

Full-time / part-time enrollment fluctuations and performance

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Introduction

Many students who start enrolling full-time do continue enrolling as full-time students. A growing body of research shows that full-time college students are more likely to graduate (<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/04/19/students-who-attend-college-full-time-even-one-semester-are-more-likely-graduate>). The paper below compares student outcomes by their enrollment status gauging the impact of full-time of part-time initial enrollment and the impact of shifting from a full-time to part time enrollment status.

% of first semester students who enroll full-time

With some fluctuations about 88% - 85% of our freshmen start full-time.

- The lowest proportions were for the Fall 2021 and Fall 2020 pandemic semesters where full-time freshmen enrollment dropped to 80% and 84% respectively.
- Before the pandemic, there was slight improvement in the proportion of freshmen who started full time, moving from 15% part-time in Fall 2016 to 12% in Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 – this is probably because of the CUNY Momentum push for 15 credits a semester that started in 2017.

First-Time Students By Full or Part-time Status

Term	First-time Full-Time		First-Time Part Time	
	N	%	N	%
Fall 16	2654	85.2%	460	14.8%
Fall 17	2576	87.0%	384	13.0%
Fall 18	2348	88.1%	316	11.9%
Fall 19	2625	88.1%	353	11.9%
Fall 20	2302	84.3%	428	15.7%
Fall 21	1821	80.5%	442	19.5%
Fall 22	1940	85.8%	320	14.2%
Total	16266	85.8%	2703	14.2%

% of these (First-time Full-time) students that drop to part-time in their second semester

- On average 23% of the freshmen who started full-time did not enroll in the second semester. After a slight improvement in 2019, there was an increase of the proportion of student who were not retained after the first semester for the cohorts that entered during the pandemic years (Fall 2020 and Fall 2021), following by some recovery for the Fall 2022 cohort.

Second Term Status of First-Time Full-Time Students							
	First-time Full-time in First Term	Full-time in Second Term		Part-time in Second Term		Did Not attend Second Term	
Term	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fall 16	2654	1710	64.4%	426	16.1%	518	19.5%
Fall 17	2576	1682	65.3%	348	13.5%	546	21.2%
Fall 18	2348	1520	64.7%	273	11.6%	555	23.6%
Fall 19	2625	1804	68.7%	315	12.0%	506	19.3%
Fall 20	2302	1375	59.7%	347	15.1%	580	25.2%
Fall 21	1821	1037	56.9%	278	15.3%	506	27.8%
Fall 22	1940	1236	63.7%	244	12.6%	460	23.7%
Total	16266	10364	63.7%	2231	13.7%	3671	22.6%

- When only students who were retained in the second semester are examined, an average 18% of those who started full-time dropped to part-time enrollment – freshmen cohorts that started during the pandemic years saw the largest shift to part-time status.

Second Term Status of First-Time Full-Time Students - excluding students who dropped out					
	Attended the second term	Full-time in Second Term		Part-time in Second Term	
Term	N	N	%	N	%
Fall 16	2136	1710	80.1%	426	19.9%
Fall 17	2030	1682	82.9%	348	17.1%
Fall 18	1793	1520	84.8%	273	15.2%
Fall 19	2119	1804	85.1%	315	14.9%
Fall 20	1722	1375	79.8%	347	20.2%
Fall 21	1315	1037	78.9%	278	21.1%
Fall 22	1480	1236	83.5%	244	16.5%
Total	12595	10364	82.3%	2231	17.7%

% of students that change their full-time/part-time status more than once during their time at LaGuardia

Only students enrolled for 3 semesters or more can be included in this analysis.

- There is a steady decrease in the proportions of students who started as full-time freshmen and changed their full-time/part-time status two or more times – from 22% in Fall 2016 to 12% in Fall 2021. However, it should be noted that the results can be partially explained by the fact that lower proportions of the Fall 2021 students were retained after three semesters.

Students Changing Their FT/PT Status More Than Two Times					
	First-time Full-time Students	Attended Three Terms or More	%	*Changed FT/PT Status Two or More Times (of those attending 3 terms or more)	
Fall 16	2654	1868	70.4%	417	22.3%
Fall 17	2576	1777	69.0%	304	17.1%
Fall 18	2348	1528	65.1%	279	18.3%
Fall 19	2625	1730	65.9%	267	15.4%
Fall 20	2302	1427	62.0%	230	16.1%
Fall 21	1821	1043	57.3%	124	11.9%
Fall 22	1940	0		0	
*For graduating students only, if their status changed from FT to PT in their last (graduating) term it was not counted as a change. Many graduating students need less than 12 credits in their last semester.					
Terms in which the student <u>did not attend</u> were not counted.					

