



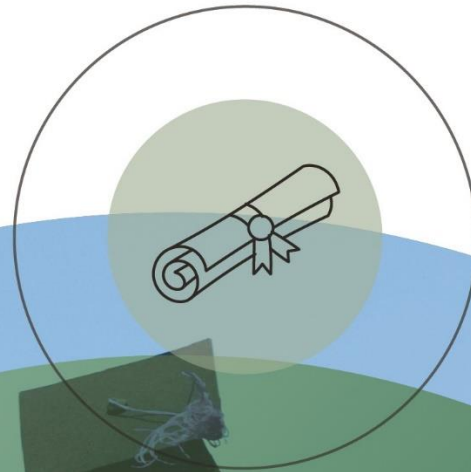
ASSOCIATION OF  
PUBLIC &  
LAND-GRANT  
UNIVERSITIES

# DEGREE COMPLETION AWARD

*SUBMISSION DEADLINE:*

JUNE 28, 2024

5:00PM PT



# 2024

## Contents

Purpose.....	2
Eligibility .....	2
Submission Documents .....	2
Application Packet.....	2
Application and Award Timeline.....	2
Rubric .....	2
Application Review Committee and Process .....	3
Finalist Announcement and Responsibilities.....	3
Degree Completion Award Winner Announcement.....	3
Questions.....	3
Application Packet Instructions .....	4
Application Checklist .....	4
Formatting Guidelines .....	4
2024 DEGREE COMPLETION AWARD APPLICATION .....	5
Section 1: Institutional Context and Problem Statement .....	6
Section 2: Initiative Description and Approach Rationale.....	6
Section 3: Evidence and Impact of Initiative .....	6
Section 4: Sustainability of Initiative, Lessons Learned, and Scalability .....	7
Appendices: .....	7
Appendix A: Institutional Data Worksheet.....	8
Appendix B: Letter of Endorsement from President/Chancellor.....	10
Appendix C: List of Data Definitions.....	11

## Purpose

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) established the Degree Completion Award to (1) recognize public universities for increasing degree completion rates and total numbers of degrees awarded; (2) recognize institutional improvement in achievement gaps across student populations; (3) collect evidenced-based models from public universities that other institutions may adapt; and (4) mobilize universities to prioritize efforts to increase student success and degree completion outcomes.

## Eligibility

All APLU member institutions (except 2022 and 2023 awardees and finalists) are eligible and invited to apply for the 2024 Degree Completion Award.

## Submission Documents

### Application Packet (Deadline: June 28, 2024, 5:00pm PDT)

The Degree Completion Award application must be submitted electronically to [degreecompletion@aplu.org](mailto:degreecompletion@aplu.org). Only one application per institution is allowed. Applications should provide clear and compelling information about the institution's efforts toward improving student retention and/or graduation outcomes. Applications must include a Letter of Endorsement signed by the institution's president or chancellor. For detailed instructions on completing the application, see the DCA Application Packet available on page 5.

## Application and Award Timeline

<b>April 1</b>	<b>Application Opens</b>
<b>June 28</b>	<b>Application Packet Due</b>
September 1	Finalists Announced
October 2024	Finalists Spotlight in APLU Media Publications
November 11	Finalists showcased in Session at APLU Annual Meeting
<b>November 12</b>	<b>Winner Announced at APLU Annual Meeting</b>
<b>Bold indicates significant date</b>	

## Rubric

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria and weighting scheme.

- Institutional Context, Problem Statement, & Significance of Effort (10%)
- Initiative Design & Approach Rationale (30%)
- Evidence & Impact of Initiative (40%)
- Sustainability of Initiative, Lessons Learned, & Scalability (20%)

## Application Review Committee and Process

Applications for the award are reviewed by a committee representing APLU member institutions, higher education leaders, and other partners. Two committee members evaluate each application. Highly rated applications from both reviewers are advanced to a final evaluative discussion across the committee. The committee may select **up to five finalists including one winner** for the 2024 Degree Completion Award.

## Finalist Announcement and Responsibilities

Finalists will be announced on September 1, and highlighted publicly through APLU’s social media accounts, member newsletter, and other communication channels. Each finalist will receive a plaque of recognition and will be expected to present an overview of their work at one of APLU’s Institutional Strategies sessions on November 11, 2024, at the APLU Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. These presentations will last 8 – 10 mins and may be led by 1-2 institutional representatives.

