

RESEARCH BRIEF

**Student Achievement Criteria at NOVA:
Graduation by Select Student Characteristics**

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) is deeply committed to the values of student access and student success. NOVA demonstrates this commitment by using evidence-based decision making to improve opportunities for students to succeed. After a long-standing history of evaluating outcomes related to retention, graduation, and other evolving priorities, NOVA refocused efforts in 2019 on a more comprehensive evaluation of eight critical measures of student achievement, which are as follows: 1) College Readiness; 2) Enrollment; 3) Course Success; 4) Retention; 5) Graduation; 6) Transfer; 7) Job Placement; and 8) Licensing Exams.¹

In This Brief

This Brief highlights NOVA's performance on the Graduation criteria. Completion of an academic program is a key goal for students of any institution of higher learning. NOVA tracks two measures of graduation: the total number of annual graduates and the graduation rate of first-time in college, full-time, program placed students. College-wide data are presented for both measures of graduation. For the graduation rate measure, this Brief disaggregates data by select student characteristics. Disaggregation by these characteristics allows the college to identify where achievement gaps exist within its eight student achievement criteria.

Key Findings

- **Annual Number of Graduates:** From the 2014-15 to 2018-19 academic years, the annual number of graduates declined by less than one percent (from 6,771 graduates in the 2014-15 academic year to 6,747 graduates in 2018-19).
- **Graduation Rate:** Among the Fall 2015 first-time in college, full-time, program placed cohort, the following student groups had graduation rates that were lower than their respective counterparts and the College overall: students who identified as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, or another race or ethnicity; male students; older students; and students who received a Pell Grant.

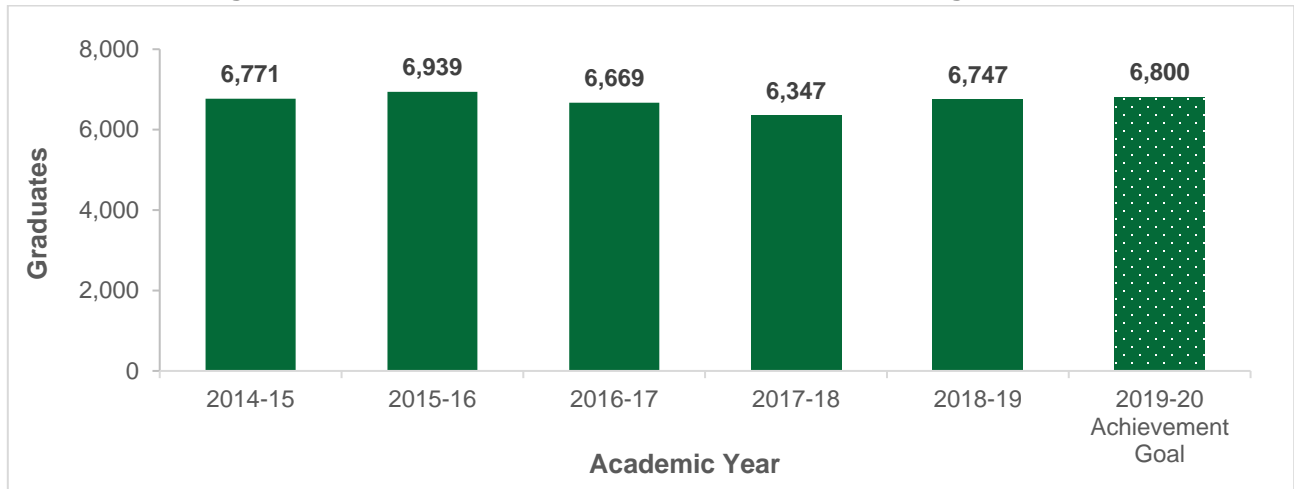
¹ For more information, see *Report 29-20: Student Achievement Criteria at NOVA: Comprehensive Evaluation Report 2020*.

Section 1. Overall Graduation Trends

Annual Number of Graduates

The total number of annual graduates includes all students who earned a degree or credential from NOVA at any point in an academic year. From the 2014-15 to 2017-18 academic years, the annual number of graduates declined by 6 percent (from 6,771 graduates in the 2014-15 academic year to 6,347 graduates in 2017-18). However, the number of graduates increased by 6 percent from 2017-18 to 2018-19, returning to approximately the same level as 2014-15.

