

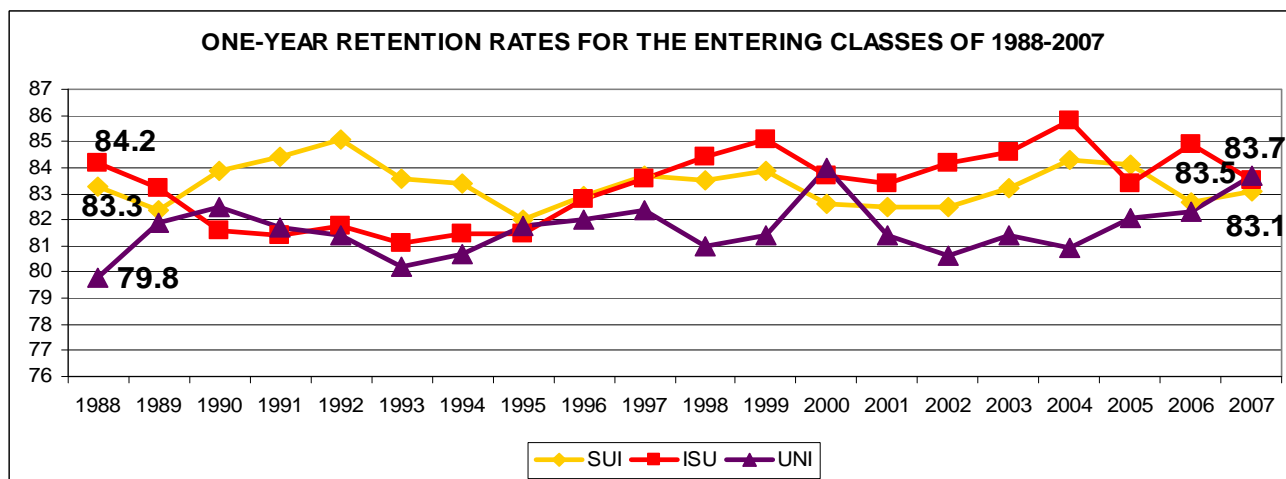
Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**ANNUAL REPORT ON STUDENT RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES**

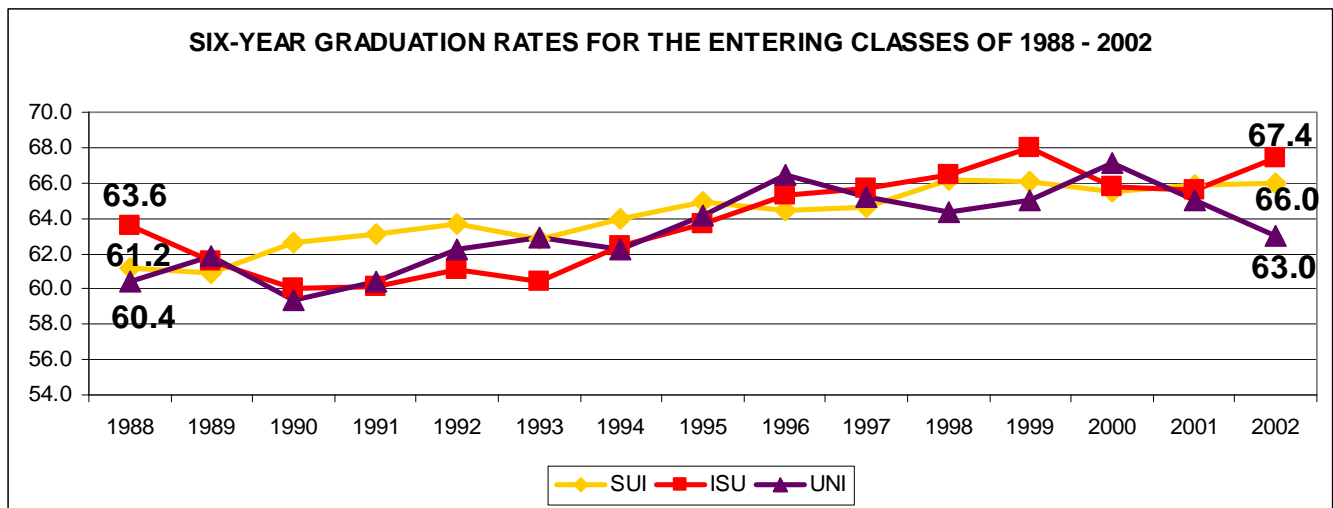
**Action Requested:** Receive the Annual Report on Student Retention and Graduation Rates for Fall 2008.

