

Office of Institutional Research

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Tracking Student Goal Attainment 1998-2007



Model Overview

Model Purpose. To track student goal progress status and attainment of first-time enrollees over a 10-year period. This is done without requiring any additional data collection effort. The model is a routine, centralized, easily-implementable, low-cost, low-maintenance, reliable and comprehensive means of tracking student goal progress/attainment. This model aligns with traditional “success” tracking but goes well beyond to address many deficiencies of traditional strategies. As such, the findings reveal and document that the university assists significantly more students in their goal progress/attainment quest than traditional success metrics count.



- ◆ It is applicable to 2-year and 4-year institutions
- ◆ Lengthens tracking time (10 yrs from initial entry)
- ◆ Tracks all awards granted (interim and originally sought)
- ◆ Tracks both goal progress and attainment outcomes
- ◆ Tracks both degree-seeking and non-degree seeking students
- ◆ Tracks both full-time and part-time students.
- ◆ Tracks undergraduate and graduate students
- ◆ Tracks sub-cohorts (“at risk”, minority, non-traditional age, gender, etc.)
- ◆ Measures knowledge/skills acquisition vs. student-reported ultimate goals
- ◆ Uses metrics available on all students at all institutions
- ◆ Avoids artificial time frame for success
- ◆ Recognizes empirical contribution to goal progress strategies
- ◆ Links accountability to factors within UAA’s control
- ◆ Provides tool to obtain empirical evidence of university efforts to help students.

Model Assumptions. The model’s simplistic surface appearance, by design, masks its underlying complexity. Model design/implementation has been overseen by UAA faculty and administration. They reflect the student’s status at each term snapshot point during 10 years (28 consecutive terms, including summers) following initial UAA entry. A student can have more than one status at each snapshot.

Model operates on 10 integrated university-consensus assumptions. Behind each assumption are a set of documented decision rules that create the information. The model tracks student knowledge and skills/competencies acquisition, as measured by faculty-assigned successful course grades, plus all official UAA awards (degrees and certificates) earned. UAA’s contribution is presumed to be embedded in successful course performance.

Model Overview (continued)

Methodology. Each fall semester only first-time students (full-time, part-time, transfers in, degree seekers, non-degree seekers, undergraduate and graduate,) are identified as a cohort and tracked forward in time for a decade following initial entry. A decade represents the life cycle of 95% of first-time students each year at UAA. All entering students are determined to be degree seeking or non-degree seeking by the university at entry. Each subsequent semester, including summers, the current status of the entire cohort is re-determined. The in-process status conditions include: Returned, Graduated, Earned Interim Award, Transferred Out, Intermittent Enrollment, Progress Level, Non-Degree Goal Met, and Not Returned. Ten different cohorts are concurrently tracked and mapped for 10 years. Within 10 years every student attending the institution will be in one of the cohorts. At the end of 10 years, a summary progress/attainment status report for that entering cohort is prepared.



Student Success Questions. A series of frequently-asked questions about student success are employed as a framework to organize model findings. These questions also serve to provide a common language when knowledge about student goal progress is shared or joint student support strategies are being implemented.

Applications. The model will be used to initially assess first-level effectiveness of various goal progress support strategies, e.g. orientation classes, academic advising, student engagement, learning communities, mentoring, developmental education, placement testing, supplemental instruction, etc. It can suggest various “momentum tipping points” and benchmarks for sub-cohorts that will be analyzed in more depth for correlation with goal progress/completion. It should be used to provide an institution-wide, long-term map of student flow and progress. It will be primarily designed to enable the university to compare against itself but can be used, through joint cooperation, to share strategies and outcomes with peers. It is NOT designed to be a ranking tool.

Each cohort is tracked individually over time while, concurrently, different cohorts will be compared at standard reference points to observe changes. Significant events will be overlaid in the model to observe relationships between such events and changes in student progress. Cause-Effect relationships need to be subsequently analyzed.

Plans also include incorporating Alaska work history data for each cohort over time from the Department of Labor. The model also is expected to provide documentation of progress within the Student Success priority of UAA’s 2017 Strategic Plan. The UAA FY09 budget setting guidelines require documentation of how fund requests contribute to the strategic plan and the Student Success priority may use this model to provide such documentation. Finally, it is anticipated UAA will use this model to provide documentation as part of its upcoming Reaccreditation visit in 2010.

