Background

At Shasta College, students are currently allowed to register for an open course that has already begun based on the following policy: *Students may be added into an open class through the 10% completion point of the class. After the first two class meetings, approval by the instructor is required to add the class, which includes both the signature of the instructor and the first date of attendance.*

Some research has shown that eliminating late registration leads to higher student success and persistence rates. The question of whether to eliminate or adjust late registration is important as funding becomes increasingly tied to student success. On the other hand, student enrollment and student access are also meaningful. Eliminating late registration should be considered if the data indicates that student success would be significantly increased while enrollment decreases would be minimal.

Research Questions

The goal of this project is to determine if student success is affected by the time period when a student registers for a class. Only credit non-special admit students were included in the study. Student registrations have been split into three categories: Early (at least two weeks before the course starts), On-Time (between two weeks before the class starts and the day the course begins) and Late (one day or more after the course has begun). Because students can add and drop the same class many times, it is the date of the last 'add' that is used. A previous study used the first registration for a course, but it is the last enrollment that is most pertinent to instruction.

The metrics calculated were Enrollment, Course Retention, Course Success Rate, Grade Point Average, and Fall to Spring Persistence. Each measure was examined over the most recent three year period. Summer terms were not included.

## General Results

Enrollment

The percentage of late course registrations has remained fairly steady in the three years, ranging from 7.0% to 6.3% of all registrations, on average this is more than 3,900 late registrations each year. In the 2019-20 Academic year, 6.8% of all Shasta College enrollments were completed after the first day of class and 30.2% of those (more than 1,200) were at least one week after class started. Although the overall percentage of late enrollments is small, the percentage of individual students registering late for at least one

course is much larger. For example, in 2019-20 twenty three percent of our students registered for at least one class after the class had already begun.
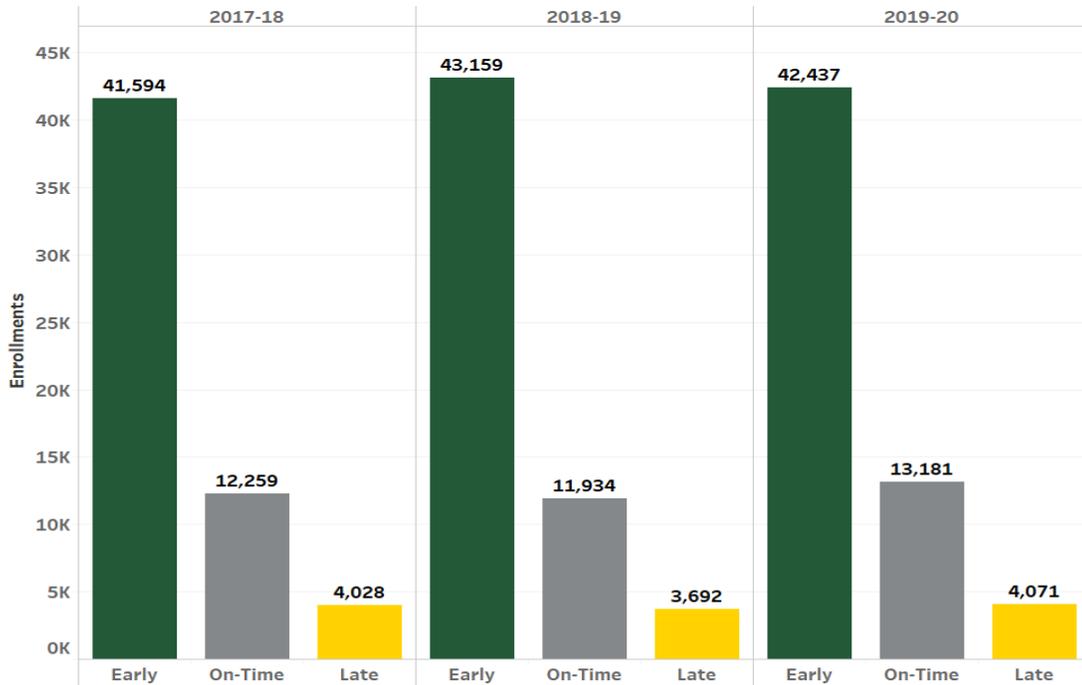

