

Board For State Academic Awards

Overview

The Board for State Academic Awards governs Charter Oak State College and the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium. Charter Oak State College was established by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1973 as Connecticut's nontraditional college designed to provide adults with alternative means of earning associate and baccalaureate degrees that are of equivalent quality and rigor to those earned at other institutions of higher education. The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium was established in 1996 as a unique association of public and independent collegiate institutions whose purpose is to create an interactive distance learning community which will meet the needs of higher education students in the twenty-first century.

Charter Oak State College

Students at Charter Oak State College earn the credits they need to complete their degrees in many ways including campus-based and distance learning courses from any regionally accredited college or university, testing such as CLEP and DANTES, non-collegiate courses and military training which have been evaluated and recommended for credit by the American Council on Education, contract learning and portfolio assessment. Charter Oak State College also offers a growing number of online distance learning courses.

Charter Oak State College has approximately 1,900 students working toward degree completion. The average age of a Charter Oak State College student is 40, and students come to Charter Oak with a significant number of credits already earned (the average is about 90 credits for bachelor's programs). Charter Oak continues to experience enrollment growth in its distance learning courses.

Total expenditures for FY 2005 were \$5.7 million. Of this amount, \$2.1 million, including capital equipment and fringe benefits, came from state support and \$3.6 million came from other revenue.

Charter Oak's strategic priorities this past year have included:

- Expanding distance learning course offerings and distance learning enrollments.
- Increasing student services to improve persistence and graduation rates, resulting in the largest graduating class (517 students) in the College's history.
- Addressing workforce issues including healthcare, public safety, and childcare.
- Developing online credit courses leading to certificates in Computer Security and Project Management and a credential in After School Education.
- Continuing expansion of its Women in Transition program to provide access to low-income women.
- Conducting process assessment to improve systems and processes with the goal of retaining the College's high-touch approach while leveraging technology to enable growth.

Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium

As of 2005, the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium has 48 members. Its 35 higher education members include the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut State Universities, Charter Oak State College, the Connecticut Community Colleges and 17 of the baccalaureate granting private institutions of higher education in Connecticut.

The mission of the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC) is to:

- Provide a single point of presence for Distance Learning offered by Connecticut public and independent education institutions;
- Provide a high quality infrastructure by maintaining a state of the art web-based delivery system that is available to all members;
- Coordinate the delivery of asynchronous education and worker training;
- Market CTDLC member courses and programs in Connecticut, nationally, and internationally;
- Improve the quality of Connecticut's distance learning products and services through rigorous assessment efforts including the implementation of a state wide assessment program;
- Provide a forum for discussion of distance learning in Connecticut and demonstrate new techniques for asynchronous delivery; and
- Provide faculty development opportunities.

The CTDLC is working to bring the higher education community together around collaborative activities that employ technology to both reduce costs and increase services to Connecticut students. Recent examples include: the CTDLC's Learning Management System hosting efforts which save higher education clients money through shared services; the electronic portfolio system that CTDLC is supplying for 14 institutions to provide their students with a shared platform for advising, assessment, and career development; and the collaborative tutoring program which allows 16 institutions to share resources while providing online tutoring.

The measures for the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium are reported after those of Charter Oak State College.

Methodology**Charter Oak State College**

The goal of the report is to include at least five-years of trend data. Data for measures of graduate preparedness for employment; further study and licensure; graduate satisfaction with outcomes; and student satisfaction with programs, policies and services are derived from surveys of graduating students and alumni.

Connecticut State Distance Learning Consortium

The data for the Consortium comes from its data base and from student surveys done each semester by students taking online courses offered by the Consortium's members.

Peer Institutions

Charter Oak State College

There are only three peer institutions for Charter Oak State College: Thomas Edison State College in New Jersey, Excelsior College (formerly Regents College) in New York and Western Governors University. Excelsior College became an independent institution two years ago and is no longer state-supported. However, we use Excelsior College data where appropriate. Western Governors University is a virtual University founded by the Governors of several western states including Colorado, Wyoming and Utah.

Western Governors was only able to provide data on licensure completion, retention and preparedness for employment.

Thomas Edison provided us with information from their FY 2004 Graduate Survey.

Excelsior College provided information on the licensure exam performance for the first-time test takers in their nursing program for 2005. Other comparative information provided by Excelsior College is from their most recent alumni survey of students that graduated between May 1998 - October 2003. However, they report this data as mean response rather than percentages of students with that response.

These institutions were not able to provide data on all measures because they do not collect information in the same way.

Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium

Last year two national studies of “Virtual Universities” (VUs) were published, and the CTDLC was a participant and a subject in both. In a national study sponsored by the State Higher Education Executive Officers, the CTDLC has been identified as one of five “peer institutions” against which the nation’s Virtual College and Universities have been benchmarking themselves. That study also characterized VUs by their level of centralization and the level of business practice. The CTDLC was placed in the group of institutions with high centralization and high business practices, which is also the group reporting the most success at meeting their mission and goals.

A second report by The Center for Academic Transformation studied the same group and offered a series of suggestions for future development that are figuring into the CTDLC’s plans for improvement.

However, none of the Virtual Colleges and Universities have the same type of mission nor practices as the CTDLC. Therefore no comparative data is available.

LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION EXAM PERFORMANCE

Common Core Performance Indicator

The percentage of successful completers on licensure and certification exams.

