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**GEORGIA
POLICY LABS**



ANDREW YOUNG SCHOOL
OF POLICY STUDIES

eCampus Course Offerings and Enrollments in the Technical College System of Georgia

How Well Does eCampus Serve Rural Students?

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Introduction

Young people from rural areas enroll in postsecondary education at lower rates and obtain less postsecondary schooling, on average, than other students.¹ Distance to postsecondary institutions in rural areas and smaller sets of course and program offerings at rural institutions contribute to this differential.² Access is particularly relevant for technical and community college students, who mostly commute to classes rather than live on campus. Limited postsecondary schooling opportunities can further contribute to career challenges for rural adults and compound economic challenges and workforce shortages in rural communities. Carefully conceived and well-supported online education programs can potentially overcome these challenges and increase access to a broader range of programs, credentials, and course offerings, and improve the quality of instruction for rural learners.

In summer 2021, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), which oversees Georgia’s 22 public technical colleges, the state’s adult literacy program, and the state’s workforce development programs, implemented a system-wide “eCampus” initiative.³ The eCampus initiative allows students to take online courses and enroll in programs hosted by other system colleges through their own (i.e., home) college using a common learning management platform. The initiative not only expands the availability of online courses but also facilitates practical access by permitting students to enroll through their own colleges’ registration system and eliminating the administrative obstacle of arranging credit transfers. Importantly, students can do this while taking advantage of all the technical, instructional, student success, and other supports available at their home institution.

To deliver on its promise, colleges and students must meet several conditions. First, colleges must be willing to host courses and make them available through eCampus to students at other institutions. Second, non-host colleges must formally accept and list eCampus courses so that their students can enroll. Third, students must be aware of and choose to enroll in the courses offered through eCampus. During the period we study, students were not able to enroll in eCampus courses on their own and instead needed to work with college staff—often an advisor. For this reason, knowledge of eCampus courses and assistance enrolling may be barriers to participation for some, even if their college officially accepts an eCampus course.

The reciprocal process requiring a school to offer an eCampus course and another to accept it as a non-host institution means that only one or a few

other colleges might accept and make available a given eCampus course. Therefore, the availability of eCampus courses will differ across colleges, including TCSG's rural or rural-serving colleges. Similarly, the courses must fulfill student demands and preferences, which may contribute to enrollment differences between institutions and between rural and urban students.

Research Questions

This report quantitatively examines the availability of and enrollments in eCampus classes using administrative data from all 22 TCSG technical colleges from fall 2020 until summer 2024. The analyses give particular attention to patterns for rural-located and rural-serving institutions and for rural students. The report answers two sets of research questions:

1. How has the availability of eCampus courses changed over time, and how do the trends in availability differ for rural students, rural-located colleges, and rural-serving colleges?
2. How have enrollments in eCampus courses changed over time, and how do the trends in enrollments differ for rural students and at rural-located and rural-serving colleges?

Data

We analyze administrative data on colleges, courses, enrollments, and students from TCSG's technical colleges for each fall, spring, and summer term from fall 2020 (when eCampus was initially piloted) until summer 2024 (12 terms in total). The college data include the geographic locations of the main and branch campuses. The course data describe the level and modality of each course and whether it was offered through eCampus. The enrollment data indicate each student who enrolled in each course and whether they took the course for credit. The student data describe the college enrollment status, demographic characteristics, and geographic characteristics of each student.

eCampus measures

The course data identify eCampus and other courses. For each eCampus course, the data further indicate the college that teaches—or “hosts”—the course and the college where students enroll (i.e., the “home” college). Colleges

that host an eCampus course almost always offer it to their own students; we refer to this offering as a “host” eCampus course. We also generate separate records for each college where the course is available; we refer to offerings outside the host institution as “non-host” eCampus courses. Our analyses consider all eCampus courses and non-host eCampus courses.

Student and College Rurality

We classify students as rural learners if they resided in a Census-defined non-metropolitan county in their first term of college attendance. We identify institutions as being rural-located if the main campus was in a non-metropolitan county. We identify institutions as being rural-serving if the institution’s Rural Serving Index (RSI) score computed by the Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges was greater than 1.75.⁴ We also examined an indicator of whether the institution had any campuses in non-metropolitan counties. Table 1 lists the three indicators for rurality and other characteristics for each college.

Among the 22 TCSG technical colleges, seven have their main campus in a non-metropolitan county, and another seven have at least one branch campus (but not their main campus) in a non-metropolitan county. Eight colleges have all their campuses in metropolitan counties. Even if a college has all its campuses in metropolitan counties, it may still serve a large proportion of rural students. The RSI metric indicates that 14 TCSG technical colleges are “rural-serving.” There is nearly complete overlap between having campuses in non-metropolitan counties and being classified as rural-serving. Only one college with all metropolitan campuses (Albany Technical College) is classified as rural-serving, and only one college with non-metropolitan branch campuses (Southern Crescent Technical College) is not classified as rural-serving. Because of this high degree of overlap, we do not examine the rural-branch-campus indicator in subsequent analyses.

The rural-located and rural-serving colleges have smaller enrollments on average than the other colleges. They also tend to have more counties in their service areas, covering larger geographic areas.

