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Academic success rates of 1991 EOP first-time freshmen

Teresa M. Hernández
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ACADEMIC SUCCESS RATES OF 1991 EOP FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Administration and Higher Education

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Teresa M. Hernández

May 1998

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ABSTRACT

ACADEMIC SUCCESS RATES OF 1991 EOP FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

by Teresa M. Hernández

This thesis examines the academic success rates of EOP first-time freshmen who entered San José State University in the 1991-1992 academic year. It compares regularly admitted and specially admitted EOP students with the purpose of determining factors which contribute to academic success at the university. The information on each student includes demographic data, high school performance data, an academic success rank, the number of semesters attended, and the student's final academic action. Underrepresented students are also examined using these variables.

The results of this research reveal that the EOP students have lower overall graduation rates than the entire freshman class of the same year. Regular admits perform better overall, have higher graduation rates, and lower probation and disqualification rates than special admits. In addition, underrepresented students have lower levels of academic performance than other ethnic groups.

Dedication

*To my parents, Joe and Gail Hernández, and my siblings, Alicia, Rebecca, and Nicolas:
Your endless love and encouragement has made all the difference.*

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Thank you for keeping me on track and providing me with invaluable criticism and
advice.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER 1: Introduction	
Overview.....	1
Background.....	3
Problem Statement.....	4
Research Questions.....	5
Definition of Terms	6
Assumptions	12
Limitations.....	12
Delimitation of the Research	13
Significance of the Study.....	13
CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature	
Overview	14
Individual Characteristics.....	15
Academic Characteristics.....	18
Institutional Characteristics.....	19
CHAPTER 3: Methodology	
Overview	23
Population and Sample.....	24
Instrumentation.....	24
Data Collection.....	27
Data Analysis	27
CHAPTER 4: Results	
Overview	28
Total EOP Cohort.....	29
Comparison Data Between Regular Admit Cohort and Special Admit Cohort..	36
Comparison of Underrepresented Students.....	44
CHAPTER 5: Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations	
Summary	49
Findings.....	50
Conclusions.....	51
Recommendations	53
REFERENCES.....	56

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

1. Distribution of Students by Ethnicity at SJSU: 1991 and 1997	3
2. Distribution of Students by Gender at SJSU: 1991 and 1997	3
3. Annual Income Guidelines for the Educational Opportunity Program: 1991-1992...	7
4. SJSU General Ethnic Category Groupings and Specific Ethnic Category Options on CSU Admission Application.....	8
5. Coursework Requirements for Regular Admission: 1991	10
6. Minimum Eligibility Index for Regular Admission: 1991	10
7. Final Grade Point Average Conversion Scale	25
8. Academic Action Values.....	26
9. Distribution of EOP Students and All Undergraduate Students by Ethnicity at SJSU: 1991	29
10. Distribution of EOP Students and All Undergraduate Students by Gender at SJSU: 1991	29
11. High School Summary Data for Total EOP Cohort	30
12. Distribution of Total EOP Cohort by Total Numbers of Semesters Completed	33
13. Distribution of Regular and Special Admits by Ethnicity at SJSU: 1991	37
14. Distribution of Regular and Special Admits by Gender at SJSU: 1991.....	37
15. High School Summary Data for Regular Admit Cohort	38
16. High School Summary Data for Special Admit Cohort	38
17. Distribution of Regular and Special Admit Cohorts by Total Number of Semesters Completed	41
18. High School Summary Data for EOP African American Students	45
19. High School Summary Data for EOP Mexican American/Chicano Students.....	45

FIGURES

1. Distribution of Total EOP Cohort by Academic Success Rank.....	31
2. Overall Academic Success of Total EOP Cohort.....	32
3. Final Academic Action for Total EOP Cohort.....	35
4. Distribution of Regular Admit Cohort by Academic Success Rank	39
5. Distribution of Special Admit Cohort by Academic Success Rank	39
6. Overall Academic Success by Admit Cohort.....	40
7. Final Academic Action for Regular and Special Admit Cohorts	42
8. Overall Academic Success of EOP Underrepresented Students	47
9. Final Academic Action for EOP Underrepresented Students	47

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Overview

In the late 1960s, public institutions of higher education in the United States were compelled to address the issue of providing equal opportunity, specifically of providing access to students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and from ethnic and racial minority groups. Access evolved to mean recruitment, admission, and retention of these disadvantaged students (Valverde, 1985; Friedlander, 1980). National and state guidelines were issued to create programs to address the issue of access to public higher education.

Both at California community colleges and at public four-year institutions, increasing the admission and retention of underrepresented students and economically and educationally disadvantaged students has been a major goal of access programs as a way to counteract the traditional exclusion of these students as the result of admissions requirements, poor secondary schools, low levels of college preparation, and their lack of financial resources (Friedlander, 1980; Rhodes & Caple, 1969; Baber & Caple, 1970). The California State University (CSU) created the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) which was enacted to address issues of access to higher education for economically and educationally disadvantaged students in California.

The Educational Opportunity Program Regulations and Guidelines (1986) states, “Educational Opportunity Program enabling legislation (SB1072) of March 1969 authorizes the CSU to provide grants and, where appropriate, educational assistance for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who display potential for success in CSU curricula” (p. 1). Generally termed high risk, EOP students are low-income, often belong to ethnic or racial minority groups, and are the first generation of their family to attend college. These characteristics have been cited in retention research as contributing to higher dropout rates of first-time freshmen (Valverde, 1985; Astin, 1977; Anderson, 1985). In order to address the higher potential for attrition among these students, EOP offers a variety of services including academic advising, tutoring, mentorship programs, and personal counseling.

Many EOP students meet the California State University minimum admission requirements for entering freshmen; but, under special circumstances, applicants who do not meet these requirements may be admitted as special admits with the support of EOP services aimed at retaining these students. The academic success rates of both regular and special admits have received little attention, and the success of retention efforts has not been widely documented or researched. The results of a study of academic success rates for these EOP students could prove to be valuable information for assessing the success of retention efforts.

Background

San José State University (SJSU) is the oldest public institution of higher education in California and is part of the California State University system. With a current total undergraduate enrollment of 21,151 (Office of Institutional Research, 1997b), it is a comprehensive four-year university. Located in Santa Clara County, San José is the third largest city in California. San José State reflects the ethnic diversity of the region in its student population:

Table 1

Distribution of Students by Ethnicity at SJSU: 1997 and 1991

Ethnicity	1997	1991
African American	4.6%	4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.7%	0.6%
Asian	28.8%	22.6%
Filipino	6.3%	4.2%
Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.4%
Mexican American/Chicano	10.3%	6.4%
Other Hispanic	3.9%	2.7%
Total minority	55.1%	40.9%
White	33.1%	49.8%
Other/Decline to State/Unknown	11.8%	9.3%

Table 2

Distribution of Students by Gender at SJSU: 1997 and 1991

Gender	1997	1991
Female	53.8%	51.7%
Male	46.2%	48.3%

In 1997, 41.4% of SJSU students, compared to 49.7% in 1991, were residents of Santa Clara County (Office of Institutional Research, 1991 and 1997b).

