Plus 50 Completion Strategy: Year One Evaluation Results

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Year One Evaluation Results

AACC engaged LFA Group: *Learning for Action* to conduct an evaluation of the Completion Strategy. LFA Group worked with the eight community colleges that compose the first cohort of AACC Completion grantees to collect process and outcome data. These data from each college cover a 12-month period (although the periods vary slightly, depending on when terms ended for particular colleges; they are usually July-June or June-May, and in a few cases are May-April). Year one findings are presented below.

Outreach Programs

Six of the eight colleges indicated that they had an outreach plan in place to recruit and retain plus 50 students. Plus 50 colleges pursued a variety of outreach activities to plus 50 learners such as hosting open house events, placing newspaper and radio ads, and making personal phone calls and emails. The eight colleges estimated they had contacted more than 24,000 individuals through their outreach programs. Exhibit 1 includes examples of outreach activities that were employed at various colleges.
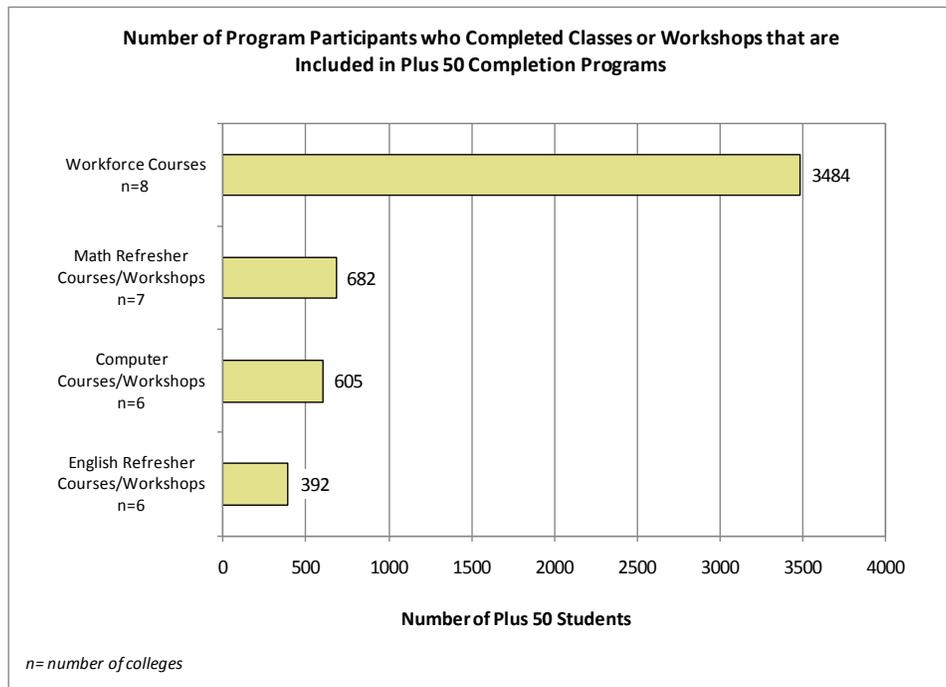
Exhibit 1

Examples of Colleges' Outreach Approaches
▪ Hosting and exhibiting at open house events
▪ Networking and exhibiting at conferences
▪ Networking with plus 50 students through other departments and services at the college such as student services and academic advisors
▪ Distributing flyers, brochures, and marketing cards with an overview of Plus 50 workforce training opportunities
▪ Creating and distributing a DVD containing Plus 50 student profiles and success stories
▪ Outreach to community partners and local businesses to raise Plus 50 awareness and to connect with potential plus 50 students
▪ Attending local Council on Aging meetings
▪ Speaking engagements at community events
▪ Plus 50 blogs and newsletters
▪ Contacting plus 50 students by phone and email
▪ Placing newspaper and radio ads

Course Offerings

As part of their Completion Strategy course offerings, colleges offered workforce programming, math and English basic education, remedial courses, or tutoring, and basic computer courses and workshops.

Exhibit 2

Number of Program Participants who Completed Classes or Workshops that are Included in Plus 50 Completion Programs

Workforce Courses n=8	3484
Math Refresher Courses/Workshops n=7	682
Computer Courses/Workshops n=6	605
English Refresher Courses/Workshops n=6	392

Number of Plus 50 Students

n= number of colleges

- Across eight colleges, 3,484 plus 50 students completed workforce courses.
- Many plus 50 students who are also in the workforce programming were able to take advantage of math and English refresher courses, computer courses and workshops:
  - 682 students completed math courses;
  - 392 completed English courses; and
  - 605 completed computer courses or workshops.

