**College of Arts & Sciences**

**1st to 3rd Semester Retention Analysis**

**For the Fall 2011 First-Time Full-Time Entering Freshmen Cohort**

*Wendy McEwen, Director of Institutional Research*

In Fall 2011, 644 First-Time Full-Time (FTFT) Entering Freshmen entered the College of Arts & Sciences. Of these, 626 (97.2%) were enrolled at Spring Census in February 2012. By Fall Census in October 2012, 585 (90.8%) were retained, defined as enrolled in the College. This 1st to 3rd semester retention rate, 90.8%, is the highest retention rate for College FTFT Freshmen since the first year we began tracking and reporting this metric in 1995. The last three years’ 1st to 3rd semester retention rates are: 81.1% for Fall 2008 to Fall 2009, 86.4% for Fall 2009 to Fall 2010, and 87.5% for Fall 2010 to Fall 2011.

**Academic Preparation & College Choice**

In past years, we’ve had a significant number of those students who were not retained leave with a final College GPA lower than 2.0. For the Fall 2011 cohort, however, only 13 of the 59 students not retained had a low GPA (22.0% of the total FTFT Entering Freshmen not retained). Comparatively, 17% of the Fall 2010 FTFT Entering Freshmen cohort not retained had a GPA lower than 2.0. For the Fall 2009 cohort, 31% of those not retained had a GPA lower than 2.0.

Twenty-seven (27) of the 59 students not retained had a final College GPA higher than 3.0 (45.7%), which is consistent with the last several years of not-retained students. For the 27 students not retained with strong GPAs, 12 (44.4%) reported that the College was their 3rd or 4th choice for admissions when they responded to the Higher Education Research Institute’s (HERI) Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey (TFS).

Graph 1 displays a summary of College Choice for all the New Freshmen and Graph 2 displays a summary for only those freshmen not retained.

**Graph 1 All First-Time Full-Time Entering Freshmen Graph 2 FTFT Entering Freshmen Not Retained**

**Gender, Financial, and Race/ Ethnicity Characteristics**

The retention rate for men was strong for the Fall 2011 FTFT Entering Freshmen cohort. Twenty-seven (27) of the 269 men who started as freshmen in Fall 2011 did not return in Fall 2012 for a retention rate of 90.0%. Our women’s retention rate was 91.5%.

As with past years, our Cal Grant retention rate for the Fall 2011 FTFT Entering Freshmen cohort was 95.0%. This is a very strong rate and higher than the 89.2% retention rate for non-Cal Grant students. Fall 2011’s cohort had 179 Cal Grant students, the highest number ever and 27.8% of the overall class. The positive retention rate for Cal Grant students combined with the large number of these students is one critical component of our strong retention rate. See Graph 3 for the retention rate by financial characteristics for the last two cohorts.

**Graph 3 Retention Rates for Cal Grant, Non Cal Grant, Pell Grant, Non Pell Grant, First Generation, and Non First Generation**

Many of our first-generation and Hispanic students also receive Cal Grants. Our Hispanic retention rate is also very good. See Graph 4 for retention by race/ethnicity. As with prior years, one unusual thing to note in Graph 4 is that the retention rate for our Asian population is lower than our overall rate. This contrasts with many schools’ experiences where Asian students are retained and graduated at a higher rate than most ethnicities.

**Graph** **4 Retention by Race / Ethnicity**

**Conclusion**

Our 1st to 3rd semester retention rate for the Fall 2011 First-Time Full-Time Entering Freshmen cohort was very strong. This is, in part, because of our strong retention rate for Cal Grant students and a higher retention rate for men. There are many other descriptive characteristics examined by the Retention Working Group as possible indicators of attrition. Please contact me if you are interested in seeing these detailed tables.