

**AGENDA ITEM B3: DEGREE COMPLETION**

**BOARD RULE 400.0200.00**

**GRADUATION RATE COMPARISON WITH COMPARABLE INSTITUTIONS**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING: OCTOBER 23, 2014**

Comparison of graduation rates among Ohio’s 23 community colleges is studied to measure Belmont College’s progress and improvement toward the Ohio completion and student success agenda (Board of Trustees, *Ends Policies*, Section IV, 400.0200.00 *Degree Completion*).

This report provides data from the Higher Education Information (HEI) system that has been gathered from the 23 community colleges in the University System of Ohio (USO). Tables and charts presented show a comparison between 3-year graduation rates at Belmont and the other 23 community colleges in Ohio.

**Presentation of Data**

Data in three charts below show paired columns with Belmont represented on the left in blue and all Ohio community colleges on the right in grey. The charts below include 3-year outcomes for entering cohorts of full-time students in 2008, 2009, and 2010. Reading from left to right, columns represent the percent of students in the cohort: 1). Who earned a degree by the end of the third year; 2). Who persisted at the same institution at the end of the third year; and 3). Who persisted at another Ohio public institution at the end of the third year. The final pair of columns show the 3-year graduation rates in the column titled: *% Total 3-year success rate*. The data for students in the cohorts have been tracked in the HEI system and provided to institutions after graduations have been reported by institutions at the end of each academic year.

