

# MACC Trustee Leadership Conference

## *The Maryland Model of Community College Student Degree Progress*

### Completion Rates in Context

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Carroll Community College  
Westminster, Maryland

**January 23, 2012**

# **The Student Right-to-Know Act**

## **Graduation Rate Disclosure Mandated**

- **Passed by Congress November 1990**
- **All institutions eligible for Title IV funding**
- **Calculate graduation rate for full-time, degree-seeking, first-time student cohorts**
- **Report completion within 150% of “normal time” (3 years for Associate degree)**
- **Graduation rate survey (GRS) added to IPEDS data collection in 1997**

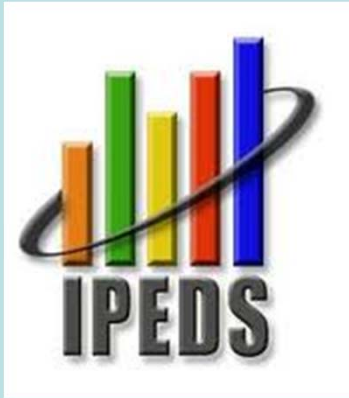
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# Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008

- **Changed GRS reporting requirements**
- **Graduation rates now reported:**
  - 100% normal time (2 years)**
  - 150% normal time (3 years)**
  - 200% normal time (4 years)**
- **Mandated display of new rates on College Navigator online data tool by August 2009**

# IPEDS-GRS for Maryland CCs

## Full-time Student 3-year Graduation Rate



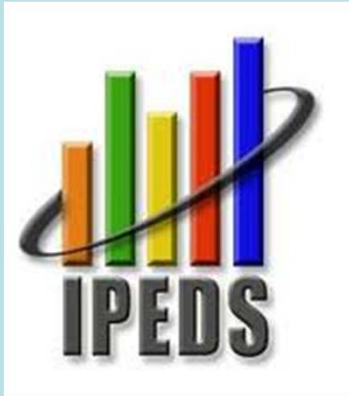
### 3-Year Graduation Rate, 2006 Cohort Public 2-year Institutions

United States	31.7%
Mid East (DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	26.2%
Maryland	13.5%

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# IPEDS-GRS

## Graduation Rates on College Navigator



### Carroll Community College 2006 Cohort

“Normal time”	6%
150% of “Normal time”	20%
Twice as long as “Normal time”	27%

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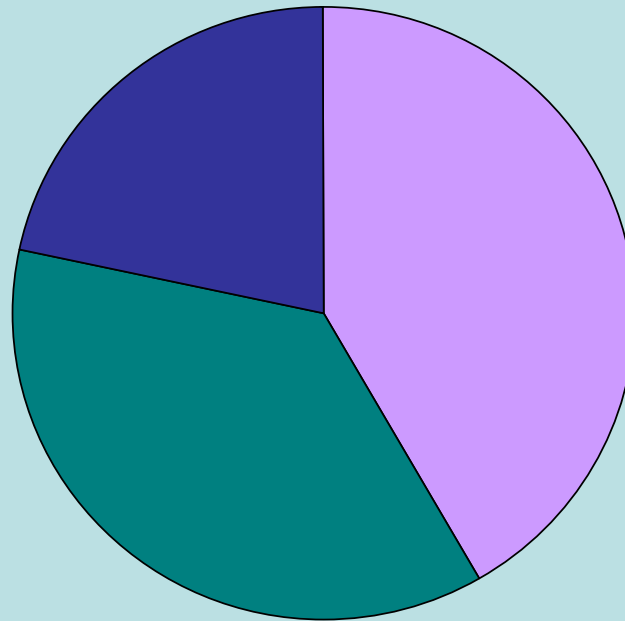
# Issues with IPEDS Graduation Rates

(Available online and widely cited)

- **Include students not seeking the Associate degree**
- **Exclude part-time students (often the majority)**
- **No allowance for developmental ed. needs**
- **“150% of normal time” (3 years) excludes majority of those who will earn the Associate degree**
- **Transfer without a degree may be a rational decision yet unaccounted for in graduation rate**

