Spring 2020 Student Outcomes Project Institutional Report

Example College

ITHAKA S+R

Updated: 10/20/2020

Project Overview

Ithaka S+R, a non-profit research and advising organization, developed this project to help higher education institutions assess the impact of the COVID-19 disruption to the Spring 2020 term on students' academic outcomes, and to inform subsequent institutional decision-making. We collected and analyzed de-identified student-level demographic and outcome data from 19 institutions in both summer 2020 (Cohort 1) and fall 2020 (Cohort 2). Specifically, we draw on data from bachelor's degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled as of each institution's census date during the spring terms of 2016 through 2020 to estimate how students' outcomes in the spring of 2020 compare to anticipated outcomes based on previous years, and present optional benchmarks against a set of self-selected peer institutions.

Report Overview

First page: Directly compares institutional means between Spring 2020 term outcomes and average outcomes from spring terms in the preceding four years, to present basic institutional trends.

Second page: Shows whether, and how, students' Spring 2020 actual outcomes differ from their otherwise anticipated outcomes in the absence of the pandemic. Data are presented across the institutional sample, as well as subsamples to uncover potential disparate outcomes among particular student groups. These results are presented alongside the actual and predicted averaged Spring 2020 student outcomes of peer institutions.

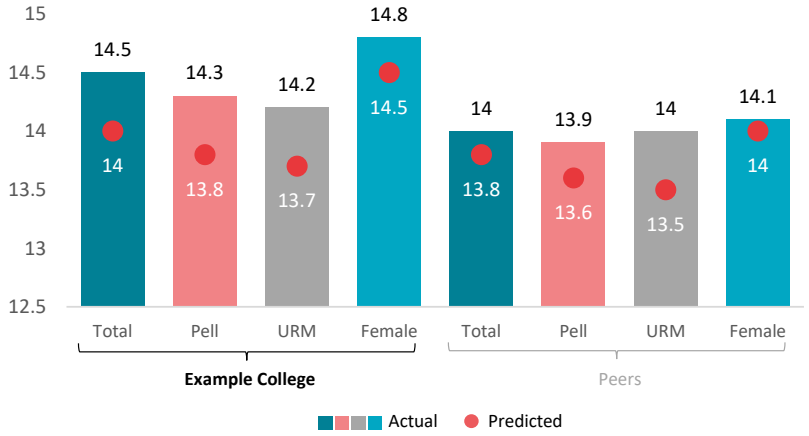
Third page: Optional analysis that compares actual and predicted Spring 2020 outcomes across additional student subsamples, based on additional variables included in institutions' data submission. Because only a subset of institutions opted-in, these analyses do not include any peer comparisons.

Technical Details

Predicted values were calculated by regressing student outcome data from Spring 2016 to Spring 2019 on the demographic characteristics that institutions were required to submit (i.e. Pell receipt, race, and gender), along with any optional variables included in the data submission (i.e. first-generation status, primary major, school, and incoming cumulative GPA). To allow for more straightforward interpretations of results, all demographic characteristics were recoded to binary variables, indicating whether each student had that characteristic (see footnotes for more information). We addressed missing student demographic data by replacing missing values with a constant of zero and adding a missing data indicator for the given measure in the analysis. The resulting constant and coefficient estimates were then used to predict the outcomes of students enrolled in the Spring 2020 term given their student demographic characteristics. Predicted student outcomes were then averaged across the full institutional sample and subsamples to produce aggregated predicted values.

*Note: We conducted quality checks on raw data submitted to us by participating institutions, but cannot guarantee their accuracy.

Example: Actual and predicted credits earned, Example College and peers



Legend details

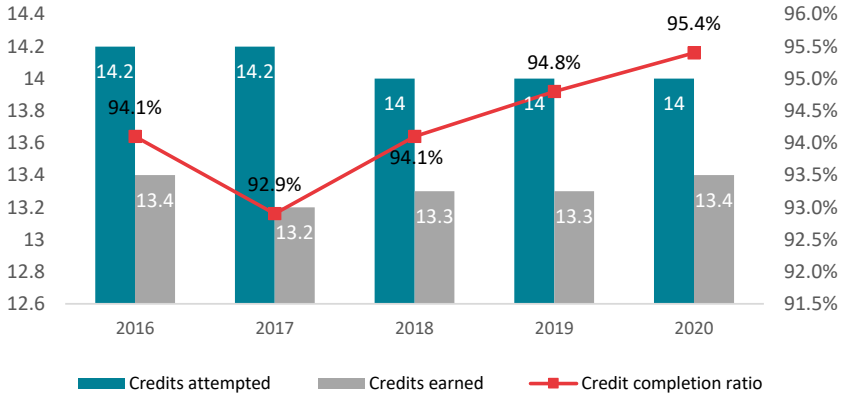
The height of the bars and corresponding labels in black text are actual Spring 2020 values while the red circles and corresponding labels in white or red text are predicted values for Spring 2020. The bars and corresponding red circles on the left side of the graphs are your institution's values, while the bars and corresponding red circles on the right side are your peers' values.

