Retention and graduation rates have increased over the last six-years. This newsletter examines retention and graduation rates, as well as the differences among the academic colleges.

**Chart 1. One-Year and Two-Year Retention Rate by Cohort**

Retention rates for the new first-time full-time student cohorts at Purdue-West Lafayette have steadily increased since the fall 2007 entering cohort (see chart 1). The one-year retention rate of 91.0% for the fall 2012 cohort is the highest in Purdue’s history, and the two-year retention rate of 84.3% for the fall 2011 cohort is also a record high. Purdue now retains nearly as many students to their third year of enrollment as it historically did to the second year. The rate of change of increasing retention rates nearly mirrors the same change of the increasing academic profile of incoming students over the last six years.

**UPWARD TRENDS CONTINUE FOR RETENTION AND GRADUATION**
FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE APPROACHES 2014 GOAL

Increased retention rates indicate more of Purdue’s students are matriculating into their third and fourth year. This has led to steady increases in the University’s graduation rates over the last five years. The most recent four-year graduation rate for the 2009 entry cohort is a Purdue record at 46.8% (see chart 2). Steady progress continues towards the University goal of graduating 50.0% of students in four-years.

FIVE-YEAR AND SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES INCREASE

As cohorts in the last few years have set record high retention and four-year graduation rates, the five and six-year graduation rates are also seeing increases (see chart 2). The average time to degree at Purdue-West Lafayette is 4.28 years. Therefore, the largest spike in Purdue’s graduation rates occurs between the 4th and 5th year, as the rate jumps from 46.8% in four years to 68.5% in five years. The 2008 cohort set a five-year graduation record of 68.5%, projecting for a record breaking six-year graduation rate next year.

Chart 2. Four, Five, and Six-Year Graduation Rates
There is variation in Purdue’s four-year graduation rates by college, ranging from a low of 21.5% in Pharmacy to a high of 68.8% in Veterinary Technology (see chart 4). Exploratory Studies (all students) and Pharmacy (most students) by the nature of their programs necessitate CODO for a four-year degree completion. Among the other academic colleges, Science has the lowest four-year rate for graduating students in the entry college at 28.7%, followed by Engineering at 36.3%. Veterinary Technology has the largest percentage graduating from their entry college at 68.8% followed by Health and Human Sciences at 54.5%.