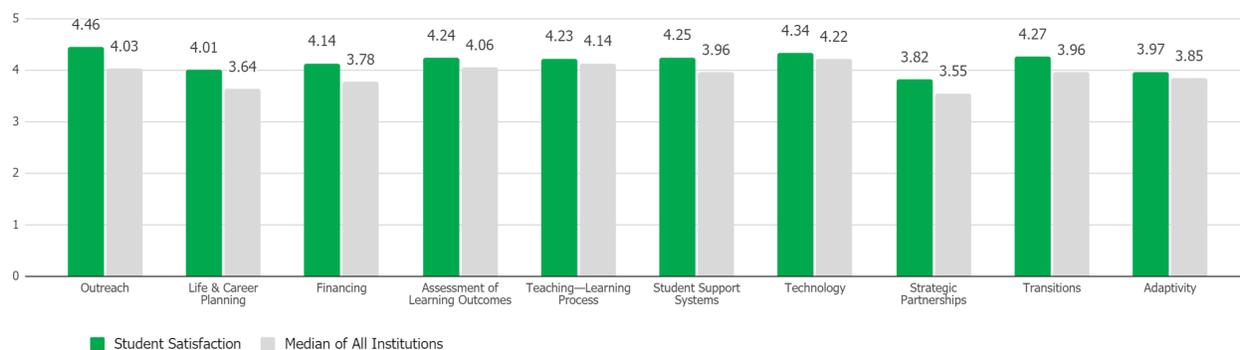


Adult Learner 360 Report

Lord Fairfax Community College

The *Adult Learner 360* assessment toolkit examines adult student perspectives to help internal stakeholders identify opportunities to improve practice and impact adult student success. In October 2020, **221 adult students** completed the *Adult Learner Satisfaction Questionnaire*. This report provides your assessment results and recommendations for change.



YOU ARE A PRACTITIONER!
You scored above the median on 92% of the items.

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Congratulations! Institutions that score consistently above the mean receive CAEL’s “Practitioner” designation, indicating that your adult learners have reported significantly greater satisfaction versus peer institutions. Common themes associated with Practitioner institutions include accessibility, support, adaptability, affordability, relevance, and workplace connectedness.



ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES:

The below items received the lowest ratings of student satisfaction at your institution. Note that while an individual item may have received the lowest relative score, similar median scores indicate that concern relative to the attributed practice is common across higher education institutions.

Principle	Assessment Question	Student Satisfaction	Median	Below Median
	10. I was encouraged to engage with career services early in my program of study.	3.42	3.22	
	9. I am part of a learning community or study group within my institution.	3.53	3.66	
	7. My institution provides a process to assess whether the knowledge and skills I already learned through life and work could qualify for credit.	3.54	3.32	
	11. Life and career planning activities are integrated into my program of study.	3.56	3.40	

Life & Career Planning Q10:

I was encouraged to engage with career services early in my program of study.

- Impact: Adult students often enroll in higher education with a career goal in mind. Early engagement with a career advisor helps all students make decisions regarding courses, programs of study, and experiential learning opportunities that set them up for post-academic success.
- Recommendation: Incorporate career advising into orientation modules for adult learners. Encourage all advisors to explore career opportunities with students regardless of age. Market career advising as a service that helps students identify prospective careers, whether they are entering the workforce for the first time, reentering, or changing/advancing careers.

The Teaching-Learning Process Q9:

I am part of a learning community or study group within my institution.

- Impact: Adult students may feel disconnected from their traditional-aged peers. For programs with great flexibility, adult students may have difficulty entering into a cohort with established social relationships. This can cause disengagement.
- Recommendation: Consider an adult student organization that provides networking opportunities at flexible times. If adults attend a half-orientation in evenings or virtually, encourage networking at that time. Emphasize the importance of building networks for all students, and ensure your adult students benefit from the social networks that emerge through academic pathways.

