HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

Humboldt State University

Draft Student Success Plan

The California State University
GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025

Graduation Initiative 2025 Goals
Humboldt State*

Metric	2025 Goal	Most Recent Rate
Freshman 6-Year Graduation	**56%**	46%
Freshman 4-Year Graduation	**30%**	14%
Transfer 2-Year Graduation	**38%**	26%
Transfer 4-Year Graduation	**79%**	69%
Gap - Underrepresented Minority	**0**	13 % points
Gap – Pell	**0**	8 % points

*** Corrected August 2, 2016**

The California State University
GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025

Executive Summary of Goals & Strategies
Humboldt State

Goals	Strategies
Long-Term • First year for freshmen and transfers • Advising • Enrollment management • Success in low completion rate courses	**Long-Term** • Implement program targeting undeclared students that provides guaranteed first-year enrollment in GE courses • Expand peer mentoring program and EOP Fall Bridge programs • Develop general but flexible course pathways so students can easily change majors without increasing time to degree • Develop Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) • Enhance mechanisms to improve bottleneck course rates
Short-Term • Advising • Enrollment management • First year for freshmen and transfers	**Short-Term** • Degree audit reports to reach targeted students • Additional staff placed to conduct follow-ups with students and assist with their timely graduation • Reduce excess units and increase class availability • Identify, contact, and provide mentoring/ additional support for all first-time undergrad and transfer students with a less than 2.0 GPA their first term/ year

Humboldt State University

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Approved by President Lisa A. Rossbacher 09-02-16

Our University, Our Students, Our Commitment

Humboldt State University (HSU) is surrounded by thousands of square miles of forest, wild rivers, coastline, and abundant natural resources - it epitomizes place-based learning and provides students an experience in higher education that is unique among public universities in the state, with a special relationship among the campus, the curriculum, our local communities, and the natural environment. HSU is a diverse institution and has the privilege of serving the highest proportion of Native American students in the California State University (CSU) system.

In addition, in the past six years, HSU has experienced one of the most radical shifts in its student demographics among the CSU system:

- Since 2010, the enrollment of students from traditionally underrepresented groups (URM), Pell-eligible students, and First-Generation college students, has doubled.
- In Fall 2013, HSU became a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and in 2015, HSU welcomed its largest ever enrollment of students from traditionally underrepresented groups (N = 3,538 out of a total enrollment of 8,790), representing an 80% increase from 2010.
- Currently, *more than half* of our student body is from traditionally underrepresented groups, Pell-eligible, and/or First-Generation college students.

The impact of this shift is profound - the majority of HSU's current student population comes from urban areas and must quickly adjust, on many levels, to life in rural Humboldt County. In addition to our dramatic demographic changes, HSU has one of the lowest rates for both freshman-to-sophomore retention and 4-year graduation in the CSU system. (See Appendix 1.)

These rapid and significant student demographic shifts, paired with our high attrition, demand that we meet the challenge of supporting our students in innovative ways to increase graduation and retention rates, close our achievement gaps, and enhance student learning.

HSU's new goals for our Graduation Initiative 2025 are daunting but doable. They include increasing our freshman 4-year and 6-year graduation rates to 30% and 56%, respectively, and our 2-year and 4-year transfer graduation rates to 38% and 79%, respectively. These graduation goals are reflected in our 2015-2020 HSU Strategic Plan and our WASC Self-Study report, creating additional momentum for making the changes required to move the needle on student success at HSU. With a focus on these crucial goals, we became an invited member of the AASCU 44-university learning community entitled "Reimagining the First Year" (RFY). Through our RFY visioning, we have committed to 16 student success initiatives in 2016-17, some small and some groundbreaking. Many, but not all, of those initiatives form the foundation of HSU's Graduation Initiative 2025 Student Success Plan.

HSU is prepared to address the Graduation Initiative 2025 goals this academic year by deploying additional funding awarded through the initiative to (1) implement a novel degree audit report for students (DARS) campaign, (2) unleash strategies to reduce excess units and increase class availability, (3) reduce the number of students on academic probation, and (4) improve student and parent onboarding. These tactics address "low hanging fruit" targets and will yield improvements in our 2-year and 4-year graduation rates.

