

April 2008

GRADUATION RATE WATCH:

Making Minority Student Success a Priority

By Kevin Carey

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Janie Scull for her research assistance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KEVIN CAREY is the Research and Policy Manager at Education Sector. He can be reached at kcarey@educationsector.org.

ABOUT EDUCATION SECTOR

Education Sector is an independent think tank that challenges conventional thinking in education policy. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to achieving real, measurable impact in education, both by improving existing reform initiatives and by developing new, innovative solutions to our nation's most pressing education problems.

© Copyright 2008 Education Sector.

Education Sector encourages the free use, reproduction, and distribution of our ideas, perspectives, and analysis. Our Creative Commons licensing allows for the noncommercial use of all Education Sector authored or commissioned materials. We require attribution for all use. For more information and instructions on the commercial use of our materials, please visit our Web site, www.educationsector.org.

1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 850, Washington, D.C. 20036
202.552.2840 • www.educationsector.org

Most people who grow up like Makandall Saint-Eloi never graduate from college. Raised along with his brother by a single mom who worked as a nurse's assistant to make ends meet, Saint-Eloi grew up poor and went to a Hollywood, Florida, high school where only a third of ninth-graders pass the state reading test.

Such surroundings create long odds, particularly for low-income black male high school students like Saint-Eloi: Only 4 percent earn a bachelor's degree by their mid-20s.¹ That's partly because many of them never go to college—only 60 percent of Saint-Eloi's classmates graduated on time, and of those, less than half went on to a four-year institution.² But it's also because less than half of all black students who start college at a four-year institution graduate in six years or less, more than 20 percentage points less than the graduation rate for white students.

In high school Saint-Eloi was helped onto a different path by a program that provided him and other low-income students with counselors to help him assemble college applications, navigate bewildering financial aid forms, and prepare for college-admissions tests. And the college he chose to attend, Florida State University, has an unusually comprehensive program to help low-income, first-generation college students like him succeed—the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (CARE).

FSU established CARE in 2000. Six years later, the university posted its highest-ever six-year graduation rate for black students—72 percent. It was higher than the rate for white students at Florida State and for black students at the state's more selective flagship university, the University of Florida. Saint-Eloi is on track for the same success, having completed a full course load in his first semester with three A's and a B.³

By reaching out to low-income and first-generation students as early as the sixth grade and providing a steady stream of advice and support through their high school and college careers, FSU has managed to defy the prevailing wisdom that low minority college graduation rates are regrettable but unavoidable. FSU is not alone. In the last six years, a significant number of colleges and universities have achieved small or nonexistent graduation rate gaps between white and black students.

But for every Florida State, there are many other, similar universities where students of color are far less likely to succeed. Those institutions are not failing because they don't realize they have a problem, or because FSU has discovered a secret formula that others have yet to learn. They fail because at many institutions the success of undergraduates, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is not the priority it should be.

A New Source of Information

Until recently, it was hard to document the success of programs like CARE or compare universities like FSU to their peers because there was little reliable information about minority graduation rates. That began to change in 1990, when former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley pushed the Student Right-to-Know Act through Congress. Bradley, a Rhodes Scholar and member of the Basketball Hall of Fame, was concerned about egregiously low graduation rates for college athletes. The act required institutions enrolling students who pay for college with federal grants and loans—essentially, every higher education institution in the nation—to report the percent of football, basketball, baseball, and track and field athletes who graduated within four, five, and six years of enrolling. While they were at it, colleges were required to report the percent of all other students who finished as well.

After a fair amount of grumbling, colleges went along with the new reporting requirements. The process was slow to get off the ground, however, and reporting wasn't made mandatory for all institutions until 1995. That meant that institutions couldn't report six-year graduation rates until 2001. As often happens when new processes are created to collect large amounts of information from thousands of disparate institutions, it took a while to work out the glitches and clean up the numbers. The first full set of graduation rates—including, crucially, rates broken down

by students' gender and race/ethnicity—wasn't made public until early 2004.

The information is sobering. At the typical institution, less than 40 percent of students earn their four-year degree in four years. Extending the time frame to six years brings the average institutional graduation rate up to roughly 57 percent. Even giving institutions credit for students who transfer and graduate elsewhere only brings the average up to 63 percent, still less than two-thirds of all students. Graduation rates for minority students are substantially lower. Black students, for example, typically graduate at a lower rate than their white peers at the same institution. Black students also are disproportionately enrolled in colleges with overall graduation rates that are below average. As a result, less than half of black college students graduate within six years. And as **Table 1** shows, black graduation rates at many institutions are far below that already-low average.

In 2000, approximately 120,000 black students enrolled as first-time, full-time freshmen at one of 1,050 four-year colleges and universities that reported graduation rate data to the federal government and enrolled more than 10

black students in that cohort.⁴ As Table 1 demonstrates, only about 11,200 of those students—less than 10 percent—enrolled at an institution that would, like Florida State, grant degrees to at least 70 percent of those black freshmen within six years. Half went to an institution that graduated less than 40 percent of black students. Nearly one in four went to an institution with a black graduation rate below 30 percent. One in 10 enrolled at an institution with a black graduation rate below 20 percent.

In other words, black students starting college at the beginning of the millennium were two-and-a-half times more likely to enroll at a school with a 70 percent chance of *not* graduating within six years than at a school with a 70 percent chance of earning a degree.

Outperforming Their Peers

Not all institutions are the same, of course. Institutional graduation rates should be examined in context, given each colleges' unique mix of resources, academic mission, and students. One way to do this is to compare graduation rates for different students attending the same institution. **Table 2** shows graduation rate results for 2006, for 94 colleges and universities that meet certain thresholds of student enrollment.⁵ (See **Appendix 1** for rate results over six years, 2001–2006.) While the median institutional graduation rate gap between white and black students is nearly 10 percentage points, each of the institutions on Table 2 had a gap in 2006 of only 3 percentage points or less. At 62 of these institutions, black students had a *higher* graduation rate than white students. (Because Table 2 focuses on graduation rate disparities at institutions with significant numbers of black and white students, it contains no historically black colleges and universities. For an analysis of minority graduation rates at HBCUs, see sidebar on Page 7.)

There are many kinds of colleges and universities on Table 2, and not all of them got there for the same reasons. Some, like Harvard, Dartmouth, and Yale, have achieved racial parity chiefly through extremely selective admissions. Harvard only admits students who are most likely to succeed. Unsurprisingly, nearly all of them do—Harvard's overall six-year graduation rate is the highest in the country at 98 percent. When nearly everyone at a college graduates, graduation rate disparities between different groups of students are mathematically unlikely.

Table 1. Distribution of Institutional Six-Year Graduation Rates for Black Students Who Enrolled as First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen in 2000

Institutional Six-Year Black Graduation Rate	Number of Beginning First-Time Full-Time Black Students	Percent of All Students	Number of Institutions	Percent of All Institutions
90%–100%	1,323	1.1%	20	1.9%
80%–89%	2,752	2.3%	46	4.4%
70%–79%	7,096	5.9%	81	7.7%
60%–69%	9,305	7.8%	103	9.8%
50%–59%	16,311	13.6%	129	12.3%
40%–49%	23,570	19.7%	168	16.0%
30%–39%	31,704	26.5%	215	20.5%
20%–29%	16,654	13.9%	154	14.7%
10%–19%	9,728	8.1%	103	9.8%
0%–9%	1,411	1.2%	31	3.0%
Total	119,854	100%	1,050	100%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

Table 2. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Small or Nonexistent Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2006

Institution	State	Sector	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Florida State Univ.	FL	Public	72%	69%	3%
Rutgers–New Brunswick	NJ	Public	71%	73%	–2%
Stony Brook Univ.	NY	Public	67%	52%	15%
Richard Stockton Coll. NJ	NJ	Public	66%	66%	0%
Longwood Univ.	VA	Public	65%	66%	–1%
Towson Univ.	MD	Public	65%	64%	1%
SUNY at Albany	NY	Public	65%	64%	2%
The Univ. of Alabama	AL	Public	65%	63%	2%
Coll. of Charleston	SC	Public	65%	60%	4%
UNC–Wilmington	NC	Public	64%	66%	–2%
Winthrop Univ.	SC	Public	64%	57%	7%
UC–Riverside	CA	Public	61%	64%	–3%
George Mason Univ.	VA	Public	60%	54%	6%
Univ. of Tennessee	TN	Public	59%	60%	–1%
Texas State Univ.–San Marcos	TX	Public	59%	54%	5%
Temple Univ.	PA	Public	58%	60%	–2%
Radford Univ.	VA	Public	58%	57%	1%
UMBC	MD	Public	58%	56%	2%
UNC–Greensboro	NC	Public	58%	50%	8%
Christopher Newport Univ.	VA	Public	57%	51%	6%
East Carolina Univ.	NC	Public	56%	57%	–1%
Troy Univ.	AL	Public	54%	50%	4%
California Univ. of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	53%	49%	4%
Univ. of South Florida	FL	Public	52%	49%	3%
UNC–Charlotte	NC	Public	51%	49%	2%
Old Dominion Univ.	VA	Public	50%	49%	1%
Marshall Univ.	WV	Public	50%	48%	2%
Frostburg State Univ.	MD	Public	50%	49%	1%
Univ. of Alabama in Huntsville	AL	Public	49%	44%	5%
CUNY John Jay Coll., Crim. Just.	NY	Public	49%	44%	5%
Western Carolina Univ.	NC	Public	48%	47%	1%
Univ. of North Texas	TX	Public	48%	45%	3%
Univ. of Tenn. at Chattanooga	TN	Public	46%	45%	1%
Georgia Southern Univ.	GA	Public	45%	42%	3%
Univ. of North Florida	FL	Public	44%	45%	–2%
Florida International Univ.	FL	Public	43%	42%	1%
SUNY Coll. at Buffalo	NY	Public	43%	44%	–1%
Middle Tennessee State Univ.	TN	Public	43%	42%	1%
Univ. of South Carolina–Aiken	SC	Public	43%	41%	2%
Virginia Commonwealth Univ.	VA	Public	42%	45%	–3%
Mississippi Univ. for Women	MS	Public	42%	43%	0%
Yale Univ.	CT	Private	96%	97%	–1%
Harvard Univ.	MA	Private	95%	98%	–3%
Wake Forest Univ.	NC	Private	94%	87%	7%
Indiana Wesleyan Univ.	IN	Private	93%	71%	22%
Dartmouth Coll.	NH	Private	92%	94%	–2%
Northwestern Univ.	IL	Private	90%	93%	–3%

Institution	State	Sector	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Cornell Univ.	NY	Private	90%	92%	–3%
Vanderbilt Univ.	TN	Private	90%	89%	1%
Smith Coll.	MA	Private	88%	86%	1%
Spring Hill Coll.	AL	Private	88%	64%	24%
Villanova Univ.	PA	Private	86%	88%	–2%
Emory Univ.	GA	Private	86%	86%	–1%
Univ. of Southern California	CA	Private	85%	84%	1%
Univ. of Richmond	VA	Private	83%	83%	0%
American Univ.	DC	Private	80%	71%	9%
Regis Univ.	CO	Private	80%	59%	21%
Southern Methodist Univ.	TX	Private	78%	74%	4%
Loyola Marymount Univ.	CA	Private	73%	74%	–2%
Rollins Coll.	FL	Private	73%	69%	4%
Baylor Univ.	TX	Private	72%	75%	–3%
McDaniel Coll.	MD	Private	72%	73%	–1%
Tulane Univ. of Louisiana	LA	Private	72%	73%	–1%
Immaculata Univ.	PA	Private	71%	56%	16%
Elon Univ.	NC	Private	70%	73%	–3%
Univ. of San Francisco	CA	Private	69%	61%	8%
Univ. of Miami	FL	Private	68%	71%	–3%
LaGrange Coll.	GA	Private	67%	55%	11%
Northeastern Univ.	MA	Private	66%	65%	1%
Loyola Univ. New Orleans	LA	Private	66%	62%	4%
Berea Coll.	KY	Private	64%	57%	7%
Mount St. Mary's Coll.	CA	Private	63%	57%	6%
Oglethorpe Univ.	GA	Private	61%	59%	2%
Wesleyan Coll.	GA	Private	61%	57%	4%
St. Francis Coll.	NY	Private	58%	57%	1%
Chestnut Hill Coll.	PA	Private	58%	55%	3%
Aurora Univ.	IL	Private	58%	49%	9%
The Univ. of Tampa	FL	Private	57%	55%	3%
LeTourneau Univ.	TX	Private	57%	51%	6%
The New School	NY	Private	56%	56%	0%
Christian Brothers Univ.	TN	Private	56%	54%	1%
Univ. of La Verne	CA	Private	56%	52%	5%
High Point Univ.	NC	Private	54%	55%	–1%
Newberry Coll.	SC	Private	54%	52%	2%
Mary Baldwin Coll.	VA	Private	53%	50%	3%
Trinity Washington Univ.	DC	Private	51%	50%	1%
Mercer Univ.	GA	Private	51%	53%	–2%
Coker Coll.	SC	Private	50%	41%	9%
Columbia Coll.	SC	Private	48%	46%	2%
Pfeiffer Univ.	NC	Private	48%	44%	4%
Johnson & Wales Univ.–FL Campus	FL	Private	45%	41%	4%
Curry Coll.	MA	Private	44%	44%	0%
Saint Leo Univ.	FL	Private	42%	43%	–1%
Marymount Manhattan Coll.	NY	Private	40%	40%	0%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

Similarly, some colleges may have boosted minority graduation rates primarily by changing the kind of students they enroll. Admissions officers at **Towson University** in Maryland, which went from a graduation rate gap of minus 20 percentage points in 2001 (the white rate was 65 percent, compared to 45 percent for black students) to plus 1 point in 2006 (64 percent for white students, 65 percent for black students), attribute much of the change to giving more weight to high school grades and less to SAT scores when deciding who to admit.⁶ Students who did well in their high school courses, they found, were more likely to be ready for college-level work.

Other institutions may have benefited from the spill-over effect of broader institutional efforts to climb the higher education status ladder, which is substantially based on the “quality” of incoming freshmen. **Northeastern University**, for example, went from a minus 18 percentage point gap in 2002 to a plus 1 percentage point difference in 2006. During the same time period, Northeastern boosted the median freshman SAT score by over 100 points and reduced admissions rates substantially, helping to elevate it from the third tier of the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings to among the top 100 national universities, continuing a longer-term trend of increased selectivity at the private, Boston-based research university.⁷ As institutions increase their ability to pick and choose who they enroll, they’re more able to admit students who are likely to graduate while maintaining their goals for racial diversity in the student body. This does not, however, necessarily reflect on what they do for those students once they arrive.

Other institutions on Table 2, such as the **Richard Stockton College of New Jersey**, achieved graduation rate parity in 2006 after years of typically large gaps. It’s possible that these results represent the fruits of new programs and initiatives designed to help minority students. They may also represent one-year statistical flukes. At others, like the **University of North Carolina-Wilmington**, graduation gaps have fluctuated up and down over the years. In both cases, graduation rate gap results should be interpreted with caution.

At institutions like **Florida State**, by contrast, a clearer pattern emerges. FSU’s large student body—it enrolls almost 40,000 students, of whom 11 percent are black—makes its graduation rates less susceptible to random variation. FSU’s graduation rate gap was minus 3 percentage points in 2001, already better than average, and it only improved from there. By 2006, black students

were graduating at a historic rate. The fact that the CARE program was implemented during the same time period suggests that it played a role in Florida State’s success. A closer look at the program reveals why.

FSU and CARE

Other universities, both within and outside of Florida, share much of Florida State’s basic institutional makeup: large, public, with somewhat selective admissions policies. But as **Table 3** shows, none of them have been able to match Florida State’s success in achieving graduation rate parity between black and white students. Many aren’t even close.

Table 3 shows FSU compared to the 15 universities that are most similar in terms of size, mission, funding, student academic preparation, and a range of other factors that impact graduation rates. FSU is the only one where black students graduate at a higher rate than white students. The median gap is 15 percentage points—larger than the national median—and the largest gap, at Michigan State, is 24 percentage points.

In part, Florida State’s success is rooted in history. For the first 110 years of its existence, Florida State didn’t have to worry about black student graduation rates, because it didn’t have any black students. Like many other states, Florida had a segregated higher education system until the 1960s. Black students from Tallahassee or elsewhere in the state who wanted a four-year degree from a public university went to Florida A&M (now the nation’s largest historically black institution) located just a mile down the road.

But when the state university system was integrated, FSU leaders recognized that they couldn’t just open their doors and leave newly arrived students of color to fend for themselves. As the years passed, a number of federal and state programs were created to help low-income and minority collegians. The federally funded Upward Bound program provided resources to reach out to such students in high school and help them make the transition to college, while the state of Florida created a program with similar goals called College Reach Out, aimed at high school students who would be the first in their family to enter higher education. The university, meanwhile, worked to develop a “summer bridge” program to bring incoming first-generation freshmen from low-income backgrounds onto the campus during the summer session before the

Table 3. 2006 Black/White Graduation Rate Gap at Florida State University Compared to Similar Institutions

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Florida State University	FL	39,973	Public	3%
The University of Texas at Austin	TX	49,697	Public	-5%
University of Central Florida	FL	46,646	Public	-7%
University of Georgia	GA	33,959	Public	-7%
Louisiana State University	LA	29,925	Public	-8%
University of Florida	FL	50,912	Public	-10%
University of Arizona	AZ	36,805	Public	-13%
Purdue University	IN	40,609	Public	-14%
Pennsylvania State University	PA	42,914	Public	-15%
University of Missouri-Columbia	MO	28,184	Public	-15%
Iowa State University	IA	25,462	Public	-16%
Texas A & M University	TX	45,380	Public	-17%
Texas Tech University	TX	27,996	Public	-18%
University of Wisconsin-Madison	WI	41,028	Public	-22%
Indiana University-Bloomington	IN	38,247	Public	-22%
Michigan State University	MI	45,520	Public	-24%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

Note: Florida State University peers calculated by www.collegeresults.org

start of fall classes, helping them become acclimated and prepared for the rigors of college work. FSU also developed tutoring services and learning centers where students could get help once the regular school year began.

Each of the programs had value, and they were all focused on helping more or less the same group of students. The problem was that they had all originated in different times and places, with different funding sources, regulations, and the like. This made overlap, miscommunication, and inefficiency a constant problem.

So FSU took the eminently sensible step of putting all of the programs under one roof: CARE.

Like nearly all public universities, Florida State enrolls many students from the local school systems in the surrounding community. Using funds from the state-funded College Reach Out program, CARE staffers start recruiting low-income students from local schools in surrounding communities as early as the sixth grade, talking to guidance counselors and identifying potential candidates from the list of students eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program. CARE meets with the students' parents, providing them with information about what they need to do to help their children get to college and succeed there. Beginning in the ninth grade, CARE provides a series of summer and after-school programs that help students negotiate the often-baffling financial aid application process, complete college applications, and study for the SAT and ACT. Makandall Saint-Eloi benefited from a version of this program at his high school in Hollywood, Fla.

As students near high school graduation, they can apply to Florida State through a CARE program that relaxes admissions standards for low-income, first-generation students if they agree to participate in an academic support program that begins the summer before matriculation and extends through the first two years of college. Due to the socioeconomic makeup of the state and surrounding area in Tallahassee, roughly two-thirds of CARE students are black.

The summer bridge program lasts for seven weeks. Students have the opportunity to meet the university president and senior faculty during a weeklong orientation, followed by six weeks where roughly 300 students live together in a residence hall staffed by hand-picked upperclassman counselors. Students with sufficient SAT and ACT scores enroll in summer session courses, and all CARE students take a one-credit course called "Diversity and Justice." The goal is to expose students to college-level work and the expectations that go with it—attending lectures, completing assigned readings, and turning in written assignments on time. CARE also introduces students to the campus and the surrounding area, helping them navigate a range of systems from public transportation to student financial aid.

Many university programs with similar goals end there, trusting that the students have been inoculated against

risk of failure by their summer orientation. CARE keeps right on going, monitoring students' progress all the way to graduation and serving, in the words of William Hudson Jr., associate director of academic programs for CARE since its inception, as "advocates for student success."⁸ The center operates a tutorial lab staffed by graduate students from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Students are required to attend the lab for at least eight hours per week—10 if their grades begin to slip. If they don't complete the required number of hours, they can't register for their next set of classes.

FSU's freshman math courses—a subject that academically at-risk college students often fail in their first attempt—typically run up to 250 students or more and meet a few times per week. CARE provides funds to the math department to offer extra sections in math that are capped at 40 students in size and meet every day. CARE students aren't required to attend these sections, but many do. Special academic advisers also help students make smart decisions about scheduling and the number of courses they can handle at a time, factoring in employment obligations and requirements for their majors. CARE also organizes social events and bimonthly seminars on strategies for college success.

The overall CARE philosophy seems to be: Identify every piece of information students might need or stumbling block they might encounter and help them through. "We work with the whole student. There's no issue that's too small that we can't help you with," says Hudson.⁹

When Saint-Eloi began his freshman year at FSU in 2007, he had a range of questions he needed answers to: What kind of classes should I take if I want to go to medical school and be an orthopedic surgeon? How can I talk to professionals who are already in the field? Are there study abroad programs available? What about financial aid? How can I get a better grade on my next term paper? The people at CARE "might not always have the answers," says Saint-Eloi, "but they always know who does."¹⁰

Hudson attributes CARE's success to strong support from university leadership and its unusual place in the university administrative hierarchy, simultaneously reporting to the vice presidents of student affairs and undergraduate studies. While many universities isolate their retention programs in the student affairs office, Florida State recognizes that helping students graduate is also a fundamentally academic endeavor.

The payoff for students seems readily apparent. While graduation rates are influenced by many factors, students' academic preparation and aptitude upon entering college are generally recognized as the single biggest determinants of whether they earn a degree. CARE students enter FSU with an average SAT score of 940, compared to 1204 among non-CARE students. This is a huge difference. At a typical university, an incoming SAT score of 1204 would be expected to yield a graduation rate of approximately 73 percent.¹¹ An average SAT score of 940, by contrast, tends to yield a 56 percent graduation rate, 17 percentage points lower. Yet CARE students are *more likely* than non-CARE students at FSU to return for their sophomore year, and they ultimately graduate at almost exactly the same rate.

To be sure, CARE and its predecessor programs aren't solely responsible for Florida State's success. Black students cite the presence of nearby Florida A&M as a positive influence, for example, providing social and community institutions with which they can comfortably connect.¹² That said, it seems likely that CARE makes a significant difference in the lives of its students, young men and women like Saint-Eloi who, if they attended college elsewhere, would have lower odds of earning a degree.

At many universities it is simply assumed that low-income, first-generation students will inevitably wash out in significant numbers. Given the dynamics of race and economic class in America, this translates into persistent graduation rate gaps between white students and students of color. Florida State's experience suggests these assumptions are wrong, and the resulting gaps are avoidable. If universities reach out to at-risk students years before they arrive in higher education, providing additional resources and support for the transition to college and ultimately throughout the entire undergraduate experience itself, at-risk students can succeed at the same rate as their peers.

Some might question whether CARE's holistic approach amounts to coddling students, denying them the chance to stand up and make decisions on their own. But Saint-Eloi disagrees. Instead, he sees a balance between careful guidance and personal responsibility. "They gear you in the right direction and let you take off, instead of just letting you fend for yourself," he says.

Graduation Rates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

There are slightly fewer than 100 four-year historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the continental United States. They enroll about one out of every five black students attending a four-year institution and grant a similar proportion of all bachelor's degrees awarded to black students.ⁱ The aggregate six-year institutional graduation rate for HBCUs in 2006 was 37.9 percent, compared to 45 percent for non-HBCUs.ⁱⁱ It's important to note, however, that HBCUs enroll a disproportionately large share of first-generation and low-income students, who tend to be at a higher risk of dropping out.

