

## SECTION 8: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**SACSCOC STANDARD 8.1. The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.**

*(Student achievement)* **[Core Requirement]**

Note: The asterisk (\*) below indicates the specific metric required by SACSCOC for measuring graduation rate and analyzing that measure of student success and a discussion of the changes the University has implemented to improve student achievement for that measure for all students, as well as those groups of students specifically served by Tusculum.

### TUSCULUM UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT:

Building on a rich Presbyterian heritage and a pioneering spirit, Tusculum University provides an active and experiential education within a caring Christian environment to inspire civic engagement, enrich personal lives, and equip career-ready professionals.

(Approved by the Tusculum University Board of Trustees on May 30, 2020)

The University last reviewed its mission during the 2019-20 academic year. After undertaking a thorough process that involved benchmarking against similar colleges and universities and conducting feedback sessions, surveys, and focus groups with over 400 constituents, the administration presented a revised mission statement to the Board of Trustees at the 698th Meeting of the Board of Trustees on May 30, 2020. The revised statement was approved unanimously.

The mission statement is specific to Tusculum University and addresses its objective of teaching and learning via an active and experiential education. It is distinctive and reflects the University's commitment to the provision of an education within a caring Christian environment. Lastly, the statement articulates the vision for Tusculum to inspire civic engagement, enrich personal lives, and equip career-ready professionals. It is both descriptive of who the University is and also aspirational for who it strives to be.

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOALS AND OUTCOMES:

#### A. STUDENT PERSISTENCE TO GRADUATION\*

##### MEASURE A-1:

ONE-YEAR RETENTION RATE: Percentage of first-time, full-time students returning for second year.  
TARGET: 60%

Table 1 – Full-time, First-time One-Year Retention Rates

	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
% Returning for 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fall Semester	59%	57%	50%	62%	59%	68%	65%	54%	62%	67%

The University **exceeded its target** for the last two cohorts.

**MEASURE A-2:**

SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE: Percentage of first-time, full-time students graduating within six years.

TARGET: 40%

Table 2 – Full-time, First-time Six-Year Graduation Rates

	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
% Graduating within Six Years	37%	38%	28%	34%	36%	36%	41%	33%	31%	41%

The University **exceeded its target** for the Fall 2013 full-time, first-time cohort after missing the target for the two consecutive cohorts prior.

**MEASURE A-3:**

FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME ONE-YEAR RETENTION AND SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES: Rolling three-year average of one-year retention rate and six-year graduation rate.

TARGET: At or above median value of SACSCOC Comparison Group\*

Table 3 – Full-time, First-time One-Year Retention & Six-Year Graduation Rates (3-Yr Avg. for 2010-2012 Cohorts)

		One-Year Retention (3-Yr Average)	Six-Year Graduation (3-Yr Average)
<b>Tusculum University</b>	<b>TN</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Peer Median</b>		<b>60%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Averett University	VA	60%	41%
Belhaven University	MS	66%	45%
Bluefield College	VA	55%	27%
Campbellsville University	KY	63%	37%
Faulkner University	AL	55%	28%
Ferrum College	VA	52%	31%
Greensboro College	NC	67%	33%
Kentucky Wesleyan College	KY	68%	37%
Limestone College	SC	51%	31%
Lindsey Wilson College	KY	60%	34%
Mars Hill University	NC	60%	35%

		<b>One-Year Retention (3-Yr Average)</b>	<b>Six-Year Graduation (3-Yr Average)</b>
North Carolina Wesleyan College	NC	60%	27%
Union College	KY	62%	29%
University of Pikeville	KY	Not Applicable	29%

