2022-26 System Strategic Plan

Report on Goal 1: Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

Multiyear Trends & Progress Update

July 2026

NC COMMUNITY COLLEGES
CREATING SUCCESS

01
Context

GOAL ONE

Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

Recruit and retain top talent to enable the North Carolina Community College System to educate and prepare the State’s workforce.

Goal 1 Context

The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan was developed during the COVID Pandemic.

Goal 1 recognizes that continued turnover undermines college capacity to deliver a skilled workforce.

<u>Concerns cited in 2022</u>:

- Great Resignation
- Higher Turnover Rates and Low Labor Force Participation rates
- College Capacity Reduced: Training Programs and course sections postponed

Defining Terms

- **Faculty** are employees whose primary role is instruction and related academic responsibilities.
- **Staff** are employees who support the institutional mission through non-instructional roles.
- **A part-time employee** is someone who works less than the institution’s defined full-time workload.
- **A full-time employee** works the standard workload defined by the institution and is typically eligible for full benefits.

GOAL ONE

Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

Primary Measures:

- Full-Time Faculty and Staff Salaries
- Full-time Time Faculty and Staff Retention

Goal 1 Results

Despite Progress with Recruitment and Retainment: Capacity has not kept pace with student and community need.

- NC has seen a 17% increase in average salary: however we still fall below national and southern state averages.
- Salary comparisons across the 58 show many colleges fall below the NC average.
- Employee numbers have increased by only 2% despite an enrollment growth of 12%.
- The student to faculty ratio has increased, decreasing the time employees have to devote to individual students.
- Faculty and Staff retainment has remained steady over the past 4 years.

Goal 1:

State Financial Impacts

State Faculty and Staff Salary Increases:

2021-2022	2.5% Increase
2023-2024	3% Increase
2024-2025	4% Increase
2025-2026	No Increase

Target: 7% Salary Increase
Actual: 7% Salary Increase

Faculty Recruitment and Retention Fund:

2021-2022	$8.6 million (recurring)
2022-2023	$12 million (recurring)
2023-2024	$31 million (recurring)

Nursing Faculty Targeted Salary Adjustments

2023-2024 $7.1 million recurring (10% Increase)

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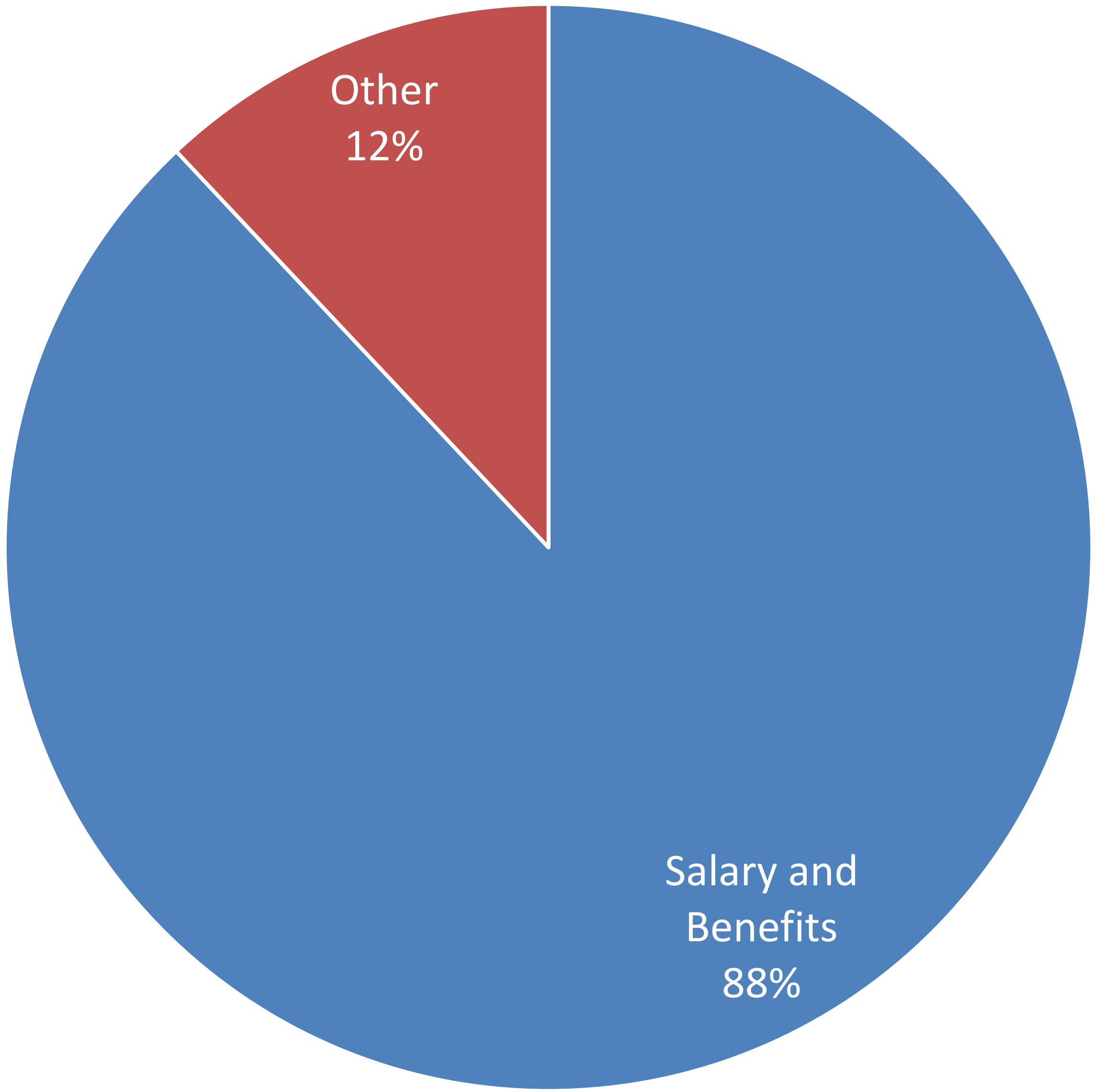
System Competitiveness

Faculty and Staff Funding and Salary Data

College Budget Expenditures, 2025



What the data tell us:

- Personnel are critical to college capacity representing the largest budget expenditure.
- On average 88% of college budgets are spent on personnel

What the data tell us:

- Compensation is considered the number 1 challenge to recruitment and retention.
- Although NC salaries have increased at a larger percentage than other states, the increase has not brought NC in line with National and Southern State Averages.

North Carolina vs. National and Southern States

Average Salary	NC	SREB	US
2022	$50,252	$53,980	$67,585
2025 (Fall)	$58,927	$61,084	$77,382
% Increase	17%	13%	14%

