

Measure E  
Easy Reader

<http://www.sopdigitaledition.com/easyreader/#/10/>, page 10

### **Addressing the problem**

Dear ER,

As a long time, knee-jerk supporter of education, the decision to oppose Measure E was not easy. In making my decision I considered the following: El Camino College is unable to provide instruction to meet the needs of current students. There is not enough money to pay operating expenses, (i.e. money for classroom instruction). Measure E does not address this problem; instead it creates debt to rebuild and remodel existing infrastructure.

Proponents advocate the expenditures for “future students,” who they assume will attend classes on campus. Opponents fear that the community will incur debt for buildings that may stand empty for lack of operating funds. Opponents suggest that on-line courses may continue to replace on-campus classes like they are already doing at many colleges and universities including USC’s Virtual Academic Center and El Camino College, which currently provides over 100 on-line classes.

I have decided that we should not incur 21st century debt on the basis of 20th century ideas of the future of education, especially when we cannot meet our obligations to provide an education to current students.

**Marilyn Montenegro**

**Redondo Beach**

**Student leader for E**

Dear ER:

Measure E invests in our college to ensure that El Camino will continue to provide local students with high quality

education and the job training they need. With the cost of UC and Cal State systems increasing, students are relying more than ever on El Camino College.

Measure E updates outdated academic facilities and technology to help South Bay students transfer to four year

universities and prepare us for the jobs of the 21st century.

I already benefit from the construction going on at El Camino. New classrooms with document projectors, air conditioning,

and new desks that are improvements to make El Camino College seem like a big university. Seeing the new buildings gives me a sense of hope for the future.

Now is the time to take action to help the students of today, and many generations to come. Please join students,

faculty, college staff, and community leaders in supporting Measure E.

**Brooke Matson**

**ASO President**

**El Camino College**

[http://www.sopdigitaledition.com/archive/easyreader1018/pubData/source/EasyReader\\_1016.pdf](http://www.sopdigitaledition.com/archive/easyreader1018/pubData/source/EasyReader_1016.pdf), pages 8-9

**Unanswered questions**

Dear ER:

As a 40+-year faculty member at El Camino I was greatly disappointed by your article (“The Choking Point,” ER Oct. 11). I was greatly disappointed. It appeared to be largely a “puff piece” written by the District designed to elicit

a “Yes” vote on the \$350 million Measure E bond.

In my political science classes I encourage my students to ask questions and gather information about exactly what a

“yes” or “no” vote would do on the issues before them. Your article was no help at all. For example, how would demolishing

Murdock football stadium or the current Administration building address the problem of poorly prepared students entering

El Camino that you cite in the article? No connection at all. How would renovating Marsee Auditorium or a new student

activities center compensate for years of under funding for community colleges by Sacramento? Not a clue. How would tearing down the Art/Behavioral Science Building increase class offerings for students, especially since plans are now in

the works to eliminate at least 250 class sections this spring semester if Prop. 30 does not pass?

Please, members of the Board of Trustees, don’t pontificate about “the future needs of El Camino,” not when I have to turn away 10-15 students in each of my six classes because there is not enough room to accommodate them.

I have not decided how I am going to vote on Measure E. I am passionate about my students using their critical

thinking skills when they decide how to vote. I try to do the same thing. Your article did very little to assist in that effort.

**Lance Widman**

**Hermosa Beach**

**Finish the job**

Dear ER,

I encourage all your readers to support El Camino College's Measure E and vote YES in November. Measure E is indeed about

future students who will be attending ECC in the years to come. The remaining structures not covered by the first Measure E are aging rapidly and are in need of replacement or remodeling. The great success of the first Measure E is readily seen, used and enjoyed by the students and community (by the way, the projects came in under budget and we were able to do more). As residents of the South Bay, let's finish the job and allow our future generations to benefit as we have enjoyed the wise decisions made by those who had made difficult choices in the past.

Frankly, I am dismayed by the critics of Measure E. If there was ever an institution that has stood up for the 99% it would be a community college. Some have asked why we would construct buildings when so many students have been cut out of their classes this year.

These critics need to remember that Measure E can only be used for capital improvements. Measure E and such bond funds can never be used for programs, salaries, and students. The regrettable cuts made in the classrooms in recent years are the direct result of insufficient funding from Sacramento, not poor decisions at the local level.

**Ray Gen, Ed.D.**

**Board trustee**

**El Camino College**

**We all benefit**

Dear ER:

Your recent story on El Camino College and bond Measure E is a testament to the “value-added” this institution brings to the

South Bay.

Most of us know someone who has benefited from El Camino College. My girlfriend’s mom graduated from ECC and my

neighbors are attending ECC now, both for career training.

El Camino helps high school students prepare to transfer to four-year colleges or for the job market. Small business owners

take at the college’s business training center to learn how to better manage and expand their business. Those who have lost their jobs are learning new skills so they can move on to productive employment.

I encourage everyone to learn about Measure E. The benefits are important and worthy of a “Yes” vote. It is important to

update classroom technology and equipment; it is important to monitor building infrastructure; it is important to create

energy- and cost-saving improvements. Adding labs and classrooms to accommodate increasing enrollment and to support

programs such as firefighting, police, science, green technology, engineering and nursing is a must if El Camino College is

going to contribute to our economic recovery. We all benefit. It is time to step up and show support for one of the South Bay’s

economic engines. It will only cost \$7 per year for each \$100,000 of assessed property value.

Help spread the word about the importance of a “Yes” vote on Measure E.

**Dave Wilks**

**Hawthorne**

The Prop 30 windfall - not yet

Ed Source

November 9th, 2012

By Kathryn Baron

When Proposition 30 won on Tuesday, it led a sweep of nearly two dozen local school parcel taxes and close to a hundred local school bonds approved by Californians that together will bring in tens of billions in new revenue for education. And some of those voters are already asking when their local schools will be rehiring laid-off teachers, reopening school libraries, and installing new technology. It will not be easy to explain that, at least for this year, new revenue from Proposition 30 won't be visible to the naked eye.

As EdSource Today has reported more than \$2 billion of Prop. 30 funds will go toward paying down some of the state's late payments to schools. Remaining funds won't backfill the \$8 billion that K-12 schools have been cut in the past five years, about \$1,400 per student.

"In some ways, I worry about it being very similar to what happened when the lottery came in," said Molly McGee Hewitt, executive director of the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), during a post-election webcast Thursday afternoon produced by School "The number one question I've been asked my entire professional career since the lottery is 'What the heck have you all done with all that lottery money?' As if we're keeping it in a back room." [The state lottery provides about 1.5% of K-12 education revenues, or some \$800 million per year]. She said she worries that maybe backers of the ballot measures oversold it a little bit to the public.

"Proposition 30 wasn't a windfall for anybody; it sort of stops the bleeding," explained Rick Simpson, deputy chief of staff for Assembly Speaker John Pérez. "But it does help stabilize the state general fund as well as public schools."

Ron Bennett, the president and CEO of School Services, who moderated the event, underscored that point, telling about a meeting he had in a large school district a few days ago. District officials told him that if Prop. 30 had failed, they would have had to cut \$60 million this year. "Now they only have to cut \$19 million," said Bennett, noting, with some irony, that they're very relieved about that.

That's because in its first year, more than \$2 billion of Prop 30 funds will be used to start paying off the nearly \$10 billion in deferrals, those late payments that forced cash-

strapped district to borrow money. Those payments should free up funds so in 2013-14, districts will start to see some real money.

But that's not what the public is necessarily expecting, and the finance experts spent a good part of the hour-long webcast discussing the need to make sure people understand the situation. They called for greater transparency regarding education spending by putting more effort into keeping the public informed.

"Proposition 30 creates a massive communication problem. Business folks now have to go out and talk to people who have a particular expectation," said panelist Joel Montero, CEO of the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), which helps school districts manage their finances. Their task, said Montero, is to explain the deferral situation and emphasize that it took a while to get into this situation and it will take a while to get out of it. "Eventually that does save school districts money, but that's a fairly complex concept when everybody thinks that Proposition 30 passes and all of a sudden we have more money to spend."

It's not just the public that may not understand where the Prop. 30 money is going this year, but teachers, administrators, and even school board members aren't necessarily clear about it, added McGee Hewitt. She said groups like CASBO and School Services will need to step up training for school boards, and called for greater collaboration and cooperation between district business officials and superintendents.

"I think that it's a wonderful day and I'm grateful to where we're going," said McGee Hewitt. "I'm a little bit hesitant to think that happy days are here again. I think that we have a long way to go to get to that again."



Local votes of confidence: Most bonds, parcel taxes pass

Ed Source

November 9th, 2012

By John Fensterwald

Proposition 30, raising statewide taxes to support education, was a nail biter, struggling to get a majority of voters behind it. But that wasn't the case for most K-12 parcel taxes and school construction bonds on the ballot Tuesday. Voters passed 14 of 22 parcel taxes by margins of victory ranging from 67.1 percent – just above the requisite two-thirds majority – to an impressive 77.3 percent, in the Berryessa School District in San Jose (see chart below).

Even in five of the eight districts where they lost, parcel taxes drew at least 55 percent support. Superintendents and school board members in those districts at least can take solace in knowing that help may be on the way in Sacramento.

Now that Democrats in the Assembly and Senate are on the verge of gaining a supermajority, they may soon be in a position to put before voters a constitutional amendment lowering the threshold for parcel taxes to 55 percent, just as it is for school construction bonds.

For a decade, state Sen. Joe Simitian, a Palo Alto Democrat, tried, to no avail, to persuade the Legislature to put the question on the ballot. But he couldn't persuade any Republican colleagues in the Senate to vote for it, so it died shy of the two-thirds needed for approval. Assemblymember Mike Feuer, a Los Angeles Democrat who authored a similar bill last year in the Assembly, didn't fare any better.

Simitian and Feuer are termed out as of January, so another legislator will have to pick up the cause, this time without having to ask for Republican support. Had the 55 percent been in effect this week, 86 percent of the parcel taxes would have passed.

The parcel taxes included a modest \$39 per property for five years in Alameda Unified and \$196 for eight years in Mill Valley – on top of \$731 voters already are paying. Davis Unified had an enticement written into the measure to vote for Gov. Brown's Prop. 30. Because it passed, property owners won't have to pay the \$204 additional parcel tax they approved on Tuesday.

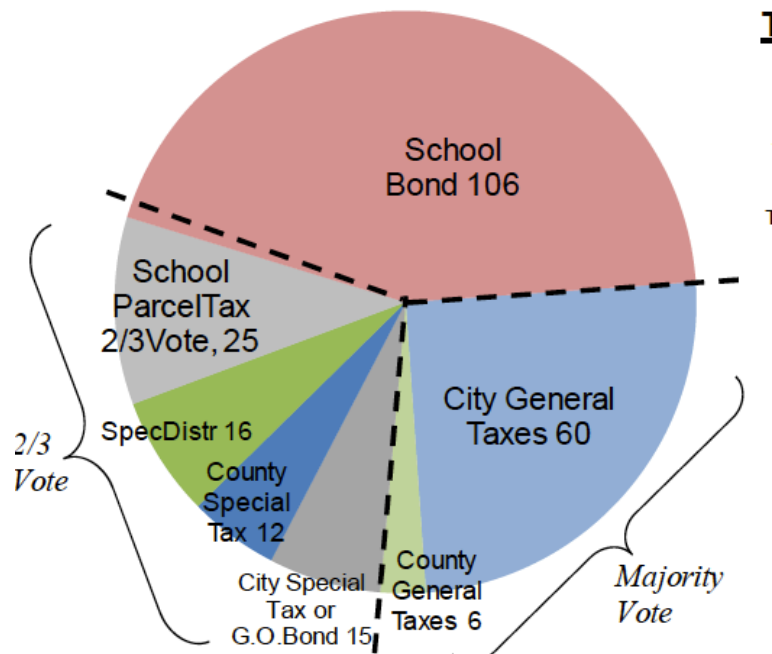
Parcel taxes are one of the few taxes that school districts can levy. Because of Proposition 13, they cannot be based on the value of a house or property. Cottages and starter mansions must be charged a uniform amount, although some districts are experimenting with parcel taxes based on square footage, and some, like Centilla Union High School District and four feeder districts in Los Angeles County, are charging commercial and residential properties different rates. A dozen of the 22 parcel taxes were renewals or extensions of existing parcel taxes. New parcel taxes had a harder time; six of the 10 failed.

Three community college districts also put parcel taxes on the ballot; only Measure A, the \$79 per parcel tax in the financially troubled San Francisco Community College District, passed. Proposals in the Chabot-Las Positas and Contra Costa Community College Districts came just shy of 66.7 percent.

Over the past 20 years, 55 percent of parcel taxes – 322 of 584 – have passed, according to Mike McMahon, a school board member from Alameda Unified, who has tracked the results. Only about 10 percent of the state’s nearly 1,000 school districts, mostly in the Bay Area, have passed parcel taxes.

Also on Tuesday, a record 106 school construction measures, requesting \$14.5 billion in bonds, were on the ballot. They needed only a 55 percent majority vote to pass, and 85 were approved – 80 percent, on par with the historic average. Among the largest to pass: \$475 million in Oakland Unified and \$346 million in Sacramento City Unified. Among the largest to fail: \$497 in Mira Costa Community College District and \$449 million in San Dieguito Union High School District. The bond receiving the most support was \$90 million in Inglewood Unified, with 86 percent support – a vote of confidence for a besieged district taken over by the state this year after declaring insolvency.

**Proposed Local Revenue Measures**  
**November 2012**



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**Results of parcel taxes from Nov. 6, 2012 election (updated Nov. 8)**

<b>County</b>	<b>District/Measure</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Passed (2/3 needed)</b>	<b>% Yes vote</b>
Alameda	San Leandro Unified/L	\$39/yr for 5 yr (new)	No	65.6%
Contra Costa	Martinez Unified/C	\$50/yr for 5 yr (extension)	Yes	67.7%
Contra Costa	West Contra Costa Unified/G	7.2 cents sq. ft for 5 yr (extension)	Yes	74.7%
Humboldt	Arcata Elementary/E	\$49/yr for 5 yr (new)	Yes	77.3%
Kern	Mojave Unified/N	\$42/yr for 5 yr (new)	No	50.4%
Los Angeles	Local Classrooms Funding Authority CL (4 elementary districts + Centilla Union High)	2 cents/sq. ft (residential); 7.5 cents/sq. ft (other property) for 12 yr (new)	Yes	69.5%
Los Angeles	Little Lake City Unified/TT	\$48/yr for 5 yr(new)	Yes	74.1%
Los Angeles	Westside Union School District/WP	\$96/yr for 4 yr (new)	No	53.6%
Marin	Mill Valley Schools/B	\$196 yr/8 yr (in addition to a \$731 tax through 2018 that increases 5% a yr)	Yes	70.4%
Marin/Sonoma	Shoreline Unified/C	\$184.70/yr for 8 yr (extension)	Yes	71.5% (Marin: 76.8%;Sonoma: 63.2%)
Monterey	Pacific Grove Unified/A	\$65/yr for 5 yr (extension)	No	65.1%
Nevada	Pleasant Ridge Union/K	\$92/yr (new)	No	36.7%
San Mateo	San Bruno Park School District/G	\$199/yr for 5 yr (new)	No	58.5%
Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara Unified (high school)/A	\$48/yr for 4 yr(continuation)	Yes	68.6%
Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara Unified (elementary)/B	\$45/yr for 4 yr (continuation)	Yes	69.6%
Santa Clara	Berryessa Union Schools/K	\$79/yr for 8 yr (continuation)	Yes	77.3%
Sonoma	Fort Ross Elementary/L	\$48/yr for 8 yr (renewal)	No	65.4%
Sonoma	Sebastopol Union/O	\$76/yr for 8 yr (renewal)	Yes	71.4%
Sonoma	West Sonoma County Union/K	\$48/yr for 8 yr (renewal)	Yes	72.3%
Tulare	Three Rivers School District/I	\$60/yr (new)	No	61.6%
Ventura	Ventura Unified/Q	\$59/yr for 4 yr (new; voters rejected \$96/yr in 2010)	Yes	67.1%
Yolo	Davis Joint Unified/E	\$204/yr for 4 yr (renewal plus \$242 more; contingent on Prop 30 failing)	Yes	68.9%

## Need 3 Quick Credits to Play Ball? Call Western Oklahoma

by Brad Wolverton

Chronicle of Higher Education

You've probably never heard of Western Oklahoma State College. But call almost any major athletics department, and staff there know it well.

Its name comes up whenever athletes get themselves in a jam: They've failed a class. They've dropped another. Maybe they're just short on credits. But they still want to play.

Western Oklahoma gives them a chance, offering three credits in two weeks—and for less than \$400. Almost as appealing: The community college mails out transcripts the day after classes end, allowing players to get back on the field with minimal disruption.

Last year those 10-day classes attracted 5,668 students. Many are adult learners and others looking to finish their degrees faster. But the market for athletes has proven particularly lucrative. Nearly half of the students in those classes play college sports, the college estimates.

The courses are especially popular with junior-college players looking to transfer to the big time. But elite research universities have also accepted their credits. Bobby Bowden, the now-retired Hall of Fame football coach at Florida State University, once put in a personal call to arrange for some of his players to take Western Oklahoma courses. Lately, Western Oklahoma credits have appeared on the transcripts of one of the most highly recruited quarterbacks in the country, basketball players from numerous NCAA tournament teams, and athletes in at least 11 NCAA Division I conferences.

It's not just the speedy credit that appeals to many players. According to dozens of academic advisers, athletes, and coaches, Western Oklahoma offers some of the easiest classes around. One Division I football player who reads at a fifth-grade level completed a three-credit health class in three sittings, his academic counselor says. Other students struggling to stay above a 2.0 on their own campus have landed A's and B's from Western Oklahoma—all in the academic blink of an eye.

Eric C. Liles Jr., a senior linebacker at Dakota State University, which has an NAIA program in South Dakota, signed up for a two-week sociology course at Western Oklahoma after falling behind in one of his traditional classes. He heard about the college from a coach who sends the team regular e-mails suggesting Western's online courses.

The class was so short, Mr. Liles didn't buy the textbook—and, as it turns out, he didn't need to. He says he aced the tests by looking at a handful of videos and slides. In other classes, students who don't pass an exam the first time are allowed to try again. And none of the exams in the two-week format are monitored.

That lack of oversight has led some athletes to turn in questionable work. One former instructor used to ask students to write a short paper about something they knew how to do. He says he was always surprised at how many baseball and basketball players described how to bake a cake.

This isn't the first time college athletes have courted controversy over academic credit. In the mid-1990s, hundreds of academically deficient players faced eligibility problems over fraudulent credits they received from Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God, a tiny college in Florida that was offering cheap, fast classes by mail. Years later Brigham Young University's independent-study courses offered many high-school athletes a tantalizing path toward NCAA initial eligibility. The NCAA shut the door on both programs but has largely stayed away from evaluating college-level courses, leaving that process to individual colleges.

Western Oklahoma State's leaders say that they are committed to ensuring academic quality, and that they have taken steps to safeguard the classes' integrity, including timing tests and locking down browsers during exams so students can't search the Web for answers. The college doesn't offer mathematics, science, or composition in the two-week format; academic leaders say such courses would be too difficult to complete in that time. And faculty members, who must approve all courses, say the 10-day content is the same as is taught during a regular semester.

Sylvia Manning, president of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which is Western Oklahoma's accreditor, had not heard of its 10-day classes. In an interview with *The Chronicle*, she raised questions about the compressed time frame.

"Two weeks is pushing it if you're talking about three semester credits," she says. "In two weeks, I would have a lot of doubt."

When visiting a campus, she says, accrediting teams tend to focus on an institution's degree-granting programs. "But if you are marketing something that, for example, is dubious but you're not awarding degrees on it, it is still a concern," says Ms. Manning, whose agency came under fire in 2010 for failing to set minimum standards for classroom time.

She says she would also worry about a large number of athletes' taking online classes somewhere: "It's a particular problem because of the whole issue of keeping athletes qualified academically when they have no interest in being serious students."

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Located among the wheat and cotton fields of Altus, Okla., Western Oklahoma State College, formerly known as Altus Junior College, is 40 miles from the nearest interstate and more than two hours from Oklahoma City, the closest major city.

The college's rural location and a fast-declining population in the surrounding high plains have contributed to a slump in the number of full-time students. This fall the college enrolled about 900—nearly the same as in 1999, when, facing questions about its viability, campus leaders first tried their hand at distance education.

Western Oklahoma's online offerings expanded around the needs of Altus Air Force Base, allowing members of the military and their spouses to complete their degrees even after they transferred out. The online classes, which are also offered in four-, eight-, and 16-week formats, have also served the state's rural residents, focusing on programs like criminal justice and child development. (The college offers associate degrees in some 20 programs, including nursing, aviation, and business administration.)

Kent Brooks, a former chief technology officer and dean of distance learning at Western Oklahoma, helped start the online program and taught its first class, "Microcomputer Applications," which had 25 students. Inspired by a book called *Accelerated Distance Learning*, in which the author describes how he earned a four-year degree in six months for less than \$5,000, Mr. Brooks helped introduce Western Oklahoma's 10-day classes and steered online operations until leaving last year.

Western Oklahoma has received approval from its accreditor to put all of its classes online. It now offers more than 400 course sections, with some 11,000 online students. The two-week format is the fastest-growing. Since 2009 enrollment in those classes has nearly doubled.

The college owes part of its growth to the power of the Web. Years ago Western officials bought key Internet search phrases and, much like for-profit educators, have mastered search-engine optimization. Now, when someone Googles "online winter classes" or "winter intersession," Western Oklahoma State College pops up among the leading results, alongside institutions like the University of Connecticut and the University of Kentucky.

Western Oklahoma has attracted online students from 48 states, in part by appealing to those who demand good service and flexible scheduling. The college offers its intersession classes 12 weeks a year, during December, July, and other periods between traditional semesters. It keeps the courses relatively small—about 35 students per instructor—and requires instructors to answer students' questions promptly. Sometimes staff members have even returned calls on Christmas Day.

"Students don't care where it comes from, they just want the course," says Mr. Brooks, who is now director of information technology at Casper College, in Wyoming. "And if you don't provide it in a time frame convenient to them, you're toast."

Soon after starting the online program, college officials got a call from the president of the Altus Chamber of Commerce, who helped them realize the potential market for athletes. The president put Western leaders in touch with her son-in-law, who was a

baseball coach at El Paso Community College. Several El Paso players enrolled in Mr. Brooks's microcomputing class, and the word started to spread among coaches.

In the past, when major-college athletes needed a lift, academic advisers would often hunt for community-college classes near their families' homes, helping them enroll over a winter or summer break. Now, with the proliferation of distance providers, it's a simpler search.

"You jump online, finish in a week and a half, get your grade posted, and you're bowl-eligible," says one Big Ten academic adviser.

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Western Oklahoma is not the only college with a popular online program for athletes. A handful of others—most prominently Cloud County Community College, in Kansas, and Adams State University, in Colorado—also offer fast-paced courses that help students stay eligible for sports. Players from the University of Maryland, Colorado State University, and many Western colleges have taken online classes from those institutions.

Many online programs saw a surge in 2009, when the NCAA began requiring junior-college athletes to complete six credits of English and three hours of mathematics before they could transfer to four-year institutions. Another change, approved last year by the NCAA, made it easier for athletes at four-year colleges to use online credits from any accredited institution to meet the association's credit-hour and progress-toward-degree requirements.

A few years ago, Chris Jeffries started noticing that many junior-college players were taking "Finite Mathematics" at Adams State. According to the online course description, that class teaches such concepts as linear programming, probability, and descriptive statistics. Adams State officials are aware that many athletes have enrolled.

Ms. Jeffries, an athletics counselor at El Camino College, in California, has a pretty good idea why: "They can't pass basic arithmetic here, but they're all passing finite math online."

Matt Nehring, chair of the mathematics department at Adams State, is not surprised that many students find the class easy, as it is the university's lowest-level general-education math course. Even so, about a quarter of students get below a C or withdraw from the class, he says.

Travis Coons enrolled in an online math class last year, after his final season playing football at Mt. San Antonio College, in California. Now a junior and the starting kicker at the University of Washington, he says he likes online classes because they allow him to work independently. Some of the courses he took at the community college didn't transfer to Washington, so he hurried online. "It's a good way to get that boost," he says. "But you've got to make sure the classes are legitimate."

In California and other cash-strapped states, players sometimes turn to distance education because they can't get into courses on their own campuses. But more often, they've gotten themselves into an eligibility pinch, says Jon P. Healy, an athletics academic counselor at the University of Maryland at College Park, whose graduate research has focused on athletes' use of online education.

That situation has arisen a few times at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, says Lisa Tarr, an athletics academic adviser and coordinator of student-support services. "Kids get themselves in trouble and say, 'Oh, I'm going to go take a Western Oklahoma.'"

Athletes on her campus have taken online classes in personal health, nutrition, and criminal justice from Western Oklahoma. Grades in those classes don't count toward their institutional GPA's. Players' scholarships don't cover the cost, but with their eligibility on the line, they can usually find a way to come up with \$387.

Rashad Allison was six hours short when he tried to transfer to Arkansas State University to play basketball a few years ago. A coach recommended Western Oklahoma, so he signed up for a two-week speech course.

A mostly B and C student, Mr. Allison got an A in the class. He just wishes he had heard about Western Oklahoma sooner: "If I could've done those type of assignments all through college, I would have."

In coming years, more players might share that sentiment. Junior-college transfers will soon need a 2.5 grade-point average to be eligible for Division I sports (before, they needed only a 2.0). That could lead even more athletes to consider places like Western Oklahoma, coaches say.

At Louisiana Tech University, four or five football players have already taken Western Oklahoma courses. The team, which has been ranked among the nation's top 25 this season, includes 21 junior-college transfers. Most players with Western Oklahoma credits took online classes there before transferring. But some football, track, and baseball athletes have taken Western Oklahoma courses after arriving at Louisiana Tech, says Missy Farrar, associate registrar for NCAA academic compliance.

Players with academic deficiencies are often the ones who sign up for Western Oklahoma's online classes. That concerns Lisa Merritt, who taught speech communications at Louisiana Tech for 11 years before becoming assistant athletics director for academics.

"I feel like my job is for these kids to be employable, and they're shortcutting the system or getting passed through," she says. "I don't know if they're learning anything other than an easy way out."

Kay Caples and Brandy Broome learned that lesson the hard way. The former junior-college standouts were ruled ineligible last month after they tried to transfer bogus credits



to play women's basketball at the University of Mississippi. The controversy led the university to fire the head coach and two of his assistants. The NCAA is investigating.

It's not clear yet what credits were in question. But one person familiar with the investigation told The Chronicle that Ms. Caples and Ms. Broome took online classes this summer from Western Oklahoma.

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In September, Western Oklahoma officials allowed a Chronicle reporter to look at certain assignments and test questions in several of its two-week classes. In addition, The Chronicle spoke with eight administrators and faculty members there about academic expectations.

Western Oklahoma officials expect students to spend an average of about five hours a day completing their class work, or some 50 hours over a two-week course. All classes have required reading, along with short assignments and papers and a handful of tests.

The officials defended the rigor of the classes, arguing that the assignments and exam questions come from textbook publishers' test banks, which are produced by faculty members throughout the country. All instructors must have completed a minimum of 18 hours of graduate work in their field, and each one receives regular training in online instruction, the officials said.

"We are not a course mill," Phil Birdine, the college's president, said during one interview. "Course mills offer any classes regardless of faculty credential."

Western's 30 or so intersession courses are a mixed bag, with some clearly setting a higher bar than others. A 60-question, multiple-choice exam in "Introductory Sociology" requires, among other things, an understanding of Talcott Parsons's equilibrium model. An assignment in that class asks students to write a two-page report about social norms, "citing examples, sanctions associated with, and consequences for violations of these norms within a group or society." Another class asks students to discuss whether the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II was a violation of their civil rights.

