

Analysis of Retention and Graduation Rates for 2013-2020

Executive Summary

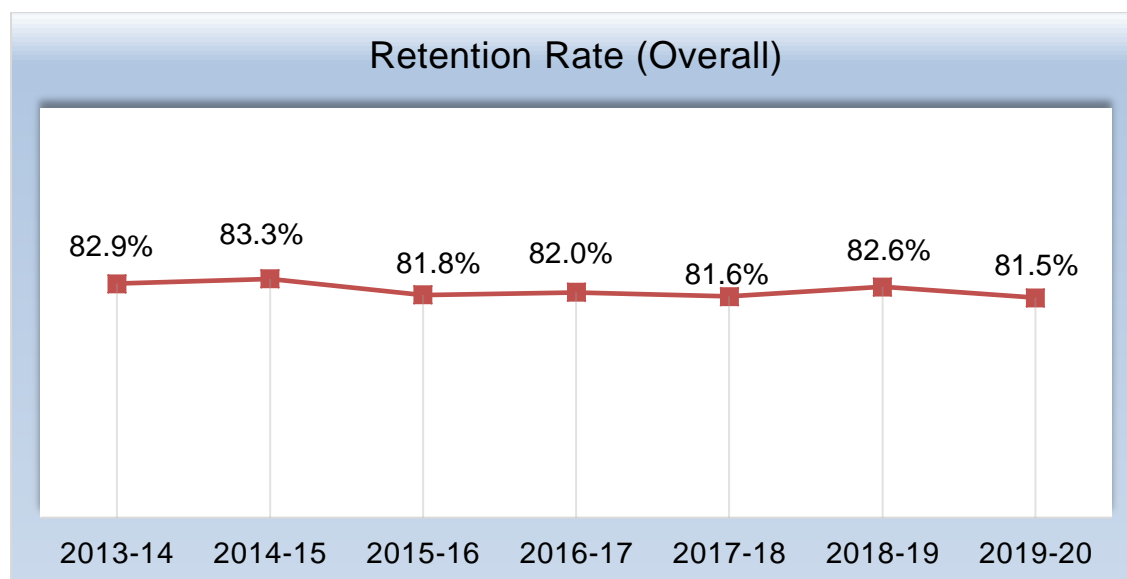
- The purpose of this report is to 1) review and map trends in retention and graduation rates over the past seven years (2013- 2020), 2) identify “at-risk” student groups and significant factors affecting retention and graduation, and 3) evaluate and support effective intervention programs for retention/graduation.
- **Overall retention rate has remained stable at around 82-83% even in the pandemic season:** 81.5% this year.
- **Commuter retention (82.7%) is higher than the resident retention (80.8%) this year:** Commuter retention slightly increased by 0.8% while resident retention decreased by 2.8% this year. It was speculated that the **pandemic** did not actually affect the commuter retention but the resident students’ retention **because of the campus closing**.
- **Hispanic retention has grown** for the past three years. This year, Hispanic retention surpassed White retention by 1% (Hispanic: 82.2%, White: 81.2%).
- It should be noted that **Hispanic commuter retention has substantially increased for the past three years** by 9.1% from 2017-18 (75.2%) to 2019-20 (84.3%).
- **African American retention decreased** again this year (72.3%) by 8% from the last year (80.3%).
- It was speculated that the **pandemic may have affected the female retention slightly more than the male retention**. Overall female retention decreased by 1.4% while overall male retention decreased by 0.5% this year. Also, first-time cohort retention for female decreased by 7.3% while that for male increased 1.5% this year (see page 15 for explanation).
- **Six-year graduation rate (2014-2020) this year is 4% higher than that of the last year (2013-2019):** 63% (2014 entering cohort) vs. 59% (2013 entering cohort).
- It should be noted that **the Hispanic six-year graduation rate increased by 8% this year and the gap between the White and Hispanic cohorts substantially reduced** to only 4% [65% (White) vs. 61% (Hispanic)].

I. Retention Rates

This retention report is for the traditional undergraduate (TUG) students only. Retention rate was calculated for each school year from the Fall 15th day to the 15th day of the following Fall semester (except for 2020 Fall-10th day). It should be noted that the following students were excluded from the retention pool: 1) Students who graduated or were accepted for commencement in the Fall semester of the previous year and the Spring semester or Summer of the following year, and 2) Student-at-large with non-degree. National reporting standards for retention can be found at the following URL: <http://www.airweb.org/EducationAndEvents/IPEDSTraining/Tutorials/Pages/default.aspx>).

1) Overall Retention

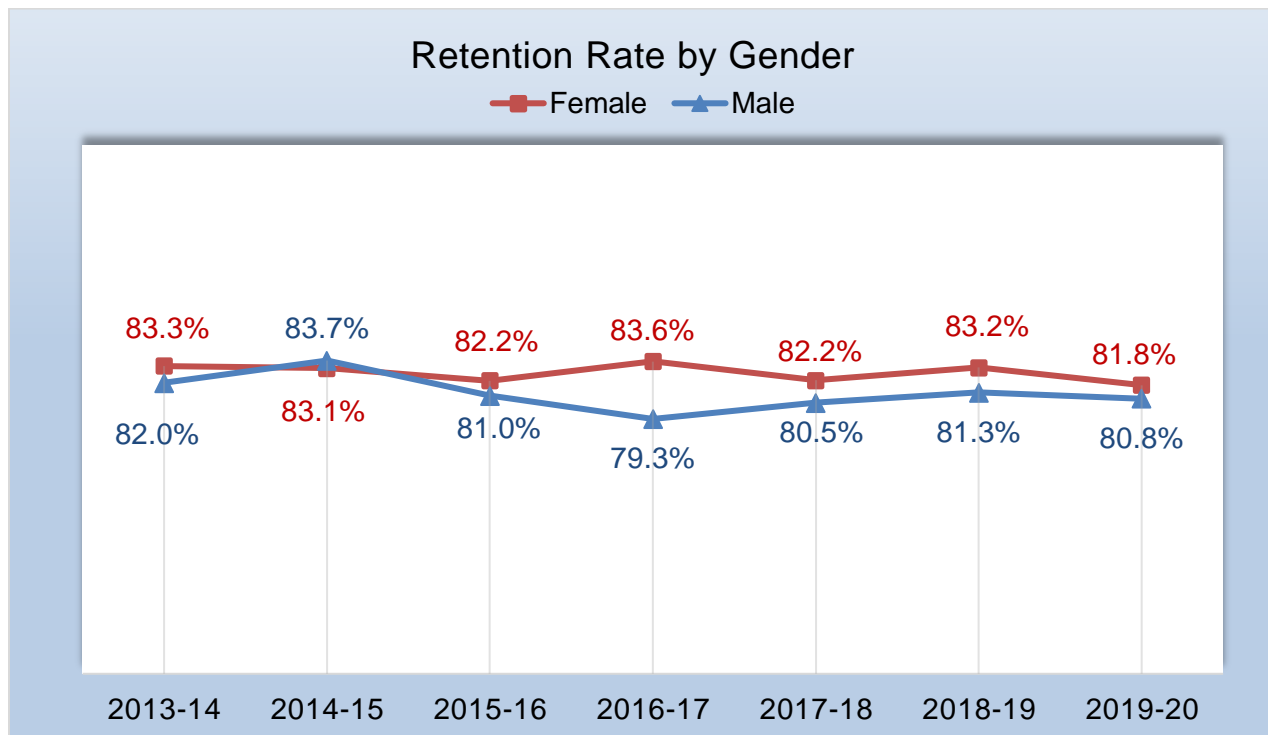
- Vanguard overall retention has **remained stable at around 82-83%** even in the pandemic season in 2019-20.
- The overall retention this year is 81.5%. It decreased by 1.1% from the last year (82.6%).



<i>School Year</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	1220	1011	82.9%
2014-2015	1128	940	83.3%
2015-2016	1097	897	81.8%
2016-2017	1118	917	82.0%
2017-2018	1176	960	81.6%
2018-2019	1250	1032	82.6%
2019-2020	1314	1071	81.5%

2) Gender

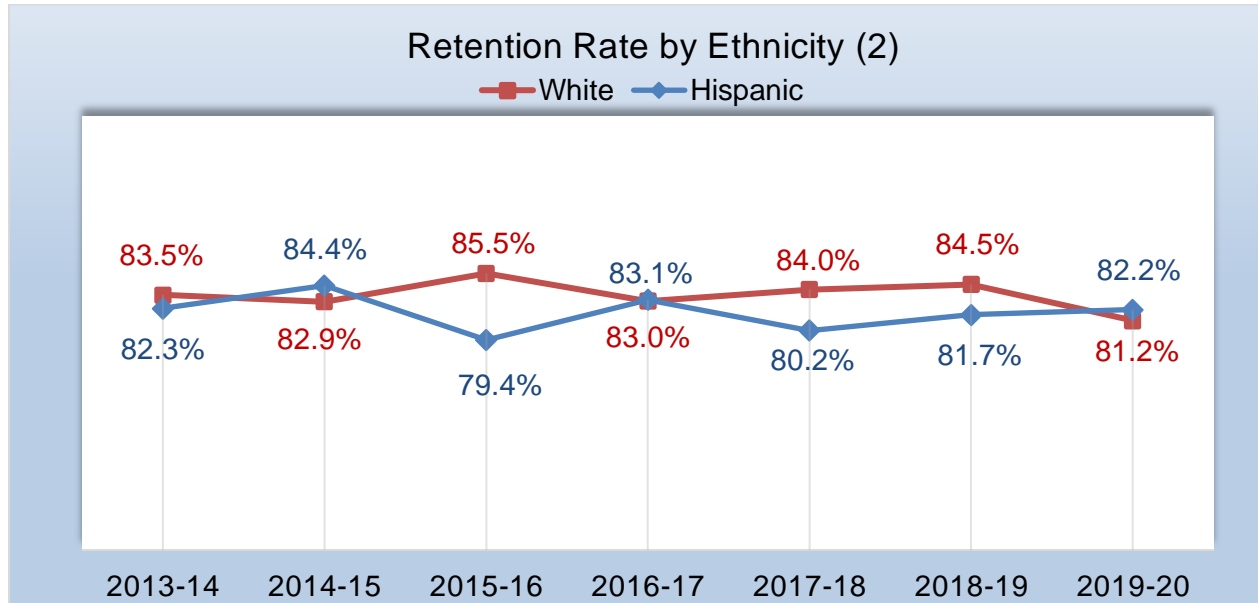
- Female retention decreased by 1.4% while male retention decreased by 0.5% this year from the last year, therefore the gap between the two groups continues to decrease to 1.0% this year from 1.9% last year.
- **It was speculated that the pandemic may have affected the female retention slightly more than the male retention.**



