



ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

STRATEGIC VISION

STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

2016

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ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES: 2016 STRATEGIC VISION STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, Arizona's community colleges embarked upon a long-term Strategic Vision to significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university. **In order to measure progress toward the three major goals outlined in the Strategic Vision, the colleges have implemented a rigorous self-assessment and accountability process centered around the annual collection and distribution of data related to 28 key indicators.**

Data presented in the 2016 Strategic Vision Student Progress and Outcomes Report identify areas of strength, as well as places where Arizona's community colleges will need to focus their efforts in order to improve student access, retention, and completion. **For some of the retention and completion measures, a specific group of students called the "Credential-Seeking Cohort" was tracked; this group is defined as full- and part-time learners who earned at least 12 credit hours by the end of their second year.** Tracking this sub-cohort aligns Arizona's data collection and accountability strategies with those of national community college initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA). Furthermore, analysis of retention and completion outcomes within this sub-cohort provides a more accurate gauge of community college student success, as it takes into account learners' diverse educational and training goals.

The 2016 outcomes presented in this report can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge. However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making long-term projections difficult at best.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2016 STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

Access

- Forty-one percent of Arizona community college students are from underserved minority groups; 40% are over age 24; and 32% are Pell recipients. These percentages are similar to or higher than national averages, demonstrating the colleges' commitment to the education and training of underserved populations.

Retention

- Arizona community colleges retain 90% of credential-seeking learners from fall to spring semesters, and 77% to the following fall.

Completion

- Arizona's community colleges awarded over 43,000 degrees and certificates in 2014-15.
- At 27% and 28%, respectively, Arizona's in-state and overall transfer rates both exceed the national average of 25%.
- More than three-quarters of credential-seeking community college students achieve a successful outcome within six years.

BACKGROUND

ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES: LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION

In 2011 Arizona's community colleges published a long-term strategic plan, which has since been incorporated into strategic planning processes at community colleges across the state. This plan outlined a clear vision for Arizona's ten community college districts and identified 28 key indicators of progress toward 3 major goal areas: access, retention, and completion. **Many of these indicators are aligned with those included in the American Association for Community Colleges' Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) initiative, which will allow for comparisons with national norms in years to come.**

A major function of the Strategic Vision is the collection, analysis, and publication of data pertaining to the 30 key indicators of progress, as well as the sharing of best practices and successful program models across the state. This document is the fifth in a series of annual reports providing data related to student progress and outcomes in Arizona's community colleges. Where available, comparable national data are also shown.

As 2016 represents the fifth full year of Strategic Vision data collection, the outcomes presented in this document can be compared to those from previous years, and trends in student progress and outcomes are starting to emerge. However, many external forces (such as the state of Arizona's economy, the actions of other public institutions of higher education, and the availability of funding for community colleges) also affect these trends, making long-term projections difficult at best.

Statewide data, as well as district-level data on these same 28 indicators, will continue to be used to guide improvement efforts at community colleges across the state. Statewide data will also be shared with the Arizona Board of Regents and the Arizona Department of Education in order to assist in the improvement of P-20 educational pathways.

The Strategic Vision, as well as a Technical Guide that provides detailed definitions of each key indicator of progress, can be found online at: www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org.

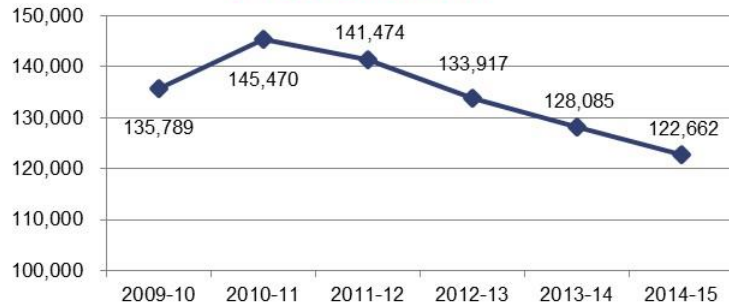
OUR VISION: Arizona's community colleges, through a collaborative effort with education, business, and community partners, will significantly increase the number of Arizonans who achieve their postsecondary education and training goals, complete a degree or certificate, and/or transfer to a university.

