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STEP-UP Success Metrics Comparison Dec 2019



Background

The mission of STEP-UP (Shasta Technical Education Program-Unified Partnership) is to provide academic, logistical, and limited financial support for students who have been formerly incarcerated and/or have suffered from alcohol or drug addiction.

The program combines support with accountability and community to assist students in making the transition to becoming successful, contributing members of our community. Although the program has earned many awards, the directors seek continual improvement and are interested in the overall success of their students as compared with others on campus.

Research Questions

The general goal of this project is to compare the students in the STEP-UP program with the general Shasta College student population in various student success measures. The success measures examined are: Fall to Spring Persistence, Course Success Rates, Grade Point Average, and Units Completed Per Academic Year.

Data was collected on more than 10,000 Shasta College students each year for the past five academic years. In addition to the student success metrics, general enrollment and degree and certificate completion was also collected.

Tableau visualizations relating all of the student data are filterable by the following student characteristics/groups: First Generation, DSPS, Foster Youth, Veterans, Age Group, Gender, and Ethnicity.

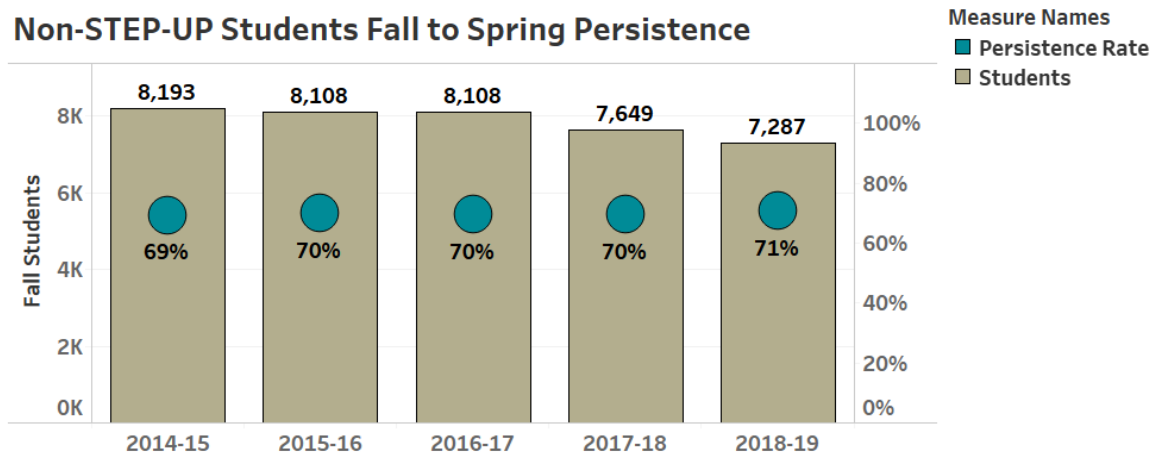
General Results

Out of the four main success metrics, STEP-UP students did much better than the rest of the student population in Fall to Spring Persistence rates and in Average Units Completed per Year. In the metrics of Course Success Rates and Grade Point Average, STEP-UP students had higher values than non-STEP-UP students in some years but lower values in other years.

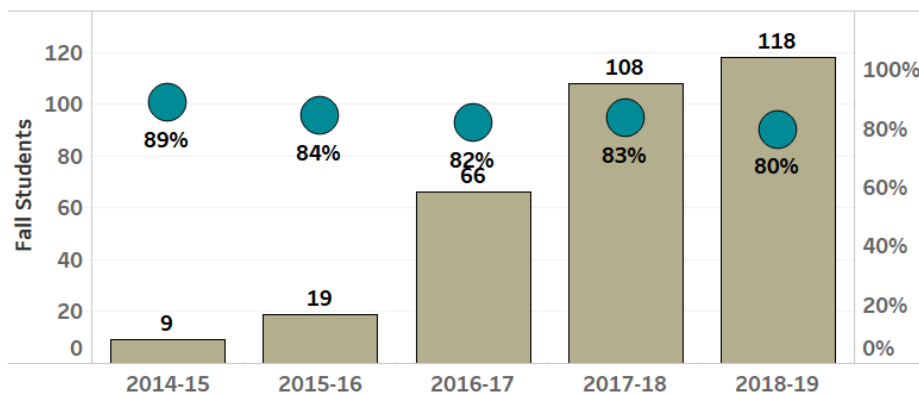
Fall to Spring Persistence

Students that enter the STEP-UP program choose a specific program of study and are expected to remain in that program as a full-time student until they complete. These high expectations and the accompanying cohort model result in students that are much more likely to return for a spring semester after starting in the fall than the non-STEP-UP student population. The bars in the graph below indicate the number of fall students and the percentage indicates the percent of that number that enrolled in classes in the following spring.

