COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

Writing SMART: Action Items Based on Metrics

Objectives

- Learn about the PDP and how it can be utilized as a source for building SMART goals
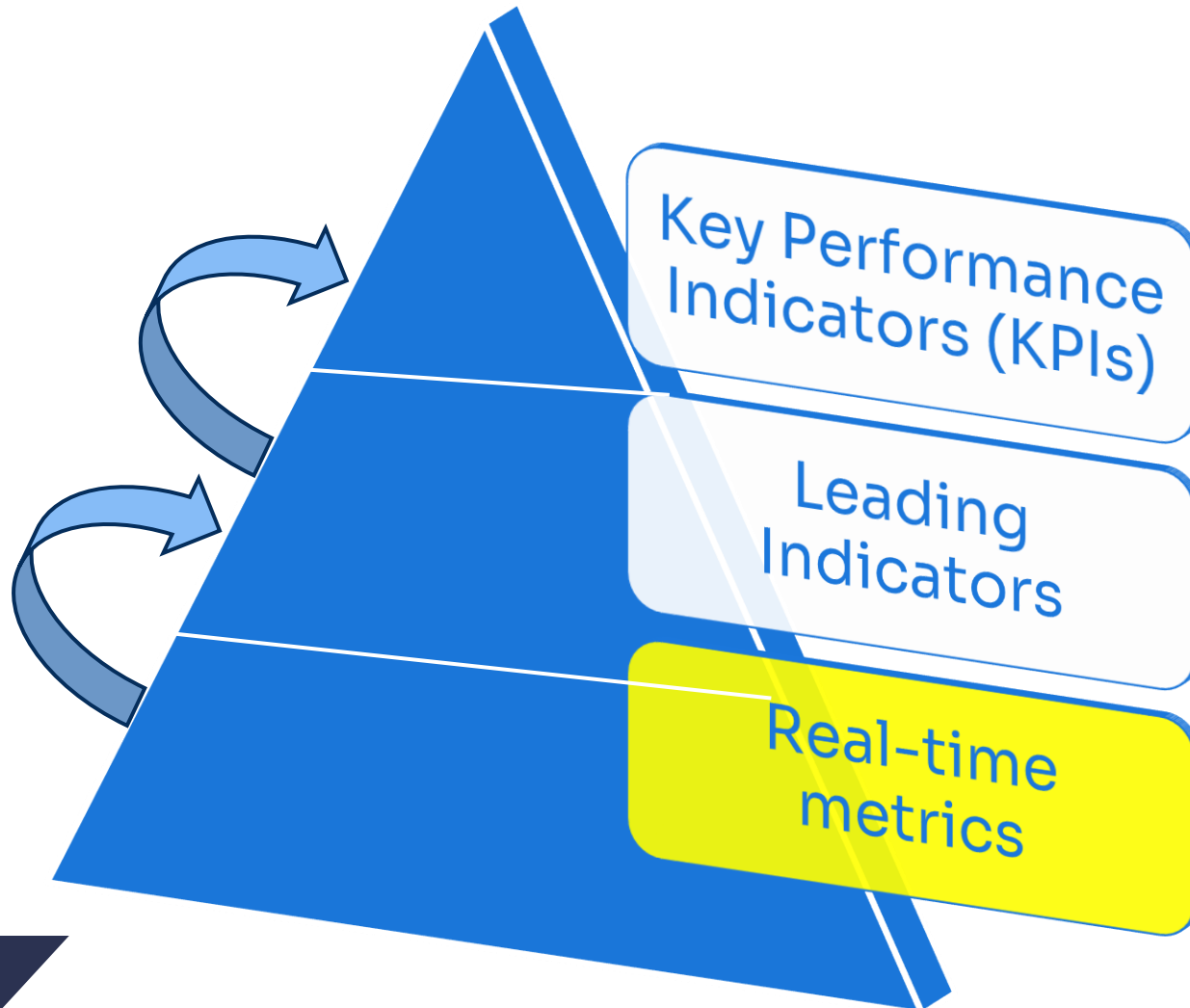- Build a SMART goal for implementation using a KPI

Measure What Matters

Structuring Data:
KPIs, Leading Indicators, and Real-Time Metrics

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- KPI-level: Changes over years.
- Potentially includes annual review cycle

Leading Indicators

- Changes every semester
- Informs changes in approach, operations, project selection

Real-time metrics

- Changes every day, week, bi-weekly
- Subject to frequent, action-oriented conversations

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4

Choose the best KPI's to align with your mission, needs, and capacity

- Metrics that align with your college's strategic plan

- Metrics derived from best practice

- Metrics about your college you already make public

Institution Specific
Align With Strategic Plan

AREA OF EMPHASIS

AREA OF EMPHASIS

START HERE

Best Practices
Common Completion Metrics

AREA OF EMPHASIS

Already Reporting
State Reports
Accreditors
U.S. Dept. of Education
Other

Example: KPIs Brainstorm

Brainstorm KPIs	6 to 10 KPIs
Identify KPIs	
Graduation Rates	Graduation Rates
Retention Rates	Retention
Median Earnings After Graduation	Transfer
Transfer Rates	Median Earnings After Graduation
Employment Rate in Field	Enrollment
Student Engagement	Student Engagement
Enrollment	KPI 7
Number of Degrees Awarded	KPI 8
Classroom Engagement	KPI 9
Instructional Cost	KPI 10
Course Completion Rates	
Student Outcomes	
Acceptance Rates	
Advising	

