SACSCOC Standard 8.1 Student Achievement

Everglades University identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs it offers.

The Mission of the University is to "provide quality education to adult learners of diverse backgrounds in a collaborative environment where each individual has the opportunity to achieve personal growth. The University seeks to accomplish its mission by combining small class sizes and innovative programs with traditional academic values. The University supports the academic endeavor and service, to deliver graduate and undergraduate programs both on campus and online." The Mission is articulated in the University Catalog into a series of ten institutional goals and objectives, the first of which is to "To continually change, improve, and ensure the effectiveness of the University's programs in preparing students for successful careers."

The University Mission heavily informed the decision-making behind the goals, outcomes, and measurements used by Everglades University to measure student success. The University is concerned primarily with providing an environment for adult students of diverse backgrounds to experience a high level of achievement in unique educational programs; the first Institutional Goal emphasizes that the learning achieved in these programs should help prepare EU graduates for jobs and successful careers after graduation, support for which is provided by the many services offered to students.

Everglades University is a member of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF), the 30 private not-for-profit Universities located in the state of Florida which are accredited by SACSCOC. Everglades University uses the ICUF peer group data to compare its own performance for two of its three criteria as explained below.

The measures chosen for student success were those upholding retention and graduation of EU's students. These measures are all disaggregated by age and ethnicity and include the following.

- Criterion 1: Attrition Rates.
    - **Description**: The University has held a long-standing commitment to achieve attrition of less than 4% per month. Monthly goals support the modular monthly class delivery structure and assist in rapid mobilization of institutional resources to limit student attrition and assist students in completing their degrees. Retention efforts ensure students remain engaged, remain enrolled through the first year, and are more likely to persist to the end of the program and graduate. The University publishes on its Consumer Information website information regarding the University's attrition rates. Published in University Master Plans available at all campuses. Paper copies of the attrition rates are available upon request.
    - **Threshold**: EU has determined a threshold of 4% attrition per month.
    - **Goal**: EU has committed to keeping its attrition better than 3% per month.

- Criterion 2: First Year Retention.
    - **Description**: Considered by EU as one of the leading indicators of student success, first year retention is a strong indicator for a student's eventual graduation. If a student remains enrolled through the first calendar year, then it is likely that student will persist and complete the program. Data are published on NCES College Navigator web site.
    - **Threshold**: EU has determined a baseline threshold of 63% First Year Retention Rate.
    - **Goal**: EU has declared a goal of matching or exceeding the median of its ICUF schools' peer group First Year Retention Rates from each future year's IPEDS reporting cycle.

- Criterion 3: IPEDS Graduation Rates (Key Student Completion Indicator).
  - **Description**: The IPEDS 150% Graduation Rates survey was chosen by Everglades University as its Key Completion Indicator. The IPEDS Graduation Rates survey was chosen because it provides the ability to perform comparisons with many other colleges and universities. The survey is already disaggregated by gender and ethnic category, which is helpful in discovering patterns of attrition, and identifying at-risk student populations. Everglades University chose to disaggregate its graduate rate data by gender and ethnicity because of its mission to serve learners of "diverse backgrounds." Data are published on NCES College Navigator site.
  - **Threshold**: EU has determined that a threshold graduation rate of 50% is its baseline threshold rate for this criterion.
  - **Goal**: EU has committed to keeping its "Four Year Student Right to Know" (SRK) graduation rates equal to or greater than the median SRK graduation rates at other ICUF schools for each IPEDS collection cycle.

CRITERION 1: ATTRITION RATES

Everglades University has held a long-standing institutional goal to keep its attrition rates to 4% or better per month at each location. The University engages in a variety of student engagement and retention efforts to support student engagement, persistence through the first year, and stronger graduation rates. The threshold value for attrition by month at each Everglades University location is 4%, with a declared goal of maintaining an attrition rate lower than 3% per month at each location. This rationale was based on the University's modular course delivery method (1 undergraduate class per month for a 4-week long, 3 credit course; four of these monthly classes constitute one 16-week semester in which full time students typically complete 12).

Updated data on monthly attrition budgets and campus performance against these budgets is archived and disseminated to all locations (including branch campuses, off-campus instructional sites, and the Online Division) in weekly meetings between the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Deans, and with the President and Vice Presidents.

