# SYSTEM-WIDE EQUITY REPORT 2021

**WISCONSIN**
**TECHNICAL COLLEGE**
SYSTEM

# SYSTEM-WIDE EQUITY REPORT

## AUTHORS

**Dr. Hilary Barker**
Wisconsin Technical College System

**Nicholas Brayton**
Milwaukee Area Technical College
*System-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair*

**Rayon Brown**
Fox Valley Technical College

**Rosemary Buschhaus**
Madison College

**Jomarie Coloriano**
Gateway Technical College

**Ben Konruff**
Wisconsin Technical College System

**Colleen Larsen**
Wisconsin Technical College System

**Leslie Laster**
Moraine Park Technical College

**Christine Munson**
Northcentral Technical College

**Brenda Powles**
Wisconsin Technical College System

**Dr. Tammi Summers**
Gateway Technical College
*System-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair*

## PUBLICATION

**Dan Arneson – Designer**
Wisconsin Technical College System

**Conor Smyth – Editor**
Wisconsin Technical College System

## November 2021

**To sustain our success, we must actively recruit, welcome, include, retain and promote the success of diverse students, staff, faculty and leaders.**

DR. MORNA K. FOY, PRESIDENT,
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM
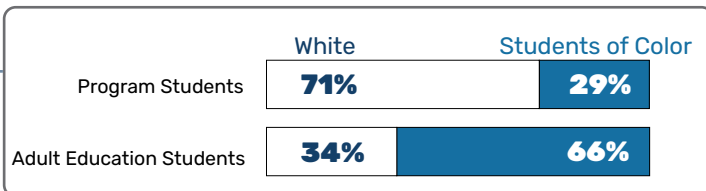
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# HIGHLIGHTS

Since publication of the 2018 Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) System-wide Equity Report, WTCS has demonstrated a meaningful commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and communicated this focus, including:
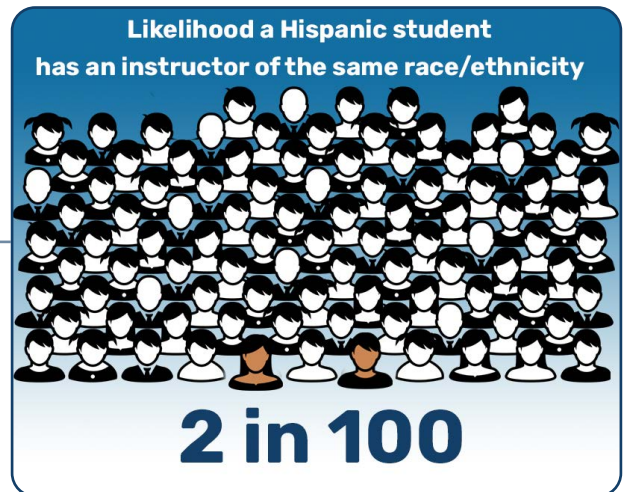
- Establishing the Commitment to Progress.
- Incorporating DEI into System and college strategic plans.
- Completing an equity report for every technical college to identify local equity gaps for students and employees.
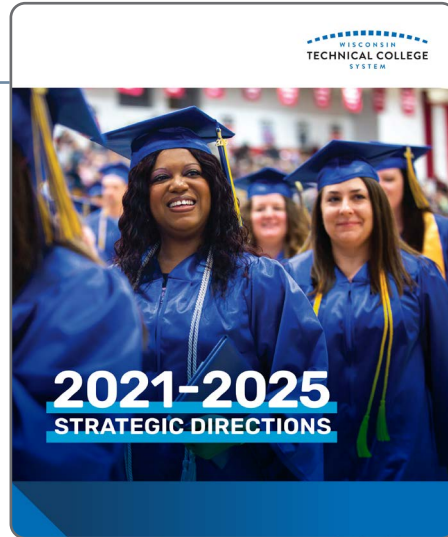
It is important to include adult education populations, who are more likely to face multiple barriers to success, in System-wide equity conversations. Adult education populations - including English Language Learners (ELL) and justice-involved students - face multiple barriers to success. Adult Education helps students improve academic skills, earn an alternative high school credential, or gain skills to improve employability. It is important to include these populations in System-wide equity conversations as they are more diverse in terms of race/ethnicity than program students.

| | White | Students of Color |
|---|---|---|
| Program Students | 71% | 29% |
| Adult Education Students | 34% | 66% |

Considering multiple barriers in data analysis is important to accurately understand needs.

*As the number of barriers students face increase, 6-year program completion rates decrease.*

**SUCCESS** / **BARRIERS**

Wisconsin has a growing Hispanic population. While WTCS enrollments reflect this, staffing diversity does not.

**Likelihood a Hispanic student has an instructor of the same race/ethnicity**

## 2 in 100
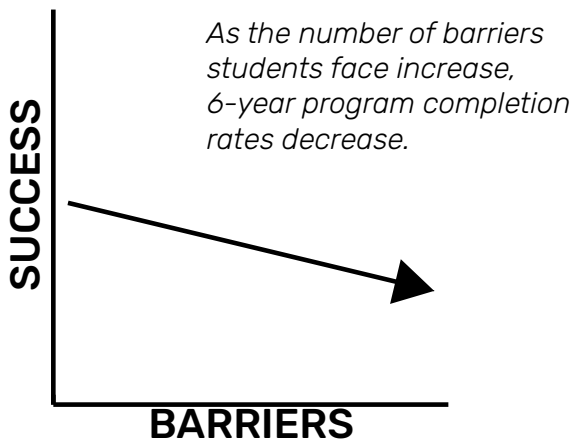
Staffing data collection is inconsistent across the System.

# CONTEXT

In addition to an aging population and workforce, other aspects of Wisconsin's demographic makeup have changed significantly, which is projected to continue well into the future.

The purpose of this report is to focus on how the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), and the 16 colleges that make up the System, are responding to these changes to assure successful outcomes for technical college students and graduates, as well as the employers anxious to hire them. The report will also summarize steps taken since release of a similar report in 2018.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Nationally, there will be no single demographic majority by 2044. By 2060, people of color will comprise over half the workforce and 1 in 4 people living in the U. S. will be Hispanic.[1]

In Wisconsin, according to U. S. News & World Report:[2]

- In 1980, of 25 small Wisconsin cities (with a population between 20,000 to 100,000):

  o   3 had populations that were more than 1 percent Black;

  o   2 were more than 1 percent Asian; and

  o   8 had populations that were 1 percent or more Latino.

- As of 2010, of the now 35 small Wisconsin cities:

  o   31 were more than 1 percent Black;

  o   31 were more than 1 percent Asian; and

  o   all 35 were more than 1 percent Latino.

Wisconsin's population is growing slowly, aging and becoming more diverse. This creates a variety of pressures affecting students, higher education institutions and employers.

According to the 2020 Census, Wisconsin's population growth was slower than the nation as a whole since 2010 – 3.6 percent compared to 7.4 percent[3] – while the state's population aged 65 and older is projected to increase 72 percent by 2040.[4]

At the same time, the state continued to become more racially and ethnically diverse. While the state's White population declined by 5.8 percentage points between 2010 and 2020, other racial and ethnic populations increased, including Asian (0.7 percentage points), Hispanic (1.7 percentage points) and multiracial (4.3 percentage points).[5]

# Student Access, Success

Predictably, these changes in the state's demographics have led to changes in the makeup of technical colleges enrollments.

The proportion of System-wide technical college enrollments who are people of color increased from at least 16.7 percent for the 2010-11 academic year to at least 22.1 percent in 2019-20. The term "at least" is used because between approximately 7 and 8 percent of enrollees chose not to report race or ethnicity.

Students enrolling at a Wisconsin technical college arrive with varying levels of preparedness and support needs. Populations with historically more limited access to higher education – not only people of color, but also women, veterans, single parents, individuals with disabilities, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people – often face more and greater barriers to access – and success in – technical college courses and programs.

