

# **Arkansas Division of Higher Education**

## **Annual Report on Retention and Graduation of College Student-Athletes at Arkansas Institutions of Higher Education**

**Academic Year 2018-19**



**Research & Analytics**

**December 2020**

**Arkansas Division of Higher Education**  
423 Main Street, Little Rock, AR 72201

## **ANNUAL REPORT ON PARTICIPATION, RETENTION AND GRADUATION OF STUDENT-ATHLETES**

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This report complies with Act 267 of 1989 that requires reporting of retention and graduation rates for first-time in college students who participate in Arkansas intercollegiate athletics. This information is collected through institutional data submissions to the Arkansas Higher Education Information System (AHEIS) from all public colleges and universities with athletic programs. In addition to retention and graduation rates, this report provides data on all athletic participation by sport and scholarship status.

### **Methodology**

The methodology used in this report closely follows the methodology used in the Annual Report on Student Retention and Graduation. The retention calculations are based on fall-to-fall comparisons of the student-athletes in the IPEDS cohort of first-time in college, full-time, and credential-seeking students from the fall term only. A student is considered retained if they returned to the same institution in the fall term of the next academic year.

Graduation rate calculations use the same cohort of first-time in college, full-time, credential-seeking students from the fall term. The graduation rates presented here include a 100% rate representing those graduating with a Bachelor's degree in four years, which is considered graduating 'on time', and a 150% graduation rate representing student-athletes graduating with a Bachelor's degree in six years.

The methodology used herein is not meant to and does not correspond with the NCAA GSR (Graduation Success Rate) methodology each institution is required to report to the NCAA.

### **Participation Overview**

In Academic Year 2018-19, 3,337 students participated in athletics at ten universities and five 2-year colleges. This is the most student-athletes ever reported for an academic year. This is an increase of 289 student-athletes over the 2017-18 academic year, including 72 student-athletes reported by three 2-year colleges, National Park College, Southern Arkansas University Tech, and UA Community College at Rich Mountain. This was the first year those colleges reported student-athlete data to ADHE.

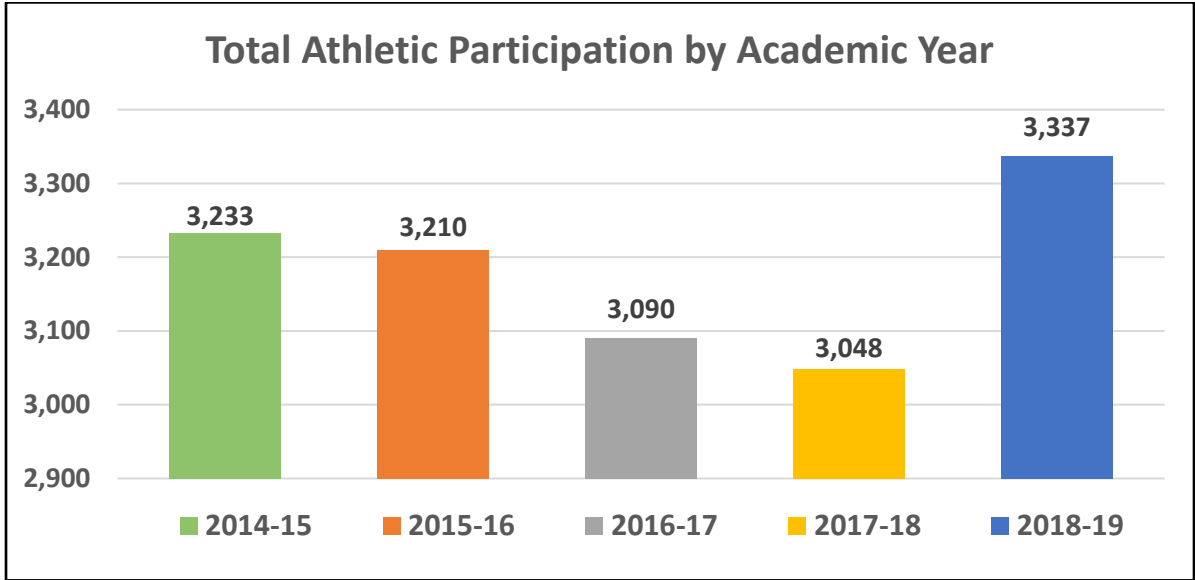


Chart 5.1: Athletic Participation by Academic Year

Sports included in student-athlete reporting are Football, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Baseball, Track/Cross Country, Golf, Swimming, Tennis, Volleyball, Soccer, Softball and an Other Sports category that includes student-athletes from all other sports. The number of student-athletes participating in football leads the way with 1,037 student-athletes reported for the 2018-19 academic year.

