

RESEARCH BRIEF

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Success and Retention Rates of New Student Orientation (NSO) Attendees by Demographics: Fall 2013

As part of the Achieving the Dream initiative, New Student Orientation (NSO) sessions are conducted at the Alexandria, Annandale, Loudoun, Manassas, and Woodbridge Campuses to help incoming students make a smooth transition to college life. The purpose of this Research Brief is to present success and retention rates of students who participated in the Summer 2013 NSO sessions and subsequently enrolled at NOVA in Fall 2013. Average semester grade point average (GPA) and Fall-to-Spring retention rates are presented by student demographics for the NSO attendees and are compared to similar data for other first-time to NOVA students who did not attend NSO but enrolled at NOVA in Fall 2013.

Tables 1 through 4 and Figure 1 display average semester GPA by NSO attendance status and demographic characteristics (gender, age, and race/ethnicity). Tables 5 through 8 and Figure 2 present Fall-to-Spring retention rates by NSO attendance status and demographic characteristics.

Findings indicate that NSO attendees, overall, earned a higher GPA than their counterparts who did not attend NSO. This trend was consistent for males and females as well as for the age group with the largest number of students (students 18 to 21 years of age). NSO attendees from minority groups earned a higher average semester GPA compared to students from those groups who did not attend NSO. The mean GPA earned by white students who attended NSO was slightly lower than that earned by their counterparts. The findings for Fall-to-Spring retention rates indicate that NSO attendees returned to NOVA in Spring 2014 at higher rates than all other first-time students who did not attend NSO. This trend applied to all of the demographic sub-categories, with the exception of students younger than age 18.

Table 1 and Figure 1 (see next page for Figure 1) present average semester GPA by NSO attendance status. As seen below, the average semester GPA for NSO students (2.43) was higher than the average semester GPA for other first-time students (2.34) in Fall 2013.

Table 1. Average Semester GPA of First-Time Students: Fall 2013

NSO Attendees		All Other First-Time Students	
#	Semester GPA	#	Semester GPA
2,001	2.43	11,874	2.34

Figure 1. Average Semester GPA of First-Time Students: Fall 2013

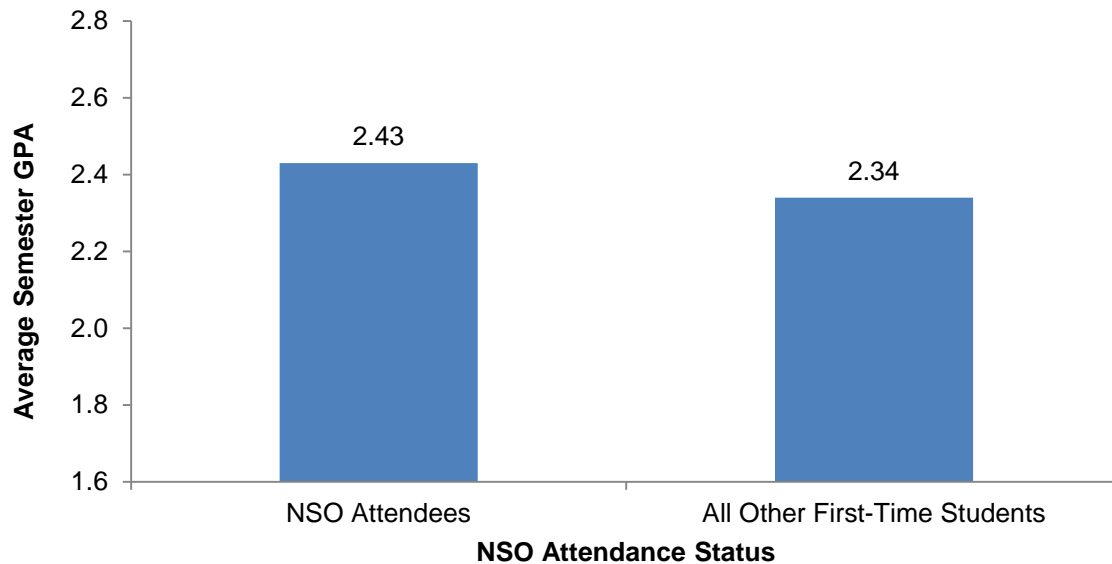


Table 2 displays average semester GPA by NSO attendance status and gender for first-time students. As seen below, both male (2.30 vs. 2.23) and female (2.54 vs. 2.46) NSO attendees achieved a higher average semester GPA than their counterparts who did not attend NSO.

Table 2. Average Semester GPA of First-Time Students by Gender: Fall 2013

Gender	NSO Attendees		All Other First-Time Students	
	#	Semester GPA	#	Semester GPA
Male	978	2.30	5,946	2.23
Female	1,023	2.54	5,928	2.46

As seen in Table 3, for the age group with the largest number of students (18 to 21), those who attended NSO averaged a higher semester GPA (2.42) in Fall 2013 than their counterparts who did not attend NSO (2.14). Three other age groups (under 18, 22 to 24, and 30 to 44) had the opposite results with NSO attendees achieving a lower GPA than the comparison group; however, comparisons for these groups should be made with caution due to the small population size of NSO attendees.

Table 3. Average Semester GPA of First-Time Students by Age Group: Fall 2013

Age Group	NSO Attendees		All Other First-Time Students	
	#	Semester GPA	#	Semester GPA
Under 18	31	2.96	1,184	3.14
18 – 21	1,901	2.42	6,404	2.14
22 – 24	28	2.06	1,157	2.43
25 – 29	18	2.77	1,145	2.49
30 – 44	16	1.91	1,411	2.40
45 – 59*	7	2.76	471	2.57
60 and Older*	0	-	102	1.06

*The size of this age group is not large enough to make accurate comparisons.

