

2009-2010 NACEP Characteristics Survey

INTRODUCTION

In August 2009, the Research Board for the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Programs (NACEP) conducted its 2nd Annual NACEP Characteristics Survey. Out of 232 invitations, 91 responded, for a response rate of 39%. This survey gathered information regarding program structure (i.e., size, staffing and financial structures, professional development), program goals, and student information (i.e., academic gate-keeping, credit transfer).

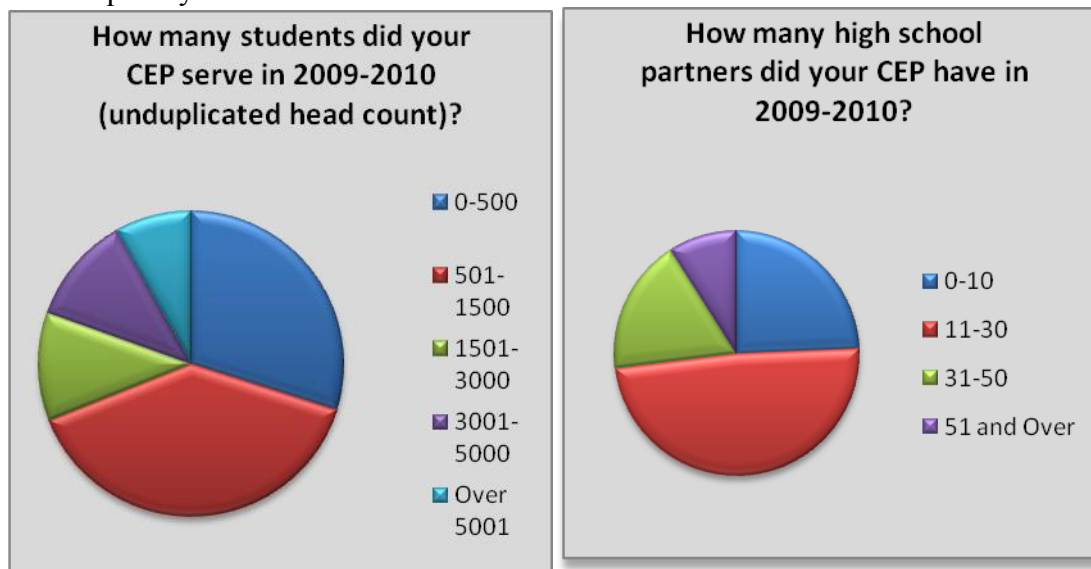
The Board divided this summary into three sections. First, it will analyze responses to questions regarding program structure, such as size, course offerings, instructor qualifications, financial information and professional development opportunities. Second, it will examine program goals, including on which students programs focus their attention. Finally, it will look at student information, such as academic requirements and credit transfer.

