



Context

This document includes section count and success rate data for Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) sections at San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges in Fall 2025. This data is provided to inform a Distance Education report to the Chancellor’s Cabinet.

ZTC data in this briefing is sourced from a Campus Solutions query that identifies sections shown in the online course registration system with a ZTC logo; this functionality is not supported for the College of Continuing Education.

This document also includes survey data about student experiences with and attitudes towards ZTC classes and classes using Open Educational Resources (OER). This data is sourced from the Fall 2025 Student Distance Education Experience survey; full analysis of this data is under way as of the production of this briefing. The Fall 2024 Distance Education Experience survey is available [here](#).

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Definitions

- **On-ground:** Courses in which students and professors occupy the same physical location at the same time. These courses may be delivered on-campus at an SDCCD instructional facility or off-campus, such as at a high school under the CCAP program. These courses are not considered Distance Education.
- **Online & On-ground:** Courses that require students to participate both online and on-ground. Online & On-ground courses include hybrid and partially online sections. These courses are considered Distance Education.
- **Online:** Courses in which students and professors do not occupy the same physical location at the same time; at SDCCD, online coursework is often completed through the Canvas learning management system. Online courses include online-live (synchronous) and fully online (asynchronous) courses, as well as Hyflex courses (in which students have the option of attending each class meeting either online or in-person, and in which students may participate entirely online). These courses are considered Distance Education.
- **Success rate:** The percent of enrollments out of total census enrollments that receive a passing grade.
- **Zero Textbook Cost, ZTC:** Sections that either include no textbooks, textbooks available at no cost to the student, or supplementary material available at no cost to the student. Course materials available in ZTC sections are often available as Open Educational Resources (OER).

Methodology

- **Identify ZTC Sections:** Sections are labeled as ZTC or non-ZTC based on data available in the Campus Solutions query X_IR_ZTC_QUERY. This query reflects data shown in the online course registration system for courses offered at San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges.
- **Inclusion criteria:** Section counts include active sections and exclude tutoring and credit-by-exam.
- **Success Rate Comparison:** Success rates are shown for “comparable courses” – i.e. courses which were delivered both across ZTC and non-ZTC formats across the credit colleges. This parameter is used to control for course-level effects on success rates, which can be significant. Additional parameters to control for course+modality variation were considered, but discarded as they resulted in a set of courses too small to be useable.
- **Survey Data:** In Fall 2024, all students enrolled in a distance education course at SDCCD were invited to complete a survey about their experiences online at the District. This survey included items regarding experience with and attitudes towards ZTC classes and classes using Open Educational Resources (OER).

About 36,000 students from San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges and the College of Continuing Education (SDCCE) were invited to complete the survey, representing 65% of students enrolled at SDCCD in Fall 2024 (City: 66%, Mesa: 76%, Miramar: 64%, SDCCE: 53%). There were 1,338 student responses (City: 346, Mesa: 435, Miramar: 289, SDCCE: 578), 267 of whom enrolled at more than one college. These responses represent a 3.7% response rate (City: 4.9%, Mesa: 3.5%, Miramar: 3.5%, SDCCE: 7.0%).

- ZTC Sections:** There were 641 Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) sections in Fall 2025, 16% of all sections at the credit colleges. ZTC sections were most prevalent among online sections, accounting for 19% of all online sections, compared to 16% of on-ground sections and 8% of online & on-ground sections.

ZTC sections were most prevalent at City College (19% of total sections) and accounted for similar percentages of sections at Mesa (16%) and Miramar (14%).

Table 1. Sections at Credit Colleges, Fall 2025, by Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Status

		On-ground		Online & On-ground		Online		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
City College	ZTC	102	16%	12	11%	91	26%	205	19%
	non-ZTC	524	84%	102	89%	262	74%	888	81%
	Total	626	100%	114	100%	353	100%	1,093	100%
Mesa College	ZTC	178	17%	11	7%	98	16%	287	16%
	non-ZTC	879	83%	154	93%	526	84%	1,559	84%
	Total	1,057	100%	165	100%	624	100%	1,846	100%
Miramar College	ZTC	72	13%	12	7%	65	18%	149	14%
	non-ZTC	486	87%	154	93%	300	82%	940	86%
	Total	558	100%	166	100%	365	100%	1,089	100%
Credit College Total	ZTC	352	16%	35	8%	254	19%	641	16%
	non-ZTC	1,889	84%	410	92%	1,088	81%	3,387	84%
	Total	2,241	100%	445	100%	1,342	100%	4,028	100%

Sections 2 and 3 of this document compare success rates between ZTC and non-ZTC courses for “comparable courses” – courses which were delivered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats across the colleges. This parameter is imposed to control for course-level effects on success rates, which may be significant. Additional parameters to control for course+modality variation were considered but discarded as they excluded too many courses.

