

SCALE OF ADOPTION ASSESSMENT BRIEF



Summary of First-Year Benchmarks on Student Pathways Implementation within the Wisconsin Technical College System

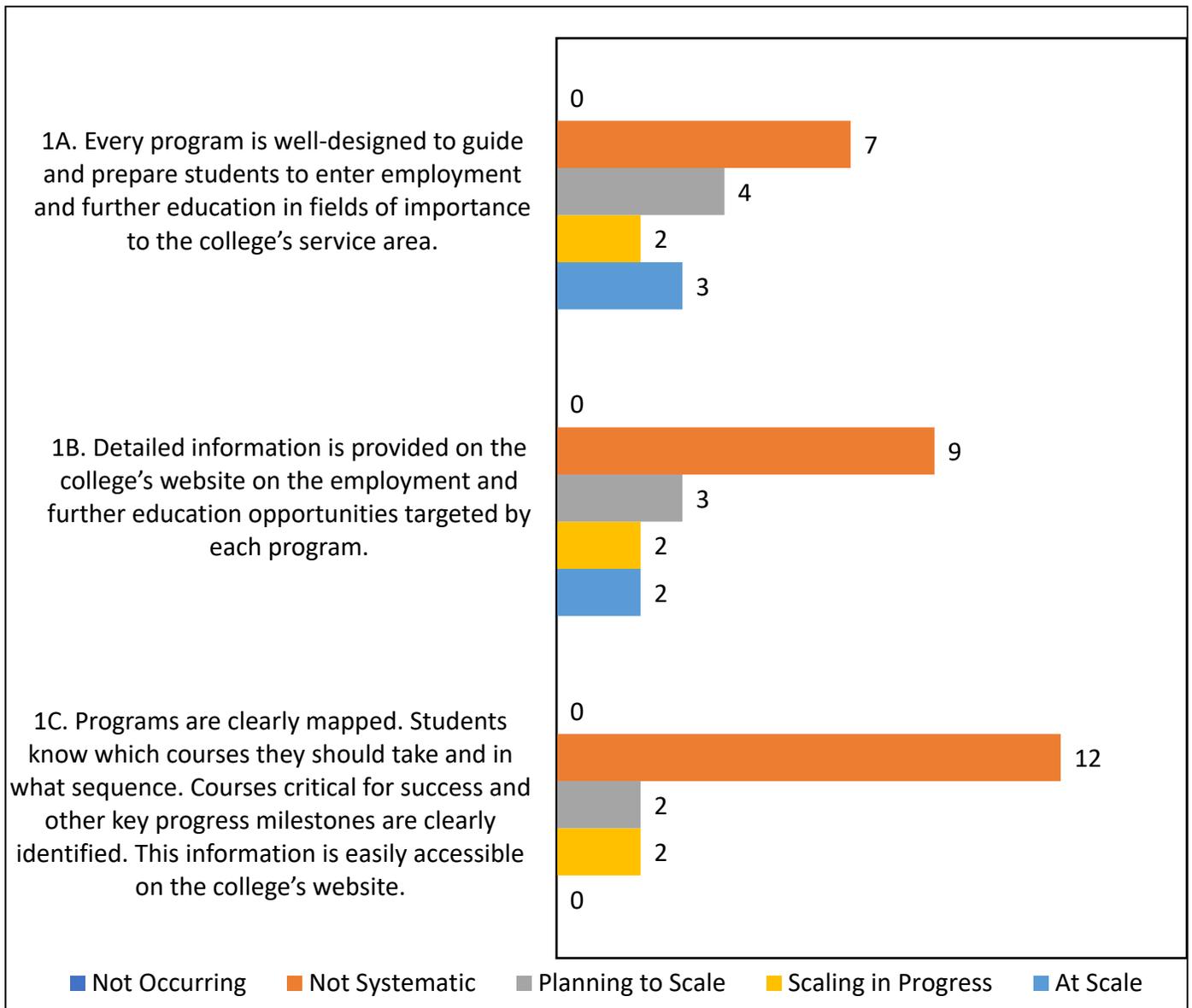
This report summarizes the key findings of the Wisconsin Technical College System's (WTCS) analysis of college responses to the Community College Research Center's Scale of Adoption Assessment. Results are organized by each of the four domains of guided pathways with an emphasis on trends, barriers, and the identification of leader colleges within the WTCS. WTCS staff who are interested in better understanding leader college practices of success are encouraged to connect with the college Student Success Center Liaison. A list of the Student Success Center Liaisons can be found on myWTCS on the WTCS Student Success Center webpage.

Each of Wisconsin's Technical Colleges were asked to form local student success teams that would convene and complete the assessment during the fall and winter of 2017/18. These teams have included faculty, academic advisors, student service managers, institutional research, college executive leadership, professional development staff, and information technology staff. All sixteen WTCS colleges completed the assessment, and to confirm the ratings WTCS System Office staff conducted follow-up calls with college student success teams. Within the assessment, colleges were prompted to assess their college operations across the 19 essential practices of guided pathways using the following five-point scale:

Scale	Definition
<i>Not occurring</i>	College is currently not following, or planning to follow, this practice
<i>Not systematic</i>	Practice is incomplete, inconsistent, informal, and/or optional
<i>Planning to scale</i>	College has made plans to implement the practice at scale and has started to put these plans into place
<i>Scaling in progress</i>	Implementation of the practice is in progress for all students
<i>At scale</i>	Practice is implemented at scale—that is, for all students in all programs of study

Domain 1 – Mapping Pathways to Student End Goals

The WTCS is performing well in Domain 1, and several colleges have rated themselves “At Scale” in the mapping pathways essential practices. The system-wide strength within this domain is supported by WTCS’ engagement in the Career Pathways model prior to integrating Guided Pathways. Because of this, our colleges already possess established program mapping information that is focused on student end goals. Even so, there is important work yet to be done within Domain 1 throughout the WTCS, and the Scale of Adoption Assessment has provided our colleges with a clear outline of what areas can still be improved or modified to better serve our students.



