

Student Achievement: Retention Rate of First-time, Full-time Students

Criteria, Thresholds of Acceptability, Goals

Retention Advisory Board

January 15, 2025

Demonstrating Student Achievement

The Retention Advisory Board identifies *retention of first-time, full-time students* as a criterion of student achievement for the University of Mississippi and discusses and approves the threshold of acceptability and retention goals annually.

Threshold of Acceptability

The Retention Advisory Board set the threshold of acceptability (minimum expectation) for retention of first-time, full-time students at 80%. This threshold is based on a review of the UM overall retention rates (see Figure 1) and the focused and increased institutional commitment to improve retention rates that began in 2007.

First Time Full Time Retention to Second Year: UM with threshold

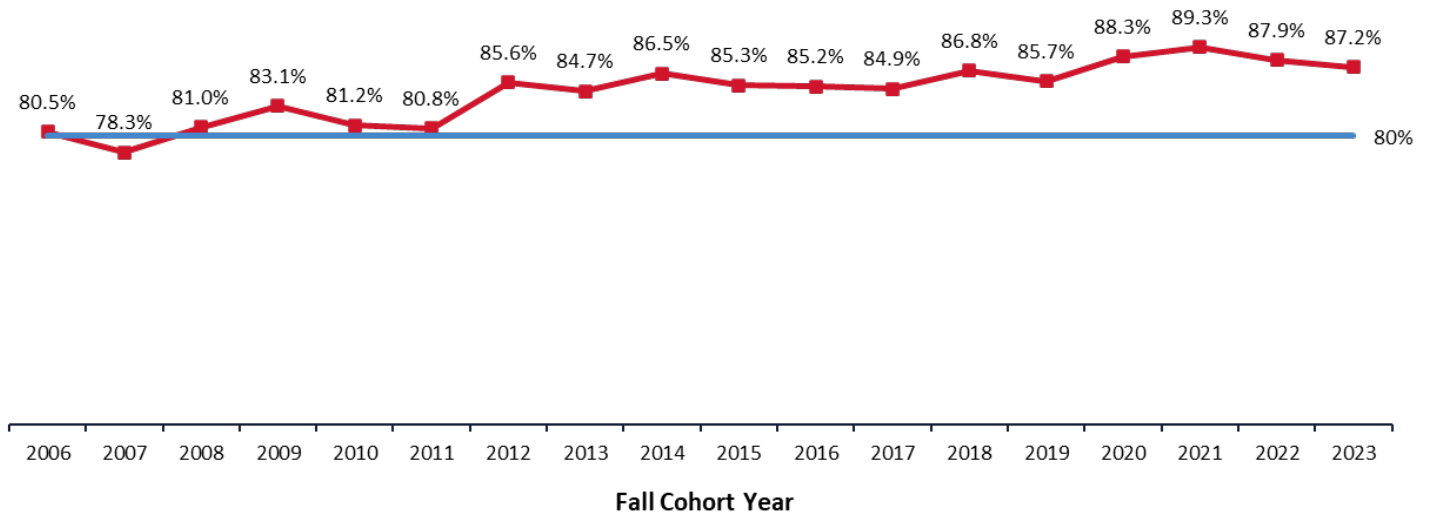


Figure 1. UM Overall Retention Rate Trends

Comparison to IHL & Peer Institutions

The goal for retention of first-time, full-time students is to exceed the average of Mississippi universities that comprise the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) and to exceed the average of peer institutions (see Table 1 and Figure 2). Comparative IPEDS data available through Fall 2022 cohort.

Table 1. UM and Comparison Institution (IHL & Peer) Retention Rates

	Fall 2016 Cohort	Fall 2017 Cohort	Fall 2018 Cohort	Fall 2019 Cohort	Fall 2020 Cohort	Fall 2021 Cohort	Fall 2022 Cohort
UM	85.2%	84.9%	86.8%	85.7%	88.3%	89.3%	87.9%
IHL Retention Average	76.7%	76.2%	79.2%	80.9%	80.1%	80.9%	80.9%
Peer* Retention Average	85.3%	85.1%	86.0%	86.8%	86.2%	85.7%	86.5%

*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: 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.

