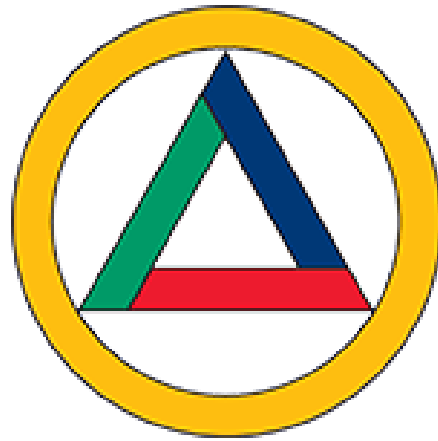


ILLINOIS EASTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

EQUITY PLAN

2024-2029



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II. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) have partnered to develop a 10-year strategic plan for Illinois Higher Education. The IBHE strategic plan, *A Thriving Illinois*, has three goals: increasing postsecondary credential and degree attainment to develop the talent that drives Illinois' economy; closing equity gaps for those who have been left behind by the higher education system; and improving affordability, increasing access, and managing costs. The vision is to create a more equitable and accessible higher education system in Illinois.

In today's rapidly evolving world, embracing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in higher education is a matter of ethical responsibility and a strategic imperative as we work to create a more just, equitable, and prosperous society. DEIA signifies commitment to acknowledging and valuing the unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions of every individual, irrespective of their background, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, or socioeconomic status. It emphasizes creating an educational environment that recognizes and supports the different starting points and unique needs of every student.

Understanding DEIA: A Path to Progress

Diversity refers to the wide range of differences among individuals, encompassing but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and abilities. Equity focuses on ensuring fairness and justice in the treatment of all individuals, recognizing historical disparities and providing resources and support tailored to the specific needs of diverse groups. Inclusion emphasizes fostering a sense of belonging and community where every individual feels welcomed, respected, and valued. Accessibility underscores the importance of removing barriers and creating an environment that accommodates the needs of individuals with diverse abilities, ensuring that education and its many associated benefits are within reach for everyone, regardless of physical or cognitive differences.

The Importance of DEIA in Higher Education

In the realm of higher education, DEIA serves as the cornerstone of building an inclusive and vibrant academic community. It goes beyond mere representation; it signifies a commitment to identifying and dismantling barriers that have hindered the progress of these vulnerable populations. By prioritizing DEIA, educational institutions not only cultivate an enriching learning environment but also prepare students to thrive in a global society where understanding and respecting diverse perspectives are essential skills.

A. Institution Vision of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Statements

We believe everyone has a place at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC). This culture is fostered through our belief in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Diversity: Refers to the wide variety of different characteristics, social identities, and group differences including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, color, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual identity, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, age, disability status, military/veteran status, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other associated preferences and ideologies.

Why we value diversity: Diversity across a wide spectrum of characteristics brings together a variety of lived experiences and world views to foster diversity of thought. This practice can greatly enrich the educational environment, better preparing our students for an increasingly global society. Diversity is representative of IECC's value of **respect** to recognize and appreciate similarities and differences to demonstrate mutual regard for others.

Equity: Refers to the fair and respectful treatment of people, through the implementation of policies and practices which enable students of different backgrounds and abilities to pursue their stated goals and to realize their full potential.

Why we value equity: A core tenant of equity is IECC's value **accessibility**. We seek to provide access to a high-quality education for all and provide needed support to students to achieve their goals. As an open access institution, equitable access is part of our core mission.

Inclusion: Refers to the promotion and creation of an environment in which the voice of all stakeholders is welcomed, valued, and encouraged in decision-making. Authentic opportunities for civil discourse cultivate a sense of value and belonging.

Why we value inclusion: Improving the lives of our students and strengthening our communities is at the heart of the IECC mission. Practicing inclusivity promotes greater engagement, a sense of belonging, and relationship building among the populations we serve. Inclusivity is part of IECC's value of **integrity** to provide an encouraging and empowering environment in our work and interactions.

2. About IECC

Our Mission

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) is an institution that engages, challenges, and supports faculty and students as they pursue excellence in teaching and learning. We place the needs of our students at the center of our decision-making and will continue to be an organization committed to excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Our Values

These values, which are the foundation of Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, have defined the District since its inception, and are affirmed by the faculty, students, staff, and administration. At IECC, we believe in and seek to embody these values:

- A. **Stewardship.** Accepting our responsibility to be good stewards of public trust, we will sensibly use our financial, human, and physical resources to achieve our mission.
- B. **Responsibility.** Encouraging personal growth and learning through leadership, citizenship, and accountability.
- C. **Integrity.** Providing an environment where people are encouraged and empowered to do the right thing in their work and interactions with others.
- D. **Respect.** Recognizing and appreciating our similarities and our differences, we demonstrate mutual regard for others through our words and actions.
- E. **Accessibility.** Providing access to a high-quality college education for everyone who seeks one, while providing the support needed to facilitate attainment of academic and professional goals.

3. Board of Trustees Policy Statements

The IECC Board of Trustees has adopted written policy statements which include, but are not limited to:

1. Equal Employment Opportunity
2. Gender Discrimination
3. Race Discrimination
4. Age Discrimination
5. Persons with Disabilities (ADA)
6. Religious and National Origin Discrimination
7. Workplace Harassment
8. Sexual Harassment, Violence and Misconduct
9. Retaliation

Policies are available on the IECC website and in Entrata. Corresponding institutional procedures, including a complaint form and detailed processes can be found on the employee portal.

B. Institutional Vision of Equity

Our Commitment at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC)

At IECC, we recognize the importance of embedding DEIA principles into the fabric of our institution. It is not merely a task to accomplish but a mindset to adopt, a culture to nurture, and a commitment to uphold. We understand that achieving our DEIA goals requires a comprehensive approach that extends beyond policies and committees. It demands a collective effort from every member of our community – students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Each one of us plays a vital role in shaping the inclusive and accessible future we envision.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility at IECC must include more than policies, value statements and committees. We understand that a holistic approach is necessary to achieve our goals. DEIA work must become a part of the everyday work that we do and become a part of who we are as individuals and as an organization. Each of us

needs to understand the impact that we have on our students' education, careers, and futures.

Moving Forward Together

While the journey towards a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible educational landscape will be challenging, IECC is determined to make small, steady, and consistent steps toward these ends. As an organization, we understand that real and lasting change takes time, effort, and resources. We are committed to taking steps to create an educational environment where each individual is empowered to reach their full potential.

We understand that this is not a journey to transform our institution, or the landscape of higher education in Illinois. This is a journey to transform individual lives, to impact families, to strengthen communities, and to make our state and nation better places to work and live. We are on the frontlines of change, champions of inclusivity, and architects of a brighter and more equitable tomorrow.

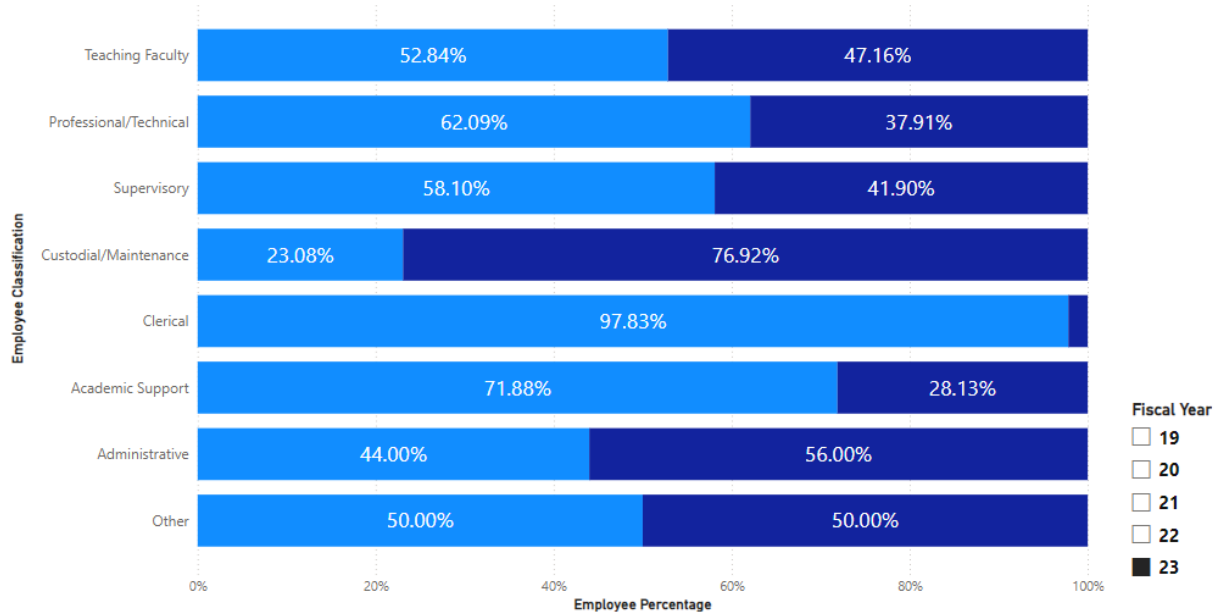
III. ANALYZE DATA

A. and B. IBHE/ICCB/Institution-Specific Data

Equity Plan Data - Employee Demographics

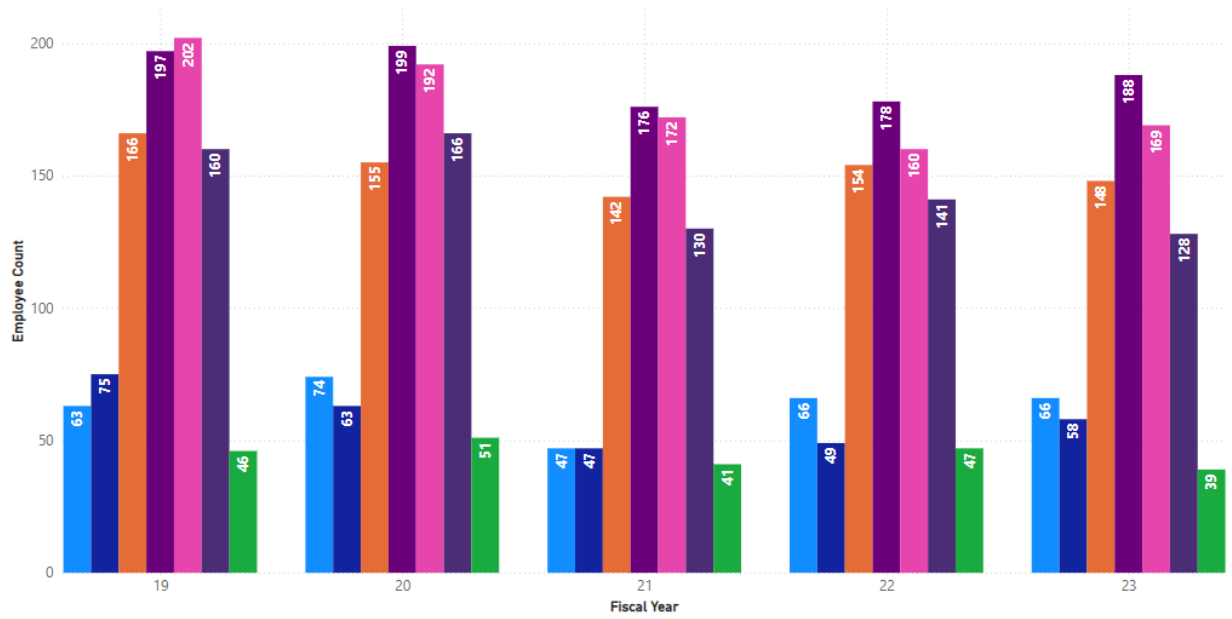
Employees by Classification and Gender

Gender ● Female ● Male



Employees by Fiscal Year and Age Range

AgeBins ● 24 or Less ● 25-29 ● 30-39 ● 40-49 ● 50-59 ● 60-69 ● 70 or Above

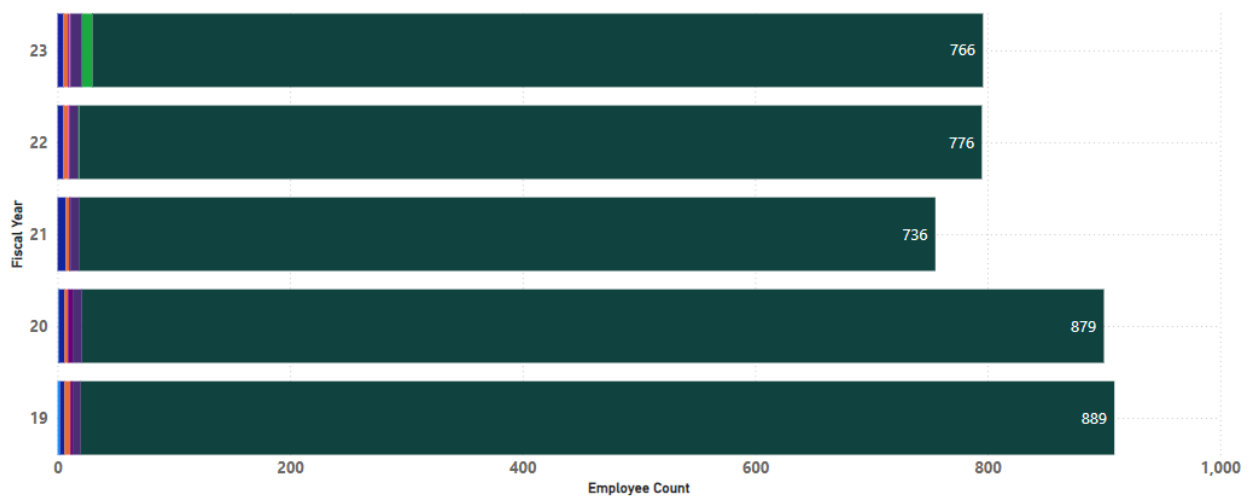


Diversity Index

Group	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
IECC Employees	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05
IECC Students	0.11	0.13	0.15	0.15	0.18
District 529	0.14	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.15

Employees by Fiscal Year and Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity ● American Indian or Alaska Native ● Asian ● Black or African American ● Hispanic/Latino ● Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ● Two or more races ● Unknown ● White



Equity Plan Data - Enrollment

ILLINOIS EASTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGES



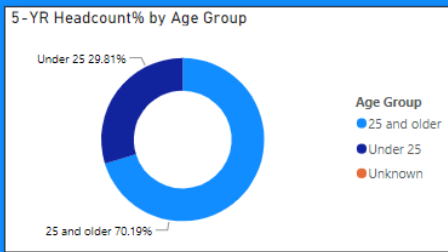
Equity Plan Data Total Enrollment by Age Group

INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY

All

COLLEGE NAME

All



68,866

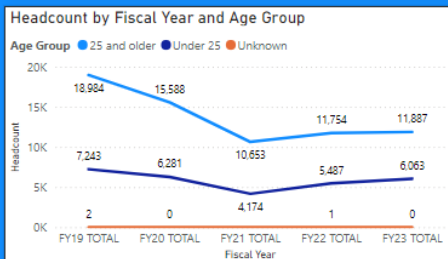
25 and Older

29,248

Under 25

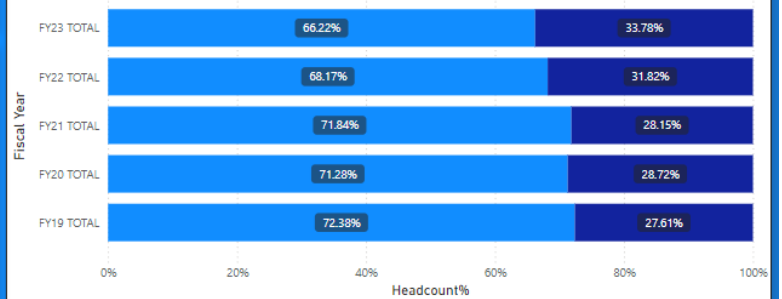
5

Unknown Age



Headcount% by Fiscal Year and Age Group

Age Group: 25 and older, Under 25, Unknown



ILLINOIS EASTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGES



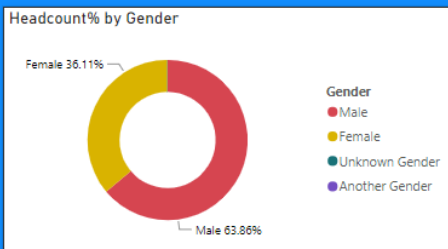
Equity Plan Data Total Enrollment by Gender

INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY

All

COLLEGE NAME

All



62,659

Male Headcount

35,435

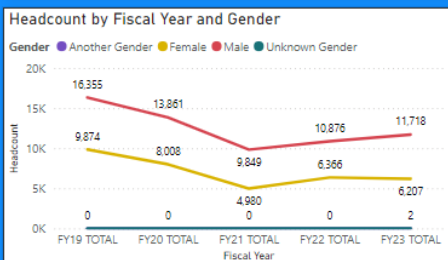
Female Headcount

23

Unknown Gender

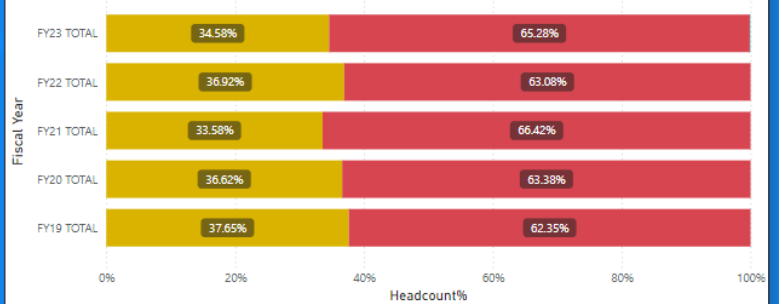
2

Another Gender



Headcount% by Fiscal Year and Gender

Gender: Another Gender, Female, Male, Unknown Gender





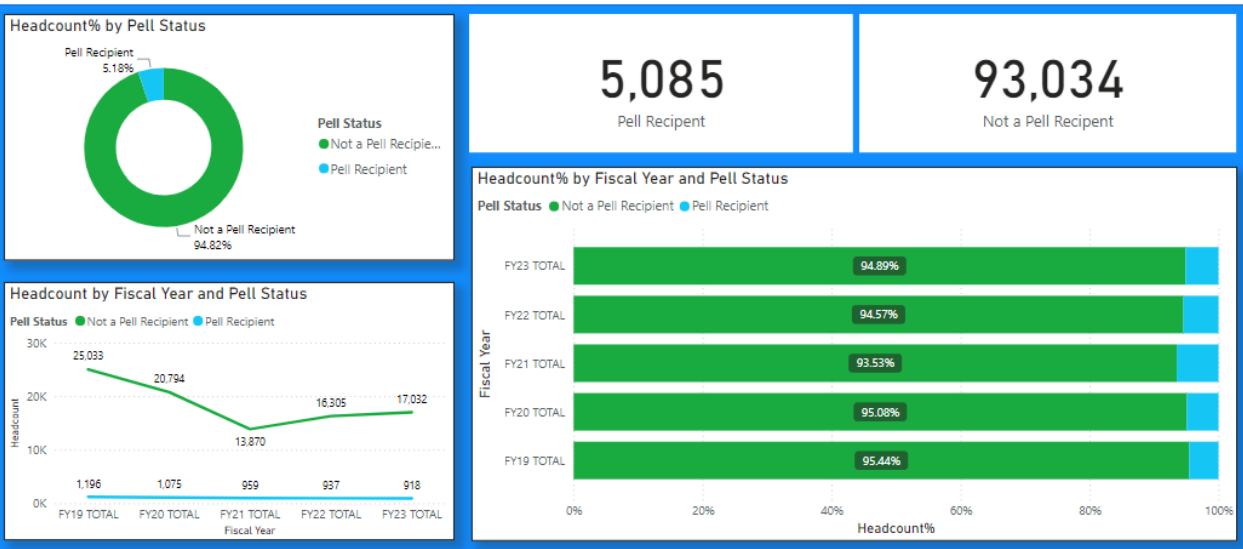
Equity Plan Data Total Enrollment by Pell Status

INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY

All

COLLEGE NAME

All



5,085
Pell Recipient

93,034
Not a Pell Recipient



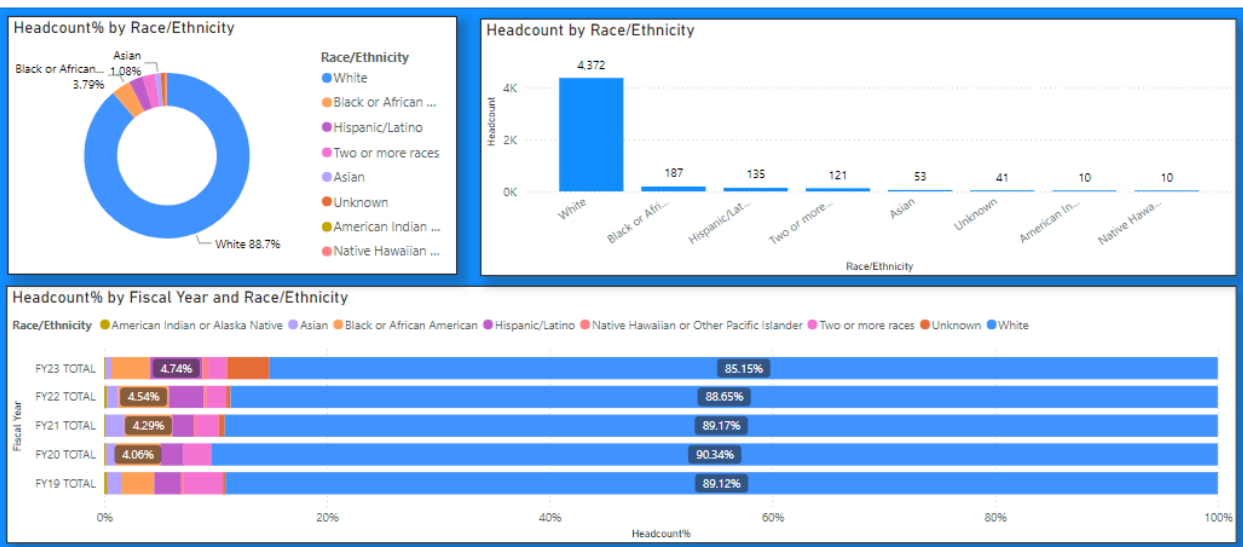
Equity Plan Data Total Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY

All

COLLEGE NAME

Lincoln Trail





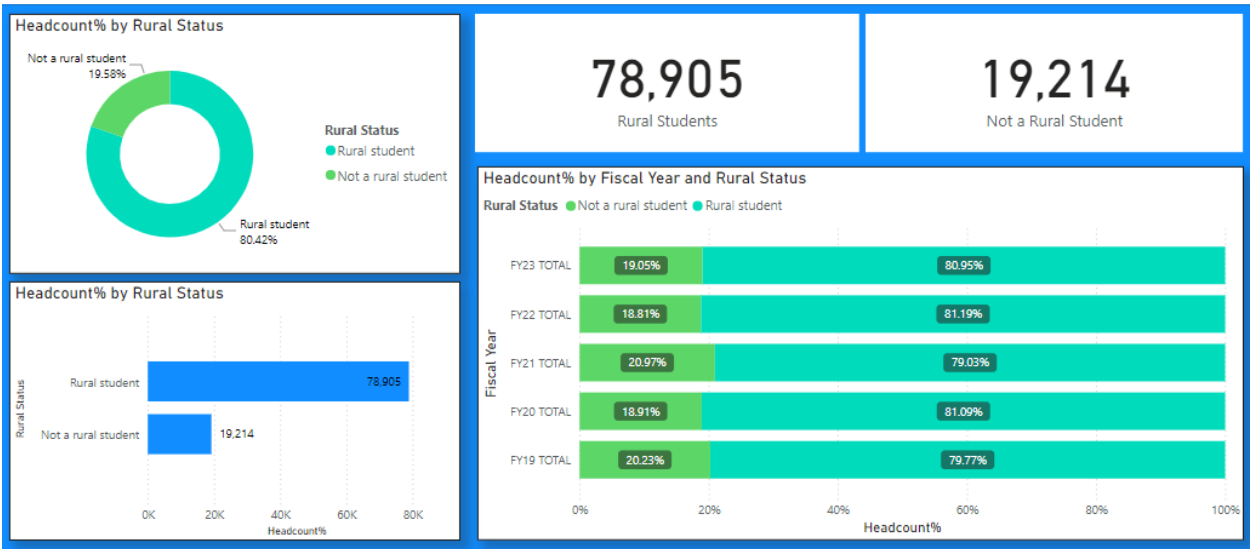
Equity Plan Data Total Enrollment by Rural Status

INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY

All

COLLEGE NAME

All



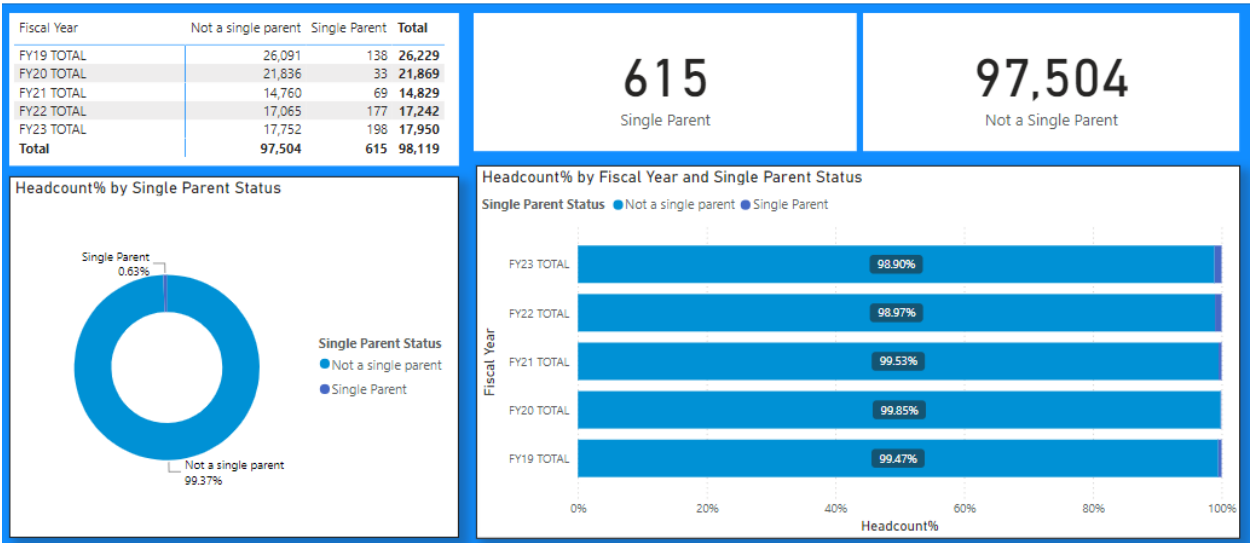
Equity Plan Data Total Enrollment by Single Parent Status

INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY

All

COLLEGE NAME

All

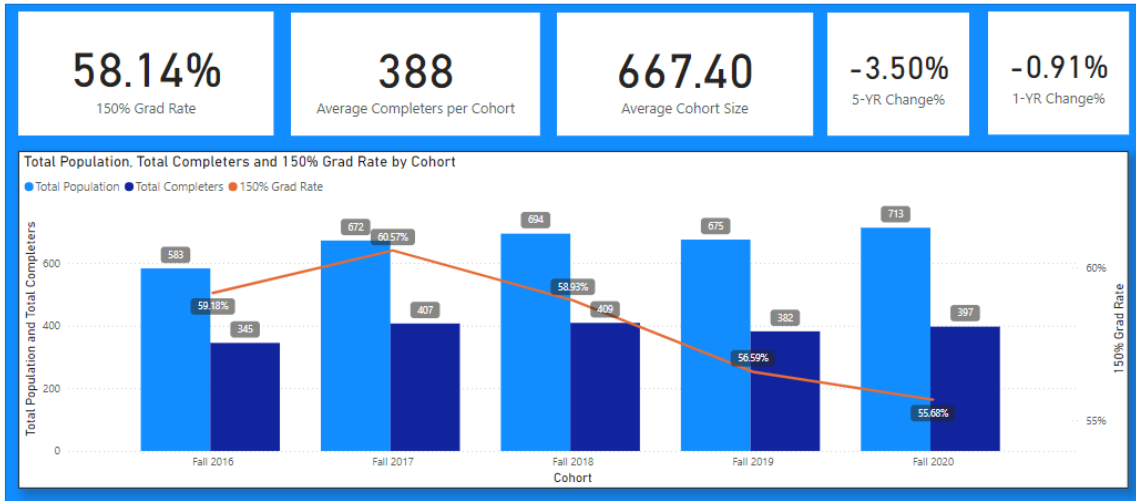


Equity Plan Data - Graduation Rates



Equity Plan Data Total 150% Grad Rates by Cohort

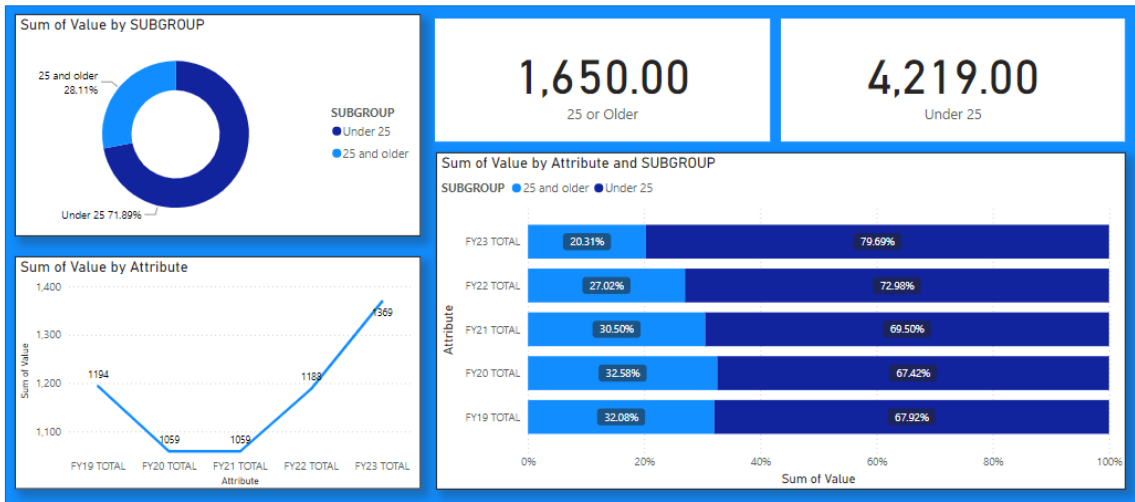
COLLEGE NAME
All



Equity Plan Data Total Completers by Age Group

INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY
All

COLLEGE NAME
All





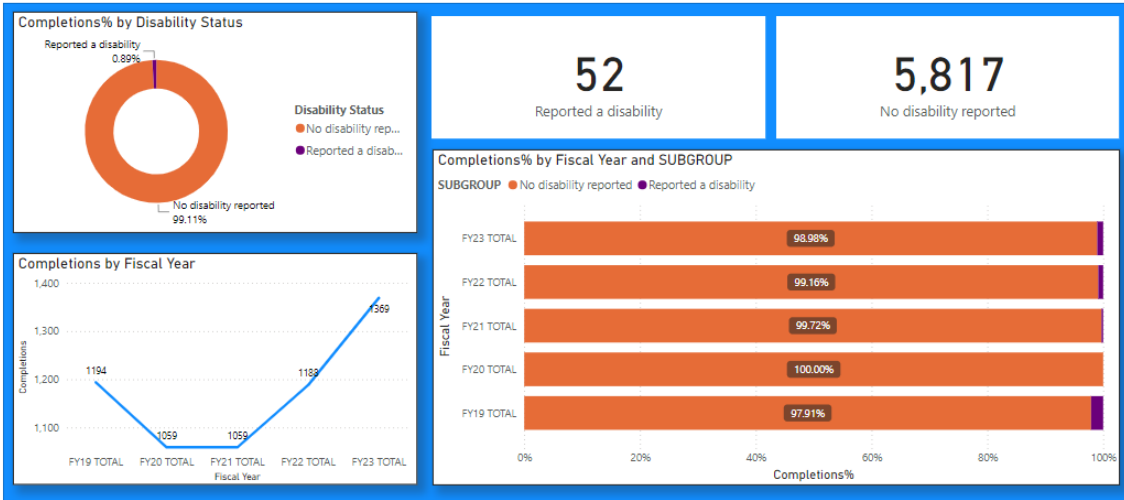
Equity Plan Data Total Completion by Disability Status

COMPLETION LEVEL

All

COLLEGE NAME

All



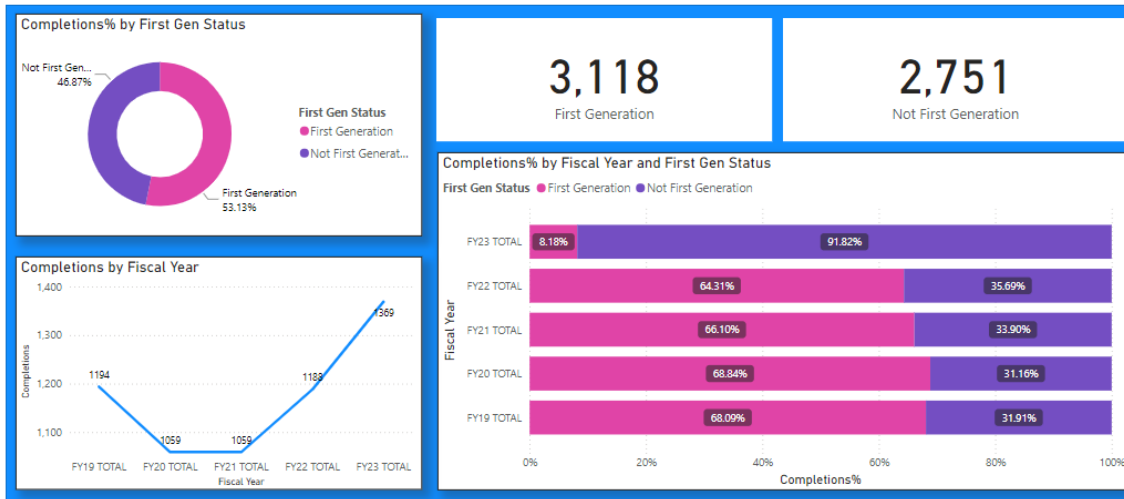
Equity Plan Data Total Completion by First Generation Status

COMPLETION LEVEL

All

COLLEGE NAME

All





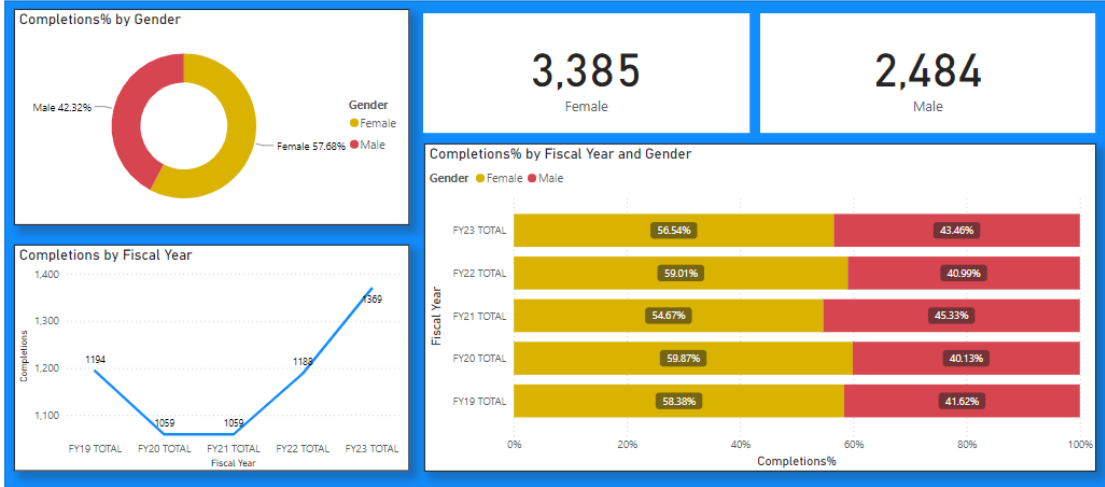
Equity Plan Data Total Completions by Gender

COMPLETION LEVEL

All

COLLEGE NAME

All



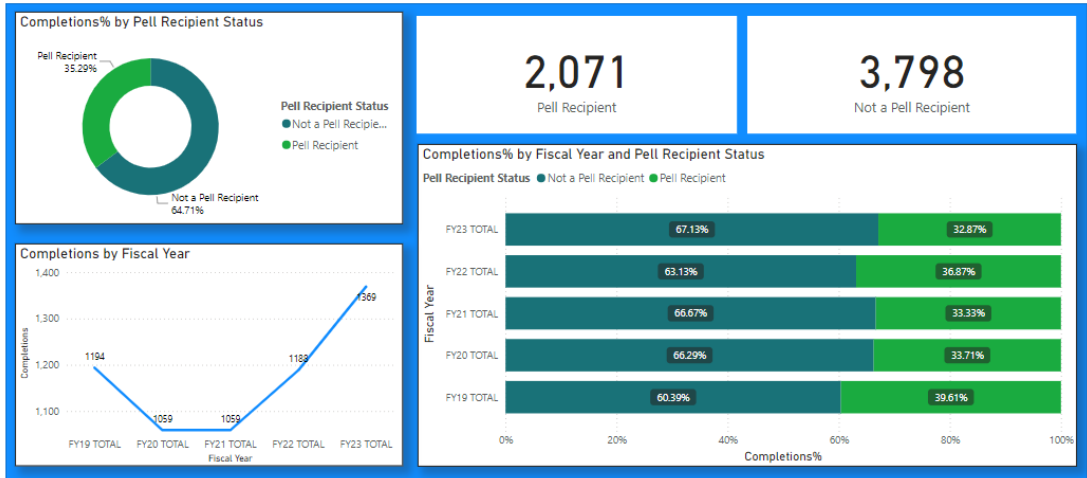
Equity Plan Data Total Completions by Pell Recipient Status

COMPLETION LEVEL

All

COLLEGE NAME

All





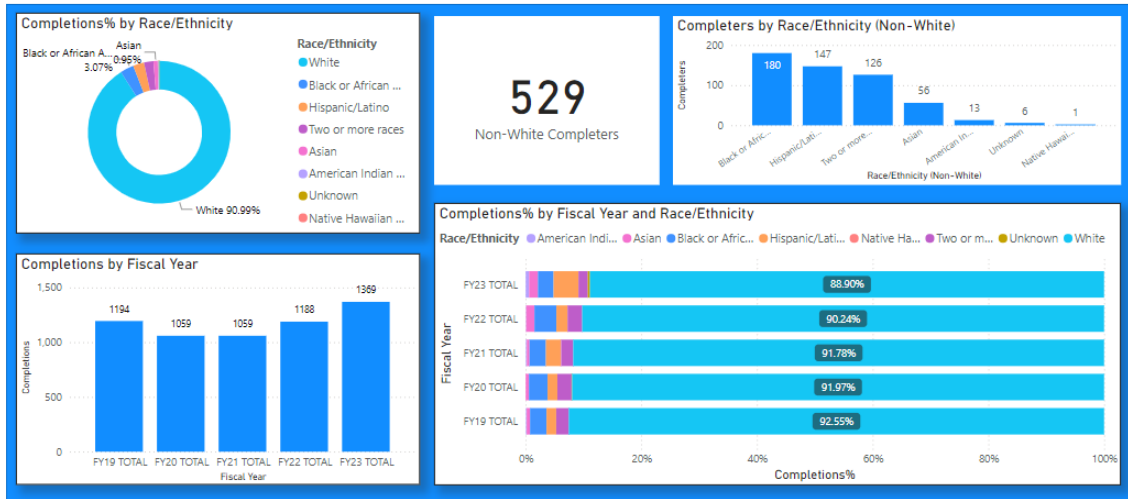
Equity Plan Data Total Completions by Race/Ethnicity

COMPLETION LEVEL

All

COLLEGE NAME

All



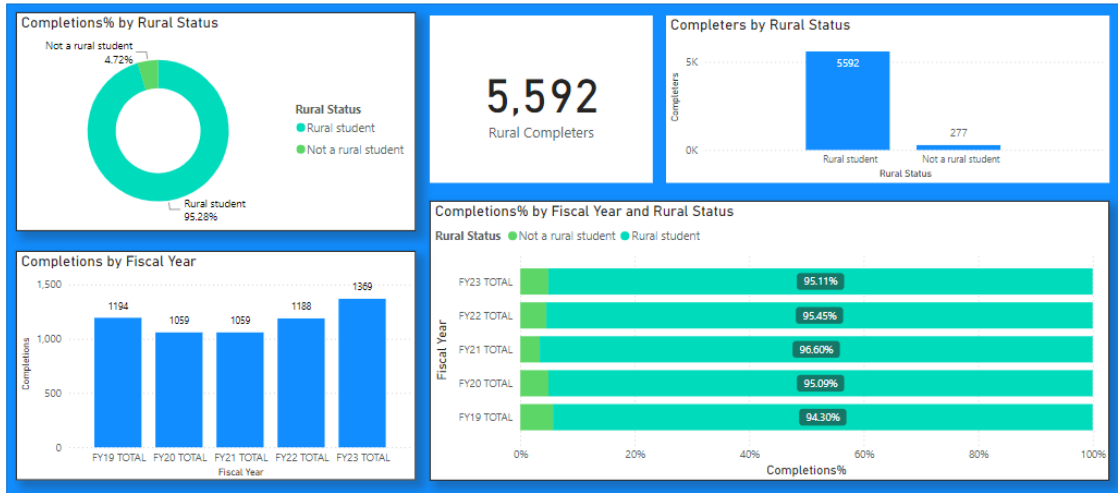
Equity Plan Data Total Completions by Rural Student

COMPLETION LEVEL

All

COLLEGE NAME

All





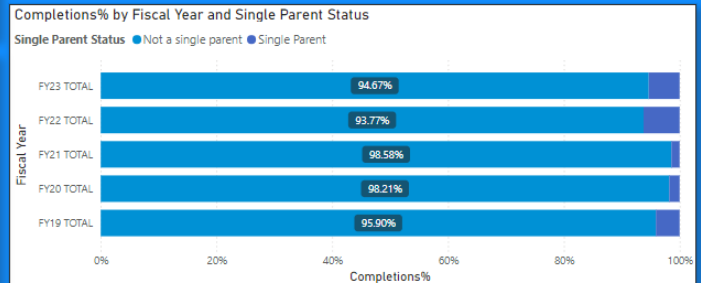
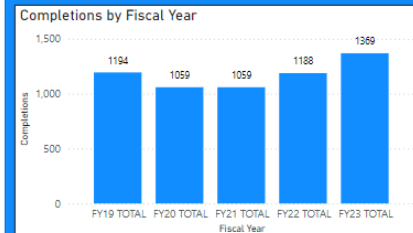
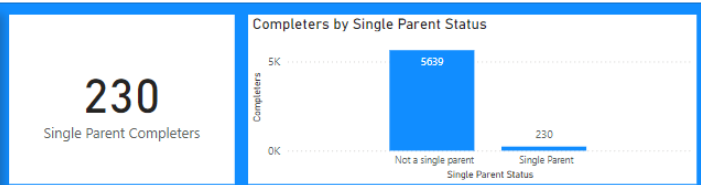
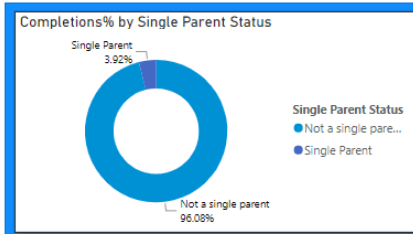
Equity Plan Data Total Completions by Single Parent Status

