CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE
2018 STRATEGIC VISION OUTCOMES REPORT
In 2017 Arizona’s community colleges embraced a Strategic Vision for 2030, which focuses college efforts around three major goals: expanding access to postsecondary credentials; increasing transfer and completion of associate degrees and certificates; and improving alignment between college programs and workforce needs.

The Strategic Vision for 2030 builds upon the colleges’ previous long-term plan, published in 2011, and outlines how Arizona’s ten community college districts will continue to improve student outcomes, as well as how the districts contribute to Arizona’s broader economic and educational goals. In particular, the Strategic Vision for 2030 creates a framework for reaching the Achieve60AZ goal that by 2030, 60% of the Arizona working-age population will hold a postsecondary credential.

A major function of the Strategic Vision for 2030 is the collection, analysis, and publication of data pertaining to 33 short-term, mid-range, long-term, and follow-up metrics. Although this report contains several metrics that were new in 2017 or 2018, most have been in place for years, making it possible to evaluate trends in student progress and outcomes.

Statewide and district-level data will continue to be used to guide improvement efforts at community colleges across the state. Statewide data will also be shared with the Arizona Board of Regents, the Arizona Department of Education, and Arizona’s workforce development and business communities in order to assist in the improvement of educational and economic pathways.

The Strategic Vision for 2030, as well as a Technical Guide that provides detailed definitions of each metric, can be found online at: www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org.
METRICS AND COHORTS

METRICS

The 2018 Strategic Vision Outcomes Report presents data related to 33 short-term, mid-range, long-term, and follow-up metrics. These data identify areas of strength, as well as places where Central Arizona College (CAC) will need to focus its efforts in order to expand access, increase transfer and completion, and improve alignment with workforce needs.

**Short-term metrics** correspond to enrollment rates, cost measures, and training for high-demand occupations.

**Mid-range metrics** examine student persistence and success in the first two years of college.

**Long-term metrics** pertain to transfer and completion rates.

**Follow-up metrics** examine student success after departing the community college and may be affected by economic forces, as well as the actions of Arizona universities.

COHORTS

The 2018 Strategic Vision Outcomes Report tracks several cohorts of students.

**2015 and 2011 New Student Cohorts** are used to examine student persistence and success after two and six years, respectively.

**2015 and 2011 Credential-Seeking Sub-Cohorts**, defined as cohort members who earned at least 12 credits by the end of their second year, are used for some retention, transfer, and completion measures. Credential-seeking sub-cohorts provide a more accurate gauge of student success, as they take into account learners’ diverse education and training goals.

**2014-15 Occupational Cohort**, comprised of students who exited CAC in 2014-15 after completing a specified number of credits in an occupational pathway, is used in follow-up metrics related to wage growth and earning industry-recognized credentials.
Total annual enrollment at CAC has declined from its high in 2010-11, and full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment has diminished commensurately. This enrollment decline mirrors statewide and national trends and reflects a greater number of students enrolling in universities and/or remaining in the workforce.

At CAC, annual enrollment in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and/or General Educational Development (GED) courses was 621 in 2016-17. Total annual enrollment of high school learners in dual credit courses remained steady at 362 in 2016-17. These programs are essential in expanding access to Arizona’s community colleges.
The percentage of CAC students who are members of an underserved racial/ethnic group is substantially higher than the percentage of the Pinal County population belonging to an underserved minority group (42%).¹ CAC enrolls fewer adult learners but more Pell recipients than statewide averages (35% and 29%, respectively).

At CAC, only 36% of instruction in 2016-17 occurred in traditional semester-length courses held on campus Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm. Extending access to many diverse populations, 64% of all student credit hours were earned online, at night or on the weekends, or at skills centers, American Indian reservations, or other locales.
CAC enrolls 27% of recent high school graduates. This rate is lower than the statewide number (32%) but higher than the national average (24%).² CAC will continue to work with other community colleges and the Arizona Board of Regents to improve college-going across the state.

At roughly $5,100 per year, the net price of attending CAC is just 10% of the Pinal County median household income. This rate is substantially lower than Arizona’s public universities (25-32%),³ making CAC an excellent and affordable option for postsecondary education and training.
After six years, 33% of developmental English or reading learners in CAC’s 2011 New Student Cohort successfully completed a college-level course in English, and 24% of developmental math learners in the same cohort completed a college-level math course. These success after developmental education rates are comparable to statewide and national averages.4

Over two years, 68% of student credit hours attempted in developmental English or reading by CAC’s 2015 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). In that same time period, 49% of student credit hours attempted in developmental math by the same cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).
Over two years, 74% of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by CAC’s 2015 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). This rate has been consistent over the past seven years.

In 2016-17, between 49% and 78% of student credit hours attempted in College Algebra, English Composition I and II, and Speech were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). The rates at which CAC students successfully complete these first college-level courses mirrors statewide and national averages. 

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**Metric 13: College-Level Course Success Rate**

- Over two years, 74% of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by CAC’s 2015 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). This rate has been consistent over the past seven years.