<i>School Year</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	Female	803	669	83.3%
	Male	417	342	82.0%
2014-2015	Female	723	601	83.1%
	Male	405	339	83.7%
2015-2016	Female	696	572	82.2%
	Male	401	325	81.0%
2016-2017	Female	703	588	83.6%
	Male	415	329	79.3%
2017-2018	Female	770	633	82.2%
	Male	406	327	80.5%
2018-2019	Female	855	711	83.2%
	Male	395	321	81.3%
2019-2020	Female	881	721	81.8%
	Male	433	350	80.8%

3) Ethnicity (White & Hispanic)

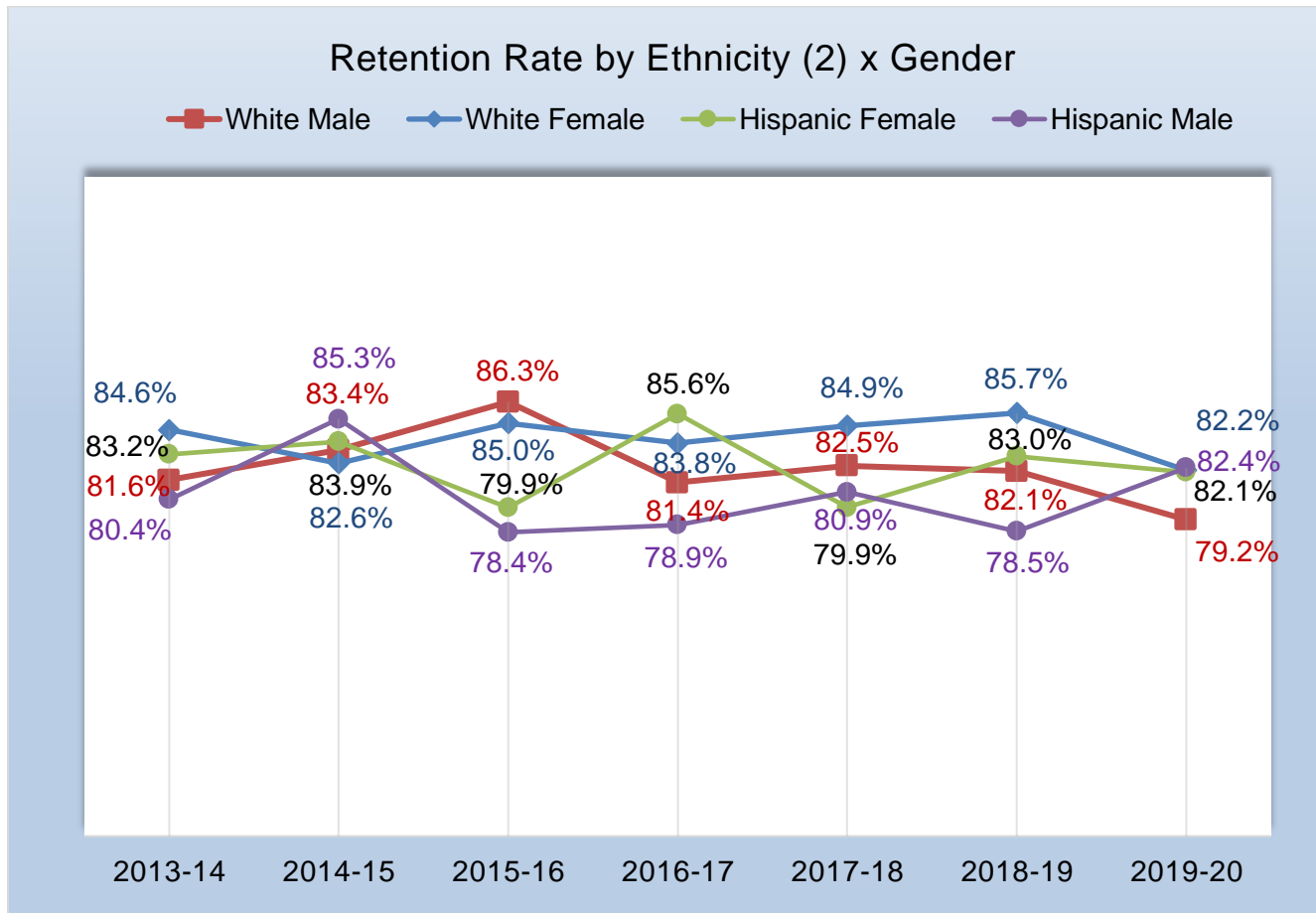
- **Hispanic retention has grown for the past three years** by 1% from 2017-18 (80.2%) to this year (81.2%).
- This year **Hispanic retention surpassed White retention** by 1%.



<i>School Year</i>	<i>Ethnicity (2)</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	White	559	467	83.5%
	Hispanic	446	367	82.3%
2014-2015	White	515	427	82.9%
	Hispanic	423	357	84.4%
2015-2016	White	504	431	85.5%
	Hispanic	417	331	79.4%
2016-2017	White	470	390	83.0%
	Hispanic	432	359	83.1%
2017-2018	White	432	363	84.0%
	Hispanic	506	406	80.2%
2018-2019	White	419	354	84.5%
	Hispanic	579	473	81.7%
2019-2020	White	441	358	81.2%
	Hispanic	611	502	82.2%

4) Ethnicity (White & Hispanic) x Gender

- Hispanic male retention increased by 3.9% while White male retention decreased slightly by 2.9% this year.
- However, there is no significant difference in retention for the four groups.