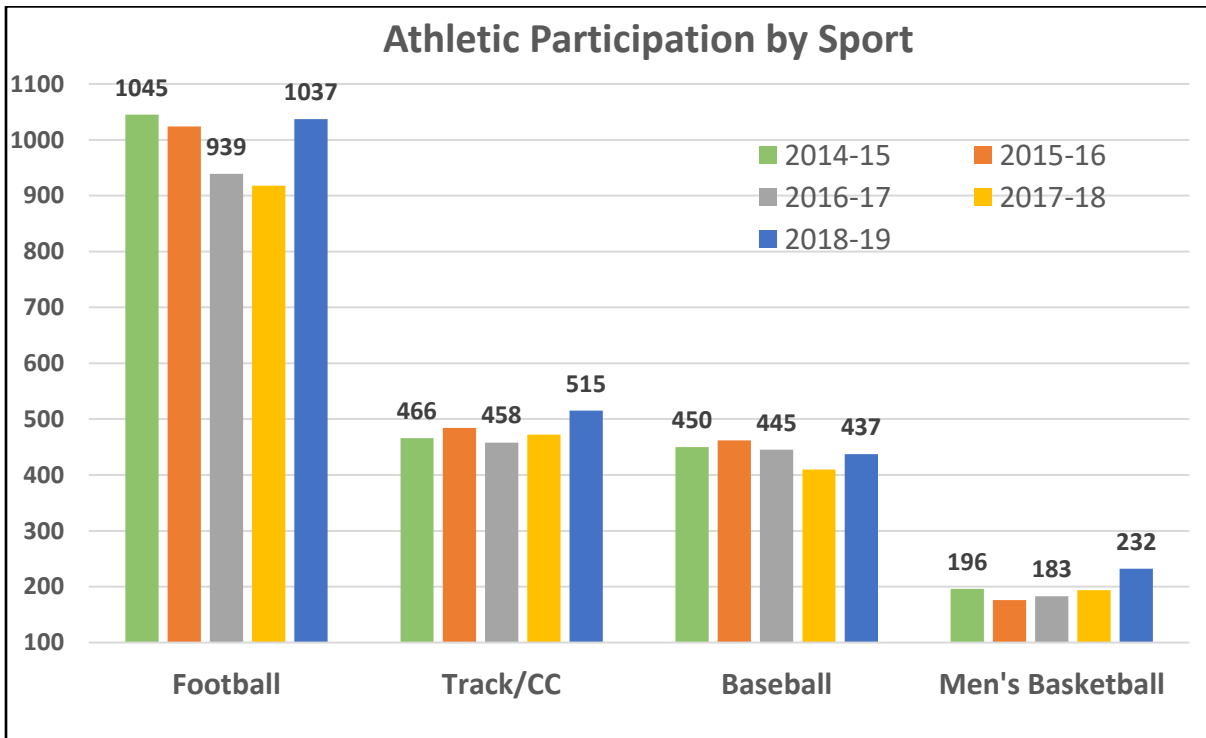


Chart 5.2: Athletes by Sport – Detailed

Considering the 2018-19 increase in student-athlete participation over 2017-18, only two sports reported a decline in participation. Women’s Basketball and Swimming both experienced a small decline.

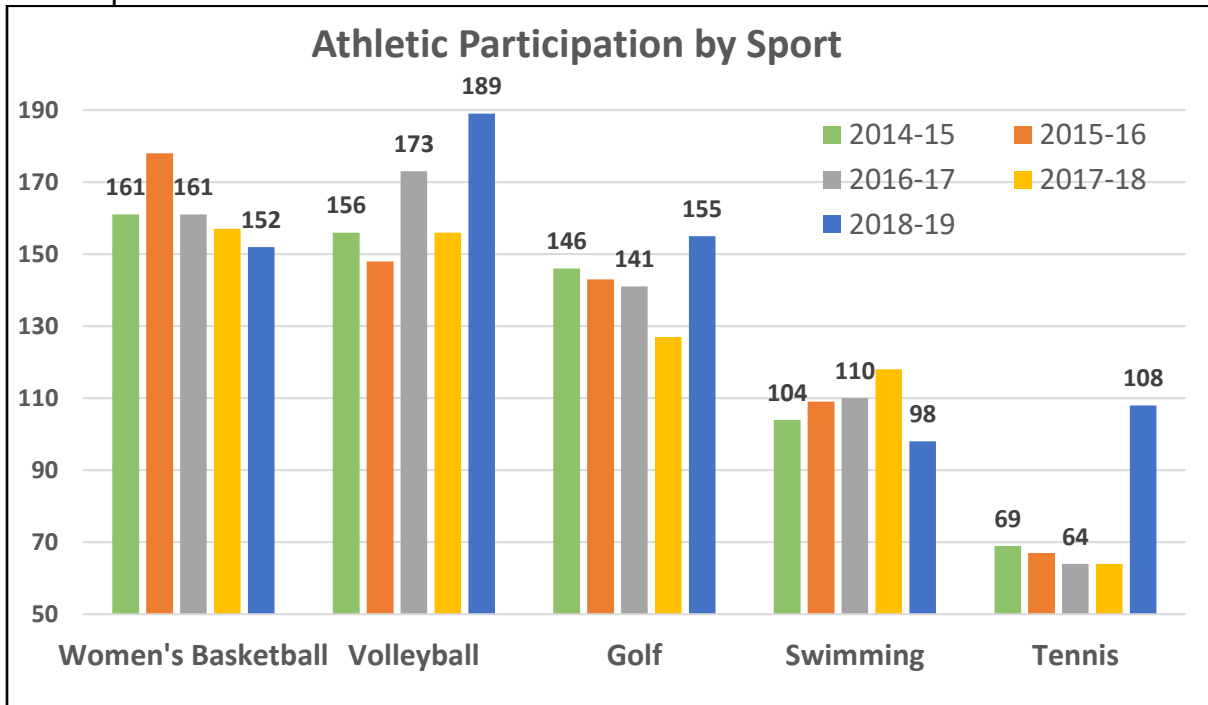


Chart 5.3: Athletes by Sport – Detailed

For the past 15 years, the Other Sports category participation ranged between 300 and 437 student-athletes. For 2018-19 institutions reported Soccer and Softball participation numbers separately for the first time, resulting in a big shift in the number of student-athletes reported in the Other Sports category.

