Academic success and engagement of Fall 2020 first-time first-year college students at ECU: How do they compare to previous cohorts and their national peers?

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COHORT COMPARISONS: DEMOGRAPHICS, RETENTION, PROGRESSION, & GRADES
First-time/First-year Demographics

- **% Female**: 58% (2018), 58% (2019), 61% (2020)
- **% Minority**: 32% (2018), 31% (2019), 33% (2020)
- **% Full-time**: 98% (2018), 99% (2019), 97% (2020)
- **% Out-of-state**: 12% (2018), 12% (2019), 13% (2020)
- **% First-generation**: 21% (2018), 21% (2019), 21% (2020)
- **% Pell**: 37% (2018), 35% (2019), 36% (2020)

Legend:
- **2018 cohort**
- **2019 cohort**
- **2020 cohort**
Retention

Fall to spring retention: 93% (2018 cohort), 93% (2019 cohort), 90% (2020 cohort)

Fall to fall retention: 82% (2018 cohort), 83% (2019 cohort), 81% (2020 cohort)

Transfer out rate: 12% (2018 cohort), 10% (2019 cohort), 12% (2020 cohort)

Stop out rate: 7% (2018 cohort), 8% (2019 cohort), 8% (2020 cohort)
Comparison of at-risk groups to total cohort: Retained to spring & retained to fall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>First-gen</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Minority</th>
<th>Pell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Retained to spring</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retained to fall</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Retained to spring</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retained to fall</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Retained to spring</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retained to fall</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within group comparison of at-risk students: Retained to spring & retained to fall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First-gen (Y-N)</th>
<th>Gender (M-F)</th>
<th>Minority (Y-N)</th>
<th>Pell (Y-N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained to spring 2018</td>
<td>-2.3% -2.1%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
<td>-4.2%</td>
<td>-4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained to fall</td>
<td>-5.2%</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
<td>-1.9%</td>
<td>-4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained to spring 2019</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained to fall</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained to spring 2020</td>
<td>-3.7%</td>
<td>-3.7%</td>
<td>-3.7%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained to fall</td>
<td>-5.6%</td>
<td>-5.6%</td>
<td>-5.6%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Retained to spring 2018</th>
<th>Retained to fall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-7.0%</td>
<td>-6.2%</td>
<td>-5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6.0%</td>
<td>-5.1%</td>
<td>-5.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>-5.0%</td>
<td>-4.5%</td>
<td>-4.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>-4.0%</td>
<td>-4.2%</td>
<td>-4.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>-3.0%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>-1.0%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparison of at-risk groups to total cohort: Transfer & stop out rates

Transfer & stop out rates:
- 2018: Transfer 11%, Stop out 12%
- 2019: Transfer 10%, Stop out 10%
- 2020: Transfer 11%, Stop out 12%

Graph showing distribution of at-risk groups across years.
Comparison of at-risk groups to total cohort: Average first-term & first-year GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>First-term GPA</th>
<th>First-year GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2.8, 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, 2.1</td>
<td>2.9, 2.8, 2.7, 2.8, 2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2.8, 2.7, 2.5, 2.7, 2.7</td>
<td>3.1, 3.0, 2.8, 3.0, 2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>3.1, 2.9, 2.8, 3.0, 2.9</td>
<td>3.2, 3.0, 3.0, 3.1, 3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Cohort
- First-gen
- Male
- Minority
- Pell
Summary of Findings

• Demographics for the Fall ‘20 cohort of new first-year students were not very different from those for the Fall ‘18 & ‘19 cohorts.

• Both fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention rates were slightly lower for the Fall ‘20 cohort than for previous cohorts.

• The pandemic may have advantaged some students who took Pass grades or used the pandemic drop option.

