



Accelerating Opportunity

**A Portrait of Students and Their Program Experiences
from the 2014 Student Survey**

Shayne Spaulding

Ananda Martin-Caughey

March 2015



ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

Contents

Highlights from the 2014 Accelerating Opportunity Student Survey	iv
Introduction	1
The Accelerating Opportunity Evaluation	3
About This Report	3
Interpreting the Survey Results	4
State Context	6
Who Are Accelerating Opportunity Students?	7
Basic Demographics	7
Family and Household Composition	9
Work and Income	11
Government Assistance	11
Education and Educational Aspirations	12
Why Do Students Choose to Enroll in AO?	15
What Instruction and Academic Support Did Students Receive?	17
Delivery of Instruction and Learning	17
Exposure to Employers	19
Course Content	20
Integrated Instruction through Team Teaching	21
Tutoring	22
What Other Support Did Students Receive?	22
How Much Financial Assistance Did Students Receive?	25
How Satisfied Were Students with AO?	28
Conclusion	31
Notes	34
References	36
Statement of Independence	37

Highlights from the 2014 Accelerating Opportunity Student Survey

- **Students expressed high levels of satisfaction with the program.** Almost 90 percent of students felt the program prepared them adequately or very well for work in their field of training or for further education. Close to half of students said the program exceeded their expectations, and an additional 47 percent said the program met their expectations.
- **Accelerating Opportunity (AO) served nontraditional students.** Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents were age 25 or older. More than half of survey respondents had dependent children, and almost a quarter were single parents. In addition, more than half of respondents were working while enrolled in AO, mostly in low-paying jobs for more than 30 hours a week. Finally, almost half of survey respondents were receiving government assistance aside from student financial aid, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.
- **Despite the initial focus on serving individuals who lacked high school credentials, most survey respondents had a high school degree or its equivalent.** Nearly 90 percent of students surveyed had obtained a high school credential. Although this may have been because of changes in Pell policy that limited receipt to those with such credentials, only 35 percent reported receiving Pell grant assistance for AO.
- **Students reported that their classes focused more on job-related skills than on basic skills.** About 64 percent of students reported spending time on content related to building knowledge and skills for a job, compared with 52 percent who said coursework included instruction to improve their reading, writing, and/or math skills. Reflecting the job skills focus, programs often included some form of hands-on learning, and 60 percent of students reported some form of employer exposure through training at a job site, class visits, or meetings. Although basic skills content was supposed to be delivered through integrated instruction, where an adult education and a content instructor teach the material together in the same classroom, more than a quarter of students did not report ever being in a team-taught class. Still, most students experienced team teaching frequently. Less than half of the respondents received tutoring. Students widely expressed the desire for more team teaching and tutoring.
- **Although most students reported receiving financial or nonfinancial support while in the program, a majority had to pay for some part of the program, and counseling focused on academic and employment issues.** Almost three-quarters of respondents received some type of advising from staff members, primarily related to academic issues and job issues. Very few students received financial or personal advising or assistance with child care, transportation, and emergencies. Sixty-eight percent of students surveyed had to pay for some part of the program, such as uniforms, books, tuition, or other fees.

Introduction

In 2011, Accelerating Opportunity (AO) was launched to increase the capabilities of adults with low basic skills so they qualify for well-paying jobs and rewarding careers. AO focuses on accelerating access to community college occupational credentials among students with low academic skills who otherwise would languish in adult basic education or development education courses and who often fail to complete, or even enroll in, degree and certificate programs.¹

Across the nation, too many students leave high school without the skills necessary to succeed in college and the workplace. By one estimate, approximately 59 percent of first-time community college students are referred to developmental math courses and 33 percent are referred to developmental reading upon enrollment (Bailey, Jeong, and Cho 2010). The need for developmental education reflects the low basic skills of many Americans, with nearly one in three adults displaying low levels of numeracy and one in six showing low levels of literacy (OECD 2013). Whereas some with low basic skills are among the 12 percent of adults who lack a high school diploma or its equivalent,² many have earned a high school credential but lack the skills necessary to succeed in college and careers, increasing their risk of unemployment, low wages, and poverty (OECD 2013). Adults who fail to complete high school may seek to improve their career prospects by enrolling in General Education Development (GED) or other high school equivalency programs; however, education and labor market outcomes for those who pass the GED are generally no better than for those without a high school credential (Heckman and Kautz 2014). A key issue is the lack of connection between GED programs and postsecondary education or the skills needed in the labor market. For those who enroll in community colleges, developmental education programs often serve as a barrier to further educational progress, because students either get stuck there or get discouraged and drop out (Bailey and Cho 2010). Only about 20 percent of first-time students at public community colleges earn their degrees within three years.²

Several initiatives in recent years, including Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) Program and the Breaking Through initiative, have aimed to address these challenges and transform the delivery of community college programs to better meet the needs of students with low basic skills.⁴ AO builds on these approaches, funding states and community colleges to allow students to access professional/technical, for-credit college programs at the same time that they are working to improve their basic skills, thereby accelerating the time it takes to obtain a credential. This is an alternative to the traditional approach of requiring students to complete developmental coursework before enrolling in for-credit programs. The AO model includes the following key features:

- **for-credit career pathways** in which students can earn valued occupational credentials, which articulate to longer-term credit and degree programs and respond to employer demand;
- **contextualized and integrated learning**, delivered through a team-teaching model where a career and technical education (CTE) instructor and a basic skills instructor work together in the same classroom; and
- **enhanced support services**, such as career coaching and assistance with child care and transportation, to help students navigate college and the complexity of their personal lives, while also preparing for entry into the world of work.

Although the goal of AO was to transform community college programs, it was not expected that these elements of the model would be implemented uniformly across all states and participating colleges. Rather, targets were set by AO’s administrators and by states, acknowledging that adoption of these new approaches would be gradual and adapted to each college’s particular context.

Key Accelerating Opportunity Design Elements: “Nonnegotiable” Aspects of the AO Model

- Two or more integrated career pathways in at least eight colleges
- Acceleration strategies
- Academic and social student support (e.g., tutoring, child care, transportation)
- Dual-enrollment strategies (e.g. paired courses, I-BEST or I-BEST-like approaches)
- Marketable, stackable, credit-bearing certificates and degrees
- Award of some college-level professional/technical credits
- Partnerships with workforce investment boards and employers
- Evidence of strong local demand for selected pathways

In 2012, five states (Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, and North Carolina) received three-year implementation grants and, in the first two years of implementation, 5,244 students in these states had

started on a pathway and enrolled in AO programs at participating colleges.⁵ When students complete their one- to two-semester (approximately 12-credit) program, it is expected that they will continue their education, find a job, or do both. Using data from a survey of AO students conducted in spring 2014, this report expands knowledge of the initiative by presenting a profile of students enrolled in the program, their experiences with AO-related features, and their perceptions of AO.

The Accelerating Opportunity Evaluation

The Urban Institute, in partnership with the Aspen Institute and George Washington University, is conducting the evaluation of the AO initiative. The evaluation is composed of three interrelated components: an impact study that uses a comparison group design, a cost-benefit analysis, and an implementation study. This report, a key component of the implementation study, provides new data on the characteristics, perceptions, and, program experiences of AO students, adding to the findings from college surveys included in the first-year and second-year implementation reports (**Anderson et al. 2014; Anderson et al. 2015**).

About This Report

This report is based on the responses of 444 students to a survey of all students currently participating in the AO evaluation in Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, and Louisiana.⁶ The student survey was designed to provide information on students and their experiences in the program to supplement information collected through administrative data, site visits, site conference calls, and the first- and second-year college surveys.

The goals of the survey were as follows:

1. to better understand the students enrolled in AO, including their pre-program experiences, work history, and family composition;
2. to understand the services received by AO students, including the amount/intensity of services received, with a goal of looking at the relationship between program experiences and student outcomes; and
3. to get AO students' perspectives on the program, their motivations for joining the program, and information on whether the program is meeting their expectations and needs.

Because the survey did not collect data on comparison group members, it is not possible to determine whether the program has exerted effects on student outcomes. However, the survey provides the opportunity to hear directly from students, not only to get their perspective on AO, but also to confirm and provide context for findings from the broader evaluation. Forthcoming reports will provide the results of the impact study, which is a quasi-experimental analysis of the effectiveness of the AO model based on its impact on educational and labor market outcomes of AO participants.

The evaluation team asked all 46 participating colleges in the four states to disseminate the online survey to students enrolled in AO during spring semester 2014.⁷ The survey was sent to 1,575 AO students.⁸ Of those, 444 students from 39 colleges submitted complete responses to the survey, a 28 percent response rate. A subsequent survey will be disseminated in spring 2015 to learn about student respondents' experiences after AO.

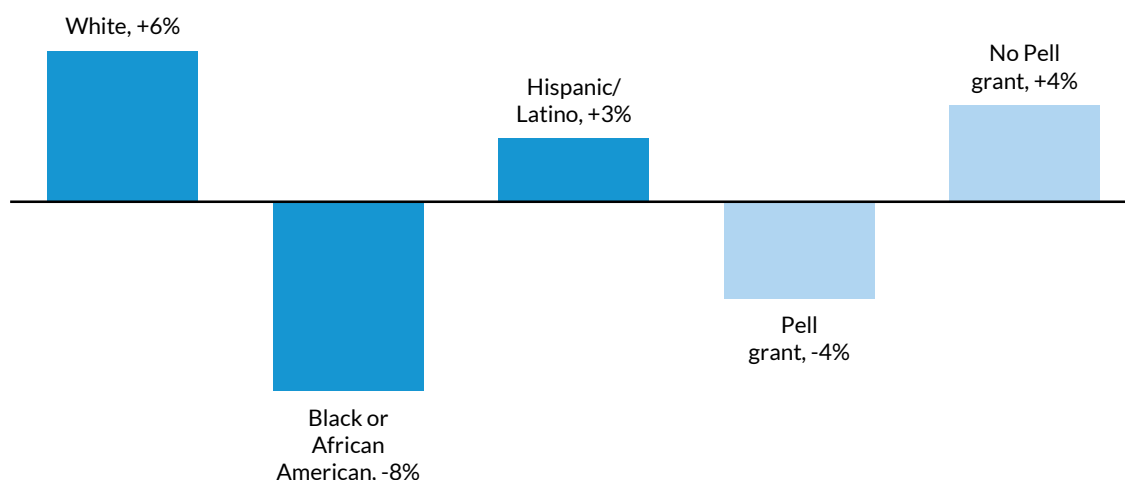
Interpreting the Survey Results

The evaluation team previously administered a survey to the AO colleges that included questions about the overall student population for the second year of implementation.⁹ Using the results of the second-year college survey as a benchmark, the student survey sample appears fairly representative of the AO population at large, with a few minor exceptions. Student characteristics are highly comparable in age and gender, with almost the exact same proportion of men and women among survey respondents and the overall AO population reported by the colleges. Race and ethnicity are also similar, although the student survey respondents include a somewhat higher proportion of white students (52 percent compared with 46 percent) and Hispanic/Latino students (22 percent compared with 19 percent) and a somewhat lower proportion of black or African American students (21 percent compared with 29 percent) than reported by the colleges (figure 1). The differences between the other race and ethnicity categories are negligible.

