

**Retention and Graduation Rates of First-time, Full-time Freshmen and Transfer Students:
A Ten-Year Analysis of Cohorts**

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning is currently modifying and expanding the *Annual York College Factbook*. One of the most significant changes is a more detailed section on the rates of retention and graduation, which will include disaggregated data by sex, race/ethnicity, county, school, and SEEK/non-SEEK. The purpose of this update is to highlight two of the most noteworthy tables that will be added to the *Factbook* – the overall analysis of retention, and graduation activity for the past ten first-time, full-time freshmen and transfer cohorts. These direct measures provide detailed evidence as to how each cohort performs; as such, it contributes to the assessment of student success outcomes. In addition, the one-year retention rate (first-time freshmen) and four-year and six-year graduation rates (first-time freshmen and transfers) are included as key performance indicators in the College’s strategic plan, *One York*. An analysis of the attrition, persistence, and graduation of first-time, full-time freshmen (see table on the following page) yielded the following observations:

- First semester retention has declined over time, most notably with the last three cohorts.
- One-year retention has declined, particularly for the past two cohorts.
- Although it was previously believed that a large proportion of students drop out between the third and fourth year, that does not appear to be the case for any of the ten cohorts included in this table. The largest rates of attrition occur in years one and two.
- In recent years, by year two, roughly half of all students in the initial cohort have left.
- By year three, the proportion of students who remain enrolled ranges from 41 to 47 percent (depending on cohort).
- By year four, a small percentage of students graduate, while approximately one-third remain enrolled. The four-year retention rate is required for federal reporting and is used as an official indicator of student success.
- By year five, roughly one-quarter of students in the initial cohort have graduated and 11 to 16 percent (depending on cohort) remain enrolled.
- Between years five and six is when we see the largest jump in the proportion of graduates.
- The Fall 2013 cohort, the most recent cohort for official reporting of six-year graduation rate statistics, yielded the highest six-year graduation rate in recent years (34.9%). However, at the fifth year mark, the Fall 2014 cohort is not performing as well as the 2013 cohort; this means the College’s six-year graduation rate will likely decline next year.

Retention and Graduation Rates of Full-Time First-Time Freshmen in Baccalaureate Programs											
by Year of Entry - Total: Fall 2008 to Fall 2019											
Entering Term	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Number of Students in Initial Fall Cohort	1021	1084	928	1087	953	960	995	936	1087	1107	1100
First Semester											
% Enrolled	93.1%	93.8%	93.1%	93.3%	93.3%	91.3%	89.4%	89.4%	87.7%	84.5%	81.5%
1 Year											
% Enrolled	74.9%	77.8%	77.5%	74.1%	76.7%	73.6%	73.1%	70.7%	64.0%	62.3%	
% Graduated	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
2 Years											
% Enrolled	50.4%	56.3%	55.5%	51.5%	55.2%	51.9%	52.2%	50.9%	45.8%		
% Graduated	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		
3 Years											
% Enrolled	40.7%	44.3%	44.3%	43.0%	47.1%	42.2%	43.0%	43.5%			
% Graduated	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%			
4 Years											
% Enrolled	31.7%	34.8%	33.4%	32.8%	34.9%	31.3%	31.6%				
% Graduated	4.9%	6.5%	6.7%	6.3%	8.7%	7.5%	9.1%				
5 Years											
% Enrolled	16.2%	15.2%	16.5%	13.8%	14.1%	11.8%					
% Graduated	18.1%	22.1%	21.1%	22.7%	28.5%	25.1%					
6 Years											
% Enrolled	7.1%	8.3%	8.2%	6.8%	7.0%						
% Graduated	26.7%	30.3%	29.4%	30.2%	34.9%						
7 Years											
% Enrolled	4.7%	4.7%	3.2%	3.6%							
% Graduated	29.3%	33.2%	33.7%	32.9%							
8 Years											
% Enrolled	1.2%	2.7%	1.5%								
% Graduated	31.5%	35.7%	35.6%								
9 Years											
% Enrolled	0.8%	1.8%									
% Graduated	32.0%	36.3%									
10 Years											
% Enrolled	0.6%										
% Graduated	32.3%										
* Preliminary											

An analysis of the attrition, persistence, and graduation of transfers (see table on the following page) yielded the following observations:

- Between 2009 and 2012, students who left were more likely to do so after their first year. Since 2013, larger proportions of students are leaving after their first semester. While the proportion of students who remain enrolled after the first year has consistently ranged from 65 to 71 percent, students are making the decision to leave more quickly.
- The proportion of students who graduate by the second year is at its highest point in 10 years (15.3%, 2017 cohort). Prior to the 2017 cohort, the proportion of graduates ranged from eight to eleven percent.
- By year three, roughly 30 percent of transfers graduate.
- We see the largest jump in the proportion of graduates between years three and four, followed by years four and five.

