When Do Students Leave? An Analysis on the Timing of Student Behavior

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Overview

• Main question: When do students complete awards at the community college, and if they don’t complete, when do they exit?

• Using student transcripts, award information, and transfer information, we can determine students’ choices over five years

• We track this behavior for every fall, spring, and summer term, over five academic years
Data

- For this analysis, we use transcript-level and student-level information from the fall 2005 cohort of 12 community colleges
- Students are followed through the 2009-2010 academic year, for every term
- Only first-time-in-college (FTIC) students are used in the analysis
- Sample size: 80,000+ students
- Information on college-ready/developmental assessment
Methods

- Using course-level information, look at which semester the student entered “concentration”
  - Concentration defined as completing at least nine college-level credits in a single area of study
- Using award information, find the semester that the student completed first award in
- Using transcript and transfer information, look at when transfer students exited the community college if they did not complete an award
- Samples consist of ALL students who: 1) concentrated, 2) completed, or 3) did not complete and left institution
Breakdown of Concentrators

- College-Ready: 16%
- Referred to One Subject: 37%
- Referred to Two Subjects: 26%
- Referred to Three Subjects: 20%
Time to Concentration

- College-Ready
- Referred to One Subject
- Referred to Two Subjects
- Referred to Three Subjects

Time to Concentration Graph showing proportions of students reaching each stage from Fall '05 to Summer '10.
Breakdown of Awardees

- College-Ready: 22%
- Referred to One Subject: 36%
- Referred to Two Subjects: 23%
- Referred to Three Subjects: 19%
Time to Award
Breakdown of Non-Completer Students

- Not Enrolled, No Outcome: 84%
- Bachelor's at Other: 3%
- Transfer to 4-Year, no Award: 13%
- Cert or Assoc at Other: <1%
Time of Departure of Non-Completers

- Cert/AA at Other Institution
- Transfer to 4-Year, No Award
- Bachelor's at Transfer Institution
- Not Enrolled, No Outcome
Summary of Findings

• Students who are referred to multiple developmental subjects are much further behind than their college-ready counterparts

• 40% of students who eventually drop out leave after the first term

• Vast majority of students who exit the community college without an award have little to show for it afterwards

• Students who eventually receive a certificate, associate, or bachelor’s degree elsewhere tend to leave the community college quickly
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