Essential Practice 1A - *Every program is well designed to guide and prepare students to enter employment and further education in fields of importance to the colleges service area.*

WTCS colleges excel in developing and delivering program instruction aligned with workforce needs. Advisory committee input as well as labor market analysis factor into program development and program modifications. Additionally, the colleges monitor the employment outcomes of graduates through annual college-level Graduate Outcome Survey reports. This work is continuous and ongoing.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Not all WTCS Colleges offer liberal arts transfer programs (5 of 16 do) and most have focused primarily on developing relevant associate degree and technical diploma programs aligned with workforce needs.
- Colleges have not done as much in clarifying the pathways to transfer for students.
- While there are many college-to-college, as well as statewide transfer agreements, some questioned whether they may be able to create more transfer opportunities for students whose end goals include employment and continuing career and educational development. (Two college that do not offer the liberal arts transfer program, referenced doing verbal surveys of students at orientation to get an idea of how many were considering continuing their education after they completed a degree or credential at the technical college. Roughly 30% said they had such goals.) While the primary mission of the WTCS colleges is to provide education for employment, we support the economic development of our communities and the career development of our students. There is opportunity to work more closely with other higher education partners to identify more specific information on course selection to help students who would like to continue their education through transfer.

Leaders (At Scale):

- All colleges do well with designing programs to guide and prepare students for employment. Not all are as focused on working with higher education partners to create more opportunities for transfer. Southwest, Madison Area, and Northeast Wisconsin are particularly interested in doing so for as many programs as they can. Examples follow below from WTCS colleges websites that are bringing as much information about employment, career development and transfer to the student in relation to their program of interest.

Examples:

<https://www.nwtc.edu/programs/fields-of-interest/health-sciences/health-informatics/health-information-technology-pathway/health-information-technology>
<https://www.swtc.edu/academics/programs/service-industry/child-care-services> (SWTC transfer information is added to programs where there are transfer agreements.)
<https://madisoncollege.edu/transfer-advising>

Essential Practice 1B - Detailed information is provided on the college's website on the employment and further education opportunities targeted by each program.

There is also opportunity to better organize transfer information, not just on one page for easy access by the institution, but by the program for easy access by potential and current students.

Barriers to this practice include:

- All colleges reported that they provide transfer and employment information on their websites, but very few link this information directly to the pages that provide program information to students and potential students.

Leaders (At Scale/Scaling in Progress/Planning to Scale):

- Fox Valley, Southwest, Northeast Wisconsin, Northcentral, and Gateway

Examples follow below:

<https://www.fvtc.edu/program/health-science/10-543-1/nursing-associate-degree>

<https://www.ntc.edu/transfer>

<https://www.ntc.edu/programs-courses/all/associate-degrees/criminal-justice-studies>

<https://www.gtc.edu/programs/associate-degrees/nursing>

<https://www.gtc.edu/programs/associate-degrees/criminal-justice-studies>

Essential Practice 1C - Programs are clearly mapped out for students. Students know which courses they should take and in what sequence. Courses critical for success in each program and other key progress milestones are clearly identified. All this information is easily accessible on the college's website.

Identifying courses critical for success and other progress milestones for every program is a challenge particularly as colleges try to share this information via their college websites. The colleges have been redesigning their websites to be more student focused. Cross-functional teams seem to be helping colleges assess just how student friendly their websites truly are. Some colleges are beginning to bring employment, transfer and career information to the program page where a student might go first to explore a program of study. WTCS colleges have created a wide array of visual career pathway maps and are currently working to make these maps accessible for posting on their college websites.

Barriers to this practice include:

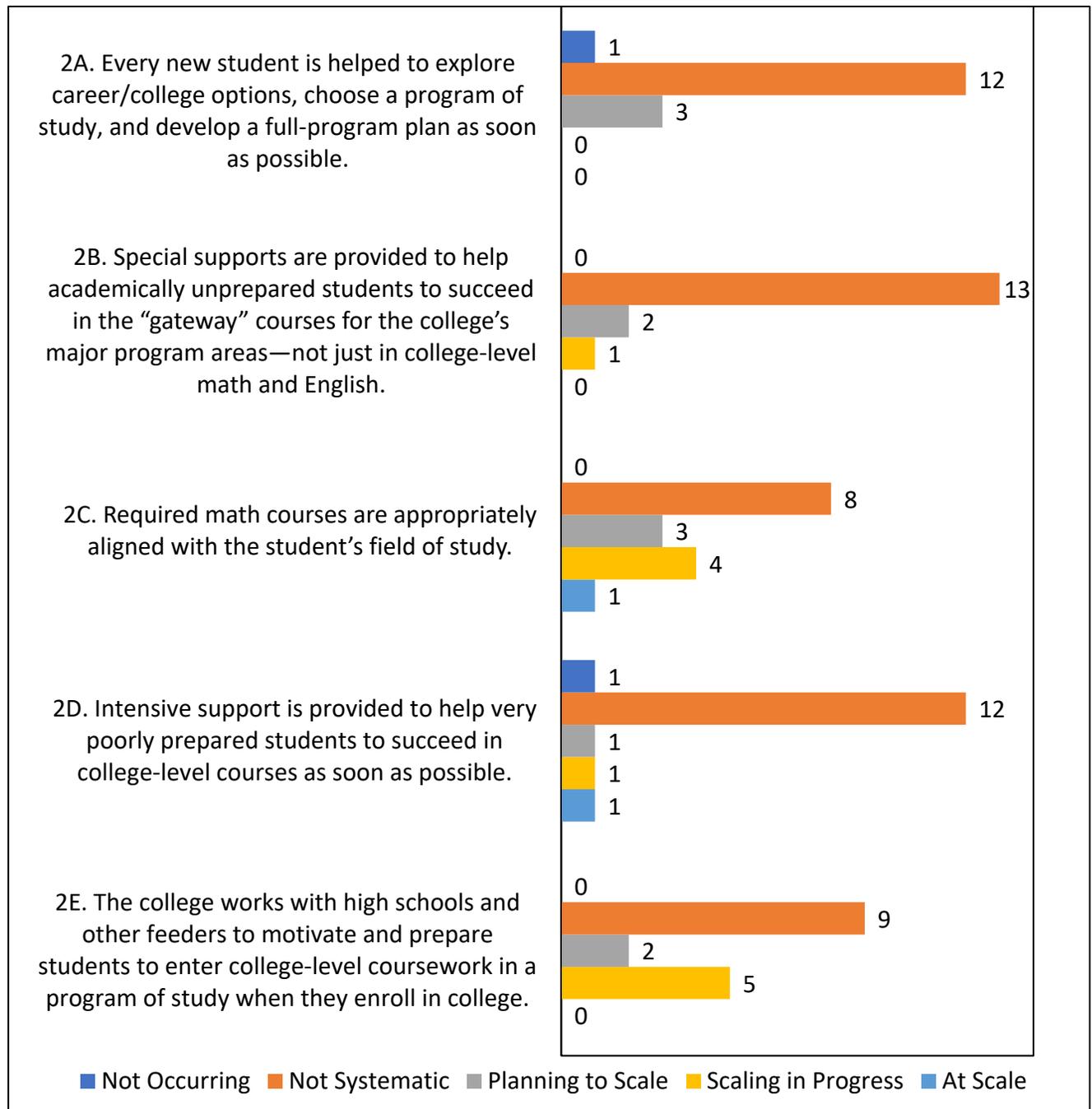
- If students meet with an advisor, they may receive verbal advice about constructing their schedule to accommodate critical courses. The challenge is how to translate this kind of guidance to potential and current students on the website so students are reminded about and/or made aware of critical courses as well as resources and services to support their success in these courses.
- It will be a challenge to communicate to students the courses critical to success other than verbally. Colleges do not want to frighten students with warnings and want to find ways to make students aware of resources available.
- This information may be most appropriate on the college intranet.