Goal Setting Requires Evidence

ESTABLISHES REALITY
VS. PERCEPTION
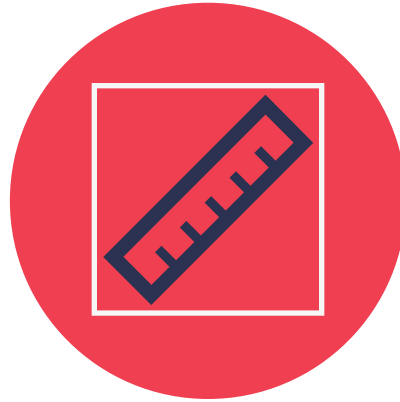
ENABLES MEANINGFUL
MEASUREMENT

PREVENTS ARBITRARY
GOAL SETTING

PDP 101: Connecting to What Matters

PDP Aligns with IHEP Student Success Metrics

Analyze **past** performance

Influence **future** performance

Lagging Indicators

Leading Indicators

Outcomes over time:
- Persistence/retention
- Transfers
- Outcomes
- Credentials conferred and time to credential
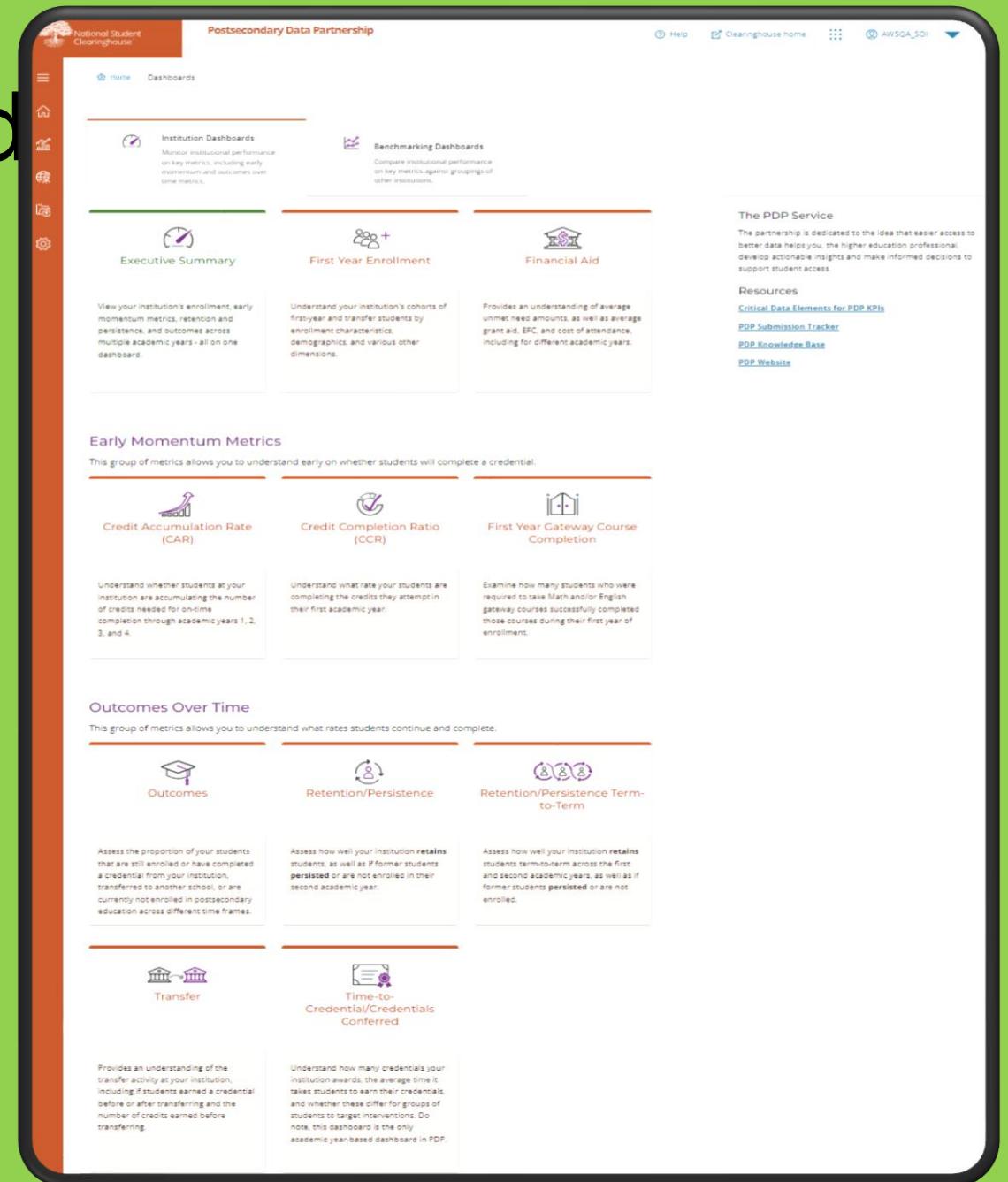
Early momentum indicators:
- Credit accumulation rate
- Credit completion ratio
- Gateway course completion
- Term to Term retention

Interactive Dashboard

- Overview:
  - Executive Summary
  - Enrollment
  - Financial Aid **(optional)**

- Early momentum indicators:
  - Credit accumulation rate
  - Credit completion ratio
  - Gateway course completion
  - Term to Term

- Outcomes over time:
  - Persistence/retention
  - Transfers
  - Outcome measures
  - Credentials conferred and time to credential

Interactive Dashboards

Filters & Dimensions:

- Cohort
- Cohort Term
- Credential Type Sought
- Age
- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Enrollment Type
- Attendance
- Dual/summer Enrollment
- Pell
- First Generation
- GPA
- College Prepared Math and English
- Program of Study (by 2 digit CIP Code)

