

Persistence, Progression, and Completion: A Review of Valencia's Student Outcomes

A review of Valencia's student outcomes data informs us about questions such as:

- How have Valencia students' completion rates and time to degree changed over time?
- How have Valencia students' academic persistence and momentum changed over time?
- Is Valencia achieving equity in student outcomes?

It also allows us to track progress toward the student outcomes goals that were endorsed by Faculty Council in 2018:

- The five-year disaggregated graduation rates for first-time-in-college (FTIC), degree-seeking students of each race/ethnicity will exceed 50% so that more than half of all FTIC, degree-seeking students of each race/ethnicity who first enroll at Valencia in the Fall 2025 term will complete an associate degree from Valencia by Summer 2030.
- As a leading indicator of Valencia's graduation rate, more than 75% of all FTIC, degree-seeking students who first enroll at Valencia in Fall 2021 will earn at least 15 college-level credit hours by Summer 2023.
- As a leading indicator of Valencia's graduation rate, more than 50% of all FTIC, degree-seeking students who first enroll at Valencia in Fall 2023 will earn all attempted credit hours in their first five courses at Valencia as defined by earning an A, B, or C in each course.

Executive Summary

- Overall, completion rates have increased and time to degree has decreased over time.
- While academic momentum has fluctuated over time, student persistence has increased.
- Completion rates for students of all races and ethnicities have increased over time.
- The percentage of students who complete fifteen college-level credit hours within two years has increased over time; this measure serves as a leading indicator for completion.
- The percentage of students who successfully complete all five of their first five course attempts has not increased in recent years; this measure serves as a leading indicator for completion.

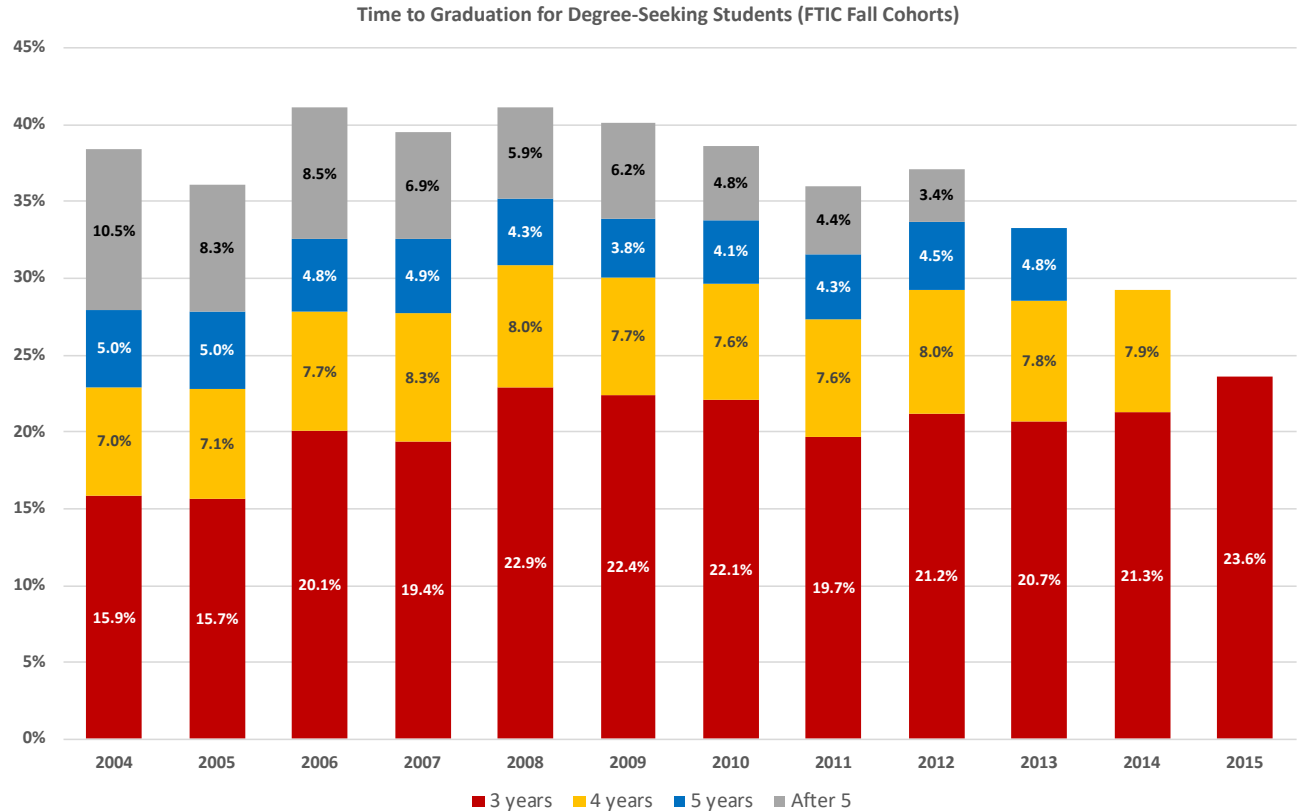
Completion Trends

Cohort Graduation Rates and Time to Degree

One standard measure of completion is the graduation rates of Fall FTIC cohorts. This method examines the percentage of students who started at the college in a Fall term as degree-seeking, first-time-in-college (FTIC) students and who completed an associate degree within three, four, and five years. The students who start in a Fall term as FTIC, degree-seeking students are considered to be part of the Fall FTIC cohort for the year in which they first enrolled. For example, a student who first enrolled at Valencia in Fall 2010 as an FTIC, degree-seeking student would be considered part of the Fall 2010 cohort.