Educational Opportunity Program participants make up approximately one-quarter of the total SJSU undergraduate enrollment. All 1991 EOP students were held to the following criteria as outlined in the EOP Regulations and Guidelines (1986):

1. Have an economically disadvantaged background with a history of low family income;
2. Be a member of an underrepresented ethnic minority group (priority given if resources are limited);
3. Have the academic potential to succeed in college but because of past grades or test scores, may not readily attend college;
4. Be in need of EOP support services to succeed in college;
5. Be enrolled primarily as a full time student;
6. Be a California resident;
7. Be enrolled as an undergraduate, pursuing their first baccalaureate degree.

Problem Statement

EOP students are low-income, often belonging to ethnic or racial minority groups, and are frequently the first generation of their family to attend college. These characteristics have been cited in retention research as contributing to dropout rates of first-time freshmen (Valverde, 1985; Astin, 1977; Anderson, 1985). Therefore, EOP

students are high risk students, particularly those who are academically underprepared as measured by minimum admissions requirements.

Little is known about the retention rates of EOP students as a group, including the subset of first-time freshmen special admits. Although services continue to be offered to EOP students, documentation of their success is limited. Because of the high attrition risk among these students, it is useful for the university to have information on the academic success rates of EOP regular and special admits as a possible measure to assess program success.

The purpose of this study is to measure the academic success rates of EOP first-time freshman regular admits and special admits to see how, if at all, they differ.

Research Questions

1. How well do EOP first-time freshmen do after they enter SJSU? The entering class of EOP first-time freshmen of 1991 will be reviewed in terms of their academic success at SJSU. In this study, academic success is measured by the following longitudinal information from their student records from fall 1991 through spring 1997: (a) university final grade point average (FGPA), (b) number of semesters on academic probation, (c) disqualification status, and (d) reinstatement status.
2. Is there a difference in the academic success rates of EOP first-time freshmen regular admits and special admits? Many factors contribute to the academic success and retention of students (Tinto, 1987; Astin, 1977). Of these, high school performance is the most successful predictor of college persistence (Morrissey, 1971; Harrington,

1969; Chase, 1970). By definition, EOP special admits have lower high school performance, as evidenced by their inability to meet the minimum CSU admissions requirements. A study of their success rates in comparison to EOP regular admits may prove useful in understanding the relationship of admissions policies, student services, and academic success.

Definition Of Terms

Students who qualify for EOP must be low-income, first-generation college students, and most are members of underrepresented ethnic groups. Each of these terms is defined along with other terms used to describe the students in this study.

Low-Income

EOP students must meet specific low-income guidelines for admission to the program. All EOP students in this study met these criteria at the time of admission to the program in the Fall 1991 semester. Thus, the term low-income is applied to all EOP students in this study. In 1991-1992 academic year, low-income status was determined by the following guidelines:

Table 3

Annual Income Guidelines for the Educational Opportunity Program: 1991-1992

Family Size	Maximum Total Parental Income	
	Two-Parent Family	Self-Supporting or One-Parent Family
2		\$ 22,125
3	\$ 21,625	24,875
4	25,125	28,375
5	28,375	31,625
6	31,875	35,375
7	34,625	38,125
8	37,625	40,875
9	40,375	43,625
10	43,125	46,375

Economically and Educationally Disadvantaged

In the EOP criteria and in this study, this term is used to describe students who have a history of low-income, which is generally assumed to have negatively impacted the quality of their K-12 educational experience.

Minority Students

This term refers to non-white students. On the CSU admission application, students are asked to place themselves into one of 27 specific ethnic categories. The university then combines these categories into 9 general category groupings for statistical purposes as outlined below:

Table 4

SJSU General Ethnic Category Groupings and Specific Ethnic Category Options on CSU Admission Application

General Ethnic Category	Specific Ethnic Category
African American	Black, non-Hispanic, including African-American
American Indian/Alaskan Native	American Indian or Alaskan Native
Asian	Asian Indian
	Cambodian
	Chinese
	Japanese
	Korean
	Laotian
	Other Asian
	Other Southeast Asian
	Thai
	Vietnamese
Filipino	Filipino
Pacific Islander	Guamanian
	Hawaiian
	Other Pacific Islander
	Samoan
Mexican American/Chicano	Mexican-American, Mexican, Chicano
Other Hispanic	Central American
	Cuban
	Other Latino, Spanish-origin, Hispanic
	Puerto Rican
	South American
White	White
Other/Decline to State/Unknown	Decline to state
	No Response
	Other

Underrepresented Students

The EOP Regulations and Guidelines (1986) provides the following definition of underrepresented students:

Underrepresented groups are defined as those who are not represented in the CSU first time freshmen enrollment in proportion to the percentage they represent of the senior graduates in the service area.

Underrepresented groups in the CSU include Hispanics, Blacks, and American Indians. Other groups may be admitted on a limited basis as space and resource [sic] allow. (p.3)

First-Generation College Student

This term applies to students whose parents have not graduated from a four-year university. These students are often the first in their family to attend college. These students are considered to be at an educational disadvantage due to the fact that they cannot benefit from parental information, experience, or understanding regarding the college experience since their parents have not attained a four-year university degree (Anderson, 1985; Valverde, 1985).

First-time Freshman

This status is given to students at the time of admission if they enroll at the university following their graduation from high school without attending another college.

Regular Admit

This term refers to a first-time freshman California resident who meets the regular university admissions requirements. The following table outlines the requirements which were in effect for the entering freshman class for the 1991-1992 academic year:

Table 5

Coursework Requirements for Regular Admission: 1991

Number of years completed with a final grade of "C-" or better		College Preparatory Subject
3*		English --may include one year of <i>Advanced English as a Second Language</i>
2*		Mathematics --to include <i>Algebra, Geometry, and Intermediate Algebra</i>
1		United States History --may include <i>1/2 year US History and 1/2 year Government</i>
1		Laboratory Science --may include <i>Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.</i>
2		Foreign Language --may be waived for <i>documented competence in a language other than English</i>
1		Visual and Performing Arts --includes <i>music, art, drama, and dance</i>
3		College Preparatory Electives
Total	13*	
* Written policy required 4 years of English and 3 years of mathematics but allowed the above exceptions due to the phasing-in of new requirements		

Table 6

Minimum Eligibility Index for Regular Admission: 1991

SAT	ACT
$(\text{GPA}^* \times 800) + \text{SAT score} = 2800$	$(\text{GPA}^* \times 200) + (\text{ACT score} \times 10) = 694$
* GPA was calculated with 10th, 11th, and 12th grade courses, not including physical education or military science on a 4 point scale (A=4, F=0). GPA minimum is 2.0.	

