

## Graduation Rate February 2023

### BACKGROUND

#### Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Rock Valley College (RVC) has identified KPI to inform the college community about institutional health and development. The College KPI are presented in five categories aligned to Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Public Agenda Goals. College KPI categories include *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success; Affordability; Educational Quality; Accountability; and Addressing Regional Economic Needs*.

Graduation Rate is a KPI aligned to the College category of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success*. This category is aligned to the IBHE Public Agenda Goal to increase educational attainment and is defined by efforts to raise success at each stage of the education pipeline and eliminate achievement gaps.

#### Graduation Rate Data

Data to inform this report have been captured and reported to the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Graduation rates represent the percent of a cohort (full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking students)<sup>1</sup> that successfully graduated within a specific time interval. Such rates can represent different lengths of time as not all students complete within the same timeframe. In data reported within this summary, three specific timeframes are identified and defined as follows:

- Normal Time – Two years is identified as the “normal” amount of time for graduation at the associate degree level.
- 150% of Normal Time – Three years for a two-year program.
- 200% of Normal Time – Twice as long as normal time or four years for a two-year program.

### GRADUATION RATE RESULTS

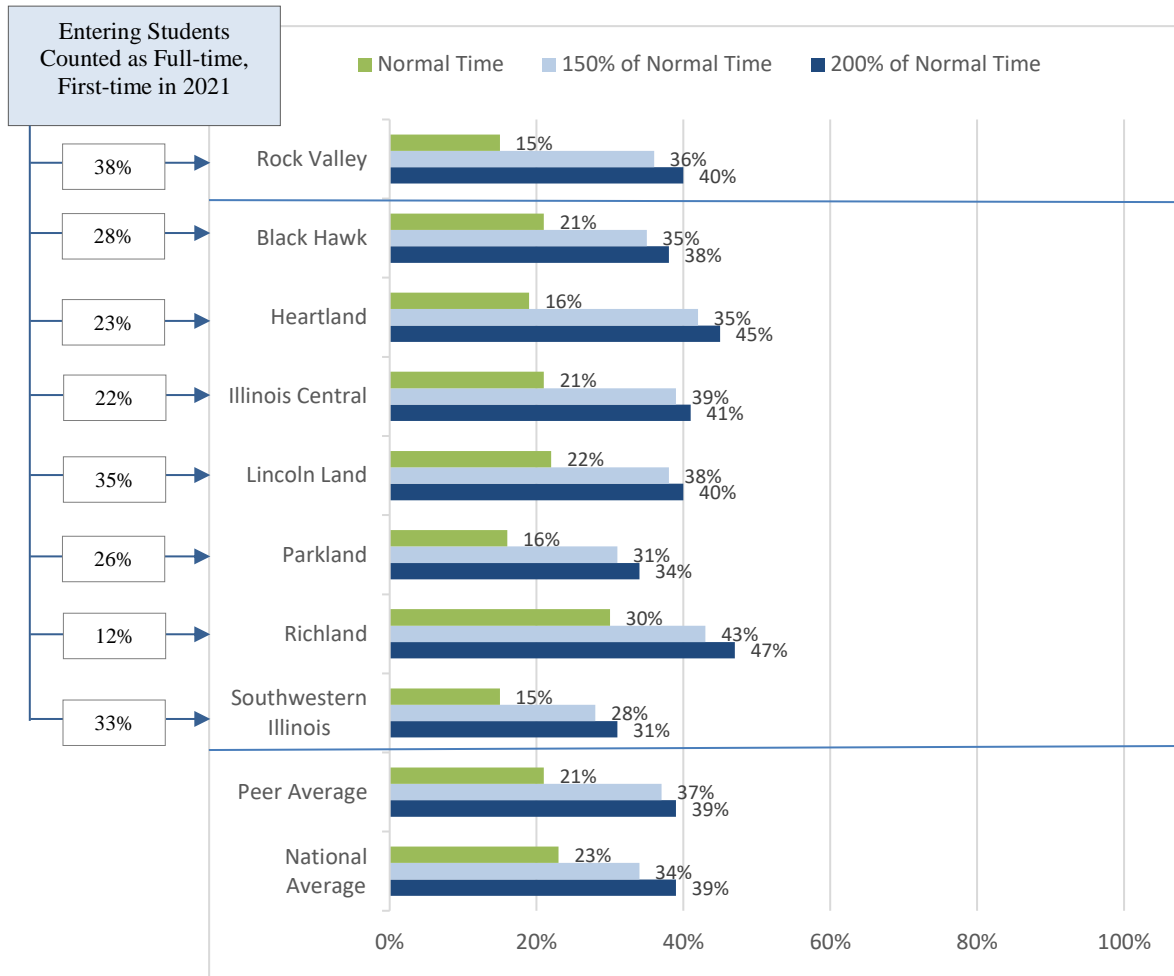
#### Graduation Rate by Completion Time Data

