



An **evaluation** of North Carolina's  
college planning web portal,  
**CFNC.org**

Produced by the University of North Carolina General Administration  
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College  
Foundation  
of North Carolina



**The University of North Carolina General Administration  
College Foundation of North Carolina, CFNC.org**

**An evaluation of North Carolina's college planning web portal, CFNC.org**

**Evaluation Report  
May 2009**



**One Place  
“To Plan, Apply, and Pay for College”  
CFNC.org**

This evaluation report was created by the University of North Carolina General Administration through grant support from Lumina Foundation for Education. In addition to the print edition, this report can be downloaded on the College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) website, [www.CFNC.org](http://www.CFNC.org), under Downloadable Resources. This information is intended for use as a report on best practices for a statewide college access web portal. States can use this report as a guide as they start or expand their college access initiatives specifically through an online web portal. This evaluation report was created by Chrissy Y. Tillery and David J. English at the University of North Carolina General Administration.

Special thanks are given to Sharon Grubb of the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority, for her tireless work in the editing of this evaluation. Her contributions and efforts were critical to the success of this project. Additionally, we thank the following colleagues for their input and review of this manual: Steve Brooks, Elizabeth McDuffie, Jim Avett, Cliff Dillard, Shera Hube, Bruce Mallette, Scott Jenkins, Robin Greene, Donnelle Graham, Melissa Caperton, Tenika McMillan, Chris Broadhurst, and Joni Petschauer.

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## **Introduction**

College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) is a premier college access program in the United States with the mission of increasing the college-going rate in North Carolina. Its Internet website, CFNC.org, provides a comprehensive resource to assist all North Carolina students and families in planning, applying, and paying for college. The CFNC.org website and initiative have become stable and mature features of the North Carolina education landscape. As a result, increased attention is being given to program evaluation to assess how well CFNC.org is performing in helping to increase the college going rate, specifically among low income and first-generation students.

The CFNC partners identified the need for increased research and evaluation not long after the inception of the initiative. Discussions between the University of North Carolina General Administration and Lumina Foundation for Education began in early 2007, with Lumina Foundation for Education grant support beginning September 2007.

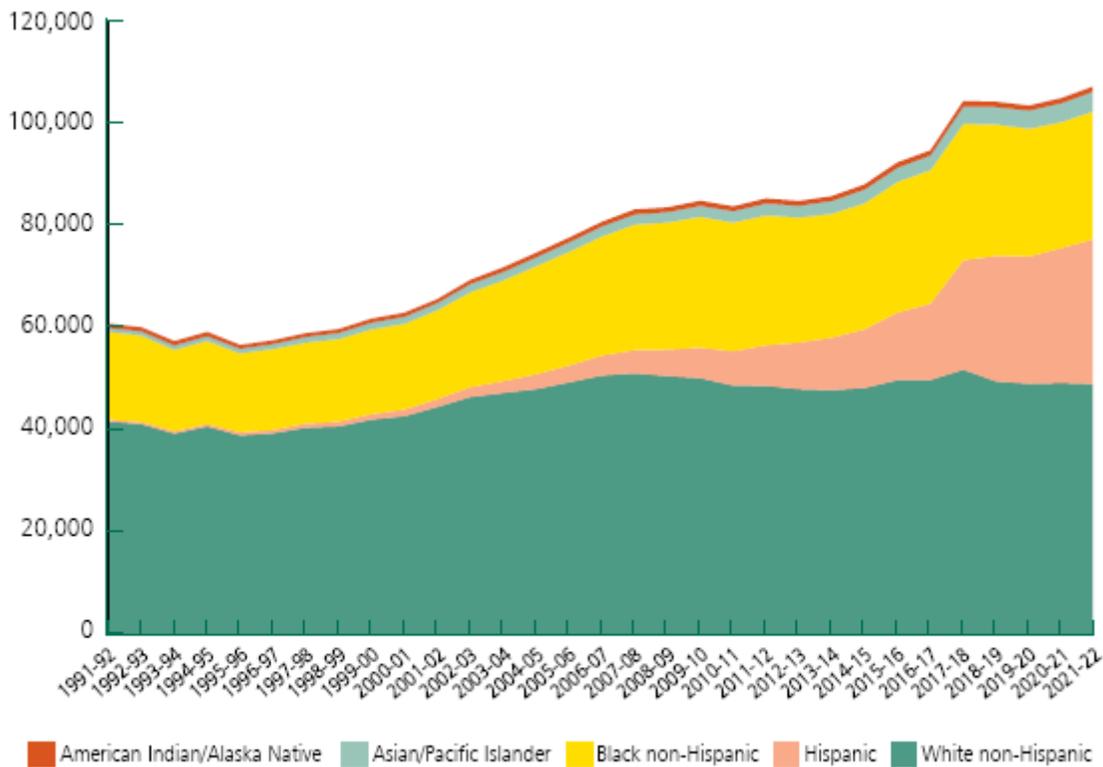
This evaluation report focuses on the “planning” and “applying” portions of the CFNC.org website. While certain aspects of the “paying” segments are referenced, the report does not provide analyses of these areas. This report presents CFNC programs and website as a model from which other states can learn as they seek to implement or refine their own broad-based college access websites. This research identifies what information CFNC currently collects to facilitate evaluation and what additional information is necessary and should be collected in the future to enable more comprehensive evaluation activity.

## I. History

North Carolina has seen significant economic challenges and demographic changes over the past twenty years which have impacted educational attainment in the state. For much of its history the economy of North Carolina was built upon the two pillars of agriculture and manufacturing – specifically the industries of tobacco, furniture, and textiles. Jobs in these areas have been highly susceptible to economic downturns, as shown by the resulting February 2009 unemployment rate of 10.7%, fourth-highest in the nation and the highest recorded since 1976.

Changing demographics have also impacted the educational landscape in North Carolina. The annual number of high school graduates is projected to increase substantially in the next decade, as shown in Figure 1. The majority of this growth is projected to come from Hispanic and African American students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education and lag behind their Caucasian peers in obtaining a high school diploma.

**Figure 1. North Carolina High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity, 1991-1992 to 2004-2005 (Actual), 2005-2006 to 2021-2022 (Projected)**



Source: WICHE Knocking at the Door Report: North Carolina, 2008

The CFNC partnership and website were created out of the need to address these changes and increase the number of North Carolina residents with a postsecondary degree. CFNC is a nonprofit partnership between Pathways of North Carolina, the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority, and College Foundation, Inc.

- Funded by the North Carolina General Assembly, **Pathways of North Carolina** is administered by the University of North Carolina General Administration. Created in 1999, its goal is to prepare every student in the state for a college education. Pathways provides tools, information, and services in three vital areas: career planning and exploration, academic planning and preparation, and financial information. Pathways is a partnership of the University of North Carolina, the North Carolina Community College System, North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. The University of North Carolina is a multi-campus University, consisting of all sixteen public four-year institutions and one constituent high school in North Carolina. All listings of the University of North Carolina or UNC refer to the multi-campus University, not any specific campus.
- The **North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA)** is a state agency established in 1965 to promote access to higher education. It administers grant, scholarship, and loan programs created under State and Federal law and is funded with governmental and private resources to help North Carolinians meet the cost of higher education at public four-year, public two-year, and independent colleges and universities in North Carolina. It also promotes access to higher education by informing students and families about paying for college, teaching educators about financial aid administration, and advocating for resources to support students.
- **College Foundation, Inc. (CFI)** is a nonprofit corporation that has been offering students and parents financial assistance since 1955. CFI is the central loan originator and servicer for North Carolina's Federal Family Education Loan Program for postsecondary education. CFI also serves as administrative agent for

a number of need-based grant programs for North Carolinians and for North Carolina's National College Savings and Investment Program.

Pathways of North Carolina was created in 1999 by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina in response to a charge from the North Carolina General Assembly to create a system of college application sharing among postsecondary institutions in order to increase the number of qualified North Carolina high school graduates participating in higher education. Pathways was designed as a statewide system of guidance information for students in grades 7-12 and their parents by providing information on three topics: 1) career planning and exploration; 2) academic preparation for postsecondary education and the workplace; and 3) student financial aid and other information about the affordability of college. To serve this purpose, it established an Internet website, [www.ncmentor.org](http://www.ncmentor.org), based on the Xap Corporation Mentor platform and an 800-number call center to provide information on obtaining a postsecondary education.

Independently, in May 2000, NCSEAA and CFI had established a website and 800-number of their own that were focused on providing information on paying for a college education. Very quickly, the three entities (Pathways, NCSEAA, and CFI) determined that North Carolina students and families would be best served through the establishment of one comprehensive resource that would address all aspects of planning, applying, and paying for college. The three agencies decided to aggregate their services under one banner, and in 2001 the partnership that is the College Foundation of North Carolina was formed. Its programs include the website, [CFNC.org](http://CFNC.org); two call centers, the CFNC Resource Center housed on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the CFNC Call Center at College Foundation, Inc. in Raleigh; and seven CFNC regional representatives assigned by telephone area code across the state.

The services offered by CFNC Technology & Internet Services, which maintains [CFNC.org](http://CFNC.org), are comprehensive and varied. CFNC Technology & Internet Services staff members are responsible for the overall vision and direction of the planning and applying sections of [CFNC.org](http://CFNC.org), which includes online admission applications to all 110 participating colleges and universities in North Carolina. Trainings and campus visits are provided free of charge to all participating institutions by the CFNC Campus Services Manager. These visits and trainings assist the colleges and universities in realizing the maximum benefit of participating in the

CFNC partnership. This is accomplished by employing targeted and refined recruitment and application strategies. CFNC Technology & Internet Services also provides significant supplementary tools to facilitate use of the online platform. These include software which assists in the uploading of student admission application, electronic high school transcripts, and student prospects.

The CFNC Resource Center provides a wealth of services to students, parents, and counselors. The CFNC Resource Center is responsible for training and outreach efforts to elementary, middle, and high schools; development and dissemination of all college access publications; Spanish services; and curriculum resources. The CFNC Resource Center's Call Center is staffed by one Spanish speaking and eight English speaking graduate students who serve as College Information Specialists. These individuals work 15-20 hours per week and are responsible for answering and responding to e-mail and telephone inquires Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. During the Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the CFNC Resource Center handled 13,072 calls.

The CFNC Call Center in Raleigh employs 14 counselors, 13 full-time and 1 part-time, to answer questions from students, families, and schools about paying for college. Translators in multiple languages are available through a third-party interpreter service utilized by the Call Center staff. The Call Center operates Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. It handles orders for publications dealing with financial aid, answers questions on the financial aid process, and provides technical assistance to CFNC.org users. During the Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the CFNC Call Center handled 154,349 calls.

CFNC regional representatives employed through CFI and located across North Carolina provide training, workshops, and presentations to community organizations and school groups from elementary students to college. During the Fiscal Year 2007-2008, they provided 2,141 programs.

CFI serves as the core information technology host of the CFNC.org website. Prior to April 2007, CFI was responsible for administration of all CFNC.org information related to paying or saving for college. An enterprise version of the Xap Mentor system was acquired in April 2007, at which time CFI technical staff assumed responsibility for the successful management of all CFNC.org website functions.

While the partnership shares responsibilities for overall coordination of CFNC.org, responsibility for managing content modules was assigned to specific partners to take advantage of their individual expertise. As such, NCSEAA and CFI jointly have primary responsibility for all content related to paying for college and Pathways of North Carolina has primary responsibility for all other content, including academic preparation, college selection and application, and career planning.

The successes of the combined program have been unparalleled – knowledge and use of the CFNC.org site continue to grow annually. CFNC.org has registered over 2.4 million users. The most recent student awareness study indicated 93% awareness among high school students in North Carolina and 88% awareness among parents of North Carolina middle and high school students (Bellomy Research, 2006). CFNC.org has a partnership with all 110 public and private North Carolina colleges as an application portal, with over 1.25 million college applications submitted online to date. CFNC.org was selected by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) as the sole partner and provider of electronic high school transcripts in the state. By Fall 2007, 88% of first-time freshmen students attending the University of North Carolina had a CFNC.org account, the majority of which were created during either the planning for college phase or while submitting an online admission application.

The fully representational nature of the College Foundation of North Carolina partnership has been fundamental to its success. The partners include institutions of public K-12 education, two-year and four-year public postsecondary education, independent colleges and universities, and state and private nonprofit providers of financial aid to students of higher education. This has been essential to the ability of CFNC.org to serve all students and families in North Carolina with comprehensive information.

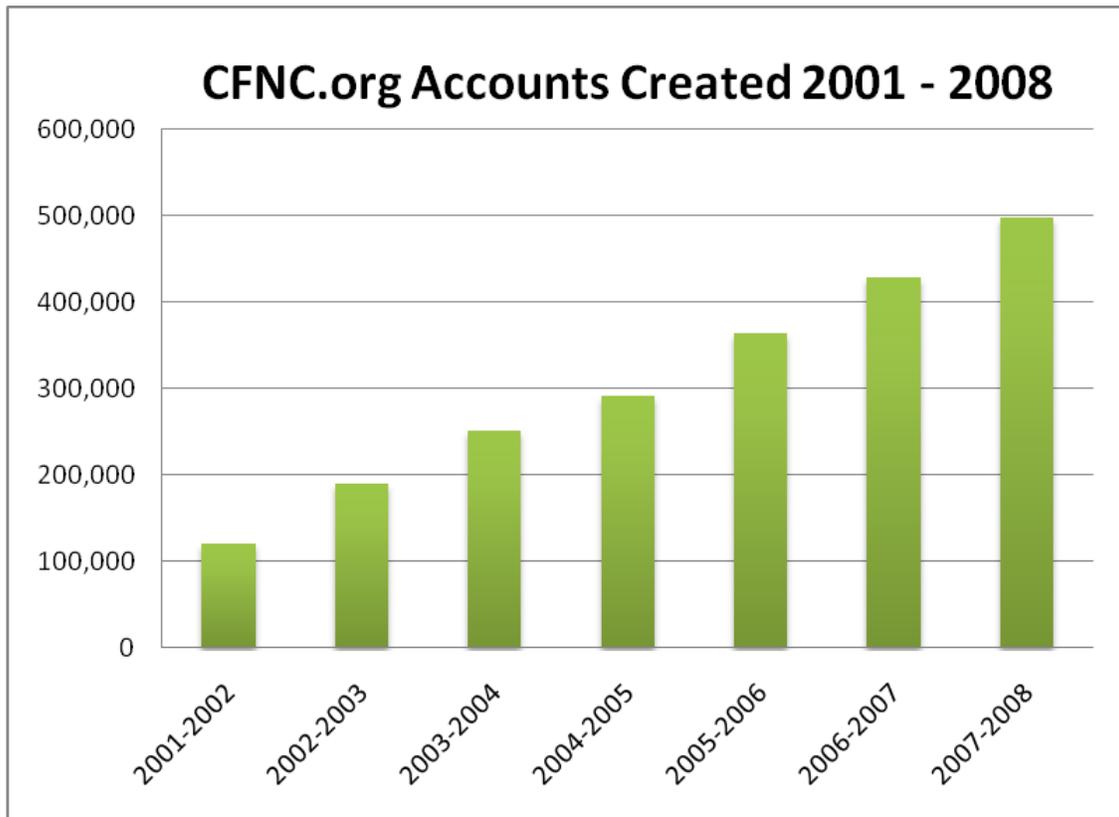
## II. The Study

This study approaches evaluation of CFNC.org activity from two perspectives. The first examines existing data and poses questions related to trends among CFNC.org account holders in their application, admission, enrollment, and graduation from North Carolina colleges and universities. The second considers the structure and effectiveness of the CFNC.org website design.