Source: IPEDS

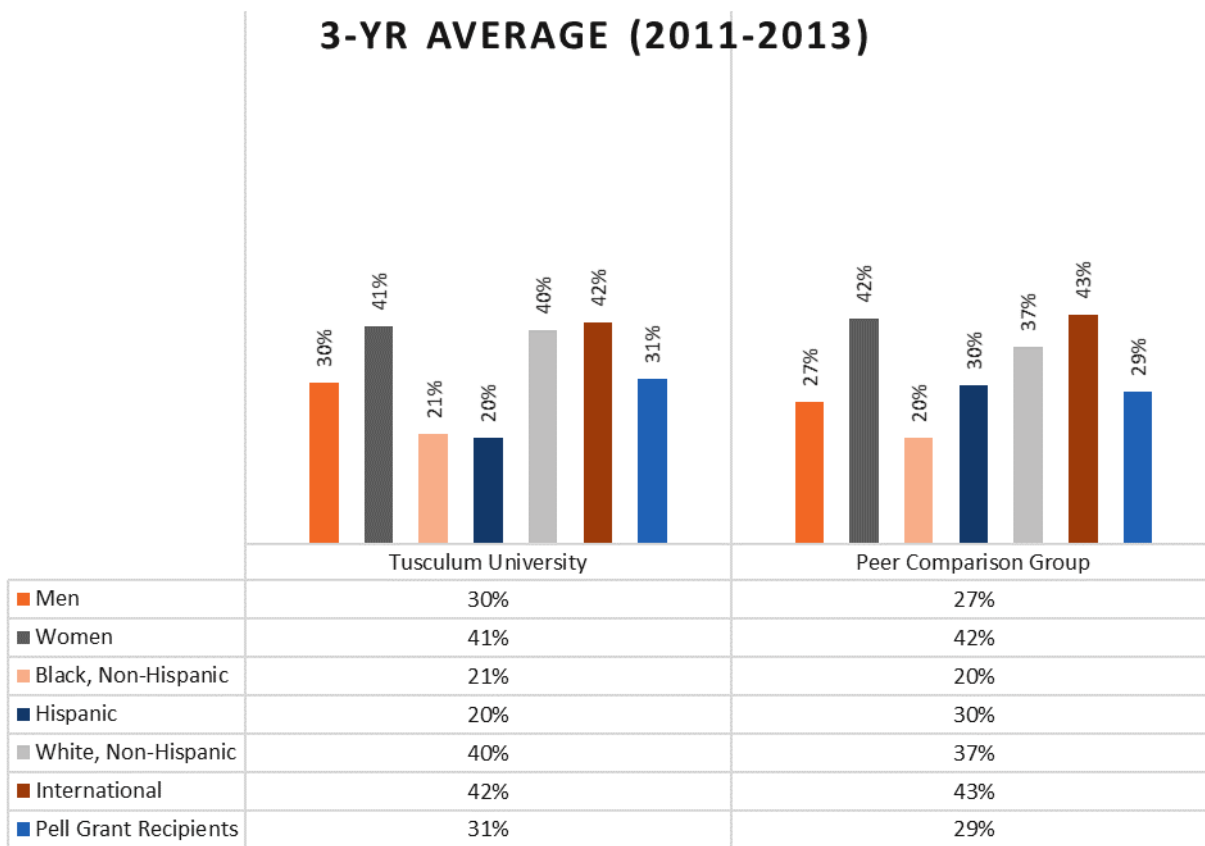
The University **exceeded its target** for both the one-year retention rate and six-year graduation rate measures.

**MEASURE A-4:**

SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE: Disaggregated rolling three-year average of six-year graduation rates for distinct student populations served by Tusculum.

TARGET: At or above median value of SACSCOC Comparison Group

**PERCENTAGE OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS  
GRADUATING WITHIN SIX YEARS  
3-YR AVERAGE (2011-2013)**



**Figure 1**

The extent to which the University **met its target varied by student group**, but for the most part the rates for Tusculum were comparable to the peer comparison groups.

## DISCUSSION OF CHANGES IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERSISTENCE TO GRADUATION\*

The University has worked diligently to bring up its one-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates and is extremely pleased to see that the efforts are making a difference in the success and achievement of its students.

