Mustang Academic Bridge Program

Annual 2010-2011 Report
Office of the Provost
Southern Methodist University

Program Overview

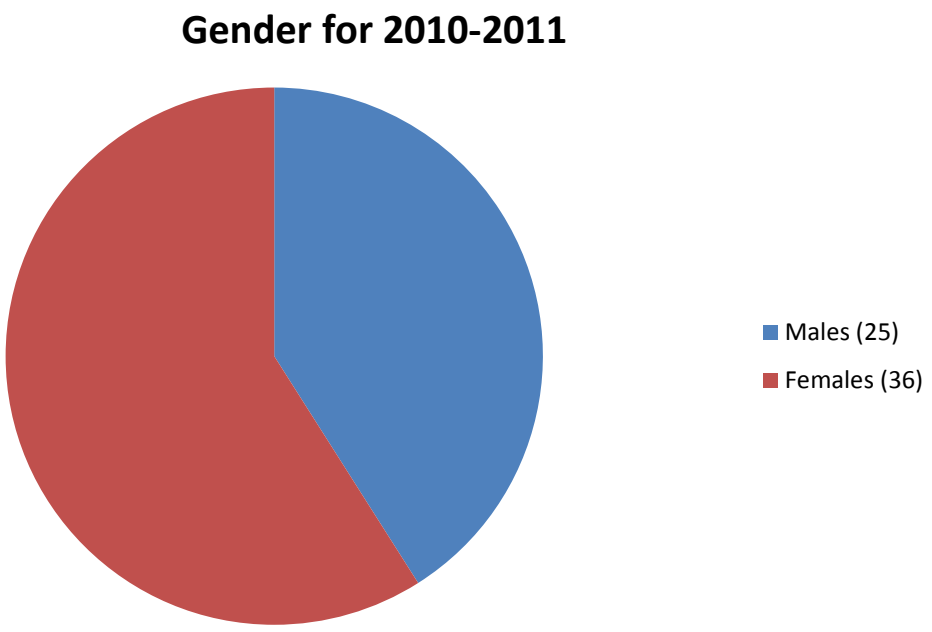
In the fall of 2010, the Mustang Academic Bridge Program was launched. This is an initiative through the Office of the Provost to ensure first year students a successful transition from high school to college. Following a visit to UCLA to learn about their Academic Advancement Program (AAP), Anthony Tillman, Assistant Provost, and Pavielle Chriss, Assistant Director for Student Success, implemented a number of their program's best practices to develop a support services program at SMU. The program is designed to provide students with an array of coordinated academic support and personal development services and to promote academic achievement and excellence. The menu of support services includes targeted academic advising, individual appointments, weekly group study group sessions, peer mentoring, collaborative learning workshops, and special extra-curricular learning enhancement experiences.

Student Overview

During the summer, 96 students were invited to the program. There were 68 students who formally accepted the invitation to participate, and 61 of those students were active participants throughout the school year.

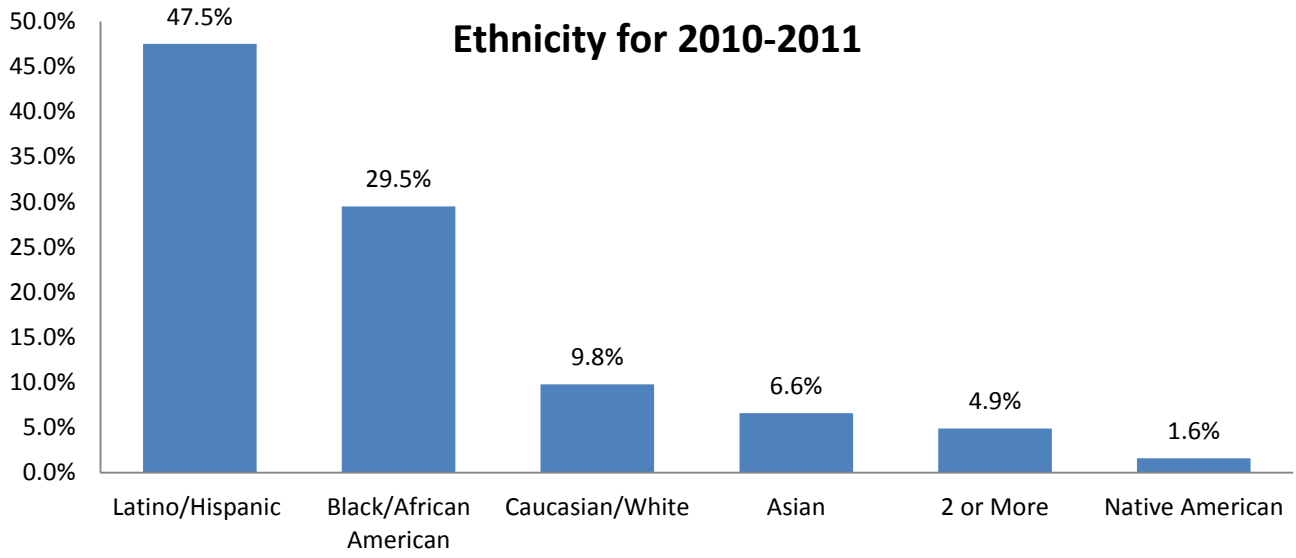
Gender

Women outnumbered men in the Mustang Academic Bridge Program; 36 of the 61 students were female (59%), while 25 of the 61 students were male (41%).



Ethnicity

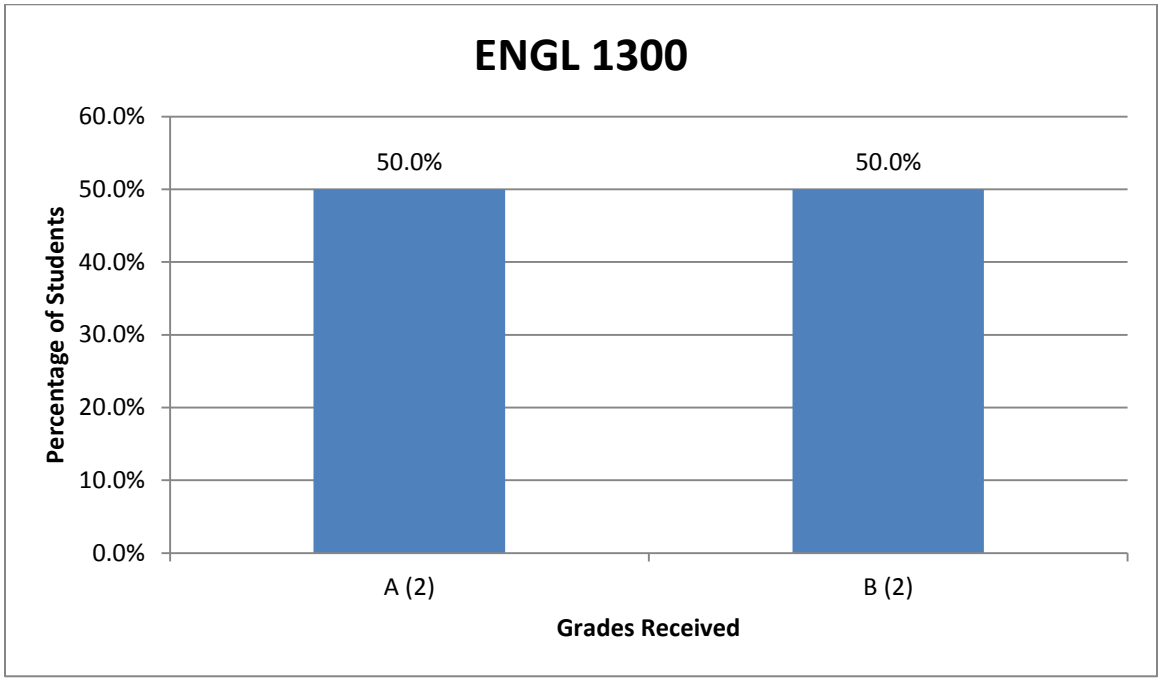
Of the 61 students, 47.5% (29) of the students were Hispanic, 29.5% (18) were Black, 9.8% (6) were Caucasian, 6.6% (4) were Asian, 4.9% (3) were 2 or More, and 1.6% (1) were Native American.