# Number of Institutions Attended Bachelor's Degree Recipients

Three or  
more  
22%



One  
41%

Two  
37%

*We must account  
for transfers!*

National Center for Education Statistics (HS&B 1993)

# Maryland Higher Education Commission

## Analyses from Statewide Data Systems

- Utilize enrollment and degree files (EIS, DIS) submitted as part of regular reporting calendar
- Student IDs allow matching enrollment and degree records across institutions within Maryland
- Calculate a combined graduation-transfer rate (+)
- Use IPEDS definition of degree-seeking: enrolled in a program of study/major (-)
- Exclude out-of-state transfers (-)

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# **MHEC Graduation-Transfer Rate Maryland Community Colleges**

**Fall 2006 First-time Full-time Cohort**

**Combined graduation-transfer rate  
after four-years 35.5%**

**(excludes transfers to out-of-state institutions)**

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# Measuring Degree Progress

**Is there a better way?**

Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress

# Degree Progress Analysis

## Development of the Maryland Model

- **Accountability work team established by MCCCCP (presidents' group) on March 5, 2004**
- **Charge: Create a statewide assessment model incorporating developmental studies, graduation, and transfer**
- **Recognition of key role of developmental studies in student degree progress –was not mentioned at all in existing Performance Accountability Report (PAR)**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

# **Degree Progress Analysis**

## **Development of the Maryland Model**

- Conducted national literature review**
- Draft definitions and templates tested by institutional researchers during spring 2005**
- Revised definitions shared with academic, student affairs, and continuing education affinity groups during summer 2005**
- Presidents approved proposal on 9/16/05**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

# **Degree Progress Analysis**

## **Development of the Maryland Model**

- MACC, work team chair shared proposal with MHEC, DLS, and DBM representatives 11/17/05**
- Adopted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission in February 2006**
- First PAR with Degree Progress Analysis indicators submitted July 1, 2006**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

# Defining the Study Cohort

## Defining Degree-seeking by Student Goal Questions?

- **Students uncertain about goals**
- **Goals may be unrealistic**
- **Goals change**
- **Wording of goal questions varies**
- **Students must declare themselves degree-seeking to qualify for financial aid**
- **Some colleges require all students to declare a program major (to aid advising)**
- **Data integrity problem!**

Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress

# **Behavioral Definition for Degree-Seeking**

## **The Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

- Avoid unreliable goal/intent data, instead look at enrollment *behavior***
- Include part-time students, but...**
- Exclude students taking one or two classes for job skills, enrichment; spring admits to university**
- Students should show evidence of effort to persist if institution to be held accountable for their degree attainment**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

# Defining the Study Cohort

## Behavioral Definition for Degree-Seeking

- **Define cohort as students *attempting* 18 hours during first two years after initial enrollment ( $\approx 6$  courses)**
- **Developmental courses included in 18-hour count**
- **Not biased toward success, as students may fail all courses/earn zero credits and be in cohort (addressed criticism of other models using credits earned)**

Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress

# Degree Progress of MD CC Students Fall 2004 First-Time Cohort after Four Years

Total first-time, full- and part-time fall headcount	25,908	
Number attempting fewer than 18 hours in first two years	10,164	
Attempted 18 hours during first two years (study cohort)	15,744	100.0
Graduated from initial community college (degree + cert.)	3,325	21.1
Transferred to another college (w/ or w/out graduating)	6,590	41.9
<b>Graduated <i>and/or</i> transferred</b>	<b>7,994</b>	<b>50.8</b>

**“Graduation-transfer rate” = 50.8%**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

# **Interim Measures of Success**

**Measured at End of Four Years**

- **A third of Associate degree graduates may take more than 4 years to complete degree**
- **Developmental ed. slows degree progress**
- **Coursework short of a degree may be of great value to individual student**
- **Completion of 30 credits in good standing may be considered “substantial preparation for transfer”**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

