



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMPREHENSIVE SCAN

OZARKS TECHNICAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



OTC CARES

STUDENTS FIRST.

PILLARS OF CARE

Our college community has embraced these guiding principles to remove barriers for students and to work collaboratively to put our students and communities at the center of everything we do.



STUDENT-CENTERED

The distinct commitment to place the student at the core of our decision-making and operations. *How will this decision affect our students?*



DATA-INFORMED

The use of student and community data to guide our continued commitment to student-centered care. *How can we use data to inform this decision?*



PROACTIVE

The urgency to evaluate and intervene early and often through all aspects of operations. *How can we provide help to students before they seek it?*



HOLISTIC

The understanding of the importance to consider and address needs of the whole student. *How can we meet all student needs, not just those expressed?*

table of contents

Introduction	3
OTC by the Numbers	4
Demographics	6
Higher Education.....	10
Economy & Workforce	16
Legislative Summary	18
Technology.....	20

introduction

As Ozarks Technical Community College sets out to begin its annual strategic planning process, information on the external environment of the college has been collected in order to assist in planning strategically for the future. This report is a compilation of important issues and trends that impact the institution and the communities it serves.

The purpose of this document is to anticipate and plan for the opportunities and challenges that OTC will face in the future. Key findings have been categorized into

five areas of change: demographics, higher education, economy and workforce, legislative priorities and technology. These five trend areas interact to shape the environment in which OTC functions.

The emerging trends identified in this report inform the strategic planning process at OTC and are vital to setting and achieving the goals and initiatives of the college. As planning for the future continues, information about these areas provides a context for decision-making related to how OTC fulfills its mission.

OTC BY THE NUMBERS

Facts and Figures from the 2021-2022 Academic Year

14,592

Unduplicated students
enrolled

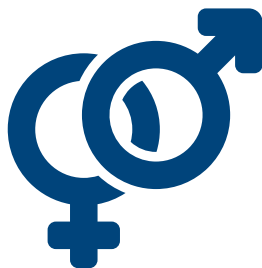


2,160

Students graduated,
including
721 A+ students
62 veterans



20 Median
student age



Student body

59%

Female

41%

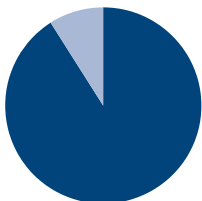
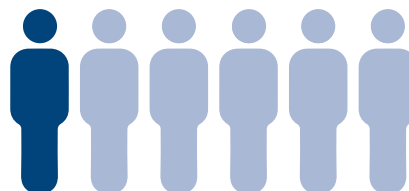
Male



67%

Students worked while
attending OTC

1 in 6 students are
underrepresented minorities

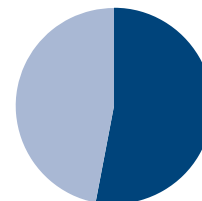


91%

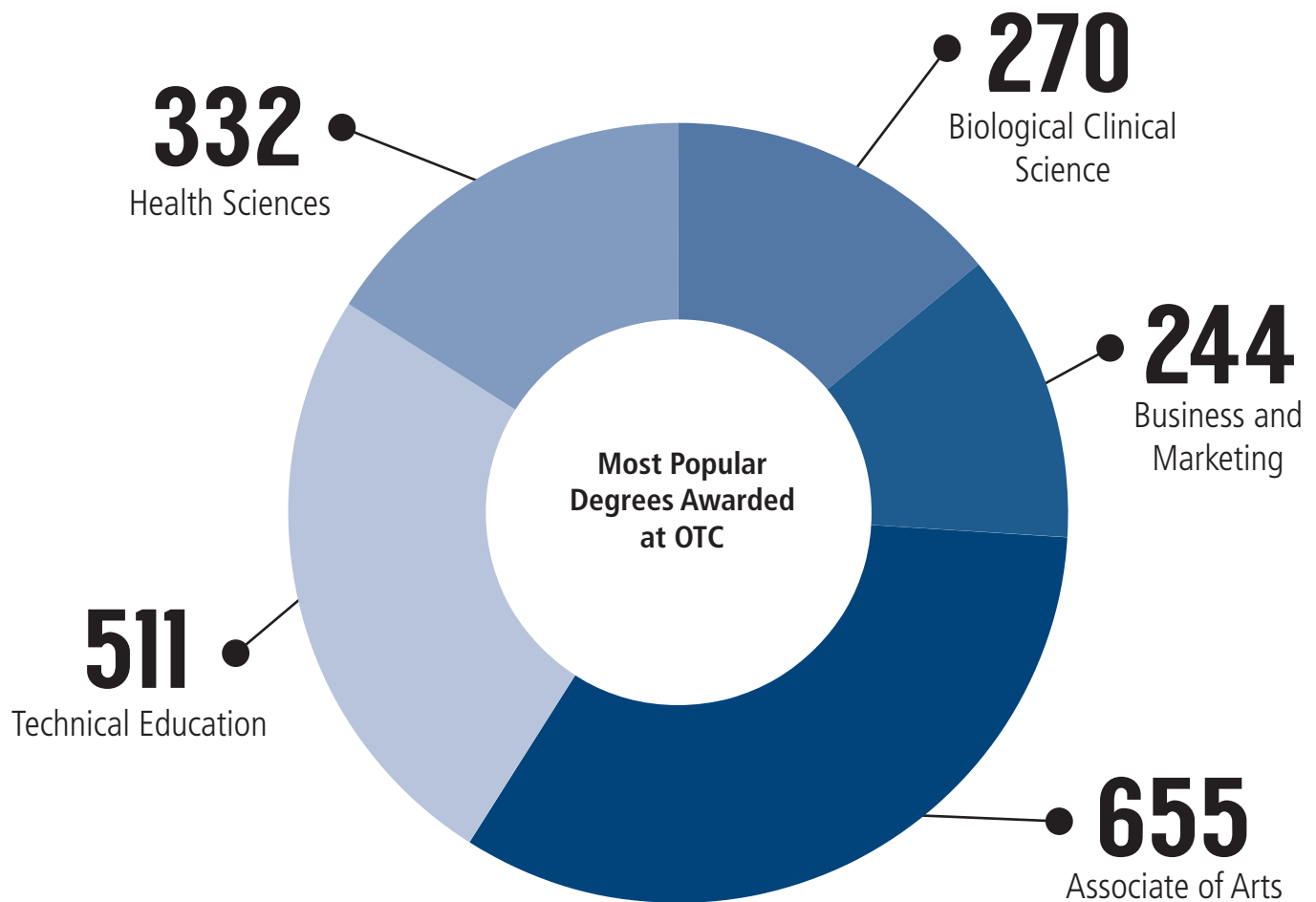
Graduates found
employment or
transferred to a
4-year institution