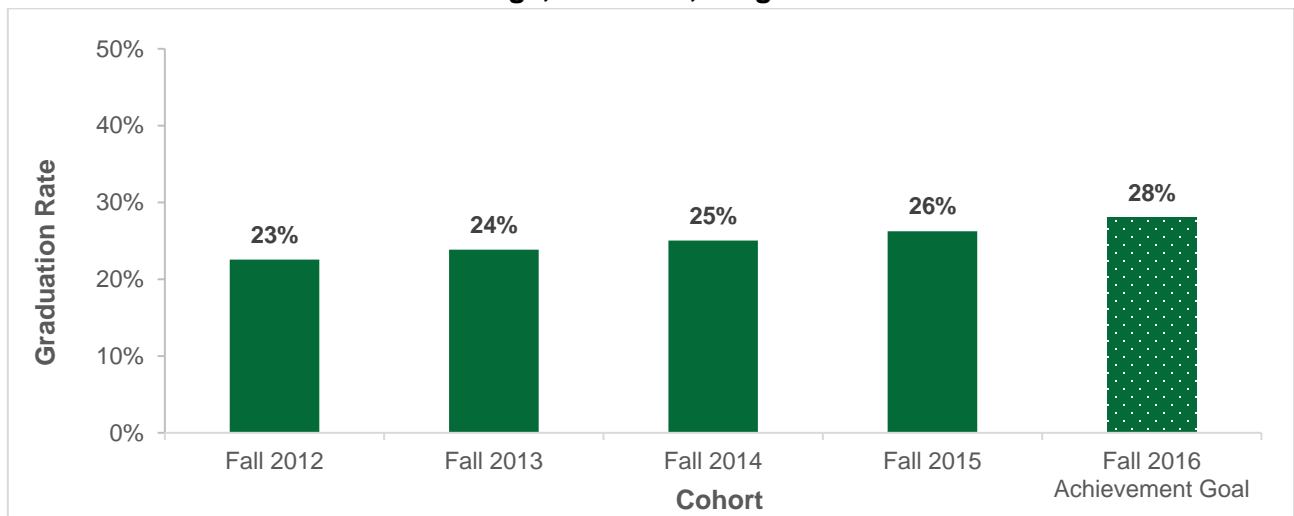
Figure 1. Annual Number of Graduates: 2014-15 through 2019-20



Graduation Rate

The graduation rate is defined as the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, program placed (degree- or certificate-seeking) students who completed their program within 150 percent of normal time. From the Fall 2012 to Fall 2015 first-time in college, full-time, program placed cohorts, the graduation rate increased by three percentage points (from 23 to 26 percent).

Figure 2. Overall Graduation Rate: Fall 2012 through Fall 2016
First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts



Section 2. Graduation Rate by Select Student Characteristics

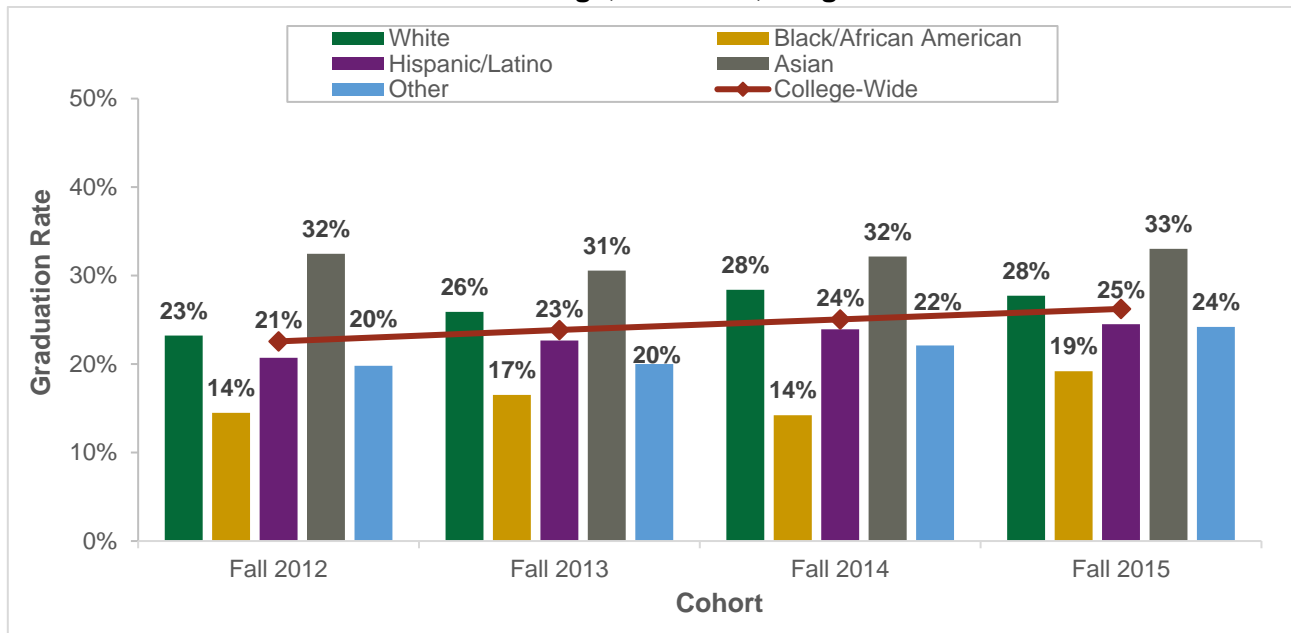
This section presents data regarding the graduation rate of first-time in college, full-time, program placed students at NOVA. The graduation rate is defined as the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, program placed (degree- or certificate-seeking) students who completed their program within 150 percent of normal time to program completion. Graduation rates are disaggregated by the following student characteristics: race/ethnicity, gender, age group, Pell Grant status, and first generation status.