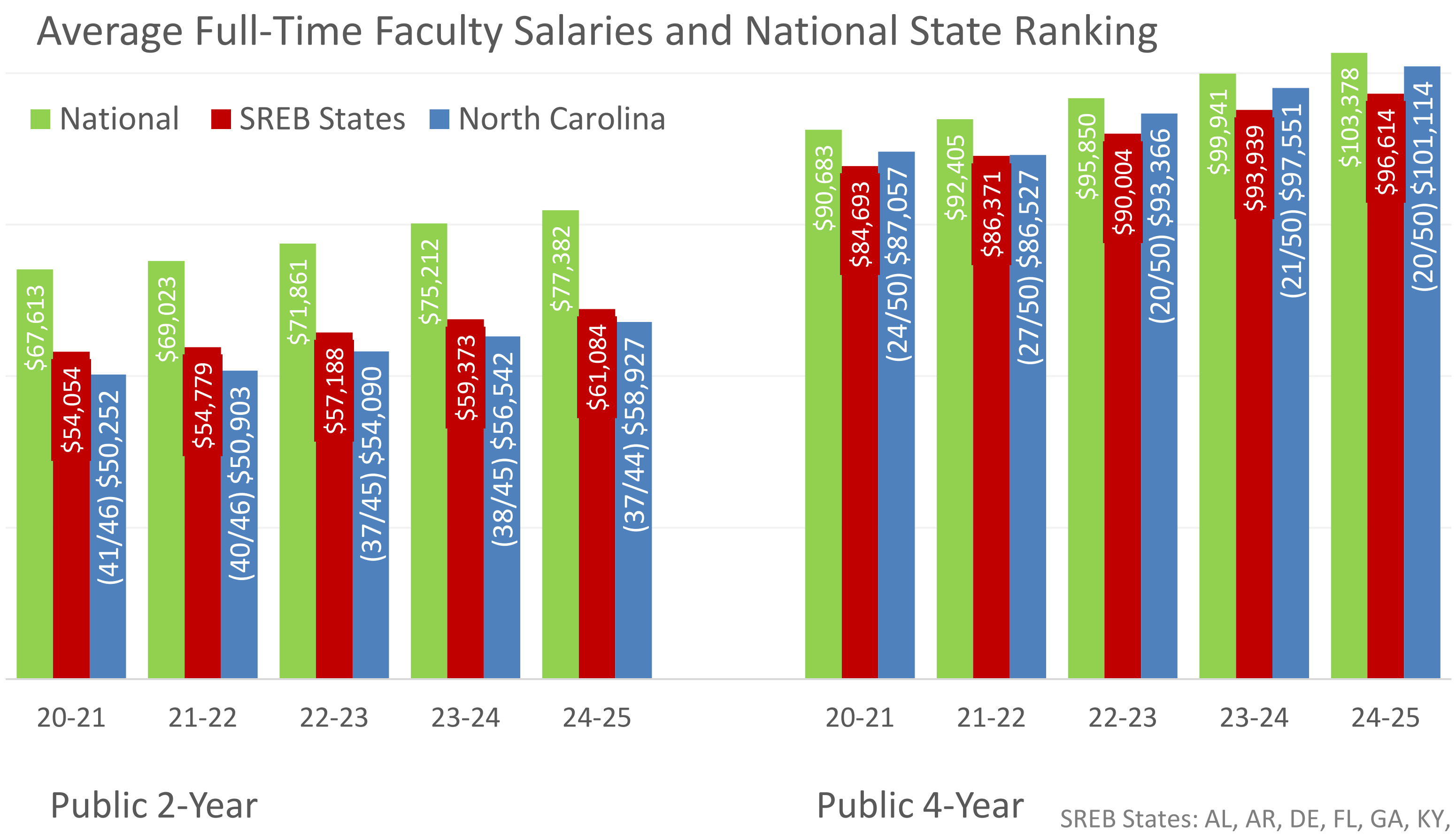
Faculty Salary Range by College

Average Salary	Tri County	NC	Fayetteville
2022	$44,250	$50,252	$55,533
2025 (Fall)	$50,339	$58,927	$67,705
% Increase	13%	17%	22%

Definition: **(SREB):** Southern Region Education Board—Mission to guide and support states as they advance all levels of education to improve the social and economic vitality of the SREB region. SREB States
Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia

What the data tell us:

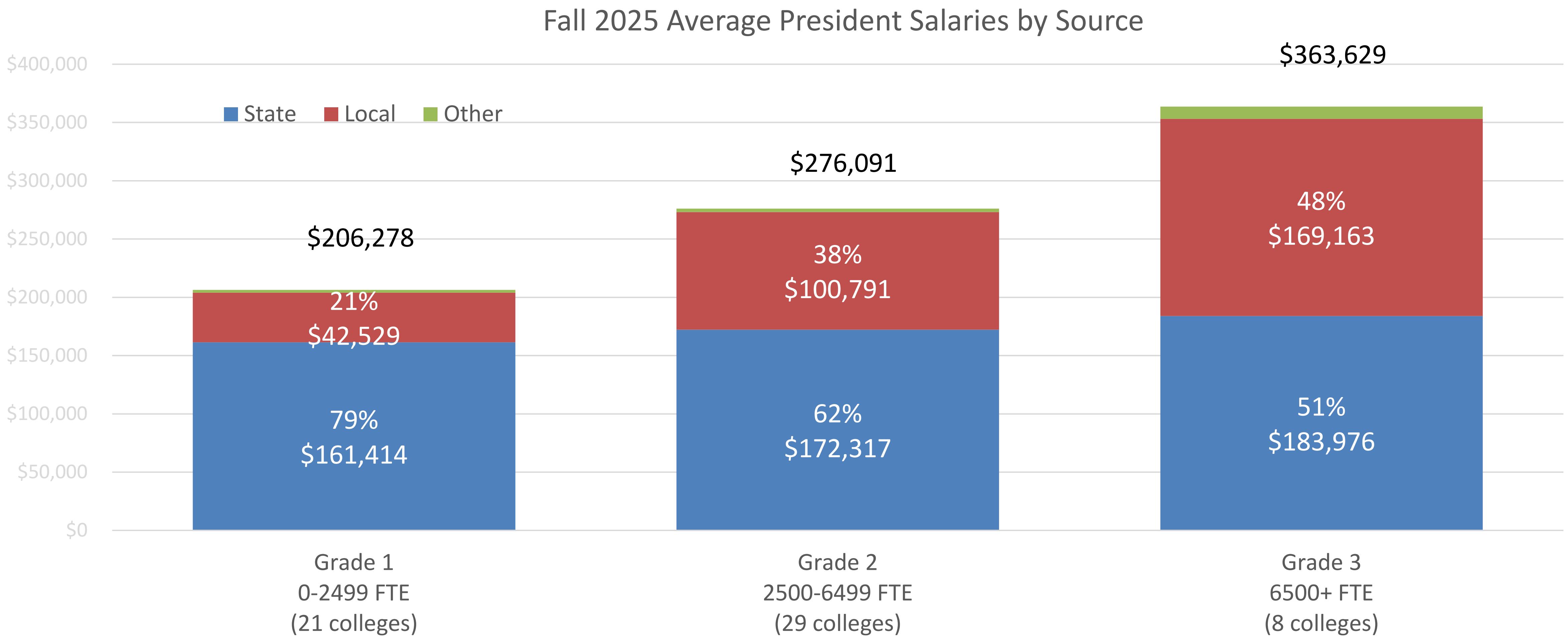
- NC community college salaries have ranked near the bottom nationally for five consecutive years (37 out of 44) — modest growth has not closed the gap
- NC 2-year faculty earn only 58 cents for every dollar earned at NC's own public 4-year institutions (2nd to last in the U.S.) – making community college recruitment difficult



SREB States: AL, AR, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC , OK , SC, TN, TX, VA, WV

What the data tell us:

- The role of college president is a critical role and is an example of the use of local funds to recruit and retain talent.
- Small colleges rely heavily on state appropriations while larger colleges leverage county (local) funds to provide a competitive salary.



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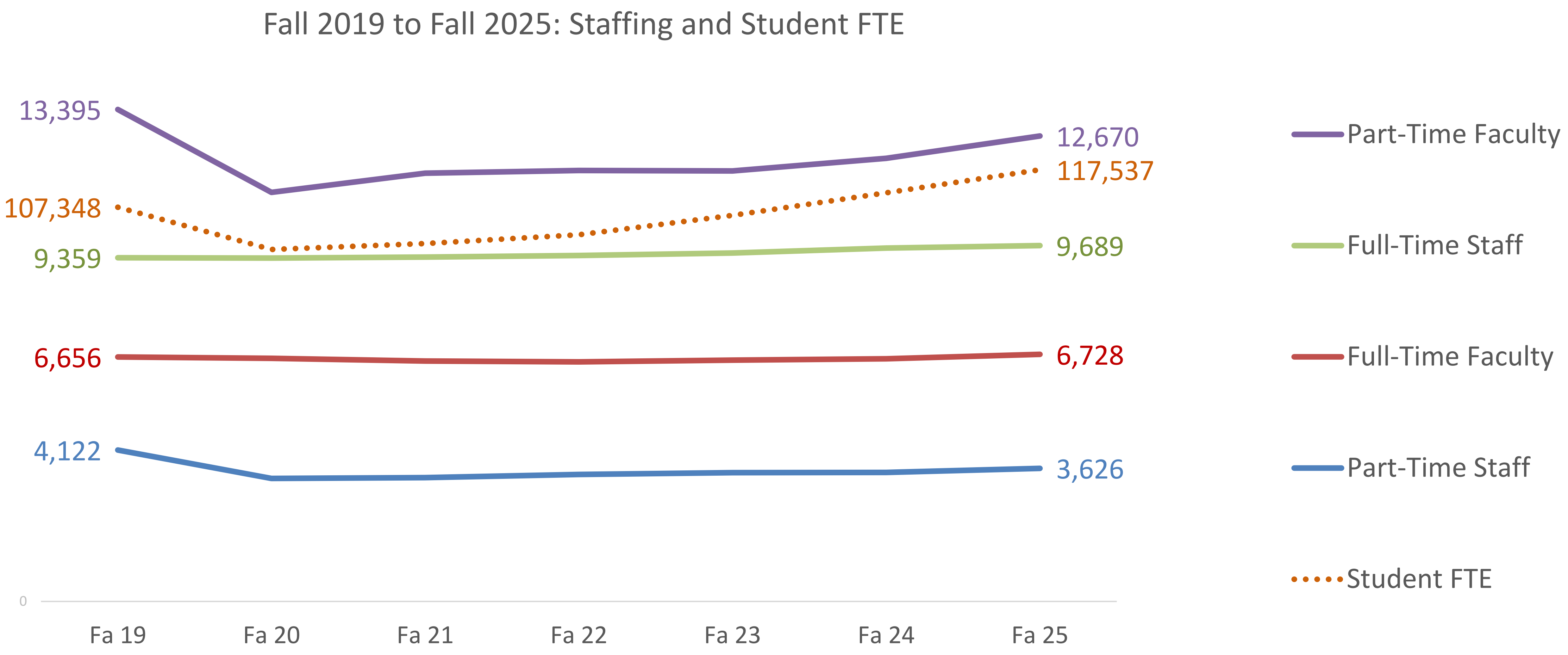
Enrollment Growth Capacity