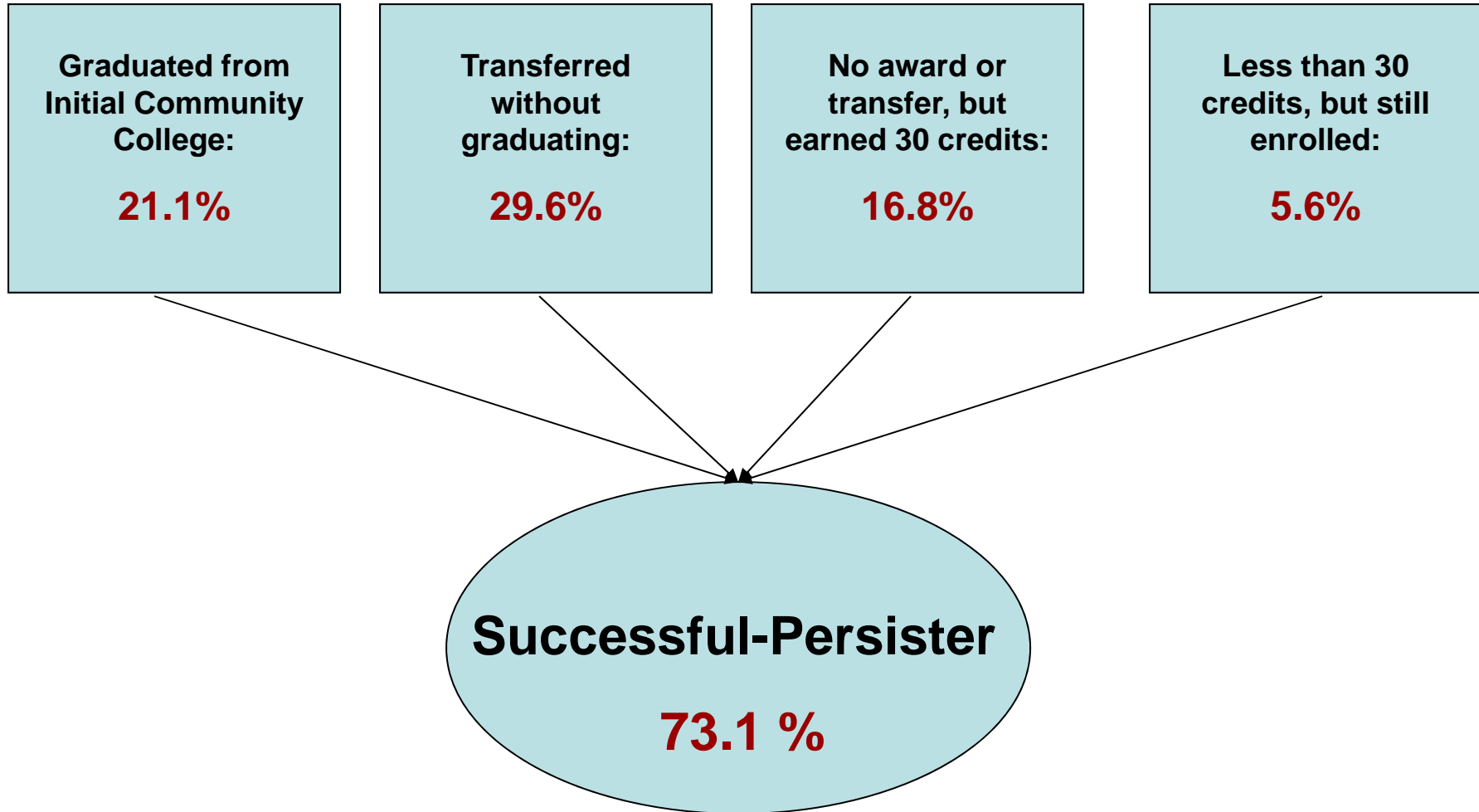
# Degree Progress of MD CC Students Fall 2004 First-Time Cohort after Four Years