When a student satisfies both the course requirements and the minimum eligibility index, the student qualifies as a regular admit and is admitted with a basis of admission code of "A".

Special Admit

This term applies to students who do not meet the regular admissions requirements but have been admitted to the university after reviewing their special circumstances. This can occur through appealing to two different committees, the Exceptional Admissions Committee or the EOP Special Admissions Committee.

If a student is eligible for the Educational Opportunity Program and does not meet the regular admissions requirements, the student's application is referred to the EOP Special Admissions Committee. At that point, the student is evaluated on the basis of the autobiographical information provided on the EOP application, as well as the nomination and recommendation forms submitted.

Special circumstances described within these forms are considered including the following subjective criteria: (a) self-perception, (b) perception by others, (c) experience and/or maturity, and (d) motivation. In addition, the student's academic performance is assessed in the following areas: (a) grade point average, (b) test scores, (c) academic skills assessment, and (d) support services needs. The student's level of disadvantage is determined using the following indicators: (a) history of low family income, (b) current economic condition, (c) educationally disadvantaged, and (d) environmentally

disadvantaged. Background characteristics including race and cultural and/or linguistic diversity are also considered.

If the EOP committee determines that the student has sufficient potential for success, the student is admitted. The student is considered a special admit with a basis of admission code of "T".

Assumptions

In conducting the research for this study, the following assumptions were made:

1. All of the students who were admitted to both the university and the Educational Opportunity Program provided accurate information on their applications upon which their admission to the university and EOP was based.
2. The records obtained from the Student Information System, San José State University's admission database, including high school admission information, were entered accurately.

Limitations

In conducting the research for this study, the following limitations were accepted:

1. No information on the students' assessments of their own academic success, their goals and motivations, or their non-intellectual characteristics was available for inclusion in this study, therefore limiting the scope of the study.

2. The data available from computerized records begins in Spring 1991.

Therefore, this limits the study to the first entering class for which computer accessible records are available for both admissions decisions and the SJSU academic record.

Delimitation of the Research

In conducting research for this study, the following restrictions were imposed:

1. The study only addressed one entering freshman class, and this may limit its applicability to other entering freshman classes.
2. The study did not take into account any subsequent activities of students who stopped attending San José State. Academic success is measured only in terms of what was accomplished at SJSU. Although students may have continued their studies elsewhere and even received a degree from another institution, this study was limited to considering their performance at SJSU.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study provides useful information with which EOP staff may better understand what is happening to EOP students in terms of their academic success. This information could be used to target students who may need more retention services, and it may provide information which would help discover areas which need more study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Overview

In an effort to address the issue of equal opportunity and access, public institutions of higher education began implementing recruitment, admission, and retention programs which targeted students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and from ethnic and racial minority groups (Valverde, 1985; Friedlander, 1980). In California, this resulted in the inception of the Educational Opportunity Program which was designed to provide grants and educational assistance for students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

San José State University's Educational Opportunity Program students are self-selected as EOP applicants. Although SJSU's high school outreach programs encourage those students who may qualify for EOP to apply, they are not required to do so. Because the program is optional and students must self-identify as being educationally and economically disadvantaged, it follows that EOP students have an understanding that they have a disadvantage upon college entrance.

The present research was conducted to discover where, if at all, more attention may be needed in order to increase the likelihood of the retention of EOP students by examining their academic achievements. Much research has been done to predict who will drop out of college and to explain why students drop out. Three major elements

impact student retention, and they offer a framework for understanding how well SJSU's EOP students are expected to do.

Individual Characteristics

Family Income

A negative association between college attrition and parental income has been found in numerous studies (Astin, 1977; Valverde, 1985; Baber & Caple, 1970; Anderson, 1985). The more sophisticated studies show that the relationship between parental income and student success is more complicated than a simple cause and effect correlation. Valverde (1985) states that low-income students have some common experiences which lessen their chances of college success:

1. They are often children of parents who have relatively little education;
2. Prior to attending college they are likely to have attended poor public schools and experienced high rates of failure while in school;
3. They received insufficient positive feedback or encouragement from teachers and classmates.

Astin (1977) also notes that the "greater dropout-proneness of students from low-income families is attributable to their less educated parents, lesser ability and lower motivation, and greater concern about finances" (p. 35).

Low-income status can be mitigated by financial support through financial aid programs (Astin, 1977; Rhodes & Caple, 1969). Astin (1977) found that receiving support from parents raises the chances of completion. Families of EOP students, by

definition, contribute no more than \$1,000 per year toward their education, thus EOP students do not benefit much from family financial support. This contributes to their high risk level for attrition.

Minority Status

The majority of EOP students are from racial and ethnic minority groups. Ethnic and racial minority students have been shown to have a hard time adjusting to fit the norms of behavior at institutions (Maynard, 1980; Tinto, 1985). Maynard (1980) states, “minority students are often overwhelmed and lost on large, predominately white university campuses” (p. 400). Social integration is key to student retention (Sagaria, Higginson, & White, 1980; Chase, 1970), and Maynard (1980) indicates that non-white students are “frequently placed in conflict when required to conform simultaneously to university standards and to family and cultural peer group expectations. Such expectations can be contradictory, so adjustment to one set of requirements makes adjustment to the other more difficult” (p. 400).

Tinto (1985) indicates that minority student persistence partially depends upon the number of similar types of students at the institution. The challenges of adjustment to a predominately white institution in terms of students, faculty, and staff still exist for these students.

In addition, minority students encounter other challenges which impact their success at the university. For example, Valverde (1985) found the following relationship between minority students and low-income status:

It is fairly well documented that the majority of black, Hispanic, and Native American families in the United States are of low socioeconomic status and that a high percentage of students from such ethnic and racial groups who are attending institutions of higher education are low-income students. (p. 79)

In fact, two-thirds to three-fourths of all low-income students are non-white. This means that most minority students not only have to struggle with financial concerns, but also the social adjustments to higher education institutions which remain predominantly white.

Furthermore, when a student is both minority and low-income, the outlook for college entrance and success is bleaker. Minority students tend to perform more poorly on traditional measures of academic ability than white students. This is exacerbated when income level is added to the equation. Tierney (1996a) points out the following:

We know, for example, that there are differences that ranged from forty to eighty points on SAT tests among blacks, Asians and whites of the same socio-economic class...Blacks, for example, score lower on both sections of the SAT than do Asians or whites. Low and middle-income Asians score higher than whites on the math section, but lower on the verbal section. When we combine scores we discover that poor Asians do not do as well as poor whites. (p.44)

Although the relationship between minority status and being low-income is not fully understood, students who fall into both categories face larger obstacles than white students.