52%

First-generation
college students



Source: OTC Office of Research & Governmental Affairs



39%

Students received
Pell grants



73%

Students received
financial aid

A⁺

3,424

A+ students
served annually



913

Students awarded
OTC Scholarships



\$1.5M

Scholarship
dollars awarded

DEMOGRAPHICS

Current State of Student Mental Health

Student Voice, presented by Kaplan in association with Inside Higher Ed and College Pulse, is a news hub spotlighting the student perspective on higher education. In spring 2022, Student Voice conducted a survey focused on students' mental health needs. Two thousand responses from students attending over 100 higher education institutions were received and weighted to be nationally representative of two- and four-year college students.

Insights on the Current State of Students' Mental Health

56%

Over half of students rated their overall mental health as "fair" or "poor": This increases to 70% for students who have accessed mental health services prior to college, who are LGBTQIA+ or identify as part of a lower socioeconomic class.

90%

The need for mental health services is great, but the takers are few: Nearly 90% of students reported personally struggling with one or more mental health challenge, yet only 34% utilized counseling or other support services available for them.



Students' top priorities for mental health include expanded services: When asked to identify up to three priorities for investment in campus mental health services, the top selections were expansion of on-campus counseling staff (37%), addition of a psychiatrist or nurse who can prescribe mental health medications (32%) and a 24-hour emergency mental health hotline (25%).

1:3

Students need support when connecting them to outside support services: One-third of students felt they were not provided with enough support when referred to off-campus mental health services.



Four out of the top five stressors students struggle to cope with most relate to academics in some capacity: When asked to identify up to four top stressors, keeping up with coursework ranked highest at 57%. This was followed by pressure to do well at college (47%), concerns about money (46%) and balancing school and work obligations (41%).

Source: Inside Higher Ed — Student Voice: <https://www.insidehighered.com/student-voice> (2022)

Supporting Student Well-Being and Mental Health

Research has shown students’ mental health is a growing issue; however, researchers are still investigating what factors are contributing to these rising mental health issues. Though the causes are less clear, potential solutions are better known on ways to help prioritize student wellness.

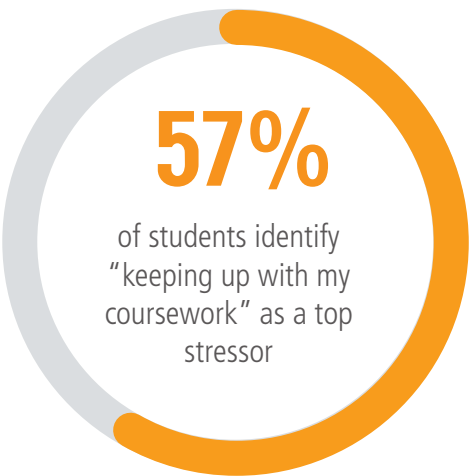
Students interact with administrators, faculty and staff daily, in and out of the classroom. These frequent interactions not only play a significant role in ensuring students feel cared for, they are also critical in helping connect students to the help they need, when they need it.

