

Adult Learners Solution Team  
Project Proposal  
LEAP 2018-2019

LEAP Solution Team

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## I. Problematique

The 2018-2019 Academic Year has been one of immense institutional challenge for College of the Canyons. Emanating primarily from Sacramento, College of the Canyons faces two distinct but interrelated mandates: Guided Pathways and the Student-Centered Funding Formula. Guided Pathways asks community colleges to streamline their educational offerings, exemplified through meta-majors, and expand student services implicitly, in order to lessen student recidivism and increase student time to completion. The Student-Centered Funding Formula, on the other hand, completely alters the means by which the State of California funds its community college system. While it is unclear how much of, and for how long, the new Student-Centered Funding Formula will last, it is likely that some kind of performance-based funding model is here to stay. Prior to the advent of the Student-Centered Funding Formula, College of the Canyon's general fund was funded entirely through FTES, or student enrollment. The Student-Centered Funding Formula, however, separates general allocation money into three distinct categories: FTES, an allocation based on Pell Grant recipients, Promise Grant recipients, and AB 540 students, and the new Student Success Allocation. The Student Success Allocation is of particular concern, as its portion finances districts according to student performance metrics. Students who earn degrees and certificates, satisfy key progress milestones, and students who transfer all comprise subsets of this outcome-based funding approach. If the Student Success Allocation composes ten percent of College of the Canyons' general fund in the current Academic Year, its share of general fund revenue is projected to double in two years. Not only has the State of California reduced FTES allocation to eventually 30 percent of prior funding levels, but the remaining 30 percent of general fund allocation is not guaranteed to community

college districts either. Districts who have a small proportion AB 540 or Pell/Promise Grant receiving students, as well as those whose students do not conform to the State of California's definition of success, will receive a decreasing share of base allocation. Given that the Santa Clarita College District has less AB 540 and Pell/Promise grant receiving students than neighboring districts through no fault of its own, focusing efforts on both FTES and the Student Success Allocation portends to be the only way for College of the Canyons to increase general fund revenue in the present and future. If Guided Pathways provides the institutional framework for California Community Colleges to obtain similar or larger amount of base allocation via Student Success, the Adult Learner demographic lies at the confluence of both.

Just as the State of California has traditionally funded its community college system through student enrollment, College of the Canyons has largely focused on one student demographic. The 18-24 student demographic, comprised of those students in-between high school and a two year degree, a certificate, or a four year college, has historically been targeted as the primary means to grow. Santa Clarita has contained a growing traditional student population, and College of the Canyons has focused its programs on attracting, retaining, and completing this kind of student. This is not to say that students outside of the 18-24 demographic have not been of concern, as College of the Canyons previously had a PACE program, and the District is energetically trying to expand its Dual-Enrollment program in local high schools. However, currently the PACE program is largely defunct, and institutionally students older than 24 are neglected. A greater focus on Adult Learners can demonstrate that there are other ways to grow beyond the below-24 demographic. For equity, financial, and outcome imperatives, the Adult Learner demographic needs to be brought in from the margins, in order to achieve student and institutional success.

Though lacking an institutional focus, Adult Learners do comprise a significant proportion of College of the Canyons' student demographic. Utilizing data from Fall 2017, the Adult Learner population comprises nearly 40 percent of College of the Canyons' student body, including ISA students, with sixty percent between the ages of 25-34. Excluding ISA's, Adult Learners comprise 26 percent of students at College of the Canyons. Seventy-two percent of Adult Learners are Part-Time students, as only 17 percent are Full-Time, and 11 percent are Noncredit students. The vast majority of this non-traditional population either have never attended college before, or are Freshmen and Sophomores without a college degree. While the largest Adult Learner educational goal is to obtain an associate's degree and transfer to a four-year institution by far, Non-Traditional students are more focused on their educational goals than their younger counterparts. Since female students comprise 58 percent of the Adult Learner demographic, women are a larger percentage of Adult Learners than female traditional students. Compared to traditional students, Adult Learners contain a larger percentage of African American, Native American, and White students, but have a smaller percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander, Latin/x, and multiracial students. While over a third of Adult Learners enrolled at College of the Canyons are from outside of the District, over 1/5 come from Canyon Country, 11 percent are from Newhall, nearly 15 percent reside in Valencia/SC, 13 percent live in Saugus, while 5 percent each reside in from Castaic, Newhall, and Stevenson Ranch. A large percentage of Adult Learners at College of the Canyons reside in areas below the median household income for the District.<sup>1</sup> This more mature, predominantly female, and overwhelmingly Part-Time facet of the College of the Canyons student body likely has greater responsibilities outside of school, and therefore deserves greater commitment from the District towards their educational success.

