



Giving Voice to Adult Learners

Gauging Adult Student Perceptions Through Survey and Qualitative Feedback

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TAIR 2023 Annual Conference

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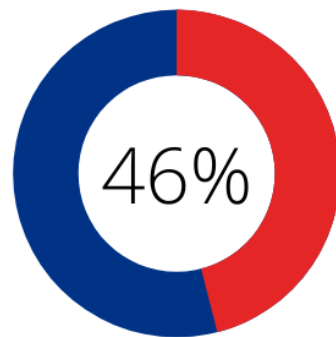


Dallas College Student Profile

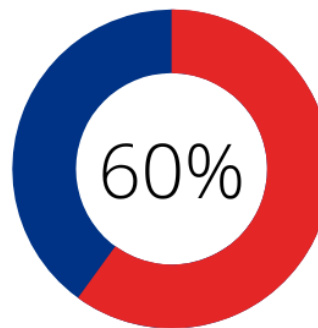


120,992
Students Enrolled
2021-2022

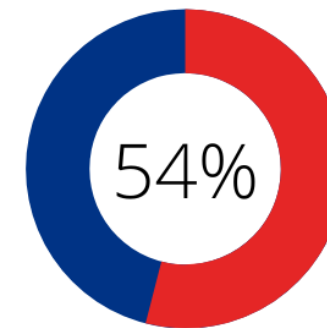
First-Generation



Female



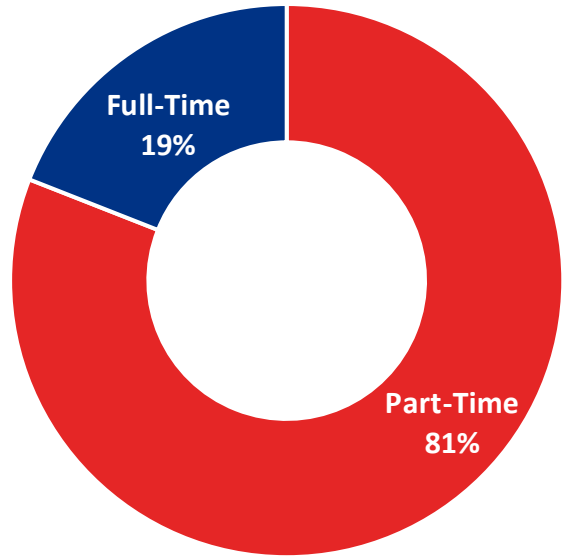
Pell-Eligible



Dallas College Adult Learner Student Profile, Fall '22



17,884
Credit-Seeking Adult Learners
Enrolled

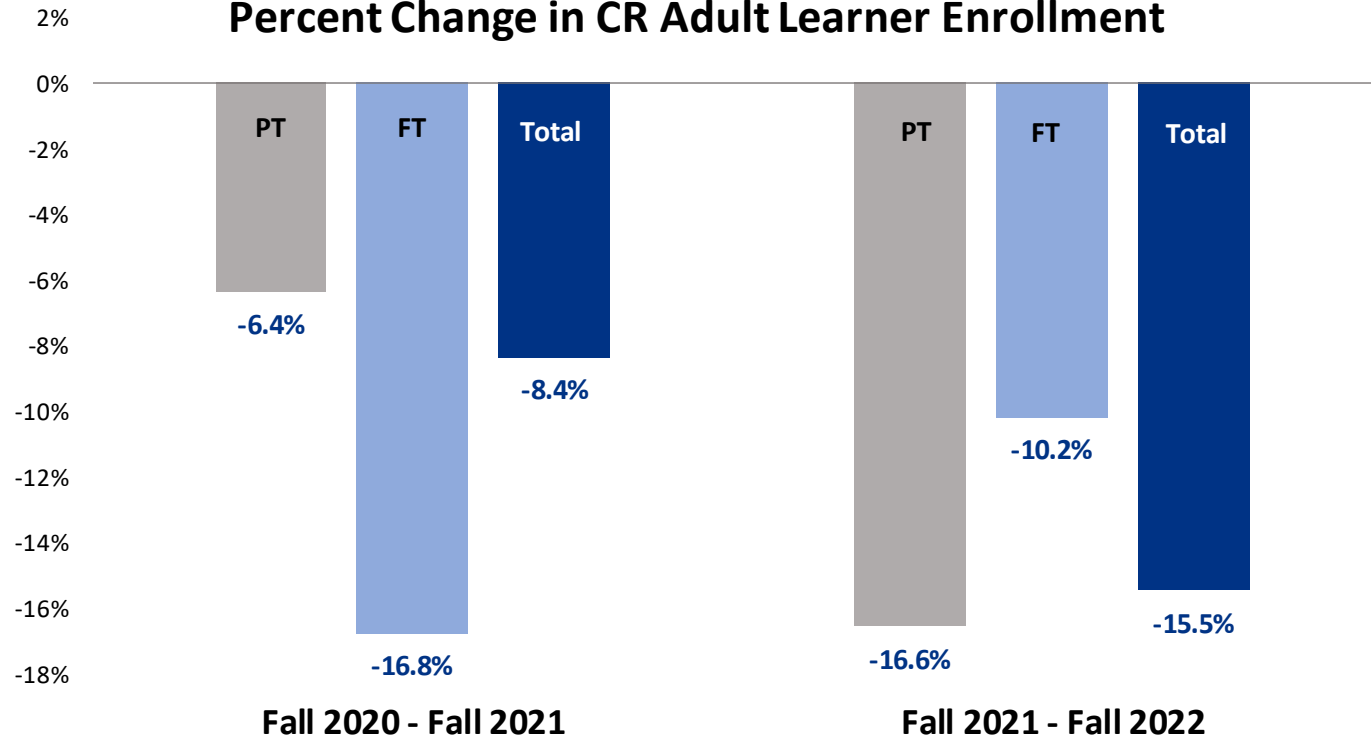


Fall 2020
23,047

Fall 2021
21,106

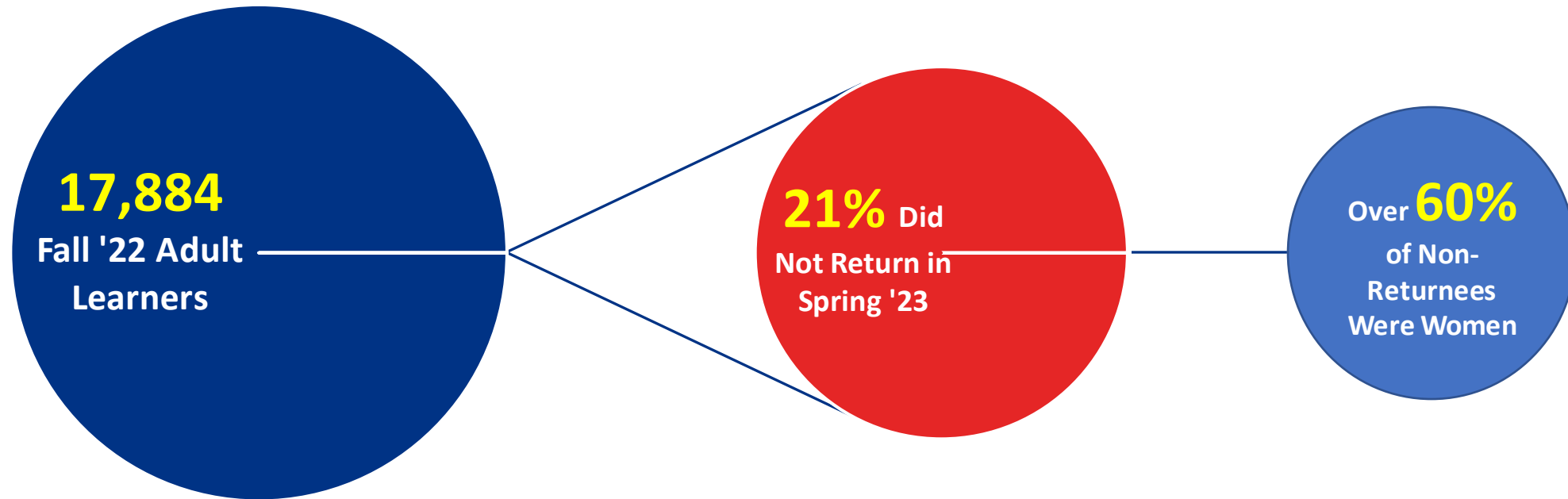
Fall 2022
17,844

Percent Change in CR Adult Learner Enrollment





Persistence of Adult Learners from Fall '22 to Spring '23



The Research Institute at Dallas College



Mission

- **Give voice** to the postsecondary education needs of the Dallas College community
- **Evaluate** access to education, the factors affecting it, and its impact on social and economic mobility
- **Produce** impactful research at the local, state, and regional levels
- **Explore** ways to strategically support student success
- **Drive** further innovation through external publication



Research Agenda Highlights

Return on Investment & EMI2

8-Year Longitudinal Outcomes of DFW High School Grads

Alumni Survey Pilot (with Strada)

Impact of Dallas College Dual Credit

Native American Students at Dallas College

Impact of Student Debt

Adult Learners & AL360 Survey

Our Team



Executive Director

Data Science Analyst

Economic Analyst

Survey Research Analyst

Data Visualization Specialist

Technical Writer

Key Partnerships



Division of Student Success

Strategic Research & Analytics

Labor Market Intelligence Center





Presentation Overview

- *Who is an adult learner?*
- Adult Learner Characteristics/Profiles
- Metrics Defining Adult Learner Success
- Gaps in Adult Learner Success
- Adult Learners at Dallas College – CAEL & RI Findings
- Addressing "Unknown" Gaps
- Q&A



Who is an adult learner?



*What does an adult learner **mean to you?***





Who is an adult learner?

