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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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# IRP Webinar: “Pathways Programs and Helping Low-Income Adults Build Marketable Skill Sets”

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*Research / Training / Policy / Practice*

# Pathways to Skills: Context and Policy

Laura Dresser

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COWS.ORG

Equity

Sustainability

Democracy

And a lot of data on skills,  
wages, and workforce  
development with a special  
focus on low-wage jobs and  
workers.

[cows.org](http://cows.org)

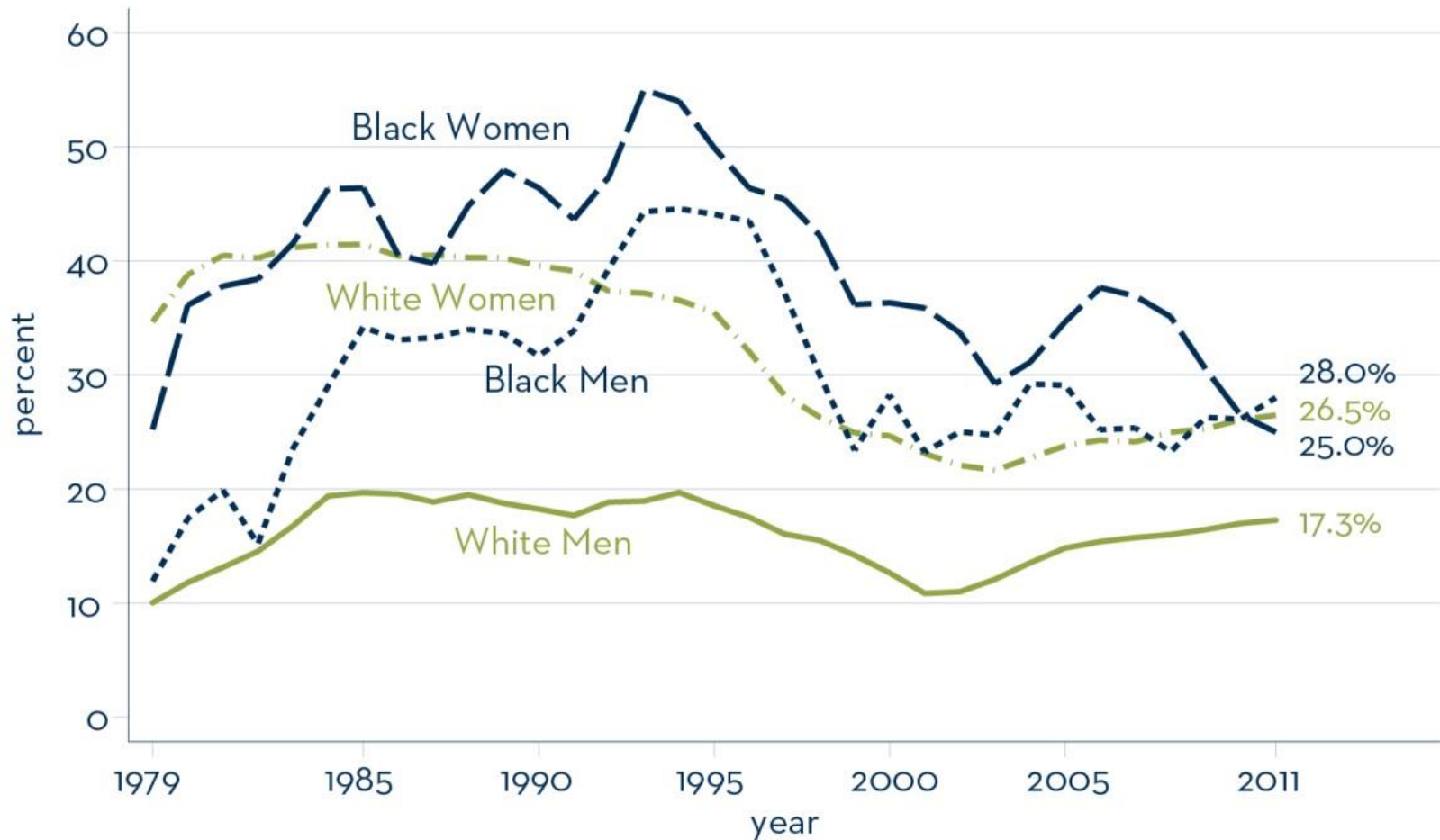
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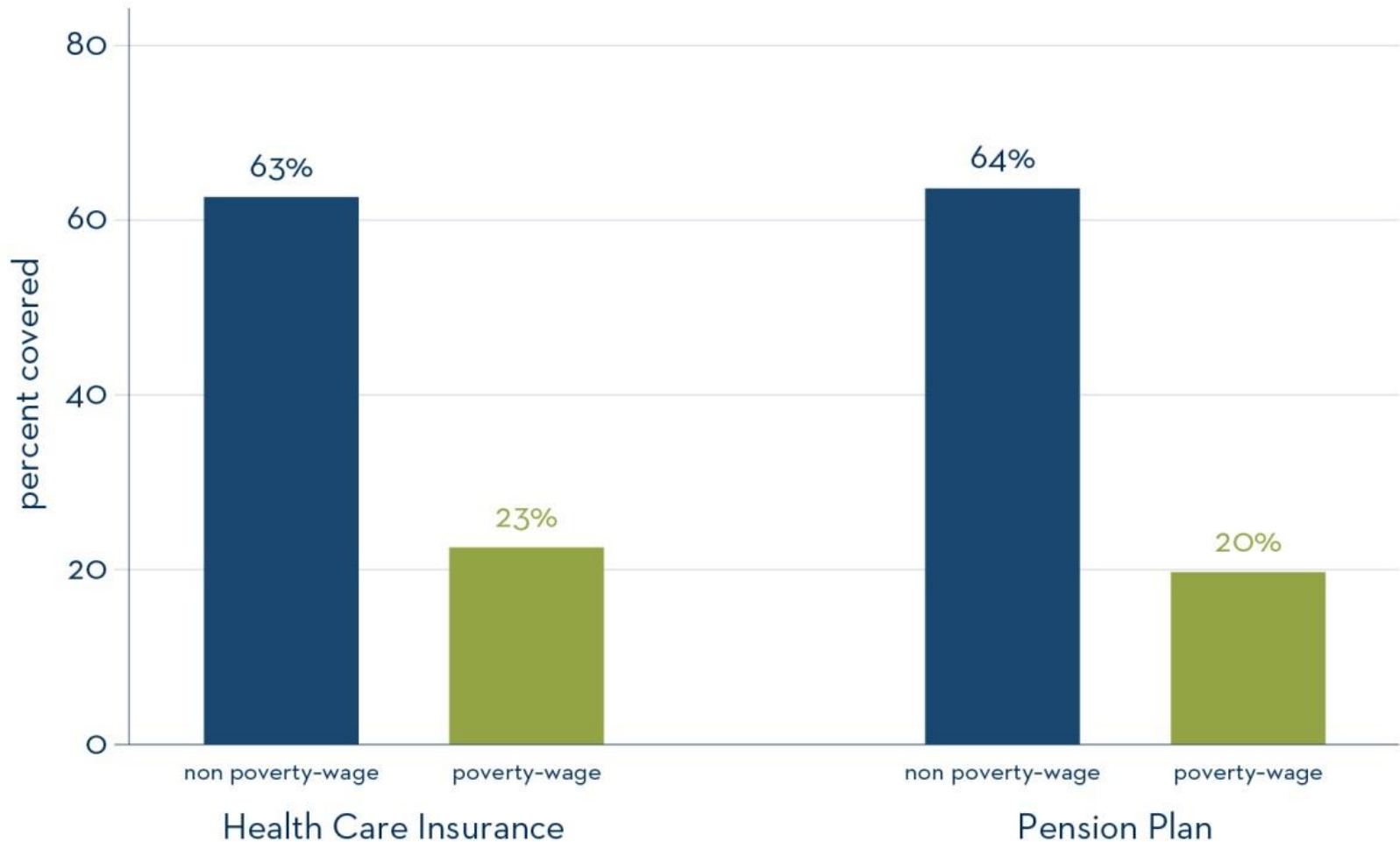
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# Share of Wisconsin Workers Earning Poverty Wages, 1979-2011