Attempted 18 hours during first two years (study cohort)	15,744	100.0
Graduated and/or transferred	7,994	50.8
No award or transfer, but earned 30+ credits with 2.0+ GPA	2,638	16.8
Still enrolled after four years (no grad/transfer/<30 credits)	877	5.6
<b>Graduated/transferred/30+ credits/still enrolled</b>	<b>11,509</b>	<b>73.1</b>

**“Successful-persister rate” = 73.1%**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

# Successful-Persister Rate Calculation



# Analysis by Developmental Status

- ***College-ready***: No developmental need.
- ***Developmental completers***: Needed at least one developmental course; completed all recommended developmental courses within study period.
- ***Developmental non-completers***: Needed at least one developmental course; had not completed all recommended developmental courses by end of study period.

# Degree Progress Measures

## Fall 2004 MD CC Cohort after Four Years

	<u>Graduation- Transfer Rate</u>	<u>Successful- Persister Rate</u>
<b>College-ready students</b>	<b>63.6%</b>	<b>82.7%</b>
<b>Developmental completers</b>	<b>56.5%</b>	<b>84.1%</b>
<b>Dev. non-completers</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>45.0%</b>
<b>All students</b>	<b>50.8%</b>	<b>73.1%</b>

Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress

# Summary of Degree Progress Measures

## Carroll Community College

Federal three-year SRK graduation rate	20%
MHEC 4-year graduation-transfer rate	39%
Degree Progress graduation-transfer rate	58%
<b>Graduation-transfer rate/college-ready students</b>	<b>82%</b>
Degree Progress successful-persister rate	75%
Successful-persister rate/college-ready students	93%

Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress

# **Strengths of the Maryland Model Degree Progress Analysis**

- **Behavioral definition of “degree-seeking”**
- **Includes part-time students**
- **Includes transfer to out-of-state institutions**
- **Reports a combined graduation-transfer rate**
- **Reports progress for college-ready, developmental completers, and developmental non-completers**

# **Strengths of the Maryland Model Degree Progress Analysis**

- Includes interim measures of success (30 credits earned, persistence)**
- Accepted by MHEC, included in Performance Accountability Report**
- Accepted by DLS, included in state budget briefing books**
- Has put focus on developmental program completion**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

# **Strengths of the Maryland Model Degree Progress Analysis**

- Now have 7 years of trend data using this methodology**
- Some influence on national indicator discussions (VFA; federal Committee on Measures of Student Success)**
- Useful on-campus: institutional effectiveness reporting to Board, enrollment management, evaluating retention interventions, used in program reviews**

**Maryland Model of Student Degree Progress**

# **Weaknesses of the Maryland Model Degree Progress Analysis**

- **Unique to Maryland**
- **No peer, state, or national comparison data**
- **Not embraced by the Governor**

# Complete College America

Founded 2009 | Carnegie, Ford, Gates, Lumina, Kellogg



By 2020, six of 10 adults in U.S. will have a college degree or credential of value

Commitment of *state governments*

Increase college completion rates through *state policy change*

Maryland joined March 2010

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# Complete College America

## Commit to Statewide and Campus Completion Goals



Governor O'Malley's stated goal:

