

Student Success Measures for Students Receiving Academic Support Services from the Ross Center for Disability Services at UMass Boston, 2009-2015

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The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (OIRAP) has been working with Virginia Perelson, the Director of the Ross Center for Disability Services (RCDS) at UMass Boston, to identify measures of student success for Ross Center students. The mission of the Ross Center is to serve as a resource on campus to ensure academic success and inclusion for students, promoting a view of disability informed by social, cultural, and political forces. This report provides a comparison of key measures of academic success for Ross Center students and all other students based on the cohort of first enrollment at UMass Boston.

This report looked at fall cohorts of students that self-reported and received services from the Ross Center starting in the Fall 2009 semester. Table 1 depicts the enrollment breakdown for Ross Center students as a percentage within the larger campus community. The overall proportion of Ross Center students has grown over the past six years, accounting for 3.6% of the total student population by 2015.

Table 1
Enrollment of Ross Center Students, Fall 2009-15 Cohorts

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
New Students														
First-time Freshmen	21	2.1%	34	3.0%	43	3.3%	39	3.1%	55	3.9%	62	4.0%	38	2.3%
Lower Div Transfer	35	2.8%	42	3.7%	51	4.2%	57	5.1%	54	5.3%	45	4.6%	29	3.0%
Upper Div Transfer	16	3.2%	14	2.9%	17	3.2%	29	4.4%	29	4.4%	33	5.0%	20	2.9%
Graduate	11	1.0%	13	1.4%	14	1.4%	18	1.7%	26	2.3%	21	1.9%	26	2.0%
Unclassified	4	11.8%	1	0.4%	5	12.8%	3	5.8%	6	12.5%	3	6.8%	4	6.3%
Continuing Students														
Freshmen	24	2.6%	27	3.1%	34	3.4%	46	4.3%	33	3.3%	41	3.7%	42	3.9%
Sophomore	63	3.8%	53	3.0%	48	3.0%	67	3.8%	92	4.8%	80	4.5%	71	3.8%
Junior	79	3.6%	85	3.4%	91	3.9%	84	3.7%	126	5.1%	140	5.3%	115	4.6%
Senior	79	3.4%	92	3.6%	104	3.6%	127	4.1%	130	4.2%	154	4.8%	167	5.0%
Graduate	46	1.6%	46	1.6%	38	1.3%	37	1.4%	40	1.4%	57	1.9%	61	2.2%
Unclassified	26	2.2%	19	1.8%	29	2.8%	33	4.1%	47	6.0%	44	5.6%	40	5.1%
Total Ross Center Students	404	2.7%	426	2.8%	474	3.0%	540	3.4%	638	3.9%	680	4.1%	613	3.6%

Table 2 depicts the key student success measures for the Fall 2009 undergraduate cohort, comparing Ross Center students with all other students by student type. These groups include both part-time and full-time students. Ross Center students are more likely to be part-time than other students, 44% versus 40%. The first-year retention rate and grade point average for Ross Center exceeded levels for all other students. However, the graduation rates for first-time freshmen Ross Center students lag behind all other students. For transfer students, Ross Center students attain higher graduation rates than other students, although Ross Center transfer students were comprised of fewer lower-division students (63%) than other transfer students (69%).

Table 2
Student Success Measures by Student Type, Fall 2009 Undergraduate Cohort (N = 2743)

	First-time Freshmen		First-year Transfer	
	Ross Center	All Others	Ross Center	All Others
<i>n</i>	21	966	55	1702
1st Sem Credit Load	13.1	13.7	12.5	11.9
1-year Retention Rate	76%	74%	85%	76%
1-year GPA	3.09	2.82	3.18	3.02
4-semester On Track Rate*	14%	35%	56%	41%
4-year Grad Rate	10%	13%	39%	37%
6-year Grad Rate	38%	42%	63%	49%

Note: *On Track means GPA \geq 2.50 and total credits earned \geq 48 after 4 semesters.

Total Credits Taken

According to Table 3, Ross Center students take nearly the same course load as other students with the most improvement associated with first-time freshmen Ross Center students.

Table 3
Credit Hours Taken across Student Types, Fall 2009-15 Cohorts

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
First-time Freshmen	Ross Center	13.1	13.1	13.9	13.6	13.3	13.8	14.2
	All Others	13.7	13.8	14.0	13.8	13.7	13.9	14.0
Lower Div Transfer	Ross Center	12.9	11.3	12.9	12.6	12.2	12.2	12.3
	All Others	12.2	12.0	11.5	12.0	12.1	12.5	12.5

First Year Success: Retention Rate & GPA

According to Table 4, retention rates are comparable for Ross Center students to other students.

Table 4

First Year Retention Rate across Student Types, Fall 2009-14 Cohorts

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
First-time Freshmen	Ross Center	76%	76%	88%	67%	76%	76%
	All Others	74%	74%	78%	77%	78%	77%
Lower Div Transfer	Ross Center	86%	79%	80%	81%	87%	80%
	All Others	74%	75%	74%	74%	77%	75%

Table 5 depicts the grade point average for those students returning for a second year. Again, Ross Center students tend to have comparable grades to other students.

