Board of Trustees

Student Success & Learning Committee

June 11, 2026
Time: 9:00am
Scanlon Hall, Loughman Living Room

Committee Members: Chair Chris Montemayor, Vice Chair Barney Garcia, Secretary Michael O'Rourke, Melissa Alvarado, Theresa Jasmin, William Reichelt and Dr. Gloria Williams

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing will also take place at the following link: https://www.westfield.ma.edu/live

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1. **Call to Order** — Trustee Christopher Montemayor

2. **Approval of Minutes** — Trustee Christopher Montemayor
   a. Minutes of April 28, 2026

3. **Items for Information**
   a. Westfield State Athletics — Richard Lenfest
   b. AY 25/26 Graduates: Undergraduate and Graduate — Dr. William Salka
   c. Institutional Research and Assessment — Jeff Xavier

4. **Adjournment** — Trustee Christopher Montemayor

Attachments:

a. Minutes of April 28, 2026
b. Year in Review-Howard C. Smith Cup Presentation
c. Graduates 2025/2026
d. Undergraduate Completion Trends and Opportunities

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Student Success and Learning Committee

April 28, 2026, 12:45 p.m.

Minutes

Loughman Living Room, Scanlon Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Chris Montemayor, Vice Chair Barney Garcia, Secretary Michael O'Rourke, Trustee Melissa Alvarado, Trustee William Reichelt, Trustee Gloria Williams, and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Theresa Jasmin.

Also, present and participating are Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson; Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. William Salka; Associate Director of Student Affairs, Stefanie Santaniello; and Assistant Director of Student Success Analytics, Melanie Gaudet.

Committee Chair Montemayor called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. and a rollcall was taken of the committee members participating as listed above. It was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

> **MOTION** made by Trustee Williams and seconded by Trustee O'Rourke to approve the Academic Affairs Committee minutes of the February 19, 2026, meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

Tenure and Promotion Ceremony

- The April meeting is a celebratory event for faculty earning tenure and promotion.
- Tenure is described as the pinnacle for academics, with promotion to full professor being the highest achievement.

Faculty Seeking Promotion to Full Professor

- Paul Cacolice, Department of Sports Medicine and Human Performance
  - Joined in 2016, promoted to Associate Professor in 2021, and tenured in 2022.
  - Described as a rigorous teacher and committed mentor.
- Andrew Hafner, Department of Education
  - Joined in 2013, was promoted to Associate Professor in 2018, and tenured in 2019.
  - Noted for substantial accomplishments in scholarship and engagement.
- Tracy McLeod, Department of Education
  - Joined in 2017, promoted to Associate Professor in 2020, tenured in 2023.
  - Effective teacher focused on preparing educators for students with disabilities.
- Edward Orgill, Department of Music

    - Dr. Orgill has established himself as an exceptional teacher whose work covers every major segment of the music curriculum.
    - Was tenured in 2017 and promoted to Associate Professor in 2018.
- Jamie Rivera, Department of Nursing
    - Her record reflects contributions in teaching, grant activity, and service to both the Nursing Department and the broader university.
    - She was hired as an Assistant Professor in 2017, tenured in 2019 and promoted to Associate Professor in 2021
- Amanda Salacinski, Department of Sports Medicine and Human Performance
    - She was promoted to Associate Professor in 2021 and tenured in 2024.
    - Her teaching philosophy is grounded in mentorship, clarity and application.
- Susan Scott, Department of Nursing
    - She was hired as an Assistant Professor in 2019, tenured and promoted to Associate Professor in 2021
    - Dr. Scott's work demonstrates a strong blend of teaching excellence, student advising, clinical expertise, scholarship, and service
- Francesca Spina, Department of Criminal Justice
    - Professor Spina joined Westfield State in 2025 at the rank of Associate Professor.
    - Her record of teaching effectiveness, student advising, contributions to the content of your discipline, participation in professional organizations as well as your research activity, public service, effectiveness as Chairperson of an extremely large department, and service to the Westfield State University community are all richly documented and have been praised by your colleagues and your college Dean.

Faculty Seeking Promotion to Associate Professor

- Timothy Honig, Department of Music
    - Joined in 2019 as a temporary instructor, hired as Assistant Professor in 2022.
    - Created the Bachelor of Music Therapy program, recognized for its potential.

MOTION made by Trustee Garcia and seconded by Trustee O'Rourke; the Student Success and Learning Committee recommends to the full Board: to approve the granting of promotion to the rank of Professor, effective September 1, 2026, to: Dr. Paul Cacolice, Sports Medicine and Human Performance; Dr. Andrew Hafner, Education; Dr. Tracy McLeod, Education; Dr. Edward Orgill, Music; Dr. Jamie Rivera, Nursing; Dr. Amanda Salacinski, Sports Medicine and Human Performance; Dr. Susan Scott, Nursing; Dr. Francesa Spina, Criminal Justice. To approve the granting of promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, effective September 1, 2026, to: Dr. Timothy Honig, Music. There being no discussion, ROLL CALL VOTE, motion passed by majority.

Faculty Seeking Tenure

- Ashley Evanoski-Cole, Department of Chemistry
    - Joined in 2020, promoted to Associate Professor in 2024.
    - Described as an innovative educator with successful grant acquisitions.
- Beverly St. Pierre, Health Sciences
    - Joined in 2020, promoted to Associate Professor in 2020.
    - Commended for her commitment to scholarship and community.

- Francesca Spina, Criminal Justice
    - Joined in 2022 as Associate Professor and Chair of the Criminal Justice Department.
    - Recognized for her engaging teaching style and published works.
- Kathryn Weglarz, Department of Biology
    - Joined Westfield State in 2020 at the rank of Assistant Professor and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2025.
    - Her teaching was described as outstanding, as evidenced by her receipt of the Early Career Teaching and Mentoring Award as well as the Teaching Showcase Award.

Tenure with Automatic Promotion to Associate Professor

- Michelle Duffelmeyer, Health Sciences
    - Joined in 2020, noted for substantial contributions to physician's assistant education.
    - Dr. Duffelmeyer has made substantial contributions to Physicians Assistant education through her role as course coordinator and lecturer for six major medical modules.
- Juliet Lee, Education Department
    - Joined in 2020, recognized for her learner-centered approach and curriculum redesign efforts.
- Nicholas Morrison, Psychology
    - Joined in 2020, noted for high teaching standards and active scholarship.
- Jessica Stephens, Biology
    - Joined in 2020, described as an exemplary teacher with a focus on inclusion and collaborative learning.

MOTION made by Trustee Garcia and seconded by Trustee O'Rourke; the Student Success and Learning Committee recommends to the full Board: to approve the granting of promotion to the rank of Professor, effective September 1, 2026, to: Professor Ashley Evanoski-Cole, Chemistry & Physical Science; Professor Beverly St. Pierre, Health Sciences; Professor Francesca Spina, Criminal Justice; Professor Kathryn Weglarz, Biology. To approve the granting of tenure with automatic promotion, effective September 1, 2026, to: Professor Michelle Duffelmeyer, Health Sciences; Professor Juliet Lee, Education; Professor Nicholas Morrison, Psychology; Professor Jessica Stephens, Biology. There being no discussion, ROLL CALL VOTE, motion passed by majority.

Academic Excellence Awards

- Presentation of the Academic Excellence Awards list for board information.
- Awards recognize exceptional students within their majors for academic performance and contributions.
- List of departments, award names, and recipients included in the board packet for review.

Student Success Data Demonstration

- Introduction of Melanie Gaudette and Stephanie Santinello from the institutional research team.
- Overview of the Huron Project: to capture, clean, verify, and utilize data effectively.

- Creation of a Data Lake House in partnership with Huron and housed in Amazon cloud.
- Data includes financial aid and student success KPIs, cleaned and stored for reliability.
- Historical data will improve over time, allowing trend analysis.

Focus on Student Success

- Emphasis on using data to improve student experience and success.
- Goals to increase retention and graduation rates.
- Commitment to supporting students in completing their degrees.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Definition of KPIs for multi-level analysis to respond to student needs.
- Ability to produce specific KPIs on request for board review.
- Enrollment data will help understand changes in the student population and inform responses.

