

FACT BOOK 2019-2020

Washington County Community College

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WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S STUDENT OF THE YEAR 2020 RECIPIENT CLINTON DAKIN



QUICK FACTS

Washington County Community College was recently named one of the top 150 community colleges in the United States for its commitment to student success and educational excellence. Along with Maine's six other community colleges, WCCC offers the lowest tuition and fees of any institution in New England.

The college currently enrolls approximately 501 students in its one-year certificate and two-year degree programs and non-matriculated students. Students prepare for direct employment through the college's programs in occupational fields of study. Others start at WCCC with the intention of transferring on to a four-year degree.

About a third of all students live on campus where they are able to take advantage of the college's proximity to some of the most spectacular natural resources in the Northeast.

The college was founded in 1969 as Washington County Vocational Technical Institute, and in 1989, became Washington County Technical College. In 2003, the Maine Technical College System became the Maine Community College System, and WCTC became Washington County Community College in recognition of our expanded mission in serving the people of Washington County and Maine.

The college is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). Washington County Community College serves as an educational, community, and economic development resource for Washington County and beyond.

MISSION STATEMENT

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NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Washington County Community College does not discriminate as proscribed by federal and/or state law on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, age, genetic information, disability, marital, parental or Vietnam era veteran status in specified programs and activities. Inquiries about the College's compliance with, and policies that prohibit discrimination on these bases may be directed to:

Tatiana Osmond, Affirmative Action Officer

Washington County Community College One College Drive Calais, ME 04619

Ph: (207) 454-1094 Fax: (207) 454-1026 tosmond@wccc.me.edu

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United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights

33 Arch Street, Suite 900 Boston, MA 02110 Ph: (617) 289-0111 Fax: (617) 289-0150

TTY/TDD: (617) 289-0063

OCR.Boston@ed.gov

and/or

Maine Human Rights Commission (MHRC)

51 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333-0051 Ph: (207) 624-6050

Fax: (207) 624-6063 TTY/TDD: (207) 624-6064

www.state.me.us

and/or

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

475 Government Center Boston, MA 02203

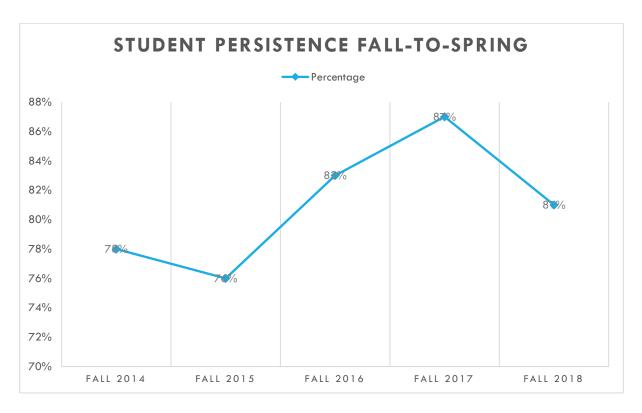
Toll-Free: 1-800-669-4000

Ph: (617) 565-3200 Fax: (617) 565-3196

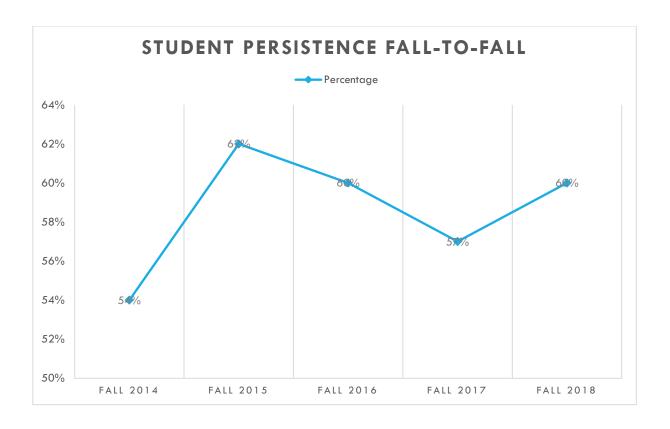
TTY: (617) 565-3204 or 1.800.669.6820 www.eeoc.gov

STUDENT PERSISTENCE

Student persistence is a measure of a students' pursuit of their education by continued enrollment within a degree seeking program. The following charts highlight the yearly average of student persistence rates from Fall to Spring and then Fall to Fall. This includes Full and Part-time students. There is a natural drop off in Fall to Fall persistence rates as there are several one-year certificates offered at WCCC.¹



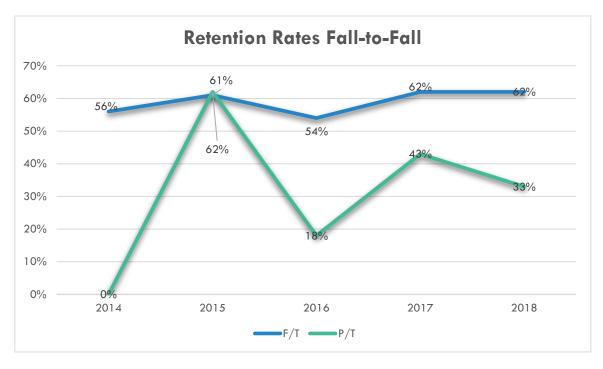
¹ National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS).