**It is the consistent goal of Wisconsin's technical colleges to be "student-ready" and to assure the success of all students.**

It is the consistent goal of Wisconsin's technical colleges to be "student-ready" and to assure the success of all students, helping them to achieve their academic and career goals. Doing so serves not only students but is also critical in meeting the needs of Wisconsin's employers.

# Employer Needs

Employers recognize the effects of the state's demographic trends in a very real, immediate way. They also recognize that failure to adapt – by being prepared to recruit and retain a diverse workforce – is an existential threat, so they are trying to do so quickly and well.

They are looking to Wisconsin's technical colleges as partners in this effort. The colleges work closely with employers to align education and training with job skill requirements and help build a stronger workforce.

With 98 percent of surveyed employers saying that a technical college is important to the success of their business, the success of technical college students and the preparedness of graduates has a direct effect on the continued success of employers.

To produce the most consistently positive outcomes for employers, Wisconsin's technical colleges must be able to support all students in successfully completing courses and programs and earning credentials.

The same Wisconsin populations that have been increasing significantly for years often fall behind in college admission and completion for a variety of reasons, including systemic barriers to access and success. Increasing educational attainment for these students is key to developing Wisconsin's workforce.

As open-access institutions, the 16 public technical colleges that make up the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) have long served as meaningful entry points for high school completion and post-high school education for a highly diverse student population.

**Wisconsin's technical colleges work closely with employers to align education and training with job skill requirements and help build a stronger workforce.**

In recent years, the System has significantly expanded and enhanced its capacity to evaluate student access and outcomes, including with Action Research Briefs that identify and begin to address very real barriers to enrollment and course and program completion.

# PANDEMIC, EFFECTS OF DISCRIMINATION

Technical college efforts to better identify and address barriers to enrollment and course and program completion have taken on an increased sense of urgency as a global pandemic and national reckoning with racial injustice have significantly affected students, college employees, employers and communities throughout Wisconsin.

In early 2020, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) began spreading globally. Due to centuries of systemic discrimination, marginalized populations world-wide are at a higher risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19. In Wisconsin, Hispanic, Non-Hispanic Black and American Indian or Alaskan Native populations, in particular, represent a disproportionately high percentage of all COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths compared with Non-Hispanic White populations.[6] Tribal Nations' decisions to maintain safety policies after a state-wide order ended resulted in American Indian or Alaskan Native populations experiencing relatively low rates of COVID contraction until Fall 2020, when a 200 percent spike occurred.[7]

During the pandemic, a series of high-profile incidents in which Black citizens were killed or seriously injured by law enforcement officers – George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and in Kenosha, Jacob Blake – resulted in a broad, national focus on addressing the effects of systemic racism and police brutality toward Black citizens. Black organizers have continued leading large multi-racial movements throughout the nation, demanding changes to policy, investment in education, and public safety efforts created for and by communities of color.

The events of 2020 have intensified the inequities experienced by some WTCS students, staff, and faculty members. As one example, economic inequities the pandemic has exacerbated – including labor exploitation, unemployment, income-loss and limited access to healthcare and childcare – significantly and negatively affect certain students' ability to persist in college.[8]

In response, System and college leaders have demonstrated a renewed commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – referred to throughout this report as DEI to simplify the narrative. This commitment is reflected in statements condemning racialized violence and systemic oppression, and in specific actions such as committing to institutional and System-wide equity goals, assessing equity gaps, diversifying faculty and staff, providing training for staff and students, and creating opportunities for college leaders to focus specifically on equity and inclusion efforts.

DEI-related efforts are important for technical college students and staff, clearly. They are also important for Wisconsin employers – who are struggling to adapt to an aging and more diverse workforce, making talent recruitment and retention more challenging than ever – and for the civic health of communities statewide.

# 2018 WTCS SYSTEM-WIDE EQUITY REPORT

The 2018 WTCS System-wide Equity Report[9] (the 2018 report) outlined equity gaps that exist for certain students and staff across the System. Specifically, the report identified the need to:

- Address gaps in high wage program participation and degree attainment for students of color, students with disabilities, women and students facing economic disadvantage.
- Diversify the WTCS workforce at the System and college levels to, among other goals, better assure that technical college faculty reflect the diversity of the student population and workforce.

The 2018 report identified three goals (Figure 1) to begin to address System-wide equity gaps, with each goal including action steps for System and college leaders, faculty and staff to advance it.

While the 2018 report contributed to a sense of urgency System-wide to address these gaps for the benefit of students, employees, colleges and employers across the state, it also left important questions unanswered, including:

- What does access and success look like for student populations not analyzed, such as English Language Learners, Adult Education students, and student facing multiple barriers?
- How do we evaluate equity when formally reviewing WTCS programs?
- How does race and ethnicity affect interactions between employees and students?
- Which actions have been taken to address System-wide equity gaps?

This report will detail progress toward achieving the three goals identified in the 2018 report, as well as providing answers to the four questions above.

As shown in Figure 1, while each WTCS college operates within a unique context, all 16 have taken significant steps to advance the three goals included in the 2018 report. Each goal included action steps that are marked "complete" or "in progress" in Figure 1.
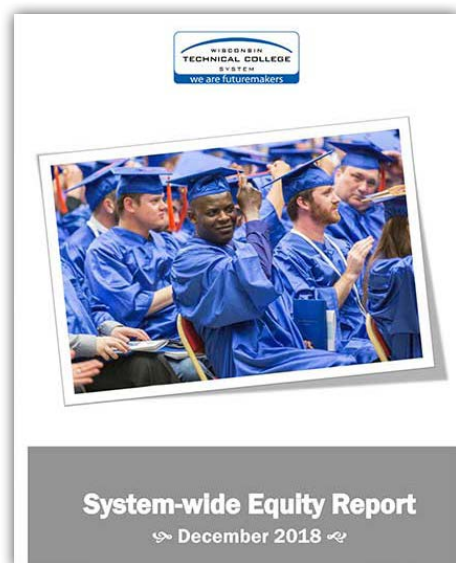
# Figure 1

## Goals and Progress: 2018 WTCS System-wide Equity Report

| GOAL 1: Identify equity gaps in student and employee data | |
|---|---|
| **Action Steps** | **Progress-to-Date** |
| Create local equity report that identifies college-specific equity data<br>**Complete**<br><br>Create policy supporting regular disaggregation of data for planning and decision-making<br>**In progress**<br><br>Share disaggregated data, college-wide, regularly<br>**In progress** | • All colleges created, shared equity reports including data on student, employee, and workforce equity with support from Perkins funding<br>• Each college assesses equity and outcomes in academic programs and creates improvement plans to close gaps<br>• The WTCS Office created an action research process to help answer questions and point to solutions regarding equity.<br>• Colleges have created equity-focused dashboards and have used expanded System Tableau resources<br>• Disaggregated equity data shared college-wide at department meetings and in-service, and at System-wide events like WisCORE<br>• College and System leaders have used equity data to set equity goals and inform action plans and professional learning opportunities. |

| GOAL 2: Address missing data to understand equity more accurately at each college | |
|---|---|
| **Action Steps** | **Progress-to-Date** |
| Examine data points collected at the college for inclusion<br>**In progress**<br><br>Establish processes for including voices of under-represented students and employees<br>**In progress** | • Some colleges have expanded gender, race and ethnicity options in data collection<br>• Some colleges have conducted equity audits and campus climate surveys to better understand equity gaps<br>• Colleges used focus and affinity groups to collect data and improve awareness of populations facing institutional barriers<br>• Student and employee panels highlighted in System-wide events such as WisCORE, Equity in the Classroom and Working as One<br>• Establishment or expansion of Community Advisory Committees |

| GOAL 3: Institutionalize a culture of equity and inclusion supported and maintained by planning, resource allocation, and the expectation that equity and inclusion is the work of each employee | |
|---|---|
| **Action Steps** | **Progress-to-Date** |
| Include equity commitment in college vision and plan, use EEO/AA plan to set goals<br>**Complete**<br><br>Review hiring practices to ensure equity and access for marginalized populations<br>**In progress**<br><br>Create equity, inclusion professional development<br>**In progress** | • Establishment of WTCS "Commitment to Progress"<br>• Renewal of WTCS Strategic Directions with clearer DEI emphasis<br>• Colleges developed equity goals and provide regular updates<br>• Presidents' Task Force created to identify diversity strategies for college faculty and staff<br>• Created DEI positions, or incorporated DEI into existing positions<br>• DEI committee created Implicit Bias Interviewer Training<br>• Establishment of WTCS Employee of Color Mentoring Program<br>• WTCS Program Approval Process now includes equity prompts<br>• Revised Faculty Quality Assurance System competencies to assure foundational knowledge in instructional equity and inclusion<br>• Colleges visibly promoted an inclusive campus culture<br>• Colleges created rubrics to evaluate equity, inclusion in curriculum<br>• Strengthened transfer policies, pathways to four-year institutions |

# PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

With support and resources provided by the System-wide DEI Committee and System and college leaders since release of the 2018 report, noteworthy strides have been made to answer these questions, and to foster a culture of equity and inclusion.

The 2018 report did not set benchmarks and as a result, this report is not a longitudinal analysis of changes in specific data points since 2018. Such an approach would – among other challenges – perpetuate omission of data for additional populations of interest, such as Adult Education students.

Instead, this report addresses the questions posed in the 2018 report and details progress made in advancing the 2018 goals, both noted above. It also frames persistent barriers to advancing equity for both technical college students and staff. Engaging campus leadership, including a diverse faculty, plays an important role in achieving inclusive institutions.

Throughout the report, terms used to refer to gender, race and ethnicity are consistent with current U. S. Census Bureau, WTCS and other data systems with the acknowledgment that improvements to data terminology is needed
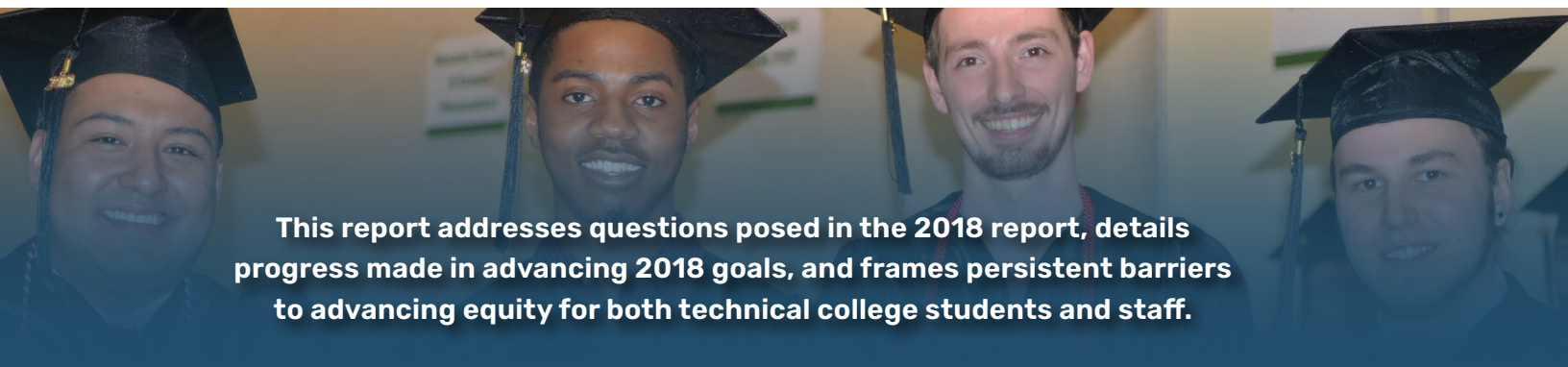
**This report addresses questions posed in the 2018 report, details progress made in advancing 2018 goals, and frames persistent barriers to advancing equity for both technical college students and staff.**

# PERSISTENT BARRIERS TO ADVANCING EQUITY

Both students and staff experience inequities and lack of inclusion in the classroom, on campus and in the larger community that affect learning, employment and other experiences.

As with the 2018 report, this report will discuss experiences and outcomes for both students and staff, and how the System and individual colleges can continuously improve learning and employment outcomes.

**Both students and staff experience inequities and lack of inclusion in the classroom, on campus and in the larger community that affect learning, employment and other experiences.**

# TECHNICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

The 2018 report identified gaps in access and success that certain student populations experience across the System.

To assess equity and inclusion across the System more completely, future analyses must:

1. Further assess data to include Adult Education and Dual Credit populations; and
2. Assess outcomes for students who face multiple barriers.

# Adult Education

The 2018 report identified equity gaps in access and success for students enrolled in specific technical college occupational programs. However, by doing so, it excluded diverse student populations served by colleges that are *not* enrolled in a program, including students enrolled in Adult Education courses.

Adult Education is a term used specifically for instruction that helps students develop academic skills, earn an alternative high school credential or gain skills to improve employability. This term also is used to generally include English Language Learner (ELL) students and those who are involved with the justice system ("justice-involved"), including incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals.

A major support for WTCS Adult Education programming is funding received under the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)[12], intended to help students:

- build the skills needed to earn a high school diploma or its equivalent;
- transition to postsecondary education; or
- obtain employment.

As shown in Figure 2, there is great diversity in the more than 13,000 students served annually through Wisconsin's AEFLA programming. More than 65 percent are students of color, about twice the proportion as those enrolled in technical college occupational programs and three times the proportion of Wisconsin's population as a whole.[13]

## Figure 2

### Adult Education and Program Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity: 2019-20
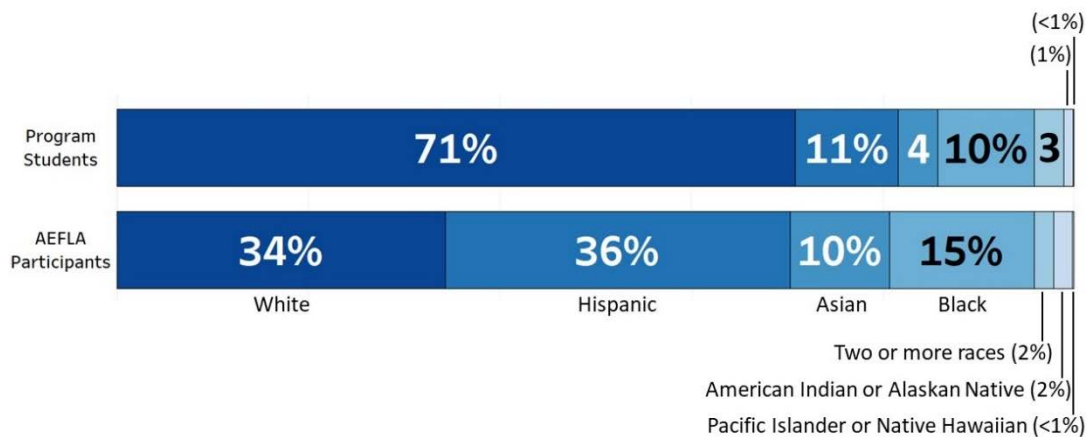


In addition, of students enrolled in Adult Education in 2019-20:

- 20 percent identified as a single parent, compared to 6 percent of all Wisconsin households;[10]
- 36 percent were English Language Learners; and
- 12 percent were justice-involved individuals

Adults in Wisconsin are more than twice as likely to live in poverty if they do not have a high school diploma.[11] Moreover, students in Adult Education often face additional barriers to college access and completion, such as racial and other forms of discrimination, limited English proficiency, incarceration, economic hardship or others.