In fact, there is far more variation in graduation rate performance within the community of historically black institutions than there is between HBCUs and non-HBCUs. A

few institutions with selective admissions policies, like Spelman College in Atlanta and Howard University in Washington, D.C., typically graduate two-thirds or more of their black students. Others that serve primarily at-risk students graduate less than 25 percent of black students within six years. The same variation occurs when HBCUs are compared to peer institutions, including non-HBCUs: A few have outstanding results, a few fare very poorly, and most are somewhere in between.

In addition to peer comparisons, the best way to judge improvement at HBCUs is to observe how black graduation rates change over time. The table below shows HBCUs that improved their black six-year graduation rate by more than five percentage points from 2002 to 2006.

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	Change 2002–2006	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2005 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2004 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2003 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2002 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2001 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate
Albany State University	GA	3,927	Public	17%	43%	45%	40%	33%	26%	31%
Savannah State University	GA	3,241	Public	15%	33%	30%	30%	18%	18%	17%
Fort Valley State University	GA	2,176	Public	11%	37%	25%	31%	30%	26%	23%
Grambling State University	LA	5,065	Public	11%	39%	37%	38%	34%	28%	35%
Delaware State University	DE	3,690	Public	10%	39%	37%	36%	33%	29%	32%
Alabama State University	AL	5,565	Public	8%	29%	23%	23%	22%	21%	25%
Central State University	OH	1,766	Public	8%	27%	30%	25%	22%	19%	12%
Harris-Stowe State University	MO	1,868	Public	6%	21%	16%	25%	22%	15%	n/a
Voorhees College	SC	710	Private	37%	46%	37%	31%	54%	10%	n/a
Saint Augustines College	NC	1,247	Private	20%	32%	36%	35%	28%	12%	45%
Howard University	DC	10,771	Private	13%	69%	67%	59%	65%	56%	56%
Wiley College	TX	862	Private	9%	37%	22%	25%	33%	28%	n/a
Clark Atlanta University	GA	4,514	Private	9%	40%	n/a	34%	30%	31%	44%
Oakwood College	AL	1,771	Private	9%	48%	45%	51%	38%	38%	30%
Dillard University	LA	1,124	Private	9%	47%	41%	49%	42%	39%	n/a
Lane College	TN	1,370	Private	6%	34%	38%	28%	29%	28%	29%
Paine College	GA	913	Private	6%	30%	28%	30%	31%	24%	n/a
Benedict College	SC	2,531	Private	6%	30%	25%	24%	25%	24%	n/a

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

ⁱStephen Provasnik and Linda Shafer, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 1976 to 2001* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

ⁱⁱAmong public and private nonprofit four-year institutions that submitted Graduation Rate Survey data for 2006.

Recurrent Themes for Success

Florida State isn't the only university to maintain or achieve unusual success in graduating minority students.

The University of Alabama improved from a minus 9 percentage point gap in 2001 to plus 2 percentage points in 2006, with nearly two-thirds of black students graduating on time. The Tide Early Alert Program (Alabama's students are the "Crimson Tide") identifies freshmen who show signs of academic struggle in the first six weeks of school, flagging students for counseling and intervention if they earn D's and F's on papers and tests or miss an excessive number of classes.

Alabama also creates "freshman learning communities," where small groups of roughly 25 students take a pre-planned sequence of three-to-five linked core courses together. Freshmen at big universities can feel lost and anonymous as they struggle alone to contend with disconnected courses taught in depersonalized settings along with hundreds of their peers. Learning communities provide more connected, individualized instruction, allowing students to form strong academic relationships with their fellow students, share knowledge, and work together to succeed in school. Studies suggest that learning communities improve the odds of freshmen returning for their sophomore year, and they have been

adopted at a significant number of two- and four-year institutions nationwide.¹³

A number of other institutions on Table 2 were contacted in late 2007 and early 2008 and asked why, in their judgment, they were able to close the black/white college graduation rate gap. Recurring themes emerged—summer bridge programs for first-generation students similar to what Saint-Eloi experienced at Florida State, Alabama-style early warning systems, “intrusive” advising in which college counselors proactively reach out to students, and state-sponsored scholarships to help academically promising low-income students afford to stay in school were all mentioned more than once. So-called “Freshman 101” seminars focusing on orientation appear to be standard on college campuses these days, part of a broad movement to focus on the first year of college, when students are most likely to drop out.

If there is a single factor that seems to distinguish colleges and universities that have truly made a difference on behalf of minority students, it is *attention*. Successful colleges pay attention to graduation rates. They monitor year-to-year change, study the impact of different interventions on student outcomes, break down the numbers among different student populations, and continuously ask themselves how they could improve. Essentially, they apply the academic values of empiricism and deep inquiry to themselves.

Successful colleges also apply attention to graduation rates in a broader sense. A recent study of relatively non-selective public universities with unusually high graduation rates conducted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities identified leadership and organizational culture as keys to graduation rate success—not just as they relate to the specific issue of how many students earn degrees, but to a broader commitment to the education of undergraduates.¹⁴

This idea runs counter to prevailing graduation rate wisdom, which is that academic standards and student degree attainment are fundamentally at odds. Professors often speak with pride about courses they took as freshmen where their instructor asked them to look to the left, then the right, and realize that one of their adjacent seatmates would not make it through to the course’s end. If nothing else, this “weed out” mentality suggests that when colleges decide ahead of time that many students won’t succeed academically, many students

don’t succeed academically. It also leads people to suggest that any push to improve graduation rates will necessarily result in lowered standards—indeed, that low college graduation rates are a *good thing*, a sign that the academy hasn’t surrendered its principles in the face of ill-prepared students who probably shouldn’t be in college in the first place.

These ideas are mistaken. Lowered academic standards could be a way to improve graduation rates, albeit one that would be hard to implement given the degree of autonomy college professors enjoy over their courses. But they are by no means inevitable. Indeed, the most important thing a college can do to help students graduate is often to ask more of them, not less, and provide more in return in the form of better teaching.

Detailed analyses of the relationship between institutional teaching practices and student success conducted by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at Indiana University confirm this. Even after controlling for their race, gender, parent’s income, high school grades, ACT scores, amount of financial aid, and other characteristics, freshmen who were more engaged in “educationally purposeful activities”—which include working with classmates on projects, making class presentations, and discussing assignments with instructors—were more likely to return to college for their sophomore year.¹⁵ Such activities require more time, energy, and effort from students and teachers alike, but they pay off in greater learning and a better chance of earning a degree. The NSSE analysis also found that engagement with good teaching practices matters more for black students than for others:

Although African American students at the lowest levels of engagement were less likely to persist than their White counterparts, as their engagement increased to within about one standard deviation below the mean, they had about the same probability of returning as Whites. As African American student engagement reached the average amount, they became more likely than White students to return for a second year.¹⁶

In other words, while black college students are particularly vulnerable to colleges and universities that short-change undergraduates, they disproportionately benefit from institutions that teach their students well.

Given these findings, it's unfortunate that so many black students appear to be enrolled in colleges and universities with so much room to improve. That doesn't mean the institutions aren't trying in some way—most colleges and universities have retention officers, freshman seminars, and some manner of programs designed to help students stay in school. But it would be a mistake to judge the quality of an institution's efforts based only on whether it does or does not have a program that shares surface similarities with CARE. Often, the distinguishing factor for minority college graduation rates isn't whether programs exist, but whether they're coordinated, supported, and well-run.

In other words, the key issue is not whether universities say they're committed to helping all students succeed. It's whether they really mean it. Too often, they don't.

The Other Side of the Coin

If Table 2 shows the colleges and universities doing the best job of helping students of color graduate from college, **Table 4** shows the other side of the coin.¹⁷ Each of these 94 institutions had a graduation rate gap of at least 18 percentage points in 2006. (See **Appendix 2** for rate results over six years, 2001–2006.)

As with Table 2, these institutions are not all the same. Some, like **Murray State University** in Kentucky, have had average or below-average graduation rate gaps in most years since 2001, only to see a one-year spike in 2006. The three campuses on the list from the California State University system—**Fresno**, **Bakersfield**, and **Fullerton**—have unusually high transfer rates for black students compared to white students, which increases their graduation rate gap.

At other institutions, relative gaps between white and black students have persisted even as absolute graduation rates for minority students have improved. The **University of Wisconsin–Madison**, for example, boosted black graduation rates by over 20 percentage points from 2002 to 2006, a major increase. But that still left Madison with a 22 percentage point gap, down from an astounding 43 percentage point difference four years earlier.

Some institutions have produced stagnant or even declining minority graduation rates and huge intra-institutional gaps, year after year. A quarter of the students

attending **Wayne State**, an urban research university in Detroit, are black. But while Wayne State graduates 45 percent of white students within six years, the black graduation rate has stood at roughly 10 percent since 2001, with no signs of improvement.

Wayne State isn't Florida State. It's an urban commuter campus with a significant number of lower-income, part-time, and working students, some of whom take longer than six years to finish school. These are all factors that can lead to lower institutional graduation rates. In the university's most recent strategic plan, the president of Wayne State described a series of goals focused on boosting retention and graduation. Ideally, every institution with serious, persistent graduation problems should be taking this approach, recognizing past shortcomings and the need to improve. It is, however, unfortunate for the vast majority of black students who enrolled in Wayne State over the past decade that this effort didn't commence at an earlier time.

Faced with tough questions about graduation rates, university officials sometimes question the validity of the measures themselves. It's true that federal graduation rate measures have shortcomings, failing to account for students who take longer than six years to graduate, or who transfer from their original institution and graduate somewhere else. But in the end, these methodological issues are less problematic than many believe, particularly when comparing different groups of students at the same university. (For more on why federal graduation rates are a valid way of gauging university success, see sidebar on Page 12.) At Wayne State, for example, extending the graduation rate time frame from six years to eight years increases the black graduation rate to a better-but-still-terrible 20 percent. But because extending the time frame also increases the white graduation rate, it leaves the difference between the two unchanged.

Why do some institutions consistently fail their most vulnerable students? There are many reasons, none of which include ignorance of the problem or lack of knowledge about why students drop out of college. In fact, the causes and solutions of low graduation rates have been well understood for some time. In the mid-1970s, Vincent Tinto, distinguished university professor at Syracuse University and perhaps the nation's leading expert on student retention, developed a nuanced theory of why students leave college that remains

Table 4. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Large Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2006

Institution	State	Sector	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006	Institution	State	Sector	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Univ. of Michigan–Ann Arbor	MI	Public	71%	90%	–19%	Geneva Coll.	PA	Private	39%	60%	–21%
The Coll. of New Jersey	NJ	Public	57%	88%	–31%	Gwynedd Mercy Coll.	PA	Private	38%	79%	–41%
Univ. of Wisconsin–Madison	WI	Public	57%	79%	–22%	Savannah Coll. of Art and Design	GA	Private	38%	74%	–36%
Michigan State Univ.	MI	Public	54%	78%	–24%	Webster Univ.	MO	Private	38%	61%	–22%
Citadel Military Coll. of South Carolina	SC	Public	53%	72%	–19%	Concordia Univ.–Wisconsin	WI	Private	38%	69%	–31%
Indiana Univ.–Bloomington	IN	Public	51%	73%	–22%	Widener Univ.–Main Campus	PA	Private	37%	62%	–26%
Univ. of Iowa	IA	Public	45%	67%	–21%	Ashland Univ.	OH	Private	37%	60%	–23%
Univ. of Colorado at Boulder	CO	Public	44%	67%	–24%	Robert Morris Univ.	PA	Private	37%	57%	–20%
Oklahoma State Univ.–Main Campus	OK	Public	40%	60%	–21%	Rochester Institute of Technology	NY	Private	36%	63%	–27%
Kansas State Univ.	KS	Public	38%	61%	–23%	Daemen Coll.	NY	Private	35%	54%	–19%
Murray State Univ.	KY	Public	36%	57%	–21%	Univ. of Hartford	CT	Private	35%	56%	–21%
Rowan Univ.	NJ	Public	36%	73%	–37%	Univ. of Indianapolis	IN	Private	34%	54%	–20%
California State Univ.–Fullerton	CA	Public	33%	54%	–21%	Univ. of Detroit Mercy	MI	Private	33%	60%	–27%
Bloomsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	31%	65%	–35%	Fontbonne Univ.	MO	Private	32%	62%	–30%
CUNY Brooklyn Coll.	NY	Public	31%	58%	–27%	Molloy Coll.	NY	Private	31%	62%	–30%
Univ. of Cincinnati–Main Campus	OH	Public	31%	54%	–24%	Northwood Univ.	MI	Private	30%	56%	–26%
Southern Illinois Univ. Edwardsville	IL	Public	27%	50%	–23%	Philadelphia Univ.	PA	Private	30%	62%	–32%
Minnesota State Univ.–Mankato	MN	Public	26%	50%	–24%	California Baptist Univ.	CA	Private	29%	57%	–28%
Indiana Univ. of Penn.–Main Campus	PA	Public	25%	51%	–26%	Univ. of St. Francis	IL	Private	27%	63%	–36%
Univ. of Central Missouri	MO	Public	25%	52%	–27%	Oklahoma City Univ.	OK	Private	27%	54%	–27%
Lock Haven Univ. of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	24%	54%	–30%	Nova Southeastern Univ.	FL	Private	26%	46%	–21%
Mansfield Univ. of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	24%	49%	–25%	Lawrence Technological Univ.	MI	Private	26%	49%	–23%
Univ. of Toledo–Main Campus	OH	Public	24%	48%	–24%	Baker Univ.	KS	Private	25%	64%	–39%
Univ. of Wisconsin–Whitewater	WI	Public	22%	54%	–32%	Saint Thomas Univ.	FL	Private	25%	69%	–44%
California State Univ.–Fresno	CA	Public	22%	55%	–33%	Catholic Univ. of America	DC	Private	25%	72%	–47%
Rhode Island Coll.	RI	Public	22%	48%	–25%	Dominican Coll. of Blauvelt	NY	Private	25%	51%	–26%
Univ. of Michigan–Dearborn	MI	Public	21%	50%	–29%	Wilmington Coll.	DE	Private	25%	51%	–26%
Univ. of Wisconsin–Milwaukee	WI	Public	21%	47%	–25%	Lewis Univ.	IL	Private	24%	59%	–35%
Univ. of Nebraska at Omaha	NE	Public	19%	41%	–22%	Concordia Univ.	IL	Private	23%	59%	–36%
California State Univ.–Bakersfield	CA	Public	19%	46%	–27%	William Carey Univ.	MS	Private	22%	42%	–20%
Youngstown State Univ.	OH	Public	16%	39%	–23%	Coll. of Mount St. Joseph	OH	Private	21%	65%	–44%
Univ. of Akron Main Campus	OH	Public	15%	42%	–27%	Roosevelt Univ.	IL	Private	21%	49%	–28%
Ferris State Univ.	MI	Public	13%	37%	–24%	McKendree Coll.	IL	Private	20%	57%	–37%
East. New Mexico Univ.–Main Campus	NM	Public	13%	35%	–22%	Polytechnic Univ.	NY	Private	20%	50%	–30%
Salem State Coll.	MA	Public	11%	42%	–31%	Trevecca Nazarene Univ.	TN	Private	20%	48%	–28%
CUNY Coll. of Staten Island	NY	Public	11%	55%	–44%	NY Inst. of Tech.–Manhattan Campus	NY	Private	18%	45%	–27%
Wayne State Univ.	MI	Public	10%	45%	–35%	Southern Wesleyan Univ.	SC	Private	17%	51%	–34%
Indiana Univ.–Northwest	IN	Public	9%	28%	–19%	Olivet Nazarene Univ.	IL	Private	17%	56%	–38%
Saginaw Valley State Univ.	MI	Public	8%	37%	–29%	Columbia Coll. Chicago	IL	Private	16%	43%	–27%
Univ. of Dallas	TX	Private	50%	70%	–20%	Alverno Coll.	WI	Private	15%	40%	–25%
Adelphi Univ.	NY	Private	47%	70%	–23%	Southern Nazarene Univ.	OK	Private	14%	50%	–35%
Maryville Univ. of Saint Louis	MO	Private	47%	68%	–21%	Medaille Coll.	NY	Private	13%	39%	–26%
DePaul Univ.	IL	Private	46%	67%	–21%	Friends Univ.	KS	Private	11%	48%	–38%
Saint Xavier Univ.	IL	Private	46%	66%	–20%	East-West Univ.	IL	Private	10%	50%	–40%
Villa Julie	MD	Private	45%	65%	–20%	Felician Coll.	NJ	Private	10%	44%	–34%
Seton Hall	NJ	Private	40%	60%	–20%	Davenport Univ.	MI	Private	7%	28%	–21%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

widely used today. His seminal book, *Leaving College*, was published over 20 years ago. There is a *Journal of College Student Retention* replete with evidence and advice from experts in the field. Numerous other handbooks, scholarly articles, and “best practice” examples can be found.

Yet overall college graduation rates have remained stagnant or risen only slightly over time. Different studies have reached marginally different conclusions on this question, depending on the time frame studied and methodology employed. A comparison of the high school classes of 1972, 1982, and 1992 found nearly identical college graduation rates—approximately 66 percent—with a slight increase for the 1992 cohort.¹⁸ A study comparing five-year graduation rates for the entering freshman classes of 1990 and 1995 found no improvement.¹⁹ These results—along with the low overall black graduation rates shown on Table 1 and the large, persistent graduation rate gaps shown on Table 4—reflect a national higher education system in which undergraduate success is not the priority it should be.

This lack of attention is particularly problematic at some colleges. A 2007 study from the Pell Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based research organization, examined a group of large universities that enroll significant numbers of low-income students.²⁰ In exchange for anonymity, the universities allowed Pell Institute researchers to conduct extensive on-campus studies of their policies and programs. The results are revealing.

While some of the participants’ graduation rates were unusually high, others were unusually low. The low-performing institutions were all public universities with relatively low admissions standards. But, despite the fact that they had higher freshman SAT scores and fewer students who came from low-income backgrounds than other institutions in the study, they had lower graduation rates. When the Pell Institute researchers arrived on campus, they found faculty and staff were well aware of the problem with graduation rates:

Staff members showed us binders full of agendas and reports from numerous retention committees that had convened and consultants who had visited over the past 10 years. As they described, the retention plans that resulted were either not implemented or were implemented piecemeal, without enough funds,

or for too short a time to be effective. As a result, faculty and staff at this institution were reluctant to participate in current efforts to improve retentions. As one staff member said, “How many times can we sit on a committee and say the same things and nothing gets done?”

In other words, these universities didn’t fail to help students graduate because they didn’t know they should, or they didn’t know how. They simply failed to act on their knowledge in a competent, sustained manner. That lack of execution stemmed from, and was sustained by, an overall institutional climate where helping students earn degrees rated far below other priorities:

It was perceived as “not an accident” that improving undergraduate education was listed behind fostering faculty excellence, improving research capabilities, and increasing graduate enrollment as major goals in the Chancellor’s strategic plan for the university. It was noted that associate dean positions that were focused on teaching and instruction were recently eliminated in most of the colleges at this university. It was also mentioned that there is a top administrative position dedicated to research and development ... but there is not a similar administrative position dedicated to instruction or retention. In fact, none of the [low-performing institutions] had a central person, office, or committee to coordinate their retention efforts.

The contrast with Florida State, which has exactly such a centralized, well-supported retention office, is clear. Without leadership, adequate resources, competent execution, and sustained commitment, efforts to help students learn and graduate are left to the whims of individual departments or faculty, which operate under incentive structures that emphasize scholarly output over helping students learn and graduate:

At one institution ... an effort to recruit full-time faculty to teach introductory science courses in order to reduce class sizes failed, in part, because the faculty felt they would not be rewarded in terms of promotion and tenure for teaching “service” classes.

Are Federal Graduation Rates a Valid Measure of Institutional Success?

The institutional graduation rate measures used in this report are based on data submitted by the institutions themselves through the annual Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The GRS does not include all college students. Instead, it only examines students who begin college as first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen. The GRS produces *institutional* graduation rates, which means that colleges don't get credit for students who transfer and graduate somewhere else, or students who graduate in more than six years. These limitations raise the question of whether GRS graduation rates are valid measures of institutional performance. The short answer is: Yes, they are—as long as they're used properly.

At some campuses—particularly the most selective institutions—the large majority of students begin as first-time, full-time freshmen, and are thus included in the GRS cohort. At other campuses, the percent of students in the GRS cohort is much smaller, because many students transfer in from community colleges or other four-year schools, or they enroll part-time. Crucially, students who begin as in-bound transfers or part-timers are not counted in the numerator or the denominator of the graduation rate equation. They don't make the rates go up or down. And there is no reason to believe that adding them into the equation would make the typical university's graduation rate increase. Limiting the GRS to full-time students, for example, likely *increases* most institutional graduation rates, since full-time students are more likely than part-time students to graduate on time.

Counting all transfer students as non-graduates, by contrast, undeniably dampens institutional graduation rates. Even though some transfer students continue their academic careers successfully, GRS treats them the same as drop-outs. That said, transfers don't have as much of an impact on graduation rates as some believe. Critics of institutional graduation rates often assert that the majority of college students attend multiple higher education institutions, making the notion of assigning responsibility for student success illogical. This is untrue. The majority (about 60 percent) of students who graduate from college *earn credits* from multiple institutions.ⁱ But many of them effectively *attend* only one, while also earning credits from a local community college, study abroad, online courses, early enrollment in high school, etc. Only about 23 percent of students who begin as first-time, full-time students at a four-year school actually transfer to another four-year institution within six years of matriculating, and of those, only one-third graduate on time. As a result, giving the typical institution credit for transfers who graduate increases the six-year graduation rate by about 8 percentage points.ⁱⁱ (This number can be significantly larger for some institutions, like regional “feeder” campuses within state university systems.) In the end, 80 percent of students who start

college at a four-year institution and earn a bachelor's degree graduate from the same institution where they started.ⁱⁱⁱ

Graduation rates are most valid when used in context. It doesn't make sense to compare overall graduation rates at CUNY City College (30 percent) to nearby Columbia University (93 percent). They're different universities with different histories, student bodies, and reasons for being. But it's reasonable to compare CUNY City College to CUNY Brooklyn College (44 percent) and ask why one graduates substantially more students than the other. When graduation rates at similar institutions are compared, there are often substantial differences.^{iv} Missions, students, and resources matter when it comes to student success—but what institutions choose to do with their resources to serve their students and fulfill their missions matters too.

And it's particularly reasonable to infer that graduation rate disparities *within* institutions may have something to do with the institutions themselves. Wayne State University in Detroit is a good example. The university recently completed a study of students who matriculated in 1997.^v It found that while only 12.8 percent of black students graduated within six years, extending the time frame to eight years raised the rate to 21 percent. Wayne State enrolls an unusually large number of part-time students for a four-year research university, so it's likely that extending the time frame to eight years would not produce similar effects at most institutions. Most of the increase at Wayne State came between years six and seven; beyond that the large majority of college students have either graduated or dropped out. Nonetheless, this shows that at some institutions, six-year graduation rates don't tell the whole story.

It's important to note, however, that (A) 21 percent is still a terrible outcome, and (B) extending the time frame to eight years also increased the white graduation rate from 42.5 percent to 50.7 percent at Wayne State, leaving the disparity *between* white and black students entirely unchanged. When graduation rates are calculated in the same way for students at the same institutions, large disparities between groups demand attention.

