15 to Finish:
An On-Time Completion Strategy

Introductory Materials

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Definition

- Marketing/ advising campaign that encourages students to enroll in more credits, graduate on time, and enter the workforce faster[1]

- Designed to educate students that 'full-time' enrollment (usually 12 credits per term) is not sufficient to complete a 120-credit bachelor's degree in 4 years

- Strategy recommends students to enroll in 15 credits per Fall/Spring semester in order to graduate in 4 years

  - Assumes 15 credit/semester enrollment from first term and no credit from other sources

- Championed by Complete College America as a critical strategy for increasing on-time degree completion[1]

[1] https://completecollege.org/strategy/15-to-finish/

National History

- Established in 2010 at the University of Hawaii[1]

- Part of the Hawaii Graduation Initiative (HGI) to spur achievement towards the state's 55 x 25 attainment goal[2]

- Strategy "developed based on research that showed students who took 15 credits or more perform better academically than students taking fewer than 15 credits"[3]

- Original ad spot viewable here: https://vimeo.com/91965988

[1] https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/vp-academic-strategy/15-to-finish/
[2] https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/vp-academic-strategy/hgi/
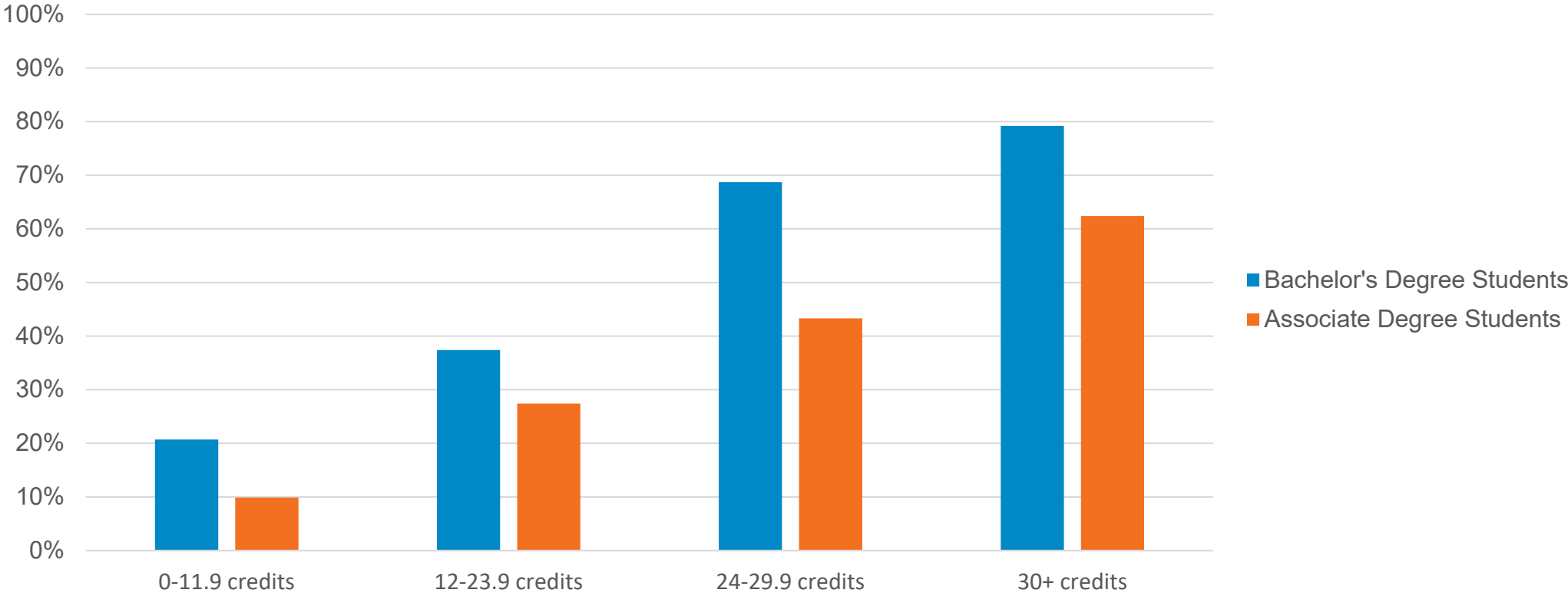[3] https://manoa.hawaii.edu/news/article.php?aId=6886

Review of National Data

Percentage of Degree Program Entrants in 2003-04 Earning a Degree Anywhere by 2008-09

Source: Complete College America, The Power of 15 Credits
(https://completecollege.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CCA-Intensity-Brief-April3-1.pdf)

