

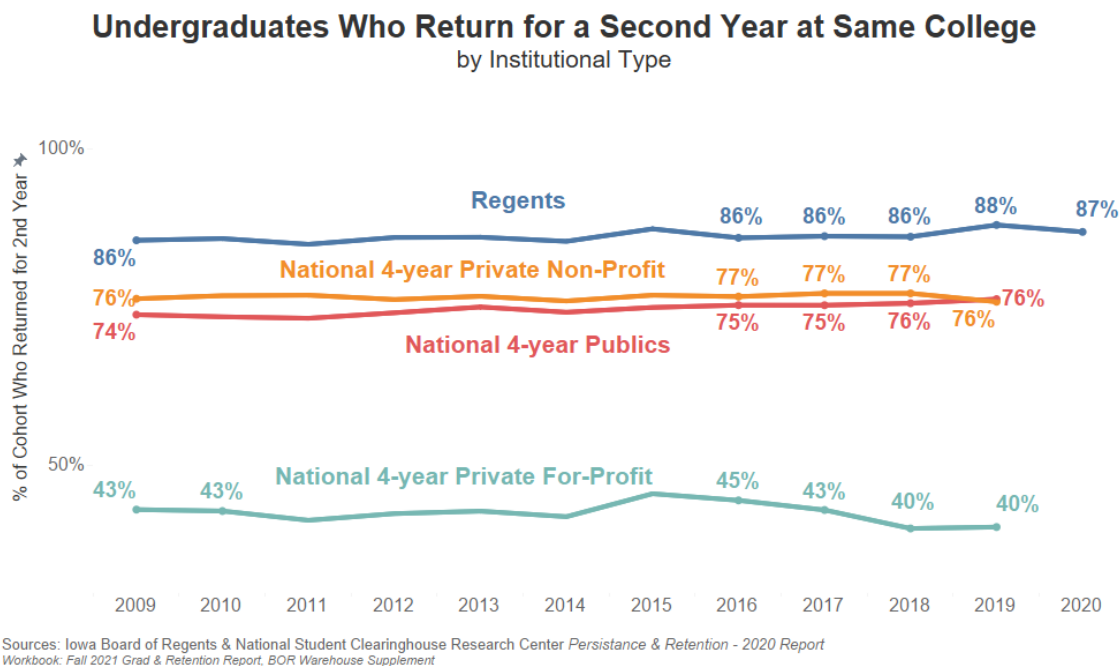
Contact: Jason Pontius

FALL 2021 GRADUATION AND RETENTION REPORT

Action Requested: Receive the Fall 2021 Graduation & Retention Report.

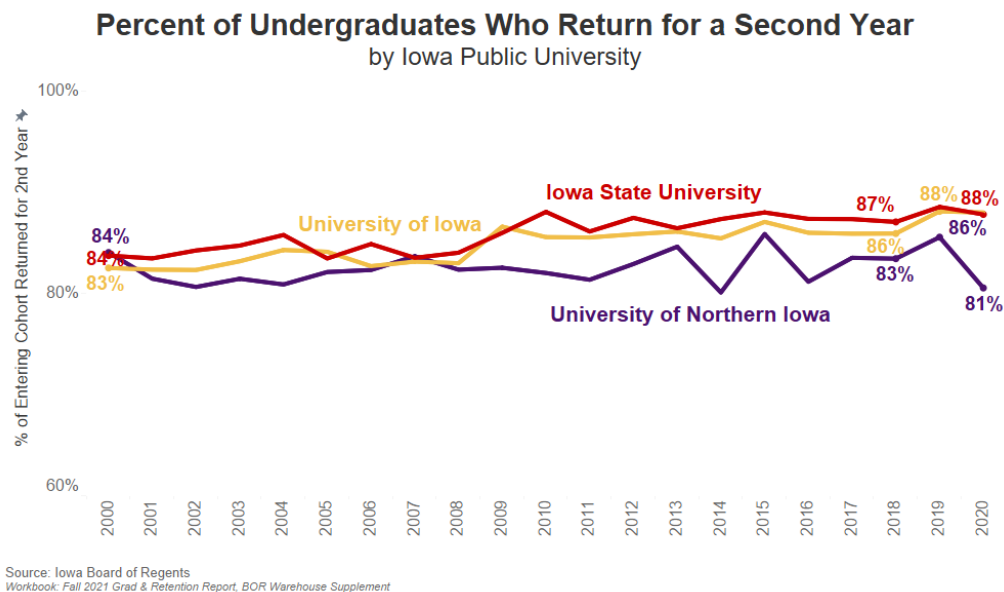
Executive Summary: The Regent university overall retention rates are down one percentage point and graduation rates within six years are up two percentage points since last year. Both metrics are well above national averages. Time to degree continues to show steady improvement but gaps in graduation rates by race/ethnicity persist.

Retention rates. One-year retention rates for Regent university students were down one percentage point for the 2020 cohort that started during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eighty-seven percent of the entering class of 2020 returned for their second year. This rate compares favorably to national one-year retention rates at both 4-year public and 4-year private colleges and universities (see graph below). Note: All retention graphs in this report have a modified scale which improves readability but can exaggerate differences by category.

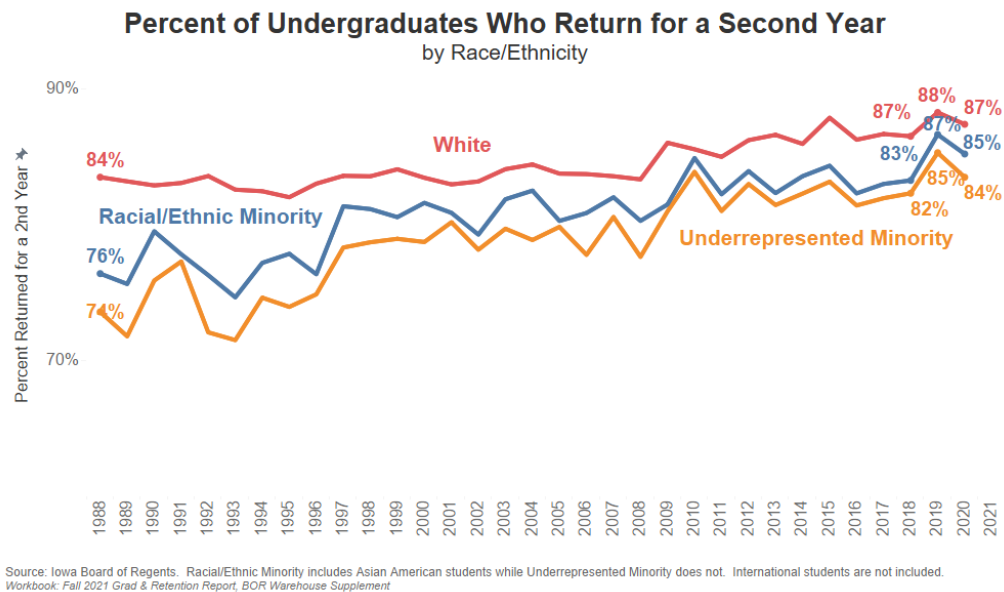


The number of first year students returning for a second year can fluctuate annually by cohort and differs by university. Iowa State University dropped one percentage point to 88%, the University of Iowa remained the same at 88%, and the University of Northern Iowa dropped five percentage point from 86% to 81% (see graph on next page).

