

Plus 50 Completion Strategy: Year Two Evaluation Results

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LFA Group enhances the impact and sustainability of social sector organizations through highly customized research, strategy development, and evaluation services

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Plus 50 Completion Strategy: Year Two Evaluation Results

AACC engaged LFA Group: *Learning for Action* to conduct an evaluation of the Plus 50 Completion Strategy. The Plus 50 Completion Strategy has now completed its second year of implementation (2011-2012). LFA Group worked with the eighteen community colleges that participated in the second year of the AACC Completion grant, including the cohort of eight colleges that participated during the first year of the grant (2010-2011). This brief presents data from both years of the evaluation.

The primary goal of the Plus 50 Completion Strategy was to serve 9,000 Plus 50 adult students across four years, with 3,600 (40%) completing a degree, certificate, or not-for-credit certificate. Exhibits 1-3 summarize key data points across the first two years of the evaluation. To date, the colleges involved in the Plus 50 Completion strategy have exceeded this goal, as they have served 9,292 Plus 50 students and 4,243 (46%) of these students have completed a degree or credential. Four hundred (9%) of these students have secured employment since completing their program. The tables below provide a summary of the key findings in this report.

Data Summary

**Exhibit 1: Summary of Key Data Points:
Workforce Programs and Participation in Workforce Courses**

Workforce Programs, Courses, and Students Enrolled	Year 1 2010-2011	Year 2 2011-2012	Cumulative Total (2010-11 + 2011-12)
Number of Workforce Programs Offered	189	395	NA ¹
Number of Students Enrolled in Workforce Courses	3,463	5,829	9,292 ²
Number of Instructors who have Participated in Professional Development Designed to Support their Ability to Work with Plus 50 Students	77	337	NA ³

¹ A cumulative number is not provided, because many of the same workforce programs are offered across years and across colleges. The total could be ascertained if the colleges “unduplicated” the information, but this is not asked of the colleges, due to burden this would place on program staff to account for unique programs across years.

² This number is not unduplicated and the cumulative number slightly overestimates the total number served. See section on “Student Enrollment in Workforce courses” for a more detailed description.

³ This number could not be unduplicated, due to burden this would place on program staff to account for unique instructors across years.

**Exhibit 2: Summary of Key Data Points:
Support Services Provided**

Support Service	Year 1 2010-2011	Year 2 2011-2012
Number of Students Working with Completion Coaches/Advisors	359	1,043
Number of Students Receiving Financial Aid Supports	720	779
Number of Students who Attended Career Development Workshops	407	702
Number of Linkages the Programs Made with Local Employers	40	460

**Exhibit 3: Summary of Key Data Points:
Outcomes: Students Completing Credentials and Gaining Employment**

Credentials and Employment	Year 1 2010-2011	Year 2 2011-2012	Cumulative Total (2010-11 + 2011-12)
Degrees Completed	191	616	807
Credit Certificates Completed	167	358	525
Non-Credit Certificates Completed	1,183	1,728	2,911
Total Completions	1,541	2,702	4,243
Total Employed	210	400	400 ¹

¹ The cumulative number is the same as the number reported in Year 2, because each year when colleges report the number of students employed, they report the number of students who have gained employment so far, no matter which year they participated in the program.

Outreach Strategies

Seventeen grantee colleges had a formal outreach plan to attract, support, and retain Plus 50 students.¹ Colleges used various strategies, ranging from highly personalized communication to far-reaching advertisement campaigns, with fliers, radio spots, and newspaper ads. More targeted approaches included hosting open houses and information sessions for Plus 50 students, as well as connecting Plus 50 students and potential students with customized mentorship and support. The 17 colleges with outreach plans estimated that they reached more than 343,000 individuals in the 2011-2012 year, which is a substantial increase from the 24,000 reached by the nine colleges in the previous year. Each college reached an average of 20,200 individuals. Exhibit 4 lists examples of outreach activities that were utilized at different colleges this year.

Exhibit 4: Examples of Colleges' Outreach Approaches

- Working with other departments to help Plus 50 students access specialized services (i.e. career and academic counseling)
- Holding Open houses and informational meetings for potential students
- Attending and sponsoring career fairs
- Attending national and regional conferences for adult learners
- Developing websites and blogs
- Placing newspaper and radio advertisements
- Contacting students and potential students by phone, email, and postcards

Workforce Programs

The breadth of workforce programs offered reflects the diversity of current workforce needs as well as the interests of Plus 50 students. The purpose of these programs is to equip Plus 50 students with the skills and expertise necessary to enter and remain in the workforce, and to advance in careers.

