

Finish First North Carolina Evaluation Executive Summary

Rachel Worsham and Holley Nichols

Finish First North Carolina (FFNC) is a data tool that draws on current and past transcript records to identify students who have fulfilled requirements to complete credentials, but have not claimed them, as well as students who are close to completing a credential. Developed by Wake Technical Community College, FFNC is free to all community colleges in North Carolina through grant funding. As of October 2020, FFNC has been distributed to over 40 of North Carolina's 58 community colleges.

During the spring of 2020, the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research conducted an evaluation to learn more about the initial implementation of the tool at North Carolina community colleges. The evaluation team invited 19 partner North Carolina community colleges (PCs) to participate in virtual focus groups. During these sessions, the evaluators spoke to 29 staff members about their experiences regarding the FFNC tool. Guided by the Evaluation Questions (EQs) provided to the evaluators by Wake Technical Community College, this report answers questions across three primary areas:

1. Finish First NC Use
2. Finish First NC Implementation and Utilization
3. Partner Colleges' Perception of Finish First NC.

We conclude with recommendations for Wake Technical Community College and PCs planning to implement FFNC on their campus.

FINDINGS

FFNC Use

Of the colleges that participated in focus groups, most use the tool to identify both students who completed a credential and those who are very near completion of a degree or certification. While most colleges use the tool to identify completers and near completers that are currently enrolled, only half used the tool to identify students who were previously enrolled.

In addition to variation in the use of the tool, we found that colleges tasked different offices with running the tool. Generally, colleges chose to house the FFNC tool in one of four offices: office of the registrar, information technology, institutional research (IR), and admissions. Once the tool was run, colleges typically sent lists of completers and near completers to units that award credentials (registrars or records office) and units that advise students (advising centers, faculty advisors, or dean's offices).

FFNC Implementation and Utilization

In addition to documenting colleges' use of FFNC, we also sought to understand the factors that impacted an institution's ability to implement the tool. We found that a colleges' approach to and

levels of implementation were usually dependent on four factors:

1. Leadership support - Though all colleges expressed that their executive leadership was supportive of bringing the tool to campus, leadership support and direction toward units that would be tasked with utilizing the data varied between colleges. Colleges with leaders that more proactively guided units in how to use the data experienced smoother implementation.
2. Personnel capacity - Colleges with more personnel capacity in the units that validated and processed FFNC data were able to implement all functions of FFNC more quickly.
3. Policies - Colleges that already had policies, such as autograduation, in place that facilitated degree completion were able to implement FFNC more fully in the first year.
4. Organizational culture - Colleges with a culture of adjusting to change more quickly were better able to implement the tool on their campuses.

PCs also identified several challenges associated with FFNC implementation. These challenges center around personnel capacity, ability to run the tool in a timely manner, technology issues, and existing institutional policies.

1. Personnel capacity - In some cases, the units whose workflow would be most impacted by FFNC (usually registrar's office or academic advisors) were not fully involved in the implementation process, which caused confusion and inefficiencies.
2. Ability to run the tool in a timely manner - PCs reported that, if the tool were run on near-completers too close to registration, advisors would not have enough time to meet with students about their schedules.
3. Technology issues - Not all PCs set up their student record platforms in the same way, which sometimes prevented FFNC from running correctly.
4. Existing institutional policies - Some PCs' policies, including required graduation applications and frequent changes to curricula, lessened the efficacy of the tool.

PC's Perceptions of FFNC

Colleges reported that time - initially learning the tool and acting upon the data in terms of graduating and advising identified students - was the primary cost to implementing the tool. Colleges perceived this cost was far outweighed by the benefits colleges reported, which include: increased completion rates, accelerated internal process efficiencies within units, enhanced ability to plan courses based on students' anticipated needs, and opportunities to increase FTE by re-enrolling previously enrolled students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, we offer several recommendations for Wake Technical Community College (the creators and administrators of FFNC), as well as colleges hoping to implement the tool on their campus. Below are highlights from the report.

Recommendations for Wake Technical Community College include:

1. Create a community forum or opportunities for PCs to share promising practices.
2. When bringing new institutions on board with the tool, incorporate resources for key college leaders with successful implementation recommendations. Consider connecting new PCs with PCs that have successfully implemented the tool to encourage mentorship and sharing of

promising practices.

3. Create a manual with detailed instructions on how to run the tool, as well as screenshots for every step.
4. Update the tool to provide student information like demographics and academic adviser in each report.
5. Provide a report for Career & College Promise (CCP) students who are dually enrolled in the community college and their high school.
6. Consider integrating the tool with existing student advising software like AVISO, so that advisors can not only alert near completers, but recommend courses that would fit their program.

Recommendations for colleges planning to implement FFNC include:

1. Before implementation, bring campus stakeholders together to discuss:
 - a. For which purpose the PC will use the tool.
 - b. Current graduation policies and any possible changes that should be made.
 - c. Stackable credential policies.
 - d. Creating an annual FFNC data timeline.
2. Once implemented, colleges should consider
 - a. Informing the whole college, particularly academic advisers and faculty members, about the tool to avoid confusion.
 - b. Releasing updates once a semester about the use of the tool and its impacts on completion.
 - c. Specifically incorporate language about FFNC in job descriptions and employee evaluations of personnel who will be interacting with the tool frequently.
 - d. Connecting with other colleges to determine other uses for the tool and to share promising practices.
 - e. Communicate with the FFNC team at Wake Technical Community College about any issues with the tool or areas for improvement.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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The Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research at NC State's College of Education develops and sustains exceptional community college leadership committed to advancing college access, the social and economic mobility of their colleges' students, and the economic competitiveness of their regions. The Center conducts and disseminates research to address current and emerging student success challenges facing community college leadership and policymakers in North Carolina and beyond.

Finish First North Carolina Evaluation Report 1

Rachel Worsham and Holley Nichols

The Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research

INTRODUCTION

Finish First North Carolina (FFNC) is a tool that draws on current and past transcript records to identify students who have fulfilled requirements to complete credentials but have not claimed them, as well as students who are close to completing a credential. Developed by Wake Technical Community College, through grant funding FFNC is free to all community colleges in North Carolina. As of October 2020, it has been distributed to over 40 of North Carolina's 58 community colleges.

In the spring of 2020, we contacted 19 partner colleges (PCs) who have implemented the FFNC tool and requested that staff at each institution participate in a focus group about their experience with the tool. To create the focus groups, we asked individuals to self-identify as serving in any of the following roles:

1. FFNC Champions and Coordinators - Those who led efforts to implement FFNC at their institution and/or have worked to foster collaboration across departments to ensure the success of the school's FFNC efforts.
2. Program Users - Those who interact directly with the FFNC interface by running the program or maintaining program files, verifying or manipulating output files, and/or distributing output files to those in the college who can use them.
3. Output Users - Those who work directly with output information to enhance advising efforts, increase completion rates, re-enroll students, or achieve related aims.