An example of the annual attrition budget and performance tracking is shown here for the years 2018 to 2020. The chart below shows the University's beginning population for each month of 2018, 2019, and 2020. The number of students who drop or withdraw from each location per month is also recorded. This number of students, divided by the beginning population number, provides the attrition percentage for that location in a given month. The attrition goal is calculated as 3% of that population by month. The data is then totaled together over the year to obtain the final attrition percentage.

University Attrition Rates									
	Overall 2018			Overall 2019			Overall 2020		
Month	University Pop.	Student Attrition Number	Attrition Percent	University Pop.	Student Attrition Number	Attrition Percent	University Pop.	Student Attrition Number	Attrition Percent
Jan	1271	38	3.00%	1238	42	3.40%	1194	38	3.18%
Feb	1351	38	2.80%	1352	35	2.60%	1356	33	2.43%
Mar	1329	33	2.50%	1341	63	4.70%	1357	58	4.27%

Apr	1329	49	3.70%	1325	36	2.70%	1353	41	3.03%
May	1296	41	3.20%	1299	62	4.80%	1341	51	3.80%
Jun	1295	52	4.00%	1298	52	4.00%	1398	43	3.08%
Jul	1255	56	4.50%	1264	57	4.50%	1399	55	3.93%
Aug	1287	57	4.40%	1293	46	3.60%	1386	73	5.27%
Sep	1358	34	2.50%	1212	52	4.30%	1519	55	3.62%
Oct	1363	52	3.80%	1331	54	4.10%	1534	41	2.67%
Nov	1342	30	2.20%	1340	46	3.40%	1541	47	3.05%
Dec	1310	11	0.80%	1299	21	1.60%	1509	25	1.66%
TOTAL:	15786	491	3.10%	15592	566	3.60%	16887	560	3.32%

The final attrition percentages in 2018 (3.1%), 2019 (3.6%) and 2020 (3.3%) indicate that the University performed well enough to meet its threshold: attrition was held below 4% every year from 2018 to 2020. The University considers that 2020 was very successful because it met its goal and retained 97% of its students. This means that students remained in class, earning credits, and making progress toward their degrees. Especially notable is that this attrition goal was reached during the COVID-19 pandemic. Great efforts to engage students academically and personally were made during 2020 to provide stability and support to its students. The success in these attrition rates should flow into and increase the other measures of student success set by the University, including improved first year retention and eventually improved graduation rates.

Current Progress:
Currently in 2021, the University stands at 3.1% attrition.

Drops Disaggregated by Gender

A comparison of the drops by gender, proportional to the percentage of each gender in the population, did not reveal a remarkable disparity in the proportion of drops to proportion of each gender in the population. The data suggest that men and women overall drop at rates approximately proportional to their presence in the population.

Proportion of Gender in Population Compared to Proportion of Gender by Drop				
Year	% Males in Population	% Male Drops	% Females in Population	% Female Drops
2018	51.09%	48.88%	48.88%	51.12%

2019	53.88%	53.71%	46.12%	46.29%
2020	53.51%	50.89%	46.49%	49.11%
3- Year Average	**52.83%**	**51.16%**	**47.16%**	**48.84%**

The University therefore draws the conclusion that its student support services and academic advising activities are equally effective for both men and women, and that one gender group is not disproportionately affected by either academic barriers or outside events that prevent their persistence and eventual success. This finding is encouraging for the University because of its mission to support a diverse student body.

Drops Disaggregated by Ethnicity

 The attrition rates disaggregated by ethnicity reveal that most ethnicities, on average, drop or withdraw from the University at rates that are proportionate to their presence in the population. The three largest groups of students by ethnicity at Everglades University are white students (approximately 45% of EU's total population on average over 2018, 2019, and 2020), Black or African American students (approximately 20% of the University's population on average over 2018, 2019, and 2020), and Hispanic/Latino students (approximately 21% of EU's population on average over 2018, 2019, and 2020). These three groups constitute on average 86% of the University's population.

Black or African American students constitute roughly 20% of the University population annually, and on average that ethnicity category constitutes approximately 20% of the annual drops over the three-year range described below. The rate at which Black/African American students drop or withdraw is proportionate to their presence in the population; they do not drop at disproportionately higher rates than white students (white students made up on average 45% of the population; roughly 47% of drops on average over these three years were white students).