Exhibit 5: Examples of Programs Offered in 2011-2012

- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Computer Support Specialist
- Criminal Justice
- Early Childhood Education
- Electrician
- Health Information Technology
- Human Services
- Mechanics Technology
- Nursing
- Pharmacy Technician
- Phlebotomy

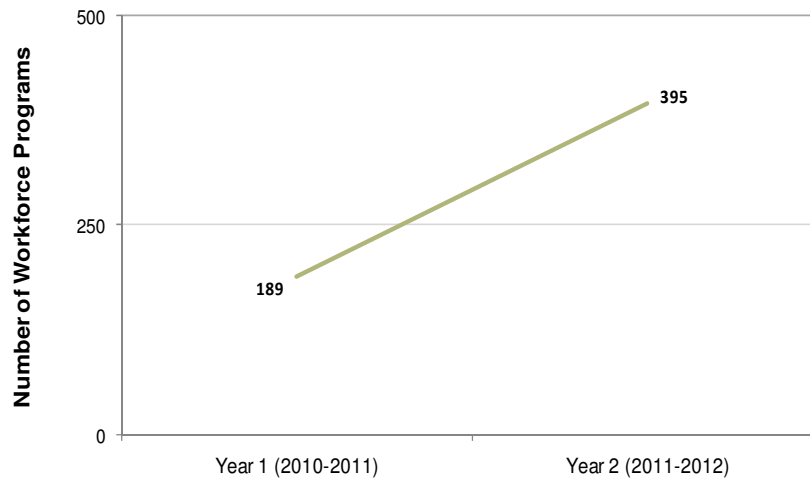
Exhibit 6 shows the number of workforce programs offered in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

- During year one, eight colleges offered a total of 189 workforce programs. In year two, this number increased to 395 workforce programs offered by 16 colleges.

¹ There is one college that provided only a few key data points: the number of Plus 50 students served and number of completions. For this reason, process-related data is missing for this college here and throughout the report.

- The per-college average number of programs stayed roughly the same, rising from 24 in year one to 26 in year two.²

Exhibit 6: Number of Workforce Programs that the Colleges Offer



Number of Colleges Offering Workforce Programs		Average Number of Workforce Programs per College	
Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
8	16	24	26

Courses and Plus 50 Student Enrollment

Student Enrollment in Workforce Courses

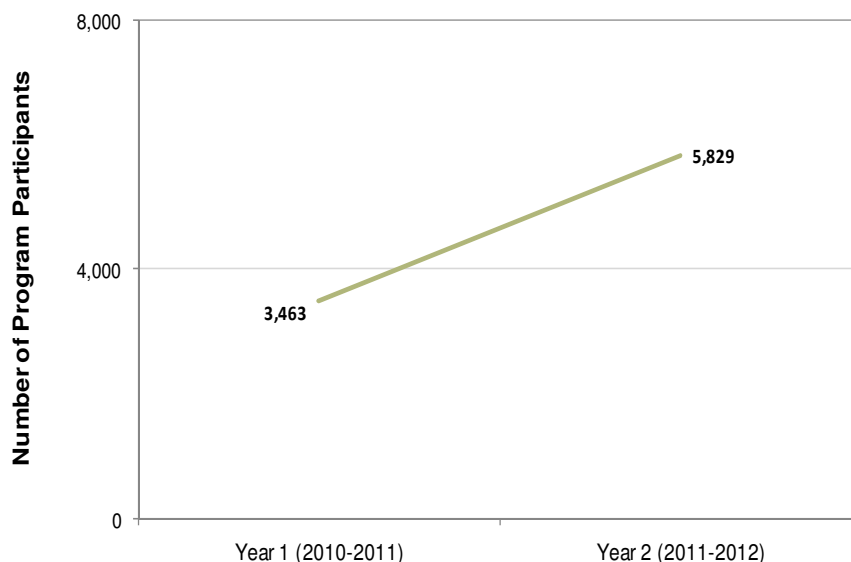
Exhibit 7, on the next page, shows the number of students enrolled in workforce courses in year one and year two, and the estimated cumulative number of students served.

- In year one, seven colleges enrolled 3,463 individual students in workforce courses.
- In year two, that number increased to 5,829 individual students enrolled in workforce courses across 18 colleges.
- On average, colleges had 324 students taking workforce courses during year two.
- **Cumulatively, Plus 50 programs have served 9,292 students through workforce courses over the past two years.**³

²It is important to note that when comparing numbers from year one and year two, there is a notable difference in the level of experience these two cohorts of colleges have with Plus 50 programs. Year one colleges are more experienced Plus 50 colleges and year two colleges are mostly new to Plus 50 programming and are working to put their programs in place. This is the primary reason why many numbers did not scale in year two as would be expected with a larger number of colleges participating.

³This number is not unduplicated from year to year. Requesting colleges to unduplicate year-over-year numbers is an undue grantee burden. Therefore, the cumulative number slightly overestimates the total number served. However, since most colleges are serving students through accelerated programs, most of the students who appear in year one of the data will not appear in year two.