By 2025, 55% of Marylanders will have associate or bachelor's degree

*(Currently 42%)*

Will require additional 20,000 degrees annually by 2025

Interim goal: 6,500 additional by 2015

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# Complete College America

## 2011 Data Compilation and Analysis by MHEC



### Positives with CCA data collection:

**Participation from 33 states**

**Recognizes many students come to college academically underprepared**

**Acknowledges most students are part-time, many with families and jobs**

**Includes shorter-term measures of retention and credit accumulation**

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# Complete College America

## 2011 Data Compilation and Analysis by MHEC



### Issues with 2011 CCA data collection:

**Designates all credit students as seeking the Associate's degree, including those in baccalaureate transfer programs**

**Lacks a combined graduation-transfer completion rate**

**Lacks a behavioral definition of degree-seeking (includes non-degree students)**

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# Complete College America

## 2011 Data Compilation and Analysis by MHEC



**Assumes community college “full-time” students remain full-time**

**National studies document that less than a third of community college students who start full-time remain full-time**

**Part-time attendance is the norm, even for those who start full-time**

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# Complete College America

## 2011 Data Compilation and Analysis by MHEC



**Use of MHEC data systems excludes transfers to out-of-state institutions (26% of Maryland transfers—'04 cohort)**

**Comparisons with data from 4-year colleges and universities ignore differences in student populations**

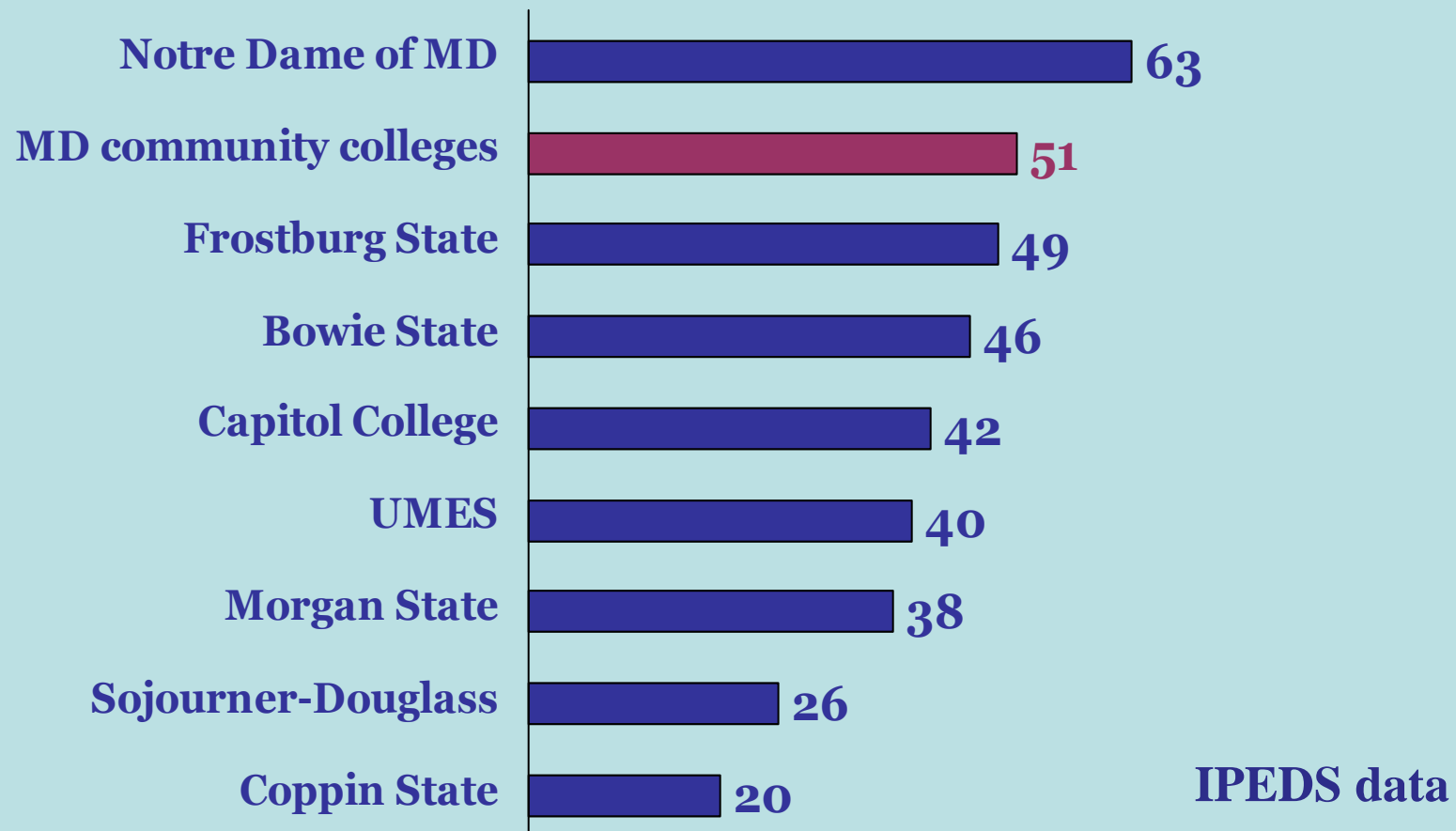
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# Completion Rates in Context