Workforce Courses

All eight colleges included as part of their Completion Strategies workforce programs that support the ability of plus 50 students to build their human capital. These programs range from business administration, to the health field (e.g. Nursing, Emergency Medical Technician, Pharmacy Tech), to high tech (e.g. Internet Services), to the trades (e.g. welding, carpentry).
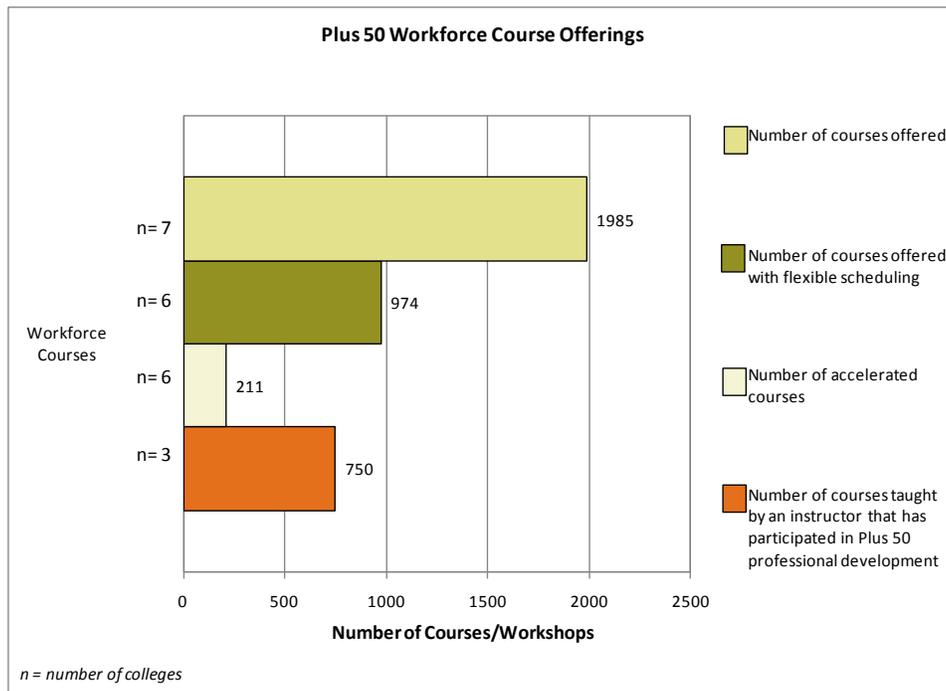
Exhibit 3

Plus 50 Completion Strategy Workforce Programming									
Program Type	Colleges								Total
	Cape Cod	Clover Park	Central Florida	Joliet	Northeast Wisconsin	Pasco Hernando	Santa Fe	Wake Tech	
Accounting	✓	✓		✓				✓	4
Business	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Computer Science and Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			5
Education (including early childhood education and teacher certification)		✓	✓	✓			✓		4
Health (including EMT, pharmacy, phlebotomy, medical assistance)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		6
Human Services	✓	✓				✓			3
Law Enforcement			✓			✓	✓		3
Nursing	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		6
Welding		✓				✓	✓		3

Exhibit 3 shows the types of workforce programs that were commonly offered across the colleges and includes program types that were offered by at least three of the eight colleges. The most common workforce offerings were in business, health, and nursing, each offered at six colleges.

Exhibit 4

Plus 50 Workforce Course Offerings

n = number of colleges

Across all eight colleges, 1,985 courses were offered in these various workforce training programs. The colleges offered them in a variety of ways that support completion for plus 50 learners:

- Seven of the colleges offered 974 courses with flexible scheduling;
- Seven of the colleges offered 211 courses in an accelerated format (the courses can be completed in less than the length of a standard term); and
- Three of the colleges offered 750 of these courses that were taught by an instructor that has participated in professional development offered to enhance the instructor's ability to work with plus 50 learning styles.

Math, English and Computer Refresher Courses and Workshops

In addition to workforce programming, colleges also offered courses and workshops in math and English basic education. These courses and tutoring support plus 50 learners to brush up on their basic skills so that they can enroll in workforce courses. Colleges also offered basic computer courses and workshops to boost computer skills that are often vital to successful performance in the workforce.