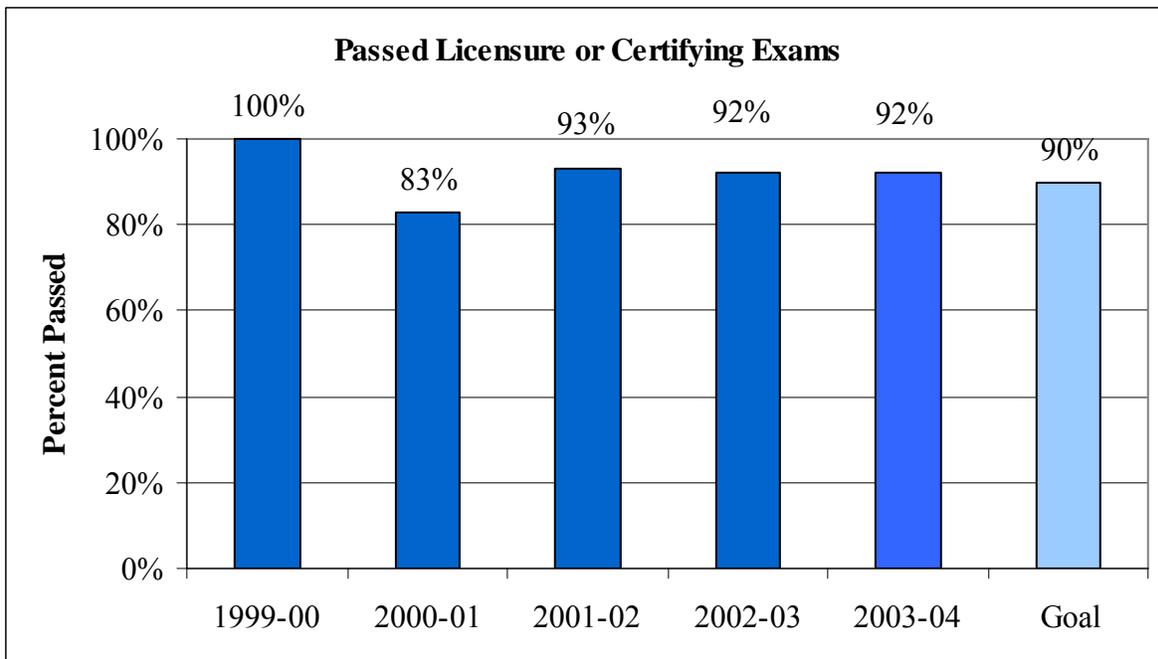
Performance Improvement Goal

Maintain rates of over 90% of COSC graduates passing licensure examinations

Data Analysis

The average age of a COSC student is 40. Over 95% of the College’s students are already employed when they enroll and typically have already attained any licensure or certification required to hold their current jobs. In addition, the COSC General Studies curriculum is not designed to prepare students for specific licensures/exams.

Consequently, only between 5% and 15% of graduates reported on the alumni survey that they took any licensure or certifying exams. Of the alumni who took such exams, since 1999, an average of over 92% passed.



Excelsior College only provides data on it’s Nursing Exam. In 2005, 90% of the students in Excelsior College’s Nursing Program passed their licensure exam. Western Governor’s University indicated that in order to graduate, their students must pass the licensure exam so the rate of graduates who pass is 100%. Thomas Edison did not supply data on this measure.

GRADUATE PREPAREDNESS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Performance Indicator

Graduate preparedness for employment. (Graduate self-reporting on knowledge and skills; graduate report on career advancement.)

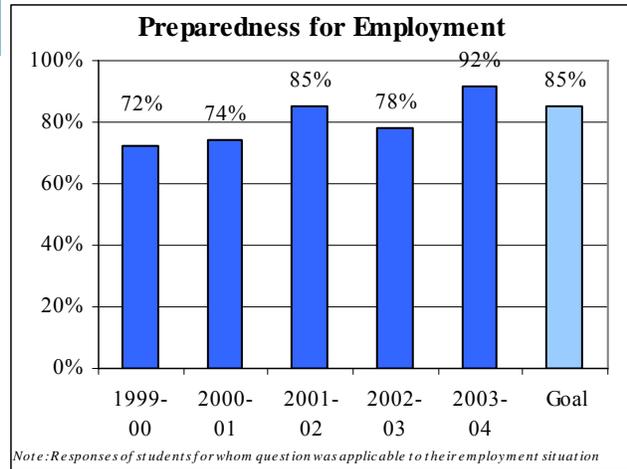
Performance Improvement Goal

By 2006, 85% of COSC graduates will rate themselves as “very well” or “well” prepared for employment.

Data Analysis

COSC uses two measures to evaluate this indicator both of which are obtained on the alumni survey which graduates complete six to nine months after graduation.

Each year recent alumni are asked, *How well did the degree program you completed at Charter Oak State College prepare you for your present employment?* Over the past three years the trend has been positive and the most recent Alumni survey reports that 91.9% of COSC graduates that responded to the survey rated their preparedness for employment as “very well” or “adequately” prepared for employment.



Forty-five percent of graduates that responded to the most recent alumni survey indicated that they experienced **positive changes in employment** as a result of earning a degree from Charter Oak State College. Students attending Charter Oak State College are primarily working adults. But many students recognize that a Charter Oak State College degree “prepares its students well for continuing their education as well as for position advancements and salary increases at the work place.” (2003-04 Graduate).

