

Research Brief on Persistence – June 2014

Background

Shasta College enrolls about 10,000 students each fall and spring, with the majority of students returning/continuing from prior terms. Persistence is defined as a student enrolled at census in one term and enrolled at census in a following term. Persistence can be fall to spring, spring to fall, or even fall to fall. Persistence counts students enrolled in subsequent terms regardless of “stopping out” or taking a semester off. The following data shows the number and percent of all students enrolled at census, starting with a primary term and tracking them over time regardless of stop outs, completion, transfer, or other reasons students do not return.

There is one statewide measure of persistence in the Student Success Scorecard. This measures the number and percent of first-time students that enroll in three consecutive primary terms (fall-spring-fall). Statewide, 70-72% of all first-time students persist for three consecutive primary terms. The Scorecard for Shasta College shows our most recent persistence rates are 66.3% for prepared students, 55.7% for unprepared students, and 59.2% overall. See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Persistence Rates for First Time Student Cohorts

Persistence	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
SC Remedial	59.8%	59.3%	56.3%	60.3%	55.7%
SC Prepared	67.5%	66.3%	66.0%	64.4%	66.3%
SC Total	61.9%	61.1%	59.1%	61.6%	59.2%
Statewide	70.9%	70.6%	70.1%	70.3%	70.5%

Results

To further explore persistence at Shasta College, the research office prepared the following analysis for all students enrolled, instead of only first-time students. In the tables below F = Fall, S = Spring, and U = Summer.

Table 2: Persistence Rates for All Students in Fall Cohorts

Starting Term	Cohort Size	Number of Terms after first fall													
		F 0	S 1	U 2	F 3	S 4	U 5	F 6	S 7	U 8	F 9	S 10	U 11	F 12	
2003F	10,105	100.0%	62.6%	11.9%	42.3%	35.6%	8.4%	25.5%	23.4%	5.5%	17.8%	15.7%	5.0%	14.0%	
2004F	9,914	100.0%	63.6%	13.8%	42.4%	36.5%	8.5%	27.0%	22.9%	6.1%	19.0%	17.2%	4.9%	15.0%	
2005F	9,848	100.0%	63.2%	13.8%	43.9%	37.3%	10.1%	28.7%	25.2%	7.0%	21.2%	19.5%	5.7%	15.3%	
2006F	10,257	100.0%	61.8%	14.7%	43.9%	37.5%	9.8%	28.6%	26.0%	7.3%	20.0%	17.0%	3.6%	13.9%	
2007F	10,914	100.0%	62.5%	14.5%	43.9%	39.1%	10.1%	28.7%	23.7%	5.1%	18.5%	17.4%	2.7%	12.8%	
2008F	11,498	100.0%	64.9%	15.6%	44.1%	36.0%	7.6%	26.6%	24.4%	3.7%	17.2%	15.1%	3.3%	12.3%	
2009F	11,726	100.0%	62.2%	12.9%	42.0%	37.3%	5.5%	25.3%	21.9%	4.2%	16.7%	15.1%	3.7%	12.0%	
2010F	10,484	100.0%	69.2%	10.4%	45.1%	37.4%	7.2%	27.1%	23.7%	5.3%	17.1%	15.4%			
2011F	10,050	100.0%	66.2%	11.7%	44.3%	38.2%	8.4%	26.4%	23.2%						
2012F	9,399	100.0%	68.6%	13.8%	44.1%	37.5%									
2013F	9,426	100.0%	68.5%												
Average Rate		100.0%	64.8%	13.3%	43.6%	37.2%	8.4%	27.1%	23.8%	5.5%	18.4%	16.6%	4.1%	13.6%	

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Fall enrollments average just over 10,000 students (10,329), between fall 2003 and fall 2013. On average 64.8% of students return the following primary term (spring). Persistence rates vary from 61.8% (Fall 2006) to 69.2% (Fall 2010) for that first semester. Only 13.3% average enroll the following summer, while 43.6% average return the following fall. See Table 2 on previous page.

