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Commanding English Tracking Report

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ABSTRACT

This report provides information about the Commanding English Program in General College. Students who entered the program in Fall 1999 through Fall 2003 are tracked, and retention, transfer, and graduation data are reported. This data is compared to students in General College, but not enrolled in the Commanding English Program. It was found that overall Commanding English students transferred at a higher rate and were retained at similar rates or higher rates than other GC students, depending on the cohort and length of time in the program. Most Commanding English students experienced a significant drop in GPA after transferring to another college.

Commanding English Tracking Report

This report provides outcome data about students in the General College Commanding English program. It is an update on another report done in 2000 with students who entered the Commanding English (CE) program between 1989 and 1997 (Hatfield, 2000). In this report, we present data from students who entered General College (GC) as new high school students (NHS) in fall 1999 through fall 2003. We chose to only present data on students who entered in 1999 or later because it was at that time the University switched from the quarter to semester system. Therefore, comparing data from NHS cohorts who entered before 1999 to cohorts who entered after 1999 becomes problematic. Students were tracked using the University of Minnesota data warehouse. Information about persistence and graduation was gathered in July 2005 from the degree tables. Transfer data was taken from enrollment and student career tables in the data warehouse for fall 2005. Graduation, persistence, and transfer rates were compared between the CE students and the non-CE General College NHS cohort for the same years. Additionally, this information was broken down by ethnicity for Asian and African students to provide information about how these two groups are succeeding in the CE program.

Tables 1 and 2 display information about the demographic make-up of the CE and non-CE General College students. The “other” category includes students who indicated Hispanic, American Indian, or Other on their admission form. As indicated in Table 2, the percentage of Asian students in CE has dropped significantly as the percentage of African students has risen. Therefore the demographic make-up of the program has shifted over time, with the current group of students looking very different from previous groups. It is also important to note that the CE students differ significantly from the GC cohort even within their indicated ethnic designation. Students in CE who indicate “Black” on the admission form are typically African students,

whereas in the general GC population they are more likely to be African-American. The Asian populations also differ in heritage between the GC and CE populations. A large group in the GC Asian population is Hmong students, most of who were born in the United States, and are not likely to enroll in CE. Most of the Asian CE students are of Vietnamese origin (Robin Murie, personal communication, September 2005).

Table 1: Number of Male and Female Students in CE and Non-CE

Cohort	CE			Non-CE		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
1999	27 (57.4%)	18 (38.3%)	45	409 (47.1%)	443 (51.0%)	852
2000	24 (49%)	25 (51%)	49	450 (51.1%)	425 (48.3%)	875
2001	17 (47.2%)	18 (50%)	35	489 (53.9%)	387 (45.5%)	876
2002	28 (47.5%)	31 (52.5%)	59	426 (50.7%)	412 (49%)	838
2003	25 (42.4%)	33 (55.9%)	58	378 (45.3%)	449 (53.8%)	827

*Those who did not indicate a gender were excluded from this table

Table 2: Ethnic breakdown of CE and Non-CE students

Cohort	CE				Non-CE			
	White	Asian	African	Other	White	Asian	Black	Other
1999	4 (9%)	30 (64%)	8 (17%)	5 (11%)	583 (67%)	108 (12%)	93 (11%)	85 (10%)
2000	4 (8%)	23 (47%)	18 (37%)	4 (8%)	616 (70%)	113 (13%)	93 (11%)	58 (7%)
2001	2 (6%)	15 (42%)	16 (44%)	3 (8%)	558 (66%)	122 (14%)	110 (13%)	61 (7.2%)
2002	3 (5%)	19 (32%)	37 (63%)	0	483 (58%)	142 (17%)	123 (15%)	102 (12%)
2003	1 (2%)	22 (37%)	32 (54%)	4 (7%)	415 (50%)	180 (22%)	154 (18%)	86 (10%)

College and Major of Transfer Students

Tables 3 through 5 indicate college of enrollment after transfer for CE students. Table 3 is all CE students, table 4 is Asian students, and table 5 is African students. CE students are similar to other GC students in that the majority of students transfer to CLA. Table 6 displays the major after transfer for all CE students.

