
On Our Way to College Completion in Maryland

**Presentation to the
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and the
House Education and Economic Development Subcommittee**

**Department of Legislative Services
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Contributing Staff

Writers

Sara J. Baker
Richard H. Harris

Reviewer

Mary E. Clapsaddle
Rachel H. Hise

For further information concerning this document contact:

Library and Information Services
Office of Policy Analysis
Department of Legislative Services
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On Our Way to College Completion in Maryland

Global Perspective

The United States is one of the most well educated countries in the world with 42% of those 25 to 64 years of age having attained a postsecondary degree, well above the 31% average of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. According to the OECD's *Education at a Glance 2012*, only four countries have higher rates:

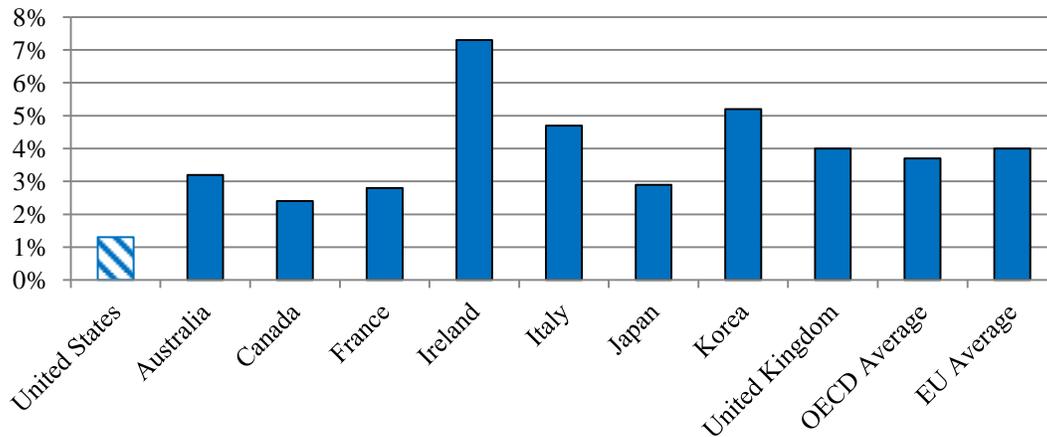
- the Russian Federation (54%);
- Canada (51%);
- Israel (46%); and
- Japan (45%).

However, many countries have surpassed the United States in the percentage of young adults with a postsecondary education degree. Overall, the United States ranks fourteenth in the percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds who have attained a higher degree at 42%, above the OECD average of 38% but behind:

- Korea (65%);
- Canada (56%);
- the Russian Federation (55%); and
- Ireland (48%).

Attainment levels in the United States have been high mainly due to that of its older workers (55 to 64 years old) who have a rate of 41%. The slight difference in attainment rates between younger and older workers indicates that the United States has not made much progress to increasing the percentage of young adults with a postsecondary degree compared to other countries. This is evident in **Exhibit 1**, which shows that the average annual attainment growth rate for those age 25 to 64 years old in the United States was 1.3% between 2000 and 2010. Besides Germany, which also had a rate of 1.3%, this is the lowest of all OECD and European Union (EU) countries. The average increase for OECD and EU countries is 3.7 and 4.0%, respectively. Based on this trend, in the years to come, many countries will approach and/or surpass the U.S. attainment levels. According to Complete College America (CCA), this stagnation in the United States may be attributed to many factors including inadequate design and delivery of remediation; funding models based on enrollment rather than completion; and changing demographics.

Exhibit 1
Average 10-year Growth in Postsecondary Education Attainment
Ages 25 to 64 Years Old
2000-2012



EU: European Union

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Source: *Education at a Glance 2012*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

At the National Level

In order to remain competitive in the global economy, the United States needs to have a highly skilled workforce. To that end, in 2009, President Barack H. Obama set a goal for the United States to have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. In outlining his goal, the President defined the problem, which encouraged the development of national programs and initiatives. On a state and individual level, degree attainment is important. According to *Help Wanted* by the Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce, by 2018, 66% of Maryland's jobs will require some postsecondary education or training.

Overall, attainment rates are greatly influenced by time – the longer it takes to graduate, the more likely that a student will drop out as finances, work, and family responsibilities compete with classes. Additionally, the added costs related to the long time in obtaining a degree not only impact the student but the state and institution, as both have invested funds in the education of students. This trend is particularly important as the student mix changes from the traditional first-time college student to nontraditional students who postpone college after

graduating from high school, attend part time, and/or have full-time jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Education, only a quarter of college students attend a residential campus full time, with most of the bills being paid by their parents. Overall, 3 out of 10 full-time students starting at a community college will receive an associate degree within three years, while 50% of those attending a four-year institution will graduate within six years, according to CCA.

Recognizing that the country's global competitiveness is linked to the educational attainment level of the workforce, organizations across the country have launched various initiatives to support the college completion agenda including:

- **The College Board's College Completion Agenda:** Increase the portion of young adults (25- to 34 year-olds) who hold an associate degree or higher to 55% by 2025;
- **Lumina Foundation:** Increase the portion of Americans with high quality degrees and credentials to 60% by 2025;
- **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation:** Double the number of low-income young people who complete a college degree or a certificate program by age 26;
- **Southern Regional Education Board's College Completion Initiative:** 60% of each state's adults ages 25 to 64 will complete postsecondary career certificates, associate's, or bachelor's degrees by 2025;
- **National Association of System Heads' Access to Success:** By 2015, cut in half the graduation gap for low-income and minority students; and
- **American Association of Community College's College Completion Challenge:** Produce 50% more students with high quality degrees and certificates by 2020.

