Advancing Support for Rural Students in South Carolina through the Technical College System

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OCCRL
Office of Community College
Research and Leadership

Mission

OCCRL researchers study policies, programs, and practices designed to enhance outcomes for diverse youth and adults who seek to transition to and through college to employment.

Public Engagement

Transformative Leadership

Equity–Driven Change

Comprehensive P–20 Educational Pathways

OCCRL

Strengthening Pathways for All Students Through Research and Leadership

- About Dr. Rockey
  - Rural student
  - 10-year career as a community college student services administrator
  - OCCRL and support for CTE programs
 - Research agenda

Overview of Presentation

- Rural Students in Education & Employment
  - National context
  - South Carolina context
- Defining Equity
- Alleviating Barriers through Community & Technical Colleges
- OCCRL Resources

Rural Students

- Least likely to enroll in college immediately following high school (NSCRC, 2016; Smith et al., 1995)
- Rural students overwhelmingly rely on community colleges as points of access to higher education (Byun et al., 2017)
  - Prioritize cost and proximity to home
  - Vocational mindset (Robbins, 2012)

Educational Attainment

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WITH AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE OR HIGHER BY GENDER AND AREA, 2000 AND 2015
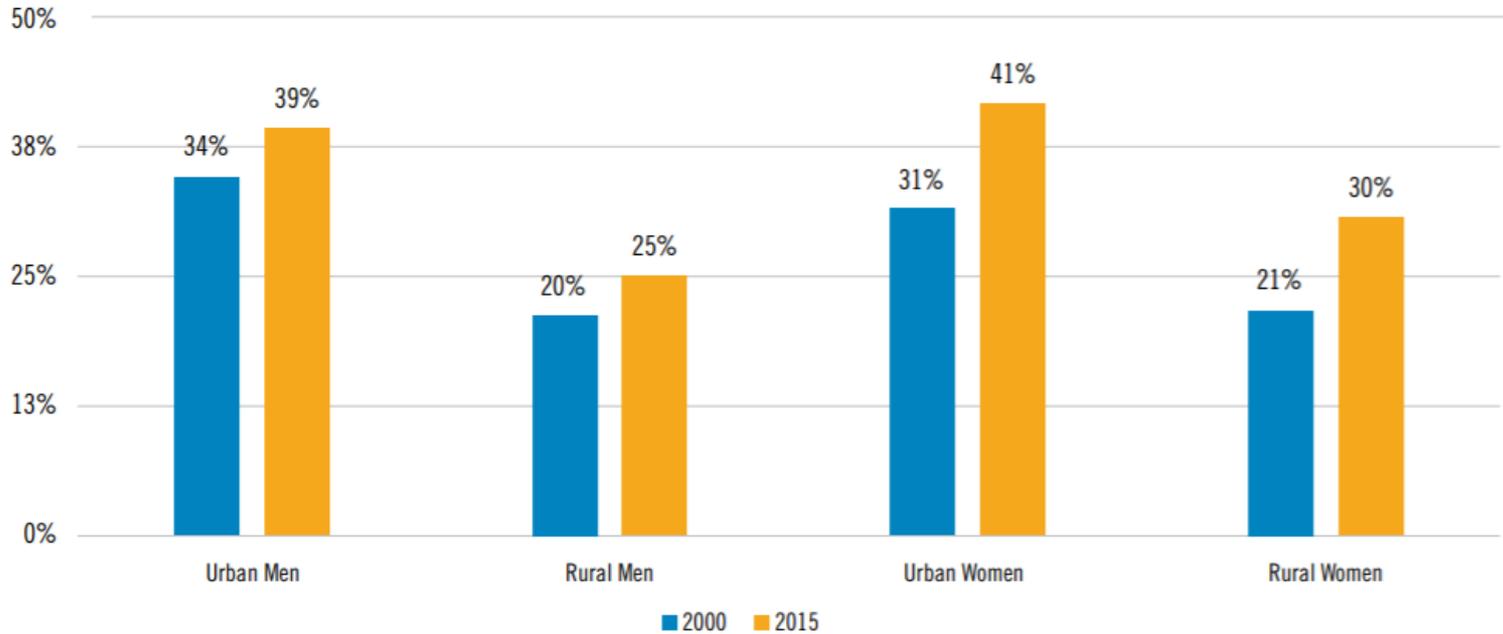
Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Econominc Research Service. (2017). Rural education at a glance, 2017 edition. Washington, DC.