**Metric 14: Percent of First College-Level Math and English Credit Hours Completed**

- In 2016-17, between 49% and 78% of student credit hours attempted in College Algebra, English Composition I and II, and Speech were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass). The rates at which CAC students successfully complete these first college-level courses mirrors statewide and national averages.
By the end of their second year, 53% of part-time learners in CAC’s 2015 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 24 credits, and 43% of full-time learners in the same cohort had completed 42 credits. These rates are notable, as research has linked attainment of credit thresholds to higher persistence and completion rates.⁶

Ninety-two percent of CAC’s 2015 Credential-Seeking Cohort (excluding those who transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted to spring 2016, and 70% of them returned the following fall. CAC’s retention rates are substantially higher than the 54%⁷ reported as a national comparison, in part because the national figure is not limited to credential-seekers.
Between 2011 and 2017, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by CAC increased by 17% to 1,140, despite declining enrollments. Of the 2017 total, 52% were degrees and 48% were certificates. These data reflect a concerted effort by CAC to increase the number of learners earning postsecondary credentials.

After six years, 28% of CAC’s 2011 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate. CAC’s graduation rate is somewhat higher than the most recent national comparison (23%),² in part because the national number is not limited to credential-seekers.
In 2016-17, CAC awarded 342 Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) certificates, an increase from 2015-16. The AGEC is comprised of 35-37 credit hours of coursework that, upon completion, transfer to all public colleges and universities in the state and fulfill lower division, general education requirements.

At CAC, 8% of the 2011 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed an AGEC within 6 years, a 2% increase from the 2005 Cohort. Increasing the AGEC completion rate—a key priority for the state’s community colleges—will not only ease transfer to Arizona’s public universities but also help students earn bachelor’s degrees in less time and with fewer excess credits.\(^8\)
Between 2010 and 2017, the number of students transferring from CAC to an in-state, public university increased by 39% to 297, despite declining enrollments. In addition, the percentage of transfers who earned an AGEC and/or degree prior to transferring has increased, indicating that the transfer process is becoming more efficient and cost effective.

At CAC, transfer rates to Arizona universities among ASSIST Transfer Behavior Cohorts have been variable. However, the overall transfer rate (the percent of learners in credential-seeking cohorts who transfer to any four-year college or university within 6 years) has remained steady at 30%. The latter rate is higher than the most recent national average (25%).

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Metrics 25 and 26: Transfer Rates

Metrics 23 and 24: In-State Transfers and Percent with AGEC and/or Degree
Eighty-two percent of learners in CAC’s 2011 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within 6 years. Because community college learners enter college with diverse education and training goals, and because they often attend part-time and/or earn credits from more than one institution, several national accountability initiatives—including the Student Achievement Measure—have broadened the definition of a successful outcome to include earning a degree or certificate, transferring to another two- or four-year college or university, or continued enrollment. Nationally, 57% of all community college students (62% of full-timers and 55% of part-timers) achieve one of these successful outcomes within 6 years.¹⁰
Sixty-eight percent of all 2013-14 full-time transfers from CAC to in-state, public universities earned a bachelor’s degree within four years. This rate has increased slightly in recent years and indicates that most full-time transfers are graduating from the state’s public universities in a timely manner.

Forty-five percent of 2013-14 transfers from CAC to all four-year institutions—public and private, in-state and out—earned a bachelor’s degree within four years. Somewhat lower than national and statewide averages (60% and 50%, respectively),¹¹ CAC’s percentage may reflect a high incidence of part-time attendance after transfer.
In 2017, an estimated 44.7% of the Arizona working-age population (residents aged 25-64) held a workforce certificate, associate degree, or bachelor’s or higher degree (up from 41.8% in 2014). Arizona’s community colleges are working closely with the Arizona Board of Regents and other postsecondary institutions across the state to reach the Achieve60AZ goal that by 2030, 60% of the Arizona working-age population will hold a postsecondary credential.
FTSE enrollment in CAC’s occupational courses reached 1,454 in 2016-17. Many of these enrollments were in degree or certificate programs associated with the highest-demand occupations in the state, including (among others) nurses, preschool teachers, computer support specialists, web developers, and medical or dental assistants.

Of all learners in CAC’s 2014-15 Occupational Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment up to one year after college exit, 82% passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential. Examples of occupational programs leading to industry-recognized credentials include nursing, EMT, construction, solar technologies, and fire science.
Metric 33: Percent of the 25 Highest-Demand Occupations in Rural Arizona requiring more than a High School Diploma but less than a Bachelor’s Degree for which Community Colleges offer Degree and/or Certificate Programs

- Registered Nurses
- Teacher Assistants
- Medical Assistants
- Computer User Support Specialists
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
- Firefighters
- Medical Records and Health Information Technicians
- Dental Assistants
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
- Web Developers
- First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
- Ophthalmic Medical Technicians
- Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians
- Phlebotomists
- Dental Hygienists
- Computer Network Support Specialists
- First-Line Supervisors of Fire Fighting and Prevention Workers
- Veterinary Technologists and Technicians
- Library Technicians
- Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- Forest and Conservation Technicians
- Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment
- Computer, Automated Teller, and Office Machine Repairers
- Architectural and Civil Drafters

Arizona’s 10 rural community colleges (including CAC) offer degree and/or certificate programs training workers for 88% of the 25 highest-demand occupations located outside the state’s metropolitan areas. For many of the fastest-growing sectors of the workforce, (e.g., nurses, computer support specialists, EMTs and paramedics, medical assistants, and preschool teachers), nearly every community college offers a program.
Strategic Vision Data: Sources and Attributions