How Administrators, Faculty and Staff Can Prioritize Student Wellness

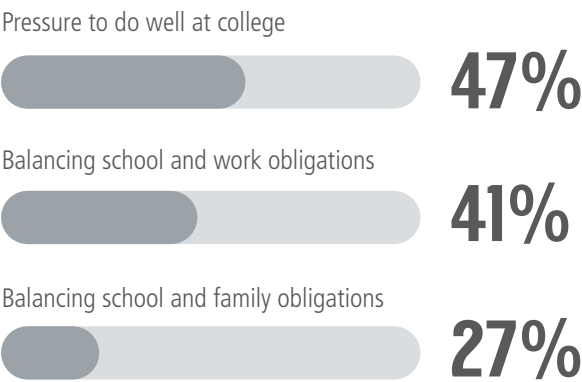
Administrators, faculty and staff are not meant to replace the role of mental health or other holistic support service professionals, but there are actions they can take as helpers to support students who need additional support.

1. Get to know students’ top stressors

Items related to coursework or student success are identified as top stressors by the majority of two-year college students.



Other Top Stressors



“ One Student’s Voice

I feel like school is so overwhelming. I have had very little time for much else in my life. ”

QUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION

What information would be helpful for administrators, faculty and staff to better understand what stressors students may be facing? What is the best way for them to receive this information?

Source: Inside Higher Ed – Student Voice: <https://www.insidehighered.com/student-voice> (2022)

2. Take an active role in student well-being

75%

Students report struggling with anxiety during college

17%

Have struggled with suicidal ideation

24%

Do not know where to seek help on campus if they are struggling with mental health

“ A Professional’s Perspective

“The responsibility of campus-wide mental health cannot fall solely on the counseling or wellness center ... there are ways we can put mental health more into students’ daily lives and into the curriculum. We can reach students where they’re at.” – Sarah Ketchen Lipson, principal investigator, Healthy Minds Network and assistant professor, Boston University

”

QUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION

Do administrators, faculty and staff know where to physically take a student who is in need of support at their respective campus/center?

3. Show empathy by being flexible and mindful about deadlines

56%+

of respondents rated their mental health as “fair” or “poor”

70%

LGBTQIA+ students whose mental health is “fair” or “poor”

71%

of students identifying as part of the lower class socioeconomically whose mental health is “fair” or “poor”

“ A Professional’s Perspective

Assignments due at 9 a.m. encourage students to pull an all-nighter. Midnight deadlines often result in skipping dinner. “I think 5 p.m. is the healthiest time to have an assignment due. I tell students, ‘It’s because I want you to have dinner, because I want you to sleep.’” – Sarah Ketchen Lipson, Boston University

”

QUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION

What are some practices and expectations instructors can embed in their course that help promote well-being?

4. Strive for equity and access both in and out of the classroom

Students that say their mental health is “fair” or “poor”

62%

Black students

59%

Hispanic students

56%

White students

54%

Asian students

“ A Professional’s Perspective

“... If stress is based on social context, traditional notions [of stress relief] aren’t taking into account how to get through the environment. Rather than asking students to breathe through oppression that exists, we should rather ask the system to rethink the ways it helps students feel more connected.” – Megan Kennedy, University of Washington Resilience Lab

”

QUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION

How can administrators, faculty and staff recognize the needs of different students in and out of the classroom while maintaining a sense of inclusion and belonging for all students?

Source: Inside Higher Ed – Student Voice: <https://www.insidehighered.com/student-voice> (2022)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Framework for Action

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) serves as the primary advocacy organization for the nation's community colleges. AACC recognizes community colleges not only serve a higher proportion of women and students of color, but are also uniquely positioned to help provide education opportunities that are safe, respectful and responsive.

As part of their professional development offerings, AACC released the following framework for action designed to aid community colleges with their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts:

#1



Define

- Be specific about what diversity, equity and inclusion mean within your organization and communicate it to all faculty, staff and students.
- Note behaviors that are expected.

#2



Assess

- Honestly assess the culture and practices within the organization through the lens of equity and inclusion.
- Include policies, practices, outcomes, written materials and perceptions.
- Communicate findings within the campus community.

#3



Educate

- Provide education and training to faculty, staff and students with regard to cultural competency, diversity, bias, equity and inclusion.
- Develop an understanding of how culture and bias impact the organization and its practices.
- Perpetuate learning and model positive change.

#4



Implement

- Conduct policy reviews and revise language in accord with values.
- Scrutinize operations and practices to ensure they align with diversity, equity and inclusion principles.

#5



Support

- Ensure that all voices are represented and welcomed in academic and operational practices.
- Be accountable to the principles and behaviors of inclusion and hold others accountable.

Source: American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Framework for Action" (2020)

HIGHER EDUCATION

Strategies to Help Adults (re)Enroll in College

In June 2021, ideas42, a non-profit focused on using behavioral science to create innovative solutions to tough problems, released the Adult Enrollment Design Guide with strategies to help increase enrollment of adult learners in postsecondary institutions.

Five Primary Behavioral Barriers to Enrollment for Adult Students



Lack of external stimulus

Even when adults intend to enroll in college, they may not follow through unless an external event or person pushes them to do so.



Implausible pathways

Many adults don't understand how college could fit into their lives without clear, relatable examples.



Money matters

Many adults are unaware of the various ways to pay for college or inaccurately believe they would not qualify for financial aid.



Hassles

Prospective adult students, many of whom are questioning whether college is right for them, can be derailed by seemingly small hurdles, inconveniences or administrative hassles in the enrollment process.