Table 4 presents the average semester GPA for NSO attendees and all other first-time students by race/ethnicity. On average, NSO attendees in all minority groups earned a higher semester GPA than their counterparts who did not attend NSO. In contrast, White students who attended NSO attained a slightly lower average semester GPA than the comparison group (2.46 for NSO attendees, 2.50 for all other first-time students).

Table 4. Average Semester GPA of First-Time Students by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2013

Race/Ethnicity	NSO Attendees		All Other First-Time Students	
	#	Semester GPA	#	Semester GPA
White	910	2.46	6,159	2.50
Black	327	2.06	2,146	1.97
Asian	337	2.72	1,761	2.40
Hispanic	394	2.38	1,528	2.09
Native American*	4	1.56	27	2.08
Other	29	2.79	253	2.61

*The size of this racial/ethnic group (n=4) is not large enough to make accurate comparisons.

Table 5 and Figure 2 display Fall-to-Spring retention rates by NSO attendance status. Students who attended NSO had a higher retention rate (89%) than all other first-time students (72%).

Table 5. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate of First-Time Students: Fall 2013 to Spring 2014

NSO Attendees		All Other First-Time Students	
#	%	#	%
1,785	89.2%	8,512	71.7%

Figure 2. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate of First-Time Students: Fall 2013 to Spring 2014

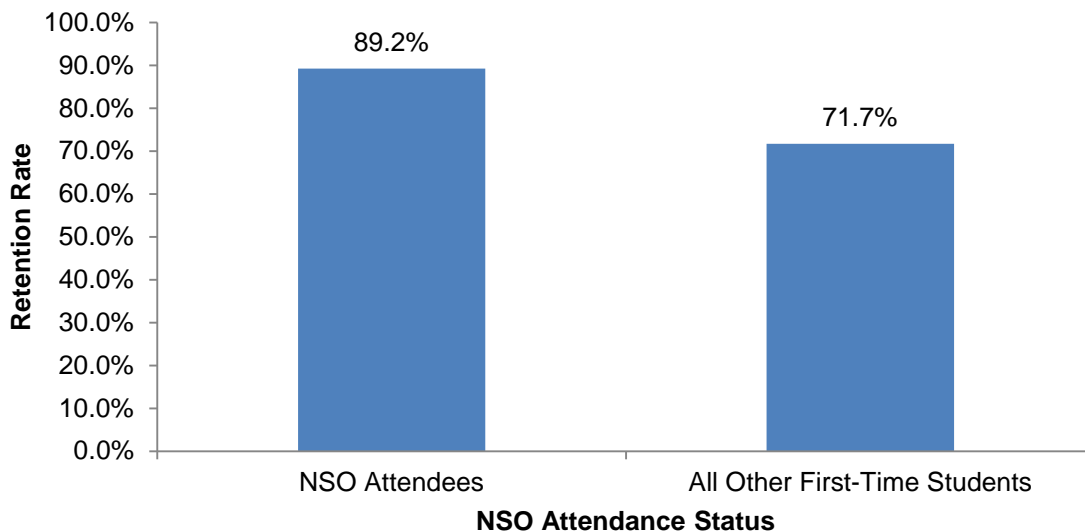


Table 6 displays Fall-to-Spring retention rates of first-time students by NSO attendance status and gender. Retention rates were higher for first-time students who attended NSO in comparison to all other first-time students who did not attend NSO for both males (89% vs. 71%) and females (89% vs. 72%).

**Table 6. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate of First-Time Students by Gender:
Fall 2013 to Spring 2014**

Gender	NSO Attendees		All Other First-Time Students	
	#	%	#	%
Male	870	89.0%	4,240	71.3%
Female	915	89.4%	4,272	72.1%

Table 7 compares Fall-to-Spring retention rates of first-time students by NSO attendance and age group. In Spring 2014, NSO attendees in the 18 to 21 age category returned at higher rates (90%) than their counterparts who did not attend NSO (78%).

**Table 7. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate of First-Time Students by Age Group:
Fall 2013 to Spring 2014**

Age Group	NSO Attendees		All Other First-Time Students	
	#	%	#	%
Under 18	25	80.7%	1,053	88.9%
18 – 21	1,704	89.6%	4,997	78.0%
22 – 24	22	78.6%	692	59.8%
25 – 29	16	88.9%	683	59.7%
30 – 44	12	75.0%	820	58.1%
45 – 59*	6	85.7%	223	47.4%
60 and Older*	-	-	44	43.1%

*The size of this age group is not large enough to make accurate comparisons.

Table 8 compares Fall-to-Spring retention rates of first-time students by NSO attendance and race/ethnicity. For all the racial/ethnic groups, NSO attendees returned at higher rates than their counterparts who did not attend NSO.

**Table 8. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate of First-Time Students by Race/Ethnicity:
Fall 2013 to Spring 2014**

Race/Ethnicity	NSO Attendees		All Other First-Time Students	
	#	%	#	%
White	797	87.6%	4,215	68.4%
Black	282	86.2%	1,503	70.0%
Asian	312	92.6%	1,399	79.4%
Hispanic	363	92.1%	1,183	77.4%
Native American*	3	75.0%	20	74.1%
Other	28	96.6%	192	75.9%

*The size of this racial/ethnic group (n=3) is not large enough to make accurate comparisons.