Table 1. Characteristics of TCSG Technical Colleges

College	Average Annual Enrollments AY 2021–AY 2024	Counties in Service Delivery Area	Main Campus in Non-metropolitan County (Rural-located)	Rural-serving College	Any Campuses in Non-metropolitan Counties
Albany Technical College	3,957	7		✓	
Athens Technical College	5,399	11		✓	✓
Atlanta Technical College	5,112	2			
Augusta Technical College	5,599	5			
Central Georgia Technical College	13,261	11		✓	✓
Chattahoochee Technical College	13,210	6			
Coastal Pines Technical College	5,575	13	✓	✓	✓
Columbus Technical College	4,469	6			
Georgia Northwestern Technical College	8,367	9		✓	✓
Georgia Piedmont Technical College	4,036	3			
Gwinnett Technical College	12,056	2			
Lanier Technical College	7,488	7		✓	✓
North Georgia Technical College	3,457	8	✓	✓	✓
Oconee Fall Line Technical College	2,618	11	✓	✓	✓
Ogeechee Technical College	3,042	3	✓	✓	✓
Savannah Technical College	5,480	4			
South Georgia Technical College	2,605	7	✓	✓	✓
Southeastern Technical College	2,453	8	✓	✓	✓
Southern Crescent Technical College	7,884	8			✓
Southern Regional Technical College	6,253	11	✓	✓	✓
West Georgia Technical College	9,061	7		✓	✓
Wiregrass Georgia Technical College	5,910	11		✓	✓
Number of Colleges in Category	22	22	7	14	14

Notes. Authors' classifications of TCSG technical colleges. Authors classify institutions as rural-serving if their Rural Serving Index score computed by the Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges is greater than 1.75.

Other Measures

In addition to rurality, our analyses of student outcomes incorporate other measures. From the TCSG student records, we form measures of the student's gender, race and ethnicity, age, receipt of Pell grants, citizenship, and schooling before entering TCSG. We also distinguish among students whose status is as a first-term first-year (beginning), returning, or transfer student and among students enrolled in technical certificate of completion (TCC), diploma, and associate degree programs. Using information on each student's county of residence, we also incorporate measures of the county unemployment rate, the percentage of people who are approximately college-age (ages 20-24), the percentages of people who are Black or Hispanic, the percentage of households without internet access, and whether the county is classified as persistently poor.⁵

Analysis Data Sets

For our analyses, we only consider courses that institutions offered as college-level classes. The analyses omit courses, including eCampus courses, that institutions offered to high school students through TCSG's dual-enrollment program.⁶ For our analyses of enrollments, we only consider Georgia residents who were enrolled in a TCSG technical college and attended a class for credit as a beginning, returning, or transfer student. This approach omits dual-enrollment students and a small number of students who enrolled on an "other" basis. Because of these restrictions, the statistics from this report may differ from TCSG's published figures.

Finding 1: Availability and Access to eCampus Courses

The number of eCampus courses has been modest, averaging just under six per college each term after the system-wide implementation. Fewer eCampus courses have been offered at rural-located colleges (3.5 per college each term) and rural-serving colleges (5.1 per college each term). Just over half of eCampus courses have been offered on a non-host basis.

To answer our first research question about the availability of eCampus courses, we examine the numbers of courses offered each term from fall 2020 until summer 2024. Table 2 reports the total number of eCampus courses and the total number of non-host eCampus courses each term across all colleges, the seven rural-located colleges, and the 14 rural-serving colleges. Note that the table counts non-host versions of each course as unique courses, so we count courses offered both at a host and non-host institution in each panel of Table 2. The table does not separately show the counts of eCampus courses that colleges host, but these can be determined by subtracting the number of non-host courses from the number of total eCampus courses.

TCSG piloted a small number of eCampus courses in fall 2020 and spring 2021, with one college hosting courses and two other colleges offering those courses on a non-host basis. The system implemented eCampus more broadly with 73 eCampus courses offered in summer 2021. The number of eCampus courses increased in fall 2021 and followed an upward year-to-year trajectory when comparing corresponding terms. Nevertheless, the total number of eCampus courses offered has been modest, averaging 130 per term (just under six per college) after the system-wide implementation.

The number of eCampus courses at the seven colleges with rural main campuses was very modest: only 25 per term or 3.5 per college after the systemwide implementation. Offerings at the 14 rural-serving campuses were also modest, averaging 71 per term or 5.1 per college.

Of the 1,309 eCampus courses offered from fall 2020 until summer 2024, institutions offered just under half (620 or 47%) as host classes and just over half (689 or 53%) on a non-host basis. The distribution of host and non-host offerings at rural-serving campuses was similar to the distribution at other colleges (about half and half). However, rural-located colleges hosted a smaller percentage of classes. Rural-located colleges hosted about one-third of the eCampus courses and offered about two-thirds on a non-host basis.

Another way to describe the availability of eCampus courses is as a percentage of all courses offered. The percentage figures account for fewer total courses being offered in some terms and at some colleges. Supplemental Table S1 lists these percentages for all eCampus courses and non-host eCampus courses at all colleges, rural-located colleges, and rural-serving colleges. Since systemwide implementation, the percentage of courses that are eCampus courses has mostly increased and ranged between 0.6% and 1.2%. The percentages have generally been lower at rural-located and rural-serving colleges.