**There are twice as many students of color in adult education than in college programs.**

Historically, Wisconsin has been a national leader in AEFLA programming with strong student outcomes, referred to as a "Measurable Skill Gain," including when a student:

- advances their literacy skills within the year, as measured by a pre- and post-test;
- earns a high school diploma or equivalent within the year; or
- enrolls in postsecondary education within a year after program exit.

With further analysis of outcomes, however, inequities persist when Measurable Skill Gain data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity.

As shown in Figure 3, 30 percent of American Indian or Alaskan Native students, 33 percent of Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students, and 42 percent of Black and Hispanic students achieved a Measurable Skill Gain in 2019-20. This compares to 52 percent of White and 45 percent of Asian students.

## Figure 3
### Adult Education Measurable Skill Gain, by Race/Ethnicity: 2019-20
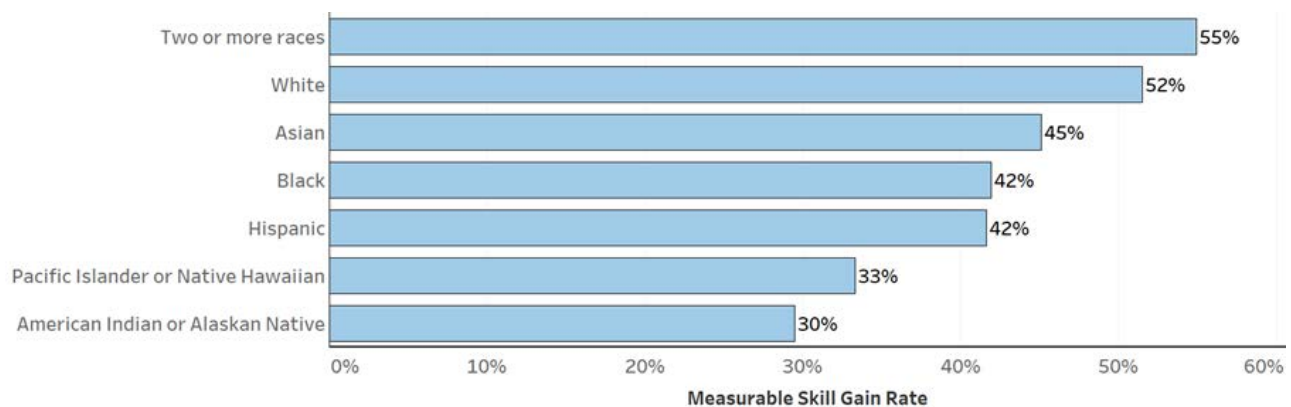


It is important to note that COVID-19 affected college and student capacity to engage in the AEFLA testing used to measure the skill gains of participants. As a result, the Measurable Skill Gain for participants in 2019-20 was lower than previous years.

Demographic diversity and the disparity in Measurable Skill Gain highlights the importance of considering Adult Education students in institutional and System-wide equity analyses and programming to ensure equity gaps are addressed for students often facing significant barriers.

One program with strong potential to advance equity in outcomes for AEFLA students is Integrated Education and Training (IET), which delivers Adult Education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually, with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational area.

Research suggests that participation in contextualized learning models like IET results in greater Measurable Skill Gain achievement and benefit students' self-efficacy, motivation, and confidence in the classroom.[14]

Despite this, participation rates in Wisconsin reveal that White students are twice as likely as students of color to participate in IET. To expand IET and address equity concerns, the WTCS Board approved a new $2.25 million, "IET Development & Expansion" annual grant category in September 2021.

# Dual Credit

Dual credit is earned for certain courses that allow high school students to simultaneously earn both high school and technical college credit.

Research consistently indicates there are positive educational outcomes associated with dual credit participation, including higher likelihood of college entry without delay after high school graduation, as well as stronger postsecondary outcomes, including GPA, persistence, credit accumulation, and degree completion.[15]

Research also suggests that dual credit participation strengthens educational outcomes for students of color, low-income students, first-generation students and students with a disability.[16] Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of equitable access to dual credit throughout WTCS.

During the 2019-20 academic year, more than 52,000 high school students earned WTCS dual credit. Yet, participation rates in dual credit demonstrate disparities in participation across student demographics.[17] For example, 8.0 percent of Black high school students earned dual credit in 2019-20, compared to 22.0 percent of White high school students.

These findings demonstrate a continuing need to assess institutional policy and partnerships with K–12 institutions to ensure that barriers to dual credit are eliminated for all students, and that appropriate supports for participation are implemented.

# Multiple Barriers

Systemic barriers faced by students, and the resulting disadvantages, often overlap and compound. We can observe the impact when students face multiple barriers by analyzing student outcomes data.

As shown in Figure 4, the likelihood of living in poverty increases with each additional barrier faced by a student. In this example, a woman of color who also has a disability and is a single parent is significantly more likely to live in poverty than the average student or a student only facing one of these barriers.

## Figure 4

### Compounding Effects for Students Facing Multiple Barriers
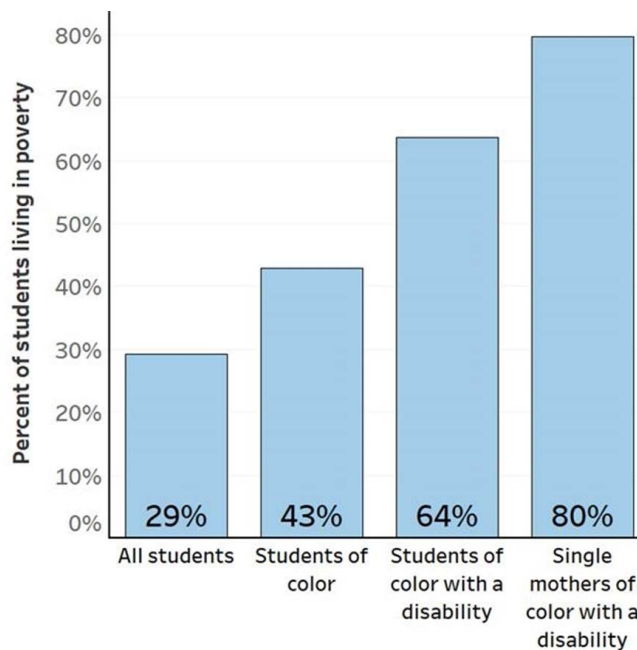
It is also important to note that as the number of barriers increases, the probability that a student will complete their program falls. In the example above, as barriers increase, the probability of program completion falls by almost half from all students (40 percent) to single mothers of color with a disability (20 percent).

**Systemic barriers faced by students, and the resulting disadvantages, often overlap and compound.**

## *Academic Program Assessment*

The 2018 report found that when individual barriers faced by students of color, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and female students are considered in isolation, all experience equity gaps in program completion and enrollment in high wage programs. However, the report did not analyze outcomes for students facing multiple barriers.

Consider the Welding One-Year Technical Diploma program, a useful example because it is offered at most WTCS colleges and has high enrollments.

WTCS welding program deans and faculty are working to address barriers faced disproportionately by marginalized students, with some faculty inviting students' families to visit the welding lab to learn about the program and discuss needed support.[18]

Yet, equity gaps persist in welding program completion when reviewing 2013-15 student cohorts, similar to many other WTCS programs.

As shown in Figure 5, when looking at program completion relative to only the Federal Poverty Level, we see students living below that threshold complete the program within 6 years at a rate approximately 10 percent lower than students living above the threshold.

