Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS)

Introduction
In an effort to learn more about the effect of the Extended Opportunity Program and Service (EOPS), a study was developed to examine cohorts of students as they progressed through Basic Skills courses and degree and certificate programs. The EOPS program provides support to students experiencing economic, social and educational challenges. EOPS helps students to achieve their educational goals by supporting access, retention and transfer. To be eligible for EOPS, students must demonstrate a financial and educational need, and be enrolled in at least 12 units.

EOPS cohorts, from the 05/06-08/09 academic years, were tracked through the Fall 11 term. A series of indicators were used to better understand students’ progress including Basic Skills course completion, transferred prepared, transfer directed, and degree and certificate achievement. Transfer prepared students are students who have successfully completed 60 UC/CSU transferable units with a GPA greater than or equal to 2.0, while transfer directed students are students who earned a grade of A, B, C, CR in a transferable math course and a transferable English course. Background variables, including sex and ethnicity, were used to compare subgroups of EOPS students.

Results

Basic Skills progress
Of the total unique students in all of the cohorts (1,182), 91% took at least one Basic Skills course. Of the total who took basic skills courses, 72.7% completed a transferable English course and 70.0% completed a transferable Math course. Of the students who took Basic Skills courses, 9.3% actually received a degree of some kind. When comparing gender and ethnicity, males has a slightly lower degree achievement rate at 8.7%. While a small subgroup (33), African-American students had a lower degree rate (6.1%), and Asian (12; 7.1%) and Hispanic (810; 8.4%) students also had lower degree rates. White students, who took Basic Skills courses, achieved degrees at a higher rate (146; 13.7%).

Completion
Of the total students in all of the cohorts (1,182), 18.4% were transfer-directed and 20.9% were transfer-prepared. Examining these same students, 19.6% received a degree and 10.5% received a certificate. When comparing both EOPS and students overall who were first time students in 05/06, EOPS students had lower rates for most indicators (See Table 1 below). EOPS students, had slightly higher rates of certificate completion than the overall 05/06 first time student population.
Summary
Prior to summarizing the results, several weaknesses of the current study must be acknowledged. Firstly, this study is a snapshot in time of the effect of EOPS services and any success or failure of students may be due to factors associated with cohorts. For example, students from the included academic years may have been experiencing greater economic challenges thus increasing the likelihood that they will leave school. A more important weakness of any comparison is that EOPS students face greater personal, academic, and economic challenges than the overall student population.

Recognizing these weaknesses, there were some interesting patterns that are comparable to the overall student population. Firstly, a small proportion of students successfully moved through the basic skills sequence and completed a program. Within the EOPS cohorts, Hispanic-, Asian-, and African-American students had even lower rates. EOPS students had slightly lower rates on success indicators as compared to the overall student population.

While these low rates are concerning, it must be recognized that EOPS students face significant barriers and challenges. These barriers and challenges may be intractable even through the services provided by EOPS are considerable. Further, the program has gone through significant change in the past three academic years which, according to the Associate Dean, has improved the quality of the program. Future study of these same indicators will be important to better understand if these changes impact student success.

Table 1: Fall 05/06 new students comparison of success indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EOPS (n=157)</th>
<th>Total (n=638)</th>
<th>EOPS</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>EOPS</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>EOPS</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer-Directed</td>
<td>Transfer-Prepared</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
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</tbody>
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