Looking back over the last decade, the graduation rates of Valencia’s Fall FTIC cohorts have improved. The three-year graduation rate for the Fall 2004 cohort was 15.9%; for the Fall 2015 cohort the three-year graduation rate was 23.6% (the highest on record). The five-year graduation rate for the 2004 cohort was 27.9%; for the 2013 cohort, the five-year graduation rate was 33.3%. (The Fall 2013 cohort is the most recent cohort for which we have five-year graduation rate data, as it was measured five years after the Fall 2013 cohort first enrolled.)

While rates of completion and time to degree have improved overall, progress has been uneven. The 2008 cohort had the highest five-year (33.9%) graduation on record; early performance of more recent cohorts suggests a positive trend.



Cohort Sizes

Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
3,617	4,166	4,518	5,524	5,507	5,931	5,957	6,497	6,393	6,586	6,906	7,076

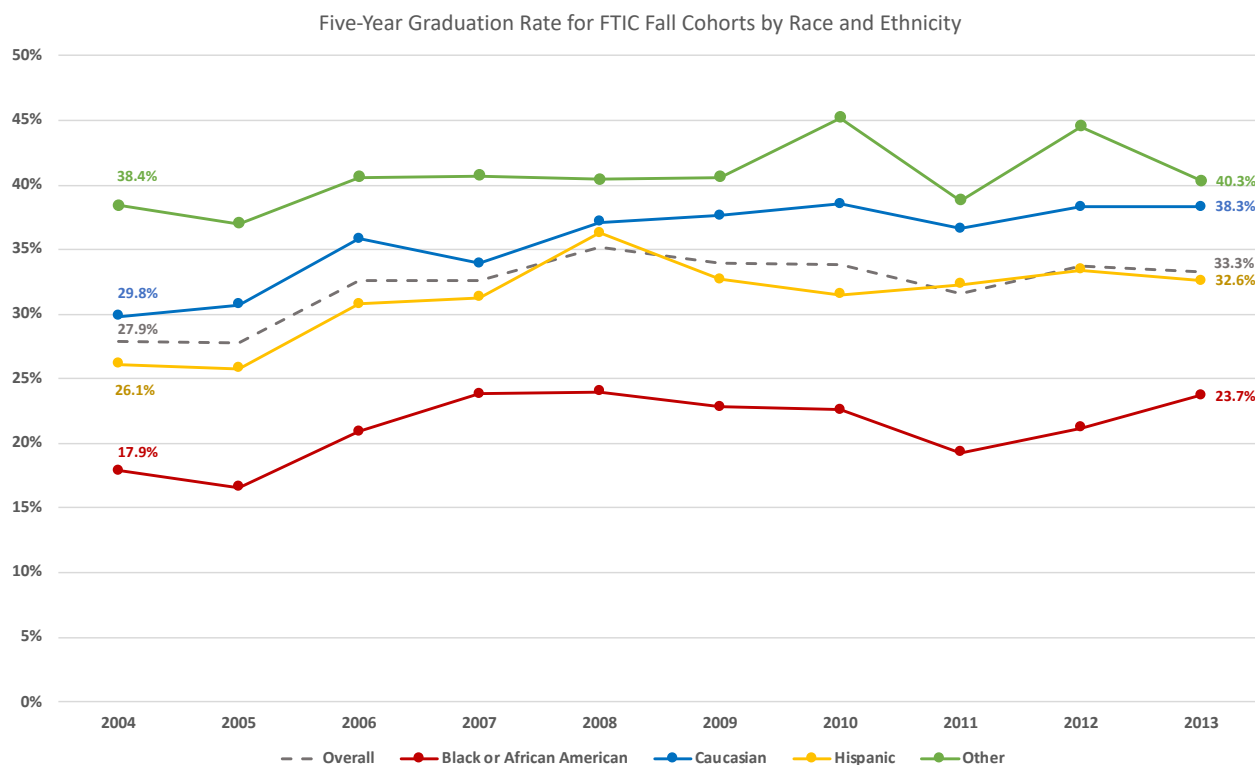
Graduation Rates Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity

The five-year graduation rate for our FTIC Fall cohorts has increased from 27.9% for the cohort that began in Fall 2004 to 33.3% for the cohort that began in Fall 2013. The five-year graduation rates for students of all races and ethnicities have increased over that same time frame.

The percentage of students graduating is not the only measure that has increased over time; the size and diversity of Valencia's Fall, FTIC, degree-seeking cohorts have also increased over time, resulting in significant increases in actual numbers of graduates.

For example, from the Fall 2004 cohort, 103 Black or African American students, 476 Caucasian students, and 262 Hispanic students graduated within five years. From the Fall 2013 cohort, 326 Black or African American students, 752 Caucasian students, and 819 Hispanic students graduated within five years.

Put another way, the overall number of students earning an associate degree more than doubled between 2004 and 2013; the number of students of color earning an associate degree during that same time frame more than tripled.



Cohort Sizes

	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Black or African American	577	669	755	878	924	1,027	1,104	1,365	1,266	1,376
Caucasian	1,598	1,829	1,748	2,070	1,936	2,014	2,067	2,106	2,012	1,965
Hispanic	1,004	1,165	1,313	1,694	1,754	1,971	2,135	2,382	2,425	2,513
Other*	438	503	702	882	893	919	651	644	690	792

*Other includes Asian, Pacific Islander, Hawaiian, Indian, Multi-Racial, Native American, Other, and Unknown.

