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MORE IDAHOANS ARE ATTENDING COLLEGE AND GRADUATING ON TIME

Idaho's efforts to encourage more high school graduates to "go-on" to college and to graduate on time, appear to be making a difference.

New data shows statewide college graduation rates are the highest they have been in seven years and more first-time students are attending college full-time.

The positive trends are documented in the federal government's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, which tracks go-on rates from around the country.

Here is what the numbers show for Idaho:

- 20.3 percent of students who graduated in 2017 from one of Idaho's four-year institutions with a bachelor degree - collected their diploma on time after four years – a 6.3 percentage point increase since 2011
- 41.9 percent of 2017 graduates were awarded a bachelor degree after six years, a 5.3 percentage point improvement since 2011 and the best percentage rate since 2013

- At Idaho’s community colleges, 11.5 percent of the 2017 graduating class earned their associate degree after two years, the best percentage rate increase since 2012
- 21.6 percent of community college graduates collected their associate degree after three years, the highest rate seen since 2011
- The number of first-time, full-time students - usually high school graduates entering their freshman year of college - increased 35 percent in the last seven years

The State Board of Education’s Complete College Idaho (CCI) initiatives, approved and funded by the Idaho legislature starting in FY2015, are credited with helping to improve on-time graduation rates, freshmen grade point averages and higher retention rates (students returning to college after their freshman year).

CCI was launched to provide resources to improve undergraduate student success. Institutions used CCI funds on a variety of strategies. For example, some institutions focused on improved student outreach, advising and intervention methods while others provided additional faculty to deliver more high-demand courses.

“Initiatives take time and these numbers show we are making progress and moving in the right direction,” State Board Chief Research Officer Carson Howell said. “More students are going full-time and more are graduating in two or four years, and that is exactly the type of positive trend these initiatives are designed to accomplish.”

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