Enrollment Data Overview

- The enrollment data can be broken down by various variables including:
    - Year, major, gender, first generation status, race, ethnicity, and age.
- Geographic dispersal of students is also analyzed, focusing on:
    - New England, primarily the Commonwealth.
    - National distribution.

Data Access and Usage

- Access to data is being limited to ensure clarity and consistency:
    - "We will not use any data that does not come from this data set."
    - This approach aims to eliminate discrepancies in data interpretation during discussions.
- Institutional research will handle all data requests to ensure proper understanding and interpretation of the data.

Data Quality and Historical Context

- Data is frozen at specific points in time to maintain consistency:
    - Data is frozen early in the fall and spring semesters.
    - Huron cleans and stores the data for reliability.
- Currently, historical data spans three to four years, with plans to expand in the future.

Future Directions and Funding

- The institution has received funding for student success initiatives:
    - "The state is giving us a million and a half hours a year to support student success."
- The data will help in setting goals and understanding student retention:
    - Focus on characteristics of students who do not continue to their second year or semester.

Data Access and Security

- Access to the dashboard is limited to Deans, the IR team, and a few others, including the President and Chair.
- Individual faculty members must go through Institutional Research for data access.
- Data can be exported and de-identified for faculty research purposes.

Retention Rates by Major

- Retention rates for the 2024 cohort show an overall rate of 72.6%.
- Nursing program has a higher retention rate due to direct admission standards and faculty support.

- Criminal Justice major retention rate is around 70.12%, consistent with expectations for large majors.
- Management major has a lower-than-average retention rate, attributed to rapid growth and insufficient faculty support.

Financial Aid and Student Retention

- Financial aid can significantly impact students' persistence.
- There is a modest performance gap for students of color that widens from year one to year two.
- Equity gaps tend to compound over time, indicating a need for deeper intervention.

Data Reporting and Retention

- Current reporting focuses on fall-to-fall retention but misses students who do not return after their sophomore year.
- Data shows that if students return for their junior year, their likelihood of graduating increases significantly.
- Targeting resources towards first-year students is essential for improving retention rates.

High School GPA and Retention

- High school GPA is a strong predictor of retention rates.
    - Students with a GPA of 2.0 to 2.49 have a retention rate that drops significantly in their second year.
    - More than half of these students do not return after their sophomore year.
- Early support is crucial for at-risk groups starting from the first week of classes.

Importance of Early Intervention

- Persistence measures show that students struggling in their first semester are unlikely to return.
- There is a direct correlation between high school GPA and first-semester performance.
- Midterm grades are critical for identifying struggling students and mobilizing support before it's too late.

Retention Data

- Low band students show improvement in retention but struggle in the Spring semester.
- Graduation indicators for first-time full-time students show a six-year graduation rate of about 50%.
    - 2019 cohort data indicate 49% retention.
    - Only 50% of students graduated within the six-year term.

Graduation Rate Insights

- The six-year graduation rate is a key metric; four-year graduation rates are also available.
- Concerns raised about the low graduation rate of 50%.
    - "Half the students who start don't complete."
    - Importance of understanding student debt and time spent without a degree.
- Future assessments will include the earnings of Pell Grant recipients' post-graduation.
- Institutions will be penalized if graduates do not earn a living wage.

Tracking Student Outcomes

- Discussion on tracking students who transfer to other institutions.
- Data analysis shows high school GPA influences transfer rates.
    - Students with higher GPAs tend to leave early if they transfer.
- Ideal outcome is for students to attend community college, upskill, and return.

Student KPIs and Dashboard

- Main student KPIs include financial outcomes and health status.
    - Metrics available: total grants received, average debt amount.
- Degree completion metrics include:
    - Graduation rates and total degrees awarded.
    - Credit accumulation as an additional indicator.

Predictive Model for Student Success

- Model predicts likelihood of retention for first-time, full-time students.
    - Uses historical data to generate predictions and test against actual outcomes.
    - Achieves an 85% accuracy rate in predicting retention.
- The model incorporates multiple variables influencing student success.
    - High school GPA identified as a significant predictor.

Targeting Student Support

- Information from the model will be used to identify students who are likely to struggle.
    - Example: Out of 804 first-year students, 200 identified as needing support.
- Resources will be allocated to students with a high likelihood of struggling, rather than those likely to succeed.

Strategic Planning and Upward Mobility

- Emphasis on developing programs that support student success and upward mobility.
- Encouragement for students to pursue additional credentials for job opportunities.
- Current statistics: 80% of students graduate within five years, with many earning over $80,000.

There being no further discussion,

> **MOTION** made by Trustee Williams and seconded by Trustee Garcia to adjourn the meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed by majority.

Meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

a. Minutes of February 19, 2026
b. Motion for Faculty Promotion
c. Promotion Candidate Summaries
d. Promotion Personnel Action
e. Motion for Tenure
f. Tenure Candidate Summaries
g. Tenure Personnel Action
h. Academic Excellence Awards List

Secretary's Certificate

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the approved minutes of the Westfield State University Board of Trustees Student Success and Learning Committee meeting held on April 28, 2026.

_____ _____

Michael O'Rourke, Secretary Date

Westfield State University Graduates: AY 2025/26

Board of Trustees
Student Success & Learning Committee
June 11, 2026

Graduate Programs in DGCE
AY 2025/2026

Degree	Program	# of Students	Degree	Program	# of Students
M.S.W.	Social Work	110	M.Ed.	Mod. Disabilities PreK-8	7
M.S.	Physician Assistant Studies	27	M.Ed.	Physical Education	6
M.A.	Counseling	22	M.Ed.	Early Childhood	4
M.P.A.	Public Administration	16	M.Ed.	Reading Specialist	4
M.S.	Criminal Justice	16	M.Ed.	Moderate Disabilities 5-12	4
M.A.	Applied Behavior Analysis	7	M.Ed.	History	3
M.A.	English	5	M.Ed.	Elementary	2
M.S.	Accounting	3	M.Ed.	Biology	1
			M.Ed.	Math	1
	Non-Ed. Total	**206**	**Education Total**		**32**
	All Graduates	**238**			

Graduate Program Growth
AY 25/26 to AY 26/27

- M.S.W.: 47 more Applications (250 – 297)
  62 additional Deposits* (115 – 177)
- M.B.A.: 28 Applications and 15 Deposits* in first year offered
- Master of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (NPA)
  26 Applications and 11 Deposits* in first year offered
- M.A. in Counseling
  48 more Applications (52 – 100)
- Planned Growth in Health Care Fields: PA, Nursing, Counseling

*Deposits as of June 5, 2026.

College of Arts & Sciences – Undergraduates AY 2025/2026

Major	# of Students	Major	# of Students
Criminal Justice	57	Economics	11
Psychology	54	Graphic Design	7
Communication	31	Music	7
Biology	29	Mathematics	6
English	23	Theatre	5
History	20	Chemical & Physical Science	2
Political Science	20	Sociology	2
Liberal Studies	18	Music Therapy*	1
Environmental Science	18	Ethnic & Gender Studies	1
Art	11	Spanish	0
	Total	**345**	

*New Major, graduates are expected to increase.