- For the most recent cohorts, by year four, roughly 40 to 45 percent graduate, with an additional ten percent still enrolled.
- By year five, roughly 45 to 50 percent of students have graduated, with approximately five percent still enrolled.
- The Fall 2013 cohort, the most recent cohort for the official reporting of six-year graduation rate statistics, yielded the highest six-year graduation rate in recent years (53%). (Fall 2013 was also a strong cohort for the first-time, full-time freshmen cohort).
- At the fifth year mark, the Fall 2014 cohort is not performing as well as the 2013 cohort. This means the College's six-year graduation rate will likely decline next year – again, similar to the first-time, full-time freshmen cohort.

Retention and Graduation Rates of Full-Time Transfers in Baccalaureate Programs by Year of Entry											
Total: Fall 2009 to Fall 2019											
Entering Term	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Number of Students in Initial Fall Cohort	536	379	635	553	491	508	613	550	616	572	548
First Semester											
% Enrolled	84.9%	86.5%	87.1%	84.3%	83.3%	81.3%	82.7%	82.0%	81.8%	81.3%	80.7%
1 Year											
% Enrolled	65.3%	69.4%	70.2%	66.9%	70.5%	64.2%	67.2%	64.7%	70.3%	65.7%	
% Graduated	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	
2 Years											
% Enrolled	43.1%	50.4%	45.8%	44.5%	50.3%	47.8%	43.2%	46.5%	45.1%		
% Graduated	11.0%	10.8%	9.9%	10.3%	8.6%	8.1%	10.9%	9.8%	15.3%		
3 Years											
% Enrolled	26.1%	27.2%	25.8%	23.5%	26.9%	23.4%	24.8%	24.0%			
% Graduated	25.9%	28.2%	25.4%	29.1%	28.9%	27.2%	29.9%	29.8%			
4 Years											
% Enrolled	11.8%	10.3%	12.0%	8.7%	9.6%	10.0%	10.0%				
% Graduated	37.7%	41.2%	38.1%	40.5%	46.0%	40.0%	44.2%				
5 Years											
% Enrolled	5.8%	6.6%	5.0%	3.4%	4.1%	4.9%					
% Graduated	43.1%	46.7%	44.7%	45.8%	50.9%	45.3%					
6 Years											
% Enrolled	3.9%	2.9%	4.4%	2.5%	2.4%						
% Graduated	46.1%	50.1%	47.1%	46.8%	53.0%						
7 Years											
% Enrolled	1.9%	1.3%	2.2%	1.6%							
% Graduated	47.6%	52.0%	49.1%	47.9%							
8 Years											
% Enrolled	1.1%	0.3%	1.1%								
% Graduated	48.3%	53.0%	50.4%								
9 Years											
% Enrolled	1.1%	0.3%									
% Graduated	48.9%	53.0%									
10 Years											
% Enrolled	1.1%										
% Graduated	49.3%										

Possible Next Steps and Future Assessment Initiatives

- Annual tracking of student persistence is critical across all cohorts. Continue to track annually.
- Discuss the findings with Cabinet and Enrollment Management team to consider identifying specific strategies to retain students after the first semester, years one and two with targets identified.

- Suggest that the Cabinet and Enrollment Management team identify strategies to bolster graduation in four years, given the data presented. Consider direct intervention with students who remain, particularly at the four-year and five-year mark, in an effort to determine what assistance, if any, students need to get to graduation (ideally within the next two years).
- Assess implemented strategies and initiatives to measure success within a defined timeframe.
- Continue to monitor credits attempted/earned as part of CUNY's *Momentum* initiative.
- In-depth analyses will be conducted for the Fall 2018 cohort (one-year retention) and the Fall 2017 cohort (two year retention) in an attempt to identify differences between those who persist and those who leave. Both demographic and academic characteristics will be analyzed.