A total of 29 individuals representing 18 partner colleges (PCs) participated in virtual focus groups. They were asked questions that probed their awareness of FFNC, interactions with the tool, and thoughts about how the tool was implemented on campus. Researchers who facilitated the focus groups were responsible for taking thorough notes on participant responses and group dynamics. Data from all focus groups were analyzed to identify overarching themes. In conjunction with information about all FFNC PCs gathered by the FFNC team at Wake Technical Community College, focus group data informed the findings shared in this report. (Please see Appendix A for a complete methodological overview.)

DEFINING KEY TERMS

- Completer - Students who completed a credential but have not claimed the award
- Near Completer - Students in striking distance of completing a credential; a student is in striking distance when they have completed 80% of a degree, 75% of a diploma, and 50% of a certificate

- Partner Colleges (PCs) - Colleges that have implemented the FFNC tool
- First 15 PCs - The first 15 colleges that implemented the FFNC tool

FINDINGS

The findings in this report respond to the Evaluation Questions (EQs) provided to the evaluators by Wake Technical Community College and address three primary areas: use of Finish First North Carolina (FFNC), implementation and utilization of FFNC, and perceptions of FFNC. They also include a summary of next steps in the evaluation process.

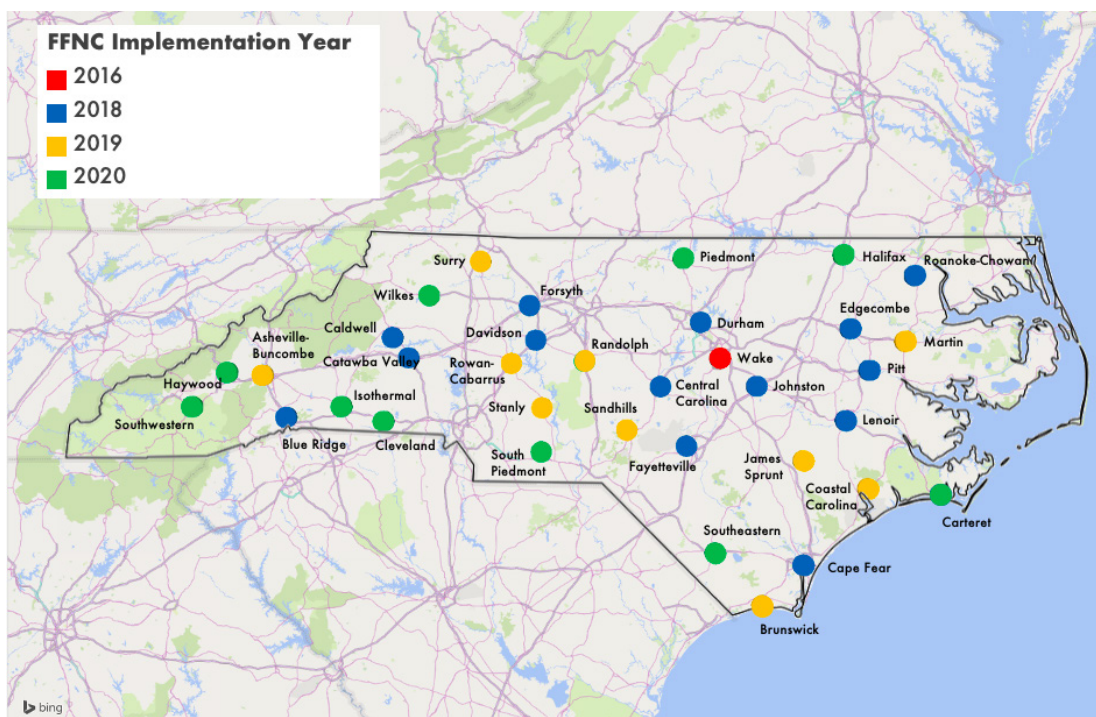
Use of Finish First North Carolina

This section reviews how PCs have incorporated FFNC into their college operations. The following EQs guide our report of findings:

1. What are the characteristics of PCs that have implemented the FFNC tool?
2. How has the FFNC tool been implemented across partner colleges?
 - a. For what purposes are each of the PCs using FFNC data?
 - b. How often and when do PCs use the FFNC tool?
 - c. What PC offices are involved in data generation and dissemination processes?

EQ1: What are the characteristics of PCs that have implemented the FFNC tool?

As of October 2020, 43 of North Carolina's 58 community colleges are using the FFNC tool. Nearly all of the PCs are located in rural or suburban areas, with very few situated in urban locations. Most of the PCs enroll between 500 and 5,000 students. Six colleges enroll more than 5,000 students and one of those enrolls more than 10,000 students. One of the PCs enrolls less than 500 students. Fifteen of the PCs, the First 15 PCs, were among the first to adopt the FFNC tool. At the time of this evaluation, they have been using it for two full academic years. Other PCs began implementing the tool in 2019 or 2020.



Please see Appendices B and C for more details about PCs that use the FFNC tool. Appendix B includes the demographic characteristics of students at PCs by Carnegie Classification.¹ Appendix C outlines the different ways colleges are using the FFNC tool.

EQ2A: For what purposes are each of the PCs using FFNC data?

We answered this question using data from 22 of the 24 colleges that implemented the FFNC tool before spring 2020. Colleges that planned to implement FFNC in Spring 2020 were not included because they did not have enough interaction with the tool to provide adequate feedback at the time of data collection. Additionally, Covid-related disruptions at the college may have delayed full implementation.

Eighteen of the 22 colleges for which we have data (see Appendix C) are using the FFNC tool to identify Completers and Near Completers. Of the colleges who implemented FFNC, only one is focusing on Near Completers but not Completers. Approximately half of the PCs are using the tool to identify Completers among previously enrolled students. We did not see a relationship between how fully the colleges are leveraging the tool and how long they have used the tool. In focus groups, participants that were not yet fully leveraging the tool (i.e., to identify currently enrolled Completers and Near Completers and previously enrolled Completers and Near Completers) expressed hope that use of the tool at their colleges would be expanded in the future.

All but one of the PCs for which we have data are using the FFNC tool to examine diplomas, associate degrees, and certificates. In focus groups, participants said they examine all credentials with the tool because there could be overlap between lower- and higher-level credentials. Only 7 of the 22 institutions for which we have data automatically award credentials; most do not require students to pay a fee to graduate. About half of the PCs are using FFNC data to guide student advising sessions, but fewer PCs are using data for recruitment purposes.

EQ2B: How often and when do partner colleges use the FFNC tool?

