



Performance Monitoring Report: Counseling Services & Special Populations

April 20, 2021

Counseling Services Purpose

Provide counseling services necessary to enhance the success of students.

Special Populations Purpose

Offer educational programming and supportive services for special populations to address barriers prohibiting participation in education and employment.

Counseling Services & Special Populations Report Details

Overview

Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) serves a student population widely varied in age, ethnicity, interests, goals, abilities, and life and work experiences. FVTC aims to be ready with the assistance needed for every person who walks through the door, regardless of skill-level or personal circumstances. People come to the College hoping for better lives, and FVTC provides the supportive pathways to guide their journey. In 2019-20, FVTC enrollment continued to decline, yet the challenges and complexity of helping students access education and earn credentials increased. This report showcases the many support layers offered, helping keep students in school and progressing towards graduation and employment.

What We Do

Student Services provides student support through all college experience aspects, starting with students' first contact and extending through graduation and beyond. Each department within Student Services provides specific services at critical points in the student journey to guide them to the next step in the journey and support their success.

FVTC supports students throughout their academic careers:



Recruitment



Admissions



Enrollment



Persistence



Graduation

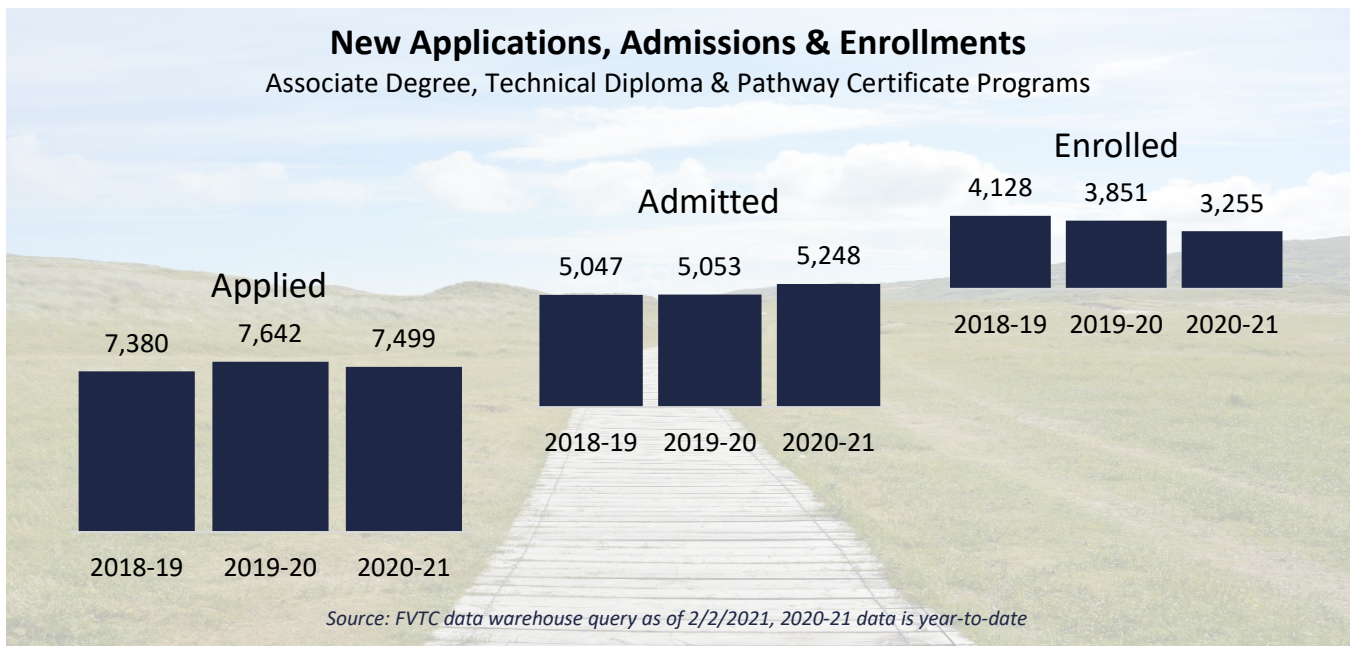
Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrollment

Attracting students to the College is the first step toward meeting their educational needs. Creating awareness of offerings and assessing interest is quickly followed by nurturing students through the application and admission process. Attention is focused on positioning students on the appropriate pathway with the support systems needed to increase their likelihood for success.