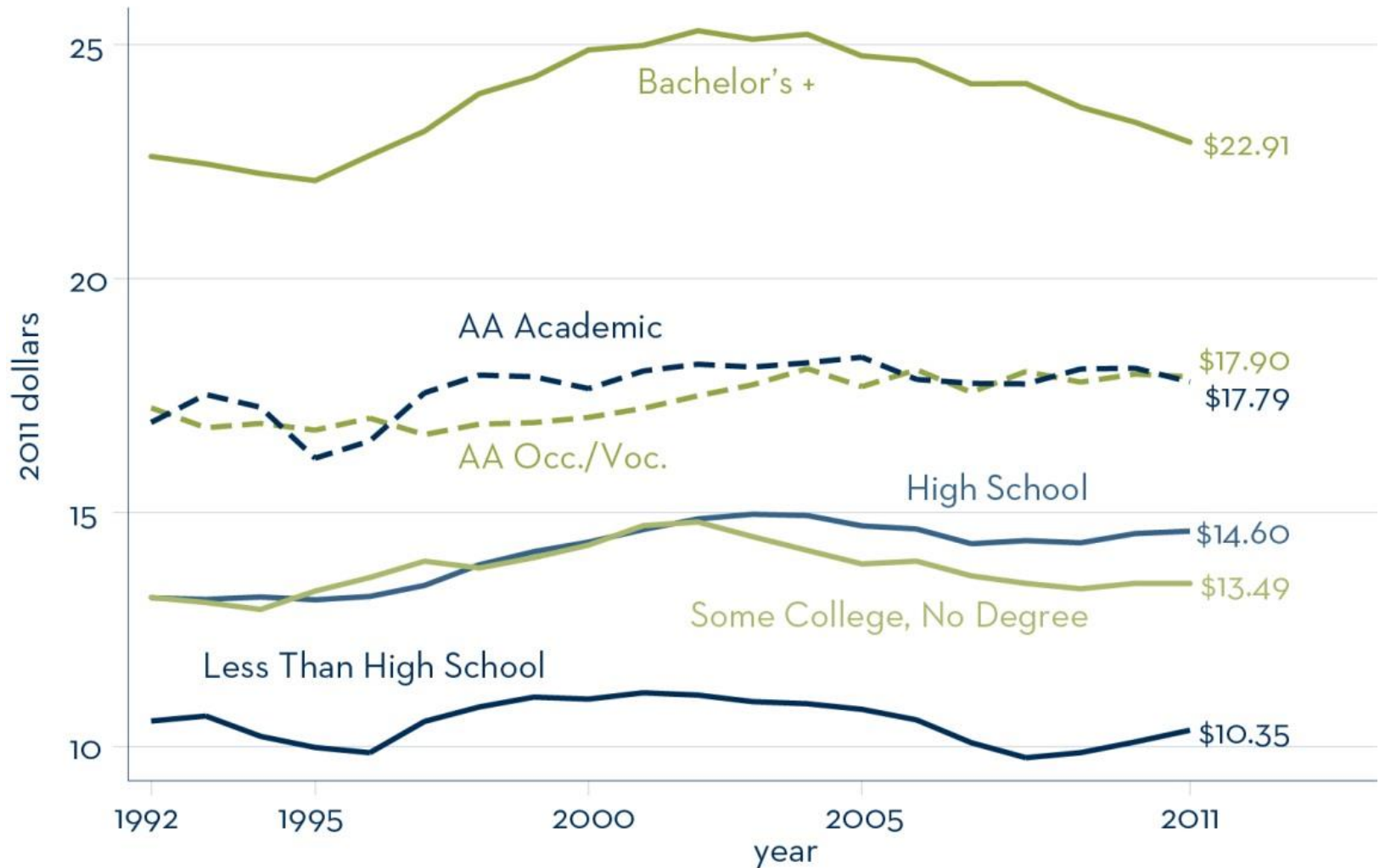


# Wisconsin Coverage by Employer-Provided Benefits, 2008-2009



# What Works?

# Median Wages by Educational Attainment, Wisconsin, 1992-2011



# What Stands in the Way of AA degrees?

- Life/family
- Low wages/work stress
- Low basic skill levels
- Negative experiences in the past with education system