College of Professional Studies – Undergraduates AY 2025/2026

Major	# of Graduates	Major	# of Graduates
Nursing	37	Movement Science	20
Health Sciences	32	Computer Science	17
Management*	26	Early Childhood Education	17
Social Work	24	Finance*	15
Elementary Education	23	Computer Information Systems	10
Marketing*	21	Regional Planning	4
Accounting*	20	Special Education	4
	Total	**278**	

*New Major, graduates are expected to increase

DGCE Online Completer Undergraduate Academic Year 2025/2026

Major	# of Graduates
Criminal Justice	21
Psychology	21
Management	10
Accounting	5
Business Management	4
History	4
Marketing	4
Finance	2
Total	**71**

Undergraduate Completion Trends and Opportunities

Presentation for the Westfield State University Board of Trustees

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
Jeff Xavier, Executive Director
Soohong Kim, Director
Stefanie Santaniello, Associate Director
Melanie Gaudet, Assistant Director of Student Success Analytics

Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

Overview

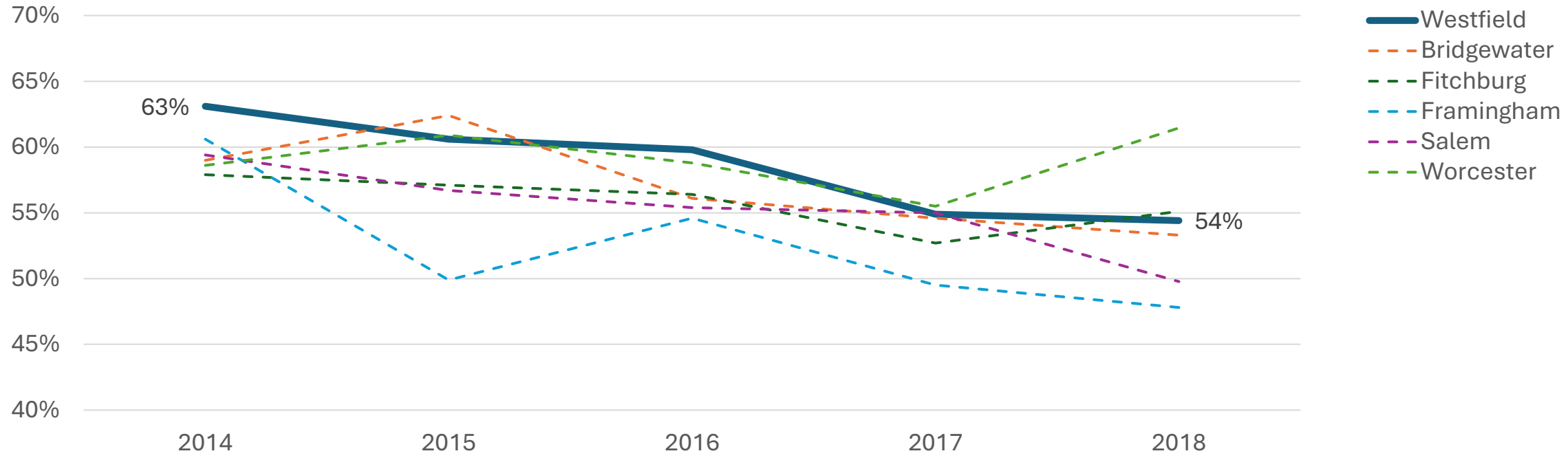
- Key performance indicators for completion
  - Four-year cohort graduation rates (on-time rate)
  - Six-year cohort graduation rates (150% time)

- Data sources
  - Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
  - WSU Student Success Analytics (Huron)
  - Westfield State Banner data
  - National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

Six-year completion rates for first-time, full-time students by cohort year

Westfield State University and other Massachusetts State Universities

Graduation rates have declined across the system—Westfield is tracking with peers



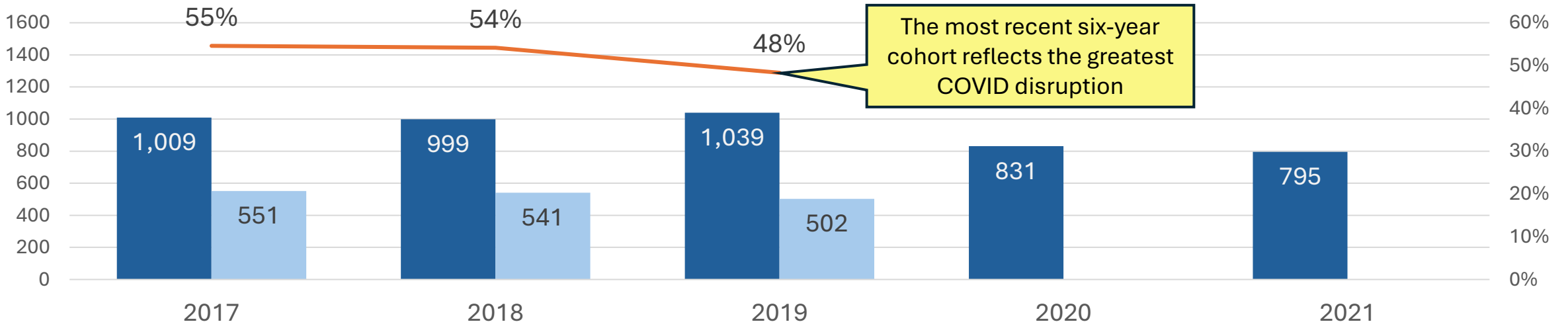
Cohort year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change 2014 to 2018
Bridgewater	59%	62%	56%	55%	53%	-6 percentage points
Fitchburg	58%	57%	56%	53%	55%	-3 percentage points
Framingham	61%	50%	55%	50%	48%	-13 percentage points
Salem	59%	57%	55%	55%	50%	-10 percentage points
Westfield	**63%**	**61%**	**60%**	**55%**	**54%**	**-9 percentage points**
Worcester	59%	61%	59%	56%	61%	3 percentage points

Source: IPEDS. Six-Year Graduation Rates for First-time Full-time Baccalaureate Degree-seeking Freshmen Cohort

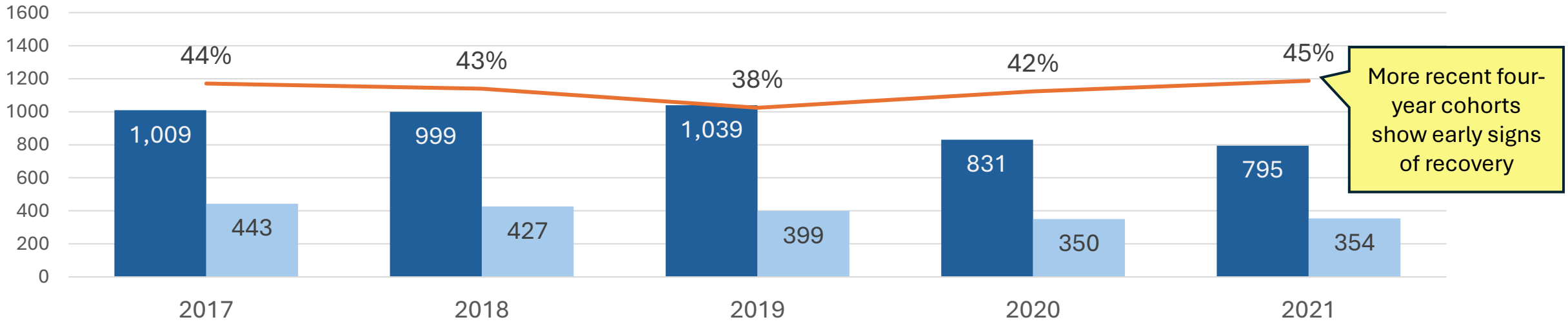
Four- and six-year graduation rates

Westfield State University Student Success Analytics (Huron Dashboard)

Six-year completion (Fall 2019 first-time full-time cohort)



