



Operations and Performance of the Virginia Community College System

Research activities

- Data analysis
 - Student outcomes and debt
 - Tuition and fees
 - College and system office spending
- Structured interviews
 - Staff at community colleges and VCCS system office
 - Staff at four-year institutions and SCHEV
 - K-12 school division staff
- Surveys of community college and VCCS system office staff
- Document and literature reviews

In this presentation

Student success

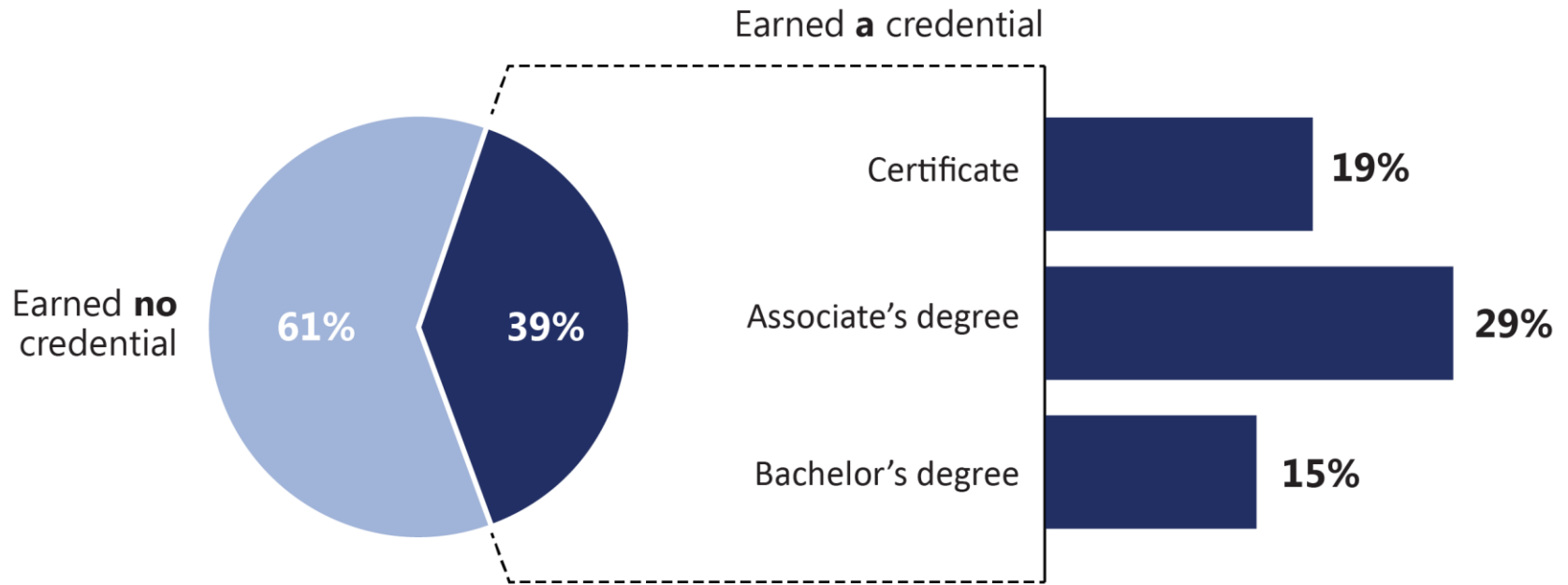
Dual enrollment and transfer policies

Community college affordability

JLARC staff analyzed academic outcomes for more than 50,000 students

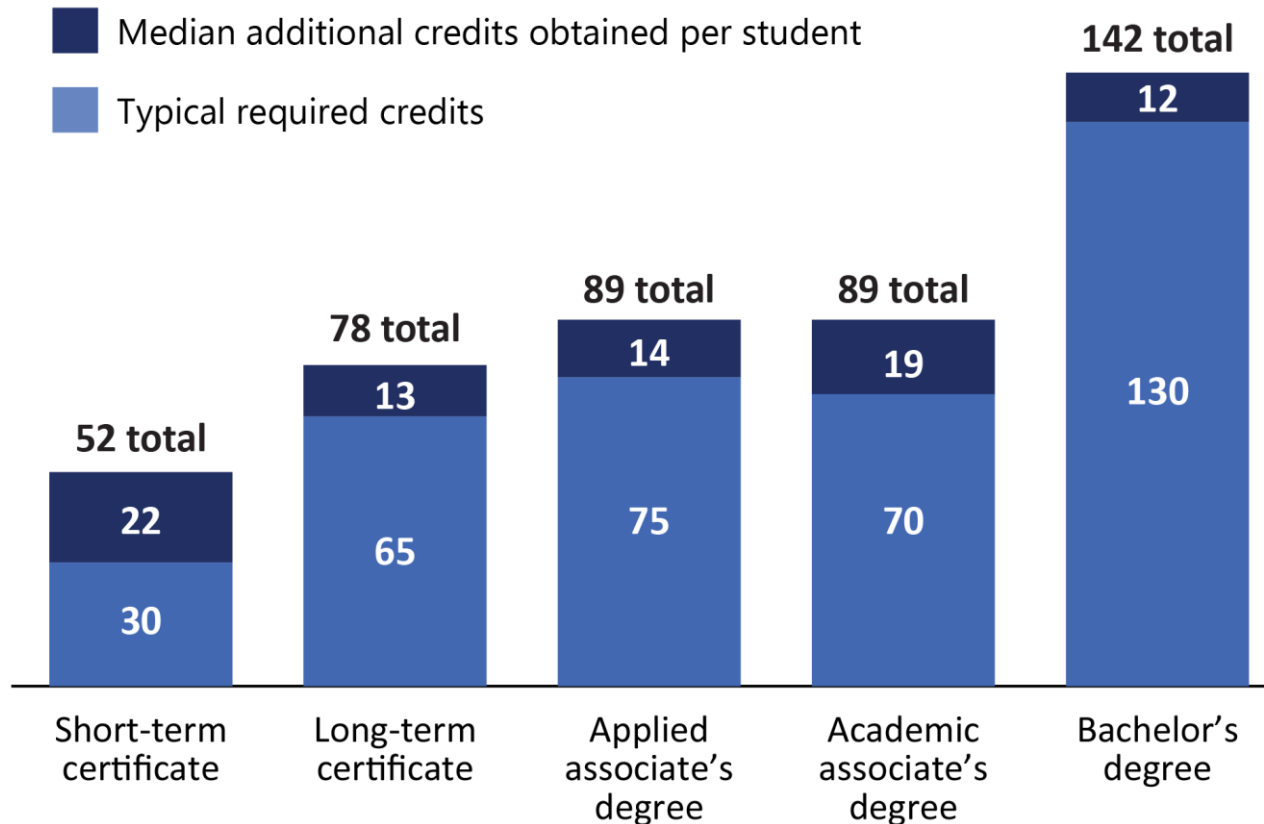
- Seeking a degree or credential
- Age 17-19 when entering community college
- Earning at least 12 credits in their first year

Majority of community college students did not earn a credential



Percentages do not total to 39% as some students obtain more than one type of credential. Does not include students enrolled in non-credit community college programs.

Most students earned more than minimum number of credits needed for a credential



Totals include remedial credits, which do not count toward degrees or credentials.

Identifying college preparedness gaps in high school could improve student success

- Nearly two-thirds of students were required to take remedial English or math
- Students needing remediation are identified when enrolling in community college
- In other states, students needing remediation are identified in high school, and high schools take steps to improve college preparedness

Recommendation

VCCS and VDOE should develop a proposal for

- (i) administering standardized testing to high school students to determine their college readiness and
- (ii) improving the college readiness of high school students.

Academic advising can improve student success

- Students using advising services are more likely to complete a credential
 - More engaged
 - More likely to stay and graduate
- Regular, mandatory meetings with an adviser is considered a best practice

Most students do not receive adequate academic advising services

- Academic advising is mostly optional, and many students do not use it
 - Majority of colleges do not require students to meet with advisers at critical times
- Advising caseloads are too high to meet student advising needs
 - 21 (of 23) colleges reported advising is difficult to provide

Recommendations

VCCS should develop a

- policy for colleges to provide mandatory academic advising services.
- proposal for improving colleges' advising capacity.