Chart I, 3-year Outcomes for full-time students entering in Fall 2008

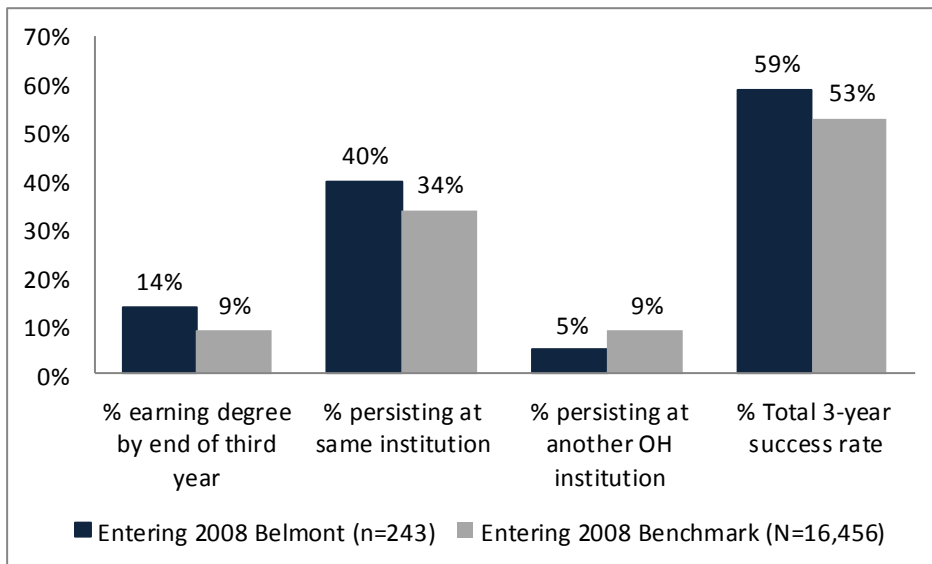


Chart II, *Third year outcomes for full-time students entering in Fall 2009*

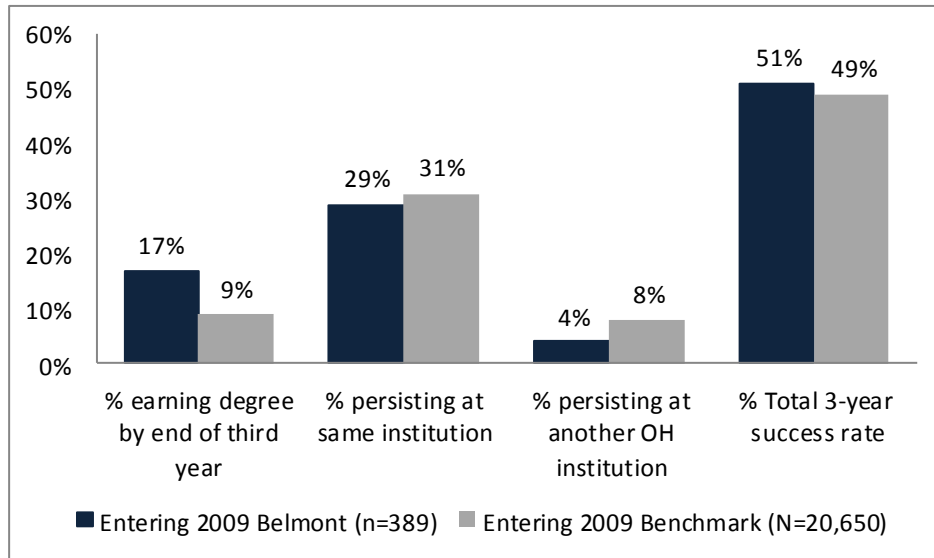
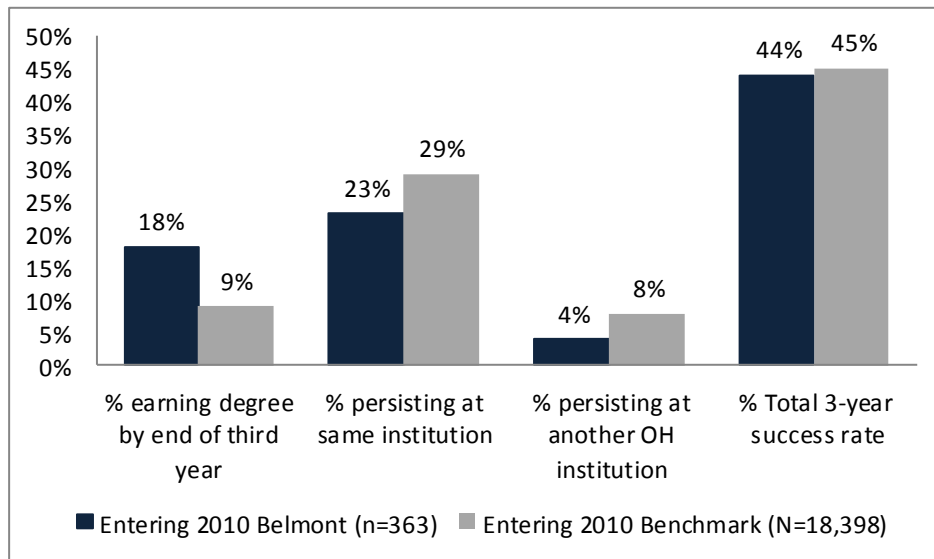
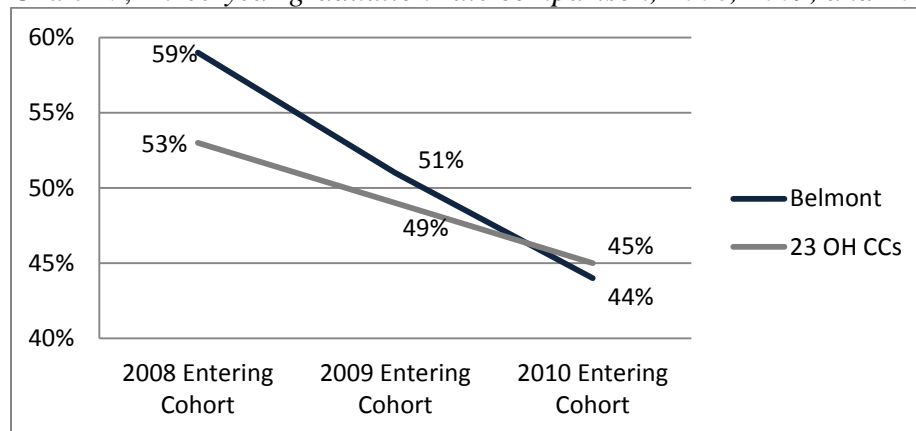


Chart III, *Third year outcomes for full-time students entering in Fall 2010*



The most recent data is in Chart III which shows the Total 3-year success rate for Belmont's 2010 full-time entering student cohort of 363 students at 44%. The Total 3-year success rate for full-time entering students in all Ohio community colleges over the same period of time was 45%.

Chart IV, *Three-year graduation rate comparison, 2008, 2009, and 2010*



The final chart shows the combined 3-year graduation rate for cohorts of full-time students entering all Ohio community colleges in 2008, 2009, and 2010 has declined from 53% to 45%. The 3-year graduation rate for Belmont's cohorts of entering students in 2008, 2009, and 2010 has declined from 59% to 44% for the 2010 cohort at the end of three years.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

1. The University of Denver Strategic Issues Panel reported in September 2014, that “Notwithstanding the long history and stability associated with institutions of higher learning, change is in the wind. In recent years, one publication after another has chronicled a growing list of perceived shortcomings in American higher education. Foremost among these concerns is the rapidly rising cost of tuition and the alleged failure of colleges and universities to actually provide meaningful education for students.” The report goes on to discuss college atmospheres that focus more on student life and athletics than on academics which appears to make institutions “under-accountable” and over resourced! There is frustration with the fact that 45% of college students failed to show substantive improvement in the Collegiate Learning Assessment during their first two years of college. Is failure of students to show significant learning and academic achievement due to lack of rigor and focus on the part of faculty and students? Is it because there is more focus on research/activities outside of the classroom? Whatever the answer, there are more questions than answers generated these days about higher education. The history of stability enjoyed by higher education for so many decades has all come to an end! In addition, Belmont College has its own unique challenges such as the oil and gas industry (while at the same time it is an economic plus), competitors within a 50 mile radius, declining population sectors, and families with little money for higher education! All of these challenges have contributed to citizens making choices for their future that do not include college. As a result, at Belmont, we will be moving to new ways of doing business and delivering our product to encourage and attract new students. We will be developing new products.
2. It is recommended that the College Completion Plan be implemented.
3. Structure a College-wide strategic enrollment management system and plan.
4. Continue to monitor and evaluate college Key Performance Indicators related to retention and completion and utilize the results to drive improvement.