Table 2. Trends in College-Level eCampus Courses Offered by College Rurality

Term	eCampus Courses			Non-host eCampus Courses ^A		
	All Colleges	Rural-located Colleges	Rural-serving Colleges	All Colleges	Rural-located Colleges	Rural-serving Colleges
Fall 2020	3	1	2	2	1	2
Spring 2021	8	1	4	4	1	4
Summer 2021	73	17	25	39	16	20
Fall 2021	119	27	66	64	21	32
Spring 2022	112	14	67	65	10	34
Summer 2022	91	9	50	49	9	24
Fall 2022	108	29	62	49	16	27
Spring 2023	213	38	118	114	26	54
Summer 2023	97	12	45	53	9	17
Fall 2023	176	43	100	99	23	39
Spring 2024	208	31	119	100	25	43
Summer 2024	101	26	56	51	17	22
All terms	1,309	248	714	689	174	318

Notes. Authors' calculations of college-level eCampus course offerings each term with listed characteristics using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG. Authors count each offering of a course at a different institution as an additional offering. See Table 1 for the list of the seven rural-located colleges and the 14 rural-serving colleges.

^A Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (i.e., hosted) by another college.

Since summer 2021, the percentages of courses that colleges host through eCampus have ranged from 0.3% to 0.6%, while the percentages that they offer course sections on a non-host basis have been slightly higher. However, the patterns differ depending on the type of institution. Rural-located colleges have hosted relatively few eCampus courses (percentages ranged from 0% to 0.5%) but offered higher percentages of non-host courses (0.3% to 0.7%). Conversely, rural-serving colleges have hosted about the same percentage of eCampus courses as other institutions but offered a lower percentage of non-host courses.

College participation in eCampus has varied across institutions, with some offering many courses and a few offering none in a term. Additionally, non-host campuses have to opt into participating in each eCampus course for their students to have access. This has resulted in some students not having any access to eCampus during some terms. Table 3 reports the percentage of students attending colleges that offer at least one eCampus course each term from fall 2020 to summer 2024. At the time of implementation in summer 2021, just over three-quarters of TCSG students attending that term were at

colleges offering an eCampus course. That figure increased to 100% in fall 2021. Since then, the percentage of students each term attending colleges with an eCampus course has ranged from 69% to 99%, with availability being lower in the summer terms and higher in the fall and spring terms. The percentage of students at colleges with at least one non-host eCampus course has generally been lower, ranging from 42% to 99%.

Availability of eCampus courses has been lower at rural-located colleges and among rural students. After fall 2021, the percentage of rural students with access to eCampus courses ranged from 66% to 94% and was lower than the availability for all students in every term—except fall 2023. The gap between all students and rural students narrowed in AY 2024. The percentage of students with access to eCampus courses has been even lower at rural-located colleges, while students at rural-serving colleges have generally had similar access as other students.

The percentage of all students attending colleges offering any non-host eCampus courses is consistently lower than the percentage attending a college offering any eCampus courses. The percentages of rural students, students at rural-located colleges, and students at rural-serving colleges with access to non-host eCampus classes are all slightly lower than the percentage for all students with access to non-host classes.

Table 3. Trends in the Percent of Students with Access to eCampus Courses by Rurality

Term	Any eCampus Courses Available				Any Non-host eCampus Courses Available ^A			
	All Students	Rural Students	Students at Rural-located Colleges	Students at Rural-serving Colleges	All Students	Rural Students	Students at Rural-located Colleges	Students at Rural-serving Colleges
Fall 2020	13.4	13.5	14.3	18.9	10.4	12.4	14.3	18.9
Spring 2021	13.7	14.9	16.0	19.8	10.6	13.8	16.0	19.8
Summer 2021	75.9	73.8	75.2	63.1	54.4	56.3	50.9	54.6
Fall 2021	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	71.3	63.4	57.6	72.7
Spring 2022	96.9	89.0	81.7	94.2	82.7	85.2	81.7	88.1
Summer 2022	84.0	75.6	62.2	86.5	65.6	68.1	62.2	73.2
Fall 2022	88.0	70.1	54.8	85.6	62.7	54.1	54.8	64.9
Spring 2023	98.5	93.9	91.3	97.2	80.8	86.0	91.3	83.6
Summer 2023	76.9	65.9	54.0	75.0	44.0	22.3	13.2	23.6
Fall 2023	87.1	90.4	87.1	95.9	67.3	74.5	87.1	59.5
Spring 2024	97.8	91.4	86.9	95.9	77.9	74.2	71.4	77.8
Summer 2024	68.9	66.4	64.4	68.4	42.3	34.9	38.8	21.4
All Terms	74.5	70.1	65.7	74.8	56.1	54.3	54.3	55.8

Notes. Authors' calculations of percentages of unique beginning, returning, and transfer college students each term with listed characteristics using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG. See Table 1 for the list of the seven rural-located colleges and the 14 rural-serving colleges.

^A Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (hosted) by another college.

Finding 2: Enrollments in eCampus Courses

The percentage of students enrolling in any eCampus courses has been low, averaging between 0.9% and 2.3% of students each term. Enrollment rates for rural students and students at rural-located and rural-serving colleges have generally been lower than the rates for other students, but the rates at rural-located colleges exceeded the rates at other colleges in AY 2024.

We now turn to our second research question regarding enrollments in eCampus courses. Table 4 reports the numbers of unique students who enroll in any eCampus courses each term and the total number of course enrollments, which may include enrollments in multiple eCampus courses by the same student. The table reports these figures for all eCampus courses and non-host eCampus courses and separate figures for all students, rural students, students at rural-located colleges, and students at rural-serving colleges.

