TRANSFER AND COMPLETION
SIX-YEAR PERSISTENCE RATES: UNITED STATES

Percentage of U.S. community college students who persisted at any institution without earning a credential or degree after six years.

STUDENT AND PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

- Attained any degree or certificate
- Did not attain credential but still enrolled in 4 year institution
- Did not attain credential but enrolled in < 4 year institution
- Did not attain credential and not still enrolled

DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM WHEN FIRST ENROLLED

- Attained any degree or certificate
- Did not attain credential but still enrolled in 4 year institution
- Did not attain credential but enrolled in < 4 year institution
- Did not attain credential and not still enrolled

FIELD OF STUDY
### What Is Measured?
Persistence without a certificate or degree at any institution within six years of first enrolling in a community college

### Who Is Counted?
First-time college students who first enrolled in U.S. community colleges in the 2003-04 academic year as of spring 2009

### What It Tells Us
About one-third of U.S. community college students had attained a degree or certificate within six years (34 percent). Nearly one-half (46 percent) had left without attaining either. The other 20 percent of community college students, however, were still enrolled after six years and had not attained any credential. Of the 20 percent of students who were still enrolled, 7 percent were still enrolled in a four-year institution and possibly working toward a bachelor's degree, and 13 percent were still enrolled a community college or other less-than-four-year institution and could still be progressing toward earning a certificate or associate degree or transferring to a four-year institution.

### Why It’s Important
Traditionally, students must study full time for two years in community college to earn an associate degree or complete a lower-division curriculum for transfer to a four-year college (and usually less than one year to earn a certificate). But less than half of community college students enroll full time in their first term (Offenstein & Shulock, 2009), and even fewer enroll full time for two consecutive years (Clery, 2010). Because many part-time students enroll less than half time, and most must take at least one developmental education course that does not count toward a degree or transfer, some have argued that even six years is not sufficiently long for community students to meet their educational goals (Moltz, 2011). This measure represents the proportion of community college students who were not able to complete or transfer within six years but still may do so.

### ABOUT THE DATA
Full-time/part-time enrollment: indicates student’s cumulative enrollment through 2009. Full-time is defined as 12 or more credit hours per semester.

Race/ethnicity: Other includes Native American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and individuals who indicated Other or Two or more races. Race categories exclude Hispanic/Latino origin unless specified.

Social sciences and humanities: includes cultural and gender studies; visual and performing arts; English language and literature; family and consumer sciences; philosophy, theology, and religious studies; psychology; social sciences and history; and liberal arts, general studies, and humanities.
STEM: includes agricultural and natural resource studies; biological and biomedical sciences; computer and information sciences and support; engineering; mathematics and statistics; physical sciences; science technologies and technicians; and engineering technologies and related fields.

Type of associate degree: A.A.S. includes occupational or technical associate degrees and A.A. or A.S. includes general education or transfer associate degrees.

Income percentile rank: calculated separately for dependent and independent students and then combined. Each ranking thus compares the respondent only to other respondents of the same dependency status. Uses parents’ income if respondent is dependent and uses respondent’s own income if respondent is independent.

DATA SOURCE