Leaders (Scaling in Progress/Planning to Scale):

- No one reports at scale with this, but Southwest, Madison College, Gateway, and Northeast Wisconsin are taking steps to move to scale.

Domain 2 – Helping Students Choose and Enter a Pathway

Across the WTCS, colleges have found “pockets of excellence” in each of the five essential practices within Domain 2. Some of these include the implementation of math pathways and strong high school dual enrollment connections that are intentional feeders into academic programs. There are, however, several colleges that are not systematic in the implementation of the five essential practices at their colleges. Helping students choose and enter a pathway will need to continue to be a focus as colleges scale effective pathways practices across all programs of study.



Essential Practice 2A - Every new student is helped to explore career/college options, choose a program of study, and develop a full-program plan as soon as possible

Colleges have made significant progress creating opportunities for new students to explore career and college options and to develop academic plans. Many colleges are moving to require students to choose at least a broad program of study (meta-major) and develop a full-program academic plan by the end of their first term, or by the second term at the latest. Most colleges are requiring students to enroll in first-year experience (FYE) courses that typically expose students to a field of interest; include career, interest, and personality assessments; and help students create an educational plan in a program suited to their interests and goals.

The completed assessments revealed that only a handful of colleges were requiring students to enter a career and academic focus area or “meta-major” early on as a means of helping students explore career and college options. Since then, nearly two-thirds of the colleges have implemented or are in the process of finalizing meta-majors, which are often called “academic and career communities,” “career pathways,” or “academic and career pathways.”

Barriers to this practice include:

- This practice is not consistent for ALL students, only students typically enrolled in programs.
- If a student chooses a career pathway, it’s not necessarily questioned/or followed up on Program plans (beginning to end) are rarely completed.

Leaders:

- Mid-State

Essential Practice 2B - Special supports are provided to help academically unprepared students to succeed in the “gateway” courses for the college’s major program areas – not just in college-level math and English.

Only a handful of colleges are integrating academic supports with college-level offerings in program-area gateway courses (in addition to college math and English). All offer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and other academic supports, but these typically remain optional for students. Most colleges have implemented reforms to help students accelerate through developmental requirements in math and English, but the majority of colleges do not currently offer these at scale. Common reforms include the creation of an integrated reading and writing developmental course, ALP-style English courses, and modularized, emporium, or corequisite math courses. Several colleges are also in the process of expanding the scope of developmental English courses so that they are contextualized to a student’s field of study.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Colleges are still in the process of identifying gateway courses in each program of study.
- Colleges don’t routinely check for gateway courses, or look for best practices to support them.

Leaders:

- Gateway

Essential Practice 2C - Required math courses are appropriately aligned with the student's field of study.

While many colleges have made progress developing math pathways aligned with a student's field of study, most are in the planning phase. This is generally because these programs are still deciding on an appropriate math sequence and also because most colleges are still currently offering only one, algebra-focused developmental math sequence (regardless of program). Some ongoing challenges that colleges face in restructuring their math pathways include state mandates that require college algebra, resistance from the four-year institutions about the transferability of quantitative reasoning and statistics pathways, and concern that students who change programs after their first semester may have to start over with a new math sequence.

Barriers to this practice include:

- All colleges/programs have advisory committees, which may or may not guide this conversation.
- Rarely are program staff working together with general education staff to make a decision about the appropriate math course to include within a program.
- Evaluation of the sequencing of program courses is rare.

Leaders:

- Chippewa Valley and Northeast Wisconsin

Essential Practice 2D - Intensive support is provided to help poorly prepared students to succeed in college-level courses as soon as possible.

Most colleges have targeted programs to support very poorly prepared students, including adult basic education programs, test prep and tutoring initiatives, summer bridge programs, learning communities, and mandatory academic advising. The challenges include ensuring that these programs connect with college-level programs of study, and that colleges offer them on a scale sufficient to address the need.

Barriers to this practice include:

- These supports are typically only provided after a student is struggling.
- Few have non-cognitive types of assessments to gauge additional needs (dependent care, financial time management, etc.).
- Support is inconsistent as it depends on who is alerted to the need of the student.

Leaders:

- Northeast Wisconsin

Essential Practice 2E - The college works with high schools and other feeders to motivate and prepare students to enter college-level coursework in a program of study when they enroll in college.

Every college discussed dual enrollment opportunities at the college, and many colleges have extensive partnerships with local high schools. Several colleges are now considering how to extend pathways down into the high schools by helping high school students explore career options, preparing them to enter fields of study while they are still in high school, and encouraging students to enroll at the community college directly after high school. To address the first issue, some colleges are requiring all dual enrollment students to take an FYE course that exposes them to the college's program pathways, helps them explore career and college options, and works with them to develop a preliminary plan for completing a community college degree and transferring.