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<sup>1</sup> The median household income for Santa Clarita as a whole is \$103,725.68. Internal to the District, the median household income for Newhall is \$75,436.80, \$87,655.23 for Canyon Country, \$111,047.18 for Castaic, \$120,027.80 for Saugus, \$123,711.66 for Stevenson Ranch, and \$111,821.14 for Valencia.

Despite the fact that Adult Learners are such a large demographic who attend College of the Canyons, their success is lacking in comparison to traditional students. Based on Fall 2017 figures, the Adult Learner retention rate is 70 percent, as contrasted to 78 percent for 18-24 students. Similarly the Adult Learner success rate is 59 percent compared to 65 percent for Traditional Students. Yet, this relative deficiency in regards to Adult Learners cannot be approached in the same fashion as Traditional Students, given that Adult Learners are less attuned to the traditional class schedule. While over 50 percent of 18-24 students take day classes, only 40 percent of Adult Learners attend classes at that time. Similarly over 30 percent of Traditional Students attend both Day and Evening classes, while less than 20 percent of Adult attend both. However, Adult Learners choose to focus on evening and online courses in greater proportion to Traditional Students. Though 10 percent of Traditional Students take night courses, 31 percent of Adult Learners attend evening classes. Similarly 10 percent of Adult Learners only take online courses, in comparison to 6 percent of 18-24 students. Adult Learners, therefore, are less likely to be committed to the traditional class schedule, and are either less flexible and/or more focused as to which course timetable best suits their needs. Attempts to improve Adult Learner retention and success must be cognizant of the fact that Adult Learners are often not on campus at the same time as Traditional Students, and have less flexibility in their schedule to access campus resources.

Given the relative precarity of Adult Learners, their tendency to choose an unconventional course schedule, and a more inflexible schedule compared to traditional students, the dearth of resources for Adult Learners is quite apparent. Counseling is only open until 7 pm on Tuesdays, meaning a student who only take evening courses on Mondays and Wednesday cannot see a counselor. Admissions and Records is open after 5 pm only on Tuesdays and

Thursdays, so a student who only take evening courses on Mondays and Wednesday cannot visit their office. The cafeteria serves from until 4:30 pm Monday through Thursday, and Subway is open until 6 pm. Adult Learners who primarily take evening courses have no fresh food options available to them, both the cafeteria and Subway are closed on Fridays, and no fresh food services are open on the Saturdays though a few courses are in session. The lack of facilities and student services available to Adult Learners can be considered a barrier to Non-Traditional student success, and should be alleviated in order to ensure the retention and graduation of this rather large, but often overlooked, body of students at College of the Canyons.

By redefining the meaning of success, both Guided Pathways and the Student-Centered Funding Formula ask California Community Colleges to do more. Primarily by utilizing existing resources, College of the Canyons can accomplish its Guided Pathways goals, and also potentially grow both in terms of FTES and Student Success Metrics, by meeting the needs of Adult Learners. With this Project Proposal, the Adult Learners Solution Team will outline a brief survey of how other community colleges have developed programs for Adult Learners. A Proposed Operational Plan, as well as a potential Management and Organization Plan, will be offered subsequent to the comparative study. The data used to understand the place of Adult Learners at College of the Canyons, as well as outline the need for efforts on their behalf, will round out this proposal. The Adult Learners Solution Team believes that accommodating Adult Learners is more about attentiveness, consideration, and concern, than increasing the budget. The Adult Learners Solution Team predominantly proposes to extend services and resources already offered at College of the Canyons, not create new Programs or Departments. Doing so would only accentuate the success of Adult Learners, hopefully lead to the growth of the Adult Learner demographic, and help College of the Canyons meet its success goals. These proposals emanate

from the realization that there is not one, by many, kinds of students who attend College of the Canyons.