Generally, colleges use the FFNC tool 1-2 times per semester; however, the timing varies across institutions and depends heavily on the college's use of data. First 15 PCs reported using the tool twice a semester or more. This may indicate that the longer a PC has access to the tool, the more they will utilize it to support their completion goals.

When it comes to timing, many colleges find it useful to employ the tool at the midpoint of the semester, immediately before course registration for the upcoming semester. The tool is used at this juncture to identify Near Completers and data is disseminated to advising offices in this case. Focus group participants reported that using the tool before registration allowed them to give advisers the information they need to help Near Completers make informed course-taking decisions.

PCs that focus on identifying Completers with the FFNC tool tend to use it closer to the end of the semester, either 1-2 months before graduation or after final grades are posted. Colleges with graduation applications used the tool in the last month of the semester to identify students who were likely to graduate and needed to file a graduation application. Colleges also use the tool after final grades are posted to verify which students completed a credential.

¹ Carnegie Classification is a framework for classifying colleges and universities. For this evaluation, we utilized size classifications as reported to IPEDS.

For many colleges, the FFNC tool is used at optimal times for identifying Near Completers or Completers. However, some PCs do not follow a set schedule and use the tool at their convenience. For example, one institution uses the tool after the registration rush while another runs the tool “whenever [they] get around to it.” This is likely due to personnel capacity issues, as both of these institutions house the FFNC tool in the registrar’s office, which is often responsible for time-consuming registration and graduation processes.

Please see Appendix D for a data dissemination schedule we have identified as an exemplar. This PC uses the FFNC tool to identify Near Completers and Completers who are currently enrolled as well as those who are no longer enrolled.

EQ2C: What PC offices are involved in data generation and dissemination processes? Our focus groups revealed that PCs house the FFNC tool in one of four offices: registrar, information technology, institutional research (IR), or admissions. According to participants, decisions to house the tool in specific offices are often guided by who brings the tool to the institution. For example, one registrar learned about the tool at a North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) conference and brought the idea to senior leadership on their campus. Ultimately, the college’s leadership decided to house the tool in this individual’s office. At other colleges, the location of the tool was determined by technical capabilities. Because the tool requires the user to pull data from student record systems and course catalogs, it made sense to locate it in offices that already dealt with these data systems. This way, users of the tool would not require as much additional training.

Once data are retrieved using the FFNC tool, there are two types of units that typically receive it: Units in charge of awarding credentials. These units usually include registrar and records, where data from the FFNC tool are cross-referenced with additional institutional data to ensure identified Completers are eligible for a credential.

Units in charge of advising. These units are often centralized academic advising centers or dean’s offices that distribute the list of Near Completers to faculty advisers. These units utilize data to assist Near Completers choose courses for the next semester.

Implementation and Utilization of Finish First NC

This section discusses various factors that influence FFNC implementation and utilization across PCs. The following EQs guide our report of findings:

1. What are PCs’ approaches to FFNC implementation?
2. What factors affect FFNC implementation and utilization?
3. What are the challenges associated with FFNC implementation and utilization?
4. What are promising practices for FFNC implementation and utilization?

EQ1: What are PCs’ approaches to FFNC implementation? The FFNC tool was initially presented to PCs in one of three ways: via a presentation at the North Carolina Association of Community College Presidents (NCACCP) meeting, a presentation given by the FFNC team at their own institution, or a workshop organized by the NC Community

College System (NCCCS). Typically, executive leaders, including presidents, vice presidents, and deans, made the decision to adopt the tool on their campuses. None of the college leaders experienced resistance to FFNC implementation on their campuses. “We just presented [to the college Provost] how it would work for [identified students] to receive the degree even without applying. It was very easy to sell. Not even really a sell, more like, ‘Yes, this is great. Let’s do it.’” For the most part, units that interact with the tool directly (e.g., registrar’s office) were not consulted before the decision was made. However, at some PCs, a presentation of the tool was given to relevant staff before the college agreed to implementation.

Approaches to implementation vary widely among the PCs and depend on institutional priorities. Some reported that the first phase of implementation included running a list of all Completers. Several PC staff described this as a “big batch” to clean up their databases, which retained records of students who appeared to be active but had completed a credential. Others said they focused on the advising potential of the tool for Near Completers before identifying the Completers. Use of the tool for previously enrolled students was not the first priority for any PCs because of the difficulty associated with reaching students who are no longer enrolled. However, despite challenges, 10 PCs did implement the tool for previously enrolled students. More details on implementation can be found in Appendix C.

EQ2: What factors affect FFNC implementation and utilization?

Our data collection revealed that, in many cases, institutional leaders who brought the FFNC tool to their colleges influenced how the tool would be implemented. For example, PC leaders interested in increasing full-time equivalent (FTE) were most likely to use the tool for identifying Near Completers who were no longer enrolled. In other cases, personnel capacity was named as an important factor in a college’s ability to implement the tool. Focus group participants noted that using the tool is easy; however, ensuing data validation and student outreach is time consuming. One participant noted that translating data into action is difficult because of staffing shortages: “I think there is no point in running this report unless you have the people to do the work to reach out and make contacts.”

Focus group participants also noted that participation in certain system-wide initiatives affects whether and how colleges implement the FFNC tool. For example, PCs that are part of the NC Guided Pathways to Success program are better able to award stackable credentials (credentials earned along the way to a final degree) since that program requires institutions to improve program mapping and alignment between sub-programs and broader parent programs. FFNC further supports stackable credentialing by making it easy to identify Completers and Near Completers. Other colleges have delayed implementing FFNC because their staff is prioritizing other time-intensive student success initiatives such as Reinforced Instruction for Student Excellence (RISE).

In some cases, the level of implementation seems to be more closely connected to overall organizational culture rather than discrete policies or initiatives at the college. One PC staff member summed this up by saying, “We [at the college] are not ever early adopters of new procedures. We are very slow moving toward using [FFNC].” Several focus group participants noted they are still trying to develop workflow processes and make decisions about who is responsible and how data are shared. This challenge emerged regardless of how many semesters a PC has been using the tool. Someone at one of the First 15 PCs remarked, “[It] still feels relatively new ... even though we’ve been using it for six semesters.”

EQ3: What are the challenges associated with FFNC implementation and utilization? One of the primary barriers to implementation we identified relates to workflow and personnel. In some cases, the units whose workflow would be most impacted by FFNC (usually the registrar’s office or academic advising) were not fully involved in determining how the tool would be implemented. The resulting confusion and inefficiencies were noted by focus group participants, including one registrar who expressed feeling “thrown into” new procedures associated with the tool. Staff at some PCs also indicated that the additional work brought on by FFNC implementation has led to resistance. One dean illustrated this challenge by sharing, “The registrar did not and does not want to cooperate. We still have to find workarounds. Sometimes we have to get the provost involved directly. We didn’t think there would be so much resistance.”