### A. CFNC.org Account Holder Analyses

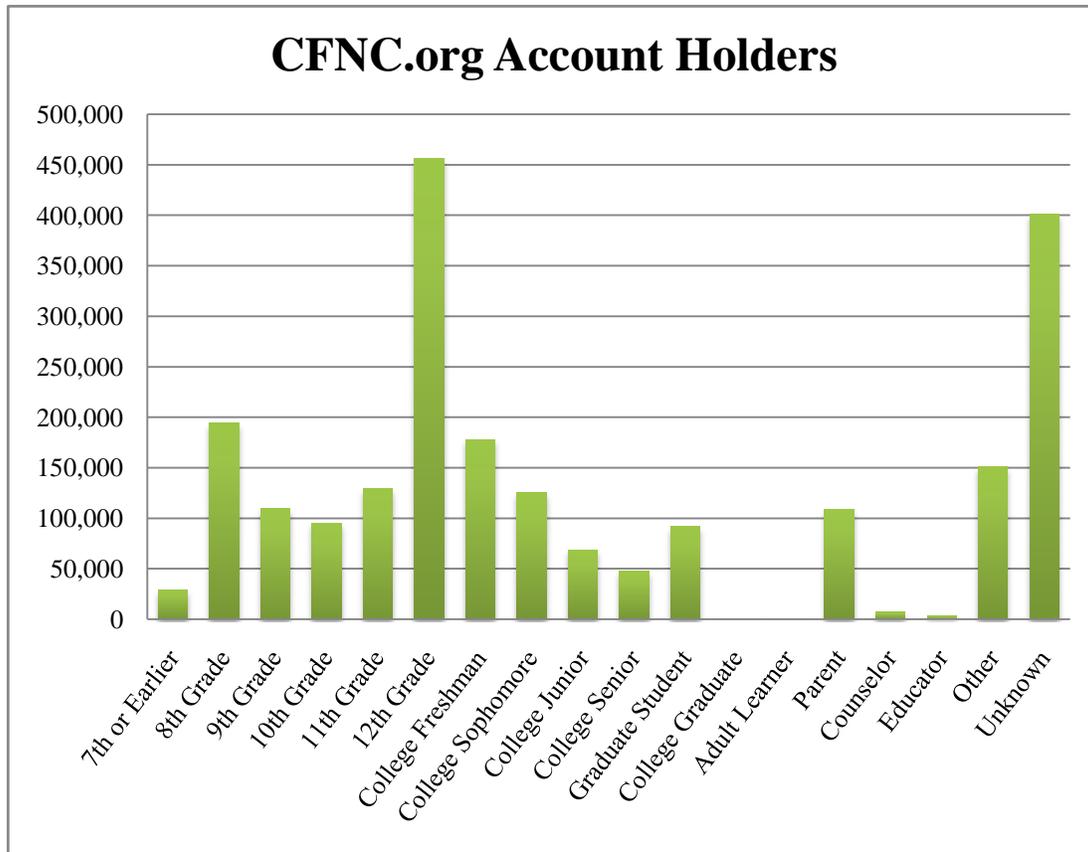
The number of CFNC.org account holders has trended steadily upward since the website was established in 2001, as demonstrated in Figure 2, with more than 2.4 million accounts created as of the date of publication.

**Figure 2. Number of CFNC.org Accounts Created Annually 2001 – 2008**



The largest account holder group is high school seniors preparing to apply to college for the first time. Figure 3 provides information on CFNC.org account holders by user type. These numbers represent cumulative totals since the inception of the CFNC partnership and website, CFNC.org.

**Figure 3. CFNC.org Account Holders by User Type Cumulative 2001 – 2008**



**B. CFNC.org Account Holders Attending the University of North Carolina**

One of the most meaningful ways to evaluate CFNC.org’s performance would be to measure its impact on college enrollment. The ability to perform accurate enrollment verification is essential for this type of evaluation. Historically, two factors have inhibited CFNC’s ability to access or collect the required data. The first was an inability to access unit-level student data prior to April 2007 as a result of limitations of the hosted software platform. This hurdle was removed by the installation of an Enterprise version of the CFNC.org site by the Technology Services group at College Foundation, Inc. The second impediment was the inability to access

enrollment records at all colleges and universities. Within the state of North Carolina, this would require agreements among the University of North Carolina, the North Carolina Community College System, and the thirty-six North Carolina independent colleges and universities. This would also not address all other North Carolina institutions, as well as all out-of-state colleges and universities. This challenge and possible solutions are discussed later in this report.

While CFNC.org does not currently have the ability to track whether or how many of its account holders go on to attend college, a review of data on the number and ethnic composition of first-time freshmen attending the University of North Carolina who have CFNC.org accounts provides some insight.

As shown in Table 1, the number and percentage of first-time freshmen attending any campus of the University of North Carolina and who have a CFNC.org account increased from 74.3% in Fall 2005 to 88.3% in Fall 2007. This demonstrates that the vast majority of students attending one of North Carolina’s sixteen four-year public universities have interacted with CFNC.org in preparing for college. Critical to this success has been the adoption of CFNC Online Admission Application exclusivity by thirteen of the sixteen University of North Carolina institutions. By 2005, all incoming first-time freshmen who applied online for admission to these thirteen institutions utilized the CFNC Online Admission Application, which means each had a CFNC.org account.

**Table 1. First-Time Freshmen at the University of North Carolina, Distribution of CFNC.org Account Holders**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total UNC First-Time Freshmen*</b>	<b>CFNC.org Account Holders</b>	<b>Account Holders as Percentage of Total</b>
Fall 2005	24,462	18,178	74.3%
Fall 2006	25,296	21,296	84.2%
Fall 2007	25,873	22,847	88.3%

\*UNC student data is the most recent data from the Division of Institutional Research and Analysis at the University of North Carolina General Administration.

Future research to examine similar data for students at North Carolina’s community colleges and independent colleges and universities will determine if similar patterns exist. Since all fifty-eight North Carolina Community College campuses use the CFNC.org Online Admission Application exclusively, high levels of students who are CFNC.org account holders can be expected. In contrast, 22 of the 36 North Carolina independent colleges and universities utilize the CFNC.org Online Admission Application exclusively so the percentage of their first-year freshman students holding CFNC.org accounts are hypothesized to be lower.

The distribution of CFNC.org account holders by gender closely mirrors the population of students in the freshman class and has changed little over the three years of the study period. Female students form a majority of first-time freshmen and hold a slightly larger majority of CFNC.org accounts, as show in Table 2.

**Table 2. First-Time Freshmen at the University of North Carolina, Distribution of CFNC.org Account Holders by Gender**

Year	Gender	Total UNC First-Time Freshmen		CFNC.org Account Holders		Percent Difference First-Time Freshmen vs. Account Holders
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Fall 2005	Female	13,742	56.2	10,435	57.4	(1.2)
	Male	10,720	43.8	7,743	42.6	1.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>24,462</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18,178</b>	<b>100</b>	
Fall 2006	Female	14,296	56.5	12,383	58.1	(1.6)
	Male	11,000	43.5	8,913	41.9	1.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>25,296</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21,296</b>	<b>100</b>	
Fall 2007	Female	14,519	56.1	13,147	57.5	(1.4)
	Male	11,354	43.9	9,700	42.5	1.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>25,873</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22,847</b>	<b>100</b>	

The distribution of CFNC.org account holders among first-time freshmen at all UNC campuses by ethnic group also closely mirrors the overall student population, as shown in Table 3. This is not surprising given most first-time freshmen held CFNC.org accounts.

**Table 3. First-Time Freshmen at the University of North Carolina, Distribution of CFNC.org Account Holders by Ethnic Group**

Year	Ethnic Group	Total UNC First-Time Freshmen		CFNC.org Account Holders		Percent Difference First-Time Freshmen vs. Account Holders
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Fall 2005	American Indian	299	1.2	204	1.1	0.1
	Asian	792	3.2	584	3.2	0.0
	African American	6,043	24.7	4,146	22.8	1.9
	Hispanic	539	2.2	409	2.2	0.0
	Caucasian	16,213	66.3	12,408	68.3	(2.0)
	Missing Data	576	2.4	427	2.3	0.1
	<b>Total</b>		<b>24,462</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>18,178</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Fall 2006	American Indian	253	1.0	207	1.0	0.0
	Asian	850	3.4	639	3.0	0.4
	African American	6,256	24.7	5,190	24.4	0.3
	Hispanic	619	2.4	530	2.5	(0.1)
	Caucasian	16,413	64.9	13,964	65.6	(0.7)
	Missing Data	905	3.6	766	3.6	0.0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>25,296</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>21,296</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Fall 2007	American Indian	303	1.2	268	1.2	0.0
	Asian	867	3.4	717	3.1	0.3
	African American	6,249	24.2	5,509	24.1	0.1
	Hispanic	718	2.8	631	2.8	0.0
	Caucasian	16,613	64.2	14,751	64.6	(0.4)
	Missing Data	1,123	4.3	971	4.3	0.0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>25,873</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>22,847</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The last analysis of UNC students who held CFNC.org accounts considered the distribution of first-time freshmen students and account holders by UNC constituent institution, as shown in Tables 4 through 6. It showed no noteworthy differences in the percentages of students holding CFNC.org accounts among students attending any of the 16 campuses.

**Table 4. First-Time Freshmen at the University of North Carolina, Distribution of CFNC.org Account Holders by Constituent Institution in Fall 2005**

UNC Campus	Total UNC First-Time Freshmen		CFNC.org Account Holders		Percent Difference First-Time Freshmen vs. Account Holders
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Appalachian State	2,184	8.9	1,859	10.2	(1.3)
Elizabeth City State	415	1.7	286	1.6	0.1
East Carolina	2,635	10.8	2,130	11.7	(0.9)
Fayetteville State	641	2.6	502	2.8	(0.2)
NC A&T	1,487	6.1	1,060	5.8	0.3
NC Central	836	3.4	642	3.5	(0.1)
NC State	3,823	15.6	2,753	15.1	0.5
UNC-Asheville	370	1.5	277	1.5	0.0
UNC-Charlotte	2,434	10.0	2,103	11.6	(1.6)
UNC-Chapel Hill	2,961	12.1	1,946	10.7	1.4
UNC-Greensboro	2,063	8.4	1,622	8.9	(0.5)
UNC-Pembroke	806	3.3	585	3.2	0.1
UNC-Wilmington	1,561	6.4	1,169	6.4	0.0
UNC School of the Arts	63	0.3	33	0.2	0.1
Western Carolina	1,393	5.7	1,089	6.0	(0.3)
Winston-Salem State	790	3.2	122	0.7	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,462</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>18,178</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Table 5. First-Time Freshmen at the University of North Carolina, Distribution of CFNC.org Account Holders by Constituent Institution in Fall 2006**

UNC Campus	Total UNC First-Time Freshmen		CFNC.org Account Holders		Percent Difference First-Time Freshmen vs. Account Holders
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	UNC Campus	
Appalachian State	2,332	9.2	2,108	9.9	(0.7)
Elizabeth City State	402	1.6	310	1.5	0.1
East Carolina	3,107	12.3	2,763	13.0	(0.7)
Fayetteville State	663	2.6	557	2.6	0.0
NC A&T	1,574	6.2	1,267	5.9	0.3
NC Central	674	2.7	558	2.6	0.1
NC State	4,126	16.3	3,307	15.5	0.8
UNC-Asheville	445	1.8	388	1.8	0.0
UNC-Charlotte	2,332	9.2	2,151	10.1	(0.9)
UNC-Chapel Hill	2,983	11.8	2,163	10.2	1.6
UNC-Greensboro	2,112	8.3	1,851	8.7	(0.4)
UNC-Pembroke	818	3.2	644	3.0	0.2
UNC-Wilmington	1,498	5.9	1,310	6.2	(0.3)
UNC School of the Arts	70	0.3	46	0.2	0.1
Western Carolina	1,379	5.5	1,241	5.8	(0.3)
Winston-Salem State	781	3.1	632	3.0	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,296</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21,296</b>	<b>100</b>	

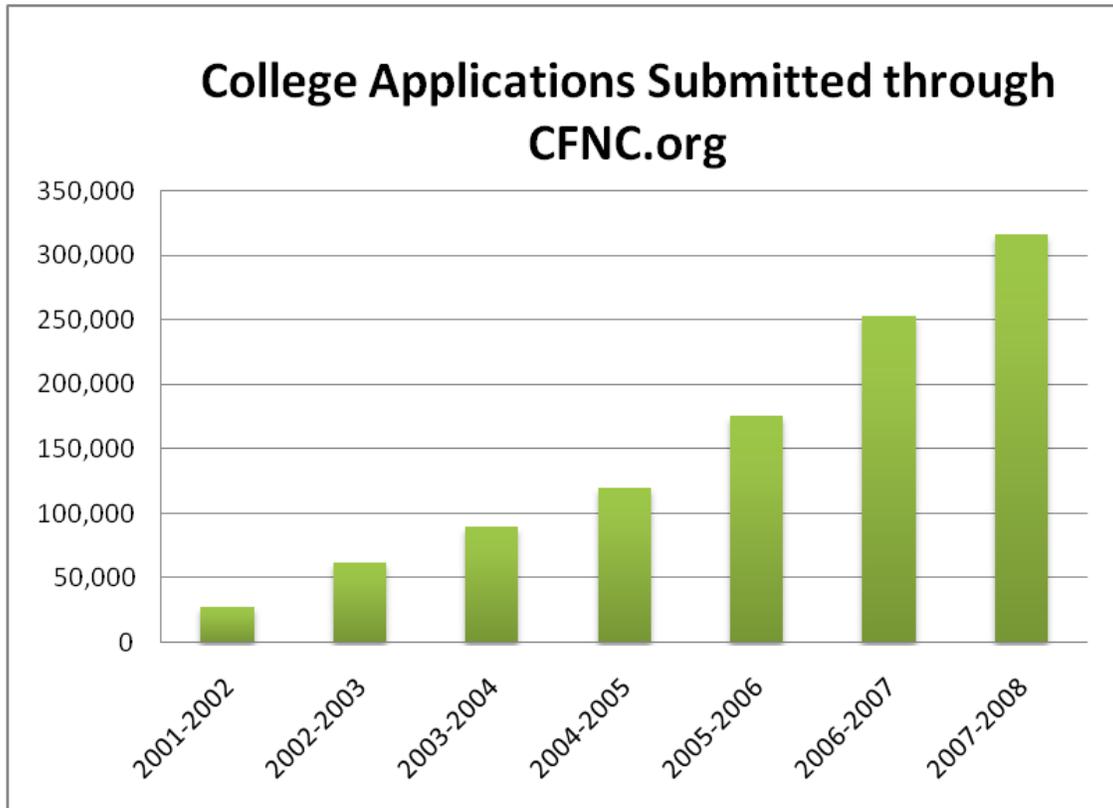
**Table 6. First-Time Freshmen at the University of North Carolina, Distribution of CFNC.org Account Holders by Constituent Institution in Fall 2007**

UNC Campus	Total UNC First-Time Freshmen		CFNC.org Account Holders		Percent Difference First-Time Freshmen vs. Account Holders
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Appalachian State	2,367	9.1	2,224	9.7	(0.6 )
Elizabeth City State	498	1.9	425	1.9	0.0
East Carolina	3,318	12.8	3,047	13.3	(0.5 )
Fayetteville State	786	3.0	671	2.9	0.1
NC A&T	1,216	4.7	1,040	4.6	0.1
NC Central	886	3.4	801	3.5	(0.1)
NC State	4,341	16.8	3,697	16.2	0.6
UNC-Asheville	452	1.7	417	1.8	(0.1)
UNC-Charlotte	2,478	9.6	2,333	10.2	(0.6)
UNC-Chapel Hill	3,009	11.6	2,309	10.1	1.5
UNC-Greensboro	2,142	8.3	1,898	8.3	0.0
UNC-Pembroke	936	3.6	813	3.6	0.0
UNC-Wilmington	1,508	5.8	1,410	6.2	(0.4)
UNC School of the Arts	74	0.3	55	0.2	0.1
Western Carolina	1,099	4.2	1,038	4.5	(0.3)
Winston-Salem State	763	2.9	669	2.9	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,873</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22,847</b>	<b>100</b>	

### C. CFNC.org and Applying to College

As mentioned previously, CFNC.org gives applicants to any participating North Carolina postsecondary institution the option to apply for admission online. All 110 eligible North Carolina postsecondary institutions accept the CFNC Online Admission Application and Electronic High School Transcript, with 89 of the 110 currently using or in the process of adopting the CFNC Online Admission Application exclusively. This online system streamlines the application process since the majority of required data fields are shared on all 110 of the college admission applications. As of the date of publication, CFNC.org account holders have submitted over 1,300,000 applications to attend college, with significant annual increases, as shown in Figure 4.