*What does an adult learner **mean to you?***

*How does your **institution define** an adult learner?*





Adult learners may...

- Be at least 24 years of age
- Care for dependents
- Be married
- Work full-time
- Be veteran or active duty
- Qualify as independent for FAFSA purposes
- Be first-generation to attend postsecondary education
- Be diverse in race, gender, ability, socioeconomic status
- Have college credit (and debt) from multiple institutions
- Have prior justice involvement
- Etc...

Serving Adult Learners is an equity issue!





Who are our adult learners?

New Adult Learner



Martina (26)

Married mom, Part-time sales assoc., Enrolled PT to begin Assoc. degree



Carmen (30)

Single mom, Full-time daycare worker, Enrolled PT for Assoc. degree (<50% complete)



Miana (33)

Full-time Public service rep., Enrolled PT to complete Assoc. degree & transfer

Disengaged Adult Learner (some college/no degree)



Chris (26)

High school diploma, 1 semester of college immediately after HS, Between jobs/seeking employment



Felipe (31)

Married dad, Technician, Certificate holder





Defining Adult Learner Success

Attainment

- Enrollment
- Persistence
- Engagement and belongingness
- Credit for prior learning
- Work-based learning
- Learning outcomes attained
- Support needs met
- Credential attainment

Post-Attainment

- Re-enrollment
- Advanced credentials
- Job placement
- Job advancement
- Socioeconomic mobility
- Multigenerational enrollment





How do we enroll and keep adult learners on pathways that ensure sustainable careers and gainful earnings?





Why focus on adult learners?

- Regional college completion declining
- Adult students stopping out
- Challenges with reengaging/reenrolling





Why focus on adult learners?

- Regional college completion declining
- Adult students stopping out
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*What does this mean in terms of the **value a Dallas College education** brings to the adult learner?*





Why focus on adult learners?



Systematic problem with how we serve adult learners





What matters most to adult learners?

Program facilitates their *sense of agency* and control over their future.

Program & institution support them holistically and *empower them to persevere*.

Program *leads to a goal* and opens multiple doors to future success.



What matters most to adult learners?

Program is
affordable;
options for
funding.

Program &
institution
*connect them to
careers.*



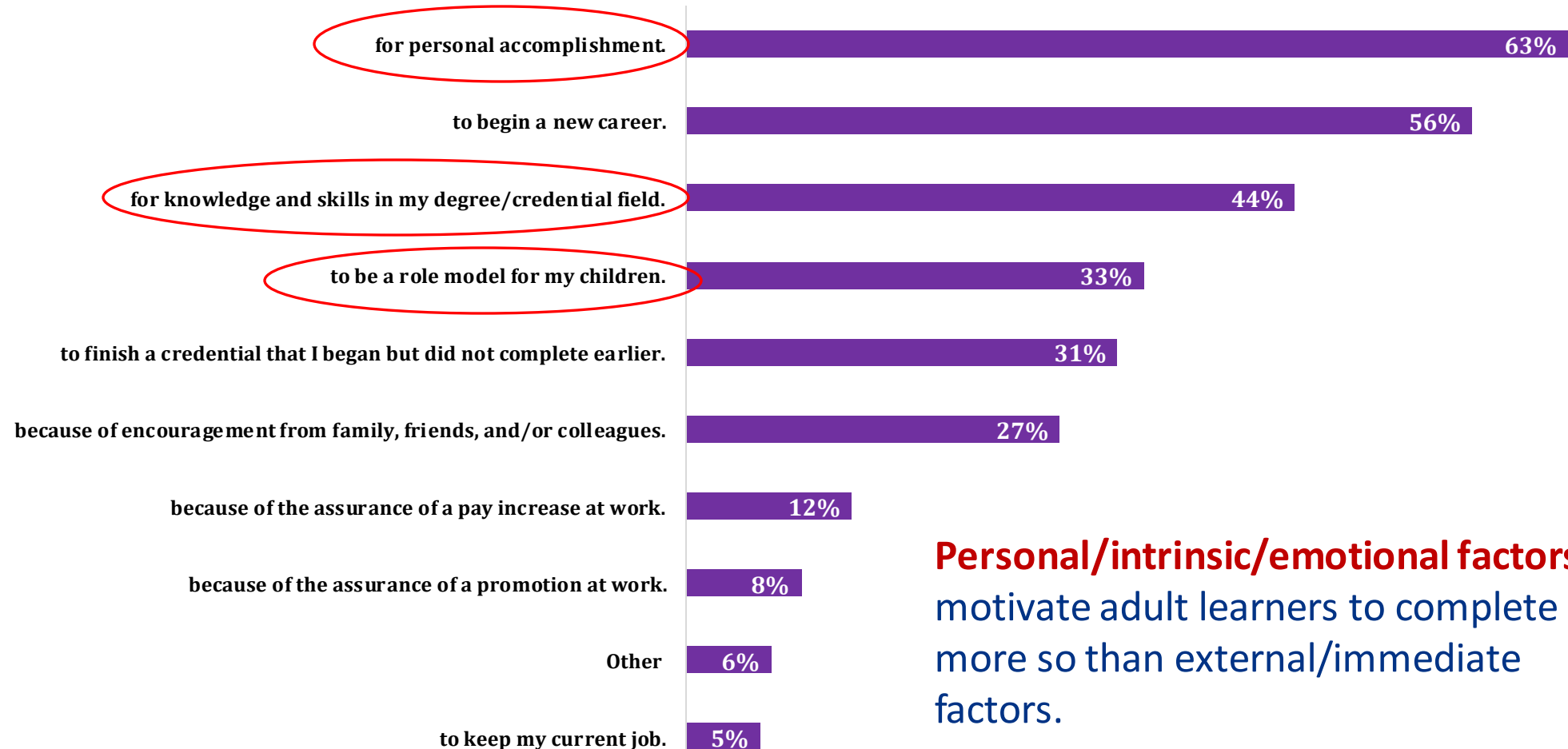
Dallas College Adult Learners: Survey and Qualitative Feedback