SECTION 1: PROGRAM STRUCTURE

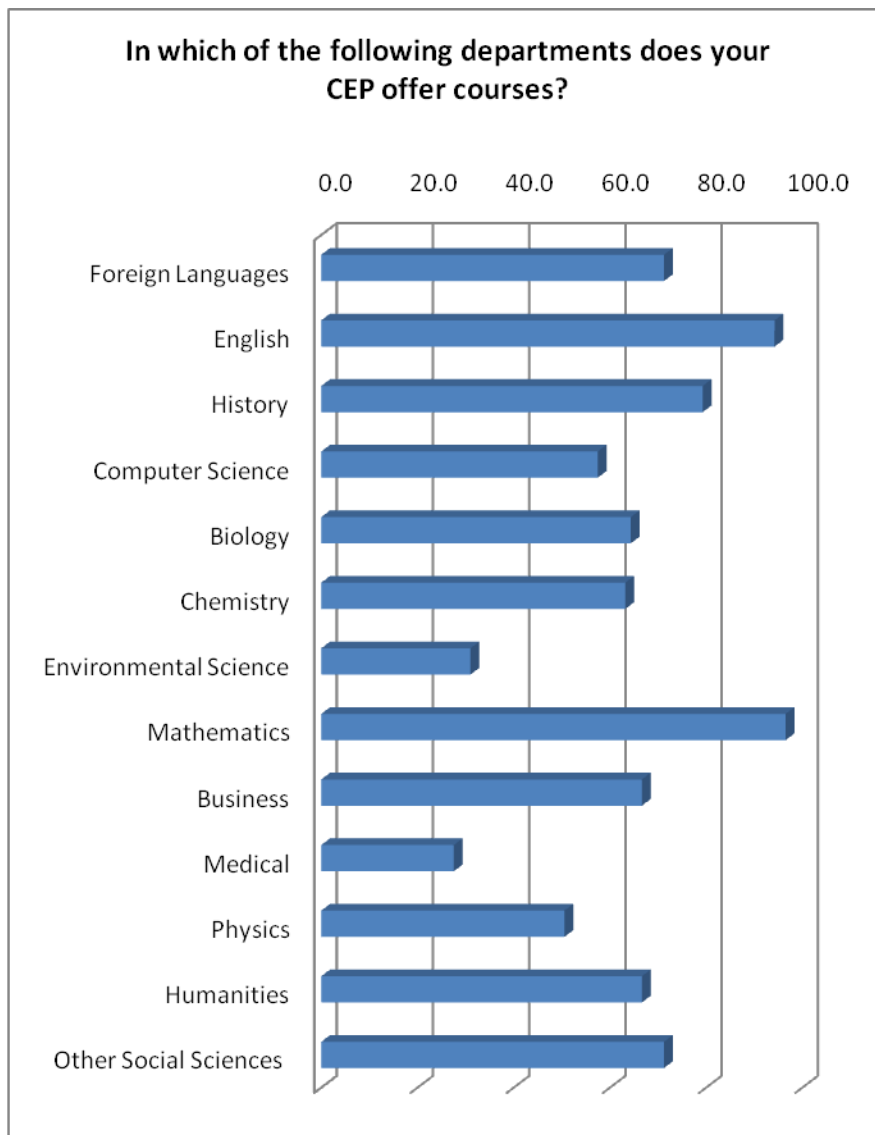
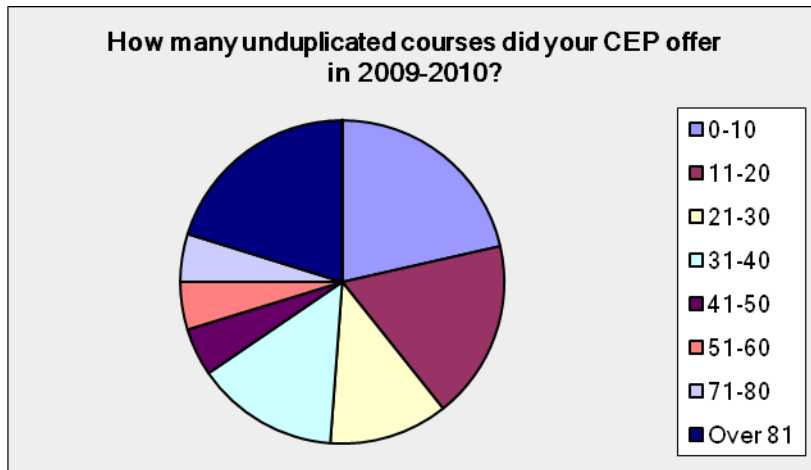
Subsection 1: Program Size

Most partner programs remain relatively small, with 2/3 serving fewer than 1500 students. However, while 81% of CEP programs partner with fewer than 50 high schools, 43% partner with 11-30 schools. Further, 84% of programs report partnering with over 85% of the high schools in their regions. This suggests that while overall student population remains small, programs are reaching out to several schools, indicating a small student-to-school ratio. This is born out further when approximately half of all programs offer fewer than 30 (unduplicated) courses. Since 60% of programs offer over 50 sections of those courses to their students, programs may be specializing in certain academic areas.

The survey found that most programs continued to offer courses in English and Mathematics (95% and 97%, respectively), with History and Foreign Languages as the next most frequent. Programs offer science courses, such as Computer Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, less frequently than courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences.