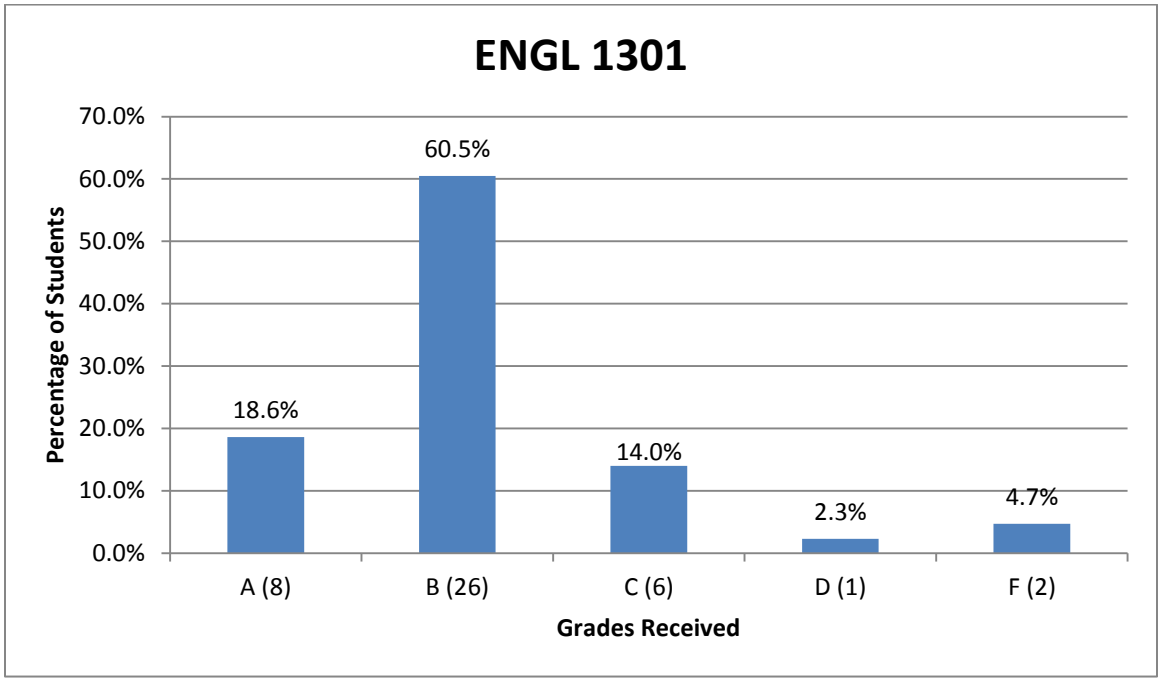


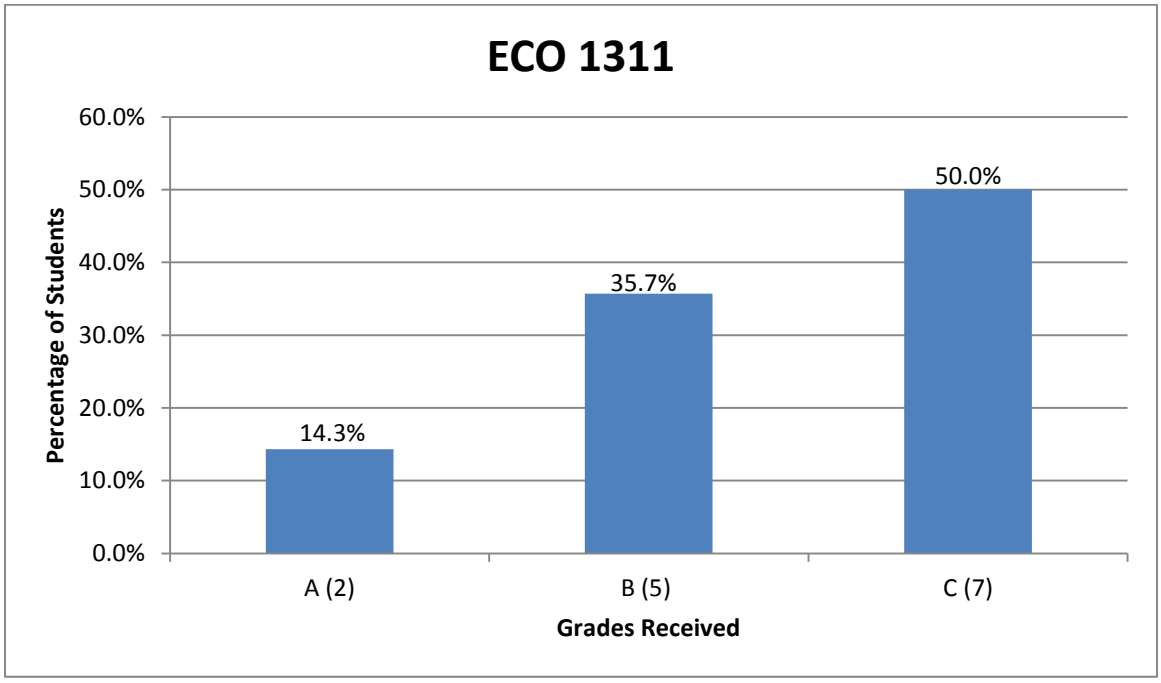
Academic Progress: Fall 2010 and Spring 2011

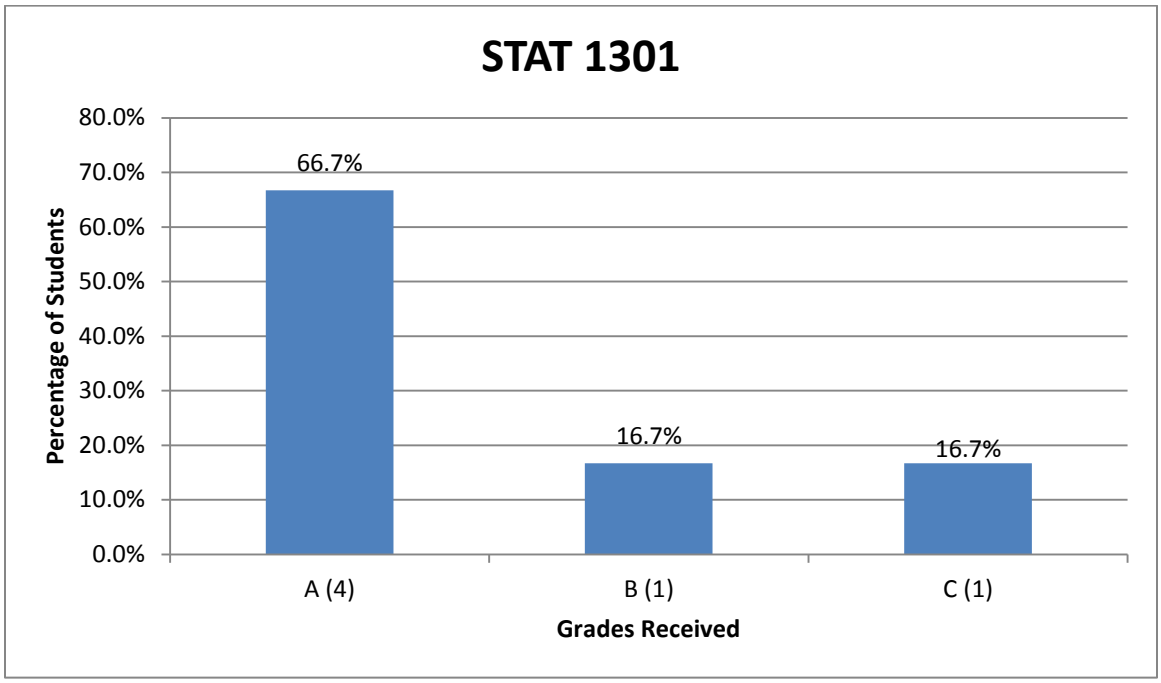
The following charts present grade distribution for identified key courses for the Bridge program participants.

