

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

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RESEARCH FACTOID

Over four years (Spring 2005 to Spring 2009), the percentage of college FTE derived from distance learning courses increased 54.7%, compared to overall college FTE growth of 21.0%. FTE from other, technology-enhanced delivery methods also increased.

Percentage of College FTE from Courses Using Specific Delivery Methods

	Percentage of College Spring 2005 FTE	Percentage of College Spring 2009 FTE	Percent Change in College FTE since Spring 2005
All NWFSC			21.0%
All Distance Classes, Blended Classes, and Traditional Classes Enhanced with Technology	22.8%	32.3%	+71.5
Distance Learning	12.7%	16.2%	+54.7
Distance Learning – Text-Based	6.7%	5.7%	+4.0
Distance Learning - Online	6.0%	9.9%	+100.0
Traditional Enhanced with Technology (Web-Supplemented)	11.1%	11.8%	+29.2
Blended	0.1%	4.4%	+3835.7

IMPROVING STUDENT SUCCESS IN BUSINESS CALCULUS

by *Ron Ethridge*

After experiencing frustratingly low success rates for first-time students in MAC2233 (Business Calculus), the math faculty studied ways to improve the success rate. Since the perception was that our first-time students were not prepared to succeed in calculus (a problem perhaps since the days of Newton and Leibniz), we decided to look at the relationship between prerequisite math courses and success in MAC2233.

Defining “success” as the first-time student earning a grade of A, B, C, we gathered the student data on all first-time MAC2233 students for the four semesters from Spring 2006 through Spring 2007. At that time, the minimum prerequisite was a “C” in MAC1105 (College Algebra). We discovered that first-time MAC2233 students with only this minimum prerequisite experienced an abysmal success rate of 19%. Studying other prerequisite options and their empirical relationship with success in MAC2233, we decided to change our prerequisite for MAC2233 to at least a “C” in MAC1140 (Pre-Calculus Algebra) or above. Our study data indicates a first-time student success rate of 62% with this prerequisite.

After several semesters of implementation, the math faculty plans to conduct a follow-up study to evaluate the change.

NWFSC SERVES SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Federal legislation, specifically the Americans with Disabilities Act and its 2008 update and the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, requires that post-secondary institutions provide accommodations to students who self-declare and document a disability.

- “Between 1992 and 2002, the number of students [nationwide] ages six to 21 years identified with specific learning disabilities . . . increased by 38 percent.”¹
- “11% of undergraduates [across the U.S.] reported having a disability in 2003-2004.”²
- “Since 2000, the percentage of undergraduates specifically identified as learning disabled (LD) or as having ADD/ADHD has almost doubled, to reach more than 2 percent of the total U.S. undergraduate population, or 394,500 students.”³

Nationwide, the increase in the number of students with disabilities, especially learning disabilities, is marked, and institutions are working to meet these students’ needs. However, the Florida College System reports that the increase in students who report a disability (5% in 2002) has not kept pace with the increase in overall enrollment (11% in 2007). Disabled

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¹ “Mathematics Cognition and Specific Learning Disabilities.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HD-02-031.html>. 12 Dec. 2002.

² “Fast Facts.” National Center for Educational Statistics. <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64>. 2009.

³ Vickers, Melana Zyla. “Accommodating College Students with Disabilities: ADD, ADHD, and Dyslexia.” The John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy. <http://www.popecenter.org/acrobat/vickers-mar2010.pdf>. March 2010.

FLASHBACK

THEN & NOW

Credit Student Headcount

	Fall 1990	Fall 2000	Fall 2009
Total Credit Students	5,615	6,837	8,485

WEB SIGHTINGS

- **Projections of Education Statistics to 2017:** <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2017/index.asp>
- **EDUCAUSE podcasts on a wide range of topics:** <http://www.educause.edu/podcasts?msg=resources>
- **Florida Featured Facts from the Southern Regional Education Board Fact Book on Higher Education 2009:** <http://info.sreb.org/main/EdData/FactBook/2009StateReports/Florida09.pdf>
- **Five-Year Summary of Statewide Performance on Accountability Measures for The Florida College System, April 2010, Edition 2010-01:** <http://www.fldoe.org/cc/osas/evaluations/pdf/fyi2010-01.pdf>