Exhibit 7: Number of Plus 50 Students in Workforce Courses



Number of Colleges Offering Workforce Programs		Average Number of Plus 50 Students in Workforce Courses per College		Total Number of Students Served by Plus 50 Programs
Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	
7	18	501	324	9,292

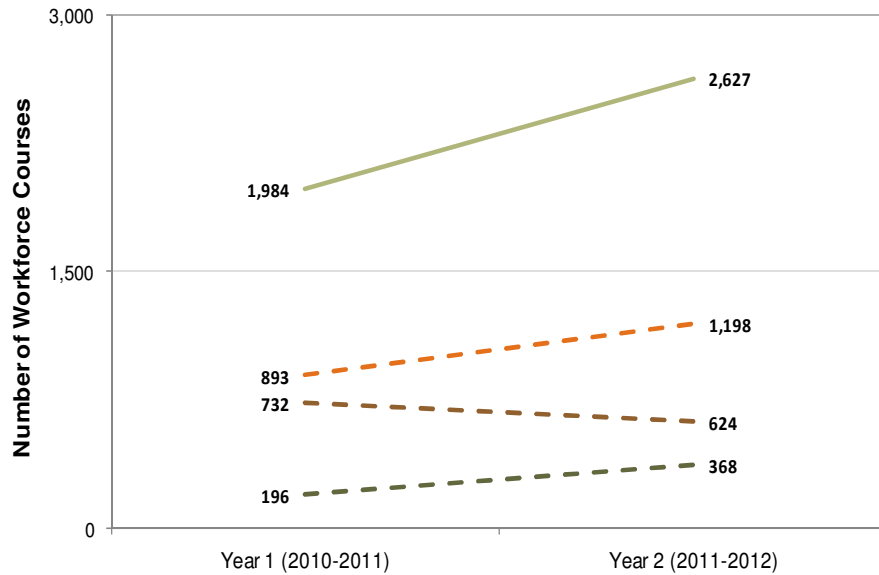
Workforce Course Offerings

Exhibit 8, on the next page, highlights the change over time in terms of total number of workforce course offerings, and also of the different *formats* in which workforce courses are offered: accelerated courses; courses taught with flexible scheduling; and courses taught by instructors who have participated in professional development targeted toward enhancing the ability of instructors to work with older learners.

- The total number of workforce courses offered by participating colleges increased from 1,984 in year one to 2,627 in year two.
- Nine of the 15 colleges who provided workforce course information offered accelerated workforce courses during year two. Each college had an average of 41 accelerated courses to help plus 50 students complete courses faster. Fourteen percent of all workforce courses were accelerated in year two.
- Over 1,000 courses with flexible scheduling, such as courses offered in the evenings or on weekends, were offered at 10 colleges. Courses with flexible scheduling constituted 46% of total courses.

- 624, or 24% of total courses, were taught by instructors that had undergone specialized professional development training in teaching to the unique learning styles of Plus 50 learners in year two.

Exhibit 8: Workforce Course Offerings



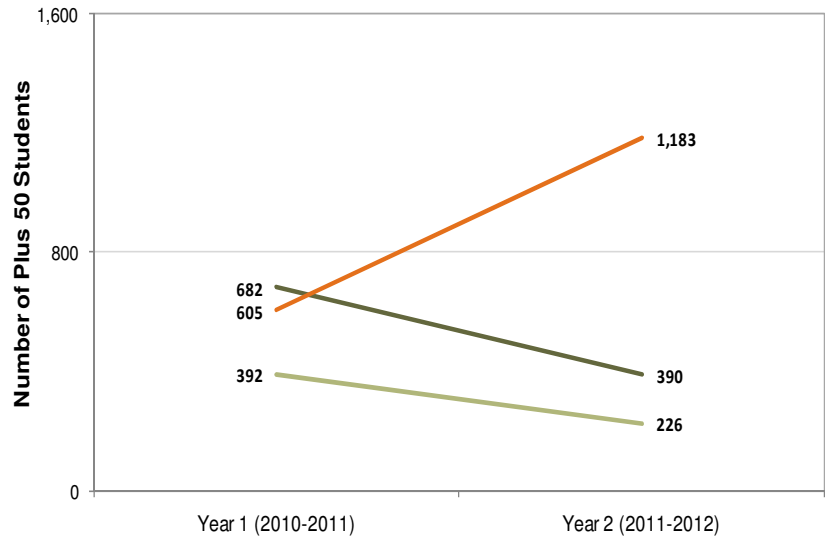
Offering Type		Number & Percent of Colleges with this Type of Offering		Average Number of Workforce Courses per College	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Total courses		8 (100%)	15 (100%)	248	175
Accelerated		7 (88%)	9 (60%)	28	41
Flexible scheduling		7 (88%)	10 (67%)	128	120
Taught by instructors with Plus 50 PD		3 (38%)	7 (47%)	244	89

Student Enrollment in Math, English, and Computer Courses and Workshops

Skill-building courses and workshops in math, English, and computers are a main tenet of many colleges' Plus 50 programs. Exhibit 9 shows the number of students in math, English and computer courses over the two years of the Plus 50 Completion Strategy.

