

## Graduation rates – Does a point matter?

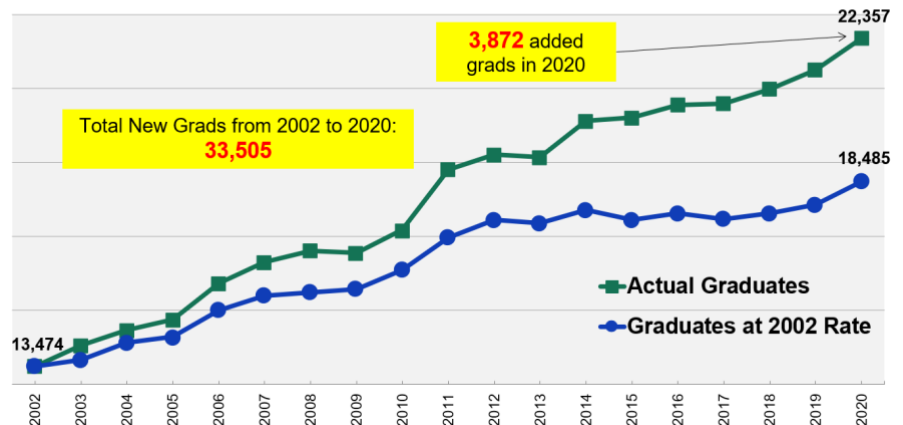
The Division I Graduation Success Rate (GSR) has risen by 16 percentage points since 2002. That sounds impressive, but what does it actually mean?

Since the average size of recent GSR cohorts is about 24,000 student-athletes, an increase of 1% equates to approximately 240 additional graduates. The 16-point gap between the current year's GSR and 2002's means that there are about 3,900 more graduates this year than would have been the case without that increase.

The accompanying graph shows the number of graduates added each year since the NCAA started collecting GSR data.

The blue line represents the number of graduates we would have seen had the GSR stayed at the 2002-level across that entire time period (those numbers on the blue line increase over time because the number of student-athletes in Division I has been increasing).

**Division I Graduates by Year**  
Number of actual graduates vs. number who would have graduated with no increase in GSR



The green line represents the actual number of annual Division I graduates. If you add the blue-green differences across each year, you will see that GSR increases over this span have led to over 33,000 additional graduates than would have been the case if the GSR observed in 2002 had not changed.

Given what we know about the [significant advantages that accrue to college graduates](#), the lives of those 33,000 new graduates were likely impacted in very positive ways.

*Notes: A graduation year of 2020 refers to the reporting year associated with the 6-year federally-defined window for graduation calculations for a student entering college in fall 2013. These data were released in November 2020 and represent the most current NCAA data available.*

Download a PDF copy of this Extra Point: [Graduation rates – Does a point matter?](#)

(Originally published October 2013. Updated November 2020.)