

Statement of Goals for Student Achievement

“The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, and course completion rates; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals.” (SACSCOC Federal Requirement 4.1, 2012)

As a degree-granting institution of higher education accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and in accord with federal requirement 4.1, Berea College identifies the following outcomes as our measures of student achievement, all of which stem from the College’s enduring mission as reflected in the [Great Commitments](#). These outcomes are intended to provide a diverse, adaptive, and sensitive set of criteria to be used for continuous improvement of student learning and, ultimately, success.

INSTITUTIONAL CRITERIA

Graduation Rates

A 66.0 percent six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students.

First-to-Second-Year Retention Rate

An 85.0 percent first-to-second-year retention rate for first-time, full-time students.

Second-to-Third-Year Retention Rate

A 92.0 percent second-to-third-year retention rate for first-time, full-time who returned for their second year.

Rationale: The rationale for these criteria is based on reviews of national data and historical performance. As Horn¹ demonstrated, graduation rates vary greatly with the selectivity and size of the low-income enrollment. Therefore, it can be challenging to identify “like” or comparable institutions to Berea College, which are both highly selective and have a high percentage of low-income students, in order to determine the appropriateness of our graduation goal of 66.0 percent.

Graduating 66.0 percent of first-time, full-time students within six years is ambitious when understood within the context of national data. According to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#), in 2012 the national six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students enrolled at 4-year baccalaureate institutions was 59.0 percent. For private, not-for-profit, four-year institutions, the 2012 average six-year graduation rate was 66.0 percent. For selective institutions with less than a 25.0 percent acceptance rate, the six-year graduation rate was 86.0 percent.

However, these statistics do not account for the primary unifying characteristic of Berea College students. Berea College accepts only students with limited financial means. Horn found that very selective institutions (which would include Berea College under the parameters of his study) with large portions of low-income enrollment (defined as 40.0 percent or more federal grant aid recipients; Berea College typically has 98.0 percent-plus PELL eligibility rate) had an average six-year graduation rate of 43.9 percent.

Furthermore, Mortenson (2011) calculated a predictive graduation rate for institutions by taking into consideration students' academic preparation, family resources, the residential nature of the campus, and other factors. His calculations suggested that Berea College's six-year graduation rate should be around 50.0 percent.²

These studies support the ambitious nature of a 66.0 percent six-year graduation rate. Additionally, this goal is higher than the current six-year average of 63.2 percent.

Achievable: While a 66.0 percent six-year graduation rate is ambitious, it is also achievable. As shown in the table below, while the five-year (2004-2008) average rate was 63.2 percent, a 66.5 percent graduation rate was achieved in one year (2006). Rather than viewing this year as an outlier, it supports the achievability of a 66.0 percent graduation rate.

Cohort Year	Six-Year Graduation Rate
2004	64.0%
2005	61.9%
2006	66.5%
2007	61.7%
2008	62.2%
Average	63.2%

In order to achieve a 66.0 percent graduation rate, the following year-to-year retention goals have been developed. These goals were developed with the understanding that graduation rates are built through a series of year-to-year retention rates. The following table includes the year-to-year retention goals and the average for these rates over the last five years.

	Year-to-Year Combined Retention or Graduation Goals	Current Five-Year Average Year-to-Year Combined Retention or Graduation Rates
1st to 2nd	85.0%	81.1%
2nd to 3rd	92.0%	90.5%
3rd to 4th	95.0%	93.1%
4th to 5th	97.0%	95.7%
5th to 6th	99.0%	*
6th to 7th	99.0%	*

*readmission of previously withdrawn students result in these rates being greater than 100 percent

While each year-to-year retention/graduation goal is slightly above the previous five-year average, they are within range of previous individual year's rates. The institution would achieve a graduation rate of 70.0 percent if these retention goals were to be met. The table below is included to illustrate the year-to-year enrollment and ultimate graduation numbers based on an entering class of 400 students and the achievement of the above retention goals.

	Entering	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year	Sixth Year	Graduated
Beginning-of-Year Enrollment	400	340	313	297	288	285	283

Year-to-Year Combined Retention/ Graduation Rate		85.0%	92.0%	95.0%	96.0%	99.0%	70.6% six-year Graduation Rate
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The achievement of this goal will be supported through monitoring these rates by sub populations based on Berea’s Great Commitments, including gender, race and ethnicity, and geographic background, and developing institutional responses to address the needs of those groups whose outcomes fall below that of the general population. The analysis at this level will prompt further investigation and inform institutional initiatives in order to further ensure that the graduation outcomes are achieved.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) rates

At least 90.0 percent of students meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards each term.

Rationale: Over the past three academic years (2010-2013), an average of 87.0 percent of all students met the SAP standards in each individual term, with a range from 83.0 to 90.0 percent.

Berea College provides each student with a “No-Tuition Promise” that promises that no student will be responsible for paying the cost of tuition while enrolled at the College. Because of this unique program, Berea College expects all students to complete their degree requirements within eight regular terms of attendance. To achieve this, students are expected to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward degree completion while fully enrolled. Students’ SAP is calculated at the end of each regular term of attendance, and factors include both progress (credits earned), and performance (GPA) expectations. Given the aforementioned national statistics relating to success and degree completion among low-income students, and a five-year average (2010-2014) of 87.0 percent of all students meeting SAP standards each term, a 90.0 percent standard would be both ambitious and attainable.

Course-completion rates

At least a 90.0 percent course completion rate (i.e., attempted versus passed credits).

Rationale: Course-completion rates are closely linked to other degree-progression indicators, and Berea College is compelled by its mission to ensure steady progress. Course-completion rates provide an indicator of efficient resource use, as student time and institutional resources are underutilized if they do not yield course credit leading to learning and degree completion. Over the past three years, 89.7 percent of attempted credits were passed. Given historic trends, a 90.0 percent completion rate is both aspirational and attainable.

PROGRAM CRITERIA

As appropriate, some programs may choose to adopt additional criteria by which they measure the achievements that may be uniquely important or relevant to the success of their majors.

Nursing NCLEX First-Time Pass Rates

85.0 percent of nursing students pass NCLEX-RN on their first attempt.

Rationale: This is the pass rate that has been set by the Kentucky Board of Nursing, the state regulatory body that oversees and accredits all nursing programs in the Commonwealth.

Education PRAXIS First-Time Pass Rates

PRAXIS II average two-year pass rate of at least 80.0 percent.

Rationale: This is the acceptable pass rate set by the National Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the Kentucky Education Profession Standards Board (EPSB).

Rates of Earned Post-Secondary Degrees – masters and doctorates (as provided by Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium)

Specific desired outcomes (if any) are determined by individual programs in terms of earned doctorates or master’s degrees (e.g., “At least 20.0 percent of all Biology graduates earn a related doctorate within seven years of graduation from BC”).

Endorsed by the Division Council October 27, 2014, approved on November 5, 2014, and monitored by the Enrollment Policies Committee.

¹ Horn, L. (2006). *Placing College Graduation Rates in Context: How 4-Year College Graduation Rates Vary With Selectivity and the Size of Low-Income Enrollment* (NCES 2007-161). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

² Tom Mortenson, founder of Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY and Senior Fellow at the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, ranks Berea College fourth among national liberal arts colleges in terms of actual versus predicted graduation rates. See the April 2011 edition of OPPORTUNITY (Number 226) for details.