In contrast, the third largest ethnic group, Hispanic/Latino students, constitute roughly 21% of the population on average over these three years, and make up only 14% of students who drop or withdraw. This demographic indicates that Hispanic/Latino students are less likely to drop or withdraw from the University than Black/African American students or white students.

Drops Disaggregated by Ethnicity 2018-2020						
Ethnicity	**2018**		**2019**		**2020**	
	% Drops	**% POP**	% Drops	**% POP**	% Drops	**% POP**
Black or African American	16.46%	20.30%	22.62%	20.20%	21.96%	19.95%
Hispanic/Latino	11.11%	21.30%	15.08%	21.20%	15.54%	21.16%
White	52.06%	45.28%	45.60%	45.07%	44.64%	44.43%

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.41%	0.14%	0.00%	0.14%	0.36%	0.22%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1.23%	1.58%	2.33%	1.57%	0.89%	1.44%
Race and Ethnicity Unknown	12.96%	8.33%	11.13%	8.76%	12.15%	9.45%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.88%	1.05%	1.44%	1.05%	1.61%	1.31%
Two or more races	2.68%	1.96%	1.80%	1.95%	2.86%	1.96%
Nonresident Alien	0.21%	0.05%	0.00%	0.05%	0.00%	0.04%

The statistics lead the University to the conclusion that it should improve support services to better engage the Black/African American students and white students, who make up the majority of the University's population. While this is a somewhat useful conclusion, other measures of student success and slightly different disaggregation of data as explained below provide a more nuanced vision of best practices for the University going forward.

CRITERION 2: FIRST YEAR RETENTION RATES

The First Year Retention Rate as reported in the IPEDS Fall Enrollment survey is another measure adopted by the University to measure student success. First year retention indicates that a student is on a strong path toward successfully persisting in and completing his or her program of choice. These retention rates are published on the Department of Education's College Navigator website and the data are available to the public via the National Center for Education Statistics website.

In 2018 when the criteria were first identified, Everglades University compared itself with its ICUF schools peer group. Everglades University reviewed its own first year retention rates for three data cycles: IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey 18-19 (2017 cohort), IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey 17-18 (2016 cohort) and IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey 16-17 (2015 cohort).

The University then compared its own first year retention rates to those of its ICUF peer institutions for the same IPEDS data cycles.

IPEDS First Year Retention Rates Comparison: Everglades University and ICUF Schools		
IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey Cohort	EU 1st year Retention	ICUF Average 1st Year Retention
Fall Enrollment Survey 16-17 (2015 cohort)	59%	71%
Fall Enrollment Survey 17-18 (2016 cohort)	64%	71%

Fall Enrollment Survey 18-19 (2017 cohort)		65%	72%
Average:		**63%**	**71%**

Based on this historical data, the University set the average first year retention rate from the 2015-2017 IPEDS Fall Enrollment cohorts as its threshold: 63% would be the minimum first year retention rate to achieve every year in the future. These retention rates are somewhat lower than the average ICUF schools' first year retention rate for those same cohorts, so the University set a goal that its first year retention rates will increase to align with the rates of its ICUF peers each year. Because IPEDS data feedback reports calculate multiple data points from comparison groups as a median, the University set its goal for first year retention to be equal to or better than the median first year retention rates of its ICUF peers each year.

In the IPEDS 19-20 Fall Enrollment Survey, the University reported the first-year retention rates for its 2018 cohort. 362 of the 589 students in the cohort remained enrolled one year later, putting that cohort at a first year retention rate of approximately 62%. IPEDS has published the data for Everglades University's ICUF comparison group for this cohort; the ICUF comparison group's median first year retention rate for the same cohort was 74%.

Everglades University's first year retention rate for this cohort of students is lower than its average of the previous three years, and is below its threshold and goal. Action is needed to address the first year retention rates of first-time full-time students.

Since the 2018 cohort's first year retention rates did not meet the goal or the threshold for this criterion, the University disaggregated the data below in an attempt to understand where the opportunities for improvement might be as far as identifying at-risk groups and targeting support services to those sub-populations.

Current Progress:
Everglades University's most recent First Year Retention Rate according to the 2021 IPEDS Fall Enrollment submission is 63% for the 2019 cohort, and 62% for the 2018 cohort. IPEDS data has not been updated yet for comparison to other institutions.

