

SVC Board of Trustees

Student Success Annual Performance Report

February 2025

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Skagit Valley College's 2024–2028 Strategic Plan identifies five strategic priorities: 1) Student Success, 2) Opportunity, 3) Enrollment, 4) Institutional Capacity, and 5) Community Engagement. This report summarizes the 2025 performance of Student Success, as measured by two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Student Completion and Employment Rates.

Completion Rates:

- Overall completion rates have improved from 36% (baseline) to 39% in 2025, showing progress toward the 2028 target of 42%.
- Internal data indicate a slight dip in the most recent cohort completion rates; however, trend data indicate the college is making progress toward our strategic priority targets.
- Both regional and national benchmarking data show that SVC continues to show strong progress in relation to peer institutions.

Employment Rates:

- Post-completion employment increased from 68% (baseline) to 77% in 2025, exceeding the 2028 target of 75%. Note that the target represents a three-year average, and that this number is representative of the most recent data available.
- SVC Workforce Program Completers have a higher employment rate than our system average.

Considerations:

- SVC should continue to investigate the baccalaureate attainment rate of academic-transfer students after SVC completion. Studies show that students who earn a transfer degree, but who subsequently fail to complete a bachelor's degree, have similar earning potential to students with no post-secondary education.
- SVC should continue to align SVC workforce degree programs with high demand careers that provide a living wage for our graduates. Internal analyses indicate that while average associate degree completers earn just above a living wage, some individual programs may not be moving students into living wage careers.
- Best practice models, research on student success, internal analyses, and student feedback surveys all indicate that SVC should continue to focus on reforming its overall advising model, advising capacity, program effectiveness, data tracking, Learning Support Services, and critical interventions within the student services division to further improve student retention, transition, and completion.

Summary:

Skagit Valley College has demonstrated initial progress toward its 2028 student success completion and employment targets, with demonstrated gains in the KPIs of completion and employment. Completion rates improved across most categories, particularly in academic-transfer and bachelor programs, though a decline in workforce completion rates warrants close attention and may indicate a need for further analysis and intervention. Employment outcomes remain strong, the overall 2025 post-completion employment rate exceeding the 2028 target, and data show that for the first time in the last 4 years, SVC workforce program completers are employed at higher rates than the system average. Comparisons

with regional and national peers also show the college continuing to perform better than peers on a variety of metrics, although much work remains to be done, specifically in the areas of transfer degree completion rates, workforce degree completion rates, and workforce program alignment with labor market demands and higher salaries. The College's current (2025-2026) operational plan focuses specifically on many of these issues, especially on a redesign and investment in the college's advising program and learning support services will be essential to sustain momentum and ensure that all students benefit from the long-term benefits of degree attainment and employment.

II. KPI: COMPLETION RATES FOR ALL DEGREE SEEKING STUDENTS

This section of the report focuses on the KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for Student Completion Rates. The Student Success Priority has the following targets associated with student completion rates:

- Increase overall completion rate to 42% (baseline = 36%)
- Increase Workforce completion to 50% (baseline = 45%)
- Increase Academic-Transfer completion to 38% (baseline = 32%)
- Increase Bachelor's completion to 80% (baseline = 70%)

Internally we define completion as the number of first-time degree seeking who have completed their certificate or degree, and/or successfully transferred to a 4-year institution within three years (150%) of first enrollment in college. Degree seeking students can pursue an associate's degree in the area of academic-transfer or workforce or pursuing a bachelor's degree.

II.A. Internal Reporting

The SVC Institutional Research (IR) office maintains internal dashboards of student completion data. These data are best used for diagnostic purposes, informing operational planning, and measuring progress toward strategic priority targets. Internal completion is defined as the percentage of first-time, degree-seeking students starting in summer or fall who earned a degree/certificate or transferred to a 4-year college or university *within three years*. It is important to keep in mind that these percentages are not the "final" SVC completion rates.

