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Closer look finds graduation rate at Michigan public universities higher than federal data shows

New data shows state six year graduation rate at 71 percent, not 61 percent as reported by federal data

Lansing, MI – New state-developed data that includes transfer and part-time students shows 71 percent of students graduate from Michigan public universities in six years or less, compared to the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System’s (IPEDS) report of just 61 percent.

The State of Michigan’s Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), utilizing data from the institutions and the National Student Clearinghouse, is able to follow students as they move from school to school to meet their particular personal or professional needs, a process that the federal data fails to capture.

“This new report from CEPI shows Michigan’s universities as a group are doing a good job helping their students get a degree, which is vital to obtaining a good paying job in today’s knowledge-based economy,” said Daniel Hurley, CEO of the Michigan Association of State Universities. “Our universities continue to strive to improve this important metric, and there is a wide disparity from university to university, as would be expected. But this more accurate data will help all schools focus their efforts and make continued progress.”

Several universities saw major changes thanks to the improved data. Ferris State University, for instance, sees its six-year graduation rate go from 40.6 percent to 63.6 percent, a 23 percentage point improvement. Lake Superior State University moved from 40.3 percent to 56.6 percent, a 16.3 percentage point increase. Individually, 13 state universities have increases in their graduation rate of 10 percentage points or more (with rounding), reflecting the addition of thousands of students the federal government has not counted, but which the state and its private sector partner have identified and credited with success.

The difference comes in part from federal IPEDS not including part-time or transfer students in their data, regardless of the graduation outcomes of these students. If a student takes 11 credits in a semester instead of 12 (12 credits being the federal definition of full-time attendance), then they don’t count to the federal government. If a student spends one semester at a community college before transferring to a university, then they don’t count to the federal government. That’s wrong for students and wrong for universities, and it’s wise that CEPI’s data includes all degree-seeking students.

Unlike IPEDS, the CEPI data sensibly defines “full-time” as taking 15 credits a semester – the minimum students need to take to graduate in four years. Only 53 percent of students are actually full-time at Michigan universities, meaning that their successes are all the more impressive.

MASU congratulates CEPI for being dedicated to fixing the problem of incomplete information regarding the graduation rate at Michigan’s public universities. The data from CEPI shows that Michigan public universities are doing better than previously reported. CEPI’s graduation rate database serves as a reaffirmation to the efforts of students and those working at the state universities to achieve higher levels of student success.

The Michigan Association of State Universities serves as the coordinating board for Michigan’s 15 public universities, providing advocacy and fostering policy to maximize the collective value these institutions provide in serving the public interest and the State of Michigan. You can learn more at www.masu.org.

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

THE MICHIGAN FIFTEEN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

IPEDS vs CEPI 6-Year Graduation Rates

| | IPEDS | CEPI | Diff. |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Central Michigan University | 59.0% | 72.1% | 13.1% |
| Eastern Michigan University | 40.1% | 54.8% | 14.7% |
| Ferris State University | 40.6% | 63.6% | 23.0% |
| Grand Valley State University | 66.6% | 76.2% | 9.6% |
| Lake Superior State University | 40.3% | 56.6% | 16.3% |
| Michigan State University | 77.2% | 87.7% | 10.5% |
| Michigan Technological University | 64.7% | 77.2% | 12.5% |
| Northern Michigan University | 47.7% | 55.9% | 8.2% |
| Oakland University | 44.0% | 58.0% | 14.0% |
| Saginaw Valley State University | 39.9% | 49.5% | 9.6% |
| University of Michigan-Ann Arbor | 90.1% | 92.1% | 2.0% |
| University of Michigan-Dearborn | 52.6% | 63.1% | 10.5% |
| University of Michigan-Flint | 38.0% | 52.7% | 14.7% |
| Wayne State University | 34.6% | 47.8% | 13.2% |
| Western Michigan University | 54.4% | 69.8% | 15.4% |
| <i>Aggregate:</i> | 61.0% | 70.7% | 9.7% |

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