**Proposal**

**Name of Proposers and Impacted Supervisors**

Upon request, this section can be omitted during evaluation by the CTL advisory committee if there is a request for a blind review.

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| ***Proposers***  Dr. Olga Tsoudis  Dr. Christina Van Puymbroeck  Prof. Erica Wager  Dr. Norma Jimenez Hernandez  ***Impacted Supervisors***  Dr. Pablo Landeros, BSCS Division Chair  Dr. Kathleen Iudicello, Dean of Instruction |

1. **Abstract and Title** (150 word maximum)

**Provide a clear and concise description of your proposal that includes the following elements (150 word maximum):**

· Project has a clear title.

· A clear description of the topic to be investigated.

· Clearly and briefly describes how the project is relevant to student success, retention and/or completion.

· Clearly describes expected, concrete outcomes.

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| ***Title:*** Who stays, who doesn’t and why?: A survival analysis of BSCS students in non-prerequisite required courses.  ***Abstract:*** Research has demonstrated that a significant proportion of community college students will not persist to degree completion. Online students may be particularly at-risk. Self-efficacy, perceived value of the curriculum, and certain demographic variables have been identified as important in both retention and persistence. We will measure these variables four times during a semester in a series of online college classes. A survival analysis will be conducted to identify at what point students are most likely to drop out of the course and how the variables of interest influence whether the students persist or at what point in the semester they withdraw. In doing so, we hope to identify critical periods where students are more likely to withdraw in order to understand the complexity of retention and persistence for community college students. |

1. **Project Description** (800 words maximum)

**Provide a clear, detailed description of the project. Description should clearly answer the following questions:**

· What issue in the classroom will be investigated?

· Why is this issue important?

· How does this issue impact student learning or retention?

· How will the impact on student learning be measured?

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| We will be investigating within-semester persistence by examining retention rates within the course of one semester for BSCS students enrolled in non-requisite, required courses. We are interested in learning at what point in the semester students drop out of these required introductory online courses and, more importantly, why they drop out. Interestingly, although persistence studies for community colleges have focused on yearly retention rates or fall to spring semester retention rates (Nakajima, Dembo & Mossler, 2012), there is a dearth of empirical research examining within-semester retention, especially for those students enrolled in online courses. The online component is particularly interesting given the increase of the number of online courses offered and that online courses negatively impact persistence rates for community college students (Huntington-Klein, Cowan & Goldhaber, 2016). Given that EMCC’s fall 2014 to fall 2015 persistence rate was 50.7% weighted for full- and part-time student enrollment and retention rates for first-time students (NCES, 2016), we feel that it is important to study at what point in the semester students drop out of a course, or that they are no longer persisting in the course which, ultimately, leads to not being retained in the course. If, for example, we find that there are *critical periods* during a semester-long course where students who persist have a greater probability of completing a course, then we can better understand our students and their contexts. It may be that reaching out to students who are at greater risk of not completing the course by making a greater effort to connect them with EMCC support services (e.g., tutoring services, instructor office hours, writing center, peer mentoring, etc.) to assist students who may be wavering on their commitment in completing the course may, ultimately, have a long-term positive effect on EMCC’s retention and persistence rates.  Moreover, we will be investigating the effect of three variables on student persistence. Two of these variables, self-efficacy and students’ perceived value of the curriculum, have been identified by Tinto (2016) as critical variables that influence whether college students persist in their academic endeavors. To measure self-efficacy, we will be using the SELF-A, an abridged 19-item academic self-efficacy scale adapted from Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2007) to assess students’ beliefs about their ability to self-regulate with respect to their academic functioning and learning. Cronbach’s alpha reliability for SELF-A was .97 (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2007). We are currently investigating how we will measure students’ perceived value of the curriculum and are confident that a valid and reliable measure will emerge after our review of the empirical literature. The third variable will consist of self-reported student demographic variables that have been identified by Goldrick-Rab (2010) and Stuart, Rios-Aguilar and Deil-Amen (2014) as variables that affect student persistence in community college settings. Students will be asked to self-report the number of hours worked per week and self-identify possible factors influencing their motivation in the course. All three variables will be measured during four points in the semester (e.g., at the start of the course, during weeks six and eleven of the course, and at the end of the course). Further, as instructors we will make every effort to contact students individually who drop out during the semester to have a better sense of why the student dropped the course. Along this vein, we will collect contact information for each student via a student information sheet that will list multiple e-mails and telephone numbers during the first week of the course.  We will be using three introductory and one non-prerequisite online courses (3 psychology and 1 sociology) as well as a traditional, face-to-face introductory psychology course to track persistence over one semester and to identify who stays, who leaves and why students leave the course. The face-to-face psychology course will serve as a control group to account for possible cohort effects specific to spring 2017. We will be analyzing the data using survival analysis to identify at what point students drop out of the course and how the three variables of interest, self-efficacy, value of the curriculum and demographic variables, influenced whether students persisted in the course and, ultimately, were retained for the entire semester. Because we will be collecting data on the three variables of interest over four points in time during the semester, we will also be able to identify if, and when, student self-efficacy and value of the curriculum increased over the course of the semester which, ultimately, can influence student learning. Finally, we will be asking those students who were retained throughout the course their academic plans for the following semester (e.g., do they plan to enroll in college in the following semester) to measure persistence defined as enrolling in the next semester towards degree completion.  References  Goldrick-Rab, S. (2010). Challenges and opportunities for improving community college student success. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(3), 437-469. doi:10.3102/0034654310370163  Huntington-Klein, N., Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (2016). Selection into online community college courses and their effects on persistence. *Research in Higher Education,* doi:10.1007/s11162-016-9425-z  Nakajima, M. A., Dembo, M. H., & Mossler, R. (2012). Student persistence in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 36*(8), 591. doi:10.1080/10668920903054931  Stuart, G. R., Rios-Aguilar, C., & Deil-Amen, R. (2014). "How much economic value does my credential have?": Reformulating Tinto's model to study students' persistence in community colleges. *Community College Review, 42*(4), 327. doi:10.1177/0091552114532519  Tinto, V. (2016, September 26). *From retention to persistence.* Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed website: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/09/26/how-improve-student-persistence-and-completion-essay>  U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). IPEDS Data for Estrella Mountain Community College.  Zimmerman, B. J., & Kitsantas, A. (2007). Reliability and validity of the Self-Efficacy for Learning Form (SELF) scores of college students. *Journal of Psychology,215*(3), 157-163. |