**Executive Summary:** The graduation and retention rates report describes two groups of students: (1) first-time, full-time freshmen and (2) transfer students. Data for the first-time, full-time freshmen group include first- and second-year retention rates as well as four- and six-year graduation rates. Data for the transfer student group include first-year retention rates and four-year graduation rates. The Fall 2008 Report includes the following trends/changes:

- 📖 An average of more than 83% of the past five entering classes at the Regent universities returned for the second year of studies.
- 📖 An average of more than 65% of the past five entering classes at the Regent universities graduated within six years.
- 📖 During the period 1988-2007, the one-year retention rates at the Regent universities fluctuated from a low of 79.8% to a high of 85.8%.
  - At SUI, a low of 82.0% occurred for the entering class of 1995 and a high of 85.1% for the entering class of 1992.
  - At ISU, a low of 81.1% occurred for the entering class of 1993 and a high of 85.8% for the entering class of 2004.
  - At UNI, a low of 79.8% occurred for the entering class of 1988 and a high of 84.0% for the entering class of 2000.



- ☰ During the period 1988-2002, the six-year retention rates at the Regent universities fluctuated from a low of 59.4% to a high of 68.0%.
  - At SUI, a low of 60.9% occurred for the entering class of 1989 and a high of 66.2% for the entering class of 1998.
  - At ISU, a low of 60.0% occurred for the entering class of 1990 and a high of 68.0% for the entering class of 1999.
  - At UNI, a low of 59.4% occurred for the entering class of 1990 and a high of 67.1% for the entering class of 2000.



- ☰ One-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates have consistently exceeded the national averages during the past five years. The one-year retention rate for the entering classes of 2007 at the Regent universities was 83.4% compared to the national average of 72.9%.<sup>1</sup> The six-year graduation rate for the entering classes of 2002 at the Regent universities was 66.0% compared to the national average of 46.3%.<sup>1</sup>
- ☰ The average number of years to complete a degree by Regent university students who graduated within six years decreased from 4.66 years for the entering classes of 1988 to 4.48 years for the entering classes of 2002. The time to degree is influenced by a number of factors, including major sought, parent’s education, and grade point average.
- ☰ Retention and graduation rates for racial/ethnic minority students have continued to be lower than for non-minority students.
  - ☑ For the entering classes of 2007, the average one-year retention rates for racial/ethnic minority students was 82.0% at the Regent universities compared to the average one-year retention rates for non-minority students of 83.5%.
  - ☑ For the entering class of 2002, the average six-year graduation rates for racial/ethnic minority students was 56.2% at the Regent universities compared to the average six-year graduation rates for non-minority students ranged of 67.0%.

<sup>1</sup> Source: ACT 2008 Retention/Completion Summary Tables.

The Graduation and Retention Rates Report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan strategies (1.1.2) to “continue to improve efforts to recruit, enroll, and retain a qualified and diverse student population” and (1.3.1) to “determine levels of student program completion and promote degree attainment.”

### **Background:**

- 📖 **Definition of Retention Rates.** Retention is the rate at which members of an entering class return to that same institution in successive years until the completion of a degree. Research shows that the majority of students who withdraw, transfer, or otherwise leave an institution do so during the first two years of college.<sup>2</sup>
- 📖 **Retention Factors.** Previous national and state studies, as well as the Regent universities' experience, have demonstrated that the following factors contribute significantly to the retention rate – (1) student input; (2) institutional environment; and (3) academic standards.<sup>3</sup>
- 📖 **Best Practices in Retention.** Retention practices responsible for the greatest contribution to retention include first-year programs, academic advising, and learning support.<sup>2</sup> The Regent universities have established a variety of initiatives, programs, and services (such as tutoring labs, academic advising, career development services, and learning communities) to help students make a successful transition to the rigors of postsecondary learning and to the challenges of independence and adulthood.<sup>4</sup>