- Even though there are 13 colleges offering math courses and workshops in year two compared to seven offering them in year one, the total number of students enrolled *declined* from 682 to 390. This trend is reflected in the average; 30 per college in year two and 97 per college in year one.
- The trend is similar for English courses. Although 11 colleges offered these courses in year two and six offered them in year one, the total number of students enrolled declined from 392 to 226. There were 21 students on average per college in year two, compared with 65 in year one.⁴
- More than 1,100 Plus 50 students at 12 colleges took computer courses or workshops in year two, averaging 99 students per college. This compares to 605 in year one. This increase is due to the addition of more colleges to the Strategy in year two; average enrollment per college remained about the same (it was 101 in year one).

Exhibit 9: Number of Plus 50 Students in English, Math, and Computer Courses



Courses Offered	Number & Percent of Colleges with This Type of Offering		Average Number of Student taking Courses per College	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Math Courses/workshops	7 (88%)	13 (76%)	97	30
English Courses/workshops	6 (75%)	11 (65%)	65	21
Computer Courses/workshops	6 (75%)	12 (71%)	101	99

⁴ Some of the differences between year one and year two for math and English may have been an artifact of what colleges have been *counting* as math and English. Some colleges participating in year one counted plus 50 enrollment in standard remedial courses. The Plus 50 approach is to support students with courses tailored to their needs, and standard remedial or development education does not meet this standard. Therefore the numbers in year two are a truer reflection of offerings that adhere to the Plus 50 Standards of Excellence.

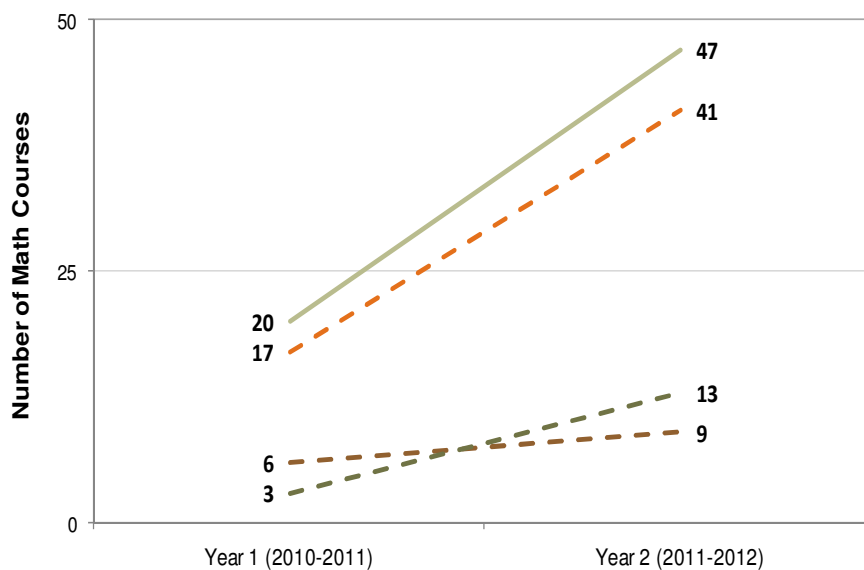
Exhibits 10-12, on the following pages, show the numbers of math, English, and computer courses offered, as well as how they break out in terms of the formats in which they were offered.

Math, English, and Computer Course Offerings

Math Courses

- Thirteen colleges offered 47 math courses in year two, and seven colleges offered 20 math courses in year one.
- Of the 47 total math courses offered in year two, 87% were offered as flexible courses, 28% were taught by instructors with Plus 50 professional development, and 19% were offered as accelerated courses.