The proportion of student survey respondents who reported having a high school diploma or having passed the GED or other equivalency test (87 percent) is equal to the proportion reported on the second-year college survey. However, some of the student survey respondents could have earned their high school credential after starting AO, which means the number with a credential at enrollment might be lower than reported in the college survey. Finally, the proportion of survey respondents who reported receiving a Pell or other federal grant (35 percent) is slightly lower than the proportion among all AO students according to the second-year college survey (39 percent). The difference between students' employment status is very minor.

FIGURE 1

Personal Characteristics of Student Survey Respondents Relative to the AO Population as Reported in the Second-Year College Survey



Sources: Second-year AO college survey and 2014 AO student survey.

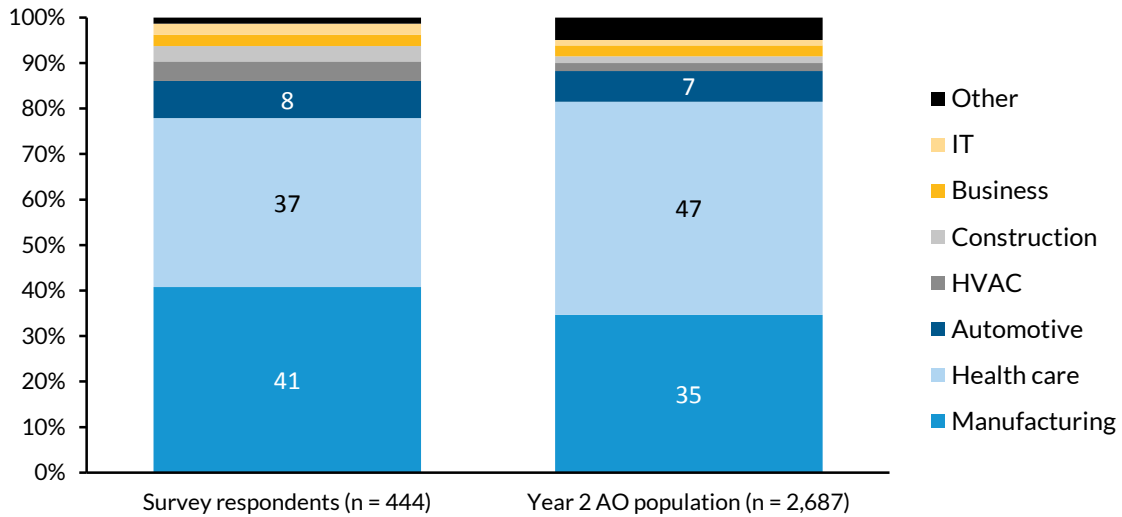
Notes: Differentials are calculated by subtracting the proportion reported on the second-year college survey from the proportion of student survey respondents for each measure. For example, the proportion of white survey respondents is 6 percentage points higher than the proportion of white students reported in the second-year college survey. Differentials of less than 2 percentage points are not reported.

In addition, the vast majority of student survey respondents were in pathways for health care or manufacturing, consistent with the college survey results. However, somewhat higher proportions of student survey respondents were in manufacturing, automotive, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), construction, and IT (information technology) than reported in the college survey, which showed slightly higher proportions of students in health care and other occupational areas, such as education and maintenance (figure 2).

Very few or no AO students responded from about half the colleges, including a large college in Illinois. Sometimes this was because of low response rates, and sometimes this was because very few students were enrolled at a particular college. The response rate was highest in Illinois (42 percent) and lowest in Kansas (20 percent). The survey was fielded online and was approximately 15 to 20 minutes long. Students with low computer literacy or the lowest basic skills may have found the survey challenging to complete, although efforts were made to ensure that the survey was targeted at the appropriate reading level and that students had access to computers for completing the survey. In addition, some results may be influenced by the possibility that those who did not complete the survey

were unsatisfied with components of the program at a higher than average level. Given those potential issues and differences between the composition of the AO student population and the population of survey respondents, estimates drawn from the student survey may be biased.

FIGURE 2
Pathway Occupational Areas of Survey Respondents versus Overall AO Population



Sources: Second-year AO college survey and 2014 AO student survey.

Notes: Louisiana began the initiative after the other states, so the second year refers to a different set of semesters: spring, summer, and fall 2013 for Illinois, Kansas, and Kentucky and fall 2013, spring 2014, and summer 2014 for Louisiana. HVAC= heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; IT = information technology.

State Context

To interpret the survey results, it is helpful to understand the local context and variation across the four states that fielded the student survey. The states faced similar successes and challenges in the implementation of the AO model, which may have affected students’ experiences in the program. The first- and second-year AO implementation reports highlight the following contextual factors:

- The states all benefited from previous initiatives involving adult education and community college systems that laid a foundation for the successful implementation of AO.
- Nearly all participating colleges implemented at least two pathway programs by the end of the first year.

- The elimination of the Pell grant's Ability to Benefit provision meant that students without high school credentials could not receive federal funding to participate in AO, leading states to expand the target population of the program to include a greater proportion of students with high school credentials.¹⁰
- Most colleges have faced challenges in effectively providing support services to AO students.
- Most colleges encountered initial skepticism from instructors regarding the team-teaching model, but there have been shifts toward more support of this approach over time.

Although the four states had some similar circumstances, states differed in their local economic context, funding sources and partners, strategies for developing program elements, buy-in by various stakeholders, and characteristics of the students targeted for the program. Those issues are explored in substantial detail in the first-year implementation report and the second-year implementation report (Anderson et al. 2014, Anderson et al. 2015). Those reports also contain results of the surveys of AO colleges.

Who Are Accelerating Opportunity Students?

The AO student survey further illuminates the background and characteristics of AO students by providing data not available in administrative records. Generally, the survey reveals a diverse population and one that is nontraditional in various respects. Survey respondents tended not to be traditional-age college students and included a high proportion who were responsible for dependent children. Most respondents reported that they were working, and about one-third said they were receiving some type of public assistance. It was the aim of the AO initiative to meet the diverse needs of this population and to improve the way community colleges structure programs for these nontraditional learners.

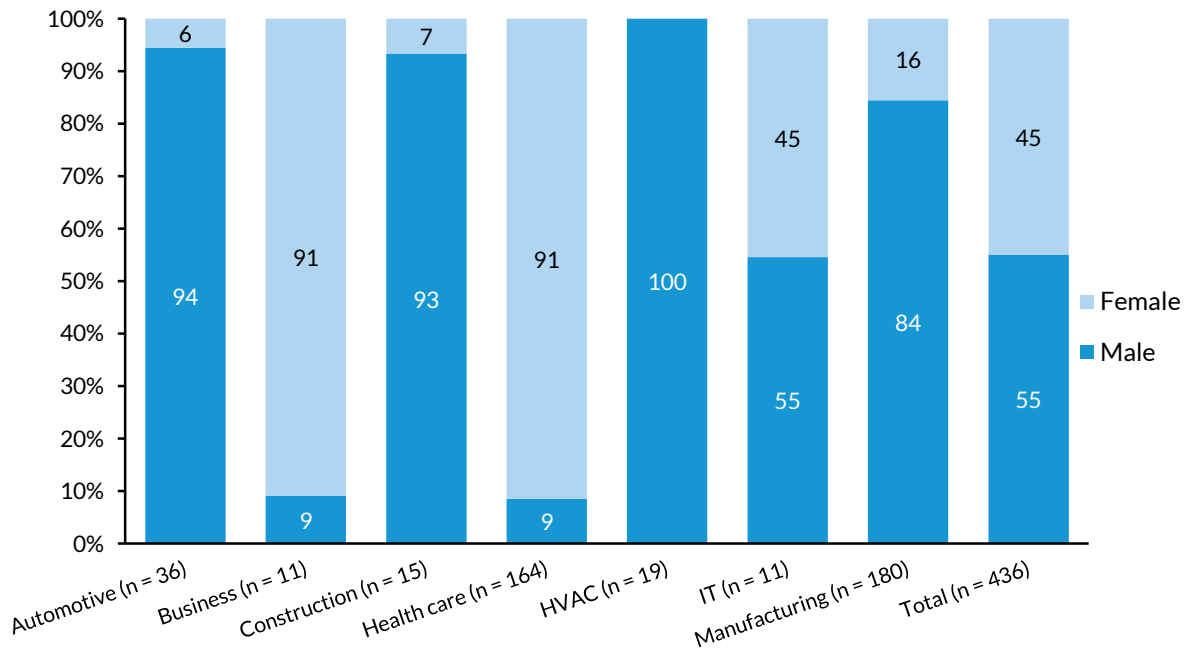
Basic Demographics

Most survey respondents in spring semester 2014 were not traditional college-age students. Respondents were almost evenly split by gender, with 55 percent male and 45 percent female.¹¹ However, survey respondents tended to cluster into pathway occupational areas by gender, with automotive, construction, HVAC, and manufacturing pathways heavily male and business and health

care pathways heavily female (figure 3). More than one-third of survey respondents—36 percent—were traditional-age college students (ages 18 to 24). Fifty-four percent were between 25 and 44 years old, and 10 percent were age 45 or older. Several respondents mentioned that they felt that the program was suitably designed for a range of student ages and that older students received the support they needed from instructors.

“This program gave me the support I needed. As someone who has been out of high school for many years, I was unsure if I could do the class work. ... It was comforting to know I had someone available at all times.”

FIGURE 3
Gender of AO Participants by Pathway Occupational Area



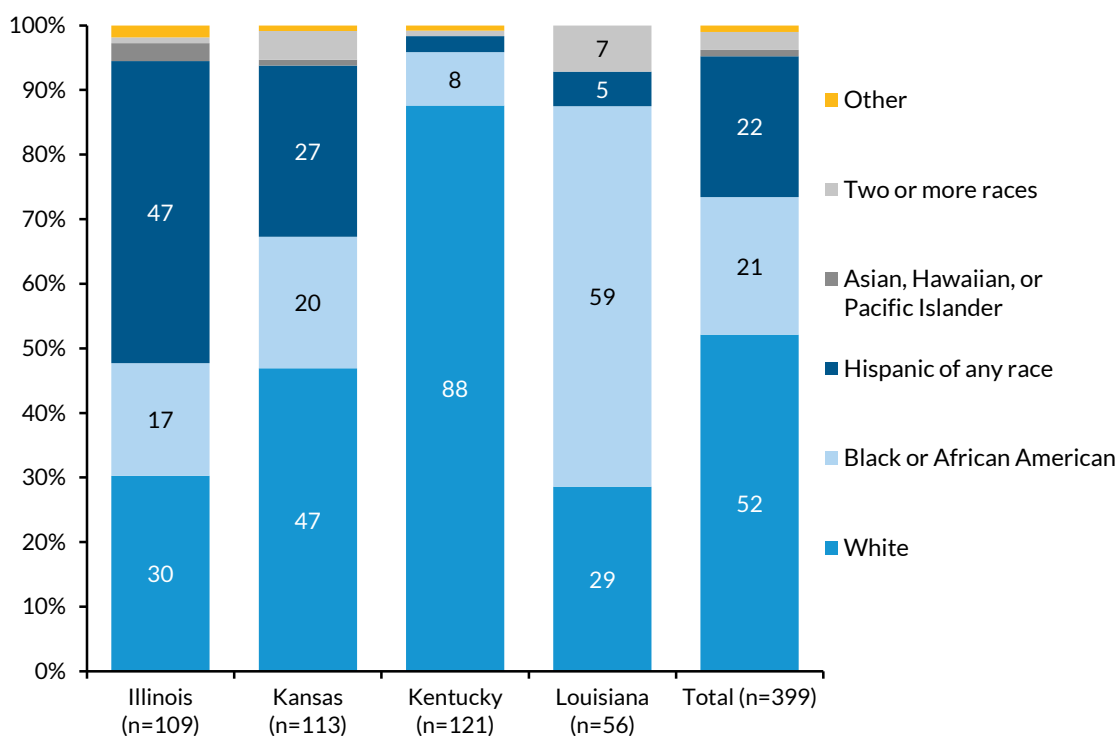
Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Notes: In this figure and subsequent figures, percentages are calculated using the total number of students who provided an answer to the question. HVAC = heading, ventilation, and air conditioning; IT = information technology.