Lack of reliable support

Many adults need reliable and accessible help navigating enrollment processes and may give up when they don't receive it.

Source: Ideas42, "Adult Enrollment Design Guide: Strategies to Help Adults (re)Enroll in College" (2021)

Designing Interventions to Help Adult Students (re)Enroll

To successfully design interventions to help increase enrollment of adult learners, it is important to identify which of the barriers the target population is facing. Once this identification occurs, interventions that directly address the barriers can be designed and implemented.

If the Barrier You Want to Address is



Lack of external stimulus

Consider designing materials that center around adult learners and meeting adults in places they already are. Once they are excited about the idea of college, assign them a peer mentor to create accountability and keep them moving forward.



Implausible pathways

Consider sending messages designed to address the specific concerns of your target population by creating a podcast or a YouTube channel that shares stories of adult students, their desires, challenges and successes. This may help make the prospect of college seem all the more real for other would-be students. Clarifying college costs and payment options may alleviate some people's concerns while leveraging planning and visioning tools could help people figure out how to fit school into their lives.



Money matters

Consider making it easier or even standard for all adults to complete the FAFSA perhaps even through guided sessions with a tax preparer. Or build your school's capacity to financially support adult students who don't qualify for full aid or to cover adult-specific needs. Additionally, consider posting all the specific financial information adults need to know on an adult-specific school website.



Hassles

Consider providing information and hands-on enrollment help through community partnerships, and/or doing an enrollment process audit to find out where people struggle most and streamline processes internally. You might also offer virtual info sessions during non-business hours so working adults can more easily attend.



Lack of reliable support

Consider offering an adult-specific seminar series and/or making help available on demand and at all hours. One way to do this could be by creating an electronic ticket system through which adults can submit a question at any time and receive a call back to answer that question.

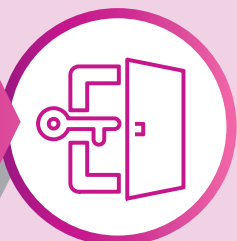
Source: Ideas42, "Adult Enrollment Design Guide: Strategies to Help Adults (re)Enroll in College" (2021)

Improving Outcomes for Adult Learners

In fall 2021, the Education Strategy Group (ESG), an education and workforce leader consulting firm, released a comprehensive playbook of promising strategies designed to assist state policymakers and institutional leaders supporting adult learners in a post-pandemic economy. Five priority areas, based on best practice research, were developed, along with field-tested strategies to achieve each priority.

Five Priorities and Strategies to Serve Adult Learners Effectively

Priority #1 ACCESSIBILITY



Adult learners effectively access and move through postsecondary programs.

Strategies to achieve this priority are:

- Ensure institutional and state aid works for adult learners.
- Use financial levers to increase postsecondary engagement and progression for key adult populations.
- Conduct comprehensive outreach to all adult learners.

Priority #2 PROGRAM CHANGE

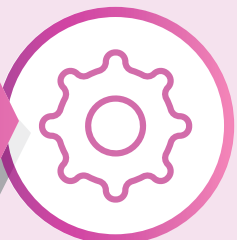


Adult learners thrive and feel engaged within postsecondary classrooms.

Strategies to achieve this priority are:

- Deliver program content in adult-friendly ways.
- Design programs for flexibility and convenience.
- Develop pathways that leverage and support all skill and preparation levels.

Priority #3 OPERATIONAL CHANGE



Adult learners easily navigate postsecondary advising and administrative systems.

Strategies to achieve this priority are:

- Create a one-stop student experience.
- Develop efficient systems for tailored student advising.

Priority #4 DATA



Adult learners are authentically measured through data and used as a subject for ongoing improvement.

Strategies to achieve this priority are:

- Strengthen data measurement and collection systems to better monitor and evaluate adult learner outcomes.

Priority #5 PARTNERSHIP



Adult learners seamlessly interface between higher education systems and trusted community/industry partners.







Strategies to achieve this priority are:

- Engage employer and workforce systems to promote relevance.
- Partner to provide critical wrap-around supports.

Source: Education Strategy Group, "The Adult-Ready Playbook: A Comprehensive Policy and Practice Guide to Improve Outcomes for Adult Learners" (2021)

Characteristics of Credit and Non-Credit Workforce Education

Jobs for the Future (JFF), a national nonprofit focused on American workforce and education systems, examined the divide between credit and non-credit postsecondary programs. The results of their study highlight innovative ways community colleges can bridge the gap between credit and non-credit coursework.