Exhibit 10: Math Course Offerings

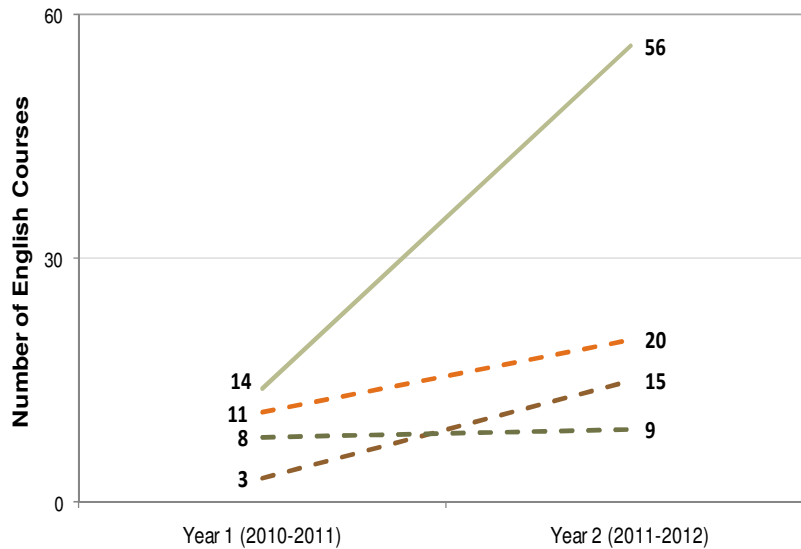


Course Type		Number & Percent of Colleges with this Type of Offering (Math)		Average number of Courses/ Workshops per College (Math)	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Total		7 (100%)	13 (100%)	3	4
Accelerated		7 (100%)	13 (100%)	1	1
Flexible Scheduling		7 (100%)	13 (100%)	2	3
Taught by Instructors with Plus 50 Professional Development		7 (100%)	13 (100%)	1	1

English Courses

- Thirteen colleges offered 56 English courses in year two, and five colleges offered 14 English courses in year one.
- Of the 56 total English courses offered in year two, 36% were offered as flexible courses, 16% were taught by instructors with Plus 50 professional development, and 27% were offered as accelerated courses.

Exhibit 11: English Course Offerings

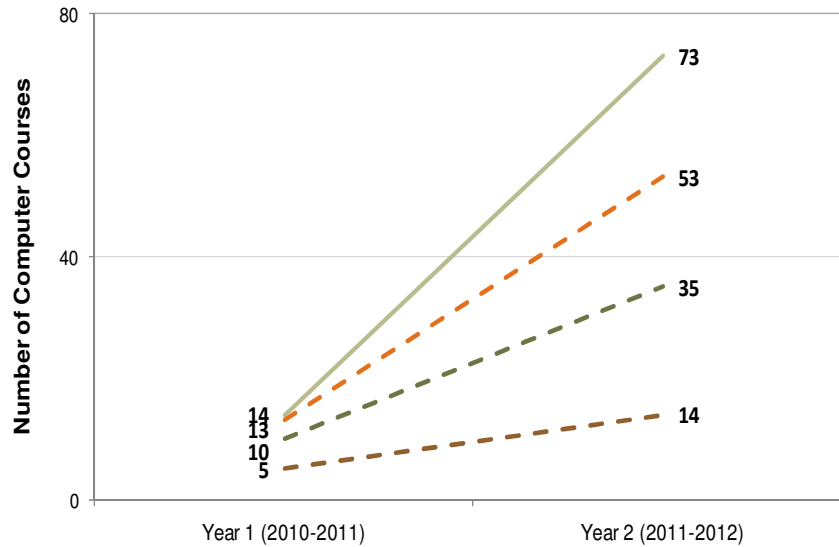


Course Type	Number & Percent of Colleges with this Type of Offering (English)		Average number of Courses/Workshops per College (English)	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Total	5 (100%)	13 (100%)	3	4
Accelerated	5 (100%)	13 (100%)	1	1
Flexible Scheduling	5 (100%)	13 (100%)	2	2
Taught by Instructors with Plus 50 Professional Development	5 (100%)	13 (100%)	2	1

Computer Courses

- Thirteen colleges offered 73 computer courses in year two, and six colleges offered 14 computer courses in year one.
- Of the 73 total computer courses offered in year two, 73% were offered as flexible courses, 48% were taught by instructors with Plus 50 professional development, and 19% were offered as accelerated courses.