Exhibit 5

Plus 50 Course Offerings

Legend:
- Number of courses offered
- Number of courses offered with flexible scheduling
- Number of accelerated courses
- Number of courses taught by an instructor that has participated in Plus 50 professional development

Math Refresher Courses/Workshops:
- n= 5: 19 *
- n= 7: 17
- n= 6: 6
- n= 2: 3

Computer Courses/Workshops:
- n= 6: 14*
- n= 6: 13
- n= 5: 10
- n= 3: 5

English Refresher Courses/Workshops:
- n= 6: 13*
- n= 6: 11
- n= 5: 3
- n= 3: 8

X-axis: Number of Courses/Workshops (0, 5, 10, 15, 20)

n = number of colleges
* In cases when data were not available for total number of courses offered, estimates were made based on the number of flexible and accelerated courses offered at the college.
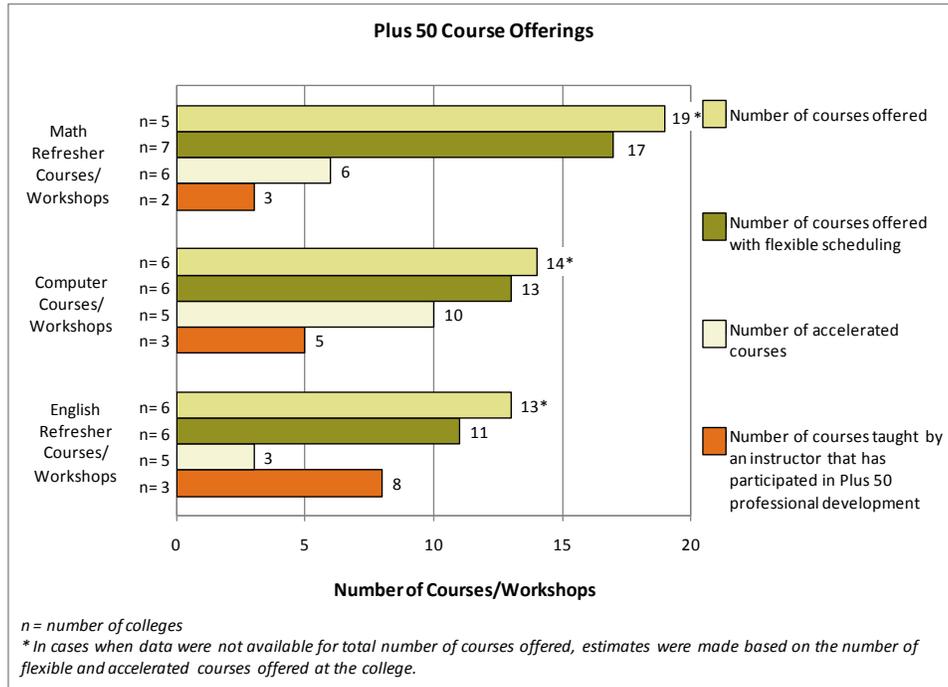
Exhibit 5 shows the total number of unique courses offered, the number of courses offered with flexible scheduling, the number of accelerated courses, and the number of courses taught by an instructor that has participated in Plus 50 professional development. All eight colleges provided professional development opportunities designed to build the capacity of instructors to effectively teach plus 50 learners. Across three colleges reporting data, 77 instructors participated in Plus 50 professional development.

Exhibit 6

Approaches that Colleges Use to Tailor Offerings to Plus 50 Students

Legend:
- Existing courses are marketed to Plus 50 students
- Courses are newly developed for Plus 50 students
- Courses are redesigned for Plus 50 students

Computer Courses/Workshops n=7:
- 5
- 2
- 2

English Refresher Courses/Workshops n=7:
- 6
- 5
- 3

Math Refresher Courses/Workshops n=7:
- 5
- 1
- 1

X-axis: Number of Colleges Using this Approach (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

