



**Message from the Interim  
Associate Provost for  
Institutional Research and  
Analysis & Chief Data  
Officer**

**Ms. Tia Marie Doxey**

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the Fall 2025 edition of the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (OIRA) Newsletter! Each semester, our goal is to keep you informed, engaged, and empowered through timely updates, key resources, and highlights of the work being done across our office to support North Carolina Central University's mission of excellence.

In this issue, you will find updates on data resources, enhancements to the Student Data Mart, and insights into student success metrics that guide our collective work. We also spotlight best practices in survey design, progress in Academic Program Review and document management, and key upcoming events such as our Virtual Open House. Together, these updates reflect OIRA's commitment to data integrity, transparency, and fostering a culture of informed decision-making at NCCU.

As always, I want to extend my gratitude for your collaboration and engagement. Our strength lies in our shared commitment to student success and continuous improvement. Thank you for allowing OIRA to serve as your partner in advancing the University's vision and goals.

Warm regards,

*Tia Marie Doxey*

**Data Requests**

OIRA operates as the central unit for the collection, processing, analysis, interpretation, reporting and maintenance of official, historical, university data. Historical university data can be requested by clicking on either link: [OIRA Data Request Form](#) or [Service Catalog](#). Please allow 14 days for all data requests. Sufficient time is needed to schedule, process and quality check requests.

**The OIRA website offers many data resources.**

<https://www.nccu.edu/oira>

Information includes data on the following:

- Admissions
- Core Metric Drivers
- Credit Hours
- Grades
- Enrollment Retention
- Financial Aid
- Employment

Links to important data resources include the UNC System Insight Dashboard, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center and Student Achievement Measure (SAM).

**Upcoming event:**

**OIRA**

**Virtual Open House**

**Thursday, October 16, 2025**

**10:40 am – 1:00 pm**

The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis invites you to our Virtual Open House. You are welcome to drop in to learn more about our office, dashboards, ways to access and use data, and more.

[. Click here for the Zoom link.](#)

**Turning Questions into Insights: Smart Survey Design  
at NCCU**

Tia Marie Doxey

At North Carolina Central University, surveys are one of the most important tools we use to gather insights, strengthen decision-making, and enhance the Eagle experience. Whether you are a student providing feedback on a program, a faculty member assessing classroom engagement, or a staff member evaluating services, well-designed surveys ensure that your results are accurate, actionable, and meaningful.

The Office of Institutional Research & Analysis (OIRA) often uses Qualtrics to design and distribute surveys across campus. Below are a few best practices, drawn from Qualtrics guidance, that can help you design stronger surveys:

**1. Keep it Short and Focused**

Respondents are more likely to complete a survey if it is concise. Ask only the questions that directly align with your goals. Aim for 10 minutes or less whenever possible.

**2. Use Clear and Neutral Wording**

Avoid jargon or double-barreled questions (asking two things at once). For example, instead of asking, *"How satisfied are you with advising and registration?"*, separate this into two questions. Keep your language neutral to avoid influencing responses.

**3. Choose the Right Question Type**

Qualtrics offers many options: multiple choice, Likert scales, text entry, and more. Match the question type to the information you need. For example, use rating scales to measure satisfaction and open text fields for detailed feedback.

**4. Provide Balanced Response Options**

If you use scales, make sure they are balanced (e.g., *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*). Avoid lopsided scales that lean too heavily toward positive or negative responses.

**5. Test Your Survey Before Launch**

Always preview your survey in Qualtrics to check flow, wording, and logic. Send it to a colleague or peer for a quick review, small adjustments can improve clarity and response quality.

**6. Respect Time and Privacy**

Be transparent about why you are collecting data and how it will be used. Include an estimated completion time at the beginning and thank participants at the end.

By applying these practices, you will help ensure that surveys on our campus generate reliable insights and drive continuous improvement. OIRA is here to support you, if you have questions about survey design or Qualtrics tools, please contact Tia Marie Doxey at [tdoxey@nccu.edu](mailto:tdoxey@nccu.edu) for assistance.