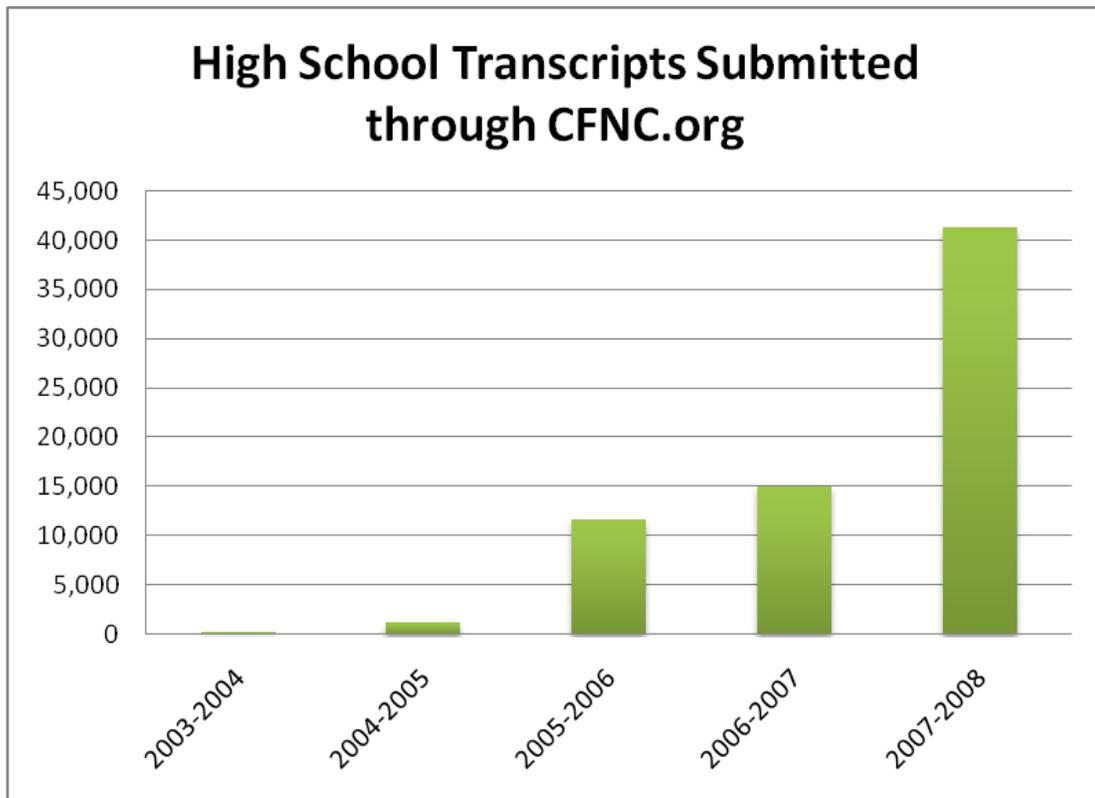
**Figure 4. College Applications Submitted through CFNC.org Annually 2001 – 2008**



## 1. CFNC.org Electronic High School Transcripts

CFNC was selected in 2003 by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) as the sole partner and provider of electronic high school transcripts in the state. NCDPI schools have been in the process of transitioning Student Information Management Systems to the newer North Carolina Window of Information on Student Education (NC WISE) platform. The project was begun in October 2004 and is being implemented incrementally, with the last schools scheduled to be transitioned in 2009. As a function of the partnership between CFNC and NCDPI, any high school that successfully transitions to the NC WISE system will automatically become eligible to send electronic high school transcripts. CFNC.org has currently implemented electronic transmission for 265 of the 523 North Carolina high schools. As of the date of publication, CFNC.org has processed over 100,000 electronic high school transcripts.

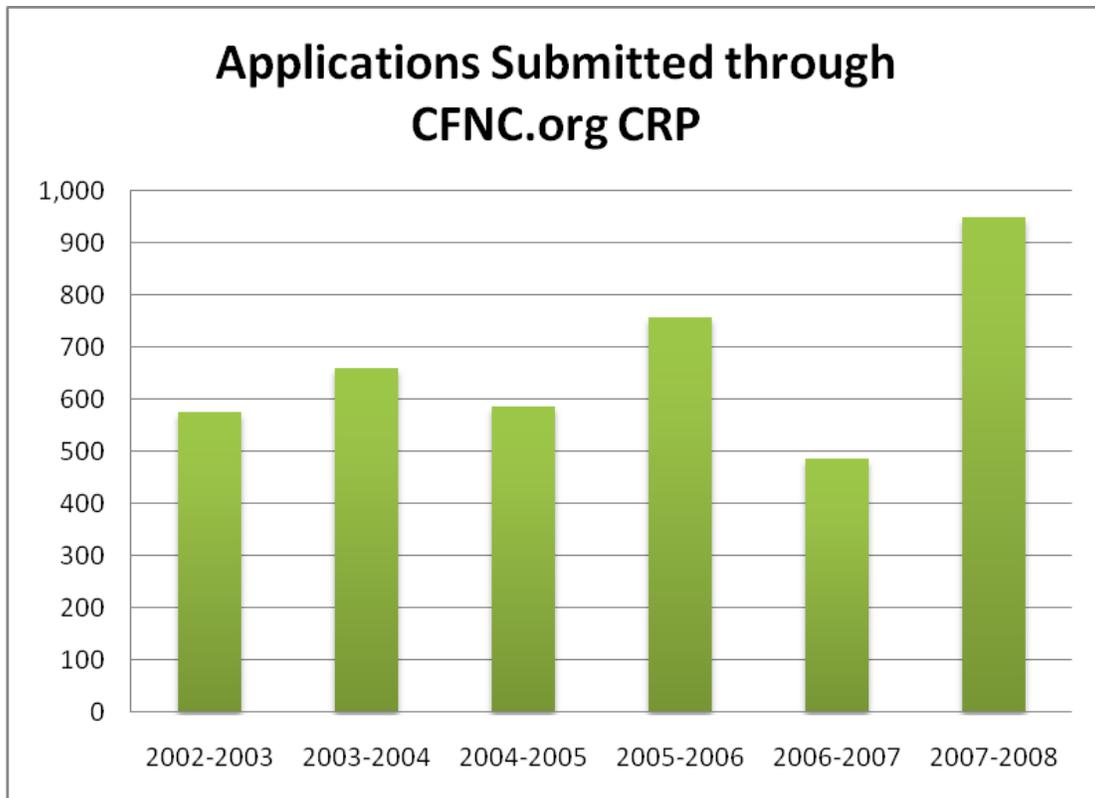
**Figure 5. High School Transcripts Submitted through CFNC.org Annually 2003 – 2008**



## 2. CFNC.org College Redirection Pool

CFNC.org features a College Redirection Pool (CRP) that provides an additional opportunity for, but is not limited to, denied applicants to be matched with a college they may not have initially considered. This service is provided during the later months of the application season to connect CRP students with North Carolina colleges and universities that have open admission slots. The CRP is open between April and August each year. Applicants through the CRP are guaranteed recruitment from at least one institution. These students often subsequently receive acceptance letters from the local community college, a private institution, and/or a public four-year institution.

**Figure 6. Applications Submitted through CFNC.org College Redirection Pool  
Annually 2002 – 2008**



### 3. CFNC College Application Week

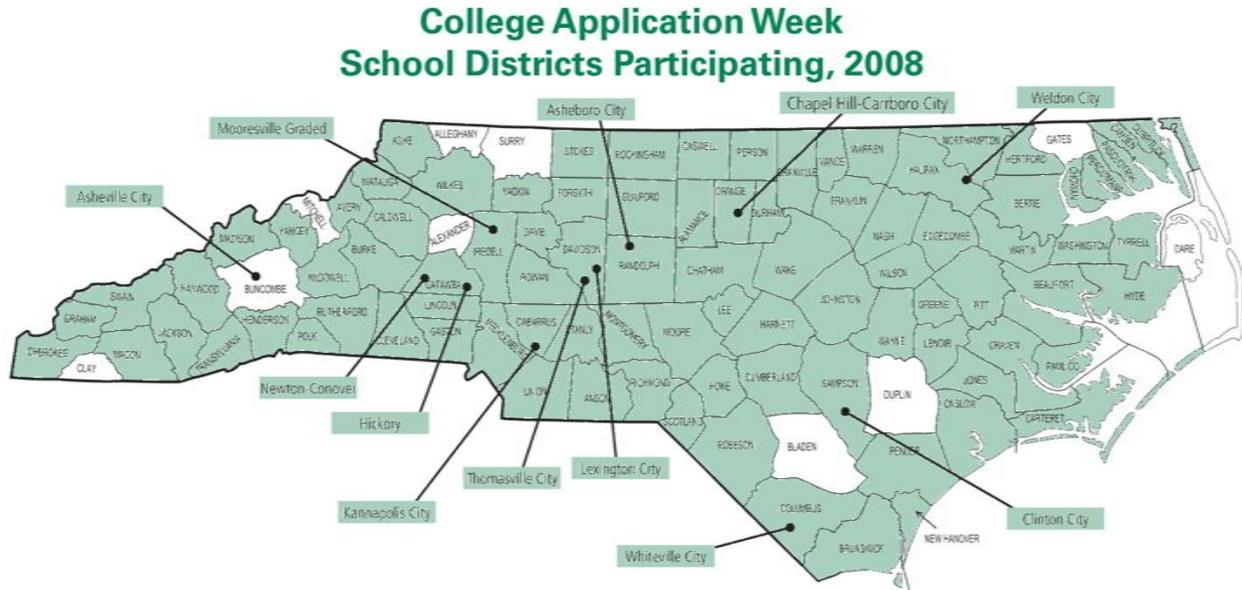
To capitalize on the strength of CFNC.org in facilitating application to college, the CFNC partnership has joined with the Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (CACRAO) to sponsor College Application Week each November. The purpose of College Application Week is to provide a high visibility, focused effort to encourage every graduating high school senior to apply to North Carolina colleges and universities online via CFNC.org. Special attention is given to reaching first-generation students and students who may not otherwise apply to college. Students with demonstrated financial need and for whom an application fee would create an undue burden are eligible for waivers of application fees during College Application Week at all 16 campuses of the University of North Carolina and all 36 private colleges and universities. Of the 36 private colleges and universities, 31 waived the application fee for all students during College Application Week, and five accepted qualified fee waivers. The 58 campuses of the North Carolina Community College System do not charge an application fee. More information on the North Carolina College Application Week is available at [www.cfnc.org/caw](http://www.cfnc.org/caw).

College Application Week began in 2005 with a pilot study at one high school. During that event, approximately 100 seniors applied to college online. Based on that success, committees and advisory councils were formed to help broaden College Application Week to serve all of North Carolina. In 2006, 15 high schools participated and 876 students submitted online college applications. By 2008, College Application Week had become a statewide event, with a commensurate leap in the numbers of students participating, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. CFNC College Application Week Summary Numbers**

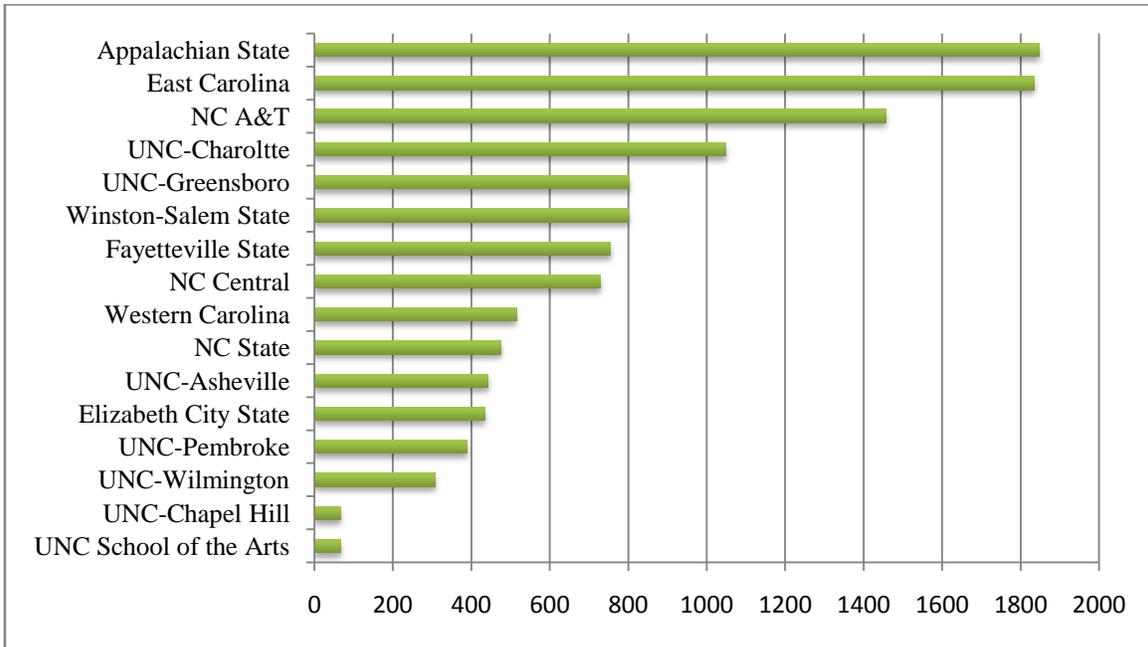
<b>Year</b>	<b>Participating High Schools</b>	<b>Participating Students</b>	<b>Applications Submitted</b>
2006	15	876	1,038
2007	109	12,808	21,445
2008	293	19,356	37,903
<b>Total</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>33,040</b>	<b>60,386</b>

