

Student Success Indicators and Goals

Introduction

The Students First Leadership Council has established indicators and goals to monitor PSU's progress in ensuring student success through the work of its four Pillars:

- Persistence;
- Academic Success;
- Affordability; and,
- Student Experience.

Updated quarterly or annually, as appropriate, the indicators compare actual performance to goals in five areas:

- first-year retention;
- six-year graduation rates;
- average time to degree;
- credit completion threshold; and,
- degrees awarded.

While the Student Success Dashboard includes additional metrics related to the Pillars, such as equity gaps, affordability, and survey data on the student experience, these five indicators have been selected for goal-setting because they are important indicators of two major components of student success, persistence and degree completion. Goals have been set at three, five, and 10-year intervals from the inception of the Students First initiative.

Data for these indicators were extracted from the University's DataMaster information system, and where appropriate, comparison data were derived from the US Department of Education's Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For each indicator, data are reported for new freshmen and transfer students, except for degrees awarded, which reports the total number of degrees.

Data from Comparator Institutions

Data from other similar institutions is useful in setting a context for PSU's student success measures, and for setting goals for increased performance. Comparison data is available for new undergraduate retention and graduation rates from the US Department of Education's data base, as mentioned above. Goals for these indicators

have not been set to meet or exceed a specific level of performance among the peers, but instead reflect an average percentage increase, over time, achieved by peer institutions that have made continuing progress in retention and graduation rates.

Using the national data base, OIRP extracted information on four-year public institutions, using following characteristics:

- urban location;
- enrollment;
- percentage of students receiving Pell Grants;
- demographics (race, ethnicity, age); and,
- academic characteristics of new students (selectivity, ACT/SAT scores).

For some institutions, progress in retention was not matched by progress in graduation rates, or vice versa. For this reason, two comparator lists were developed, as shown below.

Retention Comparators

- East Carolina University
- University of Arizona
- Kansas State University
- Georgia State University
- CSU: Sacramento

Graduation Rate Comparators

- Kent State University
- IUPUI
- University of Massachusetts - Boston
- CSU - Fresno

Goal setting

Freshman retention and six-year graduation

- Trends reflect historical performance extended out to future years.
- Goals are based on data from comparator institutions and internal trends.

Figure 1. Freshman retention goals.

