

And What about Graduate Retention and Persistence?: Building Strategies to Address the Overlooked Question

JACK DEROCHI, WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

BRIAN KLOEPEL, WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

SHARON JAMES MCGEE, EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



Session Goals



Session Goals

- To Propose to the Council of Graduate Schools the Agenda to Codify Best Practices for Graduate Retention and Degree Completion Rates
- To Identify Appropriate Metrics for Graduate Retention and Degree Completion that are Distinct from Undergraduate
- To Determine Criteria Necessary to Standardize Time-to-degree Metrics for Graduate Students

Common Undergraduate Data Points



Retention Rate of First-Time Full-Time Freshmen from First to Second year

IPEDS Data

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

IES | NCES National Center for Education Statistics

IPEDS
Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

Search IPEDS

IPEDS Data Use Help Desk (866) 558-0658 or ipedstools@rti.org

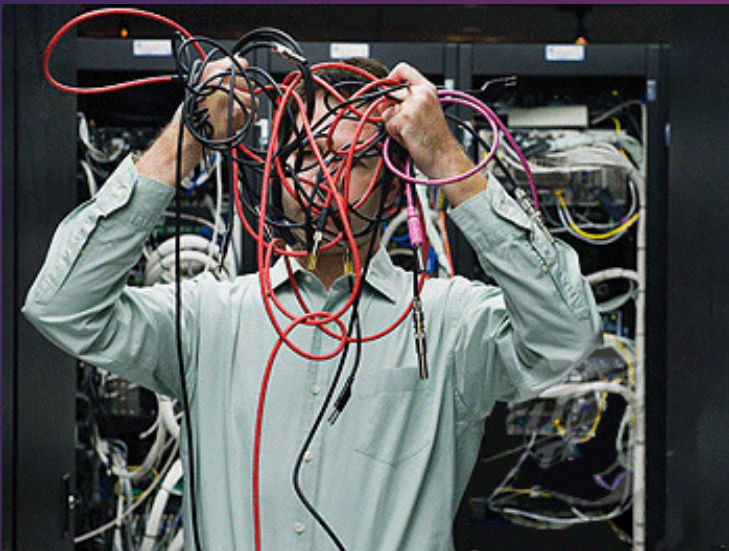
Use the Data

Access IPEDS data submitted to NCES through our data tools or download the data to conduct your research

- [Data Explorer](#)
Search for tables, charts, publications, or other products related to postsecondary education by keywords and filters.
- [Compare Institutions](#)
Download IPEDS data files for more than 7,000 institutions and up to 250 variables. Data files are provided in comma separated value (*.csv) format.
- [IPEDS Survey Components](#)
Learn more about the individual IPEDS survey components: view training videos, infographics, answers to frequently asked questions, survey forms, and more.
- [Data Trends](#)
Use the Trend Generator to view trends on most frequently asked subject areas including: Enrollment, Completions, Graduation Rates, Employees and Staff, Institutional Revenues, and Financial Aid.
- [Survey Data](#)
Data are available starting with the 1980-81 collection year for the *Complete data files* and *Custom data files* functions, which zip the data into comma separated value (*.csv). Beginning with the 2006-07 collection year, data for each collection year are compiled into an *Access database*.

Select download option

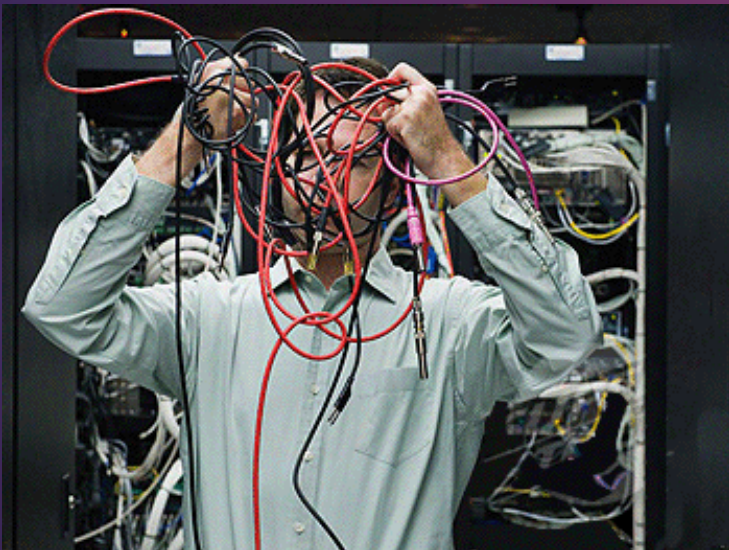
Retention and Persistence Terms: Complicated for Graduate Program



Complicating Factors

- Data vary widely by degree and program
- Doctoral vs. Masters vs. Certificate programs
- Length of programs (e.g., master's range 30 to 60 hours unlike undergraduate programs of 120 hours)
- Differing accreditation definitions of persistence and retention terms and calculations

Retention and Persistence Terms: Complicated for Graduate Program



Complicating Factors (continued)

- Full-time vs. part-time students
- Residential vs. Hybrid vs. Online programs
- Assistantship vs. Non-assistantship students
- Admission terms may be Fall, Spring, or Summer (not just Fall)

Case Study #1 Western Carolina University



Overall Enrollment Fall 2019: 12,173 students

Graduate Enrollment Fall 2019: 1,698 students (14%)

Graduate Programs: 42 including 5 doctoral

Regional Comprehensive University

Publicly-Funded

University of North Carolina System

Founded in 1889

Main Campus: Cullowhee, NC

Instructional Site: Asheville, NC at Biltmore Park

Moderate incoming student data summary

GRADUATE SCHOOL & RESEARCH

Meet Your Incoming Fall 2019 Graduate Students

Total Graduate School enrollment is 1717 students*

*As of first day of classes 08/19. Includes non-degree students. Official enrollment will be tallied on census date 08/30.

