



## Student Attrition Rates By Cohort

### **Background**

During Spring 2008, the Research Office, responding to a request by the Dean of Counseling, investigated the attrition rates of three fall cohorts to determine whether certain targeted intervention strategies might have contributed to an improvement in the student's academic standing as well as a decrease in student attrition rates.

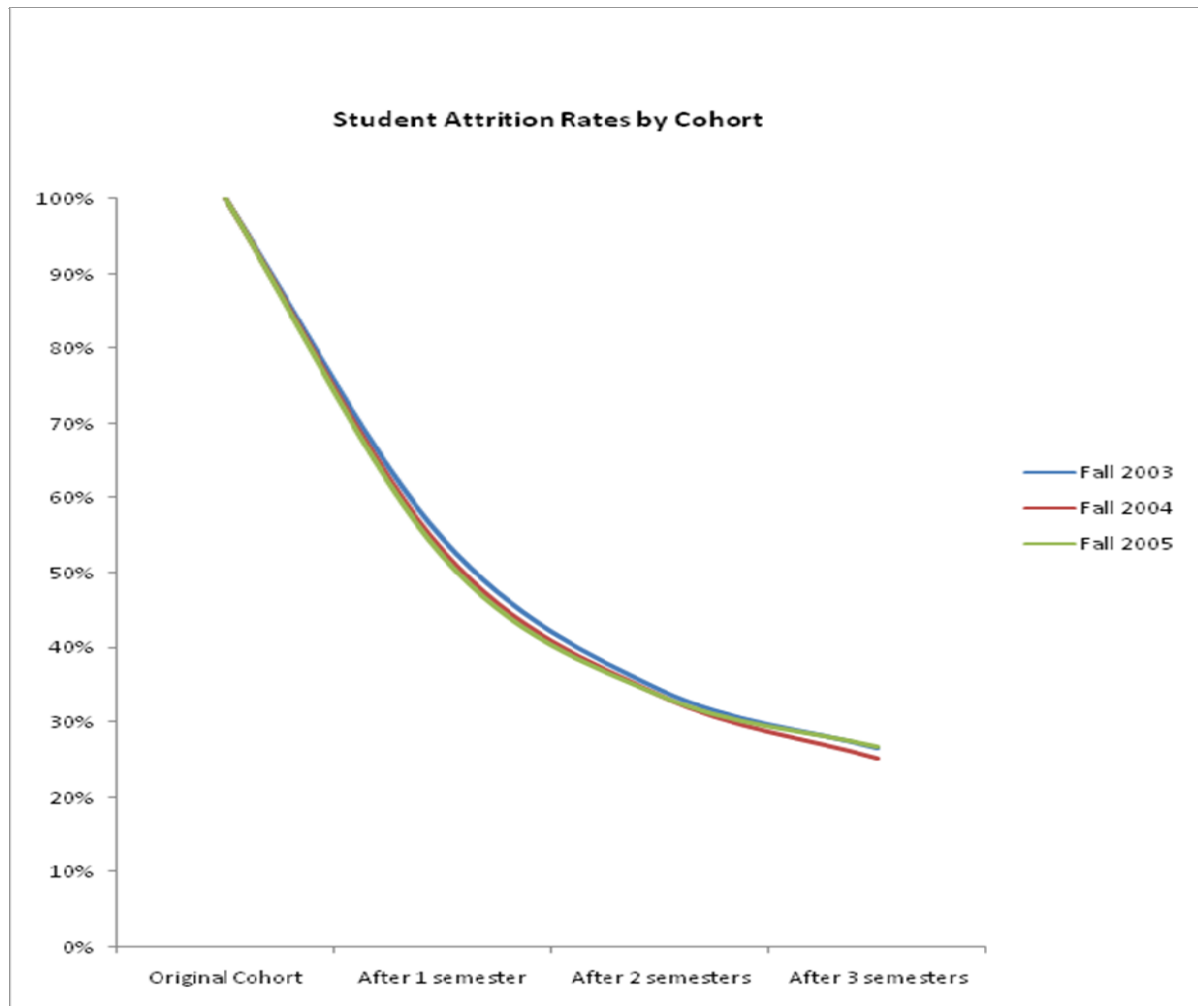
The Research Office identified three fall semester cohorts (Fall 2003, Fall 2004, Fall 2005) and selected only full-time students attending during the fall semester. For each fall semester cohort, the cohort was tracked for three subsequent semesters, measuring the change in their academic standing as well as examining the attrition rates of these students. For the purposes of the study, the students were identified by their academic standing as being either "Good Academic Standing" or "Academic Problems", based on the contents of the student's academic standing status in the PeopleSoft system which is updated once per semester (at the end of term.)