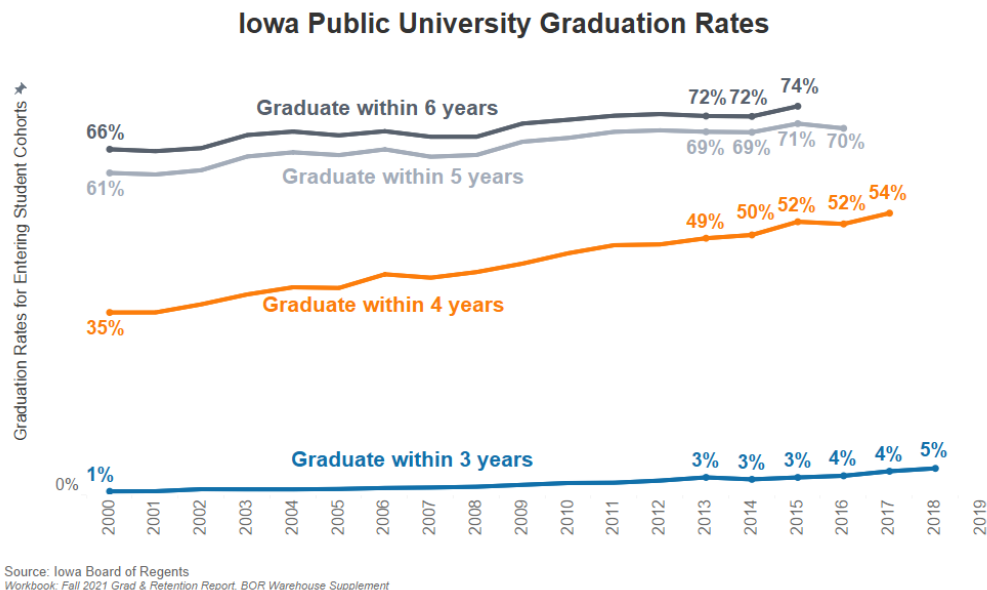
This drop is likely due to UNI's larger population of Pell-eligible and first-generation college students who leave college at higher levels nationally. For example, the Iowa Postsecondary Readiness Report shows that students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch are 2.5 times more likely to leave college in the first year than their peers from families with higher incomes. UNI still outperforms its peers. UNI's peer institutions have an average first year retention rate of 78.7%.



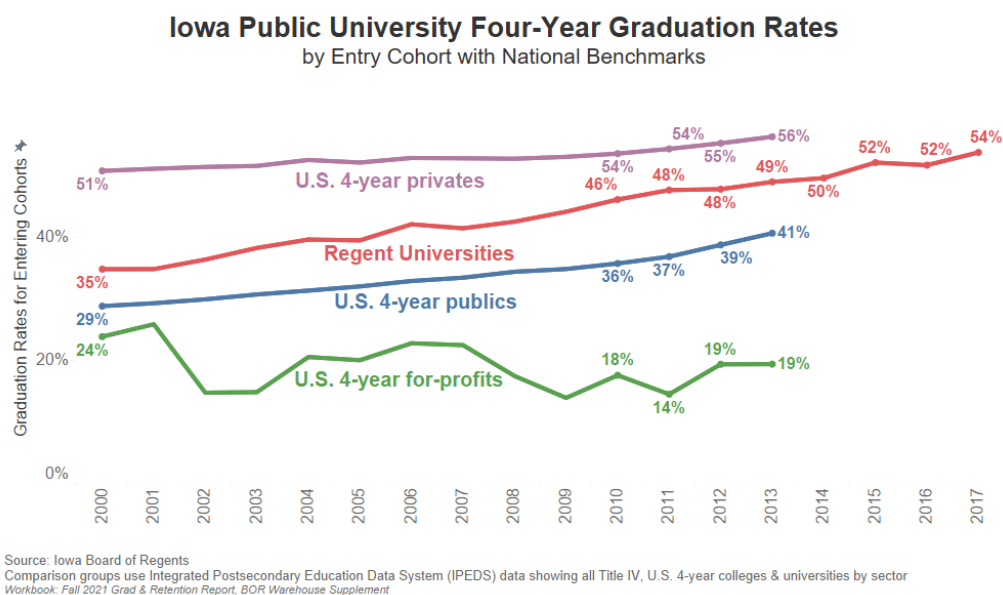
The graph below shows the percent of undergraduates who return for a second year by race/ethnicity. The gap is only two to three percentage points and has narrowed over time.



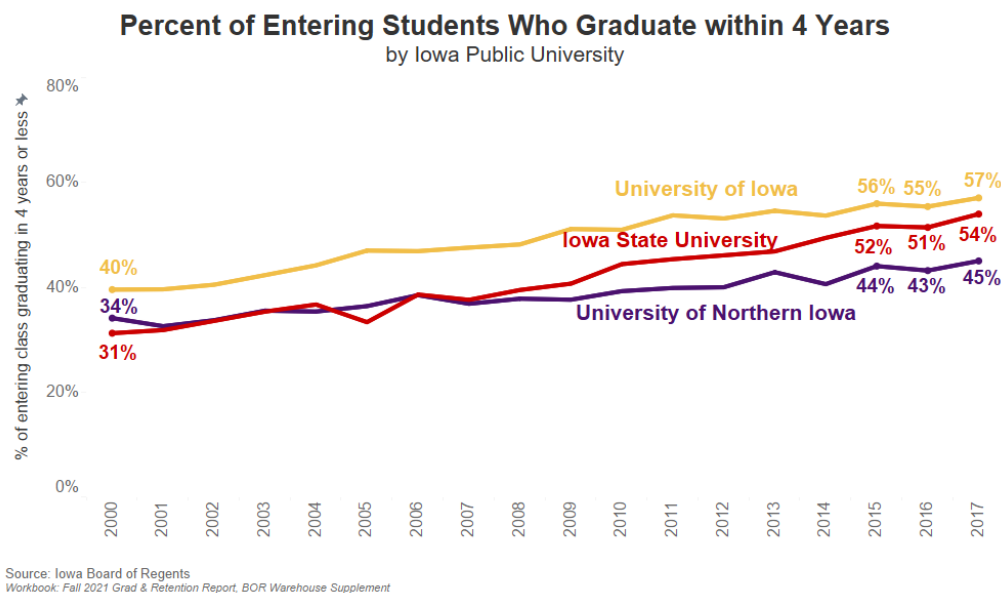
Graduation rates. The overall Regent university four-year (54%) and six-year graduation rates (74%) both improved from last year. As seen in the graph below, there was also growth in the three-year (5%) and a one percentage point drop in the five-year graduation rate (70%).