In other situations, PCs do not have the personnel in place to fully utilize the tool. For example, lists of Completers and Near Completers are pulled, but bandwidth is insufficient to reach out to students on the list. This leads to another challenge related to timing. Near Completers must be identified well ahead of registration to allow sufficient time for advisers to use data effectively. Completers should be identified near the end of each semester. However, at some PCs, staff are stretched thin during these key times and are therefore unable to run reports in a timely manner when they are needed most.

The third challenge of implementation we identified relates to FFNC being incompatible with systems at some PCs. While all North Carolina community colleges use Colleague and Informer to run FFNC reports, Colleague is not configured the same way at every institution. One focus group participant shared that, because their Colleague system was set up differently, some of the data fields were not reporting accurately when they tried to run FFNC reports. The FFNC team provided support to correct the issue, but the resulting delay affected momentum and implementation at the college.

Institutional policies and practices present a final challenge to the implementation of FFNC at certain colleges. Staff at PCs with required graduation applications and fees remarked that these policies prevent them from reaping the full rewards of the tool. At colleges that do not allow students to auto-graduate, staff must contact students about their pending graduation and walk them through the necessary paperwork. When outdated contact information or transient student populations make it difficult to complete this step, students cannot receive their credential even if they are identified as a Completer..

Practices related to program codes similarly hindered full utilization of FFNC at several PCs. Many colleges regularly update their curricula to reflect workforce demands, but when this leads to changes in program codes or degree requirements it can cause issues with FFNC reporting. For example, students who entered college under one degree program may appear to have met all requirements when, in actuality, more recent requirements are unmet. This issue requires that staff who use FFNC data perform manual verification of students identified as Completers.

EQ4: What are promising practices for FFNC implementation and utilization? Staff at PCs identified several successful strategies to overcome implementation barriers and improve utilization. These emerged in two categories:

Policy. Data revealed colleges that have already eliminated graduation fees and applications

experience greater utilization of the FFNC tool. Auto-graduation systems not only reduce the amount of staff time needed to reach out to Completers, but also eliminate a significant barrier to completion for students. It is important to note that staff from one PC expressed concern about the ethics of auto-graduation procedures, as they allow institutions to graduate students without direct consent. In response to this concern, another focus group participant suggested “opt out” policies whereby students receive a completion notification and have a prescribed amount of time to opt out. If a student does not respond in the designated time frame they are awarded the credential.

Policies that award stackable credentials were also discussed as a promising practice for FFNC utilization. Stackable credentials allow students to earn certificates en route to their final degree, which can increase the employability of students while they are enrolled. For example, a student enrolled in an HVAC program at one PC has the opportunity to earn seven certificates before receiving their degree. The FFNC tool can be used to easily identify students who have completed credentials along the way to their final degree so those credentials can be awarded. It can also be used to let students know if the credentials they hold are part of a larger degree program, which may motivate those students to continue the path toward a degree.

A final policy recommendation involved requiring early collaboration across departments to determine when reports would be run and acted on and who is responsible for doing so. It was emphasized that these decisions should be made before FFNC implementation and all relevant parties should be involved. According to focus group participants, additional topics to be discussed in this planning phase should include where the data will live, how reports will be used, and staffing/timing challenges must be addressed. Individuals from one PC followed this model and shared that it increased awareness of the FFNC tool across the college in addition to improving efficacy. One participant noted, “It’s fine and good to say we want to do this but when push comes to shove, if we don’t have a policy or procedure in place, it’s not going to happen,” reinforcing the value of policies to ensure FFNC is smoothly implemented and fully utilized.

Personnel. As it relates to personnel, consensus building in advance of FFNC implementation is key. Many focus group participants highlighted the importance of garnering public support from executive leaders in order to compel other stakeholders at the college to adopt the tool. One PC staff member suggested writing a publicly-available, informational report about FFNC as a way to facilitate buy-in and educate people across the college. This report could articulate what the tool is, goals for its use, and how various offices would be involved.

Whether via an informational report or some other avenue, FFNC implementation must be communicated to personnel at the college. Otherwise, issues arise like the instance at one PC where students were receiving completion letters and faculty members—unaware of the new process—were unable to advise them appropriately. This communication goes hand-in-hand with coordination of key staff to ensure that FFNC yields the desired results. As previously mentioned, workloads for staff often increase once FFNC is adopted, particularly at smaller colleges. Staff from these PCs recommended cross-training individuals so more than one person can assist with various FFNC-related tasks. Coordinating efforts across units can also make work more efficient. For example, some focus group participants suggested that registrars should coordinate with instructional units to ensure program codes and degree requirements are regularly updated.

PLANNING AN IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

Based on our findings on promising practices, we offer a few suggestions for colleges planning to implement the FFNC tool and have included a worksheet in Appendix E that colleges can use to plan. First, when determining how to begin using the tool, college leaders should consider institutional goals or priorities. For example, does the college wish to improve completion for a specific degree program? Does the college want to focus on currently enrolled students? Does the college wish to engage in a “stop out” campaign where they focus on formerly enrolled students with some college but no degree? Based on this assessment, leaders should rank the uses of FFNC data from most to least important and connect the data and tool to specific institutional goals or commitments.

While FFNC does produce a great deal of useful information, colleges have reported that validating and acting on the data requires significant time and effort. Therefore, the second step college leaders should take is to diagnose their college’s capacity to implement FFNC by considering personnel and resource capacity (e.g., number of individuals in each office that would be involved with the tool and their existing job responsibilities). Institutions should determine whether they have low capacity (few personnel with limited time to devote to validating FFNC data and acting on it), medium capacity (some personnel who can devote some time to validating and acting on FFNC data) or high capacity (enough personnel with enough time to devote substantial effort toward validating and acting on FFNC data).

Third, after aligning use of the FFNC tool with institutional goals and identifying capacity, college leaders should discuss what is feasible to implement first and how long it will take to fully implement the tool. In doing so, leaders should consider whether their college is positioned to fully implement the tool (e.g., using it to identify formerly enrolled Near Completers for diplomas, certificates and degrees) or partially implement the tool (e.g., using it to identify formerly enrolled Near Completers only for associate degrees).

