



**Quick Fact Summary Number 2018-4
Office of Institutional Effectiveness**

Student Withdrawal Comparison: Fall 2017 to Fall 2013 through Fall 2017

Revised March 28, 2018

The purpose of Quick Fact Summaries is to gather and report data so those requesting information may decide LSUE policy. For number 4, a request was received from members of Academic Council to study the number of withdrawals over a period of time. There was a concern that there were an excessive number of withdrawals during Fall 2017 and the members of Academic Council were wondering if a policy needed to be implemented to limit the number of times a student can withdraw from a course.

In order to obtain and analyze the data, an Institutional Research Report was run for Fall 2013 through Fall 2017 semesters that included the outcomes for every student taking a course even if the course was repeated.¹ From Fall 2013 through Fall 2017, LSUE had a total of 185 unique courses offered to students. Table 1 shows that the 185 courses were taken 81,371 times with a total of 5,692 individual course withdrawals and 2,448 course resignations. Note that the number of withdrawals and resignations in Table 1 are mutually exclusive meaning that individual courses dropped were included in the withdrawal column only. Students with zero hours at the end of the semester had each of their courses counted as a resignation instead of a withdrawal.²

Term	Number of Courses	Number of Course Withdrawals	Number of Course Resignations
FA 13	9114	663	293
FA 14	9289	611	336
FA 15	8669	549	312
FA 16	9721	701	282
FA 17	10248	823	234
SP 14	8433	529	213
SP 15	8216	554	232
SP 16	8288	587	239
SP 17	9393	675	307
Overall	81371	5692	2448

Term	Number of Courses	Percentage of Course Withdrawals	Percentage of Course Resignations	Total Percent
FA 13	9114	7.3	3.2	10.5
FA 14	9289	6.6	3.6	10.2
FA 15	8669	6.3	3.6	9.9
FA 16	9721	7.2	2.9	10.1
FA 17	10248	8.0	2.3	10.3
SP 14	8433	6.3	2.5	8.8
SP 15	8216	6.7	2.8	9.6
SP 16	8288	7.1	2.9	10.0
SP 17	9393	7.2	3.3	10.5
Mean	9041	7.0	3.0	10.0

Table 2 uses the frequency data from Table 1 and examines it as percentages so comparisons may be examined across all semesters studied. Table 2 indicates that students withdraw or resign from approximately ten percent of their courses in any given semester. Table 2 also

¹ Data is by academic year – fall and spring only including both eight week accelerated sessions within the fall and spring semesters. This time period was chosen since Modular Mathematics and MATH 1015 (Applied College Algebra) were both implemented in the Fall 2013 semester.

² Resignations at LSUE means that the student dropped all of their courses in a given semester.

indicates that Fall 2017 (highlighted) was no exception given that students withdrew from 8.0% of their courses; this being slightly higher than the mean for all other semesters examined. Students resigned from 2.3% of their courses; this being slightly less than the mean for all other semesters examined. Combining the two, students withdrew or resigned from 10.3% of their courses in Fall 2017. However, while Fall 2017 had the highest withdrawal rate for the period studied, it did not have the highest combined withdraw and resignation rate. It was exceeded by Fall 2013 and Spring 2017 – both at 10.5%.

Next, Table 3 details the top 15 courses with the highest withdraw frequency during the period studied accounting for 3,063 (54%) of the 5,692 of the course withdraws.³ Note also that the 15 courses make up 8.1% of the 185 unique courses offered and are typically taken by first-time students. The balance, 2,629 (46%) of the withdrawals are spread among the other 170 unique courses. Table 3 also examines the number of times students withdrew from courses. Using BIOL 1001 as an example, 2,371 students did not withdraw from BIOL 1001 from Fall 2013 through Fall 2017 while 369 students withdrew once. In addition, 21 students withdrew twice and none withdrew three times for a total 2,761 students.

Course	Number of Withdrawals				Total
	none	1	2	3	
BIOL 1001	2371	369	21	0	2761
BIOL 1161	973	335	24	1	1333
MATH 0002	1845	227	32	0	2104
MATH 1021	1708	236	25	1	1970
ENGL 1001	4520	263	9	1	4793
BIOL 1160	1132	242	15	1	1390
MATH 0001	2724	195	10	4	2933
ENGL 1002	3184	187	11	1	3383
ENGL 0001	2097	161	18	0	2276
MATH 1015	1545	164	11	2	1722
CHEM 1201	428	113	4	0	545
MATH 1425	1302	94	7	1	1404
BIOL 1208	402	96	1	0	499
CMST 1061	1786	93	1	0	1880
BIOL 1201	563	86	1	0	650
Total	26580	2861	190	12	29643