Barriers to this practice include:

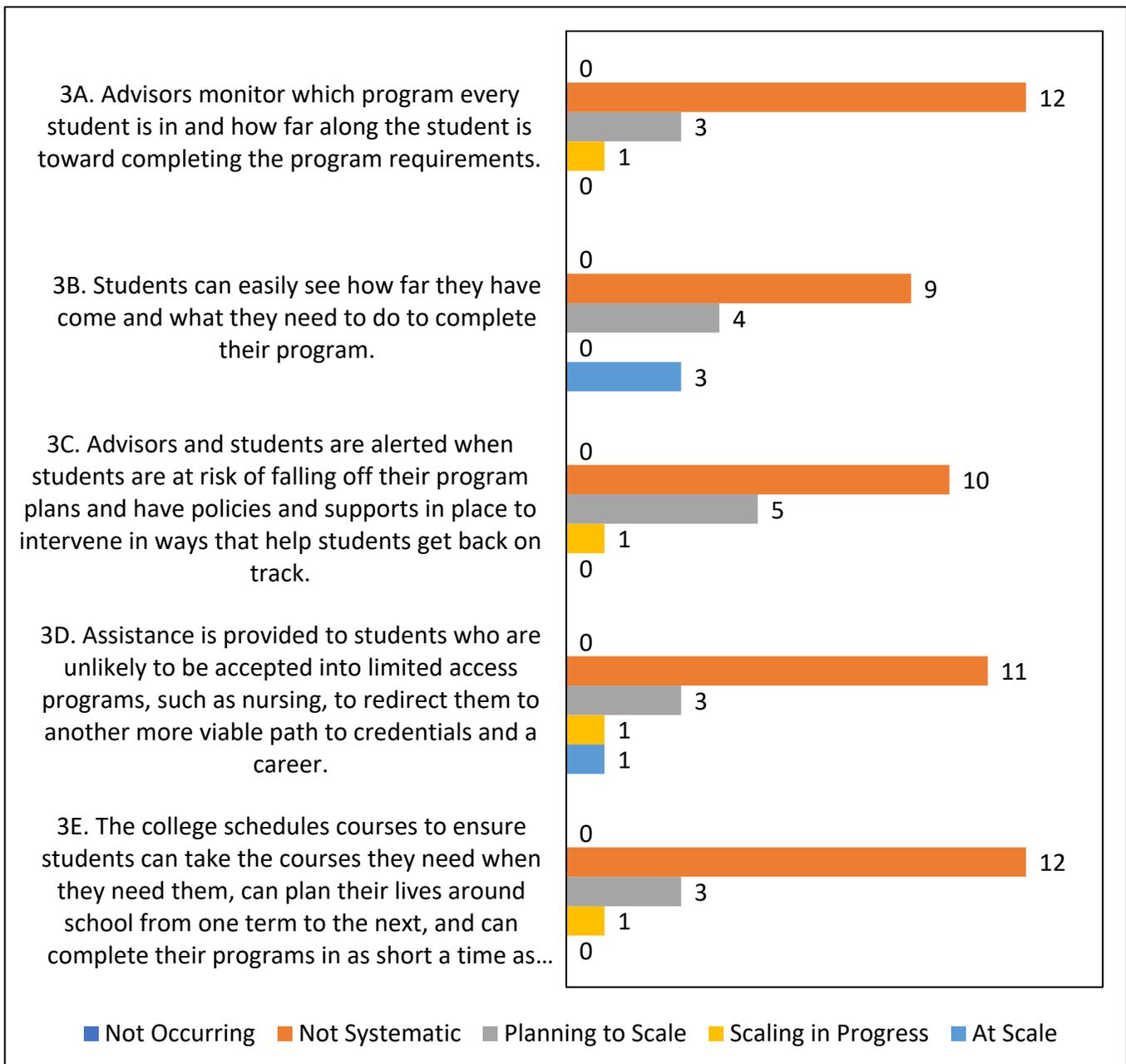
- Few colleges use dual enrollment as a marketing tool and/or follow up with students beyond the dual enrollment course.
- “*Other feeders*” tended to be an issue: colleges are unsure who are these other feeders (e.g. adult basic education, employers, etc.) and how best to connect.

Leaders:

- Chippewa Valley, Fox Valley, and Northeast Wisconsin

Domain 3 – Keeping Students on the Path

Several colleges are “Planning to Scale” the five essential practices within Domain 3. To keep students on their path, colleges are leveraging multiple models that include the use of program advisors, faculty advisors, and technology to monitor student progress to completion. Colleges are also implementing academic alert systems as a mechanism to intervene when students are at risk of falling off of their program plans. There are, however, several colleges that are not systematic in the implementation of the five essential practices at their colleges. Implementing and monitoring successful practices to keeping students on the path will need to continue to be a focus for each of the WTCS colleges as they scale pathways within their institutions.



Essential Practice 3A - *Advisors monitor which program every student is in and how far along they are toward completing their program plan.*

Across the system, many colleges identified certain programs (generally health programs, cohort programs and programs with fewer students enrolled) that monitor the progress of each student closely. Some colleges are exploring faculty advising models while others are in the process of employing software such as Starfish or Civitas to help advisors monitor their case load by identified progress metrics and easily identify students that may need support or outreach and regularly report results to program chairs.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Colleges are not yet systematically helping students create a full-program plan.
- Large caseloads for academic advisors along with an inability to view the progress of a group of students without having to sort through individual records.
- Some students are not assigned an advisor and do not have a plan (especially students not in a program and ABE/ELL students).
- Lack of systematic process for advisors to share information on student progress with program deans.

Leader (Scaling in Progress):

- Midstate

Essential Practice 3B - *Students can easily see how far they have come and what they need to do to complete their program.*

Every college has some type of degree audit where students technically can see their progress, however in many colleges this is difficult to find, and interpret for students and advisors. Students that are motivated to track their progress on their own or make appointments with their advisors or faculty members see their progress, but others go without knowing what they've accomplished, what they have left to do, or in some cases when they are eligible to graduate. Three colleges in the system are at scale and have implemented online information systems that enable students to monitor their own progress.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Lack of user-friendly tool that is updated with individual student progress and curriculum changes.
- Lack of systematic communication to students, advisors, and faculty on how all students can access and use the tool.
- Inability for ABE/ELL students and those not enrolled in a program to view what courses and milestones they have completed.