	Overall Response	Job Promotion	Salary Increase	Better Job In My Field	Better Job In New Field	Moved From Part-Time to Full Time
1999-00	*	21%	33%	35%	28%	*
2000-01	56%	20%	24%	7%	8%	4%
2001-02	40%	23%	35%	23%	15%	4%
2002-03	39%	11%	15%	10%	7%	1%
2003-04	45%	14.5%	21.4%	9.3%	6.9%	2%

*Totals may equal more than 100% because a graduate may report more than one positive change in employment.
* Information not available from 1999-2000 Alumni Survey.*

Edison reported that 79% of the FY 2004 graduates indicated that their college experience had enhanced their employment/career growth. Eighty-six percent of Edison graduates felt that their degree from the college would enhance their ability to find a better job. Sixty-one percent of Western Governor’s graduates reported that the competencies that they were tested in were very relevant.

GRADUATE PREPAREDNESS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Performance Indicator

Graduate preparedness for continuing education or advanced degree program. (Continuing education advisor rating and graduate self-reporting on knowledge and skills.)

Data Analysis

COSC graduates were asked, *If you have enrolled in another college, how well did the degree program you completed at Charter Oak prepare you for your present area of study?* Over the four years reported, an average of ninety-eight percent responded “well” or “very well.”

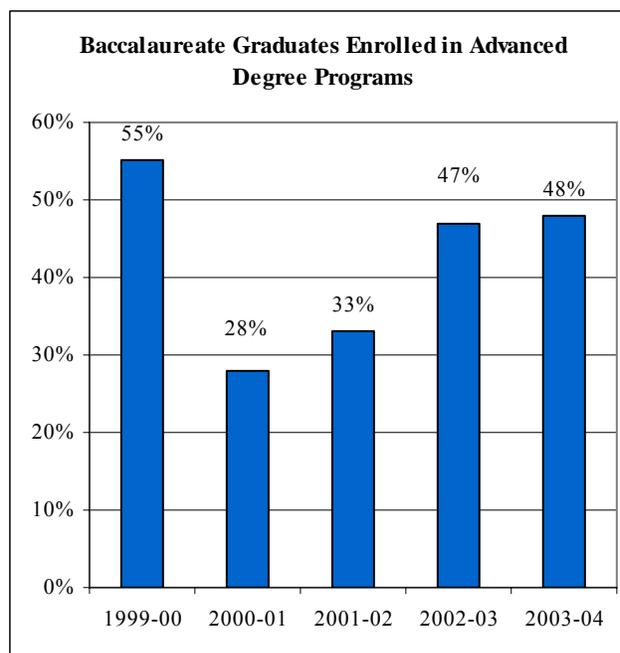
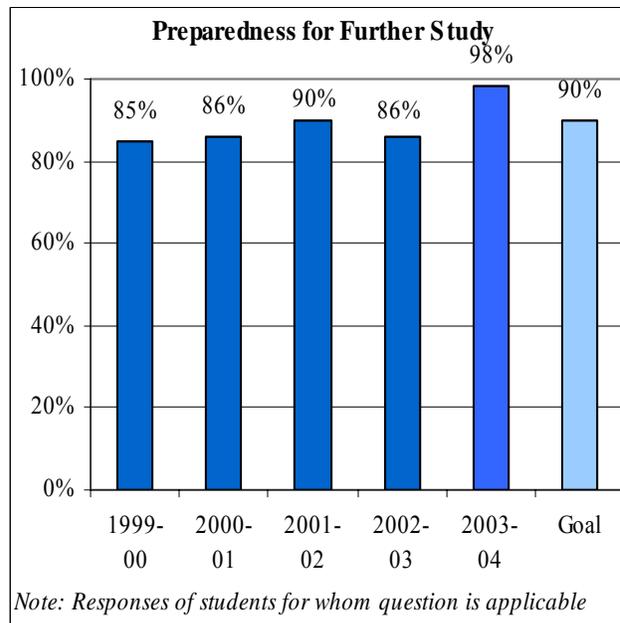
An average of 42% of the 1999-2004 COSC baccalaureate graduates surveyed have enrolled in a professional or master’s degree program within nine months of their graduation.

Thomas Edison State College reported that overall, 85% of the FY 2004 graduates indicated that the college had enhanced their preparation for further educational study. 90% of the baccalaureate degree graduates indicated that Edison had adequately prepared them for a graduate school education. One-third (34%) of students graduating with their BA/BS reported that they had applied to a graduate school program; among those graduates who applied, 91% reported that they had been accepted into a graduate program.

Approximately 80% of Excelsior students responded positively on a seven point scale to the question of how well their Excelsior experience prepared them for further education.

Performance Improvement Goal

By 2006, 90% of students surveyed will rate their preparedness for further study as “very well” or “well.”



