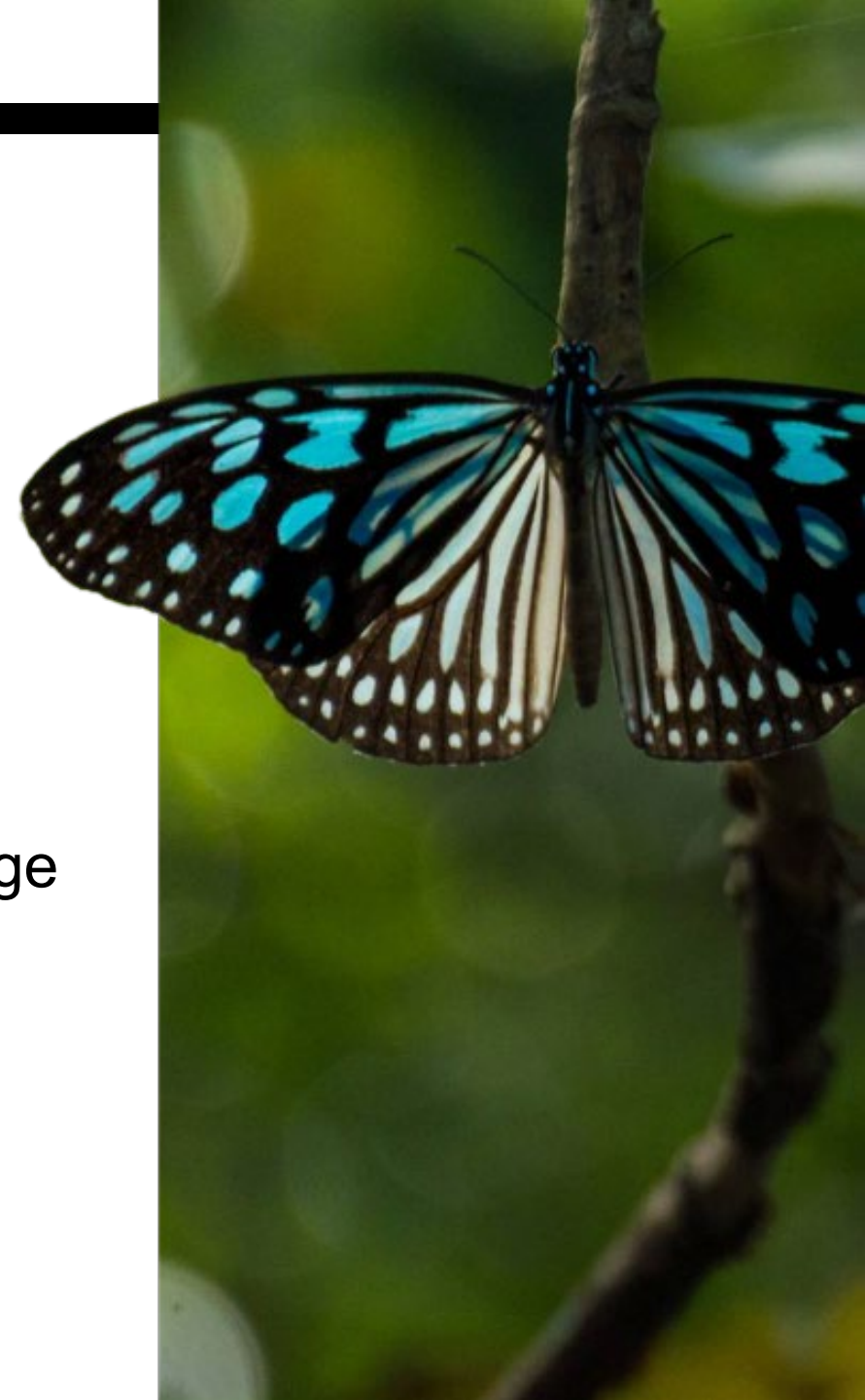

ZTC Dashboard: Data to Action

Alex Karan – Research Analyst at Chabot College

Emil Mubarakshin – Research Analyst at LA Mission College

Leslie Flaming – Research Analyst at West Hills CCD

Presentation to ASCCC OERI on 4/10/26



Agenda

- Why do we need data
- Walking through examples of data and what to do with it
 - LA Mission's Zero Textbook Cost Journey
 - Does ZTC relate to student retention?
 - ZTC & Completion: What We Know (and What's Hard to Know)

Presenters

- Emil Mubarakshin



- LA Mission's Zero Textbook Cost Journey

- Alex Karan



- Does ZTC relate to student retention?