**Figure 7. College Application Week 2008 Map of Participating School Districts**



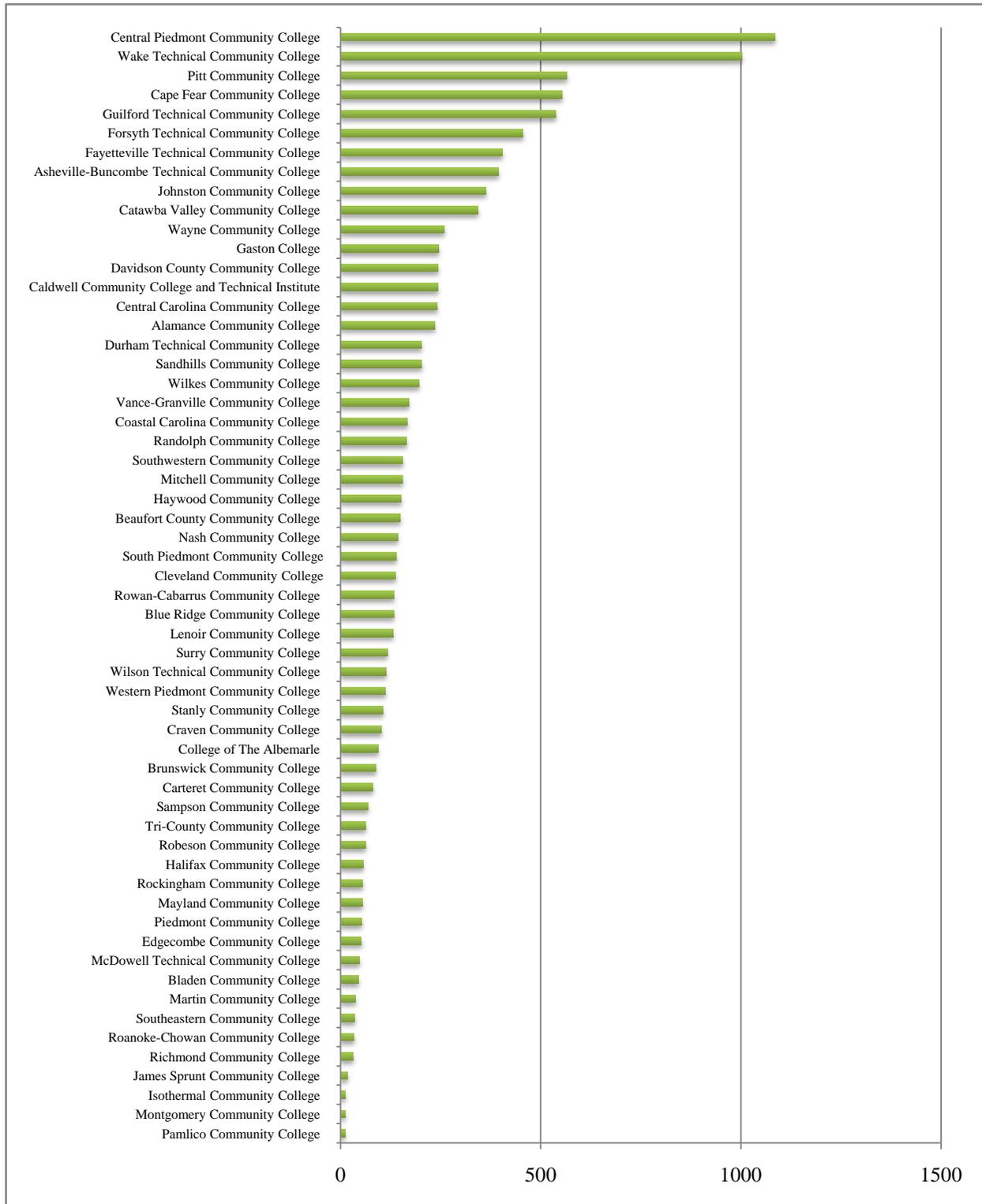
College Application week has grown to cover a broad geographic presence in North Carolina, as shown by the shaded school districts in Figure 7. As shown in Figures 8 through 10, every participating North Carolina institution received at least one application during the 2008 College Application Week event. A number of internal and external factors likely contributed to these numbers, including the size of the institutions’ freshman and transfer applicant pool, timing of fall admission application deadlines, campus use of the CFNC Online Admission Application exclusively, and proximity to College Application Week sites.

**Figure 8. Applications Submitted to University of North Carolina Constituent Institutions During College Application Week 2008**



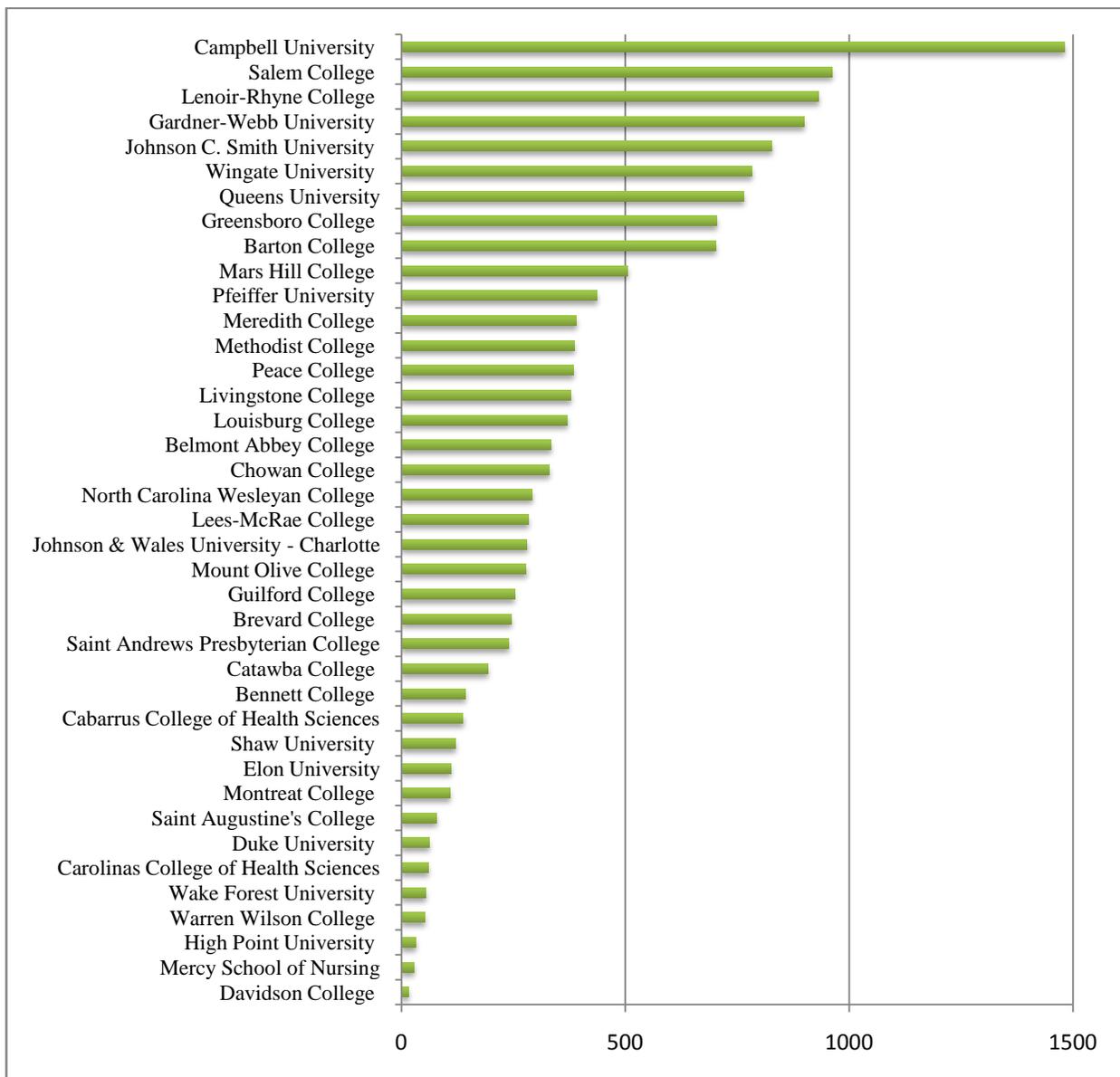
Of the 58 North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) campuses, Wake Technical Community College and Central Piedmont Community College each received over 1,000 applications, nearly double the number received by any other NCCCS campus. Since all 58 of the NCCCS campuses utilize the CFNC Online Admission Application exclusively, this appears to be related to the size of the institution and the total number of applications received.

**Figure 9. Applications Submitted to North Carolina Community Colleges During College Application Week 2008**



Thirty-one North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities waived their application fee during the 2008 College Application Week event. Those institutions received the majority of the submitted applications, with Campbell University receiving more than 1,400, nearly 50% more than the next highest. It is possible that waiving the application fee, in conjunction with exclusivity status, proximity to sites, and timing of admission deadlines, all had an impact on the dispersal of applications. This is illustrated in Figure 10.

**Figure 10. Applications Submitted to Member Institutions of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities During College Application Week 2008**



## **D. Future Directions: CFNC and College Admission, Enrollment, and Graduation**

### **1. Expanded Data Availability**

A desirable next step is to increase capabilities for tracking and analyses of college admission, enrollment, and graduation data for CFNC.org account holders. In 2008 a disclaimer was added to the CFNC.org privacy policy which permits tracking of college enrollment and retention data on individual CFNC.org account holders through the National Student Clearinghouse. This information will be available in aggregate following the Fall 2009 college semester. It will enable significant new research and evaluation capabilities, including consideration of:

- how many of the students who applied actually enrolled in college;
- where students enrolled;
- whether they are retained;
- if they transfer and where; and
- if and when they graduate.

These data will be invaluable in informing future enhancements to the CFNC.org website.

A statewide license for the National Student Clearinghouse would be an important addition to CFNC's research capabilities. It would enable consistent tracking of college enrollment and completion data for all students in pre-college programs in North Carolina. The University of North Carolina General Administration has initiated discussions with the National Student Clearinghouse regarding the development of a state-wide pre-college license, including feasibility and cost structures. North Carolina would like to become one of the first states to obtain such a license and participate in pilot testing.

### **2. Online Transfer Articulation System**

The University of North Carolina General Administration, the North Carolina Community College System, and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities are collaborating to develop and implement an online transfer articulation system within CFNC.org. This system will provide information to students, parents, and staff researching the transferability of various postsecondary courses. The development of this system has been made possible as a result of financial support provided by the College Access Challenge Grant Program.

The system will build upon the North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) which is designed to smooth transfer of students. The CAA governs the transfer of credits between the campuses of the North Carolina Community College System and the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina. The CAA provides certain assurances to the transferring student, including identifying community college courses that satisfy pre-major and general education requirements and courses that are appropriate for transfer as electives.

The project is being developed in phases. The first phase will provide course equivalency information for approximately 650 North Carolina Community College courses covered by the CAA Transfer Course List. The project will then expand to encompass all North Carolina Community College courses suitable for transfer to the UNC constituent institutions and the member institutions of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities. Latter phases will address the transfer of courses between senior institutions, provide greater integration with the existing CFNC.org enrollment processes, and incorporate degree audit functionality. The project began in August 2008 and is anticipated to be completed by January 2011.

### III. CFNC.org Web Trends Analyses

The CFNC.org website serves as the one-stop shop in North Carolina for all audiences for information on how to plan, apply, and pay for college. The site is currently utilized by the following clustered groups: pre-elementary students, elementary students, middle school students, high school students, undergraduate college students, graduate and professional students, adult learners, non-traditional students, individuals displaced from work, parents, grandparents, guardians, teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, and higher education faculty and staff.

The service-to-all approach is rooted in the nature of the CFNC partnership. Because the partners serve all students and families in North Carolina, the information provided must support the interests and needs of the widely diverse groups who form the constituencies of each partner. There is universal support among the partners to maintain the broad-based message philosophy.

The core question concerning CFNC.org is how to organize the information for the most efficient and effective presentation to users. Two structural options are:

- A **content-based** structure in which the information on the website is organized into logical subject-matter groupings, or modules, accessed by all users in the same way. For example, the CFNC Career Center module contains all information related to careers, regardless of whether the user is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader exploring what he or she wants to be when grown up, or a displaced worker searching for new career opportunities. A positive for this approach is that having all users find information in the same places simplifies building standard training structures and documents applicable to all user types. On the negative side, users see all information, not just what is specifically pertinent to them, which can result in information overload and difficulty in finding what they seek.
- A **role-based** approach offers dynamically changing content dependent on parameters defined by users, such as academic year, age, user type, etc. For example, a user who self-identifies as a high school student would see only high school-related information in the Student Planner module. The plus to this format is that users are presented with information directly applicable and useful to them. The negative is it requires the user to create an account with accurate self-identifying information, and be logged into the system. It also means a user who

has created an account as a parent but is looking for information pertinent to their 5<sup>th</sup> grader could have difficulty locating it.

CFNC.org is currently organized on a content basis. The original decision to adopt this structure was a result of the underlying technical architecture of the Xap Mentor platform on which Pathways built its original website. The next version of the Xap software, entitled Transition Premium, scheduled for release in late 2009 or early 2010, contains certain items that are more role-based in nature which would enable changing the format of CFNC.org if desired.

As a part of this grant, existing quantitative information was reviewed to determine what benefits might accrue if the CFNC.org site switched from a content-based to a role-based model. The analysis revealed that the existing evaluation tool, WebTrends logs, does not provide information on possible site design alternatives so there was insufficient information to make such a decision. As such, the CFNC partnership will explore alternate methodologies for addressing this question in the future, potentially including focus groups, user-interface testing, and usability studies.

## **Background on Data**

The individual CFNC partners carry primary responsibility for managing content on different components, or modules, of the website. Behind the scenes and invisible to users, CFNC.org resides on two separate banks of servers, both maintained at College Foundation, Inc. One set, utilizing software from Xap Corporation, named Mentor Enterprise, maintains the Career Center, Student Planner, College Fair, and Online Applications modules. A second set maintains the Paying for College and NC 529 Plan College Savings modules.

The WebTrends analyses performed for this study cover the period from April 13, 2007 through June 28, 2008. This start date was selected because in April 2007 CFNC elected to utilize WebTrends analytics software to monitor all website activity. Analysis of the data is complicated by the fact that two servers, CFI and Xap (Mentor), are utilized in the hosting of CFNC.org. This makes comparative analysis between pages difficult. The version of WebTrends in use during the study period tracked activity on the two server banks separately.

