

Berry College Student Success Report Spring 2017

As part of the strategic planning process in 2012-2013, the Board of Trustees affirmed Berry College's mission statement and specified that the purpose of Berry College is to "provide an integrated education of the head, heart and hands as the means by which to graduate responsible adults with the knowledge, experience, character and passion to improve the communities in which they live and work." Guided by our mission, history and purpose, Berry will be a model academic residential community by fusing rigorous academic preparation with firsthand experiences through research, work, service, leadership, and campus activities."

Success with respect to student achievement in relation to the Berry College mission includes consideration of enrollment data, retention and graduation rates, supervisor and student evaluations in the work experience program, the number of students at a level four or five position in the work experience program, course completion rates, job placement rates, state licensing examinations, student portfolios assessment.

Enrollment Data

In support of its mission "to make an excellent private liberal-arts education accessible to talented students from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds," Berry's enrollment continues to be strong. The college has achieved its goal of increasing enrollment to 2,100 and maintains a strong undergraduate population through successful recruitment of new students combined with record-breaking retention. From Fall 2011 to fall 2016, undergraduate enrollment increased by 7.5 percent (1,944 to 2,073 students) and total enrollment (including graduate programs) has increased 3.9 percent (2,093 to 2,174 students). This growth reflects the value that students find in Berry's distinctive model of education.

The fall 2016 enrollment included 2,073 undergraduate and 101 graduate students. Of these 2,174 students, 534 were first-time, first-year students. In fall 2016, 19 percent of incoming students were eligible for PELL grants and 25 percent of the incoming student had family incomes of less than 70,000.

Measures of Student Success

Retention and Graduation Rates

Berry College continues to improve the academic support provided to students and has initiated and improved several programs in recent years to drive student success and further improve student retention and graduation. Efforts to improve student success include the expansion and enhancement of the newly named Student Success Center, improvements to the tutoring program, continued refinement to first-year student scheduling and advising, and an expansion of "guided cohorts" of students who received focused and consistent support throughout their time at Berry.

These efforts and others have contributed to improvements in student retention. Student retention is one important measure of student success at Berry. Berry evaluates the persistence of entering students and publishes the data for review by internal and external audiences. In fact, the Board of Trustees and the President helped to highlight the institutional drive to improve student success by establishing a goal of 85 percent first-to-second year retention. A key measure of student persistence, first-to-second year retention has historically ranged from 74 to 79 percent. Berry has, over the past several years, shown steady improvement in student retention.

Table 1 demonstrates that Berry’s first-year retention rate continues to improve. Eighty-five percent of the 575 students in the 2015 cohort returned for their second fall semester, a record retention rate. Additionally, according to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), a significant number of the students who did not continue at Berry after their first year did not drop out of higher education but rather successfully transferred to another institution. In fact, considering the Fall 2015 cohort of 575 entering students, 84.7 percent remained at Berry and an additional 9.7 percent continued at another college or university for a total of 94.4 percent retention in some post-secondary institution.

Table 1 also presents data indicating that over the last five years, an average of 93 percent of the students who enroll at Berry College as freshmen continue their education at Berry or another institution. Given the increasingly mobile nature of student postsecondary attendance, this data highlights the overall success of Berry students.

Cohort	Continued at Berry	Continued at Other Institution ¹	Total Continued at Berry or Other Institution ¹
FA 11	75.4%	14.5%	89.9%
FA12	79.4%	13.1%	92.6%
FA13	79.0%	16.2%	95.2%
FA14	83.3%	9.3%	92.6%
FA15	84.7%	9.7%	94.4%

1. Continued Postsecondary Education other institution: Source–National Student Clearinghouse)

The student graduation rate is another important measure of student success at Berry College. The number of students graduating within four years or less at Berry College increased seven percentage points over the past five years (Table 2). The six-year graduation rate has been increasing as well and is expected to continue to do so over the next few years. The robust and rising graduation rates are another outcome of improving efforts to support students. The growth in the four-year rate corresponds to the increase in student support provided by the academic and student affairs staff as well as the implementation of Plan4ward, the college’s advising initiative that was implemented in 2008 and continues to be an integral part of the first-year seminar. Plan4ward emphasizes academic and co-curricular planning from the first weeks of student’s career at Berry College and provides resources that assist students in planning and tracking their academic progress toward graduation.