- Leslie Flaming



- ZTC & Completion: What We Know (and What's Hard to Know)

Why do we need data?

- It helps us support our intuition/lived experiences
 - E.g., It feels like students aren't passing courses as often --> looking at the data, success rates collegewide have gone down by 4%
- It helps us pivot when we incorrectly see what we thought was a pattern
 - E.g., Students that enroll in ZTC sections are less likely to receive an award compared to students that pay for textbooks --> actually, the data shows that students that are completing at least 25% of their courses as ZTC are more likely to receive an award

Why do we need data?

- Data is information to be shared!
- Ensure we are being equitable in aiding students' pursuits of higher education and career attainment
- Transparency and accessibility
- Communicate need for extra support

- *These insights help guide programmatic thinking, plans, and behaviors as well as budget allocation/understanding sustainability, course scheduling, professional development, asking for release time, and many other things.*

Los Angeles Mission College Zero Textbook Cost Journey

From a modest 4% of sections in Fall 2020 to 40% by Fall 2025 — a five-year transformation in access, affordability, and academic equity.

IMPACT

\$5 Million Saved — and Counting

4%

ZTC Sections

Fall 2020 starting point

40%

ZTC Sections

Fall 2025 target

\$5M+

Student Savings

Estimated* over 5 years

LA Mission College's ZTC program represents one of the most significant affordability wins in the institution's recent history. By systematically eliminating textbook costs across nearly half of all sections, the college has removed a critical financial barrier — putting real money back in students' pockets.

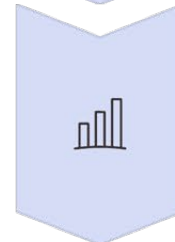
DATA JOURNEY

Building the Data Infrastructure



Collection

Began by tracking section-level attributes, then standardized with the MIS XB12 data element for consistency and comparability.



Reporting

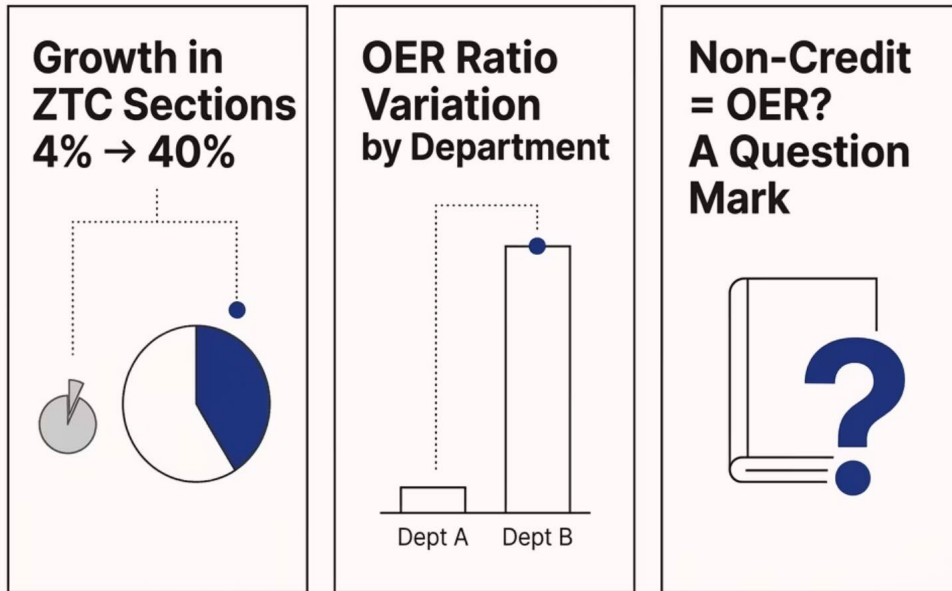
Evolved from an Excel collaboration between the OER coordinator and scheduler to a dedicated Power BI dashboard.



Transparency

The OER dashboard is now an integral part of LAMC's dashboard suite, shared across Academic Affairs, Academic Senate, and Program Review.