Introduction

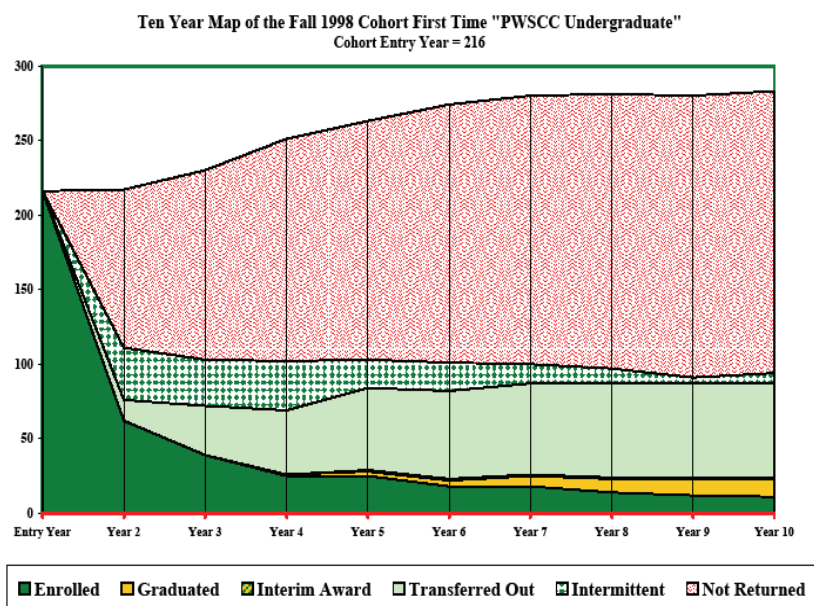
Each Fall semester a different first-time cohort is identified at Prince William campus and tracked for a decade following initial entry. The first cohort, retroactively drawn, was Fall 1998 semester. There were 216 first time students that semester, 20 admitted degree seekers and 196 non-degree seeking students. These same 216 students were re-checked each semester, according to a series of assumptions (see page 12) to determine their status compared to the last time they attended any class at any of the UAA campuses. Students were categorized based on their status; (1) re-enrolled, (2) received the award they intended, (3) earned an interim award, (4) transferred to another institution outside UAA, or (5) enrolled intermittently. At the end of 10 years, the category “Not Returned” will have the non-degree seekers and the degree seekers separated, placing the non-degree seekers into a progressing scale.

The following figure is a tracking map of the Fall 98 cohort over a decade. Examine the status patterns over time as it shows the cohort in motion. Note: a student can be in multiple statuses at each snapshot point.

There are four major points in the map: (1) a significant drop off in returning students within the first year (and still returning 10 years later); (2) the number of awards earned after the traditional expected time to receive them; (3) the large number of students who transferred to another institution; and (4) the point at which students begin to return intermittently.

At the decade endpoint when tracking for that particular cohort stops, a final goal status portrait is created (see page 6). It shows the proportion that met, made progress, or did not meet their learning goal. For the Fall 98 cohort 49% met their goal, 43% made progress and 8% did not meet their goal. The model reveals that Prince William assists a significantly higher proportion of its total student body to make progress or attain their learning goals than current traditional “Student Success” metrics recognize.

Tracking a single cohort over an extended time is important to understand, but of equal or greater importance is tracking changes in multiple cohorts. This reveals changes in the student body and points toward the impact of changes of various campus/university intervention strategies to aid its students. This model concurrently tracks 10 first-time cohorts, each for a decade. Some initial trend finding highlights for Prince William campus appear in the coming pages. The full report will be posted on our web page. Additionally a hard copy and electronic file has been provided to your president – Douglas Desorcie.



Finding Highlights




Prince William Community College First-Time Students—Fall 1998 Cohort

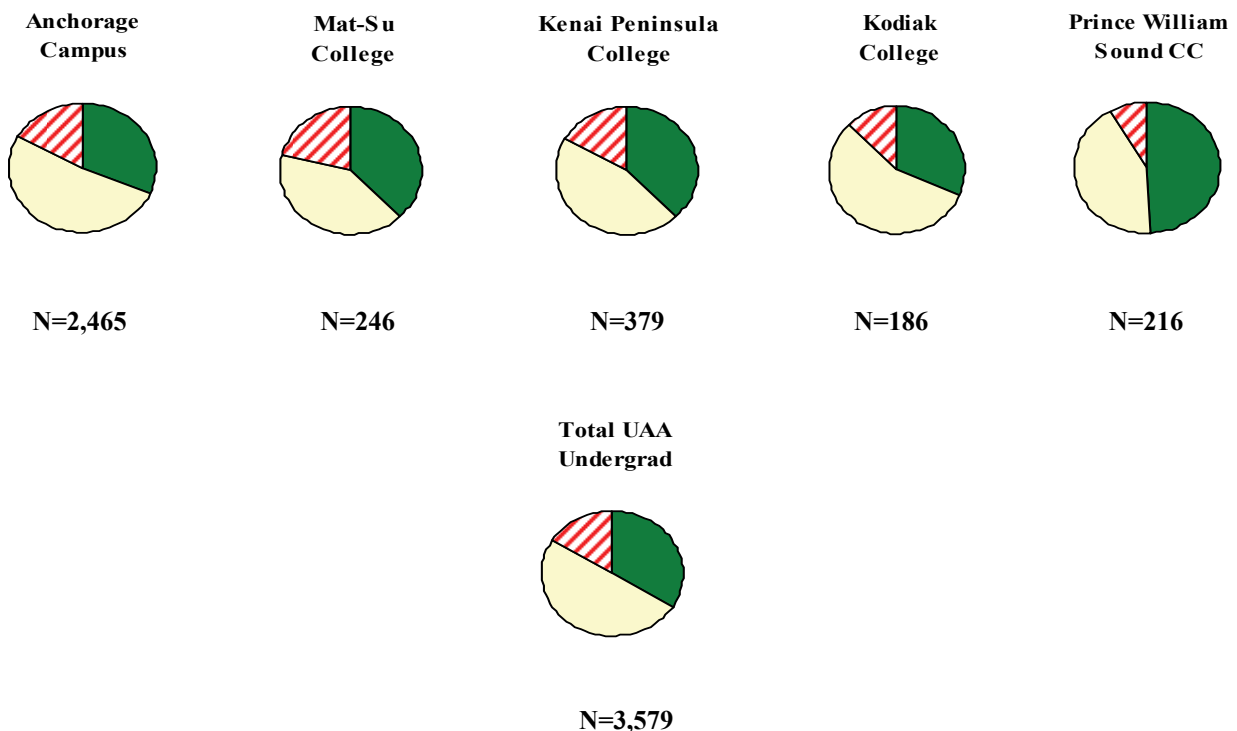
Characteristics. Prince William Community College Fall 07 had –44% less first time students than the Fall 98 cohort. The following information will reflect the proportional change of Fall 07 cohort characteristics related to the Fall 98 cohort:

- ◆ Full-time enrollment has increased by 10%
- ◆ Median age of a student decreased from 24 to 18
- ◆ Male enrollment has decreased by 8%
- ◆ Minorities have increased by 10%
- ◆ Alaska high school graduate enrollment stayed consistent at 14% of cohort
- ◆ Degree seeking students increased 65% (20 students to 33 students)
- ◆ Nearly one-half of the Prince William Fall 98 cohort attended just 2 terms (one year) or less. Further, 40% of the students only attended UAA for one term and another 14% only attended 2 terms.

Goal Status.

PRINCE WILLIAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE—Fall 1998 10-year picture

Goal Status	Degree Seeking	Non-Degree Seeking	Prince William Total	UAA Total Undergrad
Met 	15%	53%	49%	34%
Progress 	55%	41%	43%	50%
Not Met 	30%	6%	8%	16%

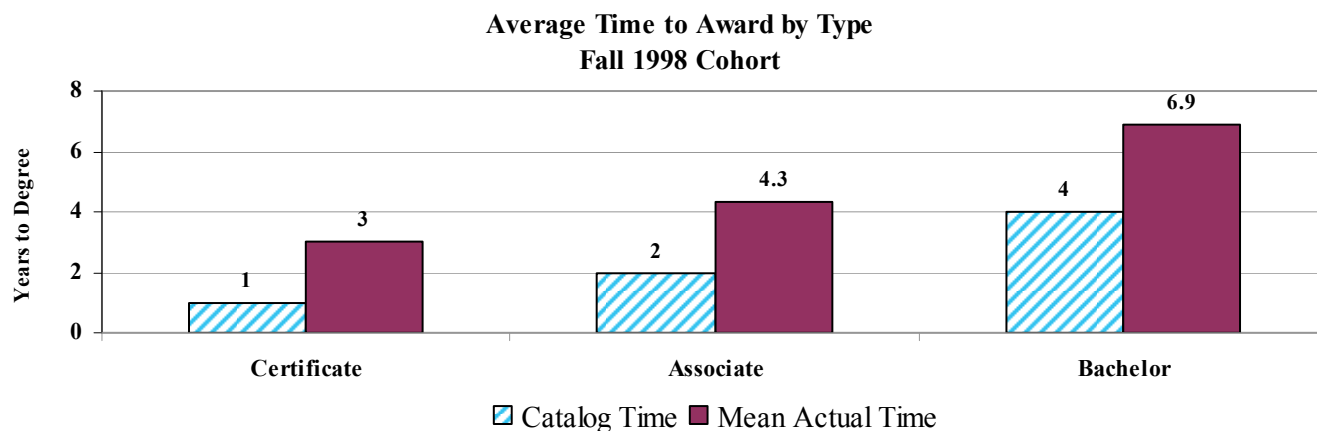


Finding Highlights (continued)

Award Recipients. Only 6% of the first-time Prince William Community College Fall 98 undergraduate student body (15% degree seekers and 5% non-degree seekers) who initially enroll at UAA left with a UAA degree or certificate. Prince William Community College lost about 29% of the Fall 98 cohort to another university after 10 years and approximate 50% of those individuals were gone by year three of their initial entry into UAA.