% of graduates that attend completely full-time (or info on FT status) as a factor toward completion

This analysis studies graduates who graduated as of Fall 2022. So, for the Fall 2016 cohort graduation rates are after 6 years, while for the Fall 2021 cohort graduation rates are after 2 years.

- There is a clear and a very substantial advantage for enrolling consistently full-time. Graduation rates (3-years or more) of graduates who only attended full-time range from a low of 69% for Fall 2016 cohort to a high of 86% for the 2019 cohort, while rates for those who switched to part-time range from a low of 5% to a high of 20%.
- For 2-year graduation rates, the vast majority (99%) of the graduates only attended full-time. If should be noted however, that only 201 of the first-time full-time freshmen graduated in 2 years (199 of them enrolled full-time only).

Graduates by Full-time/Part-time Enrollment Status										
	First-time Full-time Students	Eventually Graduated		**Average Terms Attended	*Grads That Attended Only Full-time		Grads That Changed FT/PT Status Once		Grads That Changed FT/PT Status More Than Once	
Term	N	N	%		N	%	N	%	N	%
Fall 16	2654	1052	39.6%	5.6	730	69.4%	117	11.1%	205	19.5%
Fall 17	2576	1034	40.1%	5.2	814	78.7%	88	8.5%	132	12.8%
Fall 18	2348	836	35.6%	5.2	636	76.1%	77	9.2%	123	14.7%
Fall 19	2625	869	33.1%	4.9	723	83.2%	63	7.2%	83	9.6%
Fall 20	2302	584	25.4%	4.6	504	86.3%	31	5.3%	49	8.4%
Fall 21	1821	201	11.0%	3.9	199	99.0%	2	1.0%	0	0.0%
*For graduating students only, if their status changed from FT to PT in their last (graduating) term it was not counted as a change. Many graduating students need less than 12 credits in their last semester.										
**Terms in which the student <u>did not attend</u> were not counted.										

The semester where the biggest change in status occurs

The table below shows, by term number, the percent of the original first-time full-time freshmen cohort attending full-time. Term number is the number of terms that has elapsed since their entering term (1st term). If a student does not attend in a particular term they are not counted, but if they return, they are added back into the pool either as full or part-time. Students who graduate are counted as full-time students for the graduation term even if they attended part-time as they may only need less than 12 credits to graduate. This table only counts students who are still in attendance, excluding students who dropped out or graduated.

- For the 2nd to the 4th terms full-time attendance for freshmen who started full-time, is over 80% (slightly less in the pandemic semesters of Fall 2020 and Fall 2021).
- Starting with the 5th term, full-time attendance consistently and steadily declines.

% of Remaining First-time Full-time Students Attending Full Time For Each Term in Attendance														
	1st Term		2nd Term		3rd Term		4th Term		5th Term		6th Term		7th Term	
Entering Term	% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time	
	Attending		Attending		Attending		Attending		Attending		Attending		Attending	
Fall 16	2654	100.0%	2137	80.1%	1739	81.3%	1777	80.3%	1218	74.5%	892	68.5%	525	58.7%
Fall 17	2576	100.0%	2032	82.9%	1686	85.4%	1823	84.5%	1113	72.4%	692	65.0%	376	59.0%
Fall 18	2348	100.0%	1793	84.8%	1475	83.9%	1550	84.3%	949	72.5%	659	65.4%	379	54.1%
Fall 19	2627	100.0%	2125	85.2%	1693	82.5%	1694	83.9%	1031	68.0%	656	60.2%	371	56.6%
Fall 20	2303	100.0%	1727	79.9%	1415	78.4%	1349	80.7%	786	72.6%	531	62.5%		
Fall 21	1821	100.0%	1319	78.9%	1045	80.7%	1059	82.6%						
Fall 22	1941	100.0%	1481	83.5%										
	8th Term		9th Term		10th Term		11th Term		12th Term		13th Term		14th Term	
Entering Term	% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time		% Full-time	
	Attending		Attending		Attending		Attending		Attending		Attending		Attending	
Fall 16	339	59.3%	236	53.0%	207	52.7%	123	52.0%	90	36.7%	63	42.9%	50	46.0%
Fall 17	260	58.8%	177	49.2%	112	42.9%	85	45.9%	71	52.1%				
Fall 18	253	51.0%	132	50.8%	121	51.2%								
Fall 19	232	57.3%												

PMP/CUNY data of the proportion of freshmen enrolled full-time in their first year in comparison to CUNY community Colleges.

