

A SERIES OF FOUR
BRIEFS EXAMINING THE
SUPPORT NEEDS OF
DIFFERENT COMMUNITY
COLLEGE STUDENT
POPULATIONS.

EQUITY IN DESIGN FOR HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORTS



Supporting the Success of Students Enrolled Part-Time

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FEBRUARY 2020

Part-Time Students Need Full-Time Support

A 28-year-old student at Amarillo College, Maria is a single mother and first-generation college student. Juggling two part-time jobs and family responsibilities, it's a challenge for her to keep up with her studies. That's one of the reasons Maria attends school part-time, with plans to take 12 credit hours over the course of a full academic year, but that doesn't mean she isn't serious about getting a degree and the opportunity for a better life that comes with it.

"She's smart, and she's ambitious, and she's capable—and all we have to do is remove a few key barriers in order for her to live up to her potential," says Russell Lowery-Hart, Amarillo's president.¹

Maria isn't real—Amarillo College created her to represent the institution's "average" student based on a composite of student data. But she's regularly referred to by name in conversations among faculty, staff, and stakeholders on the Texas community college campus, and for good reason: more than 60 percent of the college's students are part-time, in line with the national average for two-year institutions.

As with other student populations community colleges serve, part-time students often face multiple challenges that present additional barriers to completion, including unfamiliarity with the college experience, parenthood, and food and housing insecurity. Lowery-Hart recalls visiting a homeless shelter and seeing a student's Amarillo College ID hanging on the post of a bunk bed next to a Wendy's badge and a McDonald's badge. "That was a punch in the gut," he said in an interview with the Chronicle of Higher Education.²

Community colleges have historically opened their doors to all those interested in pursuing higher education, but even as their student populations have changed, too many of their structures are still built around serving the "traditional" college student—the first-time, full-time 18-year-old who is now a distinct minority on today's campuses.

"If someone wants to come to college, we think they'd want to come full-time, but life gets in the way," says David Harris, assistant vice president of instruction at Trident Technical College (TTC) in South Carolina. "Most community colleges are full of part-time students, and everything we do is geared towards full-time, from financial aid to how we create our courses and programs."

Given that they represent the majority of their student populations, improving outcomes for part-time students is vital for institutions to meet their goals of improving equity in outcomes and the broader economic imperative of increasing overall postsecondary attainment. And while many institutions have made efforts to encourage more part-time students to shift to full-time status, the reality of students' lives means that this can only be a limited part of the solution, particularly since part-time enrollment growth is projected to outpace that of full-time students through much of this decade.

As with the other publications in this series, this brief focuses on the importance of institutions designing and providing holistic student supports that meet the specific needs of their own student populations.

"If we're going to be the economic saviors of our community, we have to understand who our community is, and we have to readdress ourselves to reflect our community," Lowery-Hart says.

MORE ON HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORTS

Overview www.achievingthedream.org/resources/initiatives/holistic-student-supports

Holistic Student Supports Redesign: A Toolkit for Redesigning Advising and Student Services to Effectively Support Every Student www.achievingthedream.org/sites/default/files/resources/atd_hss_redesign_toolkit_2018.pdf

Getting to Know Part-Time Students

Talk to any community college across the country, and chances are that their data shows two facts about the students they serve:

- 1) The majority of the students they serve each semester are enrolled part-time.
- 2) Students who enroll part-time are less likely to stay in college and complete their academic goals than their full-time peers.

Nationwide, nearly two-thirds (64.6 percent in Spring 2019) of two-year college students attend on a part-time basis³ (i.e., taking fewer than 12 credits per semester). Unsurprisingly, public two-year institutions serve almost two-thirds of all students enrolled part-time and only 25 percent of full-time students.⁴

But even as the national community college student success movement has focused on increasing student outcomes and closing equity gaps, the part-time student has typically been on the periphery of these changes. Part of the reason could be the limited amount of data about who these students are, beyond statistics describing their gender or race. As noted in the first brief in this series, designing a college experience that supports the success of students requires spending time getting to know who they are.

So what does the data tell us about part-time students? A complicated, ever-changing picture, as students' lives are often in flux. The dichotomy between full- and part-time students isn't clear cut. Only 21 percent of community college students attend college exclusively full-time (defined as taking at least 12 credits per semester), while 12 percent attend exclusively part-time. The remaining 67 percent move between full- and part-time status semester by semester as their life and career circumstances change.⁵

Differences in enrollment patterns by race and gender, however, are more clear. Men are more likely to attend full time (18 percent, compared to 13 percent of women), while women are more likely to move between full-time and part-time status semester by semester or always attend part time.

