

# New Mexico Highlands University

## 2018-2019 Retention Plan

### Executive Summary

---

Institutions that successfully retain students coordinate efforts of administration, student support services, faculty, and office and department personnel and commit to serve their students in the best way possible to ensure their academic success. While New Mexico Highlands University has had several ad-hoc retention committees over the years, these committees were not officially recognized by the university as a whole. Implementation of the most 2016-2020 Retention Plan began with the formalization of the Retention Advisory Council with broad representation across stakeholders and oversight from the newly created Office for Strategic Enrollment Management.

To document the progress towards the Retention Plan, the Retention Advisory Council distributes a yearly list of accomplishments to the faculty, staff, students, administration, and Board of Regents. The 2017-2018 accomplishments were documented in the 2017-2018 Retention Accomplishments [document](#). To refine retention strategies for the next academic year, the Retention Advisory Council created the 2018-2019 Retention Plan, which provides more context, as well as clarification and alignment of past goals and new goals.

On November 3-4, 2016 the faculty, staff and administration participants of the Retention Summit event identified several sub-populations and strategies believed to represent the best retention improvement opportunities to focus on during Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles. The Retention Advisory Council formulated goals for each of the identified sub-populations. Strategy teams were created for each of the five strategies identified at the summit. These teams immediately began developing actionable recommendations to improve retention in the specified areas by first reviewing data for each subpopulation and, in some cases, surveying or interviewing students. Based on this additional investigation of each subpopulation, strategy teams created a report with data-informed recommendations on how to move forward with their respective subpopulation (see 2017-2018 Retention Accomplishments Report for full reports). In some cases, the team recommended not to continue to focus on a particular subpopulation.

This Retention Plan documents a disciplined approach to goal-setting and development of a blueprint that identifies priority improvement targets, strategies, and action plans. It was developed through a collaborative process and serves as a communication tool that describes what Highlands University expects to achieve and how it will accomplish it. Ongoing commitment by the Highlands community is crucial for the success of these strategies.

Outlined below are the retention, completion, and student success goals currently developed by the Retention Advisory Council. The 2018-2019 Retention Plan includes additional goals and the removal of past goals based on newly collected data. Additional description of the goals listed below and the historical and diagnostic data on which they were based are provided in detail in the “Goals Informed by Historical Data” section of the 2018-2019 Retention plan found [here](#).

#### **Goals Informed by Historical Data**

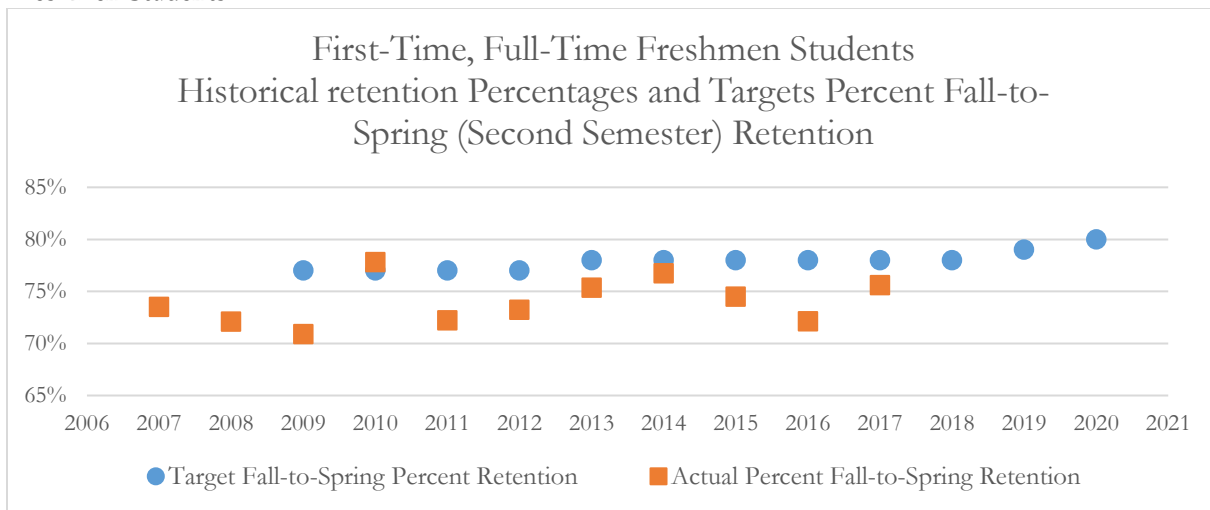
New Mexico Highlands’ overall goals are to increase persistence, completion, and student success for all students. Specific goals, along with relevant historical data on which the goals were based, are also listed below. Additional and subsequent quantifications will be developed by the retention council following an “after action” review of each annual PDSA cycle. The long-term 2020 retention goals were set in advance, and short-term academic-year goals are set yearly in order to account for the most recent data when goal-setting.

The Council acquired data for this plan update from Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (OIER) to create additional goals within the 2018-2019 Retention Plan. In the 2018-2019 Retention Plan, the Council also included retention goal targets up to 2020 for freshmen and transfer students, as well as for athletes and STEM majors, and yearly completion goals for the cohorts who have not yet reached the 4 or 6-year marks. This document is an executive summary that only includes the broad level retention, completion and student success goals set for freshmen and transfer students; it does not include the subpopulation goals. For the complete 2018-2019 Retention Plan please go to: [2018-19 Retention Plan](#).