How to interpret results

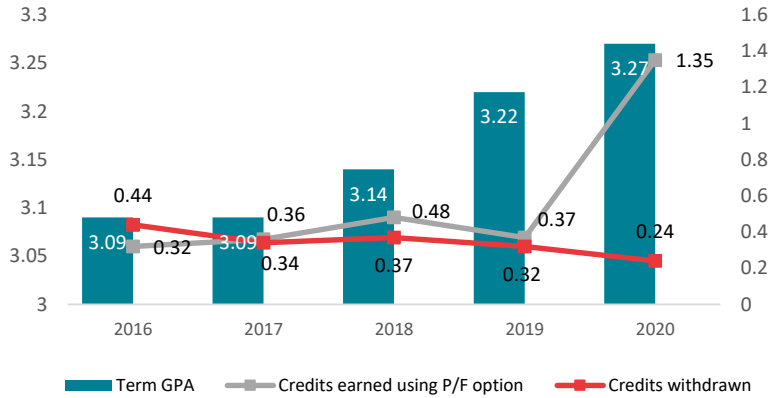
The total sample at fictional Example College earned an average of 14.5 credits in Spring 2020, 0.5 credits more than predicted. In comparison, students at Example College's peers, on average, earned only 0.2 credits more than was predicted. There are similar findings within subsamples. For instance, Pell recipients at Example College also earned half a credit more than predicted, compared with 0.3 additional credits earned by Pell recipients at Example College's peers.

Descriptive Statistics: Mean Comparisons

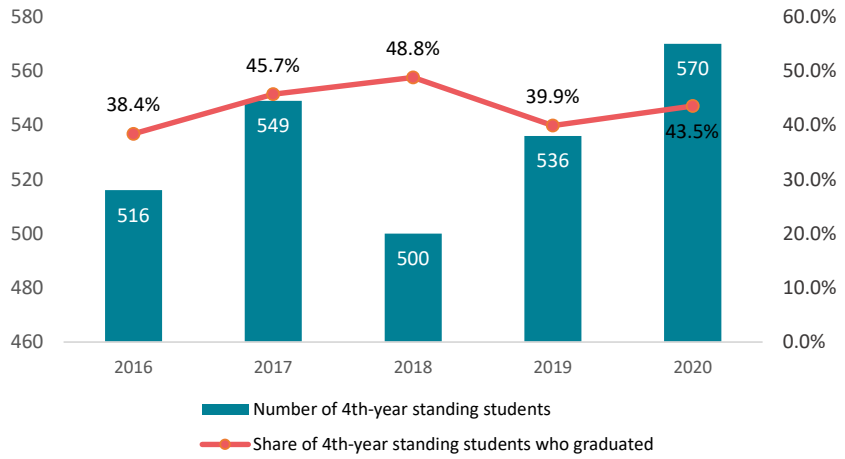
Credits attempted and earned, and credit completion ratio[1], by spring term



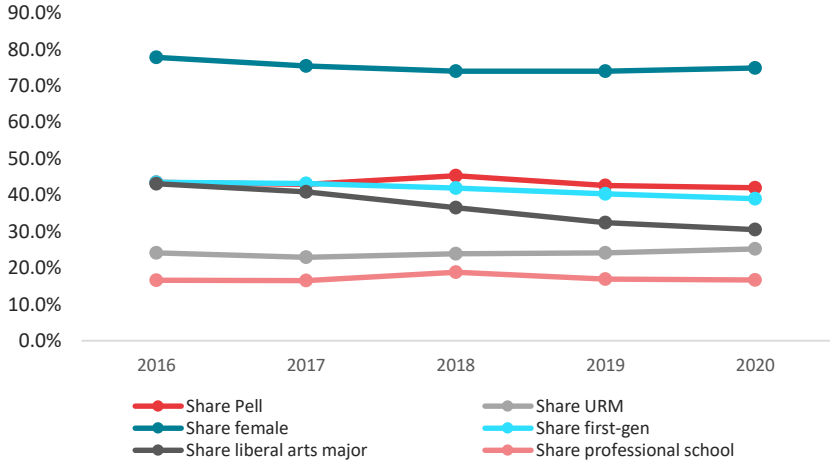
Term GPA, and credits earned using P/F option and credits withdrawn, by spring term