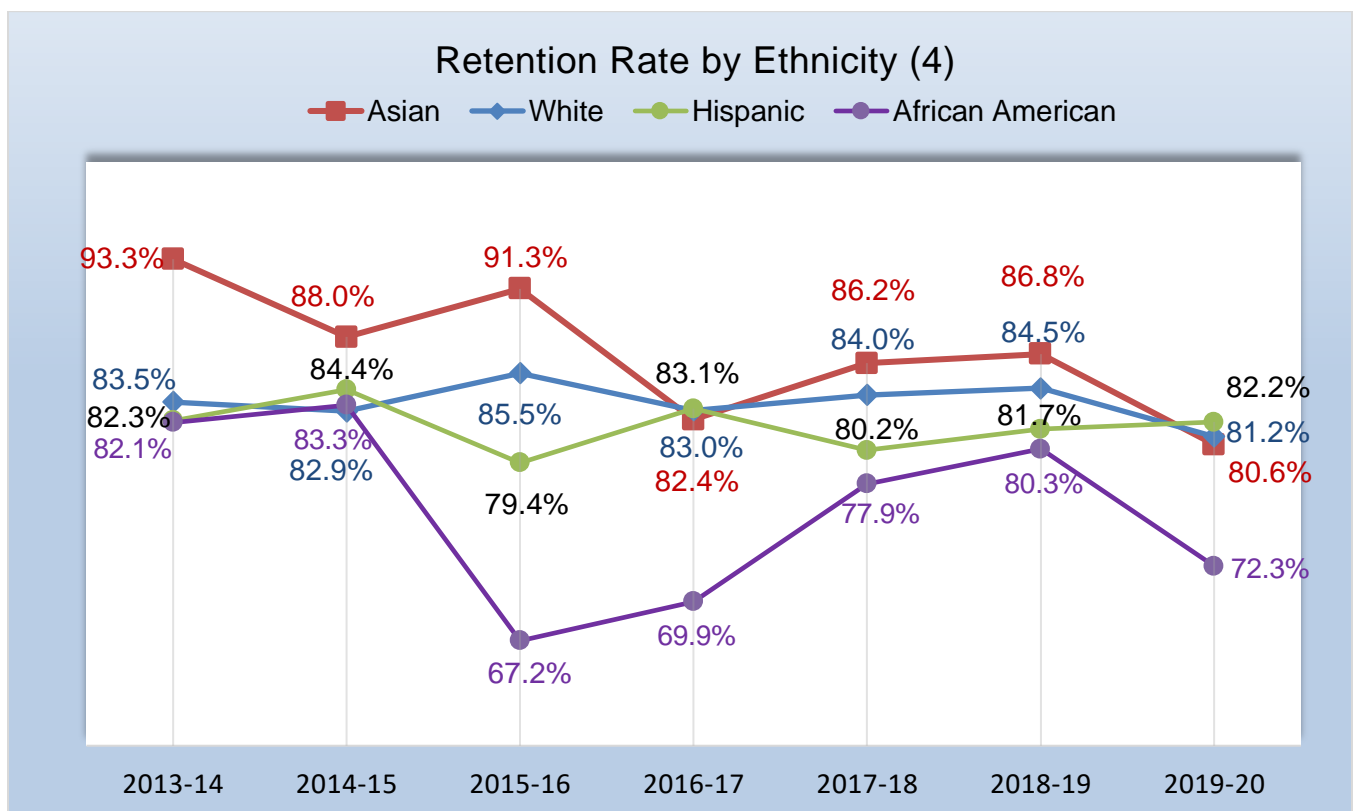


<i>School Year</i>	<i>Ethnic x Gender</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	Hispanic Female	303	252	83.2%
	Hispanic Male	143	115	80.4%
	White Female	358	303	84.6%
	White Male	201	164	81.6%
2014-2015	Hispanic Female	280	235	83.9%
	Hispanic Male	143	122	85.3%
	White Female	328	271	82.6%
	White Male	187	156	83.4%
2015-2016	Hispanic Female	264	211	79.9%
	Hispanic Male	153	120	78.4%
	White Female	321	273	85.0%
	White Male	183	158	86.3%

2016-2017	Hispanic Female	271	232	85.6%
	Hispanic Male	161	127	78.9%
	White Female	303	254	83.8%
	White Male	167	136	81.4%
2017-2018	Hispanic Female	344	275	79.9%
	Hispanic Male	162	131	80.9%
	White Female	278	236	84.9%
	White Male	154	127	82.5%
2018-2019	Hispanic Female	407	338	83.0%
	Hispanic Male	172	135	78.5%
	White Female	279	239	85.7%
	White Male	140	115	82.1%
2019-2020	Hispanic Female	424	348	82.1%
	Hispanic Male	187	154	82.4%
	White Female	292	240	82.2%
	White Male	149	118	79.2%

5) Ethnicity (African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White)

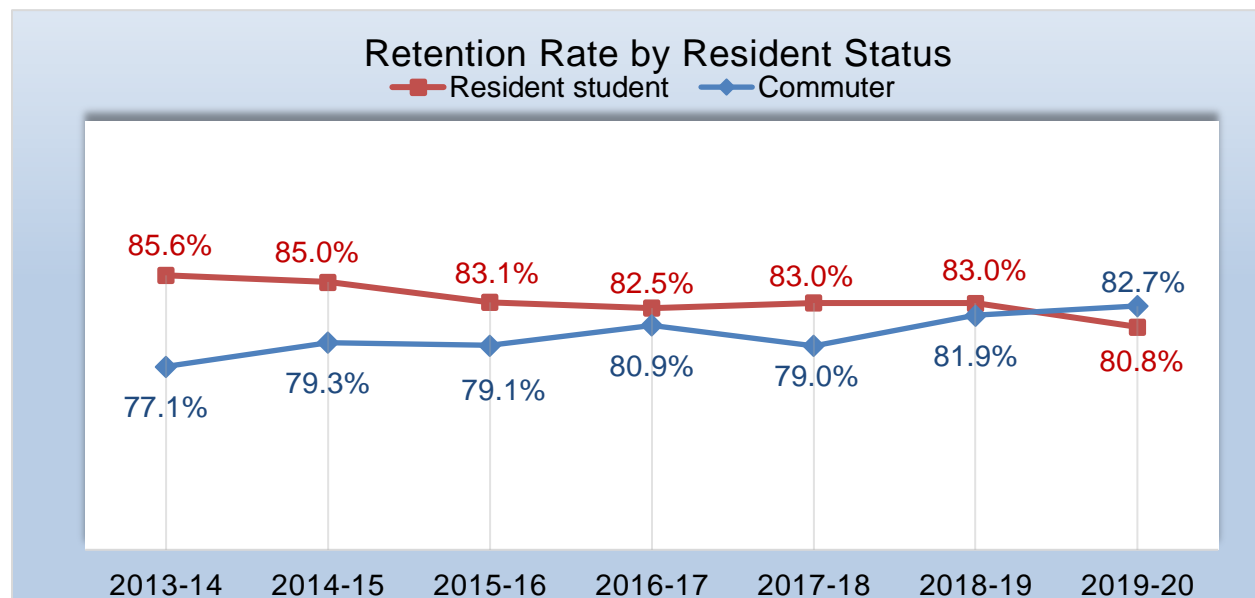
- **African American retention decreased** again this year (72.3%) by 8% from the last year (80.3%).



<i>School Year</i>	<i>Ethnicity (4)</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	Asian	30	28	93.30%
	White	559	467	83.50%
	Hispanic	446	367	82.30%
	African American	56	46	82.10%
2014-2015	Asian	25	22	88.00%
	White	515	427	82.90%
	Hispanic	423	357	84.40%
	African American	48	40	83.30%
2015-2016	Asian	23	21	91.30%
	White	504	431	85.50%
	Hispanic	417	331	79.40%
	African American	64	43	67.20%
2016-2017	Asian	34	28	82.35%
	White	470	390	82.98%
	Hispanic	432	359	83.10%
	African American	73	51	69.86%
2017-2018	Asian	29	25	86.21%
	White	432	363	84.03%
	Hispanic	506	406	80.24%
	African American	68	53	77.94%
2018-2019	Asian	38	33	86.80%
	White	419	354	84.50%
	Hispanic	579	473	81.70%
	African American	61	49	80.30%
2019-2020	Asian	62	50	80.65%
	White	441	358	81.18%
	Hispanic	611	502	82.16%
	African American	65	47	72.31%

6) Resident Status (Commuter & Resident)

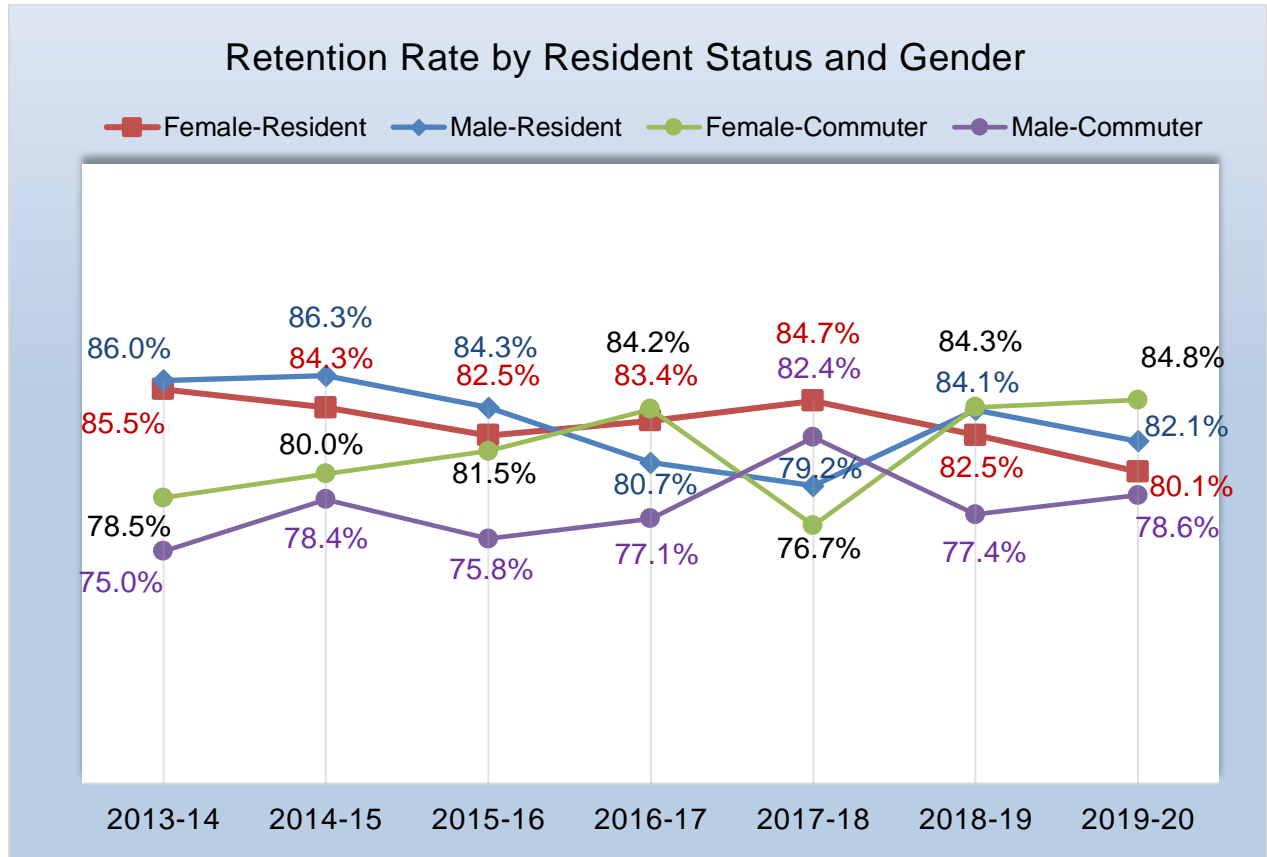
- Resident students historically showed higher retention rates than commuter students.
- However, **this year commuters showed higher retention (82.7%) than the resident students (80.8%) for the first time**: Commuter retention slightly increased by about 0.8% from the last year (81.9%) while resident retention decreased by 2.8% from the last year (83.0%).
- It was speculated that the pandemic this year did not actually affect the commuter retention, but the resident students' retention because of the campus closing.



