

RESEARCH BRIEF

**Three-Year and Six-Year Student Outcomes at NOVA:
Fall 2009 through Fall 2012 Cohorts**

Introduction

In higher education, student success has traditionally been measured in terms of graduation rates. However, with an overall mission to provide access through open admissions, community colleges typically have lower graduation rates than four-year schools. This means that community college graduation rates only show part of the story of student success. First, graduation rates do not include students who have been successful at achieving other academic goals, such as the large number of students who transfer to a four-year institution without first earning an associate degree. Second, community colleges have large populations of part-time students who will continue to enroll at the college for a longer period of time before graduating or transferring.

Therefore, a deep understanding of student success requires community colleges to include transfer rates and still enrolled rates *in addition to* graduation rates. These metrics will provide a more comparable picture to four-year schools.

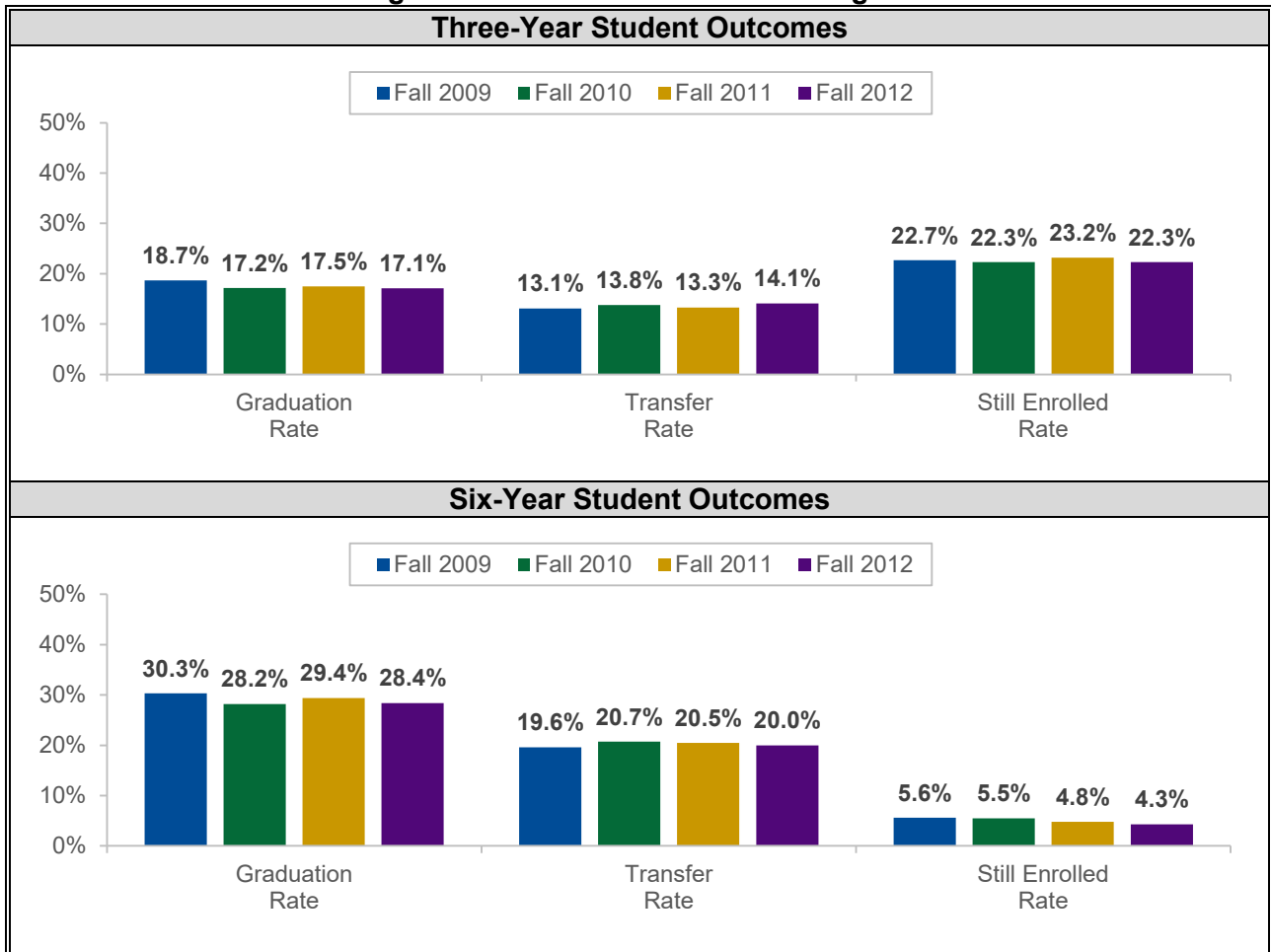
In This Brief

- I. This Brief reviews the three-year and six-year outcomes of first-time in college (FTIC), degree- or certificate-seeking students at NOVA for the Fall 2009 through Fall 2012 cohorts. This includes the following metrics:
 - **Graduation Rate:** The percentage of students who graduated with a degree or certificate from NOVA within the three-year or six-year time frame.
