

MORTON  COLLEGE

# PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION

*Accelerating action to close the graduation gap*



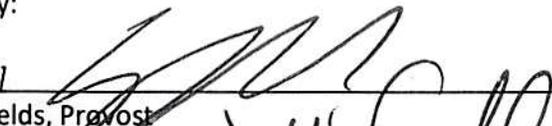
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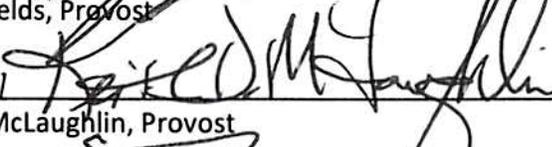
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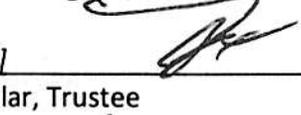
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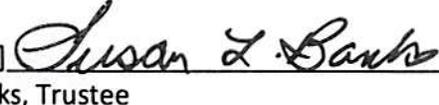
Morton College  
Equity Plan: 2020 - 2025

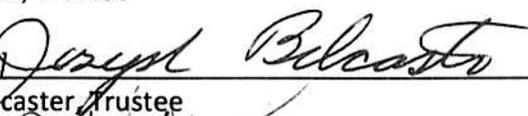
This Equity Plan has been endorsed by the following members of our college/university community:

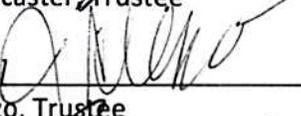
[Signature]  [Date] 2-26-20  
Dr. Stan Fields, Provost

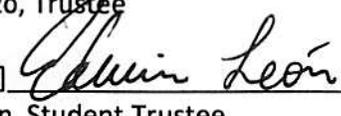
[Signature]  [Date] 2/26/2020  
Dr. Keith McLaughlin, Provost

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Frank Aguilar, Trustee

[Signature]  [Date] 2/26/20  
Susan Banks, Trustee

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Joseph Belcaster, Trustee

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Jose Collazo, Trustee

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Edwin Leon, Student Trustee

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Susan K. Grazzini

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Anthony Martinucci, Vice Chair

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Frances Reitz, Chair

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1a: ILEA Overview

Despite improvements in high school graduation and college matriculation rates for Illinois students, there are wide and persistent gaps in college completion rates especially for low-income, first-generation students, and students of color. The launch of the **Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative (ILEA)** marks a major step forward for 25 two-year and four-year public and private non-profit colleges and universities from northeastern Illinois and across the state who are committing to eliminate racial and socio-economic achievement gaps by 2025, while aggressively increasing completion rates on their campuses.

ILEA is the signature initiative of the Partnership for College Completion (PCC), a non-profit organization founded in 2016 to catalyze and champion policies, systems, and practices that ensure all students can graduate from college and achieve their career aspirations. With an initial focus on northeastern Illinois, PCC has set a goal to eliminate institutional achievement gaps in college degree completion for low-income, first generation, Latino<sup>1</sup> and African-American<sup>2</sup> students in Illinois by 2025, establishing the region as a national leader in equity in attainment.

Beginning with this initial cohort, PCC will offer direct support and resources to the 25 colleges and universities who have embraced the Equity Initiative. PCC will work alongside these partner colleges to jointly set commitments, identify appropriate evidence-based strategies to utilize on their campuses, and scale effective practices. PCC will support policy and practice change efforts that have the explicit goal of eliminating racial and socioeconomic degree completion gaps, while increasing institutional college completion rates overall. By participating in ILEA, partners commit to a core set of principles:

- Colleges are responsible for graduating all of their degree-seeking students as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- All students can graduate with college degrees if they have the right information, tools, and supports.
- Achievement gaps between low-income, Black and Latino students and their higher-income and White peers are unacceptable and should be eliminated.
- These efforts will be undertaken without sacrificing institutional quality or excellence or increasing admission standards.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably throughout the document.

The ILEA colleges will conduct a deep analysis of their institutional data, develop equity plans that contain annual growth targets, and report progress toward their goals, which will be shared publicly. The colleges will also work to identify obstacles students face and develop programs and policies that break down unnecessary barriers to college graduation. The ILEA colleges and universities will ensure the road to each degree path is clearly mapped out and communicated, guaranteeing that students can access courses when they need them to maintain momentum in pursuit of their degree.

The launch of the Initiative follows a galvanizing 2017 PCC report, “[Unequal Opportunity in Illinois: A Look at Who Graduates College and Why It Matters](#),” which found that only 33.7 percent of African American students who start at four-year institutions earn bachelor’s degrees within six years – a rate 32.7 percentage points below that of their White peers. For Latinos, 49.3 percent are earning degrees, a still-wide gap of 17.1 percentage points. The completion gap between low-income and wealthier students is also alarming: according to Advance Illinois, only 37 percent of low-income students graduate in six years while 75 percent of wealthier students do.

Increased and more equitable graduation outcomes across the diversity of our state’s higher education institutions benefits students, their families and the state of Illinois. A 3% increase in graduation rates is projected to produce \$1.7B increase in net earnings, \$132M increase in tax revenue, and \$35M in public system savings. The progress of the ILEA member colleges and universities will provide a set of learnings that the Partnership will document and share with practitioners and policymakers across Illinois, the region and the nation, establishing a path forward that will promote equity in college achievement.

For more information on ILEA, please visit: <http://partnershipfcc.org/ilea>.

### 1b: Institution Overview

Recognized by the Illinois Community College Board, Morton College is a comprehensive community college. Morton College's mission is:

To enhance the quality of life of our diverse community through exemplary teaching and learning opportunities, community service, and life-long learning.

Goals:

- Maximize the College's resources to support student learning
- Conduct ongoing assessment of student learning to discover new ways to help students succeed
- Develop responsive curricula and programs to serve community needs
- Encourage community families to embrace the educational opportunities Morton College provides

- Ensure the enrichment of its educational programs and student-support services by making a commitment to ongoing self-study and assessment

### **Morton College District Population & History**

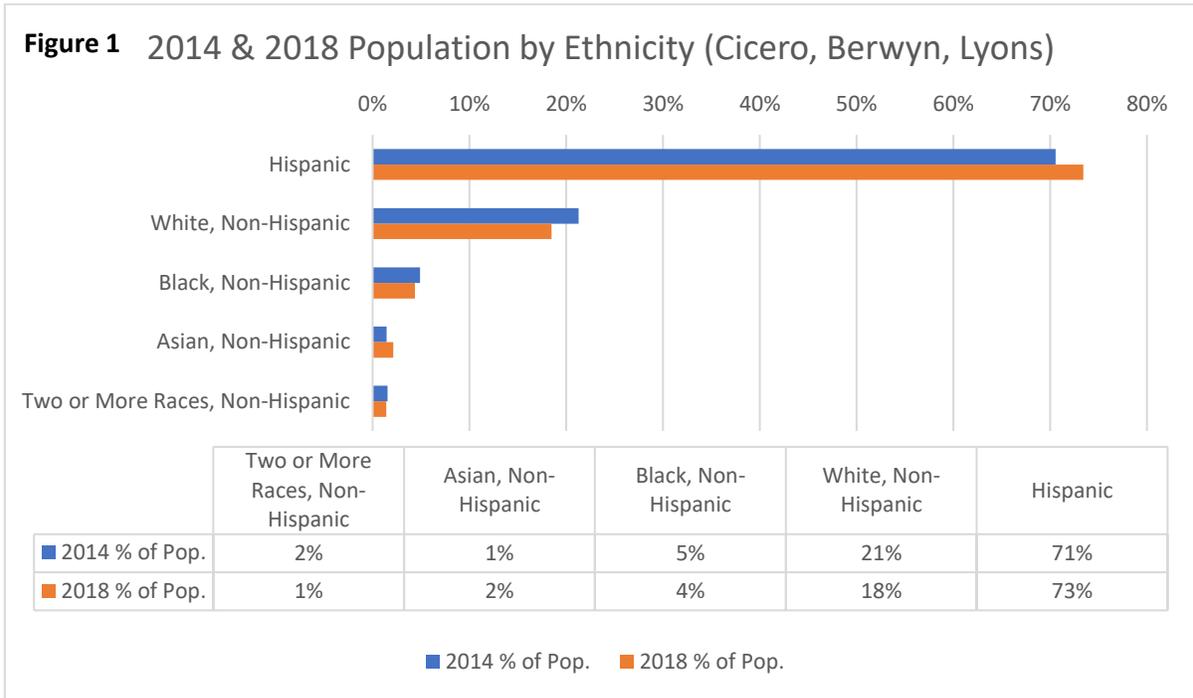
Morton College (MC) is a public, comprehensive community college located in Cicero, Illinois. It is the second oldest community college in the State of Illinois. Morton College was founded in 1924 as a public junior college under the auspices of J. Sterling Morton High School. It became an independent community college district in 1966, and a Board of Trustees was elected in 1967. The MC campus, as it is today, opened in November 1972. MC is located on 37.1 acres, at 3801 S. Central Avenue in Cicero, and includes five educational buildings. Serving one of the 39 public community college districts in Illinois, MC is recognized by the Illinois Community College Board and serves District 527, comprised of six suburbs of Chicago which include Cicero, Berwyn, Forest View, Lyons, McCook and Stickney. In terms of geographic service area, District 527 is the smallest community college district in the State. In the 2017-2018 academic year, there were 6254 credit students and 370 non-credit students enrolled at the College. Morton College is located approximately 8 miles from downtown Chicago.