1. **Overall Value of the Project** (300 words maximum)

**Clearly, concisely, and specifically explain how the proposal is aligned with EMCC’s student completion and retention initiative, which is briefly described below:**

*Under the auspices of HLC's Persistence and Completion (P&C) Academy, EMCC is exploring ways in which we can improve student completion and retention. The initiative has three elements:*

o ***Retention-*** *Keeping students in their current classes.*

o ***Persistence-*** *Ensuring students continue enrolling from semester to semester in courses that move them toward their degree).*

o ***Program Completion-*** *Facilitating students successfully obtaining their associates degree.*

**Please describe how the study will address at least one of the elements of the completion and retention initiative. Also, please discuss how will these results be measured, and how will they be shared with the EMCC community.**

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| We strongly believe that the proposed study addresses the elements above. First, we are investigating at what point in the semester students are no longer retained in the course, or at what point they drop out, and examining how self-efficacy, students’ value of the curriculum and demographic barriers influence retention. We will be asking each student who drops out why they dropped out. If there are policy-alterable variables that EMCC can identify, then as an institution we might be able to provide the necessary support structures to keep students in their classes. Without knowing why students drop, it makes it difficult to identify effective preventive interventions. We also believe that assessing students on academic self-efficacy, their perceived value of the curriculum as well as demographic variables may increase students’ awareness of these factors which, in turn could aid in student retention as well as persistence. For example, being asked about the number of hours worked each week, on average, may make the student more aware that they may be working too many hours which, in turn, could lead to decreasing hours at work and ultimately result in higher retention rates which are inextricably linked to persistence. Moreover, we will be asking students at the end of the semester if they plan to enroll in college in the fall of 2017. This measure of accountability (e.g., an instructor inquiring about future plans) may result in slightly higher persistence rates for students in this study. Finally, we believe that retention and persistence rates are ultimately related to program completion. The longer students persist, the more likely they are to successfully obtain their associate’s degree. Our description above describes how the results will be measured. We will share the results through CATS, Five Minutes of Fame and are open to other forums. |

Topic for the Grant:

**Who stays, who doesn’t and why: A survival analysis of BSCS students in non-prerequisite required courses**

4 classes -

Christina - 2 PSY 101 classes online

Olga - SOC 212 online

Norma - PSY 101 online

Erica - PSY 101 in person control group

Give 8-10 question self efficacy survey at the beginning of semester

Mid semester check-ins - every five weeks

Self efficacy, value, barriers - challenges they’re having or have had in the last 3-4 week

Throughout the semester - self efficacy through the semester, maybe in google forms?

Email can be linked to google forms but we could also have a question asking for their MEID

Baseline at week 1, week 6, week 11 and at the end of the semester

what’s the value? Where does that start to happen?

Survival analysis at the end of course - at what point do we see the greatest drop off?