(Bray et al., 2019)

Educational Attainment

"A full 76% of the differences in income between rural and urban places are explained by differences in educational attainment. By itself, this is strong evidence that rural areas are unlikely to grow without capturing a larger share of educated adults. And this fact ties together the challenges for population growth, taxes and spending and education for rural places."
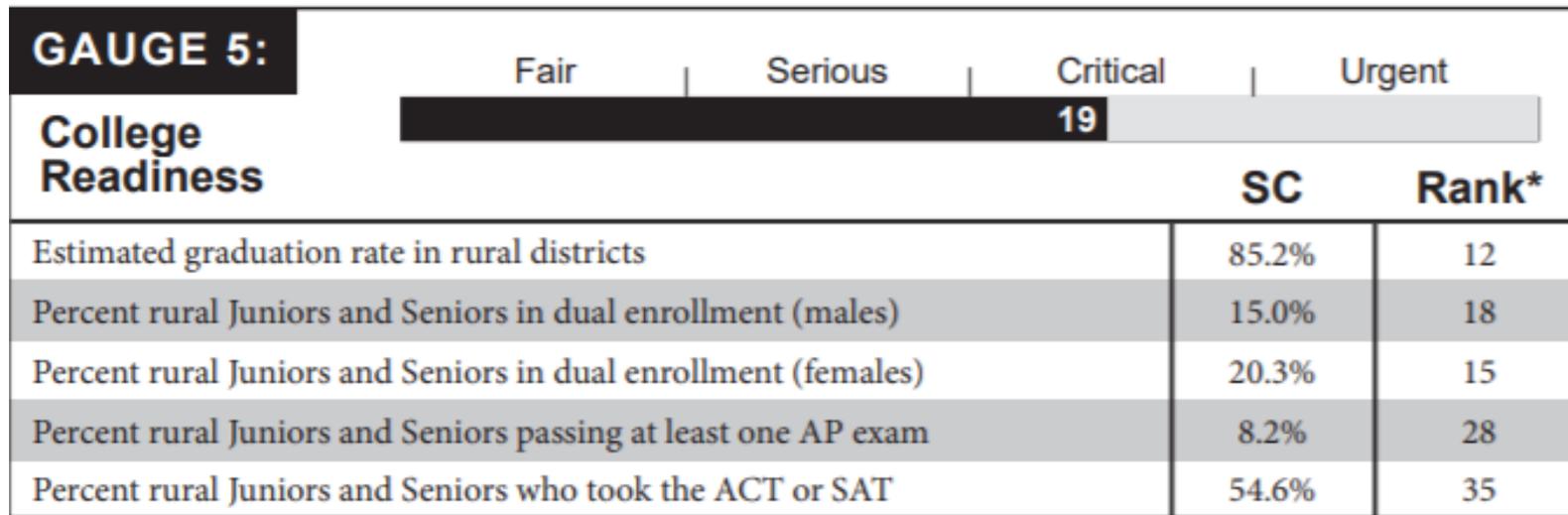
— Hicks, 2020