Low Educational Level of Parents

Chase (1970) states, "It is widely believed that the educational level of the parents has considerable influence on the child's eventual level of academic attainment" (p. 68). In fact, while parents with low educational levels may want their children to attend

college, they tend not to stress its importance. Usually this is due to the lower income levels of the non-college educated parents. The reality is that many of them need their children's financial contribution to the family—a contribution that almost invariably diminishes significantly as their children attend college (Anderson, 1985).

In addition, students with parents who never attended college must grapple with the adjustment to college without the benefit of parental knowledge and guidance in the college transition. These students are more likely to perceive college as a foreign and hostile new environment (Valverde, 1985). Also, they are less likely to be able to benefit from role models who have succeeded in higher education endeavors.

Academic Characteristics

High School Performance

Academic performance in college has long been associated with high school academic performance (Harrington, 1969; Chase, 1970; Astin, 1977). Morrissey (1971) states, "A large amount of research...has established that past performance in high school is the most valid single predictor of college grades" (p. 279). Given that EOP students are low-income, they have often attended poor secondary schools (Anderson, 1985; Valverde, 1985) and, on average, demonstrate lower levels of ability.

It is important, however, to remember that factors other than academic ability impact academic performance (Astin, 1977; Tinto, 1987; Hart & Keller, 1980; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980). Self concept, self appraisal, successful leadership experience, and demonstrated community service are some of the many psychosocial predictors for

college success (Ting, 1998). Ting states that “using college entrance examination scores in traditional measures was ineffective in forecasting first-generation and low-income students [sic] performance in the first year” (p. 22).

University Performance

Time and again, low academic achievement in the freshman year has been linked to high attrition (Hart & Keller, 1980). Morrissey (1971) found the following:

The students with low FGPA [Fall Grade Point Average] had a greater tendency to drop out, and those with a high FGPA had a greater tendency to persist. This finding supports the hypothesis that there is a relationship between first-semester grade point average and attrition. (p. 283)

This indicates that carefully watching for students who slip academically in their first and second years of college could greatly enhance retention efforts.

Institutional Characteristics

Opportunities for Social Integration

Many minority and low-income students must alter their values and social system in order to become more fully integrated into the social aspects of university life. Success in this area of transition has been found to be key to retaining minority and low-income students (Anderson, 1985; Valverde, 1985). Sagaria, Higginson, and White (1980) state the following:

Research indicates that persistence in college is viewed as a function of the degree of harmony between the student and the institution's environment. More specifically, if a student is fully integrated into the social and academic systems of a college or university, then presumably that student will have more positive perceptions of the institution's environment, participate more extensively in social activities, and perform at a higher level of academic achievement than a less fully integrated student. (p. 243)

Maynard (1980) notes that the inability of many universities to respond to the socio-cultural needs of minority students is a contributing factor to minority students' high attrition rate.

Studies have shown that disadvantaged students who are provided special attention to the problems of social adjustment can succeed in college (Rhodes & Caple, 1969). Given that this particular challenge can be mitigated by institutional efforts, attention should be given to the integration challenges that EOP students face.

Faculty

In addition to social integration, academic integration has a considerable impact on student retention (Sagaria, Higginson, & White, 1980; Tinto, 1985; Toy 1985). Tinto (1987) states that faculty "actions, both within and without the classroom, provide the standards by which individuals come to judge the intellectual ethos of the institution" (p. 56). Both formal and informal contact with faculty has a positive impact on student retention (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980; Hart & Keller, 1980; Astin, 1977; Tinto, 1985, 1987; Roueche & Roueche, 1985). Valverde (1985) points out a disturbing fact about faculty in general:

Faculty often have a tendency to assume that nearly every minority student is a special admission, that is, a student who did not meet the standard academic requirements of the university. These faculty view minority students as needing more remedial help than other students. Thus some capable minority students are incorrectly labeled as being deficient while very few white students, who may actually be academically underprepared, are so stereotyped. These assumptions, though difficult to verify, may influence faculty interaction with and behavior toward low-income students (p.80).

These biases toward minority and low-income students may significantly impact the students' perceptions of faculty accessibility. Students generally must be the initiators of interactions with faculty through office hours or after class discussions. First-year students can feel intimidated by large classes and instructors who have a distancing teaching style (Hart & Keller, 1980). Compounding this is the fact that most minority and low-income students have had previously disappointing or discouraging experiences with instructors at the secondary level which makes them less likely to reach out to instructors at the college level as well (Valverde, 1985; Friedlander, 1980).

Given that faculty contact contributes significantly to student retention, attention should be paid to levels of faculty interaction among high-risk populations. In addition, the issue of faculty bias against certain types of students also deserves attention. Tierney (1996b) states the following:

Most faculty are trained in a particular area of expertise (e.g. biology, history); they frequently do not have training in how to teach in general, and how to teach diverse populations, in particular...Faculty need formal on-going mechanisms where they have the opportunity to learn about the backgrounds of those student they teach. (p. 8)

Financial Aid Disbursement

Financial concerns are often cited as a reason that students drop out of college (Tinto, 1985; Martin, 1985; Astin, 1977). A study was conducted on low-income students who qualify for Educational Opportunity Grants (as do most SJSU EOP students) to determine whether financial support increased their retention. Freshmen Educational Opportunity Grant recipients of similar ability to higher income students

were found to have higher persistence rates than their higher income peers. This supported the idea that “a disadvantaged student can succeed in college if he is provided financial assistance” (Rhodes & Caple, 1969, p. 387).

The type of award given to low-income students is also important in retention efforts. Tinto (1985) and Astin (1977) found that on-campus work-study programs can increase retention. In addition, low-income students tend to view loans negatively, while students in general respond positively to scholarships and grants (Martin, 1985).

But financial aid awards and concerns about financing college are not considered to be a primary reason for attrition. Tinto (1987) suggests that individual response to financial stress varies by students’ institutional experiences. Specifically, he states that “unrewarding experiences in the academic and/or social communities of the college may lead students to withdraw in the face of even quite minimal financial stress” (p. 158).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Overview

Among the many things that impact student attrition are a student's individual and academic characteristics. EOP students are considered at-risk based on the fact that they possess individual and academic characteristics that have been shown to negatively impact their ability to succeed at the university level. Particularly, all EOP students are low-income and first-generation college students and almost all are minority. In addition, EOP special admits have low high school achievement as measured by the number of college preparatory courses completed, high school grade point average (HSGPA), and standardized test scores.

The purpose of this study is to measure the academic success rates of the 1991 EOP first-time freshman cohort as reflected in their university academic record. Given that all EOP students have access to support services including personal and academic counseling and tutoring, EOP students are expected to perform successfully. They face obstacles to achieving a degree, but because they have services and retention efforts dedicated specifically to serve them, the hope is that they graduate at the same rates as the university as a whole.