RETENTION RATES

Retention rates are an institutional measure of students' continued enrollment in degree seeking programs. In the chart below the percentage of first-time (including both full-time and part-time) degree/certificate-seeking students from the previous fall who either re-enrolled or successfully completed a program by the current fall is shown.³

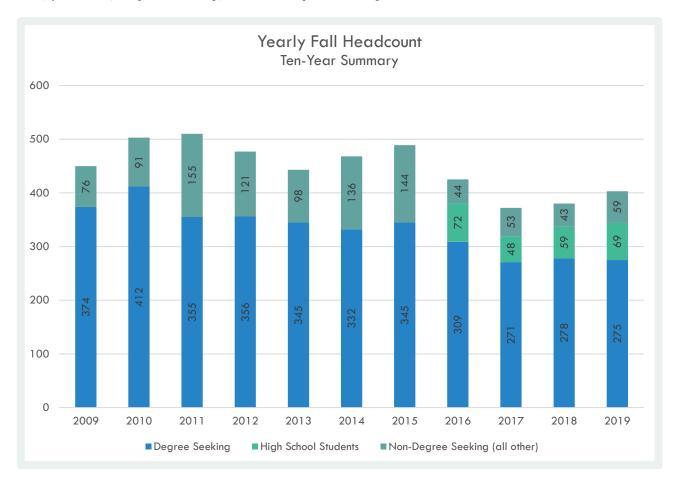
NOTE: The number of students in WCCC's cohort of part-time students was two in Fall 2012 and five in fall 2013. None of these students returned the following fall, thus the 0% retention rate in both Fall 2013 and Fall 2014.



³ National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS).

HEADCOUNT

The following chart is a ten-year summary of WCCC's yearly head count of students. This includes full-time, part-time, degree-seeking, and non-degree seeking students.⁴



Beginning in fall 2016, high school students taking courses for college credit are identified as a subset of non-degree-seeking students. Prior to fall 2016, high school students are included in the Non-Degree-Seeking (all other) category.

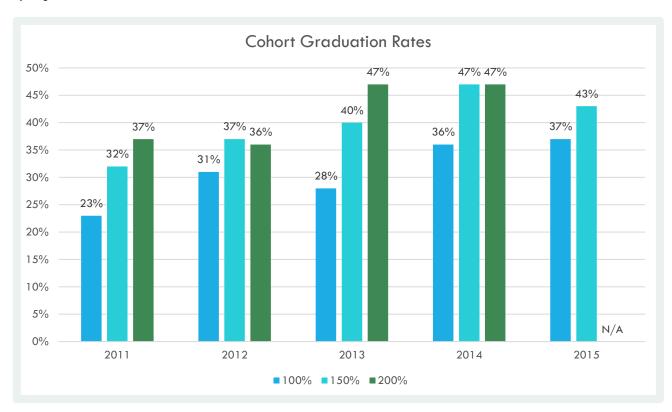
⁴ National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS).

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COHORT GRADUATION RATES AT 100%, 150%, AND 200% COMPLETION

This entails the percentage of first-time, full-time degree/certificate seeking students who completed a program within 100%, 150% and 200% of time complete.⁵

For example, if a student taking a one-year certificate began in Fall of 2018, if they completed in 100% of time they would graduate at the end of the Spring 2019 semester. If they complete in 150% of time they would graduate at the end of the Fall 2019 Semester. If they complete in 200% of the time they would graduate at the end of the Spring semester in 2020.

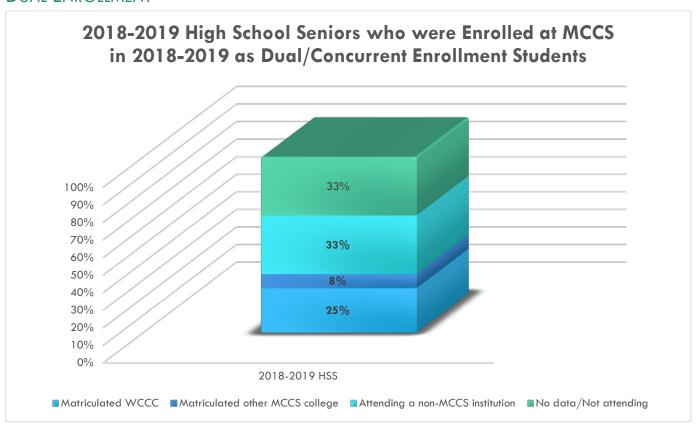


The five-year average of first-time, full-time degree seeking students shows that a significant portion of students complete at the 150% completion rate.

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⁵ National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS).

DUAL ENROLLMENT



PROFILE ON STUDENTS

SHAPING THE SELF AND SHAPING THE FUTURE WITH EMILY WILLIAMS



As a place of higher education, WCCC is in the business of preparing minds for the future – but not everyone who benefits from its programs is an adult. Students in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program utilize what they have learned to positively affect the youngest among us. One ECE graduate, Emily Williams of Harrington, is wholeheartedly embracing the concept of reaching children in the most effective way as she looks ahead to her own path.