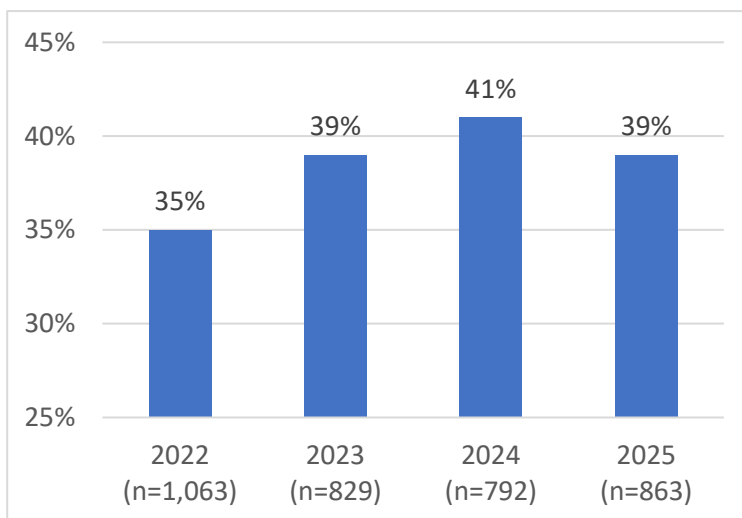
Figure 1: SVC 3-Year Completion Rates Relative to 2028 Targets

Completion Rate by Category	Baseline	2025 Completion	2028 Target
Overall Completion Rate	36%	39%	42%
Workforce Completion Rate	45%	43%	50%
Academic-Transfer Completion Rate	32%	36%	38%
Bachelor's Completion Rate	70%	74%	80%

Findings: Overall completion has increased from a baseline of 36% to 39%, showing progress toward the 2028 target of 42%. Workforce completion declined from 45% baseline to 43%, moving further away from the 2028 target of 50%. Academic-transfer completion increased from 32% baseline to 36%, showing progress toward the 2028 target of 38%. Bachelor's completion rose from 70% baseline to 74%, demonstrating early progress, though still short of the 2028 target of 80%.

Analysis. Although the figure above shows 2025 completion data, the baselines and 2028 targets were designed as three-year averages rather than single year results. Because of this, year-to-year changes provide a sense of progress but may not fully indicate long-term movement.

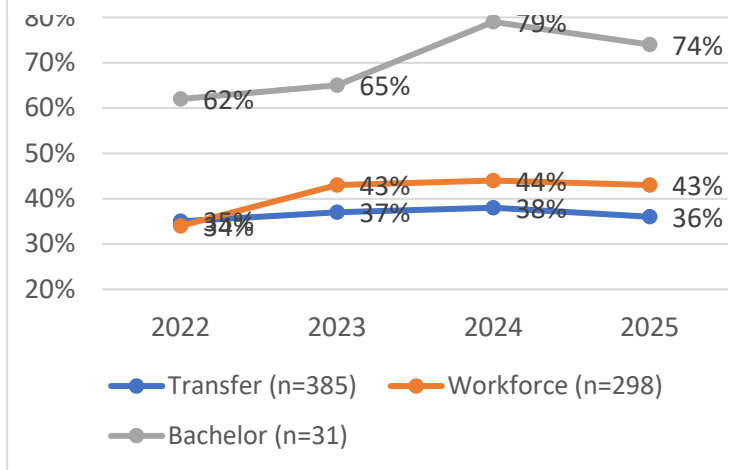
Figure 2: Overall 3-Year Completion Rates
SVC Internal Reporting



Findings: Internal completion rates improved steadily from 35% (in 2022) to 41% (in 2024), showing three consecutive years of progress. In 2025, the rate dropped to 39%, falling back to the previous year's levels.

Analysis: Completion rates vary year to year due to a number of factors; the college will need to watch closely to see if this decline continues over multiple years and examine potential causes accordingly.

Figure 3: Trend of 3-Year Completion Rates
SVC Internal Reporting



Finding: All degree types show a similar pattern of steady increases in completion rates from 2022 to 2024, followed by a slight decline in 2025. The 2025 decreases were: Transfer 38% → 36%, Workforce 44% → 43%, and Bachelor 79% → 74%.

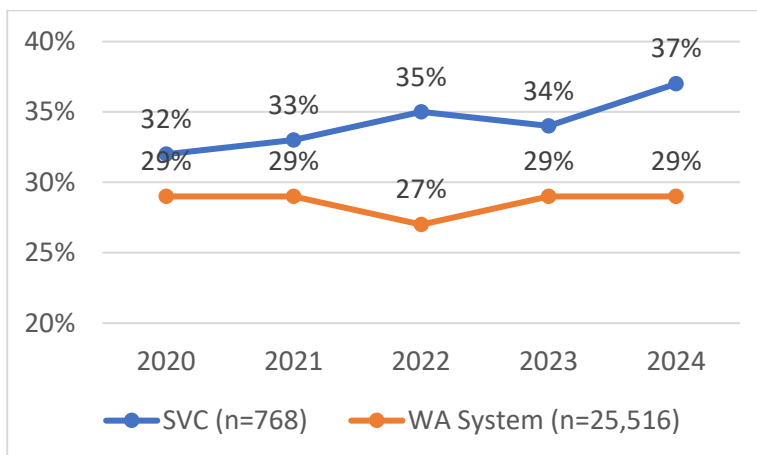
Analysis: Completion rates vary year to year due to any number of factors; a drop in all degree types (rather than just one or two) may indicate the influence of external factors outside of the college's control. We will need to examine regional and national