Leaders (At Scale):

- Southwest, Gateway, and Madison Area

Essential Practice 3C - *Advisors are able to identify when students are at risk of falling off their program plans and have policies and supports in place to intervene in ways that help students get back on track.*

Colleges across the system have some type of in-class early-alert system in place though systematic policies and procedures for what triggers an alert, who is notified and responsible for following up in a timely manner, with which appropriate campus and community resources, and what to do when students do not respond vary by college and may need development or communication. Many colleges identified specific retention programs targeted at underrepresented students (TRIO, Promise, Diversity Services etc.), at students on academic probation, and within cohort programs that represent pockets of excellence in this practice.

Barriers to the practice include:

- Every student does not have a program plan, making it difficult to alert when they are at risk of falling off the plan.
- Alerts subject to individual faculty/staff discretion, no campus-wide policy on what constitutes an alert academically, financially and otherwise.
- Lack of well communicated college-wide process for how alerts are follow up with and by whom.
- Missing “closing the loop” with the faculty/staff who sent the alert.
- Assessment of early alert-tool to determine where gaps exist and how system could be improved.

Leader (Scaling in Progress):

- Nicolet Area

Essential Practice 3D - *Assistance is provided to students who are unlikely to be accepted into limited access programs such as nursing and culinary arts to redirect them to another more viable path to credentials and a career.*

This practice requires multiple steps including developing processes for identifying limited-access programs (based on capacity or otherwise), identifying indicators that predict whether a student would be admitted or not, monitoring the progress of students seeking entry into these programs, reaching out to such students early, creating alternative paths to careers that will appeal to students seeking access to a particular program; and finally, training faculty and staff to have these difficult conversations. While many colleges across the system identified that faculty and staff are having conversations with students to help them determine the likelihood of their acceptance into their chosen program, there is work to be done on contacting students early enough, creating viable alternative pathways, and making this entire process systematic.

Leaders (At Scale):

- Southwest

Essential Practice 3E - *The college schedules courses to ensure students can take the courses they need when they need them, can plan their lives around school from one term to the next, and can complete their programs in as short a time as possible.*

Generally, this was a challenging practice across the system. Many colleges mentioned specific programs that have the consistent schedules each year, but most indicated that current scheduling is often more based on faculty wants rather than student needs. Again, program plans are essential when predicting courses students need in future semesters. Some colleges indicated reviewing program enrollment in course planning and others have purchased software to help optimize the scheduling process for students that in programs. A few colleges are considering offering schedules that cover the academic year.

Barriers to this practice include:

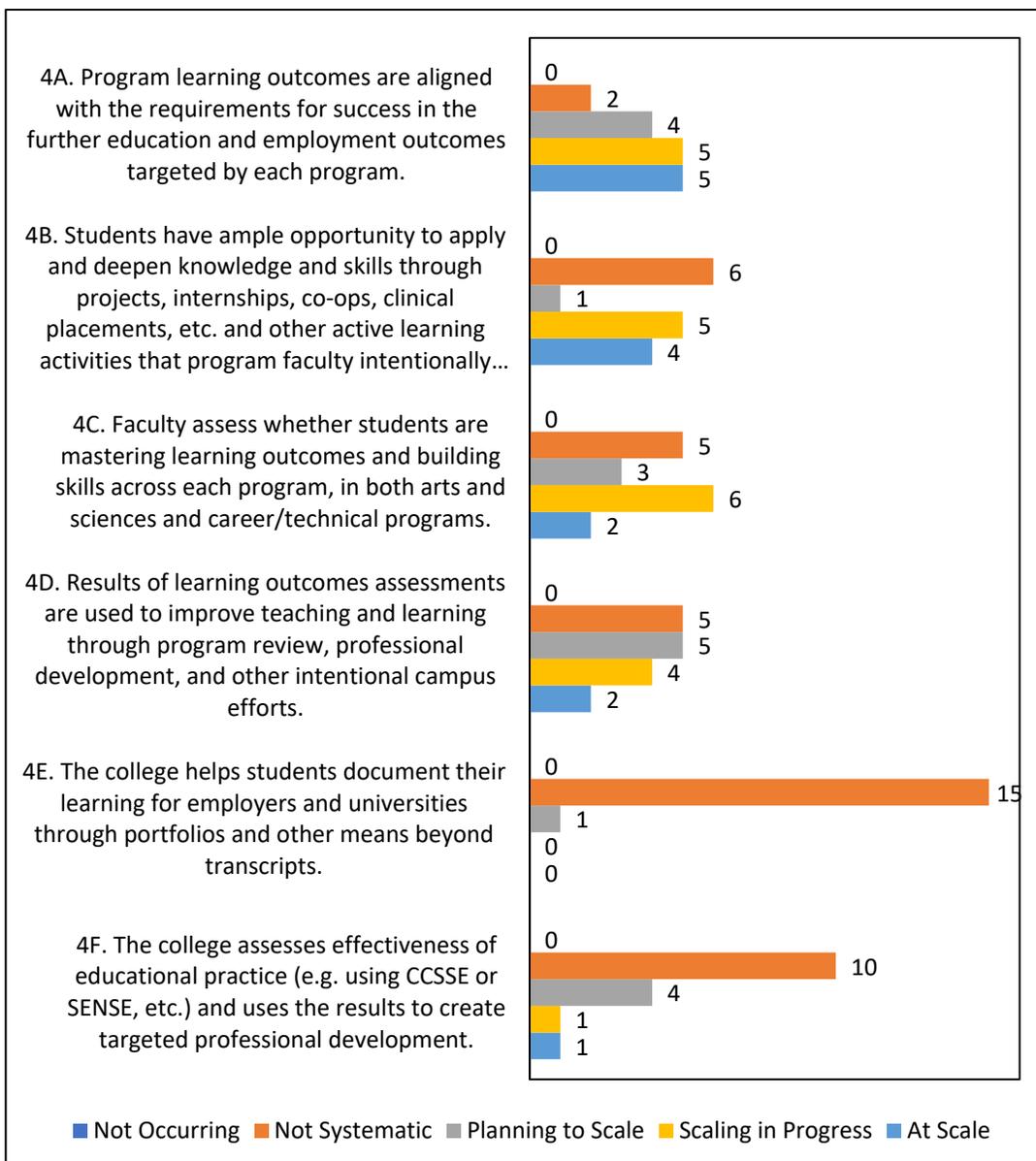
- Difficult to predict student needs without program plans.
- Balancing schedules that meet student needs while also facilitating timely completion.
- Canceling courses or changing modality close to start date based on enrollment.
- Lack of tools to easily see student program enrollment and course needs for upcoming year.