Initiative History in Kentucky

- Marketing campaign led by CPE from 2013-2014

- Radio ads and media coverage targeted students, encouraging them to enroll in 15 credits

- Support/education also provided to academic advisors through convenings

Initiative History in Kentucky

- Research published 'Momentum and Student Success in Kentucky: The Power of 15 Credits' in July 2018[1]

- Report garnered news attention and energized college/university advising and communication efforts
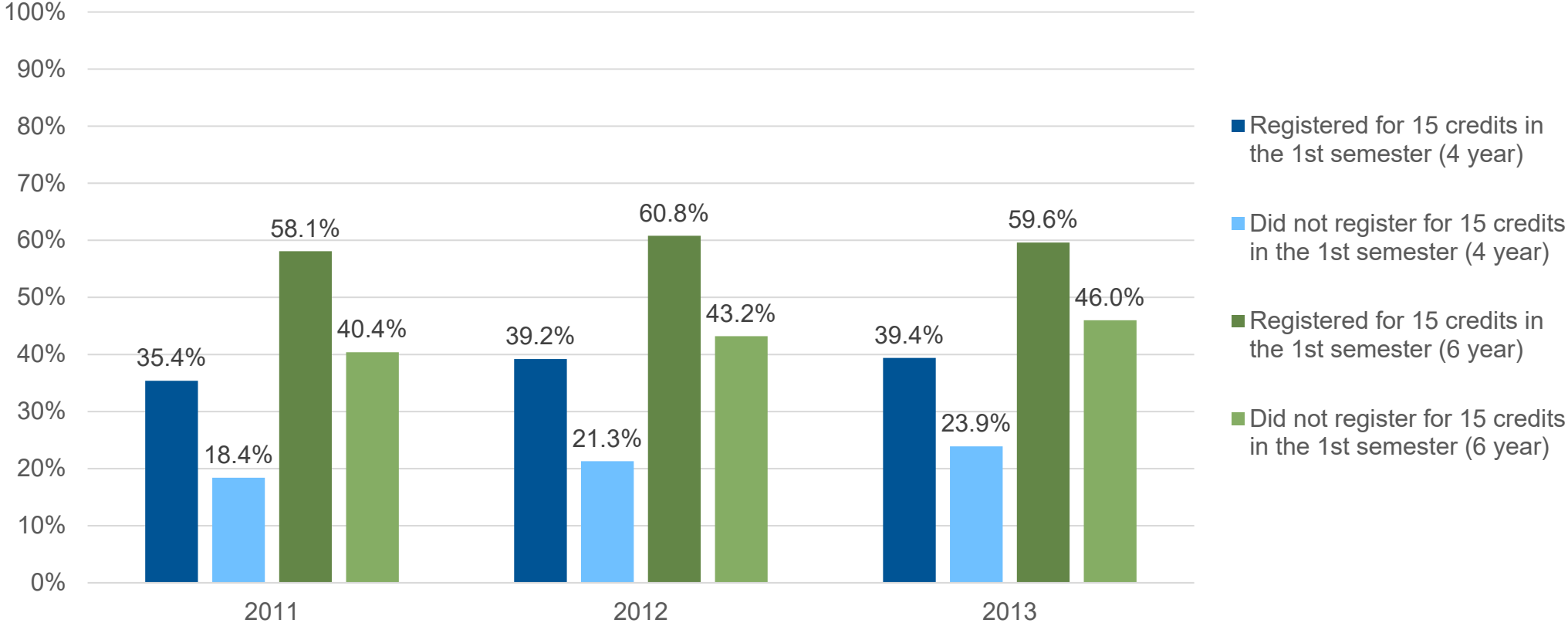
  https://www.lanereport.com/103155/2018/07/cpe-urges-college-freshmen-to-take-15-credits-a-semester-30-a-year-for-on-time-graduation/

Momentum and Student Success in Kentucky

The Power of 15 Credits

July 2018

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

[1] http://cpe.ky.gov/data/reports/academicmomentumreport.pdf

Kentucky Data Context: Highlights from 'The Power of 15 Credits'

Kentucky Public University Graduation Rates for Students Attempting 15 Credits in the First Term

Legend:
- Registered for 15 credits in the 1st semester (4 year)
- Did not register for 15 credits in the 1st semester (4 year)
- Registered for 15 credits in the 1st semester (6 year)
- Did not register for 15 credits in the 1st semester (6 year)

2011: 35.4% / 18.4% / 58.1% / 40.4%
2012: 39.2% / 21.3% / 60.8% / 43.2%
2013: 39.4% / 23.9% / 59.6% / 46.0%

Kentucky Data Context: Highlights from 'The Power of 15 Credits'