First Year Retention Disaggregated by Gender

The table below shows the 2018 cohort of first-time full-time students as reported in the IPEDS 19-20 Fall Enrollment survey disaggregated by gender. The table shows the proportions of each gender in the 2018 first-time full-time cohort, and each gender's retention and attrition rate. While most University metrics show males and females nearly equally represented, this sample is distinct in that males are represented at a significantly higher proportion than females (this cohort includes 319 males and 270 females; the cohort contains 18% more male students). The retention rates are also disproportionate by gender. As reflected in the attrition information discussed above in Criterion 1, the rates of attrition for men and women are very similar. In this sample of first time full time students, men are retained at a much higher rate than women (68.65% of the male students persisted through the first year, while only 52.96% of female students did). These data seem to indicate that while nearly equal proportions of male and female students will eventually drop from their programs, female students are more susceptible to withdrawing from the University before they have completed their first year. This may indicate a vulnerable population with a variety of causal factors and solutions that the University will seek to address through interventions such as more targeted academic advising and student support services.

Proportion of Gender in Population		
% In Cohort	% Retained	% Not Retained

Males	54.16%	68.65%	31.35%
Females	45.84%	52.96%	47.04%

First Year Retention Disaggregated by Ethnicity

The University has also disaggregated the 2018 first-time full-time cohort of students by ethnicity.

The chart below shows the proportion of each ethnic category that were retained for one year. The lowest retention per ethnic group included Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders and Non-Resident Aliens, but each of these categories is a sample size of one; each constitutes less than a quarter of a percentage of the overall cohort. Likewise, the data also indicate that a high percentage of Asian students did not persist past the first year; again, the sample size is small (Asian Students constituted 0.85% of the overall cohort) but may bear further investigation.

The larger groups of students provide a clearer picture of retention patterns. The largest ethnic group in this cohort was white students, who made up 45.84% of the cohort; white students' first year retention rate was 66.67%. This provides a stark contrast to the retention rate of the second biggest group of students in the cohort, who were Hispanic. These Hispanic students made up nearly a quarter of the cohort (24.45%) but had a retention rate of 56.25%, much lower than white students. Black/African American students had similar retention percentages; Black students constituted nearly 20% of the cohort (17.49%) but had a retention rate of just over half, 54.37%. While the attrition data from Criterion 1 show a roughly proportionate ratio of drops/withdrawals with percentage of the population, with Hispanic/Latino students less likely to drop overall, the numbers for first-time full-time students retained in their first year of study are slightly different. The data indicate that minority students are less likely than white students to be retained for one year.

2018 FTFT Cohort Total By Ethnicity				
Ethnicity	Total # of Students	# of Students Retained 1 Year	Ethnic Category as a % of Overall Cohort	% of Ethnic Category Retained for 1 Year
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	4	1.19%	57.14%
Asian	5	1	0.85%	20.00%
Black or African American	103	56	17.49%	54.37%
Hispanic	144	81	24.45%	56.25%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0	0.17%	0.00%

Nonresident Alien	1	0	0.17%	0.00%
Two or more races	12	11	2.04%	91.67%
Unknown	46	29	7.81%	63.04%
White	270	180	45.84%	66.67%
Total:	589	362	100.00%	61.46%

Because it is an area needing action for improvement to meet the institutional goal, the University further disaggregated the first-year retention rates to investigate other at-risk groups for possible intervention. White males were the biggest group represented in the cohort (26.66% of the cohort) and had a high percentage of retention in the first year (72.61%); this supports the breakout of first year retention rates discussed above which showed men persisting at a significantly higher rate than women.

Based on the data by ethnicity above, the biggest ethnic categories included Black/African American students and Hispanic students. Black males exhibited a first year retention rate almost as high as white males (Black males: 69.39%, white males: 72.61%); Black males' first year retention rates were also higher than that of white women (58.41%). Hispanic males had a retention rate of 57.69, much lower than white or Black males. Only 54.55% of Hispanic women persisted in the first year, and Black women were the largest category in the cohort with the lowest first year retention (nearly 10% of the cohort with a retention rate of 40.74%) .

