



# Research Brief #88

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## Academic Probation Enrollment Analysis Spring 2015

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As part of the Upgrade Workshop evaluation for Student Success and Support Program, enrollment data for students who were placed on Academic probation for the first time (first semester: A1s) in spring 2015 were analyzed by Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness office, in coordination with the Student Services Department. This analysis is part of a broader evaluation plan for the Upgrade Workshops that are provided as an intervention to bring students back to good standing. The purpose of this analysis was to identify specific enrollment patterns that can be addressed in the intervention as common obstacles that students who have academic difficulty may face.

A total of 763 students were placed on first-semester academic probation in spring 2015 and this report is reflective of course enrollment patterns for these students (n=763) and as a comparison group, students who were enrolled in spring 2015 and were not on academic probation (n=16,379). Data on A1 students were obtained from Datatel & academic standings were verified by the Director of Student Success and Support Program. Data on the comparison group were obtained from 320 enrollment files for spring 2015.

These analyses were aimed to answer the following research question: How do A1 students' course-taking behaviors compare to those of the overall college population?

### Course-Type Enrollment

Enrollment patterns for A1 students taking online courses as compared to on-ground courses and time of courses (day, evening, or both) were examined.

#### *Online vs. On-ground*

Enrollment data were categorized into a) traditional/on-ground, b) online or c) both. This categorization was based on the sum total of each type of course in which students enrolled. If a student was enrolled in 3 on-ground classes and 1 online class, that student was categorized as a primarily on-ground student. If the number of on-ground courses was equal to the number of online courses, the student was categorized as taking both types of courses equally.

In spring 2015, the semester that they were placed on academic probation, most A1 students were enrolled in on-ground, traditional courses (90%). This is slightly higher than the rate of the overall student population that is enrolled in on-ground courses in that same semester (82.2%). Table 1 provides further information.

Table 1. Online vs. On-ground Course Enrollment

	Academic Probation A1s	Comparison Group
On-ground	685 (90%)	13471 (82.2%)
Online	52 (6.8%)	1119 (6.8%)
Both on-ground & online	25 (3.3%)	1789 (10.9%)

### Day vs. Evening

Enrollment data were categorized into a) day courses, b) evening courses or c) both day and evening, based on the sum total of each type of course students were enrolled in. For instance, if a student was enrolled in 3 daytime classes and 1 evening class, that student was categorized as a primarily day time student, if the number of day courses was equal to the number of evening courses, the student was categorized as taking both types of courses equally.

Most A1 students were primarily enrolled in courses held during the day (80.3%). This is slightly higher than the rate of the overall student population that is enrolled in day courses in that same semester (73.1%). Table 2 provides further information.

Table 2. Day vs. Evening Course Enrollment

	Academic Probation A1s	Comparison Group
Day	612 (80.3%)	11967 (73.1%)
Night	89 (11.7%)	2602 (15.9%)
Both Day & Night	61 (8.0%)	1810 (11.1%)

With regard to course-type enrollment, A1 students have a pattern of taking traditional types of on-ground and daytime courses.

## Number of Units

The number of units that each group was enrolled in for spring 2015 were compared to observe potential patterns of over commitment as an obstacle to academic success. The A1 group had a higher mean number of units (10.5) they were enrolled in compared to the group of students who were not on first-semester academic probation (9.0 units). Furthermore, an independent sample t-test indicated that the means for unit load were significantly different across the two groups ( $t(15966) = 9.5; p < .001$ ). Table 3 provides further information. The sample size is smaller because minimum criteria for this analysis was enrollment in 1.0 unit.

Table 3. Unit Load

	Academic Probation A1s	Comparison Group
Mean number of units	10.5 (SD=3.4)	9.0 (SD=4.2)
Median number of units	11.0	9.0
Minimum-Maximum	1.0 – 23.0	1.0 – 27.0

## “Historically-Difficult” Course Enrollment

Historically difficult courses are courses with a success rate of 70% or lower. Seventy-six courses met this criteria based on analyses in fall 2011, 2012 and 2013. The number of Historically-difficult course enrollments reported in Table 4 is the sum of the number of historically difficult courses each student

was enrolled in during spring 2015. These numbers were categorized as a) none b) one) two d) three to five. Compared to the general student population, A1 students had a higher rate of enrolling in such courses: 78% of A1 students were enrolled in at least one historically difficult course, compared to 56% of the non-A1 students. An independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the number of historically difficult courses that each group was enrolled in ( $t(17139) = 12.9; p < .001$ ).

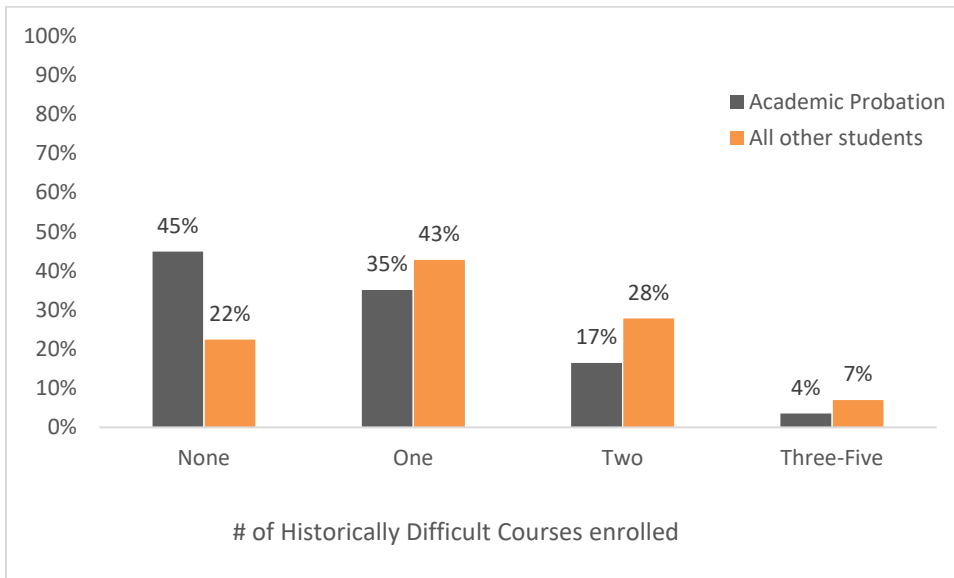


Figure 1. “Historically Difficult” Enrollment

Overall, the enrollment pattern with regard to the type of course (i.e. online/on-ground; day/evening), A1 students did not show patterns that were distinct from traditional students. However, distinctions were more apparent when examining unit load and enrollment in historically difficult courses. A1s were likely to have higher unit loads and were likely to enroll in historically difficult courses.

### Recommendations

Upon review of the enrollment pattern analysis of students on first-semester academic probation as compared to students who were not on academic probation in spring 2015, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Results should be discussed with counselors and other staff members who work with first-semester academic probation students so they can explore ways to incorporate them with their advisement of students and program planning. Specifically, management of over-commitment in terms of unit load and enrollment in more demanding courses should be taken into consideration.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness office located in BONH-224, or contact Preeta Saxena, Senior Research Analyst at 661.362.3072, or Daylene Meuschke, Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.5329.