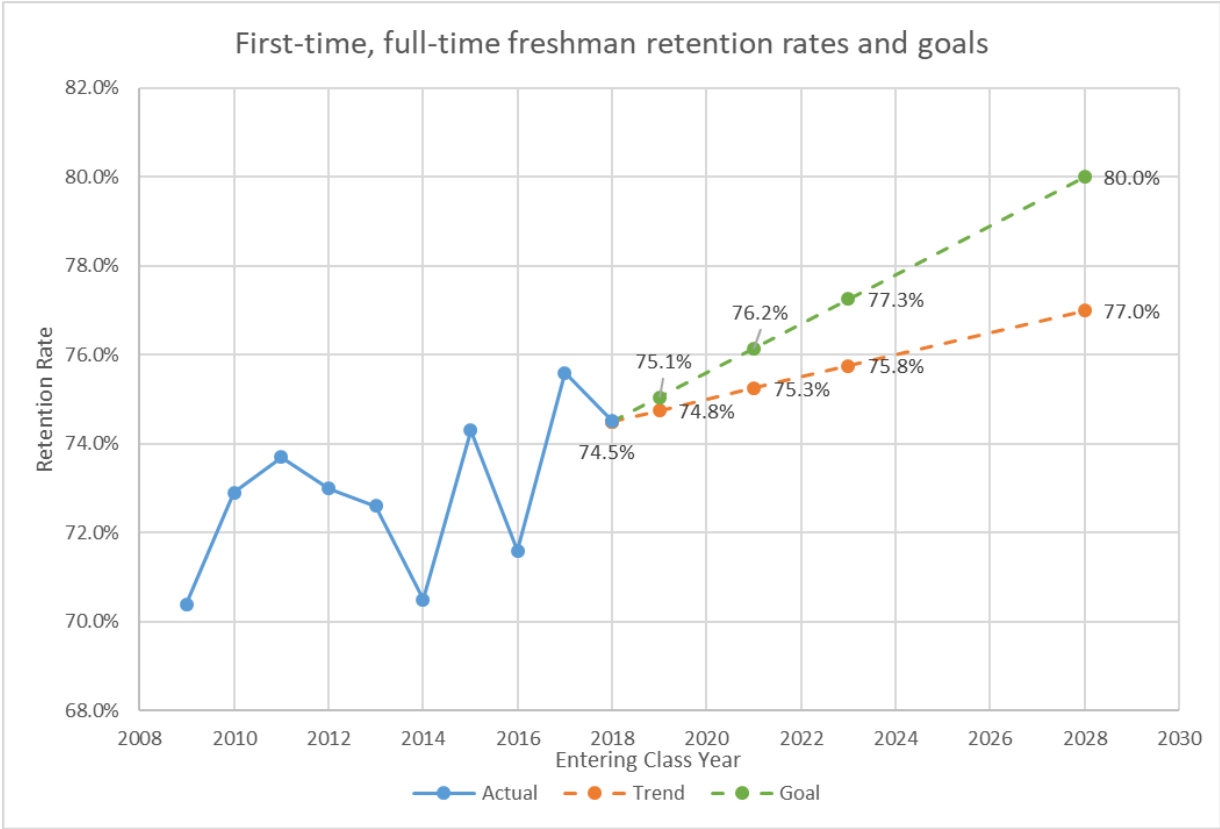
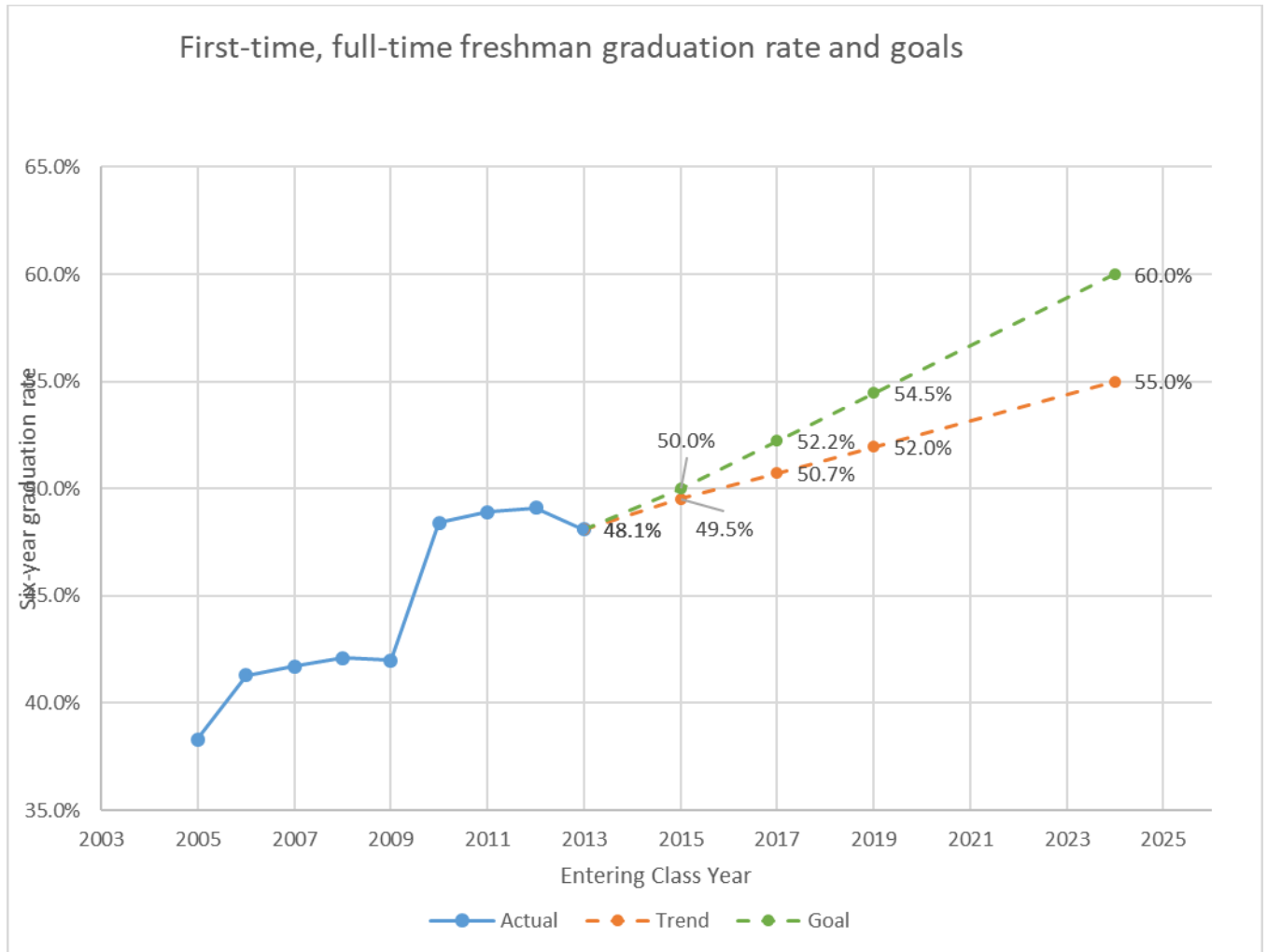


Figure 2. Freshman six-year graduation goals.



Transfer retention and six-year graduation

- Trends include students entering the institution as sophomores and juniors, and seniors who are more than one year away from graduation.
- Goals reflect three-quarters of the percentage gain for freshmen.

Note: Transfer student retention and graduation rates have been higher historically than for new freshmen, so improvement goals for this group are less aggressive. While comparator data for transfer retention or graduation rates are not readily available, evidence from other urban institutions suggests that improvement for this group would be more modest, given retention above 80% and graduation rates above 60%.

Figure 3. Transfer student retention goals.

