



COLLEGE COMPLETION TOOLKIT

Promising Practices for Improving Student Degree Attainment



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**Click on the photos in the Georgia State University, Rutgers University, and University of North Carolina Wilmington blog posts to watch videos about their programs.*

INTRODUCTION

“... A college education means higher lifetime earnings, lower jobless rates, a competitive edge in the global marketplace — and even better long-term health. A college education helps us fulfill the promise of our Founders — that we can truly be the land of equal opportunity for all.”

—U.S. Education Secretary John B. King, Jr.

Higher education has become a prerequisite for getting a job in the new economy, a necessity for individual economic opportunity and America's competitiveness, and a crucial component for the well-being of our democracy. Over the next decade, 11 of the 15 fastest-growing occupations will require a postsecondary education.¹ In the past eight years, we have seen signs of progress in expanding opportunity for historically underrepresented students. Black and Hispanic students earned over 270,000 more undergraduate degrees in 2013-14 than in 2008-09; and there were a million more cumulative Black and Hispanic students enrolled in college between 2008 and 2014.

But improving college completion rates is of paramount importance.

The graduation rate for first-time, full-time students earning bachelor's degrees at four-year colleges within six years of enrollment is just 60 percent, and the completion rate at two-year institutions within three years is only about one-third. Moreover, there are startling gaps for historically disadvantaged students, including students of color, low-income students, and first-generation students. For example, by the age of 24, young people from the poorest families are over three times less likely to have earned an undergraduate degree than are young people from the most affluent families.² And first-generation college students drop out at three times the rate of students whose parents graduated from college.

While America has some of the best colleges and universities in the world, as a system we no longer lead the world in the percentage of young adults with postsecondary degrees and credentials due in part to these gaps in completion. Today, we're in 12th place.³

The Obama Administration has introduced a number of proposals that would improve college completion moving into 2017 and beyond. America's College Promise would make two years of high-quality community college free for responsible students, enabling them to earn an associate's degree or certificate, or up to two years' worth of credits toward a bachelor's degree, at no cost. The On-Track Pell Bonus, which would provide an increase of \$300 in the Pell Grant award for students who take 15 credits per semester, would

¹Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Economic News Release: Employment Projections, 2014-24 Summary, accessed on the internet at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm> (visited 12/6/2016)

²Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Data Lab, Trend Stats, accessed on the Internet at http://nces.ed.gov/datalab/index.aspx?ps_x=bbeb added7 (visited 12/6/2016).

³Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators. Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2016. Available at: http://www.keeper.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/education-at-a-glance-2016_eag-2016-en#page38.

help an estimated 2.3 million students this next year as they work to more quickly complete their degrees. Pell for Accelerated Completion would allow full-time students the opportunity to earn a third semester of Pell Grants in an academic year and would help them finish their degrees quicker by taking courses year round. That policy could provide nearly 700,000 students an additional \$1,915, on average, to help pay for and complete college more quickly. And the College Opportunity and Graduation Bonus would reward colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of Pell students on time and encourage all institutions to improve their performance.⁴

Many institutions across the nation are stepping up to do the hard work of increasing college completion rates for underrepresented students, including those who work full-time or are parents. This toolkit gathers data-driven student supports from a sample of these institutions as a resource for institutional leaders. These tools were written by those higher education institutions for other higher education institutions, with the goal of highlighting innovative ways that schools across the country, regardless of their student and institutional characteristics, can build the systems and supports necessary to ensure that those who enroll in college complete their degrees.

This toolkit is being released now to support the momentum as states across the country look to grow the numbers of adults with postsecondary degrees. It builds on the Department's 2011 [College Completion Toolkit](#), which also includes strategies to increase completion rates; the recently published 2016 report [Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education](#); and its 2016 report, [Fulfilling the Promise. Serving the Need: Advancing College Opportunity for Low-Income Students](#), which highlighted institutions across the country that have a strong record of success when it comes to ensuring that low-income students are not just attending college but are completing their degrees.

The entries included in this guide were submitted by the colleges and universities in question in response to a request from the U.S. Department of Education. While the practices in question have been reviewed to ensure they are achieving increased completion rates for students, they have not undergone rigorous evaluation to determine whether or not students who were offered or received the services described achieved higher outcomes than students who were not offered or did not receive such services. For more information on strategies to improve college completion, we recommend visiting the [What Works Clearinghouse](#) (WWC). WWC includes intervention reports on several of the strategies highlighted in this toolkit, including the impact of [first year experience courses](#), [linked learning communities](#) and [summer bridge programs](#), as well as reviews of a number of [other individual studies](#).

This report contains numerous online resources, including hyperlinks and videos. To access all of the resources it offers, we recommend viewing it digitally. The report can be found online at <http://www.ed.gov/college-completion>.

⁴For more information on administration initiatives to promote college completion, please review our [college completion fact](#) sheet at the Department of Education's website.



4
Year



24,619 Undergraduate Students

Using Data to Create Evidence-Based Interventions: Georgia State University

By Dr. Timothy Renick, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success
Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

A little over 10 years ago, Georgia State University's (GSU) institutional graduation rate stood at 32 percent and underserved populations were floundering. Graduation rates were 22 percent for Latinos, 29 percent for African Americans, and 18 percent for African-American males. Pell students were graduating at rates far below those of non-Pell students.

Today, thanks to a dozen strategic programs implemented over the past nine years, Georgia State's achievement gaps are gone. The institutional graduation rate has improved by 22 percentage points. Rates are up 28 percentage points for African Americans (to 57 percent), 41 for African-American males (to 59 percent), and 44 for Latinos (to 66 percent). Pell students are now as successful as non-Pell students. The total number of degrees conferred annually has increased from 5,800 to 7,500 over the past five years alone, and Georgia State now confers more bachelor's degrees to African Americans than any public university in the United States.

Significantly, Georgia State accomplished this dramatic turnaround through *inclusion* rather than exclusion. Over this period, its student population became larger (growing from 27,000 to 32,000), more diverse (moving from 46 percent to 65 percent non-white), and more economically disadvantaged (with the Pell population climbing from 30 percent to 59 percent). SAT scores dropped. The progress came not by changing the students but by changing the institution that serves them. Through a strong commitment to the systematic use of data to identify problems that impact students across multiple racial, ethnic, and economic groups, the University piloted a series of innovative, cost-effective interventions. It then scaled the successful interventions to maximize their impacts.



Click [here](#) to see a video showing how Georgia State University is Crushing the Odds.