For the fall 2003 cohort, the Research Office identified 3,815 full-time students with "Academic Problems"; 3,958 full-time students were identified for the fall 2004 cohort and 3,920 full-time students were analyzed for the fall 2005 cohort. The three individual fall cohorts were tracked over three subsequent semesters (for a total of two academic years) to assess overall attrition rates and to examine attrition rates aggregated by academic standing.

The following charts and tables are the result of the analyses.

The attrition rates for each of the individual fall cohorts were analyzed for the four semesters. This analysis allowed for non-contiguous enrollment and made no distinction between students who had good academic standing and those who had academic problems. The following graphic shows the student attrition rates.

## Multi-Cohort Assessment of Student Attrition Based on Academic Standing

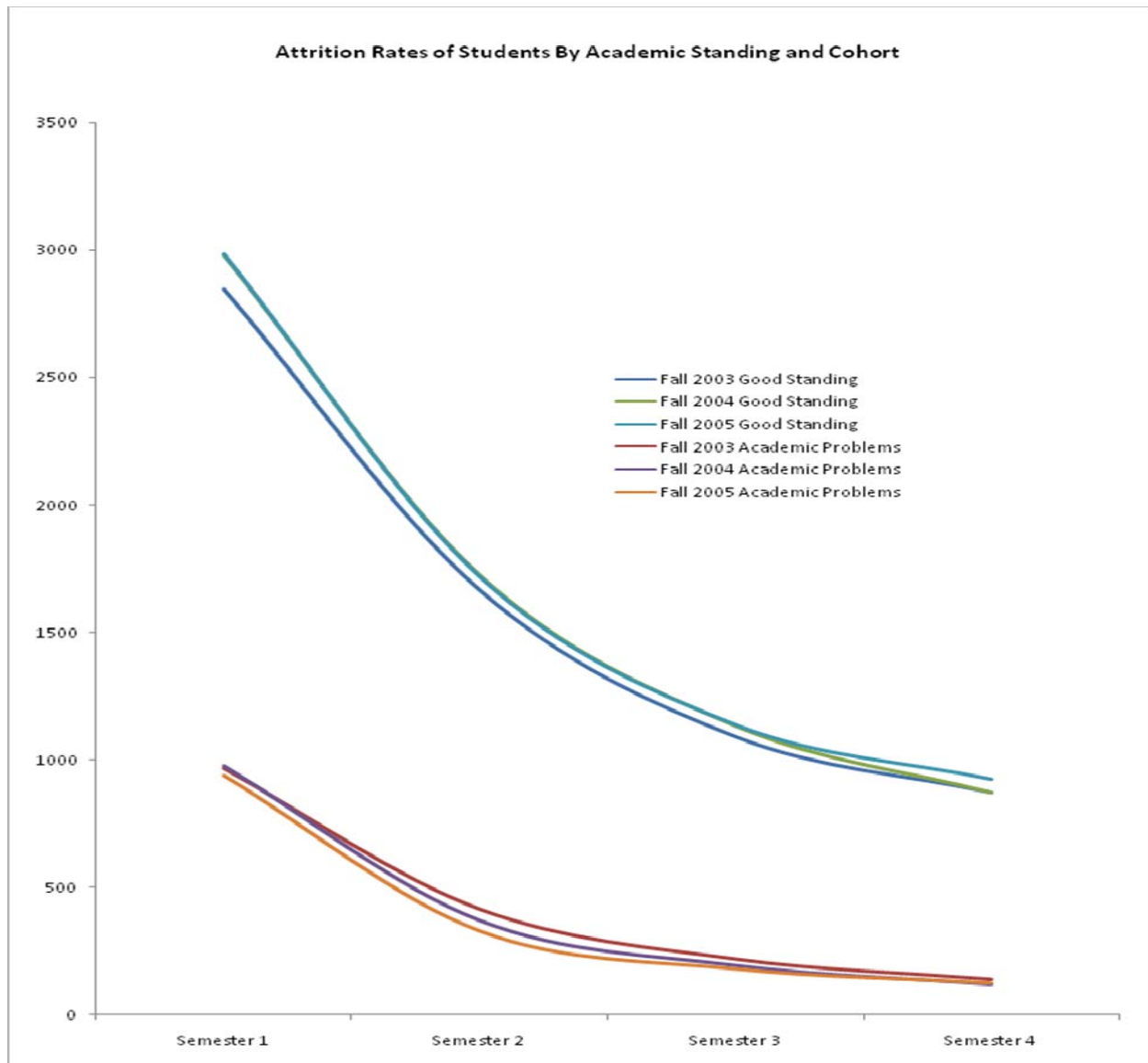


The previous graphic shows that the attrition rates of the the three fall full-time student cohorts were very similar. For the fall 2003 cohort, there were 3,815 students identified and only 1,009 students persisted to Spring 2005. For the fall 2004 cohort, there were 3,958 students identified and only 992 students persisted to Spring 2006. For the fall 2005 cohort, there were 3,920 students identified and only 1050 students persisted to Spring 2005.

On average, approximately 25% of the fall cohorts persisted to the end of the second academic year, allowing for non-contiguous enrollment during that period.

The next phase of the analyses investigated the attrition rates when controlling for the academic standing of the fall cohort's students. The following graphic is similar to the prior graphic with the exception of seperating those students in each fall cohort as to their respective academic standing. Students with "good" academic and students with "academic problems" exhibited differing attrition rates