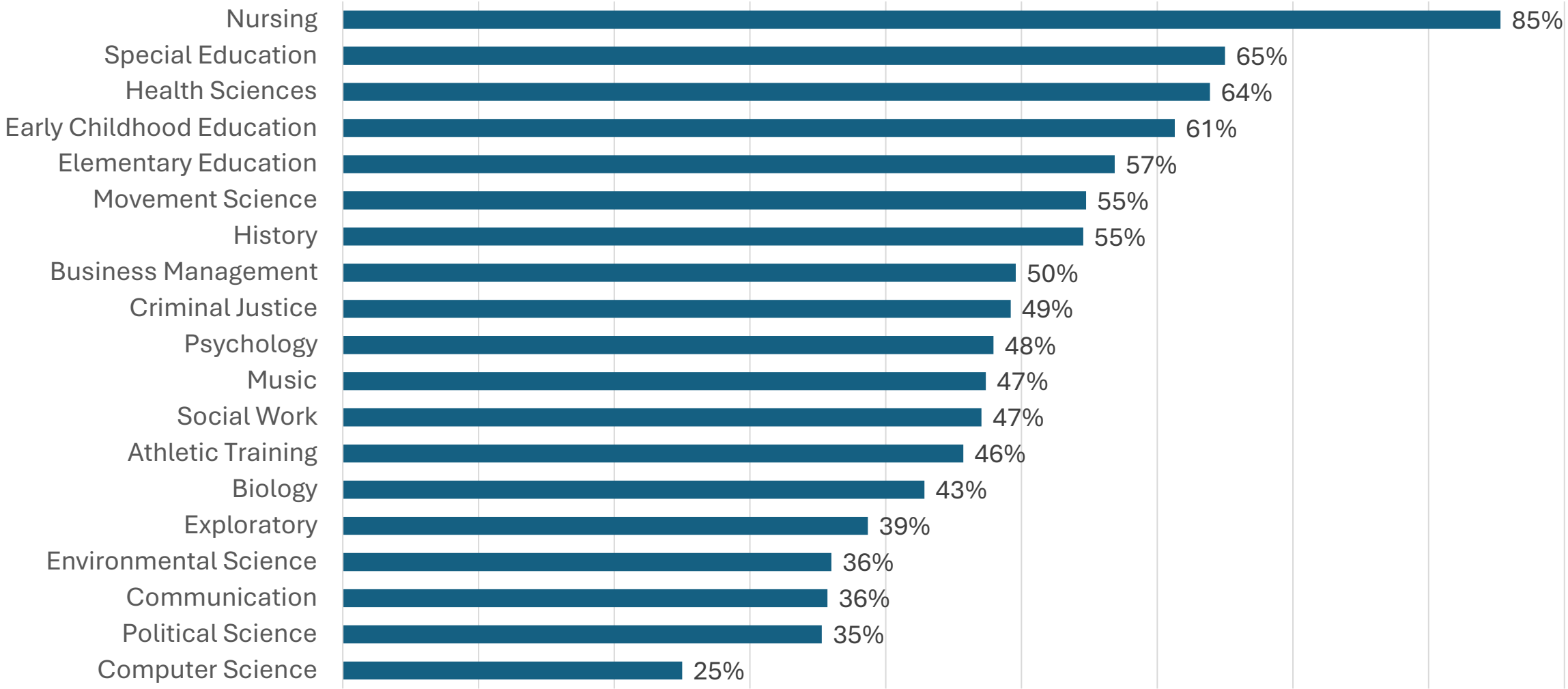
Four-year completion (Fall 2021 first-time full-time cohort)



Completion outcomes vary substantially by program

Westfield State University Student Success Analytics (Huron Dashboard)

Six year completion rates by entering major – Fall 2019 cohort



Source: WSU Student Success Analytics. Shows student major in fall of their first year; only majors with 10 or more students are shown.

Student HS GPA predicts outcomes and highlights where support can have impact

Westfield State University Student Success Analytics (Huron)

Student preparation is a strong predictor of completion.

- There is nearly a 50-point gap between the lowest and highest GPA groups

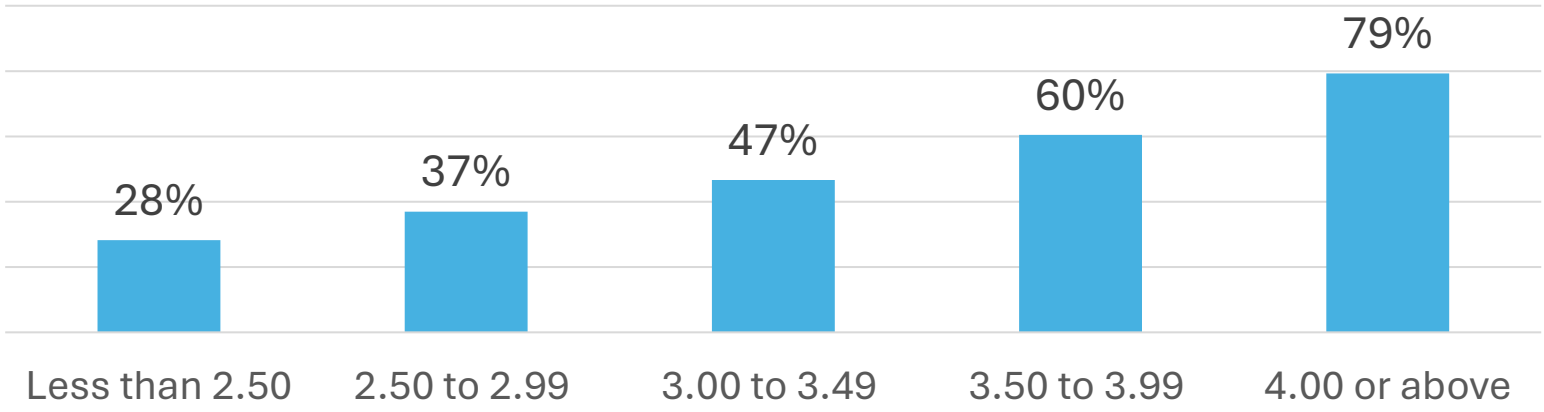
Inflection point at about 3.5 GPA.

- Completion rates increase sharply above this threshold

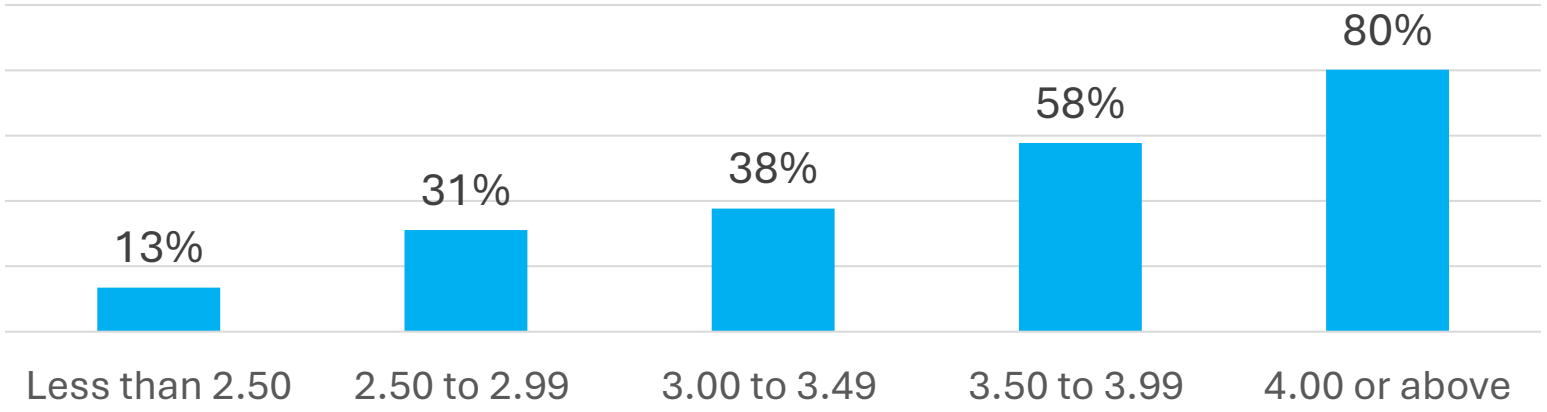
Mid-GPA students (2.5–3.49) represent the greatest opportunity for improvement.

- Large share of students, large opportunity for growth, and more likely to complete elsewhere.

Six-year completion (Fall 2019 first-time full-time cohort) by HS GPA



Four-year completion (Fall 2021 first-time full-time cohort) by HS GPA



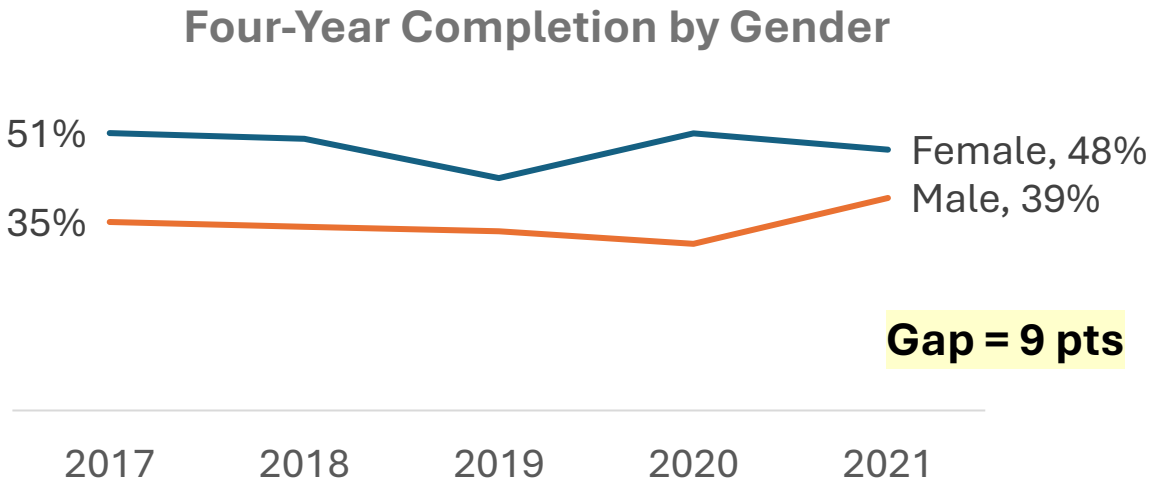
Focused support for targeted subgroups could lift overall completion rates