We’ll need to communicate with students about why they drop, what should our reasoning be for getting their numbers? Because we’re curious about drop rates? In case of emergency or excessive absences? If we get IRB approval,

How will they do them? Make it mandatory? Make it point based?

**To do:**

Get retention rates for our classes in Spring 2016 to compare

Christina will pull up summer project with lit review

Norma write up parts 2 and 3 - project description 500 words and

Christina will write up the abstract

**Possible Topics- Please put thoughts here.**

One idea connects with an article that Norma shared with me. I am specifically interested in the section on the “Perceived Value of the Curriculum.” This is a topic that was also discussed years ago at a meeting that Bryan to discuss sharing with students the value of general education courses. I tried to incorporate this focus in one of my courses and wrote a CATS. My idea is that we extensively discuss the value of the course each week in our class and connect the competencies to their future and every day lives. If students have “buy in” and understand the value of the course, this may impact retention.

Article: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/09/26/how-improve-student-persistence-and-completion-essay>

My CATS  
<https://cats.estrellamountain.edu/assessment/how-will-soc-course-impact-me-after-16-weeks-thinking-about-gen-ed-connections-clasroom>

<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/09/26/how-improve-student-persistence-and-completion-essay>

Christina:

In faculty Senate last week we had an interesting discussion about how one residential faculty person is attempting to put the class climate survey into her classes at eight weeks as well as the traditional 16 weeks in order to see if students who are not retained in the class perceived something different about the climate early on. One of the issues in terms of retention is that we usually don’t have any idea why we lose the students who drop out. Her idea was to try to capture that data before the student withdraws.

That class climate survey is only required for adjunct faculty and many residential faculty do not use it at all. One of the issues discussed in Senate, to be answered at the next Senate meeting, is that it is unclear whether the class climate survey is sent by OPIE as it has been in the past or if a faculty member could load it into the class from the beginning. There is also an issue of privacy; who receives this data since it’s an institutionally-based form? For adjunct faculty the chair receives this data after the end of the semester. Residential faculty wanted some type of guarantee that the data collected is theirs alone. Since psychology 101 is a class in which we lose many students, I am very interested in why we lose those that we do ( Really this is an issue in all classes, but since 101 is the entry class, and the class from which I lose the most students, it is a particular foci of interest for me). I antecdotely ascribe those losses to lack of preparedness in most cases; many of the students I lose I identified early on as possibly benefiting from completing the required developmental classes in English before pursuing psych 101 but almost never do those students accept my recommendation at the beginning. In fact, I’ve had several students respond angrily to my suggestion that they may benefit from completing any developmental courses into which they tested prior to attempting 101. Just another idea to ponder. I myself would like to put the climate survey in at weeks five, 10, and 16 if we were to choose this option because I think a number of students are lost before the midway point.

OPIE is in charge of the climate survey. I use it each semester in my courses. They control when the student gets the e-mail with the link (as far as I know). I have a hard time getting students to complete it unless there are points involved. :) I don’t know how much the climate survey captures why we lose students. It’s an evaluation of the instructor’s teaching.

Perhaps we can have a weekly journal entry about challenges for the week, what’s going right, what’s going wrong to capture the students’ experiences. We can include resources in that weekly journal entry. Just an idea.

Erica

How can mobile devices be used to increase student engagement in the classroom?

* My CATS on the Kahoot test review could help with this, students could use their phone or the computers to participate
* <https://cats.estrellamountain.edu/assessment/kahooting-your-way-better-grades-activecompetitive-review-sessions-help-student-learning>

Are there effective ways of integrating tutoring services into classroom practice?

* I know Norma is including tutoring with her students in the stats course this semester, that could be an interesting thing to look into!

How can I integrate student presentations more effectively into classroom practice?

* I’ve been wondering the same thing. Perhaps this goes along with Olga’s idea a bit of making the material valuable and relevant to students. I try to get students to do little 5-10 minute presentations a few times throughout the semester and I find that if the material is relevant to them or connects to them they do a much better presentation (more connected with the audience, less having to read off the slides etc…). That, in turn, may connect them more with the material and lead to better completion rates.

How can course content and homework be used to engage students in socially relevant issues?

* This semester is the first semester I’ve used TEDtalks in homework assignments. For instance, I had students in my abnormal psychology class watch this TEDtalk (it’s great if you have a chance to watch it!) and answer questions on it <https://www.ted.com/talks/johann_hari_everything_you_think_you_know_about_addiction_is_wrong?language=en>
* The following class we spent almost the entire class period discussing the TEDtalk and the implications to people with addiction and their loved ones. It was one of the most effective ways I think I’ve been able to get through to my students about current social issues. I may be writing a CATS for this also and this could be something to explore.