 - **Transfer Rate:** The percentage of students who are known to have transferred from NOVA to another two- or four-year institution prior to graduating from NOVA with a degree or certificate.
 - **Still Enrolled Rate:** The percentage of students who returned to NOVA in the 4th/7th Fall semester since initial enrollment and have not yet earned a credential.
 - **Total Success Rate:** The total percentage of students who graduated, transferred, or were still enrolled at NOVA in the three-year or six-year time frame.
- II. This Brief also shows a national comparison of six-year completion trends for students who started college in Fall 2009 at a public, two-year institution.

I.A. Three-Year and Six-Year Student Outcomes at NOVA (Figure 1)

- In Fall 2012, the graduation rate increased from 17 percent after three years of enrollment to approximately 28 percent after six years.
- In Fall 2012, the transfer rate increased from 14 percent after three years of enrollment to 20 percent after six years.
- In Fall 2012, the still enrolled rate decreased from around 22 percent after three years of enrollment to 4 percent after six years.
- These trends suggest that three years was not sufficient time for many NOVA students to achieve academic goals, but a substantial number of students had succeeded in graduating or transferring by six years.

Figure 1. Three-Year and Six-Year Student Outcomes of FTIC, Degree- or Certificate-Seeking NOVA Students: Fall 2009 through Fall 2012 Cohorts

