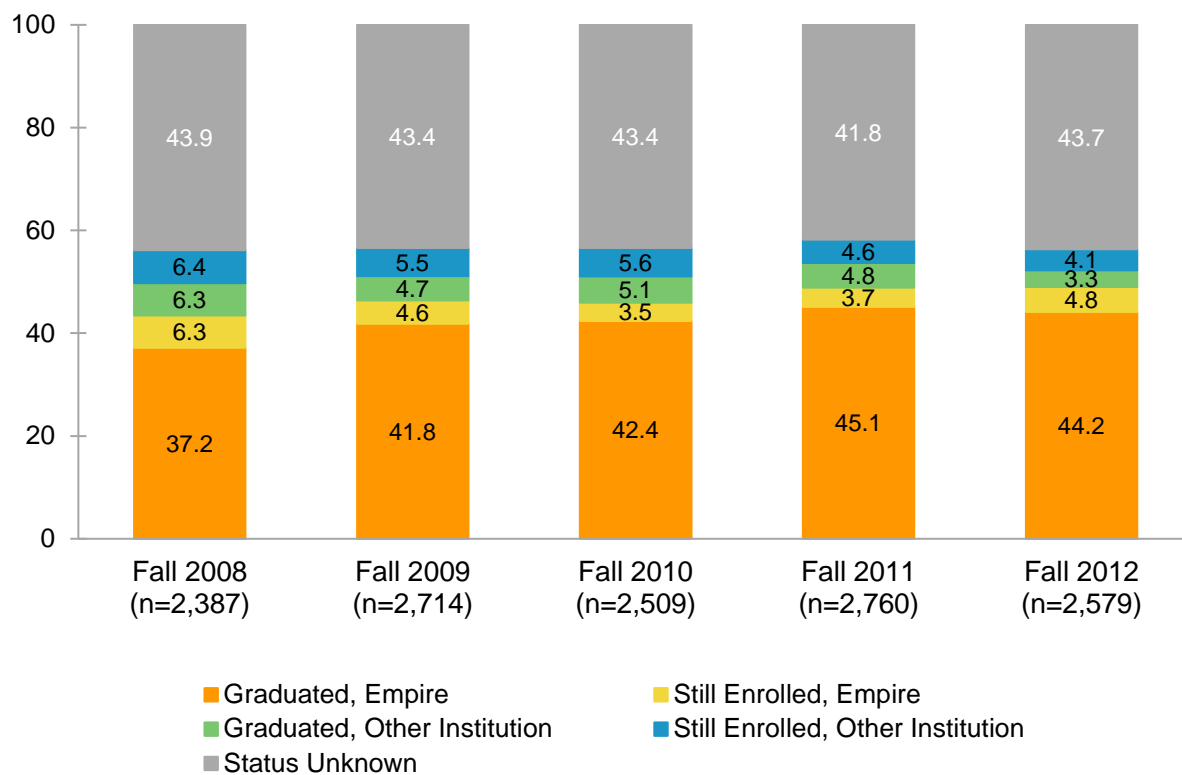


## Graduation Rates and Retention Rates

Traditional methods for calculating graduation and retention rates as reported on College Navigator are based on cohorts of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students enrolled in a given fall term, tracked over six years (150% of normal time to completion). First-time, full-time students represent only five percent of undergraduate fall enrollment at SUNY Empire State College. The graduation rate for the fall 2012 cohort of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students was 26%.<sup>1</sup> The majority of our students enroll part-time and have had some prior college enrollment elsewhere.

First-to-second year retention rates provided by College Navigator measure the percentage of first-time bachelor's degree-seeking students who return to continue studies the following fall. Retention rates for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree seekers initially enrolling at SUNY Empire in fall 2017 was 51%, while the retention rate was 62% for first-time, part-time students. Graduation and retention rates vary nationally by sector and selectivity, such that highly selective institutions generally have higher retention and graduation rates relative to institutions that promote access (open admissions). The 2018 Digest of Education Statistics<sup>2</sup> indicates that the six-year graduation rate for four-year public open admissions institutions was 31.3%. The equivalent rate at *all* four-year publics was 59.7%, while highly selective four-year publics had a graduation rate of 71.3%.

The college's internally defined approach for computing retention and graduation rates is more inclusive by design. Cohorts of new, degree-seeking students are tracked over time, indefinitely, and irrespective of entry status (first-time, transfer, full- or part-time). New matriculated students initially enrolling in fall 2016 had a one-year retention rate of 69%.<sup>3</sup> The graph<sup>4</sup> below provides a snapshot of the status of cohorts of new, matriculated undergraduate students who initially enrolled at SUNY Empire during the fall terms between 2008 and 2012 (as of August 2019), six years after their initial enrollment. Irrespective of the cohort, more than half of all students initially enrolling at SUNY Empire either graduated or were still enrolled six years later, and the majority of those students either completed or were retained through SUNY Empire.



<sup>1</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=sUNY+Empire+State+College&s=all&id=196264>, retrieved January 9, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2018 [Table 326.10]

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from Empire State College Decision Support Annual Retention Cube

<sup>4</sup> Graph based on Student Achievement Measures (SAM) conventions for the bachelor's degree seeking model. "Graduated from ESC" includes bachelor's completers and associate completers that have not subsequently re-enrolled or completed a bachelor's degree. Students who initially obtained an associate degree from ESC then subsequently re-enrolled or completed another degree at ESC, or re-enrolled/completed another degree elsewhere are classified based on their most recent activity. Cohort n's based on students found via the National Student Clearinghouse.