COMPLETION LEVEL

All

COLLEGE NAME

All



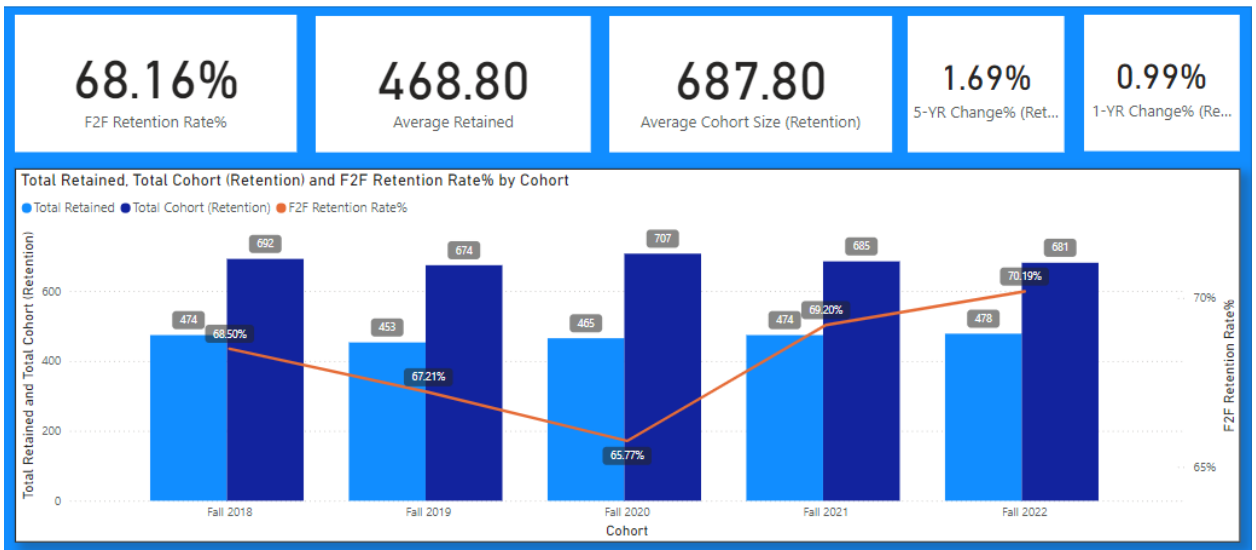
Equity Plan Data - Retention



Equity Plan Data Fall-to-Fall (F2F) Retention Rates by Cohort

COLLEGE NAME

All

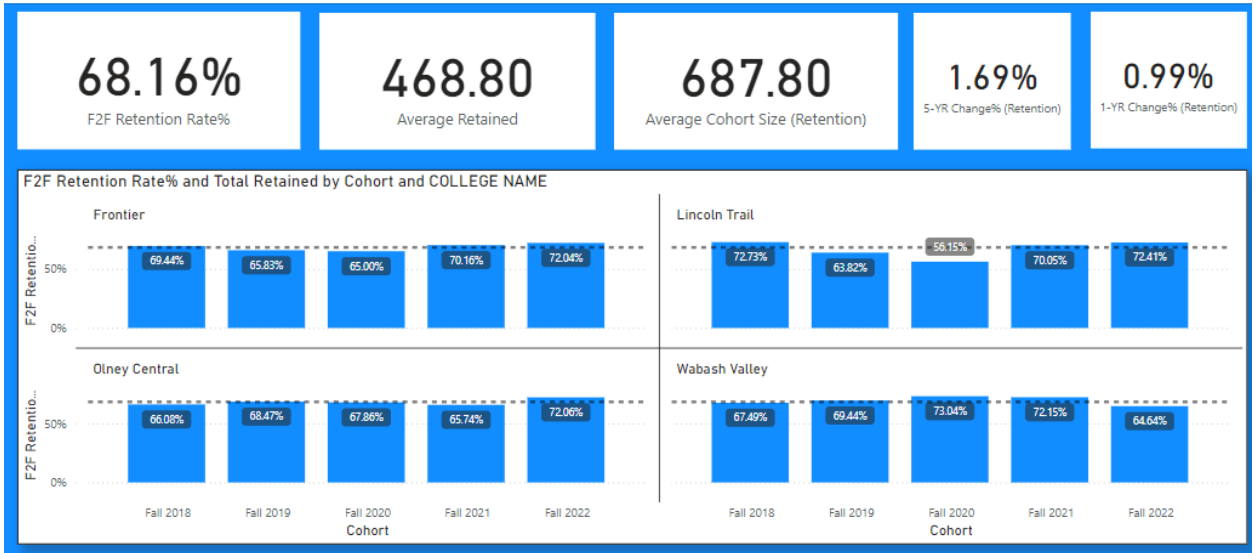




Equity Plan Data ICCB F2F Retention Rates

COLLEGE NAME

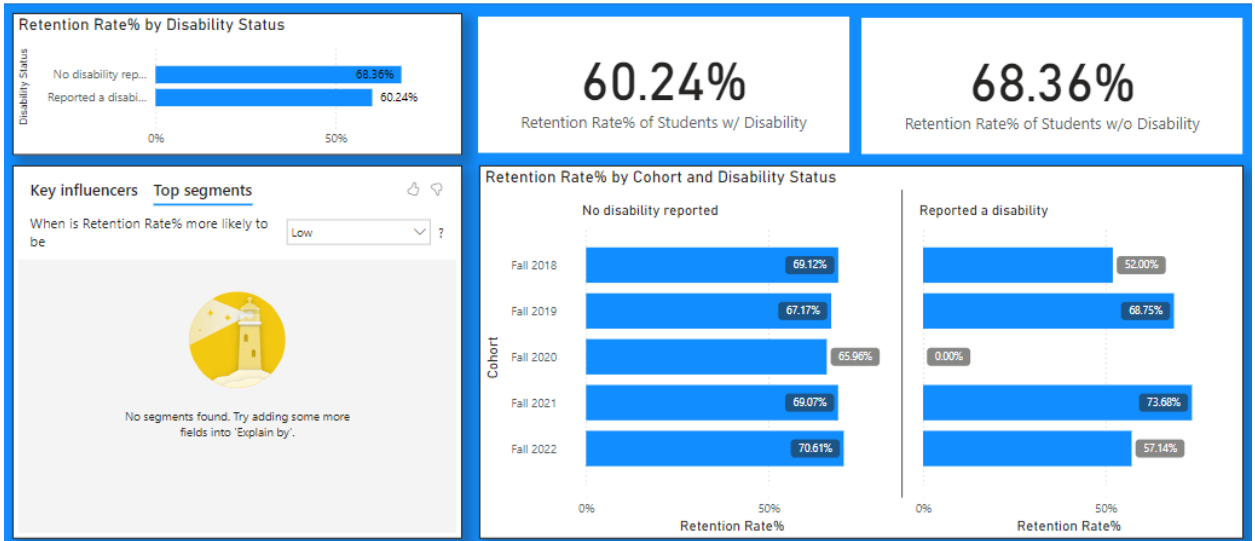
Multiple selections



Equity Plan Data Retention Rate (F2F) by Disability Status

COLLEGE NAME

All

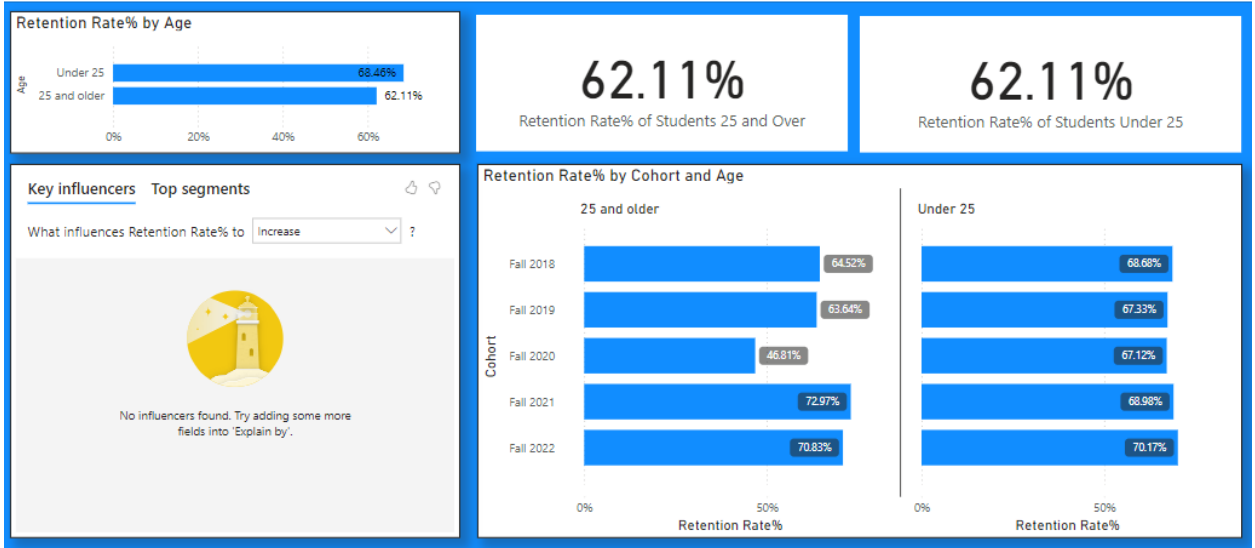




Equity Plan Data Retention Rate (F2F) by Age

COLLEGE NAME

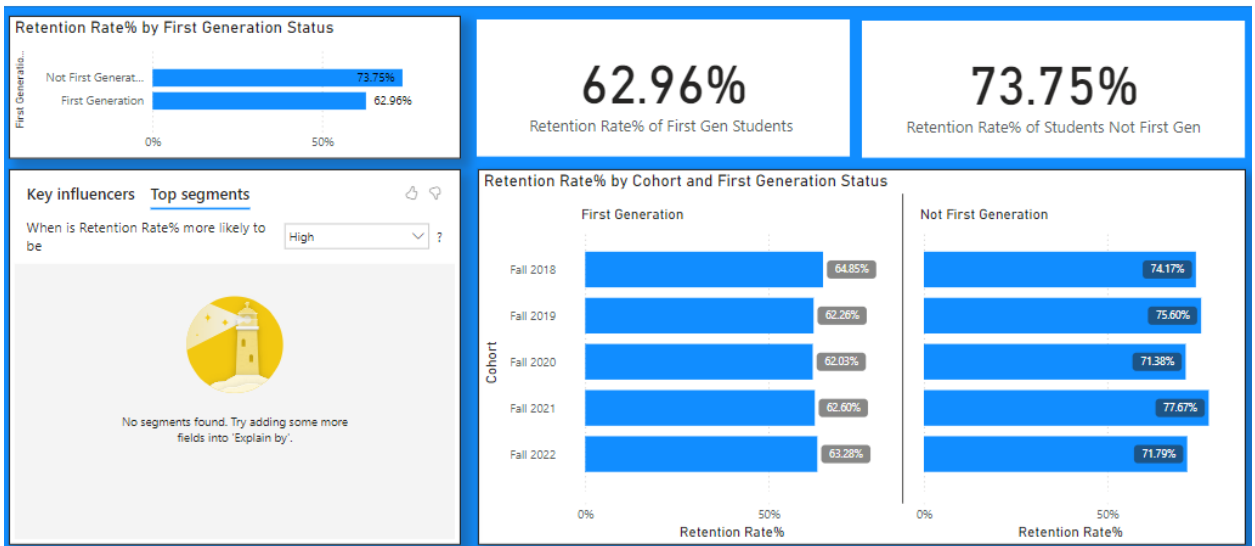
All



Equity Plan Data Retention Rate (F2F) by First Generation Status

COLLEGE NAME

All

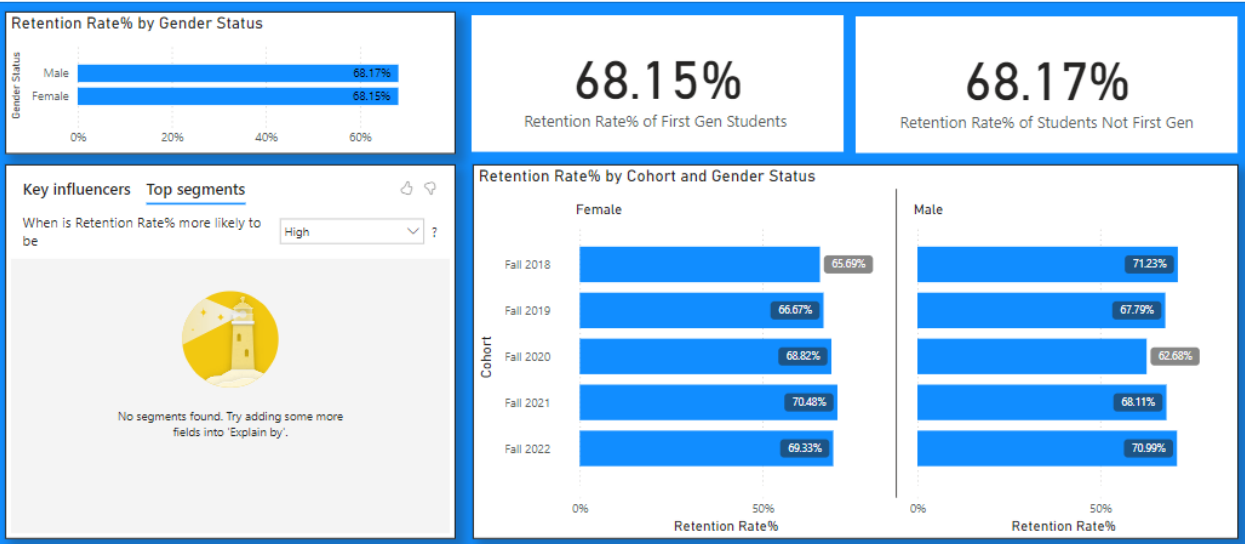




Equity Plan Data Retention Rate (F2F) by Gender Status

COLLEGE NAME

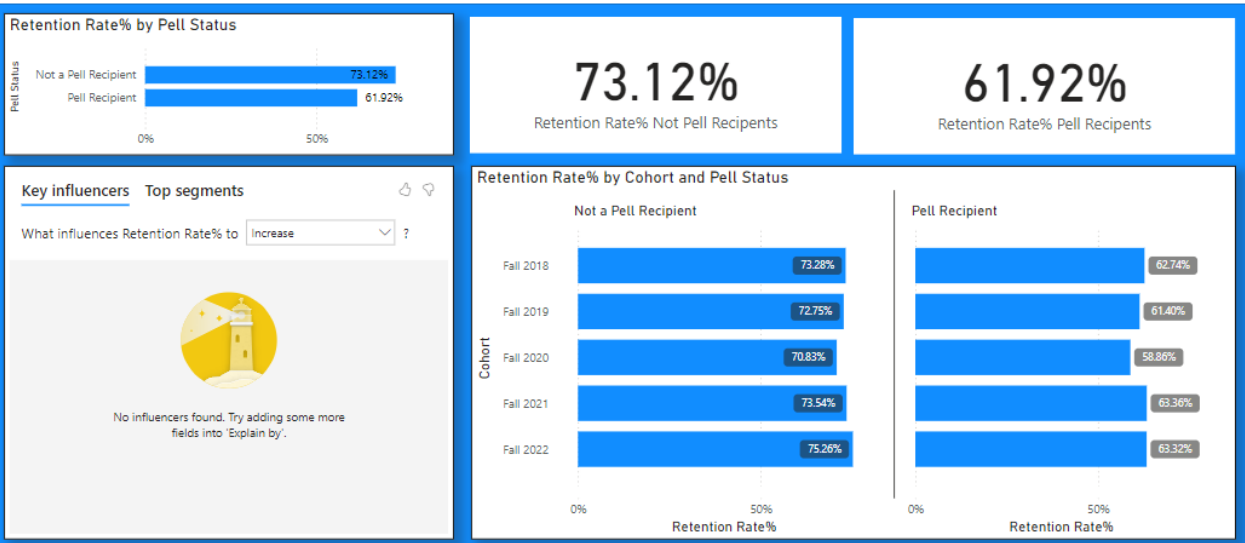
All



Equity Plan Data Retention Rate (F2F) by Gender Status

COLLEGE NAME

All

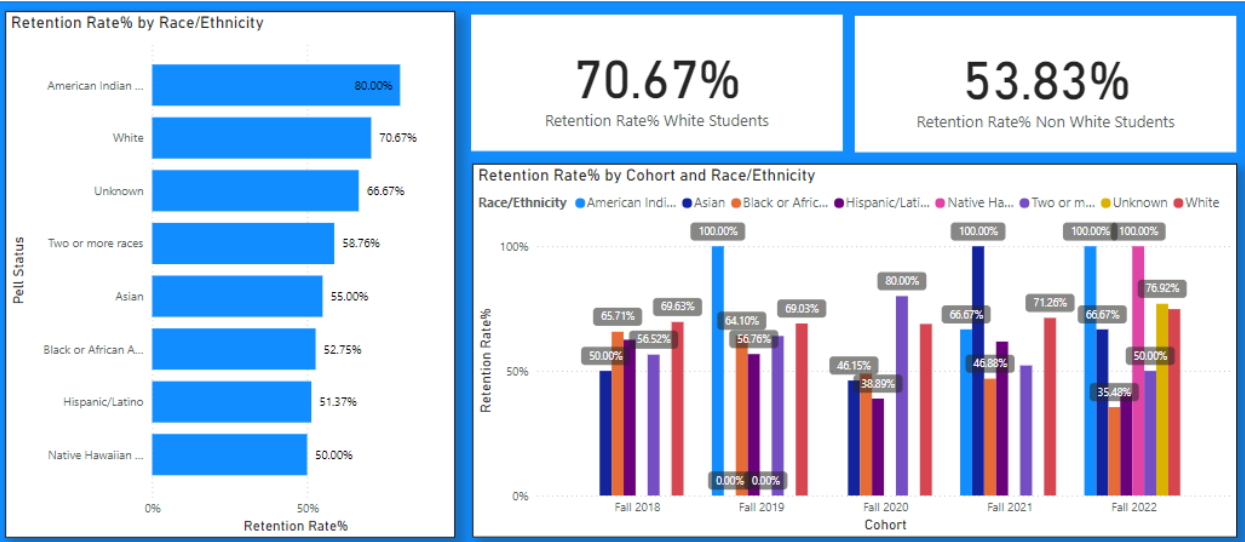




Equity Plan Data Retention Rate (F2F) by Race/Ethnicity

COLLEGE NAME

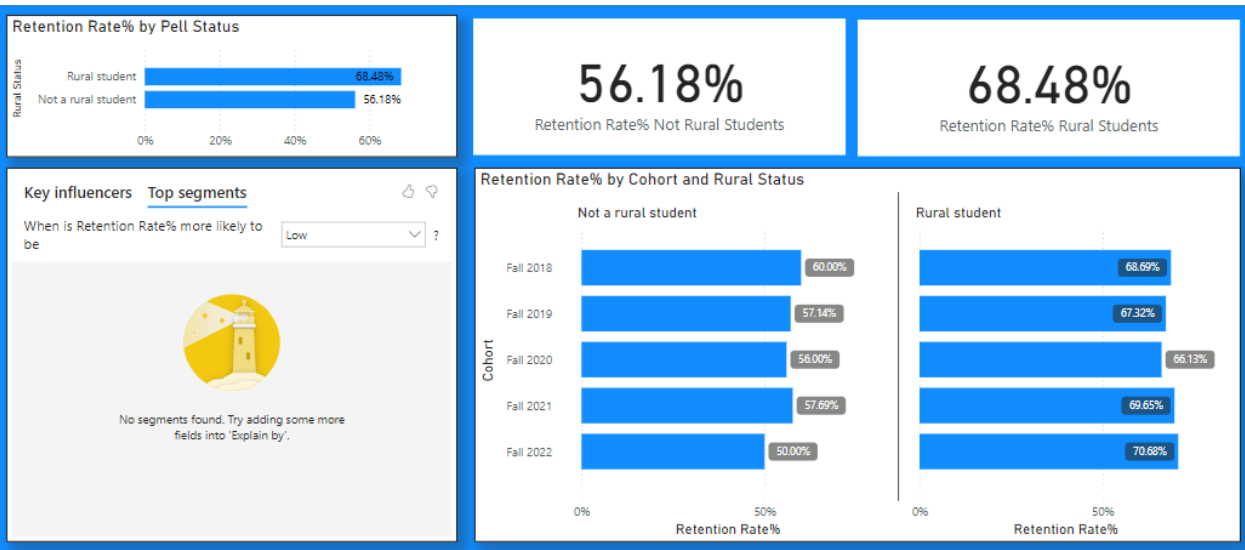
All



Equity Plan Data Retention Rate (F2F) by Rural Status

COLLEGE NAME

All

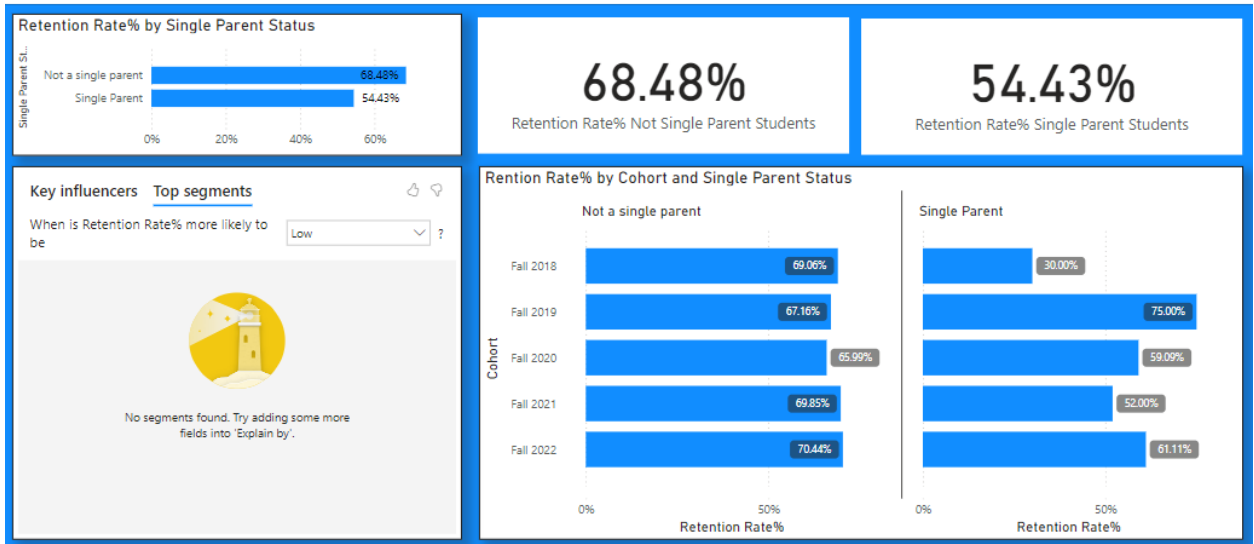




Equity Plan Data Retention Rate (F2F) by Single Parent Status

COLLEGE NAME

All ▼



C. Equity Gaps to Be Addressed

After reviewing the data provided by IBHE and ICCB as well as institutional-specific data from fiscal years 2019 to 2023, IECC has identified the following equity gaps that need to be addressed.

1. **Diversity among faculty and staff by gender**

IECC can identify three occupations where gender imbalance exists. These occupations include custodial/maintenance, clerical, and academic support. Gender imbalance may be a reflection of societal norms, stereotypes, or systemic barriers that influence career choice. IECC does not believe these gender imbalances are the result of systemic barriers, but rather societal norms and stereotypes. Still, IECC sees and understands the value of gender diversity in these three areas. It should be noted that IECC has taken significant steps to reduce gender imbalances in administration and professional/technical employees over the past three years.

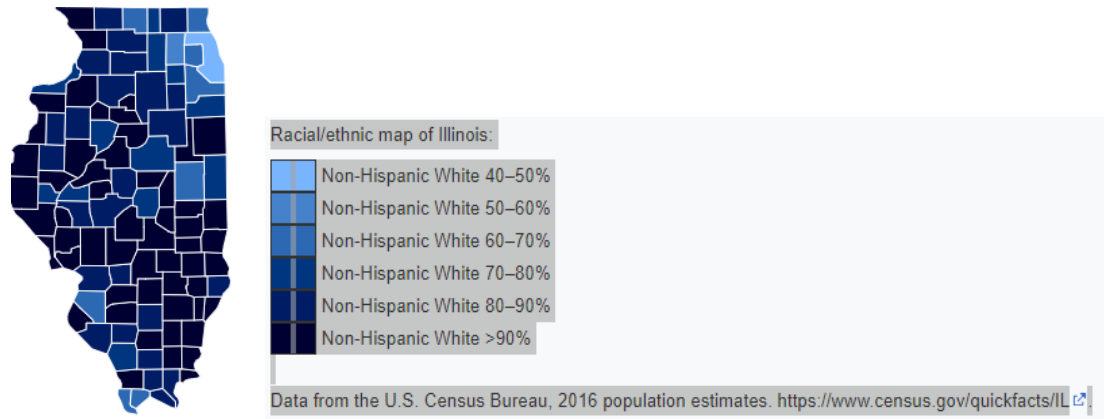
2. **Diversity among faculty and staff by age**

The majority of IECC employees are 30 to 69 years old, with the highest total in the 40 to 59 age range. IECC consistently has fewer employees below the age of 30 and above the age of 70. IECC believes that each generation brings their own unique perspectives, values, experiences and skills to the workplace. We believe a review of our data points to the need for strong succession planning as many of our administrators are moving closer to

retirement. This creates a unique opportunity for IECC to mentor and train individuals from diverse backgrounds for possible promotion in the future.

3. Diversity among faculty and staff by race/ethnicity

