

## Overview

The University of Mississippi pursues its mission by providing the “best, accessible undergraduate education in the state of Mississippi” (“UM Statement of Institutional Philosophy”, 2018) which includes a commitment to student learning and achievement. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) also recognizes that student learning and student success are paramount to member institutions.

## Demonstrating Student Achievement

The *2018 Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement* include standards specifically focused on student achievement. Principle 8.1 is a core requirement and states: “The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution’s mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success. (Student achievement) [CR]” (SACSCOC, 2017).

To demonstrate compliance with this standard the University of Mississippi must “demonstrate its success with respect to student achievement and indicate the *criteria* and *thresholds* of acceptability used to determine that success” (SACSCOC, 2018)

- The *criteria* are the items to be measured (and published); the *thresholds of acceptability* are the minimal expectations set by the institution to define its own acceptable level of achievement – a minimum target.
- The institution is responsible for offering a justification for both the criteria it utilizes and the thresholds of acceptability it sets. The items measured and the thresholds of acceptability should be consistent with the institution’s mission and the students it serves. (SACSCOC, 2018)

## Proposal

The Strategic Planning Council identifies *the six-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time students* as a criterion of student achievement for the University of Mississippi, and it is published on the UM website: <https://irep.olemiss.edu/institutional-research/student-success/>

The threshold of acceptability (minimum expectation) for the six-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time students is 59%. The goal for graduation of first-time, full-time students within six years is to meet or exceed the average of peer institutions. Additionally, the Strategic Planning Council, with support from institutional leaders, expects continuous improvement in graduation rates and aspires to achieve a six-year graduation rate that exceeds the average of peer institutions and approaches the average of the SEC public institutions and SUNG institutions.

## Rationale

Examination of institutional and peer institution data support the establishment of the graduation threshold of acceptability, goal, and aspirational achievements. Figure 1 depicts UM graduation rate trends and Table 1 and Figure 1 depict graduation rates of comparison groups. UM admissions requirements allow for access to higher education and are the same as all other IHL institutions; however, UM eclipses the IHL average graduation rate. UM graduation rates are below those of its selected and convenience comparison groups, whose institutions have more selective admissions requirements.

Figure 1. UM Overall Graduation Rate Trends by Cohort

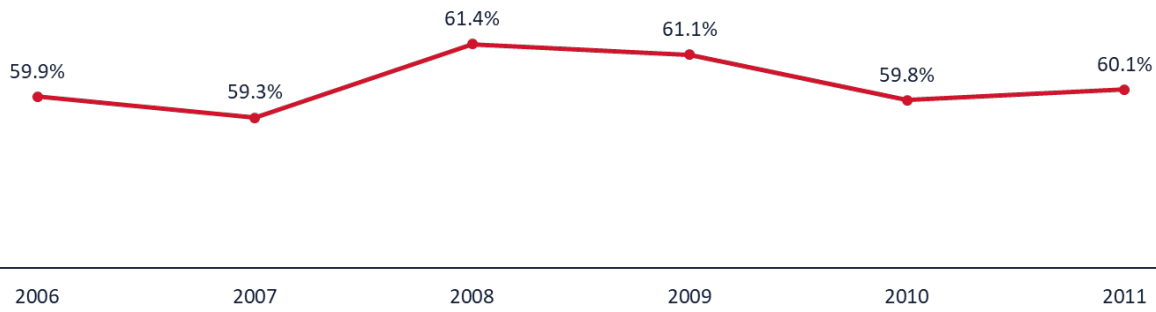
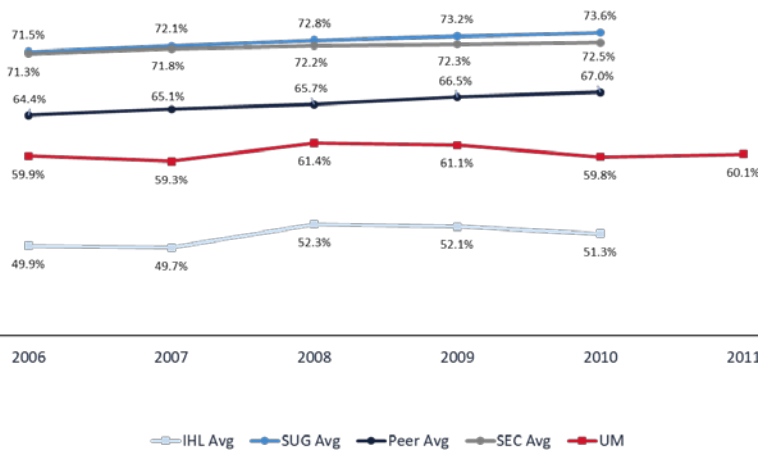


Table 1. UM and Comparison Institution Graduation Rates by Cohort

	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010
UM	59.9%	59.3%	61.4%	61.1%	59.8%
IHL Average	49.9%	49.7%	52.3%	52.1%	51.3%
Peer* Average	64.4%	65.1%	65.7%	66.5%	67.0%
SEC Public Average	71.3%	71.8%	72.2%	72.3%	72.5%
SUG Average	71.5%	72.1%	72.8%	73.2%	73.6%

\*Peer Institutions include the 20 UM prospective peer institutions identified by Faculty Excellence Task Force and approved for use in AY 2018 and AY 2019. Prospective Peer Institutions include Auburn University, Clemson University, Colorado State University, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, Ohio University, Oregon State University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Arkansas, University of California-Irvine, University of Cincinnati, University of Kansas, University of New Mexico, University of Oklahoma, University of Oregon, University of South Carolina, Virginia Commonwealth University, West Virginia University.

Figure 2. UM and Comparison Institution Graduation Rates by Cohort



## References

University of Mississippi. Statement of Institutional Philosophy. (2018) Retrieved from <http://olemiss.edu/aboutum/mission.html>

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. (2017). *2018 Principles of accreditation: Foundation for quality enhancement*. Author. Decatur, GA. Retrieved from: <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

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