



An Enrollment Intensity and Student Achievement Campaign

- Fall 2014 Outcomes -

Prepared by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs



Graduate on time.



Save money.



Earn sooner.

In September 2013, the Board of Regents approved a proposal to adopt the enrollment intensity and student achievement campaign known as *15 to Finish*. The campaign, designed to target 18 to 24 year old undergraduate students, encourages students to complete at least 30 credits per year. National and NSHE data indicate that undergraduate students who enroll full-time, completing 30 or more credits in their first year of attendance, are more likely to graduate than students who complete fewer credits. The purpose of this report is to provide data on Fall 2014 outcomes for each of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions as it relates to the 15 to Finish initiative.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Following Board approval in 2013, the System Office and seven teaching institutions began efforts to promote the campaign. (University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), began similar efforts to promote enrollment in 15 credits beginning in Fall 2012, and therefore, was ahead of other institutions in terms of scaled implementation.) All institutions, except the College of Southern Nevada (CSN), branded the campaign *15 to Finish*, and then availed themselves of the promotional materials purchased by the System Office in support of the campaign (e.g. t-shirts, book bags, pens, etc.). CSN chose to brand its campaign *Finish in Two*, and in doing so purchased its own promotional materials separately.

Early efforts to adopt the campaign included embedding the message in new student orientation as that provides an easy access point to get the message to the target 18 to 24 year old undergraduate population. In addition, the System Office conducted six advisor workshops:

- Southern workshop for CSN, NSC, and UNLV – November 2013;
- Northern workshop for TMCC, WNC and UNR – December 2013;
- TMCC Student Services Workshop – July 2013;
- TMCC Faculty Senate Meeting – November 2013
- WNC Student Services Retreat – January 2014;
- GBC Advisor Workshop – January 2014; and
- Make-up Southern Workshop – March 2014.



UNLV students display the 15 to Finish promotional poster.



TMCC students wearing 15 to Finish promotional t-shirts.

While every institution had the opportunity to participate in at least one workshop, some institutions (WNC and TMCC) requested additional workshops for broader student service audiences. To support implementation, an advisor toolkit was developed (accessible via www.nevada.edu/15) that includes student e-mail messages that can be automated, posters, postcards, a video and other support materials the institutions can access in electronic form and utilize as they see fit to support the campaign. In addition to these workshops, the Chancellor's Office accepted other speaking opportunities in an effort to get the word out beyond the System:

- GBC/School District Partnership Meeting – March 2014;
- American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers – April 2014;
- Nevada Association of Career and Technical Education Conference – July 2014; and
- Legislative Committee on Education – March 2014.

Further, NSHE's efforts to embrace the student completion agenda through its *15 to Finish* initiative were highlighted at the Complete College America annual convening held in Miami, Florida, in December 2014.

MESSAGING TO STUDENTS

The *15 to Finish* message has been embraced by NSHE institutions in a number of ways. The general message to students is the importance of accumulating 30 completed credits in the first year of enrollment. This can be accomplished through various credit combinations including 15 credits in the fall and spring semesters or 12 credits in the fall and spring semesters and six credits in the summer (12-12-6 model). The latter was often part of the messaging targeted to community college and state college students. Additional options include enrolling during a winter mini-term and in on-line courses to complete 30 credits throughout the year. Therefore, the data provided in this report, while focused on Fall 2014 enrollment of at least 15 credits, also includes data for students enrolled in 12 or more credits at the community colleges and state college. Further analysis at the completion of the Summer 2015 semester will give a more complete picture of student enrollment patterns, particularly those students who completed 30 credits in the first year of enrollment without taking 15 credits during the fall semester.

FALL 2014 OUTCOMES

All institutions began in some fashion to incorporate the *15 to Finish* message immediately following Board approval in September 2013, however, for the majority of the institutions full-scale implementation occurred during Fall 2014. Consequently, the data presented here compares outcomes from Fall 2014 to a Fall 2012 baseline. This report highlights certain metrics that generally capture the success of the initiative. Additional and more detailed data are available [here](#).

All Students. The following data include headcount for all 18 to 24 year old undergraduate degree-seeking students taking 15 or more credits during Fall 2012, Fall 2013, and Fall 2014. From this data, it is apparent that the number of 18 to 24 year olds taking 15 or more credits increased across most of the institutions.