The only prerequisite in other classes seems to be common sense. In one course, an instructor taught students to use Microsoft Excel by asking them to enter a number on a spreadsheet. Students also learned to create a slide in PowerPoint.

True or false, one nutrition test asks: The ingredients on a food label are listed in descending order of calories. Another asks whether children who eat breakfast are likelier to have better mental performance or to fall asleep in school. Assignments in that class require students to briefly explain why Americans are so obese, and why they themselves do or don't take vitamins.

Online forums are designed to spark critical thinking in students, says Chrystal Overton, dean of technical education, who has taught the nutrition class. But many already know plenty about the subject matter: "A lot of the students are athletes, and they are very conditioned," she says. "They'll say things like, 'I work out X times a day and try to eat high protein.'"

Ms. Overton acknowledges that the class is not designed to be overly rigorous. "It's not a superhard course at all—it's basic nutrition," she says. "It's difficult if the students don't do the work. But it's not the rigor of physics."

Courses that some students find easy may be difficult for others, Western Oklahoma leaders say. And sometimes players expecting an easy A don't always get what they want. That was the case at California State University at Fullerton, where some athletes who recently took "Officiating I" and "Officiating II" were tripped up when they didn't show up knowing the rules for certain sports.

But it is the courses that cover the most ground that have raised the most questions. Here's the course description of "General Humanities II," taught by Michael Coker, an English instructor at Western Oklahoma. "We start with the Renaissance and move to the present," he says in an online [video](#). "We cover art, culture, society, religion, politics. The humanities is a very broad topic, and we cover essentially everything that leads up to our modern society, the ideas that inform our modern world."

Sounds like a really interesting class—but seven centuries in 50 hours? That may seem daunting, Mr. Coker acknowledges. "But I've designed the class to be doable in 10 days," he says in the video. "If you don't have a lot going on in those 10 days, the class is not overly difficult."

Jason Morrison was an early skeptic of compressed formats. Western Oklahoma's dean of arts and sciences teaches "American History (1865-present)." He has to cover about a decade and a half per day, but he doesn't feel that he's slighting students.

His goal, he says, is not to teach students about specific historical moments, but to help them think more deeply about certain events.

But if courses are not stringent enough, or if they fail to adequately prepare students for subsequent classes, that can put students at a serious disadvantage, says Barmak Nassirian, a consultant who was associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

"The challenge of being too lenient to a student is that it can be damaging to that student," he says. But that really matters, he adds, only if those students are looking for a meaningful degree, not just eligibility to play sports.

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Registrars and campus leaders who determine academic credit say they usually can't tell from transcripts how quickly students completed classes. They also say they would have little reason to deny credits, as long as they come from an accredited institution.

"This sounds bad, but we take them at face value," says Phil Caffrey, director of admissions operations and policy at Iowa State University, which has accepted athletes' credits from Western Oklahoma. "If the official transcript is showing coursework from an accredited university, we award the transfer credit."

After learning about Western Oklahoma's 10-day classes, Ms. Manning, president of the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission, signaled that the accreditor may take a harder look at the college.

"We haven't been there since 2008, ... so obviously we have not reviewed those courses," she says. "When the institution comes up for review again, we would look at these questions."

Western Oklahoma is not due for its next comprehensive evaluation until 2017. In the meantime, Mr. Caffrey and others say, the NCAA should consider stepping in to regulate the validity of its courses.

"If it's apparent that a course is covering way too much material in way too small an amount of time, or the standards are so lax that there's nothing to assure the student is really the one taking the exams, those are places where the NCAA could intervene," says Mr. Caffrey, who has worked in athletics admissions for more than 25 years.

The NCAA is aware that an increasing number of athletes are taking short-format online courses. Its officials say they even keep a list of the places where players turn most often (although they would not provide The Chronicle with a copy). The association has no plans to get involved at Western Oklahoma. But that could change in coming months, one NCAA leader said, as the association weighs possible changes to its academic-fraud policies.

For its part, Western Oklahoma has no plans to scale back its two-week courses. They brought in more than \$2-million last year in gross revenue, which officials say has helped the college stave off cuts in academic programs and improve its online infrastructure.

Several weeks after The Chronicle started asking questions about their courses, Western Oklahoma officials said they temporarily removed one of them from the intersession lineup. College officials would not say which class it was, and they insisted that the program still met its academic standards.

"It wasn't like it had nothing in it and it was really easy," says Melissa Smith, the intersession coordinator. "We just wanted to add more to it," including more tools to help students learn.

Lisa Greenlee, the college's vice president for academic and student-support services, says the lessons it has learned from online education have helped it provide better services to all of its students. And she insists that Western Oklahoma will do whatever it takes to ensure the integrity of its curriculum.

"I will not oversee something that isn't of high quality. ... It won't happen under my watch," she says. "If you knew me and our administrative team, we go to great lengths to ensure that what we're doing has rigor and quality.

"If that means hiring someone full-time whose job is to make sure that every class is not substandard, or to make sure we integrate technology to watch students as they take exams, that's what we will do."

But for now, top athletes continue to turn to Western Oklahoma for the crutch they need. This summer, a former quarterback from an elite program signed up for "Music Appreciation" and "Federal Government" during two of the college's 10-day tracks, his academic adviser told The Chronicle.

The student, who had struggled to stay afloat academically at his university, landed an A and a B from Western Oklahoma. That helped him gain eligibility at a community college, where he is playing this fall.

Those hours will be on his transcript when he tries to transfer to another major-college team next year. With any luck, they won't stand in his way of leading another storied program to the top.

What last Tuesday's vote got us (not much)

Ed Source

November 12th, 2012

By Peter Schrag

It's amazing how fast we can adjust to an inadequate educational status quo. Somebody in Sacramento called it "re-benching our lowered expectations."

For months, mostly thanks to Gov. Jerry Brown's intense campaign, California's school supporters had been in a state of nerves, swinging from excitement to near-panic: If Proposition 30, the governor's proposed tax increase, was to fail, the budget trigger would force schools to lop yet more days off the calendar, lay off yet more teachers, and cut still more programs.

Some of it might have happened. Counterfactuals are always hard to prove. If it had, it might have brought home to voters – at last – that, yes, there was indeed a price to pay for our unwillingness to raise taxes. But given the fact that it wasn't fate, only politicians, that made the schools the prime target of possibly severe budget cuts, a lot of other things could have been cut as well.

Now, at best, we're roughly back to some approximation of an inadequate norm. Yes, Proposition 30 won, and yes, there may be Democratic supermajorities in both houses of the Legislature – maybe – that in theory could raise taxes without Republican votes.

But even if every cent went to schools of the \$6 billion to \$8 billion that Proposition 30 will generate, which certainly will not happen, we still wouldn't get back to the national average in per-pupil spending, much less to anything approaching real adequacy or equity in our diverse, convoluted system.

At last count, we were among the bottom among 10 states in per-pupil spending, at or near the very bottom in class size, and in counselors, librarians, and nurses per pupil. The schools that the majority of our poor kids attend still have the least experienced teachers, the worst equipment, and the shabbiest facilities.

Nor is there much chance that the leaders in the Senate and Assembly can harness their supermajorities for tax increases. Some of those members, as a senior legislative staffer told me this week, won by razor-thin majorities. The last thing they're going to do is jeopardize their seats by voting for taxes.

In the past couple of years, even as the share of Republican registration and votes has gone down, we've weakened parties even more. With the state's new open primary, there's almost no reason for voters to register with any party.

So how much clout does the leadership still have? Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg and Assembly Speaker John Perez are not ayatollahs (as Willie Brown once described himself) and the voters are still tax-resistant.

Could the Legislature's supermajorities withstand oil industry pressure and money to impose an extraction fee (as they well should)? Could they restore the full vehicle license fee? Or (God forbid) could they pass Molly Munger's across-the-board income tax?

Tuesday's vote did, in the words of a veteran Sacramento school consultant, restore "some stability" to the system, improve the schools' credit ratings, and revive some esprit in the school community, and that's nothing to sneeze at. The tight times of the past few years have also imposed a sort of "market test" in some districts, he said – he cited Fresno as an example – putting them in a better position to take advantage of new funding when it comes.

For the state as a whole, that would include shedding some costly unproven programs, among them the rigid 20-1 across-the-board class size reduction formula imposed without study in the mid-1990s, and adding many more preschool classes and an additional middle school period, as Fresno has just done.

But California's education system, though no longer sinking, is still, as he said, "a decrepit old ship." If the projections are right, the salvation voters approved on Tuesday will take us back, roughly, to the funding levels of 2007-08. Meaning that our education funding will still be in the pits. The promise of the Master Plan to universal access to low-cost higher education is a thing of the past. We are not about to de-privatize the University of California. In addition, Jerry Brown's tax may generate as much backlash as school improvement: "You raised my taxes and the schools still suck."

California has started to move toward some major changes in its education system – toward a weighted school funding formula that provides a base for each student, plus additional funding for poor students and English learners; toward the national Common Core standards and the new tests that come with it.

But unless the extra weighted formula funds really go to the students they're designed for, and not just to the districts in which they go to school; unless the state provides the means to effectively implement Common Core and the rigorous retraining of teachers it will require; and unless the governor's call for local control is accompanied by authority for the locals to raise their own taxes, none of those things will mean very much.

So don't expect very much more than a continuation of the status quo, at least for this year, and maybe for a lot longer. Almost certainly passage of the new tax will reduce chances of any more substantial tax reform for some years. Yes, we're better off than we were a week ago. But let no one think that we have just voted ourselves a good, equitable school system.

NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE<sup>®</sup>  
RESEARCH CENTER<sup>™</sup>

# Signature<sup>™</sup> REPORT

## **Completing College:**

A National View of  
Student Attainment Rates



Project on Academic Success



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

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Lumina Foundation, an Indianapolis-based private foundation, is committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college — especially 21st century students: low-income students, students of color, first-generation students and adult learners. Lumina’s goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina pursues this goal in three ways: by identifying and supporting effective practice, through public policy advocacy, and by using our communications and convening power to build public will for change. For more information, log on to [www.luminafoundation.org](http://www.luminafoundation.org).



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College completion, earning a degree or certificate, is considered to be a key college success outcome, supported by every educational policymaker. Yet, institutions and policymakers in the U.S. know surprisingly little about the rates of completion for students who follow all but the most traditional of postsecondary pathways. This is because traditional graduation rate calculations are institution based and only count students who finish at the same institution where they started. Building on findings from previous reports in the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center's *Signature Report* series, this new report measures this key college success outcome – rates of first completion – encompassing postsecondary credentials of all levels and types at any institution in any state, whether it is the first, second, third, or more, attended.

Students in the U.S. pursuing a postsecondary education move along pathways that are increasingly complex. In its second Signature Report, *Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Pre-Degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions* (Hossler et al., 2012), the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that one-third of first-time college students attended multiple institutions before earning a degree or certificate. Nontraditional students, like those who postpone college enrollment after high school, attend college part time, and/or have full-time jobs, have become the new majority among U.S. college students. This emphasizes the limitations of continuing to rely on traditional measures of student and institutional success that describe only first-time full-time students who never enroll at any institution other than their starting institution. Such measures fail to capture the full range of outcomes among today's college students. They also fail to recognize institutional and policy efforts to support students pursuing diverse pathways.

This report draws on the Clearinghouse database's near-census national coverage of enrollments and awarded degrees to explore the six-year outcomes of a cohort of first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who started in fall 2006 (N=1,878,484). It enhances the traditional graduation rate by reporting in four key ways:

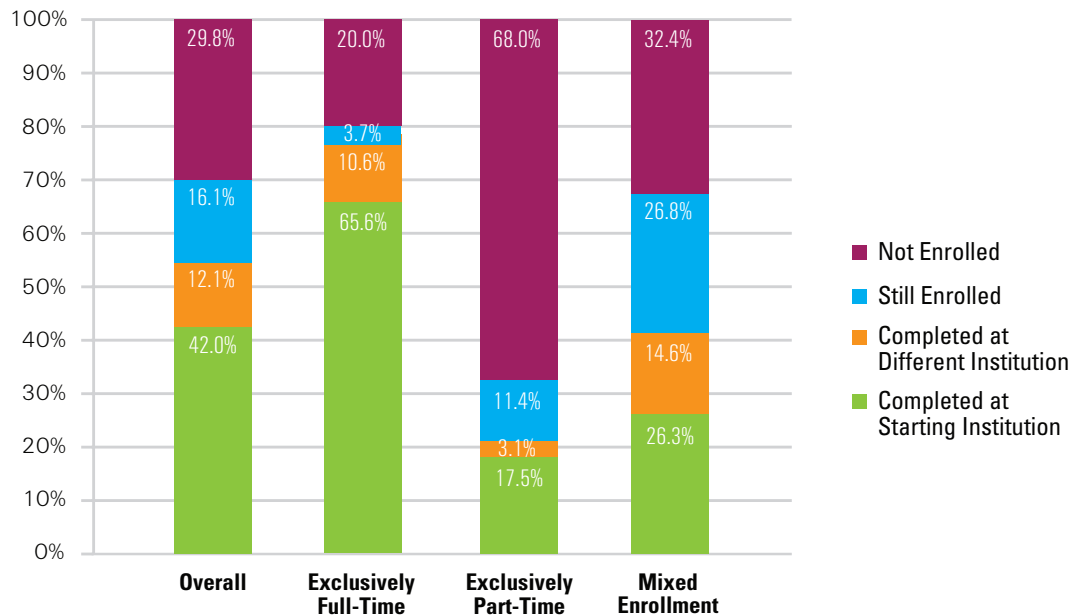
1. Student completion anywhere, beyond institutional boundaries, across state lines, and over time;
2. Persistence anywhere, not just at the starting institution, for those who have not yet completed but are still pursuing a degree;
3. College outcomes broken out by student age at first entry and enrollment intensity, thus addressing questions about the role of students' varied postsecondary pathways in progress toward national completion goals;
4. Enrollment intensity based on the enrollment status in all terms of enrollment, and not just the first term.

Specifically, this report examines:

- Six-year college outcomes, including the first instance of degree or certificate completion (first completion), persistence, and stop-out. Outcomes are broken out by students' age at first entry, students' enrollment intensity, enrollment intensity within each age group, and type of starting institution;
- Six-year college outcomes for students who started at four-year public institutions, at two-year public institutions, at four-year private nonprofit institutions, and at four-year private for-profit institutions; and
- Patterns of completion across state lines, broken out by students' enrollment intensity, students' age at first entry, and enrollment intensity within each age group.

## PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

**Figure S1. Six-Year Outcomes by Enrollment Intensity**



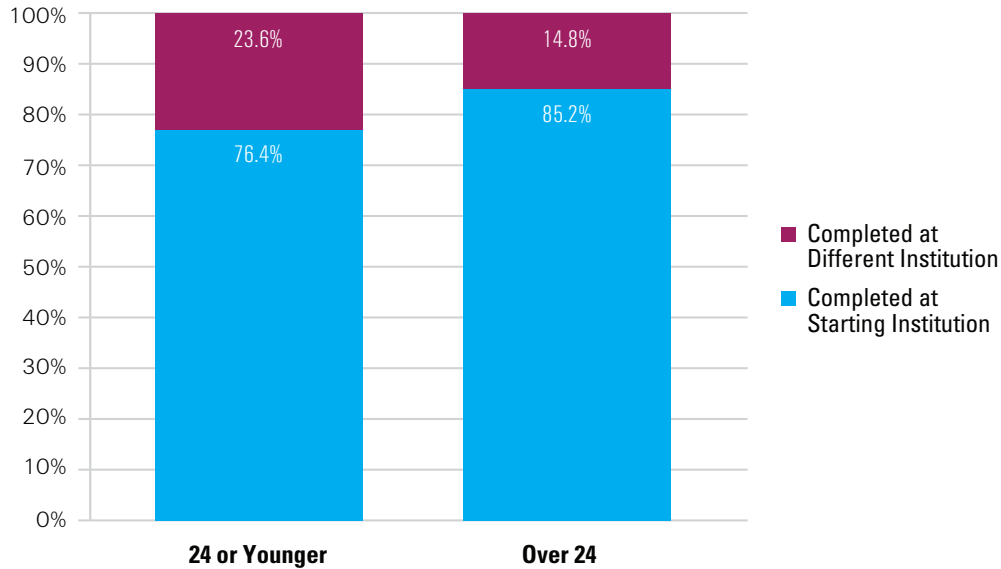
The findings presented in this report show that within six years, 12.1 percent of first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who enrolled in fall 2006 completed a degree or certificate at an institution other than their starting institution, raising the overall completion rate from 42.0 percent to 54.1 percent. Mixed enrollment students completed at an institution other than their starting institution at a higher rate (14.6 percent) than exclusively full-time (10.6 percent) and exclusively part-time (3.1 percent) students (Figure S1).

For students who started at four-year public institutions, 60.5 percent completed within six years, including 12.0 percent who completed at an institution different from their starting institution. Among all students who started at a two-year public institution, 36.3 percent received a degree or certificate within six years, with 12.4 percent completing at a different institution. Students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions showed a 62.5 percent rate of first completion within six years, with 12.9 percent completing at a different institution. Students who started at four-year private for-profit institutions showed lower completion rates at an institution other than the starting one (37.8 percent at the starting institution and 4.9 percent at a different institution).

## COMPREHENSIVE COMPLETION RATES BEYOND THOSE AT THE STARTING INSTITUTION

Overall, more than one in five students who completed a degree (22.4 percent) did so not at their starting institution, but somewhere else. That figure is closer to one in four (23.6 percent) for traditional-age students (Figure S2) and more than one in three (34.1 percent) for students who started at two-year public institutions.

**Figure S2. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Age at First Entry**



Counting students who graduated elsewhere than at their starting institution increased the completion rate across the board for every institution type and student subgroup we studied. The increases ranged from 4 percentage points for two-year private for-profit institutions to 13 percentage points for four-year private nonprofit institutions. In addition, completion rates for mixed enrollment students, those who attended both full time and part time during the six years (2006-12), increased by about 15 percentage points, followed by an 11-percentage-point increase for exclusively full-time students and a 3-percentage-point increase for exclusively part-time students.

## COMPLETION RATES FOR ADULT LEARNERS

Gains in completion rates from graduations elsewhere were greater for students who started college at age 24 or younger than they were for students who started when they were over age 24 (13 percentage points and 6 percentage points, respectively). It should be noted that while adding completions beyond the starting institution increased the completion rate for students over age 24 (n=327,487), a large gap remained between the completion rates of younger and older students, with the latter group having a much lower overall six-year completion rate (56.8 percent vs. 42.1 percent, respectively). Furthermore, by the end of the study period, 44.4 percent of the older students were not enrolled anywhere (i.e., had stopped out of college), compared to 26.4 percent of the younger students.

Disaggregating data by age and enrollment intensity demonstrated that students over age 24 who enrolled exclusively part time had a higher completion rate than traditional-age part-timers did. Thus, the overall completion rates of the older students were largely driven by the completions of the exclusively full-time students among them.

Compared to those of traditional-age students, the completion rates of adult learners varied greatly depending on the type of institution that they attended. At four-year private nonprofit institutions, the completion rate for older students was 22 percentage points lower than it was for traditional-age students; at four-year public institutions, that gap was 18.5 percentage points. Notably, however, at two-year public institutions, the completion rates were similar for these two groups: 35.7 percent for older students and 36.4 percent for younger students. At four-year private for-profit institutions, the completion rate of older students was actually higher – by 8.9 percentage points. Institutions in each of these sectors may need to adjust their strategies for supporting student success among adult learners to address the particular patterns and gaps emerging among their students.

## DEFINING ENROLLMENT INTENSITY

### **Mixed Enrollment Students**

In this study, we defined enrollment intensity as the students' enrollment status in all terms of enrollment. We categorized as mixed enrollment students those who changed their enrollment from full time to part time, or vice versa, from term to term. These students comprised more than half of the study's cohort (51.3 percent). Results showed that two-thirds of the mixed enrollment students started out as full-time students and, thus, would have been classified as full-time students in many graduation studies that define a student's enrollment intensity based on the student's first term alone. In addition, our analysis showed that 14.6 percent of mixed enrollment students completed at an institution other than the starting institution, a higher percentage than shown among exclusively full-time and part-time students. In traditional graduation metrics that focus on starting institutions, these students would be counted as nonpersisters. It is important that researchers and policymakers understand the extent to which current conventions for categorizing enrollment patterns distort both part-time and full-time results in measures where enrollment intensity is based on first-term status alone.

### **Exclusively Part-Time Students**

Considering the outcomes of mixed enrollment students separately also leads to a better understanding of the outcomes of exclusively part-time students (7.2 percent of the study's cohort). The low completion rate for part-time students can be better understood by recognizing that, typically, exclusively part-time enrollment does not allow enough time to complete a four-year degree in six years. However, one would have expected a large share of these students to be still enrolled at the end of the study period, and this was not the case. Specifically, 59 percent of part-time students at four-year private nonprofit institutions and 70 percent at four-year public and two-year public institutions had either dropped out or stopped out, showing no enrollments in the final year of the study. Additional insights come from disaggregating exclusively part-time students into older and traditional-age students. The category of exclusively part-time enrollees is the only one in which older students have a higher completion rate than traditional-age students, which suggests that enrolling exclusively part-time is associated with completion risks for traditional-age students. Institutional policymakers who understand how their students measure against these trends will be better equipped to implement changes that could lead to higher completion rates and more successful students.

## FOUR-YEAR COMPLETIONS FOR FIRST-TIME STUDENTS WHO STARTED AT TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Overall, 15 percent of two-year starters completed a degree at a four-year institution by the end of the study period. Nearly two-thirds of these students (63 percent, or 9 percent of the full cohort that started at two-year institutions) did so without first obtaining a two-year degree. In other words, these students transferred and graduated from a four-year institution without receiving any credential from their starting (or from any other) two-year institution. Traditional graduation rate measures that focus only on completions at the starting institution do not account for this type of outcome. Consequently, community colleges often do not receive credit for the two-thirds of their students who go on to complete a four-year degree.

## OUT-OF-STATE COMPLETIONS

Out of the full starting cohort, 3.5 percent received a degree in a state different from the one where they started within the six years. Thus, out-of-state completions represent about 6.5 percent of all completions, and more than a quarter (28.7 percent) of all students who completed a degree somewhere other than their starting institution. The completion outcomes for these students are typically out of the range for both institution-based graduation rate measures and state longitudinal databases that track students among different institutions, but only within a single state.

By exploring college attainment outcomes in detail with regard to students' starting institutions, institutions where first completions occurred, and by student age and enrollment intensity, this study's findings provide an alternative and more comprehensive view of student progress and success in U.S. postsecondary education. The study also sheds light on the college outcomes of students who are often overlooked by research and excluded from relevant policy discussions: older students and students who do not enroll continuously at a full-time status. Taken together, these findings have the potential to contribute to ongoing discussions about national education goals and institutional accountability. More specifically, the findings suggest that emerging policy initiatives should look to more nuanced and targeted measures of student success and that institutions should provide student support tailored to the differing needs of students along their various postsecondary pathways – pathways that include intermittent part-time enrollment, enrollment in multiple institutions, enrollment as a returning adult learner, and longer time to degree.

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## THE COLLEGE COMPLETION AGENDA

It is widely acknowledged that a highly-educated workforce is essential for the U.S. to remain competitive in the global economy (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance [ACSFA], 2012; Lee, Edwards, Menson & Rawls, 2011; White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2009). Despite the fact that the U.S. has one of the world's highest rates of higher education participation (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2012), other nations have outperformed the U.S. higher education system in degree completion (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008). In the U.S., while 34 percent of adults age 18 to 24 attended colleges or universities in 2007, only 18 postsecondary credentials were awarded per 100 college enrollees, placing the U.S. 15th among OECD countries in that latter measure (National Center, 2008, p. 6). Furthermore, large disparities remain in America between ethnic groups and across states in educational attainment (Lee, et al., 2011; National Center, 2008).

Emphasizing the link between college attainment figures and economic competitiveness, therefore, education policymakers across the nation are focusing higher education policy on fulfilling the college completion agenda and related educational attainment goals. President Obama's first budget proposal included a five-year, \$2.5 billion Access and Completion Incentive Fund to support state efforts to help low-income students complete their college education (Office of Management and Budget, n.d.). Citing growing concerns regarding the U.S. position in the global economy in his 2009 address to Congress, President Obama established a new goal: "by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world." Also, in March 2011, the U.S. Department of Education released the College Completion Tool Kit, outlining seven low-cost strategies based on promising state and local practices for governors to consider. The recommended strategies included developing an action plan, embracing performance-based funding, aligning high school standards with college entrance and placement standards, making it easier for students to transfer, using data to drive decision making, accelerating learning and reducing costs, and targeting adult students. The Department of Education viewed these strategies not as the considerations requiring major financial investments but rather as calling for "new ways of doing business and leadership that inspires new levels of collaboration among various stakeholders" (2011a, p. 4.). In addition to funding various grant programs to promote student learning outcomes and college completion, the Department of Education has also set up state targets for increasing the number and percentage of college graduates.

Further reflecting the growing concern that the U.S.'s declining economic competitiveness is related to inadequate levels of educational attainment in the nation's workforce, a wide range of organizations across the U.S. in the past few years have launched initiatives in support of the "college completion agenda." The broad goal of these diverse initiatives is the same: to significantly increase the number of adults in the U.S. with a postsecondary credential. The College Board, for example, seeks to increase the prevalence of college-educated adults from the current level of 39 percent to 55 percent by 2025 (Lee, et al., 2011), while the postsecondary success goal of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2009) is to help the nation double the number of low-income students by age 26, and Lumina Foundation's (2011) Goal 2025 aims to "increase the percentage of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials from the longstanding rate of 39 percent to 60 percent by the year 2025" (2009, p. 1). While foundations using various strategies in pursuit of a common goal, these initiatives all focus generally on a shared set of approaches (Russell, 2011): raising awareness of the issues among education stakeholders and mobilizing public support; aligning public policy with the college completion agenda; improving institutional outcomes through programmatic activity and a culture of student success; improving higher education productivity; refining the measures of completion;

analyzing current policies and practices and identifying those that are most effective; and enhancing support for attainment among underrepresented students, especially those from low-income and minority groups. The ambitious and well-publicized efforts of major foundations, particularly the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education, have helped generate wide interest in the college completion agenda among many other foundations and organizations nationwide. An unusually large number of organizations have responded to the call to increase college completions by launching a wide array of initiatives that focus on improving completion outcomes, particularly among low-income and underrepresented students.

The current college completion agenda calls for major improvement in completion outcomes in an ambitious timeline. This agenda can succeed only with comprehensive and timely measures of student outcomes to inform all stakeholders about the progress made and to identify areas for further improvement.