The following list describes initiatives over the prior two years:

- *Academic Alert* - For Fall 2020, the institution adopted a new Academic Alert system for faculty to notify students' advisors of any concerns related to attendance, assignments, or engagement in class. Faculty are to complete the alert at the end of week 3 for full-semester courses, and at the end of week 2 for 7-week session courses.
- *Midterm Grades* – Prior to fall 2020, faculty reported student academic progress through a progress report system. Faculty completed the report, and data were collected by a staff member who reviewed the reports and assigned other staff members to connect with students of concern. Advisors and students had no access to data about course-level academic progress. Beginning fall 2020, the institution has adopted a midterm grade model. Midterm grades are to be entered by faculty for all courses within a week after the midpoint of each term. Midterm grades are a quantifiable indicator of student academic progress that can be viewed by students and advisors online and can inform students' need for additional supports.
- *Change of deadline for course withdrawal* – In past years, the deadline to withdraw from a course was halfway through the semester. For some courses, students had to make a decision about course withdrawal before knowing the results of their midterm exams/assignments. Effective Fall 2020, the last day to drop a course with a W has been moved to week 13 of the semester. Students whose midterm grade is low now have time to seek support and improve their grade prior to making a decision about whether to withdraw from a course. The additional time is intended to support students to stay on track academically.
- *New 7-week sessions* – The university began offering 7-week sessions Fall 2020. Students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress or who have to drop a course early in the semester have the opportunity to enroll in a 7-week course during the second half of the semester.
- *Technology infrastructure* – The University switched its learning management system to Canvas, which has a higher satisfaction rate for students and has been shown to positively impact retention.

- *Orientation and Advising Reform* – The University retooled its first-year experience course, OREN 105 – The Tusculum Experience, to a 7-week format to quickly introduce students to Tusculum University and culminate in a deeper understanding and appreciation for the university's distinct commitment to the civic arts, as well as its rich history and traditions. Additionally, students will develop the prerequisite skillsets necessary to successfully navigate the university experience in a timely manner (within the first seven weeks). The University also changed its advising philosophy to align faculty advisors and the Tusculum Experience course instructors with students from the same chosen field of study and
- *SOCAT* – The Student of Concern Assistance Team (SOCAT), coordinated through the Office of Student Affairs, works with students who may be distressed or whose behavior is of concern to others. SOCAT provides support and assistance to students before more significant problems arise. It is a multi-disciplinary campus committee and includes representatives from Student Affairs, Campus Safety, Student Support Services (SSS), and Counseling and ADA Services. Representatives from other TU campus offices are consulted as needed. The main focus for SOCAT is to offer supportive intervention and guidance to any Tusculum University campus student who is having difficulty. The goal is to help the student focus on academic success, avert more serious difficulties, and ensure the safety of both the student and the Tusculum community.
- *Academic Support Counselor* – The University revised the Academic Support Counselor position to serve as a first-responder to at-risk students who have been identified through a variety of the University's early warning programs. The Counselor is responsible for responding to and following up with at-risk students ensuring they have access to academic support resources.
- *Athletic Academic Advisor* – The Athletic Academic Advisor was added in spring 2018 to assist in the advisement of all student-athletes on their academics, choice of majors, and path to graduation. The goal of this position is to improve student athletic eligibility as well as increase graduation rates.
- *Pioneer Peers* – The University's peer mentoring program, which utilizes a group of model upper-level students called Pioneer Peers to mentor incoming first-time students prior to matriculation and continuing through the first year, was implemented in 2018. The Pioneer Peers assist in new students' transition to Tusculum and provide insight into the college process.
- *Tutoring and Academic Support* – In Fall 2018, the Tutoring Center introduced online tutoring. In addition, the services offered were revised to include:
  - Drop-in tutoring each day of the week with the exception of Saturday with math and English tutors available from 9 am to 5 pm;

- Evening tutoring sessions available from 7p.m. to 9 p.m. that provide academic support for all majors offered at Tusculum University; and
- One-on-one tutoring or online tutoring that may be scheduled outside of the regular hours of operation.

In Spring 2020, the Center for Academic Support and Tutoring purchased TutorOcean as a way to expand tutoring services to all students. The app allows students to chat with tutors and upload work they would like reviewed. Additionally, TutorOcean provides students with information about tutors, access to educational resources, and the ability to make appointments with specific tutors.