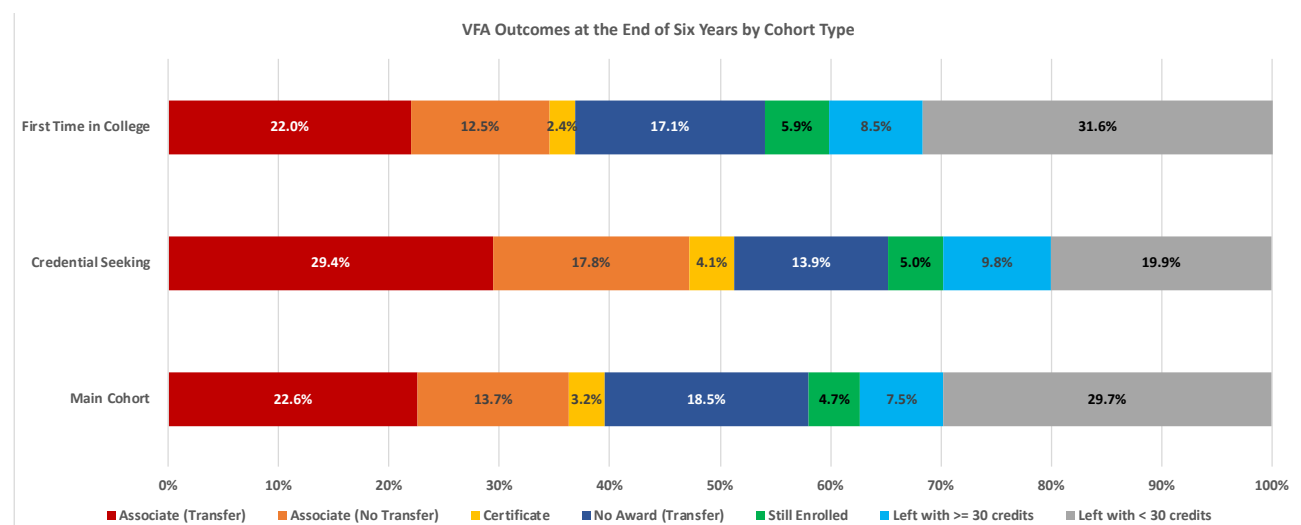
Voluntary Framework of Accountability

One of the benefits of measuring the graduation rate of Fall, FTIC, degree-seeking cohorts is that it provides a consistent methodology to compare performance over time and across institutions. One challenge with the methodology is that fewer than half of Valencia's students begin in a Fall term as degree-seeking, FTIC students.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) facilitated the development of the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) for community colleges. The VFA is intended to be a more inclusive measure of student performance.

The VFA tracks three cohorts of students. The Main Cohort is the most inclusive, tracking the outcomes for all students who were first-time-at-Valencia in Fall 2011, not just FTIC students. The Credential Seeking Cohort includes any student who started at Valencia in Fall 2011 and earned 12 credit hours within two years. The First Time in College Cohort tracks the completion of students who were FTIC in Fall 2011, similar to our standard institutional cohorts. The VFA completion rate is measured at six years.

Of all students who enrolled at Valencia for the first time in Fall 2011, 36.3% completed an associate degree within six years; nearly two-thirds of those graduates transferred to continue their studies. More than 18% of the students who started at Valencia in Fall 2011 transferred without completing an associate degree, which represents a smaller proportion than those who transferred after having completed an associate degree (22.6%). Nearly 30% of students who started at Valencia in Fall 2011 left after having completed fewer than 30 credit hours.