The student journey along the path of Applicant to Enrolled is continually scrutinized for improvement and streamlined for ease of use to properly gauge and adjust the right types and amounts of up-front guidance and support.

The onset of the pandemic resulted in major changes to our recruitment, admissions and enrollment strategies and, in some cases, our processes. Our teams very quickly adapted to virtual means of making connections with and converting prospects and applicants into enrolled students. Although they flexed quickly, in the midst of a pandemic was not a good time for many of these potential students to start school. Our team members also had many conversations with individuals who felt that online learning was not a good fit for them. We continue to follow up with these individuals in the hopes that we can meet their educational needs in the future.



Initial Academic Assessment and Placement Services. Appropriate student course placement is critical to academic success. Students entering the College complete an entrance assessment, Accuplacer, to assist with course placement. High school GPA (2.75 or higher for graduates within the last ten years) has recently been introduced as one alternative to an entrance assessment and has been used extensively during the pandemic when access to entrance assessments has been a challenge. FVTC continues to analyze student placement success rates based on these entrance assessment options and will make future adjustments as needed.

As part of student onboarding, a non-academic survey called Factors Affecting College Success (FACS) has traditionally been given to new students. This survey identifies barriers that could prevent college enrollment and persistence. Typical survey results reveal concerns about academics (for example, study habits, unsuccessful history in school, uncertainty in academic skill), career pathway uncertainty, financial issues, and personal concerns. Students who identify concerns are targeted for interventions meant to assist with their resolution.

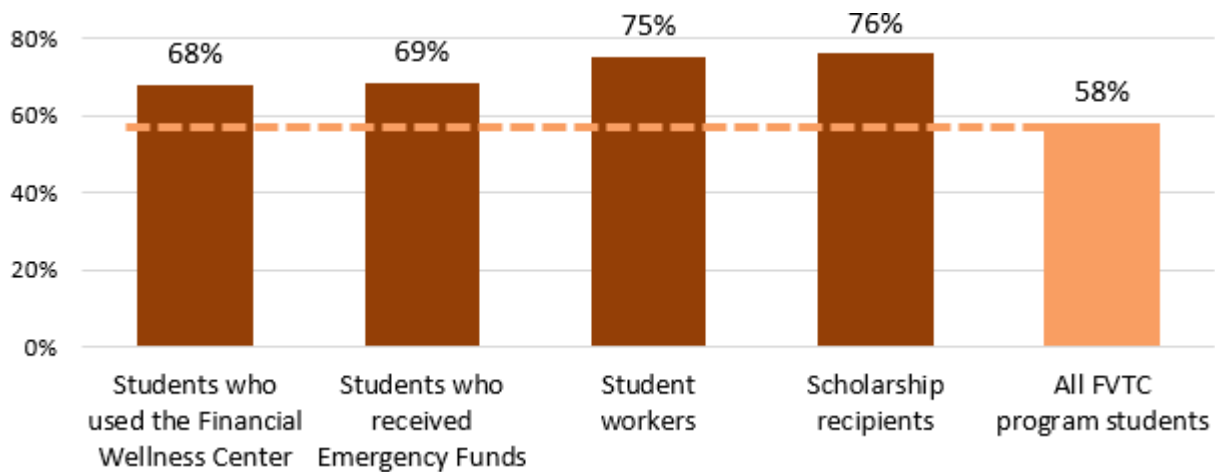
While operating virtually, most student onboarding has taken place in a 1:1 setting, so advisors are gathering this non-academic information verbally from new students. Advisors have found that these 1:1 conversations have provided an environment where students are more comfortable sharing their potential barriers as they enter college. Onboarding advisor appointments focus on identifying barriers, building a plan to address these barriers, clarifying their career path, assessing comfort with technology relevant to student success (Blackboard, Peoplesoft, FVTC email), and building relationships to create a connection early on in the onboarding process. The hope is that addressing these concerns at onboarding assists in persistence and creates a path for further intentional touchpoints in the future.



