

Research In Brief

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Evaluation of Athlete Cohorts at Palomar College, May 2002

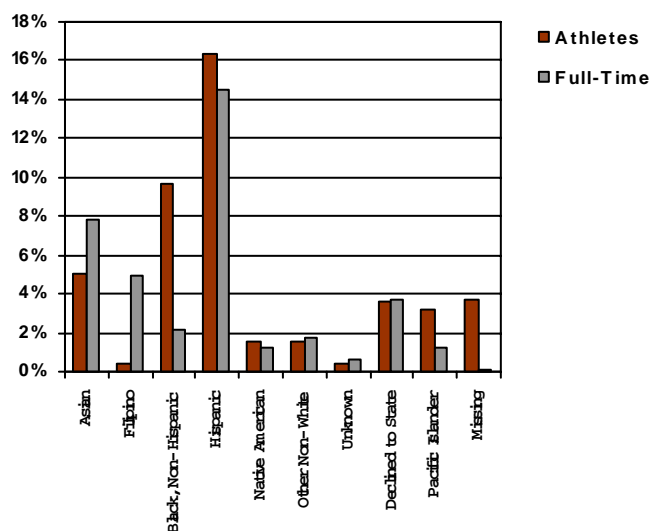
Introduction: The study described in this brief represents an update of the *Athletic Tracking* study completed by the Institutional Research and Planning department in 1999. To complete this study, we placed student athletes into cohorts based on the year in which they began participating in the athletic program. Then, we tracked the persistence and performance of each cohort by semester. For general comparison purposes, we tracked cohorts of first-time full-time students over the same time period.

Methodology: Earlier studies tracked a total of eight cohorts. For this study we updated the earlier cohorts and added three additional cohorts for a total of eleven groups tracked or updated. Athletes were included in a specific cohort using the term identified by the Athletic Office. A first-time full-time comparison group was also created by identifying new full-time students entering in corresponding terms (Fall '96, '97, and '98). We tracked the following variables by semester: persistence from one semester to the next, AA degrees awarded, Certificates of Achievement (CAs) awarded, and certifications for transfer to a CSU. We also tracked semester GPA, distribution of semester grades by category, semester units attempted, and semester units completed. Finally, we tracked the types of courses and enrollment patterns of the athlete cohorts.

Results: Phase I: Demographics

- We reviewed the following demographics of the athlete and comparison groups: gender, ethnicity, and age.
- Review of the chart indicates that a higher percentage of Black and Hispanic students make up the athlete cohorts relative to the first-time full-time cohorts. The converse is true for Asian students.

'96-'98 Athlete and First-Time Full-Time
Ethnicity of Underrepresented Students

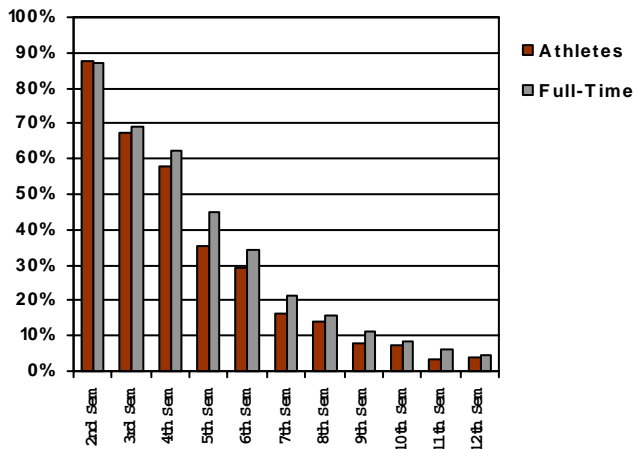


- Mean age of students was similar for athlete and first-time full-time cohorts (M=20.1 vs. 20.4 respectively).

Phase II: Persistence

- In a very general sense, it appears that retention of athletes from the 1st to the 2nd semester has slightly decreased over the last three years (i.e., 87.0% to 83.6% from '93 to '95). However, persistence in subsequent semesters appears consistent (i.e., between 26.9% and 29.8% by 6th semester).
- A comparison of athlete and first-time full-time cohort persistence reveals that both groups have somewhat similar rates of persistence during the first four semesters. Differences in persistence in later semesters could be due to athlete's relatively higher transfer rates.

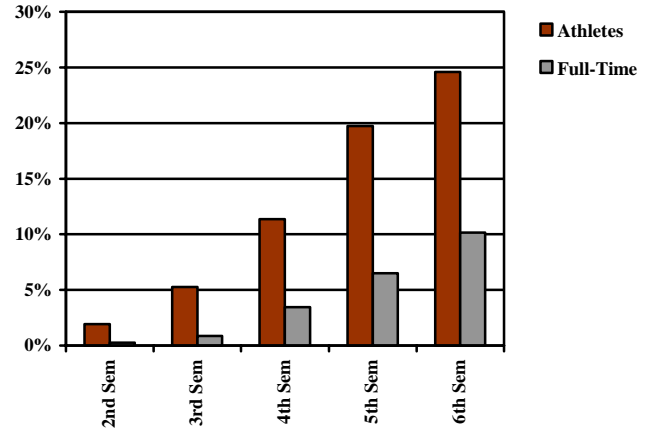
'88-'98 Persistence of Athlete and First-Time Full-Time Cohorts



Phase III: Completion

- The rate of athletes receiving AA degrees varies with no obvious pattern of improvement over time. Further, few athletes obtain certificates.
- Overall, athletes complete their studies faster than full-time students. Further review of the data shows that athletes certify to transfer to a CSU at higher rates.

'88-'97 Cumulative Completion of Athlete and First-Time Full-Time Cohorts



Phase IV: Grade Point Average

- Overall, the cohort of athletes tracked tended to earn higher GPAs in their first few semesters, dropping off slightly in later semesters.
- In comparison to first-time full-time cohorts, athletes in the current study appear to have earned slightly lower GPAs over the 11 semesters tracked.

Summary and Conclusions: In summary, athletes appear to be persisting and "completing" their studies at Palomar. In terms of academic performance, athletes appear to perform better in the earlier semesters relative to later semesters. However, a drop in semester GPAs around the 6th semester is possibly due to the fact the higher performing students are completing or moving on by this time. Athletes appear to have slightly lower GPAs relative to the comparison group.

More information? Please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Planning if you have any questions about this or other research and planning issues (Ext. 2360).