

# Pathways to Success

***2009-2010 Year End Report  
A Year of Mixed Results and Budget  
Cuts***

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**LSU**  
**EUNICE**

## Executive Summary

The 2009 – 2010 academic year marks the completion of the sixth year of the Pathways to Success program at LSU Eunice. This report summarizes some of the salient student results. Due to the number of areas covered in the report, a summary is given here for quick reference with references to the appropriate table in the report.

### Demographics

In fall 2009, 211 (27%) out of 780 new first time freshmen enrolled at LSU Eunice were enrolled in the Pathways to Success Program. Overall 503 (15%) of the 3,332 LSU Eunice students at all sites were enrolled in the Pathways program. Black (non Hispanic) students made up the majority (55%) of the students followed by White (non Hispanic) students (40%) (see Table 1).

### Enrollment/Retention

From fall 2008 to fall 2009, program enrollment increased nearly 12%, up from 450 to 503 with enrollment increasing at all three sites. Enrollment also increased 5.5% in spring 2010, up from 455 to 480.

In fall 2009, 470 (93%) of the 503 students who began the semester completed it. In spring 2010, 447 (93%) of the 480 students who began the semester completed it.

Pathways to Success one year student retention rate (fall 2009 to fall 2010) increased from 44% to 48% across the three sites.

- The Eunice site's increased from 46% to 52%;
- LCRP site's increased from 36% to 39%;
- Alexandria site's decreased from 35% to 26%.

The fall 2009 to spring 2010 retention rate for all Pathways students decreased from 81% to 75% which may be a natural fluctuation due to student characteristics.

### Academic Performance

The median spring 2010 GPA for all students enrolled in the Pathways program essentially remained level from 2.178 in spring 2009 to 2.167 in spring 2010 (see Table 4). This is a 61% increase from the overall median GPA of 1.349 from spring 2004.

- Students in good standing decreased from 70% in spring 2009 to 66% in spring 2010 (see Table 5);
- Students on probation decreased from 22% to 20% (see Table 5);
- Students dismissed academically increased from 4% to 8% (see Table 5).

### Success in Developmental Education Courses (Spring 09 to Spring 10 see Table 6)

ENGL 0001: 5% decrease in success from 83% to 79% (national average 73%);  
 MATH 0001: 15% increase in success from 54% to 62% (national average 68%);  
 MATH 0002: 11% increase in success from 55% to 61% (national average 68%);  
 UNIV 1005: Consistent success from 86% to 85%;  
 UNIV 0008: Consistent success from 80% to 80% (national average of 76%);

### Success in General Education Courses after Completing Developmental Education Course (see Table 10)

For the first time since the Pathways to Success program was implemented, students are now performing at or above the national averages in all three major subjects after the completion of their developmental education coursework.

- ENGL 0001–ENGL 0001: 81% success (national average 64%);
- MATH 0002-MATH 1014 or MATH 1017: 69% success (national average 58%);
- UNIV 0008 to a social science: 73% success (national average 69%).

### Students Completing the Program

A total of 113 students finished the program during the 2009 – 2010 academic year. In all 580 (29%) students out of 2,030 beginning the program through fall 2009 have completed the program in less than a year (0.93) on average with a median GPA of 2.80.

- 39% of the completers are White (non-Hispanic) women (see Table 13);
- 36% Black (non-Hispanic) women;
- 13% White (non-Hispanic) men;
- 7% Black (non-Hispanic) men.

### Graduation

A total of 43 (3.2%) former Pathways to Success students have graduated from LSU Eunice in 3.73 years, on average, with an average GPA of 2.78.

- 51% White (non Hispanic) women (see Table 16);
- 23% Black (non Hispanic) women;
- 19% are Black and White males (non Hispanic).

The most popular degrees are Associate of Applied Science in Management followed by an Associate of Nursing (see Table 18).

### Budget cuts and Implications

The following effects have been documented as a result of the budget cuts (from spring 2008 to spring 2010):

1. A 25% reduction in tutoring for mathematics for Pathways students.
2. A 50% reduction in tutoring for English composition for Pathways students.
3. An 84% increase in the number of course withdrawals (from 122 to 225 see Table 8).
4. A 9% reduction in the overall Pathways student GPA (2.38 to 2.17 see Table 4);
  - a. 10% decrease in students in good standing (from 73% to 66%);
  - b. 18% increase in students placed on academic probation (from 17% to 20%);
  - c. 60% increase in students being academically dismissed (from 5% to 8%).
5. Increase in Pathways class size by (see Table 7):
  - a. 85% in ENGL 0001 exceeding the national average;
  - b. 20% in MATH 0001 and 25% in MATH 00002 exceeding the national average;
  - c. 60% in UNIV 1005 exceeding the national average.
6. An 84% increase in the number of course withdrawals (from 122 to 225 see
7. Table 8
8. );
  - a. MATH 0001: 50% increase (from 26 to 39 students);
  - b. MATH 0002: 30% increase (from 23 to 30 students);
  - c. UNIV 1005: 50% increase (from 8 to 12 students);
  - d. UNIV 0008: 33% increase (from 12 to 16 students).

The faculty, staff, and students are to be commended for their hard work since Pathways was implemented. To each, I say thank you for work well done. You are truly appreciated.

Paul Fowler, Director

## *A Year of Mixed Results*

### Introduction

**P**athways to Success at LSU Eunice was implemented in June 2004 to improve the freshmen experience. Based on Boylan's (2002) work, the program targets students who are seriously academically deficient – students who need developmental coursework (often mislabeled remediation) in English, mathematics, reading, and science prior to enrolling in their first general education college course (McCabe, 2000).

Students requiring developmental education coursework are a problem that is not unique to Louisiana. In fact, according to ACT (2007), nearly 75% of the students entering two-year institutions of higher education across the United States require some form of developmental education coursework. The same report notes that 19% of the students are seriously deficient students. McCabe (2003) writes that this figure may be as high as 33% meaning that one-third of all students across the US may not have any viable option for college unless they have the opportunity to enroll in courses that will help them improve their academic skills prior to enrolling in general education courses.

Why are there so many developmental education students? The reasons are many and often depend on characteristics related to specific areas of the country; however, minority students and students of low socioeconomic status are over-represented (McCabe, 2003). Despite the number of students enrolled, developmental education has benefits. For instance, McCabe (2000) completed a longitudinal study noting that 99% of the students who only completed developmental education courses were employed nine years later with 90% of them being employed in jobs that were above entry level. In addition, only 2% of the students in the study were convicted of a felony compared to individuals with similar demographics.

### LSU Eunice's Pathways to Success

**I**n fall 2004, LSU Eunice decided to face the challenge of educating developmental education students head on. Specifically, Pathways to Success targets entering students who have no ACT scores and those who have an ACT composite of 15 or below. Unique to LSU Eunice, the program addresses whole student development by addressing the academic factors (coursework and tutoring), nonacademic factors (socialization and transition to higher education), and personal factors (life's issues in general) related to student success<sup>1</sup>. Several different theoretical constructs including, but not limited to the first year experience, orientation, intrusive academic advising, developmental education, and continuous student engagement all play a part in addressing the trio of student success factors.

