

The Effect of Freshmen Year Programs on Academic Success

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(ABSTRACT)

Student affairs practitioners attempt to combine in-class and out-of-class learning. One example of this is first year residential programs. In these programs freshmen live together in one residence hall. Each program is different, but common characteristics include increased student staff, freshmen seminar, and increase programming on adjustment issues.

This study examines one first year program (FYP) and attempts to determine the effects of the program on the academic success of the participants. Gender differences and ethnic differences were also examined. Academic success was defined as those elements of students' collegiate experiences that relate to retention and graduation. The instrument used in this study was based on a specific definition of academic success.

Five hundred and thirty five students were asked to participate in the study, and a total of 249 usable instruments were returned, for a response rate of 48.44%. Of the 249 participants, 264 (49.35%) were in the FYP and 271 (50.65%) were not in the FYP. The non-FYP students lived in a variety of buildings on campus.

There were significant findings in several areas of academic success. FYP participants had higher grades overall and completed more class credits. FYP

students were more likely to understand academic policies and requirements. FYP students were more likely to complete all assignments before class and they were more likely to begin taking steps towards their career goals. Students in the FYP also reported higher levels of contact with faculty and higher attendance at university events. The FYP appeared to offer opportunities that enabled students to reach higher levels of academic success.

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