

RESEARCH REPORT

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AT FULLERTON COLLEGE



AUGUST 2021

North Orange Promise at Fullerton College

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Introduction

In the Fall 2018, Fullerton College joined the [Anaheim Union Educational Pledge](#) in support of AUHSD students and graduates. After the first year, the program expanded to include all first-time college students enrolling at Fullerton College under the North Orange Promise program. By the Fall 2020 semester, the North Orange Promise program had expanded even further, offering first-time students [two years of tuition-free education](#) among other services and supports.

The following data provide an initial view of the first three Pledge and Promise cohorts, and the milestones they have achieved at Fullerton College. The data below focus on Fullerton College students who were fully eligible for the Pledge or North Orange Promise program. Students are identified as Fullerton College students if they enrolled in a majority of their first-term units at Fullerton College or if their home campus is FC as identified in the student information system. In addition to focusing on Fullerton College students, this analysis only considers students who met all eligibility criteria for the Promise program, which includes the following:

1. Students are first-time enrollees in higher education after high school.
2. Students are identified as California residents or equivalent.
3. Students signed the Promise Agreement by the end of their initial fall semester.
4. Students enrolled in 12+ units within NOCCCD in the initial fall semester.
 - a. Students who are approved by Disability Support Services to enroll in fewer than 12 units are also considered to be eligible.
5. Students who completed their financial aid application for their first year.

Given the specific eligibility criteria, it should be noted that the Promise Program at Fullerton College supports and engages with many more students than who are identified in the cohorts below. In addition, the analysis also focuses on students who started in the fall semester and does not include the smaller subset of students who might have begun their college experience in the spring semester.

Analysis

The number of Promise students has increased each year, starting with a cohort of 745 AUHSD students in the Fall 2018 semester and reaching over 2,000 students in Fall 2020. In addition to the growth in the number of students, the program is reaching an increasing proportion of all first-

time resident students enrolled at Fullerton College. In this way, more than half of all first-time resident students at Fullerton College in Fall 2020 became fully eligible for the Promise Program.

Table 1. Number of Students in North Orange Promise

Cohort	Cohort	% of First-Time Residents
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	17%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	43%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	52%

In addition to the growth of the Promise cohorts in overall numbers, examining student demographics reveals a cohort in which nearly three-fourths of students identify as Latinx. Table 2 denotes the breakdown of students' racial, ethnic, and/or ancestry identities, with 76% of all Promise students from the first three cohorts identifying as Latinx, 10% identifying as white, and 6% Asian-identified students.

Table 2. Percentage of Students by Race | Ethnicity | Ancestry by Cohort

Race Ethnicity	Fall '18	Fall '19	Fall '20	Overall
American Indian	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	5%	6%	7%	6%
Black	2%	2%	1%	2%
Filipino	3%	3%	3%	3%
Latinx	81%	75%	74%	76%
Native Hawaiian	0%	0%	0%	0%
Two or More	2%	2%	3%	2%
White	7%	11%	11%	10%

Table 3 indicates the percentage of students from the initial fall cohort who continued their enrollment into the spring semester (% fall to spring retention). As an example, for students in the Fall 2018 cohort, the retention metric is the percentage of students who enrolled at Fullerton College in the spring 2019 semester. In addition, the fall to fall retention percentage examines those who enrolled in the following fall semester, and then the percentage of students who enrolled in three consecutive semesters. In this case, for the Fall 2018 cohort, the three consecutive semesters would be fall 2018, spring 2019, and the fall 2019 semesters. While the percentage of the Fall 2020 cohort who persisted into the spring semester declined slightly compared to the Fall 2019 cohort, it remained near 90% and partially reflects the beginning of the pandemic.

Table 3. Persistence Rate

Cohort	Cohort	% Fall – Spring Retention	% Fall to Fall Retention	3 Consecutive Semesters
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	86%	68%	66%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	90%	73%	72%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	88%		

When examining the rate at which students enroll in the first three semesters consecutively, broken out by gender identity, female-identified students have maintained their enrollment at higher rates than male-identified students. For the Fall 2019 cohort, 76% of female-identified students enrolled in the Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020 semesters, whereas 68% of male-identified students similarly enrolled.

