Data Focus of the Month - January 2020

The Data Focus page this year has been examining various aspects of the student academic journey through a disaggregated lens in order to gauge the College's impacts*.* This month we examine the fall 2015 IPEDS cohort, comprised of 1,998 new, first-time, full-time, degree seeking students. The largest race/ethnic groups in this cohort are Hispanic (27.5 percent), Black (23.6 percent), White (20.3 percent) and Asian students (12.8 percent), with more male students (56 percent) than female students (44 percent).

Credit-hour milestones. The credit-hour milestones are leading indicators of academic progress and persistence, especially among full-time students seeking academic credentials. Students who earn at least 24 credits in their first year are well on track to finish an associate degree in about two years. Using the same pace, they should finish at least 48 credits by the end of the second year. To complete the degree requires 60 credits, so any such attainment bodes well for students.

Twenty-five percent of this cohort reached the one-year milestone. Slightly more than a quarter of the cohort, specifically 517 students, achieved the 24 credit-hour milestone by the end of the first academic year (see *Figure 1*). Black, Hispanic, and male students were far less successful at achieving this milestone than their racial/ethnic and female counterparts. In general, female students had a higher rate of success than male students across race/ethnicity (see *Figure 2*), with White female students excelling disproportionately compared to males.
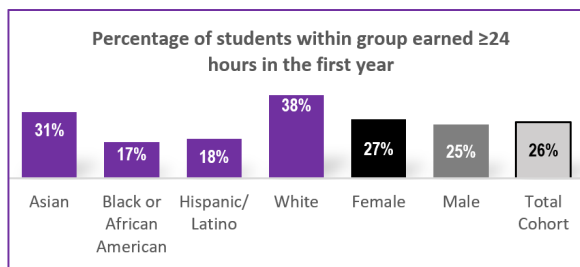

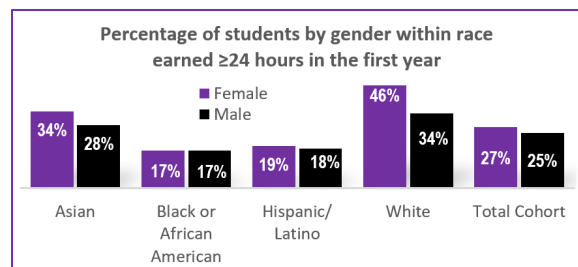*Figure 1.* Fall 2015 cohort first-year milestone of earning 24 credits, by race.

Figure 2. Fall 2015 cohort first-year milestone attainment, by race and gender.

Twenty percent reached the two-year milestone. By the end of the second year, 432 students in this cohort had earned at least 48 credit hours (see *Figure 3*). Black and Hispanic students were less likely than other student groups to achieve this milestone (see *Figure 4*). A much smaller percentage of Black and Hispanic students achieved this milestone. A slight differential by gender is noted across race/ethnicity, but the most pronounced is between White female and male students.
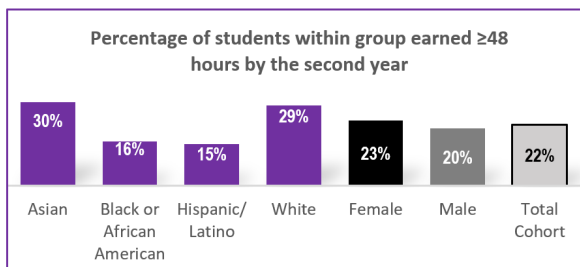

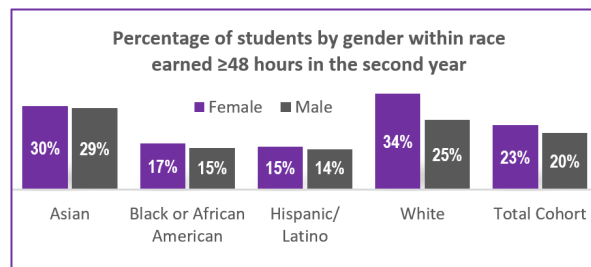*Figure 3.* Fall 2015 cohort second-year milestone of earning 48 credits, by race.

Figure 4. Fall 2015 cohort second-year milestone attainment, by race and gender.

Milestone trends. Female students appear to be more likely to achieve the credit hour milestones than male students are, and Black and Hispanic students have the lowest rates of success on this measure. Retention influences these statistics: female students returned at a higher rate than other students, and Black and Hispanic students returned at a lower rate. Other relevant factors, however, may be adequacy of high school preparation, academic achievement at MC, and financial struggles.