

Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program Grantee-Level Performance Results: 2008-09

Background

The 2008-09 performance measures for the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair) program are measurable educational outcomes for the projects funded by the program. The following provides an introduction, description of the methodology and terms used to calculate and analyze the one-year, two-year, and three-year graduate school enrollment rates of McNair projects, and a summary of the preliminary findings. The tables provide the actual data and results of the analyses for each grantee and for the program. The analyses are based on the data provided by the grantees in the annual performance reports for 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09, and are not the result of a rigorous, independent evaluation of the McNair program. Data, therefore, should be interpreted with caution given various reporting issues as described in the section below on data constraints.

Purpose

The Department is committed to continually improving its management of programs and improving the educational outcomes of students. Improvements are guided by monitoring and assessing performance, improving the data used for these assessments, collaborating with stakeholders, implementing recommendations, and re-assessing performance. Providing data to the public is a key element in promoting improvement and collaborating with stakeholders.

Performance Measure Definition

Since the TRIO McNair program prepares upper-class undergraduate students for doctoral studies, the primary performance measure is the graduate school enrollment rate of program participants. Our goal is to show, for each McNair project, the number of McNair participants receiving a bachelor's degree, who subsequently enroll in graduate school anytime during the three academic years following attainment of their bachelor's degree. Although this methodology will not capture all program successes, research data indicate that a substantial number of individuals who pursue graduate degrees begin their graduate programs within three years of receiving their bachelor's degree ¹. Thus, the three-year timeframe is a reasonable measurement for comparing program outcomes among projects.

To report performance information on all currently funded McNair grantees, this analysis reflects the current four-year grant cycle that began in 2007-08. However, grantees that were funded in 2006-07 but were not funded in 2007-08 are excluded from the tables below. The tables below show four cohorts of McNair participants, based on bachelor's degree attainment. They are as follows:

| All Grantees Funded in 2008 | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Table | Cohort Year * | Graduate School Academic Year Enrollment |
| Table 1 (3-Year Rate) | 2005-06 | 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 |
| Table 2 (2-Year Rate) | 2006-07 | 2006-07 and 2007-08 |
| Table 3 (1-Year Rate) | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |

* Cohort year is defined as McNair participants who received their bachelor's degree.

Findings

Table 1 shows the one-year, two-year and three-year graduate school enrollment rates for those McNair participants who received their bachelor's degree in 2005-06 and enrolled in graduate school in 2006-07 (one-year rate), 2007-08 (two-year rate) and/or 2008-09 (three-year rate). The overall three-year graduate school enrollment rate for those McNair participants who received their bachelor's degree in 2005-06 is 69.5 percent which is a decrease of 2.8 percent from the previous three-year rate of 72.3 percent.

Table 2 shows the two-year graduate school enrollment rate for McNair participants who received their bachelor's degree in 2006-07 and enrolled in graduate school by 2008-09. The overall two-year graduate school enrollment rate for those McNair participants who received their bachelor's degree in 2006-07 is 64.7 percent which is an increase of 3 percent from the previous two-year rate of 61.7 percent.

Table 3 shows the one-year graduate school enrollment rate for McNair participants who received their bachelor's degree in 2007-08 and enrolled in graduate school in 2008-09. The overall one-year graduate school enrollment rate for those McNair participants who received their bachelor's degree in 2007-08 is 57.5 which is an increase of 4.7 percent from the previous one-year rate of 52.8 percent.

The data in each table are organized alphabetically by state and grantee name and show all McNair grantees funded in 2008-09 (185 grantees). Please note the last column in the tables, "Notes," identifies newly funded grantees, grantees who did not submit an APR, and grantees who did not have any bachelor's degree recipients in the year the cohort was established. The latter is not an unusual situation especially for new grantees, as many McNair grantees begin working with undergraduate students when they are sophomores and juniors, and do not serve seniors during the first year of the grant.

Methodology

The data sources used for calculating the graduate school enrollment rates are the 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 McNair Annual Performance Reports (APRs) submitted by grantees.

➤ *One-year rates:*

- **For the one-year rate of the 2005-06 cohort,** we divide the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2006-07 by the number of students receiving a bachelor's degree in 2005-06 and multiply by 100.
- **For the one-year rate of the 2006-07 cohort,** we divide the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2007-08 by the number of students receiving a bachelor's degree in 2006-07 and multiply by 100.
- **For the one-year rate of the 2007-08 cohort,** we divide the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2008-09 by the number of students receiving a bachelor's degree in 2007-08 and multiply by 100.

