



**NCSC
RESEARCH BRIEF
Gatekeeper Courses**



Achieving the Dream (AtD) Initiative

Feb-06

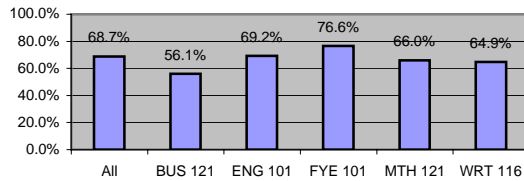
Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count is a multi-year, grant-funded initiative to increase the success rates for underserved students at two-year colleges. There are five AtD student outcome indicators: (1) Successful completion of remedial courses and progression to college-level courses; (2) Enrollment and successful completion of college-level “gatekeeper” courses; (3) Productive grades (C or higher) in all courses; (4) Semester to semester persistence; and (5) Graduation.

Feedback? Questions? Contact Tom Prendergast, tprendergast@ncstatecollege.edu, (419) 755-4712

Introduction

This brief assesses cohort students on the successful completion of gatekeeper courses. The results presented are based on a cumulative analysis of students in the Fall 2002 through 2004 cohorts taking developmental coursework. These groups include first-time degree or certificate-seeking students entering NC State.

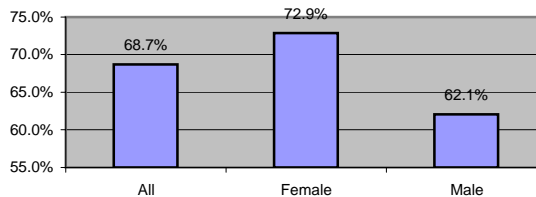
**Passage Rates for Gatekeeper Courses.
Fall 2002-2004 Cohorts**



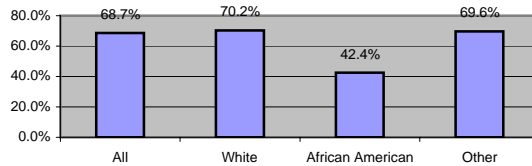
Methodology

The AtD Data team tracked the cumulative progress of 3,875 cohort students in five select courses defined as high enrollment, high failure rate. Failure rate was broadly defined to include withdrawal after the census, D or F. Pass/failure rates were analyzed for the group as a whole, as well as by sex, race and age. Finally, the Data team tracked the relationship between successful completion of these courses and persistence.

Passage Rates by Sex



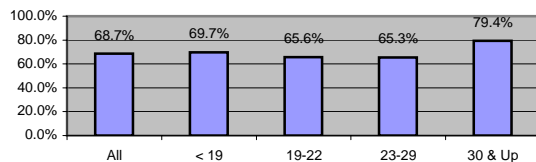
Passage Rates by Race



Overall Pass/Failure Rates

The combined cohorts achieved a passage rate of 68.7%. FYE 101 achieved the highest passage rate at 76.6%, and BUS 121 achieved the lowest at 56.1%. While ENG 101 had the second-highest passage rate, numerically it also failed the most students at 428.

Passage Rates by Age

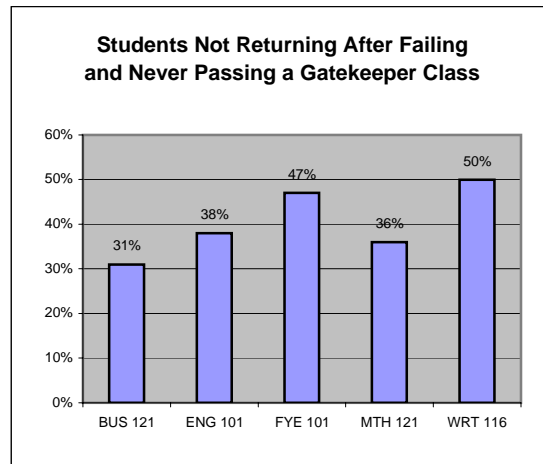
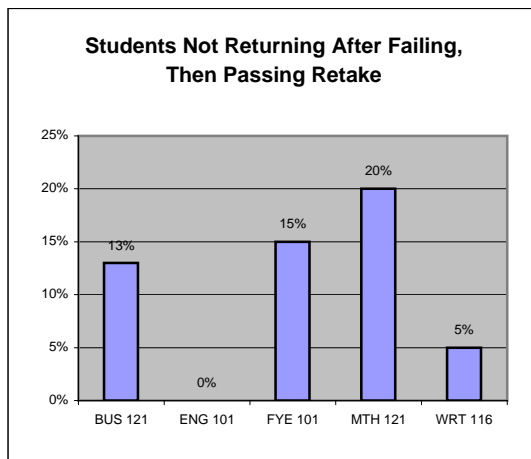
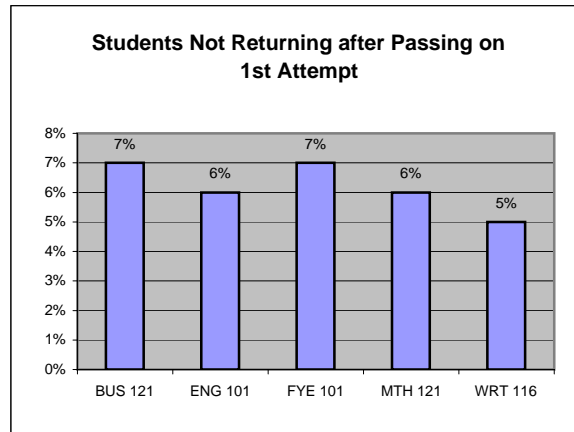
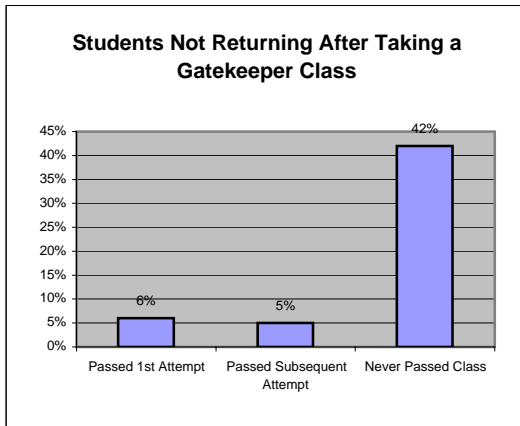


Results Based on Demographics

The analysis reveals significantly lower success rates for males, African American students and students age 23-29 in gatekeeper courses.

Relation to Persistence

The Data Team tracked the relationship between failure and success in gatekeeper courses and persistence. Approximately 42 percent of all cohort students who never passed at least one of their gatekeeper courses attempted stopped coursework and had not returned to NC State as of fall 2005.. Conversely, students who pass gatekeeper courses on their first or subsequent attempts are very likely to persist. Students never passing WRT 116 and FYE 101 have the highest tendency to stop out.



Stay Tuned

While the AtD Core Team has decided to focus the initial phase of strategy development on developmental education, there are significant linkages between success in developmental courses and gatekeeper courses. For example, the Data and Core teams intend to study progression patterns of developmental students into sequenced, college-level gatekeeper courses to determine the success rate of these students against those who directly test into college-level courses. It also intends to study potential relationships between scheduling patterns of developmental and college-level courses for students, many of which would be gatekeeper courses. Consequently, it will continue analyzing quantitative data, as well as qualitative data such as comments from faculty/staff breakout groups at the January 20th AtD retreat.