## EXISTING REPORTS ON COMPLETION

Along with these initiatives, studies and policy discussions have emerged as well, centering on (1) the progress of the completion agenda, (2) the appropriateness of current completion and related measures, (3) alternative ways of assessing student success, and (4) actions needed at institution, state, and federal levels to improve the performance of both institutions and students. These studies and discussions differ widely in focus and scope. For example, to support President Obama's college completion agenda, the U.S. Department of Education recently released an action plan that considers revising IPEDS survey procedures to include counts of students who transfer, enroll part time, and enter an institution as non-first-time students (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The Southern Regional Education Board has established action plans and made recommendations for improving college completion for their member states (e.g., Collins, 2010; Spence, Blanco & Root, 2010).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) issued a report (Radford, Berkner, Wheelless, & Shepherd, 2010) on six-year persistence and attainment using data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/09), a nationally representative sample of first-time students who started postsecondary education in 2003-04. The NCES report distinguishes students' persistence and attainment anywhere within the higher education system from students' retention and completion only at their first institution. The former, broader measure — student persistence — recognizes the complex pathways students may take during the six-year period to obtain their postsecondary education. The College Board's 2011 progress report on the college completion agenda (Lee et al., 2011) serves as a first annual measure of the current state of affairs in the U.S. based on the 10 recommendations for achieving the nation's completion goals offered in 2008 by the Commission on Access, Admissions, and Success in Higher Education. While comprehensive and broadly applicable, this progress report depends on customary, established measures (e.g., first-to-second year retention, first-time full-time cohort graduation rates, and degree awards) used by long-standing data sources, such as IPEDS. Consequently, the report has limitations in describing recent shifting of emergent enrollment trends and behaviors, for which alternative measures may be more useful.

Adding to the recent activity to assemble a national view of college completion, a number of reports have also appeared in recent years that focus on specific institutional sectors. The American Association of Community Colleges, for example, released two policy briefs focusing on trends in educational attainment for community college students (Mullin, 2011) and challenges faced by community colleges (Mullin, 2010), drawing on evidence synthesized primarily from existing literature. Likewise, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) conducted a study on college completion at four-year institutions (DeAngelo, Franke, Hurtado, Pryor & Tran, 2011), defining completion as graduation at the institution of origin (i.e., the institution where the CIRP Freshman Survey was administered).

While these examples illustrate considerable discussion and activity related to the college completion agenda in research and policy reports, more research is needed using new measures and data sources that encompass the true range of college-going behaviors. This means longitudinal tracking using student-level data. Empirical studies that use conventional measures of student success, such as completion rates at institutions of origin, only are substantially limited in their ability to capture student outcomes and fail to recognize institutional efforts to encourage enrollment mobility (particularly at community colleges) that help students realize their individual educational goals. Except for a few national studies (e.g., Radford et al., 2010), most studies focus on a single institution or a region using institutional or state-level student unit record data and, therefore, fail to account for increasingly common enrollment behaviors such as: multi-institution enrollment, cross-state transfer, and transfer between institutional sectors (Bach et al., 2000; Hillman, Lum, & Hossler, 2008).

The complexity of the postsecondary pathways of today's students makes serious engagement with college completion difficult when using traditional inquiry approaches. Increasingly, for example, students attend multiple institutions before obtaining a postsecondary credential (Adelman, 2006; Bach et al., 2000; Dougherty & Kienzl, 2006; Doyle, 2009; Eagan & Jaeger, 2009; Goldrick-Rab & Pfeffer, 2009; McCormick, 2003; McCormick & Carroll, 1997; Peter & Cataldi, 2005). As reported in previous National Student Clearinghouse Signature Reports, one-third of all first-time-in-college students transferred to a different institution at least once within a five-year study period, one-quarter of all transfers did so more than once, and over one-quarter of all transfers crossed a state line in the process (Hossler, et al., 2012a, 2012b). Clearinghouse data have the potential to document complex patterns of student mobility, including reverse transfer and swirling before degree completion (Adelman, 1999, 2006; Hossler, et al, 2012a, 2012b; McCormick, 2003; McCormick & Carroll, 1997).

In addition to the dynamic pathways students take while working toward their educational goals, students who enroll in college full time immediately after high school no longer represent the majority among postsecondary college students (Choy, 2002; Horn & Carroll, 1997; Reeves, Miller, & Rouse, 2011). Rather, many students delay college enrollment, enroll in college part time, and/or have a full-time job while enrolled. To balance the responsibilities of family, work, and school, these students often take educational routes that require a longer time to a postsecondary credential, such as enrolling part time, attending institutions with shorter terms, and stopping out occasionally. For these students, conventional measures of success, such as graduation rates for institution-based, first-time full-time degree-seeking cohorts, are insufficient for recognizing the distinctive pathways these students take, or for understanding the particular risks and supports that shape their academic careers (ACSFA, 2012; Committee on Measures of Student Success, 2011; Moore & Shulock, 2009; University Professional and Continuing Education Association Center for Research and Consulting & InsideTrack, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2011b). Moreover, institutional accountability and student success measures that are based on conventional completion rates disadvantage institutions that enroll large numbers of students who follow the above-mentioned nontraditional pathways. Consequently, a key aspect of recent research on college completion focuses on the development and adoption of new and more appropriate measures.

## TOWARD NEW COMPLETION REPORTING

The Committee on Measures of Student Success recently prepared an advisory report for the U.S. Secretary of Education, that includes strategies to help two-year institutions calculate and report completion and graduation rates using current metrics, suggestions on expanding the measures to incorporate graduation rates for part-time student cohorts and to recognize different transfer and persistence patterns, and recommendations for initiating new measures on student learning and

employment outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2011b). Further, the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (ACCSFA) initialized two panel discussions on key issues faced by policymakers and institutional practitioners with regard to serving nontraditional students and promoting their college completion (ACCSFA, 2012). The results of these discussions emphasized academic barriers to the access and persistence of these underserved students, best practices at the state and institution levels, and the federal government's role in implementing these best practices.

In sum, national higher education policy discussions, more and more, are reflecting the new shifting and emerging patterns in postsecondary enrollment (e.g., ACSFA, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2012), yet existing data collection and reporting systems as well as many widely-cited empirical studies provide only a partial and fragmentary national picture of college completion.

For these reasons, therefore, it is important to refine our methods to examine national completion rates. To understand how students and institutions are performing as well as to track our national progress, we need measures that are accurate and that fit current reality. In addition, as we refine our definitions of postsecondary student success, we need new information that can guide the decisions of policymakers and institutions. As this report illustrates, Clearinghouse data serve these goals in the immediate term. These data provide a longitudinal view of expanded student cohorts (e.g., traditional-age vs. adult students; full-time vs. part-time cohorts) at the center of changes emerging from the debate on measuring college completion in the U.S. They also provide measures of more complete outcomes, including transfer patterns, persistence, and certificate or degree completion regardless of level, and at any institution, not just the institution of first enrollment.

To reach a more comprehensive understanding of current progress toward the national completion goals, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, in partnership with the Project on Academic Success, has launched efforts to report on more broadly defined student outcomes. Building on findings from previous reports in the Signature Report series, this new report zeroes in on a key student success outcome aligned with national college attainment goals: first college completion rates, encompassing postsecondary credentials of all levels and types. Specifically, this report focuses on the six-year completion outcomes of a cohort of first-time-in-college students who started postsecondary education at U.S. colleges and universities in fall 2006. First completion, the primary focus of this report, is investigated in detail with regard to institutions of origin and destination as well as by student age at first entry and enrollment intensity. Building on the comprehensiveness and the timeliness of Clearinghouse enrollment and completion data, this report aims to contribute to research and policy discussions about college completion by providing an alternative more detailed view of student progress and success in U.S. postsecondary education.

## WHAT TO FIND IN THIS REPORT

This report focuses on student completion of postsecondary certificates and degrees among first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who initially enrolled in public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit two-year and four-year colleges and universities nationwide in fall 2006. The study followed the fall 2006 cohort's college enrollment behaviors for six years, through the spring of 2012.

Six-year outcomes provided in this report include completions at students' starting institution, completions at an institution other than the starting institution, and continued enrollment of noncompleters through the end of the study period. The report emphasizes students' first completions throughout. For students whose first credential was awarded by a two-year institution, however, subsequent completions at four-year institutions are also explored.

Results are considered by student age at first entry into college, by enrollment intensity, and by the type of institution where students first enrolled. Two age groups are defined: students who were 24 years old or younger at first entry, and those who were over age 24 at first entry. The report further presents results for students in three categories of enrollment intensity: those enrolled exclusively full time throughout the study period, those enrolled exclusively part time, and those whose enrollments showed both full-time and part-time terms within the six years examined (mixed enrollment students).

The tables and figures presented in this report explore the following:

- Six-year outcomes for the fall 2006 cohort overall and broken out by enrollment intensity;
- Six-year outcomes by student age at first entry overall and further broken out by enrollment intensity;
- Six-year outcomes by type of starting institution overall;
- Six-year outcomes by type of starting institution further broken out by age at first entry and enrollment intensity, focusing on the students who started at four types of institutions specifically:
  - Four-year public institutions,
  - Two-year public colleges,
  - Four-year private nonprofit institutions, and
  - Four-year private for-profit institutions; and also
- Certificate and degree completions that occurred at institutions other than students' starting institution, broken out by location within the same state as the starting institution, outside the state, or at a multistate institution.

## COMING UP IN THE NEXT SIGNATURE REPORT

The Clearinghouse's fifth Signature Report will focus on four-year degree completions of students who transferred from two-year to four-year institutions, including those who transferred with or without first receiving a credential from a two-year institution. Results will be disaggregated by such student characteristics as age and gender and the institutional characteristics of the destination institutions (e.g., Carnegie classification).

## A NOTE ON THE DATA

### Data Source

The data for this report were drawn from the StudentTracker<sup>SM</sup> and DegreeVerify<sup>SM</sup> services, administered by the National Student Clearinghouse<sup>®</sup> (The Clearinghouse), which tracks 94 percent of college enrollments nationwide across all postsecondary institutions, including all institution types — two-year and four-year institutions, public and private institutions, and nonprofit and for-profit institutions. In order to ensure the most accurate possible representation of student outcomes for the study cohort, the results reported here are weighted according to the formula described in Appendix A using the state-by-state coverage rate for each institution type (sector and control). A complete explanation of national coverage rates and the weights used to ensure that results reflect enrollment and completion by sector and control can be found in Appendices A and B.

The student outcomes captured in this report are based on student-level data representing an unduplicated headcount of students across all institutions, a feature of the Clearinghouse data sets that distinguishes them from many other data sources, including the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), that may not accurately capture the complexity of postsecondary pathways because they are not structured to identify multiple enrollments by individual students. The capability of StudentTracker to link enrollment records across institutions nationally allows researchers to follow students longitudinally as they move from institution to institution, producing a fuller picture of college persistence and completion.

Although Clearinghouse data contain some demographic information on students, historical coverage rates for the demographic data elements is uneven. Therefore, the results summarized in this report give a national overview of college completion by age at first entry and by enrollment intensity, showing the percentage of students who enrolled or completed at various types of institutions, but they do not examine completion by race, ethnicity, or gender, for example.

## Cohort Definition

The cohort examined in this study is made up of first-time degree-seeking students, of any age, who began their postsecondary studies in the fall of 2006<sup>1</sup>. Showing intent to seek a degree or certificate for students who started at two-year institutions was defined as, either:

1. Enrolled full time for at least one term before August 15, 2007, or
2. Enrolled at least half time for any two terms before December 31, 2007.

First-time status was established by confirming that a student (1) did not show any postsecondary enrollment record in the four years prior to the student's fall 2006 enrollment, and (2) did not receive a degree or certificate from any postsecondary institution prior to fall 2006, according to Clearinghouse data.

Depending on the strengths and limitations of the data sets they use in their analysis, researchers face considerable complexity in operationalizing the category "first-time student." For this report, the Clearinghouse and the Project on Academic Success (PAS) balanced competing priorities in selecting a method for identifying the study cohort. On the one hand, Clearinghouse data allowed the researchers to capture a unique headcount of students nationally and, therefore, to follow individual students while also accounting for concurrent enrollments. In addition, Clearinghouse data allowed the researchers to establish first-time enrollment status empirically, i.e., by searching for prior enrollments rather than relying on institutions' reports, which may include idiosyncratic definitions as well as errors in transactional records. On the other hand, some limitations do arise with the method for identifying the study cohort in this report. Because Clearinghouse data on designations for class year are incomplete, for example, the researchers were not able to use them for this report. Consequently, this study's sample may include students who have more than 30 Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment credits and, despite having first-time-in-college status, may not be considered freshmen by their institutions. Moreover, because of inconsistencies in the historical depth of DegreeVerify database records, it is possible that a small number of graduate students are also included in the study cohort. (For a full discussion of data, definitions, and limitations, please see Appendix A.)

Throughout this report, we examine college completion rates for the fall 2006 cohort. The study followed the cohort through May 31, 2012 and highlights six-year student outcomes including degree and certificate completion, and continuing enrollment (persistence). Completions were identified using a combination of degree/certificate award records submitted by institutions as part of their participation in DegreeVerify and StudentTracker enrollment records indicating completions of a certificate or degree.

Figure A shows the fall 2006 cohort (n=1,878,484) broken out by type of starting institution. Four-year public institutions enrolled the largest percentage of the cohort (44.2 percent, n=830,056), followed by two-year public institutions, with 33.6 percent (n=631,524), and four-year private nonprofit institutions, enrolling 19.1 percent (n=359,145) of the cohort. Four-year private for-profit institutions enrolled a small percentage comparatively, 2.8 percent (n=52,621), while two-year private nonprofit institutions and two-year private for-profit institutions both enrolled less than 1 percent of the cohort.

<sup>1</sup> For comparison purposes, the results for non-degree seeking students who started at two-year public institutions are presented in Appendix C.

**Figure A. Fall 2006 Cohort (N=1,878,484) by Type of Starting Institution\***

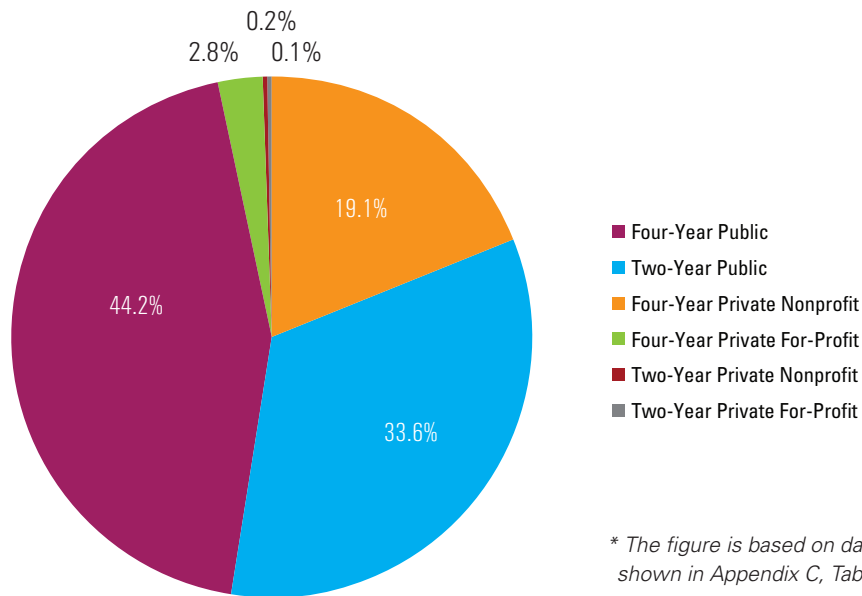


Figure B shows that at first entry, 17.4 percent of the study cohort were over age 24 at first entry, while 81.7 percent were age 24 or younger. The birthdate was missing for slightly less than 1 percent of the cohort.

**Figure B. Fall 2006 Cohort by Age at First Entry\***

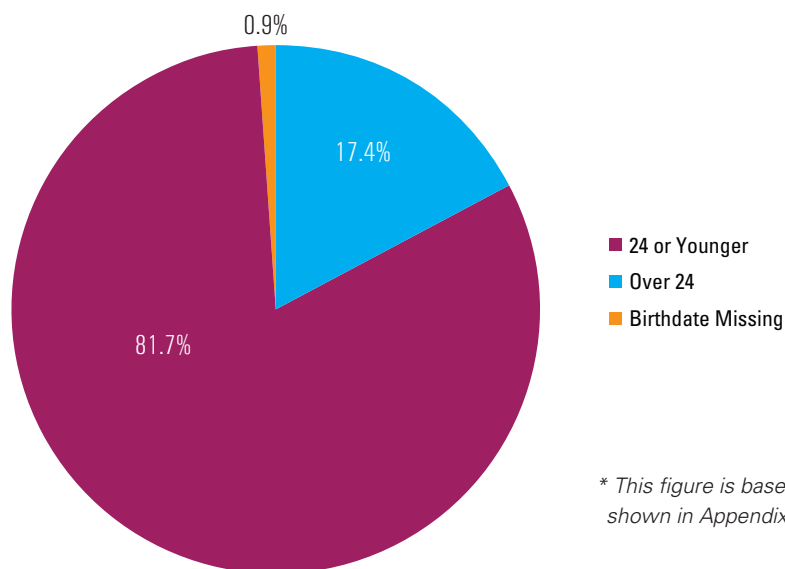
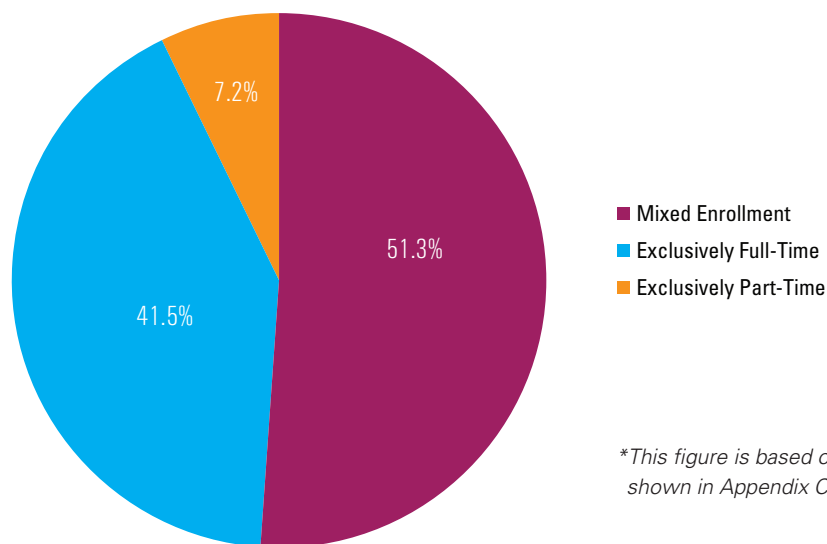


Figure C focuses on students' enrollment intensity and shows that 41.5 percent of the study cohort enrolled exclusively full time throughout the study period while 7.2 percent enrolled exclusively part time. A key point to note here is that over half of the cohort (51.3 percent) had mixed enrollment; that is, they enrolled full time for some terms and part time for other terms during the study period (see Appendix A for further detail).

It is important to note that this is a significantly different definition of enrollment status than the one commonly used in graduation rate studies based on IPEDS data. IPEDS cohorts are determined by student enrollment status in the first fall term only. By contrast, this report considers student enrollment status over time and across institutions, allowing for a more nuanced classification. For example, roughly two-thirds of the mixed enrollment group consists of students who began at full-time status but later enrolled part time. These students would have been classified as full time in studies that only considered the first enrollment term.

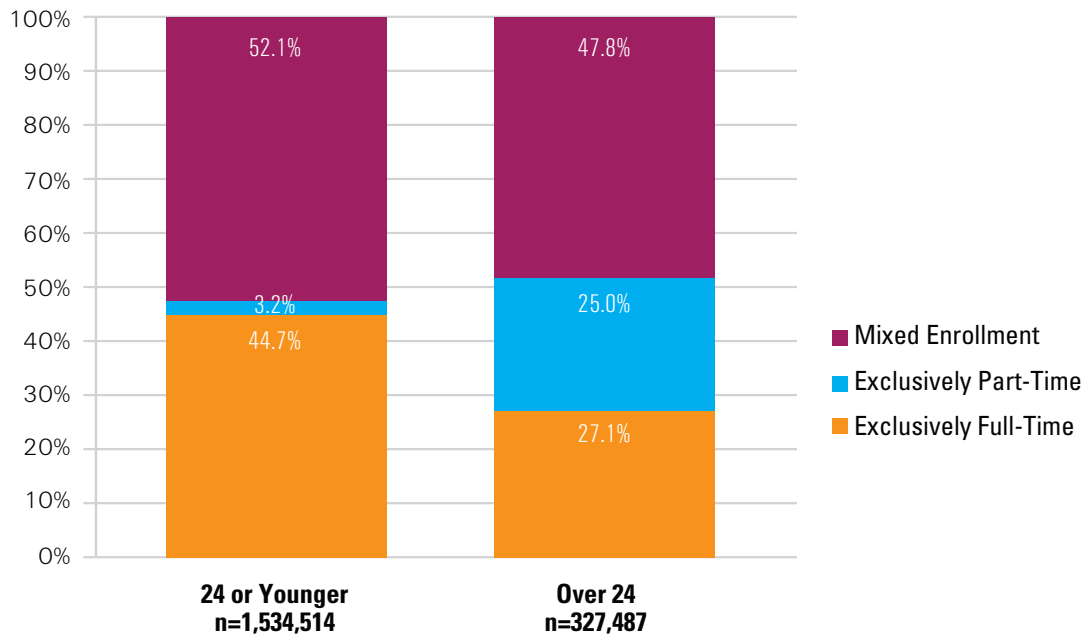
**Figure C. Fall 2006 Cohort by Enrollment Intensity\***



Finally, Figure D shows the distribution of the study cohort by age at first entry and enrollment intensity. For both age groups, students with mixed enrollment intensity represented the largest proportions. Among students who were 24 or younger at first entry, 52.1 percent had mixed enrollment, followed by students who enrolled exclusively full time (44.7 percent). Students with exclusively part-time status represented only 3.2 percent of the younger group. Among students who were over age 24 at first entry, a similarly large percentage (47.8 percent) showed mixed enrollment. However, the students who were over age 24 at first entry fell into the remaining two enrollment intensity groups in nearly equal proportions. In contrast to the younger group, fully one-quarter of students who were over age 24 at first entry enrolled exclusively part time throughout the study period, while only a slightly larger proportion (27.1 percent) enrolled exclusively full time.



**Figure D. Fall 2006 Cohort By Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity\***



*\*This figure is based on data shown in Appendix C, Table 4, and excluded a small number of students (less than 1 percent of the cohort) whose birthdate was missing.*

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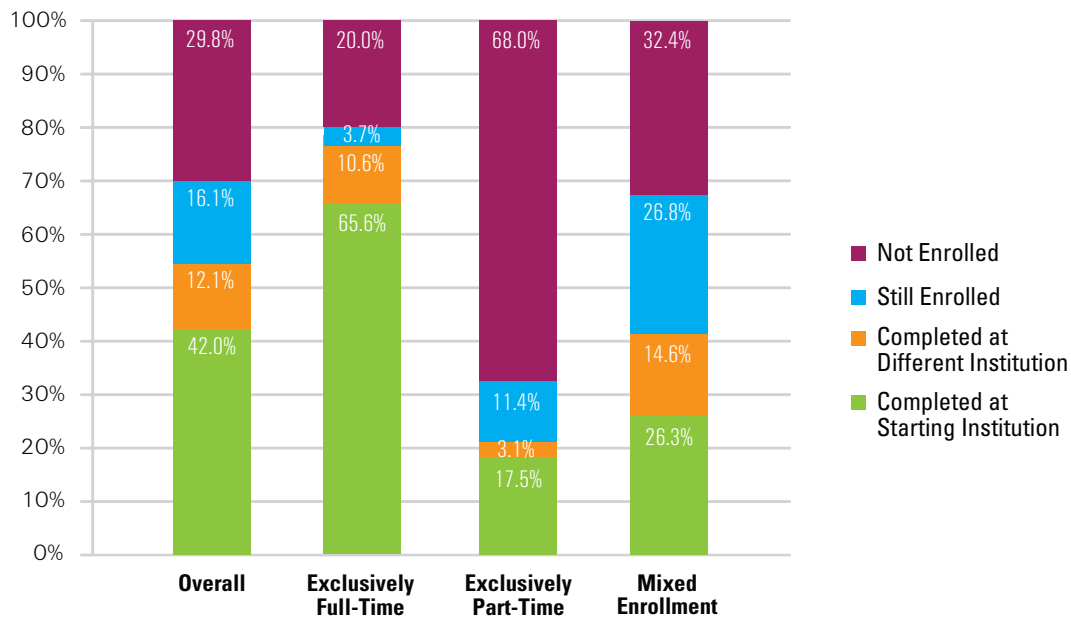
## OVERALL SIX-YEAR OUTCOMES

The results presented in this report focus on six-year outcomes of degree-seeking students who entered postsecondary education for the first time in fall 2006. The report places particular emphasis on each student’s first instance of completion. The near-census student enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse enable researchers to track student postsecondary pathways across institutions, sectors, and state lines. Within this context, using Clearinghouse data, we present a national picture of college completion, and further explore college outcomes for students of different age groups and enrollment intensity.

## SIX-YEAR OUTCOMES BY ENROLLMENT INTENSITY

The national goal for increasing college completion (i.e., 55 percent of the adult U.S. population holding an associate’s degree or higher by the year 2025) includes students from both four-year and two-year institutions. The presentation of the study’s results, therefore, begins by describing the patterns in the six-year outcomes for the entire study cohort, without consideration of institution type.

**Figure 1. Six-Year Outcomes by Enrollment Intensity\* (N=1,878,484)**



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 5a.

Figure 1 shows six-year student outcomes including degree or certificate completion, continuing enrollment during the last year of the study period, and stop-out. Results are shown for the full cohort and are broken out by enrollment intensity, showing outcomes for students who were enrolled exclusively full time, exclusively part time, and with mixed enrollment (i.e., both part time and full time during the study period).

Overall, 42 percent of the cohort completed at their starting institution and an additional 12.1 percent completed at a different institution, for a combined completion rate of 54.1 percent nationally. The percentage of students who had completed or were still enrolled at the end of the study period exceeded 70 percent.

The data used in this report enable researchers to follow students as they move across institutions, thus a fuller picture of college completion emerges here than is possible to assemble from institution-level data or statewide data sets. Furthermore, the results shown here extend on the view offered by other data sets by including outcomes for students who consistently or intermittently enrolled part time.

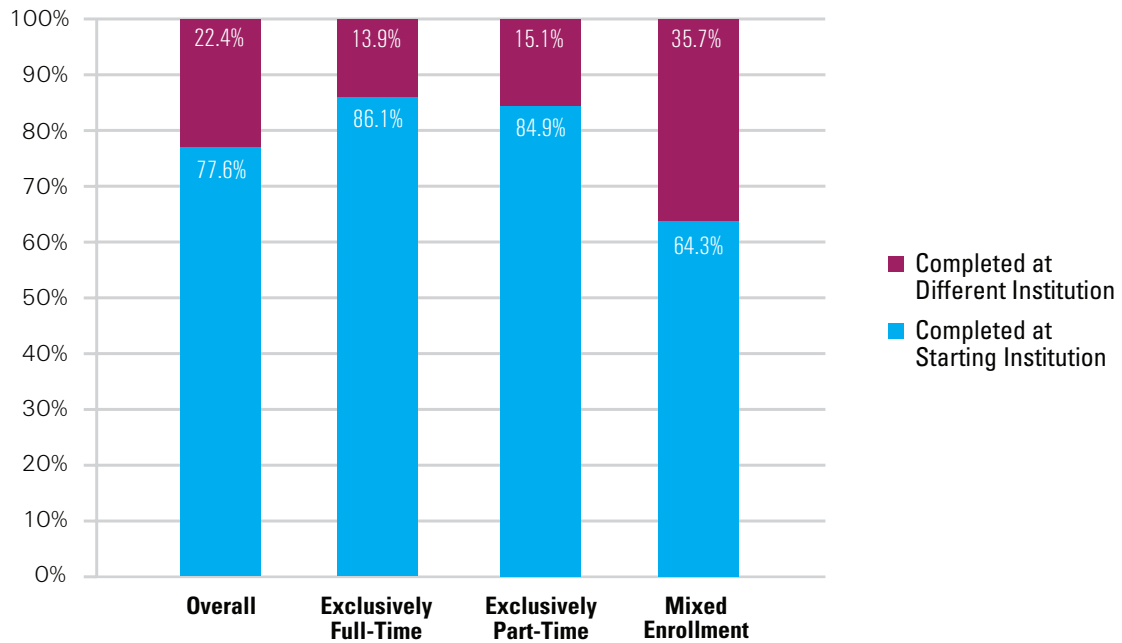
Results broken out by the three enrollment intensity categories (exclusively full time, exclusively part time, or mixed enrollment) show marked differences behind the overall rates. Exclusively full-time students (a group that comprised 41.5 percent of the cohort) showed a total completion rate of 76.2 percent, including 10.6 percent who completed at institutions other than their starting institution. An additional 3.7 percent of the exclusively full-time students were still enrolled at the end of the study period, leaving only 20 percent of this group no longer enrolled for at least a year before the end of the study period.