Chart Settings ✕

Dimension: Dimension Breakdown
               Overall ⌄

Filters

Demographic Characteristics   **Other Characteristics**

Age Group *   Cohort *   GPA Range *
All (+4 others) ⌄   All (+7 others) ⌄   All (+10 others) ⌄

Race/Ethnicity *   Cohort Term *   Past Dual/Summer Enrollment *
All (+9 others) ⌄   All (+4 others) ⌄   All (+4 others) ⌄

Gender *   Credential Type Sought *   Pell Grant Recipient *
All (+5 others) ⌄   All (+6 others) ⌄   All (+3 others) ⌄

First Generation *   Enrollment Type *   ☑ All
All (+3 others) ⌄   All (+2 others) ⌄   ☑ No

                               Attendance *   ☑ Unknown
                               All (+3 others) ⌄   ☑ Yes

                               Program of Study *
                               All (+37 others) ⌄

⊘ Apply Settings   Cancel Changes   Clear All

Disaggregate and dig into the data

The Enrollment Dashboard

Cohort Enrollment by Enrollment Type
Color = Enrollment Type, Size = Student Count

First-Time | Transfer-In

Year	First-Time	Transfer-In
2016-17	24,943	11,884
2017-18	36,627	17,696
2018-19	46,550	22,993
2019-20	46,653	23,173
2020-21	40,876	19,842
2021-22	42,386	19,172
2022-23	42,917	17,741
2023-24	40,691	16,218

Dashboard Settings | Enrollment Type | (All)

2023-24 Cohort Total Enrollment
56,909

2023-24 Cohort First Time
40,691

2023-24 Cohort Transfer In
16,218

Total Enrollment by *Gender*

Female | Male

- The dashboard calculations include only undergraduate students who enrolled for the first time at your institution either by transferring in or as their first time enrolling in college.

- The First-Year Enrollment dashboard shows 12-month enrollment counts and key characteristics by cohort year for students enrolling at your institution for the first time.

12

The Finacial Aid Dashboard

- Review the percentage of students within a certain range(s) of unmet need changed from one cohort to the next for the selected academic year.

- This allows you to see whether students moved between unmet need ranges across cohorts and, for a single cohort, what percentage of students fell within certain ranges of unmet need.

Share of Students with Unmet Need in the 1st Academic Year
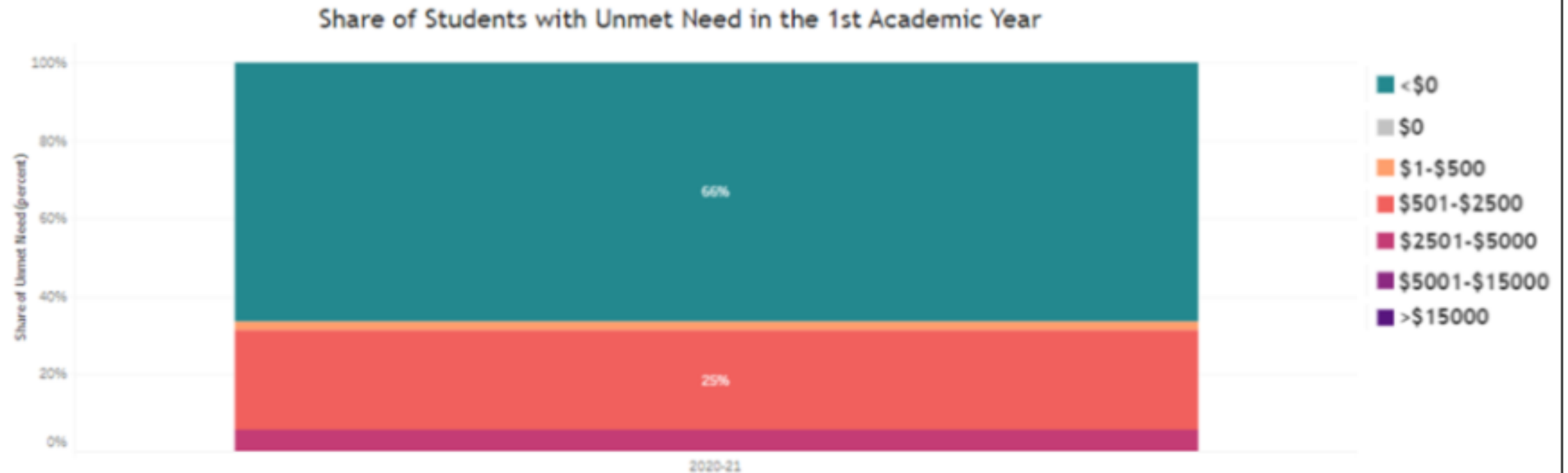
The Credit Accumulation Rate Dashboard

- Reports how successful students are at completing enough credits for satisfactory progress.

- Helps clarify which students are (or are not) gaining academic momentum early to identify which students need support.

