

# **A Comparison of Retention Rates, GPAs, and Graduation Rates for the Fall 2000 Cohort of Minority, First Generation, and Low-Income Students**

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## **Overview**

This report analyzes first to second year retention rates, fall and 1-year GPAs, and 5-year graduation rates for the Fall 2000 Cohort of minority, first generation, and low-income students based upon their participation in Freshman Seminar and Freshman Learning Communities (including General Studies Learning Communities, Watauga College, and Student Support Services). Data were collected from the Office of Institutional Research and the 2000 Freshman Survey.

## **Executive Summary**

Statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) were found in the following areas based on FS/FLC participation:

- FS/FLC students had significantly higher fall 2000 GPAs and 1-year retention rates.
- Freshman Seminar students had significantly higher 5-year graduation rates than non-FS students.
- Low-income students (annual family income  $< \$15,000$ ) enrolled in Freshman Seminar had significantly higher 5-year graduation rates than low-income students who did not take FS.

While differences were not statistically significant for other variables, participation in FS/FLC appeared to have a positive effect, in comparison to non-participants, on GPAs, 1-year retention rates, and 5-year graduation rates of minority, first generation, and low-income students.

## Results

### All Students

Students enrolled in Freshman Seminar (FS) and/or a Freshman Learning Community (FLC) had a statistically significant higher Fall 2000 GPA and were retained to their second year at a significantly higher rate. Additionally, students who took Freshman Seminar in Fall 2000 graduated at a significantly higher rate by Spring 2005.

Status	GPA Fall 2000	1-Year GPA	1-year Retention	Graduation (by Spring 05)
<b>FS</b> (n=916)*	2.79**	2.85	86.9%**	58.1%**
<b>Non-FS</b> (n=1,639)*	2.63	2.81	81.1%	52.8%
<b>FLC</b> (n=1,048)*	2.77**	2.84	86.7%**	55.2%
<b>Non-LC</b> (n=1,504)*	2.64	2.82	80.7%	54.4%

\* This *n* represents the fall 2000 population. Please note *n*'s vary by category.

\*\*Statistically significant difference at  $p < 0.05$ .

### Minority Students

While no statistically significant differences existed for minority students, minority students enrolled in FS and/or an FLC were retained to the second year at a higher rate. Furthermore, minority students enrolled in Freshman Seminar in Fall 2000 graduated at a higher rate.

Status	GPA Fall 2000	1-Year GPA	1-year Retention	Graduation (by Spring 05)
<b>FS</b> (n=50)*	2.40	2.54	88%	52%
<b>Non-FS</b> (n=116)*	2.36	2.55	85.3%	50.9%
<b>LC</b> (n=77)*	2.30	2.48	87%	46.8%
<b>Non-LC</b> (n=89)*	2.43	2.60	85.4%	55.1%

\* This *n* represents the fall 2000 population. Please note *n*'s vary by category.

## First Generation Students

First generation students (students who reported on the 2000 Freshman Survey that neither parent had attended any college) enrolled in FS and/or an FLC had higher fall 2000 GPAs and 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> year retention rates than first generation students not enrolled in FS or an FLC.

Status	GPA Fall 2000	1-Year GPA	1-year Retention	Graduation (by Spring 05)
<b>FS</b> (n=77)*	2.65	2.67	85.7%	51.9%
<b>Non-FS</b> (n=116)*	2.48	2.76	81.9%	51.7%
<b>LC</b> (n=86)*	2.60	2.61	87.2%	50%
<b>Non-LC</b> (n=107)*	2.51	2.82	80.4%	53.3%

\*This *n* represents the fall 2000 population. Please note *n*'s vary by category.

## Low-Income Students

Low-income students (students who reported on the 2000 Freshman Survey that their total family income was less than \$15,000 or \$20,000) enrolled in Freshman Seminar graduated at a significantly higher rate than low-income students not enrolled in FS. Additionally, differences were apparent in retention rates and 1-year GPAs for this group.

*Family Income <\$15,000*

Status	GPA Fall 2000	1-Year GPA	1-year Retention	Graduation (by Spring 05)
<b>FS</b> (n=16)*	2.42	2.90	75%	62.5%**
<b>Non-FS</b> (n=32)*	2.48	2.83	68.8%	31.3%
<b>LC</b> (n=21)*	2.43	2.93	76.2%	57.1%
<b>Non-LC</b> (n=27)*	2.49	2.80	66.7%	29.6%

\*This *n* represents the fall 2000 population. Please note *n*'s vary by category.

\*\*Statistically significant difference at  $p < 0.05$ .

*Family Income <\$20,000*

<b>Status</b>	<b>GPA Fall 2000</b>	<b>1-Year GPA</b>	<b>1-year Retention</b>	<b>Graduation (by Spring 05)</b>
<b>FS</b> (n=27)*	2.66	2.87	85.2%	55.6%
<b>Non-FS</b> (n=47)*	2.49	2.86	72.3%	38.3%
<b>LC</b> (n=33)*	2.66	2.91	84.8%	54.5%
<b>Non-LC</b> (n=41)*	2.46	2.83	70.7%	36.6%

\* This *n* represents the fall 2000 population. Please note *n*'s vary by category.