

THE DATA DETECTIVE

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Happy Spring Quarter!

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the quarterly newsletter from ASPIRE! Take a break, peruse our newsletter, and nerd out with us.

Okay, if you are still saying “What is ASPIRE?”

ASPIRE stands for Assessment, Strategic Planning, Institutional Research and Effectiveness, which is just a fancy way of saying “we do data” and are here to serve you in all your data needs.

We Are Moving!

To better serve the WVC community, the ASPIRE team is relocating from our current office and cubicle space on the 3rd floor of Wenatchi Hall (administrative wing) to Room 9104 in the Brown Library—the former Veterans' Lounge.

You might be wondering why we're moving from our “fancy” third-floor office. The truth is, we specifically requested this new space because of its shared common area, which better supports how we work.

When we collaborate with individuals who have data needs, it's a dynamic, back-and-forth process. The “client” shares the questions they're trying to answer, and we discuss the types of data that might help. Once we agree on direction, the ASPIRE team locates the data, cleans it (e.g., fixing formatting issues, handling null values), and then creates visualizations or dashboards and conducts analysis.

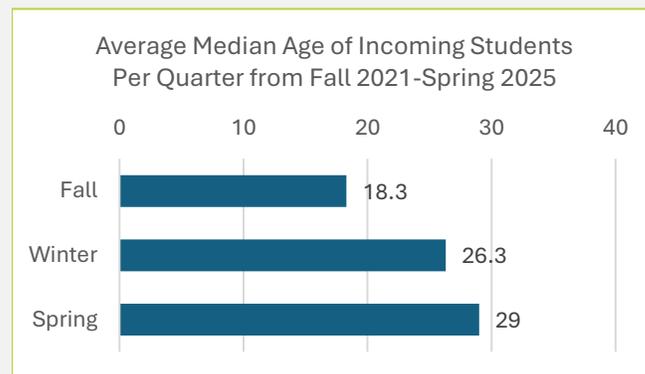
From there, we meet again with the client in an iterative process, refining the data and visuals until they accurately address the original questions and often uncover new ones. The new space in Room 9104 will allow us to hold these collaborative sessions more effectively, with a shared monitor on the wall so everyone can view the data together—no more crowding around a single screen!

Additionally, the new space will support ongoing assessment as we get ready for year seven accreditation next year as well as a space for professional development in data and data literacy.

Stay tuned—we hope to complete the move by early July! And a shout out to Erin Williams and her AMAZING team for being so helpful and kind in working with us to make this space great for our community!

ONE LITTLE THING...

Each quarter, the median age of incoming students is a little different. Can you guess why?



Without data, you are just another person with an opinion.

~Quote Attributed to W. Edwards Deming

Spring Quarter Data Dive: Empowering Our Community

In each issue of The Data Detective, we will have some interesting data to contemplate and question. This issue's Data Dive comes from Jennifer Hadersberger and Amy Snively, both of whom are WVC faculty and assessment coordinators.

The Wenatchee Valley College vision is to transform lives, to strengthen communities, to foster inclusive excellence, and to be the higher education institution of choice for North Central Washington. Educating residents within our service district provides them with more choices for employment and income mobility. For example, state and federal data indicate that earnings and employment rates are positively correlated with education level (Figures 1 and 2, Data source: US Census Bureau with graphics from StatisticAtlas.com). Median earnings of Washingtonians with a high school diploma is \$31,000/year, whereas the median earnings of Washingtonians without a high school diploma is \$23,000/year. In addition, less than 60% of Washingtonians without a high school diploma have jobs.