In addition, this study seeks to describe the differences between EOP regular and special admits in terms of their success rates. Given that the two groups do not have the

same high school preparation at the time of admission, it is possible that the special admit cohort might perform more poorly. Generally, support services are directed more intensely at special admits, including a summer bridge program, which helps to counteract their disadvantage. A study of success rates between these two groups should prove useful in identifying students who need more intensive retention efforts.

Population and Sample

The cohort for this study included all EOP students who met the following two conditions: (a) admitted as first-time freshmen for the 1991-1992 academic year, and (b) completed at least one semester in the 1991-1992 academic year. EOP Information and Technical Services (EITS) identified the students who fit this criteria. The total number of EOP students who met the above criteria was 388, all of whom were included in this study.

Instrumentation

Academic Success Rank

In order to measure the academic success of these students, an academic success rank was given to each student based on the student's final university grade point average (FGPA) and any punitive academic action taken against the student during his or her attendance at San José State University. The rank measured how well a student met the academic challenges of the university while not penalizing the student for withdrawing voluntarily. Graduation was not factored into the academic success rank, but it was used for descriptive purposes in the study. Instead, the rank reflected how well students

performed during their tenure at San José State University as opposed to whether or not a degree was granted. This distinction will be explored further in chapter four.

In order to determine a student's academic success rank, the student's SJSU final cumulative grade point average was converted according to the following 100 point scale:

Table 7

Final Grade Point Average Conversion Scale

Fall Grade Point Average	Score
0.00 - 0.49	12.5
0.50 - 0.99	25.0
1.00 - 1.49	37.5
1.50 - 1.99	50.0
2.00 - 2.49	62.5
2.50 - 2.99	75.0
3.00 - 3.49	87.5
3.50 - 4.00	100

Once the GPA score was determined for the student, any academic action taken by SJSU against the student was assessed against the GPA score according to table 8. Any academic action values were then calculated against the GPA score which resulted in the academic success rank for the student. The academic success rank has a range of one to one-hundred.

Table 8

Academic Action Values

Academic Action	Value
Probation	- 1 per non-consecutive semester that the GPA fell below 2.0 - 2 per consecutive semester that the GPA remained below 2.0
Disqualification	- 5 per disqualification
Reinstatement	+ 4 per reinstatement

Probation occurs anytime that a student's SJSU grade point average falls below the minimum 2.0 required to remain in good standing. A student is disqualified if he or she has a grade point deficiency which exceeds 15 grade points below 2.0 if 0-59 units are completed, 9 grade points below 2.0 if 60-89 units are completed, or 6 grade points below 2.0 if 90 or more units are completed. After being disqualified, a student is reinstated upon completion of the requirements approved by his or her counselor. Generally speaking, this entails completing a program of study with grades of "C" or better in approved courses.

Once calculated as outlined above, students who ranked below 50 were not academically successful. Their FGPA's remained under 2.0 and/or they were not eligible to re-enroll at SJSU. Those who ranked 50 or above successfully met the academic rigors of the university in that they met the minimum FGPA requirements that allowed them to continue their degree program.

Final Academic Action

For comparative purposes, students were assigned one of the following categories as determined by their final academic status in their last semester of attendance or at the end of the spring 1997 semester, whichever occurred first: (a) graduated, (b) filed for graduation, (c) no action, (d) probation, (e) disqualified. While some students graduated, others filed an application for graduation but had yet to be granted a degree. Students in good standing who neither received a degree nor filed for graduation were classified as “no action.”

Data Collection

The data collected for each student was taken from the Student Information System (SIS), San José State University’s mainframe student records system. EITS identified the EOP first-time freshmen admitted to SJSU in fall 1991. From this group, a total of 388 students enrolled for at least one term during the 1991-1992 academic year. EITS provided a report including ethnicity, gender, high school preparation, and academic information from fall 1991 through spring 1997. All students were tracked for a full six years.

Data Analysis

The method of data analysis was through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows Release 6.1.4. In order to examine the relationship between the selected variables, the chi-square analysis was utilized at the .01 level of significance.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Overview

The EOP program was initiated to provide greater access and retention services to underrepresented, low-income, first-generation college students. This study seeks to describe the success of the EOP first-time freshmen who entered in the 1991-1992 academic year. In addition, EOP regular and special admits are compared in order to determine what difference, if any, exists between those EOP students who met the minimum admissions requirements and those who did not.

The results of the data analysis for the 388 EOP first-time freshmen are presented in the following order for the total EOP cohort: (a) demographic data, (b) high school summary data, (c) academic success ranking, (d) length of attendance, and (e) final academic action.

The total EOP cohort is then divided into the regular admit cohort and special admit cohort. The results of the data analysis for these two cohorts are compared in the following order: (a) demographic data, (b) high school summary data, (c) academic success ranking, (d) length of attendance, (e) final academic action, and (f) comparison of underrepresented students.

Total EOP Cohort

Demographic Data

The ethnic and gender distribution of the 1991 EOP cohort (n=388) is shown with the ethnic and gender distribution of the entire undergraduate student population (n=30,061) of the same year:

Table 9

Distribution of EOP Students and All Undergraduate Students by Ethnicity at SJSU: 1991

Ethnicity	1991 EOP Cohort	1991 All University
African American	17.3%	4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.3%	0.6%
Asian	49.5%	22.6%
Filipino	1.3%	4.2%
Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.4%
Mexican American/Chicano	20.6%	6.4%
Other Hispanic	5.4%	2.7%
Total minority	94.8%	40.9%
White	1.8%	49.8%
Other/Decline to State/Unknown	3.4%	9.3%

Table 10

Distribution of EOP Students and All Undergraduate Students by Gender at SJSU: 1991

Gender	1991 EOP Cohort	1991 All University
Female	53.9%	51.7%
Male	46.1%	48.3%

High School Summary Data

All students had a reported high school grade point average (HSGPA). Many students self-reported their HSGPA, although some of the records included an official HSGPA as calculated by the high school. Either the SAT or the ACT was required of all students who fell below a 3.0 HSGPA, and most students took at least one exam. During the evaluation process of the admission applications, the Admissions and Records Office recorded the number of college preparatory semesters completed in each subject area. The average shown below reflects the total number of college preparatory semesters completed before matriculation at SJSU.

Table 11

High School Summary Data for Total EOP Cohort

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Number of students
HSGPA	2.90	0.81	4.00	388
ACT Score	16.9	11	24	72
SAT Score	816.5	450	1230	324
Total College Preparatory Semesters	26.6	0	30	388

Academic Success Ranks

The mean rank was 60.47 with a standard deviation of 20.27. The minimum rank was scored at 6.50 and the maximum rank achieved was 100.

Figure 1

Distribution of Total EOP Cohort by Academic Success Rank

Of the EOP cohort, 5.9% had an academic success rank which fell below 25 and 26% fell between 25 and 50. Thirty percent of the EOP cohort had an academic success rank between 50 and 75, while the majority of the students (38.1%) maintained an academic success above 75.