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Subsection 2: Staffing and Finances

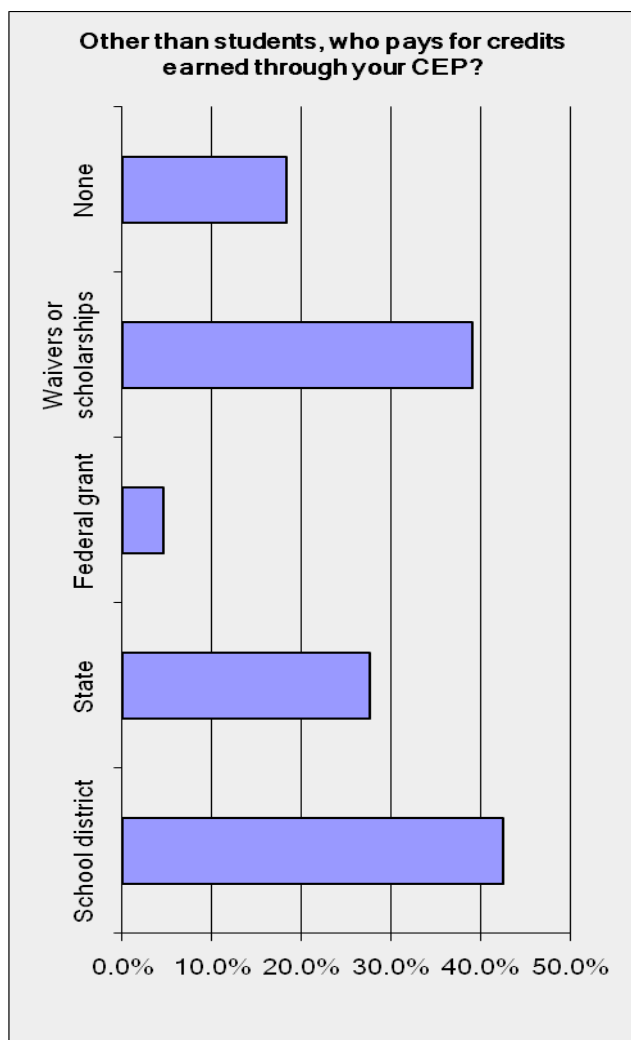
A. Reporting Structure

Most CEP programs are fully integrated into their universities, with 44% reporting directly to the heads of either Academic Affairs or Undergraduate Instruction. Other programs specified reporting to deans of colleges, Continuing Education, or External/Community Relations.

B. Finances

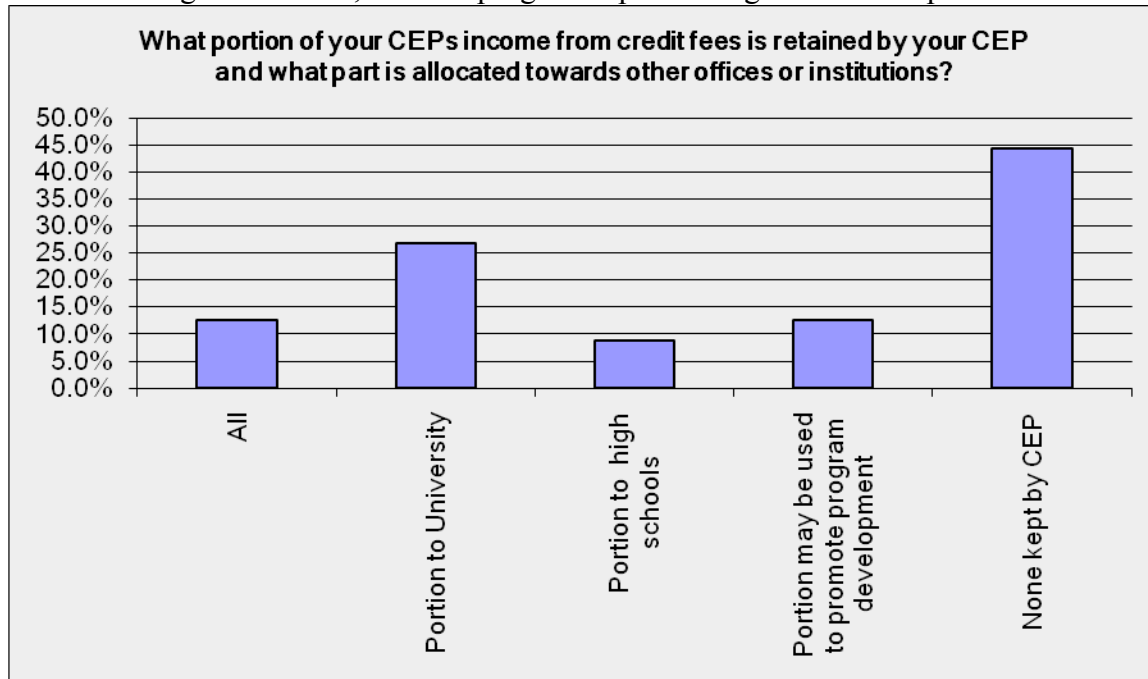
67% of CEPs charge students tuition or program fees for courses taken, with 73% of those programs charging fees per credit. However, CEPs frequently offer students courses at a discount, with approximately half of programs charging less than 40% of their university's tuition per credit. Programs also attempt to ease students financial situations by reaching out to other funding sources. 82% of programs allow for other funding sources, including local school districts, federal grants, university waivers and scholarships, and state waivers.