IECC faculty and staff are predominantly white. This is largely due to the racial and ethnic composition of the counties making up the IECC district.



4. Student Enrollment by age, gender, and Pell Status

The data provided includes Workforce Education students. Due to this, the data shows that 70% of IECC students are above the age of 25 years old, 63% of IECC students are male, and 94% of IECC students are non-Pell recipients. This data is misleading. As IECC refines its Equity Plan moving forward, data that filters out Workforce Education students will replace current data so that data focuses more on transfer and degree seeking students. Doing so will provide IECC with a more accurate representation of its student body and the equity gaps that need to be addressed.

5. Student Enrollment by disability, race/ethnicity, rural status, and single parent status

The data provided regarding student enrollment based on disability, race/ethnicity, rural status, and single parent status is a more accurate representation of the overall IECC student body. In section V of this Equity Plan, new policies, strategies, services, and practices are being implemented to address the equity gaps identified in these areas. The equity gaps include less than 1% of the student body has reported a disability, more than 88% of the student body is non-Hispanic white, more than 80% of the student body is rural, and less than 1% of the student body is a single parent.

6. Graduation Rates by age, First Gen, race/ethnicity, single parents, and disability

The data provided shows that graduation rates are lower among students over the age of 25, among First Generation students, among non-White students, among single parents, and among students with a disability. IECC has an overall 150% graduation rate of 58.14% with an average of 388 completers per cohort and an average cohort size of 667.40 students. In

section V of this Equity Plan, new policies, strategies, services, and practices are being implemented to address the equity gaps identified in these areas.

7. Retention Rates by race/ethnicity, First Gen students, Pell recipients, single parents, and rural status

The data provided shows that biggest equity gaps in retention are between white (70.67%) and non-white students (53.83%), not First Gen (73.75%) and First Gen students (62.96%), non-Pell (73.12%) and Pell recipients (61.92%), not single parent (68.48%) and single parent students (54.43%), and not rural (56.18%) and rural students (68.48%). IECC has an overall F2F retention rate of 68.16%. The lowest retention rates occurred in the Fall of 2020. IECC has witnessed an increase in retention rates since the Fall of 2020. In section V of this Equity Plan, new policies, strategies, services, and practices are being implemented to address the equity gaps identified in these areas.

D. Practices and Policies that create gaps

IECC recognizes that policies and practices intended to protect students can unintentionally harm other students. Below are some identified gaps in policy and practice identified at IECC.