2018 FTFT Cohort					
Gender	Ethnicity	Total in Cohort	Retained 1 Year	% of Total Cohort	% Gender and Ethic Category Retained
Male	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	0.17%	100.00%
	Asian	1	1	0.17%	100.00%
	Black or African American	49	34	8.32%	69.39%
	Hispanic	78	45	13.24%	57.69%
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0	0.17%	0.00%

	Nonresident Alien	1	0	0.17%	0.00%
	Two or more races	6	6	1.02%	100.00%
	Unknown	25	18	4.24%	72.00%
	White	157	114	26.66%	72.61%
Total Male		319	219	54.16%	68.65%
Female	American Indian or Alaska Native	6	3	1.02%	50.00%
	Asian	4	0	0.68%	0.00%
	Black or African American	54	22	9.17%	40.74%
	Hispanic	66	36	11.21%	54.55%
	Two or more races	6	5	1.02%	83.33%
	Unknown	21	11	3.57%	52.38%
	White	113	66	19.19%	58.41%
Total Female		270	143	45.84%	52.96%
Grand Total		589	362	100.00%	61.46%

Based on the disaggregation of attrition and first year retention, the University is able to plan retention and intervention strategies for these at-risk populations. Black women in this cohort were most at-risk of not completing the first year, followed by Hispanic women, and Hispanic men.

CRITERION 3: GRADUATION RATES

Everglades University has declared the IPEDS standard 150% timeframe graduation rates as its Key Student Completion Indicator, and its third criterion for student success. The University considers this metric a useful measure of student success because it is a clear indicator of student persistence and successful completion of an Everglades University program. These graduation rates are published on the Department of Education's College Navigator website and the data are available to the public via the National Center for Education Statistics website.

In 2018, upon request from the Commission, the University declared this metric as its Key Student Completion Indicator and determined its thresholds and goals for graduation rates. The most recently submitted IPEDS Graduation Rates Survey, submitted in February 2018, contained the 4-year average Student-Right-to-Know (SRK) graduation rate calculation. The SRK for this graduation rates submission includes the four previous cohort years, which for 2018 included 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. This calculation determined that EU's average graduation rate for the prior four years was 50%. The University determined that since this graduation rate was its historical performance over a number of years, that it was an acceptable threshold to set as its minimum acceptable graduation rate.

In order to determine a reasonable goal to aspire to, the University looked to peer institutions. Everglades University belongs to the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF), an organization of 30 private, not-for-profit colleges and Universities located throughout Florida, all accredited by SACSCOC. The average graduation rate for ICUF schools from 2008 to 2011 according to the IPEDS Trend Generator website was 53.1% for the 2008 cohort, 51.3% for 2009, 52.5% for 2010 and 51.4% for 2011. This provided an average graduation rate of 52% for ICUF schools. Similarly speaking, EU's SRK for this time range was 50%.

Considering that Everglades University's four-year average SRK graduation rate was 50%, and its self-selected comparison group of ICUF schools' was 52%, the University decided that a reasonable goal would be to put in place student support services and retention processes to ensure its own graduation rate equals or surpasses the average ICUF graduation rate each year.

The incremental but steady increase in Everglades University's graduation rates is regarded by the University as a success in improvement of this student outcome.

Current Progress:
Everglades University's most recent Student Right-to-Know Graduation Rate according to the 2021 IPEDS Graduation Rates submission is 55%. IPEDS data has not been updated yet for comparison to other institutions.

Graduation Rates By Gender

The University also disaggregates the graduation rate data by gender, in support of its mission to serve diverse students.

Of the 2013 cohort reported for graduation rates in the 19-20 survey year, the cohort included 233 men (minus one exclusion) and 240 women (minus one exclusion). Therefore the 2013 cohort contained 232 men and 239 women for a total cohort of 471 students; the cohort was 49% male and 51% female. The cohort was split almost evenly between men and women. The graduation rates of each category show that slightly higher proportion of male students (53% of the male 49% of the cohort) graduated than female students (52% of the female 51% of the cohort).

19-20 IPEDS Graduation Rates Survey (2013 Cohort) Everglades University Grad Rates by Gender				
	# in Cohort (471 total)	% of Cohort	# of Grads	% of Grads
Men	232	49%	123	53%
Women	239	51%	124	52%

This trend is reproduced in a comparison of the graduates disaggregated by gender when compared to other ICUF schools: again, male students at EU graduate at a slightly higher proportion than female students (1 percentage point higher than the ICUF median), and a lower proportion of female students than the ICUF median (6 percentage points fewer).

