CREATING MOMENTUM:
15 to Finish Deep Dive

COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

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On-Time Graduation Rates

(Full-Time Students)

2-Year Associate

13%

ON TIME

4-Year Bachelor's

(public)

41%

ON TIME

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_326.10.asp

150% Graduation Rates

(Full-Time Students)

2-Year Associate

24%

IN 3 YEARS

4-Year Bachelor's

(public)

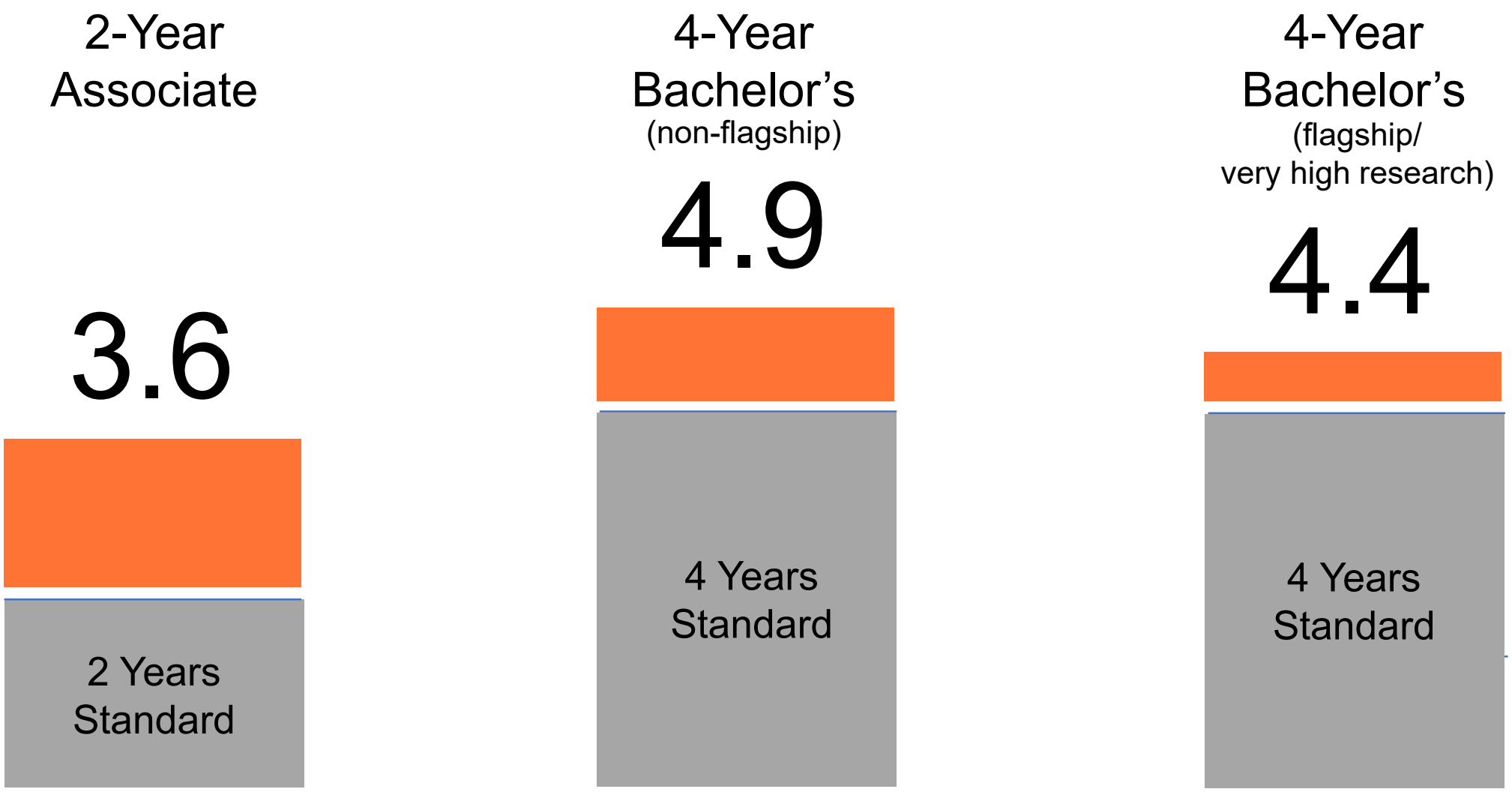
59%

IN 6 YEARS

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_ctr.pdf

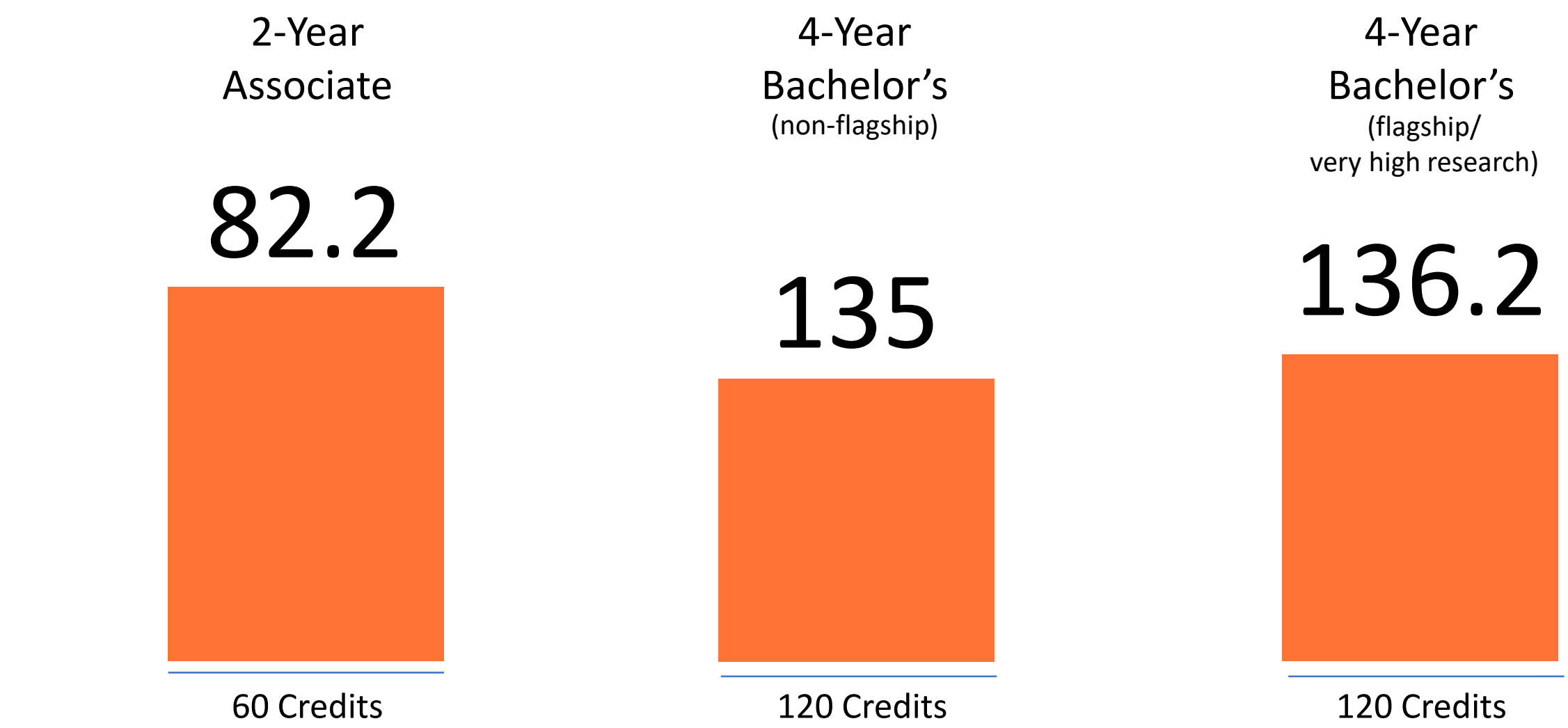
Time to Degree

(Full-Time Students)



Excess Credits

(Full-Time Students)



MOMENTUM YEAR

THE PROBLEM

Too few students start college with momentum — they delay selecting a program, take too few credits in their first year, and put off critical math and English gateway courses.