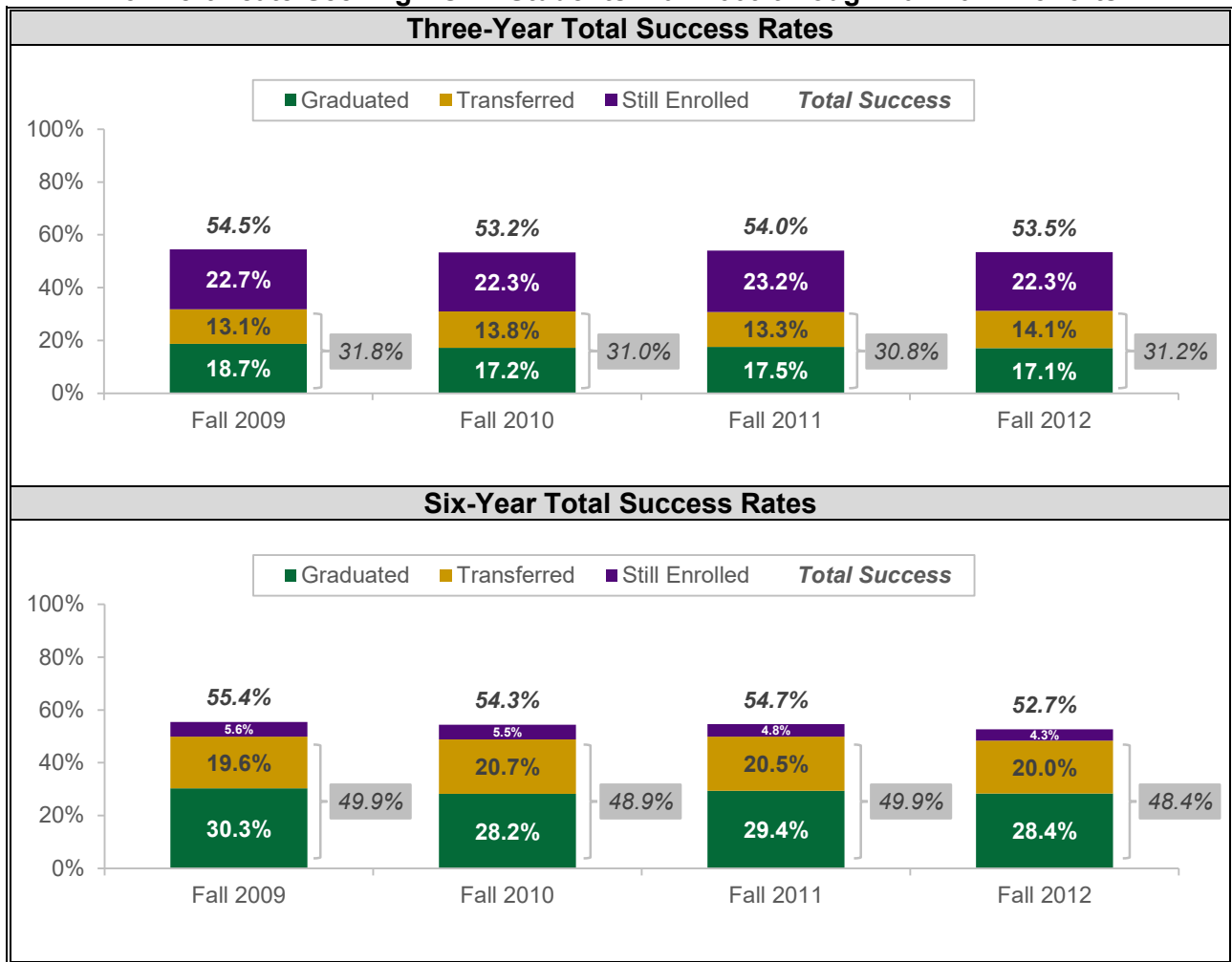


Note: For six-year outcomes, Fall 2012 data are preliminary.

I.B. Three-Year and Six-Year Total Success Rates at NOVA (Figure 2)

- The total success rate was roughly the same (between 53 and 55 percent) after both the three- and six-year time period. However, there is an observed transition of students: while a substantial proportion of students were still enrolled after three years, many of these students had graduated and/or transferred after six years.
- The similarity in the total success rates after three-years and six-years suggests that the majority of students who stop out prior to graduating or transferring are most likely to do so within the first three years.
- The success rate when looking *only* at students who graduated and/or transferred (excluding still enrolled students) increased from 31 percent after three years to nearly 50 percent after six years. This represents students who achieved a major academic goal during the time period.

Figure 2. Three-Year and Six-Year Total Success Rates of FTIC, Degree- or Certificate-Seeking NOVA Students: Fall 2009 through Fall 2012 Cohorts



Note: For six-year outcomes, Fall 2012 data are preliminary.

