

Achieving the Dream Report Series

April 21, 2011



The Effect of the Timing of Student Registration on Course Completion: Fall 2010

This analysis is a follow-up to an Achieving the Dream report prepared in February 2008 based on Fall 2007 student data ([previous report](#)). The intent of this current analysis is to attempt to confirm the results of the earlier analysis and to see if there are any factors influencing the results. Specifically, Fall 2010 course completion rates (CCRs) for students who registered for their course sections during the two weeks just prior to the start of classes (late) are compared to those who registered for classes prior to the two week period (early).

There are differences in the current methodology from the original analysis. The original analysis defined late registration as the last 3 weeks prior to the start of classes. Late registration also included students who registered after the start of classes. The current analysis defines late registration as on or after 8/24/2010 and before 9/7/2010. Early registration is defined as students who registered prior to 8/24/10. The original study also focused mainly on developmental coursework. This report displays the differences in CCRs between early and late registrations over a broader array of disciplines, gender and "new students only". This is necessary in order to gauge the impact on student success if the college proceeds with a pilot program which would halt registration two weeks prior to the start of classes.

There were a total of 21,592 grades associated with the Fall 2010 semester. 17,586 (81%) of those grades were issued to course registrants who registered early; 2,474 (11%) to late registrants; and 1,532 who registered after the start of classes (directed studies, late starting courses, 8-week classes, etc.) Therefore, our target group represents 11% of the grades issued.

Three main variables were considered: gender, academic discipline and the student status of "NEW" versus "ALL" students. Not all academic disciplines were reviewed and several groupings of like disciplines were created. This is not intended to be a full study as not all disciplines were reviewed and race/ethnicity, age and other student demographic variables were not broken out.

The academic disciplines that were reviewed are:

- Math (all MAT)
- ESL
- PSY,SOC
- CHM,BIO,SCI
- BUS,FIN,ACC,MGT,MKT
- CIS,CTE,CTN,EST

Overall, the course completion rates for all students who registered early were 8% better than those who registered late.

- Early Reg - 12,319 / 17,586 = 70%
- Late Reg - 1,532 / 2,474 = 62%

The course completion rates for all “New” students who registered early were 6% better than those who registered late.

- New - Early Reg - 2,710 / 4,154 = 65%
- New - Late Reg - 533 / 904 = 59%

In **Table 1** below, black indicates higher CCRs for the early registrations, but not excessively so. Green indicates higher CCRs for the early registrations of 10% or more and red indicates lower CCRs for early registrations.

Table 1.

All Students					New Students				
Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades	Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades
Male	Late	Math	62%	161	Male	Late	Math	60%	86
Male	Early	Math	54%	895	Male	Early	Math	57%	356
Female	Late	Math	61%	151	Female	Late	Math	56%	64
Female	Early	Math	65%	1,039	Female	Early	Math	63%	346
Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades	Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades
Male	Late	ESL	69%	69	Male	Late	ESL	77%	13
Male	Early	ESL	80%	251	Male	Early	ESL	82%	76
Female	Late	ESL	68%	68	Female	Late	ESL	72%	39
Female	Early	ESL	86%	603	Female	Early	ESL	93%	138
Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades	Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades
Male	Late	PSY or SOC	51%	61	Male	Late	PSY or SOC	56%	16
Male	Early	PSY or SOC	63%	534	Male	Early	PSY or SOC	58%	122
Female	Late	PSY or SOC	65%	133	Female	Late	PSY or SOC	59%	32
Female	Early	PSY or SOC	76%	956	Female	Early	PSY or SOC	74%	214
Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades	Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades
Male	Late	CHM BIO SCI	63%	80	Male	Late	CHM BIO SCI	45%	20
Male	Early	CHM BIO SCI	62%	553	Male	Early	CHM BIO SCI	52%	61
Female	Late	CHM BIO SCI	59%	142	Female	Late	CHM BIO SCI	65%	23
Female	Early	CHM BIO SCI	64%	1,371	Female	Early	CHM BIO SCI	56%	164
Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades	Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades
Male	Late	BUS FIN ACC MGT MKT	59%	68	Male	Late	BUS FIN ACC MGT MKT	53%	15
Male	Early	BUS FIN ACC MGT MKT	63%	443	Male	Early	BUS FIN ACC MGT MKT	58%	66
Female	Late	BUS FIN ACC MGT MKT	62%	39	Female	Late	BUS FIN ACC MGT MKT	50%	6
Female	Early	BUS FIN ACC MGT MKT	68%	545	Female	Early	BUS FIN ACC MGT MKT	55%	55
Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades	Gender	Reg. Period	Discipline	CCR	Total Grades
Male	Late	CIS CTE CTN EST	60%	140	Male	Late	CIS CTE CTN EST	57%	68
Male	Early	CIS CTE CTN EST	67%	780	Male	Early	CIS CTE CTN EST	63%	214
Female	Late	CIS CTE CTN EST	59%	87	Female	Late	CIS CTE CTN EST	56%	48
Female	Early	CIS CTE CTN EST	69%	501	Female	Early	CIS CTE CTN EST	64%	118

The data contained in **Table 1** show that for the disciplines or discipline groupings of ESL, PSY/SOC,

BUS/FIN/ACC/MGT/MKT and CIS/CTE/CTN/EST, there is a positive relationship between registering

early and higher CCRs. For ESL in particular, female registrants earned much higher CCRs (in both All and New cohorts). New female ESL registrants who registered early earned CCRs 21% higher than those who registered late. New female PSY/SOC registrants who registered early earned CCRs 15% higher than those who registered late. These were two of the largest differences identified. All of the other discipline/gender groups showed lesser differences but the same positive association, except for MAT and CHM/BIO/SCI.

New male MAT registrants who registered early earned CCRs 3% lower than those who registered late. When ALL MAT registrants are considered, we find that the late registrants performed better by 8% than those who registered early. New female CHM/BIO/SCI registrants who registered early earned CCRs 9% lower than those who registered late. When All CHM/BIO/SCI registrants are considered, there is very little difference between groups.

This data continues to show that there is a positive influence on the CCRs earned by early course registrants as opposed to those who registered in the last two weeks prior to the start of class. However,

the positive difference does not hold across all discipline/gender groups, namely in math and science. The effect of late registration also seems to be slightly more negative for female students.

Further, it is important to note that CCRs are not the only outcome that is negatively affected by late registration. As **Table 2** indicates, term grade point average, term credits earned and Fall to Spring retention are all higher for the early registrant.

Table 2.

	<u>EARLY</u>	<u>LATE</u>
CCR	70%	62%
Term GPA	2.59	2.38
Term Credits Earned	7.3	6
Fall to Spring Retention	72%	59%

Interpretations of these findings as well as suggestions for further analysis are always welcome. Please direct questions and comments to Thomas Fallon, Dean of Institutional Research and Planning, via phone at 978-556-3866 or email at tfallon@necc.mass.edu.