White students are most likely to attend full time (18 percent), while Hispanic or Latino students are least likely (9 percent). American Indian and other Native American

students, Hispanic or Latino students, and Black or African American students are also much more likely to have fluid enrollment patterns (75, 73, and 74 percent, respectively) than other racial populations.⁶

The data also show that part-time students' lives beyond school involve greater levels of responsibility than their full-time peers. Students enrolled part-time at community colleges are more likely to be working while studying (72 percent, compared to 62 percent of their full-time counterparts). Nearly four in ten (38 percent) students enrolled part-time are working full-time, while a further 34 percent work part-time.⁷ Part-time students are more likely to have dependents to care for (38 percent, compared to 23 percent of full-time students). It's unsurprising, then, to learn that part-time students are far more likely to be over the age of 24 than their full-time peers (64 percent vs. 34 percent, respectively).⁸

Their financial lives are also far more complex and precarious than their full-time peers. Part-time students are more likely to be both low-income and the first generation in their family to go to college than their full-time peers (52 percent vs. 43 percent).⁹ They're also more likely to be financially independent (71 percent, compared to 41 percent of full-time students).¹⁰ Research from the Fall 2018 Trellis Company's Student Financial Wellness Survey¹¹ shows that part-time students are more likely to report that:

- They don't know how they would pay for college the next semester.
- They would have trouble getting \$500 cash or credit in an emergency.
- It's important that they support their family financially while in college.
- They support their parent(s) or guardian(s) financially.

How Well do We Serve Part-Time Students?

Even though they represent the majority of students on community college campuses, part-time students experience lower success rates on every key metric of progress and completion. Students enrolled exclusively part-time are less likely to pass gateway courses, persist to the next fall semester, and complete a degree or certificate within six years.¹² While 61 percent of students who remain enrolled full-time complete within six years, only 19 percent of fully part-time students do so. For students who enroll both full- and part-time for at least one semester, 34 percent complete within six years.¹³ Further, part-time students and those whose status fluctuates are less likely to still be enrolled at any institution in six years and significantly less likely to transfer to a four-year institution.¹⁴



The impact is more pronounced for Black and Hispanic students. While White and Asian students enrolled exclusively part-time have six-year completion rates of 26 and 24 percent respectively, the rate is just 15 percent for Black and Hispanic students. The trend holds for students who alternate between full- and part-time enrollment; White and Asian students complete at 41 and 44 percent respectively, while Black and Hispanic students complete at much lower rates—24 and 33 percent.¹⁵ Women, however, are significantly more likely to complete within six years than men across all enrollment statuses for all four racial populations.¹⁶

Younger students who are enrolled part time or a mixture of part- and full-time are far less likely to complete within six years, though they are more likely to still be enrolled than students over the age of 24.¹⁷ And there are big outcome differences between states, with exclusively part-time students completing at rates ranging from 7 to 40 percent

within six years, though the range for mixed enrollment students is much narrower, between 27 and 46 percent.¹⁸

Research also suggests significant differences in the lived experiences of part-time and mixed enrollment students. Data from the Center for Community College Student Engagement shows that full-time students report higher scores on every single measure of engagement, with an eight percentage point gap between full-time students and their part-time peers in active and collaborative learning and student-faculty interaction metrics, and a seven percentage point gap on student effort and academic challenge metrics. The smallest gap is in support for learners, where the gap is only five percentage points.¹⁹ These measurable differences in engagement illustrate that higher education, as currently designed, isn't serving these students well.

Despite low completion and engagement rates, however, part-time enrollment is not going away. In fact, the number of part-time students enrolled in any degree-granting postsecondary institution increased by 16 percent between 2002 and 2016 (compared to 22 percent for full-time enrollment). Part-time enrollment, in fact, is projected to outpace full-time enrollment going forward, increasing 5 percent between 2016 and 2027 (compared to 2 percent for full-time enrollment).²⁰

It is imperative, then, that institutions reexamine their structures, processes, and culture to support greater success for part-time students. The remainder of this brief will explore some of the nuances associated with promising practices that make them more effective for a greater proportion of part-time students.

