Completion

Students and the state are not well served by an empty promise of college access without completion.
Less than a third of Indiana's four-year college students graduate on time and just over half graduate after six years. Only 4 percent of the state's two-year college students complete on time and 12 percent graduate within three years.*

Not completing a two-year or four-year college degree has dramatic financial implications to Hoosiers and the state.

The lifetime earning potential of a student who does not complete higher education is more than $1 million less than an individual with a college degree.

Indiana must increase overall completion rates and reduce the time it takes for students to complete degree programs.

This will require:

- Increasing preparation of K-12 students.
- Transforming remedial education policies and practices to ensure students successfully complete gateway college courses.
- Establishing clear, efficient pathways for on-time college completion.

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**The Incomplete Promise: Indiana College Completion Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four-year Public Colleges:</th>
<th>Two-year Public Colleges:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Four-year graduation rate: 28 percent</td>
<td>• Two-year graduation rate: 4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Six-year graduation rate: 53 percent</td>
<td>• Three-year graduation rate: 12 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learn More Indiana: Creating a College-Completion Culture**

Learn More Indiana, the state’s one-stop resource for college and career planning and preparation, is making higher education possible for more Hoosiers. With a comprehensive website, annual campaigns and a robust mentoring program, Learn More Indiana is working with local partners across the state to break barriers to college access and success.

One such partnership is with Project Leadership, a non-profit organization serving Grant and Delaware counties. Through Learn More Indiana and Project Leadership, students participating in the state’s Twenty-first Century Scholars program get help at every stage of the college preparation process. Initiatives such as family outreach events, in-school financial aid labs, college application days and more than 200 trained mentors help make college a reality for these students.

With partnerships like Learn More Indiana and Project Leadership, the state and local communities are working together to create a college-completion culture across Indiana.

Indiana has made significant progress in increasing the number of students pursuing and completing rigorous courses in high school. This trend is reflected by increasing numbers of students taking college entry assessments (ACT and SAT), completing Advanced Placement (AP) and dual credit courses, and earning Core 40 diplomas with Academic or Technical Honors.

Rigorous High School Course-Taking (2006-11)*
• Increase in Core 40 and honors diplomas: 70.4 percent to 80.9 percent
• Increase in graduates passing AP exams: 7.5 percent to 14.0 percent
• Increase in Dual Credit Course-Taking: 10,000 to over 43,000 students (317 percent increase)

Creating a High School Diploma that Counts
Indiana created Core 40 to ensure that high school students are prepared for success after graduation. Building on this foundation:
• Core 40 became the default curriculum for a high school diploma. The Class of 2011 was the first to graduate with this requirement.
• Core 40 diploma requirements were aligned with minimum admissions requirements at all four-year public Indiana colleges (took effect in fall 2011).
• State financial-aid policies are aligned with Core 40 completion.

While these developments are noteworthy, the data reveal significant disparities in student preparation and performance. Though the number of Core 40 high school graduates has increased over time, so has the number of students requiring remediation in college. This reality underscores the need to ensure the rigor and consistency of Core 40 courses across Indiana.

Defining What it Means to be College-Ready
Each year, the Commission for Higher Education issues feedback reports showing where Indiana high school graduates go to college and whether these students are ready for college-level coursework. The data is cause for concern: at least a quarter of all first-time Indiana public college students are not college-ready when they arrive on campus.

Building on Indiana’s already rigorous academic standards, the state adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010 to provide students and educators a consistent, clear understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to be ready for college and careers. Implementation of these standards must include:
• Creating a common definition of college and career readiness.
• Implementing common assessments of college and career readiness (administered beginning at grade 11) as a primary indicator for college placement decisions.
• Developing alternative academic courses to accelerate the transition to college-level content, particularly for high school seniors and community college students identified for remedial education.

METRICS THAT MATTER: COMPLETION

1. Degree Completion: Percentage change in total degrees conferred. For two-year campuses, includes one-year certificates and associate degrees. For four-year campuses, includes bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees.
2. Remediation Success: Percentage of entering undergraduate students who complete first-year, college-level English and math courses.
3. Student Persistence: Percentage of entering two-year college students who complete 15, 30 and 45 credit hours and entering four-year college students who complete 30 and 60 credit hours.

Improving Preparation: A Shared Responsibility

Too often, higher education dismisses responsibility for student success in college based on insufficient preparation in the K-12 system.

Indiana’s higher education community must engage with the K-12 system to ensure that postsecondary expectations for students are clear and that the future educators prepared by Indiana colleges are equipped to be effective teachers and administrators. It’s worth noting that the state’s higher education institutions trained more than 90 percent of the teachers currently working in Indiana K-12 classrooms today.

This shared responsibility—student and educator preparation—must be embraced by Indiana’s K-12 and higher education communities. Specifically, the Commission will champion state and institutional policies and actions that:

• **Define what it means to be college-ready** in Indiana and align assessments between K-12 and higher education to ensure quality and consistency.

• **Connect colleges with P-20 educators, students and families** to communicate an expectation for college readiness.

• **Improve the feedback loop between high schools, colleges and employers** regarding the performance of their graduates and transfer students.

• **Reform educator preparation programs** to reflect the Common Core State Standards and ensure graduating teachers and teacher leaders are prepared to meet these expectations and to evaluate progress.

• **Share relevant data with K-12** to identify academic areas in which students most frequently lack preparation upon college entry.

• **Ensure high-quality dual credit courses** are available across the state, transfer statewide as college credit, and reduce time-to-degree for students.