ACCESS INDICATORS

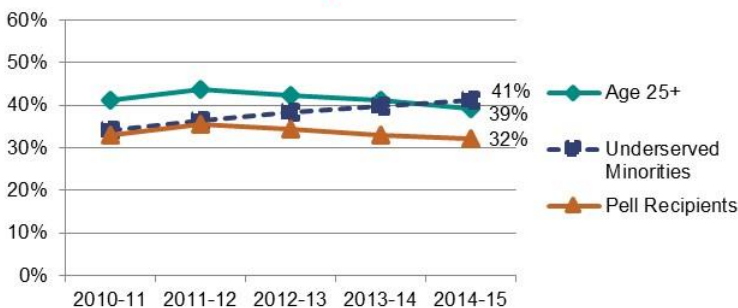
Indicator 1. Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment

Statewide, annual full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment at Arizona's community colleges has declined from its high of 145,470 in 2010-11. Despite a robust community college-going rate (see indicator 4), these enrollment numbers likely reflect a greater number of students enrolling in universities and/or private colleges, as well as an improved economy drawing more students into the workplace.

Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) Enrollment



Underserved Populations, as a Percentage of Enrollment



Indicator 2. Enrollment of Underserved Populations

Since 2010-11, the percentage of Arizona community college students who are members of an underserved racial or ethnic group has increased by 21% and is substantially higher than the national average (34%).¹ As well, the percentage of underserved minorities in the state's community college exceeds the percentage of the state's population that belongs to an underserved minority group (40%).²

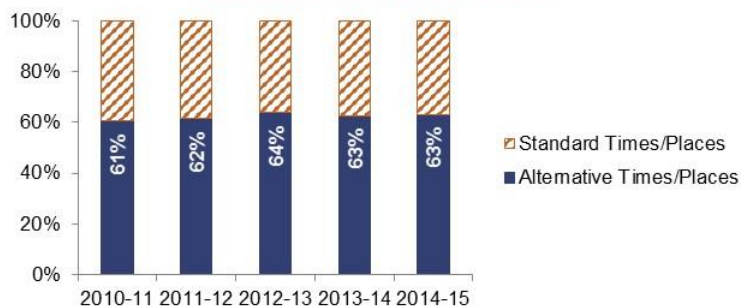
At 32%, Arizona's community colleges enroll a slightly lower percentage of Pell recipients than the national average (37%), but a slightly higher percentage of learners over the age of 24 (the national average is 38%).¹

Indicator 3. Percent of Student Credit Hours Earned via Alternative Delivery Methods and/or at Alternative Times and Places

At Arizona's community colleges, only 37% of instruction in 2014-15 occurred in traditional semester-length classes held on campus Monday through Friday between the hours of 8am and 5pm.

Extending access to many diverse populations, 63% of all student credit hours were earned online, at night or on the weekends, in short-term or open-entry/open-exit courses, and in skills centers, American Indian reservations, Army bases, or prisons.

Percent of SCH Earned at Standard and Alternative Times/Places



¹U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

²U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2016). *2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.

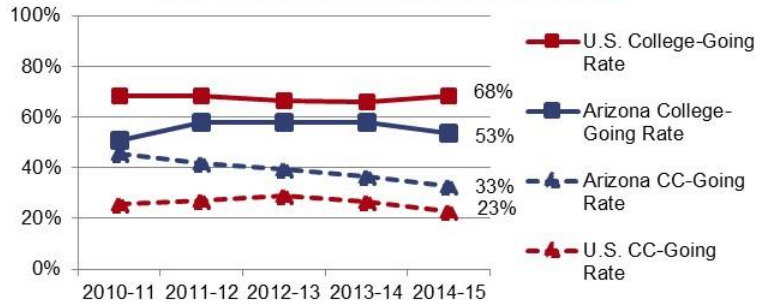
ACCESS INDICATORS

Indicators 4-5. Community College-Going Rate and Overall College-Going Rate

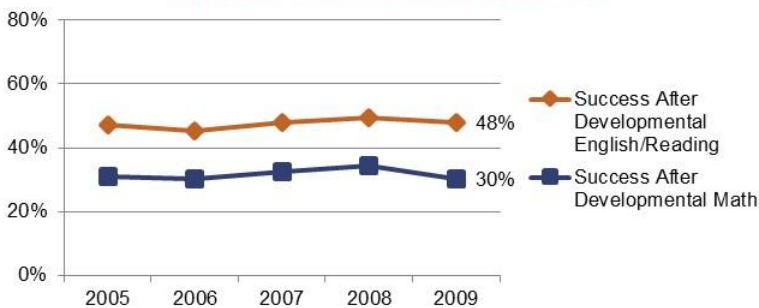
Arizona's community colleges enroll a much higher percentage (33%) of recent high school graduates than the national average (23%).³ As well, Arizona's overall college-going rate has increased to 53% in recent years, although it still lags behind the national number (68%).⁴

Arizona's community colleges will continue to work with the Arizona Board of Regents to improve the state's overall college-going rate.