Educational attainment data from the U.S. Census Bureau also underscore the college graduation rate problem. According to the latest numbers, 31 percent of all adults age 25-64 have earned at least a bachelor's degree, while another 9 percent have an associate's degree.^{vi} Seventeen percent of adults in the same age range—over 27 million people—report having “some college, no degree.” While it's true that some college students start college late, some transfer, and some take longer than six years to graduate, stopping in and stopping out along the way, the Census data make plain that many students simply never graduate at all.

ⁱClifford Adelman, *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education*; ⁱⁱLutz Berkner, et al., *Descriptive Summary of 1995-96 Postsecondary Students: Six Years Later*; ⁱⁱⁱClifford Adelman, *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education*; ^{iv}Kevin Carey, *One Step From the Finish Line: Higher College Graduation Rates Are Within Our Reach*; ^vWayne State University, *Undergraduate Student Success and Retention*, 3rd Annual Report to the Board of Governors, November 2007; ^{vi}<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/cps2007/Table1-01.xls>

The use of the phrase “service classes”—common parlance in academia to describe low-level freshman courses—says much. “Service” implies an obligation dutifully rendered, not a focus of institutional excellence. The Pell Institute study shows that graduation rate failure at individual colleges and universities is avoidable, not a matter of the circumstances in which institutions find themselves but the choices they do and do not make.

Clear Solutions

There are tens of thousands of students like Makandall Saint-Eloi living in every state in the nation; students who face numerous obstacles to earning a degree. Some are just entering middle school; others are struggling to make their way through high school. Still, others are on the precipice of deciding not to enter college—or if they’re in college, deciding to leave. These are the students for whom the decisions of policymakers and higher education leaders matter most. They live at the margins of potential success, where the upward possibilities of social mobility

are balanced, for a brief time, by the downward pressures of bias, indifference, and class. Then, often very quickly, while they’re still very young, the balance breaks, one way or another. For too many students at too many universities, it goes wrong.

Of the myriad problems confronting American education, college graduation rates offer some of the clearest solutions. The fact of the problem is undeniable, and the answers are on the table, at institutions like Florida State and others, for anyone to see. While more research in this area is certainly needed, the biggest challenge in better serving minority college students is not creating new knowledge about how to help them; it is creating new incentives for institutional leaders to act on the knowledge that already exists. Their current indifference is rooted in many areas—funding, governance, market pressures, accountability and lack thereof. Reorienting these systems in a way that makes minority graduation rates matter more will result in stories like Saint-Eloi’s becoming less extraordinary. The following recommendations describe how this can be done.

Policy Recommendations

The current system of incentives, which provides too few reasons to improve college graduation rates, is comprised of a series of interlocking funding systems, governmental relationships, and market forces that combine to give institutional leaders powerful incentives to make certain kinds of decisions—and not make others. The following recommendations explain how those systems work and how they could be changed.

Change the Rankings

Few incentives are as universally recognized as the rankings published by *U.S. News & World Report*. Most institutions, particularly those that compete nationally for students, are acutely aware of their status on the annual list, and there is a well-documented history of institutions engaging in various practices—reputable and otherwise—aimed at boosting their ranking score.

Sixteen percent of each institution's *U.S. News* ranking is based on their six-year graduation rate, the second most important factor after the magazine's annual reputational survey of college presidents and deans. (The percent of applicants who are accepted, by contrast, makes up only 1.5 percent of the ranking.) At first glance, this might seem like a powerful incentive for institutions to focus on improving graduation rate success. But several factors prevent this dynamic from working on behalf of at-risk and minority students.

First, *U.S. News* only looks at the overall six-year graduation rate, which means that institutions aren't penalized for having large graduation rate gaps. Florida State's 68 percent overall graduation rate; therefore, scores worse on the rankings than Indiana University's 72 percent rate, even though Table 3 shows Indiana with a minus 22 percentage point black/white graduation rate gap. Second, and more importantly, *U.S. News*' reliance on overall rates ignores the impact of external factors that influence graduation, such as the academic preparation of incoming freshmen. Therefore, one of the easiest ways for institutions to increase their graduation rates is to become more selective and enroll a greater percentage of well-prepared students (which also has an independent positive effect on the rankings, since SAT scores comprise another 7.5 percent of each institution's score). This dynamic doesn't help students overall; it just shifts them from one institution to another.

The solution is to rank colleges and universities based not on the overall graduation rate but the difference between that rate and the institution's statistically *predicted* rate, given the academic and demographic makeup of its students. Fortunately, just such a calculation exists and is currently being used to rank colleges—by *U.S. News* itself. But this calculation only makes up 5 percent of the ranking for national universities and liberal arts colleges, and isn't used for master's-granting institutions and baccalaureate colleges, where graduation rates are often lowest. *U.S. News* should give greater emphasis to the predicted vs. actual model. This would create incentives for institutions to recruit, enroll, and graduate at-risk students.

Improve Graduation Rate Measures

The limitations of the federal graduation measures used in this report are, of themselves, a barrier to improving graduation rates. Many critiques of federal graduation rates are overstated (see sidebar on Page 12), but they often muddy the waters enough to reduce pressure on institutions to improve.

Of all the obstacles to improving college graduation rates, this is the easiest to solve. A number of states, including Florida and Texas, have developed statewide education information systems that can track students who move from one institution to another or who graduate after more than six years, addressing two of the most frequently voiced criticisms of the current measures. The U.S. Department of Education has developed a detailed plan for implementing a similar system for all colleges and universities nationwide, allowing for graduation rates that give colleges credit for students who transfer across state lines.²¹ Only political opposition from higher education lobbying associations threatened by the specter of increased federal information gathering prevents this system from being put in place.

Advocacy organizations like The Education Trust have suggested that the federal graduation rate survey should be changed so that rates are calculated for low-income students, who are less likely to finish college than their more well-off peers.

Economists Robert Archibald and David Feldman of the College of William & Mary have proposed using “production-frontier analysis” to judge graduation rates. The technique compares colleges to their highest-performing peers and takes into account the non-linear

relationship between factors like funding and student SAT scores and student outcomes.²² Clifford Adelman, a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, has proposed fixes to the current federal system that would substantially increase the number of students included.²³ All of these proposals are constructive. Unlike many educational outcomes, the question of whether a student has (A) enrolled in college and (B) earned a bachelor's degree can be answered with 100 percent certainty. The sooner lingering questions about graduation rate methodology are resolved to the satisfaction of reasonable people, the sooner the important work of increasing those rates can begin in earnest.

Improve State Accountability Systems

Starting in the late 1980s, policymakers in many states made a concerted effort to establish new accountability systems for higher education. Twenty years later, the results are mixed. Most states report having some kind of system whereby information about higher education success is gathered, and most of those systems include graduation rates.²⁴ But few, if any states have created the kind of accountability systems—via public reporting, governance, financial incentives, or other methods—that will make college graduation rates more of an institutional priority than they would otherwise be. Graduation rate failure, particularly for minority students, is still an option.

There's not a statehouse in America where governors and state legislative leaders don't discuss the need to increase the number of college graduates as means of attracting new business development. Yet many of these same policymakers continue to govern their public university systems in a way that allows large numbers of college students to slip through the cracks. Given the central role of state governments in higher education, a new focus on accountability for graduation rates is needed, based on fair measures like intra-institutional gaps and peer comparisons.

Change Funding Incentives

While university financing varies among the states and between the public and private sectors, higher education revenues are mostly a matter of enrollment. With the exception of a few hyper-rich institutions with large endowments, most colleges and universities finance the bulk of their educational operations through tuition and (for public institutions) enrollment-based state support. Because maintaining a certain level of overall enrollment

is crucial for financial viability, many institutions are employing increasingly sophisticated marketing and enrollment management techniques to ensure that the total number of revenue-generating customers is at or above a certain amount.

Because college dropouts reduce enrollment, one might assume that colleges have powerful financial incentives to boost graduation rates. But the kind of additional supports that at-risk students need to stay in school can be expensive, and the cost/benefit equation for individual students changes as they progress through their undergraduate careers. With a few exceptions, all students pay the same tuition and generate the same amount of revenue from state governments. But students become progressively more expensive to educate as they accumulate credits. Many freshmen are taught by low-paid graduate students in big lecture halls, while seniors are more likely to take small seminars with tenured professors. The marginal cost of providing the extra support and educational attention needed to bring a sophomore back for their junior year may be substantially greater than the cost of enrolling one more student in next year's freshman class.

The solution is to change the cost/benefit equation by basing a portion of institutional funding on the number of students who *finish* college, not just the number who begin. While this would only apply to public universities, such institutions educate the large majority of all undergraduate students. State governments invest in college graduates, not college entrants, and should change their higher education funding formulas to reflect this.

Improve Accreditation

Every institution described in this report, including those with black graduation rates that persistently fail to break 20 percent, has been certified by one of the major accrediting organizations that serve, among other capacities, as the federal government's principal agent for quality control in higher education. In order to protect students and ensure that taxpayer money isn't wasted, students can only use federal grants and loans at accredited schools.

In touting the value of their process, accreditors often note—correctly—that their teams of peer reviewers are able to evaluate an institution's performance in light of its academic mission, resources, and student body. This

is crucial: Nobody expects open-access institutions to match graduation rates in the Ivy League. But analyses have shown that some institutions have persistently low graduation rates even when compared to very similar institutions.²⁵ And the fact that some accredited colleges and universities have minority graduation rates in the *single digits* suggests that there is literally no amount of persistent graduation rate failure that can put an institution's accreditation at serious risk.

Accreditors should increase scrutiny of institutional graduation rate gaps between student groups, particularly in comparison to peer institutions. The U.S. Department of Education should tighten its oversight of accreditors to ensure this occurs.

Move Back to Need-Based Financial Aid

There has been a tectonic shift in the character of higher education financial aid over the last two decades, as vast amounts of money have been dedicated to student aid programs that are indifferent to financial need. States have poured lottery dollars into programs like Georgia's HOPE scholarship, which provides generous aid to students

who meet certain academic credentials, regardless of their household income. In the 1990s, the federal government began offering education tax credits that are currently available to people earning up to \$57,000 per year (\$114,000 for couples), at an annual cost to the U.S. treasury of over \$5 billion. Colleges and universities, meanwhile, have been rapidly shifting greater proportions of their institutional aid dollars to students from the wealthiest families.²⁶

All of these efforts amount to diverting scarce financial aid resources from the students who need them most during a time when college tuition has been rising at twice the inflation rate or more every year. In addition to increasing debt burdens, these aid policies also make it more likely that lower-income students will have to work extensive hours to make ends meet during college, or cut back to part-time status. Studies suggest that working more than about 20 hours per week and/or enrolling part time creates a significant increased risk of dropping out.²⁷ Given the rising price of college and high dropout rates for low-income and minority students, policymakers and institutions should re-emphasize the role of financial aid for students who are most in need.

Endnotes

¹ Education Sector analysis of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey data set, March 2008.

² Sources: 9th grade reading scores, Florida Department of Education. Student demographics, www.schoolmatters.com. High school graduation rate, *Orlando Sentinel*. College going rate: Florida Education and Training Placement Program.

³ Studies indicate that academic performance and credit attainment in the freshman year are strongly related to students' likelihood of earning a bachelor's degree. Students like Makandall Saint-Eloi with high GPAs who are on track to earn 20 or more credits in their freshman year have significantly higher odds of graduating than others. See Clifford Adelman, *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

⁴ Limiting the analysis to institutions that enrolled more than 10 black students in the cohort of first-time, full-time students eliminates several hundred institutions from the analysis, but only about 3,000 students.

⁵ The institutions on Table 2 (and Appendix 1) represent all public and private nonprofit degree-granting four-year institutions that reported GRS data to the U.S. Department of Education in every year from 2002 to 2006 and met the following criteria:

- A 2006 black/white graduation rate gap less than or equal to 3 percentage points.

- A 2006 six-year black graduation rate greater than 40 percent.
- A 2006 six-year white graduation rate greater than 40 percent.
- At least 200 black and 200 white students enrolled in 2006.
- An average black/white graduation rate gap less than or equal to 10 percentage points from 2002 to 2006.

⁶ Personal interview, January 2008.

⁷ "America's Best Colleges," *U.S. News & World Report*, various years. Since graduation rates from 2001 to 2006 are based on the entering freshman classes of 1996 to 2000, Northeastern's most recent increases in selectivity would not be expected to impact graduation rates, aside from any positive effects of students being enrolled with better-prepared peers.

⁸ William Hudson Jr. personal interview, January 2008.

⁹ Angeline J. Taylor, "Florida State Takes Lead in Retaining and Graduating Black Students," *The Tallahassee Democrat*, November 17, 2007.

¹⁰ Makandall Saint-Eloi, personal interview, February 2008.

¹¹ Based on formulas for predicting graduation rates found in Alexander W. Astin and Leticia Oseguera, *Degree Attainment Rates at American Colleges and Universities, Revised Edition* (Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, 2005). The calculations used in this report include both SATs and differences in high school GPA between CARE and non-CARE student. Because this

formula does not take into account other risk factors for not graduating from college disproportionately found in CARE students, including low-income and first-generation status, this calculation likely underestimates the baseline difference in the likelihood of graduation between incoming CARE and non-CARE students.

¹² Shannon Colavecchio-Van Sickler, "More Blacks Succeed at FSU," *The St. Petersburg Times*, November 19, 2007.

¹³ Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini, *How College Affects Students: Volume 2* (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 422-23.

¹⁴ *Student Success in State Colleges and Universities: A Matter of Culture and Leadership* (Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2005).

¹⁵ George Kuh, Ty Cruce, Rick Shoup, Jillian Kinzie, and Robert M. Gonyea, "Unmasking the Effects of Student Engagement on College Grades and Persistence," Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University–Bloomington, (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 2007).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ The institutions on Table 4 (and Appendix 2) represent all public and private nonprofit degree-granting four-year institutions that reported GRS data to the U.S. Department of Education in every year from 2002 to 2006 and met the following criteria:

- At least 200 black and 200 white students enrolled in 2006.
- An average black/white graduation rate gap greater than or equal to 10 percentage points from 2002 to 2006.
- A 2006 black/white graduation rate gap greater than or equal to 19 percentage points.

¹⁸ Clifford Adelman, *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education, 1972–2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The studies examined bachelor's degree attainment rates for students who earned more than 10 credits and any credits from a four-year college during the study period. Because the class of 1992 was studied over 8.5 years, compared to 11 years and 12 years for the classes of 1982 and 1972, respectively, the author suggested the data lead "to the hypothesis that the system is doing better in degree completion than was the case a quarter century ago ... Capping the history of all three cohorts at the Class of 1992 time span of 8.5 years from the modal high school graduation date, time-to-degree for traditional-age students has risen slightly over the period covered by the cohort histories."

¹⁹ Laura Horn and Rachael Berger, *College Persistence on the Rise? Changes in 5-Year Degree Completion and Postsecondary Persistence Rates between 1994 and 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). The study found that black five-year graduation rates declined from 42 percent to 37 percent, but the difference was not statistically significant.

²⁰ Jennifer Engle and Colleen O'Brien, *Demography Is Not Destiny: Increasing Graduation Rates of Low-Income College Students at Large Public Universities* (Washington, DC: The Pell Institute, 2007).

²¹ Alisa F. Cunningham, John Milam, and Cathy Statham, *Feasibility of a Student Unit Record System Within the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

²² Robert B. Archibald and David H. Feldman, "Graduation Rates and Accountability: Regressions Versus Production Frontiers," *Research in Higher Education*, February 2008.

²³ Clifford Adelman, "Making Graduation Rates Matter," *Inside Higher Ed*, March 12, 2007.

²⁴ Joseph C. Burke and Henrik Minassians, *Performance Reporting: 'Real' Accountability or Accountability 'Lite,' Seventh Annual Survey 2003* (Albany, NY: The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, State University of New York, Albany, 2003).

²⁵ Kevin Carey, *One Step From the Finish Line: Higher College Graduation Rates Are Within Our Reach* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2005).

²⁶ Danette Gerald and Kati Haycock, *Engines of Inequality: Diminishing Equity in the Nation's Premier Public Universities* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2006).

²⁷ See, for example, Lutz Berkner, Shirley He, and Emily Forrest Cataldi, *Descriptive Summary of 1995–96 Postsecondary Students: Six Years Later* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Appendix 1. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Small or Nonexistent Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Florida State University	FL	39,973	Public	68%	72%	69%	3%
Rutgers University–New Brunswick	NJ	34,392	Public	73%	71%	73%	–2%
Stony Brook University	NY	22,522	Public	59%	67%	52%	15%
The Richard Stockton College of NJ	NJ	7,212	Public	63%	66%	66%	0%
Longwood University	VA	4,479	Public	65%	65%	66%	–1%
Towson University	MD	18,921	Public	64%	65%	64%	1%
SUNY at Albany	NY	17,434	Public	63%	65%	64%	2%
The University of Alabama	AL	23,838	Public	63%	65%	63%	2%
College of Charleston	SC	11,218	Public	61%	65%	60%	4%
University of North Carolina–Wilmington	NC	12,098	Public	65%	64%	66%	–2%
Winthrop University	SC	6,292	Public	58%	64%	57%	7%
University of California–Riverside	CA	16,875	Public	64%	61%	64%	–3%
George Mason University	VA	29,889	Public	56%	60%	54%	6%
The University of Tennessee	TN	28,901	Public	60%	59%	60%	–1%
Texas State University–San Marcos	TX	27,485	Public	53%	59%	54%	5%
Temple University	PA	33,865	Public	59%	58%	60%	–2%
Radford University	VA	9,220	Public	56%	58%	57%	1%
University of Maryland–Baltimore County	MD	11,798	Public	56%	58%	56%	2%
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	NC	16,872	Public	52%	58%	50%	8%
Christopher Newport University	VA	4,793	Public	51%	57%	51%	6%
East Carolina University	NC	24,351	Public	56%	56%	57%	–1%
Troy University	AL	27,938	Public	48%	54%	50%	4%
California University of Pennsylvania	PA	7,720	Public	50%	53%	49%	4%
University of South Florida	FL	43,636	Public	49%	52%	49%	3%
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	NC	21,519	Public	50%	51%	49%	2%
Old Dominion University	VA	21,625	Public	49%	50%	49%	1%
Marshall University	WV	13,936	Public	47%	50%	48%	2%
Frostburg State University	MD	4,910	Public	47%	50%	49%	1%
University of Alabama in Huntsville	AL	7,091	Public	44%	49%	44%	5%
CUNY John Jay College Criminal Justice	NY	14,645	Public	42%	49%	44%	5%
Western Carolina University	NC	8,861	Public	47%	48%	47%	1%
University of North Texas	TX	33,395	Public	45%	48%	45%	3%
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga	TN	8,923	Public	45%	46%	45%	1%
Georgia Southern University	GA	16,425	Public	43%	45%	42%	3%
University of North Florida	FL	15,954	Public	45%	44%	45%	–2%
Florida International University	FL	37,997	Public	48%	43%	42%	1%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
0%	2%	–3%	–1%	–2%	0%	11%	72%	4,397	28,781
–9%	–13%	–13%	–15%	–14%	–10%	9%	52%	3,095	17,884
14%	9%	6%	11%	n/a	11%	8%	41%	1,802	9,234
–11%	–13%	–10%	–12%	–29%	–9%	8%	81%	577	5,842
–4%	–9%	–4%	–5%	–12%	–5%	8%	88%	358	3,942
–3%	–11%	–12%	–13%	–20%	–8%	11%	70%	2,081	13,245
–3%	3%	–5%	2%	n/a	0%	8%	60%	1,395	10,460
–4%	–4%	–11%	–11%	–9%	–6%	11%	81%	2,622	19,309
–2%	–1%	–2%	–6%	–7%	–1%	7%	82%	785	9,199
–12%	–23%	–8%	–2%	–1%	–9%	5%	87%	605	10,525
8%	10%	8%	6%	n/a	8%	26%	69%	1,636	4,341
–11%	8%	2%	–10%	–10%	–3%	6%	21%	1,013	3,544
–1%	–2%	8%	–6%	–10%	1%	7%	55%	2,092	16,439
–4%	–6%	–5%	–12%	–5%	–6%	8%	82%	2,312	23,699
1%	10%	–2%	2%	10%	3%	5%	69%	1,374	18,965
–4%	–1%	–11%	–11%	–5%	–6%	16%	58%	5,418	19,642
3%	9%	–9%	1%	4%	1%	6%	89%	553	8,206
4%	6%	3%	1%	5%	3%	14%	55%	1,652	6,489
6%	1%	5%	4%	10%	5%	19%	69%	3,206	11,642
–5%	–6%	–4%	–3%	–4%	–3%	7%	84%	336	4,026
6%	–1%	–4%	7%	3%	1%	15%	77%	3,653	18,750
–7%	–3%	–5%	–4%	–26%	–3%	39%	49%	10,896	13,690
–3%	–20%	–9%	–13%	–15%	–8%	6%	69%	463	5,327
3%	–5%	–9%	–5%	–11%	–3%	11%	66%	4,800	28,800
1%	–4%	–6%	–7%	2%	–3%	14%	74%	3,013	15,924
3%	–2%	–4%	1%	3%	0%	19%	63%	4,109	13,624
–5%	–12%	–18%	–16%	–13%	–10%	4%	82%	557	11,428
–3%	–16%	–15%	–14%	–22%	–9%	15%	78%	737	3,830
9%	2%	3%	–5%	13%	3%	13%	73%	922	5,176
–4%	–2%	1%	–1%	0%	0%	24%	29%	3,515	4,247
6%	–1%	–8%	–2%	15%	–1%	5%	86%	443	7,620
1%	–3%	6%	0%	0%	2%	12%	66%	4,007	22,041
5%	10%	1%	2%	2%	4%	18%	77%	1,606	6,871
2%	1%	8%	3%	–2%	3%	22%	74%	3,614	12,155
–1%	–7%	–17%	–10%	–5%	–7%	10%	76%	1,595	12,125
5%	2%	1%	–3%	1%	1%	13%	18%	4,940	6,839

Appendix 1. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Small or Nonexistent Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006 (continued)

