

Notice to Students Regarding Rates of Graduation of First-time in College Full-time Freshmen

The Student Right-to-Know Act requires colleges and universities throughout the United States to inform students regarding graduation rates for full-time undergraduates entering college for the first time. The utility of graduation rates is a complicated and much debated issue in higher education. It is important for prospective students and parents to be as knowledgeable as possible about the university and the particular undergraduate program(s) of interest. It is hoped that the information provided will be helpful.

How is success in college measured?

Success in college and university endeavors is measured in a variety of ways depending on the needs of the student. Not all students entering college intend to complete a degree program. Success for some students is achieved when sufficient knowledge or skill has been attained from a course or series of courses that will provide qualifications for initial employment, or that will enhance skills needed for advancement in their current job. Other students may enter college with the goal of demonstrating a level of achievement in college courses that will allow them to transfer to a more selective college or university, or a less expensive state institution. At yet another level, success may be defined as degree attainment. This last measure relates directly to reporting of rates of graduation, while the other measures described above are not taken into account when measuring rates of graduation.

Some factors to consider in interpreting rates of graduation

It is difficult to make valid comparisons of the graduation rates of individual institutions. In order to do so, one must be able to identify institutions with very similar institutional and student characteristics. Institutions vary considerably in their missions, the types of students served, racial/ethnic diversity, selectivity (i.e., admissions standards and requirements), the availability of remedial and/or academic support services, etc. Therefore, the reader should be cautious in attempting to evaluate the performance of a particular institution, or to compare institutions without this essential contextual information. The term private (independent) college or university sometimes elicits in the public visions of elite universities, such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc. It is sometimes assumed that all or most private institutions are highly selective, elite institutions. In fact, the highly selective institutions are only a small percentage of the independent institutions nationally.

Generally speaking, institutions with the highest or most selective admissions standards/requirements will have the highest rates of graduation. For example, students with high SAT scores and GPAs usually are the best prepared to attend college and succeed. Therefore, a college that admits primarily high achieving students will likely have high rates of graduation.

In contrast, institutions with more liberal admissions criteria place the emphasis on access and opportunity, and tend to have lower rates of graduation compared to their more selective counterparts. Typically, entering students with lower levels of achievement in high school require a lot of academic support services to succeed in college.

The definition of graduation rate used here is one prescribed by the federal government which essentially follows a group of first-time in college full-time freshmen from entry through six years to determine how many graduated. Superficially, this measure offers the advantage of being easily communicated and easily compared across institutions (but see factors to consider above). However, an important adjunct to data on graduation rates is data on the number of students who leave before graduation to transfer to another institution, or whose educational goals did not require degree attainment. In other words, not all students who do not graduate from a particular institution have failed to achieve their goals, or have abandoned higher education entirely. Other measures of success such as those discussed above are needed. Unfortunately, accurate and reliable data on students who transfer out or otherwise achieve their educational goals are often very difficult to get. Without these missing pieces, graduation rates by themselves can be misleading.

It also is important to note that graduation rates for first-time in college freshmen generally do not represent the overall productivity of an institution's undergraduate programs. First-time in college full-time freshmen represented only 27 percent of all full-time freshmen at NSU in fall 2002; therefore, their rates of completion are not a good measure of the rate of graduation of undergraduates in general. Moreover, rates of graduation of small circumscribed groups of undergraduates might suggest that NSU produces small numbers of bachelor's degree recipients. In fact, overall productivity on an annual basis is quite substantial. While only 120 of 288 members of the fall 2002 entering class of full-time first-time freshmen graduated within six years, through academic year 2007-2008, NSU awarded 1,390 bachelor's degrees. Therefore, the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded during a 12-month period is a more comprehensive measure of productivity.

While the matters relating to rates of graduation are complex, it is hoped that the information provided will be valuable to you, and that you will keep in mind the complexities briefly addressed here when analyzing and interpreting the data provided.

**Nova Southeastern University
Disclosure of Graduation Data in Compliance with the Federal Student Right-to-Know Act**

- A total of 1,390 bachelor's degrees were awarded during the 12-month period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008.
- Fifty-three percent of all full-time undergraduates entering NSU in fall 2002 graduated with a bachelor's degree within six years (see below).
- Forty-two percent of first-time in college, full-time freshmen entering NSU in fall 2002 graduated with a bachelor's degree within six years (see below).
- Forty-two percent of first-time in college, full-time freshmen receiving athletically-related aid entering NSU in fall 2002 graduated with a bachelor's degree within six years (see below).