Year of Entering Cohort	4-year Berry Graduation Rate	6-year Berry Graduation Rate	6-year Other Institution Graduation Rate	6-year Total Graduation Rate
2005	44% (2009)	57% (2011)	18% (2011)	75% (2011)
2006	52% (2010)	62% (2012)	19% (2012)	81% (2012)
2007	50% (2011)	60% (2013)	21% (2013)	81% (2013)
2008	54% (2012)	62% (2014)	16% (2014)	77% (2014)
2009	55% (2013)	64% (2015)	18% (2015)	81% (2015)
2010	59% (2014)	66% (2016)	17% (2016)	82% (2016)
2011	57% (2015)	64% (2017)	18% (2017)	82% (2017)
2012	60% (2016)			
2013	62% (2017)			

Course Completion and Adequate Academic Progress

For fall semester 2016, 94.7 percent of undergraduate and 96.3 percent of graduate course completions were successfully completed (students earned credit for the course). For spring semester 2017 the successful course completions for undergraduate and graduate students were 96.3 percent and 100 percent, respectively. The low rate of failures and withdrawals from Berry College coursework indicates that our faculty and student support staff are able to help students persist and succeed in their academic coursework.

The percent of new first-time (native freshmen) students placed on probation upon completion of the first semester was 7.3 percent for Fall 2016. A small percentage—less than .4 percent—of Fall 2016 entering first-time students were suspended upon completion of their first semester. Table 3 summarizes the first semester probation and suspension rates for the last six years. Despite the increased rigor many students experience in transitioning from high school to Berry College, the increased attention to student success by our first year experience program, academic advisors, student work supervisors, the student alert program, and the implementation of guided mentoring programs have allowed the campus to offer better support to students at an earlier date when interventions are more likely to help students end the semester successfully.

Cohort	Probation	Suspension
2011	8.3	.7
2012	5.7	1.6
2013	7.3	.6
2014	5.6	.2
2015	6.8	.7
2016	7.3	.4

Indicators of Post-graduate Success

Graduates from Berry find success in a variety of types of employment and many choose to continue their education at the masters, doctoral, or other advanced professional level. Table 4 highlights the percent of students from entering first-time cohorts earned an advanced degree from Berry College or another institution after earning a bachelor’s degree from Berry or another institution, through May 18, 2017 (data received from National Student Clearinghouse).

Cohort Group	Percent
FA06	25.2%
FA07	28.7%
FA08	20.1%
FA09	14.1%
FA10	7.8%

**Source of data: National Student Clearinghouse (as of May 18, 2017)*

Alumni are surveyed one year following graduation so that their immediate post-graduate achievements in careers or graduate and professional study may be assessed. The latest results, summarized in Table 5, demonstrate that 69 percent 2014-15 respondents reported full-time employment and 28 percent reported attending a post-secondary institution at a graduate or professional level.

Year Graduated Berry	Attending School	Work	Total
2006-07	25%	70%	95%
2007-08	27%	67%	94%
2008-09	26%	57%	83%
2009-10	30%	63%	93%
2010-11	24%	68%	92%
2011-12	23%	72%	95%
2012-13	29%	68%	97%
2013-14	24%	69%	93%
2014-15	28%	69%	97%
2015-16	<i>Survey results pending.</i>		

*Source: Berry College Career Center

Work Experience Program

Work has been an integral part of a Berry College Education since the college's inception. Although work is not required, 99 percent of the students who graduated during the 2016-17 academic year participated in the work program at some point in their college career. Additionally, 88 percent of entering first year students participated in the work program. The work program is designed to be developmental in nature, with all campus work positions classified into one of five levels. A developmental scale was established (Table 5), and every student job on campus was classified according to the level of student work expected.

