

TRIO Student Support Services (SSS)

Performance & Efficiency Measure Results: 2008-09

BACKGROUND

The 2008-09 performance and efficiency measure results for the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program portray measurable educational outcomes for the projects funded by the program. The following provides an introduction and description of the methodology and terms used to calculate and analyze the outcomes: persistence, graduation and efficiency. The tables provide the actual data and results of the analyses for each grantee. The analyses are based on self-reported data in Annual Performance Reports (APRs), and are not the result of a rigorous, independent evaluation of the SSS program.

INTRODUCTION

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.

The performance measures for SSS projects are based on a cohort of full-time, freshman participants who enrolled at the grantee institution in a particular year. In previous APR data reporting years, there were issues with the validity and reliability of certain data fields such as the grade level at entry into the project which limited the use of fields that would enable TRIO to draw on when defining the cohort. Ideally, the grade level at entry field would have been a more suited field to determine the participant's grade level (i.e., freshman) because it captures a participant's grade level at entry into the project which is a better measurement of grade progression. However, because of data reporting issues an alternative field (current grade level field which measures a student's grade at the end of the academic year as opposed to the beginning of the academic year) was used.

In order to address data reporting issues, TRIO implemented a web-based annual performance report (APR) data collection system in 2005-06. As a result of this web-based system, TRIO has noted an increase in both the response rate and quality of the

data being collected. As such, TRIO has determined that the grade level at entry is now a more reliable field to use when determining the cohort. Therefore, beginning with the 2008-09 GPRA reporting period, the cohort will be defined as new participants (Participant Status, field #15, option 1) who are freshmen (College Grade Level—entry into project, field #18, option 1--1st yr., never attended), and enrolled full-time (Enrollment Status, field #17, option 1). Please note that “college grade level at entry into the project” contains two categories of freshmen: those that have never attended versus those that have previously attended college. TRIO recommends not using the second category because these participants are on a different matriculation path as they have already earned credits. Nonetheless, for informational purposes only, TRIO has provided—at the end of this narrative—the rates at the program level that will include the second category (Alternative #2) but these rates are not part of the published program performance plan rates. (See section *Additional Data*.)

As mentioned previously, the performance measures for SSS projects are based on a cohort of full-time, freshman participants who enrolled at the grantee institution in a particular year and are:

- the persistence (retention) rate – the percentage of full-time freshman SSS participants still enrolled at the same institution at the beginning of the next academic year, graduated with a bachelor’s degree (4-year institutions) or graduated with an associate’s degree and/or transferred from a two-year to four-year institution (2-year institutions), and
- the graduation (completion) rate – the percentage of full-time freshman SSS participants who graduated and/or transferred within three years (2-year institutions); or graduated within six years (at 4-year institutions).

The efficiency measure is the gap or difference between the cost per participant who received SSS services in a particular year and who persisted in postsecondary education, graduated with a postsecondary degree, and/or transferred to another institution in that same year (*successful outcomes*) and the cost per participant who received SSS services in that particular year.

For additional information regarding how the persistence, graduation, and efficiency measure results were calculated, please refer to the *Methodology* section.

SELECTED FINDINGS

➤ *Persistence*

- Of the 947 projects that were funded in 2008-09, all of the projects provided data that resulted in the calculation of the persistence rate. (*See Limitation of Data and Findings for a more detailed explanation.*)
- The overall persistence rate (86 percent) for those projects for which a rate was calculated exceeded the Department's goal of 73.5 percent. (*See Table 1.*)
- Of the 947 projects for which a rate was calculated, fifty (50) percent were four-year institutions and another fifty (50) percent were two-year institutions.
- Overall, the rate of persistence at four-year institutions was higher (87 percent) to that of two-year institutions, 84 percent.
- Eighty-six percent (86 percent) of all SSS projects for whom a rate was calculated had persistence rates of 73.5 percent or higher (i.e., at or above the Department's targeted goal).
- There were an equal number of four and two-year institutions (50%) with persistence rates of 73.5 percent or higher. However, eighty-eight (88 percent) of public institutions had a rate of 73.5 percent or higher while eighty (80 percent) of private institutions had a rate of 73.5 percent or higher. Of note, public 4-year institutions had the highest percent (91 percent) of projects with a persistence rate of 73.5 percent or higher.
- A comparison of the persistence rate between 2007-08 (81.0 percent) and 2008-09 (86.0 percent) showed a five percent increase.

➤ *Six-Year Graduation Rates (4-year institutions)*

- Of the 463 projects at four-year institutions that were funded in 2008-09, 418 projects provided data that resulted in the calculation of the six-year graduation rate. (*See Limitation of Data and Findings for a more detailed explanation.*)
- Of the 418 projects for which a rate was calculated, 30 percent were private-institutions while 70 percent were public institutions.

