

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Closing the Achievement Gap

I. Definition of Achievement Gap for Frostburg State University

The University of System of Maryland's Closing the Achievement Gap Initiative addresses the threat posed by the state's widening college retention and degree completion gap for lower income and under-represented (primarily African-American and Hispanic) students. The initiatives as outlined in this report support the state's initiative and will further ensure that all Marylanders have the opportunity for educational attainment that leads to success.

Frostburg State University (FSU) has identified its achievement gap as significant differences between retention and graduation rates for males and females. Female students show substantially stronger retention and graduation rates than males. Differences in retention and graduation rates based on race or household income are comparatively small. Therefore, FSU's achievement gap efforts have been focused on increasing overall retention and graduation rates in an effort to generally narrow the differences in attainment and specifically, between male and female students.

II. Common Goal Initiative: Focus on Underrepresented Minorities and Low Income Students

As shown in the tables below, the University continues to show a significant gap for male versus female students, with more narrow gaps for low income, Hispanic, or African-American students as a whole. As a rural comprehensive institution, FSU is particularly proud of its enrollment level and the academic success of its African-American students, who comprised 25% of FSU's undergraduate student population in fall 2012. As shown in Figure 1 (below), the African-American graduation rate is nearly identical to that of the entire undergraduate student population demonstrating a significant improvement over the past decade. When students' gender is taken into account, African-American females graduate at higher rates than all other cohorts; the overall average is therefore affected by the lower graduation rates for African American men. Graduation rates for Hispanic students are reported in Figure 2; the number of Hispanic students enrolled at FSU (23 for the fall 2006 entering cohort) is so small, that conclusions based on a percentage gap are likely to be idiosyncratic and misleading.

Graduation rates for low income students are reported in Figure 3. Low income students currently comprise 38% of the undergraduate cohort. As was the case for African Americans, the graduation rate for low income students is, on a consistent basis, essentially identical to that for the overall population.

III. Institutional Trend Data: University System of Maryland Common Graduation Rate Metric

Figure 1
Six-Year Graduation Rate
African American vs. All Students
Fall First-Time, Full-Time, Student Cohort

	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
	As of Fall 2007	As of Fall 2008	As of Fall 2009	As of Fall 2010	As of Fall 2011	As of Fall 2012	As of Fall 2013	As of Fall 2014	As of Fall 2015	As of Fall 2016	As of Fall 2017	As of Fall 2018
African American												
Cohort Size N	116	128	128	151	186	215	289	290	329	262	266	230
6-yr Grad Rate	40%	40%	45%	42%	43%	41%						
All												
Cohort Size N	927	1001	990	959	927	1013	1059	1030	1031	1028	825	814
6-yr Grad Rate	51%	48%	49%	48%	45%	44%						
Gap	11%	8%	4%	6%	2%	3%						

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System

Figure 2
Six-Year Graduation Rate
Hispanic vs. All Students
Fall First-Time, Full-Time, Student Cohort

	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
	As of Fall 2007	As of Fall 2008	As of Fall 2009	As of Fall 2010	As of Fall 2011	As of Fall 2012	As of Fall 2013	As of Fall 2014	As of Fall 2015	As of Fall 2016	As of Fall 2017	As of Fall 2018
Hispanic												
Cohort Size N	17	20	22	19	29	23	35	29	40	47	21	40
6-yr Grad Rate	53%	35%	36%	21%	28%	35%						
All												
Cohort Size N	927	1001	990	959	927	1013	1059	1030	1031	1028	825	814
6-yr Grad Rate	51%	48%	49%	48%	45%	44%						
Gap	-2%	13%	13%	27%	17%	9%						

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System

Figure 3
Six-Year Low Income vs. All Students Graduation Rate
Fall First-Time, Full-Time, Student Cohort