Student Financial Services. One of the most critical issues facing a large portion of students continues to be the ability to pay for both the direct and indirect expenses associated with attending college. Student Financial Services provides in-person assistance with obtaining financial resources. In addition, the Financial Wellness Center provides free in-person assistance for students at points when they need it the most: disbursement of funds, financial aid warning or suspension, and loan repayment at graduation. FVTC also offers emergency funding, FVTC Foundation scholarships, and campus employment.

As shown in the figure below, students utilizing FVTC financial resources show higher persistence rates than the overall program student population.

Program Student Persistence from 2019-20 to Fall 2020



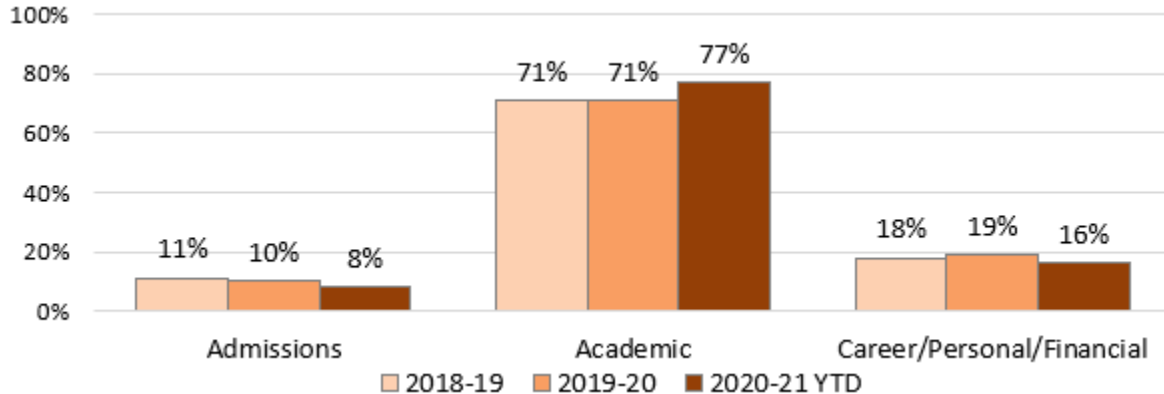
Source: FVTC data warehouse query as of 2/3/2021

On-campus financial education resources are also being offered, providing students information about student loans and repayment options. Additionally, Employment Connections promotes part-time job fairs, and all work-study employment opportunities are advertised on the FVTC jobs web page. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all of these services have been offered remotely to students and prospective students.

Counseling & Advising Services

Counseling & Advising Services meets the variety of needs for the general student population and prospective students who have academic, career, personal, financial, or transition needs. While an increasing number of students have multiple needs (for example, personal, financial, and mental health), they consistently require the most academic advising assistance.

Percentage of Counseling and Advising Contacts with Students by Service Type



Source: FVTC data warehouse report SAAA0000520; 2019-20 data is as of 2/4/2021

The main goal of academic advising is to proactively provide students with tools before their academic performance is suffering. Program advisors meet all new students during New Student Registration sessions and reach out to all program students throughout the semester. As stated earlier, since March of 2020, these sessions have been held remotely and one-on-one. Additionally, advisors also spend time in the academic departments and attend program faculty department meetings to discuss student success strategies.

What do students say about FVTC?