Course Retention

A course retention rate gives the percentage of registered students that earn any type of grade in the class. (Students auditing classes are not included in this study.) Students who register late are much more likely to be retained in a course than those who registered early or on-time. This is reasonable since those who register early have more time to choose not to stay in a course and may drop before the class even begins.
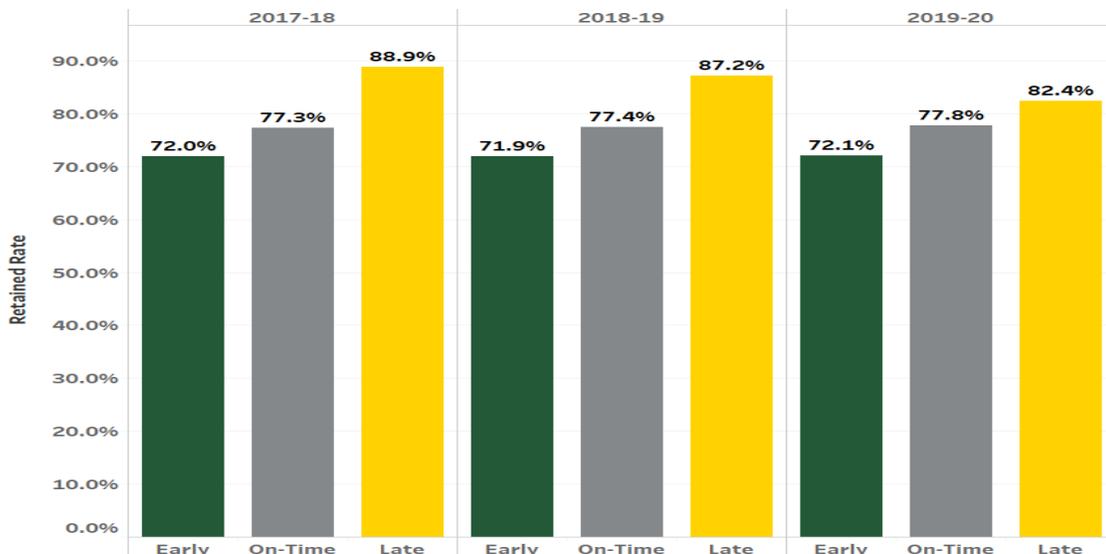
Course Success Rates

Success rates for early registrations are significantly better than those of late registrations. However, in 2017-18 and 2018-19 late registrations have success rates that are almost as high as those for on-time registrations. The course success rate data does not contradict the retention data since success rate calculations assume that a student earned a grade in the class.
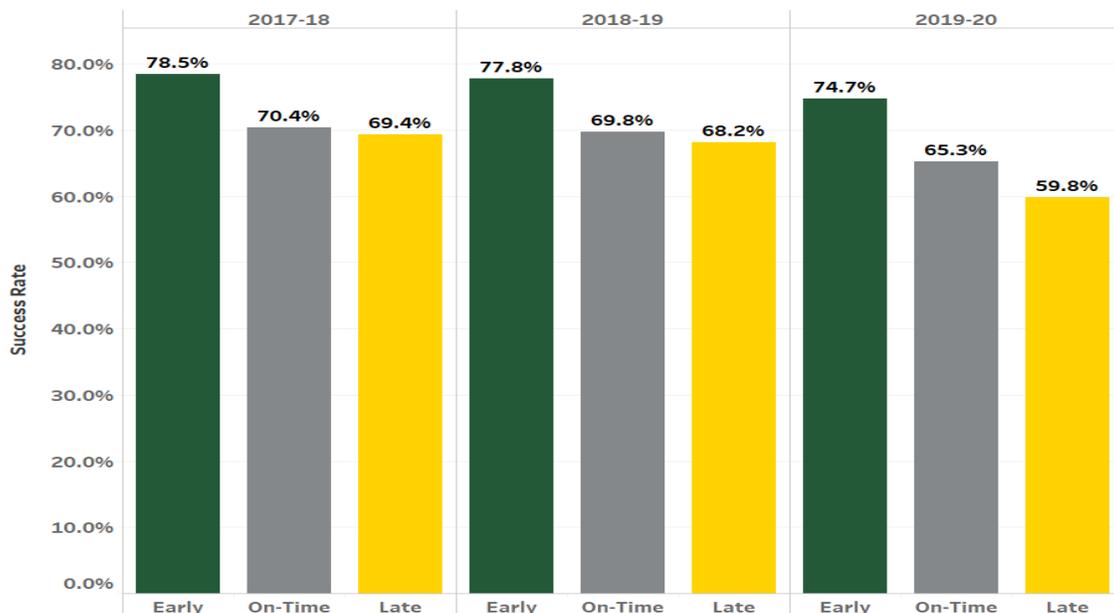