Here are two examples of interventions implemented at Georgia State:

GPS Advising: Georgia State asked: "What if students who are enrolled at large, public universities received the

same kind of personalized attention as is afforded to students at small, elite colleges?” How would such personalized attention transform student success rates? To develop this approach, Georgia State used ten years of GSU student data—over 2.5 million grades—to create predictive analytics for how each student will fare in any major and most courses we offer. The resulting GPS (which stands for Graduation and Progression Success) Advising system



Click [here](#) to see a video showing how Georgia State University is achieving student success using Panther Retention Grants.

tracks students’ decisions and academic performances, and it is updated on a daily basis—with alerts going off when a student is off path. Over the past year, the system generated 51,000 one-on-one meetings between advisors and students to discuss specific alerts—all aimed at getting and keeping each student on path to graduation. Since Georgia State went live with GPS Advising four years ago, the percent of freshmen who successfully complete 30 credit hours after one year of enrollment has increased from 47 percent to 63 percent. The average

time to degree has declined by more than half a semester, saving the graduating class of 2016 \$12 million in tuition and fees when compared with graduating seniors just three years ago. Additionally, four-year graduation rates have improved by nine percentage points.

Panther Retention Grants: This fall, over 14,000 of GSU’s 25,000 undergraduates have unmet need, meaning that even after loans, family contributions, and income from 20 hours of work a week, the students lack sufficient funds to pay for college. Each semester, hundreds of fully qualified students are dropped from their classes for lack of payment. For as little as \$300, Panther Retention Grants provide the emergency funding to allow these students to stay enrolled. Over the past four years, more than 7,000 Georgia State students were brought back to the classroom—and kept on the path to attaining a college degree—through the program. Seventy percent of the seniors who have received this support have graduated within two semesters of receiving the grants, with an average grant of just \$900.

GSU is testament to the fact that students from all backgrounds can succeed at high rates and that dramatic gains are indeed possible—not through changing the nature of the students served but through changing the nature of the institution that serves them.



Certificate



Public



Rural



Small

109 Undergraduate Students

Ilisaġvik College: Alaska's Only Tribal College

By Dr. Pearl Brower, President; Dr. Natalie Welcome, Instructor, Mathematics;
Caitlin Walls, Grants Writer and Strategist
Ilisaġvik College, Barrow, AK

Have you ever met a student who exhibits anxiety about mathematics or writing? We have, too, but with alternatives to developmental education, we have implemented methods to help students overcome content knowledge deficiencies and subsequently complete college-level courses.

At Ilisaġvik College, many of our incoming students receive placement exam scores that suggest they're unprepared for college coursework. Those students are often advised to enroll into below-college-level courses to receive remediation and developmental support services. However, rather than relegating students to isolated courses, we have effectively implemented co-requisite and embedded remediation alternatives to expedite the process of developing content knowledge.

These changes have improved degree completion for many students. For example, in a College Algebra classroom of 16 students, we identified 8 students in need of remediation. In addition, we've found that pairing a remedial lab with our freshman English class is successful in promoting student retention. Students enrolled in these types of courses have shown improvement when paired with a developmental class for support.



A student participating in hands on activities in the vocational education department at Ilisaġvik College.

At Ilisaġvik College, student completion equals student success. That is our main goal and focus. Ilisaġvik, Alaska's only tribal college and only independent, accredited community college, is making decisions every day to support student completion. The example above pertains to the college's efforts to streamline education by offering remedial support alongside college-level instruction. Other areas where Ilisaġvik supports student completion include:

- **Low student-to-faculty ratio**—We have found that our student-to-faculty ratio of approximately 5:1 facilitates more tailored learning experiences, increases opportunities for one-on-one meetings with experts, and encourages classroom discussion.
- **Proactive academic advising**—Ilisaġvik's academic advisors reach out to students several times over



- **Proactive academic advising**—Ilisaġvik’s academic advisors reach out to students several times over each semester and are able to foster good relationships to help retain students.
- **A devoted Student Success Center (SSC)**—The SSC works with students to address the whole student experience, including financial, personal, and intellectual concerns. SSC’s strength is its ability to be flexible and responsive to support the needs of our students.
- **The Learning Resource Center (LRC)**— The LRC has a twofold approach to success that is free for all students. First, students can go at any time when they need help, or faculty can proactively recommend that LRC tutors contact or work with a student and, thus, “pull” that student back in before he or she drifts away from a class.
- **Flexible and varied class delivery options**—Education at Ilisaġvik includes both traditional classroom-based courses as well as several distance delivery options. While these directly support our off-campus students, they also help our students who are located in Barrow—where our main campus is located—attend class even when traveling for work or out with a sick child. Students don’t fall behind just because they can’t physically be in a classroom.

Ilisaġvik mandates the incorporation of traditional Iñupiaq culture, values, language, and tradition in all facets of the college, from the administration to curriculum. The ability for Indigenous culture to be infused into the college allows students to feel more comfortable in this place of learning and it also allows for important cultural and educational connections to be made.

The items listed above are just a few of the important aspects of how Ilisaġvik College supports its students in relation to certificate and degree completion. Working with a population that is most at risk for not attempting higher education, not to mention not graduating from college, Ilisaġvik strives to make completion a top priority.



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

4

Year



Public



Town



Small

1,517 Undergraduate Students

MCLA's Commitment to Commencement: Providing Resources to Ensure Student Success

By Bernadette Alden, Director of Marketing and Communications

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams, MA

With an already impressive track record and a stated, ongoing commitment to access and affordability, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) in North Adams, Massachusetts, is committed to supporting all its students as they work to earn their bachelor's degrees.

Last spring, the U.S. Department of Education recognized MCLA for graduating students from low-income families at the same rate as students from high-income families, which is 52 percent over six years. Thirty percent of our students are from families that earn less than \$30,000 a year, and we have the highest percentage of Pell recipients in the Massachusetts state university system. "It is part of MCLA's mission and public purpose to provide access to a high-quality, liberal arts education at an affordable cost," says MCLA President James F. Birge, Ph.D.

MCLA's efforts start with a physical structure, right on MCLA's main quad, which provides "one-stop service." It houses the financial aid office, the bursar, and the registrar's offices, together with the College's Center for Student Success and Engagement (CSSE). CSSE encompasses the College's

academic advisors, peer advisors, career and internship counselors, and special student support services. CSSE also contributes to MCLA's First-Year Experience Program (FYE) and Peer Advisors to help identify students who need support, especially in the crucial first weeks of college.