Figure 1 represents the percentage of full-time, first-time students graduating within each specified timeframe. Students represented within Figure 1 began their program in Fall 2018. Graduation rates by completion time are provided for RVC, comparison Illinois Community Colleges, and the nation. Figure 1 also shows the percentage of entering students counted as full-time, first-time students in 2021.

As Figure 1 indicates, more students graduate across all comparison groups as time passes. For example, 15% of RVC full-time, first-time students graduated in normal time (2 years), and an additional 21% graduated between two (2) and three (3) years for a total of 36% graduating within 150% of normal time. Further, an additional 4% graduated between three (3) and four (4) years for a total of 40% graduating within 200% of normal time.

<sup>1</sup> Students that have already attended another postsecondary institution or who began their studies on a part-time basis are not included in IPEDS graduation rate data.

**Figure 1:** Graduation Rates by Completion Time of Students Who Began in Fall 2018  
(RVC, Comparison IL Community Colleges, National Comparison)



Source: College Navigator and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

Data in Figure 1 indicate:

- Fifteen percent of the RVC cohort graduated within normal time. This is lower than the peer average of 21% and the national average of 23%.
- Thirty-six percent of the RVC cohort graduated within 150% of normal time. This is lower than the peer average of 37% and higher than the national average of 34%.
- Forty percent of the RVC cohort graduated within 200% of normal time. This is higher than the peer average (39%) and the national average of 39%.

**Annual and Multiyear Aggregate and Disaggregate Data**

The IPEDS graduation rate tracks the progress of students who began their studies as full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking students to determine if they complete a degree or certificate within 150% of normal time. As such, students who have attended another postsecondary institution or begun their studies on a part-time basis are not included in the overall graduation rate. As identified previously in Figure 1, 38% of RVC entering students were counted as “full-time, first-time” in 2021.

Table 1 represents RVC and national average percentages of full-time, first-time students graduating overall, by gender, and by race/ethnicity.

**Table 1: Graduation Rates of Full-time, First-time Adjusted Cohorts<sup>2</sup> (RVC and National Average)**

Percent Graduated Within 3 years (150%)										
Fall Term Entered (graduated)	Cohort	Overall Completers	Gender		Race/Ethnicity					
			Male	Female	American Indian	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic	White	Two or More Races
2014 -2017	RVC	31	25	38	*	*	12	32	33	*
	Nation	31	30	31	18	34	19	26	34	21
2015 -2018	RVC	33	30	36	*	*	16	32	34	*
	Nation	32	32	33	18	36	21	29	36	23
2016 -2019	RVC	30	25	35	*	*	12	24	35	*
	Nation	34	33	34	17	38	21	30	37	23
2017 -2020	RVC	36	31	41	*	*	18	35	40	*
	Nation	34	33	35	20	33	22	30	38	26
2018 -2021	RVC	32	26	37	*	*	18	26	34	33
	Nation	35	34	36	20	39	24	31	39	27

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

\*Group size is less than or equal to 30

**RVC Annual Data Suggest:**

- Thirty-six percent (32%) of the full-time, first-time students entering RVC in Fall 2018 completed a degree or certificate by 2021 (i.e., within 150% of normal time).
- Female students graduated at a much higher rate (37%) than male students (26%).
- Black/African American students graduated at a much lower rate (18%) than their Hispanic/Latino peers (26%) and white peers (39%).

**RVC Multiyear Data Suggest:**

- Cohorts entering since 2014 had demonstrated a general increase in overall graduation rates until this year. The highest rate is (36%), the lowest is (30%) and the current is (32%).
- Female students consistently graduate at higher rates than their male peers
- Hispanic students decreased to the second lowest level over the previous five-year period.
- Black/African American students have consistently graduated at a lower rate than their Hispanic and white peers, however they are at their highest level in the five-year period.

