



2007 Freshman Cohort Retention Report

Overview

The following report summarizes retention of the 1,418 first-time full-time baccalaureate degree seeking freshman students in the University of South Alabama (USA) Fall 2007 freshman student cohort. Retention in the context of this report is defined as whether or not the freshman student persisted and enrolled one year later in the Fall 2008 semester. The input-environment outcome (IEO) model developed by Alexander W. Astin¹ over several years of research in higher education was used as a conceptual framework to guide this analysis. The primary question addressed by analyzing student input variables is, “What do you know about the student before he/she came to your institution?” The primary question addressed by analyzing the environment variables is, “What do you know about the environment and/or support provided to the student by the institution, government (e.g., financial aid), or private parties (e.g., scholarships)?” Outcomes include cognitive or affective variables which answer the question, “What effect did the environment have on the student?”

The variables included in this analysis were selected based on input from administrators and faculty on campus. For this study, input variables were: location of student residency prior to enrolling at USA, gender, ethnicity, age, high school GPA, and ACT score. Environmental variables were: whether the student received a freshman scholarship², whether the student received third party scholarship³, whether the student received financial aid, orientation session attended, whether the student attended freshman seminar, whether the student lived on or off campus, and which college housed

¹ Astin, A. W. (2002). *Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education*. American Council on Education, Oryx Press.

² Bay Area, Honors, Mitchell, Presidential, or Starnes merit based scholarships.

³ Military/ROTC, vocational rehab, employment funded, prepaid AL, MS, or FL tuition, etc.

the major the student selected at initial enrollment. Endogenous outcomes of interest were total hours completed through the Summer of 2008 and the USA GPA the student attained through the Summer of 2008. However, the primary outcome of interest for this study was whether or not the student persisted and enrolled one year later in the Fall 2008 semester. The research question addressed was, “Which student characteristics (inputs) and environmental characteristics (support from USA and others) can be used to best predict the persistence of USA freshman students?”

Cross tabular results for each variable and whether or not the student returned are reported. Comparisons for each subgroup are made to the overall retention rate (67%) of the 1,418 first-time full-time baccalaureate degree seeking freshman in the Fall 2007 cohort. The 68 first-time part-time baccalaureate degree seeking freshman students persisted at a 44% rate, but with part-time students comprising less than 5% of the entire cohort, the focus of this study was on full-time students only.

Additionally, three logistic regression models were tested. The first model included the input variables. The second model included the input and the environmental variables. The final model included the two endogenous outcome variables. The predictive power of each model for explaining whether or not the student returned (Yes/No) is reported as well as which variables were significant in each of the three models.

Cross Tabular Results

Cross tabular results for each variable and whether or not the student returned are summarized in the following section. Comparisons are made for each category of the variable to the retention rate (67%) of the 1,418 first-time full-time baccalaureate degree seeking freshman in the cohort. These comparisons illustrate which subgroups of students persisted at higher, similar, or lower rates than the overall cohort retention rate (67%). Significant mean differences for the comparisons are reported as well.

Input Variable Cross Tabular Results

For the input variables included in this analysis, retention rates were mixed based on the region from which the student came (see Table 1: Comparisons of Input Variables to Fall 2007 Cohort Retention Rate). Most notable perhaps was that local students from Mobile or Baldwin County (66%) and from the Mississippi service area (64%) persisted

at rates lower than the cohort retention rate (67%). Females (69%) persisted at a higher rate than males (65%) and at a slightly higher rate than the cohort retention rate (67%). African-Americans (54%) and Non-Resident Aliens (65%) persisted at rates lower than the cohort retention rate (67%). Finally, as age increased, high school GPA declined, or ACT score declined, retention decreased. Students who were 19 or older, or had a high school GPA less than 3.01, or had an ACT score of 20 or below, persisted at rates lower than the cohort retention rate (67%).