Findings from AL 360 (CAEL)

I was motivated to **enroll and stay** in Dallas College...



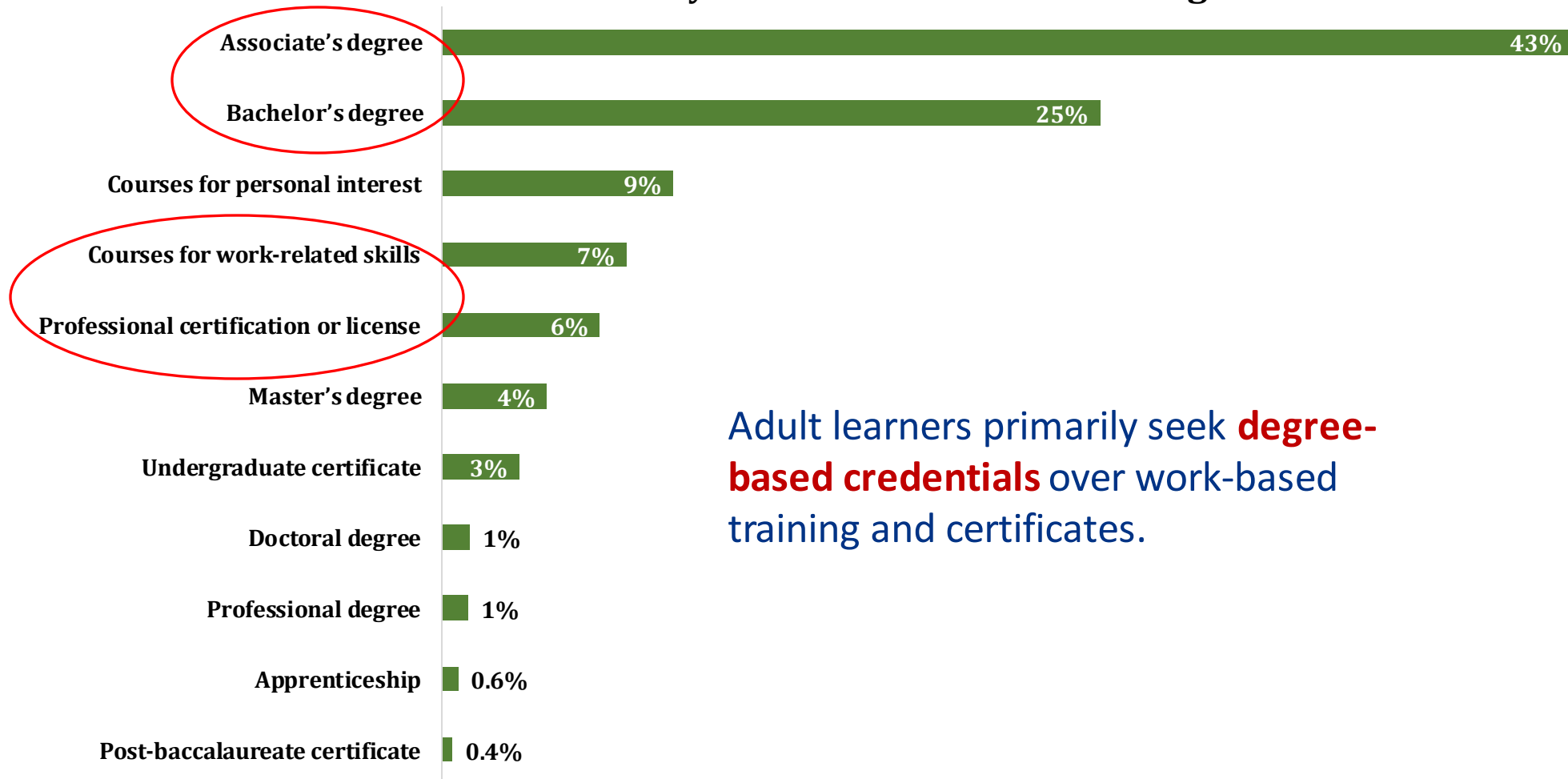
Personal/intrinsic/emotional factors motivate adult learners to complete more so than external/immediate factors.