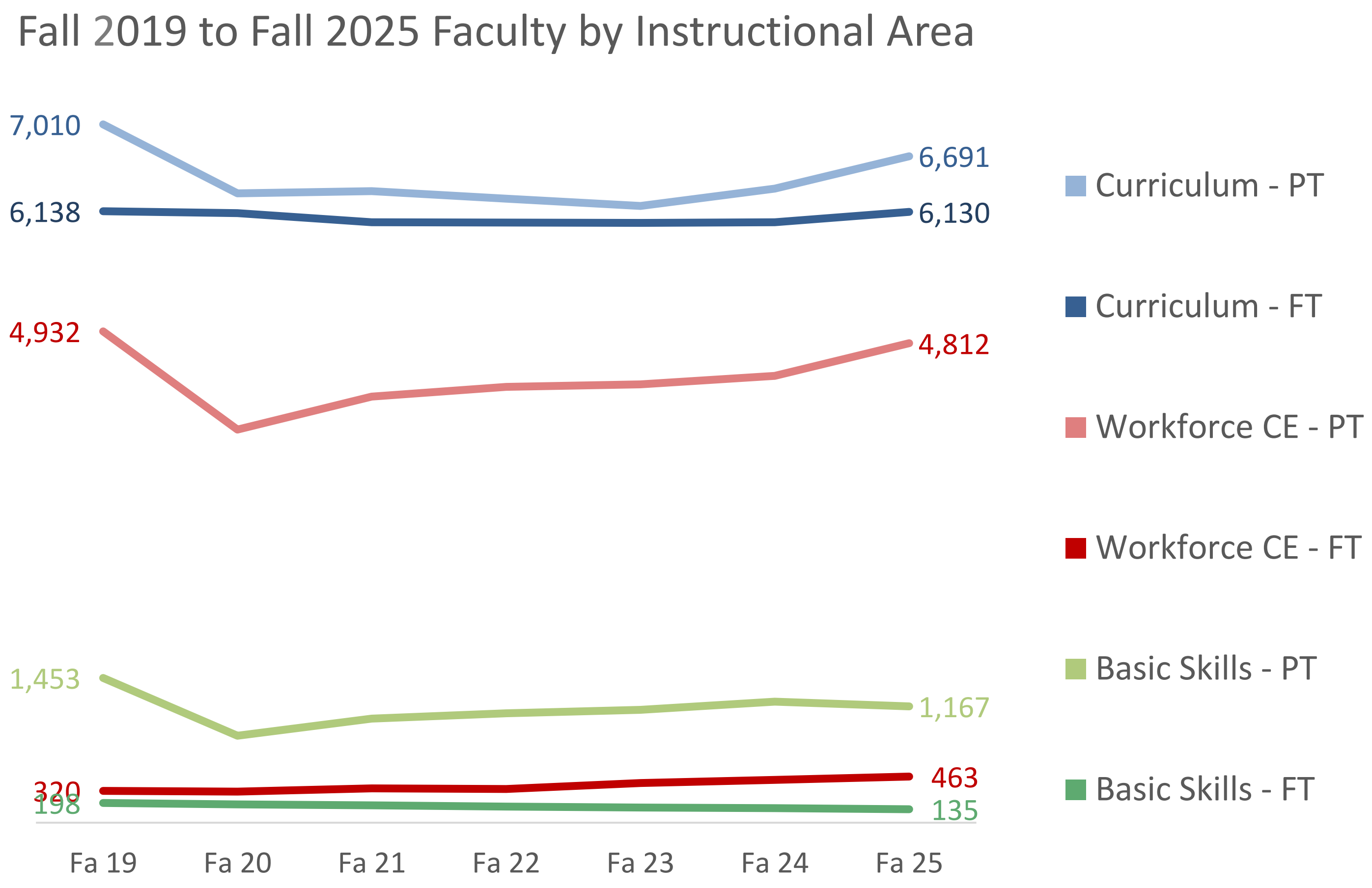
What the data tell us:

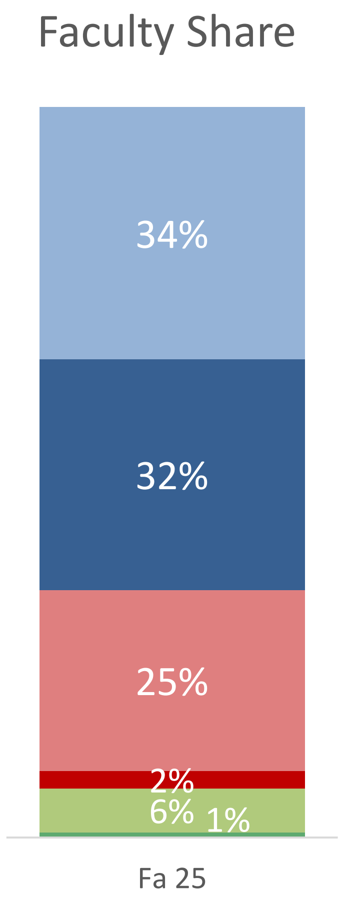
- Since 2019, Enrollment has grown 12% full-time faculty numbers have remained flat
- Enrollment Growth is being supported by increases in Part-Time Faculty

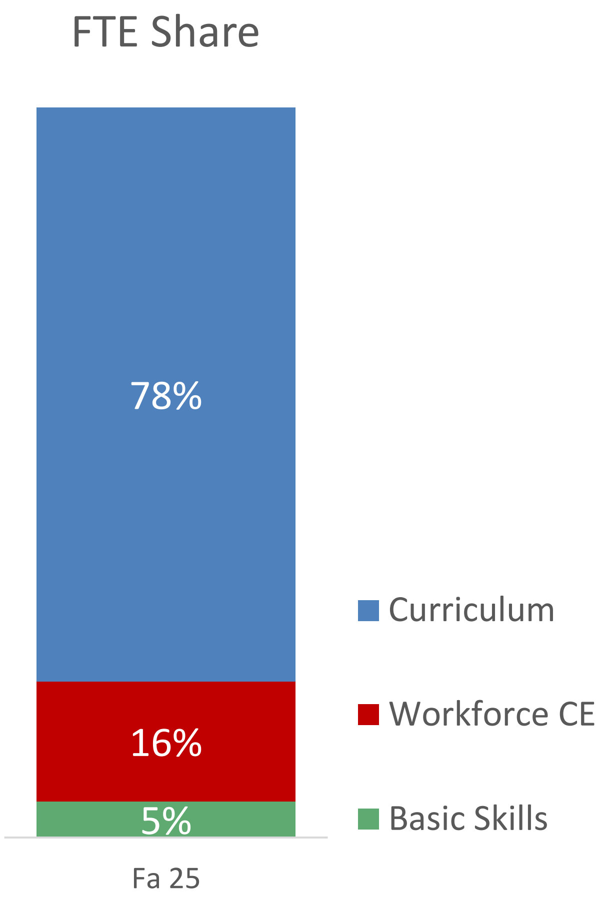


What the data tell us:

- Curriculum Faculty represent the greatest number of instructional staff.
- Nearly 6 in 10 curriculum faculty are part-time, and Workforce CE delivery is almost entirely contingent on part-time instructors.
- Part-time faculty connect students to current industry professionals and provides greater flexibility to meet instructional needs aligned with workforce demand.

