
Student Success

A 10 percent increase in our six-year undergraduate graduation rate by the year 2020.

Jump to:

- [Six-Year Graduation Rate \(#Six-Year-Graduation-Rate\)](#)
- [What We Know On \(#What-We-Know-On\)](#)
- [The Brutal Facts \(#The-Brutal-Facts\)](#)
- [What We Are Doing \(#What-We-Are-Doing\)](#)

Six-Year Graduation Rate

Our most recent six-year graduation rate for the entering class in 2009, at 71%, is not where we want to be. My charge is to increase that to an 80% graduation rate by 2020. We are a selective top public university and we should have every expectation that our graduation rate will equal that of our public peers such as the University of Washington (80+%) or the University of California-San Diego (85+%).

What We Know On

Retention: On average, we consistently lose:

- 16% of any entering freshman class by the start of their second year
- 7% of second to third year students
- 2% of third to fourth
- 7% of fourth to sixth

Academic Probation:

- 17% of first year A&S students were placed on academic probation at the end of the 2013-2014 academic year, with 43% of those students (295 students) dismissed prior to the start of the second year.
- 50% of the first-year attrition is for students with 2.0 gpa or better; 24% of those have a 3.0 gpa or better.

Alternate College Option (ACO)

- 23% of the entering first-year population in A&S in Fall 2013 applied to a different college, largely Leeds and Engineering.
- 25.8% of these students were placed on academic probation in their first semester.

Retention rates are lower for this population by 6% by the beginning of the second year.

- 11% of ACO-Business students successfully transferred to the Leeds School of Business.
- 17.9% of the ACO-Engineering students successfully transferred to Engineering.
- 30% of the ACO-Business students and 31% of the ACO-Engineering students left CU Boulder by the end of the third semester.

National and Local Research

There are three major reasons which account for a large amount of attrition:

- College doesn't care about me (as a person)
- Poor service and treatment (Overlaps 1st)
- Not worth it (Compared to a job)

Particularly troubling is that nearly one-quarter of the first-year attrition have a 3.0 GPA.

They're not flunking out, they're walking away. Why are academically competent students not willing to stay?

The answer may surprise you. Many of the students who leave believe the campus community does not care about them as a person. We need to focus on both academics and on helping our students find a sense of community at CU-Boulder. With students, faculty and staff working together we can create that sense of community. We saw this with the successful New Student Welcome that many of you worked so hard on last spring and summer.

The Brutal Facts

Our six-year graduation rates are steadily improving – we saw a small jump in each of the last three years. But if we continue doing what we have been doing, we can only expect to improve at our current pace and we will not hit our goal of 80% until 2038. Clearly this cannot be the plan.

This university travels in the company of the nation's top universities in research and we should match that success in our graduation rates. We also have an ethical responsibility to students and their families to insure they graduate in a timely manner with as little debt as possible.

What We Are Doing

I believe we can improve persistence to graduation through cultural change

New Student Welcome Program Revision

- Identify and revise major gaps in the New Student Welcome Program for the second year

- Emphasize student belonging to the university, to special programs, to disciplines, and to colleges
- Employ digital resources to maintain individual contact more effectively than in the past

Advising

- A&S Coaches: Pilot Academic Coaches for A&S students in academic difficulty
- Pilot a Student Success Team to meet individually with A&S student who wish to drop
- CU Thrive: Pilot peer-mentors assigned to two first-year students for weekly meetings
- Import Predictive Algorithms into advising; assign students to Low-case load Coordinators
- Redefine probation and suspension (w/Provost's office)

CU Hub Pilot

- Pilot new advising software
- Report on students who have not met with an academic advisor
- Planning Early Alert and Outreach Flag functionality

Provost's Office

- Establish Associate Vice Provost for Student Success
- Continue work with established persistence committees comprised of faculty and staff
- Study ALEKS effort on Math placements
- Continue focus on universal accessibility, especially for digital materials
- Continue to look at student success at the course and department level

University of Colorado Boulder

© Regents of the University of Colorado