

Statement of Goals for Student Achievement

“The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution’s mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success. (*Student achievement*) [CR]” (SACSCOC Core Requirement 8.1, 2018)

As a degree-granting institution of higher education accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and in accord with core requirement 8.1, Berea College identifies the following outcomes as our measures of student achievement, all of which stem from the College’s enduring mission as reflected in the [Great Commitments](#). These outcomes are intended to provide a diverse, adaptive, and sensitive set of criteria to be used for continuous improvement of student learning and, ultimately, success. Berea College seeks to eliminate any gaps in student achievement outcomes across cohorts of differentiated populations. Current achievement outcomes for sub-populations are available from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (<https://www.berea.edu/ira/>).

INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES & RESPECTIVE BENCHMARKS

Graduation Rates

A 66 percent six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students.

First-to-Second-Year Retention Rate

An 87 percent first-to-second-year retention rate for first-time, full-time students.

Second-to-Third-Year Retention Rate

A 92 percent second-to-third-year retention rate for first-time, full-time who returned for their second year.

Rationale: The rationale for these criteria is based on reviews of national data and historical performance. As Horn¹ demonstrated, graduation rates vary greatly with the selectivity and size of the low-income enrollment. Therefore, it can be challenging to identify “like” or comparable institutions to Berea College, which are both highly selective and have a high percentage of low-income students, in order to determine the appropriateness of our graduation goal of 66 percent.

Graduating 66 percent of first-time, full-time students within six years is ambitious when understood within the context of national data. According to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#), the national six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who entered in fall 2014 at 4-year baccalaureate institutions was 64 percent. For private, not-for-profit, four-year institutions, the 2014 average six-year graduation rate was 68 percent. For selective private, not-for-profit four-year institutions with less than a 25 percent acceptance rate, the six-year graduation rate was 90.7 percent.

However, these statistics do not account for the primary unifying characteristic of Berea College students. Berea College accepts only students with limited financial means. Horn found that very selective institutions (which would include Berea College under the parameters of his study) with large portions of low-income enrollment (defined as 40 percent or more federal grant aid recipients;

Berea College typically has 98 percent-plus PELL eligibility rate) had an average six-year graduation rate of 43.9 percent. Berea’s average six-year graduation rate for entering years 2011-2015 is 64%

Furthermore, Mortenson (2011) calculated a predictive graduation rate for institutions by taking into consideration students’ academic preparation, family resources, the residential nature of the campus, and other factors. His calculations suggested that Berea College’s six-year graduation rate should be around 50 percent.²

These studies support the ambitious nature of a 66 percent six-year graduation rate. Additionally, this goal is higher than the current seven-year average of 64.6 percent.

Achievable: While a 66 percent six-year graduation rate is ambitious, it is also achievable. As shown in the table below, while the nine-year (2008-2016) average rate was 64.4 percent, a 66 percent or higher rate was achieved in three years (2011, 2013, and 2014). Rather than viewing this years as outliers, it supports the achievability of a 66 percent graduation rate.

Table 1. Six-Year Graduation Rates

Cohort Year	Six-Year Graduation Rate
2010	62.9%
2011	65.9%
2012	62.8%
2013	68.0%
2014	67.3%
2015	65.6%
2016	61.7%
Average rate for 2010-2016	64.4%

In order to achieve a 66 percent graduation rate, the following year-to-year retention goals have been developed. These goals were developed with the understanding that graduation rates are built through a series of year-to-year retention rates. The following table includes the year-to-year retention goals and the average for these rates over the last five years.

Table 2. Year-to-Year Retention Goals

	Year-to-Year Combined Retention or Graduation Goals	Current Five-Year Average Year-to-Year Combined Retention or Graduation Rates
1st to 2nd	86.0%	84.0%
2nd to 3rd	91.0%	86.8%
3rd to 4th	94.0%	92.4%
4th to 5th	96.0%	93.2%
5th to 6th	99.0%	99.0%
6th to 7th	99.0%	99.9%

While each year-to-year retention/graduation goal is slightly above the previous five-year average, they are within range of previous individual year's rates. The institution would achieve a graduation rate near 70 percent if these retention goals were to be met.

The achievement of this goal will be supported through monitoring student sub populations and developing institutional responses to address the needs of those groups whose outcomes fall below that of the general population. The analysis at this level will prompt further investigation and inform institutional initiatives in order to further ensure that the graduation outcomes are achieved.

Successful Course Completion Rates

At least an 86.0 percent course completion rate (grade of C or above).

Table 3. Successful Course Completion

Academic Year	Percent of Courses Successfully Completed with a C or above
2016-17	82.5%
2017-18	84.0%
2018-19	85.1%
2019-20	86.3%
2020-21	88.5%
2021-22	86.1%

Rationale: Successful course-completion is essential for other degree-progression indicators, and Berea College is compelled by its mission to ensure steady progress. Successful course-completion provide an indicator of efficient resource use, as student time and institutional resources are underutilized if they do not yield course credit leading to learning and degree completion. Table 3 provides successful course completion rates from the last five years (exclusive of the 2020-21 COVID year). Given historic trends, an 86 percent completion rate is both aspirational and attainable.

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM CRITERIA

As appropriate, some programs may choose to adopt additional criteria by which they measure the achievements that may be uniquely important or relevant to the success of their majors.

Nursing National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN®) First-Time Pass Rates

Nursing: NCLEX-RN® Pass Rates for Program Completers			
Graduation Year	Number of Nursing Graduates	Number of Graduates who Passed NCLEX-RN on First Attempt	Percentage of Graduates who Passed NCLEX-RN on First Attempt
2021-22	14	11	78.6%
2020-21	8	8	100%
2019-20	13	13	100%
2018-19	8	8	100%
2017-18	11	11	100%
2016-17	12	12	100%
2015-16	7	7	100%
2014-15	9	9	100%

Rationale: Berea College's average pass rate is well above the 80% Kentucky Board of Nursing (KBN) standard. The KBN is the state regulatory body that approves all prelicensure nursing programs in the Commonwealth.

Education PRAXIS II First-Time Pass Rates

Education Studies: PRAXIS II Pass Rates for Program Completers			
Program Completers by Academic Year of Completion	Number of Completers that Passed the Praxis II	Number of Completers that Attempted the Praxis II	Program Pass Rate for Completers
2020-2021 Completer Cohort	9	9	100%
2019-2020 Completer Cohort	13	14	93%
2018-2019 Completer Cohort	11	12	92%
2017-2018 Completer Cohort	3	3	100%
2016-2017 Completer Cohort	8	11	73%

Rationale: The Education Studies Department annually reports Praxis II Pass Rates for Program Completers to the Department of Education -- Title II: Reports for National Teacher Preparation Data.

PRAXIS II average two-year pass rate of at least 80.0 percent.

Rationale: This is the acceptable pass rate set by the National Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the Kentucky Education Profession Standards Board (EPSB).

Endorsed by the Division Council on April 14, 2021; approved on May 13, 2021, and monitored by the Enrollment Policies Committee (approved at March 17, 2023 meeting).

¹ Horn, L. (2006). *Placing College Graduation Rates in Context: How 4-Year College Graduation Rates Vary With Selectivity and the Size of Low-Income Enrollment* (NCES 2007-161). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

² Tom Mortenson, founder of Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY and Senior Fellow at the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, ranks Berea College fourth among national liberal arts colleges in terms of actual versus predicted graduation rates. See the April 2011 edition of OPPORTUNITY (Number 226) for details.