**Goal 1: Increase Persistence among Freshmen**

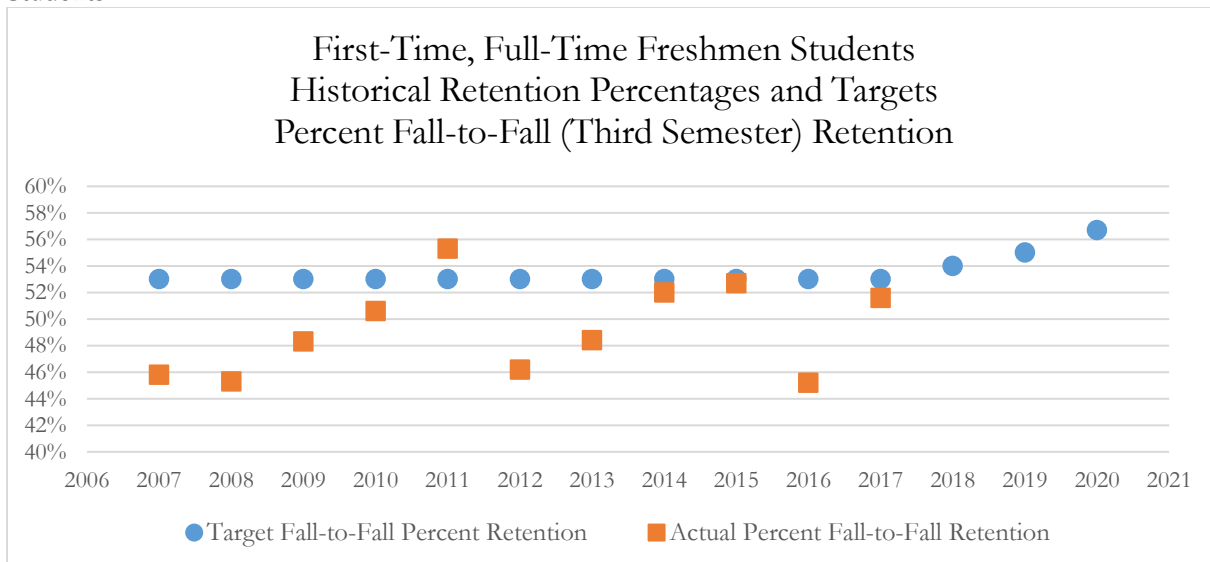
1. Highlands University’s 2018 cohort fall-to-spring (2nd semester) retention goal for first-time, full-time freshmen is 78%.

**Figure 1.** Historical Retention Rates and Targets Fall-to-Spring (2<sup>nd</sup> Semester) First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Students.



2. Highlands University’s 2018 cohort fall-to-fall (2<sup>nd</sup> year) retention goal for first-time, full-time freshmen is 54%.

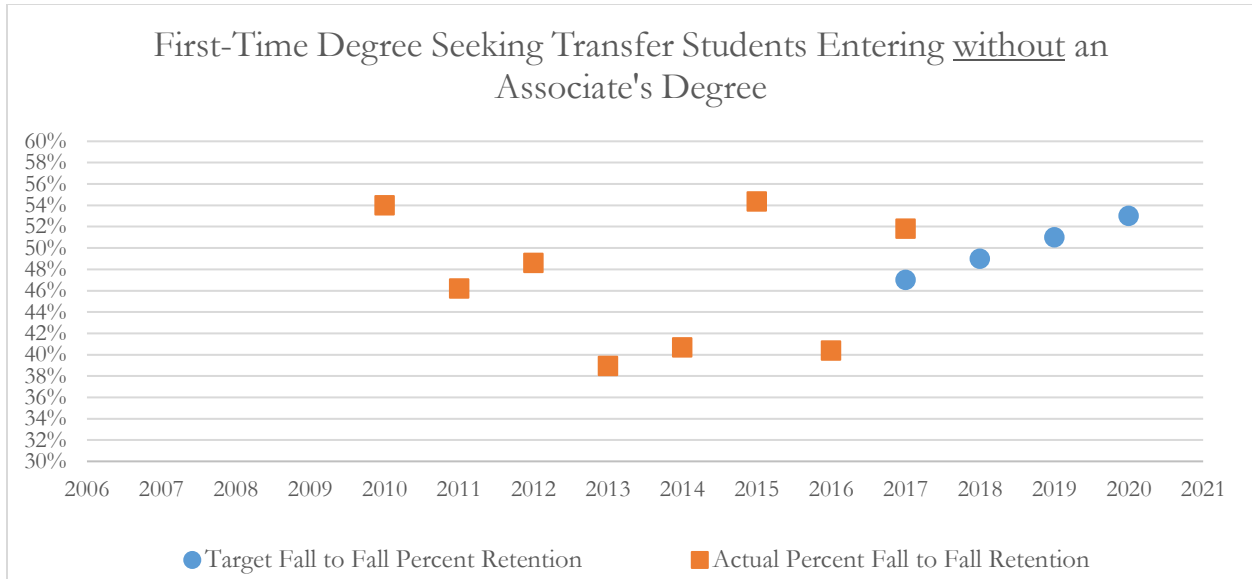
**Figure 2.** Historical Retention Rates and Targets Fall-to-Fall (2<sup>nd</sup> Year) First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Students.