Designing a College That Works for Part-Time Students

Understand the Diversity of Experience and Needs of Your Part-Time Students

While part-time students share many common experiences, such as working while enrolled, designing a holistic student supports experience to serve an institution's students requires an understanding of the range of what holistic means for its students. What works for a part-time student with a full-time day job but no dependents may not work for a mother of three who works part-time and takes two buses to get to college or a part-time student who works two shift jobs that change his hours weekly.

When ATD works with colleges to get to know its students, it uses a variety of lenses to go deeper into their lives. For example, knowing the proportion of students who are Pell eligible is good information, but it doesn't provide the whole picture of the spectrum of need within that group. So ATD challenges colleges to collect data to answer the question in greater depth: of those who receive Pell Grants, what percentage live below the poverty threshold for a family of four?

Another example involves exploring the working circumstances of part-time students. While many colleges collect data on how many of their students work while in college, capturing and quantifying more of the complexity of their experiences can help inform the design of supports to serve all students. For example:

- What percentage of part-time students work over 20 hours per week?
- What percentage of part-time students experience regular changes in their shifts or number of hours?
- What percentage of part-time students hold multiple jobs?
- What percentage of part-time students have dependents to care for? Of these, how many are the sole career for their dependents?
- What percentage of part-time students earn minimum wage?
- How long do part-time students spend on campus and what periods of the day are they most likely to be on campus?
- How do all of the above statistics differ across race and gender?

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With greater depth to the information gathered, a college is better positioned to design its support services to meet the needs of its students. These data can be used to develop tools for use across the college that help ensure the impact on part-time students is fully thought through when designing or redesigning supports. These tools can be as simple as a few personas that represent what the data says about your part-time students, such as Amarillo College's intentional use of "Maria" as a composite of students' lived experiences.

Knowing the various experiences of your part-time students also can inform how institutions equip faculty and staff to support those students.

For example, data show that part-time students are less likely to be taught by full-time faculty, which could explain why part-time students report having fewer out of classroom supports from their faculty than their full-time peers.²¹ This information could lead a college to examine how it can better equip, incentivize, and/or compensate adjunct faculty to support their students outside the classroom.

Providing a richer understanding of life circumstances can help all faculty

and staff understand the challenges students face. At Amarillo College, for example, faculty now deliver the first grade in each class to students in person, not through online systems, providing an opportunity for direct contact. For example, a college-level math professor learned that one struggling student didn't realize a TI-84 was a calculator until that conversation—a simple intervention that Lowery-Hart credits with preventing the student from dropping out.



Clarify Time to Degree Expectations

Both full- and part-time students can be better served by having easy access to clear information that helps them see the impact that the number of credits they take per semester has on the time it will take for them to complete their chosen degree or certificate. This can help clarify that taking 12 credits a semester won't enable a student to complete an associate degree in two years unless they take summer courses. It can also help part-time students explore the impact of adding one extra course per semester or taking courses over the summer and winter, where possible.

This clarity of information is useful to advisors supporting students in academic planning. Over the last few years, there have been calls for colleges to encourage students enrolled part-time to switch to full-time status, even if for only one semester. Where this is possible for students, it should be encouraged. However, as ATD President and CEO Dr. Karen A. Stout notes, "we will leave too many students behind if we only focus on that as the solution." If we are to work towards equity in the student experience and outcomes, it is essential to design supports to work for those students not able to attend full-time—or even take one extra course.

Build Pathways for Part-Time Success

As colleges across the country implement guided pathways, it's important to view this work through the lens of students enrolled part-time. While the majority of pathways efforts do not begin by designing with the part-time student experience in mind, there are many colleges working towards pathways approaches specifically designed to illustrate the part-time journey. Some example of good practices in designing pathways for part-time students include:

- Developing program maps and visuals that show the reality of the journey for part-time enrollment in their programs. TTC, for example, plans to supplement its existing published course sequences to illustrate the courses part-time students should take over multiple semesters. Given their busy lives, it also can be helpful to students considering enrolling at the college part-time to see a simple table of when classes are available by program and whether

classes can be taken online. That way, they can identify programs where classes fit their schedule as well as their area of interest.

- Building pathways that include more on- and off-ramps to enable students to earn credentials along their pathway and to rejoin their pathway if they need to stop out for any reason.
- Build in prior learning assessment at the beginning of pathways to allow older students to translate their learning outside academia into credit towards their degree, where appropriate. These assessments can save students money and shorten their journey to completion.
- When supporting students in building degree plans, build in comparisons that show how time to degree will be impacted by the number of credits the student takes per semester. This can be visualized through the use of technology or printed materials.