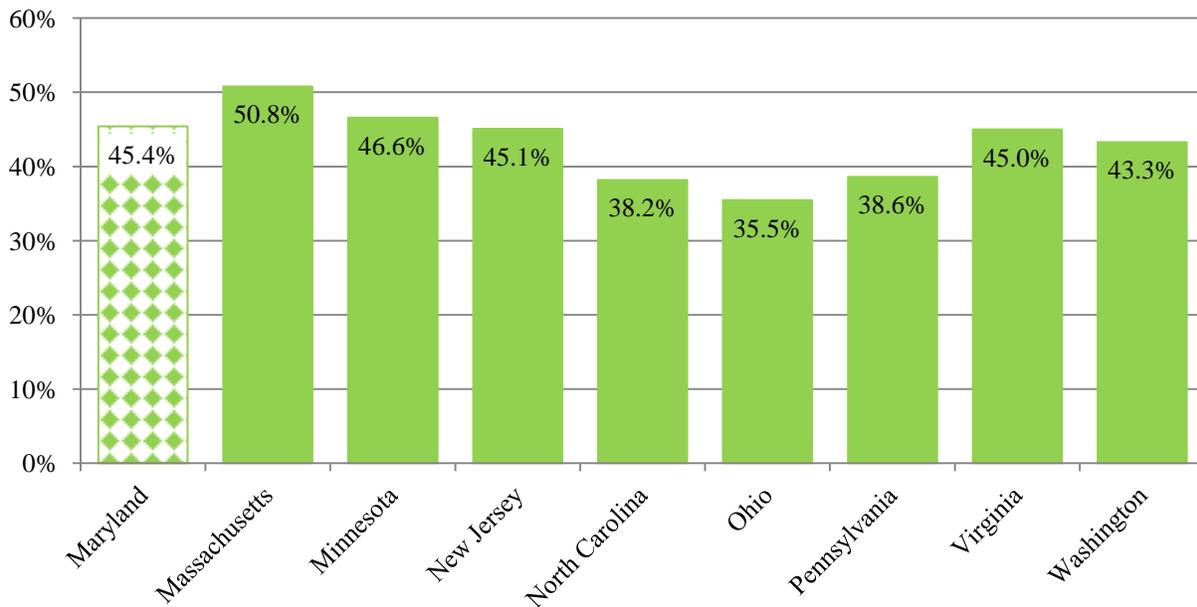
While these national college completion initiatives are taking differing approaches to increase degree attainment, they all generally focus on:

- increasing awareness and mobilizing public support;
- aligning state policies with the completion agenda;
- improving institutional outcomes and productivity;
- refining measures of completion;
- analyzing and identifying effective policies; and
- enhancing support for attainment among under represented students.

Completion in Maryland

In 2009, 17 states, including Maryland, joined the Complete College America Alliance of States. The alliance is now comprised of 33 states that have made completion a top priority – establishing degree and credential completion goals. State goals vary: Ohio’s goal is to enroll 230,000 more students by 2017 and increase graduates by 20.0%; Vermont aspires to increase the percentage of residents who have completed at least a two-year degree from 42.0 to 60.0% by 2019; and Indiana’s goal is to have 1 of the top 10 completion rates requiring the production of an additional 10,000 postsecondary credentials per year until 2025. In 2009, Governor Martin J. O’Malley announced Maryland’s completion goal – by 2025, at least 55.0% of the State’s residents age 25 to 64 years old will hold at least an associate’s or bachelors degree. This would be a 10.6 percentage point increase from 2009, when 44.4% of those aged 25 to 64 held an associate’s degree or higher. This rate improved to 45.4% in 2011, ranking Maryland eighth in the nation according to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. Maryland’s rate compares favorably to its competitor states, as shown in **Exhibit 2**, with only Massachusetts’ and Minnesota’s rates exceeding Maryland by 5.3 and 1.2 percentage points, respectively.

Exhibit 2
Percentage of Adults 25 to 64 with Associate’s Degree or Higher
Competitor States
2011

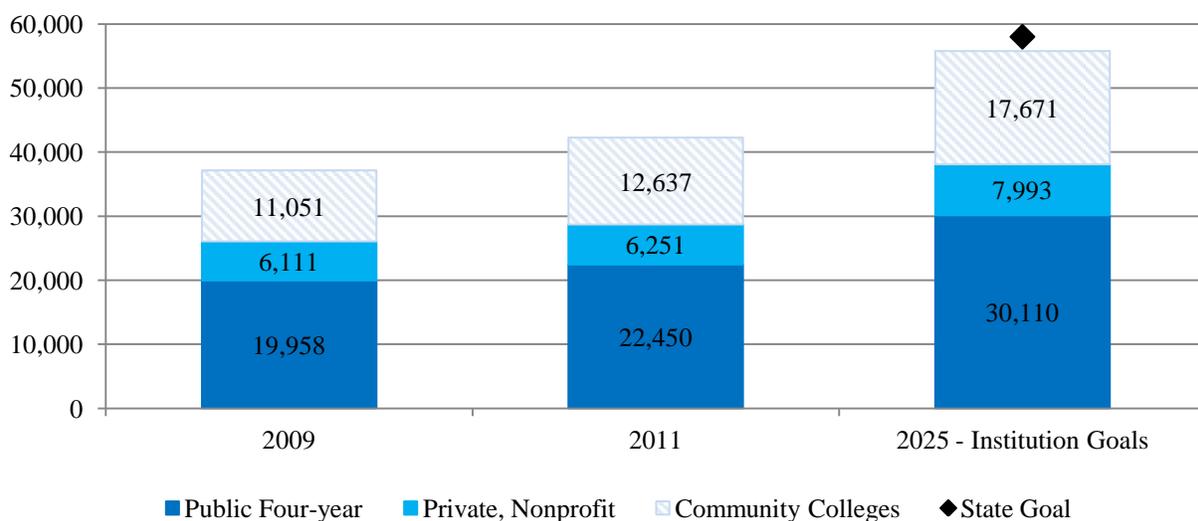


Source: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

How Is Maryland Doing In Degree Production?

In order for Maryland to achieve its 55.0% goal by 2025, the State’s institutions will need to award approximately 58,000 degrees annually by 2025. In response, Maryland’s higher education institutions set targets and developed plans to help the State reach the target. The University System of Maryland (USM) and Morgan State University (MSU) plan to increase completion through enrollment growth, mainly due to improved retention efforts and new enrollment beyond projected levels (St. Mary’s College of Maryland (SMCM) has not set specific degree targets). USM plans to increase annual degree production by 40.6%, or nearly 8,100 degrees, by 2020. To achieve this, USM has stated that it needs to increase enrollment 25.9% during this time period. MSU plans to increase the number of degrees by 850 by 2020, more than doubling the number of degrees awarded in fiscal 2010. As with USM, this will be achieved by increasing enrollment 47.5%, or 3,143 students, and by improving its six-year graduation rate from 33.8 to 50.0% within the next 10 years. Each community college campus also set an individual completion target with a combined goal of increasing degree production by 58.0% by 2025, which will also be primarily achieved through increased retention. As shown in **Exhibit 3**, these strategies and goals will result in approximately 55,774 degrees by 2025, slightly short of the 58,000 target.

