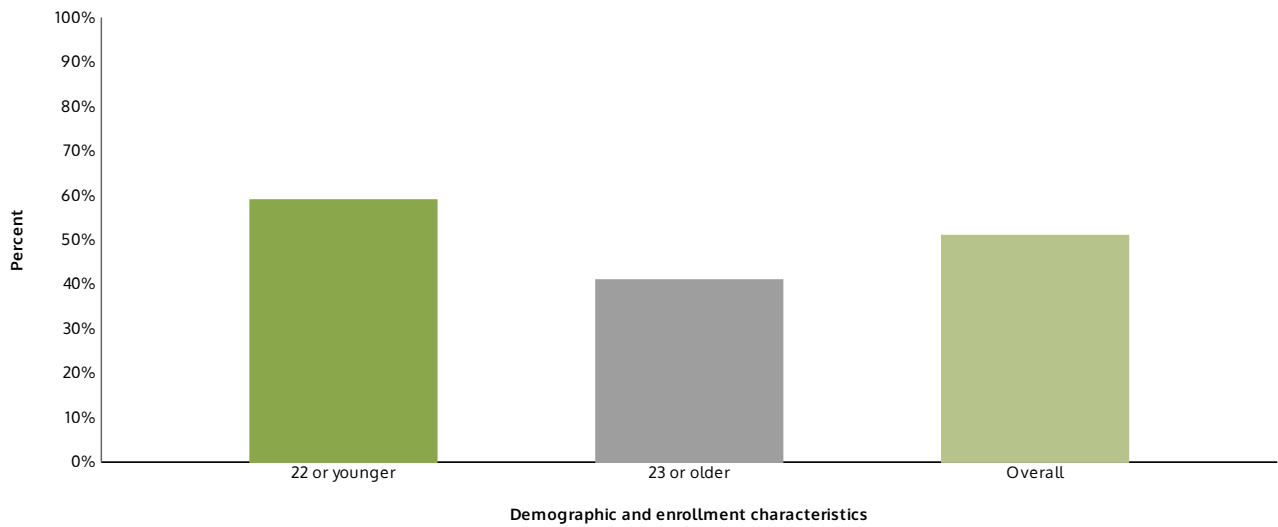


MOMENTUM

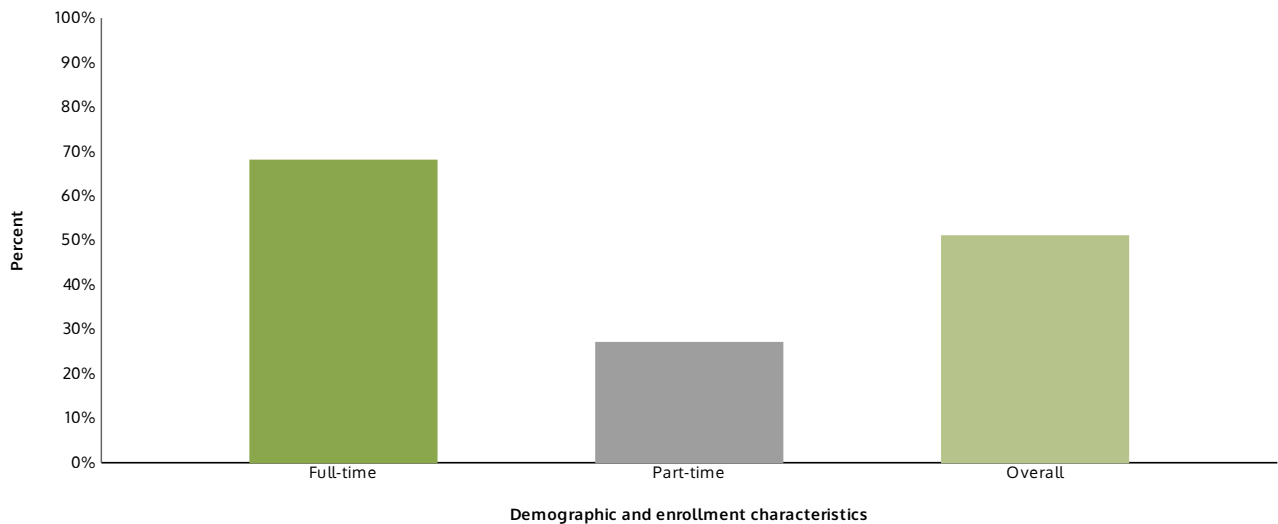
CREDITS EARNED WITHIN ONE YEAR: NORTH CAROLINA

Percentage of first-time degree-seeking North Carolina Community College students enrolled in fall 2004 who reached the one-year credit milestone

AGE



MIX OF FULL-TIME/PART-TIME ENROLLMENT



What Is Measured?

Percentage of students reaching first-year credit milestone: 24 credits for full-time students and 18 credits for part-time students

Who Is Counted?

First-time degree-seeking students who entered North Carolina Community Colleges in fall 2004

What It Tells Us

Among first-time degree-seeking North Carolina Community College students enrolled in fall 2004, about half (51 percent) reached a designated credit milestone within one year, which was 24 or more credits for students initially enrolled full time and 18 or more credits for students initially enrolled part time. Younger students were more likely than older students to reach the credit milestone (59 percent vs. 41 percent). Students initially enrolled full time were more than twice as likely to reach the credit milestone as students initially enrolled part time (68 percent vs. 27 percent).

Why It's Important

Researchers generally agree that students need to earn a certain number of credits during their first year to gain momentum toward completion and transfer. Although the probability of completing a certificate or degree increases almost linearly with the number of first-year credits completed (Offenstein et al., 2010, figure 11), the indicators in this measure specify a particular threshold number of credits in the first year. Community college students who earn at least 20 credits in their first year are more likely to complete a certificate or associate degree (Offenstein et al., 2010, figure 12) and to earn a bachelor's degree than those who do not (Adelman, 2005, table 42). Policies that encourage full-time and summer enrollment in the first year can facilitate early credit accumulation.

ABOUT THE DATA

Degree-seeking students: include students seeking associate degrees, certificates, or diplomas.

Data were obtained from Curriculum registration, Progress, and Financial Aid Report files for the fall 2004 cohort. Enrollment status was determined at the time of fall registration.

DATA SOURCE

North Carolina Community College System, Office of the President. (2009, September 11). *Data trends and briefings*.