Findings from AL 360 (CAEL)

What is your **immediate educational goal**?



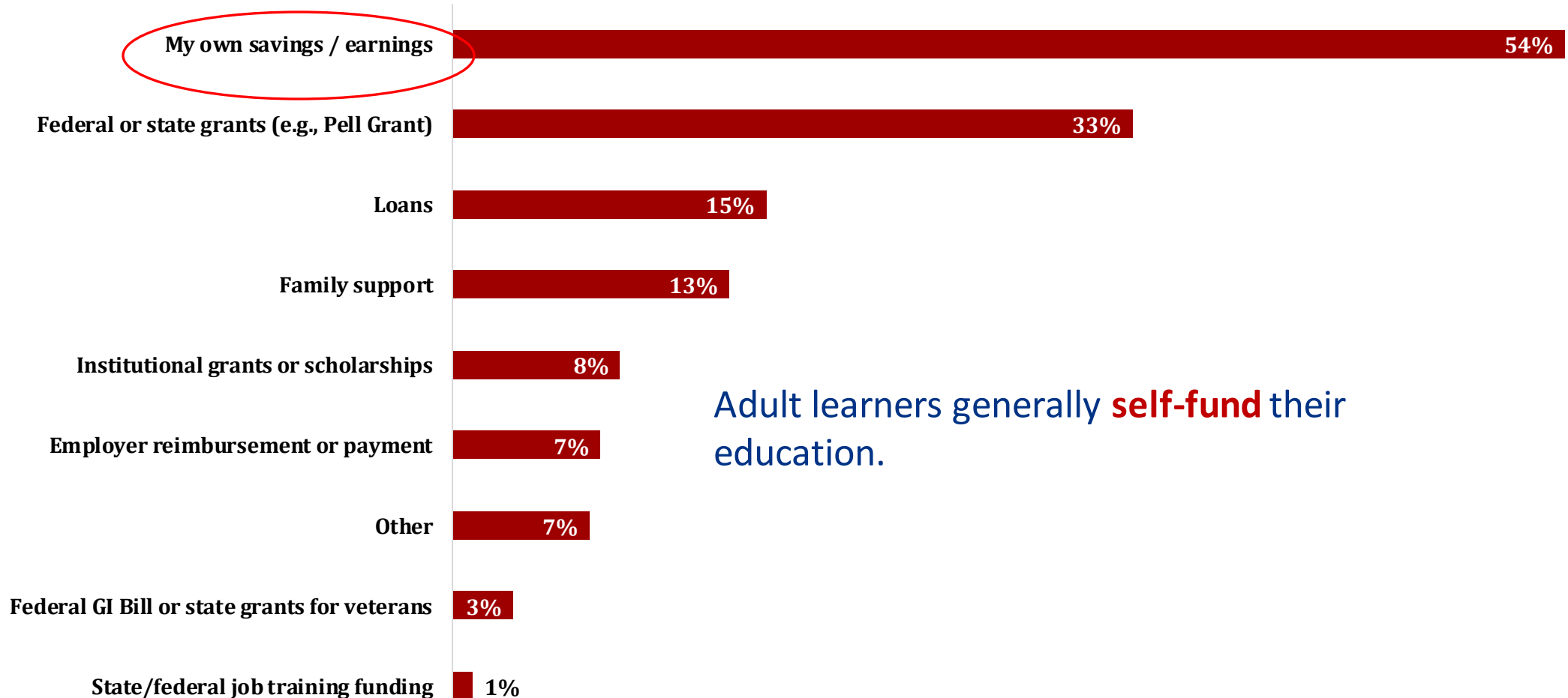
Adult learners primarily seek **degree-based credentials** over work-based training and certificates.





Findings from AL 360 (CAEL)

Please indicate the **source of funding** that you currently use to pay for your education.