	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
	As of Fall 2007	As of Fall 2008	As of Fall 2009	As of Fall 2010	As of Fall 2011	As of Fall 2012	As of Fall 2013	As of Fall 2014	As of Fall 2015	As of Fall 2016	As of Fall 2017	As of Fall 2018
Low Income												
Cohort Size N	216	222	209	221	227	243	265	253	340	371	290	294
6-yr Grad Rate	46%	45%	51%	44%	41%	42%						
All Students												
Cohort Size N	927	1001	990	959	927	1013	1059	1030	1031	1028	825	814
6-yr Grad Rate	51%	48%	49%	48%	45%	44%						
Gap	5%	3%	-2%	4%	4%	2%						

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System

IV. Additional Detail on the Institutional Achievement Gap

Figure 4
Second-Year Male vs. Female Retention Rates
Fall First-Time, Full-Time, Student Cohort

	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Male												
Cohort Size N	453	507	538	530	480	552	539	551	524	556	420	451
2nd-yr Reten Rate	74%	65%	70%	68%	66%	61%	73%	69%	69%	69%	69%	-
Female												
Cohort Size N	474	494	452	429	447	461	520	479	507	472	405	363
2nd-yr Reten Rate	78%	75%	78%	74%	77%	74%	76%	76%	79%	73%	75%	-
Gap	4%	10%	8%	6%	11%	13%	3%	7%	10%	4%	6%	

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System

Figure 5
Six-year Male vs. Female Graduation Rates
Fall First-Time, Full-Time, Student Cohort

	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
	As of Fall 2007	As of Fall 2008	As of Fall 2009	As of Fall 2010	As of Fall 2011	As of Fall 2012	As of Fall 2013	As of Fall 2014	As of Fall 2015	As of Fall 2016	As of Fall 2017	As of Fall 2018
Male												
Cohort Size N	453	507	538	530	480	552	539	551	524	556	420	451
6-yr Grad Rate	46%	39%	43%	42%	38%	34%						
Female												
Cohort Size N	474	494	452	429	447	461	520	479	507	472	405	363
6-yr Grad Rate	56%	57%	56%	54%	54%	53%						
Gap	10%	18%	13%	12%	16%	19%						

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System

V. Summary of Major Initiatives to Address the Gap

This summary discusses Frostburg State University's progress toward achieving the initiatives outlined in its November 2011 Report on the Achievement Gap. Increasing the persistence and completion rates of undergraduate male and female students is a priority of the University and the central goal of its Closing the Achievement Gap strategy. Over the reporting period, the University has increased the overall second-year student retention rate, as well as the rate for its female students. However, the achievement gap between males and females has widened.

The University's second-year retention rate of undergraduates improved from 71.0% (cohort fall 2010) in fall 2011 to 72.0% (cohort fall 2011) for fall 2012. Its second-year retention rate for male students stayed the same at 69.0% (cohort fall 2010) in fall 2011 and for the fall 2011 cohort reported in fall 2012. During the reporting period, the rate for all females increased from 73.0% to 75.0%.

Despite the efforts described below, the six-year graduation rate of male undergraduates decreased from 38.0% for cohort year 2005 to 34.0% for cohort year 2006. The University also experienced a slight decrease in the six-year graduation rate for females, from 54.0% for cohort year 2005 to 53.0% for cohort year 2006, leading to an increase in the achievement gap by gender from 16.0% for the cohort year 2005 to 19.0% for cohort year 2006. (See Figure 5 above).

As a result of these outcomes, the University is engaged in a critical review of all of its initiatives that comprise Frostburg's completion agenda in order to increase the overall retention and graduation rates.

Initiatives and Outcomes

1. Hire a position focused on achievement gap efforts, an Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention

- Outcome:

In January 2012, the University hired an Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention, who has been charged with providing leadership and coordination for University-wide programs and efforts to improve FSU student persistence and reduce time to degree. The Assistant Provost's duties include meeting with faculty and staff to create and implement revised retention and advising strategies. These strategies include identifying students most at academic risk; identifying particular "gatekeeper courses," majors, and periods of students' careers where student academic problems most often occur; reengineering programs and courses designed to improve students' entry-level skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; identifying what successful students do and modeling support services according to their behavior; and developing specific programs and strategies to sustain the University's success in second-year retention into subsequent years.