Long-Term Strategies (2016-2025)

1. Improving First-Year Experiences: In 2015-16, we established "The Klamath Connection," a year-long, place-based community model program of science and general education courses and activities focused thematically on the Klamath River. The program includes a four-day summer immersion experience, cohort block scheduling for the fall and spring semesters, major-specific, first-year seminar courses with field trips, and co-housing experiences. The Klamath Connection targets students in a number of STEM majors, including Biology, Botany, Zoology, and Wildlife. For academic year 2016-17, the program has expanded, with 118 students enrolled in a selection of 14 courses, with three additional STEM degree programs. First-year results for the program indicate success in engaging and retaining students.

To broaden this success to non-STEM majors and to reach many more students, faculty in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences are developing a similar but broader program called "Global Humboldt" that targets undeclared students. "Global Humboldt" will provide guaranteed first-year enrollment in General Education courses across the University, and, like the Klamath Connection, it will focus on aspects of our local environment and communities and our place in a globalized world.

Other first-year programs include our student-peer-mentor "Retention through Academic Mentoring Program" (RAMP), which was piloted in 2013 and is now expanding to include nearly all of the incoming freshman class. RAMP has demonstrated increases in term-to-term GPA for participants, and student mentors report a higher level of academic confidence and connection to campus. HSU also offers an Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) Fall Bridge program. The one-year retention rate among EOP Fall Bridge participants, representing Pell-eligible, First-Generation college students from traditionally underrepresented groups, has been slightly higher than the retention rate of all HSU first-time-freshman (76% vs 74%, respectively). The two-year retention rate among EOP fall bridge participants (57.4%) is approaching that of all HSU students (59.9%). If these numbers continue to improve, we plan to expand both RAMP and our EOP Fall Bridge programs.

2. Intentional Academic Advising and Pre-Major Pathways: During their time at HSU, approximately 75% of HSU's students will change their major at least once, making career and academic advising a crucial element in reducing unnecessary classes taken and improving retention and graduation rates. HSU is currently transitioning to a new advising model that will provide all first- and second-year students a professional advisor with specialized experience in their department. This relationship-based model helps students (1) understand the purpose

and requirements of their degree program (including guidance on course selection with the goal of reducing enrollment in unnecessary units), (2) learn academic success strategies that contribute to persistence, and (3) develop plans to achieve academic, personal, and professional goals that match students' values, skills, and interests.

Even with intensive academic advising, however, some students will continue to change majors. To address this, we plan to develop general but flexible course pathways along clusters of disciplines (such as pre-Science or pre-Arts/Humanities) so that students will be able to more easily change majors without increasing time to degree. We are utilizing HSU's new Graduation Progress System (GPS) to find common course enrollment patterns within and across disciplines for both first-time and transfer undergraduates, and we will use these data to develop this initiative.

3. *Enrollment Management:* We are developing a new Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) with four priorities: (1) reducing time-to-degree by employing new practices like co-requisite remediation, (2) increasing and evaluating targeted student support efforts geared toward retention (e.g., intensive advising, parent onboarding), (3) using predictive analytics to identify prematriculation factors related to student success, and (4) recruiting and retaining students for an appropriate mix of programs. Our new SEMP will align with the campus' Academic Strategic Plan (under development) and our existing University Strategic Plan, and it is supported by an updated Facilities Master Plan and Strategic Budgeting Plan.

A key element of our SEMP rests on clearly understanding student flow at the programmatic and university levels. By better understanding how student migration in and out of majors and the university itself impacts time to degree, we can provide interventions to reduce attrition. It will also help us anticipate demand for section offerings, provide proactive advisement based on student migration patterns, and develop strategies and processes to improve student retention at the institution. We have created a series of Sankey Flow Diagrams to visualize this information - these are directional flow charts where the width of the streams is proportional to the quantity of student flow (e.g., enrollment, attrition, changing majors), and where the student flow can be traced through a series of events or academic years. (See Appendix 2.)

4. Success in Low-Completion-Rate Courses: HSU research demonstrates that students who do not complete their degree in four years often fail or repeat certain gateway/bottleneck courses and may repeat the course multiple times. HSU will commit the resources to help our students graduate by further examining why students are failing certain bottleneck courses and by enhancing mechanisms to improve these rates. We also will ensure high-repeat/low success courses are available for those needing them in the short-term. In addition, we are piloting two types of support for students who have not yet demonstrated their readiness for college-level mathematics: (1) "ALEKS-PPL," an artificial-intelligence-based learning and assessment tool that provides students an opportunity to optimize their math placement prior to attending HSU, and (2) a co-requisite remediation model that supports student learning while enrolled in an entry-level college math class.