## II. Comparative Survey

The Adult Learner LEAP Solution Team reviewed existing community college programs committed to Adult Learners order to obtain an understanding as to potential solutions. Utilizing both oral interviews and research, the Adult Learner LEAP Solution Team learned of myriad ways in which community colleges currently engaged Adult Learners. The Adult Learner LEAP Solution Team formally interviewed Antoinette Chavez, Adult Learning Coordinator at Foothill College in Los Altos. Through a conference call, the Adult Learners Solutions Team learned of variegated, yet essential, role that Antoinette Chavez plays for her district's substantial Adult Learner population. Fundamentally, Antoinette Chavez's role as Adult Learning Coordinator is to recruit and maintain Adult Learners on their pathway, and to connect Adult Learners with resources on and off campus. Like College of the Canyons, the Adult Learner population Antoinette Chavez supports is motley- from veterans, students taking ESL classes, and those with master's degrees. Antoinette Chavez's goal is to help Adult Learners self-actualize their educational experience at Foothill College, which is often new and difficult for this student demographic. The emotional support expressed for Adult Learners necessitates a large degree of handholding, but this is essential in order to retain this specific student demographic. As an example, Antoinette Chavez often physically walks Adult Learners to the campus resources they need. Antoinette Chavez's presence and support conveys to Adult Learners As the resident point person from Adult Learners, the Adult Learning Coordinator supports students both academically and emotionally.

As the on-campus Adult Learning Coordinator, Antoinette Chavez is aided by the physical support given to her by Foothill College. For office space, Antoinette Chavez is provided with a smart classroom which has a small office, where she conducts workshops and

trainings. One-on-one and phone interviews are conducted in the Adult Learning Coordinator office. The office and instructional space was allocated to Antoinette Chavez by the Foothill College administration after the Adult Learning Coordinator position had been created.

Antoinette Chavez's role is greatly facilitated by Foothill College's own Adult Learners. She oversees anywhere from 50 to 150 student ambassadors who act as peer mentors in support of Adult Learners on a walk-in basis. Antoinette Chavez refers students to disability resources and EOPS through her office. Besides providing support for on-campus resources, Antoinette Chavez helps Adult Learners navigate the seemingly byzantine problems of residency and financial aid. The Adult Learning Coordinator assists students with pre-rec clearance, FAFSA applications, AB-540 paperwork, residency requirements, and the DREAM Act. In doing so Antoinette Chavez alleviates the frustration many Adult Learners have in attempting to maintain their existence as students.

On the academic side, Antoinette Chavez helps Foothill College Adult Learners choose and situate themselves into their respective learning path. Foothill College does not segregate Adult Learners from Traditional students, nor do they pedagogically differentiate Adult Learners from 18-24 students in the classroom. Instead Adult Learners are academically treated equitable to Traditional students, irrespective of their age. At Foothill College Adult Learners are usually clustered based on their major, meaning their educational and social commonalities come to be based on their major. Prior to being accepted into a cluster, Adult Learners at Foothill College take the same general education classes together. Antoinette Chavez has come to recognize that Adult Learners consequently form cohorts organically. Institutionally, Foothill College is optimally organized to facilitate Adult Learners. Adult Learners have the flexibility to take on-site, hybrid, and online courses, with essential campus resources open late. Since Foothill

College normally has lab class that end at 10:30 pm, the dining hall is open until 10 pm weekdays. The tutoring center and library are open late Monday through Friday, with the former open on Saturdays and Sundays as well. Admissions and Records is open until 7 pm twice a week, and the counseling office offers online and phone appoints for Adult Learners who cannot make regular office hours. Antoinette Chavez observed that the Foothill College campus is booming late, partially due to its academic and student service accommodation to Adult Learners. Since 42 to 50 percent of Foothill College's students have been Adult Learners over the last 5 years, this service to Adult Learners, fundamentally supported by the college's Adult Learning Coordinator, has been essential to maintain FTES levels as well as fulfill equity obligations. The Adult Learner Solutions Team conducted informal interviews, supplementing the Antoinette Chavez conference call, with current Adult Learners at College of the Canyons as well.