District 527, General Information: The American Community Survey estimates the district's population in 2017 was 158,461. Figure 1 for the district indicate that 75% of the population is Latino/Hispanic mostly of Mexican descent (88% of the Latinos are of Mexican descent). Twenty-two percent of the population was White and 4% African-American. About 28% of the district's population was under 18 years old, with the lowest median age in Cicero (29 years), while Forest View had the highest median age (43 years). In 2017, close to 33,000 students were in Kindergarten to 12th grade, about 21% of the overall population.<sup>3</sup> The high population of young people indicates that increasing numbers of students are coming through the elementary and high school systems. This increase in students will impact the College as it must be ready to enroll these students and prepare them for the workforce or to transfer to a university. Approximately 32% of the population in the district was foreign-born. In addition, 92% of the foreign-born population was from Latin America. Seventy percent of the population at least five years old living in the district spoke a language other than English in the home. Of those speaking a language other than English at home, 94% spoke Spanish and 45% reported not speaking English "very well."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table School Enrollment for Berwyn, Cicero, Forest View, Lyons, McCook and Stickney.

<sup>4</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table Age and Sex for Berwyn, Cicero, Forest View, Lyons, McCook and Stickney.



Source: EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, Demographic Table) based on Census data, 2020.

Among the employed population 16 years and older in the district, the leading industries included manufacturing (17%); educational services and healthcare (16%); and arts, entertainment, and recreation (12%). The most common occupations in the district were as follows: production, transportation, and material moving occupations (25%), sales and office occupations (24%); and service occupations (22%).<sup>5</sup> The median household income in the district varies by town, ranging from \$44,110 in Cicero to \$62,652 in Stickney. The poverty rates also reflect higher numbers within some areas of the district. Cicero and Lyons had 20% and 14% below poverty level, respectively, while Forest View had 1% poverty rate.<sup>6</sup>

The district’s unemployment rate fluctuates as high as 8.3% in Cicero and lower in Stickney (2.6%). The District’s unemployment rate is an opportunity for the college to provide workforce training for this sector of the population who seek to improve their skill set or change their career trajectory. District 527 is made up of several close-in “ring suburbs” of Chicago which, like many such communities in the Midwest and Northeast comprise what can be termed as an urban rust belt. Such communities have been built around the heavy industrial corridors that arose with the expansion of American manufacturing in the twentieth century, extended along the rail lines, waterways, and highways that served to transport goods. This economic expansion reached its apex in the boom years of American industry following World

<sup>5</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table Industry By Sex For The Civilian Employed Population 16 Years And Over for Berwyn, Cicero, Forest View, Lyons, McCook and Stickney.

<sup>6</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months for Berwyn, Cicero, Forest View, Lyons, McCook and Stickney.

War II, but then began a precipitous decline in the 1960s and 1970s as the major factories began to close and/or move their operations elsewhere, leaving behind very little employment or economic activity (Institute for Latino Studies, 2002).

*\*As reported in the 2012 comprehensive self-study document.*

### HSI Designation

Morton College is proud to be a designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Hispanic-HSIs are defined in Title V of the Higher Education Act as not-for-profit institutions of higher learning with a full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate student enrollment that is at least 25 percent Hispanic<sup>7</sup>. The colleges Latino/a total enrollment is 85.3% in the 2018-2019 academic year.

### Morton College Student Body & Employee Profile

In the year 2017-2018, Morton College enrolled a total of 6,254 credit and 370 non-credit students. The demographic profile of our students is 57% female and 42% male, with an average age of 25. Latino students account for 84% of the student population. A large majority of students are from our district at 87%. Approximately 57% of first-time students came from the two feeder high schools (Morton East and Morton West).

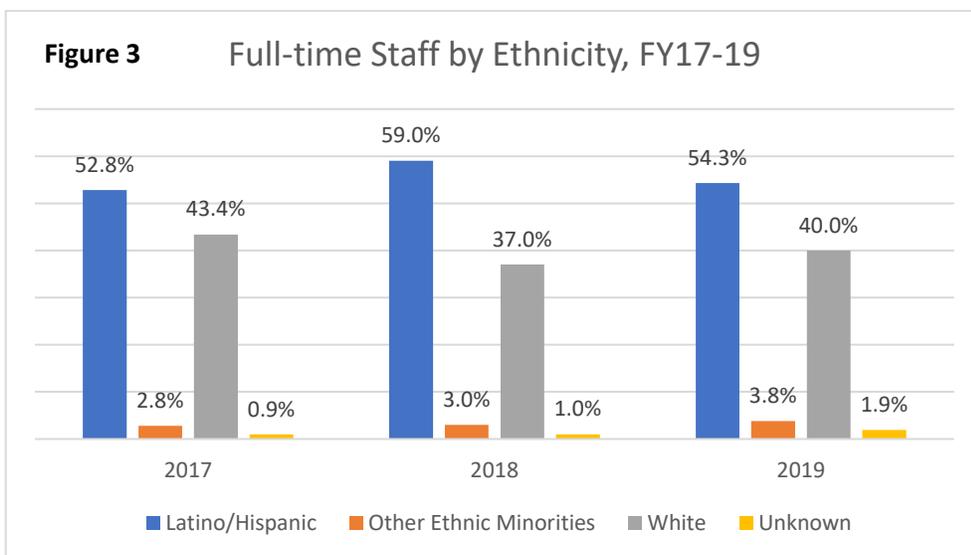
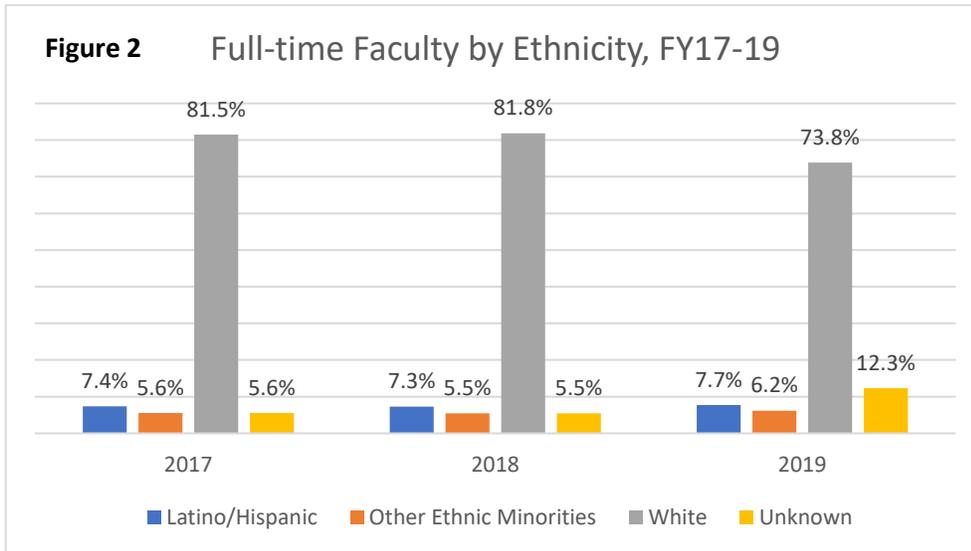
### College Employee Profile (as of October 1, 2017)

The college employs a total of 433 individuals in variety of roles. Below is a breakdown of employees:

- 39.3% full-time
- 60.7% part-time
- 4.8% (21) administrators
- 55.4% (240) faculty
- 39.8% (172) classified staff
- 39.4% of the full-time employees are Hispanic/Latino

The racial breakdown of faculty and staff:

Figures 2 and 3 below indicate that staff diversity at the College is relatively racially and ethnically diverse, especially with respect to Hispanic employees. Many of the College's Hispanic employees, and especially those with the most contact with students, are fluent in Spanish, one of the principle languages of the district. On the other hand, the College has not been as successful in attracting faculty of color. While the number of white faculty has fallen from 81.5 percent in FY 2017, it still remained at 73.8 percent in 2019. For further racial breakdown of faculty and staff refer to the appendix.