5. Digital Learning: The College of eLearning and Extended Education (CEEE) is focused on alleviating "bottleneck" course issues through increasing course accessibility and achieving greater scheduling flexibility. Since fall 2013, our online course offerings have increased 300% (35 to 145) and the total online enrollment has increased 72% (3,239 to 5,579) as well. HSU will continue to expand online course offerings to meet student demand and enhance course accessibility by developing online counterparts for high failure rate courses.

HSU is the first campus within the CSU system to provide an online General Education package, allowing students to fulfill the first two years of course requirements completely online, but our success rates in online courses in two of our three colleges need to be improved. Our goal is to eliminate the current success rate gap between online and face-to-face courses by 2020 in all three of our colleges by increasing the types of learning experiences within each course, creating more successful discussions and enhancing instructor feedback to students, increasing social interaction among the students enrolled in online instruction, and including "wrap-up" activities for every online course offered.

6. Enhanced Data Capabilities: This fall, we have created a new Office of Institutional Effectiveness, which expands the scope and function of our Institutional Research Office. We have a more robust and integrated data repository to track trends and patterns, and we are currently implementing a 7-step continuous improvement and assessment process campus-wide. Student success is now tracked not only by sub-groups (e.g., Pell-eligible students) but also through program pipelines (e.g., MAPS and migration patterns) and through sequences using "Reverse GPS" (Graduation Progress System). This work significantly strengthens both our Strategic Enrollment Management planning and Academic Program planning, allowing us to more effectively manage resources to fulfill our student success mission.

Rationale

HSU's radical student demographic shifts and low completion rates not only demand that we meet the challenge of supporting our students in innovative ways to increase graduation and retention rates, close our achievement gaps, and enhance student learning, but they are also key components in our campus discourse about accountability in higher education. The focus on our new goals goes beyond the Graduation Initiative 2025 and the federal government's 2009 call for achieving the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. It is a way to measure our overall quality and success -- our goals allow us to continually evaluate whether we are doing our best in terms of educating our students and involving our students in campus life.

Many of our students are on track to graduate in 4.5 years. Moving that group to four years by reducing their time on campus by only one semester will raise our freshman graduation rate significantly. Data analytics indicate that regardless of cohort, at their senior year, approximately 14-16% of our first time undergraduates have earned at least 90 units and have applied to graduate within four years. Another 2-4% of senior-level students indicate that they intend to graduate the following year, and an additional 8-10% have earned 90 units but have

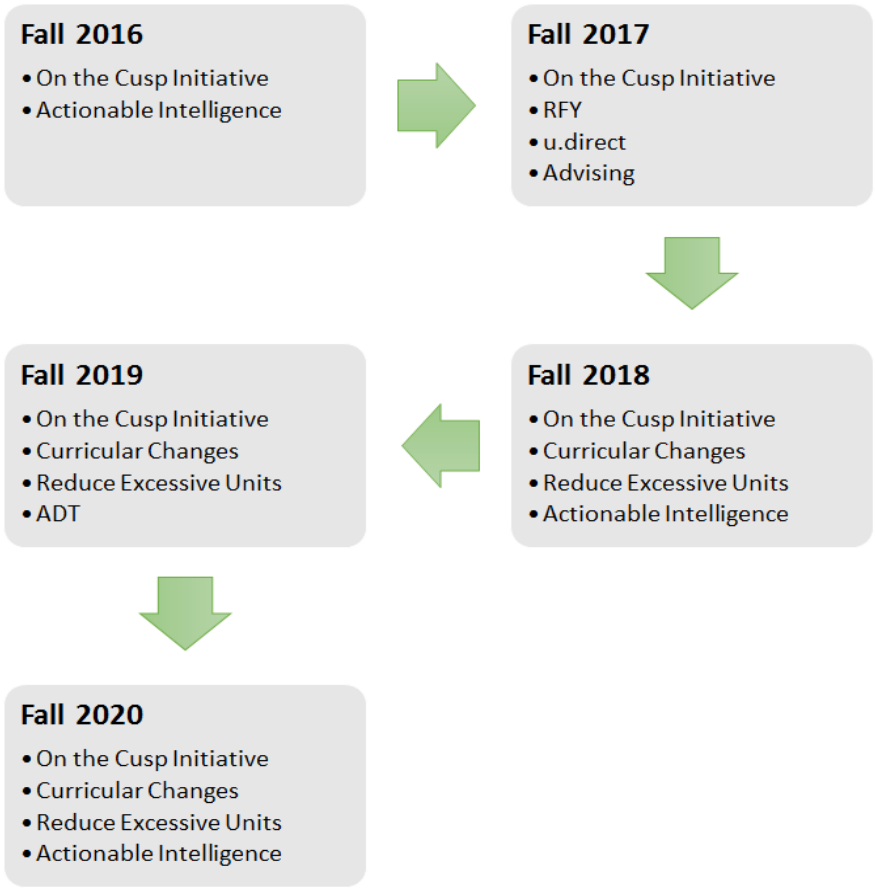
yet to apply for graduation. Taken together, if these students were to successfully graduate in the time expected (4 years), HSU's graduation rate would increase from 15% to 27-30%.