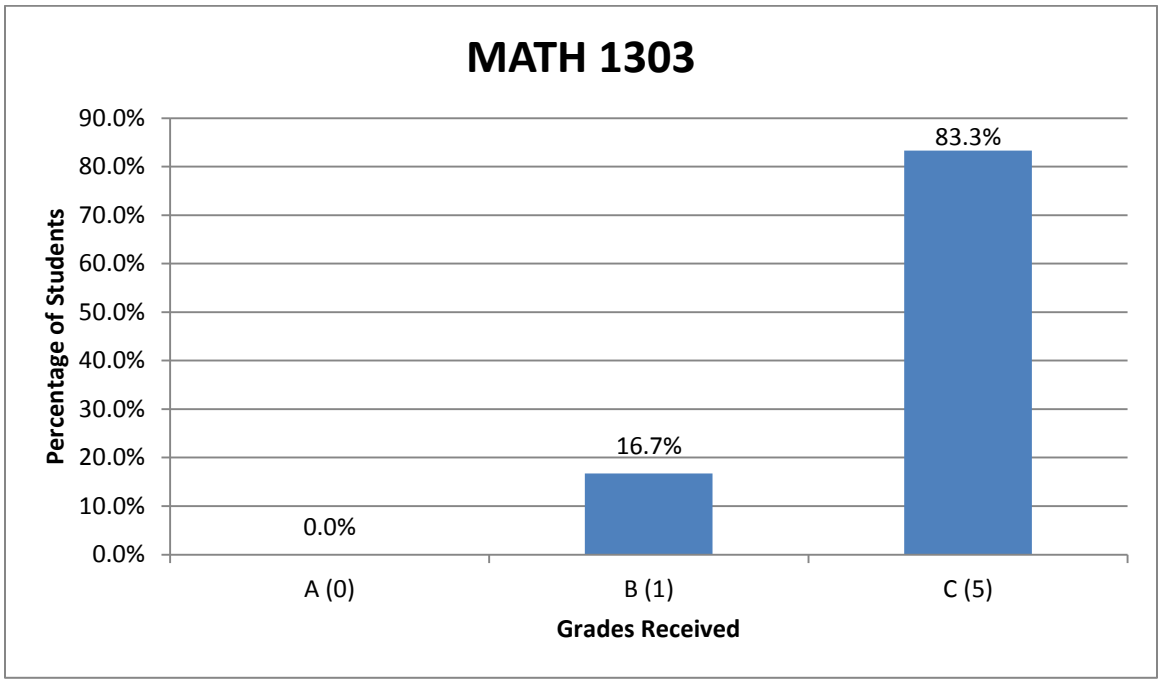
Fall 2010

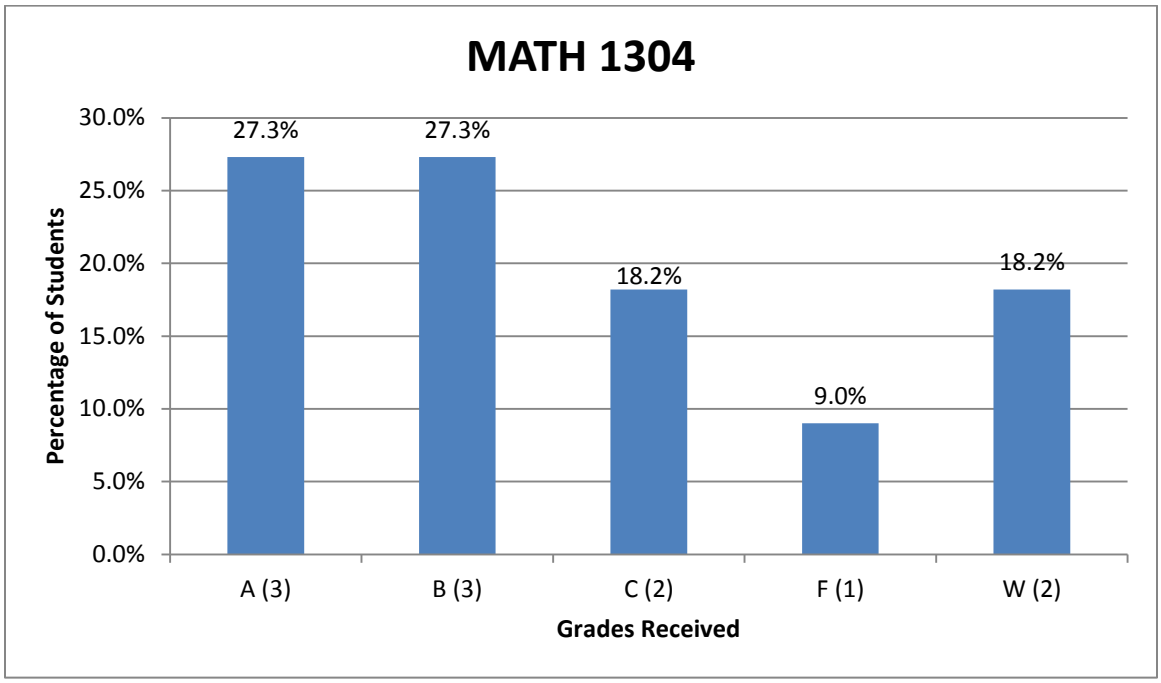


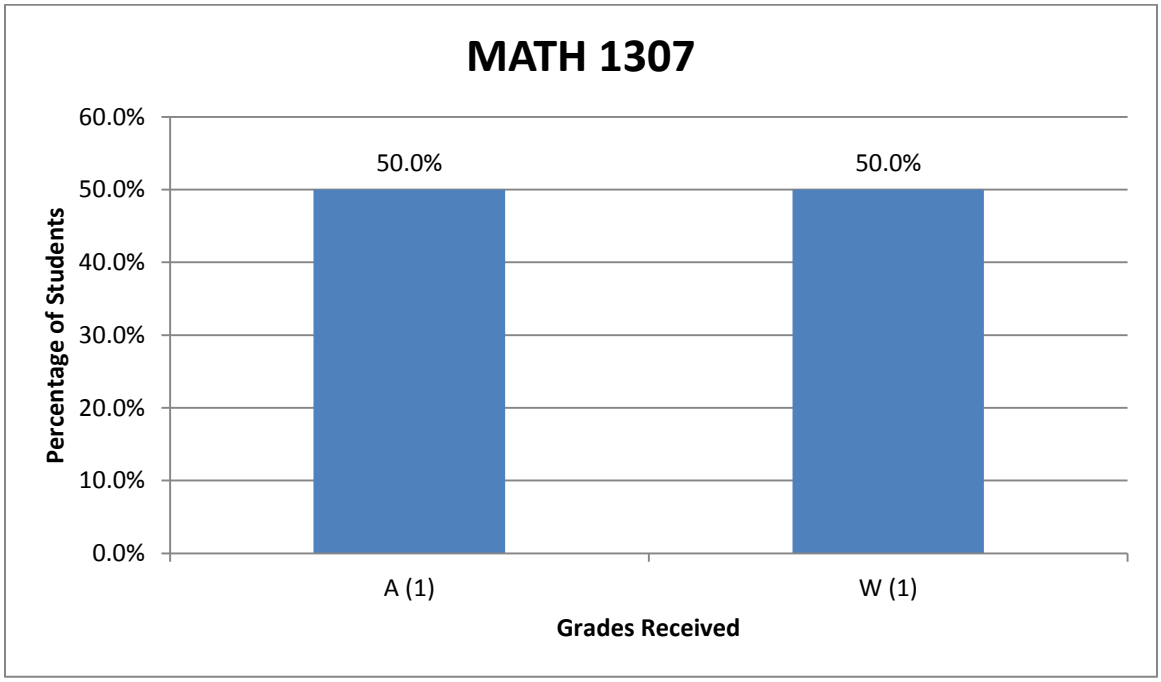

ENGL 1301
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
18.6%
60.5%
14.0%
2.3%
4.7%
A (8)
B (26)
C (6)
D (1)
F (2)
Grades Received

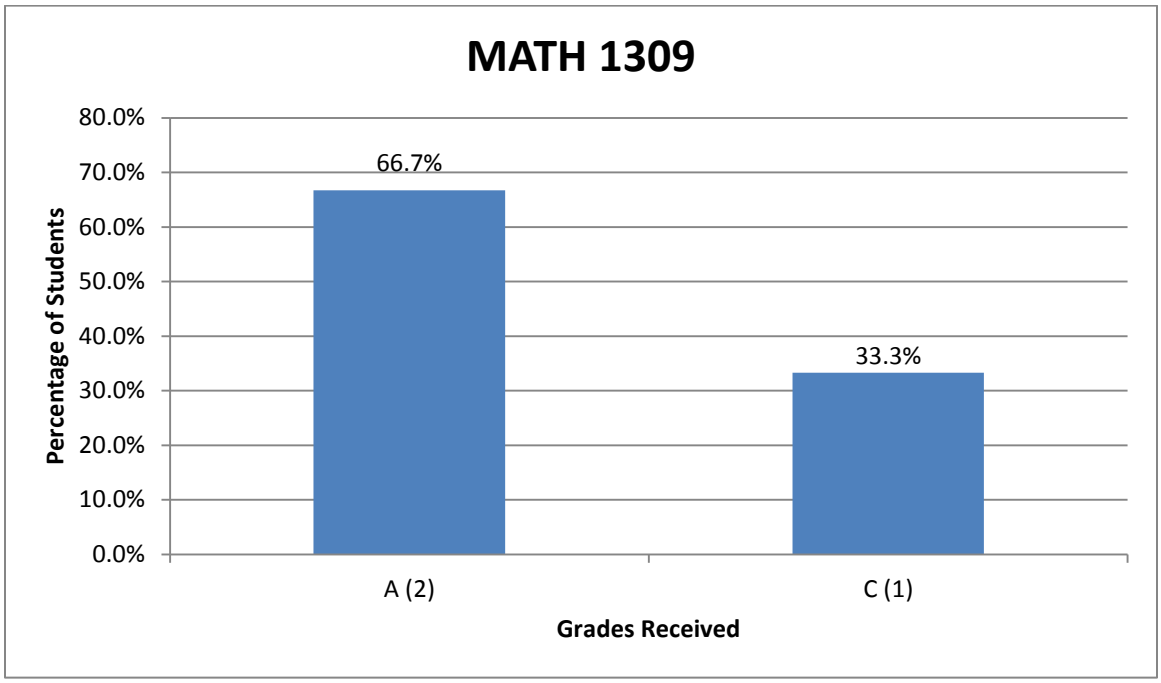

ECO 1311
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
14.3%
35.7%
50.0%
A (2)
B (5)
C (7)
Grades Received

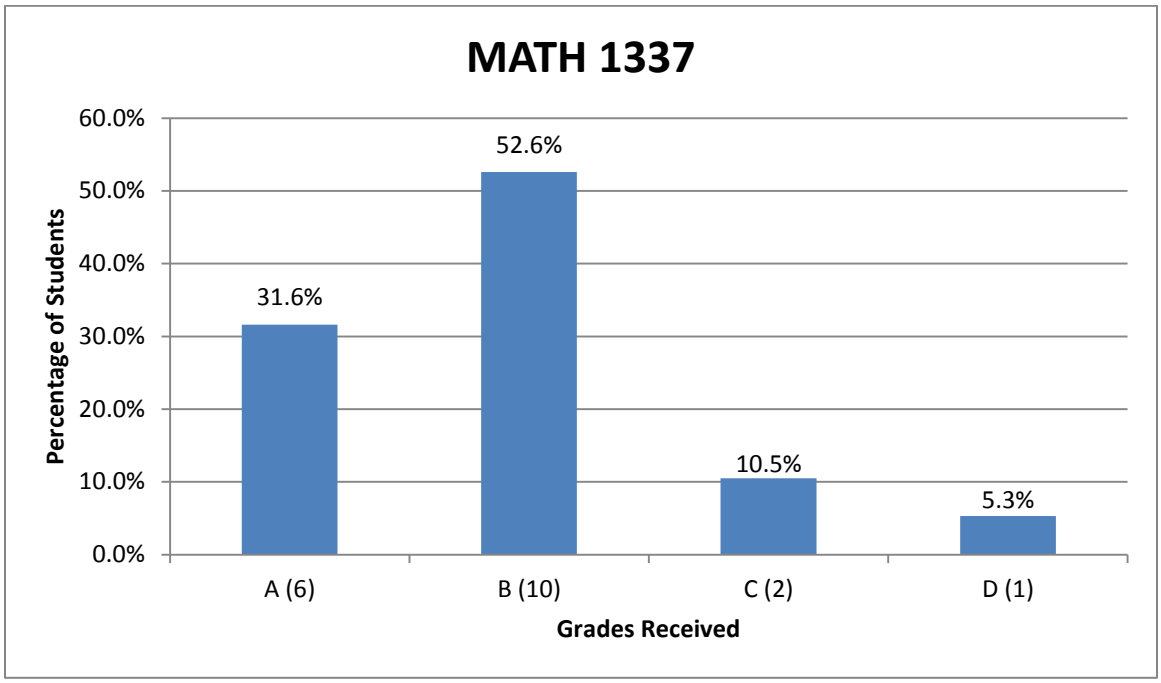

STAT 1301
80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
66.7%
16.7%
16.7%
A (4)
B (1)
C (1)
Grades Received

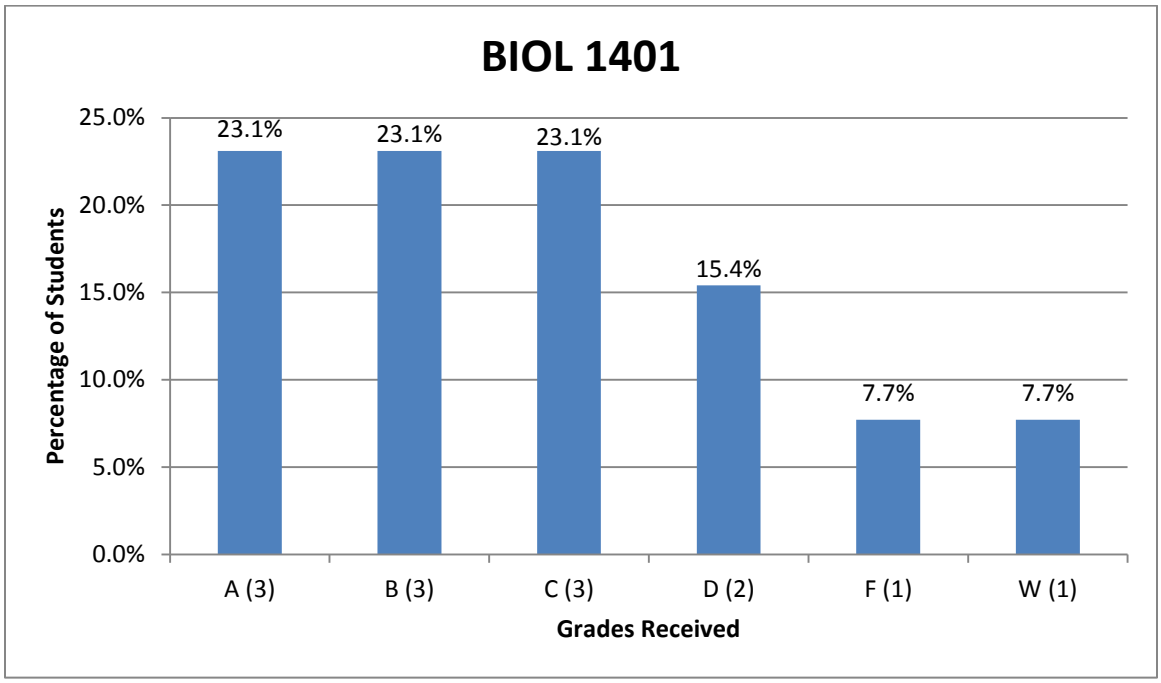

MATH 1303
90.0%
80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
0.0%
16.7%
83.3%
A (0)
B (1)
C (5)
Grades Received