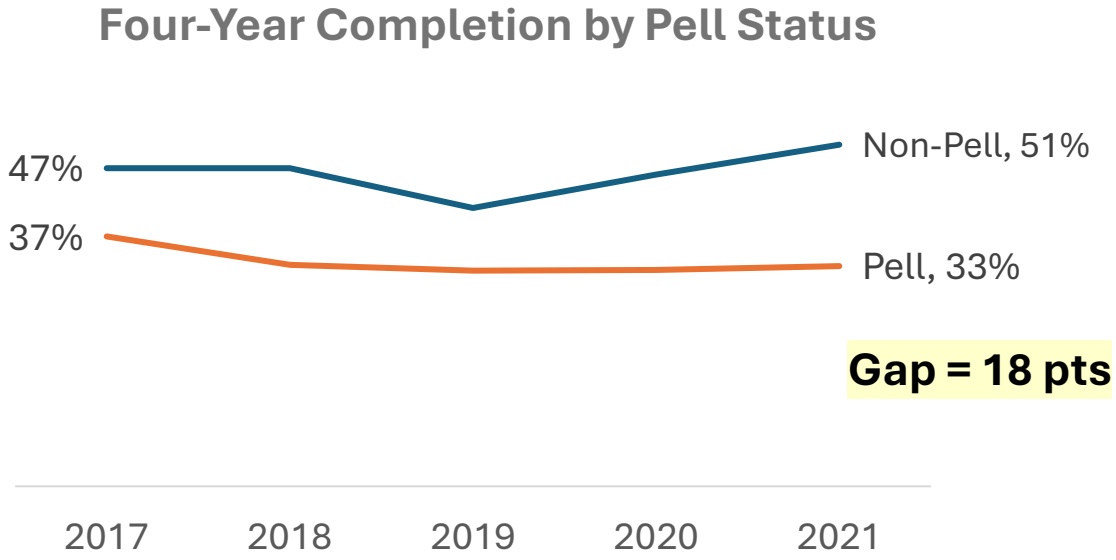
Westfield State University Student Success Analytics (Huron Dashboard)

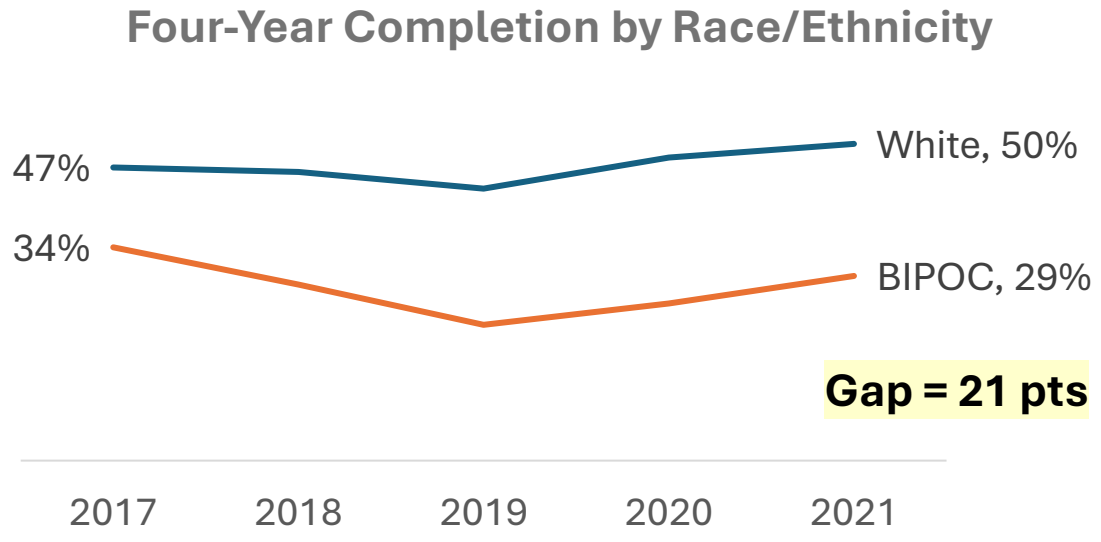
Large and persistent subgroup gaps in completion:

- Race/ethnicity gap: 21 pts (largest)
- Pell gap: 18 pts
- Gender gap: 9 pts

These gaps remain consistent over time.







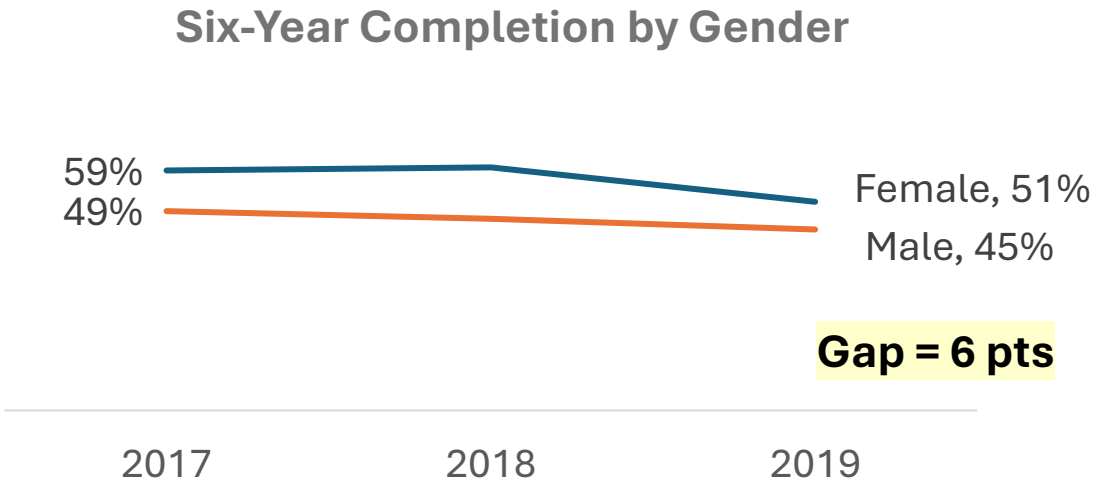
Focused support for targeted subgroups could lift overall completion rates

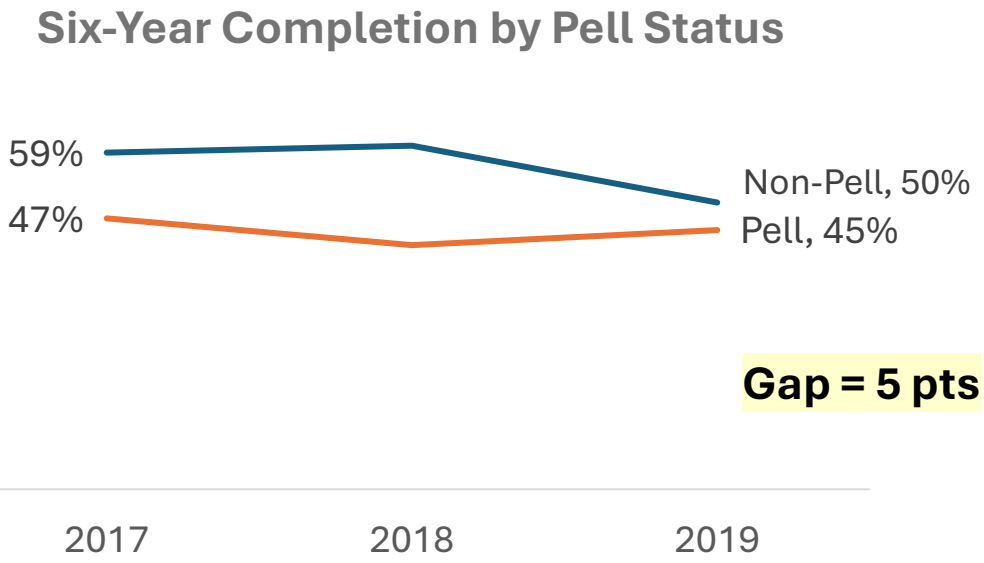
Westfield State University Student Success Analytics (Huron Dashboard)

