

# Memo

**To:** Beth Merritt Miller, Assistant Vice Provost for University Advising  
Shannon Stephens, Director, Mustang Success Center

**From:** Matt Carlton, Statistics Department

**Date:** December 14, 2016

**Subject:** Freshman Success Program — AY 2015-16

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## I. Executive Summary

This memo provides a statistical summary of the academic performance of first-time freshmen that entered Cal Poly in Fall 2015 and fell on academic probation at the end of either Fall 2015 or Winter 2016. We summarize term and cumulative GPAs, academic standing, and retention, both university-wide and by college.

Students who fell on AP at the end of Fall 2015 were invited to participate in a Freshman Success Program (FSP) workshop. Due to an issue with GPA calculations at the end of Winter 2016, such a workshop was not run at the beginning of spring quarter. This provides us with a “comparison group”: we may compare the future academic performance of students who *would have participated* in FSP after Winter 2016 to the performance of students from previous years who *actually participated* in FSP after their respective winter quarters.

At the end of Fall 2015, 304 first-time freshmen fell on AP, of whom 284 (93.4%) participated in FSP. Their academic results were very similar to those of comparable FSP cohorts from previous years (see Table 1), except for the fact that these students had a significantly higher retention rate into their second year (78.2%, compared to 67-72% in previous years).

An additional 289 freshmen fell on AP for the first time at the end of Winter 2016; this is the cohort of students who would have been eligible to participate in FSP had the program been offered the next quarter. Interestingly, the academic performance of these 289 students was not significantly different from the comparable cohorts of the previous two years (see Table 1).

## II. GPA and Academic Probation Results

Table 1 summarizes GPA, AP status, and retention status. Results for the Winter 2016 cohort are comparable in every respect to previous years, except for a much greater retention rate into the students’ second year at Cal Poly. Results for Spring 2016 cohort — again, they did not participate in FSP but would have if the program had been offered — are not statistically different from the previous years, when students who fell on AP for the first time in winter quarter actually did participate in the program.

	Spring Quarter FSP			Winter Quarter FSP		
	2016	2015	2014	2016	2015	2014
<i>Summary statistics</i>						
Mean cum GPA at end of FSP quarter*	2.253	2.236	2.251	2.075	2.003	2.049
Percent off AP at end of FSP quarter*	71.8%	69.7%	80.2%	52.1%	53.5%	53.5%
Mean cum GPA at end of subsequent quarter	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.120	2.121	2.087
Percent off AP at end of subsequent quarter	N/A	N/A	N/A	59.2%	61.1%	61.8%
Percent enrolled next fall quarter	88.9%	86.1%	86.8%	78.2%	71.8%	70.1%

**Table 1** – Summary statistics for Winter 2016 FSP participants and Spring 2016 FSP-eligible students, as well as comparison data from the previous two years. \*For the Spring 2016 group, “FSP quarter” refers to Spring 2016.

Table 2 summarizes the mean term GPA across the first year for the Winter 2016 participants, separated by college. Consistent with previous years' data, all colleges experience a large increase in term GPA from fall into winter, and all but OCOB see a drop-off from winter into spring.

<i>Mean term GPA</i>	<b>Winter 2016 FSP Participants</b>		
	Fall 2015	Winter 2016	Spring 2016
CAED	1.575	2.393	2.171
CAFES	1.414	2.225	2.052
CENG	1.620	2.227	1.959
CLA	1.493	2.118	1.883
COSAM	1.515	2.117	2.058
OCOB	1.618	2.093	2.138

**Table 2** – Mean term GPA by college and quarter for Winter 2016 FSP participants.

Table 3 summarizes academic probation and retention information for the Winter 2016 FSP participants, separated by college. A majority of students in every college except CLA got their cumulative GPAs above 2.0 for Winter 2016, and more than 88% of students in all colleges were retained into Spring 2016.

	Number of Students	CP Cum GPA $\geq$ 2.0 Winter 2016	Retained to Spring 2016	CP Cum GPA $\geq$ 2.0 Spring 2016	Retained to Fall 2016
CAED	19	63%	89%	82%	79%
CAFES	77	66%	94%	68%	75%
CENG	56	76%	98%	69%	86%
CLA	34	47%	88%	63%	76%
COSAM	60	57%	98%	64%	75%
OCOB	35	62%	91%	75%	86%

**Table 3** – Academic probation and retention statistics for Winter 2016 FSP participants.

Table 4 summarizes the mean term GPA across the first year for the Spring 2016 FSP-eligible students, separated by college. As in the previous two years, all six colleges saw dramatic increases in term GPA from winter into spring.

<i>Mean term GPA</i>	<b>Spring 2016 FSP-Eligible Students</b>		
	Fall 2015	Winter 2016	Spring 2016
CAED	2.675	1.528	2.222
CAFES	2.583	1.546	2.438
CENG	2.623	1.519	2.295
CLA	2.547	1.541	2.221
COSAM	2.418	1.497	2.494
OCOB	2.495	1.565	2.521

**Table 4** – Mean term GPA by college and quarter for Spring 2016 FSP-eligible students.

Table 5 summarizes academic probation and retention information for the Spring 2016 FSP-eligible students, separated by college. While results varied across the colleges, they are generally consistent with the results of students who participated in spring quarter FSP workshops over the previous two years.

	Number of Students	CP Cum GPA $\geq$ 2.0 Spring 2016	Retained to Fall 2016
CAED	29	72%	79%
CAFES	65	83%	89%
CENG	74	84%	93%
CLA	43	69%	81%
COSAM	45	77%	91%
OCOB	32	75%	94%

**Table 5** – Academic probation and retention statistics for Spring 2016 FSP-eligible students.