- We suggest that leaders at colleges with “low” capacity focus on one goal each academic year. This goal might be to fully or partially implement one use of the tool. For example, college leaders might decide to identify currently enrolled Completers in associate degree programs in the first year with the goal of expanding to identify currently enrolled diploma and certificate program Completers the following year. This represents a move from partial to full implementation of one use of the tool over the course of two years.
- Leaders at colleges with “medium” capacity should consider implementing one use of the tool each semester. For example, leaders can identify currently enrolled Completers in associate degree programs in the first semester and begin identifying currently enrolled Completers in diploma and certificate programs the following semester. This represents a move from partial to full implementation of one use of the tool over two semesters.
- Finally, we suggest fully implementing one use of the tool at colleges with “high” capacity with the option of partially or fully implementing another use of the tool in a subsequent semester.

Perceptions of Finish First NC

This section discusses perceptions of the FFNC tool among PCs. The following EQs guide our report of findings:

1. What are the costs and benefits associated with implementing the FFNC tool?
2. How satisfied are PCs with the FFNC tool?
3. How satisfied are PCs with support from the FFNC team?

EQ1: *What are the costs and benefits associated with implementing the FFNC tool?*

Focus group participants identified time as the primary cost of FFNC implementation. All FFNC users must spend time initially to learn how to use the tool, and once the tool is adopted time is required to verify and act on the data produced. According to data we collected, registrar's offices hold most of the verification responsibilities. One registrar employee summarized, "[FFNC] added more stuff for us to look at manually. It took us a lot of time to check all of those (lists) by hand." Time costs associated with acting on the data seem to fall most heavily on advisers. At PCs with a centralized advising office, staff felt the FFNC tool creates an extra process to their workload. Colleges with a decentralized advising structure that shares advising duties across faculty face their own challenges. As a dean at one PC shared, "Asking them [faculty] to spend more time looking at [FFNC data] feels like an additional workload."

PC representatives reported that the main benefit of implementing the FFNC tool is increased completion. Advisers noted that, upon hearing of their degree progress, their students are galvanized to earn their credentials. One adviser said, "As an adviser I see more motivation and encouragement from the students because of the tool. Not realizing that they might be that close, then we help connect students with the resources they need to be able to finish." A student's ability to complete a credential has implications for economic mobility since each completed credential increases a student's employability and opens opportunities for promotions in their industry.

According to focus group participants, the FFNC tool increases credential completion rates in part because it removes the need for students to self-identify as Completers. Before FFNC, many students did not apply for graduation even when they had completed required coursework. The tool is thus considered instrumental for updating student data systems and maintaining accuracy in completion tracking. PC staff also described process efficiencies that have been accelerated by the use of FFNC. The tool provides information that facilitates reporting required by the NCCC System Office. "We were still hand calculating graduation courses [before FFNC]," one focus group participant told us. Another PC staff added, "We were doing this on a small scale, and we were aware that some were falling through the cracks. This tool was like a big net to capture nearly all."

SERENDIPITOUS BENEFITS OF THE FFNC TOOL

Beyond the benefits that FFNC brought to students and colleges in terms of completion, focus group participants identified several unintentional benefits that came to light once they implemented the tool. One PC staff member noted, "You don't know what you don't know, and the tool helps us to have concrete knowledge of data. A lot of times, we have so much data we're drowning, and we

don't always know what to do with it or have time to do anything with it, but this has actually been actionable data that has led us to do some great interventions."

PC staff reported that the tool helps directors and department chairs evaluate programs. By viewing students' previous coursework and programs of study, they can identify their most popular courses and programs. This information allows college leaders to plan for future semesters by ensuring there are multiple sections of popular courses. Similarly, focus group participants noted that the tool allows them to identify trends for Near Completers. Specifically, some PC staff pay close attention to courses that appear to be barriers to degree completion. One focus group member shared that she was able to identify courses students seem to be avoiding as they move through their programs. This information can be used to ensure courses students need to complete their credential are available.

Another unexpected benefit of the FFNC tool relates to grants and scholarships. One PC staff member shared that they utilize Near Completer data to identify students who may qualify for need-based scholarships or grants. Some students facing hardship may be hesitant to speak up to administrators for help, but FFNC data highlights students who are near completion. Then administrators can inquire about extenuating circumstances the student may be facing and provide support for them to advance to completion.

Finally, we heard about one PC that is using data on previously enrolled Near Completers to open "cold case files" and reach out to students who began a program but unenrolled prior to completion. Another focus group participant described the revenue benefits of doing so. Because institutional funding is often based on FTE enrollment hours, effectively reengaging previously enrolled students has the potential to increase revenues. Yet another PC staff commented that proactive outreach to previously enrolled students helps colleges build positive regional reputations for helping students cross the finish line.

EQ2: How satisfied are PCs with the FFNC tool?

Overall, PCs are satisfied with the FFNC tool and all focus group participants agreed they would recommend it to other colleges. According to one staff member, "I would recommend it to any school that wants to increase their FTE, see their students succeed, take classes and have something tangible to show for it." In particular, staff were satisfied with the following features: Ability to see courses that were not applied to the degree program. The latest version of the tool can indicate that a student's degree program in the current course catalogue may be different from the degree program published in their year of entry. With this information, advisers can help students substitute courses they have already taken for courses their current degree programs require. This decreases excess credit accumulation and time to degree.

Ability to see what courses a student is missing for a certain credential. The tool also allows advisers to look up what courses a student needs to take without using other software like Datatel. User support built into the tool. Staff do not interface with the FFNC tool every day and can forget how to operate it. Accordingly, they appreciate that directions for use are embedded in the FFNC tool.

EQ3: How satisfied are PCs with support from the FFNC team?

According to our evaluation, PCs are overwhelmingly satisfied with support from the FFNC team. In particular, college staff appreciate the open lines of communication with Kai Wang and Laila Shahid-El. They feel comfortable calling on Kai anytime they have an issue with the tool and they reported that he was always helpful and quick to respond.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section offers a specific set of data-driven recommendations for Wake Technical Community College (the creators and administrators of the FFNC tool) and for any colleges considering implementation of the tool in the future.

Recommendations for Wake Technical Community College

1. When onboarding new PCs, provide key staff with resources to guide a successful implementation process. This could include connecting them with colleagues at other PCs who are using the tool successfully and can offer guidance.
2. Create a community forum or opportunity for PC staff to share how they use the tool as well as promising practices and troubleshooting strategies.
3. Create a manual with detailed instructions for using the tool that includes screenshots for every step.
4. Create a query function similar to the one used for NCCCS reports. This query should be programmed to pull the exact fields the system office requires for general reporting.
5. Create a way to identify Career and College Promise students who are dually enrolled in community college and their high school.
6. Make it possible to automatically recognize the year a student started and apply the appropriate academic catalogue for that year.
7. Make it possible to identify programs where a 'D' course grade is not accepted as successful completion of a course. (Currently, the tool recognizes a 'D' grade as successful completion.)
8. Integrate the following data fields to improve tool utility:
 - a. Transfer-in credits
 - b. County of residence
 - c. Race/ethnicity
 - d. Gender
 - e. Age
 - f. Contact information
 - g. Academic adviser
9. Consider integrating the tool with existing student advising software like AVISO so advisers can not only alert Near Completers, but recommend courses that would help them complete their program.