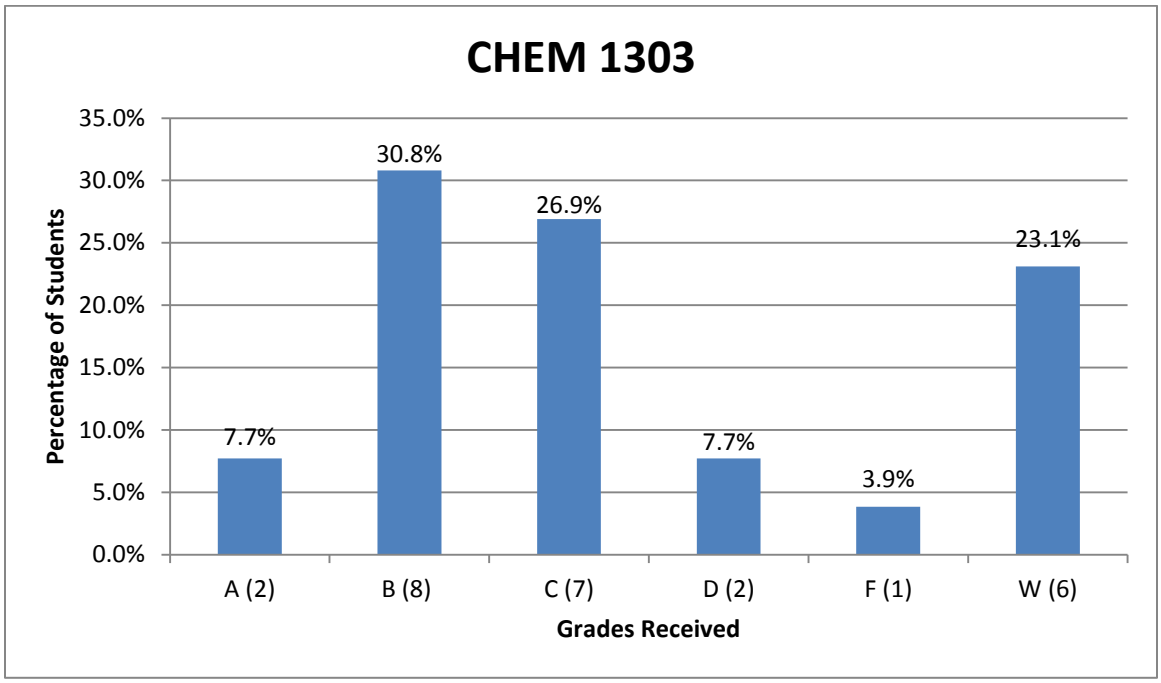

MATH 1304
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
27.3%
27.3%
18.2%
9.0%
18.2%
A (3)
B (3)
C (2)
F (1)
W (2)
Grades Received

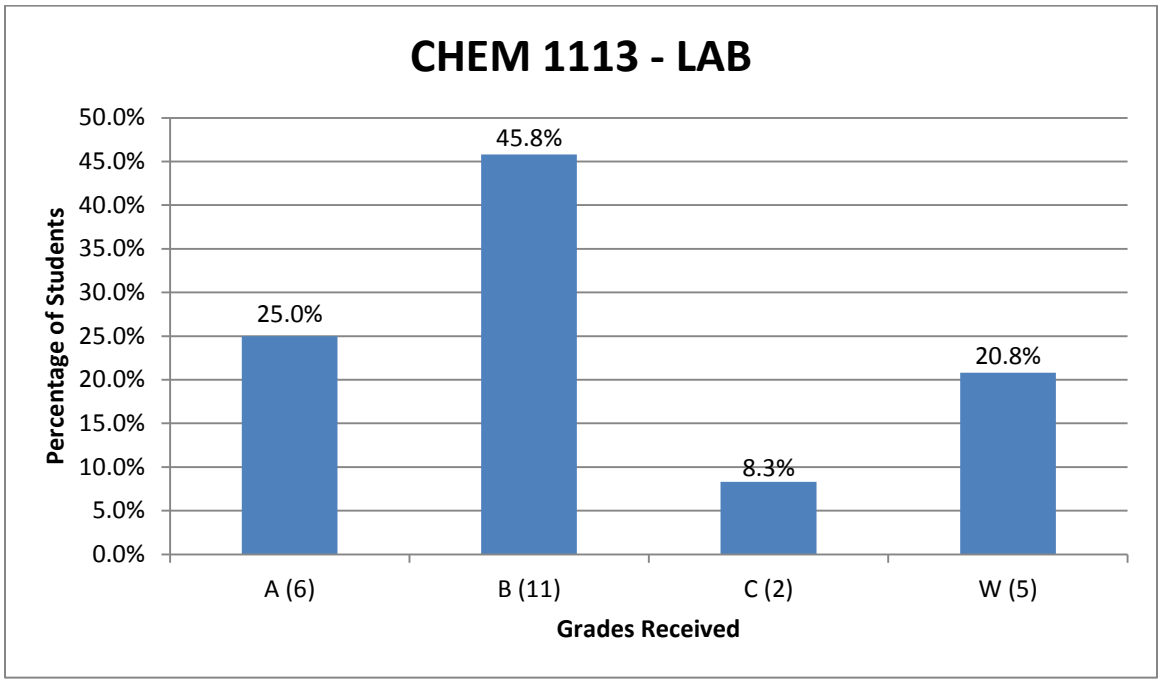

MATH 1307
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
50.0%
50.0%
A (1)
W (1)
Grades Received


MATH 1309
80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
66.7%
33.3%
A (2)
C (1)
Grades Received

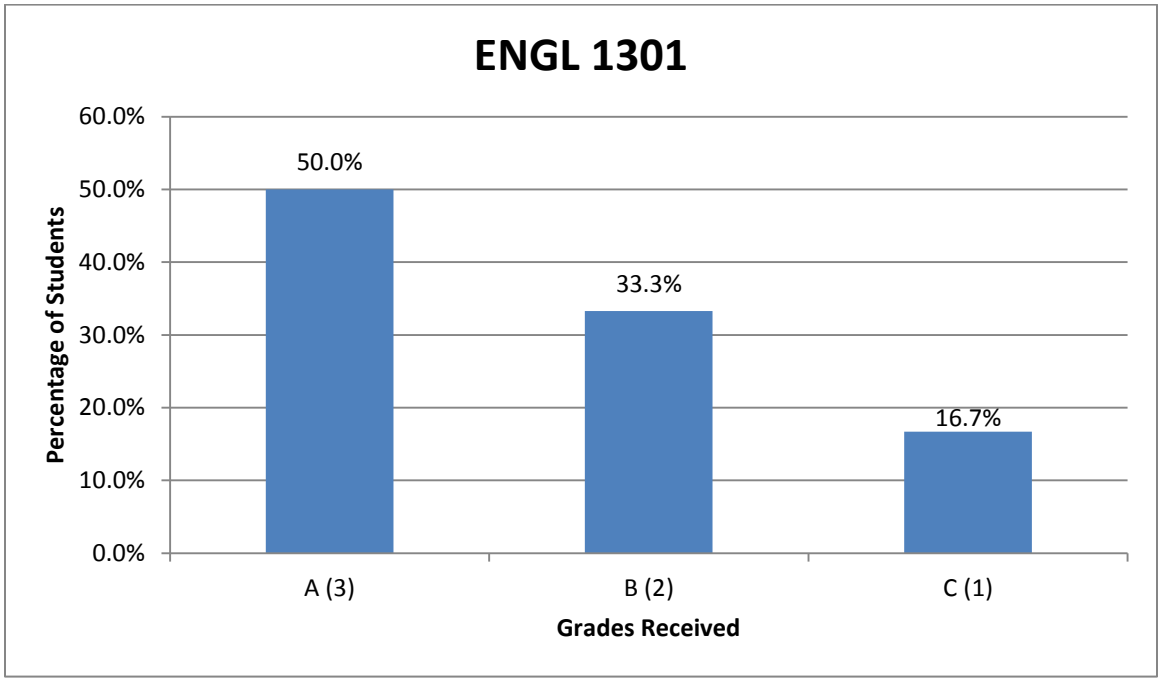

MATH 1337
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
31.6%
52.6%
10.5%
5.3%
A (6)
B (10)
C (2)
D (1)
Grades Received

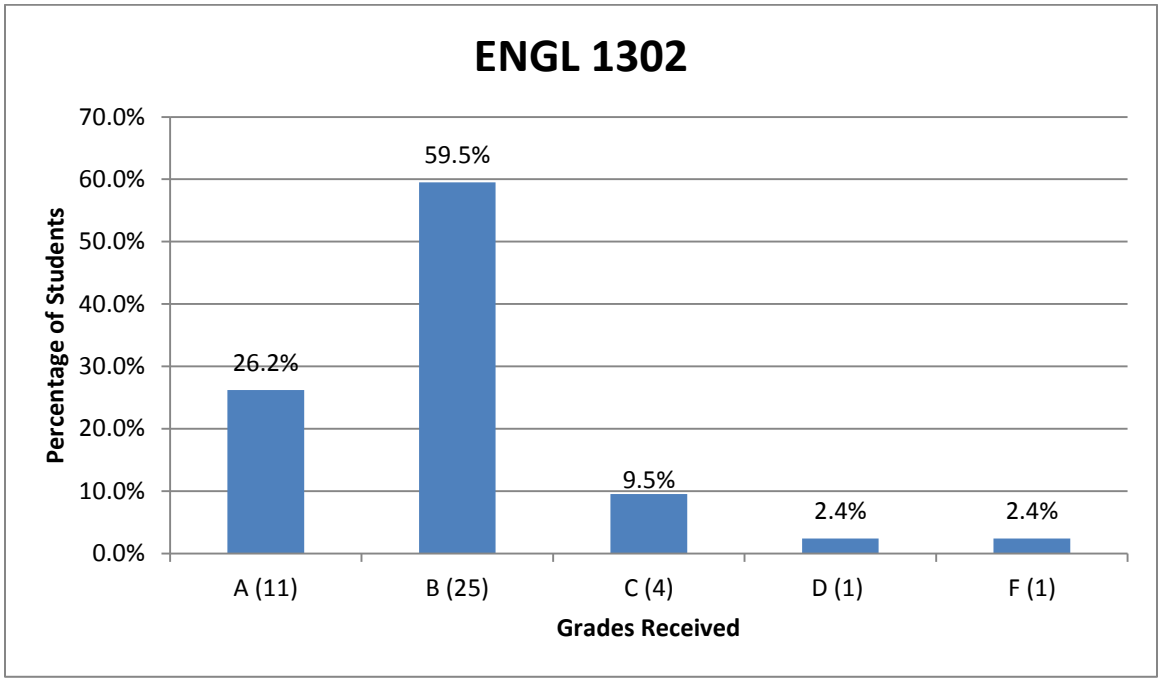

BIOL 1401
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
23.1%
23.1%
23.1%
15.4%
7.7%
7.7%
A (3)
B (3)
C (3)
D (2)
F (1)
W (1)
Grades Received