THE SOLUTION

Students' first year is intentionally designed as a Momentum Year. They take gateway math and English courses, nine credits in their academic interest area, and 30 credits overall. Institutional policy and practice reinforce this standard.

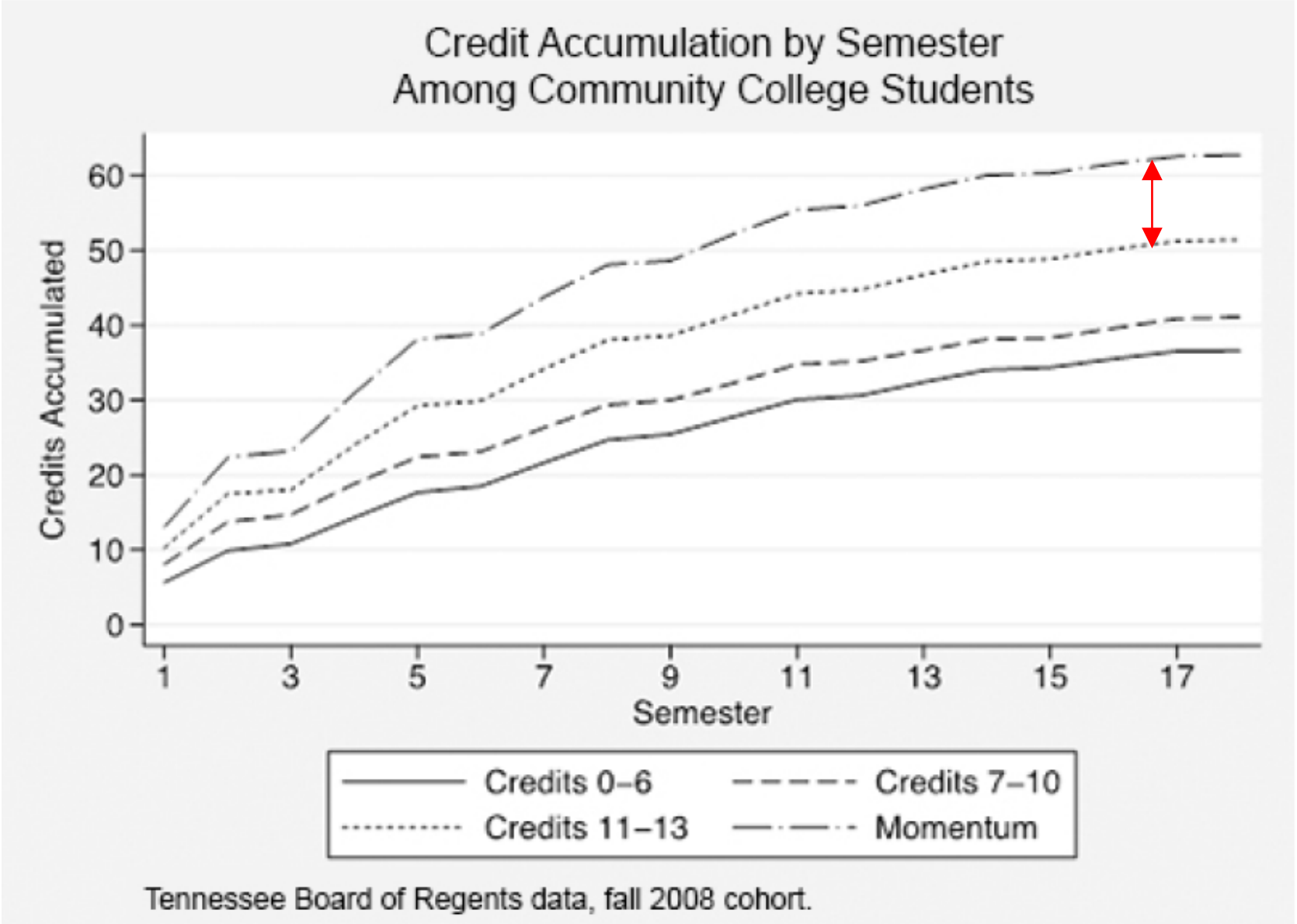
THE IMPORTANCE OF MOMENTUM

In the first year of enrollment, students who…

- ✓ Earn 30 credits in first year
- ✓ Complete math and English gateway courses
- ✓ Enter a program of study
- ✓ Complete nine program credits

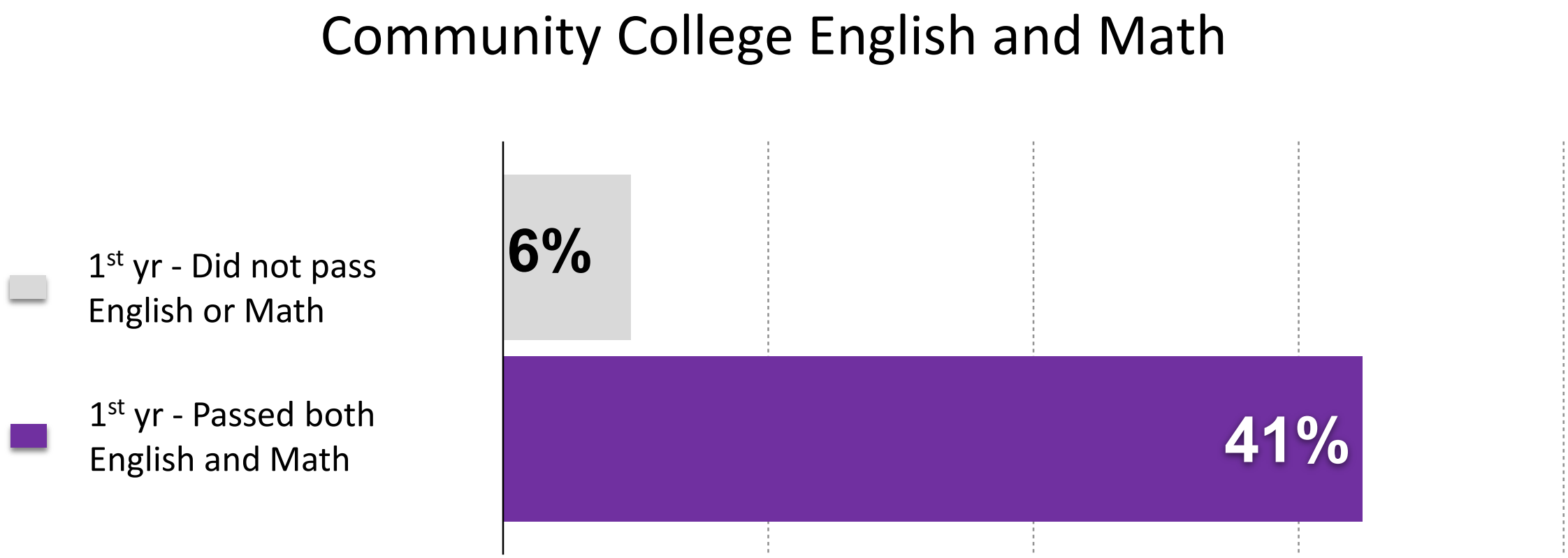
…are far more likely to graduate.

