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

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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

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 keyword and filter.

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, Completers, Graduation Rates, Employees and Staff, Institutional Finances, and Financial Aid.
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
Case Study #1
Western Carolina University

Moderate incoming student data summary

Minimal graduate-level persistence and retention data
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
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
NG291580
Select the last NG cohort to include
NG291980

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

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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
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