<i>School Year</i>	<i>Ethnicity (2)</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	Commuter	398	307	77.1%
	Resident	822	704	85.6%
2014-2015	Commuter	329	261	79.3%
	Resident	799	679	85.0%
2015-2016	Commuter	358	283	79.1%
	Resident	739	614	83.1%
2016-2017	Commuter	362	293	80.9%
	Resident	756	624	82.5%
2017-2018	Commuter	410	324	79.0%
	Resident	766	636	83.0%
2018-2019	Commuter	474	388	81.9%
	Resident	776	644	83.0%
2019-2020	Commuter	481	398	82.7%
	Resident	833	673	80.8%

7) Resident Status x Gender

- Male commuter retention rate has been lower than the other three groups' retention rates; this year it increased slightly by 1.2% from 77.4% last year.
- There is no statistically significant difference for the four groups.

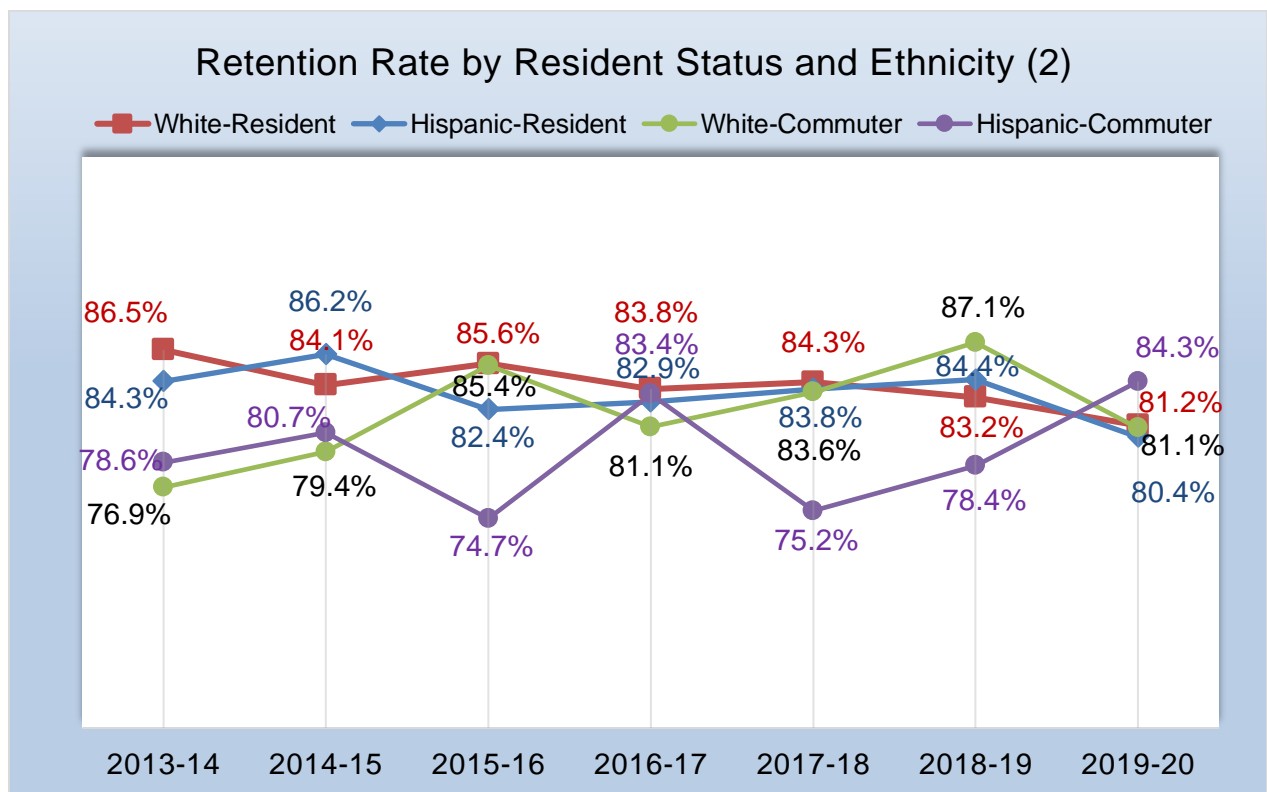


<i>School Year</i>	<i>Resident Status x Gender</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	Female-Resident	557	476	85.5%
	Male-Resident	265	228	86.0%
	Female-Commuter	246	193	78.5%
	Male-Commuter	152	114	75.0%
2014-2015	Female-Resident	528	445	84.3%
	Male-Resident	271	234	86.3%
	Female-Commuter	195	156	80.0%
	Male-Commuter	134	105	78.4%
2015-2016	Female-Resident	491	405	82.5%
	Male-Resident	248	209	84.3%
	Female-Commuter	205	167	81.5%
	Male-Commuter	153	116	75.8%

2016-2017	Female-Resident	507	423	83.4%
	Male-Resident	249	201	80.7%
	Female-Commuter	196	165	84.2%
	Male-Commuter	166	128	77.1%
2017-2018	Female-Resident	530	449	84.7%
	Male-Resident	236	187	79.2%
	Female-Commuter	240	184	76.7%
	Male-Commuter	170	140	82.4%
2018-2019	Female-Resident	549	453	82.5%
	Male-Resident	227	191	84.1%
	Female-Commuter	306	258	84.3%
	Male-Commuter	168	130	77.4%
2019-2020	Female-Resident	559	448	80.1%
	Male-Resident	274	225	82.1%
	Female-Commuter	322	273	84.8%
	Male-Commuter	159	125	78.6%

8) Resident Status × Ethnicity (Hispanic & White)

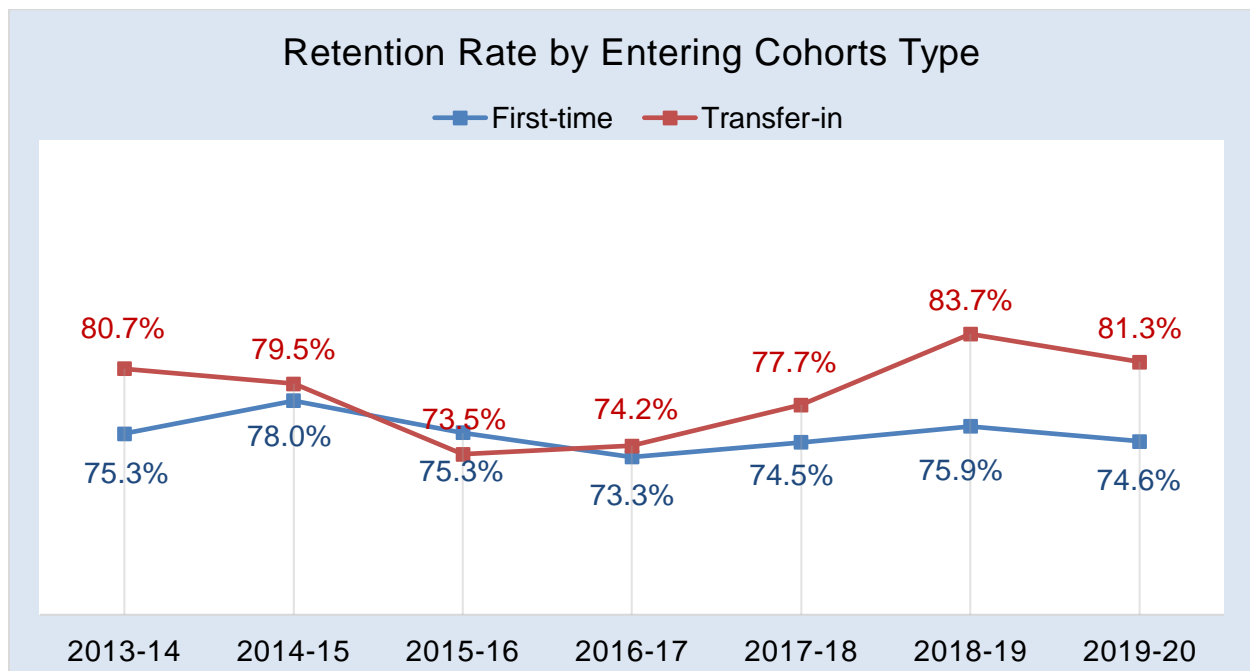
- **Hispanic commuter retention has substantially increased for the past three years** by 9.1% from 75.2% in 2017-18 to 84.3% this year.