comparisons to see if this decline is reflected across various institutions.

II.B. Regional (WA SBCTC System) Benchmarking

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) maintains a data warehouse and dashboards that display system-level data for all 34 colleges in the SBCTC system. SVC uses data provided by the SBCTC to benchmark its performance against regional (WA system) peers on all strategic priority metrics where data are available. For SBCTC reporting, completion rates are defined as the percentage of first-time, degree-seeking students who start in summer or fall and earn a degree or certificate within three years. Cohort parameters differ between SVC internal reporting and SBCTC data: SBCTC data is designed to be standardized and comparable across 34 community and technical colleges. Please note the cohort data presented here from the SBCTC System lag one year behind the internal SVC data.

Figure 4: Overall Completion Rates
SVC vs WA SBCTC System

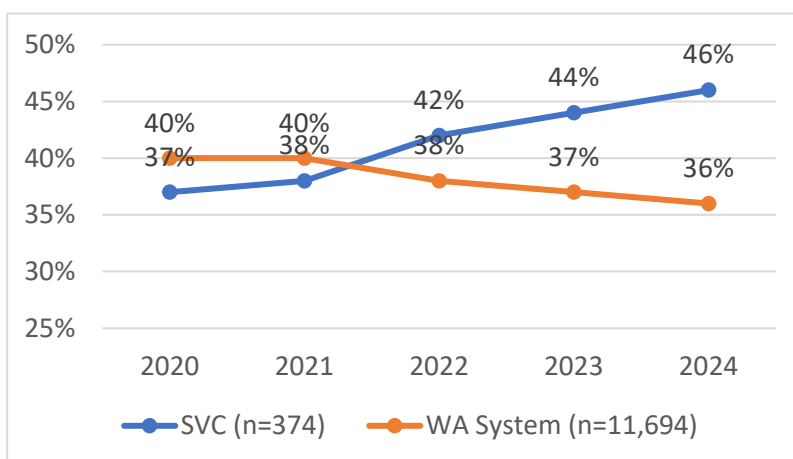


Findings: SVC's three-year completion rate shows a generally upward trend from 32% in 2020 to 37% in 2024, consistently outperforming the WA System average each year.

Analysis: SVC student completion rates are improving over time both in terms of absolute values and (more importantly) these rates are improving relative to the statewide system, suggesting effective student

support, pedagogy, and retention practices.

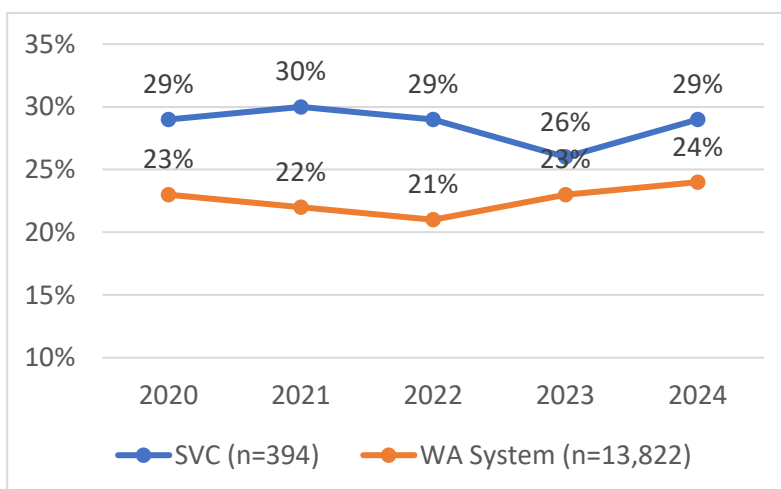
Figure 5: Workforce Completion Rates
SVC vs SBCTC System



Findings: SVC workforce-intent completion rates show a steady and continuous increase from 37% (2020) to 46% (2024). In contrast, WA System rates remain flat through 2021 and then gradually decline from 40% to 36% by 2024. Beginning in 2022, SVC surpasses the WA System and continues to widen the gap each year.