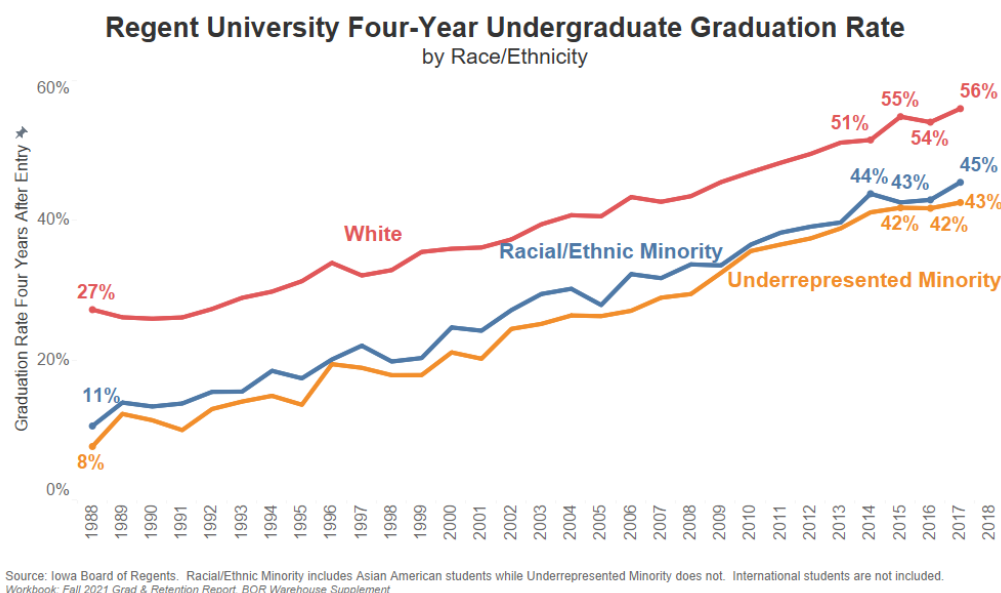
The percent of Regent university undergraduates who graduate within four years continues to outperform other four-year public universities (see graph below).



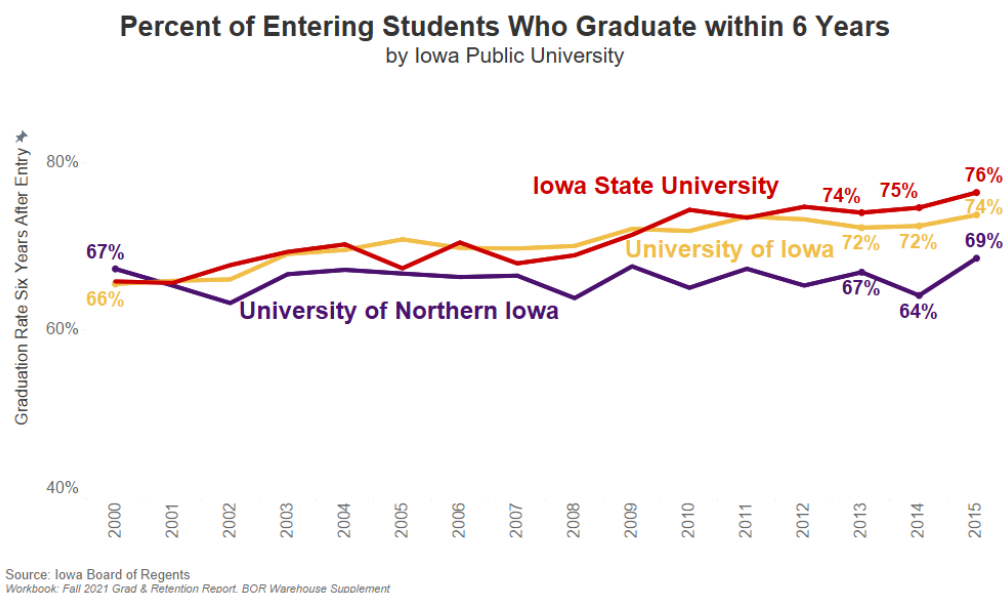
The Regent universities continue to show steady growth in the percentage of students who graduate within four years. All three universities showed one-year growth of two to three percentage points (see graph below).



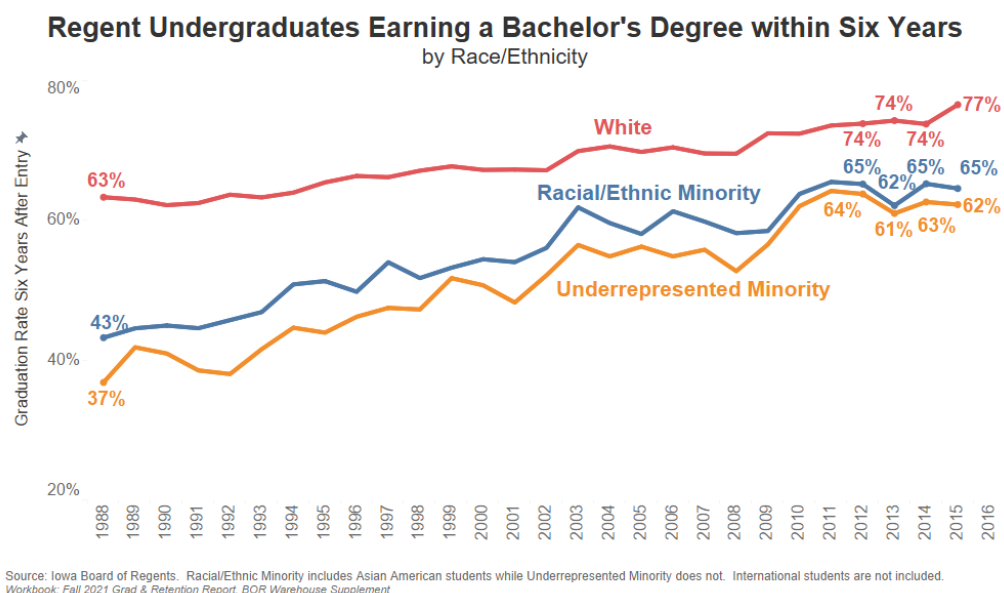
While the percent of students who graduate in four years has improved over time, the gap by degree attainment by race/ethnicity has remained. The gap has narrowed somewhat over time from a 16-percentage point gap in 1988 to an 11-13 percentage point gap for the 2017 entry cohort (see graph below).