In addition to oral interviews, the Adult LEAP Solution Team researched out of state programs relevant to Adult Learners. Capital Community College in Connecticut and Utah Valley University were researched, revealing that they collectively offer a diverse array of programs specifically for Adult Learners. Utah Valley University offers Turning Point, consisting of courses and consultations which support, educate, and empower Adult Learners during various life transitions. Events such as divorce, relationship challenges, emotional and psychological issues, and unemployment are addressed by offering courses and workshops, one-on-one consultations), and clothing sources. One-on-one consultations are utilized to assist such students of need, who can predominate the Adult Learner demographic, plan to help achieve their goals. Capital Community College's Financial Independence to Reach Success and Transformation (FIRST) Center supports students and community members with reaching their

financial goals through a mix of education and hands-on services. In partnership with several Hartford area non-profits, the FIRST Center offers Adult Learners money management classes, budget coaching, and paid internship programs directly linked to associate's degrees and certificates. Mentoring and coaching from business professionals, integrated into the FIRST Center, potentially leads to employment with partner companies such as Travellers Insurance. Both Capital Community College and Utah Valley University use their websites to message Adult Learners. Images clearly evince over-24 people, and most websites were modern, clean, and relatively easy to navigate. Oral interviews and research provided the Adult Learner Solutions Team an understanding of the means by which community colleges target, retain, and complete Adult Learners. Irrespective of the particular community colleges, they all perceive Adult Learners to be an essential part of their mission, and tailor programs as such. In formulating a Proposed Operation Plan, the Adult Learner Solutions Team will integrate many ideas from comparative institutions into what could potentially be relevant to College of the Canyons. Ideas for this comparative survey not explicitly utilized in subsequent sections could potentially be used to grow future services and programs targeting Adult Learners.

### III. Proposed Operational Plan

In order to better accommodate College of the Canyons' Adult Learners, as well as guide them on the path to success, the Adult Learner Solutions Team proposes to target three distinct but interrelated aspects of College of the Canyons. Largely by redirecting and or/modestly enhancing existing resources, Student Services, physical resources, and information could more effectively support Adult Learners cohesively. Concerning Student services, at the core of our plan is the creation of an Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator. This proposed new position would specifically act as a go-person who would specifically help Adult Learners access resources. The Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator would collaborate with all programs and services and oversee peer mentors who would help workflow on a walk-in basis. Further details on potential costs and duties of this new position are in the following section. In addition to a potential Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator, we propose that business hours for Counseling and Admissions and Records should be expanded. Due to the fact that Adult Learners often take evening courses outside of Tuesdays, we propose both offices be open until 7 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the very least. With regards to physical resources, we believe a modest outlay of spatial resources would greatly benefit Tradition and Adult Learners as well. An office/smart classroom should be fashioned in order to house Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator and provide functional space. Increased food options should be offered after 6 pm during the week, and on weekends. It is likely that the new Coffee Kiosk location in the Student Center will offer food from 6-8 pm Mondays-Thursdays when it opens. We believe there should be greater vending options, in part to accommodate Adult Learners. A larger number of self-service coffee machines evenly disbursed throughout the Valencia campus would benefit students when Coffee Kiosk, the cafeteria, and the bookstore are closed. If, in the future,

the District decides to advance its programs for Adult Learners, we believe offering on-site babysitting for Adult Learners could reduce a major barrier to entry for this demographic. With an understanding that District has a vending contract through PepsiCo, potentially options could be explored to diversify offerings to include healthier options and snacks. With respect to information, simple changes in messaging could possibly go a long way to attract and retain Adult Learners. Overall, school websites should be clean, modern, updated, and easy to navigate. College of the Canyons websites should have images of students outside of the Traditional 18-24 demographic. With more attention paid to Adult Learners, could also more clearly state Adult Learner life stages on relevant District homepages. Such as careers, re-careering, divorce, single parenting, and moving to Santa Clarita could better connect with existing and future Adult Learners.

