

# **Spring Intersession Study**

**Institutional Research and Planning  
San Diego Community College District**

**November 2007**

## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	1
DATA AND METHODS .....	2
RESULTS .....	3
Spring Enrollment Pattern.....	3
Student Characteristics.....	3
Demographics .....	3
Other Student Characteristics .....	7
Student Behaviors .....	9
Enrollment.....	9
Units Earned.....	10
GPA.....	13
Course Outcomes .....	13
<i>Grade Points</i> .....	14
<i>Drops, Never Attended, and Withdrawals</i> .....	15
Courses.....	16
Schedule Characteristics .....	17
Course Types .....	18
FTES .....	20
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	22

## **Spring Intersession Study**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This report is intended to provide information regarding intersession students and intersession classes. Intersessions have been included in spring terms since Spring 2005. These spring terms, then, comprise both an intersession and a regular spring component. Student behaviors and characteristics were examined over three spring terms, as were course offerings. FTES for intersession is also examined for the three terms. The terms examined were Spring 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007. The analysis is intended to provide an overall picture of intersession in terms of student characteristics and behaviors, FTES, and course characteristics, as well as identifying changes over time. The report includes descriptions of the data and results, as well as a brief summary.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

The data for this report come from student databases from the spring terms in 2005 through 2007. Generally, the analytic approach was to examine all questions by year to determine if there have been changes over time. If changes were identified, they are presented in this report. If results were consistent over time, the data were collapsed over terms to give focus to the general question at hand.

For each spring, students were identified as Intersession Only, Intersession and Regular Spring, or Regular Spring Only based on their course-registration pattern. If a student signed up for both intersession and regular spring classes he or she would be categorized as an Intersession and Regular Spring student regardless of whether he or she remained enrolled. That is, if the student dropped all their intersession units, he or she would still be regarded as an Intersession and Regular Spring student.

## RESULTS

### Spring Enrollment Pattern

The pattern of spring enrollments for 2005 through 2007 is displayed in Table 1. The table reveals a peak of intersession enrollments in 2006. Both the Intersession Only and the Intersession and Regular Spring enrollments were highest in 2006.

**Table 1. Spring Enrollment Pattern**

	2005	2006	2007
Intersession Only	977	1,358	1,254
Intersession & Regular Spring	5,005	7,197	7,044
Regular Spring Only	39,941	35,690	38,047
Total	45,923	44,245	46,345

### Student Characteristics

#### Demographics

The demographic composition of the intersession students did not differ by term. Consequently, the results presented in this section collapse data across the three terms.

**Gender.** The gender composition varied by spring enrollment pattern. While the Intersession Only and Regular Spring Only students were about evenly split in terms of gender, the Intersession and Regular Spring category was three-fifths (59.3%) female and two-fifths (40.7%) male. This is seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Gender by Spring Enrollment Pattern**

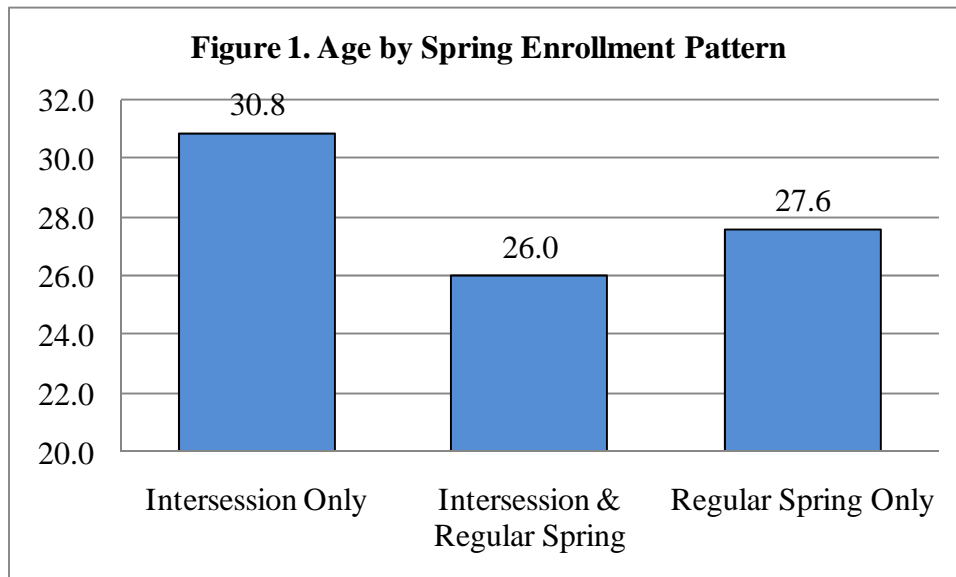
	Intersession Only	Intersession & Regular Spring	Regular Spring Only
Female	48.2%	59.3%	49.7%
Male	51.8%	40.7%	50.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Race and Ethnicity.** The race and ethnicity indicator was associated with spring enrollment pattern. As Table 3 shows, Intersession Only students were more likely to be white than were the other spring students.