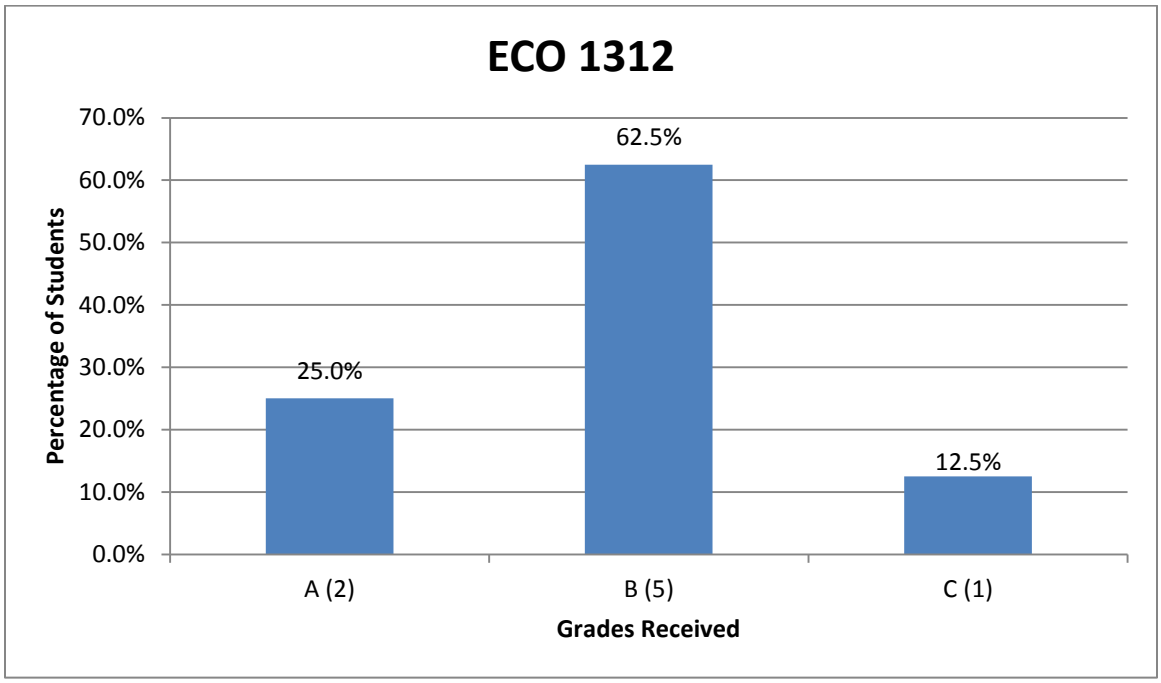

CHEM 1303
35.0%
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
7.7%
30.8%
26.9%
7.7%
3.9%
23.1%
A (2)
B (8)
C (7)
D (2)
F (1)
W (6)
Grades Received

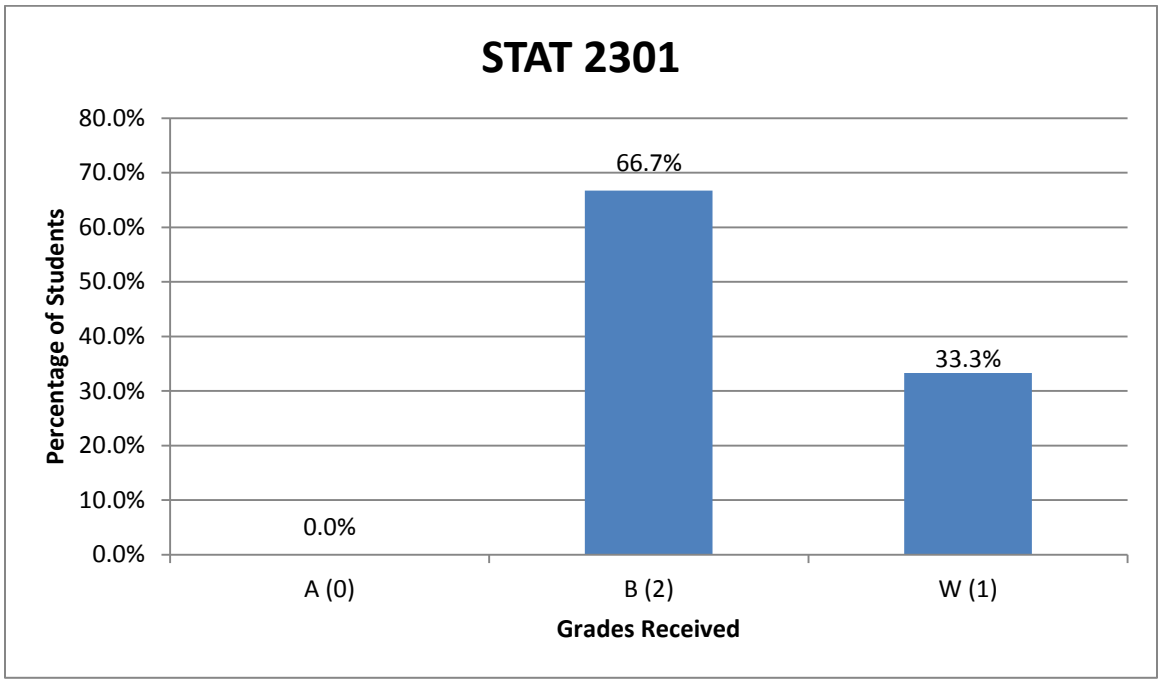

CHEM 1113 - LAB
50.0%
45.0%
40.0%
35.0%
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
25.0%
45.8%
8.3%
20.8%
A (6)
B (11)
C (2)
W (5)
Grades Received

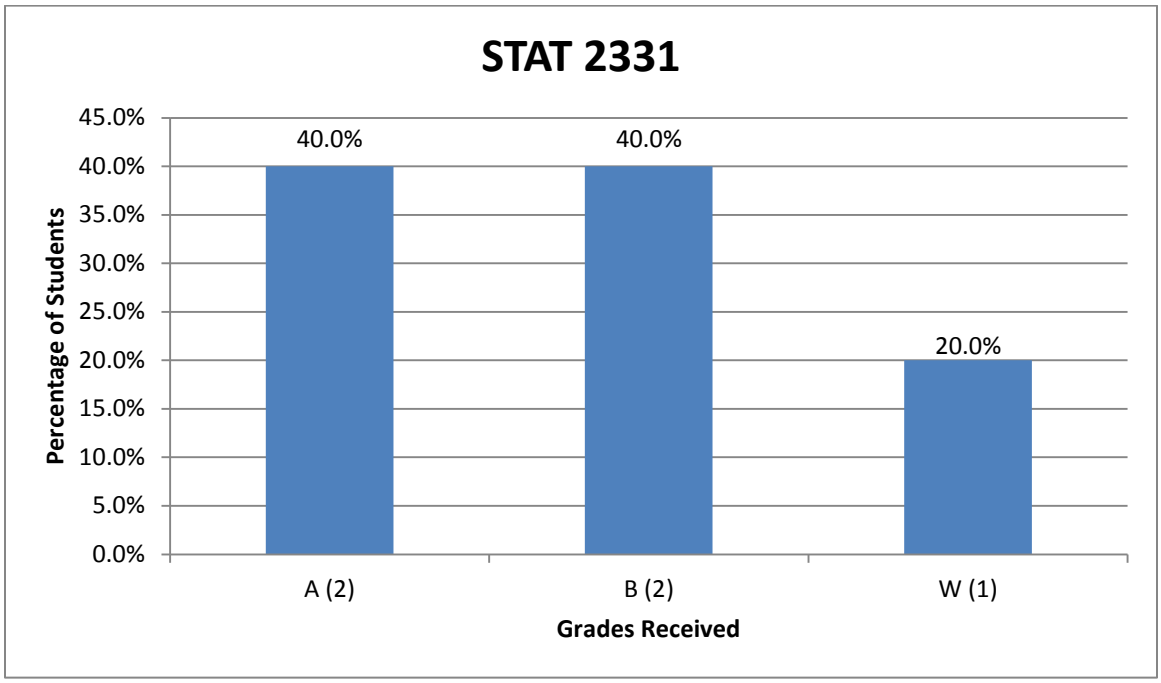
Spring 2011

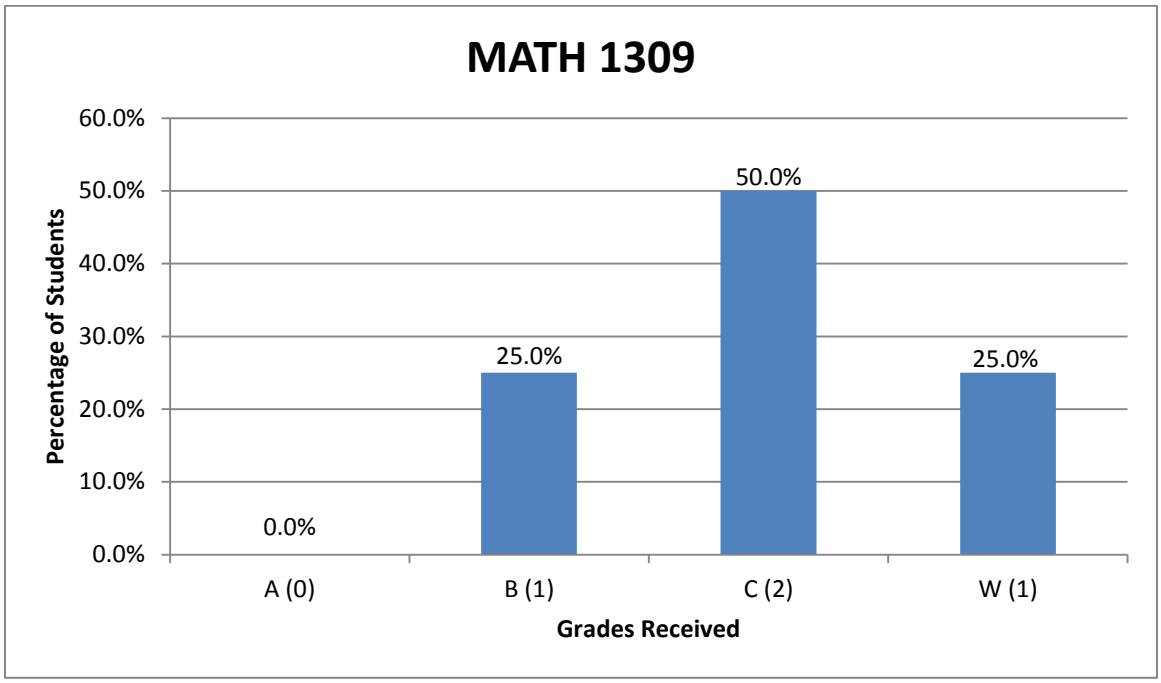

ENGL 1301
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
50.0%
33.3%
16.7%
A (3)
B (2)
C (1)
Grades Received