2013 Cohort Grad Rates by Gender			
	ICUF Medians	Everglades University	Difference
Men	52%	53%	1 percentage point
Women	58%	52%	-6 percentage points

The data indicate that while a nearly equal graduation rate for men and women has occurred at Everglades University, the norm among peer institutions in ICUF is the opposite. In fact, only 5 of the 29 ICUF schools in the sample exhibited the same distribution: 83% of the ICUF schools reported that women had higher graduation rates than men. In light of this information the University has hypothesized that this disparity may be due to the fact that some of its programs are distinctly dominated by one gender or the other (the BS in Alternative Medicine is distinctly female-dominated, and the BS in Construction Management and BS in Aviation/Aerospace are male-dominated). This conclusion is supported by a disproportionately high number of drops in the Alternative Medicine program; in 2018 and 2019, 66% of the female drops were enrolled in the Alternative Medicine program. In 2020, this percentage fell to 61%. The trend indicates a disproportionate number of drops from this one program, which is affecting the overall attrition and graduation rates when compared to women at other ICUF schools. This may also be related to the low first year retention rates for full-time first time Black/African American women discussed in Criterion 2 above. The University has used this data to begin designing a study to examine attrition, first year retention rates, and graduation rates by program over time and to determine appropriate interventions for this population.

Based on the thresholds and goals set by the University for its graduation rates, the data show that overall students at Everglades University are achieving success in terms of graduation rates.

Graduation Rate by Ethnicity

The University disaggregates this data as found in the IPEDS Graduation Rates survey by gender and ethnicity. These categories are useful to the University because the categories speak to the University's mission to provide quality education to diverse students. The data disaggregated by ethnicity also provides useful insights, as shown in a custom IPEDS Data Feedback Report comparing Everglades University with the other ICUF schools for the 2013 Cohort (based on IPEDS 19-20 Graduation Rates Survey).

Unsurprisingly, the attrition data and first year retention data described above match and support the graduation rates information, even though the cohorts are many years apart. White students generally have the highest graduation rates; EU's white students are on level with the ICUF schools' median graduation rates by ethnicity. Black students also persist and graduate at about the same rates at EU as at the ICUF schools, but the graduation rate for that subpopulation is significantly lower than the white students' graduation rate. Everglades University's Hispanic students also had a graduation rate relatively low compared to Hispanic students at other ICUF schools.
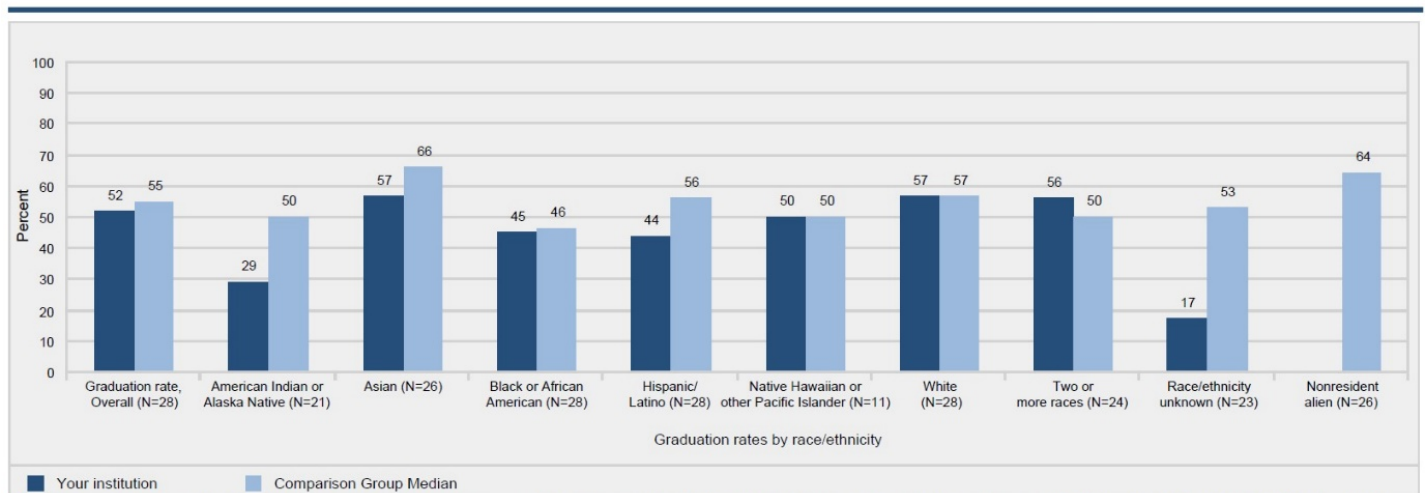
NOTE: For more information about disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity, see the Methodological Notes. The graduation rates are the Student Right-to-Know (SRK) rates. Median values for the comparison group will not add to 100%. N is the number of institutions in the comparison group.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): Winter 2019-20, Graduation Rates component.