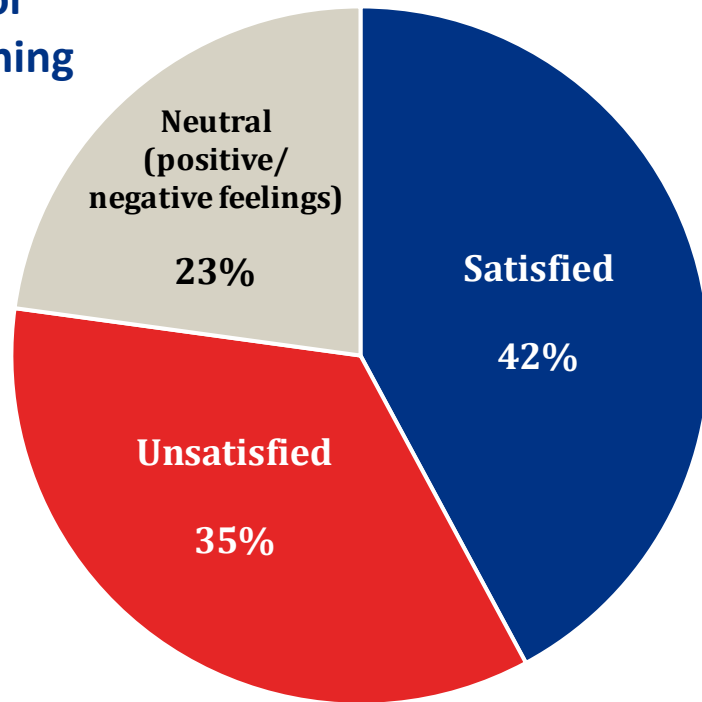




Findings from AL 360 (CAEL)

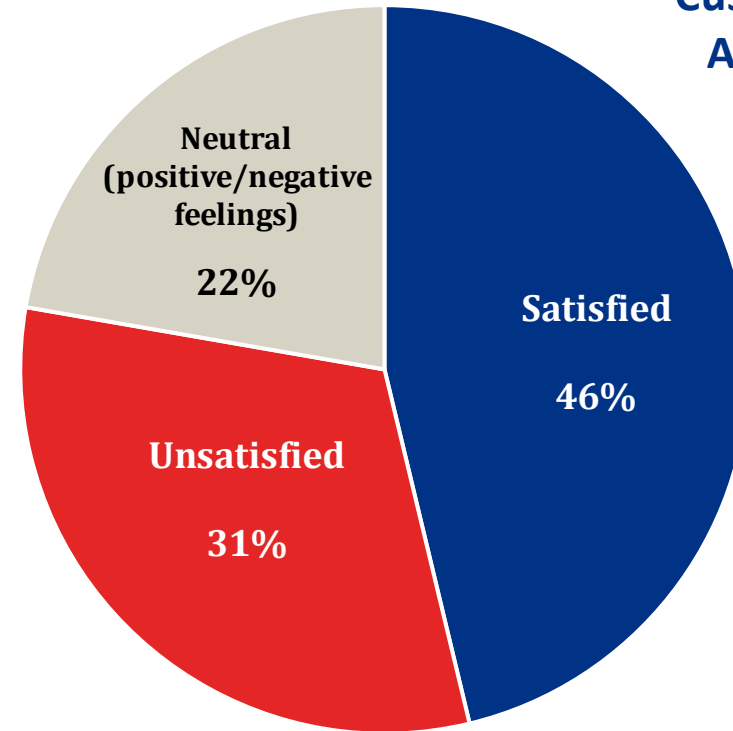
Dallas College provides a **process to assess whether the knowledge and skills I already learned through life and work could qualify for credit.**

Credit for Prior Learning



Success coaches **incorporate my work, life, and family commitments** into my learning plan.

Customized Advising





Adult Learner Experiences in Programs

Programs that provided adult learners...