**Goal 2: Increase Persistence among Transfer Students**

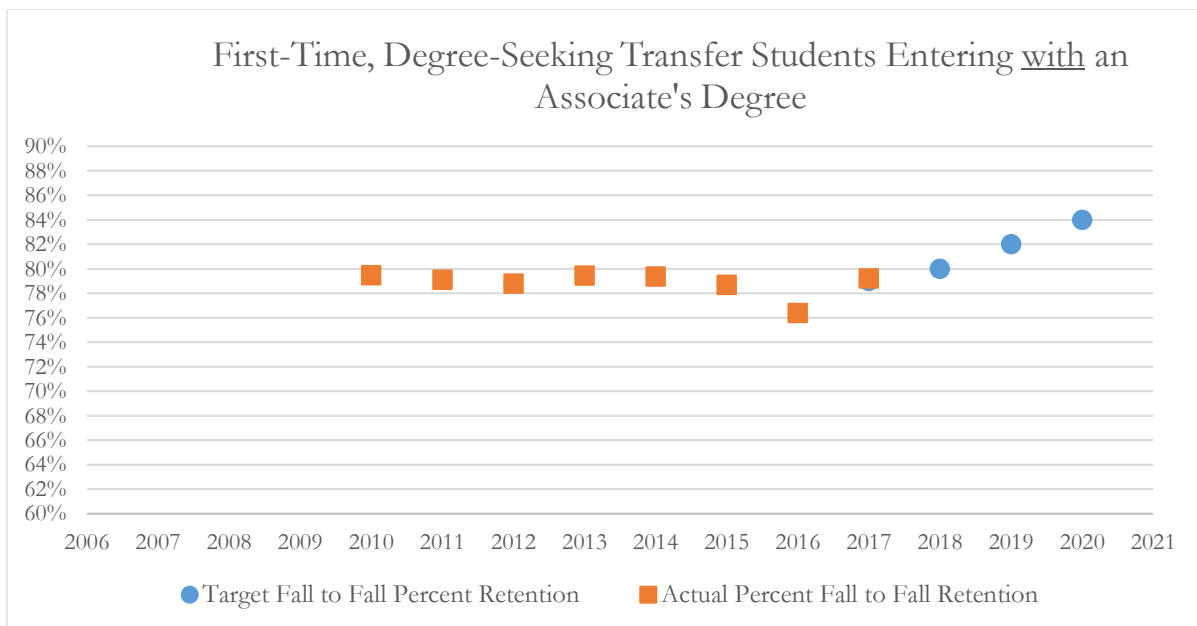
- Highlands University’s 2018 cohort fall-to-fall 3<sup>rd</sup> semester retention goal for first-time transfer students without an associate’s degree is 54%.

**Figure 3.** Historical Retention rates and Targets – First-time Transfer Students without an Associate’s Degree Fall-to-Fall (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester) Retention.



- Highlands University’s 2018 cohort fall-to-fall 3<sup>rd</sup> semester retention goal for first-time transfer students with an associate’s degree is 80%.

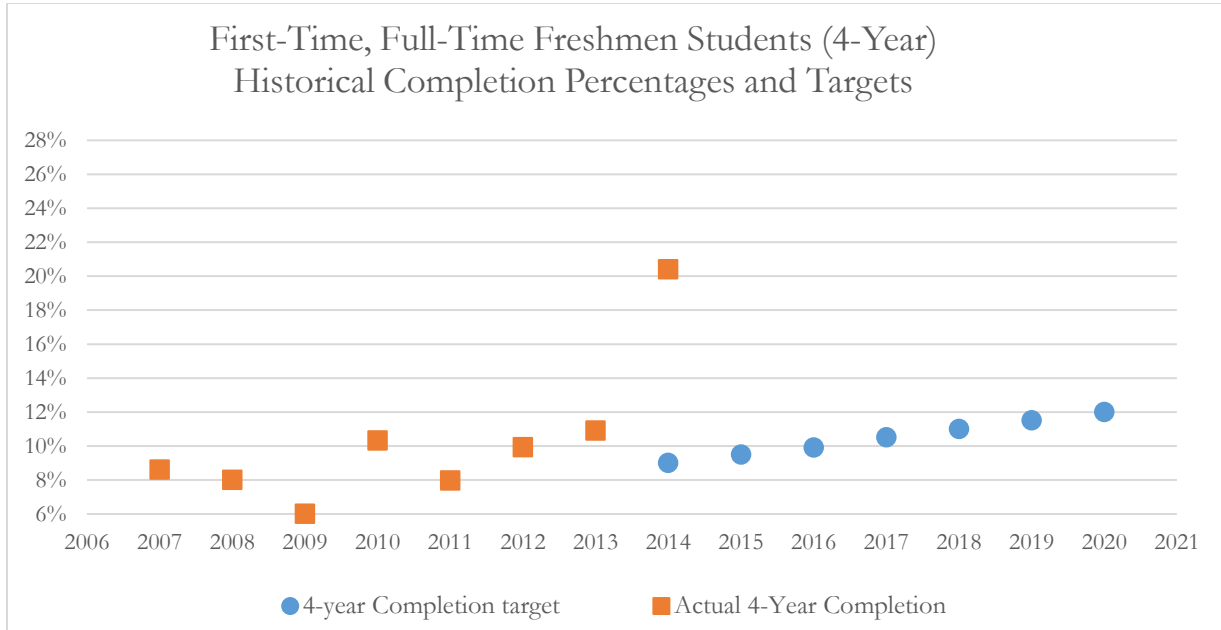
**Figure 4.** Historical Retention rates and Targets – First-time Transfer Students with an Associate’s Degree Fall-to-Fall (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester) Retention.



