

New Faculty Orientation 2024 -- Profile of GVSU Students

Following are a few facts and resources to highlight characteristics of GVSU's student body.

Demographics -- First generation students (those for whom neither parent earned a four-year degree) account for more than 1/3 of our students. At GVSU, our first-generation students enter with very similar qualifications to other students, but they face additional challenges. On average, they express less confidence in their academic ability, and they report weaker social connections on campus. As you'd expect, these challenges are mingled with considerations of wealth, transfer history, employment, and other factors. They also involve a separate layer of cultural capital and expectations that each student experiences differently. Faculty members can help by reviewing the ways we interact with students and the expectations we have of them. Are they understood by all students? Are they fair?

Academic Preparation – Every GVSU student is capable of succeeding and thriving in college. Our students' entering credentials describe a group that is well prepared for university study.

	First-time-in-Any-College (FTIAC)		Undergrad Transfer	New Graduate Student*
	H.S. GPA	SAT	GPA	Undergrad GPA
Average	3.46	1069	3.18	3.38
25th percentile	3.10	950	2.82	3.12
75th percentile	3.91	1180	3.60	3.66

(census data for Fall 2023 entering students)

* Graduate student data vary more between programs than within them, so faculty who will be teaching graduate students are encouraged to consider the data for their particular program(s) at <https://reports.ia.gvsu.edu/pgmsumm/index.html>.

However, demographic change and experiences related to the effects of Covid-19 have led to an increase in entering undergraduate students with high school GPA's below 3.0. All of our learners have strengths and value to enrich our community, and we strive to recognize and nurture the potential in each one. Students with less illustrious high school performance have often shown great resilience in the face of challenging circumstances. We encourage faculty members to seek ways to direct each student's strengths toward academic success and fulfillment, recognizing that those strengths may not have always been rewarded in the past.

Wellness and School-Life Balance – While our students are capable academically, they also come with a huge variety of non-academic challenges.

The change in the data from pre-COVID to post-COVID is striking. Students were dealing with a lot of non-classroom issues before the pandemic, and the reported impact of many factors increased markedly and remains high. Students vary wildly in the degree to which they're affected by these factors, and in the skills and resources they have to overcome them. As faculty members, you aren't expected to

diagnose or resolve each student's issues, but please always be mindful that talent and diligence aren't the only factors that affect your students' performance.

Retention and Graduation – GVSU's retention and graduation rates are higher than those at most public universities. Even so, only 4 in 9 graduates within four years, and around 2/3 graduate within six years. The chart below illustrates the progress of a single cohort over six years. The upper (blue) line shows the percentage of the cohort who remain enrolled (or have graduated) over time – so the downward slope indicates students who dropped or transferred out. The lower line shows the cumulative percentage who have graduated.

The path to better retention and graduation rates is not through lowered academic standards. We will maintain standards while we continue to look for better ways to support students and reduce barriers to their success. In particular, we have an ethical obligation to clear away impediments that affect our students differentially. If you're interested, please explore the [data on equity in our retention and graduation rates](#).

(As above, graduate programs' mileage may vary. You can see rates for particular programs [in this report](#).)