The Assistant Provost led the efforts to strengthen the University's academic advising programs by providing more professional development opportunities for academic advisors. One important initiative was the redesign of the course progress report. This advisement tool specifically focuses on effective course advisement that leads to increased progress to graduation and reduces time-to degree. These opportunities promote better continuity and effectiveness in student advising.

2. Implementing course redesign

- **Outcome:**
Beginning in fall 2011, the Department of Communication Studies applied the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) model to its Introduction to Human Communication course in an effort to eliminate a bottleneck issue and allow for more students to enroll per section. The Department of English's Freshman Composition course underwent a redesign pilot during fall 2012. Full implementation of the course redesign of the Office for Programs Advancing Student Success (PASS) and Department of Mathematics' Intermediate Algebra course took place in fall 2011, with three primary goals: improving the success rate, reducing the gender achievement gap, and improving student performance in subsequent mathematics courses. Results to date have been extremely encouraging: the gender achievement gap has been eliminated and the student failure rate has declined. In addition, a pre-test for subsequent mathematics courses indicated that students from the redesigned sections performed statistically the same as those not required to take the developmental mathematics course. For the fall 2011 cohort, students in the redesigned intermediate algebra course also earned more overall passing grades during the spring 2012 semester than those not enrolled in the course. The Department of Mathematics' College Algebra course underwent redesign pilots for the fall 2012 semester.

Next, Frostburg will engage in the process of redesigning introductory courses in biology and chemistry.

3. At-Risk Student Early Alert System

- **Outcome:**
In the spring of 2012, the President's Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness (PACIE) reviewed FSU's early warning system and retention initiative, MAP-Works. Based on PACIE's findings and feedback from other key constituents on campus, the University decided to discontinue MAP-Works and invest in a more streamlined platform called Campus Labs to facilitate faculty and staff usage and increase the number of intentional interventions for identified students.

Beginning in the fall of 2012, one of Campus Labs' components, Beacon, became Frostburg's early alert system for students who are struggling to reach their academic potential. This web-based solution focuses on a variety of factors that are the strongest predictors of student success, including social skills, confidence levels, and attitude toward learning. Beacon evaluates students' probability for academic success, produces reports for students and advisors, and recommends campus-wide resources for at-risk students. The platform also serves as a critical retention tool by enhancing communication between faculty and staff concerning students' class attendance, academic engagement, and other issues hampering their success.

4. Need-Based Financial Aid

- **Outcome**
Frostburg's Closing the Achievement Gap strategies include the increased allocation of need-based student financial aid to make education more affordable. More than 80% of FSU students receive some form of financial aid. Since 2007, FSU has allocated additional funds toward need-based awards. Spending on institutional aid has increased by 55% between 2007 and 2012.

Among those need-based awards are at least \$100,000 each year to first-generation, low-income college students who participate in the University's Student Support Services Program. The University intends to continue increasing the amount of need-based awards allocated to students over the next five years.

5. Offering Extensive Student Support and Tutoring Service

- **Outcome**

In its Strategic Plan, Frostburg cites "increasing student quality and improve student persistence to graduation" as an institutional priority. The University continues to develop and expand upon strategies and resources that help to attract quality students to its campus and enhance retention and graduation rates.

The University's Closing the Achievement Gap strategies also focus on expanding and strengthening student support, monitoring, and advising programs. During the fall 2012 semester, the University strengthened its academic advising programs by providing more professional development opportunities for academic advisors. These opportunities promote better continuity and effectiveness in student advising. The University also provides extensive student support through the services offered through Programs Advancing Student Success (PASS), the TRiO program, Student Support Services and the Center for Advising. Support includes tutoring, mathematics support, study groups, academic advising, career development, and assistance with the financial aid process. PASS has also developed a persistence program to help students improve their grades, study effectively, and attain a Bachelor's degree. Students who earned below 2.3 GPA their first semester are offered a course their second semester that teaches strategies to help them succeed in spite of the academic and personal obstacles that impeded their progression in the past. Below are the current assessment results.