**Morton College Programs**

In 2018, Morton College awarded a total of 639 degrees and certificates. Currently the college offers 40 career certificates, 18 Associate in Applied Science Degrees and 5 Transfer Program Degrees. Career Certificates are offered in the areas such as Automotive, Computer Information Systems, Business, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning. Associates in Applied Science are offered in areas such as Law Enforcement, Nursing and Physical Therapy Assistant. The transfer programs are offered in areas such as Liberal Studies, Science, and Arts. See the breakdown below of the annual enrollment by program.

Annual Enrollment by Primary Program 2018	Count	Percent(%)
Transfer Programs	2091	33.3%
Associate in Applied Science/ALS	1934	30.8%
Certificates	581	9.2%
Course Enrollees (Non-Degree Seeking, incl. transfer)	583	9.3%
Adult Education/ESL	1094	17.4%
Total	6283	100%

\*Credit student counts include Adult Education enrollments.

\*\*Non-credit students designated by community service and personal enrichment enrollments.

### 1c: Purpose of the Equity Plan

The ILEA Equity Plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for outlining how Morton College will work toward closing gaps in degree attainment for low-income, first generation, African American and Latino/a students. It is imperative to point out that the college is a minority majority institution, serving an 85% Latino student body, therefore, all of the efforts to close equity gaps are institutional wide aiming to serve all of our students. Due to the persistence and size of equity gaps across colleges and universities in Illinois, the ILEA Initiative seeks to prioritize urgent action on equitable degree completion outcomes for students across racial and socioeconomic groups. The current state section will illustrate the degree completion disparities between the following target student groups:

- African-American and White students
- Latino students and White students
- Students receiving Pell grants and those who are not eligible

The ILEA Equity Plan is intended to complement other institutional efforts to increase equity and degree completion.

### 1d: Campus Engagement Plan

Engaging the entire Morton College campus will play an imperative role in both the development and implementation of the Equity Plan. The engagement plan was created in an effort to ensure all constituents from a variety of areas are able to voice concerns and ideas, be a part of the decision making process, learn about updates and have access to information on the equity plan. The ILEA core team has designed the strategies below to ensure the campus community is engaged with the equity plan.

#### **Strategy 1: Leverage Executive Director of Institutional Advancement Position**

The existence of an Executive Director of Institutional Advancement Position gives the College one centralized point of contact for any communication initiatives moving forward, and is “responsible for setting and executing the media, community outreach, and communications strategy for the College.” Including “community outreach” responsibilities gives this position an ability to both solicit input and craft outgoing communication, making it a key figure in the College’s communication strategy with respect to the Equity Plan and its implementation.

#### **Strategy 2: President’s Office and Cabinet**

Alongside the Executive Director of Institutional Advancement, the President is Morton College’s most visible employee and acts as a representative of its interest to both internal and external stakeholders. That visibility should be evident in the accessibility of both the President and members of the President’s Cabinet to internal stakeholders and members of the community. The President and Cabinet will therefore be personally invested in supporting the Equity Plan agenda and its implementation.

#### **Strategy 3: Existing Governance Structures**

Regularly reporting on the implementation of the Equity Plan to the College Council, Faculty Assembly and unions will ensure that all of the College’s key stakeholder groups participate in Equity Plan discussions. The College Council is Morton’s only stakeholder group that draws from all units of the College, and exists to “improve communication between the various constituencies at Morton College.” As such, the Council is in the unique position of being able to both solicit feedback from stakeholders while also communicating information to different parts of the college as well. Additionally, active participation from all College stakeholders in groups like Adjunct Faculty, Faculty Assembly which includes Academic Standards, Curriculum Committee, and Student Relations Committee will help maintain clear and transparent communication.

#### **Strategy 4: Technology**

Employing technology will facilitate the implementation of the Equity Plan. The College’s website and social media presence will help the Administration, Faculty, and staff to communicate to all stakeholders about the equity plan.

**Strategy 5: Stakeholder feedback**

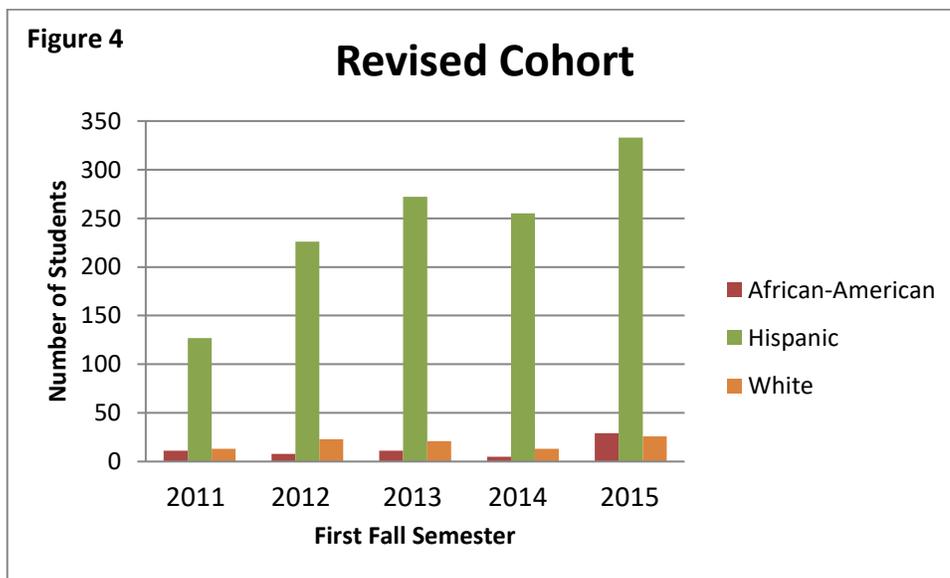
If stakeholders are not convinced the College is listening to their concerns, any announcements coming out of the College will be ignored. To that end, the College will hold regular meetings open to various stakeholders, exposing them to various aspects of the equity plan, and allowing them to contribute as equity partners.

**Strategy 6: Overall transparency**

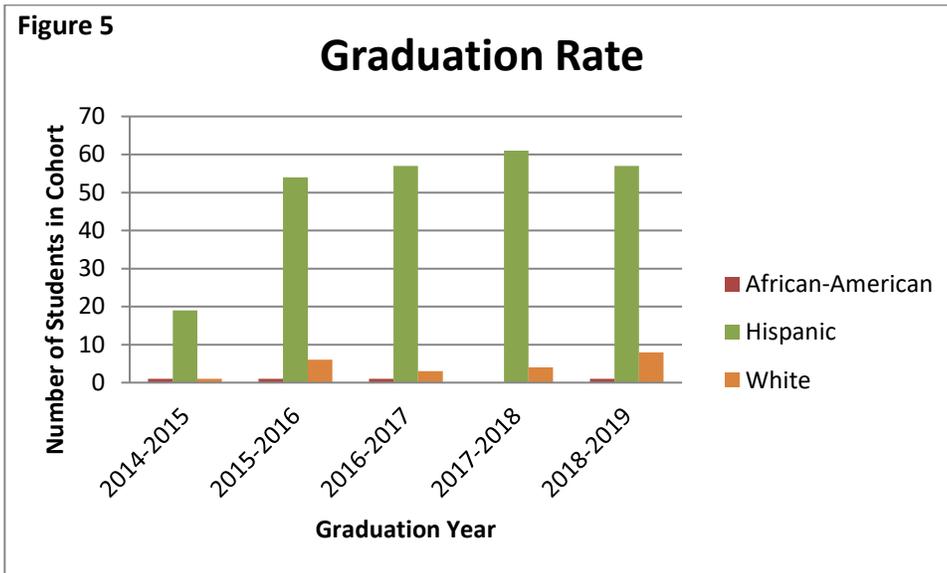
The College will maintain a transparent approach to information related to the equity plan. Policies and announcements related to the equity plan will be posted on the College’s website for external viewing, and on the portal for internal stakeholders.

