



# South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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CHE  
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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Chair Tim Hofferth and Members, SC Commission on Higher Education

**From:** Chair Terrye Seckinger and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

### Consideration of Additional Student Success Measures

In academic year 2017-18, several institutions requested the Commission report a student success and progress rate similar to that reported by the [Voluntary System of Accountability](#) (VSA), in addition to long-standing reporting of graduation rates. The VSA, established in 2007 by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AACU), developed the success and progress rate to provide a more complete picture of student progress through the higher education system. For example, the federal graduation rate excludes outcomes for students who transfer between institutions<sup>1</sup>. The success and progress rate includes this outcomes data and also serves as the foundation for the [Student Achievement Measure](#) (SAM), which uses the same methodology and data,<sup>2</sup> but also includes additional enrollment datasets and reporting. The success and progress rate reported at the end of six years is the percentage of a student cohort (e.g., first-time, full-time freshmen in Fall 2009) who:

- Graduated from or are still enrolled at the reporting institution; and
- Transferred and graduated from one or more subsequent institutions or are still enrolled at a subsequent institution<sup>3</sup>.

As an example, the number of students who transfer between institutions in South Carolina continues to increase; in Fall 2015, 16,514 (8%) students enrolled in higher education institutions in South Carolina were transfer students, an increase of 29% over the previous ten-year period<sup>4</sup>. Current graduation rates do not account for students who demonstrate such persistence instead of dropping out. To recognize the success of these students as well as those students who complete 2+2 or 3+1 programs offered collaboratively by institutions, it is timely to consider reporting additional student success and progress measures.

### Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends the Commission approve the reporting of student success and progress measures in addition to, and not in replacement of, the four- and six-year graduation rate as required by federal reporting guidelines.

<sup>1</sup> Student Achievement Measure. [Who's Missing from the Federal Graduation Rate?](#)

<sup>2</sup> Voluntary System of Accountability College Portrait. [Resources: Linkages to SAM.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Voluntary System of Accountability. [Methodology for Calculating the Undergraduate Success & Progress Rate.](#)

<sup>4</sup> See [South Carolina Higher Education Statistical Abstract 2016.](#)