In November 2008, subsequent to the study period, WebTrends was upgraded to enable the reporting of visits to the CFNC.org web portal to become more reflective of actual end user navigation. Users are now counted as a visitor only once per session regardless of how they

navigate within the web portal. An additional benefit of the upgrade is the ability to access unit-level data which is necessary to answer the most salient research questions. The trend information presented here serves as an entry-point for identifying issues and questions which CFNC is now much better positioned to investigate.

The WebTrends analyses for key CFNC.org webpages is provided in outline form below. For each webpage the following information is detailed:

1. The URL of the page.
2. The server hosting the page; this will be either CFI or Xap (Mentor).
3. The date range of the report.
4. A description of the page and its target audience.
5. A trend line graph of the webpage visits.
6. The number of times the webpage was viewed by visitors.
7. The number of visits to the page. A visit is a series of actions that begins when a visitor views the first page from the server, and ends when the visitor leaves the site or remains idle beyond the idle-time limit. The default idle-time limit is thirty minutes.
8. The average length of time the specified webpage was viewed (the format is mm:ss - minutes:seconds).
9. The overall rank of the webpage based on number of visits occurring over the specified time frame. The overall rank is also specific to the server producing the page; therefore, there is a discrete overall ranking for pages housed on the CFI server as well as the Mentor Server. Direct comparison between the two servers on the basis of overall rank is currently not possible. There are currently 1,138 pages indexed on the CFI server and 1,925 pages indexed on the Xap (Mentor) server.

The following webpages were included in the analyses since they represent the core functions related to planning and applying for college. WebTrends logs do not track webpages that require a user login. Therefore, the pages chosen for analysis are all public.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Page</b>
A. About CFNC .....	30
B. Contact CFNC.....	31
C. My CFNC.....	32
1. My CFNC → My Transcripts .....	33
2. My CFNC → Ask an Expert.....	34
D. Career Center .....	35
1. Career Center → Bridges Planning Tools.....	36
2. Career Center → Career Key .....	37
3. Career Center → Information for Students and Parents .....	38
4. Career Center → Lists of Careers .....	39
5. Career Center → Student Career Matching Assistant .....	40
6. Career Center → Fastest Growing Careers.....	41
7. Career Center → Teacher Education .....	42
8. Career Center → Nursing Careers .....	43
9. Career Center → Ask an Expert .....	44
E. Student Planner .....	45
1. Student Planner → Timeline.....	46
2. Student Planner → Transfer Student Planner Introduction .....	47
3. Student Planner → College Preparation Opportunities .....	48
4. Student Planner → College Entrance Requirements .....	49
5. Student Planner → Financial Literacy .....	50
6. Student Planner → North Carolina Virtual Public School .....	51
7. Student Planner → Ask an Expert .....	52
F. College Fair.....	53
1. College Fair → Comparative View .....	54
2. College Fair → Campus Tours .....	55

3. College Fair → Matching Assistant.....	56
4. College Fair → Ask an Expert.....	57
G. Online Applications .....	58
1. Online Applications → Application Manager .....	59
2. Online Applications → Loan Applications.....	60
3. Online Applications → College Funds Installment Payment Plan.....	61
4. Online Applications → Ask an Expert .....	62
H. CFNC Español .....	63

## A. About CFNC

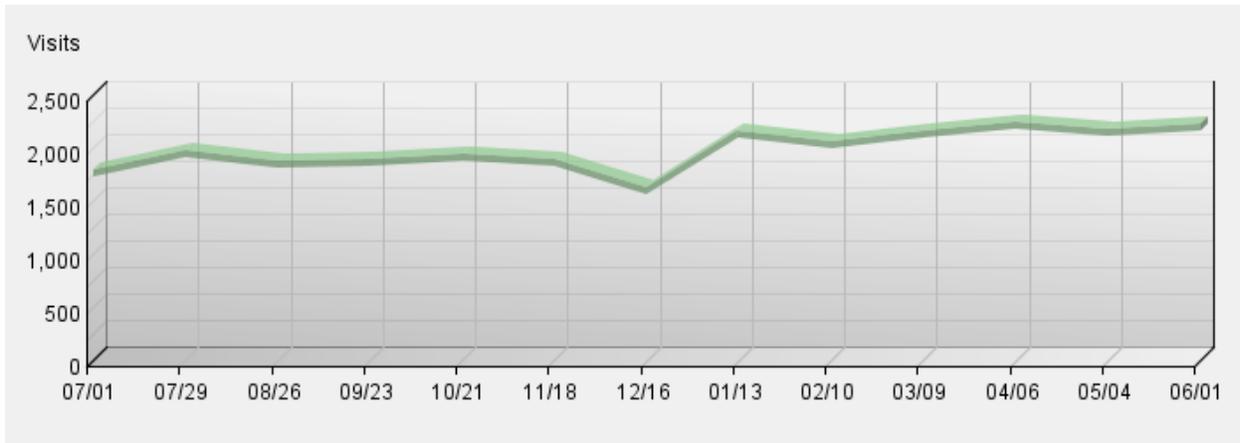
**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/about/info\\_about.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/about/info_about.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **About CFNC** is linked directly from the CFNC.org homepage. Its primary purpose is to provide information about CFNC.org and its partner entities. The target audience of the page is any individual utilizing CFNC.org resources.

### Visits



## About CFNC

Views: 108,229

Visits: 25,514

Average Time Viewed: 00:16

Overall Rank: 60

## B. Contact CFNC

**URL:** <http://www.cfnc.org/global/contact.jsp>

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Contact CFNC** is linked directly from the CFNC.org homepage. Its primary purpose is to provide information about how to contact the various CFNC.org partner entities, including the phone number for the CFNC Call Center. The target audience of the page is any individual utilizing CFNC.org resources.

### Visits



## Contact CFNC

Views: 185,660

Visits: 95,353

Average Time Viewed: 01:19

Overall Rank: 17

### C. My CFNC

**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/site/mycfnc/mycfnc\\_start.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/site/mycfnc/mycfnc_start.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** My CFNC is linked directly from the CFNC.org homepage. It represents one of the seven primary section tabs. Its primary purpose is to provide information about the various pieces of information that can be saved while utilizing the CFNC.org site. The target audience of the page is any individual utilizing CFNC.org resources.

#### Visits



#### My CFNC

Views: 1,088,049

Visits: 636,513

Average Time Viewed: 00:18

Overall Rank: 4

## 1. My CFNC → My Transcripts

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/ExternalScripts/My\\_CFNC/transcripts.asp](http://www1.cfnc.org/ExternalScripts/My_CFNC/transcripts.asp)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **My CFNC – My Transcripts** is linked directly from **My CFNC**. Its primary purpose is to provide information about the CFNC Electronic High School Transcript System, including a list of participating high schools and required information. Users may continue through to request or monitor the status of their electronic high school transcripts directly from this page. The target audience of the page is any individual utilizing the CFNC Electronic High School Transcript System.

### Visits



## My CFNC → My Transcripts

Views: 104,180

Visits: 75,825

Average Time Viewed: 00:03

Overall Rank: 59

## 2. My CFNC → Ask an Expert

**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/mycfnc/ask\\_cfnc.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/mycfnc/ask_cfnc.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **My CFNC – Ask an Expert** is linked directly from **My CFNC**. Its primary purpose is to provide a mechanism by which users can obtain additional information or assistance about the resources available in **My CFNC**. Both e-mail and phone contact information is provided. The target audience of the page is any individual experiencing difficulty with **My CFNC**.

### Visits



### My CFNC → Ask an Expert

Views: 95,177

Visits: 15,457

Average Time Viewed: 00:11

Overall Rank: 83

## D. Career Center

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Career\\_Center/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Career_Center/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Career Center** is linked directly from the CFNC.org homepage, and represents one of the seven primary section tabs. Its primary purpose is to provide tools and information about career options. The target audience of the page is any individual researching or exploring career information.

### Visits



### Career Center

Views: 673,970

Visits: 223,731

Average Time Viewed: 00:13

Overall Rank: 19

## 1. Career Center → Bridges Planning Tools

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Career\\_Center/CFNC\\_Bridges\\_Tools/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Career_Center/CFNC_Bridges_Tools/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Bridges Planning Tools** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide links to and information about the Bridges suite of Career Planning Tools. The target audience of the page is any individual researching or exploring career information. This page was first launched in October 2007.

### Visits



## Career Center → Bridges Planning Tools

Views: 55,859

Visits: 12,280

Average Time Viewed: 00:26

Overall Rank: 178

## 2. Career Center → Career Key

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Career\\_Center/Career\\_Key/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Career_Center/Career_Key/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Career Key** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide information about the **Career Key**, which generates interest assessments. The target audience of the page is for individuals exploring their career interests.

### Visits



### Career Center → Career Key

Views: 66,723

Visits: 36,684

Average Time Viewed: 00:08

Overall Rank: 101

### 3. Career Center → Information for Students and Parents

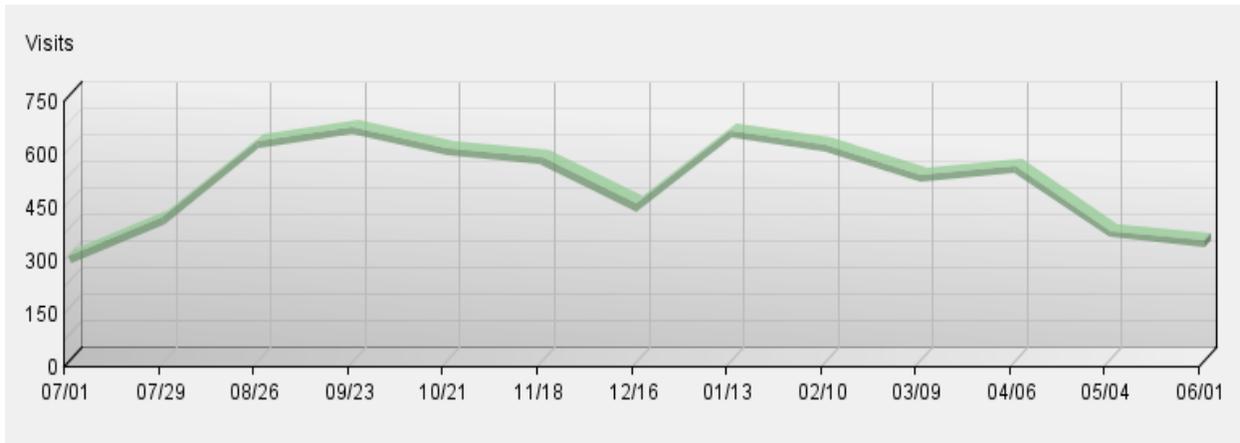
**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Career\\_Center/Information\\_for\\_Students\\_and\\_Parents/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Career_Center/Information_for_Students_and_Parents/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Information for Students and Parents** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide role-based aggregating of **Career Center** resources. The target audience of the page is middle school or high school students and parents.

#### Visits



#### Career Center → Information for Students and Parents

Views: 7,961

Visits: 6,455

Average Time Viewed: 00:17

Overall Rank: 245

#### 4. Career Center → Lists of Careers

**URL:** [https://www1.cfnc.org/ExternalScripts//Career\\_Center/default.asp](https://www1.cfnc.org/ExternalScripts//Career_Center/default.asp)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Lists of Careers** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide information on various careers delineated by occupational cluster.

The target audience of the page is any individual researching potential careers.

#### Visits



#### Career Center → Lists of Careers

Views: 259,552

Visits: 84,246

Average Time Viewed: 00:03

Overall Rank: 53

## 5. Career Center → Student Career Matching Assistant

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Career\\_Center/Student-Career\\_Matching\\_Assistant.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Career_Center/Student-Career_Matching_Assistant.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Student Career Matching Assistant** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide a mechanism by which users can have potential careers filtered by a variety of variables, including salary, required education, etc. The target audience of the page is any individual researching potential careers.

### Visits



### Career Center → Student Career Matching Assistant

Views: 233,976

Visits: 32,839

Average Time Viewed: 00:17

Overall Rank: 108

## 6. Career Center → Fastest Growing Careers

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Career\\_Center/Fastest\\_Growing\\_Careers.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Career_Center/Fastest_Growing_Careers.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Fastest Growing Careers** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide information about the fastest growing careers in North Carolina. The target audience of the page is any individual researching potential careers.

### Visits



### Career Center → Fastest Growing Careers

Views: 42,025

Visits: 30,142

Average Time Viewed: 01:00

Overall Rank: 112

## 7. Career Center → Teacher Education

**URL:** <http://www.cfnc.org/career/TeacherEd/teacher.jsp>

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Teacher Education** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide information about North Carolina teaching opportunities, and also serves as a gateway for all related subpages. The target audience of the page is any individual researching potential teaching careers.

### Visits



### Career Center → Teacher Education

Views: 16,313

Visits: 9,607

Average Time Viewed: 01:15

Overall Rank: 133

## 8. Career Center → Nursing Careers

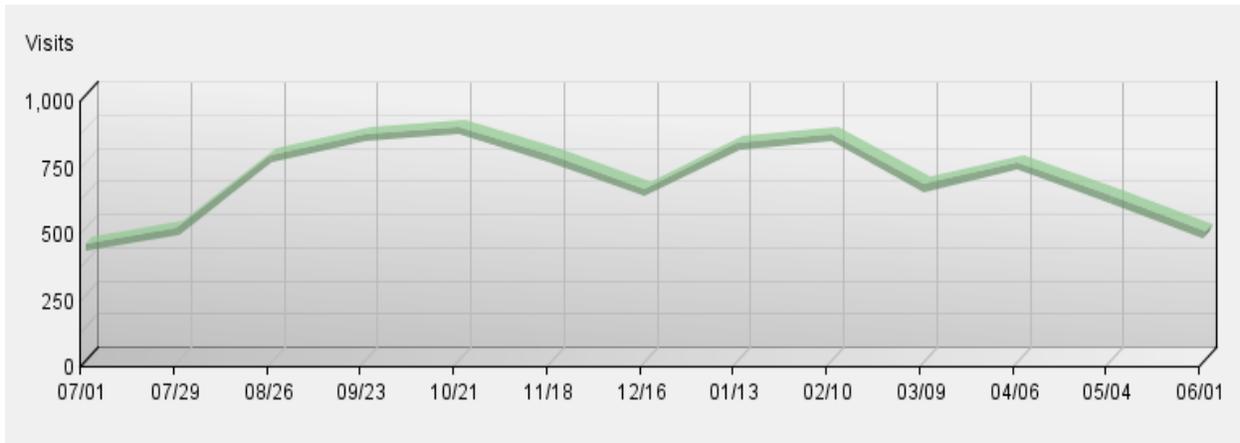
**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Career\\_Center/Nursing\\_Careers/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Career_Center/Nursing_Careers/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Nursing Careers** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide information about North Carolina nursing opportunities, and it also serves as a gateway for all related subpages. The target audience of the page is any individual researching potential nursing careers.