### **Highlights:**

- 📖 **One-Year Retention Rates.** During the past ten years, the average one-year retention rate at SUI has been 83.2%; at ISU, it has been 84.3%; and at UNI, it has been 81.9%. The Fall 2008 one-year retention rate at SUI is 83.1%; at ISU, it is 83.5%; and at UNI, it is 83.7%. In 2008, the national average one-year retention rate for public four-year institutions was 72.9%.<sup>5</sup>
- 📖 **One-Year Retention Rates by High School Rank.** There is a difference in retention rates when high school rank is considered. In Fall 2008, the average one-year retention rate for Regent university students who graduated from high school in the 90<sup>th</sup>-99<sup>th</sup> percentile was 92.0% while the average one-year retention rate for students who graduated in the 50<sup>th</sup>-59<sup>th</sup> percentile was 74.3%.
- 📖 **One-Year Retention Rates by ACT Score.** There is also a difference in retention rates when ACT score is considered. In Fall 2008, the average one-year retention rate for Regent university students with an ACT score of 32-36 was 92.4% while the average one-year retention rate for students with an ACT score of 19-21 was 80.2%.
- 📖 **Six-Year Graduation Rates.** During the past ten years, the average six-year graduation rate at SUI has been 65.0%; at ISU, it has been 65.1%; and at UNI, it has been 64.5%. The Fall 2008 six-year graduation rate at SUI is 66.0%; at ISU, it is 67.4%; and at UNI, it is 63.0%. In 2008, the national average six-year graduation rate for public four-year institutions was 46.3%.<sup>6</sup> Six-year graduation rates for the Regent universities and peer institutions are included in Appendix C.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

<sup>3</sup> Source: ACT “What Works in Student Retention?”

<sup>4</sup> Attachments on pgs 6-7 describe some of the retention initiatives implemented by the Regent universities.

<sup>5</sup> Source: ACT 2008, public institutions offering bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs.

<sup>6</sup> Source: ACT 2008, public institutions offering bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs.

-  Six-Year Graduation Rates by First-Term GPA. There is clearly a difference in graduation rates when first-term GPA is considered. In Fall 2008, the average six-year graduation rate for students with a first-term GPA of 3.50-4.00 was 84.7% while the average six-year graduation rate for students with a first-term GPA of 2.25-2.49 was 58.9%.
  
-  Average Time to Degree. The average number of years to complete an undergraduate degree by students in the entering classes of 2002 at the Regent universities who graduated within six years was 4.48 years. The time beyond four years typically reflects students' participation in additional activities, such as study abroad programs, internships, and double majors. It also reflects students' degree major changes.<sup>7</sup> The national average time to completion for first-time recipients of bachelor's degrees in 2003 was 4.70 years for students who graduated within six years.<sup>8</sup>
  
-  Diversity. Ethnic and racial minority students generally have lower retention and graduation rates than non-minority students. Significant variation can occur in the retention and graduation rates of racial and ethnic minority cohorts as a result of small cohort sizes. Resident racial and ethnic minority students have higher one-year retention rates at SUI than non-resident minority students; at ISU and UNI, non-resident racial and ethnic minority students have higher one-year retention rates than resident minority students. Men typically have lower retention and graduation rates than women. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data (January 2008), "greater proportions of young women than young men earn bachelor's degrees."

**ONE-YEAR RETENTION RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY, RESIDENCE, AND GENDER  
ENTERING CLASS OF 2007**

	Non-Minority			Minority			Male	Female
	Res	NonRes	Total	Res	NonRes	Total		
SUI	82.3%	83.8%	82.9%	87.8%	80.7%	84.7%	84.2%	82.3%
ISU	84.3%	81.9%	83.6%	79.9%	80.5%	80.1%	83.0%	84.2%
UNI	84.9%	70.4%	84.3%	77.0%	87.0%	79.1%	83.1%	84.0%

All resident minority students have higher six-year graduation rates than non-resident minority students.

**SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY, RESIDENCE, AND GENDER  
ENTERING CLASS OF 2002**

	Non-Minority			Minority			Male	Female
	Res	NonRes	Total	Res	NonRes	Total		
SUI	66.3%	67.4%	66.8%	62.4%	52.8%	57.8%	63.4%	68.1%
ISU	69.2%	67.4%	68.8%	58.5%	55.6%	57.2%	64.8%	70.3%
UNI	64.2%	58.6%	64.0%	61.7%	31.3%	46.3%	60.4%	64.5%

<sup>7</sup> According to the National Center for Education Statistics, more than 20% of college students change their degree major.

<sup>8</sup> Source: NCES Condition of Education 2003.

