

## Persistence and Retention Rates

December 2019

### BACKGROUND

#### Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Rock Valley College (RVC) has identified KPI to inform the college community about institutional health and development. The College KPI are presented in five categories aligned to Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Public Agenda Goals. College KPI categories include *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success; Affordability; Educational Quality; Accountability; and Addressing Regional Economic Needs.*

Persistence and Retention Rates are KPI aligned to the College category of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success*, as well as the category of *Educational Quality*. As a measure of *Educational Attainment*, this category is aligned to the IBHE Public Agenda Goal to raise the number of people with postsecondary credentials and improve transitions along the educational pipeline. As a measure of *Educational Quality*, this category is also aligned to the IBHE Public agenda goal to improve transitions along the educational pipeline.

#### Persistence and Retention Rate Data

Persistence Rate is defined as the percent of students enrolling in consecutive fall and spring terms (e.g., Fall 2018 and Spring 2019). Retention Rate is defined as the percent of students enrolling in consecutive fall terms (e.g., Fall 2018 and Fall 2019). Both rates are calculated by dividing the number of students enrolled in both terms by the number of students enrolled in term one, less completers who subsequently left the college. These completers are not included in the calculation because they have achieved their community college goal and are not expected to return for subsequent terms. Data to inform this report were pulled from the College's student database (Colleague) and are based on enrollment as of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of each term. Comparison data are from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

### RESULTS

#### Persistence

Table 1 represents the persistence rates for RVC students overall and disaggregated by demographic subgroups, including enrollment status (full time or part time), gender, race/ethnicity, and age (traditional or nontraditional).

**Table 1: RVC Student Persistence Rates by Various Demographic Groups (Fall-to-Spring - %)**

<b>Fiscal Year:</b>	<b>FY15 (Fall 2014)</b>	<b>FY16 (Fall 2015)</b>	<b>FY17 (Fall 2016)</b>	<b>FY18 (Fall 2017)</b>	<b>FY19 (Fall 2018)</b>	<b>Change (FY15- FY19)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	72.9	72.7	72.8	73.4	72.8	-0.1
<b>Status<sup>1</sup></b>						
Full time	86.6	87.2	85.3	86.9	85.8	-0.8
Part time	62.7	62.0	62.8	63.3	62.8	0.1
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	72.7	71.8	73.3	72.8	73.7	1.0
Female	73.1	73.4	72.4	73.8	72.2	0.9
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
American Indian / Alaska Native	83.6	62.2	69.2	60.8	55.6	-28.0
Asian	78.4	72.3	78.6	78.8	81.0	2.6
Black / African American	62.2	56.9	61.1	62.8	59.5	-2.7
Hispanic / Latino	73.9	72.2	70.1	73.0	70.6	-3.3
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	--
White	73.7	74.8	74.6	74.9	74.9	1.2
<b>Age<sup>2</sup></b>						
Traditional	74.9	75.6	75.1	75.4	74.8	-0.1
Nontraditional	68.2	65.6	66.3	67.2	67.0	-1.2

Source: Office of Institutional Research Persistence Application

\*Percentages are not reported for group sizes of 30 or less

Over the past five years, overall fall to spring persistence has been stable from 72.9% to 72.8%. Disaggregated persistence rate data in Table 1 suggest:

**Enrollment Status**

- Full-time students consistently persist at a higher rate than part-time students.
- Persistence rates have been stable for full-time students over the five-year period reported.
- Persistence rate for part-time students has been stable over the same time period.

**Gender** - Male persistence rates have increased since FY2015, while female students’ persistence rates have decreased.

**Race/Ethnicity**

- The persistence rate of Black/African American students decreased by 2.7 percentage points over the five-year period reported.
- The persistence rate of Hispanic/Latino students decreased by 3.3 percentage points over the five-year period.
- The persistence rate of American Indian/Alaska Native students has dramatically decreased, and in FY2019 reached the lowest level in the five-year period.

<sup>1</sup> Full-time students are enrolled in 12 credits or more, and part-time students are enrolled in less than 12 credit hours.

<sup>2</sup> Traditional students are age 24 and younger, and nontraditional students are over the age of 24.

