School and Student Characteristics and Student Achievement Outcomes

One of the many ways that ACCSC verifies the effectiveness of its work and that of the programs and services offered by ACCSC-accredited institutions is through detailed analysis of school characteristics and performance data. The Commission recently completed its analysis of the 2018 Annual Report and found once again that its accredited institutions continue to demonstrate significant institutional and student success through their rates of student graduation and graduate employment attainment.

These data are important indicators and are used by ACCSC to better understand its accredited institutions and the trends associated with career education, as well as to develop the Commission’s accountability standards.

The information contained in this report is a summary of the key data points from the 2018 ACCSC Annual Report and provides detailed information pertaining to ACCSC school characteristics, student characteristics, program characteristics, and student achievement rates and trends.

Sincerely,

Michale S. McComis, Ed.D.
Executive Director
Student Demographics

Overall, the analysis of the 2018 Annual Report data shows that student enrollment increased for the first time in three years. The increase is, in part, due to the number of schools who transitioned to ACCSC in 2017-2018 completing the Annual Report for the first time. Although the student population has increased, student demographics remain consistent. Based upon data submitted in the Annual Report, ACCSC-accredited institutions and their students show the following characteristics:

- 78% of the schools had 300 or fewer students as of June 30, 2018. Average enrollment as of June 30, 2018 was 235 students.
- The majority of institutions are in metropolitan areas with populations of at least 250,000.
- 46% of the students are under the age 25 and 35% of the students are in the age group 25-34.
- Student population is almost evenly distributed with regard to gender, although the percentage of male students (53%) is still higher, the percentage of female students (47%) enrolled increased 3% over last year.
- 61% of classified students represent ethnic minority groups.

These figures show that ACCSC-accredited institutions continue to provide training in small school formats and serve a large percentage of non-traditional and ethnic minority students in urban and suburban settings.

Program Characteristics

With respect to the types of programs offered by ACCSC-accredited institutions, schools submitted summary information for 4,060 programs in over 120 different occupational areas. Key characteristics include the following:

- 47% of ACCSC-accredited institutions offer a degree program, a 5% increase;
  - 38% of all programs offered at ACCSC-accredited institutions are degree programs.
- Of the 1,528 reported degree programs, 1,148 are associate degrees (75%), 324 are baccalaureate degrees (21%), and 56 are master’s degrees (4%).
- 56% of students are enrolled in non-degree programs, 26% of students are enrolled in associate degree programs (a 3% increase over the previous year), 16% of students are enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs, and 2% of students are enrolled in master’s degree programs.

With more schools reporting data for the 2018 Annual Report, the total number of programs with reportable enrollments represents a 14% increase over the prior year. The most notable increase was in the number of degree programs with a 5% increase over the previous year. The increase was largely due to the increase in the number of associate degrees, up 4% over the previous year. Member institutions continue to assess program offerings and adapt to the changing needs of students.
prospective students and to meet the needs of community employers, often discontinuing programs no longer needed by the local employment community. The overall percentage of ACCSC degree granting institutions was 47%, (a 5% increase). Although several ACCSC schools added degrees for the first time in FY2019, predominately the increase in the number of degree-granting schools was due to the by the new schools joining ACCSC that were largely degree-granting institutions. Graduate programs continue to represent a small portion of the degree offerings (4%) and degree program enrollments (2%).

Institutional Characteristics

The number of school reporting was 674 schools, a 9% increase over 2017 and represents the first increase in the number of schools reporting since 2015. Total student enrollment has been trending downward since 2010; however, the total student enrollment (158,688) in 2018 is the first increase in enrollment since 2010, representing a 10% increase over 2017.
Enrollment as of June 30, 2018

Based on 651 Annual Reports
155,037
2016

Based on 619 Annual Reports
144,905
2017

Based on 674 Annual Reports
158,688
2018

Institution Size By Student Enrollment

- 300 or Less Students: 78%
- 301-600 Students: 16%
- 601-900 Students: 4%
- 901 + Students: 2%

Average Enrollment = 235 Students

Based on 674 Annual Reports Submitted
Distribution of All Schools by Population Area