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
SUNY College at Buffalo	NY	11,220	Public	44%	43%	44%	–1%
Middle Tennessee State University	TN	22,863	Public	42%	43%	42%	1%
University of South Carolina–Aiken	SC	3,380	Public	41%	43%	41%	2%
Virginia Commonwealth University	VA	30,189	Public	45%	42%	45%	–3%
Mississippi University for Women	MS	2,428	Public	43%	42%	43%	0%
Yale University	CT	11,415	Private	96%	96%	97%	–1%
Harvard University	MA	25,778	Private	98%	95%	98%	–3%
Wake Forest University	NC	6,739	Private	88%	94%	87%	7%
Indiana Wesleyan University	IN	13,917	Private	72%	93%	71%	22%
Dartmouth College	NH	5,753	Private	94%	92%	94%	–2%
Northwestern University	IL	18,486	Private	93%	90%	93%	–3%
Cornell University	NY	19,639	Private	92%	90%	92%	–3%
Vanderbilt University	TN	11,607	Private	89%	90%	89%	1%
Smith College	MA	3,092	Private	86%	88%	86%	1%
Spring Hill College	AL	1,446	Private	67%	88%	64%	24%
Villanova University	PA	10,466	Private	87%	86%	88%	–2%
Emory University	GA	12,338	Private	87%	86%	86%	–1%
University of Southern California	CA	33,389	Private	84%	85%	84%	1%
University of Richmond	VA	4,496	Private	83%	83%	83%	0%
American University	DC	11,378	Private	71%	80%	71%	9%
Regis University	CO	11,388	Private	59%	80%	59%	21%
Southern Methodist University	TX	10,941	Private	74%	78%	74%	4%
Loyola Marymount University	CA	8,972	Private	75%	73%	74%	–2%
Rollins College	FL	3,478	Private	69%	73%	69%	4%
Baylor University	TX	14,040	Private	74%	72%	75%	–3%
McDaniel College	MD	3,671	Private	72%	72%	73%	–1%
Tulane University of Louisiana	LA	10,237	Private	71%	72%	73%	–1%
Immaculata University	PA	4,005	Private	56%	71%	56%	16%
Elon University	NC	5,230	Private	72%	70%	73%	–3%
University of San Francisco	CA	8,549	Private	65%	69%	61%	8%
University of Miami	FL	15,670	Private	73%	68%	71%	–3%
LaGrange College	GA	1,136	Private	55%	67%	55%	11%
Northeastern University	MA	23,411	Private	65%	66%	65%	1%
Loyola University New Orleans	LA	4,604	Private	63%	66%	62%	4%
Berea College	KY	1,576	Private	61%	64%	57%	7%
Mount St. Mary's College	CA	2,384	Private	66%	63%	57%	6%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–15%	–3%	–9%	–7%	n/a	–7%	12%	68%	1,346	7,630
–1%	0%	–3%	–5%	–2%	–2%	13%	80%	2,972	18,290
3%	–2%	–3%	–10%	–17%	–2%	26%	65%	879	2,197
–6%	–7%	2%	1%	–2%	–3%	17%	67%	5,132	20,227
0%	–4%	–8%	7%	–14%	–1%	32%	64%	777	1,554
–1%	–5%	–3%	–11%	–8%	–4%	6%	51%	685	5,822
–7%	0%	–2%	–4%	–5%	–3%	6%	48%	1,547	12,373
–1%	3%	–4%	–3%	–3%	0%	7%	80%	472	5,391
26%	16%	–36%	–48%	n/a	–4%	14%	81%	1,948	11,273
–8%	–5%	–12%	–8%	–7%	–7%	6%	55%	345	3,164
–11%	–2%	–6%	–2%	–2%	–5%	5%	52%	924	9,613
–10%	–6%	–13%	–9%	–14%	–8%	4%	48%	786	9,427
5%	–2%	–10%	–2%	–3%	–2%	8%	64%	929	7,428
9%	11%	–17%	14%	6%	4%	7%	52%	216	1,608
–24%	1%	–18%	–15%	19%	–6%	17%	71%	246	1,027
–9%	–5%	–5%	–11%	–21%	–6%	4%	77%	419	8,059
–2%	–4%	–6%	2%	2%	–2%	10%	57%	1,234	7,033
–10%	–10%	–12%	–3%	–10%	–7%	5%	39%	1,669	13,022
–12%	–12%	–6%	–8%	4%	–7%	8%	81%	360	3,642
–9%	0%	–10%	–14%	1%	–5%	7%	56%	796	6,372
–10%	–62%	11%	17%	–5%	–4%	5%	63%	569	7,174
–3%	–4%	–6%	–8%	–8%	–4%	6%	71%	656	7,768
–5%	–9%	–5%	–11%	–20%	–6%	7%	53%	628	4,755
–2%	–16%	41%	12%	26%	8%	6%	70%	209	2,435
–12%	–10%	1%	–8%	–11%	–6%	7%	73%	983	10,249
0%	–5%	–18%	–17%	–19%	–8%	8%	81%	294	2,974
–17%	–8%	–6%	–13%	–6%	–9%	8%	69%	819	7,064
11%	–33%	–27%	–8%	0%	–8%	7%	81%	280	3,244
11%	–3%	0%	9%	–15%	3%	7%	84%	366	4,393
2%	–9%	–15%	–1%	2%	–3%	6%	40%	513	3,420
–6%	0%	–1%	–5%	–7%	–3%	8%	48%	1,254	7,522
–35%	–14%	14%	–7%	–15%	–6%	22%	72%	250	818
–7%	–11%	–10%	–18%	–16%	–9%	6%	56%	1,405	13,110
–9%	–1%	–11%	5%	9%	–2%	11%	67%	506	3,085
–3%	4%	5%	–8%	1%	1%	18%	68%	284	1,072
–41%	10%	–1%	–10%	2%	–7%	9%	18%	215	429

Appendix 1. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Small or Nonexistent Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006 (continued)

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Oglethorpe University	GA	1,030	Private	61%	61%	59%	2%
Wesleyan College	GA	632	Private	58%	61%	57%	4%
St. Francis College	NY	2,262	Private	59%	58%	57%	1%
Chestnut Hill College	PA	1,918	Private	52%	58%	55%	3%
Aurora University	IL	3,791	Private	50%	58%	49%	9%
The University of Tampa	FL	5,381	Private	54%	57%	55%	3%
LeTourneau University	TX	3,983	Private	51%	57%	51%	6%
The New School	NY	9,123	Private	60%	56%	56%	0%
Christian Brothers University	TN	1,779	Private	55%	56%	54%	1%
University of La Verne	CA	7,482	Private	51%	56%	52%	5%
High Point University	NC	2,811	Private	55%	54%	55%	–1%
Newberry College	SC	851	Private	51%	54%	52%	2%
Mary Baldwin College	VA	1,755	Private	51%	53%	50%	3%
Trinity Washington University	DC	1,597	Private	52%	51%	50%	1%
Mercer University	GA	7,049	Private	51%	51%	53%	–2%
Coker College	SC	1,132	Private	44%	50%	41%	9%
Columbia College	SC	1,446	Private	47%	48%	46%	2%
Pfeiffer University	NC	2,104	Private	44%	48%	44%	4%
Johnson & Wales University–Florida Campus	FL	2,215	Private	40%	45%	41%	4%
Curry College	MA	3,073	Private	45%	44%	44%	0%
Saint Leo University	FL	14,179	Private	43%	42%	43%	–1%
Marymount Manhattan College	NY	1,938	Private	41%	40%	40%	0%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–13%	0%	–14%	–11%	–14%	–7%	22%	56%	227	577
23%	–3%	5%	20%	4%	10%	36%	49%	228	310
–5%	–11%	–17%	–16%	–11%	–10%	19%	44%	430	995
–15%	–35%	45%	–29%	14%	–6%	27%	63%	518	1,208
–22%	–9%	–6%	–19%	–26%	–9%	8%	78%	303	2,957
15%	0%	5%	0%	28%	5%	6%	64%	323	3,444
14%	–22%	–34%	21%	–51%	–3%	23%	64%	916	2,549
–8%	–11%	–14%	–11%	–5%	–9%	5%	41%	456	3,740
–4%	–19%	–1%	–13%	n/a	–7%	33%	51%	587	907
–3%	14%	–18%	–27%	–5%	–6%	10%	36%	748	2,694
1%	–6%	–8%	0%	0%	–3%	21%	71%	590	1,996
–17%	1%	13%	–22%	–4%	–5%	27%	66%	230	562
–3%	7%	–21%	–12%	–2%	–5%	17%	76%	298	1,334
13%	–2%	–1%	–26%	–7%	–3%	62%	8%	990	128
–3%	–4%	–14%	–18%	–16%	–8%	25%	60%	1,762	4,229
4%	–23%	32%	–4%	n/a	4%	41%	54%	464	611
14%	–17%	–4%	–17%	–9%	–4%	42%	50%	607	723
8%	12%	–5%	7%	–15%	5%	28%	61%	589	1,283
12%	–13%	–2%	–10%	–6%	–2%	28%	27%	620	598
11%	–5%	–10%	–16%	19%	–4%	7%	55%	215	1,690
6%	–28%	16%	–12%	–39%	–4%	27%	47%	3,828	6,664
–19%	7%	6%	–5%	–2%	–2%	12%	71%	233	1,376

Appendix 2. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Large Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
University of Michigan–Ann Arbor	MI	40,025	Public	87%	71%	90%	–19%
The College of New Jersey	NJ	6,934	Public	86%	57%	88%	–31%
University of Wisconsin–Madison	WI	41,028	Public	78%	57%	79%	–22%
Michigan State University	MI	45,520	Public	74%	54%	78%	–24%
Citadel Military College of South Carolina	SC	3,306	Public	71%	53%	72%	–19%
Indiana University–Bloomington	IN	38,247	Public	72%	51%	73%	–22%
University of Iowa	IA	28,816	Public	65%	45%	67%	–21%
University of Colorado at Boulder	CO	31,665	Public	66%	44%	67%	–24%
Oklahoma State University–Main Campus	OK	23,499	Public	59%	40%	60%	–21%
Kansas State University	KS	23,141	Public	59%	38%	61%	–23%
Murray State University	KY	10,298	Public	56%	36%	57%	–21%
Rowan University	NJ	9,578	Public	67%	36%	73%	–37%
California State University–Fullerton	CA	35,921	Public	49%	33%	54%	–21%
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	PA	8,723	Public	63%	31%	65%	–35%
CUNY Brooklyn College	NY	15,947	Public	44%	31%	58%	–27%
University of Cincinnati–Main Campus	OH	28,327	Public	52%	31%	54%	–24%
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville	IL	13,449	Public	46%	27%	50%	–23%
Minnesota State University–Mankato	MN	14,149	Public	48%	26%	50%	–24%
Indiana University of Pennsylvania–Main Campus	PA	14,248	Public	49%	25%	51%	–26%
University of Central Missouri	MO	10,711	Public	50%	25%	52%	–27%
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania	PA	5,175	Public	53%	24%	54%	–30%
Mansfield University of Pennsylvania	PA	3,360	Public	48%	24%	49%	–25%
University of Toledo–Main Campus	OH	19,374	Public	44%	24%	48%	–24%
University of Wisconsin–Whitewater	WI	10,502	Public	52%	22%	54%	–32%
California State University–Fresno	CA	22,098	Public	46%	22%	55%	–33%
Rhode Island College	RI	8,939	Public	45%	22%	48%	–25%
University of Michigan–Dearborn	MI	8,342	Public	50%	21%	50%	–29%
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee	WI	28,309	Public	43%	21%	47%	–25%
University of Nebraska at Omaha	NE	13,906	Public	40%	19%	41%	–22%
California State University–Bakersfield	CA	7,711	Public	41%	19%	46%	–27%
Youngstown State University	OH	13,273	Public	37%	16%	39%	–23%
University of Akron Main Campus	OH	21,882	Public	37%	15%	42%	–27%
Ferris State University	MI	12,574	Public	32%	13%	37%	–24%
Eastern New Mexico University–Main Campus	NM	4,122	Public	29%	13%	35%	–22%
Salem State College	MA	10,230	Public	40%	11%	42%	–31%
CUNY College of Staten Island	NY	12,313	Public	51%	11%	55%	–44%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–20%	–21%	–21%	–22%	–19%	–21%	6%	60%	2,402	24,015
–21%	–24%	–15%	–27%	–26%	–24%	6%	75%	416	5,201
–22%	–26%	–20%	–43%	–36%	–27%	3%	80%	1,231	32,822
–21%	–21%	–17%	–18%	–19%	–20%	8%	74%	3,642	33,685
–1%	–11%	–8%	–24%	–18%	–13%	11%	82%	364	2,711
–23%	–20%	–20%	–20%	–30%	–21%	4%	79%	1,530	30,215
–17%	–24%	–27%	–5%	–27%	–19%	2%	81%	576	23,341
–9%	–14%	–15%	–23%	–17%	–17%	2%	76%	633	24,065
–21%	–10%	–15%	–19%	–20%	–17%	4%	76%	940	17,859
–21%	–21%	–20%	–23%	–38%	–22%	3%	84%	694	19,438
–4%	–5%	–15%	–11%	9%	–11%	6%	88%	618	9,062
–6%	–11%	–20%	–20%	–16%	–19%	9%	78%	862	7,471
–25%	–18%	–24%	–19%	–20%	–21%	3%	33%	1,078	11,854
–32%	–26%	–31%	–32%	–26%	–31%	6%	84%	523	7,327
–18%	–17%	–12%	–22%	–20%	–19%	28%	44%	4,465	7,017
–19%	–17%	–9%	–24%	–19%	–19%	11%	71%	3,116	20,112
–23%	–17%	–18%	–21%	–19%	–20%	9%	85%	1,210	11,432
–29%	–31%	–32%	–2%	–17%	–24%	3%	83%	424	11,744
–20%	–20%	–17%	–13%	–12%	–19%	8%	76%	1,140	10,828
–9%	–4%	–17%	–5%	–15%	–12%	6%	80%	643	8,569
–36%	–7%	–12%	–32%	–11%	–23%	6%	87%	311	4,502
–16%	–15%	–8%	–7%	–7%	–14%	6%	86%	202	2,890
–26%	–23%	–17%	–16%	–18%	–21%	12%	73%	2,325	14,143
–35%	–7%	–24%	–29%	–20%	–25%	4%	90%	420	9,452
–24%	–24%	–23%	–30%	–26%	–27%	5%	38%	1,105	8,397
–21%	–32%	–19%	–8%	–32%	–21%	5%	74%	447	6,615
–17%	–22%	–15%	–25%	–20%	–22%	9%	67%	751	5,589
–26%	–22%	–29%	–29%	–26%	–26%	7%	82%	1,982	23,213
–22%	–30%	–18%	–12%	–12%	–21%	5%	82%	695	11,403
–23%	–12%	–7%	–12%	–26%	–17%	8%	38%	617	2,930
–25%	–23%	–24%	–24%	–14%	–24%	12%	76%	1,593	10,087
–21%	–22%	–24%	–14%	–16%	–22%	13%	77%	2,845	16,849
–30%	–19%	–22%	–28%	–20%	–25%	5%	77%	629	9,682
–3%	–16%	–27%	–6%	–21%	–15%	6%	57%	247	2,350
–2%	–7%	–2%	–10%	–18%	–11%	5%	72%	512	7,366
–31%	–32%	–26%	–34%	–41%	–33%	11%	64%	1,354	7,880

Appendix 2. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Large Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006 (continued)

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Wayne State University	MI	32,061	Public	36%	10%	45%	–35%
Indiana University–Northwest	IN	4,819	Public	23%	9%	28%	–19%
Saginaw Valley State University	MI	9,543	Public	34%	8%	37%	–29%
University of Dallas	TX	2,941	Private	66%	50%	70%	–20%
Adelphi University	NY	8,017	Private	61%	47%	70%	–23%
Maryville University of Saint Louis	MO	3,333	Private	66%	47%	68%	–21%
DePaul University	IL	23,149	Private	64%	46%	67%	–21%
Saint Xavier University	IL	5,657	Private	58%	46%	66%	–20%
Villa Julie College	MD	3,123	Private	62%	45%	65%	–20%
Seton Hall University	NJ	9,521	Private	58%	40%	60%	–20%
Geneva College	PA	1,964	Private	58%	39%	60%	–21%
Gwynedd Mercy College	PA	2,731	Private	74%	38%	79%	–41%
Savannah College of Art and Design	GA	8,236	Private	59%	38%	74%	–36%
Webster University	MO	18,963	Private	59%	38%	61%	–22%
Concordia University–Wisconsin	WI	5,574	Private	64%	38%	69%	–31%
Widener University–Main Campus	PA	4,703	Private	60%	37%	62%	–26%
Ashland University	OH	6,459	Private	59%	37%	60%	–23%
Robert Morris University	PA	5,065	Private	55%	37%	57%	–20%
Rochester Institute of Technology	NY	14,479	Private	61%	36%	63%	–27%
Daemen College	NY	2,414	Private	49%	35%	54%	–19%
University of Hartford	CT	7,308	Private	51%	35%	56%	–21%
University of Indianapolis	IN	4,440	Private	51%	34%	54%	–20%
University of Detroit Mercy	MI	5,528	Private	51%	33%	60%	–27%
Fontbonne University	MO	2,924	Private	55%	32%	62%	–30%
Molloy College	NY	3,673	Private	59%	31%	62%	–30%
Northwood University	MI	4,125	Private	52%	30%	56%	–26%
Philadelphia University	PA	3,256	Private	59%	30%	62%	–32%
California Baptist University	CA	3,409	Private	57%	29%	57%	–28%
University of St. Francis	IL	3,709	Private	60%	27%	63%	–36%
Oklahoma City University	OK	3,765	Private	50%	27%	54%	–27%
Nova Southeastern University	FL	25,960	Private	42%	26%	46%	–21%
Lawrence Technological University	MI	4,010	Private	45%	26%	49%	–23%
Baker University	KS	3,932	Private	61%	25%	64%	–39%
Saint Thomas University	FL	2,517	Private	34%	25%	69%	–44%
Catholic University of America	DC	6,148	Private	68%	25%	72%	–47%
Dominican College of Blauvelt	NY	1,782	Private	41%	25%	51%	–26%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–34%	–34%	–30%	–32%	n/a	–33%	26%	50%	8,336	16,031
–13%	–17%	–14%	–16%	–6%	–16%	23%	61%	1,108	2,940
–21%	–12%	–18%	–18%	–17%	–20%	6%	82%	573	7,825
6%	–51%	–54%	–42%	–35%	–32%	8%	56%	235	1,647
–18%	–12%	–6%	–7%	–10%	–13%	13%	48%	1,042	3,848
–14%	–7%	–31%	–68%	–40%	–28%	7%	83%	233	2,766
–15%	–6%	–15%	–14%	–5%	–14%	9%	60%	2,083	13,889
–31%	–11%	–32%	–29%	–40%	–25%	15%	67%	849	3,790
–13%	–30%	–23%	–13%	–22%	–20%	14%	71%	437	2,217
–13%	–23%	–16%	–3%	–12%	–15%	8%	47%	762	4,475
–25%	4%	–14%	–14%	n/a	–14%	12%	85%	236	1,669
–77%	22%	–4%	–46%	n/a	–29%	15%	79%	410	2,157
–16%	–12%	–25%	–11%	–5%	–20%	6%	43%	494	3,541
–16%	–7%	2%	–30%	4%	–15%	30%	52%	5,689	9,861
–37%	–53%	–41%	–58%	–50%	–44%	10%	45%	557	2,508
–28%	–6%	–22%	–18%	–27%	–20%	13%	65%	611	3,057
–45%	–7%	–36%	3%	–29%	–22%	11%	82%	710	5,296
–19%	–24%	–23%	–28%	–28%	–23%	7%	80%	355	4,052
–25%	–17%	–19%	–17%	–22%	–21%	4%	69%	579	9,991
–15%	–14%	–8%	–15%	–11%	–14%	9%	75%	217	1,811
–12%	–13%	–29%	–14%	–26%	–18%	9%	65%	658	4,750
–17%	–26%	–16%	–29%	–23%	–22%	8%	74%	355	3,286
–19%	–28%	–20%	–25%	–23%	–24%	22%	53%	1,216	2,930
–31%	–51%	–11%	–21%	–8%	–29%	34%	60%	994	1,754
–16%	–14%	–61%	–37%	–19%	–32%	20%	65%	735	2,387
–20%	–14%	–17%	–24%	n/a	–20%	9%	56%	371	2,310
–15%	–15%	–8%	–21%	–13%	–18%	10%	71%	326	2,312
–29%	–14%	–37%	–40%	–15%	–29%	9%	59%	307	2,011
16%	–29%	–19%	–33%	6%	–20%	7%	72%	260	2,670
–28%	–30%	–29%	–26%	–24%	–28%	6%	54%	226	2,033
–5%	–9%	–19%	–20%	n/a	–15%	27%	42%	7,009	10,903
–30%	–38%	–37%	–24%	–36%	–31%	10%	61%	401	2,446
14%	–15%	9%	–19%	n/a	–10%	7%	76%	275	2,988
–30%	1%	16%	4%	–6%	–10%	24%	25%	604	629
–35%	–38%	–34%	–25%	–16%	–36%	6%	62%	369	3,812
–24%	14%	–13%	–2%	–1%	–10%	16%	51%	285	909

Appendix 2. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Large Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006 (continued)

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Wilmington College	DE	8,205	Private	45%	25%	51%	–26%
Lewis University	IL	5,290	Private	50%	24%	59%	–35%
Concordia University	IL	3,710	Private	52%	23%	59%	–36%
William Carey University	MS	2,519	Private	36%	22%	42%	–20%
College of Mount St. Joseph	OH	2,259	Private	61%	21%	65%	–44%
Roosevelt University	IL	7,186	Private	37%	21%	49%	–28%
McKendree College	IL	3,212	Private	54%	20%	57%	–37%
Polytechnic University	NY	2,919	Private	50%	20%	50%	–30%
Trevecca Nazarene University	TN	2,217	Private	48%	20%	48%	–28%
New York Institute of Technology–Manhattan Campus	NY	2,636	Private	32%	18%	45%	–27%
Southern Wesleyan University	SC	2,557	Private	50%	17%	51%	–34%
Olivet Nazarene University	IL	4,486	Private	53%	17%	56%	–38%
Columbia College Chicago	IL	11,499	Private	35%	16%	43%	–27%
Alverno College	WI	2,480	Private	34%	15%	40%	–25%
Southern Nazarene University	OK	2,068	Private	45%	14%	50%	–35%
Medaille College	NY	2,971	Private	31%	13%	39%	–26%
Friends University	KS	2,849	Private	44%	11%	48%	–38%
East-West University	IL	1,001	Private	13%	10%	50%	–40%
Felician College	NJ	1,991	Private	34%	10%	44%	–34%
Davenport University	MI	12,617	Private	19%	7%	28%	–21%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–39%	–26%	–44%	–11%	–35%	–29%	14%	44%	1,149	3,610
–17%	–9%	–20%	–27%	–8%	–22%	12%	71%	635	3,756
–28%	–43%	–16%	–9%	.	–27%	14%	64%	519	2,374
–25%	–18%	–5%	–12%	–25%	–16%	27%	68%	680	1,713
–32%	–26%	–8%	–23%	–26%	–27%	10%	82%	226	1,852
–18%	–20%	–8%	–19%	–16%	–18%	22%	50%	1,581	3,593
–4%	–33%	–25%	–13%	–22%	–23%	14%	78%	450	2,505
–38%	–23%	–12%	–29%	–19%	–26%	8%	23%	234	671
–42%	–41%	–39%	–12%	–39%	–33%	12%	80%	266	1,774
–26%	–6%	–5%	–15%	–10%	–16%	11%	21%	290	554
–17%	–17%	–7%	–30%	30%	–21%	32%	60%	818	1,534
–43%	–39%	–44%	–40%	–22%	–41%	9%	82%	404	3,679
–20%	–16%	–22%	–15%	–17%	–20%	14%	64%	1,610	7,359
–13%	–15%	–11%	–10%	–12%	–15%	18%	66%	446	1,637
–19%	–38%	–53%	–31%	–29%	–35%	11%	77%	227	1,592
–20%	–35%	–21%	0%	–26%	–20%	10%	60%	297	1,783
–39%	–30%	–22%	–37%	–11%	–33%	11%	80%	313	2,279
–33%	–10%	7%	1%	.	–15%	69%	7%	691	70
–6%	–7%	–9%	–28%	–65%	–17%	12%	47%	239	936
–18%	–19%	–15%	–38%	.	–22%	21%	57%	2,650	7,192

April 2008

GRADUATION RATE WATCH:

Making Minority Student Success a Priority

By Kevin Carey

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Janie Scull for her research assistance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KEVIN CAREY is the Research and Policy Manager at Education Sector. He can be reached at kcarey@educationsector.org.

ABOUT EDUCATION SECTOR

Education Sector is an independent think tank that challenges conventional thinking in education policy. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to achieving real, measurable impact in education, both by improving existing reform initiatives and by developing new, innovative solutions to our nation's most pressing education problems.

© Copyright 2008 Education Sector.

Education Sector encourages the free use, reproduction, and distribution of our ideas, perspectives, and analysis. Our Creative Commons licensing allows for the noncommercial use of all Education Sector authored or commissioned materials. We require attribution for all use. For more information and instructions on the commercial use of our materials, please visit our Web site, www.educationsector.org.