<i>School Year</i>	<i>Resident Status x Ethnicity (2)</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	White-Resident	386	334	86.5%
	Hispanic-Resident	287	242	84.3%
	White-Commuter	173	133	76.9%
	Hispanic-Commuter	159	125	78.6%
2014-2015	White-Resident	389	327	84.1%
	Hispanic-Resident	283	244	86.2%
	White-Commuter	126	100	79.4%
	Hispanic-Commuter	140	113	80.7%
2015-2016	White-Resident	360	308	85.6%
	Hispanic-Resident	255	210	82.4%
	White-Commuter	144	123	85.4%
	Hispanic-Commuter	162	121	74.7%
2016-2017	White-Resident	327	274	83.8%
	Hispanic-Resident	269	223	82.9%
	White-Commuter	143	116	81.1%
	Hispanic-Commuter	163	136	83.4%
2017-2018	White-Resident	292	246	84.3%
	Hispanic-Resident	296	248	83.8%
	White-Commuter	140	117	83.6%
	Hispanic-Commuter	210	158	75.2%
2018-2019	White-Resident	280	233	83.2%
	Hispanic-Resident	315	266	84.4%
	White-Commuter	139	121	87.1%
	Hispanic-Commuter	264	207	78.4%
2019-2020	White-Resident	309	251	81.2%
	Hispanic-Resident	337	271	80.4%
	White-Commuter	132	107	81.1%
	Hispanic-Commuter	274	231	84.3%

9) Entering Cohort Type (First-time, Transfer-in)

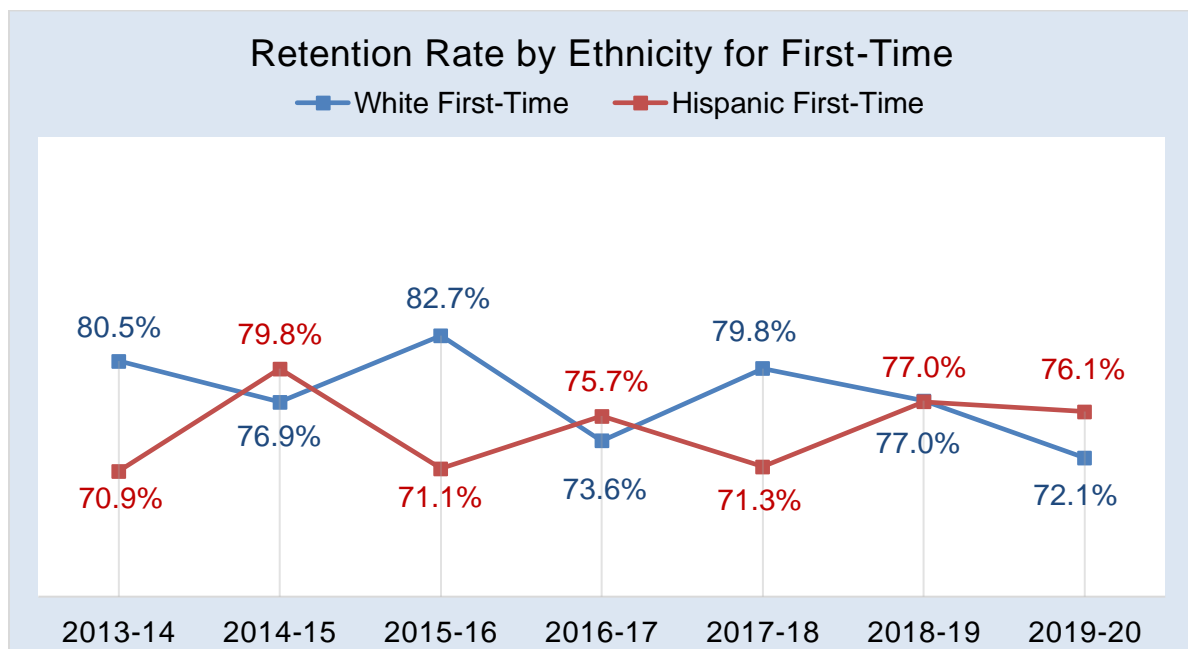
- **First-time:** A student who has no prior postsecondary experience attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. It includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term, and students who entered with advanced standing, such as college credits or postsecondary formal award earned before graduation from high school (IPEDS definition).
- **Transfer-in:** A student entering for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g., undergraduate). This includes new students enrolled in the fall term who transferred into the institution the prior summer term (IPEDS definition).
- This analysis included the **entering cohort of each year seeking a bachelor's degree only** following the IPEDS survey definition.
- The two cohorts include both full-time and part-time.
- **First-time vs. Transfer-in**
 - The retention rates of both first-time and transfer-in cohorts slightly decreased this year by 1.3% and 2.4%, respectively, from the last year.
 - Transfer-in cohort has maintained higher retention than the first-time cohort for the past four years. However, the difference between the two cohorts is not statistically significant.



<i>School Year</i>	<i>Cohort Type</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	First-time	392	295	75.3%
	Transfer-in	109	88	80.7%
2014-2015	First-time	314	245	78.0%
	Transfer-in	112	89	79.5%
2015-2016	First-time	373	281	75.3%
	Transfer-in	102	75	73.5%
2016-2017	First-time	408	299	73.3%
	Transfer-in	97	72	74.2%
2017-2018	First-time	432	322	74.5%
	Transfer-in	103	80	77.7%
2018-2019	First-time	460	349	75.9%
	Transfer-in	104	87	83.7%
2019-2020	First-time	481	359	74.6%
	Transfer-in	112	91	81.3%

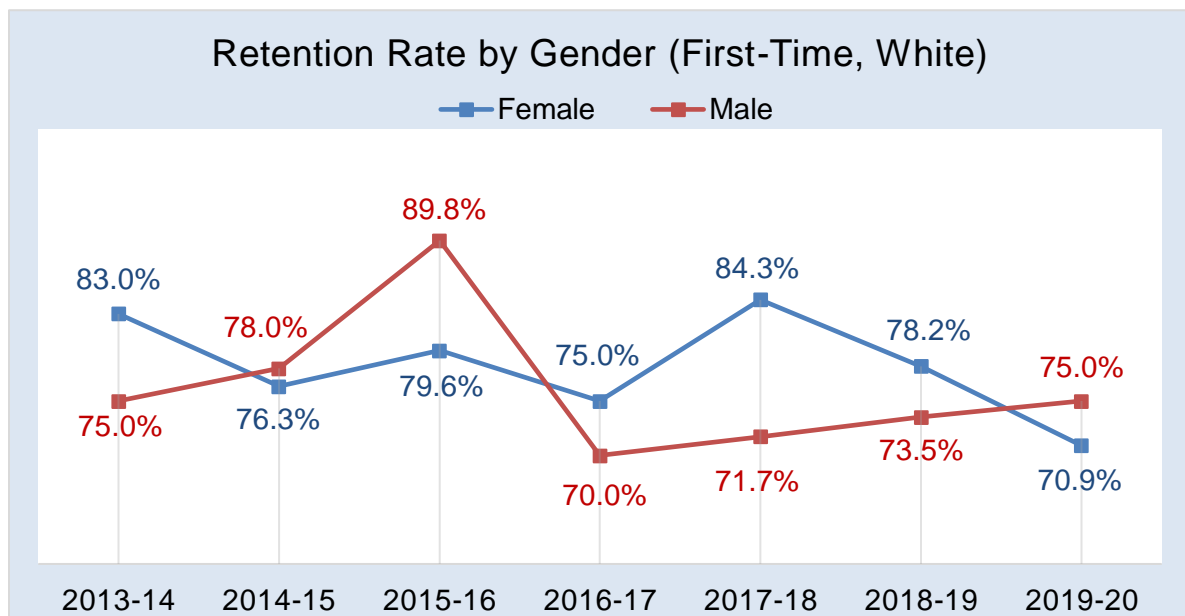
- **White vs. Hispanic for First-Time**

- Within the first-time cohort, White and Hispanic retentions tended to fluctuate in opposite directions in the past: As White retention increased, Hispanic retention decreased and vice versa.
- However, both groups' retention decreased this year. Especially, White first-time retention decreased by 7.7% this year (72.1%) from 2017-18 (79.8%).



<i>School Year</i>	<i>Cohort Type</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	White First-time	164	132	80.5%
	Hispanic First-time	172	122	70.9%
2014-2015	White First-time	143	110	76.9%
	Hispanic First-time	119	95	79.8%
2015-2016	White First-time	162	134	82.7%
	Hispanic First-time	142	101	71.1%
2016-2017	White First-time	140	103	73.6%
	Hispanic First-time	177	134	75.7%
2017-2018	White First-time	129	103	79.8%
	Hispanic First-time	216	154	71.3%
2018-2019	White First-time	135	104	77.0%
	Hispanic First-time	243	187	77.0%
2019-2020	White First-time	154	111	72.1%
	Hispanic First-time	226	172	76.1%

- It was observed that the decrease in the **White first-time retention this year was likely due to the substantial decrease (7.3%) in the female retention** while the male retention increased by 1.5%.
- No significant difference was found between the male and female White first-time cohorts in commuter%, First generation%, academic preparedness% (SAT, HSGPA), and PELL grant%.

