

**Improving Student Outcomes Utilizing 8-Week Courses:
Considering its Feasibility for Ivy Tech Community College
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Ivy Tech Community College has experienced significant improvement in graduation rates in recent years. Of the first-time, full-time, degree-seeking student cohort of 2011, only 8% successfully completed within three years. The percentage jumped to 11% for the 2012 cohort and 14% for the 2013 cohort (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). This upward trajectory is impressive. It is due largely to the creative and dedicated work of faculty and front-line staff at the campus level. They are the ones who make the difference on a daily basis, nudging students to act in their own best interests. As Parker Palmer (2002) has written, “Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves.”

Still, more work remains. According to the National Center for Education Statistics Trend Generator (2017) the average 3-year graduation rate at community colleges for the 2012 cohort of first-time, full-time, students was 31.6%. One of the responsibilities of the Systems Office is to explore research and best practice that correlate with higher completion rates, so that Indiana does not continue to lag national norms. These explorations are often first prompted or at least championed at the campus level, though. Such was the case for co-requisite remediation and growth mindset interventions. Both these initiatives became statewide practice after empirically demonstrating they enhanced course and/or credential completion rates at the campus level.

Recently, Kevin Veneskey (2017), accounting faculty member on the Anderson Campus, submitted a proposal to Ivy Tech’s Innovation Committee recommending that 8-week courses be made the default course length at Ivy Tech. It was his observation that “most [students] have the mental faculties to grasp the work required, but due to real or perceived outside forces, cannot maintain the stamina needed to successfully complete a 16-week course.” He added that “an 8-week course would allow students to not only focus on fewer courses at any one time, but also complete courses they otherwise may have failed due to the elongated semester length and situations arising outside of their control.”

This sounds plausible, but are there any hard data to support this notion—either at other colleges or at Ivy Tech? The following sections of this paper review the available data, consider some of the benefits and challenges of moving in the direction that Professor Veneskey suggests, and offer some possible next steps. This paper is meant to promote discussion and not serve as a settled decision for an initiative or a roadmap for its implementation.

Findings at Other Colleges

Recently, Odessa College was awarded \$150,000 by the Aspen Institute as its “Rising Star College.” They are also a finalist for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board “Star Award.” The reason for the College’s current visibility is they have improved their transfer/graduation rate from 15% to 32% in just 5 years. How did this happen? The College suggests the following (2017):

Odessa College re-imagined the traditional 16-week term and for more than 80% of the courses OC offers – including all core courses – transformed them into 8-week terms, thus making 16-week terms the ‘exception’ and 8-week terms the ‘new normal.’ The direct and immediate benefits have been increased enrollment, increased rate of benchmark credit attainment toward a degree, and increased semester-to-semester persistence. Unduplicated enrollment for both First Time-In-College (FTIC) students and for all students has increased each year under the new 8-week term format. For socioeconomically disadvantaged part-time students, the transition to 8-week courses has allowed more students to access federal financial aid. The percent of FTIC students achieving 12 or more credit hours in their first semester has increased substantially since the transition to 8-week terms and is now 32%, up from a range of 22% to 25% in the four years preceding the transition ... The transition to 8-week terms has done considerable good at minimal cost.

Of course, results for one college at one time do not necessarily mean a particular practice can be transported to another location and achieve the same success. It does appear, though, that those colleges employing similar scheduling practices experience similar results. Here is some information from another community college in Texas, Amarillo College (Wyatt, 2016):

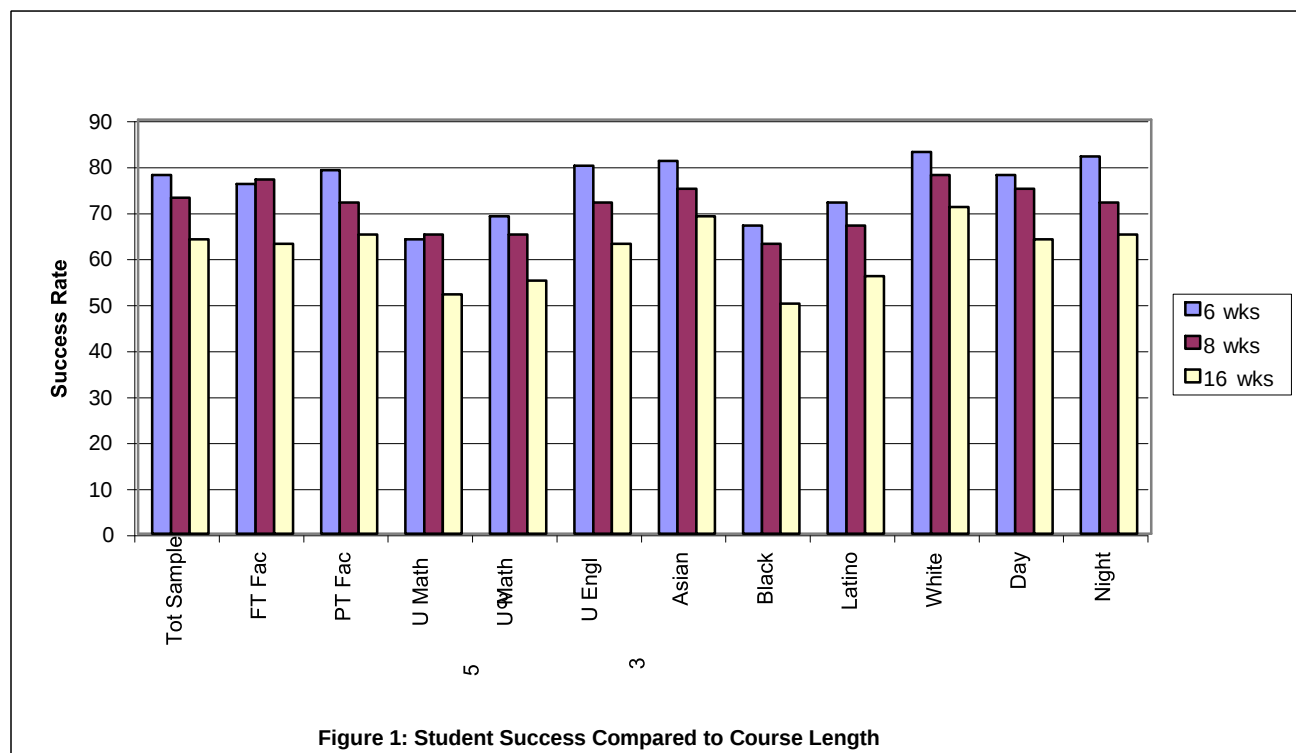
Students enrolled in 8-week courses during spring 2016 achieved an overall success rate of 80.90 percent, up significantly from the 74.20-percent success rate among students enrolled at the College in spring 2015. Students enrolled in all-important foundational or “gateway” courses, and those taking developmental courses, fared even better. The success rate in gateway courses – required core courses with typically high enrollment – soared from 68.97 percent in spring 2015 to 78.97 percent in spring 2016; while 68.52 percent of students in 8-week developmental courses demonstrated success in spring 2016, up significantly from 54.59 percent the previous year. Success rates at the College increased even more during the first 8-week session this fall – to 81.05 percent overall, to 80.35 percent in gateway courses, and to 78.64 in developmental courses. The College implemented the 8-week course model last spring in an effort to increase not only the student success rate, but to decrease time-to-completion. The strategy clearly is working.