The “comparable courses” parameter resulted in a comparison of 483 ZTC sections and 1,278 non-ZTC sections, excluding 158 ZTC sections (that were not offered in non-ZTC formats) and 2,109 non-ZTC sections (that were not offered in ZTC formats). See Table 2 on next page for full section counts in comparable sections.

See pages 4 and 8 for success rate data of these comparable sections.

ZTC Fall 2025 Update, Credit Colleges

Table 2. Comparable Sections at Credit Colleges, Fall 2025, by Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Status

		On-ground		Online & On-ground		Online		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
City College	ZTC	80	30%	1	2%	65	32%	146	28%
	non-ZTC	186	70%	53	98%	139	68%	378	72%
	Total	266	100%	54	100%	204	100%	524	100%
Mesa College	ZTC	126	32%	6	11%	66	20%	198	26%
	non-ZTC	269	68%	47	89%	257	80%	573	74%
	Total	395	100%	53	100%	323	100%	771	100%
Miramar College	ZTC	71	38%	11	14%	57	29%	139	30%
	non-ZTC	118	62%	66	86%	143	72%	327	70%
	Total	189	100%	77	100%	200	100%	466	100%
Credit College	ZTC	277	33%	18	10%	188	26%	483	27%
	non-ZTC	573	67%	166	90%	539	74%	1,278	73%
	Total	850	100%	184	100%	727	100%	1,761	100%

Note. Data above reflect courses which were delivered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats across the colleges.

2. **ZTC Growth by College:** The number of ZTC sections grew 23% from Fall 2024 (523) to Fall 2025 (641). ZTC sections accounted for 16% of all sections in Fall 2025, up 3% from Fall 2024.

Growth in the number of ZTC sections varied by college (City: +15%, Mesa: +30%, Miramar: +20%), although this continues to largely be due to Mesa and Miramar catching up to City College's ZTC rate.

Table 3. ZTC Section Counts and Percent of all Sections, Fall 2024 and Fall 2025

		Count			Percent	
		Fall 2024	Fall 2025	% Change	Fall 2024	Fall 2025
City College	Online	84	91	8%	22%	26%
	OL & OG	6	12	100%	5%	11%
	On-ground	89	102	15%	13%	16%
	Total	179	205	15%	15%	19%
Mesa College	Online	85	98	15%	13%	16%
	OL & OG	13	11	-15%	13%	7%
	On-ground	122	178	46%	12%	17%
	Total	220	287	30%	12%	16%
Miramar College	Online	41	65	59%	10%	18%
	OL & OG	20	12	-40%	13%	7%
	On-ground	63	72	14%	12%	13%
	Total	124	149	20%	11%	14%
Credit Colleges	Online	210	254	21%	15%	19%
	OL & OG	39	35	-10%	9%	8%
	On-ground	274	352	28%	12%	16%
	Total	523	641	23%	13%	16%

3. ZTC Growth by Subject: Compared to Fall 2024, the prevalence of ZTC materials in Fall 2025 grew most in Communication Studies (+20%), Communications (+18%), and three other subjects Mathematics, History and Personal Growth.

In Fall 2025:

- 25% of all Communication Studies (COMS) sections were ZTC. This was up from just 5% in Fall 2024.
- 32% of Communications sections (COMM C1000¹) were ZTC. This was up from 14% in Fall 2024.
- 31% of Mathematics sections were ZTC. This was up from 17% in Fall 2024.

Table 4. Growth in ZTC Prevalence by Subject, Subjects with 50+ total sections in Fall 2025

