



INDIANA COMMISSION for
HIGHER EDUCATION

Press Release

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More Hoosiers are completing college and earning degrees on time

The *2015 Indiana College Completion Report* released today by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education showed the number of Hoosiers earning bachelor's degrees in four years or less has increased by nearly seven percentage points in five years. The report also showed small gains in on-time completion for students earning associate degrees as well as improvement in every demographic group.

This is the second year the Commission has released this report focused on providing a comprehensive picture of college completion in Indiana. Beyond examining on-time degrees, the *Indiana College Completion Report* presents data on completion rates for students who transfer from one college to another, those who take up to eight years to graduate and those who attend college part time.

"We should be encouraged by Indiana's degree completion gains, especially for our low-income and minority students," Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers said. "At the same time, we must not relent in our efforts to advance state policies and campus-level practices that encourage ongoing improvement. Opportunities for Hoosiers without a degree or credential beyond high school are diminishing daily. For individual quality of life as well as for our state's economic future, it is critical that we dramatically increase education attainment in Indiana."

For students who started at a four-year Indiana college in 2006, 36.1 percent completed in four years, 64.8 percent completed in six years, and 70.5 percent earned bachelor's degrees in eight years. For those who started at a two-year college in 2008, 6.2 percent completed in two years, 14.1 percent completed in three years, and 27 percent earned associate degrees in six years.

Highlights of the 2015 College Completion Report

- **On-Time Completion is Improving:** The on-time completion rate for full-time students at four-year colleges increased from 29.4 percent for students who started college in 2005 to 36.1 percent for students who started college in 2010. For two-year colleges, on-time completion rates for full-time students increased from 5.1 percent for students who started college in 2007 to 5.9 percent for those who started college in 2012.
- **But, On-Time Completion Remains the Exception:** Half of all Hoosier students who earn a bachelor's degree take five to eight years to graduate. More than three-quarters of community college students who earn an associate degree take three to six years to graduate.

An additional year of college can cost a Hoosier student at least \$50,000 in extra tuition, lost wages and related costs. Taking longer to complete not only means students pay more, but it also decreases the chances that they graduate at all.

- **Extended Completion is Increasing at Four-Year Colleges:** The number of students completing bachelor's degrees in six years or less increased by 1.9 percentage points—from 62.9 percent of students who started college in 2009 to 64.8 percent of students who started college in 2010. By comparison, extended completion at two-year colleges remained relatively flat.
- **The Completion Achievement Gap:** The report showed improvements for low-income and minority Hoosier students, with on-time completion increases across all demographic groups over the last five years. In particular, 21st Century Scholar students improved on-time graduation by 7.4 percentage points between 2005 and 2010. However, the report also showed persistent disparity—particularly for black students, who are twice as likely to finish their degrees late as their peers statewide.
- **Part-time v. Full-time Students:** Full-time student success rates are significantly higher than part-time student success rates. At four-year colleges, only 27.6 percent of part-time students complete a degree in eight years, compared to 70.5 percent of full-time students.
- **Transfer Students and Degree Changers:** Transfer students and students who earn a different degree type than what they set out to pursue (e.g., changed from a four-year degree to a two-year degree) increase the statewide success rate by 8.2 percent for two-year colleges and by 12.8 percent for four-year colleges.

The Commission's *2015 Indiana College Completion Report* includes both state-level and campus-specific data profiles. When comparing completion rates for different colleges, it is important to recognize that Indiana's college campuses have different missions and serve different student populations. For that reason, a college campus is best measured in relation to its own past performance.

The *Indiana College Completion Report* is one in a series of annual reports provided by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education to clearly define Indiana's progress preparing Hoosiers for college and the workforce. Along with the *College Readiness Report* and the *Return on Investment Report*, the *College Completion Report* helps inform educators, families and policymakers.

As part of its *Reaching Higher, Achieving More* strategic plan, the Commission set a goal for 60 percent of Hoosiers to have a quality degree or credential by 2025. Currently, only 34.7 percent of Hoosiers have earned a college degree or some credential beyond a high school diploma.

Read all of the Commission's reports as well as its *Reaching Higher, Achieving More* strategic plan at www.che.in.gov.