At LSU Eunice, placement in the program is mandatory and all students enrolled in the Pathways to Success program attend an orientation introducing them to the program and LSU Eunice in general. At orientation, students sign a contract acknowledging the role of institutional policy and their own responsibilities for success. Students are also expected to attend 90% of their classes or risk being failed due to absences. Very simply, LSU Eunice officials believe that developmental education students have difficulty succeeding academically if they do not attend class on a regular basis.

In addition, students must also see their academic advisor at least three times during the semester (see <http://web.lsu.edu/docs/DevelopmentalEd/advising.pdf> for a complete list of academic

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete discussion of the academic and nonacademic factors see: Lotkowski, Robbins, and Noeth (2004). For a complete discussion of cognitive (academic) factors, affective (noncognitive) factors, and personal factors and how each relates to developmental education see Boylan (2009).

advising efforts). Advising visits play an integral role in addressing the nonacademic and personal factors related to success. These specific factors are addressed in the first semester orientation to university studies course that introduces students to the university, time management, critical thinking, goal setting, appropriate socialization skills necessary to be successful in a college setting, and various psychometric tests that help the students identify their learning styles and temperament. Academic advising may become “intrusive” for some students as the director and advisors often “get out of their offices” and visit students in class, call students at home, call students on their cell phones, or visit them in the college’s residence hall during the early warning period. During this time, students are identified by faculty for not doing homework, not showing up for class, not showing up for class on time, answering cell phones in class, or causing any kind of disruption.

Lastly, students must attend tutoring in math and English if their grade falls below 70% on a major assessment. Tutoring services are offered as institutional funds permit and students have their option of seeking tutoring face to face with a faculty member using a “drop in” method that requires no appointment or seeking help from the student success center on campus that requires appointments and uses more of a supplemental instructional approach. Students in the program may also seek electronic tutoring; however, most students prefer to use the face to face method due to limited experience with technology. Each area, attendance, advising, and tutoring is monitored for compliance by the Director of Developmental Education.

The Pathways to Success program received the John Champaign Memorial Award for Outstanding Developmental Education Program honored by the National Association of Developmental Education in March 2010. The program was also named an Outstanding Institutional Advising Program by the National Academic Advising Association in 2008 – one of three in the nation. In addition, Dr. Hunter Boylan, the

Director of the National Center of Developmental Education, named Pathways as one of the best developmental education programs in the state of Louisiana in spring 2006. The program director was named as the outstanding developmental education administrator in the State of Louisiana in 2009 and the program was named an exemplary advising program for underprepared students in 2007.



## Data Collection

The raw data is broken out in eight data sets (four for fall and four for spring), one for all campus sites and then one for LSU Eunice, LSU Alexandria, and the LCRP. The complete data set is available at:

<http://web.lsu.edu/docs/DevelopmentalEd/Pathwaysyeartoyearcomparisons.pdf>. The

data set itself is labeled by campus and is collected each semester at each site since the program was implemented. In some cases, data for the semester prior to the Pathways to Success program is also included where it was considered to be reliable. This report represents the most salient data included in the eight data sets. Further information or clarification of any data may be addressed to the author of this report: Dr. Paul Fowler, Director of Developmental Education at [pfowler@lsue.edu](mailto:pfowler@lsue.edu).

## Demographic Information for the 2009-2010 Academic Year

In fall 2009, 211 (27%) out of 780 new first time freshmen enrolled at LSU Eunice were enrolled in the Pathways to Success

Program. Overall 503 (15%) of the 3,332 LSU Eunice students at all sites were enrolled in the Pathways program.

The Pathways to Success program served a total of 2,202 students as of the completion of spring 2010 (see Table 1). The program mostly serves black (non Hispanic) females (40%). In addition, just over 27% of the population enrolled was white (non Hispanic) females with black (non Hispanic) males and white (non Hispanic) males accounting for 15% and 13% respectively. The mean age of all students served to date is 26.

**Table 1**

| Ethnicity               | Sex         |            | Total       |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
|                         | F           | M          |             |
| Am Indian or Alaskan    | 10          | 4          | 14          |
| Asian or Pacific Island | 7           | 3          | 10          |
| Black - Non Hispanic    | 884         | 323        | 1207        |
| Foreign                 | 1           | 1          | 2           |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Island | 1           | 1          | 2           |
| Hispanic                | 16          | 10         | 26          |
| Nonresident Alien       | 1           | 0          | 1           |
| Not Reported            | 36          | 15         | 51          |
| Two or more races       | 10          | 2          | 12          |
| White - Non Hispanic    | 595         | 282        | 877         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>      | <b>1561</b> | <b>641</b> | <b>2202</b> |

## Selected Results from the 2009-2010 Academic Year

### Enrollment and Retention

From fall 2008 to fall 2009, Pathways to Success enrollment increased nearly 12%, up from 450 to 503 students with enrollment increasing at all three sites. Returning students made up the increase at the Eunice and the LCRP sites while new students made up the increase at the Alexandria site. Enrollment also increased 5.5% in spring 2010, up from 455 to 480 students. Increases in new students were noted at the Eunice and the LCRP sites while an increase in returning students was noted at the Alexandria site. In fall 2008, 470 (93%) of the 503 students who began the semester completed it. The highest completion rate was 98% at LSU Alexandria

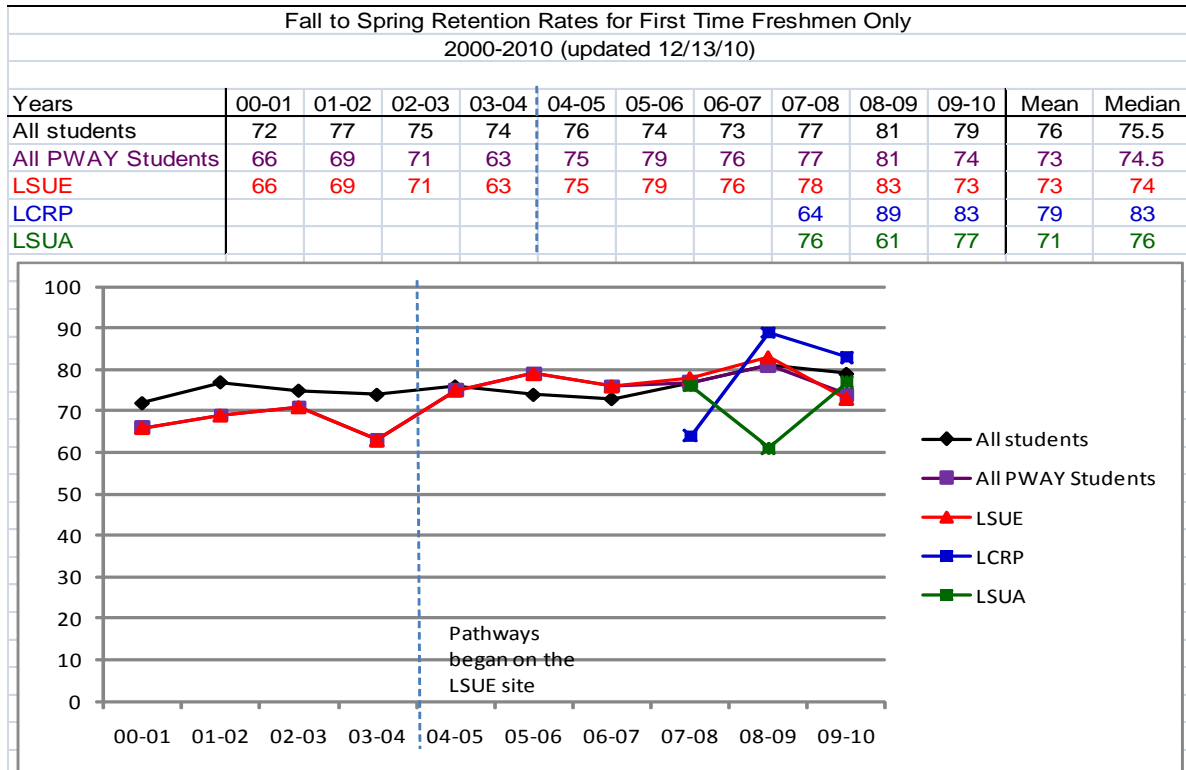
followed by 94% at the LCRP, and then 93% at LSU Eunice. In spring 2010, 447 (93%) of the 480 students who began the semester completed it. The completion rate for spring was 93% at all campus sites.