GRADUATE SATISFACTION WITH OUTCOMES

Performance Indicator

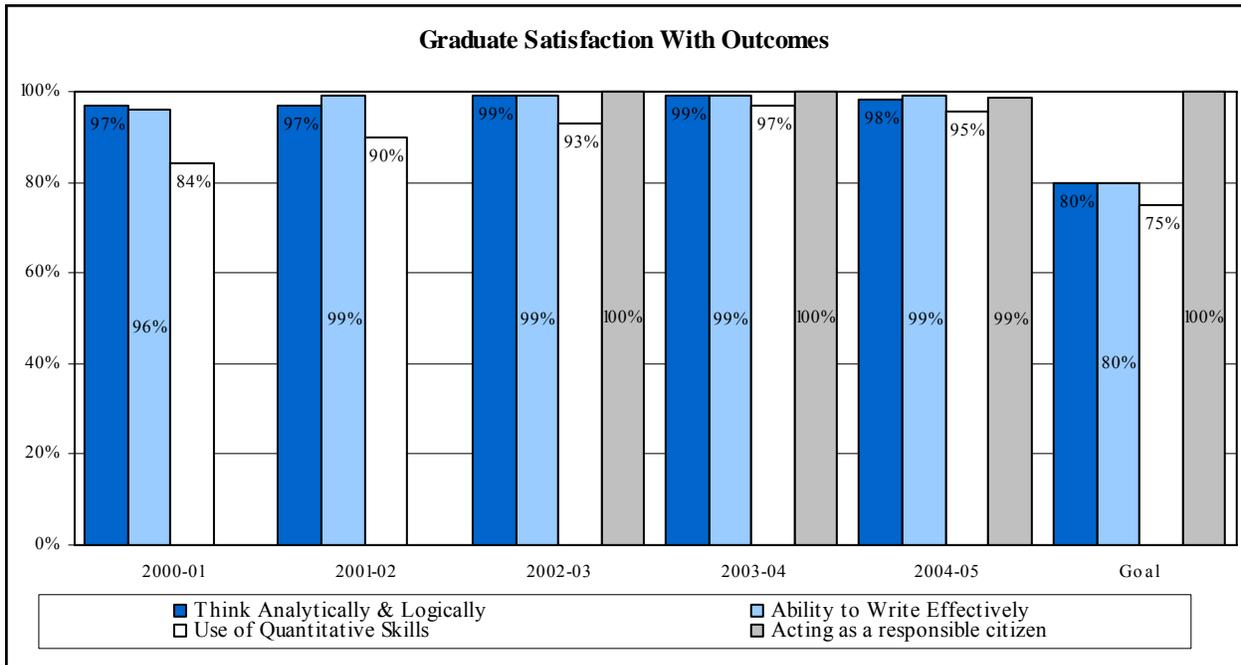
Percent of graduates who report their education greatly enhanced their ability to think analytically and logically; write effectively; and use quantitative skills.

Performance Improvement Goal

In 5 years, 80% will report their education enhanced their ability to think logically and write effectively; 75% will report enhanced quantitative skills; 100% will report that their education enhanced their ability to act as responsible citizens within a global society.

Data Analysis

An average of 98% of students surveyed since 2000 reported that their education enhanced their ability to think analytically and logically; 98% reported their education enhanced their ability to write effectively and 91% reported that their education enhanced their quantitative skills. In 2002-03 “Acting as a responsible citizen within a global society” was added as an improvement goal. Ninety-nine percent of students are satisfied that their education enhanced their ability to act as responsible citizens within a global society.



Excelsior College: using a seven point scale (1 = very poorly and 7= very well) graduates reported the mean for how well Excelsior prepared them in the following areas: Writing skills 4.61; Critical thinking skills 5.52; Applying knowledge 5.42; Team work and socialization skills 4.64.

Thomas Edison State College reported that 77% of graduates indicated that their College experience enhanced their ability to think logically and analytically and logically and 76% indicated that their experience enhanced their ability to communicate effectively. Over two-thirds (69%) of the FY 2004 graduates indicated that their experience with the College had enhanced their ability to use quantitative skills.

Western Governor’s did not ask any questions about satisfaction with outcomes on their graduate survey.

MINORITY ENROLLMENT

Common Core Performance Indicator

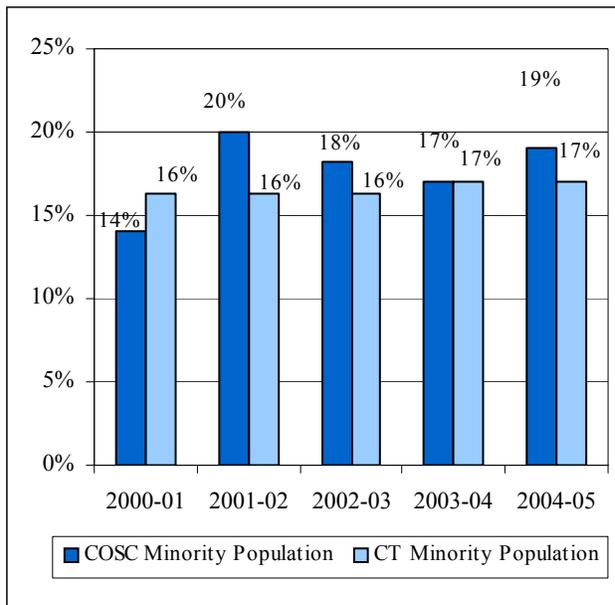
The proportion of students of color (Black, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American) enrolled in the Charter Oak State College compared to the proportions in the state population, 25 years of age and older with some college and no degree.

Performance Improvement Goal

Maintain parity with the State of Connecticut demographics.

Data Analysis

Charter Oak State College tracks its minority enrollment each year and compares it with U.S. Census Bureau data. Charter Oak uses U.S. Census Bureau data for Connecticut residents 25 years of age or older who have some college but no degree. Charter Oak only accepts students with 9 credits or more and only 5% of students enrolled at Charter Oak are under 25 years of age so this comparison is appropriate to the Charter Oak population.



In 2004-2005 minority enrollment of African American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American populations at Charter Oak represents 19% of the total student body. This is on par with the Connecticut figures for the minority population twenty-five years or over with some college and no degree.

Minority enrollment for Charter Oak went from 14% in 2000-2001 to 19% in 2004-2005. This represents a total growth of 36% in minority enrollment. Minority enrollment at Charter Oak has been very close to state figures since 1999-2000. In addition, there has been a steady increase in minority enrollment at Charter Oak since the 1998-1999 academic year.