The Center also implemented a textbook loan program, which were provided via donations. On the first day of each semester, students who are Pell-eligible can borrow textbooks for the semester for their classes. After the first day of the semester, the program is available to all students to assist with required materials for classes. A majority of available textbooks are for courses which meet general core requirements. The Center has also provided general education books as well as some textbooks for upper-level courses to the Library to be used in a reserved manner. Students may request the textbook from the circulation desk and may use it within the library.

The Tutoring Center also recognized the need to provide additional resources for Tusculum's international students. Many of the University's international students are native Spanish speakers. In response, the Center hired a Spanish-speaking tutor to provide additional support for Tusculum's Spanish speaking students.

Finally, during Summer 2020, the Tutoring Center transitioned to Center for Academic Support and Tutoring and moved its operations from the library to a much larger space in a suite on the ground floor of the campus' largest instructional building, the Meen Center. The suite provides offices for tutoring staff, group instructional space, and 11 small rooms that can be used for tutoring as well as small group and individual study space. The new space allows for continued growth of Tusculum's tutoring services.

- *First-gen Forward* – The University has focused on improving the experience for and support provided to its first generation student population. In Fall 2019, the University highlighted its first-generation students with a weeklong series of events at its Greeneville, Knoxville and Morristown locations. The activities were part of First-Generation Celebration Week, during which several first-generation students spoke about their experiences.

The abundance of Tusculum’s programs and efforts to support first generation students not only resulted in improved persistence; but in March 2020, resulted in the university’s selection as a member of the First-gen Forward Cohort for 2020-21. This prestigious group of the Center for First-Generation Student Success is an initiative of NASPA, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, and the Suder Foundation.

## B. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & RESPONSIBILITY

Motivation to make a difference in the civic life of our communities for Tusculum students is measured by voting and registration rates from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). The NSLVE is a signature initiative of the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education (IDHE) at Tufts University's Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life. IDHE is an applied research center focused on college and university student political learning and participation in democracy. The voter registration and voting rates in this report reflect the percentage of your institution's students who were eligible to vote and who voted in federal elections. Results are based on enrollment records submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse and publicly available voting files collected by Catalist. Tusculum University has participated in the NSLVE since 2014.

### MEASURE B-1:

**VOTING RATES:** the percentage of an institution's students who were eligible to vote and who voted in federal elections.

**TARGET:** (a) a 3 percentage point increase in Tusculum’s voting rate from one period to another and (b) a voting rate that is at or above the voting rate for all institutions.

Table 4 – Voting Rates

<b>Presidential Election Years</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>+/-</b>
Tusculum	N/A	41%	N/A
All Institutions	48%	51%	+3%
<i>Difference from All Institutions</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>-10%</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Mid-term Election Years</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>+/-</b>
Tusculum	18%	33%	+15%
All Institutions	20%	39%	+19%
<i>Difference from All Institutions</i>	<i>-2%</i>	<i>-6%</i>	<i>-4%</i>

The target for this goal **was partially met**. It was achieved for Tusculum’s rates increasing from one period to the next, but not for the target of being at or above the voting rate for all institutions. It will be measured next in 2020 following the November general election (presidential election).

### MEASURE B-2:

**VOTER REGISTRATION RATES:** the percentage of an institution's students who were registered to vote.

TARGET: a 3 percentage point increase increase in Tusculum’s voter registration rate from one period to another. *Note: Voter registration rates for all institutions are not provided in the study.*

Table 5 – Voter Registration Rates

Presidential Election Years	2012	2016	+/-
Tusculum	N/A	66%	N/A
Mid-term Election Years	2014	2018	+/-
Tusculum	64%	72%	+8%

The target for this goal **was met**. It will be measured next in 2020 following the November general election (presidential election).

### C. LICENSURE AND PROFESSIONAL EXAMS

#### MEASURE C-1:

NCLEX-RN EXAM: The NCLEX exam, also known as the National Council Licensure Examination, is a standardized test that every state regulatory board uses to determine if a candidate is ready to become licensed as a nurse. It is administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing,

TARGET: The graduates of the Tusculum BSN program will attain the standard in the state of Tennessee, which is an 85% pass rate on the NCLEX-RN exam.