Level	Title	Description
1	Probationary	Task oriented. Students learn basic work skills.
2	Skilled	Task oriented. Students have successfully learned basic work skills and have proven to be dependable workers.
3	Advanced	Experienced, project oriented. Students have the experience necessary to train Level 1 students. Students learn project management and more advanced work skills or perform basic academic research.
4	Supervisory	Supervisory, project management. Students have the skills to supervise other students and are able to manage major projects or perform advanced academic research.
5	Director	Departmental management. Students have the skills to supervise other students and are learning to manage the activities of and to represent a department.

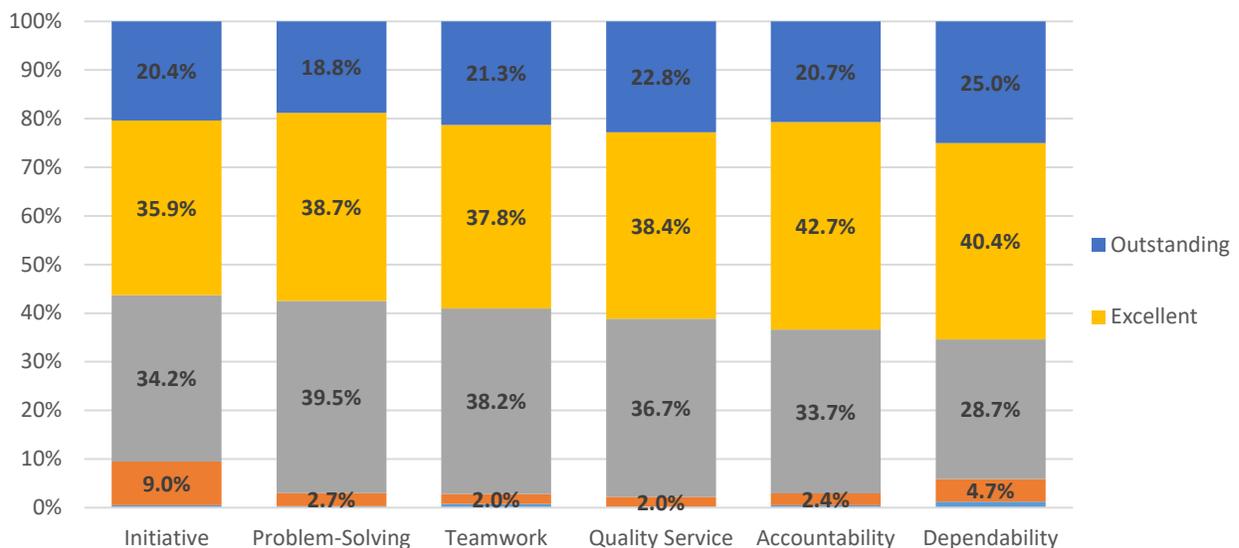
Students are encouraged to be intentional in the selection of and progress through their work positions and are assisted by faculty and staff on how they might demonstrate their ability to take on additional responsibilities. In this model, students are encouraged to strive to work up through a level 3 position or higher; many students work hard to obtain a variety of level four or five positions. Students either plan

their own path to a supervisory position within the same job unit, or they might seek to use their skills and knowledge to acquire jobs within other units at a higher developmental level. As students apply for level four or five jobs, they are required to have a resume on file that is reviewed by the hiring supervisor before the student is able to participate in an interview. For the 2016-17 academic year 451 students (25% of the total student workforce) were classified as level four or five and 84% of the 2016-17 graduates were at level three or higher.

As part of our analysis of the work program, each semester the students are asked to rate many aspects of the work program including the college’s ability to provide meaningful work experiences. For the most recent spring semester (2017) 90 percent of the students participating in the work program during the rated their work position as meaningful or very meaningful.

The work experience program has identified several learning outcomes including accountability and dependability, initiative-taking, problem-solving, teamwork, and customer service. Student work supervisors are asked to evaluate their student’s performance against these learning outcomes each semester. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the supervisor ratings for each of the learning outcomes (2016-17 results).