A total of 124 students (32%) had an academic success rank below 50. These students are not considered successful because they were either disqualified and did not get reinstated or remained on probation with a FGPA below 2.0.

A total of 264 students (68%) scored 50 or above on the academic success rank.

These students remained viable students, with their FGPA above 2.0. Seventy three percent of the women versus 62% of the men were successful.

Figure 2

Overall Academic Success of Total EOP Cohort

Length of Attendance

The average number of semesters attended was 8.25 with a standard deviation of 3.74. The number of semesters completed ranged from 1 to 12 or more. The distribution of students according to the number of semesters completed was as follows:

Table 12

Distribution of Total EOP Cohort by Total Number of Semesters Completed

Total Number of Semesters Completed	Number of Students	Percentage of Total
1	14	3.6%
2	35	9.0%
3	20	5.2%
4	26	6.7%
5	12	3.1%
6	21	5.4%
7	11	2.8%
8	20	5.2%
9	17	4.4%
10	57	14.7%
11	52	13.4%
12 or more	103	26.5%

Of the EOP cohort, 159 students (41%) attended SJSU for eight semesters or less. Out of the 159 students, six students graduated and one filed for graduation at the end of eight semesters. Fifty-five students (34.6%) left in good standing without graduating or filing for graduation by the end of eight semesters. Information was not gathered for this study on their reasons for departure.

Forty-two (26.4%) of the students who attended one to eight semesters were on probation when they departed. Fifty-five students (34.6%) of those who attended one to eight semesters left because they were disqualified from the University. A full 26.5% (n=103) of the EOP cohort completed six years or more at the University.

Final Academic Action

At the time of departure or at the end of the spring 1997 semester, whichever occurred first, each student was assigned a final academic action based upon their status. Students were labeled “graduated” if they were granted a degree while those who filed an application for graduation but had yet to be granted a degree were labeled “filed.” Students in good standing who neither received a degree nor filed for graduation were classified as “no action.”

The students labeled “graduated,” “filed,” and “no action” were considered successful according to the academic success rank. Students with a FGPA below 2.0, and thus on academic probation, were labeled “probation.” Those who were disqualified from the university and were not reinstated were labeled “disqualified.” Students who were on probation or were disqualified were not considered successful.

The following figure shows the distribution of the EOP students according to their final status at the end of six years.

Figure 3

Final Academic Action for Total EOP Cohort

The graduation rate was 26.3% for the EOP cohort at the end of six years. Comparatively, the six year graduation rate for the fall 1991 full-time enrolled freshmen class was 38.7% (Office of Institutional Research, 1997a). From the 102 EOP students who received a degree, only six students (5.9%) completed their degree within four years, while 96 students (94.1%) took four to six years to complete their degree. Of the total cohort, 22.1% (n=86) filed for graduation, while 19.6% (n=76) remained in good standing without filing for or completing graduation ("no action").

The probation rate for the EOP cohort was 14.2% (n=55). Forty percent of the students (n=22) who were put on probation attended for three semesters or less. Another 36.4% of the students (n=20) on probation attended for four to eight semesters. A total of 23.6% of the students (n=13) on probation attended for more than eight semesters. None of these students were considered successful according to the academic success rank, as their grade point averages remained below a 2.0.

The rate of disqualification was 17.8% (n=69) for the EOP cohort. Of the students who left the university because they were disqualified 33.3% (n=32) did so after completing one to three semesters. The majority, 46.4% of disqualified students (n=32), attended four to eight semesters. A total of 20.3% of the disqualified students (n=14) were not disqualified until after they completed at least nine semesters.

Figures on the probation and disqualification rates of the entire first-time freshman population of the university were unavailable at this time. Thus the EOP cohort could not be compared to the university as a whole, except in the area of graduation rates.

Comparison Data Between Regular Admit Cohort and Special Admit Cohort

Demographic Data

Out of the total EOP cohort, 231 students (59.5%) met the minimum admission requirements and were admitted as regular admits. One hundred and fifty-seven students (40.5%) were processed through the EOP Special Admission Committee and were granted admission to the University as special admits. The following is the ethnic and gender distributions of the regular admit cohort and special admit cohort.

Table 13

Distribution of Regular and Special Admits by Ethnicity at SJSU: 1991

Ethnicity	Regular Admit Cohort	Special Admit Cohort
African American	10.8%	26.9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.6%
Asian	64.0%	28.0%
Filipino	2.2%	0.0%
Pacific Islander	0.9%	0.0%
Mexican American/Chicano	13.0%	31.8%
Other Hispanic	3.9%	7.6%
Total minority	94.8%	94.9%
White	2.2%	1.3%
Other/Decline to State/Unknown	3.0%	3.8%

Table 14

Distribution of Regular and Special Admits by Gender at SJSU: 1991

Gender	Regular Admit Cohort	Special Admit Cohort
Female	54.5%	52.9%
Male	45.5%	47.1%

Of all African American EOP students, 62.7% (n=42) were special admits while 37.3% (n=25) were regular admits. Of all Mexican American/Chicano EOP students, 62.5% (n=50) were special admits versus 37.5% (n=30) regular admits. The one American Indian in this study was a special admit. Of the 21 students in the "other Hispanic" category, 57.1% were special admits (n=12). Asian, Filipino, Pacific Islander, and white EOP students were all likelier to be regular admits. The special admit rates were as follows: Asians, 22.9%; Filipino and Pacific Islander, 0%; and whites, 28.6%.

Students in this study from these ethnic groups predominately met the regular admission requirements.

High School Summary Data

It is expected that regular admits will have higher HSGPAs, ACT and SAT test scores, as well as more college preparatory coursework completed than special admits because they have to meet higher admission standards. This difference is shown below:

Table 15

High School Summary Data for Regular Admit Cohort

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Number of Students
HSGPA	3.14	1.75	4.00	231
ACT Score	17.7	12	22	33
SAT Score	844	490	1230	197
Total College Preparatory Semesters	28.5	14	30	231

Table 16

High School Summary Data for Special Admit Cohort

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Number of Students
HSGPA	2.55	0.81	3.88	157
ACT Score	16.2	11	24	39
SAT Score	773	450	1160	127
Total College Preparatory Semesters	23.8	0	30	157

Academic Success Ranks

Figure 4

Distribution for Regular Admit Cohort by Academic Success Rank

Figure 5

Distribution for Special Admit Cohort by Academic Success Rank

Of regular and special admits, 4.8% (n=11) and 7.7% (n=12), respectively, had an academic success rank which fell below 25. Nineteen percent of regular admits (n=44) compared to 36.3% of special admits (n=57) fell between 25 and 50. Twenty-nine percent of special admits (n=67) and 31.2% of special admits (n=49) had an academic success rank between 50 and 75. The majority of the regular admits (47.2%, n=109) maintained an academic success above 75. Special admits did not fare as well; only 24.8% (n=39) had academic success ranks above 75.