The fall 2009 to spring 2010 retention rate for all new first time students attending LSU Eunice decreased from 81% to 79% (see the black line in Table 2). The same was noted for the Pathways students at all sites decreasing from 81% to 74% (see the purple line in Table 2) with the largest decrease at the Eunice site from 83% to 73% (see the red line in Table 2). Retention also decreased from 89% to 83% at the LCRP site (see the blue line in Table 2). Pathways retention at the Alexandria site increased from 61% to 77% (see the green line in Table 2).

Overall fall 2009 to fall 2010 retention for all new first time students attending all LSU Eunice sites decreased from 50% to 42% (see the black line in Table 3). Pathways students exacerbated this disturbing trend decreasing from 48% to 26% overall (see the purple line in Table 3). Retention at the Eunice site decreased from 53% to 31% (see the red line in Table 3) while the LCRP site decreased from 35% to 17% (see the blue line in Table 3) and the LSUA site decreased from 17% to 14% (see the green line in Table 3).

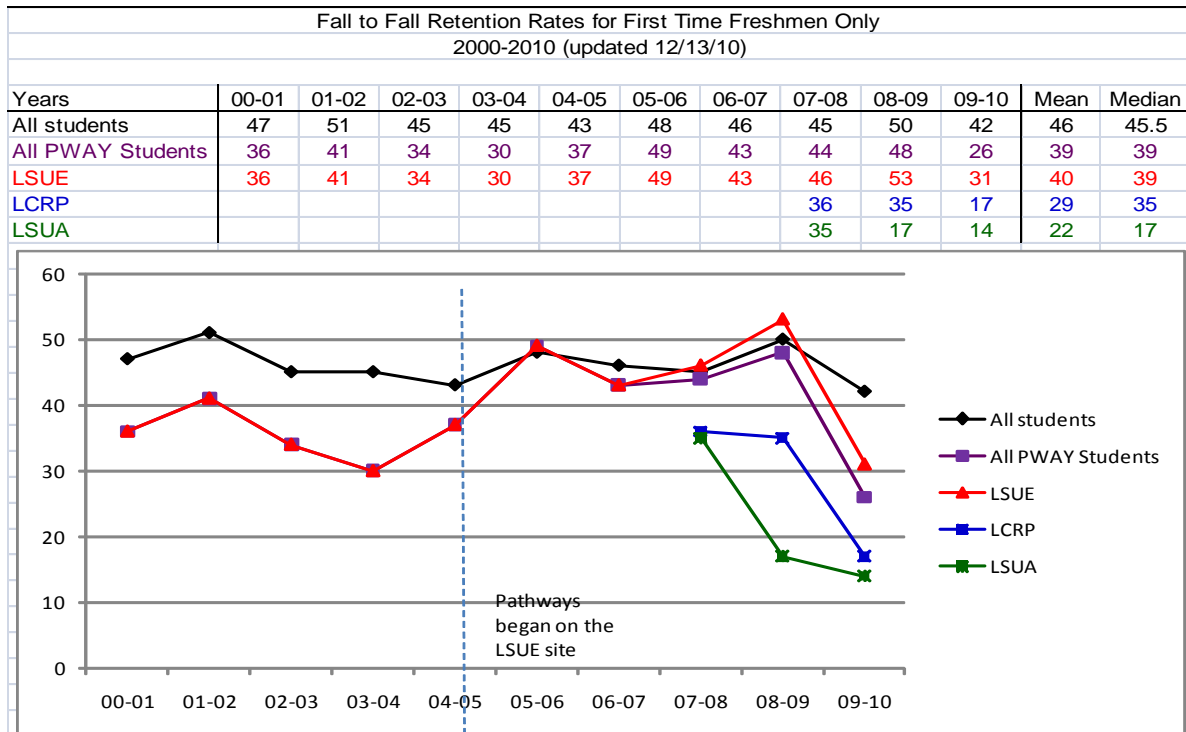
While the retention of Pathways students was challenging (to say the least) with the fall 2009 cohort, it is worth noting that the fall to fall retention for non Pathways students (those students not enrolled in the program) from fall 2009 to fall 2010 fell from 51% to 48%. The decrease in retention was across the board although it was magnified in the Pathways group since they are the most at-risk. Other possible reasons for the decreases in retention are the loss of one of the academic advisors on the Eunice campus, the variability in the students themselves, and increased developmental class sizes exceeding recommendations by the National Center for Developmental Education. These issues are discussed later in the report.

Table 2



Note: The Pathways program began at the LCRP and LSUA in fall 2007.

Table 3



Note: The Pathways program began at the LCRP and LSUA in fall 2007.

### Academic Performance 2009-2010

Grade point average for all students enrolled in the Pathways program is computed each semester and is included in the complete data set; however, the spring GPA is considered to be more important as it allows for the larger group beginning in the fall semester to perform over the course of an entire year. The median GPA for all

students enrolled in the Pathways program essentially remained level from 2.178 in spring 2009 to 2.167 in spring 2010 (see Table 4). This is a 61% increase from the overall median GPA of 1.349 from spring 2004, prior to the program being implemented indicating that the program with its varied services is positively affecting students.

Table 4

| Pathways to Success Median GPA at the Conclusion of Spring |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| GPA  | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  | 2010  | Mean  |
| median   | 1.349 | 1.750 | 2.333 | 2.333 | 2.375 | 2.178 | 2.167 | 2.069 |

It should be noted, however, that the percentage of students in good standing decreased from 70% in spring 2009 to 66% in spring 2010 as noted by the solid black line in Table 5. The Eunice site decreased from 70% to 63% while Alexandria site decreased from 73% to 66%. Students at the LCRP site increased from 59% to 70%.

*The percentage of students in good academic standing decreased with those on probation increased. Students who were dropped from LSU Eunice doubled.*

Overall, the percentage of students on probation decreased from 22% to 20% overall as noted by the dotted red line in Table 5 while those dismissed academically increased from 4% to 8% as indicated by the broken blue line in Table 5. The percentage of students placed on probation at the Eunice site decreased from 23% in spring 2009 to 20% in spring 2010. At the Alexandria site, the percentage of students on probation doubled (from 15% to 30%) while those at the LCRP site decreased from 32% to 7%. Students academically

dismissed increased at the Eunice site from 3% to 10%. Students academically dismissed decreased from 8% to 2% at the Alexandria site and dropped from 3% to 0% at the LCRP site.