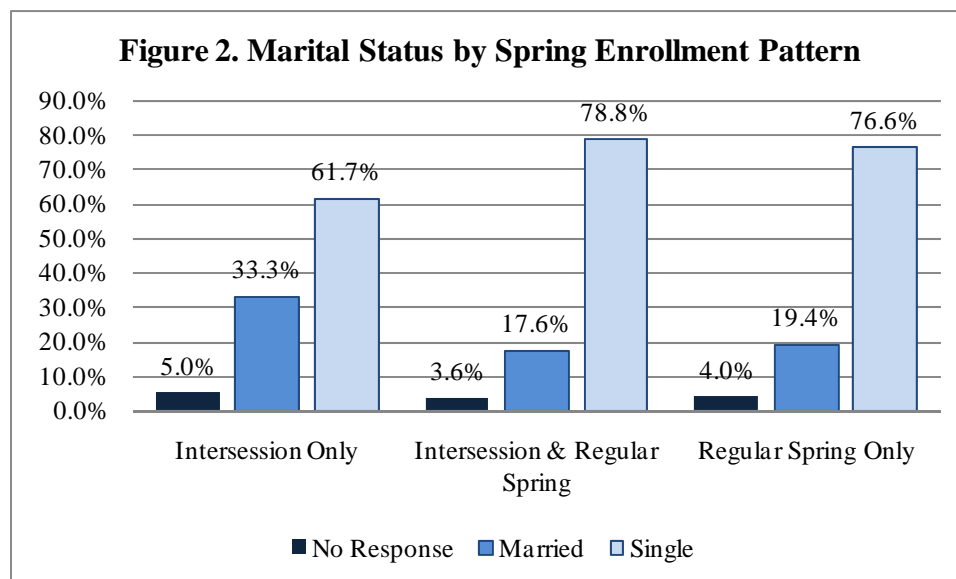
**Table 3. Race and Ethnicity by Spring Enrollment Pattern**

	Intersession Only	Intersession & Regular Spring	Regular Spring Only
Am Indian	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%
Asian	6.3%	12.1%	10.8%
African Amer	8.2%	10.3%	8.2%
White	46.6%	34.9%	39.2%
Latino	19.2%	21.1%	20.9%
Filipino	3.8%	6.6%	6.1%
Pac Islander	0.8%	1.3%	1.2%
Other	2.6%	4.2%	3.4%
Unknown	11.5%	8.5%	9.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Age.** Figure 1 shows the average age of the students with the different enrollment patterns. Intersession Only students were, on average, three or four years older than other spring students. Additionally, Intersession and Regular Spring students were younger than Regular Spring Only students.



**Marital Status.** Spring enrollment patterns were affected by marital status. As illustrated in Figure 2, Intersession Only students were less likely than other students to be single. While over three quarters of the students taking classes in the regular spring were single, only 61.7% of the Intersession Only students were single.

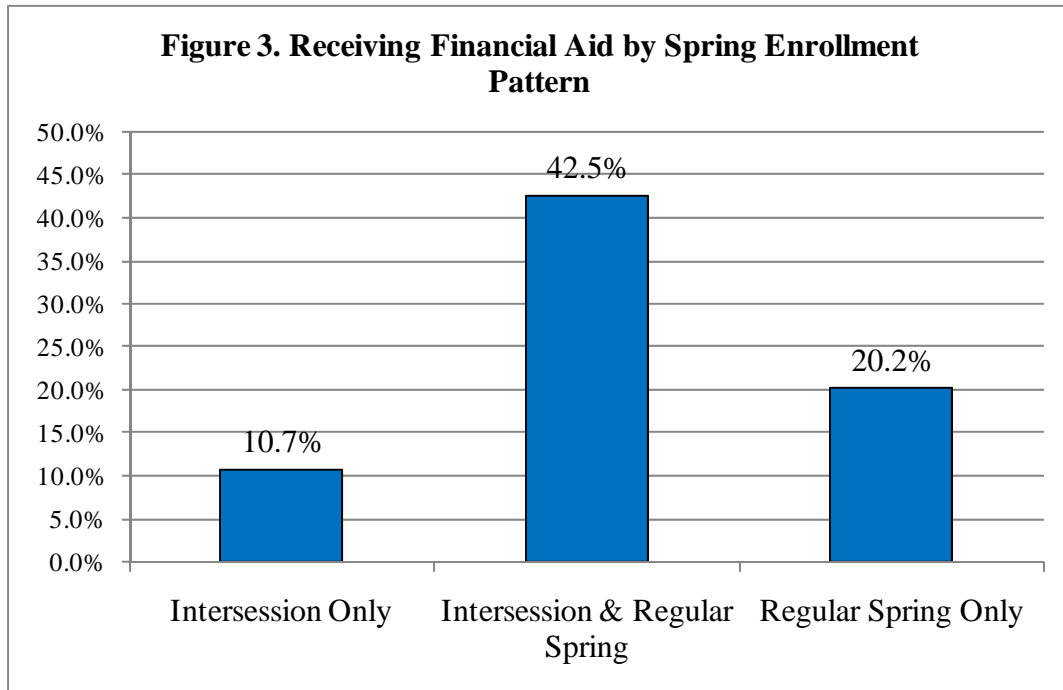


**Hours of Employment.** The number of hours per week that a student was employed varied considerably by enrollment pattern. Table 4 shows that close to half (45.0%) of the Intersession Only students were working 40 or more hours per week at their time of application, compared to 19.8% for Intersession and Regular Spring and 28.8% for Regular Spring Only.

**Table 4. Employment Hours by Spring Enrollment Pattern**

	Intersession Only	Intersession & Regular Spring	Regular Spring Only
Not Working	17.6%	22.8%	21.6%
Working 1 - 9 Hrs A Week	4.6%	5.1%	4.6%
Working 10 - 19 Hrs A Week	10.5%	15.9%	12.4%
Working 20 - 29 Hrs A Week	12.9%	23.7%	20.1%
Working 30 - 39 Hrs A Week	9.4%	12.7%	12.5%
Working 40 Hrs Or More A Week	45.0%	19.8%	28.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Financial Aid.** The likelihood of receiving financial aid varied by spring enrollment pattern. Intercession Only students were less likely to be receiving financial aid, while Intercession and Regular Spring students were twice as likely as Regular Spring Only students to be receiving financial aid. This is illustrated in Figure 3.