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Rethinking How Courses are Offered and When

Many part-time students work during the day, when most classes are offered, or have less availability to be physically present on campus. Reexamining how and when courses are offered can identify opportunities to better serve part-time students. Approaches to consider include:

- **Rethink the schedule:** Part-time students are more likely to be juggling childcare and work more hours than full-time students. Offering a greater

number of evening and weekend classes or online/hybrid classes, particularly for courses that can act as bottlenecks to a students' progression, has the potential to greatly support the progression of part-time students.

Alamo Colleges' San Antonio College (SAC), for example, launched a Saturday-only program offering three degrees in fall 2018. Targeted at the working adults who make up much of

the 80 percent of its student population who attend part-time, the hybrid programs include three-hour courses Saturday mornings and afternoons, supplemented by online components. Students taking two courses at a time in eight-week modules can complete degrees in two years through the Saturday program. “The idea was that an average working adult could probably find support one day a week if they’re facing barriers such as childcare,” says Lisa Alcorta, SAC’s vice president of student success. “It’s all around removing barriers for part-time students.” Retention is near 90 percent for students in the program, “and it continues to grow every semester,” she adds.

The Alamo District also has consolidated online offerings across its institutions to offer more than 80 degree programs that can be completed completely online, supported by coaches that can provide assistance when students call in with questions. “Our staff makes it a priority,” says George Railey, Alamo Colleges’ vice chancellor for academic success.

With online and hybrid courses, keep in mind the need to provide technical support at nontraditional times, says Harris, who notes that most of TTC students’ online activity is at 10 p.m. or later. “Most colleges don’t provide any student service or technical support at that time,” he says.

- **Consider shortening the semester:**

More and more colleges are shifting to or exploring shortening their terms to seven- or eight-week semesters. In this model, students can take fewer classes at one time because the fall and spring semesters are split into two mini-semesters. While each course is more intense, this model reduces the number of individual aspects of their lives students need to juggle at one time, particularly around exams.

TTC was one of the first colleges in the country to move almost all its courses and programs to a seven-week course format in 2014 after data revealed that success rates were higher in its shorter summer terms. It took the institution two years to plan, with campus leaders ensuring that financial aid, admissions, academic, and IT staff were involved in the transition. The compressed formats were initially a challenge for some students, but even in difficult gateway courses such as college-level algebra, students are doing 15-20 percent better in the shorter-term format and achievement gaps have narrowed, according to TTC’s Harris. “It’s now the norm, and we’ve stopped using terms like ‘compressed courses,’” he says. “In retrospect, that’s the worst wording we could have used.”

The impact on enrollment—or the balance of part- and full-time students—has been minimal at TTC. While there was some concern the longer class times in a seven-week term would present scheduling challenges for part-time students, both part- and full-time students continue to take roughly the same numbers of courses. Recent high school graduates also are familiar with the course load because most high schools have switched to some variation of block or compressed scheduling, says Brian Almquist, TTC’s dean of student engagement.

Other institutions are looking at shorter terms as a way to enhance enrollment intensity. SAC, for example, launched a three-week winter semester over the holiday period and has seen it become one of the district’s largest offerings. The college also is moving most of its degree programs to eight-week terms, citing higher persistence rates in part due to student perceptions. “Sixteen weeks feels like a long haul,” says Railey.

- **Offer staggered start dates for online courses:** Another practice, employed by both two- and four-year institutions, is to offer multiple start dates for online courses. Doing so may require small shifts in course design, but the content remains the same. These courses can be self-paced or more structured in timing, but the multiple start dates offer students more flexibility to fit courses into their life. Colleges employing these strategies are reporting positive results and strong completion rates.²²

- **Redesign developmental education programs:** Like all students, part-time students confronted by the need to take semesters of noncredit developmental courses face significantly greater time to completion and are less likely to persist. At SAC, incoming first-time students who score below college level on placement tests are now required to take mandatory refresher courses. Offered at no cost to students, the courses can be taken in person or online, are offered at several points during each semester,

and culminate in a faculty member making the final determination of each student's placement. Fifty percent of students completing refresher courses are placed at least one level higher, and the numbers of part-time students entering developmental classes has dropped significantly. Before the refresher courses were introduced in 2011, 74 percent of Hispanic part-time students and 57 percent of their white counterparts were placed in developmental ed, figures which have fallen to 52 percent of Hispanic and 35 percent of white part-time students today, says Alcorta. Along with reducing the number of levels of developmental education and the introduction of a corequisite course model in 2018, developmental reforms have resulted in significant improvements in SAC's overall graduation rate and time-to-graduation across all subgroups. "We've had huge increases in success by moving students through developmental pathways," Alcorta says.