*The percentage of students successfully completing developmental English and reading exceed the national average while those completing developmental mathematics are slightly below the national average.*

### Success in Developmental Coursework

Student success in developmental coursework for spring 2010 either increased or remained constant from spring 2009 for all subjects except for English composition (see Table 6). Success in both developmental English composition and college reading (UNIV 0008) exceed the national average according to Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, and Davis, (2007). Success in both developmental math courses is slightly below the national average at 62% and 61%.



Table 5

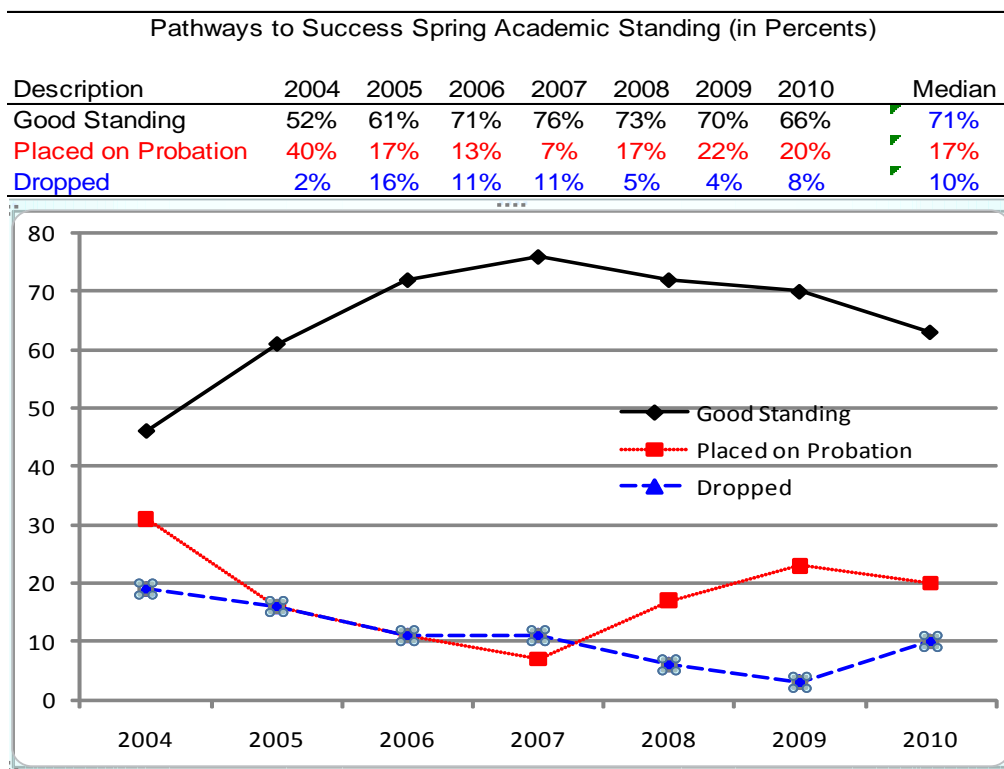


Table 6

Pathways to Success  
Spring Success in Developmental Education Courses\*

| Course    | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | National Averages |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| ENGL 0001 | 63%  | 69%  | 81%  | 86%  | 81%  | 83%  | 79%  | 73%               |
| MATH 0001 | 48%  | 54%  | 57%  | 57%  | 63%  | 54%  | 62%  | 68%               |
| MATH 0002 | 45%  | 48%  | 53%  | 58%  | 62%  | 55%  | 61%  | 68%               |
| UNIV 0005 | 29%  | 84%  | 92%  | 86%  | 87%  | 86%  | 85%  |                   |
| UNIV 0008 | 63%  | 86%  | 94%  | 91%  | 85%  | 80%  | 80%  | 76%               |

Note. Percentages are calculated by dividing the frequency of A, B, or C by the frequency of those who remained in the course at the conclusion of the semester.

Generally, students at the Eunice site outperformed students at the other two sites in all subjects except in the UNIV 0008 course. For UNIV 0008, 90% of the students successfully completed the course at the LCRP site followed by 79% at Eunice site and 64% at Alexandria site. The UNIV 0008 completion rates for Eunice and

Alexandria sites are comparable to past semesters whereas the 90% at LCRP site represents an 88% increase in success over 2009 suggesting that the success rate for spring 2010 for UNIV 0008 at the LCRP site is an anomaly.

In developmental English composition, the success rate at the Eunice site decreased slightly from 93% to 85%; however, it decreased from 73% to 59% at the Alexandria site and 89% to 60% at the LCRP site. The decreases at the Eunice and the LCRP sites have occurred in the past; however, Alexandria's success rate is the lowest since the program began. This should be investigated to determine the issues surrounding the performance in the developmental English composition course.

Finally, success in developmental mathematics courses increased at the Eunice site from 60% in spring 2009 to 71% in spring 2010 in MATH 0001 and 57% to 59% in MATH 0002 despite increased class sizes. The 71% success rate for MATH 0001 at the Eunice site is one of the highest since the Pathways to Success program was implemented in fall 2004 whereas the MATH 0002 rate is typical of past performance. Success in mathematics at the Alexandria site also increased. For example, success in MATH 0001 increased from 46% to 58% and MATH 0002 increased from 38% to 63% during the

same time period. These rates were also typical of past performance. Finally, at the LCRP site success in MATH 0001 decreased from 58% to 50% while success in MATH 0002 increased from 25% to 33%. Both of these success rates fall far below the averages of the other two sites and should be examined in greater detail to determine the issues surrounding the lack of performance.

#### Class Sizes and Faculty Status

The data in Table 7 details the dramatic increase in median developmental class sizes since the Pathways to Success program began. All, except UNIV 0008, exceed the national average with the largest classes being in English composition at the Eunice site at 24, MATH 0001 at the Eunice site at 24, MATH 0002 at the Alexandria site at 26, and UNIV 1005 at the Alexandria site at 26. The UNIV 0008 course decreasing from 22 to 17 is explained by the evening class at the Eunice site. The course was offered with 11 students paid for by a federal grant to assist adult students in returning to education.

Table 7

| Pathways to Success<br>Median Spring Class Sizes |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |        |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| Course   | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | Nat'l | Median |
| ENGL 0001  | 21   | 19   | 18   | 13   | 23   | 24   | 20    | 20     |
| MATH 0001  | 20   | 22   | 20   | 20   | 22   | 24   | 21    | 21     |
| MATH 0002  | 22   | 21   | 22   | 20   | 23   | 25   | 21    | 22     |
| UNIV 1005  | 19   | 19   | 21   | 15   | 23   | 24   | 18    | 20     |
| UNIV 0008  | 18   | 21   | 20   | 21   | 22   | 17   | 18    | 20     |

In developmental courses, namely English composition, orientation to university studies, and college reading, full-time faculty outnumber adjunct faculty teaching the courses. However, in the developmental mathematics courses, adjunct or temporary faculty outnumber full time faculty teaching the courses. In fact, no full time faculty taught a Pathways developmental math course in spring 2010.

It is worth noting that the increase in class sizes due to budget cuts masks the fact that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of student withdrawals since the budget cuts began. From spring 2008 (the spring prior to the budget cuts) to spring 2010, an 84% increase in the number of individual student withdrawals was noted (see Table 8).