- ☑ At the University of Iowa, the one-year retention rate for racial/ethnic minorities was 1.8 percentage points higher than for non-minorities. The six-year graduation rate for racial/ethnic minorities was 9.0 percentage points lower than for non-minorities. The one-year retention rate for women was 1.9 percentage points lower than for men while the six-year graduation rate for men was 4.7 percentage points lower than for women.
- ☑ At Iowa State University, the one-year retention rate for racial/ethnic minorities was 3.5 percentage points lower than for non-minorities. The six-year graduation rate for racial/ethnic minorities was 11.6 percentage points lower than for non-minorities. The one-year retention for men was 1.2 percentage points lower than for women; the six-year graduation rate for men was 5.5 percentage points lower than for women.
- ☑ At the University of Northern Iowa, the one-year retention rate for racial/ethnic minorities was 5.2 percentage points lower than for non-minorities. The six-year graduation rate for racial/ethnic minorities was 17.7 percentage points lower than for non-minorities. The one-year retention rate for men was 0.9 percentage points lower than for women; the six-year graduation rate for men was 4.1 percentage points lower than for women.

📖 Transfer Students. Completion of an associate degree and attainment of a high transfer GPA reflect higher retention and graduation rates at the Regent universities.

- ☑ Students who transferred from Iowa community colleges after they completed an associate of arts (AA) or other associate degree had a higher one-year retention rate (83.1%) than transfer students who had not completed any associate degree (74.7%). Students who transferred from Iowa community colleges after they completed an associate of arts (AA) or other associate degree had a higher four-year graduation rate (64.7%) than students who had not completed any associate degree (52.5%).
- ☑ Students with a transfer GPA of 3.00-3.24 had a significantly higher average one-year retention rate (83.4%) than students with a transfer GPA of 2.00-2.24 (64.2%), and higher average four-year graduation rates (64.7% and 38.0%, respectively).

📖 Non-Persisters.<sup>9</sup> Using data from the National Student Clearinghouse, the Regent universities were able to “track” students who did not return for their second year. Approximately, 25% of the entering class of 2002 who did not persist at a Regent university transferred elsewhere; of those who transferred, more than 32% graduated. Almost 8% of the entering class of 2002 graduated from another institution. When those numbers are factored into the total graduation rates, the six-year graduation rates increase from 66.0% to 75.7% at the University of Iowa; from 67.4% to 74.8% at Iowa State University; and from 63.0% to 68.6% at the University of Northern Iowa.

📖 First-Year Non-Persistence Study. Every other year, the Regent universities conduct a study of their first-time, full-time students who were eligible to return but did not return for the second year. The five most frequently occurring major reasons cited by the respondents to the study in Fall 2008 were (1) transferred to a lower cost institution; (2) desired program was not available; (3) classes too large; (4) wanted to be closer to family and friends; and (5) felt out of place at the university.









The data tables for the Annual Report on Graduation and Retention Rates are available on the Board of Regents website.

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<sup>9</sup> Lack of completion of a degree from the matriculating institution does not necessarily reflect failure on the part of the institution or the student. Many unexpected or uncontrollable factors can lead to this result.

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATION AND RETENTION HIGHLIGHTS  
Fall 2008**

The University has implemented a number of retention and graduation efforts.

-  The five-year and six-year graduation rates for ISU new direct freshmen exceed the average rates for the previous five years, and both exceed last year's rates as well. The four-year graduation rate declined slightly this year, but still exceeds the average for the previous five years.
-  Participation in freshman learning communities in Fall 2008 rose to a record high of 2,916 students, 65.0% of first-time, full-time freshmen (up from 55.2% last fall). Currently, ISU offers 70 learning community opportunities, with more than 62 available for new freshmen. Graduation rates for students who participate in learning communities are significantly higher than for non-learning community students with 74.0% of learning community participants graduating within six years.
-  The Retention Task Force, now in its fourth year, continues to focus on programs designed to promote student academic success and retention. The committee continues to discuss and support retention projects related to advising, first year student programs, classroom instruction, learning communities, and academic support.
-  During Fall 2008, all ISU freshmen were offered the opportunity to complete an academic and personal assessment called MAP-Works. The assessment provides resources to help freshmen make a successful transition to college.
-  Retention and recruitment grants are funded and awarded each year through ISU's Professional and Scientific Council. These grants are designed to encourage campus collaborations that will impact recruitment and/or retention of students.
-  Transfer student retention and graduation continue to be strong. Of entering transfer students, 58.7% graduate within four years following enrollment at ISU, and 66.6% graduate within six years. The Admissions Partnership Program (APP), now in effect for all Iowa community colleges, was designed for transfer students to provide benefits to current and future students planning to earn a bachelor's degree at Iowa State University.
-  ISU's new TRANSIT system assists transfer students as they plan their transition to Iowa State from a community college or another university. The system helps to create a seamless transfer, by ensuring that students know if and how their transfer credits will apply to their intended major at ISU.
-  The STEM Student Enrollment and Engagement through Connections (SEEC) project, seeks to increase ISU's undergraduate enrollment and degrees in engineering. The means to that end are connections rooted in community: learning communities, community colleges, and Iowa communities. The \$2M project is a collaborative effort between Iowa State University (ISU) and Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), funded by the National Science Foundation.