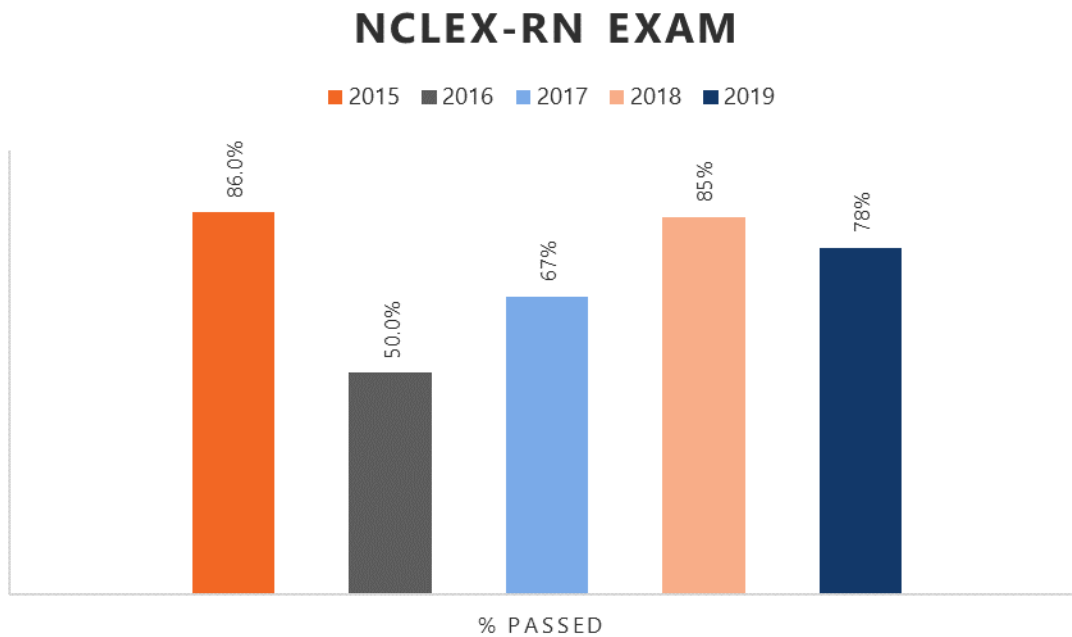


Figure 2



Table 6 – NCLEX-RN Exam

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Graduates	14	26	15	26	18	Pending
Passed NCLEX-RN Exam	12	13	10	22	14	
% Passed	86%	50%	67%	85%	78%	

\*Data Retrieved from the Tennessee Board of Nursing report

Official results of the 2020 NCLEX-RN results are pending as limitations of testing sites and availability of times is delayed from revisions due to the COVID-19/pandemic of 2020. As of July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, three of the spring 2020 graduates have self-reported to the College of Nursing of their 1<sup>st</sup> time pass rate success.

The target for this goal **was met** for two of the last five years.

**MEASURE C-2:**

FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER QUALIFYING EXAM: The American Association of Colleges of Nursing, Family Nurse Qualifying Exam.

TARGET: The target pass rate for the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, Family Nurse Qualifying Exam is 80%

Table 7 –Family Nurse Qualifying Exam Results

	Cohort	# Pass	Date	% Pass
2016-17 Cohort	FT	8	9/1/18	100%

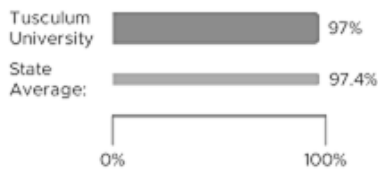
The target for this goal **was met**.

**MEASURE C-3:**

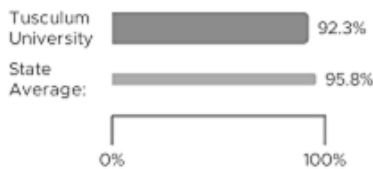
TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATE ASSESSMENTS: The Candidate Assessment domain as prepared on the Teacher Preparation Report Card from the Tennessee State Board of Education. The three assessments evaluate a University's performance in preparing candidates to pass the pedagogical and content-area assessments required to obtain a Tennessee teaching license.

TARGET: The % of Tusculum completers who pass the test will be at or above the state average.