Time to Degree. If the national JCAR traditional benchmark were modified to fit Associate seekers (first-time, full-time Associate seekers earning their Associate's Degree in 3 years), none of the Fall 98 cohort would meet that criterion. However, with the time frame extended to 10 years (instead of 3 years) and part-time Associate seekers also included, the graduation rate for the cohort rises to 17%. Nine non-degree seekers changed their mind, representing 75% of the award earners. 92% of Prince William award recipients earned a single award, with the remaining 8% earning two awards.

One Prince William Community College Certificate award earner took an average of 3 years or 6 semesters to earn a certificate. Eight Associate seekers took an average 4.3 years (8 semesters) or more to earn an Associate degree. Four Prince William students went on to earn a Bachelor's degree from UAA and their average time to degree was 6.9 years (14 semesters).



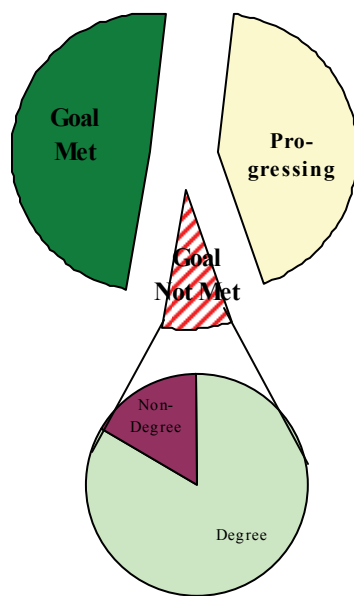
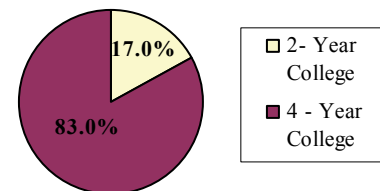
Non-Degree Seeker. There were 196 Prince William Community College non-degree seekers in the initial Fall 98 cohort and 103 (53%) met their academic goal. There were 9 (5%) that earned a degree and 94 (48%) who successfully performed in 75+% of all their coursework taken anytime during the ten years after initial entry.

Learning Goal Attained vs. Goal Not Attained. The model analyzed the characteristics of the students to identify any significant association that statistically distinguished those who met their learning goal from those who did not. The Prince William Community College first-time Fall 98 students had insufficient characteristic data to make a determination as to which students may have met their goals at a statistical higher significance.

Finding Highlights (continued)

Transfer Out. Students transferred to 21 different states in the United States. 83% of the 58 transferring students ended up at another 4 year college or university and 17% left for a two-year college. 21% (12) enrolled in another Alaska MAU. Another 47% settled in colleges located in the Pacific or Mountain States, most notably Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona.

Where They Went
PWSCC Fall 1998 Transfers



Goals Not Attained. Of the 216 Prince William Community College undergraduate students in the Fall 98 cohort, 8% (18 students) did not return or meet their learning goals. 12 students (67%) were non-degree seekers who were unable to meet their non-degree goal and the remaining 6 students (33%) were degree seekers who either did not return after attending only the Fall 98 semester and or in ten years did not transfer to another institution. After 10 years 30% of the Fall 98 undergraduate degree seekers had not yet met their learning goal and 6% of the non-degree seekers had not met their learning goal.

Levels of Progress. After 10 years the 216 first-time undergraduate Fall 98 cohort had 92 (43%) making 'Goal Progress' (55% degree seekers and 41% non-degree seekers) according to the model assumptions.

This model can also track students within the initial cohort who possess particular biographic/demographic characteristics or utilize UAA learning support strategies over time. Phase II will mine down to see a 3D view of selected sub-cohorts. For example, we can look at the high school student taking college courses, advanced placement examinations and students entering with credit earned at another college/university, various at risk sub-groups, those receiving academic advising, learning communities, etc.

Intermittent Students. The majority of the Fall 98 cohort Associate award recipients (38-65%) remained in continuous enrollment (0 terms skipped) and 4% skipped just one term. This reveals a dramatic and unexpected "momentum tipping point". The proportion of students ultimately earning an award through UAA approaches zero as soon as they begin to enroll aperiodically, for whatever reason.