#### IV. Organizational Structure

As outlined above, the Adult Learners Solutions Team believes that ensuring access and opportunity for Adult Learners is more about enhancing existing resources, rather than creating new departments or programs. Increasing the hours Counseling and Admissions and Records are open can be supplemented by Part-Time employees if Full-Time employees have no desire to work past 5 in the evening. One can assume that increasing vending options will in the very least incur no additional cost to the District. The one exception proffered by the Adult Learner Solution Team that would necessitate relatively substantial investment by the District would be the creation of an Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator position. We envision this would be a 72.5 percent position, initially at Step II, Range 36. The potential Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator work schedule and demands would depend on the needs of the District's Adult Learners, but should be flexible by definition. With expenses in addition to base salary, the Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator position would approximately cost College the Canyons an additional \$65, 618 per year. Given that the District already receives \$400,000 per year from the Adult Education Block Grant, this increased expense could possibly be offset by redirecting some funds from this grant, rather than from the general fund. With regard to organization structure, it is likely that the Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator position would be housed somewhere under the umbrella of Student Services as a Classified position. As a large percentage of Adult Learners at College of the Canyons emanate from the Canyon area, we envision this position would regularly float between the Valencia and Canyon Country campuses. Though the proposed Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator would not be a negligible increased cost to the District, we believe this new position would be requisite to effectively serve the relatively large number of Adult Learners, promote equity, implement

Guided Pathways directives, and would generate revenue for the District in the medium and long term. As such, we believe a potential Adult Learning Student Services Coordinator should be seen as an investment in College of the Canyons as a whole, and not just simply as an increased expense.



V. Data

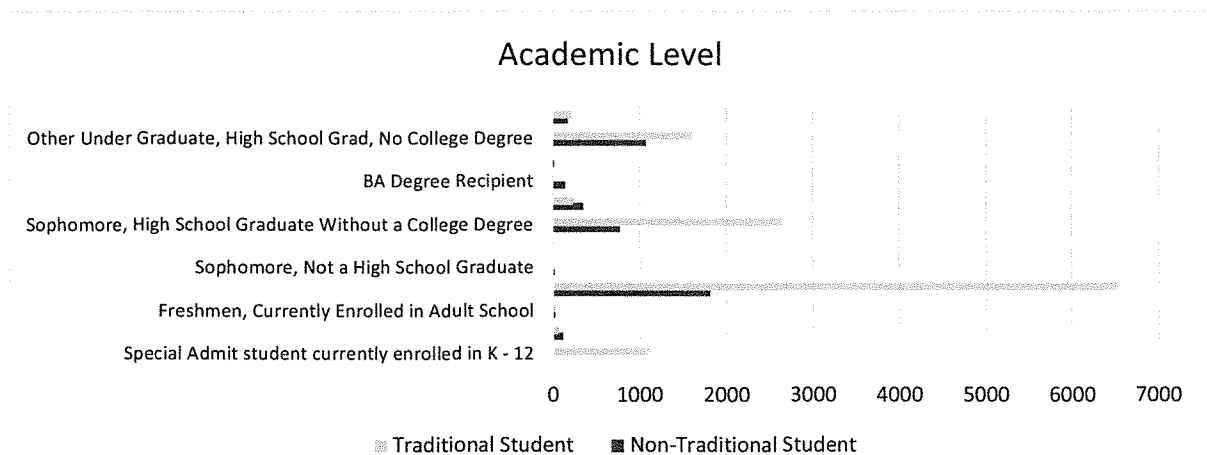
**Table 1. Fall 2017 Community of Residence: Non-Traditional and Traditional Students (Number and Percentage)**

Community of Residence	Non-Traditional Student		Traditional	
	N	%	N	%
Canyon Country	963	21%	2316	19%
Castaic	270	6%	725	6%
Newhall	335	7%	849	7%
Saugus	516	11%	1635	13%
Stevenson Ranch	155	3%	613	5%
Valencia/SC	648	14%	1773	14%
Out of District	1629	36%	4579	37%
<b>Total In-District</b>	<b>2887</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>7911</b>	<b>63%</b>

**Table 2. Fall 2017 Academic Level at Enrollment: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Number)**

Academic Level	Non-Traditional Student	Traditional Student
Special Admit student currently enrolled in K - 12	0	1111
Freshmen, Not a High School Graduate	110	64
Freshmen, Currently Enrolled in Adult School	19	20
Freshmen, High School Graduate Without a College Degree	1812	6530
Sophomore, Not a High School Graduate	15	13
Sophomore, Currently Enrolled in Adult School	2	6
Sophomore, High School Graduate Without a College Degree	783	2652
AA Degree Recipient	357	243
BA Degree Recipient	148	8
Other Under Graduate, Not a High School Graduate	11	9
Other Under Graduate, High School Grad, No College Degree	1079	1616
Unknown	180	218