Waivers/Scholarships and local school districts appear to be the bulk of additional funding opportunities, accounting for 39% and 43% of additional funding, respectively.



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Despite the majority of institutions charging some form of program fees, only 55% of those programs retain a portion of the fees in their program. However, of that 55%, only 13% are allowed to retain all of the fees, with the rest allocating a portion to the University, the high schools, or other offices. Several programs report allocating partial funds towards the Universities' general funds, and one program reports using the funds to purchase textbooks.



Subsection 3: Professional Development

As is required by NACEP standards, 95% of respondents report providing some form of professional development opportunities to high school instructors. Of these, workshops and conferences are the most utilized forms. Programs also report continued collegial interactions between the university and instructors in the high schools, though the types of interactions vary depending upon the institution. For instance, while most report discipline-specific workshops, site visits and e-mail contact, some institutions also use services such as Skype, while another reports assigning a mentor to each instructor.

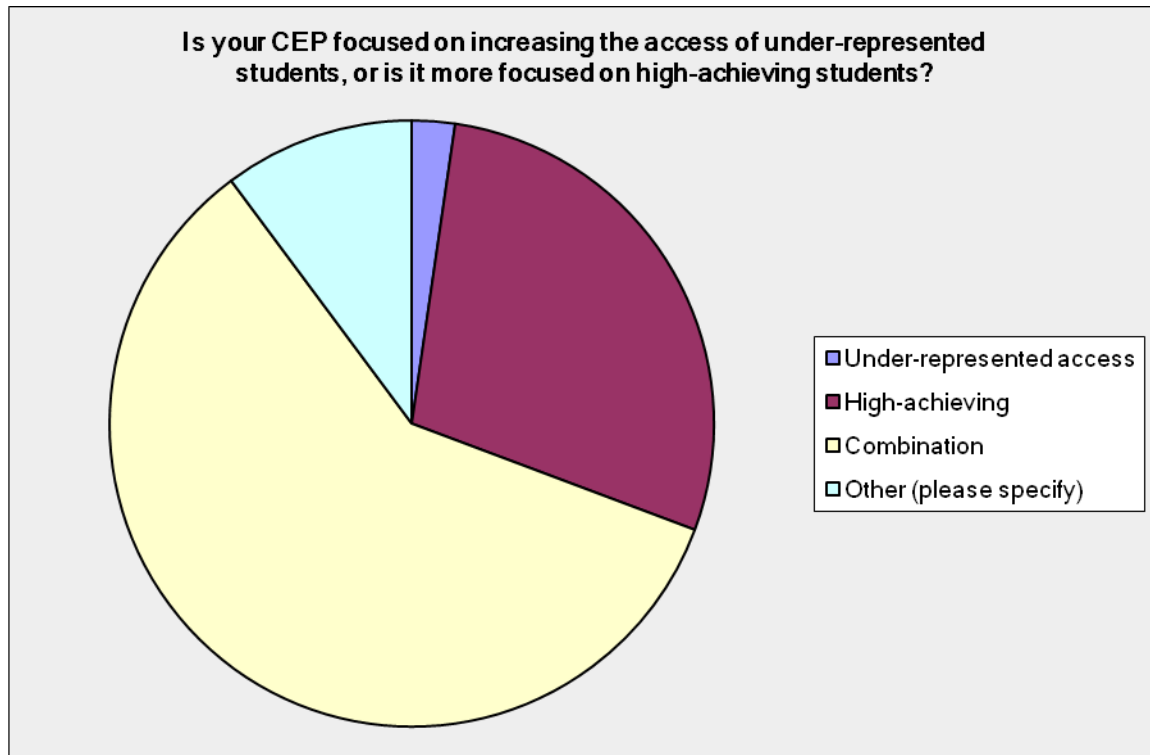
SECTION 2: PROGRAM GOALS

Subsection 1: High-achieving and Under-represented Students

There has been much debate in education lately over the role of CEPs. Some scholars argue that the programs exist for high-achieving students (increasing the rigor of senior year, for example), while others emphasize the importance of providing access to college-level courses for other students. When asked which model their programs adopt, most (59%) reported attempting to combine a focus on high-achieving students with access for under-represented students. However, 28% reported only focusing on high-achieving students, with little to no emphasis on

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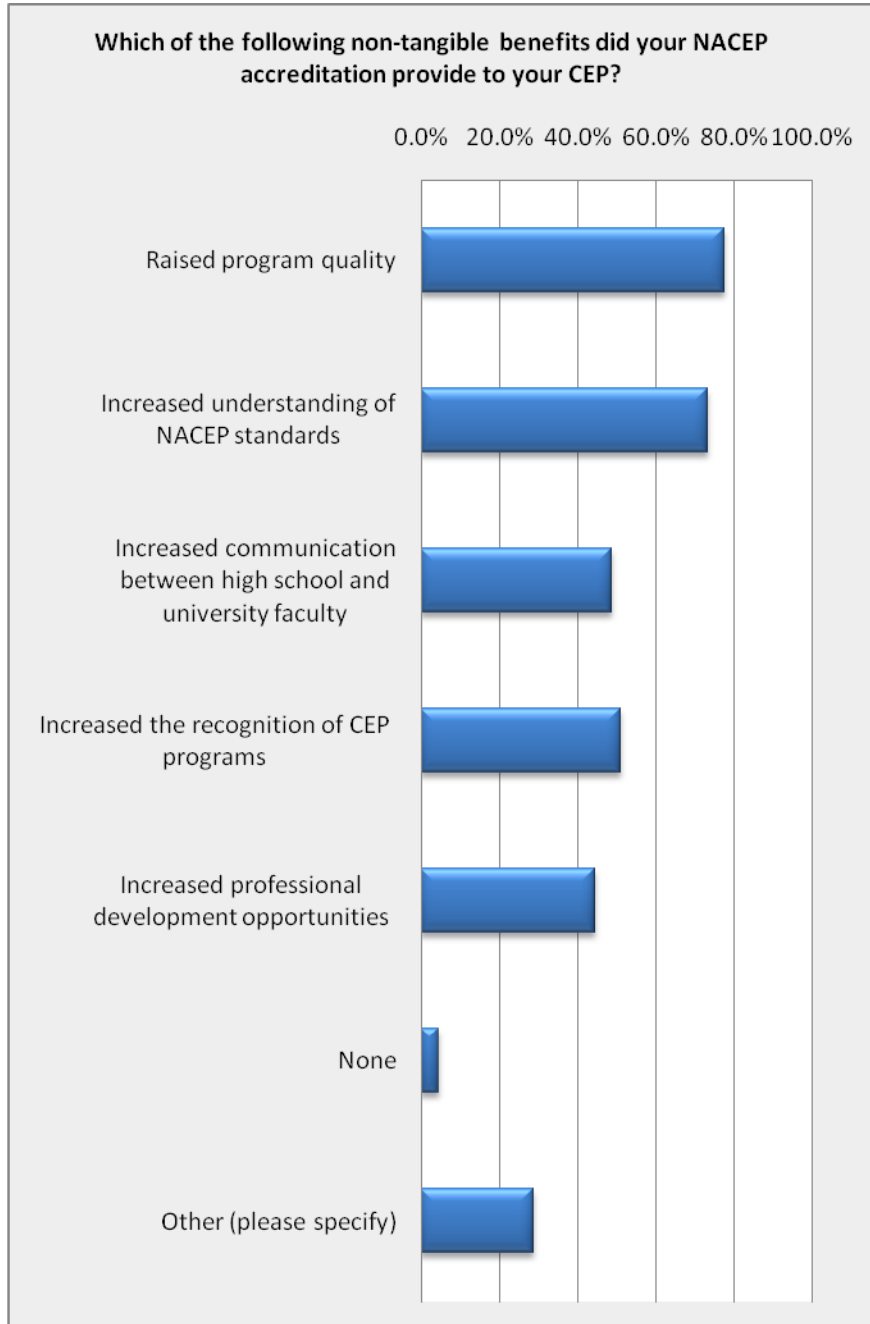
providing access. This may be due to state-level decrees, as some institutions report that their state legislated high-achieving students must enroll in concurrent enrollment opportunities.



