UW-Madison Undergraduate Transfer Students
Retention and Graduation Rates
PUBLIC SENDING INSTITUTIONS IN WISCONSIN

Summary

Transfer Students Enrollment (Table 1, Chart1).

Over the past 10 years, forty to fifty percent of UW-Madison new transfer students attended a public institution in Wisconsin (a UW System four-year institution, one of the UW Colleges, or a Wisconsin Technical College System institution) just prior to enrolling at UW-Madison. The UW four-year institutions combined were sending institutions for 28% of new transfers in 2001. The UW Colleges and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) each were sending institutions for about 10% of new transfer undergraduates. For 90% of WTCS transfers, the sending institution was Madison Area Technical College (MATC). Overall, the majority of transfer students entered UW-Madison as sophomores (53%) or juniors (about 36%). However, the proportion of transfer sophomores compared with transfer juniors differs by sending institution. For UW four-year institutions, 57% were sophomores and 30% were juniors. For the UW Colleges, 35% were sophomores and 62% were juniors. For WTCS institutions, 50% were sophomores and 40% enrolled as juniors.

Retention and Graduation Rates (Chart 2, Table 2,3,4,5).

Retention and graduation rates were calculated for cohorts of new transfer sophomores and new transfer juniors. Rates were calculated separately for transfers from the UW four-year institutions, the UW Colleges, and Madison Area Technical College (MATC). Over the past 10 years, 86% of all new transfer students were retained to the second year. The graduation rate for transfer sophomores was 72%, and for transfer juniors was 75%. Transfer students from the UW four-year institutions were retained and graduated at higher rates than the full cohort of transfer students (by 2 to 3 percentage points). For the UW Colleges, transfer sophomores were retained and graduated at lower rates compared with all transfer students, but transfer juniors were retained and graduated at similar rates. Transfer students from MATC were retained at slightly lower rates than all transfer students (1 to 3 percentage points), and graduate at much lower rates (21 percentage points for junior transfers).

Progress in First Term Enrolled (Table 6).

The average first-term GPA for transfer student cohorts was lower than the average transfer GPA. This observation holds for both transfer sophomores and transfer juniors, and also for transfer students from all three types of sending institutions. Overall, the first-term GPA was about 0.3 points lower than the transfer GPA. The decrease was smaller for transfer sophomores (about 0.2 points) compared to transfer juniors (about 0.4 points). This general pattern is repeated for transfer students from UW 4-year institutions, UW Colleges, and MATC.

Part 1. Trends in Transfer Student Enrollment (Table 1, Chart 1)

Over the past 10 years, forty to fifty percent of UW-Madison new transfer students attended a public institution in Wisconsin (a UW System four-year institution, one of the UW Colleges, or a Wisconsin Technical College System institution) just prior to enrolling at UW-Madison. All of the UW four-year institutions combined were sending institutions for 28% of new transfers in 2001. The UW Colleges and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) were sending institutions for about 10% each. Of the new transfer students who previously attended a WTCS institution, 90% of them transferred from Madison Area Technical College (MATC). The UW Colleges and MATC are the two largest single sending institutions for transfer students and which of these institutions holds the top spot depends on specific time frame in which you do the counting.

Overall, most undergraduate transfer students enter UW-Madison as sophomores (about half) or juniors (about 36%). However, the proportion of transfer sophomores compared with transfer juniors differs based on the sending institution. Over the past five years, the majority of transfers from the UW four-year institutions were sophomores (57%) and 30% were juniors. The split for the UW Colleges is nearly the opposite: about 35% sophomore transfers and 62% junior transfers. For WTCS institutions, half of the transfer students were sophomores and 40% enrolled as juniors. (Small cohorts of freshmen transfers or senior transfers account for the rest of the new transfer undergraduates.)

Part 2. Retention and Graduation Rates (Chart 2, Tables 2,3,4,5)

For this analysis, retention and graduation rates were calculated separately for cohorts of new transfer sophomores and new transfer juniors to take into account the difference in their previous college work and accumulated credits. Retention and graduation rates were calculated for all new transfers and separately for transfers from the UW four-year institutions, the UW Colleges, and for Madison Area Technical College (MATC). Because 90% of transfers from WTCS transferred from MATC, rates for MATC approximate those for all WTCS transfers. Currently, UW-Madison has a special interest in retention and graduation rates of transfer students from the UW Colleges and MATC transfer because of the UW Connections program.