The total number of students taking at least one eCampus course each term grew from 366 in summer 2021 to a peak of 1,413 in spring 2023 (Table 4, column 1). For AY 2024, the numbers were higher overall than AY 2023 (much higher in the fall term than AY 2023 but moderately lower in the spring and summer terms). Since the systemwide implementation, the number of students taking eCampus courses has averaged 728 per term or about 33 per college. Total course enrollments followed a similar pattern, with an average of 924 eCampus course enrollments per term after the systemwide implementation. In most terms, about half as many students enrolled in non-host eCampus courses on both a per-student and per-course-enrollment basis, though the percentages in non-host courses were higher in fall 2023.

Enrollment trends for rural students and at rural-located colleges have been slightly different. Like the general trends, eCampus enrollments for rural students and at rural-located colleges have mostly grown over time. However, unlike the general trends, enrollments in each term of AY 2024 were higher than in the corresponding term from the previous year, and enrollments reached their highest levels in fall 2023. Non-host eCampus enrollment among students at rural-located colleges more than doubled from fall 2022 to fall 2023. Similarly, enrollment in non-host classes for all students and rural students peaked in spring 2023 but continued to increase for students at rural-located colleges through spring 2024.

Table 4. Trends in eCampus Course Enrollments by Rurality

Term	Enrollments in All eCampus Courses								Enrollments in Non-host eCampus Courses ^A							
	All Students		Rural Students		Students at Rural-located Colleges		Students at Rural-serving Colleges		All Students		Rural Students		Students at Rural-located Colleges		Students at Rural-serving Colleges	
	Any ^B	Total ^C	Any ^B	Total ^C	Any ^B	Total ^C	Any ^B	Total ^C	Any ^B	Total ^C	Any ^B	Total ^C	Any ^B	Total ^C	Any ^B	Total ^C
Fall 2020	7	7	4	4	2	2	7	7	7	7	4	4	2	2	7	7
Spring 2021	21	26	1	1	1	1	4	9	4	9	0	0	1	1	4	9
Summer 2021	366	414	55	67	47	58	69	80	154	187	43	54	47	58	59	70
Fall 2021	673	769	107	123	76	92	329	385	276	328	39	50	37	53	69	96
Spring 2022	615	776	118	154	65	78	398	511	246	328	43	60	21	27	121	160
Summer 2022	328	400	44	59	12	17	158	201	137	162	14	17	12	17	50	56
Fall 2022	682	857	134	199	104	166	269	380	375	456	46	72	44	75	92	128
Spring 2023	1,413	1,842	225	318	109	156	682	957	703	894	115	178	73	117	194	280
Summer 2023	416	525	61	94	23	42	171	257	240	284	33	50	18	36	66	93
Fall 2023	1,125	1,428	250	385	211	333	543	756	688	863	109	170	100	168	197	298
Spring 2024	1,274	1,675	233	329	175	272	639	893	547	731	94	161	111	202	166	287
Summer 2024	388	558	108	181	99	175	187	314	188	270	38	73	36	76	40	86
All Terms	7,308	9,277	1,340	1,914	924	1,392	3,456	4,750	3,565	4,519	578	889	502	832	1,065	1,570

Notes. Authors' calculations of course enrollments among beginning, returning, and transfer college students each term using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG. See Table 1 for the list of the seven rural-located colleges and the 14 rural-serving colleges.

^A Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (hosted) by another college.

^B Any columns report the number of unique students with an eCampus course enrollment.

^C Total columns report the total number of course enrollments and can include multiple enrollments by the same student.

Table 5 re-examines the trends in students enrolling in any eCampus courses during each term but expresses the enrollments as a percentage of students. Enrollment rates have been low. Since the system-wide implementation, 0.9% to 2.3% of students have enrolled in eCampus classes each term—with higher rates in the fall and spring terms and lower rates in the summer terms. The percentage of students taking any non-host eCampus classes have ranged between 0.4% and 1.1%. Enrollment rates for all eCampus courses and for non-host eCampus courses have generally been lower for rural students and students at rural-located and rural-serving colleges. However, the enrollment rates in eCampus and non-host eCampus classes at rural-located colleges were higher in AY 2024 than at other colleges.

The trends and patterns are mostly similar when we examine eCampus course enrollments as a percentage of all course enrollments (detailed results appear in Supplemental Table S2). The percentage of course enrollments that were for eCampus courses ranged from 0.4% to 1.0% each term, and the percentage that were for non-host eCampus courses ranged from 0.2% to 0.5%. Enrollment rates in eCampus classes for rural students and students at rural-located and rural-serving colleges were lower than those for other groups in AY 2022 and AY 2023 but similar to or higher than those for other groups in AY 2024.

Table 6 reports the numbers of TCSG college students with different characteristics in our data and the percentages who enroll each term in eCampus courses, non-host eCampus courses, and online courses. For convenience, the first two rows reproduce the eCampus enrollment rates from the bottom row of Table 5 for all students and rural students. The percentage of students in non-metropolitan areas who enroll in eCampus courses each term is 0.35 percentage points lower than for students in metropolitan areas (0.79% versus 1.14% or 30% lower), and the percentage who enroll in non-host classes is 0.23 percentage points lower (0.34% versus 0.57% or 40% lower). Students in non-metropolitan areas are also less likely to enroll in online classes.