Exhibit 3
Undergraduate Degree Production by Maryland Higher Education Segments
Progress Toward 55% Goal
Fiscal 2009, 2011, and 2025



Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission, Data Book 2009 and 2012; Department of Legislative Services

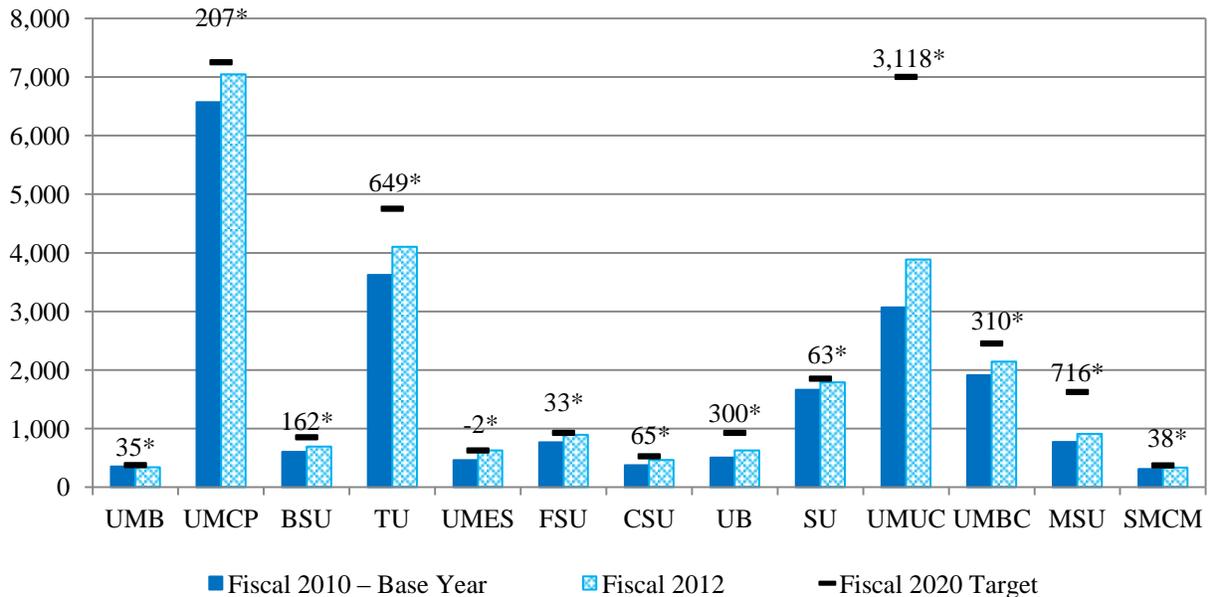
Maryland public four-year institutions' degree production increased 12.5%, or 2,492 degrees, between fiscal 2009, when the completion goal was established, and 2011 as illustrated in Exhibit 3. Community colleges increased degree production 14.4%, or 1,586 degrees, over the same period.

According to the Lumina Foundation's 2012 progress report, *A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education*, if the "current rate of degree production continues, 52% of Maryland's adult population...will hold a college degree in 2025," compared to the previous estimate of 48%. If this projection proves accurate, it raises questions about how much additional enrollment growth is truly needed to achieve the 55% goal.

The 2012 *Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR)* requested that the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) submit a report annually tracking the State's progress in meeting the 55% goal. MHEC submitted a report on January 14, 2012, and a revised submission is expected shortly, that suggests that Maryland may be closer to reaching the goal than previously estimated. MHEC's data shows that approximately 55,000 degrees must be produced annually by 2025 to reach the goal, compared to 58,000 estimated previously. Further analysis of the data and comparison to previous estimates is needed, but assuming it is accurate, this raises further questions about how much additional growth is needed to reach the goal. For the purposes of this paper, the previous estimates on which the institutions have based their completion targets will be used.

USM institutions and MSU have made progress toward achieving their degree completion targets, as illustrated in **Exhibit 4**. Overall, all institutions, except the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), increased degree production over the past 2 years. Degrees awarded at UMB declined 4.0% due to a transition from an accelerated undergraduate nursing program to a master's level program for entry-level students with a prior bachelor's degree in a non-nursing field. After only 2 years, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore surpassed its target by two degrees suggesting targets for some institutions may be set at a low level thereby ensuring success. Meanwhile, other targets, based on recent trends, appear to be unrealistic or "stretch" goals. For instance, the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) is expected to increase degree production by 44.5% over the 10-year period, reflecting the historical reliance on UMUC to be the driving force behind USM's degree production.

**Exhibit 4
Public Four-year Institutions Progress Toward 2020 Degree Targets
Fiscal 2012**



BSU : Bowie State University
 CSU: Coppin State University
 FSU: Frostburg State University
 MSU: Morgan State University
 SMCM: St. Mary’s College of Maryland
 SU: Salisbury University
 TU: Towson University

UB: University of Baltimore
 UMB: University of Maryland, Baltimore
 UMBC: University of Maryland Baltimore County
 UMCP: University of Maryland, College Park
 UMES: University of Maryland Eastern Shore
 UMUC: University of Maryland University College

*Denotes the number of additional degrees needed over the fiscal 2012 level to reach degree completion target.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, University System of Maryland, Morgan State University; Department of Legislative Services

How Is Maryland Doing In Complete College America Metrics?

CCA works with states to increase the number of citizens with degrees and close the attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations. As part of the alliance, states collect and report on common progression metrics that have not previously been available, including time to degree disaggregated by various categories, such as full- and part-time students attending two- and four-year institutions.