## Other Student Characteristics

**Enrollment Type.** Enrollment type was strongly associated with spring enrollment pattern. Table 5 shows that Intersession and Regular Spring students were more likely than other students to have enrolled having completed a high school diploma. Intersession Only students, on the other hand, were much more likely to have already received an associate degree or higher.

**Table 5. Enrollment Type by Spring Enrollment Pattern**

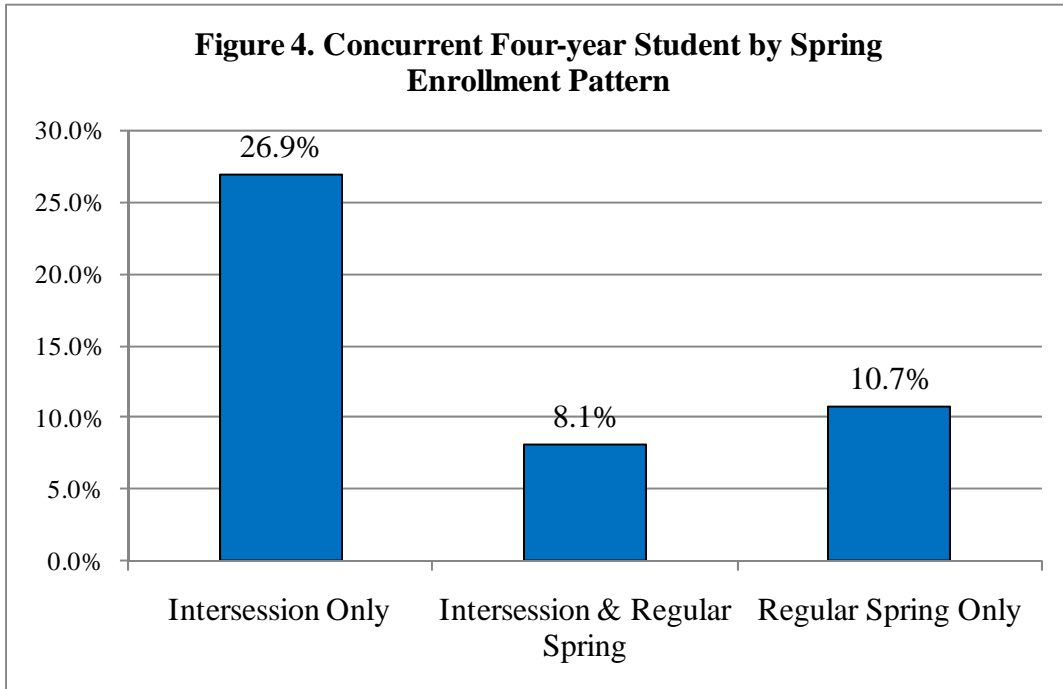
	Intersession Only	Intersession & Regular Spring	Regular Spring Only
Received High School Diploma	56.3%	74.1%	63.7%
Passed GED Received Certificate	3.0%	5.2%	4.7%
Currently Attends Adult School	0.5%	0.1%	0.5%
Received CA HS Proficiency	0.4%	0.9%	0.7%
Special Admit K-12 Student	0.3%	0.8%	3.9%
Received Foreign HS Diploma	3.0%	6.3%	5.4%
Not a HS Grad - Not Enrolled in HS	1.0%	1.6%	1.8%
Associate Degree	11.1%	4.3%	6.0%
Bachelors Degree Or Higher	24.4%	6.8%	13.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Enrollment Status.** Students also differed in terms of their enrollment status depending on their spring enrollment pattern. Table 6 shows that Intersession Only students were much more likely than other students to be first-time or returning students. Intersession and Regular Spring students were almost all (89.2%) continuing students. Almost two-thirds (65.8%) of Regular Spring Only students were also continuing students.

**Table 6. Enrollment Status by Spring Enrollment Pattern**

	Intersession Only	Intersession & Regular Spring	Regular Spring Only
Current High School Student	0.3%	0.7%	4.2%
First-Time Student	4.8%	1.5%	5.8%
First-Time Transfer Student	24.3%	4.3%	11.9%
Returning Transfer Student	17.2%	1.7%	5.1%
Returning Student	9.2%	2.4%	6.8%
Continuing Student	43.9%	89.2%	65.8%
Unknown	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Concurrency.** A number of SDCCD students are also enrolled in degree programs at four-year institutions. This is especially true of the Intersession Only students. As revealed in Figure 4, over a quarter (26.9%) of the Intersession Only students were concurrently enrolled in a four-year institution compared to 8.1% of Intersession and Regular Spring students and 10.7% of Regular Spring Only students.



## Student Behaviors

### Enrollment

Not all students who registered for an intersession class followed through and attended their classes. The likelihood of maintaining enrollment (that is, getting a grade from at least one class) in Intersession has fluctuated over the past three years. This is seen in Figure 5.