Objectives - Steps toward Sustainability

For undergraduate upper-division transfer students, approximately 27-31% apply to graduate within two years of initial enrollment and 4-6% plan to graduate the following year. In addition, 32-34% will continue to be enrolled. Taken together, if these upper division transfer students were to successfully graduate in the time expected (2 years), HSU's graduation rate would increase from 30% to nearly 70%. Our long-term plan will elevate 2-year and 4-year graduation rates through the use of analytics, assessment, clearer communication to students, and continuous improvement. In other words, we will support and enhance what works and stop what doesn't.

In allocating Graduation Initiative 2025 funds for 2016-17, HSU will focus on supporting plans to identify and work with freshman-entrant students who are now juniors or seniors and are not far from a four-year graduation plan and transfers who are not far from a two-year plan. We will use analytics to identify students "on the cusp" and mount proactive advising campaigns to work closely with these students to (1) ensure that they are taking the courses that efficiently move them toward graduation, (2) encourage increased average unit load in the academic year, and (3) encourage enrollment in summer courses (See Appendix 1.)

Timeline



This timeline illustrates some, but not all, of the initiatives listed in this plan. We have built continuous review using actionable intelligence with intervention for students "On the Cusp" of graduation into our timeline.

Short-term Strategies (2016-17) for Immediate Impact on 4-year and 2-year Graduation Rates

1. Degree Audit Report for Students (DARS) Campaign: Prior to the start of the Spring 2016 semester, the Office of the Registrar ran an *ad hoc* campaign for prospective Spring 2016 graduates, using DARS reports to identify students who were still missing courses or requirements. These students were sent an email with encouragement to either enroll in a course, contact their advisor for an approved substitution, or register for an applicable exam. Nearly half (49%) of these students took *some* action that moved them to graduation at the end of the Spring 2016 term. In addition, the Registrar noted 109 additional degrees awarded over the same period one year prior.

With the Graduation Initiative 2025 funding, additional staff placed this academic year in the Office of the Registrar will (1) conduct multiple follow-ups with students who are within one semester of graduation and who fail to respond with phone calls, in-person advising sessions, and "auto-registration" of required exams, (2) expand degree audits and outreach to students with two remaining terms in order to identify potential roadblocks that could be removed *now* so that they are addressed prior to their final term, and (3) remove the application for graduation requirement and fee for students.

2. Reducing Excess Units and Increasing Class Availability: Many of our first-time and upper-division transfer students do not efficiently move through class standing (e.g., freshman through senior year) when compared to the number of units they complete . To help us address this in the short-term, we are initiating the use of course planning software that helps provide students, advisors, and faculty a clear picture of each student's path to graduation ("u.Direct," starting fall 2016). We also have noted that many students delay their HSU degree by enrolling elsewhere prior to graduation and transferring external units back to HSU. We plan to reduce the percentage of these students to nearly zero over the long-term by ensuring that we are offering the correct number of courses they need to complete their degrees. We will identify and schedule additional specific courses needed for spring and summer 2017 so that our "On the Cusp" students can graduate.