More than half of the AO survey respondents were white, 21 percent were black or African American, 21 percent were black or African American, and 22 percent were Hispanic of any race (figure 4). The patterns differed by state. Kentucky respondents included a high proportion of white students, while Louisiana's AO respondents were majority black or African American. Hispanic student respondents were most common in Illinois. Only 16 percent of students reported being born outside the United States, although the foreign-born population was higher in Illinois than in the other states. The absence of respondents from a large college in Illinois suggests that minority and foreign-born students may be underrepresented among survey respondents.

FIGURE 4

Race of AO Participants by State



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

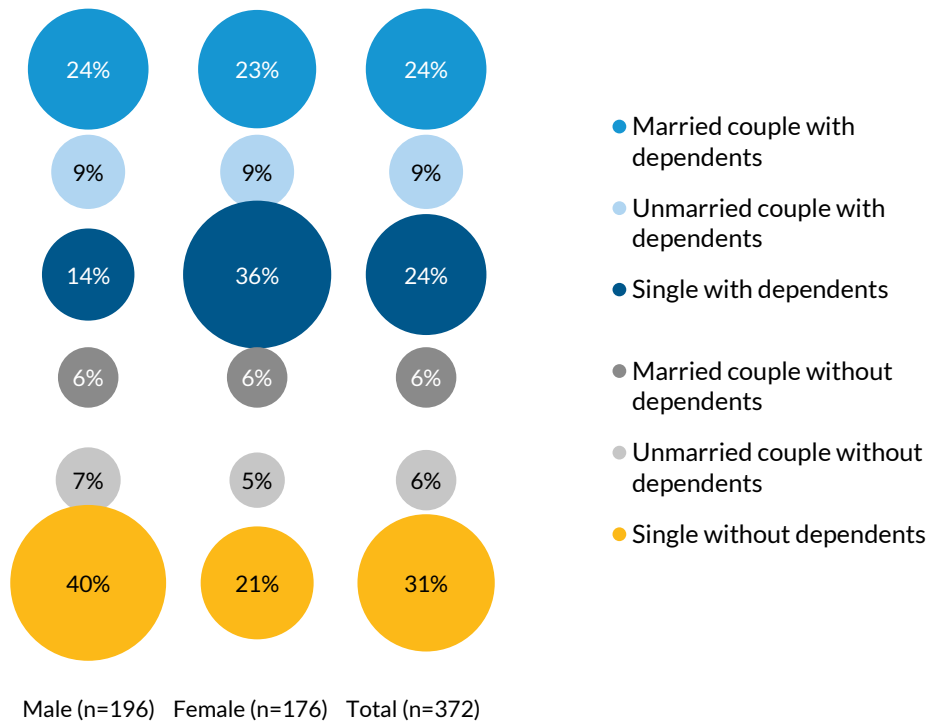
Family and Household Composition

The survey asked for detailed information about AO students' family and household composition. Thirty-eight percent of students surveyed said they lived by themselves or with one other person, while the remaining 62 percent lived with two or more people. Thirty percent were married, 53 percent had

never married, and the rest had been previously married. Forty-two percent lived with a spouse or partner, and more than half of AO participants—55 percent—had one or more dependent children.

A more complex picture emerges when one examines the composition of students' families. Figure 5 includes six emblematic family types that are based on marital status (single, married couple, and unmarried couple) and having dependent children. These family types can be useful for understanding students' support needs. More than one-third of female AO students surveyed were single and had dependent children, a much higher proportion than any other family type for women. Men, however, were most likely to be single without dependent children (40 percent) or married with dependent children (24 percent). For the large portion of single women with dependent children in AO, access to assistance with child care or other financial support may be particularly important because these women may lack support from a spouse or partner.

FIGURE 5
Family Types by Gender



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Work and Income

Given the high proportion of AO students who have families to support, it is not surprising that over half (54 percent) of respondents reported that they were working at the time of the survey. However, as it turns out, students with dependent children were less likely than their peers to be employed at the time of the survey, perhaps because of the challenges of working and going to school while caring for a child.

The students who were working at the time of the survey were employed in a variety of jobs, some of which were formal (i.e., earning a paycheck) and some of which were informal (i.e., working for pay but not receiving a paycheck). Of those who were working, 65 percent reported receiving a paycheck and not doing any informal work. Twenty-two percent were working informally. The remaining 13 percent were doing both informal and formal work. This combination may be the result of inconsistent work hours or low hourly wages and the need for additional income.

Most surveyed AO students who were working for a paycheck reported low wages. More than a quarter reported earning \$8 an hour or less and nearly half earned \$8 to \$12. Commonly reported jobs included cashier, nursing assistant, equipment/machine operator, welder, and food server.

Of the formally employed AO students surveyed, 46 percent worked part-time, or 30 or fewer hours a week. Thirty-three percent reported working 31 to 40 hours a week, and 21 percent of students said they worked more than 40 hours a week. For some students, work hours create time management challenges. One single parent gave feedback that she had a “great deal of difficulty juggling day care, work hours, [her] other class, etc.” when her AO class schedule was changed after she enrolled.

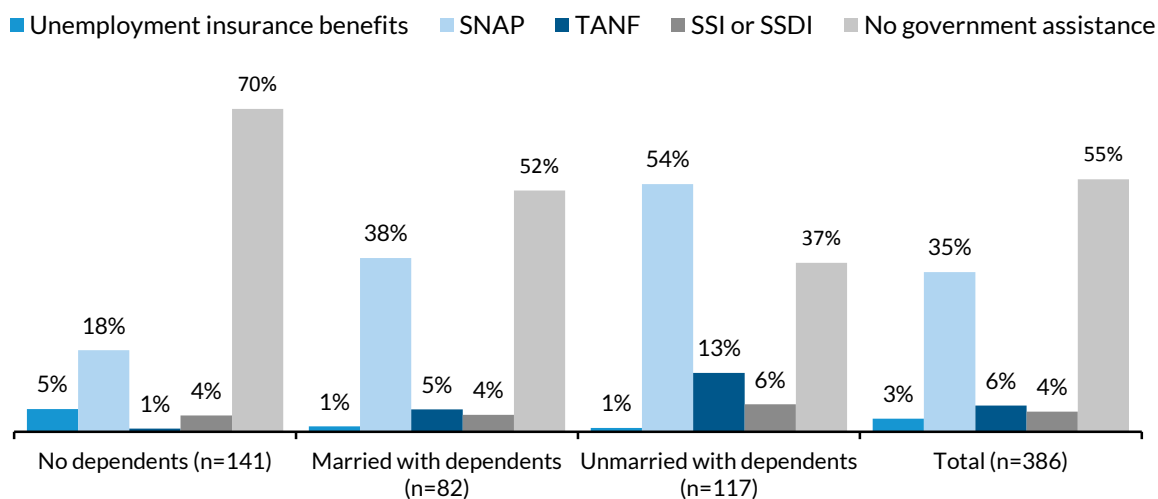
Nearly all surveyed students had held formal employment at some point. Only 8 percent of students had never worked for a paycheck, which may be related to the age characteristics of the population. Survey respondents with no work history were younger than those with a work history. Sixty percent of students with no work history were younger than 25 at the time of the survey, perhaps reflecting the challenges that young people face in developing early work experiences in the current economy.

Government Assistance

At the time of the survey, 45 percent of AO respondents said they were receiving some form of government assistance aside from student financial aid. The most common form of government assistance was the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), which supported 35 percent of respondents, including 54 percent of unmarried parents (figure 6). Only 3

percent reported that they received unemployment insurance benefits, 6 percent said they received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and 4 percent reported receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). More than half did not report support from any of those programs. However, rates of assistance may be underreported, as is common with US Census surveys (Call et al. 2012; Meyer and Goerge 2011).

FIGURE 6
Government Assistance by Dependents and Marital Status



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Education and Educational Aspirations

The AO model was designed to target individuals with low basic skills, especially those in need of a high school credential, yet only 13 percent of students surveyed did not report a secondary school credential.¹² More than half (56 percent) of AO students responding to the survey had a high school diploma and about a third (31 percent) had a GED. Anderson and colleagues (2014) found that colleges enrolled a relatively low proportion of students without high school credentials into AO, partially because of the loss of the federal Pell grant’s Ability to Benefit provision. This change, which took effect in July 2012 and was in place when the survey was administered, precluded students without a secondary school credential from receiving federal financial aid. Some colleges made concerted efforts to recruit more individuals without high school credentials from adult education programs, but overall, in the first two years of the initiative, only about one-fifth of students came from adult education

programs. Other colleges sought alternative sources of tuition funding for students who could not qualify for federal financial aid. Louisiana took this approach, making it the notable exception among the states; 56 percent of AO survey respondents from Louisiana reported that they did not have a high school diploma or GED, compared with 13 percent overall.¹³