Life & Career Planning Q7:

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

- Impact: The impact of robust credit for prior learning (CPL) is well-researched; CAEL's benchmark study *What Happens When Learning Counts?* has found that adults with CPL are two-and-a-half times more likely to persist than those who do not. In CAEL's *PLA Boost* study (2020), we found that adults who earn CPL are 47% more likely to complete their credential.
- Recommendation: In all admissions and marketing information for adult students, clearly describe and promote how the institution/program champions options to include prior learning and experience. Address how this supports completion and financial barriers. Include the steps and documents needed, focusing on promotion by using student-friendly language.

Life & Career Planning Q11:

Life and career planning activities are integrated into my program of study.

- Impact: Adult students often enroll in higher education with a career goal in mind. Adult students can bring their life experiences to related activities, demonstrating the value of all prior learning and the diversity of age in the classroom.
- Recommendation: Career-oriented classroom activities, such as a job analysis or guest lecture from a working professional in the field of study, invite both career planning and reflection. These activities facilitate crystallized learning while encouraging all students to consider their futures.



YOUR STANDOUT STRENGTHS:

The following items received the highest ratings for student satisfaction in the Adult Learner Satisfaction Questionnaire. Significant divergence from the median indicates a practice done

particularly well at your institution. CAEL strongly recommends continuing to build upon your strengths, leveraging them to address challenges where prudent.

Principle	Assessment Question	Student Satisfaction	Median	Below Median
 OUTREACH	1. Enrolling at this institution is easy.	4.69	4.45	
 OUTREACH	4. I can easily and conveniently register for courses.	4.66	4.33	
 TECHNOLOGY	3. My institution consistently communicates with me via technological means.	4.62	4.48	
 OUTREACH	5. My institution offers a planning, onboarding, or orientation course.	4.60	4.01	

Multiple strengths found across the **Outreach** Principle indicate that your institution eliminates barriers in time, place, and tradition by reaching out to adult students through creative methods. These strengths together indicate that both physical and digital communication tools serve your adult learners well. The endorsement for orientation practices is significant and positive. Incorporating elements from your challenges into orientation practices will help mitigate challenges in the **Life & Career Planning** Principle.

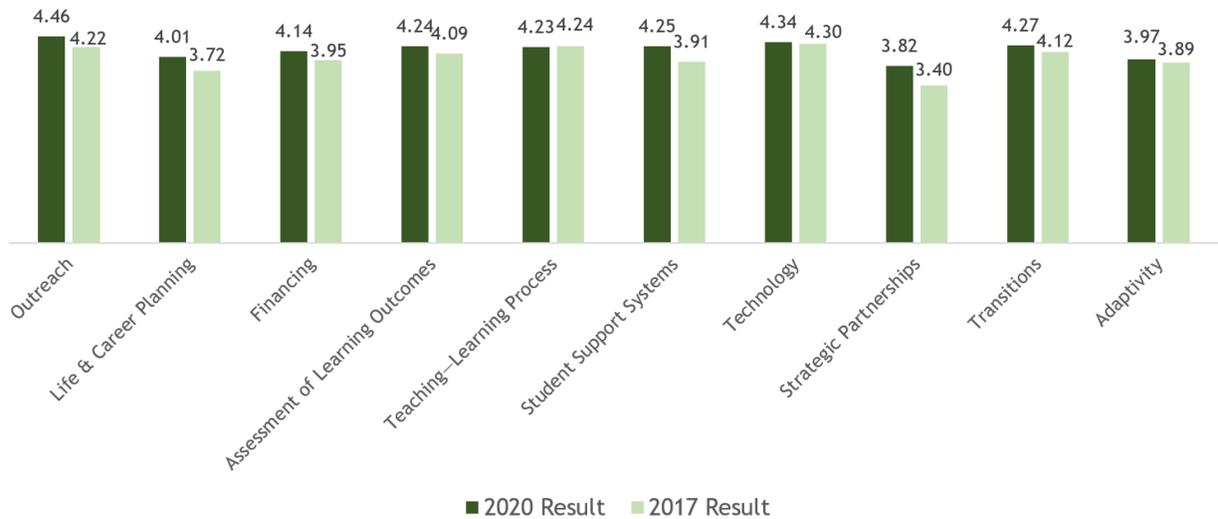
WHAT COMES NEXT?

