Planning Linked-Course Communities to Increase Student Success

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BRIDGEWATER
STATE UNIVERSITY

GOAL: CREATE A MORE COMMUNAL CULTURE OF STEM

Social relevance: first-year seminars based on UN Sustainable Development Goals

Peer connections: cohort learning model where first-semester students have multiple classes with the same peers

MICROCOSM LINKED COURSES

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

Taught by STEM faculty

Capped at 20 students

Encouraged team-based, inquiry-based learning

MATH COURSE

Based on Math Placement Test

Ranged from pre-college (MATH 095) to Calculus (MATH 161)

FIRST MAJOR COURSE (if STEM ready)

Could include a lab or small group section, if required

PUBLIC SPEAKING (if not STEM ready)

Fulfills a core requirement

A RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL

Randomly assigned incoming STEM majors to microCOSM linked courses (*n*=127) or a comparable set of unlinked courses (*n*=164)

Spring STEM Retention

■ Community ■ Control
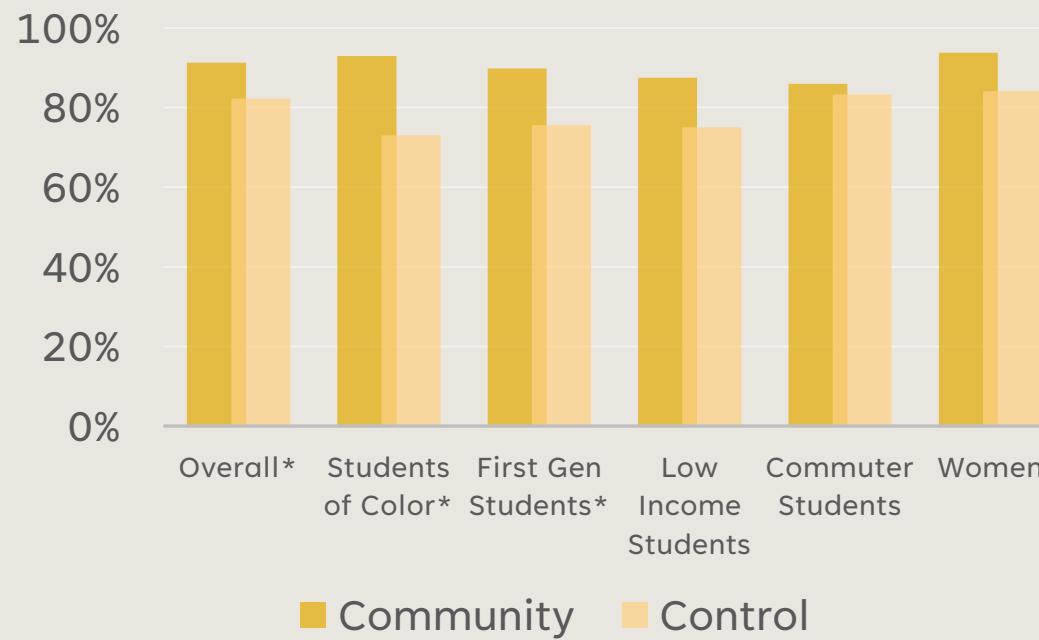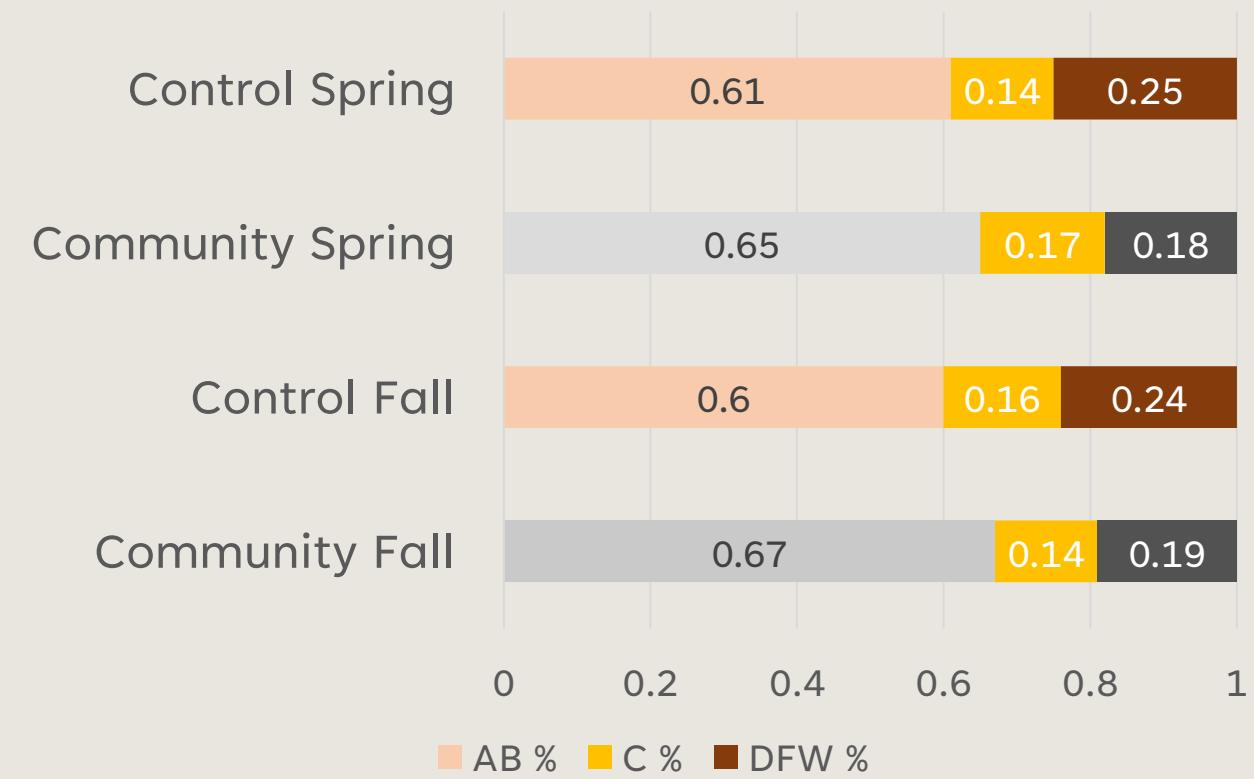
*Statistically significant at p<0.05