The number of transfer students in the fall entrance cohorts is small when separated by academic level and by sending institutions (generally less than 100), and so small numerical differences have a large effect on retention and graduation rates. To address this caveat, most of the comments in this report are confined to retention and graduation rates for all of the available cohorts combined. A summary table of retention and graduation rates is shown on the next page. Detailed retention and graduation rate tables follow the text (Tables 2-5).

Over the past 10 years, 86% of new transfer students were retained to the second year. Retention rates for transfer students from the UW four-year institutions were generally the same as or slightly higher than the rates for all transfer students and average 88% over the past 10 years.

The retention rates for transfer sophomore cohorts from the UW Colleges (82%) and MATC (82%) over the last ten years were lower than for all transfer sophomores (86%). However, for the most recent five entrance cohorts (1996 to 2000), the retention rates of transfer sophomores

from UW Colleges (84%) and MATC (85%) were closer to the over all transfer sophomore retention rate (86%).

The retention rates for transfer juniors from UW four-year institutions were similar to those of transfer sophomores. However, for UW Colleges transfer students, retention rates were higher for transfer juniors (87% over 10 years) compared to transfer sophomores (82% over 10 years). For MATC transfers, transfer juniors were retained at higher rates (85%) than transfer sophomores (82%) for the past 10 years, but the rates reversed if you look at just the last five years.

Five-year graduation rates for transfer sophomores and four-year rates for transfer juniors are used as standard rates, similar to using 6-year graduation rates as the standard rate for new freshmen. Historically, graduation rates of transfer sophomores were lower than the comparable rates for transfer juniors. This trend continued for new transfer cohorts that enrolled in the early 1990s (Table 2, Chart 2), but for cohorts that entered in the mid-1990's, that gap appears to be closing. The 5-year graduation rate for new transfer sophomores increased from 69% for the fall 1991 cohort to 72.5% for the fall 1996 cohort. In contrast, the 4- year graduation rate for new transfer juniors decreased from 76.3% to 72.4 % over the same time period.

Retention and Graduation Rates for New Transfer Students
Combined Cohort Retention and Graduation Rates

Measure	Cohort Years Combined	All	UW 4 Year Institutions	UW Colleges	MATC
Sophomore Transfers					
Retention Rate	1991-2000	85.5	88	82	82
	1996-2000	86.0	88	84	85
5-Year Graduation Rate	1991-1996	71.5	74	65	55
Junior Transfers					
Retention Rate	1991-2000	86.5	89	87	85
	1996-2000	85.4	88	87	83
4-Year Graduation Rate	1991-1997	75.0	78	76	54

Summarized from Tables 2-5.

How do retention and graduation rates compare depending on the sending institution? The five-year graduation rate for all transfer sophomores was 72% averaged over the 1991 to 1996 cohorts. The graduation rate for transfer sophomores who attended UW four year institutions was slightly higher at 74% and the rates for UW Colleges transfer sophomores (65%) and MATC transfer sophomores (55%) were lower than the overall rate.

The four-year graduation rate for transfer juniors was 75% for the 1991 to 1996 cohorts combined. The four-year graduation rate for transfer juniors was 78% for those who attended the UW four-year institutions, 76% for those who attended the UW Colleges, and 54% for those who attended MATC.

For transfer students from UW four-year institutions or the UW Colleges, those who transferred as juniors had higher comparable graduation rates than those who transferred as sophomores. However, for transfer students from MATC, their retention and graduation rates were similar whether they transferred as sophomores or juniors.

In summary, transfer students from the UW four-year institutions were retained and graduated at higher rates than all transfer students. For transfer students from the UW Colleges, transfer sophomores were retained and graduated at lower rates compared with all transfer students, but transfer juniors were retained and graduated at similar rates. Transfer students from MATC were retained at slightly lower rates than all transfer students, and graduated at much lower rates.

