



# **Supplemental Report Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**

**Survey to Institutions on Evidence-Based Best Practices**

## **February 2023**

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## **Executive Summary**

In September 2022, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) distributed a survey to all 52 institutions of higher education in the state. The purpose of the survey was to learn more about evidence-based best practices that institutions are implementing to address issues with undergraduate student completion. Commission staff analyzed responses from this survey and created this report, which contributes to the 2022 submission of the Report on Best Practices and The Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal.

The survey asked a series of questions and covered six topics: 1) Methods and Evaluation, 2) Developmental and Remediation Education Reforms, 3) Non-Academic Services Tied to Student Completion, 4) Targeted Programs and Interventions, 5) Partnerships and Collaborations, and 6) Academic Advising. All six topics are explored in detail within the report. Key takeaways from the report include:

- Institutions are implementing myriad methods of evaluating the programs, services, policies and other initiatives to support student completion efforts. These methods are helping institutions learn what may or may not be working for their students and where to direct resources so they can have the greatest impact related to college completion.
- Institutions are utilizing their regional, state and national networks to identify best practices in student completion; they take what they learn from these resources and alter the interventions as needed to ensure they best fit the campus community and institutional needs.
- Institutions have many interventions and programs in place to help students be successful in college; much of this work is in student support/non-academic services because institutions recognize that students' basic needs must be met for them to stay enrolled and graduate.

This report is a complement to the 2022 the Report on Best Practices and The Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal and is intended to inform stakeholders of the many ways that institutions are assisting undergraduate students in completing college successfully.

## Introduction

In September 2022, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) distributed a survey to all 52 institutions of higher education in the state. The purpose of the survey was to learn more about evidence-based best practices that institutions are implementing to address issues with undergraduate student completion. Commission staff analyzed responses from this survey and created this report, which contributes to the 2022 submission of the Report on Best Practices and The Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal. <sup>i</sup>

The 21-question survey asked a series of questions to aid the Maryland Higher Education Commission in better understanding the policies, practices, and programs that institutions are implementing to help with undergraduate student completion. <sup>ii</sup> The survey covered six topics:

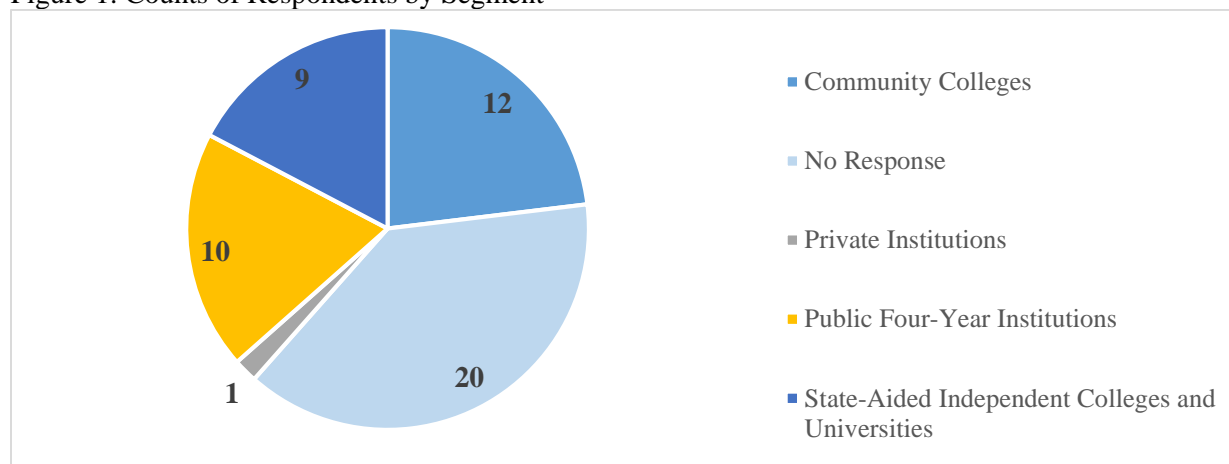
- Methods and Evaluation,
- Developmental and Remediation Education Reforms,
- Non-Academic Services Tied to Student Completion,
- Targeted Programs and Interventions,
- Partnerships and Collaborations, and
- Academic Advising.

MHEC advised survey recipients that questions could be best answered by a team of people across campus and collaboration in preparing responses was encouraged.

## Survey Administration

The survey was sent to 52 institutes of higher education across the state using a Google Form. Of the institutions contacted, 32 responded to the survey (Figure 1). Given this 62% response rate, interpretations of the findings should be used with caution. See a list of respondents and non respondents in Appendix A. <sup>iii</sup>

Figure 1: Counts of Respondents by Segment<sup>1</sup>



The survey asked a series of questions (Appendix B) about evidence-based best practices tied to college student completion. The focus was around: 1) methods of evaluation, research and assessment used by institutions, and the initiatives, practices and services established or altered because of the evidence-based

<sup>1</sup> Private institutions receive no state funding and many are religiously focused. These are different than the 13 state-aided independent colleges and universities, which receive funding from the state.

research and study implemented; 2) developmental and remedial education reforms; 3) non-academic services tied to student completion (e.g., food pantries, childcare); 4) academic advising; 5) targeted programs or interventions to specific subgroups of students, and 6) collaborations and partnerships. Each area is explored below.

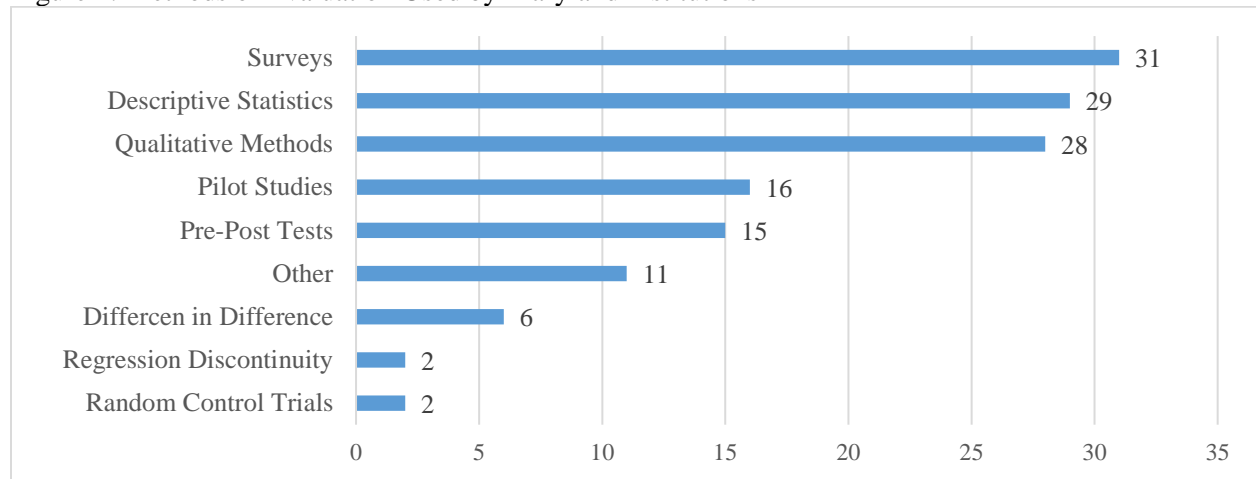
**The Methods of Evaluation Used by Maryland Colleges and Universities**

Evaluation and assessment of interventions, programs, and policies are central to institutional success and growth. In short, if institutions do not know what is working (or not) and try to determine the causes or the outcomes, it is impossible to replicate successful work, improve and alter what is not working, and otherwise direct scarce resources to help students and the institution.