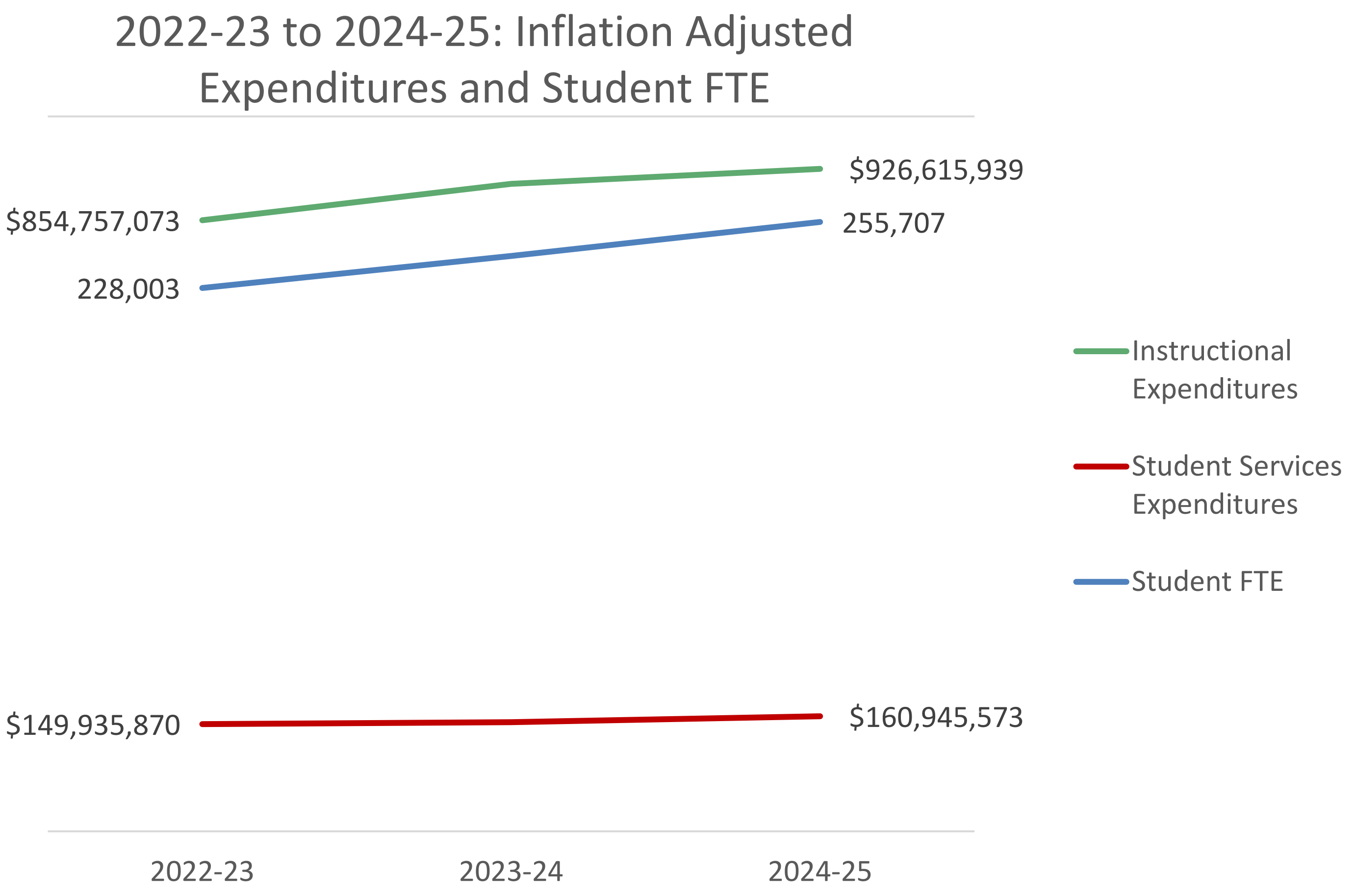


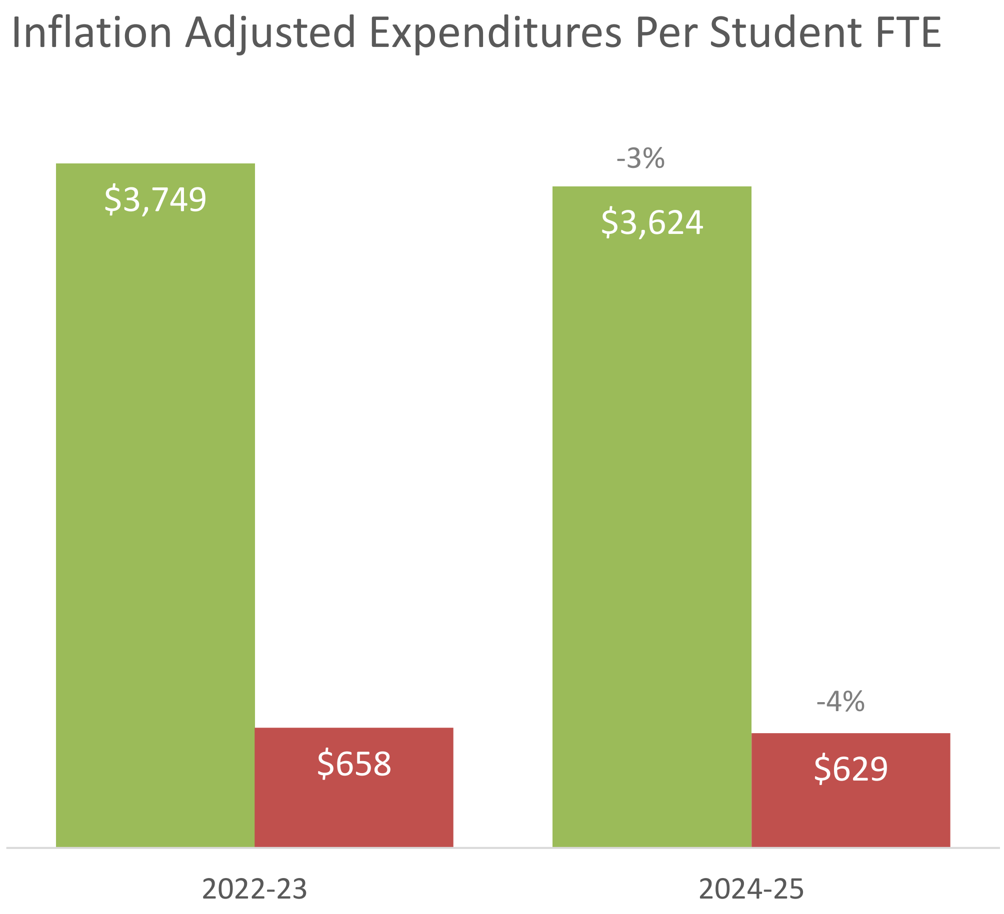




What the data tell us over the past 2 fiscal years:

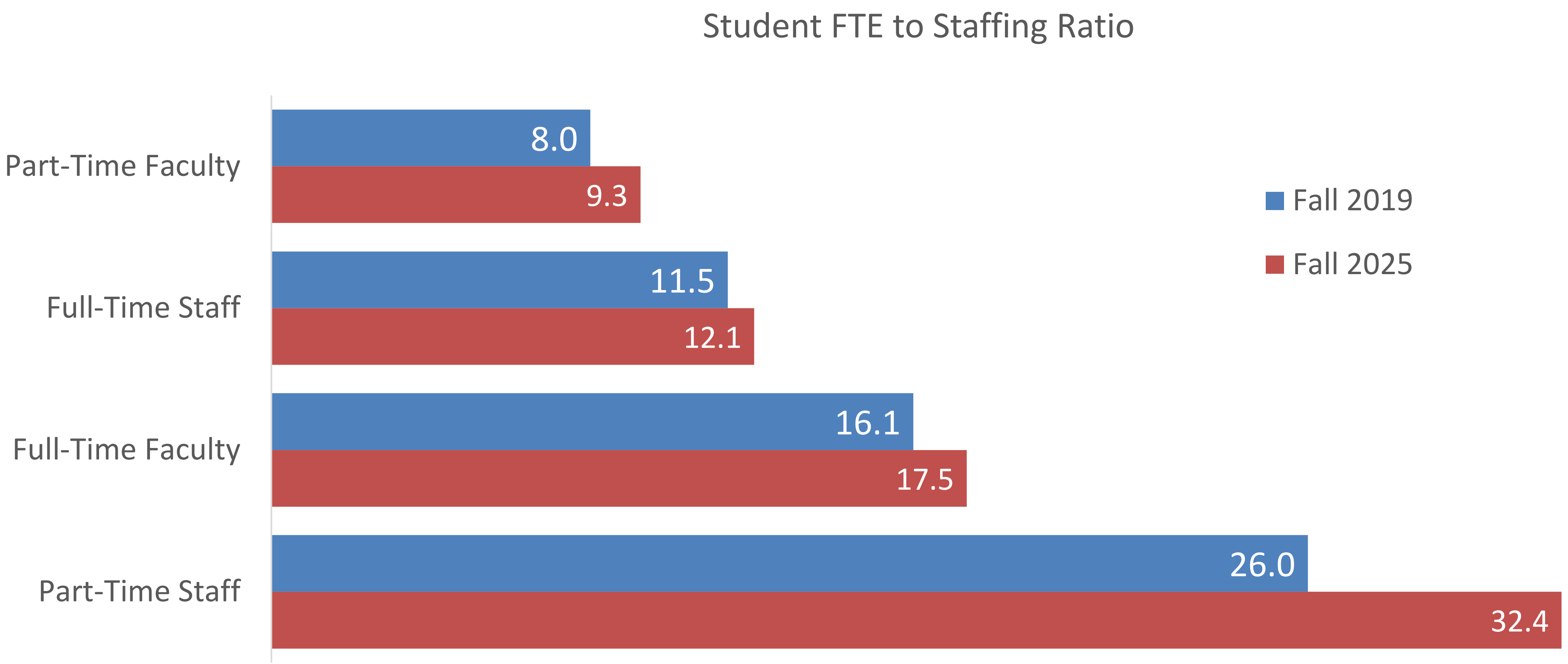
- While Enrollment grew by 12%, Instructional spending grew by only 8%.
- Spending per student has declined 4% in the past two years.
- The System is serving more students with proportionately less resources.





What the data tell us:

- Student FTE-to-Staffing ratios have increased across all employee categories since 2019, reflecting enrollment growth that has outpaced staffing investment.
- Part-time staff ratios have increased most sharply indicating greater reliance on part-time staff to support enrollment growth.



