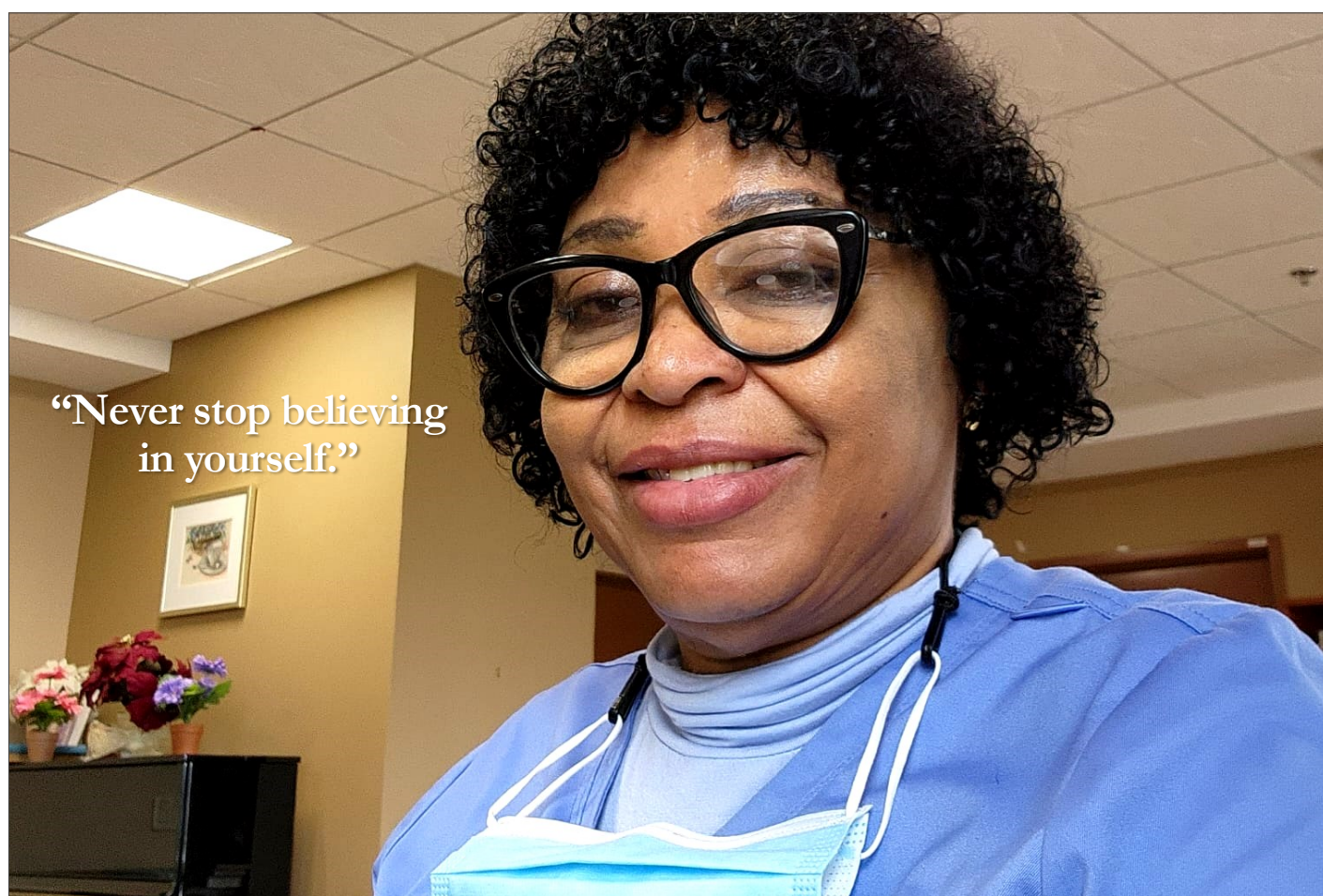
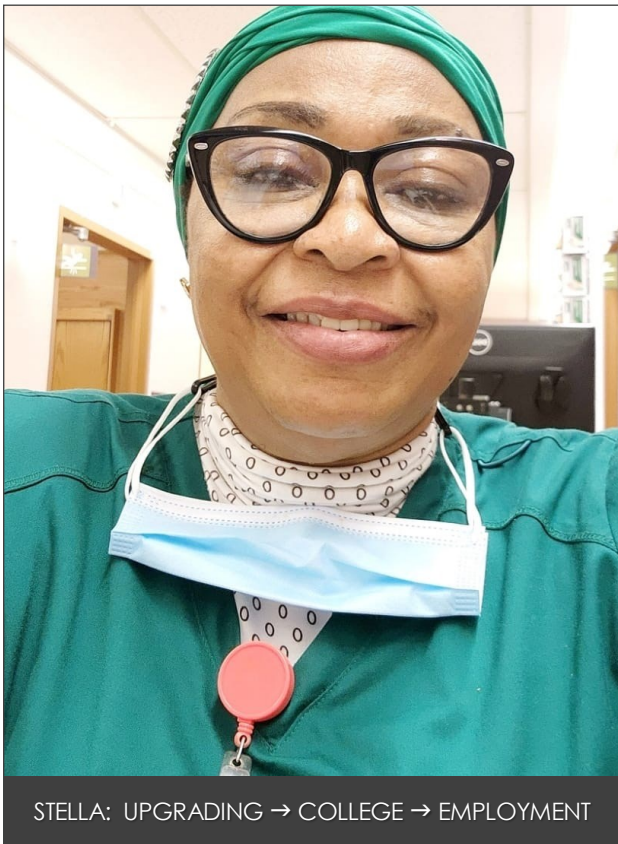