Table 1: Comparisons of Input Variables to Fall 2007 Cohort Retention Rate (High to Low)

Variable	Retention Rate >= 67%	Count	Retention Rate < 67%	Count
<i>Region</i>				
	Rest of Alabama (74%)	186	Mobile or Baldwin County (66%)	935
	Florida Service Area (72%)	36	International (65%)	65
	Rest of United States (71%)	70	Mississippi Service Area (64%)	126
<i>Gender</i>				
	Females (69%)	772	Males (65%)	646
<i>Ethnicity</i>				
	Asian (80%)	54	Non-Resident Alien (65%)	65
	Hispanic (74%)	23	African-American (54%)	258
	White (70%)	963		
	Native-American (67%)	12		
	Unknown (67%)			
<i>Age</i>				
	18 years old (71%)	1042	19 years old (59%)	184
	17 years old (67%)	82	21 years old (58%)	19
			20 years old (46%)	41
			22 years or older (38%)	50
<i>HS GPA</i>				
	GPA of 3.51-4.0 (82%)	445	GPA of 2.01-2.5 (58%)	109
	GPA of 3.01-3.5 (70%)	348	GPA of 2.51-3.0 (56%)	273
			GPA of 2.0 or below (38%)	16
<i>Composite ACT Score</i>				
	30 or above (86%)	58	18-20 (66%)	362
	27-29 (83%)	107	17 or below (54%)	134
	24-26 (76%)	249		
	21-23 (67%)	331		

Environmental Variable Cross Tabular Results

For the environmental variables included in this analysis, retention rates illustrated that receiving a scholarship or financial aid positively affected retention (see Table 2: Comparison of Environmental Variables to Fall 2007 Cohort Retention Rate). Students receiving a freshman scholarship (79%) or third party scholarship (74%) persisted at a higher rate compared to students who did not receive a freshman scholarship (60%) or third party scholarship (66%) and compared to the cohort rate (67%). Students receiving financial aid also persisted at a higher rate (78%) than students who did not receive financial aid (60%) and compared to the cohort rate (67%). Mean differences for each of these values were also statistically significant for freshman scholarship (.000 p value), third party scholarship (.017 p value), and financial aid (.000 p value).

Table 2: Comparisons of Environmental Variables to Fall 2007 Cohort Retention Rate

Variable	Retention Rate >= 67%	Count	Retention Rate < 67%	Count
<i>*Freshman Scholarship</i>				
	Yes (79%)	551	No (60%)	867
<i>*3rd Party Scholarship</i>				
	Yes (74%)	217	No (66%)	1201
<i>*Financial Aid</i>				
	Yes (78%)	544	No (60%)	874
<i>Orientation</i>				
	Summer Session 1 (85%)	214	Summer Session 5 (59%)	280
	Summer Session 2 (76%)	184	August Session (51%)	201
	Summer Session 3 (72%)	191		
	Summer Session 4 (70%)	200		
	May Session (69%)	36		
<i>*Housing</i>				
	On campus (71%)	545	Off campus (64%)	873
<i>*Freshman Seminar</i>				
	Yes (69%)	1302	No (49%)	96
	Note: *All had statistically significant mean difference at .02 p level or less.			

Table 2: Comparisons of Environmental Variables to Fall 2007 Cohort Retention Rate (cont')

Variable	Retention Rate >= 67%	Count	Retention Rate < 67%	Count
<i>College</i>				
	Allied Health (75%)	178	Engineering (65%)	149
	Business (69%)	181	Education (61%)	102
	Arts & Sciences (68%)	580	Nursing (61%)	175
			Computer Science (60%)	50
			Continuing Education (33%)	3
	Note: *All had statistically significant mean difference at .02 p level or less.			

Except for the initial orientation in May (69%) for freshman enrolling in the Summer 2007 semester, retention of students decreased for every orientation session compared to the previous orientation session. Retention was the lowest for the August orientation session with a persistence rate of 51% (see Table 2: Comparison of Environmental Variables to Fall 2007 Cohort Retention Rate). Students living on campus persisted at a higher rate (71%) than students living off campus (64%) and compared to the cohort rate (67%). Students who took Freshman Seminar persisted at a much higher rate (69%) than students who did not take Freshman Seminar (49%) and higher than the cohort rate (67%). When comparing retention based on the college housing the major the student initially selected, only Allied Health (75%), Business (69%), and Arts and Sciences (68%) students persisted at a rate higher than the overall cohort retention rate (67%). The mean differences for students living on campus (.009 p value) compared to students living off campus and for students taking Freshman Seminar (.000 p value) compared to students not taking Freshman Seminar were also statistically significant.

