

## Persistence and Retention Rates

January 2022

### BACKGROUND

#### Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Rock Valley College (RVC) has identified KPI to inform the college community about institutional health and development. The College KPI are presented in five categories aligned to Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Public Agenda Goals. College KPI categories include *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success; Affordability; Educational Quality; Accountability; and Addressing Regional Economic Needs.*

Persistence and Retention Rates are KPI aligned to the College category of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success*, as well as the category of *Educational Quality*. As a measure of *Educational Attainment*, this category is aligned to the IBHE Public Agenda Goal to raise the number of people with postsecondary credentials and improve transitions along the educational pipeline. As a measure of *Educational Quality*, this category is also aligned to the IBHE Public agenda goal to improve transitions along the educational pipeline.

#### Persistence and Retention Rate Data

Persistence Rate is defined as the percent of students enrolling in consecutive fall and spring terms (e.g., Fall 2020 and Spring 2021). Retention Rate is defined as the percent of students enrolling in consecutive fall terms (e.g., Fall 2020 and Fall 2021). Both rates are calculated by dividing the number of students enrolled in both terms by the number of students enrolled in term one, less completers who subsequently left the college. These completers are not included in the calculation because they have achieved their community college goal and are not expected to return for subsequent terms. Data to inform this report were pulled from the College's student database (Colleague) and are based on enrollment as of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of each term. Comparison data are from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

### RESULTS

#### Persistence

Table 1 represents the persistence rates for RVC students overall and disaggregated by demographic subgroups, including enrollment status (full time or part time), gender, race/ethnicity, and age (traditional or nontraditional).

**Table 1: RVC Student Persistence Rates by Various Demographic Groups (Fall-to-Spring - %)**

<b>Fiscal Year:</b>	<b>FY17 (Fall 2016)</b>	<b>FY18 (Fall 2017)</b>	<b>FY19 (Fall 2018)</b>	<b>FY20 (Fall 2019)</b>	<b>FY21 (Fall 2020)</b>	<b>Change (FY17- FY21)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	72.8	73.4	72.8	73.0	71.5	-1.3
<b>Status<sup>1</sup></b>						
Full time	85.3	86.9	85.8	84.0	83.8	-1.5
Part time	62.8	63.3	62.8	63.6	61.9	-0.9
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	73.3	72.8	73.7	71.1	70.9	-2.4
Female	72.4	73.8	72.2	74.5	71.8	-0.6
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
American Indian / Alaska Native	69.2	60.8	55.6	71.7	66.0	-3.2
Asian	78.6	78.8	81.0	81.1	73.8	-4.8
Black / African American	61.1	62.8	59.5	59.8	58.9	-2.2
Hispanic / Latino	70.1	73.0	70.6	71.2	68.5	-1.6
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	--
White	74.6	74.9	74.9	74.8	74.6	0
<b>Age<sup>2</sup></b>						
Traditional	75.1	75.4	74.8	75.1	73.5	-1.6
Nontraditional	66.3	67.2	67.0	66.0	65.2	-1.1

Source: Office of Institutional Research Persistence Application

\*Percentages are not reported for group sizes of 30 or less

Over the past five years, overall fall to spring persistence has dropped 1.3% from 72.8% to 71.5%. Disaggregated persistence rate data in Table 1 suggest:

**Enrollment Status**

- Full-time students consistently persist at a higher rate than part-time students.
- Persistence rates have decreased for full-time students over the five-year period reported.
- Persistence rate for part-time students have decreased over the same time period.

**Gender**

- Female and Male persistence rates have decreased since FY2017

**Race/Ethnicity**

- The persistence rate of Black/African American students decreased by 2.2 percentage points over the five-year period reported.
- The persistence rate of Hispanic/Latino students decreased by 1.6 percentage point over the five-year period.
- The persistence rate of Asian students has decreased to the lowest level in the five-year period.

<sup>1</sup> Full-time students are enrolled in 12 credits or more, and part-time students are enrolled in less than 12 credit hours.