Subsection 2: Non-tangible Benefits of Accreditation

When questioned about whether they were, or were seeking, NACEP accreditation, 62% of respondents answered positively. Of that group, 60% reported finding several non-tangible benefits to being accredited or seeking accreditation. These benefits includes raising program quality and rigor (78%); increasing the understanding of NACEP standards (73%); increasing communication between high school and the university (49%); increasing the recognition of the CEP program (51%); and increasing professional development opportunities for instructors (44%).

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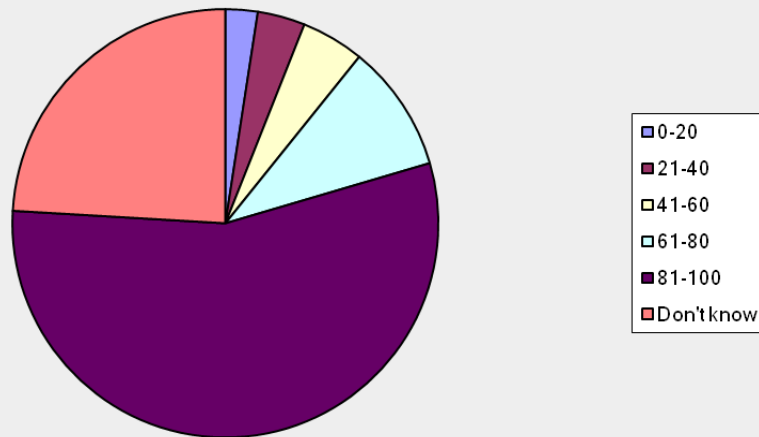
SECTION 3: STUDENT INFORMATION

Subsection 1: Credit Transfer

CEPs report high levels of credit transferability outside of the home institution. 61% of programs report between 61% and 100% of students successfully transferred their CEP credit into other institutions. However, despite this high acceptance rate, 23% of programs either do not track credit transferability or were unsure about the level. Future studies may wish to examine these institutions to determine whether their students are successfully transferring credit.