Course	Percentage of Withdrawal			
	none	1	2	3
BIOL 1001	85.87	13.36	0.76	0.00
BIOL 1161	72.99	25.13	1.80	0.08
MATH 0002 ⁴	87.69	10.79	1.52	0.00
MATH 1021	86.70	11.98	1.27	0.05
ENGL 1001	94.30	5.49	0.19	0.02
BIOL 1160	81.44	17.41	1.08	0.07
MATH 0001	92.87	6.65	0.34	0.14
ENGL 1002	94.12	5.53	0.33	0.03
ENGL 0001	92.14	7.07	0.79	0.00
MATH 1015	89.72	9.52	0.64	0.12
CHEM 1201	78.53	20.73	0.73	0.00
MATH 1425	92.74	6.70	0.50	0.07
BIOL 1208	80.56	19.24	0.20	0.00
CMST 1061	95.00	4.95	0.05	0.00
BIOL 1201	86.62	13.23	0.15	0.00
Mean	87.42	11.85	0.69	0.04

Table 4 presents the same data from Table 3 as percentages so comparisons may be made. The data for the top 15 courses with the highest historic withdrawal frequency shows that, on average, 87.42% of the students do not withdrawal. In addition, 12% withdraw from the same course once while less than one percent withdraws twice and only 0.04% withdraw from the same course three times. No student withdrew from one of the top 15 courses more than three times.

For Fall 2017 only, there were a total of 10,248 courses taken with an 8% withdrawal rate (see Tables 1 and 2). This, once again, accounted for 185 unique courses offered at LSUE. The data in Tables 5 and 6 presents the withdrawal data for Fall 2017 only in a similar fashion and in the

³ The 3,063 = 2,861+129+12 from Table 3. The total, 5,692 is the total number of withdrawals in Table 1.

⁴ MATH 0002 is the combination of MATH 0015 and MATH 0021 data.

same order to Tables 3 and 4. First, Fall 2017 had a slightly higher withdrawal rate as noted in Tables 1 and 2. The same occurred for the courses with the highest historical withdraw frequencies as well – 11.85% withdrew once historically from Table 4 versus 12.17% from Fall 2017 in Table 6. Among the 15 courses with the highest frequency of withdraw, seven of them had a lower withdrawal rate including two courses that students withdraw from the most (see highlighted in Table 6). Three courses had notably higher withdrawal rates, namely MATH 0002 increased 7.92 percentage points while CHEM 1201 increased 4.27 percentage points and MATH 1021 increased 3.52 percentage points.

Course	Number of Withdrawals			
	none	1	2	Total
BIOL 1001	365	45	0	410
BIOL 1161	180	59	0	239
MATH 0002	226	52	0	278
MATH 1021	278	51	0	329
ENGL 1001	780	51	2	833
BIOL 1160	213	39	0	252
MATH 0001	508	50	0	558
ENGL 1002	282	26	0	308
ENGL 0001	371	16	0	387
MATH 1015	236	17	0	253
CHEM 1201	57	19	0	76
MATH 1425	162	13	0	175
BIOL 1208	132	22	0	154
CMST 1061	292	6	0	298
BIOL 1201	146	24	0	170
Total	4228	490	2	4720

Course	Percentage of Withdrawal		
	none	1	2
BIOL 1001	89.02	10.98	0.00
BIOL 1161	75.31	24.69	0.00
MATH 0002 ⁶	81.29	18.71	0.00
MATH 1021	84.50	15.50	0.00
ENGL 1001	93.64	6.12	0.24
BIOL 1160	84.52	15.48	0.00
MATH 0001	91.04	8.96	0.00
ENGL 1002	91.56	8.44	0.00
ENGL 0001	95.87	4.13	0.00
MATH 1015	93.28	6.72	0.00
CHEM 1201	75.00	25.00	0.00
MATH 1425	92.57	7.43	0.00
BIOL 1208	85.71	14.29	0.00
CMST 1061	97.99	2.01	0.00
BIOL 1201	85.88	14.12	0.00
Mean	87.81	12.17	0.02

This Quick Fact Summary provides withdrawal data for Academic Council to determine whether or not a withdrawal policy is needed at LSUE – the decision will be left to that body. This Quick Fact Summary does not address one question that will be investigated in the future. The question very simply asks: How does this data compared to LSUE’s peers? Unfortunately, national databases do not collect data on individual course withdrawals; however, Quick Fact Summary Number Six does make some national comparisons to students with a final course outcome of D, F, W (withdrawal), I (Incomplete), or R (Resignation).⁷

Questions may be directed to Dr. Paul Fowler, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation Liaison, at pfowler@lsue.edu.

⁵ Note that the two students withdrawing from ENGL 1001 in one semester attempted to take it in either accelerated formats and withdrew twice.

⁶ The MATH 0002 designation was used for convenience. It is the combination of the data from MATH 0015 and MATH 0021.

⁷ Resignation means that a student dropped all courses in a given semester and had zero hours completed at the conclusion of the semester.