Minority Enrollment of COSC Students

	Total Minority Population		Black		Hispanic		Asian American		Native American	
	COSC	State	COSC	State	COSC	State	COSC	State	COSC	State
2000-01	14%	16%	8%	9%	4%	6%	1%	1%	1%	.3%
2001-02	20%	16%	10%	9%	5%	6%	2%	1%	3%	.3%
2002-03	18%	16%	10%	9%	4%	6%	2%	1%	2%	.3%
2003-04	17%	17%	10%	8%	4%	7%	2%	2%	1%	.2%
2004-05	19%	17%	10%	8%	6%	7%	2%	2%	1%	.2%

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data used.

Note: Percentages do not equal 100% because Unknown and Non-Resident Aliens are omitted.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES FROM STATE SUPPORT

Common Core Performance Indicator

The total state appropriations including general fund fringe benefits, state support for student financial aid as a percent of total education and general expenditures including capital equipment purchased with bond funds.

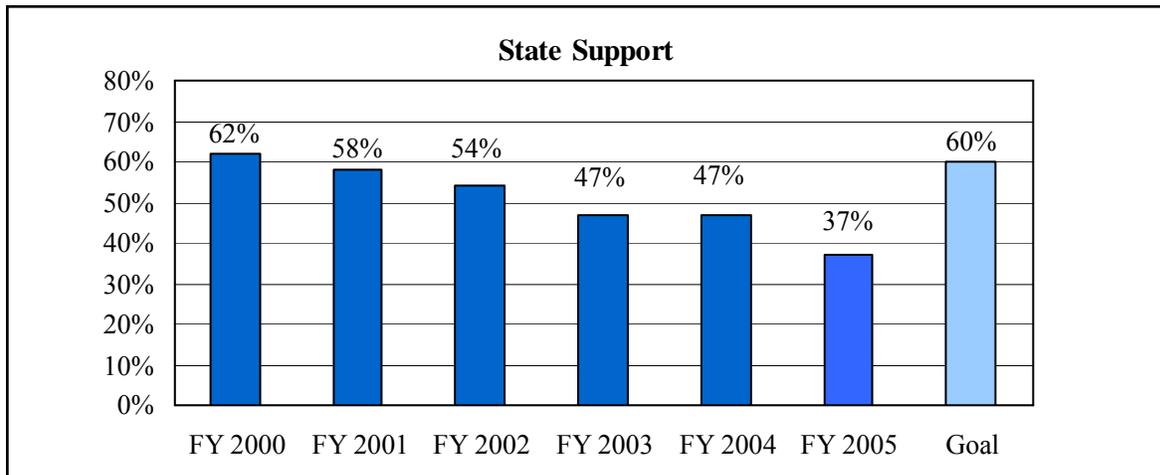
Performance Improvement Goal

The percent of operating expenses from state support should not fall below 60%.

Data Analysis

The State of Connecticut’s investment in higher education is vital to the financial viability of Charter Oak State College. From FY 2000 through FY 2005, state support of the College’s operating budget decreased from 61.8% to 37%. The majority of the decline in the percentage of operating expenses from the state can be attributed to the growth in Charter Oak’s distance learning program which is primarily supported out of student fees. It should be noted that in each of the five years, more than 95% of state support covered personnel costs.

Comparable data on state support from Charter Oak’s peer group are not available at this time.



(millions)	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	% Change 2004-05
State Support	\$1.60	\$1.68	\$1.83	\$1.83	\$1.98	\$2.1	6.1%
E & G	\$2.59	\$2.93	\$3.42	\$3.90	\$4.22	\$5.7	35.1%
Percent	61.8%	57.5%	53.6%	46.8%	46.9%	37%	

Source: COSC Financial Reports

DISTANCE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Performance Indicator

Distance education opportunities including video and online courses which improve access to higher education.

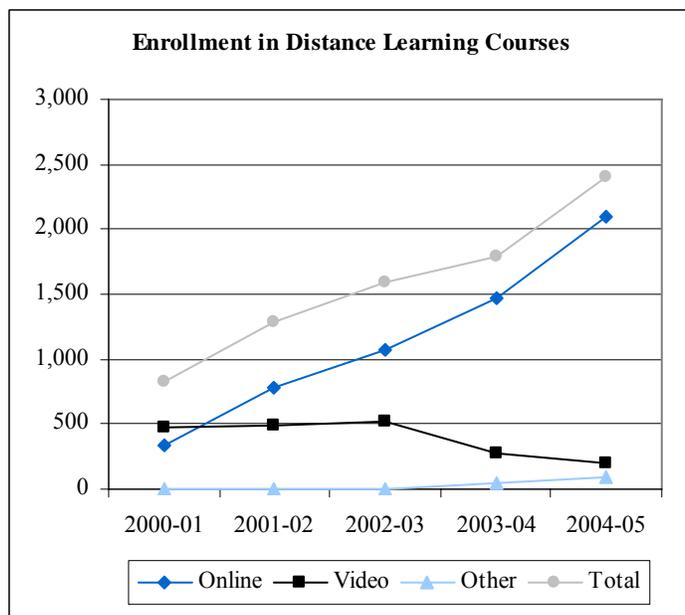
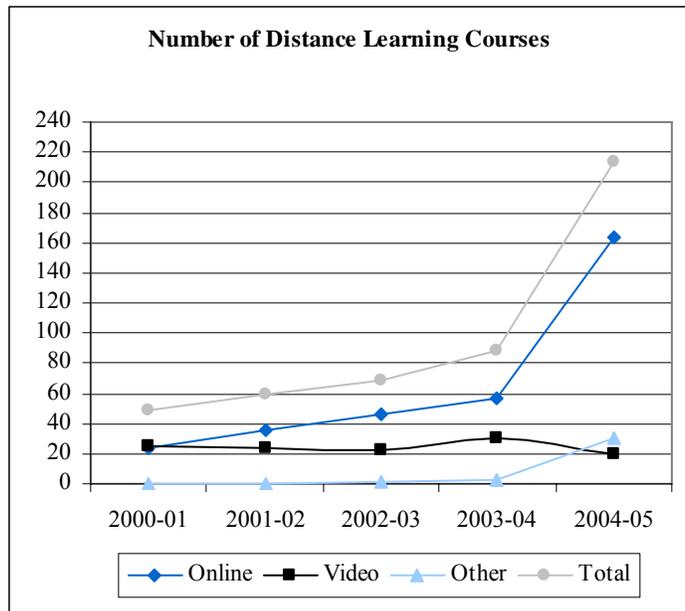
What is Charter Oak State College doing to extend access?