Table 4. Enrollment in 3 Consecutive Semesters by Gender Identity

Cohort	Cohort	% Female	3 Consecutive Semesters (Female)	3 Consecutive Semesters (Male)
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	49%	69%	62%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	52%	76%	68%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	55%		

Table 5 examines the percentage of the cohort who successfully earns 24 units or more in their first year. This analysis considers a student’s first year to be the summer, fall, and spring semesters, meaning that for the Fall 2018 cohort, the units were counted if students successfully passed the course (with a grade of an A, B, C, or Pass) during the summer 2018, fall 2018, or spring 2019 semester. The Table shows an increasing proportion of students who successfully pass 24 or more units in their first year, increasing from 17% of the Fall 2018 cohort to 42% of the Fall 2020 cohort. It should be noted that the units considered for the analysis are only Fullerton College units and that these numbers may be slightly undercounting the total unit accumulation within the district given the cross enrollment at Cypress College for a small set of students.

Table 5. Percentage of Students Successfully Earning 24+ Units in First Year

Cohort	Cohort	24+ Units
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	17%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	30%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	42%

When examining the proportion of students by race / ethnicity / ancestry who earned 24 or more units in their first year, notable gaps emerge. For the Fall 2020 cohort, 37% of Latinx-identified students earned 24 or more units, while more than 50% among students with different identities earned 24 or more units in their first year (see Table 6).

Table 6. Percentage of Students Earning 24+ Units in the First Year (Fall 2020 Cohort Only)

Race Ethnicity	Overall
American Indian	*
Asian	63%
Black	50%
Filipino	52%
Latinx	37%
Native Hawaiian	*
Two or More	51%
White	53%

In addition to earning a certain number of units, it is important for students to complete a specific set of courses for their degree, including the transfer-level Math and English courses. Table 7 examines the proportion of students who successfully complete both their math and English transfer-level courses in their first year. The table indicates a substantial increase, from 20% of the Fall 2018 cohort completing those requirements in the first year, whereas 35% of the Fall 2020 cohort did so even amidst the global pandemic. In addition, the Table provides a current look at the proportion of students who have completed their math and English courses at all. In a similar way to Tables 5 and 6, only Fullerton College courses are considered.

Table 7. Percentage of Students Completing Transfer-Level Math and English Courses

Cohort	Cohort	% English + Math Transfer-Level in 1 st Year	% English + Math Transfer-Level to Date
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	20%	32%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	30%	41%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	35%	35%

When disaggregating the percentage of students who complete their English and math-level transfer courses in the first year, less than one-third of Latinx-identified students completed such requirements. Table 8 shows the percentage of students from the Fall 2020 cohort disaggregated by racial / ethnic / ancestry identity who completed both transfer-level courses within the first year. Such inequities highlight the need to advance efforts that will improve the success of all students as well as intentional efforts that will address the disparities in opportunities and outcomes that are noted in this report and elsewhere.

Table 8. Percentage of Students Completing English and Math Transfer-Level Courses in the First Year by Race / Ethnicity / Ancestry

Race Ethnicity	Overall
American Indian	*
Asian	52%
Black	42%
Filipino	44%
Latinx	31%
Native Hawaiian	*
Two or More	45%
White	37%

A key component of students’ journey is not only their successful accumulation of units, but that they create a comprehensive educational plan in coordination with a counselor. Table 9 examines the percentage of students who completed their first comprehensive educational plan before the end of their first year. In this instance, the percentage of students who completed their comprehensive plan within their first year was highest among the Fall 2018 cohort at 39% whereas just more than one-quarter of the Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 cohorts completed their comprehensive plan in the first year. This may due to the suspension of in-person services and counseling appointments starting in the spring 2020 semester as well as the substantial increase in the size of the cohorts. While the percentages of the cohort completing a comprehensive plan decreased, it should be noted that the number of students increased substantially, increasing from 289 Promise students from the Fall 2018 cohort who completed their education plan in the first year to 561 Promise students from the Fall 2020 cohort.