Age – Traditional students consistently persist at a higher rate than nontraditional students. The persistence rates have been stable for both groups over the five years reported.

**Retention**

Table 2 represents the first-time student retention rates for students at RVC and comparison Illinois community colleges. As such, the percentage of first-time, full-time and first-time, part-time students enrolling in consecutive fall terms are provided. Data within Table 2 characterize first-time students as defined by IPEDS<sup>3</sup>. RVC data suggest:

- First-time, full-time students are consistently retained at a higher rate than first-time, part-time students.
- Over the past five years, retention rates have ranged between 65% and 69% for first-time, full-time students and between 46% and 55% for first-time, part-time students.
- RVC consistently has retention rates at or above the peer average for both full-time and part-time cohorts.

**Table 2:** Multiyear Comparison of Retention Rates (Fall-to-Fall - %) of First-time Students: RVC and Comparison Illinois Community Colleges

Entering Cohort:	FY14 (Fall 2013)		FY15 (Fall 2014)		FY16 (Fall 2015)		FY17 (Fall 2016)		FY18 (Fall 2017)	
	Retained:		FY15 (Fall 2014)		FY16 (Fall 2015)		FY17 (Fall 2016)		FY18 (Fall 2017)	
	Status:		FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
<b>RVC</b>	68	46	69	54	68	50	65	47	68	55
<b>Peer Average</b>	59	40	60	39	64	42	65	46	66	45
<b>RVC Rank (of 8)</b>	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	4	2	1
<b>Comparison Community Colleges</b>										
Black Hawk	47	30	45	38	62	37	61	43	64	40
Heartland	55	41	62	25	57	39	65	49	67	46
Illinois Central	69	44	68	42	73	51	72	45	71	38
Lincoln Land	61	44	59	47	59	39	65	42	64	47
Parkland	61	46	63	44	66	50	62	42	64	49
Richland	56	28	62	36	64	31	65	50	67	43
Southwestern	65	47	61	42	68	47	64	48	65	49

Source: IPEDS Data Center

Table 3 represents the retention rates for all RVC students, including those who are not classified as first-time students. As such, the rates represent all students enrolling in consecutive fall terms. Table 3 also disaggregates the same data by subgroups, including enrollment status (full time or part time), gender, race/ethnicity, and age (traditional or nontraditional).

<sup>3</sup> A first-time student is one “who has no prior postsecondary experience (except as noted below) attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. This includes students enrolled in academic or occupational programs. It also includes students enrolled in the fall term who attend college for the first time in the prior summer term, and students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school).”

**Table 3: RVC Student Retention Rates by Various Demographic Groups (Fall-to-Fall - %)**

<b>Fiscal Year:</b>	<b>FY15</b> (Fall 2014)	<b>FY16</b> (Fall 2015)	<b>FY17</b> (Fall 2016)	<b>FY18</b> (Fall 2017)	<b>FY19</b> (Fall 2018)	<b>Change</b> (FY18-FY19)
<b>Overall</b>	53.3	54.5	51.0	54.3	54.8	1.5
<b>Status<sup>4</sup></b>						
Full time	64.2	64.8	61.2	63.2	65.5	1.3
Part time	45.5	45.5	43.2	48.1	47.1	1.6
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	52.3	54.9	51.2	52.3	54.8	2.5
Female	54.2	54.2	50.8	56.0	54.8	0.6
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
American Indian / Alaska Native	45.5	47.8	53.1	44.9	28.6	-16.9
Asian	65.1	60.0	60.2	56.3	64.6	-0.5
Black / African American	40.8	40.2	41.7	46.6	45.2	4.4
Hispanic / Latino	57.5	60.1	52.8	55.5	58.1	0.6
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	--
White	53.7	54.7	50.9	55.5	53.8	0.1
<b>Age<sup>5</sup></b>						
Traditional	56.0	56.7	52.9	55.7	56.9	0.9
Nontraditional	46.9	49.0	45.5	50.0	48.5	1.6

Source: Office of Institutional Research Retention Application

\*Percentages are not reported for group sizes of 30 or less

Over the past five years, fall to fall retention has increased from 53.3% to 54.8%. Disaggregated retention rate data in Table 3 suggest:

Enrollment Status

- Full-time students are consistently retained at a higher rate than part-time students.
- Retention rates have demonstrated an increase for part-time students over the five-year period reported. Aside from a dip in FY2017, retention rates for full-time students were relatively stable.