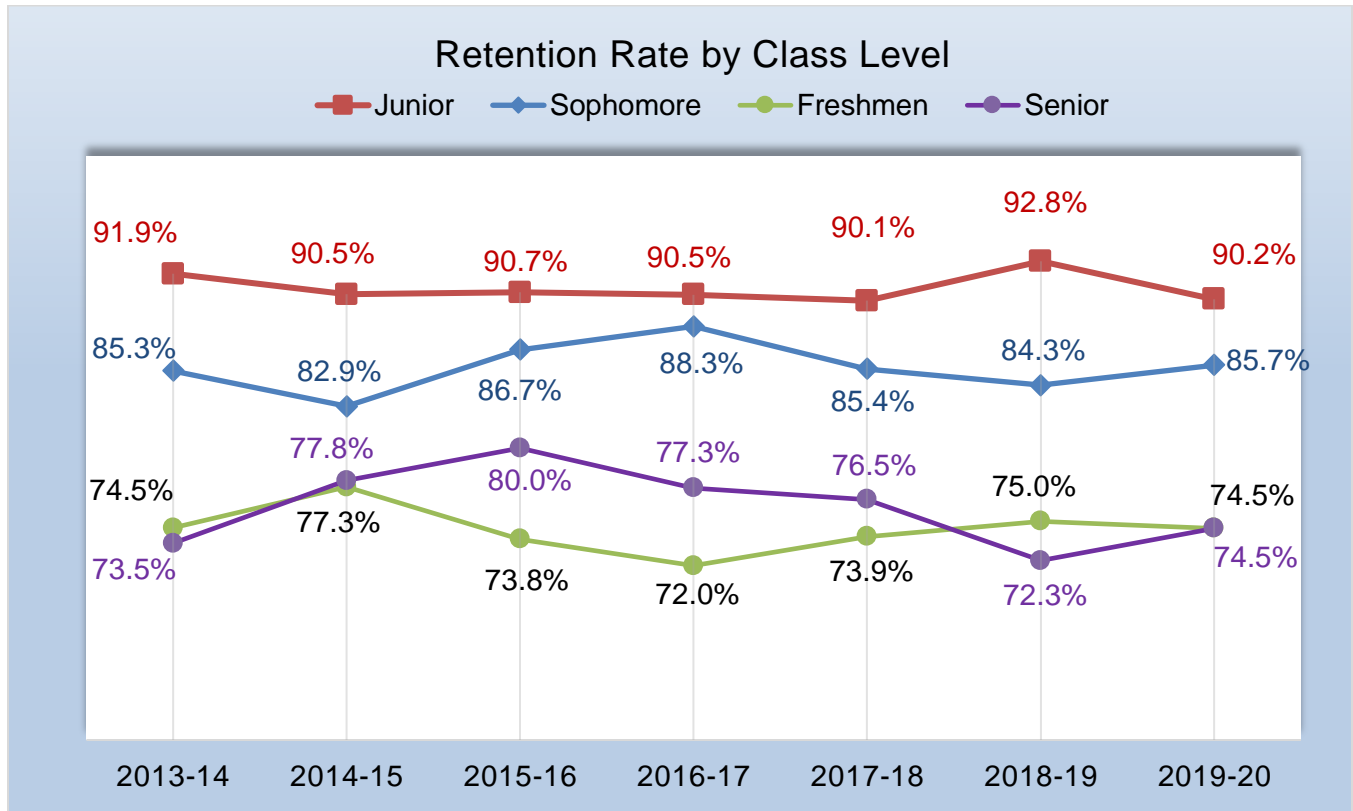


- However, it was found that **more females (8.2%) than males (2.3%)** for the White first-time cohort said “**I have seriously contemplated pausing current education due to financial reasons**” in the COVID-related survey in 2020 spring.
- It appeared that the pandemic may have affected the female retention more than the male retention for this cohort again as in the overall female retention in p. 3. However, more examination especially for the White female first-time cohort because its retention has decreased for the past three years: from 84.3% in 2017-18 to 70.9% this year (see the graph above).
- The retention rate of the first-time entering cohort is particularly important because it is one of the primary indices measuring student success according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

<i>School Year</i>	<i>Cohort Type</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	Female White First-time	112	93	83.0%
	Male White First-time	52	39	75.0%
2014-2015	Female White First-time	93	71	76.3%
	Male White First-time	50	39	78.0%
2015-2016	Female White First-time	113	90	79.6%
	Male White First-time	49	44	89.8%
2016-2017	Female White First-time	100	75	75.0%
	Male White First-time	40	28	70.0%
2017-2018	Female White First-time	83	70	84.3%
	Male White First-time	46	33	71.7%
2018-2019	Female White First-time	101	79	78.2%
	Male White First-time	34	25	73.5%
2019-2020	Female White First-time	110	78	70.9%
	Male White First-time	44	33	75.0%

10) Class Level

- This year, junior retention decreased by 2.6% (92.8% to 90.2%) while sophomore retention slightly increased by 1.4% (84.3% to 85.7%) from the last year.



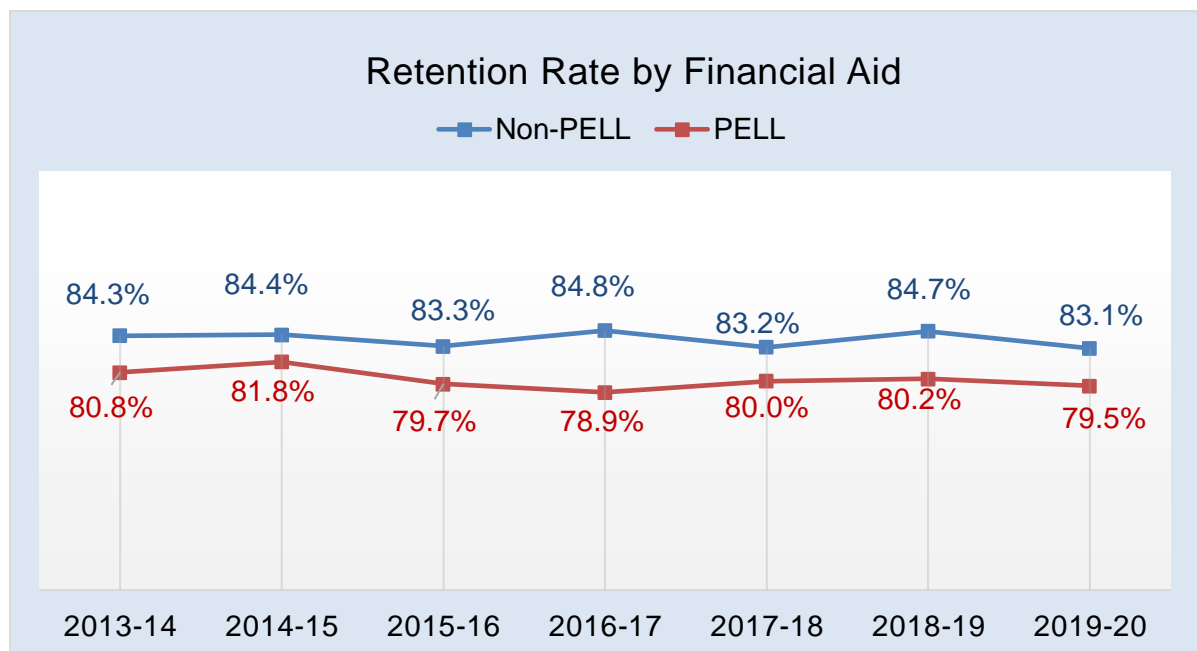
<i>School Year</i>	<i>Class Level</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	Freshman	428	319	74.5%
	Sophomore	408	348	85.3%
	Junior	335	308	91.9%
	Senior	49	36	73.5%
2014-2015	Freshman	353	273	77.3%
	Sophomore	362	300	82.9%
	Junior	359	325	90.5%
	Senior	54	42	77.8%
2015-2016	Freshman	484	357	73.8%
	Sophomore	279	242	86.7%
	Junior	289	262	90.7%
	Senior	45	36	80.0%
2016-2017	Freshman	442	318	72.0%
	Sophomore	326	288	88.3%

	Junior	306	277	90.5%
	Senior	44	34	77.3%
2017-2018	Freshman	472	349	73.9%
	Sophomore	350	299	85.4%
	Junior	303	273	90.1%
	Senior	51	39	76.5%
2018-2019	Freshman	480	360	75.0%
	Sophomore	389	328	84.3%
	Junior	334	310	92.8%
	Senior	47	34	72.3%
2019-2020	Freshman	569	424	74.5%
	Sophomore	392	336	85.7%
	Junior	306	276	90.2%
	Senior	47	35	74.5%

11) PELL Grant

- PELL grant is one of the most widely used indicators of the socio-economic status (SES).
- PELL recipients have maintained lower retention rates than the Non-PELL recipients.

However, there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in retention.