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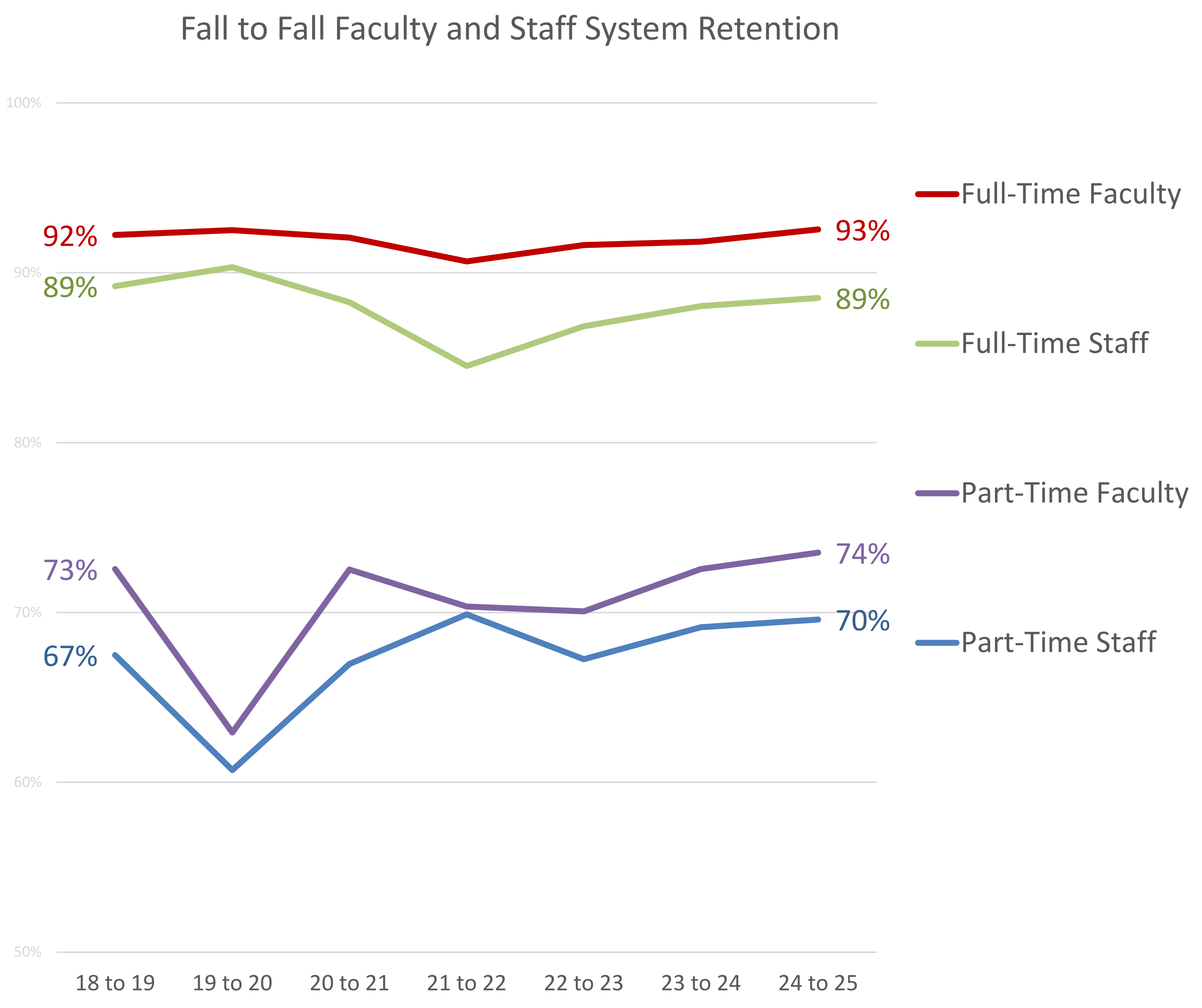
Faculty and Staff Retention

What the data tell us:

- Faculty and Staff Retention rates have returned to Pre-Pandemic Rates.
- Full-time faculty and staff are retained at consistently high rates — but they represent less than half of the instructional workforce.
- Part-time faculty have higher turnover rates, requiring sustained recruitment and onboarding effort.
- 2025 Study by CUPA-HR, showed full-time voluntary turnover in 2024 remained above pre-pandemic levels but declined from the 2022 peak and saw a further slight decrease from 2023.



System Actions:

Non-Financial Initiatives

Human Resources Association Established

- Officers elected in February 2024
- $10,000 allocated for start-up funds for 501(c)3 incorporation and website creation
- Provided 2,246 hours of training over 34 topics
- Host Monthly Chief HR Officer calls

Partnership Strategies Catalogued

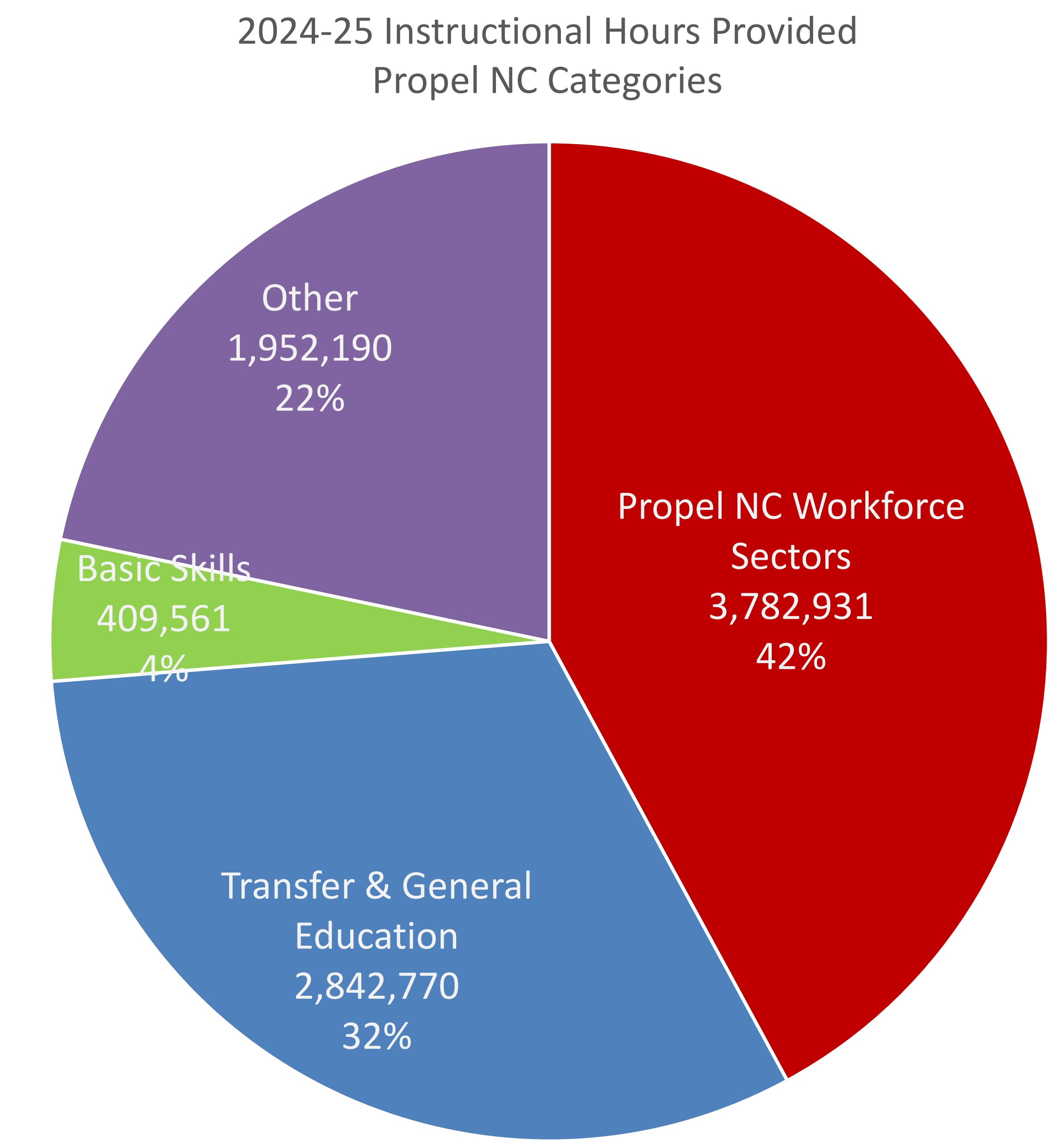
- Developed and Shared Examples of Partnerships to support faculty and staff salaries.
- Partners included Business-Healthcare Nursing, Local Government, Public Entities (K-12), and Other Colleges

Rural College Strategic Planning

- Strategic planning services provided to rural colleges
- Faculty and staff recruitment and retention goals and strategies incorporated into all strategic plans

04

How does staffing align with Propel NC workforce sectors?