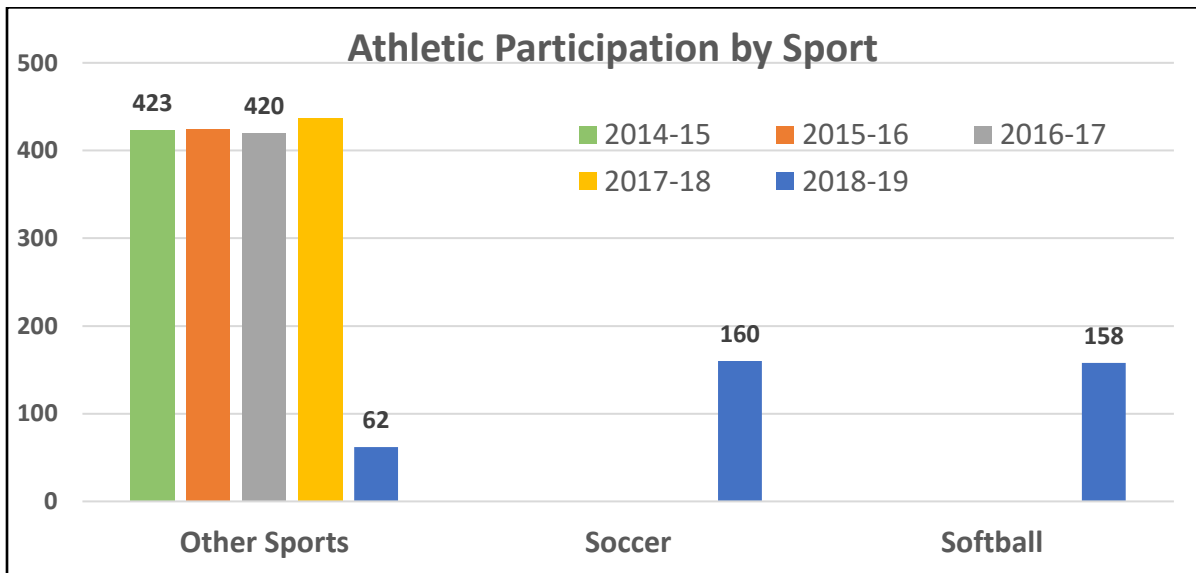


Chart 5.4: Athletes by Sport – Detailed

Many students receive scholarships to participate in athletics. The following graph illustrates the majority of students receive a partial scholarship, 2,179 of 3,337 student-athletes (65%), while only 378 (11%) receive a full scholarship.

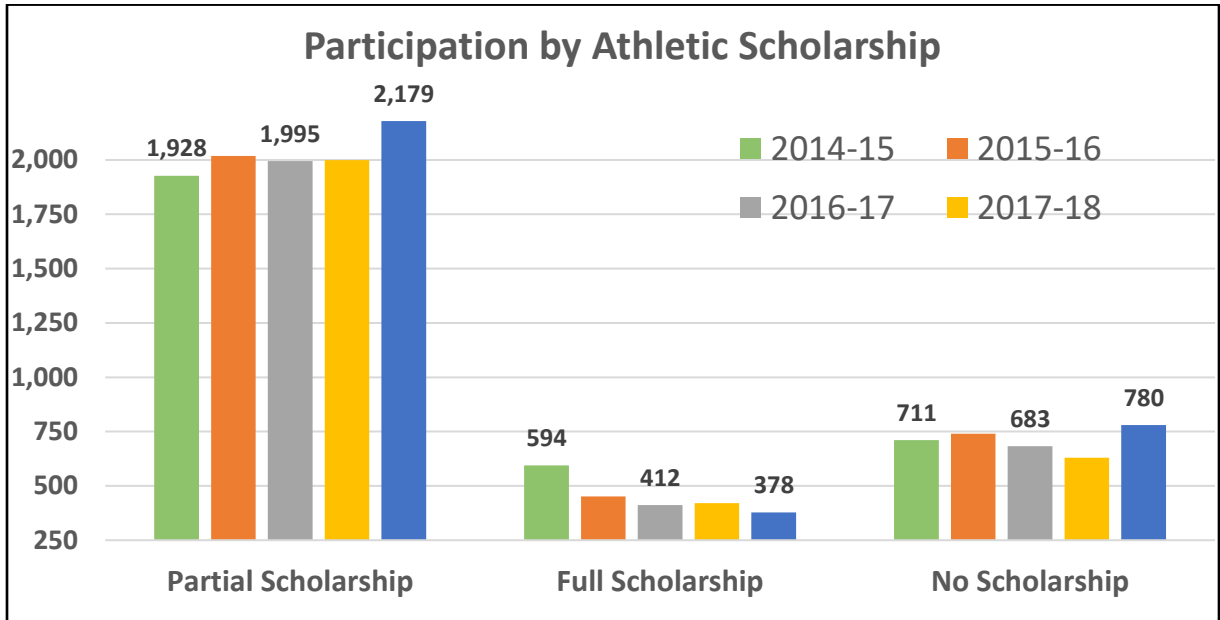


Chart 5.5: Athletes by Scholarship

While the percent of student-athletes receiving partial scholarships has remained fairly consistent the past several years, there has been an obvious decline in the number of full scholarships and an obvious increase in the number of student-athletes receiving no athletic scholarship.