Not surprisingly, given the longer time to degree required when attending college part time, the small minority who enrolled exclusively part time (7.2 percent of the full study cohort) showed much lower rates of completion within six years. It is clear that six years is not an adequate time frame for capturing completions of students who enroll exclusively part time throughout their studies, particularly those seeking four-year degrees, and the results from this study reflect that fact. Among part-time students, only 17.5 percent completed degrees or certificates at their starting institution, while an additional 3.1 percent completed at a different institution. About one in nine (11.4 percent) were still enrolled at the end of the study period, with 68 percent not enrolled anywhere in the last year of the study period. It is important to note the need to continue to follow these students over longer periods in order to obtain definitive degree outcomes. This need is underscored not just by the 11.4 percent who were still enrolled at the end of six years, but also by the 68 percent characterized as “stopped-out” (those who show no enrollment for the last 12 months of the study period). These students may enroll again, and possibly complete a degree, at some time after the close of study period.

Differences between the part-time and full-time enrollment groups are accentuated by the separate consideration in this study of the mixed enrollment group, a group that comprised more than half of the study cohort (51.3 percent). Many studies and data sources categorize this group of students as full-time or part-time enrollees based only on their enrollment intensity in their first term. Using that method, 67.3 percent of this study’s mixed enrollment group would have been classified as full time. In other words, among this study’s mixed enrollment students, twice as many started full time and later enrolled part time as followed the reverse pattern. However, because this group comprised a large portion of the study sample and showed six-year outcomes patterns distinctly different from those of the other groups in the study, researchers and policymakers should note the extent to which the mixed enrollment group would skew both the part-time and full-time results had these students been characterized on the basis of their first-term enrollments alone.

Among students with mixed enrollment, the total completion rate was 40.9 percent, with 26.3 percent completing at their starting institution and 14.6 percent completing at a different institution. Another key finding is that the highest proportion of students still enrolled without completing a degree or a certificate by the end of the study period appeared among mixed enrollment students. More than one quarter of this group (26.8 percent) were still enrolled at the end of the study period, leaving the percentage of stop-outs at 32.4 percent.

**Figure 2. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Enrollment Intensity\***

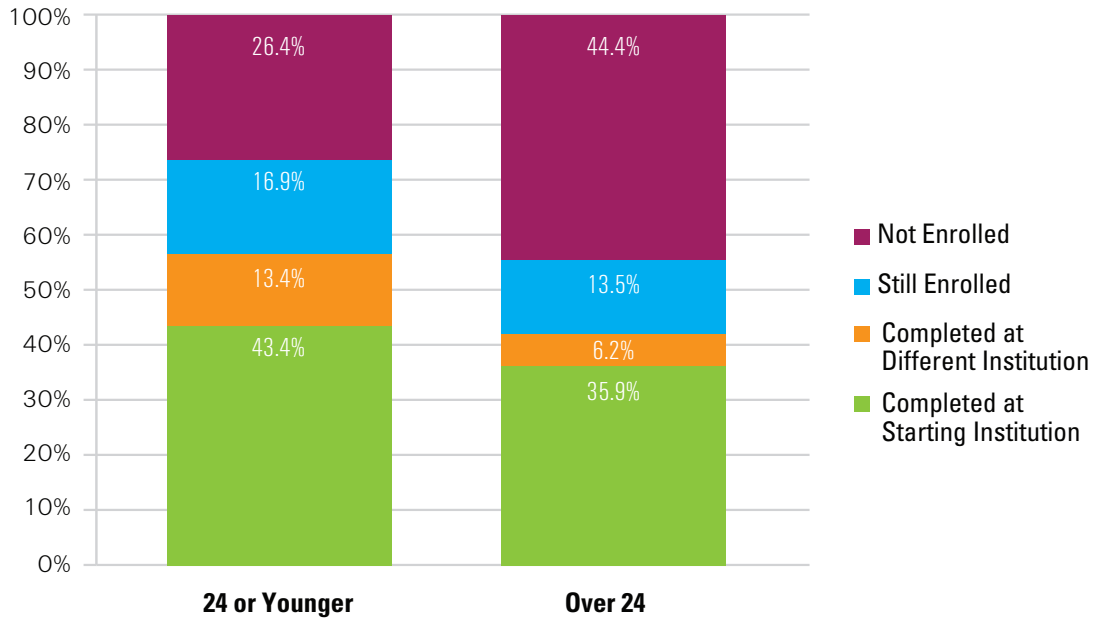


*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 5b.*

Figure 2 shows the proportions of completions that were earned at a different institution from where the students first enrolled, for each enrollment intensity group. Overall, more than one-fifth, 22.4 percent of all students with at least one completion record, earned their first credential somewhere else from their starting institutions. It is important to note that these percentages are measuring only the first degrees earned and does not include the cases when students may have completed an associate’s degree at their starting institution, for example, and then also a bachelor’s degree elsewhere. For both exclusively full-time and exclusively part-time students, relatively fewer obtained their degrees at an institution different from their starting institution (13.9 percent and 15.1 percent, respectively). In contrast, more than one-third (35.7 percent) of mixed enrollment completers (those who graduated after having enrolled both part time and full time at different points in their postsecondary career) completed at an institution other than the one where they first enrolled.

## SIX-YEAR OUTCOMES BY AGE AT FIRST ENTRY

**Figure 3. Six-Year Outcomes by Age at First Entry\***



*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 6a.  
Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.*

Figures 3 and 4 further explore differences in completion and persistence patterns by considering results broken out by students' age at first entry<sup>1</sup>. Students were divided into two age groups, one consisting of those who were age 24 or younger at first entry and the other consisting of those who were over age 24 at first entry. Among students age 24 or younger at first entry, 43.4 percent completed at their starting institution and an additional 13.4 percent completed a degree or certificate at a different institution, for a total completion rate of 56.8 percent. An additional 16.9 percent had no postsecondary credential but were still enrolled at the end of the study period, leaving the percentage of stop-outs (not enrolled) at 26.4 percent.

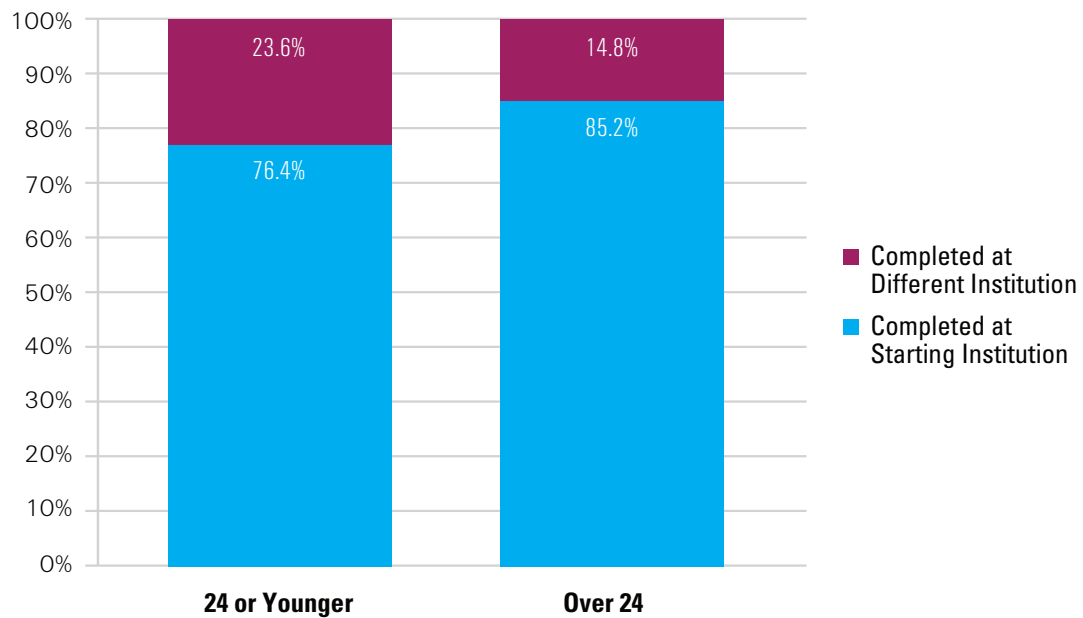
Students over age 24 at first entry showed a total completion rate of 42.1 percent, with 35.9 percent completing at their starting institution and only 6.2 percent completing at a different institution. An additional 13.5 percent were still enrolled at the end of the study period. Looking across the age groups, a notable difference lies in the greater proportion of the older group (44.4 percent) who had stopped out by the end of the study, compared with 26.4 percent of the younger group who were no longer enrolled.

There is also a higher portion of first completions elsewhere among students age 24 or younger at first entry, compared to older students. First completions outside students' starting institution occurred at twice the rate in the younger group (13.4 percent) compared to the older group (6.2 percent), a pattern expressed as a share of completions earned elsewhere, in Figure 4.

It should be noted that differences between the age groups can mask differences in enrollment intensity. Consequently, we disaggregate results by enrollment intensity within each age group in the results following this section.

<sup>1</sup> All tables and figures considering age exclude a small number of students (less than 1 percent of the cohort) whose birthdate was missing.

**Figure 4. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Age at First Entry\***

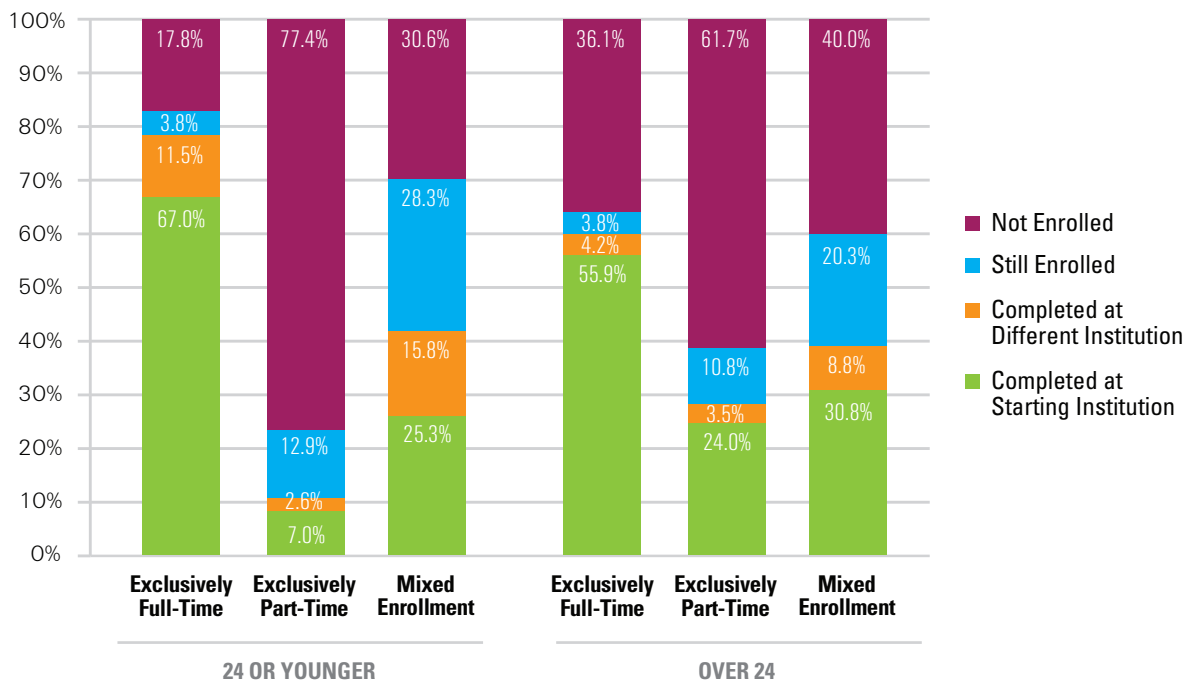


*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 6b.  
 Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.*

Figure 4 further compares the two age groups by the proportion of completions that were earned at a different institution from where the student first enrolled. Almost a quarter (23.6 percent) of the students aged 24 or younger at first entry completed their first degree or certificate somewhere other than at their starting institution, while 14.8 percent of completers in the older group did so.

## SIX-YEAR OUTCOMES AGE GROUP AND ENROLLMENT INTENSITY

**Figure 5. Six-Year Outcomes by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity\***



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 7.

Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.

Figure 5 shows students' six-year outcomes based on age at first entry and enrollment intensity. Completion rates were the highest for students who enrolled exclusively full time regardless of age at first entry. Among students in the younger age group who enrolled full time, 67 percent completed at their starting institution and an additional 11.5 percent completed at a different institution, for a combined completion rate of 78.5 percent. Full-time students in the older group showed a lower total completion rate (60.1 percent), with 55.9 percent completing at their starting institution and an additional 4.2 percent completing at a different institution. More than half of the full-time students, regardless of age, completed at their starting institution. The stop-out rate was higher for the older group (36.1 percent not enrolled at the end of the study period), more than twice the rate of the younger group (17.8 percent).

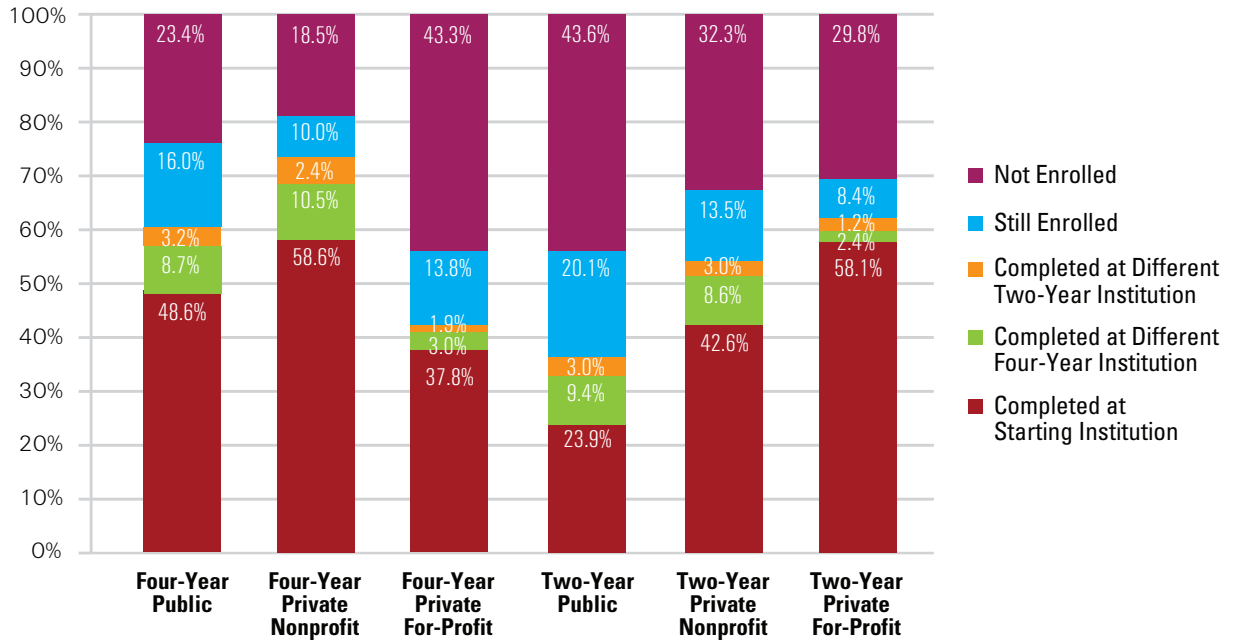
Outcomes for exclusively part-time students had a very different pattern. While both full-time and mixed enrollment students showed higher completion rates and lower stop-out rates for the younger groups than for the older groups, part-time students showed the reverse: those who were age 24 or younger at first entry completed at a lower rate and stopped out at a higher rate than did their older counterparts. Specifically, the completion rate for exclusively part-time students in the younger group was 9.6 percent, whereas it was 27.5 for those in the older group. The stop-out rate for the younger group was 77.4 percent, higher than the older group's stop-out rate of 61.7 percent.

Within both age groups, mixed enrollment students had the highest rates of completion at an institution other than the starting institution, followed by full-time students. Also, among mixed enrollment students, the younger group showed a slightly higher rate than the older group of completing at an institution other than the starting institution.



## SIX-YEAR OUTCOMES BY STARTING INSTITUTION TYPE

**Figure 6. Six-Year Outcomes by Starting Institution Type\***

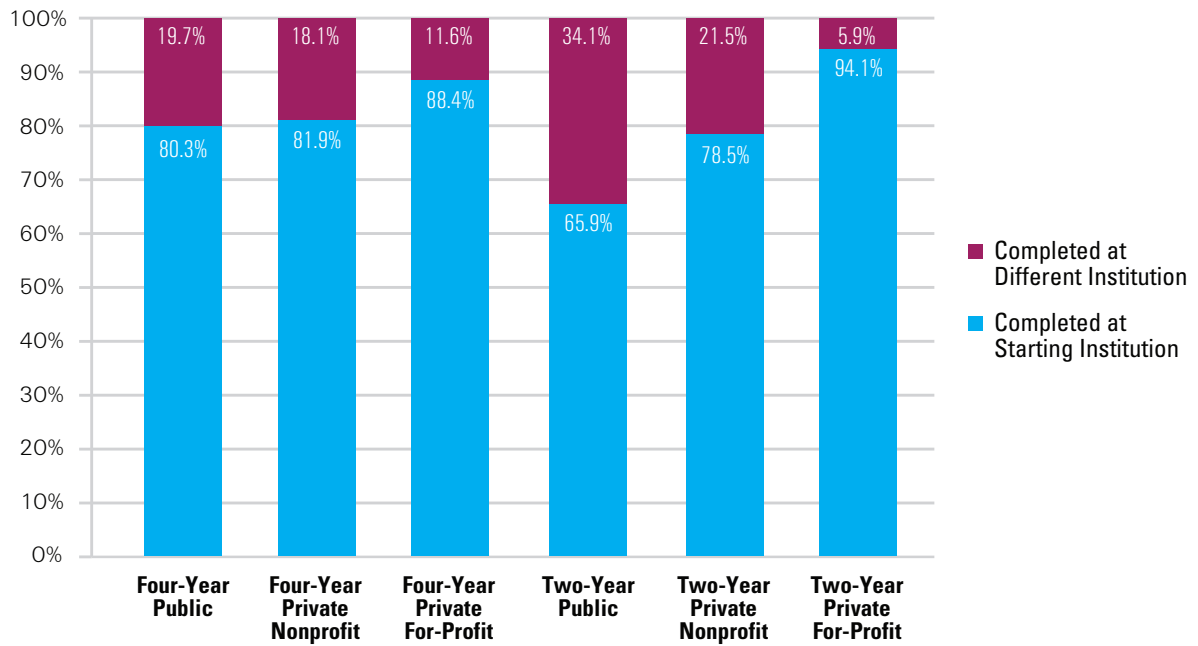


\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 8a.

Next we offer an analysis of the six-year outcomes by the type of institution where students started their postsecondary education (see Figure 6). The total completion rate, including completions at the starting institution and elsewhere, was the highest for students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions (71.5 percent). The total completion rates were also above 60 percent for students who started at four-year public and two-year private for-profit institutions (60.5 percent and 61.8 percent, respectively). Just over one-third (36.3 percent) of students who started at two-year public institutions obtained a credential within six years.

Most first completions occurred at students' starting institution. The highest rate of completion at starting institutions was among students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions (58.6 percent). More noteworthy, however, is the finding that more than one of every nine students who started in each of the public and private nonprofit institutional sectors completed at an institution different from the one where they started. Specifically, 11.9 percent of those who started at four-year public, 12.9 percent of those who started at four-year private nonprofit, 12.4 percent of those who started at two-year public, and 11.6 percent of those who started at two-year private nonprofit institutions completed at an institution other than their starting institution. It is particularly striking that even among the institutions with the lowest same-institution completion rates, two-year public institutions, this proportion holds up, with 9.4 percent completing at a four-year institution and 3 percent at a different two-year institution, for a total of roughly one in eight students completing elsewhere. These results suggest that capturing students' completions beyond their starting institution will sizably increase total completion rates observed nationally.

**Figure 7. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Starting Institution Type\***



*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 8b.*

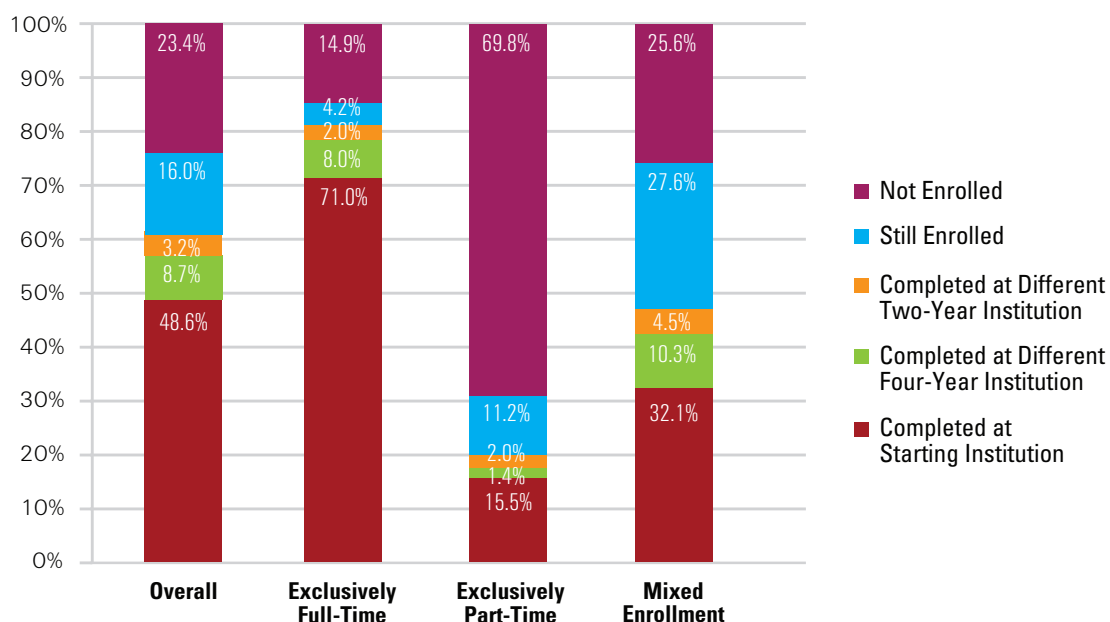
Figure 7 shows the share of all first completions for each institution type that occurred at an institution different from the starting institution. Across all categories, with the exception of two-year for-profits, more than one in 10 students who completed a credential did so at an institution different from the one where they started. For students who started at two-year public institutions, this figure is more than one in three (34.1 percent).

The proportions of completions at different institutions were similar for students who started at a four-year public institution, a four-year private nonprofit institution, and a two-year private nonprofit institution (19.7 percent, 18.1 percent, and 21.5 percent, respectively).

Students who started at private for-profit institutions, had the highest proportions of their first credential received at their starting institution (88.4 percent and 94.1 percent at four- and two-year institutions, respectively).

## STUDENTS WHO STARTED AT FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

**Figure 8. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Enrollment Intensity\* (N= 830,056)**



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 9.

Figures 8 through 10 reveal six-year outcomes for students who started at four-year public institutions, broken out by enrollment intensity (Figure 8), by age group at first entry (Figure 9), and by enrollment intensity within each age group (Figure 10).

As shown in Figure 8, overall, for students who started at four-year public institutions, 60.6 percent completed their first degree or certificate within six years, with 48.6 percent completing at their starting institution and an additional 12 percent completing at a different institution. Additionally, 16 percent of students were still enrolled six years after their initial enrollment. Nearly one-quarter (23.4 percent) were no longer enrolled at the end of the study period.

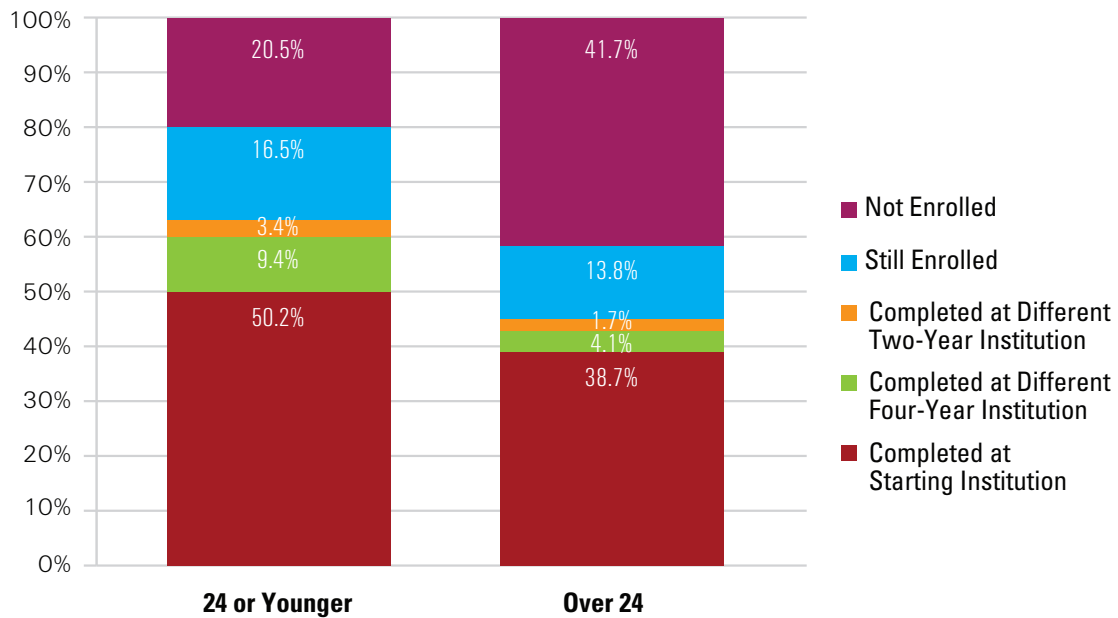
Among exclusively full-time students, 81 percent completed their first degree or certificate within six years, with 71 percent of them completing at the starting institution and 10 percent completing at a different institution (rates of first completion at a different four-year and two-year institution were 8 percent and 2 percent, respectively). The stop-out rate was the lowest for full-time students compared to part-time or mixed enrollment students.

Among exclusively part-time students, 18.9 percent completed their first degree or certificate during the study period, with 3.4 percent completing at an institution different from their starting institution, and 11.2 remained enrolled (with no completion) during the last year of the study period.

Mixed enrollment students had the highest rate of persistence (with no completion), reflecting the logical observation that students following this enrollment pattern may have a longer time than exclusively full-time students in which to complete and, furthermore, that they may progress more steadily toward completion than their exclusively part-time counterparts. Among mixed enrollment students, 46.8 percent completed a credential within six years, including 14.8 percent who completed at somewhere other than their starting institution.

Mixed enrollment students showed a relatively higher rate of first completion at a different institution (14.8 percent) with 10.3 percent completing at a different four-year institution and 4.5 percent at a different two-year institution.