# What to do?

- *Build stronger connections from adult basic education systems into technical training.*
- *Rethink and refine assessment systems – remember lines are blurry here.*
- *Streamline remediation and think hard the negative impact required remediation series.*
- *Integrate developmental and college level learning.*
- *Provide academic support to students on both sides of “cut scores”*

# Data Resource

COWS and CLASP

To gain a better understanding of the post-secondary education needs in each state, we developed profiles of adult workers in every state who are in need of better skills and wages.

[COWS.ORG](http://COWS.ORG) to get to the site.

# The Patient Care Pathway at Madison College



Real world smart

# Addressing a Skill Gap in the Healthcare Field

- Demand for skilled employees in direct patient care positions is high.
- Positions offer high pay, good advancement opportunity
- Potential employees stuck in low paying jobs with low growth potential
- Madison College offers programs to train students for health occupations

# Trouble filling the gap, especially for underprepared students

- Health programs have challenging admission requirements
- Difficulty transitioning students from remedial to degree credit, especially in math
- Traditional remediation paths are long
- Underprepared students either don't start or don't persist

# Why we lose students

- Unclear path of requirements
- Classes have no healthcare content
- It just takes too long

# Goals for a Solution

- Clarify the path so students knew exactly what they needed to do to meet their admission requirements and build their skills
- Keep the focus on health care so they stayed interested and motivated
- Accelerate the entire remediation timeline so they could get in to their programs and graduate faster.

# The Patient Care Pathway

## Education

### Patient Care Nursing Assistant

Certified Nursing Assistant

Support Classes: Academic Reading collaboratively taught with adult basic education and content area instructor

For students with a COMPASS Reading 61-80. Students who have failed, withdrew or earned a D in Certified Nursing Assistant are eligible regardless of scores.

### Patient Care 2

Chemistry

Applied Math for Chemistry

Written Communication Contextualized for the Healthcare Profession

For students with at least one score in the following COMPASS range: Pre Algebra 30-Algebra 29, Reading 80+ Writing 70+. Students who failed, withdrew or earn a D in Chemistry in the past are also eligible regardless of scores.

### Patient Care 1

Body Structure and Function

Medical Terminology

Support Classes: Academic Reading, Math and Prep for Success, team taught with adult basic education and content area instructor

For students with at least one score in the following COMPASS range: Pre Algebra 30-Algebra 29, Reading 61-80, Writing 31-70. Students who failed, withdrew or earned a D in Medical Terminology or Body Structure and Function in the past are also eligible regardless of scores.

### Health Diploma Programs

Program Choices:

Medical Coding Specialist  
Therapeutic Massage

Medical Assistant  
Optometric Technician

### Health Degrees and Diplomas

Program Choices:

Associate Degree Nursing  
Dental Hygienist  
Medical Lab Technician  
Surgical Technologist  
Occupational Therapy Assistant  
Physical Therapy Assistant  
Radiography  
Respiratory Therapy  
Veterinary Technician

## Employment

### Entry Level Employment

Graduates report average wages as \$11.46 per hour.  
Graduates are typically employed as Nursing Assistants

### Mid-Level Employment

Graduates report wages ranging from \$12.72 to \$16.85 per hour. Jobs and wages vary depending program choice.