**Together, let's design surveys that capture the true voice of our Eagle community.**

**Student Data Mart Release Summary: Spring 2024 –  
Summer 2025**

Robert Patrikios – SDM Business Analyst

The Student Data Mart or SDM continues to evolve with updated builds that support federal compliance, improve data accuracy, and enhance institutional reporting. These updates are developed by the UNC System office and tested collaboratively with OIRA and NCCU's Information Technology Services. This summary outlines key enhancements implemented across recent SDM releases, reflecting our commitment to data integrity and institutional effectiveness.

**Spring 2024 – SDM 6.8.0.0**

Released on March 15, 2024, this update introduced new validations, refined military status values in Banner, added a Section Meeting feed element, and adjusted datasets to support the upcoming DAVE Sites and Enhancement project. These changes enable improved facilities reporting.

**Fall 2024 – SDM 6.9.0.0**

Released on October 18, 2024, this update introduced changes to align SDM with the FAFSA Simplification Act. Key updates include new Student Aid Index (SAI) elements, removal of Expected Family Contribution (EFC) data, encrypted Federal Tax Information (FTI), and revised financial aid dimension tables. These changes resume FAFSA-related data collection beginning with the Fall 2024 End-of-Term snapshot.

**Spring 2025 – SDM 6.10.0.0**

Released on March 14, 2025, this update added new validations, data elements, dimension tables, and verification

reports. It also introduced tracking for nursing program pathways via an enhanced SWACIPC page in Banner.

### Summer 2025 – SDM 6.10.1.0

Released on July 18, 2025, this update focused on validation updates, dataset refinements, and report enhancements. The SITE\_LOCATION\_CODE field in the Section Meeting Feed is now mandatory.

All builds include new Error and Warning validations that the SDM Team review and resolve as needed. These ongoing enhancements to the Student Data Mart reflect a shared commitment to data transparency, regulatory alignment, and institutional excellence. As we continue refining our systems, we remain focused on delivering reliable, actionable insights that support student success and informed decision-making across NCCU and beyond. Thank you to all campus and systems partners who contribute to this collaborative effort.

### Understanding Student Success Metrics

Jim Price, Business Intelligence and Data Analyst

If you do not work with student success metrics every day it can be a challenge to understand and use them for informed analysis and decision making. Hopefully this article will shed some light, even for people who may already feel confident in working with these terms. Student success metrics are used to measure our ability to educate and graduate students efficiently. They allow campus leadership to quantify success, identify priorities, evaluate progress over time and compare our performance with other institutions. This information is also important to prospective students and parents, state and federal agencies, and others.

We sometimes receive requests from staff who misunderstand the terms, or who ask that we calculate them in ways that do not conform to common practice. For metrics to be meaningful they should be standardized across all institutions and agencies. The US Department of Education provides definitions for many of the metrics as part of the annual collection of data for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Reporting to IPEDS is required of all higher ed schools that participate in federal financial aid programs. The US Department of Education is strongly interested in determining institutional success for participation in federal

programs, with a primary focus on first-time, full-time bachelor students by enrollment cohort.

Here are some common limitations to commonly requested metrics:

- *Focus on bachelor's students who start in the fall (students enrolled in the fall who started the previous summer term are reported as part of the fall cohort)*
- *Often exclude part-time students (because they are not expected to graduate on the same schedule as full-time students)*
- *Often exclude transfer students because they have differing numbers of credits needed to meet graduation requirements (this increasingly also pertains to first-year students with dual enrollment credits and qualifying AP and IB scores)*
- *Usually exclude 2<sup>nd</sup>-degree bachelor's students and graduate students (the federal government focuses mostly on first-time completions because most federal student aid is restricted to first-degree completions)*
- *Many metrics are calculated at the institution level and cannot be applied by major/ program. If we did try to provide breakdowns by major it would raise questions such as "If a student starts in major X and completes in major Y, which department should get credit for the student success (or lack of success)?"*

Following is information about some of the more important metrics and terms, including what they are intended to measure, and what they do not measure.

### Retention

- The percentage of a cohort of first-time full-time (FTFT) students who start in the fall and are still enrolled in the following fall at the same degree level.
- Includes those who start in the summer immediately following high school graduation.
- Includes students who may have completed their degrees during that year as 'retained' (which is more of an issue for Associate's and Master's students)
- Can be used to indirectly measure stop-outs and transfer-outs.