Analysis: SVC completion rates for workforce degree seeking students show strong improvement both in terms of overall rates and in relation to peer colleges in the WA System.

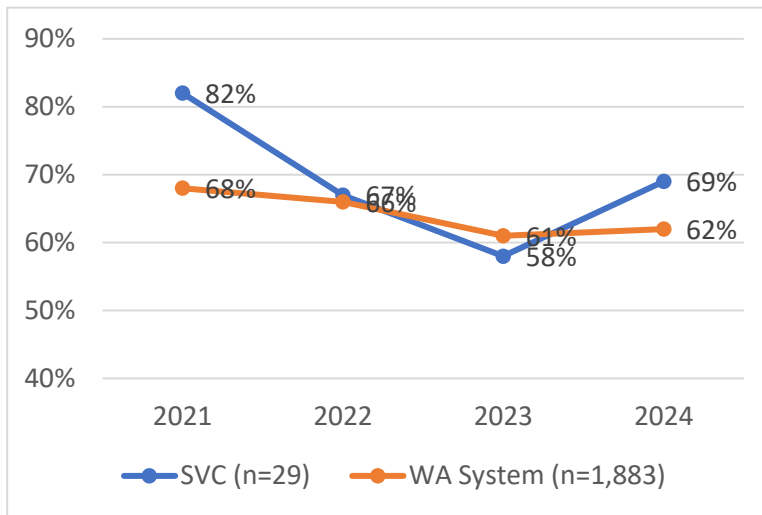
Figure 6: Transfer Completion Rates
SVC vs WA SBCTC System



Findings: SVC transfer-intent completion rates remain relatively stable over time, fluctuating slightly between 26% and 30% from 2020–2024. WA System transfer-intent rates remain consistently lower than SVC each year (21%–24%).

Analysis: Transfer degree completion rates for the WA SBCTC System have remained fairly stable over the last 5 years. Similarly, SVC's transfer degree completion rates have remained approximately 5.5% points above the SBCTC System average.

**Figure 7: Bachelor Completion Rate
SVC vs WA SBCTC System**



Findings: SVC bachelor's completion rates were higher than the WA system in three of the four reporting years (2021, 2022, 2024). SVC completion rates declined from 82% to 58% between 2021 and 2023, followed by a recovery to 69% in 2024. The WA system showed greater stability, ranging from 61% to 68% across all years.

Analysis. SVC has a relatively small cohort size (n=29) and therefore a much larger variation in yearly

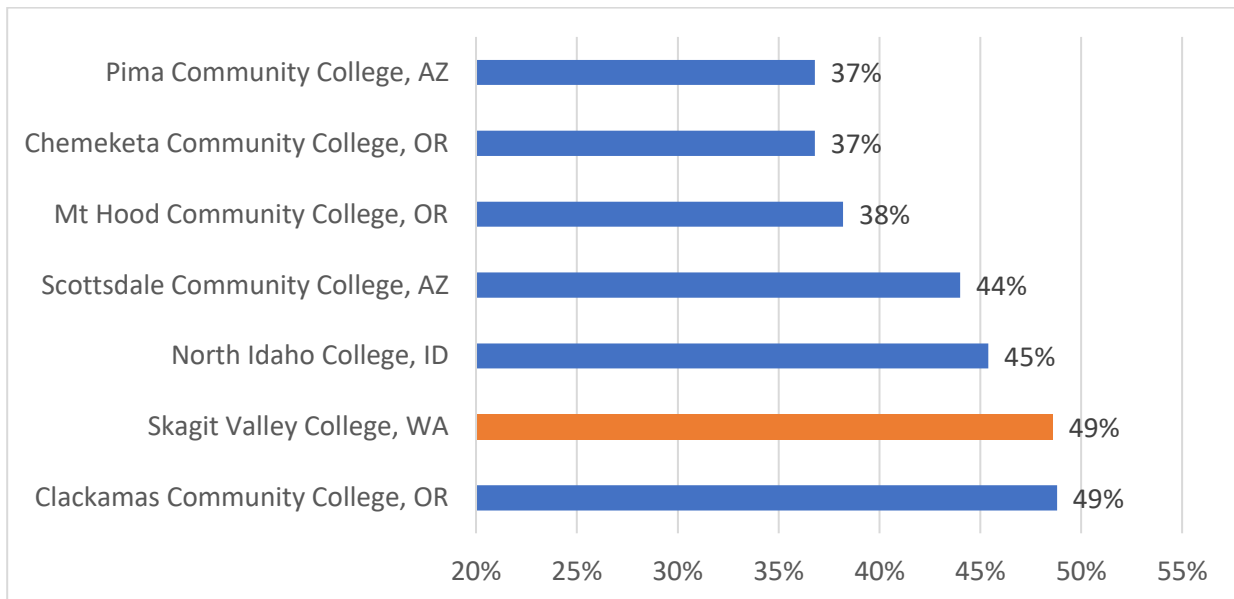
completion rates can be expected compared to the SBCTC System cohort (n=1,883). The college will need to continue to watch these rates closely as we increase Bachelor's offerings and cohort size.