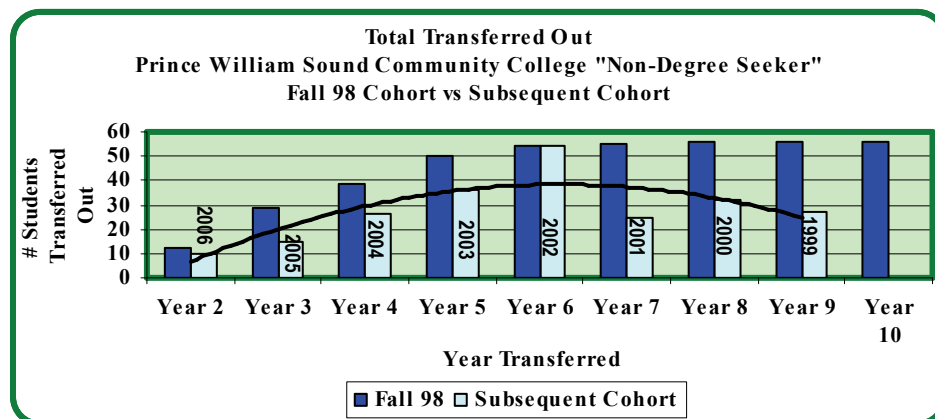
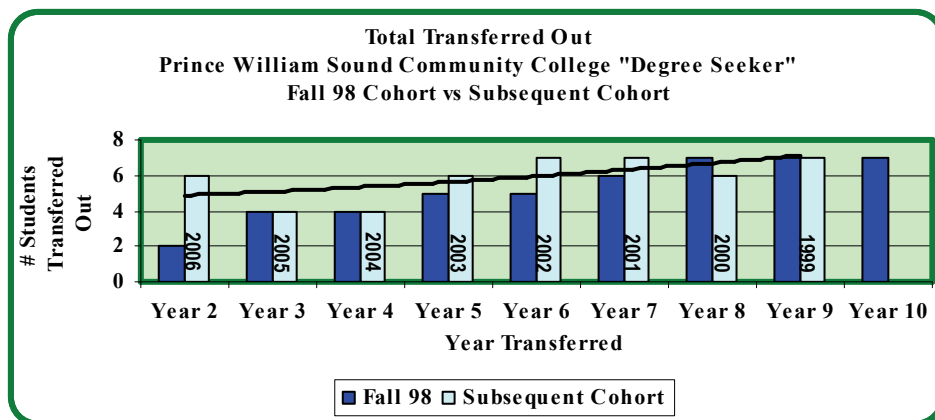
Prince William Community College First-Time Students—Trend Analysis

Retention Over Time. Prince William Community College is retaining a larger proportion of its declining first-time student pool. The Fall 06 cohort retained 4 out of every 10 students compared to Fall 98 cohort which retained only 29%. The Fall 98 cohort has 11 students (5%) (11 non-degree seekers) still returning 10 years after initial entry. These 11 non-degree seeking students could likely be life-long learners and need to be examined individually for verification.

About 11% of the Fall 05 first-time undergraduate cohort had intermittent enrollment by the start of the second year. That represents 16 students who had already ceased continuous enrollment and started to pursue their education on an aperiodic attendance schedule after just one year of enrollment.

College Credits. Five Prince William Community College Students have earned interim awards to date. Degree recipients, for a variety of reasons, amass significantly more credit hours than required in the program to earn the degree. The average Prince William Community College AA recipient in the Fall 98 cohort had 28% more credit hours than the typical AA program required. The typical Prince William Community College Fall 98 AA degree recipient amassed the credit hour equivalent of approximately 1.3 degrees to receive one. By comparison today the average AA recipient at UAA has 51% more credit hours than required which is the equivalent of 1.5 degrees. Note: Total credit hours amassed is the combined result of decisions made by both student and the university throughout the students entire college career.

Transfer Out. Throughout the 98-07 years, between 7-8% of Prince William Community College students have transferred by the start of their second year, 5% have left by year three, and 21-5% by year four. One of every three (29%) of the Fall 98 first-timers from this campus have transferred over the course of a decade following initial entry. That represents 63 students from the 1998 entry cohort and the trend appears to be increasing with subsequent sub-cohorts. Degree seekers appear to be transferring out in greater proportions at equivalent points throughout the decade than non-degree seekers. Recent non-degree seekers are leaving UAA at a declining rate than earlier cohorts.