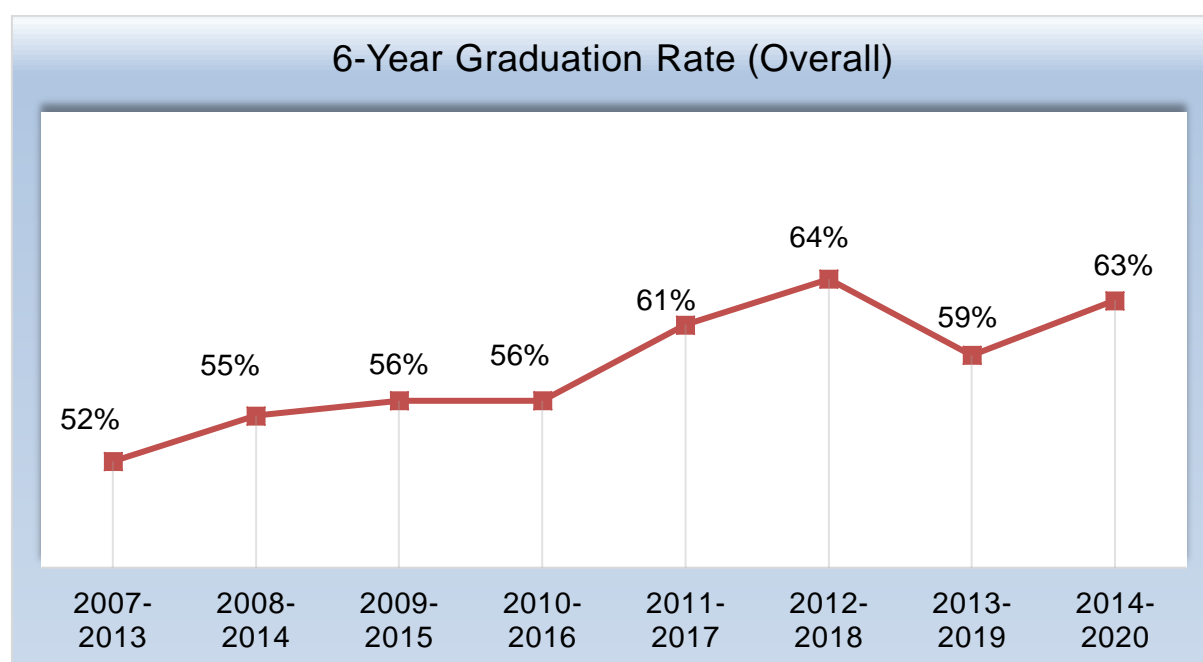
<i>School Year</i>	<i>Cohort Type</i>	<i>Retention Pool</i>	<i>Returned</i>	<i>Retention %</i>
2013-2014	Non-PELL	725	611	84.3%
	PELL	495	400	80.8%
2014-2015	Non-PELL	672	567	84.4%
	PELL	456	373	81.8%
2015-2016	Non-PELL	618	515	83.3%
	PELL	479	382	79.7%
2016-2017	Non-PELL	592	502	84.8%
	PELL	526	415	78.9%
2017-2018	Non-PELL	631	525	83.2%
	PELL	544	435	80.0%
2018-2019	Non-PELL	649	550	84.7%
	PELL	601	482	80.2%
2019-2020	Non-PELL	724	602	83.1%
	PELL	590	469	79.5%

II. Graduation Rates

6-year graduation rates were analyzed for the **full-time, first-time entering cohorts seeking a bachelor's degree only** (IPEDS definition).

1) Overall

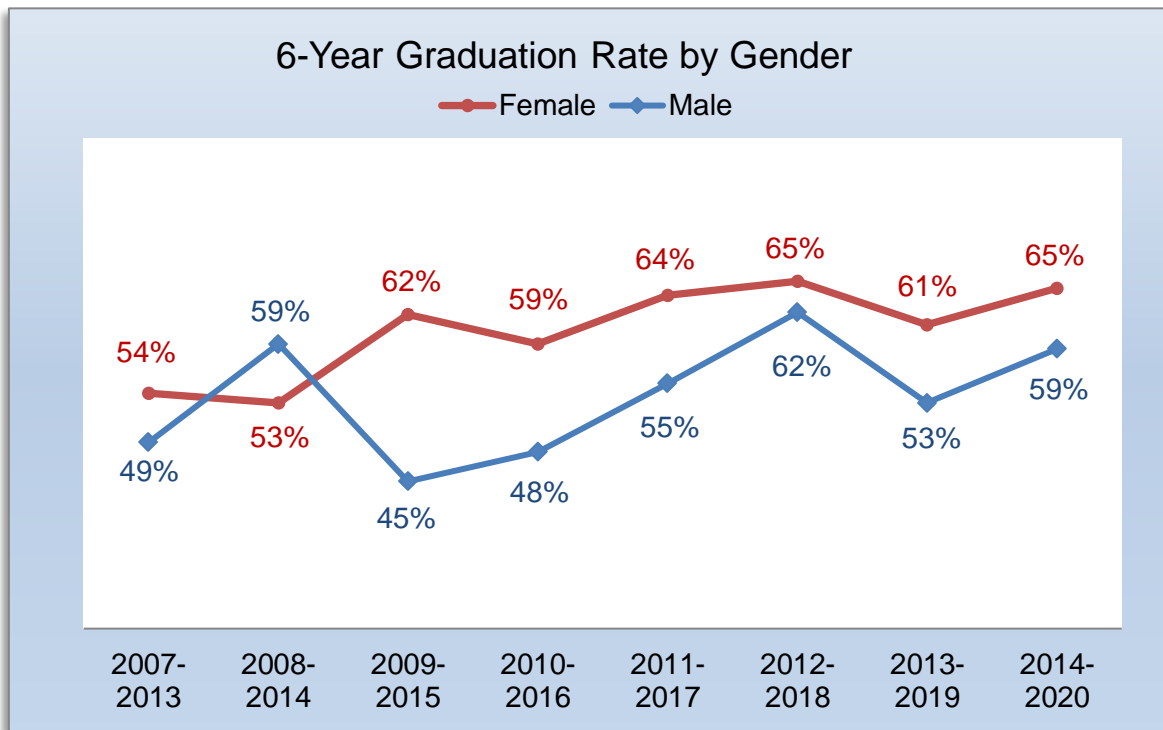
- **Six-year graduation rate of the 2014 entering cohort this year (63%) is 4% higher than that of the 2013 entering cohort (59%) last year.**
- The lower graduation rate of the 2013 cohort was likely due to their lower first-year retention rate (75.3%, See the "First-time" line in the graph p. 12.)
- Therefore, it was expected that the graduation rate of the 2014 cohort would be higher than that of the 2013 cohort because the retention rate of the 2014 first-time entering cohort was higher (78.0%).



<i>Entering- Graduating</i>	<i>Cohort total</i>	<i>Graduated</i>	<i>Graduation Rate</i>
2007-2013	367	192	52%
2008-2014	299	164	55%
2009-2015	261	146	56%
2010-2016	334	186	56%
2011-2017	397	242	61%
2012-2018	435	280	64%
2013-2019	390	229	59%
2014-2020	313	196	63%

2) Gender

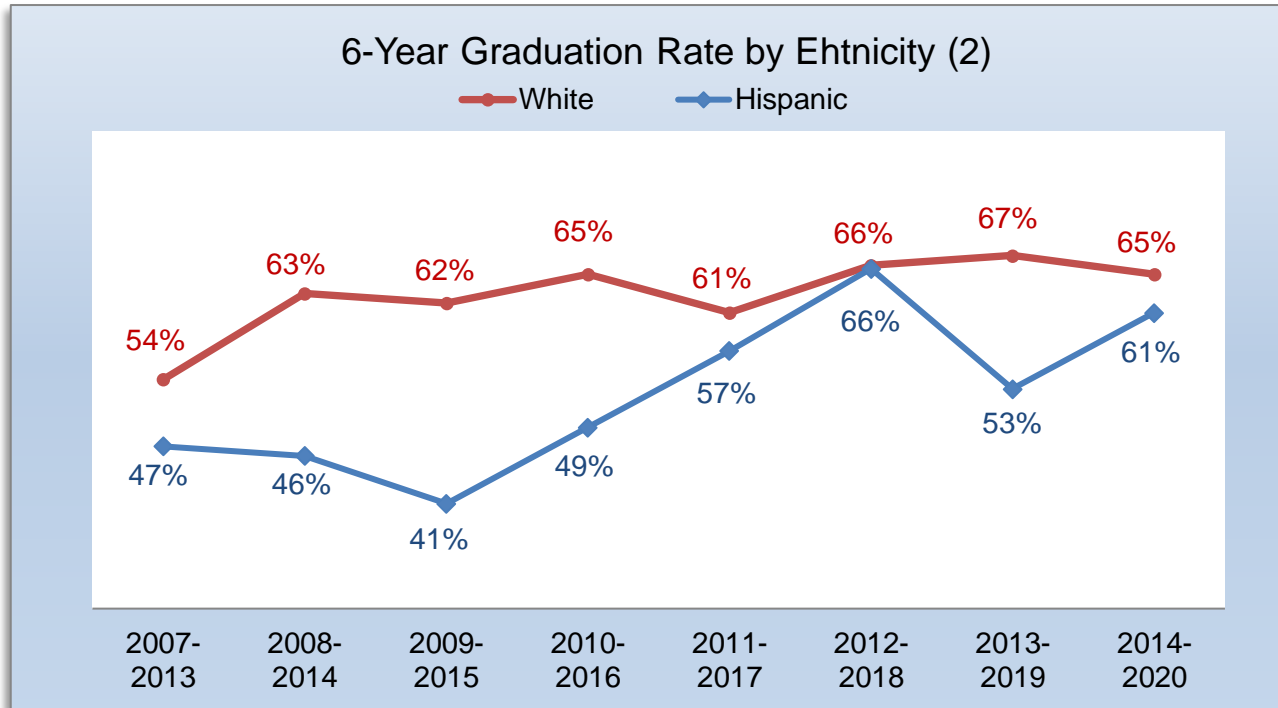
- Graduation rates of both genders of 2014 cohort are higher than those of the 2013 cohort by 4% for female and 6% for male, respectively.
- Also, male graduation rate is 6% lower than the female graduation rate



<i>Entering-Graduating</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Cohort total</i>	<i>Graduated</i>	<i>%</i>
2007-2013	Female	232	126	54%
	Male	135	66	49%
2008-2014	Female	205	109	53%
	Male	94	55	59%
2009-2015	Female	162	101	62%
	Male	99	45	45%
2010-2016	Female	234	138	59%
	Male	100	48	48%
2011-2017	Female	271	173	64%
	Male	126	69	55%
2012-2018	Female	292	191	65%
	Male	143	89	62%
2013-2019	Female	273	167	61%
	Male	117	62	53%
2014-2020	Female	207	134	65%
	Male	106	62	59%