Students in the laboratory at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

MCLA students know CSSE as a dependable resource. "I wanted to drop out, due to some family issues, but CSSE helped me with my scheduling and to set up a plan," 2015 graduate Sherley Jules said. "They asked me, 'Where do you want to see yourself? How do you want to tackle it?' If it weren't for CSSE, I wouldn't be where I am now. I am so grateful to them."



Jules is now working toward a master's degree in social work at Howard University. "They're like my second family. There were times when I wanted to give up. That wasn't in their vocabulary," Jules said of CSSE and the College's sociology department.

The College also subscribes to SALT, a financial literacy web program developed by American Student Assistance. It is free to students and offers information on budgeting, financial aid, loan repayment, and credit scores. It also provides information on internships, resume tips, and job searches.

The College is committed to showing a clear path to graduation. MCLA's 30 by 3 program tracks first-year students to ensure they have 30 college credits earned by the start of their sophomore year and provides counseling for them to do so. Every major academic program at MCLA has a [four-year degree](#) map that shows how the major can be completed in eight semesters of full-time enrollment.

Last year's retention rate was 79 percent, the highest it's been in several years. MCLA is still working to improve student retention. In September 2016, President Birge announced that MCLA received a \$2.177 million Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which will help increase retention and graduation rates of students from low-income families and students of color over the next five years. With this new grant funding, MCLA will redesign its First-Year Experience program to further support student transition and persistence; create online undergrad courses for summer, which will provide new opportunities for students to earn credit outside the traditional fall/spring semester structure; and expand supplemental instruction across disciplines in freshman-, sophomore-, and junior-level courses. MCLA students will also have expanded opportunities in undergraduate research.

The ability to work with state-of-the-art tools will not only prepare students to excel in their majors but also to compete for and earn employment in growing science, technology, and knowledge economy industries. The grant-funded expansion of these programs will ensure that all students have the tools that will get them to commencement.

When College Completion Is a Strategic Priority: Rutgers University–Newark

By Nancy Cantor, Chancellor

Rutgers University – Newark, Newark, NJ

A highly diverse urban research university, [Rutgers University–Newark](#) is an engine of social mobility in a state whose growing diversity is a microcosm of our nation. Among our 7,700 undergraduates, there is no majority ethnic/racial group, more than half are Pell-eligible, a third are first-generation college students, an increasing number are [undocumented](#), and 45 percent transfer from the excellent community colleges in New Jersey, including the six Hispanic Serving Institution county colleges with whom we have a federally funded “[Bridges to Baccalaureate](#)” STEM pathway partnership. We collaborate broadly in our [NJ STEP Program](#) on prison education, including the new Second Chance Pell experimental site, and welcome formerly incarcerated students transferring with their associate’s degrees.

Rutgers University–Newark Pathways (RUNways) engages us deeply with key transfer-in institutions, especially neighboring Essex County College and nearby Hudson County Community College, to create academic pathways for transfer students in high-demand disciplines such as biology, criminal justice, supply chain management, and the arts. Step-by-step guidance on course sequences that are aligned with our curricula is supported by a network of academic and financial support and learning communities for arriving transfer students, and RUN4Success, a newly implemented online advising tool that includes sophisticated early warning indicators to help assure that all of our students stay on track to graduate on time.



Click [here](#) to see how Rutgers University–Newark is revolutionizing access and success.

Our remarkably diverse students do remarkably well, [routinely outstripping expectations for degree completion](#). For example, first-time African-American students entering as first-year students graduate at a higher rate (69.7 percent, six-year rate) than their overall first-year cohort (66 percent); Latino/a students who transfer in graduate at the same rate as the overall transfer-in cohort (66 percent for both cohorts, four-year rate). Pivotal to making this possible is the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program. Supported with state funds, it serves 600 low-income, first-generation students from New Jersey, providing grant financial aid, dedicated counselors providing both academic and developmental counseling, tutoring support for core math and composition courses, and a six-week Summer Bridge program offering introductory-level instruction in mathematics, composition, and natural sciences plus foundational workshops in study skills, speech, and counseling. The graduation rate for students matriculating through EOF is 13.4 percent higher (as a three-year average) than predicted based on their demographics.

We know that if cities like Newark don't succeed, our nation won't succeed, so we have built our [Strategic Plan](#) around our commitment to Newark and to strengthening our legacy of high-impact scholarship, access, and affordability. For example, we are redoubling our commitment to increasing educational attainment in Newark. To grow the vital pathways from Newark's K-12 to NJ's two- and four-year institutions, Rutgers–Newark has helped form the Newark City of Learning Collaborative to increase the percentage of Newark residents with postsecondary degrees from 17 percent to 25 percent by 2025.

Also, we are in the first year of the [Rutgers University–Newark Talent & Opportunity Pathways](#)—a “last-dollar” financial aid program that guarantees aid to completely cover full-time, in-state tuition and fees for admitted students whose adjusted gross family income is \$60,000 or less and who are either residents of Newark or New Jersey residents transferring in with associate's degrees from New Jersey county colleges. The Pathways program has helped drive a 23 percent increase in Newark residents in our incoming class.

This program also offers residential scholarships to all students admitted to our new [Honors Living-Learning Community](#) (HLLC). The HLLC challenges traditional frameworks for “honors” to identify talent and merit expansively through a robust admissions rubric and group interview process to define cohorts primed to become citizens with agency in their communities. Among this year's incoming class of 60, thirty-one are students from Newark, 85 percent are students of color, nearly half are first-generation; 40 percent are transfers, one in five are undocumented, and the cohort includes students who are parents, formerly incarcerated, formerly homeless, and in foster care. The current 90 HLLC students bring a rich array of lived experiences to their intergroup dialogues, community-engaged research, and social justice curriculum, strengthening our understanding of the challenges of urban life, from mass incarceration, economic inequality, and xenophobia to environmental degradation and underperforming public education. The HLLC will grow to 500, and by 2018 students will be housed in a state-of-the-art facility designed specifically to facilitate engagement with the challenges facing Newark—and, by extension, urban America.