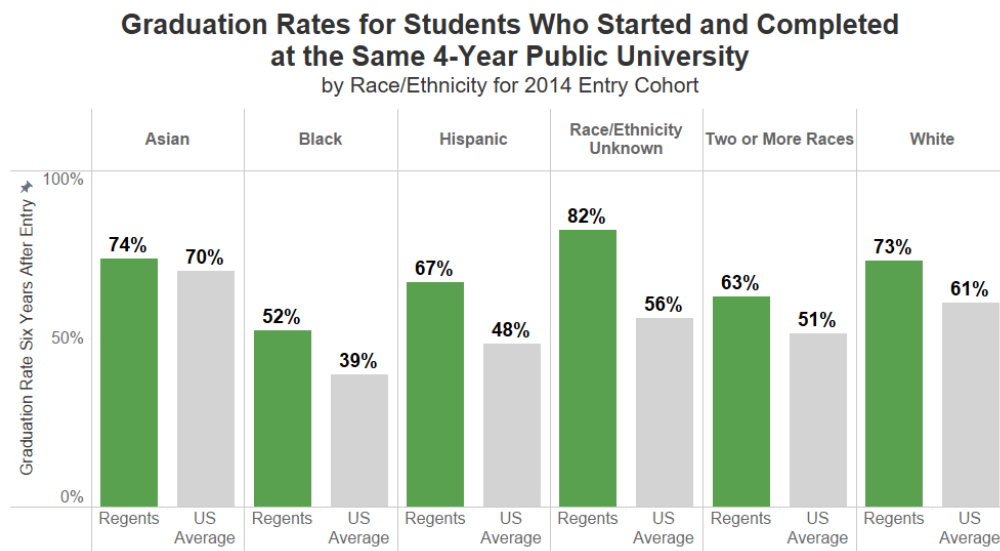
Six-year graduation rates showed growth from the previous year at all three universities with Iowa State University at 76%, the University of Iowa at 74%, and the University of Northern Iowa rebounding from last year to 69%.



The six-year graduation rate gap by race/ethnicity has narrowed more dramatically over time than the four-year graduation rate. The 1988 entry cohort had a 20-26 percentage point gap which narrowed to a 9-12 percentage point gap for the 2014 entry cohort. This gap expanded for the 2015 entry cohort to 12-15 percentage points (see graph below).

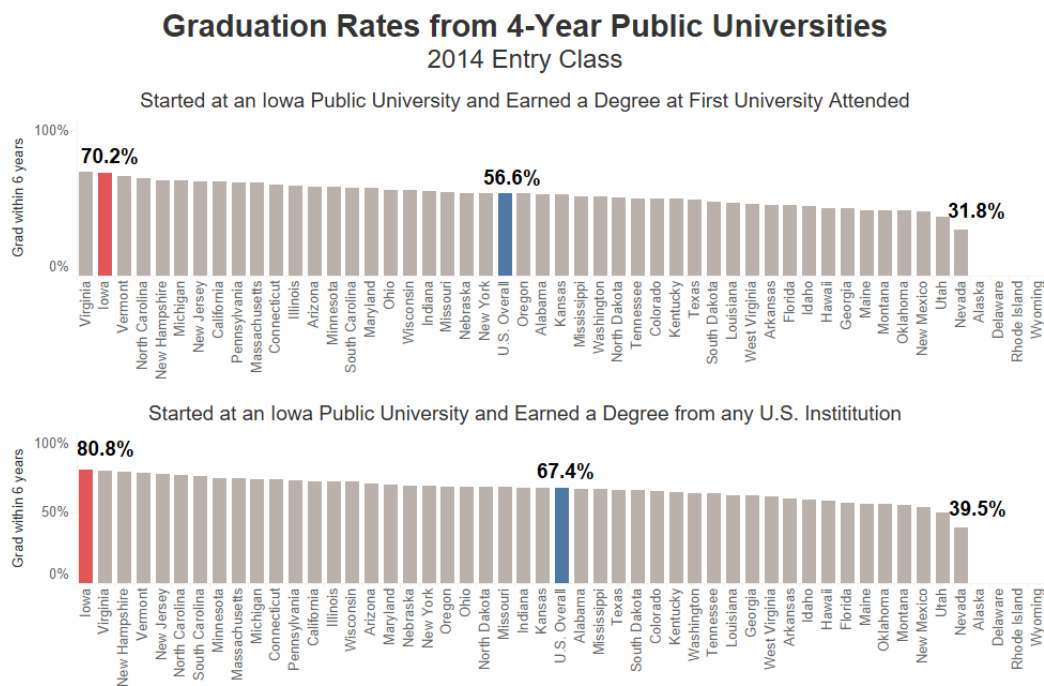


National & state benchmarking. While gaps remain in Regent university graduation rates by race/ethnicity, the Regents continue to outperform four-year public university national averages. The graph below shows six-year graduation rates by race/ethnicity.



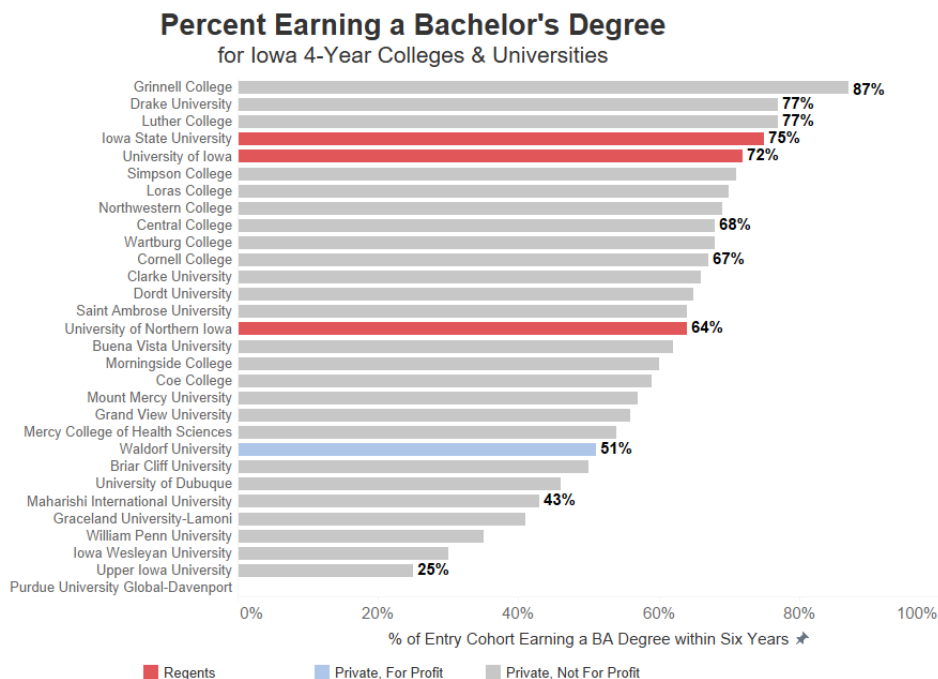
Source: Iowa Board of Regents, National Student Clearinghouse Signature 16 Report. Graduation rates within six years of entry shown.
Workbook: Fall 2021 Grad & Retention Report, BOR Warehouse Supplement

Students attending a four-year public university in Iowa continue to perform well compared to their peers in other states. The percent of students who start at a four-year public university in Iowa and graduate from that same university within six years was 70.2%. Students who start at an Iowa four-year public university have the highest total degree attainment rate (80.8%, regardless of where the student earns their degree) of similar students nationally.