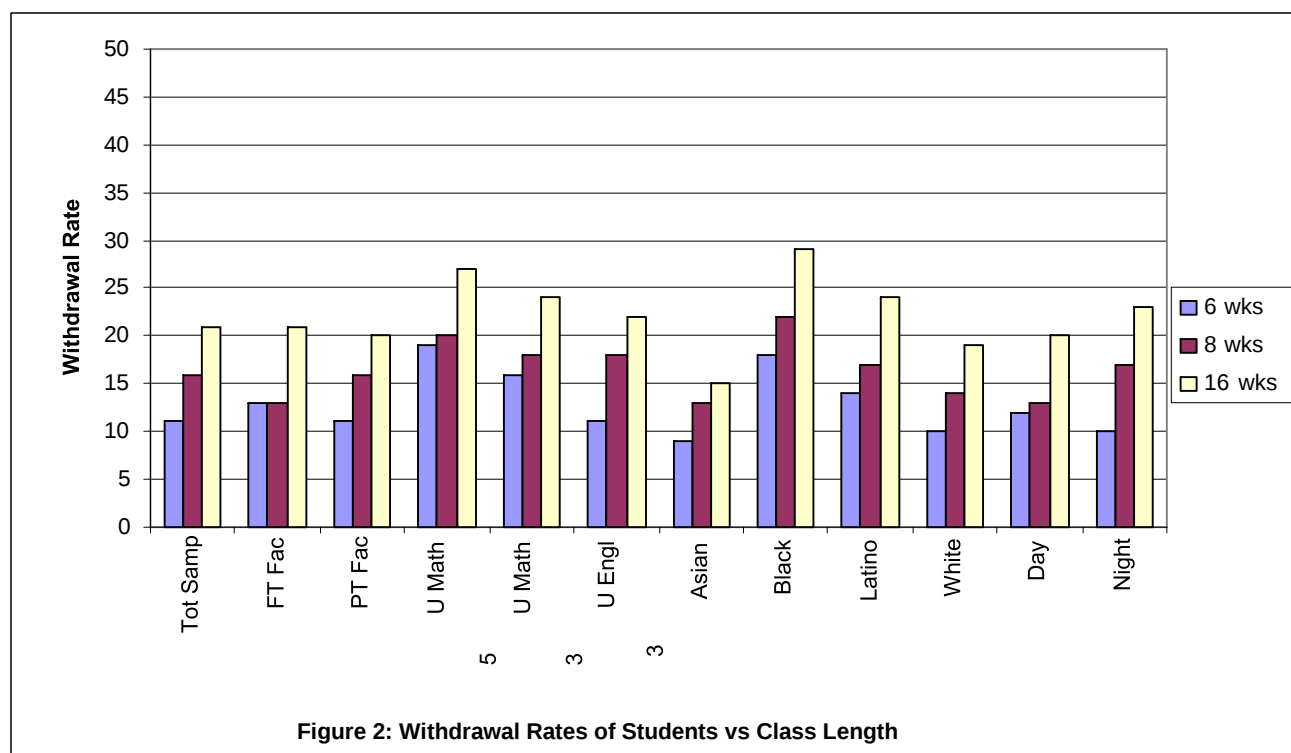
Austin Community College has a long history of flexible scheduling options for students. There are currently 25 different semester sessions of varying lengths and start dates offered for Fall 2017. Before this proliferation of semester sessions began, the College (1998) surveyed their students and faculty extensively regarding their experiences in some 8-week courses offered that year. The responses were favorable, and some good suggestions were made for improvements.

These comments will be captured in the Concerns and Responses section later in this paper. They also studied student outcomes as part of this review:

Students in the 8-week semester courses did very well. Seventy-five percent of students completed the 8-week course with a grade of C or better. Students taking the 8-week semester courses persist in these courses at a much greater rate than in some other course formats. Compared to withdrawal rates for other course formats, the withdrawal rate for the 8-week semester courses was below the college-wide average withdrawal rate.

Peter Geltner and Ruth Logan (2000) from Santa Monica College conducted a study on the influence of session length on student success over several years. They tracked student success rates (defined as earning an A, B, C, or CR in a course) and withdrawal rates. They compared class lengths of 6 weeks, 8 weeks, and 16 weeks and disaggregated the data by certain student and faculty categories (see tables below):





In an article incorporating a database of over 45,000 course observations at the University of West Georgia, Adrian M. Austin and Leland Gustafson (2006) studied the impact of shorter course lengths on student grades and learning outcomes. Their article also includes an extensive literature review of the topic that supports the results they observed at the University of West Georgia. Since their article covers the ground so well, a literature review of sources referenced in their article will not be replicated in this paper. That information can be found at a link in the References section below. The following statement summarizes the results of the authors' own empirical study at the University of West Georgia:

Overall, we find that there is a significant improvement from taking shorter courses that cannot be explained solely by student characteristics. Using a very large database and by using more robust models this study provides more definitive results than have been achieved in past studies... More importantly, we also find that the improved grades are not meaningless – they do reflect greater learning.