Part 3. Progress in First Term Enrolled (Table 6)

Table 6 reports transfer student progress in the first term enrolled for three representative cohorts, Fall 1995, Fall 1998, and Fall 2001. The report also includes the average transfer GPA for these cohorts. The transfer GPA is calculated by Admissions and is based on transferable academic course work. The transfer GPA, rather than the GPA calculated by the sending institution, is one of several factors used in the admissions decision. It is one quantitative indicator of academic preparedness available for transfer students.

The average first-term GPA for transfer student cohorts was lower than their average transfer GPA. This observation holds for both transfer sophomores and transfer juniors, and also for transfer students from all three types of sending institutions. For all transfer students, the average first term GPA was about 0.3 points lower than the transfer GPA. The decrease was smaller for transfer sophomores (about 0.2 points) compared to transfer juniors (about 0.4 points). This pattern is repeated for transfer students from UW 4-year institutions, UW Colleges, and MATC.

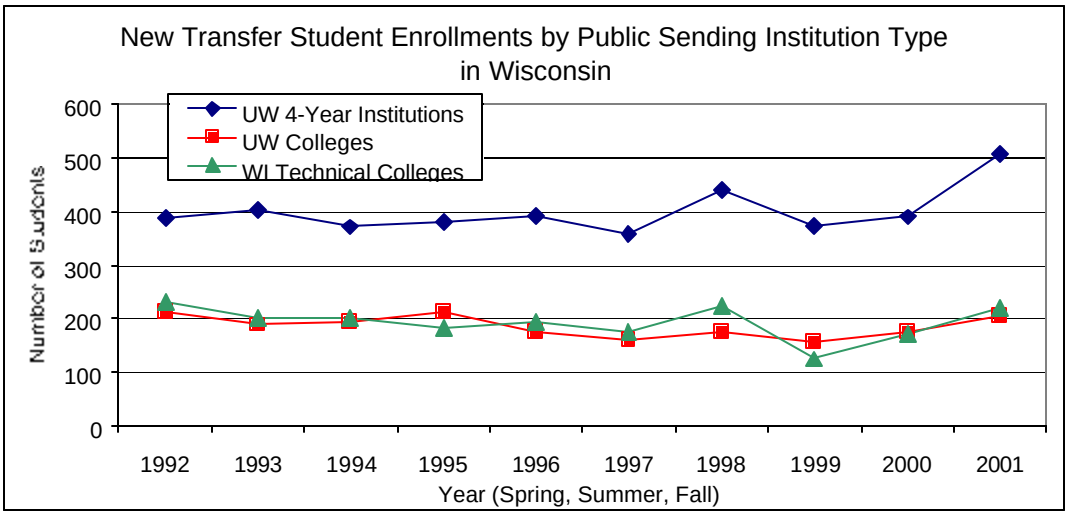
TABLE 1.

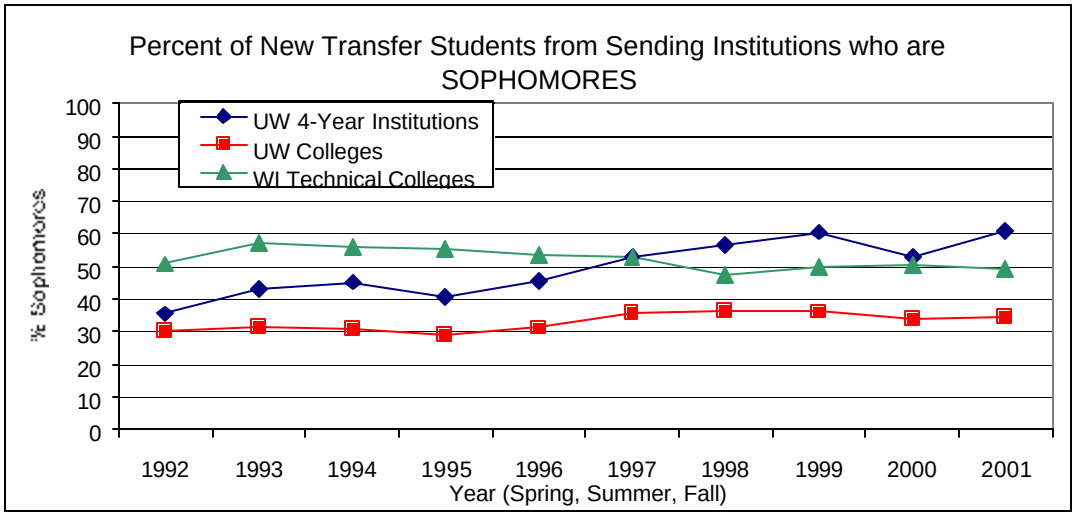
New Transfer Students Enrolled, By Public Sending Institution in Wisconsin