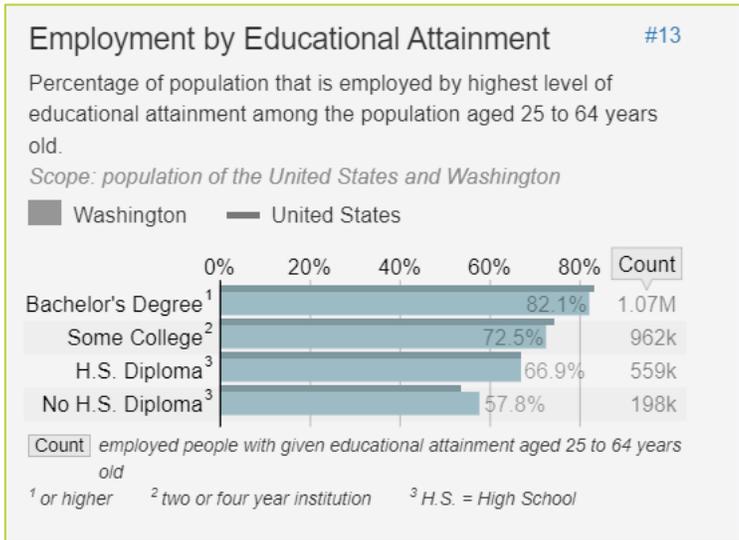


Figure 1: Employment. Graph: US Census Bureau, statisticatlas.com



Figure 2: Earnings. Graph: US Census Bureau, statisticatlas.com

As WVC moves towards inclusive excellence, we need to consider how we serve all of the residents within our community. The WVC service district has a high percentage of residents over the age of 25 that lack a high school diploma. In fact, Chelan, Okanogan, and Douglas counties rank 5th, 6th, and 7th in the state for the highest percentage of residents without a high school diploma (see Figure 3). In Douglas County alone, 18.2% of residents over the age of 25 do not have a high school diploma, which is almost double the Washington state average of 9.4%. How do we empower adults without high school credentials to pursue an education at WVC in order to improve their options in the job market?

WVC offers Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses through the Transitional Studies Department to help residents learn English, build digital literacy skills, and/or earn high school credentials. This department offers 25+ different classes in eight subject areas to help students earn a high school diploma and/or build their skills. There are more students interested in enrolling in ABE English Language and High School Completion courses than

WVC currently has the budget or capacity to enroll. Enrollment varies by year; however, roughly 800 students enroll in ABE courses annually, which comprises ~16% of the WVC enrollment headcount and ~10% of the FTE.

These 800 enrollees are served by two full-time faculty, one program director, a portion of dean time, and approximately 15 adjunct instructors each term.

WA State Counties Percentage Of Population With Less Than A High School Degree 25 Years And Over

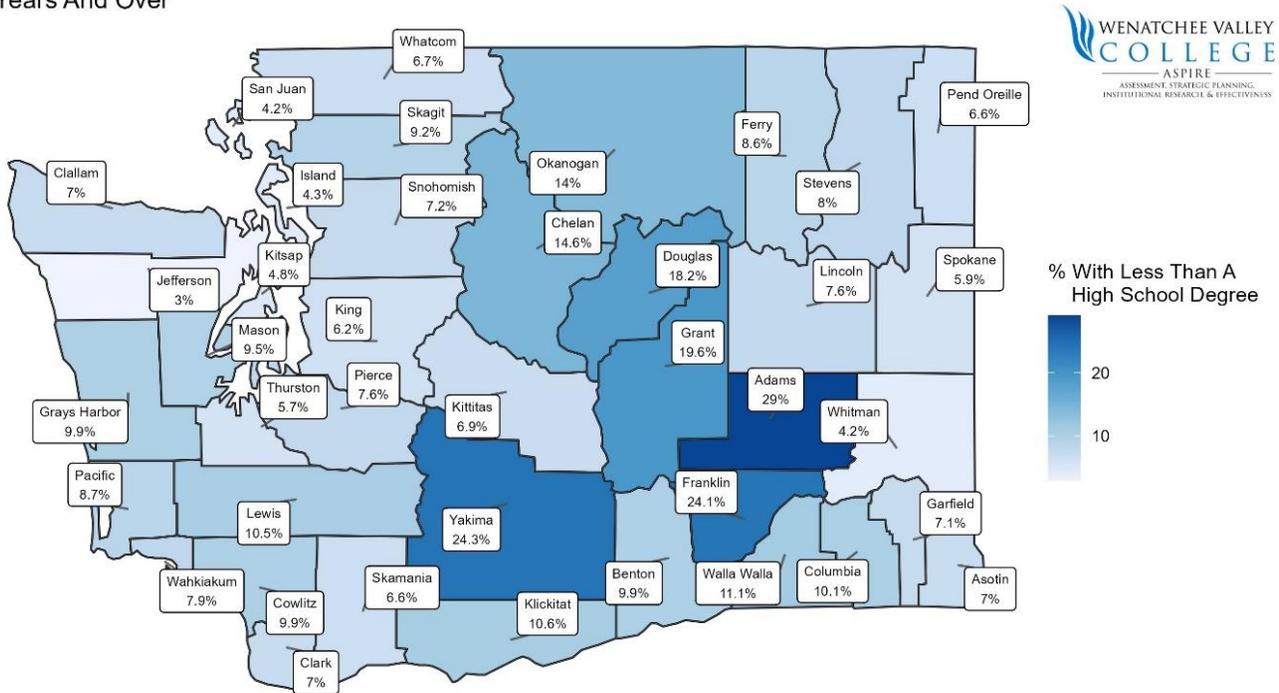


Figure 3: Graph by Rolando Rincon, ASPIRE work-study intern

The ABE classes are affordable and offered at multiple locations. Typically, ABE courses are offered on the Wenatchee campus, the Omak campus, and in Nespalem, Bridgeport, and Chelan. These classes have been offered in other areas depending upon budget and corresponding staffing levels. For example, in some years, courses have been offered near Brewster, an area with 36% of adults over age 25 lacking high school credentials. Seventy to 80% of students who enroll in ABE classes are students of color (mostly Latine), and more than half of students enrolled in high school completion courses qualify as economically disadvantaged (low income). ABE courses are offered to students at a cost of \$35/quarter, making them affordable for community members.