	% of all Sections ZTC			Count of ZTC Sections			
	Fall 2024	Fall 2025	Change	Fall 2024	Fall 2025	# Change	% Change
ENGL	16%	26%	11%	60	100	40	67%
MATH	17%	31%	14%	46	63	17	37%
BIOL	2%	2%	-1%	4	3	-1	-25%
CHEM	14%	6%	-8%	23	10	-13	-57%
ARTF	15%	14%	-1%	22	20	-2	-9%
PSYC	27%	20%	-7%	38	27	-11	-29%
BUSE	2%	8%	7%	2	9	7	350%
HIST	13%	28%	14%	13	28	15	115%
ADJU	1%	1%	0%	1	1	0	0%
MUSI	39%	50%	11%	36	40	4	11%
CISC	5%	13%	8%	4	10	6	150%
COMM	14%	32%	18%	12	24	12	100%
PERG	13%	27%	14%	9	18	9	100%
PHYS	16%	22%	6%	9	14	5	56%
CHIC	28%	11%	-17%	18	7	-11	-61%
COMS	5%	25%	20%	7	15	8	114%
ACCT	5%	12%	7%	3	7	4	133%
CHIL	28%	37%	9%	17	22	5	29%
SOCO	14%	5%	-9%	8	3	-5	-63%
BLAS	6%	7%	1%	3	4	1	33%
PHIL	33%	20%	-13%	17	11	-6	-35%
STAT	26%	36%	10%	15	20	5	33%
ANTH	28%	26%	4%	15	13	-2	-13%

Note. STAT and COMM above refer to STAT C1000 and COMM C1000, new labels under Common Course Numbering for COMS 103 and MATH 119. Courses were officially re-named in Fall 2025; Fall 2024 data in the table above updated to reflect new names for this table.

¹ COMM C1000 is the new name for COMS 103 under Common Course Numbering. Fall 2024 sections of COMS 103 were re-labeled as COMM to reflect new names for this analysis.

4. ZTC Enrollments by Ethnicity: In Fall 2025, 18.3% of enrollments (duplicated) were in ZTC sections. Native American students had the highest share of enrollments in ZTC sections at 21.5% (311 enrollments). Among larger ethnic groups, Latinx students (18.7%), African American students (18.5%), and Asian students (18.0%) were the most likely to enroll in ZTC sections

Pacific Islander students (14.9%) and Filipino students (16.7%) had the lowest rates of ZTC enrollment.

The percent of enrollments by each ethnicity in ZTC courses has grown for all groups since Fall 2024, reflecting the overall growth in ZTC across the credit colleges. Growth was most significant for Native American (+7.7%, Fall 2024: 13.8%), African American (+5.2%, Fall 2024: 13.3%) and Latinx students (+3.6%, Fall 2024: 15.1%).

Table 5. Percent of Enrollments in ZTC Sections, by Ethnicity, Fall 2025

	Total Enrollments	Enrollments in ZTC	
		#	%
African American	8,213	1,517	18.5%
Asian	14,186	2,550	18.0%
Filipino	1,700	284	16.7%
Latinx	48,263	9,042	18.7%
Multi-Ethnicity	8,613	1,540	17.9%
Native American	311	67	21.5%
Pacific Islander	442	66	14.9%
Unknown	1,136	196	17.3%
White	27,613	4,930	17.9%
Total	110,477	20,192	18.3%

5. Overall ZTC Success Rates: Overall success rates in Fall 2025 were similar between ZTC and non-ZTC sections. Across the district, the overall success rate in ZTC sections was 73%, the same as in comparable non-ZTC sections 73%.

Success rate comparisons vary by college. At City College, ZTC sections had a higher overall success rate (74%) than comparable non-ZTC sections (68%). At Mesa College, ZTC sections had a slightly lower success rate (71%) than non-ZTC sections (73%). At Miramar College, ZTC sections had a much lower success rate (73%) compared to non-ZTC sections (78%).

Table 6 below shows success rates in ZTC sections compared to comparable non-ZTC sections by college and modality. The green-colored cell indicates the course format (ZTC or non-ZTC) with the higher success rate within each college and modality. For example, in online courses, ZTC success rates were equal to or higher than non-ZTC success rates at all three colleges: 75% vs. 70% at City College, 76% vs. 73% at Mesa College, and 77% vs. 77% at Miramar College.

Table 6. Success Rates in ZTC and non-ZTC courses, comparable sections, Fall 2025

		On-ground	Online & On-ground	Online	Overall
City College	ZTC	73%	84%	75%	74%
	non-ZTC	70%	54%	70%	68%
	Total	71%	54%	72%	70%
Mesa College	ZTC	69%	76%	76%	71%
	non-ZTC	73%	77%	73%	73%
	Total	71%	76%	74%	73%
Miramar College	ZTC	73%	55%	77%	73%
	non-ZTC	78%	78%	77%	78%
	Total	76%	74%	77%	76%
Credit College	ZTC	71%	63%	76%	73%
	non-ZTC	73%	70%	74%	73%
	Total	72%	69%	74%	73%

Note. Excludes courses that were not offered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats in Fall 2025.