**CURRENT STATE**

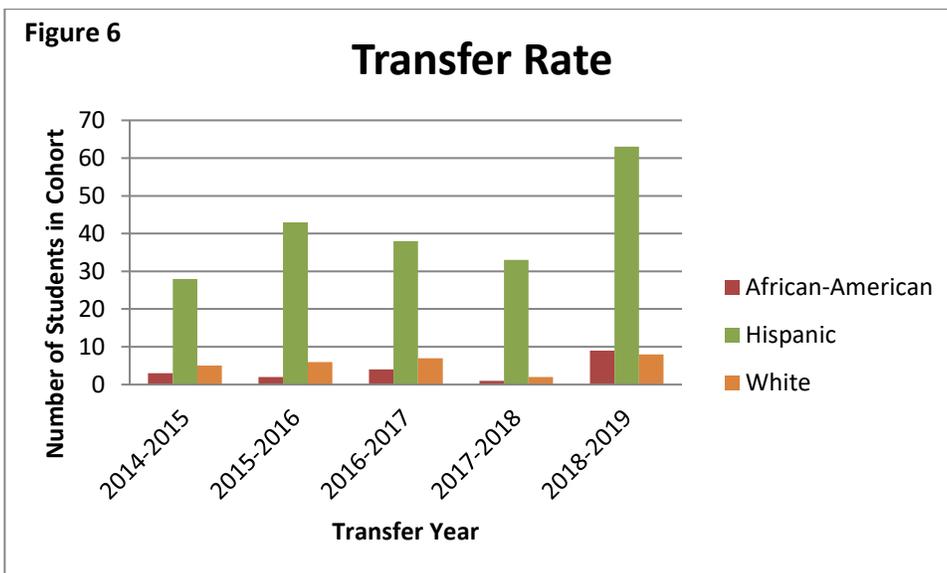
The following graphs outline cohort enrollment, graduation rates and transfer rates for African-America, Hispanic and White students over the past five years. Additionally, the final graph shows retention rates for full- and part-time students. The graduation and transfer rates are based on the number of students who completed their program within one hundred and fifty percent of the normal time to completion (three years).



Morton College has a diverse student population. As the largest, two-year HSI east of the Mississippi River, we serve a student population that is more than eighty percent Hispanic. We have also seen an increase in the number of African American students attending in the 2015 cohort while the student representation of other races has remained consistent, see figure 4.

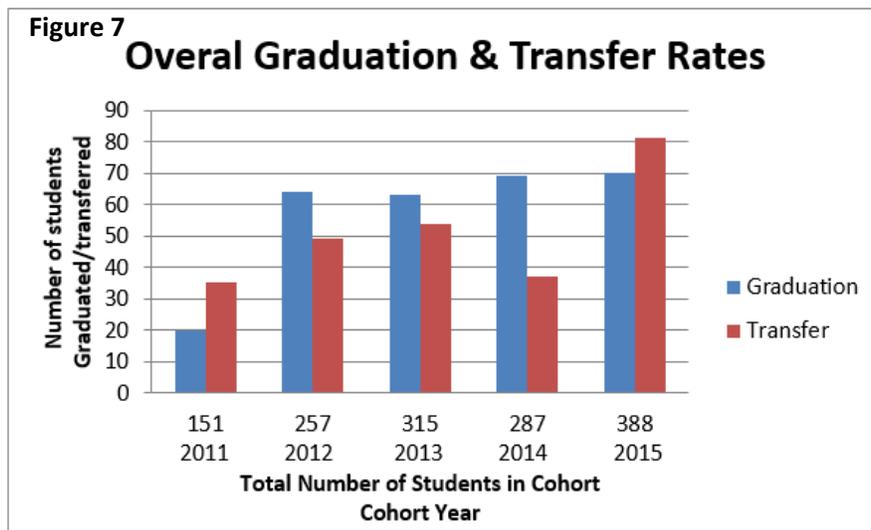


While we do see an increase in the graduation rates for our Hispanic students from the 2011 cohort to the 2015 cohort, the numbers are still low. For each cohort, their graduation rate is less than twenty-five percent. For our African American students, their maximum graduation rate was thirteen percent of the 2012 cohort, but dropped significantly in the remaining three cohorts outlined in Figure 5.

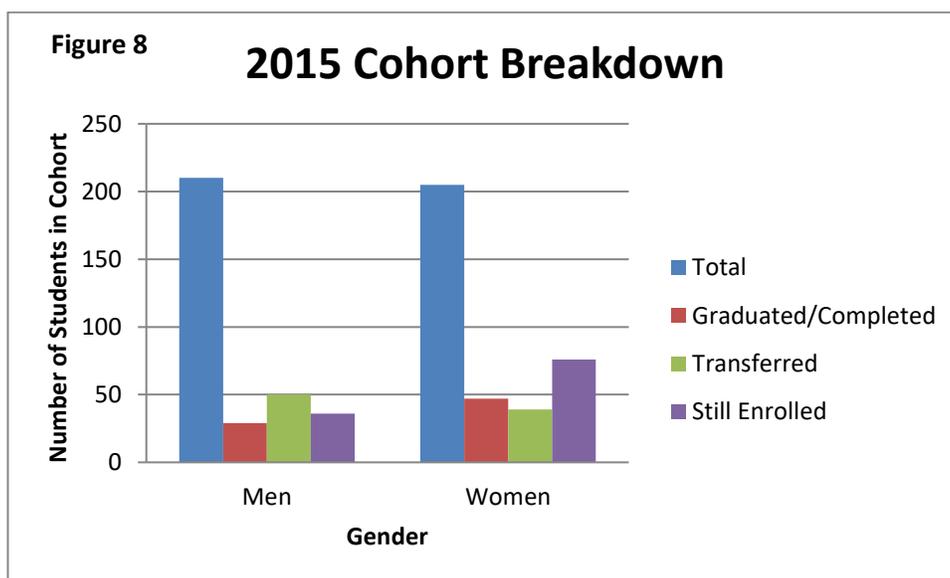


However, some of the low graduation rates could be attributed to higher transfer rates, especially in the case of our African American students. Depending on their major, students often transfer without obtaining their associates degree in order to finish school in a timelier manner. The data shows that across the cohort, a larger percentage (twenty to thirty-six

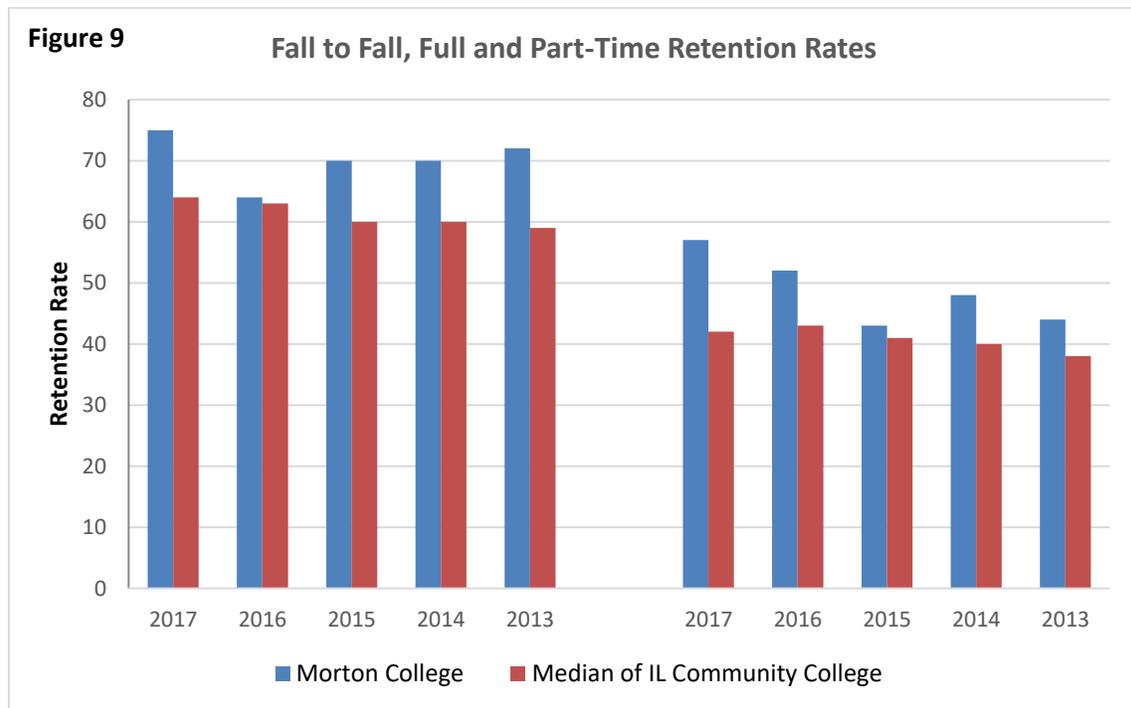
percent) of our African American students are transferring to a four-year institution. This is a significant improvement to the graduation numbers, nevertheless still has room to grow. For our Latino population, the transfer rates are similar to the graduation rates with less than twenty-five percent transferring.



The three graphs above indicate that there is still work to be done when it comes to overall graduation and transfer rates for all students but especially for our underrepresented students. With graduation rates at or less than twenty-five percent overall for the College and transfer rates sitting at a maximum of twenty-three percent, we need to make some changes to help all of our students succeed.



Within our current cohort, we find just under fifty percent of our male cohort has stopped out compared to approximately twenty percent of the female cohort. Upon further breakdown, the data shows that of the ninety-five male students no longer enrolled; ninety-one percent were Hispanic or African American. A similar trend is found with female students. While this is in line with our enrollment statistics, it is still something the college would like to change.