Exhibit 12: Computer Course Offerings



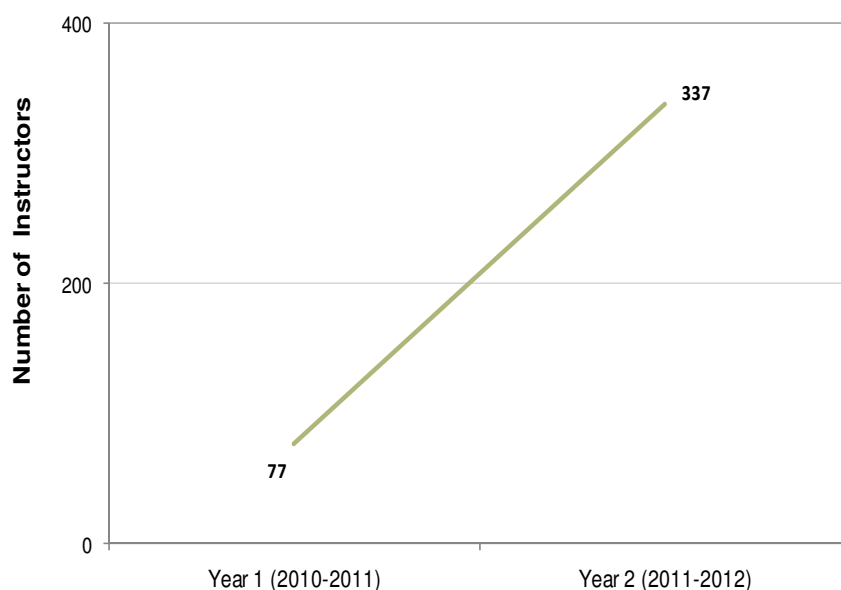
Course Type		Number & Percent of Colleges with this Type of Offering (Computer)		Average number of Courses/Workshops per College (Computer)	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Total		6 (100%)	13 (100%)	2	6
Accelerated		6 (100%)	13 (100%)	2	3
Flexible Scheduling		6 (100%)	13 (100%)	1	4
Taught by Instructors with Plus 50 Professional Development		6 (100%)	13 (100%)	1	1

Professional Development

Plus 50 students have unique learning styles. A component of two-thirds of the colleges' Plus 50 program is specialized professional development opportunities for instructors to learn how to meet the educational needs of Plus 50 students.

- A total of 337 instructors at 12 colleges participated in professional development as a part of the Plus 50 program in year two, compared to 77 instructors at three colleges in year one.
- The per-college average remained about the same: 26 in year one and 28 in year two.

Exhibit 13: Professional Development of Plus 50 Instructors

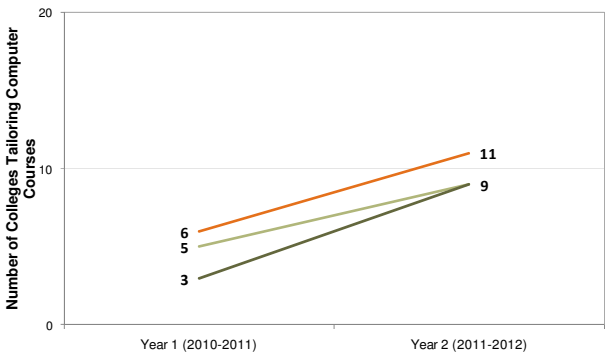
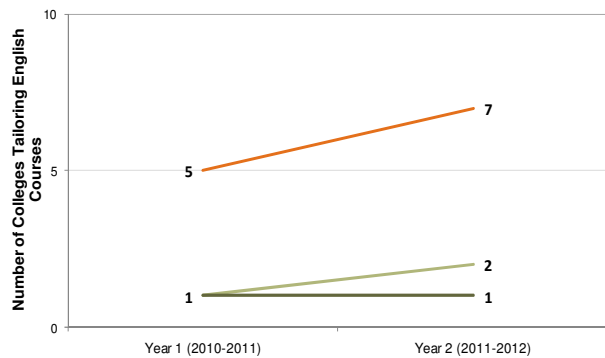
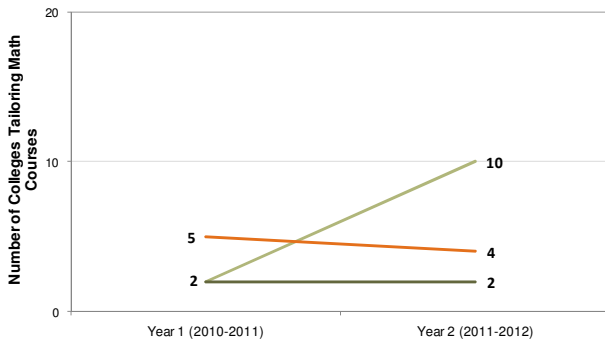


Number & Percent of Colleges with this Type of Offering		Average Number of Instructors per College	
Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
3 (38%)	12 (71%)	26	28

Tailoring Approach

Exhibit 14, on the next page, shows the breakdown of how math, English, and computer courses were tailored to meet the needs of plus 50 students. Courses were newly developed, redesigned, or marketed specifically to plus 50 students.

Exhibit 14: Colleges tailoring Math, English, and Computer Courses



Math Courses

- Ten colleges (59%) developed new math classes for Plus 50 learners in year two, compared to two colleges in year one.
- Two colleges (12%) redesigned math classes to meet the needs of Plus 50 students in year two and year one.
- Four colleges (24%) marketed math courses specifically to Plus 50 learners in year two, compared to five in year one.

English Courses

- Two colleges (12%) developed new English classes for Plus 50 learners in year two, compared to one college in year one.
- One college (6%) redesigned English courses to meet the needs of Plus 50 students in year two and year one.
- Seven colleges (41%) marketed English courses specifically towards Plus 50 learners in year two, compared to five colleges in year one.