Leader (Scaling in Progress):

- Madison Area

Domain 4 - Ensuring that Students are Learning

A goal of the pathways model is to ensure that students are building essential skills and knowledge across programs, not just in individual courses. Through this, faculty are encouraged to assess whether students are mastering learning outcomes and building skills as they progress through a program and use the results of assessments to improve the effectiveness of instruction within their programs. This domain also highlights the importance that program learning outcomes are aligned with the requirements for success in further education and employment in a related field, and that instruction imbeds collaborative and active learning that engages students within their field of study both within and outside of the classroom. Across all four domains, “ensuring that students are learning” had the most variance by essential practice, implying that WTCS colleges are at varying stages in scaling the six essential practices.



Essential Practice 4A - Program learning outcomes are aligned with the requirements for success in the further education and employment outcomes targeted by each program.

Across the system, college administration and faculty have strong relationships with employers to identify and define program learning outcomes. Learning outcome exploration is supported through business processes like the WTCS program approval and Designing a Curriculum (DACUM) process. Employers actively review program learning outcomes and program curriculum through advisory committees that convene twice per academic year. Some colleges engage further education partners in the program learning outcome defining process, and to establish transfer pathways from a WTCS college to four-year partner colleges.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Inconsistent engagement with further education partners in identifying, defining, and review of program learning outcomes across all programs of study offered.

Leaders (At Scale):

- Nicolet Area, Northeast Wisconsin, Waukesha County, Gateway, and Wisconsin Indianhead

Essential Practice 4B - Students have ample opportunity to apply and deepen knowledge and skills through projects, internships, co-ops, clinical placements, group projects outside of class, service learning, study abroad and other active learning activities that program faculty intentionally embed into coursework.

The scaling of this practice is varied across the WTCS. All colleges have at least one program offering that embeds active learning opportunities into program coursework or within the program requirements. Examples of this include health programs that require active learning opportunities such as clinical placements within their program requirements. Colleges also referenced the use of WTCS TechConnect as a resource for students to find available internship opportunities in their college district.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Several active learning opportunities are available, but they are not intentionally embedded within program coursework or the program requirements.
- Collaboration between student services and academic affairs to ensure students are made aware of these learning opportunities is not consistent.
- Standardized business processes that engage faculty in identifying active learning opportunities is not systematic.

Leaders (At Scale):

- Fox Valley, Northeast Wisconsin, Waukesha County, and Wisconsin Indianhead

Essential Practice 4C - Faculty assess whether students are mastering learning outcomes and building skills across each program, in both arts and sciences and career/technical programs.

Within the WTCS, faculty are assessing whether students achieve their program learning outcomes through the WTCS Technical Skill Attainment (TSA) assessment process. TSA assessments are formal, direct measurements that provide evidence that students have achieved intended program outcomes or skills. TSAs may include third-party exams, performance-based assessments, portfolios, capstone projects, clinical evaluations or other measures. First introduced to the WTCS in 2011-12, TSAs have been implemented in every college. System-wide, over 50% of WTCS approved programs currently have a TSA implemented. Colleges shared that TSA results are explored during established college program review processes. For all programs that have gone through the TSA process, data on the mastery of learning outcomes is tracked on the student level, reported through WTCS Client Reporting, and can be aggregated for analysis purposes. For some colleges, not all programs have gone through the TSA process.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Program learning outcome assessments including WTCS TSA, capstone projects, and portfolios are not in place for all programs of study at each college; establishing these assessments through faculty collaboration and the tracking of assessment results is time consuming and can be cumbersome if supporting technology is not available.

Leaders (At Scale):

- Nicolet Area and Gateway

Essential Practice 4D - Results of learning outcomes assessments are used to improve teaching and learning through program review, professional development, and other intentional campus efforts.

Each college within the WTCS has a formal program review process that engages faculty in the review of program learning outcome assessment results and student success indicators such as course success, retention, graduation, job placement, etc. Many colleges referenced the use of WTCS-provided student success indicators to supplement their existing college assessment results via WTCS Tableau dashboard data. Colleges consistently noted they are “swimming” in student outcome data. Some colleges that use assessment results to revise instruction noted they “close the assessment loop” by revisiting these revisions to assess for effectiveness, while others have noted this to be inconsistent. Few colleges have dedicated professional development resources to support the improvement of instruction based on the analysis and identification of completion gaps in program learning outcomes or other measures of student achievement.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Connecting learning outcome assessment results to intentional professional development to improve teaching and learning.

- Engaging faculty with data in a meaningful and reflective way; simply providing the data isn't enough.

Leaders (At Scale):

- Fox Valley and Gateway

Essential Practice 4E - *The college helps students document their learning for employers and universities through portfolios and other means beyond transcripts.*

Colleges consistently noted that this practice is scaled for some programs of study, but not all. Programs demonstrating pockets of excellence include Graphic Design programs that require graduates to develop a portfolio throughout the program.

Barriers to this practice include:

- Technology access to support the development of portfolios and other means that document the evidence of mastery of program learning outcomes.

