Holistic Belonging and Student Support
3. Innovative, Future-Ready Learning Models
4. Authentic Partnerships and Community Impact
5. Empowered Culture; Clear Communication; Bold Leadership
6. Lifelong Educational Value and Skills-based Design

Theme 1 – Embracing Transformational Change and Agility

Manager: *“It’s hard to move the entire college as fast as the world is asking us to move – but we have to figure that out.”*

Community Partner: *“If you can’t launch a new program in six months, we’ll go somewhere else.”*

Faculty: *“We should build flexible and adaptable programming that responds to workforce demands and includes skills certification.”*

Theme 2 – Holistic Belonging and Student Support

Trustee: *"We need to know where we stand—and where we're going—on student equity"*

Faculty:

"Without holistic support, academic progress suffers dramatically."

Community Partner:

"Tri-C graduates who have been supported holistically are significantly more engaged in their communities and workplaces"

Student:

"We learn best in environments where we feel supported personally and academically."

Theme 3 – Innovative, Future-Ready Learning Models

Faculty/Staff:

"We must be quicker to implement ideas that meet the real-world needs of our students"

Student:

"We need digital tools and administrative structures that reflect how quickly the world moves. Right now, it feels like the institution is always playing catch-up."

Employer:

"We need you to work at our speed."

"Skills matter. Many students come to Tri-C to 'upskill.' Let's make skills explicit"

Community Partner:

"Certifications, micro-credentials, and project portfolios give our graduates a competitive edge"

Theme 4 – Authentic Partnerships and Community Impact

Manager: *"Strategic community partnerships serve as critical feedback mechanisms, ensuring our educational offerings match regional economic and workforce development needs."*

External Stakeholders:

"Let's lead not with marketing, but with action."

"Partnerships with Tri-C aren't just beneficial—they're essential. They allow us to directly influence educational programs, ensuring graduates possess the exact skills we need."

Student:

"We want direct engagement with employers while at Tri-C; not having to scour the job posts on our own after we graduate"



Theme 5 – Empowered Culture; Clear Communication; Bold Leadership

Community Partner:

“People need to see a clear direction—and their place in the Tri-C vision”

Faculty:

“Swift curricular adjustments aren’t optional; they're essential to keep pace with technological and economic changes.”

Employer:

“Incremental change won’t cut it anymore. We need Tri-C to keep pace with industry”

Manager:

“We need systems of communication that actually connect people, not just push information”

Crosscutting Theme - Lifelong Educational Value and Skills-based Design

"Education shouldn't end with a degree—it should grow with the student."

"We need to embed skills—real ones—that they can use right away, even if they're not chasing a degree"

"Lifelong learning is a community asset, and Tri-C must be its steward."

"We need courses that measure our skills in real, measurable ways."

Strategic Tension – Tradition vs. Innovation

**Navigating the balance
between preserving
institutional traditions and
embracing necessary
innovation**



*Please see companion report on
Vision 2030 website:*

**“Potential Challenges Associated
with Listening Session Themes”**

Challenge Level Associated with Each Theme

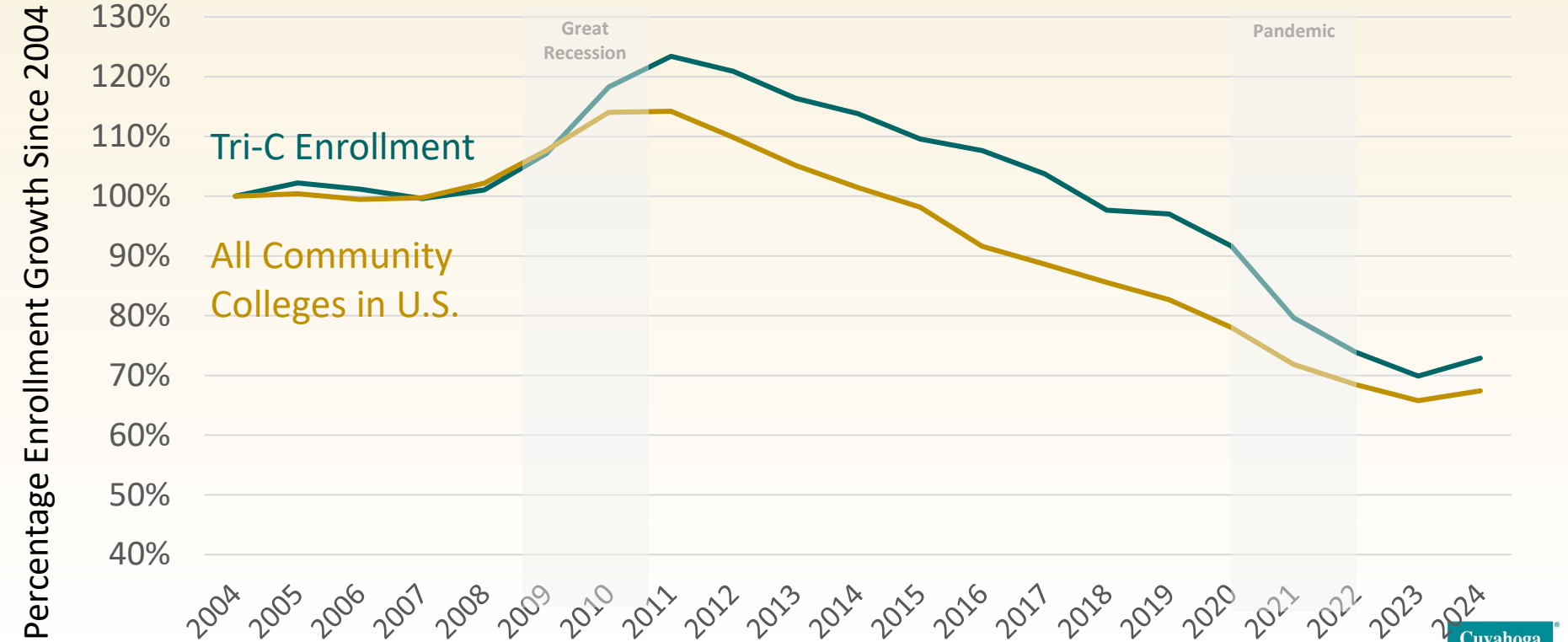
<u>Strategic Theme</u>	<u>Average Score</u>	<u>Anticipated Challenge Level</u>
Transformational Change and Agility	7.0	Significant
Holistic Belonging and Student Success	7.25	Significant
Innovative, Future-Ready Learning Models	6.25	Moderate-to-Significant
Authentic Partnerships and Community Impact	4.75	Moderate
Empowered Culture, Clear Communication, Bold Leadership	7.25	Significant
Crosscutting Theme: Lifelong Educational Value and Skills-Based Design	6.5	Moderate-to-Significant