Table 6 above shows success rates in courses that were offered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats. The success rate for all ZTC sections (of which Table 6 is a subset) in Fall 2025 was 73% districtwide, including 74% at City College, 72% at Mesa College, and 73% at Miramar College

- All ZTC sections on-ground: 71% (City: 73%, Mesa: 70%, Miramar: 73%)
- All ZTC sections online & on-ground: 68% (City: 73%, Mesa: 79%, Miramar: 57%)
- All ZTC sections online: 75% (City: 75%, Mesa: 75%, Miramar: 77%)

6. ZTC Success Rates by Ethnicity In Fall 2025, success rates in ZTC sections varied across ethnic groups when compared to comparable non-ZTC sections, and overall differences were generally modest. The clearest pattern appeared in online courses, where ZTC success rates were higher than non-ZTC rates for nearly every ethnic group. The only exception was Asian students, for whom online non-ZTC sections had slightly higher success rates than ZTC sections.

Table 7 below shows success rates in ZTC sections compared to comparable non-ZTC sections by ethnicity and modality. The green-colored cell indicates the course format (ZTC or non-ZTC) with the higher success rate within each modality.

In the online modality, ZTC success rates exceeded non-ZTC rates for most ethnic groups, although the differences were generally small. The largest online gap was observed among Pacific Islander students, whose success rate was 81% in ZTC sections compared to 73% in non-ZTC sections.

Table 7. Success Rates in ZTC and non-ZTC courses by Ethnicity, comparable sections, Fall 2025

		On-ground	Online & On-ground	Online	Overall
African American	ZTC	65%	44%	69%	66%
	non-ZTC	69%	58%	67%	67%
	Total	68%	56%	67%	67%
Asian	ZTC	80%	72%	80%	80%
	non-ZTC	82%	80%	83%	82%
	Total	81%	79%	82%	81%
Filipino	ZTC	76%	60%	79%	76%
	non-ZTC	79%	66%	76%	76%
	Total	78%	65%	77%	76%
Latinx	ZTC	66%	54%	73%	68%
	non-ZTC	69%	63%	69%	69%
	Total	68%	63%	70%	69%
Multi-Ethnicity	ZTC	70%	56%	82%	74%
	non-ZTC	70%	70%	73%	72%
	Total	70%	69%	76%	72%
Native American	ZTC	67%	33%	88%	71%
	non-ZTC	62%	50%	74%	66%
	Total	64%	47%	78%	68%
Pacific Islander	ZTC	53%	50%	81%	63%
	non-ZTC	65%	60%	73%	68%
	Total	60%	59%	75%	66%
White	ZTC	77%	74%	80%	78%
	non-ZTC	78%	76%	77%	77%
	Total	78%	76%	78%	78%

Note. Excludes students with Unreported ethnicity. Excludes courses that were not offered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats in Fall 2025.

7. **Student Experience with ZTC/OER Across the three survey administrations, the number of students responding to the Distance Education Student Experience Survey declined substantially, from 2,210 students in Fall 2023 to 661 in Fall 2025. While the survey results provide useful insights into student perceptions of ZTC/OER courses, the declining number of respondents over time means that year-to-year comparisons should be interpreted with caution.**

Despite the smaller sample in Fall 2025, the survey results suggest that students continue to see value in the availability of free or low-cost course materials.

- The share of students indicating that OER or low-cost materials were Extremely or Very important in their **enrollment decisions** increased from 63% in Fall 2023 to 73% in Fall 2025
- Positive perceptions that OER or ZTC course materials **represented diverse perspectives**, cultures, and backgrounds declined over the three survey years, with the combined share of students who Strongly Agree or Agree falling from 73% in Fall 2023 to 50% in Fall 2025. The decrease in positive responses was accounted for by a corresponding increase in students selecting neutral responses.

Table 8. ZTC/OER Survey data Distance Education Student Experience Survey, Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Fall 2025

Question	Response	Fall 2023		Fall 2024		Fall 2025	
		Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total
Are you aware of the Zero Textbook Cost filter when using the class search?	Yes	555	25%	314	25%	198	30%
	No	1,225	55%	740	59%	352	53%
	Not Sure	430	19%	191	15%	111	17%
	Total	2,210	100%	1,245	100%	661	100%
How important is the availability of free course materials (such as OER) or low-cost course materials (total cost less than \$30) in your decision to enroll in courses?	Extremely (5)	830	38%	444	36%	296	48%
	Very (4)	561	25%	291	23%	153	25%
	Moderately (3)	290	13%	196	16%	136	22%
	Slightly (2)	145	7%	110	9%	20	3%
	Not At All (1)	380	17%	202	16%	14	2%
	Total	2,206	100%	1,243	100%	619	100%
The course materials in my OER or ZTC class were representative of diverse perspectives- cultures- and backgrounds.	Strongly Agree (5)	528	38%	299	38%	183	30%
	Agree (4)	493	35%	252	32%	124	20%
	Neither Ag. nor Dis.(3)	335	24%	214	27%	293	48%
	Disagree (2)	26	2%	13	2%	6	1%
	Strongly Disagree (1)	14	1%	7	1%	8	1%
	Total	1,396	100%	785	100%	614	100%

