



RESEARCH BRIEF

OIR

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

19-15

April 2015

Six Policy Changes – Mandatory Student Orientation, Advising, and Student Development (SDV): Fall 2014 Outcomes

As part of NOVA's efforts to increase student success outcomes, NOVA enacted six policy changes in Fall 2014:

1. Mandate placement testing for first-time in college (FTIC) students.
2. Mandate enrollment in developmental courses for FTIC students during the first semester (if placed).
3. Mandate student orientation for FTIC students.
4. Mandate early advising for FTIC students.
5. Mandate Student Development (SDV) completion within the first year for FTIC students.
6. Mandate on-time registration for *all* students, requiring students register by 11:59 p.m. the day before the session begins.

While the sixth policy change mandates on-time registration for all NOVA students, the first five policy changes target NOVA's GPS population: first-time to college students ages 17-24.¹ GPS for Success: Teaching and Learning through Advising is the name of NOVA's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which is an action plan to improve student learning. GPS refers to the Goals, Plans, and Strategies that students must develop to attain their academic objectives and involves a case management approach to holistic, intrusive academic advising with a focus on development of the student.

This Research Brief summarizes the impact of three policy changes: mandatory attendance at student orientation, early advising, and enrollment in Student Development (SDV) 100/101, which were implemented in Fall 2014. Student orientation sessions at NOVA are led by first-year advisors, college teaching faculty, and student orientation leaders and cover the following: interpretation of placement test scores, developing academic goals, meeting with a first-year advisor, creating a class schedule and registering for courses, and learning about payment options and financial aid. Meeting with an advisor is a part of student orientation via group sessions or through personal sessions. SDV 100/101 is a one-credit success course on

¹ More specifically, the GPS population includes recent high school graduates or GED recipients between the ages of 17 and 24 who have never previously attended college (unless it was dual enrollment during high school) who are not members of the College Pathway Initiative program.

subjects such as time management, note taking and test preparation, academic planning, career decision making, financial literacy and critical thinking.

Since compliance with the first two policies took place simultaneously (attending student orientation included advising), data are presented together in this Brief (Orientation/Advising Cohort). While the policy change regarding mandatory enrollment in a Student Development (SDV) course addresses the same GPS population as student orientation and advising, some students were exempt from taking SDV for pre-approved reasons. Therefore, a subset of the GPS population is examined regarding compliance with the SDV policy (SDV Cohort) in order to isolate only those students for whom this policy is applicable.

Table 1 and Figure 1 present the compliance status of the cohorts of GPS students ages 17-24 with attendance at student orientation and advising as well as enrollment in SDV. In Fall 2014, 91 percent of GPS students attended student orientation and took part in advising. Corresponding data for Fall 2013 was unavailable. Enrollment in SDV was higher (53 percent) in Fall 2014 than in Fall 2013 (42 percent) for the SDV Cohort of first-time to college students ages 17-24 who were not exempt from enrolling in SDV.

Table 1. Compliance with Orientation, Advising, and SDV Enrollment Policies: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014

Semester	Orientation/ Advising Cohort	Attended Orientation/ Advising*		SDV Cohort**	Enrolled in SDV	
	#	#	%	#	#	%
Fall 2013	4,895	--	--	4,865	1,995	42.1
Fall 2014	5,142	4,683	91.1	5,079	2,629	52.9

*Orientation/Advising status not available for Fall 2013.

**In Fall 2013, 30 students were exempt from taking SDV, and in Fall 2014, 63 students were exempt from taking SDV.

Figure 1. Compliance with Orientation, Advising, and SDV Enrollment Policies: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014

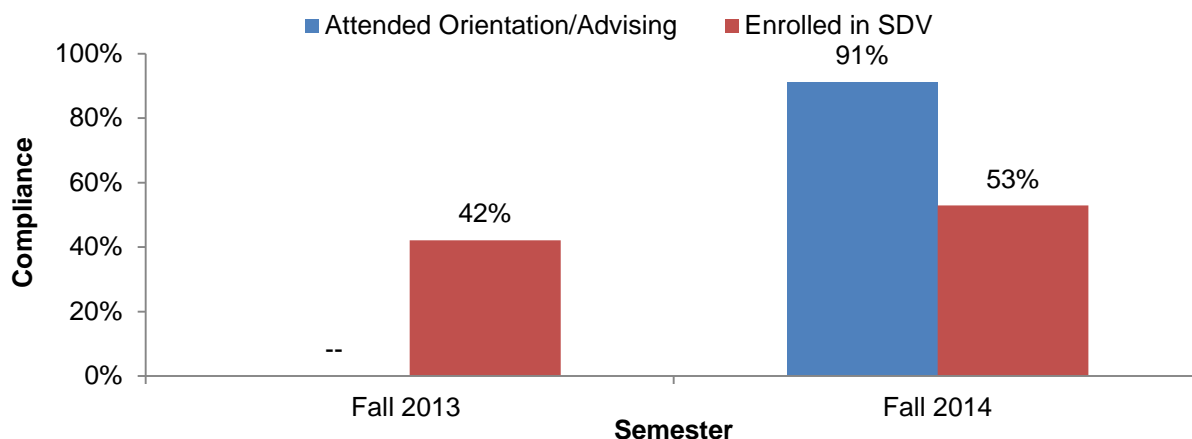


Table 2 and Figure 2 present the overall success rates in all credit courses of the Orientation/Advising Cohort and the SDV Cohort for Fall 2013 and Fall 2014. Success in a credit course is counted by earning a grade of C or higher.