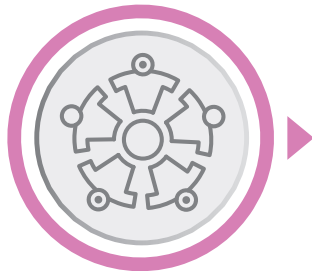
Key Differences Between Credit and Non-Credit Courses and Programs		
CREDIT		NON-CREDIT
Intended to result in a degree (associate or bachelors) or a professional credential (i.e., a licensed practical nurse certification)		Intended to result in a short-term certificate, industry-recognized certification or other occupational credential
Eligible for federal financial aid, such as Pell grants, as long as the student meets all requirements		Not eligible for federal financial aid (unless courses are woven into a credit program)
Often require prerequisite courses, entry exams or evidence of prerequisite course performance		Usually do not require prerequisite courses, entry exams or basic skills testing
Typically offer a wide variety of general education, occupational courses and electives courses		Focus mainly on niche skills or competencies necessary for a specific job or for employment in a specific industry
Measured in "credit hours" (i.e., associate degree programs typically require at least 60 credits or four to five semesters of full-time enrollment)		Measured in "seat time" (hours students are required to attend class per course), which varies greatly, though most can be completed in less than a year
Programs can be accredited by regional industry-led accrediting bodies, though many are not		Programs are not accredited (although the educational institution offering the program may be accredited)

Source: Jobs for the Future, "Closing the Credit-Noncredit Divide: Bridging the Gap in Postsecondary Education to Expand Opportunity for Low-Wage Working Adults" (2019)

Aligning Credit and Non-Credit Programs

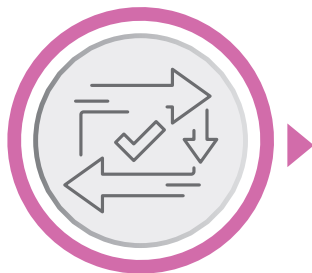
The Education Strategy Group (ESG), an education and workforce leader consulting firm, conducted research, interviewed institutional, system and policy leaders and examined evidence in the field, to determine how community colleges could better align credit and non-credit programs.

Five key tenets were identified from their work that when implemented can help create a more unified community college that aligns industry-focused on-credit programs to credit programs that lead to degrees.



1 Treat All Students as Students

Make the student experience across non-credit and credit programs more equitable. Address structural inequities that disadvantage students in non-credit programs versus those in credit programs. Begin to think of students in non-credit programs and students in credit programs as two parts of the whole, which must be considered together. Ensure every institutional decision or action with student implications includes consideration of students in non-credit programs. Remove labels attributed to students in non-credit programs.



2 Build Clear Pathways between Non-Credit and Credit Credentials

No program should be an educational dead end. Make non-credit program completion for credentials of value a seamless transition to an associate degree program. For students in degree programs, incorporate non-credit certificates or certifications into the program. Non-credit programs continue to thrive and employers benefit from the resulting cohesion. Pathways are made clear through prominent communications and strong advising.



3 Align Departments and Governance

Establish strong coordination across non-credit and credit departments. Consider organizing relevant non-credit and credit programs into the same department or establishing joint leadership. Be prepared to modify the institution's overall curriculum development and design process to achieve alignment.



4 Make Programs Credit-Worthy or Credit-Based

Ensure that learning in industry-focused non-credit programs counts for credit. Credit-worthy programs award credit for learning when students transition into credit programs through the use of bridge tools, such as credit matrices, articulation agreements or equivalency agreements. Credit-based programs go through the process to become accredited, while maintaining labor-market orientation, putting students on a direct pathway to an associate degree.



5 Remove Barriers to Transition

Make transitioning easy for students by reducing the number of forms and processes required to transition, providing navigational assistance and similar course schedules across programs. Make transitioning as automatic as possible. Make transitioning facilitated and incentivized by providing scholarships or other funding.

Source: Education Strategy Group, "A More Unified Community College: Strategies and Resources to Align Non-Credit and Credit Programs" (2020)

Preparing for Tomorrow's Middle-Skill Jobs: How Community Colleges Are Responding to Technology Innovation in the Workplace

In spring 2022, the Community College Research Center (CCRC), along with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, conducted a study to understand how community colleges are adapting their workforce programs to meet changing skill demands, diversifying pathways to certificates and degrees and dealing with equity concerns.

From their research, key considerations were emphasized for community colleges wanting to respond effectively to the evolving skill demands of local employers in three high-value fields — allied health, information technology and advanced manufacturing.

Considerations for Modifying Workforce Programs to Meet Changing Skill Demands

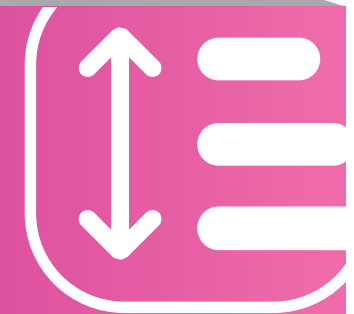
Recommendation #1 Modify program curricula

- Reassess how the math needs of workforce students are met.
- Do more to help workforce students develop digital literacy skills.
- Focus greater efforts on providing work-based learning opportunities.



Recommendation #2 Reorganize college structures and support

- Rethink the relationship between credit and non-credit workforce offerings.
- Better align short-term certificate programs with longer-duration degree programs.
- Reorganize advising and support services for workforce students, many of whom are from underserved populations.



Recommendation #3 Address equity concerns

- Enhance efforts to recruit underserved students and provide a culturally responsive campus environment.
- Disaggregate student data across programs to examine equity gaps and identify reforms.
- Eliminate the “digital divide” in student access to technology.



