

Who's Missing from the Federal Graduation Rate?

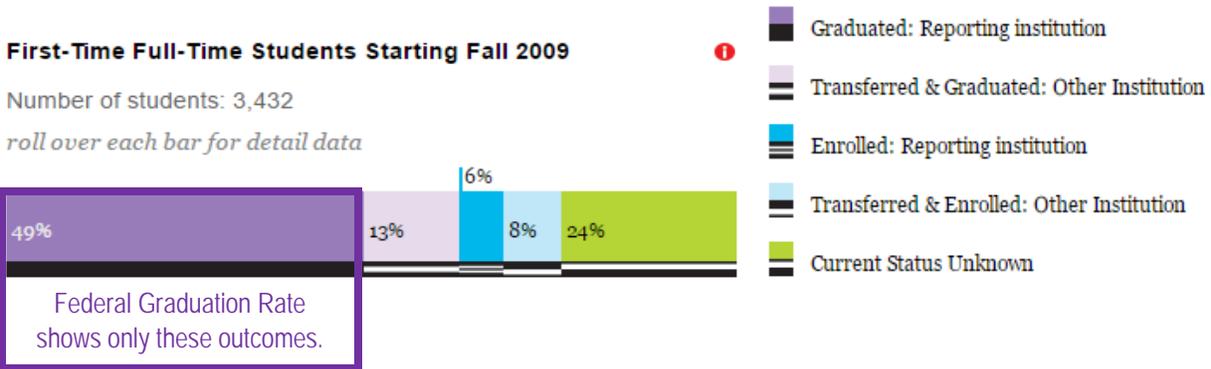


The gaps and failures of the federal graduation rate to count the successes of all higher education students are clearly demonstrated by research from the National Student Clearinghouseⁱ. The federal rate excludes outcomes for students who start part-time in their first term of attendance – 37% of students who started in Fall 2015ⁱⁱ – and fails to recognize the outcomes for over one-third of entering students who transfer between institutions.ⁱⁱⁱ It's time for a new metric that can count all students.

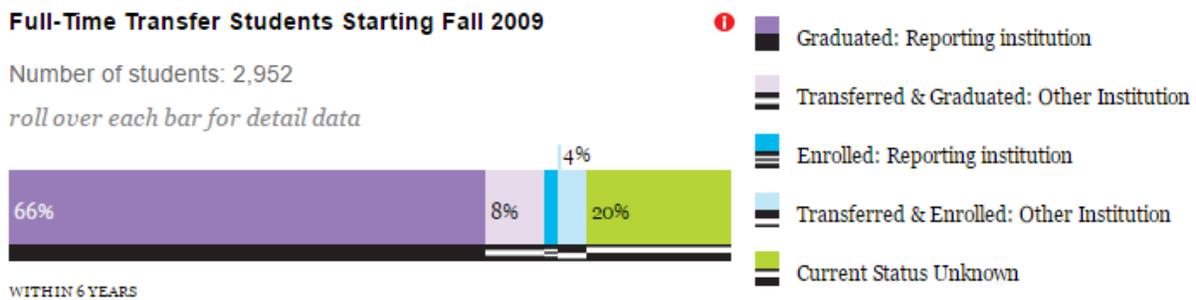
The Student Achievement Measure (SAM) is a free, voluntary initiative that provides institutions with the ability to track student movement across postsecondary institutions and offers a more complete picture of undergraduate student progress and completion within the higher education system. All degree-granting, accredited institutions are eligible to participate in SAM. If every eligible institution reported SAM outcomes, nearly half a million more first time, full time students would be counted raising the national success & progress rate for first-time, full-time students to over 70%!

Case Study: Missing Transfer Student Outcomes at the University of North Texas

The University of North Texas enrolled nearly 3,500 first-time, full-time students in Fall 2009. Of those, 49% completed their degrees within 6-years, as shown in the dark purple bar of their SAM Bachelor's Model^{iv}. These are the only outcomes reported as part of the federal graduation rate, which makes it appear as though half of the students who started at the University of North Texas failed. **SAM shows, however, that 13% of students graduated from another institution and another 14% are still enrolled pursuing their degree, for a total of 76% of starting students with a successful outcome.**



SAM also reports the successful outcomes for the 2,952 students who started at the University of North Texas as transfer students in Fall 2009 and are missing from the federal rate – 80% have graduated or are still enrolled.



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All totaled, SAM reports that over 3,000 of the University of North Texas's students who are excluded or counted as failures by the federal graduation rate were, in fact, successful – that's a 300% increase in the number of successful students over those reported as such by the federal graduation rate.

Case Study: Missing Part-time Student Outcomes at the University of Maryland-University College

The mission of University of Maryland University College is to offer top-quality educational opportunities to adult students in Maryland, the nation, and the world, setting the global standard of excellence in adult education.^v Adult students frequently don't start as the first-time, full-time student and are not included in the federal rate. Only 140 students who started at UMUC in Fall 2009 were first-time, full-time students and only 651 were full-time transfer students. When compared to the nearly 3,000 students who started as part-time students in Fall 2005, over half of whom were successful within 10 years (125% of expected time), it's clear that it's time to count all students with SAM.

First-Time Full-Time Students Starting Fall 2009

Number of students: 140

roll over each bar for detail data

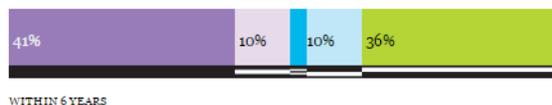


WITHIN 6 YEARS

Full-Time Transfer Students Starting Fall 2009

Number of students: 651

roll over each bar for detail data

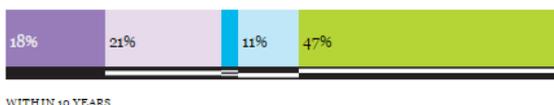


WITHIN 6 YEARS

First-Time Part-Time Students Starting Fall 2005

Number of students: 806

roll over each bar for detail data

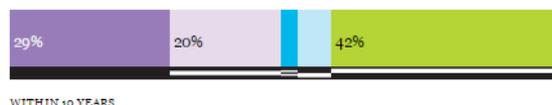


WITHIN 10 YEARS

Part-Time Transfer Students Starting Fall 2005

Number of students: 2,180

roll over each bar for detail data



WITHIN 10 YEARS

Learn more about SAM at our website (<http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/>) and follow us on Twitter (@JoinSAMProject) to hear more about how participating institutions are committed to #CountAllStudents!

ⁱ National Student Clearinghouse. (2016, March). *Snapshot Report – Yearly Success and Progress Rates*. Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Available online: <https://nscresearchcenter.org/snapshotreport-yearlysuccessandprogressrates20/>

ⁱⁱ National Student Clearinghouse. (2015, December). *Current Term Enrollment Estimates – Fall 2015*. Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Available online: <https://nscresearchcenter.org/currenttermenrollmentestimate-fall2015/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Wakhungu, P.K, Yuan, X., & Harrell, A. (2015, July). *Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2008 Cohort* (Signature Report No. 9). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Available online: <https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport9/>

^{iv} The University of North Texas SAM institutional page, retrieved September 27, 2016: <http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/participants/227216>

^v The University of Maryland-University College SAM institutional description, retrieved September 27, 2016: <http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/participants/163204>