South Carolina Context

- 4 of every 10 schools are in a rural area

- 1 in 5 rural students live in poverty

- Large numbers of Black students in rural areas

- Some of the nation's widest performance gaps between rural and non-rural students, particularly those rural students living in poverty
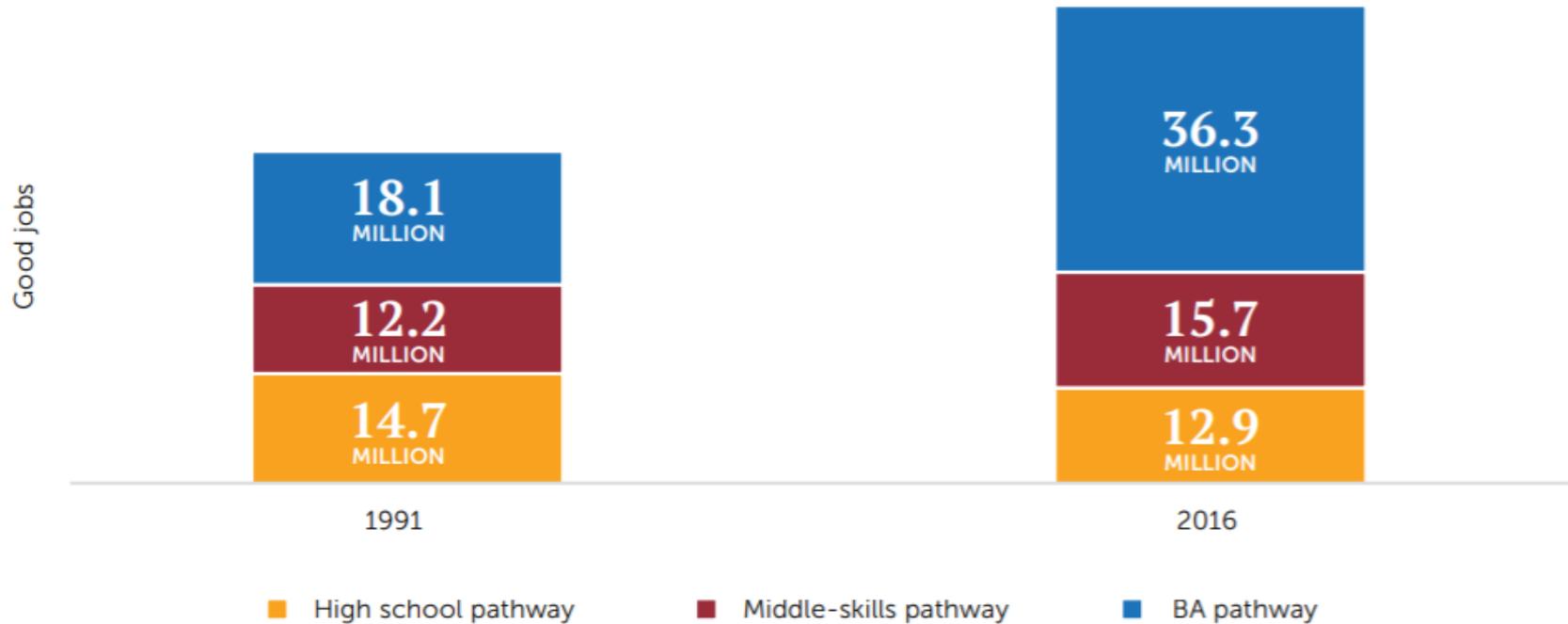
(Showalter et al., 2019)

South Carolina Context

GAUGE 5:	Fair	Serious	Critical	Urgent		
College Readiness			19		**SC**	**Rank***
Estimated graduation rate in rural districts					85.2%	12
Percent rural Juniors and Seniors in dual enrollment (males)					15.0%	18
Percent rural Juniors and Seniors in dual enrollment (females)					20.3%	15
Percent rural Juniors and Seniors passing at least one AP exam					8.2%	28
Percent rural Juniors and Seniors who took the ACT or SAT					54.6%	35

(Showalter et al., 2019)

Shifting Economic Opportunities

Figure 5. The number of good jobs for workers on the BA pathway doubled between 1991 and 2016.

