

Creating Harmony: Connecting Advisement and FYS Programming

Dr. David Henriques, Chair, Department of Academic Advisement & Student Development

Millersville University



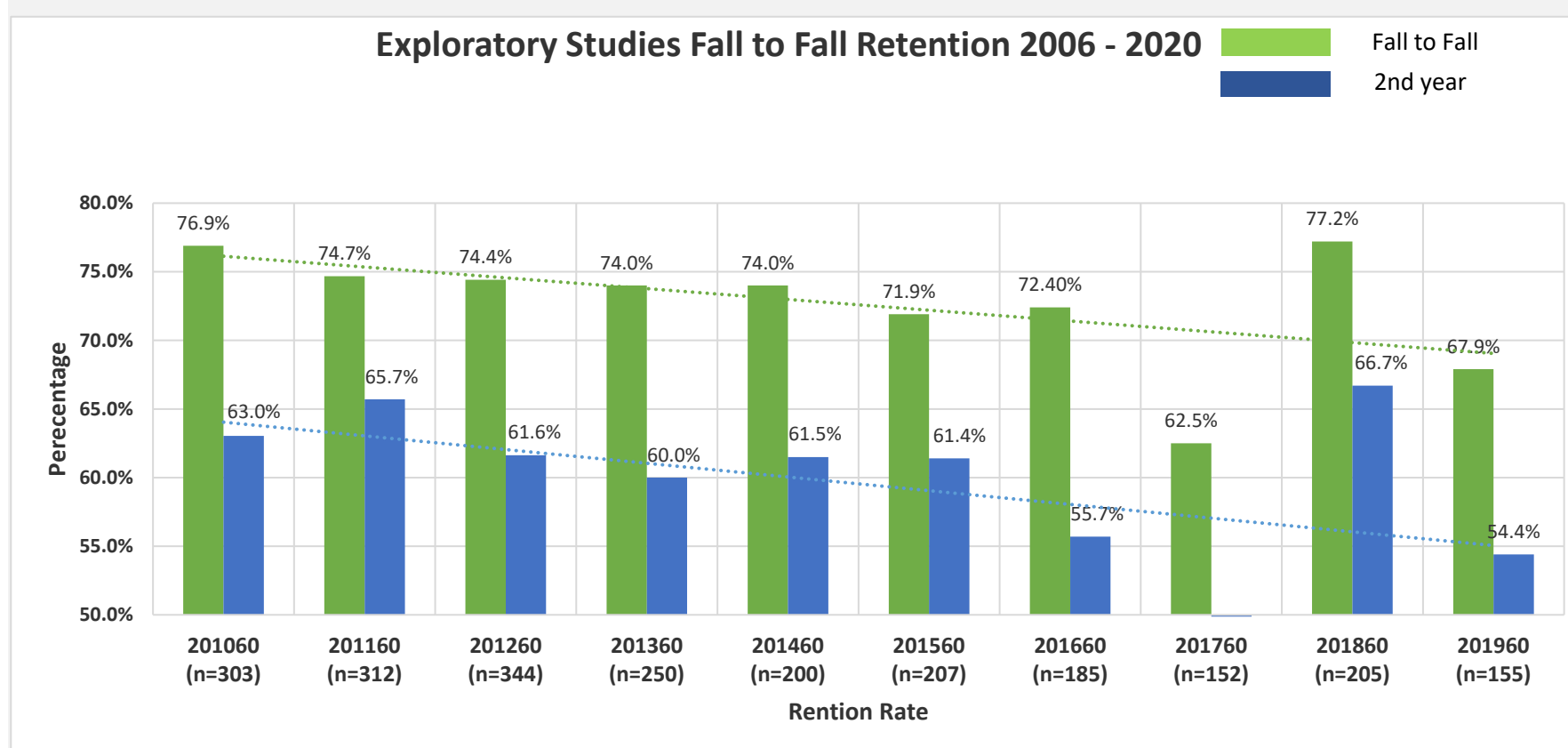
Background

Who: First-year Exploratory Program (EXPL) students (representing 15% and 12% of the incoming cohort) at Millersville University.

What: Required 1-credit FYS (First-year Seminar) in addition to their required 3-credit FYS course. 1-credit course taught by their advisor.

When: Academic years (2018 and 2019)

Why: See below:



Topic	201560	201660	Mean	201560	201660	Mean
	Never Discussed			2 or less class discussions		
Test Taking Skills	x	46%	46	x	88%	88
Mental Health	42%	39%	41	75%	83%	79
Financial Literacy	19%	35%	27	65%	88%	79
Stress Management	25%	33%	29	69%	84%	77
Note Taking	25%	39%	32	63%	85%	74
Reading Comprehension	25%	33%	29	63%	75%	69
Study Skills	26%	30%	28	61%	77%	69
Time Management Skills	17%	25%	21	52%	67%	60

Over 70% of EXPL students wished the university offered a course on major exploration and academic success.

Challenges:

- University tuition based on the per credit model
- Faculty who teach EXPL FYS course were outside the department
- Faculty who advise EXPL students were originally decentralized
- Only Faculty can advise

Implementation & Results

The Department of Academic Advisement & Student Development (AASD), in conjunction with our dean, designed a "traditional" FYS course focused primarily on transitional topics. Each section was taught by the student's respective Academic Advisor.

