

**Explaining the Rise in the Six Year Graduation Rate  
from Fall 2000 and Fall 2005**

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Between Fall 2000 and Fall 2005, KSU experienced an increase in the First-Time Full-Time Freshmen six year graduation rate from 28% to 41%. It might be perceived that this 13% increase was dramatic, but it was actually the result of incremental increases over roughly half of a decade (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Six Year Retention and Graduation Rates from Fall 2000 to Fall 2005**

	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005
<b>Retention Rate</b>	43%	46%	47%	49%	52%	50%
<b>Graduation Rate</b>	28%	33%	35%	38%	41%	41%
<b>Annual Change in Graduation Rate</b>	-4%	5%	2%	3%	3%	0%

- The net increase between Fall 2000 and Fall 2001 was one percent.

The incremental changes were fueled by significant increases in the beginning cohort sizes related to the start-up and expansion of on-campus housing in the early 2000's (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Significant Increases in First-time Full-time Freshmen since Fall 2002 Have Replaced the Modest Year-to-Year Gains Prior to the Start-up of On-Campus Housing**

	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	5-Year # Change	5-Year % Change
<b>Headcount</b>	13,373	13,951	15,654	17,485	17,961	18,556	5,183	39%
<b>First-time Full-time Freshmen</b>	1,228	1,314	1,822	2,074	1,658	2,083	855	70%
<b># of Beds in Student Housing</b>	-	-	1,252	-	878	-		
<b>Annual % Change in First-time Full-time Freshmen</b>	0%	7%	39%	14%	-20%	26%		

- KSU first experienced a significant increase in the First-Time Full-Time Freshmen cohort during Fall of 2002, which added 508 students in a single semester progressing toward conferring a degree after adding 1,252 beds in on-campus student housing primarily limited to Freshmen.
- Growth of the First-Time Full-Time Freshmen cohort continued in Fall of 2005 as KSU improved occupancy rates in the existing housing and additional on-campus housing nearly doubled in Fall of 2004.

- As the growth of housing occurred, the First-Time Full-Time Freshmen cohort increased significantly, nearly 59%, growing from 1,314 in Fall 2001 to 2,083 in Fall 2005.

This expansion of the cohorts added an unprecedented 769 students entering into the pipeline toward graduating in six years between Fall 2001 and Fall 2005. The end result of the rise was a proportional increase in the six year graduation rate as students exited.

Examination of the retention rates for the cohorts helps to further understand how the increase in cohort sizes contributed to the proportional rise in the 6-year graduation rate (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Students Graduated as a Percentage of Retained Students at the End of the Six Year Has Remained Relatively Constant Since the Start-up of On-Campus Housing in Fall 2002**

	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005
<b>Number Of Students Retained</b>	523	600	851	1,010	866	1,032
<b>Number of Students Graduated</b>	344	429	646	793	682	853
<b>% Graduated</b>	66%	72%	76%	79%	79%	83%

Analysis of KSU’s retention rates prior to the sixth year would reveal that nearly 25% of First-Time Full-Time Freshmen between Fall 2000 and Fall 2005 were no longer enrolled after their first year. An additional 25% are no longer enrolled or do not graduate by the end of their sixth year (see the KSU Retention Progression and Tracking System). In examining the remaining students retained at the end of the sixth year, the proportion of students who graduated has remained relatively constant since Fall 2002. This suggests that as on-campus housing opened and expanded, increases in the First-Time Full-Time Freshmen cohort proportionately affected the overall percentage of retained students who graduated in the sixth year and not necessarily intervention measures designed to improve graduating additional students. Additional improvement in the six year graduation rate may actually exist in the seventh year graduation rate. Further study is needed to analyze and identify the contributing factors that cause the students retained in the sixth year to defer graduation until the seventh year.

It is also worth mentioning that when comparing KSU to the top ten largest of Georgia’s public universities by headcount in the Fall of 2010, the 13% growth of the sixth year graduation rate at KSU is impressive (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Six Year Graduation Rate of Georgia’s Largest Public Universities.**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Fall 2000</b>	<b>Fall 2004</b>	<b>+/-</b>
<b>August State University</b>	23%	25%	2%
<b>Armstrong Atlanta State University</b>	22%	28%	6%
<b>Columbus State University</b>	32%	33%	1%
<b>University of West Georgia</b>	35%	35%	0%
<b>Valdosta State University</b>	42%	40%	-2%
<b>Kennesaw State University</b>	28%	41%	13%
<b>Georgia Southern University</b>	43%	45%	2%
<b>Georgia State University</b>	41%	48%	7%
<b>Georgia College &amp; State University</b>	41%	59%	18%
<b>Georgia Institute of Technology</b>	77%	79%	2%
<b>University of Georgia</b>	75%	80%	5%

- KSU had the second highest percentage increase in the six year graduation rate between Fall 2000 and Fall 2004.
- The rise of the six year graduation rate in Fall 2004 elevated KSU to the same standing as its sister University System of Georgia institutions.