Outcome Variable Cross Tabular Results

The endogenous outcome variables included in this analysis were number of earned hours through Summer 2008 at USA and the USA GPA through Summer 2008. Unsurprisingly, as number of earned USA hours increased or as the USA GPA increased, persistence rates also increased (see Table 3: Comparison of Endogenous Outcome Variables to Fall 2007 Cohort Retention Rate). Students completing 18.5 or more hours through Summer 2008 persisted at a higher rate (at least 80%) compared to students completing 18 or fewer hours (at most 51%) and compared to the cohort rate (67%).

Students with a USA GPA of 2.01 or above through Summer 2008 persisted at a higher rate (at least 73%) compared to students with a GPA of 2.0 or below (39%) and compared to the cohort rate (67%).

Table 3: Comparisons of Endogenous Outcome Variables to Fall 2007 Cohort Retention Rate

Variable	Retention Rate \geq 67%	Retention Rate $<$ 67%
<i>USA Hours Earned</i>		
	30 or more hours (96%)	12.5-18 hours (51%)
	24.5-30 hours (86%)	6.5-12 hours (33%)
	18.5-24 hours (80%)	0-6 hours (19%)
<i>USA GPA</i>		
	3.51-4.0 (90%)	2.0 or below (39%)
	3.01-3.5 (86%)	
	2.51-3.0 (79%)	
	2.01-2.5 (73%)	

Logistic Regression Results

The focus of the study was to determine which student characteristics (inputs) and environmental characteristics (support from USA and others) can be used to best predict the persistence of USA freshman students. Since the goal of this study was prediction and classification of a dichotomous outcome variable, stepwise logistic regression was used. This technique allows for the identification of significant variables that contribute to the classification of individuals by using an algorithm to determine the importance of predictor variables. Stepwise logistic regression was used to identify significant variables in the model for predicting the outcome variable. Results of the final step for the model are reported including the classification rate for the model. Additionally, an analysis of the proportionate change in odds for significant variables is provided.

As a part of this study, three logistic models were tested. The first model included the input variables. The second model included the input variables and the environmental variables. The third model tested the endogenous outcome variables of number of earned

hours and USA GPA through Summer 2008 to see what happened when these outcomes were used as predictors of retention.

The number of students included for each model varied based on the variables used in the final model. A number of the students had missing data on one or more variable, typically high school GPA or ACT score. Because complete cases were required for the logistic regression model to compute the results, the final number of students used for each model ranged from a low of 1,131 for the second model to a high of 1,402 students for the third model. The retention rate for this subset of 1,131 students was 70% compared to 67%. However, with a similar retention rate (70% compared to 67%) and 1,131 students representing 80% of the entire cohort, the models tested provide a solid representation of retention for this population.

Rather than focus on predicting returning students, the outcome was coded with students returning as a “0” and students not returning as a “1”. This focus meant results would predict the odds of whether the student would *not return*. This modeling approach allows administrators to think about designing interventions to help students at risk of *not returning* by understanding which students are at a greater risk for not persisting. The results could also be used to predict which students were more likely to return, but the report does not describe the results with this as the focus.

Model 1: Logistic Regression with Input Variables Only

The first model consisted of two steps and included location of student residency prior to enrolling at USA (region), gender, ethnicity, age, high school GPA, and ACT score (see Table 4: Model 1 Classification Table). The final step (step 2) of the first model correctly classified 93.4% of the returning students. However, the model correctly classified only 13.9% of the students who did not return. The overall correct classification rate for this model was 69.4%. In other words, the input variables could be utilized to predict students in this cohort who return 93% of the time and students who did not return 14% for an overall prediction rate of 69%.

