

# Serving Provisionally Admitted Students In and Out of the Classroom



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## Abstract

Students that are accepted provisionally or conditionally require structured resources and extra support to help them achieve success. This poster presentation will highlight the support program one institution has implemented. The example program aims to ease the transition from high school to college, and increase fall to fall retention for students within the program through student participation in a summer component, success coaching, study lab hours, intentional advising, and modified first-year seminar. Internal data show that provisionally admitted students that participate in the program are much more likely to be retained fall to fall than those that do not. Participants and presenter will engage in discussion of new ideas for programming and advising strategies aimed at retaining provisionally admitted students.

## Program History

A provisional admission program has existed on the campus of West Virginia University (WVU) for many years, under many names. However, the mission has always been the same- to provide structured resources for underprepared students in order to aid them in their transition from high school to college. WVU is the flag-ship land grant R1 research institution in the state of West Virginia, and it takes seriously its role in providing educational opportunities for those that may not get a chance elsewhere. Service to the state and region are driving factors behind the First-Year Pathway (provisional admission) program. Students admitted through First-Year Pathway (FYP) are below either the requisite high school GPA, or standardized test score (ACT/SAT) for regular admission to the university. Student demographics have changed year over year, and recently changes have been made to admissions policies concerning students admitted through FYP, but the program consistently serves the most at-risk students on campus.

Students admitted through the FYP program in the past have participated in a designated first-year seminar, professional advising, and success coaching. Evaluating/ assessment of this type of program comes with difficulties. There is not an easy way to measure the impact that the program has on students. Another difficulty comes from the fact that the program has changed so much year to year. We are now getting to a point of relative consistency. Any feedback, or ideas on assessment techniques are welcome. We have settled on a year to year assessment with the goal of continually improving the rate at which we retain students.

## Theoretical Approach

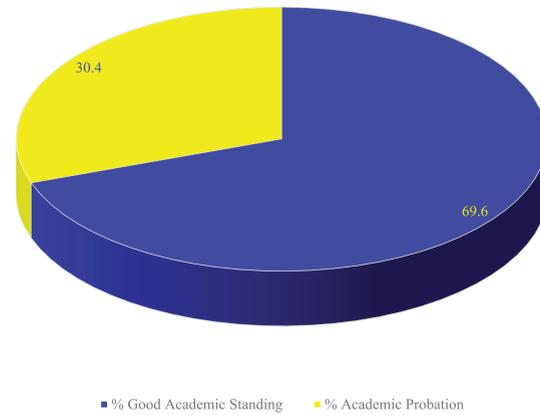
Building student engagement and student self-efficacy are the main intentions of the program. Retention research has been clear in showing that these are two areas institutions must focus on if they intend to improve retention and persistence. The First-Year Pathway program is designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to engage with each other and the university. The summer component specifically is a time for FYP students to engage with their peers and the institution in a low pressure environment, without all of the other students on campus. The program is intentionally coordinated by a professional advisor, and both advisors use a hybrid appreciative/developmental style to meet students where they are at and help to guide them to where they want to go. A great advantage advisors have in this program is that they are also the instructors for their advisees WVUE 191 course (the first-year seminar). Being able to advise a student in a one-on-one advising appointment while having the knowledge of how they perform in the classroom is invaluable. Success coaching on our campus has shown to have a statistically significant effect in increasing term GPA. The effect over time has been about .1 GPA points on a 4.0 scale for each meeting. Students in the First-Year Pathway program are required to attend 5 success coaching appointments. Together the program aims to provide the students with the mastery experiences, peer learning opportunities, and verbal persuasion necessary for them to develop self-efficacy and make behavioral changes.

## Cohort Demographics

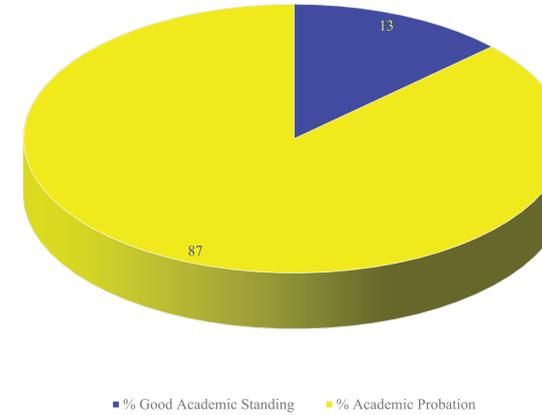
- Demographic Data
- 266 Student Cohort
  - 77% Out of State
  - 46% Did not place into a math course
  - Average SAT (SS)- 985
  - Average ACT (SS)- 18
  - Average High School GPA- 2.69
  - 46% Female
  - 54% Male