Source:

Community College Research Center, “Preparing for Tomorrow's Middle-Skill Jobs: How Community Colleges Are Responding to Technology Innovation in the Workplace” (2022)

ECONOMY & WORKFORCE

Ozark Region Economic Report

The Ozark Region is comprised of seven counties, including Greene County. The top industry is Health Care and Social Assistance, which accounts for 17% of the region's employment. The average annual wage for all industries in the Ozark Region is \$41,198.

Ozark Region Workforce Demographics

1 The workforce is getting older

23% of the workforce is age **55** or older, up from **19%** a decade earlier.

2 A higher percentage of the population has a disability compared to the state and nation

14% of the population has a disability compared to **12%** in Missouri and **10%** in the U.S.

3 Educational attainment rates are slightly behind

34% of the region's population, age **25** and older, has an associate, bachelors or advanced degree compared to **37%** for Missouri.

4 Projected occupational growth will continue in the region's largest industries

Projections indicate that the largest growth industries in the Ozark Region will be Hospitals, Ambulatory Health Care Services, Administrative and Support Services, Educational Services, Specialty Trade Contractors and Management of Companies and Enterprises.

5 Almost 7,000 new jobs were created in the Springfield metro area over the past five years

The bulk of these new jobs are in the professional services, manufacturing and health care sectors.

6 The Springfield metro area continues to grow and expand

On average, Springfield's annual growth percentage is more than double that of the state of Missouri and **62%** higher than the nation's.

Source: Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), "2021 Economic Report Ozark Region" (2021)
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Development (2022)

Ozark Region Occupational Projections

The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) provides information on projected growth by industry in order to identify future employment needs for an area. Projections indicate that the largest growth industries in the Ozark Region will be Hospitals, Ambulatory Health Care Services, Administrative and Support Services, Educational Services, Specialty Trade Contractors and Management of Companies and Enterprises.

Ozark Region Largest Growth Industries 2018-2028				
	Employment		Change	
	2018 Estimated	2028 Projected	Numeric	2018-2028 Percent
Hospitals	18,063	24,068	6,005	33.20%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	11,141	14,684	3,543	31.80%
Administrative and Support Services	12,402	15,543	3,141	25.30%
Educational Services	19,375	21,544	2,169	11.20%
Specialty Trade Contractors	6,957	8,552	1,595	22.90%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,904	5,164	1,260	32.30%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	8,633	9,347	714	8.30%
General Merchandise Stores	7,431	8,133	702	9.40%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	9,613	10,290	677	7.00%
Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, Orgs.	4,623	5,244	621	13.40%

MERIC also produces occupational projections that estimate labor demand over a 10-year period. These occupations are categorized using a Now-Next-Later method to help job seekers understand the education, training and experience requirements for these occupations.

The following occupations, which typically require a non-degree certificate, associate degree, apprenticeship, some experience or moderate- to long-term training are projected to be the fastest growing occupations in the region:

- Respiratory Therapists
- Occupational Therapy Assistants
- Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
- Physical Therapist Assistants
- Security and Fire Alarm System Installers

Source: Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), "2021 Economic Report Ozark Region" (2021)

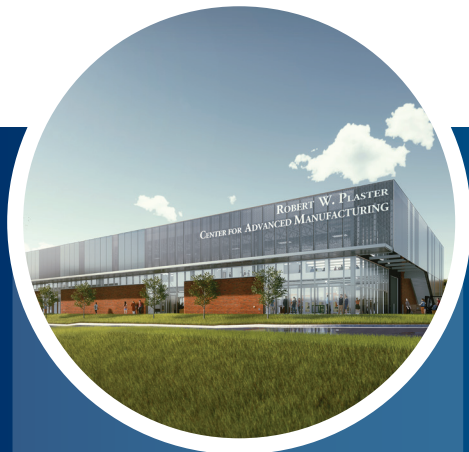
LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

2

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2

2



**OVER \$12
MILLION**

in state funding for the
Plaster Manufacturing
Center from MoExcels and
direct appropriations



\$5 MILLION
in state and
\$3 MILLION

in federal funding for the
OTC Center of Excellence
for Airframe and Powerplant
Maintenance at the airport



**\$1.5
MILLION**

in federal funding
for Health Sciences
program expansions
in Lincoln Hall

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

**\$1.1 million
in one-time
funding for
fiscal year
2023**

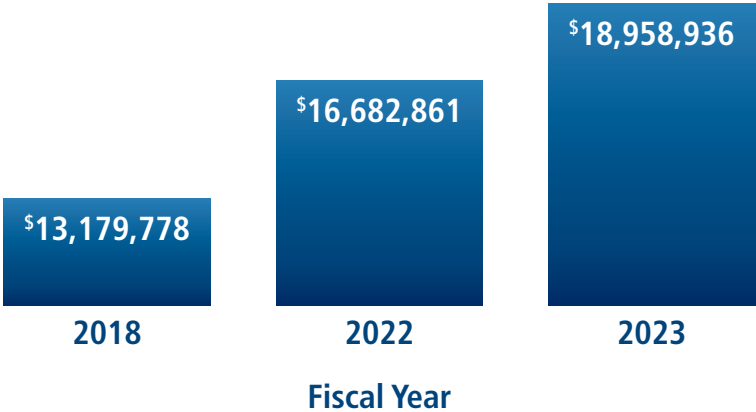
**OTC is leading
provider for
the state's new
Fast Track
program**

