

Trustee Information Program

Degree Progress of  
Fall 2001, Fall 2002 and Fall 2003  
Four Years after Entering Montgomery College



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## Degree Progress of Fall 2001, Fall 2002 and Fall 2003 Entrants After Four Years

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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*To what degree do students progress or persist (continue to enroll in courses) toward a degree and/ or prepare for transfer to a four-year college or university after four years of entering Montgomery College?*

The progress of first-time full- and part-time students who entered Montgomery College in the fall semesters of 2001, 2002 and 2003 and who attempted 18 credits within the first two years was examined to answer that question. The criterion of attempting 18 hours over a two year period is an indication that a student is earnest about pursuing a goal, be it a degree or the eventual transfer to a senior college or university. In that sense, this will be referred to as degree progress. Then, four years after entry, what is the collective success of students that met the 18 credit hour criterion? Examining the success of students from this perspective has been adopted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission and currently represents four indicators of institutional effectiveness (10, 11, 17 and 18) in the 2008 Performance Accountability Report (PAR).

Upon entry to Montgomery College, some students are prepared to take on challenging courses and others require developmental coursework that delays access to college level courses. The degree progress model examines the success of: (1) all students (2) students who entered the college academically prepared for college level work, (3) students who needed and completed all recommended developmental course work, and (4) students who needed but did not complete all of the recommended developmental courses.

Analysis of the data revealed that after four years of entry, 47 to 55 percent of all students in the cohort groups had graduated from Montgomery College and/or transferred to senior colleges and universities. Students who entered the College without developmental needs were more likely to graduate and/or transfer than students who were assessed with developmental needs. Students who were in need of developmental course work were much more likely to graduate and/or transfer when they completed the developmental sequence compared to students who did not complete developmental course work. Data by race revealed that white and Asian students were much more likely to graduate and/or transfer within four years of entry than African-American and Hispanic students; and this conclusion was true across all areas of academic preparedness.

Within the scope of degree progress, an interim measure of success is the completion of 30 credits or more with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0. In addition, a smaller number of students who did not meet the above criteria but were still enrolled during the examination period were included in the analysis. When these measures were taken into account along with the graduation/transfer rates, it revealed that almost 72 percent of the 2001 cohort, 73 percent of the 2002 cohort and 79 percent of the 2003 cohort continued to persist toward their goal after four years of entry. Students who completed their developmental course work had as good a chance at persistence as students who attended Montgomery College ready for college level coursework, while those who did not complete their developmental coursework were much less likely to be successful or persistent toward their educational goal. Hispanic students persisted at a much lower rate than did other student groups.

#### **Discussion and Implications**

The success rate or performance of students on these indicators of institutional effectiveness (indicators 10, 11, 17 and 18) has potential legislative implications as assessed in the Performance Accountability Report. The College has set benchmarks or goals that it is committed to achieved by the end of the assessment period. For indicator 11, the most recent cohort information (fall 2003) shows that College has exceeded its

goal on the graduation/transfer rates for all students and for developmental completers. The College has achieved its goal for college ready students but continue to lag in the graduation/transfer success of students who do not complete necessary developmental course work. Graduation/transfer success by race for the fall 2003 cohort (indicator 18) shows mixed results. African American students are more than six points below the benchmark; Asian students are slightly below the College's goal; Hispanic students are 10 points below their benchmark and white students are on par with the College's benchmark or goal.

**Table A: Fall 2003 Cohort**  
**Graduation/transfer rate after four years by race/ethnicity and academic preparedness**

	College Ready		Developmental Completers		Developmental Non-Completers		All Students	
	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal
<b>All Students</b>	<b>62.0</b>	<b>62.0%</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>38.0%</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>49.0%</b>
African-American	56.0		48.5		26.1		47.6	49.0%
<b>Asian</b>	<b>61.6</b>		<b>6.09</b>		<b>43.5</b>		<b>60.3</b>	<b>53.0%</b>
Hispanic	42.9		46.8		11.9		39.3	45.0%
<b>White</b>	<b>75.2</b>		<b>60.9</b>		<b>29.9</b>		<b>65.4</b>	<b>53.0%</b>

Results on persistence are mixed on academic preparedness (indicators 10 and 17). Overall, the College exceeded its goals for all students and for students who were academically prepared for college upon entry. The degree of persistence for developmental completers is within one point of the benchmark, while the success rate of developmental non-completers is about 10 points below the benchmark. The persistence by race/ethnicity without considering academic preparedness is very encouraging. The persistence rate for Asian, Hispanic and White students exceeded the College's expectations, while the persistence rate for African-American students is less than two points away from the goal.