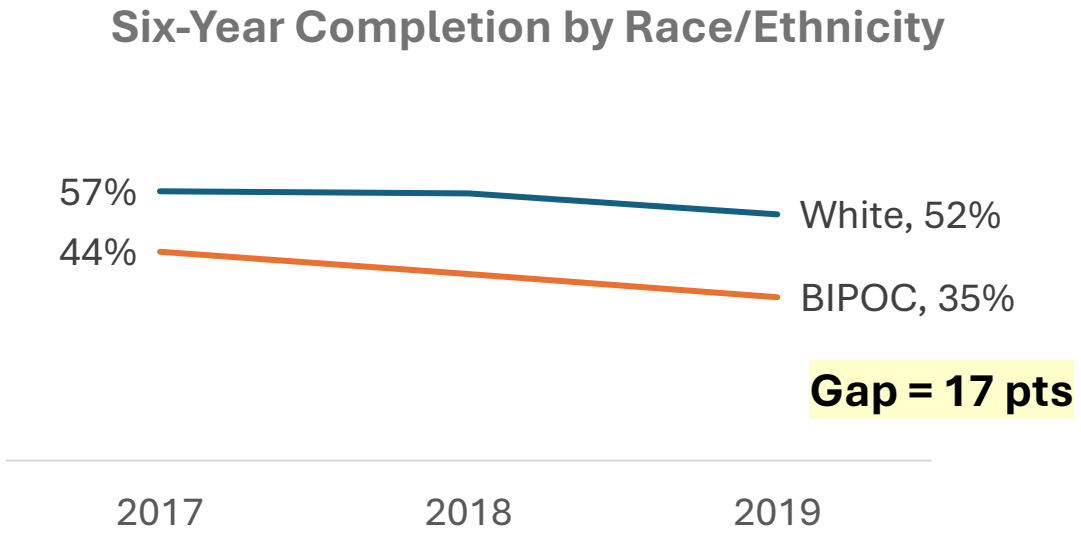
Similar gaps are evident in six-year completion rates:

- Race/ethnicity gap: 17 pts (largest)
- Pell gap: 5 pts
- Gender gap: 6 pts

Gender and Pell gaps are smaller for the 2019 cohort, different trends that year.





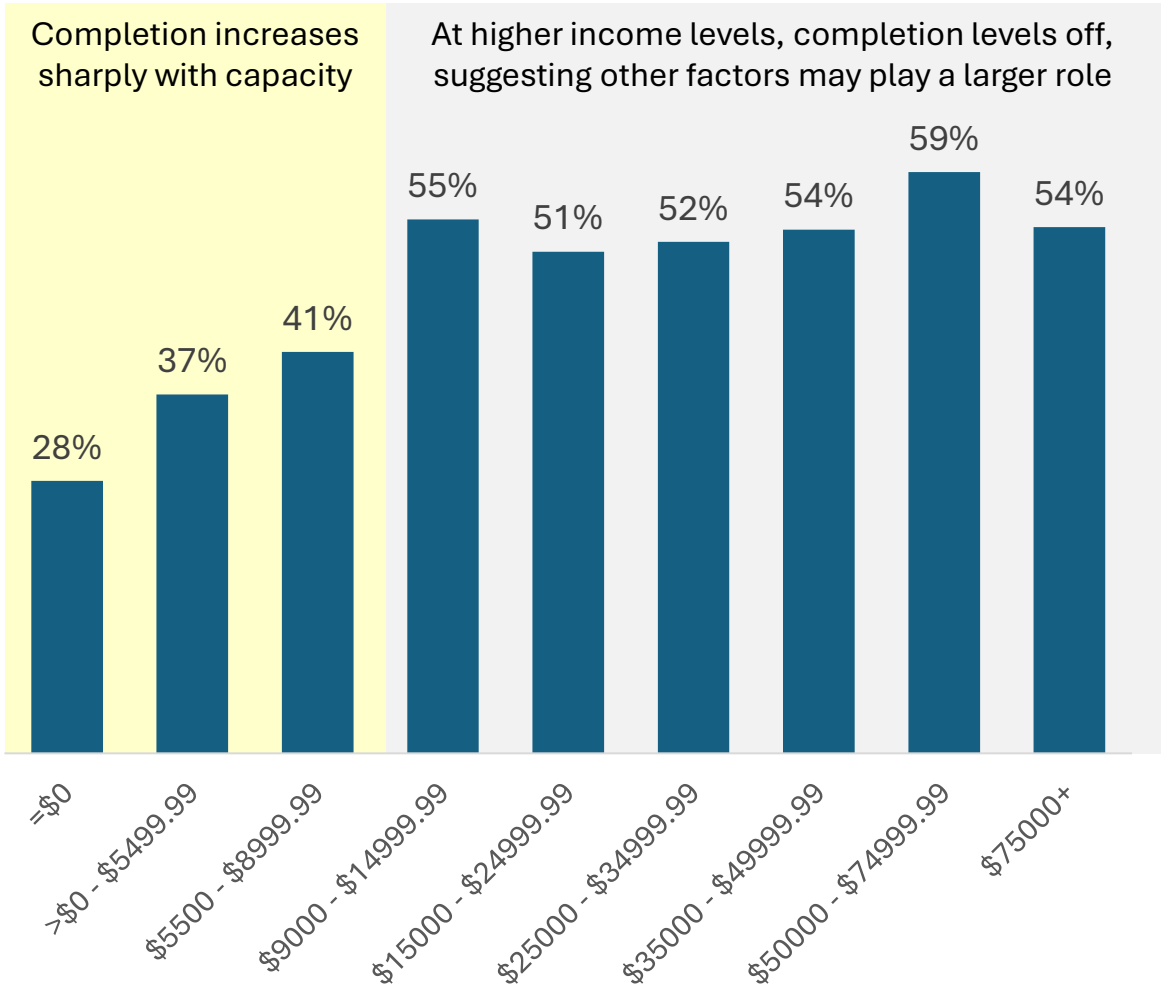


Financially at-risk students have lower completion—and represent a large share of students

Westfield State University Student Success Analytics (Huron Dashboard)