Assessment Results

- TRiO Student Support Services program data: the Fall 2011 first-time student cohort has a retention rate of 87%, with 91% of females and 80% of males returning for their third semester.
- PASS office staff have visited First Year Experience classes, attended Academic Probation meetings, and presented workshops to inform students of academic support services available to them. Nearly 1,400 students learned of services through these outreach activities during the Fall 2012 semester.
- More students are taking advantage of tutoring services. The Fall 2012 data show a 13% increase in the number of students using individual and group tutoring services.

Another important strategy is the Maryland College Access Challenge Grant. In February 2012, FSU was awarded \$31,324 to improve the persistence rate of Pell-awarded, academically at-risk freshman and sophomore male students. The main components of the program, entitled *The Championship Forum*, are intrusive advising with academic coaches, mandatory workshops covering financial literacy, learning strategies, and personal growth topics, and weekly study hall sessions. Participants who fulfilled program requirements were eligible for stipends of \$250 each semester. Below are the results for FSU's fall 2012 'Championship Cohort'.

Initial Assessment Results

- 100% of the program participants receive a Pell award and meet the definition of low income.

- 79.6% (39) of the 49 program participants are African-American, Hispanic, or multi-racial.
- Of the 10 participants who entered the program on academic probation, eight now have cumulative grade point averages above 2.0.
- 33% (16) of the program participants earned a 3.0 or better for the fall 2012 semester.
- 93.9% (46 of 49) of participants remain at FSU and are making steady progress toward graduation.

6. Interventions for Students on Probation and Warning

- **Outcome**
 During August 2012, students who were on probation or warning were invited to attend workshops held during the first week of fall semester. The purpose of the workshops was to introduce these students to key administrative personnel, institutional policies and procedures, GPA calculations, and strategies for academic success, including a listing of campus resources and the schedule of enrichment workshops sponsored by the Advising Center.

While the number of students on probation/warning in proportion to the total FSU undergraduate student population and the fall semester 2012 was consistent with that of fall semester 2011, students on probation and warning who attended the workshops and followed through with the suggestions (filing an academic plan in PAWS, visiting with their academic advisors, and attending developmental workshops) were in better academic standing at the conclusion of fall semester than students in the overall cohort. Fewer were dismissed, and fewer remained on probation. The increased number of students on warning reflected that most were able to retain a cumulative GPA of over 2.00.

Figure 6
Status of Students falling under the Standards Governing Academic Probation and Dismissal at conclusion of fall semester

Student Status	Fall 2012	Fall 2011
Dismissed	84	100
Probation	315	413
Warning	121	83
Removed from Probation/Warning	123	94
Total	643	690

Data Source: Office of the Provost

A study of the outcomes concluded that students being better informed on institutional policies and becoming increasingly engaged with the support network and advisors on campus may have driven students' improved academic status. Based on these outcomes, the expectations for students on probation/warning in respect to engagement with campus resources and the number of interventions will be increased for the spring 2013 cohort.

VI. **Statement of Intermediate Goals**

1. Transition from Learning Community model to First-Year-Experience model

In order to improve retention rates for freshmen, the President's Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness in 2011 recommended the founding of a work group to review

current practices in respect to Frostburg's Learning Community Program. (Note: At the conclusion of fall semester 2012, 46% of students on probation were freshmen.) After monthly discussions during 2012, it became evident that the University should transition from a Learning Community Program to a First-Year-Experience in order to centralize the administration of efforts and to ensure continual academic support during students' pivotal freshman year. Emphasis needs to be placed on providing students with the skills necessary for success, e.g. quality advising/mentoring, fluency in core skills and critical thinking, and collaborative pedagogies that model cross-disciplinary problem solving. By emphasizing such skill sets, students will ease into their majors and disciplinary courses. Topics for discussion during 2013 include the extension of the IHE (Introduction to Higher Education) into a second semester, the continued linkage of the IHE course to GEP content courses where students can apply new skill sets, the design of instructional programs targeted at transfers, the expanded use of peer mentors, and the training of IHE instructors focusing on the pedagogical model of collaboration essential for effective programs.

