

Executive Summary

Introduction

In order to obtain data about why students drop out of the San Diego Community College District's three colleges prior to degree attainment or class completion, SDCCD's Office of Institutional Research began a comprehensive retention study during the Fall 2000 semester.

Institutional Research's analysis was focused on three populations. Each group was identified, demographic analysis was conducted, and sample populations were mailed surveys to obtain more information about why they failed to complete their matriculation goals.

The three groups examined were:

Group 1: Students who applied but did not enroll

Group 2: Students who dropped all classes before census (week 4)

Group 3: Students who withdrew from all classes after census

Research Groups

College	Group 1: Applied but did not Enroll	Group 2: Dropped all classes before census	Group 3: Withdrew all classes after census	Fall 2000 Enrollment as of census
City	2,247	932	1,483	13,268
Mesa	2,292	1,478	2,224	20,204
Miramar	812	566	653	6,971
ECC	144	56	89	716
SDCCD Total	5,495	3,032	4,449	41,159

The purpose of this study is to provide a thorough analysis of these three groups so administrators and policymakers may be more informed in their efforts to create outreach or retention activities.

This is the first report conducted by Institutional Research. Further analysis on other populations is underway.

Each group was analyzed in three ways:

1. Demographic analysis: Provides a demographic profile of each group. Included in the analysis are ethnicity, educational objective, GPA, and other variables.

2. Prediction analysis: Identifies factors, if any, which can predict student behaviors or tendencies.
3. Survey analysis: A sample of each population was surveyed to identify reasons for not successfully matriculating.

Summary of Findings

Group 1: Applied but did not enroll

The following differences in demographics were found among students who applied but did not enroll and the general population. All demographics can be found in the appendix by college and district total.

- More males applied but did not enroll compared to the District population. This is particularly evident at Miramar (56.2% males applied and did not enroll compared to 52.9% males enrolled at Miramar Fall 2000).
- There were a greater number of students that did not graduate from high school who applied but did not enroll (5.8% versus 2.6%). 13.2% of students at ECC who applied and did not enroll were not high school graduates versus 5.9% of ECC's total population.
- Among the students who were identified as either first generation or non-first generation, there were more first generation students who applied but did not enroll compared to the general population (28.6% versus 23.2%). This is evident at all colleges except ECC, and especially at Miramar (25.1% versus 20.7%).
- More of the students in the District who applied but did not enroll (14.9%) were African American compared to the general District population (10.0%). This difference is particularly apparent at City (22.9% versus 16.5%).
- 17.2% of the students who applied but did not enroll at Mesa were 18 years old compared to 8.0% of total enrollment Fall 2000.
- At Miramar and ECC, there were more students working 40 or more hours per week that applied but did not enroll compared to the population.

Group 2: Dropped all classes before census

- More females dropped all classes before census compared to the District population. This is particularly evident at Miramar (54.9% females dropped all classes compared to 46.6% females enrolled at Miramar Fall 2000).

- There were more students who dropped all classes that work 40 or more hours per week compared to the population. At Mesa, 34.2% of students who dropped were working 40 or more hours per week, compared to 29.6% of the population.
- Students who dropped were generally older than the population. 62.9% of those students were over the age of 25, compared to 49.4% of the population. At City College, 56% of the population is over 25 compared to 69% of the students who dropped all classes.
- The majority of students who dropped (50.4%), attempted less than 5 units during Fall 2000 compared to 30.9% of the population that attempted less than 5 units.
- At Mesa, 65.1% of the students who dropped all classes were transfer level writing students compared to 61.6% of the population. At City, 29% of the students who dropped were transfer level math students, compared to 25.2% of the total population.
- Miramar had more students who completed 0 cumulative units than the population (30.7% compared to 36.0%). This was not true for the entire District.
- There were more students who dropped all classes at ECC (17.9%) who were there to obtain an Associates degree without transferring than the population (8.9%).

Group 3: Withdrew after census

The following differences in demographics were found among students who withdrew from all classes after census and the general population as of census. Of the three groups, students who withdrew from all classes after census have fewer differences compared to the District population. All demographics can be found in the appendix by college and District total.

- More returning students withdrew from all courses after census than the general population (10.3% versus 6.6%). This can be seen at Mesa, where 8.4% of student who withdrew were returning students compared to 5.2% of the population.
- 29.6% of students who withdrew work more than 40 hours a week compared to 34.0% of the total population that works more than 40 hours a week.

- Students who withdrew had 0 cumulative units (35.2%) more often than the total population (31.0%).
- More students who withdrew were enrolled in less than 5 units Fall 2000. This is particularly evident at Mesa where 42.8% of the students who withdrew from all classes were enrolled in less than 5 units Fall 2000, compared to 27.0% of the population.
- At City College, 34.6% of students who withdrew were working 40 or more hours per week compared to 30.8% of the population. Similarly, at Mesa 30.8% of the students who withdrew were working more than 40 hours a week compared to 24.8% of the population.

Observations and Recommendations

The research generates valuable information for creating efficient and effective retention strategies to increase student retention and success in the District. Based on research findings and student comments, it is recommended that SDCCD should implement the following retention practices:

- Offering shorter semester terms and more flexible course schedules.
- Offering more online classes and online registration.
- Increasing parking capacity on campus.
- Make financial aid information more readily available to students.
- Maintaining high quality of instruction.
- Offering additional classes in information technology, liberal arts, career preparation, and recreational areas.
- Establishing customer service guidelines for those offices that work directly with students.
- Have counseling services more accessible to students.

Institutional Research will continue to conduct analysis of these three groups and other identified populations in order to increase retention outcomes, including successful class completion, degree attainment, and successful matriculation.