Based on 674 Annual Reports Submitted

Average Reported Household Median Income = $54,950
Average Reported Unemployment Rate = 4.6%

- Metro Level A - 1 Million or Greater
  32%
- Metro Level B - 250,000 to 999,999
  24%
- Metro Level C - 100,000 to 249,999
  18%
- Metro Level D - Less than 100,000
  8%
- Urbanized Area - 50,000 or Greater
  7%
- Urban Cluster - 2,500 to 49,999
  11%

Distribution of Programs by Program Area

Based on 4,060 Programs w/Enrollments ≥ 1 for the Reporting Year
Distribution of All Students By Age

Based on 158,688 Reported Students

- Under 25: 46%
- 25-34: 35%
- 35-44: 13%
- 45 & Over: 6%

Distribution of All Students By Gender

Based on 158,688 Reported Students

- Male: 53%
- Female: 47%
**Distribution of All Students By Ethnicity**

Based on 135,603 Reported and Classified Students

- White: 39%
- Hispanic or Latino: 29%
- Black or African American: 26%
- Asian: 5%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: <1%
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 1%

**Distribution of Programs By Credential**

Based on 4060 Program Enrollment Summaries

- Certificate / Diploma: 62%
- Associate Degree: 28%
- Baccalaureate Degree: 8%
- Master’s Degree: 1%

Total Percentage of Degree Programs = 38%
Percentage of Schools Which Offer Degree Programs

Based On 674 Annual Reports

Offers a Degree Program 47%
Does Not Offer a Degree Program 53%

Distribution of Degree Programs By Credential

Based on 1,528 Total Reported Degree Programs

- **1,148 Associate**: 413 Associate of Applied Science, 241 Associate of Occupational Studies (AOS, OAD), 229 Associate of Science, 122 Associate of Specialized Technology, 103 Associate of Applied or Specialized Business, 40 Associate of Arts
- **324 Baccalaureate**: 238 Bachelor of Science (BS, BSN, BHS), 37 Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA, BGA), 32 Bachelor of Arts, 17 Bachelor of Applied Science
- **56 Master's Degrees**: 3 Master of Education, 31 Master of Science, 6 Master of Arts, 9 Master of Business Administration, 5 Master of Fine Arts, 2 Master of Public Health
Enrollment by Program Area

Based on 4,060 Total Reported Programs
158,688 Students
Student Achievement Outcomes

The Commission first promulgated the quantitative student achievement standards in 1998 based upon several studies conducted by the Center on Education and Training for Employment at the Ohio State University. During 2002, the Commission engaged in a comprehensive study of the student achievement requirements promulgated in 1998 and the associated processes of data collection and verification. The Commission continues to review comparative data and make adjustments to the methodology for the analysis of student achievement outcomes in order to ensure sound data collection and analysis.

As part of its ongoing commitment to assessing student achievement in its accredited schools and the tools used to do so, during the 2015 Annual Report year, the Commission conducted an 11-year longitudinal study of the graduation and employment rates report from 2005 to 2015 in the ACCSC Annual Report. The Commission noted that longitudinal data showed little variation from ACCSC’s benchmark review using three-year rolling increments. Thus establishing the stability, predictability, and reliability of the rates used in establishing ACCSC’s benchmark rates.

Also, as part of its systematic program of review, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems reviewed ACCSC’s student achievement standards, practices, and the longitudinal study and found that “[t]aken together, these features provide considerable confidence in the soundness and appropriateness of ACCSC’s general approach to establishing quantitative performance criteria on selected student outcomes measures.”

Previously, the Commission re-calculated student achievement benchmark rates every three years using a rolling average. Because the longitudinal data and study show no significant variation from the current benchmarks (with one exception), the Commission established the results of the 11-year longitudinal study as the basis for its new student achievement rates. The one exception is in programs 24 months in length or longer. This group of programs exhibits the largest variability and range of graduation rate outcomes. Once that variability was controlled for, the rate stabilized at 40%, which the Commission believes is an appropriate trigger for further monitoring in these longer programs. The established rates are semi-permanent meaning that while the Commission will continue to study and assess the reported rates of student achievement regularly, the Commission does not intend to adjust the rates unless the data suggest that an adjustment is warranted. A review of the most recent three-year data (2016-2018) found the graduation benchmarks continue to be consistent with the longitudinal study.