Figure 6

Overall Academic Success by Admit Cohort

A total of 55 regular admits (23.8% of regular admits) had an academic success rank below 50. Sixty-nine special admits (44% of special admits) ranked below 50. These students were not considered successful because they were disqualified from the university or remained on probation with a FGPA below 2.0.

A total of 176 regular admits (76.2% of regular admits) scored 50 or above on the academic success rank. Only 88 special admits (56% of special admits) ranked in the successful category. In fact, regular admits were 36% more likely to be successful than special admits, although no high school variables were significant predictors of success.

Length of Attendance

Table 17

Distribution of Regular and Special Admit Cohort by Total Number of Semesters Completed

Total Number of Semesters Completed	Regular Admit Cohort		Special Admit Cohort	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1	5	2.2%	9	5.7%
2	20	8.7%	15	9.6%
3	11	4.8%	9	5.7%
4	6	2.6%	20	12.7%
5	6	2.6%	6	3.8%
6	14	6.1%	7	4.5%
7	7	3.0%	4	2.5%
8	12	5.2%	8	5.1%
9	11	4.8%	6	3.8%
10	40	17.3%	17	10.8%
11	30	13.0%	22	14.0%
12 or more	69	29.9%	34	21.7%

Eighty-one (35.1%) of the regular admits and 79 (49.7%) of special admits attended SJSU for eight semesters or less. Of regular admits, 64.9% (n=150) stayed for more than four years while only 50.3% of special admits (n=79) persisted for more than four years.

Final Academic Action

The same categories applied to the entire EOP cohort were used to describe the regular admit and special admit cohorts:

Figure 7

Final Academic Action for Regular and Special Admit Cohorts

The overall graduation rate was 26.3% for the total EOP cohort at the end of six years. Thirty-two percent of the regular admit cohort (n=74) graduated by the end of six years while only 17.8% of the special admit cohort (n=28) graduated by the end of six years. In fact, regular admits were 80% more likely to graduate than special admits in this study.

Regular and special admits had comparable rates of filing for graduation (22.5%, n=52 and 21.7%, n=34 respectively). Fifty students (21.6%) of the regular admits and 26 (16.6%) of the special admits remained in good standing without graduating or filing for graduation by the end of six years.

The probation rate for the regular admit cohort was 13.4% (n=31) by the end of six years. Of the regular cohort who finished on probation, 32.3% (n=10) did so at the end of three semesters, 45.2% (n=14) did so between four and eight semesters, and 22.6% (n=7) did so after finishing nine semesters. Of the special admit cohort, 15.3% (n=24) ended up on probation by the end of six years. A total of ten special admits (41.7%) left on probation after attending only three semesters, six special admits (25%) left on probation after completing four to eight semesters, and six special admits (25%) left after completing nine semesters or more. None of these students were considered successful according to the academic success rank.

The rate of disqualification was 17.8% (n=69) for the total EOP cohort. For regular admits, the disqualification rate was 10.4%, while for the special admits, the disqualification rate was 28.7%. Of all the students who were disqualified, 34.8% (n=24)

were regular admits and 62.2% (n=45) were special admits. A special admit was 26% more likely than a regular admit to end up leaving the university as a disqualified student.

Of the regular admits who were disqualified, 50% (n=12) did so within three semesters. Twenty-five percent (n=6) left because of disqualification after attending four to eight semesters, and 25% (n=6) were disqualified after completing at least nine semesters. Of the special admits who were disqualified, 24.4% (n=11) stopped attending because of disqualification within three semesters, 57.8% (n=26) left on disqualification after attending four to eight semesters, and 17.8% (n=8) left after finishing at least nine semesters. Although the majority of disqualified special admits attended SJSU for two or more years, they had a significantly higher rate of disqualification than regular admits.

Comparison of Underrepresented Students

Regular admits fared much better in terms of overall success rates, graduation rates, and disqualification rates than special admits. Regular admits were 36% more likely to be successful and 80% more likely to graduate within six years. Out of the data used to measure high school preparation, no single variable emerged as a significant predictor of eventual success at the university level. Although the high school variables did not have significant impact on university success levels, they did have some predictive value in that those who were better prepared performed at higher levels.

Underrepresented students were more likely to fall into the special admit cohort than into the regular admit cohort. African American, Mexican American/Chicano, and

American Indian students were all considered underrepresented in California's institutions of higher education. All of these groups had a special admit rate above 62%.

Of all African American EOP students, 62.7% (n=42) were special admits while 37.3% (n=25) were regular admits. Of all Mexican American/Chicano EOP students, 62.5% (n=50) were special admits versus 37.5% (n=30) regular admits. Because there was only one American Indian in this study (a special admit who was disqualified after completing one semester), this student was not included in the comparison of underrepresented students. The data below examines the academic performance of the two underrepresented populations, African American and Mexican American/Chicano EOP students, on the basis of their high school preparation and University success levels.

High School Summary Data

Most African American and Mexican American/Chicano students in this study were admitted as special admits. Their high school performance reflects their lower preparation.

Table 18

High School Summary Data for EOP African American Students

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Number of Students
HSGPA	2.46	1.50	3.15	67
ACT Score	16.18	11	24	17
SAT Score	801.90	490	1160	58
Total College Preparatory Semesters	25.01	1	30	67

Table 19

High School Summary Data for EOP Mexican American/Chicano Students

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Number of Students
HSGPA	2.65	1.81	3.63	80
ACT Score	16.90	12	22	21
SAT Score	815.33	450	1120	60
Total College Preparatory Semesters	25.18	0	30	80

African Americans and Mexican Americans/Chicanos had similar high school preparation as measured by HSGPA, ACT and SAT test results, and the number of college preparatory semesters completed. Again, these high school variables held no significant predictive value for eventual academic success at the university level. Despite the similarities in high school performance, these two groups performed very differently after entering the university. For the entire EOP cohort, the academic success rate was 68%. The African American EOP group had a 40.3% success rate, while the Mexican American/Chicano EOP group had a success rate of 65%.

Figure 8

Overall Academic Success of EOP Underrepresented Students

Figure 9

Final Academic Action for EOP Underrepresented Students

Of the African American students, 59.7% (n=40) left San José State on probation or as a disqualified student. Only 6 African American students (9%) in this study graduated within six years. From the entire entering freshman class of 1990, 17.8% of African American students graduated within six years (Office of Institutional Research, 1997a). This is compared to the overall graduation rate of 38.7% for the entire freshman class of 1991. By far, the African American EOP students had a lower graduation rate.