**Table B: Fall 2003 Cohort**  
**Rate of Persistence after four years by race/ethnicity and academic preparedness**

	College Ready		Developmental Completers		Developmental Non-Completers		All Students	
	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal
<b>All Students</b>	<b>86.6</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>80.1</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>79.0</b>	<b>75.0%</b>
African-American	80.1		76.6		41.3		71.4	73.0%
<b>Asian</b>	<b>90.3</b>		<b>84.8</b>		<b>65.2</b>		<b>87.5</b>	<b>76.0%</b>
Hispanic	79.9		79.4		37.3		72.9	70.0%
<b>White</b>	<b>91.1</b>		<b>80.2</b>		<b>50.6</b>		<b>82.9</b>	<b>74.0%</b>

However, the disparity in graduation/transfer and persistence rates between student groups should not be ignored and some commitment on the part of the College must be made to close the apparent performance gaps by race/ethnicity. Proactive programmatic initiatives need to be identified, articulated and implemented to increase the success on these indicators – thereby narrowing and ultimately closing the disparity gap.

## Degree Progress of Fall 2001, Fall 2002 and Fall 2003 Entrants After Four Years

*To what degree do students progress or persist (continue to enroll in courses) toward a degree and/or prepare for transfer to a four-year college or university?*

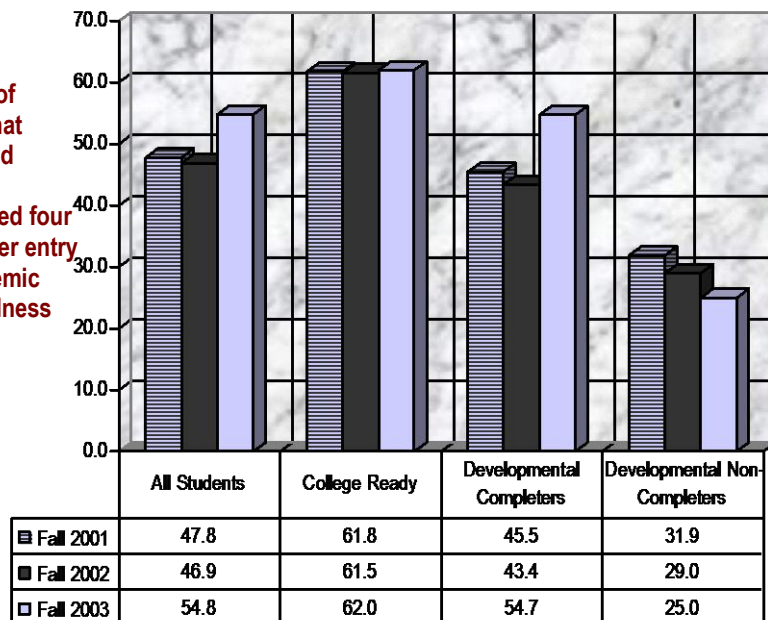
First-time full- and part-time students who attempt 18 credits over two years are regarded as students who are earnest about pursuing a degree and/or preparing for transfer to a senior college or university in a reasonable time frame. Then, four years after entry, what is the collective success of a cohort of students that meet this 18 credit hour criterion? Examining student success from a degree progress perspective has been adopted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission and currently represents four indicators (10, 11, 17 and 18) of institutional effectiveness in the 2008 Performance Accountability Report (PAR).

Upon entry, students enroll at Montgomery College with a wide range of academic skills – some students enter well prepared to take on challenging courses, while others require developmental coursework that delays access to college level courses. With that in mind, the degree progress model examines the success of: (1) all students (2) students who entered the college academically prepared for college level work, (3) students who were assessed in need of and completed all recommended developmental course, and (4) students who did not complete all of the recommended developmental courses on which they were assessed. A selective examination of the data on three cohort groups is presented below.