Unlike in a laboratory or other controlled environment, evaluating the effectiveness of a particular intervention, resource, policy, or program can be challenging, particularly when evaluating programs tied to people. There are several reasons for this. First, humans are complicated and it can be difficult teasing apart the causes for outcomes due to confounding variables (for example, it can be difficult to determine whether a student dropped out of college due to unmet financial need, family issues, personal health issues, and/or a job offer). Second, performing true experiments on students can be unethical – it is not fair to provide some students access to a service or opportunity and deny access for others based solely on experimental methods. And, third, evaluation and research is costly in funding, time, and human resources; institutions often need experts with dedicated time and money to assist them in performing complex, multi-year studies of student performance and outcomes. Despite these challenges, it is important to have evidence-based interventions, resources, policies, or programs.

To that end, MHEC sought, via the survey, to better understand the research and evaluation methods used by institutions to assess interventions, programs and policies aimed at undergraduate student completion. Campuses reported using a variety of methods, ranging from basic surveys and interviews to random control trials (RCT), pilot studies, and regression discontinuity. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Methods of Evaluation Used by Maryland Institutions

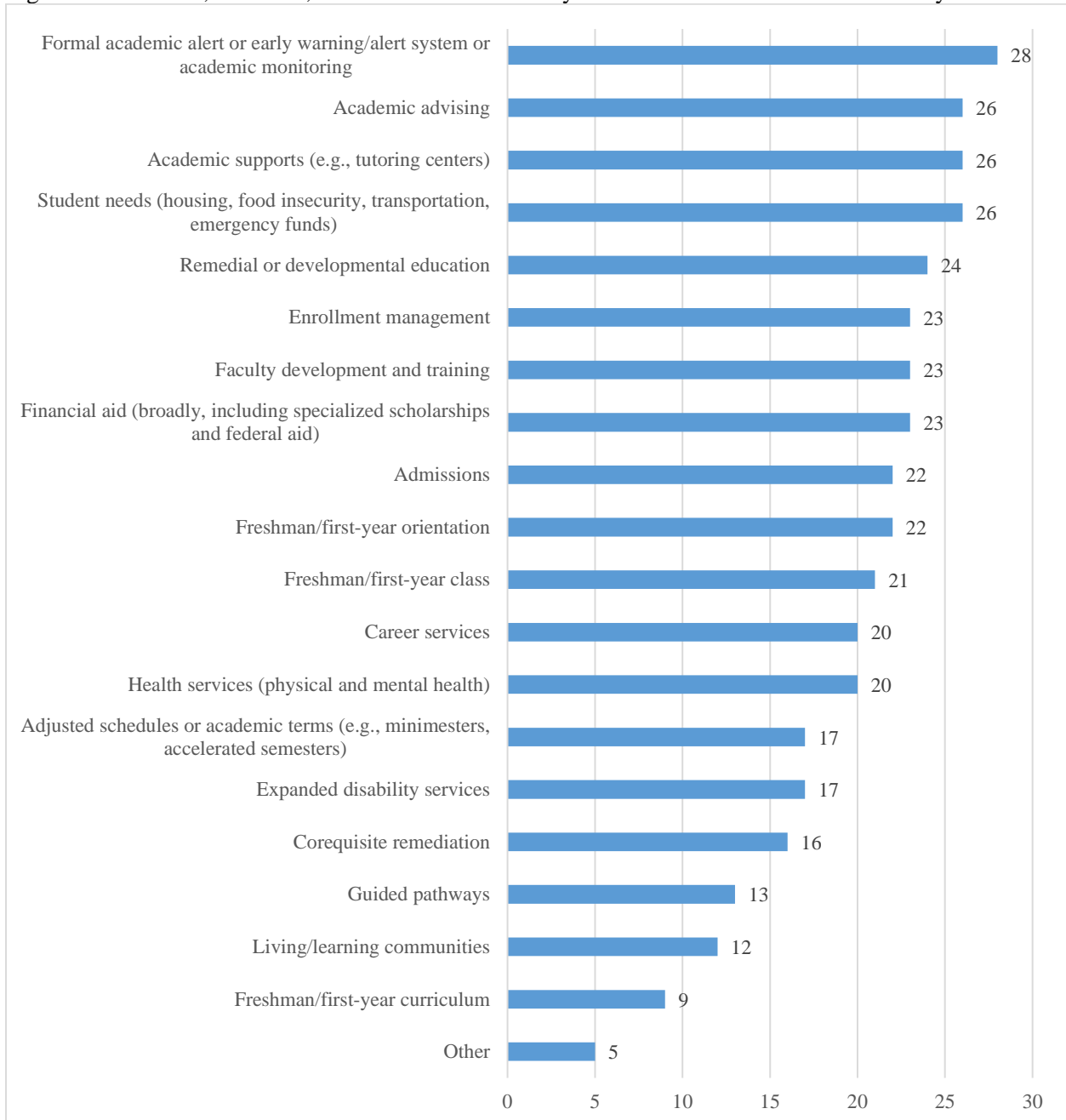


Institutions indicating “Other” shared items such as: Predictive Analytics, Propensity Score Matching, Machine Learning, and Ordinary Least Squares.

*Programs Changed as a Result of Evaluation Methods<sup>iv</sup>*

Institutions were asked to identify the types of initiatives, practices and services tied to undergraduate completion that have been established or altered because of evidence-based research and study. Figure 3 shows the responses to that question.

**Figure 3: Initiatives, Practices, and Services Informed by Evidence-Based Research and Study**



Institutions indicating “Other” shared items such as: Honors programs, Near completer initiatives, Academic success centers.

Some responses were almost universal among all respondents, such as academic alert systems, and academic advising and supports. Others were skewed by institutional sector, with public and state-aided independent institutions focusing on first-year curriculum and living/learning communities and community colleges more likely to note their work on co-requisite remediation.

An important finding from this survey is the prevalence of institutions using evidence, research, and evaluation to inform their practices, policies, and initiatives. This is important in that it signals that

institutions are willing and able to do the challenging work of self-study and self-assessment with an eye for improvement and impact. The culture of using evidence and study to inform institutions' work is growing both in Maryland and nationally. The remainder of this report will reveal the areas of institutional practice where evidence is driving change such as in remedial education, advising, and nonacademic support. Furthermore, it is evident that institutions are not operating in silos in this work. They have networks of collaborators and experts to rely on to help them in their efforts.

### **Developmental and Remedial Education Reforms**

The survey asked each institution whether they had implemented developmental/remedial education reform in the past five years. Reforms could include implementation of co-requisite remediation, assessing placement methods and cut off scores, faculty training, and curriculum design. Institutions could also discuss additional reforms. Of the 32 survey respondents, 26 indicated they had made reforms in the past five years. Of the remaining six institutions, five responded that they do not offer remedial or developmental coursework, and one institution indicated that changes were made five years ago that were working successfully.