* Scores derived by an AI model & rubric derived from listening session feedback.

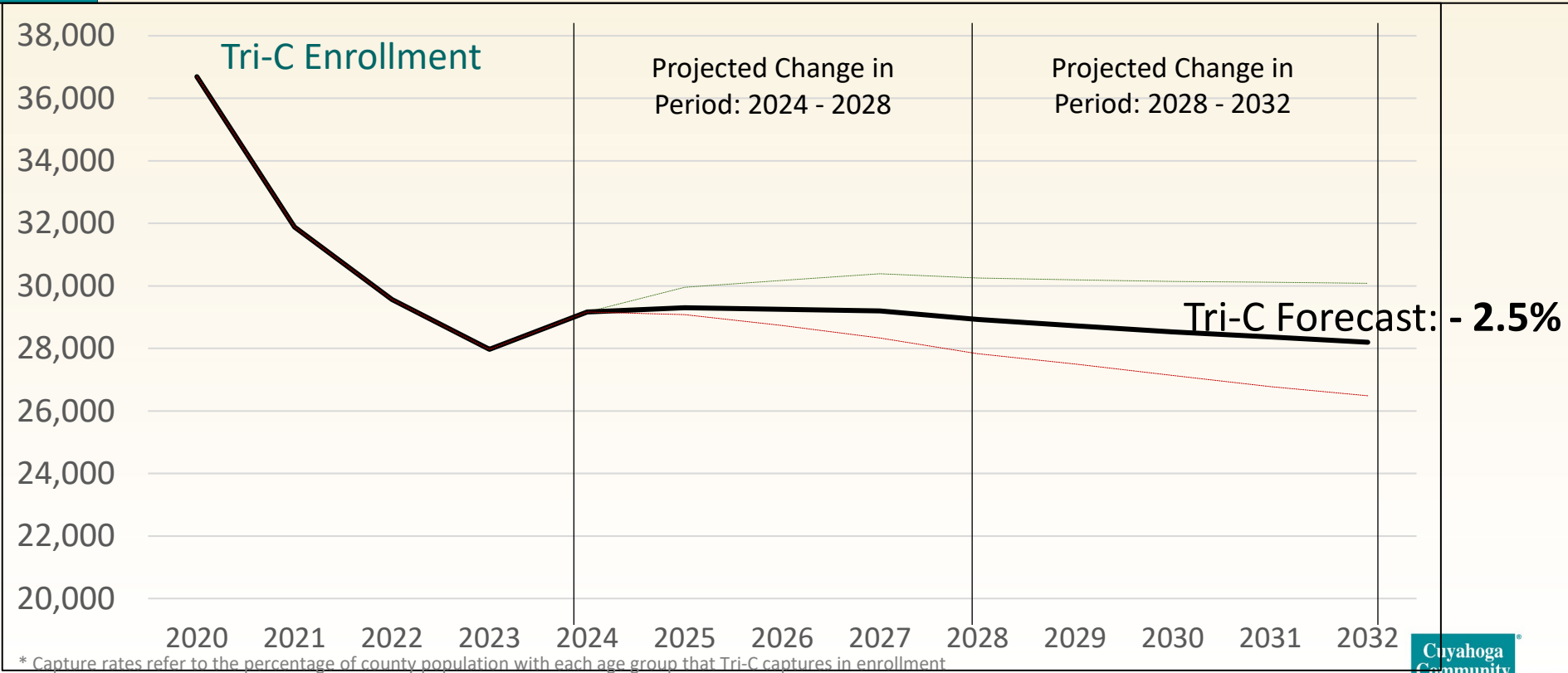
Data Snapshot

Forecast data: the challenges and opportunities ahead

Percentage Growth of Enrollment for Tri-C and the Nation's CCs



Enrollment Projections Across our Next Two Levy Cycles



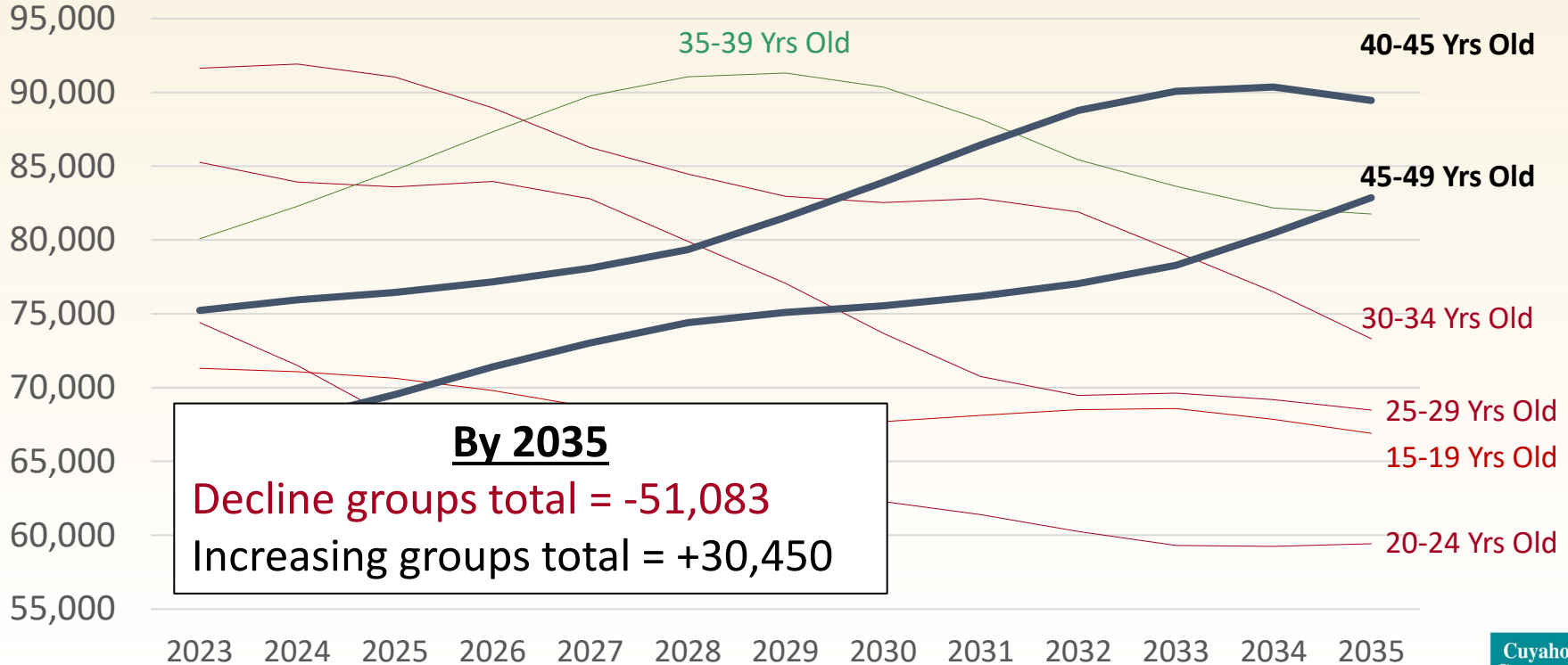
* Capture rates refer to the percentage of county population with each age group that Tri-C captures in enrollment

Cuyahoga County Population Forecasts by Age Group

Rapid decline

Variable

Steady increase



Credit Load by Age Group

Student Credit Load First Semester	Less than 18 yrs	18-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-29 yrs	30-39 yrs	40+ yrs	Total
Less than 6 Credits	8%	17%	37%	35%	42%	56%	26%
6 - 11 Credits	45%	35%	35%	40%	33%	21%	35%
12 -15 Credits	40%	43%	25%	25%	25%	23%	35%
16+ Credits	7%	5%	3%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Only 1 Course	4%	12%	24%	23%	26%	48%	18%

Retention and Completion by Credit Load

Student Credit Load First Semester	Student Count	Student Percent	Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate	Six Year Completion Rate
Less than 6 Credits	883	26%	53%	3%
6 - 11 Credits	1172	35%	66%	13%
12 -15 Credits	1157	35%	80%	37%
16+ Credits	128	4%	91%	62%
Only 1 Course	603	18%	43%	2%

* The "Only 1 Course" population is a subset of the "Less than 6 credits" category which is why the individual row percentages don't sum to 100%

Historical and Projected Trends in Industry Employment

