



***redefine what's possible***

## **Central Ohio Technical College 2021-2023 Completion Plan**

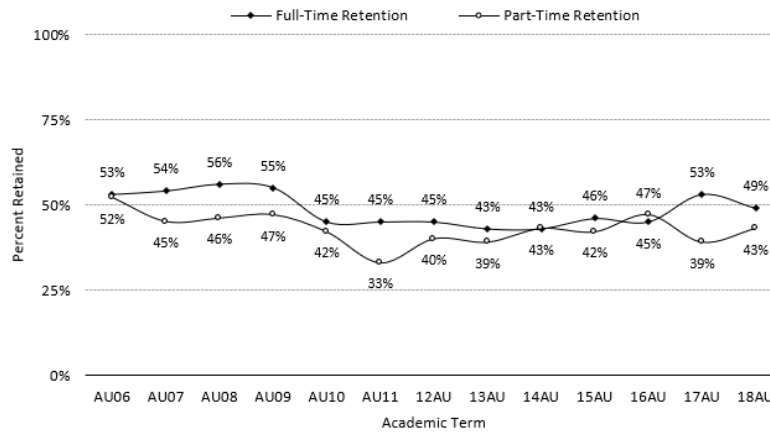
Approved by the COTC Board of Trustees on: November 17, 2020

**Central Ohio Technical College** is undertaking a definitive shift in how we guide, support, teach, and care for our students. The following biennial completion plan reflects the strategic goals of the institution during this two-year period. Additionally, the goals within this plan are aligned to the college's current strategic framework. At its core, this completion plan is our roadmap for how we will improve our service to students, help them stay on track, and ultimately move them towards a successful graduation.

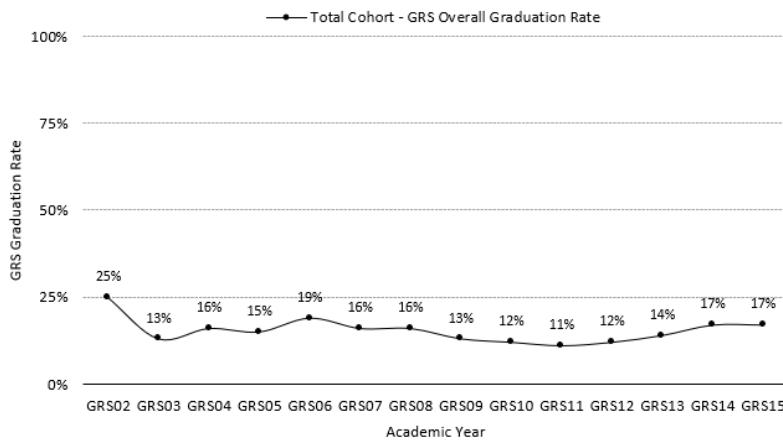
The Provost Office has embarked on a new way of identifying how the college will achieve its completion and persistence goals. Using a framework from the book *The Four Disciplines of Execution* the college has identified two equally important *Wildly Important Goals* or WIGs. Each of these WIGs will drive decision making throughout this plan cycle and beyond. COTC's *Wildly Important Goals for 2021-2023* are:

- **Improve Part-time Student Retention by 7%**
- **Improve Overall Student Completion by 10%**

**COTC's IPEDS Full- and Part-time Autumn-to-Autumn Retention Trend:**



**COTC's IPEDS Entering Cohort Graduation Rate:**



The college will monitor its progress of each WIG in real-time through the use of internally created scoreboards. Each area will monitor their success and will be responsible for ensuring that faculty and staff have the tools they need in order to meet the WIGs.

This completion plan will be broken out into four sections in accordance with the Ohio Department of Education's Completion Plan template. Each section will include the overarching goal with additional sub-goals. A narrative accompanies each of the four sections.



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**Section One:**

## Connection to Our Students

COTC will continue our focus on onboarding students into easily identifiable pathways to encourage student retention and completion. We will achieve this by following nationally recognized best practices for student onboarding and success. COTC will strive to follow research from the Community College Research Center (CCRC) to ensure that the most important areas are both top of mind and in focus. According to CCRC, Community Colleges *“are replacing what is often a set of disconnected and optional activities with a coherent series of curricular and co-curricular experiences that enable students to explore program options; network with faculty, students, and industry professionals in fields of interest; take program-specific courses; and create an educational plan that they and their advisors can use to monitor progress toward completion.”*<sup>1</sup>