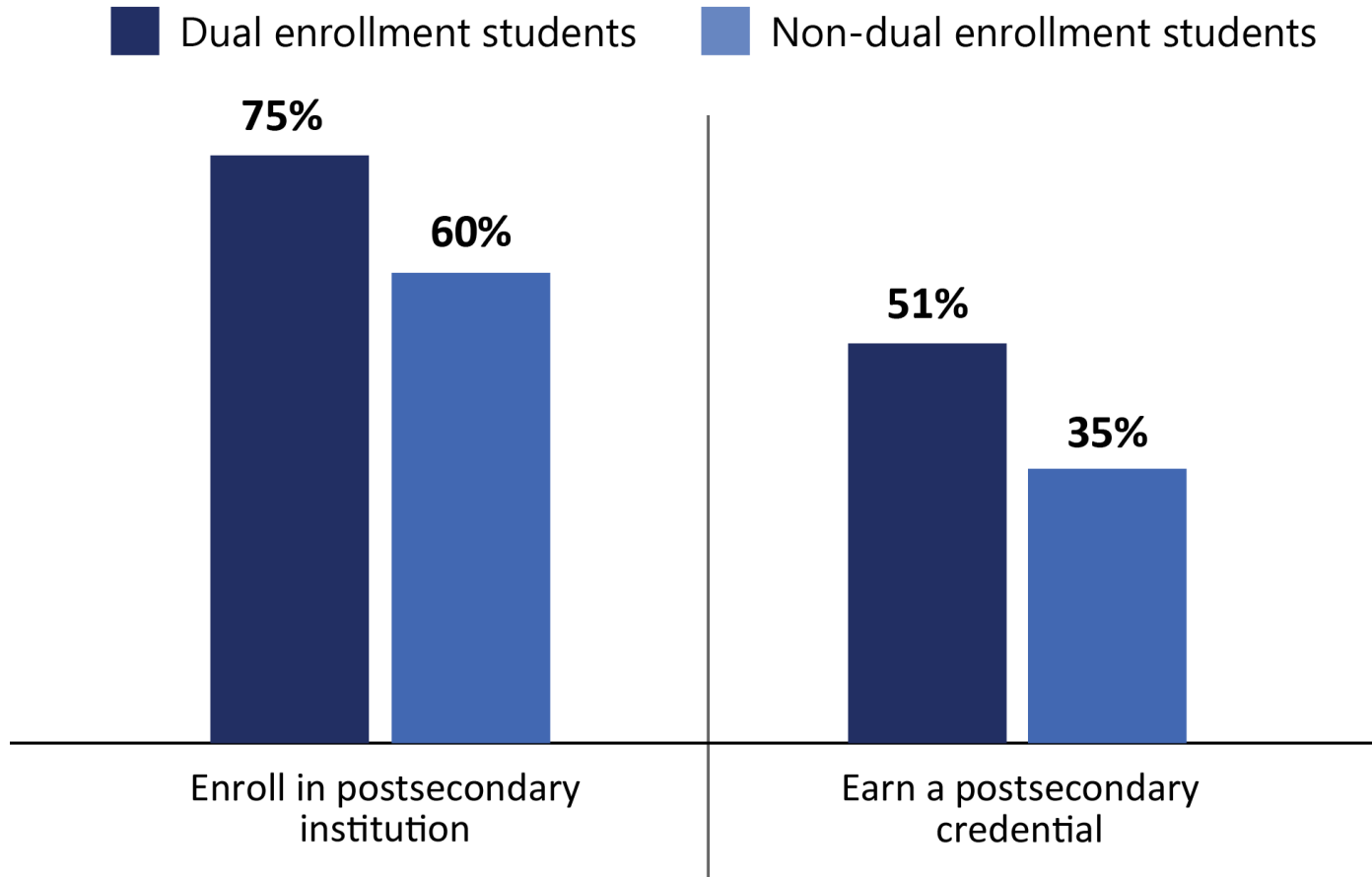
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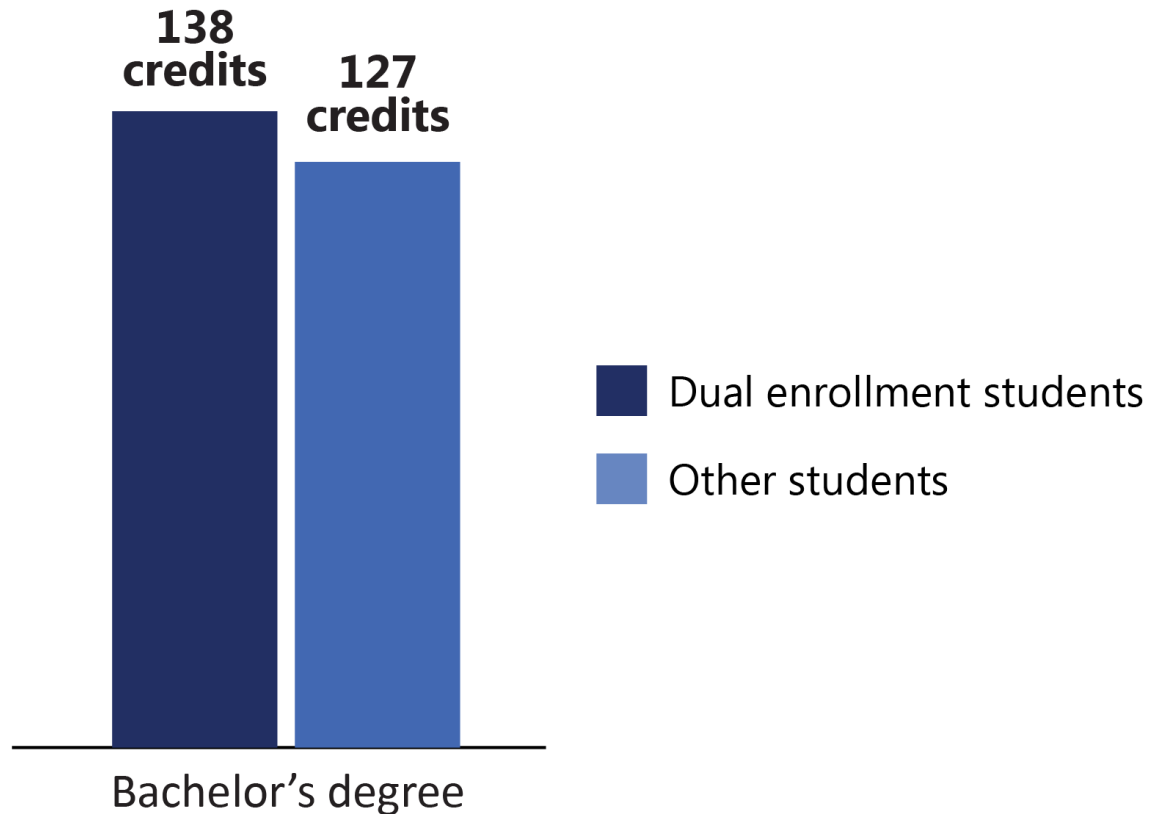
Higher proportion of dual enrollment students enroll in college and earn credentials