## Figure 5

### Welding One-Year Technical Diploma Completion, Relative to Federal Poverty Level
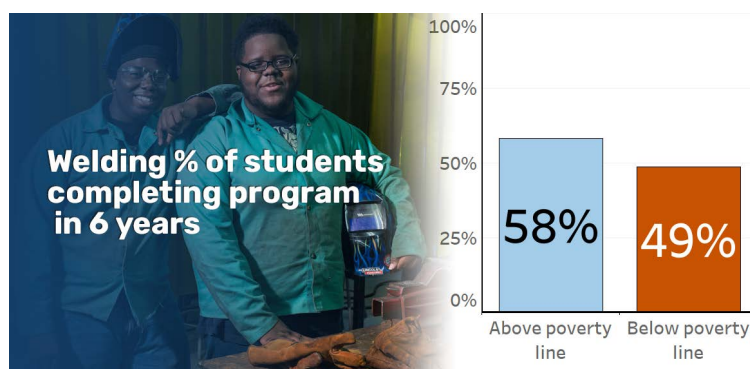


Welding % of students completing program in 6 years

58% Above poverty line

49% Below poverty line

**Program completion rate is considerably lower for students if they face multiple barriers.**

As shown in Figure 6, the program completion rate is considerably lower for students if they face multiple barriers. For example, only 16 percent of Black students and 33 percent of His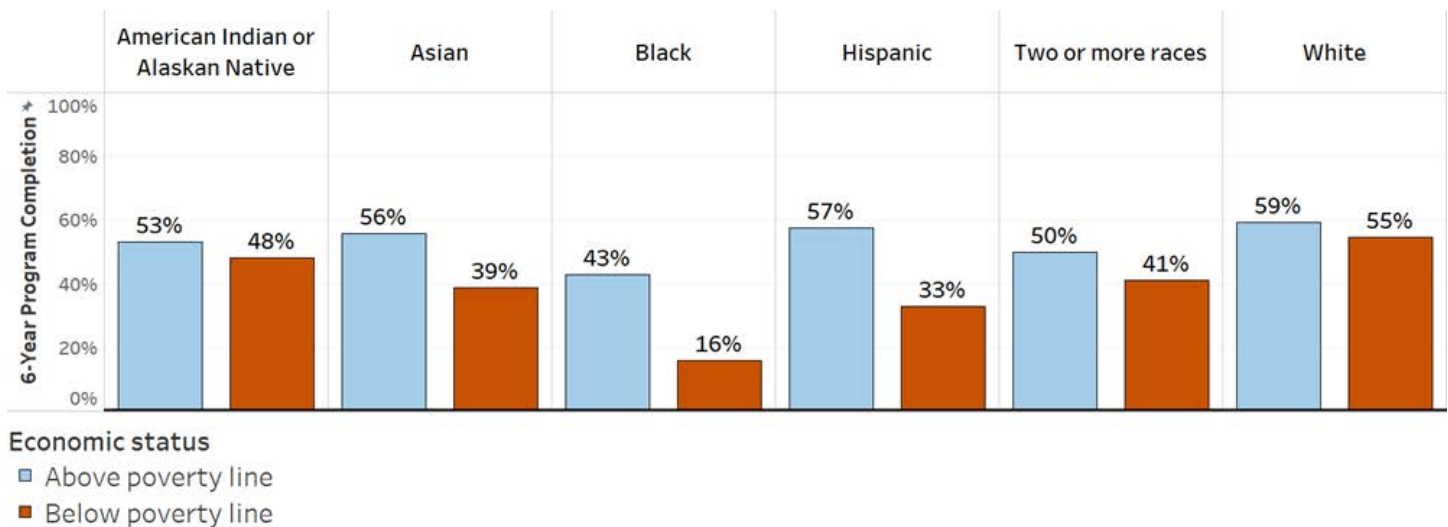panic students living in poverty completed the welding diploma within 6 years. This is considerably lower than the 55 percent of White students living in poverty completing the credential within 6 years.

## Figure 6

### Percentage of 2013-2015 Cohort Students Completing Welding Program within 6 years, Relative to Federal Poverty Level Status and Race/Ethnicity



**Institutions that focus on poverty alone - without also considering the compounding effects of multiple barriers faced by students of color - may make decisions based on insufficient factors**

This analysis suggests it is important to consider both income and race/ethnicity to address equity gaps in this program. For example, Institutions that focus on poverty alone – without also considering the compounding effects of multiple barriers faced by students of color – may make decisions based on insufficient factors. As a result, financial barriers for some students may be addressed while equity gaps persist for others.

A similar result was found when reviewing program access for 2013–2015 Associate Degree Nursing program cohorts. In these cohorts, students with a disability were accepted into the program at roughly the same rate as students without a disability. However, for students with disabilities who also identified as students of color, equity gaps were clear.

This type of analysis can both demonstrate the positive effects that addressing barriers for students with disabilities is having across racial/ethnic groups, while also highlighting the need to assure equity in program access for students of color.

These findings are supported by national assessments. Specifically, guidance from the National Association for Partnerships in Equity regarding the Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment acknowledges that "data disaggregation must go beyond single student demographic measures."[19]

# TECHNICAL COLLEGE LEADERS, STAFF AND FACULTY

While there are many aspects to diversity, this section focuses on two: race/ethnicity and ability. The 2018 report found that technical college employees, including faculty and administrators, were generally less racially and ethnically diverse than WTCS students. This was particularly stark for faculty positions, which is why they are a focus of this report, along with a more developed analysis of representation in employee-to-student leadership. College staff are more representative of student populations, but are not highlighted in this report.

To re-examine the 2018 finding and more accurately analyze technical college employee-to-student ratios by college, each institution was asked to submit employment data disaggregated by race, gender, disability status and position type.

By statute, Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges operate with relative independence. This is a unique strength, allowing each college to respond nimbly and flexibly to local needs.

In some instances, however, this structure can present challenges. For example, colleges' varying data structures complicate System-level benchmarking and trend analyses to measure progress in diversifying technical college leaders, staff and faculty.

## *Race and Ethnicity*

While progress has been made in certain areas, technical college leaders, faculty and staff generally remain less racially and ethnically diverse than the students they serve.

For this analysis, the representation of race and ethnicity in the student population at each technical college was compared to the representation within the college's leaders, deans and faculty.

In the figure below, the percentage represents the average difference in representation between employees and students in that category across the 16 colleges.

Bars displayed in blue indicate that the employee group has a higher representation than is found in the student body. Bars displayed in orange indicate that the employee group has a lower representation than is found in the student body.

As shown in Figure 7, when looking across all employee groups System-wide, deans and faculty remain the least diverse. For example, compared with Hispanic students at each college, the average representation of the Hispanic faculty who serve them is 7 percent lower.

In other words, on average across WTCS colleges, Hispanic students make up about 9 percent of students, but only about 2 percent of faculty.
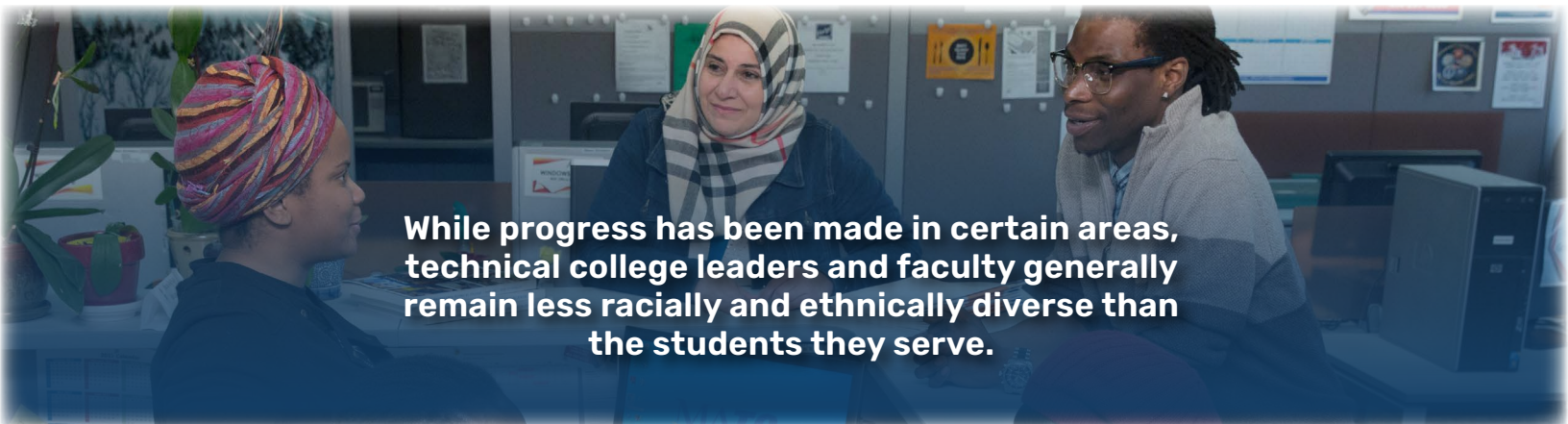
> While progress has been made in certain areas, technical college leaders and faculty generally remain less racially and ethnically diverse than the students they serve.