15 CREDITS IN 1ST SEMESTER CREATES STUDENT MOMENTUM



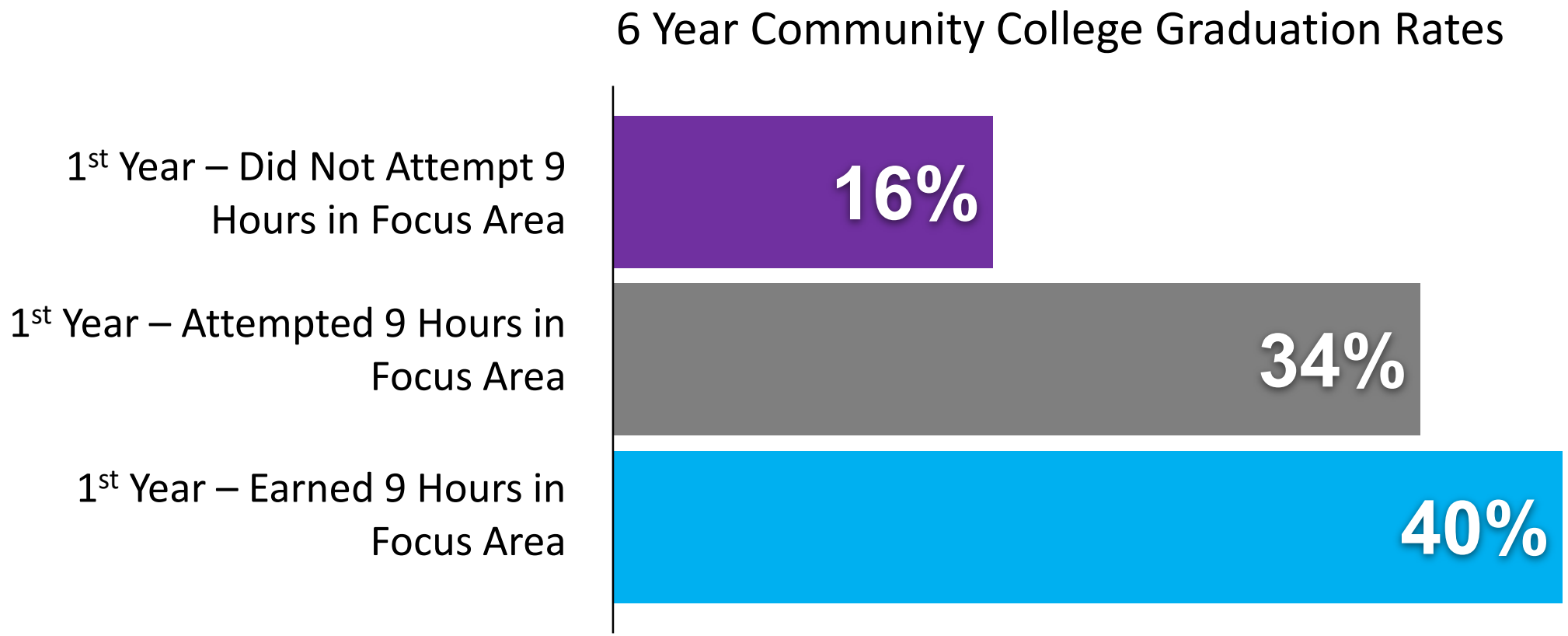
Belfield, Jenkins and Lahr, 2016

COMPLETION OF GATEWAY MATH AND ENGLISH CREATES MOMENTUM



Tennessee Board of Regents
Denley, 2016

NINE CREDITS IN PROGRAM
FIRST YEAR CREATES MOMENTUM



Tennessee Board of Regents
Denley, 2016

15 TO FINISH

#15toFinish

15 to FINISH

THINK 30

30 Louisiana

THINK

ELEVATE • EDUCATE • INNOVATE

Finish in 4

2+2

15 to Finish

WHAT IT IS:

Campaign to inform students about how best to graduate on time by taking relevant courses

WHAT IT IS NOT:

Requirement that every student registers for 15 credits every term

15 to Finish

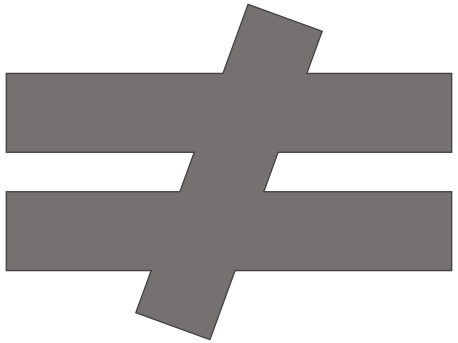
WHAT IT IS:

Recurring and continual campaign for all students (new and returning)

WHAT IT IS NOT:

Campaign targeted solely at incoming first-semester students

FULL-TIME



ON-TIME

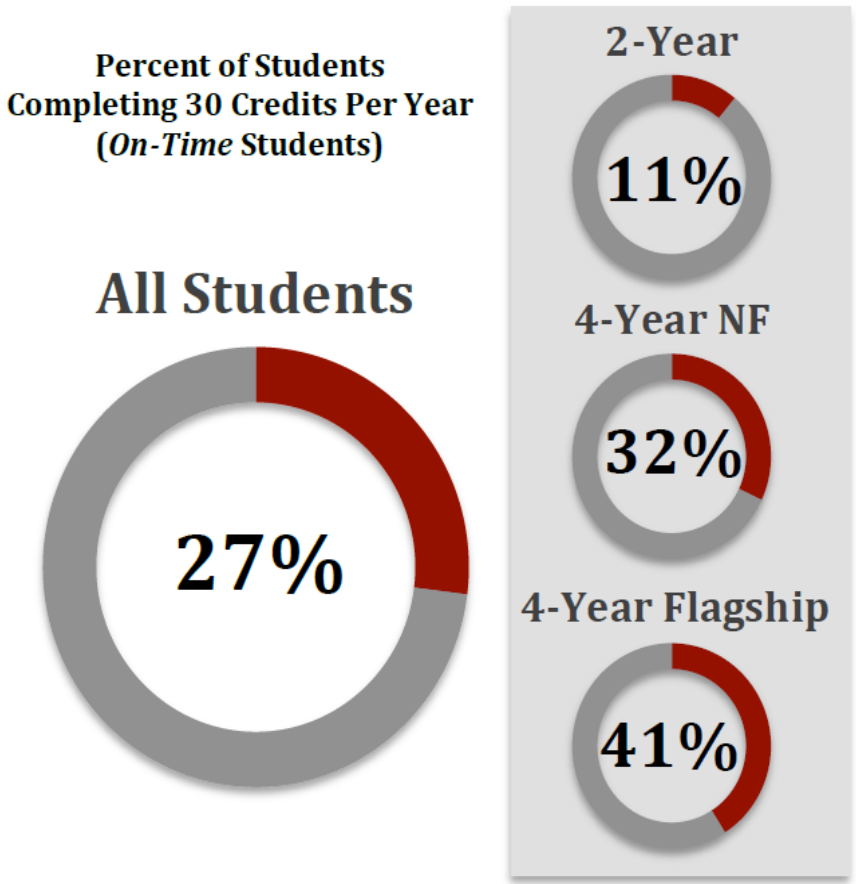
NACADA
THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY FOR ACADEMIC ADVISING