**Graduation/Transfer Success:** Figure 1 (Indicator 11 on PAR) shows that after four-years of entry, 47 to 55 percent of all students in the cohort groups had graduated from Montgomery College and/or transferred to senior colleges and universities. Overall, the extent of progress was much higher for the 2003 cohort than the two previous cohort groups. When data for all three cohort groups were examined by degree of academic preparation upon entry to Montgomery College, the data clearly revealed that college ready students, those who entered the College academically prepared for college, were much more likely to graduate and/or

transfer than students who were assessed with developmental needs. Students who were in need of developmental course work were substantially much more likely to graduate and/or transfer when they completed the developmental sequence that addressed their academic deficiencies compared to students who did not complete developmental course work. As one would

**Figure 1:  
Percent of cohort that graduated and/or transferred four years after entry by academic preparedness**



expect, the disparity in success (37 percentage points) was greatest between college ready students and developmental non-completers. The 29.7 percentage point disparity between developmental completers and non-completers is also worth noting. It is also noted that the disparity of success between college ready

students and developmental completers narrowed to 7.3 percentage points for the 2003 cohort compared to 18.1 percentage points for the 2002 cohort.

**Table 1: Number of Graduates/transfers after four of entry**

	All Students	College Ready	Developmental Completers	Developmental Non-Completers
Fall 2001	1,285	591	474	220
Fall 2002	1,292	627	488	177
Fall 2003	1,034	647	324	63

When data for all students in the fall 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts were examined by race (**Indicator 18 on PAR**), which included students with and without developmental needs, differences in success was quite evident. **Table 2** shows that white and Asian students, in general, were much more likely to graduate and/or transfer within four years of entry than African-American and Hispanic students. The success of Hispanic students for all three cohort groups is particularly disturbing in that they were far less likely to graduate and/or transfer within four years of entry (35.3 to 39.3 percent) than other student group. It was further noted that the 2003 cohort group was notably more successful than its 2001 and 2002 counterparts, especially among Asian and white students.

**Table 2: Graduation/transfer rate after four by race/ethnicity**

	African-American		Asian		Hispanic		White		All Students	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Fall 2001	46.1	367	53.3	235	36.4	151	51.6	532	47.8	1,285
Fall 2002	42.4	336	52.0	222	35.3	163	53.2	569	46.9	1,292
Fall 2003	47.6	228	60.3	231	39.3	145	65.4	425	54.8	1,034

A selected analysis of data for the fall 2003 cohort by race and academic preparedness (Table 3) reveals that students of all race/ethnic groups, with the exception of Hispanics, who enrolled at Montgomery College academically prepared for the rigors of college level course work had a much higher graduation and/or transfer rate within four years of entry than students assessed with developmental needs. For Hispanic students, developmental completers had a slightly higher transfer/graduation rate than those who were college ready. Asian and white students had greater graduation/transfer success in all three areas of academic preparedness than African-American and Hispanic students.

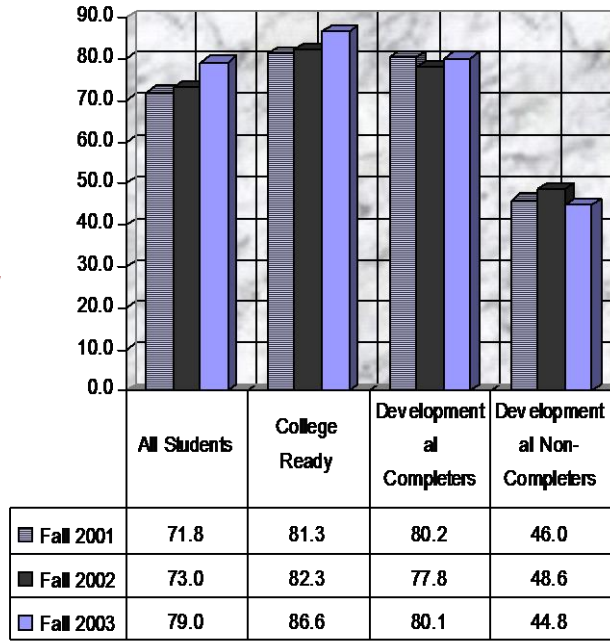
**Table 3: Fall 2002 Cohort  
Graduation/transfer rate after four years by race/ethnicity and academic preparedness**