## Degree Completion Award Winner Announcement

The winner of the Degree Completion Award will be announced at APLU’s 2024 Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida at the APLU, and highlighted publicly through APLU’s social media accounts, member newsletter, and other communication channels. Winning campuses are also eligible for a visit from APLU President, Mark Becker. The visit could, at the winning university’s discretion, include a media event to which local elected officials and others could be invited to celebrate the Degree Completion Award and the institution’s leadership in driving student success.

## Questions

**Levi Shanks, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Vice President  
Academic and Student Affairs  
[lshanks@aplu.org](mailto:lshanks@aplu.org)

**Sarah Bartlome**  
Senior Program Associate  
Academic Affairs  
[sbartlome@aplu.org](mailto:sbartlome@aplu.org)

## Application Packet Instructions

- (1) Complete Degree Completion Award applications must be submitted electronically to [DegreeCompletion@aplu.org](mailto:DegreeCompletion@aplu.org) as a single PDF file.
- (2) Applications should be formatted as specified below.
- (3) Sections 1-4 are not to exceed **8 pages**.

## Application Checklist

Assemble the required sections in the following order:

- \_\_\_ Institution Contact Information and Abstract Cover Page
- \_\_\_ Sec. 1: Institutional Context, Problem Statement, & Significance of Effort
- \_\_\_ Sec. 2: Description of Initiative & Approach Rationale
- \_\_\_ Sec. 3: Evidence & Impact of Initiative
- \_\_\_ Sec. 4: Sustainability of Initiative, Lessons Learned, & Scalability
- \_\_\_ Appendix A: Institution Data Worksheet
- \_\_\_ Appendix B: Letter of Endorsement from President/Chancellor
- \_\_\_ Appendix C: List of Data Definitions

## Formatting Guidelines

The application should adhere to the following formatting guidelines:

- Font/Type style: Times New Roman, 12-point
- Margins: 1" all around (left-hand, right-hand, top and bottom)
- Line Spacing: Double-spaced
- Page Number Placement: Bottom center

*The following Application Packet is formatted to the above specifications and can be used as a template for entering the application information. The submission requirements and instructions within the Application Packet can be removed as appropriate.*

---

[INSTITUTION]

## 2024 DEGREE COMPLETION AWARD APPLICATION

(You may include a cover page if you prefer)

### Institutional Contact Information

---

*Date Submitted:*

---

*Name of Institution:*

---

*Name of Initiative/Program:*

---

*Primary Institution*

Full Name

Address

*Contacts:*

Title

Phone Number

Email Address

### Abstract

Provide an overview of the initiative/program being submitted for consideration. Abstracts should be no more than 250 words, double-spacing throughout. Abstracts may be used on APLU websites and publications. Please include 3-5 keywords at the conclusion of your stated abstract.

*Keywords:*

---

## Section 1: Institutional Context and Problem Statement

Describe the institutional context and significance of the undergraduate degree completion effort at the institution. Identify and demonstrate the problem intended to be addressed by the initiative and discuss its significance for your institution.

**Consider including the following information:**

- Institution mission and/or strategic plan
- Student body characteristics
- Selectivity
- An institutional barrier to student success, and how you know it was an issue/barrier.

## Section 2: Initiative Description and Approach Rationale

Describe an initiative that resulted in improvements in student success outcomes at your institution. Provide a rationale of why the initiative was chosen and its design.

**Consider including the following information:**

- Goals and objectives of the initiative.
- Alignment between this initiative and the issue or barrier identified in Section 1.
- How the results of the initiative were determined and assessed.
  - Include why certain data or metrics were used to determine effectiveness.
- Initial investment or start-up costs and continuation costs of the initiative.

## Section 3: Evidence and Impact of Initiative

Detail the outcomes of the initiative as they relate graduation metrics. Discuss whether the goals outlined in Section 2 were achieved and clearly identify the retention or graduation metric linked to each goal. References to institutional metrics must be represented in the Institutional Data Worksheet (located in the Appendix).