2. Near-Completers

Frostburg State University recognizes that the graduation of students who have stopped-out constitutes a critical component of the institution's completion strategies. The University was recently awarded a One-Step-Away Grant by MHEC in the amount of \$60,000 to identify, re-engage, re-enroll, and graduate students who have stopped-out and met the other parameters set by the grant's guidelines. A preliminary analysis of the demographic details of the cohort reveal:

- The male to female ratio is 54% to 46%, representative of FSU's Achievement Gap between males and females.
- Black/African-Americans are represented in greater numbers than in the overall student population; 41% within the cohort are Black/African-American.
- 64% of students received Pell Grants while previously enrolled at University.

If the policies and procedures to be developed under this grant result in an infrastructure that has demonstrated success in the selected cohort, such policies and procedures will be integrated into the normal practices of the institution. Additionally, through the data collected on this cohort, the institution will identify a particular student profile for those most likely to stop-out. Current students with a similar profile could be identified and interventions instituted to ensure their persistence to graduation.

3. On Course to College Success Program

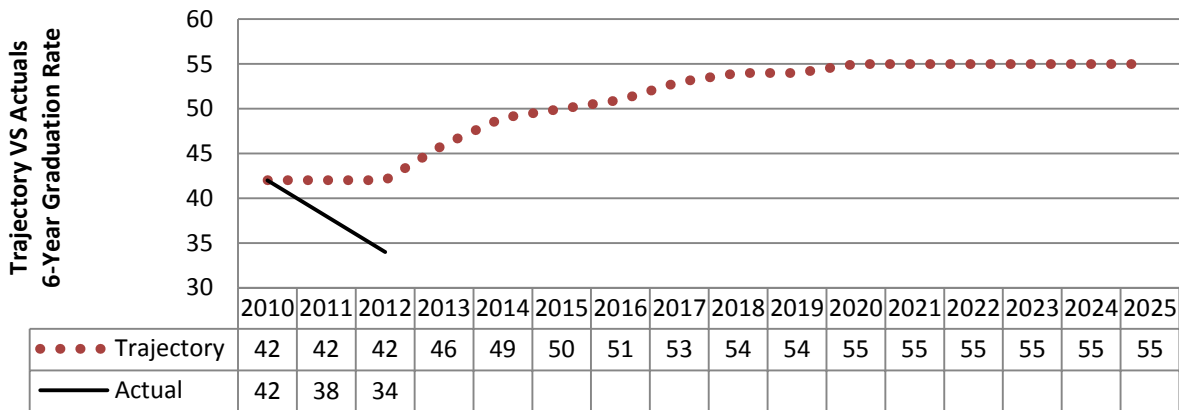
The On Course to College Success program targets first and second year students who have cumulative GPAs below 2.3. The program consists of a specialized one credit Introduction to Higher Education Course that is designed to provide a general structure for success at FSU, an opportunity to address and solve the problems encountered during previous semesters, and a support system comprised of peers and instructors. Throughout the past four semesters, 47 students have completed the course. Out of these students, 81% were eligible to continue at FSU the next semester and 64% persisted through the next semester. In addition, 78% had a grade gain ranging from .07 to 2.846 on a 4.0 scale.