It was really easy to get the help I needed when picking out classes. My advisor was helpful in giving me information about my classes and was super supportive.

Counseling services have been easy to access and readily available.

It is nice to know that FVTC is keeping students safe while also offering student services. FVTC has done a great job.

Academic Alerts allow faculty and Student Services staff to work together and assist struggling students. Students placed on academic probation are required to complete academic success plans with their program advisor/counselor and are referred to the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) and other College resources. These interventions' expected outcomes are multi-fold: increased engagement with a College staff member, increased subsequent successful course completion, and increased persistence to graduation.

FVTC counseling staff address personal, mental health, and career counseling student needs. These needs are becoming more complex and are rising in our student population. With the onset of the pandemic, many of these struggles have worsened and our counseling staff have pivoted to remote support.

Prior to March 2020, our Peer Leaders also served as an additional student support mechanism, assisting with things like:

- MyFVTC and email
- BlackBoard
- Organization and time management strategies
- Class selection and registration

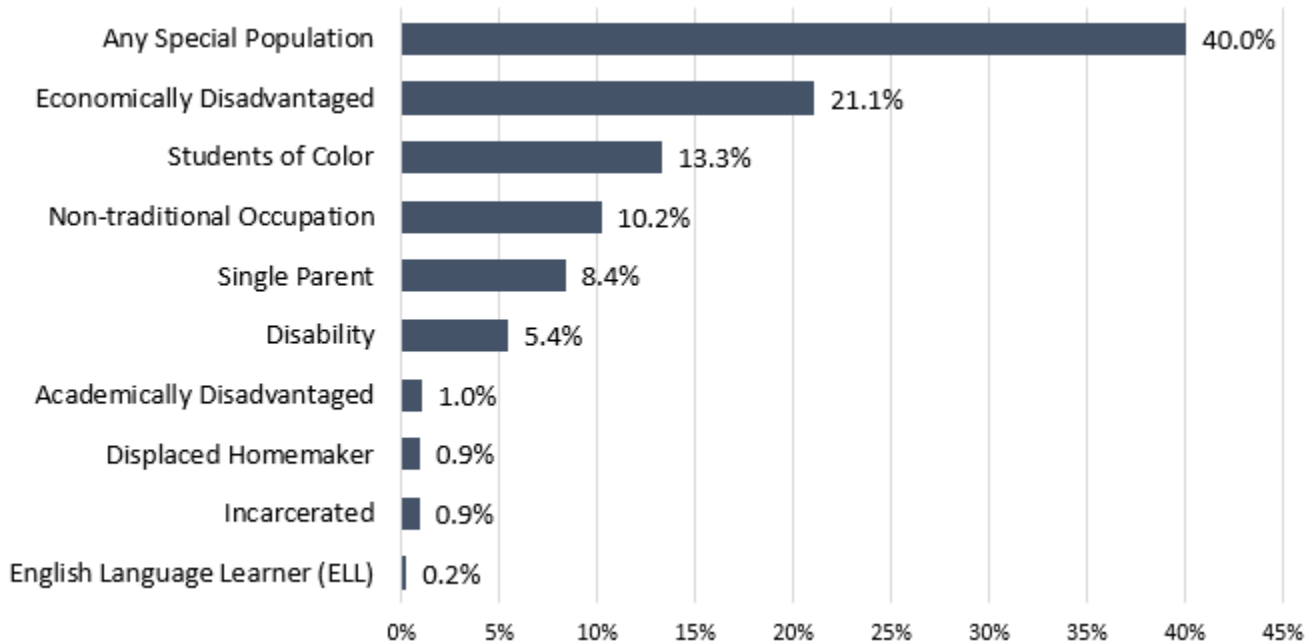


For Whom

Services for Special Populations

Special Populations include various categories of minoritized students, such as those who are emotionally challenged, physically and learning disabled, academically disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged, English Language Learner (ELL), incarcerated, displaced homemaker, single parent, and students of color. The chart below illustrates the percentage of students who fit into each classification. Student Services team members use this data for outreach and other program development. FVTC's support teams work hard to build relationships with students and faculty in order to create a comfort level and knowledge base of the available supports.