Computer Courses

- Nine colleges (53%) developed new computer classes to meet the needs of Plus 50 students in year two, compared to five in year one.
- Nine colleges (53%) redesigned computer courses to meet the needs of Plus 50 students in year two compared, to three colleges in year one.
- In year two, 11 colleges (65%) marketed computer courses specifically towards Plus 50 student, compared to six in year one.

Number of Colleges		Number & Percent of Colleges Providing Information on Tailoring	
		Year 1	Year 2
	Developed New Courses	7 (100%)	17 (100%)
	Redesigned Courses	7 (100%)	17 (100%)
	Marketed Courses	7 (100%)	17 (100%)

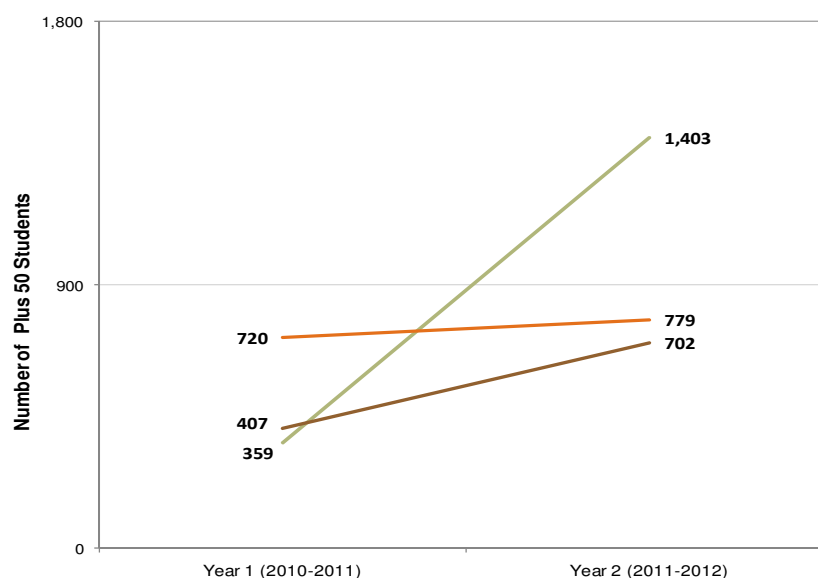
Additional Program Components Supporting Completion and Employment

Support Services

Colleges offered the following tailored support services to Plus 50 students: completion coaches and advisors, financial aid support, and career development workshops. Exhibit 15 shows the number of students benefiting from support services in year one and year two.

- 779 students at 12 colleges were provided **financial aid support** in year two, compared to 720 students at six colleges in year one.
- 1,043 students at 14 colleges were provided **completion coaches** in year two, compared to 359 students at five colleges in year one.
- 702 students at 11 colleges attended **career development workshops** in year two, compared to 407 students at three colleges in year one.

Exhibit 15: Support Services Offered



Type of Support Offered		Percent of Colleges with this Type of Support		Average Number of Students Receiving Support per College	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
	Financial Aid Supports	6 (75%)	12 (71%)	120	65
	Completion Coach/Advisor	5 (63%)	14 (82%)	72	184
	Career Development Workshops	3 (38%)	11 (65%)	136	64

Employer Linkages

Community colleges that are working to support the career growth of their students sometimes work directly with employers or employer groups. Colleges add this program component for a variety of purposes. Some examples are: collaborating with employers on developing curricula; receiving local labor market information on the most valuable skills that employers currently seek; encouraging employers to understand the value of hiring plus 50 employees; and working with employers to place students directly into jobs. By working with employers in these ways, Plus 50 programs help to smooth the transition for program participants from completion to employment.

- 460 employers at eight colleges were part of a formalized employer linkage program in year two, compared to 40 employers at two colleges in year one.

Completion and Employment Outcomes

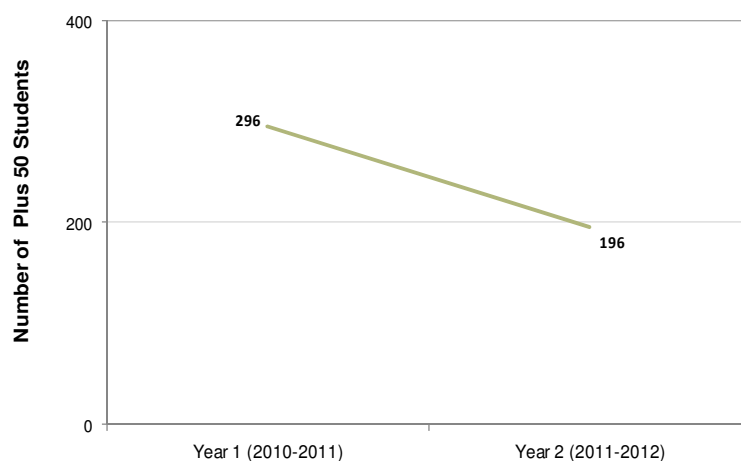
Out of the total number of program participants served, some students reached specific completion milestones. As we reported in Exhibit 7, an estimated 9,292 students were served; the findings below show the subsets attaining completion and employment.