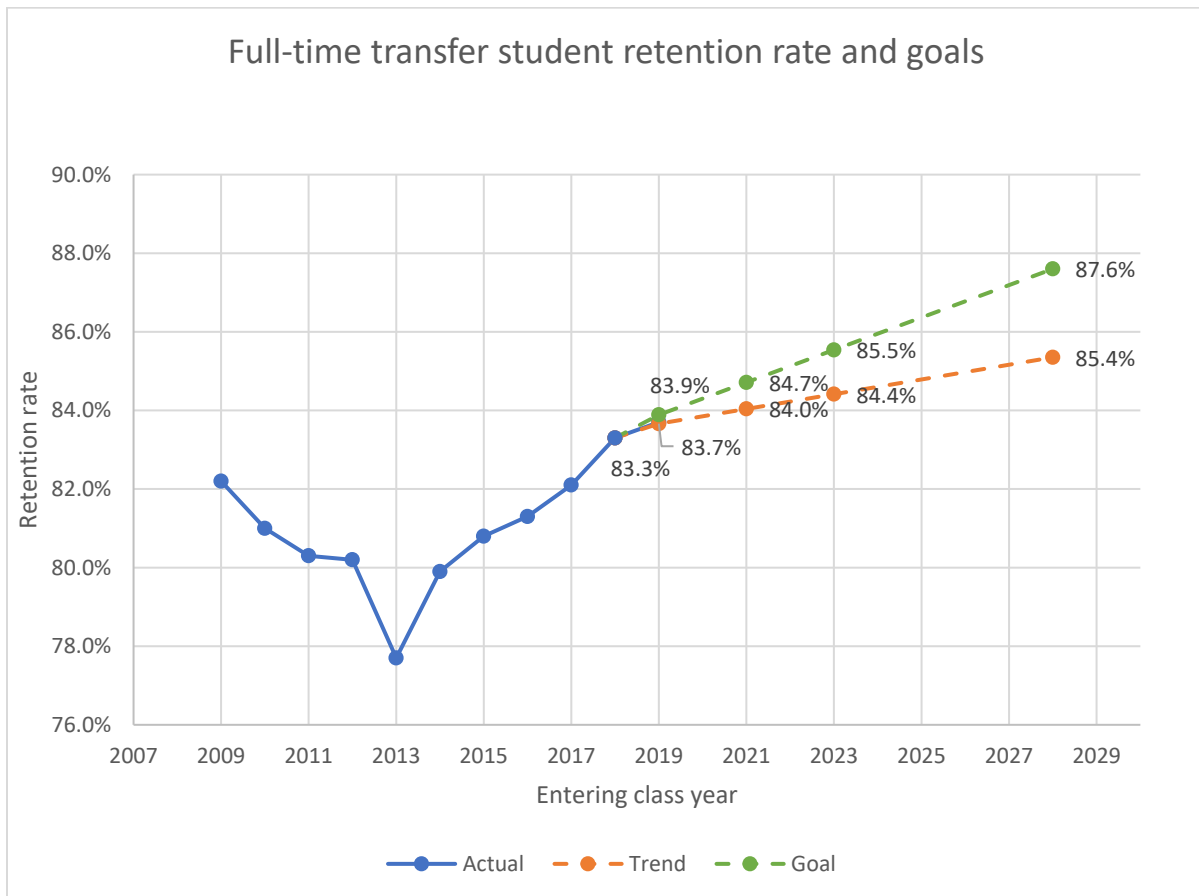


Figure 3 updated 12/18/2020

Figure 4. Transfer student six-year graduation goals.

