**Source of the data**

These data were pulled from the [College Completion microsite](http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/) produced by [The Chronicle of Higher Education](http://www.chronicle.com/) with support from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/). Its goal is to share data on completion rates in American higher education in a visually stimulating way. [Their] hope is that ... you will find your own stories in the statistics and use the tools [they] provide to download data files; share charts through your own presentations; and comment, start conversations, or provide tips about this important topic.

*Note: This text was adapted from the College Completion website's About page copy. Please visit* [*http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/about/*](http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/about/) *for more info*

**About the data**

**The institutions**

College Completion examines data and trends at 3,800 degree-granting institutions in the United States (excluding territories) that reported a first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate cohort, had a total of at least 100 students at the undergraduate level in 2013, and awarded undergraduate degrees between 2011 and 2013. It also includes colleges and universities that met the same criteria in 2010.

**Graduation rates**

[**NCES/IPEDS**](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)**:**

Graduation data from the National Center for Education Statistics’ [Integrated Postsecondary Education System](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/) is limited to tracking completions for groups of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students at the undergraduate level.

The groups examined typically first entered college six years earlier at four-year institutions and three years earlier at two-year institutions. Colleges report how many students completed their programs within 100 percent of normal time and within 150 percent of normal time. For students seeking a bachelor’s degree or equivalent, this corresponds with graduation within four years and six years, respectively.

Institutions report these data based on the length of the program, which can vary for students seeking another type of degree or certificate.

It’s important to note that graduation data do not contain information for students who drop out and re-enroll or complete a degree elsewhere.

[**Voluntary System of Accountability**](http://www.voluntarysystem.org/)**:**

Graduation and continued enrollment statistics come from the Voluntary System of Accountability’s [Student Success and Progress rate](http://www.voluntarysystem.org/docs/cp/SP_Methodology.pdf). The numbers are based on student cohort data from the National Student Clearinghouse for first-time, full-time students and full-time transfer students. About half of four-year public institutions we examined have reported these data. Because it’s linked to a particular student instead of an institution, these figures can show outcomes for students who enter and leave a particular college in a way traditional graduation rates cannot.

While there are similarities between the first-time, full-time completion measures that come from IPEDS and those that exist as part of the VSA, the rates will never completely align for reasons including variations in the time frame examined and the exact group of students–institutions are not penalized for students who cannot be successfully identified from National Student Clearinghouse records.

**Race and ethnicity**

Until 2009, the NCES classified students in seven ways: White, non-Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian/Alaskan Native; Asian/Pacific Islander; unknown race or ethnicity; and nonresident. In addition to creating a stronger separation between race and ethnicity categories, [two new race categories were created](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/news_room/ana_Changes_to_10_25_2007_169.asp): Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (previously combined with Asian students) and students who belong to two or more races.

The new race classifications have not been adopted by all institutions—they are given the option to use the old categories, the new categories, or a mixture of the two.

Because of that, graduation data specific to race since 2008 may be affected by these differences in classification.

To match previous years, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander has been combined with Asian. Students reported as being of two or more races, nonresident, or unknown are included in totals but not shown separately.

At two-year institutions, the number of graduates within 100 percent of normal time is not available before 2009 and is never broken down by race or gender.

**Efficiency measures**

“Awards per 100 full-time undergraduate students” includes all undergraduate-level completions reported by the institution to the NCES: bachelor’s degrees, associate degrees, and certificate programs of less than four years in length. Full-time-equivalent undergraduates are estimated from the number of credit hours taken at the institution in an academic year. To account for changes in enrollment, the resulting metric is a three-year average of data from 2011, 2012, and 2013.

Expenditure categories are slightly different depending on whether the institution is public, private non-profit, or private for-profit. The spending types considered to be educational in nature, either directly or indirectly, are: instruction, student services, academic support, institutional support, operations, and maintenance. Because separate spending figures are not available for only undergraduate students, the measure includes graduate degrees, post-master’s certificates, and all doctorates.

**In context**

At four-year institutions, the graduation rates and percent rank shown are only for bachelor’s-degree-seeking students.

The median estimated SAT score is derived from the 25th and 75th percentile scores for reading and math submitted to the institution by students in the 2013 entering class. For students submitting an ACT score, an approximate equivalent was generated based on a conversion formula for English and mathematics from ACT. The estimate is derived from all submitted tests–in some cases, admitted students submitted both. Score estimates and percent rank within sector are displayed for four-year publics and four-year private nonprofit institutions only, and at least 90 percent of incoming students must have submitted a score for it to be included.

Average student aid is equal to the total amount of grants, loans, and scholarships awarded by the institution, divided by the number of recipients in 2013.

Pell grant percentage corresponds with the total share of undergraduates receiving a Pell grant.

Endowment figures are based on values at the end of 2013 calendar year, divided by the total number of enrolled full-time-equivalent students that year.

Full-time faculty members are full-time employees focused on instruction, research, and/or public service, excluding employees who explicitly work for a medical school.