First Time Full Time Retention to Second Year: UM with IHL and Peers

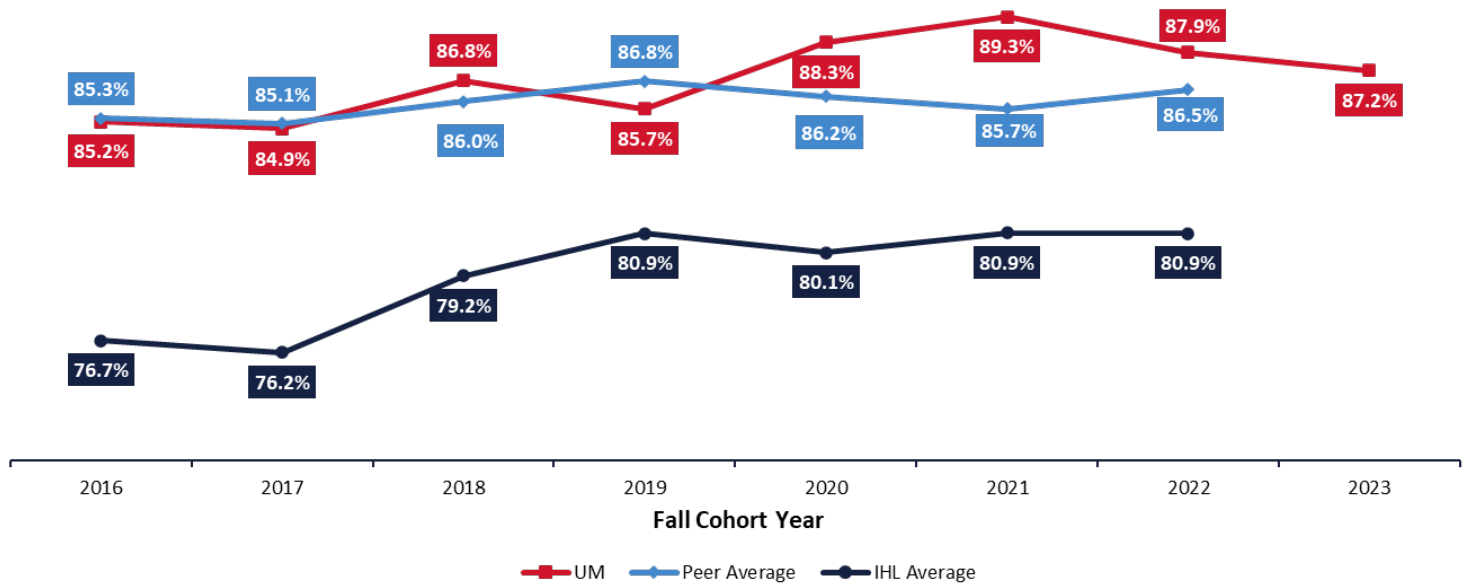


Figure 2. UM Overall Retention Rate Trends compared to IHL and Peer Institutions.

Comparison to SEC & SUG Institutions

Additionally, the Retention Advisory Board, with support from institutional leaders, expects continuous improvement in retention and aspires to achieve a retention rate comparable to the Southeastern Conference (SEC) public institutions and Southern University Group (SUG) institutions.

Table 1. UM and Comparison Institution (SEC & SUG) Retention Rates

	Fall 2016 Cohort	Fall 2017 Cohort	Fall 2018 Cohort	Fall 2019 Cohort	Fall 2020 Cohort	Fall 2021 Cohort	Fall 2022 Cohort
UM	85.2%	84.9%	86.8%	85.7%	88.3%	89.3%	87.9%
SEC** Public Average	88.0%	88.6%	89.0%	89.9%	89.4%	89.5%	90.1%
SUG*** Average	89.1%	89.2%	89.5%	89.9%	89.4%	89.3%	89.8%

**SEC Public Institutions include: Auburn University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, Texas A&M University, University of Alabama, University of Arkansas, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of Missouri, University of South Carolina, University of Tennessee, University of Oklahoma and University of Texas will be included beginning with the Fall 2025 cohort.

