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Assessing for Equity: the student experience through the standards

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**Aren't Students just
in Standard 4?**

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**Equity is everyone's
responsibility.**

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Students are Everywhere

Throughout the standards and the Requirements of Affiliation, the new MSCHE standards reflect the importance of students in consideration of accreditation.

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Comment

When assessing for equity, it is important to see how all aspects of the student experience may impact various groups of students differently.

Consider Requirements of Affiliation (ROA)
#5, 9, &10.



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ROA#5

The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and State) laws and regulations.





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ROA#9

- The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and **appropriate assessment of student achievement** throughout the educational offerings regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.

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ROA#10

Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, **student achievement of educational goals, student learning**, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

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Comment

- These are requirements which are supposed to be met even before institutions are considered for accreditation.
- Roles of students in institutional governance among other things are regulated by the state.
- Student learning is of equal importance regardless of how or where that learning is delivered.
- Students are supposed to be at the heart of **planning processes.**

Standard 1

Mission and Goals

The institution defines its purpose within the context of higher education, **the students it serves**, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specifies how the institution fulfills its mission.



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Relevant criteria

3 Goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission.

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Comment

Students and student learning are supposed to be at the center of the institution's mission **and goals**. Goals should reflect how the institution intends to achieve what it sets forward.

Does your institution have goals related to student learning and achievement?



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Standard 2 Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and Integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

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Relevant Criteria

1. a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights.
2. a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.

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Relevant Criteria

3. a grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and **equitably**.
6. honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials, as well as in internal communications.

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Comment

Many of the aspects of the integrity standard have a direct impact on students:

- A climate that fosters respect is especially difficult these days.
- Policies should be reviewed to ensure fairness and equity.
- Freedom of expression poses many thorny issues for faculty, staff, and students. Do students have academic freedom?
- Honestly and truthfulness in **internal** communications may also be a concern.



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Standard 3 Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

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Relevant criteria

1. certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, **designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning.**

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Relevant criteria

3. Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution **in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion.**

4. Sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support **both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress.**



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Relevant criteria

5.b. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and **diverse perspectives**.

7. Adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of any **student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers**.

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Comment

- Things like scheduling, preferred content, and arbitrary grading, or attendance practices, etc. have an impact on the coherence of a program, synthesis of learning, and time to degree, among other things. Credit caps anyone? Please review syllabi for these.
- Third party providers are becoming more common. Whatever is done in the institution's name by a third party provider is a responsibility of the institution. Do you know that students are being treated fairly by these contracted entities? These relationships may also need to be approved through Middle States substantive change.



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Standard 5 Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

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Relevant Criteria

2. Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating **the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals.**

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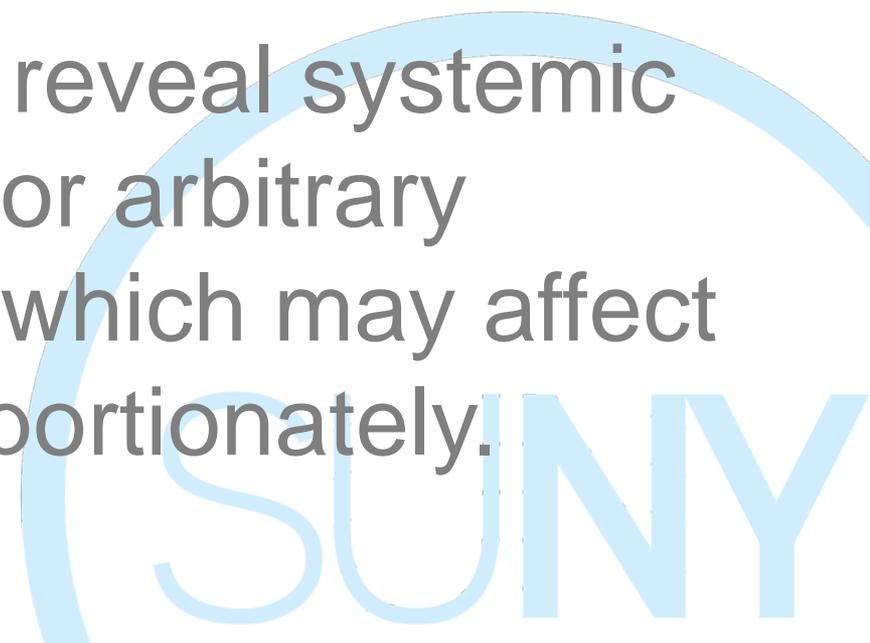
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Comment

Use of assessment results should include strategies for improving student learning.