20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

PREPARED *for* SUCCESS 2021 - 2022

Tracking the success of college upgrading students
who enter full-time postsecondary programs





STELLA was born in Lagos, Nigeria. Back home, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Relationship Counselling and had her own business, Stellamaris, a fashion line.

In 2018, Stella moved to Canada to be closer to her children studying in Ottawa. Shortly after arriving, Stella began to search for a new career. She had always been interested in Nursing and started to consider the Practical Nursing program at Algonquin College.

But Stella was nervous. She had never taken science before and also struggled in math. The fear of the unknown started to set in. Her siblings were confused about her decision to go into the health sciences and friends told her to reconsider as she was not in her twenties anymore.

Stella nearly gave up on her dream. But she believed that age was no barrier to acquiring knowledge. With determination and dedication, she knew she could do it.

She contacted the Academic Access Centre and registered in the Academic Upgrading department's Preparation for Health Sciences (PHS) program.

Her professors encouraged her to turn the page on past negative experiences and embrace her potential. In this positive, relaxing classroom environment, math became one of Stella's favourite subjects.

Even though biology was a challenge for Stella — and she needed a very high score on the final biology test to get into the Practical Nursing program — she achieved a 97%.

The hard work and sacrifices paid off. It was not an easy journey, but one that she can look back on with great pride.

Stella has now completed the 2-year Practical Nursing program at Algonquin College and can hardly wait for her Pinning Ceremony, which signifies the completion of the Practical Nursing program and the initiation into the profession.

With a number of job offers already on the table, she is excited to start the next chapter of her life.

The biggest lesson that she says she has learned? "Never stop believing in yourself. Never give up!"

OVERVIEW

For 20 years, every year since 2001, this study has proven that individuals who complete Ontario public college academic upgrading programs...

- **achieve high marks in postsecondary programs**
- **have the necessary commitment to complete their education** and
- **make the right program choices** — evidenced by the low rate of program change.

Academic upgrading programs continue to provide thousands of dedicated, well-prepared, successful students to Ontario's public colleges, apprenticeship programs and the workplace.

2021 — 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of **3,054 upgrading graduates enrolled in college programs**.
- These students represent over **\$7 million** in postsecondary tuition revenue, plus operating grant funding, for Ontario public colleges in 2021-2022.*
- **The most popular program cluster was Health Sciences with Personal Support Worker #1 and Practical Nursing #2.**
- The **average GPA** across all five program clusters was **3.2**.
- 77% passed and 67% continued into semester 2 — see chart page 9.
- Only 5% changed their program — see chart page 9.

PLEASE NOTE

- **The statistics in this report represent only the students who completed their upgrading programs with their local college.** Every year, a significant number of students also complete their academic upgrading through the ACE Distance (e-learning) program (2,075 in 2021-22).
- **The students documented in this report are college upgrading graduates who have enrolled in full-time postsecondary programs at the same college where they completed their upgrading.** Many upgrading graduates pursue postsecondary programs in a different college from the one where they upgraded — but cannot currently be tracked. This report also does not include upgrading graduates who enter Continuing Education or other part-time programs.
- In total, **this could represent significantly more than 2,000 additional upgrading students** who enrolled in postsecondary programs but couldn't be included in this report.