Students who complied with the policies to attend orientation and receive advising in Fall 2014 had an overall success rate of 64 percent, which is equivalent to both the Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 cohorts overall (both 64 percent). Students who complied with the policy to enroll in SDV in Fall 2014 as required had an overall success rate of 73 percent, which is much higher than both the Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 cohorts overall (both 64 percent).

Table 2. Success in All Credit Courses by Orientation/Advising Attendance and SDV Enrollment: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014

		Orientation/ Advising Cohort	Success Rate in All Credit Courses		SDV Cohort	Success Rate in All Credit Courses	
		#	#	%	#	#	%
Fall 2013	All Cohort	19,092	12,160	63.7	18,956	12,058	63.6
Fall 2014	All Cohort	20,535	13,209	64.3	20,261	12,989	64.1
	Compliant Students Only*	19,101	12,191	63.8	11,826	8,629	73.0

*Complied with the Policy corresponding to the cohort indicated in the header row.

Note: In the Orientation/Advising cohorts, there were 14 missing grades in Fall 2013, and 22 missing grades, including 18 of the "Compliant" students, in Fall 2014. In the SDV cohort, there were 15 missing grades in Fall 2013, and there were 25 missing grades, including 10 of the "Compliant" group, in Fall 2014. The totals are duplicated headcounts.

Figure 2. Success in All Credit Courses by Orientation/Advising Attendance and SDV Enrollment: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014

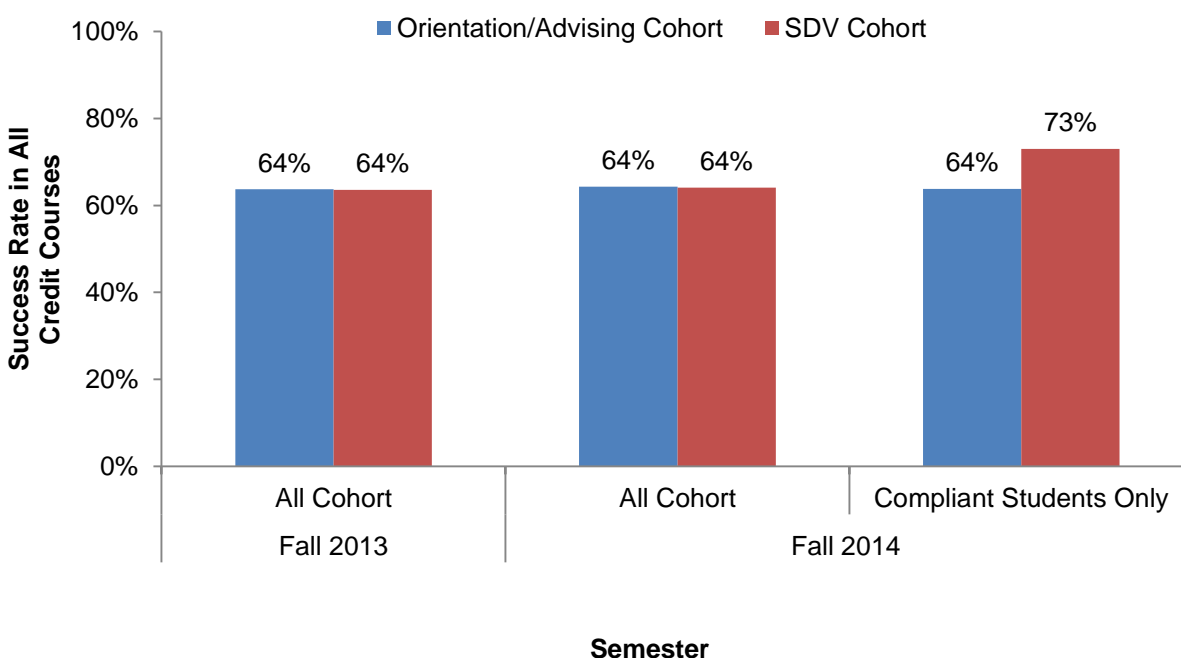


Table 3 and Figure 3 present the fall-to-spring retention rates of the Orientation/Advising Cohort and the SDV Cohort for Fall 2013 and Fall 2014. Students who complied with the student orientation and early advising policies returned to NOVA in Spring 2015 at a greater rate (81 percent) than the Fall 2014 cohort overall (80 percent) and at the same rate as the Fall 2013 cohort overall (81 percent). Students who enrolled in SDV as required returned to NOVA in Spring 2015 at a greater rate (91 percent) than both the Fall 2013 cohort overall (81 percent) and the Fall 2014 cohort overall (80 percent).

Table 3. Fall to Spring Retention by Orientation/Advising Attendance and SDV Enrollment: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014

		Orientation/Advising Cohort		Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate		SDV Cohort		Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate	
		#	#	%	#	#	%		
Fall 2013	All Cohort	4,766	3,871	81.2	4,735	3,843	81.2		
Fall 2014	All Cohort	5,036	4,004	79.5	4,973	3,969	79.8		
	Compliant Students Only*	4,651	3,749	80.6	2,629	2,403	91.4		

*Complied with Policy corresponding to the cohort indicated in the header row.
 Note: Spring 2015 retention data from PeopleSoft as of February 24th, 2015.

Figure 3. Fall to Spring Retention by Orientation/Advising Attendance and SDV Enrollment: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014