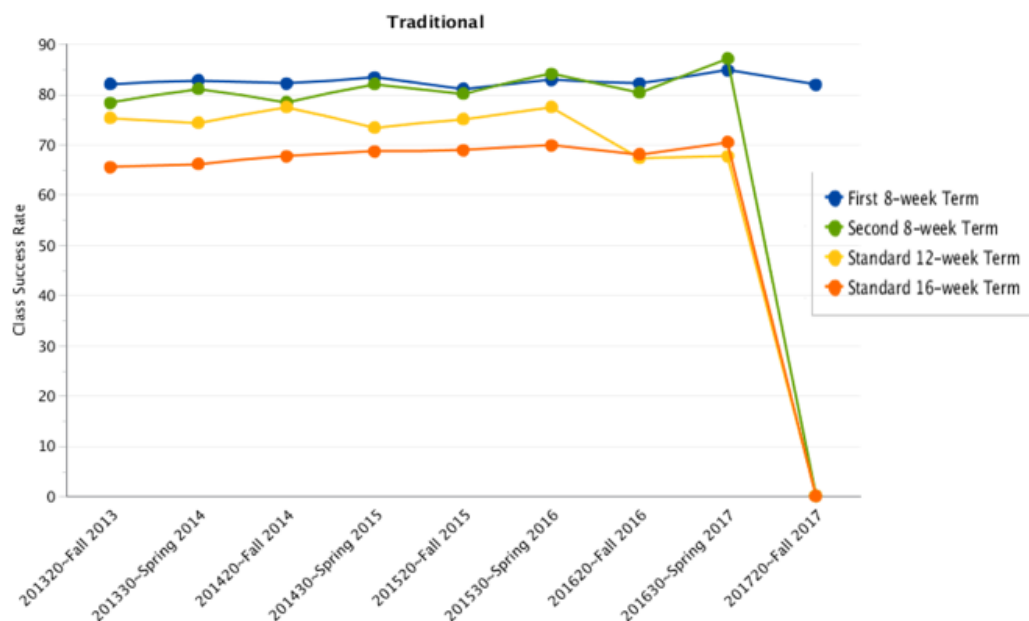
Crafton Hills College, a suburban community college in Southern California, studied the comparative success rates of condensed courses from 2008/09 through 2012/13 (Gamboia, 2013). It is a particularly meaningful study in that they disaggregated their result by course subject and student GPA prior to the condensed course enrollment. In the overall results they also controlled for the instructor, academic term, and specific course. They found that prior GPA and course length were the best predictors of student success. The table below provides the aggregated results:

Measurement	Traditional courses		Compressed courses		<i>d</i>	<i>p</i>
	N	%	N	%		
Students Successful	7,599	69.1	3,437	74.8	0.13	<0.001

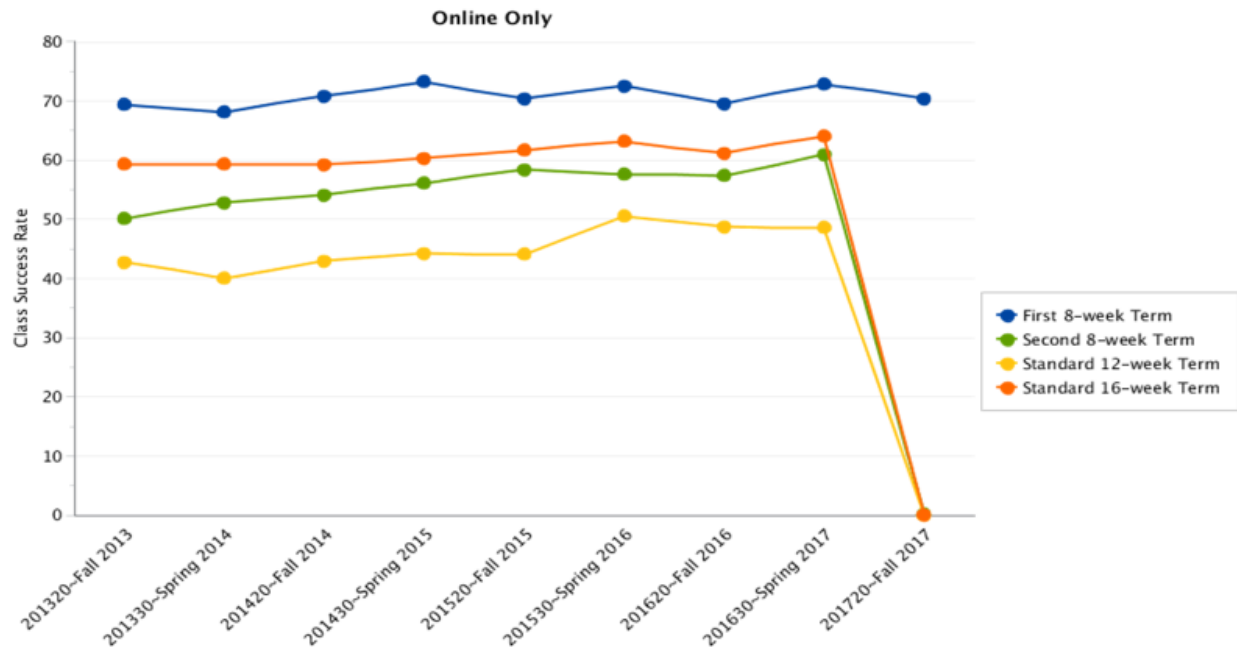
It was noted in their study that “If compressed courses offered during summer courses were included in the sample of compressed courses, the success rate for compressed courses would have increased to 81%, which is statistically significantly ($p < 0.001$) and substantially ($d = 0.28$) greater than the success rate of traditional-length courses in primary term(s).” The study also includes a more up-to-date literature review on the topic than does the article from West Georgia University. Again, this paper will not reference these additional sources but direct the reader to the paper from Crafton Hills College.

