Date of Initial Registration and Student Success of Fall 2017 New, First-Time Students at Honolulu Community College

Methodology
All new, first-time students (student types = ‘F’ or ‘M’) enrolled and home based at Honolulu Community College (HonCC) except concurrent high school students (major = ‘SPEA’) were identified from the Operational Data Store (ODS) data warehouse after the fall 2017 census freeze (25 September 2017.) The initial dates of registration were extracted from ODS for the previously identified students. The relation between registration date and student success (term GPA, course success, and fall-to-spring reenrollment) was examined.

Findings
The correlation between the initial registration date for each student and their term GPA at HonCC was calculated. The Pearson correlation coefficient showed a small negative correlation between initial registration date and term GPA ($r = -0.273, p < 0.0001$). There was a tendency for the GPA in fall 2017 to be higher the earlier the student registered.

The relation between term GPA and initial registration date also was significant if students were divided into two groups based on the date of initial registration. Students who started registration before the first day of classes were labeled ‘Early’ (423 students), and students who started registration on the first day of classes or later were labeled ‘Late’ (47 students.) A significant t-test ($t = 5.56, p < 0.0001$) indicated that ‘Early’ students had significantly higher fall GPAs then ‘Late’ students (2.196 vs 1.112, respectively.)

Course success rates also were examined between the two registration groups. Successful course completion was defined as a ‘C’ or higher grade. A course success rate was calculated for each student. The ‘Early’ group had significantly higher overall course success (68.35% vs 34.22%) than the ‘Late’ students ($t = 5.82, p < 0.0001$) ‘Early’ students were significantly more successful in their classes than ‘Late’ students.

The two registration groups also were examined to determine if they had significantly different fall-to-spring reenrollment rates. The ‘Early’ group reenrolled at a higher rate (78.01%) than the ‘Late’ group (31.91%). This was a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 46.046, p < 0.0001$) The ‘Early’ group was significantly more likely to reenroll in the spring semester than the ‘Late’ group.

Conclusions
Early registration was significantly related to student success in all three student success measures. Students who registered early had significantly higher term GPAs, higher course success rates, and were more likely to reenroll in the spring than students who registered on or after the first day of classes. These results don’t prove a causal relation between early registration and student success. Early registration just may be a practice of successful students.

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