See Table 9 in next page for Fall 2023-2025 survey results disaggregated by College Enrolled, Age Group, Major, Educational Objective, and Ethnicity for respondent groups with more than 20 observations.

Awareness of the ZTC class search filter: Awareness varied across student groups but remained relatively modest overall.

- Differences among the credit colleges were small, with awareness ranging from 31% among students enrolled only at City College to 35% among those enrolled only at Miramar College.
- Awareness at SDCCE was significantly lower, at 20%.
- Awareness also differed by age group. Students aged 25–34 reported the highest awareness (38%), followed closely by students aged 18–24 (37%), while awareness decreased among older students, more than halving among students aged 65 and older (16%).
- When examined by educational objective, awareness ranged from 18% among students pursuing educational development to 34% among students working toward transfer or an associate degree.

Importance of free course materials and representation of diverse perspectives: Students in majors such as Nursing or pre-Nursing, Biology or Allied Health, and Business reported particularly high scores on the cost-affects-enrollment measure. Students also tended to agree that OER/ZTC course materials represented diverse perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds, with most groups reporting average scores between approximately 3.6 and 4.33 on the five-point scale.

Overall takeaway: The number of survey responses has declined across the three survey administrations, which may limit the ability to draw strong conclusions from year-to-year comparisons. This trend may provide an opportunity to revisit the primary purpose of the survey and consider whether additional or alternative channels could be used to gather student feedback on ZTC/OER initiatives. Revisiting the ways in which students can share their experiences may help strengthen the evidence base used to improve access to zero-textbook-cost courses and related support services.

ZTC Fall 2025 Update, Credit Colleges

Table 9. ZTC/OER Survey data, Fall 2025 Distance Education Student Experience Survey, Disaggregated, Groups larger than 20

Disaggregation		Aware of ZTC Class Search (0% - 100%)	Cost affects Enrollment (1-5)	OER Materials Representative (1-5)	Total Respondents
Overall Average		30%	4.13	3.78	661
College	City College	31%	4.26	3.81	211
	Mesa College	32%	4.12	3.74	286
	Miramar College	35%	4.06	3.89	191
	SDCCE	20%	4.12	3.68	168
Age	18 - 24	37%	4.26	3.85	179
	25 - 34	38%	4.22	3.89	147
	35 - 44	25%	4.26	3.83	113
	45 - 54	20%	4.19	3.72	83
	55 - 64	22%	3.87	3.54	59
	65+	16%	3.41	3.19	56
Major	Accounting	17%	4.00	3.38	23
	Art/Graphic Design	48%	4.30	3.81	21
	Biology or Allied Health	30%	4.34	3.92	37
	Business	12%	4.31	3.44	42
	Comp Sci/Comp. & Info. Sci.	44%	4.24	3.96	25
	Nursing or pre-Nursing	24%	4.48	3.95	21
	Psychology	28%	4.24	3.83	29
	Other	39%	4.03	3.65	87
Ed Goal	Transfer and/or Associate	34%	4.21	3.81	286
	CTE Certificate	28%	4.15	3.46	54
	Undecided	19%	4.00	3.42	37
	Prepare for a new job	23%	4.13	3.70	40
	Educational development	18%	4.00	3.65	74
	Other	39%	4.03	3.65	87
Ethnicity	Black/African American	30%	4.57	4.04	56
	Latina/o/e/x	33%	4.25	3.66	165
	Asian	22%	4.03	3.79	78
	Filipino	47%	4.00	3.93	32
	White	28%	4.01	3.68	181
	Multiple Ethnicities	35%	4.14	3.98	60
	Race/ethnicity not listed	41%	4.33	4.19	27
	Prefer not to say	20%	3.78	3.49	46

Note 1. Student responses for "Cost affects Enrollment" and "OER Materials were Representative" are transformed into weighted averages for each item, with a score of 1.00 indicating the most negative response and 5.00 indicating the most positive response.

Note 2. Total Respondents reflects "Aware of ZTC Class Search." Total Respondents Cost = 619, Total Respondents Representative = 614.