

Wesleyan College Student Achievement Report

Updated August 2026

Wesleyan College publishes statements of its goals for student achievement and success in compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and applicable federal requirements. For each measure, the College establishes a threshold of acceptability and an aspirational goal. The appropriate offices examine the data, respond to it, and incorporate it into yearly reporting and planning.

Wesleyan College is a small private institution founded in 1836 as the first college in the world chartered to grant degrees to women. It enrolls a predominantly undergraduate, residential student body, a substantial share of whom are Pell-eligible, and it offers baccalaureate programs alongside a growing set of graduate and professional programs. The College has selected the five measures below because together they follow a student's full path, from first-year persistence through course completion, timely graduation, and early career outcomes, and because they reflect the College's mission to serve students who often depend heavily on institutional support to reach graduation. The thresholds of acceptability are drawn from Wesleyan's own historical performance and budget planning, and the aspirational goals are set with reference to the College's aspirational peers. Graduation rates, which SACSCOC expects every institution to include, are reported using the IPEDS Graduation Rate as Wesleyan's chosen indicator.

This report addresses five measures of student achievement: undergraduate graduation rates, graduate program graduation rates, course completion rates, retention rates, and career outcomes.

A. Undergraduate Graduation Rates

Wesleyan monitors undergraduate graduation rates using the IPEDS Graduation Rate, its chosen SACSCOC graduation-rate indicator, drawn from the Graduation Rate Survey component of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. The College has set a threshold of acceptability of 48 percent for the four-year rate and 54 percent for the six-year rate, with aspirational goals of 51 percent and 58 percent.

Table 1 reports Wesleyan's four-year and six-year rates alongside the peer averages published in the IPEDS Data Feedback Report, organized by entering cohort so that each row follows a single class from entry to graduation. Peer comparison data is produced on a lag of roughly three years, so peer figures are not yet available for the three most recent cohorts.

Across the cohorts for which peer data exists, the 2008 through 2016 cohorts, Wesleyan's four-year rate exceeded the peer average in every cohort except the 2016 cohort, and its six-year rate met or exceeded the peer average in all but the 2008 and 2016 cohorts. The three most recent cohorts show a decline in both rates: the four-year rate falls from 55 percent for the 2017 cohort to 29 percent for the 2019 cohort, and the six-year rate from 61 percent to 43 percent. The 2018 and 2019 cohorts, which entered immediately before and during the pandemic period, fall below both thresholds. The College has developed a comprehensive retention plan aimed at strengthening early persistence, and it is examining the causes of the late-stage attrition reflected in the gap between the four-year and six-year rates.

Table 1. Undergraduate Graduation Rates by Entering Cohort, Wesleyan and Peers*Source: IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey (Wesleyan) and IPEDS Data Feedback Report (peers)*

Entering Cohort	Wesleyan 4-Year	Wesleyan 6-Year	Peer 4-Year	Peer 6-Year
2008	46%	48%	39%	51%
2009	56%	59%	44%	52%
2010	48%	59%	42%	48%
2011	49%	56%	40%	48%
2012	45%	52%	43%	49%
2013	42%	50%	36%	47%
2014	45%	52%	40%	45%
2015	50%	56%	42%	46%
2016	46%	46%	54%	53%
2017	55%	61%	n/a	n/a
2018	33%	45%	n/a	n/a
2019	29%	43%	n/a	n/a

Rates are organized by entering cohort. Wesleyan rates are drawn from the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey; peer averages are drawn from the IPEDS Data Feedback Report, which is published on an approximate three-year lag, so peer figures are not yet available for the 2017 through 2019 cohorts.

B. Graduate Program Graduation Rates

Wesleyan tracks graduate program completion rates, with a threshold of acceptability of 90 percent and an aspirational goal of 95 percent. Performance has varied by program. The MBA program declined from 97 percent in 2018 to 33 percent in 2023 following its transition to an online format, recovered to 80 percent in 2024, then fell to 50 percent in 2025 on a very small graduating group of roughly ten students. The M.Ed. program has ranged from 67 percent to 100 percent and stood at 86 percent in 2025. The MBA program has since grown to roughly thirty students, a scale at which completion rates become more stable and meaningful.