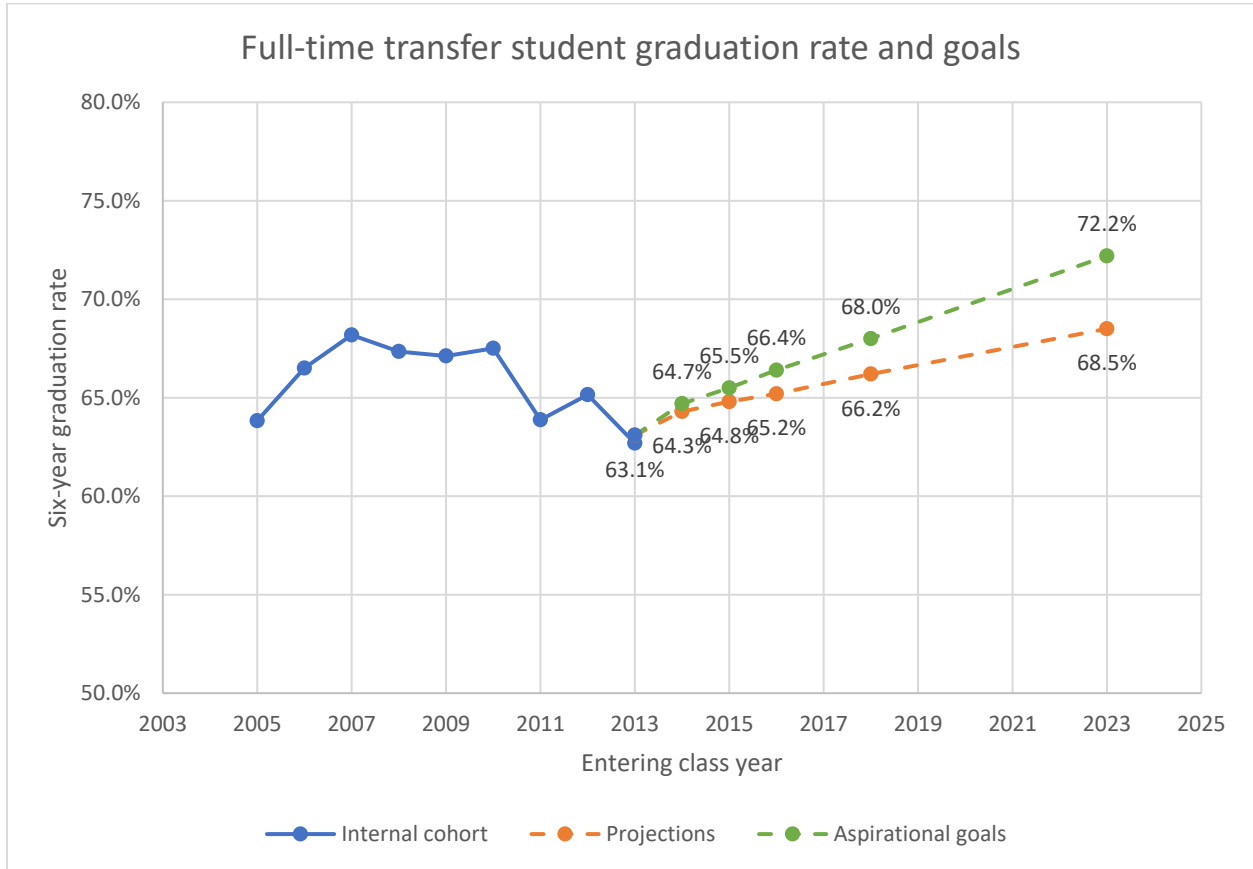


Figure 4 updated 12/18/2020

Average time to degree

- Trends reflect shorter time to degree for freshmen since 2013.
- Goals are set to be closer to four years for freshmen or three years for transfers.

Note: Average time to degree for new freshmen should approach four years. However, at PSU, many students alternate between full- to part-time status during their undergraduate career and thus tend to follow less traditional pathways to the degree. Transfer students entering as sophomores or juniors would be expected to graduate within three years.

Figure 5. Freshman average time to degree goals.