Leaders (Planning to Scale):

- Northeast Wisconsin

Essential Practice 4F - *The college assesses effectiveness of educational practice (e.g. using CCSSE or SENSE, etc.) and uses the results to create targeted professional development.*

Each college within the WTCS regularly administers at least one student survey to assess the effectiveness of educational practices. Regularly administered surveys include CCSSE, SENSE, home-grown end-of-course surveys, etc. The majority of colleges noted there is no process in place to report survey results across the college. Colleges scaling this practice noted engaging college leadership in discussions on the potential implications of the results. Further, some colleges engage faculty with survey results during the college program review process. The majority of colleges noted that survey results are inconsistently used to plan and conduct professional development activities for college staff.

Barriers to this practice include:

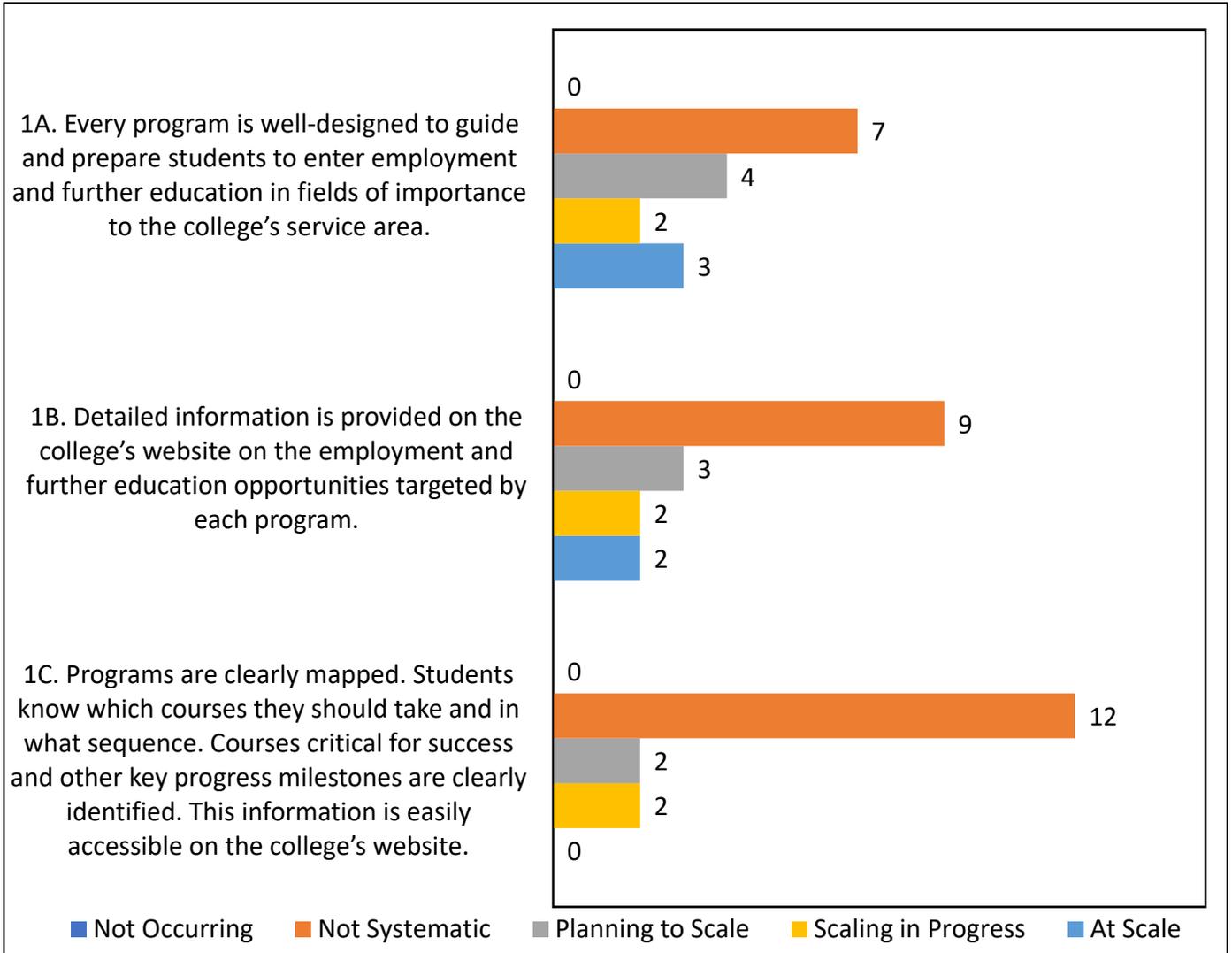
- Compiling and disaggregating survey results in a meaningful way for program faculty.
- Developing targeted professional development based on survey findings.
- Creating formats where meaningful discussion around the implications of the survey results can be explored.

Leaders (At Scale):

- Northeast Wisconsin

First-Year Benchmarks on Student Pathways Implementation within the Wisconsin Technical College System

Domain 1 – Mapping Pathways to Student End Goals



Domain 2 – Helping Students Choose and Enter a Pathway

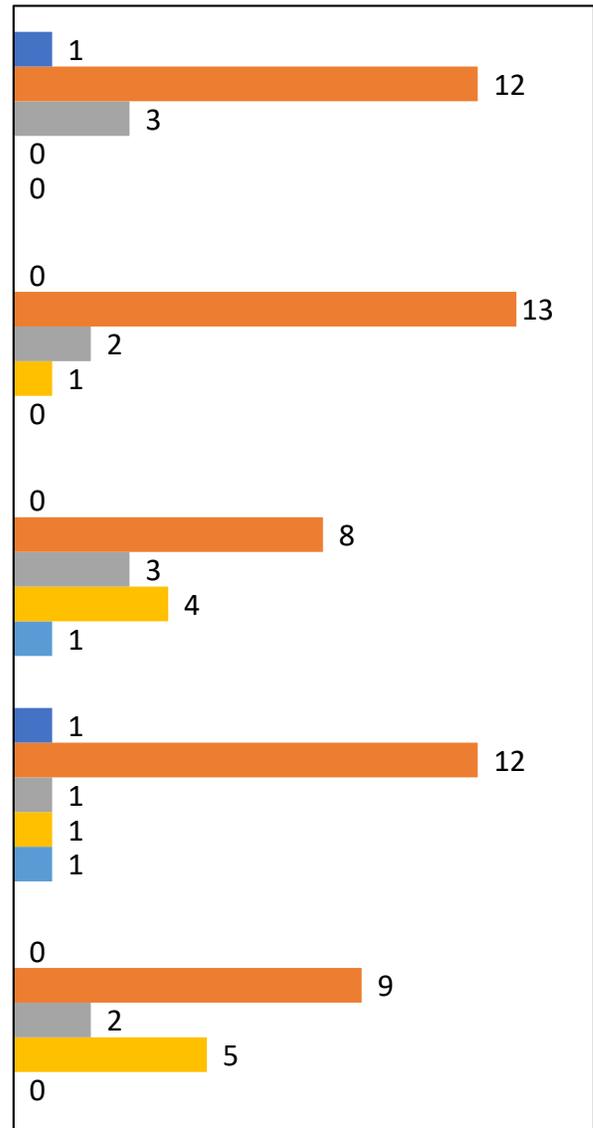
2A. Every new student is helped to explore career/college options, choose a program of study, and develop a full-program plan as soon as possible.