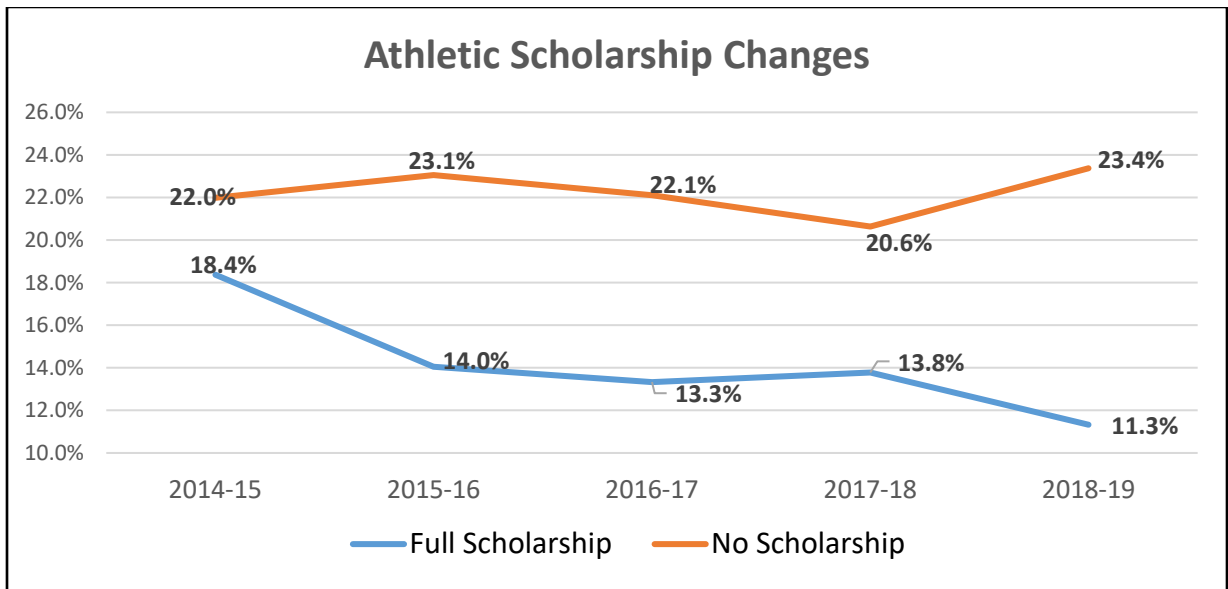


Chart 5.6: Athletes by Scholarship Percentages

The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville reported the most student-athletes with the University of Central Arkansas reporting the second largest number of athletes for the 2018-19 academic year.