### Visits



## Career Center → Nursing Careers

Views: 11,178

Visits: 8,824

Average Time Viewed: 00:25

Overall Rank: 212

## 9. Career Center → Ask an Expert

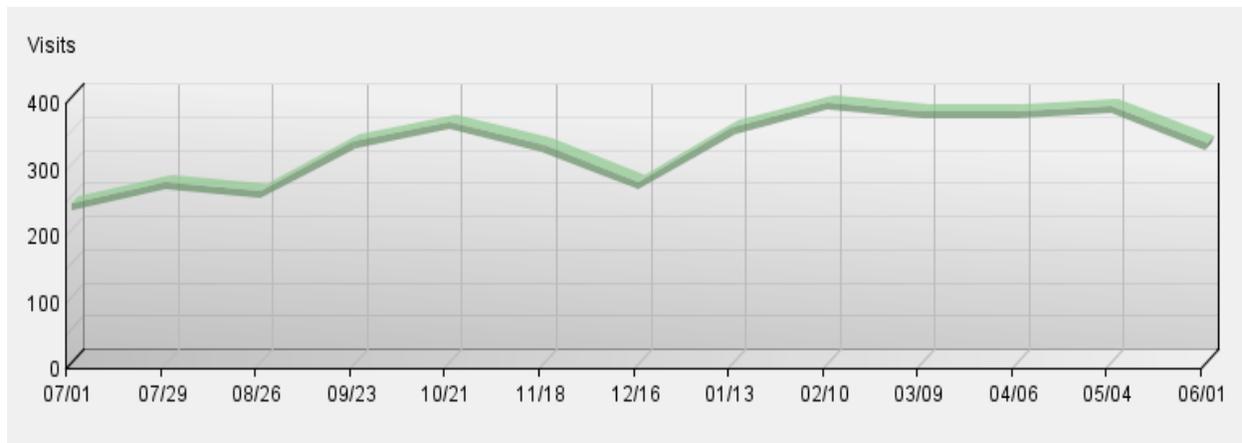
**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/career/ask\\_career.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/career/ask_career.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Career Center – Ask an Expert** is linked directly from the **Career Center**. Its primary purpose is to provide a mechanism by which users can obtain additional information or assistance about the resources available in the **Career Center**. Both e-mail and phone contact information is provided. The target audience of the page is any individual experiencing difficulty with the **Career Center**.

### Visits



### Career Center → Ask an Expert

Views: 83,263

Visits: 4,202

Average Time Viewed: 00:03

Overall Rank: 199

## E. Student Planner

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Student\\_Planner/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Student_Planner/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Student Planner** is linked directly from the CFNC.org homepage, and represents one of the seven primary section tabs. Its primary purpose is to provide college and academic preparation and planning. The target audience of the page is any middle or high school student engaging in academic preparation.

### Visits



### Student Planner

Views: 283,548

Visits: 149,279

Average Time Viewed: 00:14

Overall Rank: 37

## 1. Student Planner → Timeline

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Student\\_Planner/Student\\_Planner\\_Timeline/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Student_Planner/Student_Planner_Timeline/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Timeline** is linked directly from the **Student Planner**. Its primary purpose is to provide a college preparation timeline. The target audience of the page is any high school student engaged in college planning.

### Visits



## Student Planner → Timeline

Views: 22,760

Visits: 17,183

Average Time Viewed: 00:17

Overall Rank: 151

## 2. Student Planner → Transfer Student Planner Introduction

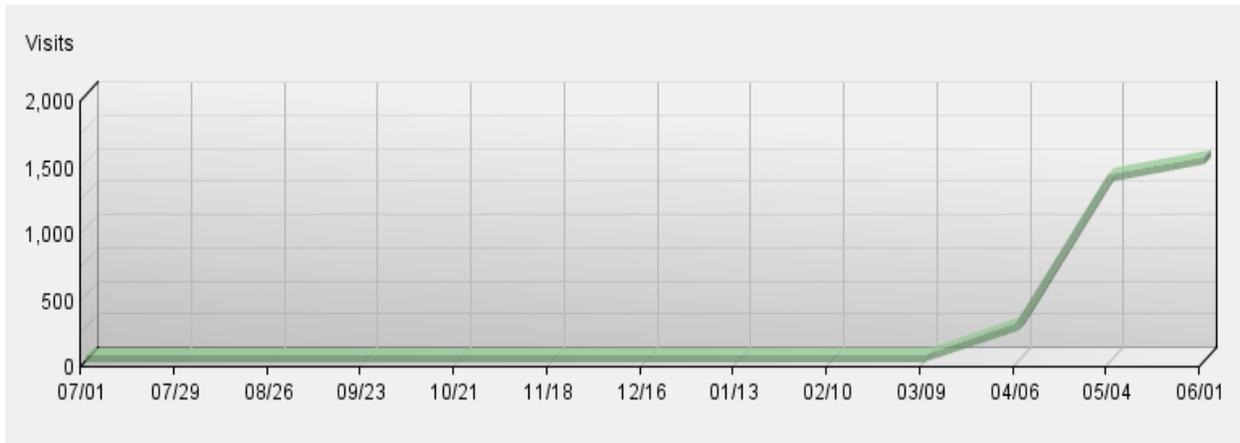
**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Student\\_Planner/Transfer\\_Student\\_Planner/Introduction\\_-\\_Transfer\\_Planner.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Student_Planner/Transfer_Student_Planner/Introduction_-_Transfer_Planner.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Transfer Student Planner** is linked directly from the **Student Planner**. Its primary purpose is to provide information about transferring between colleges and universities. The target audience of the page is any high school or college student who will potentially transfer course credits. This page was created in March 2008.

### Visits



## Student Planner → Transfer Student Planner Introduction

Views: 4,554

Visits: 3,089

Average Time Viewed: 00:37

Overall Rank: 353

### 3. Student Planner → College Preparation Opportunities

**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/site/planner/college\\_preparation/college\\_preparation\\_search.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/site/planner/college_preparation/college_preparation_search.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **College Preparation Opportunities** is linked directly from the **Student Planner**. Its primary purpose is to provide a searchable database of pre-college access programs in North Carolina. The target audience of the page is any middle or high school student interested in pre-college activities.

#### Visits



### Student Planner → College Preparation Opportunities

Views: 193,843

Visits: 16,249

Average Time Viewed: 00:09

Overall Rank: 80

#### 4. Student Planner → College Entrance Requirements

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/Student\\_Planner/College\\_Entrance\\_Requirements.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/Student_Planner/College_Entrance_Requirements.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **College Entrance Requirements** is linked directly from the **Student Planner**. Its primary purpose is to provide information about minimum entrance requirements for North Carolina colleges and universities. The target audience of the page is any middle or high school student engaged in college planning.

#### Visits



#### Student Planner → College Entrance Requirements

Views: 35,228

Visits: 27,541

Average Time Viewed: 01:06

Overall Rank: 117

## 5. Student Planner → Financial Literacy

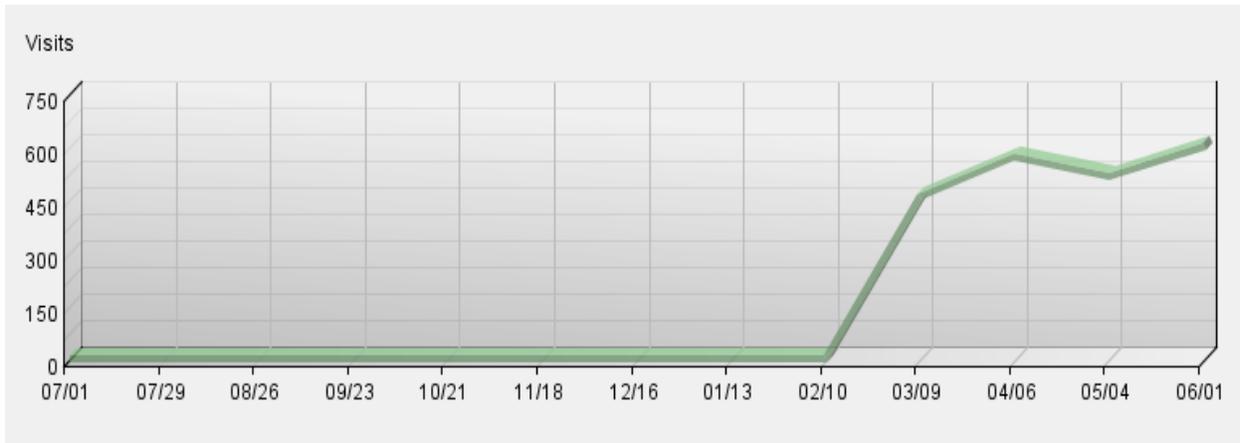
**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/paying/financial\\_literacy.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/paying/financial_literacy.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Financial Literacy** is linked directly from the **Student Planner**. Its primary purpose is to provide interactive courses on how to manage finances. The target audience of the page is any high school or college student interested in making good financial decisions. This page was created in February 2008.

### Visits



### Student Planner → Financial Literacy

Views: 31,083

Visits: 2,152

Average Time Viewed: 00:05

Overall Rank: 308

**6. Student Planner → North Carolina Virtual Public School**

**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/planner/virtual\\_school.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/planner/virtual_school.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **North Carolina Virtual Public School** is linked directly from the **Student Planner**. Its primary purpose is to provide information about North Carolina's online high school. The target audience of the page is any high school student interested in online coursework.

**Visits**



**Student Planner → North Carolina Virtual Public School**

Views: 82,201

Visits: 3,814

Average Time Viewed: 00:03

Overall Rank: 217

## 7. Student Planner → Ask an Expert

**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/planner/ask\\_planner.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/planner/ask_planner.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Student Planner – Ask an Expert** is linked directly from the **Student Planner**. Its primary purpose is to provide a mechanism by which users can obtain additional information or assistance about the resources available in the Student Planner. Both e-mail and phone contact information is provided. The target audience of the page is anyone experiencing difficulty with the Student Planner.

**Visits**



## Student Planner → Ask an Expert

Views: 82,337

Visits: 3,595

Average Time Viewed: 00:02

Overall Rank: 222

## F. College Fair

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/College\\_Fair/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/College_Fair/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **College Fair** is linked directly from the CFNC.org homepage; it represents one of the seven primary section tabs. Its primary purpose is to provide information about North Carolina colleges and universities. The target audience of the page is any student interested in learning more about specific postsecondary institutions.

### Visits



### College Fair

Views: 404,818

Visits: 188,153

Average Time Viewed: 00:13

Overall Rank: 31

## 1. College Fair → Comparative View

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/College\\_Fair/Comparative\\_View.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/College_Fair/Comparative_View.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Comparative View** is linked directly from the **College Fair**. Its primary purpose is to allow users to directly compare institutions on a variety of characteristics, including enrollment, housing, etc. The target audience of the page is anyone interested in comparing institutions.

### Visits



## College Fair → Comparative View

Views: 163,035

Visits: 66,344

Average Time Viewed: 00:40

Overall Rank: 64

## 2. College Fair → Campus Tours

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/College\\_Fair/Campus\\_Tours.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/College_Fair/Campus_Tours.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Campus Tours** is linked directly from the **College Fair**. Its primary purpose is to provide detailed information about institutional cost, attendance, location, etc. The target audience of the page is anyone interested in learning detailed information about specific institutions.

### Visits



### College Fair → Campus Tours

Views: 3,431,641

Visits: 218,848

Average Time Viewed: 00:29

Overall Rank: 21

### 3. College Fair → Matching Assistant

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/College\\_Fair/Matching\\_Assistant/\\_default.aspx](http://www1.cfnc.org/College_Fair/Matching_Assistant/_default.aspx)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Matching Assistant** is linked directly from the **College Fair**. Its primary purpose is to provide a mechanism by which users can filter institutions on specified criteria. The target audience of the page is anyone interested in exploring institutions based upon personal preferences.

**Visits**



### College Fair → Matching Assistant

Views: 47,509

Visits: 16,096

Average Time Viewed: 00:28

Overall Rank: 156

#### 4. College Fair → Ask an Expert

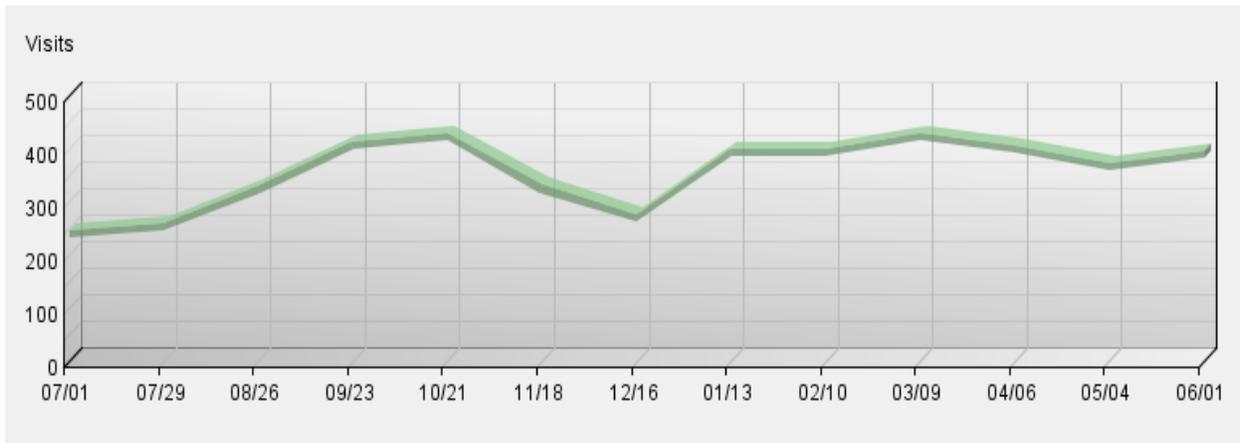
**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/fair/ask\\_fair.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/fair/ask_fair.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **College Fair – Ask an Expert** is linked directly from the **College Fair**. Its primary purpose is to provide a mechanism by which users can obtain additional information or assistance about the resources available in the College Fair. Both e-mail and phone contact information is provided. The target audience of the page is anyone experiencing difficulty with the **College Fair**.

#### Visits



#### College Fair → Ask an Expert

Views: 84,558

Visits: 4,584

Average Time Viewed: 00:03

Overall Rank: 191

## G. Online Applications

**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/onlineapps/info\\_onlineapps.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/onlineapps/info_onlineapps.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Online Applications** is linked directly from the CFNC.org homepage, and represents one of the seven primary section tabs. Its primary purpose is to provide mechanisms for various online applications, including college admission and electronic high school transcripts. The target audience of the page is anyone interested in utilizing an established online application system.

### Visits



### Online Applications

Views: 630,958

Visits: 380,794

Average Time Viewed: 00:18

Overall Rank: 6

## 1. Online Applications → Application Manager

**URL:** [http://www1.cfnc.org/ExternalScripts/Online\\_Applications/College\\_Admission/default.asp](http://www1.cfnc.org/ExternalScripts/Online_Applications/College_Admission/default.asp)

**Server:** Xap (Mentor)

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Application Manager** is linked directly from **Online Applications**. Its primary purpose is to provide a landing page and information for the over 110 online admission applications. The target audience of the page is anyone interested in applying to college online.