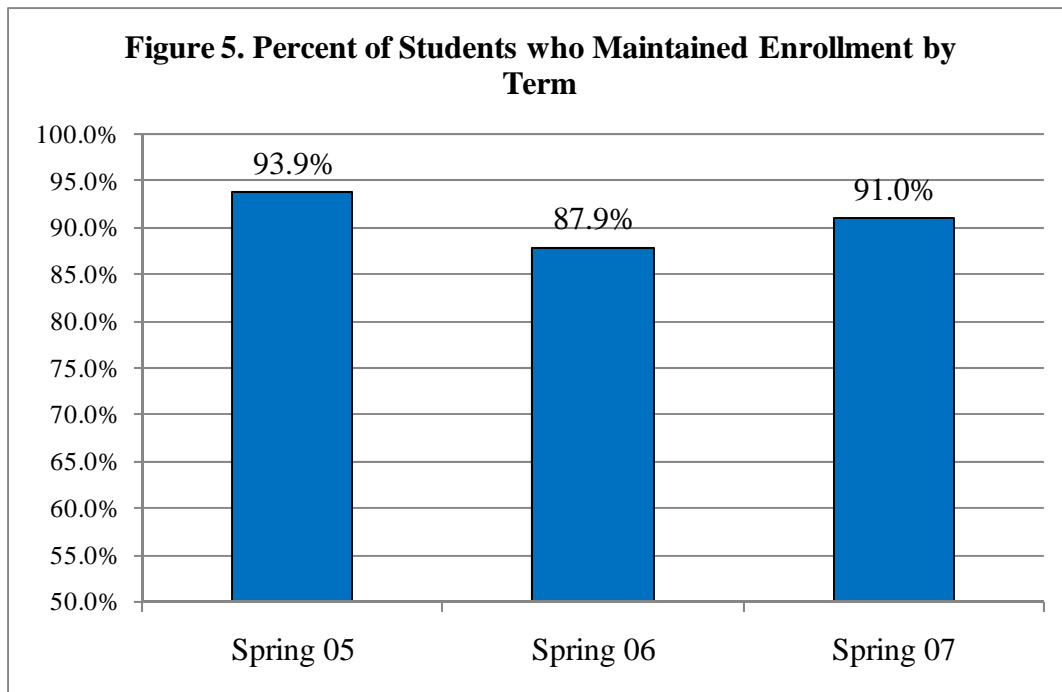
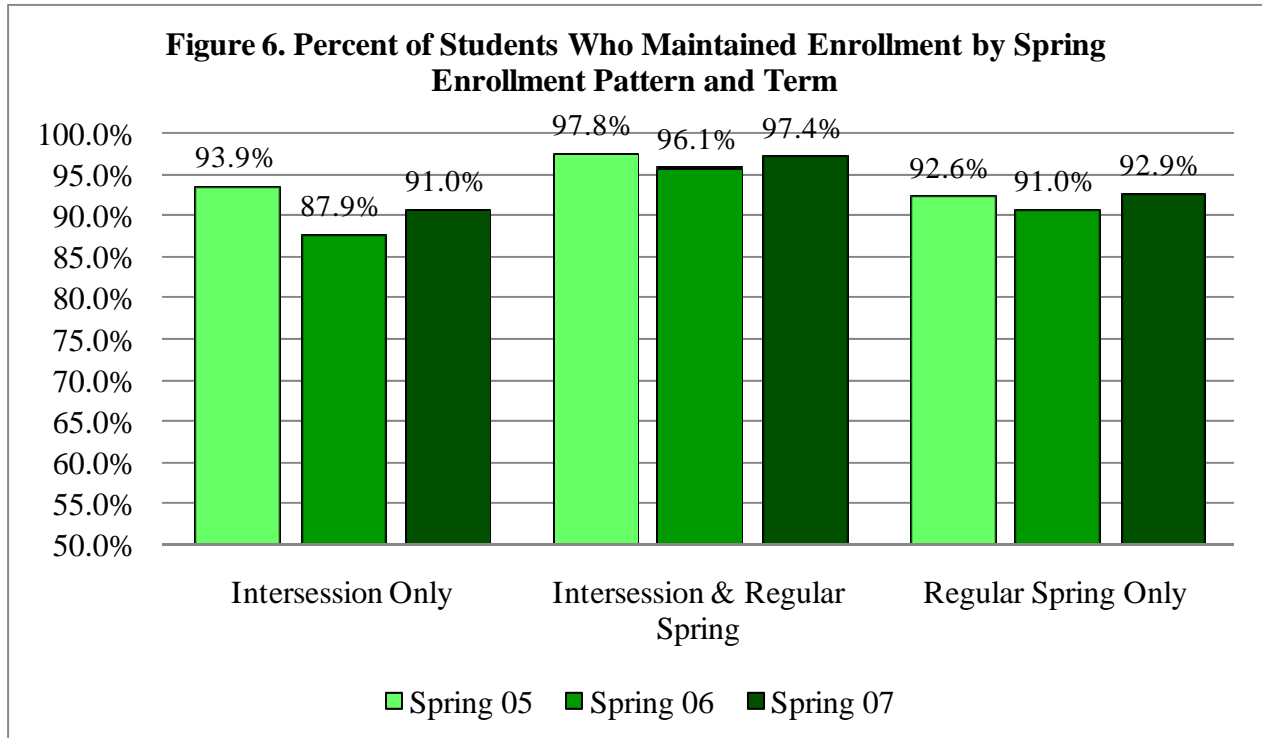


Figure 6 shows the enrollment rates over the three years for all three spring enrollment patterns. This figure shows that the dip in enrollment rate seen for the intercession is mirrored in the other spring enrollment patterns. The figure also shows that the enrollment rate for students taking both intercession and regular spring classes is significantly higher than that for Intercession Only and Regular Spring Only students. Intercession and Regular Spring students maintained enrollment at a rate of 97.4% compared to 91.0% for Intercession Only students and 92.9% for Regular Spring Only students.