**How do community college completion rates compare to bachelor's degree attainment rates?**

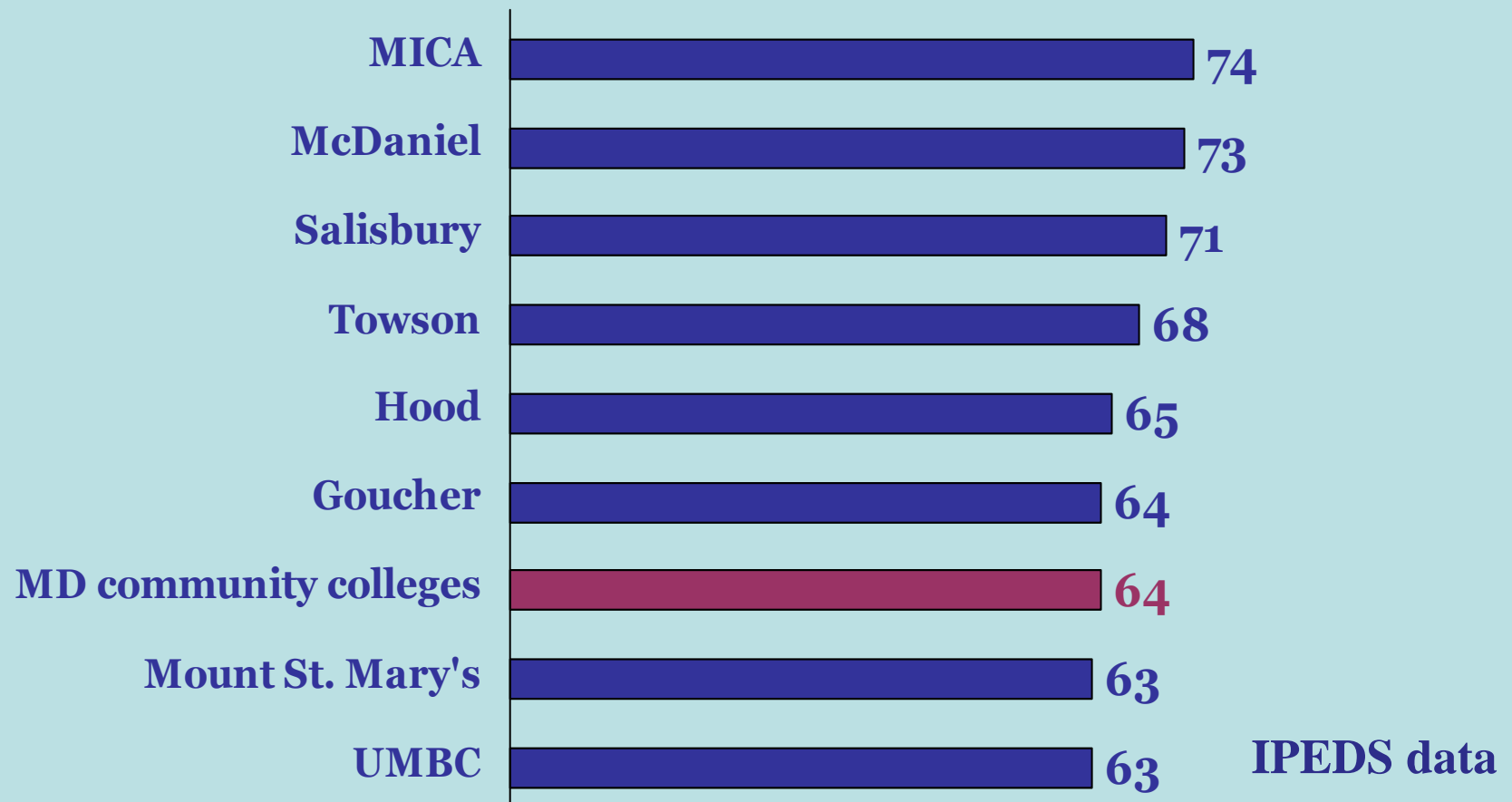
**CC completion=AA or transfer**

# Completion Rates (200% Time) Less-Selective Institutions



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# Completion Rates (200% Time) College-ready Students



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# Completion Rates in Context

**How do University freshmen who are *similar to community college students in life circumstances* do in terms of bachelor's degree attainment?**

# Percent Earning Bachelor's Degree By Number of Risk Factors

- Delayed college entry by one or more years
- Enrolled part-time
- Financially independent
- Children or dependents
- Employed full-time
- Is a single parent
- GED or HS dropout

Percent Earning Bachelor's Degree in Six Years	
Risk Factors	
None	70.6%
One	49.0%
<b>Two or more</b>	<b>20.9%</b>

*NCES, BPS 96/01, 1995 Freshmen*

# Colleges of At-risk Students?

## Maryland Community Colleges

<b>Enrolled part-time</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Paid for tuition with own income</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Employed 30+ hours per week</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Have children at home</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Need developmental/remedial courses</b>	<b>63%</b>

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# Issues Students Say Are Likely or Very Likely to Cause Them to Withdraw from College

## Maryland Community Colleges

<b>Transfer to four-year college</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Lack of finances</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Employed full-time</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Caring for dependents</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Academically unprepared for college</b>	<b>20%</b>

**SOURCE: Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2010**

**Community College Survey of Student Engagement**

# **“Competing Explanations of Undergraduate Noncompletion” (Attewell, Heil, and Reisel)**

**Nontraditional status—delaying entry to college, starting college part-time, and having dependents...is the second strongest correlate of noncompletion in community colleges.**

## **“Competing Explanations of Undergraduate Noncompletion” (Attewell, Heil, and Reisel)**

**For students who enter two-year colleges, financial aid is the single strongest predictor of graduation. By contrast, amount of aid has significantly smaller impacts on students who start at four-year colleges...**

**...variations in amounts of aid received, even in this “low aid” and “low cost” sector, are associated with substantial differences in graduation rates.**