Fall 2008 Undergraduates																
Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Full-Time Degree/Certificate-Seeking Students by Headcount																
Enrollment Status	Nonresident Alien		Black, Non-Hispanic		American Indian or Alaskan Native		Asian or Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White, Non-Hispanic		Race/Ethnicity Unknown		Grand Total All Students	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Full-Time	30	67	202	658	3	14	92	175	295	813	379	723	75	156	1,076	2,606
Students Receiving Athletically-Related Financial Aid																
Total	3	0	10	10	0	1	0	3	19	23	41	73	5	6	78	116
Baseball	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	19	0	0	0	31	0
Basketball	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	8	3	0	12	13
Cross Country	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	5	6	0	1	10	11
*All Other Sports Combined	1	0	3	5	0	1	0	3	7	20	12	61	2	6	25	96

*All other sports combined included cheerleading, golf, rowing, soccer, softball, tennis, and volleyball.

Men's sports included baseball. Women's sports included rowing, softball, tennis, and volleyball. There were men's and women's teams in basketball, cheerleading, cross country, golf, and soccer.

Four female students received athletic aid in multiple sports. Therefore the athlete total does not equal the sum of the sports.

Six-Year Rates of Graduation and Persistence of All Full-time Undergraduates Entering in Fall 2002

			Graduated as of August 31, 2008		Still Enrolled in Fall 2008		Graduated + Still Enrolled	
By Gender	No. in Original Cohort	% of original cohort	No.	% of each category	No.	% of each category	No.	% of each category
	Male	230	27%	127	55%	7	3%	134
Female	620	73%	324	52%	14	2%	338	55%
Total	850	100%	451	53%	21	2%	472	56%
By Race/Ethnicity								
White, Non-Hispanic	304	36%	170	56%	5	2%	175	58%
Black, Non-Hispanic	177	21%	80	45%	6	3%	86	49%
Hispanic	232	27%	126	54%	8	3%	134	58%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2	100%
Asian or Pacific Islander	43	5%	23	53%	0	0%	23	53%
Non-Resident Alien	26	3%	18	69%	0	0%	18	69%
Race/ethnicity unknown	66	8%	32	48%	2	3%	34	52%
Total	850	100%	451	53%	21	2%	472	56%

The four year average rate of graduation within six years for first-time, full-time, freshmen was 44 percent including students who transferred to graduate or first-professional degree programs under NSU's dual admission program. Data for the most recent year appear below.

**Rates of Graduation and Persistence Within 150 Percent of Normal Time
Fall 2002 Cohort of Bachelor's and Certificate-Seeking First-time in College Full-time Entering Freshmen**

	Original Cohort				Graduated			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent of Category	No.	Percent of Category
White, Non-Hispanic	37	42%	66	33%	18	49%	28	42%
Black, Non-Hispanic	15	17%	43	22%	9	60%	13	30%
Hispanic	14	16%	55	28%	3	21%	25	45%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1%			0	0%		
Asian or Pacific Islander	9	10%	18	9%	3	33%	10	56%
Non-Resident Alien	4	5%	7	4%	2	50%	3	43%
Race/ethnicity unknown	8	9%	11	6%	5	63%	1	9%
Total	88	100%	200	100%	40	45%	80	40%
Total Men + Women	No. Percent				No. Percent			
	288 100%				120 42%			

Nine of the cohort members who did not graduate were still enrolled six years after entry, making the overall persistence rate 45 percent. One student in the cohort entered under the dual admissions program, and transferred to an NSU graduate or first-professional degree program without conferral of a bachelor's degree. This student was counted as a completer in the table above.

**Six Year Rates of Graduation for Fall 2002
First-time in College Entering Freshmen Athletes Receiving Athletic Aid**

	Original Cohort				Graduated			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent of Category	No.	Percent of Category
Total	17	100%	19	100%	8	47%	7	37%
Total Men + Women	No.	Percent			No.	Percent		
	36	100%			15	42%		

Note: In accord with federal regulations race, ethnicity, and gender data are not reported by sport, because there were five or fewer students in each category.

Rates of Graduation of Students Receiving Athletically-Related Aid By Sport

Sport	Fall 2002			Four Year Average Graduation Rate
	Entering Cohort	No. Graduated	Percent Graduated	
Basketball	7	4	57%	53%
Baseball	9	3	33%	56%
Cross Country	0	0	NA	50%
All Other Sports Combined	20	8	40%	42%

Note: In accord with federal regulations race, ethnicity, and gender data are not reported by sport, because there were five or fewer students in each category.