

## 2.2 - Retention, Persistence, and Completion

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Retention, Persistence and Completion focuses on the approach to collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence and completion to stakeholders for decision making. The institution should provide evidence for Core Component 4.C. in this section.

### **2P2: PROCESSES**

Describe the processes for collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence and completion. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Collecting student retention, persistence and completion data (4.C.2, 4.C.4)
- Determining targets for student retention, persistence and completion (4.C.1, 4.C.4)
- Analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion
- Meeting targets for retention, persistence and completion (4.C.1)
- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess retention, persistence and completion (4.C.4)

### **2R2: RESULTS**

What are the results for student retention, persistence and completion? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 2P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)
- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks
- Interpretation of results and insights gained

### **2I2: IMPROVEMENT**

Based on 2R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.C.3)

## Responses

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### **2P2a. Collecting student retention, persistence and completion data (4.C.2, 4.C.4)**

LCCC has two formal processes for collecting data on student retention, persistence, and completion. The first is embedded in the College's KPI system, which includes setting of performance indicators and associated measures that focus on institution-level effectiveness outcomes, including specific persistence/retention and completion measures. The data for these

measures resides in Colleague and is extracted, analyzed and communicated through the Office of Institutional Research.

The second process uses the College's Program Annual Analysis (PAA) method, developed to determine the current health of the institution's academic programs. This method measures the relative performance of LCCC's programs of study and is a central aspect in the College's program review process. The [measures](#) of key performance areas such as, efficiency, efficacy, and value have been identified (4.C.2, 4.C.4).

#### **2P2b. Determining targets for student retention, persistence and completion (4.C.1, 4.C.4)**

LCCC has a systematic process, incorporated into its KPI system, for determining annual internal improvement goals (targets) for student success (retention, persistence, and completion) measures using statistical modelling that incorporates trend data for continuous improvement. A variety of sources are used for external comparison (benchmarks) including Integrated Post-Secondary Educational Data System (IPEDS), National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and the Wyoming Community College system (4.C.1, 4.C.4).

In addition, LCCC's Board of Trustees set an aggressive student success goal, aligned with Goal/Focus 1 in the College's strategic plan, to increase the credentials awarded by LCCC five percent each year through 2022.

Program-specific improvement targets are established by faculty through program review and assessment processes (see sections 1.3 and 1.4).

#### **2P2c. Analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion**

LCCC has two systematic processes for analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion. The first is the College's academic program review process, LCCC's annual process for analyzing student success trend data for specific programs utilizing PAA (referenced above) data. For each measure in that system, program results are scored using quintiles (i.e., scores of 1 to 5). Institutional Research (IR) staff provide both student success results and scores to faculty and deans annually. When a program of study is undergoing review, faculty analyze the information and develop strategies for improvement of low-scoring results.

At the institutional level, results are analyzed in the annual process of updating the KPI system data. The College produces an annual report card that provides grading and trend analysis on the performance indicators and associated measures. The analysis and the report card are shared with the college community at the annual convocation in the president's [State of the College address](#) (pg. 14). Institutional outcomes provide additional context for program-level analysis. Additionally, KPI and other retention data are analyzed by the Learning Leadership Team, which includes both academic and student services campus leaders.

#### **2P2d. Meeting targets for retention, persistence and completion (4.C.1)**

LCCC's process for meeting performance targets for student persistence, retention, and completion is through its academic program and service/support function review systems. Mentioned above, as part of these processes, data are provided and analyzed, and then utilized to develop annual assessment as well as longer-term improvement plans for the programs and functions. These plans guide the continuous improvement work of the units (4.C.1).

In addition, the College uses its strategic plan process to guide institution-wide action for improvement in student success, such as persistence and completion. The first goal, the focus of LCCC's strategic plan, identifies strategies for improving student progress and success. These strategies, but results that didn't move metrics as much as desired led to LCCC's participation and [case statement](#) in the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Guided Pathways 2.0 Initiative.