2B. Special supports are provided to help academically unprepared students to succeed in the “gateway” courses for the college’s major program areas—not just in college-level math and English.

2C. Required math courses are appropriately aligned with the student’s field of study.

2D. Intensive support is provided to help very poorly prepared students to succeed in college-level courses as soon as possible.

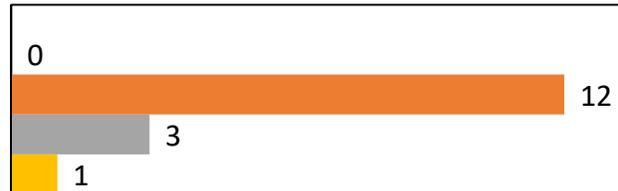
2E. The college works with high schools and other feeders to motivate and prepare students to enter college-level coursework in a program of study when they enroll in college.



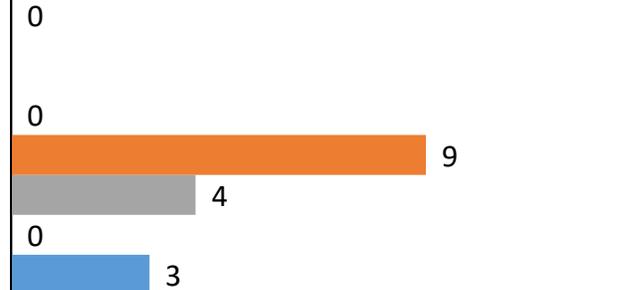
■ Not Occurring ■ Not Systematic ■ Planning to Scale ■ Scaling in Progress ■ At Scale

Domain 3 – Keeping Students on the Path

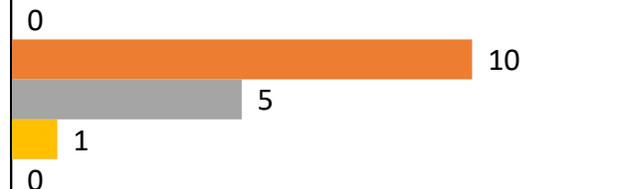
3A. Advisors monitor which program every student is in and how far along the student is toward completing the program requirements.



3B. Students can easily see how far they have come and what they need to do to complete their program.



3C. Advisors and students are alerted when students are at risk of falling off their program plans and have policies and supports in place to intervene in ways that help students get back on track.



3D. Assistance is provided to students who are unlikely to be accepted into limited access programs, such as nursing, to redirect them to another more viable path to credentials and a career.



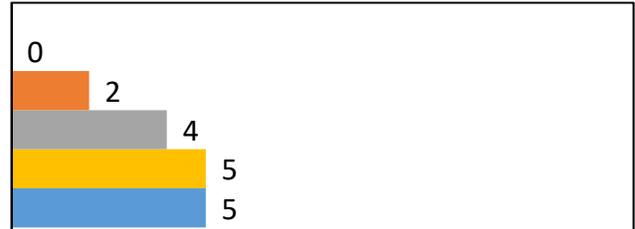
3E. The college schedules courses to ensure students can take the courses they need when they need them, can plan their lives around school from one term to the next, and can complete their programs in as short a time as possible.



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Domain 4 – Ensuring that Students are Learning

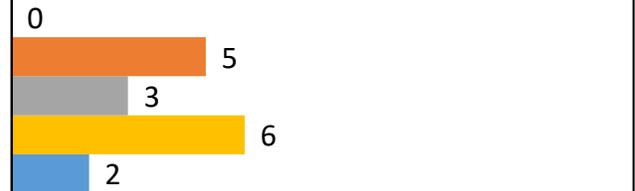
4A. Program learning outcomes are aligned with the requirements for success in the further education and employment outcomes targeted by each program.



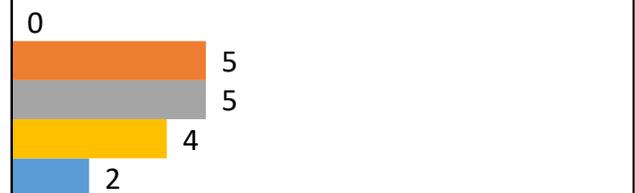
4B. Students have ample opportunity to apply and deepen knowledge and skills through projects, internships, co-ops, clinical placements, etc. and other active learning activities that program faculty intentionally embed into coursework.



4C. Faculty assess whether students are mastering learning outcomes and building skills across each program, in both arts and sciences and career/technical programs.



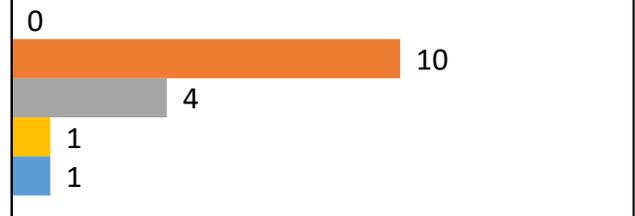
4D. Results of learning outcomes assessments are used to improve teaching and learning through program review, professional development, and other intentional campus efforts.



4E. The college helps students document their learning for employers and universities through portfolios and other means beyond transcripts.



4F. The college assesses effectiveness of educational practice (e.g. using CCSSE or SENSE, etc.) and uses the results to create targeted professional development.



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