II. National Trends in Community College Completion

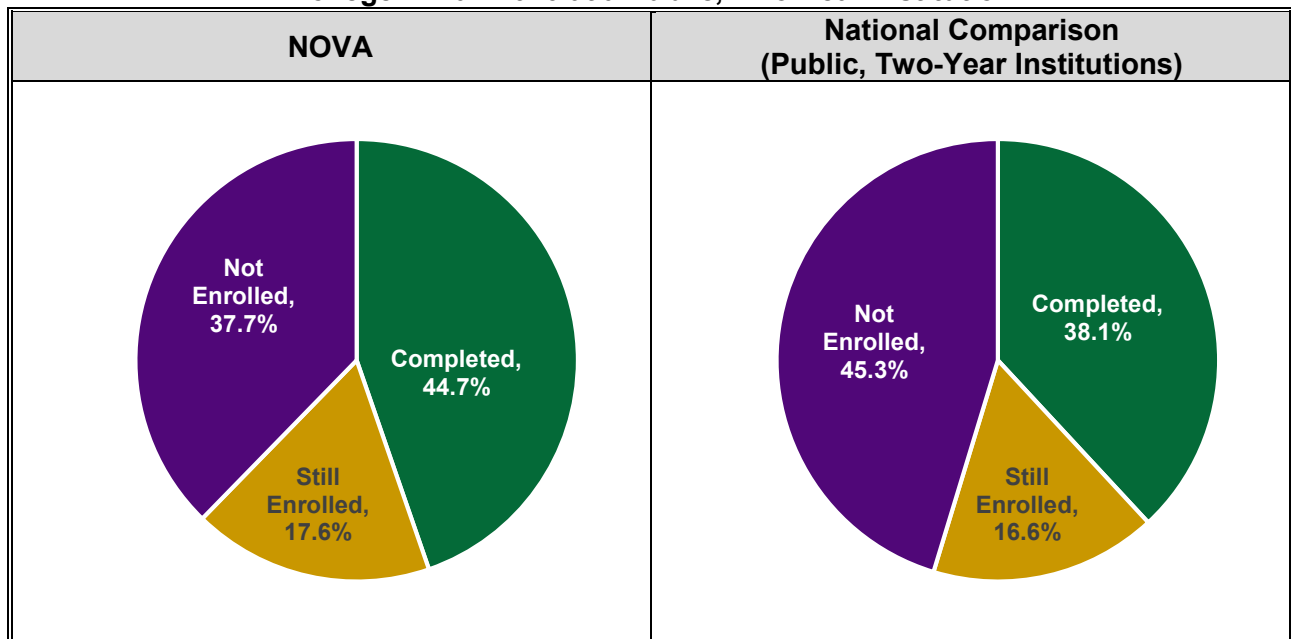
For students starting college in Fall 2009, the National Student Clearinghouse benchmarks the six-year completion rates of NOVA students against the national average for students attending two-year, public institutions.

Figure 3, below, shows the overall completion rate, still enrolled rate, and not enrolled rate for all students who enrolled at NOVA or another public, two-year institution in Fall 2009. Figures 4 and 5, on the following page, show additional details regarding six-year completion rates. The appendix section provides further detail, including a breakdown by enrollment intensity.

Overall Completion Rates: NOVA and National Comparison (Figure 3)

- NOVA's overall six-year completion rate (45 percent) was nearly seven percentage points higher than the national average at public, two-year institutions (38 percent).
- Furthermore, NOVA had a slightly higher percentage of students still enrolled (18 percent) than the national average at public, two-year institutions (17 percent).
- This means that substantially fewer students at NOVA (38 percent) had stopped out or dropped out completely during the six-year period, compared to students who attended other public, two-year schools nationwide (45 percent).

Figure 3. Six-Year Overall Completion Rate for Students Who Started College in Fall 2010 at a Public, Two-Year Institution



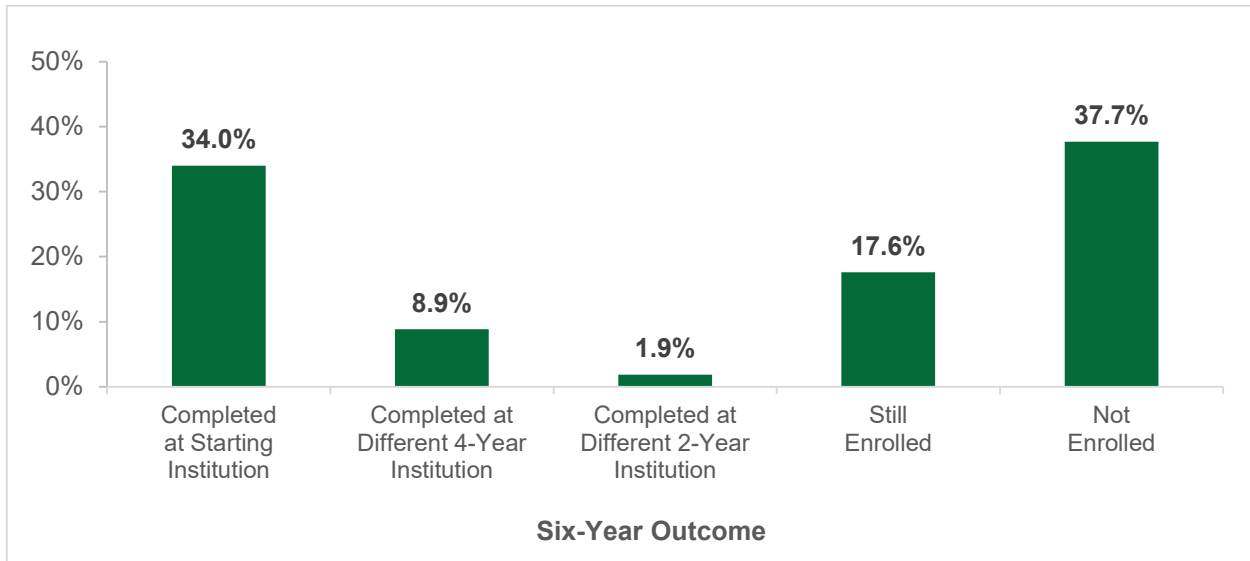
Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center¹