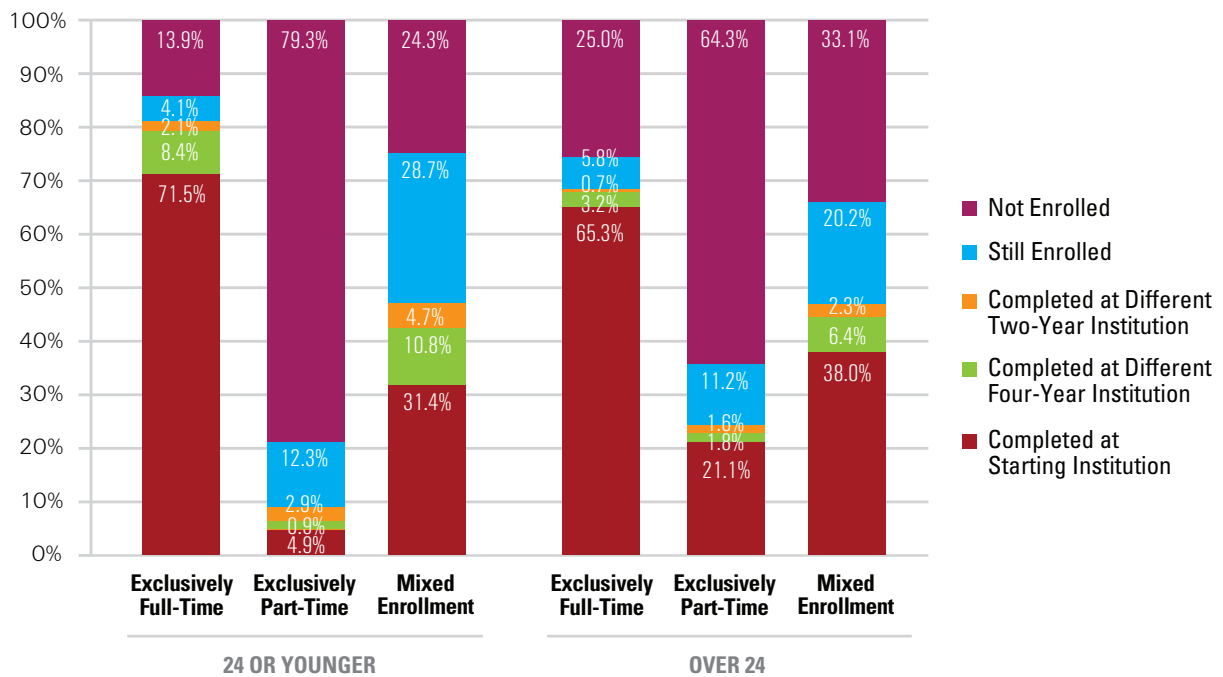
**Figure 9. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry\***



*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 10.  
Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.*

Figure 9 displays six-year outcomes for students who started at four-year public institutions by age group. Students age 24 or younger had a higher completion rate (63 percent vs. 44.5 percent) and a lower stop-out rate (20.5 percent vs. 41.7 percent) compared to students over age 24 at first entry. The younger group also had a higher completion rate (12.8 percent vs. 5.8 percent) at an institution different from their starting institution.

**Figure 10. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity\***



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 11.  
 Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.

Figure 10 displays six-year outcomes for students who started at four-year public institutions by enrollment intensity within each age group.

Overall, for students who started at four-year public institutions, the completion patterns by enrollment intensity for both age groups were similar. Within each age group, exclusively full-time students had the highest proportion of students completing at their starting institution compared to exclusively part-time and mixed enrollment students, while mixed enrollment students had the highest proportion completing at a different four-year institution.

Among students age 24 or younger at first entry and enrolled exclusively full time, 71.5 percent completed at their starting institution, 8.4 percent completed at a different four-year institution, and 2.1 percent completed at a two-year institution. For students in the younger group with mixed enrollment, 31.4 percent completed at their starting institution, 10.8 percent completed at a different four-year institution, and 4.8 percent completed at a two-year institution.

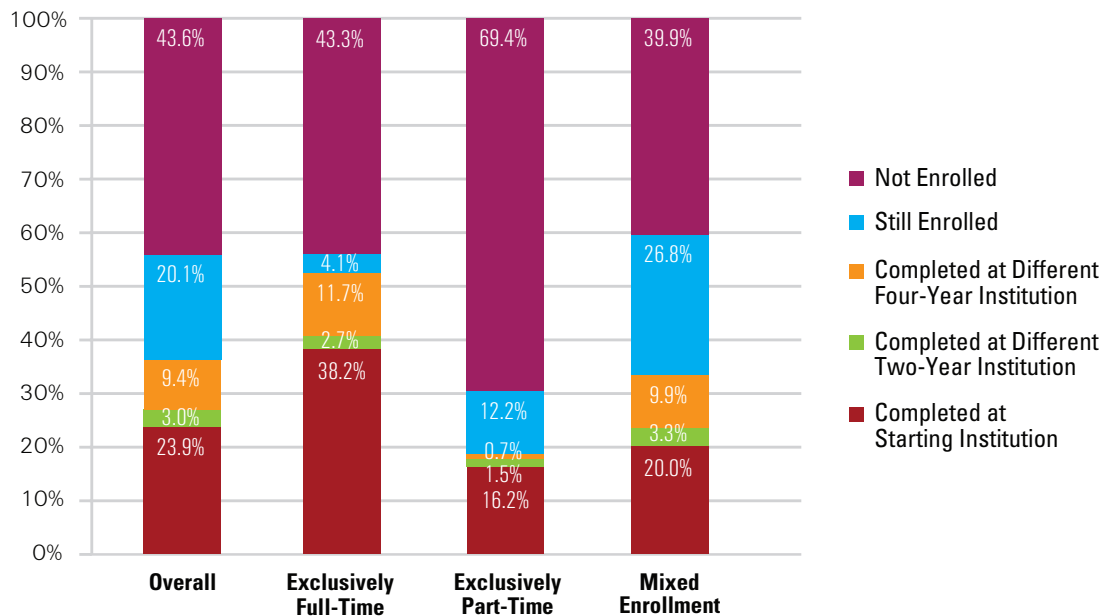
Among students over age 24 at first entry and enrolled exclusively full time, 65.3 percent completed at their starting institution, 3.2 percent at a different four-year institution, and 0.7 percent at a two-year institution. Among students in the older group with mixed enrollment, 38 percent completed at their starting institution, 6.4 percent at a different four-year institution, and 2.3 percent at a two-year institution.

Interestingly, part-time students over age 24 at first entry had a higher six-year completion rate than did part-time students age 24 or younger at first entry (24.5 and 8.4 percent, respectively). A large majority, 86 percent, of part-time completers in the older group completed at their starting institutions, compared to a smaller majority (approximately 60 percent) of part-time completers in the younger group who completed at their starting institutions.

## STUDENTS WHO STARTED AT TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

We next focus on the college outcomes of degree-seeking students who started at two-year public institutions<sup>2</sup>. In each subsection of results broken out by enrollment intensity, age at first entry, and enrollment intensity within each age group, we first present six-year outcomes of these students, focusing primarily on their first instance of completion. Following this, we explore the two-year entering cohort's rate of total completions at four-year institutions, both with and without first attaining a credential from the two-year sector.

**Figure 11. Six-Year Outcomes and First Completion for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Enrollment Intensity\* (N=631,524)**



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 12.

In Figure 11, we present six-year outcomes and first completions of students who started at two-year public colleges, by enrollment intensity.

Among all students who started at a two-year public institution, 36.3 percent received a degree or certificate within six years, with 23.9 percent completing at their starting institution, 3 percent at a different two-year institution, and 9.4 percent at a (different) four-year institution. Note that Figure 11 measures first-degrees only, meaning that some of the 23.9 percent who completed at the starting institution may have later completed an additional degree at a four-year institution, but none of the 9.4 percent who completed at a four-year institution had completed an associate's degree first (see Figure 12 for a view of all four-year completers).

More than half of the full-time students (52.6 percent) completed within six years. Among this group, 38.2 percent completed at their starting institution, with an additional 2.7 percent completing at a different two-year institution and

<sup>2</sup> Notably, results for non-degree students who started at two-year public institutions showed significant numbers of completions as well. For comparison, see Tables 15-17 in Appendix C.

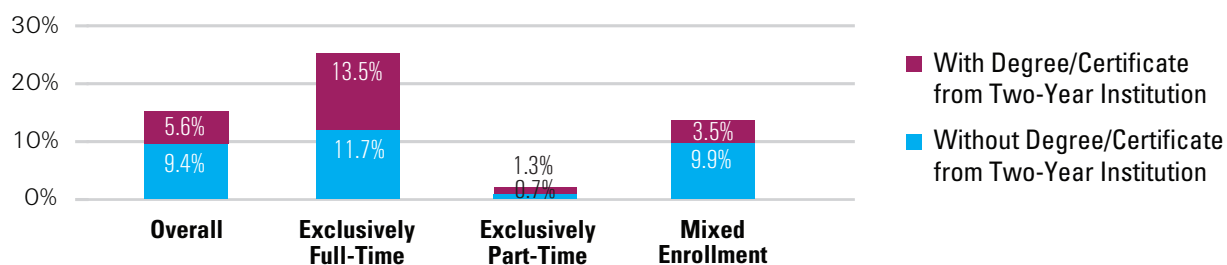
11.7 percent completing at a four-year institution. Given that the overall stop-out rate for full-time students was 20 percent (see Figure 1), it is noteworthy that 43.3 percent of full-time students who started at a two-year public institution stopped out during the period of this study, more than twice the overall rate for full-time students.

Compared to exclusively full-time students, exclusively part-time students had a very low six-year completion rate (18.4 percent). Of all part-time students, 16.2 percent completed at their starting institution, while only 1.5 percent and 0.7 percent completed at a different two-year institution and at a four-year institution, respectively. As noted above, low six-year completion rates for students who enrolled exclusively part time are unsurprising and suggest the importance of following these students for longer periods.

Among students with mixed enrollment, however, 20 percent completed at their starting institution, with an additional 3.4 percent and 9.9 percent completing at a different two-year institution and a (different) four-year institution, respectively. Completers with mixed enrollment intensity completed at institutions different from their starting institution at a rate nearly as high (13.2 percent) as that for exclusively full-time students (14.4 percent).

With a particular interest in four-year completion among students who started at two-year public institutions, we focus next on percentages of students who completed at a four-year institution, both with and without first obtaining a credential from a two-year institution. Figure 12 shows all completions at four-year institutions for students who started at two-year public institutions, both with and without a credential from a two-year institution, exploring how these completion rates differed by students' enrollment intensity.

**Figure 12. Completion Outcomes at Four-Year Institutions for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Enrollment Intensity\***



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 12.

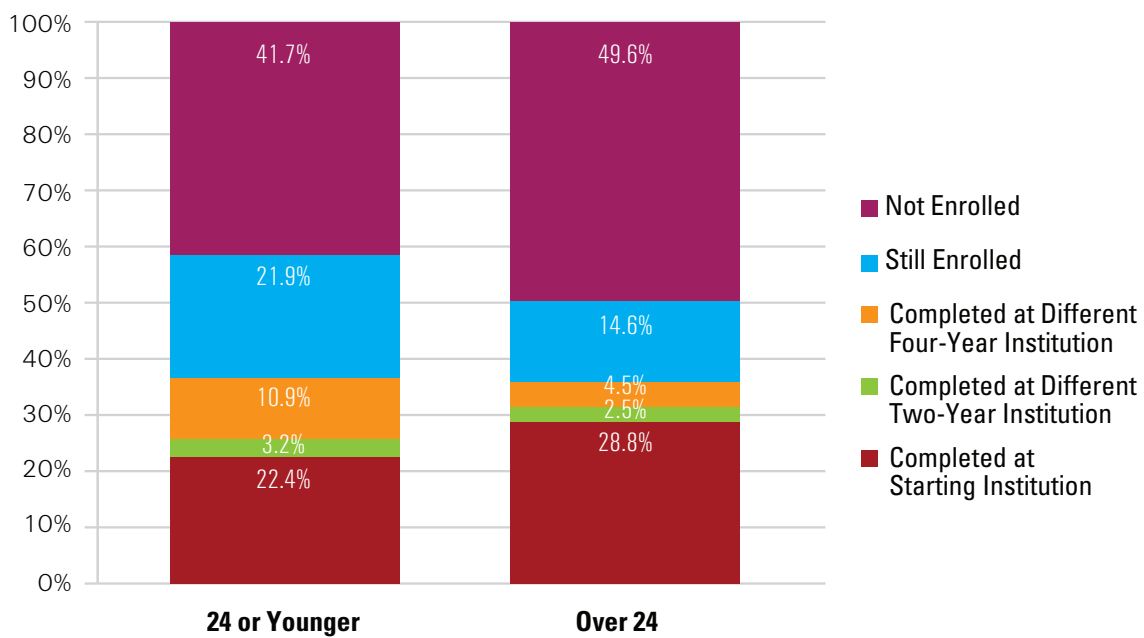
Overall, a total of 15 percent of students who started at two-year public institutions completed at a four-year institution within six years. Among these, 5.6 percent had previously received a credential from a two-year institution (not necessarily the starting institution). Note that the 9.4 percent indicated here as completing at a four-year institution without a two-year degree are the same as the 9.4 percent shown in Figure 11, above, who completed their first degree at a four-year institution.

With a total rate of completions at four-year institutions at 25.2 percent, full-time students showed the highest proportion of completions at four-year institutions, either with (11.7 percent) or without (13.5 percent) a credential from a two-year institution, compared to part-time and mixed enrollment students.

Part-time students showed a very low rate of completion at a four-year institution within six years, as expected given that the study period was too short for most of them to earn the necessary credits. Nonetheless, 2 percent of these students did manage to complete a degree while enrolling exclusively part time, with 0.7 percent receiving the credential from a four-year institution without first graduating from the two-year, and 1.3 percent with a completion at a four-year institution after receiving a credential from a two-year institution.

Additionally, among students with mixed enrollment, 9.9 percent obtained their first postsecondary credential at a four-year institution, while 3.5 percent completed at a four-year institution after receiving a degree or a certificate from a two-year institution.

**Figure 13. Six-Year Outcomes and First Completion for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry\***



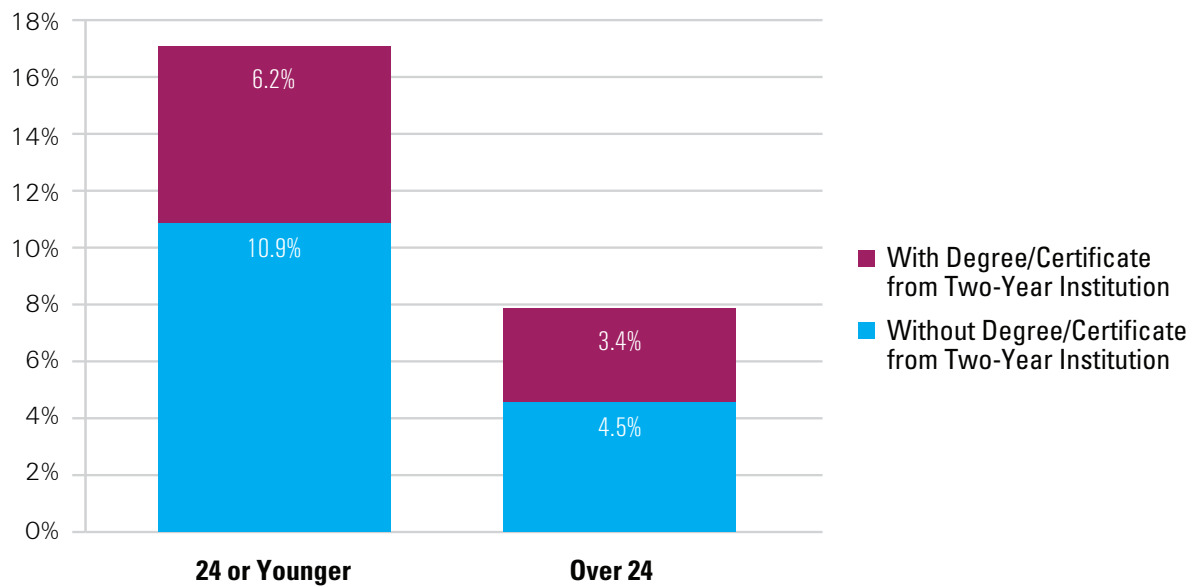
*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 13.  
Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.*

Similar to Figure 11, Figure 13 shows six-year outcomes of students who started at two-year public institutions and their first completions at four-year institutions, by age at first entry.

The overall completion rates for students age 24 or younger and those over age 24 at first entry were very similar (36.5 and 35.8 percent, respectively), with students in the older group having a higher completion rate at their starting institution than students in the younger group (28.8 and 22.4 percent, respectively). In comparison with students in the older group, students in the younger group had a higher rate of first completion at a four-year institution (10.9 and 4.5 percent, respectively).



**Figure 14. Completion at Four-Year Institutions for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry\***



*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 13.  
Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.*

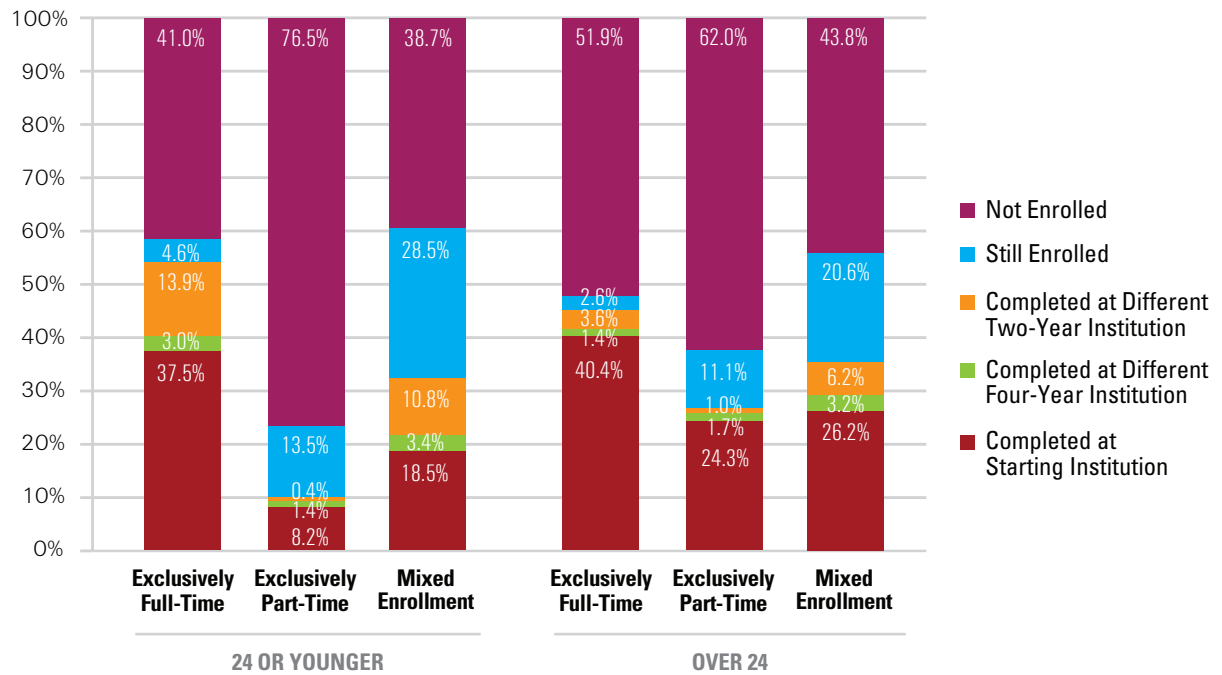
Figure 14 presents patterns of completion at four-year institutions, with and without a postsecondary credential from a two-year institution, among students who started at two-year public institutions by age at first entry.

Among students age 24 or younger at first entry, 10.9 percent completed at a four-year institution without previously receiving a certificate or degree from a two-year institution, and 6.2 percent completed at a four-year institution with a credential from a two-year institution.

Among students over age 24 at first entry, 4.5 percent earned their first postsecondary credential at a four-year institution and 3.4 percent did so with a credential from a two-year institution.

Compared to the older group, the younger group had a markedly higher proportion of students completing at a four-year institution either with or without a degree or a certificate from a two-year institution.

**Figure 15. Six-Year Outcomes and First Completion for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity\***



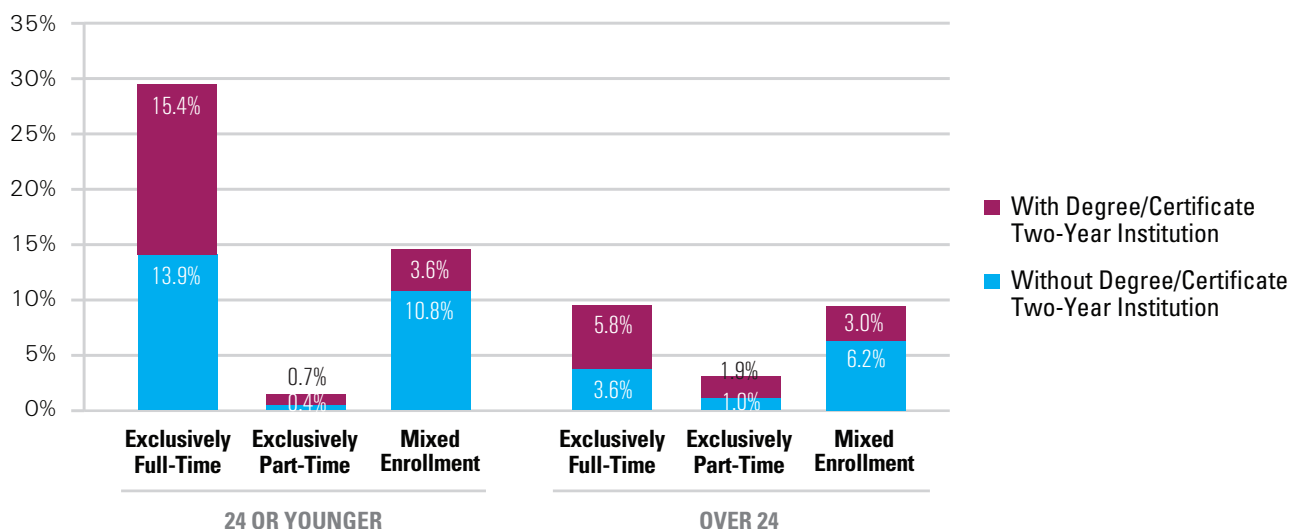
*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 14.  
Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.*

Figure 15 presents six-year outcomes and first completions for students who started at two-year public institutions by age at first entry and enrollment intensity.

Overall, a larger proportion of students over age 24 compared to students age 24 or younger at first entry completed at their starting institution. This pattern held regardless of students' enrollment intensity. Conversely, a larger proportion of students in the younger group than in the older group completed at a four-year institution.

Among full-time enrollees, the overall completion rate was higher for students in the younger group than it was for students in the older group (54.4 and 45.4 percent, respectively). The older part-time students, on the other hand, had a much higher completion rate (17 percentage points higher) than their younger part-time counterparts.

**Figure 16. Completion at Four-Year Institutions for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity\***



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 14.  
 Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.

Figure 16 displays completion at four-year institutions, with and without a postsecondary credential from a two-year institution, among students who started at two-year public institutions by enrollment intensity and age of entry.

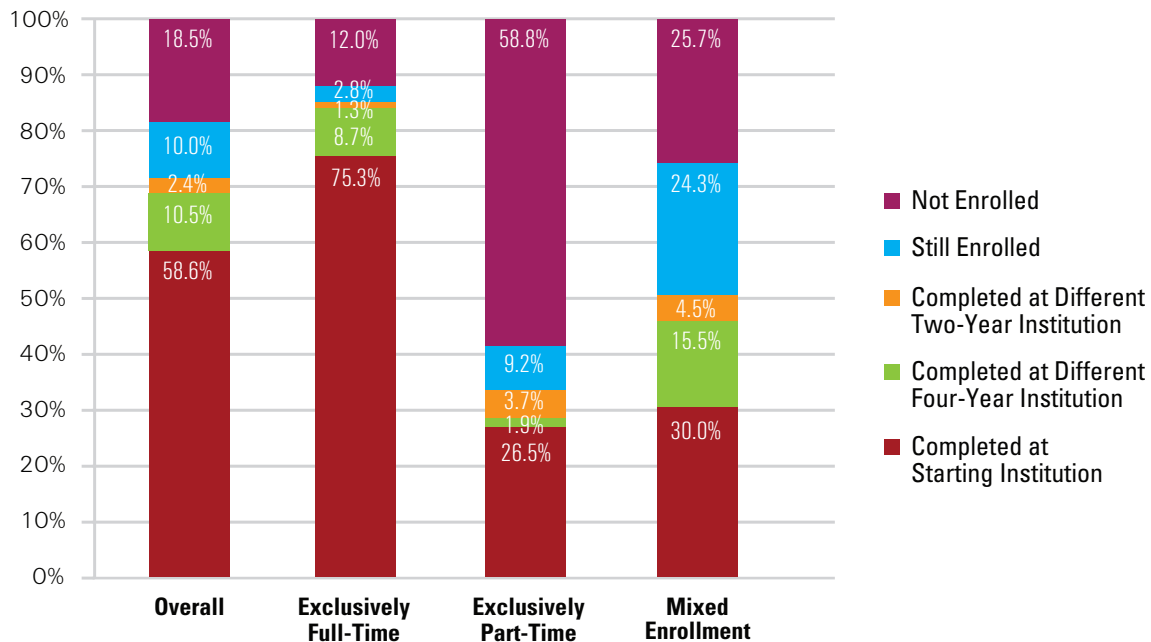
With the exception of those enrolled exclusively part time, a larger proportion of students age 24 or younger than students over age 24 at first entry earned a credential at a four-year institution.

Among students in the younger group, 13.9 percent of full-time students earned their first postsecondary credential at a four-year institution, and 15.4 percent of full-time students did so with a degree or a certificate from a two-year institution, achieving in total a 29.3 percent completion rate at four-year institutions. Among full-time students in the older group, the overall four-year completion rate was 9.4 percent, with 3.6 percent completing at a four-year institution without previously receiving a credential from a two-year institution and 5.8 percent completing at a four-year institution with a degree or a certificate from a two-year institution. Mixed enrollment students in the younger group also had a higher completion rate at four-year institutions than their mixed enrollment counterparts in the older group (14.4 and 9.2 percent, respectively).

While, in both age groups, exclusively part-time students had a lower rate of completion at a four-year institution than full-time and mixed enrollment students, completion at a four-year institution was higher in the older group than in the younger group of exclusively part-time students.