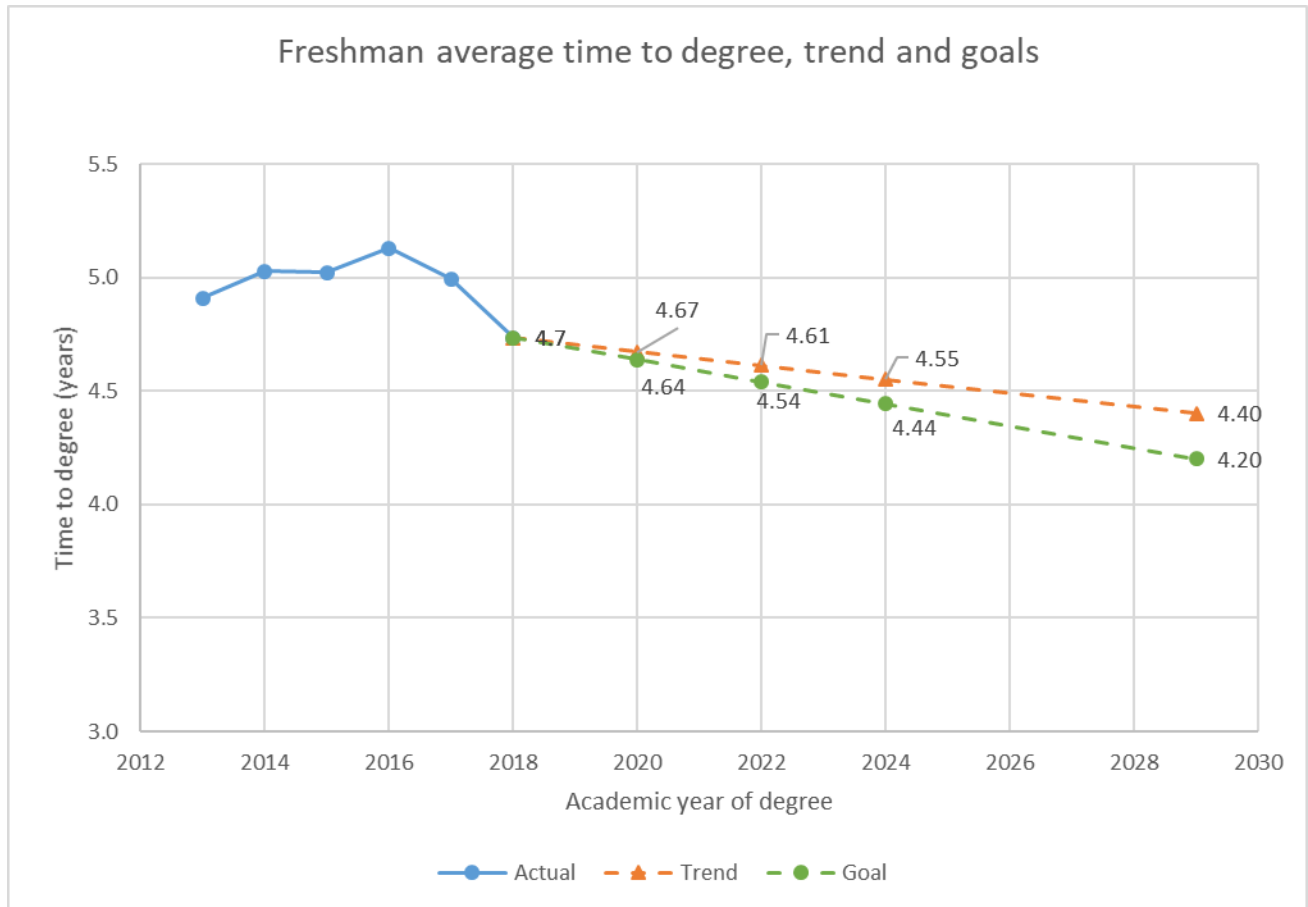
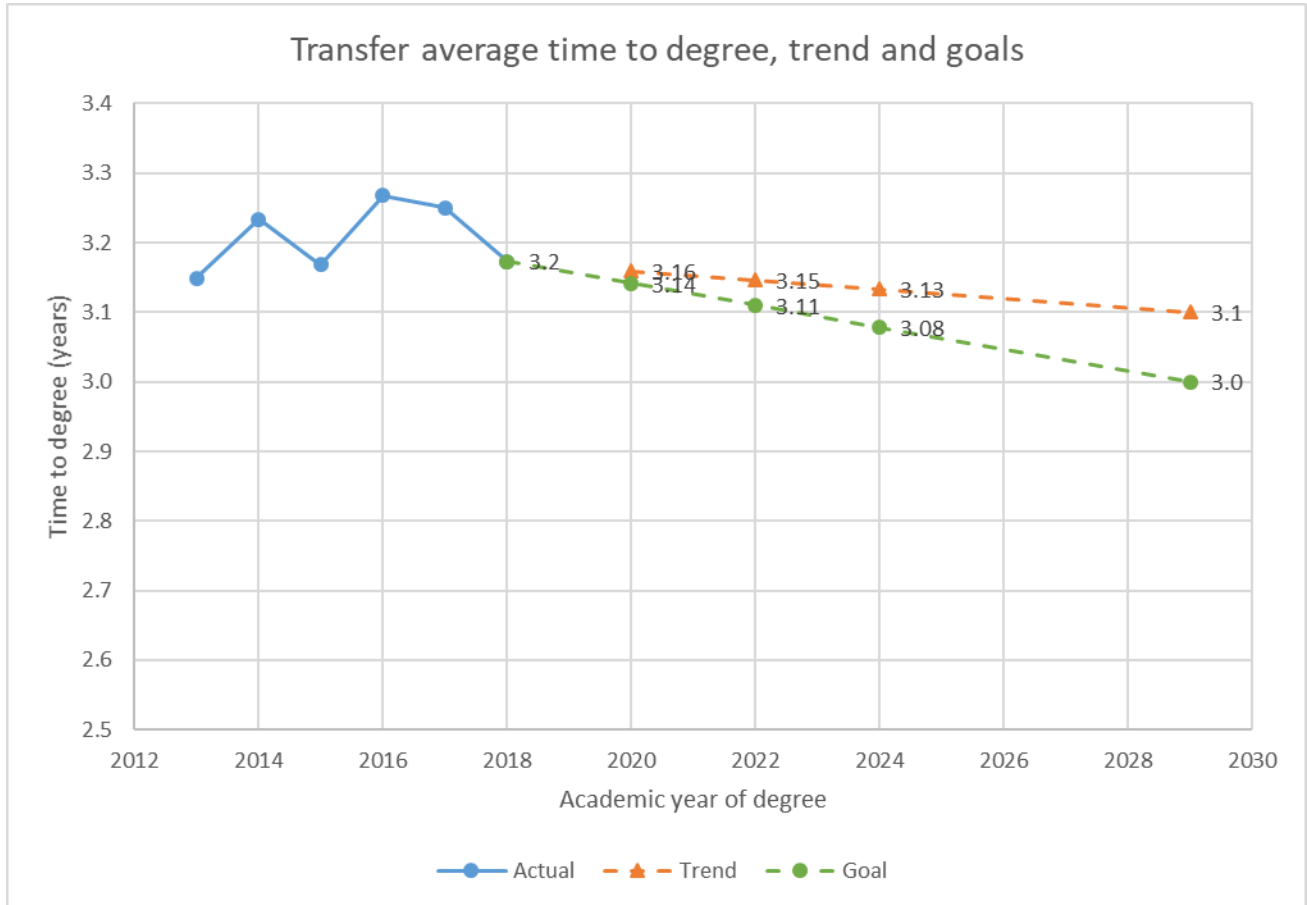


Figure 6. Transfer student average time to degree goals.



Credit completion threshold

- Research has shown that completion of at least 67% of attempted hours during the first year is positively related to retention and degree completion.
- Goals for this metric would raise the percentage of students meeting this threshold to above 90%.

Figure 7. Freshman credit completion threshold goal.