Academic Level at Entrance	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
All New Transfers	2030	2007	1929	1896	1818	1779	1725	1798	1581	1819
% Freshmen	*9*	*10*	*8*	*8*	*7*	*3*	*3*	*5*	*4*	*3*
% Sophomore	*43*	*46*	*45*	*44*	*46*	*49*	*50*	*53*	*51*	*53*
% Junior	*35*	*32*	*36*	*38*	*38*	*39*	*38*	*34*	*38*	*36*
% Senior	*12*	*12*	*11*	*10*	*9*	*9*	*9*	*9*	*7*	*8*
UW 4-Year Institutions	388	404	371	382	393	358	441	373	390	509
% Freshmen	*9*	*9*	*7*	*7*	*10*	*1*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*2*
% Sophomore	*36*	*43*	*45*	*41*	*46*	*53*	*56*	*61*	*53*	*61*
% Junior	*37*	*30*	*33*	*37*	*34*	*32*	*30*	*28*	*34*	*26*
% Senior	*18*	*18*	*15*	*15*	*11*	*13*	*11*	*9*	*11*	*11*
UW Colleges	211	188	192	211	173	160	175	155	176	205
% Freshmen	*2*	*4*	*6*	*4*	*4*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*2*
% Sophomore	*30*	*31*	*31*	*29*	*31*	*36*	*37*	*36*	*34*	*35*
% Junior	*66*	*60*	*60*	*63*	*63*	*61*	*61*	*61*	*63*	*63*
% Senior	*1*	*4*	*3*	*5*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*3*	*2*	*0*
WI Technical Colleges	232	202	200	182	194	173	225	124	171	218
% Freshmen	*19*	*16*	*15*	*7*	*10*	*8*	*8*	*8*	*8*	*3*
% Sophomore	*51*	*57*	*56*	*55*	*54*	*53*	*48*	*50*	*50*	*49*
% Junior	*26*	*24*	*27*	*32*	*33*	*34*	*41*	*37*	*39*	*45*
% Senior	*4*	*2*	*3*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*3*	*5*	*3*	*3*
Madison Area T C	204	181	178	171	171	154	209	116	159	210
% Freshmen	*13*	*13*	*12*	*6*	*8*	*5*	*8*	*6*	*4*	*3*
% Sophomore	*56*	*60*	*59*	*56*	*56*	*54*	*47*	*51*	*53*	*50*
% Junior	*27*	*25*	*26*	*33*	*34*	*36*	*43*	*40*	*40*	*45*
% Senior	*3*	*2*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*5*	*2*	*3*	*3*	*2*

Source: UW-Madison Retention Dataviews.
JLM Academic Planning and Analysis, 10/21/2002

CHART 1.