• Some sub-groups of new students are more at-risk than others (e.g., first-gen, male, minority, Pell) in terms of retention, stop-out, and GPA. The pandemic may have been particularly detrimental to retention for these students.
Engagement Indicators and Participation in High Impact Activities
## NSSE Respondent Characteristics (First-Year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year Students</th>
<th>ECU 18</th>
<th>ECU 21</th>
<th>Carnegie 21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-time first-year</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Age =19</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Modality</th>
<th>ECU 18</th>
<th>ECU 21</th>
<th>Carnegie 21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mostly remote</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid learning</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly in-person</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retention to Fall 2021**

- First-year student response rate = 15%
- ECU is compared to institutions of the same Carnegie Classification (i.e, Doctoral University with High Research Activities) that participated in NSSE 2021.
Comparing NSSE 2021 to NSSE 2018/19 Administrations – All Institutions

• Vast majority of the NSSE measures did not change substantially

• Engagement Indicators – First-year Students
  • **Collaborative Learning** shows the greatest change of all EIs – on average the first-year student scores dropped by seven points
  • **Discussion with Diverse Others, Student-Faculty Interaction** and **Supportive Environment** saw a drop of 3 points
  • The six other EIs show negligible shifts in average scores

• High Impact Practices – First-year Students
  • Participation in Service Learning dropped by 9 percentage points
  • Intent to participate in Study Abroad dropped by 5 percentage points

• Overall, few meaningful differences by student sub-populations exist using race, first-generation status, disability, and older student status (*based on 200+ institutions that participated in 2021 and 2019)

Differences between 2021 and Pre-Pandemic Years (2018 or 2019)

- For each Engagement Indicator, NSSE calculated a standardized difference (effect size) for first-year and senior respondents at each institution.
- “To assess the magnitude of Engagement Indicator changes, differences greater than .1, .3, and .5 are considered small, medium, and large, respectively” (NSSE, n.d.).

Source: The Pandemic and Student Engagement: Trends, Disparities, and Opportunities. [https://nsse.indiana.edu/research/annual-results/2021/story1.html](https://nsse.indiana.edu/research/annual-results/2021/story1.html)
### ECU First-Year Student Engagement Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Indicators</th>
<th>ECU 18</th>
<th>ECU 21</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>Carnegie 21</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Challenge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher-Order Learning</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>▼</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>▼</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect. &amp; Integ. Learning</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Strategies</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>▼</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.05</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student-Faculty Interaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss w. Diverse Others</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>▼</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching Practices</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>▼</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>▼</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Interaction</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive Environment</strong></td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>▼</td>
<td>-.39</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>△</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaborative Learning

% responding “very often” or “often”

- Asked another student to help you understand course material: 62% (ECU 2018), 41% (ECU 2021), 37% (Carnegie 2021)
- Explained course material to one or more students: 64% (ECU 2018), 42% (ECU 2021), 40% (Carnegie 2021)
- Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students: 59% (ECU 2018), 33% (ECU 2021), 31% (Carnegie 2021)
- Worked with other students on course projects or assignments: 61% (ECU 2018), 44% (ECU 2021), 36% (Carnegie 2021)
Student Faculty Interaction

% responding “very often” or “often”

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member: 49% (ECU 2018), 40% (ECU 2021), 33% (Carnegie 2021)
- Worked w/faculty on activities other than coursework: 28% (ECU 2018), 18% (ECU 2021), 16% (Carnegie 2021)
- Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class: 30% (ECU 2018), 20% (ECU 2021), 20% (Carnegie 2021)
- Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member: 42% (ECU 2018), 27% (ECU 2021), 26% (Carnegie 2021)
Supportive Campus Environment

% responding “very much” or “quite a bit” about how much the institution emphasized...

- Providing support to help students succeed academically: 80% (ECU 2018), 70% (ECU 2021), 66% (Carnegie 2021)
- Using learning support services: 81% (ECU 2018), 76% (ECU 2021), 67% (Carnegie 2021)
- Encouraging contact among students from diff. backgrounds: 65% (ECU 2018), 61% (ECU 2021), 56% (Carnegie 2021)
- Providing opportunities to be involved socially: 77% (ECU 2018), 61% (ECU 2021), 56% (Carnegie 2021)
- Providing support for your overall well-being: 80% (ECU 2018), 62% (ECU 2021), 59% (Carnegie 2021)
- Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities: 48% (ECU 2018), 39% (ECU 2021), 34% (Carnegie 2021)
- Attending campus activities and events: 75% (ECU 2018), 51% (ECU 2021), 45% (Carnegie 2021)
- Attending events that address social, economic, or political issues: 59% (ECU 2018), 46% (ECU 2021), 40% (Carnegie 2021)
How Students Spent Their Time

