EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall, UC Berkeley students perform well academically and have low probation rates. Averaging a first-year grade point average of 3.3 and graduating at record-high rates of over 90%, this success is seen for both freshmen and transfer entrants. However, despite these overall positive trends a subset of students are placed on academic probation early on in their academic studies at UC Berkeley. While the numbers represent only a fraction of new students (~5%), among those entering in Fall 2011, 200 freshmen and 160 transfers were placed on probation as a result of either their first- or second- term cumulative UC Berkeley grade point average (GPA).

This brief, a continuation of a previous report and campus dialogue, highlights the demographic and academic correlates associated with new UC Berkeley students being placed on academic probation, followed by the relationship between early academic probation and graduation rates. Common across both freshmen and transfer entrants, we find males being more likely than females to be placed on academic probation and students in the Colleges of Chemistry and Engineering are more likely than students in other Colleges to be placed on 1st year probation.

For transfer students, we find that they have an overall probation rate that is higher than freshmen, and that international transfer students have a significantly higher probation rate than their domestic transfer counterparts—with students from South Korea having a notably high probation rate. For freshmen in particular, results show that prior GPA (i.e., high school GPA) is a major factor associated with 1st year probation. We also find a relationship between first generation college and probation for freshmen, but not transfers.

HISTORICAL PROBATION DATA

The chart below depicts the decline in probation rates among new students entering UC Berkeley in a given Fall term.

For the Fall 1998 group of new freshmen, we see that about 10% were flagged for 1st-year academic probation, meaning that they were placed on probation as a result of either their 1st- or 2nd- term cumulative UC Berkeley GPA. New transfers entering
in that same term in 1998 had a comparable probation rate of about 8%. Despite the noticeable peaks and valleys, probation rates are trending downward, particularly for freshmen.

1st Year Probation Rates at UC Berkeley Have Steadily Declined

BY ACADEMIC TERM

The first-year probation rates for new Fall 2011 entrants to Berkeley was 4% for freshmen and 7% for transfers. Among freshmen on probation:

- 67% were on probation both terms
- 3% for the Fall only
- 31% for spring only

The by-term breakdown was similar for transfers – 64% both terms, 5% Fall only, 31% Spring only.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

At 6% for freshmen and 9% for transfers, male undergraduates at Berkeley have higher 1st year probation rates than female undergraduates, whose rates are 3% (freshmen) and 5% (transfers), respectively (Fall 2011 new cohort).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Freshmen</th>
<th>New Transfers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Undergraduates</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Undergraduates</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cal Answers (Undergraduate Cohorts; Students Registered). Note: the above rate for each respective group excludes student athletes whose 1st year rate was 11%

When considering how freshmen compare to one another across residency, we find little difference; the 1st year freshmen probation rate is 4% for CA residents, 6% for out-of-state domestic students and 3% for international students.

Males, International Transfer Students and Underrepresented Minority (UREM) Freshmen Have Higher Probation Rates than Peers

International transfers, however, have a significantly higher probation rate (12%) than their domestic counterparts. With students from China and South Korea accounting for about 70% of international transfer students, we looked at probation rates by country of origin and found significant differences. Fall 2011 entering transfer students from South Korea had a 1st year probation rate of 18%, compared to a rate of 8% for transfer students from China (includes Hong Kong & Macau). Among international freshmen, South Korean students also have higher probation rates than Chinese students (4% versus 2%).

To get a better sense of the historical trends in probation by residency,
irrespective of country of origin, the two charts below show rates for international and domestic students (CA Residents and out-of-state domestic combined):

**1st Year Probation Rates by Residency & Entry Status, 2003-2011 Fall Cohorts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Freshmen</th>
<th>New Transfers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| College of Chemistry | 7% | 19% |
| College of Engineering | 6% | 15% |
| College of Environ. Design | 5% | 3% |
| College of Letters & Science | 4% | 6% |
| College of Natural Resources | 3% | 6% |
| Haas School of Business | n/a | 2% |

**Source: Cal Answers (Undergraduate Cohorts)**

Domestic freshmen and domestic transfers have had a steady decline in their 1st year probation rate from 2003 to 2011. For the same time frame, however, probation rates for international transfer students show an irregular pattern that is suggestive of an upward trend, to the 12% rate that we see today. This compares to a similarly irregular pattern seen in the chart for international freshmen. Importantly, the pattern for international students in the top chart can be interpreted as no significant change when accounting also for the changes in the international freshmen population during those years (increasing from about 100 students in the fall 2003 cohort to about 600 in the 2011 cohort).

**PROBATION RATES BY COLLEGE**

We also find differences across the six undergraduate colleges. Looking specifically at the fall 2011 entry cohort, rates were highest for freshmen and transfers alike in the Colleges of Chemistry and Engineering.