Graduation Rate by Race/Ethnicity

Among the Fall 2015 cohort of first-time in college, full-time, program placed students, students who identified as Asian had the highest graduation rate (33 percent). Students who identified as white also had a relatively high graduation rate (28 percent). The graduation rate for both groups was above the College-wide graduation rate of 26 percent for this cohort.

Conversely, the other three racial/ethnic groups fell below the College-wide graduation rate of 26 percent. Students who identified as Black/African American had the lowest graduation rate (19 percent), followed by students of another race or ethnicity (24 percent) and Hispanic/Latino students (25 percent).

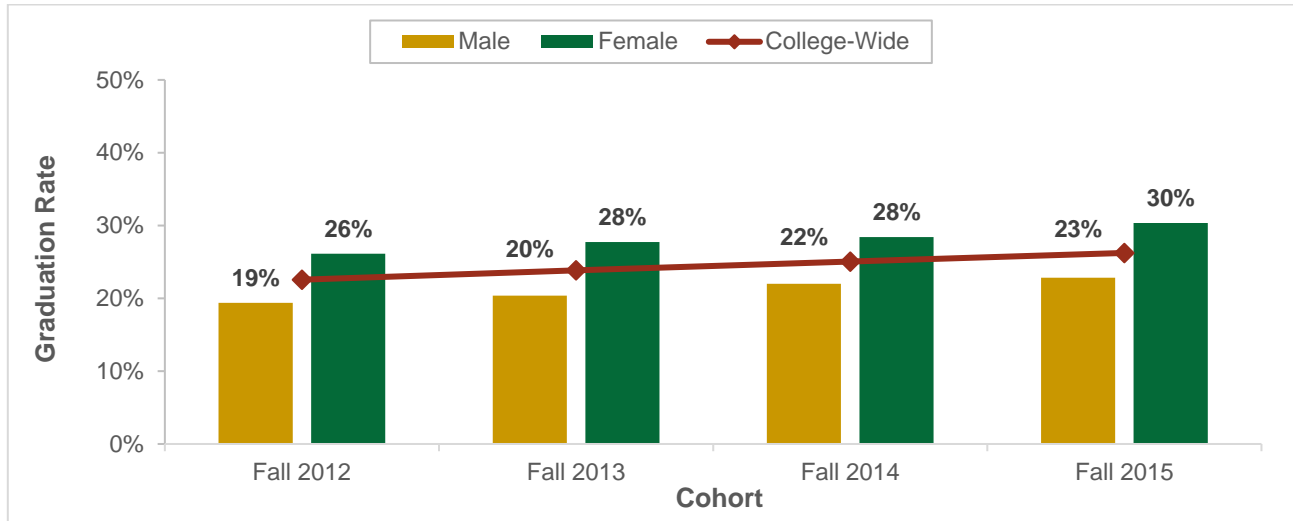
Figure 3. Graduation Rate by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015 First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts



Graduation Rate by Gender

Among the Fall 2015 cohort of first-time in college, full-time, program placed students, female students had a substantially higher graduation rate than male students (30 versus 23 percent). While the graduation rate for female students was well above the College-wide average of 26 percent, the graduation rate of male students was three percentage points below the College.