With regard to the employment rate, the Commission’s 11-year longitudinal data and study yielded a 70% benchmark, which the Commission adopted. The employment rate for all programs was previously 70% and was only lowered due to the impact of the economic recession. The data show that employment rates overall have risen and thus found resetting the employment rate benchmark at 70% to be appropriate.
While graduation and employment rates play an integral role in an institution’s on-going programmatic and institutional assessment plan, an additional area that demonstrates student learning outcomes includes pass rates on licensing/certification examinations required for employment. The Commission has collected licensure/certification examination pass rate data through the Annual Report over the 11-year period and now requires schools to demonstrate a minimum 70% pass rate on licensure/certification examinations for those programs where a governmental entity requires students to pass the examination as a condition of employment.

The Commission continues to refine protocols intended to give both schools and the Commission a framework for the review and assessment of student achievement rates and to provide a framework for assessing rates that are above benchmarks and above average as well as below benchmark rates.

**ESTABLISHED BENCHMARK GRADUATION RATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Average Rates of Graduation Demonstrates Acceptable Student Achievement</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Established Benchmark Graduation Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-23</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24+</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ESTABLISHED BENCHMARK EMPLOYMENT RATE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Average Rate of Employment Demonstrates Acceptable Student Achievement</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Established Benchmark Employment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Programs</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of the 2018 Annual Report Data

As the total number of schools reporting data increased in 2018, the number of programs with reportable graduation and employment rates also increased, showing a slight increase in the number of programs with reportable rates over the three-year period of this analysis. The overall graduation rates reported by ACCSC-accredited institutions in the 2018 Annual Report are consistent with the data reported for previous years. For the past three years the average graduation rate for all programs, regardless of length held steady at 69%. The analysis of graduation rates continues to show that program length has a strong influence on program graduation, i.e., as length increases graduation rates decline. This correlation is consistently the most substantial and significant relationship found in the Commission’s student achievement data and allows the Commission to evaluate programmatic performance within a context of program length comparability.

For the 2018 Annual Report year the graduation rates for all program-length groupings remained stable over the past three years. In addition, a review of data for a five-year period found very little variability in reported graduation rates by program length. For the 2018 Annual Report, of particular note is the stability of the reported graduation rate for programs 24 months and longer. The reported graduation rate of 57% for programs 24 months and longer in length is a 10% increase over the 2015 reported rate and a 19% increase over the reported rate of 48% in 2014. In addition, 57% for programs 24 months or longer is the highest reported graduation rate for long programs since 2012. The student achievement outcomes for longer programs are an area that the Commission continues to monitor with keen interest. Analysis of the three-year data for employment rate found the reported rate of 76% is consistent for the three-year period. The rate of 76% over the three-year period with continues to be the highest reported employment rate since 2012. This is consistent with the trends noted in the longitudinal study.

While graduation and employment rates play an integral role in the overall assessment of the effectiveness of an instructional program, an additional area that demonstrates student learning outcomes includes pass rates on licensing/certification examinations required for employment. The Commission collects licensure/certification examination pass rate data through the Annual Report and implemented, effective July 1, 2015, the requirement that schools demonstrate a minimum 70% pass rate on licensure/certification examinations for those programs where a governmental entity requires students to pass the examination as a condition of employment. Review of the major areas requiring licensure employment such as allied health, nursing, cosmetology, massage therapy, and truck driving found the average pass rate has consistently exceeded 70% for the past three years.