Table 3: First Transfer College Enrollment for All CE Students

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
CALA	1	1	1	0	0
CBS	1	3	0	3	4
CCE	0	2	1	0	1
CHE	2	0	3	1	2
CLA	22	18	19	35	18
COAFES	1	1	3	3	1
CSOM	0	1	1	1	0
Dent	0	2	0	0	0
EHD	0	3	1	1	1
IT	6	0	1	2	2
Nursing	0	0	1	0	1
Total	33	31	31	46	30

Table 4: First Transfer College Enrollment for Asian CE Students

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
CALA	1	0	1	0	0
CBS	1	1	0	1	2
CCE	0	0	1	0	0
CHE	1	0	0	0	1
CLA	11	5	4	11	8
COAFES	1	1	3	1	1
CSOM	0	0	1	1	0
Dent	0	2	0	0	0
EHD	0	3	1	1	1
IT	4	0	1	1	2
Nursing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	19	13	12	16	15

Table 5: First Transfer College Enrollment for African CE Students

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
CALA	0	0	0	0	0
CBS	0	0	0	2	2
CCE	0	2	0	0	1
CHE	0	0	2	1	1
CLA	6	10	11	22	10
COAFES	0	0	0	2	0
CSOM	0	0	0	0	0
Dent	0	0	0	0	0
EHD	0	0	0	0	0
IT	1	0	0	1	0
Nursing	0	0	1	0	1
Total	7	12	16	28	15

Table 6: Major area after transfer for CE students

Major area	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003
Architecture/Interior Design	3	1	3	0	2
Biological/Natural Sciences (agriculture, biology, geology)	2	2	0	5	5
Business (e.g. management, marketing, economics)	1	4	6	5	1
Communication (e.g. journalism, mass communication)	2	0	0	1	0
Computer Science	3	0	1	0	0
Education	0	0	0	0	1
Fine Arts/Design	1	0	0	0	0
Hard Sciences (e.g. chemistry, physics, engineering, math)	9	3	0	3	2
Health Sciences (e.g. nursing, pharmacy, nutrition)	0	3	1	0	2
Humanities (e.g. English, foreign language)	0	1	0	0	0
Other (e.g. University College, Individual Study)	0	2	1	0	1
Social Sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology, family social science)	4	4	4	4	1
Sport Studies/Kinesiology	0	0	0	0	0
Undecided/Undeclared	8	11	15	28	15
Total	33	31	31	46	30

Persistence and Transfer of CE and Non-CE Students

Percentage of persisters, leavers, and graduates are displayed in table 7 for each cohort. Leavers were defined as students who had not enrolled in the 2004-2005 academic year. Graduation data was not obtained for students in the 2002 and 2003 cohorts as they have not had sufficient time to graduate at the time of the report. In general, the CE students have a similar graduation rate to the remaining GC student body; however they have a lower leaving rate. In the previous report (Hatfield, 2000), the CE students did have a higher graduation rate than the non-CE students when seven and eight year graduation rates were reported. It is possible that in another year or two, the 1999 and 2000 CE cohorts will have a higher graduation rate than the non-CE students, as they still have a fair number of students persisting. However, this is purely speculative, as the previous data was based on a different group of students who were enrolled in the quarter system.

Table 8 displays the number of students for the 1999 and 2000 cohorts who graduated in three, four, five, or six years. They do not appear to be graduating in the first several years at significantly different rates.

Table 7: Persistence of GC Student Body

Cohort	Leavers		Persisters		Graduates		Total	
	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE
1999	18 (38%)	468 (54%)	12 (26%)	84 (10%)	17 (36%)	317 (37%)	47	869
2000	22 (45%)	445 (51%)	15 (31%)	204 (23%)	12 (25%)	233 (27%)	49	880
2001	15 (42%)	400 (47%)	18 (50%)	388 (46%)	3 (8%)	63 (7%)	36	851
2002	6 (10%)	296 (35%)	53 (89%)	544 (65%)			59	840
2003	5 (9%)	193 (23%)	54 (92%)	642 (77%)			59	835

**Graduation frequency for 2002 and 2003 not calculated

Table 8: Years to Graduation/Percent of graduates

Cohort	3 years		4 years		5 years		6 years	
	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE
Fall 1999	1 (5.8%)	2 (.6%)	5 (29.4%)	77 (24.2%)	10 (58.8%)	188 (59.3%)	1 (5.8%)	50 (15.8%)
Fall 2000	0	1 (.4%)	2 (16.7%)	72 (30.9%)	10 (83.3%)	160 (68.7%)		

Table 9: College of Graduation for CE Students

College	1999	2000	2001
CALA	0	0	0
CBS	1	3	0
CCE	1	1	0
CHE	2	0	0
CLA	8	2	3
COAFES	1	1	0
CSOM	0	1	0
Dent	0	2	0
EHD	2	2	0
IT	2	0	0
Nursing	0	0	0
Total	17	12	3