Share of 4th-year students who graduated by spring term



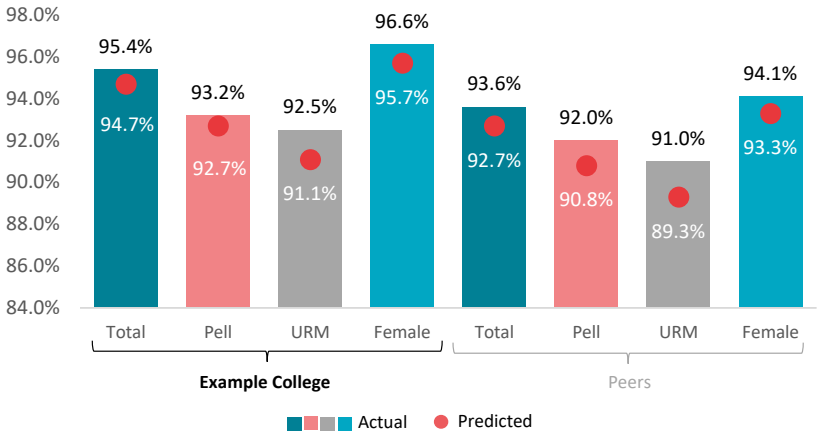
Student demographic breakdown[2] by spring term



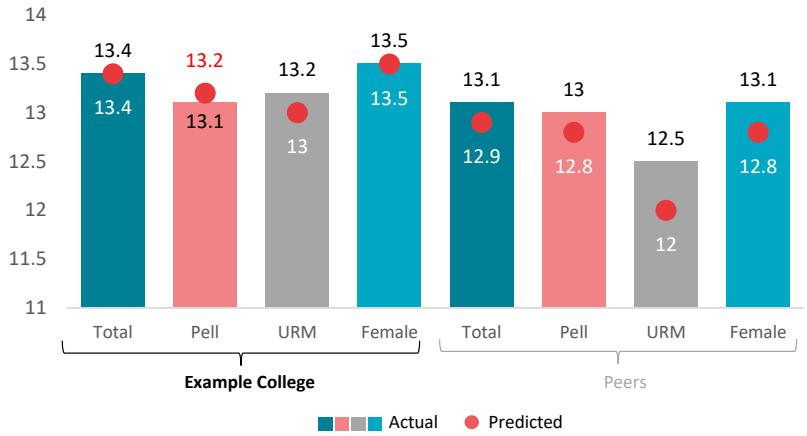
[1] Credits attempted and credits earned include remedial credits, if available. Credits earned also include credits earned using P/F option. Credit completion ratio is the share of credits attempted that are earned.
[2] Students missing demographic information are included in the denominators so that calculations are of the total number of students in each spring term. Share URM, or underrepresented minority, is the share of students in the given spring term who are American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic, or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Share liberal arts major is the share of students in the given spring term whose primary major is in the liberal arts and sciences based on CIP code. Share professional school is the share of students in the given spring term who are enrolled in a professional school, as opposed to a college of arts and/or sciences.

Predictions and Peer Comparisons, Disaggregated by Required Demographic Variables[3]