What the Data Reveals



Growth has been substantial, but the data also surfaces important nuances. **Departmental variation** in OER adoption reveals both champions and areas needing additional support.

A critical open question has emerged: **Is non-credit coursework always ZTC by default?** Clarifying this definition is essential for accurate reporting and equitable policy.

CURRENT WORK

Strengthening the Foundation

Stronger Data Collection

Refining processes to ensure every ZTC section is accurately captured and consistently categorized across all departments.

Continued ZTC Promotion

Sustaining momentum through faculty outreach, professional development, and celebrating departmental adoption milestones.

Access → Success

Shifting focus from simply providing ZTC options to measuring whether those resources drive student success outcomes.

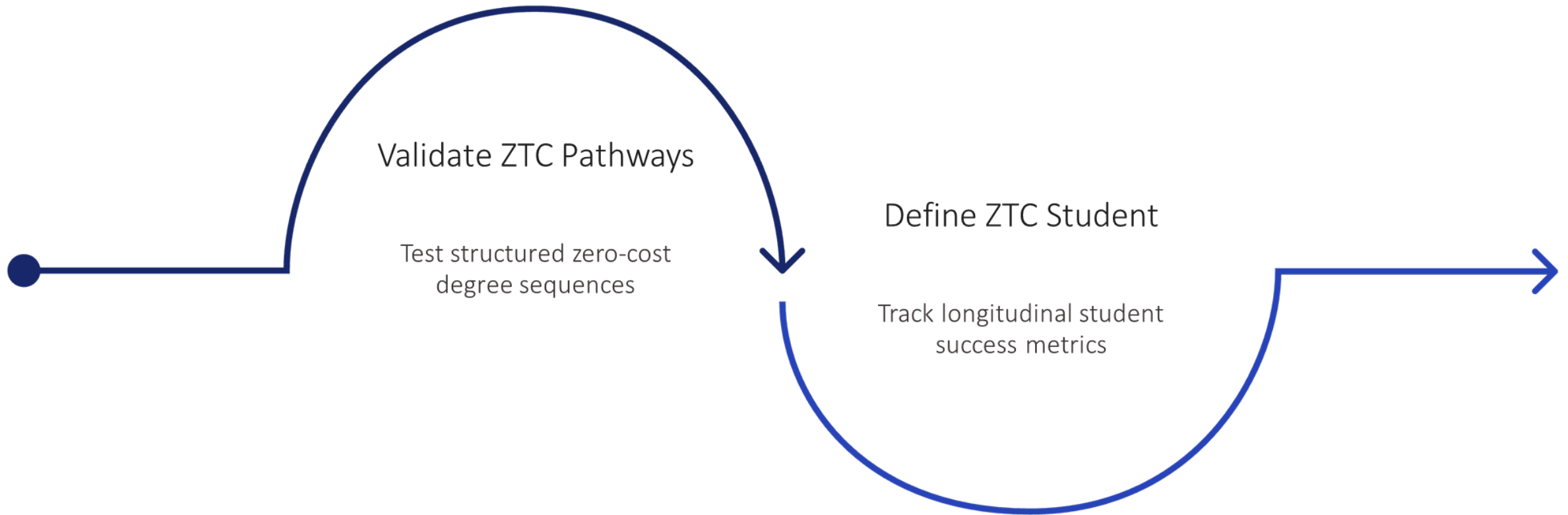
The Road Ahead

ZTC Pathways

Developing and validating structured ZTC pathways — complete sequences of courses where students can earn a degree or certificate with zero textbook costs from start to finish.

Defining the “ZTC Student”

Creating a clear, data-supported definition of an “ZTC student” — one who completes a meaningful portion of their coursework through ZTC sections — enabling longitudinal outcome tracking and equity analysis.