Chart Settings ×

Dimension: Dimension Breakdown — GPA Range

Filters

Demographic Characteristics

Age Group* — All (+4 others)
Race/Ethnicity* — All (+9 others)
Gender* — All (+5 others)
First Generation* — All (+3 others)

Other Characteristics

Cohort* — All (+8 others)
Cohort Term* — All (+4 others)
Credential Type Sought* — All (+6 others)
Enrollment Type* — All (+2 others)
Attendance* — All (+2 others)
Program of Study* — All (+43 others)

GPA Range* — 2.0 to 2.5 (+1 other)
Past Dual/Summer Enrollment* — All (+4 others)
Pell Grant Recipient* — All (+3 others)
Math Prep* — All (+3 others)
English Prep* — All (+3 others)

✓ Apply Settings   Cancel Changes   Clear All

CAR by *GPA Range*

■ 2.0 to 2.5
■ 3.5 to 4.0

60.0%
40.0%
20.0%
0.0%

2017-18   2018-19   2019-20   2020-21   2021-22   2022-23

The Credit Completion Ratio Dashboard

- Shows student success at completing the credits they attempt in their first year.
- First-year completion ratios can help you identify student populations that need early intervention.

Credit Completion Ratio by *Cohort*
bar = CCR, line = Avg. Credits Earned

Cohort	CCR	Avg. Credits Earned
2016-17	77.1%	16.0
2017-18	76.9%	16.1
2018-19	77.4%	17.6
2019-20	77.4%	17.6
2020-21	75.9%	17.3
2021-22	74.4%	16.6
2022-23	73.8%	16.3
2023-24	75.2%	14.4

The Gateway Dashboard

- This dashboard can help you determine, assess, and address any gaps in gateway course completion, a critical leading indicator of on-time credential completion.

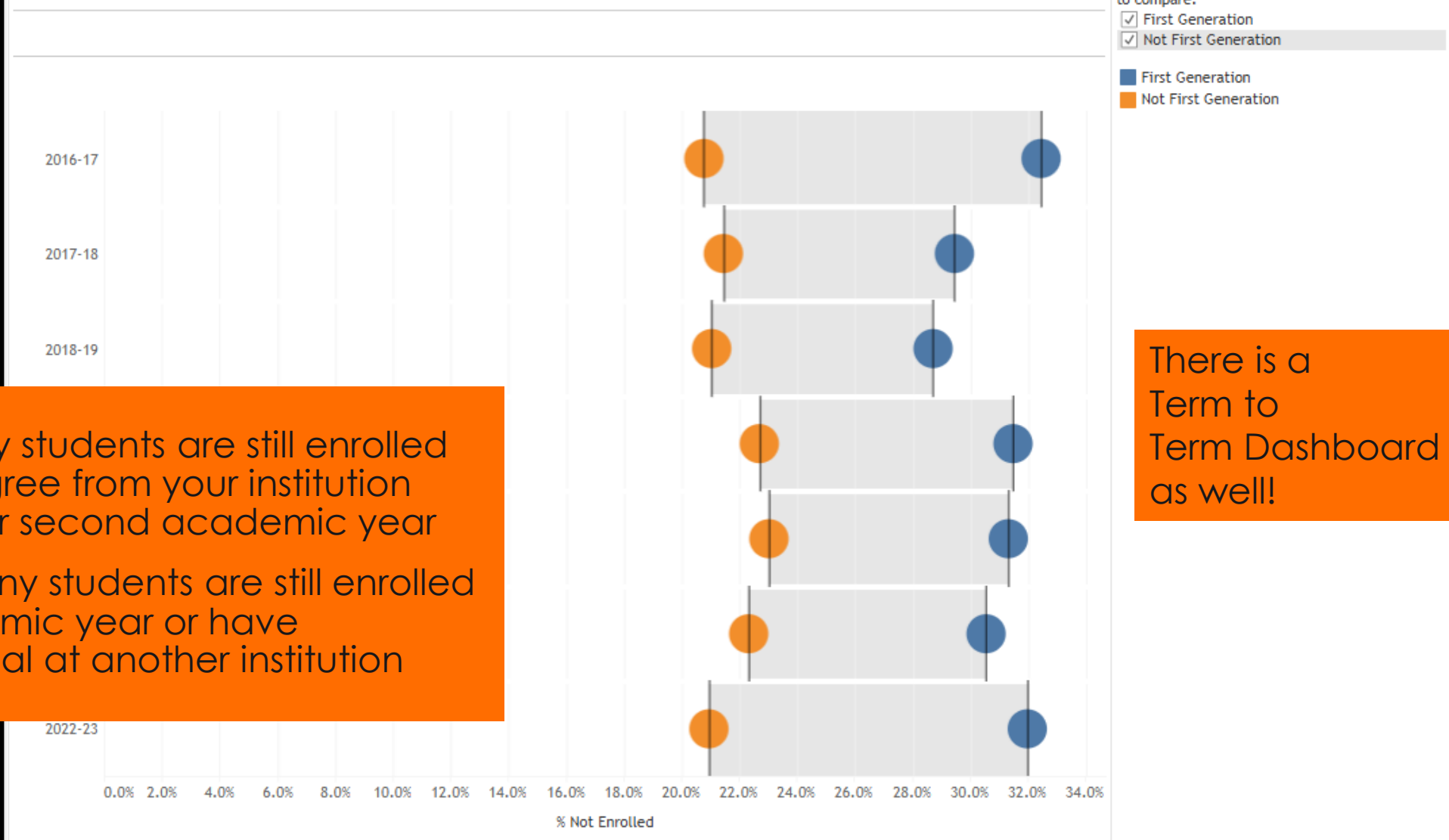- Views by completed English, Math, or both English and Math.
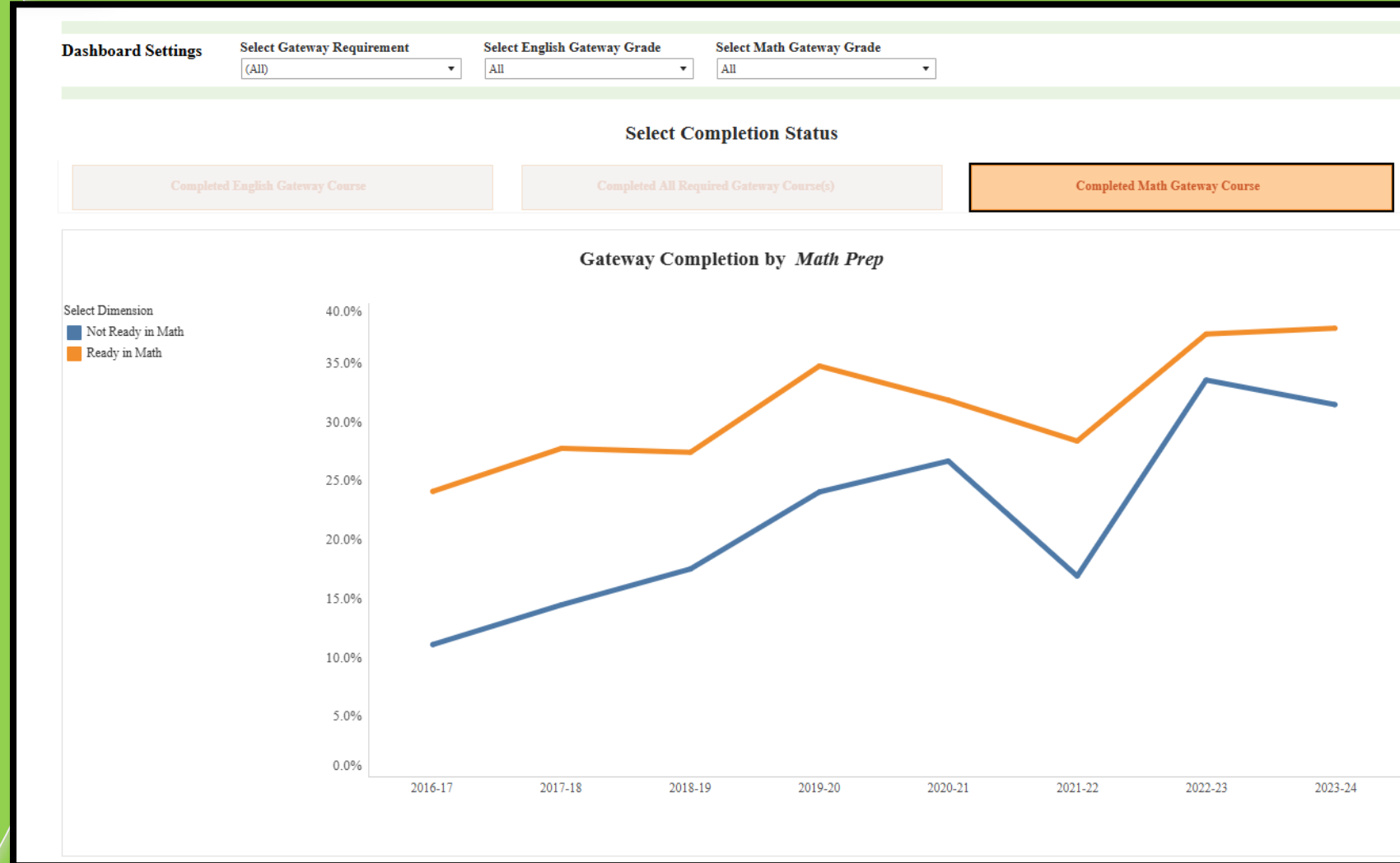
The Retention & Persistence Dashboard