¹ (2015). *StudentTracker Postsecondary Completions, Institutional Benchmark Report (Pilot): Fall 2009 Entering Cohort, Northern Virginia Community College*. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

Breakdown of Completion Rates: NOVA and National Comparison (Figures 4-5)

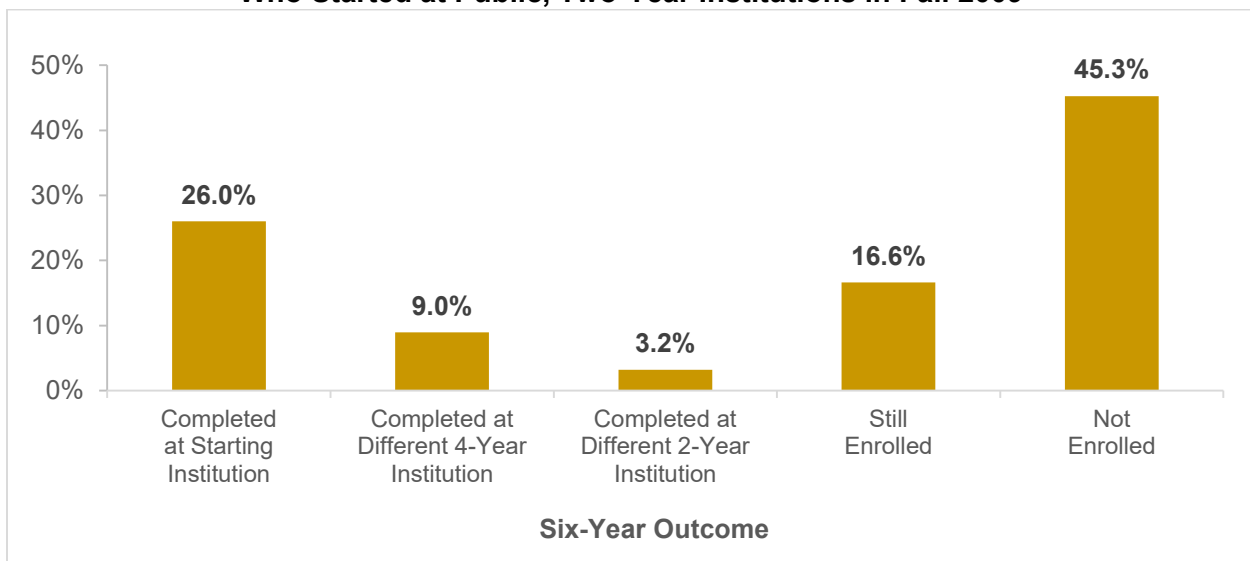
- NOVA is more successful at graduating students who initially enroll (34 percent) than other public, two-year institutions (26 percent). This contributes substantially to NOVA’s higher overall completion rate when compared to the national average.
- A comparable number of students nationwide and at NOVA continue on to a four-year institution and complete a degree (9 percent each). However, a slightly smaller proportion of NOVA students (2 percent) transfer to another two-year school and complete a degree than the national average (3 percent).