## Figure 7
### College Leader, Dean and Faculty Diversity Compared to Student Population



Chart showing representation compared with student body across three groups:

**Executive Leadership**
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 0%
- Asian: -2%
- Black: 2%
- Hispanic: -7%
- Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian: 0%
- Two or more races: -2%
- White: 9%

**Deans**
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: -1%
- Asian: -3%
- Black: -1%
- Hispanic: -6%
- Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian: 0%
- Two or more races: -2%
- White: 15%

**All Faculty**
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: -1%
- Asian: -2%
- Black: -4%
- Hispanic: -7%
- Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian: 0%
- Two or more races: -2%
- White: 13%

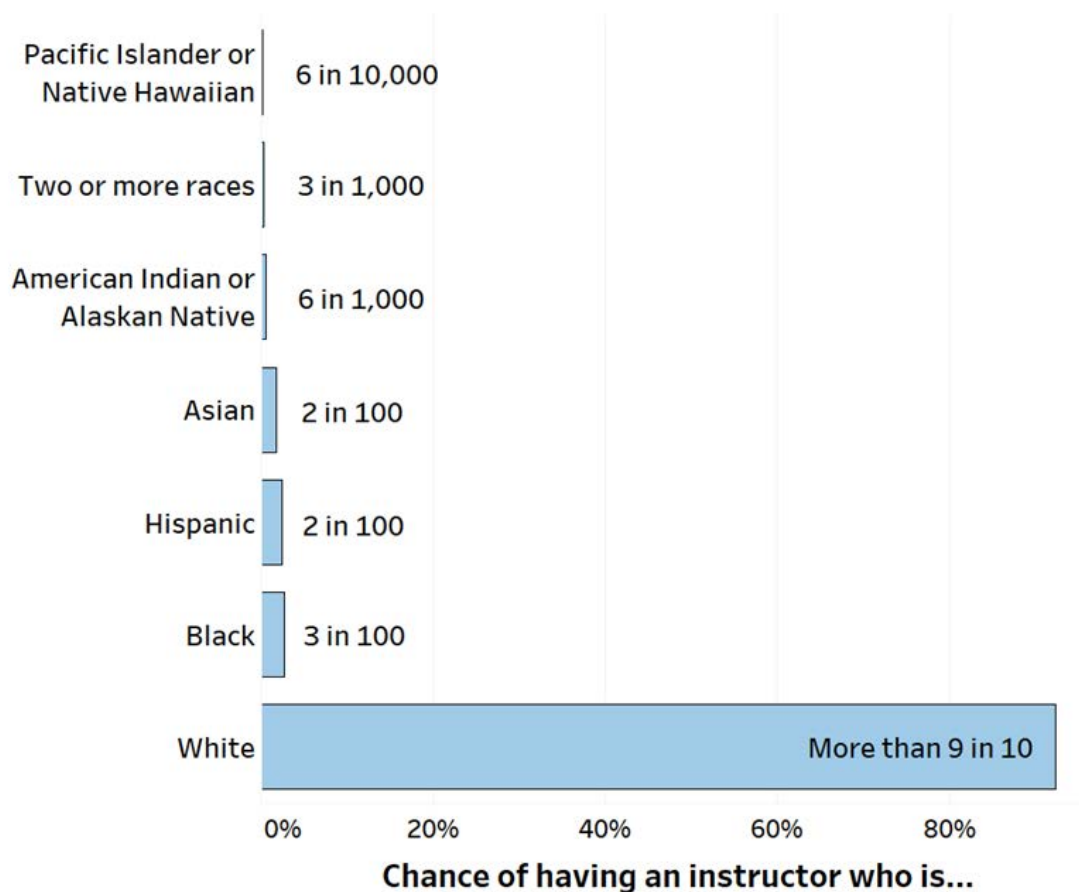Representation compared with student body

This disparity is also seen in dean and executive leadership positions when compared to students, a finding that is particularly noteworthy considering that the Hispanic community is the second largest and fastest growing racial/ethnic group in Wisconsin.[20] This growth is evident in the recent designation of Milwaukee Area and Gateway Technical colleges as "Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions".[21]

In a positive development, Black executive leaders in the 2020 data, on average, exceeded the proportion of Black students (+ 2.0 percent).

In terms of faculty representation, Figure 8 reflects the chances that a technical college student – regardless of race or ethnicity – will have an instructor of a particular race or ethnicity. The data suggests that the chances of a student of color having an instructor of their same race or ethnicity are quite low.

## Figure 8

### Chances a Technical College Student Will Have Instructor of Particular Race/Ethnicity

| Race/Ethnicity | Chance |
|---|---|
| Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian | 6 in 10,000 |
| Two or more races | 3 in 1,000 |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | 6 in 1,000 |
| Asian | 2 in 100 |
| Hispanic | 2 in 100 |
| Black | 3 in 100 |
| White | More than 9 in 10 |

Chance of having an instructor who is...

"It is one of the most important things, when a student looks up, they see someone they can relate to or that inspires them, like I did."

**JESUS VEGA, JR.
GATEWAY TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

Of technical college program areas, faculty in the areas of Human Services and General Education had the highest racial and ethnic diversity, with about 14.0 percent instructors who were people of color. Faculty in the areas of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics were the least diverse, with less than 2.0 percent people of color.

Employing diverse faculty across program areas benefits all students. Research shows that having an instructor with a shared racial/ethnic background contributes to successful outcomes for students of color, which could help close persistent equity gaps.[22]

Additionally, employers increasingly expect graduates to interact effectively with a diverse workforce and community. Engagement with diverse faculty and college staff helps all students develop this competency.[23]

A recent feature in Milwaukee–based BizTimes, supported by 45 companies large and small and across sectors, stated that "diverse workplaces and work teams are more innovative, creative and better for the bottom line."[24]

Since 2018, System and college leaders have taken steps to address the representation gap between technical college students and employees.

For example, leaders System-wide are reviewing both hiring and retention policies. In addition, the 16 technical college presidents created a taskforce charged with identifying steps to diversify faculty and employee positions.[25]



**Significant work remains to ensure students see themselves represented in the leaders and employees at the college they attend.**

In addition to considering race and ethnicity of technical college leaders, deans and faculty, the demographic make-up of the District Boards of Trustees who oversee operations of the technical colleges was also considered.

Technical college District Board appointment committees are required, under state law, to formulate a "plan of representation" for the membership of the Board. The plan must consider the general population distribution within the district, as well as the proportion of women and "minorities."

It is worth noting that at the same time, the colleges' student populations are often considerably more diverse than the general population within the district. As one example, one analysis found that District Board members are on average 14 percent more male than students.

