

Educational Opportunity Program

Brief

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at the CSU has traditionally served undergraduates who have the potential to succeed, but who come from social conditions usually associated with lower-than-average college graduation rates. As such, the profile for EOP students is quite different than the profile for the general population of CSU undergraduates.

The first major difference is academic preparedness. Many new EOP first-time freshmen have not fulfilled all the high school performance standards that characterize CSU eligibility. The second major difference is economic. Most EOP students come from low family-income backgrounds. Another trait that distinguishes EOP students from the general population is ethnic status: EOP students overwhelmingly come from historically underrepresented groups. Fully 70 percent of EOP first-time freshmen identify themselves as African American, American Indian, Latino, or Pacific Islander, while the comparable proportion for the general CSU student population is just 24 percent.

Despite entering college with academic, economic, and historical disadvantages that are known to negatively affect persistence to graduation, CSU data indicate that EOP students persist to graduation at rates on par with systemwide averages.

The CSU has researched continuation and graduation rates for its students for over thirty years. Through this ongoing research, it is known that the graduation rate for any cohort of first-time freshmen will be, at least, as high as the rate of graduation and the rate of continuing enrollment at any point after the four years. The CSU serves students who must juggle family and work obligations, and, consistent with this reality, the CSU does not require full-time college enrollment like its sister segment, the University of California.

All of this means that snapshots of graduation rates taken after four years, five years, or six years do not capture the extent to which CSU students ***persist to graduation***. To provide a more meaningful indicator of CSU students' true graduation rate, the CSU has created a new variable, called a persistence rate, which is the sum of the graduates and continuing students divided by the number of students in the entering class.

Persistence indicators from the fall 1995 and fall 1996 cohorts of first-time freshmen reveal that EOP students attain eventual graduation rates that are on par with the CSU systemwide average. The percentage of regularly admitted first-time freshmen from the combined fall 1995 and 1996 cohorts that

earn a degree from their origin campus or another CSU is 60.1 percent. The comparable figure for EOP enrollees is 58.6 percent. The observed differential is nominal. The percentage of specially admitted first-time freshmen from the combined fall 1995 and 1996 cohorts that earn a degree from their origin campus or another CSU is 37.7 percent. The comparable figure for EOP enrollees is 36.9 percent. Again, the observed differential is nominal.

These findings from the CSU provide support for the claim of the positive impact that the Educational Opportunity Program has on its students. The CSU is proud of the EOP program and its ability to provide effective orientation and academic programs, as well as much-needed financial assistance, to California residents who have the potential to succeed.

TABLES

PERSISTENCE RATES FOR ALL STUDENTS AND EOP ENROLLEES

Fall 1995 and Fall 1996 Cohort of First-Time Freshmen

Table 1.1. Fall 1995 Persistence Rates

Admission Basis	Rate	
	All Students	EOP
Regular Admits	59.8%	59.2%
Special Admits	36.9%	35.4%

Table 1.2. Fall 1996 Persistence Rates

Admission Basis	Rate	
	All Students	EOP
Regular Admits	60.3%	58.0%
Special Admits	38.6%	38.6%

Table 1.3. EOP Differential: Fall 1995 and Fall 1996 Persistence Rates Combined

Admission Basis	Rate		EOP Ratio
	All Students	EOP	
Regular Admits	60.1%	58.6%	0.975
Special Admits	37.7%	36.9%	0.979

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