

Retention of First Time Full Time Freshmen by First Year Seminar Status Fall 2002 and Fall 2003 Cohorts

In 2002 there was no statistically significant difference in the retention rates of those who attempted a First Year Seminar during the first semester and those who didn't. This was also true for the 2003 cohort.

Retention rates were stable between cohorts for those who attempted an FYS (71.4% in 2002 vs. 71.3% in 2003) and for those who didn't attempt an FYS (69.3% in 2002 vs. 70.1% in 2003).

FYS and ENG 101 courses were offered as linked courses for the first time in 2003.

Success on the FYS as measured by the grade received was positively related to retention for both cohorts. For the 2003 cohort, success on the ENG 101 section was also positively related to retention. Overall, 1st semester GPA had a stronger relationship with retention than either individual grades in an FYS or in an ENG 101 section (2003 cohort only). Among students who attempted these courses, success (by any measure) was positively related to retention.

It is difficult to compare those who attempted an FYS and those who did not because we do not know the reasons for not attempting. We also have difficulty comparing those who attempted only an FYS or only an ENG 101 course for the same reasons.

Our best comparison is between those who attempted both an FYS and an ENG 101 course. Among those who attempted linked FYS and ENG 101 sections, the grades in those courses were more highly correlated than were the grades for those who attempted both an FYS and ENG 101 in non-linked versions. We were surprised that retention rates were significantly lower for those who attempted both in linked sections (68.7%) than for those who attempted both in unlinked sections (81.6%).

This is a very limited analysis of the retention of these cohorts. Factors that we know from earlier studies affect retention at UMass Boston such as high school GPA, SAT scores, home language status, gender, race/ethnicity, etc. have not been taken into account. Perhaps the impacts of the First Year Seminars and linked ENG 101 courses should be analyzed in more depth in the future. However, given the small numbers currently available (the 2003 cohort only) and the limitations of the current methods, nothing indicates that attempting an FYS either alone or linked to a particular ENG 101 section affects retention. Success in an FYS is positively related to retention, but less so than success as measured by overall first semester GPA and only slightly more so than success in an ENG 101 course.

Details for both cohorts follow.

Fall 2002 Cohort

There were 479 new first time full time freshmen in the 2002 cohort.
334 returned in fall 2003 for a retention rate of 69.7

460 of the new first time full time freshmen in the 2002 cohort were non-CPCS students.
324 of these returned in fall 2003 for a retention rate of 70.4%

205 of the non-CPCS students did not attempt a First Year Seminar (FYS) in fall 2002.
142 of these returned in fall 2003 for a retention rate of 69.3%

255 of the non-CPCS students attempted a First Year Seminar in fall 2002.
182 of these returned in fall 2003 for a retention rate of 71.4%.

There is no statistically significant difference in retention rates between those who attempted an FYS and those who didn't.

Of those who attempted an FYS, 41 did not pass.
13 of those returned in fall 2003 for a retention rate of 31.7%.

Of those who attempted an FYS, 214 passed.
169 of those returned in fall 2003 for a retention rate of 79.0%.

Of those who attempted an FYS, 204 received a C or better or a P on a P/F option.
166 of those returned in fall 2003 for a retention rate of 81.4%.

Of those who attempted an FYS, 51 received less than a C.
16 of those returned in fall 2003 for a retention rate of 31.4%.

Additional Analysis

We converted letter grades to numeric values for the First Year Seminars, discarding grades of P on the Pass/Fail option. We also accessed records of the first semester GPA as collected in January 2003. Overall GPA was highly correlated with FYS grade and more highly correlated with retention than the FYS grades. See the table below for details.

Table 1: Correlation Table of FYS Grades, 1st Semester GPA, and Retention

	Retained	FYS Numeric Grade	1st Semester GPA
Retained	1		
FYS Numeric Grade	0.4269	1	
1st Semester GPA	0.4367	0.7198	1

Fall 2003 Cohort

There were 567 new first time full time freshmen in the 2003 cohort.
400 returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 70.6%

546 of the new first time full time freshmen in the 2003 cohort were non-CPCS students.
387 of these returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 70.9%

187 of the non-CPCS students did not attempt a First Year Seminar (FYS) in fall 2003.
131 of these returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 70.1%

359 of the non-CPCS students attempted a First Year Seminar in fall 2003.
256 of these returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 71.3%.