**Action Steps:**

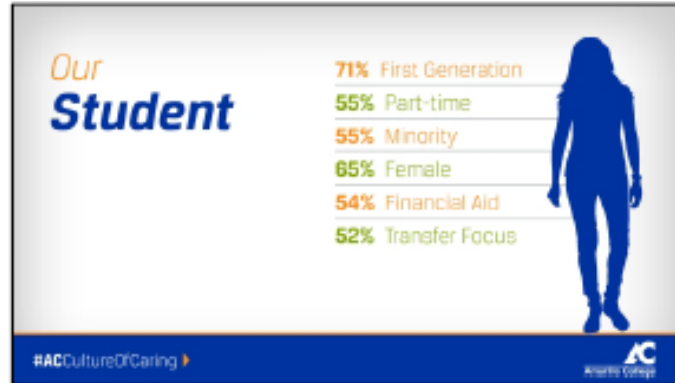
1. COTC will continue to increase focus on upfront and active advising for both new and returning students. The admissions team will also be more active in reaching out to students who have indicated interest but not yet registered. The admissions team will use of a new dashboard to drive communication to students who have not yet registered. This process will occur throughout the year.
  - a. The college will continue to require mandatory advising check-ins for new students as well as increasing steps taken to identify students who are struggling and need additional assistance.
  - b. The college will continue to improve the online and in-person orientation modules for new students in effort to sure up potential issues with retention and completion.
2. COTC will develop a student persona that identifies who our students look like. This persona will be distributed widely to our internal audience. The persona will be looked upon to help us make decisions by always focusing on who our students are and what they are asking of us.

| Autumn 2019 Degree/Certificate Student Characteristics | Percent of Student Body |
|--|-------------------------|
| Part-time  | 71%                     |
| Female   | 73%                     |
| Under 24 Years Old                                     | 53%                     |
| 25 Years and Older                                     | 47%                     |
| White  | 71%                     |
| Black  | 13%                     |
| Health Technology-Related Program                      | 59%                     |

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<sup>1</sup> CCRC Report on Community College Student Onboarding Through Guided Pathways  
<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/redesigning-community-college-onboarding-guided-pathways.html>

COTC is Developing Our Persona Based on Amarillo College's Culture of Caring Report<sup>2</sup>



3. COTC will place an emphasis on serving adult learners. This will include changing and adapting our academic delivery styles to include more flexible learning solutions for those with families or working full-time jobs. These new deliveries will focus on online, hybrid, competency-based, and flexible start date strategies.
  - a. By the end of the 2021-2023 completion plan, COTC strives to have the following:
    - i. Increase the number of courses offered online by 50% with at least 20% of our programs offered completely or mostly online.
    - ii. At least four full competency-based education (CBE) programs. These programs would allow students to move at their own pace and accelerate and decelerate as needed.
    - iii. Offer more than 50% of our courses in a hybrid or hy-flex model.
    - iv. Continue to grow our offerings of second-term courses to include general-education and programmatic specific courses. This would allow students who miss the start of any semester to enroll at the mid-way point and still stay on track towards completion of a certificate or degree.

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<sup>2</sup> Amarillo College's Culture of Caring  
<https://www.actx.edu/president/culture-of-caring>

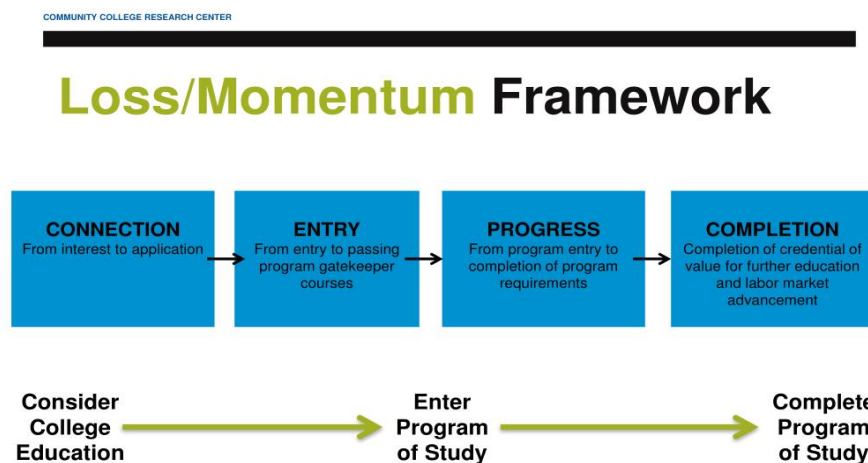
## Section Two

### First Year Entry

COTC will continue our focus of ensuring our students can start with college-level courses immediately upon starting their educational journey. Within the two-year cycle of this plan, COTC will eliminate all stand-alone developmental education courses and move towards a complete co-requisite model. The college is currently running co-requisite courses in both mathematics and English and will continue to develop those models to achieve their full potential.

Additionally, students at COTC will be guided by a more structured approach to their educational goals. This will include an enhanced focus on the college's current guided pathways efforts and will involve academic affairs, enrollment management, advising, and admissions teams.

Lastly, the college will overhaul its current academic program evaluation model for one that values career placement and/or transfer to a 4-year institution.



#### Action Steps:

1. Improve current co-req model to achieve equity and eliminate equity gaps among completion rates for students of color and underserved students. The college aims for a 10% overall achievement increase during the two-year period.
2. COTC's Academic Deans will work with program leads to develop a new academic program evaluation model. The model will include yearly check-in's as well as three and five-year benchmarks to ensure that the program is meeting goals and serving students to the fullest extent possible.