Table 3 Persistence Rates for All Students in Spring Cohorts

		Number of Terms after first spring													
Starting Term	Cohort Size	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
2004S	10,086	100.0%	14.4%	50.2%	41.8%	9.4%	28.5%	26.4%	5.9%	19.6%	17.7%	5.1%	15.2%	14.6%	
2005S	10,237	100.0%	16.6%	48.9%	41.7%	9.5%	29.8%	26.4%	7.1%	20.7%	19.1%	5.4%	15.9%	15.0%	
2006S	10,408	100.0%	15.4%	48.3%	41.9%	10.6%	30.4%	27.8%	7.1%	21.7%	20.9%	5.9%	15.7%	14.0%	
2007S	10,532	100.0%	17.7%	49.1%	42.1%	10.3%	30.5%	28.7%	7.8%	20.9%	18.4%	3.8%	14.4%	14.5%	
2008S	11,284	100.0%	17.5%	49.3%	43.8%	10.8%	30.7%	26.6%	5.3%	19.2%	19.1%	2.8%	13.5%	12.7%	
2009S	12,315	100.0%	18.5%	49.8%	40.4%	8.4%	28.3%	26.8%	3.9%	18.0%	16.2%	3.1%	12.4%	12.2%	
2010S	10,976	100.0%	16.4%	50.6%	45.5%	6.8%	29.6%	26.2%	4.9%	18.5%	17.7%	4.0%	12.9%	12.3%	
2011S	11,005	100.0%	12.1%	50.4%	42.3%	7.6%	28.9%	26.3%	5.7%	17.8%	16.8%				
2012S	9,751	100.0%	14.5%	52.3%	45.6%	9.5%	29.8%	27.0%							
2013S	10,188	100.0%	16.0%	49.4%	43.0%										
Average Rate			15.9%	49.8%	42.8%	9.2%	29.6%	26.9%	6.0%	19.6%	18.2%	4.3%	14.3%	13.6%	

Table 3 shows the persistence rates for students enrolled in spring. Similar patterns show that only 15.9% enroll in the first summer (after spring) and 49.8% enroll the following fall. Next we examine persistence rates by ethnicity. Table 4 below shows the persistence rates for students starting in fall terms for each ethnic group aggregated over ten years (2003 to 2013).

Table 4 Persistence Rates for Fall Cohorts by Ethnicity 2003 to 2013

		Number of Terms after first fall													
Ethnicity	Cohort Size	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
American Indian	3,678	100.0%	60.4%	11.1%	39.1%	33.3%	6.2%	23.4%	20.8%	4.2%	16.5%	15.1%	3.0%	11.4%	
Asian	3,195	100.0%	68.9%	15.9%	47.9%	40.3%	10.4%	30.3%	25.6%	7.4%	20.3%	18.1%	5.5%	15.1%	
Black or African American	1,434	100.0%	61.7%	17.0%	38.7%	32.8%	10.8%	22.9%	19.2%	6.2%	13.1%	11.2%	4.6%	9.2%	
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	430	100.0%	62.4%	13.2%	45.7%	36.6%	7.5%	28.4%	22.8%	4.9%	17.6%	15.9%	4.7%	15.2%	
Hispanic	10,942	100.0%	62.0%	12.7%	42.5%	35.4%	7.8%	27.2%	23.4%	5.3%	19.0%	16.8%	4.0%	14.1%	
Non-Resident Alien	1,009	100.0%	76.1%	17.9%	57.0%	51.5%	11.5%	40.0%	35.9%	8.0%	28.9%	26.3%	7.7%	24.2%	
Two or More Races	1,478	100.0%	65.5%	16.5%	43.7%	41.1%	10.4%	29.7%	31.2%	9.7%	21.4%	23.6%	9.0%	19.4%	
Unknown	7,299	100.0%	64.4%	13.8%	43.2%	37.2%	8.5%	26.3%	22.8%	5.6%	17.6%	15.7%	3.8%	13.1%	
White	84,156	100.0%	65.1%	13.2%	43.7%	37.4%	8.4%	27.1%	23.9%	5.5%	18.4%	16.6%	4.1%	13.6%	

The above table shows that non-resident alien students have the highest persistence rate compared to other ethnic groups (76.1% for the first spring semester after fall). At the other end are African American students (61.7%) and American Indian students (60.4%). Both groups are well below the college average (64.8%). Detail tables for African American and American Indian students are shown below.

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Table 5 Persistence Rates for Fall Cohorts of American Indian and African American Students