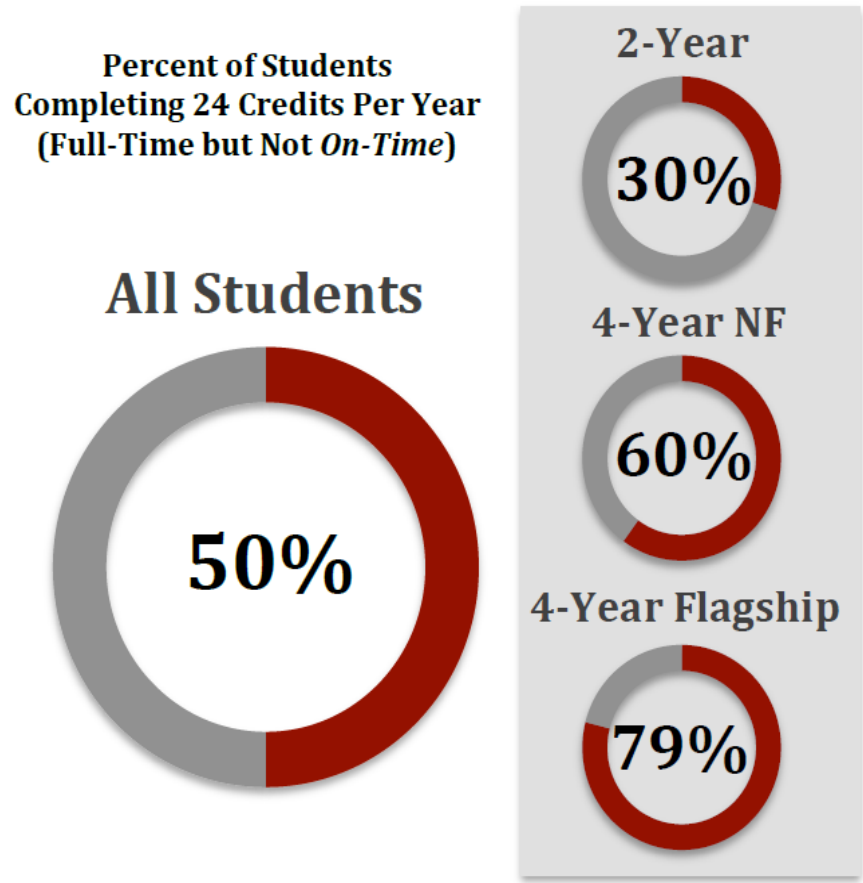
COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

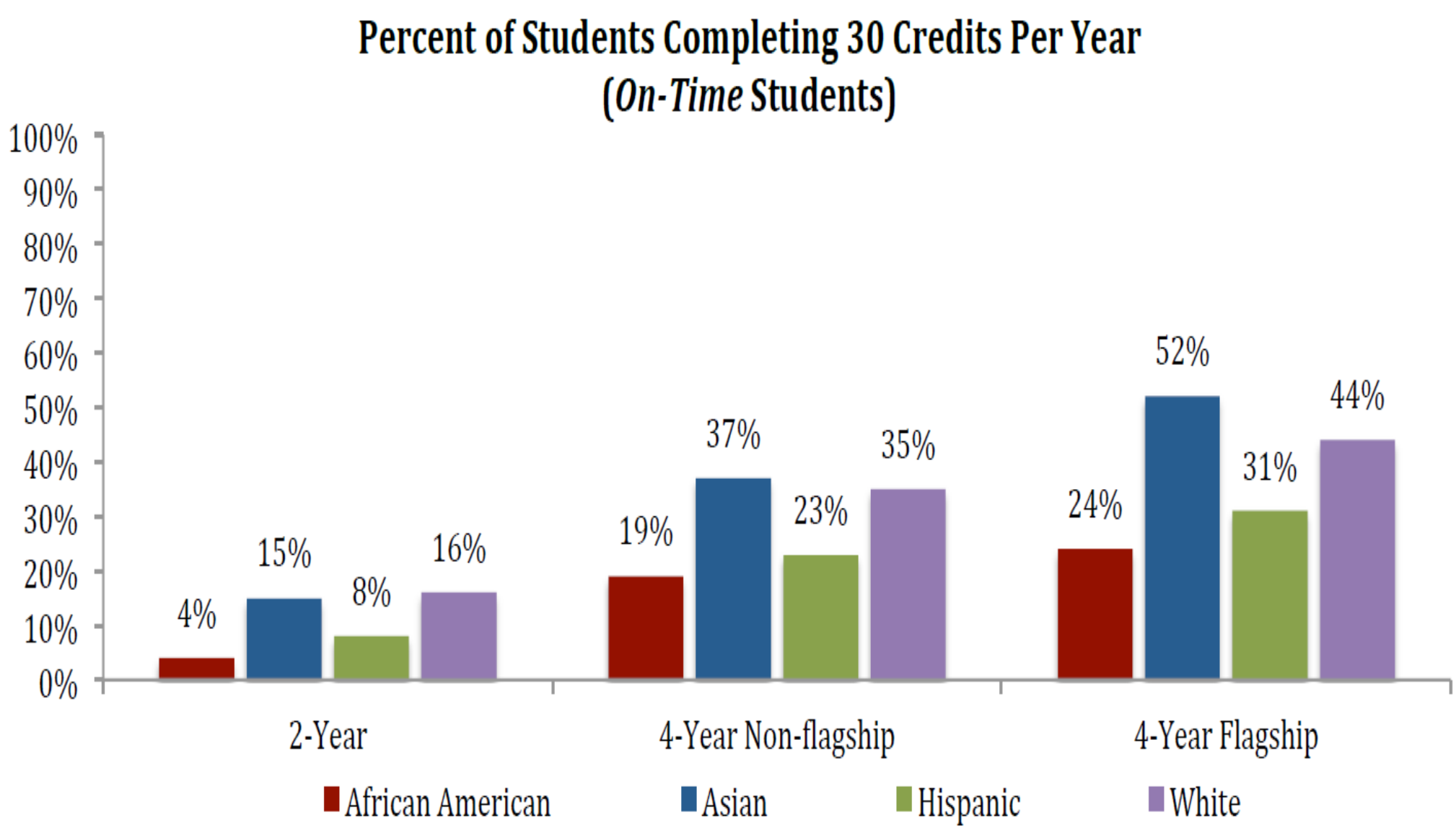
SHARED PRINCIPLES

- Far too few full-time students graduate on time.
- Graduating late or “taking an extra year” comes at great cost for students and their families.
- Advisors play a critical role in boosting student success.
- Many more students can take 15 credits per semester or term, greatly increasing their likelihood of on-time completion.
- #15toFinish informs students of their choices and ensures they know what it takes to graduate on time.

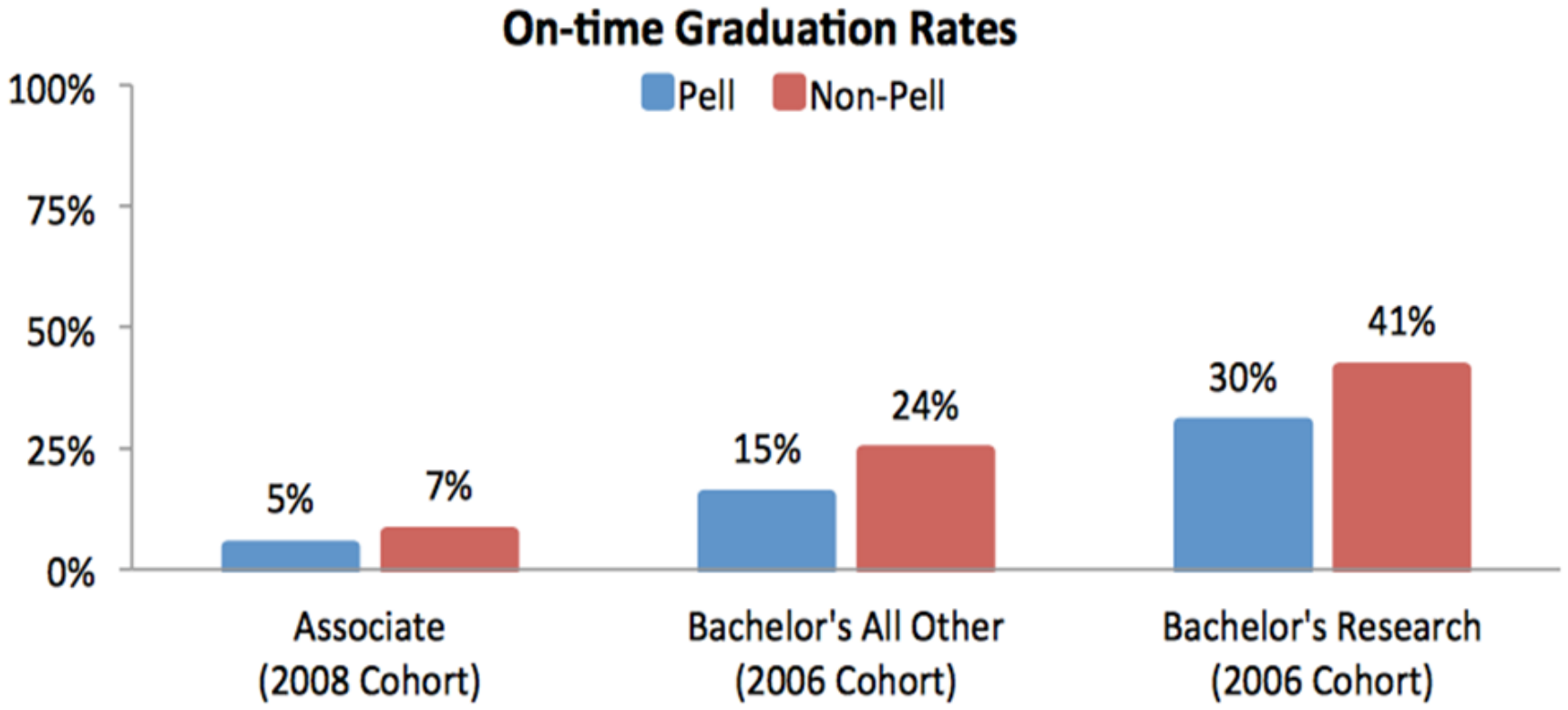
Half of American college students need just one more course per semester to be on track for on-time graduation.