Credit for Prior Learning

Earning credit for prior learning is an essential part of helping Plus 50 students successfully complete their programs.

- In year one, 296 students at seven colleges earned credit for prior learning. In year two, 196 students earned credit for prior learning at 13 colleges.
- 492 Plus 50 students have received credit for prior learning over the past two years.

Exhibit 16: Number of Students Receiving Credit for Prior Learning



Number & Percent of Colleges Offering Credit for Prior Learning		Average Number of Students Receiving Credits for Prior Learning per College		Total Number of Students Receiving Credit for Prior Learning
Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1 & 2
7 (88%)	13 (76%)	43	15	492

Completion Outcomes

For 100% of the 18 participating colleges, Plus 50 students completed degrees, credit certificates, or non-credit certificates in year two. Exhibit 17 shows the breakdown of different types of completion over two years.

Degrees

- In year one 191 students completed degrees at eight colleges. This increased in year two to 616 students completing degrees at 17 colleges. This increase is reflected in the per college average which rose significantly from 24 in year one to 39 in year two.

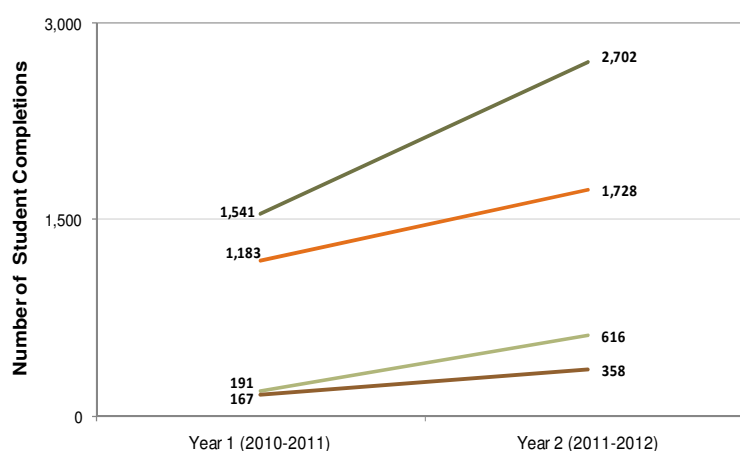
Credit Certificates

- In year one 167 students completed credit certificates at eight colleges. This increased in year two to 358 credit certificates completed at sixteen colleges. The per college average increased from 21 in year one to 24 in year two.

Non-credit Certificates

- In year one, 1,183 students completed non-credit certificates at four colleges. In year two, 1,728 students completed non-credit certificates at sixteen colleges. The per college average decreased from 296 to 115 between year one and year two.

Exhibit 17: Number of Students Completing Degrees and Certificates

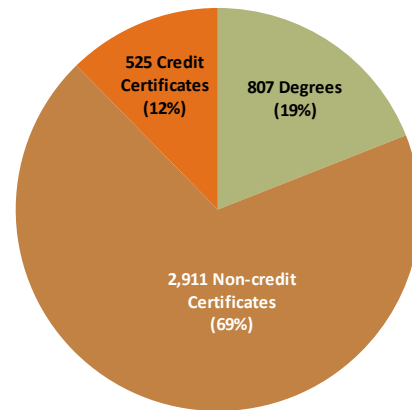


Completion	Number & Percent of Colleges Offering Degrees and Certificates		Average Number of Student Completions	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Total Completions	8 (100%)	18 (100%)	193	159
Degrees	8 (100%)	17 (94%)	24	39
Credit Certificates	8 (100%)	16 (89%)	21	24
Non-credit Certificates	4 (50%)	16 (89%)	296	115

Exhibit 18 provides information about the 4,243 completions awarded over the two years of the completion strategy:

- 807 degrees were awarded (19%).
- 2,911 non-credit certificates were awarded (69%).
- 525 credit certificates were awarded (12%).

**Exhibit 18: Completions over Two Years:
Total of 4,243 Completions**



Employment Outcomes

Nine colleges have tracked employment outcomes. These colleges have counted **400 Plus 50 students securing employment since leaving the program.** This number is an undercount, even for this sub-set of colleges: most colleges do not have access to an employment database, and so must use individual follow-up by online or phone survey to determine employment outcomes. With generally low response rates with these methods, colleges are missing many former students who are employed.