II.C. National Benchmarking

In accordance with U.S. Department of Education requirements, colleges regularly complete multiple Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) surveys annually, which report metrics such as student retention, graduation, and transfer rates. Current accreditation standards require SVC to compare its performance with a cohort of national peers, and IPEDS data are the only data that are available for these comparisons. Benchmark institutions were selected based on the following criteria: public colleges primarily awarding associate degrees, size, demographic profile, located in rural or suburban areas, and participating in Title IV financial aid programs.

Note: IPEDS rates often rely on a cohort of first-time full-time (FTFT) degree seeking students, which currently represent only a small percentage of the total SVC student population: currently more than half of SVC students attend part-time.

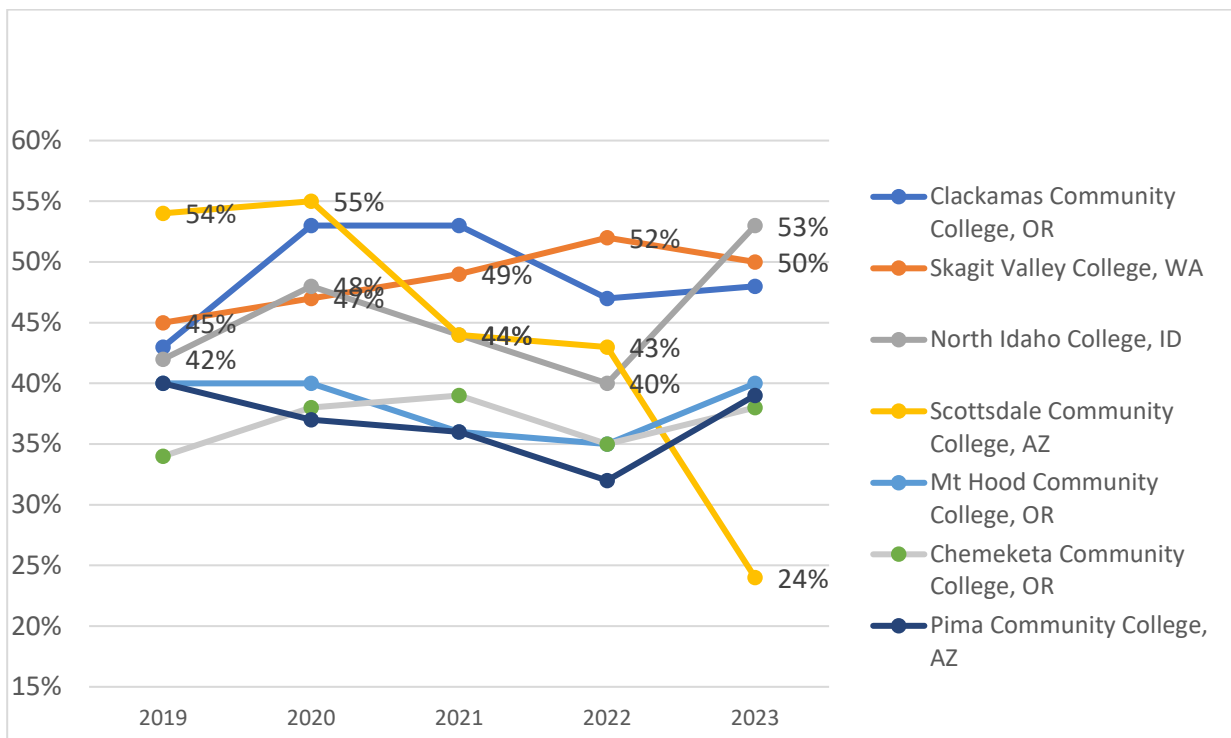
Figure 8: Completion Success Rates (Graduation + Transfer)
SVC vs National Peer Colleges