## STUDENTS WHO STARTED AT FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

**Figure 17. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Enrollment Intensity\* (N=359,154)**

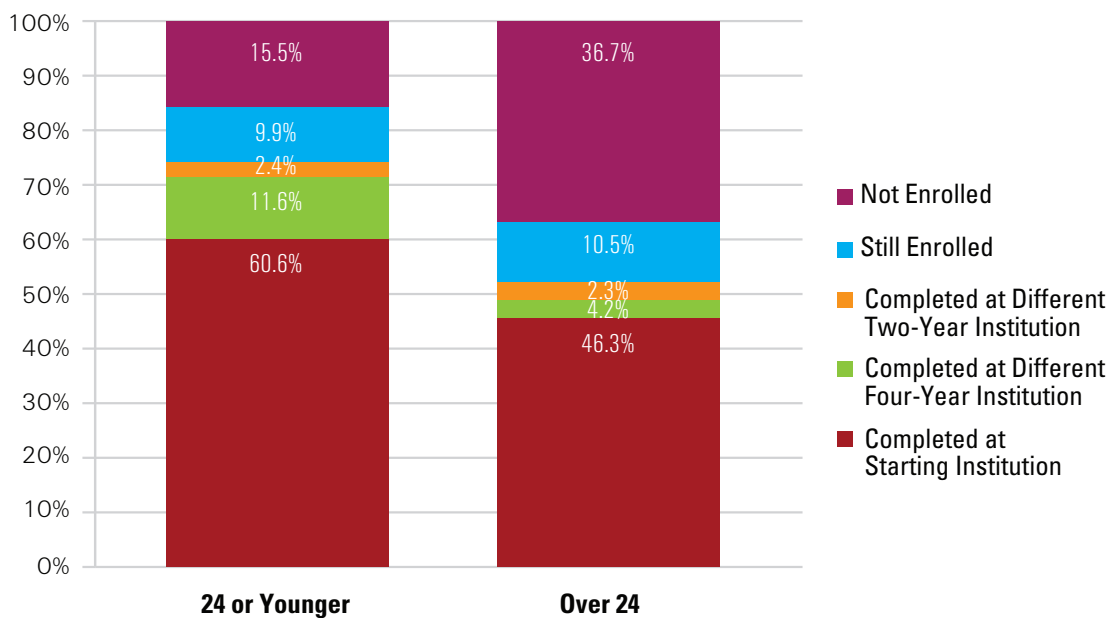


\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 18.

Figure 17 focuses on the six-year outcomes by enrollment intensity of students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions.

Completions at a different institution increased the total completion rates for students irrespective of enrollment intensity. This gain was especially notable for mixed enrollment students: completions at a different institution increased the total completion rate for this group by 20 percentage points. Only a small proportion of students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions completed at a two-year institution, but the mixed enrollment population had a higher rate completion at a two-year institution (4.5 percent) than full-time (1.3 percent) and part-time (3.7 percent) students.

**Figure 18. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Age at First Entry\***

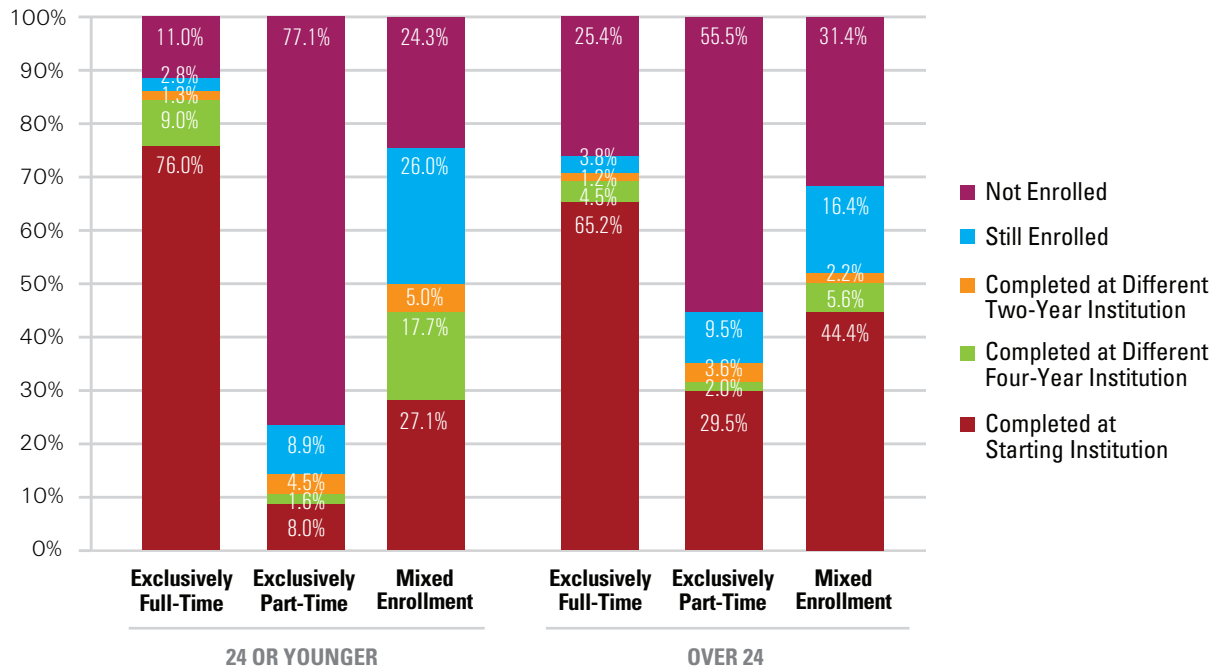


*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 19.  
Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.*

Figure 18 presents six-year college outcomes by age at first entry for students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions.

Among students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions, students age 24 or younger at first entry had a higher overall completion rate (74.6 percent) than students age 24 and over at first entry (52.8 percent). The younger group also had higher rates of first completion both at their starting institution (60.6 percent) and at a different four-year institution (11.6 percent) than the older group (46.3 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively). While similar percentages of students were still enrolled by the end of the study period in both the younger and the older age groups (9.9 percent and 10.5 percent, respectively), 36.7 percent of students in the older group stopped out by the end of the study period, more than twice the rate of the younger group (15.5 percent).

**Figure 19. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity\***



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 20.  
 Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.

Figure 19 further disaggregates the six-year outcomes of four-year private nonprofit starters by enrollment intensity within each age group.

Full-time students age 24 or younger at first entry had a higher overall first completion rate compared to full-time students over age 24 at first entry (86.3 percent and 70.9 percent, respectively). The rate of first completion at the starting institution was also higher for younger full-time students, with three-quarters of the younger full-time students completing at their starting institution and a little less than two-thirds of their older full-time counterparts doing so. First completions at institutions different from their starting institution were highest among younger mixed enrollment students, resulting in a gain of 22 percentage points for this group.

The comparisons between the older and the younger groups showed some interesting patterns, particularly within the mixed enrollment and part-time enrollment groups. Specifically, older students with mixed enrollment showed a higher rate of first completion at their starting institutions (44.4 percent) than younger students with mixed enrollment (27.1 percent). However, older mixed enrollment students showed a lower completion rate at a different institution (7.8 percent) than their younger mixed enrollment counterparts (22.7 percent). Older mixed enrollment students also persisted (without completion) at a lower rate (16.4 percent) than their younger mixed enrollment counterparts (26 percent), leaving a higher stop-out rate for the older group than for the younger group (31.4 percent and 24.3 percent, respectively).

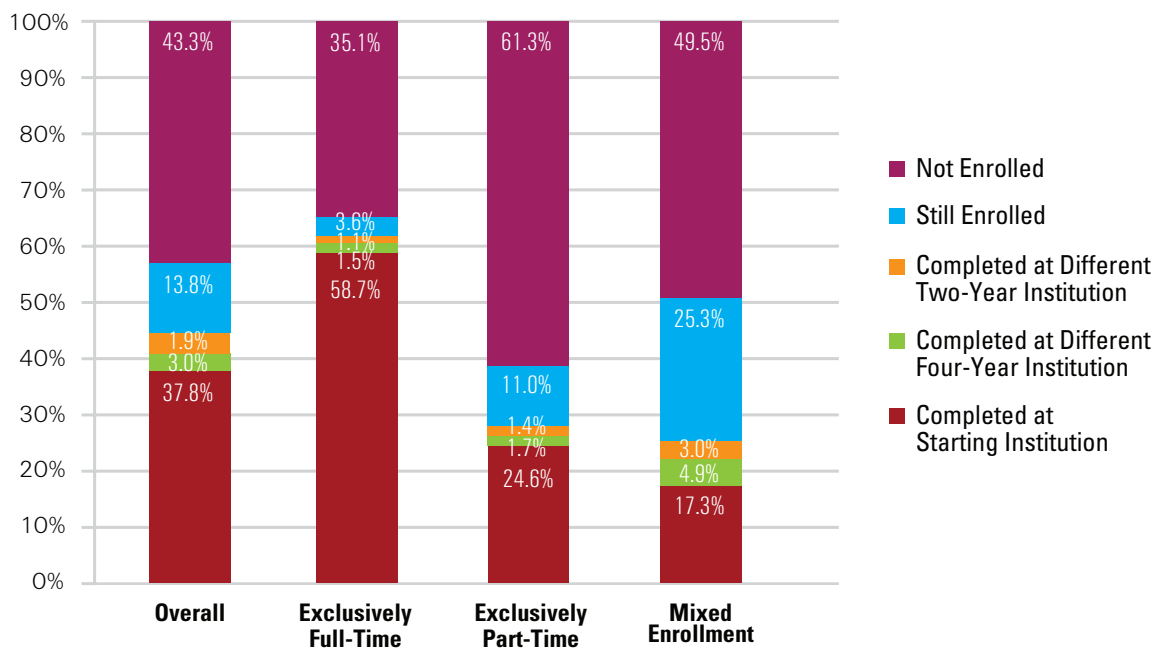
Finally, the difference in completion rates between the younger part-time students and the older part-time students was perhaps the most intriguing phenomenon. A little less than a quarter of exclusively part-time students age 24 or younger at first entry (24 percent total) either completed (14.1 percent, as shown in the figure) or were still enrolled (8.9 percent) by the end of the study period. In contrast, fully 44.6 percent of the exclusively part-time students over age 24 at first entry showed similar outcomes: 35.1 percent completed and 9.5 percent were still enrolled at the end of the study period.

These results point to the importance of institutional retention policies and practices that target the distinct needs and circumstances of traditional-age students and adult learners, especially those students in both age groups who start as part-time enrollees or shift to part-time enrollment during the course of their college experience.

## STUDENTS WHO STARTED AT FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS

We next examine the six-year college outcomes for students who started at four-year private for-profit institutions. Similar to the results presented in the previous sections, these results were broken down by enrollment intensity, age group, and the category combining both.

**Figure 20. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Enrollment Intensity\* (N=52,611)**

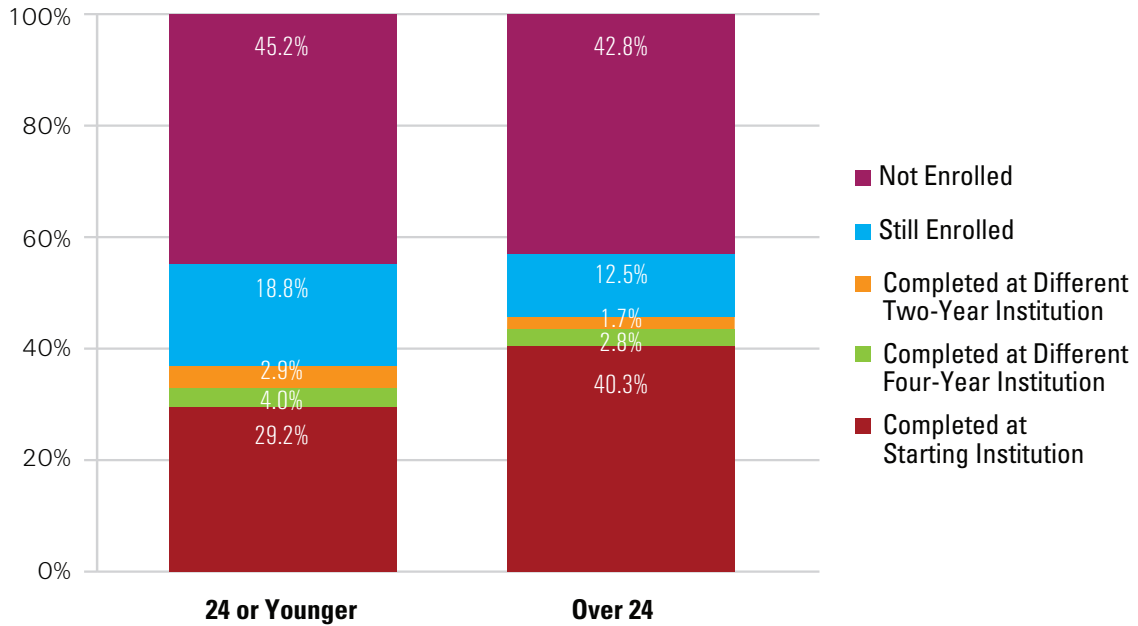


\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 21.

As previously shown in Figure 6, Figure 20 shows that students who started at four-year private for-profit institutions had the lowest completion rates — 37.8 percent at the starting institution and 5.1 percent at a different institution — compared to students who started at other four-year institutions. The gain from completions elsewhere was also smaller for students who started at four-year private for-profit institutions than for students who started at other four-year institutions. Among students who enrolled exclusively full time, 58.7 percent completed at their starting institution, with only 2.6 percent of additional first completions at a different institution.

Although the stop-out risk was the highest for part-time students (61.3 percent), these students actually had a higher overall completion rate (27.7 percent) and a higher completion rate at their starting institution (24.6 percent) compared to mixed enrollment students (25.2 percent overall completion rate including 17.3 percent completion at the starting institution).

**Figure 21. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Age at First Entry\***

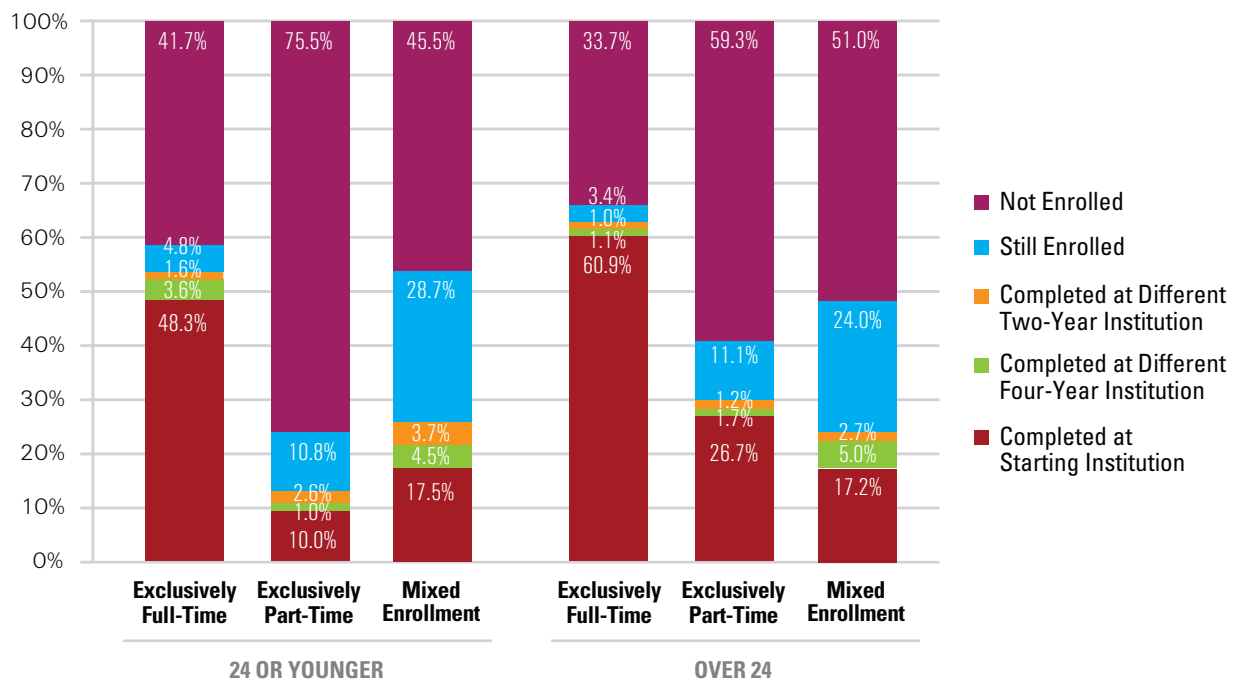


*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 22.  
Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.*

Further investigation of six-year outcomes by age group, as shown in Figure 21, reveals patterns among students who started at four-year private for-profit institutions that are very different from those we have observed for other institution types. Students in the older group who started at four-year private for-profit institutions had a higher completion rate overall and a higher completion rate at their starting institution compared to students in the younger group who started at these institutions. The older group also exhibited a slightly lower risk of stopping out (42.8 percent) than their younger counterparts (45.2 percent). It is important to note, however, that a large majority, more than 80 percent, of four-year private for-profit enrollees were over age 24 at first entry. Thus, findings related to this sector may mainly reflect patterns followed by older students who started at four-year private for-profit institutions.



**Figure 22. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity\***



\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 23.  
 Note: Students with birthdate missing were excluded from the above figure.

When these outcome patterns are broken down further by enrollment intensity within each age group, they show that both exclusively full-time and exclusively part-time students from the older group had higher rates of overall completion and of completion at their starting institution compared to their counterparts from the younger group (see Figure 22). Specifically, 60.9 percent of full-time students over age 24 at first entry completed at their starting institution, while this rate was 48.3 percent for full-time students age 24 or younger at first entry. Of the older group who enrolled exclusively part time, more than a quarter completed at their starting institution (26.7 percent), while only 10 percent of the younger part-time group did so. The results for part-time students are consistent with our observation at other institution types, suggesting that older students might be better at balancing the demands of school, work, and family.

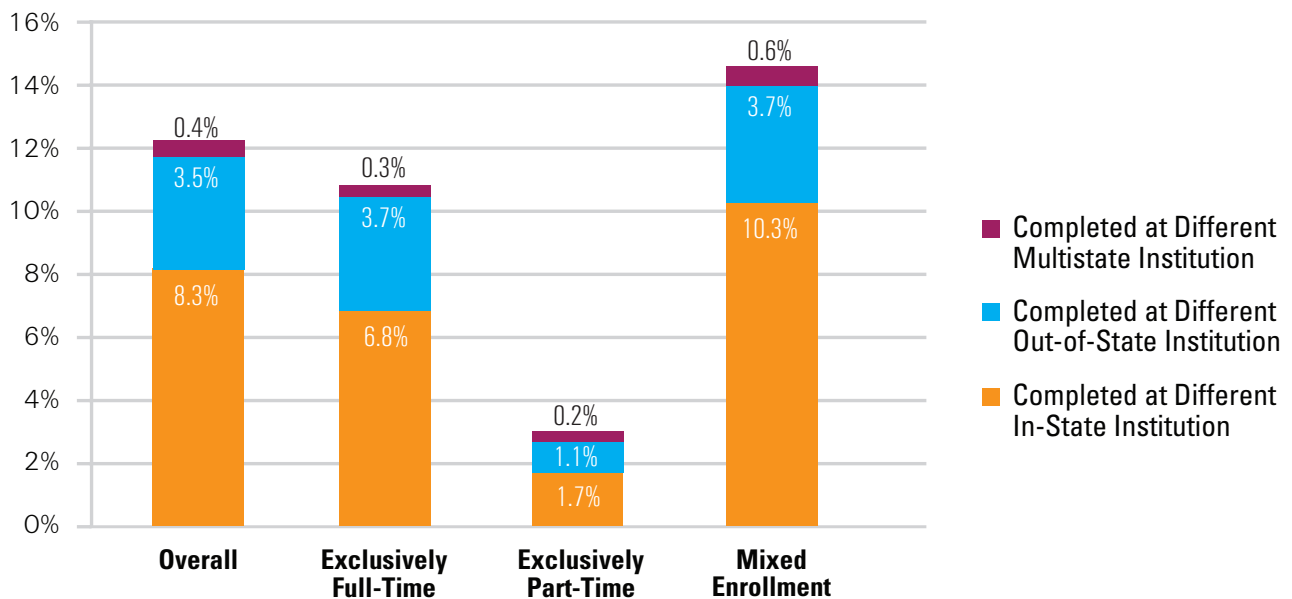
Mixed enrollment students in two age groups showed similar patterns in their completion outcomes but differed slightly in their proportions of students still enrolled, with the younger group showing a higher percentage of still enrolled (without completion) by the end of the study period (28.7 percent vs. 24 percent).

# COMPLETION ACROSS STATE LINES

Previous studies of college student completion, restricted by the data available either within institutions or within state data systems, have focused primarily on completion at the starting institution or within system or state boundaries. The national coverage of enrollments and degrees provided in Clearinghouse data enables us to offer policymakers and researchers a national view of completion not available in studies using other data sources. Drawing on this resource, we examine patterns of completion across state lines in this section.

For students who completed a degree or certificate at institutions different from their starting institution, Figures 23 through 25 show the patterns of first completions across state lines, by students' age group, enrollment intensity, and the category combining both. For the purpose of this analysis, institutions that report enrollments to the Clearinghouse from a central office that covers a system of campuses residing in more than one state ("multistate institutions") are excluded from the starting cohort, since we have no way of identifying in which state the students began. (Results for students who started at multistate institutions are included separately in Appendix C, Tables 27-29.)

**Figure 23. Completions at Different Institutions Across State Lines by Enrollment Intensity\***



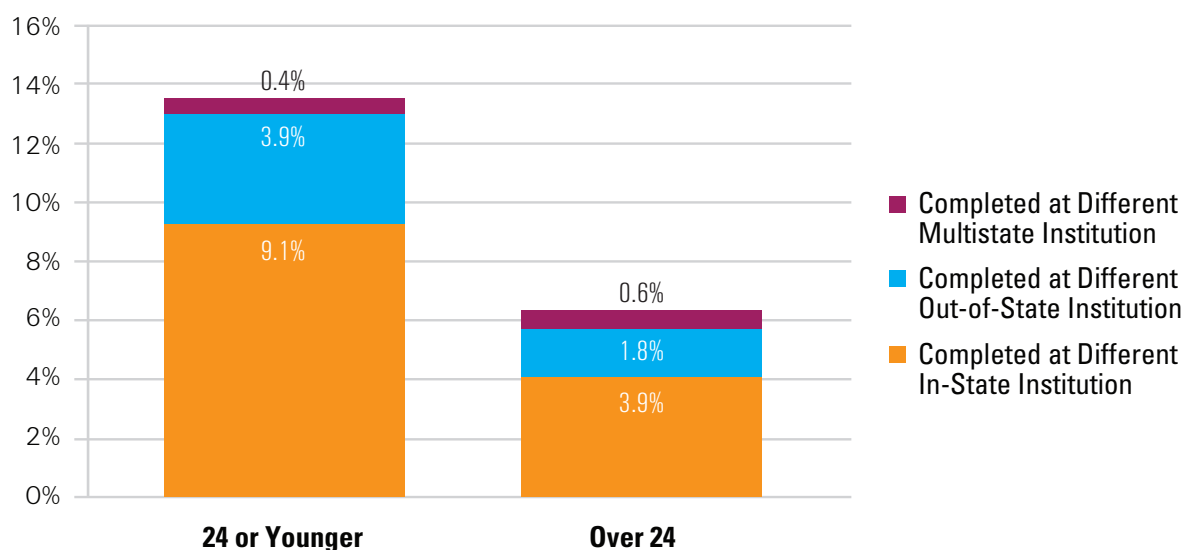
\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 24.

Note: Students who started at a multistate institution were excluded from the above figure.

Overall, 12.2 percent of all students completed at institutions other than their starting institution, with 8.3 percent doing so in the same state where they began and 3.5 percent in a different state. The remaining 0.4 percent completed at a multistate institution where the actual location of the student could not be determined (see Figure 23).<sup>3</sup>

Thus, among students who completed at an institution different from where they started, receiving the first credential in a different state was quite common. More than one-third of the full-time students completing at a different institution did so in a different state (3.7 percent out of 10.8 percent). About one-third of part-time students who completed at a different institution and about a quarter of mixed enrollment students who completed at a different institution did so at an out-of-state institution (1.1 percent out of 3 percent and 3.7 percent out of 14.6 percent, respectively).

**Figure 24. Completions at Different Institutions Across State Lines by Age at First Entry\***

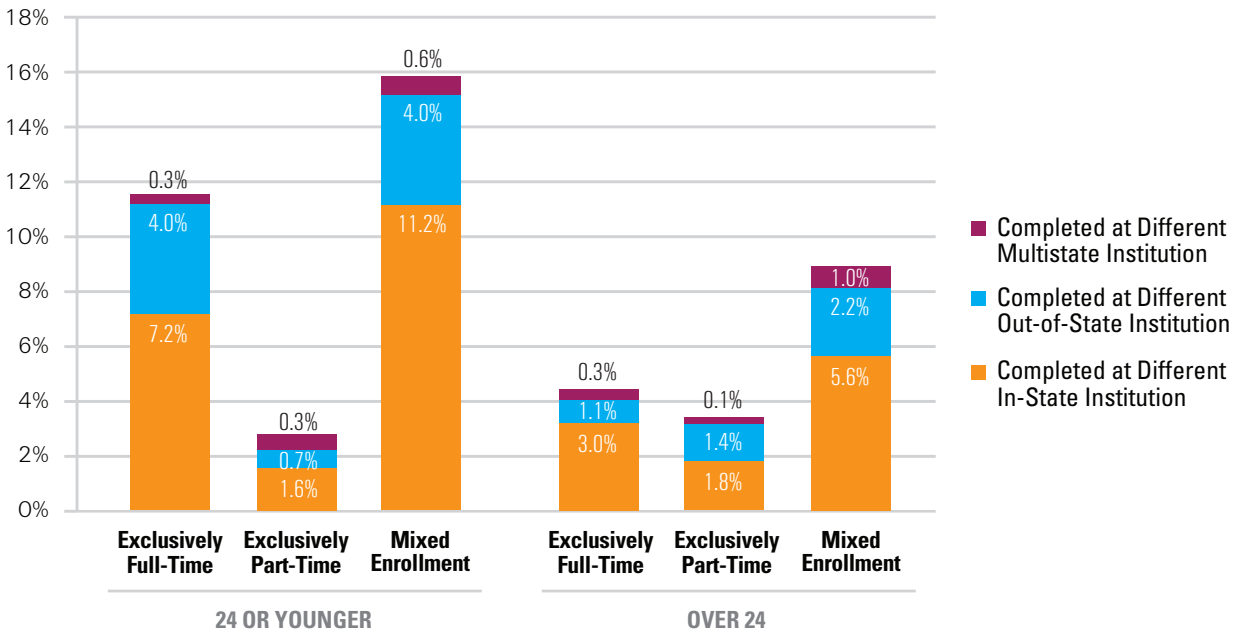


*\*This figure is based on data shown in Table 25.  
Note: Students who started at a multistate institution were excluded from the above figure.*

Further results on completion at institutions other than students' starting institution broken out by age group are shown in Figure 24. Among those who completed at a different institution, the younger group of students showed higher rates of completion at a different in-state institution (9.1 percent) and at a different out-of-state institution (3.9 percent) compared to the older group of students (3.9 percent and 1.8 percent for different in-state and different out-of-state institutions, respectively). These results may suggest that older students were perhaps more restricted by institutional or geographic boundaries, perhaps due to family or work obligations. It is important to keep in mind, however, that completion across institutions and across state lines does not necessarily represent the actual mobility of students, as many students may change institutions without completing a degree or certificate.

<sup>3</sup> To place this small proportion in further context, we should note additionally that many students who enrolled in multistate institutions did so online and/or from their original home state.

**Figure 25. Completions at Different Institutions Across State Lines by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity\***



*This figure is based on data shown in Table 26.  
Note: Students who started at a multistate institution were excluded from the above figure.*

The patterns of first completion across state lines disaggregated by enrollment intensity showed similarities and differences between the two age groups (see Figure 25). Full-time and mixed enrollment students age 24 or younger at first entry completed at out-of-state institutions at the same rate (4 percent for both full-time and mixed enrollment students). In both age groups, mixed enrollment students obtained their first degree or credential at out-of-state institutions at a higher rate than their exclusively full-time or part-time counterparts. For students enrolled exclusively full time and those with mixed enrollment, higher percentages of students in the younger group received their first credential out of state, compared to older students sharing the same enrollment intensity. It is important to note, however, that these comparisons should be understood in the context of findings, presented earlier in this report, showing higher completion rates overall among students age 24 or younger.