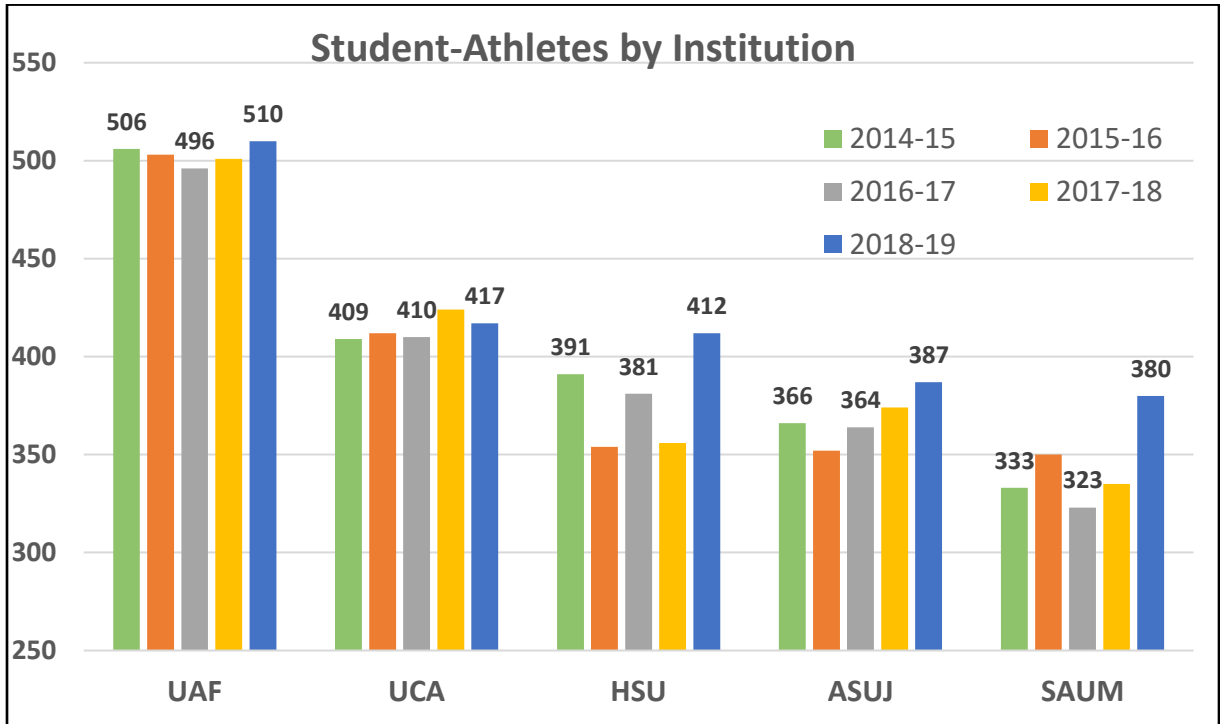


Chart 5.7: Athletes by Institution

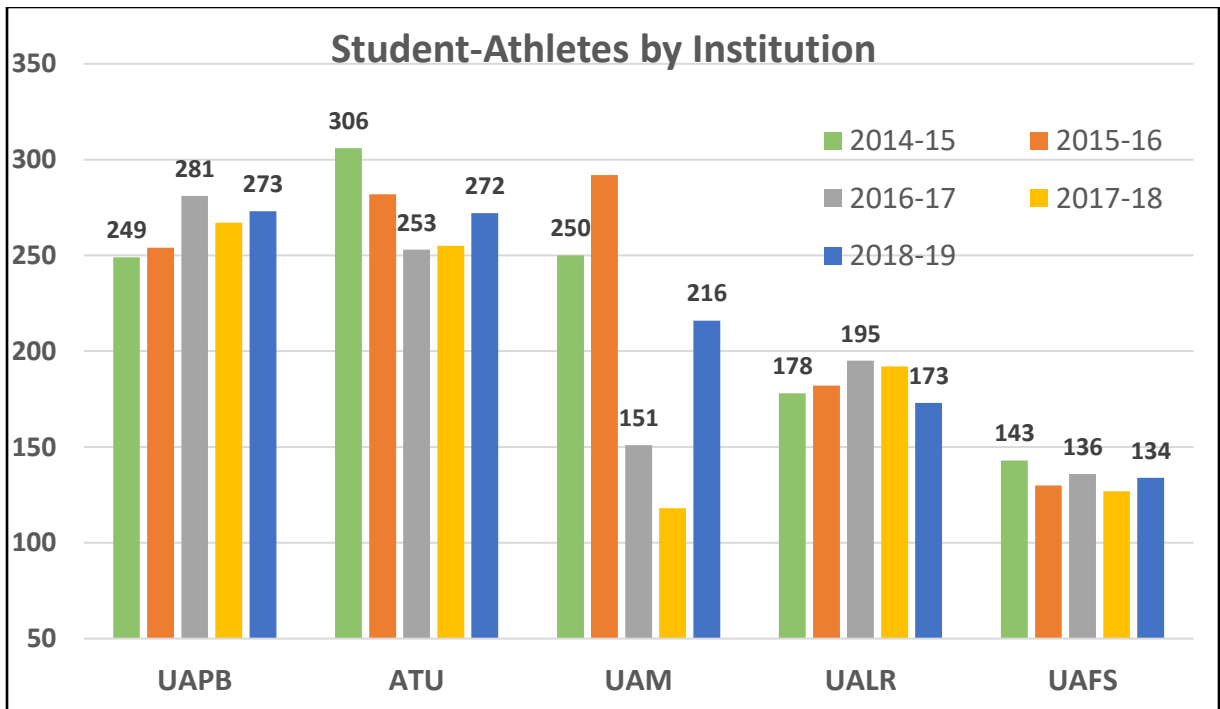


Chart 5.8: Athletes by Institution

### STUDENT-ATHLETE FALL-TO-FALL RETENTION

Athletes are retained at higher rates than non-athlete students due to the commitment to and interest in participating in college athletics; also, a correlation may be made between participation and the impact of support services many institutions provide.

The next two graphs show the retention rates for student athletes for the last three cohort years. UCA returned 89.3% of their Fall 2018 student-athlete cohort in Fall 2019, while UA Little Rock returned 81.1% from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019.