Findings: The rates above are based on a metric that combines graduation and transfer-out outcomes, similar to the way SVC defines “completion” in its internal reports: a student is counted as a “success” if he/she either graduates within 150% of normal time and/or successfully transfers to a four-year institution. These rates represent a five-year average of FTFT, degree or certificate-seeking students who, within three years of entry, either completed a credential at the institution or transferred to a 4-year institution to continue their education. Note that IPEDS reports graduation and transfer outcomes separately and counts each student only once.

Analysis: SVC completion compares favorably to this cohort of national peers. However, comparisons between community colleges in different state systems are notoriously problematic given the large variation in state community college systems. The NWCCU has signaled that it intends to drop this accreditation standard when the new standards are released later in 2026.

**Figure 9: Trend of Completion Success Rates (Graduation + Transfer)
SVC vs National Peer Colleges**



Findings: Compared to peer cohort institutions, Skagit Valley College shows steady improvement in student completion success, rising from 45% in 2019 to a peak of 52% in 2022 before stabilizing at 50% in 2023, positioning it as a consistent top performer in the group. This sustained upward trend contrasts with the performance of several other institutions within the cohort.

Analysis: The results in the above figure demonstrate long-term consistency in improved completion outcomes relative to peer institutions.

III. KPI: EMPLOYMENT RATES FOR WORKFORCE COMPLETERS

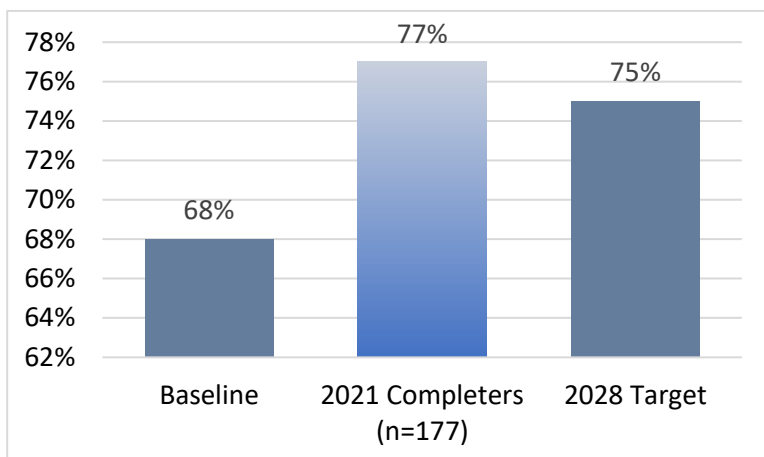
The KPI for Student Employment Rates has the following target:

- Improve student post completion employment to 75% (baseline = 68%)

III.A. Internal Reporting

This section examines student employment rates of Workforce and BAS program completers. The college does not currently have the capacity to internally track completion (or earnings) of students who complete a workforce program (although this is a future goal), so the data reported in this section have all been taken from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) data warehouse.

Figure 10: Employment Rate for all Workforce Program Completers
4 Years Post-Completion



Findings: The SVC employment rate for workforce program (bachelor, associate, certificate) completers increased from a 68% (baseline) to 77% among 2021 completers (n=177), demonstrating substantial early progress and exceeding the 75% target set for 2028.

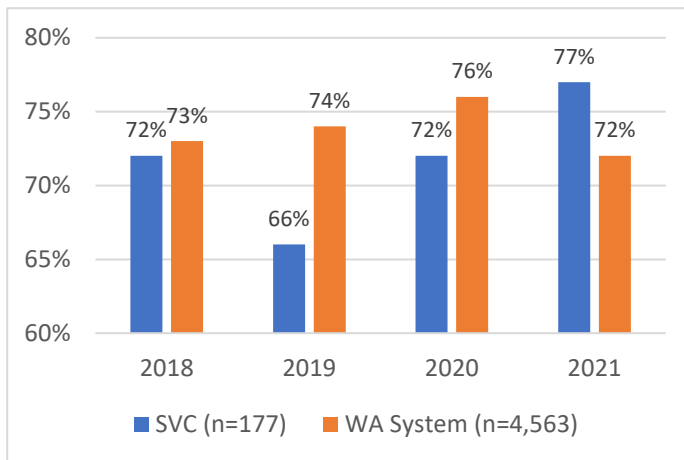
Analysis: The strong employment rate (77%) of Workforce program completers (n=177 in 2021) suggests improved alignment between

Workforce programs and regional labor market demand. However, student employment is subject to a wide range of factors, many of which are outside of the college's control. We will need to closely monitor this in future years to see if improved employment rates are sustained.