- Being a multi-campus college district can lead to inconsistencies in practice that can create frustrations for students. This includes inconsistent textbook procedures (which require students to purchase the textbook from the bookstore associated with that campus offering the course). This also includes campus-specific meal plans that require the student to spend their meal plan funds at their main campus. External scholarships typically do not allow for taking classes at the other campuses in the district.
- Receiving multiple bills from more than one IECC campus for tuition and fees can create anxiety and confusion for a student applying for financial aid.
- Policy 500.32 outlines IECC's open admission policy but indicates that admission is not guaranteed for all courses or programs of study.
- Course scheduling and availability can limit students who are employed or have family commitments and responsibilities.
- Procedure 300.1.19 Accounting: Collection of Overdue Accounts can be overwhelming for new or first-generation students.
- The timeline for disbursement can create a barrier for first-generation and low-income students.

E. Programs, efforts, curricular, or pedagogical changes that have been implemented

1. Professional Development and Training

IECC supports faculty and staff in professional development and training related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Funds were set aside in FY 23, FY 24, and FY 25 to support professional development. Through this funding faculty and staff were able to attend general and contextualized trainings related to best practices in inclusive teaching and supporting minoritized populations.

IECC requires annual online training through Vector Solutions for all employees for sexual harassment. Additionally, optional opportunities are available year-round through the platform on ADA, discrimination in the workplace, and DEI practices.

Through IECC's Quality Initiative, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning was created to provide professional development. These opportunities are developed by subject matter experts available to all employees with select classes focusing on inclusive practices (EDU 1611 Creating Accessible Documents, EDU 1616 Adult Learning). IECC has annual faculty and staff workshops with breakout sessions that highlight the needs of various populations, best practices, and encourage reflective practice. Recent sessions that highlight inclusive practice include presentations Debunking Disability Myths, Creating Access, Title IX, Courageous Conversations, and McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance.

2. **Supports for Underrepresented Populations**

IECC understands the importance of creating specialized supports to ensure equitable outcomes for underrepresented populations.

a. *Learning Commons*

Each IECC campus provides tutoring and disability services through a Learning Commons. Tutoring Services are free and available on all subjects. TutorMe is a 24/7 online platform for students who cannot receive assistance during traditional hours. The Director of Learning Commons is a trained ADA Coordinator at each location. These individuals work with students to provide resources, support, and accommodations to students with disabilities.

b. *Ally by Anthology*

In FY 2023, IECC purchased Ally for LMS. This product is embedded in Canvas as a tool to help build a more inclusive learning environment and improve the student experience. Students can take control of how they consume content and faculty are provided live instructions on how to improve their accessibility. Ally is available to all students serving as a resource for students who commute, those who English is not their first language, and many other special populations who want to consume content in alternative formats.

c. *TRIO Programming*

IECC has two TRIO grants. Upward Bound was established at IECC in 1989 and currently serves over 200 students at 12 high schools within the district. Upward Bound's academic and summer component include after school college preparatory sessions, workshop, educational and college trips, and a six-week summer program on campus. These services are critical to expanding access and knowledge of the college-going process to the rural, economically disadvantaged population in District #529.

The Student Support Services (SSS) TRIO grant has been available at all four campuses since 1993 and serves 190 students. This program provides intensive

academic and career advisement, tutoring, college visits, and special workshops to participants. Students are eligible for the program if 1) neither parent receives a baccalaureate degree; 2) financially limited resources as defined by the federal guidelines; or 3) have a documented disability. Each campus' Academic Counselor works with students to provide the individual support they need.

IECC invests resources into writing and maintaining these grant programs to assist at-risk students and provide community outreach.

d. *Mental Health*

In 2023, IECC provided access to Timely Care for faculty, staff, and students. Timely Care gives everyone 24/7 access to a counselor as well as many other services. In addition, we hired a Mental Health Specialist to help prioritize mental health support through comprehensive awareness campaigns, peer support initiatives, wellness fairs, and increased partnerships with community mental health agencies, ensuring access to mental health resources and services for all students.

e. *Synchronous Lecture Halls (SLH)*

Through grants received from the USDA, IECC installed synchronous classrooms in each of the 16 high schools in our district. In addition, each of our four campuses has four multi-use synchronous classrooms and one classroom specifically for Early Childhood Education. The SLHs address inequities and access within our system and in our area high schools that do not have qualified faculty to teach dual-credit courses or high schools that the travel distance is too far to bus students or have students drive to campus.

f. *Perkins Transition Center*

Through the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century, IECC invests a portion of its funding to providing assistance to Career and Technical Education students who meet the definition of a special population:

- Low-income youth or adult;
- Has a Disability;
- Preparing for a nontraditional field;
- English Learner;
- Single Parent, including pregnant woman or parenting teen;
- Out-of-workforce individual
- Experiencing Homelessness;
- Youth who is in or has aged out of the foster care system; or
- Youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty.

The Coordinator of the Transition Center connects students to supportive agencies and provides textbook loans and transportation assistance. This

guidance and financial assistance reduces barriers for underrepresented populations.

g. *Additional Services*

The Coordinator of Financial Aid on each campus serves as the Coordinator of Veterans and Military Personnel Student Services. These individuals possess specialized knowledge on Veteran financial aid options and additional resources. The Associate Dean of Admissions and Records serves as the specialist for undocumented or mixed status.

h. *The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.*

IECC fosters a climate of respect among students and employees. Respect is a core value of IECC. By its definition, this foundational value means faculty, students, staff, and administration recognize and appreciate similarities and differences, and everyone demonstrates mutual regard for one another through our words and actions. As explained in 2.D. This respectful diversity is projected through classrooms, student organizations, community events, and radio and television broadcasts. Members of the IECC community are protected by the First Amendment and Academic Freedom Policy 800.6. Additional policies related to nondiscrimination, ADA, sexual misconduct, and religious observances set the expectations of respect for individuals.

In Spring 2023, IECC adopted statements on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and how these principles are part of our core values. The development of these statements were the foundation of a charge and formation of a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee. This cross-campus committee includes faculty, staff, and administration whose goal is to ensure meaningful work around planning and policymaking related to DEI progress. While the committee is in its infancy, the members retain a strong commitment to educating the community at large about the benefits received from embracing diversity and the need to ensure equitable support.

IV. ASSESS CLIMATE

1. Methods or approaches used to assess the campus climate and culture

IECC recognizes the importance of assessing the campus climate and culture to understand the perceptions and experiences of diversity, equity, belonging, inclusion and other relevant factors among its staff, faculty, students, and key partners.

IECC uses a variety of methods or approaches to gather feedback from different stakeholders, such as:

1. **Employee satisfaction survey:** This is an annual online survey that measures the level of satisfaction and engagement of IECC employees with various aspects of their work environment, such as leadership, communication, collaboration, professional development, and recognition.
2. **SENSE and CCSSE surveys:** These are nationally recognized surveys that are administered every three years to IECC students to assess their engagement and satisfaction with the college's academic and support services, as well as their sense of belonging, inclusion, and academic success.
3. **End of course surveys:** These are online surveys that are offered to IECC students at the end of each course to evaluate their learning experience, instructor performance, course content, and delivery.
4. **Focus groups:** These are facilitated discussions that are conducted periodically with selected groups of staff, faculty, students, and key partners to explore specific topics or issues related to the campus climate and culture, such as diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and student success.
5. **Program Advisory Committees:** Program Advisory Committees are made up of employers, alumni, K-12 representatives, and other key stakeholders who provide valuable input and feedback on the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of IECC's academic programs and career pathways. These committees meet regularly to review the curriculum, learning outcomes, and assessment methods, as well as to discuss the trends, challenges, and opportunities in the local and regional labor market. Their insights and recommendations help IECC to improve its academic offerings continuously and to better prepare its students for success in their chosen fields of study and careers.

2. Frequency and timing of campus climate surveys or assessments

IECC administers the employee satisfaction survey annually, usually in the fall semester. The SENSE and CCSSE surveys, implemented in AY24, replaced the student satisfaction survey. These new surveys are planned to be conducted every two years. In gap years, IECC has plans to administer the RNL Student Satisfaction Index. This process has replaced the annual student satisfaction survey that occurred in the spring semester. The end-of-course surveys are offered to students at the end of each course every semester. The focus groups are conducted as needed, depending on the availability of resources and the stakeholders' interests. The most recent campus climate assessments that IECC completed were the employee satisfaction survey and the end-of-course surveys in spring 2024 and the SENSE survey in fall 2023. IECC is administering the CCSSE survey at the time of writing, and the results will become available this spring.

3. Key findings of the campus climate assessment that will inform the Equity Plan and Practices

The key findings of the assessments that help inform campus climate at IECC which have been gathered from the various methods or approaches, are summarized below:

1. Employee Satisfaction:

- a. Overall communication and collaboration: The survey results indicate that communication and collaboration in the workplace are generally good, but there is room for improvement. The preferred method of

communication is face-to-face meetings, followed by virtual meetings and email. The respondents also feel that their colleagues are eager to share and collaborate, and that they are valued and empowered by their supervisor.

- b. **Areas for improvement in communication and collaboration:** The survey results suggest that some areas for improvement in communication and collaboration are: improved communication and transparency from leadership, more frequent and consistent communication within and across departments, better organization and clear roles and responsibilities, more effective use of technology for communication and task management, more inclusion of staff in decision-making and information sharing, and more recognition and appreciation for part-time faculty and staff.
- c. **Professional development and employee satisfaction:** The survey results indicate that most respondents feel that their organization values and supports professional development and that their work is noticed, valued, and appreciated. The eNPS score for IECC is 28.89, which is considered good in the higher education industry and reflects positive employee engagement and satisfaction. The NPS score for IECC is 64.57, which is considered excellent, and reflects a positive reputation and attractiveness among prospective students.
- d. **Potential employees and prospective students:** The survey results suggest that potential employees would be more likely to recommend working at IECC if they received better pay and benefits, such as affordable health insurance for families, and if there was a clearer understanding of the direction of the institution. The survey results also suggest that prospective students would be more likely to recommend IECC if the institution invested in academic infrastructure and professional development for employees, improved facilities and technology, provided more student life opportunities and campus activities, and offered more curricular variety and mental health resources.

2. SENSE Survey

The initial findings from the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) included the following:

- a. **Enthusiastic Beginnings:** Students show eagerness in their educational pursuits, enrolling in an average of 3.5 courses initially.
- b. **Navigating Challenges:** A trend of dropping 1.71 courses post-start suggests a need for enhanced guidance and support systems.
- c. **Proactive Planning:** Students are ahead in planning, registering for classes 1.14 weeks early and applying for financial aid 1.63 months in advance.
- d. **Inclusive Atmosphere:** A strong sense of belonging is evident, with students feeling welcomed at a high rating of 4.41 out of 5.
- e. **Faculty Support:** Confidence in faculty support is high, with an average rating of 4.46 out of 5, reflecting a nurturing educational environment.
- f. **Accessible Education:** Course availability is well-received, with a rating of 4.4 out of 5, indicating a commitment to accommodating student schedules.

- g. **Advisory Availability:** The ease of accessing academic advisors, rated at 4.4 out of 5, underscores the availability of essential guidance.

V. POLICIES, STRATEGIES, SERVICES, AND PRACTICES

A to C. Outline of curricular or pedagogical changes, academic support, student support, faculty/staff diversity efforts, financial assistance, policy, or other changes to be implemented.

1. Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Professional Development

The IECC district will develop curriculum design and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff related to DEI, focusing on equitable classroom learning environments and student well-being.

a. Timeline/Goals:

- By 2025, IECC will develop an original DEI content training module for Faculty and Staff and promote existing resources on a website.
- By 2026, IECC will develop an original DEI content training module for Students and promote existing websites.
- By 2027 – IECC will develop templates and processes to ensure equity and cultural sensitivity in the Canvas shells and Curriculum development process.
- By 2028, Based on data and feedback from the JEDI committee, the CETL will revise DEI training courses
- By 2029, IECC's Success stories and best practices will be shared across departments to inspire and motivate the entire IECC community.

b. Curriculum and Pedagogy:

Creating an inclusive and diverse curriculum and pedagogy at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges involves a comprehensive approach that integrates various perspectives and teaching practices. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) plays a role in facilitating this process.

Equipping faculty with the necessary tools and knowledge becomes the critical focus. Through a series of workshops, seminars, and online modules, the CETL fosters a learning environment for educators themselves. Topics span inclusive pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching.

Curriculum revision and development take center stage as the plan progresses. The CETL supports faculty in a comprehensive review and revamp of existing courses, encouraging the development of new ones that celebrate diverse voices, histories, and contributions. This is about ensuring that the curriculum

reflects a wide array of perspectives and a global and multicultural understanding.

Creating an inclusive classroom environment is pivotal—the CETL shares best practices aimed at nurturing spaces where every student feels valued. Strategies for facilitating difficult conversations, addressing unconscious bias, and supporting diverse learning styles are disseminated, fostering a culture of inclusivity.

Communication and advocacy play a crucial role. The CETL will develop strategies to share milestones and successes, not just within the IECC community but also with a broader audience. This effort is about building awareness and drumming up support for a culture of diversity and inclusivity at every level of the college's operations.

Data on curricular revisions will be gathered through new course proposal forms and course revision forms, and how those new courses are implemented into IECC's degree and certificate programs. Long-term enrollment data and student evaluations will also help to measure the impact of those new courses and will guide revisions and further action. Equity and inclusivity on campus will be measured through an annual campus climate survey.

c. Professional Development

IECC is dedicated to offering high-quality professional development opportunities to its faculty, staff, and administrators. To support its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) plan, the Human Resource Department and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) will create innovative programs and promote existing ones. These professional development programs will focus on educating participants on various aspects of DEI, such as understanding and addressing implicit biases, developing cultural competency, and implementing strategies to remove systemic barriers that affect marginalized students.

The programs emphasize practical applications of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles in classroom settings and campus operations. The participants will be encouraged to implement what they learn in their daily interactions and decision-making processes. Special attention will be given to understanding the unique diversity of the local community and the difficulties faced by underrepresented student groups.

Participation data will be collected, and assessments will be created or revised to measure the learning outcomes of the DEI-focused programs. The impact of these programs will also be measured in an annual campus climate survey.

d. Current Professional Development Opportunities

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges allows professional development monies for faculty and staff to fund traveling to and attending professional conferences. The funds can be used to attend conferences, workshops, and other events that

provide best practices and other resources related to diversity, equity, and inclusion that can be implemented at IECC.

IECC also provides access to optional online training modules relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. These modules can be used by faculty and staff to lead to a micro-credential in "Fostering a Culturally Responsive Campus Through Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion."