While DEI progress System-wide since 2018 is noteworthy, significant work remains to ensure students see themselves represented at the college they attend. The 2020 data again show that overall, Wisconsin technical college employees are consistently less racially and ethnically diverse than the students they serve.
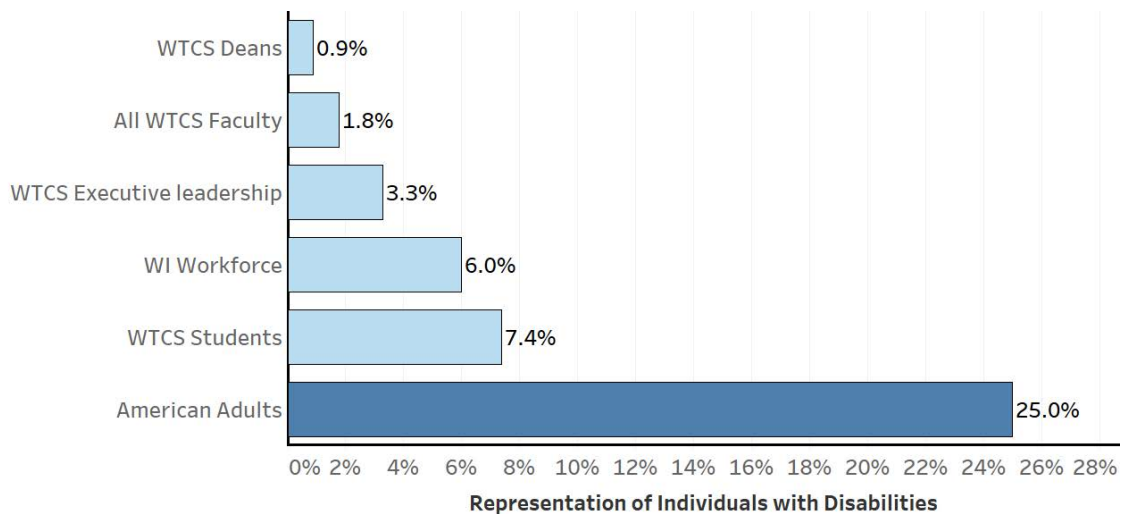
## *Ability*

Across all WTCS employee groups, there are fewer staff with disabilities than students.

As shown in Figure 9, more than 7 percent of WTCS students have disclosed a disability, which is higher than the percent of workers statewide with reported disabilities (6 percent), and considerably higher than for deans, faculty and executive leaders. In contrast, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated in 2016 that 1 in 4 adults in the U. S. had a disability.[26]

### Figure 9

**Proportion of Individuals Disclosing a Disability, 2019-20**



| | |
|---|---|
| WTCS Deans | 0.9% |
| All WTCS Faculty | 1.8% |
| WTCS Executive leadership | 3.3% |
| WI Workforce | 6.0% |
| WTCS Students | 7.4% |
| American Adults | 25.0% |

Representation of Individuals with Disabilities

According to Inside Higher Ed, some faculty with disabilities report experiencing stigmas, microaggressions, and barriers to advancement when they have disclosed their disability, despite protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act. As a result, part of the underrepresentation of faculty with disabilities could be due to underreporting.

As with other types of identities, students, employees, and community members with disabilities benefit from a campus climate that is visibly inclusive to individuals with diverse abilities. Employing the principles of Universal Design throughout the college and addressing stigmas directly will benefit students and staff alike.

"It's a joy to see an adult with a hearing aide, or pronouns in their signature. I feel safer, more comfortable, and more at ease."

**LYNDIN ATKIELSKI**
**NORTHEAST WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE**
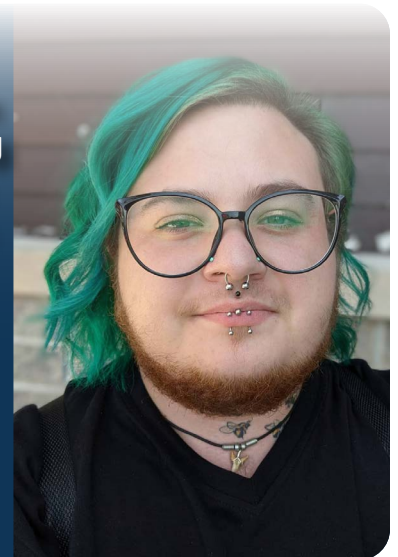
## *Data Collection*

Collecting additional employee data for this report from each of the WTCS colleges revealed some noteworthy insights and challenges.

As mentioned, employee data – unlike student data – is not collected at a System level. This means that each technical college has its own process for collecting and maintaining employee data. At many colleges, both the Institutional Research and Human Resources offices collect employee data. Without coordination, it can be unclear who is responsible for collecting and maintaining data on employee representation and retention.

In addition, similar to student data, employee demographic categories are sometimes narrower than how employees identify themselves. For example, only providing male/female gender options, or limiting racial/ethnic options to broad categories such as "Asian" do not allow employees to identify themselves, nor do they allow the WTCS community to discuss demographics most accurately.

Creating common definitions and processes for collecting employee data across the 16 colleges may help colleges compare their progress with employee representation and retention with other technical colleges, and discuss strategies that have shown positive results.

For example, standardizing a System-wide definition for *part-time faculty* and a process for measuring employee retention would improve the accuracy of future System-wide reports and conversations on equity in technical college employment.

**Common employee data definitions and collection processes may help colleges better measure progress in employee representation and retention.**

# CONCLUSION

While WTCS and individual technical colleges have taken meaningful steps since 2018 to advance DEI, significant work remains to ensure students and employees have what is needed to be successful.

This work is part of an iterative process to continuously listen, respond to and lift up student and employee voices. Everyone has a role to play in advancing DEI within their college and across the System.

Appendix A provides an updated series of action steps that will support stakeholders in maintaining momentum and continue progress toward achieving the important goals identified in 2018.

**"Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a commitment and an ongoing institutional journey, not a one-and-done activity that is checked off a DEI to-do list."**

**WTCS EQUITY REPORT AUTHORS**

# APPENDIX A: ACTION STEPS

## All WTCS Employees

### ACTIONS

- Familiarize yourself with System- and college-level commitments and plans for advancing DEI and consider how to operationalize these plans in your role.
- Engage in discussions and activities around DEI. Include diverse perspectives in your community, look to amplify marginalized voices, and share your ideas around how to create an inclusive college environment.

### RESOURCES

- Systemwide Commitment to Progress
- Local Equity Reports (Ask WTCS DEI Committee Liaison from your college for access)
- WTCS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee webpage

## Executive Leaders, Board Members

### ACTIONS

- Institutionalize a continuous improvement process for capturing, analyzing and benchmarking student and employee equity data to set goals and action steps and assess progress.
- Invite students, community members, and all employees to engage in DEI conversations with the support needed to actively participate.
- Include Adult Education, Justice-Involved and English Language Learner student data and voices in institutional equity and inclusion action plans.

### RESOURCES

- Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment
- Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessment with Equity Considerations
- Effective use of data framework

## Human Resources Managers

### ACTIONS

- Provide an annual opportunity for employees to disclose disability information. Assess disability services for employees.
- Establish a process for regularly collecting, reviewing, and analyzing employee recruitment and retention data for the purposes of advancing equity.
- Evaluate recruitment strategies to support the recruitment of staff and faculty of color, paying particular attention to the growing Hispanic community.

### RESOURCES

- Resources from HR Task Force
- Perkins Capacity Building Grant
- Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment
- Affirmative Action Plans
- Local Equity Reports
- Excelencia in Education

## Directors, Deans & Faculty

### ACTIONS

- Evaluate equity within department by using System- and college-level data resources.
- Include Adult Education, English Language Learner, and Justice Involved student data and voices in institutional equity and inclusion action plans.
- Engage in professional learning to better meet the needs of diverse learners in accordance with Faculty Quality Assurance System (FQAS) competencies.

### RESOURCES

- WTCS Tableau Dashboards
- Integrated Education and Training Innovative Practice
- Faculty Quality Assurance System (FQAS) Competency Framework

## Student Services Staff

### ACTIONS

- Collaborate across the college to best serve students facing multiple barriers (e.g., living in poverty and facing systemic racism).
- Reach out to Adult Education, Justice-Involved and English Language Learner populations with information about student supports. Tailor communication to these populations.
- Create and provide student supports that acknowledge student needs from a lens of cultural competence and equity.