Grade Point Averages

In each of the last three years, grade point averages in the early registration category are substantially higher than the other two categories. On-time registrations produced slightly higher grade point averages than late registrations.
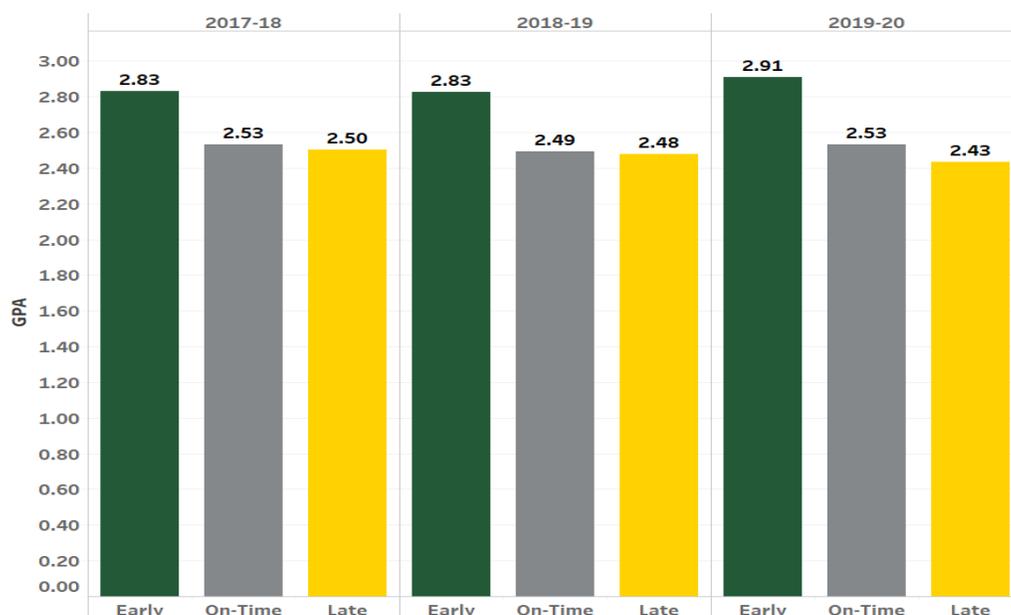
Persistence