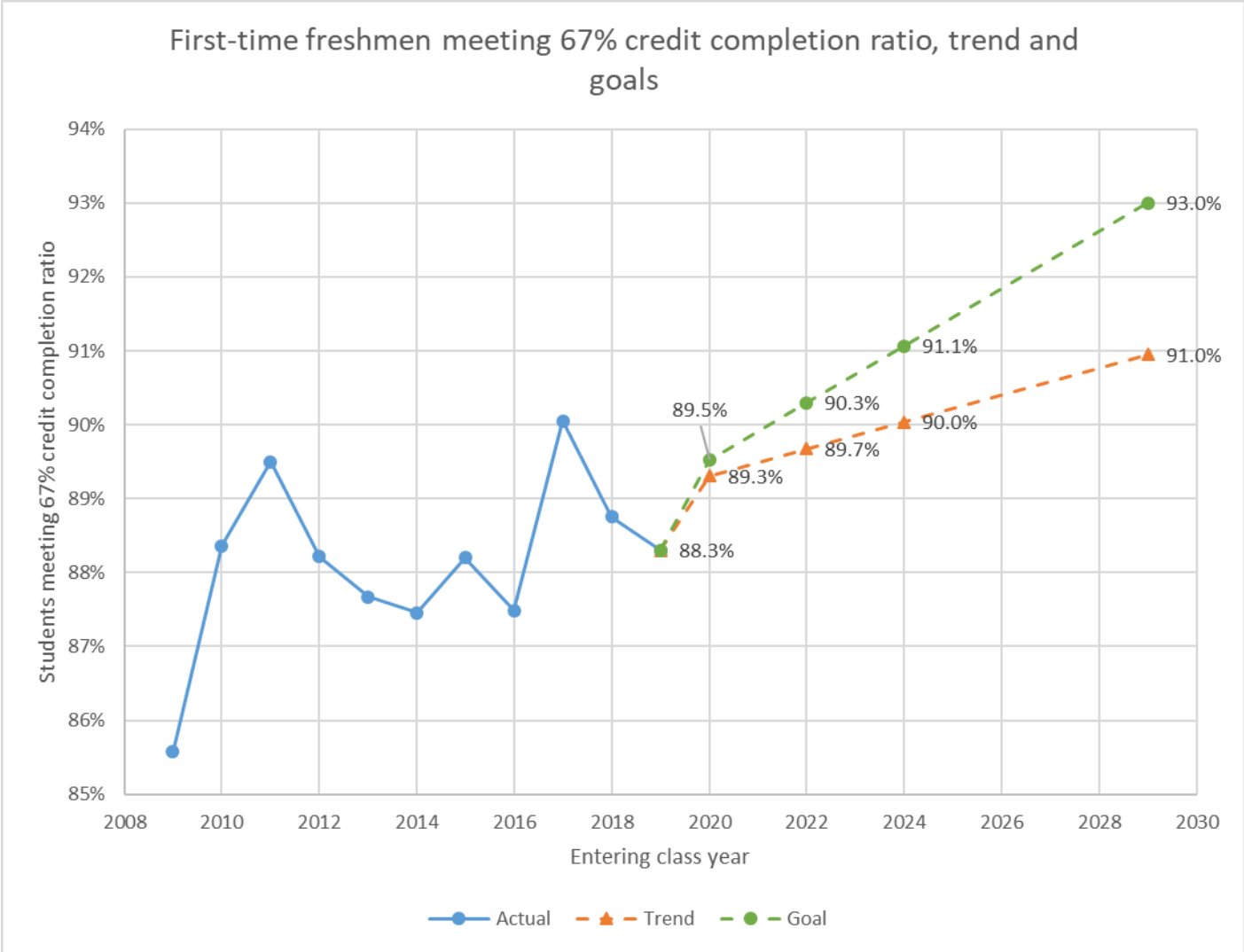
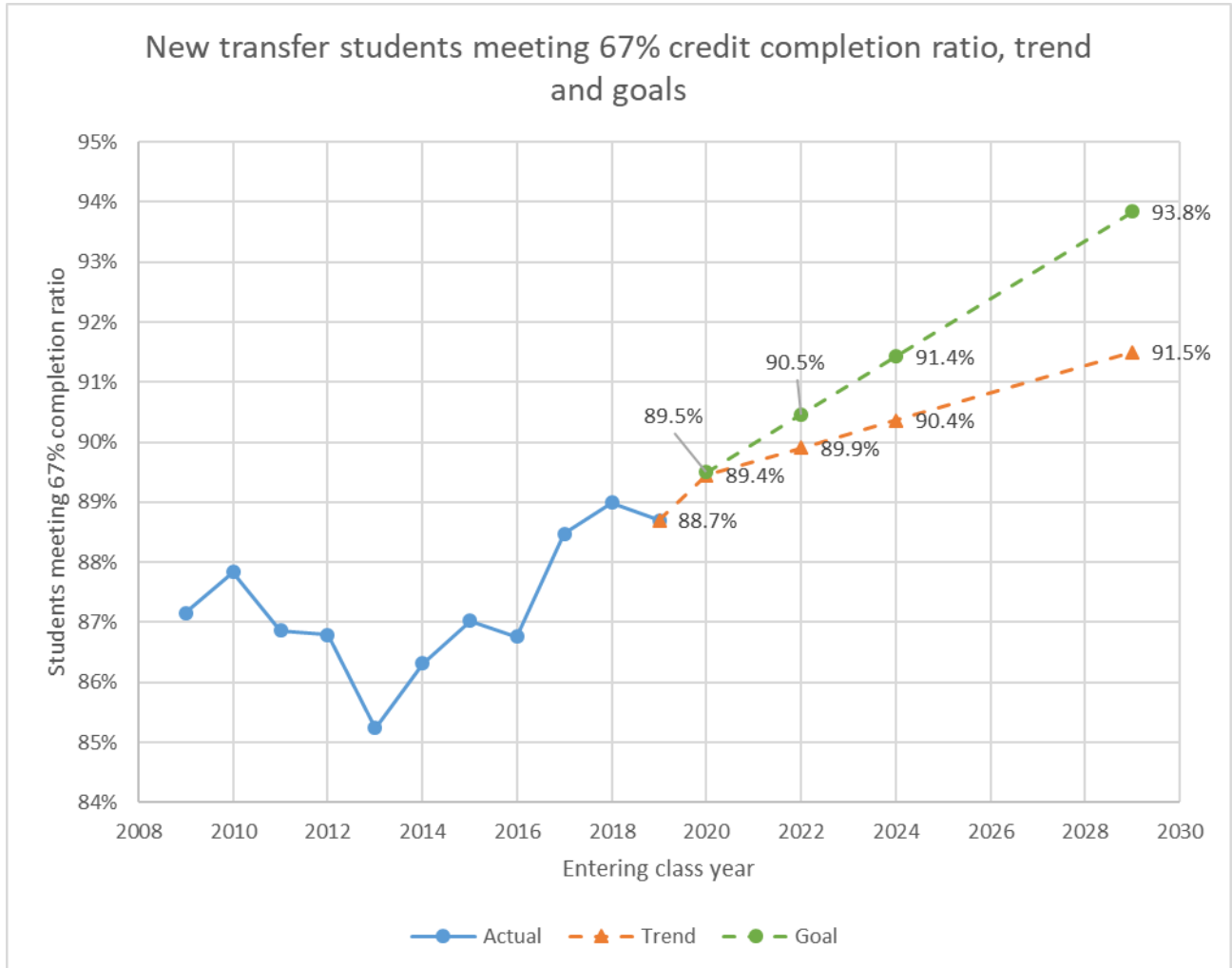