### Visits



## Online Applications → Application Manager

Views: 409,014

Visits: 248,109

Average Time Viewed: 00:03

Overall Rank: 13

## 2. Online Applications → Loan Applications

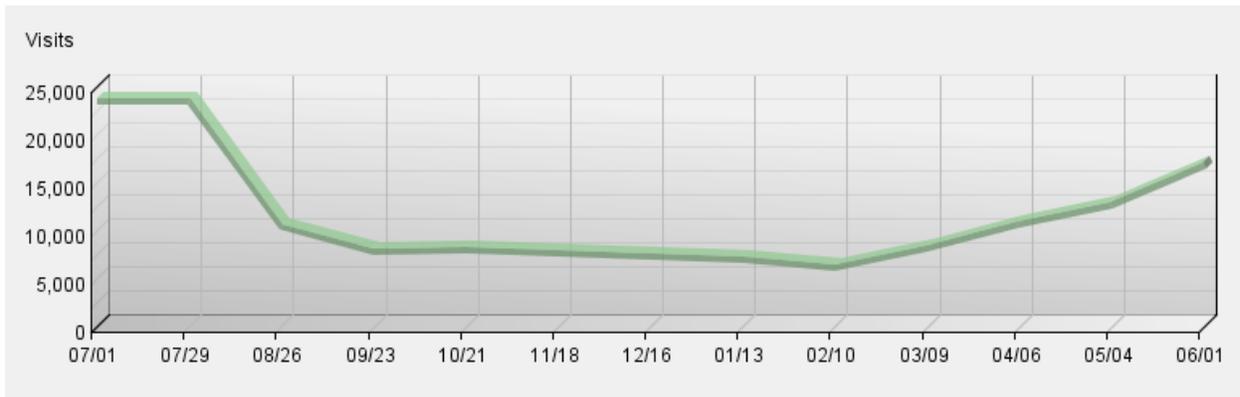
**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/onlineapps/financial\\_aid.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/onlineapps/financial_aid.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Loan Applications** is linked directly from **Online Applications**. Its primary purpose is to assist students and parents in applying for loans. The target audience of the page is anyone interested in utilizing loans to finance a college education.

### Visits



### Online Applications → Loan Applications

Views: 310,206

Visits: 150,292

Average Time Viewed: 00:22

Overall Rank: 11

### 3. Online Applications → College Funds Installment Payment Plan

**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/site/onlineapps/cfipaymentplan/cfipaymentplan\\_start.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/site/onlineapps/cfipaymentplan/cfipaymentplan_start.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **College Funds Installment Payment Plan** is linked directly from **Online Applications**. Its primary purpose is to provide students and parents an installment payment plan option at participating institutions. The target audience of the page is anyone interested in utilizing the installment plan to finance their college education.

**Visits**



### Online Applications → College Funds Installment Payment Plan

Views: 152,017

Visits: 48,922

Average Time Viewed: 00:17

Overall Rank: 38

#### 4. Online Applications → Ask an Expert

**URL:** [http://www.cfnc.org/onlineapps/ask\\_onlineapps.jsp](http://www.cfnc.org/onlineapps/ask_onlineapps.jsp)

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **Online Applications – Ask an Expert** is linked directly from **Online Applications**. Its primary purpose is to provide a mechanism by which users can obtain additional information or assistance about the resources available in **Online Applications**. Both e-mail and phone contact information is provided. The target audience of the page is anyone experiencing difficulty with **Online Applications**.

**Visits**



#### Online Applications → Ask an Expert

Views: 129,683

Visits: 44,303

Average Time Viewed: 00:25

Overall Rank: 41

## H. CFNC Español

**URL:** <http://www1.cfnc.org/Espanol/Introduccion.aspx>

**Server:** CFI

**Report Range:** July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 through June 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Description:** **CFNC Español** is linked directly from the CFNC homepage. This section of the site provides Spanish translations for key college planning website services. The target audience is Spanish speaking family members of students.

### Visits



### CFNC Español

Views: 7,774

Visits: 3,106

Average Time Viewed: 00:21

Overall Rank: 351

## IV. Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The collaborative approach taken by North Carolina with the CFNC.org website is based around three fundamental themes that prospective college students consider:

- (1) Plan: What do I need to do to be prepared to go to college? How can I learn what courses different colleges expect me to have taken? Are there minimum admission requirements?
- (2) Apply: What do I need to do to apply to college? Can I apply online? What is the cost to apply? Do I need to visit a campus for an interview?
- (3) Pay: Can I afford to go to college? What are the financial aid options available to me?

The CFNC.org mantra of “*Helping You Plan, Apply, and Pay for College*” directly addresses these three themes. North Carolina’s experience since CFNC was founded in 2001 offers numerous recommendations that can be of value to other states as they seek to develop their own strategies for increasing college access.

### **A. Recommendation #1: Build and sustain broad partnerships and high levels of collaboration among all education interests.**

The fully representational nature of the CFNC partnership has been essential to its ability to serve all students and families in North Carolina with comprehensive information. The CFNC partnership includes virtually every sector of the education community in the state, including the University of North Carolina (4-year public universities), the North Carolina Community College System (2-year public colleges), North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (private 2- and 4-year colleges and universities), the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (public K-12 education), and the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority and College Foundation, Inc. (public and private nonprofit providers of student financial aid).

The development and ongoing success of the partnership is rooted in North Carolina’s long history of collaborative support for education in general and higher education specifically. The three higher education sectors, public universities, public community colleges, and private colleges and universities, know each plays an essential role in educating North Carolina’s citizens, thereby helping to manage competition among the three.

The power of a legislative mandate should also not be underestimated. In 1999, the North Carolina General Assembly required the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina to create a system of college application sharing among postsecondary institutions in order to increase the number of qualified North Carolina high school graduates participating in higher education and proposed that they cooperate with the State Board of Community Colleges and with the private colleges and universities in North Carolina to do so. This legislation encouraged the creation of Pathways of North Carolina, the initial partnership which brought all of the education interests to the table to begin working collaboratively on college access issues.

During its initial years, the partnership was nurtured by a leadership commitment to travel the state and personally engage knowledgeable resource people and opinion leaders at schools and colleges to participate in developing the design and content of the website and supporting programming. This built buy-in early in the life of the project.

Other important contributors to the ongoing strength of the partnership include keeping the members informed of CFNC's value as demonstrated through results, such as the dramatic growth in the number of CFNC accounts and activity levels cited previously, and an unwavering commitment to ensuring that CFNC offers comprehensive information and serves *all* North Carolina students and families in an effort to meet the needs of all partners and their constituents.

## **B. Recommendation #2: Provide a comprehensive internet-based platform and complementary call-center support.**

CFNC's design as a comprehensive, universally-accessible resource is fundamental to its success. It not only informs students and parents about all aspects of planning for college; it enables them to accomplish essential tasks easily that are related to applying and paying for college.

The CFNC.org electronic portal provides a variety of features and functions important to planning and applying for college, including:

- Resources available to all student groups, with a focus on students in grades 7 through 12;
- Comprehensive career counseling and planning resources;
- Academic preparation and planning tools;
- Assistance in selecting appropriate high school courses;

- Entrance test (SAT, ACT) preparation;
- Admission applications for all North Carolina colleges and universities, including streamlined admission application data entry and field pre-population;
- No cost surcharge for use of the site; and
- No cost to participate (K-12 and postsecondary).

While not addressed in depth in this report, a host of information on how to pay for college is also on the website, including:

- A financial aid process overview and specific information on scholarships, grants, federal and alternative loans, and work study;
- Applications for State- and privately-funded scholarships and scholarship loans;
- Applications for federal and alternative loans;
- A financial aid estimator that helps students and families determine the amounts of State and federal grants for which they may qualify;
- A financial literacy course for high school and college students;
- A “Smart Borrower” calculator that reviews entering salaries in a variety of professions and compares planned student loan indebtedness to those salaries, warning if the debt level appears too high; and
- A system and service for college savings through North Carolina’s 529 savings plan.

Through CFNC.org, students and families can learn about careers and opportunities for pursuing higher education and perform tasks necessary to achieve it. Two specific examples of the website’s functionality in this area are worth noting as important to CFNC’s statewide adoption:

- 1) The online admission application is accepted by all 110 colleges and universities in North Carolina. The ability for students to enter their personal information one time and submit applications to multiple institutions is extremely attractive to students and families.
- 2) The electronic high school transcript is the official and exclusive system for students and is accepted by all 110 participating colleges and universities.

Partner leadership also recognized from the beginning the need to complement the CFNC.org electronic resource with opportunities for real-time human interaction. Two Call

Centers support a toll-free information line that is open from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Friday. English- and Spanish-speaking College Information Specialists and counselors are available to answer questions about any aspect of planning, applying, or paying for college. The availability of telephone resources helped to address concerns about computer access among lower income and rural groups as well as concerns about comfort levels in using computer resources among parents of first generation and others in at risk populations.

**C. Recommendation #3: Build a brand and commit to a comprehensive marketing program to build awareness and understanding.**

Shortly after the CFNC partnership was formed in 2001, it entered into a contract with a professional marketing firm to provide guidance on establishing College Foundation of North Carolina, or CFNC, as the brand for college access information and in marketing its services to North Carolina. They developed a brand position statement that “College Foundation of North Carolina is the best source for information and services to help North Carolina students and parents with planning, applying, and paying for college.” The initial marketing objectives were to: 1) create awareness of CFNC and the CFNC.org website among the target audiences; 2) increase understanding of the information and services offered on the CFNC.org website and through the toll-free number; and 3) increase usage of the CFNC.org website and services.

The marketing strategies adopted to pursue these objectives were to:

- Utilize a combination of media advertising (television, radio, print, and billboards) direct marketing (mailings to students and parents), and in-school marketing (posters, mouse pads, links for school websites, and literature) to build awareness among all target audiences;
- Build awareness through strong visual continuity. Brand standards, including appropriate use of logos, color schemes, fonts, photography, and other visuals, helped to unify the appearance of all CFNC materials and make them readily identifiable to audiences;
- Target specific messages (such as seasonal information) to professional and consumer audiences to increase understanding of the specific services and information available on the site; and

- Continue to promote the basic brand positioning in all communications while building awareness of specific information and services.

The CFNC partners made a deliberate decision to establish a recognizable brand. The target audiences included: all middle and high school students and their parents, all middle and high school educators, and all adults interested in continuing education. Once a foundation of general awareness had been established, the CFNC partners pursued a two-pronged approach of maintaining the message to all audiences while complementing it with additional segmented marketing messages for other underrepresented populations including African American, Hispanic, low income, first generation, and rural populations.

Market research completed in May 2004 revealed that overall awareness of CFNC was excellent at 81% for parents and 84% for students. While it was also high for all subgroups, there were some differences based on income levels and ethnicity: total awareness of CFNC was lower for parents with annual incomes under \$50,000 (79%) than for those with incomes above \$50,000 (91%). It was also lower among African American parents at 70% versus 90% for other ethnicities (Bellomy Research, 2004). These data supported the need for the two-pronged marketing plan, and the creative focus was fine-tuned to target the college access market as described above. This involved sharpening the message for these audiences to focus on the importance and possibility of college, targeting radio and television segments that exhibited higher viewership and listenership levels among the targeted market, using minority newspapers to reach parents, and using school newspapers to reach students and educators.

By 2006, total awareness among parents had climbed to 88% and students to 93%. The CFNC brand had become firmly entrenched. The emphasis on the access market had paid off. Total awareness of CFNC had grown to 88% among African American parents and 90% among African American students, with no statistically significant differences between African American and Caucasian populations. Similarly, awareness among parents of all incomes had climbed to range from 90% for incomes of less than \$35,000 to 95% for incomes of more than \$75,000, again with no statistically significant differences among the income groups (Bellomy Research, 2006).

Based on these results, the dual marketing strategy has been maintained, combining efforts to reach the broad target audiences of all middle and high school students and parents,

middle and high school educators, and adults interested in continuing education or retraining, with special focused efforts targeted toward underrepresented populations.

**D. Recommendation #4: Complement advertising with training and outreach activities.**

Early market research confirmed the widely held perception that students and parents perceive school counselors to be an important source of information for going to college. The partnership developed a multi-dimensional plan to educate school counselors on CFNC and its value as a resource for them as well as for students and parents. These efforts have been critical to the acceptance of CFNC as a college planning resource by K-12 school counselors as well as postsecondary admission and financial aid administrators. CFNC Resource Center staff and regional representatives provide training for elementary, middle, and high school counselors on career planning and preparing students to apply and attend college and on CFNC as the comprehensive resource needed to navigate the process. CFNC staff also provides free in-depth training for new financial aid administrators to learn and understand the complexities of administering federal and State grant, scholarship, and loan programs.

CFNC outreach activities include workshops and presentations to community organizations and school groups for parents and students. Also the annual Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Day is held each February. In 2009, more than 4,500 North Carolina high school seniors received help completing their FAFSA. More than 750 financial aid professionals, school counselors, and other volunteers assisted students and families with completing the FAFSA at 65 locations across the state.

While these training and outreach programs assist all constituencies in using the tools available to them through CFNC in a comprehensive way, they also serve to reinforce the CFNC brand image and its consistent message of “helping you plan, apply, and pay for college.”

**E. Recommendation #5: Address the needs of schools, colleges, students, and families.**

While the “you” in CFNC’s slogan on planning, applying, and paying for college is often interpreted as students and families, it is important to remember that CFNC provides essential services to schools and colleges. As previously cited, the CFNC online application for admission is accepted by all 110 participating colleges and universities in the state. Those institutions were therefore not required to create or purchase their own online application programs, yielding significant cost and effort savings for them. The aforementioned training for financial aid

administrators provides essential information and skill development for college and university staff at no charge to their institutions. CFNC's State grant information and delivery system, which is not visible to the public but is accessible to college aid administrators, enables them to process over \$350 million per year in student awards from five distinct State grant programs through one electronic portal.

These programs and functionalities, in combination with a commitment to excellent service from CFNC staff that see the schools and colleges as customers as well as partners, have further embedded CFNC in the college access landscape in North Carolina.

#### **F. Recommendation #6: Leverage financial resources from diverse sources.**

Initiating, developing, and maintaining CFNC has required significant financial investment. The CFNC partnership has been successful in securing resources from a variety of sources, including State appropriations, federal grants, private grants, and, most significantly, North Carolina's Federal Family Education Loan Program through the State Education Assistance Authority and College Foundation, Inc. Some of these grants and awards were specific to CFNC. In other cases, external grants to improve college access were leveraged to serve additional purposes.

The University of North Carolina General Administration, which serves as the fiscal and administrative agent for the Pathways of North Carolina program, has been awarded two successive GEAR UP State grants, beginning in 2000 and continuing through 2011. These grants have contributed a combined \$26 million dollars towards improving college access and have served 35 school districts across North Carolina. The GEAR UP North Carolina State Grant has a dollar for dollar match requirement through both state and local funds, including applicable expenditures made by Pathways of North Carolina and the CFNC partnership. CFNC.org serves as the home of the GEAR UP North Carolina website. GEAR UP North Carolina monies have also assisted with statewide dissemination of college access materials, including the translation of significant portions of CFNC.org into Spanish to serve the needs of this rapidly growing community. UNC General Administration serves as the administrative agent for the North Carolina College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP). This two-year grant (2008 – 2010) will contribute \$3.797 million dollars to college access programs, including the creation of the CFNC Transfer Articulation System, an expansion of the College Application Week and FAFSA

Day programs, and increased use of the National Student Clearinghouse for enrollment verification.