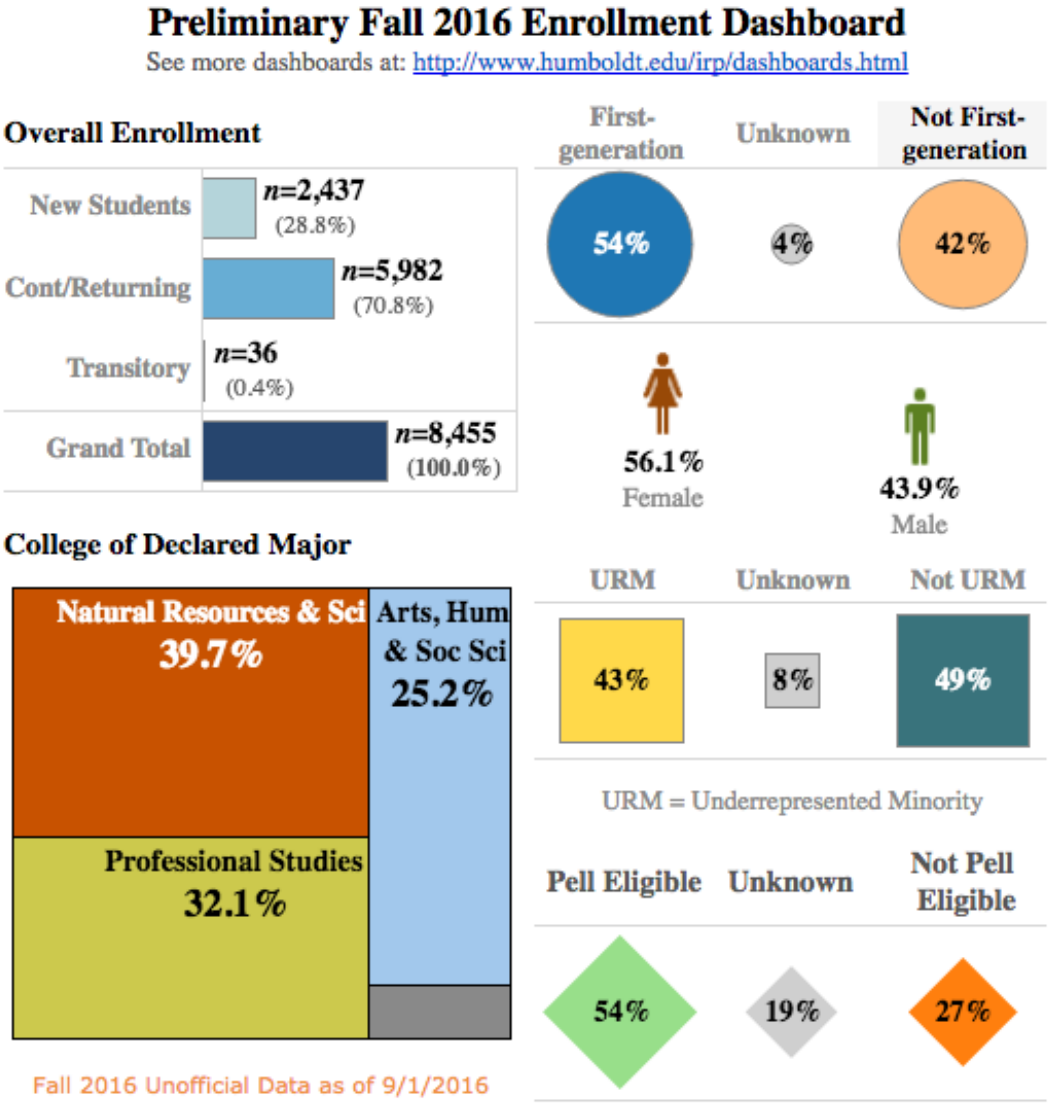
3. Reducing Number of Students on Academic Probation: At HSU, first-time undergraduate students who find themselves on academic probation are 5 times less likely to graduate within four years. With the Graduation Initiative 2025 funding, HSU will identify, contact, and provide mentoring and additional support for all first-time undergraduate students and upper-division transfer students who earn less than a 2.0 GPA their first term and first year.

4. Improving Student and Parent Onboarding: There is strong evidence that including family members in the establishment of a supportive climate for students correlates to higher persistence and facilitates a healthy transition for students. Recent surveys indicate that loneliness and homesickness rank high as reasons some consider leaving HSU. Since 85% of our student population originates a significant distance from our campus, we need to involve our students' families in creating a supportive transition to our campus. To that end, we have identified an immediate need to deploy Graduation Initiative 2025 funds to create a "Family and Student Support Program" on campus, that includes creating a position and emergency hire a Director of Family and Student Support Office charged with active outreach and education for the families of our students. This office will be active by spring 2017 and will include hiring 8-10 students to participate in an ongoing telephone outreach campaign to students' family members, creating bilingual web pages and newsletters, and developing and implementing educational outreach to families in major recruitment areas (Los Angeles and San Francisco). This office will be tasked not only with identifying issues impacting families and student transition, but also empowered to act on behalf of the university to solve those issues. Our goal is to help both students *and* their families understand these challenges and to provide tools to help them navigate through to graduation.

