Data Focus of the Month - September 2019

The theme of the Data Focus page this year will be to examine various aspects of the student academic journey through a disaggregated lens and to gauge how College efforts are making a difference.

Montgomery College has always tracked academic achievement of students, but the Student Success Score Card, which was launched five years ago, has provided attention to each phase of the academic journey. In addition to the "final outcomes"—graduation and transfer—the Score Card has included "leading indicators," which are factors that influence final outcomes. Five leading indicators of interest are shown in Figure 1.
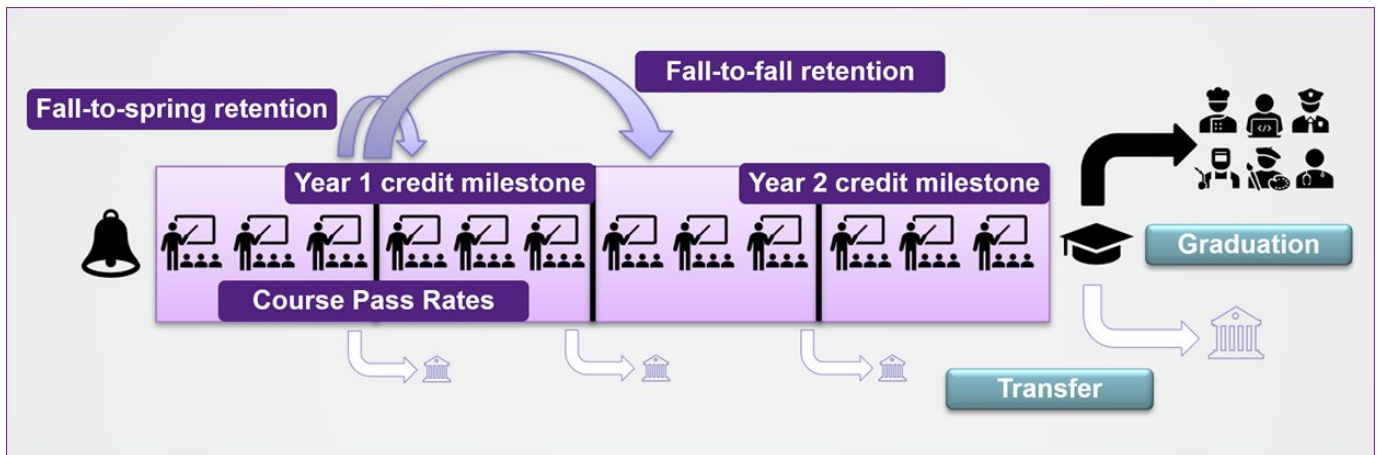

Figure 1. *The student academic journey, noting leading indicators in purple and final outcomes in green.*

Taken in sequence, these indicators provide a window on student progress toward graduation and/or transfer. As students pass their courses (**course pass rate**), they move forward in their academic journeys. Returning to school the following term (**fall-to-spring retention**) is an indicator of momentum and that they are staying on track. Reaching a credit milestone, which is earning 24 credits by the end of their first year for a full-time student (**Year 1 credit milestone**), shows good progress. Then, coming back in the second year (**fall-to-fall retention**) is a critical factor toward completion. Completion of at least 48 credits by the end of the second year (**Year 2 credit milestone**) indicates strong progress.

In 2013, a College taskforce conducted an extensive examination of disaggregated academic achievement data. The taskforce's Closing the Achievement Gap report led the College to launch a series of action steps and reinvigorate efforts to help all students succeed. The College joined the Achieving the Dream (ATD) network, an organization dedicated to assisting schools as they develop at-scale strategies and practices to improve student success. The work with ATD led to a Student Success Model and inspired collective and individual efforts to improve Montgomery College's student success. The 2014 reorganization of the Academic Affairs division has allowed the College to address student needs functionally in a new way. The College's Academic Master Plan and Student Affairs Master Plan are focused on improving student success. Indeed, the strategic plans that drive the overall College direction have student success as their main objective, as will be the case with *Montgomery College 2025*.

This year's editions of Data Focus will mark the fifth anniversary of the Score Card and examine specific points along the student academic journey, one each month, and present these factors with disaggregated data.