	College Ready		Developmental Completers		Developmental Non-Completers		All Students	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>All Students</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>62.0</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>54.8</b>
African-American	121	56.0	83	48.5	24	26.1	228	47.6
<b>Asian</b>	165	<b>61.6</b>	56	<b>60.9</b>	10	43.5	231	<b>60.3</b>
Hispanic	79	42.9	59	<b>46.8</b>	7	11.9	145	39.3
<b>White</b>	279	<b>75.2</b>	123	<b>60.9</b>	23	29.9	425	<b>65.4</b>

**Persistence:** Not all students graduate or transfer within four years, especially those who attend on a part-time basis. When students continue to enroll and take courses well beyond four-years of entry, it denotes continuation on the path of success. Therefore, and within the scope of degree progress, an interim

measure of success is the completion of 30 credits or more with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0. This measure of success is characteristic of students who are in good academic standing and persistently moving toward their goals. A smaller number of students who did not meet the above criteria but were still enrolled during the analysis period were also considered to be persisters. When these measures were taken into account along with the graduation/transfer rates (Figure 2 and Table 4), it revealed that 79 percent of the 2003 cohort continued to persist toward their goal after four years of entry (Indicator 10 on PAR), which is the highest rate of success to date compared to the other two cohort group. Figure 2 also shows that students who completed their developmental course work had as good a chance at being successful as students who were college ready upon entry. Consistent with the graduate/transfer findings, those who did not complete their developmental coursework were much less likely to be persistent toward their educational goal.

**Figure 2: Percent of students that were successful persister after four years by academic preparedness**



**Table 4: Number of successful- persister after four years**

	All Students	College Ready	Developmental Completers	Developmental Non-Completers
Fall 2001	1,929	777	835	317
Fall 2002	2,011	839	875	297
Fall 2003	1,490	903	474	113

When data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity (Indicator 17), differences in the success of students were apparent (Table 5). Across all three cohort groups, the rate of academic persistence was consistently lower for Hispanic and African-American students than their white and Asian counterparts.

**Table 5: Successful-persister rate after four years by race/ethnicity**

	African-American		Asian		Hispanic		White		All Students	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Fall 2001	70.0	557	76.4	337	64.6	268	74.3	767	71.8	1,929
Fall 2002	68.4	542	80.1	342	64.5	298	77.2	826	73.0	2,011
Fall 2003	71.4	342	87.5	335	72.9	269	82.9	539	79.0	1,490

A closer observation of the fall 2003 cohort by race and academic preparedness (Table 6) left no room for doubt that regardless of race, students who enrolled at Montgomery College academically prepared for the rigors of college level course work were much more likely to stay enrolled and persist toward their academic goal within four-years of entering Montgomery College than students who were not prepared. It must be

noted that students, who were assessed in need of and completed their developmental course work were almost as persistent as those who entered the College academically prepared – and this was clear across all racial groups. Consistent with aforementioned success data, Asian and white students had a higher rate of persistence than other student groups in all levels of academic preparedness. Hispanic students were slightly more persistent than African-American students in the developmental completers category; and Hispanic students who completed their developmental course work were on par with Hispanic students who were college ready.

**Table 6: 2003 Cohort  
Successful persistence after four years by race/ethnicity and academic preparedness**

	College Ready		Developmental Completers		Developmental Non-Completers		All Students	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>All Students</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>86.6</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>80.1</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>79.0</b>
African-American	173	80.1	131	76.6	38	<b>41.3</b>	342	71.4
<b>Asian</b>	242	<b>90.3</b>	78	<b>84.8</b>	15	65.2	335	<b>87.5</b>
Hispanic	147	79.9	100	79.4	22	37.3	269	72.9
<b>White</b>	338	<b>91.1</b>	162	<b>80.2</b>	39	50.6	539	<b>82.9</b>