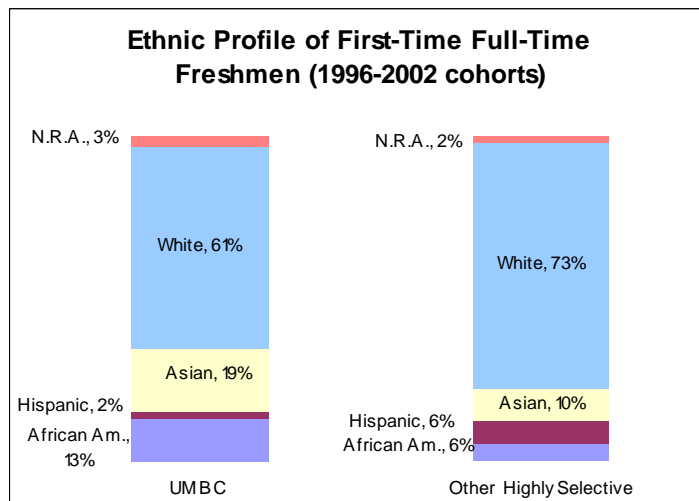


Comparison of UMBC Retention and Graduation Rates with CSRDE's Other Highly Selective Institutions

Office of Institutional Research July, 2004

Since 1994 the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), based at the University of Oklahoma, has been collecting data on retention and graduation rates from selected four-year degree awarding institutions. Among the reports that they generate from these data is the annual CSRDE Report, summarizing the retention and graduation rates of freshmen cohorts for the previous seven years. In their analysis of the data, institutions are classified as highly selective, selective, moderately selective, and less selective. Based on the average combined SAT score for the freshman class (>1100), UMBC falls into the highly selective institution category. This report will compare UMBC's student retention and graduation data for the 1996-2002 cohorts to data for the same student cohorts of all highly selective institutions. Below is a series of charts that summarize the ethnic and gender profiles of these students as well as graduation and retention rates. A comparison of SAT scores is also included. The data for the charts come from the CRSDE 2003-2004 Retention Report and UMBC's survey response data. A synopsis of the data accompanies each chart.

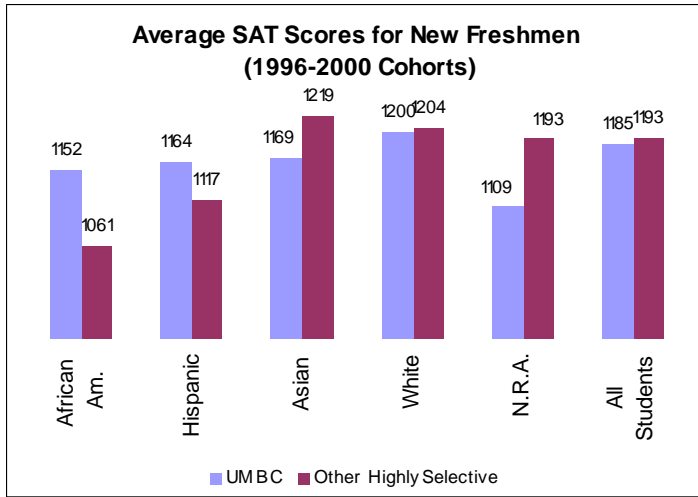
Ethnic Profile of First-Time Full-Time Freshmen



Comparatively, UMBC's freshman cohorts from 1996 to 2002 tended to have a higher percentage of minorities, especially Asians and African Americans, than the other highly selective institutions. Since the average enrollment of American Indian first-time full-time freshmen at UMBC between 1996 and 2002 was only five students or .4% of the average population compared to 1% of the

population in other highly selective institutions, their data are not presented separately in this report.