Recommendations for Colleges Planning to Implement the FFNC Tool

Before the tool is implemented, bring campus stakeholders together to discuss:

1. Primary purposes for which the tool will be used at the college. Stakeholders can utilize the planning worksheet in Appendix E to determine how to use the tool in light of institutional priorities and the college's capacity for implementation.
2. How policies might increase or decrease FFNC tool effectiveness.
3. We recommend considering "opt out" graduation policies whereby students receive a completion notification from the college, and if the student doesn't respond within a prescribed amount of time, they are awarded the credential without a fee.
4. We also recommend stackable credential policies. Colleges should consider awarding completed credentials like certificates to students currently enrolled in degree programs.
5. An annual timeline for running and acting on FFNC data. This timeline should specify when

the tool will be used, who will receive the data, what the office receiving data should do with the information, and who will be responsible for various tasks. The timeline should also account for “high times” when different offices are particularly busy.

After the tool is implemented, campus stakeholders should:

1. Inform the whole college about how and why the tool is being used, particularly academic advisers and faculty members, to avoid confusion and maximize utility.
2. Promote use of the FFNC tool on the college’s website to indicate commitment to student degree completion.
3. Release updates once a semester about the use of the tool and its impact on completion.
4. Incorporate specific language about FFNC-related responsibilities in job descriptions and employee evaluations of personnel who interact with the tool regularly.
5. Seek continuous improvement by connecting with other colleges to learn how they are maximizing their use of the tool and to glean promising practices.
6. Communicate with the FFNC team at Wake Technical Community College about any issues with the tool or areas for improvement.

LOOKING AHEAD

In this report, we described findings of our focus groups with partner colleges. In particular, this report focuses on use of the FFNC tool, implementation and utilization of FFNC, and perceptions of FFNC. In subsequent reports, we will use completion data from PCs to detail changes in degree completion since FFNC implementation, and we will use surveys or interviews to capture student attitudes toward completion.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Methods

First, we grouped individuals by their self-identified roles and invited college staff to participate in focus group discussions via Zoom video conferencing. A total of 63 people were invited to participate in focus groups and 29 participated. Each focus group consisted of 2-6 participants. Researchers from the Belk Center team led the focus groups and served as notetakers. Notetakers summarized conversations and documented any group dynamics. We obtained informed consent from all participants prior to the start of the event.

After introducing themselves, the researchers asked each focus group participant for consent to record the Zoom call, and all focus groups provided consent. Each of the hour-long Zoom focus groups included questions that probed the participants’ awareness of FFNC, interactions with the tool, and perspectives about how the tool was implemented on campus. Questions were semi-structured, and the researchers asked follow-up questions for clarification.

Appendix B - Demographic Charts

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics for FFNC PCs with Carnegie Classification of 5

	Wake Technical Community College	All	All Like Institutions
Racial/Ethnic Makeup			
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	0%
Asian	3%	2%	3%
Black or African American	25%	25%	33%
Hispanic or Latinx	8%	7%	10%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
White	50%	57%	43%
Two or More Races	3%	2%	3%
Unknown	3%	4%	4%
Non-Resident Alien	8%	2%	5%
<i>N</i>	30895	5824	31038
Other Characteristics			
Pell	36%	39%	53%
FTE*	55%	26%	54%
Full Time, First Time*	7%	6%	5%
Total Entering at Undergraduate Level Fall 2017*	14%	11%	12%

Note: Utilizing 2014-2015 IPEDS data. Like institution is Central Piedmont Community College. Carnegie Classification of 5 is defined as two-year, very large; *data is only for students enrolled in the fall

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics for FFNC PCs with Carnegie Classification of 4

	Cape Fear Community College	Fayetteville Technical Community College	Forsyth Tech Community College	Pitt Community College	All	All Like Institutions
Racial/Ethnic Makeup						
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Asian	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%
Black or African American	13%	36%	24%	35%	22%	33%
Hispanic or Latinx	7%	12%	11%	7%	10%	9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	71%	36%	56%	48%	56%	43%
Two or More Races	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Unknown	2%	6%	2%	6%	4%	3%
Non-Resident Alien	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	5%
<i>N</i>	12293	18684	11306	12206	5350	14232
Other Characteristics						
Pell	37%	44%	51%	52%	39%	49%
FTE*	29%	24%	27%	32%	26%	28%
Full Time, First Time*	1%	6%	7%	8%	6%	6%
Total Entering at Undergraduate Level Fall 2017*	11%	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%

Note: Utilizing 2017-2018 IPEDS data. Like institutions are Carnegie Class 4, which is defined as two-year, large; *data is only for students enrolled in the fall

Table 3
Demographic Characteristics for FFNC PCs with Carnegie Classification of 3

	Caldwell Community College	Catawba Valley Community	Central Carolina Community	Gaston College	Nash Community College	Montgomery Community College	Davidson County Community	Durham Technical Community	Johnston Community College	Roanoke- Chowan Community	Asheville- Buncombe Tech	Coastal Carolina Community	Sandhills Community College	Surry Community College	Rowan- Cabarrus Community	All NCCCS Institutions	All Like Institutions
Racial/Ethnic Makeup																	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Asian	2%	7%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	5%	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Black or African American	5%	7%	19%	14%	31%	19%	15%	37%	15%	19%	5%	17%	18%	3%	19%	22%	33%
Hispanic or Latinx	6%	10%	16%	7%	5%	16%	8%	15%	13%	10%	8%	15%	11%	16%	10%	10%	9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	82%	70%	57%	61%	56%	60%	70%	35%	62%	61%	78%	61%	58%	78%	61%	56%	43%
Two or More Races	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	1%	4%	1%	3%	3%	3%
Unknown	2%	2%	3%	13%	1%	0%	2%	4%	6%	2%	3%	0%	3%	1%	2%	4%	3%
Non-Resident Alien	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	5%
<i>N</i>	4636	6125	6811	7333	4549	1142	5013	8049	5343	7939	10492	6255	5329	4040	7939	5350	6089
Other Characteristics																	
Pell	31%	36%	32%	37%	39%	29%	44%	34%	31%	39%	37%	46%	31%	29%	39%	39%	36%
FTE*	27%	29%	28%	20%	24%	27%	29%	17%	26%	18%	13%	22%	26%	35%	18%	26%	27%
Full Time, First Total Entering at Undergraduate Level Fall 2017*	6%	8%	7%	5%	7%	11%	6%	3%	7%	10%	4%	8%	9%	8%	10%	6%	7%
	9%	13%	11%	17%	11%	15%	9%	8%	11%	14%	9%	12%	13%	12%	14%	11%	12%