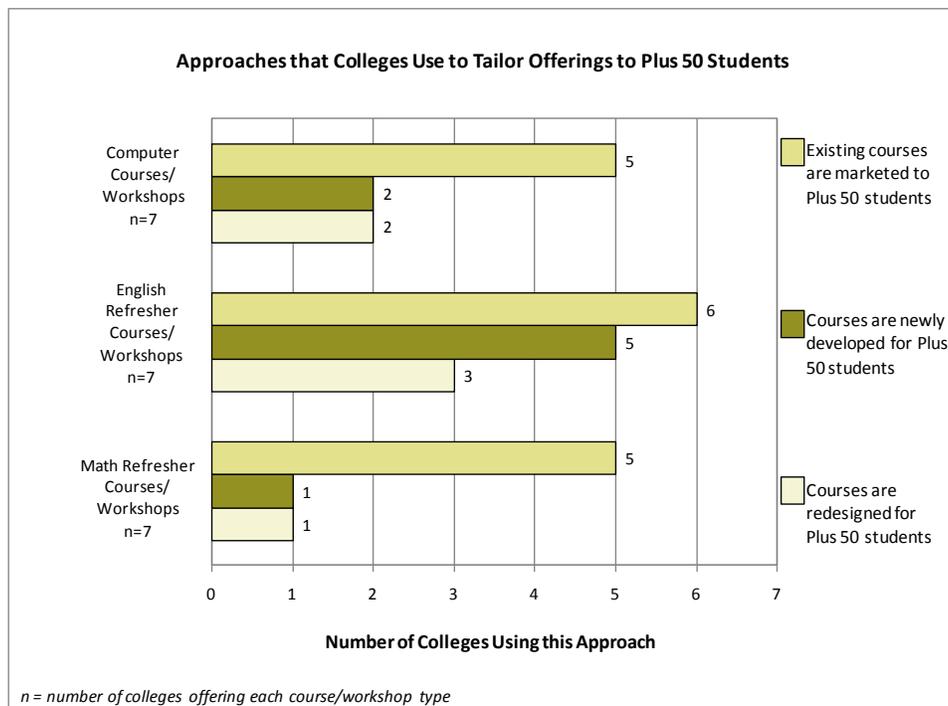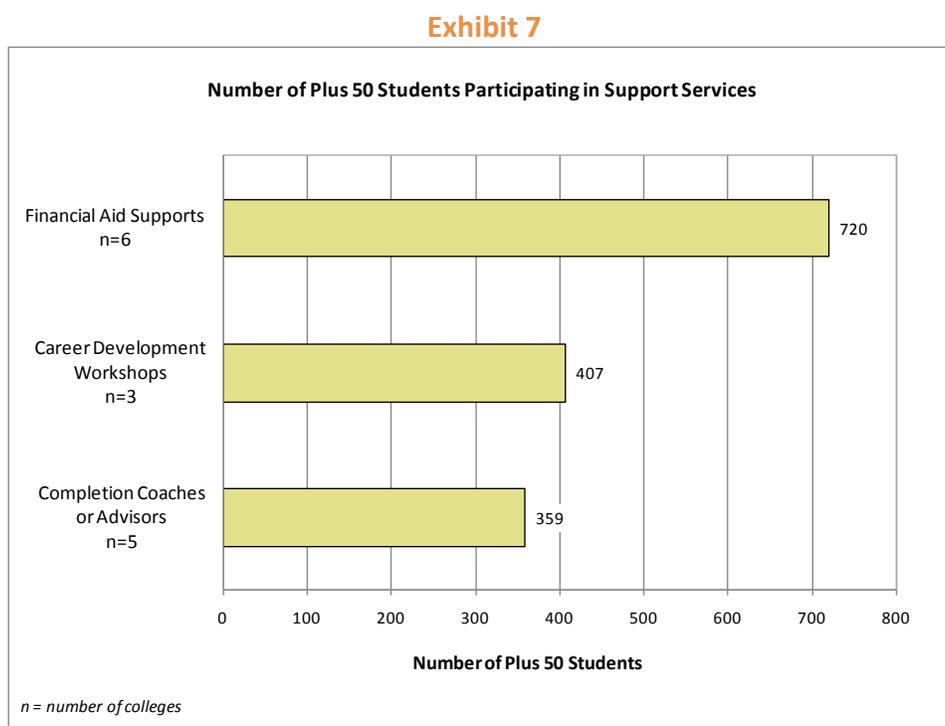*n = number of colleges offering each course/workshop type*

Exhibit 6 highlights the approaches that colleges use to tailor math, English and computer course offerings to Plus 50 students.