As you consider your raw data, examine student responses across items related to your strengths and challenges to identify significant themes. For example, your strength in the **Outreach** Principle showcases effective enrollment, registration, and orientation practices. Relatedly, adult students endorse practices related to program completion, academic advising, and transfer as identified in the **Transitions** and **Life & Career Planning** Principles.

Approximately two weeks from receiving your report and data, you will have a consultation with CAEL to review your results and, as applicable, examine change over time since your prior assessment. This consultation includes a deep-dive into the emerging challenges and strengths at your institution to identify action steps that can move the needle on adult student satisfaction and success.

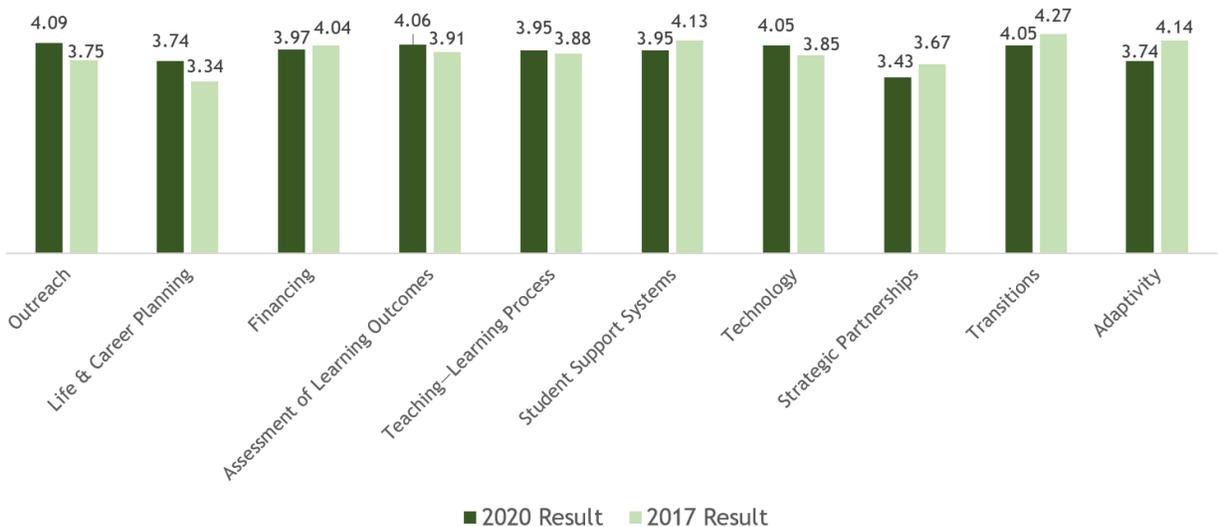
CHANGE OVER TIME: 2017 vs. 2020 Comparison by CAEL Principle

2020 vs. 2017 Comparison: Student Satisfaction, Adult Learner 360



Results over time show modest to significant improvement in student satisfaction, especially relative to the **Strategic Partnerships** and **Student Support Systems** Principles. Changes in student satisfaction can be attributed to both macro factors (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic moving support services online) and change over time (e.g., addressing the previous challenges relative to **Strategic Partnerships**).

2020 vs. 2017 Comparison: Institutional Effectiveness, Adult Learner 360



Institutional effectiveness improved significantly in the **Life & Career Planning** Principle, suggesting a readiness to address adult student concerns relative to career services. Careful attention is needed to examine diminished performance in the **Adaptivity** Principle. Change fatigue is a common driver of lower performance in this Principle area.