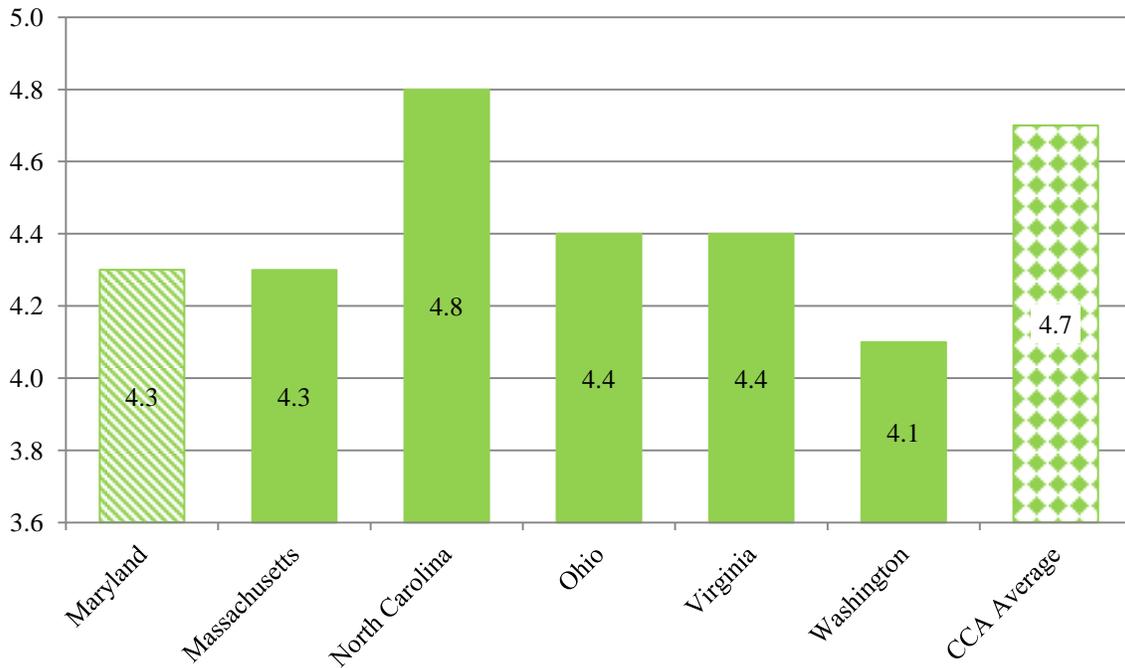
Although the CCA data strives to collect a common data set across institutions and states, there are some limitations to the data. Like other national data sets, the data does not yet accurately capture the various pathways students are taking in pursuing a postsecondary degree. Standard measures of student and institution success characterize only the first-time full-time students enrolled in the fall semester. This does not capture the outcomes of those students who fall outside the traditional metrics such as those whose enrollment status changes from full- to part-time and back again (referred to as mixed enrollment), or transferring to multiple institutions both in- and out-of-state. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Data Center, these mixed enrollment students comprised 51.3% of the fall 2006 cohort used to calculate national completion rates. In its report, *Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates*, it was found that when accounting for completions beyond the traditional method, the overall six-year graduation rate increases from 42 to 54%, indicating students are doing a better job in attaining a postsecondary degree than that indicated by existing institutional focused metrics.

Maryland received a \$1 million CCA grant in fiscal 2012 and is submitting data on various progression metrics to CCA. This report focuses on two metrics – time and credit to degree. In general, the more time it takes for a student to complete a degree, the less likely they will graduate. Reducing the credit requirement for a degree translates into less time to earn a degree resulting in more students completing in a timely fashion, thereby increasing the State’s completion rate and decreasing the cost of the degree to the student, State, and institution. These metrics provide a more accurate picture than those currently used, such as the six-year graduation rates, which only include first-time full-time students. However, as previously discussed, the data does not fully capture the progression and completions of the mixed enrollment students *e.g.*, those who transition between full and part time. This information would be useful to guide decisions that currently focus on the “traditional” college student to those that include the nontraditional student.

Time to Degree

The traditional standard or goal for students to complete a bachelor’s degree is 4.0 years. Maryland comes close to this goal, with an average time of 4.3 years for a full-time student attending a Maryland public four-year institution to complete a bachelor’s degree. This compares favorably with the average time of Maryland’s competitor states, as shown in **Exhibit 5**, with Washington close to meeting the goal with an average of 4.1 years, while in North Carolina it takes students 4.8 years to earn a degree. The average of the 33 states reporting data to CCA is 4.7 years.

Exhibit 5
Competitor States Average Time to Degree at Public Four-year Institutions
First-time Full-time (at Entry) Students
2008-2009 Academic Year



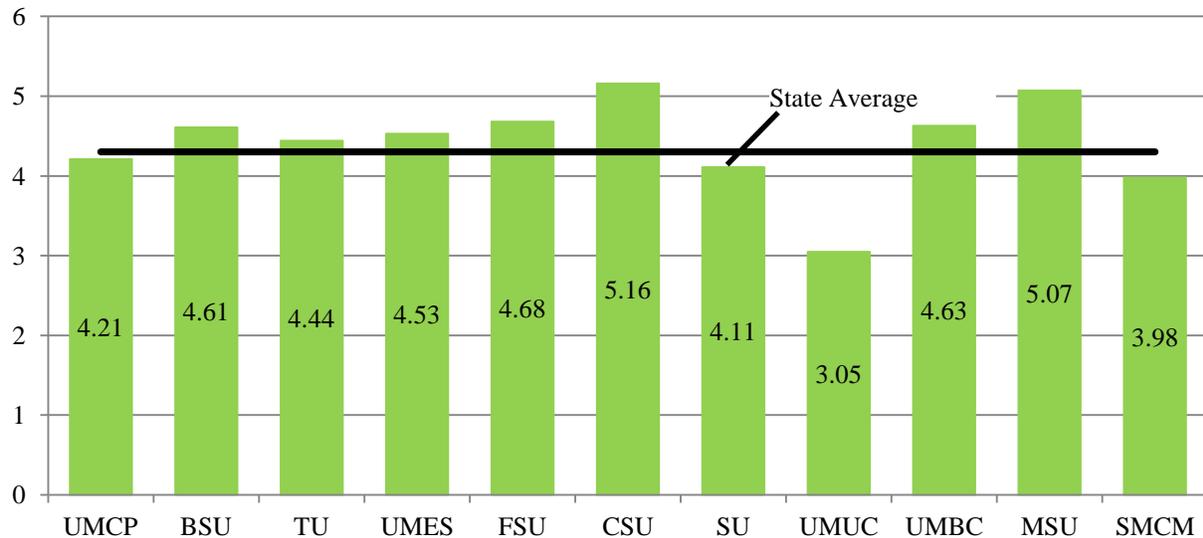
CCA: Complete College America

Note: Minnesota, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania did not provide data for this metric.

Source: Complete College America

The average time to degree by institution is shown in **Exhibit 6**. This is the second year MHEC has collected data as part of the CCA grant and, as such, the metrics have been refined to ensure the consistency and uniformity of data reported across institutions. Therefore, comparisons cannot be made between the fiscal 2008 and 2009 data. Furthermore, UMB and the University of Baltimore (UB) are not included because neither had first-time students among those who graduated in fiscal 2009. UB has started to enroll first-time students, so this metric will apply in future years.