Examine How Support Services are Designed & Delivered

As mentioned earlier, improving the support experience for part-time students does not necessarily mean setting up a new type of service. Most likely, the majority of support services they could benefit from already exist on campus or in the community. Based on the data outlined at the beginning of this brief, students enrolled part-time may be more likely to benefit from childcare services, whether provided on-campus or through an affordable off-campus partner. Because they're more likely to be financially independent and the first generation in their family to attend college, they also may benefit from additional, proactive support and nudges related to completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Given that complexity of their lives means they have less time to spend on campus, they would certainly benefit from being assigned to a specific advisor who uses a proactive and holistic advising approach, such as participating in class early in the semester to introduce themselves to their students. Put simply, supports that work well for all students should provide needed support for part-time students.

However, the reality is that part-time students are less likely to get connected to these supports, even as the data illustrate a greater need for them. Institutions need to take ownership of this problem by asking what college structures and processes are contributing to underuse. A starting point may be to realize that especially for part-time students, anything that requires them to spend more time on campus or make an extra trip there represents a disruption to their work and family obligations. "You have to keep the mindset that every time you ask a student to come to the college, it's another roadblock," says TTC's Almquist.

With that in mind, the following are design considerations for support services to complement the design principles outlined in the first brief in this four-part series.

- **Availability:** Availability can be thought of as multifaceted—time, demand, restrictions, and location are key to availability.
- **Time:** Consider when services are open and available to students and whether a student taking only night or weekend classes would be able to access them. Identify when your part-time students are on campus and have extra time to seek out these services. For example, many colleges are setting up food pantries on campus to address their students' basic needs, yet too many of these pantries operate during limited hours, typically in the middle of the day when many part-time students are unable to get to campus. SAC, for example, is adding on-campus childcare services on Saturdays to support courses scheduled for working students.
- **Demand:** Provide sufficient staffing to ensure there isn't a wait to access services. Part-time students likely have little time to spend waiting for an appointment on campus.
- **Location:** Ensure services are located in a central part of the campus and directional signs are clear. If the service is delivered by an off-campus partner, ensure it is easily accessible via public transportation.
- **Restrictions:** Carefully consider and track data on the impact of any restrictions on service use. For example, many emergency aid programs have eligibility criteria that exclude students taking one or two courses a semester. Food pantries also often have restrictions associated with their use, such as limiting students to one trip per semester or the number of items that can be taken, which doesn't provide sustained support to students who experience persistent food insecurity. While some restrictions may be necessary given limited resources, a full understanding of who will bear the brunt of the impact of these restrictions can help inform decisions.

“A starting point may be to realize that especially for part-time students, anything that requires them to spend more time on campus or make an extra trip there represents a disruption to their work and family obligations.”

- **Simplicity:** Colleges should use data to identify the core actions and supports that impact the success of their students and focus on promoting and delivering them. One key is eliminating unnecessary or confusing steps in processes students go through to access services. The intake and onboarding experience, in particular, is a common pain point, often characterized by complicated processes and/or unnecessary steps.

Some ATD Network colleges are moving away from offering an orientation workshop and towards a technology-supported stream of information delivered in a personalized and just-in-time manner. TTC, for example, discovered that the information imparted through its traditional orientation programs weren't being used in a very visible way: by checking the trash cans outside of the rooms where orientation was held. "You'd find all the materials in the trash, then (later) students were in appeals saying they didn't know these services and supports were available—all the things that were covered in the orientation," Almquist says. "We were feeding these students with a firehose and expecting them to retain everything."

Today in-person orientation is much shorter—and focused specifically on helping students learn how to find information about resources, policies, and supports on the college's online portal as they need it. Along with optional group sessions during the summer, the Navigate to Success orientation is available to students on a walk-in basis throughout the semester, and even over the phone for those who can't come into campus. "Students are taught where the information lives and how to access it—not what's in the information, but where it's housed,"



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Almquist says. Data shows that students are accessing the online materials and using them to connect to college resources including student employment opportunities and counseling.

Other institutions are taking a hybrid approach with a shorter orientation, delivered online or in-person, paired with more just-in-time communications. These approaches allow the onboarding experience to be personalized to each student and is a better fit for part-time students, many of whom are unable to attend on-campus orientations. A just-in-time approach also helps part-time students manage their time as messages act as reminders to take relevant actions and are provided in more digestible manner.