**Calculated at an average \$2,400 tuition per student. Source: www.ontariocolleges.ca/colleges/paying-for-college*

SHAWN's inspiring journey from Lambton College's Academic Upgrading program to the Instrumentation & Control Engineering Technology program to a successful career exemplifies how the right educational path can change lives.

Shawn was a Millwright Apprentice who found himself drawn more to the electrical aspect of the job. But he lacked the necessary requirements for the intensive Instrumentation & Control Engineering Technology (ICET) program that could help him achieve his career goals.

Then he learned about the Academic Upgrading program, which would become the foundation for his success. Upgrading provided Shawn with the fundamental skills in math and physics that he needed to enter the ICET program.

The Academic Upgrading program's structured approach to learning allowed him to progress at his own pace, ensuring he was fully prepared for his future studies.

Upon completing upgrading, Shawn entered the ICET program with a solid foundation. His co-op experiences in the program allowed him to gain practical knowledge and make valuable connections. Ultimately, he secured a successful career at Bluewater Power as an Electrical Operator.

His advice to prospective students is to enroll in Academic Upgrading because it offers a chance to develop organizational skills and mental readiness, ensuring a smoother transition into college programs.



SHAWN: UPGRADING → COLLEGE → EMPLOYMENT

HOW MANY UPGRADING GRADUATES ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS?

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 (1st year of COVID-19 pandemic)	2021-22
3,364	3,750	4,444	3,579	3,692	2,734	3,054

PREPARED *for* SUCCESS STORY



“I dropped out of high school at the age of 16. I have faced so much adversity that I thought I would never get through school, let alone get into college.

When I met the staff at Academic Upgrading, things really started turning around. They helped me realize my true potential.

My life would be somewhere completely different without them. I cannot thank them enough for always believing in me and showing me that I really could do this.

I found my place in the Sault College Culinary Program and now I have a full-time job with benefits in the culinary industry, working as a cook in a long-term care home. I have surpassed the goals I set for myself and I couldn't be happier with the way life has turned out for me thus far.

A huge shout out to the Academic Upgrading staff at Sault College for helping me make my dreams come true.” —*Kayla*



COSIMO graduated from Confederation College’s academic upgrading program with an ACE Certificate and went on to graduate from the Recreation Therapy Program.

Now, he is happily and meaningfully employed as a Recreation Therapist at the John Howard Society (JHS).

When residents at JHS are interested in pursuing their education, Cosimo shares his enthusiasm for and experience in academic upgrading — and gives them hope and motivation that they can do it too. He even offers to bring them on campus to help them feel supported.

In high school, Cosimo says he was “not immersed in the experience.” He didn’t see the

value of it, had trouble focusing, skipped lots of classes, never finished.

He tried other options but felt like he was spinning his wheels. Then he opted for upgrading.

He didn’t initially think he would pursue a post-secondary program; but, once he started exploring his options, he realized that Recreation Therapy was a perfect fit for him.

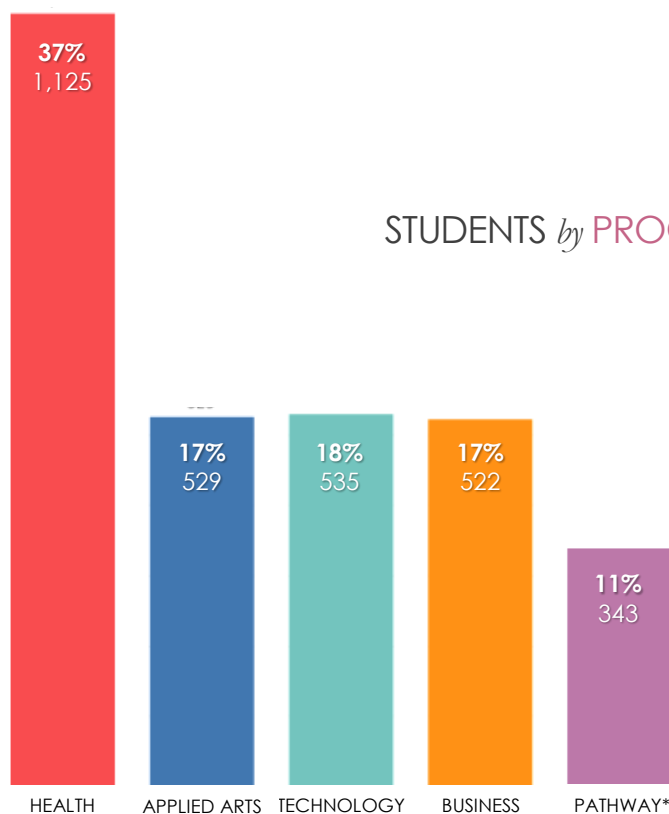
What was his biggest challenge in upgrading?