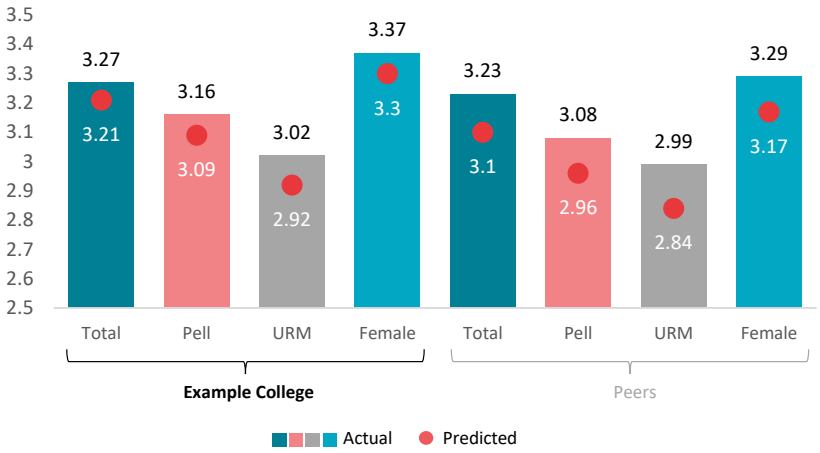
Actual and predicted credit completion ratio, Example College and peers



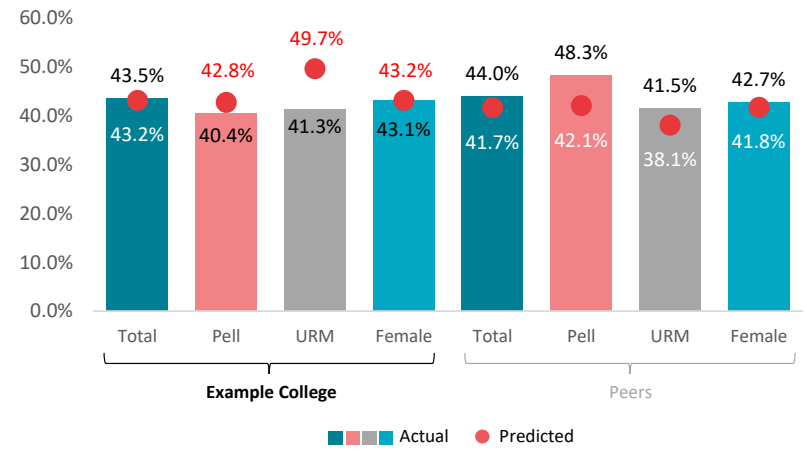
Actual and predicted credits earned, Example College and peers



Actual and predicted term GPA, Example College and peers



Actual and predicted graduation rate of 4th-year students, Example College and peers



Example College's 7 Peers

Institution A
City, State

Institution B
City, State

Institution C
City, State

Institution D
City, State

Institution E
City, State

Institution F
City, State

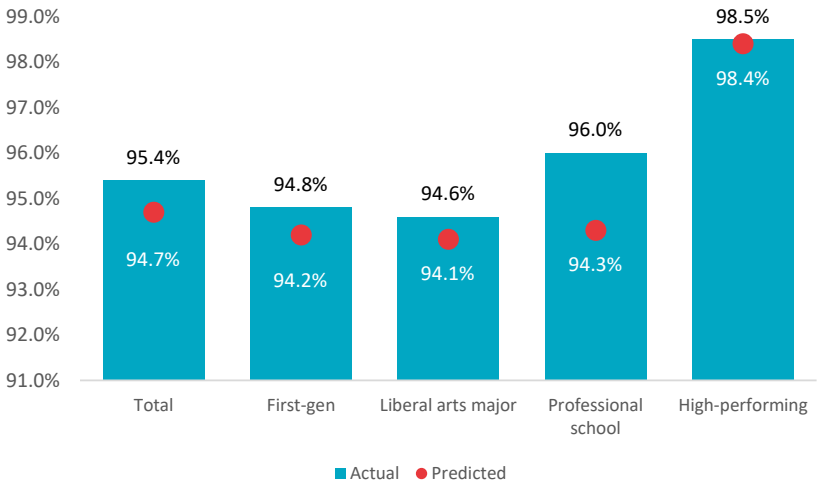
Institution G
City, State

Peers were self-selected from a list of other project participants.

