Will They Stay or Will They Go:
Early Signs of UM Undergraduate Student
Retention/Attrition

Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG)
Retention Subgroup

Presenters

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- https://www.irpa.umd.edu/CAWG/

Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG)

- CAWG is charged with developing a campus "Culture of Evidence" in which data and assessment play a key role in campus decision making

- 4 subgroups:
    - Retention
    - Beginnings
    - Assessing Campus Experiences (ACES)
    - Completions

Background

- In any given semester, between 1500 and 3000 undergraduate students discontinue their enrollment at the University of Maryland

- 2006 Non-Returning Student Survey, see report:

    A Delicate Balance: Stop-outs and Transfer-outs Tell Their Story (2007)

Introduction

- Usually retention studies focus on 2 categories: Here or Not Here

- Non-Returning Student Survey: Experiences of non-returning students may be different for transfer-outs and stop-outs

Introduction

- Can freshmen behaviors, attitudes, and expectations tell us about the chances of different enrollment outcomes five semesters later?

Data Sources

- The 2002 University of Maryland Beginning Student Survey (BSS'02)

- The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

Four Different Enrollment Categories

Fall 2002 at UM		Fall 2005	
Stayers		Still here or graduated	1606 (76%)
Stop-outs	Temporarily left UM	Back to UM	242 (11%)
Transfer-outs	Left UM	Enrolled in / graduated from another institution	159 (8%)
Not enrolled	Left UM	Not enrolled in or graduated from any NSC institution	103 (5%)
			2,110

Academic Probation/ Dismissal

	Probation	Dismissal
Stayers (n=1606)	0	0
Stop-outs (n = 242)	0	0
Transfer-outs (n=159)	17	4
Not Enrolled (n=103)	25	3

Methodology

- Descriptive Analysis (Institutional Data)

- Multinomial Logistic Regression

Descriptive Analysis Results

- **Gender**
  - Stop-outs had the highest percentage of women (71%)
  - Stayers had the highest percentage of males (52%)

- Undeclared Major
  - Stop-outs: 56%; Transfer-outs: about 45%
  - Stayers 34%; Not Enrolled students: 36%

***Items highlighted in red are statistically significant in MLR analysis

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Descriptive Analysis Results

- **Race**
- Not Enrolled: highest percentage of African American students (28%) and the lowest percentage of White students (50%)

Race	Asian American	African American	Hispanic	White
Not Enrolled	9%	28%	10%	50%
Other Three Categories	8-14%	6-12%	3-9%	63-76%

Descriptive Analysis Results

- **Residency**
  - Stayers and Not Enrolled: More than 70% in-state
  - Stop-outs and Transfer-outs: About 50% in-state

- Living On Campus in Fall 2002
  - Not Enrolled: 79% lived on campus
  - Other 3 categories: more than 89% lived on campus

Descriptive Analysis Results

- Academic Abilities

- Stayers and Stop-outs :
  - Higher percentages enrolled in UM's Honors or College Park Scholars
  - Higher mean SATs and GPAs
  - Lower % being dismissed or on academic probation

Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR)

Variables included in the MLR:

- Academics factor
- Study Skills factor
- Institutional Connectedness factor
- General attitude toward UM
- College finances
- Future direction

- Working on campus
- Working off campus
- UM was first choice institution
- Race
- Residency
- Interaction between residency and finances

* See Handout for Specific Survey Items

Multinomial Logistic Regression

- Exploratory Analysis (p<.075)

- Men and women have different enrollment patterns
  - Women are overrepresented in the Stop-out category and underrepresented in the Stayers category (p<.001)

- Ran separate MLR analyses for men and women

Enrollment Patterns of Female Students

6 Variables that Distinguish Stayers from Other Enrollment
Patterns:

- General attitude toward UM
- Academics factor
- Residency
- UM was first choice
- Future (career & major) direction
- Race

Enrollment Patterns of Female Students

Risk Factors of Stopping out	Didn't know major or career direction
	UM was NOT 1st choice
	White as opposed to African American
	Higher score for Academics Factor

Enrollment Patterns of Female Students

Risk Factors of Transferring out	Didn't know major or career direction
	Lower general attitude about UM
	Out-of-state compared with in-state
	Higher score for Academics Factor

Enrollment Patterns of Female Students

Risk Factors for being Not Enrolled	Knew major and career direction
	White as opposed to Asian American

Enrollment Patterns of Male Students

3 Variables that Distinguish Stayers from Other Enrollment
    Patterns:

- General attitude toward UM
- Race
- Study skills factor

Enrollment Patterns of Male Students

Risk Factors for Stopping Out	Lower general attitude about UM "Unknown" race as opposed to White

Enrollment Patterns of Male Students

Risk Factors for Transferring Out	No significant effects

Enrollment Patterns of Male Students

Risk Factors for being Not Enrolled	Lower general attitude toward UM
	Lower score on Study Skills factor
	African American as opposed to White

Limitations

- Time frame of Fall 2005 was arbitrary

- NSC: Not all institutions participate

- Sample: BSS participants w/ UID

- BSS is self-report

- The analyses were restricted to questions on the BSS'02 and to institutional data

General Conclusions for Women and Men

- **Gender** seems to play a compelling role in enrollment patterns

- A more positive **attitude** toward UM indicated a greater likelihood of continuous enrollment

- **Race** seems to play a role in enrollment patterns

Conclusions For Female Students

- Why is it that scoring higher on the Academics factor indicates a greater likelihood of stopping-out or transferring-out vs. staying?

- How does lacking future direction influence the enrollment patterns?

Conclusions For Female Students

- If UM was not their first choice, they were more likely to stop-out vs staying

    - Why did they choose to re-enroll at UM after their stop out period?
    - Did their opinion of UM change over time?

Conclusions For Female Students

- More likely to transfer out if non-resident of Maryland

  - Is out-of-state tuition a concern?
  - Is distance from home a concern?
  - Is the culture on campus different than home?

Conclusions For Male Students

- More likely to be 'not enrolled' if lower score on their self-assessed study abilities

  - Does this have to do with confidence or abilities?
  - Do students struggle with UM's academic standards and therefore leave UM?

Discussion

- What role does gender play in a student's decision to stay or leave UM?

- What was it about UM in just the first 8 weeks that stop-outs, transfer-outs, or the not enrolled didn't like?
  Did they leave because they didn't like UM?

Discussion

- Does race influence whether a student returns or enrolls elsewhere? If so, how?

- Did male students in the not-enrolled category leave school all together because they felt they had below average skills for any college/university?

Implications

- Many of these factors are identifiable 8 weeks into the semester through a few simple questions by an advisor or an RA and looking at institutional records

- Can policy and programmatic initiatives encourage these students to be retained at UM?

- What other implications do you see for your specific department?

Next Steps????

- Thank you!!