### Goal 3: Increase Completion among Freshmen

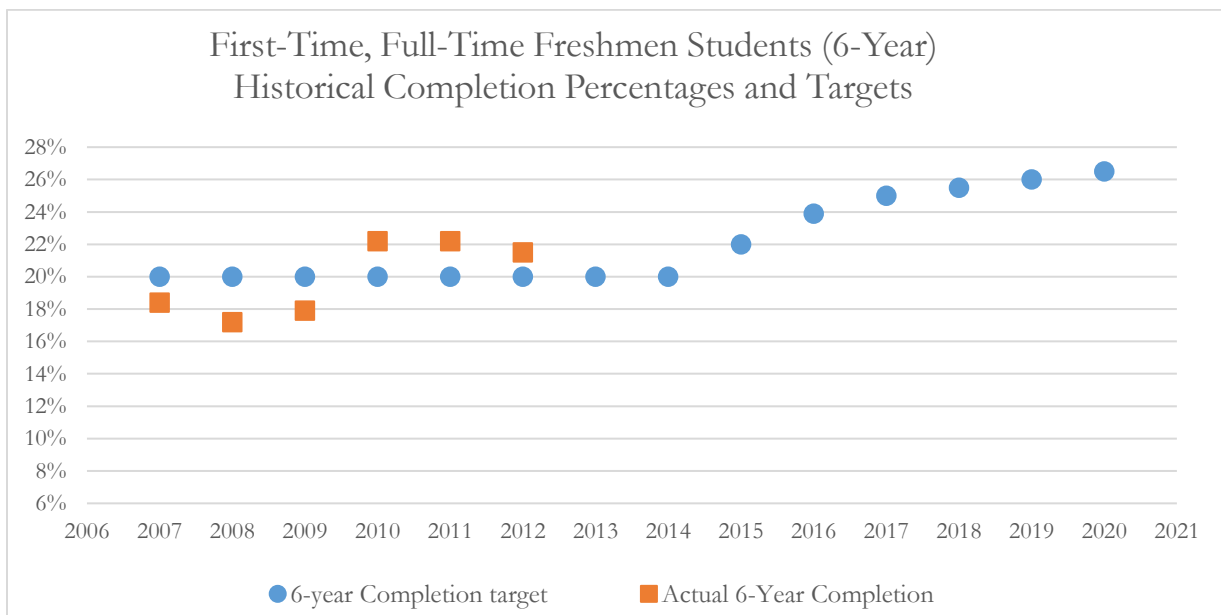
5. Highlands University's class of 2020 4-year completion goal for first-time, full-time freshmen (fall 2016 cohort) is 9.9%. The 4-year completion goal for the class of 2019 (fall 2015 cohort) is 9.5%.

**Figure 5.** Historical Completion and Target Rates-First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Students (4-year).



6. Highlands University's class of 2020 6-year completion goal for first-time, full-time freshmen (fall 2014 cohort) is 20%. The 6-year completion goal for the class of 2019 (fall 2013 cohort) is 20%.

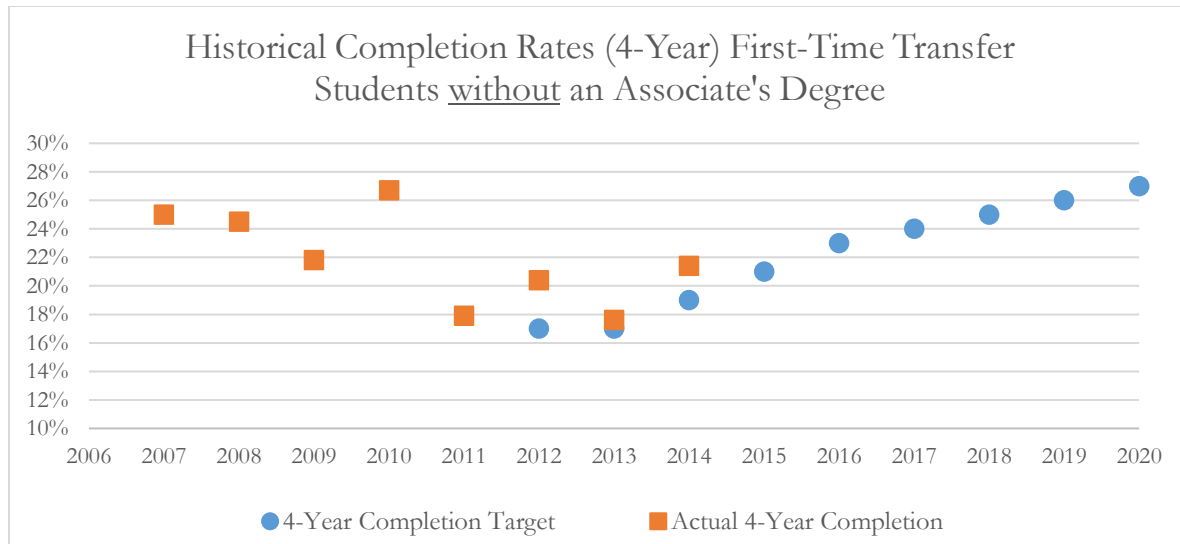
**Figure 6.** Historical Completion and Target Rates-First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Students (6-year).