**\$250,000 in
MoExcels funding
for student
success offices in
Lincoln Hall**

Source: OTC Office of Research and Governmental Affairs

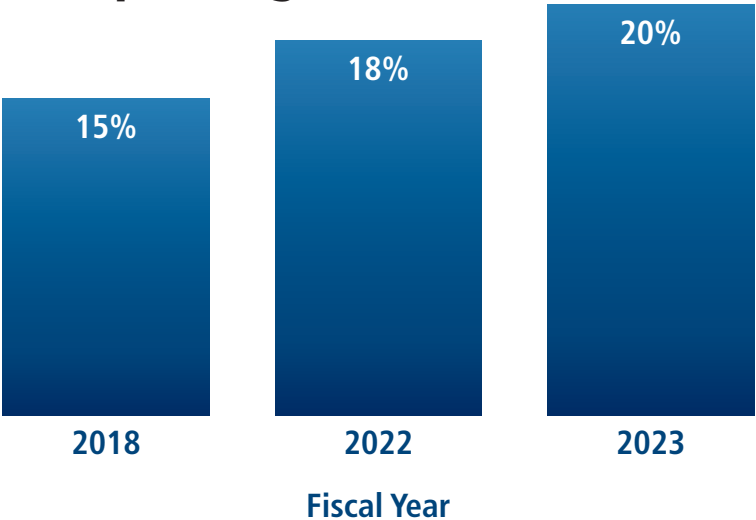
State Appropriations by Fiscal Year

(Source: Missouri Office of Administration Budget Documents and MCCA Equity Model for FY 2023)



OTC's annual core state appropriations have increased by over \$5 million in the last 5 years

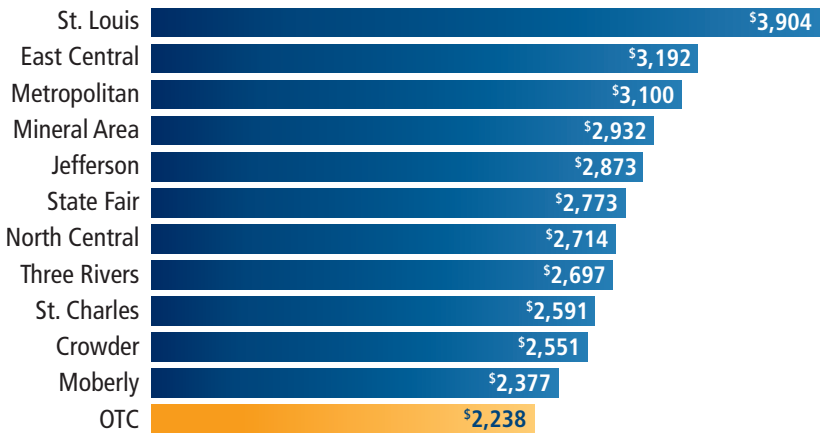
State Appropriations as a Percent of OTC's Operating Revenue



As a result, state appropriations have increased from 15% of OTC's total operating revenue to 20%

Fiscal Year 2023 State Appropriations per IPEDS 12 Month FTE Enrollment

(Source: MCCA Equity Model for FY 2023)



However, OTC remains Missouri's lowest funded college per full time equivalent student enrollment

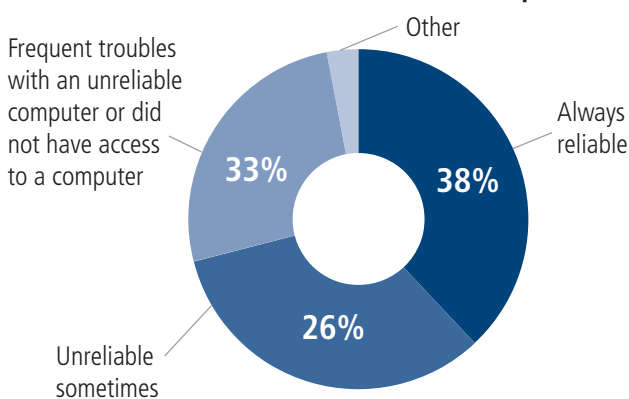
TECHNOLOGY

The Digital Divide

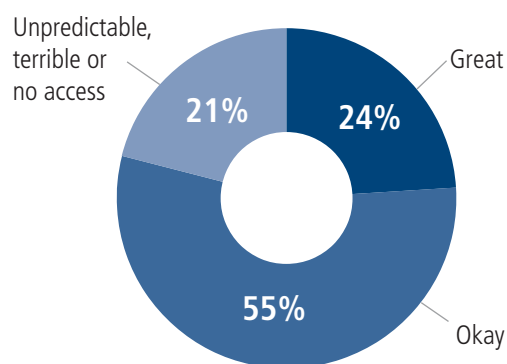
ACT, the leading US admissions test provider and nonprofit organization focused on helping people achieve education and workplace success, surveyed first-year college students to understand their online learning experiences during the pandemic. Results of their survey showed lack of reliable technology and internet access remain a persistent barrier for students.