VII. Six-Year Glide Path to Resolving the Achievement Gap

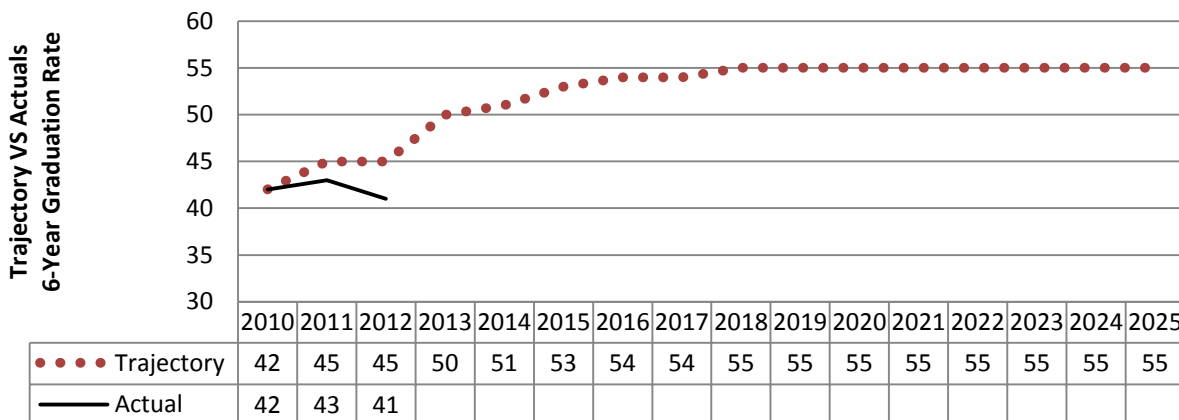
- Institution:** Frostburg State University
- Group 1:** First-time Full-time Male Undergraduate Students
Comparison Group: First-time Full-time Female Undergraduate Students
- Group 2:** First-time Full-time African American Undergraduate Students
Comparison Group: First-time Full-time Undergraduate Students
- Group 3:** First-time Full-time Hispanic Undergraduate Students
Comparison Group: First-time Full-time Undergraduate Students
- Group 4:** First-time Full-time Low Income Undergraduate Students
Comparison Group: First-time Full-time Undergraduate Students

Institution: Frostburg State University

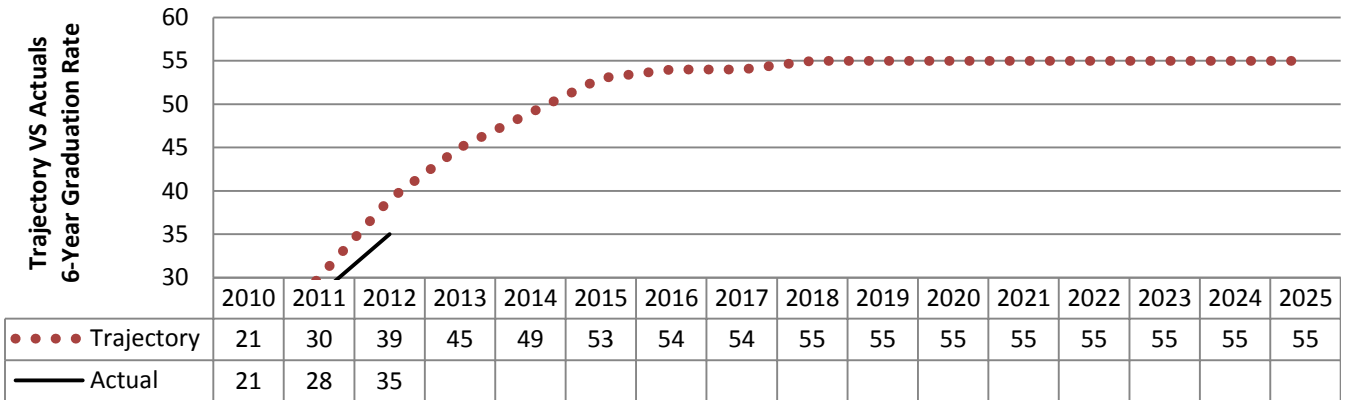
Target Group 1: First-time Full-time Male Undergraduate Students