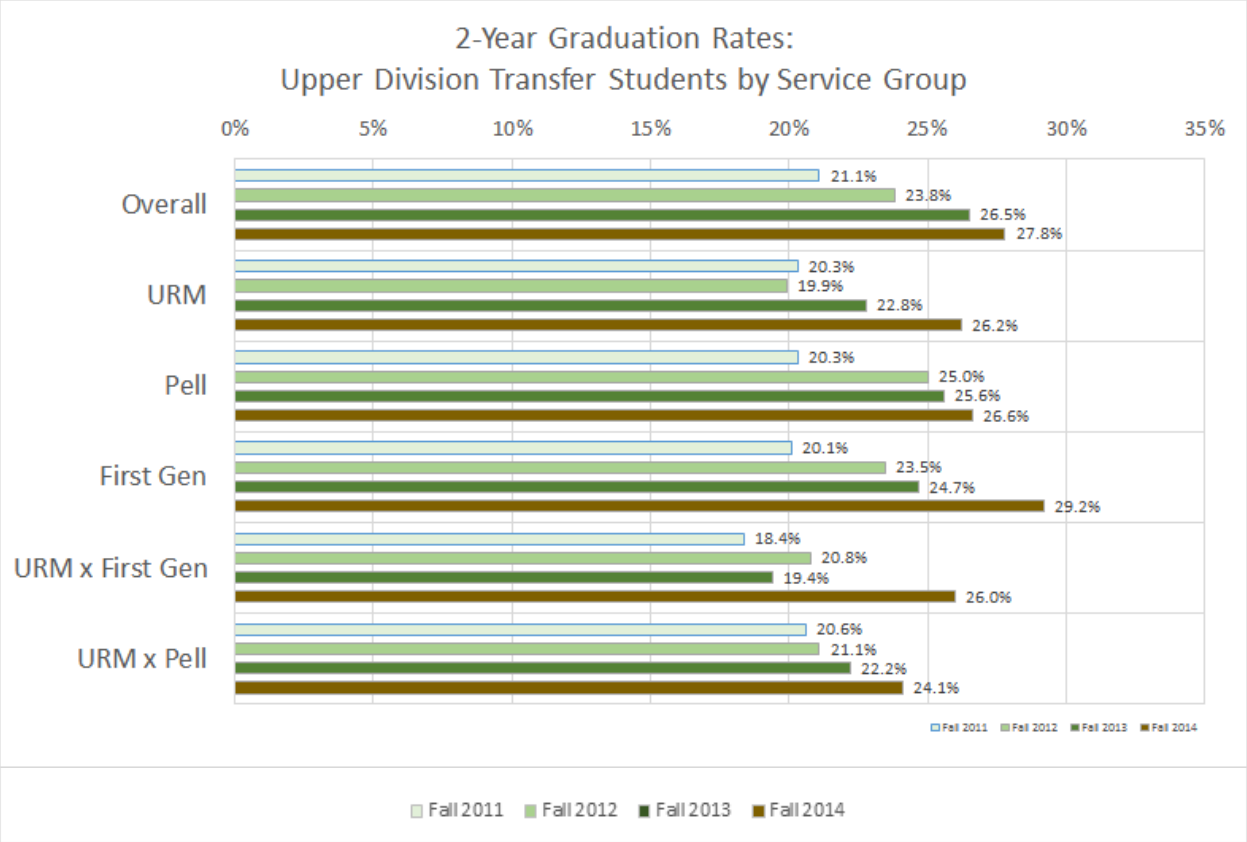
In conclusion, as we strive to raise our freshman and transfer graduation rates and eliminate achievement gaps, we remain committed to ensuring that *all* of our students continue to receive an exceptional education at HSU. We are proud of the opportunities that we provide our students, and we are dedicated to preparing our students to become full and productive members of our state.