#### Goal 4: Increase Completion among Transfer Students

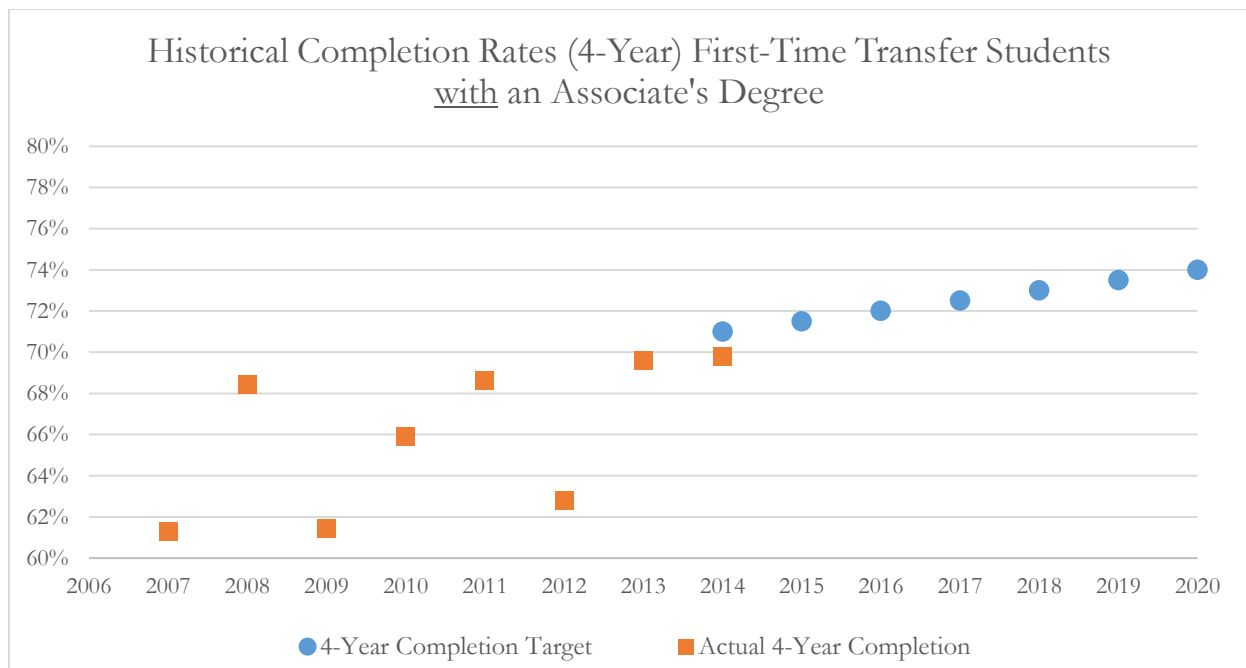
7. Highlands University's class of 2020 (fall 2016 cohort) 4-year completion goal for first-time transfer students without an associate's degree is 23%. The completion goal for the class of 2019 (fall 2015 cohort) is 21%.

**Figure 7.** Historical Four-Year Completion Rates – First-Time Transfer Students without an Associate's Degree (full-time and part-time).



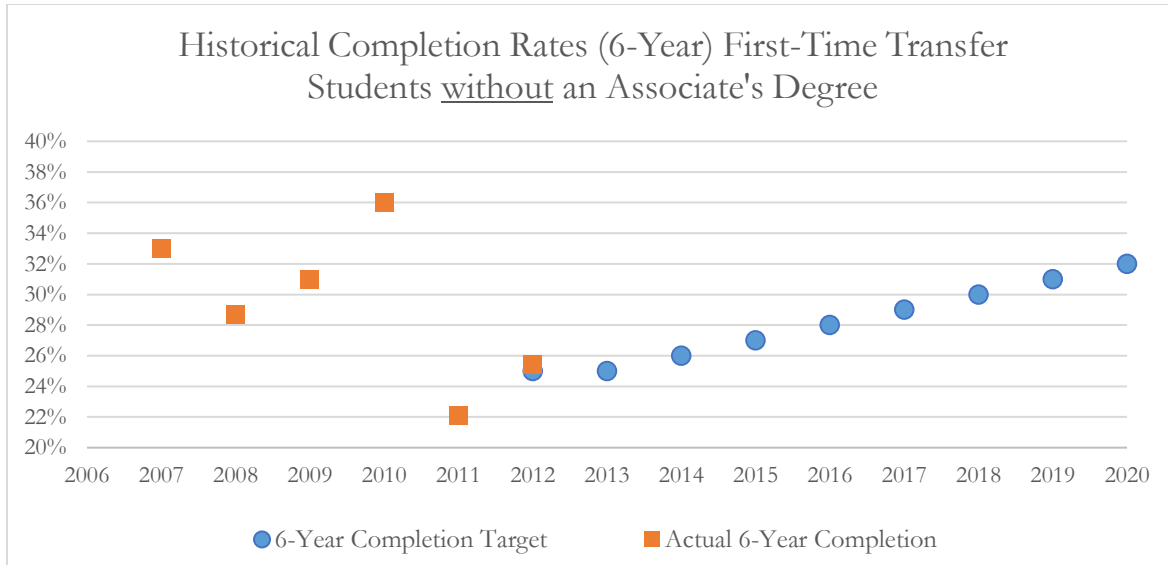
8. Highlands University's class of 2020 (fall 2016 cohort) 4-year completion goal for first-time transfer students with an associate's degree is 74%. The completion goal for the class of 2019 (fall 2015 cohort) is 73.5%.