- Is similar to Persistence (which includes retention at other institutions), but Retention is considered an institutional measure and Persistence is considered a student measure.

### Graduation Rate

- The percentage of a FTFT cohort that has completed in a standard period of time.
- Bachelor's student completions, measured at 4, 5, and 6 years (150%)
- Adjusted for: death or total and permanent disability, service in the armed forces, service with a US foreign aid service (e.g. the Peace Corps), and service on official church missions.
- Often aggregated by 1) those who received a Pell Grant during their first year, 2) those who did not receive a Pell but accepted a subsidized loan, and 3) all others.

### Time to Degree

- Often confused with Graduation rates, but is based on the average time needed for students to graduate among those who graduated in a given academic year.
- Unlike Graduation Rate, this does not address students who have not graduated.
- Excludes students who started as part-time or transfer students.
- Can be skewed by students who left for a long period and returned.
- Not well suited for new programs (which would have great rates because completers would have only had a few years since matriculating in comparison to older programs).

### First Generation

- Definition varies by institution. At NCCU it is based on FAFSA responses to parent highest level of education questions and excludes non-responses. Beginning Fall 2024: no parents graduated college.
- Prior to Fall 2024, no parents reported with 'College' as 'highest level of education'.

### Low Income

- NCCU uses Pell Grant offers in first fall semester (regardless of acceptance of Pell) and applies to undergraduate students only.
- For Graduation rate breakdown, students who received a Pell during their first year.

### Rural (retired)

- Previously used by the UNC System, determined based on residence in a county defined by the NC legislature for economic development purposes (not a good measure of rural or urban). Has been replaced by whether the student is from a NC county with college attendance rates below the state average ("Underserved County Enrollment").

### Military Affiliation

- Includes active duty (US), veterans, dependents and spouses.
- Based on students certified to receive VA benefits, or self-reported on the application for admission.
- Increasing enrollments for this population is the basis of one of NCCU's 5 metrics for the UNC System Strategic Plan.

### Student/Faculty Ratio:

- Student FTE divided by instructional faculty FTE.
- Includes all undergraduate and graduate students as well as non-degree students.
- Includes faculty from non-academic departments (those that do not award degrees)
- Includes non-faculty course instructors as 1/3 FTE
- Excludes students and faculty in standalone programs (e.g. Law, MIS/MLS, Social Work).



**Strengthening Document Management for a Successful  
Academic Program Review.**

Larchin Leslie, Ph.D.

**Introduction**

Academic Program Review (APR) is a cornerstone of institutional effectiveness, providing a structured opportunity for academic units to evaluate the quality, relevance, and impact of their programs. As universities strive to align educational offerings with strategic goals and student success outcomes, the role of data becomes increasingly vital. At NCCU, the Academic Program Review process serves as a critical mechanism for continuous improvement and accountability. However, to strengthen document management for a successful academic program review, it is important to first understand the role of document management in academic program review.

**Document Management in Academic Program Review**

The role of Document Management in Academic Program Review is critical. Currently, many academic programs store their data, evidence, and artifacts on platforms such as Google Drive, OneDrive, or individual office computers.

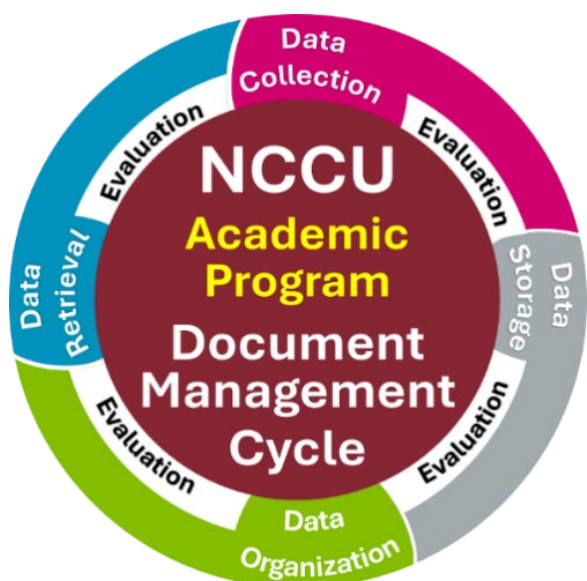
Aspect	Current Data Storage	Ideal Situation with AP-DMS
Location of Documents	Scattered across personal accounts and devices	Centralized in the OIRA-managed SharePoint system
Ownership	Tied to individual personnel accounts	Institutional ownership, not dependent on individuals
Risk of Data Loss	High risk when staff leave or accounts are deactivated	Secure storage ensures continuity and preservation
Organization	Inconsistent and varies by user	Standardized libraries for each academic program
Efficiency in Reviews	Time-consuming to locate and compile evidence	Quick access to artifacts for APR/accreditation
Evidence of Improvement	Fragmented or missing over time	Continuous collection and storage in the AP-DMS cycle