- Based on the new calculations rules discussed previously, the overall grantee-level six-year graduation rate (42.3 percent) for those projects for which a rate was calculated exceeded the Department's goal (29.5 percent). (*See Table 2.*)
- Three-quarters (75 percent) of all SSS projects for whom a rate was calculated had graduation rates of 29.5 percent or higher (i.e., at or above the Department's targeted goal).
- Of the 75 percent of SSS projects whose rate was at or above the Department's targeted goal (29.5 percent), 71 percent were private institutions and 77 percent were public institutions.
- Overall, the graduation rate was higher at public institutions (44 percent) versus at private institutions (39 percent).
- A comparison of the six-year graduation rate between 2007-08 (40.6 percent) and 2008-09 (42.3 percent) showed nearly a two percent increase.

➤ ***Three-Year Graduation/Transfer Rates (2-year institutions)***

- Of the 484 projects at two-year institutions that were funded in 2008-09, 470 projects provided data that resulted in the calculation of the graduation/transfer rate. (*See Limitation of Data and Findings for a more detailed explanation.*)
- Of the 470 projects for which a rate was calculated, two percent were private-institutions while 98 percent were public institutions.
- Based on the new calculation rules discussed previously, the overall grantee-level three-year graduation rate (36.5 percent) for those projects for which a rate was calculated slightly exceeded the Department's goal (28 percent). (*See Table 3.*)
- Sixty-three percent (63 percent) of all SSS projects for whom a rate was calculated had graduation/transfer rates of 28 percent or higher (i.e., at or above the Department's targeted goal).
- A comparison of the three-year graduation/transfer rate between 2007-08 (34.4 percent) and 2008-09 (36.5 percent) showed a one percent increase.

➤ *Efficiency Measures*

- Of the 947 projects that were funded in 2008-09, all of the projects provided data that resulted in the calculation of the efficiency measure.
- The overall efficiency measure (\$183) for those projects whose efficiency measure was calculated improved in comparison to the 2007-08 overall efficiency measure (\$192) reported at (*See Table 4.*)
- Of the 947 projects for which a rate was calculated, there was a nearly even distribution among two-year (51 percent) and four-year (49 percent) institutions.
- Overall, the cost per successful outcome (efficiency measure) at two-year institutions was more than double that at four-year institutions, \$253 vs. \$125, respectively.
- A comparison of the efficiency measure between 2007-08 (\$192) and 2008-09 (\$183) showed a decrease of \$9.

DATA LIMITATION

➤ *Persistence Rate*

- A total of 947 SSS projects were funded in 2008-09.
- Twenty-six (26) projects or three percent of the projects did not serve any full-time freshmen in the year the cohort was established (i.e., 2008-09); therefore, a persistence rate could not be calculated.
- One (1) project served only upperclassmen participants; therefore, the persistence rate could not be calculated since the cohort is based on full-time freshmen.

➤ *Six-Year Graduation Rates (4-year institutions)*

- Twenty-six (25) projects or five percent were funded for the first time in the 2005-06 project year; therefore, a bachelor's degree completion rate could not be calculated since these projects were not in operation during the year in which the cohort was established (i.e., 2003-04).

- Nineteen (19) projects or four percent did not report serving any full-time freshmen participants in the year the cohort was established; therefore, the graduation rate could not be calculated.
- One (1) project served only upperclassmen participants; therefore, the graduation rate could not be calculated since the cohort is based on full-time freshmen.

➤ *Three-Year Graduation/Transfer Rates (2-year institutions)*

- Fourteen (14) projects or three percent did not report serving any full-time freshmen participants in the year the cohort was established (i.e., 2006-07); therefore, the graduation/transfer rate could not be calculated.

In addition, incomplete data in any of the data fields used to determine the cohort such as grade level at entry into the project and enrollment status could distort the calculated rate.

➤ *Efficiency Measures*

- None noted.

METHODOLOGY

➤ *Student Cohort for Persistence, Graduation and/or Transfer Rates:*

- Comprised of participants who are freshmen, enrolled full-time, and received SSS services for the first time during a designated year (i.e., new participants).¹

➤ *Determining the Cohort*

As mentioned previously, beginning in 2008-09 the definition of the cohort changed because the data field—grade level at entry—which was perhaps a better measurement of grade level progression had improved due to more refined data collection methods. The original field, current grade level, captured a participant's grade level at the end of the academic year which may have resulted in underreporting of the freshmen cohort since a participant could have entered the project as a freshmen, yet at the end of the academic year, the participant may have matriculated into the next grade level (e.g.,sophomore).