## Units Earned

The average number of units the students earned was of interest, and provides a valuable perspective on the utility of the spring intercession for students and the district. Of key interest is whether students utilize intercession as an opportunity to progress more rapidly towards their goals, or if they are simply spreading out their spring course taking across the regular spring session and intercession. To address this question, a ratio was computed (for students who took classes in both fall and spring) of the number of units they took in the spring to the number they took in the fall. If a student took the same number of units in the spring as in the fall, the ratio would equal 1, while those taking more classes in the spring would have a ratio greater than 1. This analysis is limited to students who earned units in both the fall and spring terms.

Table 7 shows that, as one would expect, students who took only intersession classes earned fewer units in the spring (which includes intersession) than they had in the fall. The ratio of 0.64 indicates that they earned only 64% of the units in spring that they did in the previous fall. However, for Regular Spring Only students, their units ratio was 1.00. Those who didn't take intersession, on average, earned the same number of units in spring as they had in fall. The big difference in terms of total units comes from the Intersession and Regular Spring students. On average, they earned 28% more units in the spring than they had in the fall. The student earning 12 units in the fall was likely to earn more than 15 units in the spring if he or she took an intersession class. For most of the students taking intersession classes, their spring unit load was increased, not merely spread across the intersession and regular spring terms.

**Table 7. Ratio of Spring to Fall Units Earned by Spring Enrollment Pattern for Spring 2005, 2006, and 2007**

	N	Ratio of Spring to Fall Units
Intersession Only	868	0.64
Intersession & Regular Spring	15,375	1.28
Regular Spring Only	65,165	1.00
Total	81,408	1.05

The spring-to-fall units ratio is displayed, by term, in Table 8. For the Intersession Only and the Intersession and Regular Spring enrollment patterns, there was a dip in the spring-to-fall units ratios in 2006.

**Table 8. Ratio of Spring to Fall Units by Term and Spring Enrollment Pattern**

		N	Mean Ratio
Intersession Only	Spring 2005	246	0.71
	Spring 2006	353	0.59
	Spring 2007	269	0.63
	Total	868	0.64
Intersession & Regular Spring	Spring 2005	3,987	1.32
	Spring 2006	5,805	1.23
	Spring 2007	5,583	1.31
	Total	15,375	1.28
Regular Spring Only	Spring 2005	23,618	1.02
	Spring 2006	20,521	0.99
	Spring 2007	21,026	0.98
	Total	65,165	1.00

## GPA

The performance of students was analyzed by term and enrollment pattern in terms of GPA. It is important to note that the student is the unit of analysis. That is, the students are unduplicated in this analysis. Table 9 shows that the average GPA was highest for Intersession Only students, and was higher for Intersession and Regular Spring students than it was for Regular Spring Only students. The table also shows that spring students saw a dip in GPA's in 2006.

**Table 9. Average Term GPA by Term and Spring Enrollment Pattern**

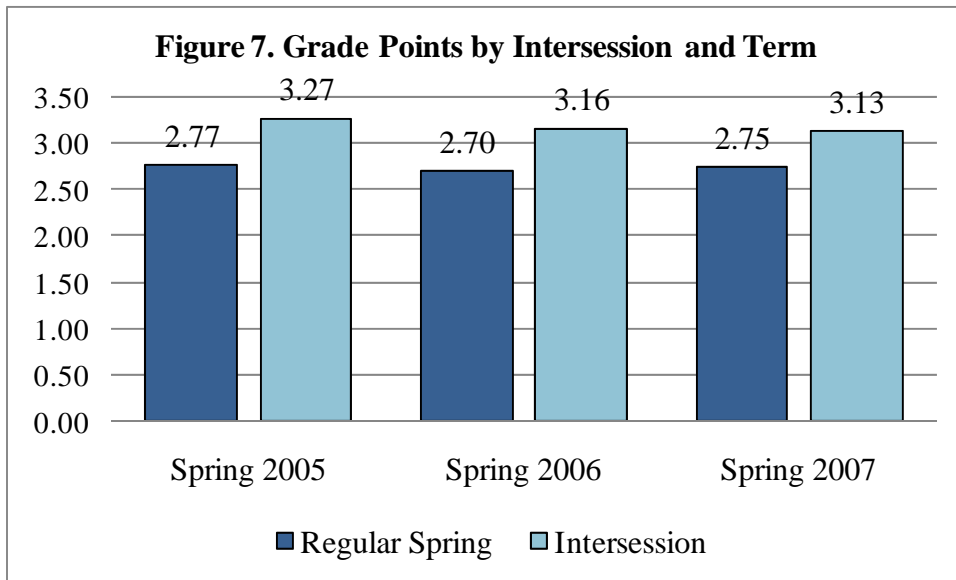
		N	Mean
Intersession Only	Spring 2005	977	3.25
	Spring 2006	1,358	3.02
	Spring 2007	1,254	2.95
	Total	3,589	3.06
Intersession & Regular Spring	Spring 2005	5,005	2.69
	Spring 2006	7,197	2.55
	Spring 2007	7,044	2.62
	Total	19,246	2.61
Regular Spring Only	Spring 2005	39,941	2.28
	Spring 2006	35,690	2.17
	Spring 2007	38,047	2.21
	Total	113,678	2.23

## Course Outcomes

The course outcomes assessed in this study are grade points, drops, and withdrawals. For each of these outcomes, the unit of analysis is an enrollment. That is, students are duplicated for each enrollment they generated.