The full-time retention rate is the percent of the fall full-time cohort from the prior year that re-enrolled at the institution as either full- or part-time in the current year. Part-time retention rate is the percent of the fall part-time cohort from the prior year that re-enrolled at the institution as either full- or part-time in the current year. These rates are promising, but the college is looking for the best strategies to capitalize on this student retention, and extend it to transfer or graduation.

Morton College has implemented two key strategies to help with retention and graduation rates over the past five years. The first involved changes to the developmental education program, and the second involved a restructuring of student advising. Like most community colleges, Morton College serves many underserved and disadvantaged students. Indeed, over 84 percent of all entering Morton College students place into developmental English or courses, and 68 percent of all entering Morton College students place into developmental mathematics courses. What is more, many of these students have traditionally been required to complete a long series of developmental English and/or math courses before

being given the opportunity to enter into a full, college-level academic schedule. In fact, institutional data demonstrates that many of Morton College's least-prepared students never make it to credit-bearing classes, or drop out before ever earning either a certificate or degree. For this reason, Morton College administrators and faculty are dedicated to systematically reexamining and reforming its developmental education program. The goal is to give all entering Morton College students the opportunity to earn a college credential in a reasonable amount of time. This is in line with the College's Strategic Plan goal to "make student success the core work of Morton College," as well as with the Strategic Plan's Objective Seven, "to improve success of students requiring remedial coursework" by reducing "the number of students requiring remedial courses."

In the last two years, Morton College has begun to overhaul its developmental education program. The mathematics faculty has already made major changes to its program in order to help students graduate more quickly. Morton College's college readiness program has several key dimensions. First, Morton College has created a new dual credit and dual enrollment program. More specifically, Morton College now offered expanded dual credit opportunities, i.e., Math 105, Math 110, and Math 141. The success of the program is indicated by the fact that in AY 18 Morton College offered only 109 students dual credit in math, while in AY 2019 that number increased to 893 students. What is more, Morton College has begun to offer dual enrollment classes in the past year, including Math 203 and Math 215. Second, Morton College has collaborated with the district high school to create a senior-year college readiness high school course that allows successful student to circumvent all developmental coursework at the College. This program began in the 2018-2019 academic year. The course centers on elementary and intermediary algebra. Third, Morton College is aiding the high school district in its plan to create a Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act Course. Like the existing college readiness course, the goal is to creating a four-year high school math class to smooth the transition to college and reduce remediation credits. Fourth, Morton College has created a co-requisite system that pairs the highest level of developmental mathematics with a college-level math course, Math 102. (Note: By contrast, the existing college readiness class, called Algebra 3, prepares students for Math 105). This course will be a quantitative literacy course. The goal is to allow many students who place into developmental math the opportunity to immediately earn college credit in mathematics. Fourth, Morton College has expanded its mathematics tutoring. Fifth, the College has begun to host regular K-14 articulation meetings to identify and address other issues of college readiness.

Morton College has also started to revamp its developmental English program. First, Morton College has reduced its developmental English sequence from five to three courses. In

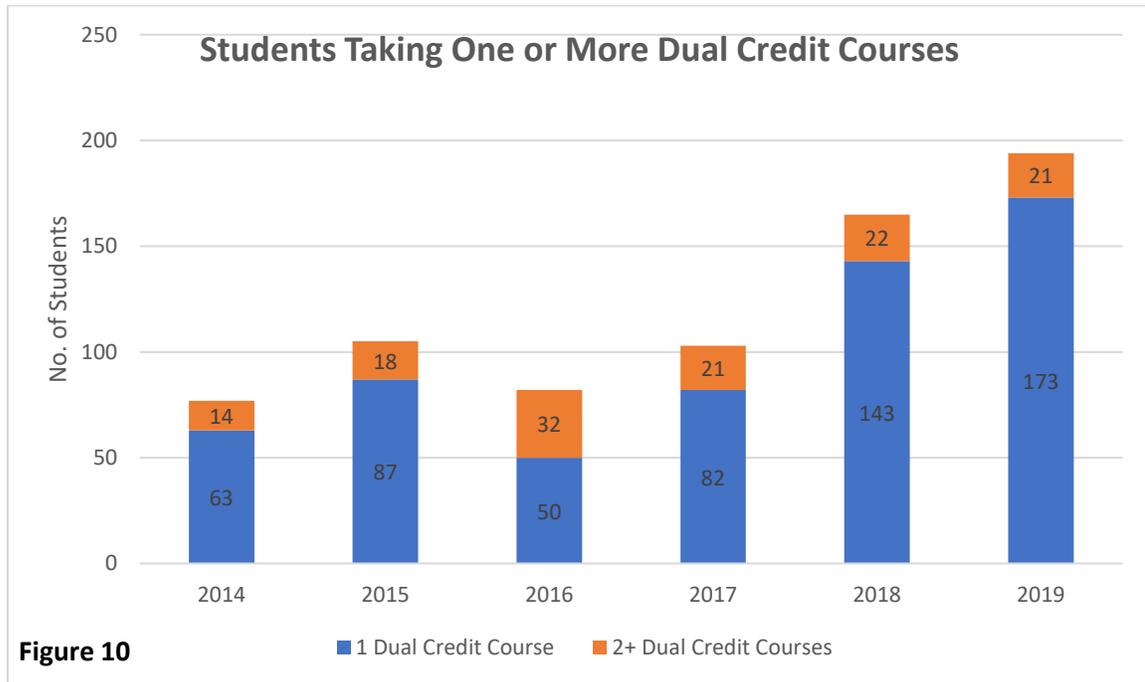
practice, this has meant that some students who do not meet a minimum threshold of college readiness will attend adult education courses with specialized instruction. One administrative consequence of this is that students who are not yet ready for developmental education courses can receive instruction in Basic English reading and writing skills without incurring tuition costs, since these courses are covered by a state grant. Morton College’s English faculty have also created a co-requisite model. This means that students who test into the highest of three developmental English courses will simultaneously attend a developmental English and college-level English course. The result will be a much faster integration into college credit coursework in general. Additionally, the English faculty are piloting a program that will eventually mirror the high school college-readiness math course. In other words, English students who successfully complete a senior-year English college-readiness class will, like their math counterparts, be able to skip developmental English classes altogether.

### ***Early College and Developmental Education***

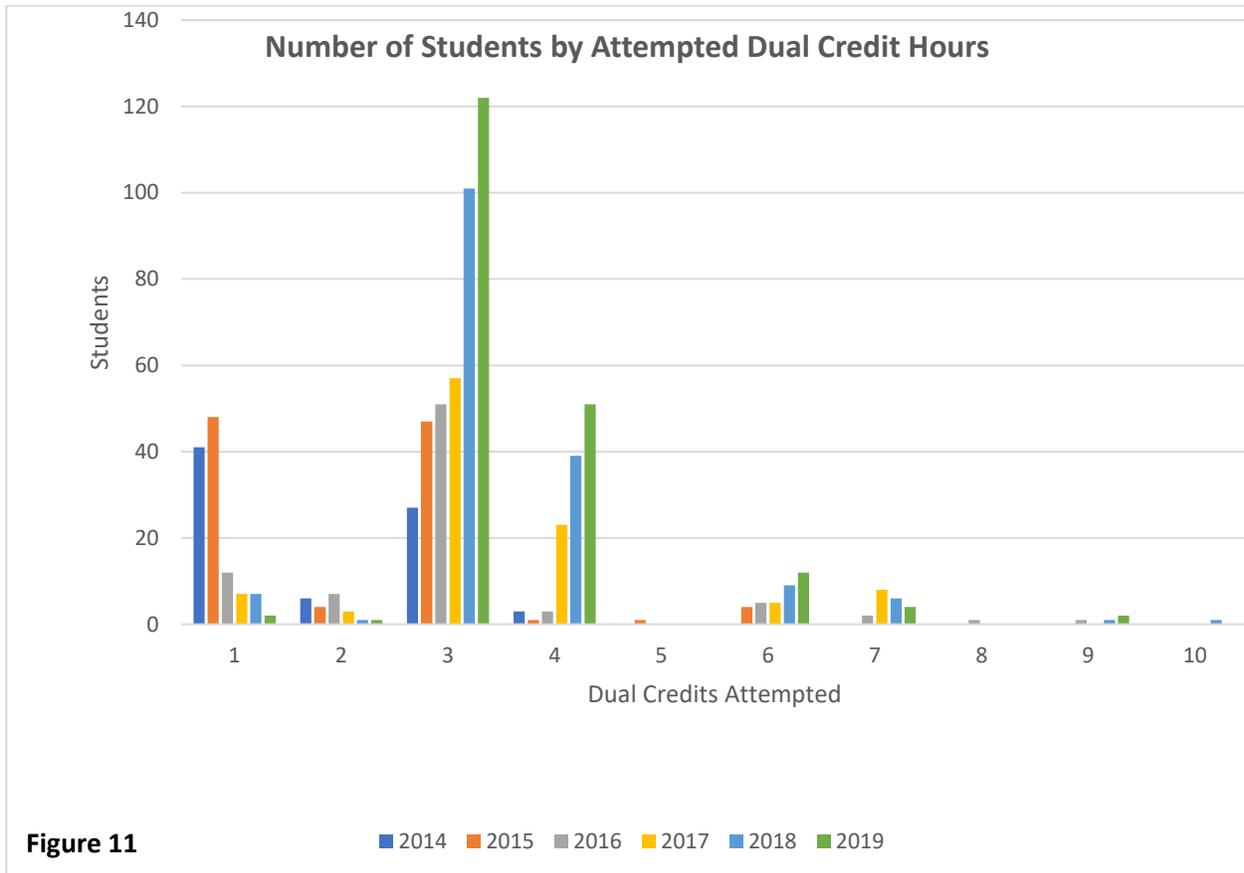
Morton College’s Strategic Plan calls for the creation of “seamless” educational experiences for high school students who enroll at Morton College. The term “seamless” will be tracked according to the following metrics: 1) the number of students by percentage who earn dual credit, dual enrollment, or Advanced Placement, or college credits while still enrolled in high school; 2) the average number of college credits earned by high school students who have earned college credit prior to matriculating at the College 3) the number of students by percentage who require remediation after graduating from the high school and enrolling at Morton College; and 4) the average number of developmental education “credits” students earn, on average, when they require some remediation; 5) students’ average time to certificate or degree completion.