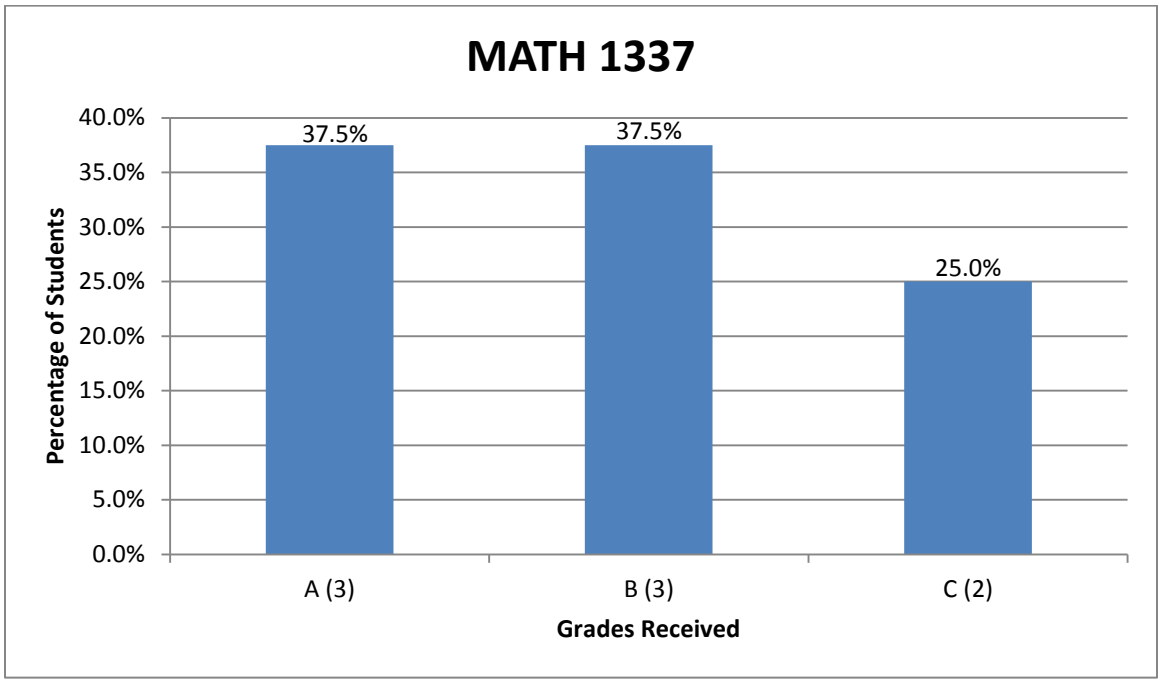

ENGL 1302
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
26.2%
59.5%
9.5%
2.4%
2.4%
A (11)
B (25)
C (4)
D (1)
F (1)
Grades Received

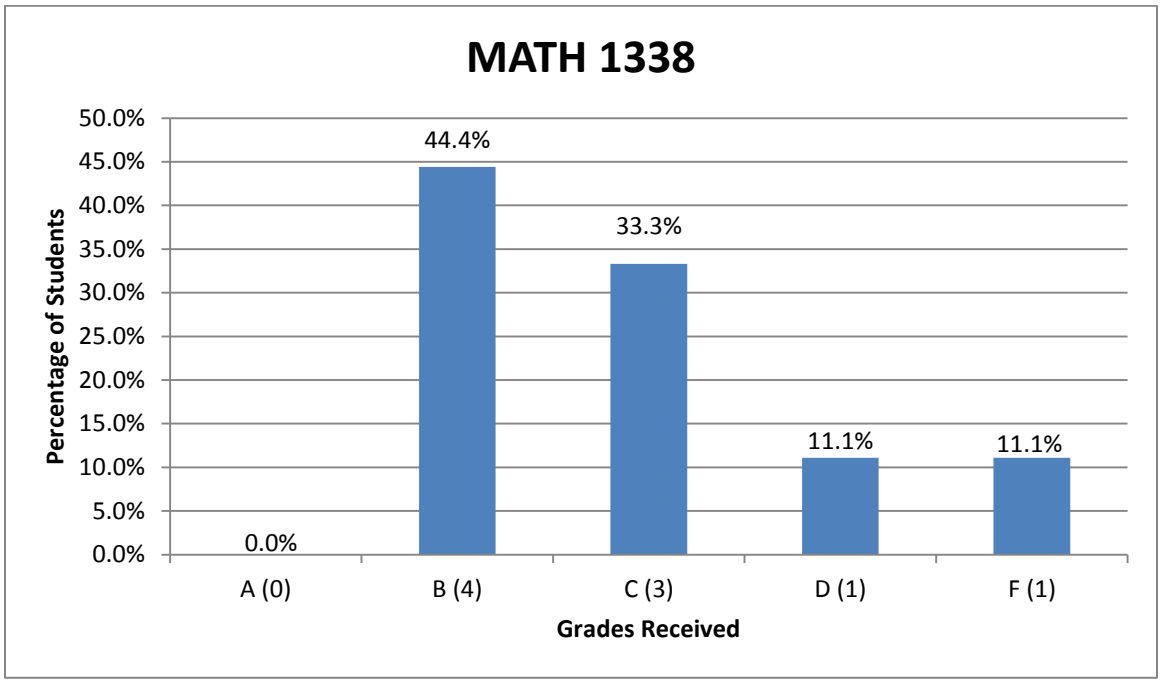

ECO 1312
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
25.0%
62.5%
12.5%
A (2)
B (5)
C (1)
Grades Received

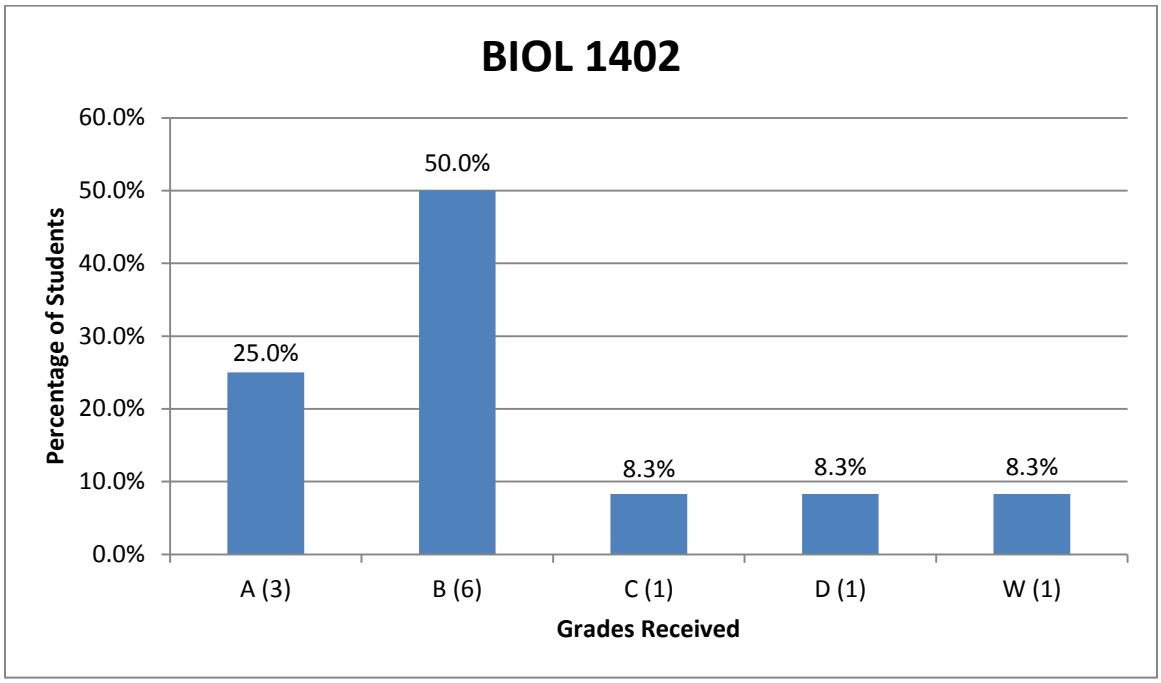

STAT 2301
80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
0.0%
66.7%
33.3%
A (0)
B (2)
W (1)
Grades Received

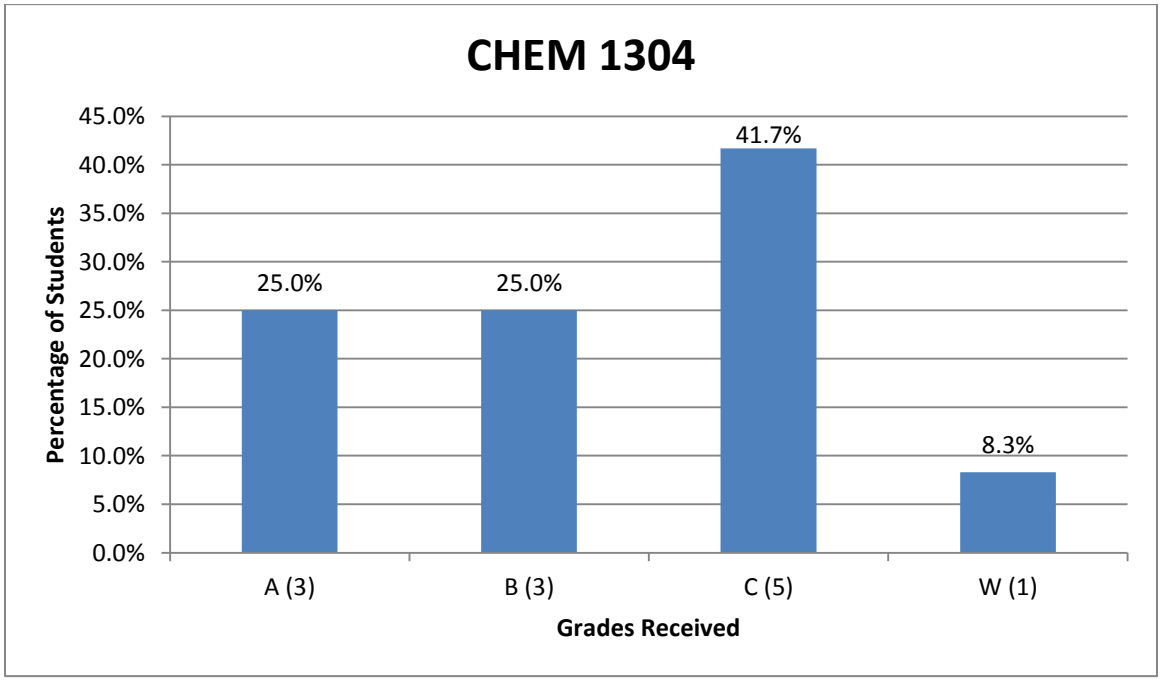

STAT 2331
45.0%
40.0%
35.0%
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
40.0%
40.0%
20.0%
A (2)
B (2)
W (1)
Grades Received