**Consider including the following information:**

- Description of evidence that demonstrates improvement in retention or graduation rates.
  - Please consider adding a list of Data Definitions in the appendices.
- Identification and explanation of leading indicators that can be reasonably attributed to the initiative's continued success.
- Trend data for periods before, during, and after the implementation of the initiatives.
- If the initiative targeted a subset of students, provide parallel metrics for an appropriate comparison group.

## Section 4: Sustainability of Initiative, Lessons Learned, and Scalability

Explain institutional plans to sustain, modify, or expand the initiative. Include an overview of lessons learned during initiative implementation and considerations for broader scalability.

**Consider including the following information:**

- Outline the future goals and objectives of the initiative.
- Describe the systems, people, and/or financial models in place to sustain the initiative.
- Describe the evaluation process for the initiative.
- Scalability & Replicability
- How this program may be adapted at other institutions.

### Appendices:

All submission **must** include Appendix A, B, and C. The formatting for each required Appendix is listed on the subsequent pages.

Any additional appendices may be added after Appendix C and must be appropriately marked (beginning with Appendix D). Additional appendices may include references (APA citation format), tables, charts, images, and are limited to an additional 2 single sided pages (not including Appendix A, B, and C).



## Appendix A: Institutional Data Worksheet

Instructions for completing the worksheet:

- (1) For “Table 1” provide your institutional characteristics for the corresponding academic year.
- (2) For “Table 2” provide your metrics for the cohort academic year  
 For example: If your initiative began in 2017-18, the first “YEAR” of Intervention in Table 1 and Table 2 should both be “2017-18”. However, the Table 1 entries should refer to the student population statistics for that year, whereas in table 2, the entries should depict cohort-based data. Thus, in the 2017-18 column, you would share the retention data for that cohort (based on those retained in 2018-19), and the bachelor’s completion for that cohort in 2020-21 and 2022-23).
- (3) Provide at least one year of institution level baseline data.
- (4) Provide at least two years of data demonstrating the outcome of the intervention.
- (5) Institutions are encouraged to add other outcomes data to this worksheet that are specific to their initiatives (e.g., first-generation, transfer, post-traditional, specific racial/ethnic groups, etc.)
- (6) Metrics with an asterisk (\*) are required.
- (7) **Please remove these instructions from your submitted application.**

Table 1.

[INSTITUTION NAME]								
2024 Degree Completion Award Worksheet								
	Baseline		Intervention					
<i>Institutional Characteristics</i>	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR
Total Undergraduates (N)*								
% of N who are Students of Color (SOC) <sup>11</sup> *								
% of N who are Pell-Recipients (Pell)*								
% of N who are [programs target] (if applicable, <i>please list subgroup</i> )								
Total Bachelor’s Degrees Awarded*								
% Awarded to SOC*								
% Awarded to Pell*								
% Awarded to [programs target]								

Table 2.

	<b>Baseline</b>		<b>Intervention</b>					
	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR	YEAR
<b>RETENTION METRICS</b>								
<b><i>Undergraduate 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Retention Rate</i></b>								
% of total undergraduates retained in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year*								
% SOC retained in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year*								
% Pell retained in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year*								
% [programs target] retained in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year								
<b>BACHELOR COMPLETION RATES</b>								
<b><i>Undergraduate 4-Year Bachelor's Completion Rate</i></b>								
% of undergrads awarded bachelor's degree								
% SOC Awarded bachelor's degree *								
% Pell Awarded bachelor's degree*								
% [programs target] Awarded bachelor's degree								
<b><i>Undergraduate 6-Year Completion Rate</i></b>								
% of undergrads awarded bachelor's degree*								
% SOC Awarded bachelor's degree*								
% Pell Awarded bachelor's degree*								
% [programs target] Awarded bachelor's degree*								
<b>OTHER OUTCOMES (IF APPLICABLE):</b>								
TBD								
TBD								
TBD								

## Appendix B: Letter of Endorsement from President/Chancellor

Please provide a letter of endorsement from the institution's president or chancellor. The letter should identify the primary contact person for the application (including name, title, email address, and phone number). The letter should be brief, but may include information regarding the institution's mission, student success goals, or overall strategy related to improving retention and graduation outcomes.

## Appendix C: List of Data Definitions

Please alphabetically list any data definitions you reference in your application and conform to the formatting guidelines established on page 4 of the Application Packet.