

Bowie State University
Institutional Achievement Gap Report
2013 - 2014 Report

I. Institutional Definition of the Achievement Gap

Bowie State University defined the achievement gap as the difference in graduation rates between African-American first-time, full-time degree-seeking freshmen at the University and all students in the USM.

II. Trends in Retention and Graduation Rates for Selected Subgroups (see page 2)

III. FY 2013 Initiative Summary and Assessment

The following initiatives were undertaken to assist in closing the achievement gap for Bowie State University for FY 2013:

Bulldog Academy: The Bulldog Academy is a 4-week residential academic program designed to provide a "jump start" towards a college education for a first-time freshman. Students are given the opportunity to earn up to 7 credits in English and mathematics.

All admitted first-time freshman were encouraged to participate in the program with twenty-six students registering for the summer 2012 program. In addition to taking classes, Bulldog Academy participants became familiar with student support services available to them, including tutoring centers, and career and counseling services. Students utilized the math labs in the library. English classes incorporated assignments using the writing laboratory. Mandatory tutoring sessions were conducted on Monday - Thursday evenings from 8:00 pm - 10:00 p.m. The sessions continued beyond this time in the study lounge located in the dormitory. Study sessions were conducted by peer tutors. Utilizing best practices, peer tutors were assigned to each Bulldog Academy class. Peer tutors were required to attend all classes and study sessions with the students. Feedback from the participants revealed that the tutors were knowledgeable and very helpful during the tutoring sessions.

The Office of Testing Services administered the placement test for Bulldog Academy students. Twenty seven percent of Bulldog students needed developmental English (ENGL 100). The remainder enrolled in the first credit English course (ENGL 101). Six of the seven students successfully completed ENGL 100 passed and 74 percent of the ENGL 101 class completed their first college level English course before the fall semester.

In comparison, 65 percent of Bulldog students tested into developmental mathematics (MATH 99) and the remainder enrolled in a first credit mathematics course, pre-calculus (MATH 141). Sixteen of the 17 completed developmental mathematics. All students in MATH 141 passed.

Twenty five of the 26 students enrolled for the fall 2012 semester. At the end of AY 2012-2013, 76 percent (19 out of 25) of these students had a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher.

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Trends in Retention and Graduation Rates for Selected Subgroups

Bowie State University	Six-year Graduation and Retention Rates at Institutions of First-Entry												
	Fall Cohort First-Time Full Time	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
USM	6-Year Graduation Rate	62	62	62	59	60							
Institution's Total	6-Year Graduation Rate	40	40	38	41	35							
	2 nd Year Retention	70	73	77	71	71	69	69	71	75	71	71*	
	3 rd Year Retention	60	60	60	56	54	57	54	59	57	57*		
	4 th Year Retention	55	51	53	45	49	47	47	53	50*			
	5 th Year Retention	34	35	47	30	36	34	34	40*				
Institution's African American	6-Year Graduation Rate	41	40	37	40	35							
	The Gap	21	22	25	19	25							
	2 nd Year Retention	71	74	78	72	72	70	70	71	75	72	71*	
	3 rd Year Retention	61	62	61	56	54	57	54	59	58	57*		
	4 th Year Retention	56	52	53	45	49	47	48	53	51*			
	5 th Year Retention	35	36	39	32	36	34	34	43*				
Institution's Hispanic	6-Year Graduation Rate	NA (N<5)	23 (N=13)	33 (N=9)	36 (N=14)	25 (N=16)	(N=14)	(N=18)	(N=19)	(N=15)	(N=17)	(N=19)	
	2 nd Year Retention		46	67	57	63	71	78	74	67	76	68*	
	3 rd Year Retention		38	56	64	50	36	50	68	47	59*		
	4 th Year Retention		31	56	36	50	50	39	58	27*			
	5 th Year Retention		31	44	21	25	36	30	47*				
Institution's Low-income (Pell)	6-Year Graduation Rate	39	47	36	40	35							
	2 nd Year Retention	70	77	79	72	72	69	65	75	75	65	71*	
	3 rd Year Retention	63	66	63	57	53	56	49	57	57	57*		
	4 th Year Retention	62	56	53	45	49	46	45	51	47*			
	5 th Year Retention	42	43	41	28	37	34	29	37*				

* Preliminary

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Emerging Learners Program: The Emerging Learners Program (ELP) was developed in FY 2013 by the Academic Advising Center (AAC). This program focuses on second semester freshmen who fell below 2.0 GPA after one semester at BSU. ELP identified were sent a letter strongly encouraging their participation in a two-part program. The first spring 2013 workshop included topics on time management, study skills, motivation and group session feedback to discuss reasons why they were not successful. Each student was given a portfolio notebook, highlighters, flash cards and organizers to prepare for the second session with an assignment to use the notebook to create a study portfolio. A second workshop offered students an opportunity to openly discuss reasons why they had fallen below 2.0 GPA. Participants in the Emerging Learners Program will be tracked to the fall 2013 semester.

