RETENTION & GRADUATION TREND UPWARD

The October issue examines the increasing retention and graduation rates for the West Lafayette campus as well as those of specific student populations.

For questions, comments and suggestions please contact: enrollmentmanagement@purdue.edu.

RECORD HIGH ONE-, TWO- & THREE-YEAR RETENTION RATES

Retention rates for the new first-time full-time student cohorts at Purdue-West Lafayette have continued to increase since the fall 2007 entering cohort (see Chart 1). The one-year retention rate of 92.6% for the fall 2013 cohort is a historic high for Purdue, as are the two-year rate of 86.1% and the three-year rate of 80.9%.

Purdue now retains more students to their second year than it did to their first year in 2006. In addition, more students are retained to their third year than were to their second year in 2008.

The rate of change of increasing retention rates closely parallels the increasing academic profile of incoming students over the last seven years, but is also a reflection of a campus-wide culture and many programs that support student success.

Chart 1. One-, two-, and three-year retention rates for Purdue-West Lafayette campus.
FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE APPROACHES 50% GOAL

Increased retention rates indicate more of Purdue’s students are matriculating into their third and fourth year than ever before. This has led to steady increases in the University’s graduation rates over the last six years. The most recent four-year graduation rate for the 2010 entry cohort is a Purdue record at 49.2% (see Chart 2). Steady progress continues toward the University goal of graduating at least 50.0% of students in four years.

FIVE- & 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 increasing (see Chart 2). The average time to degree at Purdue-West Lafayette is 4.26 years. Therefore, the largest spike in Purdue’s graduation rates occurs between the fourth and fifth year, as the rate jumped from 46.8% in four years to 70.6% in five years for the 2009 cohort. Both the five-year graduation rate of 70.6% and the six-year graduation rate of 73.8% hit new record highs.

RETENTION & GRADUATION BY ETHNICITY

From fall 2013 to fall 2014, Purdue-West Lafayette has retained 92.6% of first-time, full-time new beginners overall. When the various reporting categories are considered, Asian students are retained at the highest rate (95%). Students who self-identified as two or more races are next highest at 94.4%. International students were retained at 93.6%. See Chart 3 for more.
For the 2010 cohort of first-time, full-time beginners pursuing a baccalaureate degree, the overall graduation rate was 49.2%. Notably, international students had the highest four-year graduation rate at 53.9%. Of students who identified themselves as Caucasian, 50.3% graduated in four years. Those who identified as two or more races were the next highest at 45.5%.

This was followed closely by Hispanic/Latino students who graduated at a rate of 43.9%, and Asian students at 42.5%. See Chart 4 for more.

Graduation rates were not included for ethnic groups with fewer than 99 enrolled students. In those cases, due to the small numbers of enrolled and graduated students, an accurate comparison could not be presented based on the current data.

**FIRST-GENERATION & 21ST CENTURY RETENTION**

The retention of first-generation students at Purdue-West Lafayette has followed a steady upward trend, reaching 88.7% for retention from fall 2013 to fall 2014. This sustained trend reflects the ongoing efforts of faculty and staff across the campus community to retain this student population.

Twenty-first Century Scholars at Purdue-West Lafayette were retained from fall 2013 to fall 2014 at a rate of 90.1%. This is a total increase of eight percentage points from the fall 2008 cohort to the fall 2013 cohort.

In addition, the 2010 cohort had a four-year graduation rate of 44.0%.