Review of syllabi may reveal systemic issues of inconsistent or arbitrary application of policies which may affect various groups disproportionately.





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Comment

Assessment of student learning is where equity gaps may be most prominent.





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Standard 6 Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

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Relevant Criteria

2. Clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for **constituent participation**, and incorporate the use of assessment results.
5. Well defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability.

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Comment

Are students constituents?

What is the role of student government in decision-making?

Are students involved in key committees?

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Standard 7 Governance,

Leadership, and Administration (excerpt)

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, **its students**, and the other constituencies it serves.

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Relevant Criteria

1. a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision-making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and **students**.

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Comment

How are students involved in the governance of the institution? Are the roles, responsibilities, and accountability clearly defined?

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Standard 4 Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution **recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings.** The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which **enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.**

Relevant Criteria

1. clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including:
 - a. accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds;
 - b. a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals;

Relevant Criteria

c. orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and **guide students throughout their educational experience;**

d. **processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals** including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement;

Relevant Criteria

2. policies and procedures regarding **evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits**, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches;
6. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.

Comment

Most of the activity around student success currently is relevant to this standard. There are initiatives on placement of underprepared students, processes to improve advising and orientation, and the Guided Pathways initiative which is intended to make the processes around degree attainment much more transparent. The question of how to assess the success of these continues to remain a topic for debate.

Comment

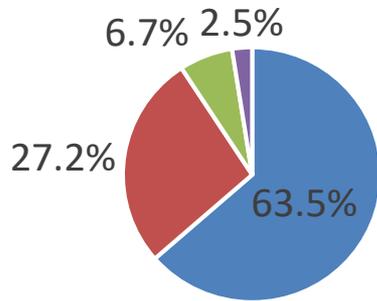
The question of how to assess for equity becomes even more complex, however, all of the student relevant aspects of the other standards also have a potential impact on student success, including the possibility of a disproportionate impact on various demographic groups.

**Do we have any
examples of
assessing these
standards for impact
on equity?**

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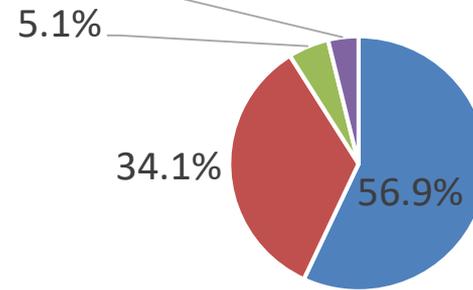
Seamless Transfer Interim Assessment: Associate Degree Student Outcomes

Fall 2011 Cohort (n = 69,553)



■ Non URM ■ URM
■ Unknown ■ Non Resident Alien

Fall 2015 (n = 52,624)