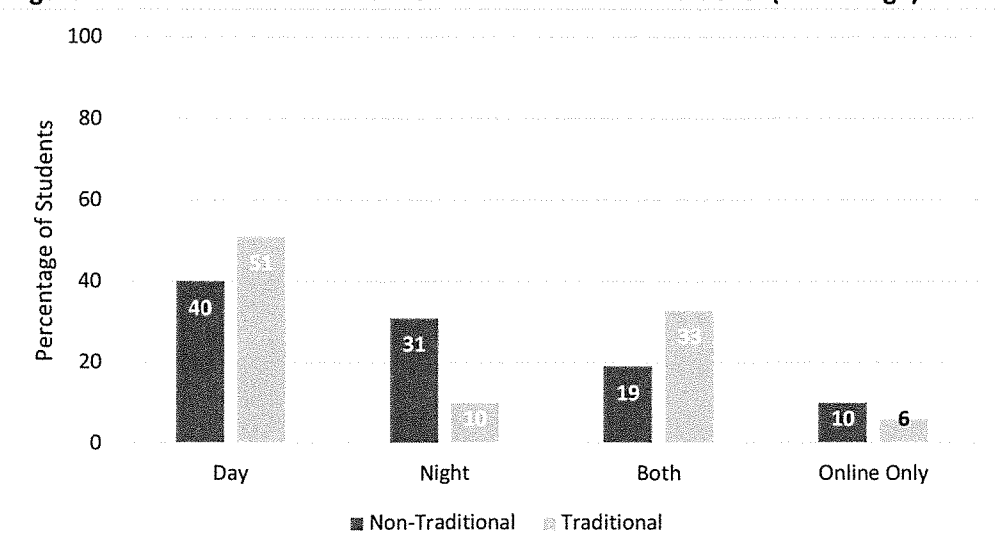
**Figure 1. Fall 2017 Academic Level at Enrollment: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Percentage)**



**Table 3. Fall 2017 Time of Class: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Number and Percentage)**

Time of Class	Non-Traditional Student		Traditional Student	
	N	%	N	%
Day	1793	40%	6340	51%
Night	1412	31%	1293	10%
Both	848	19%	4168	33%
Online Only	449	10%	689	6%

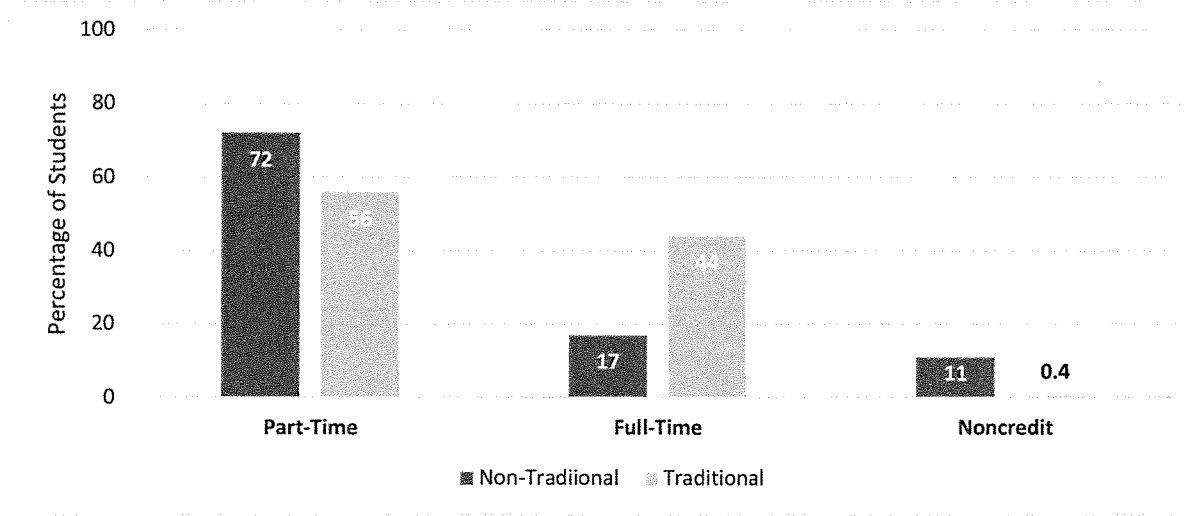
**Figure 2. Fall 2017 Time of Class: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Percentage)**