Applied, Admitted and Enrolled

All Graduate Level Students

Applications..... 1806
Admissions Offered 1041
Enrolled (unofficial/pre-census) 708

Degree-Seeking Students

Applications..... 1739
Admissions Offered 981
Enrolled (unofficial/pre-census) 686

Enrollment Status*

60% Full-Time
40% Part-Time
43% are distance/online-only

*all incoming graduate students

Undergraduate GPA and Standardized Test Scores*

Average Undergraduate GPA3.40
Average GRE Verbal 153
Average GRE Quantitative 149
Average GRE Writing..... 3.9

* incoming degree-seeking graduate students

Demographics*

Gender

66% Female
34% Male

Age

Mean.....31
Median.....29

Minimal graduate-level persistence and retention data

Persistence

B3 Number of degrees awarded from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

B3	Certificate/diploma	
B3	Associate degrees	
B3	Bachelor's degrees	2279
B3	Postbachelor's certificates	0
B3	Master's degrees	577
B3	Post-Master's certificates	22
B3	Doctoral degrees – research/scholarship	7
B3	Doctoral degrees – professional practice	37
B3	Doctoral degrees – other	

Case Study #1 Western Carolina University



Case Study #2 East Tennessee State University



Overall Enrollment Fall 2019: 11,511 students
(UG + G, not including College of Medicine
and College of Pharmacy for total of 14,411)

Graduate Enrollment Fall 2019: 2,436 students (21%)

Graduate Programs: 52 including 12 doctoral + 31
certificates + 4 joint programs with College of
Pharmacy and College of Medicine

Doctoral Research University High Research; Research
Doctoral Professional Dominant; Academic Health
Science Center designation

Publicly-Funded

Founded in 1911

Main Campus: Johnson City, TN
Instructional sites: Kingsport, TN; Sevierville, TN;
Abingdon, VA; Galax, VA; Asheville, NC

Case Study #2 East Tennessee State University



Data are available but...

vary based on accreditation needs

(e.g. public health and nursing accreditation agencies have different definitions and metrics for retention)

are not widely disseminated yet

(modified RCM budget model is in year 3 and there is concern that these varying definitions and data points will cause disruption and unrest)

Tennessee funding formula uses “credit accumulated by level” for UG. ETSU has found that at the UG level, that # of credits at particular thresholds is a good predictor for college retention and completion. **Would the same apply for graduate level?**

Case Study #3 Winthrop University



Overall Enrollment Fall 2019: 5,860 students

Graduate Enrollment Fall 2019: 1,101 students (19 %), including 833 graduate degree-seeking students (240 online)

Graduate Programs: 28 certificate, master's, and specialist programs

Regional Comprehensive University

Publicly-Funded, separate from University of South Carolina System

Founded in 1886

Main Campus: Rock Hill, SC

Case Study #3 Winthrop University



Graduate Retention at Winthrop University

- Historical challenges capturing institutional-level retention or completion data
- Collaboration with Institutional Research
- New Provost = New Approach
 - University-wide WIG on Retention
 - *Increase one-year total retention rate plus graduation rate for first-time degree seeking graduate students from **86.5%** to **88.5%** by Fall 2020.*
- WE HAVE DATA!

Case Study #3 Winthrop University



RTG200 - Graduate Cohort Tracking

Filter Values

Select the first NG cohort to include

Select the last NG cohort to include

1. Specify values for all parameters.
 2. Select the run button to submit the request.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	
Sum of Graduates			YEARS_TO_GRADUATE					Total Coh	2 Yr	4 Yr	2 yr rate	4 yr rate	
Cohort	Initial Colle	Initial Program		1	2	3	4	9999					
⊕NG201580				25	162	45	6	72	310	187	238	0.603226	0.767742
⊕NG201610				28	9	3	13		53	28	40	0.528302	0.754717
⊕NG201680				51	182	32	1	58	324	233	266	0.719136	0.820988
⊕NG201710				1	12	6		8	27	13	19	0.481481	0.703704
⊕NG201780				59	153	10		68	290	212	222	0.731034	0.765517
⊕NG201810				2	20			24	46	22	22	0.478261	0.478261
⊕NG201880				48	10			268	326	58	58	0.177914	0.177914
⊕NG201910				2				85	87	2	2	0.022989	0.022989
⊕NG201980								384	384	0	0	0	0

Group Discussion



Goal of Group Feedback

- Gather your thoughts/questions/insights
- Extend current discussions for future

Table Discussions

- Questions on table
- Record discussion points on tablet
- Be prepared to report to entire group

Please Contact Us

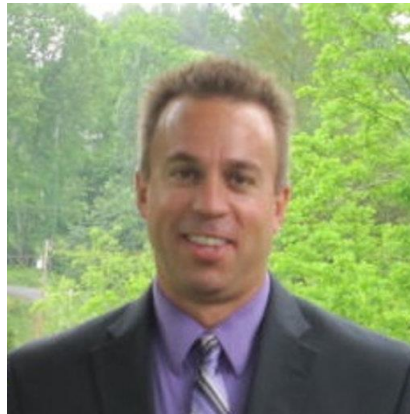
Jack DeRochi

Winthrop University
derochij@winthrop.edu



Brian Kloepffel

Western Carolina University
bkloepffel@wcu.edu



Sharon McGee

East Tennessee State University
mcgees@mail.etsu.edu

