First Year Experience Program
Comparison of Success, Retention, and Persistence Rates
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At the request of the First Year Experience (FYE) Sub-Committee, a sub-committee of the Skills4Success Committee, the Office of Institutional Development and Technology examined the retention, success, and persistence rates of students who participated in FYE during the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters. More specifically, retention and success rates of students who participated in FYE were compared to the retention and success rates of other first-time freshmen and all other students enrolled in the same courses. In addition, persistence rates of FYE students were compared to other first-time freshmen from Fall 2011 to Spring 2012 and from Fall 2011 to Fall 2012.

The FYE program is designed to provide a welcoming and informative environment that supports student success from the beginning. The program is available for entering freshmen from the Wm. S. Hart Union High School District who place below transfer-level math and/or English. Students participating in the program are involved in support activities such as Cougar Days and Orientation Days on COC’s campus prior to taking classes at COC. The 2010-11 academic year was the first time the program was offered. Students participating in 2011-12 were guaranteed enrollment in 12 units in their first semester at College of the Canyons, including: basic skills math and/or English, Counseling, and General Education/Career Technical Education courses. Students who did not complete their developmental math and/or English course sequence by the end of their first semester at COC were provided access to FYE math and/or English classes for Spring 2012. Additional information on the FYE program can be found online at http://www.canyons.edu/Offices/CTE/CollegeSuccess/fye.asp.

Comparison of Retention, Success, and Persistence Rates:
As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, the overall retention and success rates were higher for students who participated in FYE compared to other first-time freshmen and all other students enrolled in the same courses. The results of this study are consistent with the results of the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 analysis for the 2010-11 cohort.

- Compared to other first-time freshmen enrolled in the same courses during the Fall 2011 semester, FYE students had a two percent higher retention rate (96 vs. 98 percent, respectively) and a five percent higher success rate (73 vs. 78 percent, respectively).
- Compared to all other students enrolled in similar courses during the Fall 2011 semester, FYE
students had an eight percent higher retention rate (90 vs. 98 percent, respectively) and a 10 percent higher success rate (68 vs. 78 percent, respectively).

- Compared to other first–time freshmen enrolled in similar courses during the Spring 2012 semester, FYE students had a two percent higher retention rate (95 vs. 97 percent, respectively) and a four percent higher success rate (72 vs. 76 percent, respectively).

- Compared to all other students enrolled in similar courses during the Spring 2012 semester, FYE students had a six percent higher retention rate (91 vs. 97 percent, respectively) and a six percent higher success rate (70 vs. 76 percent, respectively).

**Comparison of Retention and Success in Basic Skills Math and English Courses:**

As illustrated in Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6, the overall retention and success rates were higher for students who participated in FYE compared to other first-time freshmen and all other students enrolled in the same basic skills math and English courses during the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters.

- Compared to other first –time freshmen enrolled in basic skills math courses during the Fall 2011 semester, FYE students had a five percent higher retention rate (99 vs. 94 percent, respectively) and a seven percent higher success rate (64 vs. 57 percent, respectively).

- Compared to all other students enrolled in basic skills math courses during the Fall 2011 semester, FYE students had a twelve percent higher retention rate (99 vs. 87 percent, respectively) and a 13 percent higher success rate (64 vs. 51 percent, respectively).

- Compared to other first –time freshmen enrolled in basic skills English courses during the Fall 2011 semester, FYE students had a one percent lower retention rate (96 vs. 97 percent, respectively) and a seven percent higher success rate (79 vs. 72 percent, respectively).

- Compared to all other students enrolled in basic skills math courses during the Fall 2011 semester, FYE students had a five percent higher retention rate (96 vs. 91 percent, respectively) and a 13 percent higher success rate (79 vs. 66 percent, respectively).

- Compared to other first –time freshmen enrolled in basic skills English courses during the Spring 2012 semester, FYE students had a four percent higher retention rate (98 vs. 94 percent, respectively) and a two percent higher success rate (58 vs. 56 percent, respectively).
Compared to all other students enrolled in basic skills math courses during the Spring 2012 semester, FYE students had a six percent higher retention rate (98 vs. 92 percent, respectively) and a six percent higher success rate (58 vs. 52 percent, respectively). Compared to other first-time freshmen enrolled in basic skills English courses during the Spring 2012 semester, FYE students had a two percent higher retention rate (97 vs. 95 percent, respectively) and an 18 percent higher success rate (85 vs. 67 percent, respectively).

Compared to all other students enrolled in basic skills math courses during the Spring 2012 semester, FYE students had a six percent higher retention rate (97 vs. 91 percent, respectively) and 24 percent higher success rate (85 vs. 61 percent, respectively).

Similar to the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 analysis for the 2010-11 cohort, FYE students had higher Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall persistence rates compared to other first-time freshman (98 vs. 86 percent and 86 vs. 69 percent, respectively). See Table 1 for details.

Table 1. Persistence Rates – Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall: FYE Students Compared to Other First-Time Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Fall 2011 – Spring 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2011 – Fall 2012</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FYE Students</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other First-Time Students</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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**Recommendations.** Upon review of the results, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Consider expanding and promoting the FYE program as the budget permits while responding to regulation changes regarding priority registration.
- Disseminate findings to stakeholders, including stakeholders outside of College of the Canyons.
Methodology

To conduct the analysis, Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 First Year Experience enrollment data were obtained from MIS. Student ID’s from the FYE enrollment file were matched with the MIS ID file. Data were then merged with the College’s grade files (USX referential file) and student demographic files (UST referential file) from Fall 2011 and Spring 2012. Data were then merged with MIS 320 files to determine persistence rates. To perform the analysis data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS, 2011) and Excel (2010).

Notes:

1.) **Course Success**: defined as the percent of students successful in courses out of total enrolled in courses: Numerator = Number of students (duplicated) with A, B, C, CR/P; Denominator = Number of students (duplicated) with A, B, C, D, F, FW, CR/P, NC/NP, W, I. (This analysis uses the RP Group definition, which facilitates statewide comparisons.)

2.) **Course Retention** is defined as the percent of students retained in courses out of total enrolled in courses: Numerator = Number of students (duplicated) with A, B, C, D, F, I, CR/P, FW, NC/NP; Denominator = Number of students (duplicated) with A, B, C, D, F, I, W, CR/P, FW, NC/NP. (This report uses the RP Group definition, which facilitates statewide comparisons.)

3.) **Fall to Spring Persistence** is defined as enrollment in Fall 2011 as of 1st census and enrollment in Spring 2012 as of 1st census.

4.) **Fall to Fall Persistence** is defined as enrollment in Fall 2011 and enrollment in Fall 2012 as of the second week of classes. 1st Census data for Fall 2012 not available at time of analysis.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research office located in UCEN-204H, or call Daylene Meuschke, Director of Institutional Research at 661.362.5329.