“Honestly,” he says, “I never thought that there would be a place for me at the college, that I wasn’t worthy enough to be there.” He quickly learned that everyone is welcome. Everyone is worthy.

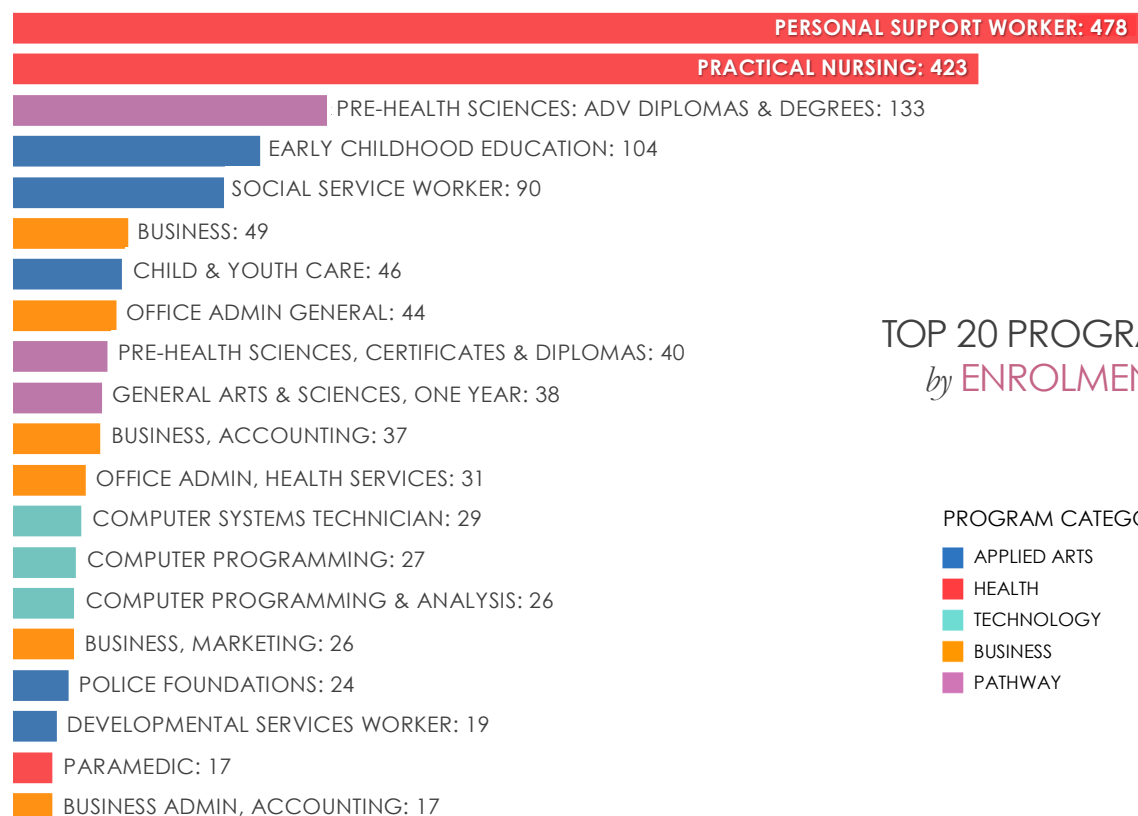
Cosimo’s favourite thing about the program is “without a doubt” the teachers. “Every single teacher in every single classroom just wants every single student to just soar,” he says. “Some of them seem to have an innate ability to know when you need help even when you haven’t asked for it. Pretty amazing.”

His advice for current or potential students (like the clients he works with every day at JHS)?