Figure 1. Student Performance on Learning Outcomes (Supervisor Evaluations of Students)



State Licensing Examinations

State licensing examinations are available to graduates in teacher-education programs. The purpose of the Georgia Assessments for Certification of Educators (GACE) is to assess the knowledge and skills of prospective Georgia public school educators. The GACE are criterion-referenced, objective-based assessments designed to measure a candidate’s knowledge and skills in relation to an established standard rather than in relation to the performance of other candidates. Those completing the GACE exam include students majoring in art education, elementary education, middle-grades education, mathematics-education, music-education, and secondary education. Student performance on these examinations is evaluated by administrators and faculty in the Charter School of Education and Human Sciences, and curricular or program changes may result to increase student performance.

For the Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE), only pass or fail is reported in the *Berry College Exit Examination Report*. In 2016-2017 academic year, 100 percent of the 48 graduating seniors who took the examination passed all sections.

Nursing majors complete the ATI and Critical Thinking examinations (the NCLEX and CPAEX State licensing examinations after graduation). Only pass or fail is reported in the *Berry College Exit Examination Report*. In 2016-2017 academic year, 100 percent of the 26 graduating seniors who took these examinations passed both examinations.

Other Means of Demonstrating Achievement Goals

All graduating seniors are required to complete an assessment in their major field of study during the last semester. In addition to those who complete the GACE, other assessment tools include capstone courses, senior projects, portfolios, departmental examinations, and national tests. Many academic programs use the results of these various senior assessments as a part of their program institutional effectiveness plans and to directly improve methods of instruction and assessment.

One of the key program assessments for teacher education is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment called edTPA (Educational Teacher Performance Assessment). Students in this program “demonstrate readiness to teach” in tasks that require candidates to provide authentic evidence of their ability in planning, instruction, and assessment and the portfolios are scored by teachers and teacher educators with subject-area and grade-level expertise. In the last semester of a candidate’s program, the college supervisor and advisor score the culminating reflection. The average edTPA scores and Culminating Reflection Scores for the various education majors are summarized in Table 6 (below).

<i>Major</i>	<i>edTPA Average Scores</i>	<i>Culminating Reflection Average Scores</i>
ECE Average (24 students)	50.56	23.84/25
MG Average (5 students)	50.2	22.5/25
Secondary Average (10 students)	43.2	19/25
P-12 (8 students)	39.12	16.5/25

Capstone courses, senior projects, portfolios, and departmental exams are completed in 14 major areas. For example, communication majors complete a test within their capstone seminar class and are required to complete a portfolio to demonstrate comprehensive mastery of skills appropriate for the major. Creative Writing and English majors are required to develop a portfolio of written work that represents significant successes in their career as an English major; animal science, environmental science, and exercise science majors complete a departmental examination administered by the institutional research office. A summary of the pass rates for these exams, portfolios, and senior projects are presented in Table 7 (below).

<i>Major</i>	Pass Rates		
	<i>2014-15</i>	<i>2015-16</i>	<i>2016-17</i>
Animal Science	86%	86%	84%
Art	100%	100%	100%
Communication	96%	97%	97%

Creative Technologies	N/A	100%	100%
Creative Writing	100%	N/A	100%
English	100%	100%	100%
Environmental Sciences	30%	20%	79%
Exercise Science	100%	100%	100%
Interdisciplinary Studies	100%	100%	N/A
Music	100%	100%	100%
Physics	N/A	100%	100%
Religion and Philosophy	100%	100%	100%
Sociology and Anthropology	100%	100%	100%
Theatre	100%	100%	100%

National tests include the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Tests for 10 major areas (Accounting, Biology, Economics, Finance, International Business, Management, Marketing, Mathematics, Political Science, and Psychology), the American Chemical Society Diagnostic Undergraduate Chemistry Knowledge 2013 (DUCK) test, the History Area Concentration Achievement Test (ACAT), and The American Association of Teachers of Foreign Languages test (French, German, and Spanish). A new ETS Business Major Field Test was introduced in fall 2016 for five major areas (accounting, finance, international business, management, and marketing) such that no meaningful comparisons were available for that year.