

PROJECT GRADUATION

Answering the Call to Completion



A CALL FOR CREDENTIALS

Concerned by the percentage of students completing a degree or certificate, Waubonsee launched its Project Graduation initiative in the 2009-10 academic year. That same year, President Barack Obama sounded his own call to action in the form of the American Graduation Initiative, with a goal of producing an additional five million community college graduates by 2020.

In the past six years, # of completers has grown by
43%

This national call was echoed by the State of Illinois as then Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon released her "Illinois Community Colleges: Focus on the Finish" report in 2011. That report set the goal of increasing the proportion of working-age adults with meaningful career certificates and degrees from 41 percent to 60 percent by 2025.

Both the national and state goals were set with an eye toward the country's economic and workforce needs.

WAUBONSEE RESPONDS

Waubonsee has been taking steps to help more students

- get ready
- get set
- go — to graduation and beyond

GET READY

Efforts focused on preparing students for college-level work, as well as helping them envision what a college credential can mean for their lives

- **College and Career Readiness**

To help make sure high school graduates are prepared to bypass developmental education courses and jump straight into college-level work, Waubonsee faculty and staff work closely with high school teachers and counselors on curricular alignment and other projects as part of the college's College and Career Readiness Partnership.

- **Raising Awareness**

A culture of completion requires both commitment and communication. Waubonsee's board of trustees demonstrated the institution's commitment by adopting "Accepting the College Completion Challenge: A Call to Action" in 2011, with student leaders following suit and signing their own pledge to completion. Graduation-related messaging can be found in almost all of Waubonsee's online and print communications.

GET SET

Efforts focused on helping students choose an educational path and then find success while traveling it

- **Choosing a Path**

Since many students enter college undecided about their future plans, Waubonsee launched its first Exploring Majors Fair in 2013. Featuring faculty and staff from all six academic divisions, it has since become an annual event.

- **Tutoring Centers**

In 2013, a remodeled tutoring space opened in Collins Hall, and the Developmental Education and College Readiness Division added Academic Coaches, who can teach students how to learn any subject more effectively.

- **Resources to the Rescue**

Launched in 2013, the Resources to the Rescue, or R2R, initiative brings students the information they need when they need it; for example, a student club fair the second week of the semester, course selection tips once the next semester's registration opens, scholarship workshops after the Waubonsee Foundation application becomes available in November, and Career Services resources leading up to graduation.

20,640
degrees awarded since 1968.

- **Building a Foundation for Excellence**

From 2011 to 2013, Waubonsee participated in the Foundations of Excellence® project, a self-study designed to examine and improve both the first-year and transfer student experience at the college.

- **Online Services**

Students who hit a stumbling block on their path can reach out to Counseling and Student Support via online chat or online appointment scheduling. They can also utilize an online degree audit tool to track their progress toward completion, and then once they're ready, petition to graduate online as well.

GO!

Efforts focused on student progress, both toward a Waubonsee degree or certificate, as well as a bachelor's degree and beyond

- **Making Every Credit Count**

Waubonsee faculty and staff examined and revised the college's degree requirements in order to eliminate extraneous courses while maximizing transferability and completion.

- **Stackable Steps**

Ideally, certificates and degrees should fit together into stackable credentials that follow a natural career ladder, allowing students to see tangible, concrete benefits all the way to completion. Waubonsee's new Manufacturing Technology curriculum was built using this best practice.