How have retention/persistence gaps between student subgroups changed from cohort to cohort?

Subgroup Gap Analysis by *First Generation*

Select two values to compare:
- ☑ First Generation
- ☑ Not First Generation

■ First Generation
■ Not First Generation

- Retention = How many students are still enrolled or have earned a degree from your institution before the end of their second academic year
- Persistence = How many students are still enrolled in their second academic year or have completed a credential at another institution
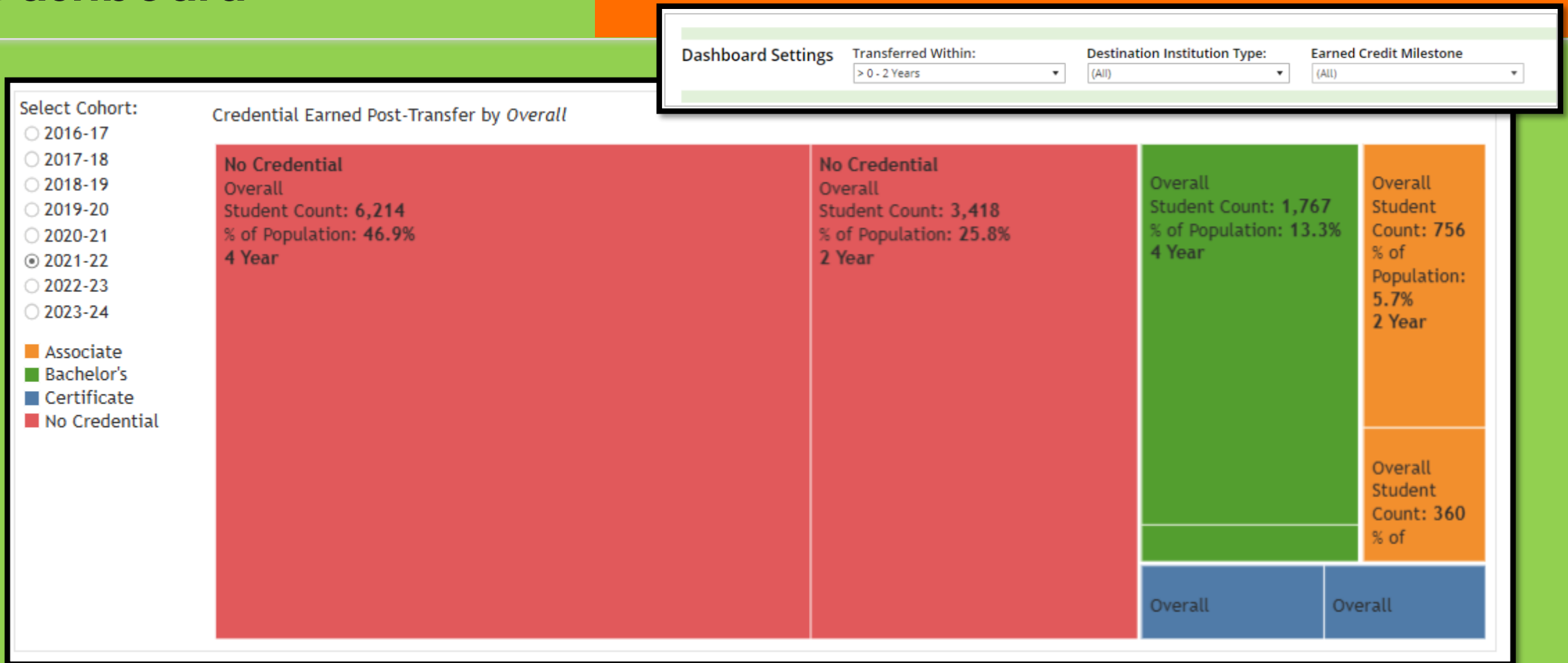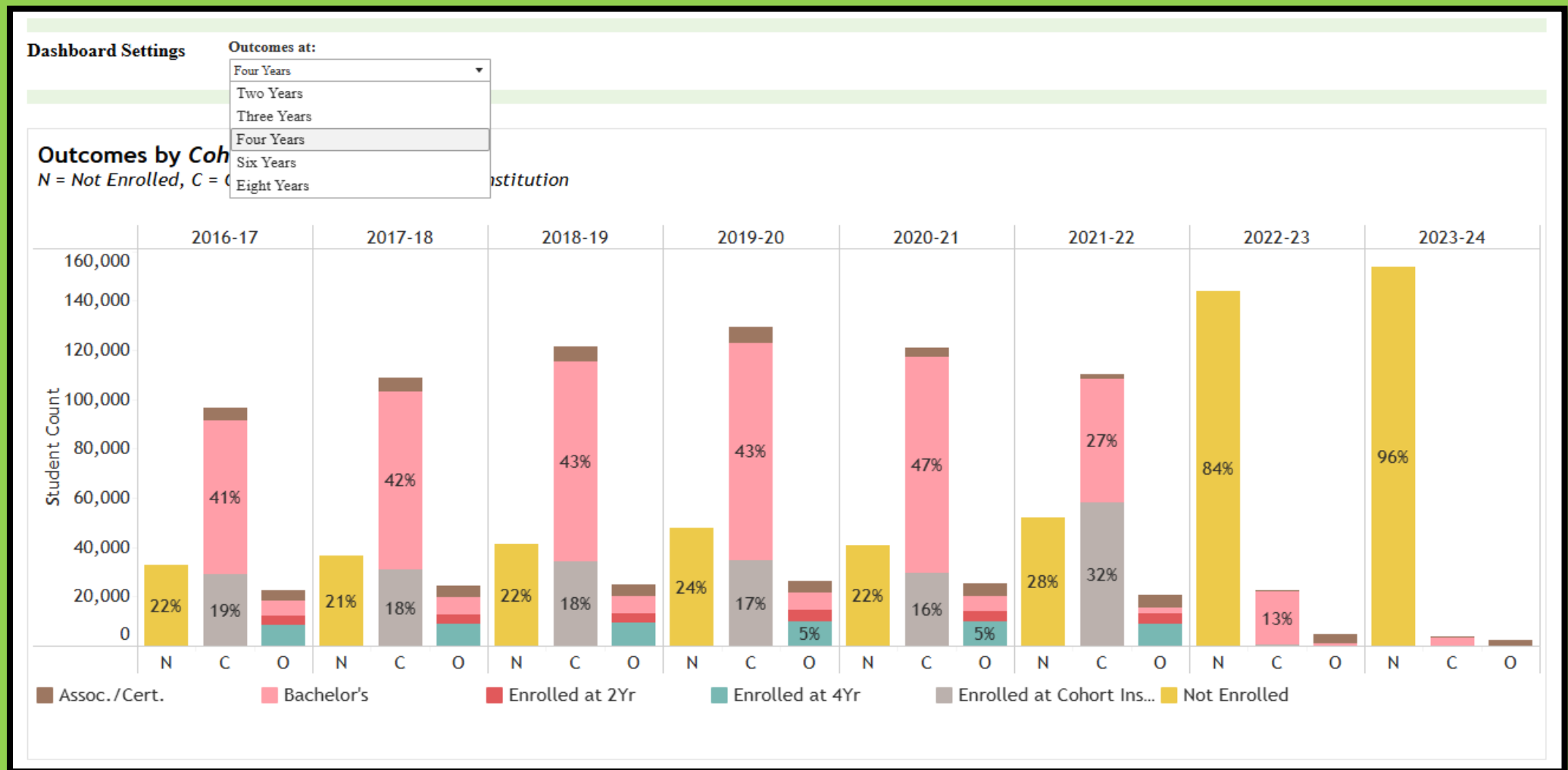
There is a Term to Term Dashboard as well!