**ADDITIONAL PRE-UCB FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PROBATION**

Focusing again on fall 2011 entering transfers and freshmen, we used a combination of admitted applicant data and registered students’ data to expand the scope of analysis and better understand additional factors associated with probation.

**High School or Transfer GPA**

Prior GPA (high school or transfer GPA) is associated with the likelihood of 1st year probation; students with higher pre-UC Berkeley GPAs have a lower likelihood of being on probation. As shown below, the probation rate for new freshmen with an unweighted high school GPA of 3.75 to 4.0

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is 3%, which is similar to the overall freshmen probation rate of 4%. However, for freshmen with a slightly lower GPA range of 3.5 to 3.74 we see an 8% rate. Finally, for new fall 2011 freshmen whose pre-UC Berkeley GPA was less than a 3.25, the probation rate was 16%.

Ist Year Probation Rates by Pre-UC Berkeley GPA and Entry Status

A relationship between prior GPA and probation is also seen for transfer students; of new fall 2011 transfers with a transfer GPA of 3.75 or above, 5% were placed on probation, with the rate at or above 9% for students with lower transfer GPAs.

Another way to consider this is by comparing academic indicator means for students on probation versus students who did not end up on probation. For freshmen there is a significant statistical difference (based on t-tests) for the differences in GPA and test scores. The difference for transfer students was not statistically significant (based on t-tests).

Taken together, the t-test analysis and the frequency of results as charted above indicate that pre-UC Berkeley GPA predicts whether or not a new freshmen will be placed on academic probation in their first-year, but for transfer students, their prior GPA is not as predictive.
Parent Income and Education
Finally, we examined the effect of parent education and income. For freshmen there is a clear relationship between both parent income and education and probation rates, not as much for transfers.

Median Parent Income by Entry Status and 1st-year Probation Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Median Parent Income</th>
<th>On Probation</th>
<th>Not on Probation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Freshmen</td>
<td>$68,000</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Transfers</td>
<td>$52,809</td>
<td>$70,492</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Undergraduate Admissions

Median Parent Income by Entry Status and 1st-year Probation Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probation rates by level of Parent Education</th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Transfers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No High School</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year Degree</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year Degree</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-baccalaureate deg.</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Undergraduate Admissions

Probation rates for freshmen decline as the level of parent education rises. For transfers there is no obvious relationship. We think this may be because transfers are a more heterogeneous group than freshmen – they are older and in general have life experiences that may mitigate somewhat the positive or adverse effects associated with parent demographics.

The charts below display graduation rates by probation and entry statuses. For freshmen, 6-year rates are shown, whereas 4-year rates are highlighted for transfers—both corresponding to the federal reporting metrics for assessing persistence to degree by entry as a new freshmen or transfer.

Graduation Rates by Probation Status

We see from the freshman chart that the 6-year graduation rate for students on 1st year probation is low, at less than 60%. This is equally true for new freshmen who entered in Fall 2002 as it is for freshmen who entered in Fall 2006—and all the years in between. This lower 6-year graduation rate of about 60% compares to a rate of over 90% for the freshmen entrants who did not have early experiences with being on academic probation. The transfer student chart above looks almost identical to the freshman chart, highlighting that there is a phenomena of substantially lower graduation rates for students placed on 1st year probation, irrespective of entry status.

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Indeed, as shown in the chart, 92% of the Fall 2008 entering cohort of transfer students who were not on 1st year probation graduated by Spring 2012—compared to only 56% of their Fall 2008 cohort peers who were on probation early on in their Berkeley studies.

This phenomenon of across the board lower graduation rates is also found when we look at students by race/ethnicity.

**Graduation Rates of Students Placed on 1st Year Probation, by Race/Ethnicity**

**Freshman 6-yr grad rate (On 1st-Yr Probation)**

![Graph showing graduation rates for freshmen](image)

**Transfer 4-yr grad rate (On 1st-Yr Probation)**

![Graph showing graduation rates for transfers](image)

*Source: Cal Answers (Undergraduate Cohorts)*

A longer time to degree for students on probation likely reflects the need for these students to repeat courses for which they did not receive a passing grade—courses that may be prerequisites for a course sequence or for a desired major. As the curriculum data is migrated into Cal Answers, UC Berkeley’s data warehouse, it will be easier to conduct analysis to better understand this prolonged persistence and the challenges that arise after being placed on probation.

Taken together, one of the goals of this analysis is to expand what is known about students on 1st year probation so as to help inform the larger campus conversations around targeted student services, and supporting all students as they work toward completing their Berkeley degree.

For more student statistics and briefing notes on the student experience and academic probation, visit the Analyses & Reports section of the OPA website below.

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