This study examined persistence to graduation at a public Midwestern university from the perspective of the constructs of spirituality and grit, using historical demographic, academic, and survey data from nine cohorts of students. Significant correlation between spirituality and grit was found, leading to the development of the SPIRIT theory and working model. Significant correlation between spirituality, grit, and persistence to graduation was also found, and the SPIRIT theory was applied to persistence to graduation, accounting for both progress towards the graduation goal, as well as for times when some cohorts showed negative correlation for some factors. Development of the SPIRIT theory offers insights into the psychological attributes that have been identified by previous scholars as relevant to persistence to graduation.