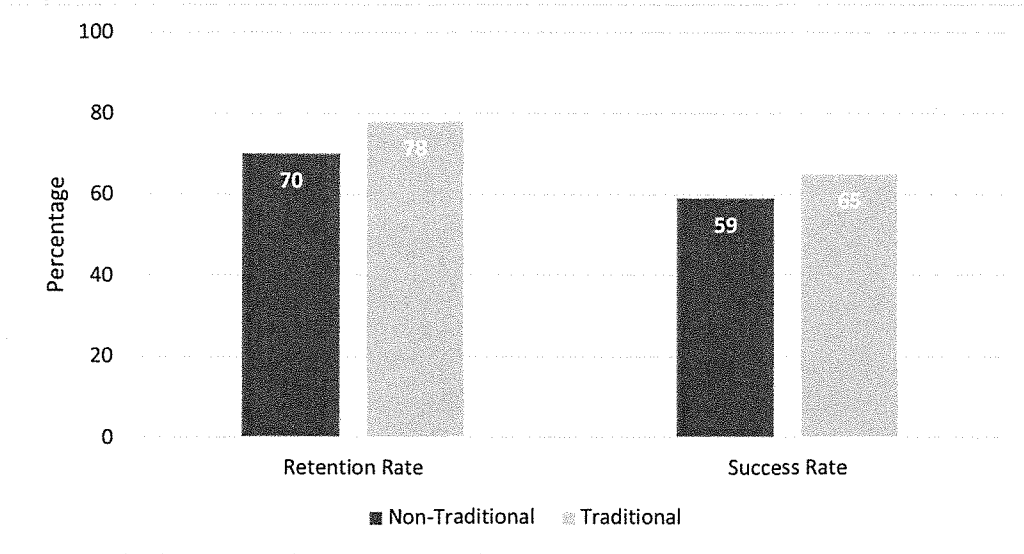
**Table 4. Enrollment Status: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Number and Percentage)**

Enrollment Status	Non-Traditional Student		Traditional Student	
	N	%	N	%
Part-Time	3250	72%	6943	56%
Full-Time	776	17%	5499	44%
Noncredit	490	11%	48	0.38%

**Figure 3. Enrollment Status: Non-Traditional and Traditional ( Percentage)**



**Figure 4. Fall 2017 Retention and Success Rates: Non-Traditional and Traditional Students**



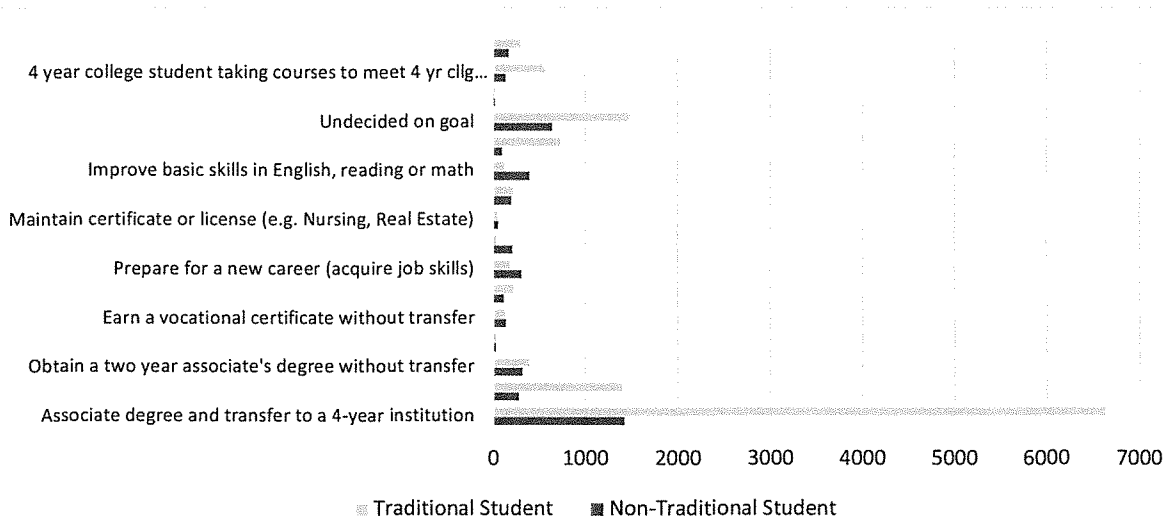
**Table 5. Special Populations (Number and Percentage)**