Academic

Fall Overall GPA (Mean)		
Fall Cohort	Freshmen Exploratory	Freshmen Overall
2015	2.53	2.68
2016	2.76	2.84
2017	2.57	2.77
2018	2.77	2.84
2019	2.76	2.78

Credit Completion Ratio (D- or higher)		
Fall Cohort	Freshmen Exploratory	Freshmen Overall
2015	86.6%	88.8%
2016	90.6%	90.5%
2017	86.9%	88.7%
2018	88.0%	89.3%
2019	90.3%	90.0%

COMM 100 Pass Rates (C- or higher)		
Fall Cohort	Freshmen Exploratory	Freshmen Overall
2015	77.8%	89.4%
2016	89.7%	90.0%
2017	75.7%	87.5%
2018	91.5%	92.2%
2019	84.3%	90.4%

ENGL 110 Pass Rates (C- or higher)		
Fall Cohort	Freshmen Exploratory	Freshmen Overall
2015	69.9%	80.6%
2016	91.0%	85.5%
2017	72.5%	83.2%
2018	80.4%	83.4%
2019	81.7%	81.0%

Retention

Exploratory Student Retention Rates			
Fall Cohort	#	Fall to Spring Retention Rate	Freshmen Cohort Overall
2014	191	89.0%	91.2%
2015	207	88.4%	90.8%
2016	185	87.6%	90.7%
2017	152	85.5%	89.9%
2018	205	91.7%	91.2%
2019	155	91.0%	91.0%

Fall to Fall retention appears on graph to the left

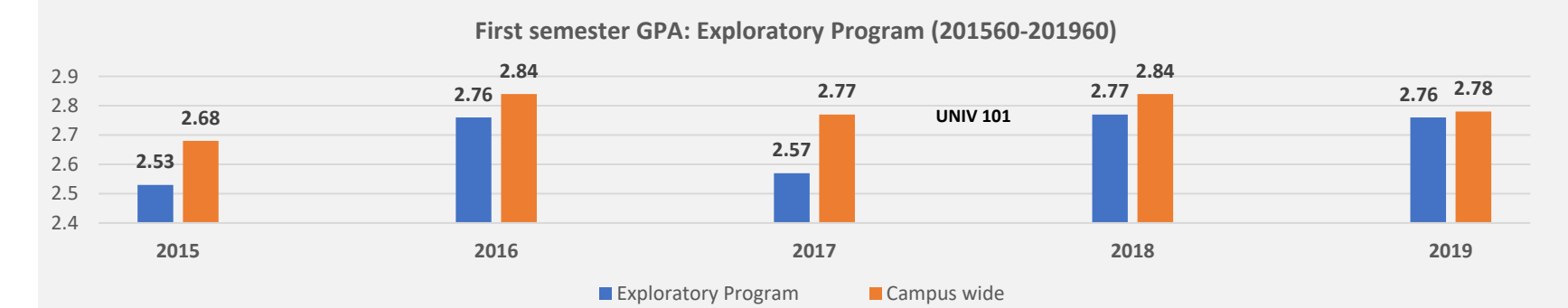
Advisement and Outreach

EXPL student ratings of Advisement	Advising is Pleasant and Rewarding	Neutral	Unpleasant and Frustrating
2017	62%	30%	8%
2018	80%	19%	1%
2019	87%	13%	0%

Question	Yes	IDK	No
Did you provide academic skill instruction to other students?	59.2%	11.7%	29.1%
Did you provide registration/scheduling help to other students?	60.9%	9.5%	29.1%
Did you provide assistance/help to another student to locate registration/advisement information?	57%	14%	29.1%

Implications

Compared to non-exploratory students, compare your first semester against theirs:	Much More	More	Same	Less	Much less
Enjoyed 1 st semester	9.6%	27.5%	53.4%	7.3%	1.1%
Performed better	9.6%	25.2%	58.1%	5.6%	1.1%
More comfortable with transition from HS	18.4%	30.7%	36.3%	11.1%	1.7%
Happier that you selected Millersville Un.	17.3%	24%	50.8%	5.6%	1.1%
More confident to graduate (2019 only)	12.5%	29.5%	35.2%	14.8%	4.5%
Feel more of a connection with your major department	10.1%	16.8%	48%	18.4%	3.4%
More comfortable speaking with faculty	17.3%	29.1%	48.6%	3.4%	.5%
More comfortable locating and accessing offices and services on campus	20.7%	24%	50.3%	3.9%	.5%



84% of EXPL students "glad that there was a 1-credit FYS course";

Advisors shared: "Advising more relational with addt. contact.";

Increased satisfaction with academic advising;

Increased credit completion and pass rates;

EXPL students served as academic ambassadors to other students;

Improved overall first-semester academic performance; students with higher first-semester GPA retained at significantly higher rate;

Trends show, on average, EXPL students graduate with fewer credit hours than students who start in BA or BS majors;

Cost to University = Zero!