Dual enrollment reduces time and cost for students directly entering community college

- Compared to non-dual enrollment students, dual enrollment students starting in community college
 - take 1 less semester to earn associate's and bachelor's degrees
 - accumulate similar number of credits to earn associate's and bachelor's degrees

Dual enrollment does not reduce time and cost for students directly entering four-year institutions



Note: 55% of dual enrollment students enter four-year institutions directly from high school.

Four-year institutions are reluctant to accept dual enrollment credits

- Four-year institutions express concerns about quality and content of dual enrollment courses

“Students whose dual enrollment course work was taken solely in high school were not prepared for [college-level] course work.” – University staff

- Community colleges report student difficulties transferring dual enrollment credits

“Some [four-year] colleges do not want to accept dual enrollment courses as transfer.” – Community college staff

Colleges do not consistently use quality assurance practices for dual enrollment courses

- Staff at 16 community colleges reported difficulty ensuring the quality of dual enrollment courses
- Colleges do not consistently use nationally recommended quality assurance practices
 - Classroom observations not consistently conducted by half of colleges
 - Instructor performance not consistently evaluated by one-third of colleges

Recommendations

The General Assembly may wish to consider requiring public four-year institutions to annually report data that would allow VCCS and SCHEV to identify dual enrollment courses that are not accepted for credit.

VCCS should require community colleges and school divisions to clearly disclose to students which community colleges and programs will accept their dual enrollment credits.

VCCS should coordinate with VDOE to require that community colleges use recommended practices to ensure dual enrollment courses are high-quality.

Difficulty recruiting dual enrollment instructors contributes to program shortcomings

- 77% of colleges identified recruiting instructors as a challenge
 - High school instructors must meet minimum credentials
- Other states provide financial assistance to help instructors earn credentials
 - Loan forgiveness
 - Competitive grants

Recommendation

The General Assembly may wish to consider creating a financial assistance grant program to help high school teachers earn credentials for teaching dual enrollment courses.