Arizona & U.S. College-Going and Community College-Going Rates



Success After Remediation (2005-09 New Student Cohorts)



Indicators 6-7. Success after Remediation

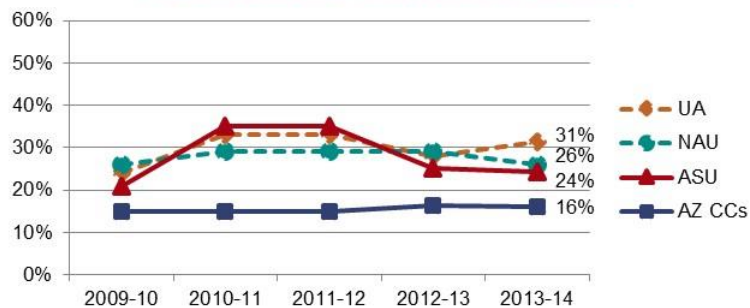
After six years, nearly half of developmental English or reading learners in the 2009 New Student Cohort successfully completed a college-level course in English, and 30% of all developmental math learners in the same cohort completed a college-level math course.

These success after remediation rates have been relatively stable over the past five years and are similar to national comparisons.⁵ (Because the national numbers were derived from a somewhat different methodology, they are not depicted here.)

Indicator 8. Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Arizona Median Household Income

At just over \$8,000 per year, the median net price of attending Arizona's community colleges is 16% of the state's median household income, making the institutions excellent and affordable options for postsecondary education and training. (Cost of attendance for each of the institutions shown here reflects the 2013-14 average net price reported by the National Center for Education Statistics.)

Cost of Attendance as a Percentage of Arizona Median Household Income



³U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015). *College enrollment and work activity of 2014 high school graduates*. Washington, DC: Author.

⁴Postsecondary Education Opportunity. (2016). *Chance for college by age 19 by state, 1986-2012*. Oskaloosa, IA: The Mortenson Seminar on Public Policy Analysis and Opportunity for Postsecondary Education.

⁵Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S. W. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review*, 29, 255-270.

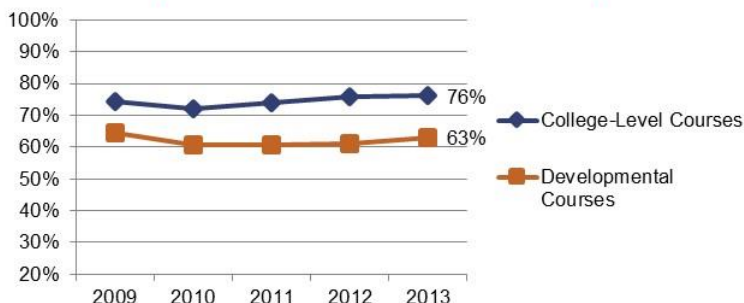
RETENTION INDICATORS

Indicators 9-10. Course Success Rates

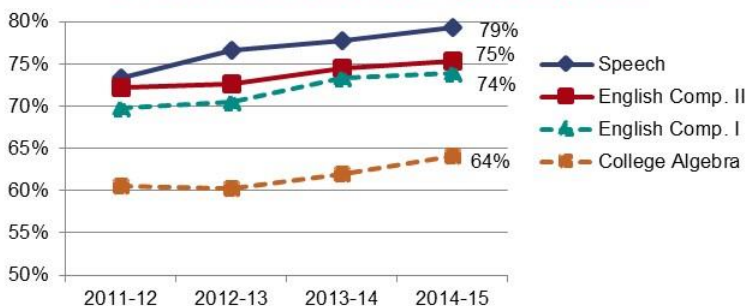
Over two years, 76% of student credit hours attempted in college-level courses by the 2013 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

In that same time period, 63% of student credit hours attempted in developmental courses by the 2013 New Student Cohort were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

**Course Success Rates
(2009-13 New Student Cohorts)**



**Percent of Gateway Math and English
Credit Hours Successfully Completed**



Indicator 11. Percent of Gateway (First College-Level) Math and English Credit Hours Successfully Completed

In 2014-15, between 64% and 79% of student credit hours attempted in College Algebra, English Composition I and II, and Speech were successfully completed (with a grade of A, B, C, or Pass).