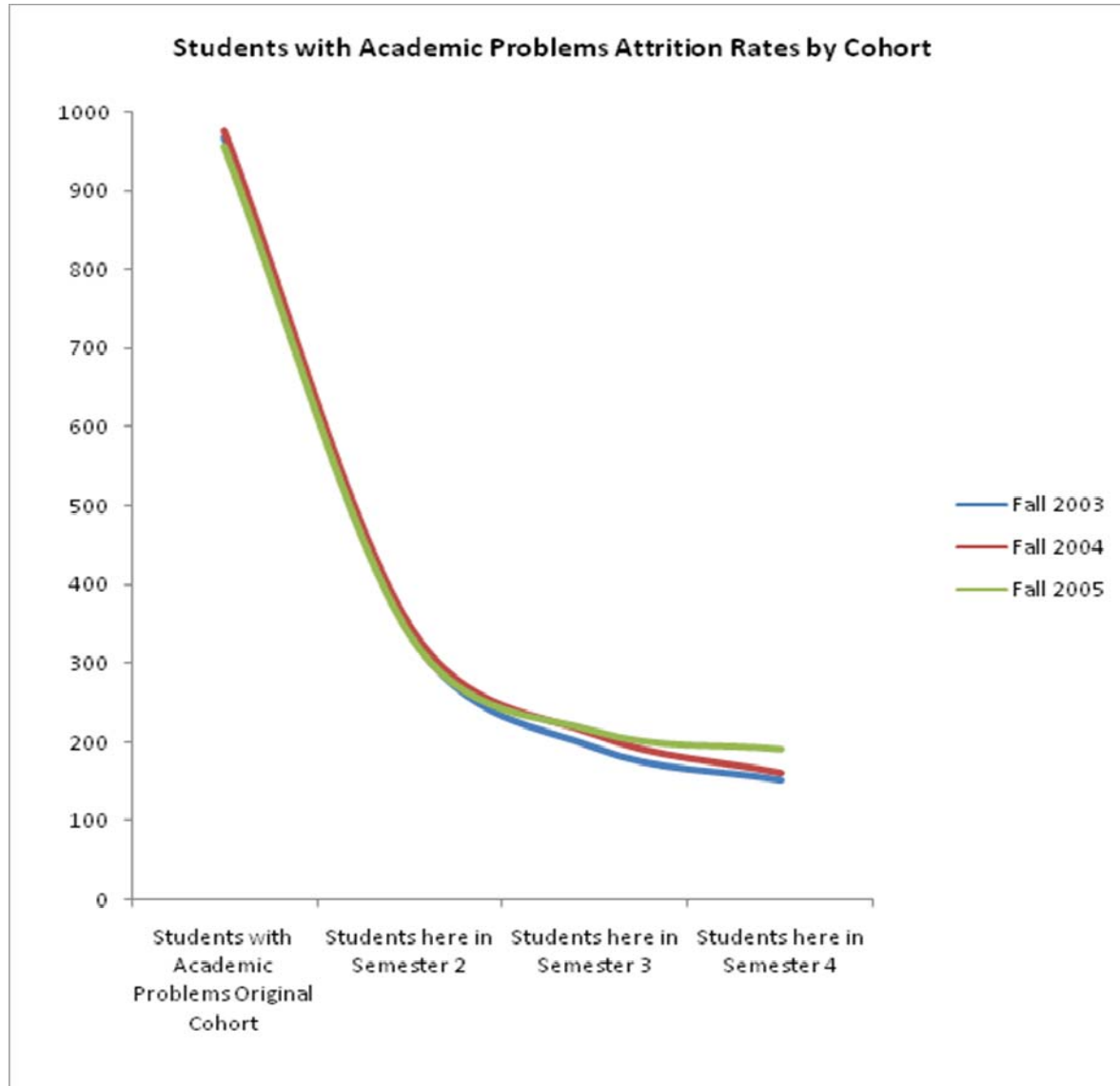
## Student Attrition Rates By Cohort (continued)



On average, approximately 30% of the fall cohorts who were identified as having “Good academic standing” persisted to the end of the second academic year; approximately 13% of the fall cohorts who were identified as having “Academic problems” persisted to the end of the second academic year. Those students who had good academic standing had lower attrition rates compared to those students who had academic problems.

The next phase of the analysis was to examine the attrition rates of students with academic problems more closely.

