

Quality Initiative Proposal

Increase 6-year graduation rate

The proposed quality initiative is to improve IIT's 6-year graduation rate. IIT's 6-year graduation rate has historically been significantly lower than our peer AITU schools and lower than expected based on the quality of the incoming IIT first-year student. The goal of this quality initiative is to increase IIT's 6-year graduation rate to 85% within 5 years.

Historical graduation rates have been hovering around 65% for quite some time. The latest data point for IIT for Fall 2012 is based on what happened to the class that came to IIT in Fall 2005 (fall 2005 cohort). Our first-to-second year retention rate that year was 85%. 6-year graduation rates are strongly correlated to the first-to second year retention rate.

Since Fall 2005, the university has made steady improvements in our first-to-second year retention rate that has reached a high of 95% in fall 2011.

The most recent data point for 6-year graduation rate will come out soon and is expected to be 68%, a four percent increase over the previous cohort. This increase is partly due to the efforts of the retention task force that was formed that year by the university, and also due to a more forgiving policy was initiated on the annual renewal of student merit-based scholarships.

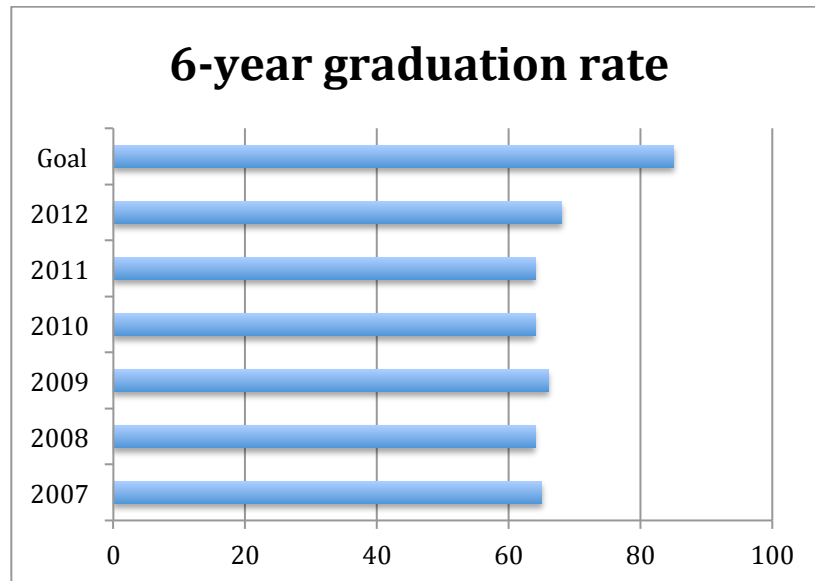


Figure 1. Historical 6-year graduation rates at IIT (%).

Based on recent trends in first-to-second year retention, it is reasonable to expect that we can and should reach a goal of 85% within five years. Due do this, however will require hard work and a concerted effort by the entire university community. Resources will also be necessary to accomplish this goal.

The expected outcomes of this initiative are:

- Increase student satisfaction
- Improve learning outcomes
- Improve University National Ranking
- Lower cost of attendance
- Lower student debt levels upon graduation
- Increase alumni engagement
- Better classroom utilization
- Class schedules and sizes are determined by educational pedagogy and not driven by unforeseen demand
- Increase summer session enrollment
- Reduce variability in semester student credit-hour load

Proposed Method:

The task of increasing our 6-year graduation rate will require a concerted effort by the entire IIT community (faculty, staff, students, administration, alumni).

An essential step toward achieving this goal is to simply require incoming students to create a plan in the student degree-audit system, "DegreeWorks." DegreeWorks will ensure that the student plan leads to a degree within a specified time frame at IIT. Faculty advisors can assist students with creating a plan, and central support by Academic Undergraduate Affairs will ensure that DegreeWorks results are accurate and up to date. The student plan data will reside in the central University database (Operational Data Store).

The data will be used to:

- Project demand for courses that are offered in the future terms
- Taylor class sizes based on pedagogy and not unforeseen demand
- Assist course schedulers in all academic units
- Make sure that the right mix of courses are offered in the right place at the right time

The basic premise of the proposed method is that students with a plan will do better and graduate faster than students without a plan.