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## OU achieves new records for graduation rates, percentage of 'on track' students

As Oakland University focuses on keeping students on a firm path to graduation, recent data from the university's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) shows that Oakland's four- and five-year graduation rates have reached new records and the 2016 entering class boasts the highest percentage of students who are "on track," to graduate.

Among OU students who started college in 2016, a record 68 percent are "on track," to graduate, which is defined as having 28 or more credits by the start of their second year. Additionally, OU's four-year graduation rate is now at nearly 30 percent, an all-time high and a three-fold increase over the past two decades.

Likewise, the five-year graduation rate is at a record 47 percent, which is higher than the highest 6-year graduation rate on record. This is particularly noteworthy, given that the five-year graduation rate corresponds to the 2012 cohort, which was the first cohort to go through the university's First Year Advising Center (FYAC).



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FYAC provides advising services to all first-year students and facilitates a variety of programs, including new student orientation and COM 1100, a first-year success course. According to FYAC Director Sara Webb, student retention rates have improved significantly since the center opened in 2012.

"We have consistently kept a 3 to 6 percent increase in first-year retention since the FYAC's opening in 2012, compared to the freshmen classes before we opened," Webb said.

As a result of this progress, OU's six-year graduation rate is expected to surpass 50 percent, she added.

Along with positive graduation and retention trends, the data also shows that OU's first-year students have a higher satisfaction rate with academic advising compared to first-year students at peer institutions.

In the 2016 National Survey of Student Engagement, 56 percent of OU's first-year students gave high ratings on interactions with academic advisers – scores of 6 and 7 on a scale ranging from 1 to 7. This was seven percentage points higher than first-year students at peer institutions.

"The FYAC staff takes great pride in helping each student develop a solid foundation right from the start," Webb said. "We are pleased that our students recognize and appreciate OU's commitment to providing excellent advising services in their first year."