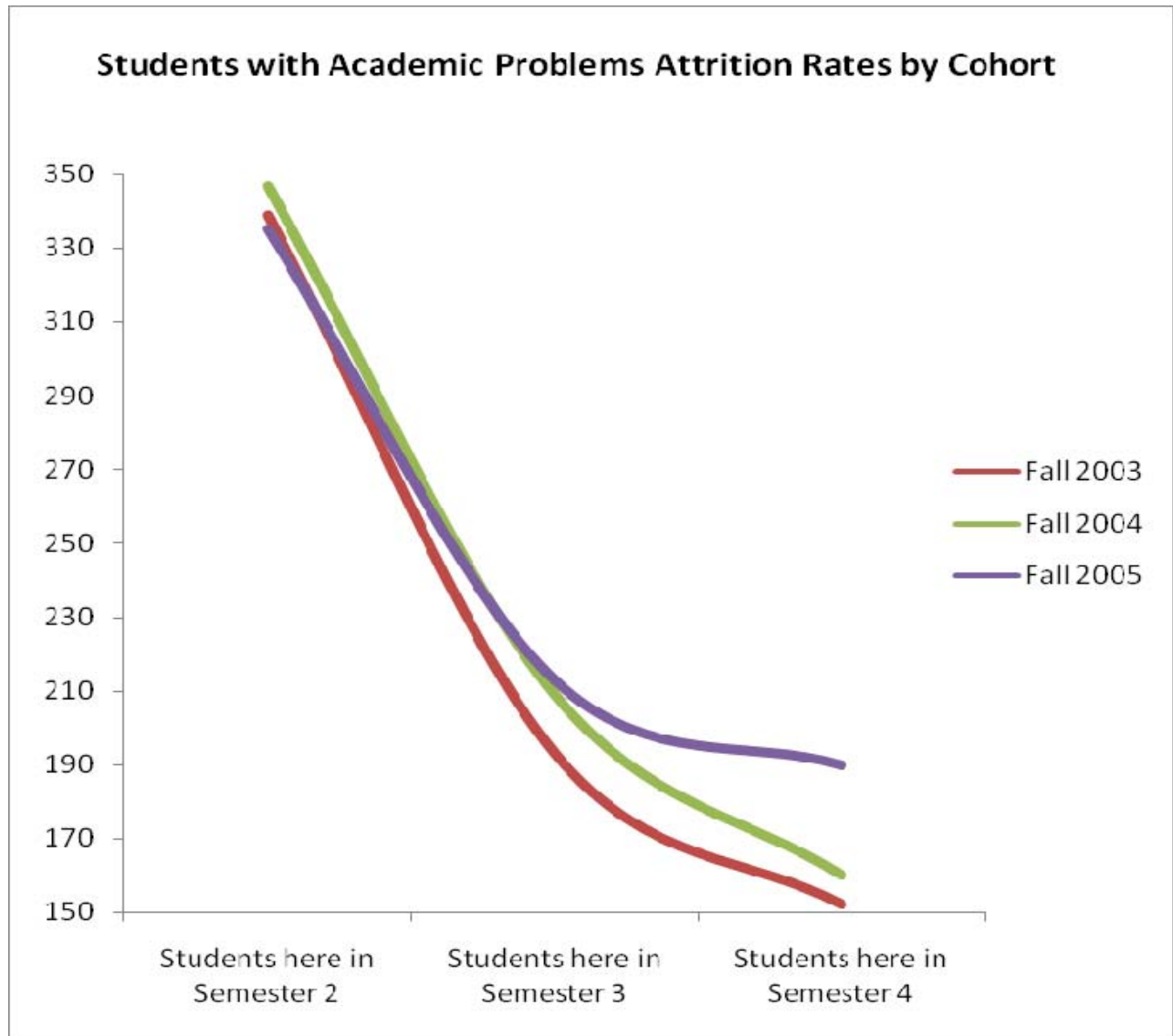
## Student Attrition Rates By Cohort (continued)



The graph above indicates that full-time students in each of the cohorts who had “Academic problems” had similar attrition rates. On average, approximately 13% of the fall cohorts who were identified as having “Academic problems” persisted to the end of the second academic year

However, it is interesting to note that for the fall 2005 cohort, there was a slight increase of students persisting to the fourth semester. The next graph explores these differences more closely.