Findings at Ivy Tech Community College

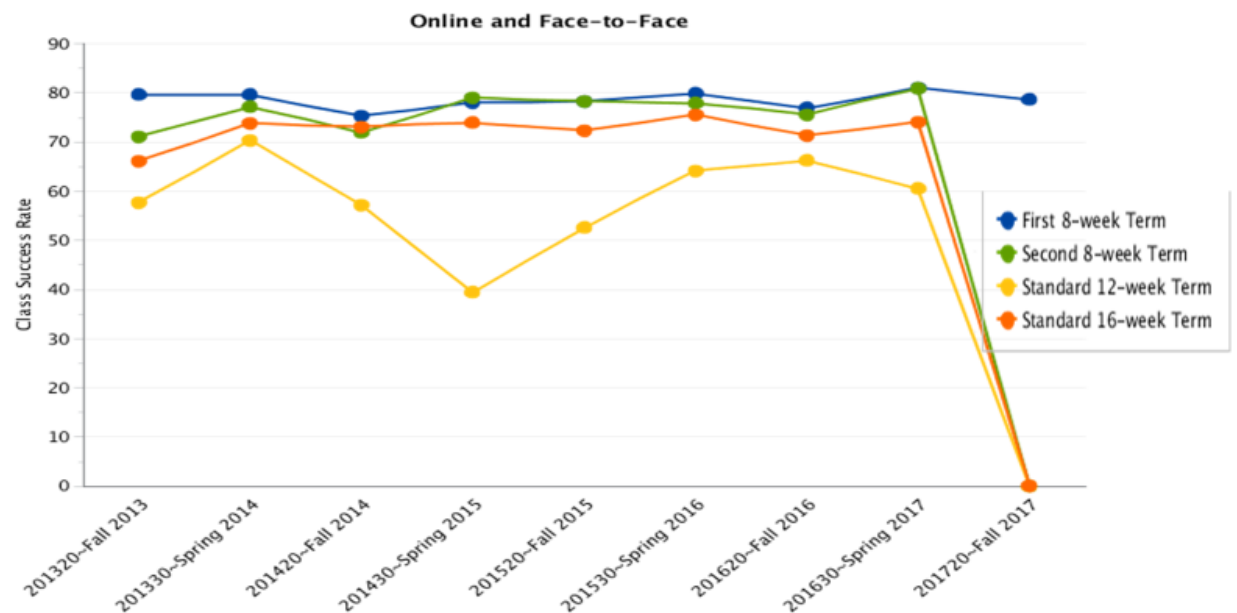
Student Course Success Rate by Semester Length—The graphs directly below (Williams, 2017) present the student success rates (i.e. achieving an A, B, or C) by semester length and modality for the Fall and Spring Semesters over several years. For courses offered in the traditional face-to-face modality, by far the most numerous, the average success rate for 16-week courses was 68.24%. This compares with 82.57% for first-session 8-week courses and 81.53% for second-session 8-week courses:



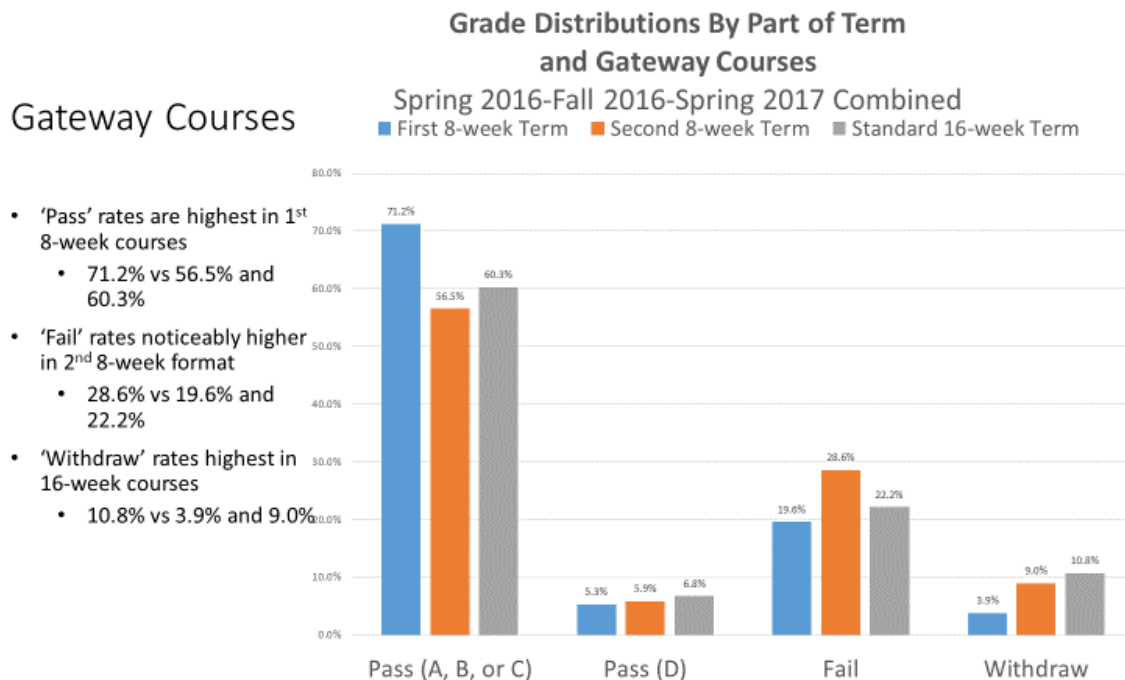
For online courses, the results are more mixed. The most effective semester period is still clearly the first 8-week session, with an average success rate of 70.82%. This is followed by the 16-week session at 61.08% and the second 8-week session at 55.96%:



The results for hybrid courses (i.e., online delivery combined with face-to-face sessions) are comparatively positive in all session lengths, except for 12-week courses. The semester period with the highest course success rate is again the first 8-week session, with an average course success rate of 78.61%. This is followed by the second 8-week session at 76.50% and the 16-week session at 72.55%:



In looking at Gateway courses there is yet additional student success information about those specific courses that are most often taken by Ivy Tech students. In this example, Gateway courses include the following: ENGL 111 COMM 101, MATH 123, MATH 136, MATH 201, PSYC 101, SOCI 111, ACCT 101/102, APYH 101/102, HIST 101, HLHS 101, BIOL 101, CHEM 111, and SPAN 101/201. In these particular courses, which are not disaggregated by delivery modality in the graph directly below, the second 8-week session does not fare as well as the 16-week session. Remember that this is not the case with all courses, though (see graphs above):

