

**What We Can Learn About Students
Who Persist to Degrees:
Findings from Longitudinal Analyses of
Multiple Survey Instruments**

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How generally can we describe Appalachian State University?

- Rural/small town location in NW North Carolina with Fall 2004 headcount of 14,653
- 90% In-state; 90% undergraduate
- Traditional college age undergraduates on a residential campus
 - 2,516 new freshmen
- Predominantly full-time (87%)
- Predominantly white, urban North Carolinians
- Higher socioeconomic status
- Higher academic credentials
- Generally satisfied with the university

Assessment at Appalachian

- Assessment plan with tracking matrix
- Began in mid to late-1990s
- Assessment plan for each freshman cohort through the 8th semester

Looking back at the 2000 Freshman Cohort

- N= 2,555
- Average SAT: 1086
- HS GPA: 3.51
- Predicted GPA: 2.65

- Male: 46.2%
- Female: 53.8%

- In-State: 84.3%
- Out-of-State: 15.7%

Looking forward to those identified as graduated from the 2000 cohort

Original Cohort:

- Average SAT: 1086
- HS GPA: 3.51
- Predicted GPA: 2.65

- Male: 46.2%
- Female: 53.8%

- In-State: 84.3%
- Out-of-State: 15.7%

Graduates:

- Average SAT: 1112
- HS GPA: 3.71
- Predicted GPA: 2.84

- Male: 30.6%
- Female: 69.4%

- In-State: 86.6%
- Out-of-State: 13.4%

2000 Freshman Cohort Usable Instruments

Graduated as of May 2004:	530 (27%)
Still Enrolled:	825 (41%)
Not Enrolled:	647 (32%)

**Example of Findings
for the Fall 2000 Freshman Cohort:
graduated vs. still enrolled vs. not enrolled ($p < .05$)**

- Dropout proneness (stanine scale and percentile rank)
- Family emotional support
- Desire to finish college
- Importance placed on grades
- Initial impressions of the institution
- Desire to transfer

**Example of Findings
for the Fall 2000 Freshman Cohort:
graduated/still enrolled vs. not enrolled (p<.05)**

- Sense of financial security
- Receptivity to social enrichment

**Example of Findings
for the Fall 2000 Freshman Cohort:
graduated vs. still enrolled/not enrolled (p<.05)**

- Predicted academic difficulty (stanine scale and percentile rank)
- Attitude toward educators
- Intellectual interests
- Leadership (perception of self)
- Study habits
- Impression of academic offerings

**Example of Findings
for the Fall 2000 Freshman Cohort:
graduated vs. not enrolled ($p < .05$)**

- Handling educational stress (stanine scale and percentile rank)
- Impression of location
- Impression of costs

**Example of Findings
for the Fall 2000 Freshman Cohort:
graduated vs. still enrolled ($p < .05$)**

- Receptivity to academic assistance
- Academic confidence
- Sociability

**Example of Findings
for the Fall 2000 Freshman Cohort:
graduated/not enrolled vs. still enrolled (p<.05)**

- Receptivity to institutional help (stanine scale and percentile rank)

Example of Findings

for the Fall 2000 freshman cohort: graduated vs. still enrolled vs. not enrolled

	Graduated (%)	NG-Enrolled (%)	NG-NE (%)
Experiences: How Often (Very often/Often)			
Prepared 2 or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	58.7	66.3	57.4
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or info from various sources	74.3	83.2	72.2
Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	58.4	68.4	59.3
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	45.5	63.2	42.6
During Current School Year, how much Reading and Writing			
Number of books read on own for personal enjoyment/ academic enrichment (5 or more)	19.8	8.4	22.2
Which of the following have you done/plan to do before you graduate? (Yes)			
Study abroad	31.7	41.1	35.2
To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to the following (Very much/Quite a bit)			
Writing clearly and effectively	68.3	77.9	72.2
Learning effectively on your own	75.2	85.3	74.1
To what extent does your institution emphasize the following (Very much/Quite a bit)			
Encouraging contact among students from difference economic, social, racial/ethnic backgrounds	59.4	70.5	46.3
Helping you cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	39.0	50.5	13 46.3

Fall 2000 Freshman Cohort: Sample Policy Implications

- Where are the highest payoffs for intervention efforts?
- What does the role of first impressions play in students' decisions to stay or leave and what can be done about those impressions?
- Students who are still enrolled after four years are different from those who have graduated and those not retained. How can that information be used to promote their persisting to graduation?

Next Steps

- Data mining second-year, fourth-year, and alumni surveys administered to the 2000 Freshman Cohort
- Data mining batteries of surveys administered to other Freshman Cohorts
- Tracking students who earn degrees at other institutions

More Information

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