Raised in Harrington, Emily found out about WCCC while she was a junior in high school participating in the Early College for ME program. Mary-Ann Urquhart, Regional Coordinator for Early College for ME, informed her about the college and the benefits of attending a highly ranked school close to home.

"We evaluated all the community colleges in Maine, since I wanted to stay local, and WCCC stuck out to me because of its great prices and the ability to only be about one and a

half hours away from home," Emily shares. "With scholarships and grants, I never even had to worry about being financially unstable."

While she had her college picked, Emily wasn't sure at first as to what program she wanted to pursue. After giving it some thought, she decided to go with her passion of working with children and enrolled in the ECE program. "I figured this degree was a great start to learn all about how to develop a curriculum for kids and learn all the psychology behind a young person's brain," Emily explains.

Once on campus for a tour, Emily met with the program director, Linda Levesque, and felt instantly welcomed. From that moment onward, Emily absorbed everything she could about working with young minds. "I have had a great time learning under Linda and will think of all the knowledge she has taught throughout my future endeavors," Emily said. "I knew nothing about education, but she has taught me so much and I will surely be holding onto the information moving forward."

Being on WCCC's campus transformed Emily from "a shy young lady" to a "confident adult" as a result of the many experiences she has had with faculty, staff, and her peers. She worked as a TRIO tutor and took on a work study job answering phones, all while employing the soft skills she was learning in her classes.

There were bumps in the road that almost shook Emily off – including in her very first semester when she committed accidental plagiarism and was facing withdrawal from her class. "I freaked out and thought, 'Well, maybe I can't handle this.'" Rather than quitting altogether, Emily was assisted by Academic Dean Darin McGaw who enabled her to withdraw from the class without it affecting her standing. "I

was beyond thankful for his encouraging words and willingness to help me out so I didn't feel so discouraged," she recalls.

Many other staff and faculty members made an impact on Emily. In the dorms, Director of Residential

Life Karen Gookin and Student Involvement & Engagement specialist Ben Collins were always ready to provide advice and assistance where they could at the same time as always having fun activities planned. Director of Financial Aid Linda Fitzsimmons was "an amazing financial help" and Student Navigator Bernadette Farrar could "make a bad day be a really good one with encouraging words and, no matter the situation, real life help," Emily shares.

With her first degree in hand, Emily is preparing to go on to work in an environment dedicated to improving children's mental and behavioral health. Her next step is to attend the University of Maine at Augusta online to take more courses in education and human services.

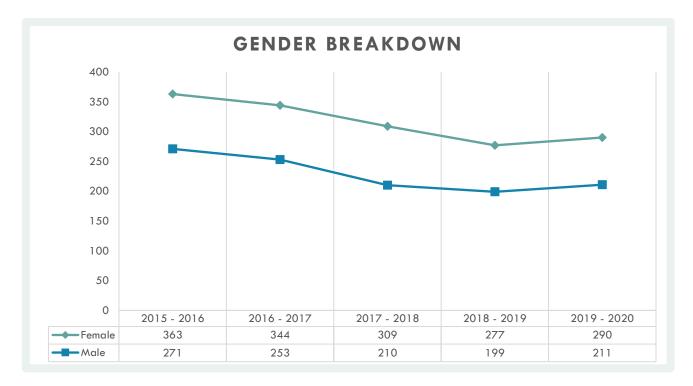


After her two years at WCCC, Emily is ready to recommend the college to anyone and everyone. "It has been an amazing experience and one that I will hold onto forever," she said. "You'll never find a better or closer community in a school system like you will at Washington County Community College."

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GENDER BREAKDOWN

A five-year average of students at Washington County Community College (WCCC), shows 58% of WCCC students are female and 42% are male.⁶



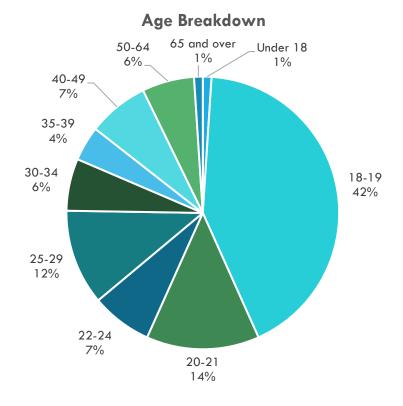
AGE BREAKDOWN

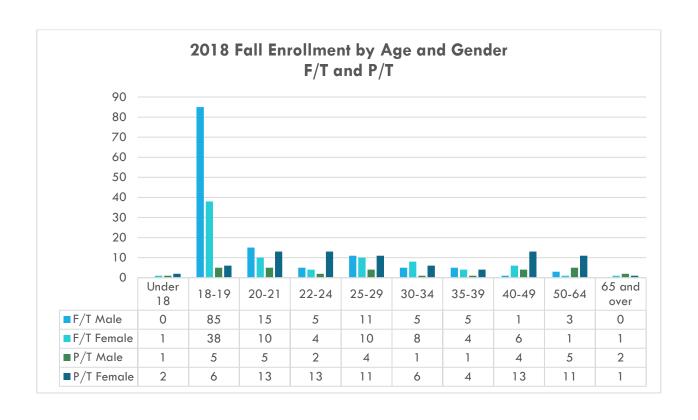
The following two charts highlight the age range of Washington County Community College's population of Full-time and Part-time students at Fall Enrollment for 2019.⁷

The first chart shows that 42% of students who enroll at WCCC are 21 years old or under. The remaining 58% of the fall enrollment population are distributed through several age ranges. When we view this chart in conjunction with the second chart⁸ we can see that the distribution of students by age shows that a large portion of full-time students are younger (21 years or less) males, while a large portion of our part-time students are females over the age of 22.