Overall, these results show that among students who earned a degree or certificate at a different institution, many, regardless of age or enrollment intensity, also changed states when changing institutions. About one-quarter of first completions at a different institution occurred at an out-of-state institution, with the exception of full-time students in the younger group and part-time students in the older group. For those two remaining categories — full-time students in the younger group and part-time students in the older group — out-of-state completions represented even larger proportions of first completions at a different institution: 34.8 percent of exclusively full-time students age 24 or younger at first entry who later completed at an institution different from their starting institution attained their credential out of state; an even greater percentage (42.4 percent) of exclusively part-time students over age 24 at first entry who completed at a different institution completed at an out-of-state institution.

Taken together, these findings point to ways in which student pathways differ across types of starting institutions as well as by students' age at first entry and enrollment intensity. This report highlights differences in six-year outcomes of students, centering on the most widely used measure of success for both students and colleges — college completion. By

disaggregating results by students' age at first entry and by enrollment intensity throughout the study period, this study sheds light on the outcomes for students often excluded from relevant policy discussions: students who are older and those who follow nontraditional postsecondary education pathways. Further, the national coverage of Clearinghouse data used for this study makes it possible to capture student mobility and completion beyond institutional boundaries and across state lines. These findings have the potential to contribute to ongoing discussions of institutional accountability, emerging policy initiatives to use more nuanced and targeted measures of student success, and institutional practices aiming at providing a supportive environment for all students.

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Today's students follow complex enrollment pathways in pursuit of a postsecondary education. As previous studies in the Signature Report series have demonstrated, measuring success outcomes at students' starting institution alone captures only part of the postsecondary experience of many students. Results presented in the first Signature Report, *National Postsecondary Enrollment Trends: Before, During, and After the Great Recession* (Hossler et al., 2011), for example, showed that rates of student persistence (continued enrollment at any U.S. institution) were considerably higher than rates of retention (continued enrollment at the same institution) in almost all institutional categories, with gaps between these two measures ranging from just under 10 to over 18 percentage points. In its second Signature Report, *Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Pre-Degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions* (Hossler et al., 2012a), the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that one-third of all first-time students transferred to or enrolled at a different institution at least once within five years after their initial enrollment and that more than a quarter of student transfers were across state lines. Extending that research, this new Signature Report examines a key student success outcome aligned with the national college attainment goals: first completion rates, encompassing postsecondary credentials of all levels and types and accounting not just for students who finish at their starting institution but also for those who finish at any other institution nationwide. For this study, we followed students to different institutions and across state lines to examine how tracking students beyond their starting institution changes the completion rate picture. In this report, our goal is twofold: first, to incorporate the complexity of students' enrollment behaviors into the overall picture of outcomes measures and, second, to highlight the outcomes of student groups that research and policies often overlook: nontraditional-age, part-time, and mixed enrollment students. We discuss our key findings and their implications below.

## COMPREHENSIVE COMPLETION RATES BEYOND THOSE AT THE STARTING INSTITUTION

Accounting for completions beyond the starting institution raises the overall six-year completion rate above the halfway point, from 42 percent to 54 percent. This finding shows that students are doing a better job of pursuing their educational goals than our existing institution-focused metrics are giving them credit. These results also demonstrate that the multiple institutions serving mobile students are also assisting them in achieving their educational goals. The discussions that follow help point the way to policies that recognize and promote such student success while also crediting the institutions that contribute to it.

Counting students who graduated not at their starting institution but elsewhere increased the completion rate for every institution type and student subgroup we studied. The increases ranged from 4 percentage points for two-year private for-profit institutions to 13 percentage points for four-year private nonprofit institutions. In addition, completion rates for mixed enrollment students, those who attended both full and part time during the six years, increased by about 15 percentage points, followed by an 11-percentage-point increase for exclusively full-time students and a 3-percentage-point increase for exclusively part-time students. The 12-percentage-point increase in completion rates over the same-institution graduation rates due to degrees earned elsewhere takes on even greater importance when considered as a percentage of all degree completions by students in the starting cohort. Overall, more than one in five students who completed a degree (22.4 percent) did so not at their starting institution but somewhere else. That figure is closer to one in four (23.6 percent) for traditional-age students and more than one in three (34.1 percent) for students who started at two-year public institutions. Clearly, existing measures of institutional or student success that do not count one-fifth to one-third of completions are inadequate for facilitating either accountability or improvement efforts.

It is only by tracking individual students across institutions and states, as the Clearinghouse data enable, that broader measures of student outcomes become possible. These measures will help policymaking focus on persistence to graduation beyond the starting institution and will broaden institutional accountability to include all students, not just those on a traditional postsecondary path.

## COMPLETION RATES FOR ADULT LEARNERS

The completion rate gains from completions elsewhere than the starting institution were greater for students age 24 or younger at first entry into college than they were for students over age 24 at first entry (13 percentage points and 6 percentage points, respectively). While adding completions beyond the starting institution increased the completion rate for students over age 24 at first entry, a large gap remained between the completion rates of younger and older students, with the latter group having a much lower overall six-year completion rate (56.8 percent vs. 42.1 percent, respectively). Furthermore, by the end of the study period, 44.4 percent of the older students were not enrolled anywhere, compared to 26.4 percent of the younger students. This suggests that a low completion rate is not simply a matter of taking a longer time to complete, but rather that there is a serious issue of nonpersistence to graduation among students over age 24. Disaggregating data by age and enrollment intensity demonstrated that exclusively part-time students over age 24 at first entry actually showed a higher completion rate than traditional age part-timers did. Thus, the overall completion rates of older students were largely driven by the completions of the full-time students among them. This clearly indicates that institutions should tailor their efforts for improving student outcomes to the needs of different types of students and should provide specific services for adult students, especially full-time adult learners who may find it challenging to balance a full course-load with work and/or family responsibilities.

Institution's policies and organizational structures clearly have particular effects on older students. Compared to those of traditional-age students, the success rates of adult learners varied greatly depending on the type of institution they attended. At four-year private nonprofit institutions, the completion rate for older students was 22 percentage points lower than it was for traditional-age students, and at four-year public institutions, that gap was 18.5 percentage points. Notably, however, at two-year public institutions, the completion rates were similar for these two age groups: 35.7 percent for older students and 36.4 percent for younger students. At four-year private for-profit institutions, the completion rates of older students was actually higher, by 8.9 percentage points. These findings suggest that the different postsecondary sectors can learn from one another and develop academic programs and support systems that enhance student success. Institutions in each of these sectors may need to adjust their strategies for supporting the success of adult learners so as to address the particular patterns and gaps emerging among students.

## DEFINING ENROLLMENT INTENSITY

### **Mixed Enrollment Students**

This study's more nuanced and comprehensive definition of enrollment intensity contributes to our understanding of the relationship between students' enrollment status and student outcomes. Most studies define enrollees as full-time or part-time students based on the enrollment intensity shown in their first term alone. While some students maintain the same enrollment status throughout their postsecondary career, many of today's students change from full time to part time, or vice versa, from term to term throughout their postsecondary career. For this study, we categorized this latter



group as mixed enrollment students, a group that comprised more than half of the study's cohort (51.3 percent). Mixed enrollment students are a large group, we found, and their six-year outcomes showed distinctive patterns compared to the outcomes of exclusively full-time and exclusively part-time students. The outcomes of mixed enrollment students are clearly misrepresented, however, by traditional measures. This is especially true for students who first entered at full-time status but later changed to part-time status. Two-thirds of the mixed enrollment students in this study started out full-time; many graduation studies, using existing institution-focused definitions, would have classified them as full-time students. Decreased enrollment intensity increases students' expected time to graduation, but traditional measures cannot reflect this. By holding mixed enrollment students to a full-time standard, these measures penalize both the students and the institutions that serve them. Our analysis also showed that, compared to exclusively full-time and exclusively part-time students, a larger proportion of mixed enrollment students completed at an institution other than their starting institution; traditional graduation metrics that focus on starting institutions would have counted these students as nonpersisters. This finding, perhaps one of the most important in this report, merits more attention from both academic researchers as well as institutional and public policymakers. It is important that researchers and policymakers understand the extent to which current conventions of categorizing enrollment patterns distort the success outcomes results of both part-time and full-time students in measures that characterize students' enrollment intensity only by their first-term status.

### **Exclusively Part-Time Students**

Examining the outcomes of mixed enrollment students separately leads to a better understanding also of the outcomes of part-time students. The low completion rates of part-time students are better understood by recognizing that with exclusively part-time enrollment, a six-year period does not typically allow the student enough time to complete a four-year degree. By the same token, however, one would expect a large share of these students to be still enrolled at the end of our study period, and yet this was not the case. Instead, we found that 59 percent of part-time students at four-year private nonprofit institutions, and 70 percent at four-year public and two-year public institutions, had either dropped out or stopped out, showing no enrollments in the final year of the study. Additional insights come from disaggregating exclusively part-time students within the adult and traditional-age students. The category of exclusively part-time enrollees is the only one in which older students have a higher completion rate than traditional age students, which suggests that enrolling exclusively part time is associated with completion risks for traditional-age students. Some of these students may eventually return to complete at a later date, but there is likely more that institutions can do to keep such students on track for steadier progress toward a degree.

## **FOUR-YEAR COMPLETIONS FOR FIRST-TIME STUDENTS WHO STARTED AT TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

In addition to examining the overall completion rates of students who started at two-year public institutions, we looked at the completions among these students at four-year institutions, giving particular attention to whether they received their four-year degree with or without first earning a credential at a two-year institution. Overall, 15 percent of two-year starters completed a degree at a four-year institution by the end of the study period, and nearly two-thirds of them (63 percent, or 9 percent of the full cohort that started at two-year public institutions) did so without first obtaining a two-year degree. In other words, these students transferred to a four-year institution without receiving any credential from their starting (or from any other) two-year institution. Traditional graduation rate measures that focus only on completions at the starting institution do not account for this type of outcome. This means that

community colleges do not receive any credit for the two-thirds of their students who go on to complete a four-year degree.

In our second Signature Report, *Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Pre-Degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions* (Hossler et al., 2012), we reported that about 26 percent of the starting two-year cohort transferred to a four-year institution within five years — six percent of them having obtained a two-year credential and 20 percent of them without a two-year credential. The findings from this report as well as our earlier one provide evidence that, although many state policies encourage students to obtain a degree at two-year public institutions and then to transfer to a four-year institution, in reality, many students make the transfer without a two-year credential. In our previous report, the rate of transfer to a four-year institution without a two-year degree was three times that of the post-degree transfers. The same pattern did not hold with completions, however. In other words, our findings suggest that while transferring to a four-year institution with a two-year degree is a good pathway to a degree from a four-year institution, transferring pre-degree is not, even though the latter is more common. This demonstrates the relevance of enacting policies that encourage transfer with an associate’s degree, but it also shows the need for other policies that support students who prefer or need to do otherwise. Policies ensuring the seamless transfer of credits and the student’s transition to a new institution are needed. While state policies can do much to address the former, the latter also requires the active involvement of four-year institutions.

## OUT-OF-STATE COMPLETIONS

The second Signature Report shed light on the prevalence of out-of-state transfers by showing that over a quarter of all transfers, or 9 percent of the starting cohort, crossed state lines to continue their postsecondary education at a different institution. Extending that earlier finding, this study continued tracking students after they transferred and we found that out of the full starting cohort, 3.5 percent received a degree in a state different from where they started. Thus, out-of-state completions represent about 6.5 percent of all completions, and over a quarter (28.7 percent) of all students who completed a degree somewhere other than at their starting institution. The completion outcomes for these students are typically out of the range, not only of institution-based graduation rate measures but also of state longitudinal databases that track students among different institutions only within a single state. Our findings speak to the value of using multiple sources of information, including data such as those from the National Student Clearinghouse, when studying student enrollment outcomes. Combined the findings on student mobility from the previous report and completion rates from this report demonstrate that while many students cross state lines to continue their postsecondary education, not many of them graduate out of state (some of these students may return to their original state and complete their degree at their starting institution or another institution). One possible reason for the low completion rate of transfers across state lines could be that state transfer and articulation agreements focus almost exclusively on in-state transfers, missing the opportunity to support the completions of cross-state transfers. Armed with more complete data on transfer and completion phenomena for all types of students, policymakers can begin to address these challenges.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICYMAKING

Our findings support the call to develop new student outcomes measures that capture the complex enrollment behaviors of today’s students — outcomes measures that incorporate both the student perspective and the institutional perspective for enhancing college completion rates. Such an approach will prevent misclassifying as failures those students who persist or graduate at an institution different

from their starting institution, and also will credit institutions for serving the needs of students who transfer or who enroll part time. This balanced approach will also mean enacting public policies that support student persistence to graduation anywhere in the postsecondary education system.

In this new environment, institutions will be accountable for the success outcomes not only of their full-time students but also of their part-time students as well as of students who change their enrollment status during their postsecondary career. While maintaining funding formulas that provide incentives for institutions to retain and graduate their students, states should also ensure that such incentives raise institutions' accountability for retaining and graduating part-time and mixed enrollment students as well as adult learners, given the distinctive nature and pathways of these groups of students.

The pressing need for new measures of student success outcomes is widely acknowledged. Less common — and yet critical to developing such measures — is a truly student-level perspective of the complexity of enrollment behaviors currently displayed throughout the postsecondary education system nationwide. This report demonstrates the power of an existing high-coverage, reliable national student-level data to inform that perspective.

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## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

This report describes six-year college student success outcomes, focusing primarily on degree and certificate completion of a cohort of first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who started their postsecondary education at U.S. colleges and universities in the fall of 2006. Six-digit distinct OPE-ID codes were used to identify postsecondary education institutions. The study follows this cohort for six years, through May 31, 2012. The results presented in the report center on student outcomes over the six-year span, including completion (i.e., receipt of any postsecondary credential by the end of the study period), persistence (i.e., having enrollment records at any postsecondary institution during the last year of the study period), or stop-out without completion (i.e., having no enrollment records at any postsecondary institution during the last year of the study period). The report mainly focuses on students' first completion, with further distinctions drawn between completions awarded at the institution where a student first enrolled (his or her starting institution) and those awarded at an institution other than the starting institution. For students who started at a two-year public institution, this report also presents an overview of their completions at a four-year institution, either as a first completion (i.e., those who completed a four-year degree without having first earned a credential at a two-year institution<sup>1</sup>) or as a subsequent degree after a first completion awarded in the two-year sector. In addition to results on degree and certificate completion rates by enrollment intensity, age group, and starting institution type, the report includes results on completion across state lines, and for students who started at multistate institutions.

## NATIONAL COVERAGE OF THE DATA

The National Student Clearinghouse® (the Clearinghouse) is a unique and trusted source for higher education enrollment and degree verification. Since its creation in 1993, the participation of institutions nationwide in Clearinghouse data-collection programs has steadily increased. Currently, Clearinghouse data include more than 3,400 colleges and 94 percent of U.S. college enrollments. The Clearinghouse has a nearly 20-year track record of providing automated student enrollment and degree verifications. Due to the Clearinghouse's unique student-level record approach to data collection in its StudentTracker<sup>SM</sup> service, the Clearinghouse database provides opportunities for robust analysis not afforded by the more commonly used institution-level national databases.

The enrollment data used in this report provide an unduplicated headcount for the fall 2006 first-time-in-college student cohort. Clearinghouse data track enrollments nationally and are not limited by institutional and state boundaries. Moreover, because this database is comprised of student-level data, researchers can use it to link concurrent as well as consecutive enrollments of individual students at multiple institutions — a capability that distinguishes the Clearinghouse database from national databases built with institution-level data. For instance, in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) — one of the most widely used national data sets in postsecondary education research — concurrent enrollments remain unlinked and, therefore, are counted as representing separate individuals.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, "two-year institution" is used broadly to designate institutions offering both associate's degrees and less-than-two-year degrees and certificates.

## COHORT IDENTIFICATION, DATA CUT, AND DEFINITIONS

Focusing on the cohort of first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who started their postsecondary studies at U.S. colleges and universities in the fall of 2006, this report examines completion over a span of six years through May 31, 2012. In order not to exclude or misrepresent the outcomes of students whose postsecondary pathways included enrollment in college preparatory summer study, the report also includes students who started their studies in the summer of 2006 (i.e., May 1–August 31, 2006). Furthermore, to limit the cohort to first-time undergraduate students only, the study uses data from the Clearinghouse’s StudentTracker and DegreeVerify<sup>SM</sup> services to confirm that students included in the study (1) showed no previous college enrollment in the four years prior to May 31, 2006 and (2) had not previously completed a college degree.

In defining the study cohort, it was necessary to identify a coherent set of first-enrollment records that would as closely as possible represent a starting point for the fall 2006 cohort of first-time-in-college students. With this goal in mind, the researchers excluded enrollment records that were either (1) not clearly interpretable within the study’s framework and data limitations or (2) inconsistent with the experiences of first-time college enrollment that were the focus of the analysis. Students who showed concurrent enrollments (defined in this step as enrollments overlapping by at least one day) in the fall 2006 term were therefore excluded from the study, as were students who showed no enrollment lasting longer than 21 days in fall 2006. Also excluded were students who had any enrollment terms shorter than one day or longer than 365 days, who first enrolled in postsecondary study outside the U.S. or its territories (e.g., Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands), or who started at non-IPEDS institutions.

Because our outcome of interest was completion, we sought to focus analyses on degree-seeking students only. Consequently, we attempted to exclude non-degree-seeking, casual course takers from the cohort. For students who first enrolled in four-year institutions, non-degree-seeking students were defined as those who had only one enrollment record, with intensity of less than half time. Students who started at two-year institutions were excluded as non-degree-seeking students if they failed to meet at least one of the following criteria: (1) one or more full-time enrollment before August 15, 2007; or (2) two enrollment terms with half-time status or more before December 31, 2007<sup>2</sup>. Finally, we excluded students whose last enrollment record was in any of the following institutional contexts: a two-year private nonprofit institution in California or Georgia or a two-year private for-profit institution in Kentucky, Nebraska, New York, or Ohio<sup>3</sup>. These students were excluded because of the low coverage for these institution types within these states, combined with high rates of stop-out and undercoverage for these institutions, or with changes of institution type within the study period. Because of these limitations, the available data did not describe these students’ pathways well enough to be used as bases for weights (see below more on weights).

In summary, the study cohort included students who fulfilled all of the following conditions:

1. Enrolled in a Title IV institution in fall 2006 (defined as any term with a start date between August 15 and October 31, 2006, inclusive);
2. Did not have a previous enrollment record, as shown in StudentTracker, between June 1, 2002, and May 31, 2006;
3. Did not receive any degree or certificate from a postsecondary institution prior to the first day of enrollment in fall 2006, according to Clearinghouse data;

<sup>2</sup> We excluded 39,423 students who began at two-year institutions, as non-degree-seeking students as a result.

<sup>3</sup> A total of 1,884 students were excluded from the degree-seeking cohort following this criterion.

4. Enrolled at just one institution in fall 2006 (i.e., showed no overlapping multiple enrollments August 15-October 31, 2006);
5. Enrolled for at least one term that was longer than 21 days and that started between August 15 and October 31, 2006;
6. Showed no enrollment terms of implausible length; that is, either longer than 365 days or shorter than one day throughout the study period;
7. Had at least one legitimate enrollment status throughout the study period; that is, enrolled for at least one term with full-time, part-time (i.e. half-time or less than half-time), or withdrawal status<sup>4</sup>;
8. Showed intent to seek a degree or certificate. That is:
  - a. For students who started at four-year institutions, enrolled at least one term with an intensity of half time or higher.
  - b. For students who started at two-year institutions, either:
    - i. Enrolled full time for at least one term before August 15, 2007, or
    - ii. Enrolled at least half time for any two terms before December 31, 2007;
9. Did not show a last enrollment record in any of the following contexts, identified above as having a combination of low coverage and high rates of stop-out:
  - a. Two-year private nonprofit institutions in California,
  - b. Two-year private nonprofit institutions in Georgia,
  - c. Two-year private for-profit institutions in Kentucky,
  - d. Two-year private for-profit institutions in Nebraska,
  - e. Two-year private for-profit institutions in New York, or
  - f. Two-year private for-profit institutions in Ohio.

## ENROLLMENT INTENSITY

For this report, enrollment intensity is classified as exclusively full time throughout the study period, exclusively part time throughout the study period, or mixed enrollment (including both full-time and part-time enrollments), based on students' enrollments across all terms through the first completion or, for noncompleters, through the entire study period. In establishing students' enrollment intensity in this way, enrollments during summer terms (defined as terms with both the start date and the end date falling between May 1 and August 31, 2006) and short terms (defined as terms lasting less than 21 days) were excluded from consideration.

For terms in which a student showed concurrent enrollment records (i.e., records that overlapped by 30 days or more), the two highest-intensity enrollments were considered. For example, a student concurrently enrolled half time at two institutions was categorized as enrolled full time for that term. Overall, for each term under consideration (i.e., all terms except summer terms and short terms – less than 21 days – up through the first completion, or, if no completion, throughout the entire study period), the “exclusively full-time enrollment” designation was assigned to students whose enrollment

<sup>4</sup> The Clearinghouse receives enrollment status data as full-time, half-time, less-than-half-time, withdrawal, or other statuses from its participating institutions.

showed one of three situations: (1) the enrollment record showed exclusively full-time enrollment for all terms; or (2) for terms with concurrent enrollments, the two highest-intensity enrollment records included at least one full-time enrollment; or (3) for terms with concurrent enrollments, the two highest-intensity enrollment records both reflected half-time enrollment.

The “part-time enrollment” designation was assigned to students whose enrollment for each term under consideration showed one of the two following situations: (1) the enrollment record showed exclusively half-time or less than half-time enrollment; or (2) for terms with concurrent enrollments, the two highest-intensity enrollment records included some combination of half-time and less than half-time enrollments, but no full-time enrollment, and no more than one half-time enrollment.

The category of mixed enrollment was applied to students who showed a combination of full-time and part-time enrollments across the terms under consideration. Finally, students who showed records indicating withdrawal but no full-time or part-time enrollments were randomly assigned to an enrollment intensity category.

## AGE GROUP

This report focuses on two age groups, “24 years old or younger” and “over 24 years old.” Students whose 24th birthday fell before December 31, 2006, were placed in the “over 24 years old” group, while those who turned 24 on December 31, 2006, or later were placed in the “24 years old or younger” group.

## CONCURRENT COMPLETION

For this report, we examined completion by first-time students at either two-year or four-year institutions. We defined completion as having obtained a degree or certificate at any institution within the six-year study period, i.e., by May 31, 2012. Clearinghouse data provide a unique headcount of U.S. college enrollments during each term, which allows for the tracking of individuals including those with concurrent completion. In preparing data for this report, a small number of individuals showed more than one completion awarded at multiple institutions on the same day. In these instances, a primary completion record was selected using decision rules specific to the sector of the student’s starting institution.

The first set of decision rules was applied to students with concurrent completions who started at a two-year institution:

1. **Concurrent Completions at Two Different Two-Year Institutions**
  - a. **Same over different:** Completions at the starting institution were selected over completions at other institutions.
  - b. **Random selection:** If the first decision rule did not result in a single completion record being selected, then a completion record was selected at random.
2. **Concurrent Completions at One Two-Year Institution and One Four-Year Institution**
  - a. If the two-year completion was at the two-year starting institution, then the two-year degree completion was considered the first completion and the four-year degree completion was considered a subsequent completion.

- b. If the two-year completion was at an institution different from the two-year starting institution, then the four-year degree completion was considered the first completion and outcome of interest.
3. **Concurrent Completions at Two or More Four-Year Institutions**  
**Random selection:** If a student started at a two-year institution but later completed at two or more four-year institutions concurrently, then a completion record was selected at random.

The second set of decision rules was applied to students who started at four-year institutions and later showed concurrent completion records:

1. **Same over different:** Completions at the starting institution were selected over completions at other institutions.
2. **Four-year over two-year:** If the first decision rule did not result in the selection of a single completion record, then completions at four-year institutions were selected over those at two-year institutions.<sup>5</sup>
3. **Random selection:** If neither of the first two decision rules resulted in the selection of a single completion record, then a completion record was selected at random.

## IMPUTATION OF MISSING DATA

The National Student Clearinghouse collects graduation information from its participating institutions via two data reporting services: Enrollment Reporting and DegreeVerify. Enrollment Reporting has higher data coverage rates, but includes only basic completion information such as graduation indicator and the date of graduation. For the fall 2006 cohort, Enrollment Reporting covered 89 percent of all the students in Title IV degree-granting institutions listed in IPEDS (including 93 percent of the students in public institutions, 87 percent in private nonprofits, and 53 percent in private for-profits). DegreeVerify includes enhanced information on completions, including degree title, major, level, and CIP code, but covered fewer enrollments in 2006, by about 10 percentage points. Institutions may participate either in Enrollment Reporting alone, or in both services. Completions data for this report included information drawn from either service. An analysis conducted by the Clearinghouse on the 2006 cohort found that graduation data for the institutions that participated in DegreeVerify were relatively more complete for some of the years covered in this study than those for institutions that participated only in Enrollment Reporting, biasing completion rates slightly downwards for institutional sectors with lower participation rates in DegreeVerify.

In order to correct for this bias, the Research Center conducted a randomized imputation procedure for missing graduation data among students at non-DegreeVerify institutions who were no longer enrolled, but for whom outcome data were missing (that is, for whom the institution had reported neither a graduation nor a withdrawal status in their Enrollment Reporting). This involved comparing the Enrollment Reporting and DegreeVerify records for institutions that participated in both services and estimating, for each institution type, the average percentage of students with missing outcomes in the enrollment data who had a reported graduation in the DegreeVerify data. We further specified these underreporting rates by taking into account student age and the academic year. We then used random assignment of graduation outcomes to students with missing data at the institutions that did not participate in DegreeVerify in order to match each institution's underreporting rate for each student age group and for every year of the study to the average rate for similar students at institutions of the same type that did participate in DegreeVerify.

<sup>5</sup> In theory, this decision rule might lead to underestimating the number of two-year completers who were shown to subsequently receive a four-year degree, but in reality, the rule did not affect the outcomes of any student.

This imputation was performed only for students with missing outcomes data at institutions that did not participate in DegreeVerify. It is based on the typical underreporting of graduation outcomes from similar institutions that participate in both Enrollment Reporting and DegreeVerify. The table below shows, for each institution type, the percentage of the starting cohort for whom graduation data were imputed:

Institution Type	Percentage of the Starting Cohort With an Imputed Completion
Two-Year Private For-Profit	0.23%
Two-Year Private Nonprofit	0.69%
Two-Year Public	0.72%
Four-Year Private For-Profit	0.21%
Four-Year Private Nonprofit	1.62%
Four-Year Public	0.59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.81%</b>

## WEIGHTING

The institutions participating in the Clearinghouse Enrollment Reporting service (i.e., providing the data coverage) is not 100 percent of all institutions for any individual year. Therefore, in order to account for possibilities of not capturing a student’s enrollment outcome due to noncoverage of Clearinghouse data, the analysis weights were calculated using 2011 coverage rate of the sector, control, and state of the institution where a student was enrolled for the last enrollment record. Last enrollment record was defined based on the first completion (for completers) or the last enrollment record either before stop-out (for students who had no enrollment records during the last year of the study) or before the end of the study period (for persisters). For students who completed a degree at the starting institution or were still enrolled at the starting institution by the end of the study period, a weight=1 was applied. For all other students, two weights were created and applied in this study:

1. For students who completed a degree or were still enrolled at a different institution by the end of the study period, a “transfer” weight was applied. The transfer weight used was an over-weight based on the coverage of the sector, control, and state of the institution at which the student was enrolled for the last enrollment record, as calculated by the formula provided below:

$$= \frac{\text{Transfer Counts} + \left[ \text{Missing Counts} * \text{Noncoverage Rate} * \frac{\text{Transfer}}{\text{Nonmissing Counts}} \right]}{\text{Transferred Counts}}$$

2. For students who stopped out by the end of the study period, a “missing” weight was applied. The missing weight used was an under-weight based on the coverage of the sector, control, and state of the institution at which the student was enrolled for the last enrollment record, as calculated by the formula provided below:

$$= \frac{\text{Transfer Counts} - \left[ \text{Missing Counts} * \text{Noncoverage Rate} * \frac{\text{Transfer}}{\text{Nonmissing Counts}} \right]}{\text{Transferred Counts}}$$

## DATA LIMITATIONS

The data limitations in this report center mainly on the data coverage, the methods used for cohort identification, and the definition of key constructs, as outlined above.

