

### **MEASURE 3: Demonstrate Student Achievement through Graduation from Academic Programs**

**Metric:** Graduation Rate (6-Year)

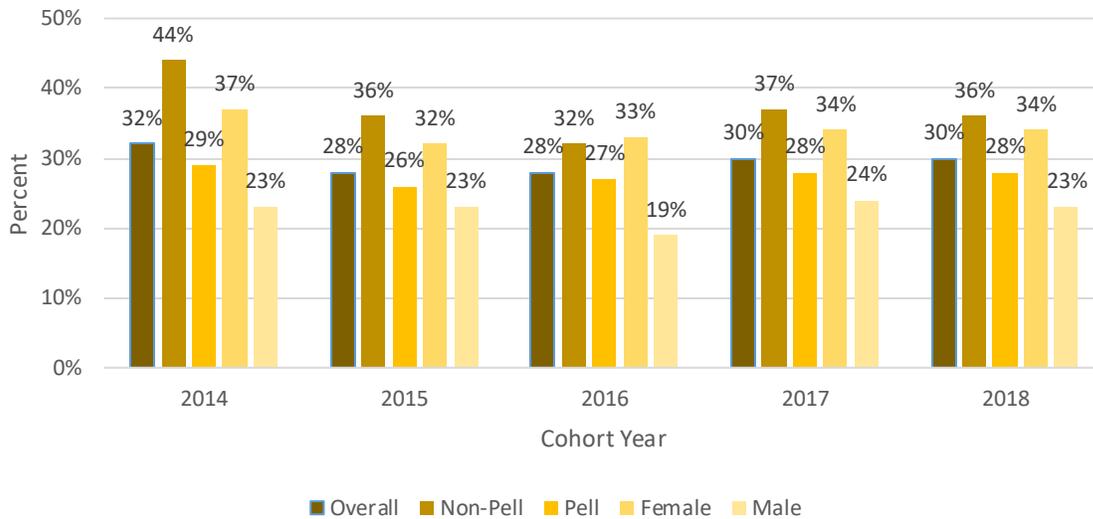
**Identification:**

The University fulfills its core mission of teaching, research, and service by conferring degrees from baccalaureate to doctoral. The most direct measure of the institution's effectiveness in achieving its educational goals is the successful completion of degree programs. The desire to fulfill its core mission is the rationale for selecting graduation rate as a criterion for student achievement. The Office of Institutional Research at ASU calculates graduation rates annually for reports required by the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Several types of graduation rates are computed, but the standard measure used by the federal government is the six-year cohort graduation rate for first-time, full-time students. This rate is calculated by counting the number of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students enrolled at ASU each fall term and dividing that number by the total who earn a baccalaureate degree from ASU by the spring term of their sixth year. ASU uses the IPEDS six-year graduation rate as its SACSCOC key student completion indicator (1) since many of its students need more than four years to complete their degree due to financial hardships and insufficient academic preparation, and (2) to allow for comparison of graduation rates with peer institutions since the data are publically available. Additionally, increasing the graduation rate aligns with the objectives of **Focus 2030**.

ASU's 6-year cohort graduation rate has fluctuated between 28% and 32% over the past five years. As ASU strives to increase its graduation rate, its rationale for setting the minimum threshold of acceptability for ASU's 6-year cohort graduation rate as 30% is to align with the average graduation rate for HBCUs with similar institutional and student characteristics. Over the next several years, the goal is to reach a 6-year cohort graduation rate of 35%. Figure 3 displays the six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time cohorts based on the most recent five years of data, covering Fall 2014 to Fall 2018. The figure also shows the graduation rate disaggregated by gender and Pell status.

Figure 2: First-time, Full-Time Freshmen 6-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

## 6 Year Graduation Rate by Freshman Cohort (First-time, Full-time Freshman)



### Evaluation:

The cohort graduation rate experienced a decline of 2% from 2014 to 2018; however, there was an increase of 2% from the 2016 to the 2017 freshmen cohort. Students who do not receive Pell Awards graduate at higher rates than students receiving Pell Awards, 36% versus 28% for the 2018 cohort. ASU recognizes that financial difficulties experienced by many families cause the difference in graduation rates for Pell and non-Pell students. ASU has worked to restructure its institutional awards to attempt to assist in relieving some of this financial pressure. Female students consistently graduate at higher rates than male students, 34% versus 23% for the 2018 cohort. ASU has worked to implement programs targeted towards male students to engage them in the campus community and support their matriculation. While the institution is encouraged by the upward trend in the graduation rate, leadership acknowledges that continuous improvement is essential to increase the proportion of students who successfully obtain their baccalaureate degrees.

To facilitate the improvement of the 6-year graduation rate, the Office of Institutional Research provides both university-wide and program-specific retention data for colleges and departments. Through the Institutional Effectiveness assessment process, these colleges and departments will employ this data to formulate continuous improvement plans aimed at enhancing programmatic student retention, which, in turn, will positively influence the overall university graduation rate. University-wide initiatives are part of the improvement plan to support the work of academic departments. The initiatives include implementing an intrusive advising model for new students, streamlining the transition from new student advising to major college advising, creating an automatic merit award scholarship program for incoming students, and developing more robust student engagement activities. The 6-year graduation rates for ASU are also available on the [ASU Achievement Goal webpage](#), which is updated on an annual basis.