⁶ National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS).

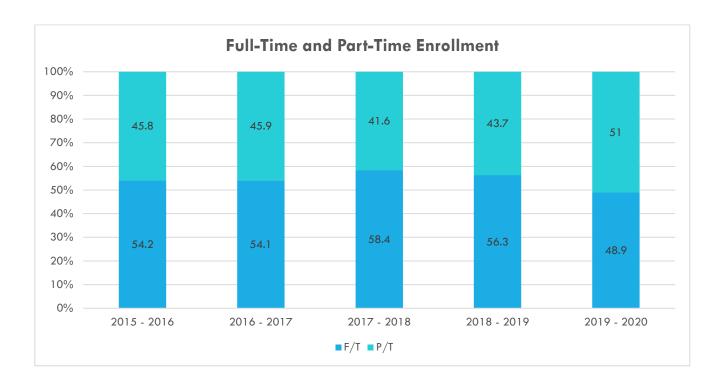
⁷ National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS).





Enrollment Status

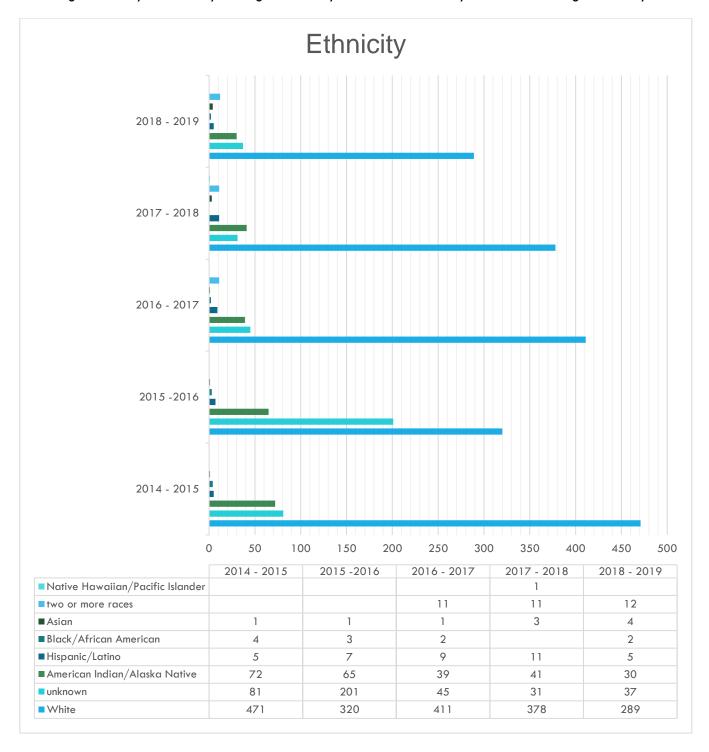
WCCC's Full-time to Part-time ratio has stayed relatively consistent with a five-year average of 54.4% Full-time students and 45.6% Part-time students.



⁹ National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS).

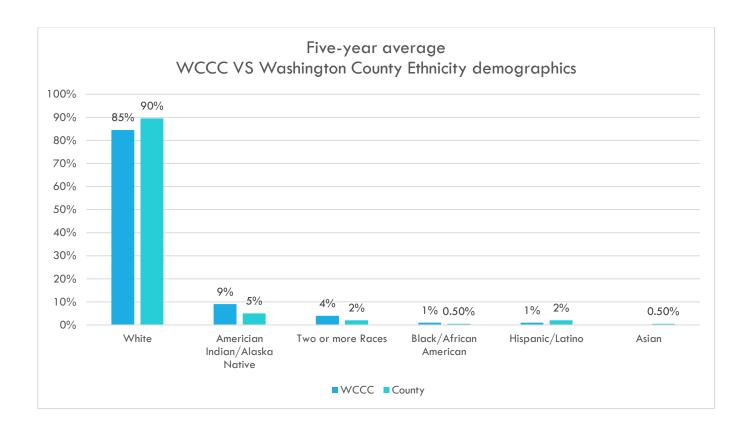
ETHNICITY

Washington County Community College's ethnicity reflects the ethnicity level of Washington County.



Five Year Average¹⁰

¹⁰ Washington County Data retrieved from Data USA https://datausa.io/profile/geo/washington-county-me#demographics



DISCOVER CHOICES

MATTHEW MALLOCK ON MAKING THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITY



For residents of Washington County willing to commit themselves, a first-rate education is available close to home in the form of Washington County Community College (WCCC). Computer Technology student and Eastport resident Matthew Mallock knew he could get exactly the education he was looking for without needing to leave the area.