➤ **Two-year rates:**

- **For the two-year cumulative rate of the 2005-06 cohort**, we divide the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2006-07 and 2007-08 (i.e., within two years after receiving a bachelor's degree) by the number of students receiving a bachelor's degree in 2005-06 and multiply by 100. Please note, this is a cumulative rate that includes in the numerator students who enrolled in graduate school one and two years after receiving a bachelor's degree (i.e., enrolled in graduate school in 2006-07 and/or 2007-08).
- **For the two-year cumulative rate of the 2006-07 cohort**, we divide the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2007-08 and 2008-09 (i.e., within two years after receiving a bachelor's degree) by the number of students receiving a bachelor's degree in 2006-07 and multiply by 100. Again, please note, this is a cumulative rate that includes in the numerator students who enrolled in graduate school one and two years after receiving a bachelor's degree (i.e., enrolled in graduate school in 2007-08 and/or 2008-09).

➤ **Three-year rate:**

- **For the three-year cumulative rate of the 2005-06 cohort**, we divide the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 (i.e., within three years after receiving a bachelor's degree) by the number of students receiving a bachelor's degree in 2005-06 and multiply by 100. Again, please note, this is a cumulative rate that includes in the numerator students who enrolled in graduate school one, two, and three years after receiving a bachelor's degree (i.e., enrolled in graduate school in 2006-07, 2006-08 and/or 2008-09).

To calculate the numbers of students in each cohort and numbers of bachelor's degree recipients for use in the rate formulas above, the following APR fields are used:

- **For the number of students receiving bachelor's degree in 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08** (i.e., cohorts), data are derived from several fields on the APR. The first criterion in determining the cohort of bachelor's degree recipients is to determine if a student earned a bachelor's degree prior to the cohort year. If a student earned a bachelor's degree prior to the cohort year, the student is not included in the cohort. The second criterion is to examine the responses to fields #21 and #22. If field #21 (highest degree earned) equals option 1, Bachelor's degree, and field #22 (date of highest degree earned) is between September 1, 2005, and August 31, 2006, for the 2005-06 cohort, September 1, 2006, and August 31, 2007, for the 2006-07 cohort, and September 1, 2007, and August 31, 2008, for the 2007-08 cohort then the student is included in the cohort of baccalaureate recipients. If field #22 (date of highest degree earned) is out-of-range, missing, or invalid, then the responses to field #18 (College grade level at the end of the spring/summer term), field #17 (college grade level at entry into the project), and field #19 (enrollment status for academic year being reported) are examined to determine whether or not a student should be included in the cohort.
- **For the 2005-06 cohort**, the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2006-07 (one-year rate), 2007-08 (two-year rate) and/or 2008-09 (three-year rate) is captured from the data reported in field #18 (college grade level at the end of the 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 academic years), options 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 (graduate/professional program).

- **For the 2006-07 cohort**, the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2007-08 (one-year rate) and/or 2008-09 (two-year rate) is captured from the data reported in field #18 (college grade level at the end of the 2007-08 academic year), options 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 (graduate/professional program).
- **For the 2007-08 cohort**, the number of students enrolling in graduate school in 2008-09 (one-year rate) is captured from the data reported in field #18 (college grade level at the end of the 2008-09 academic year), options 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 (graduate/professional program).

Data Limitations

An examination of the data indicated various reporting issues such as some grantees not updating their student records, inconsistent responses among data fields, and changes to some data fields in, for example, the 2004-05 APR from previous APRs. Some grantees may not have data on the graduate school enrollment status of all prior participants at the time the APR is submitted. The extent to which these factors impacted the number of students in each cohort and the number enrolling in graduate school is not known.

Furthermore, the data, at the grantee-level, show that graduate school enrollment rates vary significantly between projects. One reason for this variance is the number of bachelor's degree recipients reported for each institution. The average cohort has only 10.6 students, so each student accounts for a significant change in graduate school enrollment rates. For example, in Table 1 one grantee has a 100 percent graduate school enrollment rate because only two students received a bachelor's degree in 2005-06 and these same students enrolled in graduate school in 2006-07. The grantee's two and three-year rates remained the same because the rate is a cumulative number and the students had already enrolled in the first year. This contrasts with another grantee that has a 55 percent graduate school enrollment rate based on 11 students enrolling in graduate school within three years out of 20 students who received a bachelor's degree in 2005-06.

¹ Nevill, S.C., and Chen, X. (2007). *The Path Through Graduate School: A Longitudinal Examination 10 Years After Bachelor's Degree (NCES 2007-162)*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, p. 18.