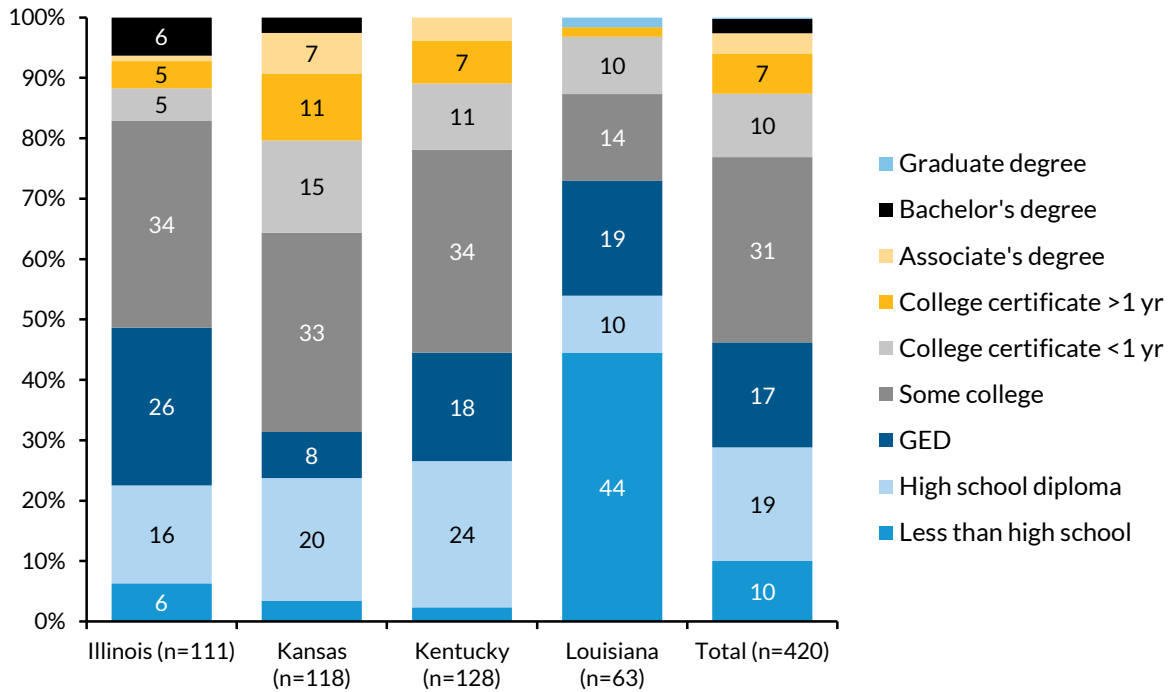
Although the data suggest that AO may be serving more students with high school credentials than originally anticipated, they do not necessarily indicate that AO is serving a population with higher skills. Students eligible for AO may or may not have a high school credential but must fall within National Reporting System levels 4–6 (equivalent to grade 6 and above) on math, reading, or writing or National Reporting System levels 5–6 in English language skills.

In addition to high school credentials, a sizable portion of survey respondents indicated other types of educational attainment. Whereas 36 percent of AO respondents attained only a high school degree or GED, another 31 percent reported having completed “some college,” which may or may not refer to their participation in AO or other career training to date. Seventeen percent previously earned a college certificate, 3 percent earned an associate’s degree, and 2 percent earned a bachelor’s degree.¹⁴ Figure 7 shows the highest educational attainment of survey respondents overall and by state.

The educational aspirations of survey respondents reveal a population that is eager to pursue further education. While 14 percent of students said they would be satisfied with a high school credential or some college and 28 percent of students reported they would be satisfied with a college certificate, 27 percent hoped to earn an associate’s degree, 23 percent aimed for a bachelor’s degree, and another 8 percent aspired to earn a graduate degree. Although these long-term educational goals may not be completed within the time frame of AO programs—usually two semesters—the initiative is designed to enable students to successfully take their first steps on a longer career pathway and educational trajectory.

FIGURE 7

Highest Educational Attainment by State



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

The fact that nearly 60 percent of surveyed students reported educational aspirations beyond the immediate certificates they can earn in the program could mean the AO initiative is successful in orienting students to longer-term career goals that require further education, rather than just being focused on an immediate job. It is also possible that AO colleges are recruiting a population of students interested in pursuing further education or that the survey respondents are a more motivated group.

"I enjoyed this opportunity and have learned so much from it. I feel I will be well prepared for starting college in the fall because of this program."

Why Do Students Choose to Enroll in AO?

The survey reveals students' initial reasons for enrolling in AO programs. The most common reason for enrolling was to earn a certificate, degree, or credential, which was listed among the top three reasons for enrolling by nearly two-thirds of respondents. The next two most common reasons were to begin a new career and to get a job (49 percent and 43 percent, respectively). Improving skills and making more money were also frequently identified. Only 13 percent of students selected earning a high school credential among their top reasons. Some students noted in open-ended responses that they were in the program “for [their] children” or “to make [their] family’s life better.”

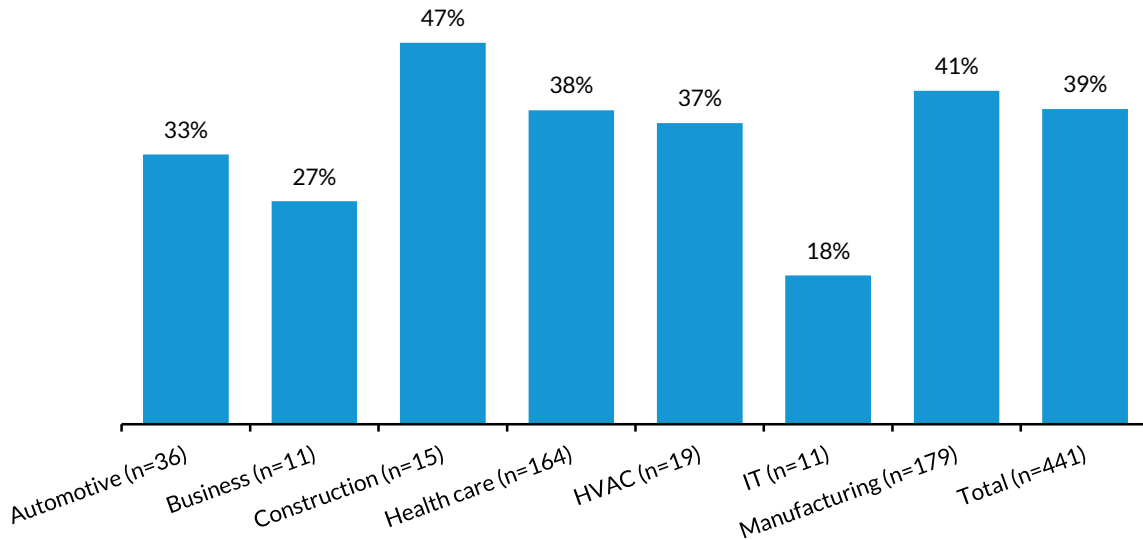
The least commonly cited reasons were to earn credits toward a college degree, to get a better job in the same field, and to get a promotion. This suggests that most surveyed students did not necessarily anticipate earning a college degree after AO, even though students appear to be interested in further education, as indicated previously. It also shows that students were interested in starting new careers rather than furthering themselves within a field in which they were already employed. Thirty-nine percent of students reported prior experience working in the same field as their AO pathway. As shown in figure 8, a larger proportion of students in construction and manufacturing indicated having previously worked in their sector, in contrast to students in business and IT pathways.

The vast majority of survey respondents were in AO pathways for occupations in manufacturing (41 percent) or health care (37 percent), such as certified nurse aides or emergency medical technicians (figure 9). The next most common pathways were in the automotive (8 percent) and HVAC (4 percent) fields. A handful of survey respondents were enrolled in occupational pathways for business, culinary, construction, and IT. This is reflective of all four states' investment in pathways in high-demand occupations, particularly those in health care and manufacturing.

Most surveyed students selected AO pathways primarily because they could earn a good living in jobs in those fields (57 percent). Other students selected reasons related to a perceived strong fit of the pathway (i.e., they thought they would like the jobs or do well in the jobs within those industries). A few people cited having previous experience or having a friend or family member in the field as their reason for selecting the pathway.

FIGURE 8

Prior Experience Working in Pathway Field

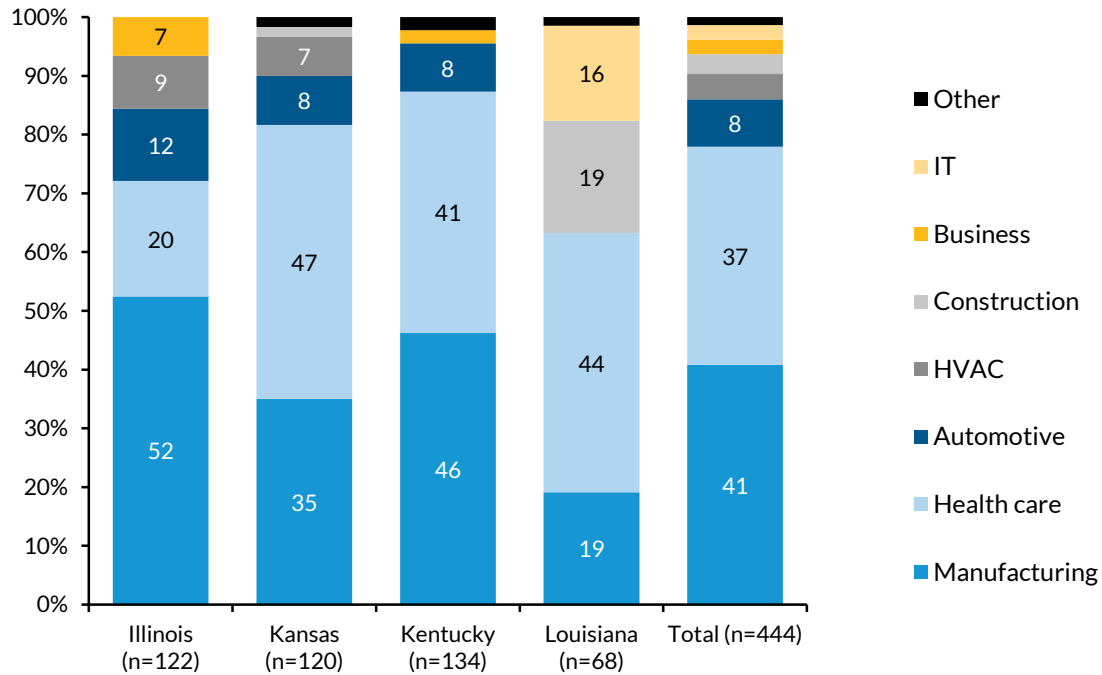


Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Note: HVAC = heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; IT = information technology.

FIGURE 9

Pathway Occupational Areas by State



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Note: HVAC = heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; IT = information technology.

What Instruction and Academic Support Did Students Receive?

The goals of AO are to help adults with low skills succeed in professionally or technically focused programs that prepare them for good jobs and enable them to earn credit toward longer-term degree programs that offer the potential for higher earnings and career growth. Data from the student survey shed additional light on how the participating AO colleges structured their programs to further these goals. Instruction was delivered primarily through both lecture and hands-on learning; 60 percent of students received job-site training or some other form of employer exposure through site visits, meetings, or class visits. Surveyed students reported that their courses were focused more on building job-related skills than on improving basic skills: less than a quarter of students reported coursework related to English as a second language (ESL) and GED preparation. Additionally, more than two-thirds of students had some form of integrated instruction, whereas tutoring was a smaller component of students' experience. Many of these data corroborate earlier findings from other sources, as described in the first- and second-year implementation reports (Anderson et al. 2014, Anderson et al. 2015). This section describes in more detail what surveyed students experienced in their AO programs, highlighting important differences across states, programs of study, or subpopulations.