CUNY's PMP provided data on the proportions of Fall full-time freshmen who were retained as full-time in the following Fall semester. Unfortunately, CUNY discontinued providing this information in the last two years.

- LaGuardia's full-time rates are slightly over 50%, with a notable improvement only for the Fall 2017 cohort at the start of the CUNY Momentum campaign.
- When compared to other CUNY community colleges, LaGuardia's percentage of students that are retained as full-time are considerably lower compared to Kingsborough and Guttman, slightly lower compared to Queensborough, similar to BMCC, and mostly higher than Hostos and Bronx.

Percentage of fall full-time first-time freshmen retained in the fall as full-time (1 year)					
	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
BMCC	54.2	54.9	50.4	53.6	51.1
Bronx	48.6	49.3	45.5	46.7	53.4
Guttman	62.8	61.4	56.7	64.2	59.0
Hostos	52.8	46.3	41.5	39.3	43.9
Kingsborough	64.6	64.4	61.7	59.3	62.8
LaGuardia	50.0	52.4	55.3	51.8	52.2
Queensborough	53.5	58.3	57.3	52.9	53.9
Community College Average	54.4	55.4	52.7	52.4	53.2

Note: Percentage of fall full-time (12 or more credits per semester), first-time freshmen still enrolled full-time in the college of entry one year after entry.

Below are also comparative CUNY data for one-year retention and 3-year graduation. The last year was extracted from CUNY's Databook instead of the PMP

- The retention table below in conjunction with percentage of freshmen who are retained as full-time, shows clear relations between higher one-year retention and the percentage of full-time attendance.
- All colleges had retention drop in Fall 2020 (the pandemic cohort). However, LaGuardia is the only College where the Fall 2021 one-year retention did not slightly increase compared to Fall 2020.

Percentage of fall full-time first-time freshmen retained in the fall (1 year)						Databook
	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
BMCC	62.9	57.8	59.7	58.7	55.9	60.8
Bronx	58.6	54.6	55.6	59.5	51.9	53.9
Guttman	67.4	63.5	67.5	65.8	47.2	48.7
Hostos	61.2	55.8	57.7	59.6	52.0	52.4
Kingsborough	70.7	68.7	65.7	69.3	60.8	61.1
LaGuardia	64.4	64.8	61.8	63.2	59.9	57.1
Queensborough	67.3	64.2	62.0	61.5	58.8	59.0
Community College Average	64.5	61.0	60.7	61.5	56.7	58.2

Note: Percentage of fall full-time (12 or more credits per semester), first-time freshmen still enrolled in the college of entry one year after entry.

- Despite the fact that LaGuardia's one-year retention rates were in the middle range compared to the other CUNY community colleges, its 3-year graduation rates are higher than the other community Colleges (with the exception of Guttman). Kingsborough rates were higher than LaGuardia's until the Fall 2019 cohort where they dropped by 5% compared to Fall 2018.
- The negative impact of the pandemic started showing for the graduation rates of Fall 2019 cohort (and even 2018). However, as is revealed by the sharp drop in one-year retention rates, the impact is going to

be even more severe for the Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 cohorts (preliminary Fall 2020 3-year graduation rates for LaGuardia are 25.3%).

Three-year graduation rate of associate full-time first-time freshmen (completed at college of entry)						Databook
	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
BMCC	20.1	22.4	24.5	26.6	26.4	24.0
Bronx	16.0	20.3	21.4	19.5	21.9	21.2
Guttman	46.3	43.1	39.8	38.9	41.1	31.6
Hostos	20.0	26.7	23.1	22.9	21.1	20.4
Kingsborough	27.9	31.9	34.3	35.0	31.6	26.7
LaGuardia	22.8	26.9	28.5	32.2	29.3	29.2
Queensborough	22.6	24.3	28.1	29.2	28.6	26.1
Community College Average	22.4	25.3	27.0	28.2	27.4	25.2

Note: Students are counted as graduates if they earned the degree pursued or higher within three years from the college of entry.
Graduation rates reflect all degrees conferred through August 31 of the last year of the tracking period.

Conclusion

Most studies of student retention and graduation focus on students who started their academic career as full-time students. The data presented in the report show the clear advantage of enrolling full-time. Furthermore, students who shift to part time enrollment after starting full-time have considerably lower retention and graduation rates.