## KEY FINDINGS

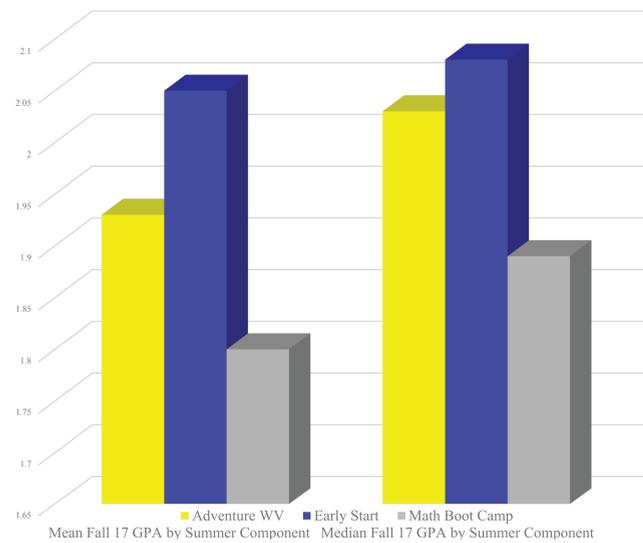
Academic Standing (after spring 18 term) of those that Participated in the FYP Program



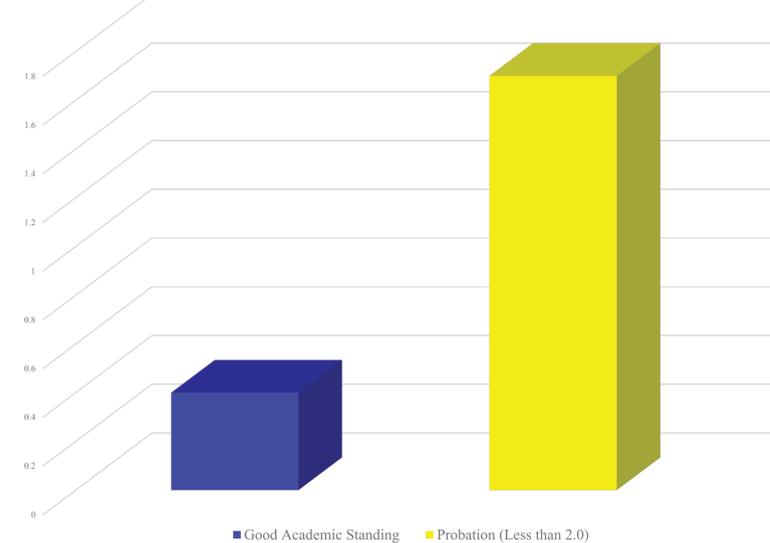
Academic Standing (after spring 18 term) of those that did Not Participate in the FYP Program



Average Fall 17 GPA by Summer Component



Average Number of No-Shows by Academic Standing



## First-Year Pathway Fall 2017 Cohort Requirements

For the Fall 2017 cohort the FYP program consisted of:

- Mandatory Summer Component (3 Options)
  - Early Start-
    - 3 Week Summer Bridge Program consisting of 5/6 credits of either Math, English, or a general education course.
  - Math Boot-Camp-
    - Intensive 4 day math workshop including the chance to take a math placement test.
  - Adventure West Virginia First-Year Trip-
    - 5 or 6 day adventure based experiences designed to prepare incoming students for life at WVU.
- Designated First-Year Seminar
  - FYP students had specific sections of the WVUE- 191 (First-Year Seminar) course designated
- Designated Professional Advisor
  - Two professional advisors work with the program, one serving as the program coordinator
- Success Coaching
  - Coaches are graduate assistants that work individually with students to enhance their academic success in time management, note taking, reading, and study skills. Coaches also assist in the transition to WVU by answering questions and providing information about campus resources.
  - Coaches work collaboratively with advisors

## Findings

Success in WVUE 191 meant success during the fall term:

- Students with an A/B/C in WVUE 191 had an average Fall GPA of 2.33
- Students with a D/F/W in WVUE 191 had an average Fall GPA of .94

Summer experiences were not equal. Fall 2017 average (mean) GPA by summer component:

- Adventure WV: Mean- 1.93, Median-2.03
- Early Start: Mean- 2.05, Median- 2.08
- Math Boot Camp: Mean- 1.80, Median- 1.89

No-Showing your advisor hurt:

- Students with a 2.0 or higher fall 17 semester GPA (in good academic standing) had fewer than 1 (.4) no-shows on average
- Students with less than a 2.0 fall 17 semester GPA had almost 2 (1.7) no-shows on average

Participation in the program was paramount:

- Students that participated in the program (completed the summer requirement, attended at least 4 success coaching appointments, attended an advising appointment) had an average cumulative spring 18 GPA of 2.25, and 69.6% (140/201) were eligible to return for fall 18.
- Students that did not participate in the program (did not complete summer requirement, attend at least 4 coaching appointments) had an average cumulative spring 18 GPA of 1.04, and only 13% (7/56) were eligible to return for fall 18.

## Conclusions

The First-Year Pathway program has shown to be effective in retaining students that participate in all components of the program. This blended approach combining a professional adviser that also serves as the first-year seminar instructor, near-peer success coaching, and a summer component helps to engage students with the university, and with each other. It also helps to provide them with the mastery experiences, verbal persuasion, and vicarious learning needed to develop self-efficacy.

The next step for this program is to work to increase the level of complete participation. There is significant evidence that shows that deciding not to participate in all required components of the program results in a lower GPA. Students that no-show their advisor, did not participate in success coaching, or did not participate in the summer component had much lower average GPA's than those that did participate.

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