1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 850, Washington, D.C. 20036
202.552.2840 • www.educationsector.org

Most people who grow up like Makandall Saint-Eloi never graduate from college. Raised along with his brother by a single mom who worked as a nurse's assistant to make ends meet, Saint-Eloi grew up poor and went to a Hollywood, Florida, high school where only a third of ninth-graders pass the state reading test.

Such surroundings create long odds, particularly for low-income black male high school students like Saint-Eloi: Only 4 percent earn a bachelor's degree by their mid-20s.¹ That's partly because many of them never go to college—only 60 percent of Saint-Eloi's classmates graduated on time, and of those, less than half went on to a four-year institution.² But it's also because less than half of all black students who start college at a four-year institution graduate in six years or less, more than 20 percentage points less than the graduation rate for white students.

In high school Saint-Eloi was helped onto a different path by a program that provided him and other low-income students with counselors to help him assemble college applications, navigate bewildering financial aid forms, and prepare for college-admissions tests. And the college he chose to attend, Florida State University, has an unusually comprehensive program to help low-income, first-generation college students like him succeed—the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (CARE).

FSU established CARE in 2000. Six years later, the university posted its highest-ever six-year graduation rate for black students—72 percent. It was higher than the rate for white students at Florida State and for black students at the state's more selective flagship university, the University of Florida. Saint-Eloi is on track for the same success, having completed a full course load in his first semester with three A's and a B.³

By reaching out to low-income and first-generation students as early as the sixth grade and providing a steady stream of advice and support through their high school and college careers, FSU has managed to defy the prevailing wisdom that low minority college graduation rates are regrettable but unavoidable. FSU is not alone. In the last six years, a significant number of colleges and universities have achieved small or nonexistent graduation rate gaps between white and black students.

But for every Florida State, there are many other, similar universities where students of color are far less likely to succeed. Those institutions are not failing because they don't realize they have a problem, or because FSU has discovered a secret formula that others have yet to learn. They fail because at many institutions the success of undergraduates, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is not the priority it should be.

A New Source of Information

Until recently, it was hard to document the success of programs like CARE or compare universities like FSU to their peers because there was little reliable information about minority graduation rates. That began to change in 1990, when former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley pushed the Student Right-to-Know Act through Congress. Bradley, a Rhodes Scholar and member of the Basketball Hall of Fame, was concerned about egregiously low graduation rates for college athletes. The act required institutions enrolling students who pay for college with federal grants and loans—essentially, every higher education institution in the nation—to report the percent of football, basketball, baseball, and track and field athletes who graduated within four, five, and six years of enrolling. While they were at it, colleges were required to report the percent of all other students who finished as well.

After a fair amount of grumbling, colleges went along with the new reporting requirements. The process was slow to get off the ground, however, and reporting wasn't made mandatory for all institutions until 1995. That meant that institutions couldn't report six-year graduation rates until 2001. As often happens when new processes are created to collect large amounts of information from thousands of disparate institutions, it took a while to work out the glitches and clean up the numbers. The first full set of graduation rates—including, crucially, rates broken down

by students' gender and race/ethnicity—wasn't made public until early 2004.

The information is sobering. At the typical institution, less than 40 percent of students earn their four-year degree in four years. Extending the time frame to six years brings the average institutional graduation rate up to roughly 57 percent. Even giving institutions credit for students who transfer and graduate elsewhere only brings the average up to 63 percent, still less than two-thirds of all students. Graduation rates for minority students are substantially lower. Black students, for example, typically graduate at a lower rate than their white peers at the same institution. Black students also are disproportionately enrolled in colleges with overall graduation rates that are below average. As a result, less than half of black college students graduate within six years. And as **Table 1** shows, black graduation rates at many institutions are far below that already-low average.

In 2000, approximately 120,000 black students enrolled as first-time, full-time freshmen at one of 1,050 four-year colleges and universities that reported graduation rate data to the federal government and enrolled more than 10

Table 1. Distribution of Institutional Six-Year Graduation Rates for Black Students Who Enrolled as First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen in 2000

Institutional Six-Year Black Graduation Rate	Number of Beginning First-Time Full-Time Black Students	Percent of All Students	Number of Institutions	Percent of All Institutions
90%–100%	1,323	1.1%	20	1.9%
80%–89%	2,752	2.3%	46	4.4%
70%–79%	7,096	5.9%	81	7.7%
60%–69%	9,305	7.8%	103	9.8%
50%–59%	16,311	13.6%	129	12.3%
40%–49%	23,570	19.7%	168	16.0%
30%–39%	31,704	26.5%	215	20.5%
20%–29%	16,654	13.9%	154	14.7%
10%–19%	9,728	8.1%	103	9.8%
0%–9%	1,411	1.2%	31	3.0%
Total	119,854	100%	1,050	100%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

black students in that cohort.⁴ As Table 1 demonstrates, only about 11,200 of those students—less than 10 percent—enrolled at an institution that would, like Florida State, grant degrees to at least 70 percent of those black freshmen within six years. Half went to an institution that graduated less than 40 percent of black students. Nearly one in four went to an institution with a black graduation rate below 30 percent. One in 10 enrolled at an institution with a black graduation rate below 20 percent.

In other words, black students starting college at the beginning of the millennium were two-and-a-half times more likely to enroll at a school with a 70 percent chance of *not* graduating within six years than at a school with a 70 percent chance of earning a degree.

Outperforming Their Peers

Not all institutions are the same, of course. Institutional graduation rates should be examined in context, given each colleges' unique mix of resources, academic mission, and students. One way to do this is to compare graduation rates for different students attending the same institution. **Table 2** shows graduation rate results for 2006, for 94 colleges and universities that meet certain thresholds of student enrollment.⁵ (See **Appendix 1** for rate results over six years, 2001–2006.) While the median institutional graduation rate gap between white and black students is nearly 10 percentage points, each of the institutions on Table 2 had a gap in 2006 of only 3 percentage points or less. At 62 of these institutions, black students had a *higher* graduation rate than white students. (Because Table 2 focuses on graduation rate disparities at institutions with significant numbers of black and white students, it contains no historically black colleges and universities. For an analysis of minority graduation rates at HBCUs, see sidebar on Page 7.)

There are many kinds of colleges and universities on Table 2, and not all of them got there for the same reasons. Some, like Harvard, Dartmouth, and Yale, have achieved racial parity chiefly through extremely selective admissions. Harvard only admits students who are most likely to succeed. Unsurprisingly, nearly all of them do—Harvard's overall six-year graduation rate is the highest in the country at 98 percent. When nearly everyone at a college graduates, graduation rate disparities between different groups of students are mathematically unlikely.

Table 2. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Small or Nonexistent Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2006

Institution	State	Sector	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Florida State Univ.	FL	Public	72%	69%	3%
Rutgers–New Brunswick	NJ	Public	71%	73%	–2%
Stony Brook Univ.	NY	Public	67%	52%	15%
Richard Stockton Coll. NJ	NJ	Public	66%	66%	0%
Longwood Univ.	VA	Public	65%	66%	–1%
Towson Univ.	MD	Public	65%	64%	1%
SUNY at Albany	NY	Public	65%	64%	2%
The Univ. of Alabama	AL	Public	65%	63%	2%
Coll. of Charleston	SC	Public	65%	60%	4%
UNC–Wilmington	NC	Public	64%	66%	–2%
Winthrop Univ.	SC	Public	64%	57%	7%
UC–Riverside	CA	Public	61%	64%	–3%
George Mason Univ.	VA	Public	60%	54%	6%
Univ. of Tennessee	TN	Public	59%	60%	–1%
Texas State Univ.–San Marcos	TX	Public	59%	54%	5%
Temple Univ.	PA	Public	58%	60%	–2%
Radford Univ.	VA	Public	58%	57%	1%
UMBC	MD	Public	58%	56%	2%
UNC–Greensboro	NC	Public	58%	50%	8%
Christopher Newport Univ.	VA	Public	57%	51%	6%
East Carolina Univ.	NC	Public	56%	57%	–1%
Troy Univ.	AL	Public	54%	50%	4%
California Univ. of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	53%	49%	4%
Univ. of South Florida	FL	Public	52%	49%	3%
UNC–Charlotte	NC	Public	51%	49%	2%
Old Dominion Univ.	VA	Public	50%	49%	1%
Marshall Univ.	WV	Public	50%	48%	2%
Frostburg State Univ.	MD	Public	50%	49%	1%
Univ. of Alabama in Huntsville	AL	Public	49%	44%	5%
CUNY John Jay Coll., Crim. Just.	NY	Public	49%	44%	5%
Western Carolina Univ.	NC	Public	48%	47%	1%
Univ. of North Texas	TX	Public	48%	45%	3%
Univ. of Tenn. at Chattanooga	TN	Public	46%	45%	1%
Georgia Southern Univ.	GA	Public	45%	42%	3%
Univ. of North Florida	FL	Public	44%	45%	–2%
Florida International Univ.	FL	Public	43%	42%	1%
SUNY Coll. at Buffalo	NY	Public	43%	44%	–1%
Middle Tennessee State Univ.	TN	Public	43%	42%	1%
Univ. of South Carolina–Aiken	SC	Public	43%	41%	2%
Virginia Commonwealth Univ.	VA	Public	42%	45%	–3%
Mississippi Univ. for Women	MS	Public	42%	43%	0%
Yale Univ.	CT	Private	96%	97%	–1%
Harvard Univ.	MA	Private	95%	98%	–3%
Wake Forest Univ.	NC	Private	94%	87%	7%
Indiana Wesleyan Univ.	IN	Private	93%	71%	22%
Dartmouth Coll.	NH	Private	92%	94%	–2%
Northwestern Univ.	IL	Private	90%	93%	–3%

Institution	State	Sector	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Cornell Univ.	NY	Private	90%	92%	–3%
Vanderbilt Univ.	TN	Private	90%	89%	1%
Smith Coll.	MA	Private	88%	86%	1%
Spring Hill Coll.	AL	Private	88%	64%	24%
Villanova Univ.	PA	Private	86%	88%	–2%
Emory Univ.	GA	Private	86%	86%	–1%
Univ. of Southern California	CA	Private	85%	84%	1%
Univ. of Richmond	VA	Private	83%	83%	0%
American Univ.	DC	Private	80%	71%	9%
Regis Univ.	CO	Private	80%	59%	21%
Southern Methodist Univ.	TX	Private	78%	74%	4%
Loyola Marymount Univ.	CA	Private	73%	74%	–2%
Rollins Coll.	FL	Private	73%	69%	4%
Baylor Univ.	TX	Private	72%	75%	–3%
McDaniel Coll.	MD	Private	72%	73%	–1%
Tulane Univ. of Louisiana	LA	Private	72%	73%	–1%
Immaculata Univ.	PA	Private	71%	56%	16%
Elon Univ.	NC	Private	70%	73%	–3%
Univ. of San Francisco	CA	Private	69%	61%	8%
Univ. of Miami	FL	Private	68%	71%	–3%
LaGrange Coll.	GA	Private	67%	55%	11%
Northeastern Univ.	MA	Private	66%	65%	1%
Loyola Univ. New Orleans	LA	Private	66%	62%	4%
Berea Coll.	KY	Private	64%	57%	7%
Mount St. Mary's Coll.	CA	Private	63%	57%	6%
Oglethorpe Univ.	GA	Private	61%	59%	2%
Wesleyan Coll.	GA	Private	61%	57%	4%
St. Francis Coll.	NY	Private	58%	57%	1%
Chestnut Hill Coll.	PA	Private	58%	55%	3%
Aurora Univ.	IL	Private	58%	49%	9%
The Univ. of Tampa	FL	Private	57%	55%	3%
LeTourneau Univ.	TX	Private	57%	51%	6%
The New School	NY	Private	56%	56%	0%
Christian Brothers Univ.	TN	Private	56%	54%	1%
Univ. of La Verne	CA	Private	56%	52%	5%
High Point Univ.	NC	Private	54%	55%	–1%
Newberry Coll.	SC	Private	54%	52%	2%
Mary Baldwin Coll.	VA	Private	53%	50%	3%
Trinity Washington Univ.	DC	Private	51%	50%	1%
Mercer Univ.	GA	Private	51%	53%	–2%
Coker Coll.	SC	Private	50%	41%	9%
Columbia Coll.	SC	Private	48%	46%	2%
Pfeiffer Univ.	NC	Private	48%	44%	4%
Johnson & Wales Univ.–FL Campus	FL	Private	45%	41%	4%
Curry Coll.	MA	Private	44%	44%	0%
Saint Leo Univ.	FL	Private	42%	43%	–1%
Marymount Manhattan Coll.	NY	Private	40%	40%	0%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

Similarly, some colleges may have boosted minority graduation rates primarily by changing the kind of students they enroll. Admissions officers at **Towson University** in Maryland, which went from a graduation rate gap of minus 20 percentage points in 2001 (the white rate was 65 percent, compared to 45 percent for black students) to plus 1 point in 2006 (64 percent for white students, 65 percent for black students), attribute much of the change to giving more weight to high school grades and less to SAT scores when deciding who to admit.⁶ Students who did well in their high school courses, they found, were more likely to be ready for college-level work.

Other institutions may have benefited from the spill-over effect of broader institutional efforts to climb the higher education status ladder, which is substantially based on the “quality” of incoming freshmen. **Northeastern University**, for example, went from a minus 18 percentage point gap in 2002 to a plus 1 percentage point difference in 2006. During the same time period, Northeastern boosted the median freshman SAT score by over 100 points and reduced admissions rates substantially, helping to elevate it from the third tier of the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings to among the top 100 national universities, continuing a longer-term trend of increased selectivity at the private, Boston-based research university.⁷ As institutions increase their ability to pick and choose who they enroll, they’re more able to admit students who are likely to graduate while maintaining their goals for racial diversity in the student body. This does not, however, necessarily reflect on what they do for those students once they arrive.

Other institutions on Table 2, such as the **Richard Stockton College of New Jersey**, achieved graduation rate parity in 2006 after years of typically large gaps. It’s possible that these results represent the fruits of new programs and initiatives designed to help minority students. They may also represent one-year statistical flukes. At others, like the **University of North Carolina-Wilmington**, graduation gaps have fluctuated up and down over the years. In both cases, graduation rate gap results should be interpreted with caution.

At institutions like **Florida State**, by contrast, a clearer pattern emerges. FSU’s large student body—it enrolls almost 40,000 students, of whom 11 percent are black—makes its graduation rates less susceptible to random variation. FSU’s graduation rate gap was minus 3 percentage points in 2001, already better than average, and it only improved from there. By 2006, black students

were graduating at a historic rate. The fact that the CARE program was implemented during the same time period suggests that it played a role in Florida State’s success. A closer look at the program reveals why.

FSU and CARE

Other universities, both within and outside of Florida, share much of Florida State’s basic institutional makeup: large, public, with somewhat selective admissions policies. But as **Table 3** shows, none of them have been able to match Florida State’s success in achieving graduation rate parity between black and white students. Many aren’t even close.

Table 3 shows FSU compared to the 15 universities that are most similar in terms of size, mission, funding, student academic preparation, and a range of other factors that impact graduation rates. FSU is the only one where black students graduate at a higher rate than white students. The median gap is 15 percentage points—larger than the national median—and the largest gap, at Michigan State, is 24 percentage points.

In part, Florida State’s success is rooted in history. For the first 110 years of its existence, Florida State didn’t have to worry about black student graduation rates, because it didn’t have any black students. Like many other states, Florida had a segregated higher education system until the 1960s. Black students from Tallahassee or elsewhere in the state who wanted a four-year degree from a public university went to Florida A&M (now the nation’s largest historically black institution) located just a mile down the road.

But when the state university system was integrated, FSU leaders recognized that they couldn’t just open their doors and leave newly arrived students of color to fend for themselves. As the years passed, a number of federal and state programs were created to help low-income and minority collegians. The federally funded Upward Bound program provided resources to reach out to such students in high school and help them make the transition to college, while the state of Florida created a program with similar goals called College Reach Out, aimed at high school students who would be the first in their family to enter higher education. The university, meanwhile, worked to develop a “summer bridge” program to bring incoming first-generation freshmen from low-income backgrounds onto the campus during the summer session before the

Table 3. 2006 Black/White Graduation Rate Gap at Florida State University Compared to Similar Institutions

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Florida State University	FL	39,973	Public	3%
The University of Texas at Austin	TX	49,697	Public	-5%
University of Central Florida	FL	46,646	Public	-7%
University of Georgia	GA	33,959	Public	-7%
Louisiana State University	LA	29,925	Public	-8%
University of Florida	FL	50,912	Public	-10%
University of Arizona	AZ	36,805	Public	-13%
Purdue University	IN	40,609	Public	-14%
Pennsylvania State University	PA	42,914	Public	-15%
University of Missouri-Columbia	MO	28,184	Public	-15%
Iowa State University	IA	25,462	Public	-16%
Texas A & M University	TX	45,380	Public	-17%
Texas Tech University	TX	27,996	Public	-18%
University of Wisconsin-Madison	WI	41,028	Public	-22%
Indiana University-Bloomington	IN	38,247	Public	-22%
Michigan State University	MI	45,520	Public	-24%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

Note: Florida State University peers calculated by www.collegeresults.org

start of fall classes, helping them become acclimated and prepared for the rigors of college work. FSU also developed tutoring services and learning centers where students could get help once the regular school year began.

Each of the programs had value, and they were all focused on helping more or less the same group of students. The problem was that they had all originated in different times and places, with different funding sources, regulations, and the like. This made overlap, miscommunication, and inefficiency a constant problem.

So FSU took the eminently sensible step of putting all of the programs under one roof: CARE.

Like nearly all public universities, Florida State enrolls many students from the local school systems in the surrounding community. Using funds from the state-funded College Reach Out program, CARE staffers start recruiting low-income students from local schools in surrounding communities as early as the sixth grade, talking to guidance counselors and identifying potential candidates from the list of students eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program. CARE meets with the students' parents, providing them with information about what they need to do to help their children get to college and succeed there. Beginning in the ninth grade, CARE provides a series of summer and after-school programs that help students negotiate the often-baffling financial aid application process, complete college applications, and study for the SAT and ACT. Makandall Saint-Eloi benefited from a version of this program at his high school in Hollywood, Fla.

As students near high school graduation, they can apply to Florida State through a CARE program that relaxes admissions standards for low-income, first-generation students if they agree to participate in an academic support program that begins the summer before matriculation and extends through the first two years of college. Due to the socioeconomic makeup of the state and surrounding area in Tallahassee, roughly two-thirds of CARE students are black.

The summer bridge program lasts for seven weeks. Students have the opportunity to meet the university president and senior faculty during a weeklong orientation, followed by six weeks where roughly 300 students live together in a residence hall staffed by hand-picked upperclassman counselors. Students with sufficient SAT and ACT scores enroll in summer session courses, and all CARE students take a one-credit course called "Diversity and Justice." The goal is to expose students to college-level work and the expectations that go with it—attending lectures, completing assigned readings, and turning in written assignments on time. CARE also introduces students to the campus and the surrounding area, helping them navigate a range of systems from public transportation to student financial aid.

Many university programs with similar goals end there, trusting that the students have been inoculated against

risk of failure by their summer orientation. CARE keeps right on going, monitoring students' progress all the way to graduation and serving, in the words of William Hudson Jr., associate director of academic programs for CARE since its inception, as "advocates for student success."⁸ The center operates a tutorial lab staffed by graduate students from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Students are required to attend the lab for at least eight hours per week—10 if their grades begin to slip. If they don't complete the required number of hours, they can't register for their next set of classes.

FSU's freshman math courses—a subject that academically at-risk college students often fail in their first attempt—typically run up to 250 students or more and meet a few times per week. CARE provides funds to the math department to offer extra sections in math that are capped at 40 students in size and meet every day. CARE students aren't required to attend these sections, but many do. Special academic advisers also help students make smart decisions about scheduling and the number of courses they can handle at a time, factoring in employment obligations and requirements for their majors. CARE also organizes social events and bimonthly seminars on strategies for college success.

The overall CARE philosophy seems to be: Identify every piece of information students might need or stumbling block they might encounter and help them through. "We work with the whole student. There's no issue that's too small that we can't help you with," says Hudson.⁹

When Saint-Eloi began his freshman year at FSU in 2007, he had a range of questions he needed answers to: What kind of classes should I take if I want to go to medical school and be an orthopedic surgeon? How can I talk to professionals who are already in the field? Are there study abroad programs available? What about financial aid? How can I get a better grade on my next term paper? The people at CARE "might not always have the answers," says Saint-Eloi, "but they always know who does."¹⁰

Hudson attributes CARE's success to strong support from university leadership and its unusual place in the university administrative hierarchy, simultaneously reporting to the vice presidents of student affairs and undergraduate studies. While many universities isolate their retention programs in the student affairs office, Florida State recognizes that helping students graduate is also a fundamentally academic endeavor.

The payoff for students seems readily apparent. While graduation rates are influenced by many factors, students' academic preparation and aptitude upon entering college are generally recognized as the single biggest determinants of whether they earn a degree. CARE students enter FSU with an average SAT score of 940, compared to 1204 among non-CARE students. This is a huge difference. At a typical university, an incoming SAT score of 1204 would be expected to yield a graduation rate of approximately 73 percent.¹¹ An average SAT score of 940, by contrast, tends to yield a 56 percent graduation rate, 17 percentage points lower. Yet CARE students are *more likely* than non-CARE students at FSU to return for their sophomore year, and they ultimately graduate at almost exactly the same rate.

To be sure, CARE and its predecessor programs aren't solely responsible for Florida State's success. Black students cite the presence of nearby Florida A&M as a positive influence, for example, providing social and community institutions with which they can comfortably connect.¹² That said, it seems likely that CARE makes a significant difference in the lives of its students, young men and women like Saint-Eloi who, if they attended college elsewhere, would have lower odds of earning a degree.

At many universities it is simply assumed that low-income, first-generation students will inevitably wash out in significant numbers. Given the dynamics of race and economic class in America, this translates into persistent graduation rate gaps between white students and students of color. Florida State's experience suggests these assumptions are wrong, and the resulting gaps are avoidable. If universities reach out to at-risk students years before they arrive in higher education, providing additional resources and support for the transition to college and ultimately throughout the entire undergraduate experience itself, at-risk students can succeed at the same rate as their peers.

Some might question whether CARE's holistic approach amounts to coddling students, denying them the chance to stand up and make decisions on their own. But Saint-Eloi disagrees. Instead, he sees a balance between careful guidance and personal responsibility. "They gear you in the right direction and let you take off, instead of just letting you fend for yourself," he says.

Graduation Rates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

There are slightly fewer than 100 four-year historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the continental United States. They enroll about one out of every five black students attending a four-year institution and grant a similar proportion of all bachelor's degrees awarded to black students.ⁱ The aggregate six-year institutional graduation rate for HBCUs in 2006 was 37.9 percent, compared to 45 percent for non-HBCUs.ⁱⁱ It's important to note, however, that HBCUs enroll a disproportionately large share of first-generation and low-income students, who tend to be at a higher risk of dropping out.

In fact, there is far more variation in graduation rate performance within the community of historically black institutions than there is between HBCUs and non-HBCUs. A

few institutions with selective admissions policies, like Spelman College in Atlanta and Howard University in Washington, D.C., typically graduate two-thirds or more of their black students. Others that serve primarily at-risk students graduate less than 25 percent of black students within six years. The same variation occurs when HBCUs are compared to peer institutions, including non-HBCUs: A few have outstanding results, a few fare very poorly, and most are somewhere in between.