Estimated Hours per Week Preparing for Class (ECU Students)

Estimated Hours per Week Working for Pay On- and Off-Campus

Survey Year

Hours per week

ECU 15 | ECU 18 | ECU 21 | Carnegie 18 | Carnegie 21

On-campus | Off-campus

13.8 | 14.4 | 16.0

2.1 | 3.6 | 9.2 | 4.8 | 7.9

1.3 | 1.5 | 1.0 | 2.6 | 1.6
High Impact Practices – Overall Participation of First-Year ECU Students*

High Impact Practices in NSSE

- Service Learning*
- Learning Community*
- Research with Faculty*
- Internship or Field Experience
- Study Abroad
- Culminating Senior Experience

(*Overall participation indicates the percentage of first-year students who participated in at least one of the HIPs with an “*”. )
High Impact Practices – Done or In Progress

Participated in Two or More HIPs

- ECU 18: 15% (2 or more HIPs), 46% (1 HIP)
- ECU 21: 10% (2 or more HIPs), 40% (1 HIP)
- Carnegie 21: 7% (2 or more HIPs), 42% (1 HIP)

Participation Rate by Activity Type

- ECU 18: Service Learning 55%, Learning Community 20%, Research 15%
- ECU 21: Service Learning 41%, Learning Community 15%, Research 4%
- Carnegie 21: Service Learning 44%, Learning Community 11%, Research 3%

*In 2021, female students were more likely to engage in (i.e., done or plan to do) learning communities than male students.
Summary of Findings

• The pandemic had a significant, negative impact on student engagement as measured by NSSE.

• Compared to 2018, 3 out of 10 EI scores had a substantial drop in 2021 for first-year ECU students:
  • Collaborative Learning
  • Student-Faculty Interaction
  • Supportive Campus Environment

• In 2021, first-year students spent more time studying and working off-campus.

• When comparing within demographic groups at ECU:
  • Engagement Indicators
    • Male students scored significantly higher than female students on Quantitative Reasoning.
    • Disabled students scored significantly higher than non-disabled students on Discussions with Diverse Others
  • High Impact Practices
    • Female students reported significantly higher participation than male students in Learning Communities
Retention and Satisfaction
Overall Satisfaction with Educational Experience

- Student satisfaction with their educational experience declined in 2021 as compared to 2018.
- In terms of satisfaction level, there is no difference between ECU students and their counterparts in the institutions of the same Carnegie classification.
- No significant differences in levels of satisfaction were found between any demographic groups within ECU (sex, minority, first-gen, disability, Pell, or retention outcome).
Intent to Return Next Year

• Compared to 2018, a higher percentage of 2021 first-year students indicated that they were “not sure” whether they could return to ECU in the next year, an increase of 4 percentage points.

• In 2021, ECU first-year students were as likely as their counterparts to return for the next year.

• Female and White respondents were significantly more likely to state that they intend to return.

• Retained respondents were significantly more likely to state that they intend to return.

• No significant differences were found by other characteristics such as first-gen, disability, and Pell.
Helping Students Adapt to Changes Brought on by COVID-19

- 65% of ECU first-year students thought ECU faculty and staff have helped them adapt to the changes brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic “very much” or “quite a bit,” compared to 71% of their counterparts in other doctoral universities with high research activity.

- Of all NSSE respondents, 73% said faculty and staff had helped them substantially (NSSE, 2021).

- No significant differences were found between any demographic groups within ECU (sex, minority, first-gen, disability, Pell, or retention outcome).
Summary of Findings

• ECU first-year student satisfaction with their educational experience declined in 2021 as compared to 2018, but no difference compared to Carnegie class.

• More 2021 first-year students were "not sure" whether they could return to ECU next year, but no significant difference compared to Carnegie class. Female and White respondents were significantly more likely to intend to return.

• Fewer first-year students thought ECU faculty and staff have helped them adapt to the pandemic, compared to both our Carnegie Class and all schools participating in NSSE.
Contact Information

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