FAST FACTS

According to the Division of Florida Colleges and Technical Center MIS:

- 66 % of Florida's high school graduates begin their postsecondary education at one of Florida's 28 colleges.
- In 2009, 77% of students transferring from a Florida college to a state university with an AA degree had a GPA of 2.5 or higher

BRIGHT IDEAS



If you have a newsletter suggestion or a research idea, please contact us at: IR@nwfsc.net or 729-5363

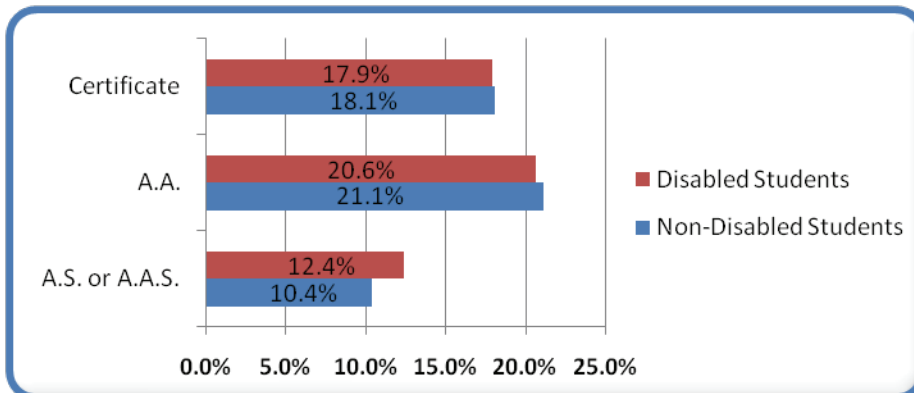
Production Staff

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SURVEY OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS — CONTINUED

students comprised 1.5% of the total Florida college population in 2002 and 1.8% in 2007. Since students must self-declare, the real percentage of disabled students is almost certainly much higher than these figures indicate: in 2002, 76% of college students who received accommodations in high school did not self-report in college. Nevertheless, the percentage of students who are classified as disabled in high school and who enter college has climbed substantially, by 21% from 2002 to 2007. Interestingly, the success rate for those students who do self-report and receive accommodations in college is comparable to the success rates for the non-disabled students, as indicated in Figure 1.0.⁴

Figure 1.0 First-time-in-college (FTIC)⁵ students enrolling in 2002 who graduated by 2007



Northwest Florida State College continues to respond to the needs of disabled students. The college recently renovated and expanded the Academic Success Center in Building E on the Niceville campus to provide supervised, secure, distraction-free testing environments. In addition, the Coordinator of Services for Students with Special Needs, Ms. Dianne Avillion, assesses each disabled student's needs and informs faculty of required accommodations each semester. In their year-long orientation program, new faculty members are educated about students with disabilities, the accommodations to which they are entitled, and the college's dedicated resources for these students. Thanks to these strategies, the Office of Services for Students with Special Needs netted high satisfaction ratings from students, as indicated in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0 NWFSC Survey of Students Receiving Services from the Office for Students with Special Needs (N = 44)

	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Not Applicable
The Office of Services for Students with Special Needs (OSSSN) assisted me in receiving the accommodations I need/needed in my courses at the college.	93%	7%	—	—
OSSSN respected the confidential nature of the information I shared with them.	91%	9%	—	—
OSSSN was responsive to my questions and concerns.	91%	9%	—	—
My professors were responsive to my request for accommodations.*	84%	9%	4%	2%
OSSSN assisted me in resolving issues with my professors.*	75%	20%	—	4%
I feel comfortable referring other students to the OSSSN.	93%	7%	—	—

*Does not equal 100% due to rounding.

As an open-door institution, NWFSC is committed to the success of all students, including those challenged by disabilities.

⁴ The Florida College System. "Program Review of Disability Services." *Florida Colleges*. April 2009. <http://www.fldoe.org/cc/OSAS/Evaluations/>

⁵ FTIC students are a cohort in their first semester of college who have never enrolled in a degree program at the post-secondary level.