

Day 13: Did you know that CMU has retention and graduation rate goals?

[4.C.1] Goals defined for student retention, persistence, and completion are attainable and appropriate to mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

In recent years, CMU has made significant gains in the one-year retention rates for first-time, full-time students, coupled with improvements to its six-year graduation rates. The first-year retention rate for the Fall 2015 cohort reached 73.3%, up from 65.9% for the Fall 2009 entering students. Meanwhile, the six-year graduation rate climbed from 24% for the cohort entering in Fall 2005 to 35.8% for the Fall 2010 group. In its final report, the Working Group to Improve Student Academic Success set **a five-year goal of 80% for first-year retention and 45% for six-year graduation** for first-time, full-time, [baccalaureate-seeking students](#). For [community college students](#), **a more aggressive improvement - to 61%** - is expected so as to meet the national success rate average. Recommendations made by the working group in 2017 are now being implemented, but the outcomes of two recommendations from the 2012 report have been in effect for several years and illustrate the benefits emerging from changes in Mathematics and English.

The Mathematics faculty evaluated the process for placement testing. They concluded that the amount of remediation varied widely and that some students did not need a full semester or year of developmental preparation before enrolling in College Algebra. Mathematics faculty piloted a one-credit, three-week "review" course for Intermediate Algebra as a "prequel" to College Algebra in Fall 2014 (MATH 101). Students who successfully completed the review course moved on into a Late Start section of College Algebra in the same semester; those who were not successful continued in the developmental-level course.

Results of this pilot were that 74% of those who went on to College Algebra were successful, exceeding the average success rate of 65% (defined as earning a 'C' or higher) for students not in a review course prior to enrolling in College Algebra. Beginning in AY 2016-17, review courses for Precalculus, Calculus I and Calculus II were added to improve student learning in these courses. The [success](#) of this streamlined approach to remediation has not only been a psychological boost in terms of students' attitudes toward enrolling in Mathematics, but also both a time and financial savings for successful students.

Faculty from the English Program teamed with the Developmental English faculty to create a one-credit Writing Studio as an alternative to Basic Writing that provides "just in time" support. In the initial lab session, students write a diagnostic essay to determine particular areas of their writing in need of improvement and schedule meetings with a lab instructor to work on specific assignments for English Composition. Again, by students enrolling in English Composition and its co-requisite studio course, they are saving time and reducing the costs for three credits to one credit.

CMU offers a limited number of Developmental English sections that concurrently remediate reading and writing skills while students are enrolled in English Composition (ENGL 111). Co-enrollment in the Writing Studio (ENGC 092) has not only accelerated students' progress toward completion but has also enhanced those students' success rates to a remarkable degree. For AY 2013-14 through AY 2015-16, the average student pass rate for ENGL 111, when taken concurrently with ENGC 092, was 72%. This [metric](#) compares favorably with the 81% pass rate for all students only enrolled in ENGL 111, especially when one considers that previously these students would have enrolled in a full-semester remedial course.

To learn more, log into MAVzone and click on the document link found in the CMU Assurance Argument for HLC channel (top left on the Home tab) for the full text of CMU's Assurance Argument. Links to supporting evidence are identified by underlined words but are not available through the PDF version.

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