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA  
GRADUATION AND RETENTION HIGHLIGHTS  
Fall 2008**

The University has implemented a number of retention and graduation efforts.

- 📖 The four year graduation rate for the entering class of 2004 at 35.2% ties the highest rate since this report was initiated in 1988.
- 📖 The six year graduation rate for the entering class of 2002 at 63.0% is approximately 15 percentage points above the median of our peer institutions.
- 📖 The persistence rate to the second year for the entering class of 2007 at 83.7% is the highest rate ever reported at UNI.
- 📖 The average time to degree for those students who graduated, at 4.53 years, is the best rate at UNI since the creation of this report in 1988.
- 📖 The Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are implementing the “Foundations of Excellence” Program, which includes an in-depth assessment of the first year experience of students. A primary measure of improvement is the formulation of a strategic plan for retention of first-year students.

NCAA SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES AT REGENT UNIVERSITIES AND PEER INSTITUTIONS

	Reported Six-Year Graduation Rates for Entering Classes of:				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>UNIVERSITY OF IOWA</b>	65%	66%	66%	65%	<b>66%</b>
University of Arizona	55%	57%	59%	57%	<b>56%</b>
University of California - Los Angeles	87%	87%	87%	89%	<b>90%</b>
University of Ill., Champaign-Urbana	81%	80%	83%	82%	<b>82%</b>
Indiana University - Bloomington	72%	71%	72%	72%	<b>72%</b>
University of Michigan	85%	87%	87%	87%	<b>88%</b>
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities	54%	56%	61%	61%	<b>63%</b>
University of NC - Chapel Hill	83%	81%	84%	84%	<b>83%</b>
Ohio State University	62%	62%	68%	71%	<b>71%</b>
University of Texas - Austin	71%	74%	75%	77%	<b>78%</b>
University of Wisconsin - Madison	76%	76%	77%	78%	<b>79%</b>
<b>Median (excluding SUI)</b>	73%	75%	76%	78%	<b>78%</b>
<b>Mean (excluding SUI)</b>	73%	73%	75%	76%	<b>76%</b>
<b>IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY</b>	66%	66%	68%	66%	<b>66%</b>
University of Arizona	55%	57%	59%	57%	<b>56%</b>
University of California - Davis	81%	81%	80%	81%	<b>79%</b>
University of Ill., Champaign-Urbana	81%	80%	83%	82%	<b>82%</b>
Michigan State University	69%	71%	74%	74%	<b>74%</b>
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities	54%	56%	61%	61%	<b>63%</b>
North Carolina State University	63%	67%	71%	70%	<b>69%</b>
Ohio State University	62%	62%	68%	71%	<b>71%</b>
Purdue University	66%	64%	66%	70%	<b>69%</b>
Texas A & M University	75%	76%	77%	77%	<b>78%</b>
University of Wisconsin - Madison	76%	76%	77%	78%	<b>79%</b>
<b>Median (excluding ISU)</b>	68%	69%	73%	73%	<b>70%</b>
<b>Mean (excluding ISU)</b>	68%	69%	72%	72%	<b>72%</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA</b>	65%	64%	65%	67%	<b>65%</b>
California State University - Fresno	46%	46%	46%	46%	<b>48%</b>
Central Michigan University	49%	55%	55%	57%	<b>57%</b>
Illinois State University	59%	62%	63%	64%	<b>65%</b>
Indiana State University	39%	40%	39%	41%	<b>41%</b>
Northern Arizona University	52%	50%	48%	47%	<b>48%</b>
Ohio University - Athens	70%	70%	71%	71%	<b>71%</b>
University of Minnesota - Duluth	47%	46%	48%	51%	<b>50%</b>
Univ. of North Carolina - Greensboro	50%	50%	51%	52%	<b>50%</b>
University of North Texas	39%	40%	43%	45%	<b>44%</b>
University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire	56%	57%	59%	59%	<b>60%</b>
<b>Median (excluding UNI)</b>	51%	50%	50%	52%	<b>50%</b>
<b>Mean (excluding UNI)</b>	51%	52%	52%	53%	<b>53%</b>

Source: 2008 NCAA Division I Graduation Rates Annual Report for all full-time degree seeking students.