Diverse Strategies for a Diverse Student Body: Salem College

By Richard Vinson, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies;
Susan Calovini, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Dean of the College
Salem College, Winston-Salem, NC

At Salem College—the oldest women’s educational institution in the country, with a founding date of 1772—we have been successful in attracting a richly diverse student body that includes adults, students from low-income families, and those from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. Improving student success is a high priority. We have adopted a variety of strategies to increase retention and graduation rates, and we have seen a 10 percent increase in retention of first-time full-time students in the past six years. Traditional-age and adult students are admitted through separate offices and often receive differentiated support services that are tailored to meet the unique needs of these different student populations.

Traditional-Age Students:

Salem uses an Early Alert behavioral intervention team that employs a case-management strategy for traditional-age students. Staff and faculty notify the team electronically when they see stu-



Hands-on learning at Salem College.

dents dealing with troubles or engaging in unproductive behaviors ranging from class absences and low grades to problems with alcohol use or family issues. The team is composed of staff and administrators from academic affairs, residence life, athletics, and health and counseling services. This team meets weekly, decides on intervention strategies for individual students, and then tracks what works best. For example, the Director of Academic Support Services might schedule a test-taking workshop with a student doing poorly on exams, whereas a residential coordinator might stop by a student’s room to talk about social or academic concerns that have come to the team’s attention and assist the student in planning steps to address the problems. The team approach has improved communication and cooperation among various parts of the campus, and we believe that it has contributed most strongly to the ten-point increase in Salem’s retention rate between 2010 and 2016.

First-Year Students: All first-year traditional students are assigned to a full-time faculty member who is their academic advisor and instructor for the first-year seminar. Students whose entrance scores indicate that they might be high-risk are assigned to sections of first-year seminar taught either by the Director of Academic Support



or the Director of the Writing Center. This particular strategy, based on research done at the [University of Texas](#), has resulted in dramatic improvements in the retention of traditional-age students at greatest risk of leaving college. In the four years since we implemented this strategy, the retention of this population of students has increased by 25 percent.

Students from Diverse Backgrounds: As the number of our Latina students has grown (and more than doubled) since 2010, Salem has begun offering bilingual webinars to explain the financial aid process to prospective students and their parents. Spanish interpreters are also present to answer questions during admissions and orientation events. With approximately 45 percent of the entering classes identifying as first-generation college students in the past several years, Salem has begun providing special “Salem First” programming, including a pre-orientation to introduce first-generation students to basic aspects of college life and assist with the adjustment to campus. During orientation, upper-class students provide compelling “diversity monologues” to help the incoming class begin talking about how to live comfortably in a very diverse community and how to see diversity as a benefit to their education. A Committee on Community comprising students, faculty, and administrators addresses issues of inclusion and social wellness across the campus and works closely with the Director of Diversity and Inclusiveness to cultivate a climate of awareness, understanding, respect, and inclusiveness for all individuals and groups.

Adult Students: Students age 23 and older are admitted to Salem through a dedicated Flee Center for Adult Education, where administrators and staff are prepared to offer orientation, advising, and specialized services (academic planning workshops, career and professional counseling, a student leadership council, etc.) aimed at adult students. Flee Center personnel serve as academic advisors until students are ready to declare a major, at which time faculty advisors are assigned. A new cohort program called Threshold offers a year of special programming and mentoring by the Flee Center dean and assistant dean to small groups of entering at-risk students (those with little or no prior college experience or support outside of school). We had a 77 percent retention rate for the Threshold cohort in the pilot year, whereas in previous years the Flee Center had expected to retain only about half of similar at-risk students.



Spelman College

A Choice to Change the World

4

Year



Private



City



Medium

2,135 Undergraduate Students

Student Success at Spelman College

By Dr. Myra Burnett, Interim Provost

Spelman College, Atlanta, GA

For its size and resources, Spelman College overproduces successful students. The National Science Foundation reports that between 1997 and 2006, Spelman prepared more Black women to earn doctoral degrees in STEM than Duke, Georgia Tech and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill combined.

That legacy of student success continues with a six-year graduation rate of [77 percent](#). Almost 45 percent of Spelman graduates pursue graduate and professional degrees within five years of graduation. These percentages are even more impressive when one considers that 15 percent of Spelman students are first-generation, over 80 percent require financial aid, and about half are Pell-Grant eligible. Spelman produces exceptional outcomes by allocating resources to the most critical college completion initiatives, some of which are described below.



Spelman students at class day's March Through the Arch.

Academic Support Services: Spelman offers an array of academic support services for students of all levels of ability and performance, which are vital to ensuring students remain on track to graduate on time. The Center for Academic Planning and Success (CAPS) is the umbrella organization for the Comprehensive Writing Center, the Math Lab, and the Language Lab. In 2015, CAPS received a \$2.7 million grant from FIPSE for its First-in-the-World project to deepen students' awareness and use of effective learning strategies.

In addition to services offered by affiliated units, CAPS provides the following learning support services:

- Directed supplemental instruction—pre-determined topics are covered to support achievement in STEM courses,
- Peer tutoring on demand—faculty recommend high-performing students to support others who follow them in courses,
- Specialized academic counseling for students who are on or at risk of probation because of low academic performance,



Spelman College

A Choice to Change the World

- Assessment of student learning and development for all students at the sophomore and senior years,
- Workshops on student success.

Undergraduate Research and Major Capstone Projects. With a student-to-faculty ratio of 10:1, Spelman offers opportunities for close engagement with faculty in classes and in research activities. Students are encouraged to participate in the annual Research Day competition. Last year, over 250 students competed for the 60 awards. The College fosters a culture of student engagement in research through projects embedded in courses, and independent research projects in collaboration with faculty mentors. Each major has or is developing a capstone experience for students to demonstrate their intellectual and workplace competencies as they approach receipt of the baccalaureate degree. We also know these capstones help students take ownership of their own education, thereby increasing the likelihood of completion.

Study-Travel Opportunities. Spelman has encouraged international travel since the early 20th century, but has dramatically increased emphasis and opportunity for such experiences in the last five years. With a \$17 million anonymous gift, the College established the Gordon-Zeto Center for Global Education. Through that Center, students learn of study-travel opportunities ranging from one week to one year. Spelman underwrites a portion of the expense for study-travel, enabling students to travel internationally for as little as \$600. With pre-payment plans available to them, students may make deposits toward their trips months ahead of time. Last year, 402 Spelman students studied abroad—more Black students than at any other institution in the country. Similar to the capstone project, study abroad opportunities help students stay invested in their education, which we know impacts their rate of completion.