Exhibit 6
Average Time to Degree at Public Four-year Institutions
First-time Full-time (at Entry) Students
2008-2009 Academic Year



BSU : Bowie State University
 CSU: Coppin State University
 FSU: Frostburg State University
 MSU: Morgan State University
 SMCM: St. Mary's College of Maryland
 SU: Salisbury University

TU: Towson University
 UMBC: University of Maryland Baltimore County
 UMCP: University of Maryland, College Park
 UMES: University of Maryland Eastern Shore
 UMUC: University of Maryland University College

Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission; Complete College America

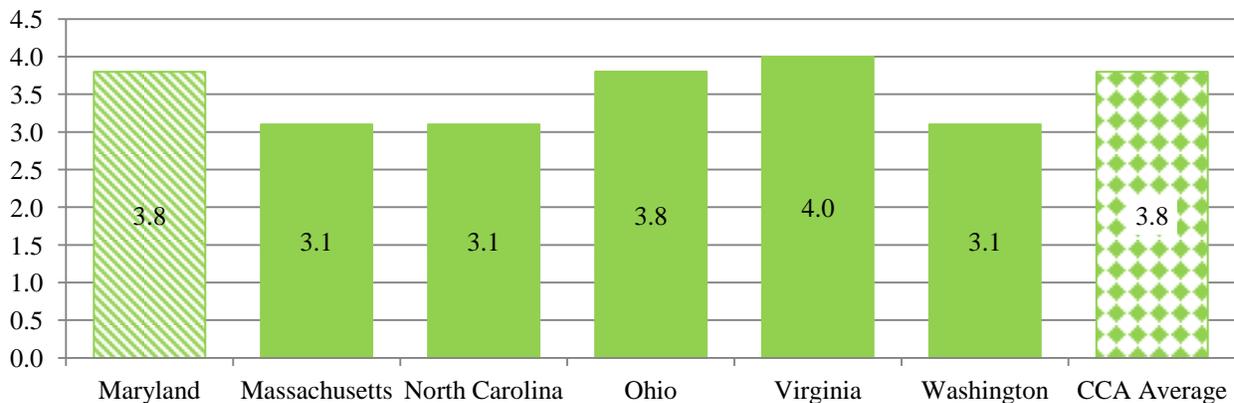
Three institutions – the University of Maryland, College Park, Salisbury University (SU), and SMCM – fell below the State average of 4.3 years. On average, students at SMCM took slightly less than four years to earn a degree while those at SU took a bit longer than four years. At the other end of the spectrum, students at MSU and Coppin State University took over five years to graduate. Overall, this data suggests that while students did not complete their degrees in exactly four years, neither did it take six years for those who graduated, which has been a common measure of performance.

It should be noted that UMUC has a reported average time to degree of 3.1 years for full-time students. Typically, less than 100 UMUC students enter as freshmen, and many of

those start as part-time students. If this data is accurate, UMUC is particularly efficient at graduating first-time full-time students. It may be the case that students self-selected to enroll at UMUC for its more flexible scheduling and that these extra-motivated students took a more aggressive course schedule than those at a traditional four-year institution, allowing them to graduate at an accelerated rate.

Although the goal is 2.0 years for a full-time student to earn an associate’s degree, the average time at Maryland’s community colleges is 3.8 years, almost the time needed to complete a bachelor’s degree. Given the significant number of students who enter with developmental educational needs at community colleges, a slightly longer average may be acceptable. When compared to its competitor states, Maryland has one of the longest average times to degree at 3.8 years but is on par with the average of the participating CCA states. Three states have an average time of 3.1 years – Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Washington – while Virginia had the longest at 4.0 years, as illustrated in **Exhibit 7**.

Exhibit 7
Competitor States Average Time to Degree at Two-year Institutions
First-time Full-time (at Entry) Students
2008-2009 Academic Year



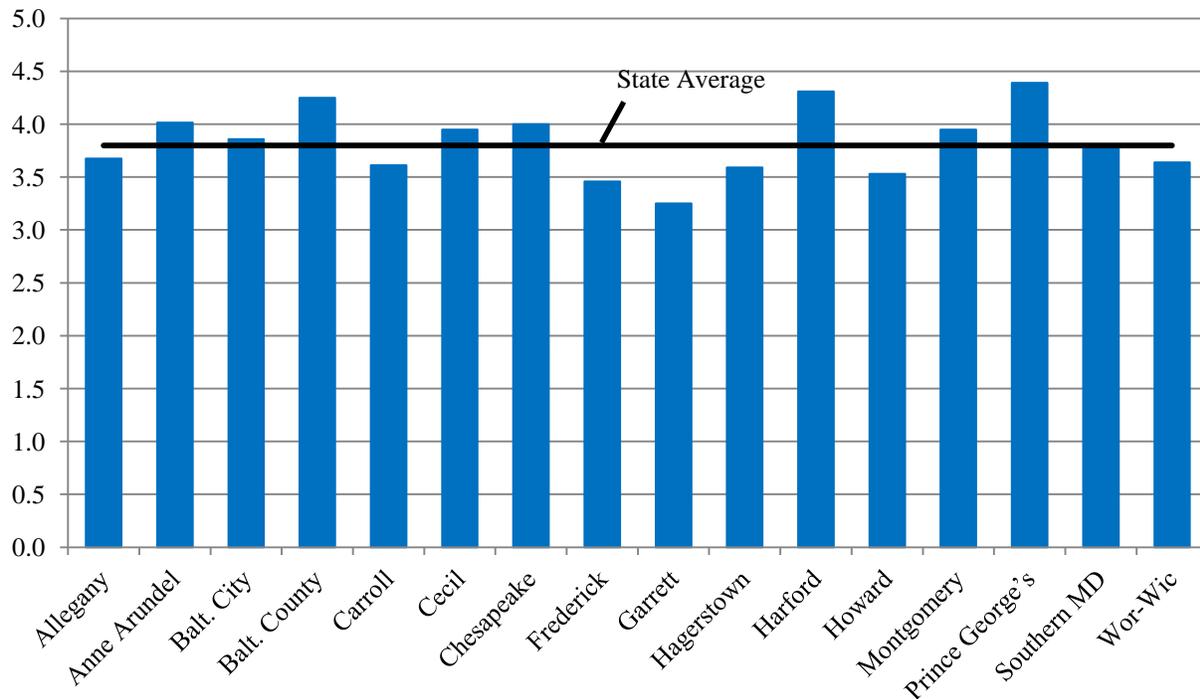
CCA: Complete College America

Note: Minnesota, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania did not provide data for this metric.