**Figure 8.** Historical Four-Year Completion Rates – First-Time Transfer Students with an Associate's Degree (full-time and part-time).



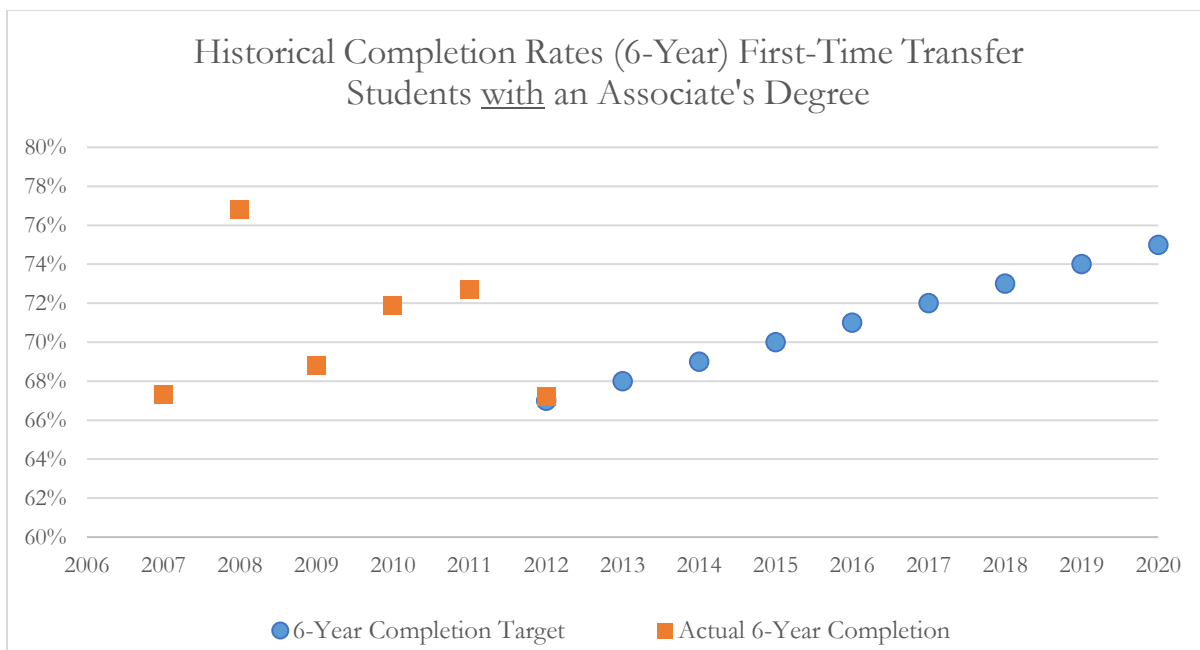
9. Highlands University's class of 2020 (fall 2014 cohort) 6-year completion goal for first-time transfer students without an associate's degree is 32%. The completion goal for the class of 2019 (fall 2013 cohort) is 31%.

**Figure 9.** Historical Six-Year Completion Rates – First-Time Transfer Students without an Associate's Degree (full-time and part-time).



10. Highlands University's class of 2020 (fall 2014 cohort) 6-year completion goal for first-time transfer students with an associate's degree is 75%. The completion goal for the fall 2013 cohort is 74%.