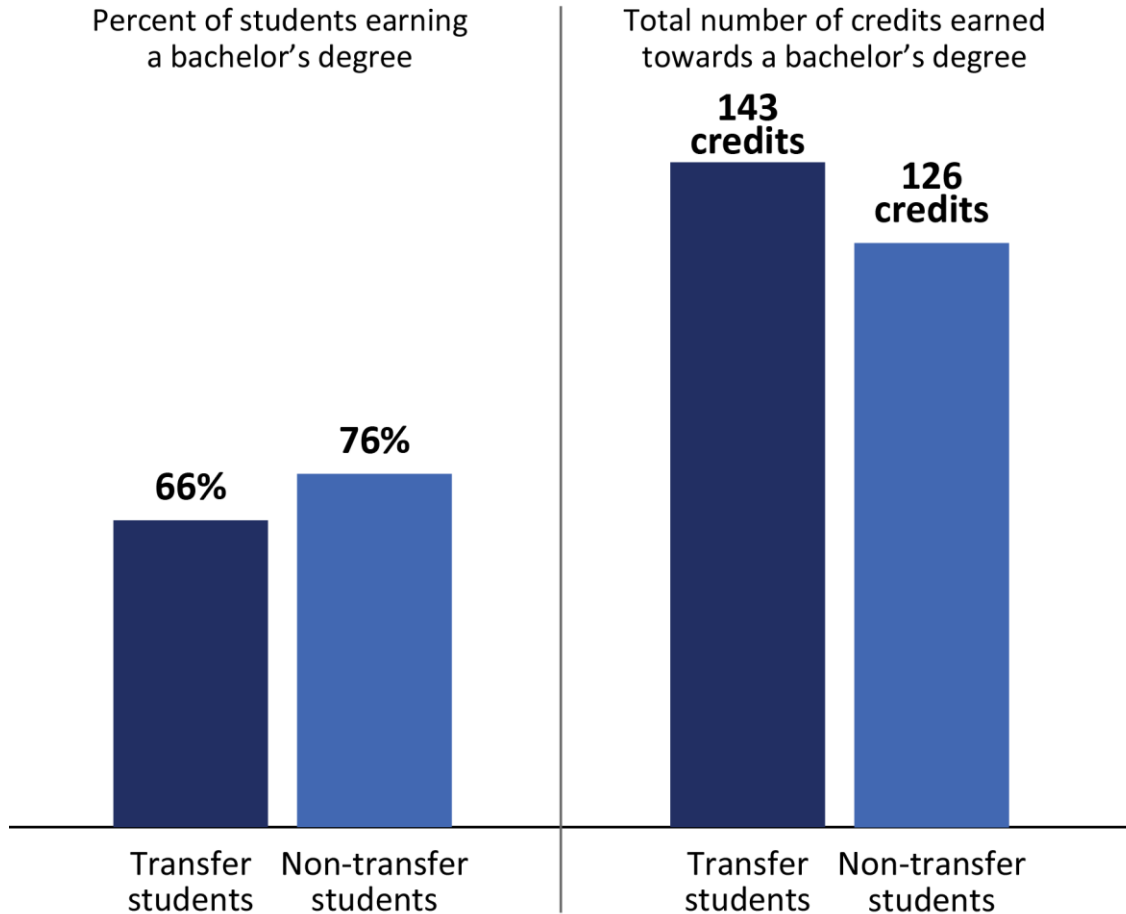
Dual enrollment funding model leads to statewide variation in program costs

- Statewide variation in
 - Prices students pay
 - Program costs to community colleges and school divisions
- Administrative costs of program are not covered by existing funding approach

Recommendation

VCCS and VDOE should collect data on dual enrollment expenditures from each community college and school division. This data should be used to develop a single, statewide dual enrollment funding formula and tuition and fee structure.

Transfer students earn bachelor's degrees at lower rates and accumulate more credits



Transfer students take longer to earn bachelor's degrees

- Transfer students took 1 year longer than non-transfer students
 - Transfer students took longer at all four-year institutions
- Additional credits are roughly equivalent to a full semester
 - \$2,420 in tuition and fees at a community college
 - \$6,780 at the average four-year institution

Transfer process and resources are difficult to use

- Transfer agreements have proliferated and are difficult to find
 - 338 identified
 - Transfer resources maintained on multiple websites
- Agreements do not always indicate whether community college credits will be applied to bachelor's degree requirements
 - Students may discover that some credits were not applied to degree requirements

Recommendations

The General Assembly may wish to consider requiring

- VCCS to maintain a single online repository for all transfer resources, including agreements.
- four-year institutions and community colleges to develop more useful transfer agreements consistent with guidelines set by SCHEV.
- four-year institutions to keep transfer agreements up-to-date.