Cohort Groups. Recognizing the importance of connecting to others in the college environment, Spelman encourages students to affiliate with cohort groups. Spelman has recognized student organizations to support honors students, adult learners, biomedical scholars, STEM students, and social justice scholars, in addition to disciplinary and college-wide honor societies and community service organizations.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate how Spelman faculty and administrators have coordinated efforts to create intellectually vibrant academic and co-curricular environments to increase student engagement and preparation for post-baccalaureate work and study, both critical to degree completion. We firmly believe that these structures play a vital role in the high graduation rate we see at Spelman.



4
Year



Public



City



Large

16,635 Undergraduate Students

Getting College Students Back on Track: A Summer Bridge Writing Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago

By Tom Moss, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

The University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL

Nationwide, about one-third of all first- and second-year bachelor's degree students [report having taken remedial courses during that time period](#), coursework which is designed to strengthen basic skills. The situation is even starker at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), the city's only four-year public research institution. In fall 2014, over half of first-year students were initially placed into either a remedial math or writing course.

For many years, students' lack of academic preparation was addressed through remedial coursework, which meant many students were unable to complete prerequisites until their second year, setting them off track to graduate on time from the first day of classes. Several years ago, in response to these concerns, support units and academic colleges at UIC began offering bridge programs—multi-week summer programs offering students with remedial needs the opportunity to earn a new placement in math or writing. For several years, these programs operated in silos across campus, but in 2006, they were coordinated under a common banner: UIC Summer College (summercollege.uic.edu).



Students at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

In its current form, Summer College is a collection of over a dozen programs aimed broadly at easing the transition from high school to college. The key to Summer College are the programs that not only help with the transition, but also accelerate students' progress to degree—the Summer Enrichment Workshops in math, writing and chemistry. Each year, about 80 percent of students who participate in the summer workshops earn revised placements.

We have learned a number of lessons along the way. Success of the coordinated bridge program to reduce the need for remedial instruction relies on a robust recruitment plan where parents are our best ally. No recruitment tool succeeds better than the low-tech hard-copy letter sent home to get passed around the kitchen table where decisions are made. Another key aspect of Summer College is a set of common outcomes. UIC Summer College offers students:



- A revised placement into a credit-bearing course;
- Experience with college-level work;
- An introduction to the campus and help building socio-emotional identification with the university, staff, and instructors, and;
- An introduction to a community of peers.

Though summer bridge programs are not uncommon, there has been very little research to document the long-term effects of such programs until now. Researchers at UIC recently published the results of a rigorous research study that demonstrates the impact of these programs. Regression results showed that participation in Summer College, notably UIC's Summer Enrichment Writing Workshop, was a positive, significant predictor of the outcomes of four year

graduation rates (27.5 vs. 26.5 percent), six-year graduation rates (58.6 vs. 46.8 percent), first year earned credits (22.4 vs. 19.2), and first year college GPA (2.48 vs. 2.34), even after controlling for [demographic and academic preparation variables](#).



First day of classes at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

This is an especially positive finding considering the impact of our Summer Enrichment Workshops on first-generation, low income, and under-represented populations. UIC is one of the country's most diverse universities, with no [racial/ethnic majority](#). At UIC last fall, 58 percent of students

in the entering cohort were Pell-eligible and about 50 percent of those first-year students who submitted a FAFSA were first generation. These rates were even higher among Summer College participants: for the same period, 66 percent of students who participated in at least one of the workshops were Pell eligible, 60 percent were first generation, and 62 percent were either Latino/a or African American. Providing this opportunity to resolve remedial placements prior to the fall semester has a clear benefit, but particularly among those groups we know are overrepresented in remedial courses.

We believe the program must be free of charge so that students at the greatest risk of not succeeding in college can satisfy their remedial placements most efficiently. Finally, assessment of the program must be rigorous and performed with a dispassionate eye on the outcomes noted above. At UIC, our assessment of the writing program, detailed in our recently published article, tells us we are on the right track.



4

Year



Public



Suburban



Medium

12,190 Undergraduate Students

Four Ways UMass Lowell Has Made Retention and Student Success a University-wide Effort

By Julie Nash, Vice Provost for Student Success

University of Massachusetts Lowell, Lowell, MA

At the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Lowell, our first-year retention rate has risen to 85 percent for our fall 2015 cohort from 79 percent in 2011. How have we achieved this progress? At our University, retention is not “owned” by one individual or even one office. Student success is the center of everyone’s job—from the faculty and department staff who answer questions, to the people in marketing who help us tell the story of what we are doing for students, to the residence hall directors who respond at 2 a.m. because a student is stressed about a problem at home.



Students who reside in UMass Lowell’s themed Living and Learning Communities retain at a higher rate than their peers.

The opportunity to collaborate and study with like-minded students is one reason why.

There are four initiatives, in particular, that have helped us build the UMass Lowell culture of student success crucial to achieving our improved retention rate:

1) We engage students with [Living Learning Communities](#): Academics alone can’t do it. Residence life alone can’t do it. Together, we’ve created Living Learning Communities (LLCs) organized around students’ interests. LLCs provide students with the chance to live in an engaged, like-minded community of students and scholars. LLCs facilitate close interaction with faculty advisers who are here to help students navigate their college experience. We offer programming intentionally created for each unique LLC. Whether our students want to “Live Allegra” with music students, or be one of the multicultural advocates of tomorrow, our students will live it while they learn it. We know it works because students in our LLCs are retained at a 90.4 percent rate compared with 85.5 percent among all other cohorts.

2) We help students be [Difference Makers](#): Studies show that students who are engaged in active learning and who feel empowered are more likely to persist in their efforts to earn a college degree. Our Difference Maker program, which we introduce to accepted students during Welcome Day, is an interdisciplinary competition in which students create innovative solutions to real world problems such as food insecurity or the high cost of prosthetics for children. We support them through specific programs and activities that teach them how to



address big problems through entrepreneurial action. Winning a significant cash prize is a nice bonus, but making a difference is its own reward.

3) We provide safe-harbor for students navigating tough issues: Our student Navigators Club works closely with students who are managing special challenges. Some have come through foster care, have experienced homelessness, or face other life challenges. A group of faculty, academic administrators, and student affairs staff work toward meeting their needs. For example, we created the university's first food pantry with monthly food drives. In addition, we created the "Harbormasters" program, which provides training for faculty and staff volunteers to support these students. Our harbormasters self-identify by placing a decal on their office door or window so students will know they have someone to talk to when things become tough.



Women in Science and Engineering is one of many Living-Learning Communities at UMass Lowell. LLCs can help underrepresented student groups find academic and social support as they work toward their degree.