Source: Complete College America

As shown in **Exhibit 8**, none of Maryland’s community colleges are at or below Massachusetts’ average of 3.1 years to earn an associate’s degree. The closest is Garrett College, with an average of 3.3 years for full-time students. Next closest are Frederick Community College (FCC) and Howard Community College, which average 3.5 years.

Exhibit 8
Average Time to Degree at Maryland's Public Two-year Institutions
First-time Full-time (at Entry) Students
2008-2009 Academic Year



Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission

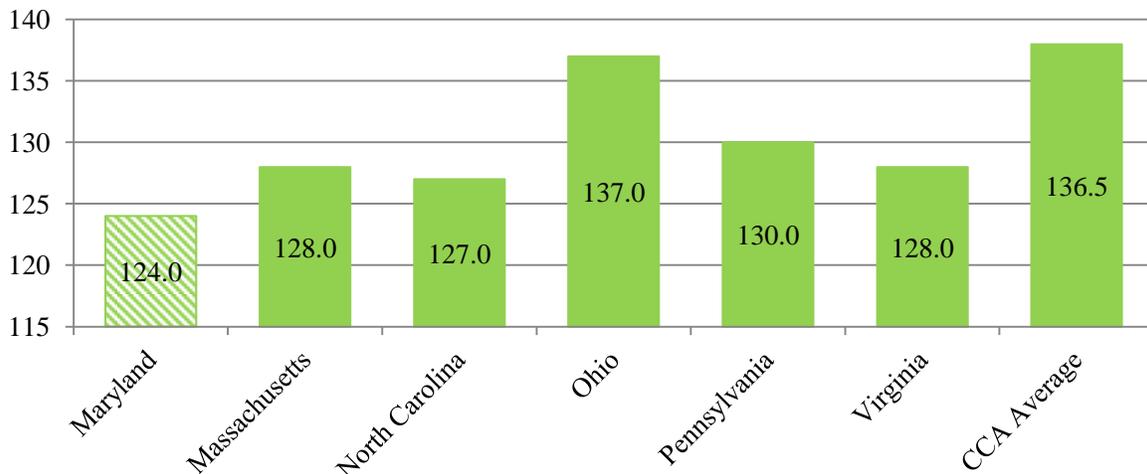
Students at Prince George's Community College take the longest to earn an associate's degree, averaging 4.4 years for full-time students, longer than is needed at the State's public four-year institutions to earn 124 credits and a bachelor's degree. Students at Harford Community College and the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) are also taking longer than most, averaging 4.3 years each.

Maryland's community colleges stress that this metric does not measure the full range of outcomes for students that come through their doors. Many students' goals are to earn a certificate rather than an associate's degree, or to transfer to a four-year institution. If students achieve those goals, then the community colleges believe they should be counted as a successful student. Nevertheless, according to CCA data, students at community colleges in Maryland's competitor states have the same range of goals, and many of those colleges are still able to perform better on associate's degree completion.

Credits to Degree

The amount of time it takes a student to earn a degree directly correlates to the number of credits to a degree. In Maryland, the average number of credits accumulated to complete a bachelor’s degree is 124 for a full-time student roughly corresponds with average time to degree of 4.3 years. Maryland comes the closest of the competitor states to meeting the 120 credit goal, as shown in **Exhibit 9**. North Carolina averages 127 credits, but students take an average of 4.8 years to complete a degree, the highest of the competitor states. In general, Maryland and its competitor states compare favorably to the participating CCA states average of 136.5 credits.

Exhibit 9
Competitor States Average Number of Credits to Degree at Four-year
Institutions
Full-time Students
2008-2009 Academic Year

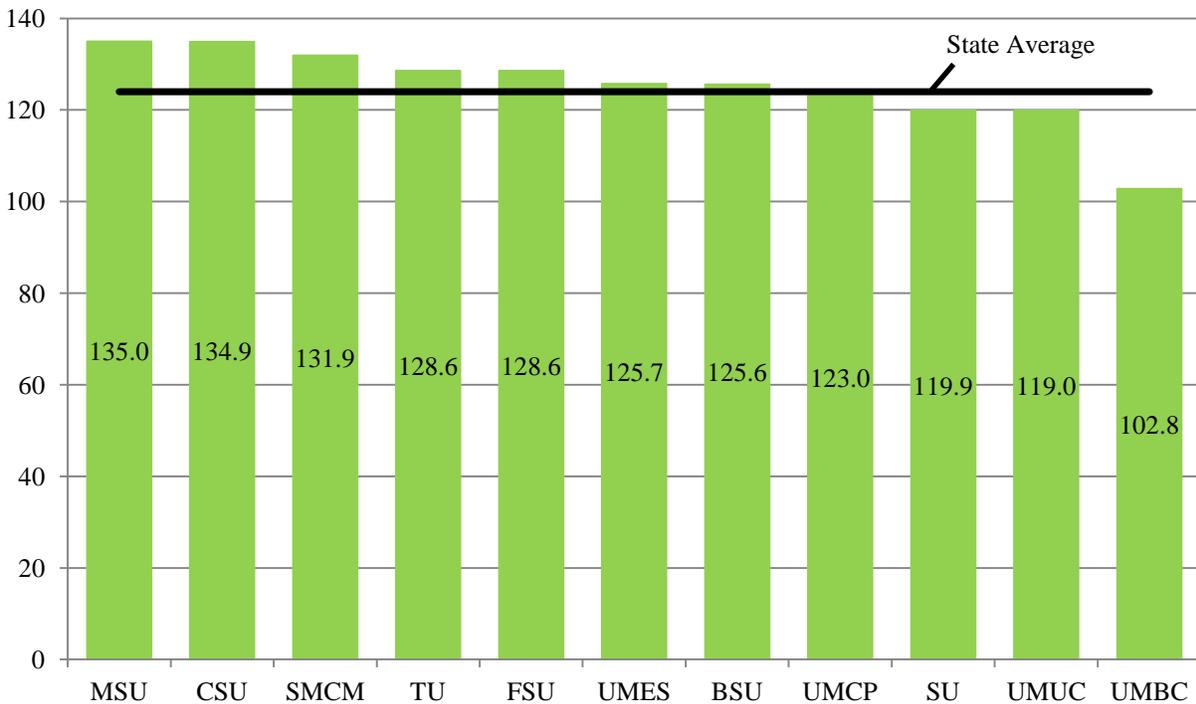


Note: Pennsylvania only includes those colleges from the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Minnesota, New Jersey, and Washington did not provide data for this metric.