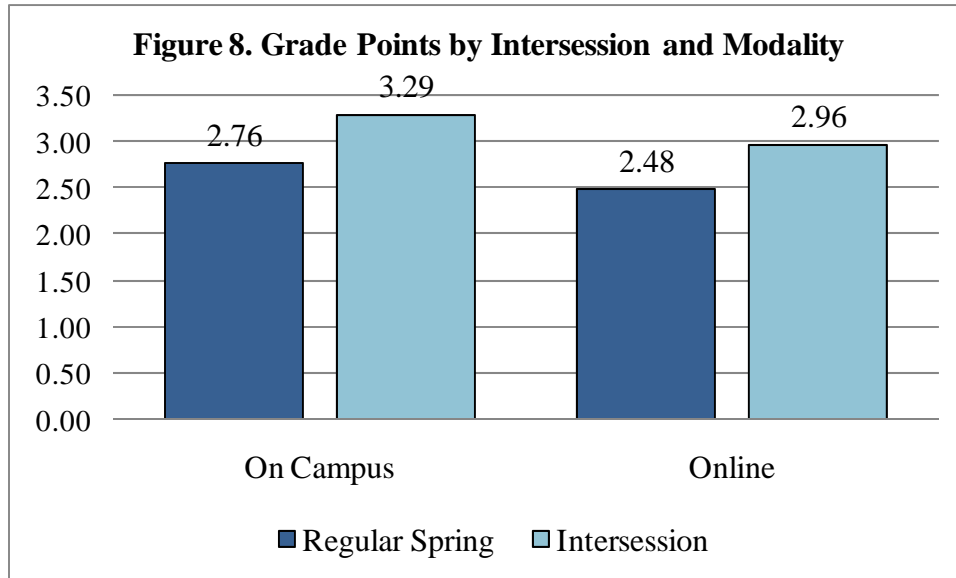
**Grade Points**

Performance was assessed in terms of grade points. Grade points are the values assigned to grades on a four-point scale. The level of analysis is the enrollment. That is, this analysis compares grades associated with enrollments rather than aggregated GPA's for students. Average grade points are displayed in Figure 7 by intersession and term. The figure reveals two findings. First, the average grade points for intersession were substantially higher than for regular spring. Second, the average grade points over the past three spring terms have remained stable for regular spring, but declined slightly for intersession.





Grade points were also examined by intersession and modality. While Figure 8 demonstrates an effect of modality, this effect does not qualify the advantage in grade points of intersession over regular spring.



***Drops, Never Attended, and Withdrawals***

For the purposes of this study, *Dropped* and *Never Attended* outcomes are not regarded as enrollments, as the student has exited a class prior to census. In practice, these outcomes are difficult to distinguish using our student databases, and are therefore analyzed together. *Withdrawals* are outcomes in which the student exits a class after the census date, but the student does not complete the class. Table 10 shows that these outcomes differ slightly in intersession compared to regular spring. That is, intersession enrollments were less likely to result in a withdrawal, and more likely to end up with a course grade.

**Table 10. Course Outcomes by Intersession**

	Regular Spring	Intersession
Dropped or Never Attended	25.0%	26.3%
Withdrew	13.8%	10.2%
Course Grade Received	61.2%	63.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The likelihood of these course outcomes was examined for intersession students by term. Table 11 shows that these outcomes varied across terms. Spring 2006 witnessed a 30.7% drop or never attended rate, considerably higher than the other two intersession terms.

**Table 11. Intersession Course Outcomes by Term**

	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007
Dropped Or Never Attended	22.9%	30.7%	23.8%
Withdrew	9.5%	9.8%	10.9%
Course Grade Received	67.6%	59.5%	65.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The likelihood of drops or never attended and withdrawals from intersession classes also depended on the modality of the class. Table 12 shows that both drops and never attended and withdrawals were significantly more likely for online classes than for on campus classes. Overall, across the three intersession terms, 57.1% of online classes resulted in course grades, while 67.1% of on campus classes did so.

**Table 12. Intersession Course Outcomes by Mode**

	On Campus	Online
Dropped or Never Attended	24.5%	29.5%
Withdrew	8.4%	13.3%
Course Grade Received	67.1%	57.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

## Courses

The characteristics of the courses offered over the past three intersession terms were examined. The following analyses show that there were significant changes in the course offering compositions over the three intersession terms.

## Schedule Characteristics

The modality and time of day of the intersession course offerings were examined. Tables 13 and 14 show growth in the proportion of intersession classes offered online and in the evening.

**Table 13. Intersession Course Modality by Term**

	Spring 05	Spring 06	Spring 07
On Campus	86.4%	78.0%	67.8%
Online	13.6%	22.0%	32.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 14. Intersession Class Time by Term**

	Spring 05	Spring 06	Spring 07
Day Status	89.3%	86.5%	77.4%
Evening Status	10.7%	13.5%	22.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