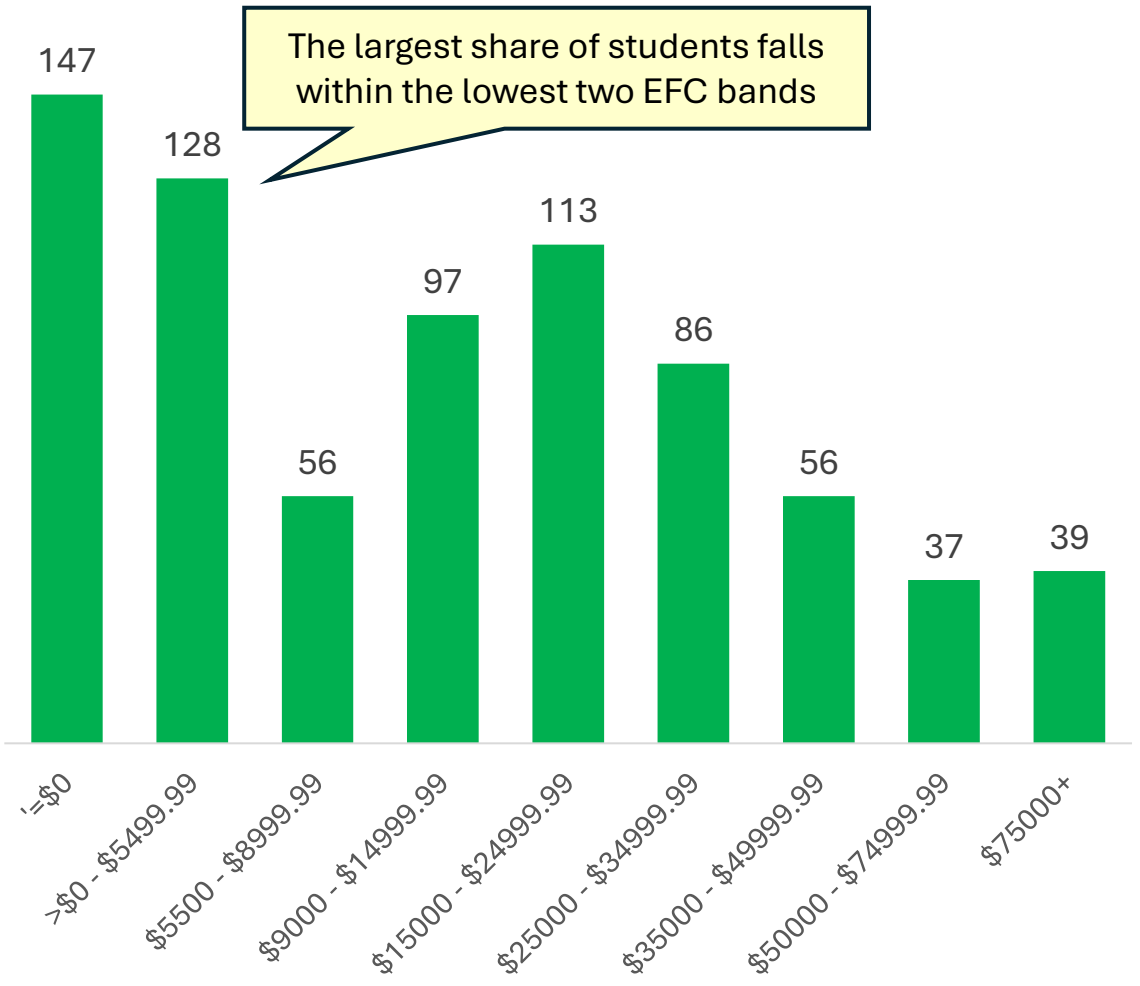
Percent of 2021 Cohort Completing in Four Years

by Expected Family Contribution



Number of Students in the 2021 Cohort

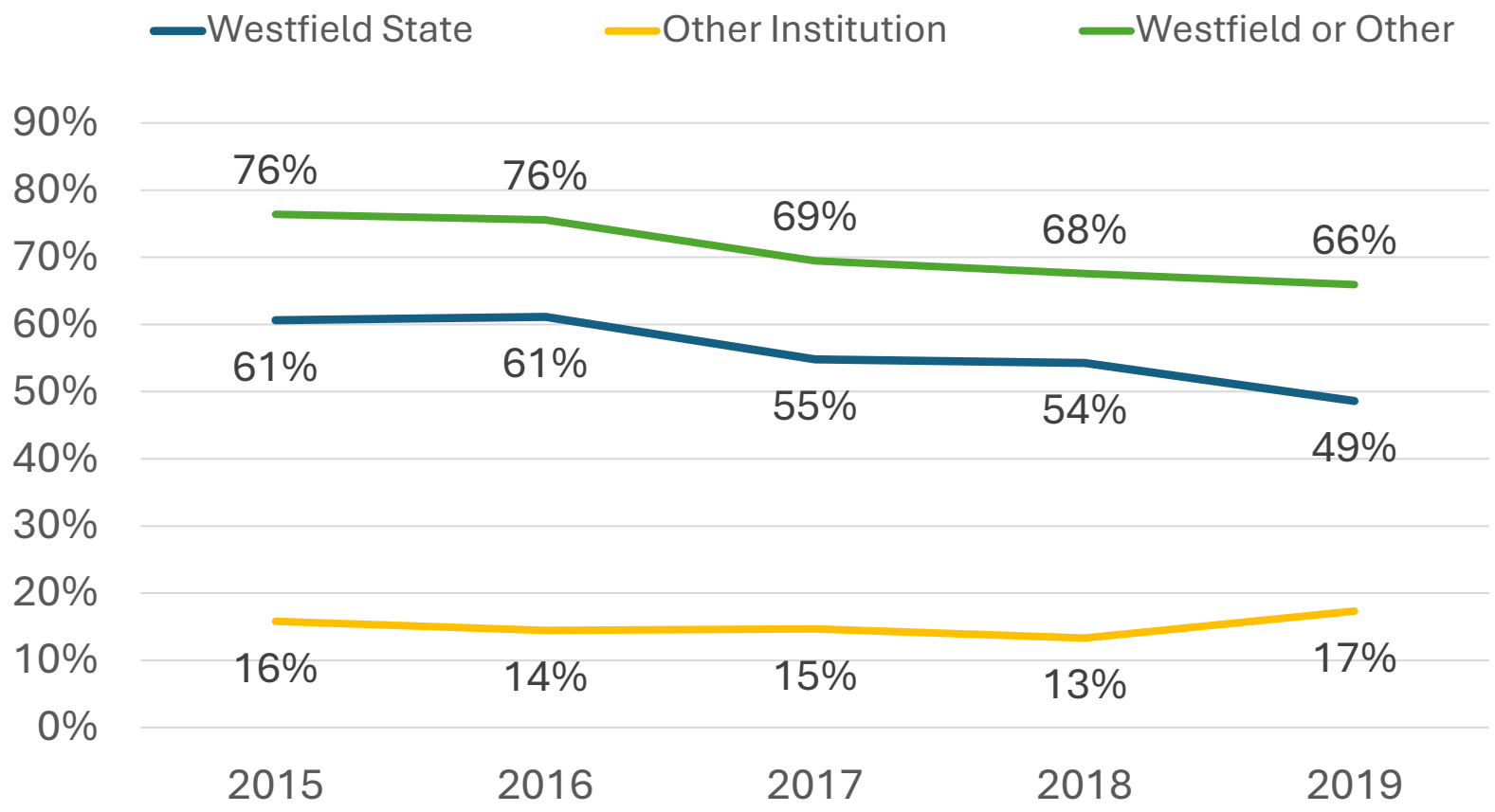
by Expected Family Contribution



Retention of eventual completers may also improve WSU outcomes

% of first-year, full-time students earning a degree at WSU or any institution by cohort year