Overall Grade Rates

	AB %	C %	DFW %
Control Spring	0.61	0.14	0.25
Community Spring	0.65	0.17	0.18
Control Fall	0.6	0.16	0.24
Community Fall	0.67	0.14	0.19

■ AB % ■ C % ■ DFW %
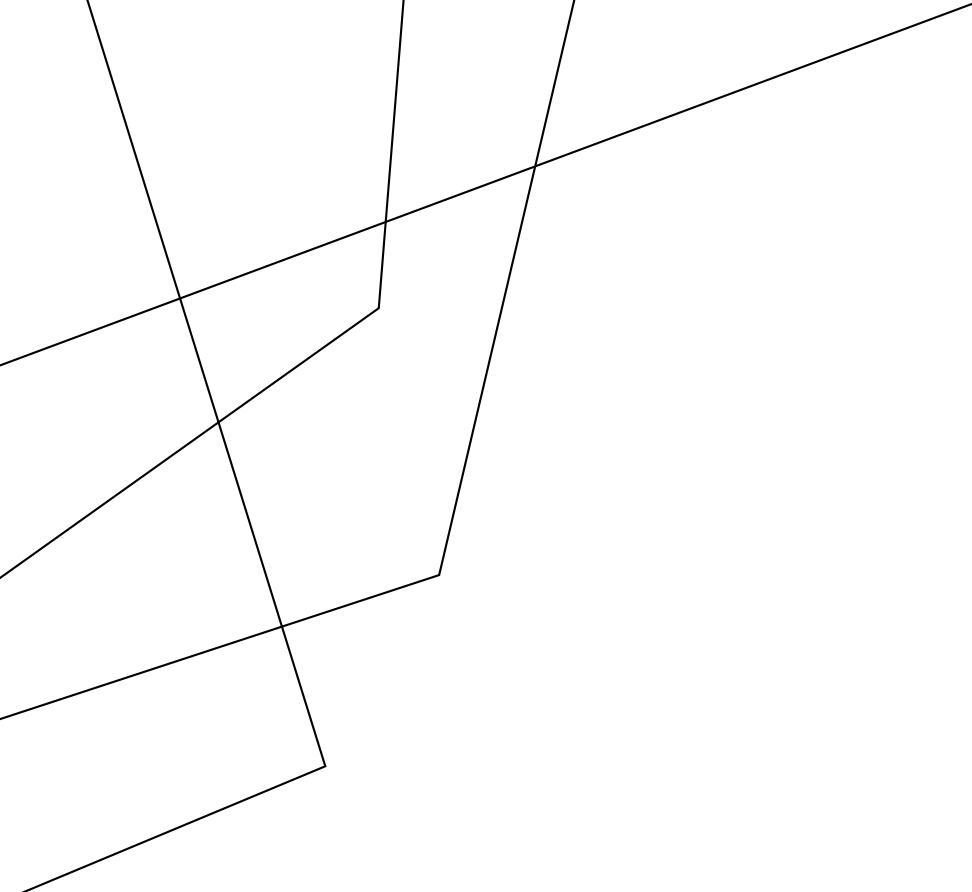
BENEFITS OF COHORT LEARNING

INCREASED STUDENT CONNECTIONS & STUDENT SUCCESS

At least it seems that way from our data so far

STUDENTS TAKE THE COURSES THEY NEED

Students in our study took more required courses than those not in our study

Especially helpful for recommended (but not required) co-requisites

EASIER ADVISING

Recommending blocks of courses instead of individual courses

LESS UNPREDICTABILITY FOR FACULTY

Courses may fill more evenly in a linked-course model

WHAT YOU WOULD NEED TO DO TO SET UP LINKED COURSES

Identify courses that could/should be linked

Schedule those courses so they don't overlap & can easily be taken by the same students

Tell the registrar about the linked courses

Advise appropriate students to register for linked courses

What is your goal?
- Create quicker connections among new majors
- Create connections among smaller groups within a larger major
- Ensure students take certain courses at a particular time
- Something else?

How can you best enroll the students? What is the local process of advising incoming 1st year students?

DISCUSSION

Could linked courses work for your department or college?
- What benefits would you anticipate?
- What challenges?

WE ARE AVAILABLE FOR FOLLOW-UP

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