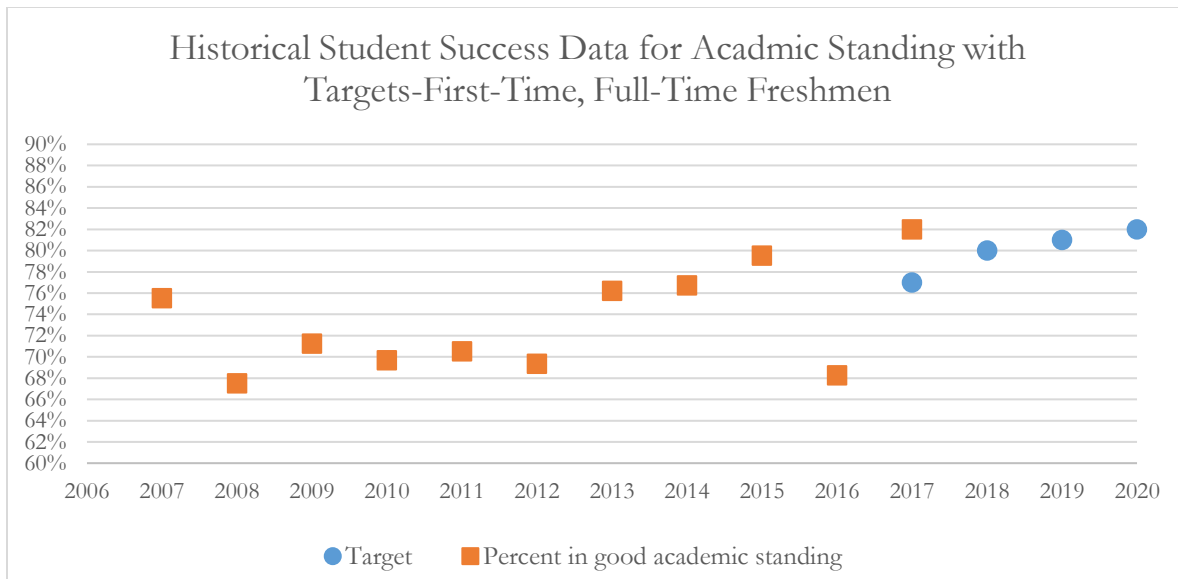
**Figure 10.** Historical Six-Year Completion Rates – First-Time Transfer Students with an Associate's Degree (full-time and part-time).



### Goal 5: Increase Student Success among Freshmen

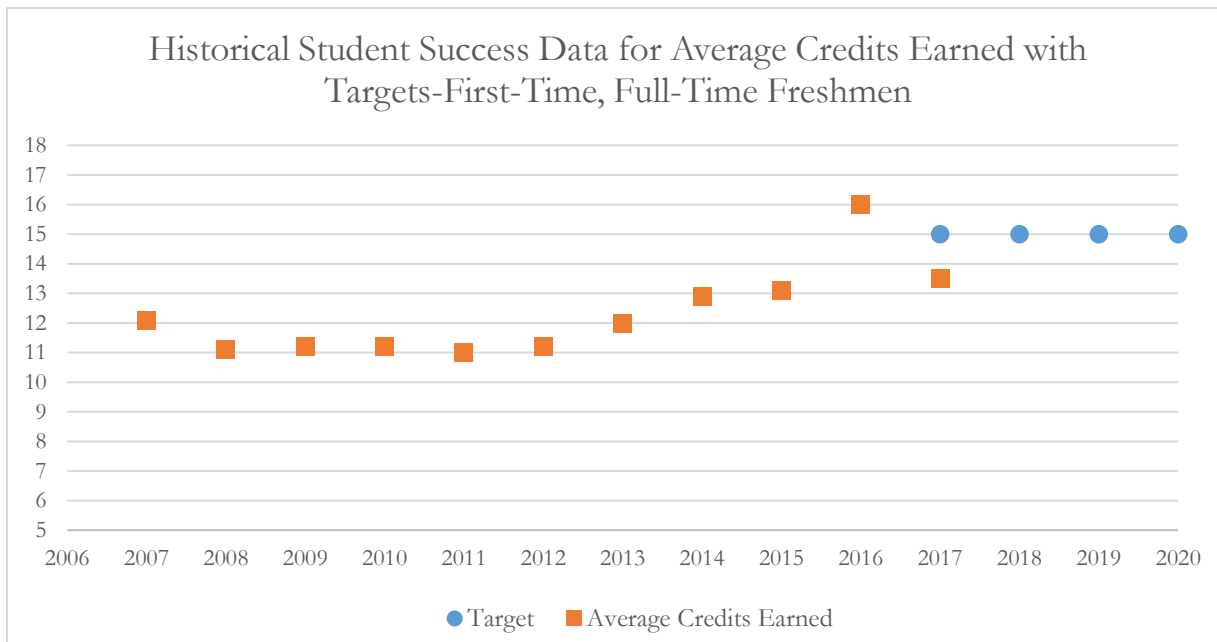
11. Highlands' 2020 goal for academic standing is that 82% of first-time full-time freshmen will be in good academic standing (not on academic probation) after the first semester. The goal for the upcoming cohort (fall 2018) is 80%.

**Figure 11.** Historical Student Success Data for Academic Standing with Targets-First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen, First Semester.