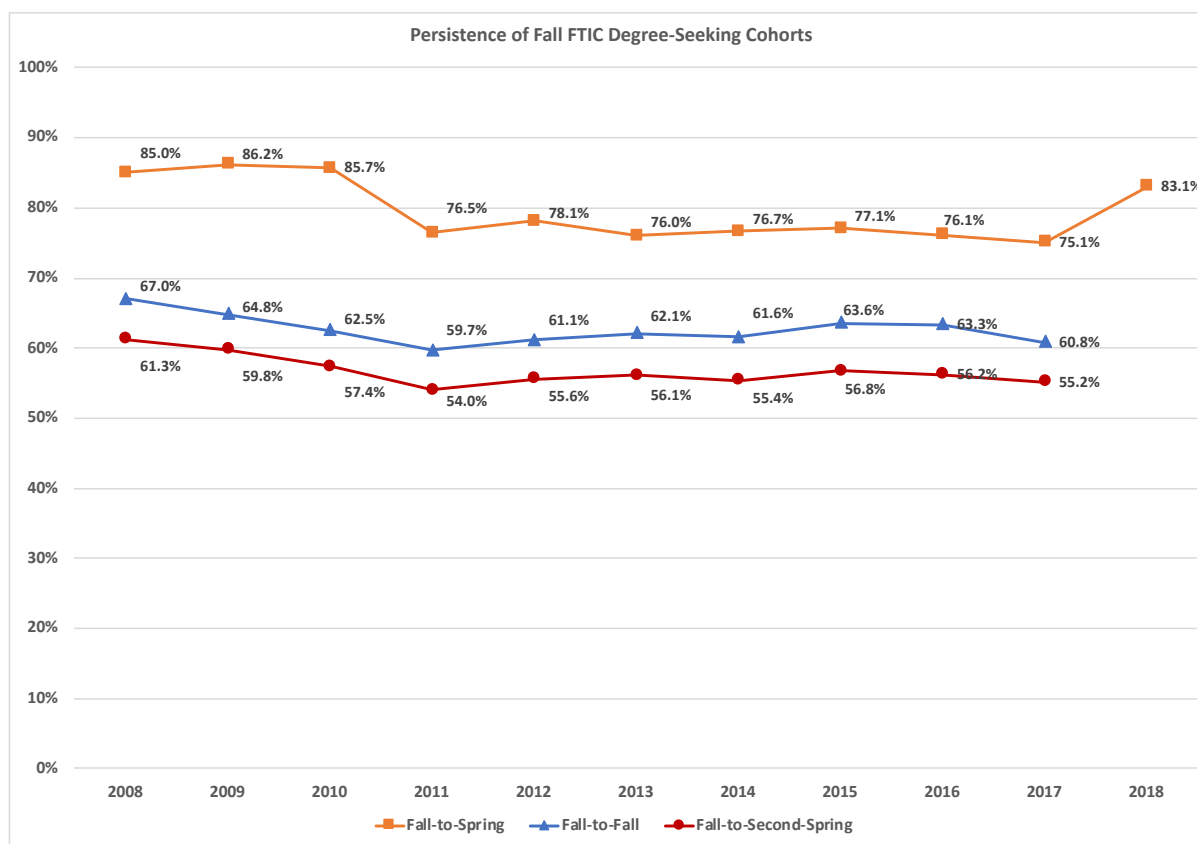
While transfer prior to completion is often perceived as a positive outcome, it is important to note the primary transfer institutions for students who transfer without having completed an associate degree from Valencia: Seminole State (15.2%), UCF (6.2%), Broward College (3.7%), Florida Technical College (3.5%), and Palm Beach State College (3.4%). For students who transfer after completing an associate's degree, the primary transfer institutions are UCF (73.0%), Seminole State (3.0%), USF (2.7%), UF (1.8%), and FSU (1.5%).

Trends in Student Persistence and Momentum

Cohort Persistence

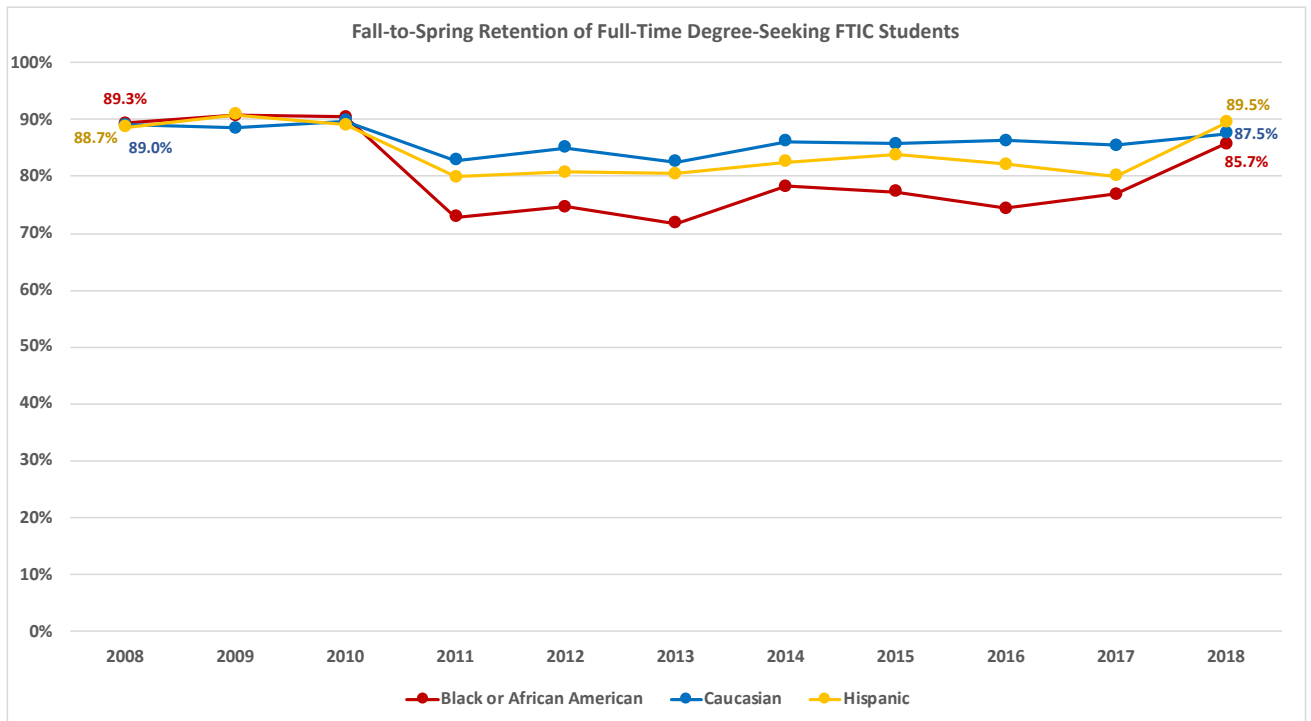
Between 2011-2017, fall-to-spring, fall-to-fall, and fall-to-second-spring persistence was relatively stable for Fall FTIC cohorts. However, persistence rates of the Fall 2011 cohort dropped significantly as compared to the previous cohorts. Notably, a new Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) process was implemented in Fall 2011. In previous years, students who did not meet SAP requirements were placed on probation prior to being suspended from Financial Aid. In Fall 2011, students who did not meet SAP requirements were automatically placed on Financial Aid Suspension, with an opportunity to appeal the suspension to once again become eligible for financial aid.

