



Research Brief #144

July 2017

Veteran Student Persistence

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At the request of the Veterans Resource Center (VRC), the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness examined persistence among student Veterans. Part of the purpose of this analysis was to provide data for the Military Friendly Survey.

The following research questions guided this analysis:

- What proportion of Veteran students persist to enroll in the subsequent year and persist in their third year?
- What proportion of Dependent of Veteran students persist to enroll in the subsequent year and persist in their third year?

Method

To conduct the analyses, applicant records for the fall 2014 term were merged with the 320 enrollment file for fall 2014 to identify initial cohort. Student demographics report and dependent of veteran financial aid reports from informer were used to identify the Veteran student groups.

Veteran flags of “VE” and “NVE” were identified as Veteran students with “NVE’s” being students who are flagged for priority registration but may not be served as intensely by the Veteran Resource Center. Dependents of veterans were identified either through Datatel code, VED, or the financial aid report for California Veteran fee waiver (BOGW) recipients.

Persistence was defined as enrollment in units higher than 0 in the subsequent year 2015-16 (fall, winter, spring and summer) and in the third year of continuous enrollment, 2016-17.

Results

Among new COC students who had an application on file for fall 2014 (N=6,603), 124 were veteran students and 35 were dependents of veterans.

Table 1 Veteran Students in Fall 2014

	N
Veterans	124
Dependents of Veterans	35
All other students	6,444

Persistence

Persistence over two years were tracked for the 159 students. Dependents had the highest persistence rates in comparison to student veterans and overall student population. Of the 124 Veterans, 54% enrolled in the subsequent year and 35% of the original cohort enrolled in the third year. These rates were lower than the overall student population’s persistence rates (57%, and 38%). Among dependents of veterans, second-year persistence rate was 69% and third-year rates were 46%. This group had the highest rates compared to veteran students and non-veteran students. Five veteran students completed a degree/certificate at the end of the 1-year after initial enrollment in fall 2014. These students were included in the “persisted” counts.

Table 2 Persistence by Veteran Status

	Total	2nd-year	Persistence	3rd-year	Persistence
	N	N	%	N	%
All Students	6444	3,698	57.4%	2415	37.5%
Veterans	124	67	54.0%	43	34.7%
Dependents of Veterans	35	24	68.6%	16	45.7%

Some Dependents were Cal. Vet. Fee Waiver (BOGW) recipients who also received the VED flag indicating that they received services from the Veteran Resource Center for benefits. These students were included in the first group (VED). Those in the BOGW-only group did not receive services from the VRC. Compared to those who received services, students identified as dependents of veterans through BOGW had lower persistence rates for both time-points.

Table 3 Persistence by Veteran Dependent Status

	Total	2nd-year	Persistence	3rd-year	Persistence
	N	N	%	N	%
Dependents of Veterans (VED)	21	15	71.4%	11	52.4%
Cal. Vet Fee Waiver (BOGW)	14	9	64.3%	5	35.7%

Graduation Rates

One of the metrics on the Military Friendly Survey was to compare graduation rates for Veteran students, dependents of veteran students and all students. Student equity data for the 2008-09 cohort were used for this metric. Although only 11 students were identified as Veterans, student veterans had a lower graduation rate than the general student population. (within 6-years of start-term) (18% vs. 23%).

Table 4 Graduation Rates by Veteran Status

	Total	Graduation	Rate
	N	N	%
All Students	2756	644	23.4%
Veterans	11	2	18.2%

Recommendations

Upon review of the 2-year persistence data for veteran students and dependents of veteran students, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Assess and evaluate program structure to identify strategies to increase persistence and graduation rates for veteran students.
- Conduct persistence analyses for the fall 2016 cohort to compare to the 2014 cohort's persistence.
- Compare Persistence rates to rates of other Community colleges in-state and reach out for best practices to colleges with higher persistence for Veterans.

Notes:

- Students who did not enroll in the subsequent second year and enrolled in the third year were not included in the persistence counts.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness office located in BONH-224, or contact Preeta Saxena, Senior Research Analyst at 661.362.3072, or Daylene Meuschke, Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.5329.