**Let's view the
dashboard!**

Questions

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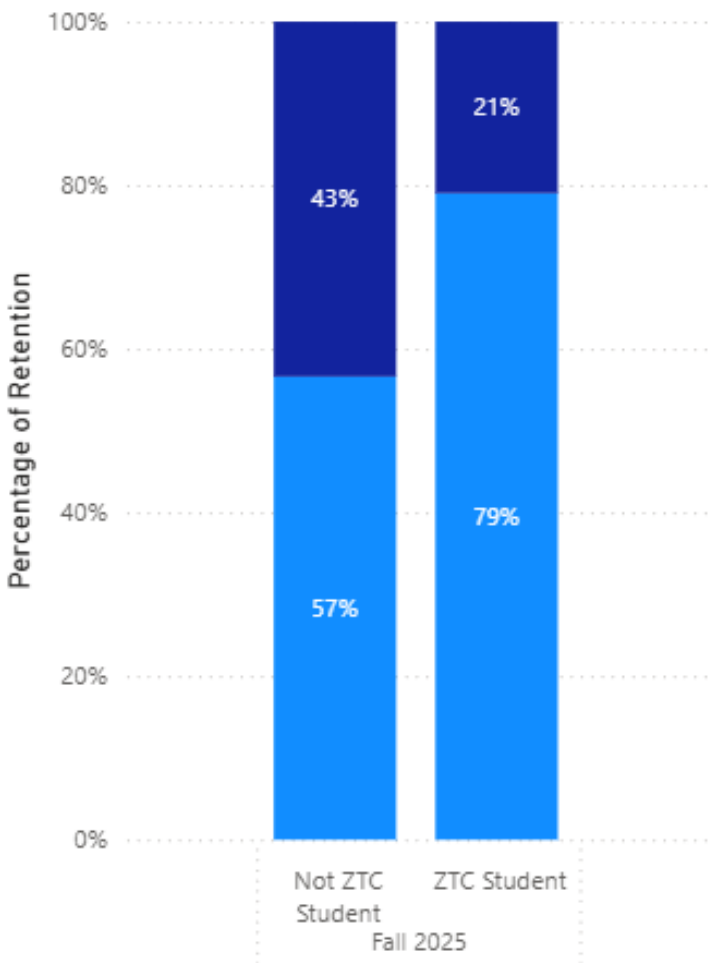
Retention Rates – Initial Questions

- If a student was enrolled in Fall, do they come back in Spring?
- Does this depend on if the student enrolled in ZTC courses or not?

Retention Rates to Next Spring Comparing ZTC and Non-ZTC Students

Overall Retention Rates by Textbook Cost

Limited to new, transfer-/degree-seeking/undecided stu...



Retention Rates – Initial Questions

- If a student was enrolled in Fall, do they come back in Spring?
 - Sort of
- Does this depend on if the student enrolled in ZTC courses or not?
 - It seems like it!
 - But...does it?
- We don't actually know!
- Does that mean this data is useless? No.
- Instead, we know that if students enroll in at least 1 ZTC course, they are also more likely to return the next semester. This could be due many things.

Retention Rates – What else could the data mean?

- Data can either answer questions or it can spur more questions. In this case, I hope it does a little of both.
- A small list of remaining questions:
 - What specifically is it about ZTC sections? The teachers? The content? The affordability of taking the course?
 - Are ZTC students better students? (e.g., maybe they are more likely to pay attention to details such as if the section is ZTC or not)
 - Do ZTC students share the same characteristics as non-ZTC students? (same ed goals, age, SEP status, income status, work schedules, etc.)
 - Does it depend on the subjects students are taking? Their majors?
 - Did it just happen to be something else outside of academics? Maybe ZTC students happened to watch Stranger Things and it revitalized them to come back next semester.