In Fall 2018, Valencia returned to a financial aid process similar to what was in place prior to Fall 2011 in that students who did not meet SAP requirements for the first time were placed on Financial Aid Warning without losing eligibility for financial aid. Fall-to-spring persistence for the Fall 2018 cohort approached persistence rates experienced by cohorts prior to 2011.

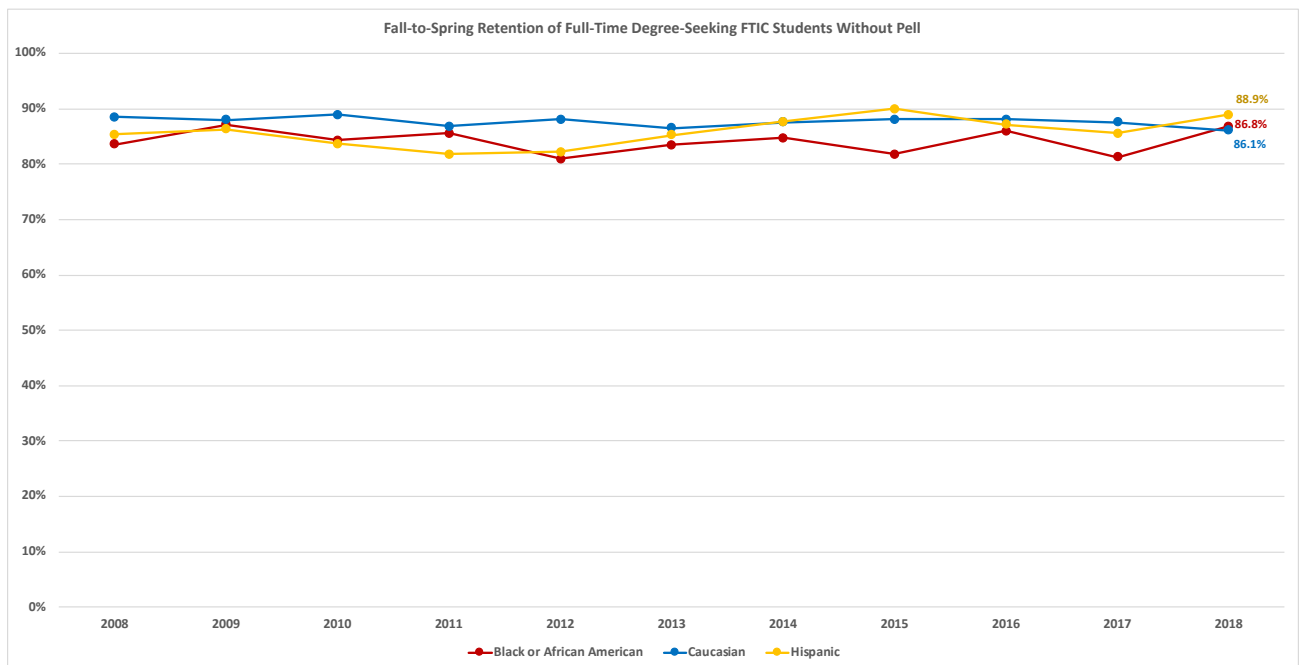


Persistence Rates Disaggregated by Race, Ethnicity, and Pell

While Fall-to-Spring persistence rates were similar for students of different races and ethnicities before 2010, gaps in persistence appeared beginning with the Fall 2011 cohort. While all student groups in the Fall 2011 cohort experienced a decline in persistence, Black or African American students experienced the greatest decline. After a period of Financial Aid Warning was reestablished in 2018, gaps in persistence among students of different races and ethnicities decreased substantially.