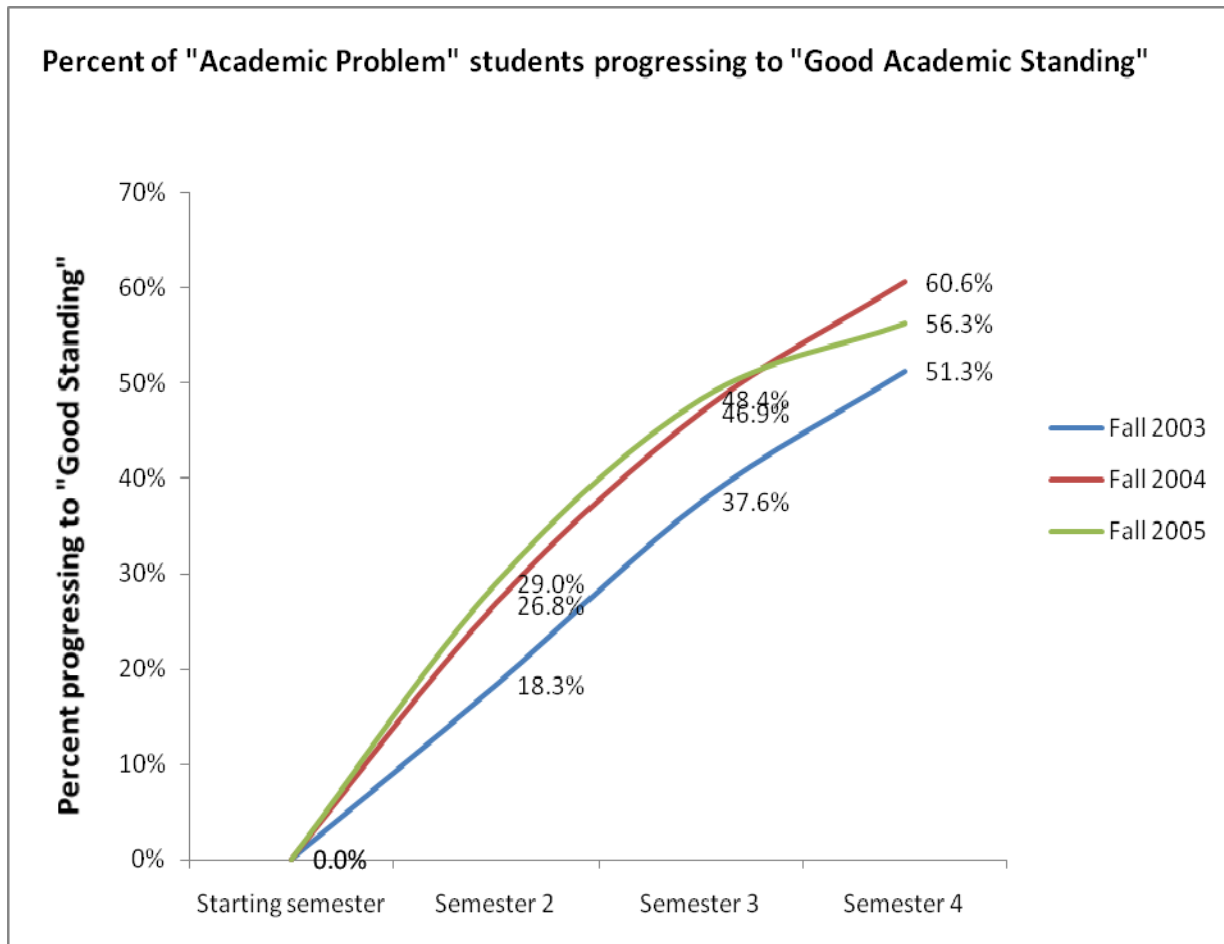
## Student Attrition Rates By Cohort (continued)



The new scale, which magnifies the previous graphic, and only examines the number of students in the cohorts enrolled in subsequent semesters, more clearly shows the ongoing improvements in the attrition rates for the fall 2004 and the fall 2005 cohorts of students with “academic problems”.

The next phase of the analyses was to investigate how many students identified as having “Academic Problems” improved their academic standing to achieve “Good academic standing”. The following graph shows the percent of “Academic Problem” students progressing to “Good Academic Standing”.