2019-20 Special Populations Students Enrolled in Program Courses



Source: FVTC data warehouse query as of 2/2/2021; Excludes dual credit students but includes apprenticeship students

Students with Disabilities. In 2019-20, the Educational Support Services (ESS) team recorded over 1,500 contacts with students with disabilities. ESS staff members provide these students with transition and intake services, academic accommodations, and case management services. ESS staff members continuously broaden their knowledge of new adaptive and assistive technologies to serve the unique needs of these students.



Auxiliary aids for students with disabilities include, but are not limited to:

- Screen readers and magnifiers
- Assistive listening devices
- Speech to text software
- Smart pens
- Adjustable tables and specialized chairs
- Interpreter services

The ESS team collaborates closely with the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) tutoring staff and faculty to provide wrap-around services to students with the highest needs.

Students of Color. The College is committed to serving a diverse student body, and the Diversity & Inclusion Services Office offers a variety of services. FVTC commits to fostering an inviting and supportive educational environment, where opportunities are accessible, and achievements are possible for every student and staff member regardless of individual abilities, differences, and backgrounds.

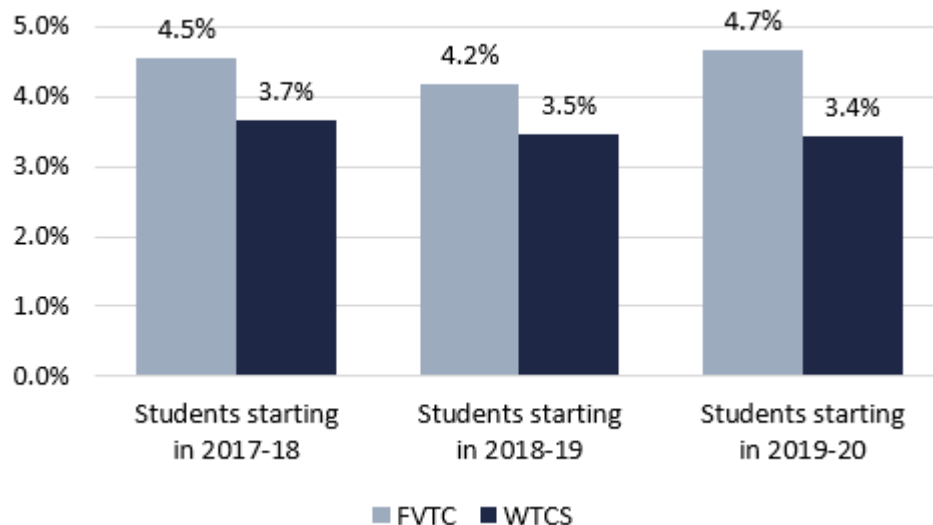
The current social climate, paired with the effects of COVID-19, elevated the importance of providing equitable services for our minoritized students. Diversity & Inclusion Services put into practice a four-step advising process for the students they served to identify challenges and implementing interventions to create equitable access and facilitate success for students of color. The four-step advising process helped the team understand the at-risk factors students were experiencing. The Master Advising Plan (MAP) kept the on-going conversations grounded and student-focused, allowing students a voice in the interventions developed and deployed.



Data brought to light equity gaps in access and retention based on race/ethnicity, location, test scores, and gender identity. This information helped develop targeted strategies to connect with students at the earliest point possible, such as a post-secondary education mentoring stewardship council.

Veterans. Veterans transitioning to post-secondary education often need significant coordination of services and intensive support. The full-time Academic and Resource Advisor of Veteran Support provides assistance and service coordination to student veterans and their families.