COMPLETION METRICS

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Falling Behind: College Remediation Rates of Recent High School Graduates (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diploma Graduates</th>
<th>Remediation Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Diploma</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core 40 Graduates</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core 40 with Honors Graduates</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


One in four Indiana college students enrolled in remediation will earn a degree within six years.

Source: Complete College America, 2011.
Collective efforts must now focus on ensuring that remedial students transition quickly and successfully into college-level coursework. Indiana must both reduce the number of entering students who require remedial education and accelerate the success of those students who do. These twin goals emphasize increasing preparation for high school graduates and finding more effective approaches to deliver remedial education for returning adult students.

The Commission will champion institutional practices that reduce the time students spend in remediation by customizing instruction based on students’ individual academic strengths and deficiencies. These tiered approaches to remediation will:

- Enable students to enroll directly in college-level courses as research shows that many remedial students can succeed in gateway college courses when given the opportunity.
- Promote co-requisite course models that enroll students in a college-level course along with a supplemental education experience.
- Expand computer-assisted learning models that individualize instruction and enable students to move into college-level courses as soon as they demonstrate proficiency.

Fostered by the imperative initially laid out in Reaching Higher, Indiana has consolidated delivery of college remediation at the state’s two-year institutions. Students requiring remediation at Indiana’s four-year colleges are now referred to the local community college campus.

**Darniece’s Story: Back on Track**

Darniece Christian looks forward to graduating and earning her bachelor’s degree in 2014. Her outlook wasn’t so bright a few years ago when she was on probation after her first semester at Purdue University Calumet. Like many students, Darniece struggled with the transition from high school and had to juggle the demands of a job with her college courses.

As a regional campus, Purdue Calumet understands that many of today’s students face tough challenges when they start college. Its Academic Recovery Program in the Center for Student Achievement supports students like Darniece. The program’s Topics for Study course taught her core skills to improve studying, test taking, time management and organization.

“It was an eye-opener, especially out of high school,” Darniece says. She applied new techniques, got removed from probation and was accepted into the highly competitive nursing program.

“I would have no idea how to study for college and manage my time if it were not for that class,” Darniece says. Through the Academic Recovery Program’s guidance and support, she is on track to meet her goal of a college degree and a career dedicated to helping people.

**Completion**

**REMEDIATION REDESIGN**

The majority of college students who enroll in remedial education never earn a degree. The data is clear: time is the enemy of completion.

Only one in four college students in remediation today will graduate within six years. Remedial education also has significant costs to students, taxpayers and institutions, with estimated annual costs exceeding $35 million at Indiana’s community college alone.*

Traditional remedial education models do not accurately discern between students who require minimal strengthening of certain skills and those students with significant academic deficiencies who require more intensive intervention.

This means too many students, regardless of remedial needs, are placed in a long series of coursework that does not count toward their degree. Moreover, these models often are disconnected from the credits students need to earn a degree—despite research indicating that underprepared students have the best shot at success when they move quickly into college-level courses.

Fostered by the imperative initially laid out in Reaching Higher, Indiana has consolidated delivery of college remediation at the state’s two-year institutions. Students requiring remediation at Indiana’s four-year colleges are now referred to the local community college campus.

**SMarter Pathways**

The majority of Indiana college students today are working, commuting to campus, and trying to balance family and job responsibilities while furthering their education.

As Indiana’s college population has grown and become more diverse, the level of support students require has increased commensurately. Even students who enter college without needing remediation often struggle to complete their degrees on time or at all.

Indiana must deploy more effective structures that guide and support students toward graduation, particularly low-income and first-generation college students.

Though student choice will always play a significant factor in college completion, proactive institutional policies and practices can present students with a clear and manageable path to success.

Specifically, the Commission will champion state and institutional policies and actions that:

- Expand opportunities for students to earn one-year certificates in high-value career fields.
- Implement highly structured, cohort-based programs for high-demand degrees that serve high proportions of low-income and working students.
- Promote on-time degree maps that articulate clear pathways for students to earn a certificate within one year, an associate degree within two years and a bachelor’s degree within four years.
- Limit total credit requirements to 120 credit hours for bachelor’s degrees and 60 credits for associate degrees, except when program accreditation or licensure requirements mandate otherwise.
- Ensure availability and capacity of required courses to enable students to graduate on time.
- Institute early and ongoing career advising practices that help students successfully set their career path and degree program decisions, thereby limiting costly credit accumulation and changes in major.

**The 21st Century Indiana College Student**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25 or older</th>
<th>attending part-time</th>
<th>Pell-eligible (low-income)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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**Mirjana’s Story: A LAUNCH to College Completion**

Being self-motivated, outgoing and organized wasn’t enough to prepare Mirjana Jackson for the challenges of college life at Indiana State University (ISU). "There were plenty of things they don’t teach you about college and things you just don’t understand unless you’ve been there," says the first-generation college student.

ISU’s LAUNCH program helped Mirjana stay on track. The program is designed to address the dual challenge of growing enrollment and declining retention rates by using academic advisers and peer mentors along with scholarship incentives for students who meet GPA requirements. With about 65 percent of ISU students being the first in their families to attend college, there is a clear need for the kind of support LAUNCH provides.

Mirjana says her peer mentor provided invaluable tips. “If it wasn’t for the peer mentor, I would have been lost.” To pay it forward, she became a peer mentor herself.

Jennifer Schriver, ISU’s associate vice president for student success, reports that 40 percent of LAUNCH freshman earned at least a 2.75 GPA after two semesters—twice what they anticipated. Given its positive impact, ISU plans to enhance LAUNCH and extend the program to sophomores.