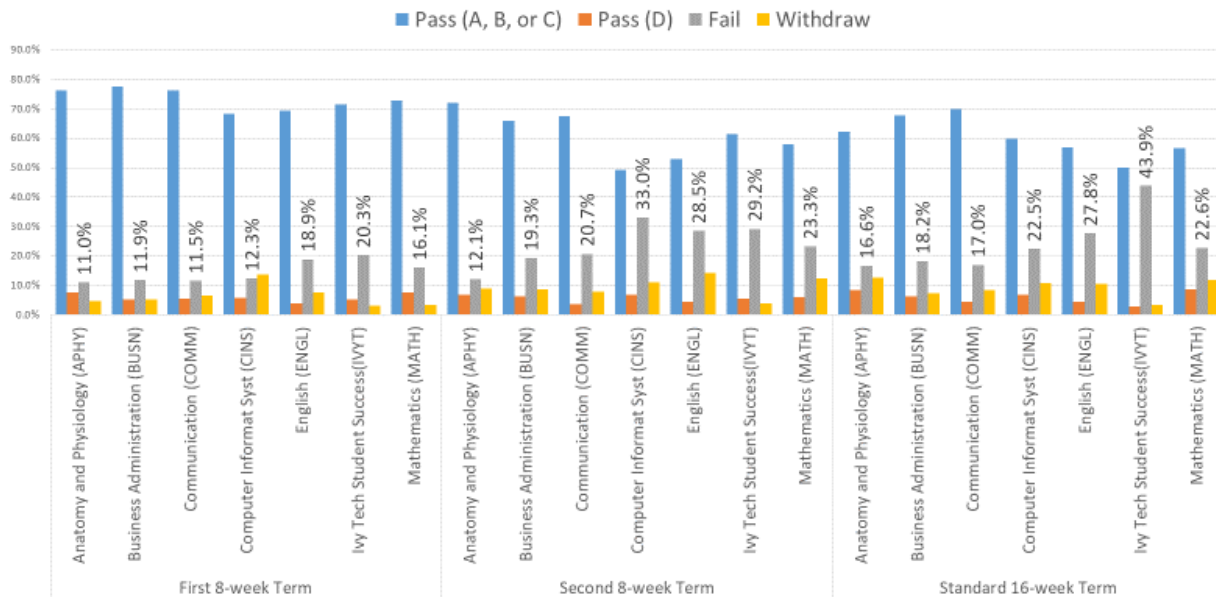


The graph below includes all courses taken using the course prefixes given. This gives a view as to whether certain disciplines are best suited for the different session lengths. As with the graph directly above, the results are not disaggregated by modality. Again, the first 8-week period has the best results of all the sessions. Taken in consideration with the other graphs that have been presented, some possible next steps to implement might include the following:

- Move most of the APHY and IVYT courses to the 8-week sessions and away from 16 weeks as soon as possible.
- Do not move CINS and COMM courses to the second 8-week session until extra supports are provided, or proven best practices replicated. This is particularly true for online classes. These are the two disciplines in which there is a greater than a 1.1% higher failure rate for second 8-week courses than for 16-week courses.
- Consider more use of the hybrid modality for the second 8-week period as opposed to online classes.

Grade Distributions By Part of Term and Select Subjects

Spring 2016-Fall 2016-Spring 2017 Combined



Before leaving this series of graphs, it is interesting to note the power of widespread communication and usage of such disaggregated data, and even doing so at a more detailed level. Pierce College in Washington State has disaggregated data by student demographic at the course and section level. This information is made available for all its faculty to see (Gose, 2017). Thus, “an instructor who spends a few minutes looking at the dashboards might find, for example, that when he and his colleague across the hall each teach the same course, African-American men are 20 percent more likely to successfully complete the course taught by his colleague.”

Because of the assurance given by Pierce’s administration that this exposure of data will not be used punitively, there has acceptance by the faculty. The faculty’s commitment to view the data to make the changes needed has had a dramatic impact at Pierce College:

That kind of adjustment is helping more students succeed. In 2010, fewer than 19 percent of Pierce students earned an associate degree or certificate within three years. By 2016, that number had risen to 31.4 percent. The college hopes to hit 45 percent by 2020. In February [2017], Pierce was one of two community colleges in the country (the other was Miami Dade College) to receive the Leah Meyer Austin Award, handed out annually by Achieving the Dream to colleges that are making changes that lead to measurable improvement in student outcomes.

A consideration for moving more courses to 8-week sessions might be an opportune time for each curriculum committee to look at the student success rates for each highly-enrolled course at each campus, for each modality, for each semester session length, and, yes, for each section. This could be a mammoth undertaking, which might benefit by some consultation with Pierce College. Also, the picture would not truly be complete until learning outcomes are included. The potential pedagogical and student success advances for doing so, however, might be immense.

ASAP—The ASAP initiative was launched in 2010. According to ASAP Director Paula Birt (2017), “The large majority of ASAP classes are delivered in the 8-week format; many campuses schedule 16-week courses for the more difficult benchmark courses such as MATH 124, MATH 136, ACCT 101, BIOL 101, etc. as a strategy to help ASAP students balance the heavy semester course load of the program. However, we are beginning to question the effectiveness of this [16-week class length] strategy.”