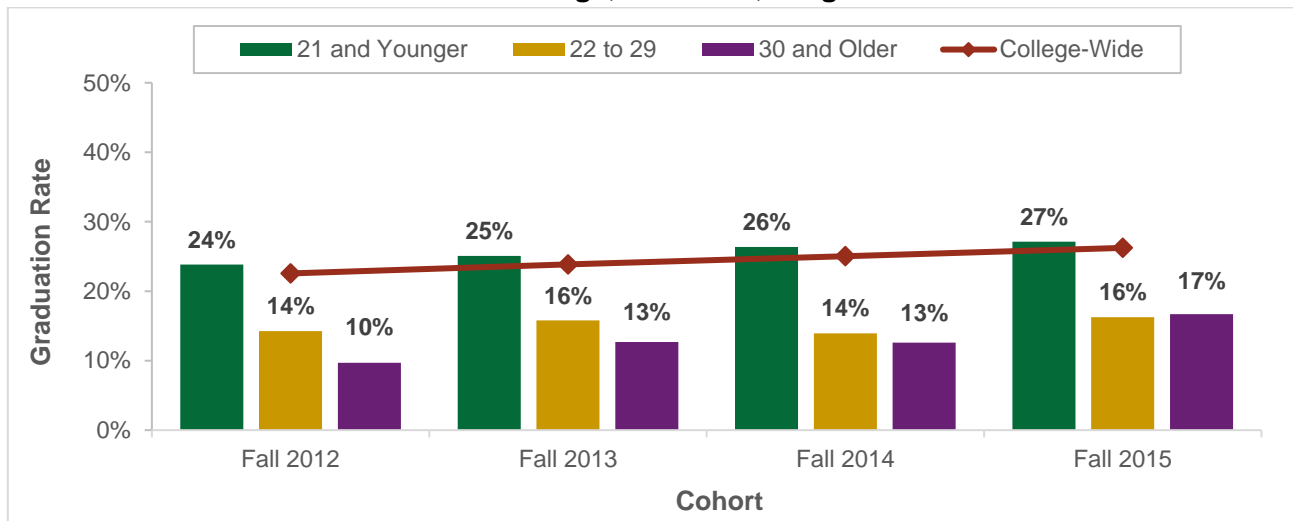
Figure 4. Graduation Rate by Gender: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015 First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts



Graduation Rate by Age Group

Among the Fall 2015 cohort of first-time in college, full-time, program placed students, students aged 21 and younger had a higher graduation rate than older students (27 percent versus 16 percent for students aged 22 to 29; and 17 percent for students aged 30 and older). The graduation rate for both older age groups was below the College-wide average of 26 percent.

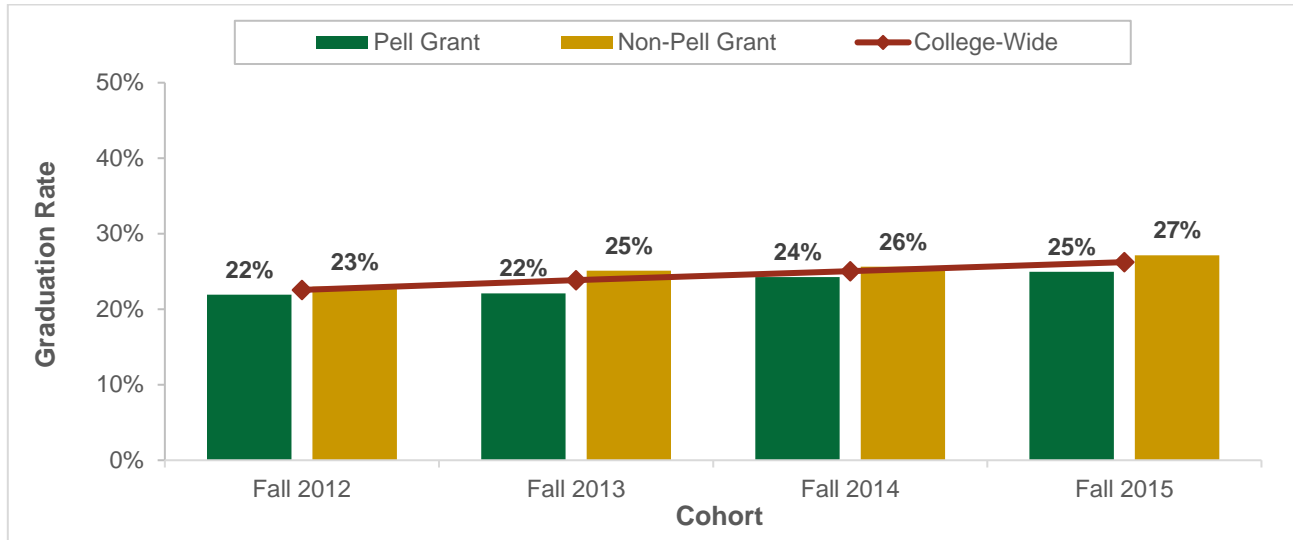
Figure 5. Graduation Rate by Age Group: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015 First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts



Graduation Rate by Pell Grant Status

Among the Fall 2015 cohort of first-time in college, full-time, program placed students, students who did not receive a Pell Grant had a higher graduation rate than Pell Grant recipients (27 versus 25 percent). While the graduation rate for non-Pell Grant recipients was above the College-wide average of 26 percent, the graduation rate of Pell Grant recipients was below that of the College.

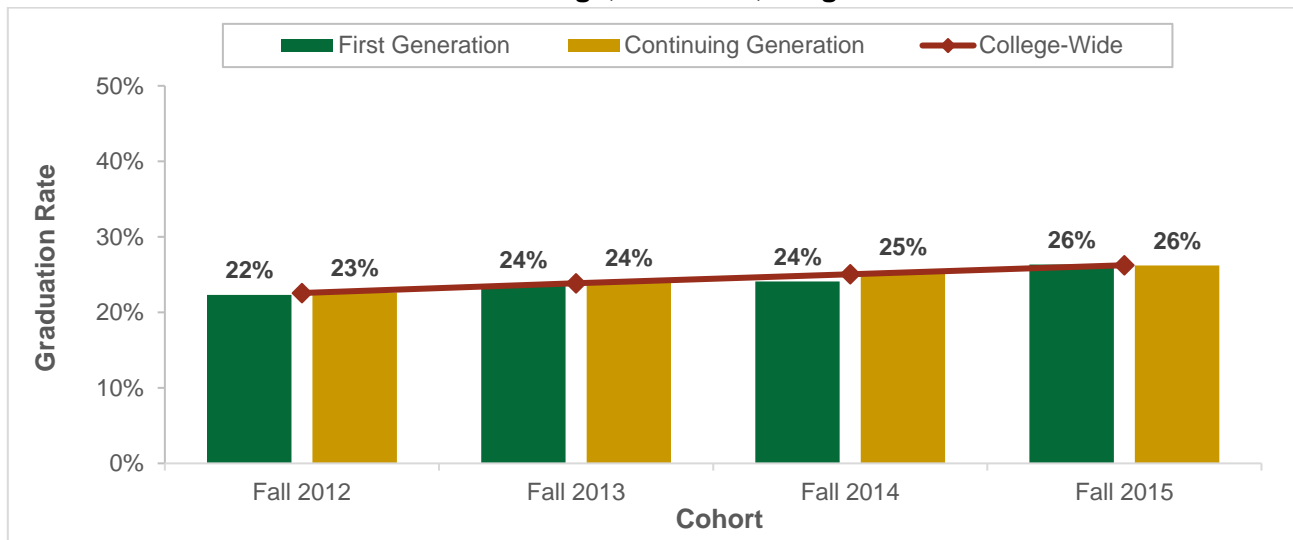
Figure 6. Graduation Rate by Pell Grant Status: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015 First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts



Graduation Rate by First Generation Status

Among the Fall 2015 cohort of first-time in college, full-time, program placed students, the graduation rate for first generation students and continuing generation students was the same. The graduation rate for both groups matched the College-wide graduation rate of 26 percent.

Figure 7. Graduation Rate by First Generation Status: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015 First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts



Data Tables

Overall Graduation Trends

Table 1. Annual Number of Graduates: 2014-15 through 2018-19

Academic Year	Completers
2014-15	6,771
2015-16	6,939
2016-17	6,669
2017-18	6,347
2018-19	6,747

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Northern Virginia Community College.

**Table 2. Overall Graduation Rate: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015
First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts**

Cohort	N	Graduated	
		#	%
Fall 2012	5,137	1,159	22.6
Fall 2013	5,819	1,388	23.9
Fall 2014	5,818	1,457	25.0
Fall 2015	5,881	1,543	26.2

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Northern Virginia Community College.