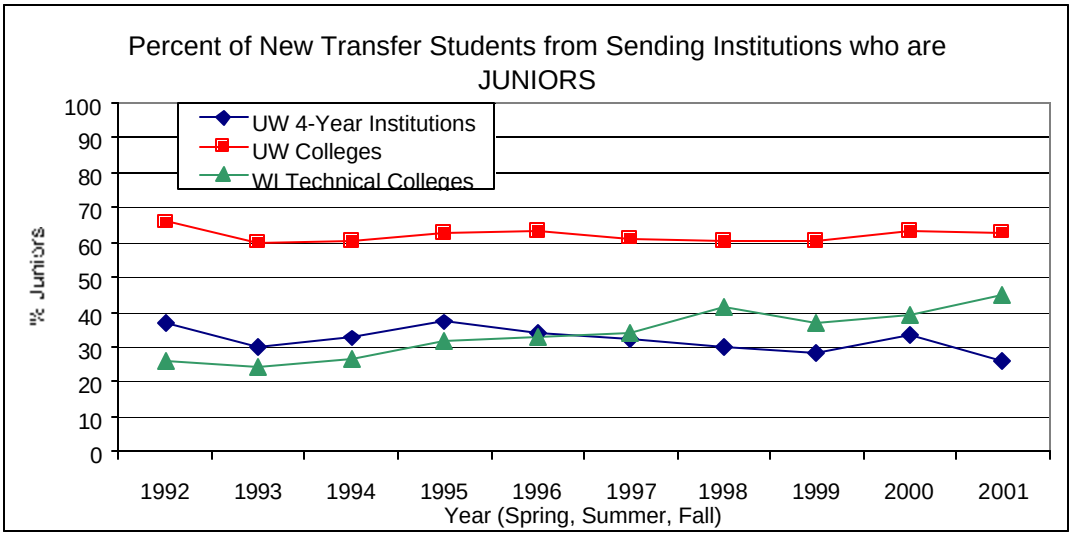


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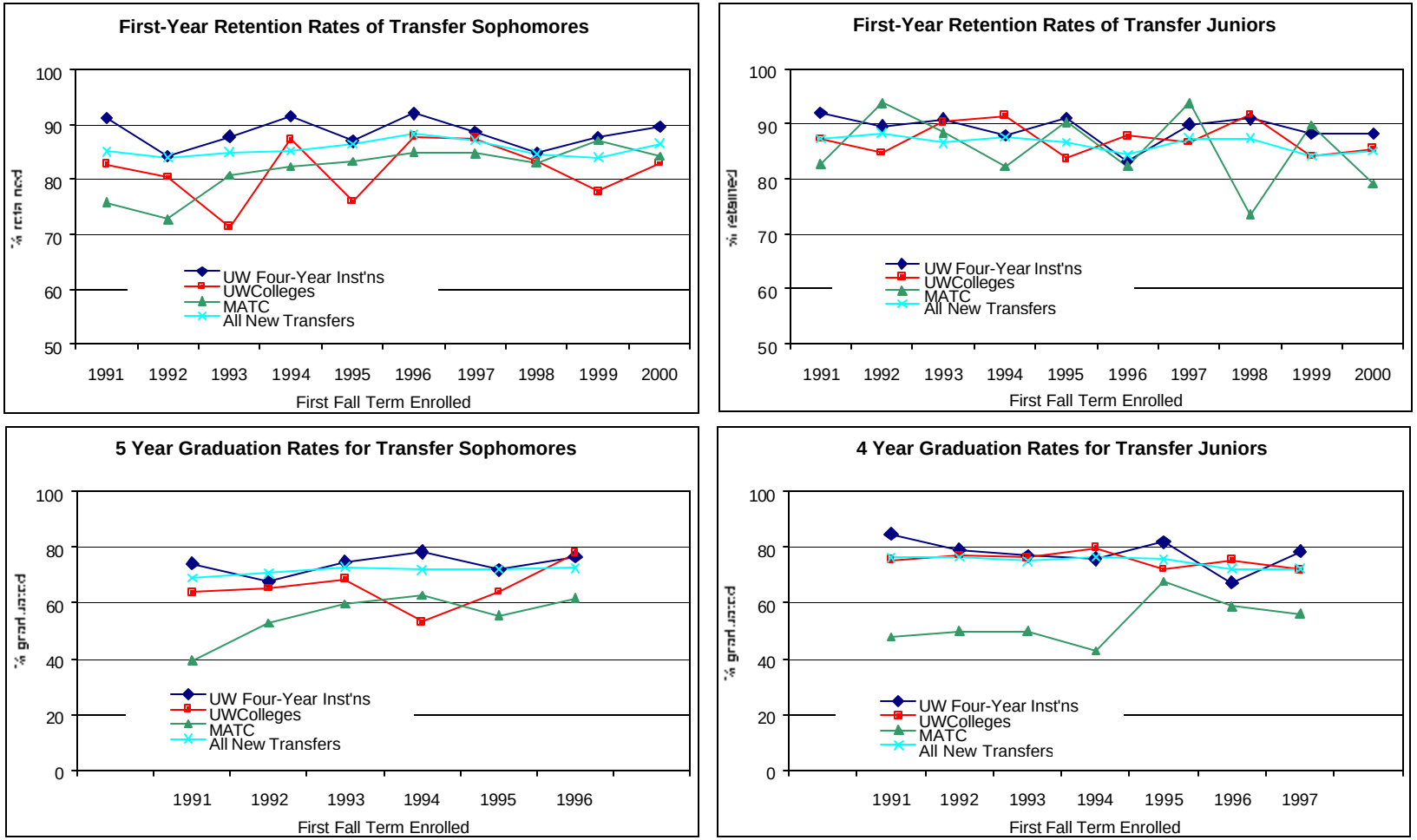
CHART 2.