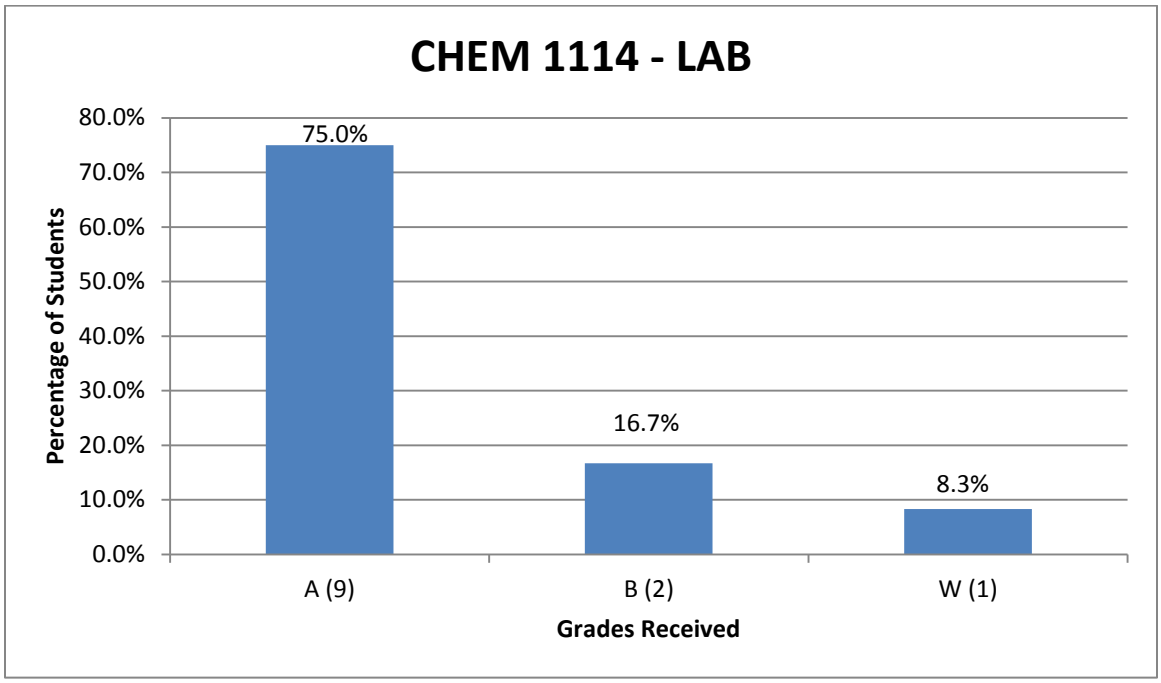

MATH 1309
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
0.0%
25.0%
50.0%
25.0%
A (0)
B (1)
C (2)
W (1)
Grades Received


MATH 1337
40.0%
35.0%
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
37.5%
37.5%
25.0%
A (3)
B (3)
C (2)
Grades Received


MATH 1338
50.0%
45.0%
40.0%
35.0%
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
0.0%
44.4%
33.3%
11.1%
11.1%
A (0)
B (4)
C (3)
D (1)
F (1)
Grades Received


BIOL 1402
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
25.0%
50.0%
8.3%
8.3%
8.3%
A (3)
B (6)
C (1)
D (1)
W (1)
Grades Received


CHEM 1304
45.0%
40.0%
35.0%
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
25.0%
25.0%
41.7%
8.3%
A (3)
B (3)
C (5)
W (1)
Grades Received


CHEM 1114 - LAB
80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Percentage of Students
75.0%
16.7%
8.3%
A (9)
B (2)
W (1)
Grades Received

Student Academic Performance

Based upon the data, students who participated in the Bridge program in the fall and spring semesters performed better academically overall than those who were invited but did not participate in the program. The average GPA and number of credit hours earned is greater for those in the program.

Fall Semester

Fall 2010	Bridge Students n = 61	Non-Bridge Students n = 30
Average GPA	2.87	2.68
Lowest GPA	1.12	.69
Highest GPA	3.93	3.86
Average Earned Credit Hours	14.2	13.6
Lowest Earned Credit Hours	5	7
Highest Earned Credit Hours	18	18

Spring Semester

Spring 2011	Bridge Students n = 51	Inactive Bridge Students n = 10*	Non-Bridge Students n = 30
Average GPA	3.08	2.81	2.97
Lowest GPA	1.16	2.25	0.86
Highest GPA	3.89	3.25	4.0
Average Earned Credit Hours	14.3	14.4	13.7
Lowest Earned Credit Hours	10	12	4
Highest Earned Credit Hours	18	18	18
Cumulative Average GPA	3.01	2.64	2.92
Cumulative Average Credit Hours (includes transfer/test credit)	37.7	28.5	33.5
Average Admission Rating	6.6	5.7	5.6

*In the spring, 10 students who participated in the program in the fall did not attend any programs or appointments. These students are considered ‘inactive’ in the program.

Academic Probation

Ten Bridge students were placed on academic probation following the fall semester. Half of these students were on the pre-med/dental track and enrolled in both BIOL 1401 and CHEM 1303.

One of the students on probation did not take classes at SMU in the spring. Of the 9 who took courses, all but 2 raised their GPA to a 2.0 and subsequently returned to good academic standing after the spring semester.

Fall 2010	**Probation Students n = 10**
Average GPA	1.61
Lowest GPA	1.12
Highest GPA	1.9
Average Earned Credit Hours	9.4
Lowest Earned Credit Hours	5
Highest Earned Credit Hours	15
Average Admission Rating	6.25
Pre-Med Students	5
Engineering Students	2

Spring 2011	**Probation Students n = 9**
Average GPA	2.7
Lowest GPA	1.16
Highest GPA	3.45
Average Earned Credit Hours	13.3
Lowest Earned Credit Hours	10
Highest Earned Credit Hours	16

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Two of the Bridge participants, who were on probation, did not complete Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). By the end of the summer term, the remaining 49 students will meet SAP.

Major Declaration

At the end of the spring semester, 9 of the 51 active students are declared majors.

Course Registration

All 51 students are registered for the fall 2011 semester.

Workshops and Outings Overview

During the fall 2010 and spring 2011 semesters, there were a variety of academic workshops, informational presentations, outings, and social activities coordinated for the Mustang Bridge Program participants. Students were encouraged to attend at least two activities throughout the semester.

In the fall, there were a total of 9 activities with an overall student attendance of 169. In the spring, there were a total of 10 activities with an overall student attendance of 115.

Date, Time	**Activity**	**Student Attendance**
August 30, Mon., 5-7 PM	Orientation and Welcome Reception	43
September 13, Mon., 4-5 PM	Hegi Family Career Development Center Presentation	9
September 24, Fri., 3-4 PM	Family Weekend Reception	28
September 29, Wed., 5-6 PM	Pizza and LEC Workshop *GPA 101: SMU Survival Skills*	19
October 2, Sat., 10:30-5 PM	State Fair Outing	28
October 15, Fri., 4-5 PM	Academic Planning Session	20
November 13, Sat., 7:30-4 PM	UT Southwestern Health Careers Conference for pre-med underrepresented students	5
November 18, Thurs., 6-8 PM	Dinner at the home of the Dean of the Meadows School of the Arts, Jose Bowen	13
December 8, Wed., 1-2 PM	FAFSA: Essentials and Updates Webinar	4
January 20, Thurs., 5-7 PM	Welcome Back Dinner (Goal Setting and Reflection)	25
January 29, Sat., 11-1 PM	Meadows Museum Tour of El Greco and Lunch	5
February 16, Wed., 4-5 PM	National Fellowships and Scholarships Presentation	10
February 25, Fri., 4-5 PM	Academic Advising Planning Session	6
March 1, Tues., 5-6 PM	GPA 101 Workshop	8
March 8, Tues., 5-6 PM	Summer School/Study Abroad Presentation	14
March 23, Wed., 5-6 PM	Mock Interview Preparation Workshop	3
Week of March 28	Mock Interviews with a Career Counselor	9
April 15, Fri., 3-4 PM	Preparing for Finals Workshop	6
May 3, Tues., 6-7:30 PM	End of the Year Celebration	29

Total # of Activities	19
Total Attendance in Activities	284
Avg. Overall Attendance/Activity	14.9

Individual Appointments Overview

During the fall 2010 and spring 2011 semesters, the Mustang Bridge Program participants were asked to attend three scheduled individual appointments. These appointments took place around critical periods in the semester to provide students with proactive assistance. While three appointments were required, some students scheduled additional appointments to discuss a variety of topics. More details on the appointments are outlined below.

Fall 2011

Appointment #	Start/End Date	Topic/Purpose	Allocated Duration
1	September 13th/October 5th	*Get to Know Student/First Weeks* • Fill out and Review Self-Assessment Discuss: • 1st Weeks of Classes • Provide Referrals • Grade Deficiencies on Early Intervention Report (if applicable)	60 minutes
2	October 26th/November 8th	*Midterm Progress* Discuss: • Academic Progress • Grade Deficiencies on Midterm Report • Drop Deadline • Holds on Account • Spring Course Selection/Enrollment Appointment: Review DPR and Major Requirements • Campus Services (if necessary)	30 minutes
3	November 29th/December 8th	*Preparing for Finals/Spring Semester* Discuss: • Academic Update • Reflection on Fall Semester • Looking Ahead to the Spring Semester	30 minutes
Additional	September 3rd/December 15th	Discuss: • Finding a Work Study Position • Resume Review • Judicial Issues • Dropping a Course • Grades • Issues in a Specific Class • Tutoring/Study Sessions • Major Change • Creating a Four Year Plan • Account Balance: Financial Aid, Payment Plans • Summer School • First-Year Repeat Policy	Varied

Total student contacts = 184

Spring 2011

Appointment #	Start/End Date	Topic/Purpose	Allocated Duration
1	January 31/February 21	*First Weeks* Discuss: • Goals for the semester • Academic Progress • Concerns for the semester • Housing for 2nd year • Financial aid (forms completed?) • Summer plans	Varied
2	February 28/March 11	*Early Intervention* Discuss: • Grade Deficiencies on Early Intervention Report • Concerns/Questions	Varied
3	March 28/April 11	*Midterm Progress* Discuss: • Academic Progress • Grade Deficiencies on Midterm Report • Drop Deadline • Holds on Account • Summer/Fall Course Selection/Enrollment Appointment • Four Year Plan: Review DPR and Major Requirements • Campus Services (if necessary) • Preparing for Finals	Varied
Additional	January 24/May 3	Discuss: • Recommendation Letters • Resume Review • Applying to the UHP • Financial Aid • Scholarship Applications • Summer School • Scheduling Issues • Major Change • Creating a Four Year Plan	Varied
Probation Weekly Check In Meetings	February 28/May 6	Discuss: • Academic Progress In Each Course • Issues • Improvement • Utilization of Resources • Preparation for Upcoming Assignments, Tests, Quizzes, etc. • What Worked Well This Week? • What Would You Have Done Differently? • Review Academic Success Agreement	30 minutes

Total student contacts = 174

Communication with Faculty

Every three weeks during the school year, an e-mail was sent to faculty teaching ENGL 1300, 1301, 1302, MATH 1303, 1304, 1309, 1337, BIOL 1401, 1402, CHEM 1303, 1304, and STAT 1301, 2301, 2331 who had Bridge students in their courses. The feedback from professors allowed the Assistant Director to monitor the academic performance of the students in the program in order to provide proactive and intentional intervention. Professors were asked to provide comments in the areas of student attendance, class participation, quality of work, timeliness of assignments, etc.