Table 5

Grade Point Average after First Year across Student Types, Fall 2009-14 Cohorts

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
First-time Freshmen	Ross Center	3.09	2.92	2.71	2.72	2.57	2.82
	All Others	2.82	2.75	2.87	2.89	2.87	2.88
Lower Div Transfer	Ross Center	3.09	2.96	2.78	2.90	2.93	2.65
	All Others	2.93	3.00	3.03	2.94	2.93	2.92

Progress toward Graduation

Table 6 depicts the percentage of first-time freshmen, Ross Center students and other students, that are on track to graduate in six years. On track is defined as a GPA ≥ 2.50 and total credits earned ≥ 48 after 4 semesters. While the on track rate for other students has steadily increased over the past five years, there has been fluctuation in the on track rate for Ross Center students. As Figure 1 depicts, the on track rate for Ross Center students seems to be half the first year retention rate.

Table 6

On Track Status after Four Semesters across Student Types, Fall 2009-13 Cohorts

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
First-time Freshmen	Ross Center	14%	44%	40%	31%	36%
	All Others	35%	36%	40%	42%	41%

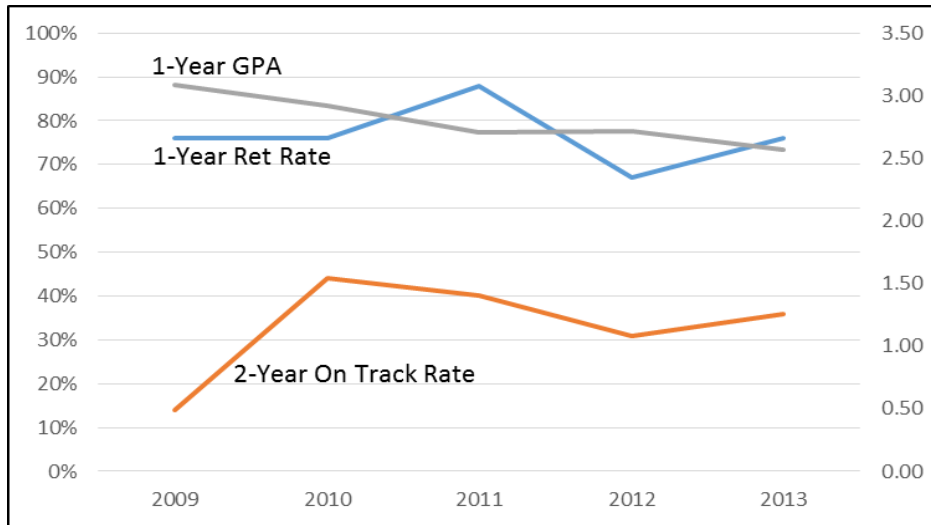


Figure 1. Relationship of Ross Center student (Cohorts 2009-13) first year success with on track status after two years.

Tables 7 depicts the four year and six year graduation rates for Ross Center students compared to other students. While the Ross Center student cohorts from 2009-11 had comparable first year retention rates and grade point averages, as well as on track rates, to other students, the graduation rates were lower for Ross Center students. However, the five-year graduation rate for Ross Center students in the 2010 cohort was 32% versus 35% for other students, suggesting that Ross Center students have sustained steady progress toward graduation.

Table 7

Graduation Rates and Final GPA for First Time Freshmen, Fall 2009-11 Cohorts

4-Year Grad Rate and GPA		2009	2010	2011	6-Year Grad Rate and GPA		2009
Graduation Rate	Ross Center	10%	9%	2%	Graduation Rate	Ross Center	38%
	All Others	13%	14%	18%		All Others	42%
Final GPA	Ross Center	3.72	3.17	2.92	Final GPA	Ross Center	3.38
	All Others	3.42	3.36	3.43		All Others	3.21

Table 8 provides a list of the top majors during their first semester for undergraduate Ross Center students that have matriculated since 2009. During this period, 126 Ross Center students were undeclared CLA majors and 39 Ross Center Students were undeclared CSM majors.

Table 8

Top Majors for Undergraduate Ross Center Students, Fall 2009-15 Cohorts

Psychology, Sociology, or both	116
Biology, Chemistry, or BioChem	91
Management	51
Exercise & Health Science	48
Computer Science or Info Tech	35
Nursing	34
English	29
History and/or Anthropology	29
Criminal Justice	29
Art, Music, or Theater Arts	23
Political Science	20
Human Services	19
Environmental Science	18
Early Ed&Care Inklus Sett	15

Graduate Students

Ross Center students account for a small percentage of graduate students. From 2009-2015, there were no differences in the credit hours taken in fall semesters by Ross Center students (6.1 credit hours) and all other students (6.1 credit hours). Likewise, only a small difference existed for the cumulative grade point average for Ross Center students (3.67) and all other students (3.75). Among all Ross Center graduate students that have matriculated since 2009, the top majors included Vision Studies or Rehabilitation Counseling (22), Mental Health Counseling (11), and either a MEd or EdD in Education (11).

Conclusion

While UMass Boston has seen substantial growth in Ross Center students since 2009, Ross Center students have done as well as other undergraduate students on key student success measures, such as first term credit hour load, GPA, first year retention rates, and on track status after four semesters. While Ross Center students have had lower 4-year graduation rates than other students, the on track status and 5/6-year graduation rates are similar to other students. This report will serve as a baseline for tracking and assessment of Ross Center students going forward.