Retention and Graduation Rates of New Transfer Students - Wisconsin Public Sending Institutions



Source: Retention_Semester_History and Retention_Awards_Main Data views, Data Digest.
Adjusted Fall Term is given for the probable first matriculation year of the sophomore or junior new transfer student cohort.
The 5th year graduation and retention rates for sophomore transfers and the 4th year graduation and retention rates for junior are a proxy for the 6th year graduation rate for new new students who all started in the same fall term.

TABLE 2.

Retention and Graduation Rates of New Transfer Students by Fall Entrance Cohort

Transfer Students who Entered as Sophomores

			Cumulative Graduation / Retention Rates									
	Cohort	Retention	After 2nd Year		After 3rd Year		After 4th Year		After 5th Year		After 6th Year	
Fall Term	Head-count	Rate After First Year	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained
1991	642	85.0	2.3	76.0	31.9	43.8	60.7	13.6	69.0	5.3	71.8	2.8
1992	602	84.1	4.0	75.7	35.4	41.0	61.6	12.8	70.8	4.5	73.1	2.3
1993	606	85.0	4.1	76.9	33.3	44.9	64.2	12.2	72.9	3.5	74.8	1.0
1994	579	85.1	1.6	78.2	35.4	42.5	63.4	13.0	71.8	3.1	73.9	1.6
1995	558	86.4	2.3	77.4	36.9	39.6	65.2	11.3	72.0	3.9	74.0	3.4
1996	582	88.1	3.8	75.8	35.1	41.2	64.4	11.9	72.5	3.8		
1997	591	87.1	2.0	78.8	32.8	43.7	64.3	12.2				
1998	606	84.7	0.7	76.7	32.3	42.4						
1999	712	84.0	2.2	73.7								
2000	638	86.5										

Transfer Students who Entered as Juniors

			Cumulative Graduation / Retention Rates									
	Cohort	Retention	After 2nd Year		After 3rd Year		After 4th Year		After 5th Year		After 6th Year	
Fall Term	Head-count	Rate After First Year	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained
1991	477	87.2	22.4	60.4	62.1	20.8	76.3	6.7	80.1	2.7	82.2	0.6
1992	481	88.4	25.6	58.4	62.8	20.2	76.5	6.7	80.7	2.5	82.1	1.0
1993	446	86.5	30.0	50.2	61.9	17.0	75.1	2.9	77.1	1.3	77.6	1.6
1994	473	87.5	24.1	59.4	66.2	16.1	76.5	5.1	79.9	2.1	80.8	1.5
1995	502	86.7	26.5	54.8	64.7	15.5	75.7	4.2	78.1	1.8	79.1	1.2
1996	471	84.3	28.9	48.4	61.1	15.7	72.4	3.0	74.3	2.8		
1997	453	87.4	24.5	55.8	62.7	14.8	72.4	6.0				
1998	413	87.4	28.8	51.1	62.5	15.7						
1999	422	84.1	22.7	54.7								
2000	447	85.0										

Source: Retention_Semester_History and Retention_Awards_Main Data views.
The 5th year graduation and retention rates for sophomore transfers and the 4th year graduation and retention rates for junior are a proxy for the 6th year graduation rate for new freshmen in the same cohort year.

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TABLE 3.

