Academic Outcomes for Students in Residential Academic Programs (RAPs) During Their Freshman Year

University of Colorado Boulder, PBA, February 2011

Summary

For fall 2009 frosh, we compared RAP vs. non-RAP students on:
- First year mean GPAs
- Percent of students meeting or exceeding a 2.0 cumulative GPA
- Retention rates to the 2nd fall

For frosh entering in fall 2004-5 combined, we compared RAPs and non-RAPs on:
- 5-year graduation rate

In all the above comparisons, RAP students exceeded their non-RAP counterparts. However, we cannot say that RAP participation caused this success, because students self-select into RAPs, and students who choose RAPs may differ from those who do not on many attributes related to academic success.

Details of present findings

Fall 2009 frosh:
- First-year GPAs (or first-term for those who did not return for the second term) averaged 2.98 for RAP students, 2.79 for non-RAP, a difference of .19 GPA points. The difference in college-specific predicted GPA at entry (a measure derived from high school grades and SAT/ACT scores) was only .05 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE/SCHOOL</th>
<th>RAP No</th>
<th>RAP Yes</th>
<th>Non-RAP No</th>
<th>Non-RAP Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>2,402</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1,575</td>
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<td>BU</td>
<td>506</td>
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<td>3.04</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.22</td>
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<tr>
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<td>104</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.05</td>
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<td>JR</td>
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<td>3.44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.50</td>
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<td>MB</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>3,663</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1,856</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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• When PGPA was statistically controlled in a general linear models procedure, RAP participation was associated with a GPA advantage of 0.13. No other variables (e.g. gender, ethnicity, financial resources) were controlled in the present study; however, the more detailed earlier study referenced above did control for these and other variables, and still found that RAP students graduated at a higher rate than non-RAPs.

• About 92% of RAP participants met or exceeded a 2.0 cumulative GPA (the cutoff in most colleges for academic probation), compared to 87% of non-RAP students.

• The retention rate to the second fall was 89% for RAP students, 82% for non-RAP.

**Fall 2004-5 Frosh**

• The 5-year graduation rate for frosh entering in the falls of 2004 and 2005 was 67% for RAP students, vs. 61% for non-RAPs.

**RAPs included**

• RAPs included in the study were
  • Farrand
  • Sewall
  • Baker
  • Global Studies
  • Honors (formerly Kittredge)
  • Libby
  • Chancellor’s Leadership
  • Engineering Honors (2009 only)