Enrollment rates in eCampus and online courses also differ with other characteristics. Women enroll in eCampus courses at slightly lower rates than men, but they enroll in non-host eCampus classes and online classes at higher rates than men. Enrollments in general eCampus courses and non-host eCampus courses are higher for older students, Pell Grant recipients, students with more education, transfer students, students in associate degree programs, and students living in counties with high proportions of college-age residents, Black residents, Hispanic residents, and internet-connected households.

Table 5. Trends in the Percent of Students Enrolling in eCampus Courses by Rurality

Term	Enrollments in Any eCampus Courses				Enrollments in Any Non-host eCampus Courses ^A			
	All Students	Rural Students	Students at Rural-located Colleges	Students at Rural-serving Colleges	All Students	Rural Students	Students at Rural-located Colleges	Students at Rural-serving Colleges
Fall 2020	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02
Spring 2021	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01
Summer 2021	0.89	0.51	0.57	0.30	0.38	0.40	0.57	0.25
Fall 2021	0.98	0.66	0.64	0.89	0.40	0.24	0.31	0.19
Spring 2022	0.97	0.80	0.61	1.18	0.39	0.29	0.20	0.36
Summer 2022	0.86	0.43	0.15	0.72	0.36	0.14	0.15	0.23
Fall 2022	1.03	0.84	0.91	0.75	0.56	0.29	0.38	0.26
Spring 2023	2.28	1.51	1.01	2.04	1.13	0.77	0.68	0.58
Summer 2023	1.08	0.58	0.30	0.77	0.62	0.31	0.23	0.30
Fall 2023	1.60	1.49	1.74	1.42	0.98	0.65	0.83	0.52
Spring 2024	1.88	1.49	1.56	1.79	0.81	0.60	0.99	0.46
Summer 2024	0.92	0.99	1.22	0.78	0.45	0.35	0.44	0.17
All Terms	1.05	0.79	0.75	0.91	0.51	0.34	0.41	0.28

Notes. Authors' calculations of percentages of unique beginning, returning, and transfer college students who enrolled in eCampus courses each term with listed characteristics using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG. See Table 1 for the list of the seven rural-located colleges and the 14 rural-serving colleges.

^A Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (hosted) by another college.

Table 6. Percentages of Students with Different Characteristics Enrolling in eCampus Online Courses

Characteristic	Number of Students	Percent with any eCampus Courses	Percent with any Non-host eCampus Courses ^A	Percent with any Online Courses
All Students	694,411	1.05	0.51	66.74
Rural Student	169,179	0.79	0.34	65.08
Metropolitan Student	525,232	1.14	0.57	67.27
Woman	452,423	1.03	0.53	72.01
Man	241,988	1.10	0.48	56.87
Hispanic	81,803	1.08	0.54	62.06
Non-Hispanic Black	281,544	1.11	0.62	71.64
Non-Hispanic Other Race	42,129	1.30	0.66	65.54
Non-Hispanic White	288,935	0.96	0.38	63.46
Age 20 or Less	194,143	1.00	0.55	65.54
Age 21–25	195,364	1.03	0.48	66.02
Age 26–30	103,971	1.09	0.53	68.55
Age 31 and Above	200,933	1.11	0.50	67.66
Received a Pell Grant	439,571	1.11	0.54	71.28
Did not Receive a Pell Grant	254,840	0.95	0.46	58.91
U.S. Citizen	590,180	1.05	0.51	66.27
Not a U.S. Citizen	104,231	1.06	0.54	69.40
Entered College without a HS Credential	27,804	0.74	0.36	57.69
Entered College with Only a HS Credential	497,247	1.02	0.49	68.39
Entered College with Some College or a Degree	169,360	1.20	0.62	63.37
Beginning Student	147,463	0.90	0.49	66.11
Returning Student	459,226	1.04	0.47	65.98
Transfer Student	87,722	1.38	0.79	71.78
Enrolled in TCC Program this Term	118,229	0.54	0.20	59.42
Enrolled in Diploma Program this Term	187,128	0.48	0.20	56.36
Enrolled in Associate Degree Program this Term	387,470	1.48	0.76	73.99
County Unemployment Rate Below Median	332,671	1.40	0.65	64.78
County Unemployment Rate At or Above Median	361,740	0.73	0.39	68.54
County Population Age 20–24 % Below Median	344,280	0.86	0.38	66.53
County Population Age 20–24 % At or Above Median	350,131	1.24	0.64	66.94
County Hispanic Population % Below Median	346,909	1.00	0.49	67.14

Notes. Authors' calculations of percentages of unique beginning, returning, and transfer college students who enrolled in eCampus and online courses each term with listed characteristics using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG.

^A Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (hosted) by another college.

Table 6. Percentages of Students with Different Characteristics Enrolling in eCampus Online Courses

Characteristic	Number of Students	Percent with any eCampus Courses	Percent with any Non-host eCampus Courses ^A	Percent with any Online Courses
County Hispanic Population % At or Above Median	347,502	1.10	0.54	66.34
County Black Population % Below Median	345,278	0.84	0.32	64.84
County Black Population % At or Above Median	349,133	1.26	0.70	68.61
County Persistently Poor	92,044	0.76	0.40	65.39
County not Persistently Poor	602,367	1.10	0.53	66.94
County Households (HHs) w/o Internet Below Median	341,705	1.15	0.60	66.44
County HHs w/o Internet At or Above Median	352,706	0.96	0.43	67.03

Notes. Authors' calculations of percentages of unique beginning, returning, and transfer college students who enrolled in eCampus and online courses each term with listed characteristics using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG.

