

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 19, 2017 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

POSTER SESSION 1

Commons West, Easel 1

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Transitioning into Higher Education: A Data Driven Investigation on Freshman Interest Groups at the University of Washington

Joshua Noah Malters, Senior, Informatics: Data Science

Casey Lee, Senior, Informatics

Gianni Mancinelli, Senior, Informatics

Mentor: Amirah Majid, The Information School

Mentor: Lovenoor Aulck, iSchool

Mentor: Jevin West, Information School

The First-Year Interest Group (FIG) program at the University of Washington (UW) is a variant of University First Year Seminars (FYSs), which are found at nearly all accredited four-year US colleges and universities. FYSs are believed to boost social cohesion, support knowledge acquisition, and introduce first-year students to the breadth of academic choices available to them at the host institution. At the UW, the FIG program began in the early 1980s, and has grown to involve roughly half of all entering freshmen. Despite the widespread implementation of FYSs at universities, little research has been done to measure the efficacy of these programs. This study leverages UW registrar data (including transcript records and demographic information) on over 60,000 UW freshmen across 13 years to examine the performance of FIG and non-FIG students (as measured by graduation, retention, and grades) through econometrics-based analyses of transcript records. To supplement this quantitative analysis, we use text-mining/NLP on 6 years of FIG exit survey data consisting of the responses of 14,000 students to questions regarding their FIG experiences. Our objective in our work is to use UW student information to conduct a thorough audit of the FIG experience and its effects on first-year student performance and retention. We hypothesize that students who take FYSs have a unique academic experience that is reflected in their academic outcomes as well as social integration to campus. We hope our results will motivate further discussion on current practices around FYS both at UW and across the country, while providing quantitative evidence of their impact on students' academic progression.

SESSION 2H

SUPPORTING STUDENT GROWTH FROM HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY

Session Moderator: Walter Andrews, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization

MGH 251

3:30 PM to 5:15 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

Analyzing the Potential Effects of Online Tutoring in the Context of a Writing Center

Madeline Gibson (Madeline) Clarke, Senior, Informatics

UW Honors Program

Mina Tari, Senior, Informatics, Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies

UW Honors Program

Riley Elizabeth Andert, Senior, Informatics: Data Science

Anne (Annie) Lace, Senior, Informatics

Mentor: Matthew Saxton, Information School

Mentor: Amirah Majid, The Information School

The University of Washington (UW) Seattle has over five writing centers on campus, where in-person tutoring is available for students. We hypothesize that certain obstacles reduce access barriers to writing center services for student populations, including those who experience disability, commute long distances, identify as ELL, or are non-residential. UW writing centers have seen an impressive increase in student use in the last 5 years. The overall increase in usage, coupled with changing student needs and resources has sparked an important conversation about the future of writing support services at UW. We hypothesize that online tutoring, in addition to the current model, could help solve issues of access. In order to explore this hypothesis we have prepared a multi-phase, qualitative study, which is currently underway. Drawing upon the demographic and satisfaction data of current campus writing centers, we discuss what current gaps may exist and how online tutoring could potentially bridge them. The current tutoring setup, one-to-one in-person conversation, may also be excluding students who are not comfortable with this format. Through on-campus focus groups, interviews, and surveys we are triangulating on factors of the

writing center experience most salient for different stakeholders. We also examine dimensions such as student's area of study, year in school, familial obligations, and current employment status as they may relate to writing center access. In a multi-factor perspective analysis, we gain perspectives of administrators, tutors, users, and potential users at writing centers on campus. In doing so, we pursue a better understanding of how writing centers could use online tutoring to provide services to students who would not have access otherwise. As students and writing center tutors we feel a deep, personal investment in this project and are excited to be a part of building a positive future for writing support at UW.