Non-STEP-UP Students Fall to Spring Persistence



STEP-UP Students Fall to Spring Persistence

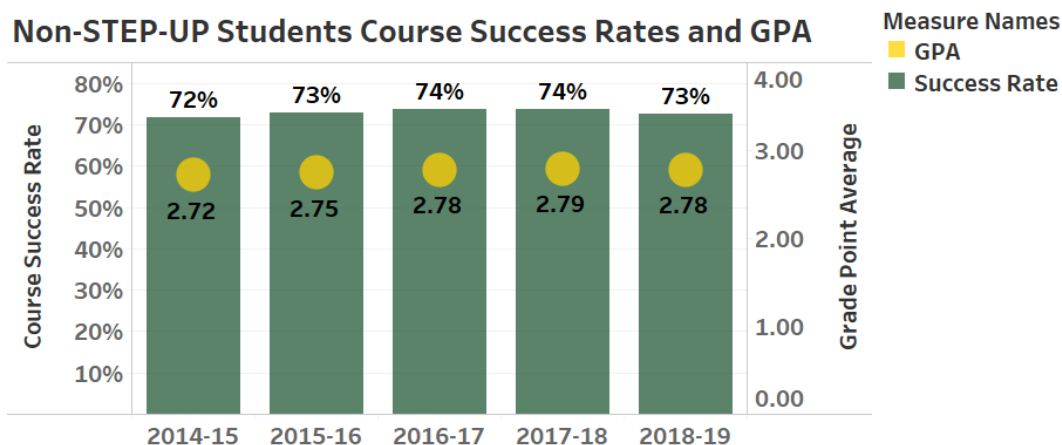


Course Success Rates and Grade Point Averages

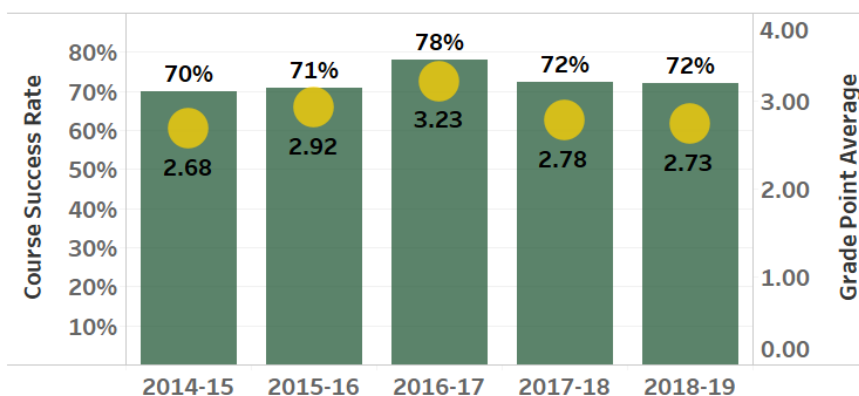
The course success rates (percentage of courses passed) for the STEP-UP students are comparable to the general Shasta College student population. For four out of the five years, there is not a statistically significant difference between the STEP-UP success rates and those of the other students. In 2016-17 the success rates for the STEP-UP students are significantly higher than the general population.

In most years, the average GPA for STEP-UP students is similar to that of those students who are not in STEP-UP. The only exception is the year 2016-17 where the mean GPA of STEP-UP students was significantly higher than the rest of the Shasta College students.

