

Examination of Success, Retention, and Persistence among Prison Program Recipients

The purpose of the following brief is to examine the rates of success, retention, and persistence among students who participated in our prison program in 2017. Comparisons are made between the course success, retention, and persistence rates of prisoners and the general student population at Columbia College. The sample for the examination included all students who were enrolled at Columbia College in the Fall of 2017.

Research Question 1:

Is there a significant difference in the course success rates between those in the prison program and the general student population at Columbia College?



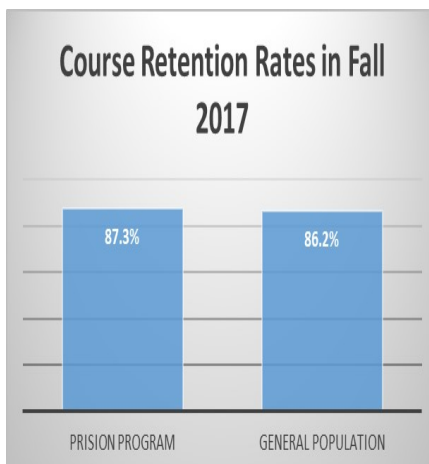
Overall, students who were in our prison program had a 7.6% higher course success rate (82.5% vs. 74.9%) compared to the general student population at Columbia College.

Table #1: Comparison of Fall 2017 course success rates.

Status	n	Success	Success Rate
Prison Program	268	221	82.5%
General Student Population	6466	4844	74.9%

Research Question 2:

Is there a significant difference in the retention rates between those in the prison program and the general student population at Columbia College?



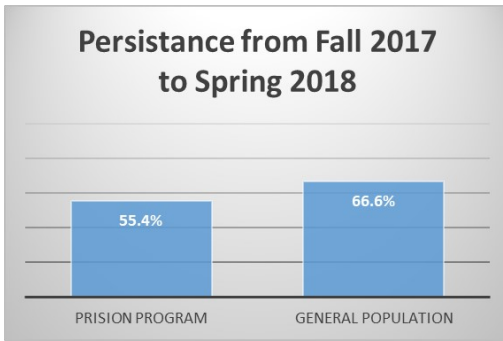
Overall, students who were in our prison program had an 1.1% higher retention rate (87.3% vs. 86.2%), compared to the general student population at Columbia College.

Table #2: Comparison of Fall 2017 course retention rates.

Status	n	Retention	Retention Rate
Prison Program	268	234	87.3%
General Student Population	6466	5575	86.2%

Research Question 3:

Is there a significant difference in the fall to spring persistence rates between those in the prison program and the general student population at Columbia College?



Overall, the persistence rates from fall 2017 to spring 2018 were 10.2% lower for students that were in the prison program than those who were not (55.4% compared to 66.6%).

Table #3: Comparisons of persistence rates.

	<i>n</i>	Enrolled Spring 2018	Persistence Rate
Prison Program	195	108	55.4%
General Student Population	3274	2181	66.6%

Discussion / Limitations / Recommendations for Further Study

Overall, course success and retention were slightly higher for students who participated the prison program than their counterparts who were part of the general population at Columbia College. These findings suggest that the majority of students in the college prison program are capable of, and benefiting from, participation in higher education. However, the results also indicated that the incarcerated students were less likely than their peers at Columbia College to persist from one term to the next. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that high achieving students at SCC are sometimes afforded the opportunity to transfer to one of the many fire camps throughout the state, and thus no longer have the opportunity to receive face to face instruction from Columbia College. Additionally some of the incarcerated students may have participated in programs which were only designed to last a single term, such as the hospitality program, and therefore did not have the opportunity to persist to a second term.

One of the limitations of the study were the differences in the comparison groups. Although it was useful to compare the success rates of incarcerated Columbia College students with their non-incarcerated peers at the college, it would also be interesting to see how the performance of Columbia College's incarcerated students compare with other incarcerated students throughout the state.



**COLUMBIA
COLLEGE**
YOSEMITE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT

For more information regarding this brief contact:

Dean of Student Services
Brandon Price
(209) 588-5079
priceb@yosemite.edu

Or

Educational Research Analyst
Kristin Rascon
(209) 588-5386
rasconk@yosemite.edu