

NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE®

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States' Students Marching Down Diverse Educational Pathways to College Completion

Herndon, Virginia, February 26, 2013 – In Minnesota, 27 percent of students who started at a four-year public university in the fall of 2006 completed their degree at a different institution. One in five students in Virginia who started at a two-year public institution completed at a four-year institution within six years. In Alaska, 28 percent of students who started at a four-year public institution and later graduated had earned that credential not just in a different institution but in a different state as well.

[“Completing College: A State-Level View of Student Attainment Rates”](#) gives a state-by-state rundown of the student attainment rates. The report is based on student-level data made available to the Clearinghouse by its more than 3,300 participating colleges and universities, including nearly 97 percent of students attending public and private nonprofit postsecondary institutions.

The recent national college completion report by the [National Student Clearinghouse® Research Center™](#), [“Completing College: A National View,”](#) revealed that college completion exceeds 75 percent for full-time students when nontraditional pathways are included. These pathways are taken by heretofore “invisible” students, including those who transfer, maintain part-time or mixed enrollment status, or are adult learners. By including students who are on these nontraditional trajectories, and by using student-level as opposed to institutional-level data, a much more complete view of college completion comes into focus, which can better inform policy.

Findings from the state-level report include:

- Nationally, 12 percent of students who started at four-year public institutions completed at an institution other than the starting institution. In 20 states, students who started at four-year public institutions had a higher completion rate at another institution with Minnesota having the highest rate at 27 percent.
- 3.2 percent of all students who started at a four-year public institution received their first degree/certificate at a two-year institution. The rate was over 5 percent in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Conversely, 9.4 percent of all students who started at a two-year public institution received their first credential at a four-year institution. In seven states, more than 10 percent did so with the highest being 13.8 percent.
- In eight states, more than one in six students who started at a two-year public institution completed at a four-year institution within six years with or without receiving a credential at a two-year institution (compared to 15 percent nationally). Virginia had the highest rate, with one in five students who started at a two-year public graduating from a four-year institution.
- In nine states, more than 10 percent of students who started at a four-year public institution and received a degree ended up graduating in a different state (compared to 6 percent nationally). The rate was much higher in Alaska (28 percent) and North Dakota (20 percent).
- In three states, more than 10 percent of students who started at a two-year public institution and later graduated did so in a different state (compared to 5.6 percent nationally).

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- In 14 states and the District of Columbia, over 10 percent of the students who started at a four-year private nonprofit institution and received a credential did so in a different state (compared to 8.8 percent nationally).
- In nearly every state, traditional-age students starting at four-year public institutions had higher six-year completion rates than adult learners. The smallest gap was in Arizona (1 percentage point) and the highest in Vermont (42 percentage points).
- In 13 states, over 75 percent of the exclusively part-time students at four-year public institutions had not received a credential and were not enrolled at the end of six years (compared to 70 percent nationally).

“By drilling down to individual states’ completion rates, we are able to see student behavior in a very specific way,” stated Dr. Doug Shapiro, Executive Director of the Research Center. “This information will help each state included in the study as well as institutions, school districts, and the federal government inform policy as they work toward meeting college completion goals.”

The study follows college enrollment behaviors starting in the fall of 2006 through the spring of 2012, focusing on first-time degree-seeking students.

About the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center is the research arm of the National Student Clearinghouse. The Research Center collaborates with higher education institutions, states, school districts, high schools, and educational organizations as part of a national effort to better inform education leaders and policymakers. Through accurate longitudinal data outcomes reporting, the Research Center enables better educational policy decisions leading to improved student outcomes.

To learn more, visit <http://research.studentclearinghouse.org>.

About the National Student Clearinghouse

The National Student Clearinghouse (a nonprofit formed in 1993) is the unique and trusted source for higher education enrollment and degree verifications. The Clearinghouse serves as a single point of contact for the collection and timely exchange of accurate and comprehensive enrollment, degree, and certificate records on behalf of its more than 3,300 participating higher education institutions, which represent 97 percent of all students in public and private U.S. institutions. The Clearinghouse also provides thousands of high schools and districts with continuing collegiate enrollment, progression, and completion statistics on their alumni.

Through its verification and reporting services, the Clearinghouse saves the education community cumulatively nearly four hundred million dollars annually. Most Clearinghouse services are provided to colleges and universities at little or no charge, including enhanced transcript and research services, enabling institutions to redistribute limited staff and budget resources to more important student service efforts. Clearinghouse services are designed to facilitate an institution’s compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, The Higher Education Act, and other applicable laws.

In addition, the Clearinghouse provides accurate, timely enrollment and degree verifications to student loan providers, employers, student credit issuers, the U.S. Department of Education, and others who access its registry more than half a billion times annually.

For more information, visit www.studentclearinghouse.org.

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