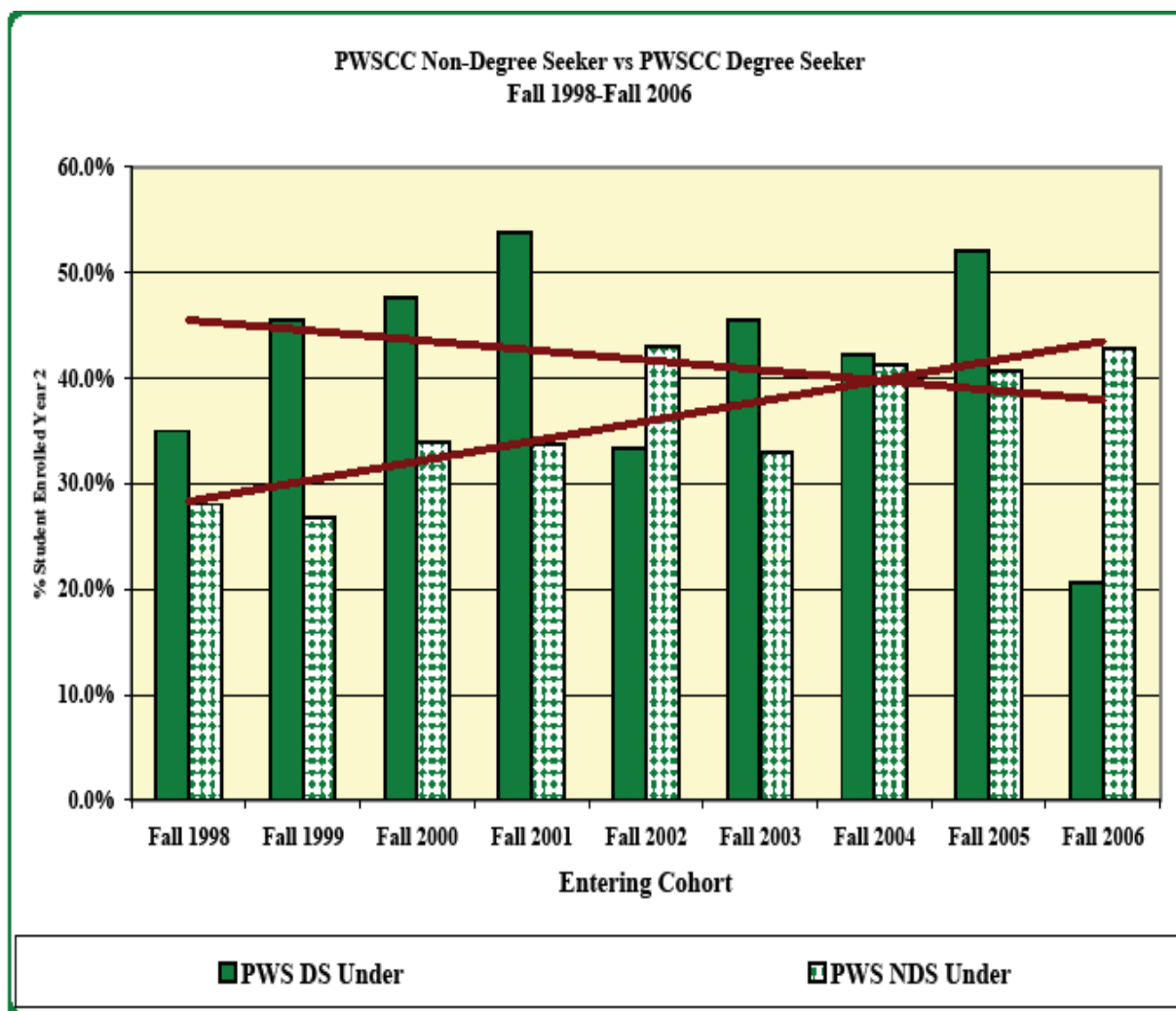


Source: UAA IR Data Warehouse
 Note: 1. Year 10 = Fall 98 Cohort
 2. Subsequent Cohort begin at Fall 99 through Fall 2007 as of Fall 2007 Closing freeze

Finding Highlights (continued)

Retention Pattern. There is a pronounced decrease in the proportion of each succeeding degree-seeking cohort who return for the second year. To illustrate, 35% of the Fall 98 first-time cohort returned for the second year while 21% of the Fall 06 cohort returned for the second year. Not only is the proportion of second year returnees decreasing but the sizes of the first time cohorts are also decreasing at the same time. Prince William is holding on to a larger proportion of a smaller number of its first-time degree-seeking students for short-term persistence.