Through our Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, faculty and staff have access to resources and assistance with instructional design and technology. Resources include online courses, including "Bloom's Taxonomy Best Practices," "Creating Accessible Documents," and "Cognitive Load Best Practices," which provide teaching faculty and staff with research-based best practices that can make their courses accessible to a larger student population.

IECC's Human Resources office is reviewing its procedures surrounding job postings and the language that is used therein with the goal of attracting a more diverse applicant pool for open positions.

Data will be gathered on the types of conferences, trainings, and other events on which professional development funding is spent. Participation data will be collected, and assessments will be created or revised to measure the learning outcomes of IECC's current professional development opportunities, and that data will guide revisions to those offerings. The impact of these programs will also be measured in an annual campus climate survey.

2. Academic Support, Student Support, and Financial Assistance

IECC recognizes the imperative to address equity gaps in enrollment, persistence, advancement, and completion among historically underserved and underrepresented student populations. Our comprehensive equity plan includes plans for student services designed to support the success of all students, particularly focusing on Black, Latinx, low-income, rural, first generation, women, individuals with disabilities, working adults, and other minoritized groups.

a. Retention

IECC aims to enhance student retention through a multi-faceted approach. Initiatives include the expansion of online career coach services to incorporate retention efforts, the development of specialized orientation and course offerings, the establishment of dedicated retention centers on each campus, the implementation of alumni mentorship programs, and the integration of technology for tracking student progress.

- **Now** – One Full-time Retention Specialist, Online Career Coach, Allied Health, Two College and Career Center Specialists (CCS), Academic advisors
- **FY'25** – Expand 2 CCS to include Retention; Hire two more CCS/Retention Specialists, retention added to the services provided by the CCS
 - Getting Started at IECC video onboarding tutorial course revisions (complete after registration and before on-site orientation; Intro to

- o IECC; Intro to online learning at IECC; video components compliance pieces)
 - o On-site Orientation
 - o Pathways to Success – 1st semester two credit hour course; goal is engagement.
 - o Leadership Development – 2nd semester two credit hour course like Pathways but with a leadership focus
- **FY '26-'28** - Allocate physical space on each Campus for a Retention/College and Career Center to include meeting rooms, and resource library,
 - o Alumni pancake breakfast meet and greet on the first day of school, divided by meta-majors.
 - o Campus events schedule sent to students who have applied.
 - o Class visit schedule developed for Spring and Summer
- **FY '29** - Invest in technology and systems to support career assessments, job matching, and resource sharing; implement a centralized database to track student progress, interests, and career outcomes.
 - o Honors Program/Advanced Leadership Program
- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Retention rates compared to previous years
 - Persistence rates compared to previous semester
 - Increase in utilization of retention services such as career coaching, TutorMe
 - Feedback from students on the effectiveness of retention initiatives
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Achieving a target persistence rate of 70% for degree-seeking students over the next five years
 - Achieving a target retention rate of 70% for degree-seeking students over the next five years
 - Positive feedback from students regarding the impact of retention initiatives on their academic experience
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Regular assessment of retention program effectiveness through surveys and focus groups
 - Adjustment of retention strategies based on feedback and data analysis
 - Investment in additional staff and resources as needed to enhance retention efforts
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** Retention student data, course placement data, IECC staff list showing increased retention coordinators and, training attendance logs, Mentoring student count and meeting records, office created for Retention/College and Careers
- **Evidence of Success:** Students are provided with increased support and services needed to improve retention and success rates at IECC.

b. College & Career Services

Career counseling services are expanded to facilitate academic and career exploration, focusing on addressing individual preferences and career

pathways. Career assessment inventories, workshops, and transfer services are provided to guide students through academic and career decisions, ensuring equitable access to transfer opportunities and resources.

- Career Counseling provides a one-on-one opportunity to meet with a counselor.
 - A career counselor can help students:
 - Discover personal traits and work preferences.
 - Relate traits and preferences to IECC Pathways
 - Learn about career resources and options.
 - Understand the actions needed to accomplish the student's goals.
 - Overcome obstacles and develop a plan.
- Career Assessments
 - Career assessment inventories are effective academic and career exploration tools. Based on self-reports, they can provide insight into how individuals function using an unbiased, factual representation.
 - All career inventory referrals and interpretations are part of the career counseling process. There are various fees associated with career assessment inventories.
- Career Exploration Workshops
 - Career workshops offer directions on life and career planning. They can provide valuable information for those seeking help with career decision-making.
 - Offered throughout the year, workshops cover various career-related topics and guidance to integrate personal traits with career information.
 - There may be a fee charged for workshops.
- Transfer Services
 - Transfer Options – in coordination with the academic plan created with the student's academic advisor, career counselors can help students navigate the number of transfer options available.
 - Transfer Partnerships – Career counselors help students understand the Illinois Articulation Initiative and articulation agreements between IECC and other institutions that will facilitate a smooth transfer of IECC students.
 - Transfer Events – Organize transfer planning workshops and information sessions, coordinate transfer fairs with visiting colleges and universities, and schedule field trips to nearby colleges and universities.
 - Navigating – Issues at IECC, referral to campus and community services, scholarships, FA, etc.
- **Now** – Online Career Coach, Allied Health 10 CCS, Transfer Planning on the website with current affiliation agreements, academic advisors
- **FY'25** – Market/public information career coach, tracking usage of the online service, have 2 Allied Health CCS expand services to other students; add two

- more CCS; incorporate retention into the services provided by the CCS; 1 workshop on each campus each semester (resume writing, job interviewing)
- **FY '26** - Allocate physical space on each Campus for a Retention/College and Career Center to include meeting rooms, and a resource library. 4 Networking events with the Chamber of Commerce on campus, two seminars; establish a dedicated link on the IECC website for the College and Career Center; provide online resources, virtual advising, and job portals; develop a marketing and outreach strategy to inform students about the services offered; utilize social media, campus events, and classroom presentations.
 - **FY' 27** – Train existing staff at each Center; four synchronous seminars; Forge partnerships with local employers, industry associations, and community organizations; collaborate with alumni for mentorship programs.
 - **FY '29** - Invest in technology and systems to support career assessments, job matching, and resource sharing; implement a centralized database to track student progress, interests, and career outcomes.
 - **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Number of students utilizing career counseling services
 - Percentage of students satisfied with career exploration workshops and transfer services.
 - Increase in transfer rates to 4-year institutions.
 - Increase in job placements post-graduation/completion.
 - **Success Criteria:**
 - Achieve a target increase in the utilization of career counseling services.
 - Positive feedback from students regarding the effectiveness of career exploration workshops
 - **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Continuous evaluation of career counseling effectiveness and adjustment of services based on student feedback.
 - Expansion of career exploration workshop offerings based on student needs and interests.
 - Strengthening partnerships with 4-year institutions to improve transfer opportunities for students.
 - **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** Career Assessments completed by students, training logs, implementation and use of centralized student tracking system; course placement data; increased college and career specialist on IECC staff; course completion data; logs for career assessments completed.
 - **Evidence of Success:** Students are more confident in their career path and continue to 4-year college or workforce in their area of choice.

c. Student Code of Conduct

- **FY '25** -Revise student code of conduct to incorporate new Dean of Students
 - Incorporate the athletic code of conduct – 1 instead of 2
 - Review for inclusive/non-biased language
- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Revision Status of the SCC

- Feedback from students and staff regarding inclusivity and clarity of language
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Complete revisions to incorporate new Dean of Students position and inclusive language.
 - Positive feedback from stakeholders on the revised SCC
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** Implementation of new code of conduct.
- **Evidence of Success:** IECC Code of Conduct provides inclusive practices for all student populations.

d. Housing

IECC collaborates with housing partners to ensure equitable access to student housing options, particularly emphasizing efforts to address justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations.

- **FY'25** – work with existing housing partners on affiliation agreements to ensure Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- **FY'26** – increasing student housing opportunities through expanded affiliation agreements.
- **FY'27**--increasing student housing opportunities through expanded affiliation agreements.
- **FY'28**--increasing student housing opportunities through expanded affiliation agreements.
- **FY'29** – increasing student housing opportunities through expanded affiliation agreements.

- **Measurement Criteria:**

- Number of students utilizing housing options
- Satisfaction rates of students with housing arrangements
- Assessment of equity and inclusivity within housing partnerships

- **Success Criteria:**

- Increase in the availability of affordable and inclusive housing options
- Positive feedback from students regarding housing options

- **Improvement Strategies:**

- Collaboration with housing partners to address any equity gaps in housing options
- Regular assessment of student satisfaction with housing services and adjustment of partnerships as needed

- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** number of affiliated housing agreements in place, number of students living in campus affiliated housing

- **Evidence of Success:** Safe, affordable housing for students to eliminate the housing barrier to promote success at the college level

e. Meal Plans/Food Services

Evaluation and enhancement of food services and meal plans aim to ensure affordability, accessibility, and diversity of food options across all campuses, addressing students' basic needs.

- **FY'25** – Evaluate food services and meal plans on each campus for usage (food sampling event), Costs, and usage patterns; meal plans work for all food/beverage services across all campuses.
- **FY '26-'29** – Increase food services (hours of operation) on each campus; increase food variety on each campus; increase healthy food options on each campus.
- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Usage patterns and satisfaction rates of meal plans and food services
 - Diversity and affordability of food options available
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Increase in usage of meal plans and food services across campuses.
 - Positive feedback from students regarding the variety and affordability of food options
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Regular assessment of food service usage and feedback collected from students.
 - Expansion of food options to include more diverse and healthy options based on student preferences.
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** Food service hours of operation posted, menu items available at each campus location, number.
- **Evidence of Success:** The elimination of food insecurity as a barrier to success for students at IECC.

f. Transportation

IECC evaluates and expands transportation options, including partnerships with mass transit services, to enhance student accessibility across campuses, affiliated housing locations, and the surrounding rural communities.

- **FY '25** – Evaluate the use of public transportation/RIDES mass transit by student/faculty/staff on each campus; public information/marketing of RIDES public transportation; transportation from primary campuses to satellite campuses.
- **FY '26** – Increase our partnership options with RIDES mass transit # of routes, student housing, and routes to shopping/dining in each community.
- **FY '27** – Increase our partnership options with RIDES mass transit to include monthly transportation bills on the IECC student bills- does financial aid apply to transportation? public information/marketing on RIDES options for students.
- **FY '28** – As affiliated housing options are increased, Increase our partnership options with RIDES mass transit # of routes, routes to student housing, and routes to shopping/dining in each community.
- **FY '29** – As affiliated housing options are increased, Increase our partnership options with RIDES mass transit # of routes, routes to student housing, and routes to shopping/dining in each community.
- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Usage rates of transportation options
 - Accessibility and coverage of transportation routes
 - Feedback from students on transportation services
- **Success Criteria:**

- Increase the availability and accessibility of transportation options.
- Positive feedback from students regarding the convenience and reliability of transportation service.
- **Improvement Strategies**
 - Collaboration with transit services to expand routes and improve service frequency.
 - Regular assessment of transportation needs and adjustments to routes based on student feedback.
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** number of partnerships agreements in place with public transportation, number of routes and stops in place through affiliated transportation agreements; number of IECC students using transportation services through these agreements.
- **Evidence of Success:** Transportation is no longer a barrier for students to meet basic needs, live independently and thrive in the college setting.

g. Disability Support Services

Efforts to increase awareness and accessibility of Disability Support Services include faculty/staff training, physical facility evaluations, and ongoing updates to ensure compliance with ADA standards.

- **FY '25** – Increase public information/marketing about DSS on IECC, process, and location in the Learning Common; increase education for faculty/staff; website updates; AHEAD training; and Head Start training.
- **FY'26** – Awareness campaigns and faculty staff training; Evaluate physical facilities for ADA compliance.
- **FY'27** - Awareness campaigns and faculty staff training; address ADA compliance needs on physical facilities.
- **FY'27** - Awareness campaigns and faculty staff training; address ADA compliance needs on physical facilities.
- **FY'28** - Awareness campaigns and faculty staff training; address ADA compliance needs on physical facilities.
- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Participation rates in disability support services
 - Accessibility of physical facilities and resources
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Increase in utilization of disability support services.
 - Positive feedback from students and staff regarding accessibility and effectiveness of services
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Ongoing evaluation of physical facilities for ADA compliance and implementation of necessary improvements
 - Continuous training for faculty and staff to ensure awareness and understanding of disability support needs.
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** training logs, awareness campaign materials and dates distributed, student accommodations reports.
- **Evidence of Success:** All students have equitable access to a college education regardless of having a disability.

h. Mental Health

IECC prioritizes mental health support through comprehensive awareness campaigns, peer support initiatives, wellness fairs, and increased partnerships with community mental health agencies, ensuring access to mental health resources and services for all students.