Additional questions in the survey allowed the 26 institutions to discuss their reforms in greater detail. The community college respondents all referenced a series of external and internal actions that have driven their changes over the past five years. There have been national and state reforms encouraging the use of multiple measures for remedial/credit course placement and the adoption of co-requisite course models.<sup>v</sup> In addition, many community colleges referenced the Memorandum of Understanding with the State's K-12 schools that establishes statewide benchmarks for college readiness and multiple measures standards. Most community colleges discussed their ongoing evaluation of their multiple measures (e.g., GPA, SAT scores, high school course grades) and the complexity of ensuring the application of the measures was effective.

Many four-year institutions also discussed the implementation of multiple measures and their move away from one standardized test (e.g., Accuplacer) to place students in remedial or credit courses. Others discussed intervention programs such as tutoring or college skills courses they used as tools to help struggling students get back on track.

Lastly, almost all institutions discussed their reforms to math course placement and math remedial education, as there has been a lot of statewide and national focus on remedial placement in this subject area. Several institutions discussed their participation in a "First in the World Maryland Mathematics Reform Initiative" sponsored by the Charles A. Dana Center study done among several community colleges and public four-year institutions implementing math pathways.<sup>vi</sup> These pathways guide students to college level math that is appropriate for their academic major. For example, students on non-STEM tracks can take an applied math/statistics pathway versus a traditional algebra/calculus pathway. Algebra courses have been shown to stymie students' progress in college, especially for those who do not need that type of mathematical skills for their major.

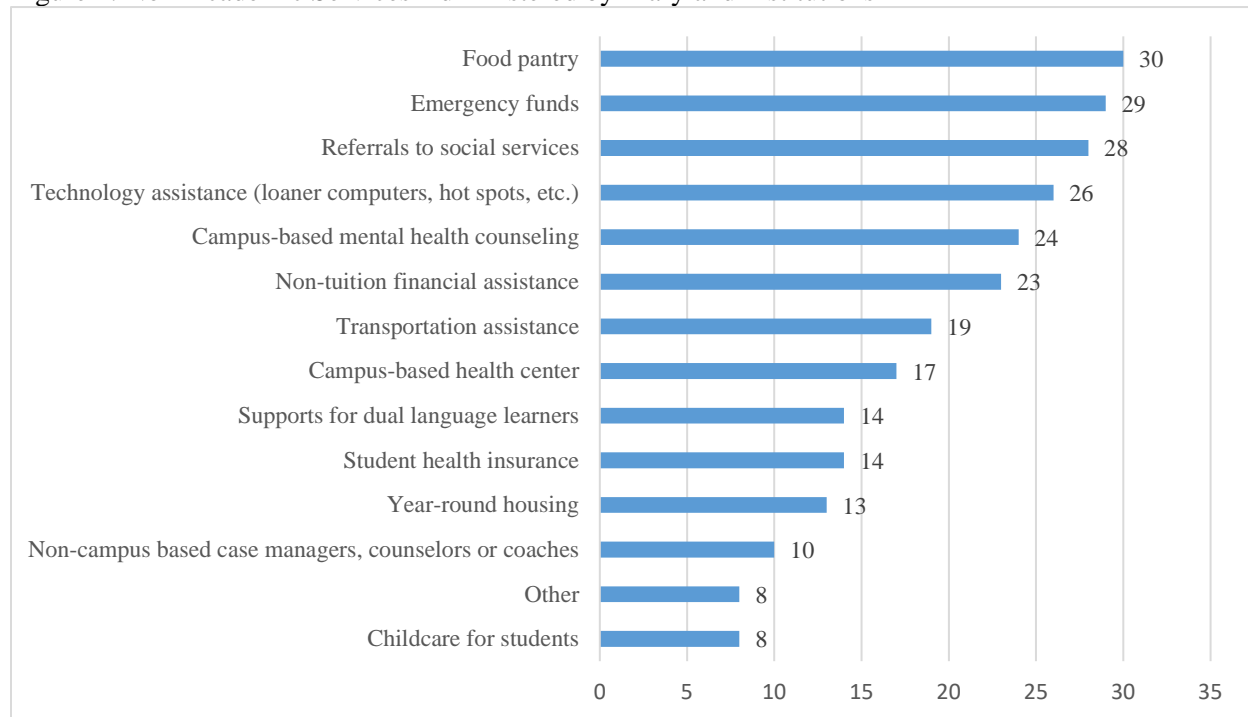
### **Non-Academic Services Tied to Student Completion**

A growing body of research<sup>vii</sup> shows that non-academic interventions and services can help address the pressing issues students may be facing and can assist them in staying enrolled in and completing college. Institutions answered several questions tied to non-academic student services, and were given an opportunity to share what services they offered. Institutions also answered how they measure the effectiveness of these interventions.

### Services Offered

Figure 4 reveals the vast array of non-academic services and interventions institutions offer to help support students (which, in theory, should help students remain enrolled and ultimately complete a college degree). Examples include food pantries, childcare, transportation services and emergency financial support. Some of these services are more readily offered and available among four-year, residential institutions; these include such services as year-round housing, student health insurance, and campus-based health services. Other services such as transportation assistance, child care, and support for dual language learners are split evenly among community colleges and four-year institutions. Lastly, some services like food pantries and emergency funds, are offered by the majority of institutions.

Figure 4: Non-Academic Services Administered by Maryland Institutions



Institutions indicating “Other” shared items such as: Open Educational Resources (OER), a “career closet” (donated clothes students can have for job interviews and work), crisis counseling, and support for students with disabilities.

Non-academic services show evidence of helping students better navigate their college pathways and can serve to reduce barriers to completion. Research indicates (Gupta, 2017; <sup>viii</sup> Miller, et al, 2022; <sup>ix</sup> Dawson, et. Al, 2020<sup>x</sup>) that comprehensive services that include mental health counseling, non-tuition financial assistance, and transportation assistance can make a significant impact on student retention and completion. However, these services are costly and can be difficult to fully implement with limited resources of money and staff. Therefore, it is essential that institutions evaluate and assess the effects of these programs to ensure they are being implemented well, with equity, and using resources wisely.

### How Institutions Evaluate Non-Academic Services

Survey respondents shared a number of ways by which they measure the effectiveness of these non-academic supports. Their methods mirror some of the ways used to evaluate the effectiveness of other interventions, as discussed earlier in report. Many institutions use surveys and pre- and post-assessments from students. These are most commonly used for programs and services that provide a tangible benefit delivered over a short period of time (e.g., food from the food bank, funds from the emergency fund).



Sometimes the measure of impact is easy to quantify (e.g., data on transportation usage, volume of foot traffic to the health center). However, due to the sensitive nature of some of these services, such as social service referrals, mental health counseling, and the desire to protect student privacy, it can be hard to measure the impact of these interventions. In these cases, a common recourse is to ask service providers (e.g., counselors and social workers) to administer anonymous surveys to recipients.

The challenge in using these methods to assess impact is that it can be difficult to use rigorous methods to attempt to measure the impact these services have on student retention or completion. Institutions note that challenges include: small sample sizes, limited ability to assess impact compared to a “control” group or using experimental or quasi-experimental methods, and difficulty in teasing apart the impact of the intervention from other, confounding issues that may affect the students’ ability to stay in college and graduate (e.g., employment, family issues, and academic performance). Therefore, institutions report attempting to link more short-term student outcomes (e.g., term completion, term-to-term retention, GPA, etc.) to help measure the effect of the non-academic services offered.