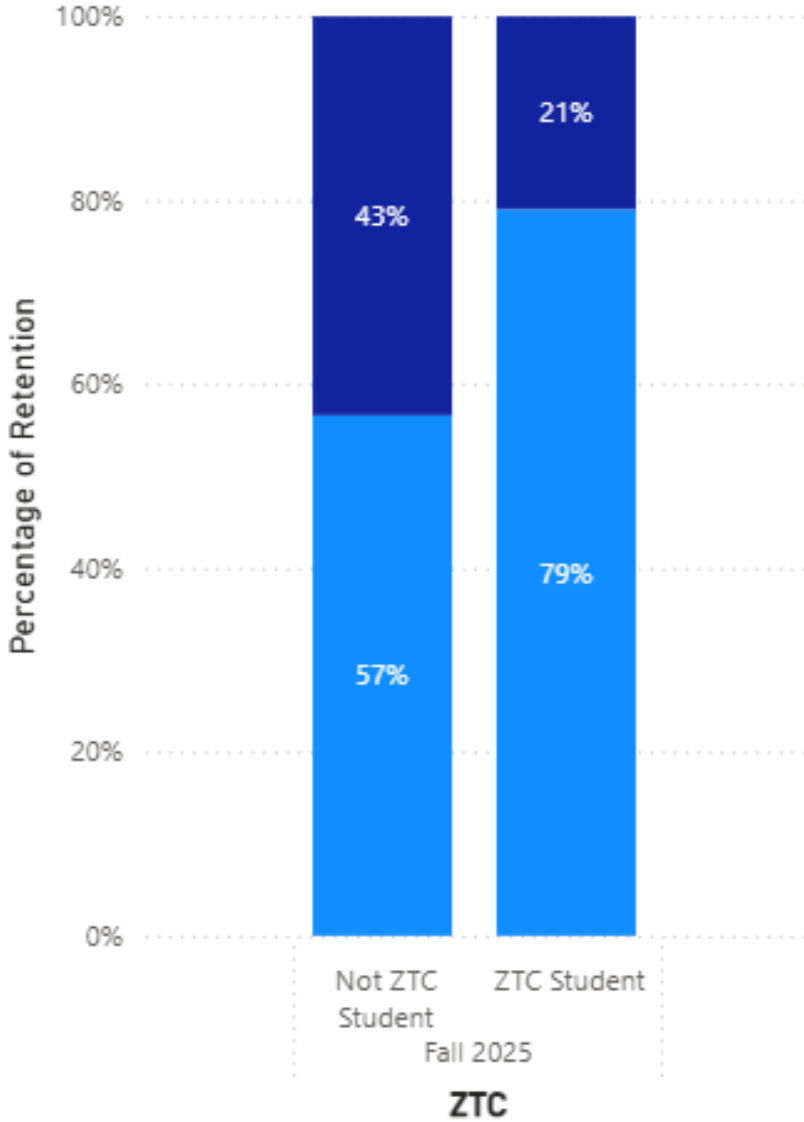
For any of these further questions, reach out to your local, friendly research analyst and ask for more data!

Retention Rates – Further questions

- Does the general pattern hold across different student demographics (e.g., are ZTC students more likely to come back regardless of their age grouping?)
- Are there any groups where we see a reverse pattern?

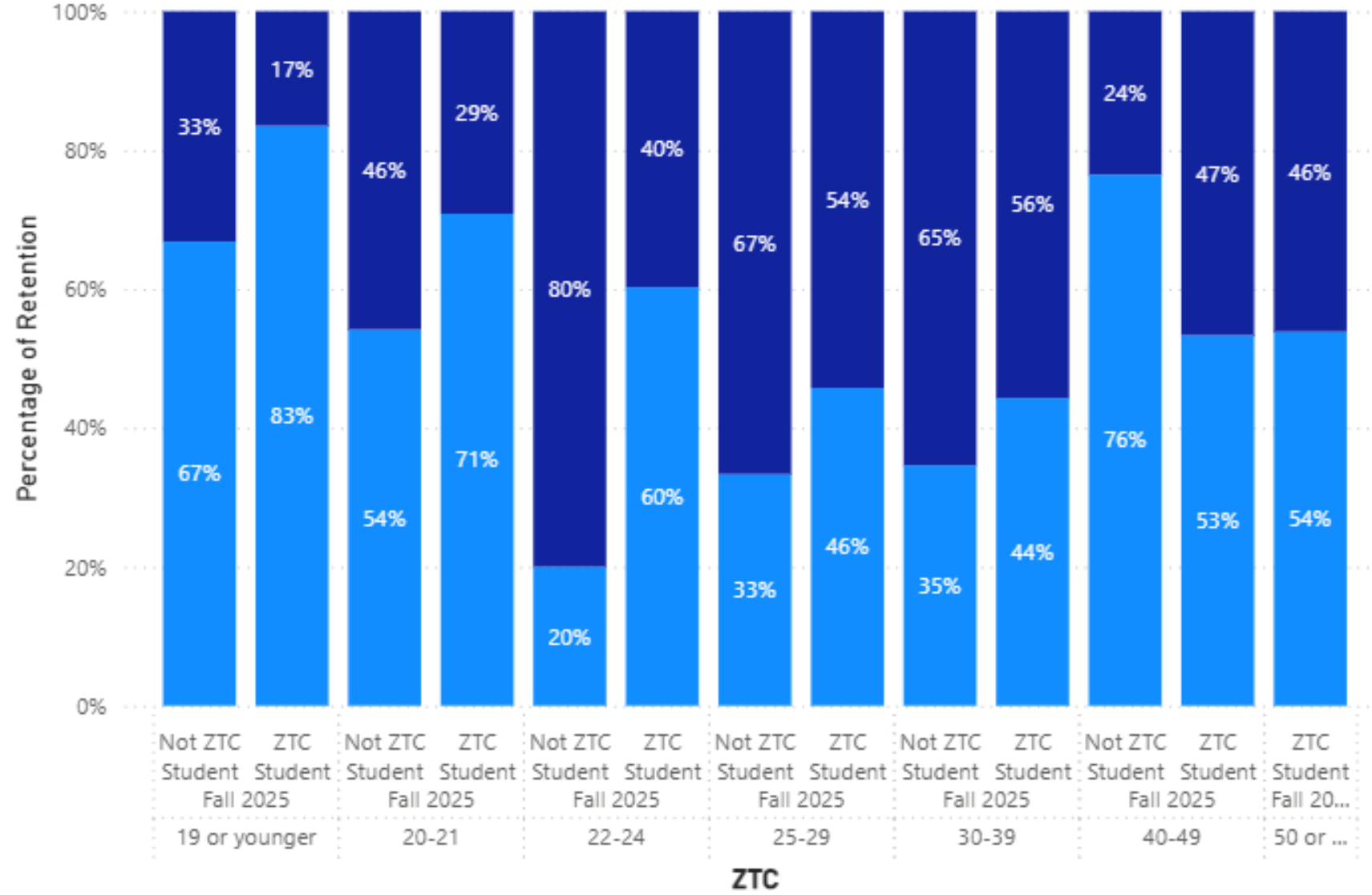
Overall Retention Rates by Textbook Cost