**RVC and National Comparison Data Suggest:**

- RVC's overall graduation rate had decreased to (32%) and is (3%) lower than the national average (35%) over the last five years.

<sup>2</sup> The adjusted cohort is defined in the IPEDS reporting process as students who come to RVC with the intention to complete a degree or certificate, attend RVC for the first time in the fall term (or immediately preceding summer), have no college experience (unless as a high school student), and attend RVC full-time for that first term attended. Students may be removed from the initial cohort before calculating graduation rates for the following reasons: death or total and permanent disability, service in the armed forces, service with a foreign aid service of the federal government, or service on official church mission.

- The average graduation rates for RVC men had steadily increased to its highest level (31%) in 2020, but dropped to (26%) in 2021, and is less than the national average (34%) in 2021. Graduation rates of RVC women decreased to (37%), and is slightly higher the national average (36%) in 2021.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

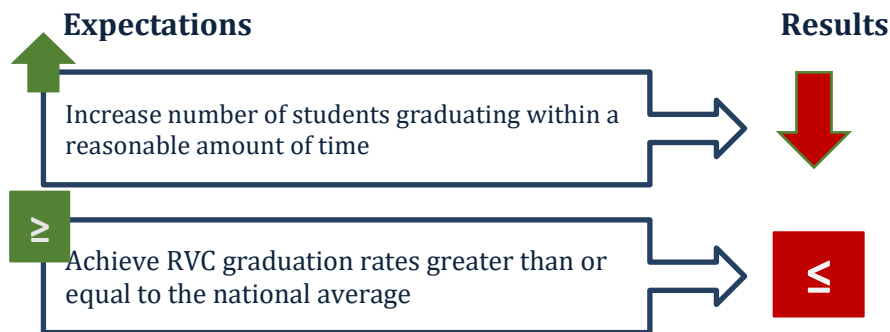
Graduation Rate is examined as an institutional KPI which provides information about the College's efforts in the area of Educational *Attainment, Access, and Success*. Specifically, data within this summary report support decision making about efforts to raise success at each stage of the education pipeline and to eliminate achievement gaps. These data suggest the following about these two efforts:

### Raising Success within the Education Pipeline

Within the context of this KPI, raising success within the education pipeline would be determined by a sufficient number of students graduating within a reasonable amount of time. Specifically, the expectation is that the percentage of RVC students graduating within 150% of normal time would increase over time (Figure 2). RVC Graduation rates (32%) have demonstrated a decrease (3%) last year, and is lower than the national average (35%).

In addition, the expectation would be that RVC graduation data would be comparable to national and local comparison groups (See Figure 2). The percentages of RVC students graduating within 200% of normal time and 150% of normal time are lower than the peer and national averages. The percentage of students graduating from RVC within normal time falls below the national average and is lower than all but one peer institution. This suggests that, while RVC students are completing their credentials, they are less likely than their peers at other community colleges to complete within normal time.

**Figure 2:** Current Results on Raising Success within the Education Pipeline



### Eliminating Achievement Gaps

Expectations for eliminating achievement gaps include narrowing group disparities over time (i.e., one group improves at a faster rate than the other to close the gap, not one group improves while the other declines in performance) and having gaps smaller than or equal to those demonstrated at the national level (see Figure 3).

The RVC subgroup data within this report indicate that a gender gap exists with female students consistently having higher graduation rates than their male peers. Graduation rates for males has

increased by 1% and women decreased by 1% over the five-year period. The gap between men and women is 11% for 2021. The gap between men and women at RVC is much larger than the achievement gap (2% for 2021) demonstrated at the national level.

The subgroup data within this report also indicate that gaps exist between racial/ethnic groups. The gap between graduation rates for Hispanic students dropped 4% and the White increased 1% over the five-year period causing an increase in the achievement gap. Black/African American graduation rates have increased 6% over the time period, decreasing the gap between their white peers. However, this disparity is larger than the achievement gap demonstrated at the national level. The differences in graduation rate between Hispanic and White students is better than the national average but should continue to be monitored, and the differences between Black/African-American and White students should be addressed and monitored.

**NOTE:**  
Findings related to graduation rate data should be considered along with transfer rate data before concluding success or failure. Some subgroups are more likely than others to transfer without earning a credential.

Figure 3: Current Results on Eliminating Achievement Gaps