Retention and Graduation Rates of New Transfer Students by Fall Entrance Cohort

UW SYSTEM FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

Transfer Students who Entered as Sophomores

		Retention	Cumulative Graduation / Retention Rates									
	Cohort	Rate after	After 2nd Year		After 3rd Year		After 4th Year		After 5th Year		After 6th Year	
Fall Term	Head-count	First Year	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained
1991	124	91	3	76	31	45	64	13	74	4	76	2
1992	108	84	2	79	26	51	56	20	68	6	69	4
1993	115	88	0	83	28	53	63	17	75	5	77	1
1994	129	91	0	87	30	51	66	13	78	1	80	1
1995	107	87	1	78	31	45	64	13	72	2	73	3
1996	137	92	2	79	33	49	66	14	77	5		
1997	133	89	2	80	29	51	67	11				
1998	210	85	0	79	28	51						
1999	220	88	1	79								
2000	163	90										

Transfer Students who Entered as Juniors

		Retention	Cumulative Graduation / Retention Rates									
	Cohort	Rate after	After 2nd Year		After 3rd Year		After 4th Year		After 5th Year		After 6th Year	
Fall Term	Head-count	First Year	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained
1991	113	92	24	63	66	22	85	3	88	1	88	1
1992	96	90	24	60	68	17	79	5	83	0	84	0
1993	87	87	25	56	68	16	77	3	82	0	83	1
1994	91	88	18	63	66	15	76	5	80	2	80	2
1995	100	91	26	59	68	18	82	5	83	2	84	1
1996	95	83	19	56	58	18	67	2	69	5		
1997	89	90	21	63	66	15	79	0				
1998	99	91	29	59	63	19						
1999	102	88	19	64								
2000	102	88										

Source: Retention_Semester_History and Retention_Awards_Main Data views.

The 5-year graduation and retention rates for sophomore transfers and the 4-year graduation and retention rates for junior are a proxy for the 6-year graduation rate for new freshmen in the same cohort year.

TABLE 4.

Retention and Graduation Rates of New Transfer Students by Fall Entrance Cohort

UW COLLEGES

Transfer Students who Entered as Sophomores

		Retention	Cumulative Graduation / Retention Rates									
	Cohort	Rate after	After 2nd Year		After 3rd Year		After 4th Year		After 5th Year		After 6th Year	
Fall Term	Head-count	First Year	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained
1991	58	83	2	76	29	43	55	19	64	7	67	3
1992	46	80	7	67	28	43	54	11	65	4	70	4
1993	35	71	0	80	17	54	57	9	69	0	69	3
1994	47	87	2	60	26	43	47	19	53	2	57	0
1995	50	76	4	68	22	42	50	14	64	0	68	2
1996	41	88	2	83	34	41	61	20	78	5		
1997	48	88	2	71	27	38	60	6				
1998	48	83	2	69	29	40						
1999	54	78	0	69								
2000	53	83										

Transfer Students who Entered as Juniors

		Retention	Cumulative Graduation / Retention Rates									
	Cohort	Rate after	After 2nd Year		After 3rd Year		After 4th Year		After 5th Year		After 6th Year	
Fall Term	Head-count	First Year	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained
1991	102	87	17	69	61	24	75	11	82	5	87	1
1992	105	85	19	61	55	28	77	6	82	2	83	2
1993	93	90	31	52	59	23	76	3	78	1	80	2
1994	94	91	24	65	62	27	80	9	84	4	85	3
1995	104	84	21	59	60	18	72	6	77	1	78	3
1996	90	88	21	57	60	17	76	3	77	2		
1997	75	87	25	55	61	20	72	7				
1998	84	92	32	49	64	18						
1999	88	84	24	55								
2000	96	85										

Source: Retention_Semester_History and Retention_Awards_Main Data views.

The 5-year graduation and retention rates for sophomore transfers and the 4-year graduation and retention rates for junior are a proxy for the 6-year graduation rate for new freshmen in the same cohort year.

TABLE 5.