Limited to new, transfer-/degree-seeking/undecided stu...



Retention Rates by Textbook Cost and Student Characteristic

Limited to new, transfer-/degree-seeking/undecided students



Retention Rates – Further questions

- Does the general pattern hold across different student demographics (e.g., are ZTC students more likely to come back regardless of age?)
 - Yes, generally, in this case
 - Some groups see a bigger difference.
 - Ages 22-24 have a 40% difference compared to closer to a 20% difference for other age groupings
- Are there any groups where we see a reverse pattern?
 - Yes, ages 40-49 non-ZTC students are more likely to be retained than 40-49 ZTC students!
 - Why is there a 23% difference in the opposite than expected direction and what can we do to rectify that?
 - Is it an age thing? Technology? The types of courses?

We have some answers, what do we do with this information now?

- Tell others; especially others that can make decisions that increase probabilities of success for our students.
- Some messages
 - ZTC offerings positively relate to higher retention rates.
 - Students are likely more able to complete their programs (include additional evidence).
 - We've historically seen low retention rates for 22-24 year olds (e.g., less contact points to do other services like SEPs or orientations, for example). ZTC may help offset costs for these slightly older students.
 - We also note need for examining 40-49 year old students to ensure parity of offerings and quality to meet educational goals.
 - We are working with institutional research/effectiveness (and any other parties) to understand how to increase retention for this group. (or maybe you have answers and need to find a funding source to implement strategies!)

Questions

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ZTC & Completion: What We Know (and What's Hard to Know)

Why Completion Is Tricky

Student enrollment patterns don't typically follow clean paths (or clean paths don't exist) leading toward completion of a program

- Students mix of ZTC and non-ZTC courses
- Students take courses across multiple colleges
- Many pathways existed before full ZTC was theoretically possible
- Not all sections of a course on a given pathway will be ZTC

