

EOPS Impact Study Technical Report

Abridged Version

Prepared for

California Community College Association of Extended Opportunity Programs and Services

By

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Introduction

The purpose of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) Impact Study is to show the effect of the EOPS program by comparing EOPS participants to comparable non-participants on key student outcomes. EOPS is a state-funded program designed to help students with economic or social disadvantages achieve their educational goals including obtaining job skills, occupational certificates, associate degrees, and transferring to four-year institutions. Strategies include targeted advising practices, counseling, mentoring and tutoring. EOPS also provides a secondary program, Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE), intended to support single-parent recipients of public assistance attain self-sufficiency. This study is intended to be a continuing step in the development of an ongoing system to collect and compile quantitative and qualitative evidence of EOPS program impacts. *This abridged report shows does not contain related research, complete methods, or extensive display of the study findings. Please see the full technical report for those details.*

Sample Selection

A set of 707,113 first-time college students beginning in either fall 2004, fall 2005, fall 2006, or fall 2007 were selected from 60 participating college districts representing 97 colleges and tracked for three years. The study used data from the California Community College Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS) to identify EOPS and comparison group students and to derive outcome and control variables. First-time students at a participating California community college who showed a credit enrollment that was not concurrent with high school enrollment and also did not have a prior record of a college-level degree or certificate were included in the study. Of all first-time students starting in Fall 2004, 2005, 2006, or 2007, there were 64,196 EOPS participants and 642,917 students who did not participate in EOPS during this same time. EOPS students in the study did not necessarily join the EOPS program in their first term, but could have been in the program at any time during the three-year tracking period.

Outcomes

The outcomes selected for comparison between EOPS and non-EOPS students included:

- **One-year retention** – Students enrolling in the academic year after their first term of enrollment. For example, a first-time student in fall 2004 would be counted as retained if s/he enrolled in any term during the 2005-2006 academic year.
- **Two-year retention** – Students enrolling in the second academic year after their first term of enrollment. For example, a first-time student in fall 2004 would be counted as retained in the second year after enrollment if s/he enrolled in any term during the 2006-2007 academic year.
- **Earned degree or certificate within 3 years** – Students earning an associate's degree or certificate of completion by the end of the third year of enrollment, also referred to as earning an award. For example, a first-time student in fall 2004 who earned a degree or certificate by the end of spring 2007 would be flagged as achieving an award.
- **Transfer English success within 3 years** – Students completing a transfer-level English course as defined by taxonomy of program (TOP) codes with a grade of C- or better within three years of college entrance.
- **Transfer math success within 3 years** – Students completing a transfer-level math course as defined by taxonomy of program (TOP) codes with a grade of C- or better within three years of college entrance.
- **Number of transferable units completed within 3 years** – The sum of units coded as transferable successfully completed with a grade of C- or better within three years of college entrance.
- **60 or more transferable units completed within 3 years** – An indicator variable for students earning 60 or more units coded as transferable with a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher.
- **Transferred to a four-year institution within 3 years** – Students with a record of enrollment at a university after their community college enrollment. Note this indicator does not account for the number or type of courses taken at the university.

Results

Figure 1 shows the direction and magnitude of differences in outcomes when comparing EOPS to comparable non-EOPS first-time students. Green arrows indicate outcomes where EOPS students had higher values and red arrows indicate where EOPS students had lower values. The lengths of the arrows approximate the size of the differences among outcomes.¹ ***EOPS students were higher than non-EOPS students on all outcomes except for “Transferred in 3 years.”*** For those who did transfer, EOPS students were more likely to transfer to an in-state public university (i.e., California State University or University of California) while the non-EOPS comparison students were more likely to transfer to an in-state private university, including for-profit institutions, or an out-of-state university. For specific values on outcomes, please refer to the full technical report.

Caveats

In this study, different methods that control for background differences between EOPS and non-EOPS produced similar findings, thus increasing confidence that the differences between these two groups of students can be attributed to EOPS services. However, it should be kept in mind that other key differences between EOPS and non-EOPS students may not have been fully accounted for due to lack of data availability. These other variables may include factors such as parents' education level, personal support networks, individual motivation, employment load, responsibility for dependents, and health conditions. In addition, this study only included first-time students, did not include all college districts in the state, and did not test every cohort over time, therefore caution is warranted when generalizing these results to re-entry students, districts not participating in the study, and timeframes beyond the study framework.

¹ Arrow lengths for outcomes except for average transferable units earned are proportionate to the odds ratios derived from a regression analysis shown in the full technical report. The arrow length for average transferable units earned was based on the percent difference in units between EOPS and non-EOPS students.

Figure 1. Approximate differences in key outcomes between EOPS and comparable non-EOPS students

Green arrows indicate EOPS outcomes were higher than non-EOPS outcomes

Red arrows indicate EOPS outcomes were lower than non-EOPS outcomes