4) We ask for help: At 85 percent, our first year retention rate is just above average for a public institution our size, but that number means we are losing 15 percent of our incoming class. We knew we needed a push to make progress toward our goal of 90 percent retention. We put out a call for help, asking for volunteers across the campus to help us brainstorm new programs and initiatives to support students. We are proud to say we received more than 150 volunteers. Some of these volunteers came from areas you would expect—faculty, student affairs—but we also heard from staff in human resources, web design and information technology. We are currently organizing these volunteers into subcommittees to tackle the next set of challenges. With everybody on board, we know we can do it.



4

Year



Public



City



Medium

12,686 Undergraduate Students

UNCW: Developing Strategies for Moving From Good to Great

By Paul A. Townend, Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean, Undergraduate Studies

University of North Carolina–Wilmington, Wilmington, NC

Even in a state of strong institutions like North Carolina, UNC Wilmington (UNCW) has a strong rate of graduation and retention. We have retained, over the past five years, some 85 percent of our incoming first-time, full-time students. Our four-year graduation rate is over 50 percent, while our six-year rate tops 70 percent, above national averages and among the best figures in the UNC system. We owe those numbers to much hard work on the part of many people—faculty, academic advisors, and caring staff across campus—as a part of a system of supports for our students.

All our first-year students begin in our [University College](#), staffed by dedicated professional academic advisors who encourage major exploration, close mentorship, and experiences designed to create strong academic and personal transitions. Our required [first-semester seminar](#) for all freshmen (and available as an option for all transfers), encourages, supports and challenges. We have a [comprehensive system of general education](#) that engages students with some of the best questions liberal education can offer. Our students are



Click [here](#) to see a video about how UNCW is Moving from Good to Great!

also engaged in innovative ways—our cross-campus “[Experiencing Transformative Education through Applied Learning](#)” program encourages faculty and staff to develop high-impact experiences that allow students to tackle real-world problems through applied experiences. We know from our own assessment that this program’s experiences improve critical thinking and student engagement.

Still, across UNCW’s five schools and colleges, some 500 students in good standing fail to re-register for classes, or “stop out,” in any given semester. This happens for a variety of reasons. Our own data indicate that, among freshmen stop outs, nearly half intend to transfer and some seven to eight percent report serious financial difficulty. Others are frustrated with a range of transition issues or by their progress towards a desired degree. Most stop out without consulting faculty and professional advisors, and most do not engage the institution in the run up to, and the aftermath of, the stop out to consider options and opportunities for continuing their academic careers, at UNCW or elsewhere. Every student leaving UNCW without thinking through his or her best options represents a missed opportunity to support intellectual growth and personal development.



UNCW Chancellor Jose “Zito” Sartarelli’s new strategic plan challenges us to do better. It is one thing to simply set goals, such as increasing retention rates from 85 to 90 percent over the next five years and to strengthen our four- and six-year graduation rates. It is another to develop targeted, sustainable, and effective practices. This fall, UNCW established a retention workgroup, with faculty and staff representation from Admissions, Business Affairs, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, University College, as well as Housing and Residence Life and the University Learning Center. This effort has opened doors to new collaborations and communication strategies that we expect to make a difference. By focusing on student success, we are developing new ways of tracking and supporting at-risk students and sharing what we know helps. Already, several new strategies are being pulled together, including:

1. The UNCW Student Success campaign, which requires advisors and faculty to reach out to students who fail to register and to offer support;
2. Targeted efforts to have University College advisors work more closely with groups identified early as being at risk for stopping out, including students with high financial need and students who struggle academically early on;
3. The development of better degree completion programs, including online options, for stopped-out adult learners, in our College of Arts and Sciences;
4. The adoption of better data analytics and communication plans to identify and support students identified to be at risk for departure, through which we are working hard to learn FROM students—not only why they go, but also why they stay!

None of these measures will solve this problem, and there is no “magic bullet” to raise retention, but UNCW is working hard to ensure that all students graduate. For us, the goal is to operationalize care and concern, and to work hard to build a campus culture that sees degree completion and student success as an integrated and intentional shared goal.



UNCW students working together.

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

4

Year



Private



City



Medium

3,223 Undergraduate Students

Sophomore Scholars in Residence Program at the University of Richmond

By Dr. Scott D. Johnson, Associate Provost for Student Academic Initiatives

University of Richmond, Richmond, VA

In a typical public policy class examining healthcare systems in the United States and the developing world, students might read scholarly texts, write research papers, and have engaging classroom discussions. But what if we add to that work community-based learning within a local healthcare setting or non-profit organization to help build a real-world perspective? Now add two class trips—one to a rural community facing serious health challenges, the other to the Dominican Republic for firsthand experience with developing-world health concerns. Follow all of that with a spring semester working cooperatively on a capstone project, and add a living component, with the students living together in the same hall, engaging often in informal conversations about class topics or watching a spontaneously assigned video together over a weekend. Now, you have the experience of a [Sophomore Scholars in Residence](#) (SSIR) community at the University of Richmond.

About SSIR: The SSIR program combines a fall academic course and a spring-semester project with co-curricular learning activities and [travel \(domestic or international\)](#), spanning a student's sophomore year. At the end of the year, each community presents its final capstone projects to the University community. All expenses associated with the program, including the community-based learning and the class trip(s), are covered at no additional cost to students beyond the usual tuition, room, and board charges.



Richmond students visit Cincinnati for the Historians Against Slavery Conference.

The 10 SSIR communities are kept small, with 16 students in each. This allows for good discussions and strong group bonding. But these residential communities don't live in isolation. SSIR communities are grouped together in co-ed residence halls, creating a unique academic environment that fosters conversation within communities and across them.

Faculty Engagement. Faculty engagement in the SSIR program is high, including teaching class, traveling with students, mentoring their research and community-based learning, and guiding the community throughout the year. SSIR communities also take advantage of various University resources. Students participate in workshops and interact with staff from Career Services, the Speech and Writing Centers, libraries, and the Center for Civic

Engagement (among others). SSIR communities also connect with alumni working in or around the community topic.

The SSIR program was designed to promote continued faculty development, providing seminars on inclusive pedagogies, community and experiential learning, student-development theory, and cross-cultural competence. Further, the program measures six student-learning outcomes through qualitative and quantitative program assessments.