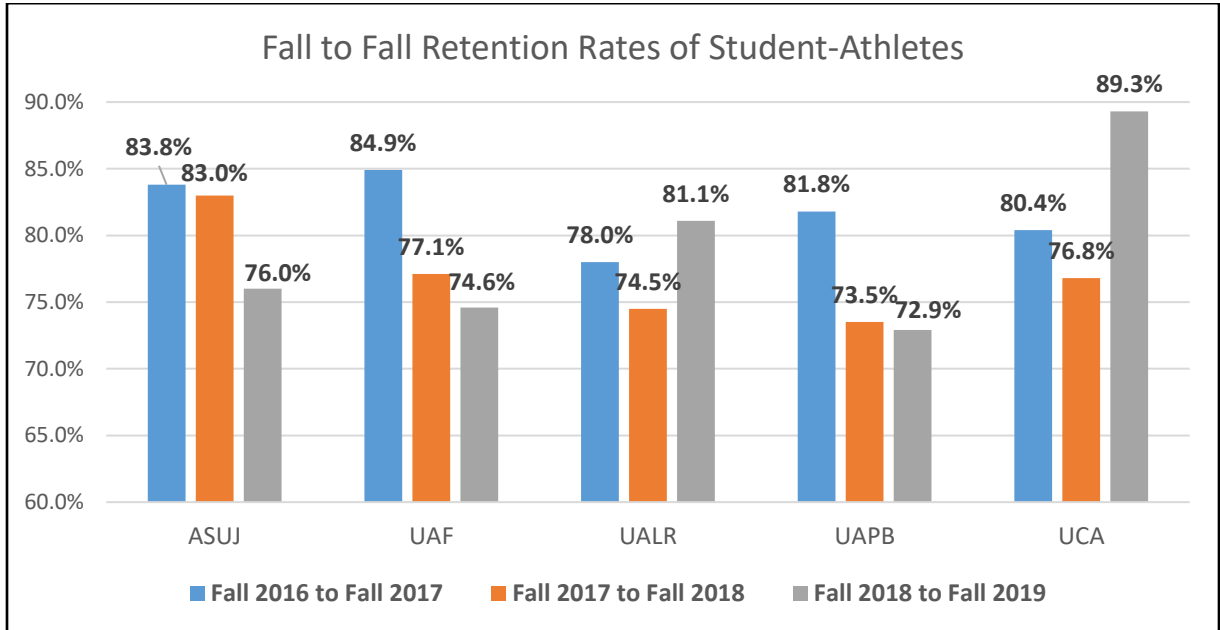


Chart 5.9: Retention Rate of Athletes by Institution

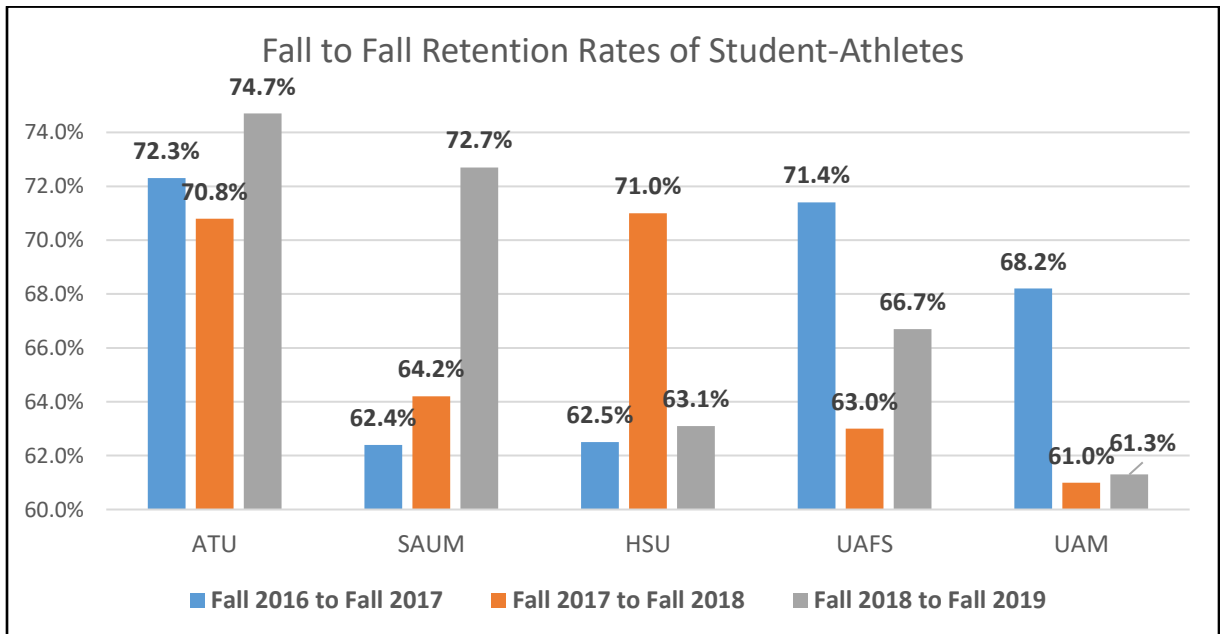


Chart 5.10: Retention Rate of Athletes by Institution

For our 2-year colleges, both ASU-MidSouth and NorthArk have had athletic programs long enough for a retention trend calculation.

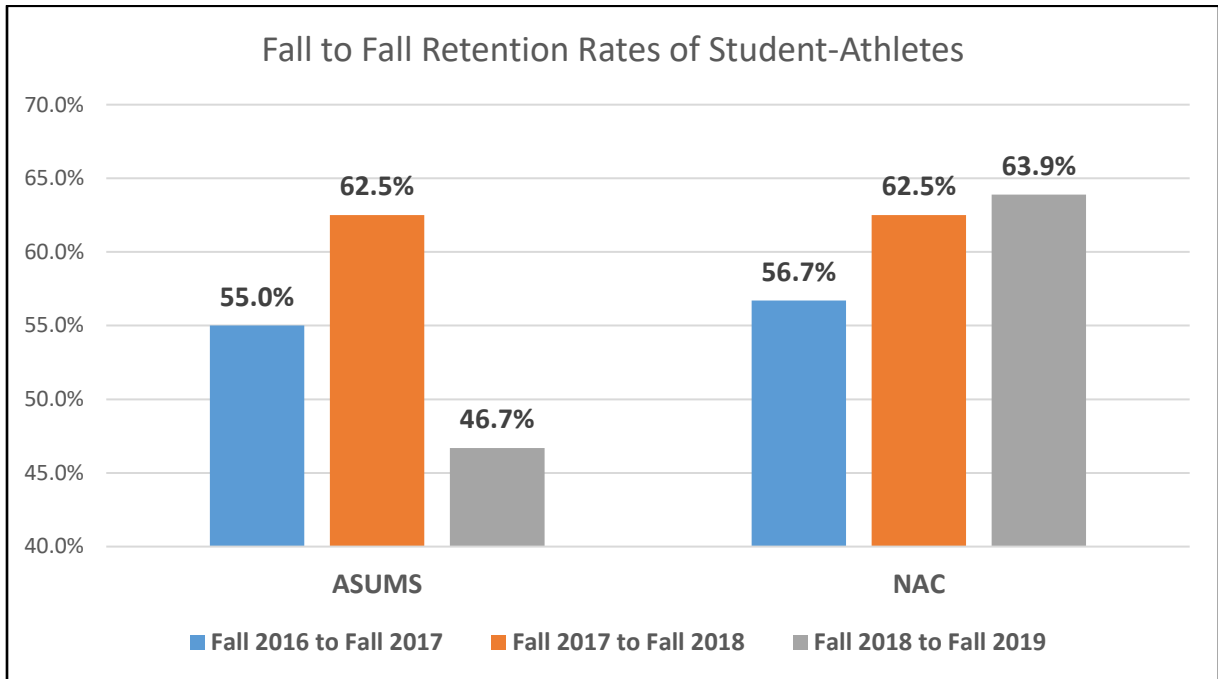


Chart 5.11: Retention Rate of Athletes by Institution

### STUDENT-ATHLETE GRADUATION RATES

The graduation rate calculations for student-athletes are based on the same methodology as the other graduation report. First-time in college, student-athletes enrolled for the first time define the cohorts. The chart below shows the graduation rate progression for three cohorts for the 4-year universities. Due to the varying sizes of the entering student-athlete cohorts each year, graduation rates for athletes tend to fluctuate more than rates of non-athletes.

Graduating in four years is considered graduating on time for a Bachelor’s degree. Two of our 4-year institutions have on time graduation rates above 40%. UAF reported a 46.6% graduation rate for the most recent cohort, Fall 2015, while UCA reported a 41.0% on time graduation rate for the Fall 2015 entering cohort.

Five other 4-year institutions reported a student-athlete 4-year graduation rate above 30% including UALR, UAPB, ATU, ASUJ, and HSU.

Three of our 4-year institutions reported a six-year graduation rate above 60% including UCA, UAF, and ASUJ as seen in Chart 5.14.



