



Research Brief

Semester to Semester Persistence and Academic Success



Office of Planning, Research, and Effectiveness
(<http://www.accd.edu/spc>)

Achieving the Dream (AtD) Initiative

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“Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count” is a multi-year initiative funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education that addresses the challenge of providing low income students and students of color with opportunities for academic success. There are five AtD student outcome indicators: (1) Successful completion of remedial courses and progression to college-level courses; (2) Enrollment and successful completion of college-level “gatekeeper” courses; (3) Productive grades (C or higher) in all courses; (4) Semester to semester persistence; and (5) Graduation. All colleges of the Alamo Community College District participate in this initiative to cultivate and promote a culture of evidence, accountability, equity, and excellence in support of the student outcomes.

Feedback? Questions? Contact Dr. Maritha Burmeister at burmistr@accd.edu, (210) 531-3369.

Introduction

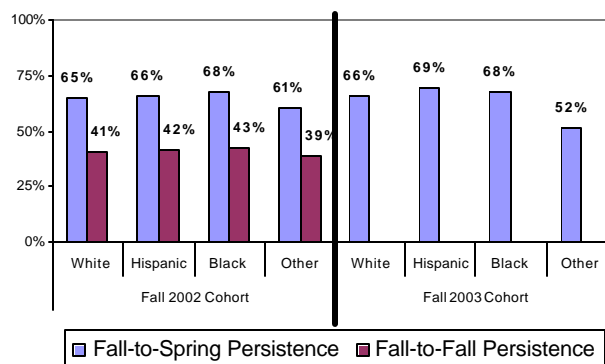
The focus of this brief will be to assess the term-to-term persistence and academic success by ethnicity and Pell grant status of the students in the cohorts.

Also, the fall-to-fall rate for the 2002 cohort is higher for Pell students than non-Pell students.

Methodology

This initiative will track Fall semester student cohorts to understand students' academic success through college and ascertain their persistence from term to term. Collection of historical data for Fall 2002 and Fall 2003 cohorts has been completed. Included in each cohort are students entering St. Philip's College in the fall terms, regardless of their status as full-time, part-time, transferred, entering as first-time degree or certificate seeking.

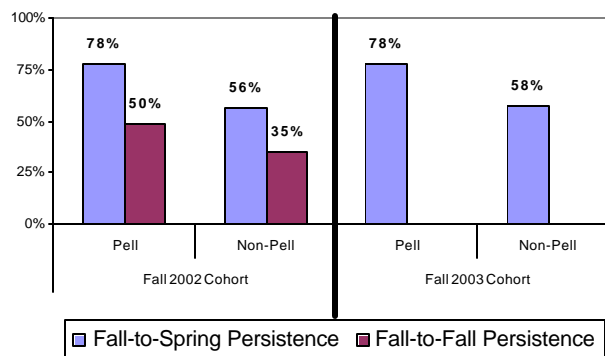
SPC Persistence (Enrollment Term-to-Term) by Race/Ethnicity



Persistence

The following graphs exhibit the persistence of Fall 2002 and 2003 cohorts by race/ethnicity and by Pell grant status. Persistence is defined as the percent of students enrolled in a given Fall semester who re-enroll the next spring semester (Fall -to-Spring persistence), or the percent of students enrolled in a given Fall semester who re-enroll the next Fall semester (fall-to-fall semester.)

SPC Persistence (Enrollment Term-to-Term) by Pell Grant Status



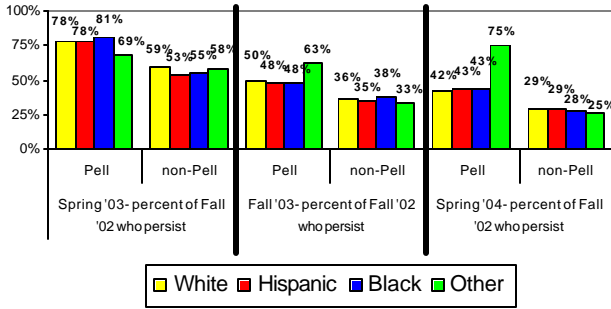
Results

Fall to spring persistence for all ethnic groups is about the same in both 2002 and 2003 cohorts. The fall to fall rate of persistence for the Fall 2002 cohort is about the same for all ethnic groups. However, note that the fall to spring persistence is about 68% as compared to the fall to fall persistence rate of approximately 42%.