The representation of private for-profit institutions in the StudentTracker data is lower than that of other institution types, with 65 percent coverage for private for-profit four-year institutions in fall 2006 compared to 87 percent and 95 percent respectively for private nonprofit four-year institutions and public four-year institutions. Despite the challenges presented by low participation in the early years covered in this report, current Clearinghouse data nevertheless offer near-census national coverage, representing 94 percent of U.S. postsecondary enrollments. In an effort to correct for coverage gaps, in this study, data were weighted, as explained above.

Data limitations resulting from the cohort identification methods used in preparing this report also should be noted. Because the Clearinghouse data on designations for class year are incomplete, the researchers identified first-time undergraduate students via two indirect measures:

- No previous college enrollments recorded in StudentTracker going back four years, and
- No previous degree awarded in the Clearinghouse's historical DegreeVerify database.

Given these selection criteria, the sample for this report may include students who had more than 30 Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment credits and who would not be considered first-time students despite having first-time status. Moreover, because of inconsistencies in the historical depth of DegreeVerify database records, it is possible that a small number of graduate students are also included in the study cohort.

Finally, data on most demographic variables in Clearinghouse data are not complete. Consequently, the results summarized in this report do not break out enrollments by race, ethnicity, or gender.

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## COVERAGE TABLES

**Table B1. National Student Clearinghouse Coverage of Enrollments by Institution Type Across States (Title IV, Degree-Granting Nonmultistate Institutions, 2011 Fall)\***

State	Four-Year Public	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Private Nonprofit	Two-Year Private Nonprofit	Four-Year Private For-Profit	Two-Year Private For-Profit
Alabama	100.00%	90.77%	90.60%	—	0.00%	0.00%
Alaska	100.00%	65.55%	100.00%	—	0.00%	—
Arizona	100.00%	88.98%	67.55%	-	95.40%	0.00%
Arkansas	96.98%	93.29%	79.55%	-	-	-
California	100.00%	99.45%	92.57%	0.00%	55.20%	37.56%
Colorado	97.26%	100.00%	96.40%	0.00%	16.02%	0.00%
Connecticut	98.55%	100.00%	89.71%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Delaware	100.00%	100.00%	91.30%	100.00%	-	-
District of Columbia	100.00%	-	99.34%	-	-	-
Florida	99.66%	95.52%	82.32%	0.00%	48.90%	21.01%
Georgia	100.00%	98.96%	93.96%	52.80%	0.00%	0.00%
Hawaii	100.00%	100.00%	40.19%	-	0.00%	-
Idaho	100.00%	100.00%	93.20%	-	-	-
Illinois	100.00%	100.00%	96.67%	0.00%	53.92%	0.00%
Indiana	100.00%	100.00%	93.54%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Iowa	100.00%	100.00%	98.58%	0.00%	99.53%	-
Kansas	99.05%	86.73%	66.21%	0.00%	-	0.00%
Kentucky	100.00%	100.00%	86.69%	-	77.31%	54.85%
Louisiana	97.82%	64.62%	99.07%	-	-	10.22%
Maine	100.00%	96.70%	99.48%	0.00%	-	0.00%
Maryland	97.24%	100.00%	92.92%	-	-	0.00%
Massachusetts	99.03%	100.00%	97.66%	25.69%	31.61%	0.00%
Michigan	100.00%	95.12%	96.52%	-	-	-
Minnesota	100.00%	99.83%	96.30%	0.00%	97.47%	50.67%
Mississippi	100.00%	95.75%	92.33%	-	-	0.00%
Missouri	100.00%	100.00%	91.74%	24.98%	0.00%	18.95%
Montana	100.00%	82.89%	74.71%	0.00%	-	-
Nebraska	100.00%	99.64%	98.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Nevada	100.00%	100.00%	53.00%	-	-	44.33%
New Hampshire	100.00%	100.00%	96.60%	0.00%	100.00%	-
New Jersey	100.00%	100.00%	90.13%	-	100.00%	0.00%

\*The analysis weights were calculated using these coverage rates.

**Table B1. National Student Clearinghouse Coverage of Enrollments by Institution Type Across States  
(Title IV, Degree-Granting Nonmultistate Institutions, 2011 Fall) (Continued)**

State	Four-Year Public	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Private Nonprofit	Two-Year Private Nonprofit	Four-Year Private For-Profit	Two-Year Private For-Profit
New Mexico	93.30%	94.59%	44.11%	-	100.00%	-
New York	98.58%	100.00%	96.00%	8.14%	83.74%	26.51%
North Carolina	100.00%	99.83%	89.50%	100.00%	54.53%	0.00%
North Dakota	99.25%	93.80%	82.80%	0.00%	-	-
Ohio	100.00%	100.00%	95.84%	19.55%	100.00%	5.01%
Oklahoma	96.72%	96.75%	84.21%	-	100.00%	0.00%
Oregon	100.00%	100.00%	91.99%	-	0.00%	0.00%
Pennsylvania	100.00%	100.00%	98.43%	66.83%	6.46%	18.94%
Rhode Island	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	-	-	-
South Carolina	100.00%	98.99%	88.46%	84.67%	100.00%	0.00%
South Dakota	95.20%	95.95%	70.03%	100.00%	-	-
Tennessee	100.00%	100.00%	78.61%	0.00%	31.65%	0.00%
Texas	100.00%	94.11%	96.87%	0.00%	0.00%	2.11%
Utah	100.00%	85.05%	100.00%	100.00%	31.00%	0.00%
Vermont	100.00%	100.00%	97.93%	100.00%	0.00%	-
Virginia	100.00%	100.00%	95.45%	-	80.43%	36.03%
Washington	99.63%	100.00%	94.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
West Virginia	98.92%	82.84%	93.88%	-	0.00%	0.00%
Wisconsin	100.00%	100.00%	94.48%	100.00%	0.00%	-
Wyoming	100.00%	100.00%	-	-	-	-

**Table B2. NSC Coverage of Enrollment by Institution Type  
(Title IV Degree-Granting Multistate Institutions)**

Institution Type	Coverage Rate (%)
Four-Year Public	-
Two-Year Public	-
Four-Year Private Nonprofit	95.06
Two-Year Private Nonprofit	-
Four-Year Private For-Profit	70.69
Two-Year Private For-Profit	24.94

**Table 1. Fall 2006 Cohort (n=1,878,484) by Type of Starting Institution**

Institution Type	Unweighted Count	Percentage (%)
Four-Year Public	830,056	44.19
Four-Year Private Nonprofit	359,145	19.12
Four-Year Private For-Profit	52,611	2.8
Two-Year Public	631,524	33.62
Two-Year Private Nonprofit	3,527	0.19
Two-Year Private For-Profit	1,621	0.09

Data from this table are displayed in the report in A Note on the Data in Figure A. Fall 2006 Cohort by Type of Starting Institution.

**Table 2. Fall 2006 Cohort by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	Unweighted Count	Percentage (%)
24 or Younger	1,534,514	81.69
Over 24	327,487	17.43
Birthdate Missing*	16,483	0.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,878,484</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\*Students with birthdate missing are excluded from all subsequent tables that break out results by age.

Data from this table are displayed in the report in A Note on the Data in Figure B. Fall 2006 Cohort by Age at First Entry.

**Table 3. Fall 2006 Cohort by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	Unweighted Count	Percentage (%)
Exclusively Full-Time	780,050	41.53
Exclusively Part-Time	134,762	7.17
Mixed Enrollment	963,672	51.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,878,484</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Data from this table are displayed in the report in A Note on the Data in Figure C. Fall 2006 Cohort by Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 4. Fall 2006 Cohort by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Unweighted Count	Percentage of Age Group (%)
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Overall</b>	1,534,514	100.00
	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	685,248	44.66
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	49,740	3.24
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	799,526	52.10
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Overall</b>	327,487	100.00
	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	88,844	27.13
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	81,970	25.03
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	156,673	47.84

Data from this table are displayed in the report in A Note on the Data in Figure D. Fall 2006 Cohort by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 5a. Six-Year Outcomes by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
<b>Overall</b>	54.06	41.97	12.09	16.14	29.79
<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	76.23	65.64	10.59	3.75	20.02
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	20.58	17.47	3.11	11.40	68.02
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	40.79	26.25	14.55	26.81	32.40

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 1. Six-Year Outcomes by Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 5b. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	PROPORTION OF COMPLETIONS	
	At Starting Institution (%)	At Different Institution (%)
<b>Overall</b>	77.64	22.36
<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	86.11	13.89
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	84.89	15.11
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	64.34	35.66

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 2. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 6a. Six-Year Outcomes by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
<b>24 or Younger</b>	56.78	43.35	13.42	16.86	26.36
<b>Over 24</b>	42.10	35.86	6.24	13.50	44.40

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 3. Six-Year Outcomes by Age at First Entry.

**Table 6b. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	PROPORTION OF COMPLETIONS	
	At Starting Institution (%)	At Different Institution (%)
<b>24 or Younger</b>	76.36	23.64
<b>Over 24</b>	85.18	14.82

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 4. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Age at First Entry.

**Table 7. Six-Year Outcomes by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	78.4	67.00	11.46	3.77	17.76
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	9.66	7.04	2.62	12.92	77.42
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	41.10	25.34	15.76	28.30	30.60
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	60.09	55.91	4.18	3.82	36.10
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	27.49	24.04	3.45	10.83	61.68
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	39.68	30.85	8.84	20.30	40.02

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 5. Six-Year Outcomes by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 8a. Six-Year Outcomes by Starting Institution Type**

Starting Institution Type	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>Overall</b>	54.06	41.97	9.14	2.95	16.14	29.79
<b>Four-Year Public</b>	60.57	48.65	8.73	3.20	16.01	23.42
<b>Four-Year Private Nonprofit</b>	71.53	58.60	10.53	2.40	9.95	18.52
<b>Four-Year Private For-Profit</b>	42.81	37.83	3.03	1.95	13.84	43.35
<b>Two-Year Public</b>	36.29	23.90	9.38	3.02	20.07	43.64
<b>Two-Year Private Nonprofit</b>	54.24	42.59	8.62	3.03	13.50	32.26
<b>Two-Year Private For-Profit</b>	61.79	58.12	2.43	1.24	8.37	29.84

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 6. Six-Year Outcomes by Starting Institution Type.

**Table 8b. Completion at Starting Institution vs. Different Institution by Starting Institution Type**

Starting Institution Type (%)	PROPORTION OF COMPLETIONS	
	At Starting Institution (%)	At Different Institution (%)
<b>Four-Year Public</b>	80.31	19.69
<b>Four-Year Private Nonprofit</b>	81.92	18.08
<b>Four-Year Private For-Profit</b>	88.37	11.63
<b>Two-Year Public</b>	65.85	34.15
<b>Two-Year Private Nonprofit</b>	78.52	21.48
<b>Two-Year Private For-Profit</b>	94.06	5.94

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 7. Completion at Starting vs. Different Institution by Starting Institution Type.

**Table 9. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>Overall</b>	60.57	4.65	8.73	3.20	16.01	23.42
<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	80.97	70.96	8.02	2.00	4.18	14.85
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	18.95	15.53	1.45	1.97	11.24	69.81
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	46.83	32.08	10.28	4.47	27.58	25.59

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 8. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 10. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>24 or Younger</b>	63.02	50.17	9.44	3.41	16.47	20.51
<b>Over 24</b>	44.53	38.73	4.08	1.73	13.81	41.66

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 9. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry.

**Table 11. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
				FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	81.96	71.49	8.45	2.08	4.11	13.93
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	8.32	4.89	0.87	2.87	12.34	79.34
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	47.00	31.44	10.83	4.73	28.68	24.32
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	69.22	65.33	3.15	0.74	5.82	24.96
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	24.50	21.11	1.77	1.62	11.17	64.33
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	46.70	37.98	6.37	2.35	20.16	33.14

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 10. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 12. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	First Completion at Starting Institution (%)	First Completion at Different Institution (%)		Subsequent Completion at a Four-Year Institution (%)	Total Four-Year Completion Rate (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR				
<b>Overall</b>	36.29	23.90	3.02	9.38	5.61	14.99	20.07	43.64
<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	52.55	38.18	2.69	11.68	13.50	25.18	4.13	43.32
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	18.39	16.18	1.53	0.68	1.33	2.01	12.16	69.44
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	33.24	20.03	3.35	9.86	3.48	13.34	26.84	39.91

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 11. Six-Year Outcomes and First Completion for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Enrollment Intensity and in Figure 12. Completion Outcomes at Four-Year Institutions for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 13. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	Total Completion Rate (%)	First Completion at Starting Institution (%)	First Completion at Different Institution (%)		Subsequent Completion at a Four-Year Institution (%)	Total Four-Year Completion Rate (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			TWO-YEAR	FOUR-YEAR				
<b>24 or Younger</b>	36.47	22.39	3.20	10.88	6.22	17.10	21.87	41.66
<b>Over 24</b>	35.75	28.80	2.46	4.49	3.35	7.85	14.63	49.62

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 13. Six-Year Outcomes and First Completion for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and in Figure 14. Completion at Four-Year Institutions for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry.

**Table 14. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	First Completion at Starting Institution (%)	First Completion at Different Institution (%)		Subsequent Completion at a Four-Year Institution (%)	Total Four-Year Completion Rate (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
				TWO-YEAR	FOUR-YEAR				
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	54.46	37.48	3.04	13.94	15.39	29.33	4.59	40.95
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	10.00	8.19	1.40	0.41	0.74	1.14	13.50	76.50
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	32.74	18.53	3.42	10.79	3.58	14.37	28.54	38.72
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	45.51	40.44	1.45	3.63	5.78	9.41	2.62	51.87
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	26.90	24.27	1.67	0.97	1.94	2.91	11.10	62.00
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	35.57	26.17	3.17	6.24	2.99	9.23	20.64	43.78

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 15. Six-Year Outcomes and First Completion for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity and Figure 16. Completion at Four-Year Institutions for Students Who Started at Two-Year Public Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity.



**Table 15. Six-Year Outcomes for Non-Degree-Seeking Students Who Began at Two-Year Public Institutions (n=385,503) by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	First Completion at Starting Institution (%)	First Completion at Different Institution (%)		Subsequent Completion at a Four-Year Institution (%)	Total Four-Year Completion Rate (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			TWO-YEAR	FOUR-YEAR				
<b>Overall</b>	21.52	7.61	2.65	11.26	1.11	12.37	25.45	53.03
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	8.62	6.63	1.30	0.68	0.54	1.22	11.62	79.77
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	31.19	8.34	3.66	19.19	1.54	20.73	35.83	32.98

Note: By definition, non-degree-seeking students could not include students enrolled exclusively full time because any student enrolled full time for at least one term in the first year was classified as degree-seeking in this study. Note that completion rates for mixed enrollment non-degree-seeking students were very similar to those for mixed enrollment degree-seeking students, suggesting that non-degree seeking students who start part time and later enroll full time become similar to degree-seeking students in terms of their outcomes.

**Table 16. Six-Year Outcomes for Non-Degree-Seeking Students Who Began at Two-Year Public Institutions (n=385,503) by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	Total Completion Rate (%)	First Completion at Starting Institution (%)	First Completion at Different Institution (%)		Subsequent Completion at a Four-Year Institution (%)	Total Four-Year Completion Rate (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			TWO-YEAR	FOUR-YEAR				
<b>24 or Younger</b>	26.47	7.17	3.09	16.21	1.44	17.65	29.98	43.55
<b>Over 24</b>	13.04	8.49	1.91	2.64	0.54	3.18	17.86	69.09

**Table 17. Six-Year Outcomes for Non-Degree-Seeking Students Who Began at Two-Year Public Institutions (n=385,503) by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	First Completion at Starting Institution (%)	First Completion at Different Institution (%)		Subsequent Completion at a Four-Year Institution (%)	Total Four-Year Completion Rate (%)	Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
				TWO-YEAR	FOUR-YEAR				
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	6.65	4.67	1.54	10.45	0.65	1.10	11.86	81.48
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	34.16	8.14	3.69	22.33	1.74	24.07	37.00	28.84
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	10.20	8.17	1.16	0.86	0.47	1.33	11.79	78.01
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	19.33	9.20	3.57	6.56	0.69	7.25	31.27	49.40

**Table 18. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>Overall</b>	71.53	58.60	10.53	2.40	9.95	18.52
<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	85.19	75.28	8.66	1.26	2.82	11.98
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	31.01	26.46	1.88	3.67	9.17	58.82
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	50.05	30.02	15.55	4.48	24.29	25.65

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 17. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 19. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>24 or Younger</b>	74.63	60.64	11.57	2.42	9.90	15.47
<b>Over 24</b>	52.75	46.26	4.19	2.30	10.54	36.71

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 18. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Age at First Entry.

**Table 20. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
				FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	86.24	76.01	8.96	1.27	2.77	10.99
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	14.03	8.00	1.57	4.47	8.91	77.05
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	49.71	27.07	17.66	4.97	26.01	24.28
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	70.87	65.22	4.47	1.18	3.75	25.38
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	35.06	29.47	1.97	3.61	9.46	55.48
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	52.15	44.35	5.62	2.18	16.42	31.43

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 19. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private Nonprofit Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 21. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>Overall</b>	42.81	37.83	3.03	1.95	13.84	43.35
<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	61.29	58.67	1.53	1.09	3.62	35.09
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	27.64	24.60	1.65	1.39	11.04	61.32
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	25.17	17.33	4.88	2.96	25.34	49.49

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 20. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 22. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>24 or Younger</b>	36.05	29.17	40.01	2.87	18.76	45.19
<b>Over 24</b>	44.17	40.25	2.76	1.69	12.49	42.80

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 21. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Age at First Entry.

**Table 23. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
				FOUR-YEAR	TWO-YEAR		
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	53.52	48.29	3.62	1.61	4.79	41.69
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	13.63	9.96	1.03	2.64	10.83	75.54
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	25.74	17.53	4.48	3.73	28.74	45.52
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	62.97	60.90	1.09	0.98	3.38	33.66
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	29.64	26.67	1.74	1.22	11.11	59.26
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	24.93	17.24	5.03	2.66	24.04	51.03

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 22. Six-Year Outcomes for Students Who Started at Four-Year Private For-Profit Institutions by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 24. Completion Rates Across State Lines by Enrollment Intensity**

Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Same Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		
			IN-STATE	OUT-OF-STATE	MULTISTATE
<b>Overall</b>	54.27	42.05	8.25	3.53	0.44
<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	76.61	65.82	6.81	3.72	0.26
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	20.42	17.42	1.70	1.11	0.19
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	41.15	26.51	10.31	3.71	0.62

Note: Students who started at a multistate institution were excluded from the rates presented in this table.

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 23. Completions at Different Institutions Across State Lines by Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 25. Completion Rates Across State Lines by Age at First Entry**

Age at First Entry	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Same Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		
			IN-STATE	OUT-OF-STATE	MULTISTATE
<b>24 or Younger</b>	56.84	43.39	9.13	3.90	0.42
<b>Over 24</b>	41.74	35.45	3.94	1.75	0.59

Note: Students who started at a multistate institution were excluded from the rates presented in this table.

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 24. Completions at Different Institutions Across State Lines by Age at First Entry.

**Table 26. Completion Rates Across State Lines by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Same Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		
				IN-STATE	OUT-OF-STATE	MULTISTATE
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	78.55	67.06	7.23	4.01	0.26
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	9.65	7.06	1.57	0.67	0.34
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	41.22	25.43	11.23	4.01	0.56
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	59.20	54.73	3.02	1.13	0.31
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	27.43	24.12	1.81	1.40	0.10
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	41.33	32.51	5.57	2.25	1.00

Note: Students who started at a multistate institution were excluded from the rates presented in this table.

Data from this appendix table are displayed in the report in Figure 25. Completions at Different Institutions Across State Lines by Age at First Entry and Enrollment Intensity.

**Table 27. Completion Rates by Enrollment Intensity for Students Who Started at Multistate Institutions**

	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)
<b>Overall</b>	46.65	39.30	7.35
<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	65.81	60.84	4.96
<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	27.08	19.35	7.73
<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	25.01	14.66	10.35

**Table 28. Completion Rates by Age at First Entry for Students Who Started at Multistate Institutions**

	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)
<b>24 or Younger</b>	50.61	39.85	10.75
<b>Over 24</b>	44.95	39.10	5.84

**Table 29. Completion Rates by Enrollment Intensity and Age at First Entry for Students Who Started at Multistate Institutions**

Age at First Entry	Enrollment Intensity	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Starting Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)
<b>24 or Younger</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	71.78	62.71	9.07
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	10.45	4.17	6.28
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	28.08	15.11	12.97
<b>Over 24</b>	<b>Exclusively Full-Time</b>	63.24	60.08	3.16
	<b>Exclusively Part-Time</b>	29.54	21.62	7.92
	<b>Mixed Enrollment</b>	23.46	14.43	9.03

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Dan Walters California's straitjacket education bites back

By Dan Walters  
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We Californians – or at least those of us with access to the media or political forums – make lots of celebratory noise about our diversity, as we should.

One of the state's unique qualities, and one of its strengths as well as one of its challenges, is its wide array of ethnicities, cultures, languages, religions, nationalities, lifestyles and sexual orientations.

That diversity represents a particular challenge for the public school system in educating 6 million students with such an astonishing array of backgrounds, not to mention the diversity of intelligence, talent and motivation that may be found in any student population, even monochromatic ones.

Such wide variations would seem to warrant a more individualized approach to education, but oddly, for all our happy talk about diversity, we increasingly tend to stuff kids into one-size-fits-all systems, with ever-narrower curricula enforced by testing.

Nowhere is that rigid approach more evident than in the twin trends toward eliminating job-related classes, once called vocational education, and insisting that all high school students, regardless of their aptitudes, take college prep classes as a condition of graduation.

Not every adolescent wants, or needs, college prep classes, especially since we should know that only a fraction of them will actually pursue or obtain four-year degrees.

The college-for-all assumption also denigrates the very useful – and often well-paying – employment opportunities in trades, crafts and technical fields.

Any society needs its auto mechanics, its carpenters, its electricians, its plumbers, its electronic technicians, its machinists and others who do real work.

Tellingly, there are still unfilled demands for skilled workers in those and other fields while many college graduates are jobless or struggling in low-skill jobs.

Moreover, the rigid imposition of college prep subtly encourages those not oriented toward academia to drop out of high school, as San Francisco Unified School District, one of those college-for-all systems, is learning.

The district imposed its college prep requirement on incoming ninth-graders in 2010. Now, it was revealed last week, almost half of its potential high school class of 2014 is not on track to complete the curriculum, a requirement for graduation.



Educators are all college graduates, and most parents like the concept that their sons and daughters are going to become college- educated professionals, so it may be a popular policy.

But what if their Johnny or Jane really would be better suited by talent and inclination for a blue-collar job?

Do San Francisco Unified and other systems that have adopted the college prep requirement really care about what happens to them?

New California community colleges head is taking things slow

Brice W. Harris, who took charge of the beleaguered California colleges Nov. 6, isn't rushing in with a plan, saying, 'There's a real risk in charting a specific vision too soon.'

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times

November 25, 2012, 4:16 p.m.

In assuming the reins of California's community colleges system, Brice W. Harris takes over at a pivotal time of long-range budget uncertainty, fluctuating goals and ever-intensifying pressure to educate a sizable portion of the state's workforce.

Harris became chancellor of the nation's largest two-year system Nov. 6 when voters approved Proposition 30, the tax hike measure that avoided a \$338-million cut to the colleges. Instead, the system will receive about \$210 million more in state funding and is poised to serve 20,000 additional students this spring.

Even with the measure's success, however, the pressure on California's 112 community colleges has barely lifted. Funding has been cut by \$809 million, classes have been slashed by nearly a quarter and enrollment has dropped by 500,000 students in recent years. Most students need remedial classes and don't transfer to four-year schools or graduate with associate's degrees.

Harris' role is part lobbyist, part fundraiser and part cheerleader. He can suggest systemwide policies to the 72 locally elected district boards that run the campuses. He can lobby the Legislature and governor's office on behalf of the system's 2.4 million students.

And he said he will lead a broad public discussion about the direction of community colleges, including the state's commitment to its Master Plan for Higher Education, advocating open access and quality, and an embrace of new technology, especially online education.

Harris said educators need to advise policymakers on what is in the colleges' best interests rather than allow legislators to make those decisions. But he has not developed a detailed agenda for his first year.

"I think there's a real risk in charting a specific vision too soon," Harris, 64, said in a recent interview. "A lot of people who are going to accomplish that need to be consulted. We need to talk to faculty, staff and the Board of Governors about what they want to see."

Harris has been widely praised for his energy, efficient and collaborative management style and for gaining the respect of faculty and students over 16 years at the Los Rios Community College District near Sacramento.

But he faces immense hurdles, education experts said.

"Frankly, he was in a much more authoritative and stronger position to effect change in the Los Rios district than he will have as systemwide chancellor," said Steve Boilard, executive director of the Center for California Studies at Cal State Sacramento. "The community college system is a weak system where a tremendous amount of autonomy is granted to individual districts."

Still, his predecessor, Jack Scott, succeeded in steering the schools toward a stronger focus on job training and helping students transfer. To that end, Scott set into place — with the help of the Legislature and the governor — new policies that deemphasize programs for adults seeking recreational activities such as art, language and theater classes.

Boilard, formerly director of higher education for the state's Legislative Analyst's Office, said Harris will immediately have to decide how far to follow that path, which is not universally accepted by faculty or the wider communities the colleges serve.

"I know he's going to have some push-back from others in the system that would rather the cuts fall elsewhere," Boilard said. "Let's just assume that everything community colleges do has some value. The question is: what has less value?"

Another issue the chancellor will have to address is the low rate of student completion and large achievement gaps hindering low-income and minority students, educators and others said.

Harris should pursue measures to make colleges more transparent about how their students are performing, including campus-based score cards, said Michele Siqueiros, executive director of the Campaign for College Opportunity, an advocacy group in Los Angeles and Sacramento.

The new chancellor also will have to deal with requirements easing the transfer process. Legislation in 2010 required community colleges to offer associate's degrees that would guarantee a student admission to California State University as a junior. But a new report by Siqueiros' group has found efforts at some colleges have fallen short.

"One big critique of California is that it doesn't have a coordinating body for higher education," Siqueiros said. "It becomes even more important for Harris and the other two higher-education leaders [at UC and Cal State] to work together and for the Legislature to expect better coordination between the systems."

Although he has not developed detailed strategies, Harris is a strong supporter of measures recommended by a systemwide task force of which he was a member. Many of the steps, such as mandatory education planning, enrollment prioritization and tracking students' academic progress online, were initiated by Harris at Los Rios and have improved success rates there.

But Harris said it is counterproductive to try to control education from the central office and that local colleges must be left to decide the best approach to teaching and learning.

His familiarity with the system was key to his appointment, said Scott Himmelstein, immediate past president of the community colleges Board of Governors and chairman of the selection committee.