In addition to peer comparisons, the best way to judge improvement at HBCUs is to observe how black graduation rates change over time. The table below shows HBCUs that improved their black six-year graduation rate by more than five percentage points from 2002 to 2006.

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	Change 2002–2006	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2005 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2004 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2003 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2002 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2001 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate
Albany State University	GA	3,927	Public	17%	43%	45%	40%	33%	26%	31%
Savannah State University	GA	3,241	Public	15%	33%	30%	30%	18%	18%	17%
Fort Valley State University	GA	2,176	Public	11%	37%	25%	31%	30%	26%	23%
Grambling State University	LA	5,065	Public	11%	39%	37%	38%	34%	28%	35%
Delaware State University	DE	3,690	Public	10%	39%	37%	36%	33%	29%	32%
Alabama State University	AL	5,565	Public	8%	29%	23%	23%	22%	21%	25%
Central State University	OH	1,766	Public	8%	27%	30%	25%	22%	19%	12%
Harris-Stowe State University	MO	1,868	Public	6%	21%	16%	25%	22%	15%	n/a
Voorhees College	SC	710	Private	37%	46%	37%	31%	54%	10%	n/a
Saint Augustines College	NC	1,247	Private	20%	32%	36%	35%	28%	12%	45%
Howard University	DC	10,771	Private	13%	69%	67%	59%	65%	56%	56%
Wiley College	TX	862	Private	9%	37%	22%	25%	33%	28%	n/a
Clark Atlanta University	GA	4,514	Private	9%	40%	n/a	34%	30%	31%	44%
Oakwood College	AL	1,771	Private	9%	48%	45%	51%	38%	38%	30%
Dillard University	LA	1,124	Private	9%	47%	41%	49%	42%	39%	n/a
Lane College	TN	1,370	Private	6%	34%	38%	28%	29%	28%	29%
Paine College	GA	913	Private	6%	30%	28%	30%	31%	24%	n/a
Benedict College	SC	2,531	Private	6%	30%	25%	24%	25%	24%	n/a

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

ⁱStephen Provasnik and Linda Shafer, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 1976 to 2001* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

ⁱⁱAmong public and private nonprofit four-year institutions that submitted Graduation Rate Survey data for 2006.

Recurrent Themes for Success

Florida State isn't the only university to maintain or achieve unusual success in graduating minority students.

The University of Alabama improved from a minus 9 percentage point gap in 2001 to plus 2 percentage points in 2006, with nearly two-thirds of black students graduating on time. The Tide Early Alert Program (Alabama's students are the "Crimson Tide") identifies freshmen who show signs of academic struggle in the first six weeks of school, flagging students for counseling and intervention if they earn D's and F's on papers and tests or miss an excessive number of classes.

Alabama also creates "freshman learning communities," where small groups of roughly 25 students take a pre-planned sequence of three-to-five linked core courses together. Freshmen at big universities can feel lost and anonymous as they struggle alone to contend with disconnected courses taught in depersonalized settings along with hundreds of their peers. Learning communities provide more connected, individualized instruction, allowing students to form strong academic relationships with their fellow students, share knowledge, and work together to succeed in school. Studies suggest that learning communities improve the odds of freshmen returning for their sophomore year, and they have been

adopted at a significant number of two- and four-year institutions nationwide.¹³

A number of other institutions on Table 2 were contacted in late 2007 and early 2008 and asked why, in their judgment, they were able to close the black/white college graduation rate gap. Recurring themes emerged—summer bridge programs for first-generation students similar to what Saint-Eloi experienced at Florida State, Alabama-style early warning systems, “intrusive” advising in which college counselors proactively reach out to students, and state-sponsored scholarships to help academically promising low-income students afford to stay in school were all mentioned more than once. So-called “Freshman 101” seminars focusing on orientation appear to be standard on college campuses these days, part of a broad movement to focus on the first year of college, when students are most likely to drop out.

If there is a single factor that seems to distinguish colleges and universities that have truly made a difference on behalf of minority students, it is *attention*. Successful colleges pay attention to graduation rates. They monitor year-to-year change, study the impact of different interventions on student outcomes, break down the numbers among different student populations, and continuously ask themselves how they could improve. Essentially, they apply the academic values of empiricism and deep inquiry to themselves.

Successful colleges also apply attention to graduation rates in a broader sense. A recent study of relatively non-selective public universities with unusually high graduation rates conducted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities identified leadership and organizational culture as keys to graduation rate success—not just as they relate to the specific issue of how many students earn degrees, but to a broader commitment to the education of undergraduates.¹⁴

This idea runs counter to prevailing graduation rate wisdom, which is that academic standards and student degree attainment are fundamentally at odds. Professors often speak with pride about courses they took as freshmen where their instructor asked them to look to the left, then the right, and realize that one of their adjacent seatmates would not make it through to the course’s end. If nothing else, this “weed out” mentality suggests that when colleges decide ahead of time that many students won’t succeed academically, many students

don’t succeed academically. It also leads people to suggest that any push to improve graduation rates will necessarily result in lowered standards—indeed, that low college graduation rates are a *good thing*, a sign that the academy hasn’t surrendered its principles in the face of ill-prepared students who probably shouldn’t be in college in the first place.

These ideas are mistaken. Lowered academic standards could be a way to improve graduation rates, albeit one that would be hard to implement given the degree of autonomy college professors enjoy over their courses. But they are by no means inevitable. Indeed, the most important thing a college can do to help students graduate is often to ask more of them, not less, and provide more in return in the form of better teaching.

Detailed analyses of the relationship between institutional teaching practices and student success conducted by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at Indiana University confirm this. Even after controlling for their race, gender, parent’s income, high school grades, ACT scores, amount of financial aid, and other characteristics, freshmen who were more engaged in “educationally purposeful activities”—which include working with classmates on projects, making class presentations, and discussing assignments with instructors—were more likely to return to college for their sophomore year.¹⁵ Such activities require more time, energy, and effort from students and teachers alike, but they pay off in greater learning and a better chance of earning a degree. The NSSE analysis also found that engagement with good teaching practices matters more for black students than for others:

Although African American students at the lowest levels of engagement were less likely to persist than their White counterparts, as their engagement increased to within about one standard deviation below the mean, they had about the same probability of returning as Whites. As African American student engagement reached the average amount, they became more likely than White students to return for a second year.¹⁶

In other words, while black college students are particularly vulnerable to colleges and universities that short-change undergraduates, they disproportionately benefit from institutions that teach their students well.

Given these findings, it's unfortunate that so many black students appear to be enrolled in colleges and universities with so much room to improve. That doesn't mean the institutions aren't trying in some way—most colleges and universities have retention officers, freshman seminars, and some manner of programs designed to help students stay in school. But it would be a mistake to judge the quality of an institution's efforts based only on whether it does or does not have a program that shares surface similarities with CARE. Often, the distinguishing factor for minority college graduation rates isn't whether programs exist, but whether they're coordinated, supported, and well-run.

In other words, the key issue is not whether universities say they're committed to helping all students succeed. It's whether they really mean it. Too often, they don't.

The Other Side of the Coin

If Table 2 shows the colleges and universities doing the best job of helping students of color graduate from college, **Table 4** shows the other side of the coin.¹⁷ Each of these 94 institutions had a graduation rate gap of at least 18 percentage points in 2006. (See **Appendix 2** for rate results over six years, 2001–2006.)

As with Table 2, these institutions are not all the same. Some, like **Murray State University** in Kentucky, have had average or below-average graduation rate gaps in most years since 2001, only to see a one-year spike in 2006. The three campuses on the list from the California State University system—**Fresno**, **Bakersfield**, and **Fullerton**—have unusually high transfer rates for black students compared to white students, which increases their graduation rate gap.

At other institutions, relative gaps between white and black students have persisted even as absolute graduation rates for minority students have improved. The **University of Wisconsin–Madison**, for example, boosted black graduation rates by over 20 percentage points from 2002 to 2006, a major increase. But that still left Madison with a 22 percentage point gap, down from an astounding 43 percentage point difference four years earlier.

Some institutions have produced stagnant or even declining minority graduation rates and huge intra-institutional gaps, year after year. A quarter of the students

attending **Wayne State**, an urban research university in Detroit, are black. But while Wayne State graduates 45 percent of white students within six years, the black graduation rate has stood at roughly 10 percent since 2001, with no signs of improvement.

Wayne State isn't Florida State. It's an urban commuter campus with a significant number of lower-income, part-time, and working students, some of whom take longer than six years to finish school. These are all factors that can lead to lower institutional graduation rates. In the university's most recent strategic plan, the president of Wayne State described a series of goals focused on boosting retention and graduation. Ideally, every institution with serious, persistent graduation problems should be taking this approach, recognizing past shortcomings and the need to improve. It is, however, unfortunate for the vast majority of black students who enrolled in Wayne State over the past decade that this effort didn't commence at an earlier time.

Faced with tough questions about graduation rates, university officials sometimes question the validity of the measures themselves. It's true that federal graduation rate measures have shortcomings, failing to account for students who take longer than six years to graduate, or who transfer from their original institution and graduate somewhere else. But in the end, these methodological issues are less problematic than many believe, particularly when comparing different groups of students at the same university. (For more on why federal graduation rates are a valid way of gauging university success, see sidebar on Page 12.) At Wayne State, for example, extending the graduation rate time frame from six years to eight years increases the black graduation rate to a better-but-still-terrible 20 percent. But because extending the time frame also increases the white graduation rate, it leaves the difference between the two unchanged.

Why do some institutions consistently fail their most vulnerable students? There are many reasons, none of which include ignorance of the problem or lack of knowledge about why students drop out of college. In fact, the causes and solutions of low graduation rates have been well understood for some time. In the mid-1970s, Vincent Tinto, distinguished university professor at Syracuse University and perhaps the nation's leading expert on student retention, developed a nuanced theory of why students leave college that remains

Table 4. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Large Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2006

Institution	State	Sector	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006	Institution	State	Sector	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Univ. of Michigan–Ann Arbor	MI	Public	71%	90%	–19%	Geneva Coll.	PA	Private	39%	60%	–21%
The Coll. of New Jersey	NJ	Public	57%	88%	–31%	Gwynedd Mercy Coll.	PA	Private	38%	79%	–41%
Univ. of Wisconsin–Madison	WI	Public	57%	79%	–22%	Savannah Coll. of Art and Design	GA	Private	38%	74%	–36%
Michigan State Univ.	MI	Public	54%	78%	–24%	Webster Univ.	MO	Private	38%	61%	–22%
Citadel Military Coll. of South Carolina	SC	Public	53%	72%	–19%	Concordia Univ.–Wisconsin	WI	Private	38%	69%	–31%
Indiana Univ.–Bloomington	IN	Public	51%	73%	–22%	Widener Univ.–Main Campus	PA	Private	37%	62%	–26%
Univ. of Iowa	IA	Public	45%	67%	–21%	Ashland Univ.	OH	Private	37%	60%	–23%
Univ. of Colorado at Boulder	CO	Public	44%	67%	–24%	Robert Morris Univ.	PA	Private	37%	57%	–20%
Oklahoma State Univ.–Main Campus	OK	Public	40%	60%	–21%	Rochester Institute of Technology	NY	Private	36%	63%	–27%
Kansas State Univ.	KS	Public	38%	61%	–23%	Daemen Coll.	NY	Private	35%	54%	–19%
Murray State Univ.	KY	Public	36%	57%	–21%	Univ. of Hartford	CT	Private	35%	56%	–21%
Rowan Univ.	NJ	Public	36%	73%	–37%	Univ. of Indianapolis	IN	Private	34%	54%	–20%
California State Univ.–Fullerton	CA	Public	33%	54%	–21%	Univ. of Detroit Mercy	MI	Private	33%	60%	–27%
Bloomsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	31%	65%	–35%	Fontbonne Univ.	MO	Private	32%	62%	–30%
CUNY Brooklyn Coll.	NY	Public	31%	58%	–27%	Molloy Coll.	NY	Private	31%	62%	–30%
Univ. of Cincinnati–Main Campus	OH	Public	31%	54%	–24%	Northwood Univ.	MI	Private	30%	56%	–26%
Southern Illinois Univ. Edwardsville	IL	Public	27%	50%	–23%	Philadelphia Univ.	PA	Private	30%	62%	–32%
Minnesota State Univ.–Mankato	MN	Public	26%	50%	–24%	California Baptist Univ.	CA	Private	29%	57%	–28%
Indiana Univ. of Penn.–Main Campus	PA	Public	25%	51%	–26%	Univ. of St. Francis	IL	Private	27%	63%	–36%
Univ. of Central Missouri	MO	Public	25%	52%	–27%	Oklahoma City Univ.	OK	Private	27%	54%	–27%
Lock Haven Univ. of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	24%	54%	–30%	Nova Southeastern Univ.	FL	Private	26%	46%	–21%
Mansfield Univ. of Pennsylvania	PA	Public	24%	49%	–25%	Lawrence Technological Univ.	MI	Private	26%	49%	–23%
Univ. of Toledo–Main Campus	OH	Public	24%	48%	–24%	Baker Univ.	KS	Private	25%	64%	–39%
Univ. of Wisconsin–Whitewater	WI	Public	22%	54%	–32%	Saint Thomas Univ.	FL	Private	25%	69%	–44%
California State Univ.–Fresno	CA	Public	22%	55%	–33%	Catholic Univ. of America	DC	Private	25%	72%	–47%
Rhode Island Coll.	RI	Public	22%	48%	–25%	Dominican Coll. of Blauvelt	NY	Private	25%	51%	–26%
Univ. of Michigan–Dearborn	MI	Public	21%	50%	–29%	Wilmington Coll.	DE	Private	25%	51%	–26%
Univ. of Wisconsin–Milwaukee	WI	Public	21%	47%	–25%	Lewis Univ.	IL	Private	24%	59%	–35%
Univ. of Nebraska at Omaha	NE	Public	19%	41%	–22%	Concordia Univ.	IL	Private	23%	59%	–36%
California State Univ.–Bakersfield	CA	Public	19%	46%	–27%	William Carey Univ.	MS	Private	22%	42%	–20%
Youngstown State Univ.	OH	Public	16%	39%	–23%	Coll. of Mount St. Joseph	OH	Private	21%	65%	–44%
Univ. of Akron Main Campus	OH	Public	15%	42%	–27%	Roosevelt Univ.	IL	Private	21%	49%	–28%
Ferris State Univ.	MI	Public	13%	37%	–24%	McKendree Coll.	IL	Private	20%	57%	–37%
East. New Mexico Univ.–Main Campus	NM	Public	13%	35%	–22%	Polytechnic Univ.	NY	Private	20%	50%	–30%
Salem State Coll.	MA	Public	11%	42%	–31%	Trevecca Nazarene Univ.	TN	Private	20%	48%	–28%
CUNY Coll. of Staten Island	NY	Public	11%	55%	–44%	NY Inst. of Tech.–Manhattan Campus	NY	Private	18%	45%	–27%
Wayne State Univ.	MI	Public	10%	45%	–35%	Southern Wesleyan Univ.	SC	Private	17%	51%	–34%
Indiana Univ.–Northwest	IN	Public	9%	28%	–19%	Olivet Nazarene Univ.	IL	Private	17%	56%	–38%
Saginaw Valley State Univ.	MI	Public	8%	37%	–29%	Columbia Coll. Chicago	IL	Private	16%	43%	–27%
Univ. of Dallas	TX	Private	50%	70%	–20%	Alverno Coll.	WI	Private	15%	40%	–25%
Adelphi Univ.	NY	Private	47%	70%	–23%	Southern Nazarene Univ.	OK	Private	14%	50%	–35%
Maryville Univ. of Saint Louis	MO	Private	47%	68%	–21%	Medaille Coll.	NY	Private	13%	39%	–26%
DePaul Univ.	IL	Private	46%	67%	–21%	Friends Univ.	KS	Private	11%	48%	–38%
Saint Xavier Univ.	IL	Private	46%	66%	–20%	East-West Univ.	IL	Private	10%	50%	–40%
Villa Julie	MD	Private	45%	65%	–20%	Felician Coll.	NJ	Private	10%	44%	–34%
Seton Hall	NJ	Private	40%	60%	–20%	Davenport Univ.	MI	Private	7%	28%	–21%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

widely used today. His seminal book, *Leaving College*, was published over 20 years ago. There is a *Journal of College Student Retention* replete with evidence and advice from experts in the field. Numerous other handbooks, scholarly articles, and “best practice” examples can be found.

Yet overall college graduation rates have remained stagnant or risen only slightly over time. Different studies have reached marginally different conclusions on this question, depending on the time frame studied and methodology employed. A comparison of the high school classes of 1972, 1982, and 1992 found nearly identical college graduation rates—approximately 66 percent—with a slight increase for the 1992 cohort.¹⁸ A study comparing five-year graduation rates for the entering freshman classes of 1990 and 1995 found no improvement.¹⁹ These results—along with the low overall black graduation rates shown on Table 1 and the large, persistent graduation rate gaps shown on Table 4—reflect a national higher education system in which undergraduate success is not the priority it should be.

This lack of attention is particularly problematic at some colleges. A 2007 study from the Pell Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based research organization, examined a group of large universities that enroll significant numbers of low-income students.²⁰ In exchange for anonymity, the universities allowed Pell Institute researchers to conduct extensive on-campus studies of their policies and programs. The results are revealing.

While some of the participants’ graduation rates were unusually high, others were unusually low. The low-performing institutions were all public universities with relatively low admissions standards. But, despite the fact that they had higher freshman SAT scores and fewer students who came from low-income backgrounds than other institutions in the study, they had lower graduation rates. When the Pell Institute researchers arrived on campus, they found faculty and staff were well aware of the problem with graduation rates:

Staff members showed us binders full of agendas and reports from numerous retention committees that had convened and consultants who had visited over the past 10 years. As they described, the retention plans that resulted were either not implemented or were implemented piecemeal, without enough funds,

or for too short a time to be effective. As a result, faculty and staff at this institution were reluctant to participate in current efforts to improve retentions. As one staff member said, “How many times can we sit on a committee and say the same things and nothing gets done?”

In other words, these universities didn’t fail to help students graduate because they didn’t know they should, or they didn’t know how. They simply failed to act on their knowledge in a competent, sustained manner. That lack of execution stemmed from, and was sustained by, an overall institutional climate where helping students earn degrees rated far below other priorities:

It was perceived as “not an accident” that improving undergraduate education was listed behind fostering faculty excellence, improving research capabilities, and increasing graduate enrollment as major goals in the Chancellor’s strategic plan for the university. It was noted that associate dean positions that were focused on teaching and instruction were recently eliminated in most of the colleges at this university. It was also mentioned that there is a top administrative position dedicated to research and development ... but there is not a similar administrative position dedicated to instruction or retention. In fact, none of the [low-performing institutions] had a central person, office, or committee to coordinate their retention efforts.

The contrast with Florida State, which has exactly such a centralized, well-supported retention office, is clear. Without leadership, adequate resources, competent execution, and sustained commitment, efforts to help students learn and graduate are left to the whims of individual departments or faculty, which operate under incentive structures that emphasize scholarly output over helping students learn and graduate:

At one institution ... an effort to recruit full-time faculty to teach introductory science courses in order to reduce class sizes failed, in part, because the faculty felt they would not be rewarded in terms of promotion and tenure for teaching “service” classes.

Are Federal Graduation Rates a Valid Measure of Institutional Success?

The institutional graduation rate measures used in this report are based on data submitted by the institutions themselves through the annual Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The GRS does not include all college students. Instead, it only examines students who begin college as first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen. The GRS produces *institutional* graduation rates, which means that colleges don't get credit for students who transfer and graduate somewhere else, or students who graduate in more than six years. These limitations raise the question of whether GRS graduation rates are valid measures of institutional performance. The short answer is: Yes, they are—as long as they're used properly.

At some campuses—particularly the most selective institutions—the large majority of students begin as first-time, full-time freshmen, and are thus included in the GRS cohort. At other campuses, the percent of students in the GRS cohort is much smaller, because many students transfer in from community colleges or other four-year schools, or they enroll part-time. Crucially, students who begin as in-bound transfers or part-timers are not counted in the numerator or the denominator of the graduation rate equation. They don't make the rates go up or down. And there is no reason to believe that adding them into the equation would make the typical university's graduation rate increase. Limiting the GRS to full-time students, for example, likely *increases* most institutional graduation rates, since full-time students are more likely than part-time students to graduate on time.

Counting all transfer students as non-graduates, by contrast, undeniably dampens institutional graduation rates. Even though some transfer students continue their academic careers successfully, GRS treats them the same as drop-outs. That said, transfers don't have as much of an impact on graduation rates as some believe. Critics of institutional graduation rates often assert that the majority of college students attend multiple higher education institutions, making the notion of assigning responsibility for student success illogical. This is untrue. The majority (about 60 percent) of students who graduate from college *earn credits* from multiple institutions.ⁱ But many of them effectively *attend* only one, while also earning credits from a local community college, study abroad, online courses, early enrollment in high school, etc. Only about 23 percent of students who begin as first-time, full-time students at a four-year school actually transfer to another four-year institution within six years of matriculating, and of those, only one-third graduate on time. As a result, giving the typical institution credit for transfers who graduate increases the six-year graduation rate by about 8 percentage points.ⁱⁱ (This number can be significantly larger for some institutions, like regional “feeder” campuses within state university systems.) In the end, 80 percent of students who start

college at a four-year institution and earn a bachelor's degree graduate from the same institution where they started.ⁱⁱⁱ

Graduation rates are most valid when used in context. It doesn't make sense to compare overall graduation rates at CUNY City College (30 percent) to nearby Columbia University (93 percent). They're different universities with different histories, student bodies, and reasons for being. But it's reasonable to compare CUNY City College to CUNY Brooklyn College (44 percent) and ask why one graduates substantially more students than the other. When graduation rates at similar institutions are compared, there are often substantial differences.^{iv} Missions, students, and resources matter when it comes to student success—but what institutions choose to do with their resources to serve their students and fulfill their missions matters too.

And it's particularly reasonable to infer that graduation rate disparities *within* institutions may have something to do with the institutions themselves. Wayne State University in Detroit is a good example. The university recently completed a study of students who matriculated in 1997.^v It found that while only 12.8 percent of black students graduated within six years, extending the time frame to eight years raised the rate to 21 percent. Wayne State enrolls an unusually large number of part-time students for a four-year research university, so it's likely that extending the time frame to eight years would not produce similar effects at most institutions. Most of the increase at Wayne State came between years six and seven; beyond that the large majority of college students have either graduated or dropped out. Nonetheless, this shows that at some institutions, six-year graduation rates don't tell the whole story.

It's important to note, however, that (A) 21 percent is still a terrible outcome, and (B) extending the time frame to eight years also increased the white graduation rate from 42.5 percent to 50.7 percent at Wayne State, leaving the disparity *between* white and black students entirely unchanged. When graduation rates are calculated in the same way for students at the same institutions, large disparities between groups demand attention.

Educational attainment data from the U.S. Census Bureau also underscore the college graduation rate problem. According to the latest numbers, 31 percent of all adults age 25-64 have earned at least a bachelor's degree, while another 9 percent have an associate's degree.^{vi} Seventeen percent of adults in the same age range—over 27 million people—report having “some college, no degree.” While it's true that some college students start college late, some transfer, and some take longer than six years to graduate, stopping in and stopping out along the way, the Census data make plain that many students simply never graduate at all.