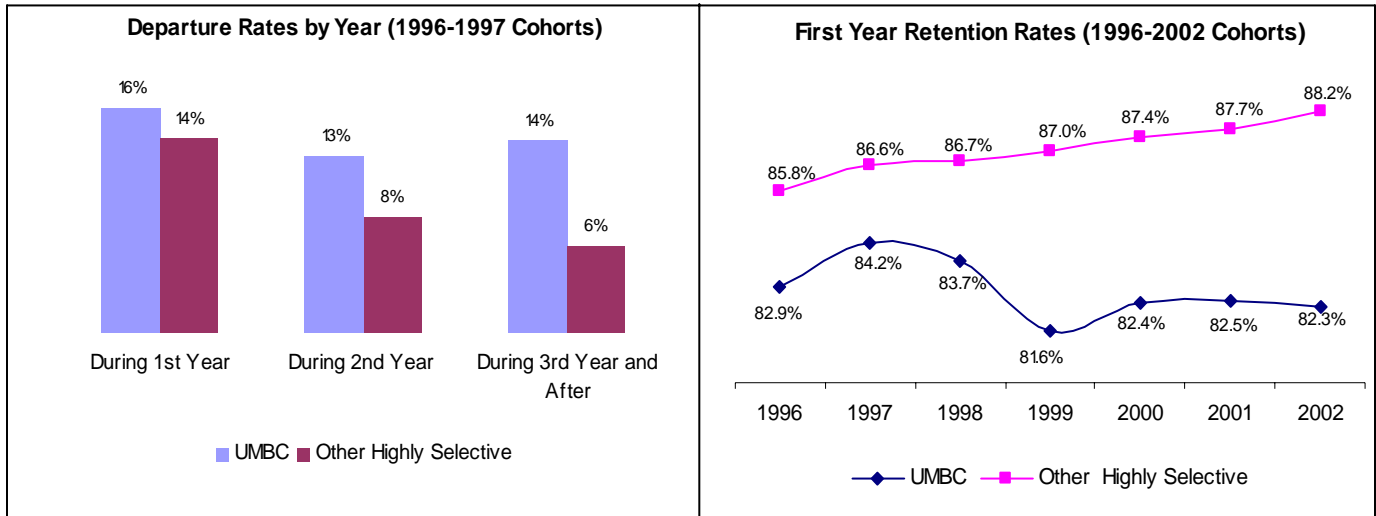
SAT Scores of First-Time Full-Time Freshmen



The overall average SAT score for UMBC’s freshman cohorts from 1996 to 2002 was 1185, compared to 1193 for other highly selective institutions. When SAT scores are disaggregated by ethnic group, the gap in scores between UMBC and students from other highly selective institutions reverses for the African American and Hispanic ethnic groups. UMBC’s African American students between 1996

and 2002, on average, had combined SAT scores of 1152, which was 91 points higher than the average SAT scores for African American students at other highly selective institutions. Hispanics at UMBC also had SAT scores that were higher than their counterparts’ scores at other highly selective institutions, although the gaps were not as great as the gap for the African Americans. All other ethnic groups at UMBC had average SAT scores that were lower than those of students at other highly selective schools.

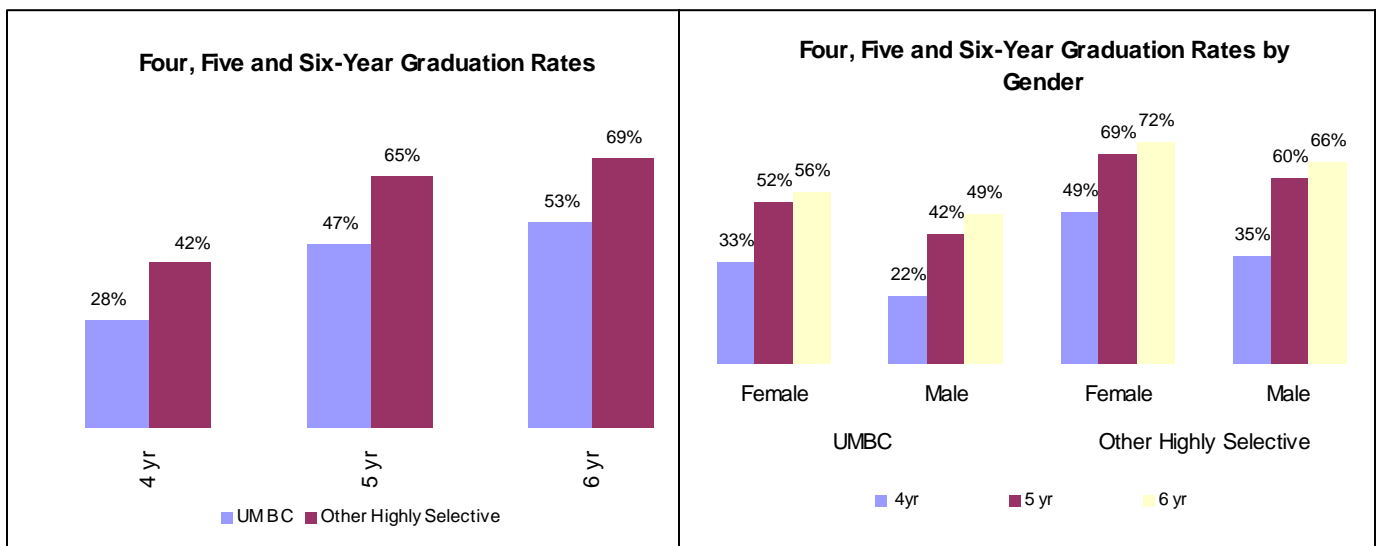
Departure and First Year Retention



The chart on the left shows the combined 1996 and 1997 cohort departure rates for the first, second, and third year and after. Of all freshmen from the 1996 and 1997 cohorts, after seven years 43% dropped out of UMBC, compared to 28% of freshmen at other highly selective institutions. UMBC’s dropout rates were higher than the others for the first year (16% vs. 14%), second year (13% vs. 8%) and the third year and after (14% vs. 6%).