### Upper-Mid Level Employment

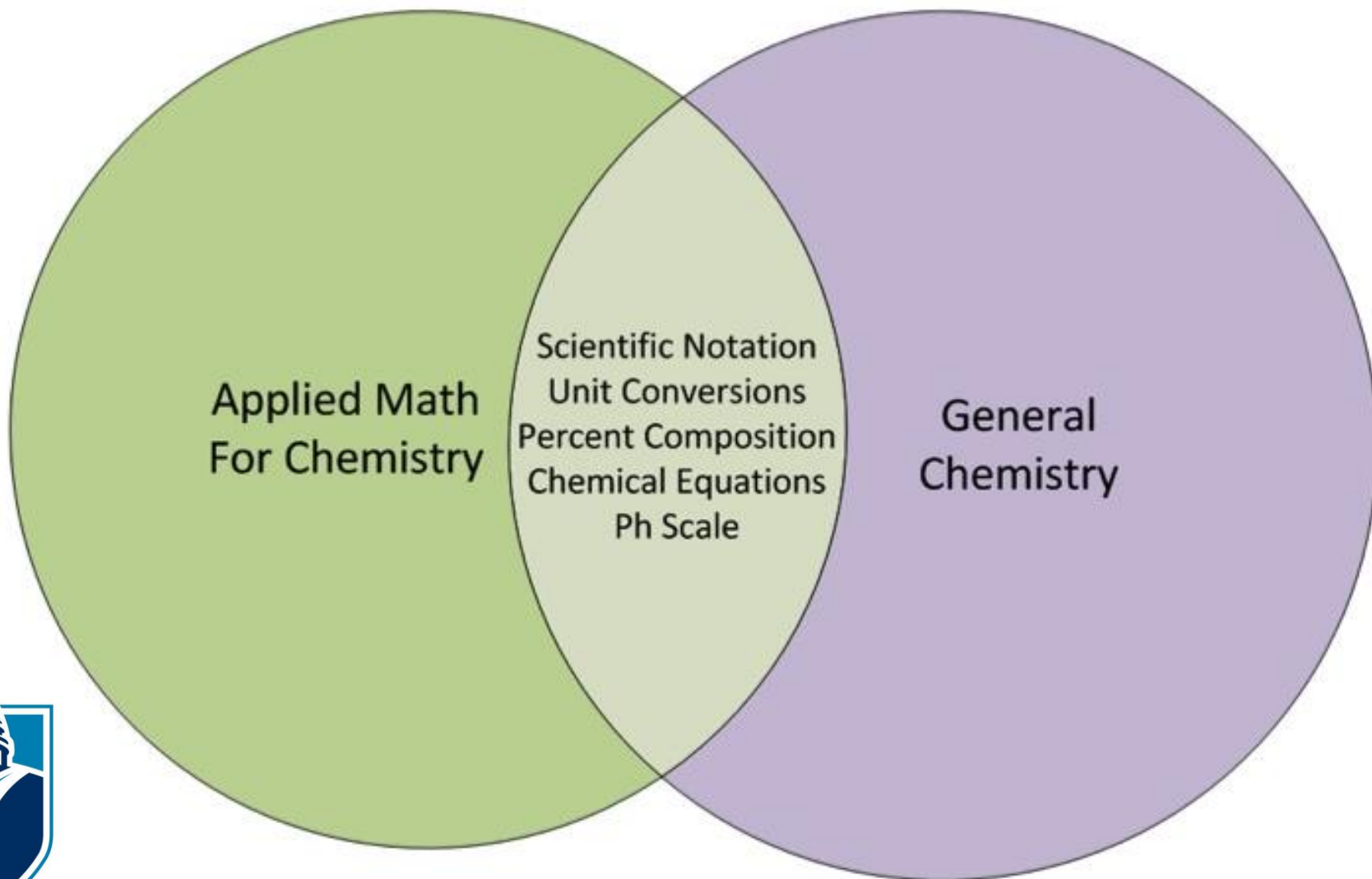
Graduates report wages ranging from \$17.82 to \$24.17 per hour. Jobs vary and wages depending on program choice.



# Why it works

- Clear, intentional path to meet requirements
- Team teaching
- Contextualized Curriculum
- Advising and Support
- Decreased time to degree

# Team Teaching



# Contextualized Curriculum



# Advising and Support

- Collaboration between instructors and advisors.
- Intensive Advising in class and in person
- Additional Support
  - TEAS Workshops
  - Admission assistance

# Decreased Time to Degree

- Saves students up to 3 semesters of remediation
- Allows student to be accepted into program more quickly
- Faster progress through remedial/developmental education