KEEP Program: The AAC continued its Knowledge Enriched through Educational Performance (KEEP) Program which serves students who fall below 2.0 GPA after two semesters at BSU. The KEEP Program works closely with Financial Aid and Housing to insure continuance of housing and financial aid for the following year after probation. To participate in KEEP, students must sign a partnership agreement. Fifty five students from the fall 2010 cohort participated. After one year in the program, 43 percent of these students were above 2.0 GPA, and 57% were on the Probation/Dismissal List. In one year the average cumulative GPA moved from 1.54 to 1.73, with six students earning a GPA > 3.0. The second year of the KEEP program was less successful. Seventy one fall 2011 cohort students were accepted into the program in August 2012. At the end of AY 2012-2013, eight students were not making satisfactory academic progress, nine students were making satisfactory progress and 54 were no longer enrolled.

Early Alert Program: The AAC utilized an early intervention system, STARFISH, to advise more than 800 students of academic deficiencies, prior to midterms in fall 2012 and spring 2013. Groups were established for students, depending on their majors, and the Academic Advisors were responsible for contacting students when manual flags were raised by faculty. A total of 26 courses with high concentrations of freshmen were identified and faculty for these courses were asked to raise flags for the following reasons: missed assignments, excessive absences (> 4), performance below 70%, in jeopardy of failing a course, and failure to sign-in to Blackboard for more than 7 days.

Once flags were raised, students were contacted using the BSU email address on file. Advisors used standardized messages, advising students to visit with the Advisor to get more information on tutoring services available on campus, or meet with the Instructor to determine their progress and whether they could pass the class.

Disability Support Services: Disability Support Services (DSS) continues to expand the number of students served. DSS is comprised of 2 full-time staff professionals and a part-time tutor. DSS had 133 students registered with the office to receive accommodations in FY 2013. DSS is supporting students with documented learning disabilities (29%), ADHD (16%), ADD (8%) and other needs (47%).

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Retention Coordinators: The University’s *Closing the Achievement Gap Plan* included an objective to hire College-level Retention Coordinators. These positions were recommended after reviewing analyses of programmatic retention and graduation reports, which indicated student challenges in transitioning from the Academic Advisement Center to departmental advising. The four Retention Coordinators developed and implemented the Rebound Program to identify upper division undergraduate students on academic warning and probation. The Rebound Program supported 15 students fall 2012, and 18 students spring 2013. Eighty seven percent of fall 2012 and 84 percent of spring 2013 participants transitioned satisfactory status after this intervention.

Using data sets developed by the Office of Planning, Analysis and Accountability, the Retention Coordinators systematically tracked upper division student matriculation through graduation. Analyses of the data led to revised college-level academic advising and graduation clearance procedures. It also identified potential obstacles to continued matriculation and graduation and provided College Deans and Department Chairs with information on courses and/or programs that may benefit from redesign.

The Retention Coordinators now serve on several University committees to revise policies and procedures associated with retention and student success. They have also initiated College-level committees to address unique concerns of the majors/programs therein, organized events within Colleges to connect students with career opportunities and graduate schools and fostered academic success through the formal recognition of students on the Dean’s List.

Increasing Need Based and Academic Scholarships: Institutional funding for need-based and academic scholarships increased 11 percent between FY 2011 and FY 2012. Trends in institutional aid are below.

	Fiscal Year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Institutional Need-based Aid	1,849,309	1,776,563	1,866,953	1,928,794	2,081,501
Other Institutional Scholarships	1,480,668	2,349,502	2,153,239	2,095,034	2,389,284

Tutoring Services: The University maintains three tutoring centers as well as online tutoring to support student success. Bowie State University’s English/Writing and Mathematics laboratories are focused primarily on students taking developmental mathematics, English and reading courses but also assist others in college-level classes. The Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Program offers both individual and group tutoring sessions in the following content areas: biology, chemistry, computer science and technology, English, French, mathematics, physics, physical sciences and Spanish. SMARTHINKING is available 24/7/365 providing assistance in English, writing, mathematics and STEM disciplines.