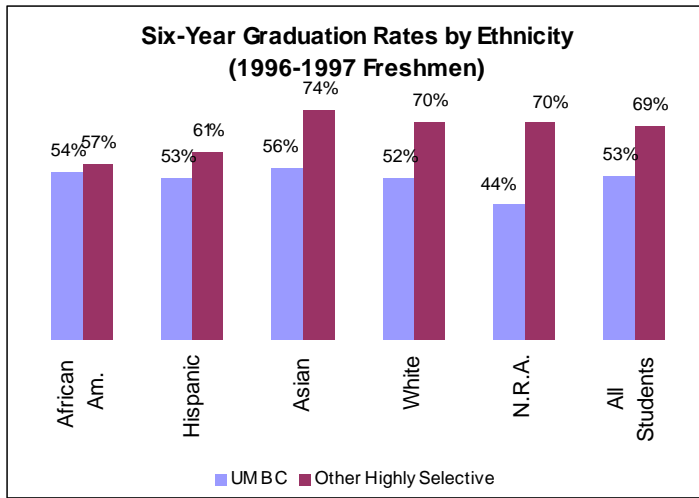
The gap in first-year retention rates between UMBC and other highly selective institutions has widened over the seven year period between 1996 and 2002 from 2.9 to 5.9 percentage points. At other highly selective institutions there was a slow, but steady, increase from 85.8% to 88.2%, whereas UMBC's first-year retention rates stayed relatively flat, starting at 82.9% and falling slightly to 82.3% for a net decrease of .6 percentage points. Only one ethnic group (African American) had a higher first-year retention rate at UMBC than at the comparative institutions (89% vs. 86%). All other ethnic groups at UMBC were within seven percentage points lower than their counterparts at other highly selective institutions except Asians, who had an average first year retention rate of 83% at UMBC and 95% at other highly selective institutions between 1996 and 2002.

Graduation Rates



The average four-year graduation rate was calculated for the 1996 through 1999 cohorts, five-year rate for the 1996-1998 cohorts and six-year rate for the 1996 cohort. UMBC's four-, five- and six-year graduation rates were substantially lower than those of other highly selective institutions, with gaps of 14, 18 and 16 percentage points, respectively.

Examining graduation rates by gender reveals a pattern of higher graduation rates for women. This same pattern holds for the other highly selective institutions although the rates were consistently higher than those for females and males at UMBC.



UMBC's students had six-year graduation rates that were lower than those of other highly selective institutions, regardless of ethnicity. The gap was lowest for African Americans (54% vs. 57%), and greatest for Non-Resident Aliens (44% vs. 70%).

UMBC's Rank among CSRDE Public Highly Selective Institutions (n=69)

	1 st Year Retention (1996-2002 Cohorts)	2 nd Year Retention (1996-2002 Cohorts)	5 Year Graduation (1996-1998 Cohorts)	6 Year Graduation (1996-1997 Cohorts)
Rates (%)	84%	71%	48%	54%
Rank	38 th	47 th	61 st	59 th

In all, 421 institutions reported to CSRDE in its 2003 reporting cycle. Of these, 97 were classified as highly selective institutions, 69 of which were public. The table above lists UMBC's average rates for first and second-year retention for the 1996 through 2002 cohorts as well as five and six-year graduation rates for the 1996 through 1998 cohorts. Listed just below are its rankings among the 69 highly selective public institutions. UMBC was in the second quartile for its first and second-year retention rates and in the bottom quartile (or first quartile) for its five and six-year graduation rates.

Conclusions

UMBC has demonstrated a tendency to attract highly qualified students, but is more likely to lose them at higher rates than other highly selective institutions who participate in the CRSDE. The group at UMBC that has demonstrated the greatest success, compared to other schools, is African American students. These findings reinforce the need to identify ways to increase the retention and graduation rates of all of UMBC's freshmen.

References

Hayes, R. (2004). The retention and graduation of 1996-2002 entering freshman cohorts in 421 colleges and universities. (2003-04 CSRDE Report). Norman: The University of Oklahoma, Center for Institutional Data Exchange and Analysis. (Data used with permission of CSRDE)

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