Currently, ABE students' desire to further their education and training with college-level programs significantly outpaces their transition rates into those programs at WVC. Roughly 9% of ABE students transition into college-level classes at WVC; however, when surveyed, ~90% of students taking ABE classes stated that they wanted to continue into a college-level program. If WVC increased transition rates, this would also increase State funding allocations because the college earns more Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) point metrics for students who transition from ABE into college-level courses.

How could WVC increase ABE student transitions into college-level programs? One idea could be to help ABE students get started in college-level classes before they complete their ABE program. Recently, grant funds from the WVC Foundation have been made available to ABE students to help them pay for their first 6 college-level

credits. After earning 6 college-level credits, these students are eligible for financial aid so that they can continue their education or training program. Another idea that might be helpful to improve transitions into college-level courses is to link ABE students with faculty advisors from college-level programs. This could help ABE students build relationships on campus that help make college-level programs feel more accessible. The college enrollment process itself is also a barrier, so streamlining this process for ABE students might increase the ease of the transition process and thus increase the transition rates.

In 2022, two WVC faculty, Dr. Karina Villa-Vega and Dr. Amy Snively, conducted an ethnographic survey in the Latine communities that live and work in WVC's service district. The goal of this work was to analyze the attitudes, knowledge, accessibility, and perceptions of Latine residents regarding WVC and the career pathways that it offers. The hope was that this information could be used by WVC to evaluate current values, policies, and practices to identify places of potential growth and influence the institutional, cultural and organizational change in ways that better serve the Latine community in our service district. Approximately half of the 330 residents surveyed in this study had an education level less than a high school diploma, so their perceptions of WVC will also help us understand the potential future ABE student. Results indicated that 79% of individuals surveyed were not familiar with the programs that the college offers. This indicates that culturally responsive outreach is needed to reach primarily Spanish-speaking Latine community members. When asked what a participant would study at WVC if they could attend, approximately 25% of respondents indicated Skilled Trades as an interest and English Language courses were the next highest category, with many respondents wanting opportunities that would allow them to complete coursework in both areas simultaneously. Opportunities to offer learning community models that combine English Language Acquisition and/or secondary credential courses with 2-year trades training certifications would be of value to this sector of our community. When asked about barriers to attending college, one third of respondents indicated that access to the college is not compatible with work hours. The affordability of tuition as well as family responsibilities (mainly finding child-care) also overlapped with the compatibility of work hours as barriers for taking classes at WVC. While the initial goal of this survey was to assess the community's understanding of the pathways to careers at WVC, it became evident that respondents' understanding of the institution itself was limited.

In closing, when we consider how WVC can best serve residents within our service district, we must consider existing WVC programs, such as our ABE courses for English Language and high school completion. We also need to consider the outreach we have done to obtain input from the community as we make institutional decisions. Hopefully, you learned something from this data dive newsletter article that will help WVC make data informed decisions that empower our community with an education and with tools for income mobility.



Figure 4: Jennifer Hadersberger, Author



Figure 5: Amy Snively, Author

Questions and comments can be directed to the authors of this month's Data Dive, WVC faculty members and assessment coordinators, Jennifer Hadersberger and Amy Snively or to the ASPIRE team. Please reach out and start a conversation!

Spring Quarter Data Rock Stars!

This quarter ASPIRE wants to give kudos to Ellia Sablan-Zebedy and the Enrollment Management team! The enrollment management team works tirelessly to recruit, provide access, and foster student success for all students who dream of attending college. This team used data on applications, enrollment numbers, Running Start, CTE and College in High School (CiHS) students, and so much more! Ellia and her team were directly responsible for the new dashboard on the ASPIRE website showing data on student applications.

The team reached out to ASPIRE when they wanted to be able to drill down into the application data for new insights on who is applying and enrolling and, more importantly, to work on recruitment methods to reach out to those who apply but might have reservations about committing to enrolling. The data they have been utilizing is helping them develop strategies for enrollment services. Under this team's efforts and with their extensive use of data, enrollment has increased 11-13%.

Way to go Enrollment Management Team! YOU ARE ROCK STARS!

ASPIRE TEAM



Figure 6: The ASPIRE Team: Victor, Robin and Hadley

If you need data, contact the ASPIRE team! We are currently in the administrative suite on the third floor of Wenatchi Hall.

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