



Goal Attainment of Cabrillo College Students by Ethnicity

Jing Luan
Planning and Research Office (PRO)
March, 2004

Goal Attainment of Cabrillo College Students By Ethnicity

Jing Luan
Planning and Research Office (PRO)
March, 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study provides information to help respond to the questions posed by the Cabrillo College Governing Board on the subject of educational goal attainment of students by select demographics. The study focused on first-time students by ethnic groups of Hispanic, White and All Other. Whenever possible, first-time students were compared to continuing students.

First-time Hispanic students were the largest percentage of students "Undecided" on their educational goals (31%); as continuing students, the percentage dropped to 17%. This was the largest decrease of the 3 ethnic groups. Meanwhile White students experienced smaller changes in this category (24% for "first time" and 20% for "continuing").

What goals and whose goals have changed?

The study tracked a cohort of first-time students from fall 2002 to spring 2003. Comparing the first-time students' goal declaration and the goals for the same students in their next term, the goals that changed the most were Obtaining GED, Obtaining Job Skills, Transfer with or without AA/AS, and Undecided. Among them, transfer oriented goals, (the bottom row of Tables B and C entitled, "Certificate & Beyond"), have increased for all three ethnic groups. For all of them, the undecided percentages have decreased.

Although all three ethnic groups have changed the initial goals, percentage-wise, Hispanic students tended to change their goals less. For example, 34% of the White students who initially selected Transfer with AA/AS, a semester later, went up to 44% - a 10% change. Meanwhile, Hispanic students only had a 7% change. Hispanic students shifted from 41% to 53% in their goals of obtaining certificates or higher, for Whites, 50% to 65%, and for the All Other category 47% to 64%.

The study also examined the degree and certificate recipients in 2001-2002 and their original educational goals. Of those Hispanic and White students who received degrees and certificates, the data showed that the majority of them accomplished their goal. About 6 out of 10 students whose goal was at or above getting an associate degree or certificate actually accomplished their goal. The percentage would be higher if those who were not sure about their goals were excluded from the analysis.

In spring 2003, Hispanic students were 21.3% of the total student body. A little over 23% of the degrees and certificates were awarded to Hispanic students in Academic Year (2002-2003).

Goal Attainment of Cabrillo College First-time Students By Ethnicity

Jing Luan
Planning and Research Office (PRO)
March, 2004

BACKGROUND

This research study addresses the following three questions posed by Cabrillo Governing Board members:

1. What is the information on first-time Hispanic students by age?
2. What is the attainment level of Educational goals of Hispanic students?
3. How does the graduation of Hispanic students compare with other students at Cabrillo?

These three questions covered a very broad spectrum of issues. For example, the educational goals of community college students have long been regarded as less reliable than expected, as well as ever-changing. Graduation and success are broad concepts that, in a typical community college environment, are defined as course success and degree/certificate awards. Additionally, in the vocational education area, there have been measures established to report on program enrollment and dropouts (completers and leavers), employability and earning power. These additional measures are independent of the traditional measures of course success.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

After reviewing data availability and conversing with Vice-President for Student Services, and Dean of Instruction, Career Education and Economic Development, the Planning and Research Office (PRO) established the following study plan based on questions from the Governing Board:

1. What is the percentage distribution of first-time students and continuing students by age and by ethnicity groupings of Hispanic, White and All Other?
2. What is the percentage distribution of goal declaration of first-time students and continuing students by ethnic groupings of Hispanic, White and All Other?
3. What is the recent percentage distribution of degree and certificate award recipients by ethnic groupings of Hispanic, White and All Other and by educational goals?

In this study, if percentage difference is 3 percentage points or greater, it is regarded as significant and is examined further. The analysis would first start with the differences among the ethnic groupings within first-time students, then compared first-time student to continuing students. Differences among the ethnic groupings within either the first-time or continuing students are discussed, but not highlighted in the tables. Numbers in bold type represent the higher of the comparisons between first-time students and continuing students, which are in two tables side-by-side. When necessary, numbers are further boxed to draw attention to the comparisons between the two tables. Summary statistics have been provided at the bottom of the tables.

First-time students are those who have had no college experience prior to enrolling at Cabrillo. Continuing students are all those who were enrolled in a given term after excluding the first-time students. Therefore, many of these students have had previous college experiences.

FINDINGS

Section One – Age, Educational Goals

The following tables display fall 2002 information on first-time and continuing students separately.