Recruitment and Outcomes. The SSIR program attracts impressive numbers of students from historically underrepresented populations, and those students graduate at rates higher than those in the larger student population (mirroring findings on other high-intensity practices found to have particularly strong effects on students from underrepresented groups). While all students are encouraged to participate, additional recruitment efforts are made to attract students from underrepresented groups (especially first-generation students), who otherwise tend toward underparticipation in such programs. Mailings and email contacts over summer and winter breaks, and the diverse nature of the communities themselves, have raised the application rates of students of color, first-generation students, and other underrepresented groups beyond those of the larger student body. The [tight-knit nature of the communities](#) and the close ongoing interaction with faculty are among the features that enhance graduation rates.

More specifically, in recent years, SSIR participation rates for U.S. students of color have reached 40 percent overall (compared with an overall institutional representation rate of 23 percent). Further, SSIR students go on to participate in other high-impact practices at significantly higher rates, and, overall, four-year graduation rates among SSIR participants are nearly 10 percent higher than those for the larger undergraduate population. In sum, the SSIR program has enhanced retention and graduation—as well as the overall college experience—for participating students.

Pathways to Completion at Valencia College

By Joyce Romano, Vice President, Educational Partnerships

Valencia College, Orlando, FL

Valencia College has been working to improve student success and completion through intentionally designed initiatives based on [Big Ideas](#) such as “Start Right,” “Connection and Direction,” and “Anyone can learn anything under the right conditions.”⁵

LifeMap: LifeMap is Valencia’s comprehensive advising system grounded in developmental theories designed to increase students’ social and academic integration, development of education and career plans, and acquisition of study and life skills. [LifeMap](#) describes the ideal progression of a student through Valencia in a five-stage model from college transition to lifelong learning. Each stage has stated outcomes and performance indicators so students can understand “what to do when” in order to develop and complete their education and career goals. LifeMap links all of the components of Valencia into a personal itinerary to help students succeed in their college experience, according to their developmental needs through the various stages of their educational journey. LifeMap has contributed to student success and completion at Valencia as noted by our selection as the 2011 Inaugural Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence for results in completion/transfer (51 percent within 3 years, IPEDS 2007-09), labor market outcomes, learning outcomes, and equitable outcomes (2011 Aspen Prize publication).⁶



High school students visit Valencia College’s Osceola Campus for an early taste of college.

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds aspire to college attendance and degree completion as a means to improve the life trajectory for themselves and their families. Disadvantage occurs in our community based on a number of factors including education, economic status, race/ethnicity, gender, and family history. In addition to comprehensive systems for all students, Valencia has invested in special cohort based programs to address inequity. Two examples are Bridges to Success (BTS), and Reaching Every Academic Challenge Head-On (REACH).

⁵Shugart, S., Puyana, A., Romano, J., Phelps, J., and Walter, K. Valencia’s big ideas: Sustaining authentic change through shared purpose and culture. In O’Banion, T. and Wilson, C.D. Focus on Learning: A Learning College Reader. Chandler, AZ: League for Innovation in the Community College; 2011.

⁶Romano, J. Valencia College: A learning centered student advising system. In O’Banion, T. (ed.) Academic Advising: The Key to Student Success. Washington, DC: Community College Press; 2013 (pp 33-56).

Bridges to Success: The [Bridges to Success](#) (BTS) program at Valencia College has a 30-year proven history of transition, persistence and graduation success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The BTS Program is designed to enhance skills needed for academic success for at-risk, recent high school graduates. The program provides an academic, cultural, and social road map that has proven to be successful in graduating ethnically diverse students. It includes a highly structured academic and co-curricular experience that builds personal connection and accountability for each student.

The BTS Program begins with a six-week summer program which includes completion of two college classes as well as community and leadership development. Students who successfully complete the summer program are invited to participate in the BTS Achievers Program, which provides a full tuition scholarship for up to three years of study, leading to completion of the associate's degree. Students apply for the Summer Program during their senior year of high school and are selected through a competitive process which includes assessment of risk factors and ability to benefit.

For 2015, summer-to-fall persistence rates were 97.6 percent for new Bridges students and 69.5 percent for other new first-time-in-college (FTIC) students. There are similar trends in credit accumulation: 77.4 percent of Bridges students completed 30 credits in three years compared with 42.3 percent of other FTICs (summer 2012 cohorts). Finally, 47 percent of Bridges students completed an associate's degree in four years compared with 20.1 percent of other FTICs (summer 2011 cohorts). We see similar trends in looking at the persistence, credit completion, and graduation rates of African-American and Hispanic males, which are a special emphasis of the Bridges program. The graduation rates of African-American and Hispanic men in BTS are consistently 20 percent higher than those of non-Bridges students from the same background.

Valencia intentionally invested in substantially growing the Bridges program beginning in 2010 so that it now enrolls over 1,100 students and admits 400 new students each fall.

REACH: The Reaching Every Academic Challenge Head-On program was designed to provide an integrated learning community of faculty, staff, and peer students for at-risk new students who start below college level in reading, English, and math. The cohort progresses together through its first year (fall, spring, summer terms) and can complete 24 credits of college-level coursework. REACH enrolls 100 students each fall term.

The first-year program provides students a guaranteed full-time (12 credit hours) class schedule with faculty who utilize the college's Learning in Community (LinC) curriculum model, which consists of at least three integrated assignments, a shared syllabus, and a partnership between faculty who collaborate on individual student success. Faculty from different disciplines attend each other's classes so that the students experience a true learning community and no chance of anonymity. REACH students also participate in co-curricular activities designed and facilitated by the REACH faculty to help students build effective teams (study groups), make the transition to college-level coursework, and engage with the college community.

Since its start in 2011, the REACH program has had a cumulative fall-to-fall retention rate of 70 percent compared with 47 percent for similar peers not in REACH. The fall-to-fall retention rates for REACH students are nearly the same as those of "college-ready" students enrolled during the same time period. In 2012, REACH students' average GPA was 2.46 compared with 1.98 for non-REACH students. Seventy-one percent of REACH students completed 15 college credit hours or more in two years compared with 26 percent of non-REACH students.



4

Year



Public



Town



Medium

9,645 Undergraduate Students

Assistance and Persistence: The Western Illinois Way

By Dr. Jack Thomas, President; Darcie R. Shinberger, Assistant Vice President, Advancement & Public Services
Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL

Recently, Western Illinois University (WIU) was identified within the U.S. Department of Education report, [“Fulfilling the Promise, Serving the Need,”](#) as outperforming its peer institutions in enrolling and graduating Pell Grant recipients. At the time of reporting, WIU’s six-year graduation rate for Pell Grant recipients, who comprised 43 percent of the student population, was the same as that of all students at WIU (56 percent). Additionally, the report notes that two-thirds of Pell Grant recipients earn more than \$25,000 within six years of enrolling at WIU.

