Undergraduate Student Persistence and Progress Towards Graduation

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Persistence and progress are central to the Drive to 25

- Metric 8: 6-year graduation rate
- Metric 9: Percentage of undergraduates involved in research, scholarship, or creative discovery
- Metric 10: Placement rates of graduates
Primary reasons students leave WSU (in rank order)

- Financial difficulties
- Family/personal health (physical and emotional)
- Academic performance/preparedness
- Lack of connectedness to campus community
Current status of retention and graduation rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>17-18</th>
<th>16-17</th>
<th>15-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Freshmen</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Transfers</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Incoming</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How WSU retention and graduation rates compare to national averages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>WSU</th>
<th>Public institutions (2015)</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Retention of first-time, full-time  
(WSU cohort from 2017; public institutions cohort from 2015) | 79.3% | 80.8%                     |
| 6-year graduation  
(WSU cohort from 2012; public institutions cohort from 2009) | 58.9% | 58.9%                     |
Which students are most at risk?

Their biggest challenges include:

• >$7K unmet financial need;
• first-generation status;
• low high school GPA;
• non-resident status.

Examples of related trends:

• More have >$7K unmet financial need
  - Increase in Pell-eligible students from 41% in 2016-17 to 50% in 2017-18;
• First-generation students are approximately 38% of undergraduates;
• Average HS GPA of entering students has increased to 3.4.
How the financial burden on students has increased
Sources of financial aid at WSU

Federal, $207,381,578
*Primarily loans

State, $55,230,898
*Mostly state grants

Institutional, $61,769,933
*Scholarships/grants

Outside Sources, $22,929,036
*Scholarships/loans

$347,311,445 to 22,000 students
Strategies to reduce attrition and hindered progress due to financial reasons

• Strategic allocation of financial aid and scholarships.
• Reducing course materials costs.
• Eliminating unproductive credits.
• Improving student’s financial literacy
Philanthropy is essential to reducing unmet need
WSU is ensuring scholarships reach more students

*Expanded Comprehensive Scholarship Search Engine

- Includes both WSU and Private Scholarships
- Social Media Share Function for parents and advisors

- Current grade level
- G.P.A.
- Citizenship
- Residency

= scholarships awarded by Washington State University.
WSU faculty are working to reduce the cost of course materials

- Internally funded grants facilitate conversion of courses to Open Education Resources.
  - 35 new conversions affect ~ 6100 enrollments per year;
  - Estimated savings of $100.00 per text = $610,000 savings annually for WSU students;
  - 2 degrees online are entirely OER.

- “First Day” provides students access to digital course materials on the first day of class.
  - 10 courses on the Pullman campus participated this fall;
  - Course materials costs reduced by 45% on average.
For academic success: Foreshadowing unproductive credits will help address causes

- Course withdrawal tracking and alert system launched Fall 2017:
  - Reasons for withdrawals are tracked;
  - Students receive intervention message offering assistance;
  - Certain reasons trigger message to Advisors and Student Financial Services.
- Primary reasons for withdrawals:
  - Concern about academic performance;
  - Feeling overwhelmed;
  - Mental/emotional stress.
Productive credits and good retention have a financial impact

Barely half of FT students complete 30 credits in the first year:

• Additional cost of tuition and delayed career

For institution:

• 1% increase in retention equals (annually):
  – $281K resident net tuition
  – $212K domestic non-resident net tuition
  – $21K international net tuition

• Cost of instruction to deliver duplicate courses (2207 unproductive course enrollments in Spring 2018)

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Grants and partnerships improve support for low-income and first-generation needs

e.g. $9.9M in grant funding for:

- **Invest in Success** (serving 170 students)
  - Students save $1,000 to receive $4,000
  - Programming includes financial literacy, peer mentoring
  - Helps them engage in academics and “high-impact practices”
    - Has boosted retention by 20%

- **Cougs Rise** college transition programming for low-income and first-generation students (in first year, serving 180)
  - Includes financial literacy training and scholarship support

- **ATLAS** (special advising program with College of Education, serving 140 annually)
  - Includes financial literacy and emergency grant aid
  - 87% retention; 78% have increased cumulative GPA
Thank You