The Mathematics Lab aims to foster better understanding, improve knowledge, independence and pride through each tutoring session. In FY 2013, 15 undergraduate and 3 graduate tutors were funded to support both math and computer science. These part-time tutors supported 2,432 student sessions (any student visiting the lab for assistance in math or computer science). Final grades of students with tutoring sessions in Math: 099, 125, 141, 155, 225, 226, and 228 were

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compared to those who did not have tutoring support. Between 15 and 20 percent of students enrolled in these classes utilized the Mathematics Lab during AY 2012-2013. The success rate (C or better) of students utilizing the lab exceeded that of students who did not. In fall 2012, student utilizing the lab had a 57 percent success rate while students who did not had a 47 percent success rate.

The Smith Vidal Literacy and Language Center (Writing Center) functions as a support service for students enrolled in writing intensive courses. Although the Writing Center primarily offers one-on-one tutoring, the center increasingly accommodates requests for group tutorials, in-class orientations, in-class writing workshops, and assignment development consultations. Once a place for only students enrolled in English composition courses, the center, during FY 2013 expanded services to both students and faculty across multiple disciplines.

The Writing Center experienced 9,149 student visits, which indicates a 66% increase from student visits experienced in AY 2011-2012. The center attributes this increase to the staffing of two full-time writing specialists dedicated solely to the center, the acquisition of two student workers, and the change in configuration and operation. Writing Center staff performed a combination of 821 tutoring sessions, which indicates a 10% increase (72 additional sessions) from sessions performed in AY 2011-2012. Staff attributes the increase to the hiring of a student tutor and to the change in space configuration. Grades of students utilizing the Writing Center exceeded that of those who did not use the Center.

Writing specialists actively met the Center's AY 2013 objectives. Staff continued to revise and develop the English Proficiency Exam and general writing workshop series. Staff also focused on coordinating student-centered events as a way to promote services and establish relationships with students. Students who participated in the center's 1st Annual Black History Month Writing Contest, for example, were mostly non-English majors who heard about the Writing Center from visiting with a tutor, attending other writing workshops/events, or advertising. In addition, the staff participated in the iPad Inquiry Group examining the integration of iPads to support student writing.

The Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Program (TuSIP) set three goals for FY 2013: to increase the number of tutors and diversify subjects supported; to increase use and improve quality of tutoring services; and to provide training to tutors. A total of 22 tutors per semester were hired and collectively worked for over 3500 hours per semester, covering all STEM-related courses as well as adding the following new subjects: philosophy, history, government, Spanish, and French. Topical workshops were instituted in the spring semester in English and in microbiology. Approximately 1,600 tutoring sessions were conducted over the fiscal year. A total of 822 students benefited from the tutoring and supplemental instruction services. The increase in tutoring sessions was a direct result of an awareness campaign, increased tutor availability and subject coverage as well as the purchase of new tutoring support materials. Tutors received training by a nationally-renowned tutoring association, the National Tutoring Association. Tutor training contributed to improving the quality of services the tutoring centers delivered.

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Online tutoring through SMARTHINKING is also available. For the FY 2013, a total of 3,290 sessions were conducted through SMARTHINKING. While most of the assignments were for ENGL 101, faculty in computer science, nursing, psychology, sociology and criminal justice encouraged students to utilize SMARTHINKING before submitting written assignments. The area where students requested the most assistance was content development, followed by grammar and mechanics, introduction and conclusion, and main idea. SMARTHINKING is available 24/7. All students can use this support service.

IV. Target Group Trajectory

Six-Year Graduation Rates:
 Gap Student Group vs. Student Group Comparator

	Fall												
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
African-American First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Students													
Cohort size	393	267	325	379	302	337	560	517	711	577	858	717	762
6-Year Graduation Rate	40%	38%	38%	38%	39%	36%	36%	41%	40%	37%	40%	35%	35%
All USM First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Students													
Cohort size	9,226	9,615	10,040	10,589	10,521	10,766	11,796	11,421	11,518	11,736	12,379	12,479	12,893
6-Year Graduation Rate	57%	58%	61%	62%	61%	60%	61%	62%	62%	62%	62%	60%	60%
The Gap	17%	20%	23%	24%	22%	24%	25%	21%	22%	25%	22%	22%	25%

*Preliminary
 Note: Graduation Rates are for institution of first-time entry.
 Source: IPEDS DataCenter, BSU GRS reports and USM Retention and Graduation Reports