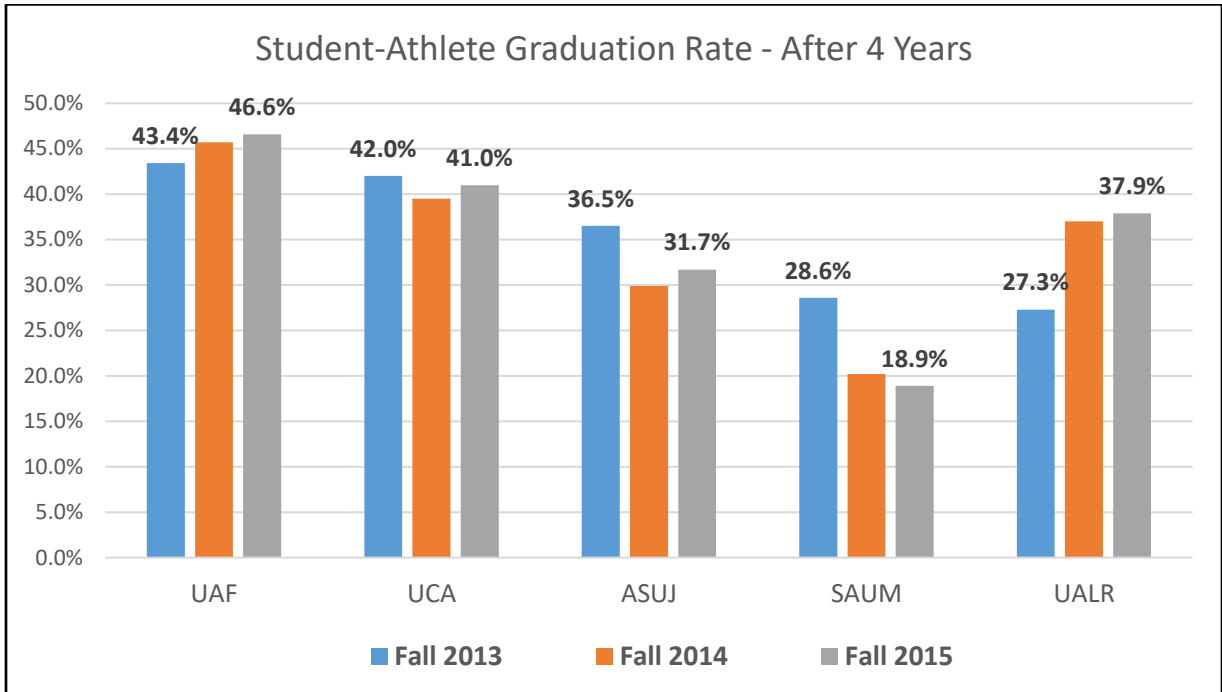


Chart 5.12: 100% Graduation Rates of Athletes by Institution-1

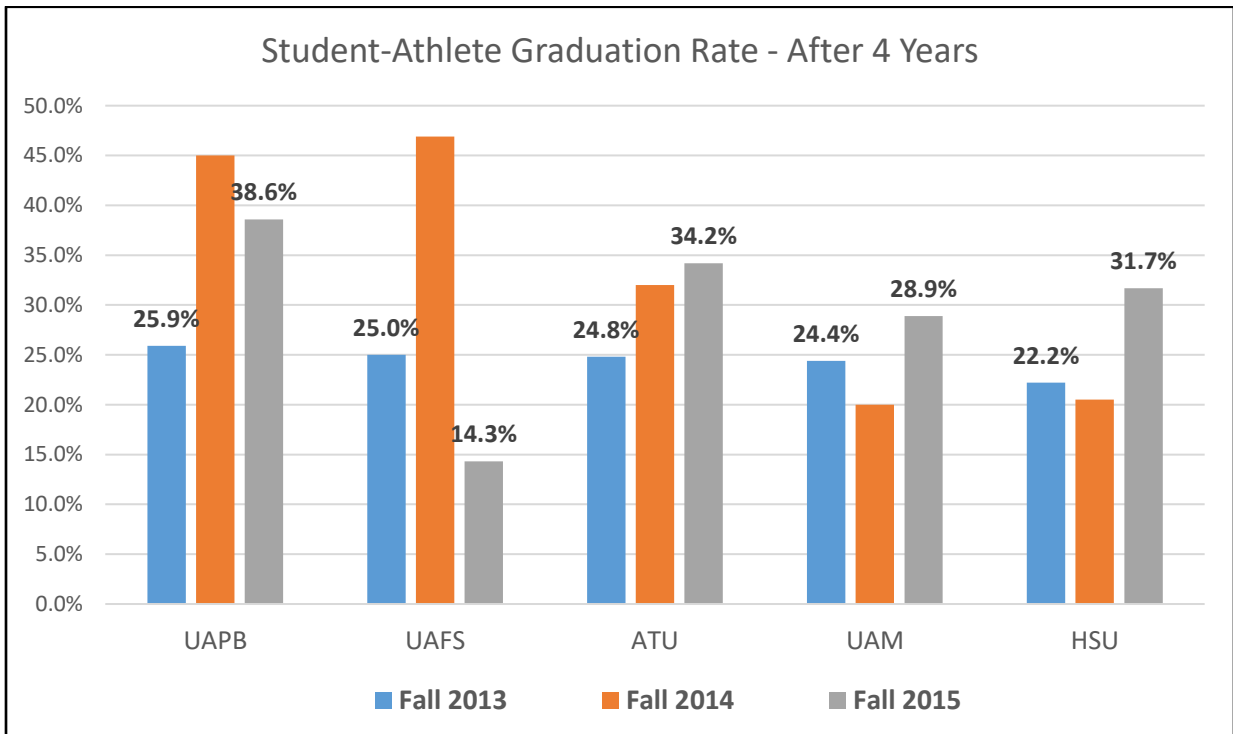


Chart 5.13: 100% Graduation Rates of Athletes by Institution-2