Figure 4. Breakdown of Six-Year Completion Rates for Students Who Started at NOVA in Fall 2009



Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

Figure 5. Breakdown of Six-Year Completion Rate for Students Who Started at Public, Two-Year Institutions in Fall 2009



Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

Data Tables

I. Three-Year and Six-Year Student Outcomes at NOVA

Table 1. Three-Year Student Outcomes of First-Time in College, Degree- or Certificate-Seeking Students at NOVA: Fall 2009 through Fall 2014 Cohorts

Cohort	Number of Students	Three-Year Graduation Rate (%)	Three-Year Transfer Rate (%)	Three-Year Still Enrolled Rate (%)	Total Success Rate (%)
Fall 2009	6,486	18.7	13.1	22.7	54.5
Fall 2010	6,355	17.2	13.8	22.3	53.2
Fall 2011	6,766	17.5	13.3	23.2	54.0
Fall 2012	7,226	17.1	14.1	22.3	53.5
Fall 2013	7,768	18.8	13.4	20.2	52.4
Fall 2014	7,729	19.7	13.7	20.1	53.5

Note: For the Fall 2010 cohort, the graduation rate includes students who graduated by the end of Summer 2013 and the transfer rate includes students who transferred out by August 20, 2013.

Table 2. Six-Year Student Outcomes of First-Time in College, Degree- or Certificate-Seeking Students at NOVA: Fall 2009 through Fall 2012 Cohorts

Cohort	Number of Students	Six-Year Graduation Rate (%)	Six-Year Transfer Rate (%)	Six-Year Still Enrolled Rate (%)	Total Success Rate (%)
Fall 2009	6,486	30.3	19.6	5.6	55.4
Fall 2010	6,355	28.2	20.7	5.5	54.3
Fall 2011	6,766	29.4	20.5	4.8	54.7
Fall 2012*	7,226	28.4	20.0	4.3	52.7

Note: For the Fall 2010 cohort, the graduation rate includes students who graduated by the end of Summer 2016 and the transfer rate includes students who transferred out by August 20, 2016.

*Preliminary data.

II. NSC Completion Trends Data: Fall 2009 Cohort²

Table 3. Breakdown of Six-Year Completion Rates for Students Who Started at NOVA in Fall 2009 by Enrollment Intensity

Outcome	All Students	Exclusively Full-Time	Exclusively Part-Time	Mixed Enrollment
	N=6,456	N=1,178	N=711	N=4,567
1 st Completion at NOVA	34.0	52.1	17.2	31.9
1 st Completion at Different Four-Year Institution	8.9	12.7	0.8	9.1
1 st Completion at Different Two-Year Institution	1.9	1.8	0.7	2.1
Total Completion Rate*	44.7	66.6	18.6	43.1
Still Enrolled (At Any Institution)	17.6	3.3	10.9	22.4
Not Enrolled (At Any Institution)	37.7	30.2	70.5	34.5

*Total Completion Rate is the sum of the first three categories (1st Completion at NOVA, 1st Completion at Different Four-Year Institution, and 1st Completion at Different Two-Year Institution).

Table 4. Breakdown of Six-Year Completion Rates for Students Who Started at Public, Two-Year Institutions in Fall 2009 by Enrollment Intensity

Outcome	All Students	Exclusively Full-Time	Exclusively Part-Time	Mixed Enrollment
	N=1,111,368	N=260,578	N=103,461	N=746,390
1 st Completion at Same Institution	26.0	41.8	16.4	21.8
1 st Completion at Different Four-Year Institution	9.0	10.2	0.7	9.7
1 st Completion at Different Two-Year Institution	3.2	2.6	1.2	3.6
Total Completion Rate*	38.1	54.6	18.3	35.2
Still Enrolled (At Any Institution)	16.6	3.6	8.5	22.3
Not Enrolled (At Any Institution)	45.3	41.8	73.2	42.6

*Total Completion Rate is the sum of the first three categories (1st Completion at Same Institution, 1st Completion at Different Four-Year Institution, and 1st Completion at Different Two-Year Institution).

² (2015). *StudentTracker Postsecondary Completions, Institutional Benchmark Report (Pilot): Fall 2009 Entering Cohort, Northern Virginia Community College*. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.