Growth of Students Enrolling in 15+ Credit Hours in the First Semester at Kentucky's Public Universities
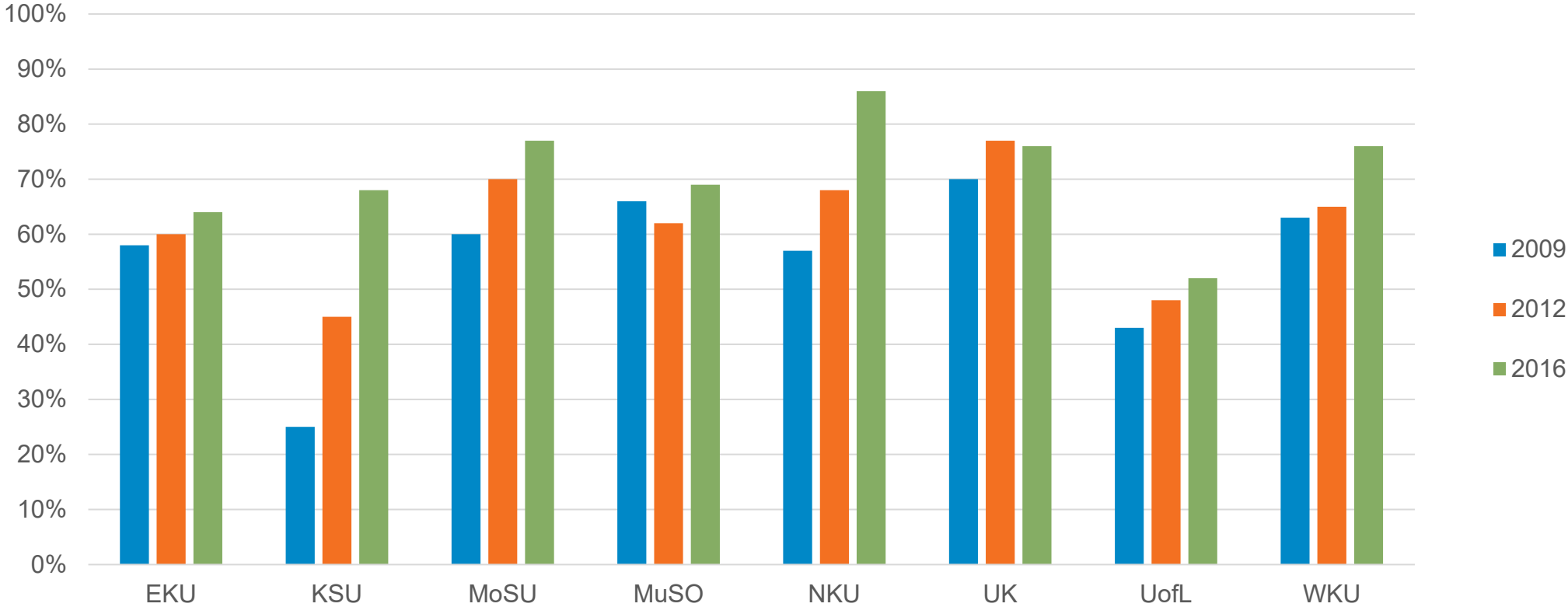
Campus Practices that Support On-time Completion

Banded Tuition	Credit Caps	Academic Program Maps	Intentional Course Schedule	Summer Course Availability	Proactive Academic Advising
• provides financial incentives to attempt 15 credits	• degree program credit caps at 60 and 120: ensures students complete in 2 or 4 years at 15 credits/term	• demonstrate which courses students should enroll in and in which order, accounts for toxic course combinations	• considers 15 credit-based program maps and ensures course availability to students seeking on-time completion	• provides flexibility for students who choose to spread credit accumulation but still finish on time	• recommends 15 credit enrollment and discusses on-time completion strategies frequently

Campus-Created Communications Examples

- Create a university-hosted website with information and statistics about on-time degree completion strategies

  – WKU: https://www.wku.edu/15tofinish/

- Utilize student voice to show impact of on-time credit completion

  – UK: https://www.as.uky.edu/15-finish-simple-success-strategy-uk-students

Applications to Advising Students

Encourage taking 15 credits per semester (including 1st semester)

Utilize winter and summer terms to accumulate 30 credits each academic year

Discuss tuition/ cost benefits of enrolling in 12 vs. 15 credits per semester

Account for credit from other sources (transfer, AP, credit for prior learning) when setting completion goals

Twitter: CPENews and CPEPres   Websites: http://cpe.ky.gov and http://kyhigheredmatters.org   Facebook: KYCPE

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