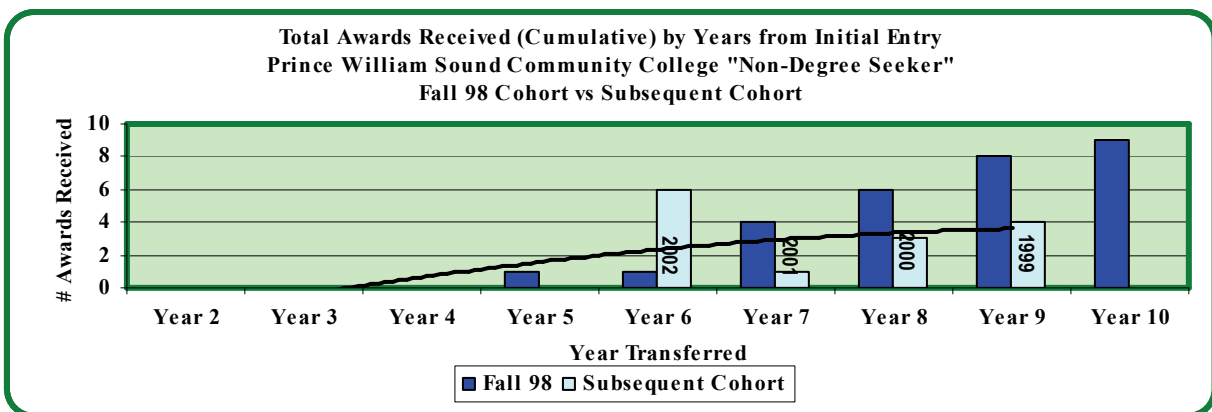
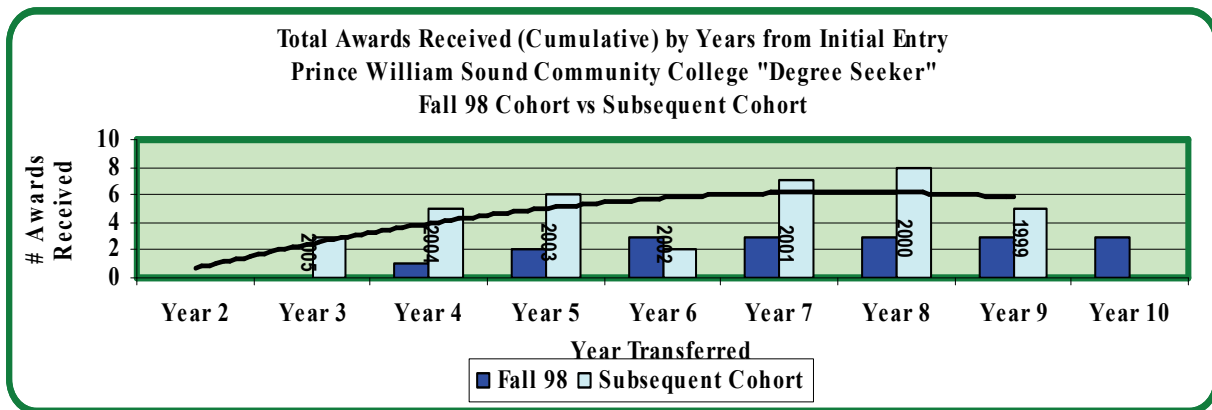
Predictably, first-time non-degree seekers were less likely to return the second year than their degree-seeking counterparts. Only 28% of the 196 non-degree seekers in the Fall 98 cohort came back in Fall 99 to start their second year. Although the number of first-time non-degree students has diminished about – 40% between 1998 (196students) and 2006 (117 students), today Prince William Community College is attracting a smaller proportion than they did a decade ago.



Finding Highlights (continued)

Graduation Trend.

The total number of Prince William awards received by recent degree seekers have increased compared to the Fall 98 cohort. Except for year 6 the degree seeking figure reveals that more awards are being received by degree seekers than the recipient rate of the earlier cohort at comparable points. It takes the recent award recipient 5+ years to earn their undergraduate degree, This average includes certificates, associates and bachelors degrees. The awards received by non-degree seeking students continues to show small inconsistent rates of increase. This suggests many initially-declared non-degree seeking student are latent degree seekers.



Source: UAA IR Data Warehouse

Note: 1. Year 10 = Fall 98 Cohort

2. Subsequent Cohort begin at Fall 99 through Fall 2007 as of Fall 2007 Closing freeze

Intermittent Students. Throughout the decade for the fall 98 cohort has been tracked, the intermittent pattern appears to decline for every succeeding year. The proportion of first time degree seekers who “fail” to return for the second year has gone from one out of four (25%) for the Fall 98 cohort down to 0% not returning from the Fall 05 entering cohort. Campus efforts to lower the intermittent (stopout) enrollment of degree seeking students during the critical first two years appear to be bearing fruit. The proportion of non-degree seeking who fail to return for the second year has gone down from 15% for the Fall 98 cohort to 13% for the Fall 05 entering cohort. Their long-term intermittent rate is also decreasing. This bodes well for both student and Prince William Community College efforts to aid student goal progress/attainment.

Assumptions

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT STATUS DETERMINATION ASSUMPTIONS

What constitutes “Goal Attainment” and “Goal Progress”? One cannot know what is continually in the mind of the student and the majority does not tell the university when they change their mind. However, one can document and assess the behavioral action outcomes of student decisions and reasonably conclude about “Goal Attainment”, “Goal Progress”, or “Goal Unmet” through the following assumptions.

Assumptions concurrently provide both explanation of the model and defense against the inevitable challenges. Each assumption incorporates a consensus belief that UAA contributes directly, although not necessarily a defined percentage, to the student’s progress and/or actual goal attainment. Even though UAA does not profess to have contributed a specific amount, various levels of student progress, based on successful course grade performance, are produced. Traditional ‘Success’ measures and “Value Added” are imbedded in the assumptions. Assumptions overlap but are slightly different for degree seekers and non-degree seekers. Assumptions are posed with positive outcomes but, at the same time, designed to alert UAA officials about areas of concern. One can challenge each assumption but the onus is on the challenger to postulate and convince the university majority their assumptions are better and can be determined with objective and appropriate routinely-gathered available data on all students.

COHORT SELECTION CRITERION: A student is placed in a particular undergraduate cohort and tracked forward for a decade from that point. The initial selection is made each Fall semester. The sole criterion for selection is the student is enrolling at UAA for the first time. Their particular enrollment status is immaterial e.g. degree seeking, non-degree seeking, full-time, part-time, transfer-in etc. Summer first time students who continue on during the subsequent Fall are considered first-time as of that Fall semester. First-time Spring semester entrants are excluded. Once identified in the initial cohort students are segmented by Enrollment Services into a Primary Campus and further segmented/tracked as ‘degree seekers’ and ‘non-degree seekers (NDS)’ within campus. Once a student is identified into an undergraduate cohort, every course, regardless of level, the student takes for 10 years after that point is considered part of the student’s total coursework as an undergraduate.