**G. Recommendation #7: Plan for sufficient staffing and share staff responsibilities.**

Responsibilities for planning and implementing CFNC programs and activities are shared among staff employed through UNC General Administration as administrative home to Pathways, the College Foundation, Inc. (CFI), and the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA). Spreading the duties among the partners not only provides accountability through shared responsibility (which helps to cement the partnership), it also facilitates sharing the cost.

CFNC's overall strategic vision and marketing efforts are directed by a group comprised of the leaders of Pathways, NCSEAA, and CFI. In addition, several committees with representation from each of the partners meet regularly to review progress and develop plans on such topics as communications and web management.

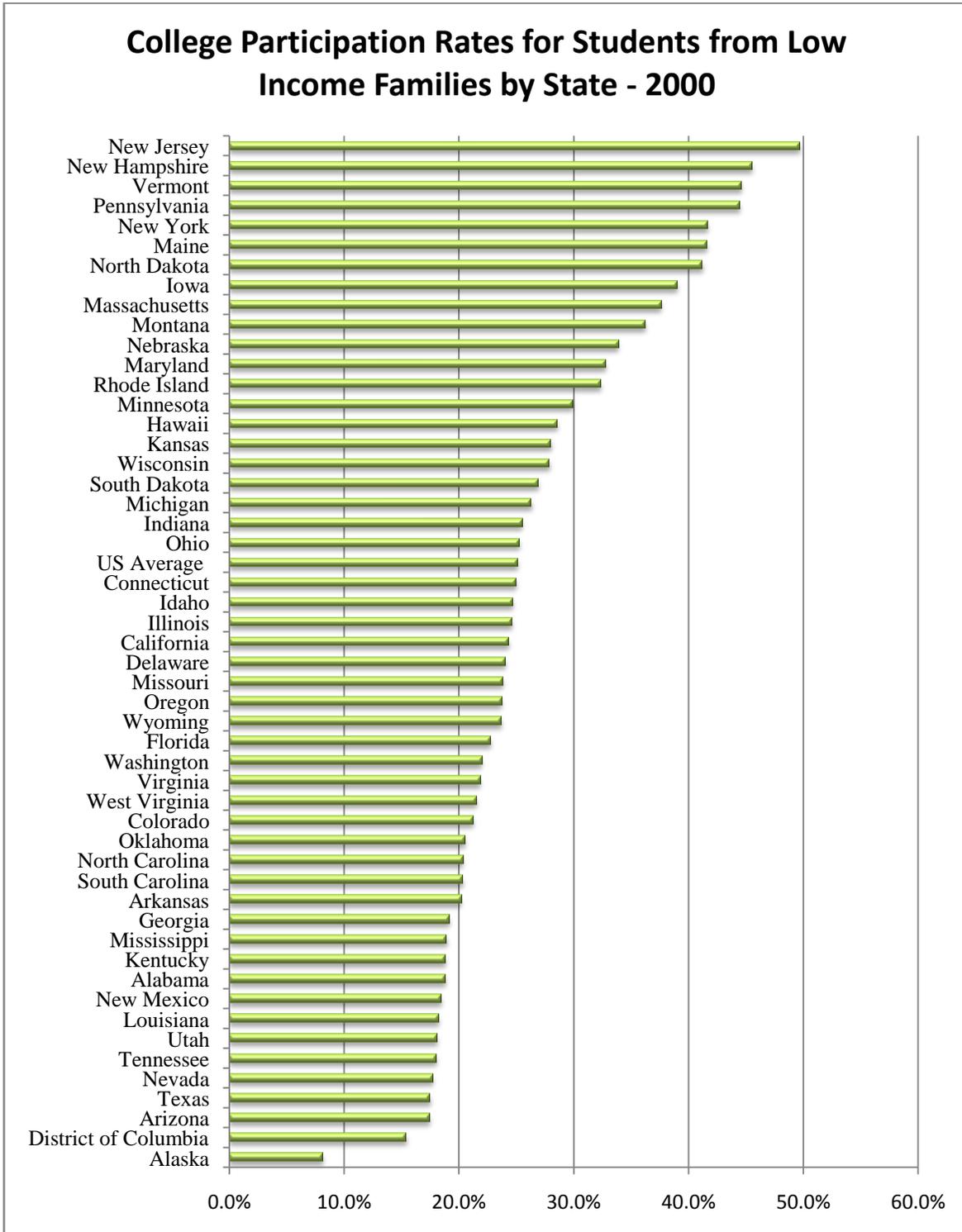
Staff support for managing CFNC.org has increased significantly over the ten years of its existence, primarily as a result of the transition from a vendor-hosted model to an enterprise platform. Administrative support in CFNC's department of Technology & Internet Services, which is responsible for content on the planning and applying portions of CFNC.org, originally consisted of a Director and an Administrative Assistant. As the website and its scope grew, so did the need for additional technical support. Currently there are six full-time positions: Director, Senior Associate Director, Campus Services Manager, Transfer Articulation System Manager, Business Analyst, and Administrative Support Associate. These positions work directly with the 110 participating colleges and universities. College Foundation, Inc. staff, including a Technical Support Manager, two Content Specialists, a Database Analyst, and a Quality Assurance Analyst, also provides technical development and infrastructure support for the planning and applying portions of the CFNC.org site.

Senior staff at CFI and NCSEAA provides support for marketing program planning and implementation as well as coordination of outreach activities. The Resource Center and Call Center staff are employed through both UNC General Administration and CFI. Staff at CFI and NCSEAA also carry full responsibility for planning the content and providing technical support for the Paying for College section of CFNC.org.

## **H. Conclusion**

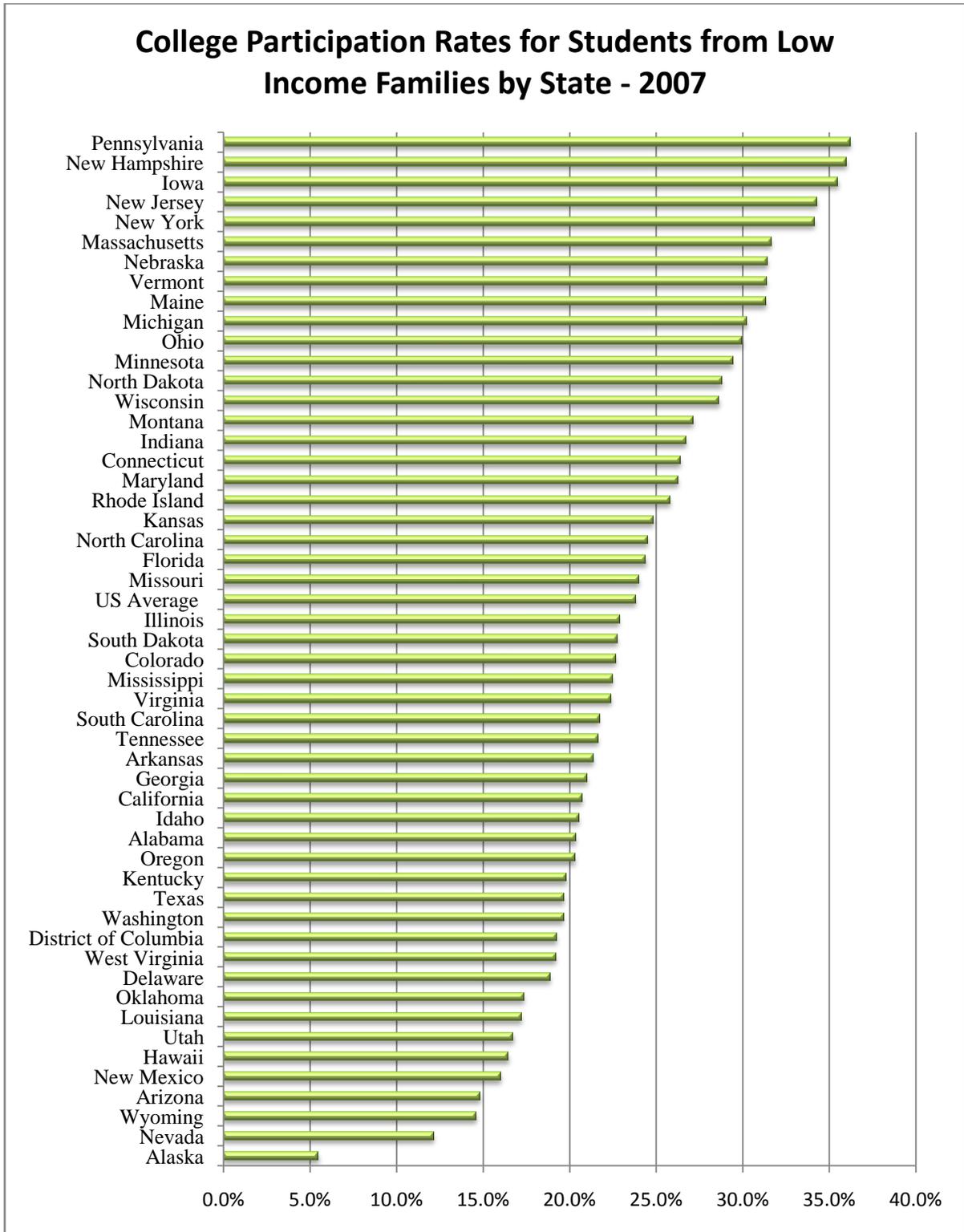
The success of College Foundation of North Carolina has been demonstrated through significant growth in its activity levels: numbers of accounts, site visits, admission applications submitted, and electronic high school transcripts requested. More importantly, in the last ten years North Carolina has seen significant increases in the college participation rate for students from low income families. As shown in Figure 11, in 2000, the year prior to the launch of the CFNC partnership and website, North Carolina ranked 36<sup>th</sup> in the United States, with 20.3% of students from low income families participating in college. Figures 12 and 13 show that by 2007, college participation among this population in North Carolina had increased to 24.5%, resulting in a ranking of 21<sup>st</sup> and placing North Carolina second in the nation in its rate of improvement. It is anticipated that North Carolina will continue to see improvements in college participation rates as use of the CFNC.org tools and services increase.

**Figure 11. College Participation Rates for Students from Low Income Families by State – 2000**



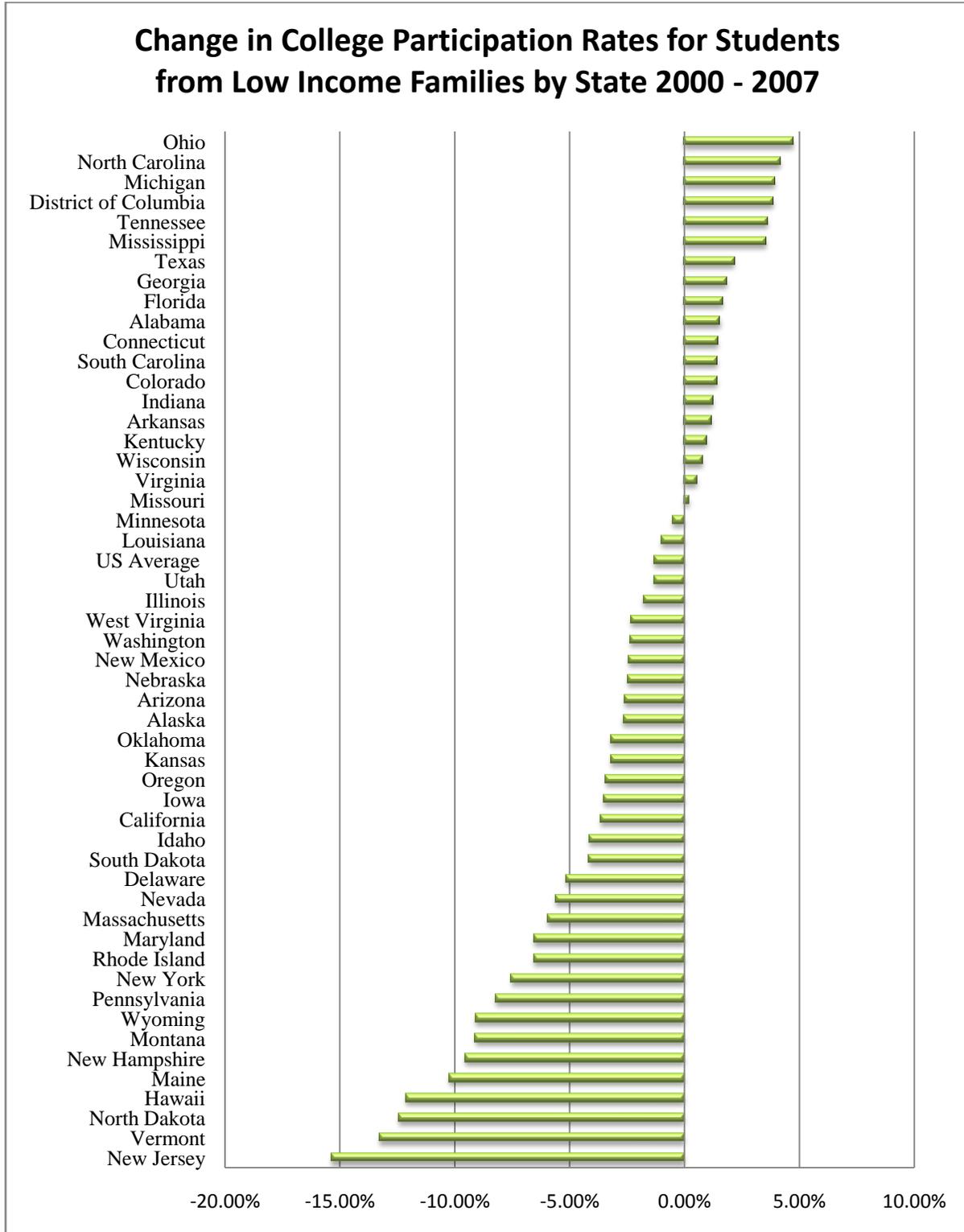
Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2008

**Figure 12. College Participation Rates for Students from Low Income Families by State – 2007**



Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2008

**Figure 13. Change in College Participation Rates for Students from Low Income Families by State 2000 – 2007**



Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2008

## V. The University of North Carolina Tomorrow and Future Priorities

The University of North Carolina General Administration created the UNC Tomorrow initiative to determine how to proactively anticipate and identify the needs facing North Carolina in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. UNC Tomorrow set forth seven areas of improvement for the University based on a series of town hall meetings across the state, surveys, and stakeholder feedback. Major finding 4.2 states: “UNC should increase access to higher education for all North Carolinians, particularly for underserved regions, underrepresented populations, and non-traditional students.”

CFNC’s planning and applying resources have provided significant contributions towards the achievement of these goals, and are demonstrated in this report through the following:

- The existing access framework provided by CFNC.org and the CFNC Resource and Call Centers;
- Knowledge of how to better capture and analyze data concerning the growing number of pre-college programs in North Carolina;
- The development of a statewide pre-college program database;
- A statewide College Application Week proclaimed by the Governor of North Carolina;
- A statewide online transfer articulation system inclusive of the University of North Carolina, North Carolina Community College System, and North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities; and
- Use of the National Student Clearinghouse to verify college enrollment and success.





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