WASC Student Success Essay
Addendum

Introduction and Summary of EER Analysis

This Addendum updates and builds upon the findings presented in the Student Success essay presented with Pacific’s Educational Effectiveness Self Study. Recent enrollment data indicate that Pacific continues to meet its enrollment goals of incremental growth. The current spring 2012 undergraduate registration stands at 3,732, a 3.4% increase from spring 2011. Fall 2011 undergraduate enrollments were also up 3.3%.

Current fall-to-spring first year student persistence was 96%. Over the last 5 years, this rate has fluctuated between 95% and 97%. Continuing undergraduate persistence (fall 2011 to spring 2012) was slightly (0.7% point) higher than last year.

As shown in the EER submission, Pacific’s undergraduate six-year retention rate is higher than private and public non-profit institution averages, similar to Pacific’s standard peers, but falls short of Pacific’s aspirant and combined peer group. Pacific’s key performance indicator (KPI) goal for graduation has been set at the combined peer institution average.

Undergraduate Six Year Graduation Rate, normative comparisons using 2004 entering cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacific (KPI Goal)</th>
<th>68.9% (75%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All 4 Yr Non Profits</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4 Yr Non Profits</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private 4 Yr Non Profits</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Peers</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Peers</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirant Peers</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data set: http://www.wasc.pacific.edu/ss.six.year.grad.rate.norm.pdf

Pacific has conducted additional analysis since the WASC team visit to determine why these retention trends exist at Pacific, and determine future steps to improve undergraduate student success. As mentioned in the original student success essay for WASC, a new Vice Provost will oversee the implementation of academic student success strategies; candidate interviews are being held currently, and the position should be filled by summer 2012.

Regression analyses conducted by the office of institutional research illustrate that the strongest predictor of retention and graduation success for undergraduates is the student’s Pacific GPA. Additional analysis showed that SAT and high school GPA are stronger predictors of Pacific GPA (+0.308, +0.504), as compared to persistence
Other potential factors, such as students’ estimated family contribution (EFC), were included in the regression analysis, and were not shown to be significantly correlated with student success. Adjusted cost of attendance (total cost minus tuition discounts from all sources of aid), was also not significantly correlated, and in fact, the students in the lowest EFC group (students with Cal Grant and Pell-Grant eligible profiles, EFC < $15,000) demonstrated above-average student success. Controlling for other variables, including ethnicity and financial need, the Pacific GPA is the strongest predictor of persistence and graduation rates, even in these difficult economic times.

The analysis does show that financial pressures are real; more students are taking out loans, and in greater amounts. There is no question that student financial need is growing due to rising costs combined with stagnant family income, and federal/state aid programs. In 2011, 5% of students that withdrew from Pacific did so because they could not make financial arrangements sufficient to pay their tuition bills. Analysis of entering student course enrollment patterns shows that 28% of entering Pacific students need remediation, and that under-represented minority (African American, Native American, Hispanic, and multiethnic) students disproportionately enroll in remedial courses. These students show graduation rates 3-8% below the overall rate.

While the student success essay included enrollment data up to fall 2011, additional research using the latest data supports and builds upon the findings presented previously.

**Additional Research Subsequent to EER Submission**

Pacific has continually analyzed retention over a ten-year period. After the EER submission, we continued our student success analysis, and focused on student academic performance and trends in those students withdrawing. A new analysis of students receiving D or F grades confirmed prior research conclusions. This new analysis shows that 36% of Pacific undergraduates received a grade of D or F in their first year as students. Students receiving more D and F grades were less likely to be successful.

Grade reports for Pacific’s freshmen students in their first year reveals:
- 64% do not receive a D or F grade (or, they receive a C or higher in all courses)
- 18% receive one D or F grade
- 18% receive two or more D or F grades
The number of D or F grades impacts both persistence and GPA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># D Grades First Year</th>
<th>FR to SO Persistence</th>
<th>First Year GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># F Grades First Year</th>
<th>FR to SO Persistence</th>
<th>First Year GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A new withdrawal report (finalized in January 2012) analyzed trends in undergraduate students leaving Pacific (some stop-out and return later, others leave permanently). We define a “withdrawal” as a student who has neither graduated from Pacific, nor registered for the subsequent fall or spring semester.

The most recent data in the next two figures show that Pacific has fewer student withdrawals currently than in recent years. The first figure shows the registration status (withdrawal or enrolled/graduated) of students from the fall semester to the following spring semester. These data confirms that very little attrition occurs between the fall and spring terms.
Retention and Withdrawal Summary, Fall to Spring, all undergraduates

The second figure shows the registration status (withdrawal or enrolled/graduated) of students from the spring semester to the following fall semester. These data show that: in the most recent year, withdrawals have declined; and the majority of Pacific’s current student enrollment fluctuations occur over the summer, due to either graduation or withdrawal.

Retention and Withdrawal Summary, Spring to Fall, all undergraduates
The next level of analysis focused on spring-to-fall withdrawals, since most student withdrawals occur during that period. The data in the following figures capture those students who withdrew, and does not contain data for those students enrolled or graduated.

Withdrawal data were broken out by gender, ethnicity, GPA, region of the country, and residence (e.g. on- or off-campus). The following figures display some new findings from the withdrawal report.