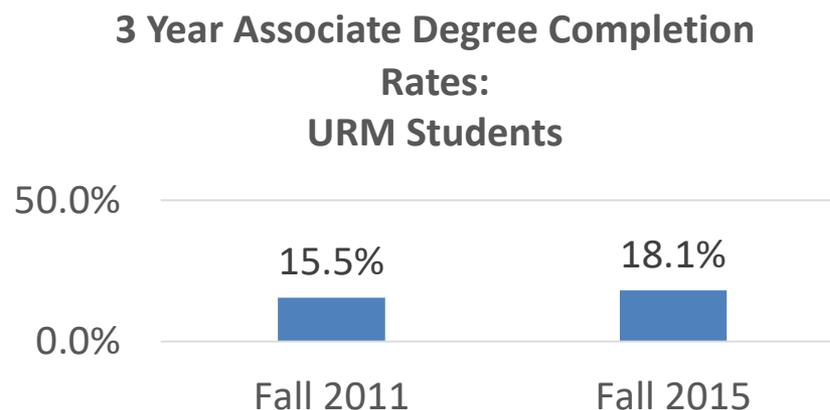
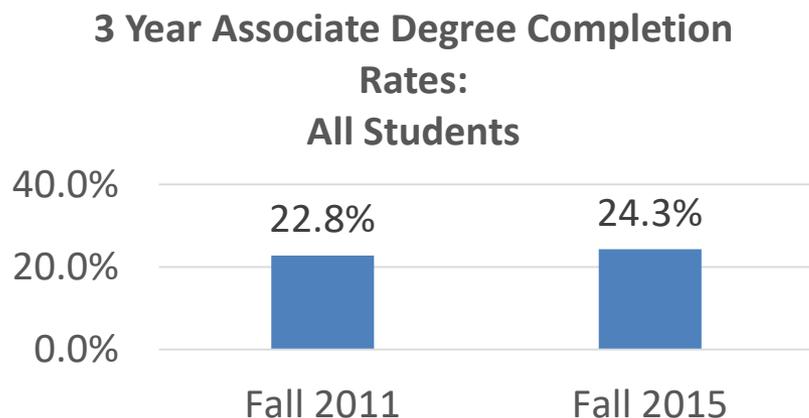


■ Non URM ■ URM
■ Unknown ■ Non Resident Alien

Key Finding

- Comparing the 2011 and 2015 cohorts, the percentage of URM associate degree students increased by 6.9%.

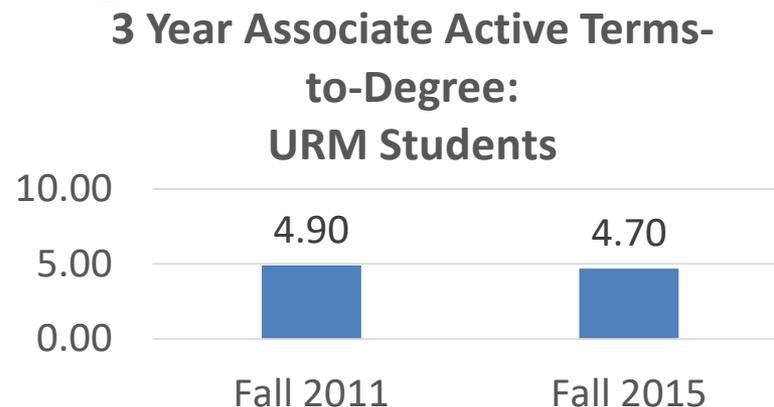
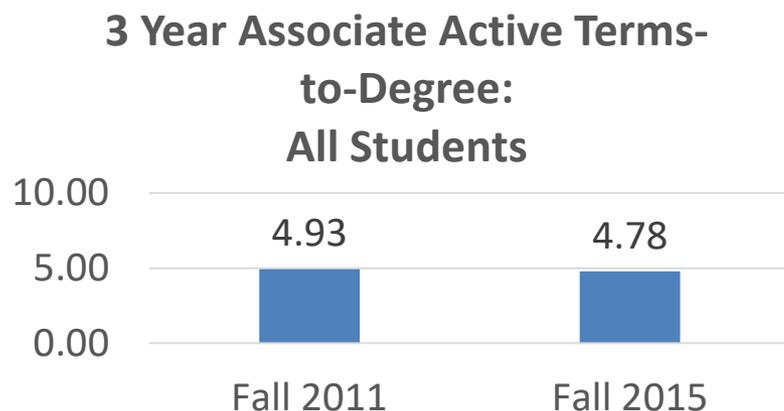
Seamless Transfer Interim Assessment: Completion



- **Completion rates increased:**

- Completion rates for all students increased by 1.5%. Results of two-sample t-test were significant ($t = -4.1, p < .001$).
- Completion rates for URM students increased by 2.6%. Results of two-sample t-test were significant ($t = -5.4, p < .001$).