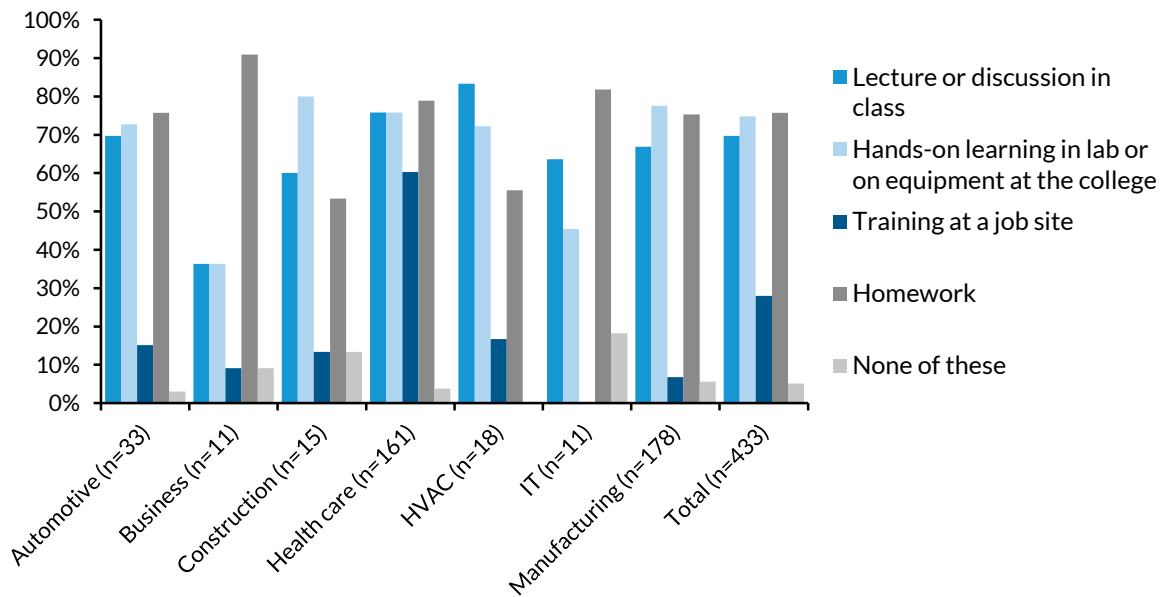
Delivery of Instruction and Learning

The student survey yields information on how programs were structured to teach CTE content that students needed to know to obtain a credential (or multiple credentials) and find related jobs. Although participation in traditional classroom activities was common—70 percent said they spent time in classroom-based lecture and discussion as part of the program—applied and hands-on learning was also common. Twenty-eight percent of students said they participated in learning at a job site, and 75 percent said they participated in hands-on activities in a lab or simulated work environment. Students who reported engaging in these activities said that they spent 6 to 10 hours each week, on average, participating in hands-on learning, compared with 3 to 5 hours on lecture or discussion in class. Students specifically mentioned in the open-ended survey feedback that they benefited from the “different ways of learning.”

The incorporation of hands-on learning—whether at school or on the job site—reflects adult-learning principles as well as the professional and technical nature of the AO programs and the requirements of particular industries. More than 72 percent of surveyed students in automotive,

construction, health care, HVAC, and manufacturing pathways said they spent time participating in hands-on instruction in lab or on equipment (figure 10). Given the manual or physical nature of these occupations, the high share with hands-on learning is not surprising. In comparison, lower proportions of surveyed students in business and IT pathways—36 percent and 45 percent, respectively—spent time on hands-on learning. A majority of students (80 percent) who engaged in training at the work site were in the health care sector, likely reflective of clinical/field experience requirements for licensure in particular occupations, such as certified nurse aid and emergency medical technician.

FIGURE 10
Activities Included in the Program by Occupational Area



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Note: HVAC = heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; IT = information technology.

Outside of classroom or hands-on learning, surveyed students also reported homework as a common activity. More than 75 percent reported doing homework as part of the program. Of those students, over half spent 1 to 5 hours a week on homework, whereas a smaller proportion (13 percent) spent significantly more time on homework—over 15 hours a week on average. Homework is an expected component of college programs. For AO students, it may both reinforce classroom learning and prepare students for further education in college programs. At the same time, given the large percentage of students who have dependent children and who report working, homework may add to the complexity of students’ lives.

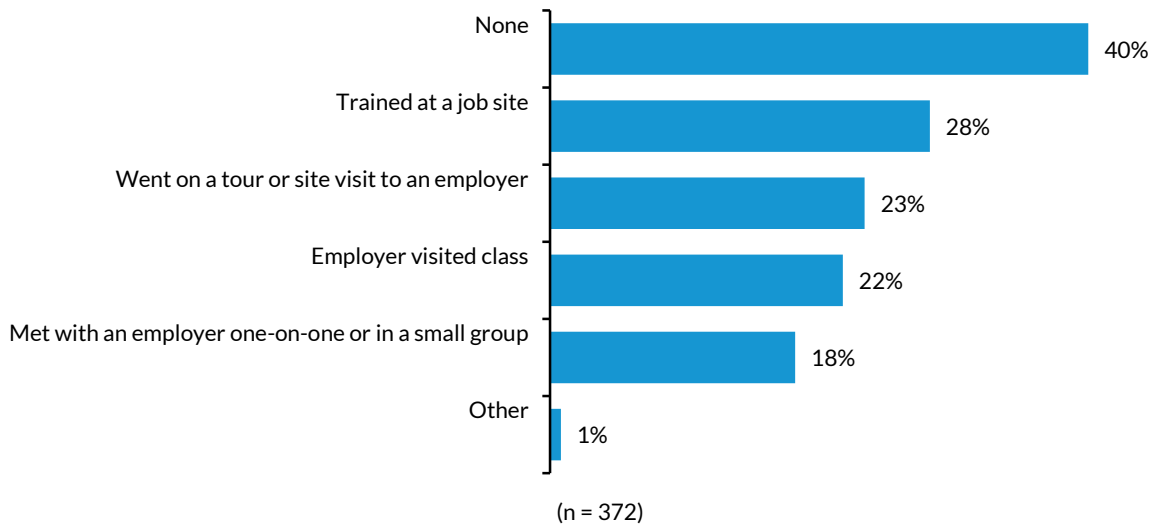
Although the survey did not ask about online instruction, many students mentioned online classes in their feedback, both positively and negatively. Some students appreciated the flexibility: “I really like being able to take as many classes online as possible. It was easier for me, and I could still help support my family financially.” Others found the online instruction rushed or difficult, with too little face-to-face time with the instructors. One student even suggested she would not be able to get her certificate because, for her, “the online classes were too hard.”

Exposure to Employers

Another way that students can prepare for work and careers is through exposure to employers in the sector related to their field of study. Exposure to employers can help students better understand the nature of the work and the culture and environments of their future workplaces. Exposure can even help students to make connections that can be helpful later in their job search. Almost half of surveyed students reported having contact with employers in the field as part of the program, and if those who participated in training at a job site are included, 60 percent of students surveyed reported having exposure to employers as part of the program.¹⁵ The second most common way surveyed students came in contact with employers was through a tour or site visit to a workplace (23 percent), followed by a visit from an employer to the classroom (22 percent; figure 11).

FIGURE 11

Exposure to Employers



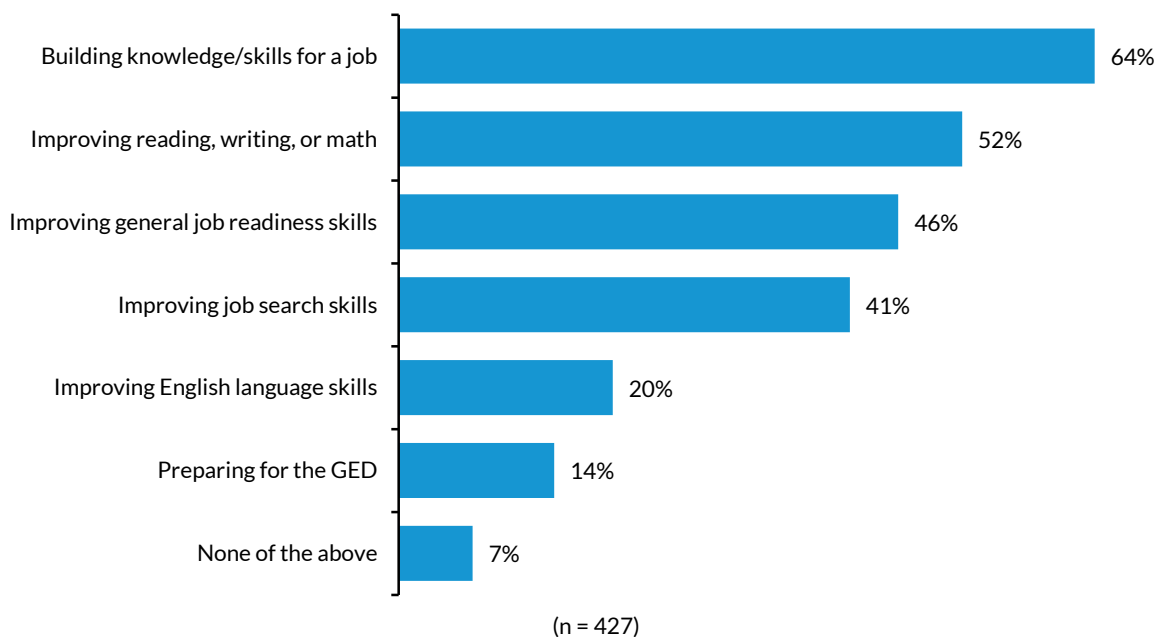
Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Course Content

AO is meant to help students build their occupational skills related to getting a job and pursuing a career. At the same time, AO aims to help students develop general academic skills or address basic skill deficiencies. To better understand the extent to which students focused on these learning areas, the survey asked students about the content of their courses. More students (64 percent) reported spending time on content related to building knowledge and skills for an occupation than any other area. About half also said that coursework included instruction to improve their reading, writing, or math skills. One explanation for the low share of students reporting that they received instruction in these areas is that many students did not know that they were receiving instruction in reading, writing and math skills when it was integrated as part of job skills content. Readiness for the world of work was also a focus, with 46 percent of students reporting that their courses included a focus on general job readiness and 41 percent reporting a focus on job search skills (figure 12).

FIGURE 12

Topics Covered in AO Courses



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

A much smaller percentage said that they spent time in their classes preparing for the GED or other high school equivalency test (14 percent), which is consistent with the low proportion of students without a high school credential, or spent time receiving ESL instruction (20 percent).

Integrated Instruction through Team Teaching

The AO model was meant to replicate several key elements from Washington State’s I-BEST program, including team teaching. During team teaching, two instructors are in the classroom: one who is focused on delivering CTE instruction and one who is focused on basic skills content.¹⁶ The idea is to help “accelerate” student learning while better engaging students.

The AO model requires that colleges use team teaching for at least 25 percent of AO instructional hours over the course of a term. According to results of the student survey, 72 percent of students experienced team teaching while in the program, whereas 28 percent never reported having two teachers in the classroom at the same time. One student stated that the program could use another instructor “to lift the workload.” The highest proportion of students reporting being in a team-taught class was in Louisiana (85 percent of respondents). About 70 percent of respondents in Kentucky, Kansas, and Illinois reported being in a team-taught class.