**Benefits of the Document Management Cycle**

An effective document management cycle improves data integrity, reduces the risks of non-compliance, and prevents data loss. The diagram shows a graphic presentation of the Document Management Cycle that we intend to propagate at NCCU. A big part of this is evidence of continuous improvement and stronger sustainability of academic programs.

**Conclusion**

Academic Program Review is an essential mechanism for ensuring institutional effectiveness, continuous improvement, and alignment with accreditation standards. At North Carolina Central University (NCCU), the development and implementation of the Academic Program Document Management System (AP-DMS) represent a strategic step toward strengthening the integrity, accessibility, and sustainability of program review processes. By transitioning from dispersed, personnel-dependent storage methods to a centralized system housed (OIRA), NCCU is safeguarding critical evidence and compliance.



### Fall 2025 Admission

Between Fall 2024 and Fall 2025:  
 ■ Completed App Headcount **decreased** by -2.0%  
 ■ Yield Rate has **decreased** by -1.0%  
 ■ Resulting in a **decrease** in Enrolled Headcount of -3.99%.

**Applied Headcount**  
22,663  
(System Avg 31,658)

**Admitted Headcount**  
18,669  
(System Avg 18,526)

**Enrolled Headcount**  
3,413  
(System Avg 5,403)

**Admittance Rate**  
82.4%  
(System Rate 58.5%)

**Yield Rate**  
18.3%  
(System Rate 29.2%)

**Draw Rate**  
0.22  
(System Rate 0.50)

### Fall 2025 Enrollment

**Headcount**  
8,056  
(System Avg 14,613)

**% Undergraduate**  
77%  
(System Avg 82%)

**% In-State**  
83%  
(System Avg 81%)

**FTE**  
7,430  
(System Avg 13,139)

**Credit Hours**  
101,072  
(System Avg 180,773)

**Avg. Credit Hours Per Student**  
12.55  
(System Avg 12.37)

**% Minority**  
90%  
(System Avg 53%)

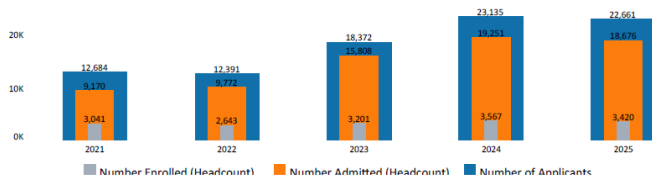
**% Pell Offered\***  
25%  
(System Avg 35%)

**% Rural\***  
25%  
(System Avg 33%)

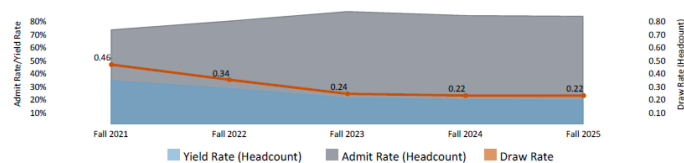
**First-Time Full-  
Time Fall 2025  
Cohort  
1,664**

**76.1%  
Fall to Fall  
Retention Rate for  
FTFT 2024 Cohort**

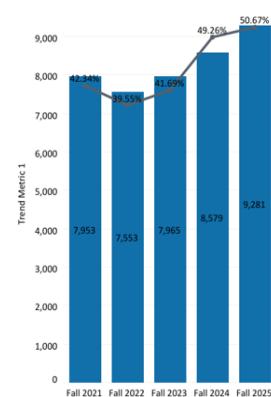
Application Count 5-Year Trends (Census Number Enrolled (Headcount), Number Admitted (Headcount), Number of Applicants)



