

Using High School Data to Explore Early College Success on Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

The Pohnpei Department of Education and the College of Micronesia–FSM are working to improve students' early college success. This study examined the relationship between high school academic preparation characteristics, such as cumulative grade point average; college student characteristics; and college success outcomes, including college entrance test result, placement in credit-bearing courses, and persistence to a second year. The study analyzed predictors of performance on the College of Micronesia–FSM Entrance Test in a sample of 1,146 students who graduated from a Pohnpei public high school between spring 2016 and spring 2018 and who took the exam. It also analyzed predictors of college success in a subset of 327 of those students who enrolled in the college in the summer or fall term immediately after high school graduation in either an associate degree program or an alternative series of developmental courses called Achieving College Excellence, which is designed to help students enter a degree program.

Key findings

- **One-third of Pohnpei high school students who took the College of Micronesia–FSM Entrance Test received a high enough result to be considered for direct admission to a degree program.** About 33 percent received consideration for direct admission to the two-year associate degree program (degree result), 23 percent received consideration for conditional admission to a degree program upon successful completion of the Achieving College Excellence developmental courses, 34 percent received consideration for admission to a one-year non-degree certificate program, and 10 percent were not admitted.
- **High school grade point average was positively associated with receiving a College of Micronesia–FSM Entrance Test result high enough to be considered for college admission.** High school students with higher grade point averages were more likely than students with lower grade point averages to receive the degree result on the College of Micronesia–FSM Entrance Test.
- **Enrollment in the high school academic coursework track was positively associated with college students' placement in credit-bearing reading courses but had no clear association with placement in credit-bearing math or writing courses.** College students who had been enrolled in the academic coursework track in high school were more likely than students who had been enrolled in the business or vocational coursework track to receive the degree program result on the College of Micronesia–FSM Entrance Test. Once in college, students who had been enrolled in the academic coursework track were more likely to be placed in credit-bearing reading courses.
- **A majority of college students were placed in credit-bearing math courses, while smaller percentages were placed in credit-bearing reading and writing courses.** About 69 percent of college students were placed in credit-bearing math courses, 40 percent were placed in credit-bearing writing courses, and 13 percent were placed in credit-bearing reading courses.
- **High school grade point average was positively associated with college students' placement in credit-bearing courses and persistence to a second year.** College students with higher grade point averages in high school were more likely than students with lower grade point averages to be placed in credit-bearing courses and to persist to a second year.
- **First enrolling in the summer term rather than in the fall term was positively associated with college students' persistence to a second year.** College students who first enrolled in the summer term immediately following high school graduation were more likely to persist to a second year than students who first enrolled in the fall term.