*** SUG Institutions include: Arizona State University, Auburn University, Clemson University, Florida State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, North Carolina State University, Oklahoma State University, Texas A & M University, Texas Tech University, University of Alabama, University of Tennessee, University of Texas, University of Alabama, University of Arkansas, University of Delaware, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Houston, University of Kentucky, University of Maryland, University of North Carolina, University of Oklahoma, University of South Carolina, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, West Virginia University

First Time Full Time Retention to Second Year: UM with SEC and SUG

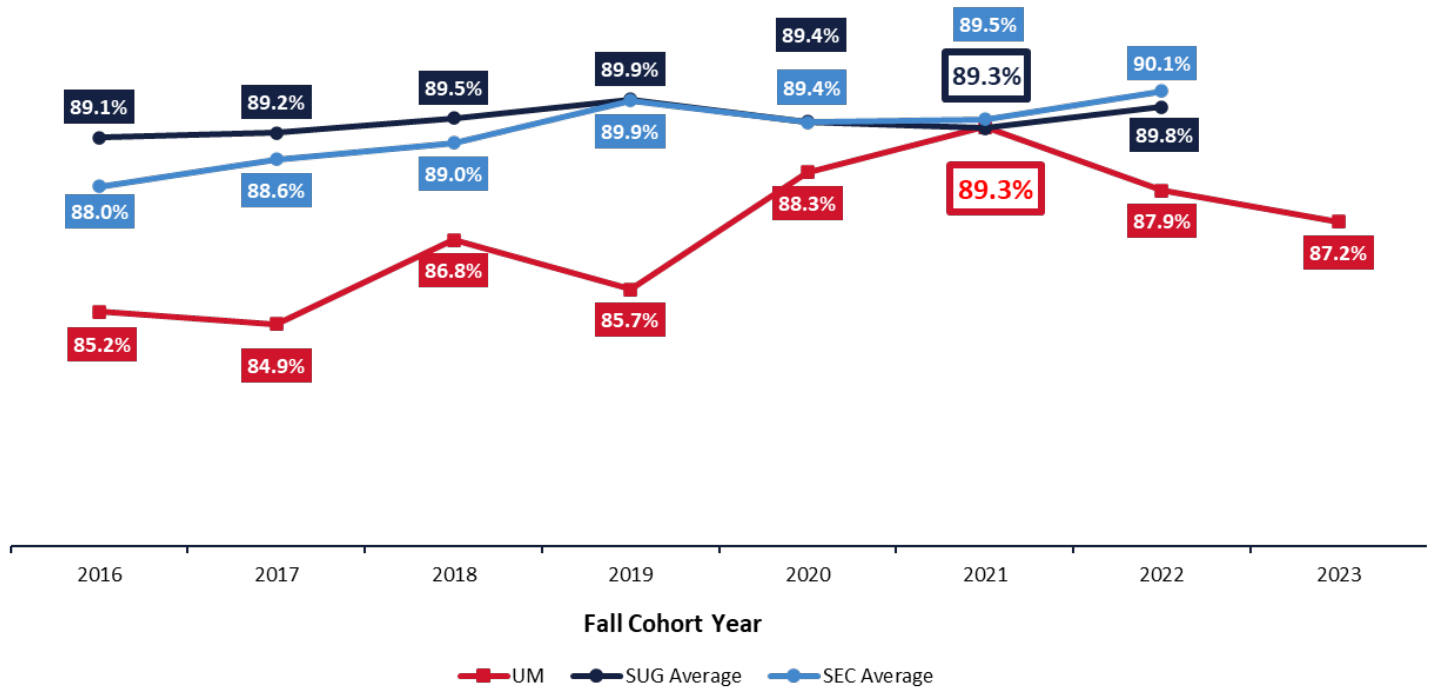


Figure 2. UM Overall Retention Rate Trends compared to SEC and SUG Institutions.

Summary

The University of Mississippi has met the threshold for the retention of first-time, full-time students every year since the institutional commitment to improve retention rates began in 2007. Similarly, UM leads the state in retention rates as evidenced by the IHL peer comparison and has exceeded the retention rates of its peer institutions since 2020. With a commitment to reaching its aspirational goals, in fall 2022 (fall 2021 cohort) UM tied the retention rate of the Southern University Group (SUG) and was within .1% of the Southeastern Conference (SEC) public institution retention rate.