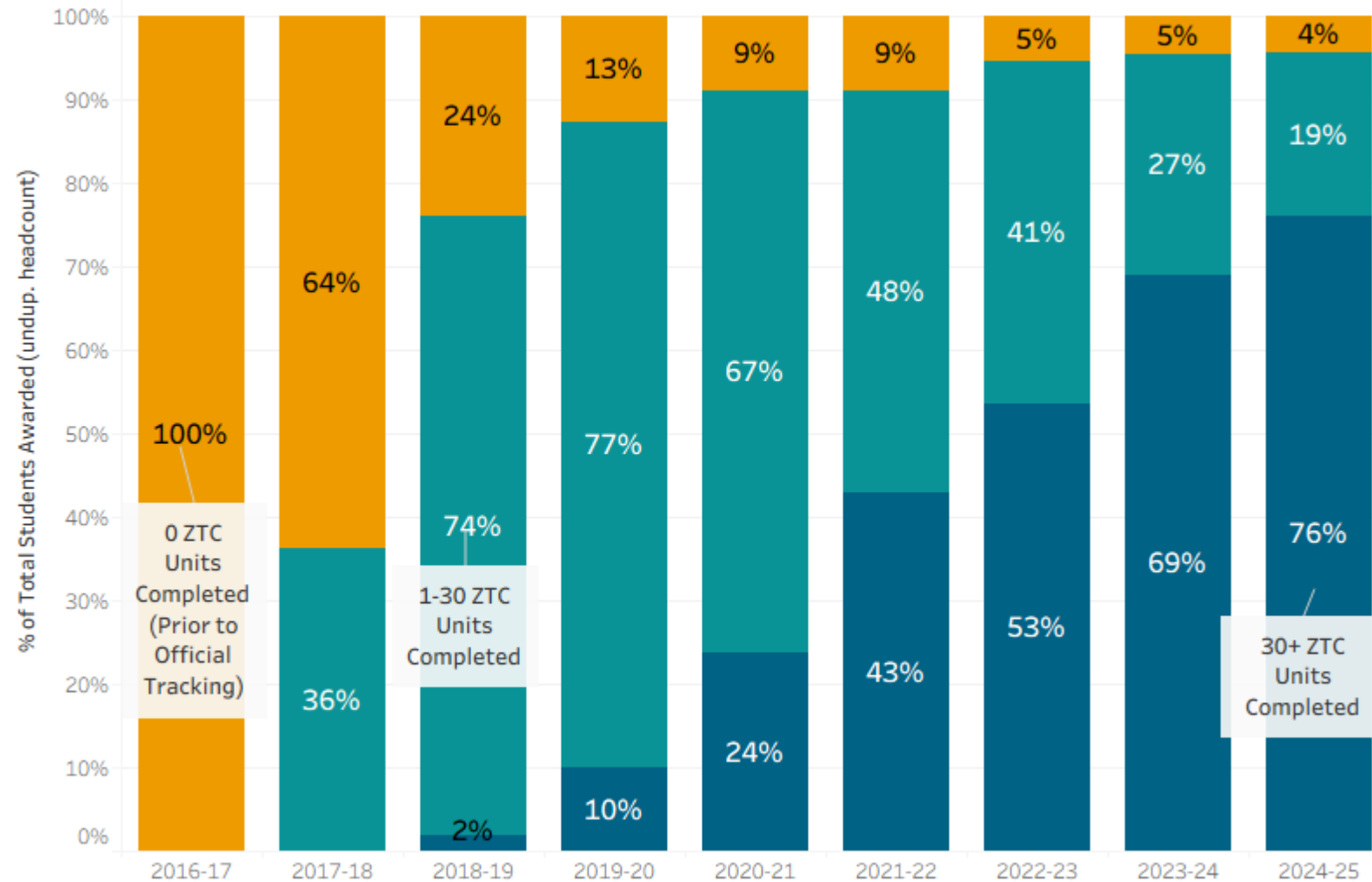
Aim for Simple Measurements that are Grounded in Real Student Enrollment Behavior

Instead of vague labels, measure exposure to the initiative

- How many ZTC units did students complete?
- What % of their coursework was ZTC?
- Group students into simple ranges/buckets (e.g., 0, some, a lot)