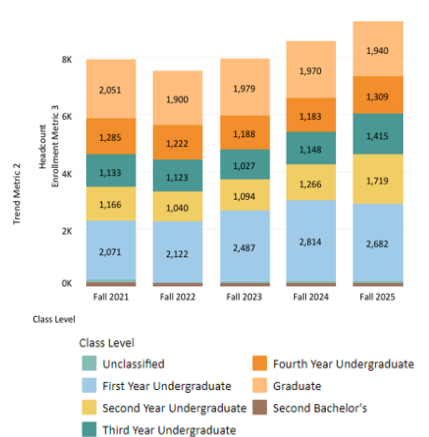
Institution Admission Trends 5-Year Trends (Census Yield Rate (Headcount), Admit Rate (Headcount), Draw Rate)



Headcount and % Pell Offered Trends



Headcount by Class Level



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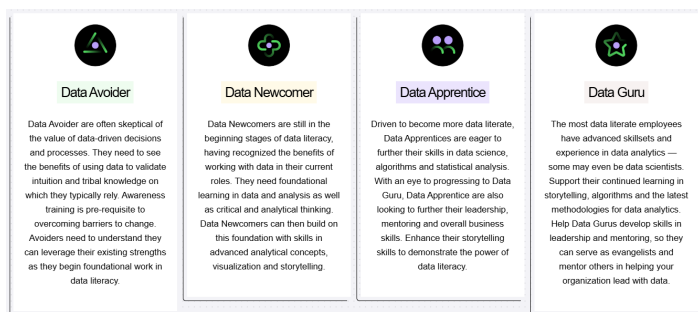
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**How Data Literate Are You?**

Source: <https://thedataliteracyproject.org/assessment/>

OIRA has resources to help you become more data literate. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month join our virtual data literacy group discussion from 3-4 pm. Details are shared in advance via email. Also, stay informed about data literacy via the OIRA website link, <https://www.nccu.edu/oira/data-literacy-information>,

**Chewy Pumpkin Cookies**

Source: [https://inbloombakery.com/wprm\\_print/chewy-pumpkin-cookies#](https://inbloombakery.com/wprm_print/chewy-pumpkin-cookies#)

**YIELD:** 18 COOKIES    **PREP:** 30 MINS    **COOK:** 12 MINS

**Ingredients****FOR SPICED SUGAR**

1/4 cup (50 g) granulated white sugar  
1/2 tsp pumpkin pie spice

**FOR THE PUMPKIN COOKIES**

3/4 cup (168 g) unsalted butter  
softened 1 cup (220 g) light brown sugar, packed  
2 egg yolks  
2 tsp vanilla  
1/2 cup (122 g) canned pumpkin puree,  
1 3/4 cups (219 g) all purpose flour, spooned and leveled  
1 tbsp pumpkin pie spice  
1/2 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp baking powder  
1/2 tsp salt

**Instructions****FOR THE SPICED SUGAR**

In a small bowl mix the granulated sugar and pumpkin pie spice together. Set aside.

**FOR THE PUMPKIN COOKIES**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Start by drying your pumpkin. (This step is not optional. The cookies will not bake properly if you skip this step.)

Spread the canned pumpkin on a plate and lightly press with a paper towel to absorb the excess liquid. Repeat the step four more times.

The pumpkin should be dry enough that it goes from being 1/2 cup dried down to just about a 1/4 cup. Then set aside.

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, pumpkin pie spice, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl cream the softened butter and brown sugar together with an electric mixer on high speed until light and fluffy.

Add egg yolks and vanilla and mix on medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 1-2 minutes.

Add in the pumpkin and mix on medium-low speed to combine.

Add in the dry ingredients and mix on low speed until combined.

Scoop the dough with a 2 tbsp cookie scoop, and roll them into balls. Then roll the balls in the spiced sugar.

Place the cookie dough balls at least 2 inches apart on the baking sheets,

Bake the cookies for 12-14 minutes. When the cookies are done baking the centers will be puffy. As they cool the centers will fall and the cookie will get "wrinkly".

Let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer them to a cooling rack to finish cooling.