Key Findings on Students' Access to Technology and the Internet

Student Survey Question How Reliable is Your Computer?



Student Survey Question How is Your Internet Access?



13% of students have limited access to both technology and the internet.

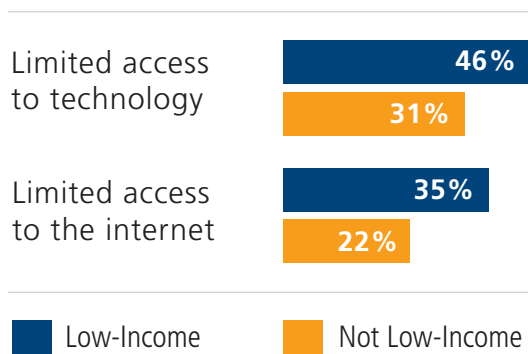
24% have limited access to either technology or the internet.

Only **18%** of students report never having an issue with technology and the internet.

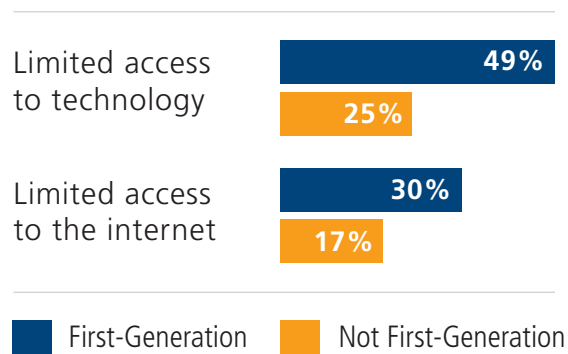
Additionally, first-generation students and students from low-income families are more likely to have limited access to technology and the internet.

Percentage of Students Who had Limited Access to Technology and the Internet

Family Income Status



First-Generation Status



Source: ACT Research, "First-Year College Students' Online Learning Experiences During the Pandemic" (2021)

Technological Landscape of Higher Education

Over the past few years, the technological landscape of higher education has undergone a major transformation. This transformation has highlighted the need to increase access and build skills that support student success in digital environments. EDUCAUSE, ISTE, EDTech and other educational technology-focused organizations provide research and insights on how educational institutions can utilize technology to shape strategic decisions at every level to support students, faculty and staff.

Key Findings about the Technological Landscape of Higher Education



The digital equity gap has widened for students around the United States in both rural and urban regions

- **16** million students in the United States lack adequate access to technology and internet connection.
- **61%** of students have difficulties completing coursework due to unreliable technology.



Colleges continue to face cybersecurity and data privacy concerns

- Data collection happens at each point of the admission process for students.
- Institutional services and data are becoming cloud-based rather than campus-based.
- Phishing and data mining continue to affect institutions, requiring institutions to further strengthen their security.



Acquisitions for technology resources will pressure colleges to spearhead technology initiatives

- Campuses will need to identify efficiencies and cost reductions in their IT budgets to adequately support the technology needs of their intuitions.



The projected information security workforce shortage will impact higher education institutions

- From 2019 to 2029 information technology employment will grow by **31%**.

Source: EDUCAUSE, "2021 Horizon Report: Information Security Edition" (2021)
ISTE, "EPPs for Digital Equity and Transformation" (2022)
EDTech, "4 Barriers to Achieving Digital Equity in 2022, and How to Overcome Them" (2021)

Extending Technology Influence in Higher Education

Best practice research continues to highlight the influence technology has in higher education. Issues such as expanding access to high-speed internet and ensuring students have access to adequate devices to engage fully in their learning remain critically important. Internally, considerations must be made to address gaps due to workforce shortages and ways to effectively utilize technology and software.

Three Recommendations to Extend Technology Influence in Higher Education



Digital equity needs to remain at the forefront of making technology accessible for all students

- COVID has changed the landscape of education and has widened the digital equity gap for many students. Institutions must prepare faculty and staff to thrive in digital learning environments that support student success in all classrooms and at every point of the college enrollment process.
- Form partnerships to establish a shared understanding of competencies for effective, equitable use of technology for learning.



Institutions will need to implement processes and programs that effectively fill the expected shortage in the information technology workforce

- Institutions will have to build up their privacy staffing and support, either through their existing information security units or through new, dedicated privacy units.
- Workforce training will be key to ensuring that information technology personnel is staffed and trained to meet the needs of higher education institutions.



Procurement processes at higher education institutions are being reassessed to ensure best practices and effective usage of technology and software

- Higher education institutions will need to rethink conventional approaches to procurement. Higher education leaders may need to plan several months in advance for technology refreshes.
- Procurement processes have encouraged higher education institutions to create innovative and transformative environments. Colleges around the United States are searching for ways to partner with other institutions to further the use of their technology.

Source: EDUCAUSE, "2021 Horizon Report: Information Security Edition" (2021)

ISTE, "EPPs for Digital Equity and Transformation" (2022)

EDTech, "4 Barriers to Achieving Digital Equity in 2022, and How to Overcome Them" (2021)

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