### **Academic Advising**

Academic advising is a cornerstone of undergraduate student success and progress. According to the federal Institute of Education Sciences’ (IES)<sup>xi</sup> What Works Clearinghouse’s<sup>2</sup> publication “Effective Advising for Postsecondary Students” (page 1):

At its most effective, advising is a collaborative process between a student and an advisor designed to help the student realize their educational potential. Most postsecondary institutions have historically used advisors to help students select and register for courses, but postsecondary institutions are increasingly asking advisors to play an instrumental role in helping students progress through college. This expanded advising role often involves ensuring students are connected to both academic supports and non-academic supports that enable students to overcome barriers to persistence and completion.<sup>xii</sup>

The IES report emphasizes that there is no “one size fits all” model for advising and that institutions should perform their own analysis of students and resources to determine models that best align with their mission and goals.

#### *Academic Advising Models*

Academic advising is a central service institutions provide that can help students be retained and graduate from their college or university. Advisors help students with course and major area of study selection, aid in directing students to other services on campus (e.g., financial aid, tutoring) and may serve in directing students to nonacademic services such as mental health counseling and child care services.

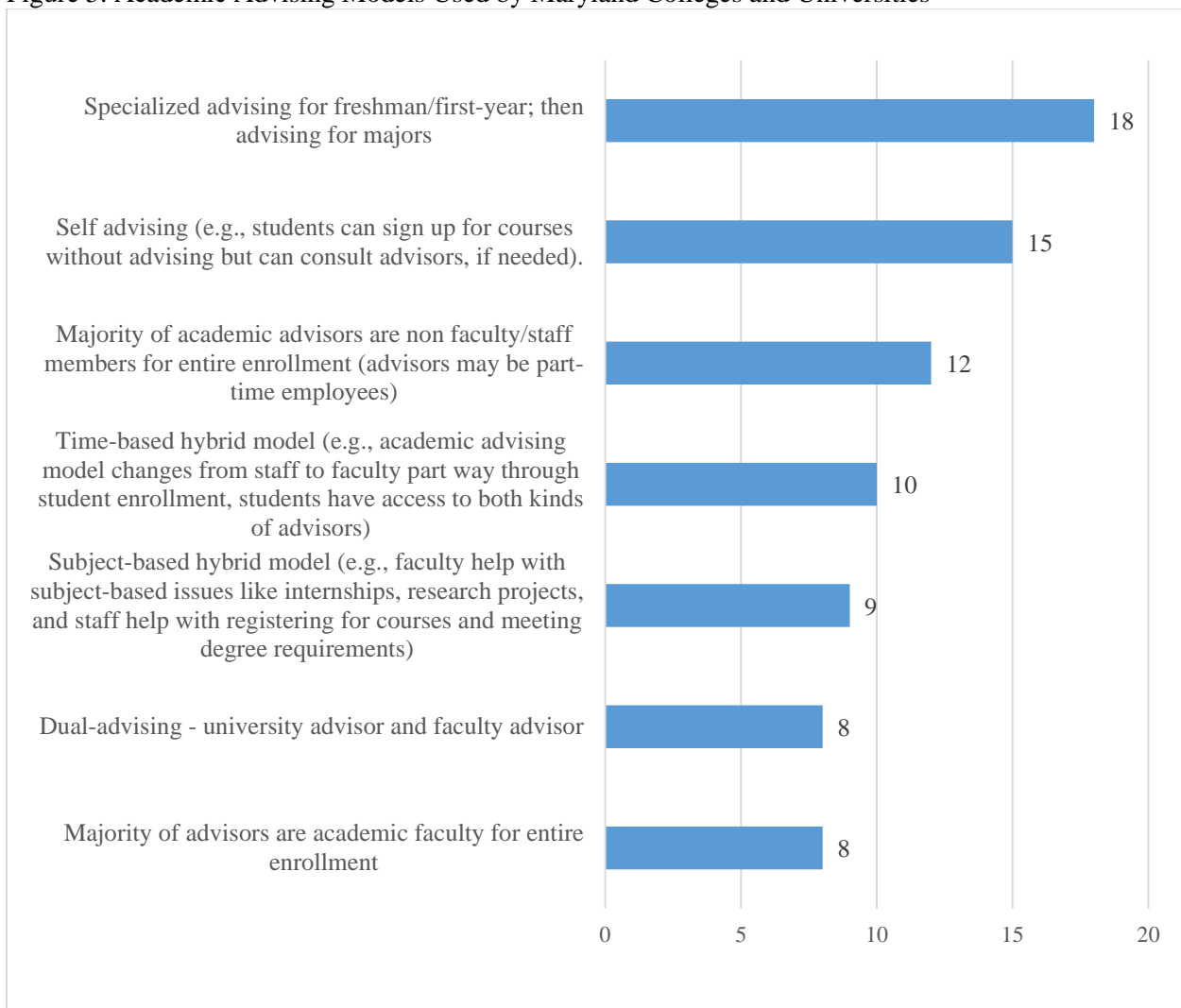
Advising models differ. The traditional advising model relies on faculty members to provide academic advising to students. This mode generally continues to be in place at smaller, traditional/liberal arts/private institutions. However, these duties, when assigned to faculty, can compete with the other demands of teaching and research. Larger institutions often utilize professional advisors to replace or supplement faculty advising models.

<sup>2</sup> What Works Clearinghouse is a source of scientific evidence on education interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies) and is funded via the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education. The Clearinghouse uses systematic processes to evaluate and summarize findings for research to identify evidence-based best practices in education. More can be found here: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/ReferenceResources/WWC\\_E-Brochure\\_2016\\_022417.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/ReferenceResources/WWC_E-Brochure_2016_022417.pdf)

In this MHEC survey, institutions were asked to identify the undergraduate advising models that best describe their services. Many institutions report differing models (Figure 5) for undergraduate students depending on the students’ circumstances and year of enrollment. Most institutions implement two or three advising models (average was 2.5 and median was 3.0). Only five institutions reported having one advising model for all undergraduate students.

Results differ by institutional segment. For example, the most commonly selected model overall was specialized advising for first-year students with advising for majors after the first year. However this model was mostly used by public and state-aided independent four-year institutions (n=15). Other models preferred by the four-year institutions (state-aided and public) were ones in which faculty played a central role (either dually or the majority). Conversely, self-advising was almost entirely the purview of community colleges (n=11).