III.B. Regional (WA SBCTC System) Benchmarking

The SBCTC data system is currently tracking employment rates at 4, 5, and 6 years post-completion. Thus, these reports use the earliest metric (3-4 years post-completion) rather than 9 months post-completion, which was an earlier report standard from the system. For bachelor students only, the SBCTC system has a three-year post completion metric which was used for our bachelor completion metric. Employment and wage data are notoriously difficult for colleges and universities to track and require significant institutional capacity to do so. SVC is working on creating that capacity in our current data department to better track and analyze this metric, which is critically important to the mission of the college.

Figure 11: Employment Rates for all Workforce Program Completers
4-years post-completion

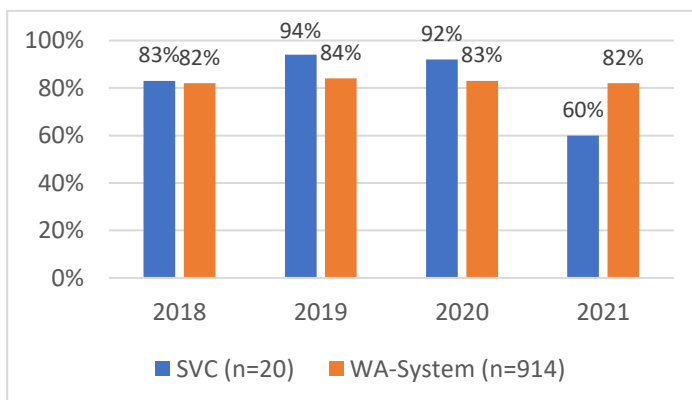


Findings: From 2018-2020, the employment rates for workforce (bachelor/associate/certificate) completers ranged from 66% to 72%, generally remaining 1-4 percentage points below the WA System average during those years. However, in 2021, SVC's employment rate increased to 77%, surpassing the statewide average of 72%.

Analysis: Employment outcomes for workforce programs at both SVC and the WA System were relatively stable from

2018 to 2020. The sharp rise in SVC's employment rate in 2021, alongside a statewide decline, suggests stronger alignment between SVC programs and regional workforce needs. There is some inherent variability in the employment rate metric, and we expect this to continue in future years. The college will continue to monitor these data to see if this trend persists in upcoming cohort data.

Figure 12: Employment Rates of Bachelor's Completers
3-years post-completion



Findings: From 2018–2020, SVC bachelor's employment rates 3-years post-completion were consistently strong (83–94%) and exceeded the WA System average by an average of 6.6 percentage points. In 2021, SVC's employment rate declined sharply to 60%, falling well below the WA System rate of 82%.

Analysis: Strong employment outcomes for SVC bachelor's completers prior to

2021 suggest strong labor market alignment for early cohorts. The sharp decline in 2021 may be the result of a relatively small cohort size (n=20 in 2021) which often correlates with greater year-to-year volatility and warrants continued monitoring and analysis.

IV. CONCLUSION

Overall Skagit Valley College has demonstrated initial progress toward its 2028 student success completion and employment targets, with demonstrated gains in the KPIs of completion and employment. Completion rates improved across most categories, particularly in academic transfer and bachelor programs, though a decline in workforce completion rates warrants close attention and may indicate a need for further analysis and intervention. Employment outcomes remain strong, with the 2025 post-completion employment rate exceeding the 2028 target, and preliminary analyses indicate that associate and bachelor's degree graduates earn (on average) above a living wage for our service area. At the same time, comparisons with regional and national peers show that the College continues to outperform on a variety of metrics, though significant work remains to improve transfer and workforce degree completion rates and to better align workforce programs with labor market demands and higher-wage opportunities. The College's current (2025-2026) operational plan focuses specifically on many of these issues, especially on a redesign and investment in the college's advising program and learning support services, which will be essential to sustain momentum and ensure that all students benefit from the long-term benefits of degree attainment and employment.