# Completion Rates in Context

**How do community college transfers compare to native University freshmen in bachelor's degree attainment rates?**

# **University System of Maryland**

## **Native Freshmen vs. MD CC Transfers**

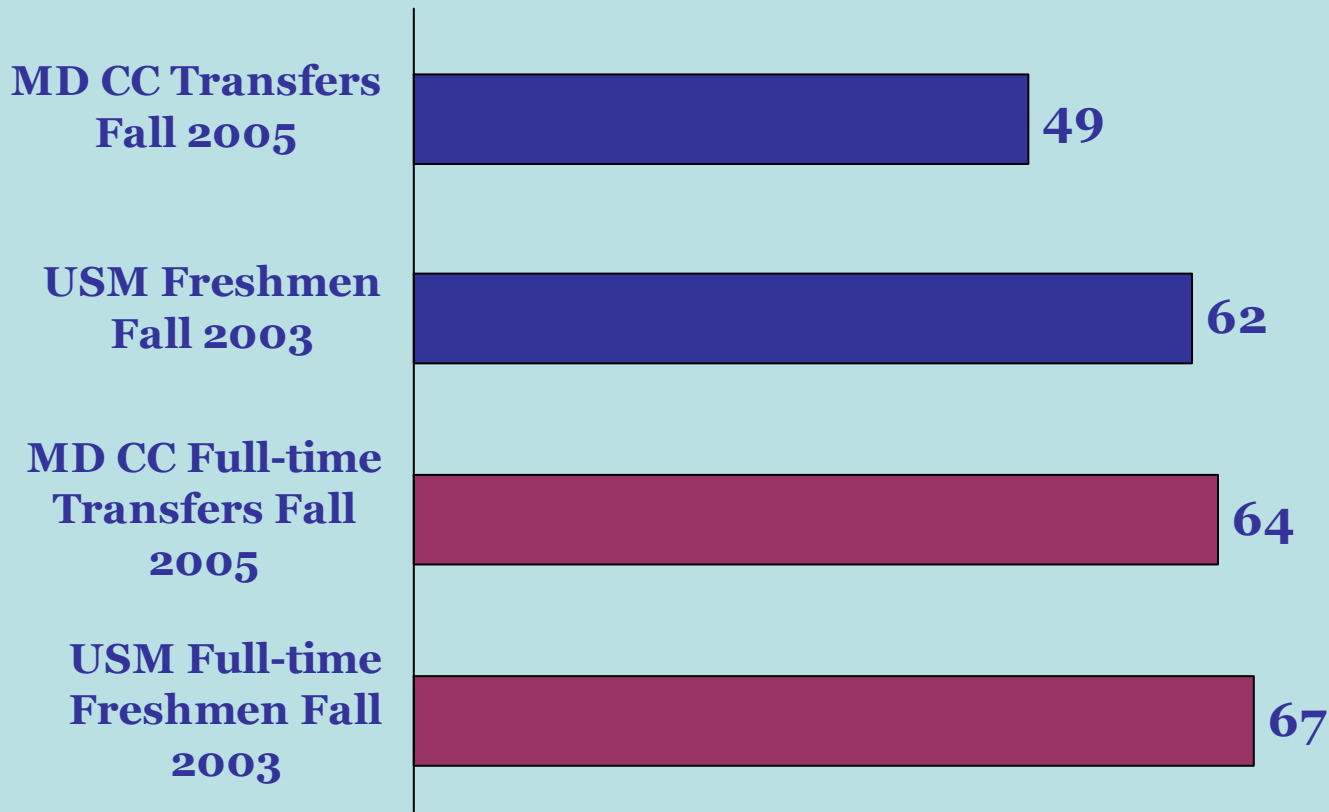
### **Bachelor's Degree Attainment**

**6 Years after entry as New Freshmen  
in Fall 2003**

**4 Years after Transfer from Maryland  
community college in Fall 2005**

# USM Bachelor's Attainment Rates

## Native Freshmen 6 Year and Transfers 4 Year



(Bachelor's Degrees Earned through FY2009)

University System of Maryland

# Takeaways: Measuring Degree Progress

- **Enrollment in a community college degree program does not indicate a student is seeking the Associate degree**
- **Identification of degree-seekers should be based on an hours-attempted threshold**
- **Most community college students who start full-time subsequently attend part-time**
- **Transfers must be tracked across state lines**

# Takeaways: Measuring Degree Progress

- **Completion rates for community colleges should include transfer to 4-year colleges**
- **Completion rates are similar at 2-year and 4-year institutions when you account for admission policies & student demographics**
- **Differences in completion rates reflect differences in academic preparation, ability to consistently attend full-time, and life circumstances of the student populations**

# Takeaways: Improving Completion Rates

- **Revise developmental education so students able to earn college credits sooner**
- **Ensure articulation and improve advising to minimize lost credits**
- **Restructure programs to fit busy lives**
- **Encourage and support full-time attendance, where appropriate**
- **Provide more financial aid to community college students, including part-timers**