Of the students who reported having two teachers, 29 percent reported two teachers were in their classes all the time, 36 percent said they had two teachers in most of their classes, and 30 percent said that two teachers were in some of their classes. The remaining 5 percent said they had only two teachers in a class once or twice. The survey does not clearly indicate whether colleges were meeting the goals set by program administrators because the goals were based on a targeted number of team-taught hours, but a majority of students reported that they experienced team teaching frequently. In addition, it is possible that some AO participants did not realize that two teachers were in the classroom with them, depending on the form of team teaching practiced. The AO implementation research revealed that, in some classrooms, the adult education instructor sat in the back of the room and took notes to inform supplemental instructional activities outside the classroom rather than engaging as an equal instructor in the classroom.

Tutoring

Tutoring can also play an important role in student learning, providing students with extra help outside the classroom either one on one or in small groups. Tutoring was a moderate component of the program; 57 percent of respondents received no form of tutoring. Of those who received tutoring, 48 percent participated in small work groups, while approximately the same number (44 percent) received one-on-one tutoring. Online tutoring and extra class sessions were less common.

“The one-on-one math tutoring that I had before my lecture would start helped me a lot. For the Compass test, I had to retake Math and Language Arts, but I didn’t have a tutor to help for the Language Arts section.”

What Other Support Did Students Receive?

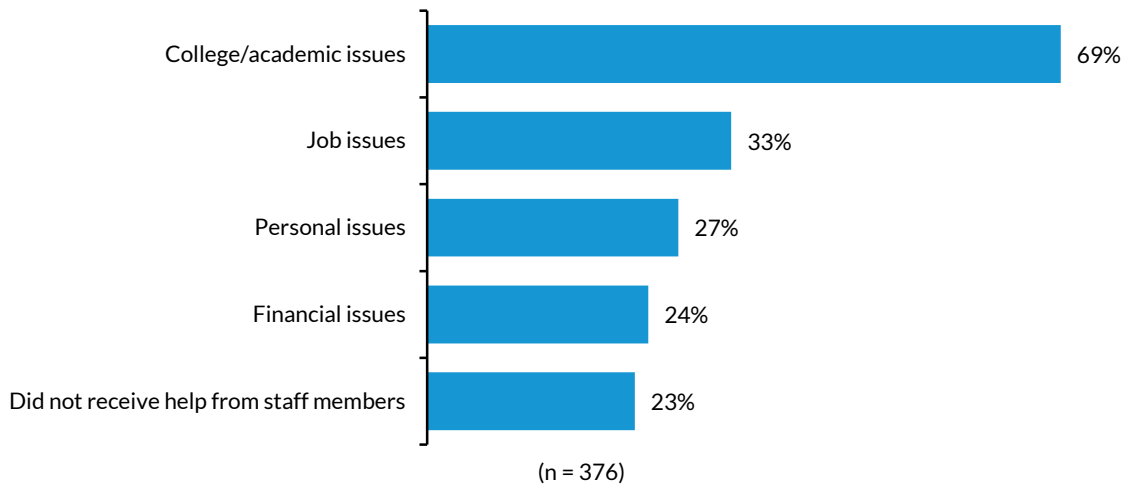
A major issue for students in community college or four-year college programs can be the lack of support available, particularly around non-academic issues. In large systems, as many as 1,000 students can be on a single advisor’s caseload, making it difficult to provide some students with the kind of personal support they need (Scrivener and Weiss 2009). Some systems have created new positions called “career navigators” to provide students with more employment-focused support, while others have added counseling staff members to ensure that students receive more intensive support and help with personal issues that may interfere with success in college.

Enhanced student support is a key component of the AO model, although what this looks like varies, depending on the college and state in which AO is operating. The majority of students reported that staff members provided them with support and advice on a range of issues, including college, job, financial, and personal issues. However, almost a quarter (23 percent) did not report receiving help from any staff members. One student wished he had received financial assistance and other referrals but did not know how to get them, and another student regretted not knowing that assistance was available. However, because of low response rates for these particular questions, the findings might not be representative of all respondents.

Of the students surveyed, 69 percent received assistance for college/academic issues, whereas much smaller percentages received assistance with job (33 percent), personal (27 percent), or financial (24 percent) issues, as shown in figure 13. These data suggest that counseling and advising in AO may be delivered in a way that reflects the traditional community college model, with more of a focus on academics and college than other kinds of support. The first- and second-year implementation reports describe how colleges have continued to face challenges, primarily related to funding, in making support services available to AO students.

FIGURE 13

Types of Support Received from Advisors

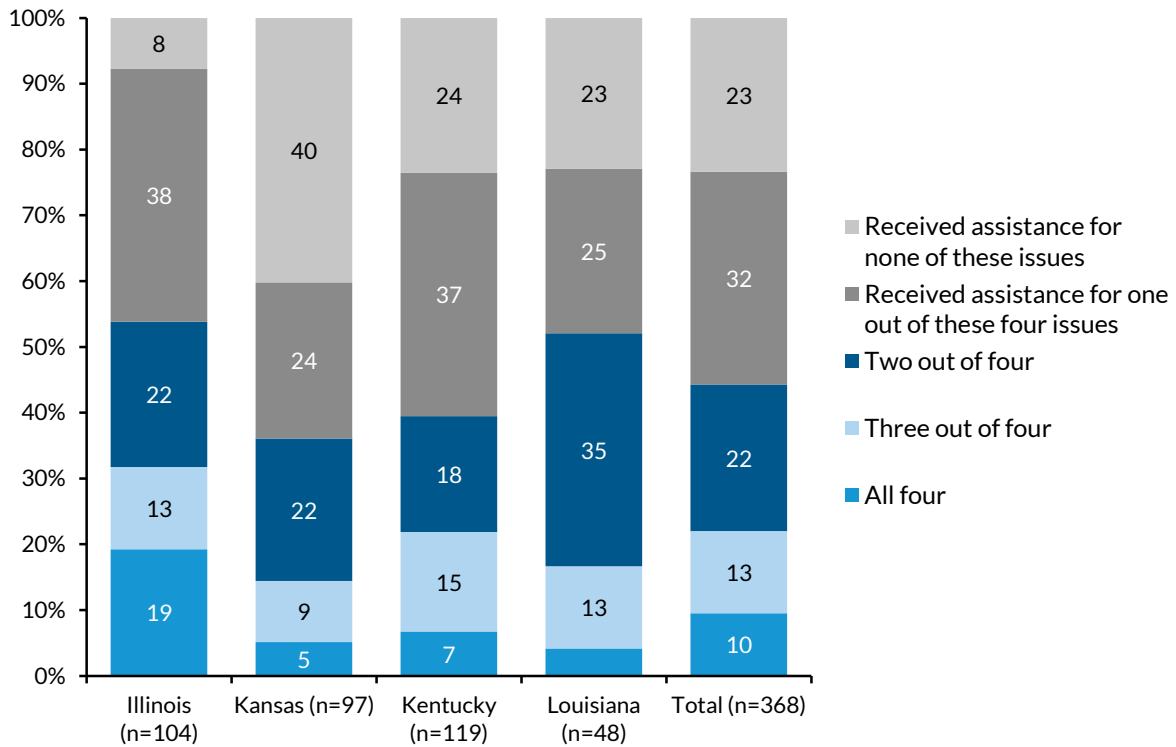


Source: 2014 AO student survey.

The fact that AO students reported receiving support for multiple issues (college/academic, job, personal, or financial) illustrates the comprehensive nature of the support, which is a key part of the AO model. Figure 14 shows how, in Illinois, surveyed students appeared to receive more comprehensive support than in other states: 92 percent reported that they received assistance on at least one issue, and 32 percent reported that they received assistance on three or four issues. About three-quarters of respondents in both Kentucky and Louisiana received support on at least one issue, and less than one-quarter received support on three or four issues. Respondents in Kansas received the least comprehensive support services: 40 percent did not receive any advising on academic, job, financial, or personal issues. Some of Kansas's lack of support stems from the fact that students there, who were often automatically enrolled from existing CTE classes, may not have accepted offered support because they neither chose the AO program nor based their decision to enroll on the availability of AO support.

FIGURE 14

Student Receipt of Comprehensive Advising for Academic, Job, Financial, and Personal Issues



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Those students who did receive comprehensive support could see the benefit. One student shared feedback about his advisors at the college’s learning center.

“[I] received help from [staff members] ... in a variety of ways. From scheduling my classes to making sure my finances were in order. I am very grateful for [the staff’s] help.”

One way of understanding the nature of the counseling relationship and its potential effectiveness is to look at whether counseling occurs only in reaction to an issue that arises or if there are efforts to intervene before a problem happens. To evaluate this, the survey asked about the nature of the interactions with counselors/advisors and found that almost half of students had regularly scheduled

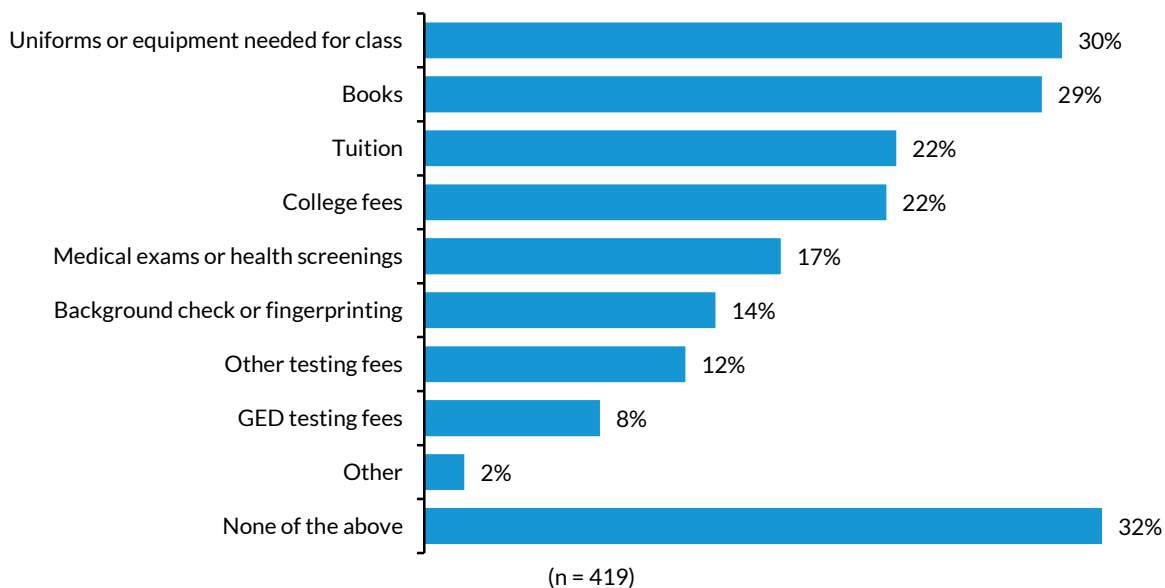
meetings with their advisors, whereas 41 percent met with their advisors only when issues came up. An additional 11 percent interacted with their advisors/counselors only when these staff members contacted them, suggesting either that advisors/counselors were taking proactive steps to support students or possibly that students did not view the counselors as helpful resources.

How Much Financial Assistance Did Students Receive?