Table 8

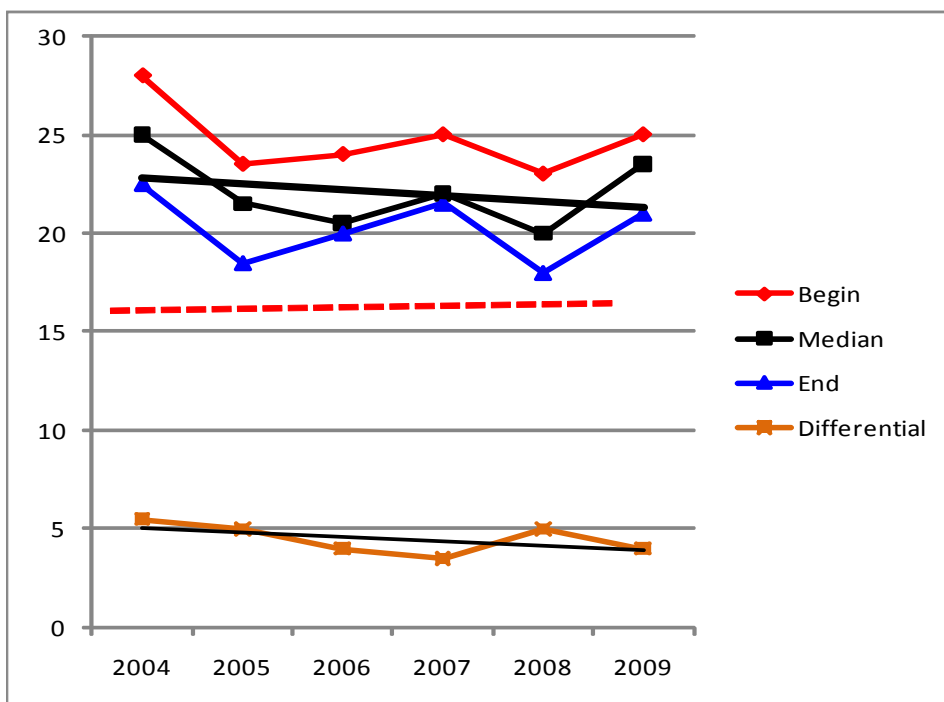
| Pathways to Success                                      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of Individual Student Course Withdrawals (Spring) |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Year   | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Number   | 89   | 97   | 118  | 122  | 167  | 225  |

Larger class sizes at the beginning of the semester generally leads to an increase in the number of withdrawals for a specific course. For example, at the Eunice site, MATH 0002 had a median beginning class size of 27 (see Table 9). The larger class size at the beginning of the semester led to 6 students, on average, withdrawing from

each section. The total remaining in the course on the last day is 21. As a result, the median class size is only increased by two; however, larger class sizes at the beginning of the semester leads to increased withdrawal rates which will eventually affect retention and program completion rates.

Table 9

| Pathways to Success                   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Spring Class Sizes at the Eunice Site |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| MATH 0002                             |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Year                                  | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Begin                                 | 24   | 24   | 25   | 23   | 25   | 27   |
| Median                                | 22   | 21   | 22   | 20   | 24   | 25   |
| End                                   | 19   | 20   | 22   | 18   | 21   | 21   |
| Differential                          | 5    | 4    | 3.5  | 5    | 4    | 6    |



Red dotted line indicates average national class size (21).

### Success in General Education Courses after the Completion of Developmental Courses

Upon the conclusion of each spring semester, the overall success rates for Pathways to Success students completing their first general education course in each of the three major areas are calculated. Students from all three sites progress from developmental English (ENGL 0001) to general education English composition (ENGL 1001). They also progress from

introduction to algebra (MATH 0002) to college algebra (MATH 1014) or college algebra and quantitative reasoning (MATH 1017) depending on their major. Lastly, students also progress from college reading (UNIV 0008) to a social science depending on their major. For the first time since the implementation of the Pathways to Success program, students are performing at a rate that exceeds the national average in all three areas (see Table 10).

Table 10

Pathways Students Succeeding in Their First General Education Course  
After Successfully Completing the Developmental Course Sequence<sup>1</sup>

| Course                      | Percent success at the end of spring: <sup>2</sup> |      |      |      | Nat'l<br>Averages <sup>3</sup> | n for<br>2010 <sup>4</sup> | Non<br>Pathways <sup>5</sup> |
|-----------------------------|--|------|------|------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
|                             | 2007   | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |                                |                            |                              |
| ENGL 0001 to ENGL 1001      | 82   | 84   | 82   | 81   | 64                             | 1233                       | 85                           |
| MATH 0002 to MATH 1014      | 62   | 61   | 64   | 69   | 58                             | 373                        | 79                           |
| UNIV 0008 to Social Science | 63   | 64   | 68   | 73   | 69                             | 400                        | 66                           |

Notes:

1. Success is defined by the student achieving an A, B, or C only
2. National Center for Developmental Education methodology was used; frequency of withdraw was removed.
3. According to Gerlaugh, K., Thompson, L., Boylan, H., and Davis, H. (2007). National study of developmental
4. Frequency of withdraw has been removed from the total n.
5. Calculated at the end of spring 2008.

Since 2007 when the success rates in general education courses were first computed, Pathways to Success students continue to improve in both mathematics and reading. In both cases, the success

*Pathways students are now completing their first general education course in math, English, and social science at a rate consistent with the national average.*

rates are expected to increase slightly to some maximum number thus creating a ceiling effect for overall success. English

composition seems to have already reached this ceiling with success rates in the low 80s.

### Absence Appeals

The attendance policy in the Pathways to Success program requires students to attend 90% of their classes; otherwise, they risk failing the course regardless of the grade earned. Overall, the total number of absence appeals filed for the spring semester was 202 for 148 individual students or 33% of the 447 students that completed the semester (i.e. did not resign). The most common result was the student not appearing to discuss the reason for their absence from class (see Table 11).

Table 11

| Pathways to Success<br>Results of Absence Appeals |      |      |      |      |      |      |        |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Description                                       | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | Median |
| base grade on course work                         | 39%  | 35%  | 49%  | 39%  | 39%  | 30%  | 39%    |
| dropped course                                    | 2%   | 5%   | 7%   | 7%   | 14%  | 16%  | 7%     |
| failed due to absences                            | 3%   | 6%   | 2%   | 3%   | 5%   | 10%  | 4%     |
| never showed for appeal                           | 56%  | 54%  | 42%  | 51%  | 42%  | 44%  | 48%    |

### Academic Advising

Overall, 83% of the Pathways students complied with the advising component of the program for fall 2009 generating 1,330 advising visits over the 10 faculty and professional advisors. This is up from 78% in fall 2008. For spring 2010, 87% of the Pathways students complied with the advising component of the program generating 1,260 advising visits. This is down from 92% in spring 2009 and is not surprising given the resignation of one of the full time advisors in February 2010.

### Tutoring

Resources dedicated to mathematics outpace those dedicated to English by four to one due to success rates. Students at the Eunice site had available tutoring in mathematics generally from 10 am to 2 pm Monday through Thursday where English had no availability other than the Office of Academic Assistance during fall 2009 and just five hours by appointment only for spring 2010. A total of 292 students were tutored in mathematics at the Eunice site generating a 47% compliance rate during fall 2009 down from 397 in fall 2008. Spring 2010 had 324 visits to tutoring generating a 59% compliance rate down from 375 in spring 2009. At Alexandra in fall 2009, no data was reported while in spring 2010, no students who were assigned to tutoring completed the requirement. One tutoring referral was received from the LCRP in fall 2009; however, none were received in spring 2010.