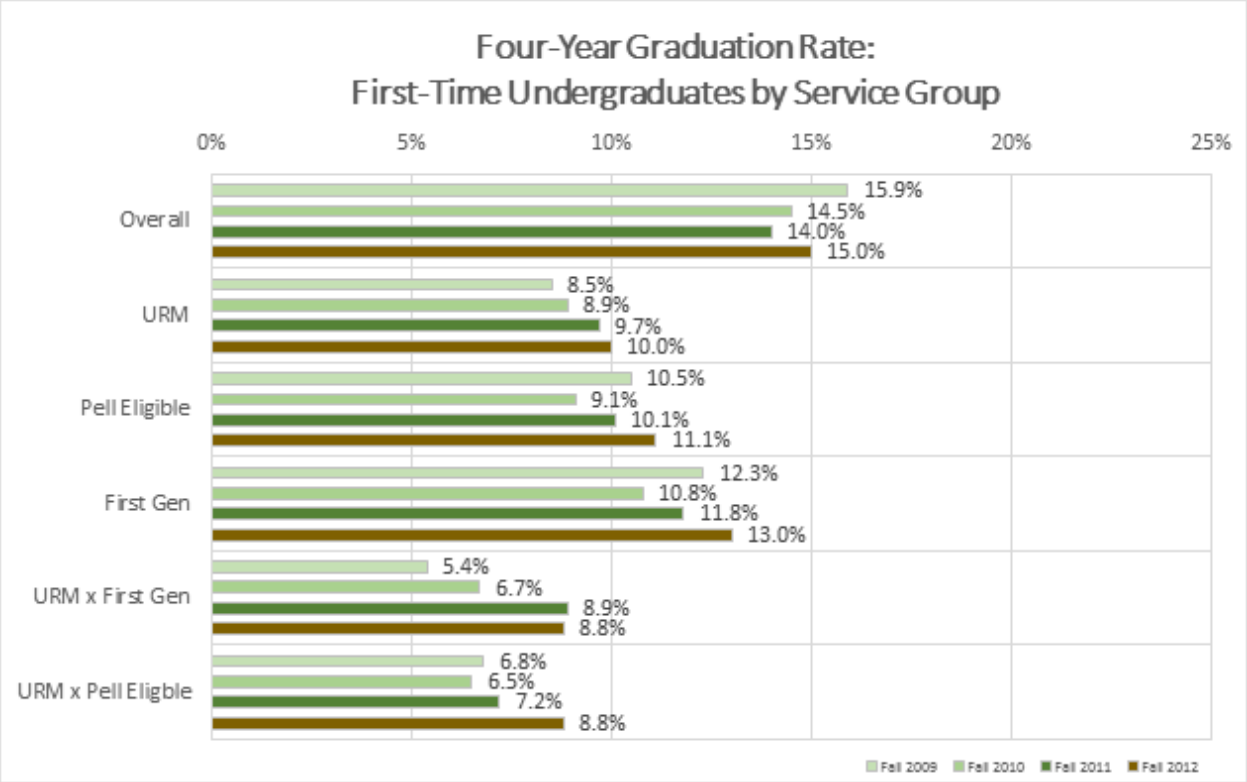
Appendix 1. HSU Demographics, Retention and Graduation Rates