The rate at which Arizona's community college students successfully complete these gateway or first college-level courses exceeds the corresponding national averages in all areas.⁶ College-level math continues to pose the biggest challenge for many community college students, both in Arizona and across the nation.

⁶National Community College Benchmark Project . (2015). *Report of national aggregate data*. Overland Park, KS: Author.

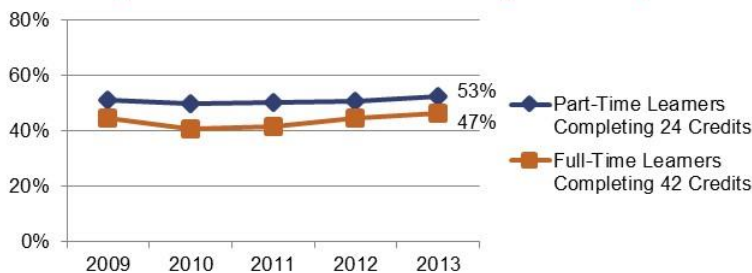
RETENTION INDICATORS

Indicator 12. Percent of Full-Time Learners Completing 42 Credits and Percent of Part-Time Learners Completing 24 Credits within Two Years

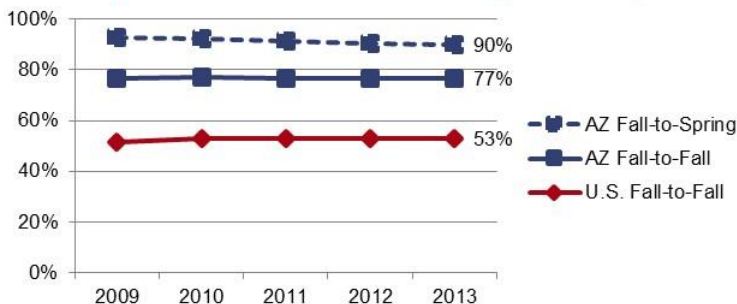
By the end of their second year, 53% of all part-time learners in the 2013 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed 24 credits, and 47% of full-time learners in the same cohort had completed 42 credits. These rates have remained steady over the past four years.

Although there is room for improvement, these rates are notable, as research has linked attainment of credit thresholds (roughly equivalent to 20 credits per year for full-time students) to higher retention and completion rates.⁷

Percent of Learners Reaching Credit Thresholds within Two Years (2009-13 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



Retention Rates (2009-13 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



Indicators 13-14. Retention Rates

Ninety percent of learners in the 2013 Credential-Seeking Cohort (excluding those who successfully transferred and/or earned a degree or certificate) persisted at their college to spring 2014, and 77% of them returned for classes the following fall. As this figure shows, Arizona's community colleges are retaining the vast majority of credential-seeking students.

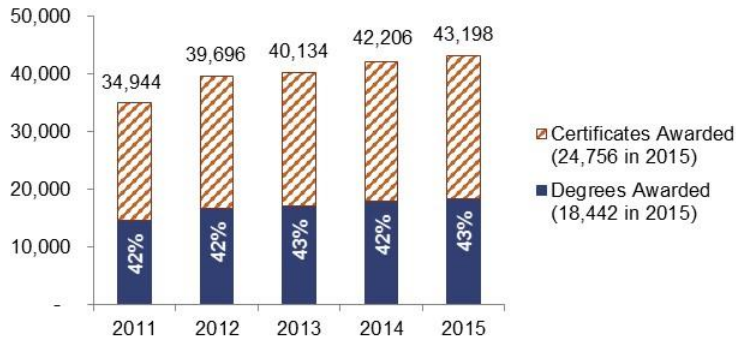
Arizona's retention figures are higher than the 53% fall-to-fall retention rate reported as a national comparison,⁸ as the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. However, national community college accountability initiatives such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability are beginning to track and analyze retention among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

⁷Moore, C., Shulock, N., & Offenstien, J. (2009). *Steps to success: Analyzing milestone achievement to improve community college student outcomes*. Sacramento: California State University, Sacramento, Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy.

⁸NCHEMS. (2010). *Retention rates – First-time college freshmen returning their second year*. Boulder, CO: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

Degrees and Certificates Awarded



Indicator 15. Number of Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Between 2011 and 2015, the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Arizona's community colleges increased by 24% to 43,198.

