

Comparing the Progress of Continuing Freshmen to New And Continuing Transfer Students

Comparing the progress of our freshmen to that of transfers can be difficult because the transfers come in closer to the degree and have to complete less time than do the freshmen. More transfers students who start here with 30 or 40 credits should graduate in four years than freshmen who start at the same time with zero or nearly zero credits.

In order to assess any real differences in progress between freshmen and transfers, we took all of the fall 2006 matriculated undergraduates who had 25 to 60 credits inclusive at the beginning of the semester and tracked their graduation and continuation status forward fall by fall. We broke all of these 2006 students into three groups; those who had begun here as freshmen at sometime in the past, those who were continuing here after entering as transfers sometime in the past, and the newly incoming fall 2006 transfers. We then did the same with the fall 2007 enrollees.

In fall 2006, there were 896 continuing freshmen, 939 continuing transfers, and 709 new transfers with 25 to 60 credits at the beginning of the semester. In fall 2007, there were 698 continuing freshmen, 1000 continuing transfers, and 711 new transfers with 25 to 60 credits at the beginning of the semester.

We found that the students who had started as freshmen at UMass Boston were more likely to have graduated from or returned to UMass Boston year by year compared to either the new incoming transfers with 25 to 60 credits or the continuing transfer students with 25 to 60 credits. The differences were statistically significant at the highest level between our continuing freshmen and both groups of transfers.

Table 1 displays the results for the 2006 group.

Table 1: Fall 2006 Enrolled 25 to 60 Credit Holding Students' Progress by Year

Graduated by or Returned for:	Continuing Freshmen	New Transfers	Continuing Transfers
Fall 2007	84%	76%	74%
Fall 2008	77%	62%	64%
Fall 2009	70%	58%	57%
Fall 2010	68%	56%	55%

We found almost exactly the same graduation/continuation rates for the fall 2007 enrolled group. Again, the differences between our continuing freshmen and both groups of transfers are statistically significant for each year. Table 2 presents the details.

Table 2: Fall 2007 Enrolled 25 to 60 Credit Holding Students' Progress by Year

Graduated by or Returned for:	Continuing Freshmen	New Transfers	Continuing Transfers
Fall 2008	82%	76%	69%
Fall 2009	77%	65%	60%
Fall 2010	67%	57%	56%

Graduation rates were not significantly different except for the percentage of 2006 students who had graduated by fall 2010. The continuing freshmen were significantly more likely to have graduated than either the incoming transfers or the continuing transfers. About 56% of the continuing freshmen had graduated by fall 2010 compared to 46% of the new transfers and 42% of the continuing transfers.

At least in these two cohorts, once they can get to the 25 to 60 credit level, students who began here as freshmen were more likely to stay and to graduate than were transfers with similar numbers of credits.