Figure 5: Academic Advising Models Used by Maryland Colleges and Universities

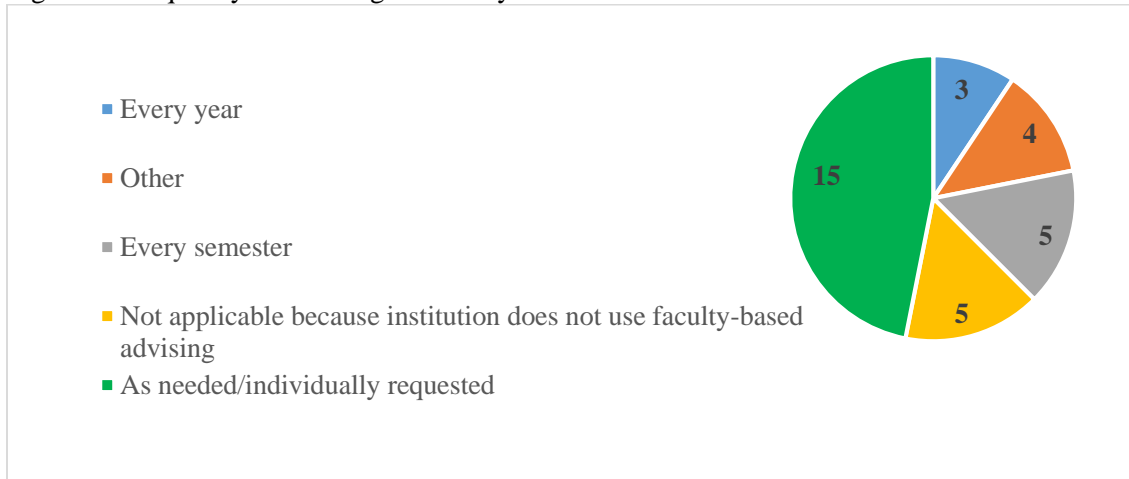


Note: Because institutions could select “all that apply,” the responses to this question exceed the number of respondents.

*Advisor Training and Support*

An important aspect of successful advising programs involves keeping advisors trained on such things as updated policies and practices, effective advising methods, and new advising tools. When asked, institutions indicated that there was training for faculty advisors, but the frequency differed (Figure 6). Most institutions implemented training when requested by faculty advisors. Eight institutions administered training annually, or each term. Of those institutions that selected “other,” their most common response was that new faculty and new advisors received training as part of their onboarding process. Another response was that reference materials and resources for all advisors (faculty and non-faculty) were readily available and updated as needed, as a complement to training. The most frequently noted source of those materials was the professional organization the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).<sup>3</sup>

Figure 6: Frequency of Training of Faculty-Based Academic Advisors



The most common “other” response was that academic advising was a part of onboarding training.

*Academic Advisor Caseload*

Lastly, institutions were asked about the ratio of their undergraduate students to academic advisors. Due to the complexity of their advising models, as described above, some institutions found this a difficult question to answer.<sup>4</sup> For example, those institutions that use a time-based model, or specialized advising, provided multiple answers. There is a ratio for freshman, and a different ratio for upperclassmen/students with declared majors. See Table 1 for the largest and smallest ratio responses per segment and overall statewide.

Table 1: Student-to-Academic Advisor Ratio for Undergraduate Students

	Minimum	Maximum
Overall	11 to 1	922 to 1
Community Colleges	23 to 1	922 to 1
Public Four-Year Institutions	75 to 1	480 to 1
State-Aided Independent Institutions	11 to 1	300 to 1

<sup>3</sup> The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) is an international organization dedicated to supporting and educating academic advisors in institutions of higher education. NACADA provides training and support to advisors as well as access to proven best practices in academic advising.

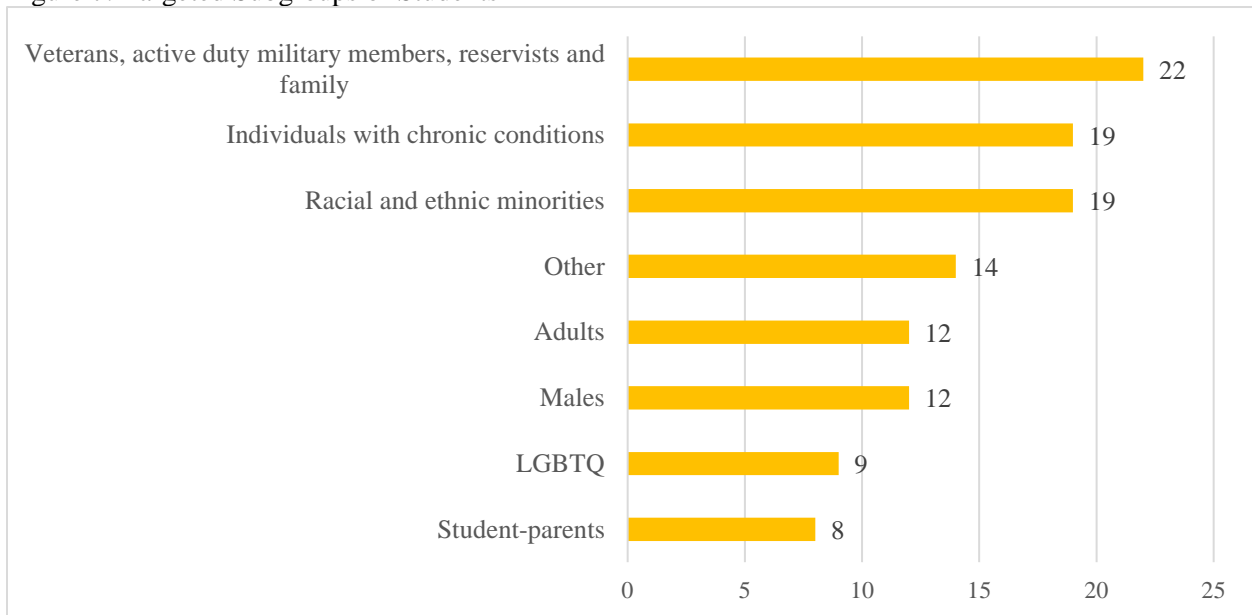
<sup>4</sup> Coppin State University was not included in the numeric state and segment calculations provided in Table 1; their response in the survey was “Varies by department <50 students; professional advisors will see an unlimited amount of students” indicating a mixed model that is hard to quantify.

The data show that Maryland institutions’ advisor caseloads vary considerably but fall along some consistent patterns reflected nationally.<sup>xiii</sup> While there is no one specific target number institutions should have as a ratio<sup>5</sup>, the research literature (NACADA<sup>xiv</sup>) does show that providing students access to adequate and frequent advising is key to student success. This advising can take the form of academic advising, but success can also be achieved by mentoring (faculty and peer), counseling services, and social and financial advising and counseling. MHEC knows from other annual reports from institutions (e.g., the annual “Performance Accountability Report”, “Report on Plans of Cultural Diversity”<sup>xv</sup>) that institutions implement other advisory services such as peer advising, intrusive advising, as well as other services that expand the reach of advising in cost-effective and targeted ways.

**Targeted Programs and Interventions – Who is Served?**

Institutions were asked if they offered targeted interventions or programs for specific subgroups of students, and if so, to identify these subgroups of students. Twenty-nine of the 32 institutions indicated they identified specific populations of students for interventions. See Figure 7 for the groups of students.

Figure 7: Targeted Subgroups of Students



Note: Institutions could select “all that apply” as well as provide text responses to “other”. Institutions indicating “Other” shared items such as: first-generation students, disabled students, Pell eligible/low income students, students participating in TRIO, transfer students, and near completers.

When asked how the institution defines and measures the effectiveness of these targeted interventions, institutions provided responses that align with a few common themes.

- Measures such as first-year retention rates, graduation rates, and other metrics are disaggregated by subgroups to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions. These are compared to all students or other related populations.