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING STUDENT SUCCESS

Everglades University has a robust and comprehensive set of student support services and strategies for its population and will perform further study to see if these services can target at-risk subpopulations. It will also determine if any services need to be added to what it already does to increase student success and achievement as defined in the goals above. The strategies are designed to provide both academic support as well as personal support to increase student engagement. Because Everglades University is primarily a commuter school without resident facilities or sports teams, involving students as a University community presents unique challenges for the University. However, the support services currently offered create opportunities for EU to increase its already robust academic and student support services to target at-risk populations as identified by the data above. By assisting those students with their academic and personal issues, the University can remove obstacles to success for its students and improve its attrition, first year retention, and graduation rates. This network of support services fulfills the University's Mission and creates a University-wide effort to support students at every level, from the faculty to the Dean to Student Services.

Academic Advising and Support Services

Everglades University requires regular student advising meetings with academic advisors. At the beginning of the program, the advisor or Dean provides a welcome advising and schedules an academic advising session for the end of the student's first semester. All Everglades University students receive academic advising at the conclusion of each semester. The academic advisor or Dean discusses the student's satisfactory academic progress and offers guidance and assistance with time-management skills, study skills, and refers the student to additional support services such as tutoring. This schedule of advising meetings is maintained for the end of every semester until the student graduates. Throughout the semester if a student fails a course or has some other major academic event, an additional advising is held with the student to attempt to provide support and direction to the student. The Online Division is currently running a pilot program with its academic advising team; currently each academic advisor is responsible for cohorts of students by program. Its pilot program connects one dedicated academic advisor to advise and guide all new students in their first term; this advisor then hands off the student to the cohort advisor corresponding to the student's program. The hypothesis is that a dedicated advisor for new students will make students' experience and success in the first class more targeted and applicable to the new student experience, and provide better support for new students and lay the foundation for them to persist and succeed.

Additional support is offered by monitoring student attendance daily; students are contacted by faculty, advisors or Deans if they are not in class. Registrars also assist with student support by sending unsatisfactory grade letters directly to students to let them know that academic advising is needed and their advisors are available to assist.

Deans and advisors use an Academic Advising Session Guide during their academic advising sessions. This Guide ensures all student support services relevant to the student (tutoring, resume writing and job placement assistance, faculty mentoring) are discussed in each student's academic advising sessions. To ensure thorough and meaningful academic advising has occurred, the University closes the loop on the academic advising process with the Academic Advising Survey. This survey is automatically generated by the student database when an academic advising activity is entered on the student record. The student receives an email with a link to the Academic Advising Survey, which inquires about the student's advising experience and whether the student has additional questions that were not addressed or resolved in the advising session. This has resulted in the University's immediate ability to answer student questions and provides verification that meaningful advising is occurring, and that student support services are being discussed.

Faculty members are a part of this support system as well. Each week faculty send a faculty feedback form to their deans to identify students who are at-risk, missing from class, or who have failed to turn in assignments. Faculty are by policy required to set aside time to answer questions for and provide individual tutoring to students as needed. Each month the students rate their experience in the classroom on the Student Evaluation of Course Survey. If the faculty member scores below a certain benchmark score then the Dean must complete a Faculty Teaching Enhancement Plan to improve the faculty member's teaching performance. Faculty are further trained and supported by the University's Center for Teaching and Learning, headed by the Curriculum and Faculty Developer, who designs and delivers training and development activities to all faculty, and provides orientation and initial training to new incoming faculty members.