Our University has long been known for serving underrepresented populations, and we are committed to ensuring our students’ success throughout their tenure at WIU. One of the many programs in place to assist in retention and persistence includes our First-Year Experience (FYE) program, which began in 2004. This University-wide initiative helps all incoming first-year students make a successful transition to college from their previous educational or life experiences. It is our duty to make a difference in the lives of our students.

The FYE program includes FYE classes, advising, mentoring, student services and residential life components. The comprehensive program aligns classroom activities and campus life to effect a greater impact on the learning and development of new students through emphasizing how to live well so that students can succeed academically, physically, emotionally and socially/civically. The program also helps students build meaningful connections with a variety of individuals from both the Western and Macomb communities.



Hands-on learning at Western Illinois University.

In 2015, first-year and senior students were asked to complete the National Survey of Student Engagement. The results compare WIU students’ average scores to those of a peer comparison group. Relative to students in our first-year student comparison group, engagement indicator items from the survey show that WIU first-year students’ average was significantly higher ($p < .05$) in the following areas: discussions with diverse others, student-faculty interaction and supportive environment. Senior students from the same year significantly ($p < .05$) outperformed their peers in the following areas: learning strategies, student-faculty interactions, effective teaching practices, quality of interactions and supportive environment.

Other elements of the FYE program may also contribute to the preceding data regarding student engagement. University 100, a component of the FYE program, is a one-credit-hour general education course that meets once per week and focuses on how students can successfully transition to Western Illinois University. In this class, which is required for graduation, first-year students learn about what it means to be a WIU student; what



it takes to read, write, and be successful in college; how to live “well” in all areas of life; how to participate in civic engagement; how to master time management; and much more. In addition to the University 100 instructor, students also have peer mentors (upper-level college students) who help the first-year students succeed. All first-year students are required to take University 100 their first semester at WIU.

The other required FYE course students take during their first year at WIU, in conjunction with University 100 in their first semester, is a two- to four-semester-hour FYE general education/pre-professional course. In this FYE course, students focus on specific content from a select number of academic departments. The skills learned in University 100 are then applied to the FYE course.

The Building Connections (BC) New Student Mentoring program also serves to assist new students acclimate to college life and provides another resource to ensure our students’ success. New students are assigned a BC mentor, and mentors meet and communicate with their students to ensure they are doing well at Western. The program began in fall 2011 as a pilot program with 400 randomly selected new freshmen living in the same residence hall. The BC program stemmed from an in-depth review of freshman-to-sophomore year retention rates, which had fallen behind the national average at that time.

For more than a decade, the retention of WIU’s first-year students held at 73 to 74 percent. Following the 2011-12 academic year, the retention rate dropped to 67.7 percent. Therefore, in fall 2012, the program was expanded to include all new incoming students. In fall 2013, the BC program became a component of University 100.

Following the implementation of the BC program within University 100 in fall 2013, the freshman fall-to-spring retention rate rose from 82.2 percent to 90.7 percent, and the percentage of new first-time freshmen in good academic standing or attaining semester honors after their first semester was 78.2 percent in fall 2013 compared with 70.4 percent in fall 2012. The current freshman fall-to-spring retention rate has remained stable at 87.8 percent over the past two years. Furthermore, students who meet with their BC faculty or staff mentor are 90.6 percent likely to return for the spring semester, and a renewed emphasis on community development within University Housing and Dining Services has resulted in 92.7 percent of freshmen returning to the residence halls for the second semester compared with 79.9 percent in 2013.

We continue to see increases in our freshman-to-sophomore retention rate. In fall 2016, the rate rose to 69.2 percent, from 67.7 percent the previous year, and our six-year graduation rate increased to 53.1 percent in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 compared with 52.8 percent in FY 2015.

Other initiatives we have implemented to ensure persistence, particularly among our underrepresented populations, include programming through the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center and the Casa Latina Cultural Center. The Centers’ initiatives create opportunities for underrepresented students to participate in culturally enriching activities at WIU. These activities contribute to our recruitment efforts by providing academic enhancement opportunities and social programs designed to aid in the adjustment of underrepresented students to WIU.

I am proud of the strategies we have in place that provide essential resources and opportunities to our students, many of whom are first-generation college students. We must continue this commitment to ensure that future generations of students continue to achieve great things at WIU.

Graduation and Transfer Rates at Completion Toolkit Institutions—2014-2015

Source: College Scorecard (for documentation see: collegescorecard.ed.gov/data)

Name	State	Highest Degree	Predominant Degree	Control	First-time full-time	Black-White Graduation Rate Gap*	Hispanic -White Graduation Rate Gap*	First-time full-time graduation rate**	Transfer-out rate	Percent of undergraduates receiving Pell grants
Georgia State University	GA	Graduate	Bachelor's	Public	53%	-6%	-4%	22%	17%	52%
Ilisagvik College	AK	Associate's	Certificate	Public	23%			15%	0%	13%
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	MA	Graduate	Bachelor's	Public	52%	15%	16%	34%	0%	46%
Rutgers University-Newark	NJ	Graduate	Bachelor's	Public	66%	6%	4%	37%	18%	52%
Salem College	NC	Graduate	Bachelor's	Nonprofit	65%	-10%	52%	61%	0%	58%
Spelman College	GA	Bachelor's	Bachelor's	Nonprofit	74%			67%	0%	48%
University of Illinois at Chicago	IL	Graduate	Bachelor's	Nonprofit	93%	3%	6%	87%	0%	12%
University of Massachusetts-Lowell	MA	Graduate	Bachelor's	Public	54%	5%	9%	27%	0%	29%
UNC Wilmington	NC	Graduate	Bachelor's	Public	71%	5%	3%	49%	14%	29%
University of Richmond	VA	Graduate	Bachelor's	Nonprofit	84%	-9%	9%	80%	0%	19%
Valencia College	FL	Bachelor's	Associate's	Public	44%	15%	6%		13%	44%
Western Illinois University	IL	Graduate	Bachelor's	Public	54%	8%	5%	30%	33%	44%

* Within 150% of normal program time

**Within 100% of normal program time

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DECEMBER 2016



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