The majority of professors responded to the requests for information every three weeks, and there were a number of professors who contacted Pavielle Chriss regularly regarding student concerns. We found professors genuinely wanted to help their students succeed. They appreciated the opportunity to speak with someone regarding their students who could also reinforce the messages they were conveying to them.

In the fall semester, we communicated with 48 professors across the 6 disciplines. In the spring, we communicated with 34 professors across the 6 disciplines. The decrease was due to increasing the number of courses with blocked scheduling.

Overall, professors were satisfied with the Mustang Academic Bridge Program students in their courses and genuinely enjoyed having them in their courses. A few comments received from professors are below.

Ross Sloan, College Writing
I really have nothing but complements for them, as well. It probably does the program credit for me to affirm that all ten of my Bridge Program students this spring semester seem both responsible and purposeful. Many of my other students could learn from the ambition and determination of the Bridge Program students I have been pleased to teach these past two semesters. Perhaps they better understand the opportunities that can be seized with a recognized degree. I am sure that they have made their families proud and, with time, will make SMU proud as well. It is a worthy program.

Patty Wisian-Neilson, Chemistry
All four of these students are some of my favorites. They are coming to office hours and working hard. I believe work ethic takes care of most things.

Samantha Mabry, College Writing
My Bridge students REALLY are the best in the class as far as doing the reading and participating.

Adriana Aceves, Mathematics
They are really good kids, have great attendance, and turn assignments in on time.

Campus Partnerships

This year we worked closely with a number of campus offices and departments to provide resources for the students in the Mustang Academic Bridge Program.

University Central Libraries

Gillian McCombs offered to host the fall study groups in the Fondren Library study rooms in order to increase visibility of the library for students in our program. She and her staff also welcomed the opportunity for the program participants to tour the library.

Learning Enhancement Center

The LEC was one of the greatest supporters of the program. We met at least twice each semester to evaluate their role in the program and how they can best support our students. In the fall, they presented a workshop in preparation for midterms. In the spring, they increased their participation and presented workshops on goal setting at the beginning of the semester, as well as preparing for midterms and finals. They also allowed our study groups to meet in their study rooms, and they provided space in the Writing Center for Mary Kay Jackman to meet twice a week solely with students in the program without scheduling an appointment. Based upon referrals from the program staff, the Learning Specialists also worked individually with Bridge students in a number of areas including time management, reading speed/comprehension, test anxiety, etc.

Additionally, we worked closely with Elsie Umeh, Academic Counselor, who worked with the Bridge students on academic probation. We consulted on a regular basis to ensure the students were being provided with the support they needed and were progressing towards good academic standing.

Dedman College Advising Center

Throughout the year, Pavielle Chriss attended the weekly advising staff meetings to stay up to date with advising policies and procedures, as well as to build rapport with the advisors and keep the lines of communication open between the two programs.

Also, an advisor presented to the Bridge students each semester on preparing for enrollment for the next semester and creating a four year plan.

Hegi Family Career Development Center

The Hegi Career Center presented to students in the Bridge program a number of times during the school year. In the fall, they provided a general overview of their services. In the spring, students were given information on the opportunity to conduct mock interviews and resume review with a Career Counselor. The students who participated in the mock interviews positively remarked on their experience in the Career Center, and they will be tracked by Janet Lewis during their four years at SMU to assess their continued involvement in services provided by the Hegi Career Center and the effectiveness of these services in obtaining internships, interim employment opportunities, and preparation for employment or advanced studies after SMU.

Student Evaluation

At the end of the spring semester, student participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the Mustang Academic Bridge Program. Overall, students were very satisfied with their experience in the program. They also found the workshops, monthly appointments, easy access to the Writing Center, and study groups to be helpful resources.

Some of the student remarks regarding how the program helped them in their first year transition are below.

- *Participation in the Bridge Program has been THE GREATEST BLESSING for me at SMU. When I got here, I was lost and very discouraged. I had financial issues, I wasn't passionate about any organization, and I felt really lost. The program helped me with making decisions and provided comfort. I would not have grown as much academically or interpersonally without the program.*
- *The program helped me to understand the differences between high school and college.*
- *The program helped me find out about resources on campus and provided networking opportunities!*
- *It is a great support system.*
- *The program helped me make friends, evaluate what I need to do to be successful, and improve my grades.*
- *I was able to really bring up my grades, learn the keys to success, and also become more proactive through the program.*
- *The program helped by giving me insight into how to boost my GPA, and the consequences of a low GPA.*
- *Being in the Mustang Academic Bridge Program was honestly the best thing that could have happened to me this year, and I am truly grateful. I was able to push myself to do better, and the program staff always kept me in check. I was able to have the network that a lot of freshmen don't and from that I was able to try new things and get my feet wet. Thanks to the support, I made SMU what I wanted it to be.*

Student suggestions for improving the program to better help students with their first year transition are listed below.

- Select more classes with reserved seats for bridge students.
- Provide more social events.
- Send students information during the summer before they start classes.
- Allow the Bridge students to meet and really get to know each other at the beginning of the school year, so they develop a strong support system.

New Initiatives in 2011-2012 School Year

Based upon our experiences with the program this year, and the information gleaned from the NASPA Conference in March, we are implementing new and significant initiatives in the Bridge Program for the 2011-2012 school year (see below). Incoming students have already been invited to the program, and we currently have a group of approximately 76 participants.

Orientation

From August 15-17, the incoming Bridge participants will attend a Mustang Academic Bridge Program Orientation. The orientation will further explain the program to students and introduce them to the program staff, as well as other student participants. It will also connect the students to key resources and introduce them to college-level academic skills before classes begin.

Mentor Program

In the spring semester, students who participated in the program this past year were recruited to serve as mentors for the incoming Bridge class. As mentors, they will assist incoming students in the program with their transition to college. They will serve as a peer resource, as well as support the students academically and socially by sharing their experiences with them and connecting them to the University. These students were trained in April and will have a follow up training the first week of classes. They will communicate with their mentees over the summer and will have the opportunity to meet with them during the Mentor/Mentee Mixer on Thursday, August 25, 2011. Throughout the fall and spring semesters, the mentors are required to communicate with their mentees every week and attend an event or program once a month. The mentor program was designed, developed, and implemented through collaboration with the Executive Director for Student Development and the Student Coordinator.

Peer Advisors

Four Peer Advisors were hired to assist with the Mustang Academic Bridge Program. Their purpose is to provide first year students with resources that will enhance their opportunity for academic success and facilitate their transition to college level work. They are hired to provide an additional resource and to serve as positive role models to the program participants. They are expected to foster a sense of community among students in the program, as well as work cooperatively with other staff members to provide educational activities. An initial training for the students took place in the spring and will be followed up with additional trainings throughout the school year. Peer advisors will hold office hours (approximately 10 hours a week) for first year students in need of academic and social guidance.

Student Coordinator

A Student Coordinator was hired to work closely with the Executive Director of Student Development and Programs and the Assistant Director of Student Success Programs. The position of Student Coordinator is one of the premier leadership opportunities for student employment on campus. The position also provides the opportunity to get involved in the campus community and to acquire hands on experience in student development and programming. The Student Coordinator position is designed to enrich and support SMU through various activities relating to recruiting prospective Mustang Bridge Program students and welcoming and retaining them once they matriculate at SMU.

Study Groups

In the fall, we will offer expanded study group offerings. Study groups will take place for BIOL 1401, CHEM 1303, 1113, and MATH 1303, 1304, 1309, 1337. The study groups will take place in the LEC and last 50 minutes. During orientation, students will register for study groups in applicable courses and are expected to attend on a weekly basis starting the second week of classes.

Second-Year Program

We would like to continue to provide programming for second-year students. This programming would focus on helping students achieve certain milestones, which have been proven critical in the second year. These milestones include, but are not limited to declaring a major, creating and fine tuning a four year degree plan, connecting with faculty members, getting involved in extracurricular activities, preparing for graduate school, and career exploration.

Conclusion

The Mustang Academic Bridge Program was a success in its inaugural year of operation. To fully comprehend the complexity of its success it is important to understand the Bridge Program was launched in August 2010 with just three months of planning – May through July. The success of the Program can be attributed to the overwhelming support that was provided by the Provost, Dr. Paul Ludden; the support of the Department Chairs in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Mathematics and Statistics; the reception by SMU faculty and staff; student participation and acceptance of Program values and the efforts put forward by Bridge Program staff, notably that of Pavielle Chriss. The Program and its concept were completely embraced by the entire campus community. This was a big win and a major factor in its success during its first year of operation.

Two of the stronger components of the Program were the regular interaction between the faculty and the Assistant Director and the scheduled student meetings with the Assistant Director. The communication with faculty every third week during the semester served as an early warning academic system that allowed Pavielle Chriss to provide necessary aggressive intervention to assist a student identified by faculty in need of additional support. In the obverse, this communication flow also served as a strong reinforcement to students who were performing well in their classes. This resulted in providing them with positive self-regard and the impetus to continue their efforts.

The frequent meetings, a minimum of three, between the students and the Assistant Director during the semesters resulted in the forging of a close relationship with the student and the student with the program. The students knew there was someone they could meet with to discuss issues relevant to their transition to SMU. This element of the Bridge Program provided the students with a *sense of place* and unconditional support along with the ability to receive constructive feedback on their progress as SMU students. One of the future challenges for the Bridge Program is to not lose this key feature as the program grows in its number of students receiving the services.

In addition to the new initiatives planned for the 2011 – 2012 academic year, there will be an enhanced focus on assessing the progress of students with pre-major interests in successfully completing their sub-sets of courses for conversion into the major as well as continuing to prepare students for leadership roles on campus. The forming of an advisory committee in the next academic year will be beneficial in helping to guide and direct this and other student milestones.