Headcount: All Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Students (Ages 18-24) Enrolled in 15 or more credits					
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	F12 to F14 % Change	F13 to F14 % Change
UNLV	5,301	5,471	6,432	27.85%	17.57%
UNR	5,300	5,567	7,624	43.85%	36.95%
NSC	168	112	227	35.12%	102.68%
CSN	1,099	1,026	1,076	-2.09%	4.87%
GBC	236	250	243	2.97%	-2.80%
TMCC	380	412	496	30.53%	20.39%
WNC	165	218	273	65.45%	25.23%

While the number of students taking 15 credits incrementally increased since the Board’s approval of the campaign, the percentage of all students taking at least 15 credits clearly shows the impact of the enrollment intensity campaign.

Percentage of All Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Students (Ages 18 to 24) Enrolled in 15 or more credits			
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
UNLV	32.3%	33.1%	37.7%
UNR	44.6%	44.3%	53.9%
NSC	13.3%	10.6%	16.8%
CSN	6.8%	6.3%	6.5%
GBC	24.5%	24.3%	26.7%
TMCC	6.9%	8.1%	10.0%
WNC	9.6%	13.0%	17.5%

At UNR more than half (53.9 percent) of all degree-seeking undergraduates ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in 15 or more credits in Fall 2014 – an indication of the institution’s strong commitment to the initiative that is expected to have a positive impact on its graduation rates as these students progress towards degree completion. WNC also significantly increased its percent of all degree-seeking students enrolled in at least 15 credits from 9.6 percent in Fall 2012 to 17.5 percent in Fall 2014.

First-Time Students. Looking at the first-time, degree-seeking subset of the 18 to 24 year old undergraduate population, a more dramatic increase in the number of students taking 15 or more credits during Fall 2012, Fall 2013, and Fall 2014 is evident. This is most likely attributable to the fact that the *15 to Finish* message was incorporated into new student orientation sessions across all NSHE institutions. The following table is for 18 to 24 year old first-time, degree-seeking students only and depicts a significant increase in students taking at least 15 credits, particularly over Fall 2012 baseline figures.

Headcount: <u>First-Time</u> , Degree-Seeking Students (Ages 18 to 24) Enrolled in 15 or more credits					
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	F12 to F14 % Change	F13 to F14 % Change
UNLV	956	1,566	2,028	112.13%	29.50%
UNR	1,547	1,583	2,336	51.00%	47.57%
NSC	13	24	65	400.00%	170.83%
CSN	191	180	250	30.89%	38.89%
GBC	41	78	82	100.00%	5.13%
TMCC	56	64	121	116.07%	89.06%
WNC	49	78	154	214.29%	97.44%

When again considering the percentage of all first-time, degree-seeking students taking 15 or more credits, the impact of the campaign is apparent. All institutions experienced an increase in the percentage of first-time students taking 15 or more credits.

Percentage of <u>First-Time</u> Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Students (Ages 18 to 24) Enrolled in 15 or more credits			
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
UNLV	36.2%	50.4%	63.6%
UNR	62.3%	61.2%	80.1%
NSC	12.7%	10.9%	28.5%
CSN	6.3%	5.5%	6.8%
GBC	21.8%	32.4%	32.2%
TMCC	5.5%	6.7%	12.9%
WNC	12.4%	17.0%	28.6%

UNLV saw a significant increase in the percentage of first-time students taking 15 or more credits, increasing from 36.2 percent in Fall 2012 to 63.6 percent in Fall 2014. UNR is also notable with 80.1 percent of first-time students in Fall 2014 taking at least 15 credit hours. Both GBC and WNC saw increases of 10 percentage points or more between Fall 2012 and Fall 2014.



UNR New Student Orientation leaders helped promote *15 to Finish* objectives.

12 or More Credits. As previously noted, the messaging of the *15 to Finish* campaign took on various forms, particularly at the state college and community college where it was recognized early on that 15 credits per semester is not a model that will work for all students, particularly those who must work to support themselves and a family while paying for college. Because the 15 credits per semester message took many forms, including 12 credits in the Fall and Spring and six credits in the summer (12-12-6 model), the following data reflect the number of students taking 12 or more credits during Fall 2012, Fall 2013, and Fall 2014. This analysis does not consider the number of students that accumulated 30 credits during the academic year, because complete data for the 2014-15 academic year will not be available until the end of the summer term.