Gender

- Retention rates for female students have been volatile over the five-year period reported, with a low of 50.8% in FY2017 and a high of 56.0% in FY2018.
- Retention rates for male students has increased over the five year period.

Race/Ethnicity

- Black/African American students have increased retention in the last two years.
- Retention rates for Black/African American students demonstrated an overall increase of 4.4 percentage points over the five years reported.

<sup>4</sup> Full-time students are enrolled in 12 credits or more, and part-time students are enrolled in less than 12 credit hours.

<sup>5</sup> Traditional students are age 24 and younger, and nontraditional students are over the age of 24.

- Except for FY2018, Hispanic students have been retained at a higher rate than white students. In FY2018, the retention rate for these two groups was the same.

Age

- Traditional-age students are consistently retained at a higher rate than their nontraditional peers.
- Retention rates for nontraditional students have increased over the past five years. Aside from a peak in FY2017, retention rates for traditional students have remained relatively stable.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

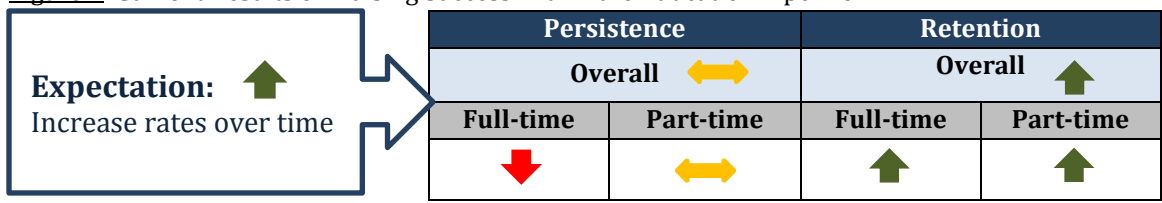
Persistence and retention are examined as institutional KPI which provide information about the College’s efforts in the areas of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success* and *Educational Quality*. Specifically, data within this summary report support decision making about efforts to raise success and improve transitions within the educational pipeline, as well as eliminate achievement gaps. The data in this report suggest the following about these two areas:

**Raising Success and Improving Transitions within the Educational Pipeline**

Raising success and improving transitions within the educational pipeline would be determined by persistence and retention rates that reflect students’ successful completion of courses and progress toward educational goals. The minimum expectation of persistence and retention rates would be that they would increase over time.

Data in this report indicate stability in the overall persistence rate, indicating that the College has maintained its capacity to re-enroll students from fall to spring. Data indicate an overall increase in retention rate from FY2015 to FY2019, indicating that the College has improved its capacity to re-enroll students from fall to fall. Further improvements in persistence and retention for all students would enhance students’ movement through the educational pipeline to graduation, transfer, or other goal completion.

Figure 1: Current Results on Raising Success within the Education Pipeline









### Eliminating Achievement Gaps

Eliminating achievement gaps would be determined by persistence and retention rates that reflect successful progress toward educational goals for all students. As such, the minimum expectation is that gaps in persistence and retention rates between subgroups will narrow over time.

The achievement gap between Black/African American students and their peers in other racial/ethnic groups is of particular concern. While persistence for Black/African American students as compared to their Hispanic/Latino and white peers has decreased, their retention has improved over the five-year period. Hispanic/Latino students' persistence gap has increased, their retention is typically higher than White students.

Figure 2: Current Results on Eliminating Achievement Gaps

	Persistence	Retention	
<b>Expectation:</b>  Decrease achievement gaps over time	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
	<i>Black/African-American and White</i>		
	<i>Black/African and Hispanic/Latino</i>		
	<i>Hispanic/Latino and White</i>		NA*

\*Hispanic students are retained at a higher rate than white students.