CE students have a higher transfer rate than the non-CE students. A comparison between CE and non-CE students for a 4 year or more transfer rate indicates clearly that more CE students transfer, especially in the 1999 and 2001 cohorts. This may be in part due to the fact that more non-CE students left the University early in their college career before having the opportunity to transfer to another college. The rates of transfer have varied across cohorts. For CE students, the 2000 cohort has transferred at a slower rate than the other cohorts, and these students do not appear as different from the non-CE students. The 1999 CE cohort began with a stronger transfer rate than the non-CE cohort, but eventually the non-CE students were only slightly lower. The 2001 CE cohort has been strong throughout their tenure. The 2002 CE cohort started slightly behind the non-CE students in year one, but by year three had a much

higher transfer rate than their non-CE counterparts. At this point, the CE 2003 cohort does not appear to differ from the non-CE 2003 students. It should also be noted that the entire 2002 and 2003 cohorts have a higher two year transfer rate than the two previous cohorts.

Table 10: Transfer Rate of General College Students

Cohort	1 year		2 years		3 years		4 years or More	
	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE
Fall 1999	4 (8.5%)	41 (4.7%)	24 (51.1%)	365 (44.2%)	29 (61.7%)	482 (57.7%)	35 (70.2%)	545 (62.7)
Fall 2000	2 (4.1%)	71 (8.1%)	14 (28.6%)	348 (39.6%)	27 (55.1%)	474 (53.9%)	31 (63.3%)	517 (59.8%)
Fall 2001	6 (16.7%)	52 (6.1%)	20 (55.6%)	324 (38.1%)	27 (75%)	451 (53%)	31 (86.1%)	499 (58.6%)
Fall 2002	4 (6.8%)	78 (9.3%)	31 (52.6%)	388 (45.2%)	46 (78%)	487 (58%)		
Fall 2003	5 (8.5%)	65 (7.8%)	30 (50.9%)	399 (47.8%)				

GPA

A common finding in previous studies of GC students is that first term GPA predicts whether or not a student graduates from the University. We wanted to explore this question with the CE population. We began by examining the differences between first term GPA for CE students and non-CE students in order to determine if the first term might be a different experience for CE students. We did find that on average, CE students earned a higher GPA than non-CE students, as indicated in table 11.

For the following analysis, we used only 1999 and 2000 cohorts due to the small number of graduates in 2001. In both of these cohorts the graduates had a higher GPA in their first term than the students who have not graduated (see table 12). Similar to other GC student groups, first term GPA appears to be important in predicting later performance for CE students.

Table 11: First Term GPA: Difference between CE and Non-CE students

	CE	Non CE	P-Value
1999	3.16	2.74	.003
2000	3.13	2.75	.009
2001	3.41	2.80	<.001
2002	3.31	2.64	<.001
2003	3.20	2.60	<.001

Table 12: First Term GPA for CE Students: Comparison of Graduates and Non-Graduates

	Graduates	Non Graduates	P-Value
1999	3.44 (N=17,SD=.69)	3.005 (N=30,SD=.63)	.037
2000	3.71 (N=12, SD=.44)	2.94 (N=36, SD=.88)	.006

We were also concerned with the level of transfer shock for CE students, in other words, whether or not their GPA dropped upon transferring to another college. Table 13 displays the pre-transfer term GPA and the post-transfer term GPA for all CE students. GPAs from the term immediately before transfer and immediately after transfer were used as opposed to cumulative GPA in order to better isolate the effect of transfer. Only students who had both pre and post transfer GPA data available were used for these analyses. Therefore, any student who had transferred the term the data was collected was excluded because a post transfer term GPA was not yet available.

The 1999 cohort actually improved their GPA in the term after they transferred. However, all other cohorts experienced a drop in their GPA to varying degrees. This may be influenced by when students actually transferred. For example, the 2003 cohort had the largest drop in GPA; however the students in this group all transferred within a year and a half if they have both pre and post transfer GPA data available. Previous research has shown that students who transfer within the first year have a larger decrease than those who transfer in their second year (Franko & Connor, 2005).

Table 14 displays similar information for the non-CE students. These students also experienced a decrease in term GPA after transfer. With the exception of the 1999 cohort, their decrease was of a smaller magnitude than the CE students.