- **Modality:** Offer supports through multiple modes of delivery to increase accessibility of services to students unable to be on campus for long periods of time or during traditional office hours. For example, TTC offers online counseling services using webcams to maintain a level of intimacy. These services help students who can't be on campus access those vital supports, including online students and those who attend a campus that doesn't offer in-person counseling services. The college also offers a shortened orientation course online that delivers the same information as the in-person course. Many other colleges offer online options for some of their supports, yet still have the opportunity to leverage this delivery mode for a greater range of supports. For example, SAC partners with an external organization to offer virtual tutoring services to all its students. By partnering with an external organization, the college is able to offer close to 24/7 access to tutoring on many topics.
- Another aspect of accessibility is in the design of the support. While 20-30 minute advising appointments may be the ideal, not all part-time students have that much time to spare when on campus. Advisors at many ATD Network colleges are employing more proactive techniques for reaching students by having mini-advising pop ups in high-traffic areas. This is a great way to reach students who may be less likely to use those services and, assuming they are offered outside of traditional office hours, they can make accessing these supports more achievable for students with less time to spend on campus.
- **Integration:** Greater integration of existing support services benefits all students by getting them connected to the specific services they need quickly and seamlessly. For part-time students,

effective integration might look different than for full-time students. For example, if the food pantry is only available during the day, a referral to the pantry by an advisor or faculty member is not useful for a student only attending night classes. However, that doesn't have to mean the service is unavailable to that student. Are there processes that could be set up to enable the advisor or faculty member to get the student the resources from the food pantry? For example, could a bag of food be delivered to the advisor to hand to the student in the evening? Or could the advisor have a key to the pantry and a set of protocols to follow to log the visit?

- An effective approach to integrating services for part-time students is to identify what they do while on campus and to focus on those spaces and services as the integration points. The classroom is a great integration opportunity, as is the library, and, if it's open, the cafeteria. Better equipping faculty, and particularly the adjunct faculty who part-time students are more likely to interact with, to engage with students inside and outside the classroom about both academic and life supports available on campus can help bridge awareness gaps.
- **Policies:** Consider how institutional policies governing how students use supports impact part-time students differently than full-time students. For example, if orientation is mandatory, make sure there are different delivery methods so part-time students can access the content without having to be on campus for half a day.

Reexamining college structures, processes, and attitudes through these frames can surface where the college is supporting its part-time students effectively and where there are areas for improvement.

Conclusion

While the experiences and outcomes of part-time students have been receiving more attention nationally over the last few years, there is still a lot we don't know that could inform a more effective approach to supporting this diverse student population. While redesign of student supports benefits all students, effective practices directly impacting part-time students will be few and far between until we can get a deeper understanding of how their complex lives impact their decisions and how college policies and practices impact the ability of this population to progress and complete their goals.

The first brief in this series challenged colleges to do three things in their implementation of student supports redesign: move beyond the initiative mindset, know your students, and practice facilitative leadership. These challenges are all the more important to serving part-time students, as the data in this brief shows there is not one solution to the challenges of serving part-time students—and much more to learn about the diverse experiences and needs of this population. Once armed with these data and an understanding of the complexity of the challenge, colleges can examine how their structures, processes, and culture support or hinder the progress and success of this population. This requires college leadership to be bold enough to own the obstacles that part-time students face and commit to engaging the campus in making necessary changes to how it works.

Ultimately, making colleges more accessible to part-time students could provide new opportunities for institutions to meet their broader mission of improving individual and economic outcomes throughout their service areas. SAC, for example, serves one of the poorest zip



codes in the nation—yet the city has an outsize population of residents with some college but no degree. As the college begins a large-scale outreach program to encourage working adults to return and earn a credential, it's doing so with a key understanding: "They're working—they can't go full-time," Railey says.

Other briefs in this series will examine how colleges are supporting the success of other student populations that have been historically underserved by higher education, including transitioning and formerly incarcerated students, and disconnected youth.

Endnotes

- 1 Lumina Foundation. (2018). *Amarillo College Accepts 'No Excuses' In Pursuing Its Anti-Poverty Mission*. Retrieved from <https://focus.luminafoundation.org/amarillo-college-accepts-no-excuses-in-pursuing-its-anti-poverty-mission/>
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PHOTO CREDITS: Thank you to San Antonio College and Trident Technical College for providing the student images included in this publication.



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