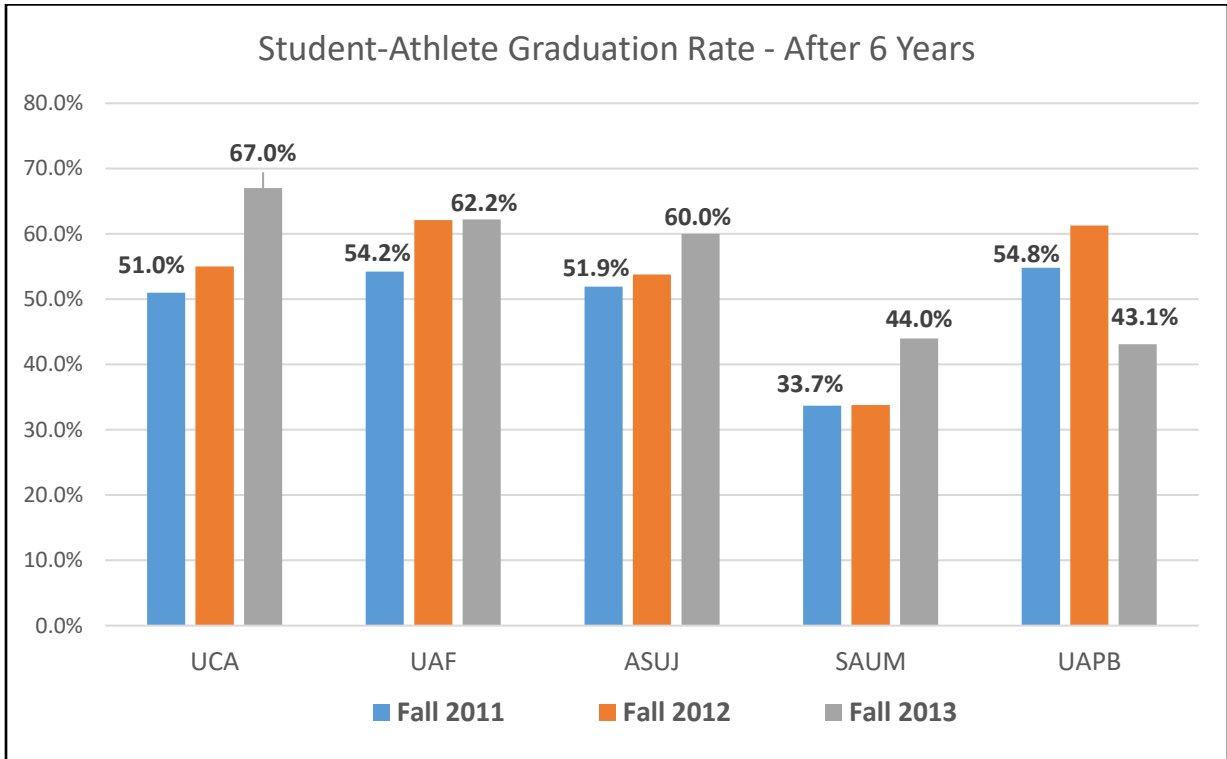


Chart 5.14: 150% Graduation Rates of Athletes by Institution-1

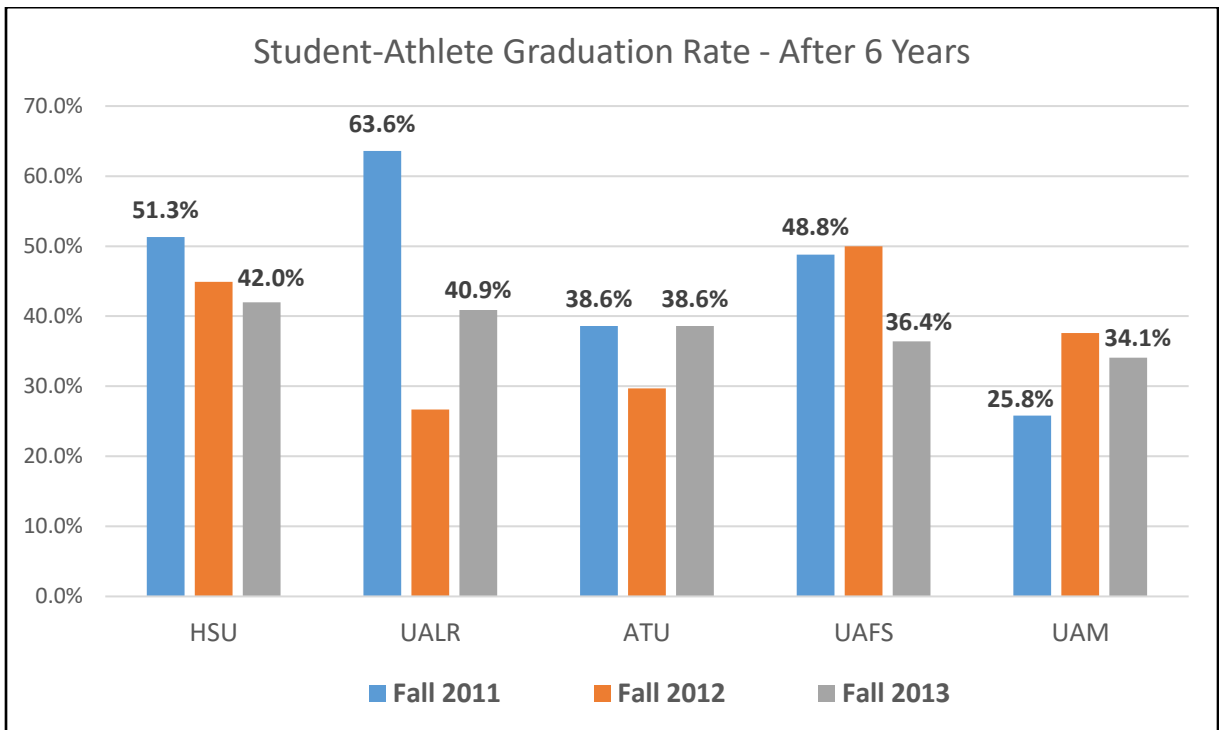


Chart 5.15: 150% Graduation Rates of Athletes by Institution-2