Table 13: GPAs at Transfer for CE Students

	Pre-transfer	Post-transfer	Change
1999	2.56 (N=33, SD=.88)	2.69 (N=33, SD = .68)	+.13
2000	2.70 (N=31, SD=1.02)	2.28 (N=29, SD=1.23)	-.42
2001	2.56 (N=28, SD=1.04)	2.52 (N=26, SD=.82)	-.04
2002	2.37 (N=36, SD=.98)	2.11 (N=36, SD=.79)	-.26
2003	2.91 (N=11, SD=.67)	2.06 (N=12, SD=.86)	-.85

Table 14: GPAs at Transfer for Non-CE Students

	Pre-transfer	Post-transfer	Change
1999	2.66 (N=527, SD=.75)	2.53 (N=527, SD = .86)	-.13
2000	2.68 (N=510, SD=.75)	2.54 (N=495, SD=.84)	-.14
2001	2.65 (N=479, SD=.76)	2.57 (N=466, SD=.80)	-.08
2002	2.76 (N=452, SD=.69)	2.58 (N=442, SD=.80)	-.18
2003	2.98 (N=180, SD=.61)	2.77 (N=175, SD=.72)	-.21

Asian and African Students

The following section presents data on Asian and African students in CE and the non-CE General College population. As stated above, the earlier cohorts had a large percentage of Asian students, and the later cohorts had a large percentage of African students. The following tables display how these two groups are succeeding in regards to persistence, transfer, and GPA. It is important to keep in mind that some of the groups are quite small when comparing percentages. For example, when examining the early cohorts of African students, the percentages can be somewhat misleading. We also included the Asian non-CE students as a point of comparison; however the reader is reminded that the Asian population between CE and non-CE students do typically come from different nationalities and therefore have different cultural backgrounds as well as different forms of educational backgrounds.

Table 15 displays the persistence rates of Asian students in CE and GC students not in CE. Generally, the Asian CE students appear to be persisting at high rates. Their leaving rate is much lower than the Asian non-CE students. Their leaving rate is also lower than the GC non-CE students (Table 7), especially in the 2002 and 2003 cohorts. They also have a higher graduation rate than the Asian non-CE students and the entire non-CE General College population, with the 2000 cohort performing particularly well in comparison.

Table 15: Persistence rates of Asian GC Students

Cohort	Leavers		Persisters		Graduates		Total	
	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE
1999	14 (47%)	75 (69%)	7 (23%)	10 (9%)	9 (30%)	23 (21%)	30	108
2000	11 (48%)	66 (58%)	5 (22%)	30 (27%)	7 (30%)	17 (15%)	23	113
2001	8 (53%)	73 (60%)	5 (33%)	41 (34%)	2 (13%)	8 (7%)	15	122
2002	3 (16%)	49 (35%)	16 (84%)	93 (66%)			19	142
2003	1 (5%)	41 (23%)	21 (96%)	139 (77%)			22	180

**Graduation rate for 2002 and 2003 not calculated

Table 16 displays information for African CE students only. The first few cohorts have very small numbers and are difficult to compare to others. However, it is notable that 75% of both the 1999 and 2001 cohorts are either persisting or have graduated. The persistence rates of the 2002 and 2003 cohorts are commendable for these two groups, and are much higher than the non-CE General College persistence rate.

Table 16: Persistence rates of African CE Students

Cohort	Leavers	Persisters	Graduates	Total
1999	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)	8
2000	9 (50%)	7 (39%)	2 (11%)	18
2001	4 (25%)	11 (69%)	1 (6%)	16
2002	2 (5%)	35 (95%)		37
2003	4 (13%)	28 (88%)		32

**Graduation rate for 2002 and 2003 not calculated

Tables 17 and 18 display the transfer rates for Asian and African students. Asian CE students transferred at similar rates in the 1999 and 2000 cohorts, but have higher transfer rates than both Asian non-CE students and the entire non-CE student group in the later cohorts. The African CE group seems to be transferring at high rates across cohorts. The majority of students do eventually transfer, and in later cohorts with larger groups approximately half to two-thirds transfer within two years.

Table 17: Transfer Rate: Asian Students

Cohort	1 year		2 years		3 years		4 years or More	
	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE	CE	Non-CE
Fall 1999	2 (6.7%)	2 (1.9%)	13 (43.4%)	43 (39.9%)	17 (56.7%)	60 (55.6%)	19 (63.3%)	63 (58.3%)
Fall 2000	1 (4.3%)	6 (5.4%)	6 (26%)	36 (32.2%)	12 (52.1%)	48 (42.9%)	13 (56.4%)	58 (51.8%)
Fall 2001	2 (13.3%)	10 (8.2%)	5 (33.3%)	36 (29.5%)	10 (66.6%)	54 (44.3%)	12 (80%)	58 (47.5%)
Fall 2002	1 (5.3%)	8 (5.6%)	11 (57.9%)	56 (39.4%)	16 (84.2%)	74 (52.1%)		
Fall 2003	0	10 (5.6%)	15 (68.2%)	70 (44.4%)				