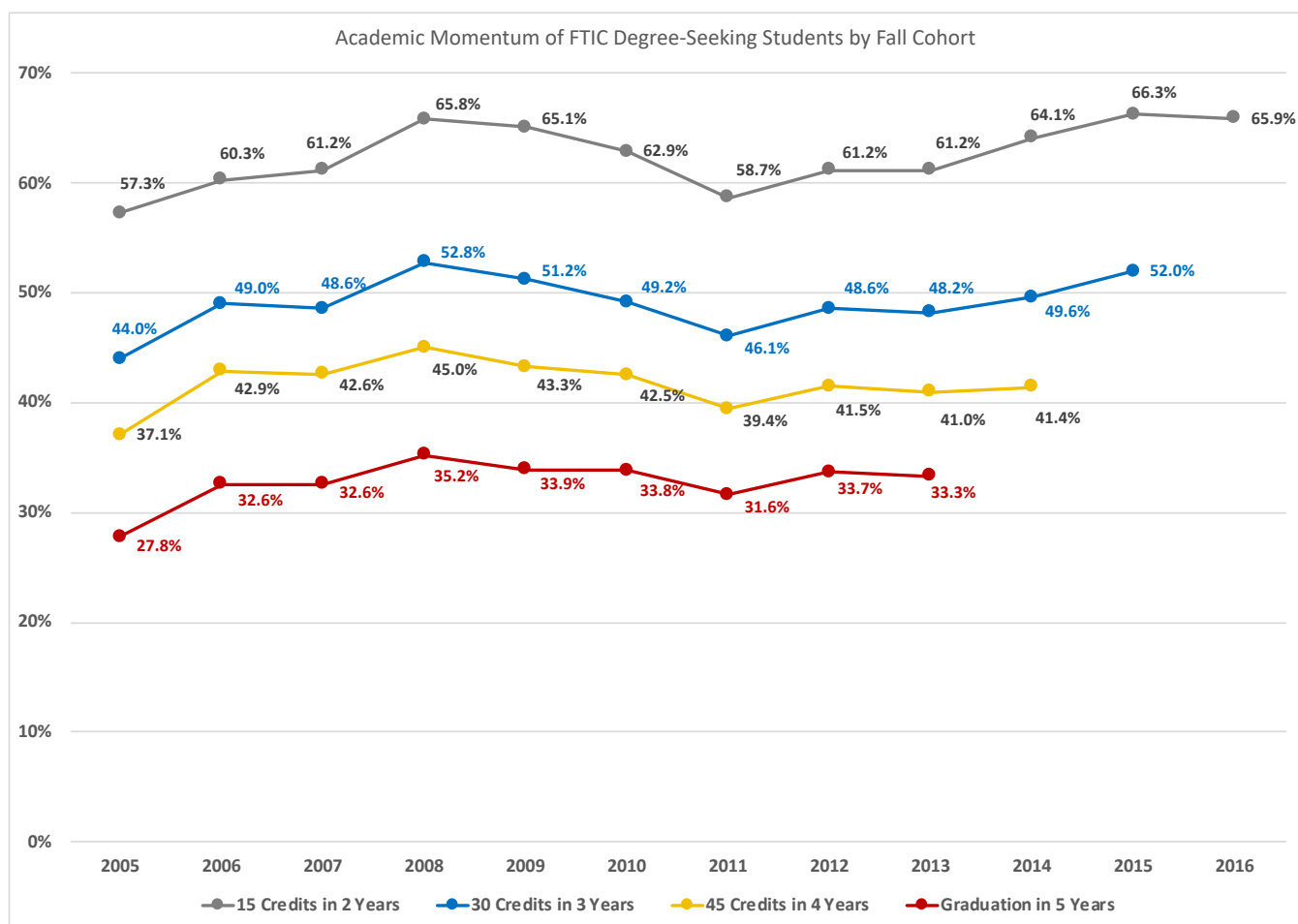
When examining persistence rates of students who were not awarded a Pell grant, there is not a substantial difference between African American, Caucasian, or Hispanic students in the Fall 2018 cohort.



Academic Momentum

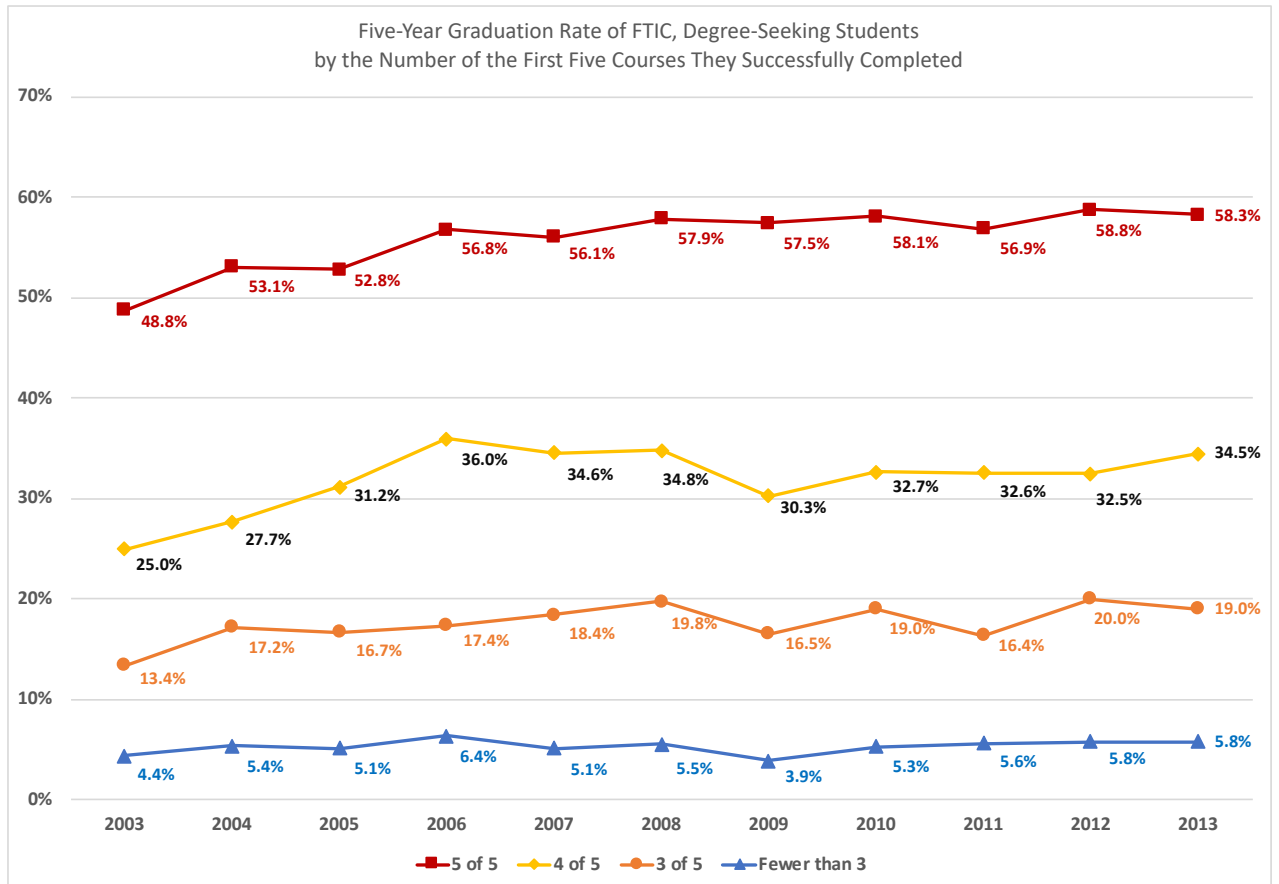
Academic momentum points, such as completion of 15 credit hours within two years, serve as leading indicators for a cohort's future graduation rate. The proportion of FTIC, degree-seeking students (full-time and part-time) who completed 15 credit hours within two years grew between Fall 2005 and 2008, reaching a peak of 65.8%, and then declined between 2009 and 2011. Nevertheless, the proportion of students who completed 15 credit hours within two years in 2011 (58.7%) was higher than 2005 (57.3%). Between 2011 and 2015, the proportion of students who completed 15 credit hours within two years increased, reaching 66.3% in the Fall 2015 cohort. The Fall 2016 cohort experienced a slight decline (65.9%).