### **Dual credit and Dual enrollment**

Morton College has created a new dual credit and dual enrollment program. More specifically, Morton College now offers expanded dual credit opportunities, i.e., Math 105, Math 110, and Math 141. In AY 18 Morton College offered only 109 students dual credit in math, while in AY 2019 that number increased to 893 students. What is more, Morton College has begun to offer dual enrollment classes in the past year, including Math 203 and Math 215. Below is a graph depicting the recent increase in the number of students taking dual credit courses. Morton College’s goal will be to increase the number of students taking dual credit courses by five percent each year over the next five years.



Morton College is committed to increasing the number of dual credits each entering student brings when he or she enrolls at the College after competing high school. As the graph below indicates, most “dual credit” students currently attempt a single class, or three credits. The College’s goal will be to double the number of students taking six credits within five years.



Of course, the College’s goals for students’ average dual credit hours is closely linked to the number of dual credit classes students typically take. Again, the chart below reveals that the vast majority of current dual credit students only take one course. To advance College completion goals, the College will need to double this average within five years.

**Figure 12 Dual Credit Students by No. of Dual Credit Courses Enrolled**

No. of Dual Credit Classes		1	2	3	4	5	Total
FY	2014	63	9	5	0	0	77
	2015	87	10	8	0	0	105
	2016	50	16	14	1	1	82
	2017	82	19	2	0	0	103
	2018	143	15	6	1	0	175
	2019	173	15	4	1	1	209
<b>Total</b>		<b>598</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>751</b>

It should be noted that the College will have to work closely with the High School District to incentivize and encourage students to take more than one dual credit course. As the table below indicates, notwithstanding the dramatic rise in the number of students earning

dual credit, the average number of credits each High School student has earned has remained stable over the past five years.

	fy	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
		Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
attempted		3.19481	3.30476	3.14634	3.23301	3.42286	3.29187

**Math College Readiness Course**

In the last two years, Morton College has begun to overhaul its developmental education program. The mathematics faculty has already made major changes to its program in order to help students graduate more quickly. Morton College’s college readiness program has several key dimensions. First, Morton College has collaborated with the district high school to create a senior-year college readiness high school course that allows successful student to circumvent all developmental coursework at the College. This program began in the 2018-2019 academic year. The course centers on elementary and intermediary algebra.

**Math PTR Course**

Second, Morton College is aiding the high school district in its plan to create a Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act Course. Like the existing college readiness course, the goal is to creating a four-year high school math class to smooth the transition to college and reduce remediation credits.

**Math Co-requisite Course**

Third, Morton College has created a co-requisite system that pairs the highest level of developmental mathematics with a college-level math course, Math 102. (Note: By contrast, the existing college readiness class, called Algebra 3, prepares students for Math 105). This course will be a quantitative literacy course. The goal is to allow many students who place into developmental math the opportunity to immediately earning college credit in mathematics.

**Mathematics Tutoring**

Fourth, Morton College has expanded its mathematics tutoring.

**Math Articulation Meetings**

Fifth, the College has begun to host regular K-14 articulation meetings to identify and address other issues of college readiness.

**Reduction in Levels**

Morton College has also started to revamp its developmental English program. First, the college has reduced its developmental English sequence from five to three courses. In practice, this has meant that some students who do not meet a minimum threshold of college readiness

will attend adult education courses with specialized instruction. One administrative consequence is that students who are not yet ready for developmental education courses can receive instruction in Basic English reading and writing skills without incurring tuition costs, since these courses are covered by a state grant.

### **English Co-requisite Course**

Morton College's English faculty have also created a co-requisite model. This means that students who test into the highest of three developmental English courses will simultaneously attend a developmental English and college-level English course. The result will be a much faster integration into college credit coursework in general.

### **English College Readiness Course**

Additionally, the English faculty are piloting a program that will eventually mirror the high school college-readiness math course. In other words, English students who successfully complete a senior-year English college-readiness class will, like their math counterparts, be able to skip developmental English classes altogether.

### ***Academic Advising***

Over the last two years, numerous initiatives have contributed to the overall improvement and service delivery of the academic advising center. The Morton College Academic Advising Center operates on the self-contained model, where all advising occurs in the advising center. Prior to FY 2016, the academic advising department consisted of a total of 6 full time advisors and 1 part time advisor. Since 2016, with the support of the college, the academic advising team expanded to include a total of 10 full-time advisors and 1 part-time advisor. With the help of the additional advisors, the department was able to implement Caseload Advising, where each Morton College student is assigned an academic advisor. Caseload advising was introduced to maximize the number of students meeting with advisors. Students are assigned advisors based on the spelling of their last name, credit hours, and program of study. Caseload model strengthens the service delivery of advising services and the relationship between advisor and student.

First-year advisors meet with students that have fewer than 30 semester hours. These First Year advisors welcome our new students, introduce them to the college, educate them on what advisors do, help them develop an academic plan and so much more. By establishing a strong relationship with our new students and providing them the foundation they need to feel confident in their academic progress we are setting them up for success. First year advisors also coordinate and organize a number of programs and activities geared towards helping students succeed in their first year of college. Once students reach more than 30 credit hours, transition to their Transfer or CTE advisor depending on their academic and career goals. The transfer advisors will aid in the students transferring to 4-year colleges/universities. Career Advisors prepare students to enter the workforce. Students in the healthcare programs and Computer Information System are assigned an advisor from first year all the way to graduation.

To meet the demands and needs of our students the college has taken significant steps to improve the services offered by the Academic Advising department. Recognizing, that advisors play a critical role in not only helping students persist but also informing students of valuable educational opportunities that lead to learning and development, the college invested widely in human resources and technology. The department’s goal is to be the one positive connection that a student may need to make a difference in their college experience.

The academic advising department began to encounter positive results from the investment in additional staff and resources. The department experienced an increase in the amount of student appointments and walk-ins for the summer months beginning in 2017 in comparison to 2016. While the Academic Advising Department has increased the number of students meeting with advisors either as a walk-in or appointment, the quality of appointment has also increased. Past student surveys indicated students feeling unsatisfied and rushed when meeting with advisors. Having additional advisors allow us to spend more time with individual students. Moreover, caseload advising grants us the ability to build strong relationships with our students from their first day on campus

To have more lines of communication with students, technology improvements were made. Utilizing SARS software, we enabled the text-messaging feature allowing the college to reach students via additional venues. Now students receive text message reminders for their Advising Appointment, reducing the amount of no-shows and cancelations. Additionally, text messages has been utilized to notify students about Placement Test appointment and New Student Orientations. Also, we have utilized text messages to remind students about non-payment, students are reminded of payment deadlines and the date they will be dropped for non-payment. Additionally, during high peak registration periods, the text messaging tool is used to notify students of their place in line. Student is able to leave the advising center, and return once they receive a text message. This creates a positive environment for students. Other technology improvements include the use of the Academic Planning tool available by Ellucian. The Academic Planning module is a planning tool for students. Students are able to track their courses from their panther portal, which studies show access to this tool increases the likelihood that students will graduate. This feature allows students and advisors to lay out a recommended sequence of classes that fulfill remaining program requirements—so students know exactly what is ahead.