➤ *Persistence Rate Calculation*

- Beginning in 2006-07, persistence rates were calculated using a new method which drew entirely from each cohort year's APR data.
- **The calculations are as follows:**
 - ✓ The **numerator** consists of the number of participants who were enrolled in the fall of the 2009-10 academic year, graduated with a bachelor's degree by the end of the 2008-09 academic year, or graduated with an associate's degree and/or transferred from a two-year to a four-year institution by the end of the 2008-09 academic year. The fields used to determine the numerator are:
 - #21 (CurPerstStatus/CurEnrlStat), options 1, 2, 3, and 0,²
 - #23 (Transfers) options 2,

¹ Please note that this definition of the cohort for the program performance measures is different from the participants included in the cohort for the objectives used for the assessment of a grantee's prior experience. For the prior experience objectives, the cohort consists of all participants served by a project for the first-time in the designated year.

² For field #21, include in the numerator options 1 and 2. Also include in the numerator if field #21 equals 3 or 0 and field #27, DegreeCD = 3, 4, 5, or 6 or field #23, Transfers = 2.

- #27 (DegreeCD) options 3, 4, 5, and 6, and/or
 - #20 (PersGradStatus) options 2, 3, and 9.
- ✓ The **denominator** consists of the number of full-time freshman participants served by the SSS project in 2008-09.³ The fields used to determine the numerator are:
- #15 (PartCD) option 1,
 - #17 (EnrollCD) option 1, and
 - #18 (EntertGradeLV) option 1

➤ *Six-Year Graduation Rates (four-year institutions)*

- Divide the number of full-time freshman students who were served by the SSS project in 2003-04 and who graduated with a bachelor's degree from the grantee institution before or during the 2008-09 academic year (numerator) by the number of full-time freshman students served by the SSS project in 2003-04 (denominator).ⁱ

➤ *Three-Year Graduation and/or Transfer Rates (two-year institutions)*

- Divide the sum of the number of full-time freshman students who were served by the SSS project in 2006-07 and who graduated with an associate's degree from the grantee institution and/or transferred to a four-year institution by 2008-09 (numerator) by the number of full-time freshman students served by the SSS project in 2006-07 (denominator).ⁱⁱ

➤ *Efficiency Measures*

- The efficiency measure is calculated among new, continuing, new summer session, and reentry participants who received project services in the reporting year, and is based on annual funding per successful outcome.

³ Only data from the 2008-09 annual performance report was used.

- SSS efficiency is measured according to the cost per successful outcome in the reporting year, derived by dividing the annual appropriation by the number of participants completing, transferring, or persisting at the same institution during the reporting year.
- The cost per participant served is derived by dividing the annual appropriations by the number of participants served.
- The efficiency gap is then the difference between the cost per successful outcome and cost per participant served.
- For the 2008-09 efficiency measure calculations, only projects who did not submit an APR were excluded from the results. By contrast, the 2005-06 efficiency measure calculations excluded projects that were unable to report the academic outcomes of more than 15 percent of the participants who were served by the SSS project in 2005-06 and the results were adjusted for those participants in 2005-06 for which the project did not report academic **outcomes**.

ⁱ Data from the 2003-04 APR were used to establish the cohort of full-time first-year participants. APR data on degree completion for six years (2003-04; 2004-05; 2005-06; 2006-07; 2007-08; and 2008-09) was used to determine the number of the 2003-04 full-time freshmen who received a bachelor's degree from the grantee institution by 2008-09.

ⁱⁱ Data from the 2006-07 APR was used to establish the cohort of full-time freshman students. APR data on degree completion and/or transfers for three years (2006-07; 2007-08; and 2008-09) was used to determine the number of the 2006-07 full-time freshmen who received an associate's degree from the grantee institution and/or transferred from the grantee institution to a four-year institution by 2008-09.

ADDITIONAL DATA

The table below illustrates the GPRA rates for each measurement based on the original cohort definition and two additional alternatives.

1. The original cohort was defined as new participants, who were enrolled full-time and whose current grade level at the end of the academic year was 1st year, never attended.
2. The cohort for Alternative 1 is defined as new participants, who were enrolled full-time and whose grade level at entry into the project is 1st year, never attended.
3. The cohort for Alternative 2 is defined as new participants, who were enrolled full-time and whose grade level at entry into the project is either 1st year, never attended or 1st year, attended before.

2008-09 GPRA Rates			
Measure	Original Rate	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Persistence	82.2	86.0	86.4
BA Completion	32.5	42.3	42.3
AA Completion/Transfer	28.7	36.5	40.1