<b>Special Population</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% (out of total N for non-traditional students)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% (out of total N for traditional students)</b>
CalWorks	94	2%	24	0.2%
DSPS	274	6%	750	6%
EOPS	104	2%	359	3%
Foster	2	--	34	0.3%
Veteran	272	6%	104	1%

**Table 6. Fall 2017 Educational Goals at Enrollment: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Number)**

<b>Educational Goals</b>	<b>Non-Traditional Student (N)</b>	<b>Traditional Student (N)</b>
Associate degree and transfer to a 4-year institution	1424	6633
Transfer to 4-year institution without an associate degree	280	1397
Obtain a two year associate's degree without transfer	314	386
Obtain a two year vocational degree without transfer	21	21
Earn a vocational certificate without transfer	134	121
Discover/formulate career interests, plans, goals	115	224
Prepare for a new career (acquire job skills)	309	183
Advance in current job/career (update job skills)	207	33
Maintain certificate or license (e.g. Nursing, Real Estate)	54	43
Educational development (intellectual, cultural)	198	223
Improve basic skills in English, reading or math	394	118
Complete credits for high school diploma or GED	100	734
Undecided on goal	642	1483
Move from noncredit to credit coursework	14	20
4 year college student taking courses to meet 4 yr clg requirements	140	573
Uncollected/unreported	170	298

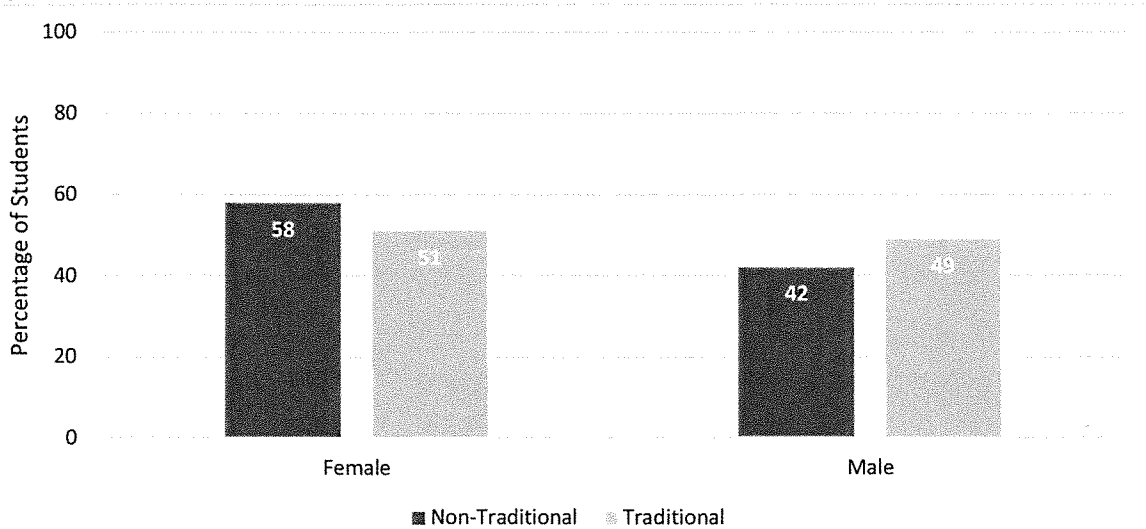
**Figure 5. Fall 2017 Educational Goals at Enrollment: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Percentage)**



**Table 7. Gender: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Number and Percentage)**

Gender	Non-Traditional Student		Traditional Student	
	N	%	N	%
Female	2633	58%	6380	51%
Male	1871	42%	6037	49%

**Figure 6. Gender: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Percentage)**



**Table 8. Ethnicity: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Number and Percentage)**

Ethnicity	Non-Traditional Student		Traditional Student	
	N	%	N	%
Asian/Pacific Islander	395	9%	1519	12%
African American/Black	256	6%	557	4%
Latinx/a	2150	48%	6204	50%
Native American	19	0.42%	45	0.36%
Two or more	145	3%	317	3%
White	1481	33%	3718	30%
Unknown	70	2%	130	1%

**Figure 7. Ethnicity: Non-Traditional and Traditional (Percentage)**