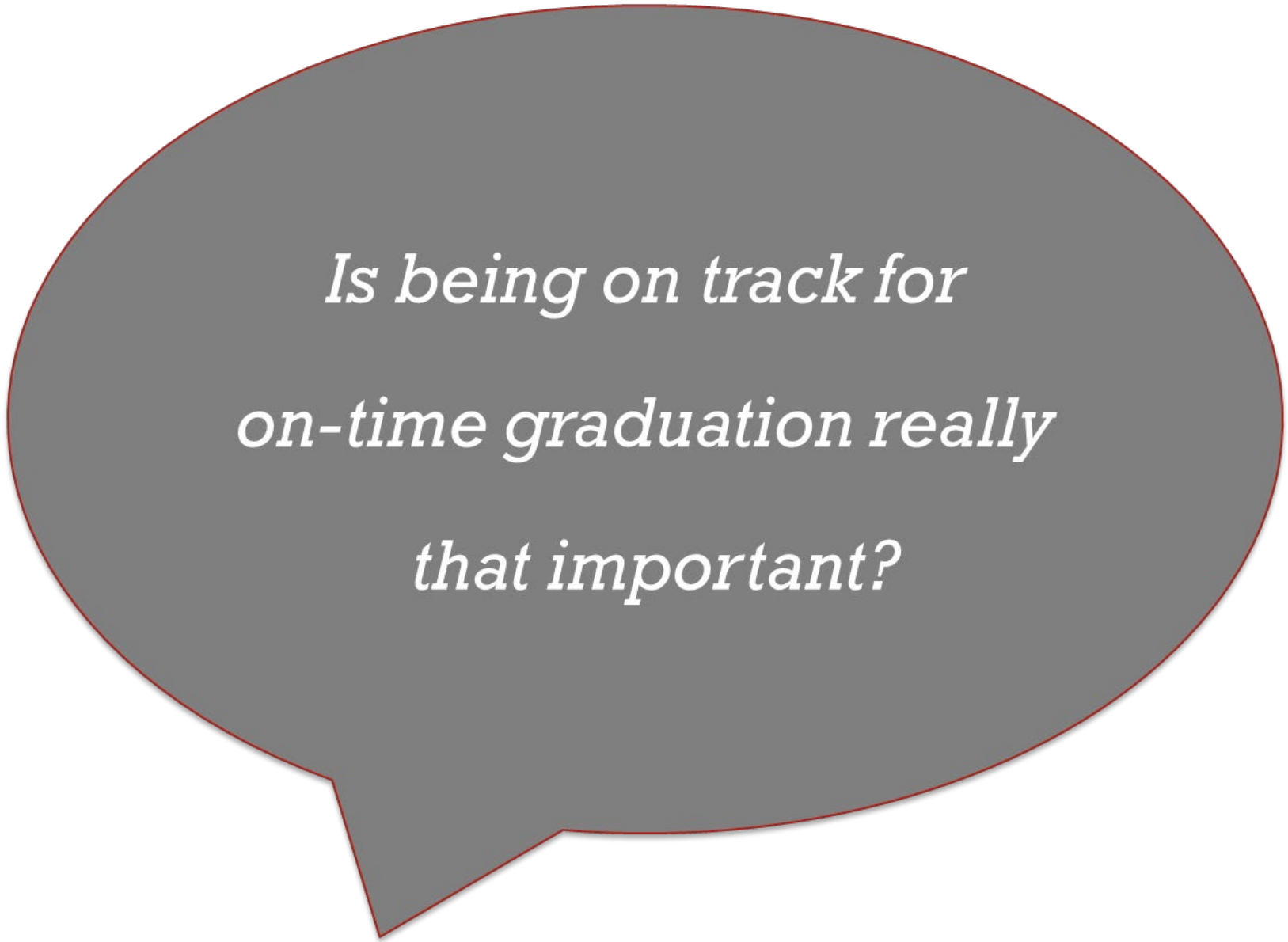



Percent of Students Completing 30 Credits Per Year
(*On-Time* Students)
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
4%
15%
8%
16%
19%
37%
23%
35%
24%
52%
31%
44%
2-Year
4-Year Non-flagship
4-Year Flagship
African American
Asian
Hispanic
White

Low-income students are **less likely** to be on track for on-time graduation



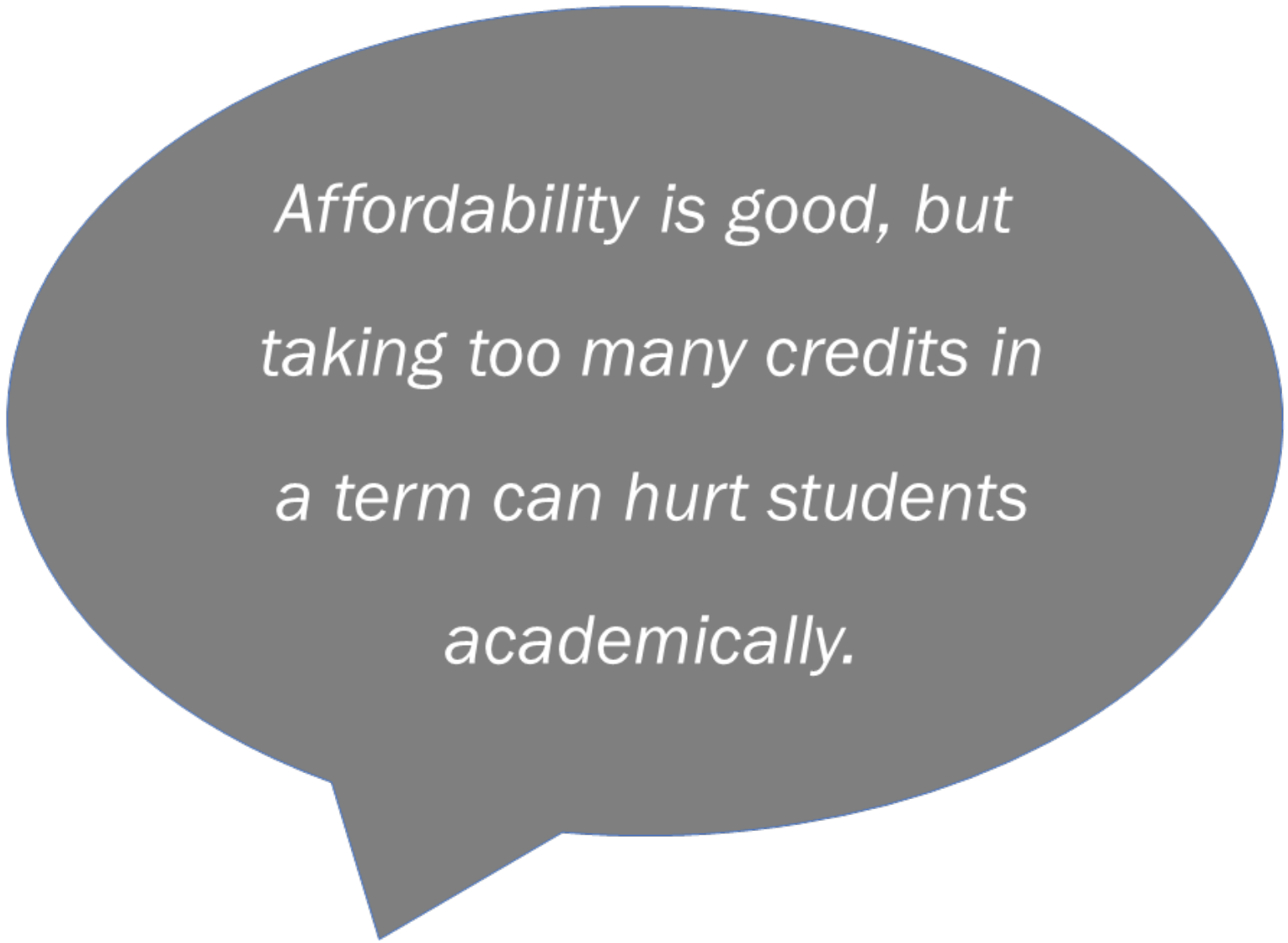
Source: 2014 CCA data collection, full-time degree seeking students at public institutions.