Table 4: Model 1 Classification Table^a

Observed			Predicted		
			Returned		
			Yes	No	Percentage Correct
Step 1	Returned	Yes	798	0	100.0
		No	345	0	.0
		Overall Percentage			69.8
Step 2	Returned	Yes	745	53	93.4
		No	297	48	13.9
		Overall Percentage			69.4

a. The cut value is .500

For each variable included in the first model, a comparison group was selected (region=Mobile or Baldwin County, gender=female, ethnicity=White, age=17, high school GPA=3.51-4.0, and ACT score=17 or below). Values greater than 1 (exp *b*) indicated that the odds of the outcome (student *not returning*) were higher compared to the selected comparison group. Values less than 1 indicated that the odds of the outcome (student *not returning*) were lower compared to the selected comparison group.

In the first model (see Table 5: Model 1 Final Variables in the Equation), only high school GPA and ethnicity were significant in the final model (step 2). The final model showed that the odds (Exp *B*) of a student *not returning* were higher for students with the lowest high school GPAs (2.5 or below=3.29, 2.51-3.0=3.43, and 3.01-3.5=1.85) than for students with a high school GPA between 3.51-4.0. Interestingly, the odds of someone *not returning* with a high school GPA between 2.51-3.0 are greater than for a student with a high school GPA below 2.5. This may partially be due to the fact that there were more students (272) with a high school GPA between 2.51-3.0 range than students (125) with a high school GPA of 2.5 or below. Additionally, all confidence intervals (95%) indicated that the odds of a student with a lower high school GPA *not returning* are greater than students with a high school GPA of 3.51-4.0 since the confidence intervals do not encompass an odds value lower than one.

Table 5: Model 1 Final Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for Exp(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	HSGPA 2.5 or below	1.319	.231	3.740	2.376	5.886
	HSGPA 2.51-3.0	1.294	.176	3.646	2.584	5.146
	HSGPA 3.01-3.5	.651	.172	1.918	1.369	2.686
	Constant	-1.508	.124	.221		
Step 2 ^b	Other Ethnicity	-.343	.259	.710	.427	1.178
	African-American	.462	.168	1.587	1.141	2.206
	HSGPA 2.5 or below	1.191	.236	3.290	2.070	5.229
	HSGPA 2.51-3.0	1.232	.178	3.426	2.419	4.853
	HSGPA 3.01-3.5	.615	.173	1.849	1.318	2.595
	Constant	-1.530	.129	.217		

- a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: HSGPA.
- b. Variable(s) entered on step 2: Ethnicity.
- c. Comparison group for HSGPA=3.51-4.0 and Ethnicity=White.

In terms of ethnicity, the odds of an African-American (1.59) student *not returning* were higher than for White students while the odds of students of another ethnicity (0.71) showed that they were more likely to return than White students. For African-American students, the confidence interval (95%) indicated that the odds of an African-American not returning are indeed greater than White students since the confidence interval did not encompass an odds value lower than one. However, with students of another ethnicity, the confidence interval was between 0.43-1.18 so odds for students of another ethnicity *not returning* should be interpreted more cautiously since the confidence interval spans above and below an odds value of one.

The second model included the input variables and also the environmental variables. For each environmental variable included in the second model, a comparison group was selected (whether the student received a freshman scholarship=yes, whether the student received a third party scholarship=yes, whether the student received financial aid=yes, whether the student attended freshman seminar=yes, orientation session

attended=August orientation session, whether the student lived on or off campus=on campus, and which college housed the major the student selected at initial enrollment=Arts & Sciences). Values greater than 1 (Exp *B*) indicated that the odds of the outcome (student *not returning*) were higher compared to the selected comparison group. Values less than 1 indicated that the odds of the outcome (student *not returning*) were lower compared to the selected comparison group.

The correct classification rate for this second model (see Table 6: Model 2 Classification Table) slightly decreased to 93.2% for returning students. However, the classification rate slightly increased to 18.6% for students who did not return. The overall correct classification rate for this model was 70.8%.