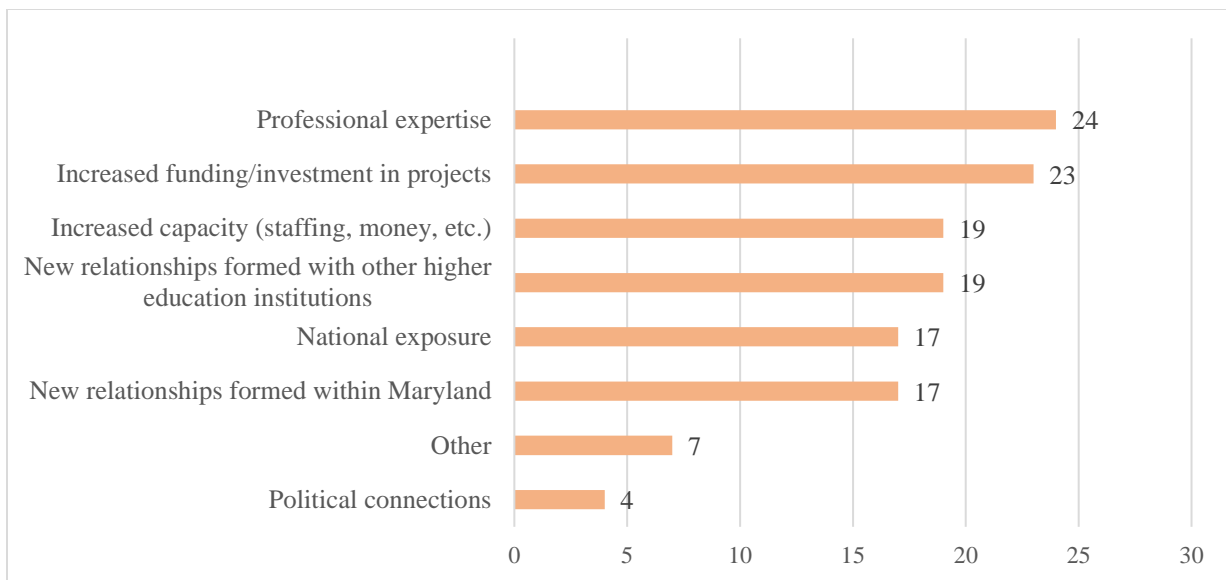
<sup>5</sup> A 2011 NACADA survey found that the median number of advisees per advisor for a full-time advisor was 296 students among US colleges and universities. Community colleges typically have higher caseloads; public and private four-year colleges and universities have smaller case loads

- The effectiveness of specific programs and interventions is measured over time, or by tracking student progress in various ways. Examples of these include changes in GPA, credit completion, and course completion patterns.
- Qualitative data such as students’ sense of belonging, satisfaction, and/or perceptions of themselves or the program are used as a complement to quantitative data.
- Institutions continue to develop measurement methods as they learn more, both from experts and from internal analysis, as programs are implemented.
- Different measures and methods may be employed for different programs, as appropriate. There is no one-size, fits all approach to evaluating programs targeting student groups.
- These evaluation efforts can take time to produce findings – both due to having to track students over time (from term to term and year to year) and due to the manpower required to conduct rigorous work.

### Collaborations and Partnerships

Like all industries, institutions of higher education are embedded within professional networks and organizations that help inform operations and practices. These structures provide institutions opportunities to collaborate, learn from one another, advance best practices and share policy and program initiatives. MHEC recognizes that these networks, which often expand beyond the state’s boundaries, are an important aspect of institutions’ efforts to tackle thorny issues such as student retention and completion. To that end, MHEC asked institutions to share information about their collaboration partners and the benefits of these relationships.

Figure 8: Benefits of Partnerships with Outside Organizations



Notes: Institutions could select all that apply in the survey question.

Institutions indicating “Other” shared items such as: professional development, sharing best practices, student recruitment, and expansion of experimental learning opportunities

Institutions’ responses to the survey question regarding which organizations are most notable for these collaborations, the responses fell into a few categories that add further context to responses in Figure 8.

- **National organizations and foundations** dedicated to assisting with college completion such as Achieving the Dream, Strada Education Network, and the Lumina Foundation as well as state and national foundations (Abell Foundation, DuPont Foundation).
- **National professional organizations** such as the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), NACADA, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE), the National Science Foundation NSF), Council for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administration, and the US Department of Education and its associated programs such as TRIO .
- **Regional or state organizations** such as the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities Association (MICUA), MHEC, the Maryland Food Bank, city and county public school systems, and county- or regional-based industry councils.
- **Industry and corporate partners** such as Adobe, Amazon, Google, Apple, IBM, T-Mobile, and myriad local and state companies.
- **For-profit companies with a commitment to student completion** that assist institutions with data analysis, etc. such as Education Advisory Board, and HelioCampus.

As Figure 8 shows, partnerships and collaborations with these organizations help expand networks and professional development opportunities for institutions. For example, coalitions and professional networks can assist in advocacy and policy work. Also, thanks to partnerships, institutions are able to access additional resources such as professional staff and tools. Outside organizations sometimes have dedicated researchers and analysts who can assist in conducting evaluation and assessment. The structures of many of these partnerships have accountability frameworks built-in such that institutions must implement change, measure outcomes, and regularly report on progress in order to participate in the collaborations.

## Conclusions

This survey aimed to better understand the means by which Maryland institutions advance their missions, goals and objectives, with regard to retention and completion goals. This report ties together the findings from the annual “Best Practices Progress to 55% Goal JCR Report” to the best practices that institutions are using to help the state meet its 55% completion goal.

Takeaways from this report include:

- Institutions are implementing myriad methods of evaluating the programs, services, policies and other initiatives to support student completion efforts. These methods are helping institutions learn what may or may not be working for their students and where to direct resources so they can have the greatest impact related to college completion.
- Institutions are utilizing their regional, state and national networks to identify best practices in student completion; they take what they learn from these resources and alter the interventions as needed to ensure they best fit the campus community and institutional needs.
- Institutions have many interventions and programs in place to help students be successful in college; much of this work is in student support/non-academic services because institutions recognize that students’ basic needs must be met for them to stay enrolled and graduate.
- With 20 institutions not participating in the survey, the results cannot be generalized. Certain institutions are missing (e.g., large highly-selective institutions, smaller/rural community colleges, private religious institutions). They may have provided responses that differ considerably from the results reported here.

This 2023 report provided MHEC additional information to share with statewide stakeholders on the many efforts institutions have in place to help students succeed. This report is a complement to the most recent (November 2022) Best Practices and Annual Progress Towards the 55% Completion Goal.

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> This was a one-time survey administered in Fall 2022. MHEC does not intend to distribute this survey annually.

<sup>ii</sup> The survey used skip logic, a method by which different responses to questions led respondents to associated questions. Not all respondents had to answer all 21 questions.