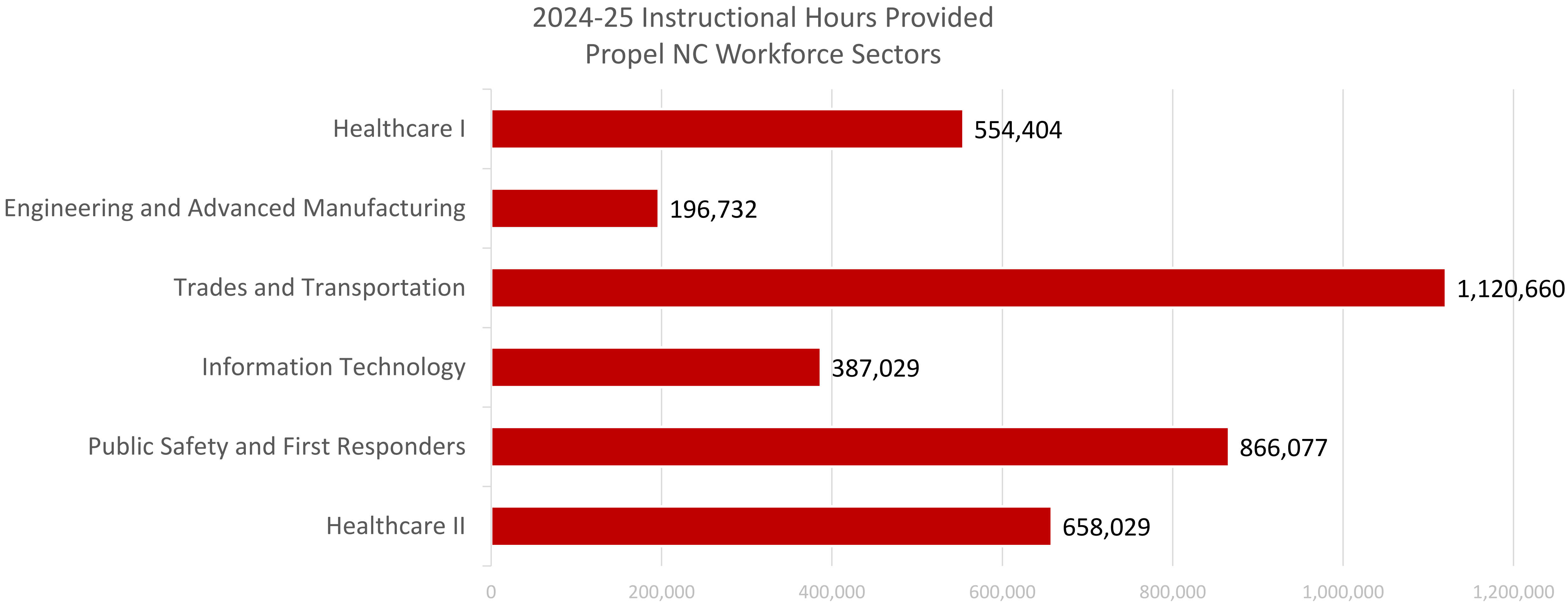
What the data tell us:

- ***42% of instructional hours provided were in Propel NC Workforce Sectors.***
  - 32% Transfer & General Education
  - 22% Other Workforce Sectors
  - 4% Basic Skills

- Staffing capacity in these high-demand areas directly determines the System’s ability to meet statewide workforce priorities.

What the data tell us:

- **Over 3.7 million hours of instruction were provided in Propel NC Workforce Sectors in 2024-25.**
  - **Trades and Transformation: 1,120,660 hours**
  - **Public Safety and First Responders: 866,077 hours**
  - **Healthcare II: 658,029 hours**
  - **Healthcare I: 554,404 hours**
  - **Information Technology: 387,029 hours**
  - **Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing: 196,732 hours**



Closing: Why Does This Matter?

- **Meeting the State's workforce needs depends on attracting and retaining highly-qualified faculty and staff.**
- **Staffing levels are not keeping pace with enrollment,** despite the System's strategic focus on recruiting and retaining faculty and staff. **Data shows**:
  - Faculty salaries have ranked near the bottom nationally for the past 5 years despite salary increases.
  - Student enrollment has increased by 10% over the past 5 years, full-time faculty numbers have remained flat.
  - Growing student to faculty ratios require each faculty and staff member to support more students, limiting individual attention.
- The **Propel NC** funding model is critical because it targets investment for staffing capacity to sustain high-demand, high-wage programs.

06

System Office

Staffing Overview

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Defining Terms

- **SHRA:** employees who are subject to the State Human Resources Act.
- **EHRA:** employees who are not subject to the State Human Resources Act. EHRA employees are primarily senior or executive staff.
- **Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) Oversight:** As a state agency the System Office operates under the guidance of OSHR and is part of the state Human Resource Information System. Colleges are not subject to OSHR guidelines and rules. SHRA employee classifications and compensation are approved by OSHR. EHRA employees and their compensation are approved by the State Board.
- The System Office currently has 58 EHRA employees and 158 SHRA employees.

Goal 1 Impact

System Office staffing is critical to support College Capacity to serve communities and students.

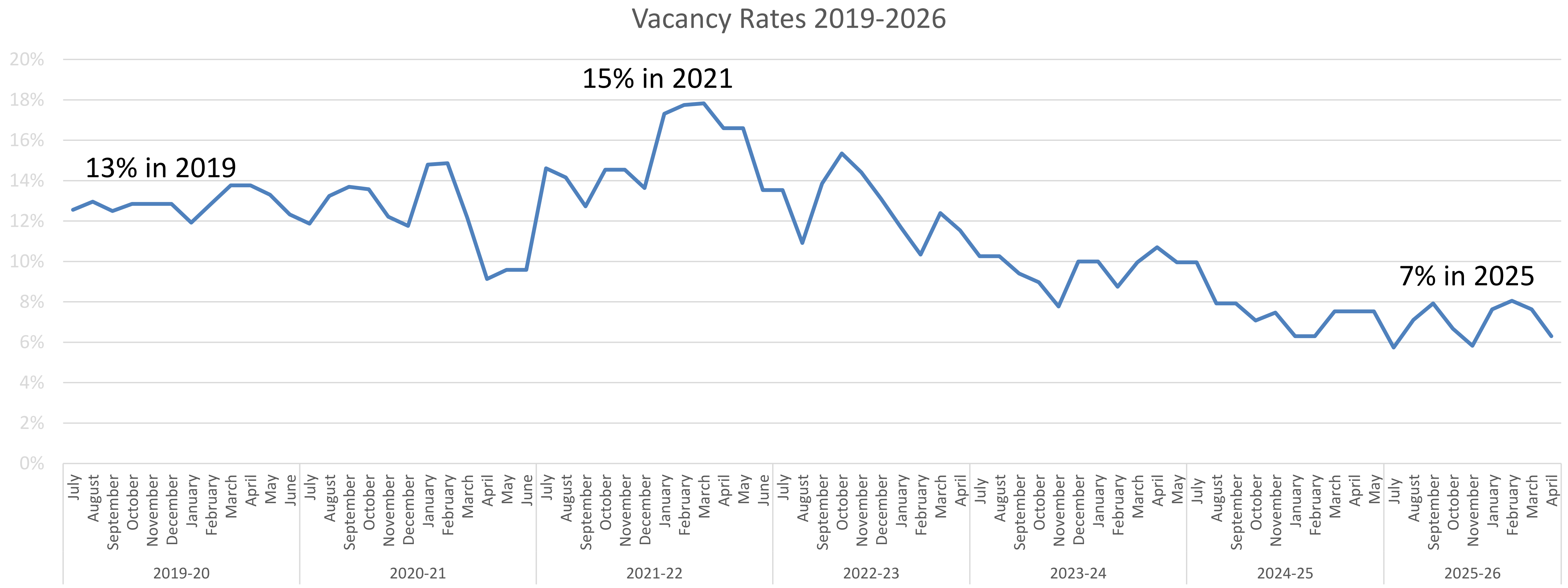
- **Vacancy rates** have declined from 15% to an average of 7%
- Salaries have increased however **53% of SHRA employees and 36% of EHRA employees fall below the midpoint for their salary grade.**
- Staff dependent on **federal grant funding has increased by 4%.**
- **Programs and Economic Development** receive the largest share of Federal grant funding and are the most impacted by federal funding changes.

NCCC

What the Data Tells Us:

- System Office vacancy rates have declined steadily from a pandemic-era peak of 15% (2021) to 7% in 2025 — a consistent, year-over-year improvement.
- Other state agencies experienced vacancy rates rising to 17% in 2020 and 2021.