- “Don’t be afraid! Everyone is afraid at first, but know that it’s going to be okay.
- Explore the college — go on tours, talk to everyone. That’s how I found the program I wanted to take and why I have this job I love.
- Take your time and enjoy the journey.
- Thank yourself every day for the commitment you have made to yourself and your life, and for making the most of the opportunity that was in front of you.”



***PATHWAY OR “FOUNDATIONS”** programs are typically 2-semester Ontario College Certificate programs. Students explore a general area of study, e.g. Applied Arts, Health, Technology or Business to discover specific interests and prepare for a more specialized diploma or degree program.

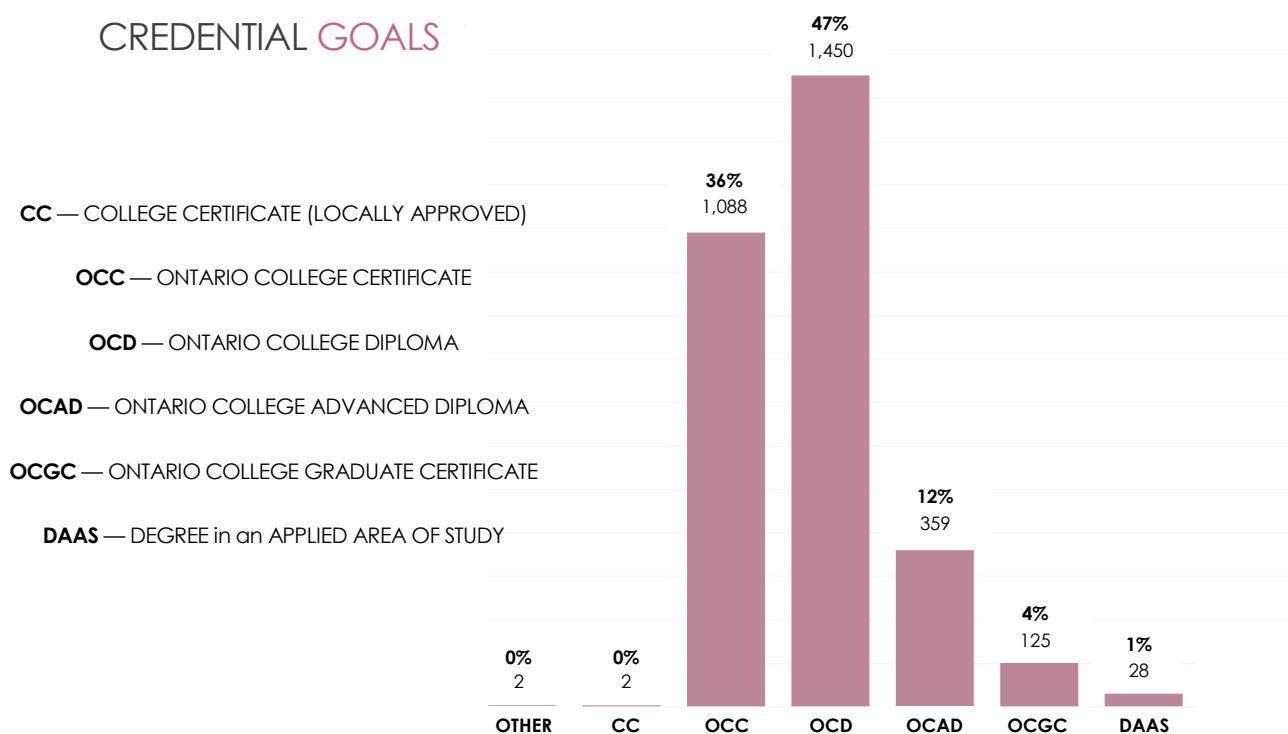


TOP 20 PROGRAMS by ENROLMENT

PROGRAM CATEGORY

- APPLIED ARTS
- HEALTH
- TECHNOLOGY
- BUSINESS
- PATHWAY

CREDENTIAL GOALS



THE 'PANDEMIC EFFECT' ON COLLEGE ACADEMIC UPGRADING PROGRAMS

The 2020-21 pandemic effect on the college sector province-wide, including academic upgrading programs, was twofold.

1. Enrollment numbers went down.
2. Demand for programs delivered online went up.

In 2020-21, the number of students registered in academic upgrading programs at their local college decreased, while the number of ACE Distance (e-learning) course registrations increased by 82% (from 1,318 in 2019-20 to 2,397 in 2020-21).