Six-year completion for WSU cohorts by institution of completion



1 in 6

students (2015–2019 cohorts) completed at another institution

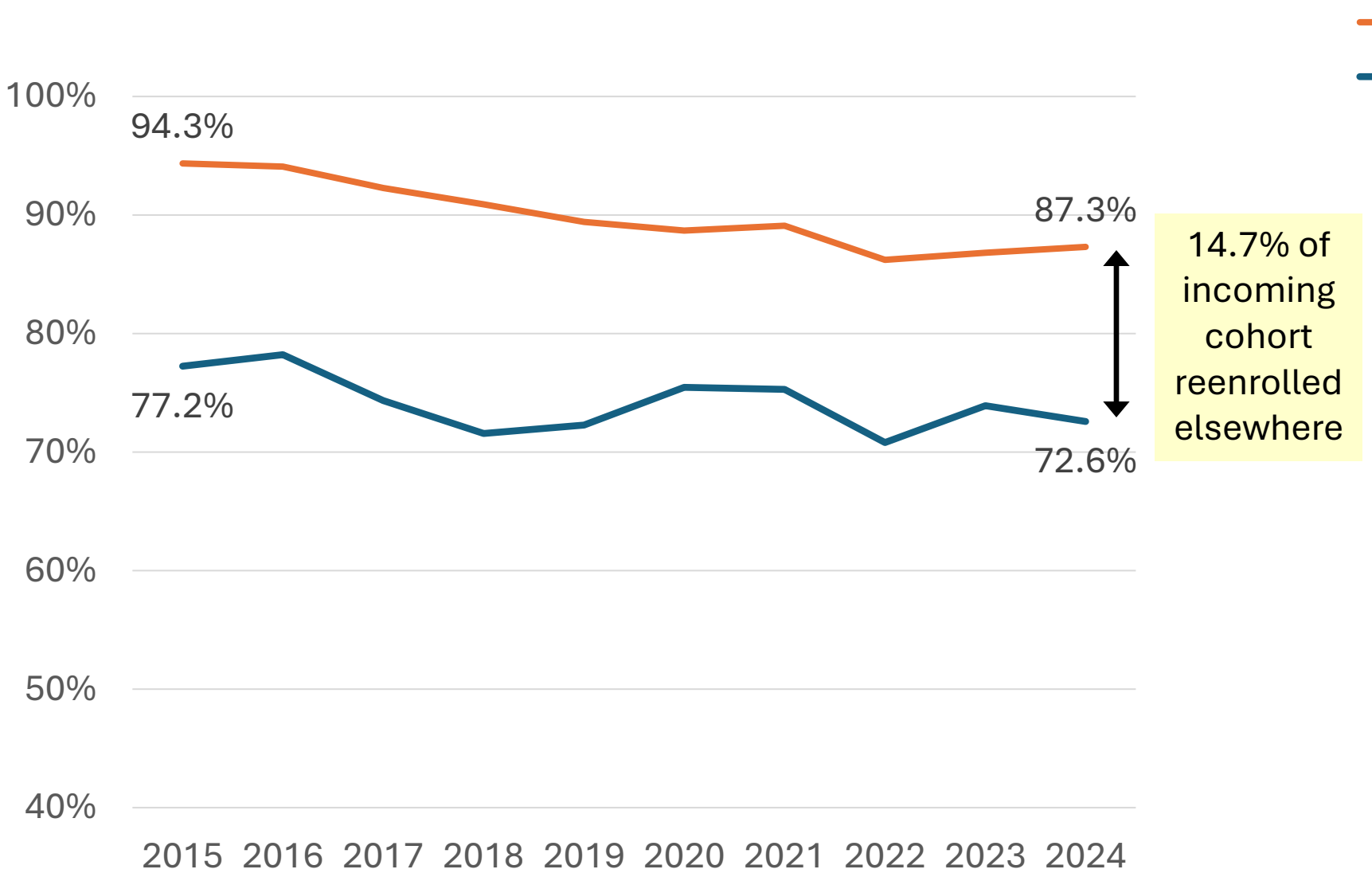
Increase in % completing at other institutions among 2019 cohort likely influenced by COVID disruptions

Most transfer completions are within the Massachusetts public system

Top destinations:
UMass Amherst, Bridgewater State, Worcester State

Most students who leave Westfield State after their first fall remain in higher education

% of first-year, full-time cohort students remaining at Westfield State for second fall (retention) or in higher education



14.7% of incoming cohort reenrolled elsewhere

Where do students go?

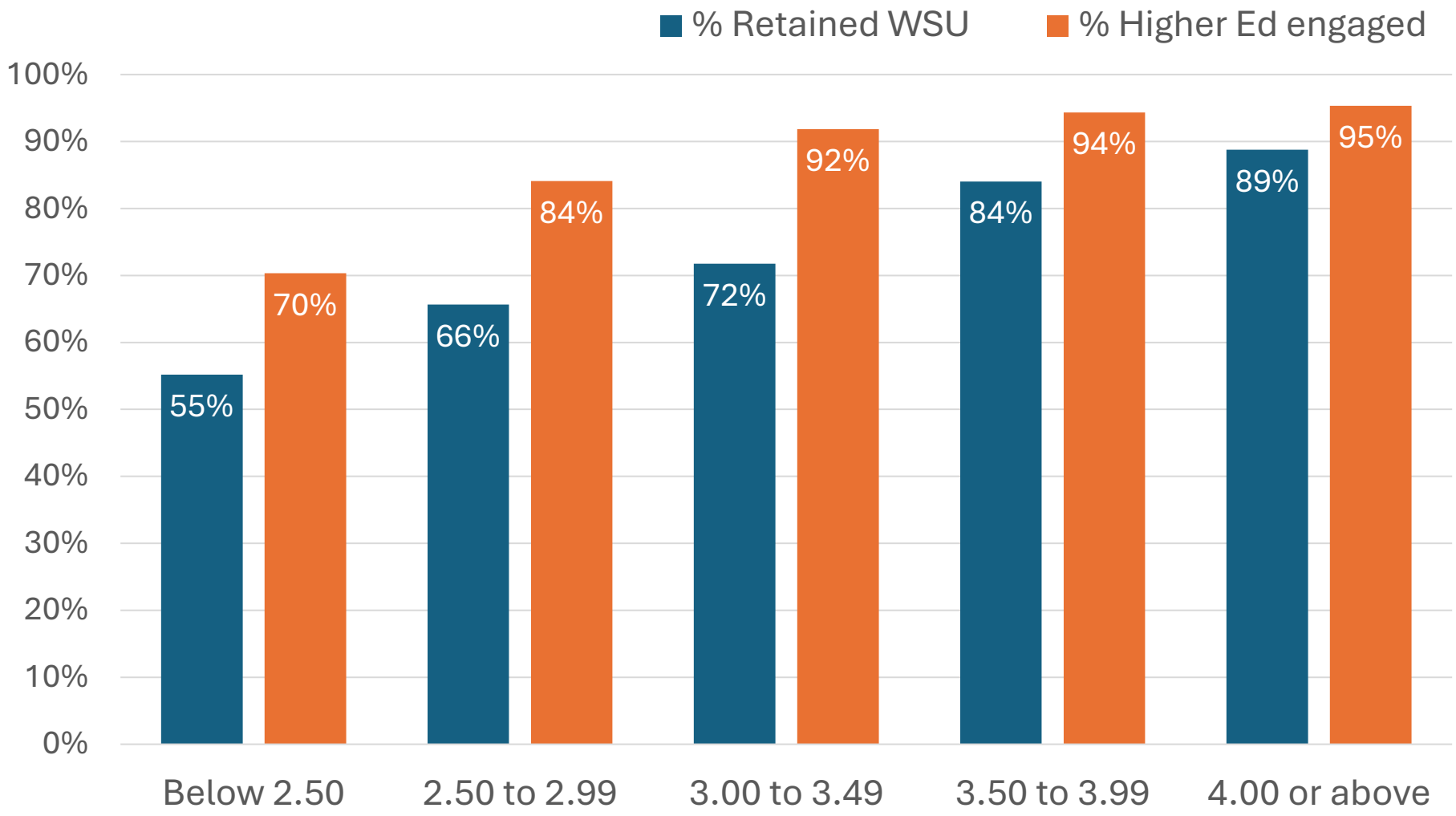
- Nearly 75% of transfer-out students stay in Massachusetts public higher education

- Most common transfer institutions for the 2024 cohort:

    1. Springfield Technical Community College
    2. UMass Amherst
    3. Holyoke Community College
    4. Quinsigamond Community College
    5. Bridgewater State

Mid-range HS GPA students represent the greatest opportunity to improve retention

% of 2024 first-year, full-time students remaining at WSU for second fall (retention) or in higher education (persistence)



# remaining in higher ed	22	36	37	20	7

122

students from the 2024 cohort left Westfield State but remained enrolled elsewhere

60%

of students from the 2024 cohort who left but remained enrolled elsewhere had HS GPAs in the 2.5–3.49 range

Institutional aid is highly impactful on student retention

% of first-year students remaining at WSU for second fall (retention) based on institutional aid receipt

Retention of all FT students from F19-F25 cohorts* (N = 5879)	
Retained	75.3%
Not retained	24.7%

+21.7 pct points

Difference in retention rates for students receiving **at or above median institutional aid**.

Below median, none or no data

Above median

Retention of all FT cohort students from F19-F25 who received below median, unknown or no institutional aid (N = 2966)	
Retained	**64.5%**
Not retained	35.5%

Retention of all FT cohort students from F19-F25 who received above median institutional aid (N = 2913)	
Retained	**86.2%**
Not retained	13.8%

*For the fall ‘25 cohort, persistence to spring ’26 was used rather than fall to fall retention

Highlights

- Completion rates have declined, aligning with MA system trends
- Early signs of recovery are emerging in four-year grad rates
- Persistent gaps across student groups shape overall outcomes, particularly students of color and Pell grant recipients
- Improving retention may offer the most direct path to higher completion and is associated with receipt of institutional aid
- Targeted, data-informed strategies—progression pathways, early warning systems, and targeted support for at-risk students—may meaningfully improve outcomes
  - Transfer-out may need to be addressed as a discrete issue needing unique support (versus stop-out)