3. COTC will assess the current state of the guided pathways project and finish its implementation during this two-year cycle.
  
4. Remove all remedial Math and English standalone courses. Following recommendations from the California Acceleration Project, Strong Start to Finish, and OACC's Student Success Leadership Institute, all students will be placed into appropriate co-req courses for remediation.

**Section Three**

**Student Progression**

COTC will remake its completion and retention plan process. As noted in the opening of this document, the college is laser focused on improving both part-time student retention and overall student completion. We will meet this goal by demonstrating an unwavering commitment to do whatever is needed to help our students persist and complete.

COTC will again lean heavily on research from CCRC with regard to early momentum metrics. A 2019 brief found *“that early momentum metrics do predict longer term success for students. They also find that a key factor in low completion rates, as well as in equity gaps in completion rates, is that many students do not gain early momentum in their first year. College outcomes would be substantially higher if more students met early momentum metrics. These findings indicate the need for comprehensive reforms to community college organization and practice to help more students gain early momentum on their way to earning a credential.”*<sup>3</sup>

**Early Momentum Metrics for COTC:**

| First-Time College Student Cohort Rates        | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | Fall 2018 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Did Not Enroll in Dev Ed                       | 17%       | 21%       | 26%       | 34%       | 40%       | 50%       |
| Attempted 12+ Credits First Semester           | 40%       | 50%       | 51%       | 50%       | 50%       | 54%       |
| Earned 24 Credits in Year 1                    | 9%        | 13%       | 15%       | 15%       | 19%       | 22%       |
| Passed College English in Year 1               | 43%       | 42%       | 51%       | 51%       | 53%       | 50%       |
| Passed College Math in Year 1                  | 17%       | 27%       | 26%       | 32%       | 33%       | 37%       |
| Passed Both College Math and English in Year 1 | 14%       | 22%       | 23%       | 27%       | 27%       | 32%       |
| Persisted from Term 1 to Term 2                | 72%       | 70%       | 72%       | 72%       | 70%       | 69%       |

**Action Steps**

1. All areas, including but not limited to, the Provost staff, faculty, Institutional Research & Effectiveness, and the Gateway will closely monitor their WIG scoreboard. Adjustments will be made quickly to ensure that the college is doing all it can to meet the WIGs.
2. Using CCRC best practices, COTC will implement new early momentum tools to help in identifying students who may need intervention.
  - a. The college will utilize the National Student Clearinghouse’s Post-Secondary Data Partnership data dashboard (PDP) to help successfully implement the recommendations from CCRC.
3. COTC will identify the best EdTech solutions, in conjunction with our partner College Innovation Network, to ensure we have the best technology to meet and help our students where they are. There are no costs associated with this project for the next two years.

<sup>3</sup> CCRC Research Brief: Early Momentum Metrics: Leading Indicators for Community College Improvement  
<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/early-momentum-metrics-leading-indicators.html>



## Section Four

### Completion

The ultimate goal of any college should be the successful completion of their students. Specifically, the state of Ohio places heavy emphasis among its community and technical colleges to ensure that students finish the programs they start. However, without a comprehensive plan in place to guide students from start to finish, the pathway to success is often rife with stop outs, false starts, or in the worst-case students dropping out and not returning. COTC intends to redefine how we guide students through to completion. This plan has lined out how we intend to do so.

It is vitally important that COTC communicate to all its stakeholders that this is not just another initiative or project. Rather, we are changing the way in which we do what we do. Plain and simple, this plan is who we are and what we do. It is not just another plan that will collect dust on a bookshelf. This plan will be front and center to all faculty and staff and it will inform all the decisions we make as it relates to student success and completion.

#### **Action Steps:**

1. COTC will improve our overall student completion rate within the next two years. We will achieve this goal by doing the following:
  - a. Increased emphasis on early alert systems
  - b. Intrusive and required advising for students who are struggling as well as those students who are considered at-risk of academic failure.
  - c. Comprehensive faculty on-boarding focusing on the faculty members role in retention and completion
  - d. Partner with Achieving the Dream to introduce steps to reduce equity gaps across the college
2. COTC will increase the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) by 10% by 2023. Though the research to this area is new, there are promising studies indicating that OER can help students with course and program success by providing textbooks and low or no cost<sup>4</sup>. We will achieve this goal by doing the following:
  - a. Academic Deans working with Faculty to promote OER usage.
  - b. Peer to peer faculty workshops and training on how to move from traditional textbooks to OER.
3. COTC will become an Achieving the Dream (ATD) member college in 2021. ATD will help COTC achieve its ambitious retention and completion goals by providing strategic and focused coaching while utilizing industry recognized best practices in addressing course

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<sup>4</sup> *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*: A multi-institutional study of the impact of open textbook adoption on the learning outcomes of post-secondary students. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12528-015-9101-x>

4. delivery, content, and design with an eye on improving success for all students, regardless of race, class, socioeconomic, or prior family college attendance status.