

Data Brief



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Danville Area Community College

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The Success in College Course has Proven to be of Great Value for DACC Students

The one credit INST 101 course, required of most degree seeking students since 2007 at Danville Area Community College, has proven to be of benefit to students taking the course. What follows is an analysis of student persistence and coursework success that show the impact this course has delivered.

Students new to college and seeking a degree, transfer or career/technical, are required to take Success in College. While advisors encourage INST 101 be taken during the students first semester the choice is left up to the student. Although many take the course in their first semester, a number wait for a later semester and still others enter their degree program having taken it while in high school through College Express. In this analysis, two groups of students that started in a summer or fall semester were compared - those taking the course their first fall semester or summer prior and those who did not have the course by the end of that first fall semester. Students starting in fall semesters from 2008 through 2013 were considered.

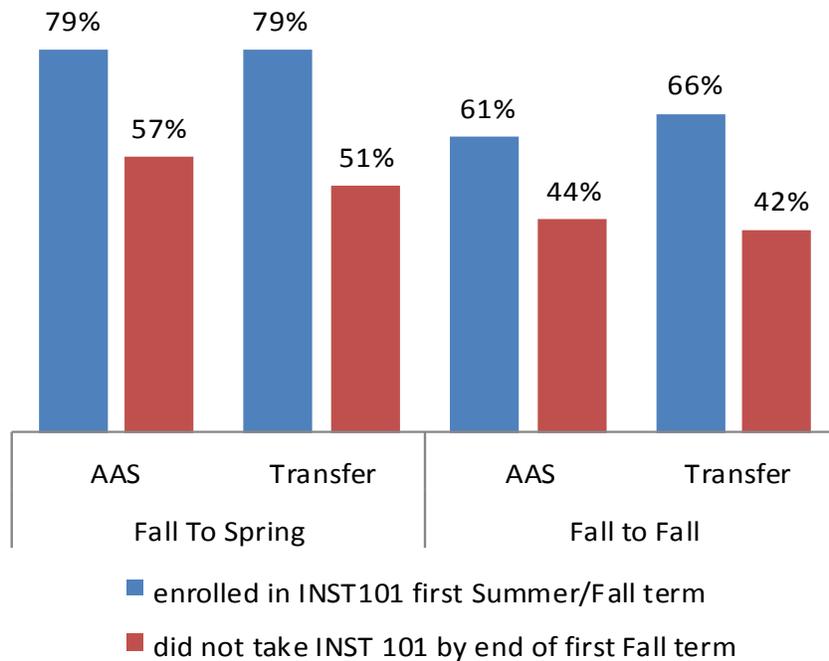
Student Persistence Rates Improve Dramatically

In the chart to the right, Fall to Fall and Fall to Spring persistence rates have shown gains of 17% to 28% for both applied associate degree and transfer degree students. Persistence is

defined as retention at DACC or transfer to another higher education institution.

Gains of this magnitude are rarely seen in larger scale initiatives. Across the nation, the Fall to Fall persistence rate for multiple years has fluctuated between 55% and 60% for first-time two-year public institution students with full-time students having rates approximately 10% higher and part-time

Persistence Comparisons of New Fall Students Based on Timing of INST 101 Enrollment

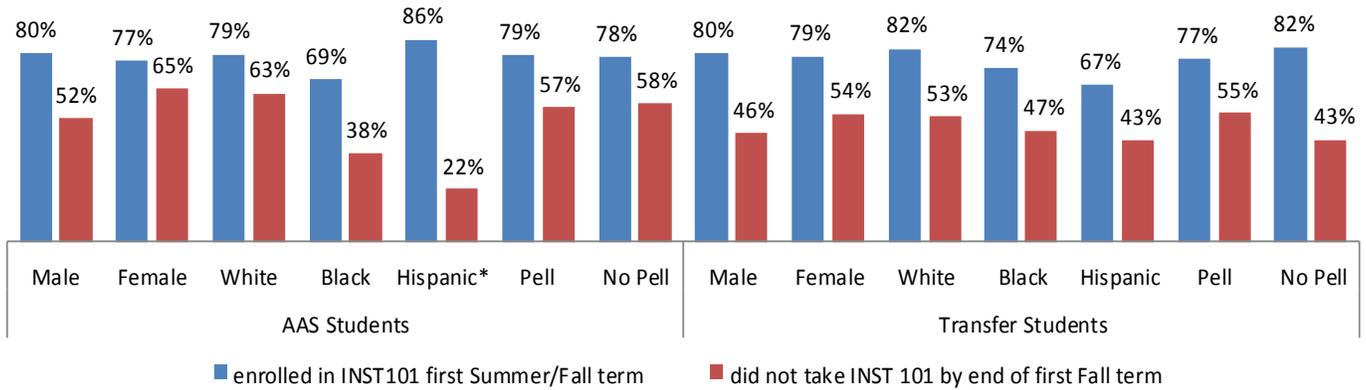


students approximately 6% lower, according to the National Student Clearinghouse.

As can be seen in the chart, students who enrolled in Success in College in their initial semester have had persistence rates well above that national average, while students not taking advantage of first semester enrollment in the course did not.



Fall to Spring Persistence Comparisons of New Fall Students Based on Timing of INST 101 Enrollment



*cohort size less than 20

When the data is disaggregated into specific student groups, as shown above, the gains can be seen in every subgroup of students. For economically disadvantaged students, labeled as Pell eligible, the gains were 22% for the both the career/technical and transfer cohorts. Additionally, Black and Hispanic students saw even larger gains, although the Hispanic career/technical cohort was very small. Similar patterns can be seen in the Fall to Fall persistence rates, although not shown here.

Course Success Rates Show Modest Gains

Along with increased persistence rates, students are experiencing modest gains in course success as shown below.

Percent of Students Passing 50%-100% of Coursework, Excluding INST 101

First Fall Semester

	Enrolled in 101	Not Enrolled	Difference
AAS	72%	66%	6%
Transfer	74%	63%	11%

Following Spring Semester

	Enrolled in 101	Not Enrolled	Difference
AAS	70%	76%	-6%
Transfer	72%	72%	0%

In the initial Fall semester, an additional 6% of career/technical and 11% of transfer cohort students passed at least half of their classes. Although not shown in this brief, differences were greater for Pell than non-Pell students and for Black than White students, lessening some traditional higher education gaps.

In the following Spring semester, the course success differences seem to have disappeared. Why this is occurring is not immediately obvious. But knowing that a substantially larger percentage of students persisted to Spring from the group taking INST 101 it might mean that comparing Spring semester course success rates is not a valid indicator of course value, while Fall semester course success rates are more directly tied to the course value of Success in College.