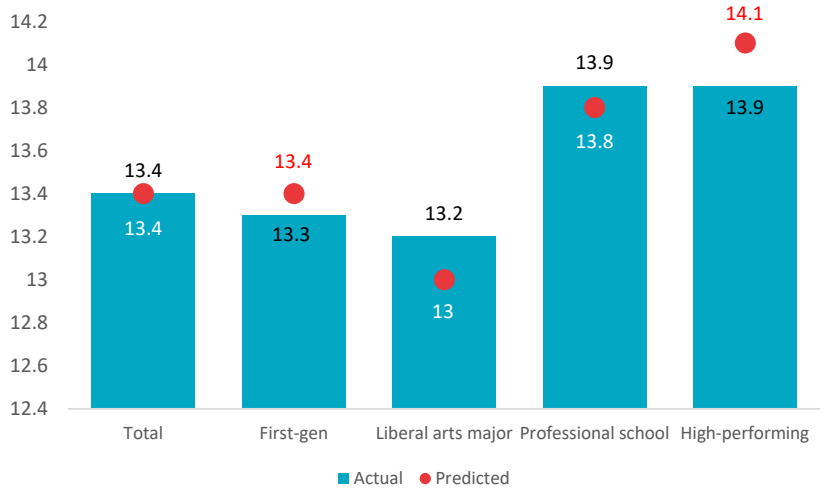
[3] Please note that values for student subgroups (e.g. Pell recipients) may be based on small sample sizes at your institution and need to be interpreted with caution as a result. This is especially true for findings pertaining to graduation rates, which are further restricted to fourth-year standing students only.

Predictions, Disaggregated by Optional Variables[4]

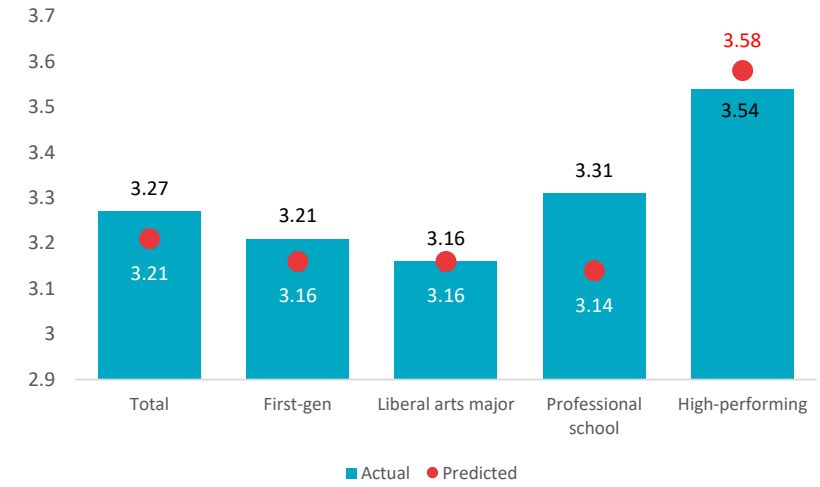
Actual and predicted credit completion ratio



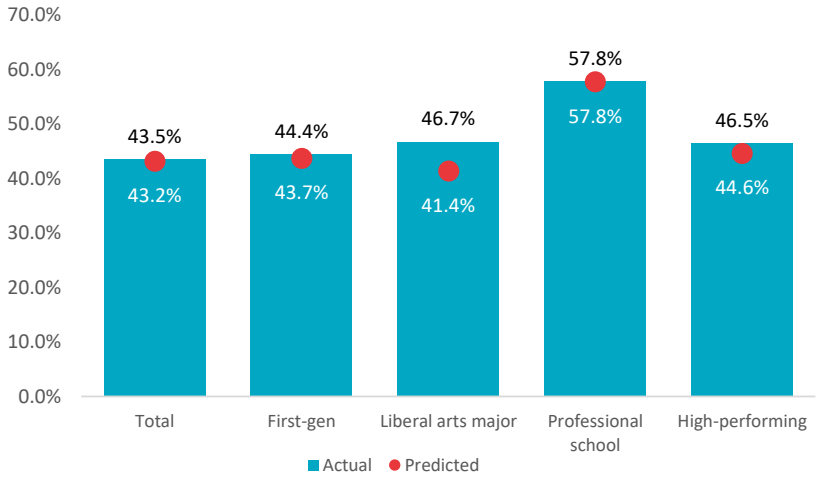
Actual and predicted credits earned



Actual and predicted term GPA



Actual and predicted graduation rate of 4th-year students



[4] Actual and predicted values were additionally reported for the optional variables included in your institution's data submission. High-performing students are those who entered the Spring 2020 term with a cumulative GPA in the upper half of the GPA distribution. Please note that values for student subgroups may be based on small sample sizes at your institution and need to be interpreted with caution as a result. This is especially true for findings pertaining to graduation rates, which are further restricted to fourth-year standing students only.