3) Ethnicity (White and Hispanic)

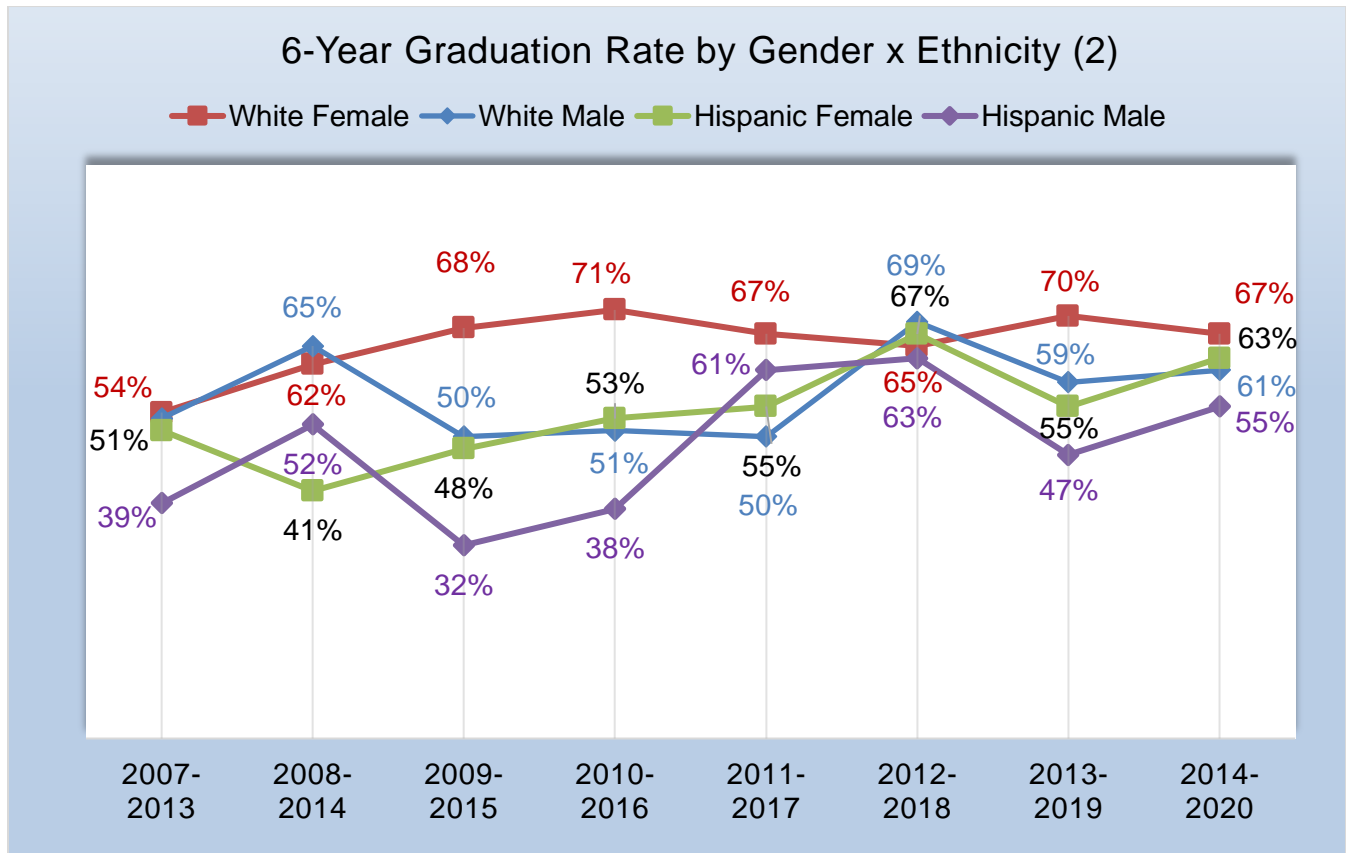
- **Hispanic graduation rate increased by 8%** for the 2014 entering cohort (61%) compared to the 2013 cohort (53%). The gap between the White and Hispanic cohorts substantially reduced for the 2014 cohort: 65% of White vs. 61% of Hispanic.



<i>Entering-Graduating</i>	<i>Ethnicity (2)</i>	<i>Cohort total</i>	<i>Graduated</i>	<i>%</i>
2007-2013	Hispanic	55	26	47%
	White	256	137	54%
2008-2014	Hispanic	57	26	46%
	White	188	118	63%
2009-2015	Hispanic	58	24	41%
	White	159	98	62%
2010-2016	Hispanic	101	49	49%
	White	165	108	65%
2011-2017	Hispanic	122	69	57%
	White	215	132	61%
2012-2018	Hispanic	157	103	66%
	White	185	122	66%
2013-2019	Hispanic	172	91	53%
	White	162	108	67%
2014-2020	Hispanic	120	73	61%
	White	162	105	65%

4) Gender x Ethnicity (White and Hispanic)

- White female entering cohort showed a slight decrease, but the other three groups (White & Hispanic male, Hispanic female) of the 2014 entering cohort showed increases in the graduation rate compared to their counterparts in the 2013 entering cohort.



<i>Entering-Graduating</i>	<i>Ethnicity (2) × Gender</i>	<i>Cohort total</i>	<i>Graduated</i>	<i>%</i>
2007-2013	White Female	155	83	54%
	White Male	101	54	53%
	Hispanic Female	37	19	51%
	Hispanic Male	18	7	39%
2008-2014	White Female	133	82	62%
	White Male	55	36	65%
	Hispanic Female	34	14	41%
	Hispanic Male	23	12	52%
2009-2015	White Female	103	70	68%
	White Male	56	28	50%
	Hispanic Female	33	16	48%
	Hispanic Male	25	8	32%

2010-2016	White Female	118	84	71%
	White Male	47	24	51%
	Hispanic Female	72	38	53%
	Hispanic Male	29	11	38%
2011-2017	White Female	141	95	67%
	White Male	74	37	50%
	Hispanic Female	89	49	55%
	Hispanic Male	33	20	61%
2012-2018	White Female	127	82	65%
	White Male	58	40	69%
	Hispanic Female	109	73	67%
	Hispanic Male	48	30	63%
2013-2019	White Female	111	78	70%
	White Male	51	30	59%
	Hispanic Female	121	67	55%
	Hispanic Male	51	24	47%
2014-2020	White Female	105	70	67%
	White Male	57	35	61%
	Hispanic Female	82	52	63%
	Hispanic Male	38	21	55%

III. Retention and Relational Factors (Kim, Kim, Praslova, Lebrecht, Ziegler, & Sales, 2020)

- Student retention is often attributed to student factors (e.g., GPA, finances) and institutional factors (e.g., quality of instruction, campus support services). However, it was hypothesized that **relational factors (caring for students, sense of welcoming, and quality of interaction)** could be a key to retention. Previous studies support our hypothesis: any **community caring** for their members will retain them (Tinto, 1993); “**Relentless welcome**” is what students need and want throughout their time in higher education (Felten, 2019); **student-faculty interaction** has a strong effect on student satisfaction with the college experience than any other factors (Astin, 1993). Our hypothesis was tested using data from the 2014 and 2018 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the 2016 and 2019 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). The sample consists of 1158 Vanguard traditional undergraduate students.
- Of all ten NSSE constructs, **Quality of Interactions** was the only construct that showed a significant correlation ($<.05$) with the students’ return intentions, “Do you intend to return to this institution next year?” Additional NSSE questions focused on students-centeredness (**sense of belonging, feeling comfortable and valued**) also had significant correlations ($<.001$) with the return intention.
- Analysis of SSI data further supported our hypothesis. **Student Centeredness** and **Campus Climate** categories, as well as **Sense of Belonging** items, showed the highest positive correlations with the retention item, “All in all, if you had to do it over again, would you enroll here?” than other categories (Campus Life, Instructional Effectiveness, Recruitment and Financial Aid, Campus Support Services, Academic Advising, Registration Effectiveness, Service Excellence, Responsiveness to Diverse Populations).
- Additionally, the correlations between all the 89 SSI items (2019 spring) and the actual 2018-2019 student retention were examined. First, of all the categories of the items, **Student Centeredness** showed the highest positive correlation with the actual retention ($<.05$) than other categories. Second, followings are some of the individual items which showed significant correlations ($<.05$):
 - #1. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.*
 - #3. Faculty care about me as an individual.*
 - #13. Library staff are helpful and approachable.*
 - #34. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.*
 - #39. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.*
 - #45. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.*
 - #47. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.*
 - #58. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.*

#59. *This institution shows concern for students as individuals.*

#65. *Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.*

#69. *There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.*

#75. *Campus item: My understanding of God is being strengthened by classroom and/or campus experiences.*

#79. *Campus item: Given where I am spiritually right now, this campus is a good "fit" for me.*

- **In conclusion, the results above clearly showed that the relational factors (caring for students, sense of welcoming, and quality of interaction) are key retention factors for Vanguard campus.** These findings are aligned with the core motives framework in which belonging is the key human motivational force (Fiske, 2019). We need to contextualize these findings within campus culture so faculty and staff can continue to “create a relentless welcome” (Felten, 2019) through their regular interaction with students.
- See the infographic for this study here:
[https://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/Provost/Relational_factors_for_retention\(Final\).pdf](https://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/Provost/Relational_factors_for_retention(Final).pdf)

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