The University maintains an active financial services department to assist students with financial aid, billing questions, and work study options. The University's Department of Library Services provides valuable support opportunities to assist students via one-on-one assistance, classroom presentations, and workshops on library resources, research, and APA formatting. The Library also provides students with information and training on the third-party SmarThinking online tutoring service. Information on these initiatives is available to students and the general public on the EU Library Blog.

Small Class Sizes

The University's mission is to provide a collaborative environment where each individual has the opportunity to achieve personal growth, using small class sizes. The scheduling at each campus fulfills the University's mission and allows students to receive individualized attention from their faculty members. Below is a chart showing the average class sizes in 2020 for each University location, including the Online Division.

	2020 Winter Semester			2020 Summer Semester			2020 Fall Semester		
	# of Courses	# of Seats Filled	**Average Students Per Course**	# of Courses	# of Seats Filled	**Average Students Per Course**	# of Courses	# of Seats Filled	**Average Students Per Course**
Boca Raton	116	503	**4.34**	117	471	**4.03**	134	451	**3.37**
Miami	34	83	**2.44**	49	127	**2.59**	52	138	**2.65**

Online Division	238	2711	**11.39**	258	2781	**10.78**	292	3099	**10.61**
Orlando	119	460	**3.87**	105	398	**3.79**	108	414	**3.83**
Sarasota	132	572	**4.33**	142	509	**3.58**	133	492	**3.70**
Tampa	153	622	**4.07**	143	630	**4.41**	144	662	**4.60**
Total	792	4951	**6.25**	814	4916	**6.04**	863	5256	**6.09**

Student Support Services

The University maintains dedicated full-time Student Services staff to assist students with concerns, obstacles and personal experiences. The University offers many support services to support its adult students, as befits its mission "to provide quality education to adult learners of diverse backgrounds in a collaborative environment where each individual has the opportunity to achieve personal growth."

One important contextual note is that Everglades University's population is unique among its peers. The University's population is on average much older than other ICUF schools; a comparison chart produced by ICUF demonstrates that Everglades University, of all the ICUF schools, has by far the most undergraduate students who are 25 years of age or older (84.7%, compared with the next closes ICUF school at 72.5%). The unique profile of Everglades University students as adults means that the students reflected in EU's Graduation Rates and Retention Rates are non-traditional students. EU's students are not recently graduated from high school. Rather, they are an average 35 years of age and have active careers, children, and family obligations. As such, the Student Services Department provides an array of support not just for academic success but for unexpected life issues, such as lists of medical care facilities, child care facilities, and transportation alternatives at all physical locations. Referral information for many other life crises and situations are available to all students throughout the United States. The Student Services Department also provides students with resume writing assistance and job placement assistance, and prepare them for employment by hosting professional development seminars and connecting them with potential employers via the College Central network. Students with disabilities are supported by the University's ADA process; all policies and materials, including the Everglades University Accessibility and Disability Services Guide, are available to students and the public on the ADA page at Everglades University's website at www.evergladesuniversity.edu/ada-main.

Considering that every EU location is a commuter school with older students, creating a community atmosphere is one of the University's major opportunities for improvement. Adult students most often come to campus to go to class, conduct administrative business with University staff as needed, and then leave immediately. These students do not generally spend time on campus for social events or participate in student organizations. The University therefore plans to increase student engagement with additional options for student life and student engagement at each EU location, including the Online Division. Plans for additional social events, student organizations, and guest speakers are being put in place to increase student engagement.

The University has budgeted in 2021 to expand its admissions team to include counselors dedicated to high school recruitment. By recruiting more actively in the high school market and enrolling students in a younger age demographic, EU will be accessing additional students who stand to benefit from its unique modular schedule in which students take only one course at a time, and its innovative programs. The University hypothesizes that expanding its younger student demographic will support participation in student life activities on campus.

Conclusion

Everglades University continues to use multiple measures to monitor the goals and outcomes for student success that have been identified, evaluated, and published. These goals and outcomes for student success are appropriate to the University's mission to serve its diverse population of adult students to provide quality education and an environment that serves them educationally and personally through academics and other support services. The University continues to strive to improve student success as measured by the criteria described in this section.