17

The Transfers Dashboard

The dashboard includes information on transfer students who earned a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree or did not earn a credential before or after transfer. It also displays your institution's overall transfer rate.

The Outcomes Dashboard

- The dashboard displays outcomes for up to eight cohorts of students of multiple credential types within timeframes selected.
- This includes credentials a student received from either your institution or another institution.

19

Outcomes: Six Year Outcomes ⌄

↺ Reset Dashboard

⌄ **Definitions and Visualizations Guide**

⌄ **Data Sources** **Institution(s):** 22 selected. **Institution Type:** Two Year **Organizational Grouping:** Student Insights Dashboard Institutions ✎ Edit
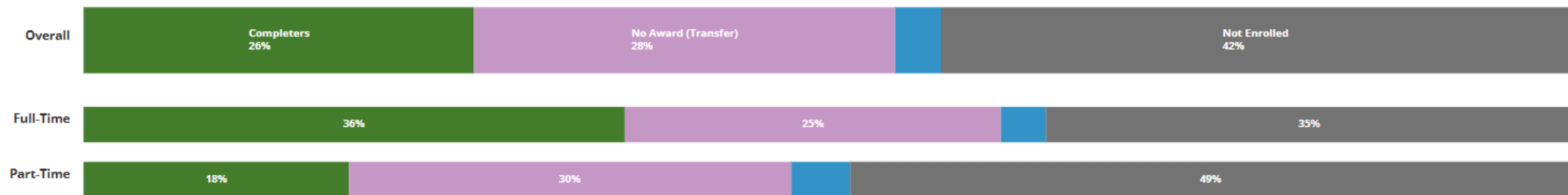
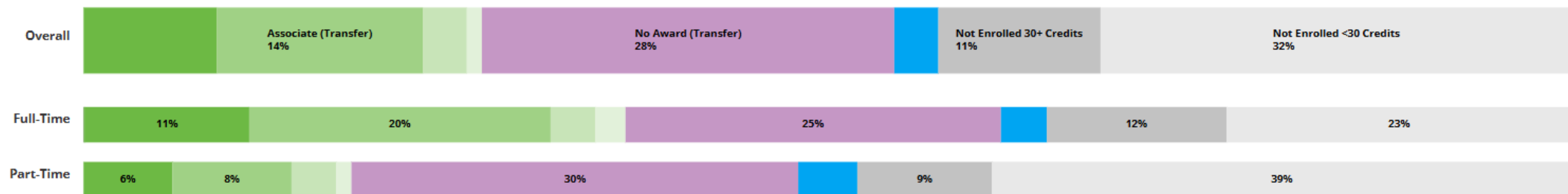⌄ **Chart Settings**

Dimension: Attendance ✎ Edit

Filters: 1 applied
Attendance: Full-Time,Part-Time; **Cohort:** 2018-19;

Grouped Six Year Outcomes by Attendance for Cohort Year 2018-19

| Overall | Completers 26% | No Award (Transfer) 28% | | Not Enrolled 42% |

| Full-Time | 36% | 25% | | 35% |

| Part-Time | 18% | 30% | | 49% |

Six Year Outcomes by Attendance for Cohort Year 2018-19

| Overall | | Associate (Transfer) 14% | | | No Award (Transfer) 28% | | Not Enrolled 30+ Credits 11% | Not Enrolled <30 Credits 32% |

| Full-Time | 11% | 20% | | | 25% | | 12% | 23% |

| Part-Time | 6% | 8% | | | 30% | | 9% | 39% |

20

The Time to Credential Dashboard

- This dashboard displays the full range of undergraduate credential levels offered by your institution across the six most recent academic years.

- This dashboard is based on the academic year in which each credential was awarded, unlike the other dashboards, which are cohort based.

Dashboard Settings

Select Chart:
Average Time to Credential ▾

Average Time To Credential by *Year*

Legend: ■ Certificates ■ Associate Degree ■ Bachelor's Degree

Associate Degree: 4.2 yrs, 4.3 yrs, 4.0 yrs, 4.0 yrs, 4.1 yrs, 3.9 yrs, 3.8 yrs

Certificates: 3.7 yrs, 3.7 yrs, 3.5 yrs, 3.4 yrs, 3.4 yrs, 3.3 yrs, 3.2 yrs, 2.8 yrs

Bachelor's Degree: 3.5 yrs, 3.5 yrs, 3.9 yrs, 4.1 yrs, 4.1 yrs, 4.1 yrs, 4.2 yrs, 4.1 yrs

Y-axis (Average Time To Credential): 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5

21

Interactive Dashboards

Filters & Dimensions:

- Cohort
- Cohort Term
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- Age
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- Enrollment Type
- Attendance
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- First Generation
- GPA
- College Prepared Math and English
- Program of Study (by 2 digit CIP Code)

Chart Settings

Dimension:

Dimension Breakdown
Overall

Filters

Demographic Characteristics

Age Group *
All (+4 others)

Race/Ethnicity *
All (+9 others)

Gender *
All (+5 others)

First Generation *
All (+3 others)

Other Characteristics

Cohort *
All (+7 others)

Cohort Term *
All (+4 others)

Credential Type Sought *
All (+6 others)

Enrollment Type *
All (+2 others)

Attendance *
All (+3 others)

Program of Study *
All (+37 others)

GPA Range *
All (+10 others)

Past Dual/Summer Enrollment *
All (+4 others)

Pell Grant Recipient *
All (+3 others)

- ☑ All
- ☑ No
- ☑ Unknown
- ☑ Yes

Apply Settings   Cancel Changes   Clear All

Disaggregate and dig into the data

SMART Goal Framework

- **Specific**: What exactly are you trying to improve?
- **Measurable**: What data will show change?
- **Attainable**: How will this goal be achieved given current capacity and context?
- **Relevant**: How is the goal aligned with student success?
- **Timely**: What is the timeframe?