### Student Satisfaction upon Exiting the Program

Each semester, students who complete the UNIV 0008 course are asked to complete an online survey in order to determine student satisfaction with the Pathways to Success program. For spring 2010, there is no doubt that students are dissatisfied with several issues (see Table 12). However, 49 (34%) out 144

*In spring 2010, some Pathways students were not able to schedule classes when they needed them.*

students enrolled completed the electronic survey. When compared to prior spring semesters

and to the mean of all semesters the results of just a few questions stand out – namely questions 2, 3, 6, 7, 16, and 29-31. Students evidently felt they did not need orientation (questions 3, 6, and 7) and that they were not able to schedule classes when they needed them (question 4). This could be related to the large class sizes (see questions 8, 9, and 10). In addition, some students felt their instructors were not knowledgeable about their subjects (question 16); however, very few students attended tutoring or knew anything about the tutoring labs even though tutoring services were mandatory (questions 29, 30, and 31).

Table 12

| Program Evaluation                             |  |         |         |         |         |         |         |      |
|--|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| Pathways to Success                            |  |         |         |         |         |         |         |      |
| Percent that Responded Agree or Strongly Agree |  |         |         |         |         |         |         |      |
| Question Number                                | Question   | SP 2005 | SP 2006 | SP 2007 | SP 2008 | SP 2009 | SP 2010 | Mean |
| 1  | LSUE helps students who need financial assistance.   | 81      | 81      | 75      | 84      | 81      | 76      | 79   |
| 2  | LSUE helps students to be successful in school.  | 78      | 89      | 88      | 92      | 94      | 76      | 86   |
| 3  | The new student orientation helped me better understand the university.  | 64      | 74      | 77      | 82      | 80      | 71      | 78   |
| 4  | I was able to schedule classes when I needed them.   | 74      | 79      | 79      | 89      | 91      | 80      | 80   |
| 5  | Online information available at LSUE helped me to understand the university, my course, and my program of study. | 74      | 78      | 75      | 82      | 90      | 92      | 84   |
| 6  | The Pathways to Success orientation help me better understand the program and its requirements.                  | 57      | 78      | 82      | 82      | 86      | 71      | 81   |
| 7  | The Orientation to University Studies class helped me to better understand how to succeed in college.            | 59      | 79      | 67      | 79      | 88      | 67      | 77   |
| 8  | My math classes were small enough to facilitate learning   | 66      | 70      | 72      | 85      | 64      | 64      | 73   |
| 9  | My developmental studies classes were small enough to facilitate learning.                                       | 81      | 88      | 73      | 85      | 80      | 76      | 81   |
| 10   | My English classes were small enough to facilitate learning.   | 82      | 90      | 83      | 89      | 80      | 71      | 81   |
| 11   | The Pathways to Success office was available and willing to help when I asked.                                   | 50      | 75      | 79      | 70      | 85      | 71      | 75   |
| 12   | Pathways to Success helped me deal with the pressures of school and life.  | 31      | 55      | 62      | 64      | 67      | 67      | 63   |
| 13   | Pathways to Success helped me stay on track with my program of study.  | 41      | 63      | 69      | 72      | 81      | 71      | 73   |
| 14   | The attendance policy in Pathways to Success was fair.   | 34      | 62      | 66      | 63      | 77      | 69      | 66   |
| 15   | My instructors were clear about what they expected in each class.  | 80      | 84      | 83      | 85      | 92      | 84      | 84   |
| 16   | My instructors were knowledgeable about the subjects they taught.  | 82      | 91      | 86      | 90      | 92      | 82      | 87   |
| 17   | My instructors taught in way I could understand.   | 67      | 80      | 78      | 85      | 84      | 76      | 77   |
| 18   | My instructors could relate to the students.   | 70      | 82      | 77      | 81      | 84      | 74      | 77   |
| 19   | My instructors treated me with respect.  | 81      | 62      | 80      | 88      | 92      | 82      | 83   |
| 20   | My instructors wanted me to succeed.   | 84      | 92      | 84      | 89      | 89      | 82      | 86   |
| 21   | My Advisors were available when I needed them.   | 71      | 86      | 79      | 84      | 91      | 82      | 81   |
| 22   | My advisors were open and honest with me, even if I did not like what they had to say.                           | 75      | 83      | 77      | 88      | 92      | 84      | 83   |
| 23   | My advisors were knowledgeable about course and program requirements.  | 73      | 78      | 83      | 73      | 90      | 90      | 82   |
| 24   | My advisors help me to monitor my attendance.  | 49      | 63      | 67      | 67      | 82      | 76      | 69   |
| 25   | I met with my advisor at least three times per semester.   | 77      | 79      | 76      | 89      | 92      | 84      | 84   |
| 26   | I completed all my assignments on time.  | 84      | 86      | 78      | 89      | 92      | 84      | 87   |
| 27   | I asked questions when I did not understand.   | 85      | 84      | 78      | 89      | 87      | 88      | 87   |
| 28   | I asked the instructor for help when I did not understand the course material.                                   | 78      | 77      | 78      | 87      | 90      | 82      | 83   |
| 29   | I went to peer tutoring when I needed help.  | 37      | 41      | 47      | 52      | 48      | 31      | 43   |
| 30   | I went to the computer lab in S-224 when I needed help.  | 37      | 49      | 56      | 70      | 59      | 43      | 51   |
| 31   | The tutoring labs were helpful.  | 26      | 50      | 56      | 66      | 60      | 43      | 51   |

## Students Completing the Pathways to Success Program through Spring 2010

During the 2009 – 2010 academic year, a total of 113 Pathways students finished all requirements for the program. This compares to 93 in the previous academic year. In all 580 (29%) students out of 2,030 beginning the program through fall 2009 have completed the program in less than a year (0.93) on average with a median GPA of 2.80. As shown in Table 13, 39% of the completers are White (non-Hispanic) women followed by 36% Black (non-Hispanic) women, 13% White (non-Hispanic) men, and then 7% Black (non-Hispanic) men.

Table 13

| Demographic Data for Students Completing Developmental Education Coursework |        |      |          |
|---|--------|------|----------|
| Ethnicity   | Female | Male | Subtotal |
| Am Indian or Alaskan  | 1      |      | 1        |
| Asian or Pacific Island   | 2      | 2    | 4        |
| Black - Non Hispanic  | 210    | 38   | 248      |
| Foreign   | 1      |      | 1        |
| Hispanic  | 4      | 1    | 5        |
| Nonresident Alien   | 1      |      | 1        |
| Not Reported  | 13     | 1    | 14       |
| Two or more races   | 3      | 1    | 4        |
| White - Non Hispanic  | 224    | 78   | 302      |
| Grand Total   | 458    | 121  | 580      |

While a completion rate of 29% could be improved, it appears to be consistent with the national completion rate. According to Bailey, Jeong, and Cho, (2008), 33% to 40% of the students nationwide complete their developmental education coursework. The overall completion rate for LSU Eunice, however, does not represent all developmental students enrolled. Instead, it represents only the students who are the most underprepared – students who are in

the most need and have the highest probability of dropping out. The fact that the completion rate for the most underprepared approximates the overall national number speaks to the quality of the faculty and the determination of the students.

