

Data Focus of the Month - February 2020

The Data Focus page this year has been examining various aspects of the student academic journey through a disaggregated lens in order to gauge the College's impacts. The fall 2015 IPEDS cohort is comprised of 1,998 new, first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. The largest race/ethnic groups in this cohort are Hispanic (27.5 percent), Black (24 percent), White (20 percent) and Asian students (13 percent), with more male students (56 percent) than female students (44 percent).

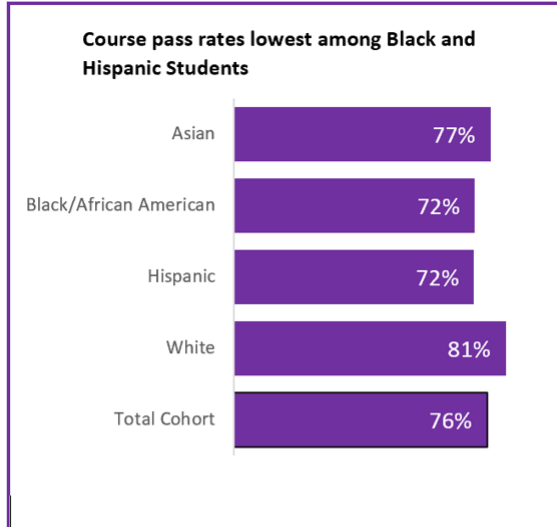


Figure 1. Fall 2015 cohort course pass rates after four years by race/ethnicity and gender

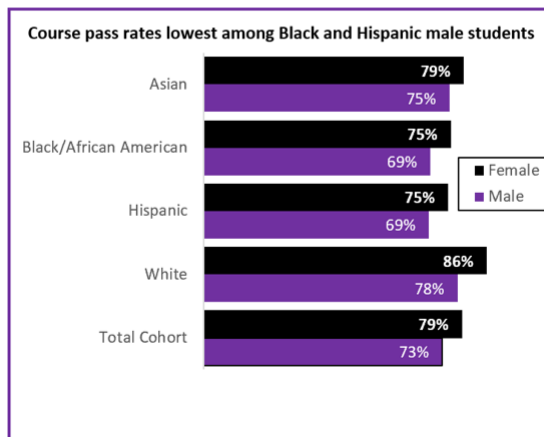


Figure 2. Fall 2015 cohort course pass rates after four years by gender within race/ethnicity

Course pass rates. This month we take a look at this cohort's course pass rates. In this context, of all the courses taken over a four-year period, "course pass rate" is defined as the percentage of courses passed with grades of A, B or C.

Pass rates differ among races. Figure 1 shows that students in the 2015 cohort passed 76 percent of their courses. As a group, female students had a higher course pass rate than male students (79 percent versus 73). White students as a group passed a higher percentage of their courses than did other student groups.

The female pass rate exceeds that of males. Female students within race/ethnicity show a pattern of passing courses at a higher rate than their male student counterparts—with a three to seven-point differential (see Figure 2). White female students had the highest course pass rate of all student group across race/ethnicity and gender. Black and Hispanic males show the lowest pass rates among male and female students—as much as 17 points lower than white females.

Pass rate is a key leading indicator. Course pass rate is a leading indicator of academic progress. Recall leading indicators provide data on the path to a final outcome. When students pass courses, they stay on their academic paths to success. In the same way, failing a course or withdrawing without a grade impedes academic progress and is often an indicator of a student facing challenges, such as financial aid issues, attendance, employment schedule, or family

responsibilities. Of note is the disparity in the course pass rates between Black and Hispanic students in general and Black and Hispanic male students in particular compared to other student groups. To diminish this disparity, the College has invested in academic support approaches—such as the Achieving the Promise Academy, embedded coaches in high impact courses—which have the potential to positively impact current and future students.