

ASSET Students

The purpose of this research brief is to describe the ASSET students at CSU in terms of their academic/demographic characteristics as well as their student success indicators. ASSET status is defined as being eligible for in-state tuition under Senate Bill 13-033 during any semester of enrollment at CSU.

Executive Summary

There are a total of 126 ASSET students at CSU and the population has shown consistent growth since the first student in 2011-12 to the 56 students in 2016-17. The majority of these students are first generation and have lower average index scores. ASSET students are performing very well at CSU in terms of their persistence. Over 90% of the ASSET students persist to the second fall and third fall. However, their academic performance (measured by the first term GPA and probation rates) is slightly lower than the overall levels at CSU. It is imperative to continue assessing these students to ensure that the increase in the number of students does not negatively impact the resources that CSU can offer them and their high levels of persistence.

ASSET Students' Demographic and Academic Characteristics

Table 1, below, shows the number of newly enrolled ASSET students for the last 6 academic years as well as their demographic and academic characteristics.

Table 1.

Demographic and Academic Characteristics of ASSET Students					
First Academic Year	Headcount	First Generation (%)	Average Index	STEM Major (%)	Undeclared Major (%)
2011-12	1	100%		0%	100%
2012-13	3	100%	103	33%	67%
2013-14	6	100%	112	50%	0%
2014-15	18	83%	111	39%	22%
2015-16	42	90%	111	33%	31%
2016-17	56	82%	109	36%	29%
Overall	126	87%	110	36%	29%

The representation of ASSET students is growing at CSU. In 2011-12 there is one ASSET student and in 2016-17 there are 56 new or transfer ASSET students. CSU has had a total of 126 ASSET students and there are 119 enrolled (new and continuing) in FA16. About 78% of these students started at CSU as a new freshman (22% are transfer students) and 88% started in a fall semester (13 of the ASSET students started in a summer semester and 2 started in a spring semester).

This group of students are mostly first generation (87%) and have a lower average index compared to the overall first-time, full-time (FTFT) cohorts (110 compared to 115).

In terms of academic major, undeclared majors are slightly over represented and STEM majors are slightly underrepresented among ASSET. About 29% of ASSET students are undeclared (25% of new or transfer students in FA16 are undeclared) and about 36% of ASSET students have a STEM major (39% of new or transfer students in FA16 have a STEM major).

Table 2, below, displays the self-reported ethnicity for ASSET students.

Table 2.

ASSET Student Ethnicity		
Ethnicity	Headcount	Distribution
Asian	6	5%
Black	4	3%
Hispanic/Latino	62	49%
International	1	1%
No Response	53	42%
Overall	126	100%

About half of the ASSET students are Hispanic (49%), but a large proportion did not report their ethnicity (42%). It is important to note the impact the large proportion who do not report their ethnicity may have on gaps in minority student success because these students are included in the non-minority group based on the federal definition.

Student Success

Persistence rates (2nd through 4th fall) and academic performance (first term GPA and probation rates) are used to assess the success of the ASSET students and are displayed in table 3.

Table 3.

Academic Success Measures for ASSET Students						
Cohort Year	Headcount	Freshman Retention	3rd Fall Persistence	4th Fall Persistence	First Term GPA	First Term Probation Rate
2011-12	1	100%	100%	100%		0%
2012-13	3	67%	100%	100%	2.28	33%
2013-14	6	83%	67%	60%	2.57	17%
2014-15	18	100%	100%		3.12	11%
2015-16	42	95%			2.86	14%
2016-17	48					
Overall	118	94%	93%	78%	2.87	14%

Note: 2nd and 3rd fall persistence is the actual second and third fall for spring and summer starts. For instance, the second fall for a SP14 start is FA15.

The persistence of ASSET students is considerably higher than the overall rates for FTFT freshman cohorts. The second fall persistence is about 94% (which is higher than the overall FA15 FTFT rate of 86.2%), third fall persistence is 94% (which is higher than the overall FA14 FTFT rate of 78.4%), and fourth fall persistence is 78% (which is slightly higher than the overall FA13 FTFT rate of 74.6%). Two ASSET students have graduated. Graduation rates can be more fully assessed after the end of summer 2017 so more students have the opportunity to graduate.

Please note that the ASSET rates are based on students who started as transfer and new freshman and also includes summer and spring starts so the comparison to the FTFT rates is not identical. When ASSET students are restricted to only those who start as new freshmen in a fall semester the persistence rates decrease slightly. For instance, the second fall persistence rate decreases to 93.5%, the third fall persistence rate decreases to 89.5%, and the fourth fall persistence decreases to 71.4%. The fourth fall persistence rate is lower than the overall rate, but this calculation is only based on 7 students (FA11, FA12, FA13). Even among this partial (no transfer students or spring/summer starts) group of ASSET students the statement that 90% of them are retained to the second and third fall still holds.

Academic performance (GPA, probation) in the first term is slightly lower for the ASSET group. First term GPA for ASSET students is 2.87, which is slightly lower than the overall first fall GPA of freshman who started in FA15 (2.94). The first fall probation rate of ASSET students is about 2 percentage points higher than the first fall probation rate of the FA15 FTFT cohort (14.3% compared to 12.2%).

It is also important to note that these comparisons of persistence and academic performance between ASSET students and the overall population at CSU are not accounting for differences in demographic attributes or high school academic preparation. Prior research at CSU has shown a strong negative association between student success indicators and first generation status and a strong positive association between student success indicators and index. Based on the demographic profile of the ASSET students it would be expected that this group would have a freshman retention around 76.6% (assumes first generation, Pell recipient, with a 110 index). Therefore, the 93.5% freshman retention rate is about 16 percentage points higher than would be predicted based on this groups demographic characteristics.

Conclusions

In summary, the ASSET students are performing very well at CSU in terms of their persistence, but their academic performance (measured by the first term GPA and probation rates) is slightly lower than the overall levels at CSU. However, after considering the demographic attributes and high school preparation of ASSET students the lower GPA (.07 of a grade point) and higher probation rates (2 percentage points) are not disproportionately large and the higher levels of persistence are unprecedented. As the number of ASSET students continues to grow it will be important to consider the resources necessary to appropriately serve these students. It should be noted that the FA15 cohort is the first group with a larger number of students and the probation rate for this cohort is relatively high (14.3% compared to 12.2% overall). Future cohorts need to continue to be tracked to ensure that a trend does not emerge between lower levels of success with greater numbers of students.

It is also interesting that a large proportion of these students did not report their ethnicity. If this group continues to grow and persist at similar rates they could have a positive impact on the overall persistence and graduation rates of minority students. However, the success rates among the ASSET students that do not report their ethnicity are included in the non-minority rates. The politically sensitive nature of ASSET students' in-state tuition benefit and financial aid may influence these students to not report their ethnicity. As an institution, CSU needs to ensure these students feel safe so that are comfortable identifying their ethnicity so that their success can contribute to the institutional effort to decrease gaps in student success across demographic groups.