<sup>iii</sup> Four community colleges, three state-aided independent institutions, and three public four-year institutions did not respond to the survey. Non respondents include: Anne Arundel Community College, Carroll Community College, Chesapeake College and Garrett College, Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University Maryland, St. Johns College, St. Mary's College of Maryland, Stevenson University, University of Maryland Baltimore and University of Maryland College Park. An additional 10 private institutions did not respond to the survey; they include: Bais HaMedrash and Mesivta of Baltimore, Lincoln College of Technology, Ner Israel Rabbinical College, Reid Temple Bible College, SANS Technology Institute, St. Mary's Seminary and University, Yeshiva College of the Nation's Capital, Maryland University of Integrative Health, and Collegium sanctorum angelorum. Several private institutions contacted MHEC requesting they not be required to submit the survey, as their student populations (e.g., all graduate students) did not align with the survey's line of inquiry. MHEC granted these requests.

<sup>iv</sup> The methods selected by institutions fall into several broad areas: experimental (random control trials), quasi-experimental (Regression Discontinuity, Difference-in Difference, Propensity Score Matching), Exploratory (Pilot Studies, Surveys, Pre-Post Tests), Qualitative (interviews, case studies), and Descriptive. Experimental methods are the gold standard in that subjects are randomly assigned to a treatment or control group. Quasi-experimental methods do not randomly assign participants to treatment and control groups and instead identify a comparison group that is as similar as possible to the treatment group in terms of pre-intervention (baseline) characteristics. Exploratory and Descriptive cannot be used to determine, with confidence, cause and effect or impact. Qualitative methods often rely on small groups of students and cannot be considered representative of larger groups.

<sup>v</sup> Corequisite remediation requires that students be placed directly into a college-level, credit-bearing course while receiving additional, aligned academic support during the semester

<sup>vi</sup> See Data Center's First in the World Report for Maryland here:

<https://dcmathpathways.org/resources/first-world-maryland-mathematics-reform-initiative-fitw-mmri-project-overview>

<sup>vii</sup> Karp, M. M. (2011). *Toward a New Understanding of Non-Academic Student Support: Four Mechanisms Encouraging Positive Student Outcomes in the Community College*. CCRC Working Paper No. 28. Assessment of Evidence Series. *Community College Research Center, Columbia University*.

<sup>viii</sup> Gupta, H. (2017). *The Power of Fully Supporting Community College Students: The Effects of The City University of New York's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs after Six Years*. MDRC.

<sup>ix</sup> Miller, C., & Weiss, M. J. (2022). *Increasing Community College Graduation Rates: A Synthesis of Findings on the ASAP Model From Six Colleges Across Two States*. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 44*(2), 210-233.

<sup>x</sup> Dawson, R. F., Kearney, M. S., & Sullivan, J. X. (2020). *Comprehensive approaches to increasing student completion in higher education: A survey of the landscape* (No. w28046). National Bureau of Economic Research.

<sup>xi</sup> IES is the US Department of Education's independent, non-partisan, statistics, research and evaluation arm.

<sup>xii</sup> Karp, M., Ackerson, S., Cheng, I., Cocatre-Zilgien, E., Costelloe, S., Freeman, B., & Richburg-Hayes, L. (2021). *Effective Advising for Postsecondary Students: A Practice Guide for Educators*. WWC 2022003. *What Works Clearinghouse*. Found January 3, 2023 at

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/WWC-practice-guide-summary-effective-advising.pdf>



<sup>xiii</sup> These finding mirror results from a national survey conducted by NACADA. National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). 2011 NACADA National Survey <https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/2011-NACADA-National-Survey.aspx> posted May 2014.

<sup>xiv</sup> The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). 2011 NACADA National Survey <https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/2011-NACADA-National-Survey.aspx> posted May 2014.

<sup>xv</sup> See the Maryland Higher Education Commission's Research and Policy Analysis reports here <https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Pages/research/index.aspx>. The annual Performance Accountability Reports are organized in the Performance Accountability Reports section and the Reports on Plans for Cultural Diversity are in the Student and Academic Affairs section.

## Appendix A

### List of Respondents<sup>6</sup>

Allegany College of Maryland	Community College
Baltimore City Community College	Community College
Bowie State University	Public Four-Year Institution
Capitol Technology University	State-Aided Independent Institution
Cecil College	Community College
College of Southern Maryland	Community College
Community College of Baltimore County	Community College
Coppin State University	Public Four-Year Institution
Frederick Community College	Community College
Frostburg State University	Public Four-Year Institution
Goucher College	State-Aided Independent Institution
Hagerstown Community College	Community College
Harford Community College	Community College
Hood College	State-Aided Independent
Howard Community College	Community College
Maryland Institute College of Art	State-Aided Independent Institution
McDaniel College	State-Aided Independent Institution
Montgomery College	Community College
Morgan State University	Public Four-Year Institution
Mount St. Mary's University	State-Aided Independent Institution
Notre Dame of Maryland University	State-Aided Independent Institution
Prince George's Community College	Community College
Salisbury University	Public Four-Year Institution
Towson University	Public Four-Year Institution
University of Baltimore	Public Four-Year Institution
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	Public Four-Year Institution
University of Maryland Global Campus	Public Four-Year Institution
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	Public Four-Year Institution
Washington Adventist University	State-Aided Independent Institution
Washington College	State-Aided Independent Institution
Women's Institute of Torah Seminary	Private Institution
Wor-Wic Community College	Community College

<sup>6</sup> Four community colleges, three state-aided independent institutions, and three public four-year institutions did not respond to the survey. Non respondents include: Anne Arundel Community College, Carroll Community College, Chesapeake College and Garrett College, Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University Maryland, St. Johns College, St. Mary's College of Maryland, Stevenson University, University of Maryland Baltimore and University of Maryland College Park. An additional 10 private institutions did not respond to the survey; they include: Bais HaMedrash and Mesivta of Baltimore, Lincoln College of Technology, Ner Israel Rabbinical College, Reid Temple Bible College, SANS Technology Institute, St. Mary's Seminary and University, Yeshiva College of the Nation's Capital, Maryland University of Integrative Health, and Collegium sanctorum angelorum. Several private institutions received permission from MHEC to opt out of the survey because they don't serve undergraduate students.

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

# 2022 Evidence-Based Best Practices Survey - Undergraduate Student Completion (Tuesday October 25, 2022)

## *Introduction and Instructions*

*The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) is interested in learning more about evidence-based best practices your institution is implementing in its efforts to address issues of undergraduate student completion. The responses gathered from this survey will be analyzed by MHEC staff and will be included, in aggregated form, in a future statewide Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal.*

*This brief survey asks a series of questions to aid the Maryland Higher Education Commission in better understanding the policies, practices and programs institutions are implementing that help with undergraduate student completion. The survey covers five topics (Remedial/Developmental Education, Methods and Evaluation, Partnerships and Collaborations, Student Success, and Advising). We expect that questions can be best answered by a team of people across your campus and we encourage collaboration in preparing responses.*

*Note that whomever submits the survey must attest that the institution's president has reviewed and approved all responses. Therefore, please ensure your campus president has reviewed the responses prior to submission.*

**Due Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2022** (for inclusion in the upcoming 2022 report)

Contact Barbara Schmertz, Director of Research and Policy Analysis, at [barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov](mailto:barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov) if you have questions or concerns.