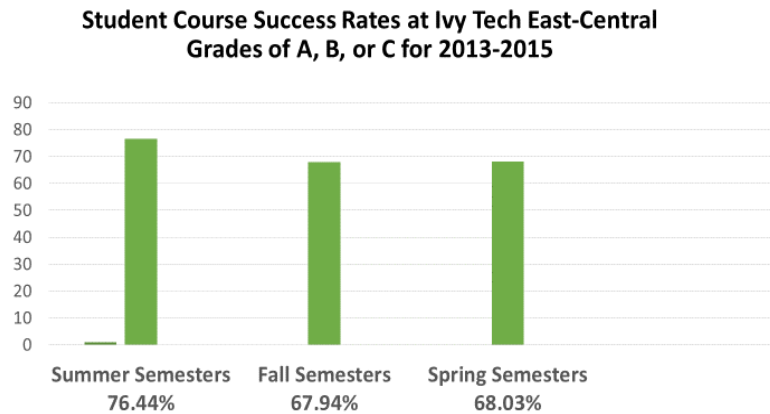
Thus, this program gives a good picture of long-term persistence for students taking mainly 8-week courses over multiple semesters. Of the 944 students who have participated in the program, 575 successfully completed within one calendar year, or five 8-week sessions. This is a 60% one-year completion rate. By adding on another two semesters for those who did not complete in one-year, the best projection is that the completion rate rises to 81%. This is still a shorter time period than the IPEDS three-year standard for community college comparisons.

In a discussion with ASAP campus directors (2017) several significant comments were expressed regarding the benefits and distinctives of 8-week courses:

- “Many ASAP students only know 8-week courses at the college level and don’t consider it atypical or strange at all.”
- “All the courses can work well in an 8-week format as long as the instructor is very intentional about course planning and is very prompt in providing student feedback.”
- “The greater contact time over a shorter period enables the students to develop stronger relationships with each other and the instructors.”
- Some non-ASAP students have sometimes enrolled in ASAP courses by accident. Often these students then ask for additional 8-week courses because they appreciate the format.

Aside from the 8-week course length, there are other variables that no doubt contribute to the completion success of this program. These include a campus director, a structured schedule, and required social activities and study times. Although all these features would be difficult to take to scale for all Ivy Tech students, there may be some aspects that could be incorporated on a broader basis without undue expense. This will be discussed in a later section of this paper.

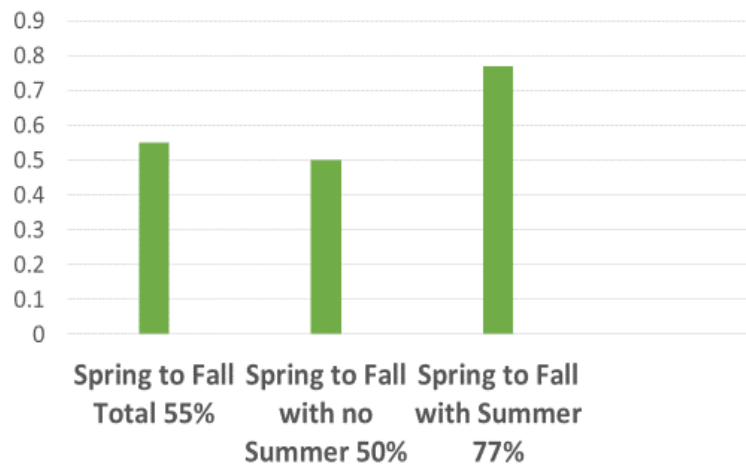
Summer Semesters—One readily available way to examine the results of regular Ivy Tech students (i.e., not receiving extra support) taking only 8-week courses compared with regular students taking a mix of mostly 16-week courses and a few 8-week courses is to review the success rates for the Summer Semesters versus the Fall and Spring Semesters. Almost all summer courses are 8-week courses. A review of course success rates (Sloan, 2016) was done for the students in the former East-Central Region (i.e. Anderson, Marion, Muncie, New Castle Campuses). Guest students, both those from other post-secondary institutions and high school dual credit students, were removed from the results. The student success rates in the table below only represent Ivy Tech credential-seeking students:



Although the focus of this paper is the feasibility of 8-week courses, the value of summer enrollment deserves a brief mention. The work by Crafton Hills College and the University of West Georgia referenced above also showed substantially higher success rates for summer terms. Attewell and Jang (2013) found that “summer school attendance after first year of college was associated with an 11% advantage in graduation at two-year colleges.” Clifford Adelman (2006) uncovered an even larger positive impact, particularly for African-American students. Cara Crowley (2017) of Amarillo College wrote, “We are also moving toward year-round enrollment. Our data have shown that 95% of students who take summer school return in the fall.”

Persistence results at Ivy Tech’s former East-Central Region show a similar positive correlation:

**Spring to Fall Persistence in East-Central Region
2014 (Achieving the Dream Cohort)**



Concerns and Responses Regarding the 8-Week Model

The positive student outcomes correlating with 8-week classes noted above stand on their own. They show that whatever barriers or uncertainties existed for moving to a shorter class length, these did not negatively impact student success in almost all cases. These positive outcomes were noticed by Vice President Jeffery Fanter (2015) almost two years ago. Still it is appropriate to consider specific concerns about moving in this direction as the overall default pathway. A fair-minded appraisal of concerns validates those valuable faculty, staff, and administration who have them and then must implement any changes. Also, such consideration may, in fact, lead to creative measures to enhance student success more than if these concerns were never honestly examined. Odessa College (Jones, 2017) particularly stressed the importance of faculty involvement in both the decision and implementation.

Concern: When Ivy Tech was exploring 8-week remediation and gateway mathematics courses several years ago, the success rates for the first 8-week session were good, but the success rates for the second 8-week session were not. Also, the success rates for online courses taken in the second 8-week sessions are about 5% below those for online courses taken in 16-week sessions. What can be done to mitigate against this dip in the second 8-week session, especially for online courses?

Response: This was one reason that the College did not move to the 8-week + 8-week remediation concept. The co-requisite model's more "just-in-time" approach has provided better, more timely support for success in gateway courses. Currently, second 8-week course outcomes exceed those of 16-week courses in traditional and hybrid formats but, as mentioned, not online courses. It should be noted that currently many students who enroll late are often placed in second 8-week courses. According to Ivy Tech's research, late-enrolling students are typically not as successful. This possibly skews the data. The findings of some second 8-week session dip are not limited to Ivy Tech, though. According to a Cara Crowley from Amarillo

College, “We have the highest success rates in the 1st 8-weeks. The 2nd 8-weeks does slip slightly from the 1st 8-weeks, but the course success rates are still higher than the 16-week formats.”