Financial assistance can play a key role in helping students realize educational and career goals. Financial issues can often get in the way of students completing their college program. While colleges sought to ease the financial burden for students in various ways, many students reported having to pay for the program themselves. Sixty-eight percent of surveyed students reported having to pay for some part of the AO program, whereas 32 percent said that the program did not cost them anything (figure 15). Of those who reported having to pay money out of their own pocket for the program, 75 percent reported spending less than \$500 while they were in the program. One student felt that there were “way too many out-of-pocket expenses that the students [had] to pay for, like testing fees and buying uniforms to do clinical time.”

FIGURE 15

Out-of-Pocket Expenses Paid by Students

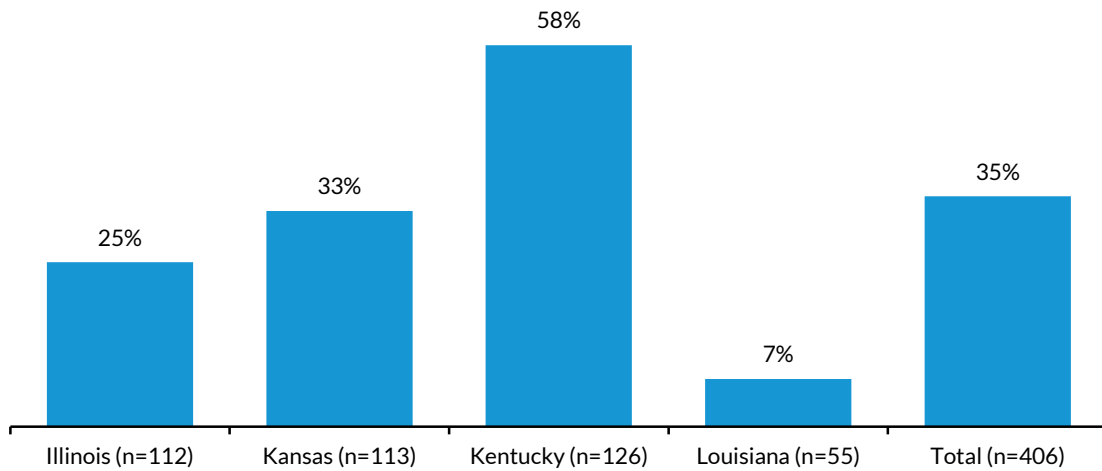


Source: 2014 AO student survey.

The most commonly reported costs to students were class materials, such as uniforms and equipment (30 percent) and books (29 percent). Twenty-two percent reported having to pay for tuition, and another 22 percent reported having to pay for college fees. When looking at differences across states in terms of the tuition burden, Louisiana and Kentucky had the smallest percentages of students reporting that they had to pay for tuition—9 percent and 11 percent, respectively—compared with about one-third of students in Kansas and Illinois. This may be related to the fact that Kentucky had the largest number of Pell or other federal grant recipients (58 percent) and Louisiana was able to use tuition waivers more freely than the other states, as shown in figure 16.

FIGURE 16

Pell Receipt by State

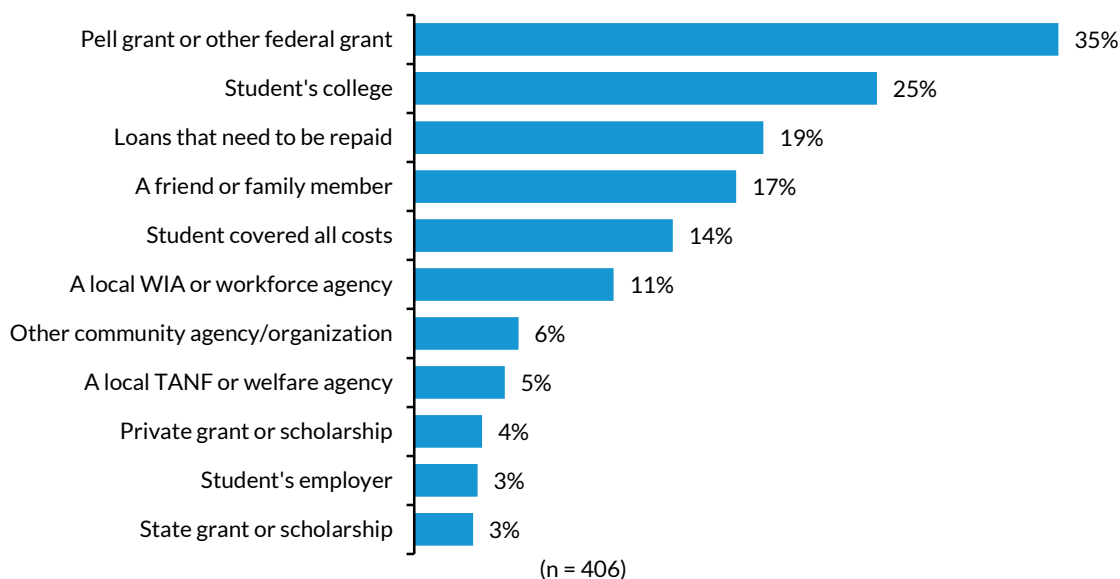


Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Students who reported having to pay for AO said they used a variety of financial resources for the program, as shown in figure 17. Surprisingly, although the colleges targeted students who had high school credentials and who should have been Pell-eligible, only 35 percent reported that they received Pell or other federal grant funding to pay for the program. One factor contributing to the relatively low uptake of Pell grants may be the fact that some short-term programs within AO pathways do not meet federal eligibility for semester hours offered during a defined period of instruction.¹⁷ As noted above, Pell receipt was higher in Kentucky—58 percent—and lower in the other states: 33 percent in Kansas, 25 percent in Illinois, and only 7 percent in Louisiana. In addition, many students (25 percent) received help from their colleges to pay for the program, and 19 percent reported that they took out a loan to pay for college or received help from a friend or family member (17 percent). Fourteen percent of re-

spondents said that they paid for all the costs of the program themselves. Students without a high school credential were more likely to cover all the costs of the program themselves (23 percent compared with 13 percent of students with a high school credential) or to receive assistance from their college (44 percent compared with 22 percent). They were less likely to receive assistance from other sources.

FIGURE 17



Sources of Financial Assistance to Students

Source: 2014 AO student survey.

Note: WIA = Workforce Investment Agency.

The survey asked students about help they received paying for some of the common noncollege expenses. Small percentages received financial help with child care (6 percent), transportation (14 percent), and emergencies (7 percent). An even smaller number reported receiving referrals to those types of assistance, with only 4 percent receiving referrals to child care, 10 percent receiving referrals to transportation assistance, and 6 percent being referred to help with emergencies. Of those respondents who were responsible for dependent children, just 10 percent reported receiving financial assistance with child care, and 5 percent reported being referred to child care assistance. States did not vary much in terms of the child care assistance that survey respondents reported receiving.

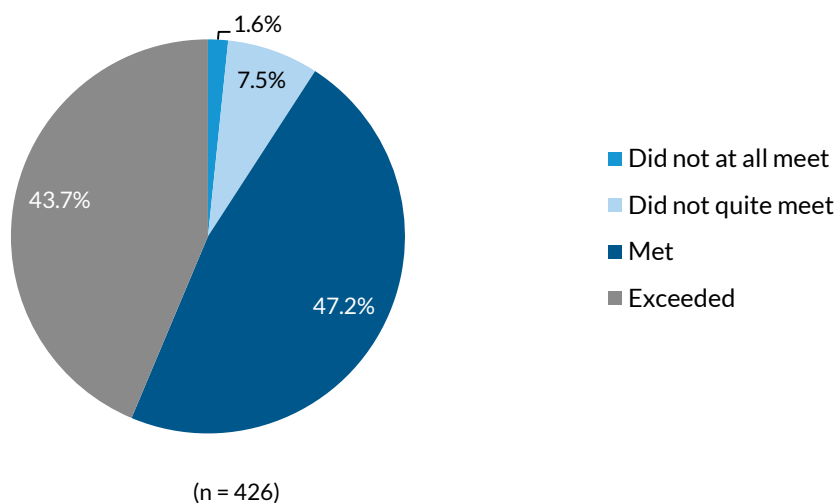
How Satisfied Were Students with AO?

Overall, students appear to be very satisfied with almost all aspects of AO. Ninety-one percent of students said the program exceeded or met their expectations, with 44 percent of students saying the program exceeded their expectations and 47 percent saying their expectations were met (figure 18). The program did not quite meet the expectations of 8 percent of students and did not at all meet the expectations of 2 percent. In addition, 63 percent of students would highly recommend the program to a friend or family member. Only 2 percent would not recommend the program.

“This is the most amazing program to start and further your education. The support from the staff is inspiring; they make you want to excel in all of your future endeavors. This opportunity has encouraged me to execute my career goals without ever giving up. This has been an experience to truly be thankful for.”

FIGURE 18

Did the Program Meet Students' Expectations?



Source: 2014 AO student survey.

The survey asked about students' satisfaction with particular aspects of the program. Each program component (lecture/discussion in class, hands-on learning, job site training, and homework) was met with a satisfaction rate of more than 90 percent. Most students (84 percent or more) felt that their classes spent the right amount of time on various topic areas (preparing for the GED, reading/writing, ESL instruction, job knowledge/skills, job readiness skills, and job search skills); however, 12 percent would have preferred more time spent on preparing for the GED, and 11 percent would have preferred more time spent on job search skills. Generally, students were very satisfied with the support and advice they received from their advisors; only 7 percent were dissatisfied with the support and advice they received on financial issues, whereas less than 3 percent were dissatisfied with the academic, career, and personal advice they received. As reported previously, financial advice was less common than other types of counseling.

"I am happy to have AO. It would have taken me three to four years to earn my AAS [associate in applied science degree] if it hadn't been for the AO program. What I am learning in this program helped me get the job I currently have and is helping me know what kind of job I want in the future."

Despite overall satisfaction, students did indicate that they would have liked more academic support through team teaching and tutoring. Forty-three percent of students believed they would have benefited from more team teaching. That number increases to 63 percent among students without a high school credential. One student stated, "There has been support with a second teacher in most classes, but I feel that the lab class needs two teachers as well." In addition, more than one-third of students said they would have benefited from more tutoring, which was not a large part of the program. Although the large majority of students did not find the career and technical classes difficult, 19 percent said they were "difficult" or "very difficult." Also, in providing open-ended feedback, several students noted the accelerated pace of the courses, explaining that not enough time was spent on certain topics to fully learn them. "My only issue is that the majority of the curriculum taught flew over my head due to the accelerated process of the course," said one student. Another said, "The class would have been better if the teacher showed the skills more than once before she expected you to learn them." Those individuals might have benefited from additional educational support.

Almost 90 percent of students felt that the program adequately prepared them or very well prepared them for work in their field of training or for further education. Students in health care and manufacturing pathways, the two occupational areas that were most heavily invested in by the majority of AO colleges, were more likely to feel very well prepared for work than their peers in other occupational areas.

Students were given the opportunity to share open-ended feedback about their experience in the program. Overall feedback was highly positive, especially with regard to the staff and instructors. Students described the staff as “very helpful,” “supportive,” and “encouraging.” Complaints about teachers were less common, but a couple of students said that their instructors were not well prepared or that they moved too quickly.

“Every one of [the] staff [members is] there to help you in any way that they can, whether it's school or ... a personal problem. They are always there for you ... and give you a great support system.”