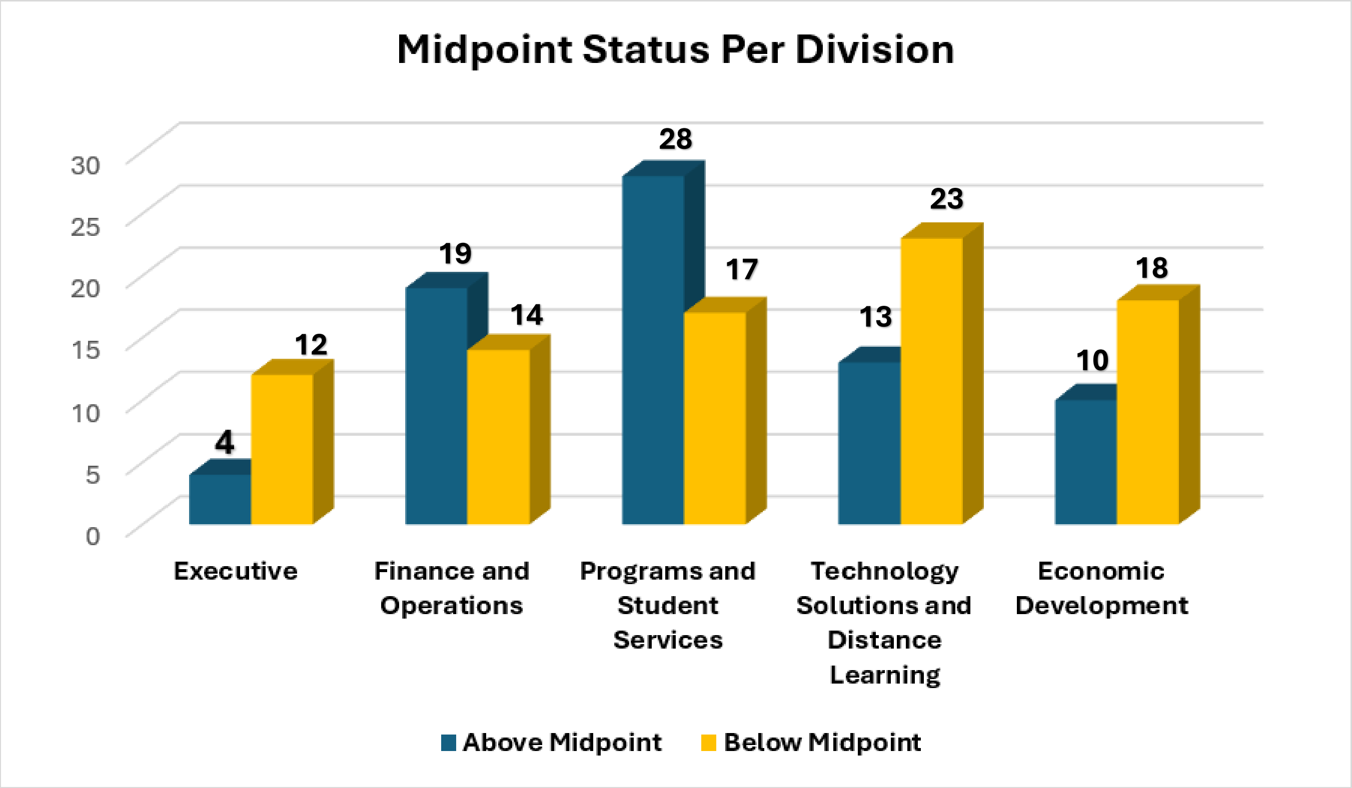
System Office Vacancy Rate Over Time



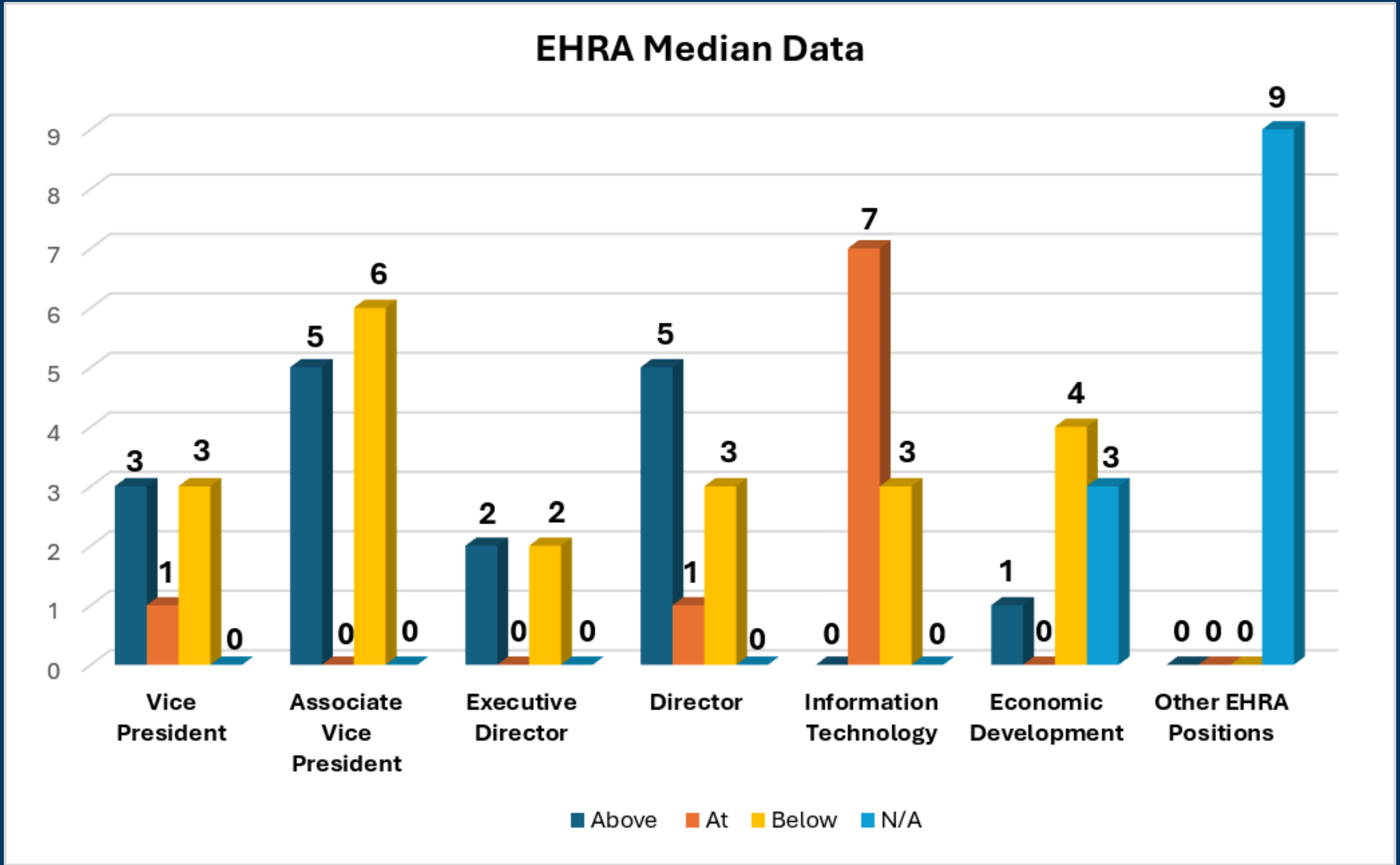
NCCC

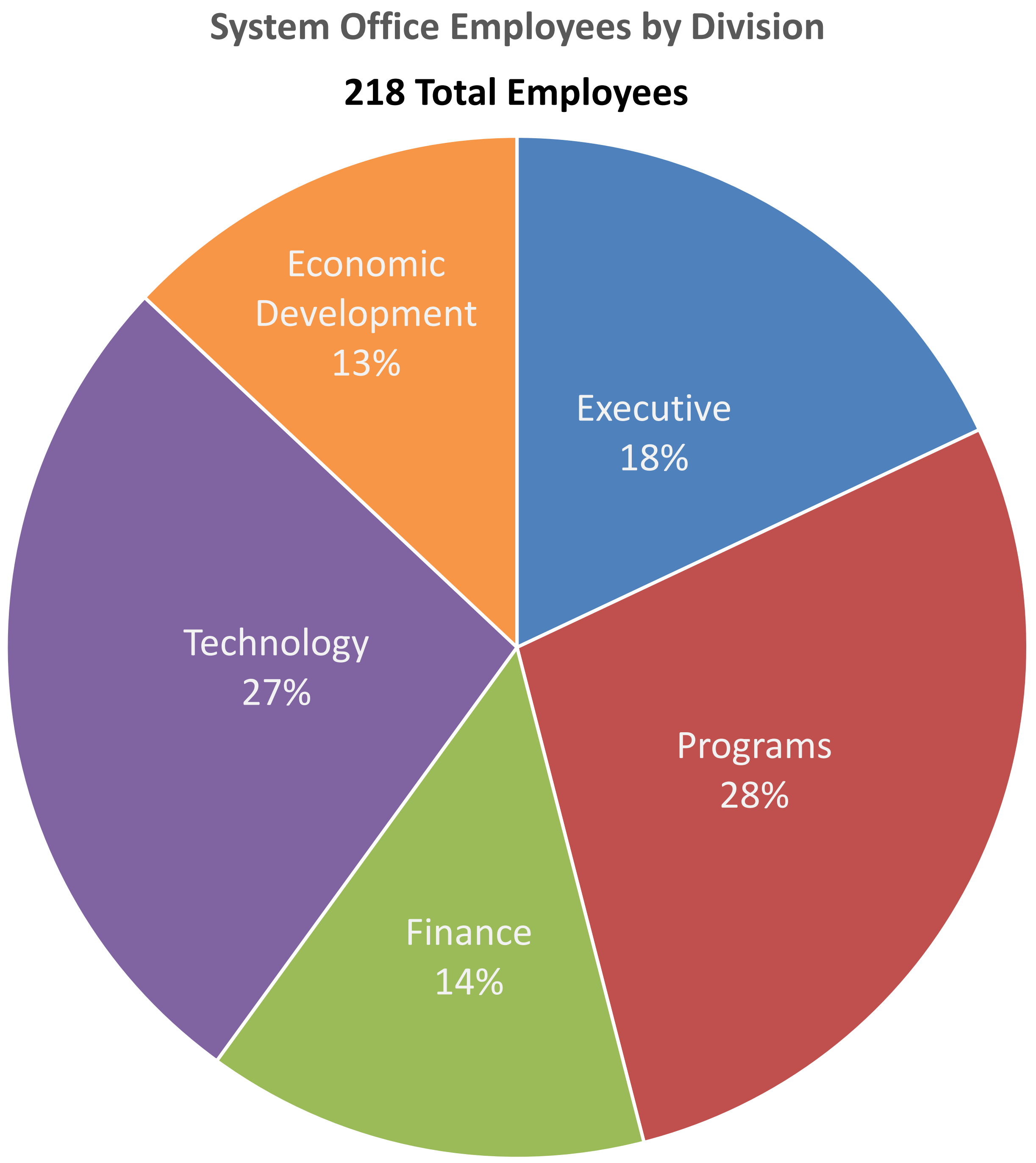
System Office Salary Analysis: What the Data Tells Us:
Despite salary increases over the past 4 years, 53% of SHRA employees still fall below the midpoint of the salary range. Of those below the midpoint, only 3% are more than 10% below.

