

The Current Graduation and Continuation Status of the Fall 2004 Cohort Of First-Time Full-Time Freshmen

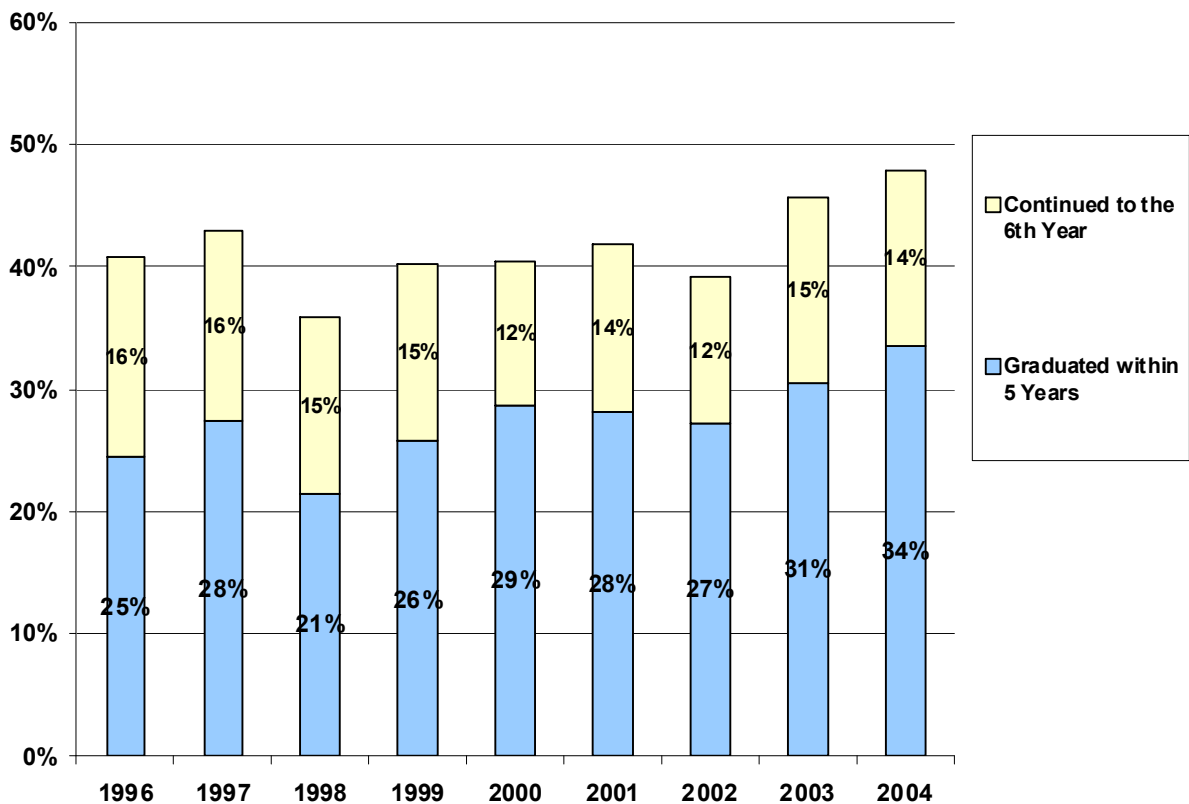
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Following up on yesterday's report of the six-year graduation rate for the fall 2003 cohort, I looked at the current graduation/continuation status of the fall 2004 cohort and compared it to other cohorts at the beginning of the sixth year.

At this point last year, about 31% of the fall 2003 cohort had graduated and 15% were still enrolled. This combined five-year graduation/six-year continuation rate of about 46% was the best we have had since at least the 1996 cohort. That was reflected in the final six-year graduation rate of 38.6% we reported yesterday.

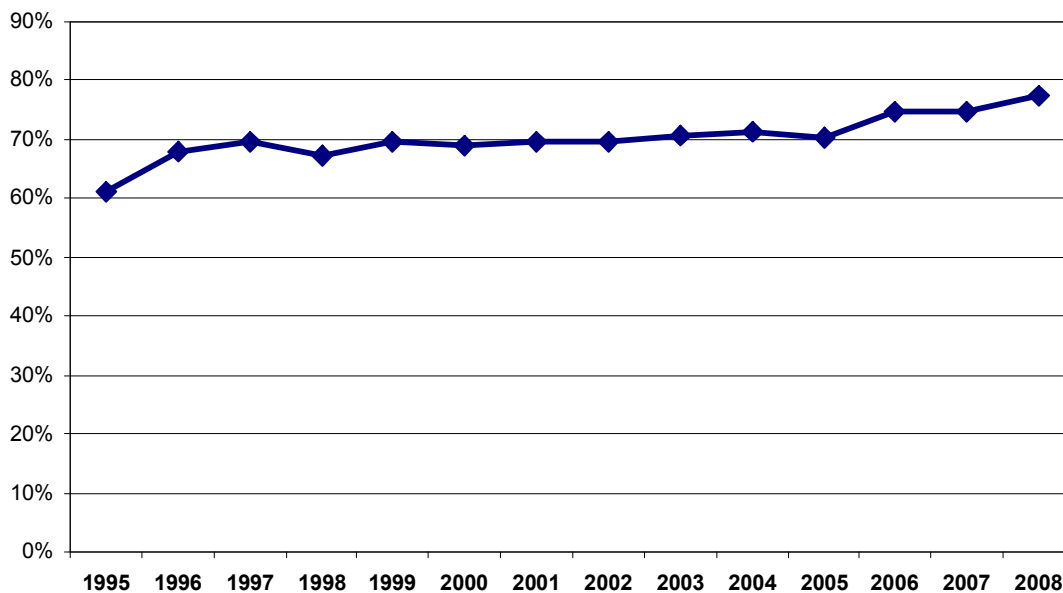
The 2004 cohort is slightly ahead of where the 2003 cohort was at this time last year. Of the 521 students in the cohort, 34% have already graduated and about 14% are currently enrolled. The five-year graduation rate for the 2004 cohort is better than the 33% six-year graduation rate we reported for the fall 2002 cohort. Details of the status of the fall 1996 to fall 2004 cohorts at the beginning of the sixth year are presented in Figure 1, below.

**Figure 1: Progress Towards the Bachelor's Degree
At the Beginning of the 6th Year**



It is surprising that this is happening now. As can be seen in Figure 2 below, the retention rate to the second year was relatively stable at about 70% from the 1999 through 2005 cohorts. We did not see any remarkable change until the 2006 cohort when the retention rate rose to 74.8%.

**Figure 2: First-Time Full-Time Student Retention to the Second Year
At UMass Boston for the Fall 1995 to Fall 2008 Cohorts**



Given the stability of the retention rate from 1999 through 2005, I would not have expected to see much appreciable change in the graduation rates until we reported on the 2006 cohort in 2013.

The retention and graduation rates for the pre-2005 cohorts may be somewhat volatile because the number of students in each cohort was low. In 2003 there were 567 first-time full-time freshmen, and in 2004 there were 521. Starting in 2005, the number increased to over 700, and for the past three years we have been over 900.

I will continue to monitor the graduation and continuation rates, and will keep you informed of any unexpected changes. However at the moment, it appears that the fall 2004 cohort will have a six-year graduation rate of about 40%. While a 40% six-year graduation rate is still cause for concern, it is a vast improvement over the 28% rate we reported for the fall 1998 cohort.