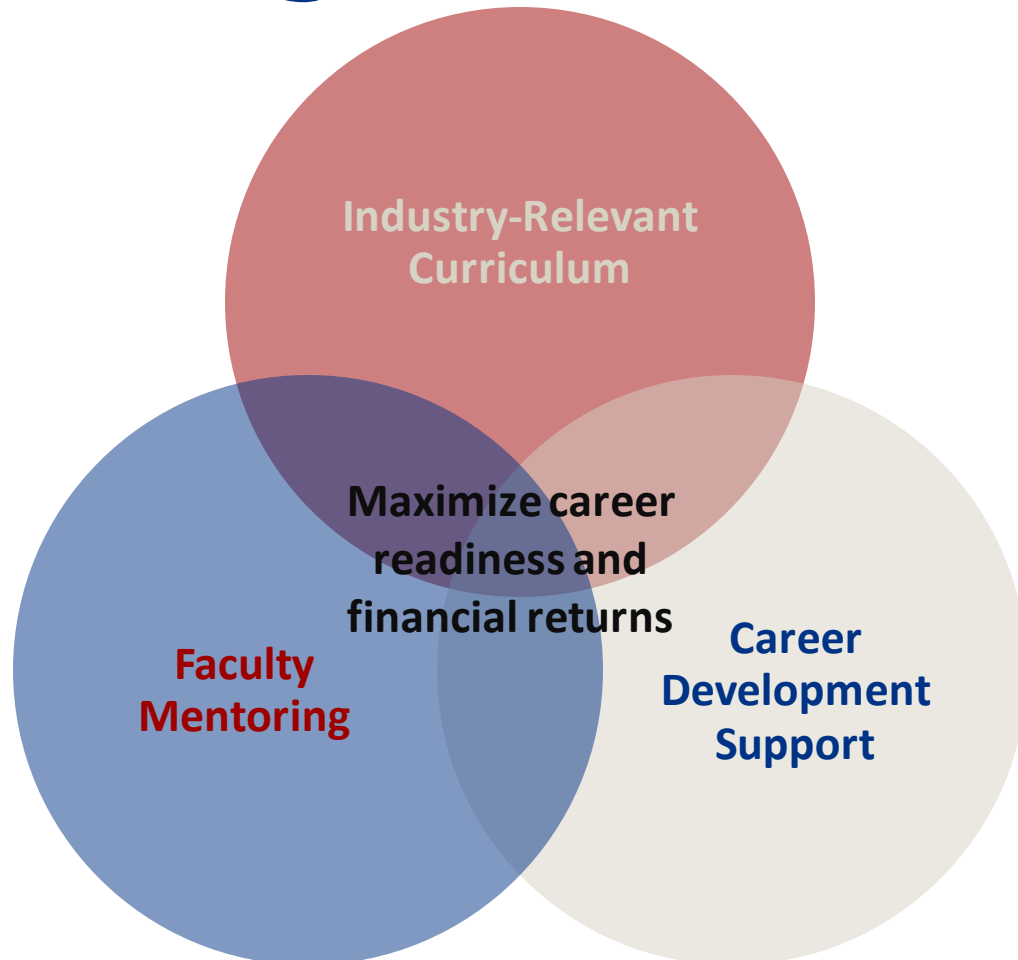
Employability & Soft Skills

Experiential Learning

Networking Skills

Cultural Capital

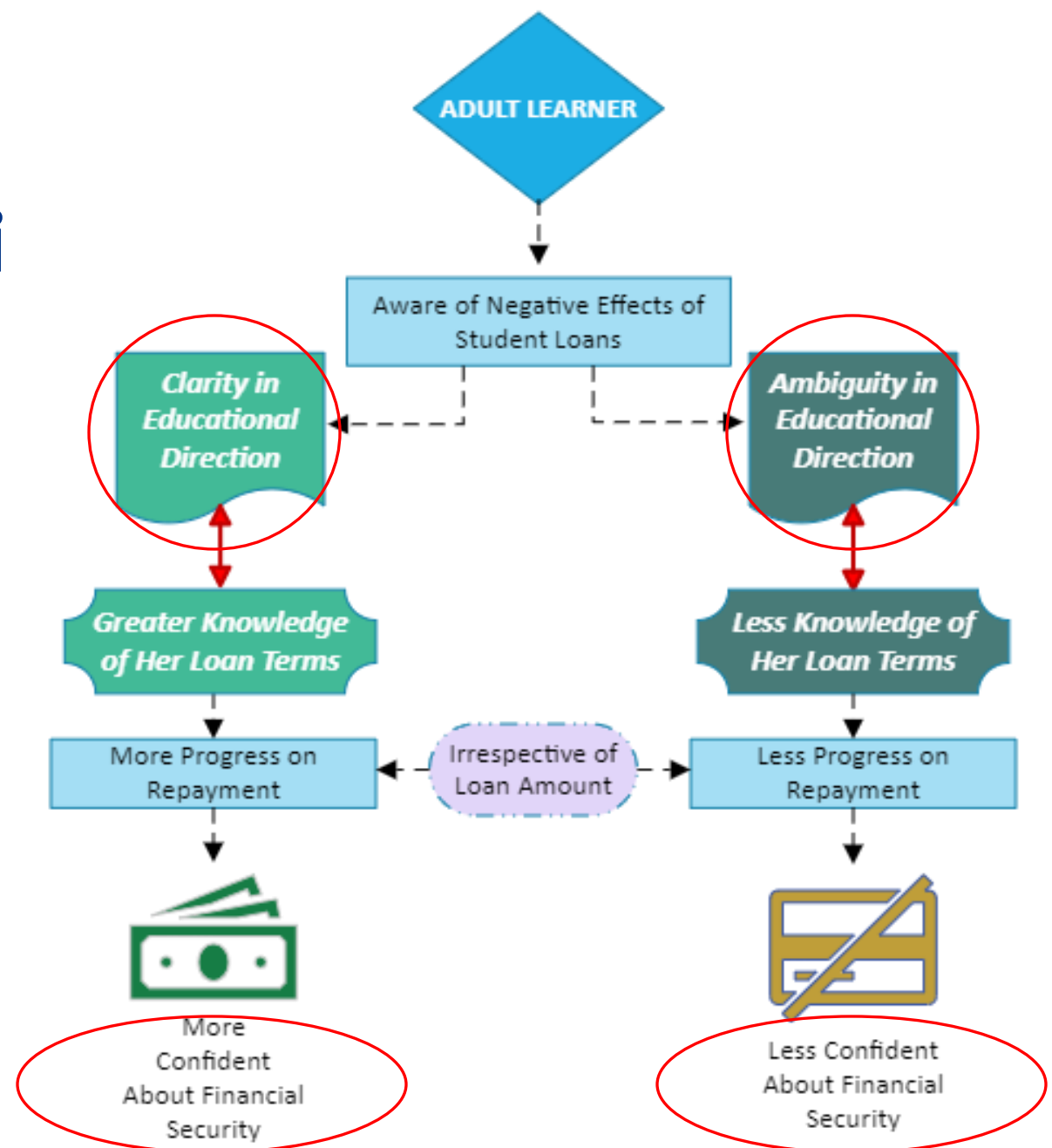
...were **successful in enrolling students in careers.**





Adult Learners and Student Debt: Alumni Insights

- Adult learners with student debt
- **Clarity in educational pathway** → more likely to feel confident about future financial well-being
- **Robust academic and financial aid advising** improves adult learner outcomes.

