

# Student Achievement & Goals

Florida College identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to its mission, its students, and its programs. Florida College has identified three student achievement goals to inform improvement efforts: the Clearinghouse 6-Year graduation rate as its graduation metric; the 4-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time freshmen as its retention metric; and an internship program as its career preparation metric. The narrative will provide explanations of how the institution identifies goals and outcomes, evaluates achievement using multiple measures and disaggregated data, uses data for improvement, and publishes student achievement information.

Florida College uses several measures to evaluate its success in reaching its student achievement goals. These goals are related to the mission of Florida College and appropriate to the type of students it serves and the programs it offers. This data is collected through various departments, including academic programs and administrative offices. The information that is collected provides a summary of the success of Florida College in reaching its student achievement goals. This information also informs policy decisions to ensure that the development of the school is aligned with its mission.

Among the goals for student achievement are the annually reviewed and revised Academic Program Goals, and these include the specific goals that the college:

1. Provide a post-secondary liberal arts curriculum leading to several bachelor's degrees, while also offering an associate in arts degree. (Purpose IA)
2. Prepare students for advanced studies by providing them with the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

The college's effectiveness in providing bachelor's degrees and preparing students for advanced studies is measured by students' six-year graduation rate (150%), as measured by annual reporting to the National Student Clearinghouse. Florida College's stated measure for achievement to its goal is that "sixty percent of all students admitted to Florida College without restrictions will go on to earn a bachelor's degree within six years of our research cycle."

## **Goal: Improve student graduation rates and degree attainment.**

- Florida College has officially selected the Clearinghouse 6-Year graduation rate (150%) as its graduation rate metric. This measure was adopted as a standard indicator of student success in completing a bachelor's degree and necessary preparation for advanced degrees. This was especially appropriate for Florida College because until 1995 we were a 2-year college with most our graduates going on to other schools for completion of their bachelor's degree. This history impacts our alumni and their children's expectations of the college, so that a higher-than-average number of students still leave the college after their first or second year. Our effectiveness as a school is therefore, tied especially to the percentage of students who graduate from college, whether at FC or elsewhere, which is what the 6-Year graduation rate reflects, as measured by the NSC .
- **Target:** The most recent 2021-22 institutional plan for academics states that 60% of first-time, full-time students will graduate from any college with a bachelor's degree within 6

years. This goal was increased from 40% after consistent improvement to above 50% over the past decade, and is set as an aspirational, but achievable goal given the current three-year average of 58.7. This goal of 60% was also recently affirmed by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Academic Dean, who monitor the national average of the 6-year graduation rate across all schools. This average has risen from 56% to 62% over the past 5 years, as reported by the Student Clearinghouse Research Center affirming Florida College’s goal of moving to 60% or above. The school’s active efforts (see below) to raise the 4-year graduation rate should also improve the 6-year graduation rate.

- **Threshold:** 40%. This threshold is based on historical levels of six-year graduation rates that the college achieved in the 2002 cohort, over 15 years ago when we began to utilize the 6-year graduation rate. The 40% threshold is, therefore, a minimum base from past years, and a level below which we would not permit ourselves to fall.

6-Year Clearinghouse Graduation Rates		
2014 cohort	2015 cohort	2016 cohort
59.9%	60.5%	55.7%

Data has been disaggregated by gender, race, and religion. Florida College ensures all students have equal access to opportunities and resources who might otherwise be marginalized. In compliance with set standards, we disaggregated to observe and address imbalances and potential inequities.

6-Year Clearinghouse Graduation Rates by Gender			
	2014 cohort	2015 cohort	2016 cohort
Female	58.9%	54.2%	52.6%
Male	56.7%	48.5%	49.5%

6-Year Clearinghouse Graduation Rates by Ethnicity			
	2014 cohort	2015 cohort	2016 cohort
Black	38.1%	29.4%	23.1%
Hispanic	55.6%	41.2%	25.0%
White	60.8%	55.2%	57.9%

6-Year Clearinghouse Graduation Rates by Religion			
	2014 cohort	2015 cohort	2016 cohort
Church of Christ	62.4%	53.4%	56.1%
Non-Church of Christ	41.4%	46.0%	29.7%

**Goal: Maximize student achievement to improve four-year graduation.**

- **Target:** In 2021, the leadership team of the college launched a new initiative to improve the four-year graduation rate of the college, Unlike the 6-year graduation rate, this is a measure

of students graduating from Florida College. The 5-year average of first-time, full-time students enrolled at and receiving a bachelor's degree from Florida College within 4 years will increase from 23% in 2021 to 35% in 2026. This target was set as a stretch goal, which is 2% higher than the graduation rate (33%) that the College will have in 2026, if all new 4-year academic programs have student persistence rates at Florida College that are in line with their national averages.

- **Threshold:** 20%. This threshold was set based on historic four-year graduation rates in 2019 above which we are seeking to climb.

Florida College analyzed its retention and determined measures to take to increase the retention rate for students. This will be measured by the 4-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time freshmen. These are students graduating at Florida College and not other schools. Florida College has proposed several steps to improve its retention rate, to be borne out by the 4-year graduation rate.

The College Leadership Team, with support of the faculty, established an institutional goal of increasing from 23% in 2021 to 35% in 2026. This is based on planned rises in retention and completion rates in newly instituted four-year degrees, including Nursing, Kinesiology, and Marketing. Our past two years of 4-year graduation rates are showing steady maintenance and improvement.

5-Year average of 4-year Graduation Rate				
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
19.2%	20.9%	23.2%	23.2%	24.6%

**Goal: Facilitate students' workforce hireability and success**

- **Target:** Increase the percentage of graduating seniors who participate in at least one internship during their college career from 65% to 80%.
- **Threshold:** 60%. This threshold is set as a past level below which we do not want to fall.

A July 2020 survey of current and prospective students revealed that career preparation, including internships, is a priority of our target market. Florida College evaluates its internship program and identifies opportunities to improve the participation of its students in this valuable resource. Our model had been that, as a rule, only students whose major required an internship took advantage of the opportunity.

However, as Florida College reviewed its internship data, we determined three areas we could use to increase the participation rate: 1) The utilization of Handshake software to facilitate getting students in touch with businesses that can provide internships; 2) Providing opportunities for internships to those majors that have not traditionally required them, by the creation of an Office of Experiential Learning and an Internship Coordinator to help students recognize the internships that are available to them; and, 3) The introduction of new degree programs that will have internships built into their requirements.

Our analysis of the growth of new bachelor's programs with internships (e.g., Kinesiology and Nursing) leads us to calculate that the level of students who participate in at least one internship

during their college career will rise to 80% of the student body by 2026, compared to currently levels of 63-65%.

Graduating seniors with an internship (by program)

<b>Program</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
<b>Business Administration (BS)</b>	24	21	29
<b>Sports Management (BS)</b>	4	1	1
<b>Elementary Education (BS)</b>	10	5	7
<b>Educational Studies: Reading (BS)</b>			1
<b>Music Education (BS)</b>	2	3	
<b>Communication (BA)</b>	6	2	9
<b>Organizational Communication (BA)</b>	4	2	1
<b>Music (BA)</b>			1
<b>History (BA)</b>	1		
<i>Internship Graduates</i>	51	34	49
<i>All Graduates</i>	79	52	78
<i>Internship Percentage</i>	65%	65%	63%

Florida College determined that the criteria are appropriate and consistent with the College’s mission. Additionally, these criteria, or items measured, are standard measures of success and common indicators of student achievement in higher education and are therefore justified as acceptable measures for this reason as well.