Retention and Graduation Rates of New Transfer Students by Fall Entrance Cohort

MADISON AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Transfer Students who Entered as Sophomores

		Retention	Cumulative Graduation / Retention Rates									
	Cohort	Rate after	After 2nd Year		After 3rd Year		After 4th Year		After 5th Year		After 6th Year	
Fall Term	Head-count	First Year	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained
1991	66	76	0	68	15	39	30	23	39	9	47	5
1992	55	73	0	73	16	47	38	22	53	11	55	4
1993	57	81	2	75	25	46	49	19	60	9	65	2
1994	51	82	0	78	24	53	59	18	63	8	65	8
1995	54	83	0	76	22	44	46	20	56	9	61	6
1996	60	85	2	68	25	43	57	8	62	3		
1997	46	85	0	76	24	39	41	20				
1998	59	83	0	78	24	49						
1999	54	87	0	67								
2000	57	84										

Transfer Students who Entered as Juniors

		Retention	Cumulative Graduation / Retention Rates									
	Cohort	Rate after	After 2nd Year		After 3rd Year		After 4th Year		After 5th Year		After 6th Year	
Fall Term	Head-count	First Year	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained	Graduated	Retained
1991	23	83	17	65	43	30	48	26	61	9	65	9
1992	32	94	16	66	38	34	50	22	63	9	69	3
1993	26	88	8	65	15	46	50	12	54	8	58	8
1994	28	82	0	68	32	29	43	18	54	11	61	4
1995	31	90	16	68	58	23	68	6	71	3	74	0
1996	34	82	9	62	35	32	59	6	62	3		
1997	32	94	9	72	47	22	56	25				
1998	49	73	8	59	43	20						
1999	39	90	18	64								
2000	43	79										

Source: Retention_Semester_History and Retention_Awards_Main Data views.

The 5-year graduation and retention rates for sophomore transfers and the 4-year graduation and retention rates for junior are a proxy for the 6-year graduation rate for new freshmen in the same cohort year.

TABLE 6.

UW-Madison New Undergraduate Transfer Students
Progress in First Term Enrolled by Fall Entrance Cohort

Fall Term	Cohort Headcount	Average Transfer GPA	Number Completing First Term	Percent Completing First Term	Average First Term GPA	Average First Term GPA Credits
ALL NEW TRANSFER STUDENTS						
Transfer Students who Entered as Sophomores						
1995	558	3.33	536	*96.1*	2.99	12.6
1998	606	3.33	576	*95.0*	2.90	12.8
2001	735	3.37	710	*96.6*	2.90	12.6
Transfer Students who Entered as Juniors						
1995	502	3.27	475	*94.6*	3.11	12.4
1998	413	3.26	395	*95.6*	3.03	12.3
2001	435	3.27	421	*96.8*	3.02	12.3
TRANSFER STUDENTS FROM UW Four-Year INSTITUTIONS						
Transfer Students who Entered as Sophomores						
1995	107	3.36	106	*99*	3.00	12.9
1998	210	3.33	201	*96*	2.86	13.2
2001	249	3.38	242	*97*	2.85	12.8
Transfer Students who Entered as Juniors						
1995	100	3.31	97	*97*	3.17	12.9
1998	99	3.19	96	*97*	3.00	12.3
2001	97	3.22	94	*97*	2.95	12.4
TRANSFER STUDENTS FROM UW COLLEGES						
Transfer Students who Entered as Sophomores						
1995	50	3.25	49	*98*	2.89	12.0
1998	48	3.33	47	*98*	2.89	12.8
2001	61	3.36	56	*92*	2.72	12.4
Transfer Students who Entered as Juniors						
1995	104	3.25	98	*94*	3.13	12.1
1998	84	3.30	80	*95*	2.92	12.5
2001	104	3.34	101	*97*	2.90	12.3
TRANSFER STUDENTS FROM MADISON AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE						
Transfer Students who Entered as Sophomores						
1995	54	3.26	46	*85*	2.84	11.0
1998	59	3.23	55	*93*	2.84	11.9
2001	72	3.31	69	*96*	2.90	11.6
Transfer Students who Entered as Juniors						
1995	31	3.05	27	*87*	2.76	9.4
1998	49	3.08	45	*92*	2.93	9.8
2001	61	3.16	58	*95*	2.83	11.1

Source: Retention_Semester_History and Retention_Transfer_Student_(History) Dataviews.
Students are counted as having completed their first term if they completed 1 or more credits.
Transfer GPA is not available for the Fall 1999 and Fall 2000 cohorts.
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