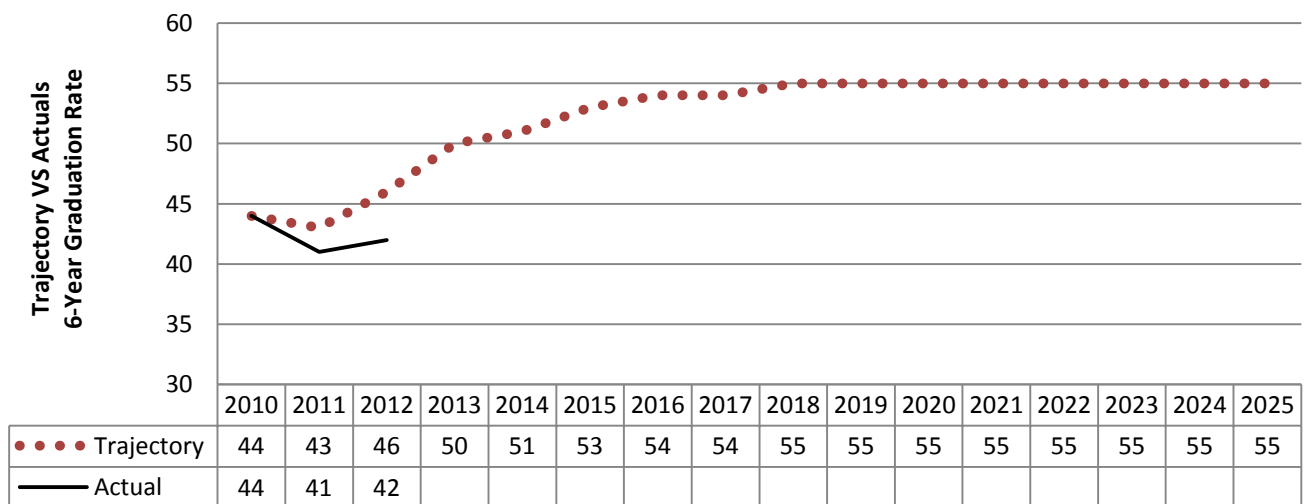
Target Group 2: First-time Full-time African-American Undergraduate Students



Target Group 3: First-time Full-time Hispanic Undergraduate Students



Target Group 4: First-time Full-time Low Income Undergraduate Students



ACHIEVEMENT GAP TASK FORCE

Terri Massie-Burrell (Chair), Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention
301-687-3206 tmassieburrell@frostburg.edu

Wray Blair, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
301-687-4201 wnblair@frostburg.edu

Thomas Bowling, Vice President for Student and Educational Services
301-687-4311 tbowling@frostburg.edu

John Bowman, Vice Provost
301-687-4745 jbowman@frostburg.edu

Megan Bradley, Professor of Psychology
301-687-4194 mbradley@frostburg.edu

Harriet Douglas, Director of Programs Advancing Student Success
301-687-4598 hdouglas@frostburg.edu

Johnston Hegeman, Assistant Vice President for Educational Services & Registrar
301-687-4738 jhegeman@frostburg.edu

Sara-Beth James, Senior Research Analyst
301-687-3130 sjames@frostburg.edu

Marc Michael, Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics
301-687-4686 mmichael@frostburg.edu

Randall Rhodes, Associate Provost
301-687-4212 rrhodes@frostburg.edu

Stephen Simpson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
301-687-4211 ssimpson@frostburg.edu

Robert Smith, Assistant Vice President for Planning and Assessment
301-687-4489 rsmith@frostburg.edu

Rochelle Smith, Professor-English Department
301-687-4280 rsmith2@frostburg.edu

Selina Smith, Assistant Director, Institutional Research
301-687-4187 ssmith@frostburg.edu

Rubin Stevenson, Associate Director, Department of Athletics
301-687-4086 rstevenson@frostburg.edu

Ahmad Tootoonchi, Dean College of Business
301-687-4740 Tootoonchi@frostburg.edu

Bernard Wynder, Assistant Vice President for Student Services
301-687-3138 bwynder@frostburg.edu