Women were less likely to withdraw than men. These results confirm a previous finding (already contained in the EER report) that women were more likely to graduate from Pacific than men.
Between 22 and 26 percent of withdrawals are underrepresented minority (African American, Native American, Hispanic, and multiethnic), and they represent 19-23 percent of Pacific's undergraduate population.

Between 35 and 43 percent of students who withdrew had a GPA under 2.00.
Close to one-third of students who withdrew come from Pacific’s local student market (the four surrounding counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras, and Sacramento).

Nearly half of students who withdraw live in on-campus residence halls.

**Future Strategies to Improve Student Success at Pacific**

Going forward, the new undergraduate retention & withdrawal report will be used to monitor withdrawals and provide an early warning if any changes emerge in
student enrollment patterns. Plans are underway for mid-semester grade reports, so that students in danger of D or F grades will be required to attend study skills/academic improvement workshops before they can register for their next semester courses.

Though not technically considered peer institutions, universities with student demographics similar to Pacific have utilized mid-term grade checks and expanded referral networks as effective mechanisms for identifying retention risk and orchestrating interventions, including intrusive advising, in response. In the case of University of California, Merced (an institution that like Pacific enrolls many first generation students, students from low income backgrounds, and students who are not fully prepared for the academic expectations associated with a four-year college experience) mid-term grade checks and associated advising interventions had the effect of decreasing the number of students at academic risk from 45% at the mid-point of the first semester to 15-20% at the end of the first year.

Expanding the capacity for mid-term grade checks and referrals at Pacific allows for intervention at one of the most critical junctures in the student experience. Beginning in fall 2012, this process will be piloted, polished, and assessed for efficacy with all first year students. The grade check process will be fully implemented once the required technology integration, staffing and training infrastructure, and feedback mechanisms are established. In the pilot phase, the mid-term grade check and related responses will take the following form:

- Mid-term grades of D or F or mid-term indication of risk of earning a D or F will be reported by faculty for all first year students, including transfer students. Pacific is exploring the option of using the Gradebook feature of Pacific’s Sakai CLE during week six of both the fall and spring semester and a related report will be generated and provided to the Assistant Dean of Students for action and follow up intervention. Targeted reports could also be provided to Athletics and SUCCESS staffs that already use mid-term grade checks and have group specific follow up strategies in place for students who are considered to be at academic risk.
- The Assistant Dean of Students, in consultation with the Council of Assistant and Associate Deans, faculty and staff as appropriate, will triage to determine students at the greatest academic risk. In particular, students who are at risk of earning multiple D or F grades and/or being placed on academic probation at the end of the term would be considered one priority intervention group. Students at risk for earning a D or F in a “gateway” or major course would be considered as a secondary high-risk group. Students at risk of earning one D or F would be placed into a tertiary risk group and receive corresponding follow-up.
- Students in the first two risk groups (anticipated to earn multiple D or F grades or a D or F in a gateway or major course) will be contacted via email (and phone follow up) by a professional staff member or peer advisor from
the Student Academic Support Services with a cc to the student’s academic advisor within a week of the report being generated. In that contact, students will be advised of the expectation that they participate in a student success advising workshop (focused on time management or study skills) or an individual student success advising appointment where in each meeting they will develop an academic success plan that will also be used for future check ins with their peer (student) and academic advisors. Students will be asked to RSVP to the email or phone communication indicating which scheduled workshop(s) or appointments(s) they plan to attend. The pilot will use an implied mandate using “flags”, rather than “holds” on registration for the next term.

- Students who are identified to have other resource needs during the student success workshop session or student success advising meeting will be coached through referrals to those resources and services. Students who are at risk for earning a D or F in a gateway or major course may be strongly encouraged to also complete an advising session with the Career Resource Center, where students who might be questioning or experiencing challenges with choice of major could receive advice about their strengths, weaknesses and interests, potentially altering their intended career path.

- Academic and student advisors will be provided with a copy of the student’s academic success plan for follow up during the upcoming advising period for the next term.

- Students who are identified to be at academic risk will be followed through the first semester of their second year via continued contact from Student Academic Support Services.

- Students who are at risk of earning one D or F will receive a purposeful contact from their assigned peer (student advisor), with a cc to their faculty advisor, requesting an individual meeting to express concern and to assess other resource or situational needs and to plan strategies for success in that one course (and with related issues, as relevant).

- Students who still earn D or F grades in the first semester will continue to be enrolled in the PASS program and will be enrolled in the PASS class.

This pilot will be assessed using multiple metrics, with the most significant being a decrease in the number and percentage of first year students being placed on academic probation and/or disqualified at the end of their first year at Pacific. A secondary assessment measure will come from an analysis of how well students have met the goals and strategies identified in their student success plans. These metrics will be purposefully shared in debriefs of the early intervention protocol with associate deans, faculty, staff, and peer (student) advisors. Improvements to the protocol will be informed by these assessment results and other relevant data about student experiences.
Pacific remains committed to improving student success, using the research and strategies identified above (and others) to reach or surpass the stated goal of 75% six-year graduation rate for undergraduate students.