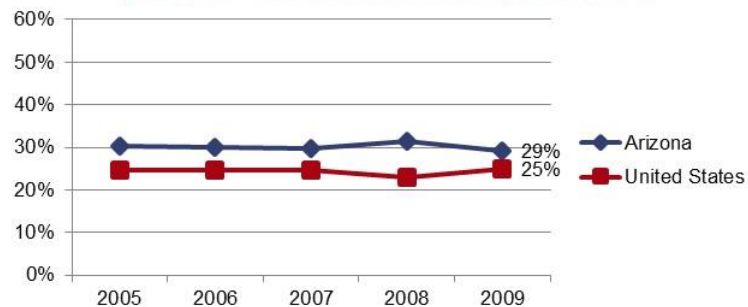
Of the 2015 total, 43% were degrees, and 57% were certificates. These data reflect a concerted effort by Arizona's community colleges to increase the number of learners earning postsecondary credentials, especially in high-demand fields.

Indicator 16. Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (Graduation Rate)

After six years, 29% of the 2009 Credential-Seeking Cohort had completed a degree or certificate (this percentage has been relatively consistent over the past four years).

Arizona's graduation rate is somewhat higher than the most recent national comparison (25%),⁹ as the national number is not limited to credential-seekers. However, the Voluntary Framework of Accountability is beginning to track and analyze completion among credential-seeking sub-cohorts, and thus more accurate national comparisons should be available in future years.

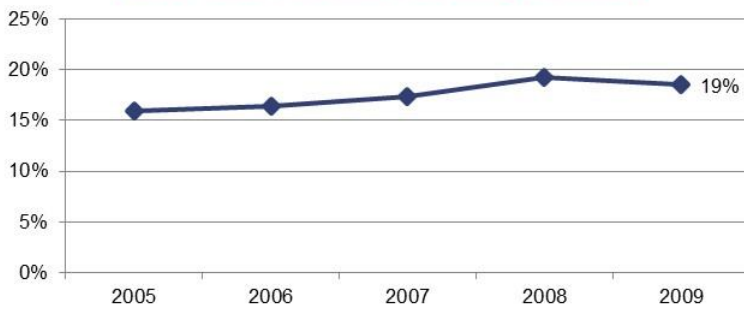
Degree/Certificate Completion Rate (2005-09 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



⁹U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, DC: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

**AGEC Completion Rate
(2005-09 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)**



Indicator 17. AGEC Completion Rate

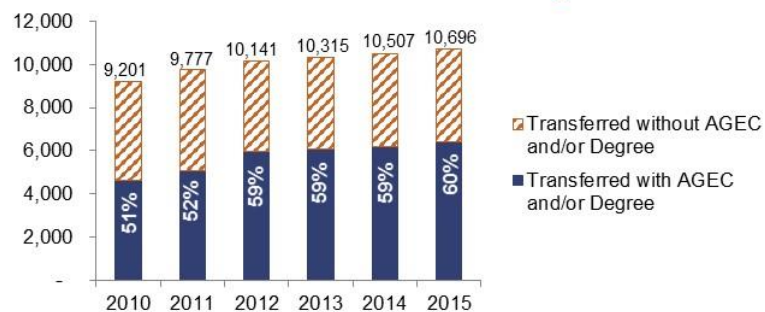
Statewide, 19% of the 2009 Credential-Seeking Cohort completed the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) within 6 years, a 21% increase from the 2005 Cohort.

Increasing the statewide AGEC completion rate—a key priority for the state’s community colleges—will not only ease transfer to Arizona’s public universities but should help to improve bachelor’s degree completion in Arizona.

Indicators 18-19. Number of In-State University Transfers, and Percent with an AGEC and/or Degree at Time of Transfer

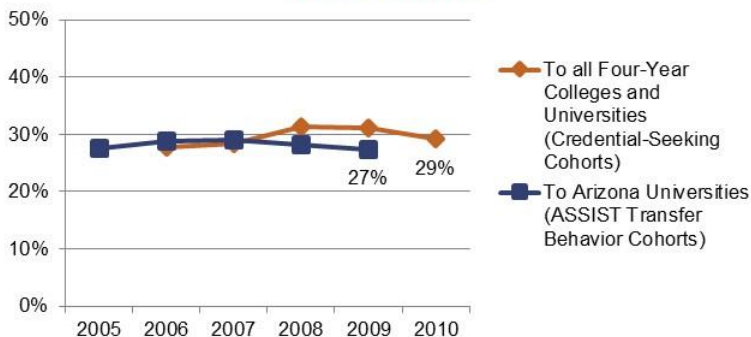
Between 2010 and 2015, the number of students transferring from Arizona’s community colleges to an in-state, public university increased by 16% to 10,696. In addition, the percentage of those transfers who had earned an AGEC and/or degree prior to transfer increased from 51% to 60%. These data indicate that the transfer process is becoming more efficient and cost effective for both students and the state.