Table 18: Transfer Rate: African Students

Cohort	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 or more years
Fall 1999	0	7 (87.5%)	7 (87.5%)	7 (87.5%)
Fall 2000	1 (5.6%)	6 (33.4%)	10 (55.6%)	13 (66.7%)
Fall 2001	2 (12.5%)	11 (68.8%)	12 (75.1%)	14 (87.5%)
Fall 2002	3 (8.1%)	18 (48.6%)	26 (75.7%)	
Fall 2003	5 (15.6%)	15 (46.9%)		

Tables 19 through 21 demonstrate the trends in GPA for the CE Asian and African students and non-CE Asian students. The first term column includes all students who were enrolled for the first term, whereas the transfer GPA data only includes students who transfer into another University college. A trend for all CE students is a drop in post-transfer GPA over cohorts, with the 2002 and 2003 cohorts performing especially poorly after transfer. This trend is not apparent in the non-CE students. It is possible that the reason the CE students persist longer to graduation is that they are earning poor grades after transferring, which historically is related to length to graduation.

Table 19: GPAs at Transfer for Asian CE Students

	First Term	Pre-transfer	Post-transfer
1999	3.14 (N=30, SD=.76)	2.52 (N=19, SD=.94)	2.68 (N=19, SD=.64)
2000	2.98 (N=23, SD=.92)	3.03 (N=13, SD=.91)	2.41 (N=12, SD=1.01)
2001	3.50 (N=15, SD=.40)	2.55 (N=11, SD=1.18)	2.70 (N=9, SD=.89)
2002	3.44 (N=19, SD=.87)	2.41 (N=13, SD=1.09)	2.35 (N=13, SD=.63)
2003	3.30 (N=22, SD=.69)	2.74 (N=6, SD=.80)	1.97 (N=6, SD=.67)

Table 20: GPAs at Transfer for Asian Non-CE Students

	First Term	Pre-transfer	Post-transfer
1999	2.51 (N=107, SD=1.03)	2.45 (N=63, SD=.75)	2.37 (N=58, SD=.80)
2000	2.66 (N=108, SD=.93)	2.61 (N=57, SD=.77)	2.50 (N=56, SD=1.02)
2001	2.64 (N=118, SD=.97)	2.51 (N=57, SD=.66)	2.18 (N=55, SD=.96)
2002	2.54 (N=142, SD=.76)	2.67 (N=67, SD=.76)	2.47 (N=66, SD=.90)
2003	2.44 (N=180, SD=1.12)	2.91 (N=38, SD=.66)	2.64 (N=37, SD=.81)

Table 21: GPAs at Transfer for African CE Students

	First Term	Pre-transfer	Post-transfer
1999	3.16 (N=8, SD=.44)	2.58 (N=7, SD=.90)	2.57 (N=7, SD=1.03)
2000	3.39 (N=17, SD=.51)	2.35 (N=12, SD=1.11)	2.17 (N=12, SD=1.50)
2001	3.25 (N=16, SD=.64)	2.42 (N=12, SD=.95)	2.29, (N=12, SD=.75)
2002	3.25 (N=37, SD=.52)	2.26 (N=21, SD=.93)	1.88 (N=21, SD=.79)
2003	3.16 (N=32, SD=.97)	3.11 (N=5, SD=.48)	2.14 (N=6, SD=1.07)

Conclusion

The CE students in these cohorts had a high transfer rate. Most transferred to CLA, however many graduated from other colleges. In the 1999 cohort, half of the graduates graduated from CLA, and in the 2000 cohort, only 17% graduated from CLA. This suggests that many students transfer to CLA and go on to other colleges or do not graduate within five years. This may be one reason their length to graduation is longer. Generally, CE students did not graduate at higher rates than their GC counterparts, but they did leave the University less frequently, possibly indicating that CE students persist longer until they reach their goal of graduation.

Another noticeable difference between CE students and non-CE students is the paths of earned GPAs over time. CE students earn higher first term GPAs than non-CE students. However, they also drop more significantly after the first term to GPAs that are lower than the non-CE students. We can only speculate as to why this change occurs. One possibility is that CE students are transferring earlier, and therefore have more of a transfer shock when they enter non-GC courses. Another possibility is that CE students often transfer into biological, management or hard science majors, which typically assign lower grades than other majors. However caution is required when interpreting these findings due to small numbers and in many cases there was a large standard deviation around the GPA, indicating that students varied from one another notably.