^A Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (hosted) by another college.

Conversely, enrollments in eCampus courses are lower for non-Hispanic White students and students living in high-unemployment and persistently poor counties. Enrollments in online courses follow some of these patterns but not all of them. For example, online enrollments are higher for Pell Grant recipients, transfer students, and associate degree students but not for more-educated students or students in counties with high proportions of Hispanic residents or internet-connected households. In contrast to the relatively low enrollments in eCampus courses, nearly two-thirds of students and more than half in every group we examine have enrolled in other online courses, suggesting broad familiarity with and acceptance of online education.

The results from Table 6 show that eCampus enrollments not only vary with student rurality but with many other characteristics. Some of the association between eCampus enrollments and rurality may be attributable to these differences. To address this issue, we estimated multivariate regression models of student enrollments in eCampus courses during a term that account for rurality and other observed characteristics of the students. For comparison purposes, we also estimated a model of students enrolling in any online courses during a term. Table 7 reports results from the models.

The first column in Table 7 lists results from a model of eCampus enrollments that includes controls for student rurality and the numbers of host and non-host eCampus courses. Because enrollments could only occur if institutions offered eCampus courses, we restrict the data for the model to students and terms when eCampus courses were available at their college. The measures for the numbers of host and non-host eCampus courses further account for eCampus availability. As we might expect, the models indicate that enrollment rates were higher at colleges that offered more host and non-host eCampus courses. However, the multivariate models also indicate that there is no association between student rurality and eCampus enrollments once we account for course availability. This finding suggests that the lower (unconditional) rates of eCampus enrollments among rural students that we observed in the descriptive analyses are attributable to the reduced availability of eCampus courses at the students' colleges.

Finding 3: eCampus Availability and Enrollment Rates

Enrollments in eCampus courses are higher at colleges that offer more eCampus courses. The lower rates of eCampus enrollments among rural students appear to be attributable to the reduced availability of eCampus courses at their colleges.

The second column of Table 7 repeats this analysis for non-host eCampus enrollments but restricts the data to students and terms when non-host eCampus courses were available at their college. As with the first model, the results indicate that there is no statistically meaningful association between student rurality and non-host eCampus enrollments once we account for course availability. The models also indicate that enrollments in non-host courses increase with the number of non-host courses offered but decrease slightly with the number of host courses offered.

The third and fourth columns of Table 7 report results from models of general and non-host eCampus enrollments that add controls for student characteristics, geographic contexts, terms (time trends), and colleges. As with the previous two models, the results indicate that there is no statistically meaningful association between eCampus enrollments and student rurality but a strong positive association between enrollments and course availability. Among the other characteristics in the models, general eCampus enrollments are higher for older students, Pell Grant recipients, transfer students, and students in counties with high unemployment and larger proportions of college-age residents. General eCampus enrollments are lower for women, Hispanic students, beginning students, students in technical certificate and diploma programs, and students in persistently poor counties. Enrollments in non-host eCampus courses are higher for Black students, Pell Grant recipients, beginning students, and transfer students. Non-host enrollments are lower for older students, U.S. citizens, students who entered with some college, students in technical certificate and diploma programs, and students in persistently poor counties.

Finding 4: Who Enrolls in eCampus Courses?

Other things held constant, older students, Pell Grant recipients, transfer students, and students in counties with high unemployment and larger proportions of college-age residents are more likely to enroll in eCampus courses than other students. Women, Hispanic students, beginning students, students in technical certificate and diploma programs, and students in persistently poor counties are less likely to enroll than other students.

As seen in Table 6, about two-thirds of TCSG students take online courses each term. The fifth column of Table 7 examines characteristics that are associated with students taking online courses while controlling for other factors. Notably, rural students are more likely than other students to have taken an online course, suggesting that the modality does not prevent rural students from taking eCampus courses. Women are also more likely to take online courses (12 percentage points), though they take fewer eCampus courses. Black students, other non-White students, students receiving Pell Grants, beginning students, transfer students, and students in counties with higher unemployment rates and persistently poor residents are all more likely than other students to take online courses. Conversely, Hispanic students, older students, students without a high school credential or with a college credential, and students from counties with a higher percentages of college-age people, Hispanic residents, Black residents and households without internet access are less likely to take online courses. The credential students are working toward is strongly related to the likelihood a student has taken an online class, with students in certificate programs (15 percentage points) and diploma programs (17 percentage points) being less likely to have had an online class than students in associate's degree programs. Taken together, these patterns suggest that enrollment in online classes generally, and eCampus courses specifically, may be more strongly related to the availability of courses in students' programs of study than to the reticence among some groups of students to take online courses.