Echoes of these trends are visible throughout the data related to other academic momentum points, including 30 credits in three years, 45 credits in four years, and ultimately, graduation within five years. Accordingly, the overall increase in the proportion of students who have completed 15 credit hours within two years is a positive trend as this could serve as an early indicator that five-year graduation rates will also be on the rise.



Success in First Five Courses

Students' success in their first five courses at Valencia is a powerful predictor of graduation. Students who successfully complete (earn an A, B, or C in) all five of the first five classes they take at Valencia have had a five-year graduation rate that is substantially higher than the rate of students who successfully complete four of their first five courses, and triple the graduation rate of students who successfully complete three of their first five classes at Valencia.



Success in First Five Courses Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity

The relationship between students' success in their first five courses at Valencia and completion holds true for all races and ethnicities; however, the magnitude of impact is highest for students of color. For example, while 52.4% of Black or African American students who successfully completed all of their first five courses in 2012 graduated within five years, only 26.9% who successfully completed four out of five graduated within five years. Put another way, nearly three out of four Black or African American students who have just one unsuccessful course attempt in their first five courses at Valencia do not graduate within five years.

Five-Year Graduation Rate for the 2012 Cohort by Success in First Five Courses at Valencia				
	All Students	Black or African American	Caucasian	Hispanic
5/5	58.3%	52.4%	62.1%	56.1%
4/5	34.5%	26.9%	43.1%	31.8%
3/5	19.0%	16.8%	20.2%	19.6%
Fewer than 3	5.8%	2.6%	9.2%	5.0%

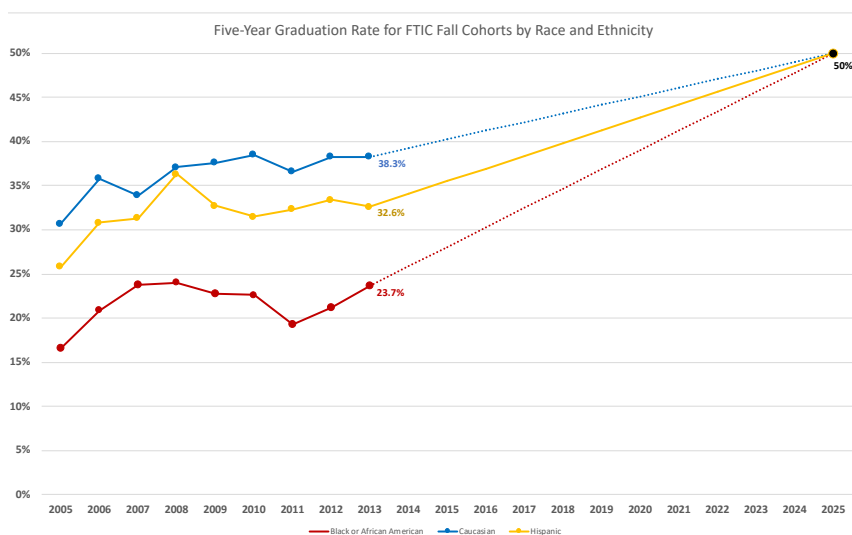
Progress Toward Student Outcomes Goals

In 2018, our Faculty Council endorsed the following objectives related to student outcomes:

- The five-year disaggregated graduation rates for first-time-in-college (FTIC), degree-seeking students of each race/ethnicity will exceed 50% so that more than half of all FTIC, degree-seeking students of each race/ethnicity who first enroll at Valencia in the Fall 2025 term will complete an associate degree from Valencia by Summer 2030.
- As a leading indicator of Valencia’s graduation rate, more than 75% of all FTIC, degree-seeking students who first enroll at Valencia in Fall 2021 will earn at least 15 college-level credit hours by Summer 2023.
- As a leading indicator of Valencia’s graduation rate, more than 50% of all FTIC, degree-seeking students who first enroll at Valencia in Fall 2023 will earn all attempted credit hours in their first five courses at Valencia as defined by earning an A, B, or C in each course.