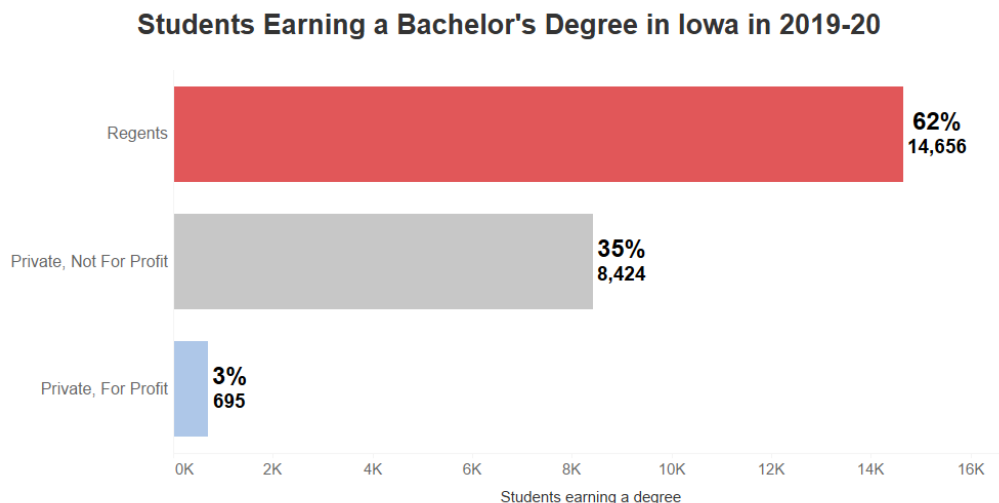
Source: NSC 2020 Completing College National and State Reports. Graduation rates determined six years after entry to first college attended. Student could have graduated from any U.S. college, not just the first attended. Workbook: NSC 6-year Graduation Rates by State 2014 Cohort

Regent university graduation rates also perform well compared to other Iowa colleges and universities (see graph below).



Source: U.S. Dept. of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Rates represent the percent of the 2014 entry cohort who earned a BA within 6 years.
Workbook: Fall 2021 Grad & Retention Report, BOR Warehouse Supplement

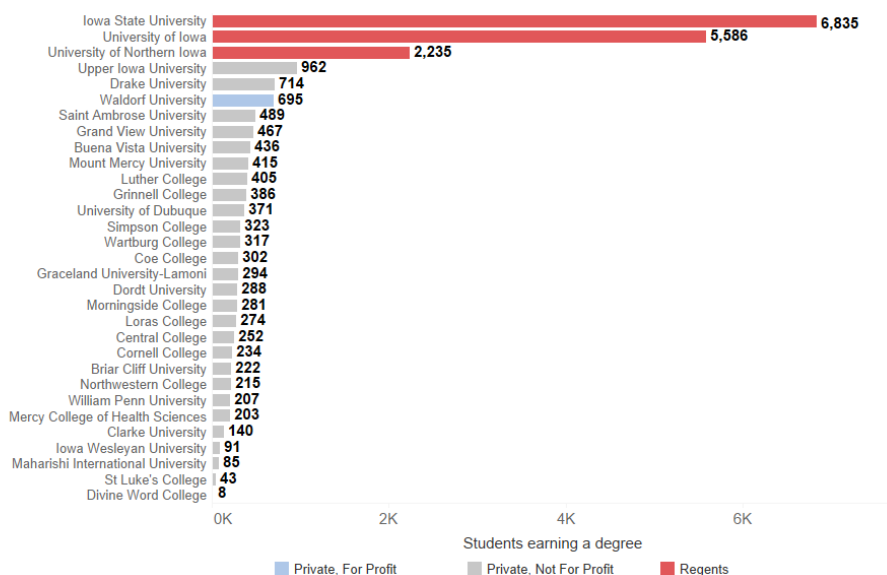
Regent universities are engines for an educated workforce in Iowa. Regent universities awarded 62% of all bachelor's degrees awarded by Iowa colleges and universities in 2019-20 (see graph below).



Source: U.S. Dept. of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
Graph shows Iowa institutions that reported students earning bachelor's degree in 2019-20. Purdue Global campuses did not report any graduates to IPEDS during this time.
Workbook: Fall 2021 Grad & Retention Report, BOR Warehouse Supplement

The Regent universities are also the top three producers of bachelor's degrees in the state of Iowa (see graph below).

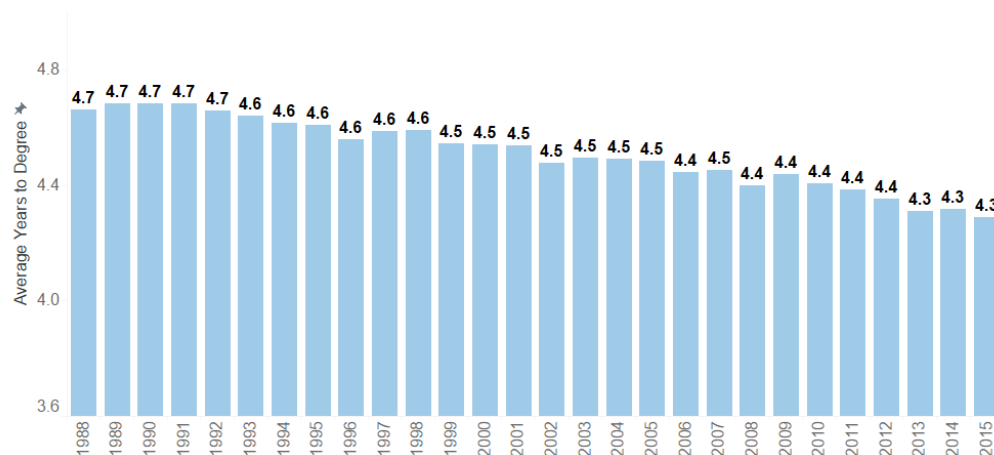
Students Earning a Bachelor's Degree in Iowa 2019-20



Source: U.S. Dept. of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Graph shows institutions that reported earned a bachelor's degrees in 2019-20.
Workbook: Fall 2021 Grad & Retention Report, BOR Warehouse Supplement