Source: Complete College America

The average number of credits to degree at Maryland’s public four-year institutions is shown in **Exhibit 10**. A note of caution regarding the data – although the CCA Technical Guide requests that institutions within a state report credits earned prior to transfer consistently, some Maryland institutions are reporting credits to degree that include transferred credits while others do not. Therefore, comparisons cannot be made among institutions. Before making policy or fiscal decisions based on any performance metric, it is important to ensure the data being reported is consistent and valid.

Exhibit 10
Average Credits to Degree at Maryland's Public Four-year Institutions
First-time Full-time (at Entry) Students
2008-2009 Academic Year



BSU : Bowie State University
 CSU: Coppin State University
 FSU: Frostburg State University
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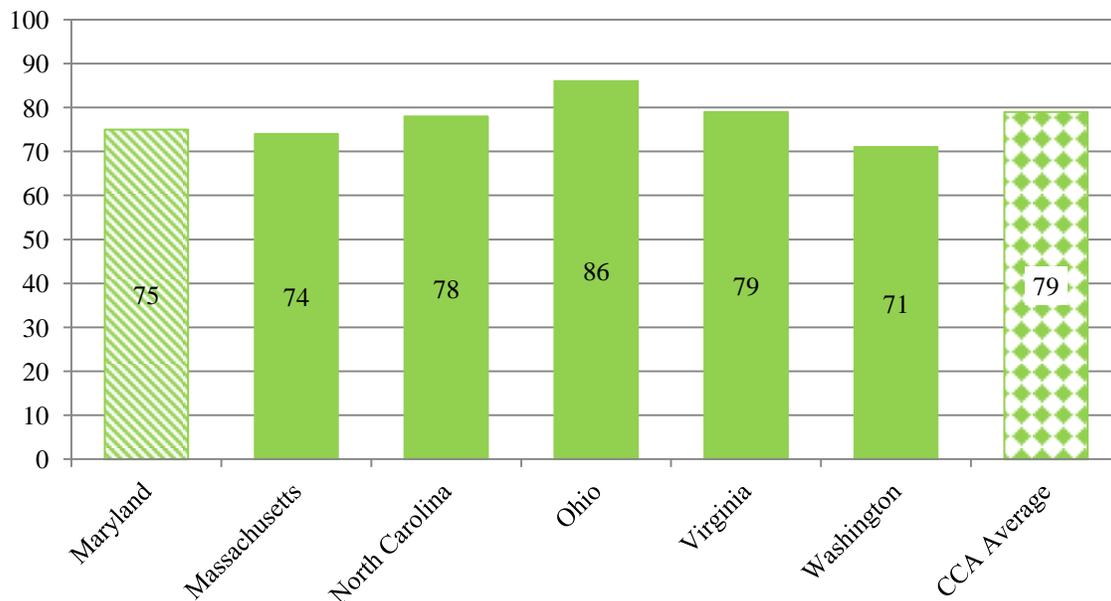
Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission; Complete College America

While no institution's average number of credits exactly equaled the 120-credit goal, three fall below the goal. As previously mentioned, care should be taken when interpreting the data. While the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) appears to excel at this metric, the calculation does not include credits earned at other institutions (*i.e.*, transfer credits). In fact, as shown in Exhibit 6, the average time to complete a degree at UMBC is 4.6 years. Conversely, while SMCM has the shortest time to degree at 3.9 years, it has one of the highest credits to degree at 131.9. This is to be expected given its policy of requiring at least 128 credits

for a degree. In general, USM institutions perform fairly well in keeping students from taking excessive credits, thereby decreasing time to degree. This stems from a major academic initiative as part of USM’s Board of Regents’ Effectiveness and Efficiency Initiative to reduce a student’s time to degree. One component was the establishment of a policy (III-8.02) that established 120 credits as the standard number required for a bachelor’s degree except for programs requiring five years of coursework or programs fulfilling external accreditation standards.

At community colleges, the longer time to a degree translates into an excessive number of credits. It should typically take a full-time student two years to complete 60 credits and attain an associate’s degree. However, in Maryland full-time students on average accumulated 75 credits, as illustrated in **Exhibit 11**. Although high, Maryland compares favorably to most of its competitor states. The number of credits to degree in Maryland’s competitor states ranges from 71 in Washington to 86 in Ohio. Overall, of the 33 CCA states, the average credits to degree was 79.

Exhibit 11
Average Credits to Degree at Maryland’s Public Two-year Institutions
First-time Full-time (at Entry) Students
2008-2009 Academic Year



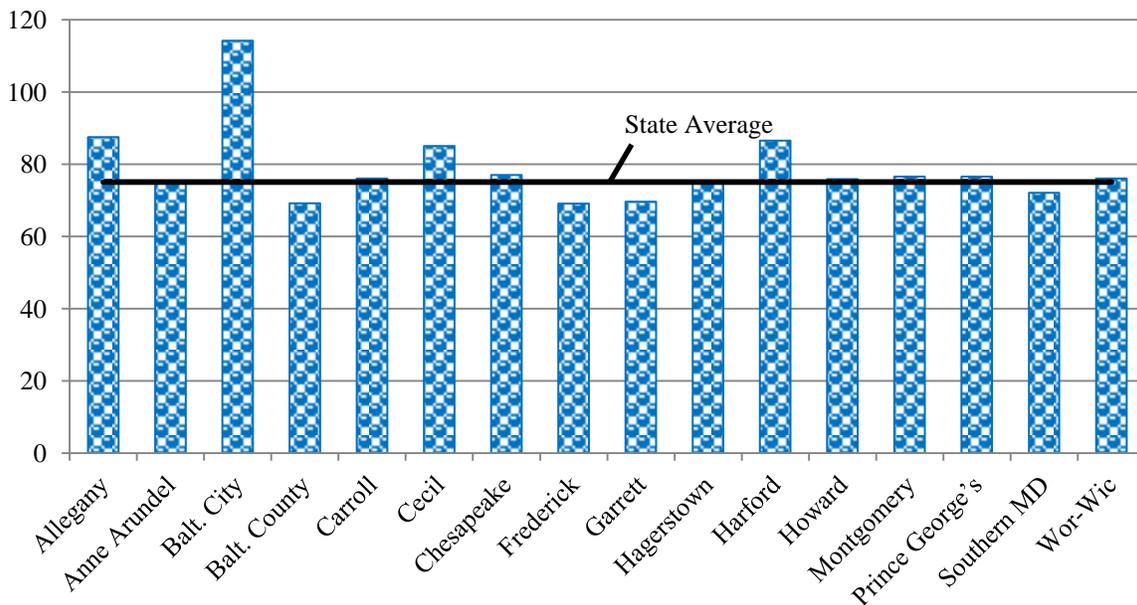
CCA: Complete College America

Note: Minnesota, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania did not provide data for this metric.