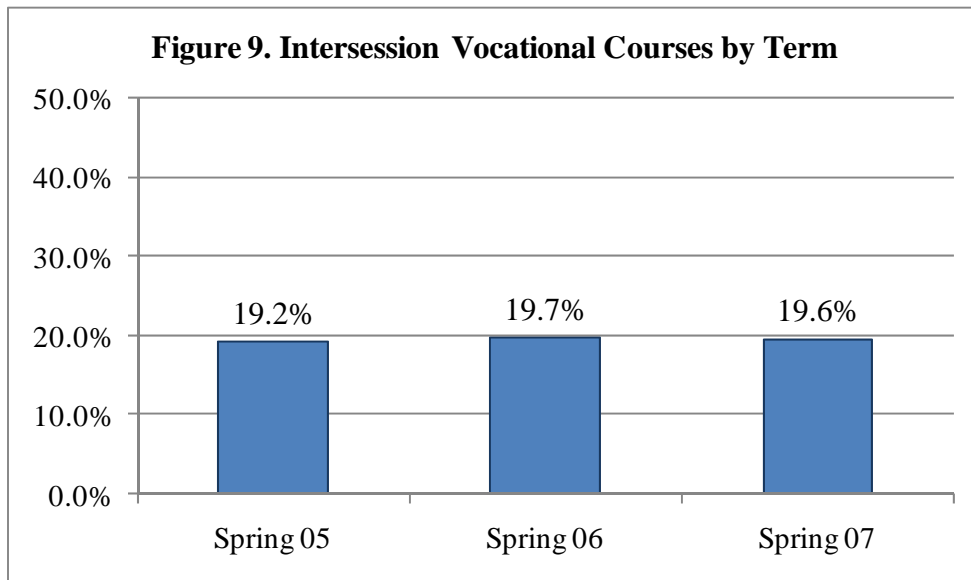
## Course Types

Table 15 shows the course levels of classes offered in the three intersession terms. The table reveals a substantial shift toward higher level courses over the three terms. From 2005 to 2007, the percentage of classes below the 050 level dropped while classes in the 100 to 199 level increased from 49.8% to 71.6%.

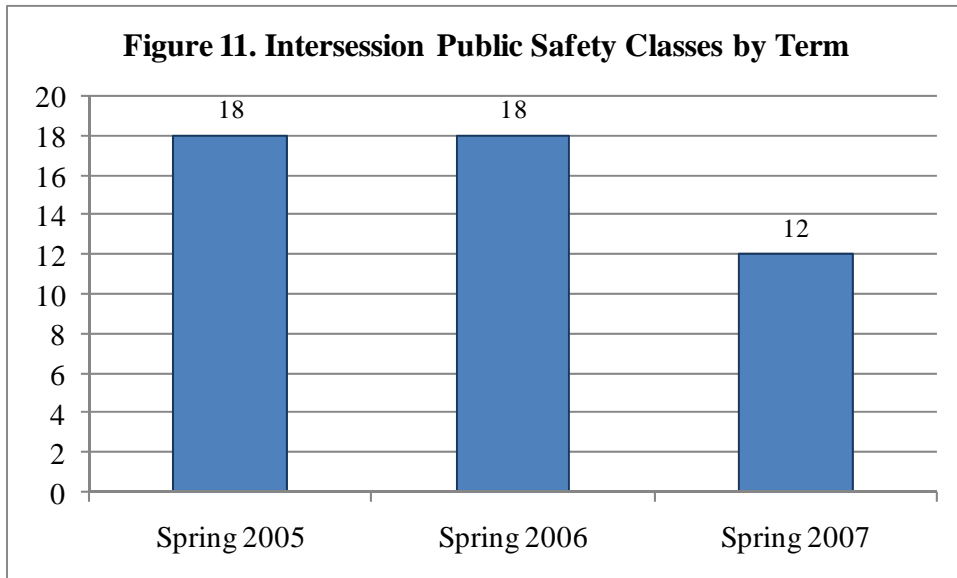
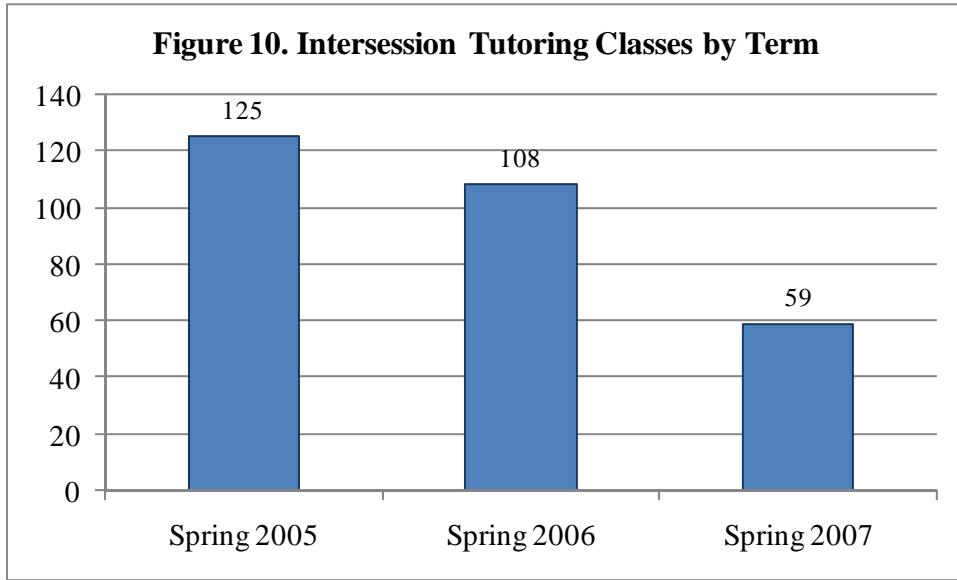
**Table 15. Intersession Course Level by Term**

	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007
Lowest through 049	41.6%	28.0%	18.8%
050 through 99	0.6%	1.2%	1.8%
100 through 199	49.8%	63.0%	71.6%
200 & Higher	7.9%	7.8%	7.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The percentages of classes offered that were vocational (defined as SAM code B or C) are displayed in Figure 9. This percentage has been very stable over the three terms.