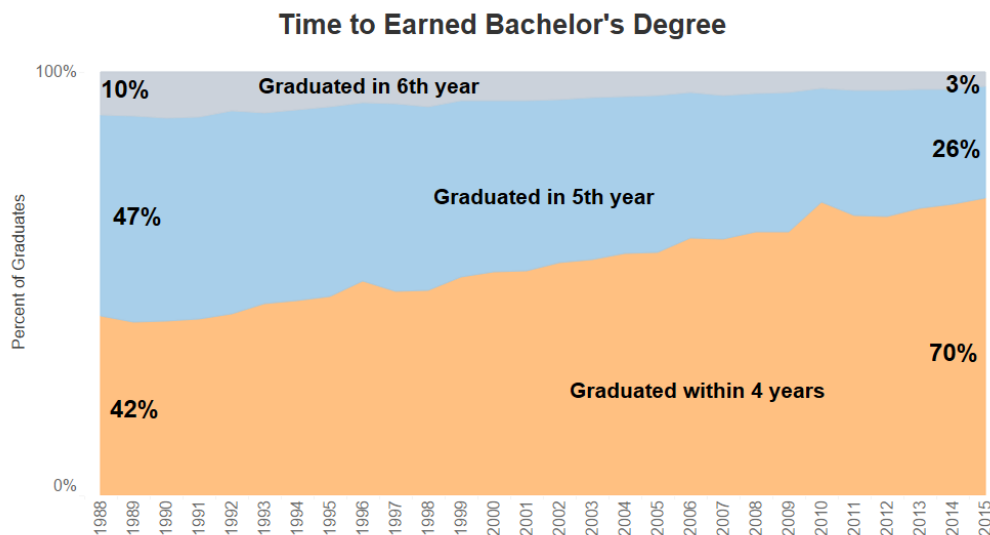
Time to degree. The federal six-year graduation rate standard does not mean that most students need six years to complete a degree. The graph below shows the amount of time in elapsed years that the average student at a Regent university needed to earn a bachelor's degree. This metric measures elapsed time from start to finish, and includes time away from the classroom. Regent university time to degree has steadily declined over time.

Time to Bachelor's Degree in Elapsed Years Iowa Public Universities



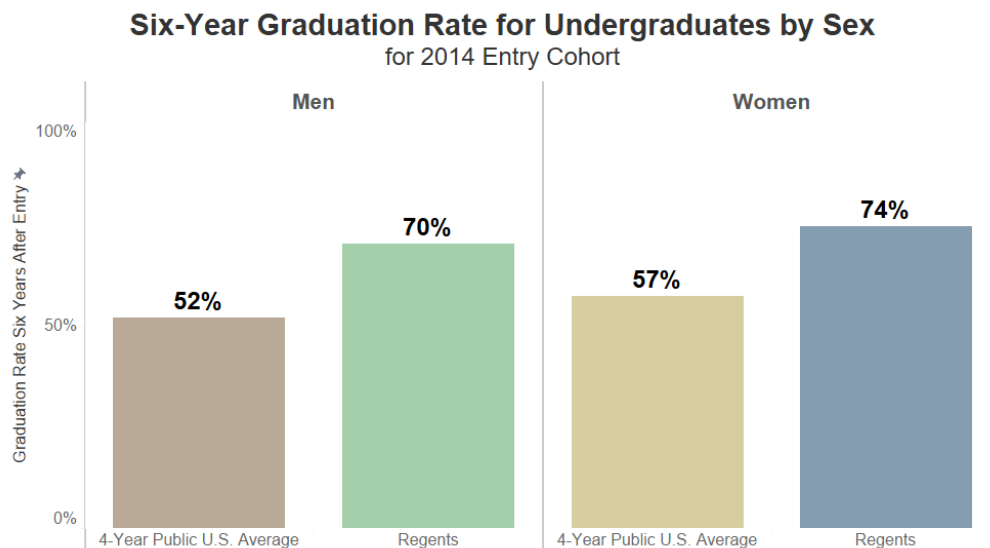
Source: Iowa Board of Regents
Time to degree = (# graduating within 3 years x 3) + (# 3-4 years grads x 4) + (# 4-5 year grads x 5) + (# 5-6 year grads x 6) / # grads within 6 years of entry
Workbook: Fall 2021 Grad & Retention Report, BOR Warehouse Supplement

When looking at Regent university graduates, the percent who earn a degree in four years has increased significantly over the past 25 years. Of the 2015 entry cohort, 70% of degree earners graduated in four years compared to 42% of the 1988 cohort. Only three percent of degree recipients in the 2015 cohort needed a sixth year to complete their degree.



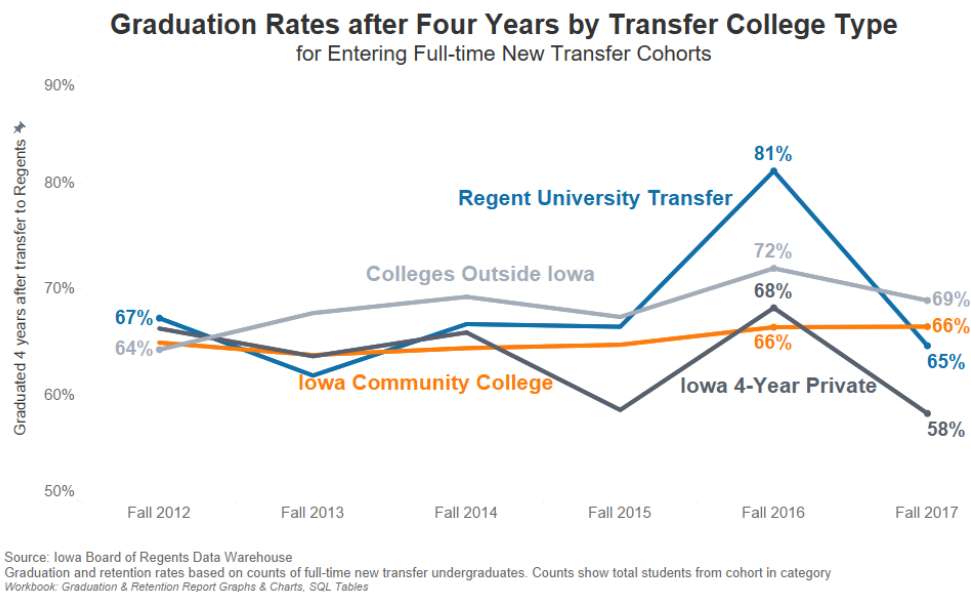
Source: Iowa Board of Regents for first-time full-time bachelor's degree graduates looking six years after entry.
Workbook: Fall 2021 Grad & Retention Report, BOR Warehouse Supplement

Sex. While there is a small gap in graduation rates by sex, both men and women at the Regent universities outperform their four-year public university national averages.



Sources: Iowa Board of Regents & National Student Clearinghouse Research Center "Persistence & Retention - 2019" Report.

Transfer. The graph below shows graduation rates for students who have transferred into a Regent university from another college or university. Most students who transfer to a Regents institution have graduation outcomes that are similar to students who entered out of high school. These rates can change from year-to-year based on the number of transfers and the amount of credit hours transferred in by these students. As seen the in graph below, the 81% graduation rate for the Fall 2016 entry cohort of Regent university transfers appears to have been an outlier. The graduation rate returned to baseline for the Fall 2017 cohort.



**THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
FALL 2021 GRADUATION AND RETENTION HIGHLIGHTS**

The University of Iowa's six-year graduation rate for the entering class of 2015 is 73.7%, while the four-year graduation rate for the entering class of 2017 is 57.0%. The university's 2020 first-to second-year retention rate is 88.0%.