## FUTURE VISION

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### Goal

The goal of this equity plan and the ILEA Initiative is to eliminate disparities in degree completion rates on our campus between African-American and White students, between

Latino/a and White students, and between low-income and higher income students (as indicated by Pell receipt).

Before looking into the future, we must first look into the past to identify what has worked, what could be stronger, and help to shape innovation within our departments to meet students needs moving forward. Our plan is to steadily increase our resources and access for students who may not (or may) have otherwise been exposed to them. This will help to ensure that students are all being uplifted, which will establish equity among all Morton College Students.

**Data Analysis - Success Rates in Top 20 Highest Enrolled Courses.**

To conduct a further data analysis Figure 17 and 18 found in the appendix were explored to answer the following questions.

<p><b>1. What percentage of your total college enrollment do the top 20 courses comprise? The top 10?</b></p>
<p>The top 20 accounts for 3,482 students, which is about 66% of our total enrollment. The top 10 accounts for 2,613 students, which is about 50% of our total student enrollment.</p>
<p><b>2. In which subject areas do students struggle the most?</b></p>
<p>English and Mathematics are the areas that students struggle in the most, which is common amongst higher education institutions. Particularly, they struggle in developmental courses, which we may find to be a larger issue within the community college system.</p>
<p><b>3. In which courses do students struggle the most?</b></p>
<p>The top 5 lowest success rate courses are the following: MAT 086 Intermediate Algebra II (55%); MAT 083 Elementary Algebra I (58%); BIO 152 Anatomy &amp; Physiology (58%); ENG 084 Reading &amp; Writing II (61%); ENG 101 Rhetoric I (63%). This is indicative of the trend within higher education where we see the majority of lowered success lie within developmental Mathematics and English courses.</p>
<p><b>4. Which student ethnic groups struggle the most?</b></p>
<p>The Black ethnic group comes in at the lowest success rate with about 60% overall. Following that is the Latino population with about a 70% overall success rate overall. To compare, the White population came in at around an 81% success rate, while the Asian population came in at about the 88% success rate range.</p>
<p><b>5. Which courses would your college identify as gateway? (Gateway courses are high enrollment, low success, lower division, foundational courses required to complete a degree, e.g. English Composition, College Algebra, Intro to Biology.)</b></p>

The first would be ENG 101 Rhetoric I, as it is the highest enrolled, yet among the lowest success rates listed, coming in at about a 63%. The second runner-ups are all MAT courses, two of them being developmental courses (MAT 085, MAT 090, MAT 105).
<b>6. What data is missing that should be added to gain a better understanding of the table?</b>
The data that should be included is the student age range because that in itself is so far more diverse than it once was and would be an interesting perspective to gain. Adult Learners have vastly different experiences than "traditional" students coming directly out of high school.
<b>7. What other disaggregation categories would be helpful to understanding student struggles?</b>
Including Part-Time and Full-Time student distinctions. Perhaps even a count of students who use Financial Aid versus those who do not.
<b>8. Who should we be discussing these data with on campus? How and when should we do this?</b>
This data should be shared with Student Services (academic advising, financial aid assistance) and Faculty. Faculty have the responsibility to know their student population to understand how to better help them to learn. This is and should be the primary goal and focus of all stakeholders.

Figure 13 found below reflects part-time vs full-time enrollment for first-fall students and distinguished by Hispanic, African American, and White race populations. The vast majority is comprised of the Hispanic/Latino population, as the areas Morton College serves are predominately Hispanic/Latino. After additional research, we found that the 3 largest communities that MC serves are made up of the following (averages): 68% Hispanic/Latino; 24% White; 4% African American. Enrollment at both part-time and full-time reflect the population of the communities the institution serves.

Leading Indicators										Figure 13
Cohort	Credits accumulated first fall									
	Part-time students (at least 7)					Full-time students (at least 15)				
	African-American Students	Latino/a Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students	African-American Students	Latino/a Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2019	3%	86%	5%			6%	74%	8%		
Fall 2020	4%	85%	5%			7%	73%	8%		
Fall 2021	5%	84%	5%			8%	72%	8%		
Fall 2022	6%	82%	6%			9%	71%	8%		
Fall 2023	7%	81%	6%			10%	69%	9%		
Fall 2024	8%	79%	7%			11%	68%	9%		

Growth within the White population is consistent and steady, with small increases every few years on average, while the Black population, though low, has seen a gradual increase over the last 5 years, which is why an increase of 1% annually is the goal. The Hispanic/Latino population will likely experience a drop in percentages, but not enrollment, as we’re looking to provide an equitable learning environment.

**Figure 14 Gateway course completion**

English					Math				
African-American Students	Latino/a Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students	African-American Students	Latino/a Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
3 - (50%)	270 - (64%)	21 - (72%)			10 - (48%)	410 - (65%)	30 - (64%)		
52%	65%	72%			50%	67%	64%		
54%	66%	72%			52%	68%	64%		
56%	67%	73%			54%	69%	65%		
58%	68%	74%			56%	70%	65%		
60%	69%	75%			58%	71%	66%		

Gateway courses are described as high enrollment courses with low success rates. For the English portion above, the ENG 101 is identified as the most prevalent English gateway course. According to the data, 50% of African American Students enrolled in the English gateway course(s) are successful; 72% for White students; 64% for Latino students. Considering the projected growth in Black enrollment and success, we project about a 2% annual increase in success rates; 1% annual increase for Latino students; 0-1% in annual growth for White students.

For Math gateway courses, there were three courses identified in this category, as they were very close in enrollment and success. These three math courses are MAT 085, 090, and 105. We used the average enrollment and success rates for all of these combined. According to the data above, we’ve seen a 48% success rate for Black students; 65% for Latino students; 64% for White students. We utilized the same growth projections mentioned above.

**Degree Completion** Figure 15

Cohort	Degree in 2 years				
	Full-time students				
	African-American Students	Latino/a Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	0%	24%	31%		
Fall 2019	3%	17%	31%		
Fall 2020	9%	19%	31%		
Fall 2021	15%	21%	35%		
Fall 2022	21%	23%	39%		
Fall 2023	27%	25%	43%		
Fall 2024	33%	27%	47%		

For degree completion, we calculated the average growth of each demographic from the last 5 years, as an indicator of how we can expect to realistically view the progress over the next 5 years. African American students showed an average of 6% growth annually; Latino students are at about a 2% annual growth rate; growth rate for White students

We as an institution of higher education aspire to remove all barriers that hinder student’s graduation and completion. Therefore, the college is committed to implementing the equity plan collectively with full force.

### **INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES**

**STRATEGY 1: Reduce the number of students requiring remedial coursework**

In line with the College’s Strategic Plan goal to “make student success the core work of Morton College,” as well as with the Strategic Plan’s Objective Seven, “to improve success of students requiring remedial coursework” by reducing “the number of students requiring remedial courses.” The college will work on establishing strong partnership agreements with the local high schools with the mission to removing barriers that add cost and time complete to a degree.

**STRATEGY 2: Evaluate cost to eliminate unnecessary fees and maintain college affordability**

The cost of attending college is the number one barrier for students to attain a post-secondary credential. The college will evaluate fees and commits to maintaining cost low to ensure college is financially attainable and affordable.

**STRATEGY 3: Invest in Student Support Services (Academic Advising and Mentoring)**

Acknowledging that advisors and mentors play a critical role in helping students persist, the college will continue to invest widely in the development and continued growth of student supportive services.

**STRATEGY 4: Recruit and Retain Diverse Staff and Faculty**

Recognizing the importance of having diverse faculty and staff that reflect the student body, the college will work diligently and intentionally to build a more diverse workforce. Hiring processes will be explored and evaluated to ensure the goal is attained. Furthermore, the college will ensure that opportunities and support is available to retain the current talent.

**STRATEGY 5: Create an Inclusive Campus Climate**

The college aims to create an environment for faculty, staff and students where all individuals feel welcome and supported. More importantly, all individuals must feel encouraged and empowered to provide divergent perspectives and feel that their contributions are valued. The college will conduct a college wide climate survey to develop programming and increase support for students experiencing biases on campus.

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### Evaluating Impact

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We recognize that equity work requires time and the commitment from every single individual at the institution. In order to ensure progress has been made towards achieving the goals of the plan, we commit ourselves to conducting a continuous assessment and evaluation. The evaluation method applied will be a combination of the implementation of programs, an increase or decrease of graduation and persistence rates, and participation in programs and utilization of services. We believe these metrics are an important representation and indication of the progress made towards the plan. Major progress will be evaluated at the end of year three and year five.