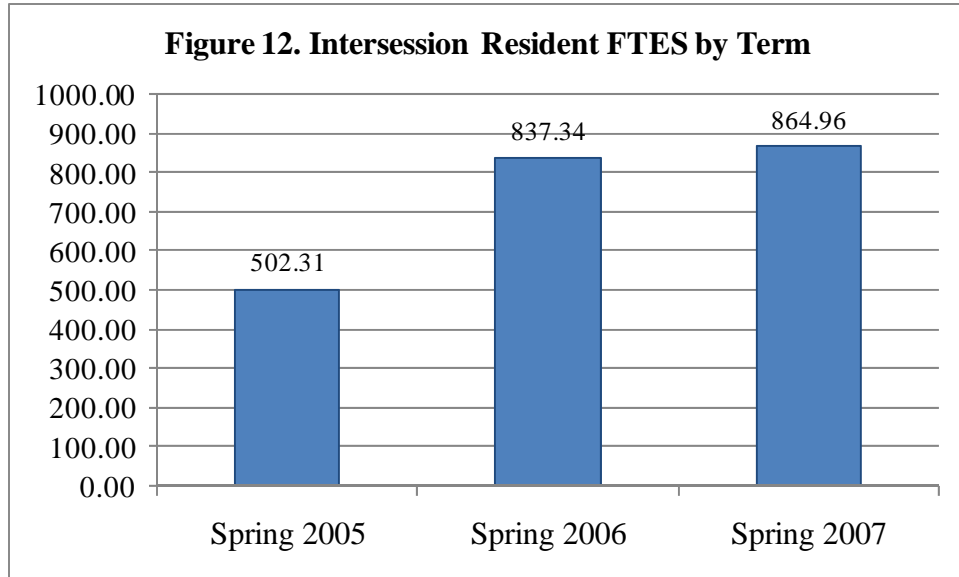


The number of tutoring classes utilized in intersession has fallen off considerably over the three terms, as is illustrated in Figure 10. In addition, Figure 11 shows a reduction in the number of public safety classes in the 2007 intersession.

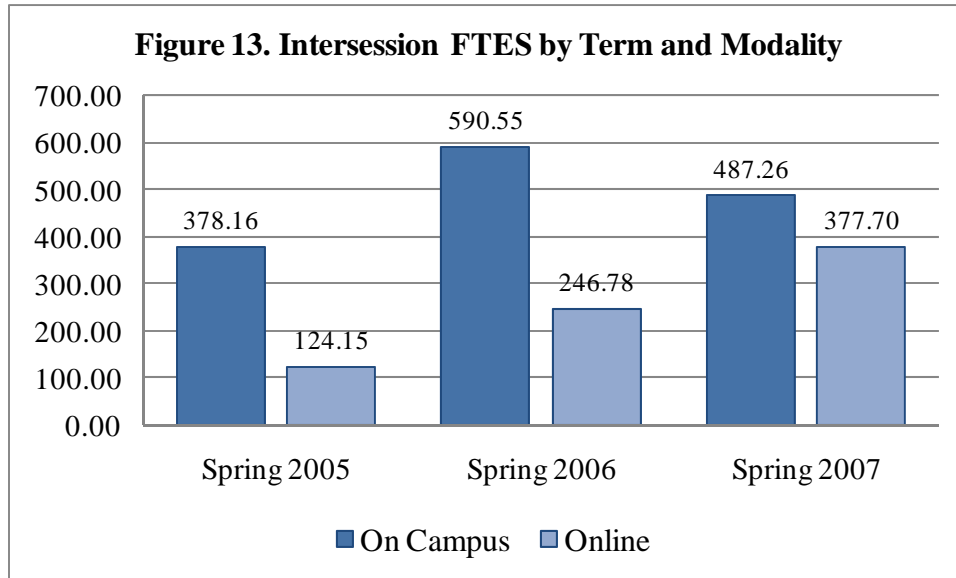


## FTES

The college resident FTES was examined over the three intersession terms. Figure 12 shows that the total FTES jumped considerably (66.7%) in 2006, and continued to increase slightly (3.3%) in 2007.



The growth in FTES illustrated in Figure 12 was not consistent across modalities. Figure 13 reveals that while online FTES has continued to grow significantly, on campus FTES was highest in 2006.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report has presented an overall picture of intersession in terms of student behaviors and characteristics, course characteristics, and FTES. It has also identified where there have been changes over the last three intersession terms. Some key points are noted below.

### Student Characteristics

- Intersession Only students were more likely than other students to (a) be married, (b) work 40 hours per week, (c) have an associate or bachelor degree, and (d) be concurrently enrolled in a four-year institution.
- Intersession and Regular Spring students were more likely to (a) be younger, (b) receive financial aid, and (c) be continuing students.

### Student Behaviors

- Intersession and Regular Spring students earned 28% more units in the spring than they had in the fall.
- GPA was highest for Intersession Only students, and was higher for Intersession and Regular Spring students than it was for Regular Spring Only students.
- The average grade was substantially higher for intersession than for regular spring.
- Intersession enrollments were less likely to result in a withdrawal, and more likely to result in a course grade.

### Courses

- The proportion of intersession classes offered online and in the evening has grown over the three terms.
- The course levels of intersession courses have shifted higher over the three terms.

### FTES

- Total intersession FTES has increased since 2005.
- Online intersession FTES has continued to grow significantly, while on campus FTES was highest in 2006.

Three important points are worth discussion: student profiles, units taken, and FTES patterns. The findings reported in this study show that the student characteristics differ by enrollment pattern. The profiles of the Intersession Only students, the Intersession and Regular Spring student, and the Regular Spring Only students all look a little different. These patterns are reinforced by student behaviors.

The spring-to-fall units ratio provides some illuminating results. Specifically, these findings demonstrate that students are using intersession to accelerate their progress, not merely lighten



their regular spring load. Overall, intersession does not simply siphon off enrollments from regular spring.

The FTES results are also worth mentioning. While the jump in intersession FTES from 2005 to 2006 reflects the district's stage of development with respect to intersession, with 2005 being the first year intersession was offered, FTES increased from 2006 to 2007 by 3%.