<sup>2</sup> Traditional students are age 24 and younger, and nontraditional students are over the age of 24.

Age

- Traditional students consistently persist at a higher rate than nontraditional students.

**Retention**

Table 2 represents the first-time student retention rates for students at RVC and comparison Illinois community colleges. As such, the percentage of first-time, full-time and first-time, part-time students enrolling in consecutive fall terms are provided. Data within Table 2 characterize first-time students as defined by IPEDS<sup>3</sup>. RVC data suggest:

- First-time, full-time students are consistently retained at a higher rate than first-time, part-time students.
- Over the past five years, retention rates have ranged between 65% and 70% for first-time, full-time students and between 39% and 46% for first-time, part-time students.
- RVC consistently has retention rates at or above the peer average for both full-time and part-time cohorts.

**Table 2:** Multiyear Comparison of Retention Rates (Fall-to-Fall - %) of First-time Students: RVC and Comparison Illinois Community Colleges

Entering Cohort:  Retained:  Status:	FY16 (Fall 2015)		FY17 (Fall 2016)		FY18 (Fall 2017)		FY19 (Fall 2018)		FY20 (Fall 2019)	
	FY17 (Fall 2016)		FY18 (Fall 2017)		FY19 (Fall 2018)		FY20 (Fall 2019)		FY21 (Fall 2020)	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
<b>RVC</b>	68	50	65	47	68	55	70	56	64	48
<b>Peer Average</b>	64	42	65	46	66	45	66	46	64	45
<b>RVC Rank (of 8)</b>	2	2	2	4	2	1	1	1	4	3
<b>Comparison Community Colleges</b>										
Black Hawk	62	37	61	43	64	40	63	37	63	38
Heartland	57	39	65	49	67	46	69	48	67	45
Illinois Central	73	51	72	45	71	38	69	45	66	47
Lincoln Land	59	39	65	42	64	47	68	51	65	57
Parkland	66	50	62	42	64	49	63	46	63	39
Richland	64	31	65	50	67	43	62	52	63	50
Southwestern	68	47	64	48	65	49	66	44	63	42

Source: IPEDS Data Center

Table 3 represents the retention rates for all RVC students, including those who are not classified as first-time students. As such, the rates represent all students enrolling in consecutive fall terms. Table 3 also disaggregates the same data by subgroups, including enrollment status (full time or part time), gender, race/ethnicity, and age (traditional or nontraditional).

<sup>3</sup> A first-time student is one "who has no prior postsecondary experience (except as noted below) attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. This includes students enrolled in academic or occupational programs. It also includes students enrolled in the fall term who attend college for the first time in the prior summer term, and students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school)."

**Table 3: RVC Student Retention Rates by Various Demographic Groups (Fall-to-Fall - %)**

<b>Fiscal Year:</b>	<b>FY17</b> (Fall 2016)	<b>FY18</b> (Fall 2017)	<b>FY19</b> (Fall 2018)	<b>FY20</b> (Fall 2019)	<b>FY21</b> (Fall 2020)	<b>Change</b> (FY17-FY21)
<b>Overall</b>	51.0	54.3	54.8	51.1	50.8	-0.2
<b>Status<sup>4</sup></b>						
Full time	61.2	63.2	65.5	61.0	60.0	-1.2
Part time	43.2	48.1	47.1	43.3	44.1	0.9
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	51.2	52.3	54.8	48.1	49.8	-1.4
Female	50.8	56.0	54.8	53.6	51.6	0.8
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
American Indian / Alaska Native	53.1	44.9	28.6	56.8	43.9	-9.2
Asian	60.2	56.3	64.6	61.5	55.1	-5.1
Black / African American	41.7	46.6	45.2	39.5	41.9	0.2
Hispanic / Latino	52.8	55.5	58.1	53.2	54.6	1.8
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	--
White	50.9	55.5	53.8	51.1	50.4	-0.05
<b>Age<sup>5</sup></b>						
Traditional	52.9	55.7	56.9	52.4	52.6	-0.3
Nontraditional	45.5	50.0	48.5	47.2	45.2	-0.3

Source: Office of Institutional Research Retention Application

\*Percentages are not reported for group sizes of 30 or less

Over the past five years, fall to fall retention has a small decreased of 0.2%, but is not as high as it was for FY2018 and FY2019. The pandemic may be the cause of improvements of retention.