Number of In-State University Transfers and Percent with AGEC and/or Degree



COMPLETION INDICATORS

Transfer Rates



Indicators 20-21. In-State and Overall Transfer Rates

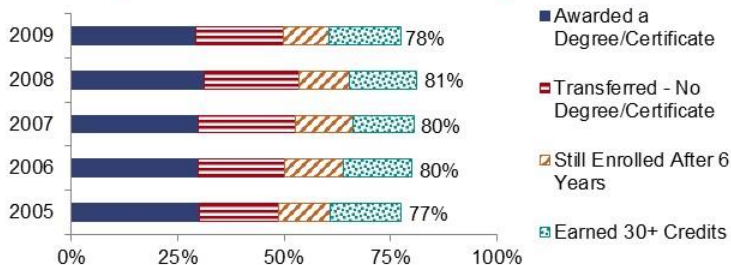
Statewide, transfer rates among ASSIST Transfer Behavior Cohorts have remained around 27%. However, the overall transfer rate (the percent of learners in Credential-Seeking Cohorts who transferred to any four-year college or university within 6 years) has varied, reaching 29% in 2010. Both rates are higher than the most recent national transfer rate (25%) calculated by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges.¹⁰

Indicator 22. Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Community College Outcome

Statewide, 78% of learners in the 2009 Credential-Seeking Cohort achieved a successful outcome within 6 years.

Because community college learners enter college with diverse education and training goals, and because they often attend part-time and/or earn credits from more than one community college, the Voluntary Framework of Accountability and other national accountability initiatives have broadened the definition of a successful community college outcome to include: earning a degree or certificate; transferring to another two- or four-year college or university; continued enrollment; and/or leaving the institution after earning 30 or more credits.

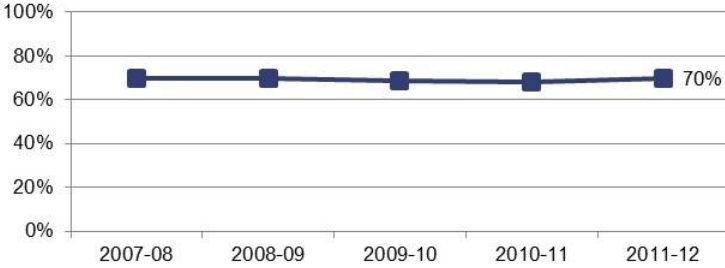
Percent of Learners Achieving a Successful Outcome (2005-09 Credential-Seeking Cohorts)



¹⁰Center for the Study of Community Colleges. (2002). *National transfer rates are up! Results of the 2001 Transfer Assembly Project*. Los Angeles: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

Percent of Full-Time Transfers to Arizona Universities Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



Indicator 23. Percent of Full-Time Transfers to Arizona Public Universities who Earn a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years

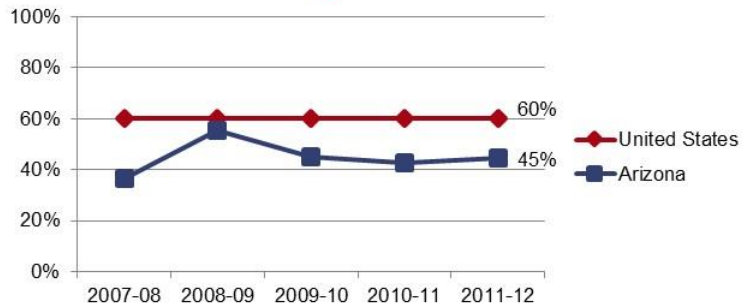
Seventy percent of all 2011-12 full-time transfers from Arizona community colleges to in-state universities earned a bachelor's degree within four years.

This rate has remained consistent in recent years and indicates that most full-time transfers from Arizona community colleges are graduating from the state's public universities in a timely manner.