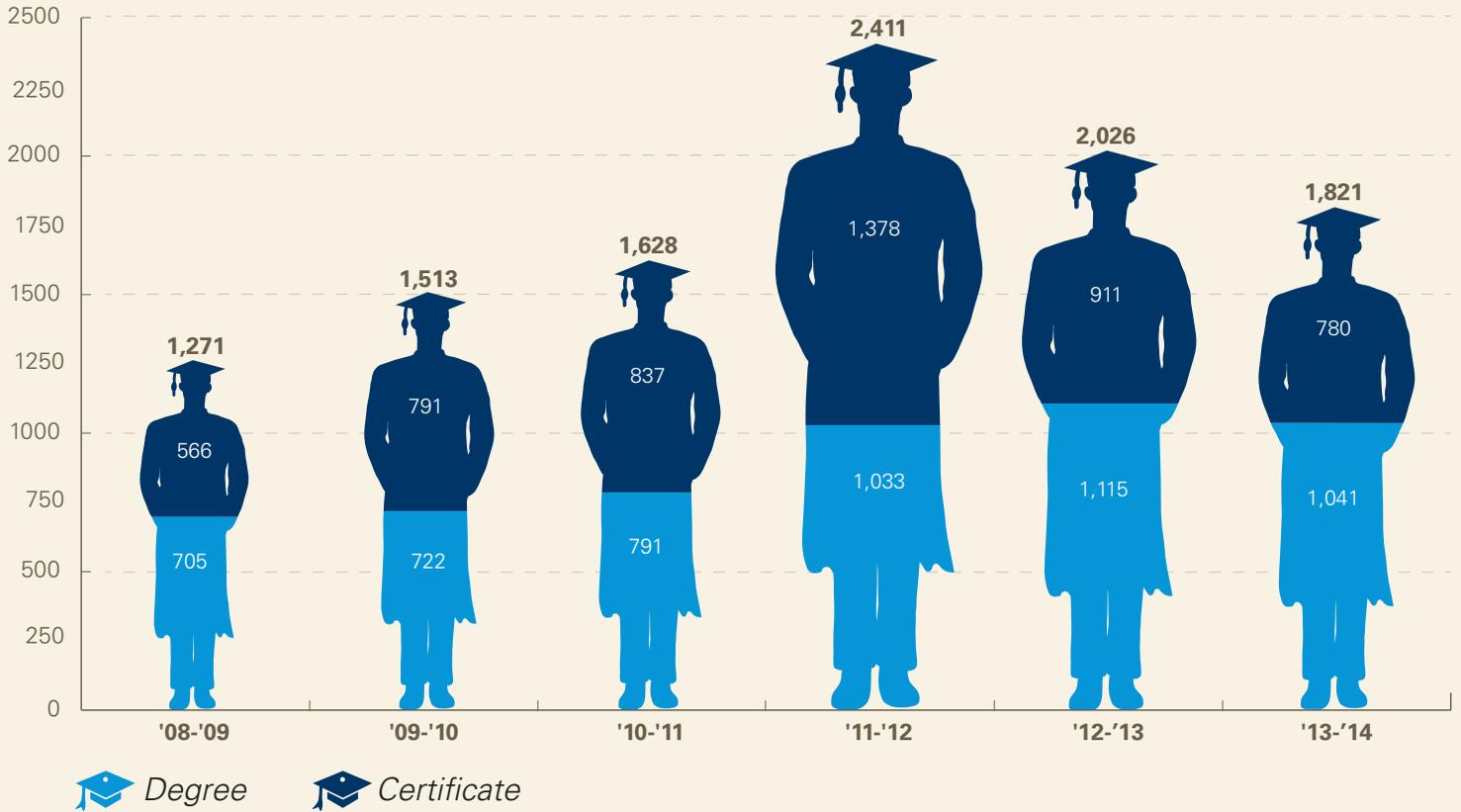
- **Convenience**

Waubonsee wants students to figuratively go far, while literally staying close to home. Since the launch of Project Graduation, we've opened new campuses in downtown Aurora and Plano, making Waubonsee a network of four convenient campuses that reaches across the district. Our online course offerings and accompanying student services also continue to grow. And it's not just where courses are offered that contribute to accessibility, but also when; with that in mind, master scheduling guidelines and timetables were modified, and scheduling options like Flexible Fridays and late start 12-week courses were introduced.