### ACT to CAAP Analysis

In spring 2010, a Content Analysis Report was completed for 142 students who took the English Composition section of the CAAP test in fall 2009. It should be noted that the report was completed so LSU Eunice could develop baseline data for students completing the CAAP. Caution should be taken in interpreting the scores due to an n of 142 representing a low number of Pathways students taking the test.

The results for English composition are shown in Table 14 and represent both Pathways and non-Pathways students. According to ACT, students scoring in the bottom 25% (the group containing Pathways students) on the writing section of the ACT test scored below the national norms in all categories on the CAAP test. ACT notes that differences with magnitudes less than 5% is considered to be negligible while differences between 5% and 10% are considered to be moderate and differences greater than 10% are considered substantial.

The Division Head of Liberal Arts held a meeting with the English faculty to discuss the results of the scores. The result of the meeting was that students were probably not taking the writing section of the CAAP test seriously leading to the poor scores. The English faculty agreed that more emphasis will be placed on taking the test seriously in the future.

Table 14

| Table W-1: Writing Skills Comparison Highlights |  |            |         |
|---|--|------------|---------|
| Content Category                                | Local-Normative Group Differences in Percent Correct |            |         |
|   | Bottom 25%   | Middle 50% | Top 25% |
| Punctuation                                     | - 6%   | - 1%       | - 3%    |
| Basic Grammar and Usage                         | - 5%   | - 7%       | - 8%    |
| Sentence Structure                              | - 4%   | - 1%       | 1%      |
| Strategy  | - 9%   | -15%       | -10%    |
| Organization                                    | - 4%   | -12%       | - 8%    |
| Style   | -13%   | -12%       | - 9%    |

Next, 124 students completed the mathematics section of the CAAP as well. The results indicate that students in the bottom 25% of the mathematics section on the ACT performed above the national norm in pre-algebra, elementary algebra, and intermediate algebra (see Table 15).

*On the CAAP test, Pathways students are performing below the national norms in English, but higher than national norms in mathematics.*

Negligible differences below the national norm were found in coordinate geometry and college algebra. The results detailed in Table 15 are rather impressive for students who are the neediest given that Pathways students generally struggle with mathematics courses.

Table 15

| Table M-1: Mathematics Comparison Highlights |  |            |         |
|--|--|------------|---------|
| Content Category                             | Local-Normative Group Differences in Percent Correct |            |         |
|  | Bottom 25%   | Middle 50% | Top 25% |
| Prealgebra                                   | 17%  | 8%         | - 1%    |
| Elementary Algebra                           | 33%  | 11%        | 7%      |
| Intermediate Algebra                         | 6%   | 2%         | - 3%    |
| Coordinate Geometry                          | - 1%   | - 1%       | - 7%    |
| College Algebra                              | - 3%   | - 4%       | -11%    |
| Trigonometry                                 | - 7%   | 1%         | - 1%    |



## Graduation

As of this writing, a total of 43 (3.2%) former Pathways to Success students have graduated from LSU Eunice. Pathways does add some time to graduation since students spend roughly a year in developmental education courses; however, institutional data indicates that they graduate in 3.73 years, on average, with an average GPA of 2.78. The percentage of graduates is based on all Pathways students enrolled up to and including summer 2008. Students who enrolled in fall 2008 or after could not have conceivably completed the program and taken the courses necessary to graduate.



Of the Pathways students who have graduated from LSU Eunice, 51% have been White (non Hispanic) women followed by 23% being Black (non Hispanic) women. Males, both Black and White (non Hispanic) make up 19% of the former Pathways students who have graduated from LSU Eunice (see Table 16).

Table 16

| Ethnicity               | F  | M | Total |
|-------------------------|----|---|-------|
| Am Indian or Alaskan    | 1  |   | 1     |
| Asian or Pacific Island | 1  |   | 1     |
| Black - Non Hispanic    | 10 | 3 | 13    |
| Two or more races       | 1  |   | 1     |
| White - Non Hispanic    | 22 | 5 | 27    |
| Grand Total             | 35 | 8 | 43    |

Even though the graduation rate decreased slightly in the 2009-2010 academic year, the data indicates that the overall graduation rate for Pathways students seems to be increasing (see Table 17). The most popular degrees are Associate of Applied Science in Management followed by an Associate of Nursing (see Table 18).

Table 17

| AY    | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total | 3       | 6       | 19      | 15      |

Table 18

| Degree | Assoc Arts | Accounting Info Systems | Mgmt | Care/Dev Young Children | Computer Info Tech | Fire & Em Service | Gen Studies | Nursing | Assoc Science | Criminal Justice | Total |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------|---------------|------------------|-------|
| Number | 5          | 5                       | 11   | 3                       | 2                  | 2                 | 2           | 9       | 2             | 2                | 43    |

## Initiatives

Three initiatives were continued during the 2009-2010 academic year. The first was related to reading comprehension and was put in place in fall 2007 due to the questionable reading performance of students exiting UNIV 0008. Students leaving the course were not reading at a collegiate level using ASSET cut scores determined by ACT. In addition, students were not performing at national averages in their first social science course as defined by the National Center for Developmental Education (see Table 10). Students were pretested in the second week of UNIV 1005 and then took a different version of the ASSET reading test as post test one upon the conclusion of UNIV 1005. Students then took a second post test using a third version of the test upon the conclusion of UNIV 0008. An ANOVA for repeated measures was used to analyze the scores on each test. The ANOVA found the treatment offered by the UNIV 1005 course statistically significant; however, the treatment offered by the UNIV 0008 course was found not to be statistically significant. In addition, the data suggested that as many as 80% of the students may be successfully completing UNIV 0008, but still not reading at a collegiate level. This was contrasted to the current data (from spring 2010) in Table 10 that notes that students leaving Pathways are now succeeding in their general education social science at a rate that exceeds the national average. The conflicting data led the Director to convene a series of committee meetings related to reading in summer 2010 to develop learning objectives and outcomes for both UNIV 1005 and UNIV 0008. Those meetings are ongoing as this report is being written.

Related to the first initiative, the second allowed students to test out of UNIV 0008 if the student scored a 43 or higher on the post test one using ACT's recommended

cut scores for placement into general education social science courses. To date, 81 (62%) of the 130 students who scored a 43 or higher since fall 2008 actually opted out of UNIV 0008 and took a social science course instead of UNIV 0008. A total of 48 (61%) of the 81 students who opted out successfully completed their social science course with a C or better. An additional 8 (6%) of the students had nearly perfect scores on the post test one and were permitted to exit the Pathways to Success program without taking UNIV 0008. As part of the UNIV committee meetings in summer 2010, the Director of Developmental Education recommended that students continue to be given this option.

The last initiative dealt with the reasons that Pathways to Success students see their

*61% of the Pathways students who tested out of UNIV 0008 successfully completed their general education course.*

academic advisors and why they withdraw from individual classes. The purpose of this initiative was to develop baseline data for each. Very simply, the reason most cited for seeing their advisor according to the logs from fall

2009 and spring 2010 was advising visits related to both UNIV courses. The second most cited reason was to alter or create a schedule, meet about attendance appeals with the Director, and then withdraw from an individual course. Baseline data will continue to be generated during the 2010 – 2011 academic year.