**ILEA – MC TEAM**

<b>ILEA Core Team</b>	
First name, Last name	Position
Micheal Brown	Associate Dean of Student Services
Dr. Magda Banda	Director of Institutional Research
Blanca Jara	Executive Director of Institutional Advancement
Dr. Sara Helmus	STEM Faculty
Dr. Derek Shouba	Associate Provost / Dean of Arts & Sciences
Marisol Velazquez	Dean of Student Services
<b>ILEA Leadership Team</b>	
Dr. Stan Fields	President
Dr. Keith McLaughlin	Provost
<b>Key Campus Leaders Consulted for Equity Plan Development</b>	

**Appendix**

**Figure 16** Ethnicity and Employment Status of Morton College Staff and Faculty, 2017-2019

		2017						2018						2019					
		Full-time		Part-time		Total		Full-time		Part-time		Total		Full-time		Part-time		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Faculty	Latino/Hispanic	4	7.4%	27	11.0%	31	10.3%	4	7.3%	23	11.4%	27	10.5%	5	7.7%	30	15.2%	35	13.3%
	Other Ethnic	3	5.6%	29	11.8%	32	10.7%	3	5.5%	21	10.4%	24	9.3%	4	6.2%	20	10.1%	24	9.1%
	White	44	81.5%	108	43.9%	152	50.7%	45	81.8%	92	45.5%	137	53.3%	48	73.8%	84	42.4%	132	50.2%
	Unknown	3	5.6%	82	33.3%	85	28.3%	3	5.5%	66	32.7%	69	26.8%	8	12.3%	64	32.3%	72	27.4%
	Total	54	100.0%	246	100.0%	300	100.0%	55	100.0%	202	100.0%	257	100.0%	65	100.0%	198	100.0%	263	100.0%
Staff	Latino/Hispanic	56	52.8%	36	42.9%	92	48.4%	59	59.0%	31	41.3%	90	51.4%	57	54.3%	29	42.0%	86	49.4%
	Other Ethnic	3	2.8%	4	4.8%	7	3.7%	3	3.0%	5	6.7%	8	4.6%	4	3.8%	5	7.2%	9	5.2%
	White	46	43.4%	40	47.6%	86	45.3%	37	37.0%	37	49.3%	74	42.3%	42	40.0%	32	46.4%	74	42.5%
	Unknown	1	0.9%	4	4.8%	5	2.6%	1	1.0%	2	2.7%	3	1.7%	2	1.9%	3	4.3%	5	2.9%
	Total	106	100.0%	84	100.0%	190	100.0%	100	100.0%	75	100.0%	175	100.0%	105	100.0%	69	100.0%	174	100.0%
Administration	Latino/Hispanic	8	29.6%	0	0.0%	8	29.6%	9	34.6%	0	0.0%	9	34.6%	11	40.7%	0	0.0%	11	40.7%
	Other Ethnic	5	18.5%	0	0.0%	5	18.5%	2	7.7%	0	0.0%	2	7.7%	1	3.7%	0	0.0%	1	3.7%
	White	13	48.1%	0	0.0%	13	48.1%	14	53.8%	0	0.0%	14	53.8%	13	48.1%	0	0.0%	13	48.1%
	Unknown	1	3.7%	0	0.0%	1	3.7%	1	3.8%	0	0.0%	1	3.8%	2	7.4%	0	0.0%	2	7.4%
	Total	27	100.0%	0	0.0%	27	100.0%	26	100.0%	0	0.0%	26	100.0%	27	100.0%	0	0.0%	27	100.0%
Total	Latino/Hispanic	68	36.4%	63	19.1%	131	25.3%	72	39.8%	54	19.5%	126	27.5%	73	37.1%	59	22.1%	132	28.4%
	Other Ethnic	11	5.9%	33	10.0%	44	8.5%	8	4.4%	26	9.4%	34	7.4%	9	4.6%	25	9.4%	34	7.3%
	White	103	55.1%	148	44.8%	251	48.5%	96	53.0%	129	46.6%	225	49.1%	103	52.3%	116	43.4%	219	47.2%
	Unknown	5	2.7%	86	26.1%	91	17.6%	5	2.8%	68	24.5%	73	15.9%	12	6.1%	67	25.1%	79	17.0%
	Total	187	100.0%	330	100.0%	517	100.0%	181	100.0%	277	100.0%	458	100.0%	197	100.0%	267	100.0%	464	100.0%

The following table shows the top 20 courses at Morton College by enrollment in fall 2017. Success rates are calculated based on students receiving grades of "A-C" or "P"(Pass), out of all grades "A-W" and "AW". Incomplete or Audited course grades are excluded.

**Figure 17**

Enrollment Rank	Enrollment Term	Enrolled Course Name	Enrollment Course Title	Seat Count	All A.C & P Grades	All A.W Grades	Success Rate	Latino/Hispanic A.C & P Grades	Latino/Hispanic All A.W Grades	Latino/Hispanic Success Rate	Black/African-American A.C & P Grades	Black/African-American All A.W Grades	Black/African-American Success Rate
1	2017FA	ENG-101	Rhetoric I	487	309	487	63%	270	423	64%	3	6	50%
2	2017FA	ENG-102	Rhetoric II	358	257	358	72%	225	314	72%	5	11	45%
3	2017FA	ENG-088	Basic Composition	271	179	271	66%	156	239	65%	5	6	83%
4	2017FA	MAT-085	Intermed Algebra-Part I	260	171	260	66%	151	229	66%	4	9	44%
5	2017FA	MAT-090	Mathematics Fundamentals	244	159	244	65%	139	215	65%	3	6	50%
6	2017FA	MAT-105	College Algebra	224	142	224	63%	120	191	63%	3	6	50%
7	2017FA	BIO-102	Introduction to Biology	214	151	214	71%	132	184	72%	2	5	40%
8	2017FA	ENG-086	Reading & Writing III	206	150	206	73%	138	185	75%	4	6	67%
9	2017FA	MAT-141	Statistics	183	157	183	86%	139	163	85%		2	0%
10	2017FA	MAT-102	General Education Mathematics	166	111	166	67%	95	141	67%	4	7	57%
11	2017FA	MAT-086	Intermed Algebra-Part II	132	72	132	55%	65	115	57%	1	2	50%
12	2017FA	BIO-203	Anatomy & Physiology I	131	94	131	72%	77	108	71%	3	6	50%
13	2017FA	MAT-083	Elementary Algebra-Part I	113	65	113	58%	58	93	62%	3	6	50%
14	2017FA	MAT-075	Math for Nurses	99	64	99	65%	56	88	64%	5	5	100%
15	2017FA	ENG-084	Reading & Writing II	89	54	89	61%	47	73	64%	2	5	40%
16	2017FA	BIO-204	Anatomy & Physiology II	72	62	72	86%	52	62	84%	3	3	100%
17	2017FA	BIO-212	Microbiology	63	56	63	89%	43	49	88%	5	6	83%
18	2017FA	MAT-084	Elementary Algebra-Part II	60	45	60	75%	40	53	75%	3	4	75%
19	2017FA	MAT-012	Mathematics for Proficiency	58	48	58	83%	38	47	81%	1	1	100%
20	2017FA	BIO-152	Anatomy & Physiology (therapie	52	30	52	58%	25	42	60%			
21	2017FA	MAT-201	Calculus I	52	51	52	98%	45	45	100%	2	2	100%

The following table shows the top 20 courses at Morton College by enrollment in fall 2017. Success rates are calculated based on students receiving grades of "A-C" or "P"(Pass), out of all grades "A-W" and "AW". Incomplete or Audited course grades are excluded.

Asian A-C & P Grades	Asian All A-W Grades	Asian Success Rate	White A-C & P Grades	White All A-W Grades	White Success Rate	Unknown A-C & P Grades	Unknown All A-W Grades	Unknown Success Rate
4	7	57%	21	29	72%	7	13	54%
3	4	75%	16	19	84%	6	8	75%
1	1	100%	5	10	50%	5	8	63%
1	1	100%	13	16	81%	2	3	67%
2	2	100%	8	10	80%	6	9	67%
2	4	50%	9	11	82%	4	7	57%
			10	12	83%	7	11	64%
1	2	50%	4	7	57%	2	4	50%
1	1	100%	11	11	100%	3	3	100%
1	1	100%	10	14	71%		2	0%
1	1	100%	5	12	42%		2	0%
5	5	100%	6	6	100%	3	6	50%
			3	10	30%	1	2	50%
1	1	100%	1	2	50%	1	3	33%
			1	6	17%	3	4	75%
2	2	100%	4	4	100%			
3	3	100%	3	3	100%	2	2	100%
			2	2	100%		1	0%
			4	4	100%	5	6	83%
			4	7	57%	1	2	50%
1	1	100%	2	2	100%	1	2	50%

**Figure 18**