Data Analysis

The Distance Learning Program, which began as the Independent Guided Study program in 1992, has grown substantially since its beginnings when two video-based courses were offered. COSC began to offer online courses in the spring of 1998 and added accelerated eight-week courses in the spring of 2001. In spring 2005, several courses were offered in 5 week “sessions”.

The Distance Learning Program allows adult students to create a study schedule which fits into their busy work and family lives. For this reason, COSC has expanded the number of courses offered, especially courses which help students meet their General Education Requirements. Because of the interactivity provided in online courses, COSC is increasing the number of online courses offered while decreasing the video options.

In the 2000-2001 academic year, COSC offered 25 video courses and 24 online courses with an enrollment of 822 students. In the 2004-2005 academic year, 2,404 students enrolled in 20 video courses, 163 online courses, and 30 correspondence courses, resulting in a 335% increase in courses offered and a 193% increase in enrollment. The number of faculty also increased 232% from 34 in 2000-2001 to 79 in 2004-2005.



NON-CREDIT REGISTRATION

Common Core Performance Indicator

Annual course registrations of non-credit student by the following categories: personal development and workforce development.

*Are the needs of lifelong learners being met?
Are the needs of CT employers being served?*

Data Analysis

Charter Oak State College has developed a series of non-credit, distance learning courses for nurses and pharmacists who want to return to their professions and for nurses to expand their expertise in the area of home care. The three module Nurse Refresher programs were designed by the Connecticut League of Nursing in cooperation with COSC to prepare inactive licensed RNs and LPNs to return, after an absence of three years or more, to the practice of nursing in first-level medical-surgical staff positions. The one-module Home Health Care program was jointly developed with the Connecticut League of Nursing and designed for practicing nurses who want to work in the home health care field. Two additional non-credit tutorials have been developed based on the content of the Home Health Care module. These tutorials will be used by home care agencies for orientation and staff development purposes. Students in the Home Health Care module and the two tutorials are allowed 12 months to complete the content. They will all be offered on a continuous basis. The three module Pharmacist Refresher program was developed by the Connecticut Pharmacists Association in cooperation with COSC and is approved for American Council on Pharmaceutical Education continuing education credits.

	Enrolled 2001-02	Enrolled 2002-03	Enrolled 2003-04	Enrolled 2004-05	Total Enrolled	Completed Program to Date*
RN Refresher (3 modules)	28	54	45	139	266	101
LPN Refresher (3 modules)	n/a	15	7	3	25	13
Home Health Care (1 module)	n/a	n/a	10	4	14	9
Pharmacy Refresher* (3 modules)	n/a	n/a	25	34	59	1

*Students often take more than one year to complete these modules.

**Duplicated headcount

REAL COST PER STUDENT

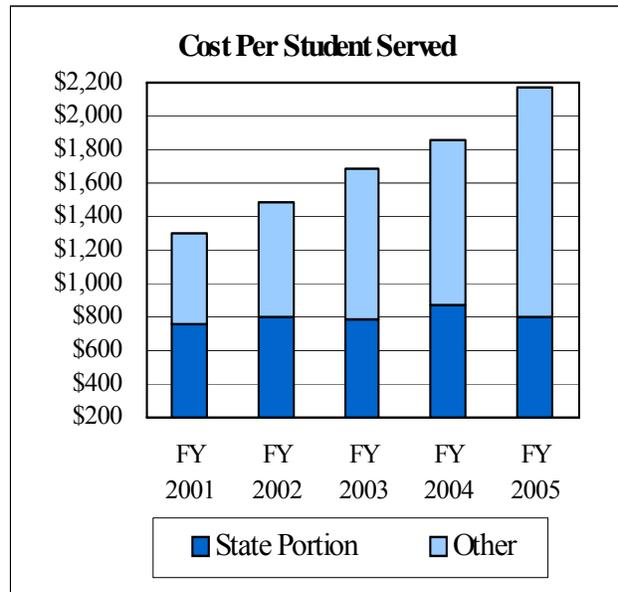
Common Core Performance Indicator

Programmatic costs per student served (students on July 1 plus new enrollees during the fiscal year). General fund fringe benefits and capital equipment funds were included in total educational and general expenditures.

Are operations cost-effective with efficient use of resources?