Fall to spring persistence rates are clearly higher for those students who registered early. The results are mixed for the other two categories. In two of the last three years, students who registered late had higher persistence rates than those who registered on time.
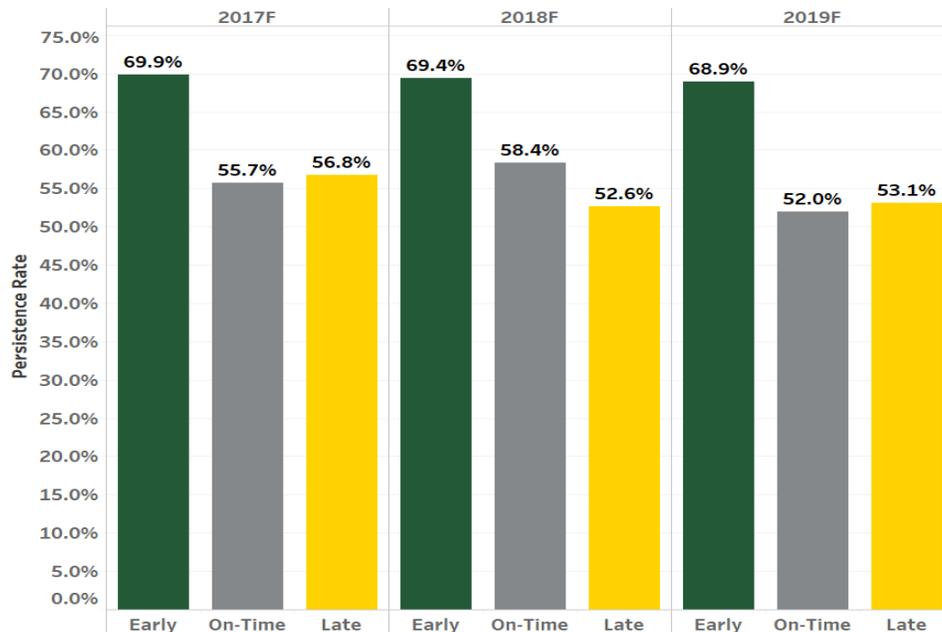
Hypothetical Analysis

As a hypothetical example, consider the case where all of the 2019-20 late registrations were converted to early registrations and also suppose that all of those registrations performed at the same level as the early registrations. In that case, overall success rates would increase from 71.4% to 72.5%. This may not look like a large percentage increase but this increase creates 500 more course successes and it is statistically significant.

Similarly, suppose that all of the students who were categorized as Late enrollees were switched to Early enrollee status with the corresponding Early persistence rates. In this case, the overall fall to spring persistence rate would increase from 64.4% to 65.4%, which correlates to 80 more students enrolling in the spring.

Summary

It is clear that course registrations that occur early produce greater course success and higher persistence rates than those which occur after a course has already started. However, determining the effect on enrollment and success measures if late registration was eliminated is difficult to quantify.

Notes

- Only the enrollments from fall and spring credit classes that resulted in non-Audit grades were used in this report.
- Concurrent and dual enrollment students were excluded.
- Student persistence is an unduplicated student measure and is independent of how many courses a student takes. For persistence, a student's status of Early, On-Time, or Late was determined by the status that occurred most frequently over all their courses.

Calculations for Hypothetical Situation Where All Late 2019-20 Registrations Had the Same Success as Those Who Registered Early

2019-2020 Success Rates by Time of Registration			
	Successes	**Enrollments**	**Success Rate**
Early	22,848	30,583	74.7%
On-Time	6,691	10,250	65.3%
Late	2,006	3,355	59.8%
Total	31,545	44,188	71.4%

2019-20 Success Rates If All Late Registrations had the Same Success as Early Registrations			
	Successes	**Enrollments**	**Success Rate**
Early	22,848	30,583	74.7%
On-Time	6,691	10,250	65.3%
Late	2,506	3,355	74.7%
Total	32,045	44,188	72.5%

Calculations for Hypothetical Situation Where All Late 2019-20 Registrants Had the Same Persistence as Those Who Registered Early

2019-20 Persistence Rates by Time of Registration			
	Persist	**Students**	**Persistence Rate**
Early	3,977	5,768	68.9%
On-Time	860	1,654	52.0%
Late	268	505	53.1%
Grand Total	5,105	7,927	64.4%

2019-20 Persistence Rates if all Late Registrants Persisted at the Same Rate as Early Registrants			
	Persist	**Total**	**Persistence Rate**
Early	3,977	5,768	68.9%
On-Time	860	1,654	52.0%
Late	348	505	68.9%
Grand Total	5,185	7,927	65.4%