## Progression of Academic Problem Students to Good Academic Standing

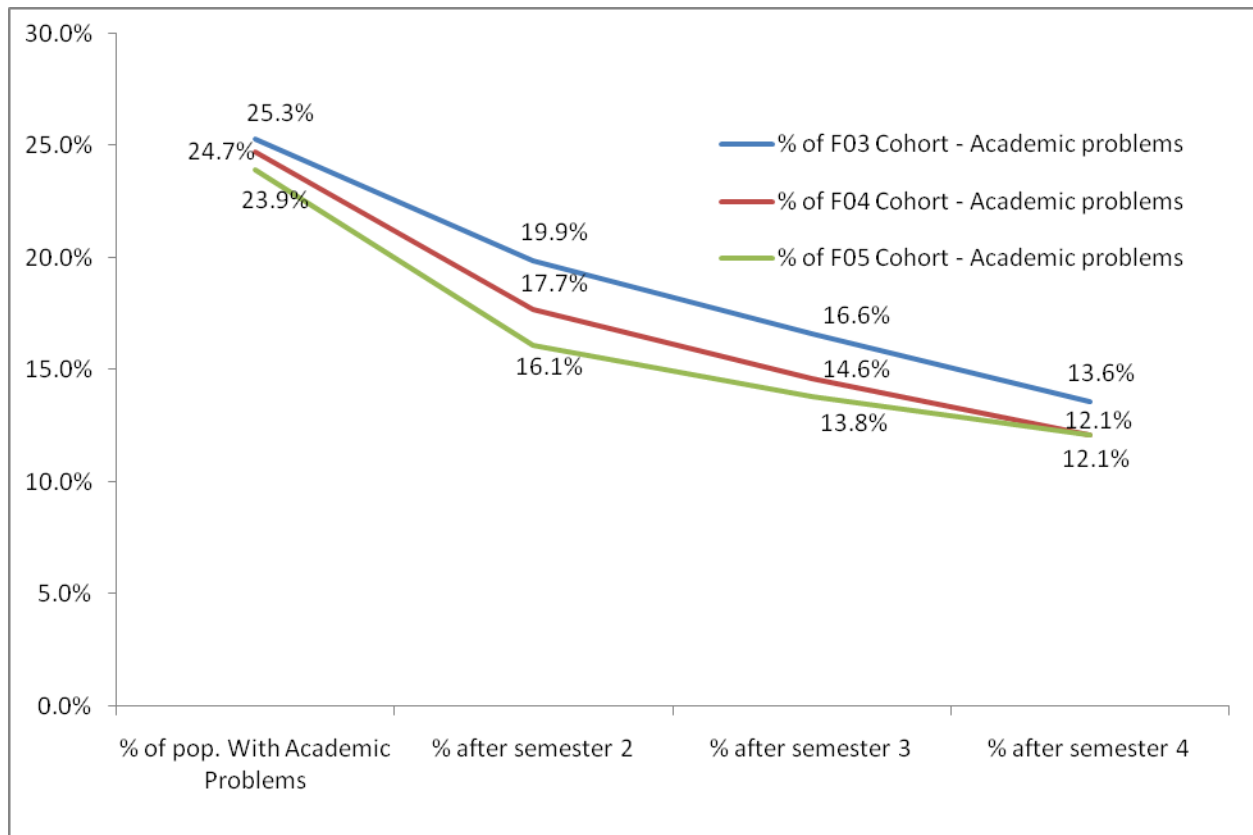


In all three fall cohorts, students who were identified as having “academic problems” improved their academic standing over time (evidenced by their persistence to subsequent semesters). In particular, both fall 2004 and the fall 2005 cohorts showed increasing movement from “academic problems” toward “good academic standing”.

The Fall 2004 cohort had the largest proportion of “academic problems” students improving their academic standing. Within three semesters after fall 2004, 60.6% of the “academic problem” students were able to improve their academic standing to “good standing”.

The final phase of the study examined the percentage of the cohort who experienced “academic problems” during the course of the study. The following graph illustrates these percentages.

## Percentage of the Cohort with Academic Problems



As shown in the previous graph, the fall 2005 Full-time student cohort had the lowest proportion of students who are experiencing academic problems. In addition, the fall 2005 cohort was able to retain a slightly higher proportion of students from the first semester to the fourth semester of the study. It can be generalized that with each cohort (from Fall 2003 to fall 2005), the proportion of students with academic problems was smaller and that students who experienced academic problems persisted at slightly higher proportions.

### **Conclusion**

There is evidence that, over the past three fall full-time student cohorts, attrition rates of CRC students have improved and a slightly smaller proportion of students have experienced academic problems during their first two years at the college. Although the differences in the cohorts are not statistically significant, it is encouraging to note that many of the students progressed from having academic problems to good academic standing and the findings appear to show that specialized intervention strategies by Student Services personnel, especially in supporting students experiencing academic problems, may be making a positive impact, as evidenced by the decreasing attrition rates and the improved movement of students from academic problem status to good academic standing.