Data Analysis

Over the five-year period from FY 2001 to FY 2005, the cost per student served at Charter Oak State College increased 67.4%, from \$1,293 to \$2,165. Over the prior fiscal year, the FY 2005 cost per student served increased 16.8% from \$1,854 to \$2,165. Comparable data on expenditures per student from Charter Oak’s peer group are not available at this time.



The cost per student has increased rapidly primarily because of the College’s growth in the distance learning and student financial aid programs. This has been supported by other sources and not state appropriations. In FY 2005, the College had 2,402 enrollment in 120 course sections, a 31% increase in enrollments over FY 2004. This past year followed the previous years outcomes; in FY 2004, the College had 1,826 enrollments in 129 for-credit course sections, a 15% increase in enrollment over FY 2003. Since FY 2000, there had been a 233% increase in course sections offered and a 365% increase in course enrollment.

	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	% Change 2004-05
Students Served	2,263	2,316	2,320	2,276	2,633	15.7%
Cost Per Student Served	\$1,293	\$1,476	\$1,682	\$1,854	\$2,165	16.8%
State Portion	\$743	\$791	\$788	\$869	\$801	-7.8%
Other	\$549	\$684	\$895	\$984	\$1,364	38.6%

Source: COSC Enrollment and Financial Reports

RETENTION RATES

Common Core Performance Indicator

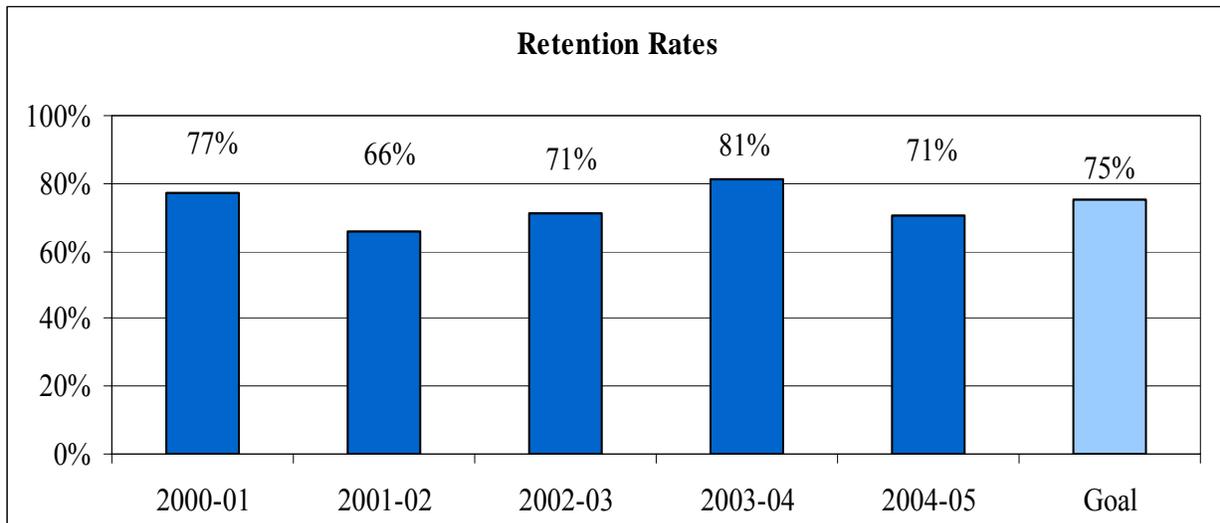
Percent of students who have continued their enrollment or who have graduated one year after initial enrollment.

Performance Improvement Goal

Maintain persistence rates of 75% or more.

Data Analysis

Retention rates are calculated for one year after enrollment. The College began using this methodology in 1997. That figure has ranged between 66% and 81% during the past five years. The college closely monitors annual increases and decreases in retention rates in order to understand the reasons behind them. The college is strongly committed to achieving and maintaining its goal of 75% for first year retention rates.



The College has initiated a number of activities during the past few years designed to increase student persistence. Some of these may be contributing to higher retention and graduation rates. These include increased contact between students and their counselors, technology upgrades, increased electronic communications to keep students engaged, and the availability of Charter Oak State College online courses making it easier for the students to find the courses needed to complete their degrees.

Western Governor’s University indicated a retention rate of 73% for 2004-2005.

Thomas Edison College reported that information on students who have continued their enrollment or who have graduated one year after initial enrollment is not available for FY 2005.

GRADUATION RATES

Common Core Performance Indicator

Percentage of students who have graduated within six years after initial enrollment with a bachelor’s degree or within three years with an associate’s degree.

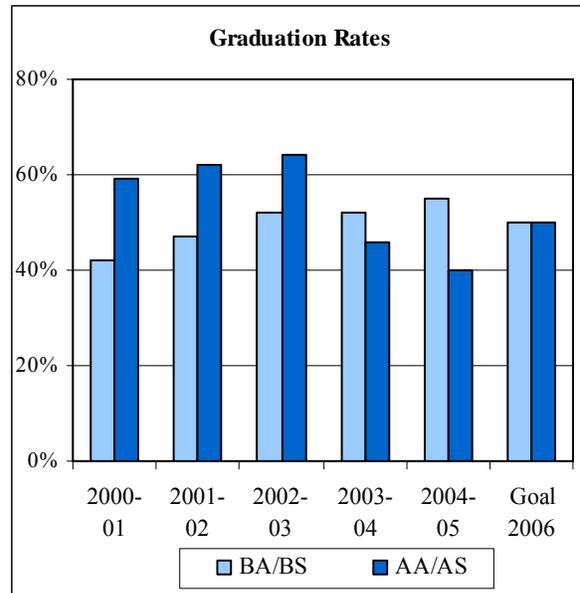
Performance Improvement Goal

By 2006, an average of 50% of degree seeking students will graduate with a BA/BS in 6 years and an average of 50% of degree seeking students will graduate with an AA/AS in 3 years.