TABLE A

Age by Race for <i>First-time</i> Students Fall 2002				Age by Race for <i>Continuing</i> Students Fall 2002			
	Hispanic	White	All Other		Hispanic	White	All Other
< 18	6%	8%	10%	< 18	4%	6%	5%
18 - 20	52%	59%	51%	18 - 20	24%	17%	16%
21 - 25	18%	15%	15%	21 - 25	27%	21%	28%
26 - 30	8%	5%	6%	26 - 30	14%	10%	14%
31 - 40	9%	5%	8%	31 - 40	18%	16%	16%
41 - 50	5%	5%	6%	41 - 50	10%	16%	13%
51 - 60	1%	2%	3%	51 - 60	3%	10%	6%
>60		1%	2%	>60	1%	4%	3%
Counts:	823	1311	231	Counts:	2688	8689	1480
Age <26 %:	76%	82%	76%	Age <26 %:	55%	44%	49%
Race %:	35%	55%	10%	Race %:	21%	68%	12%

As shown in the bottom portion of Table A, among the first-time students, a total of 76% of the Hispanic students, and 82% of the White students, were under the age of 26.

There was a higher percentage of first-time students who were 18-20 years of age, compared to continuing students.

Among continuing students, there were significantly higher percentages of Hispanic students (55%) under the age of 26, compared to either White students (44%) or "All Other" (49%).

The overall composition of the first-time student body showed that Hispanic students were 35% of the population. The percentage of Hispanic students among continuing students was 21%.

The following tables display fall 2002 information on first-time and continuing students separately. Their educational goals were based on their initial declaration of goals.

TABLE B

Initial Goals of First-time Students by Race Fall 2002				Goals of Continuing Students by Race Fall 2002			
	Hispanic	White	All Other		Hispanic	White	All Other
AA/AS	5%	3%	3%	AA/AS	6%	6%	4%
Basic Skills	4%	1%	1%	Basic Skills	2%	4%	1%
Certificate	2%	1%	2%	Certificate	2%	2%	2%
Ed Development	3%	6%	8%	Ed Development	12%	6%	17%
Form Career Interests	4%	4%	3%	Form Career Interests	4%	5%	5%
Maintain License	2%	1%	1%	Maintain License	1%	2%	1%
Obtain GED	6%	6%	6%	Obtain GED	4%	6%	5%
Obtain Job Skills	7%	6%	5%	Obtain Job Skills	7%	8%	7%
Tran w/ AA/AS	26%	34%	35%	Tran w/ AA/AS	26%	26%	22%
Tran w/o AA/AS	6%	11%	6%	Tran w/o AA/AS	10%	7%	10%
Undecided	31%	24%	27%	Undecided	17%	20%	14%
Unreported	0%	1%	0%	Unreported	1%	2%	3%
Update Job Skills	2%	2%	1%	Update Job Skills	4%	6%	7%
Voc AA/AS	2%	1%	1%	Voc AA/AS	2%	2%	2%
Count	550	915	151	Count	3085	9814	1596
Certificate or Higher:	41%	50%	47%	Certificate or Higher:	46%	43%	40%

Among first-time students, there was a clear indication that more Hispanic students (31%) compared to White students (24%) tended to be "Undecided". Fewer of the first-timer Hispanic students (26%), compared to White students (34%) chose Transfer w/ AA/AS.

Compared to continuing students, fewer first-time Hispanic students (6%) initially claimed Transfer w/o AA/AS as their goal. The bottom row of the tables contains the percentage of students who claimed goals in Certificates, AA/AS or transfer (Certificate or Higher). The percentages changed from 41% for first-time Hispanic students to 46% for continuing Hispanic students. A drop is visible for White students and the "All Other" category.

Comparing percentages in the boxes in both tables, it showed that while White students experienced smaller changes in the "Undecided" category (24% for "first time" and 20% for "continuing"), the percentage of first-time Hispanic students with "Undecided" goals dropped significantly from 31% to 17%. The same dramatic drop is visible for the All Other category as well.

Since students change their educational goals from term to term with or without seeking guidance from counselors, it is more informative to track a cohort of first-time students for one semester to observe change. Specifically, the tracking ought to answer such questions as, "What goals were changed?" and "Whose goals have changed and by how much?" The following tables display fall 2002 information on first-time students and their goal change a semester later (spring 2003).