The University of Iowa has many efforts in place to facilitate retention and timely graduation, with a focus on decreasing gaps in retention and graduation rates of first-generation, underrepresented minority, and Pell eligible students. Examples of recent initiatives include:

- Excelling@Iowa is a campus-wide student success platform that provides staff and faculty with actionable data about the student experience in ways that yield improvements in both program and individualized student support. The system uses predictive analytics to help identify students who may be struggling, or students considered at risk, and alerts faculty and staff who are connected to these students so they can provide support and connect students to resources. In the past year, Excelling@Iowa has been integrated into the learning management system, which has helped faculty better connect students to resources and resulted in increased referrals to students' support teams. Additionally, the system created new opportunities for various departments—such as Orientation Services and Iowa Veteran Education, Transition, and Support—to better connect with students during virtual and in-person interactions.
- The First Gen Hawks (FGH) program provides first-generation students ways to engage in activities that enhance the college experience within and beyond the classroom, such as experiential learning in leadership, undergraduate research, and mentored campus employment. The program bundles seminar courses, peer mentoring, community events, and personalized academic coaching. While the initial group was small, the FGH program supported more than 600 hours of peer mentoring, offered eight FGH seminar sections, and facilitated more than 100 hours of academic coaching. Overall, FGH students trended toward higher retention rates than other first-year students. These differences were consistent across multiple statistical approaches that accounted for students' precollege characteristics and academic preparation and were observed for both spring of students' first year (nearly six percentage points) and fall of their second year (nearly 10 percentage points).
- Learning Assistants (LAs) is an academic support program that embeds students into high enrollment lecture courses to help facilitate learning. In 2021, 70 LAs were embedded in three chemistry courses (General Chemistry I, Principles of Chemistry I, and Principles of Chemistry II). LAs provide an avenue for students to ask questions and seek support from peers who are trained to assist. The University of Iowa plans to expand the LA program to include additional courses.
- Peer Led Undergraduate Study (PLUS) is a zero-semester hour course that is required for students who are dually enrolled in General Chemistry I and College Algebra. The PLUS course is facilitated by a peer and based on the principles of Supplemental Instruction (non-

remedial, active, collaborative learning through peer facilitation). PLUS focuses on the problem-solving components of chemistry. The program served more than 250 students in fall 2021.

□ Summer STEM Bridge Programming: The Chemistry and Mathematics Departments collaborated with Admissions and Academic Support and Retention to develop an online summer bridge program for incoming students interested in improving their introductory skills in both chemistry and mathematics. Given that many entering students in fall 2021 completed their senior year of high school online, the goal of this initiative was to help students review key concepts and skills. Faculty and graduate teaching assistants prepared both asynchronous and synchronous opportunities for students during mid-July to mid-August 2021. Approximately 500 students participated in the two summer bridge programs.

□ Introductory Course Instructor Professional Development: As part of a university-funded initiative, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology, and Academic Support and Retention worked closely with departmental instructors in five key STEM areas (computer science, chemistry, mathematics, statistics and actuarial science, and health and human physiology) to increase awareness of student success practices, student demographics, and student perspectives on experiences with introductory courses. During summer 2021, instructors attended a three-day summer institute on how to best support students using data-driven best practices. The longer-term goal of the initiative is to improve overall student success in these key introductory courses and improve the retention and graduation rates of all students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds interested in pursuing careers in STEM disciplines.

□ Learning@Iowa Framework to Increase Students' Academic Success: Most students starting college have not received guidance on how to learn for success in collegiate settings. This university-funded initiative will develop and implement the Learning@Iowa framework to transform the culture of learning throughout campus, spanning a variety of academic courses, residence hall settings, academic advising sessions, and more. The project uses empirically proven learning methods from cognitive science that have been demonstrated to have positive effects on student learning and progress toward degree.

□ The University of Iowa completed the GEAR UP Iowa College Partner Grant from Iowa College Aid in September 2021. The grant served 329 of the state's GEAR UP Iowa students and provided services and programming that improve outcomes of these traditionally underserved and underrepresented students. Almost 70% of the cohort participated in the GEAR UP Online Summer Bridge program in July, and 80% participated in a mentoring program to address academic skill building, goal setting, and social integration. One of the intended outcomes from GEAR UP is to close the retention gap for these students. Previously, the ten-year fall to fall retention rate average for students from GEAR UP high schools was 74%, compared to the overall institutional average of 85%-88%. The retention rate for this past cohort was more similar to that of non-GEAR up students, at 85.5%.

□ The second round of Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) was informed by knowledge gained from the awarding of CARES funds, during which process the institution learned that students with the greatest need often do not advocate for themselves. In response the UI implemented a block grant process to prioritize Pell eligible students. As a result, 1,773 more Pell grant eligible students received HEERF awards than had received CARES funding. Overall, the UI was able to focus the distribution of these funds to the neediest students, with 65% of the funds that went to undergraduate students going to Pell grant recipients. In addition, 39% of the awardees were first-generation college students.

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
FALL 2021 GRADUATION AND RETENTION HIGHLIGHTS**

Iowa State University of Science and Technology continues to experience growth in its six-year graduation rate and is at a record-high 76% (entering class of 2015), outperforming the national average by 20 percent. Similarly, the four-year graduation rate increased three percentage points to a record-high 54 percent (entering class of 2017). The university's first- to second-year retention rate remained strong at 88% (entering class of 2020) for Fall 2021.

Iowa State continually strives to foster collaboration across the university to positively influence the persistence of students from matriculation to degree completion. A few examples of the high-impact practices that occurred this past year are outlined below.

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) Funding

The Coronavirus Aid, Relieve, and Economic Security Act (CARES) was extended with the enactment of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA). Both programs are established under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, with CARES identified as HEERF I and CRRSA as HEERF II. Under HEERF II, Iowa State University received \$10,849,429 in funding to be used specifically for student support. Continuing the protocols established when administering the CARES funding, a total of 7,319 students were awarded funding either through block grants or individual applications. Of these students, 1,409 graduated in either Spring or Summer 2021. A total of 5,434 students returned for Fall 2021.

EAB Navigate Retention & Re-enrollment Efforts

The university distributed academic progress reports (i.e., academically at-risk notices) to students during the fourth- and fifth weeks of the semester, with a particular focus on high D-F-W courses. This is important shift in at-risk notification timing, as research indicates that intervention efforts earlier in the semester are more effective than mid-term grade reporting, particularly in D-F-W courses. During Spring 2021, our faculty participation rate reached 87%, a 22% increase over Fall 2020.

Additionally, a mobile app via the EAB Navigate platform was introduced enabling students to easily connect with study groups and support resources. The mobile app is also used to keep current students enrolled and on track for graduation. The app connects students, based on their individual situation, with academic, student financial aid, wellness, and/or other resources to overcome barriers to re-enrolling.