In 2021-22, the number of upgrading graduates who enrolled in postsecondary programs at their local college increased by 12% (from 2,734 in 2020-21 to 3,054 in 2021-22). The total number of students registered for in-person academic upgrading programs in Ontario colleges increased 13% in 2021-22, from 15,081 to almost 17,000 — while the number of ACE Distance (e-learning) course registrations decreased by 13% (from 2,397 in 2020-21 to 2,075 in 2021-22).

This trend towards **more in-person registrations** may be attributable to waning COVID fears. However, the 2021-22 number of postsecondary enrollments is still 17% lower than pre-pandemic enrollment (3,692 in 2019-20). As the effects of the pandemic continue to impact learning and work, we will continue to track and report college academic upgrading students' postsecondary registrations and outcomes in Ontario colleges' in-class programs and the ACE Distance (e-learning) program.

“Although I had worked as a professional for 30 years, I decided to return to school to pursue a new beginning in my career. I was determined to prove that nothing — not my age, my educational background, not even my current career — should stand in the way of following my dream!

I was incredibly nervous to enroll at Sheridan College as a mature student. But the Academic Upgrading program was a wonderful way to transition into postsecondary. It allowed me to refresh the high school knowledge I needed in order to apply to college and surrounded me with a network of like-minded peers. After years of being out of school, the adult environment certainly diffused my fears about studying alongside a younger generation.

During my time in Academic Upgrading, I was fortunate to learn from supportive, understanding and patient instructors who encouraged us to work hard while giving us a sense that there was a place for us in the program and in our future careers.

I completed Academic Upgrading with a 96% average, an Academic Achievement award, and was genuinely honored to speak at the Recognition of Achievement ceremony. The time I spent in this program was a blessing to me, as it allowed me to develop the skills I needed to apply to the Early Childhood Education diploma program and realize my passion.

I completed the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) program in two years, earned my ECE diploma with Honors, and was hired with PLASP Childcare Services as a Program Supervisor.

I was recently working as a DECE and I’m currently working as an EA within the Peel District School Board.

I would not be here without the Academic Upgrading courses, my drive to succeed, and the courage it took to make a change.



MAXINE: UPGRADING → COLLEGE → EMPLOYMENT

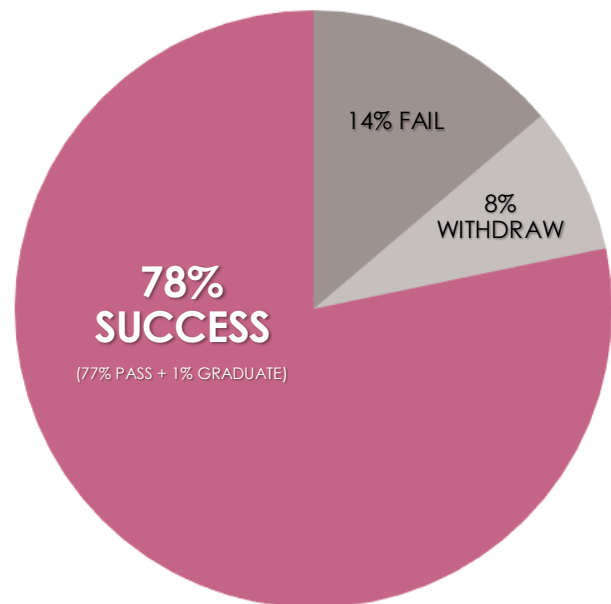
I left Sheridan College with a new career, an improved breadth of abilities, new friends, and wonderful memories that will stay with me as I embark on this new journey.

I am extremely glad that, despite all my doubts, I made the decision to believe in myself and return to school!”—*Maxine*