TABLE C - Initial Goal of First-time Students and Their Informed Goals*

Fall 2002	Spring 2003					
	Hispanic	White	All Other	Hispanic	White	All Other
AA/AS	5%	3%	3%	7%	5%	5%
Basic Skills	4%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%
Certificate	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Ed Development	3%	6%	8%	2%	5%	4%
Form Career Interests	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Maintain License	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	
Obtain GED	6%	6%	6%	2%	2%	2%
Obtain Job Skills	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	1%
Tran w/ AA/AS	26%	34%	35%	33%	44%	46%
Tran w/o AA/AS	6%	11%	6%	9%	13%	11%
Undecided	31%	24%	27%	27%	19%	21%
Unreported	0%	1%	0%	5%	2%	3%
Update Job Skills	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Voc AA/AS	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	
Certificate or Higher:	41%	50%	47%	53%	65%	64%

*Data reported on those students in the beginning cohort of fall 2002 who were enrolled in spring 2003.

What goals have changed?

Comparing the first-time students' goal declaration and the goals for the same students in their next term, the goals that changed the most were Obtaining GED, Obtaining Job Skills, Transfer with or without AA/AS, and Undecided. Among them, transfer oriented goals, the last row of the tables entitled, "Certificate or Higher", have increased for all three ethnic groups. For all of them, the undecided percentages have decreased. Obtaining GED and Obtaining Job Skills have also decreased slightly.

Whose goals have changed?

Although all three ethnic groups have changed the initial goals they had, percentage-wise, Hispanic students tended to change their goals less. For example, 34% of the White students who initially selected Transfer with AA/AS, a semester later, went up to 44% - a 10% change. Meanwhile, Hispanic students only had a 7% change (26% to 33%). Using data in the bottom row of the tables (Certificates or Higher), Hispanic students shifted from 41% to 53% in their goals of obtaining certificates or higher, for Whites, 50% to 65%, and for the All Other category 47% to 64%. It is possible that the Hispanic students may have "stayed" with their original goals more than changing them. However, this cannot be concluded due to the increase of "Unreported" cases among them.

Ideally, the size of the Undecided group should be significantly minimized, perhaps, to single digits.

Section Two – Graduation and Educational Goals

The following table provides information on degrees and certificates recipients in the 2001-2002 academic year. The recipients have been regrouped into Hispanic, White and All Other. This section addresses the questions about graduation rates of Hispanic students. To the extent possible, the award recipients' original educational goals information is presented.

TABLE D - 2001–2002 Degree/Certificate Award Recipients by Race by Initial Educational Goal*

	Hispanic	White	All Other
AA/AS	6%	5%	6%
Basic Skills	4%	0%	3%
Certificate	4%	1%	4%
Ed Development	2%	5%	4%
Form Career Interests	3%	7%	3%
Maintain License	1%	2%	4%
Obtain GED	10%	2%	3%
Obtain Job Skills	6%	6%	4%
Tran w/ AA/AS	35%	37%	47%
Tran w/o AA/AS	9%	9%	13%
Undecided	13%	11%	4%
Unreported	4%	8%	5%
Update Job Skills	1%	2%	3%
Voc AA/AS	4%	5%	
Recipients	136	421	79
Recipients' Ethnic %	21.4%	66.2%	12.4%
Certificate or Higher:	58%	57%	70%

* Goals were their initial goals. Students do not enroll in college continuously prior to their obtaining an award, which makes it difficult to track the informed goals for all the terms when they were enrolled.

The above table contains the degree and certificate recipients in 2001-2002 and their original educational goals. Of those Hispanic students who received degrees and certificates, the data showed that the majority of them accomplished their goal. To state it more accurately, the combination of the goals that were certificates or higher was 58% (35% of the Hispanic students selected Transfer with AA/AS, 9% selected Transfer without AA/AS, 6% selected AA/AS, 4% selected Vocational AA/AS, and another 4% selected Certificates for a combined 58%). Without excluding those who were undecided on their goal in the total counts, about 6 out of 10 students (58% of the students) whose goal was at or above getting an associate degree or certificate actually accomplished their goal. The same is true for White students. The percentages would be higher if those who were not sure about their goals were excluded.

In spring 2003, Hispanic students were 21.3% of the total student body. A little over 23% of the degrees and certificates were awarded to Hispanic students in Academic Year (2002-2003).