

Student Retention and Graduation Rates

Colleges pay lots of attention to the percentage of their new freshmen who return for their sophomore year as well as the percentage of each freshman cohort who eventually graduate. These two metrics are reported to regulatory agencies as well to publishers of college guidebooks and college choice websites. These two percentages are widely regarded as proxies for student satisfaction and achievement.

Retention and graduation rates can and do vary significantly between different colleges and even from year to year at one college depending upon many variables. Incoming student quality indices such as SAT scores are highly correlated with retention rates; better students tend to stay with their studies and their original college. Based upon analysis of benchmark data from peer colleges, RMU believes that it has retention and graduation rates that are very comparable with colleges of similar academic quality.

RMU actively tries to boost its retention and graduation rates. The Center for Student Success and the Department of Athletics offer extensive tutoring and counseling services to students who need academic or personal help with various aspects of their college life. The University also has a Committee for Student Success with membership from every area of its operations. The Committee examines retention data and trends in order to pinpoint and address areas of strength and weakness.

Here is some recent retention and graduation rate data for RMU:

Freshman to Sophomore Retention - First Time, Full Time Freshmen					
Reported in	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Cohort Beginning	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018
One Year Retention Rate	85%	80%	81%	81%	83%
Six Year Graduation Rate - First Time, Full Time Freshmen					
Reported in	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Cohort Beginning	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Six Year Graduation Rate	58%	61%	61%	64%	65%
Transfer Out Rate - First Time, Full Time Freshman					
Reported in	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Cohort Beginning	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Original Cohort Number	722	896	781	844	981
Transferred Out	217	219	129	188	228
Transfer Out Rate	30%	24%	17%	22%	23%

RMU has made significant improvement in all three of these metrics over the past decade. The 65% six year graduation rate reported for fall 2019 is the highest in RMU's history.