RECORD HIGH RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

Purdue has continued its record growth in retention of students. A record 90.6% of students who entered the campus for the first-time in Fall 2011, returned for their sophomore year in Fall 2012. Additionally, the first to third year retention (two-year retention rates) reached a record high of 83.7%. Lower attrition in Purdue students’ first two-years is highly related to an increased probability of graduating from the institution. Given the multi-year trend of increasing first and second-year retention rates it is not surprising that the university also reached a record high four-year graduation rate of 45.7%. Finally, as predicted from previous retention rates, Purdue’s six-year graduation rate showed an increase, once again topping 70%. The continued increase in retention rates predicts that the University will continue to see a multi-year growth in its six-year graduation rates. Future Purdue goals for retention and graduation rates are 93% first-year retention rate by 2014, 50% five-year graduation rate by 2015 and 76% six-year graduation rate by 2017.

HISTORICAL BOILERMAKER HIGHS

1-YEAR RETENTION
2011 COHORT 90.6%
2010 COHORT 83.7%
2008 COHORT 45.7%

4-YEAR GRADUATION

Chart 1. One-year retention with four and six year graduation percentage by cohort
The At-Risk Survey is administered to all new students entering in a fall term. The latest survey was administered in Spring 2012 to 6,663 currently enrolled students who began in Fall 2011. The response rate was around 16%.

Of those students who responded to the survey, 8.9% were identified as At-Risk students based upon their likelihood to re-enroll at Purdue.

The strongest influencing factor on whether or not they would be returning to Purdue were academic factors (52%). The academic workload has consistently been the greatest influencing factor and has been on the rise over the years. Financial reasons were the second most cited factor by students in the most recent survey, with campus environment being the third. These two factors have changed position in importance over time, during the 2008 administration students listed campus environment as the second most important factor (see chart 2).

Academic workload is the highest academic risk factor from the 2012 survey. 64.2% respondents indicated this as an influential factor to remain at Purdue, which is a significant increase from 2010 and 2008 survey responses. The 2012 responders also cited that their academic program did not match their career goals much more than in 2010 and 2008. Also, the odd spike in the statement that the students felt they were not challenged enough academically that occurred in 2008 did not persist in the 2012 data (see chart 3).
As seen in chart 4, 43.8% of respondents indicated they would not remain at Purdue if they think they can get the same level of education for a better price elsewhere, this has continued to remain the top financial reason for leaving. Respondents indicated they would most likely feel comfortable in continuing at Purdue if the tuition were at least $10K to $15K less expensive.

More students prefer to have more social opportunities (68% for 2012) than in the prior year survey results (see chart 5). The size of Purdue as a risk factor has decreased over the years falling from 55.3% of respondents in 2008 (when it was the most commonly stated factor) to only 40.0% in 2012. Although, it remained the second highest campus environment factor. Racial and ethnic diversity has been declining as a stated factor over time as well, while the other factors have seen gains since 2008.