Table 2. Graduate Program Graduation Rates Over Time*Source: Internal query, graduate students by degree and entry date*

Program	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
MBA	97%	100%	93%	85%	67%	33%	80%	50%
M.Ed.	n/a	91%	91%	100%	78%	100%	67%	86%
MA, Music	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	0%

The MA in Music has had only two graduates, one in 2023 and one in 2024, both of whom entered the program in 2021.

C. Course Completion Rates

Table 3 reports the percentage of enrolled students who completed their courses. Because the College provides numerous early alerts and support services, it sets ambitious goals for course completion, with a threshold of acceptability of 80 percent and an aspirational goal of 90 percent. The College has exceeded the threshold every semester in both traditional and online classes, with traditional classes completing at 88 to 92 percent and online classes at 89 to 97 percent, and has met the 90 percent aspiration in most semesters, particularly online.

Table 3. Course Completion Rates, Traditional and Online Classes

Source: Internal grade distribution report

Academic Year	Traditional Fall	Traditional Spring	Online Fall	Online Spring
2020-2021	88%	88%	94%	97%
2021-2022	88%	87%	89%	94%
2022-2023	88%	90%	93%	91%
2023-2024	89%	91%	90%	97%
2024-2025	91%	91%	91%	90%
2025-2026	91%	92%	94%	91%

D. Retention Rates

Table 4 reports average year-to-year retention for the five most recent cohorts, 2019 through 2023, of degree-seeking, full-time, traditional-age students. The College derives the threshold of acceptability from historical data and budget projections and sets the aspirational goal by comparison with its aspirational peers. Junior-to-senior retention exceeded its threshold at 93 percent against 89 percent. First-year-to-sophomore retention, at 70 percent against a 72 percent threshold, and sophomore-to-junior retention, at 80 percent against an 82 percent threshold, each fell just short. The College has developed a comprehensive retention plan focused on strengthening these two earlier transitions.

Table 4. Five-Year Retention Average, 2019 to 2023

Source: Registrar Fall Board Report. Five-year average of degree-seeking, full-time, traditional-age students.

Transition	Retention Goal	Actual Rate (5-Year Average, 2019-2023)
First-year to sophomore	threshold 72%; aspirational 78%	70%
Sophomore to junior	threshold 82%; aspirational 89%	80%
Junior to senior	threshold 89%; aspirational 95%	93%

E. Career Outcomes

Wesleyan's Center for Career Development tracks graduates' progress toward the positive career outcomes defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers:

- Full-time employment

- Full-time post-graduate internship or fellowship
- Full-time entrepreneur or freelance work
- Part-time employment
- Military service
- Volunteer service, such as the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps
- Continuing education

The College sets a threshold of acceptability for positive career outcomes, meaning a graduate falls into at least one of these categories, at 85 percent, based on the national average six months after graduation, with an aspirational goal of 92 percent. Table 5 reports results against the peer average. Wesleyan exceeded the threshold for the classes of 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2025, and fell short for the classes of 2020, 2023, and 2024. Data for the Class of 2026 is preliminary and incomplete because outcomes are collected six months after graduation.

Table 5. Career Outcomes, Wesleyan Compared to Peer Institutions

Source: Wesleyan College Center for Career Development

Graduating Class	Wesleyan	Peers
2019	86.0%	82.9%
2020	81.3%	89.7%
2021	86.8%	86.7%
2022	87.3%	85.7%
2023	79.8%	84.7%
2024	83.7%	85.7%
2025	86.7%	n/a
2026	n/a	n/a

Data is collected six months after graduation. Figures for the Class of 2026 are not yet available.

