As part of a continuing effort to monitor the success of undergraduates at WSU Vancouver, the following short summary represents significant developments over the past academic year:

- Academic qualifications of incoming students continued an upward trajectory in the Fall 2018 term. The average transfer GPA for incoming transfer students reached an all-time high 3.21, up from 3.02 ten years ago. High school GPAs of incoming freshmen averaged 3.41, just below their highest level.
- First-year persistence rates remained within the range of normal fluctuation for all major new student groups this fall (Freshman 71.6%, Early Transfer 72.3%, Late Transfer 83.4%. All rates include full and part-time students). (See Figure 1)
- The Six-year graduation rate for students entering as freshmen was at its lowest historical point (2018 rate: 49.7%. Five-year average: 57.2%). Three-year graduation rates for late-transfer students held near historical averages (2018 rate: 71.7%. Five-year average: 69.1%). Early transfer (six-year) graduation rates have also stayed near historical averages (2018: 56.4%. Five-year average: 51.9%). (See Figure 2)
- Low graduation rates for the class that began as freshmen in 2012 may be tied to the implementation of new WSU database and web interface systems (zzusis) that resulted in many challenges for students registering and receiving financial aid. That term was widely acknowledged to have been a difficult one for the student experience. Graduation data suggest the impact of those difficulties was experienced disproportionally between different race/ethnicity groups. The disparity in graduation rates between students from underrepresented race/ethnicity groups (Latinx, African American, Native American, and Pacific Islander) and white students reached 22.6% (see figure 3). Sub-populations on campus are small in size and prone to fluctuation so it is important to make determinations based on multiple years. Looking ahead to subsequent classes, disparities between these groups have narrowed as reflected in retention rates and 4-year and 5-year graduation rates. However, clearly further work is needed to eliminate these disparities entirely.
- Contrary to demographic-associated persistence differences for students admitted as freshmen, transfer student outcomes are improving. For two of the last three years, transfer students from underrepresented backgrounds have graduated at rates equivalent to, or above, those of white transfer students. This multi-year pattern, as well the narrowing in the two prior years, suggests that transfer graduation may be achieving a sustained pattern of equity (see figure 3).
- Disparities in the graduation rate tied to gender have narrowed to a 3-year average of 8% for freshman admits and 6% for transfer admits.
- One important predictor of success for students admitted as freshmen that has emerged over the past few years is participation in the Running Start program in which students receive college credit while still in high-school. In recent years, between 20% and 32% of each incoming freshman class have entered with at least 30 transferable college credits achieved through this program. These students are much more likely to persist at WSU Vancouver and have achieved a 6-year graduation rate 20 percentage points higher than non-running start freshmen (75% vs 55%) over the past three years. For more recent incoming classes, this persistence advantage has been even greater. Participation in running start, however, has significant demographic disparities. In the past five years, 16% of students admitted as freshmen from underrepresented race/ethnicity groups have entered with significant running start credit as compared to 31% of white students admitted as freshmen. Likewise, a gender disparity exists as well with running start participation equaling 25% of male freshmen and 31% of female freshmen.
Another Washington State program specifically designed to increase degree attainment among low income students is the College Bound Scholarship. Over the past five years, 25% of incoming freshmen have been recipients of the scholarship. This includes 40% of freshmen from underrepresented groups and 20% of white freshmen. While the program has not existed long enough to accurately judge its impact on 6-year graduation rates, 1st year persistence rates of College Bound recipients exceed those of their peers (78.6% vs. 70.2%, five-year average). College Bound students enter WSU Vancouver with an average $10,000 more in financial need. These initial results suggest the program is having a positive impact on the burden of financial need. College Bound, like running start however, shows a gender disparity, with participation amongst female freshmen at 27% and 22% among male freshmen.

![1st year Persistence](image)

**Figure 1** | 1st year persistence rates for freshmen, early transfer (<60 credits) and late transfer students (>59 credits). Persistence is here defined as retained or graduated by the student’s second fall at WSU Vancouver.
Figure 2 | Graduation rates for freshmen, early transfer (<60 credits) and late transfer students (>59 credits).
Figure 3 | Graduation rates for students identifying from underrepresented race/ethnicity groups (African American, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander) vs. identifying as white.

Figure 4 | Graduation rates for female vs. male students.