Note: Utilizing 2017-2018 IPEDS data. Like institutions are Carnegie Class 3, which is defined as two-year, medium; *data is only for students enrolled in the fall

Table 4
Demographic Characteristics for FFNC PCs with Carnegie Classification of 2

	College of the Albemarle	Rockingham Community College	Bladen Community College	Mitchell Community College	Beaufort County Community College	Blue Ridge Community College	Carteret Community College	Edgecombe Community College	Lenoir Community College	Southeastern Community College	Halifax Community College	South-western Community College	Isothermal Community College	Cleveland Community College	Haywood Community College	Brunswick Community College	James Sprunt Community College	Stanley Community College	Randolph Community College	Wilkes Community College	Piedmont Community College	South Piedmont Community College	All NCCCS Institutions	All Like Institutions
Racial/Ethnic Makeup																								
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	0%	15%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	6%	2%	7%	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%
Asian	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%	2%	2%	1%
Black or African American	13%	16%	24%	11%	24%	4%	7%	56%	28%	21%	51%	2%	9%	18%	7%	13%	27%	17%	6%	3%	28%	18%	22%	18%
Hispanic or Latinx	4%	6%	8%	10%	10%	9%	6%	4%	9%	5%	3%	7%	5%	4%	3%	7%	20%	3%	9%	10%	5%	12%	10%	8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	68%	68%	45%	71%	60%	77%	80%	35%	58%	62%	37%	79%	76%	71%	84%	70%	47%	66%	60%	80%	61%	57%	56%	62%
Two or More Races	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	0%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Unknown	6%	4%	4%	2%	4%	6%	2%	2%	0%	3%	5%	1%	5%	2%	2%	4%	1%	6%	22%	5%	2%	9%	4%	5%
Non-Resident Alien	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
<i>N</i>	3262	1279	1643	4188	1994	2812	2077	2967	3843	1887	1626	3262	2662	3883	2223	1860	1596	3837	3475	3416	1692	3935	5350	2549
Other Characteristics																								
Pell	26%	33%	53%	28%	28%	30%	42%	53%	31%	46%	50%	36%	47%	38%	36%	36%	61%	43%	37%	36%	33%	24%	39%	39%
FTE*	27%	24%	30%	27%	20%	24%	20%	23%	26%	22%	30%	26%	29%	25%	17%	31%	27%	23%	29%	35%	24%	17%	26%	26%
Full Time, First Time*	6%	7%	7%	6%	3%	8%	4%	5%	6%	4%	8%	5%	9%	6%	8%	9%	8%	7%	9%	12%	6%	3%	6%	6%
Total Entering at Undergraduate Level Fall 2017*	12%	14%	10%	9%	7%	13%	12%	9%	8%	8%	11%	9%	13%	9%	20%	14%	13%	11%	14%	17%	11%	7%	11%	11%

Note: Utilizing 2017-2018 IPEDS data. Like institutions are Carnegie Class 2, which is defined as two-year, small; data is only for students enrolled in the fall

Table 5
Demographic Characteristics for FFNC PCs with Carnegie Classification of 1

	Martin Community College	All	Like Institutions
Racial/Ethnic Makeup			
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%
Asian	1%	2%	1%
Black or African American	22%	22%	30%
Hispanic or Latinx	3%	10%	7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
White	48%	56%	56%
Two or More Races	0%	3%	0%
Unknown	25%	4%	4%
Non-Resident Alien	0%	1%	0%
<i>N</i>	1001	5350	693
Other Characteristics			
Pell	28%	39%	41%
FTE*	28%	26%	23%
Full Time, First Time*	3%	6%	6%
Total Entering at Undergraduate Level Fall 2017*	6%	11%	12%

Note: Utilizing 2017-2018 IPEDS data. Like institution is Pamlico Community College. Carnegie Classification of 5 is defined as two-year, very small; *data is only for students enrolled in the fall

Appendix C - Partner College Profile

Partner College Profiles												
College Information			Types of Students			Types of Credentials			Graduation Policy		Additional Data Uses	
College Name	Implementation date	Carnegie Classification	College uses tool to identify near completors	College uses tool to identify completors	College uses tool for previously enrolled students	College uses tool for associate degrees	College uses tool for diplomas	College uses tool for certificates	College automatically awards credentials	College graduates students without fees	College uses data to advise students	College uses data to recruit students who have some credits but are not currently enrolled
Asheville-Buncombe Tech CC	Fall 2019	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Unknown
Blue Ridge CC	Fall 2018	2	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Brunswick CC	Fall 2019	2	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Unknown
Caldwell CC & TI	Fall 2018	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Unknown	Unknown
Cape Fear CC	Fall 2018	4	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Catawba Valley CC	Fall 2018	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Central Carolina CC	Fall 2018	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coastal Carolina CC	Fall 2019	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Unknown	Unknown
Davidson County CC	Fall 2018	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Durham TCC	Fall 2018	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown
Edgecombe CC	Fall 2018	2	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Fayetteville TCC	Fall 2018	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Forsyth TCC	Fall 2018	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Johnston CC	Fall 2018	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Lenoir CC	Fall 2018	2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Pitt CC	Fall 2018	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Randolph CC	Fall 2019	2	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Roanoke-Chowan CC	Fall 2018	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sandhills CC	Fall 2019	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown
Stanly CC	Fall 2019	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Unknown
Surry CC	Fall 2019	4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Unknown
Wake Tech CC	Fall 2016	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Colleges that implemented FFNC in spring 2020 were not able to participate in the focus group. James Sprunt Community College and Rowan-Cabarrus Community College began implementation in fall of 2019, but were not able to participate in the focus groups.