Table 7. Coefficients from Regression Models of the Percent of Students Enrolling in Courses

Characteristic	Models with Limited Controls		Models with Full Controls		
	eCampus Course ^A	Non-host eCampus Course ^B	eCampus Course ^A	Non-host eCampus Course ^B	Online Course
Rural Students	0.0001 (0.0004)	-0.0005 (0.0003)	-0.0004 (0.0005)	-0.0004 (0.0005)	0.0099*** (0.0020)
No. of Host eCampus Courses at College	0.0016*** (0.0001)	-0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0018*** (0.0001)	0.0000 (0.0000)	
No. of Non-host eCampus Courses at College	0.0028*** (0.0001)	0.0030*** (0.0001)	0.0031*** (0.0001)	0.0032*** (0.0001)	
Woman			-0.0024*** (0.0004)	0.0003 (0.0003)	0.1161*** (0.0012)
Hispanic			-0.0009* (0.0006)	-0.0002 (0.0005)	-0.0224*** (0.0019)
Non-Hispanic Black			-0.0004 (0.0004)	0.0006* (0.0004)	0.0460*** (0.0014)
Non-Hispanic Other Non-White Race			-0.0003 (0.0008)	-0.0003 (0.0007)	0.0127*** (0.0025)
Age			0.0004** (0.0002)	-0.0005*** (0.0002)	-0.0081*** (0.0006)
Received a Pell Grant			0.0021*** (0.0004)	0.0008** (0.0003)	0.0711*** (0.0012)
U.S. Citizen			-0.0002 (0.0005)	-0.0013*** (0.0005)	0.0017 (0.0016)
Entered College without a HS Credential			0.0007 (0.0007)	0.0005 (0.0008)	-0.0683*** (0.0029)
Entered College with Some College or a Degree			0.0001 (0.0005)	-0.0010** (0.0004)	-0.0508*** (0.0015)
Beginning Student			-0.0017*** (0.0004)	0.0010** (0.0004)	0.0159*** (0.0014)
Transfer Student			0.0019*** (0.0006)	0.0035*** (0.0006)	0.0663*** (0.0018)

Notes. Table reports coefficients (and standard errors in parentheses) from regression models of whether beginning, returning, and transfer college students who enrolled in the listed course each term. Models estimated using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG.

^A Observations are restricted to students and terms when eCampus courses were offered their college.

^B Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (i.e., hosted) by another college. Observations are restricted to students and terms when non-Host eCampus courses were offered their college.

Table 7. Coefficients from Regression Models of the Percent of Students Enrolling in Courses

Characteristic	Models with Limited Controls		Models with Full Controls		
	eCampus Course ^A	Non-host eCampus Course ^B	eCampus Course ^A	Non-host eCampus Course ^B	Online Course
Enrolled in TCC Program			-0.0109*** (0.0004)	-0.0083*** (0.0004)	-0.1493*** (0.0016)
Enrolled in Diploma Program			-0.0134*** (0.0004)	-0.0098*** (0.0003)	-0.1711*** (0.0013)
County Unemployment Rate			0.0006* (0.0003)	-0.0000 (0.0003)	0.0120*** (0.0009)
County Proportion of Population Age 20–24			0.0179** (0.0091)	0.0146 (0.0094)	-0.2596*** (0.0334)
Proportion of County Population Hispanic			0.0051 (0.0034)	-0.0007 (0.0028)	-0.0708*** (0.0106)
Proportion of County Population Black			-0.0018 (0.0018)	0.0016 (0.0017)	-0.0019 (0.0058)
Persistent Poverty County			-0.0019*** (0.0006)	-0.0014** (0.0006)	0.0055** (0.0023)
Proportion of County HHs without Internet Access			0.0051 (0.0037)	0.0055 (0.0035)	-0.0573*** (0.0129)
Term Effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
College Effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student/Term Observations	517,402	389,640	517,402	389,640	694,411

Notes. Table reports coefficients (and standard errors in parentheses) from regression models of whether beginning, returning, and transfer college students who enrolled in the listed course each term. Models estimated using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG.

^A Observations are restricted to students and terms when eCampus courses were offered their college.

^B Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (i.e., hosted) by another college. Observations are restricted to students and terms when non-Host eCampus courses were offered their college.

Conclusions and Implications

In summary, most students—including rural students and students at rural-located and rural-serving institutions—attend colleges offering at least one eCampus course. On a year-by-year basis, the numbers of eCampus courses and enrollments have grown over time. However, the numbers of course offerings have been modest, averaging 4.9 courses per college each term in AY 2022, 6.3 courses per college each term in AY 2023, and 7.3 courses per college in AY 2024. Total enrollments in eCampus courses have also been low (generally less than 1% of all course enrollments). The percentage of students taking any eCampus courses has been 2.3% or lower each term. Modest course availability and low enrollment rates are a challenge to eCampus delivering on its promise.

The availability of eCampus courses in terms of numbers of courses per college and the percentage of courses offered was initially lower at rural-located and rural-serving institutions, though these gaps closed by AY 2024. As a result, rural students were less able to access eCampus courses than other students in the first years following the system-wide implementation. Enrollment rates in eCampus courses also tended to be lower among rural students and students at rural-located and rural-serving colleges than other students, though enrollment rates for these groups caught up to other groups in AY 2024.

The lower initial rates of eCampus enrollments among rural students appear to be attributable to the reduced availability of eCampus courses at their colleges. Multivariate analyses indicate that there is no difference in rural and non-rural students' eCampus enrollment rates once course availability is taken into account. The analyses also show rural students' enrollments in other online courses is 10 percentage points higher than non-rural students, once we control for other characteristics of the groups. These results suggest that there is demand for eCampus and other online courses among rural students. However, rural-located and rural-serving institutions may need to offer more eCampus courses to reduce geographic inequities.

We detail recommendations for learning more about and expanding eCampus course availability and enrollment below.