Ethnicity	Cohort Size	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
American Indian	3678	100.0%	60.4%	11.1%	39.1%	33.3%	6.2%	23.4%	20.8%	4.2%	16.5%	15.1%	3.0%	11.4%
2003F	368	100.0%	53.0%	8.4%	35.9%	30.2%	4.6%	22.0%	19.6%	3.8%	13.9%	13.3%	2.7%	9.8%
2004F	339	100.0%	60.8%	11.5%	41.6%	31.6%	6.5%	23.3%	21.5%	5.3%	16.2%	14.2%	4.4%	13.6%
2005F	350	100.0%	55.1%	12.3%	38.3%	33.4%	7.7%	22.9%	21.4%	6.0%	19.7%	16.9%	4.6%	13.1%
2006F	336	100.0%	58.9%	12.8%	39.3%	31.5%	8.6%	26.2%	20.2%	5.7%	18.2%	17.0%	2.1%	10.4%
2007F	350	100.0%	56.0%	13.4%	39.7%	34.6%	8.3%	26.0%	22.3%	3.1%	17.4%	16.3%	3.1%	11.1%
2008F	405	100.0%	57.8%	13.1%	38.8%	31.1%	5.2%	20.2%	21.5%	3.5%	14.3%	13.3%	2.0%	11.9%
2009F	381	100.0%	59.8%	10.2%	35.7%	34.9%	4.5%	23.9%	17.1%	2.4%	14.4%	15.0%	2.4%	10.2%
2010F	309	100.0%	68.3%	8.1%	44.3%	36.2%	5.2%	23.9%	24.3%	3.9%	17.8%	15.2%		
2011F	315	100.0%	63.5%	9.2%	39.0%	33.3%	5.4%	22.2%	19.4%					
2012F	271	100.0%	65.7%	12.2%	38.4%	35.8%								
2013F	254	100.0%	65.0%											
Black or African American	1434	100.0%	61.7%	17.0%	38.7%	32.8%	10.8%	22.9%	19.2%	6.2%	13.1%	11.2%	4.6%	9.2%
2003F	103	100.0%	58.3%	18.4%	38.8%	32.0%	15.5%	18.4%	16.5%	6.8%	11.7%	12.6%	4.9%	6.8%
2004F	105	100.0%	62.9%	19.0%	35.2%	35.2%	12.4%	23.8%	21.9%	7.6%	12.4%	13.3%	9.5%	11.4%
2005F	106	100.0%	62.3%	27.4%	40.6%	36.8%	16.0%	27.4%	24.5%	9.4%	16.0%	17.0%	9.4%	14.2%
2006F	120	100.0%	60.8%	20.0%	40.0%	35.0%	10.8%	25.8%	20.8%	9.2%	15.0%	12.5%	1.7%	5.0%
2007F	136	100.0%	57.4%	16.9%	36.8%	35.3%	11.8%	23.5%	18.4%	4.4%	9.6%	8.1%	1.5%	7.4%
2008F	142	100.0%	64.8%	19.0%	40.8%	28.2%	8.5%	15.5%	16.2%	1.4%	10.6%	4.9%	2.1%	8.5%
2009F	151	100.0%	58.9%	13.2%	35.1%	34.4%	5.3%	23.2%	15.9%	2.0%	13.2%	9.3%	3.3%	11.3%
2010F	129	100.0%	72.9%	13.2%	47.3%	32.6%	5.4%	26.4%	22.5%	8.5%	16.3%	11.6%		
2011F	136	100.0%	52.2%	7.4%	38.2%	32.4%	11.8%	22.1%	16.2%					
2012F	156	100.0%	65.4%	15.4%	34.0%	25.6%								
2013F	150	100.0%	62.7%											

Recent research from the National Student Clearinghouse shows that, on average:

- 18% of public 2-year students enroll the following fall at a different institution
- 33% of public 2-year students enroll in a different institution within the first five years
- Only 26.5% of students starting at a public 2-year institution complete at the same college
- 18.9% of students starting at a public 2-year institution are still enrolled (anywhere) six years later
- While 41.2% of students starting at a public 2-year institution are not enrolled anywhere six years later

Prior research has shown an association between the cost of education and persistence that suggests the higher the cost of attending, the less likely students are to drop. Financial aid can reduce student expenses but may also reduce the incentive to persist. Table 6 shows the average first term persistence rates for Shasta College students adjacent to the fee rates for California Community Colleges over the last ten years.

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Table 6 Persistence Rates for Fall Students at Shasta College compared to Statewide Tuition

Starting Term	Cost of Tuition	1st Term Persistence
2003F	\$ 18.00	62.6%
2004F	\$ 26.00	63.6%
2005F		63.2%
2006F	\$ 20.00	61.8%
2007F		62.5%
2008F		64.9%
2009F	\$ 26.00	62.2%
2010F		69.2%
2011F	\$ 36.00	66.2%
2012F	\$ 46.00	68.6%
2013F		68.5%

Readers may notice an increase in the first term persistence rates for each fee hike over time.

State budget reductions led to reduced class offerings in 2007-2008. This may explain some drops in persistence if students could not get into courses.

References

1. College Completion Rates: Student Pathways, Outcomes and Institutional Measures (AACRAO Webinar from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, on June 18, 2014).
2. Diversity, College Costs, and Postsecondary Opportunity: An Examination of the Financial Nexus between College Choice and Persistence for African Americans and Whites (Journal of Higher Education Sep-Oct 2005).
3. Price Response in Persistence Decisions: an analysis of the high school and beyond senior cohort (Research in Higher Education Aug 1990).
4. Predictors of Retention and GPA (Abstract of published journal, “Do Psychosocial and Study Skill Factors Predict College Outcomes? A Meta-Analysis”) published in Psychological Bulletin, March 2004.

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