### RESOURCES

- WTCS Tableau Dashboards
- WTCS Creating Inclusive Spaces Resource Guide

## Institutional Researchers

### ACTIONS

- Collaborate with HR regarding collecting, reviewing, and analyzing employee recruitment and retention data.
- Identify populations facing multiple barriers (e.g., living in poverty and facing systemic racism) when reviewing disaggregated data for equity gaps.
- Create and manage process for collecting authentic student and employee voice (e.g., climate surveys, focus groups).

### RESOURCES

- WTCS Tableau Dashboards
- Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration
- EMSI-Burning Glass recruitment data within EMSI Analyst

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Staff

### ACTIONS

- Invite students, community, and all employees to engage in DEI conversations with the support needed to actively participate.
- Identify populations facing multiple barriers (e.g., living in poverty and facing systemic racism) when reviewing disaggregated data for equity gaps.
- Include Adult Education, Justice-Involved and English Language Learner student data and voices in institutional equity and inclusion action plans.

### RESOURCES

- Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment
- National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity resources
- The Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide

# ENDNOTES

1    Colby, S.L. and J.M. Ortman. 2015. *Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060*. Current Population Reports, P25-1143. U.S. Census Bureau., Washington, DC.

2    Eason, J.M., B. Witkovsky, C. Haimson, and J. Kim. 2020. *In Wisconsin's Diversifying Cities Like Kenosha There's Fear and Unrest*. The Conversation.

3    Karnopp, H. 2021. *Wisconsin is getting more diverse but growing slower than much of the country, and more takeaways from the 2020 census*. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

4    Wisconsin Department of Health Services. 2020. Dementia: Wisconsin Population Demographics.

5    Tallahassee Democrat. *How many people live in Wisconsin: 2020 Decennial Census*. USA Today.

6    Center for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. *Health Disparities: Provisional Death Counts for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. National Center for Health Statistics.; Wisconsin Department of Health Services. 2020. *COVID-19: Racial and Ethnic Disparities*.

7    Spivak, C. 2020. *American Indian COVID-19 numbers in Wisconsin stayed low until Sept. 1. 'Then all of a sudden, boom.'* Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

8    Breakthrough ACTION. 2020. *Socially Marginalized Groups and COVID-19*. A Technical Brief for the Breakthrough ACTION Field Teams.; Brown, S. and K. Mangan. 2020. *What College Students Need Now*. The Chronicle of Higher Education.; Center for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. *Weekly Updates by Select Demographic and Geographic Characteristics*. National Center for Health Statistics.; Kantamneni, N. 2020. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on marginalized populations in the United States: A research agenda. Journal of Vocational Behavior. 119:103439.

9    Larsen, C., H. Barker, B. Konruff, B. McClure, B. Powles, C. Smyth, K. Spannbauer, M. Bey, R. Buschhaus, R. De Leon, W. Lanier, C. Munson, L. Snyder, T. Summers, M. Thornton, and N. Yang. 2018. *System-wide Equity Report*. Wisconsin Technical College System.

10   United States Census Bureau. (2019). *Table DP02: Selected Social Characteristics*. 2015-19 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

11   United States Census Bureau. (2018). *S1501: Education Attainment*. 2013-17 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

12   *AEFLA* is a federal program that helps adults gain basic skills (English language proficiency, math, reading, writing, digital literacy) for gainful employment.

13   United States Census Bureau. (2019). *Table DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates*. 2015-19 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

14   Konruff, B. 2020. *Understanding Measurable Skill Gains: Identifying Factors Associated with Student Success*. Wisconsin Technical College System. Student Success Center Action Research Brief.

15   D'Amico, M. M., G. B. Morgan, S. Robertson, and H. E. Rivers. 2013. *Dual enrollment variables and college student persistence*. Community College Journal of Research and Practice. 37, 769-779.; Karp, M. M., J. C. Calcagno, K. L. Hughes, D. W. Jeong, and T. Bailey. 2008. *Dual enrollment students in Florida and New York City: Postsecondary outcomes*. New York, NY: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.; Kim, J., and D. D. Bragg. 2008. *The impact of dual and articulated credit on college readiness and retention in four community colleges*. Career and Technical Education Research. 33, 133-158.; Wang, X., H. Chan, A. Phelps, and J. Washbon. 2015. *Fuel for success: Academic momentum as a mediator between dual enrollment and educational outcomes of two-year technical college students*. Community College Review. 43(2), 165-190.

16   An, B. P. 2013a. *The impact of dual enrollment on college degree attainment: Do low-SES students benefit?* Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. 35, 57-75.; An, B. P. 2013b. *The influence of dual enrollment on academic performance and college readiness: Differences by socioeconomic status*. Research in Higher Education. 54, 407-432.; Plasman, J. S., and M. A. Gottfried. 2018. *Applied STEM Coursework, High School Dropout Rates, and Students with Learning Disabilities*. Educational Policy. 32(5), 664–696.; Speroni, C. 2011. *Determinants of students' success: The role of advanced placement and dual enrollment programs*. New York, NY: National Center for Postsecondary Research, Teachers College, Columbia University. Taylor, J. L. 2015. *Accelerating pathways to college: The (in)equitable effects of community college dual credit*. Community College Review. 43, 355–379.

17   Konruff, B. 2019. *Equity in WTCS Dual Credit Participation*. Wisconsin Technical College System. Student Success Center Action Research Brief.

18   Lakeshore Technical College. 2020. *Education sparks better life for Pablo Gomez*. LTC News.

19   National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity. 2020. *Equity Principles in the Perkins V CLNA*. Perkins V.

20   United States Census Bureau. 2019. *Table B03002: Hispanic or Latino by Race*. American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

21   "Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions," defined as Hispanic enrollments between 15 and 24.9% of all enrollments. '

22   Fairlie, R. W., F. Hoffman, and P. Oreopoulos. 2014. *A community College Instructor Like Me: Race and Ethnicity Interactions in the Classroom*. American Economic Review. 104(8): 25672591.

23   *"Why Cultural Competence Matters to Recruiters."* Insight Into Diversity (February 2016)

24   *Business Cares: Diversity & Inclusion*. Milwaukee BizTimes (Jul 19 – Aug 15, 2021).

25   Wisconsin Technical College System. 2020. *Commitment to progress*. WTCS Priorities.

   Burke, L. 2021. *A difficult pathway*. Inside Higher Ed.

26   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2018. *CDC: 1 in 4 US adults live with a disability.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

WISCONSIN
TECHNICAL COLLEGE
SYSTEM

Northwood Technical College

NICOLET COLLEGE

Chippewa Valley Technical College

Northcentral TECHNICAL COLLEGE

NORTHEAST WI Technical College

Mid-State TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Fox Valley TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Knowledge That Works

Western Technical College

MORAINE PARK TECHNICAL COLLEGE

LAKESHORE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

MADISON AREA | TECHNICAL COLLEGE

MATC Milwaukee Area Technical College

WAUKESHA COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE | Hands-on Higher Ed

Southwest Wisconsin TECHNICAL COLLEGE

BLACKHAWK TECHNICAL COLLEGE

GATEWAY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

# 16 COLLEGES, ONE SYSTEM

## WTCSYSTEM.EDU

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| BLACKHAWK | blackhawk.edu | MORAINE PARK | morainepark.edu |
| CHIPPEWA VALLEY | cvtc.edu | NICOLET COLLEGE | nicoletcollege.edu |
| FOX VALLEY | fvtc.edu | NORTHCENTRAL | ntc.edu |
| GATEWAY | gtc.edu | NORTHWOOD | northwoodtech.edu |
| LAKESHORE | gotoltc.edu | NORTHEAST WISCONSIN | nwtc.edu |
| MADISON COLLEGE | madisoncollege.edu | SOUTHWEST TECH | swtc.edu |
| MID-STATE | mstc.edu | WAUKESHA COUNTY | wctc.edu |
| MILWAUKEE AREA | matc.edu | WESTERN | westerntc.edu |