Respondents also highlighted the program’s ability to meet the needs of nontraditional students (e.g., older students, parents, and students with low levels of educational attainment).

“Never in a million years ... did I ever imagine myself going back to college, not only for my GED, but to get a degree. I think this program is a great asset to the community. It provides people who work different schedules and [have a] home life [the opportunity] to get an education and better themselves.”

Critiques were most commonly related to (1) a need for further training in specific skill sets, such as particular equipment or computer software; (2) a lack of physical and financial resources, such as laptops, tools, or tuition assistance; or (3) disorganization in program scheduling.

“[The program] wasn’t as organized as it needed to be. To prepare students for work and employment, the school needs to be prepared first. All the hiccups should be done before the class starts.”

Students had mixed feedback about the length of the program, some saying that it was too short and fast-paced and others indicating that parts could have been shortened. The feedback reveals that students have varying needs, with some wanting more time spent on career training versus basic skills and vice versa.

Conclusion

Accelerating Opportunity was designed to meet the needs of individuals with low literacy and numeracy skills and predominantly those who lack a high school credential. The program provides those individuals with access to college through a career pathway program in which they can earn short-term credentials and college credit and improve their basic skills and their long-term educational and employment outcomes. Despite the shift in AO’s target population, mainly resulting from the Pell policy change, the results of the AO student survey suggest the initiative has continued to serve a vulnerable population with complex lives. More than half of surveyed students reported being responsible for dependent children, more than one-quarter of those who worked were in jobs paying less than \$8 an hour, and nearly half of students were not working at all. More than one-third reported receiving SNAP assistance.

Survey results do not describe the academic needs of students, but information collected from site visits and interviews with program administrators suggests that the AO initiative has continued to serve an academically challenged population, despite the fact that the majority of students had a high school degree or its equivalent. Analysis of test scores as part of the broader evaluation will shed more light on this issue. The survey does reveal that students desired additional academic support, with nearly half saying they would have benefited from more team teaching and more than one-third saying they wanted more tutoring.

Despite challenges highlighted in earlier reports with securing college administrator and faculty support for team teaching, a sizable portion of survey respondents said their AO classes were team

taught all or most of the time. At the same time, team teaching is one of the “non-negotiable elements of the AO model,” yet about a quarter of students said they never had two teachers in the classroom. Given the demand from students, the program’s administrators can continue to look to expand the availability of team-taught classes, drawing on what they have learned to date about how best to implement this aspect of the model.

The goal of this instructional and academic support is to help students make progress along career pathways. One clear way to prepare students for jobs and careers is to give them the practical knowledge and hands-on experience to qualify for jobs and thrive in the workplace. Increasingly, surveys of employers indicate a desire for workers, even at the entry level, who have related experience (Manpower Group 2014). Most AO student survey respondents indicated they were gaining exposure to employers and to the workplace as part of the AO program. While this may be, in part, because of industry requirements in the health care sector, such approaches can be important for engaging students who may not have been successful in traditional classroom settings and for helping adult learners master the necessary skills for career success. Program administrators may include additional opportunities to integrate hands-on learning and exposure to the industry, such as expanding paid internships, across all pathways.

Non-academic support can be critical for helping students, especially those who are supporting families or working, realize their education and career goals. Whereas most surveyed students received some counseling and assistance, 23 percent did not receive counseling or advising support on any issues; the most common support provided was help with academic issues. However, in no surveyed states did the majority of respondents report receiving support services for a range of issues. AO programs may be able to do more to offer enhanced support services, but resource constraints likely pose a challenge in delivering services.

Resource constraints probably also limit financial assistance to students. Sixty-eight percent of students reported having to pay for some aspect of the program, although most reported spending \$500 or less. For low-income students, those costs may pose a particular burden and interfere with their ability to complete the program and succeed in it. Had more students received Pell grants, they might not have had to bear so many program expenses. It is unclear why so few students reported receiving Pell grants when the majority of students had a high school diploma or equivalent.

Despite these financial limitations, students reported high levels of satisfaction with AO and felt that it prepared them well for further education and their careers. Students valued the support they received and generally expressed strong satisfaction with each component of the program. Although

there were suggested improvements—for example, the need for additional academic skills support—the overwhelmingly positive feedback suggests that students perceived that the program was meeting their needs. A follow-up survey in spring 2015 will provide the opportunity for students to further reflect on the effectiveness of AO in helping them realize their education and career goals after they have left the program.

Notes

1. Jobs for the Future (JFF) manages the initiative and partners with the National College Transition Network, the National Council for Workforce Education, and the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to provide states with technical assistance. A consortium of foundations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, the University of Phoenix Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations, has provided funding for the AO initiative.
2. Digest of Education Statistics, "Table 104.10. Rates of high school completion and bachelor's degree attainment among persons age 25 and over, by race/ethnicity and sex: Selected years, 1910 through 2013," National Center for Education Statistics, accessed February 26, 2015, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_104.10.asp.
3. Digest of Education Statistics, "Table 326.20. Graduation rates of first-time, full-time degree/certificate-seeking students at 2-year postsecondary institutions who completed a credential within 150 percent of normal time, by race/ethnicity, sex, and control of institution: Selected cohort entry years, 2000 through 2009," National Center for Education Statistics, accessed February 26, 2015, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_326.20.asp.
4. For more information on I-BEST, see http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_integratedbasiceducationandskillstraining.aspx. For more information on Breaking Through, see <http://www.jff.org/initiatives/breaking-through>.
5. Data are from the first and second-year AO college surveys.
6. North Carolina transitioned out of the initiative in mid-2013 to pursue other priorities within the state. It was not included in the AO student survey.
7. Survey respondents include students who started the program in spring 2014 and in 2013.
8. Because of privacy concerns, the Urban Institute was unable to contact students directly for the purpose of administering the survey. Instead, colleges were charged with sending out the survey to their AO students, and some colleges chose not to do so. Therefore, the number of students who received the survey is lower than the total number of AO students.
9. For Illinois, Kansas, and Kentucky, 2013 was the second year of implementation. Because Louisiana started the AO program after the other states, the second year of implementation refers to fall 2013 through summer 2014. To maintain consistency with the second-year implementation report, characteristics of the student population based on the college survey were counted in the same way for both reports, by using data from the 34 colleges in these four states that offered programs in the first and second years.
10. In July 2012, Congress eliminated the Ability to Benefit provision, which had allowed students who lacked a high school degree or its equivalent to receive federal aid for higher education, including Pell grants. In December 2014, the Ability to Benefit provision was partially restored, with students enrolled in career pathway programs after July 1, 2014, eligible for aid. However, individuals who enroll in career pathway programs after July 1, 2015, will not be eligible for full financial aid through Pell.
11. Unless otherwise noted, percentages are based on the number of students who provided answers to the survey questions. Students who skipped a question or responded with "don't know" or "prefer not to answer" are not included in the total number of respondents for that question.
12. As mentioned previously, the proportion of students without a high school credential is slightly lower among survey respondents than among the overall population reported by the colleges in the college survey (13 percent compared with 18 percent). The small difference might be because the survey was administered on the computer, so those with very low literacy or computer skills may have been less likely to complete it. It also may be because there were relatively fewer responses from Louisiana, which had a higher proportion of students without secondary school credentials enrolled in AO.

13. As described in the first-year implementation report, Louisiana successfully recruited more students without high school credentials by broadly interpreting existing tuition waiver rules, allowing more students to receive financial assistance. Because Louisiana joined the AO initiative after the other states, the Louisiana state office also had more time to plan for the change in Pell rules than the other states.
14. The survey asked about the highest level of education students have completed at this time. Some students may have counted their time in AO and responded with “some college,” even if they had only completed high school or less before enrolling in AO. It is also possible that students may have earned a certificate through an AO program before taking the AO student survey, as several pathways offer entry-level certificates that are completed in the beginning of the program, which is typically two semesters in length.
15. The second-year implementation report includes further discussion of the role of employers in the pathway programs. Employers interacted with students through hiring, providing work-based learning opportunities, and providing guidance to AO programs.
16. For more on the I-BEST model and its approach to team teaching, see <http://www.careerladdersproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/How-IBest-Works-CCRC-Report.pdf>.
17. Federal student aid requires at least 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours of undergraduate instruction offered during a minimum of 15 weeks of instruction. For more information see the Federal Student Aid Handbook (July 2012) at <http://ifap.ed.gov/fsahandbook/attachments/1213FSAHbkVol2Ch2.pdf>.

References

- Anderson, Theresa, Lauren Eyster, Robert I. Lerman, Carol Clymer, Maureen Conway, and Marcela Montes. 2014. *The First Year of Accelerating Opportunity: Implementation Findings from the States and Colleges*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. <http://www.urban.org/publications/413238.html>.
- Anderson, Theresa, Lauren Eyster, Robert I. Lerman, Carolyn O'Brien, Maureen Conway, Ranita Jain, and Marcela Montes. 2015. *The Second Year of Accelerating Opportunity: Implementation Findings from the States and Colleges*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. <http://www.urban.org/publications/2000132.html>.
- Bailey, Thomas, and Sung-Woo Cho. 2010. "Issue Brief: Developmental Education in Community Colleges." New York: Community College Research Center, Teacher's College, Columbia University.
- Bailey, Thomas, Dong Wook Jeong, and Sung-Woo Cho. 2010. "Issue Brief: Student Progression through Developmental Sequence in Community Colleges." New York: Community College Research Center, Teacher's College, Columbia University.
- Call, Kathleen T., Michael E. Davern, Jacob A. Klerman, and Victoria Lynch. 2012. "Comparing Errors in Medicaid Reporting across Surveys: Evidence to Date." *Health Services Research* 48: 652–64.
- Meyer, Bruce D., and Robert M. Goerge. 2011. *Errors in Survey Reporting and Imputation and Their Effects on Estimates of Food Stamp Program Participation*. Center for Economic Studies Paper CES-WP-11-14. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau.
- Heckman, James, and Tim Kautz. 2014. "Achievement Tests and the Role of Character in American Life." In *The Myth of Achievement Tests: The GED and the Role of Character in American Life*, edited by James J. Heckman, John Erick Humphries, and Tim Kautz, 3–56. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Manpower Group. 2014. *The Talent Shortage Continues: How the Ever-Changing Role of HR Can Bridge the Gap*. Milwaukee, WI: Manpower Group.
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2013. *Skilled for Life? Key Findings from the Survey of Adult Skills*. Paris: OECD.
- Scrivener, Susan, and Michael J. Weiss. 2009. "More Guidance, Better Results?" New York: MDRC.

STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

The Urban Institute strives to meet the highest standards of integrity and quality in its research and analyses and in the evidence-based policy recommendations offered by its researchers and experts. We believe that operating consistent with the values of independence, rigor, and transparency is essential to maintaining those standards. As an organization, the Urban Institute does not take positions on issues, but it does empower and support its experts in sharing their own evidence-based views and policy recommendations that have been shaped by scholarship. Funders do not determine our research findings or the insights and recommendations of our experts. Urban scholars and experts are expected to be objective and follow the evidence wherever it may lead.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.



2100 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

www.urban.org