Is being on track for
on-time graduation really
that important?

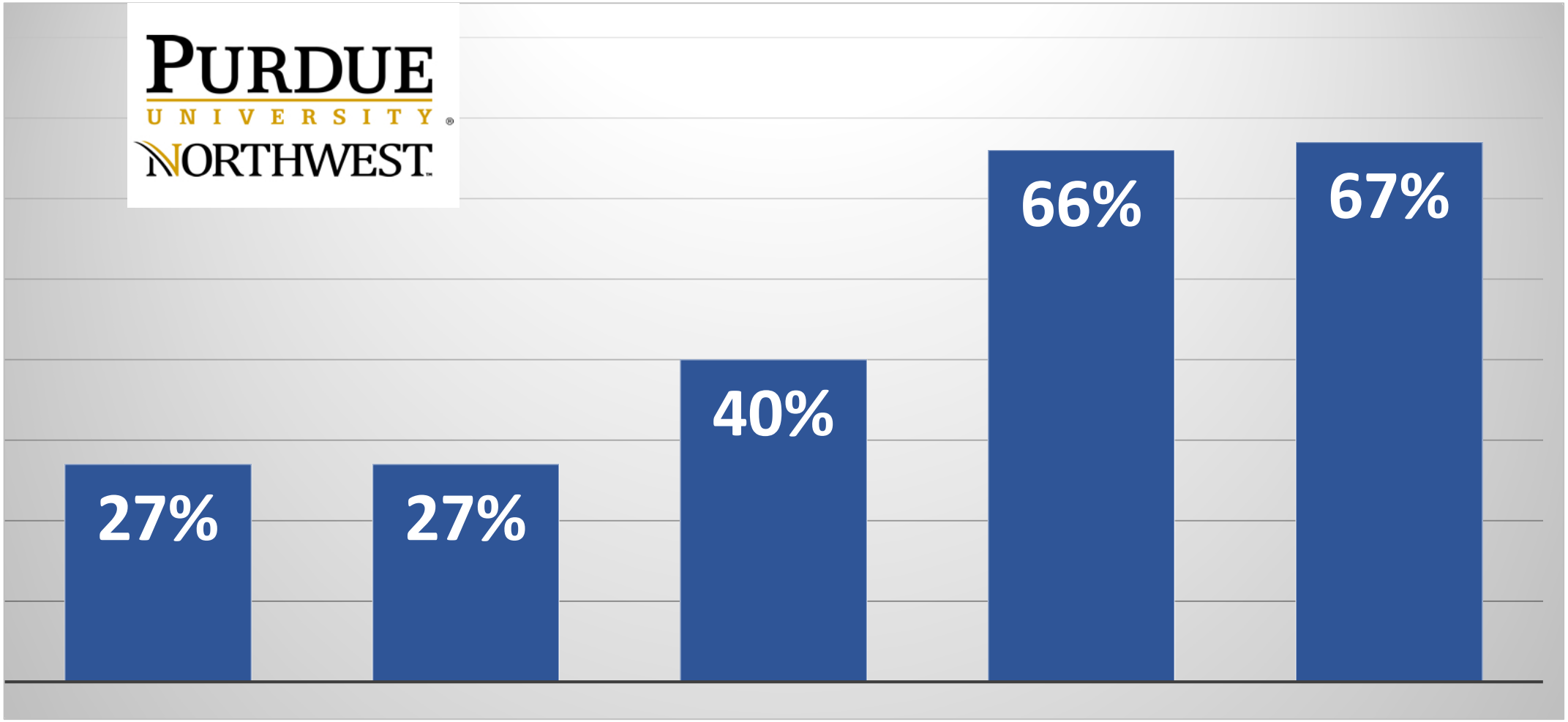
Okay, but do we really want to encourage our students to take more credits?

"The best strategy for reducing the cost of college is to ensure more students take the credits needed to graduate on time."

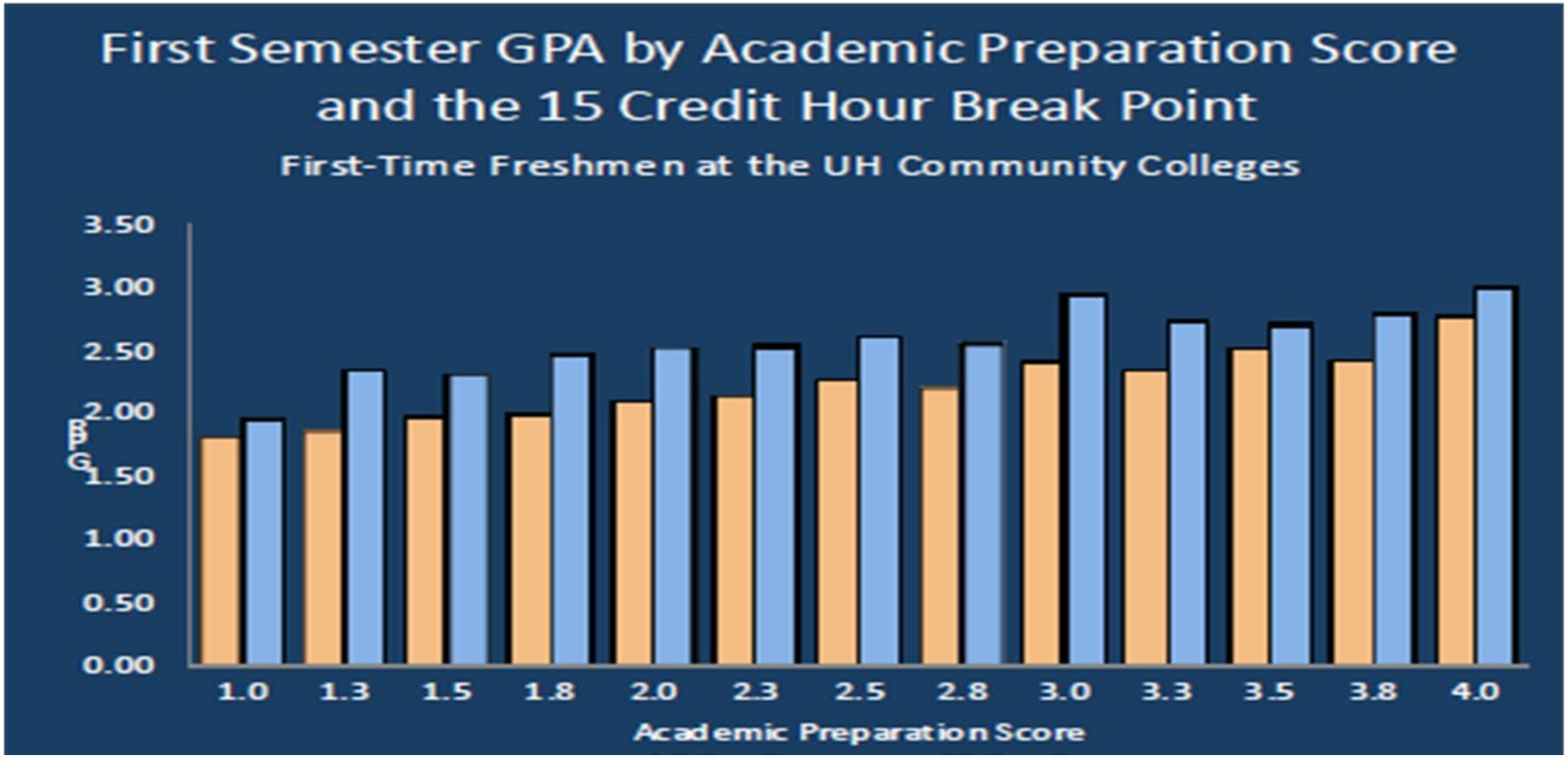
(Complete College America, 2016)


