

Academic Outcomes for Students in Residential Academic Programs (RAPs) During Their Freshman Year

University of Colorado Boulder, PBA, February 2011

Summary

For fall 2009 frosh, we compared RAP vs. non-RAP students on:

- First year mean GPAs
- Percent of students meeting or exceeding a 2.0 cumulative GPA
- Retention rates to the 2nd fall

For frosh entering in fall 2004-5 combined, we compared RAPs and non-RAPs on:

- 5-year graduation rate

In all the above comparisons, RAP students exceeded their non-RAP counterparts. However, we cannot say that RAP participation caused this success, because students self-select into RAPs, and students who choose RAPs may differ from those who do not on many attributes related to academic success.

Details of present findings

Fall 2009 frosh:

- First-year GPAs (or first-term for those who did not return for the second term) averaged 2.98 for RAP students, 2.79 for non-RAP, a difference of .19 GPA points. The difference in college-specific predicted GPA at entry (a measure derived from high school grades and SAT/ACT scores) was only .05 points.

	N	RAP		N	last-	
		No	last-gpa		Yes	last-gpa
		PGPA	Mean	PGPA	Mean	Mean
COLLEGE/SCHOOL						
AS	2,402	2.90	2.71	1,575	2.99	2.94
BU	506	3.19	2.89	129	3.24	3.05
EN	594	3.04	2.94	108	3.22	3.35
EV	104	3.02	2.96	28	3.05	3.10
JR	13	3.44	3.59	10	3.50	3.72
MB	44	3.37	3.34	6	3.50	3.28
All	3,663	2.98	2.79	1,856	3.03	2.98

- When PGPA was statistically controlled in a general linear models procedure, RAP participation was associated with a GPA advantage of 0.13. No other variables (e.g. gender, ethnicity, financial resources) were controlled in the present study; however, the more detailed earlier study referenced above did control for these and other variables, and still found that RAP students graduated at a higher rate than non-RAPs.
- About 92% of RAP participants met or exceeded a 2.0 cumulative GPA (the cutoff in most colleges for academic probation), compared to 87% of non-RAP students.
- The retention rate to the second fall was 89% for RAP students, 82% for non-RAP.

Fall 2004-5 Frosh

- The 5-year graduation rate for frosh entering in the falls of 2004 and 2005 was 67% for RAP students, vs. 61% for non-RAPs.

RAPs included

- RAPs included in the study were
 - Farrand
 - Sewall
 - Baker
 - Global Studies
 - Honors (formerly Kittredge)
 - Libby
 - Chancellor's Leadership
 - Engineering Honors (2009 only)