

Title: Student Right-to-Know Act
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Introduction

The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act (Public Law 101-542) was signed into law by President Bush on November 8, 1990. Title I of the Act, the Student Right-to-Know Act (the Act), amended section 485 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 by adding graduation/completion rate and student population information disclosure provisions for all colleges and universities that receive federal student aid. The Act was amended by the Higher Education Technical Amendments of 1991 (Public Law 102-26) and the Higher Education Technical Amendments of 1993 (Public Law 103-208). On October 7, 1998, the Act was again amended when President Clinton signed into law the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 (Public Law 105-244).

The Act requires colleges and universities to disclose information about graduation or completion rates to current and prospective students, upon request, and to provide certain types of data regarding the institution's student population and the graduation or completion rates of categories of student athletes to the Department of Education and certain individuals who are identified in the law. Noncompliance with the requirements of the Act will affect an institution's continued participation in the Title IV student financial assistance programs authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The general policies and procedures that follow have been formulated to facilitate Boston College's implementation of the requirements of the Act.

Definitions

Athletically-related student aid is defined by the November 1, 1999, Student Assistance General Provisions Final Rule as any scholarship, grant, or other form of financial assistance offered by an institution, the terms of which require the recipient to participate in a program of intercollegiate athletics at the institution. Other student aid, of which a student athlete simply happens to be the recipient, is not athletically-related student aid.

Certificate- or degree-seeking student is defined by the November 1, 1999, Student Assistance General Provisions Final Rule as a student enrolled in a course of credit who is recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or certificate.

First-time undergraduate student is defined by the November 1, 1999, Student Assistance General Provisions Final Rule as an entering undergraduate who has never attended any institution of higher education. Included in this definition are students enrolled in the fall term who attended a postsecondary institution for the first time in the prior summer term, and students who entered with advanced standing (college credit earned before graduation from high school).

Full-time student is defined in section 668.2 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations as an enrolled student who is carrying a full-time academic work load (other than by correspondence) as determined by the institution under a standard applicable to all students enrolled in a particular program. The student's workload may include any combination of courses, work, research, or special studies that the institution considers sufficient to classify the student as a full-time student. However, for an undergraduate student, an institution's minimum standard must equal or exceed the following minimum requirements: 12 semester hours or 12 quarter hours per academic term in an educational program using a semester, trimester, or quarter system.

Normal time is defined by the November 1, 1999, Student Assistance General Provisions Final Rule as the amount of time necessary for a student to complete all requirements for a degree or certificate according to the institution's catalog. This is typically four years for a bachelor's degree in a standard term-based institution.

Official fall reporting date is defined by the November 1, 1999, Student Assistance General Provisions Final Rule as the date (in the fall) on which an institution must report fall enrollment data to either the state, its board of trustees or governing board, or some other external governing body.

Prospective employee is defined by the November 1, 1999, Student Assistance General Provisions Final Rule as an individual who has contacted an eligible institution for the purpose of requesting information concerning employment with that institution.

Prospective student is defined by the November 1, 1999, Student Assistance General Provisions Final Rule as an individual who has contacted an eligible institution requesting information concerning admission to that institution.

Undergraduate students are defined by the November 1, 1999, Student Assistance General Provisions Final Rule as students enrolled in a bachelor's degree program, an associate degree program, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate.

Sport is defined by the Student Right-to-Know Act as 1) basketball, 2) football, 3) baseball, 4) cross-country and track combined, and 5) all other sports combined.

Policy

Boston College complies with the requirements of Title I of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act, the Student Right-to-Know Act. The requirements of Title I are as follows:

- I. Information on completion or graduation rates
 - (a) Each institution that participates in the Title IV student financial assistance programs must prepare annually the completion or graduation rate of its certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time undergraduate students, as provided in paragraph (1)(d) below.
 - (b) An institution that determines that its mission includes providing substantial preparation for students to enroll in another eligible institution must prepare the transfer-out rate of its certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time undergraduate students. Boston College's mission does not include providing substantial preparation for its students to transfer to a program at another eligible institution.
 - (c) An institution that offers a predominant number of its programs based on semesters, trimesters, or quarters must base its completion or graduation rate and, if applicable, transfer-out rate calculations on the cohort of first-time, certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time undergraduate students who enter the institution during the fall term of each year. An institution must count as entering students only first-time undergraduate students who are enrolled as of October 15, the end of the institution's drop-add period, or another official reporting date.
 - (d) In calculating the completion or graduation rate under paragraph (1)(a), an institution must count as completed or graduated students who have completed or graduated by the end of the 12-month period ending August 31 during which 150 percent of the normal time for completion or graduation from their program has lapsed. For the purpose of calculating a completion or graduation rate, an institution may exclude students who 1) have left school to serve in the Armed Forces; 2) have left school to serve on official

church missions; 3) have left school to serve with a foreign aid service of the federal government, such as the Peace Corps; 4) are totally and permanently disabled; or 5) are deceased.

