

Project 2 Q&A

DSC680

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1. What are the most common gateway courses?

The top 10 by enrollment are ED100, EN101, PY101, PE154, IS101, SO101, MA115, HI101, BI216, and MA110

2. Is there a difference in success based on how many gateway classes are taken?

The difference in gateway courses taken between retained and lost students is relatively small. The average for retained is 3.7 and lost is 3.5.

3. Are things getting better or worse?

Just looking at the two years of data, things have gotten slightly worse. DFIW rates for retained students rose from 18.9% to 20.6%, while dropped students went from 66.6% to 69.3%

4. If gateway courses have high failure rates, why take them?

Part of the reason they have high failure rates is because everyone takes them. Students cannot avoid mandatory courses and even while failure is not a desirable outcome, students need to rise to the challenge the classes present as the work will continue to increase in difficulty.

5. What value is predicting if students won't return when the semester is already over?

For one, if we know they are unlikely to return then admissions specialists can reach out and try to get them to re-enroll. This can also be used to inform budget decisions if we know how many students will return.

6. Does program of study have a difference on DFIW rates?

Certainly. The average is around 29% but the top 5 highest are over 75% DFIW. 4 out of the 5 highest DFIW rate majors are 1-year certificates rather than degrees, and the 5th is an independent study program.

7. Do adjunct instructors have a higher DFIW rate than full-time instructors?

Information about instructors or specific courses was not part of this data. Future steps will likely involve looking at faculty status.

8. How do we improve outcomes?

That question is largely dependent on where outcomes are lacking. Tutoring is available for many of the gateway courses, with math and English in particular. Further exploration into why students are choosing to withdraw is also important for answering this question. Unfortunately it is not common for students to tell us after they leave why they made that decision.

9. Does overall GPA affect retention?

Examining the comparisons between groups, definitely. The mean GPA for retained students is 2.76 while the mean GPA for lost students is 1.14.

10. Do courses considered “gateway” change over time?

They can change as enrollments shift, but generally you will see introductory math and English courses fitting the definitions. The most recent definitions were Fall 2020, but they are revisited regularly.