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**\* Required**

1. Name of person certifying this survey \*

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Title and office of person certifying this survey \*

\_\_\_\_\_

3. By selecting Yes you are attesting that the president of your institution has reviewed these responses and endorses them. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

## 4. Please select your institution from the list below \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Allegany College of Maryland
- Anne Arundel Community College
- Bais HaMedrash and Mesivta of Baltimore
- Baltimore City Community College
- Bowie State University
- Capitol Technology University
- Carroll Community College
- Cecil College
- Chesapeake College
- College of Southern Maryland
- Collegium sanctorum angelorum
- Community College of Baltimore County
- Coppin State University
- Frederick Community College
- Frostburg State University
- Garrett College
- Goucher College
- Hagerstown Community College
- Harford Community College
- Hood College
- Howard Community College
- Johns Hopkins University
- Lincoln College of Technology
- Loyola University Maryland
- Maryland Institute College of Art
- Maryland University of Integrative Health
- McDaniel College
- Montgomery College
- Morgan State University
- Mount St. Mary's University

- ...
- Ner Israel Rabbinical College
- Notre Dame of Maryland University
- Prince George's Community College
- Reid Temple Bible College
- Salisbury University
- SANS Technology Institute
- St. John's College
- St. Mary's College of Maryland
- St. Mary's Seminary and University
- Stevenson University
- Towson University
- University of Baltimore
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- University of Maryland Global Campus
- University of Maryland, Baltimore
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- University of Maryland, College Park
- Washington Adventist University
- Washington College
- Women's Institute of Torah Seminary
- Wor-Wic Community College
- Yeshiva College of the Nation's Capital

**Part 1 -  
Methods  
and  
Evaluation  
Questions**

*These questions are tied to research and evaluation methods employed by your campus and the ways in which evidence-based research is used to inform policies and practices tied to student completion.*

5. Does your institution employ the following research and evaluation methods to assess interventions, programs and/or policies related to **undergraduate student completion**. This can also be in partnership with external researchers/organizations who employ these methods (with the results benefiting the institution). \*

Select all research and evaluation methods that apply.

*Check all that apply.*

- Random Control Trials
- Regression Discontinuity
- Difference-in-Difference
- Qualitative Methods (focus groups, interviews, case studies)
- Surveys
- Pre-/Post-Tests
- Descriptive Statistics
- Pilot Studies
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Select the types of initiatives, practices, and services tied to undergraduate student completion that have been established or altered because of evidenced-based research and study. \*

Select all that apply.

*Check all that apply.*

- Remedial or developmental education
- Corequisite remediation
- Guided pathways
- Enrollment management
- Admissions
- Academic Advising
- Formal academic alert or early warning/alert system or academic monitoring
- Financial aid (broadly, including specialized scholarships and federal aid)
- Student needs (housing, food insecurity, transportation, emergency funds)
- Faculty development and training
- Health services (physical and mental health)
- Career services
- Freshman/first-year orientation
- Freshman/first-year class
- Freshman/first-year curriculum
- Living/learning communities
- Adjusted schedules or academic terms (e.g., minimesters, accelerated semesters)
- Academic supports (e.g., tutoring centers)
- Expanded disability services
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Developmental or  
Remedial Education  
Reforms**

This section asks questions about developmental or remedial education reform.



7. This question is specific to reforms or changes: Has your institution implemented developmental/remedial education reform in the past five years. This can include implementing corequisite remediation, assessing placement methods and cut off scores, faculty training, curriculum design or other activities tied to change/reform. \*

\*\*For the purposes of this question, developmental/remedial education is broadly defined interventions for students identified as not ready for college-level coursework within a specific field of study.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes    *Skip to question 8*
- No    *Skip to question 9*

Yes - your institution has implemented developmental/remedial education reform in the past five years

8. Please describe these efforts in greater detail (such as the impetus, challenges, successes, future vision and other details to help us understand institutional efforts) \*

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*Skip to question 10*

No - your institution has not implemented developmental/remedial education reform in the past five years

9.

\*

Please indicate why change has not been implemented:  
Select all that apply

*Check all that apply.*

- Changes were made more than five years ago
- We do not offer any developmental or remedial education
- The developmental/remedial education practices in place are working sufficiently
- We are in the midst of those reforms currently
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Skip to question 10*

### **Partnerships and Collaborations**

10. Please list the most significant or effective partnerships your institution has developed that has helped in meeting institutional goals and benchmarks. These can be national organizations (e.g., Achieving the Dream), statewide or regional partnerships, collaborations with foundations or other philanthropic organizations, think tanks or research groups, businesses/for profit organizations. If the list is extensive, focus on those most salient to undergraduate student completion. \*

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11. Please select the benefits of these partnerships: \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Increased funding/investment in projects
- Professional expertise
- New relationships formed within Maryland
- New relationships formed with other higher education institutions
- Political connections
- National exposure
- Increased capacity (staffing, money, etc.)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. How do these partnerships help your institution evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives around college completion? \*

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**Non-Academic Student Services to Aid in Student Completion**

This section focuses on non-academic based services your institution may offer or engage in as well as the ways in which the institution measures the effectiveness of these services on student completion

13. Does your institution offer:

Select all that apply.

*Check all that apply.*

- Food pantry
- Childcare for students
- Transportation assistance
- Year-round housing
- Emergency funds
- Non tuition financial assistance
- Referrals to social services
- Campus-based health center
- Campus-based mental health counseling
- Student health insurance
- Non-campus based case managers, counselors or coaches
- Technology assistance (calculator, loaner computers, hot spots, etc.)
- Supports for Dual-language learners
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. How does your institution define and measure the effectiveness of these services \* as they relate to college completion? (Describe broadly and/or select specific service(s) and detail).

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15. Does your institution offer programs or interventions aimed at helping with student completion for specific subgroups of students? \*

Mark only one oval.

Yes Skip to question 16

No Skip to question 18

Yes - your institution offers programs or interventions for specific subgroups of students

16. Which subgroups of students does your institution offer programs or interventions aimed at helping with student completion? \*

Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- Males
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Adults
- Veterans, active duty military members, reservists and family
- Individuals with disabilities or chronic health conditions
- LGBTQ
- Student-parents
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. For targeted programs or interventions for specific subgroups of students, how does your institution define and measure the effectiveness of these programs/interventions as they related to college completion? In other words, how do you know the program/intervention is working?

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## Advising

18. What is the student-to-academic advisor ratio for your undergraduate students? \*  
(please insert numeric response - e.g., 300:1)

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19. Please identify the undergraduate advising models that best describes advising services at your institution. Select all that apply. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Majority of advisors are academic faculty for entire enrollment
- Majority of academic advisors are non faculty/staff members for entire enrollment (advisors may be part-time employees)
- Time-based hybrid model (e.g., academic advising model changes from staff to faculty part way through student enrollment, students have access to both kinds of advisors)
- Subject-based hybrid model (e.g., faculty help with subject-based issues like internships, research projects, and staff help with registering for courses and meeting degree requirements)
- Self advising (e.g., students can sign up for courses without advising but can consult advisors if needed) if needed
- Specialized advising for freshman/first-year; then advising for majors
- Dual-advising - university advisor and faculty advisor
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

20. For faculty-based advisors, how frequently is explicit training on advising provided? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Every semester
- Every year
- As needed/individually requested
- Not applicable because institution does not use faculty-based advising
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

21. How does your campus know if the ways you have implemented advising is working? How do you measure its effectiveness? \*

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Thank  
you

Thank you for completing this survey for the Maryland Higher Education Commission

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