Overall, the student graduation and graduate employment attainment rates demonstrate that ACCSC-accredited institutions graduate a significant number of students and that a significant number of students attain training-related employment after graduation. Out of 4166 programs with reportable graduation and employment rates, 82% (n=3413) meet or exceed benchmark in the respective program length grouping and 79% of the programs meet or exceed the benchmark for
graduate employment. The Commission encourages its institutions to avoid using the benchmark rates as a goal for graduation and employment but as an assessment starting point and goal setting baseline. Institutions should continue to set the highest attainable goals with regard to student success and the rates of graduation and employment.
2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates - All Programs
Annual Report Data

Average Graduation Rates By Program Length
Groups - 2018

Average Program Length = 13.5 months
Average Graduation Rate for All Programs = 69%

Based on Data Reported for 2,604 Programs
2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates
Programs 1-3 Months in Length

2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates
Programs 4-6 Months in Length
2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates
Programs 7-9 Months in Length

2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates
Programs 10-12 Months in Length
2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates
Programs 13-15 Months in Length

- 2016: 64% (N=376)
- 2017: 65% (N=317)
- 2018: 64% (N=334)

Standard Deviation:
- 2016: 14%
- 2017: 15%
- 2018: 14%

2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates
Programs 16-18 Months in Length

- 2016: 64% (N=333)
- 2017: 64% (N=327)
- 2018: 63% (N=372)

Standard Deviation:
- 2016: 15%
- 2017: 16%
- 2018: 18%
2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates
Programs 19-23 Months in Length

- 2016: 62% (N=224) - 17%
- 2017: 63% (N=235) - 18%
- 2018: 61% (N=271) - 17%

2016-2018 Average Graduation Rates
Programs 24 Months and Greater in Length

- 2016: 55% (N=189) - 20%
- 2017: 57% (N=186) - 20%
- 2018: 57% (N=195) - 19%
2016-2018 Average Employment Attainment Rates
Annual Report Data

Licensure Pass Rate by Program Area

Avg. Employment Rates - All Programs
Standard Deviation

N=2,596 Programs
N=2,437 Programs
N=2,604 Programs

2016 - 2018 Average Employment Attainment Rates

N=2,596
N=2,437
N=2,604

14%
14%
14%

65%
70%
75%
80%
85%
90%
95%
100%

2016
2017
2018

Allied Health
Holistic Arts & Sciences
Aviation
Beauty & Skin Care
Building Construction & Industrial Trades
Heavy Equipment Operator & Truck Driver
Nursing & Health Aid
### SUMMARY OF SCHOOLS FY2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (as of June 30, 2019)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Schools</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Schools</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ACCREDITED SCHOOLS</strong></td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **SCHOOL CLOSURES & VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWALS (FY2019)** |   |
| Closures                                             | 25 |
| Precipitous Closures                                 | 14 |
| Voluntary Withdrawals                                | 13 |

| **ADVERSE ACTIONS (FY2019)**                         |   |
| Denials                                               | 1  |
| Withdrawal                                            | 3 (1 under appeal) |
FY2016-FY2019 Annual Comparative Activity Data

Accreditation Activities

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
Initial Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2016</th>
<th>FY2017</th>
<th>FY2018</th>
<th>FY2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Applications Received</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Applications Accepted</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
Renewal Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2016</th>
<th>FY2017</th>
<th>FY2018</th>
<th>FY2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renewal Applications Received</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal Applications Accepted</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
Total On-Site Evaluations

FY2018 includes 126 Transition On-site evaluations

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
Commission Actions

Commission Activities

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
Commission Actions

Initial Applicants  
Renewal Applicants  
Substantive Changes  
Other Actions  
Transition Schools
External Relations/Member Services Activities

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
External Relations & Member Services Activities

Accreditation Workshop Attendance
Team Leader Training
Education Specialist Training
Professional Development Conference

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
Webinar Attendance

25
Institutional Review and Development Activities

Institutional Development

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
Substantive Change Applications Received by Category

**Non-Degree Programs**

**Degree Programs**

**Other Level II Subchanges**

**New Facilities (Branch Part II + Satellite + DE Facility)**

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Activity Data
Total Substantive Change Applications Received

**FY2018 numbers impacted by Transition Schools**
Institutional Review

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Data Activity
External Review

- Complaints Received
- Complaints Forwarded to Committee/Panel
- Media Reports/Agency Notices Received
- Media Reports/Agency Notices Forwarded to Committee

FY2016-FY2019 Comparative Data Activity
Internal Review

- Significant Growth
- Cohort Default Rate
- Employment Verification Information Requested
- Employment Verification Actions