ASSUMPTION #1: COURSE COMPLETION —Any successful grade (A, B, C, D, or P) earned while the student is tracked as an undergraduate represents goal progress and some level of ‘value-added’ by the university. AU also included for non-degree seekers only if their initial course declared intent was to audit.-GOAL PROGRESS

ASSUMPTION #2: GRADUATED--All degree-seeking students, who receive the award type (degree or certificate) they officially declared as their initial intent to attain, are considered to have met their goal. All non-degree seeking students who change their mind and earn an award (degree or certificate) are considered to have met their goal. All students who receive UAA recognized academic honors as they graduate are considered to have met their goal with distinction. (See Assumption #10) –GOAL MET

ASSUMPTION #3: INTERIM AWARD--Degree-seeking students who receive interim awards (degree or certificate) are considered to have made UAA-assisted progress toward their goal throughout the decade they are tracked.-GOAL PROGRESS. At the end of 10 years those degree-seekers who have only earned an interim award are recognized as GOAL MET while Non-Degree seekers receiving an award are recognized as ‘Graduated’ (see Graduated assumption) –GOAL MET

ASSUMPTION #4: TRANSFERRED OUT--All students, degree and non-degree, who transfer out before earning a UAA award (degree or certificate) and are admitted and enroll at another college/university are assumed to have profited from their UAA experience and are considered to have been assisted in their transferability toward their ultimate goal. –GOAL PROGRESS

Assumptions (continued)

ASSUMPTION #5: TRACKING STUDENT BEHAVIOR: Underlying all intents, every student seeks knowledge and improved skills/competencies. These two outcomes are being tracked. Every student's initial goal intent, implicit or conscious, directs his/her decisions. These decisions shape individual strategies and produce and/or drive subsequent student behavior. Such behavior is measurable and traceable. It is assumed student behavior is directly attributable to his/her underlying intent to obtain knowledge and improve skills/competencies. Goal progress/attainment is reflected in such behavior—GOAL PROGRESS

ASSUMPTION #6: INTERMITTENT (STOPOUT) --All students, degree and non-degree, determined to be Intermittent within the decade following initial entry are considered to be "Intermittent Enrollees". Note: Intermittent enrollees include a student who attends more than one term but less than all terms, summers excluded, throughout the decade following initial enrollment. At the decade point, degree seekers in 'Intermittent' status remain there but are no longer tracked annually. All Non-Degree seekers meet the same criteria but at the decade point following initial entry, all non-degree "Intermittent" are classified into "Goal Progress Levels" based on the course completion criteria (See Assumption #10) and removed from the 'Intermittent' Status –GOAL PROGRESS

ASSUMPTION #7: NON-RETURNING—Any degree-seeking student who enrolls for the initial term only but does not return for 10 years and does not transfer to another institution is considered to have not met his/her goal—GOAL NOT MET. Any non-degree seeking student who enrolls for the initial term only is ultimately classified into "Goal Progress Levels" based on the course completion criteria (See Assumption #10) to determine Goal status at the decade final status report —GOAL PROGRESS.

ASSUMPTION #8: ACQUIRING HIGHER ORDER SKILLS—Any student who meets the 'Goal Progress Levels' criteria in GER courses, including GER capstone courses, is considered to be making progress in attaining his/her goal with direct UAA assistance – GOAL PROGRESS.

ASSUMPTION #9: ACQUIRING COLLEGE READINESS SKILLS—Any student who meets the 'Goal Progress Levels' criteria in one or more Developmental Education courses AND meets the 'Goal Progress Levels' criteria in 12 or more credits of selected college-level courses is considered to be making progress in attaining his/her goal with direct UAA assistance – GOAL PROGRESS.

ASSUMPTION #10: LEVELS OF GOAL PROGRESS: All students are making levels of progress toward their goal to the extent they are earning "Success" grades in their courses. Levels of undergraduate Goal Progress will be based on the following proportion ranges of 'Student Success' course grades to total grades earned (See Assumption #1) up to the point each status snapshot is taken: 0-10% = No Progress; 11-30% = Minimal Progress; 31-74% = Moderate Progress; and 75+% = Substantial Progress. Undergraduate students who receive 90+% progress are deemed to have attained substantial progress with distinction. At the 10-year final summary status, NDS students achieving substantial progress are assumed to have met their goal while those who have made no progress are assumed to have not met their goal. NDS students attaining minimal or moderate progress are considered to be making progress with direct UAA assistance—GOAL PROGRESS.



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**See the full report and all the data tables at the IR website:
<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/opra>**

Or contact President Desorcie for an electronic or paper copy