Learning Communities

Iowa State University's Learning Communities, a collaborative partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, is one of Iowa State's most successful retention initiatives. In Fall 2021, 91 learning communities were offered, serving 6,171 students. 89.1% of all first-year, full-time (FYFT) students engaged in one or more learning community options. Participation among under-represented and underserved FYFT student populations is robust, with 89.6% multicultural students, 88.6% first-generation students, and 88.2% Pell-eligible students participating in a Fall 2021 Learning Community. The retention and graduation rates of students participating in learning communities continue to surpass those of non-learning community participants. Iowa State's data show that, on average, the one-year retention rate for learning community students is seven percentage points higher than for non-learning community

students, and the six-year graduation rate for learning community students is eleven percentage points higher than for non-learning community students. Since its inception in 1995, learning communities have helped over 99,000 students reach their academic goals.

Supporting Underrepresented Students

Iowa State University has several programs that have a positive effect on student retention and graduation, particularly for students of color, low-income students, and first-generation students. Programs of note include the Multicultural Vision Program (MVP), the George Washington Carver (GWC) program, and the Academic Program for Excellence (APEX), each of which primarily serve students of color. The three programs all see very high first- to second-year retention rates for participants, as well as strong graduation rates when compared to eligible non-participating students. Of the 2020-2021 cohort of MVP scholars, 88.0% returned to Iowa State for a second year compared to 82.7% of the eligible students of color who were not involved. The GWC students returned at a rate of 98% as compared to a retention rate of 83.6% for the eligible non-participating students, and 100% of APEX students returned in Fall 2021. Graduation rates are similarly high, with six-year graduation rates for APEX, MVP, and GWC participants reaching 83.0%, 74.0%, and 86.7%, respectively, compared to 61.4% - 63.3% of their eligible non-participating peers.

Student Health and Wellness

Last year, the Thielen Student Health Center served 34,197 patients, completed 195,801 lab tests, filled 25,694 prescriptions, and fielded nearly 54,000 phone calls. A total of 76% of patients served during the year agreed or strongly agreed that the services at Thielen helped them to be able to participate in their classes and co-curricular activities, and 88% agreed or strongly agreed that Thielen improved their overall health and wellbeing. Similarly, Student Counseling Services (SCS) provided a host of mental health services. During the 2020-2021 academic year, SCS hosted 8,342 appointments for 2,844 unique students, with nearly 100% of students indicating that SCS helped them to be personally successful, succeed academically, and remain enrolled at Iowa State. Student Wellness exposed over 6,500 members of the campus community to "Green Dot," a training program that aims to decrease power-based personal violence through education, personal awareness, and bystander intervention skills.

Students Helping Our Peers (SHOP) Food Pantry

Over the past year 1,426 people were able to benefit from the Students Helping Our Peers (SHOP) Food Pantry run by students. The shelves were stocked with 18,009 pounds of food that was donated or purchased with donated funds. On average, the SHOP Food Pantry serves around 350 students and distributes 4,300 pounds of food every month. According to the most recent National Collegiate Health Assessment, 31.46% of respondents indicated low- or very low food security, and 48.41% of multicultural students indicated challenges with having sufficient food.

University Innovation Alliance "Cy" Chatbot

The University Innovation Alliance (UIA) has continued to pilot, scale, and push for programming to support student success at Iowa State. One initiative that grew out of the UIA was "Cy," which is chatbot that supports multiple campus offices including, but not limited to, the Office of Student Financial Aid, the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Admissions, and the Veteran's Center. Since Cy's introduction in January 2020, it has had 35,230 conversations and has a knowledgebase of 2,231 questions it can answer. Cy has been relied upon even more heavily since the start of the pandemic as a safe, effective, and expedient way for students and their families to get their questions answered.

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
FALL 2021 GRADUATION AND RETENTION HIGHLIGHTS**

Graduation rates for UNI students are at all-time high levels this year, and remain well above the average of our peer institutions.

- The four-year graduation rate for the fall 2017 cohort (45.0%) increased by 1.8 percentage points as compared to the prior year's cohort, and by 2.7 percentage points over the previous five-year average.
- The six-year graduation rate for the fall 2015 is 68.7%, an increase of 5.2 percentage points above the prior cohort's graduation rate (63.5%) and an increase of three percentage points over the previous five-year average (65.7%).
- One in 14 UNI students are graduating in three years, a larger proportion than at any previous point in our history.

The first-to-second year retention rate for the entering class of 2020 is 80.5%, 3.3 percentage points below our five-year average of 83.8%. This retention decline for the fall 2020 cohort reflects challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including personal, academic and financial disruptions. Despite this short-term decline, the fall 2020 cohort's retention rate is higher than that of our Board approved peer institutions (78.7%) and our Carnegie peers (73.9%) (IPEDS Data Center). Fall-to-spring registration progress for the current (fall 2021) new student cohort is strong, and points to a rebound in retention rates this fall.

The Retention and Completion Council guides campus-wide work on improving systems and developing interventions to continuously increase student success rates. Systematic programs and resources supporting student retention and success include:

- Panther Welcome, during which new UNI students move to campus two days early and engage in educational, social, and community events with peer leaders, faculty and staff.
- Course-embedded peer mentoring, connecting new students to first-year only sections of general education courses. UNI faculty with expertise in the college transition prepare sections of various general education courses specifically for first-year students, with a focus on supporting students' successful transition to college while teaching content knowledge. Peer mentors are embedded within each course section to assist with study skills, community building, role modeling and connection to campus resources.
- The Panther Completion Grant provides funding for students who face short-term financial barriers to persistence, allowing students to continue moving forward toward graduation rather than stopping out. This grant fund has supplemented the HEERF support provided to students throughout this academic year.
- UNI's Early Intervention System harnesses robust student data from a variety of sources to inform proactive outreach to students based on individual needs. UNI faculty and staff learn quickly of students who may be struggling based on predictive retention modeling data, student responses to the Connection Survey (four weeks

after the start of each semester), midterm grade reports, registration progress information, and various additional data sources. This facilitates timely outreach from UNI academic advisors, faculty and staff that helps students resolve barriers to degree completion.

- PACE (Panther Access, Connection, and Engagement) is an advising program designed to increase the retention of students who could benefit from additional guidance, including low-income students, first-generation students, and students who indicate a need for supplemental academic support. PACE participants benefit from holistic advising services, financial literacy assistance, interactive educational workshops, and academic skill building opportunities.
- The UNI PLUS program provides course-embedded academic assistance to students in traditionally challenging courses. PLUS leaders work closely with faculty to offer supplemental study sessions outside of regular class times and additional office hours in Rod Library.
- Members of the campus community have invested extensively throughout this past year in providing a vibrant and robust on-campus experience for UNI students, from an expanded Panther Welcome early move-in program to an increase in the size and scale of campus events and student outreach designed to promote student engagement. Paired with timely distribution of HEERF funds to students with financial need and systematic outreach to students who stopped out temporarily, the campus community continues work to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on our students.

Retention and Completion Council members have identified several areas of focus for the coming year, including the implementation of the CRM case management system to enhance early intervention for at-risk students, enhanced outreach and support for students on academic probation after their first semester, and the implementation of strategies to support retention and success for students in online degree programs.