



Fact Book Bulletin

REPORTING SIGNIFICANT TRENDS AFFECTING HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE SREB STATES

SREB

Turning Freshmen Into Sophomores is Key to College Students' Success

The freshman year is the pivotal time for post-secondary students' success. Data show that most students who drop out of college without earning degrees leave during or right after the freshman year. This trend is true for students at four-year colleges and two-year colleges*.

Within about six years, 31 percent of the fall 1995 class of first-time, full-time, bachelor's-seeking students left the public four-year university at which they first enrolled and had not transferred to another college. Those who left during or in the year after the first year of college accounted for more than half of these.

Similarly, within about three years, 55 percent of the fall 1998 class of first-time, full-time, degree- or certificate-seeking students left the public two-year college at which they first enrolled and had not transferred to another institution. Those who left during or in the year after the first year accounted for more than half.

On the positive side, 68 percent of the students at two-year colleges and 84 percent of the students at universities returned for a second year. Of the students at public four-year universities, 76 percent returned to the same university and

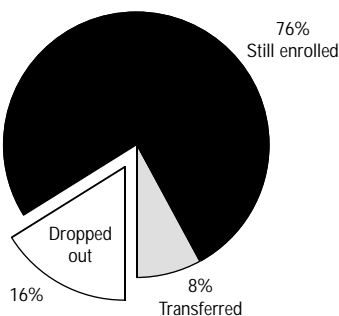
8 percent transferred to another institution. Of the students at public two-year colleges, 59 percent still were enrolled at their original college and 9 percent transferred.

Despite the freshman-year losses, nearly half (45 percent) of the students at two-year colleges "progressed" within three years: 17 percent graduated; 10 percent still were enrolled at the college they first attended; and 18 percent transferred. Of the students at four-year universities, more than two-thirds (69 percent) "progressed" within six years: 48 percent graduated; 5 percent still were enrolled at the university they first attended; and 16 percent transferred.

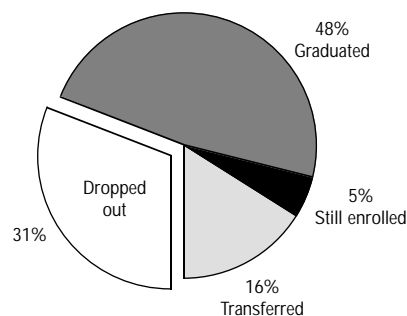
The SREB rates count those still enrolled at, those who transferred from and those who graduated from their original college within 150 percent of normal program time (about three years for two-year colleges and six years for four-year colleges). Several SREB states still are developing their systems for tracking students, particularly those who transfer. As a result, retention and progression rates could be higher than this report suggests.

Public Four-year Colleges and Universities in the SREB States

First-year Retention Rate*: 84%



Six-year Progression Rate*: 69%



* For students who began attending in fall 1995

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Postsecondary First-year Retention and Student Progression Rates¹

(updates Table 35, *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education 2000/2001*)

Four-year Colleges and Universities				Two-year Colleges			Technical Institutes	
First-year Retention Rate	Progression Rate		First-year Retention Rate	Progression Rate		First-year Retention Rate	Progression Rate	
	Total	Graduation Rate		Total	Graduation Rate			
SREB states	84%	69%	48%	68%	45%	17%	—	54%
Alabama	—	53	49	—	35	17	—	39
Arkansas	74	65	32	50	48	19	—	—
Delaware	—	—	—	—	—	—	NA	NA
Florida	84	74	55	76	57	30	—	—
Georgia	84	72	42	69	53	15	—	—
Kentucky	79	68	44	60	49	10	—	—
Louisiana	—	36	34	—	12	5	—	—
Maryland	87	74	54	65	38	11	NA	NA
Mississippi	74	54	47	—	44	22	NA	NA
North Carolina	84	76	57	—	24	19	NA	NA
Oklahoma	84	90	42	68	72	20	—	43
South Carolina	—	55	55	—	19	15	NA	NA
Tennessee	—	55	43	—	32	11	—	72
Texas	88	83	45	69	52	12	NA	NA
Virginia	88	82	63	63	43	15	NA	NA
West Virginia	78	63	43	62	39	17	—	—

"NA" indicates not applicable. There is no institution of this type in the state.

"—" indicates data not available. Georgia technical institutes and Mississippi two-year colleges will report retention rates beginning with students who started college in fall 1999. Four-year and two-year colleges and technical institutes in Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina and Tennessee and two-year colleges in North Carolina will report retention rates beginning with students who started college in fall 2000.

¹ These rates are based on the first-time, full-time, bachelor's-seeking students who enrolled in public four-year institutions in fall 1995 and on first-time, full-time, degree- or certificate-seeking students who enrolled in public two-year colleges and technical institutes in fall 1998. The SREB first-year retention rate consists of students who still were enrolled at the institution they first attended as well as students who transferred to other colleges during the next fall, winter or spring term. The SREB progression rate for four-year colleges and universities is the percentage of the first-time students in fall 1995 who, within 150 percent of normal program time (six years for most programs), either completed bachelor's degrees, remained enrolled at their original institution or transferred to another postsecondary institution. The SREB progression rate for two-year colleges and technical institutes is the percentage of the entering students in fall 1998 who, within 150 percent of normal program time (three years for most programs), either completed degrees or certificates, remained enrolled at their original institution or transferred to another postsecondary institution.

Source: SREB-State Data Exchange*.

For more information about this bulletin or the *SREB Fact Book*, contact Joe Marks at the Southern Regional Education Board, 592 10th St. N.W., Atlanta, GA 30318-5790, (404) 875-9211.

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