Percent of New Program Students Receiving Veteran Benefits



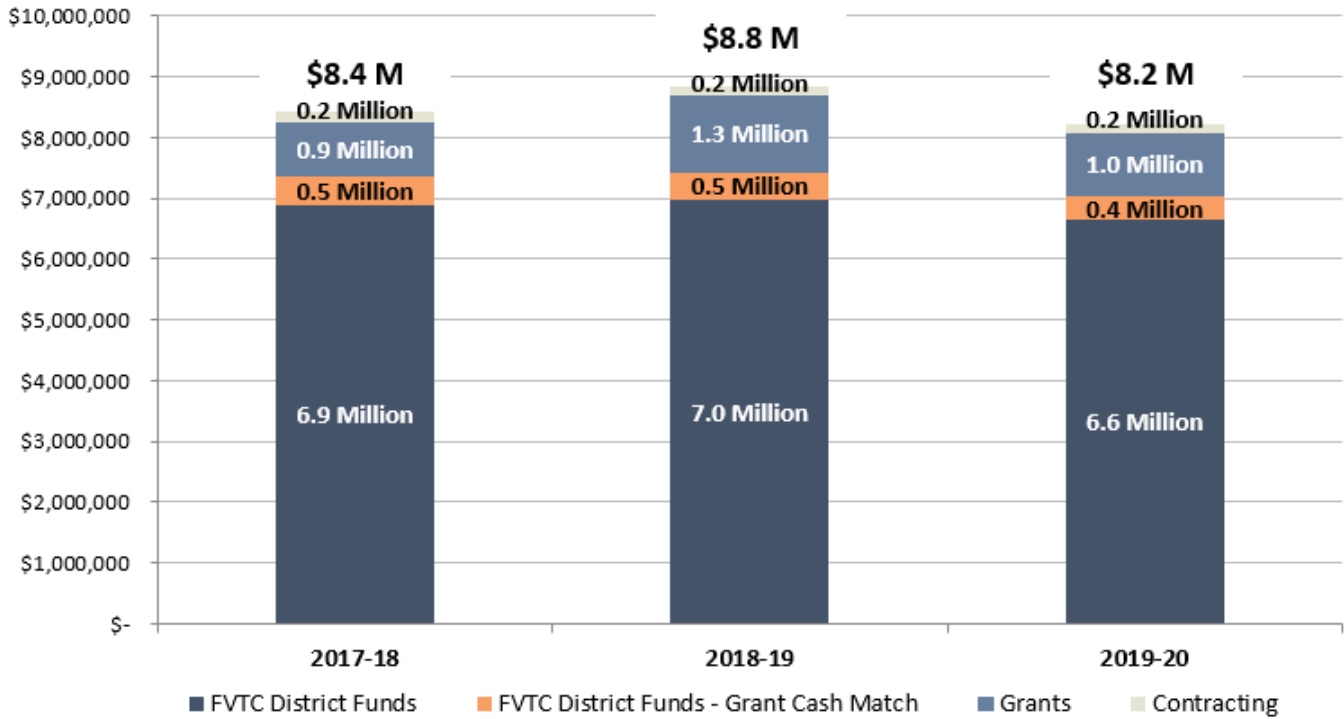
Source: WTCS Tableau Student Success Dashboard, 2/4/2021

Over the past several years, FVTC has experienced fluctuation in the percentage of new students who are veterans; however, the College still outpaces the WTCS average for percentage of program students who receive veteran benefits. FVTC's support for veterans has resulted in high 3-year graduation rates which are consistently higher than the WTCS average.

At What Cost

District funds comprise the greatest portion of the Student Services Division budget primarily supporting personnel expenses. The decrease in district funding over the last year was a result of retirements, lower replacement costs, position eliminations, and restructuring. The grants funding source represents mainly WTCS grants which include state and federal funds for targeted services. The smallest funding source, contracting, is a result of skills assessment testing.

Student Services Funding Sources



Source: FVTC Financial Database