ⁱClifford Adelman, *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education*; ⁱⁱLutz Berkner, et al., *Descriptive Summary of 1995-96 Postsecondary Students: Six Years Later*; ⁱⁱⁱClifford Adelman, *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education*; ^{iv}Kevin Carey, *One Step From the Finish Line: Higher College Graduation Rates Are Within Our Reach*; ^vWayne State University, *Undergraduate Student Success and Retention*, 3rd Annual Report to the Board of Governors, November 2007; ^{vi}<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/cps2007/Table1-01.xls>

The use of the phrase “service classes”—common parlance in academia to describe low-level freshman courses—says much. “Service” implies an obligation dutifully rendered, not a focus of institutional excellence. The Pell Institute study shows that graduation rate failure at individual colleges and universities is avoidable, not a matter of the circumstances in which institutions find themselves but the choices they do and do not make.

Clear Solutions

There are tens of thousands of students like Makandall Saint-Eloi living in every state in the nation; students who face numerous obstacles to earning a degree. Some are just entering middle school; others are struggling to make their way through high school. Still, others are on the precipice of deciding not to enter college—or if they’re in college, deciding to leave. These are the students for whom the decisions of policymakers and higher education leaders matter most. They live at the margins of potential success, where the upward possibilities of social mobility

are balanced, for a brief time, by the downward pressures of bias, indifference, and class. Then, often very quickly, while they’re still very young, the balance breaks, one way or another. For too many students at too many universities, it goes wrong.

Of the myriad problems confronting American education, college graduation rates offer some of the clearest solutions. The fact of the problem is undeniable, and the answers are on the table, at institutions like Florida State and others, for anyone to see. While more research in this area is certainly needed, the biggest challenge in better serving minority college students is not creating new knowledge about how to help them; it is creating new incentives for institutional leaders to act on the knowledge that already exists. Their current indifference is rooted in many areas—funding, governance, market pressures, accountability and lack thereof. Reorienting these systems in a way that makes minority graduation rates matter more will result in stories like Saint-Eloi’s becoming less extraordinary. The following recommendations describe how this can be done.

Policy Recommendations

The current system of incentives, which provides too few reasons to improve college graduation rates, is comprised of a series of interlocking funding systems, governmental relationships, and market forces that combine to give institutional leaders powerful incentives to make certain kinds of decisions—and not make others. The following recommendations explain how those systems work and how they could be changed.

Change the Rankings

Few incentives are as universally recognized as the rankings published by *U.S. News & World Report*. Most institutions, particularly those that compete nationally for students, are acutely aware of their status on the annual list, and there is a well-documented history of institutions engaging in various practices—reputable and otherwise—aimed at boosting their ranking score.

Sixteen percent of each institution's *U.S. News* ranking is based on their six-year graduation rate, the second most important factor after the magazine's annual reputational survey of college presidents and deans. (The percent of applicants who are accepted, by contrast, makes up only 1.5 percent of the ranking.) At first glance, this might seem like a powerful incentive for institutions to focus on improving graduation rate success. But several factors prevent this dynamic from working on behalf of at-risk and minority students.

First, *U.S. News* only looks at the overall six-year graduation rate, which means that institutions aren't penalized for having large graduation rate gaps. Florida State's 68 percent overall graduation rate; therefore, scores worse on the rankings than Indiana University's 72 percent rate, even though Table 3 shows Indiana with a minus 22 percentage point black/white graduation rate gap. Second, and more importantly, *U.S. News*' reliance on overall rates ignores the impact of external factors that influence graduation, such as the academic preparation of incoming freshmen. Therefore, one of the easiest ways for institutions to increase their graduation rates is to become more selective and enroll a greater percentage of well-prepared students (which also has an independent positive effect on the rankings, since SAT scores comprise another 7.5 percent of each institution's score). This dynamic doesn't help students overall; it just shifts them from one institution to another.

The solution is to rank colleges and universities based not on the overall graduation rate but the difference between that rate and the institution's statistically *predicted* rate, given the academic and demographic makeup of its students. Fortunately, just such a calculation exists and is currently being used to rank colleges—by *U.S. News* itself. But this calculation only makes up 5 percent of the ranking for national universities and liberal arts colleges, and isn't used for master's-granting institutions and baccalaureate colleges, where graduation rates are often lowest. *U.S. News* should give greater emphasis to the predicted vs. actual model. This would create incentives for institutions to recruit, enroll, and graduate at-risk students.

Improve Graduation Rate Measures

The limitations of the federal graduation measures used in this report are, of themselves, a barrier to improving graduation rates. Many critiques of federal graduation rates are overstated (see sidebar on Page 12), but they often muddy the waters enough to reduce pressure on institutions to improve.

Of all the obstacles to improving college graduation rates, this is the easiest to solve. A number of states, including Florida and Texas, have developed statewide education information systems that can track students who move from one institution to another or who graduate after more than six years, addressing two of the most frequently voiced criticisms of the current measures. The U.S. Department of Education has developed a detailed plan for implementing a similar system for all colleges and universities nationwide, allowing for graduation rates that give colleges credit for students who transfer across state lines.²¹ Only political opposition from higher education lobbying associations threatened by the specter of increased federal information gathering prevents this system from being put in place.

Advocacy organizations like The Education Trust have suggested that the federal graduation rate survey should be changed so that rates are calculated for low-income students, who are less likely to finish college than their more well-off peers.

Economists Robert Archibald and David Feldman of the College of William & Mary have proposed using "production-frontier analysis" to judge graduation rates. The technique compares colleges to their highest-performing peers and takes into account the non-linear

relationship between factors like funding and student SAT scores and student outcomes.²² Clifford Adelman, a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, has proposed fixes to the current federal system that would substantially increase the number of students included.²³ All of these proposals are constructive. Unlike many educational outcomes, the question of whether a student has (A) enrolled in college and (B) earned a bachelor's degree can be answered with 100 percent certainty. The sooner lingering questions about graduation rate methodology are resolved to the satisfaction of reasonable people, the sooner the important work of increasing those rates can begin in earnest.

Improve State Accountability Systems

Starting in the late 1980s, policymakers in many states made a concerted effort to establish new accountability systems for higher education. Twenty years later, the results are mixed. Most states report having some kind of system whereby information about higher education success is gathered, and most of those systems include graduation rates.²⁴ But few, if any states have created the kind of accountability systems—via public reporting, governance, financial incentives, or other methods—that will make college graduation rates more of an institutional priority than they would otherwise be. Graduation rate failure, particularly for minority students, is still an option.

There's not a statehouse in America where governors and state legislative leaders don't discuss the need to increase the number of college graduates as means of attracting new business development. Yet many of these same policymakers continue to govern their public university systems in a way that allows large numbers of college students to slip through the cracks. Given the central role of state governments in higher education, a new focus on accountability for graduation rates is needed, based on fair measures like intra-institutional gaps and peer comparisons.

Change Funding Incentives

While university financing varies among the states and between the public and private sectors, higher education revenues are mostly a matter of enrollment. With the exception of a few hyper-rich institutions with large endowments, most colleges and universities finance the bulk of their educational operations through tuition and (for public institutions) enrollment-based state support. Because maintaining a certain level of overall enrollment

is crucial for financial viability, many institutions are employing increasingly sophisticated marketing and enrollment management techniques to ensure that the total number of revenue-generating customers is at or above a certain amount.

Because college dropouts reduce enrollment, one might assume that colleges have powerful financial incentives to boost graduation rates. But the kind of additional supports that at-risk students need to stay in school can be expensive, and the cost/benefit equation for individual students changes as they progress through their undergraduate careers. With a few exceptions, all students pay the same tuition and generate the same amount of revenue from state governments. But students become progressively more expensive to educate as they accumulate credits. Many freshmen are taught by low-paid graduate students in big lecture halls, while seniors are more likely to take small seminars with tenured professors. The marginal cost of providing the extra support and educational attention needed to bring a sophomore back for their junior year may be substantially greater than the cost of enrolling one more student in next year's freshman class.

The solution is to change the cost/benefit equation by basing a portion of institutional funding on the number of students who *finish* college, not just the number who begin. While this would only apply to public universities, such institutions educate the large majority of all undergraduate students. State governments invest in college graduates, not college entrants, and should change their higher education funding formulas to reflect this.

Improve Accreditation

Every institution described in this report, including those with black graduation rates that persistently fail to break 20 percent, has been certified by one of the major accrediting organizations that serve, among other capacities, as the federal government's principal agent for quality control in higher education. In order to protect students and ensure that taxpayer money isn't wasted, students can only use federal grants and loans at accredited schools.

In touting the value of their process, accreditors often note—correctly—that their teams of peer reviewers are able to evaluate an institution's performance in light of its academic mission, resources, and student body. This

is crucial: Nobody expects open-access institutions to match graduation rates in the Ivy League. But analyses have shown that some institutions have persistently low graduation rates even when compared to very similar institutions.²⁵ And the fact that some accredited colleges and universities have minority graduation rates in the *single digits* suggests that there is literally no amount of persistent graduation rate failure that can put an institution's accreditation at serious risk.

Accreditors should increase scrutiny of institutional graduation rate gaps between student groups, particularly in comparison to peer institutions. The U.S. Department of Education should tighten its oversight of accreditors to ensure this occurs.

Move Back to Need-Based Financial Aid

There has been a tectonic shift in the character of higher education financial aid over the last two decades, as vast amounts of money have been dedicated to student aid programs that are indifferent to financial need. States have poured lottery dollars into programs like Georgia's HOPE scholarship, which provides generous aid to students

who meet certain academic credentials, regardless of their household income. In the 1990s, the federal government began offering education tax credits that are currently available to people earning up to \$57,000 per year (\$114,000 for couples), at an annual cost to the U.S. treasury of over \$5 billion. Colleges and universities, meanwhile, have been rapidly shifting greater proportions of their institutional aid dollars to students from the wealthiest families.²⁶

All of these efforts amount to diverting scarce financial aid resources from the students who need them most during a time when college tuition has been rising at twice the inflation rate or more every year. In addition to increasing debt burdens, these aid policies also make it more likely that lower-income students will have to work extensive hours to make ends meet during college, or cut back to part-time status. Studies suggest that working more than about 20 hours per week and/or enrolling part time creates a significant increased risk of dropping out.²⁷ Given the rising price of college and high dropout rates for low-income and minority students, policymakers and institutions should re-emphasize the role of financial aid for students who are most in need.

Endnotes

¹ Education Sector analysis of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey data set, March 2008.

² Sources: 9th grade reading scores, Florida Department of Education. Student demographics, www.schoolmatters.com. High school graduation rate, *Orlando Sentinel*. College going rate: Florida Education and Training Placement Program.

³ Studies indicate that academic performance and credit attainment in the freshman year are strongly related to students' likelihood of earning a bachelor's degree. Students like Makandall Saint-Eloi with high GPAs who are on track to earn 20 or more credits in their freshman year have significantly higher odds of graduating than others. See Clifford Adelman, *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

⁴ Limiting the analysis to institutions that enrolled more than 10 black students in the cohort of first-time, full-time students eliminates several hundred institutions from the analysis, but only about 3,000 students.

⁵ The institutions on Table 2 (and Appendix 1) represent all public and private nonprofit degree-granting four-year institutions that reported GRS data to the U.S. Department of Education in every year from 2002 to 2006 and met the following criteria:

- A 2006 black/white graduation rate gap less than or equal to 3 percentage points.

- A 2006 six-year black graduation rate greater than 40 percent.
- A 2006 six-year white graduation rate greater than 40 percent.
- At least 200 black and 200 white students enrolled in 2006.
- An average black/white graduation rate gap less than or equal to 10 percentage points from 2002 to 2006.

⁶ Personal interview, January 2008.

⁷ "America's Best Colleges," *U.S. News & World Report*, various years. Since graduation rates from 2001 to 2006 are based on the entering freshman classes of 1996 to 2000, Northeastern's most recent increases in selectivity would not be expected to impact graduation rates, aside from any positive effects of students being enrolled with better-prepared peers.

⁸ William Hudson Jr. personal interview, January 2008.

⁹ Angeline J. Taylor, "Florida State Takes Lead in Retaining and Graduating Black Students," *The Tallahassee Democrat*, November 17, 2007.

¹⁰ Makandall Saint-Eloi, personal interview, February 2008.

¹¹ Based on formulas for predicting graduation rates found in Alexander W. Astin and Leticia Oseguera, *Degree Attainment Rates at American Colleges and Universities, Revised Edition* (Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, 2005). The calculations used in this report include both SATs and differences in high school GPA between CARE and non-CARE student. Because this

formula does not take into account other risk factors for not graduating from college disproportionately found in CARE students, including low-income and first-generation status, this calculation likely underestimates the baseline difference in the likelihood of graduation between incoming CARE and non-CARE students.

¹² Shannon Colavecchio-Van Sickler, "More Blacks Succeed at FSU," *The St. Petersburg Times*, November 19, 2007.

¹³ Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini, *How College Affects Students: Volume 2* (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 422-23.

¹⁴ *Student Success in State Colleges and Universities: A Matter of Culture and Leadership* (Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2005).

¹⁵ George Kuh, Ty Cruce, Rick Shoup, Jillian Kinzie, and Robert M. Gonyea, "Unmasking the Effects of Student Engagement on College Grades and Persistence," Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University–Bloomington, (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 2007).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ The institutions on Table 4 (and Appendix 2) represent all public and private nonprofit degree-granting four-year institutions that reported GRS data to the U.S. Department of Education in every year from 2002 to 2006 and met the following criteria:

- At least 200 black and 200 white students enrolled in 2006.
- An average black/white graduation rate gap greater than or equal to 10 percentage points from 2002 to 2006.
- A 2006 black/white graduation rate gap greater than or equal to 19 percentage points.

¹⁸ Clifford Adelman, *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education, 1972–2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The studies examined bachelor's degree attainment rates for students who earned more than 10 credits and any credits from a four-year college during the study period. Because the class of 1992 was studied over 8.5 years, compared to 11 years and 12 years for the classes of 1982 and 1972, respectively, the author suggested the data lead "to the hypothesis that the system is doing better in degree completion than was the case a quarter century ago ... Capping the history of all three cohorts at the Class of 1992 time span of 8.5 years from the modal high school graduation date, time-to-degree for traditional-age students has risen slightly over the period covered by the cohort histories."

¹⁹ Laura Horn and Rachael Berger, *College Persistence on the Rise? Changes in 5-Year Degree Completion and Postsecondary Persistence Rates between 1994 and 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). The study found that black five-year graduation rates declined from 42 percent to 37 percent, but the difference was not statistically significant.

²⁰ Jennifer Engle and Colleen O'Brien, *Demography Is Not Destiny: Increasing Graduation Rates of Low-Income College Students at Large Public Universities* (Washington, DC: The Pell Institute, 2007).

²¹ Alisa F. Cunningham, John Milam, and Cathy Statham, *Feasibility of a Student Unit Record System Within the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

²² Robert B. Archibald and David H. Feldman, "Graduation Rates and Accountability: Regressions Versus Production Frontiers," *Research in Higher Education*, February 2008.

²³ Clifford Adelman, "Making Graduation Rates Matter," *Inside Higher Ed*, March 12, 2007.

²⁴ Joseph C. Burke and Henrik Minassians, *Performance Reporting: 'Real' Accountability or Accountability 'Lite,' Seventh Annual Survey 2003* (Albany, NY: The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, State University of New York, Albany, 2003).

²⁵ Kevin Carey, *One Step From the Finish Line: Higher College Graduation Rates Are Within Our Reach* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2005).

²⁶ Danette Gerald and Kati Haycock, *Engines of Inequality: Diminishing Equity in the Nation's Premier Public Universities* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2006).

²⁷ See, for example, Lutz Berkner, Shirley He, and Emily Forrest Cataldi, *Descriptive Summary of 1995–96 Postsecondary Students: Six Years Later* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Appendix 1. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Small or Nonexistent Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Florida State University	FL	39,973	Public	68%	72%	69%	3%
Rutgers University–New Brunswick	NJ	34,392	Public	73%	71%	73%	–2%
Stony Brook University	NY	22,522	Public	59%	67%	52%	15%
The Richard Stockton College of NJ	NJ	7,212	Public	63%	66%	66%	0%
Longwood University	VA	4,479	Public	65%	65%	66%	–1%
Towson University	MD	18,921	Public	64%	65%	64%	1%
SUNY at Albany	NY	17,434	Public	63%	65%	64%	2%
The University of Alabama	AL	23,838	Public	63%	65%	63%	2%
College of Charleston	SC	11,218	Public	61%	65%	60%	4%
University of North Carolina–Wilmington	NC	12,098	Public	65%	64%	66%	–2%
Winthrop University	SC	6,292	Public	58%	64%	57%	7%
University of California–Riverside	CA	16,875	Public	64%	61%	64%	–3%
George Mason University	VA	29,889	Public	56%	60%	54%	6%
The University of Tennessee	TN	28,901	Public	60%	59%	60%	–1%
Texas State University–San Marcos	TX	27,485	Public	53%	59%	54%	5%
Temple University	PA	33,865	Public	59%	58%	60%	–2%
Radford University	VA	9,220	Public	56%	58%	57%	1%
University of Maryland–Baltimore County	MD	11,798	Public	56%	58%	56%	2%
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	NC	16,872	Public	52%	58%	50%	8%
Christopher Newport University	VA	4,793	Public	51%	57%	51%	6%
East Carolina University	NC	24,351	Public	56%	56%	57%	–1%
Troy University	AL	27,938	Public	48%	54%	50%	4%
California University of Pennsylvania	PA	7,720	Public	50%	53%	49%	4%
University of South Florida	FL	43,636	Public	49%	52%	49%	3%
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	NC	21,519	Public	50%	51%	49%	2%
Old Dominion University	VA	21,625	Public	49%	50%	49%	1%
Marshall University	WV	13,936	Public	47%	50%	48%	2%
Frostburg State University	MD	4,910	Public	47%	50%	49%	1%
University of Alabama in Huntsville	AL	7,091	Public	44%	49%	44%	5%
CUNY John Jay College Criminal Justice	NY	14,645	Public	42%	49%	44%	5%
Western Carolina University	NC	8,861	Public	47%	48%	47%	1%
University of North Texas	TX	33,395	Public	45%	48%	45%	3%
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga	TN	8,923	Public	45%	46%	45%	1%
Georgia Southern University	GA	16,425	Public	43%	45%	42%	3%
University of North Florida	FL	15,954	Public	45%	44%	45%	–2%
Florida International University	FL	37,997	Public	48%	43%	42%	1%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
0%	2%	–3%	–1%	–2%	0%	11%	72%	4,397	28,781
–9%	–13%	–13%	–15%	–14%	–10%	9%	52%	3,095	17,884
14%	9%	6%	11%	n/a	11%	8%	41%	1,802	9,234
–11%	–13%	–10%	–12%	–29%	–9%	8%	81%	577	5,842
–4%	–9%	–4%	–5%	–12%	–5%	8%	88%	358	3,942
–3%	–11%	–12%	–13%	–20%	–8%	11%	70%	2,081	13,245
–3%	3%	–5%	2%	n/a	0%	8%	60%	1,395	10,460
–4%	–4%	–11%	–11%	–9%	–6%	11%	81%	2,622	19,309
–2%	–1%	–2%	–6%	–7%	–1%	7%	82%	785	9,199
–12%	–23%	–8%	–2%	–1%	–9%	5%	87%	605	10,525
8%	10%	8%	6%	n/a	8%	26%	69%	1,636	4,341
–11%	8%	2%	–10%	–10%	–3%	6%	21%	1,013	3,544
–1%	–2%	8%	–6%	–10%	1%	7%	55%	2,092	16,439
–4%	–6%	–5%	–12%	–5%	–6%	8%	82%	2,312	23,699
1%	10%	–2%	2%	10%	3%	5%	69%	1,374	18,965
–4%	–1%	–11%	–11%	–5%	–6%	16%	58%	5,418	19,642
3%	9%	–9%	1%	4%	1%	6%	89%	553	8,206
4%	6%	3%	1%	5%	3%	14%	55%	1,652	6,489
6%	1%	5%	4%	10%	5%	19%	69%	3,206	11,642
–5%	–6%	–4%	–3%	–4%	–3%	7%	84%	336	4,026
6%	–1%	–4%	7%	3%	1%	15%	77%	3,653	18,750
–7%	–3%	–5%	–4%	–26%	–3%	39%	49%	10,896	13,690
–3%	–20%	–9%	–13%	–15%	–8%	6%	69%	463	5,327
3%	–5%	–9%	–5%	–11%	–3%	11%	66%	4,800	28,800
1%	–4%	–6%	–7%	2%	–3%	14%	74%	3,013	15,924
3%	–2%	–4%	1%	3%	0%	19%	63%	4,109	13,624
–5%	–12%	–18%	–16%	–13%	–10%	4%	82%	557	11,428
–3%	–16%	–15%	–14%	–22%	–9%	15%	78%	737	3,830
9%	2%	3%	–5%	13%	3%	13%	73%	922	5,176
–4%	–2%	1%	–1%	0%	0%	24%	29%	3,515	4,247
6%	–1%	–8%	–2%	15%	–1%	5%	86%	443	7,620
1%	–3%	6%	0%	0%	2%	12%	66%	4,007	22,041
5%	10%	1%	2%	2%	4%	18%	77%	1,606	6,871
2%	1%	8%	3%	–2%	3%	22%	74%	3,614	12,155
–1%	–7%	–17%	–10%	–5%	–7%	10%	76%	1,595	12,125
5%	2%	1%	–3%	1%	1%	13%	18%	4,940	6,839

Appendix 1. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Small or Nonexistent Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006 (continued)