System Office SHRA Personnel



System Office Salary Analysis: What the Data Tells Us:
Despite salary increases over the past 4 years, 36% of EHRA employees still fall below the midpoint of the salary range. Of those below the midpoint, 9% are more than 10% below.





What the data tell us:

- Employee Count Comparison
    - 2019 (216)
    - 2026 (218)

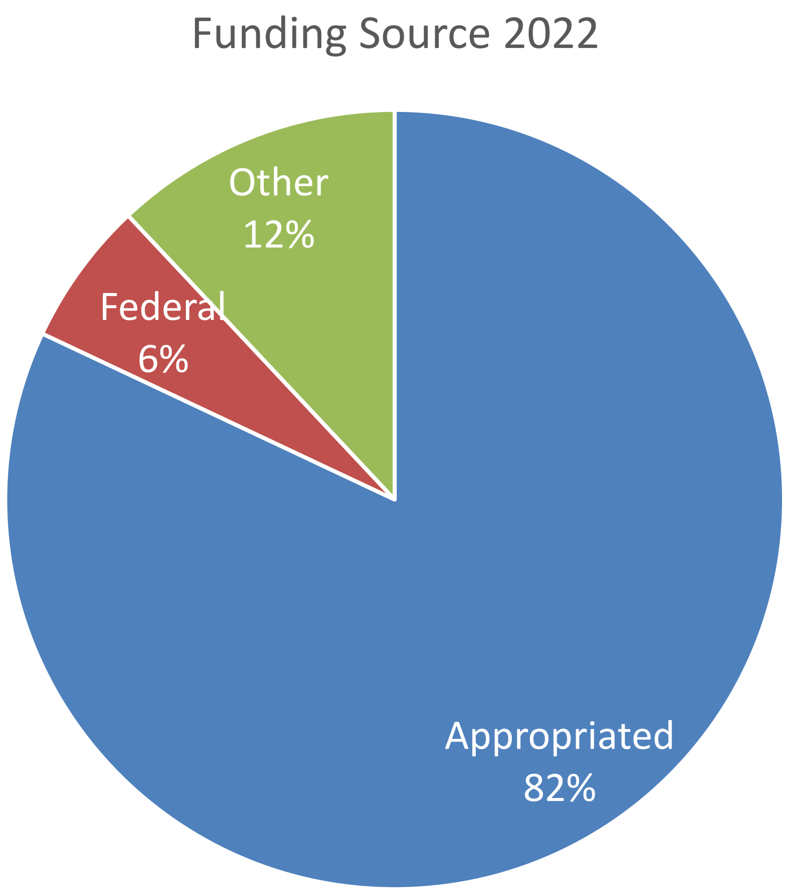
- 41% Program and Economic Development
- 27% Technology
- 32% Support (Exec, Finance, Marketing, HR etc.)

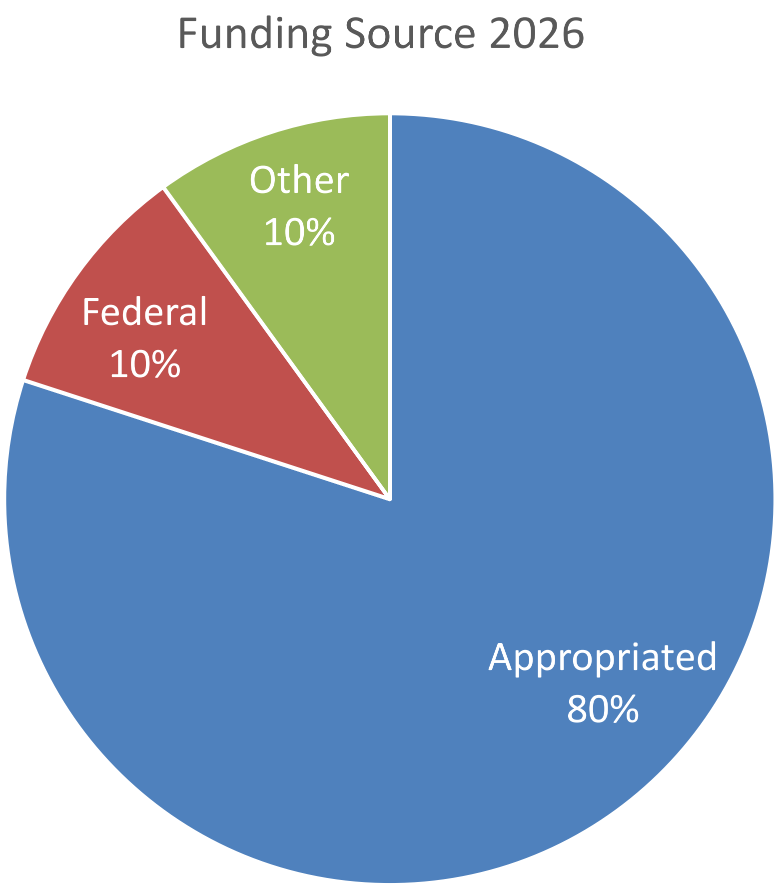
- The System Office represents 1% of total System employees – a lean model to serve and support over 31,000 employees at 58 colleges serving over 600,000 students

- At 218 employees, the System Office is comparable in size to the 8th smallest college — yet its scope of responsibility spans the entire statewide system

What the data tell us:

- The System Office has diversified its personnel funding over five years, with federal funds increasing 4% — reducing reliance on state appropriations for System Office operations





Grant Supported Staffing: What the Data Tells Us:
Federal Grants funds are primarily used to support staff in Economic Development and Programs.
Philanthropic funds are primarily used to support staff in Strategic Initiatives.

System Office Grant Funded Personnel

Department	Number of 100% Grant Funded Employees	Number of Partial Funded Employees	Total Percentage of Dept. Employees Grant Funded
Economic Development	11	6	36%
Finance	2	2	13%
Programs	17	9	43%
System Effectiveness	0	11	100%
Strategic Initiatives	1	3	100%
Total	31	31	28%

Grant Personnel Funding Types: Competitive vs. Non-Competitive Grants

Competitive Grants
(Time Limited)

UNC Gear UP

Apprenticeship Building America (US DOL)

State Apprenticeship Expansion (US DOL)

Build Back Better (US Dept. of Commerce)

BOOST (Arnold Ventures)

CCP Evaluation Subaward (UNC Greensboro)

John M. Belk Endowment

Non-Competitive Grants
(Allocated Annually)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (US DOL)

SCIF (State Construction and Infrastructure)

Grant Indirect Cost

Federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)

Federal CTE (Career Technical Education Funds) Carl D. Perkins Act

DHHS-SNAP Education and Training

Belk Center Partnership

Closing: Why Does This Matter?

- **Supporting Colleges and meeting the State's workforce needs depends on attracting and retaining highly-qualified System Office employees.**
- **Data shows**:
  - Employee salaries have increased but many continue to fall below the mid-point of their salary grade
  - Vacancy rates have improved after a record high during the pandemic.
  - An increased reliance on federal funding for system office employees increases the impact of shifting federal priorities.