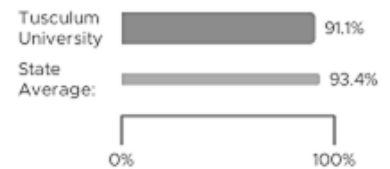
**Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) Pass Rate**



**edTPA Pass Rate**



**Praxis Subject Assessments Pass Rate**



**Figure 3**

The target for this goal **was nearly met**.

Table 7 – Praxis Results by Licensure Area

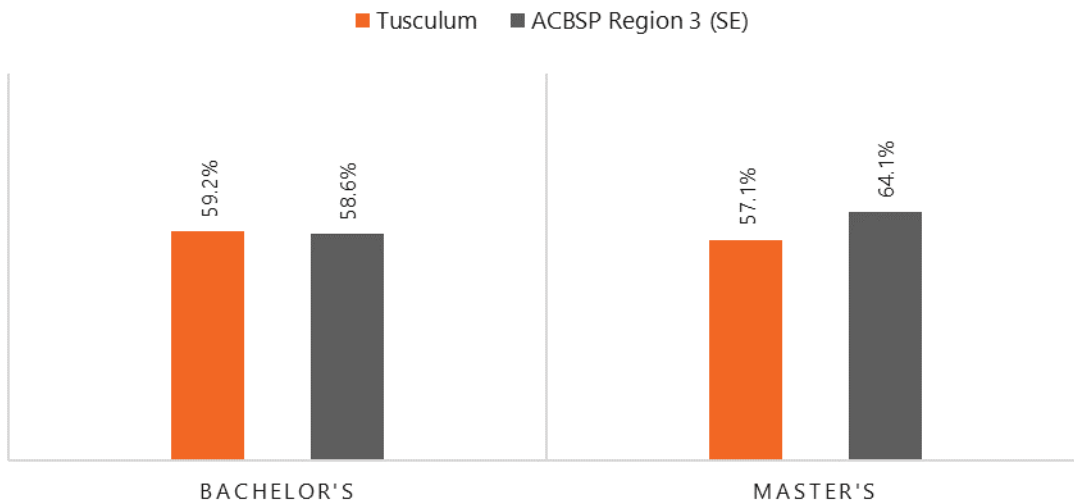
	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	Tusculum	Tenn.	Tusculum	Tenn.	Tusculum	Tenn.
<b>BAIS K-6</b>	97.1%	99.6%	87.5%	90.8%	93.2%	91.8%
<b>MAT K-6</b>	100%	98.5%	87.5%	90.8%	93.2%	91.8%
<b>MAT 7-12</b>	100%	100%	100%	90.6%	95.1%	89.8%

The target for this goal **was met** for 2017-18 and partially met for prior years.

**MEASURE C-4:**

**PEREGRINE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION OUTBOUND EXAM:** Peregrine Academic Services, the higher education division of Peregrine Global Services, provides nationally normed, summative assessment services used by institutions of higher education for internal and external programmatic evaluation. The assessment service is designed to address institutional and programmatic accreditation and certification requirements related to learning outcomes assessment, quality assurance, and external academic benchmarking. The Outbound Exam is administered to the students at the end of the academic program. **TARGET:** To score above the average for students from schools within the ACBSP Region 3 (Southeastern Region)

**PEREGRINE EXAM  
OUTBOUND 2019-20**



**Figure 4**

The target for this goal **was met** for undergraduate students and not met for graduate students for test takers during the 2019-20 academic year.