Data from spring 2008 to present indicates that students withdraw from individual courses for academic reasons (38%), then nonacademic reasons (33%), and then personal reasons (28%). However, in spring 2010, students withdrew from courses mostly for personal reasons (44%), then nonacademic reasons (29%), and then academic reasons (27%). The most cited personal reason in spring 2010 was family issues including medical for children and medical issues with the student (both at 19%). Students also reported withdrawing due to work (18%). The most cited

nonacademic reasons for withdrawing were not attending class (28%), not attending tutoring (17%), and not motivated to complete coursework (13%). Lastly, the most cited academic reasons were grade (58%), overwhelmed by the course load and issues with the instructor (both at 16%). It should be noted that students who withdraw due to grade are often doing so to protect their GPA.

### The Effects of Budget Cuts

It is no secret that as of this writing, the state side of LSU Eunice's revenue source has been cut nearly 23% since summer 2008 due to the economic downturn in the country and Louisiana. However, this decrease in state funds has translated to numerous issues for Pathways to Success students at all sites. They are outlined from spring 2008 to spring 2010:

1. Developmental English Composition (ENGL 0001);
  - a. 85% increase in class size (from 13 to 24 students per class compared to the national average of 20 students per class);
  - b. 2% decrease in success (from 81% to 79% compared to the national average of 73%);
  - c. Constant withdraw rates (9 students).
2. Pre-algebra (MATH 0001);
  - a. 20% increase in class size (from 20 to 24 students per class compared to the national average of 21 students per class);
  - b. 2% decrease in success (from 63% to 62% compared to the national average of

*44% of the withdrawals from classes in spring 2010 were for personal reasons.*

- c. 50% increase in the withdrawal rate (from 26 to 39 students).

3. Introduction to Algebra (MATH 0002);
  - a. 25% increase in class size (from 20 to 25 students per class compared to the national average of 21 students per class);
  - b. 2% decrease in success (from 62% to 61% compared to the national average of 68%);
  - c. 30% increase in the withdrawal rate (from 23 to 30 students).
4. Orientation to University Studies (UNIV 1005);
  - a. 60% increase in class size (from 15 to 24 students per class compared to the national average of 18 students per class);
  - b. 3% decrease in success rates (from 88% to 85%);
  - c. 50% increase in the withdrawal rate (from 8 to 12 students).
5. College Reading (UNIV 0008);
  - a. 19% decrease in class size (from 21 to 17 students per class compared to the national average of 18 students per class)<sup>2</sup>;
  - b. 6% decrease in the success rate (from 85% to 80% compared to the national average of 76%);
  - c. 33% increase in the withdrawal rate (from 12 to 16 students).
6. A 25% reduction in the available tutoring for mathematics.
7. A 50% reduction in the available tutoring for English composition.
8. An 84% increase in the number of course withdrawals (from 122 to 225).

<sup>2</sup> One section of UNIV 0008 during spring semester was offered with 11 students on the 14<sup>th</sup> day and 10 students at the completion of the semester. The course would have typically been cancelled; however, it was grant funded targeting adult students who made up the majority of the students enrolled.

9. A 9% reduction in the overall student GPA (2.38 to 2.17);
  - a. 10% decrease in students in good standing (from 73% to 66%)
  - b. 18% increase in students placed on probation (from 17% to 20%)
  - c. 60% increase in students being dismissed (from 5% to 8%).

There can be no doubt that the situation will only be compounded by further budget cuts.

### Final Comments

According to the data, the success of the Pathways to Success program was mixed during the 2009 – 2010 academic year. Program results for the last academic year are most likely due to three variables – all other variables were held constant. For example, the way in which students were placed into classes, the instruction itself, and the program policies were held constant. Given this, success and retention rates would have been influenced by the variability in the student body only. However, three environmental factors impacted the operation of the program during the year. The first is the loss of one of the full time academic advisors. Since there are only two full-time developmental studies advisors, it was next to impossible for the department to adapt to the loss midway through spring 2010 when the advisor left LSU Eunice. In other words, it was virtually impossible to increase Ms. Rougeau's and Dr. Fowler's advising load to accommodate the 300+ advising visits that the other advisor typically took care of during a typical spring semester. Departmental personnel did the best they could, but it is very likely that students "fell through the cracks" that opened as a result of the vacancy.

Next, the mixed results were also a result of the students themselves. While most students are somewhat motivated and will comply with policies if they know them, many students will simply do what they wish regardless of the impact to their GPA or future goals and objectives. It was apparent with the fall 2009 to spring 2010 retention

rates that this particular cohort of Pathways students included many such students and that the statistical analysis would be interesting. This same situation apparently occurred in 2003 – 2004 just prior to the Pathways program's implementation (see Table 3). Still, in 2009 – 2010, every aspect of program was enforced as best as it could be in an effort to meet the needs of every student in the program.

Lastly, larger class sizes due to budget cuts have had the most impact relative to student success and retention. For example, developmental English classes have 71% more students in them while mathematics classes currently have 25% more students (see Table 7). The orientation to university studies classes have 60% more students in them in spring 2010 compared to the national norm according to the National Center for Developmental Education. In fact, some of the LSU Alexandria classes had an average of 30 students (ENGL 0001 was 31, MATH 0001 was 29, and UNIV 1005 was 32) in them during the fall 2009 semester when the average number of students in the class should have been no larger than 20. Larger class sizes are also a major factor in the 84% increase in the withdrawal rate as well (see Table 8). Undoubtedly, this will lead to increased time to program completion and graduation at a time when those deciding the budget cuts are demanding increased accountability in higher education through higher graduation rates. LSU Eunice and Pathways to Success showed progress after the implementation of the program. However, that progress has now been checked by the lack of resources. Decreased resources will slow, if not reverse the success that has been demonstrated by the program.

Graduating more students in three years and "doing more with less" are words often heard from those holding the purse strings, but one further issue should be noted and that is the fact that students are human beings with various degrees of personal problems. Some actual student examples from spring 2010 might prove useful. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive and various degrees of these problems are

faced each semester. The first example comes courtesy of a student who had to have a kidney removed just prior to spring 2010 beginning. The second example involves a student whose young son was molested by the student's 17 year old nephew. In this case, the student's sister (the molester's mother) also attempted suicide as a result of the molestation. Another case involved a student who is a single parent who was a victim of domestic violence by her boyfriend who attempted to lock her in the trunk of a car and leave her five year old daughter on the side of the road on a 95 degree day. Another student found her grandmother dead, having committed suicide over a personal argument with the student. Lastly, another single parent of 11 and 7 year old boys was told by her boyfriend to "get out". Being from California, she had nowhere to go and no money. In fact, the small family lived in a car for one night before a friend helped out and let them stay with her.

In each case above, students were advised to withdraw from classes to protect their overall GPA (some of them being A students). They were also referred to counseling with two of the students being seen by the LSU Eunice counselor in the Director's office. LSU Eunice officials believe that these circumstances warrant doing what is best for the students and allowing them to address their personal factors including their mental and physical well being since these needs are more important than attending classes at that specific time. However, according to those who control the state funding, LSU Eunice will have funding withheld since the students above probably will not be retained and probably will not graduate from LSU Eunice in the three year time span. It appears as if either LSU Eunice or those holding the purse strings lack common sense when dealing with students of this type. The reader may decide that issue. There is no doubt in this author's mind that the short term goal of balancing the Louisiana's budget outweighs the need for an educated citizenry. How this will impact Louisiana's future economic development remains to be seen; however, it is a picture

that is being painted with water colors in a thunderstorm.

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