Of the Mexican American/Chicano students in this study, 35% (n=28) left SJSU on probation or as disqualified students. While 20% (n=16) of Mexican American/Chicano students graduated within six years, the Mexican American/Chicano students who entered as freshmen in the fall of 1990 had a graduation rate of 36.0%. Mexican American/Chicano students in this study had lower graduation rates overall. But compared to African American students in this study with similar high school preparation, they had a higher graduation rate.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

EOP students have many individual and academic characteristics which put them at a higher risk for attrition. Unfortunately, little is known about the retention rates of EOP first-time freshmen at San José State University. Given that academic support services are dedicated to these EOP students, it is important to have information on their success rates.

The purpose of this study was to determine the academic success rates of the 1991 EOP first-time freshmen regular and special admits over a six-year period. Their final grade point averages were used in conjunction with probation, disqualification, and reinstatement information in order to determine their academic success rank. Information was also gathered on how many semesters these students attended SJSU. Their final academic status was reported as well, indicating the academic circumstances under which they left the university.

A comparison was done with regular admits and special admits in order to determine differences in performance between these two groups. Demographic data, high school summary data, academic success ranks, and final academic action information were all used to illustrate the differences between regular admits and special admits.

Findings

1. The EOP students in this study had a lower six-year graduation rate (26.3%) than the entire first-time freshman class of 1991 (38.7%). The overall academic success rate for the total EOP cohort was 68%.
2. Regular admits did much better than special admits. Regular admits were 36% more likely to be successful and 80% more likely to graduate. They also had lower rates of probation (13.4%) and disqualification (10.4%) than special admits, who had a probation rate of 15.3% and disqualification rate of 28.7%.
3. Asian students fared the best in both their overall academic success rate (81.8%) and their graduation rate (38%). Also, 77.1% of Asians were regular admits. They showed better high school preparation than other ethnic groups, with an average HSGPA of 3.19 and an average of 27.82 college preparatory semesters completed—two more than the average for underrepresented students.
4. Underrepresented students made up 59.2% of all special admits and had lower high school preparation than other ethnic groups. Most notably, underrepresented students had the lowest college performance as measured by graduation, probation, and disqualification rates. Underrepresented students were on probation or disqualified at nearly the same rate regardless of regular or special admit status. African American students were on probation or disqualified at rates of 60% for regular admits and 59% for special admits. Similarly, Mexican American/Chicano students had 33% of

regular admits and 36% of special admits ending up on probation or as a disqualified student.

5. Mexican Americans/Chicanos had a lower overall academic success rate (65%) and graduation rate (20%) than the total EOP cohort.
6. African Americans had the lowest overall academic success rate (42.7) and the lowest graduation rate (9%) of all EOP students.

Conclusions

1. Past research has shown that students who are low-income and first-generation face more obstacles to entering the university and completing a degree. This was reflected in the lower graduation rates of EOP first-time freshmen in this study.
2. High school preparation plays a role in a student's eventual college success. Although no single high school variable proved to accurately predict college success, it is evident that those less prepared fared worse overall. Whether this was a direct cause of their high school preparation is unclear. It is possible that factors which impact high school performance which are not ability-based (such as work demands, family pressures, racism, etc.) may also impact university level performance. For example, attitudes and beliefs about the importance of college as well as a commitment to completing a degree are additional factors that were not studied here, but they have been proven to impact both high school and college success.
3. Asian students had the highest academic performance rates at both the high school and college levels. Currently, they have the largest cultural community on campus as

reflected by the fact that they make up 28.8% of the students on campus, a total second only to whites. Studies have shown that the extent to which opportunities for social integration exist has an impact on academic success. This was reflected in Asian students' performance overall. Furthermore, family and cultural expectations about college degree completion may also have impacted the success rates of these students.

4. High school preparation levels for underrepresented students did not impact their eventual college success. Those who had better high school preparation did not perform better at the college level. Interestingly, minority students have been shown to underperform on traditional measures of academic ability in various studies, which may explain the results of this study.
5. For Mexican American/Chicano students, measures of high school ability do not seem to reflect the academic potential of these students. Despite the fact that they have lower overall high school preparation, they tended to perform comparably to the total EOP cohort. In addition, regular admits and special admits in this group performed comparably in college despite the differences in high school preparation.
6. For African American students, institutional characteristics and the level of social integration may have a greater impact on this group in terms of academic performance in the university. Academic variables seem to predict little about eventual college success.

Recommendations

1. Further study on other entering classes is needed to determine if there is a pattern among EOP students in terms of their academic success rates. With this cohort, further study on what factors influence the graduation rates of EOP students, such as financial concerns, commitment levels, and many other non-cognitive variables, would also be useful.
2. The students in this study were grouped according to whether or not they were special or regular admits. Grouping the students differently may reveal more accurate information on the reasons for differences in probation and disqualification rates. For example, students could be grouped strictly on GPA, by the number of hours worked, or the number of units attempted per semester.
3. Although Asians have the largest cultural community on campus, a closer inspection of the sub-groups may reveal significant differences in performance levels within the Asian category. For instance, Asians as a whole have better high school preparation, but a sub-group such as Cambodian students may show a departure from the norm of the total Asian group. If differences are found between the sub-groups, other variables are likely to be discovered as better predictors of success.
4. Factors other than high school preparation must be studied in order to reveal the variables which led to the college-level academic success of underrepresented students. Frequency and type of interactions with EOP academic support services would be a reasonable starting point. Given that these students may be at risk

because of fewer opportunities for social integration, interactions with faculty, staff, and student groups may impact their overall academic success rates more than for other students.

5. Because the high school performance of Mexican American/Chicano students had the least amount of predictive use for their college success, further study is essential. For those Mexican American/Chicano students who succeeded, information should be gathered on the factors which contributed to their success. It would be interesting to discover what experiences and abilities led to the success of those students who had low high school performance but ended up successful at the university.
6. Perhaps the most important follow-up to the findings on African American EOP students is to closely examine those students with the highest high school preparation. The hope is that upon further study of this sub-group, the reasons for the higher rates of probation and disqualification for the group as a whole may become clearer.

In order to more fully understand the academic success rates of the EOP first-time freshman cohort, information on university-wide probation and disqualification rates is critical. In addition, consideration of non-cognitive variables would also reveal a deeper understanding of the academic success rates presented here. The patterns of academic support services usage, such as advising and tutoring, also need to be explored.

Many of these students were enrolled in remedial courses, though they were not held to a deadline for completion of remedial course patterns. This is another area of

study which could prove useful in determining the reasons for poor academic performance.

Although it is clear that all of these students were low-income, the specific income level of each student was not available for this study. Perhaps an examination of the stratification of income levels within the EOP cohort might shed light on the extent to which income levels correlate with academic success. Particularly, a study of income levels by ethnic group may reveal a stronger relationship with income and success.

In addition to reviewing the impact of the above variables on academic success rates, a closer examination of institutional attitudes, beliefs, and actions towards EOP students in general, and underrepresented students in particular, may reveal a deeper understanding of the barriers to academic success at the university.

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