Source: Complete College America

The performance of Maryland's community colleges at the institutional level is shown in **Exhibit 12**. Similar to the four-year institutional data, institutions may not be reporting data consistently, so direct comparisons between colleges should be made cautiously. While Exhibit 11 showed that Maryland's community colleges were below the CCA average of 79 credits to degree for full-time students, Exhibit 12 shows wide variations between institutions.

Exhibit 12
Average Number of Credits to Degree at
Maryland's Public Two-year Institutions
First-time Full-time (at Entry) Students
2008-2009 Academic Year



Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission

Full-time students earn an associate's degree with the fewest credits at three community colleges: CCBC (69 credits), FCC (69 credits), and Garrett College (69.5 credits). In the case of CCBC, although students take longer than average to complete their degree (4.3 years), they do so with the lowest number of credits in the State. Baltimore City Community College students earn their associate's degree with by far the most number of credits, at 114 credits.

Completion Initiatives

Various efforts are underway in Maryland to improve student outcomes such as course redesign and reverse transfer initiatives, which are designed to increase degree production moving the State toward the 55% completion goal. One promising area MHEC is focusing on is the “near-completers” initiative – Marylanders who have completed a significant number of credits toward a degree but for various reasons stopped or dropped out just short of completing their degree. According to the Lumina Foundation’s 2012 progress report, about 21% of Maryland’s adult population has gone to college but did not receive an associate or bachelor degree and that “encouraging and helping these adults to complete degrees would go a long way to helping Maryland” reach its goal. This suggests that resources may be best used to encourage these adults to complete their degrees rather than to increase new enrollment.

The Governor’s fiscal 2014 proposed budget includes \$250,000 for the Complete College Maryland grant for the third year in a row. The funds are being used for a competitive grant program to support the four-year public and independent institutions’ near-completers efforts. The Complete College Maryland Near-Completers Grant Program entitled One Step Away provides seed money for institutions to identify, contact, re-enroll, and graduate stop-out and/or drop-out students. The grant targets those students who:

- enrolled for the first time during the 2005-2006 academic year or later;
- completed at least 75% of the credits needed to earn a bachelor’s degree (approximately 90 credits or more);
- are in good academic standing; and
- have dropped/stopped out for at least 12 months.

Students are classified as either degree-eligible or degree-potential. Degree-eligible students are those who:

- accumulated the required number of credits;
- completed the required courses; and
- hold a grade point average above the minimum required for a degree but have not received a degree.

These students may not realize they have met the degree requirements, may qualify for a degree that is different than the one initially being sought, or not met the residency or nonacademic testing requirements associate with degree completion. This would also include those students who did not receive a degree due to financial holds or incomplete paper work.

Degree-potential or nearly eligible students have earned at least 75% of the credits needed for a degree.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, MSU launched its reclamation initiative, which identified those near completers from the fall 2006 first-time full-time cohort. These near-completers were in good academic standing but no longer enrolled at the university. This initiative yielded positive results with MSU's six-year graduation rate increasing from 28.9 to 30.2% for the 2006 cohort. This program will be further discussed in MSU's budget analysis.

Grant awards will range from \$25,000 to \$60,000 and require an institutional match, either in-kind or matching funds, of at least one-third of the total project. In addition, institutions may be eligible for an additional \$10,000 to be used for financial aid for those near-completer students demonstrating the most financial need. Applications for fiscal 2013 funding were due to MHEC in November 2012, with the awarding of grants to start in December 2012. The overall goal is to increase the attainment rate of these students thereby helping the State meet its completion goal.

Completion Forum

The 2012 JCR also requested that MHEC convene an annual college completion summit to share best practices in completion and cost-saving strategies at higher education institutions, both within and outside of the State. MHEC sponsored the Statewide Completion Forum on January 8, 2013, which included presentations by the U.S. Department of Education, the CCA, the Education Trust, and the Lumina Foundation, as well as best practices sessions. Among the consistent themes throughout the presentations and discussions were the need to engage faculty in the completion agenda and student success; focus on timely progression data (*e.g.*, retention, credit accumulation, and mid-term grades) rather than graduation data, which is essentially retrospective; and requiring certain actions of students, such as block scheduling and college advising.

Issues and Recommendations

This paper has covered a number of factors related to increasing college completion and success. The representatives of the higher education segments have been asked to discuss them. The following issues and recommendations are intended to guide the discussion.

Reduce Credits to Degree

Reducing credits to degree should translate into shorter times to degree, increasing the capacity of institutions to serve more students.

- Community colleges should adopt a goal that students seeking associate's degrees should not take more than a reasonable number of credits, *e.g.*, 60 credits. Degree audits could be used to determine the appropriate credit goal for different programs, *e.g.*, general education; and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Likewise, MSU should adopt a credits to degree goal similar to USM's 120-credit goal.
- Require students to do more, such as intrusive student advising, block scheduling, and mandatory first-year courses.
- Ask faculty to do more, such as monitor attendance, mid-term grades, and credit accumulation of students.

Data

Standard data definitions should be adopted for CCA and institutional data submissions, especially regarding transfer credits, so that inter-institutional comparisons can be made.

Incentives

The use of existing and new resources as incentives to focus attention on completion should be considered.

- **Students** – Financial incentives linked to completion could be provided, such as linking existing State and/or institutional financial aid to credit progression and awarding financial aid to students who complete an associate's degree before transferring to a four-year institution or tuition incentives for students completing a degree on time. This will also be discussed further in the Affordability policy paper.
- **Institutions** – Competitive grant funding or performance-based funding tied to progression metrics and completion outcomes should be provided instead of/in addition to input-based funding, both at the State and institution level.