

Second-Year Students Report

Analysis by the Office of Institutional Research, November 2012

Retention and Graduation

Over the last seven years (AY 2004 to 2010), on average, 18% of students did not persist to their third year of study (Table 1). The number of students who are retained each subsequent year continues to grow; however, students' first and second years continue to have the higher percentage of student attrition comprising the majority of student attrition rates over a six-year window. While the first-year remains important in students' retention, students' second-year retention also matters--once students surpass their second year, they are more likely to persist until graduation.

Table 1

Retention and graduation rates by cohorts (NHS UMNTC students only).

	2004 (n = 5556)		2005 (n = 5274)		2006 (n = 5419)		2007 (n = 5257)		2008 (n = 5090)		2009 (n = 5383)		2010 (n = 5311)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
First-to-Second Year Retention	4868	87.6	4550	86.3	4794	87.9	4655	88.5	4616	90.7	4818	89.5	4804	90.5
Second-to-Third Year Retention	4385	78.9	4123	78.2	4349	80.3	4308	81.9	4324	85.0	4515	83.9	***	***
Third-to-Fourth Year Retention	4049	72.9	3813	72.3	4040	74.6	3983	75.8	3975	78.1	***	***	***	***
Fourth-to-Fifth Year Retention	1507	27.1	1378	26.1	1348	24.9	1243	23.6	***	***	***	***	***	***
Fifth-to-Sixth Year Retention	353	6.4	320	6.1	300	5.5	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Four-Year Graduation	2555	46.0	2490	47.2	2737	50.5	2841	54.0	***	***	***	***	***	***
Six-Year Graduation	3922	70.6	3720	70.5	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

Note. Preliminary figures retrieved November 1, 2012.

Engagement, Campus Climate, & Satisfaction: Using SERU Survey Data

The SERU was administered to 28,743 undergraduates as a census survey in spring 2012, with the majority of communication occurring via electronic mail. The response rate was 34.5% ($n = 9,906$). In order to draw comparisons, students' level (first-year or sophomore) was derived using admission year and term. In this report, first-year students were admitted either fall 2011 or spring 2012 while second-year students were admitted either fall 2010 or spring 2011. This procedure allows reviewers to compare students based on the length of time they have been on campus (one or two years), rather than compare students based on credits earned. Only non-transfer students were included in this analysis.

The number of students who responded to each SERU survey question varies, as students were not required to respond to each question. Survey respondents included 1,656 first-year and 1,689 second-year students. Slightly more females and White students responded to the survey than are represented in the population; additionally, respondents tended to have slightly higher grade point averages than non-respondents.

The analyses presented in this brief report demonstrate statistically significant differences between first-year and second-year students in the areas of academic disengagement, satisfaction, and the time students spend on activities. The results can serve as potential talking points to understand some of the differences between these two levels of students. In most cases, categorical data (e.g. hours, satisfaction, frequency) were re-coded to be continuous; this was conducted so that reviewers could more easily explore significant findings through mean differences, although it is recommended that reviewers examine the results from categorical analyses as well to pinpoint specific areas of differences.

Second-Year Students' Experience

Time Spent on Activities

The data suggest that second-year students are more likely to perform community service, participate in student clubs or organizations, watch TV, commute to school/work, and spend time in employment compared with first-year students (Table 2). Additionally, first-year students spend more time attending movies, concerts, sports, or other entertainment; participating in physical exercise; attending classes; and socializing with friends.

Table 2
Differences in the amount of time spent pursuing different activities.

		First-Years			Second-Years		
		M	SD	n	M	SD	n
-	Attending movies, concerts, sports, or other entertainment events	2.09	.85	1644	2.00	.82	1675
+	Performing community service or volunteer activities	1.68	.90	1642	1.75	.87	1676
-	Participating in physical exercise, recreational sports, or physically active hobbies	2.53	1.11	1646	2.46	1.08	1675
+	Participating in student clubs or organizations	1.93	1.09	1638	2.06	1.23	1666
-	Socializing with friends	3.61	1.51	1646	3.30	1.38	1676
+	Watching TV	2.09	1.13	1647	2.24	1.18	1674
+	Commuting to school and to work	1.86	1.05	1634	2.08	.91	1664
-	Attending classes, discussion sections or labs	4.90	1.14	1645	4.76	1.13	1671
+	Paid employment (include paid internships)	2.20	1.60	1618	3.06	1.83	1657
+	Of your total hours spent working for pay, about how many hours did you work on campus?	1.87	1.46	1620	2.30	1.62	1660
+	Of your total hours spent working for pay, about how many hours were related to your academic interests?	1.46	1.15	1617	1.85	1.48	1661

Note. The items began with, "How many hours do you spend in a typical week (7 days) on the following activities?" and were coded 1 = 0, 2 = 1-5, 3 = 6-10, 4 = 11-15, 5 = 16-20, 6 = 21-25, 7 = 26-30, 8 = more than 30.

Campus Climate

The data suggest that first-year students report a statistically significant higher perception of campus climate compared to second-year on all of the items in Table 3.

Table 3
Differences in the perception of campus climate.

		First-Years			Second-Years		
		M	SD	n	M	SD	n
-	Students are respected here regardless of their religious beliefs	4.78	.97	1499	4.71	1.02	1516
-	Students are respected here regardless of their political beliefs	4.72	1.01	1502	4.64	1.06	1514
-	I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus	4.78	1.05	1488	4.69	1.08	1497
-	I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus	4.81	1.04	1487	4.72	1.08	1491

Note. The items began with, "Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements" and were coded 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.

Second-Year Students' Experience

Academic Disengagement

The data suggest that second-year students report higher frequency in going to class without completing assigned reading and going to class unprepared (Table 4).

Table 4
Differences in academic disengagement.

		First-Years			Second-Years		
		M	SD	n	M	SD	n
+	Gone to class without completing assigned reading	3.10	1.28	1648	3.29	1.30	1680
+	Gone to class unprepared	2.60	1.05	1648	2.78	1.07	1676

Note. The items began with, "How frequently during this academic year have you done each of the following?" and were coded 1 = never to 6 = very often.

Satisfaction

The data suggest that second-year students are less satisfied with the availability of courses needed for general education requirements and graduation, access to small classes, the availability of educational enrichment programs, and the value of their education for the price they are paying (Table 5). Second-year students are more satisfied with the quality of faculty instruction and the ability to get into the major that they want.

Table 5
Differences in the perception of campus climate.

		First-Years			Second-Years		
		M	SD	n	M	SD	n
+	Quality of faculty instruction	4.65	.89	1500	4.72	.92	1503
+	Ability to get into a major that you want	4.84	1.05	1484	4.98	1.01	1498
-	Availability of courses for general education or breadth requirements	4.53	.96	1500	4.44	.95	1492
-	Availability of courses needed for graduation	4.66	.96	1496	4.54	1.00	1506
-	Access to small classes	4.37	1.14	1493	4.29	1.16	1503
-	Educational enrichment programs (e.g., study abroad, internships)	4.71	.91	1481	4.57	1.03	1490
-	Value of your education for the price you're paying	4.29	1.25	1504	4.13	1.25	1519

Note. The items began with, "How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your educational experience in the major?" and were coded 1 = very dissatisfied to 6 = very satisfied.