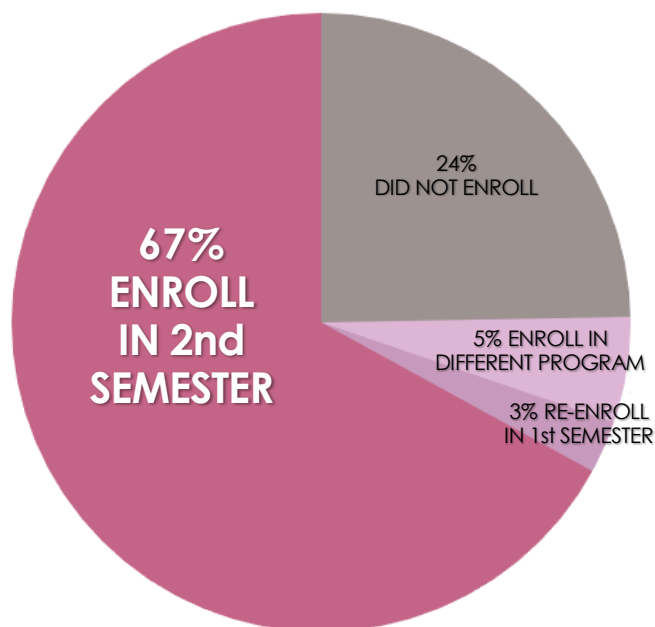
ARE COLLEGE UPGRADING GRADUATES **SUCCESSING** IN THEIR FIRST SEMESTER OF POSTSECONDARY?

College upgrading graduates consistently prove that they are well-prepared for success in post-secondary.

In 2021-22, they achieved an 78% success rate in their first postsecondary semester and only 8% withdrew.



WHAT ARE THEY DOING **AFTER** THEIR FIRST SEMESTER?



OVERALL RETENTION RATE 75%

College upgrading graduates consistently prove that they are committed to completing their postsecondary education and make the right program choices, evidenced by the high rate of enrollment in a second semester and the low rate of program change after their first semester.

In 2021-22, 67% enrolled in the second semester of their postsecondary programs and only 5% changed programs.

“With my youngest child starting school in a few years, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do with my life. I was wondering what kind of job I could do that I would enjoy. I wasn’t sure what I wanted. And so the search began.

I decided to take nursing. But I didn’t have much confidence that I could even complete the academic aspect of the program requirements.

I knew I had a learning disability, but was never diagnosed. My husband gave me the encouragement and confidence that I did not have in myself to pursue this goal.

I learned about Northern College’s Academic Upgrading program on the radio and immediately visited the Northern College website. I quickly registered and began my journey.

After completing Upgrading, I entered and graduated from the RPN program and now work as a nurse. I am very proud to say that I love making a difference in peoples’ lives.



KIM: UPGRADING → COLLEGE → EMPLOYMENT

I would really recommend Academic Upgrading as a starting point for someone going back to school after being out for so many years. I am forever grateful for the strength they gave me.”—*Kim* during my time at Northern College.”

CONCLUSION

With a high rate of re-enrolment in a second semester, an average GPA of 3.2 after the first semester, and an average success rate of 78% in the first semester, academic upgrading graduates are consistently high-achieving, low-attrition contributors to the Ontario public college system.

They are well-prepared, high-performing and career-focussed students, poised to become highly-skilled workers and contribute significantly to Ontario’s economy.

OUR SINCERE THANKS

The academic upgrading programs in 23 of 24 Ontario public colleges were able to provide complete data sets for this 2021-2022 report. The CSC thanks all the dedicated managers and support staff who helped to collect and analyze this data.

ABOUT PREPARED *for* SUCCESS

PREPARED *for* SUCCESS is a publication of the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC), an incorporated, not-for-profit support organization representing academic upgrading programs and staff in Ontario's 24 public colleges. It has been published annually since 2001.

The CSC provides leadership, representation, support, advocacy and resources to Ontario's public colleges in their delivery of outstanding academic upgrading programs and services to adults, including the ACE program. ACE stands for Academic and Career Entrance, the upgrading programs delivered on campus by Ontario's 24 public colleges and through ACE Distance (e-learning).

ACE offers adults in Ontario the chance to achieve their grade 12 equivalency, improve their high school marks and qualify for the college program, apprenticeship and career of their choice. ACE students prepare for college *at* college, as college students, with all the advantages and supports that colleges can offer. While the goal of most ACE students is postsecondary, many take ACE courses to move directly into employment and apprenticeship training.

Ontario residents 19 and over can enrol for free if they meet the eligibility requirements. ACE courses and the ACE certificate are recognized as grade 12 equivalent by Ontario's public colleges, by a growing number employers across the province, and for registration as an apprentice.

In 2021 — 2022, college academic upgrading programs served almost 17,000 learners at 80 sites and 20 itinerant locations plus an additional 2,075 learners in ACE Distance (e-learning).