Notes: Data include first-time in college, full-time, program placed students who completed their program at NOVA within 150 percent of normal time to program completion, including summer.

Graduation Rate by Select Student Characteristics

**Table 3. Graduation Rate by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015
First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts**

Race/Ethnicity	Fall 2012			Fall 2013			Fall 2014			Fall 2015		
	N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated	
		#	%		#	%		#	%		#	%
White	1,778	413	23.2	1,927	499	25.9	1,835	521	28.4	1,868	518	27.7
Black/African American	870	126	14.5	1,011	167	16.5	970	138	14.2	891	171	19.2
Hispanic/Latino	1,227	254	20.7	1,430	324	22.7	1,601	383	23.9	1,620	397	24.5
Asian	918	298	32.5	1,021	312	30.6	1,023	329	32.2	1,060	350	33.0
Other	344	68	19.8	430	86	20.0	389	86	22.1	442	107	24.2
College-Wide	5,137	1,159	22.6	5,819	1,388	23.9	5,818	1,457	25.0	5,881	1,543	26.2

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Northern Virginia Community College.

Notes: Data include first-time in college, full-time, program placed students who completed their program at NOVA within 150 percent of normal time to program completion, including summer. Other includes American Indian/Alaska Native, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, Unknown, and Not Specified.

**Table 4. Graduation Rate by Gender: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015
First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts**

Gender	Fall 2012			Fall 2013			Fall 2014			Fall 2015		
	N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated	
		#	%		#	%		#	%		#	%
Male	2,723	528	19.4	3,064	624	20.4	3,063	674	22.0	3,216	734	22.8
Female	2,414	631	26.1	2,755	764	27.7	2,755	783	28.4	2,665	809	30.4
College-Wide	5,137	1,159	22.6	5,819	1,388	23.9	5,818	1,457	25.0	5,881	1,543	26.2

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Northern Virginia Community College.

Notes: Data include first-time in college, full-time, program placed students who completed their program at NOVA within 150 percent of normal time to program completion, including summer.

**Table 5. Graduation Rate by Age Group: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015
First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts**

Age Group	Fall 2012			Fall 2013			Fall 2014			Fall 2015		
	N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated	
		#	%		#	%		#	%		#	%
21 and Younger	4,540	1,082	23.8	5,126	1,286	25.1	5,219	1,376	26.4	5,392	1,463	27.1
22 to 29	421	60	14.3	456	72	15.8	409	57	13.9	363	59	16.3
30 and Older	176	17	9.7	237	30	12.7	190	24	12.6	126	21	16.7
College-Wide	5,137	1,159	22.6	5,819	1,388	23.9	5,818	1,457	25.0	5,881	1,543	26.2

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Northern Virginia Community College.

Notes: Data include first-time in college, full-time, program placed students who completed their program at NOVA within 150 percent of normal time to program completion, including summer.

**Table 6. Graduation Rate by Pell Grant Status: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015
First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts**

Pell Grant Status	Fall 2012			Fall 2013			Fall 2014			Fall 2015		
	N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated	
		#	%		#	%		#	%		#	%
Pell Grant	2,075	455	21.9	2,417	534	22.1	2,511	609	24.3	2,417	603	24.9
Non-Pell Grant	3,062	704	23.0	3,402	854	25.1	3,307	848	25.6	3,464	940	27.1
College-Wide	5,137	1,159	22.6	5,819	1,388	23.9	5,818	1,457	25.0	5,881	1,543	26.2

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Northern Virginia Community College.

Notes: Data include first-time in college, full-time, program placed students who completed their program at NOVA within 150 percent of normal time to program completion, including summer.

**Table 7. Graduation Rate by First Generation Status: Fall 2012 through Fall 2015
First-Time in College, Full-Time, Program Placed Cohorts**

First Generation Status	Fall 2012			Fall 2013			Fall 2014			Fall 2015		
	N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated		N	Graduated	
		#	%		#	%		#	%		#	%
First Generation	1,134	253	22.3	1,370	324	23.6	1,382	333	24.1	1,283	338	26.3
Continuing Generation	4,003	906	22.6	4,449	1,064	23.9	4,436	1,124	25.3	4,598	1,205	26.2
College-Wide	5,137	1,159	22.6	5,819	1,388	23.9	5,818	1,457	25.0	5,881	1,543	26.2

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Northern Virginia Community College.

Notes: Data include first-time in college, full-time, program placed students who completed their program at NOVA within 150 percent of normal time to program completion, including summer.