One way both Odessa College and Amarillo College have addressed this long stretch of condensed study over the course of the 8-week + 8-week, 16-week period in the Fall and Spring was to insert breaks after each first 8-week session. Odessa inserted a two-day break between the Fall 8-week sessions, while Amarillo went to a full week break. Amarillo has also used this break to grow enrollment: “We knew we needed to build into our calendar a fall break. We always offered a spring break. It has moved our fall graduation back one week, but the fall break has been well received by students and faculty alike. Staff do not have the fall break holiday and the college remains open. We use that item to continue enrolling students for the 2nd 8-week term.”

Ivy Tech’s ASAP’s Director, Paula Birt, endorses this concept: “I most definitely believe that building in a week-long Fall Break between 1st and 2nd week Fall terms is an excellent idea and would encourage sustainability of an 8-week program model. On most campuses, Spring Break already falls at the exact mid-point of the Spring semester and is much appreciated by ASAP students. To give ASAP students a break during the Fall semester [would also be appreciated.] Most campuses give the cohort the entire Thanksgiving week off, but with finals just a few weeks away, it doesn’t truly relieve students from stress and focus on school like a break that falls between terms does.”

Guided advising could also be provided to direct more students to face-to-face courses for the second 8-week period. Additionally, requiring the use of support services for online courses might improve results. For example, student satisfaction with Tutor.com is at 98-99% (Morse 2017), yet still only a small minority of students take advantage of this service. Southeast Technical Institute (2017) has shown a correlation between the student success and student use of tutoring services. In fact, there is strong support for building in student support services as a required part of college courses (Lipka, 2010; Rendleman, 2013).

An instance where required tutoring worked well this past summer was the ASAP cohort in Indianapolis. According to Jonathan Arbuckle (2017), Associate Director of K-12 Initiatives, “This past summer we ran 3 MATH123 sections as an 8-week course ... We had a required lab immediately following each class for students to work on homework and practice quizzes/exams... From this we had a 91% passing rate for the class.” In this case, participation in the ASAP initiative was the “hook” for students to participate. Perhaps there could be other such reasons to require such activity, such as the receipt of certain grants or being placed on academic probation status or SAP warning status.

Concern: Heretofore at Ivy Tech and at other colleges, most 8-week courses have had the same total contact hours as 16-week courses. That means a 3 credit-hour course would need to meet twice a week for three hours to maintain the number of contact hours required. From a program chair’s point of view, finding faculty willing to teach twice a week or for evening students to attend twice a week could prove difficult for some campuses that have a smaller pool of adjuncts from which to choose.

Response: It is hard to predict if this model would make finding adjuncts more problematic. Amarillo College, not a major metropolitan area, has not had to make any adjustments in contact time as they moved almost entirely to 8-week courses. If it this did emerge as a challenge, though, Professor Veneskey from the Anderson Campus offers this suggestion: “One way to solve this challenge is to offer each class as a hybrid – each class only meeting three hours per week instead of six. For many courses, this will mean converting a traditional class to a flipped classroom. Students will need to come to class prepared and use class time to work in groups, on problems, or give speeches, etc. Instructors would need to prepare the groundwork ahead of time by providing short lecture videos for students to watch before attending class.”

Odessa College has in fact increased the sections of hybrid classes. According to Valerie Jones, Vice President of Instruction (2017), “We have increased our offering of hybrid classes as a byproduct of this shift. Our students continue to have an in-class retention rate of 96% and success rate of 82% as faculty have flipped the classroom and utilized high engagement strategies regardless of modality. We continue to have full face to face as well. However, faculty focus on learning outcomes, not text book chapters.”

A pedagogical approach that is both a version of flipped classrooms and a predecessor to it historically is Team-Based Learning (TBL). It is a highly structured method that depends on student preparation before class, the use of test-taking as a learning tool, immediate feedback, team interaction, peer accountability, and conceptual understanding. TBL has been shown to have better learning outcomes than other approaches, particularly for those students placing in the lowest quartile (Koles, et al., 2010). Rebecca Orr from Collin College (2017) has been successful with this model at the community college level. She in turn has trained more than 150 of her colleagues at Collin College. Collin faculty utilizing this approach on a regular basis include biology, microbiology, chemistry, government, economics, calculus, humanities, and English faculty. Dr.Orr’s presentation on the topic can be viewed at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkMCA3pg7h8>.

Concern: Would getting students through their courses and programs more quickly come at the expense of academic rigor? Is that what is meant by “student success”? What can be done to ensure that these classes are not watered down and do damage Ivy Tech’s academic reputation?

Response: Perhaps one could consider student success as a double-helix strand of DNA (see picture below). One helix is persistence (i.e., passing the course); the other is deeply learning the course concepts. They are intertwined and connected:



If an instructor maintained the highest course rigor, but did nothing to engage and assist their students so that all of them withdrew or failed the course, the aggregate amount of student learning would be minimal. If, on the other hand, all the students passed the course with A’s, but the course had no academic rigor, the aggregate amount of learning would again be minimal;

plus, the College would have no integrity. Both student persistence and student learning must be present to achieve true student success.

Here are some relevant comments from Cara Crowley of Amarillo College: “We did not make the [8-week] courses easier. In fact – we encourage courses to be more rigorous. Historically, course redesign at AC has shown when the course is more demanding but purposeful students rise to the higher expectations of faculty. We use the National Center for Academic Transformation as the model for our course redesign efforts.”

Also, worth noting is this observation from the University of West Georgia: “Having found evidence of significant increases in summer grades over the regular semesters, we now ask if these increases reflect an actual increase in learning. To examine this proposition, we look at the performance of students in classes with a pre-requisite... This indicates that even though students earn higher grades during the time shortened summer semesters, the effect on a follow-on course is no different whether the prerequisite is taken during a shortened session or a traditional sixteen-week semester.”

The only way a college can know for sure if students are learning is through learning outcomes assessment. Assessment is easier for those programs with standard licensure exams, such as nursing. Robust assessment for all courses, programs, and support services will soon be the norm at Ivy Tech, regardless of course length, because it complies with the standards of the Higher Learning Commission and with the College’s own desire to ensure its students are adequately prepared for a meaningful career or further academic study.

Concern: There are courses, internships and clinicals for example, that need extended time to give students an authentic learning experience. Will these be forced into the 8-week periods?