Born and raised in Washington County, Matthew has been a lifelong resident of Eastport. As such, he has known about WCCC since he was young as the college was always a presence in the community in his life. "When it came time for me to go to college I decided on the closest, most available one in my county," he recalls.

For his major, Matthew had a clear idea of what he wanted to do. "I had always been into computers when I was a kid and I knew quite a bit before joining the program just from my own experience," he said. Recognizing that he could turn his interest into a solid career, he opted for a degree in Computer Technology.

During his studies, Matthew shares he did run into issues – but "most of the problems and roadblocks I faced I was able to work through with the help of the college." Working multiple jobs on the side caused some of his assignments to be later than usual, but the instructors were generally accommodating, he shares. "I didn't have any problems balancing my home and work lives with my college courses since the teachers knew that sometimes things just got held up and were often willing to work with me."

Some of Matthew's challenges stemmed from working with instructors with different expectations of workload, but he successfully navigated through them with the college's support. "From my experience the faculty and staff are highly supportive of the students, even though some courses were more difficult and demanding than others. If you are willing to put the work in, then WCCC will help you succeed."

Among the faculty that connected with Matthew the most were Mathematics Instructor Travis Stepan, "who brought me up to par for my courses after I failed the math portion of my entry exam," and History Instructor William Love, with whom Matthew enjoyed "a number of conversations on the topics discussed" due to their mutual interest in the subject. Computer Technology Program Director George Chmielecki was especially impactful for Matthew as a teacher and a mentor. "Thanks to him I now have a Microsoft Certification in networking and a broad wealth of knowledge in Computer technology that will help me along my career path."

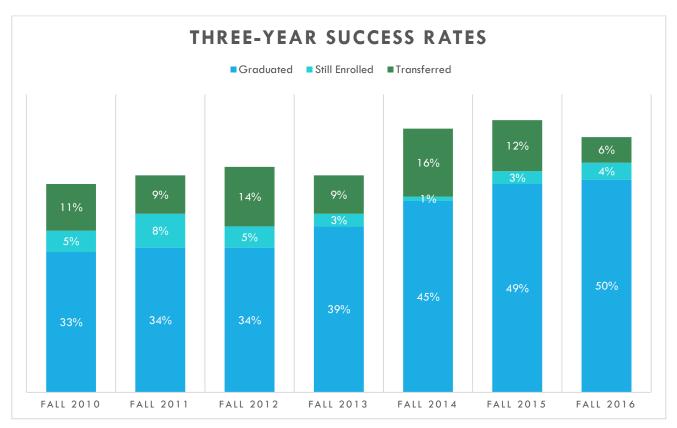


With his IT degree in hand, Matthew is looking to secure a job in the county to start employing and sharpening his skills as he looks ahead to his career. Eventually, he plans to come back to WCCC to earn a Business Management degree to start his own computer support

business somewhere in the state. "That's a goal that will take me a while to get to, but I know when I'm ready the college will be here to support me on my next steps."

SUCCESS RATES

This includes degree/certificate-seeking students who entered the college as first-time or transfer-in students, enrolled full or part-time, in the fall of the given year.¹¹

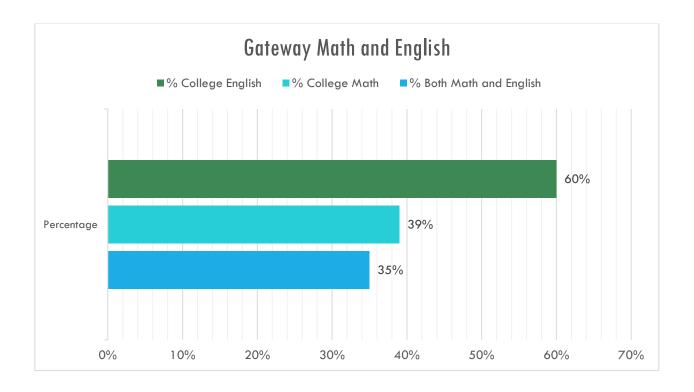


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¹¹ MCCS Data Mart

GATEWAY MATH AND ENGLISH

Completion status by the end of the first year of Fall 2018 Cohort of both Full-time and Part-time students. 12



CREDIT COMPLETION



22

¹² MCCS Data Mart

	Award	No. Given	
	President's List	7	
	Dean's List	24	
	President's Award for Excellence	9	
	Outstanding Achievement Award	11	
	All Maine Academic Team	3	
	Instructor's Choice Award	12	100.00
	Dean's Award for Dedication and Perseverance in Educational Pursuit	5	THE
	Dean's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Student Life	4	
	TRiO Grant Aid Award 13	37	
	TRiO Grit Award	2	
No. of Concession, Name of Street, or other Persons, Name of Street, or ot	TRiO Excellence Award	2	
	TRiO Crusader Award	2	
	TRiO Renaissance Award	2	
	Student Senate	10	1000
	Resident Assistants	6	
	Student of the Year Nominees	3	

¹³ TRIO Student Support Services provides Grant Aid Awards each academic year to eligible participants. Recipients of a TRIO Grant Aid Award must be making satisfactory academic progress, be enrolled full-time in a future semester, be PELL eligible, and have unmet need. During the 19-20 academic year, TRIO SSS was able to give 37 out of 160 participants an award.

CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSES

Washington County Community College prepares students for several certificates and licenses. Students also have an opportunity to qualify for many of these certificates and licenses on the campus during the school year.

Program	Certification/License
Adventure Rec	 Wilderness First Responder (WFR) American Canoe Association Level 3 (River Canoe) Leave No Trace certificate National Association of Interpretation Certified Interpretive Guide US Sailing/American Red Cross Small Boat Sailing Certification Maine Snowmobile and ATV Safety Certificate Maine Boating Safety Certificate
	 Offered through elective courses: Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician (WEMT) Maine Recreational Guide License prep Maine Sea Kayak Guide License prep US Coast Guard Captain's License prep (Six Pack) PADI SCUBA Open Water Dive Certification Professional Climbing Instructor Association (PCIA) Climbing Wall Instructor
Automotive Technology	ASE Certification • G1 Maintenance & LT Repair: Auto Maintenance
Computer Technology	Microsoft Certification Windows Operating System Fundamentals Networking Fundamentals Security Fundamentals
Education	Education Certification • Behavioral Health Professional (BHP)
Engine Specialist	Safety Certifications OSHA Certifications First Aid CPR
Heating Technology	License Preparation • State of Maine journeyman oil burner license examination ProV Certification • Journeyman oil burner
Heavy Equipment Maintenance	Safety Certifications OSHA Certifications

	First AidCPR
Heavy Equipment Operations	Safety Certifications OSHA Certifications First Aid CPR
Medical Assisting	American Association of Medical Assistants
Phlebotomy	American Society for Clinical Pathology Phlebotomy Technician Certification First Aid CPR
Plumbing Technology	License Preparation State of Maine journeyman plumbing examination
Production Technician	Manufacturing Skills Standard Council CPT Safety CPT Quality Practices & Measurement CPT Manufacturing Processes & Production CPT Maintenance Awareness CPT Green Production
Residential & Commercial Electricity	License Preparation • State of Maine journeyman electrician examination ProV Certification • Journeyman electrician
Welding	American Welding Society structural certification • State of Maine pipe certification

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

The college currently offers 31 programs of study at the associate degree, diploma and certificate levels. Certificates are "stackable"; students have the option to gain skills in a specific technical area and return for a subsequent year to obtain another technical certificate in order to maximize employment opportunities by becoming multi-skilled technicians. Technical and career programs provide both in-class instruction and practical skill development taught in laboratories and clinical/training sites.

Academic	Offering	js			
Program of Study	AA	AS	AAS	D	С
Adventure Recreation & Tourism			X		Х
Automotive Technology					X
Business Management			X		
Business Management – International Commerce Option			X		
Career Studies			X		
Computer Technology			X		
Criminal Justice			X		
Criminal Justice — Conservation Law Option			X		
Early Childhood Education			X		Х
Education		X			
Electromechanical Instrumentation Technology			Х		
Engine Specialist					X
Entrepreneurship					Х
Heating Technology					Х
Heavy Equipment Maintenance Technology					Х
Heavy Equipment Operation Technology					Х
Human Services			X		
Liberal Studies	X				
Mechanical Technology **			X		Х
Specialization in Passenger Vehicle Concentration			X		
Medical Assisting			X		
Medical Office Technology					Х
Phlebotomy					Х
Plumbing Technology					X
Powersport Equipment/Small Engine Technician					X
Production Technician			X		Х
Residential & Commercial Electricity				Х	

Trade & Technical Occupations			X			
Welding Technology					Х	
** Two year diploma attained through successful completion of specific combinations of one year program options						

A = Associate in Arts

AS = Associate in Science

AAS = Associate in Applied Science

 $\mathsf{D} = \mathsf{Diploma}$

C = Certificate

ENROLLMENT BY MAJOR

Enrollment by Major includes First-Year Full-time First-Year Part-time, Second-Year First-time, Second-Year Part-time.

Program of Study	Degree Type	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Adventure Recreation & Tourism	AAS, C	15	9	11	8	9
Automotive Technology	С	5	9	7	10	4
Business Management	AAS	14	9	15	14	14
Business Management – International Commerce Option	AAS	1	2	1	1	
Career Studies	AAS	7	1	4	1	7
Computer Technology	AAS	17	22	9	11	7
Criminal Justice	AAS		7	8	5	9
Criminal Justice – Conservation Law Option	AAS				2	6
Early Childhood Education	AAS, C	30	34	26	20	18
Education	AS	14	16	10	14	5
Electromechanical Instrumentation	AAS					7
Engine Specialist	С	5	1	3	7	4
Entrepreneurship	С					
Heating Technology	С		5		4	
Heavy Equipment Maintenance Technology	С	3	5	7	5	3
Heavy Equipment Operation Technology	С	16	16	9	12	4
Human Services	AAS	21	16	16	16	17
Liberal Studies	AA	32	32	35	27	28
Liberal Studies Family Futures Downeast	AAS		11	12	11	10
Mechanical Technology	AAS, C	7	12	1 <i>7</i>	16	13
Specialization in Passenger Vehicle Concentration	AAS	8	8	7	8	11
Medical Assisting	AAS	47	34	26	36	46
Medical Office Technology	С	2	2	1		4
Phlebotomy	С	7	5	10	3	5
Plumbing Technology	С	7		4		8