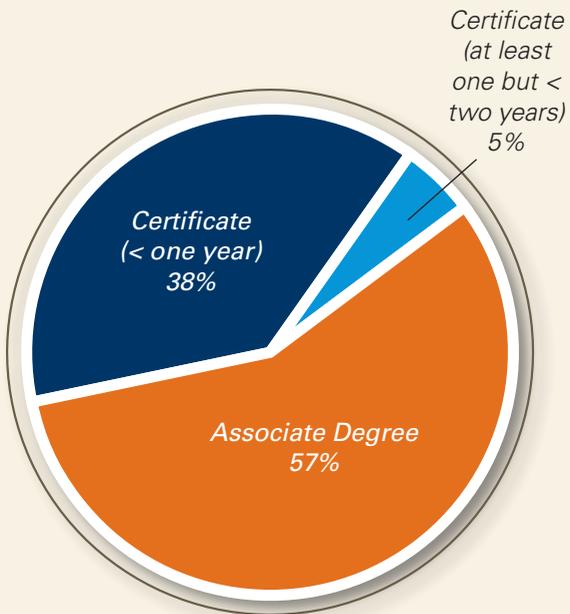
- **Agreements with Four-Year Schools**

Over the past few years, Waubonsee has signed additional articulation agreements with several area universities in order to make it even easier for students to go on to earn their bachelor's degree. These partners include Governors State University, Western Illinois University, DePaul University, Roosevelt University, University of St. Francis and Southern Illinois University - Carbondale. DePaul, Roosevelt and Northern Illinois University are also part of Waubonsee's reverse articulation agreements, allowing four-year students to apply their credit back to Waubonsee to finish an associate degree.

GRADUATES BY THE NUMBERS – THE LAST SIX YEARS



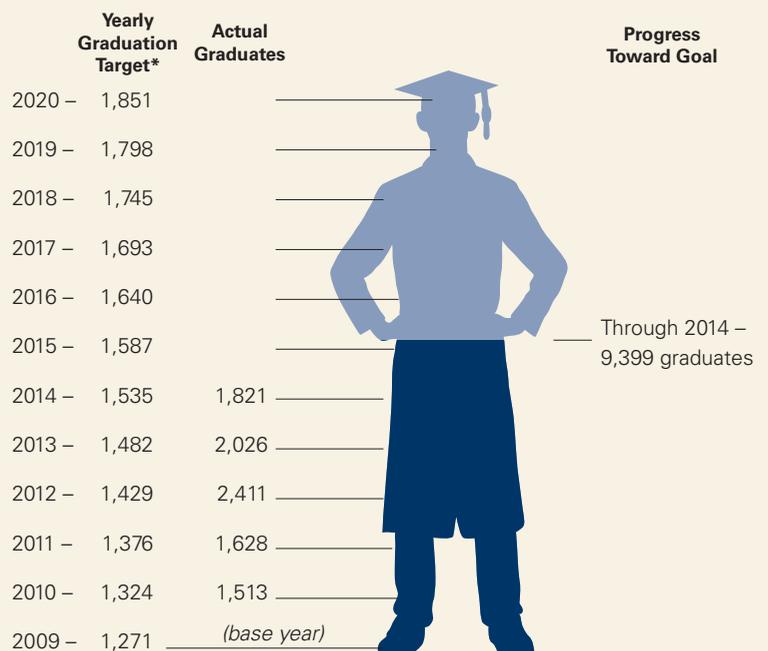
CREDENTIALS EARNED IN 2014



YEARLY GRADUATE GOALS

Between 2010 and 2020, Waubensee needs to produce 17,460 graduates to meet our share of President Obama's goal of five million additional graduates by 2020. From 2010 to 2014, Waubensee produced 9,399 graduates, so we need to produce 8,061 graduates over the next six years.

GOAL +17,460



*Per the Illinois Community College Board's Complete College America Goal.