Figure 8. Transfer students credit completion threshold goals.



Degrees awarded goals.

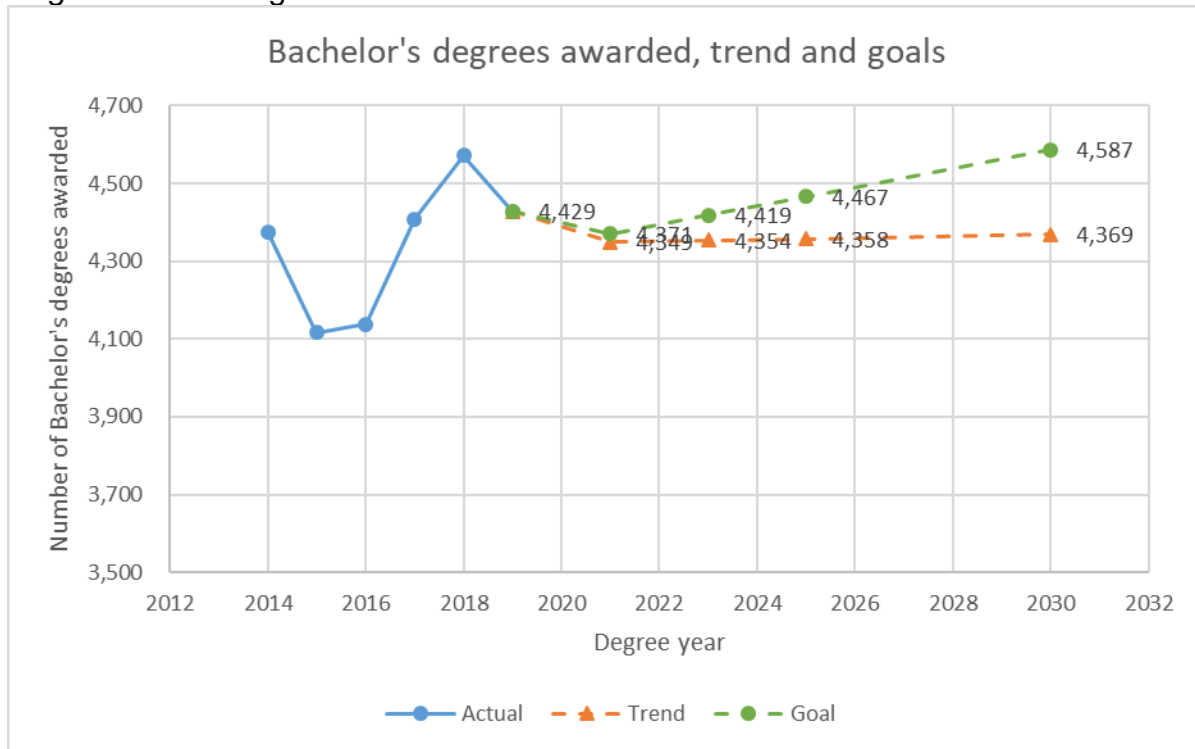


Figure 10. Master's degrees awarded goals.

