

University of Massachusetts Boston
Office of Institutional Research and Policy Studies

To: Jennifer Brown
From: Kevin B. Murphy
Date: May 3, 2011
Subject: Updated retention and persistence rates for the Honors Program

At your request, I have updated the report on the retention and graduation rates of several recent cohorts of the Honors Program. The retention rates I calculate differ from what the Honors Program computes because we have different cohort definitions. OIRP uses the IPEDS definition of first time full time freshmen, but from 2005 through 2009, the Honors Program included several transfer students, several students who were enrolled part time, and several students who withdrew completely from UMass Boston before the end of add/drop. For every cohort, the retention rate for the Honors students was higher than for other students. The differences for the three most recent cohorts were statistically significant at various levels.

Cohort	Number of Honors Students	Honors Retention Rate	Retention Rate Non-Honors	Difference	Statistical Significance
Fall 2005	46	78.3%	69.7%	8.6%	No
Fall 2006	48	85.4%	74.1%	11.3%	No
Fall 2007	58	86.2%	74.1%	12.1%	P<.05
Fall 2008	51	90.2%	76.5%	13.7%	P<.05
Fall 2009	39	94.9%	74.1%	20.8%	P<.01

Persistence to the third and fourth years showed a similar pattern. For the 2007 cohort, the difference in persistence to the fourth year was quite large and statistically significant.

Cohort	Honors Persistence to the Third Year	Non-Honors Persistence to the Third Year	Difference	Statistical Significance
Fall 2005	71.7%	58.3%	13.4%	No
Fall 2006	64.6%	58.4%	6.2%	No
Fall 2007	74.1%	58.1%	16.0%	P<.05
Fall 2008	66.9%	57.4%	9.5%	P<.01
Cohort	Honors Persistence to the Fourth Year	Non-Honors Persistence to the Fourth Year	Difference	Statistical Significance
Fall 2005	65.2%	56.7%	8.6%	No
Fall 2006	62.5%	52.0%	10.5%	No
Fall 2007	74.1%	54.2%	19.9%	P<.01

We now have four-year graduation rate information for the 2005 and 2006 cohorts, and a five-year graduation rate for the 2005 cohort. The 2005 cohort increased the gap in rates between Honors and non-Honors from the fourth year to the fifth year rate. The 2006 cohort's difference in four-year graduation rates between Honors and non-Honors is not as large as it was for the 2005 cohort, but is still quite large and statistically significant.

Cohort	Honors Graduated by Fourth Year	Non-Honors Graduated by Fourth Year	Difference	Statistical Significance
Fall 2005	34.8%	12.4%	22.4%	P<.001
Fall 2006	27.1%	11.7%	15.4%	P<.01
Cohort	Honors Graduated by Fifth Year	Non-Honors Graduated by Fifth Year	Difference	Statistical Significance
Fall 2005	54.3%	29.2%	25.1%	P<.001

I note that the number of students in the Honors Program has declined in recent years with the 2009 cohort the smallest on record, and more than 30% below the 2007 cohort.