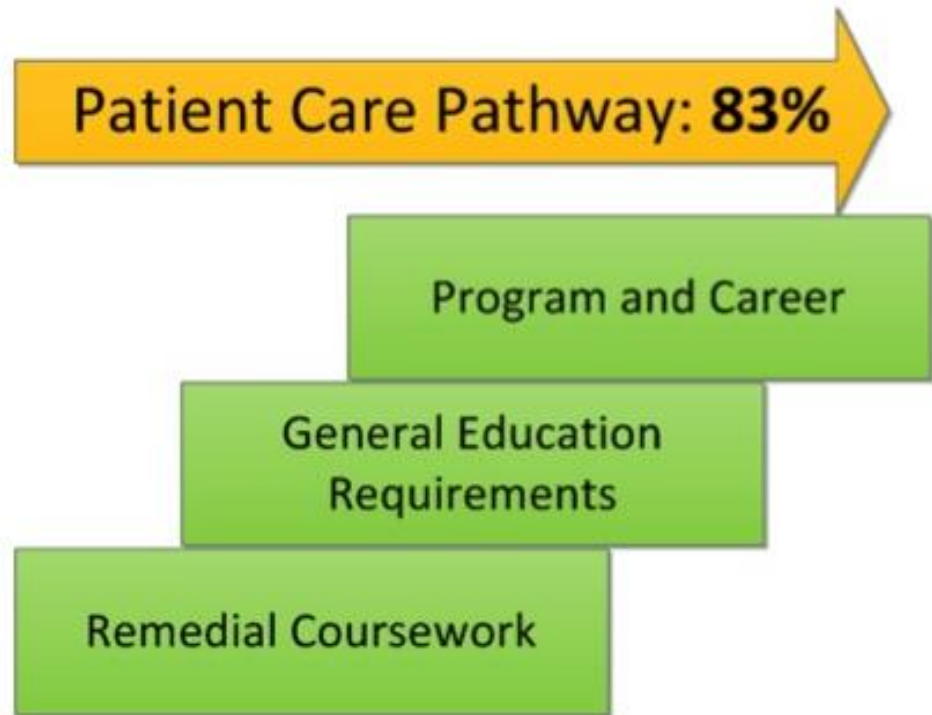
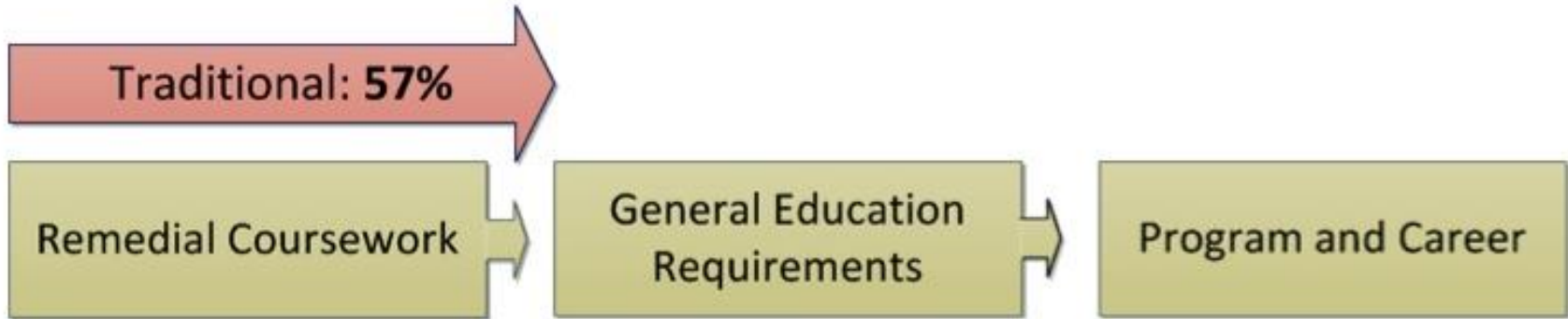
# Participating in the ISIS Study

- Madison College is one of 9 sites participating in ACF's Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency (ISIS) study
  - 10 year randomized trial testing career pathway programs across the country
  - Examining student outcomes in the Patient Care Pathway vs. traditional route
  - 417 Madison College students in study since December 2011

# Promising Early Results

- No student outcome results available from ISIS study yet
- Early information evaluated by Madison College show some promise

# Progress toward Health Career





# Early Results