- **FY '25-** increase public information/marketing on mental health issues, especially targeting times of high stress for IECC students and where to get support; evaluate mental health supports needed on campus to meet the needs of students; increase linkage agreements with community mental health agencies to meet the needs of IECC students; grow membership for peer support clubs (Active Minds) on campuses; "Counselor Chats" begin quarterly to provide mental health education in a small group setting to students interested; "Let's Talk" drop-in consultations with counselor begin at least once a semester on each campus;
- **FY'26-** more formal mental health awareness campaigns on campuses, especially targeting times of high stress for IECC students; peer support clubs run mental health awareness campaigns in addition to at least one self-care workshop/day on campus per semester for students; continue to increase linkage agreements with community mental health agencies; IECC hosts wellness fair once a year; at least one, student support group is started on highest topic of need among student body; "Counselor Chats" continue quarterly to provide mental health education in a small group setting to students interested; "Let's Talk" drop-in consultations with counselors increase to quarterly on each campus.
- **FY '27-** continue mental health awareness campaigns; peer support clubs continue with campaigns; peer support clubs host self-care workshops/day quarter on campus for students and faculty; IECC continues to host wellness fair once a year; student support groups increase to two topics of need; increase in services provided by community mental health agencies within linkage agreements: "Counselor Chats" continue quarterly to provide mental health education in a small group setting to students interested; "Let's Talk" drop-in consultation continue quarterly
- **FY '28--** continue mental health awareness campaigns; peer support clubs continue with campaigns; peer support clubs host self-care workshops/day quarter on campus for students and faculty; IECC continues to host wellness fair once a year; student support groups increase to three topics of need; increase in services provided by community mental health agencies within linkage agreements; "Counselor Chats" continue quarterly to provide mental health education in a small group setting to students interested; continue "Let's Talk" consultations if indicated
- **FY' 29--** continue mental health awareness campaigns; peer support clubs continue with campaigns; peer support clubs host self-care workshops/day quarter on campus for students and faculty; IECC continues to host wellness fair once a year; student support groups increase to four topics of need if indicated; increase in services provided by community mental health agencies within linkage agreements;

“Counselor Chats” continue quarterly to provide mental health education in a small group setting to students interested; continue “Let’s Talk” consultations if indicated

- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Participation rates in mental health awareness campaigns and support programs
 - Feedback from students on the effectiveness of mental health initiatives
 - Assessment of mental health resources and services provided.
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Increase in participation rates in mental health programs and workshops.
 - Positive feedback from students regarding the impact of mental health initiatives on their well-being
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Regular assessment of mental health needs and adjustments of support services based on student feedback.
 - Expansion of mental health resources and partnerships with community agencies to meet growing demand.
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** group sign in sheets, “Counselor Chats” and “Let’s Talk” consultation logs, number of linkage agreements in place and services on each, wellness fair dates and marketing materials, peer support meeting dates and sign in sheets, workshop registration and sign in sheets; annual IECC Health and Wellness survey.
- **Evidence of Success:** IECC students report increased awareness and less stigma of mental health issues on campus. IECC students are engaged in mental health support services provided on campus through “Counselor Chats,” “Let’s Talk” Consultation and peer support activities._

i. TRIO Student Support Services (SSS)

TRIO Student Support Services is a 100% federally funded program that provides academic development and assists students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. The goal of SSS is to increase college retention and graduation rates of its participants and to help students make the transition from one academic level of higher education to the next. These goals are met through intense wrap-around services that include: Intrusive academic advising, Personal counseling, Workshops/trainings, Financial information and training (budgeting), Financial Aid assistance (assistance with Scholarships and FAFSA), Equipment loan, Printing services, Student supplies, Transfer assistance, College visits, Fall/Spring Cultural Trips, Career Counseling, Courses (GEN-1205, On Course to Student Success, GEN-1208, Career Explorations, GEN-1206, Financial Literacy), Team Building Leadership Training, Tutoring, Resume and portfolio building, Business etiquette/interviewing skills, Recognition Reception, and other services as needed.

- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Participation rate in TRIO programs and services

- Academic performance and retention rates of TRIO participants
- Feedback from TRIO participants on the effectiveness of support services
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Improvement in academic performance and retention rates among TRIO participants
 - Positive feedback from TRIO participants regarding the impact of support services on their success
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Continuous evaluation of TRIO program effectiveness and adjustment of services based on participant's feedback.
 - Expansion of resources and support services to meet the evolving needs of TRIO participants.
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** workshop sign in sheets, workshop/training date and topic logs, individual student meeting logs; TRIO Student Support Services grant Annual Performance Report; TRIO Student Support Exit Interviews; TRIO Student Success Plans completed for each student; college completion data; college acceptance data.
- **Evidence of Success:** Successful completion of 2-year college program at IECC for TRIO SSS participants. TRIO SSS participants increase transfer rates to a 4-year university.

j. International Program

The IECC International Program contributes to the diversity of the student body, adding perspectives and experiences from different cultures and backgrounds. The presence of international students promotes cultural awareness and understanding among the student body and faculty. The International Program offers opportunities for students to engage with global issues and enhance their educational experience, preparing them for an increasingly interconnected world. The International Program offers cultural adjustment support, and other specific support services tailored to the needs of international students. The program also offers Study Abroad programs fostering cross-cultural exchanges.

- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Enrollment rates of international students
 - Participation rates in cultural adjustment and support programs
 - Feedback from international students on their experience at IECC
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Increase in enrollment and retention rates of international students.
 - Positive feedback from international students regarding the support and resources available to them.
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Regular assessment of the needs of international students and adjustment of support programs based on feedback.
 - Expansion of cultural adjustment and support services to enhance the experience of international students.

- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** student enrollment data, student completion rates
- **Evidence of Success:**

k. Bookstore

One of the primary issues addressed by the equity plan is ensuring equitable access to resources for all students, including those from low-income backgrounds. Our campus bookstores contribute to this goal by offering affordable options for course materials, including textbooks and supplies. This involves initiatives such as textbook rental programs, used book sales, and digital textbook options, which can help reduce the financial burden on students.

- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Affordability of course materials compared to market prices.
 - Utilization rates of rental programs, used book sales, and digital textbook options.
 - Feedback from students regarding the accessibility and affordability of course materials.
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Increase in affordability and accessibility of course materials for students.
 - Positive feedback from students regarding the availability of affordable options at the bookstore
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Regular assessment of course material pricing and adjustment of rental and sales programs to ensure affordability.
 - Collaboration with faculty to explore open educational resources (OER) and other cost-saving alternatives.
- **Evaluation/Outcome measures:** logs for textbooks rentals and used book sales,
- **Evidence of Success:** Decreased average book costs to ensure equitable access for all students.

l. Learning Commons

The Learning Commons can ensure equitable access to resources and support services for all students. This involves providing accessible physical spaces, such as study rooms and computer labs. These spaces accommodate diverse learning needs, including those students with disabilities. The Learning Commons services to address the needs of historically underserved and underrepresented student populations includes academic supports such as tutoring programs, peer mentoring initiatives, and workshops focused on study skills and academic success strategies. By offering targeted support services, the Learning Commons can help close achievement gaps and improve academic outcomes for all students.

In keeping with the equity plan's focus on technological equity, the Learning Commons can provide access to technology resources and support services that facilitate digital literacy and proficiency among students. These resources include computer workstations with internet access, software applications, and technology training workshops aimed at bridging the digital divide and

empowering students to succeed in a technology-driven academic environment.

- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Utilization rates of learning commons resources and support services
 - Feedback from students on the effectiveness and accessibility of learning commons facilities
 - Academic performance and success rates of students utilizing learning commons services.
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Increase in utilization of learning commons resources and services.
 - Improvement in academic performance and success rates among students utilizing learning commons support.
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Continuous assessment of learning commons usage and adjustment of resources and services based on student needs.
 - Expansion of technology resources and digital literacy programs to support students in a technology-driven academic environment.
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** tutoring hours logs; workshop attendance logs, online tutoring service student usage report
- **Evidence of Success:** IECC students. Especially those student populations at risk, will be provided with increased academic support to facilitate success in college.

m. Food Pantry Programs

The food pantry programs on each IECC campus address food insecurity, a significant barrier to academic success for many students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. The community engagement fostered by the campus food pantries also serves to promote a sense of belonging and connection among students. The food pantry programs are integrated into student support services to provide holistic and comprehensive support to navigate students' academic and personal challenges.

- **FY'25** – Increase fresh, nutritious food offerings in each campus's food pantry.
- **FY '26** – Increase hours of operation to improve accessibility for students.
- **FY '27** – Increase options for specific dietary preferences to ensure equitable access to food resources.
- **FY '28** –
- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Usage rates of food pantry programs
 - Diversity and availability of food options provided.
 - Feedback from students on the effectiveness of and accessibility of food pantry programs
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Increase in utilization of food pantry programs.
 - Positive feedback from students regarding the diversity and availability of food options
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Regular assessment of food pantry usage and adjustment of offerings based on student needs and preferences.

- Collaboration with community partners to enhance food pantry resources and expand support.
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** Hours of operation posted for food programs show increase, logs for food stocked in food pantries at each campus.
- **Evidence of Success:** Equitable access to food for all students to eliminate this barrier to success in college.

n. Childcare

A lack of affordable childcare is one of the barriers to educational attainment academic success. IECC is working with community partners to improve access to affordable childcare for students and community members. Collaborative efforts with community partners have included financial support for students interested in early childhood education with a goal to increase the number of childcare workers in our communities and the building of childcare facilities.

o. Student Organizations

Student organizations can serve as a catalyst for change and champions for equity on our campuses at IECC. By promoting representation, education, advocacy, community building, collaboration, and leadership development among students who are engaged in equity-driven initiatives, student organizations can contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable campus environment where students can thrive.

- **District-wide student advisor board**
- **Measurement Criteria:**
 - Number of active student organizations
 - Participation rates in equity-driven initiatives and activities
 - Feedback from students on the impact of student organizations on campus climate and culture
- **Success Criteria:**
 - Increase in the number and engagement of student organizations focused on equity and inclusion.
 - Positive feedback from students regarding the role of student organizations in promoting a supportive campus environment.
- **Improvement Strategies:**
 - Promotion of existing student organizations focused on equity and inclusion.
 - Support for the formation of new student organizations centered on addressing equity gaps and promoting diversity.
- **Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** member roster for advisor council, meeting dates and sign in logs
- **Evidence of Success:** District-wide student advisor council has diverse representation of students from each campus with routine meetings being held and working on equity-driven initiatives.

Conclusion:

The Student Services portion of the IECC Equity Plan outlines the strategic framework to address equity gaps and support the success of historically underserved and underrepresented student populations at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges. By implementing targeted initiatives across the various service areas, IECC is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive campus environment where all students have the tools and resources needed to thrive academically and personally.

3. Diversity in Hiring

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Human Resources Department is working closely with the JEDI committee to foster equitable hiring processes and procedures. Recognizing the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) in hiring, District Administration has committed substantial resources to strengthen HR's efforts. In the upcoming fiscal year of 2025, HR will begin working to implement a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS). This system will track applicants' race, ethnicity, gender, visa status, disability, and veteran status. By tracking applicant demographics, HR aims to ensure that our employee composition mirrors the diversity of our applicant pool. In addition to the new HRIS, HR has introduced mandatory training for individuals serving on interview committees. This comprehensive training covers topics such as unconscious bias and methods to mitigate discriminatory practices in the hiring process. As data becomes available through the utilization of the new HRIS, the HR Department will collaborate closely with the JEDI committee to make well-informed, data-driven decisions.

D. Institution's approach to development of the equity plan

Fostering Change Through IECC JEDI Committee

Central to our commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges is the establishment of our JEDI Committee. Comprising a diverse and passionate mix of faculty, staff, and administration, this committee stands at the forefront of our efforts to champion DEIA principles within our institution. United by a shared vision of a more inclusive and equitable academic environment, the committee members bring forth a wealth of perspectives and experiences, reflecting the rich tapestry of our community. Their collaborative efforts drive initiatives, facilitate conversations, and implement strategies that address the unique challenges faced by our diverse student body and workforce.

Through the IECC JEDI Committee, we harness the collective wisdom and creativity of our community members, ensuring that the policies and practices we develop are not only comprehensive but also sensitive to the needs of every individual. By fostering open dialogue and embracing a spirit of mutual respect, this committee serves as a beacon guiding our institution towards a future where justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are not just ideals but lived experiences for all. Their dedication exemplifies our collective commitment to building a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive IECC for every member of our community.

Moving forward, IECC will include the Student Advisory Board to participate in refining of this equity plan, providing feedback as the voice of the student body, and help to ensure that concerns of the student body are addressed.

E. The relationship between this equity plan and other institutional plans.

In 2022, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges implemented a strategic engagement plan (SEP) to move our institution forward. It was decided that everyone at IECC is responsible for the strategy that would put IECC on the pathway to improvement and growth. *Forward Together* has four specific strategic pillars:

1. Transform lives through exceptional education and services
2. Foster excellence in faculty and staff
3. Cultivate and steward resources for strategic growth
4. Positively impact our local communities

In order to succeed in achieving these goals, IECC must include voices from not only administration, but faculty, staff, and students as well. IECC must be accountable. IECC must be transparent in its communication. IECC must hold true to its mission, vision, and values. It is important that all members of the IECC community feel valued, feel included, and feel a sense of belonging. Therefore, *Forward Together* must include efforts to improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility on each of our four campuses. Doing so helps to ensure that we transform lives, foster excellence, cultivate and steward resources, and positively impact the lives of everyone at IECC.

The IECC equity plan will be incorporated into the SEP through shared and unique goals. The Strategic Enrollment Planning Council (SEPC) will be responsible for listening to the voices of and the feedback from faculty, staff, students, and community members. The SEPC will oversee the approval, implementation, acceptance, and evolution of this equity plan, embedding it within the broader strategic plan to ensure it is given appropriate resources for success.

F. Institution's plan to solicit ongoing feedback and how information will be shared.

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) understands the importance of transparent communication and soliciting stakeholder feedback as we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all members of our community. To ensure accountability and continuous improvement in our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts, we intend to implement several strategies for soliciting feedback and sharing information with staff, students, faculty, and the broader community.

As a plan that is being written and intended to be enacted for Academic Year 2025, IECC will formally introduce our DEI plan to the faculty, staff, and students of IECC in the Fall 2024 semester in our orientations and back-to-school workshops. We will run several break-out groups introducing members of our community to the rationale and intended purpose of the DEI plan, key findings and strategies we have identified, and we will provide ample opportunity for feedback and discussion. Only after this feedback has

been received and incorporated (as appropriate) into our document will we present the DEI plan to the IECC Board of Trustees for acceptance. While we made every effort for our DEI task force to be cross-functional with hierarchical diversity, we believe it is important to seek and engage a wider cross-section of our community before the plan is finalized. These break-out groups will give us the opportunity to launch this important new initiative with broad understanding and buy-in.

Once our DEI plan has been accepted by the IECC Board of Trustees, we will put several measures in place to gauge our effectiveness, communicate our progress, and invite feedback from our stakeholders. Among these strategies will be:

1. Annual anonymous surveys focused on DEI initiatives and campus climate. Specifically, we will be seeking to measure and understand awareness, impact, and areas for growth. These qualitative surveys will be designed to capture nuanced feedback and will be distributed to students, faculty, staff, and Trustees.
2. IECC will host open forums and listening sessions (no less than twice annually) where members of the community can directly engage directly with DEI task force members and District leadership. These forums will provide a platform for two-way communication with participants being given the opportunity to share their thoughts, experiences, and suggestions.
3. Recognizing the importance of accessibility and convenience, IECC will establish dedicated feedback channels, including webpages, features in our District Newsletter, and dedicated DEI email addresses that will be monitored by task force members. These efforts will be another way to communicate the reasons and rationale behind our DEI plan and strategies, and to create vehicles through which individuals can submit feedback, concerns, or suggestions related to DEI initiatives in real time. These channels will be actively monitored, and responses will be provided promptly to ensure that all voices are heard and valued.
4. IECC will make meeting minutes, action plans, and relevant documents accessible to the community, promoting transparency and accountability in our efforts.

These simple strategies will undoubtedly evolve and improve as we move forward with implementation, but they will serve as a solid foundation for IECC to solicit ongoing feedback and to share information with faculty, staff, and students.