The following table indicates the nuanced message of 12-12-6 most likely did reach entering freshman students at the community colleges and state college as it reflects increases across the board in the percentage of new students taking 12 or more credits:

	Percentage of <u>First-Time, Degree-Seeking Students</u> (Ages 18 to 24) Enrolled in 12 or more credits		
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
NSC	75.5%	70.9%	77.2%
CSN	45.7%	39.6%	41.7%
GBC	58.5%	69.3%	68.2%
TMCC	43.2%	40.5%	51.1%
WNC	51.5%	59.2%	65.6%

Overall, Fall 2014 data indicate that the *15 to Finish* message was effective in increasing the number of students taking 15 or more credits. It is also apparent from the data that the greatest impact occurred with entering freshmen who were most likely to receive the message through new student orientation and other institutional efforts.

Grade Point Average. Historical data indicate that NSHE students who take 15 or more credits have higher grade point averages than their counterparts taking fewer credits. That trend was confirmed with the following Fall 2014 data. Across all institutions the cohort GPA was highest for students taking 15 or more credits.



**Cohort GPA: All Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Students
Ages 18 to 24 (Fall 2014)**

Credit Load	UNLV	UNR	NSC	CSN	GBC	TMCC	WNC
<12	2.51	2.56	2.60	2.36	2.63	2.45	2.43
12 to <15	2.76	2.79	2.74	2.52	2.68	2.51	2.49
15+	2.94	2.97	2.97	2.75	2.83	2.68	2.79

Cohort GPA is the sum of all grade points divided by the sum of all credits; it is not an average of grade point averages

One advantage of full-time enrollment is that students are more likely to make their college coursework their primary focus, and are therefore less likely to withdraw or dropout, resulting in a greater commitment that is reflected in the students' overall grade point averages. While grade point average is only one indicator of student success, it does reflect that a higher course load goes hand-in-hand with successful academic progress.

Fall to Spring Persistence. There are a number of ways to measure student persistence from term to term. Because the initial semester of impact was defined as Fall 2014, persistence for this reporting purpose is defined as fall to spring. The following table indicates the percent of all undergraduate 18 to 24 year old students who enrolled in Fall 2014 by credit load and returned in the Spring 2015 semester.

**Fall 2014 to Spring 2015 Persistence Rates*
by Credit Load for All Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Students (Ages 18 to 24)**

Credit Load	UNLV	UNR	NSC	CSN	GBC	TMCC	WNC
<12	75.0%	67.6%	70.0%	65.1%	65.0%	68.4%	65.1%
12 to <15	88.8%	87.3%	87.1%	80.1%	86.2%	84.2%	78.6%
15+	91.8%	92.4%	90.3%	83.1%	93.0%	82.9%	83.2%

*Preliminary persistence data based on Spring enrollment as of March 6, 2015. The persistence rate is calculated using the number of students in the fall semester that enrolled in at least one credit-bearing course the following spring divided by the number of students in the fall. The persistence rate does not include students that graduated in the end of the fall semester.

Across all NSHE institutions, preliminary data on the percentage of students (by Fall 2014 credit load) who persisted to Spring 2015 indicate a substantially higher rate for students who enrolled in at least 12 credits in Fall 2014. At six of the seven teaching institutions, the percentage of students who persisted from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015 and took 15 credits in fall was even higher.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUING THE INITIATIVE

This report captures limited outcomes for the Fall 2014 semester as a benchmark for the term in which there was system-wide scaled implementation of the *15 to Finish* campaign. While it is clear from this initial data that the campaign was successful in increasing the number of students taking 15 or more credits, that message must be continued for the impact to have any long-term effects. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the campaign continue and that the Chancellor's Office continue to monitor the success of the initiative, including tracking students who accumulated at least 30 credits in their first year of enrollment and through degree or certificate completion. Future reports will provide a broader and more detailed depiction of program outcomes, including the impact on graduation rates.