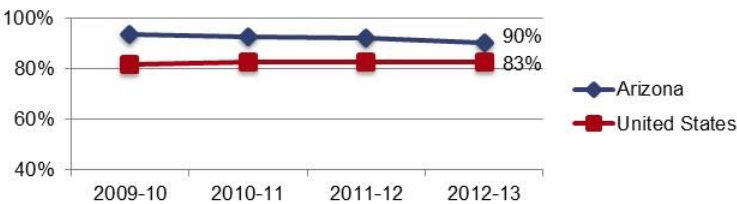
Indicator 24. Percent of all Transfers who Earn a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years

Statewide, 45% of 2011-12 transfers from Arizona community colleges to all four-year institutions—public and private, in-state and out—earned a bachelor's degree within four years. Somewhat lower than the national average (60%),¹¹ this percentage may reflect a high incidence of part-time attendance after transfer.

Percent of all Transfers Earning a Bachelor's Degree within Four Years



Percent of Learners Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential (2009-13 Occupational Completers/Leavers)



Indicator 25. Percent of Occupational Program Completers/Leavers Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential within One Year

Out of all learners in the 2012-13 Occupational Completers/Leavers Cohort who took a technical skill or end-of-program assessment aligned with industry-recognized standards up to one year after college exit, 90% passed the assessment and/or earned an industry-recognized credential. This level of performance exceeds the 2011-12 national average of 83%.¹²

Examples of occupational programs leading to industry-recognized credentials include, among others, aviation technology, building and construction, dental hygiene, education, emergency medical technician, fashion, fire science, nursing, solar technologies, and veterinary technologies.

¹¹National Student Clearinghouse. (2012). *Snapshot report: transfer outcomes (four years after transfer)*. Herndon, VA: Author.

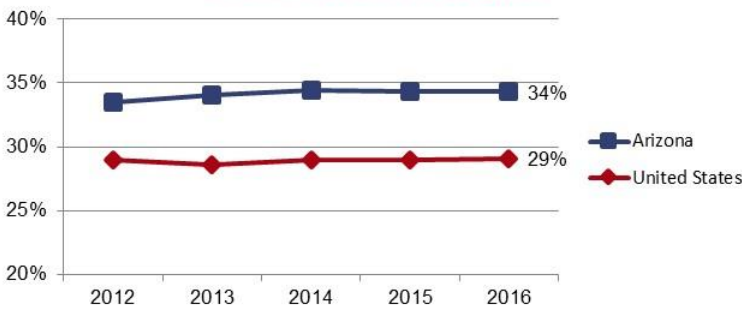
¹²Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. (2014). *Core indicator report : 1P1 Technical Skill Attainment , 2011-12*. Washington, DC: Author.

COMPLETION INDICATORS

Indicator 26. Wage Growth of Occupational Completers

This indicator will be incorporated into the Strategic Vision pending a statewide agreement for sharing wage data.

Percent of Adults with Some College or an Associate Degree



Indicator 27. Percent of Adults with Some College or an Associate Degree

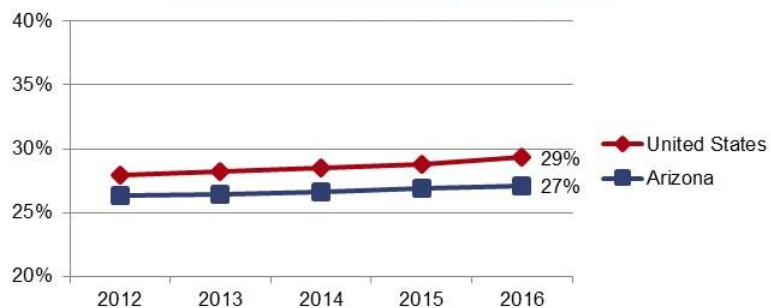
Thirty-four percent of Arizona adults age 25 and older have attended some college and/or have earned an associate degree. This rate is substantially higher than the national average of 29%.¹³

Indicator 28. Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree

Twenty-seven percent of Arizona adults hold a bachelor's or higher degree. This number is slightly lower than the national average of 29%¹³ but has increased slightly over the past few years.

Although Arizona's community colleges only indirectly affect the percentage of bachelor's degree holders in the state, the colleges will continue to work with the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) to reach ABOR's goal of meeting or exceeding the national rate by 2017.

Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree



¹³U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2016). Educational attainment for the population 25 years and older: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Washington, DC: Author.