Summary and Conclusion

This report measures Wesleyan's performance against a threshold of acceptability and an aspirational goal for each of five outcomes, and the overall picture is solid. Course completion has remained strong, at 88 to 92 percent in traditional classes and 89 to 97 percent online, above the 80 percent threshold every semester and at or above the 90 percent aspiration in most (Table 3). Retention improves as students progress, with five-year averages rising from 70 percent first-year to sophomore, to 80 percent sophomore to junior, to 93 percent junior to senior, the last comfortably above its threshold (Table 4). Positive career outcomes have held up well, remaining at or near the 85 percent threshold in most years and reaching 86.7 percent for the Class of 2025 (Table 5).

Two areas warrant continued attention. The two earliest undergraduate transitions sit just below threshold, first-year to sophomore at 70 percent against 72 percent and sophomore to junior at 80 percent against 82 percent (Table 4), and the College has developed a comprehensive retention plan aimed at strengthening them. At the opposite end of the student path, the gap between the four-year and six-year graduation rates indicates that a number of students approach degree completion without

finishing on time, and the most recent cohorts have fallen below threshold on both rates (Table 1). This late-stage attrition merits closer study, and the College is examining its causes and identifying ways to raise the completion rate. The graduate programs are in a period of growth, and the MBA program in particular has expanded to a scale at which completion rates should become more stable.

The appendix presents graduation, retention, and career-outcome data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, Pell eligibility, and, for graduate programs, gender. Because Wesleyan's cohorts are small, a single student can shift a disaggregated rate substantially, so these figures are best read as multi-year trends rather than single-year results. A particular strength appears in the retention of Pell-eligible students, who make up a substantial share of enrollment and who have matched or exceeded the overall first-year-to-sophomore rate in most recent cohorts (Table A4), a sign that the College's early support systems are reaching the students who most depend on them. Carrying that support through to graduation, where six-year completion rates for Pell-eligible students still trail the overall rate (Table A1), remains a priority.

Appendix: Disaggregated Data

The tables below disaggregate the graduation, retention, and career-outcome measures by race, ethnicity, Pell eligibility, and, for graduate programs, gender. The SACSCOC Interpretation of Core Requirement 8.1 does not require disaggregated data to be published, but it does expect the College to analyze and discuss disaggregated results, particularly where they fall below threshold. Wesleyan provides these tables to meet that expectation and to support its own understanding of how different groups of students fare. The College's federal disclosure of disaggregated graduation rates under the Higher Education Opportunity Act is published separately as consumer information. Because several categories contain very small numbers, individual cells should be read with caution, and trends over time are more meaningful than single-year figures.

Table A1. Wesleyan Six-Year Undergraduate Graduation Rate by Race and Pell Eligibility

Source: IPEDS Data Feedback Report. Columns show the IPEDS reporting year with the entering cohort in parentheses.

Group	2021 (2014)	2022 (2015)	2023 (2016)	2024 (2017)	2025 (2018)
Total	51%	56%	46%	61%	45%
Black or African American	33%	55%	41%	59%	47%
White	48%	56%	49%	60%	48%
Hispanic/Latinx	75%	33%	58%	0%	23%
Non-Resident Alien	80%	78%	50%	83%	60%
Pell-eligible	42%	54%	40%	56%	44%

Table A2. Peer Six-Year Undergraduate Graduation Rate by Race and Pell Eligibility

Source: IPEDS Data Feedback Report. Columns show the IPEDS reporting year with the entering cohort in parentheses.

Group	2021 (2014)	2022 (2015)	2023 (2016)	2024 (2017)	2025 (2018)
Total	44%	46%	55%	47%	49%
Black or African American	42%	40%	40%	44%	32%
White	49%	52%	53%	52%	54%
Hispanic/Latinx	49%	47%	57%	50%	44%
Non-Resident Alien	46%	60%	68%	39%	50%
Pell-eligible	43%	44%	49%	46%	43%

Table A3. Graduate Program Graduation Rate by Race and Gender Over Time*Source: Internal query, graduate students by degree and entry date*