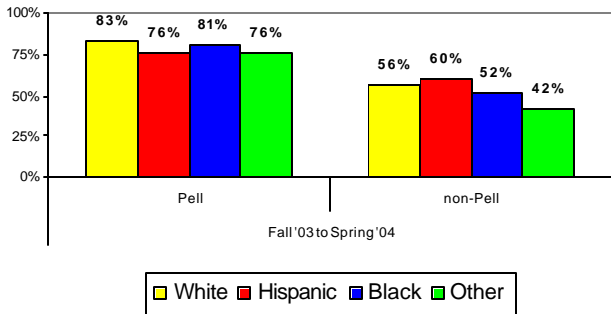
In comparing rates amongst Pell recipients, it is noted that Pell students in both cohorts have a higher fall-to-spring persistence rate as those who were non-Pell students.

The following chart examines the rate of persistence in the 2002 cohort for each ethnic group according to Pell status. The rate of persistence in this chart compares each successive term's enrollment to the fall 2002 enrollment for the 2002 cohort and expresses this as a percentage.

SPC 2002 Fall Cohort- Percentage of Persistence (compared to Fall '02 term enrollment) by Ethnicity and Pell status



SPC Fall 2003 Cohort- Percentage of Persistence (term-to-term) by Ethnicity and Pell status



Results

Pell students from the Fall 2002 cohort exhibit stronger persistence levels than non-Pell students.

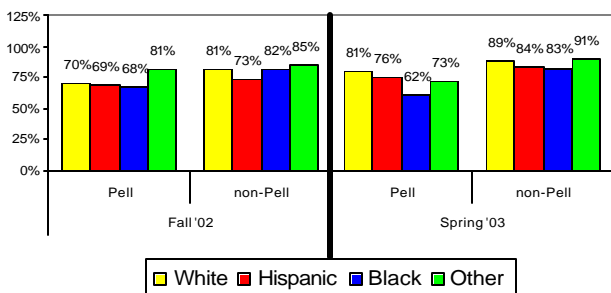
Hispanic and Black Pell students in the 2002 cohort have persistence levels which are nearly equivalent as White Pell students.

Persistence results for students in the 2003 cohort show that Black Pell students persist at a slightly lower rate as White Pell students, while Hispanic Pell students persist at lower rates than White and Black Pell students.

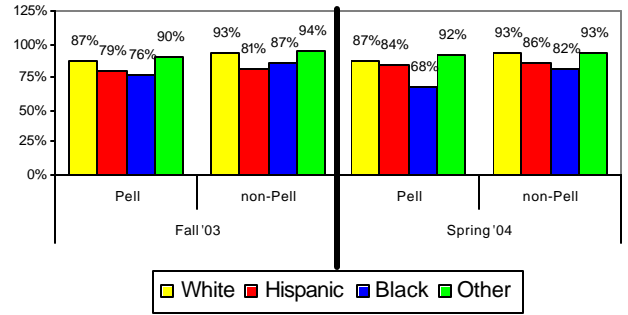
Student Success

The following graphs show the student success rates for students in both the 2002 and 2003 cohorts. Student success is defined as having a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher at the end of each term as the student progresses through college. The graphs display success by ethnicity and Pell grant status.

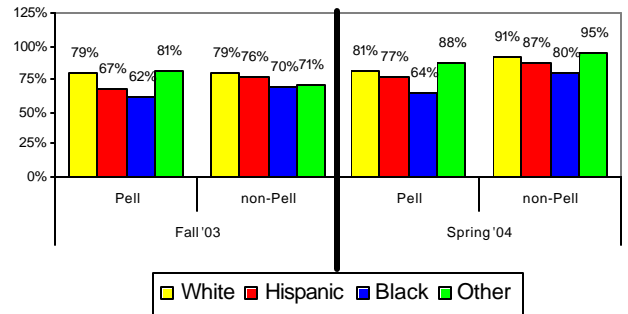
SPC Fall 2002 Cohort- Student Success: Cumulative GPA >= 2.0



SPC Fall 2002 Cohort- Student Success: Cumulative GPA >= 2.0



SPC Fall 2003 Cohort- Student Success: Cumulative GPA >= 2.0



Results

Preliminary observations indicate that non-Pell students consistently perform better than Pell students. Furthermore, initial findings show that regardless of Pell status, White students consistently yield higher success rates each semester than do Hispanic and Black students.

Summary

In general, a disparity exists when comparing persistence and success rates amongst low-income students of color. Consistently, Pell grant students persist at a higher rate than non-Pell student where as, non-Pell students have a better success rate. And in all cases, regardless of Pell status, Hispanic and Black students do not achieve academic success at as high a rate as White students.

Stay tuned

You will be provided with added information about the progress, performance, and success for these and subsequent student cohorts with respect to the Achieving the Dream student outcome indicator