There is no statistically significant difference in retention rates between those who attempted an FYS and those who didn't.

Of those who attempted an FYS, 48 did not pass.
13 of those returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 27.1%.

Of those who attempted an FYS, 311 passed.
243 of those returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 78.1%.

Of those who attempted an FYS, 289 received a C or better or a P on a P/F option.
233 of those returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 80.6%.

Of those who attempted an FYS, 70 received less than a C.
23 of those returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 32.9%.

69 of the non-CPCS students did not attempt an English 101 course in fall 2003.
49 of these returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 71.0%,

477 of the non-CPCS students did attempt an ENG 101 course in fall 2003.
338 of these returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 70.9%

There is no statistically significant difference in retention rates between those who attempted an ENG 101 course and those who didn't.

Of those who attempted an ENG 101 course, 52 did not pass.
15 of those returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 28.85%.

Of those who attempted an ENG 101 course, 425 passed.
323 of those returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 76.0%.

There is no statistically significant difference in retention rates between those who attempted an FYS and didn't pass and those who attempted an ENG 101 course and didn't pass.

There is no statistically significant difference in retention rates between those who attempted an FYS and passed and those who attempted an ENG 101 course and passed.

Of those who attempted an ENG 101 course, 71 received less than a C.
26 of those returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 36.6%.

Of those who attempted an ENG 101 course, 406 received a C or better or a P on a P/F option.
312 of those returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 76.9%.

There is no statistically significant difference in retention rates between those who attempted an FYS and received lower than a C and those who attempted an ENG 101 course and received lower than a C.

There is no statistically significant difference in retention rates between those who attempted an FYS and received a C or better and those who attempted an ENG 101 course and received a C or better.

351 of the non-CPCS students attempted both an FYS and an ENG 101 course in fall 2003.

251 of these returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 71.5%.

76 attempted both but not linked versions.

62 of these returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 81.6%.

275 attempted linked courses.

189 of these returned in fall 2004 for a retention rate of 68.7%.

The retention rate for those who attempted both an FYS and an ENG 101 course in a linked version is significantly below that of those who attempted both but in non-linked versions.

Additional Analysis

We converted letter grades to numeric values for both the First Year Seminars and the ENG 101 courses, discarding grades of P on the Pass/Fail option. We found high correlations between grades in both the FYS and ENG 101 courses and retention, and high correlation between the grades in the FYS and grade in the ENG 101 courses. We

note that the correlation between grades in the two courses is much higher for those who took the linked courses.

We also accessed records of the first semester GPA as collected in January 2004. Overall GPA was more highly correlated with retention than the FYS or ENG 101 grades. See the table below for details.

Table 2: Correlation Table of FYS and ENG 101 Grades, 1st Semester GPA, and Retention

All Students with FYS and ENG 101 Attempts	Retained	FYS Numeric Grade	ENG 101 Numeric Grade	1st Semester GPA
Retained	1			
FYS Numeric Grade	0.4398	1		
ENG 101 Numeric Grade	0.3725	0.7614	1	
1st Semester GPA	0.4885	0.7584	0.744	1
Non-Linked FYS and ENG 101	Retained	FYS Numeric Grade	ENG 101 Numeric Grade	1st Semester GPA
Retained	1			
FYS Numeric Grade	0.386	1		
ENG 101 Numeric Grade	0.3429	0.5963	1	
1st Semester GPA	0.5541	0.5918	0.5335	1
Linked FYS and ENG 101	Retained	FYS Numeric Grade	ENG 101 Numeric Grade	1st Semester GPA
Retained	1			
FYS Numeric Grade	0.445	1		
ENG 101 Numeric Grade	0.3682	0.782	1	
1st Semester GPA	0.4707	0.7816	0.7695	1