#### **2P2e. Selecting the tools, methods and instruments to assess retention, persistence and completion (4.C.4)**

LCCC's tools for assessing completion, persistence, and retention are selected and developed through a systematic collaborative process. The Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness works with teams of faculty, staff, and administrators to develop definitions and methodologies for program review consistent with the College's mission and strategic priorities. Program review measures are aligned with measures used in the College's KPI system, which were developed by cross-functional action teams led by IR staff, who ensure that measure definitions align with good practice, based on commonly accepted national standards as well as research on community college student success (4.C.4).

#### **2R2a. Summary results of measures (include tables and figures when possible)**

Institutional-level student retention, persistence, and completion KPI measure results for [2017-18](#) show slight improvement over 2016-17 results for five of the eight measures. In particular, 2017-18 [completions](#) increased significantly from the prior year.

In addition, as part of the College's involvement in AACC's Guided Pathways 2.0 initiative, the College assesses progress, retention and completion data. [Pathways metrics](#) show some improvement for the most recent data.

[Program-level data](#) show three year average fall-to-spring persistence rates ranging between 22% (Diagnostic Medical Sonography) and 93% (Nursing), while fall-to-fall persistence rates vary between 22% (Diagnostic Medical Sonography) and 83% (Theatre).

#### **2R2b. Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks**

The KPI data presented above include internal targets and identified external benchmarks. Most recent results met the internal target for three of the eight measures. The external benchmark was met for three of six measures.

While the number of completions increase significantly in 2017-18, it fell short of the ambitious five percent (5%) goal established by the Board of Trustees.

Internal targets and benchmarks have not been established for program-level persistence measures.

### **2R2c. Interpretation of results and insights gained**

LCCC's persistence and graduation rates have increased over the last four years. Best practices and improvements undertaken by academic programs and support services have resulted in incremental increases in these and other KPI measures (see 2I2 for examples of improvements). However, LCCC's internal targets and benchmarks are ambitious. LCCC has determined that more sweeping changes are necessary to make larger gains in retention, persistence, and graduation, including disaggregating student data to identify achievement gaps by student demographics.

Program faculty and LCCC peer reviewers use the quintile scores in the program review process (a score of 5 represents results in the highest 20 percent of all programs) to identify best practices among all LCCC programs and areas for improvement at the academic program level. Support services, such as Advising and Tutoring, perform annual functional assessments that evaluate their impact on retention, persistence, and completion and identify institutional strategies.

### **2I2. Based on 2R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.C.3)**

LCCC wants to achieve greater gains in student retention, persistence, and completion. This is the driving force behind joining AACC Guided Pathways 2.0 and undertaking major process changes to bring the Pathways model to scale by fall 2020.

Many improvements the College and specific academic programs have implemented over several years support the Pathways model and the research that recommends community colleges clarify the path for students, help students get on a path, help students stay on a path, and ensure students are learning (4.C.3):

- A curriculum overhaul was undertaken for 2015-16 to increase on-time graduation. Programs were capped at 64 credits and programs were mapped out by semester, leading to a decrease in time-to-graduation across the College.
- Mandatory holistic advising, orientation, and ending late registration have all been implemented and have positively impacted retention and persistence.
- Support services, such as Advising and Tutoring, have recently established processes to perform annual functional assessments that evaluate their impact on retention, persistence, and completion and identify institutional strategies for improvement.

Additionally, IR staff developed a [Tableau dashboard](#) to enable faculty and administrators to more deeply analyze annual program analysis data.

Planned improvements include:

- The development of a Pathways metrics dashboard to enable more in-depth analysis of data through disaggregation by gender, age, ethnicity, and other characteristics to better understand achievement gaps going forward.
- The development of a KPI evaluation system to determine which measures are valuable, need revisions, and whether the weighting system is valid and reliable. This process will include broad input from campus stakeholders.