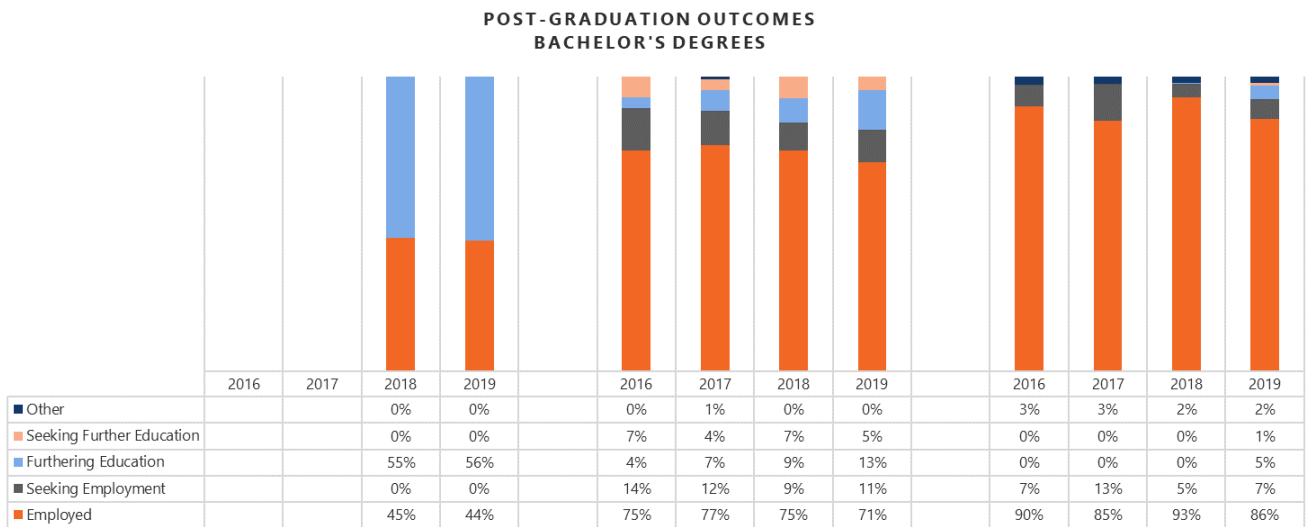
## D. POST-GRADUATION STUDENT SUCCESS

Tusculum University participates in the National Association of Colleges and Employer (NACE) First-Destination Survey (FDS). The FDS captures data for all degree levels and provides trend data and information regarding how new college graduates fare in their careers within six months of graduation.

### MEASURE D-1:

**POST-GRADUATION OUTCOMES BY DEGREE LEVEL:** The percentage of completers employed or enrolled in further education such as graduate school.

**TARGET:** To increase from the baseline year (2015-16) for % employed and % seeking further education.



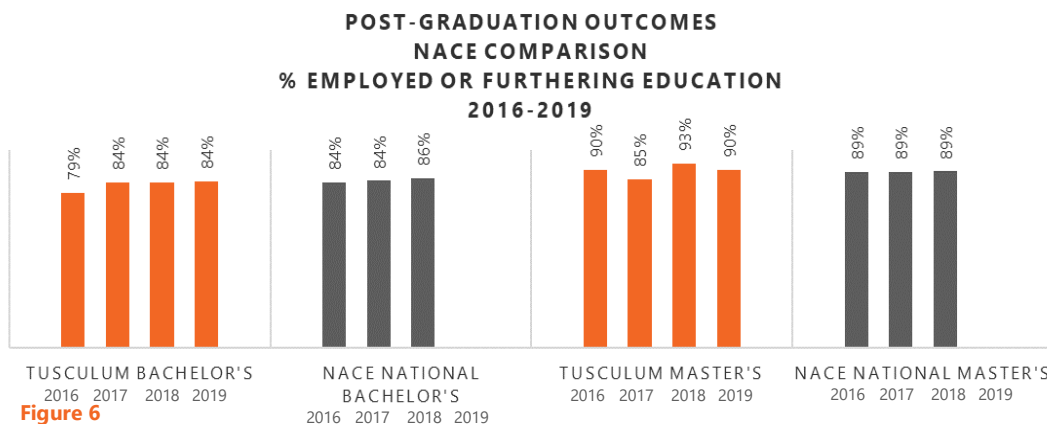
**Figure 5**

The target for this goal **was not met**.

### MEASURE D-2:

**POST-GRADUATION CAREER OUTCOME RATE BY DEGREE LEVEL:** The career outcome rate is the percentage of completers either employed or enrolled in further education.

**TARGET:** To be at or above the national career outcome rate.



**Figure 6**

Note: Comparison data for 2019 will be available in December 2020

The target for this outcome **was met** for bachelor's completers in 2017 and 2018 and master's completers in 2016 and 2018.