

The following thresholds, goals, and targets were developed during Summer 2022. Goals were established which could be successfully evaluated in January 2028, with targets established with those goals in mind. Since these metrics are finalized late in the fall semester, annual review and adjustment of these thresholds, targets, and goals will occur in January each year.

### One-Year Retention Rate for all first-time full-time degree-seeking students (Established June 8, 2022)

- Minimum Threshold of Acceptability: 60.0%
  - Rationale: Over the last ten years, Dalton State's lowest retention rate was 63.9%, experienced for the Fall 2020 cohort, as part of a downward trend in recent years. While we are working to reverse this recent trend, we recognize that it could still go lower before we successfully do so. We also strive to stay above the average retention rate for institutions in the University System of Georgia's State College sector, the sector to which we belong. The five-year average of the retention rates for the sector is slightly less than 59% so a minimum threshold of 60.0% reflects our desire to stay above the recent sector average. We also focus on all first-time full-time degree-seeking students together rather than focusing on associates-seeking and bachelors-seeking students separately since the rates for the two degree levels are often comparable and students frequently change majors between the degree levels. Based on the last five years, the associates-seeking cohort has been approximately one percentage point below and the bachelors-seeking cohort has been approximately one percentage point above the value for all students.
- Goal for the Fall 2026 cohort: 68.0%
  - Rationale: In the last ten years, Dalton State's retention rate has only exceeded 68.0% in two years, with the Fall 2013 (68.1%) and Fall 2014 (71.2%) cohorts, but was 67.0% or higher in three additional years, including three of the past six cohorts (Fall 2015, Fall 2017, and Fall 2019). The trends over the last five and ten years have been decreasing retention, with the most recent cohort, starting in Fall 2020, having the lowest retention rate in the last ten years, at 63.9%. Achieving a retention rate of 68.0% for the Fall 2026 cohort would represent a significant improvement, would be approaching our highest rates seen in the last ten years, and would reflect a five-year trend of increasing retention rates. The following targets reflect this desired trend, with targets for the Fall 2021 and Fall 2022 cohorts representing a transition to retention rate growth and then steady growth starting with the Fall 2023 cohort.
  - Fall 2021 Cohort Target: 64.0%
  - Fall 2022 Cohort Target: 64.5%
  - Fall 2023 Cohort Target: 65.4%
  - Fall 2024 Cohort Target: 66.3%
  - Fall 2025 Cohort Target: 67.2%

### Three-Year Associates Graduation Rate (Established June 8, 2022)

- Minimum Threshold of Acceptability: 10.0%
  - Rationale: For the Fall 2013 through Fall 2018 cohorts, the graduation rates have been at least 10.0% with the exception of the Fall 2016 cohort, and for the Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 cohorts was over 11.0%. Various realities of our institution cause this rate to

remain suppressed, such as an increasing emphasis on baccalaureate programs, several associates degrees in health professions requiring at least three years to complete, a significant proportion of students beginning as associates-seeking but switching to baccalaureate programs without earning an associate degree, and a significant proportion of students transferring to other institutions without first earning an associate degree. However, the associates graduation rate again falling below 10.0% would be cause for concern and additional investigation.

- Goal for the 2024 Cohort: 15.0%
  - Rationale: Dalton State College is below the USG's State College sector average, which has been gradually increasing in recent years to its highest-ever rate of 16.3% for the Fall 2018 cohort. Due to the sector including several associates-only institutions and our increasing emphasis on baccalaureate programs, many of our students who start in an associate degree program switch to a baccalaureate degree program without earning the associate degree, so we predict we will generally stay below the sector average three-year associate graduation rate. This goal of a 15.0% rate would leave us below the recent sector average but reflect a significant improvement. The targets below reflect a steady growth toward that target from the Fall 2018 cohort's 11.9% graduation rate, incorporating the knowledge that the Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 cohorts have been most impacted by the pandemic at the collegiate level, which has negatively impacted their retention rates.
  - Fall 2019 Cohort Target: 12.0%
  - Fall 2020 Cohort Target: 12.0%
  - Fall 2021 Cohort Target: 12.5%
  - Fall 2022 Cohort Target: 13.4%
  - Fall 2023 Cohort Target: 14.3%

#### Six-Year Bachelors Graduation Rate (Established June 8, 2022)

- Minimum Threshold of Acceptability: 25.0%
  - Rationale: For the five most recent cohorts, the six-year graduation rate has averaged slightly less than 41% of the corresponding one-year retention rate. Since we have established a minimum threshold of acceptability of 60% for the one-year retention rate, the corresponding graduation rate would be slightly less than 25.0%. Additionally, the six-year graduation rates for the four most recent cohorts have been above 26.0% so 25.0% would represent a concerning retreat in that rate. All currently active cohorts have also experienced significant disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which we anticipate will have an impact on graduation rates. The Fall 2015 cohort had a graduation rate of 29.7% after having a 72.5% one-year retention rate, a four-year graduation rate of 9.9%, and a five-year graduation rate of 22.7%. The pandemic first impacted the Fall 2015 cohort at the end of its fifth year, so subsequent cohorts will be likely to feel a more significant impact.
- Goal for Fall 2021 Cohort: 29.0%
  - Rationale: Assuming the one-year retention rate for bachelors-seeking students is approximately 66.0%, in line with the last two cohorts for whom the retention rate would include effects from the pandemic, then this goal would represent successful

graduation of 44.0% of students retained into their second year. We aspire to have this graduation rate reach 30.0% for the 2021 cohort, which would be the highest rate to date aside from the Fall 2014 cohort's graduation rate of 34.8%. The following targets reflect increasing the proportion of students retained into their second year who successfully graduate in six years.

- Fall 2016 Cohort Target: 28.4% (41.5% of cohort's first-year retention rate)
- Fall 2017 Cohort Target: 29.5% (42.0% of cohort's first-year retention rate)
- Fall 2018 Cohort Target: 26.9% (42.5% of cohort's first-year retention rate)
- Fall 2019 Cohort Target: 28.7% (43.0% of cohort's first-year retention rate)
- Fall 2020 Cohort Target: 28.6% (43.5% of cohort's first-year retention rate)