Powersport Equipment/Small	С	13	8	6	12	3
Engine Technician						
Production Technician	AAS, C		1		2	3
Residential & Commercial Electricity	D	13	16	14	18	15
Trade & Technical Occupations	AAS					
Welding Technology	С	15	19	12	15	13

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C = Certificate

PROGRAM STATS

The number of awards conferred by program and award level for 2018-2019.14

Program	1 to <2-year Certificate	Associate
Adventure Recreation and Tourism		1
Automotive Technology	6	
Busines Management		4
Business Management – Entrepreneurship	3	
Career Studies		3
Computer Technology		1
Education		4
Early Childhood Education		4
Engine Specialist	9	
Heating	4	
Heavy Equipment Maintenance Technology	10	
Heavy Equipment Operation	9	
Human Services		5
Liberal Studies		1
Mechanical Technology		8
Mechanical Technology — Specialization in Passenger Vehicle		7
Medical Assistant		5
Medical Office Technology	3	
Phlebotomy	1	
Powersports Equipment/Small Engine Technology	8	
Production Technology	1	
Residential and Commercial Electricity	14	
Welding Technology	15	
Grand Total	83	43

¹⁴ IES NCES National Center for Education Statistics

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Tyler Sabattis Steers Toward Success with Mechanical Technology Degree



Success doesn't always come easy, but the challenge of getting there provides a strong foundation for future endeavors. That is but one of the lessons Tyler Sabattis, a 2020 graduate of the Mechanical Technology program, has gleaned from his time at Washington County Community College (WCCC).

Growing up in Indian Township, a sovereign territory of the Passamaquoddy nation, Tyler first heard about WCCC while he was in junior high school. Later, he learned about the school's Mechanical Technology program from a graduate of the Automotive program who encouraged Tyler to follow in his footsteps. He "took me under his wing and showed me what to

expect in the field, demonstrated proper safety, and invited me into his personal projects outside of school," Tyler shared.

Tyler refers to his time at WCCC as a "great experience," though he adds that it wasn't without its challenges. In some cases, Tyler was able to overcome the obstacles in his path using the resources WCCC provides to support all students in the interest of creating a healthy, thriving campus.

When Tyler was struggling academically in his classes, he routinely found that his instructors "went above and beyond making sure I understood the material." Tyler provides the example of how mathematics instructor Greg Smith "always makes time" to help students in need. "He can be getting ready to teach a class, but if he has a few minutes to spare, Greg will help."

Making the switch to online classes following the outbreak of COVID-19 was a challenge in and of itself, but Tyler said his instructors – particularly Randy McCormick – made the process much easier. "Randy would have several ways to demonstrate the material being taught. It was very helpful." When he needed extra help, Tyler was able to find it in TRIO.

Student navigator Bernadette Farrar was another link in the chain of Tyler's success. "Bernadette is always reaching out making sure I have everything I need to be successful," he said.

Outside of class, Tyler was appreciative of WCCC's sharing shelf and on-campus food pantry, which he described as "huge for students." Established to provide low-barrier assistance to students in need of extra food, Tyler said the "shelves are always stocked with food and supplies." Even when Tyler's vehicle broke down, he was able to work with the college to find parts and keeping going.

Once he graduates with his Associate's in Applied Science in Mechanical Technology, Tyler plans to enter the workforce – but he isn't done with his education yet. His goal is to work with an automotive shop such as VIP to attain his ASE certification. Eventually, he'd like to become a Master Mechanic to

enable him to work "for the respectable Ron O'Brien," Tyler said, referring to WCCC's Automotive Instructor and owner of O'Brien's Quality Auto Care in Calais.

To those who are considering higher education, Tyler now highly recommends WCCC. "You'll meet great people who do whatever it takes to make sure you are successful. Accept the challenge and be successful."



BUSINESS SERVED BY WCCC OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

Adult Family Care Homes of Maine

AOS # 77

Aroostook Mental Health Center Atlantic House Brewing Company

Beatrice Rafferty School

Border Electric
Calais Motor Inn

Calais Regional Hospital
Calais School Department
Charolotte Fire & Rescue

City of Calais

Cobscook Shores Program

Community Caring Collaborative

Denny's River Volunteer Fire & Ambulance

Dennysville Ambulance Eastport Health Care

Eastport Memorial Nursing Home

Eastport School Department

Indian Township

Indian Township School

Jo's Diner

Jonesboro Fire Auxiliary
Lubec Brewing Company
Lubec Community Outreach
Lubec Regional Medical Center

Machias CareerCenter

Machias Memorial High School

Maine Indian Education

Mine Safety and Health Administration

Moosabec Ambulance Service

Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge

Nook and Cranny Restaurant Passamaquoddy Health Care Passamaquoddy Yacht Club Pembroke Elementary School Perry Elementary School