HSU's Current Student Profile

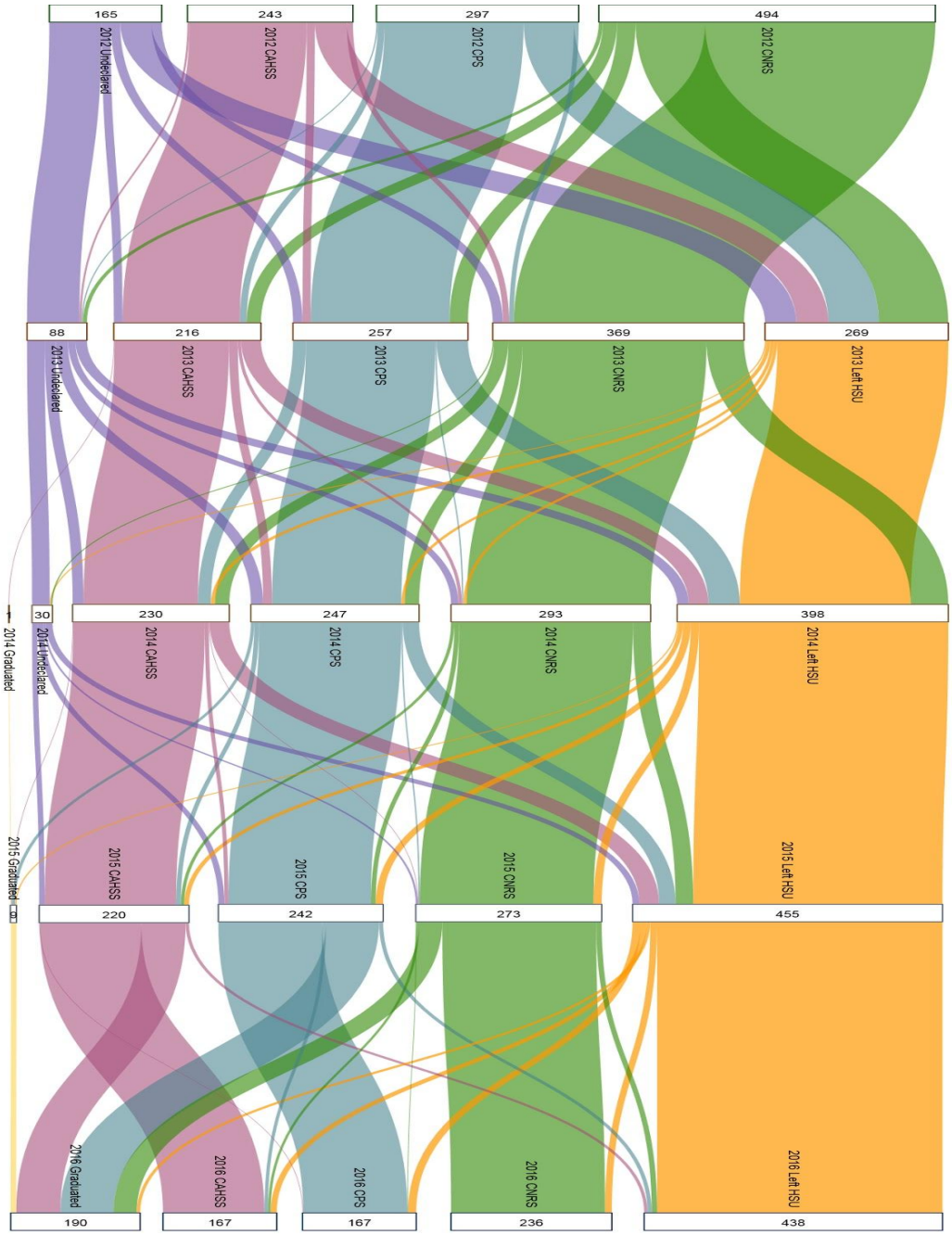


	URM	Pell	First-in-Family	URM + Pell + First-in-Family
First-Time UG	36%	42%	44%	18%
Upper Division Transfer	36%	61%	56%	19%


2-Year Graduation Rates:
Upper Division Transfer Students by Service Group
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%
Overall
21.1%
23.8%
26.5%
27.8%
URM
20.3%
19.9%
22.8%
26.2%
Pell
20.3%
25.0%
25.6%
26.6%
First Gen
20.1%
23.5%
24.7%
29.2%
URM x First Gen
18.4%
20.8%
19.4%
26.0%
URM x Pell
20.6%
21.1%
22.2%
24.1%
Fall 2011
Fall 2012
Fall 2013
Fall 2014


Four-Year Graduation Rate:
First-Time Undergraduates by Service Group
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
Overall
15.9%
14.5%
14.0%
15.0%
URM
8.5%
8.9%
9.7%
10.0%
Pell Eligible
10.5%
9.1%
10.1%
11.1%
First Gen
12.3%
10.8%
11.8%
13.0%
URM x First Gen
5.4%
6.7%
8.9%
8.8%
URM x Pell Eligble
6.8%
6.5%
7.2%
8.8%
Fall 2009
Fall 2010
Fall 2011
Fall 2012

Appendix 2. Sankey Diagram. This flow diagram shows the movement for our entire 2012 cohort of first-time undergraduates. The figure depicts the fate of the 1199 freshmen who enrolled at HSU in Fall 2012. For example, for students who did not declare a major upon entry (n=165), nearly 47% (77) of students in this cohort continued as undeclared in the next academic year (2013); 28% (46) left HSU during 2013; 9% (15) went into College of Natural Resources and Sciences (CNRS); 8.4% (14) went into the College of Professional Studies (CPS) and 7.8% (13) went into the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS).



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