Good jobs

1991:
- 18.1 MILLION
- 12.2 MILLION
- 14.7 MILLION

2016:
- 36.3 MILLION
- 15.7 MILLION
- 12.9 MILLION

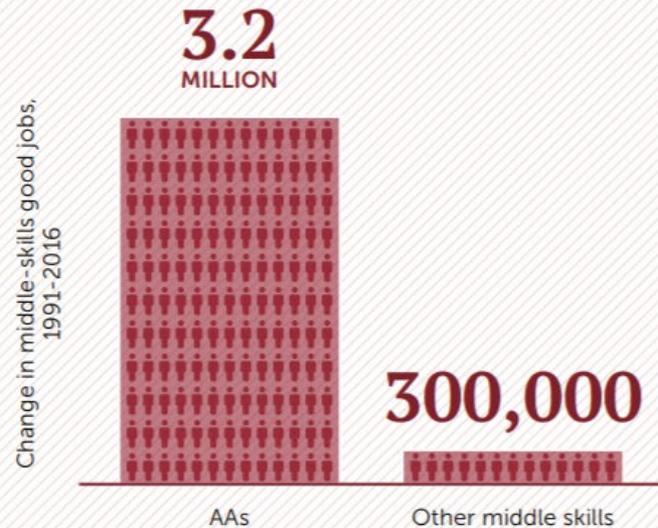■ High school pathway   ■ Middle-skills pathway   ■ BA pathway

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, 1992–2017.

(Carnevale et al., 2018)

Shifting Economic Opportunities

Associate's degrees showed the strongest growth among middle-skills jobs.

Within the middle-skills pathway, the associate's degree (AA) labor market has shown remarkable strength.[i] Good jobs for workers with AAs grew by 83 percent between 1991 and 2016, a growth rate close behind that of good jobs for workers with BAs and graduate degrees (101%). The growth of good jobs among AA holders has dwarfed the growth of other good jobs on the middle-skills pathway, with 3.2 million good jobs added for workers with AAs, 10 times more than the growth in other middle-skills good jobs (Figure I). As good jobs on the high school pathway have declined, the AA has offered high school graduates the most efficient option for upskilling.[ii]

Figure I. Workers with AAs have been responsible for the bulk of growth in good middle-skills jobs.

Change in middle-skills good jobs, 1991-2016

3.2 MILLION — AAs

300,000 — Other middle skills

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, 1992–2017.

(Carnevale et al., 2018)

Defining Equity

Equity is when every student has what they need to succeed.

EQUALITY

EQUITY

NAPE
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
Education Foundation

National Alliance For Partnerships In Equity | www.napequity.org
DESIGN BASED ON ILLUSTRATION BY AUDREY AND AUBREY SELDEN

Racial Equity

that keep Black students from accessing and succeeding in college.

Racial Equity

- Challenge deficit perspectives of Black students and Black communities

- Invest in community and youth-based programs for Black students that provide guidance on college access including financing college

(Means et al., 2016; Means, 2019)

What can YOU do?

- Advance your own consciousness of racial, geographic, and socioeconomic inequity as you evaluate outcomes in courses and programs of study

- As you engage with workforce and community partners, ensure that these partners are representative of the populations that you serve

- Dig deeper than quantitative data to understand the lived experiences of students experiencing inequitable outcomes at your institution

What can YOU do?

- Engage rural students in career and college exploration in the middle grades

- Fill opportunity gaps in rural schools to develop college and career readiness

- Shift from blaming individual student subpopulations to interrogating root causes and alleviating them at the institutional and system levels

COVID19 and Rural Institutions

Short Term	Long Term
Mobile-friendly courses	Support entrepreneurship
Provide technology devices	Hubs for telecommuting
Provide internet connection	Expand dual credit
Facilitate a sense of community	Ensure rural colleges stay open
	Employ remote faculty for positions that are difficult to fill locally
	Support data analysis

(Ratledge et al., 2020)

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OCCRL Resources

- Advancing Racial Justice and Equitable Outcomes in Community Colleges Institutes

- Community Colleges for All (CC-ALL) video vignette series and equity speaks podcast series

- Democracy's College podcast series

- Pathways to Results model

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