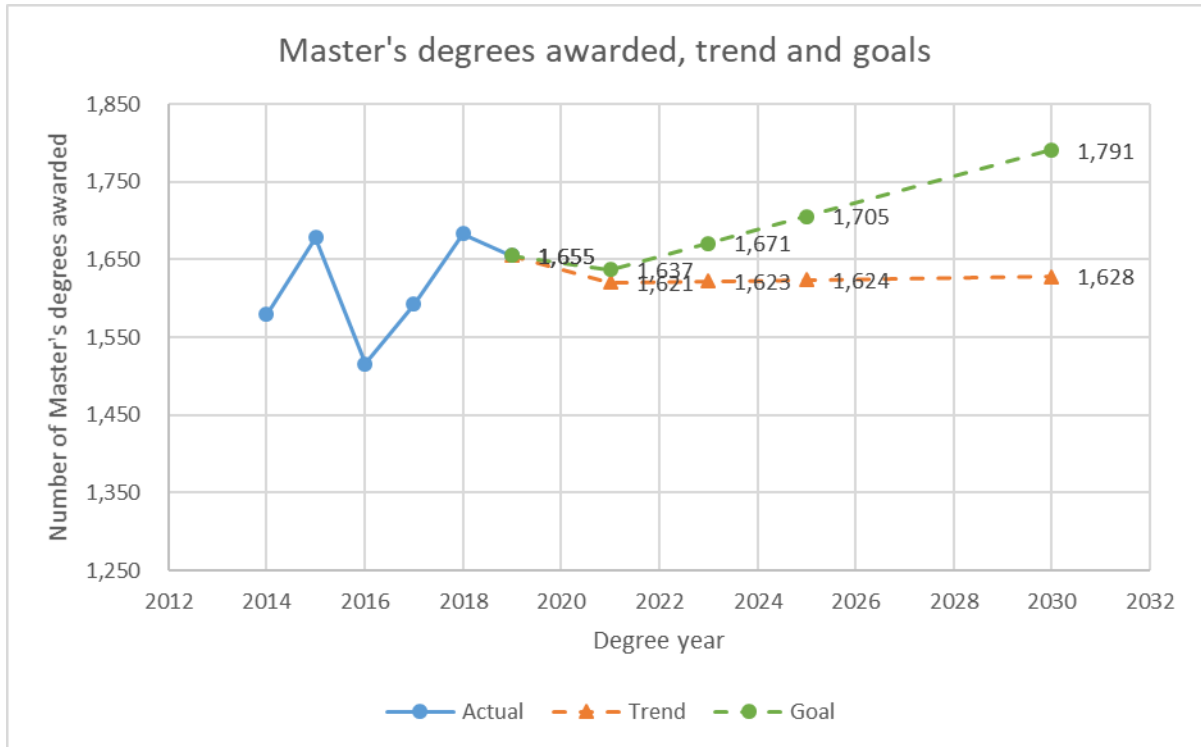
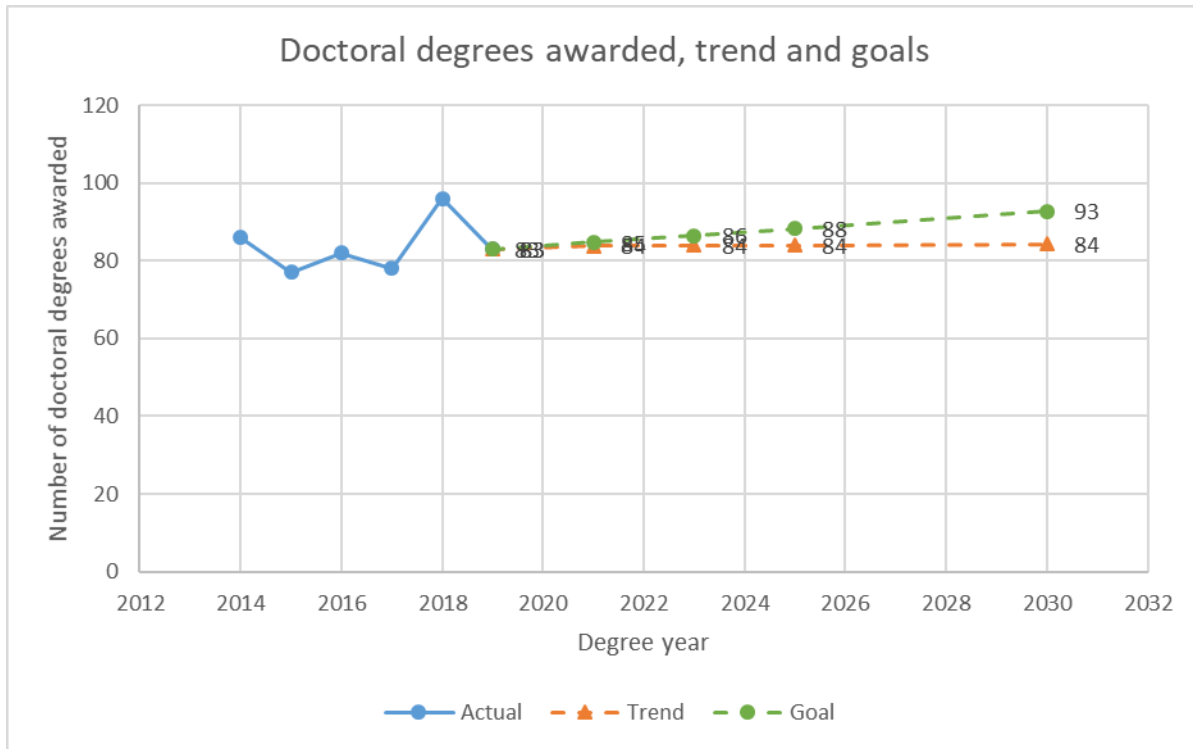


Figure 11. Doctoral degrees awarded goals.



OIRP:mjs/kk
Revised 12.18.2020