Non-STEP-UP Students Course Success Rates and GPA

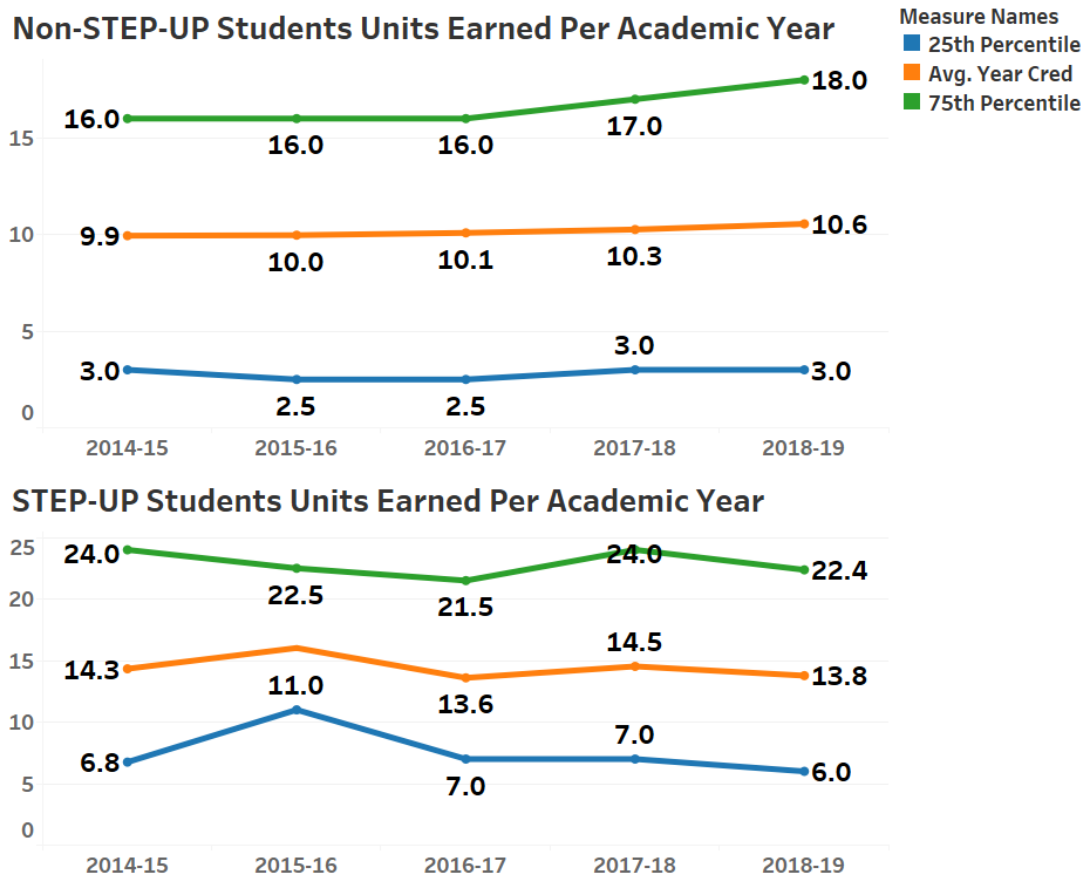


STEP-UP Students Course Success Rates and GPA



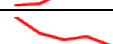
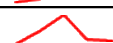
Units Earned Per Year

The number of units earned per year is a leading measure related to student completion and transfer readiness. The average number of units earned per year for STEP-UP students has been higher than that of the non-STEP-UP students for each of the last five years. This is not surprising since all STEP-UP students are degree-seeking and are expected to enroll full-time. The mean number of units earned per year was significantly higher for the STEP-UP students in each year except 2014-15 and that was only due to the low number of STEP-UP students.



Summary

The chart below shows the summary of the success measures. The 'sparklines' at the end of each row are line graphs of the five year period with vertical axes compressed to show trends and not absolute gains or losses. It is clear that the number of STEP-UP students has grown considerably over the last five years with a corresponding number of completers. However, as enrollment increases persistence tends to decrease. With a decrease in persistence the number of units earned per year will also decrease. Success rates and GPA peaked in the 2016-17 academic year.

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
Students	12	21	76	138	166	
Persistence	89%	84%	82%	83%	80%	
Completers	1	3	5	28	37	
Success Rates	70	71	78	72	72	
Avr GPA	2.68	2.92	3.23	2.78	2.73	
Units Per Year	14.3	11	13.6	14.5	13.8	

Recommendations

The STEP-UP program has enjoyed great success over the last few years and deservedly earned many accolades. A focus on increasing students will likely continue to increase the number of students earning awards. However, based on the data, it is possible that general success measures may decrease and therefore the following areas should be investigated or maintained.

- The persistence rate of STEP-UP students has decreased slightly with the increased number of students. One key to the success of the program has been the case management model where each student is given individual attention and direction. As the program gains more students, the directors will need to consider how to maintain a high level of personal interaction with the students.
- The success rate of STEP-UP students is relatively high, but there are many instances of course withdrawals. Mid-term progress reports are already being used, but obtaining more complete and/or more accurate information from the faculty members would be helpful. Having more faculty use Shasta Summit would give STEP-UP directors current and accurate current grade information.
- Certain courses are known to be difficult for STEP-UP students. Continuing to monitor those courses and taking proactive steps such as adding embedded tutors to increase student success is encouraged.
- STEP-UP students earn more credits per year than the general Shasta College population but many do not maintain full-time status throughout the year. Since many STEP-UP students are pursuing a CTE degree, the college CTE counselor could help with scheduling or other strategies to increase the number of units completed per year.

Notes

- Fall to Spring persistence includes any student that earned a grade in the fall and also earned a grade in the spring. Students who earned an award of any kind in the fall are counted as persisted.
- Although students often earn more than one award, completions is an unduplicated student count where only their highest award is noted.
- The calculation of average number of units per year includes students who may have earned an award or dropped out after the fall term.

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