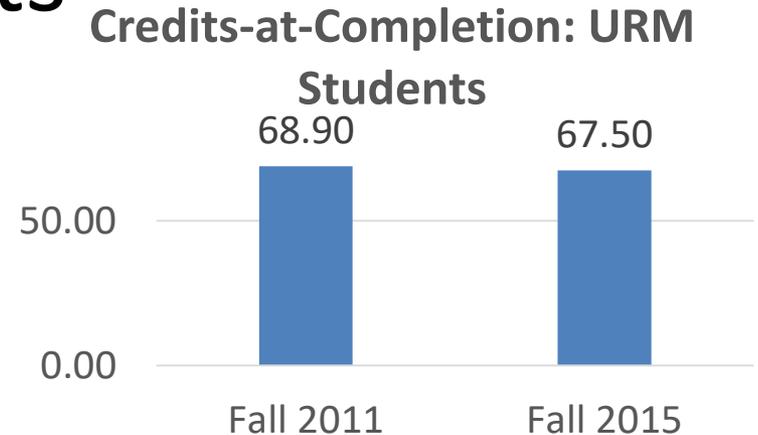
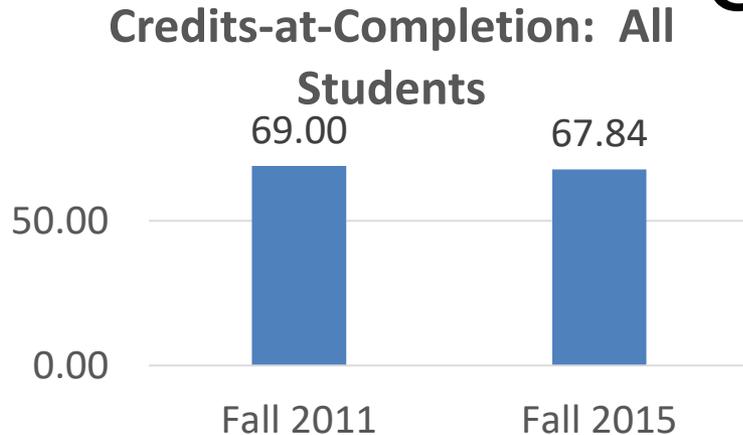
Seamless Transfer Interim Assessment: Time-to-Degree



- **Time-to-degree decreased:**

- Average active terms-to-degree for all students decreased by .15 terms. Results of two-sample t-test were significant ($t = 10.3, p < .001$).
- Average active terms-to-degree for URM students decreased .20 terms. Results of two-sample t-test were significant ($t = 2.4, p < .016$).

Seamless Transfer Interim Assessment: Credits



- **Credits at completion decreased:**

- Average credits-at-completion for all students decreased by 1.16 credits. Results of two-sample t-test were significant ($t = 10.8, p < .001$).
 - Collective credit reduction estimated at over = 9,000 credits.
- Average credits-at-completion for URM decreased by 1.40 credits. Results of two-sample t-test were significant ($t = 8.5, p < .001$).

Seamless Transfer Interim Assessment: Student Outcomes Summary

- In comparing the 2011 and 2015 cohorts, the percentage of URM students increased. SUNY data suggests that, on average, URM students tend to have poorer academic outcomes than other students due to historical and structural barriers.
- Considering associate degree outcomes, the 2015 cohort is outperforming the 2011 cohort:
 - 3 year completion rates have increased
 - Time-to-degree has decreased
 - Credits-at-completion have decreased
 - Results are statistically significant for all outcomes
- **URM students saw greater gains in all student outcomes in the study, though equity gaps remain. These results were statistically significant for all student outcomes.**

Comment

Causality is very difficult to prove, however, trend evidence in the aggregate can point to general progress as well as persistent achievement gaps.

All of the standards present possibilities to explore for potential impact on equity issues.

Becoming a Student Ready College

Tia Brown McNair, Susan Albertine,
Michelle Asha Cooper, Nicole McDonald,
Thomas Major, Jr.

Redesigning America's Community Colleges

Thomas Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars,
Davis Jenkins

Comment

Nobody said this was easy.



Discussion

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