Goal #1: Graduation Rate

The five-year graduation rate for students of each race and ethnicity will be at least 50% by 2025.



Black or African American Graduation Rate:

Three-Year Change	↑ 1.1 percentage points
From Goal	26.3 percentage points

Caucasian Graduation Rate:

Three-Year Change	↓ 0.2 percentage points
From Goal	11.7 percentage points

Hispanic Graduation Rate:

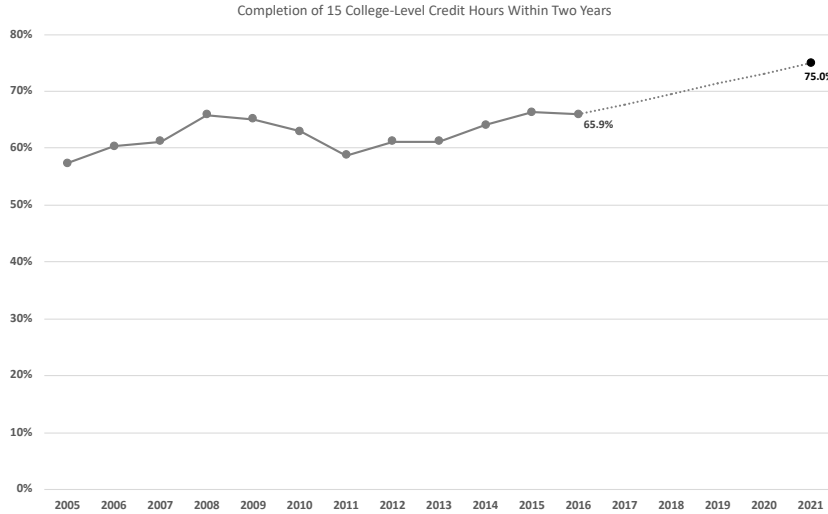
Three-Year Change	↑ 1.1 percentage points
From Goal	17.4 percentage points

The most recent five-year graduation rate data are from the cohort of students that started at Valencia in Fall 2013 (as the 2018-19 academic year marks five years after they started college). Generally, the graduation rate for Black and African American students has been on an upward trend since the 2011 cohort, while there has been little recent change in the graduation rates for Caucasian and Hispanic students.

While the change needed to meet our graduation rate goal appears significant, relatively small changes in absolute numbers of students graduating will have a large impact on graduation rates. For example, for the 2013 cohort to have reached our goal of 50% of students completing their goal of earning a degree from Valencia, 362 additional Black or African American graduates, 230 additional Caucasian graduates, and 439 additional Hispanic students would have had to have graduated.

Goal #2: College-Level Credits

More than 75% of FTIC, degree-seeking students will earn at least 15 college-level credit hours within two years.

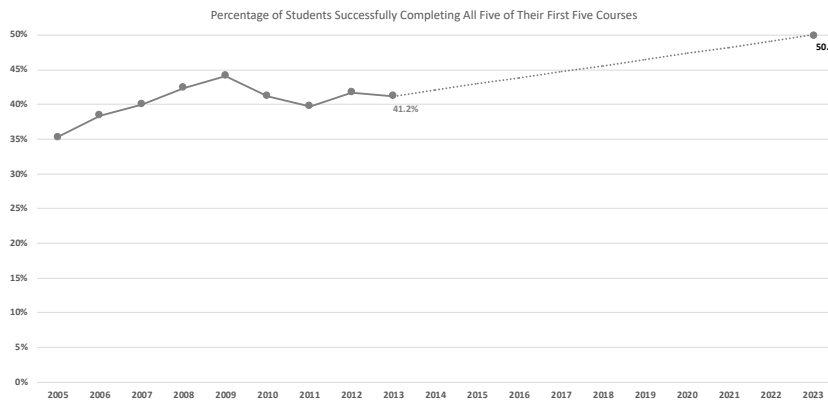


Three-Year Change	↑ 4.7 percentage points
From Goal	9.1 percentage points

In recent years, the percentage of students who complete fifteen college-level credits within two years has been on an upward trend. For the 2016 cohort, if 670 additional students would have completed fifteen college-level credits within two years, we would have reached our goal of 75%.

Goal #3: Success in First Five

More than 50% of FTIC, degree-seeking students will successfully complete all five of their first five course attempts as defined by earning an A, B, or C in each course.



Three-Year Change	no change
From Goal	8.8 percentage points

After a steady increase in the percentage of students successfully completing all five of their first five course attempts between 2005-2009, the percentage declined between 2010-2011 and has made only a modest recovery. For the 2013 cohort, if 581 additional students would have successfully completed all of their first five course attempts, we would have reached our goal of 50%.

Goals #2 and #3 serve as leading indicators for our graduation rate goal. While our most recent data show that more of our students have been completing fifteen college-level credits within two years, fewer students have been successful in all five of their first five course attempts. Given the strong correlation between success in first five and completion, this is a trend to which we should pay close attention. These data also suggest that the development of interventions to support the success of students who have unsuccessful course attempts early in their academic trajectories will be important as we work to raise the graduation rates of all students.