Pleasant Point Health Center Princeton Elementary School

Remeliah House Riverside Electric

Sipayik Ambulance Service

St. Croix Tissue

Town of Cherryfield

Cherryfield Ambulance Service

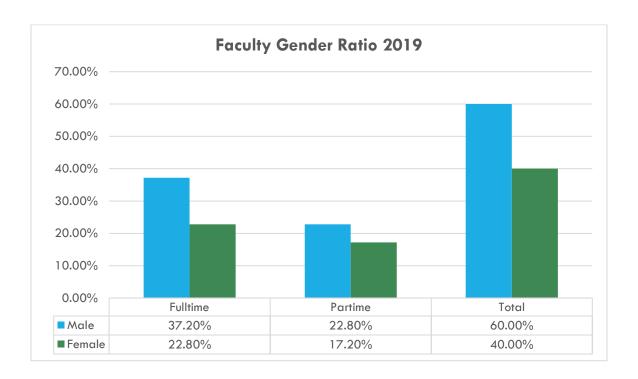
Veterans Administration Washington Academy Washington Place

Wesley School Department Xanadu (Dunkin Donuts)

STAFF/FACULTY PROFILE

FACULTY GENDER RATIO

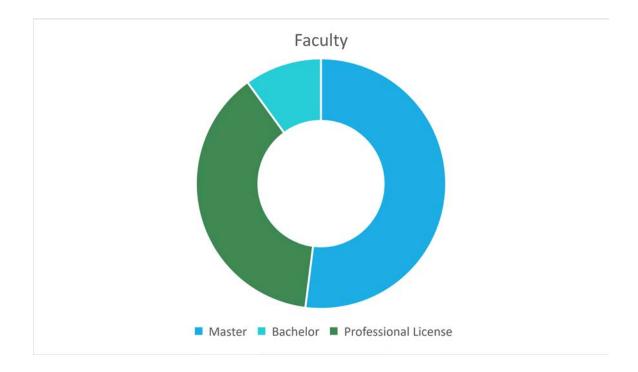
Approximately 60% of faculty are male and 40% are female. With males holding more full-time and part-time academic positions.



29% of WCCC's full-time faculty and staff are alumni.

2019 FULL-TIME FACULTY DEGREE HELD

Washington County Community College program faculty come from a large variety of professions which aligns with WCCC's 30 degree programs. Over half of the faculty hold a master's degree and over a one-third have specific professional licensing credentials.



7.4 years = the average length of service of WCCC's full-time faculty and staff.

MAYEZ TRAVIS ON UPHOLDING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL LEGACY



Sometimes it is those who have come before us who shine light on the path ahead. On her personal journey as a college student, Mayez Travis embraced the fact that she stands on the shoulders of a giant in the form of her father – and firmly stepped into his shoes with the aim of continuing a legacy of determined, self-sufficient Downeasters.

Mayez was born in Calais to a mother raised in South Carolina and a father who was himself a Calais native. She attended Calais Middle High School,

and it was there that she learned about WCCC and the available co-enrollment opportunities for some classes. "When I graduated, I already had a lot of college credits through WCCC," she explains.

When it came time for Mayez to pick a college, she set out for the University of Maine at Fort Kent with an eye on its nursing program. The major didn't feel right, however, and neither did the others she tried at the time. "I ended up moving back home, and taking a year off from school," Mayez shares. Initially "very discouraged" by this seeming setback, she now recognizes that doing so gave her time to "take a moment and figure out what I wanted and enjoyed from life, and to prepare to focus on schooling, while balancing adult life."

After reflecting on her goals, Mayez realized what she was looking for was much closer to home. Her father, an alum of WCCC's Welding program, served as an inspiration for what one could attain with the right kind of personal drive. "He did a lot of things, from owning and running a carpentry business to day-trading stocks and developing land," she recalls. "He flipped houses, built them from the ground up, collected rental properties, and was always talking about different business ideas."

Mayez decided to follow in her father's footsteps and foster her own entrepreneurial drive. She enrolled in WCCC's Associate of Applied Sciences degree to attain her welding certification and a background in career studies with a goal of "retiring" – or working for herself – by 35.

Just before enrolling full-time at WCCC, Mayez was diagnosed with multiple learning disorders. "Once I figured out what was going on in my head, I was able to better mitigate them," she shares. Armed with new understanding, she was better able to navigate her classes, family health issues, and working between 50 and 60 hours a week – partly through the help of WCCC's Student Services. "The school offered accommodations, as well as changing my learning approach to a more beneficial one," Mayez said.

As a Welding student, Mayez worked with first-year instructor Scott Wheelock most frequently. His ability to effectively reach his students came through with flying colors, she shares. He honed her natural ability and taught her the critical terminology she would need to excel in the trade.

"I struggled a lot with that side of things a lot more than any other, and Scott was always there to decipher my needs and questions, and also provide an answer that I'd understand," Mayez explains. "For a first-year professor, he really knew how to connect with his students, and how to encourage each and every one of us. He made the shop feel safe, inviting, and more importantly something to look forward to."