Affordability is good, but taking too many credits in a term can hurt students academically.

15 to Finish Increases Credits Attempted

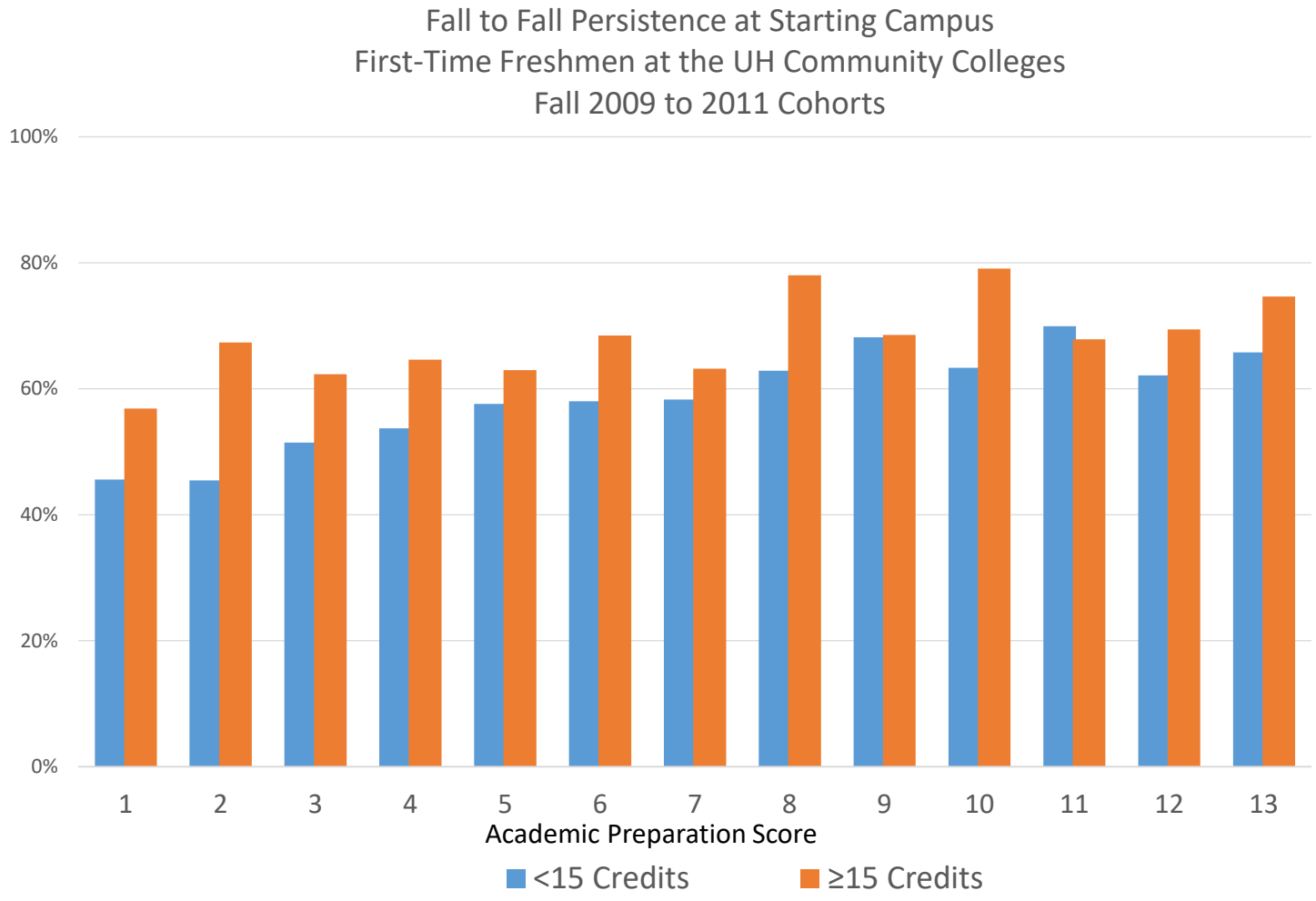


15 to Finish Increases GPA



15 to Finish Increases Retention

CC students taking 15 credits were retained at even higher rates at almost all levels of academic preparation



MSI INITIATIVE

(Preliminary Data)