- The modest levels of eCampus course availability and enrollments should be investigated to determine whether structural issues may be impeding its growth.

- The limited availability of eCampus courses suggests that steps could be taken to increase the number of host and non-host courses available through eCampus, such as granting automatic approval for non-host courses that are not offered at a student's home campus and providing additional incentives for instructors and institutions to make additional eCampus courses available.
- There may be opportunities to expand student awareness of eCampus through marketing or publicity and/or streamline the enrollment process to expand participation in existing courses.
- Rural-located colleges should be engaged to learn more about their course and enrollment needs to identify any areas for eCampus growth.
- Given the higher eCampus participation rates among older students, Pell Grant recipients, transfer students, and students residing in counties with high unemployment, partnering with institutions and degree programs most popular with these student groups could support eCampus expansion in a manner targeted to students most likely to enroll.
- Additionally, there may be an opportunity to create a feedback system to better capture demand for eCampus courses to inform future offerings.

Supplemental Table S1. Trends in eCampus Courses as a Percentage of All Courses Offered by College Rurality

Term	eCampus Courses			Non-host eCampus Courses ^A		
	All Colleges	Rural-located Colleges	Rural-serving Colleges	All Colleges	Rural-located Colleges	Rural-serving Colleges
Fall 2020	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02
Spring 2021	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.04
Summer 2021	0.73	0.69	0.41	0.39	0.65	0.32
Fall 2021	0.68	0.68	0.61	0.37	0.53	0.30
Spring 2022	0.65	0.37	0.63	0.37	0.26	0.32
Summer 2022	0.93	0.37	0.84	0.50	0.37	0.40
Fall 2022	0.62	0.73	0.58	0.28	0.40	0.25
Spring 2023	1.23	0.98	1.12	0.66	0.67	0.51
Summer 2023	0.98	0.50	0.75	0.54	0.38	0.28
Fall 2023	0.98	1.06	0.90	0.55	0.56	0.35
Spring 2024	1.17	0.78	1.10	0.56	0.63	0.40
Summer 2024	1.01	1.07	0.92	0.51	0.70	0.36
All Terms	0.73	0.60	0.65	0.38	0.42	0.29

Notes. Authors' calculations of college-level eCampus course offerings as a percentage of all college-level courses each term with listed characteristics using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG. Each offering of a course at a different institution is counted as an additional offering.

^A Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (i.e., hosted) by another college.

Supplemental Table S2. Trends in eCampus Enrollments as a Percentage of All Enrollments by Rurality

Term	Enrollments in All eCampus Courses				Enrollments in Non-host eCampus Courses ^A			
	All Students	Rural Students	Students at Rural-located Colleges	Students at Rural-serving Colleges	All Students	Rural Students	Students at Rural-located Colleges	Students at Rural-serving Colleges
Fall 2020	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Spring 2021	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
Summer 2021	0.43	0.25	0.28	0.14	0.19	0.20	0.28	0.12
Fall 2021	0.39	0.26	0.26	0.36	0.17	0.10	0.15	0.09
Spring 2022	0.43	0.35	0.25	0.52	0.18	0.14	0.08	0.16
Summer 2022	0.44	0.24	0.09	0.38	0.18	0.07	0.09	0.11
Fall 2022	0.44	0.42	0.48	0.36	0.24	0.15	0.22	0.12
Spring 2023	1.02	0.72	0.48	0.98	0.50	0.40	0.36	0.29
Summer 2023	0.57	0.36	0.21	0.47	0.31	0.19	0.18	0.17
Fall 2023	0.68	0.77	0.91	0.66	0.41	0.34	0.46	0.26
Spring 2024	0.84	0.71	0.81	0.85	0.37	0.35	0.60	0.27
Summer 2024	0.54	0.67	0.86	0.54	0.26	0.27	0.37	0.15
All Terms	0.48	0.40	0.39	0.44	0.23	0.19	0.23	0.15

Notes. Authors' calculations of eCampus course enrollments among beginning, returning, and transfer college students each term with listed characteristics using AY 2021-24 administrative records from TCSG.

^A Non-host courses are courses that are taken at one TCSG college but taught (i.e., hosted) by another college.

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Endnotes

1. See, for example, Koricich, A., Chen, X., & Hughes, R.P. (2018). Understanding the effects of rurality and socioeconomic status on college attendance and institutional choice in the United States. *Review of Higher Education*, 41(2), 281–305.
 2. Hillman, N. W. (2016). Geography of college opportunity: The case of education deserts. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(4), 987–1021.
 3. Prior to the system-wide implementation, eCampus was piloted at a handful of colleges in fall 2020 and spring 2021.
 4. Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges. (2022). *Projects: Introducing our nation's rural-serving postsecondary institutions*. regionalcolleges.org/project/ruralserving
- The RSI considers the number of people in the institution's county, the percentage of rural residents in the county, the percentage of rural residents in surrounding counties, whether the county is adjacent to a metropolitan area, and the percentage of credentials the institution awards in rural-related fields.
5. Data on internet availability are obtained from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, National Broadband Availability Map (ntia.gov/category/national-broadband-availability-map).
 6. TCSG began offering eCampus courses to dual enrollment students in fall 2022.

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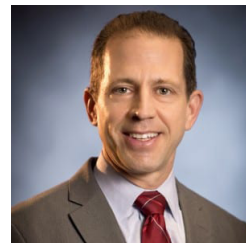
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