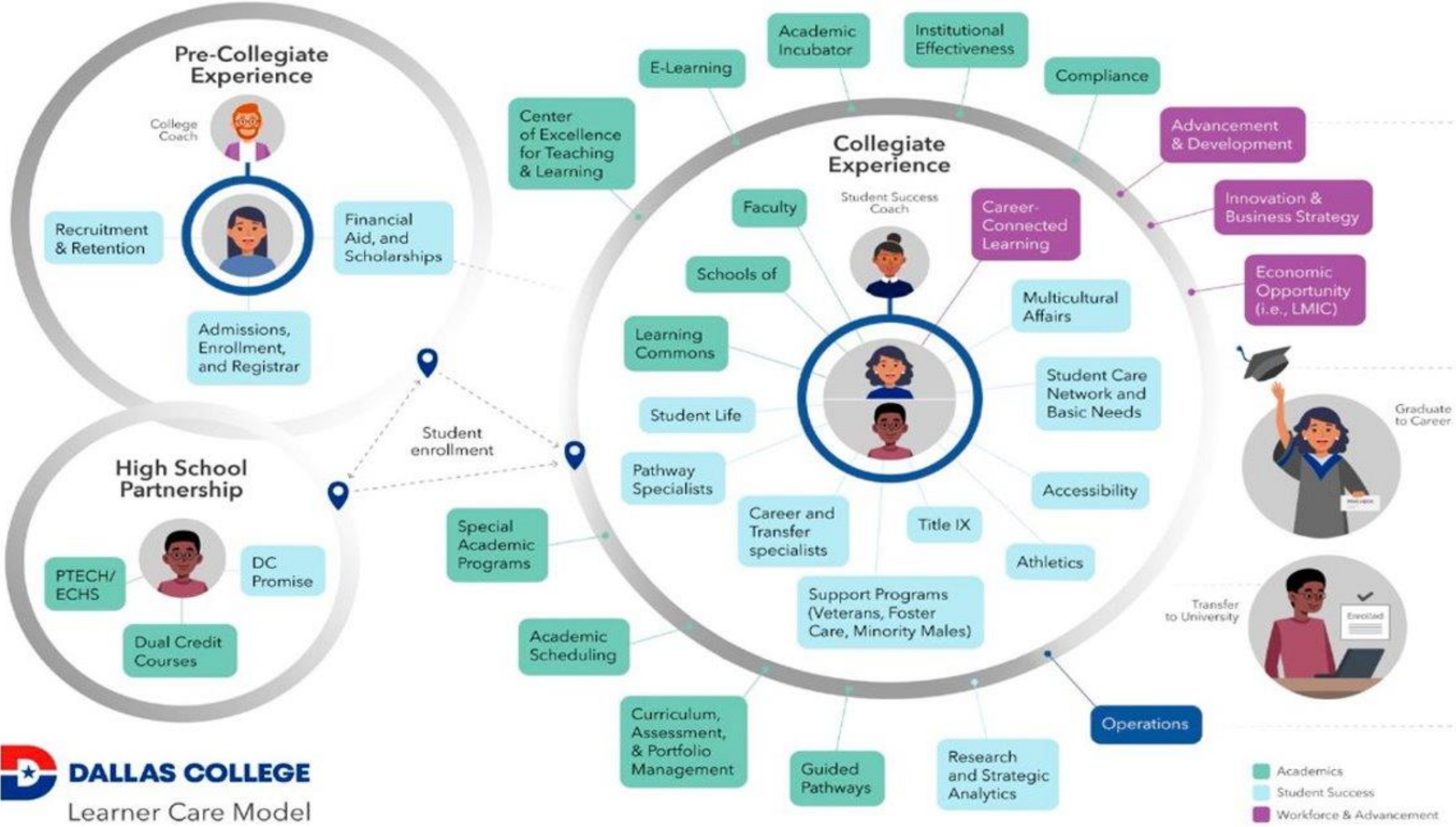




Summary Findings from CAEL Adult Learner Study

- Adult learners need **specialized, adult learner-focused Success Coaches** who can provide support for their unique educational and career needs.
- Adult learners should know about **Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)** and the programs of study that currently offer CPL.
- Adult learners need more guidance with **financial aid** and more information on **scholarship opportunities**.







Thank you!

Q&A