Number of First-Time/Full-Time enrolled in 15+ hours fall 2018

↑ 54.6%

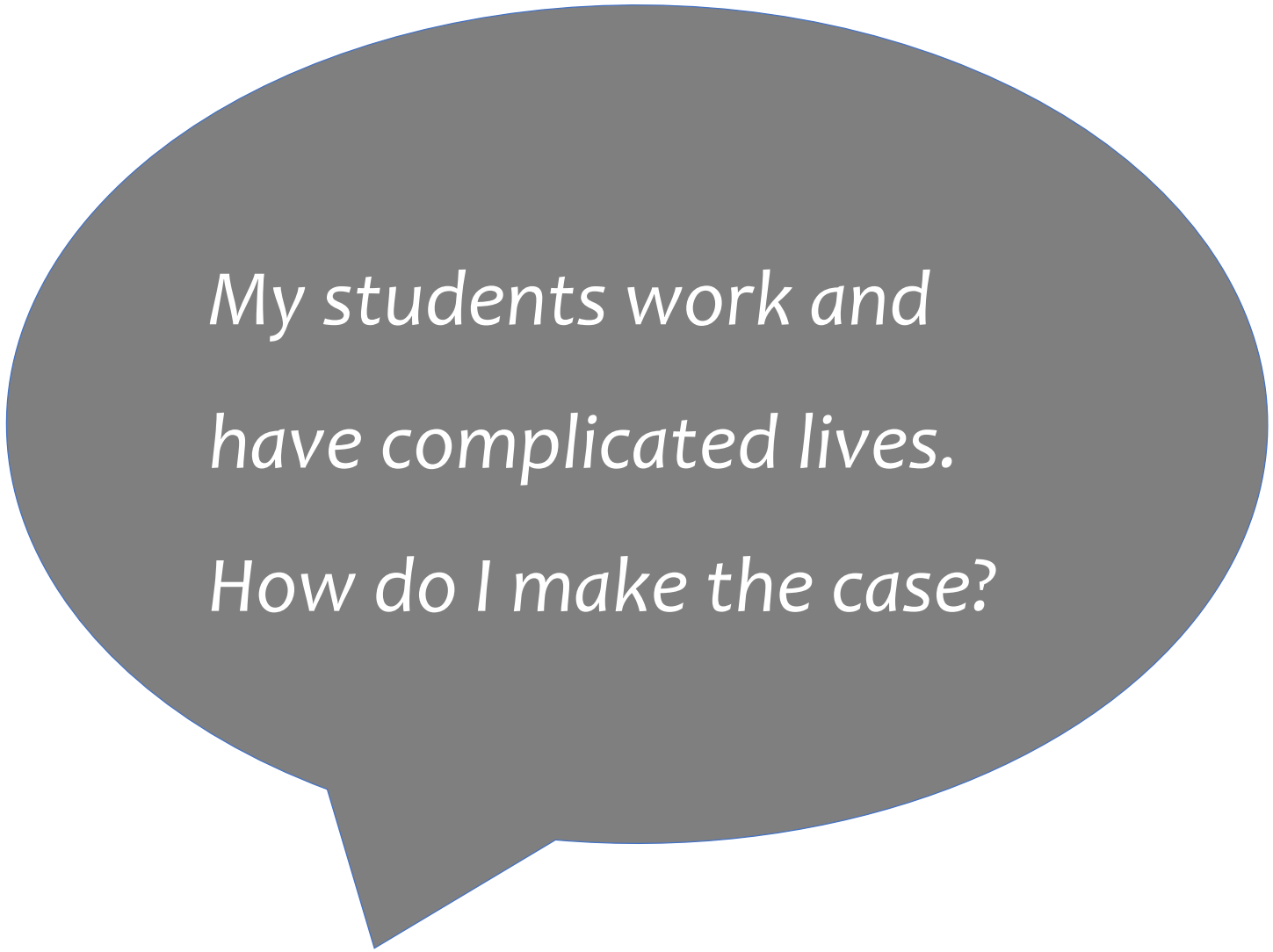
↑ 61.7%

↑ 9.6%
(Hispanic students)

CLARK ATLANTA
UNIVERSITY

↑ 29.0%

↑ 12.5%


My students work and
have complicated lives.
How do I make the case?

TALKING POINTS

- Incorporate full-time vs on-time language
- Emphasize cost of extra year
- Note that the longer students take to graduate, the more life gets in the way
- Inform them that there are multiple ways to get to 30 credits
- Come up with a plan that can make up credits in future terms
- Remember that underrepresented students are more likely to need information and tend to benefit more from this strategy

DO YOU KNOW?

- Number of students enrolled in 30 credits
- Number of students who completed 30 credits in the first year
- Grade Point Average of students completing 30 credits in their first year
- Retention rate of students completing 30 credits per year
- Retention rate of students completing 24-29 credits per year
- Retention rate of students completing fewer than 24 credits per year

Disaggregated by race, gender, age, income

How do I respond if a student doesn't think that taking 15 credits is reasonable?

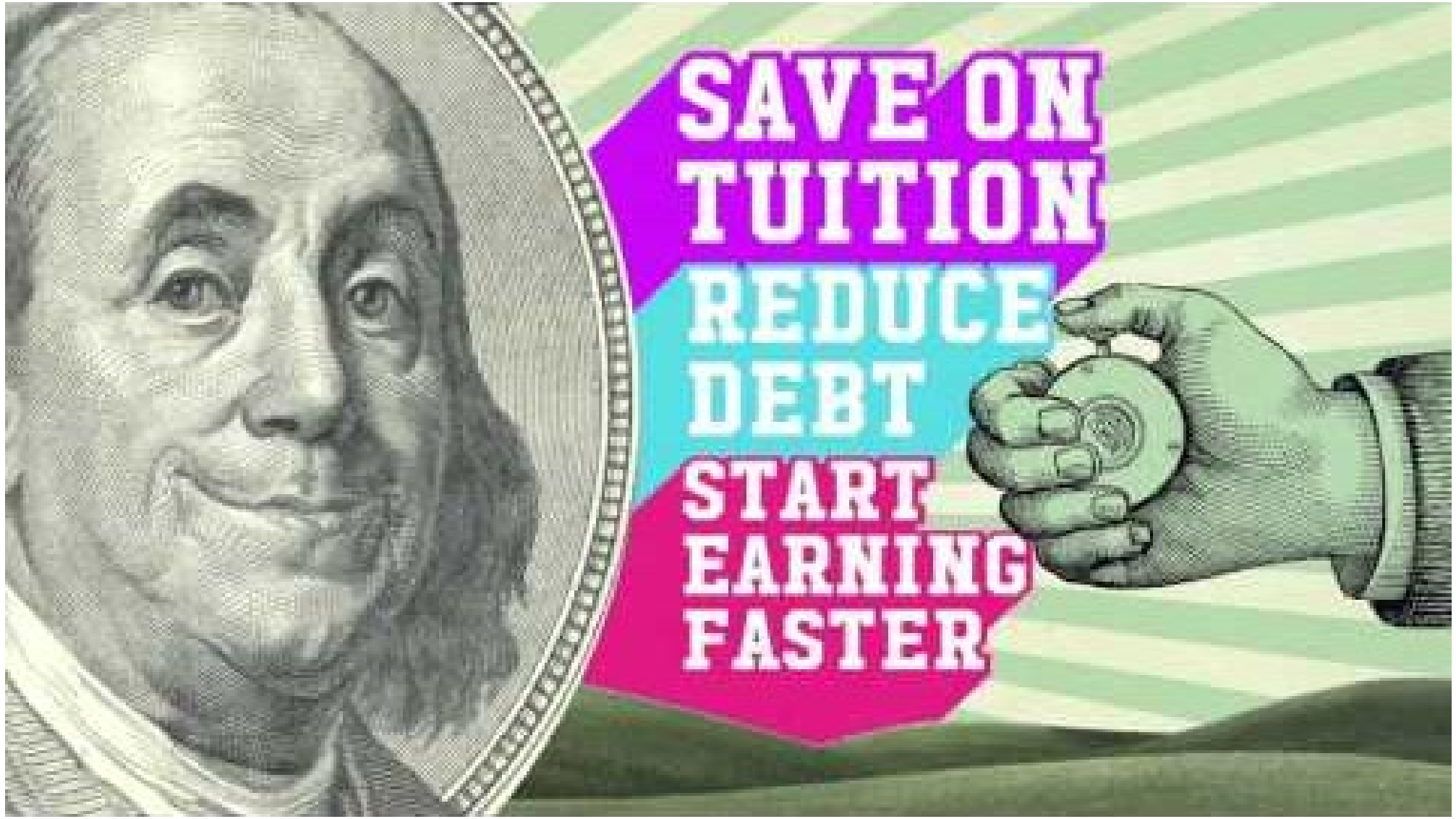
What about transfer students? Or students on probation?

CORE COMPONENTS

- Marketing during Recruitment and Admissions
- Messaging at Orientation
- Advisor/Faculty-Advisor Training
- Publicizing material for strategy
- Presentations for different audiences (students and parents)
- Communication Plan for campus stakeholders

BEST PRACTICES

- Academic Maps that show a term-by-term listing of courses required for on-time graduation.
- Block predictive scheduling to keep required courses organized in a morning, afternoon, or evening block.
- Incorporate 15 to Finish into new student orientation presentations for students and parents.
- Implement a comprehensive campus and state informational marketing campaign to increase awareness.


SAVE ON TUITION
REDUCE DEBT
START EARNING FASTER

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

- Degree capped at 60 or 120 credit hours
- Banded tuition
- Financial Aid packages based on 15 credit hours
- Course availability so that students can register for the necessary 15 hours every term
- Rewards for students: priority registration, parking, housing, other campus perks

https://completecollege.org/article/15tofinish-materials-now-available/

RACK UP

15

#15TOFINISH

QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?