Analysis of “Online” Courses vs. All Courses (2006 – 2011)

CRC Research Office
October 2011
Summary of Findings

• Compared to the general student population, a greater percentage of online enrollments are
  – Over the age of 25
  – Not be a first-time freshmen
  – Female
  – White
  – More likely to have
    • A degree and/or certificate objective
    • Already earned an AA degree or higher
Summary of Findings

• Average course success rates in online courses are in general 7% below college-wide average course success rates.

• The gap in online average course success rates compared to college-wide average course success rates is greater for the following:
  – Students under the age of 25
  – African American, Native American, and Hispanic students
  – First time freshmen
  – Basic skills and transfer-level courses
Caveats

- Online course enrollments represent a fairly small proportion of the college’s total enrollment. For this reason caution should be taken when interpreting and taking action on this data.

- The two groups being compared are not mutually exclusive and contain enrollments not unduplicated students. The potential impact of this fact on the data is unknown.
A greater percentage of online enrollments are over the age of 20 (72%) compared to the general student population (61%). In addition, the distribution of on-line enrollment by age is fairly uniform compared to the general student population.
A greater percentage of enrollments in online courses are 25 or over (57%) compared to the general student population (34%).
A slightly greater percentage of online enrollments are female compared to the general student population.
Asian/Pacific Islander students are under-represented and White students are over-represented in the online course enrollments compared to the general student population. The percentage of Hispanic students enrolling in online courses has significantly increased the past two years.
A greater percentage of the enrollments in online courses are seeking a Degree and/or Certificate (29%) compared to the general student population (20%).
Analysis of “Online” Courses vs. All Courses (2006 – 2011)

A greater percentage of the online enrollments are students who have completed an AA Degree or higher (17%) compared to the general student population (7%).
A lower percentage of online enrollments are first-time freshmen (10%) compared to the general student population (18%).
A slightly lower percentage of the online enrollments are students who do not speak English as their primary language (15%) compared to the general student population (21%).
Analysis of “Online” Courses vs. All Courses (2006 – 2011)

Course success rates for online courses are lower compared to the overall college course success rates. The increase in course success rates for online courses during the last academic year (3%) was slightly greater than the increase in overall course success rates (2%).
The course success rates for students in online courses under the age of 40 are substantially below the course success rates for the same age groups in general college population. This differential is smaller for students 40 and over.
The gap in average course success rates in online courses compared to college-wide data for students under the age of 25 (approximately 12%) is greater than the college differential in average course success (7%). Improvements in average course success in online courses mirror the college-wide improvements.
Analysis of “Online” Courses vs. All Courses (2006 – 2011)

It does not appear that there is any differential impact on average courses success rates by gender.
The gaps in average course success rates in online courses compared to college-wide data for African American, Native American and Hispanic are greater than the gaps in average course success rates for other groups and the college-wide differential of 7%.
The average course success rates for first time freshmen in online courses increased by 7% compared to a 4% gain college-wide during the past academic year. The gap (approximately 12%) in average course success rates for first-time freshmen in online courses compared to college-wide data is greater than the college differential (7%).
The significant increase in average course success rates in “College-level” online courses last year eliminated the gap between online course success rates and overall course success rates for these courses. Average course success rates online basic skills and transfer courses have been relatively unchanged over the past 4 years.
For the past two years, the gap in average course success rates for students whose first language is not English (3%) in online courses compared to college-wide data is less than the college differential (7%).
Conclusions

- There is a gap between average course success rates in online courses compared to college-wide average course success rates.
- The differential in success varies by demographic groups.
- Average course success rates in online courses have generally mirrored college-wide improvements.
Next Steps

• Program based research should be conducted
  – Programs with significant online course enrollments should review their course success by instructional mode data in their PrOF data packets
  – Programs with a gap greater than 7% may wish to identify planning agenda items related to this fact.
  – Programs with a gap less than 7% may wish to identify and disseminate instructional practices to other programs through PD, FLEX and CASSL presentations.

• Best practices in online education should be identified and disseminated to the college community.