Data Analysis

An average of 50% of those who graduated from Charter Oak State College in the past five years completed their BA/BS degrees within six years, while an average of 54% of those who graduated in the past five years completed their AA/AS degree within 3 years.

In 2004-2005, 40% of COSC students completed their AA/AS degree within three years of enrollment. This rate is lower than that of previous years and may reflect the fact that COSC enrolled a number of students in a corporate partnership and within a short period the corporation downsized. A number of these students lost their jobs and were not able to continue with their degree program.



In 2004-2005, 17% of those who graduated from Charter Oak with their BA/BS within six years were racial/ethnic minorities. This is slightly higher than their enrollment rate. Fifty-nine percent of the racial/ethnic minorities that initially enrolled at Charter Oak State College during the 1998-1999 academic year graduated with their BA/BS degree within six years of enrollment. Twenty-five percent of the students who graduated with their AA/AS degree within three years were racial/ethnic minorities. Thirty percent of the racial/ethnic minorities that initially enrolled at Charter Oak State College during the 2001-2002 academic year graduated with their AA/AS degree within three years of enrollment.

Graduation Rates by Ethnic/Racial Minorities							
Degree	Graduation Year	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian American	Native American
BA/BS	2003	52%	52%	50%	55%	33%	100%
	2004	52%	51%	61%	48%	79%	100%
	2005	55%	54%	53%	63%	63%	100%
AA/AS	2003	64%	65%	50%	50%	0%	0%
	2004	46%	48%	47%	50%	67%	100%
	2005	40%	48%	27%	71%	100%	17%

STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND SERVICES

Performance Indicator

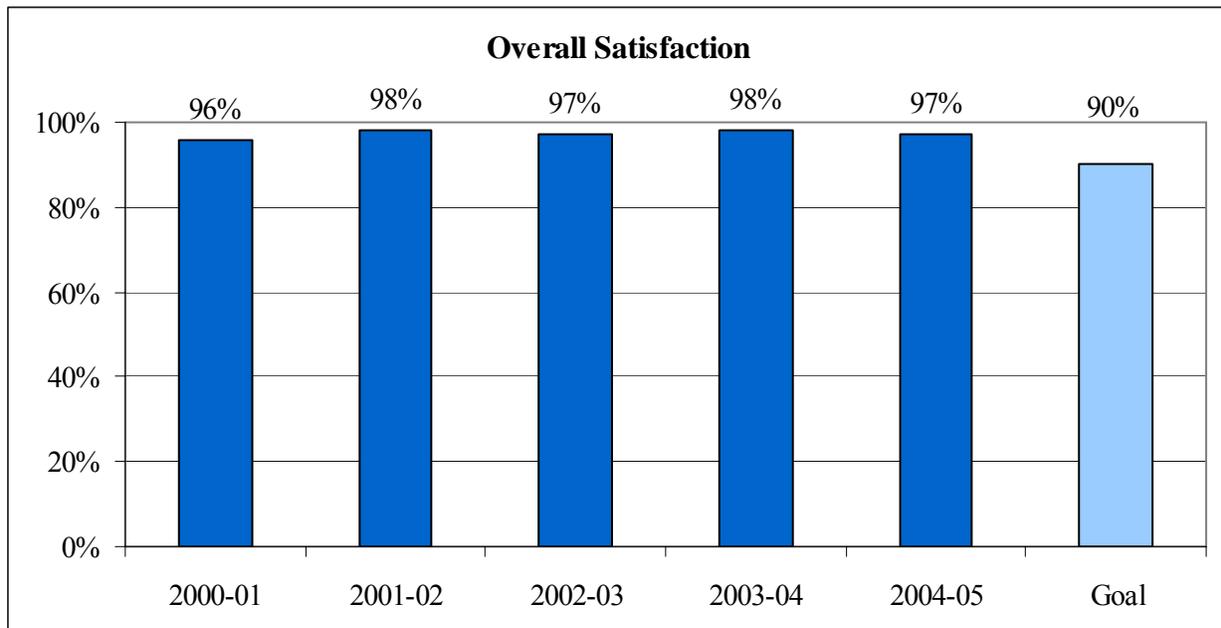
Level of student satisfaction with programs, policies and services as indicated by respondents to the alumni survey.

Performance Improvement Goal

Maintain ratings of over 90% satisfaction with programs, policies, and services.

Data Analysis

An average of 98% of the COSC graduates who responded to the alumni and graduate surveys from 2000-2005 reported being “very satisfied” or “satisfied” when asked to *Please mark your level of satisfaction regarding the Charter Oak Program, in general.* COSC monitors these data regularly and pays particular attention to the sub-categories which contribute to overall satisfaction.



When asked *how satisfied they were with their Excelsior College education*, graduates reported a mean of 6.1 on a 7 point scale to the question reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied.”

Thomas Edison State College reported that the majority (94%) of FY 2004 Graduate Survey respondents rated their overall experience with the College as “Good” or “Excellent”.

One hundred percent of Western Governor’s graduates that were surveyed reported that their experience was “Excellent” or “Very Good”.