Disaggregated retention rate data in Table 3 suggest:

**Enrollment Status**

- Full-time students are consistently retained at a higher rate than part-time students.
- Retention rates have demonstrated a small increase for part-time students over the five-year period reported. Retention rates for full-time students have a decrease of 1.2%.

**Gender**

- Retention rates for female students have a small increase over the five-year period reported, with a low of 50.8% in FY2017 and a high of 56.0% in FY2018.
- Retention rates for male students has decreased 1.4% over the five year period.

**Race/Ethnicity**

- While Black/African American students had been improved by 0.2
- Hispanic students have been retained at a higher rate than white students over the five year period.

<sup>4</sup> Full-time students are enrolled in 12 credits or more, and part-time students are enrolled in less than 12 credit hours.

<sup>5</sup> Traditional students are age 24 and younger, and nontraditional students are over the age of 24.

Age

- Traditional-age students are consistently retained at a higher rate than their nontraditional peers. Traditional-age students have decreased over the past five years.
- Retention rates for nontraditional students have decreased over the past five years.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

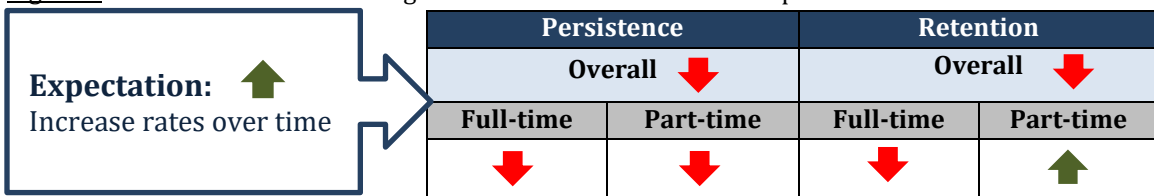
Persistence and retention are examined as institutional KPI which provide information about the College’s efforts in the areas of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success* and *Educational Quality*. Specifically, data within this summary report support decision making about efforts to raise success and improve transitions within the educational pipeline, as well as eliminate achievement gaps. The pandemic appears to have caused a disruption in retention. The data in this report suggest the following about these two areas:

**Raising Success and Improving Transitions within the Educational Pipeline**

Raising success and improving transitions within the educational pipeline would be determined by persistence and retention rates that reflect students’ successful completion of courses and progress toward educational goals. The minimum expectation of persistence and retention rates would be that they would increase over time.

Data in this report indicate stability in the overall persistence rate, indicating that the College has maintained its capacity to re-enroll students from fall to spring. Data indicate an overall decrease in retention rate from FY2017 to FY2021, indicating that the College has not improved its capacity to re-enroll students from fall to fall. Further improvements in persistence and retention for all students would enhance students’ movement through the educational pipeline to graduation, transfer, or other goal completion.

Figure 1: Current Results on Raising Success within the Education Pipeline



### Eliminating Achievement Gaps

Eliminating achievement gaps would be determined by persistence and retention rates that reflect successful progress toward educational goals for all students. As such, the minimum expectation is that gaps in persistence and retention rates between subgroups will narrow over time.

The achievement gap between Black/African American and White students have demonstrated and improvement over the five year period for retention. The persistence and retention gap between Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American peers has increased over the five-year period. Hispanic/Latino students' retention is typically higher than White students.

Figure 2: Current Results on Eliminating Achievement Gaps

	Persistence	Retention
Race/Ethnicity		
<i>Black/African-American and White</i>	↑	↓
<i>Black/African and Hispanic/Latino</i>	↑	↑
<i>Hispanic/Latino and White</i>	↑	NA*

**Expectation:** ↓  
Decrease achievement gaps over time

\*Hispanic students are retained at a higher rate than white students.