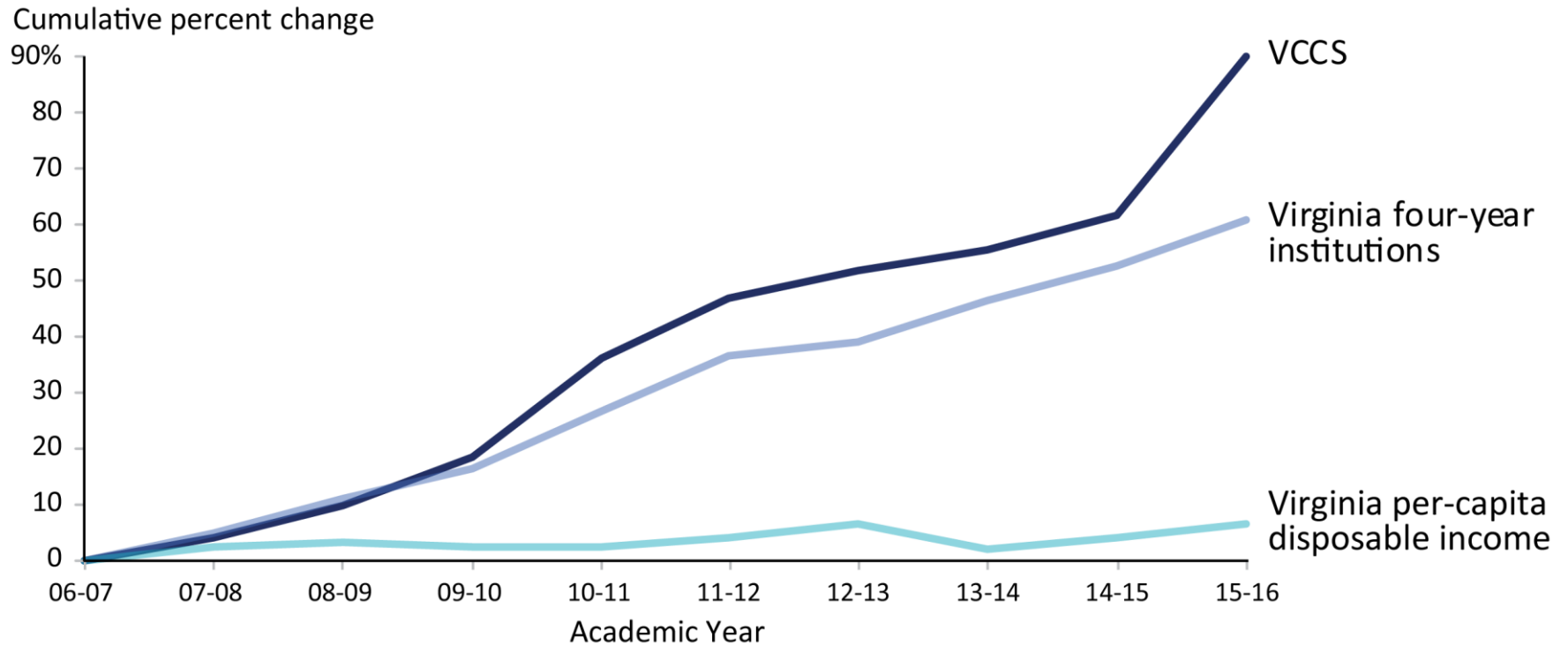
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VCCS tuition increased faster than 4-year institutions and per capita income



Adjusted for inflation

VCCS uses metrics that are not relevant to affordability

- State Board for Community Colleges considers tuition relative to other states and four-year institutions to evaluate affordability
- Boards in other states consider more comprehensive information
 - Availability of financial aid
 - Change in net price relative to income

Recommendation

When tuition and fee increases are considered, VCCS staff must present to the State Board for Community Colleges:

- Tuition and “net price” relative to income in each college’s service area
- Changes in availability of financial aid relative to increases in tuition and fees

QUESTIONS?