- (e) An institution must make available its completion or graduation rate no later than the July 1 immediately following the 12-month period ending August 31 during which 150 percent of the normal time for completion or graduation has elapsed for all of the students in the group on which the institution bases its completion or graduation rate calculations. This information is to be made available to any enrolled or prospective student, upon request, through appropriate publications, mailings, or electronic media. In the case of a request from a prospective student, the information must be made available prior to the student's enrolling or entering into any financial obligation with the institution.

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3. Report on completion or graduation rates for student athletes

Annually, by July 1, each institution that participates in the Title IV student financial assistance programs and that is attended by students who receive athletically-related student aid must produce a report that contains the following information:

- (a) The number of students, categorized by race and gender, who attended that institution during the year prior to the submission of the report.
- (b) The number of students described in paragraph (2)(a) who received athletically-related student aid, categorized by race and gender within each sport.
- (c) The completion or graduation rate and, if applicable, transfer-out rate of all entering, certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time, undergraduate students described in paragraph (1)(a) above.
- (d) The completion or graduation rate and, if applicable, transfer-out rate of the entering students described in paragraph (1)(a) who received athletically-related student aid, categorized by race and gender within each sport.
- (e) The average completion or graduation rate and, if applicable, transfer-out rate for the four most recent completing or graduating classes of entering students described in paragraph (1)(a) categorized by race and gender. If an institution has completion or graduation rates and, if applicable, transfer-out rates for fewer than four of those classes, it must disclose the average rate of those classes for which it has rates.
- (f) The average completion or graduation rate and, if applicable, transfer-out rate of the four most recent completing or graduating classes of entering students described in paragraph (1)(a) who received athletically-related student aid, categorized by race and gender within each sport. If an institution has completion or graduation rates and, if applicable, transfer-out rates for fewer than four of those classes, it must disclose the average rate of those classes for which it has rates.

The provisions of paragraph (1) above apply for purposes of calculating the completion or graduation rates and, if applicable, transfer-out rates required under paragraphs (2)(c) through (2)(f). However, in determining their athletic cohorts, term-based institutions are allowed to include athletes who receive athletically-related student aid at any time during the academic year in which their cohorts are established.

Except under the circumstances described below, when an institution offers a prospective student athlete athletically-related student aid, it must provide to the prospective student athlete, and his or her parents, high school coach, and guidance counselor, the report produced pursuant to paragraph (2) above. An institution's responsibility with reference

to a prospective student athlete's high school coach and guidance counselor is satisfied if:

- The institution is a member of a national collegiate athletic association;
- The association compiles data on behalf of its member institutions, which data the Secretary of Education determines are substantially comparable to those required by paragraph (2); and
- The association distributes the compilation to all secondary schools in the United States.

Each institution is also required to submit to the Secretary of Education, by July 1 of each year, the report produced pursuant to paragraph (2).

The Secretary of Education grants a waiver of the data collection requirements described above to any institution that is a member of an athletic association or conference that has voluntarily published completion or graduation rate data, or has agreed to publish such data, that the Secretary determines are substantially comparable to the data required by the Student Right-to-Know Act. An institution that receives a waiver for substantially comparable data gathered by an athletic association or conference must still comply with the information dissemination provisions of the statute and regulations.

The Academic Vice President has overall responsibility for implementing, monitoring, and enforcing the provisions of this policy. The Dean for Enrollment Management and the Director of Athletics are responsible for implementing, monitoring, and enforcing specific procedures as stipulated by the policy.

Procedures

The Dean for Enrollment Management is responsible for compiling the completion or graduation rate data required in paragraph (1). The Dean is also responsible for disclosing this information to current and prospective students in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (1)(e). The information is to be disclosed through publication in the BOSTON COLLEGE BULLETIN.

The Dean for Enrollment Management, the Director of Athletics, and the Director of Learning Resources for Student Athletes are responsible for compiling the information required in paragraph (2). The Director of Athletics is responsible for disclosing this information to prospective student athletes and their parents, high school coaches, and guidance counselors. The information is to be disclosed in correspondence that is standard to the recruiting process. The Director of Athletics may elect to satisfy the University's responsibility to disclose this information to high school coaches and guidance counselors by verifying that the applicable disclosures are made by the NCAA each year. The University Secretary, in coordination with the Dean for Enrollment Management, is to ensure that the information required in paragraph (2) is incorporated in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Survey's Graduation Rate Survey for submission to the Department of Education by July 1 of each year.

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