

# Mission Fulfillment

## Plan to Meet Mission Fulfillment (2024-2029)

### Six-year Graduation Rate (150% Degree Completion)

The Six-year Graduation Rate (150% Degree Completion) is the only mission fulfillment metric where Idaho State University (ISU) has consistently been lower than most of its peers and is currently not meeting its target for mission fulfillment. For the Fall 2011 cohort, 29% of first-time bachelor's degree seeking students graduated within six years, and while this has increased to 35.5% in the most recently available data (for the Fall 2018 cohort), this key student achievement measure remains a critical focus for improvement for the Institution. Intentional emphasis directed toward increasing degree completion is a priority. Program-level initiatives, newly developed completion degrees, greater advising for upper-division students, and the strong and increasing retention rates will provide a solid foundation for degree completion in the coming years.

ISU continues to develop program-level initiatives for student success and degree completion. Beyond strengthening relationships between faculty and professional advisors, two initiatives are in fairly early stages of implementation. First, the Institution has begun analyzing and evaluating current course sequencing to decrease the time to degree. Ensuring programs offer courses when students need them and streamlining those courses for optimal sequencing will support completion and time to degree across the Institution. Second, an initiative to expand program-level incentives and accountability for student completion within the budget model and the Program Prioritization process has begun. Finally, enhancing and expanding the use of High Impact Practices (HIPs) (e.g., capstone courses, collaborative

assignments, internships, undergraduate research, etc.) has been shown to increase completion. HIPs have become a greater focus at the state level, particularly within general education, which in turn is increasing interest at ISU.



Program-level initiatives | Part of ISU's effort getting more students from the first day to graduation.

In Fall 2024, the Institution implemented two new completion degrees to further support degree attainment, the BA and BS in Interdisciplinary Studies. These degrees, along with ISU's long-standing BA in University Studies, provide increased flexibility for students nearing the end of their college careers. Ensuring that those students with 100 credits or more are aware of these completion degrees is another vital piece of the student completion puzzle.

The Institution is looking to further develop advising and mentoring, particularly during a student's junior and senior years. Professional advisors would not only help guide students as they



Faculty member working with students in class.

complete prerequisites and general education course requirements, but also ensure students complete major requirements and know their many completion options as they look toward graduation. As students begin to interface with faculty members and program-level leadership in their chosen fields, these faculty mentors would also help students engage with resources such as the [ISU Career Center](#) on their path toward career selection and degree attainment.

Over the past several years, ISU has demonstrated substantial progress with the Fall-to-Fall retention rate improving from 64% for students returning in Fall 2019 to 74% for students returning in Fall 2023. This increased retention has built a strong foundation for degree completion. Successful initiatives such as [ISU Navigate](#) have created a streamlined vehicle for faculty members to submit detailed and individualized student notes that ensure members across campus are aware of student needs. Additionally, faculty members are encouraged to analyze the needs of each of their students and connect them to resources to help improve success. As ISU Navigate continues to expand across the entire institution to include "care units" that support additional student cohorts, the potential to positively impact degree completion is substantial.

Although the most recent six-year graduation rate was 35.5% for the Fall 2018 cohort, disaggregation of this cohort shows substantial race/ethnicity equity gaps for several sub-groups of the population. Students who identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino, graduate at 17%, 18%, and 30% respectively, significantly below the total student population. In addition, for the same cohort, only 27% of students receiving Pell Grants and 27% of first-generation students graduated within six years. Several initiatives, with particular attention to the equity gaps noted above, have been set in



Info session | Hispanic Youth Leadership Summit at ISU

motion to attend to ISU's six-year graduation rate. Newly developed demographically-contextualized recruiting events such as the [Hispanic Youth Leadership Summit \(HYLS\)](#) and [Rugir Con ISU](#), create early cultural connection and belonging for students and families at ISU. Additionally, long-standing programs such as [Bengal Bridge](#), focused on supporting first-generation, underrepresented and underserved students, have increased their attention on individualized growth and academic success. ISU continues to explore how the [Student Success Center](#), [Diversity Resource Center](#), the [Gender Resource Center](#), and [Native American](#)

[Student Services](#) can each potentially offer additional programming and initiatives to support students within specific demographic groups.

Together, the Institution expects that these multifaceted efforts and initiatives will soon demonstrate the positive impact they are already having through increasing six-year graduation rates not only for students as a whole but also for students representing these particular demographic groups and categories. ISU anticipates that through continuing its broad and systematic prioritization of degree completion and graduation, this important metric of student achievement will soon align with the Institution's peers.



Individualized growth and academic success | Bengal Bridge Program at ISU