Group	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total	80%	79%	69%	58%	68%	43%
Black or African American	72%	79%	65%	56%	71%	50%
White	89%	86%	83%	89%	69%	50%
Hispanic/Latinx	50%	0%	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Asian	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	0%
Non-Resident Alien	100%	n/a	0%	33%	0%	n/a
Race and Ethnicity Unknown	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	50%	0%
Female	75%	80%	66%	58%	68%	43%
Male	100%	67%	100%	n/a	n/a	0%

Table A4. First-Year to Sophomore Retention Rate by Race and Pell Eligibility*Source: Currently Enrolled Report and Fall Cohort Tracking Spreadsheets*

Group	Cohort 2020	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023	Cohort 2024
Total	71%	63%	65%	76%	70%
Black or African American	70%	63%	65%	74%	68%
White	64%	65%	53%	70%	63%
Hispanic/Latinx	78%	56%	86%	76%	77%
Non-Resident Alien	75%	50%	67%	82%	95%
Asian	100%	100%	100%	n/a	50%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	n/a	n/a	100%	n/a	n/a
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	n/a	100%	n/a	100%	n/a
Two or More Races	100%	60%	58%	100%	33%
Unknown	100%	100%	n/a	100%	n/a
Pell-eligible	76%	65%	66%	81%	61%

Table A5. Sophomore to Junior Retention Rate by Race and Pell Eligibility*Source: Currently Enrolled Report and Fall Cohort Tracking Spreadsheets*

Group	Cohort 2019	Cohort 2020	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023
Total	52%	58%	52%	48%	70%
Black or African American	49%	53%	54%	52%	65%
White	45%	53%	49%	34%	62%
Hispanic/Latinx	86%	74%	56%	48%	76%
Non-Resident Alien	56%	50%	25%	67%	73%
Asian	100%	100%	100%	100%	n/a
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%	n/a	n/a	100%	n/a
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	n/a	n/a	100%	n/a	100%
Two or More Races	75%	67%	50%	58%	100%
Unknown	100%	100%	100%	n/a	100%
Pell-eligible	56%	60%	51%	48%	77%

Table A6. Junior to Senior Retention Rate by Race and Pell Eligibility*Source: Currently Enrolled Report and Fall Cohort Tracking Spreadsheets*

Group	Cohort 2019	Cohort 2020	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022
Total	37%	50%	49%	45%
Black or African American	28%	45%	50%	48%
White	35%	49%	46%	34%
Hispanic/Latinx	71%	65%	44%	48%
Non-Resident Alien	44%	50%	25%	67%
Asian	67%	0%	100%	100%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%	n/a	n/a	100%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	n/a	n/a	100%	n/a
Two or More Races	75%	50%	50%	50%
Unknown	100%	100%	100%	n/a
Pell-eligible	41%	53%	46%	47%

Table A7. Number of Graduates by Race and Pell Eligibility

Source: Wesleyan College Center for Career Development. Provided so that the outcome rates in Table A8 can be read against cohort size.

Ethnicity/Race	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
Black/African American	37	50	29	55	34
Hispanic/Latinx	4	6	7	12	9
White	61	49	46	40	29
Two or more races	1	2	3	7	9
Nonresident alien	9	8	3	0	0
Ethnicity/race unknown	1	3	0	0	0
Pell eligible	43	58	44	76	49
Total Graduates	121	118	89	117	83

Table A8. Positive Career Outcome Rate by Race and Pell Eligibility

Source: Wesleyan College Center for Career Development. Corresponds to the graduate counts in Table A7.

Ethnicity/Race	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
Black/African American	94.6%	92.0%	82.8%	83.6%	88.2%
Hispanic/Latinx	100.0%	66.7%	57.1%	75.0%	77.8%
White	91.8%	87.8%	89.1%	85.0%	86.2%
Two or more races	0.0%	100.0%	66.6%	100.0%	88.9%
Nonresident alien	77.8%	62.5%	33.3%	n/a	n/a
Ethnicity/race unknown	100.0%	100.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pell eligible	97.7%	62.1%	86.4%	77.6%	77.6%
All Graduates	86.8%	87.3%	79.8%	83.7%	86.7%