Tracking Graduate Student Success for International Students at UMass Boston, Fall 2017

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The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (OIRAP) has been working with Kristof Zaba, the Executive Director of the International Student Success Program (ISSP) at UMass Boston, to provide tracking of student success for ISSP students, formerly identified as Navitas students. As part of the pre-master's program (PMP), ISSP graduate students enrolled in courses beginning in Fall 2014. The tracking can be complicated because ISSP graduate students are enrolled as non-degree students for one or two semesters before declaring a major. This report provides a comparison of the progress of ISSP students, non-ISSP International students, and domestic students enrolled in degree-seeking graduate programs.

Assessment of graduate student success differs in key measures from those used to evaluate undergraduate student success, such as retention and graduation rates. Additionally, differences in graduate programs, such as master's or doctorate level, number of credits required, and targeted time to degree, make it difficult to group all graduate students together for comparative analysis purposes. Therefore, ISSP graduate students are compared to other students within the same program. Refer to *Graduate Student Success Indicators at UMass Boston, Fall 2017* for a breakdown of key metrics for each program, including the target metrics based on program requirements, metrics based on degrees awarded in academic year 2017, and enrollment metrics for Fall 2017.

Enrolled Student Progress

Across all cohorts, ISSP students maintain an equal or higher credit load when compared with non-ISSP international students (Table 1). In general, international students tend to take more credit hours per semester than domestic students, suggesting that domestic students are more likely to take graduate courses on a part-time basis.

The Computer Science (MS) major tends to be the most common course of study for ISSP graduate students, as well as being more common for all international students compared to domestic students.

Table 1 - Mean Credit Hours Taken across Student Types per Masters Degree Program

Program		ISSP	Non-ISSP Int'l	Domestic
Computer Science	n	38	46	16
	M	9.0	8.4	6.1
MBA	n	20	36	217
	M	8.4	8.6	6.4
Finance	n	5	30	18
	M	9.6	8.9	6.8
Information Technology	n	6	23	17
	M	9.5	8.5	5.8

Note: Fall 2017 enrollment for ISSP graduate students included 1 full-time student each in Accounting, Business Analytics, and Education Administration; 1 part-time student in International Relations; and 2 full-time students each in Applied Physics and International Management.

Time to degree (TTD) is a key metric for graduate student success. However, the TTD varies according to the program, because the degree requirements vary. Table 2 depicts the projected time to degree for various student types in selected programs. The projected time to degree is calculated by taking the actual time to degree for graduates in those programs during the previous academic year (AY17) and dividing it by the average annual course load derived from Table 1.

According to Table 2, ISSP and non-ISSP international graduate students are on track to earn their degree faster than the domestic students, because they tend to taken a higher credit load. For MBA and Finance programs, international students are projected to complete degree requirements ahead for the target time to degree. However, for Computer Science and Information Technology programs, international students are project to lag the target and actual time to degree measures.

Table 2 - Projected Time to Degree (years) across Student Types per Masters Degree Program

Program	AY17 Final Credits	Target TTD	AY17 Actual TTD	Projected TTD		
				ISSP	Non-ISSP Int'l	Domestic
Computer Science	49.5	2.0	2.3	2.7	2.9	4.1
MBA	41.8	3.0	2.2	2.5	2.4	3.3
Finance	38.7	2.5	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.8
Information Tech	53.1	2.5	2.1	2.8	3.1	4.6

There were 37 ISSP PMP students that graduated during AY17. Table 3 depicts the breakdown of Master's programs for those students, along with actual time to degree, average final GPA, and total credit hours accumulated. The actual time to degree measures are quite low, because these students represent the early completers among the ISSP students. Subsequent academic years will include ISSP students that take longer to complete degree requirements, thereby driving the average time to degree higher. The final GPA measures for ISSP were comparable to the average final GPA measures for all students that completed in respective degree programs during AY17.

Table 3 - Actual Time to Degree (years) for ISSP Students across Masters Degree Program

Program	N	Actual TTD	Final GPA	Total CH
MBA	13	1.5	3.71	39.8
Computer Science	13	1.7	3.53	32.0
Finance	4	1.3	3.84	37.7
Applied Physics	2	1.4	--	--
MPA / Int'l Rel	2	1.0	--	--
Accounting	1	2.0	--	--
Conflict Resolution	1	1.3	--	--
Information Tech	1	2.5	--	--

Grade point averages among graduate students differ according to degree program. Table 3 depicts the cumulative grade point averages across student types for selected programs. In the MBA, Finance, and IT programs, ISSP students maintain grade point averages at comparable levels with other students. However, ISSP students have a significantly lower grade point average ($t = 2.25$, $p = .028$) than domestic students in the Computer Science program.

Table 4 - Cumulative Grade Point Average across Student Types per Masters Degree Program

Program		ISSP	Non-ISSP	Domestic
Computer Science	n	38	46	16
	M	3.13	3.63	3.55
MBA	n	20	36	217
	M	3.64	3.69	3.71
Finance	n	5	30	18
	M	3.63	3.74	3.74
Information Technology	n	6	23	17
	M	3.55	3.69	3.70