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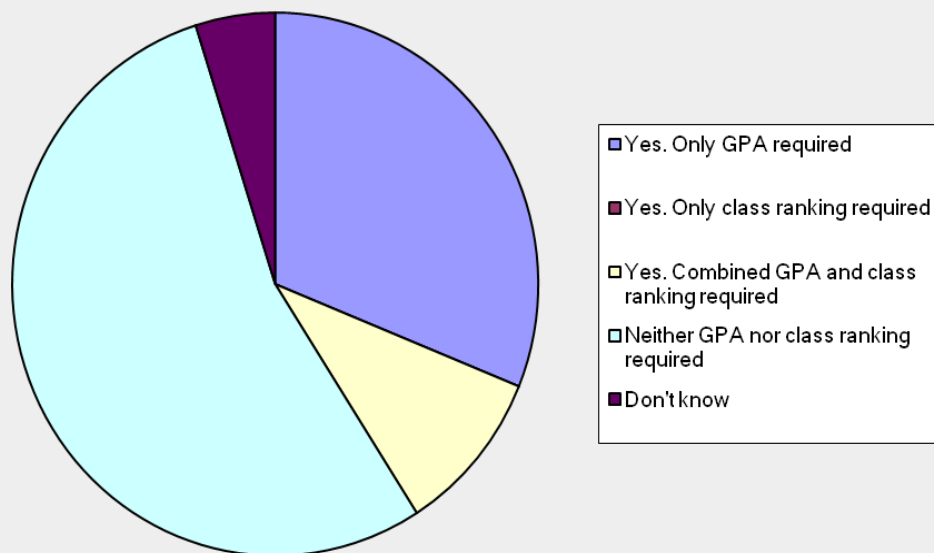
Based on the results of your annual and college graduate student surveys, what percentage of the students who request credit recognition are successful at having their CEP credits recognized by institutions other than the sponsoring CEP?



Subsection 2: Academic Gate-keeping

As mentioned before, while most programs focus on a combination of high-achieving students and providing access to under-represented students, no program seeks only to provide access. As such, it is understandable that 40% include some form of academic gate-keeping, including but not limited to a certain grade point average (GPA), class rank, and a specific grade on a national exam (ACT, SAT, etc). However, 54% require neither GPA nor class ranking for entry, suggesting that they allow the partner high schools to select appropriate students. For those requiring a GPA, students need at least a 2.6, with 83% of programs also requiring students in the top half of their class.

Do your CEP courses on the aggregate require academic proficiency, as measured by grade point average (GPA) or class ranking, for entry?



CONCLUSIONS

As evidenced by this survey, Concurrent Enrollment Programs (CEPs) continue to grow in strength and rigor in their regions. They report high levels of collegial interaction between university faculty and high school instructors, and a majority report high levels of credit transferability to outside institutions.

There are, however, some concerns about the growth of CEPs. First, CEP student populations remain relatively small (less than 1500 students), though the number of high school partnerships continues to grow. This suggests that, while CEPs are increasing the amount of schools, there is a low student-to-school ratio. The small number of discrete courses, combined with the high amount of course sections, bears this out. CEPs appear to be offering only a handful of select courses, but offering several different sections of those courses. Those interested in the future growth of CEPs may wish to examine whether offering additional courses in different departments may be a way of differentiating and growing the student population. This growth, however, is dependent upon local conditions, such as school funding and available instructors.

Another potential concern is that nearly a quarter of respondents either do not track credit transferability, or were unaware of the level of transferability. There are several reasons that credit transferability is important. First, parents and students may look to CEPs as a cost-saving measure. If outside institutions do not accept the credits, then students may begin looking elsewhere for accepted credit (i.e. Advanced Placement [AP], International Baccalaureate [IB]). Second, CEP offices hold courses to the same academic rigor as courses offered on campus. Credit transferability indicates whether outside institutions view CEP courses as academically appropriate. If these institutions are concerned about the rigor or appropriateness of CEP courses, it may damage the reputation of CEPs if the courses lack (or are perceived to lack) comparability.

The final concern with CEP growth involves combining access with opportunities for high-achieving students. While 59% of programs report attempting to combine under-achieving and high achieving students, 40% require academic gate-keeping in the form of grade point averages (GPAs) and class ranking, prior to entry into the program. 54% of programs do not require academic gate-keeping, though this question refers to program-mandated requirements. Many of the programs without mandated academic requirements may allow high schools set the terms under which their students participate. Future surveys should ask whether programs allow high schools the opportunity to be their own gate-keepers, for this could potentially undo the access for under-achieving students for which some programs strive.