TRANSFER AND COMPLETION
SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATES: WASHINGTON

Percentage of first-time degree-seeking Washington Community College students entering in 2001 who completed within six years, by race/ethnicity

What Is Measured?
Percentage of students who completed a certificate or associate degree or transferred to a four-year institution within six years

Who Is Counted?
First-time degree-seeking students who entered Washington Community Colleges in fall 2001

What It Tells Us
Among all first-time degree-seeking students enrolled in Washington Community Colleges in fall 2001, Asian American and white students had the highest rates of associate degree completion (30 percent) and African American students had the lowest (16 percent). White and Asian American students also had the highest rates of transfer (12 percent and 13 percent, respectively), while Hispanic/Latino students had the lowest (7 percent). African American students had the highest rate of certificate completion (9 percent), and Hispanic students had the lowest (3 percent). Among all racial/ethnic groups, the rates of those still enrolled were very low; however, African American students had a slightly higher rate of enrollment (2 percent).

Why It's Important
At community colleges, graduation means attainment of a certificate or associate degree. However, many students attend community colleges to take lower-division courses for a bachelor's degree, and some transfer to a four-year institution without obtaining a credential. From the perspective of the community college, these students have finished a curriculum that prepared them for transfer and, therefore, should be considered as having completed. Some states even track and report which community college students graduate from other institutions. Most sources, however, do not specify what proportion of transfer students have finished the coursework required for upper-division standing at the four-year college, and research suggests that many students transfer without reaching this threshold (Moore, Shulock, & Offenstein, 2009, table 3). A completion rate that combines transfer and degree attainment is sometimes referred to as a “success rate.”

ABOUT THE DATA
Degree-seeking students: include students in a job preparatory program or who intend to transfer or complete an associate degree and who had not yet completed a bachelor's degree.

Estimates for student degree and transfer outcomes were obtained through spring 2007. Overall results for all racial/ethnic groups were not reported.

DATA SOURCE