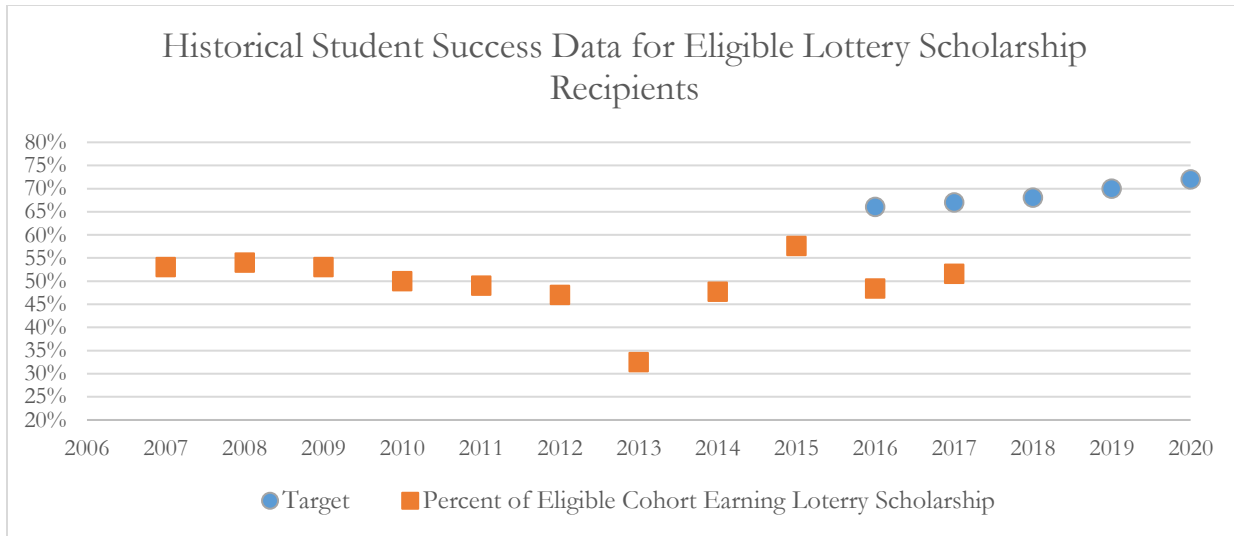
12. The 2020 goal for average credits earned by first-time full-time freshmen in their first semester is 15 credits. That goal for the Fall 2018 cohort is 16 credits earned.

**Figure 12.** Historical Student Success Data for Average Credits Earned with Targets-First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen, First Semester.

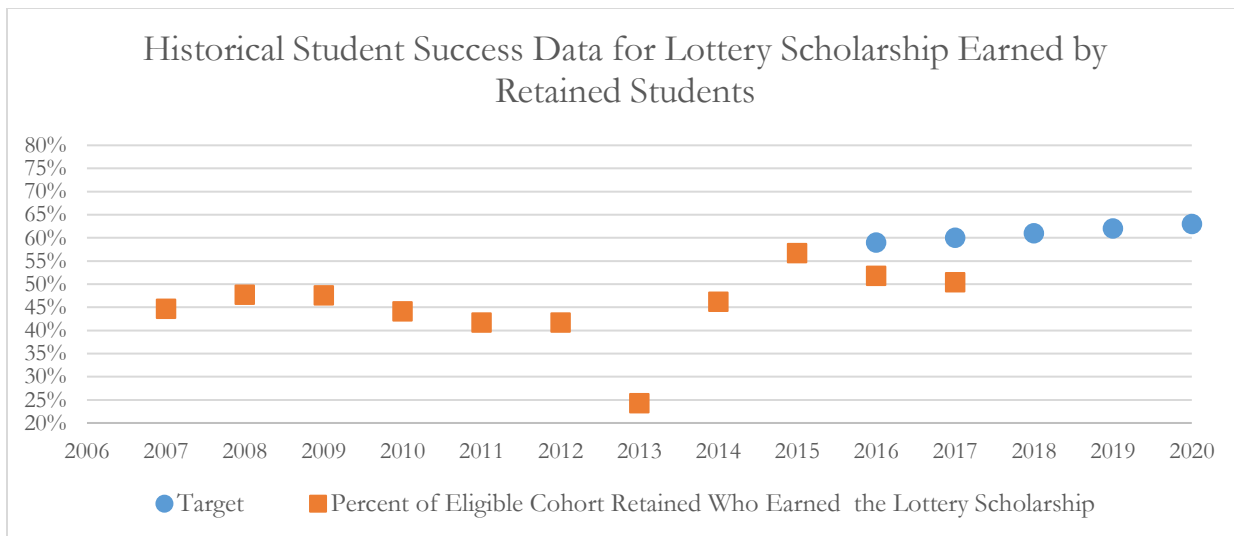


13. The 2020 goals for the Lottery Scholarship is that 75% of the cohort who are eligible will earn the scholarship and 65% of the eligible cohort retained will have earned the scholarship. The goals for the upcoming cohort (fall 2018) is 68% of the total eligible cohort and 61% of those retained will earn the scholarship.

**Figure 13 a.** Historical Student Success Data for Lottery Scholarship with Targets-First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen, First Semester.



**Figure 13 b.** Historical Student Success Data for Lottery Scholarship Earned with Targets-First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen, First Semester.



Highlands University provides nine of the ten RNL “best retention practices,” including learning communities, a required first-year seminar, supplemental instruction leaders/embedded tutors, peer mentors/peer advisers, required on-campus housing for freshmen, tutoring services, one-to-one advising by professional staff, early alert, and required orientation for new students. Highlands also offers most of the RNL “35 good practices in retention.” These practices have been implemented for several years and are continually assessed and updated to best meet the needs of Highlands students. Those practices that are institutionalized and overseen by appropriate departments produce strategic plans and yearly reports that aim to increase their effectiveness and further information about the progress of those efforts can be found in those reports.