S   **M**   **A**   **R**   **T**

Specific   Measurable   Attainable   Relevant   Timely

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SMART Goal Worksheet

Specific: What exactly are you trying to improve?

Finding:
Only 45% of first-time Pell students complete gateway math in their first year

Specific:
Focus on gateway math, and first-time Pell students

✅ **Get specific, figure out the who's, and the what's:**
- Identify your student population of focus, and the metric you are wanting to improve

Measurable: What data will show change?

✅ **Good Measurable Indicators from PDP:**
- % of students completing 15+ credits in year one
- Retention rate from fall to fall
- Gateway course (math/English) completion in year one
- Credit accumulation by term

❌ **Avoid vague outcomes like:**
- "Improve student success"
- "Make advising better"

✅ **Instead say:**
- "Increase gateway math completion from 45% to 48% for first-time Pell students"

Attainable: Is the goal attainable & realistic?

Ask: Can this goal reasonably be achieved with our resources?

✅ **Tips to assess attainability:**
- Review past PDP trends (is this a 5% jump or 25%?)
- Consider current capacity (staffing, budget, programs)
- Compare to similar institutions if possible

Example:
If gateway math completion has never surpassed 50%, a jump to 90% in one year is **not realistic**.
But increasing from 45% to 60% over two years **with supports** could be.

Relevant & Timely: Is the Goal Relevant & Time-Bound?

Ask:
- Is this tied to a key student success or equity priority?
- Have we defined when the goal will be met?

✅ **Relevant Goals:**
- Address equity gaps (e.g., retention for Pell students)
- Focus on progression milestones (gateway completion, credit accumulation)

✅ **Time-Bound Examples:**
- "…by Fall 2026"
- "…within the next three academic years"
- "…by the end of the 2025–26 academic year"

❌ **Avoid:**
- "As soon as possible"
- "Eventually"
- "Ongoing"

# Crafting a SMART Goal Using PDP Data

Finding:
Only 45% of first-time Pell students complete gateway math in their first year

SMART Goal Example:
Increase gateway math completion for first-time Pell students from 45% to 48% by Fall 2027 through expanded corequisite support and targeted advising interventions.

How can you leverage the PDP?

- If you had access to your PDP data right now, which student outcome would you look up first? Why?
- What is one outcome on your campus that you think could be realistically improved with a focused initiative and the right resources?
- Imagine you're writing a goal to be accomplished by Fall 2026. What change would be most meaningful for your department or team to achieve by then?
- What's one challenge your students face where a clear, time-bound improvement goal could help guide action and accountability?
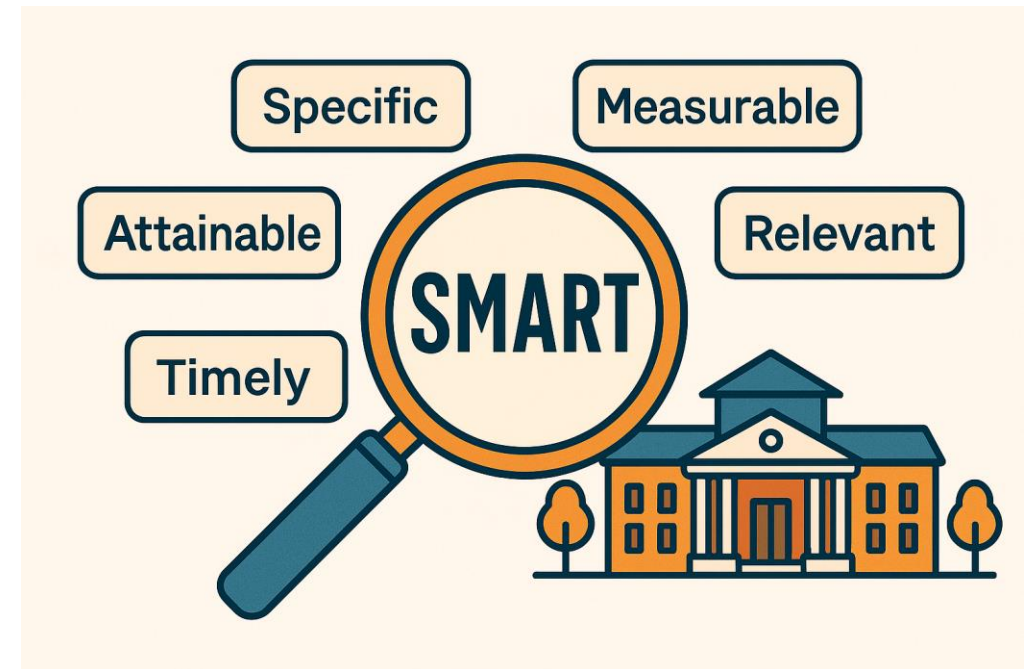
Meow Wolf

- Shuttle pick up 5:45 at the hotel lobby. We will have one shuttle running
- It is about a 20-minute walk
- Don't forget your wristband and drink tickets. The wristband is mandatory for entrance
- Dinner will be provided
- Dress is casual, we encourage comfortable shoes for walking around the exhibit

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