Response: Academic quality will always be the highest priority should a change be made to the 8-week model. If courses need to remain 16-weeks, they will. Since Ivy Tech already offers many of its courses in the summer in the 8-week format, it is anticipated that the large majority of its courses can be offered in this format, if the decision is made to move in this direction.

Concern: For these “large majority” of courses that might work in an 8-week format, will it be absolutely necessary to change one’s teaching approach totally from what was working in the 16-week format?

Response: Leo Studach, a faculty member on the Kokomo Campus, has had great success with teaching APHY 101 and 102 in the 8-week format. He has indicated that he does not change anything in his teaching style, but has some intuitions as to why his success rate is greater for the shorter session (2017):

1. I continually review material from past class sessions regardless of course length and this is key for material retention. Importantly, having a second lecture and lab period during the week helps with this constant refreshing of material. Additionally, in a 16-week APHY 101 course, students take their first exam during the 6th week

of semester whereas 8-week APHY 101 students take their first exam on class meeting 6 (end of the third week of the semester).

2. In the 8-week sections of APHY 101 and 102, I have taught over the past few years most students tend to be very motivated to learn, they participate in SI at a much higher rate and they are highly engaged with the class. These students rarely have attendance issues, consistently turn work in on time, complete tests and quizzes on time and make time in their schedule to attend SI sessions (typically an hour before each lecture).

Although there has been no official investigation, Professor Studach suspects that students who have chosen the shorter session are more motivated by nature, not necessarily experiencing more success entirely because of the shorter time period. Thus, he believes it might still be valuable to maintain some 16-week options for those unable to handle this quicker pace.

Concern: If students do indeed experience greater success in 8-week courses, when will the College enroll more of its students in these classes? Might sooner be better than later? How can a balance be maintained between the time it takes to make the change in a purposeful manner and the need to improve student completion rates?

Response: If a decision is made to move in this direction, the College leadership will work closely with campus leadership and statewide faculty to make sure the implementation timeline balances speed with feasibility. A suggested implementation model will be offered at the end of this paper as a conversation starter.

One way to maximize enrollment in 8-week courses almost immediately is to begin promoting student enrollment for the 2018 Summer Semester. With the newly expanded Pell Grants, now would be the perfect time to communicate the benefits to students. One successful model, The Commit to Finish program, was first employed at the Lawrenceburg Campus to encourage students to finish the Spring 2015 Semester strong and register for subsequent semesters. The components of this program could easily be replicated at other campuses. Below is a summary of the results from Matt Probst, Campus Academic Officer for the Lawrenceburg Campus (2017):

The Spring 2015 to Summer 2016 was used in a small pilot. It was in a limited number of IVYT classes during Fall 2016, all IVYT in Spring 2017, and will be used in all IVYT during Fall 2017... In the Spring 2015, students in the program successfully completed 75.2% of courses compared to 68.6% of the non-Commit to Finish students. The non-Commit to Finish students are those who were invited to participate but declined. Commit to Finish students had a higher GPA of 2.57 compared to 2.29 and persisted to the Fall semester at 65.5% compared to 27.3% for the non-Commit to Finish students.

Another study (Brownback and Sadoff, 2017) related to incentivizing summer enrollment recently took place on the Anderson, Marion, New Castle, Muncie, Richmond and Connersville Campuses. During the Spring and Summer of 2017, a grant-funded initiative provided students

in randomly selected courses vouchers at the beginning of the 2017 Spring Semester for a free summer-term course. These vouchers were “activated” for those students who earned at least a C on their final standardized, objective assessment that Spring. Students in the treatment group were 4.6% more likely to enroll in the Summer Semester and slightly more likely to take more than one summer course than the control group, regardless how they did on the assessment.

Finally, it is interesting that MDRC (2017), a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve programs and policies that affect the poor, has launched a project this year to increase summer enrollment at 10 community colleges in Ohio. They have discussed working on a similar project for Ivy Tech in the past and would be willing to pursue this possibility further.

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Possible Implementation Timeline for 8-Week Courses as the Default Length

Date to be Accomplished	Task	Person(s) Responsible/Involved
November 2017	Initial discussion of concept	CAOC
November 2017	Initial discussion of concept	Faculty Council
November/December 2017	Initial discussion of concept with CAOC and faculty feedback	Executive Council
November/December 2017	Update to the Board of Trustees with the opportunity for feedback	President or Designee
December 2017	Decision to proceed or not to proceed	President
January 2018	Implementation Taskforce named, if the decision is made to proceed	President or Designee
January 2018 and Ongoing	Consultations with Amarillo College and Odessa College	Implementation Task Force
January 15, 2018	Target percentage for 8-week courses for Fall 2018 (possibly 50% of all sections) presented to the campuses	Provost
February 15, 2018	Fall 2018 schedule due to campus registrar's offices	Program Chairs and School Deans
March 15, 2018	Registration begins for Fall 2018	Advisors
April-Summer 2018	Faculty development provided for best course design and teaching pedagogies for 8-week courses	Provost or Designee
May-August 2018	written progress report prepared to include any alterations of the original plan	Implementation Task Force
August 2018	Target percentages for 8-week courses for Spring 2019 (possibly 80% of all sections) presented to the campuses	Provost
September 15, 2018	Spring 2019 schedule due to campus registrar's offices	Program Chairs and School Deans
October 15, 2018	Registration begins for Spring 2019	Advisors
October/November 2018	Review made of student outcomes for first 8-weeks of Fall 2018 and findings reported to College leadership	Implementation Task Force
January 2019	Review made of student outcomes for second 8-weeks of Fall 2018 and findings reported to College leadership	Implementation Task Force
January 2019	Target percentage for 8-week courses for Fall 2019 (possibly full implementation, minus approved exceptions) presented to the campuses	Provost
February 15, 2019	Fall 2019 schedule due to campus registrar's offices	Program Chairs and School Deans
March 15, 2019	Registration begins for Fall 2018	Advisors
June 15, 2019	Final report on the project submitted to the College leadership	Implementation Task Forces
June 16, 2019	Taskforce Disbands and monitoring taken over by the regular governing bodies	