Lemoore College Completer Data

Percent of First-Time Degree Earners by ZTC Units Accumulated



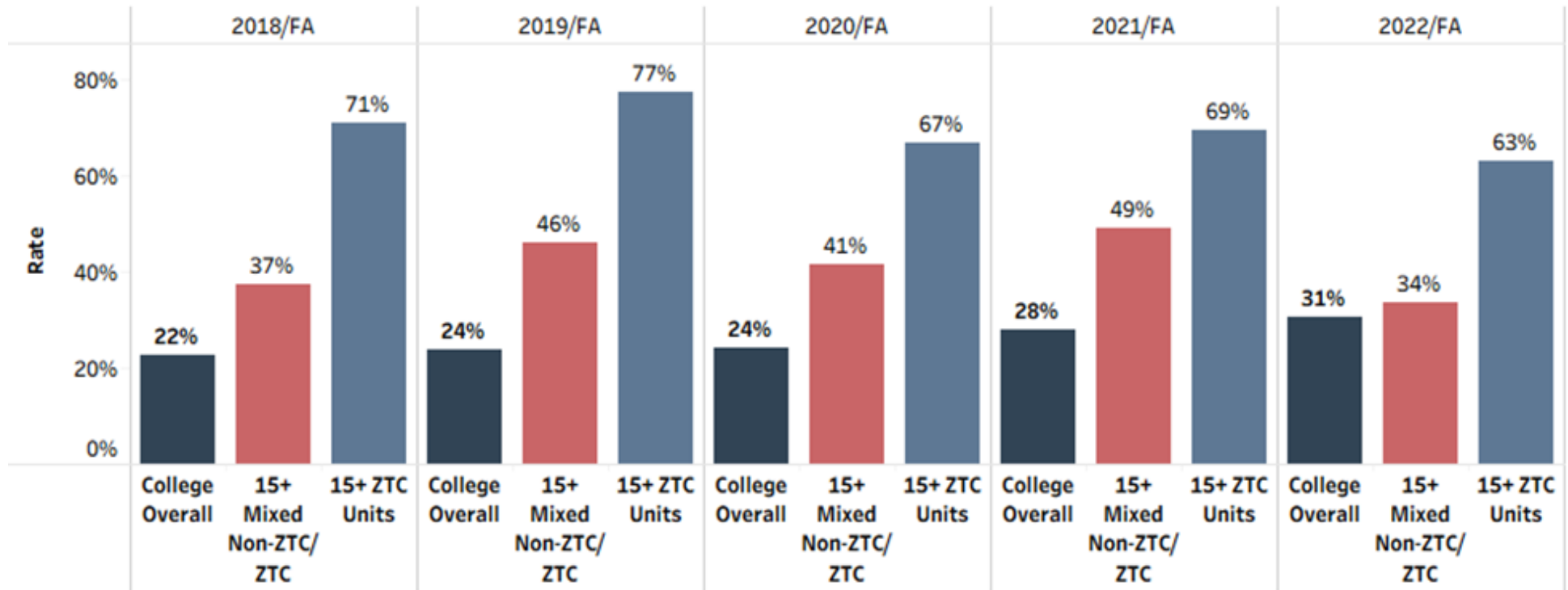
What We're Seeing in Completion Rates (The Descriptive Side)

- More ZTC exposure is associated with higher completion (degree, certificate of achievement, or transfer) rates
- Based on first-time student cohorts
 - Students with 15+ ZTC units outperform peers, even students with similar total units (mixed ZTC/non-ZTC)
- But: correlation \neq causation
 - Who takes ZTC courses?
 - Which programs offer them?

What We're Seeing in Completion Rates (The Descriptive Side... Continued)

- But: correlation ≠ causation
 - Who takes ZTC courses?
 - Which programs offer them?

Degree, CoA, or Transfer Completion Rate (within 3 years) by Completion of 15+ Degree Applicable Unit Categories



Where Are We Going Anyway?

- Promising signals, but not causal (yet)
- Early modeling shows: ZTC exposure is associated with higher persistence (with relevant controls for demographics, academic goals, and enrollment behavior)
- Next step: More rigorous models for timely completion as the outcome
- ZTC may influence completion through early momentum

- What this means for faculty
 - Participation helps shape student pathways
 - Accurate ZTC section tracking is critical – XB-12 coding would be even better
 - Expect definitions and analysis to evolve as ZTC scales

Questions

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What did you get from this?

- Something! (Hopefully)
- Ways to provide evidence and argue for your (amazing) cause
 - Data and decision-making transparency
 - Asking for resources
 - Ensuring equity
 - Achieving ed goals
- There is usually more to the story
 - Correlation does not mean causation
 - Why do certain things work about ZTC? What's the actual reason?
 - How can we replicate and sustain positive findings? What actions do we need to keep taking and what actions can we stop?
 - Does it work the same across all groups? Are we doing any incidental harm? Let's not do that.

Thank you

Slides will be posted

Contact ASCCC OERI

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