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
SUNY College at Buffalo	NY	11,220	Public	44%	43%	44%	–1%
Middle Tennessee State University	TN	22,863	Public	42%	43%	42%	1%
University of South Carolina–Aiken	SC	3,380	Public	41%	43%	41%	2%
Virginia Commonwealth University	VA	30,189	Public	45%	42%	45%	–3%
Mississippi University for Women	MS	2,428	Public	43%	42%	43%	0%
Yale University	CT	11,415	Private	96%	96%	97%	–1%
Harvard University	MA	25,778	Private	98%	95%	98%	–3%
Wake Forest University	NC	6,739	Private	88%	94%	87%	7%
Indiana Wesleyan University	IN	13,917	Private	72%	93%	71%	22%
Dartmouth College	NH	5,753	Private	94%	92%	94%	–2%
Northwestern University	IL	18,486	Private	93%	90%	93%	–3%
Cornell University	NY	19,639	Private	92%	90%	92%	–3%
Vanderbilt University	TN	11,607	Private	89%	90%	89%	1%
Smith College	MA	3,092	Private	86%	88%	86%	1%
Spring Hill College	AL	1,446	Private	67%	88%	64%	24%
Villanova University	PA	10,466	Private	87%	86%	88%	–2%
Emory University	GA	12,338	Private	87%	86%	86%	–1%
University of Southern California	CA	33,389	Private	84%	85%	84%	1%
University of Richmond	VA	4,496	Private	83%	83%	83%	0%
American University	DC	11,378	Private	71%	80%	71%	9%
Regis University	CO	11,388	Private	59%	80%	59%	21%
Southern Methodist University	TX	10,941	Private	74%	78%	74%	4%
Loyola Marymount University	CA	8,972	Private	75%	73%	74%	–2%
Rollins College	FL	3,478	Private	69%	73%	69%	4%
Baylor University	TX	14,040	Private	74%	72%	75%	–3%
McDaniel College	MD	3,671	Private	72%	72%	73%	–1%
Tulane University of Louisiana	LA	10,237	Private	71%	72%	73%	–1%
Immaculata University	PA	4,005	Private	56%	71%	56%	16%
Elon University	NC	5,230	Private	72%	70%	73%	–3%
University of San Francisco	CA	8,549	Private	65%	69%	61%	8%
University of Miami	FL	15,670	Private	73%	68%	71%	–3%
LaGrange College	GA	1,136	Private	55%	67%	55%	11%
Northeastern University	MA	23,411	Private	65%	66%	65%	1%
Loyola University New Orleans	LA	4,604	Private	63%	66%	62%	4%
Berea College	KY	1,576	Private	61%	64%	57%	7%
Mount St. Mary's College	CA	2,384	Private	66%	63%	57%	6%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–15%	–3%	–9%	–7%	n/a	–7%	12%	68%	1,346	7,630
–1%	0%	–3%	–5%	–2%	–2%	13%	80%	2,972	18,290
3%	–2%	–3%	–10%	–17%	–2%	26%	65%	879	2,197
–6%	–7%	2%	1%	–2%	–3%	17%	67%	5,132	20,227
0%	–4%	–8%	7%	–14%	–1%	32%	64%	777	1,554
–1%	–5%	–3%	–11%	–8%	–4%	6%	51%	685	5,822
–7%	0%	–2%	–4%	–5%	–3%	6%	48%	1,547	12,373
–1%	3%	–4%	–3%	–3%	0%	7%	80%	472	5,391
26%	16%	–36%	–48%	n/a	–4%	14%	81%	1,948	11,273
–8%	–5%	–12%	–8%	–7%	–7%	6%	55%	345	3,164
–11%	–2%	–6%	–2%	–2%	–5%	5%	52%	924	9,613
–10%	–6%	–13%	–9%	–14%	–8%	4%	48%	786	9,427
5%	–2%	–10%	–2%	–3%	–2%	8%	64%	929	7,428
9%	11%	–17%	14%	6%	4%	7%	52%	216	1,608
–24%	1%	–18%	–15%	19%	–6%	17%	71%	246	1,027
–9%	–5%	–5%	–11%	–21%	–6%	4%	77%	419	8,059
–2%	–4%	–6%	2%	2%	–2%	10%	57%	1,234	7,033
–10%	–10%	–12%	–3%	–10%	–7%	5%	39%	1,669	13,022
–12%	–12%	–6%	–8%	4%	–7%	8%	81%	360	3,642
–9%	0%	–10%	–14%	1%	–5%	7%	56%	796	6,372
–10%	–62%	11%	17%	–5%	–4%	5%	63%	569	7,174
–3%	–4%	–6%	–8%	–8%	–4%	6%	71%	656	7,768
–5%	–9%	–5%	–11%	–20%	–6%	7%	53%	628	4,755
–2%	–16%	41%	12%	26%	8%	6%	70%	209	2,435
–12%	–10%	1%	–8%	–11%	–6%	7%	73%	983	10,249
0%	–5%	–18%	–17%	–19%	–8%	8%	81%	294	2,974
–17%	–8%	–6%	–13%	–6%	–9%	8%	69%	819	7,064
11%	–33%	–27%	–8%	0%	–8%	7%	81%	280	3,244
11%	–3%	0%	9%	–15%	3%	7%	84%	366	4,393
2%	–9%	–15%	–1%	2%	–3%	6%	40%	513	3,420
–6%	0%	–1%	–5%	–7%	–3%	8%	48%	1,254	7,522
–35%	–14%	14%	–7%	–15%	–6%	22%	72%	250	818
–7%	–11%	–10%	–18%	–16%	–9%	6%	56%	1,405	13,110
–9%	–1%	–11%	5%	9%	–2%	11%	67%	506	3,085
–3%	4%	5%	–8%	1%	1%	18%	68%	284	1,072
–41%	10%	–1%	–10%	2%	–7%	9%	18%	215	429

Appendix 1. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Small or Nonexistent Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006 (continued)

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Oglethorpe University	GA	1,030	Private	61%	61%	59%	2%
Wesleyan College	GA	632	Private	58%	61%	57%	4%
St. Francis College	NY	2,262	Private	59%	58%	57%	1%
Chestnut Hill College	PA	1,918	Private	52%	58%	55%	3%
Aurora University	IL	3,791	Private	50%	58%	49%	9%
The University of Tampa	FL	5,381	Private	54%	57%	55%	3%
LeTourneau University	TX	3,983	Private	51%	57%	51%	6%
The New School	NY	9,123	Private	60%	56%	56%	0%
Christian Brothers University	TN	1,779	Private	55%	56%	54%	1%
University of La Verne	CA	7,482	Private	51%	56%	52%	5%
High Point University	NC	2,811	Private	55%	54%	55%	–1%
Newberry College	SC	851	Private	51%	54%	52%	2%
Mary Baldwin College	VA	1,755	Private	51%	53%	50%	3%
Trinity Washington University	DC	1,597	Private	52%	51%	50%	1%
Mercer University	GA	7,049	Private	51%	51%	53%	–2%
Coker College	SC	1,132	Private	44%	50%	41%	9%
Columbia College	SC	1,446	Private	47%	48%	46%	2%
Pfeiffer University	NC	2,104	Private	44%	48%	44%	4%
Johnson & Wales University–Florida Campus	FL	2,215	Private	40%	45%	41%	4%
Curry College	MA	3,073	Private	45%	44%	44%	0%
Saint Leo University	FL	14,179	Private	43%	42%	43%	–1%
Marymount Manhattan College	NY	1,938	Private	41%	40%	40%	0%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–13%	0%	–14%	–11%	–14%	–7%	22%	56%	227	577
23%	–3%	5%	20%	4%	10%	36%	49%	228	310
–5%	–11%	–17%	–16%	–11%	–10%	19%	44%	430	995
–15%	–35%	45%	–29%	14%	–6%	27%	63%	518	1,208
–22%	–9%	–6%	–19%	–26%	–9%	8%	78%	303	2,957
15%	0%	5%	0%	28%	5%	6%	64%	323	3,444
14%	–22%	–34%	21%	–51%	–3%	23%	64%	916	2,549
–8%	–11%	–14%	–11%	–5%	–9%	5%	41%	456	3,740
–4%	–19%	–1%	–13%	n/a	–7%	33%	51%	587	907
–3%	14%	–18%	–27%	–5%	–6%	10%	36%	748	2,694
1%	–6%	–8%	0%	0%	–3%	21%	71%	590	1,996
–17%	1%	13%	–22%	–4%	–5%	27%	66%	230	562
–3%	7%	–21%	–12%	–2%	–5%	17%	76%	298	1,334
13%	–2%	–1%	–26%	–7%	–3%	62%	8%	990	128
–3%	–4%	–14%	–18%	–16%	–8%	25%	60%	1,762	4,229
4%	–23%	32%	–4%	n/a	4%	41%	54%	464	611
14%	–17%	–4%	–17%	–9%	–4%	42%	50%	607	723
8%	12%	–5%	7%	–15%	5%	28%	61%	589	1,283
12%	–13%	–2%	–10%	–6%	–2%	28%	27%	620	598
11%	–5%	–10%	–16%	19%	–4%	7%	55%	215	1,690
6%	–28%	16%	–12%	–39%	–4%	27%	47%	3,828	6,664
–19%	7%	6%	–5%	–2%	–2%	12%	71%	233	1,376

Appendix 2. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Large Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
University of Michigan–Ann Arbor	MI	40,025	Public	87%	71%	90%	–19%
The College of New Jersey	NJ	6,934	Public	86%	57%	88%	–31%
University of Wisconsin–Madison	WI	41,028	Public	78%	57%	79%	–22%
Michigan State University	MI	45,520	Public	74%	54%	78%	–24%
Citadel Military College of South Carolina	SC	3,306	Public	71%	53%	72%	–19%
Indiana University–Bloomington	IN	38,247	Public	72%	51%	73%	–22%
University of Iowa	IA	28,816	Public	65%	45%	67%	–21%
University of Colorado at Boulder	CO	31,665	Public	66%	44%	67%	–24%
Oklahoma State University–Main Campus	OK	23,499	Public	59%	40%	60%	–21%
Kansas State University	KS	23,141	Public	59%	38%	61%	–23%
Murray State University	KY	10,298	Public	56%	36%	57%	–21%
Rowan University	NJ	9,578	Public	67%	36%	73%	–37%
California State University–Fullerton	CA	35,921	Public	49%	33%	54%	–21%
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	PA	8,723	Public	63%	31%	65%	–35%
CUNY Brooklyn College	NY	15,947	Public	44%	31%	58%	–27%
University of Cincinnati–Main Campus	OH	28,327	Public	52%	31%	54%	–24%
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville	IL	13,449	Public	46%	27%	50%	–23%
Minnesota State University–Mankato	MN	14,149	Public	48%	26%	50%	–24%
Indiana University of Pennsylvania–Main Campus	PA	14,248	Public	49%	25%	51%	–26%
University of Central Missouri	MO	10,711	Public	50%	25%	52%	–27%
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania	PA	5,175	Public	53%	24%	54%	–30%
Mansfield University of Pennsylvania	PA	3,360	Public	48%	24%	49%	–25%
University of Toledo–Main Campus	OH	19,374	Public	44%	24%	48%	–24%
University of Wisconsin–Whitewater	WI	10,502	Public	52%	22%	54%	–32%
California State University–Fresno	CA	22,098	Public	46%	22%	55%	–33%
Rhode Island College	RI	8,939	Public	45%	22%	48%	–25%
University of Michigan–Dearborn	MI	8,342	Public	50%	21%	50%	–29%
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee	WI	28,309	Public	43%	21%	47%	–25%
University of Nebraska at Omaha	NE	13,906	Public	40%	19%	41%	–22%
California State University–Bakersfield	CA	7,711	Public	41%	19%	46%	–27%
Youngstown State University	OH	13,273	Public	37%	16%	39%	–23%
University of Akron Main Campus	OH	21,882	Public	37%	15%	42%	–27%
Ferris State University	MI	12,574	Public	32%	13%	37%	–24%
Eastern New Mexico University–Main Campus	NM	4,122	Public	29%	13%	35%	–22%
Salem State College	MA	10,230	Public	40%	11%	42%	–31%
CUNY College of Staten Island	NY	12,313	Public	51%	11%	55%	–44%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–20%	–21%	–21%	–22%	–19%	–21%	6%	60%	2,402	24,015
–21%	–24%	–15%	–27%	–26%	–24%	6%	75%	416	5,201
–22%	–26%	–20%	–43%	–36%	–27%	3%	80%	1,231	32,822
–21%	–21%	–17%	–18%	–19%	–20%	8%	74%	3,642	33,685
–1%	–11%	–8%	–24%	–18%	–13%	11%	82%	364	2,711
–23%	–20%	–20%	–20%	–30%	–21%	4%	79%	1,530	30,215
–17%	–24%	–27%	–5%	–27%	–19%	2%	81%	576	23,341
–9%	–14%	–15%	–23%	–17%	–17%	2%	76%	633	24,065
–21%	–10%	–15%	–19%	–20%	–17%	4%	76%	940	17,859
–21%	–21%	–20%	–23%	–38%	–22%	3%	84%	694	19,438
–4%	–5%	–15%	–11%	9%	–11%	6%	88%	618	9,062
–6%	–11%	–20%	–20%	–16%	–19%	9%	78%	862	7,471
–25%	–18%	–24%	–19%	–20%	–21%	3%	33%	1,078	11,854
–32%	–26%	–31%	–32%	–26%	–31%	6%	84%	523	7,327
–18%	–17%	–12%	–22%	–20%	–19%	28%	44%	4,465	7,017
–19%	–17%	–9%	–24%	–19%	–19%	11%	71%	3,116	20,112
–23%	–17%	–18%	–21%	–19%	–20%	9%	85%	1,210	11,432
–29%	–31%	–32%	–2%	–17%	–24%	3%	83%	424	11,744
–20%	–20%	–17%	–13%	–12%	–19%	8%	76%	1,140	10,828
–9%	–4%	–17%	–5%	–15%	–12%	6%	80%	643	8,569
–36%	–7%	–12%	–32%	–11%	–23%	6%	87%	311	4,502
–16%	–15%	–8%	–7%	–7%	–14%	6%	86%	202	2,890
–26%	–23%	–17%	–16%	–18%	–21%	12%	73%	2,325	14,143
–35%	–7%	–24%	–29%	–20%	–25%	4%	90%	420	9,452
–24%	–24%	–23%	–30%	–26%	–27%	5%	38%	1,105	8,397
–21%	–32%	–19%	–8%	–32%	–21%	5%	74%	447	6,615
–17%	–22%	–15%	–25%	–20%	–22%	9%	67%	751	5,589
–26%	–22%	–29%	–29%	–26%	–26%	7%	82%	1,982	23,213
–22%	–30%	–18%	–12%	–12%	–21%	5%	82%	695	11,403
–23%	–12%	–7%	–12%	–26%	–17%	8%	38%	617	2,930
–25%	–23%	–24%	–24%	–14%	–24%	12%	76%	1,593	10,087
–21%	–22%	–24%	–14%	–16%	–22%	13%	77%	2,845	16,849
–30%	–19%	–22%	–28%	–20%	–25%	5%	77%	629	9,682
–3%	–16%	–27%	–6%	–21%	–15%	6%	57%	247	2,350
–2%	–7%	–2%	–10%	–18%	–11%	5%	72%	512	7,366
–31%	–32%	–26%	–34%	–41%	–33%	11%	64%	1,354	7,880

Appendix 2. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Large Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006 (continued)

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Wayne State University	MI	32,061	Public	36%	10%	45%	–35%
Indiana University–Northwest	IN	4,819	Public	23%	9%	28%	–19%
Saginaw Valley State University	MI	9,543	Public	34%	8%	37%	–29%
University of Dallas	TX	2,941	Private	66%	50%	70%	–20%
Adelphi University	NY	8,017	Private	61%	47%	70%	–23%
Maryville University of Saint Louis	MO	3,333	Private	66%	47%	68%	–21%
DePaul University	IL	23,149	Private	64%	46%	67%	–21%
Saint Xavier University	IL	5,657	Private	58%	46%	66%	–20%
Villa Julie College	MD	3,123	Private	62%	45%	65%	–20%
Seton Hall University	NJ	9,521	Private	58%	40%	60%	–20%
Geneva College	PA	1,964	Private	58%	39%	60%	–21%
Gwynedd Mercy College	PA	2,731	Private	74%	38%	79%	–41%
Savannah College of Art and Design	GA	8,236	Private	59%	38%	74%	–36%
Webster University	MO	18,963	Private	59%	38%	61%	–22%
Concordia University–Wisconsin	WI	5,574	Private	64%	38%	69%	–31%
Widener University–Main Campus	PA	4,703	Private	60%	37%	62%	–26%
Ashland University	OH	6,459	Private	59%	37%	60%	–23%
Robert Morris University	PA	5,065	Private	55%	37%	57%	–20%
Rochester Institute of Technology	NY	14,479	Private	61%	36%	63%	–27%
Daemen College	NY	2,414	Private	49%	35%	54%	–19%
University of Hartford	CT	7,308	Private	51%	35%	56%	–21%
University of Indianapolis	IN	4,440	Private	51%	34%	54%	–20%
University of Detroit Mercy	MI	5,528	Private	51%	33%	60%	–27%
Fontbonne University	MO	2,924	Private	55%	32%	62%	–30%
Molloy College	NY	3,673	Private	59%	31%	62%	–30%
Northwood University	MI	4,125	Private	52%	30%	56%	–26%
Philadelphia University	PA	3,256	Private	59%	30%	62%	–32%
California Baptist University	CA	3,409	Private	57%	29%	57%	–28%
University of St. Francis	IL	3,709	Private	60%	27%	63%	–36%
Oklahoma City University	OK	3,765	Private	50%	27%	54%	–27%
Nova Southeastern University	FL	25,960	Private	42%	26%	46%	–21%
Lawrence Technological University	MI	4,010	Private	45%	26%	49%	–23%
Baker University	KS	3,932	Private	61%	25%	64%	–39%
Saint Thomas University	FL	2,517	Private	34%	25%	69%	–44%
Catholic University of America	DC	6,148	Private	68%	25%	72%	–47%
Dominican College of Blauvelt	NY	1,782	Private	41%	25%	51%	–26%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–34%	–34%	–30%	–32%	n/a	–33%	26%	50%	8,336	16,031
–13%	–17%	–14%	–16%	–6%	–16%	23%	61%	1,108	2,940
–21%	–12%	–18%	–18%	–17%	–20%	6%	82%	573	7,825
6%	–51%	–54%	–42%	–35%	–32%	8%	56%	235	1,647
–18%	–12%	–6%	–7%	–10%	–13%	13%	48%	1,042	3,848
–14%	–7%	–31%	–68%	–40%	–28%	7%	83%	233	2,766
–15%	–6%	–15%	–14%	–5%	–14%	9%	60%	2,083	13,889
–31%	–11%	–32%	–29%	–40%	–25%	15%	67%	849	3,790
–13%	–30%	–23%	–13%	–22%	–20%	14%	71%	437	2,217
–13%	–23%	–16%	–3%	–12%	–15%	8%	47%	762	4,475
–25%	4%	–14%	–14%	n/a	–14%	12%	85%	236	1,669
–77%	22%	–4%	–46%	n/a	–29%	15%	79%	410	2,157
–16%	–12%	–25%	–11%	–5%	–20%	6%	43%	494	3,541
–16%	–7%	2%	–30%	4%	–15%	30%	52%	5,689	9,861
–37%	–53%	–41%	–58%	–50%	–44%	10%	45%	557	2,508
–28%	–6%	–22%	–18%	–27%	–20%	13%	65%	611	3,057
–45%	–7%	–36%	3%	–29%	–22%	11%	82%	710	5,296
–19%	–24%	–23%	–28%	–28%	–23%	7%	80%	355	4,052
–25%	–17%	–19%	–17%	–22%	–21%	4%	69%	579	9,991
–15%	–14%	–8%	–15%	–11%	–14%	9%	75%	217	1,811
–12%	–13%	–29%	–14%	–26%	–18%	9%	65%	658	4,750
–17%	–26%	–16%	–29%	–23%	–22%	8%	74%	355	3,286
–19%	–28%	–20%	–25%	–23%	–24%	22%	53%	1,216	2,930
–31%	–51%	–11%	–21%	–8%	–29%	34%	60%	994	1,754
–16%	–14%	–61%	–37%	–19%	–32%	20%	65%	735	2,387
–20%	–14%	–17%	–24%	n/a	–20%	9%	56%	371	2,310
–15%	–15%	–8%	–21%	–13%	–18%	10%	71%	326	2,312
–29%	–14%	–37%	–40%	–15%	–29%	9%	59%	307	2,011
16%	–29%	–19%	–33%	6%	–20%	7%	72%	260	2,670
–28%	–30%	–29%	–26%	–24%	–28%	6%	54%	226	2,033
–5%	–9%	–19%	–20%	n/a	–15%	27%	42%	7,009	10,903
–30%	–38%	–37%	–24%	–36%	–31%	10%	61%	401	2,446
14%	–15%	9%	–19%	n/a	–10%	7%	76%	275	2,988
–30%	1%	16%	4%	–6%	–10%	24%	25%	604	629
–35%	–38%	–34%	–25%	–16%	–36%	6%	62%	369	3,812
–24%	14%	–13%	–2%	–1%	–10%	16%	51%	285	909

Appendix 2. Four-Year Colleges and Universities With Large Black/White Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps, 2001–2006 (continued)

Institution	State	Enrollment	Sector	2006 Overall Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 Black Six-Year Graduation Rate	2006 White Six-Year Graduation Rate	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2006
Wilmington College	DE	8,205	Private	45%	25%	51%	–26%
Lewis University	IL	5,290	Private	50%	24%	59%	–35%
Concordia University	IL	3,710	Private	52%	23%	59%	–36%
William Carey University	MS	2,519	Private	36%	22%	42%	–20%
College of Mount St. Joseph	OH	2,259	Private	61%	21%	65%	–44%
Roosevelt University	IL	7,186	Private	37%	21%	49%	–28%
McKendree College	IL	3,212	Private	54%	20%	57%	–37%
Polytechnic University	NY	2,919	Private	50%	20%	50%	–30%
Trevecca Nazarene University	TN	2,217	Private	48%	20%	48%	–28%
New York Institute of Technology–Manhattan Campus	NY	2,636	Private	32%	18%	45%	–27%
Southern Wesleyan University	SC	2,557	Private	50%	17%	51%	–34%
Olivet Nazarene University	IL	4,486	Private	53%	17%	56%	–38%
Columbia College Chicago	IL	11,499	Private	35%	16%	43%	–27%
Alverno College	WI	2,480	Private	34%	15%	40%	–25%
Southern Nazarene University	OK	2,068	Private	45%	14%	50%	–35%
Medaille College	NY	2,971	Private	31%	13%	39%	–26%
Friends University	KS	2,849	Private	44%	11%	48%	–38%
East-West University	IL	1,001	Private	13%	10%	50%	–40%
Felician College	NJ	1,991	Private	34%	10%	44%	–34%
Davenport University	MI	12,617	Private	19%	7%	28%	–21%

Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2005	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2004	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2003	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2002	Black/ White Graduation Rate Gap 2001	Average Black/ White Gap 2002–2006	Percent of Students Who Are Black	Percent of Students Who Are White	Black Enrollment	White Enrollment
–39%	–26%	–44%	–11%	–35%	–29%	14%	44%	1,149	3,610
–17%	–9%	–20%	–27%	–8%	–22%	12%	71%	635	3,756
–28%	–43%	–16%	–9%	.	–27%	14%	64%	519	2,374
–25%	–18%	–5%	–12%	–25%	–16%	27%	68%	680	1,713
–32%	–26%	–8%	–23%	–26%	–27%	10%	82%	226	1,852
–18%	–20%	–8%	–19%	–16%	–18%	22%	50%	1,581	3,593
–4%	–33%	–25%	–13%	–22%	–23%	14%	78%	450	2,505
–38%	–23%	–12%	–29%	–19%	–26%	8%	23%	234	671
–42%	–41%	–39%	–12%	–39%	–33%	12%	80%	266	1,774
–26%	–6%	–5%	–15%	–10%	–16%	11%	21%	290	554
–17%	–17%	–7%	–30%	30%	–21%	32%	60%	818	1,534
–43%	–39%	–44%	–40%	–22%	–41%	9%	82%	404	3,679
–20%	–16%	–22%	–15%	–17%	–20%	14%	64%	1,610	7,359
–13%	–15%	–11%	–10%	–12%	–15%	18%	66%	446	1,637
–19%	–38%	–53%	–31%	–29%	–35%	11%	77%	227	1,592
–20%	–35%	–21%	0%	–26%	–20%	10%	60%	297	1,783
–39%	–30%	–22%	–37%	–11%	–33%	11%	80%	313	2,279
–33%	–10%	7%	1%	.	–15%	69%	7%	691	70
–6%	–7%	–9%	–28%	–65%	–17%	12%	47%	239	936
–18%	–19%	–15%	–38%	.	–22%	21%	57%	2,650	7,192

Graduation Rate Watch: Making Minority Student Success a Priority

Publisher(s): Education Sector

Author(s): Kevin Carey

Date Published: 2008-04-23

Rights: Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 United States

Subject(s): Education and Literacy; Race and Ethnicity

IssueLab Permalink: <http://www.issuelab.org/permalink/resource/1072>

This social sector resource is permanently archived with IssueLab.

IssueLab permalink: <http://www.issuelab.org/permalink/resource/1072>

Metadata last modified: 2015-05-07

Date file archived: 2008-06-20

Date this page generated to accompany file download: 2015-08-07

IssueLab, a service of the Foundation Center, works to more effectively gather, index, and share the collective intelligence of the social sector. We provide free access to thousands of case studies, evaluations, white papers, and issue briefs published by foundations, nonprofits, and academic research centers that address some of the world's most pressing social problems. Visit www.issuelab.org where you can search, browse, access, and share social sector resources.