- Of the seven colleges including math and English basic education, remedial courses, or tutoring as part of their Completion Strategy programming:
    - Two colleges developed math courses specifically for plus 50 learners;
    - Two redesigned them;
    - One college developed English courses specifically for plus 50 learners; and
    - One college redesigned them.
- Of the seven colleges including basic computer courses and workshops as part of their Completion Strategy programming:
    - Five colleges developed computer courses and workshops specifically for plus 50 learners; and
    - Three redesigned them.

Support Services

All eight colleges include support services as part of their Completion Strategy programming.

Exhibit 7

Number of Plus 50 Students Participating in Support Services

n = number of colleges

- At five colleges, 359 program participants worked with Plus 50 / Completion Advisors.
- At six colleges, 720 program participants were provided financial aid supports such as being connected with advisors that can help them identify and apply for sources of financial aid. Options for financial aid for many states include scholarships, or funding through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) or Department of Labor programs for dislocated workers, and college credit tuition waivers for students who are over a certain age (not all states have this policy, and the age varies by state). Programs may also seek their own funding to provide

tuition vouchers for students taking courses that contribute to certificate or degree completion in workforce-related programs.

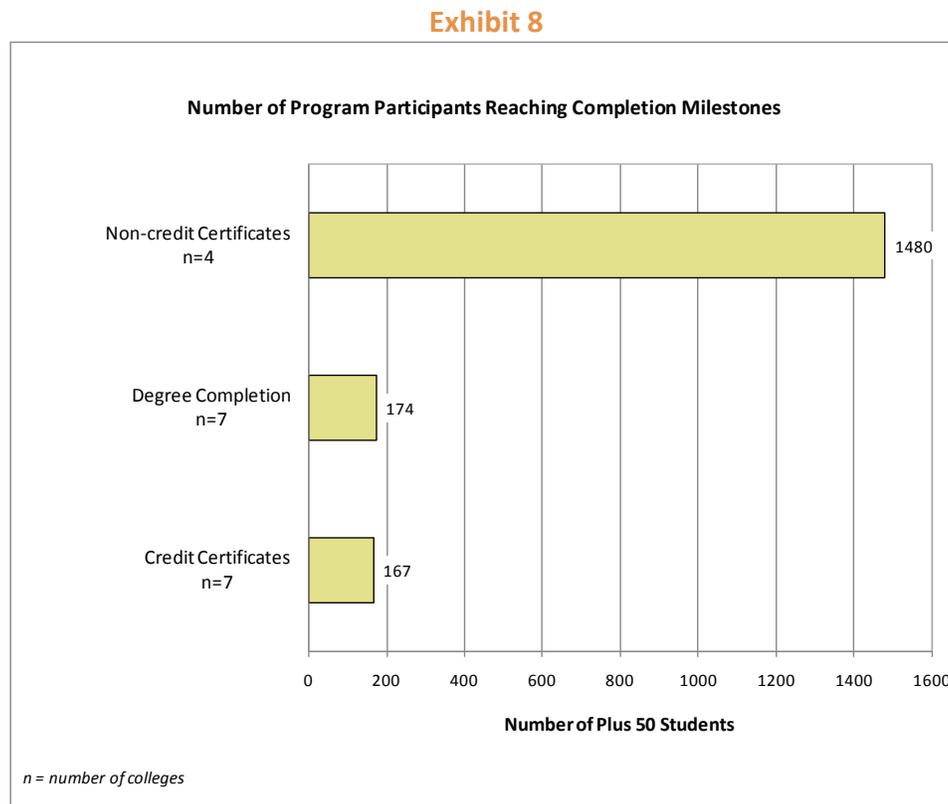▪ At three colleges, 407 program participants attended career development workshops.

Student Outcomes

Employment and Credit for Prior Learning

▪ Two colleges collected data on participant employment and reported that 210 participants were able to secure jobs.

▪ At seven colleges, 327 program participants were awarded credits for prior learning.

Completion Milestones

All eight of the colleges have plus 50 students attaining degrees and credit certificates in their identified workforce programs, though data are only available for seven colleges. Exhibit 8 below shows students' completion outcomes across the colleges.

Exhibit 8

Number of Program Participants Reaching Completion Milestones

n = number of colleges

▪ At four colleges, 1480 program participants were awarded non-credit certificates.
▪ At seven colleges, 174 program participants completed degrees.
▪ At seven colleges, 167 program participants were awarded credit certificates.