Table 9. Completion of First Comprehensive Ed Plan before the End of the First Year

Cohort	Cohort	Comp. Ed Plan in 1 st Year
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	39%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	28%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	28%

Another key milestone is the percentage of successfully completed units. The proportion of each cohort that has completed 30 or more units at Fullerton College, 45 or more units, and 60 or more units is shown below in Table 10. An important aspect to this table is that it does not consider similar timeframes, so the Fall 2018 cohort has had more semesters worth of enrollment to achieve such milestones; however, the table can illuminate the overall momentum of a cohort and the extent to which they earn sufficient units in preparation for transfer to a four-year institution.

Table 10. The percentage of students who earn 30+, 45+, or 60+ units at Fullerton College.

Cohort	Cohort	30+ Units	45+ Units	60+ Units
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	44%	34%	21%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	50%	32%	10%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	17%	0%	0%

The percentage of students who earn a Program Award at Fullerton College is a key metric that indicates the rate at which students are completing their intended programs. Although students may transfer without earning a certificate or degree, it is important for students to complete their intended course of study and transition with the credentials they have earned. As of August 1, 2021, approximately 12% and 6% of the Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 cohorts respectively have earned an associate degree. A few students have also earned a state-approved certificate without a degree, and when examining the percentage of students who have earned a degree or state-approved certificate, the percentages tick up slightly.

Table 11. Percentage of Students Earning a Degree and/or State Approved Certificate

Cohort	Cohort	Associate Degree	Associate Degree or State Approved Certificate
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	12%	13%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	6%	7%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	0%	0%

*As of July 7, 2021

The following table indicates the percentage of students who enrolled as a dual enrollment or special admit student at Fullerton College while in high school. Such metrics can be important in considering students' initial experiences with the College and how they may begin their journey before enrolling after graduating from high school. Approximately one-third of all promise students enrolled in as a special admit student at Fullerton College prior to high school graduation. Whether through a specific dual enrollment course at the high school or by enrolling in a course of interest at the College, a proportion of students have had interactions with the curriculum and college processes before entry into the Promise Program. When considering only the students from the four local high school district (Anaheim, Brea, Fullerton, and Placentia), approximately 40%, or two in five, of the Promise Students previously enrolled in as a special admit student. These early connections and opportunities will be important to facilitate students' smooth transition into the Promise Program and will hopefully accelerate their progress towards their academic goals.

Table 12. Percentage of Students Previously Enrolled as a Dual Enrollment / Special Admit Student at Fullerton College

Cohort	Cohort	Prior Enrollment as Special Admit @ FC	Prior Enrollment as Special Admit @ FC (Local Districts Only)
Fall 2018 Cohort	745	27%	27%
Fall 2019 Cohort	1,932	33%	40%
Fall 2020 Cohort	2,004	31%	41%

Lastly, as the Promise cohorts have expanded in size, the high schools from which students are enrolling is also changing. While the initial Fall 2018 cohort was limited to graduates from the Anaheim Unified district, students from the Anaheim district comprised about one-fourth of the Fall 2020 cohort. About one-third of students from the recent two cohorts have come from the Fullerton Joint district, with an increasing proportion of students from Placentia Yorba Linda and from outside the local high school districts.

Table 13. Percentage of Students by High School District

Cohort	Cohort	Anaheim Unified	Fullerton Joint	Brea Olinda	Placentia Yorba Linda	Different District
Fall 2018	745	100%	~	~	~	~
Fall 2019	1,932	38%	36%	2%	5%	19%
Fall 2020	2,004	26%	32%	2%	11%	28%

Conclusion

Over the years, the Promise Program has expanded its reach, growing from a pilot program of approximately 750 students in fall 2018 to over 2,000 fully eligible students in the fall 2020 semester. As the program has increased in size, there has been growth in students' progress towards successful program completion, with students more likely to be completing their English and math courses in the first year, more students earning 24 or more units in their first year, and a consistently high rate of continuous enrollment. While there are notable increases in key momentum metrics, there are inequities in student experience and goal attainment that are highlighted here in this report, such as the disparities by gender in retention rates or the rate at which students earn 24+ units in their first year by race, ethnicity, and/or ancestry. In addition, the first set of Promise students are now earning their degrees and/or transferring. Further studies to ascertain the rate at which students transfer will be important to understand students' journey to and through Fullerton College in addition to additional metrics and analyses that can further inform the development of the Promise Program.