Appendix D - Tool Use Timeline

Group: Completers who are no longer enrolled

Date	Deadline	Activity	Office Responsible
February	Feb 1	Institutional research office (IR) runs report for past TWO years	IR Office
	Feb 15	Send letter to potential grads notifying them that they may have earned a credential. Request that students return letter if they do not want to be considered for graduation.	Registrar's Office
	March 15	Deadline for return of REFUSAL letters returned	Registrar's Office
March	Late March	Registrar's office evaluates potential completers, identifies who does not qualify, and processes the credentials of all those who did not REFUSE, and graduates them at end of semester	Registrar's Office
April	April 15	Send list of final graduates to advising staff for check	Registrar's Office/Dean of Advising
September	Sept 1	IR runs report for past TWO years	IR Office
	Sept 15	Send letter to potential grads notifying them that they may have earned a credential. Request that students return letter if they do not want to be considered for graduation.	Registrar's Office
October	October 15	Deadline for return of REFUSAL letters returned	Registrar's Office
	Late October	Registrar's office evaluates potential completers, identifies who does not qualify, and processes the credentials of all those who did not REFUSE, and graduates them at end of semester	Registrar's Office
November	Nov 15	Send list of final graduates to advising staff for check	Registrar's Office/Dean of Advising

Group: Near Completers who are no longer enrolled

Date	Deadline	Activity	Office Responsible
March	March 1	IR Runs Report for Fall. Creates live Google spreadsheet	IR Office
	Early March	IR runs students through National Student Clearinghouse	IR Office
	March 15	Report sent to Deans to clean data	IR Office to Deans
	Mid-March	Dean of Advising hires adviser to locate students who are no longer enrolled and whose contact information is not correct	Dean of Advising
June	Jun 1	Deans send personalized letter directing student to advisor and/or Admissions. Outreach is tailored to how long they've been away.	Deans
	Jun1	Deans send list of students to chairs	Deans
	June	Chairs call students if their list is small	Department Chairs
	June	Chairs determine if they need to add course sections	Department Chairs
	Jun1	Recruitment sends texts and emails to students	Recruitment Office
July	Mid July	IR checks enrollment list against data report.	IR Office
	Mid July	Recruitment does second round of outreach for fall	Recruitment Office
October	Mid Oct	IR checks enrollment list against data report.	IR Office
	Mid Oct	Recruitment does second round of outreach for spring	Recruitment Office

Group: Current Students

Date	Deadline	Activity	Office Responsible
	Early Feb	IR runs report for potential graduates- students who may be eligible to graduate at end of CURRENT semester	IR Office
February	Mid Feb	Data goes to the Academic Deans	IR Office
	Mid Feb	IR runs near completer report for Dean of Advising	IR Office
March	March	Email or letter goes out to near completers	Dean of Advising
	Early June	IR runs report for potential graduates- students who may be eligible to graduate at end of CURRENT semester	IR Office
June	Mid June	IR runs report for potential graduates- students who may be eligible to graduate at end of CURRENT semester	IR Office
	Early Sept	Data goes to the Academic Deans	IR Office
September	Mid Sept	IR runs near completer report for Dean of Advising	IR Office
October	Early Oct	Email or letter goes out to near completers	Dean of Advising

Appendix E - Implementation Planning Worksheet

INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

Please rank the following uses for FFNC data from 1 (most important to your mission or institutional priorities) to 4 (least important to your mission or institutional priorities). Then, within each data use category, please rank each type of credential from 1 (identifying these students is most important to your mission or institutional priorities) to 3 (identifying these students is least important to your mission or institutional priorities). You may also choose the "all" option.

Identify Near Completers who were formerly enrolled

- Associate
- Diploma
- Certificate
- All are equally important

Identify Completers who were formerly enrolled, but did not receive a credential

- Associate
- Diploma
- Certificate
- All are equally important

Identify Near Completers who are currently enrolled

- Associate
- Diploma
- Certificate
- All are equally important

Identify Completers who are currently enrolled, but have not received a credential

- Associate
- Diploma
- Certificate
- All are equally important

CAPACITY DIAGNOSIS

Please rank the following capacity features of your college from 1 (low capacity - we do not have much of this resource) to 3 (high capacity - we have a great deal of this resource).

In the office that produce FFNC reports:

- Number of staff available to run FFNC reports
- Time available to devote to FFNC
- Ability to share tasks to other offices

In the office that verifies FFNC data (often the registrar):

- Number of staff available to validate FFNC data
- Time available to devote to FFNC
- Ability to share tasks to other offices

In the office that contacts students identified by FFNC:

- Number of staff available to contact students identified by FFNC
- Time available to devote to FFNC
- Ability to share tasks to other offices

Based on your responses, please use your own judgement to determine whether your institution has high, medium, or low capacity to implement FFNC on your campus. Please note this decision below.

My college has _____ capacity to implement FFNC.

TOOL USE PLANNING

Based on your institution's priorities as noted in section 1 of this worksheet, and your college's capacity as noted in section 2, use this section of the worksheet to plan how your institution will approach implementing FFNC. Colleges should not only consider which uses to focus on, but also whether your institution is able to fully implement uses of the tool (i.e., identify formerly enrolled Near Completers for diplomas, certificates and degrees) or partially implement uses of the tool (i.e., identify formerly enrolled Near Completers only for associate degrees).

We suggest that colleges with "low" capacity focus on one goal each academic year. This goal can be to either fully or partially implement one use of the tool. For example, in the first year you can identify currently enrolled Completers in associate degree programs with the goal of expanding to identify currently enrolled diploma and certificate program Completers the following year. This represents a move from partial to full implementation of one use of the tool over two years.

We suggest that colleges with "medium" capacity implement one new use of the tool each semester. For example, you can identify currently enrolled Completers in associate degree programs in the first semester following implementation and expand to identify currently enrolled Completers in diploma and certificate programs the following semester. This represents a move from partial to full implementation of one use of the tool over one year.

We suggest that colleges with "high" capacity begin by implementing one use of the tool fully with the option of partially or fully implementing another use of the tool the next semester. For example, you can choose to identify currently enrolled Completers for all three types of credentials in the first semester and expand to identify associate degree Completers who are no longer enrolled the following semester. See final chart for an example.

"LOW" CAPACITY COLLEGE PLANNING CHART

Year	Use of Tool	Implementation Level for:	
First Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Fourth Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		

"MEDIUM" CAPACITY COLLEGE PLANNING CHART

Semester	Use of Tool	Implementation Level for:	
First Semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Second Semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Third Semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Fourth Semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		

"HIGH" CAPACITY COLLEGE PLANNING CHART

Semester	Use of Tool	Implementation Level for:	
First Semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Second Semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Third Semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		
Fourth Semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Near Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completers	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled		

HOW TO USE THPLANNING CHART (EXAMPLE):

State A Community College has self-identified as a “medium” capacity college. The college’s leadership has decided that identifying enrolled and formerly enrolled Near Completers aligns most with the college’s priorities. The college’s choices are denoted with red text and check marks.

Semester	Use of Tool	Implementation Level for: <u>Identifying Enrolled Near Completers</u>	Implementation Level for: <u>Identifying No Longer Enrolled Near Completers</u>
First Semester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Near Completers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Completers <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associates <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Associates <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
Second Semester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Near Completers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Completers <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Associates <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Associates <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
Third Semester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Near Completers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrolled <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Completers <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Associates <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associates <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates
Fourth Semester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Near Completers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrolled <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Completers <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled <input type="checkbox"/> Formerly Enrolled	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Associates <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Associates <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates

Implementation Planning Worksheet last updated November 11, 2020.