**School of Business Retention and Graduation rates**

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The School of Business Retention and Graduation Rate Working Group includes Keith Roberts, Jim Spee, Derek Dsa, Nancy Svenson, Christine Taitano, Maria Johnson, Stacey Neeley, Alisha Aguilar and me. We meet regularly with the goal of understanding and improving our students’ success rates. This paper provides a brief update of the current rates for both our post-traditional undergraduate students and our graduate students. The retention rates are current as of our Fall census and the graduation rates are current as of June 30th, 2013.

**Undergraduates**

In order to conduct retention and graduation rate analysis, it is important to clearly define when a student begins a program. For the purposes of this analysis, I’ve defined a starting cohort as a student beginning their program in either *Fall* (July 1st to December 31st) or *Spring* (January 1st to June 30th).

In looking at retention and graduation rates, common questions are “are these rates good?” and “what should they be?” Because Universities are currently only required to publish information on retention and graduation rates for their first-time full-time entering freshmen, most schools do not publish information on any other populations. Thus, it is difficult to find comparable rates with which to benchmark our student success.

While it is difficult to find external comparisons, we can compare the post-traditional undergraduate 1st to 3rd semester retention rates to those of our traditional, first-time full-time entering freshmen population. Using this comparison, the retention rates for our post-traditional undergraduates are very similar to those of our first-time full-time entering freshmen. Post-traditional student graduation rates are slightly lower than those of our traditional students, but they are higher than the first-time full-time entering freshmen rates for public universities in the area. According to the National Center of Education Statistics College Navigator website, CSU-SB’s current 6 year graduation rate for their first-time full-time entering freshmen is 44% (California State University San Bernardino) and CSU-Los Angeles’ rate is 37% (California State University Los Angeles).

See Graphs 1 through 4 for the retention and graduation rates for both our post-traditional students and our first-time full-time entering freshmen, including retention and graduation rates when the post-traditional students are disaggregated by race / ethnicity.

**Graph 1: Post-Traditional Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates**

**Graph 2: College of Arts & Sciences First-Time Full-Time Entering Freshmen Retention and Graduation Rates**

**Graph 3: School of Business Undergraduate Retention Rates by Race / Ethnicity**

**Graph 4: School of Business Undergraduate Graduation Rates by Race / Ethnicity**

As you can see in graphs 3 and 4, there are segments of the population with lower rates. The School of Business Retention and Gradation Rate Working Group has been discussing strategies about how to address these sub-populations. Some of these segments have few students, so a small number of students who are not retained or do not graduate can have a significant impact on the percentage.

In tracking the post-traditional graduation rate, we’ve notice that it is common that degree-completion students take longer to complete their program than our traditional undergraduates. The post-traditional students are often balancing school with a full-time job and family obligations. Thus, we expect the cohort graduation rates to continue increasing over the next couple of years.

As a final note, using the National Student Clearinghouse database, we are also able to determine if a student who is not retained is enrolled at another institution. In a study conducted in Fall 2012, Institutional Research analyzed all School of Business undergraduate students starting between Fall 2003 and Spring 2010 who were not enrolled in Spring 2012. This group of 1,191 students was submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) requesting subsequent enrollment data. Only 394 of the 1,191 students (33.1%) were found in the NSC database. Because an overwhelming majority of schools submit data to the National Student Clearinghouse, we can conclude that the 797 students not found in the NSC have not been enrolled in another higher education program in the United States. For the 394 students for whom subsequent enrollment information was found in the NCS database, only 196 (16.5% of the original 1,191) progressed onto another 4 year college.

**Graduate Programs**

The Master of Arts and Master of Business Administration programs attract different students and have different degree-completion times. See graphs 5 and 6 for the 1st to 3rd semester retention by cohort along with the graduation rates. As with the post-traditional undergraduate population, it is difficult to find retention and graduation rates for graduate programs which can be used for benchmarking and comparison purposes. Despite our lack of comparisons, we do think that our retention and graduation rates for both our MA and MBA are good. Similarly to the undergraduates, we also know that if a student does leave one of our graduate programs and decides to complete their degree at a later date, they overwhelming decide to return to the University of Redlands.

See the graphs below for these rates.

**Graph 5: Master of Arts Retention & Graduation Rates**

*The Fall 2008 cohort’s retention rates are lower than each cohort’s subsequent graduation rates. This is because students who are on the equivalent of a leave of absence at the census date of their third semester are not counted as retained. If the student returns at a later time, they are counted in their original cohort for graduation rates.*

**Graph 6: MBA Retention & Graduation Rates**

*The Fall 2010 cohort’s retention rates are lower than each cohort’s subsequent graduation rates. This is because students who are on the equivalent of a leave of absence at the census date of their third semester are not counted as retained. If the student returns at a later time, they are counted in their original cohort for graduation rates.*

We also look at these rates by gender and by race / ethnicity. While there seems to be a significant difference in graduation rates between men and women, over time this gap closes because women are taking longer to complete their degrees. We’ve also noted that there appears to be opportunities to improve the graduation rates of some sub-populations. While there are opportunities, some of these sub-populations are comparatively small so a few students who are not retained or don’t graduate can have a significant impact on the rates.

**Graph 7: Graduate Graduation Rate by Gender**

**Graph 8: Graduate Graduation Rate by Race / Ethnicity**

**Next Steps**

The School of Business Retention and Graduation Rate Working meets monthly. We are actively engaged in looking at opportunities to improve our services to students and increase our students’ success. With a combination of administrators and faculty, we are trying to approach these opportunities in a balance manner with sensitivity to the impact on both our organization and on the students. Please feel free to contact a member of the group if you have any questions or recommendations.

**References**

California State University – Los Angeles. *College Navigator*. Retrieved January 23rd, 2014 from <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=california+state+los&s=all&md=1&id=110592#retgrad>

California State University – San Bernardino. *College Navigator*. Retrieved January 23rd, 2014 from <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=california+state+san+bernardino&s=all&id=110510#retgrad>.