Table 6: Model 2 Classification Table^a

Observed			Predicted		
			Returned		
			Yes	No	Percentage Correct
Step 1	Returned	Yes	792	0	100.0
		No	339	0	.0
		Overall Percentage			70.0
Step 2	Returned	Yes	719	73	90.8
		No	265	74	21.8
		Overall Percentage			70.1
Step 3	Returned	Yes	738	54	93.2
		No	276	63	18.6
		Overall Percentage			70.8

a. The cut value is .500

Model 2: Logistic Regression with Input and Environmental Variables

The second model consisted of three steps. Similar to the first model, in the second model (see Table 7: Model 2 Final Variables in the Equation) high school GPA

and ethnicity were significant in the final model (step 3). However, orientation session attended was also significant in the second model. Once again, the final version (step 3) of the second model showed that the odds (Exp *B*) of a student *not returning* were higher for students with the lowest high school GPAs (2.5 or below=2.48, 2.51-3.0=2.85, and 3.01-3.5=1.64) than for students with a high school GPA between 3.51-4.0. Additionally, all confidence intervals (95%) indicated that the odds of a student with a lower high school GPA not returning are greater than students with a high school GPA of 3.51-4.0 since the confidence intervals do not encompass an odds value lower than one.

Table 7: Model 2 Final Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for Exp(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	HSGPA 2.5 or below	1.324	.235	3.760	2.372	5.959
	HSGPA 2.51-3.0	1.296	.177	3.655	2.585	5.169
	HSGPA 3.01-3.5	.667	.173	1.948	1.388	2.733
	Constant	-1.521	.125	.218		
Step 2 ^b	HSGPA 2.5 or below	.993	.247	2.699	1.663	4.381
	HSGPA 2.51-3.0	1.084	.186	2.957	2.055	4.255
	HSGPA 3.01-3.5	.520	.178	1.682	1.188	2.383
	May Session	-.780	.487	.458	.177	1.189
	Summer 1 Session	-1.282	.268	.278	.164	.470
	Summer 2 Session	-.704	.261	.495	.297	.824
	Summer 3 Session	-.908	.250	.403	.247	.659
	Summer 4 Session	-.691	.244	.501	.311	.809
	Summer 5 Session	-.331	.221	.719	.466	1.107
	Constant	-.752	.220	.472		

Table 7: Model 2 Final Variables in the Equation (cont')

		B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for Exp(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Step 3 ^c	Other Ethnicity	-.495	.269	.610	.360	1.033
	African-American	.321	.175	1.378	.978	1.941
	HSGPA 2.5 or below	.907	.250	2.478	1.517	4.047
	HSGPA 2.51-3.0	1.046	.187	2.846	1.973	4.104
	HSGPA 3.01-3.5	.495	.179	1.641	1.157	2.329
	May Session	-.817	.488	.442	.170	1.150
	Summer 1 Session	-1.272	.272	.280	.164	.478
	Summer 2 Session	-.687	.264	.503	.300	.844
	Summer 3 Session	-.915	.253	.400	.244	.658
	Summer 4 Session	-.714	.246	.490	.302	.793
	Summer 5 Session	-.373	.223	.688	.445	1.065
	Constant	-.738	.228	.478		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: HSGPA.

b. Variable(s) entered on step 2: Orientation.

c. Variable(s) entered on step 3: Ethnicity.

d. Comparison group for HSGPA=3.51-4.0, Ethnicity=White, Orientation=August session.

Once again with ethnicity, the odds of an African-American (1.38) student *not returning* were higher than for White students while the odds of students of another ethnicity (0.71) showed that they were more likely to return than White students. This time the confidence interval (95%) for both African-American (0.98-1.94) students and students of another ethnicity (0.36-1.03) encompassed odds above and below a value of one for *not returning* in comparison to White students so results should be interpreted more cautiously. However, for African-American students the confidence interval was slightly below an odds value of one and for students of another ethnicity the confidence interval was slightly above an odds value of one so the odd results do seem very likely of representing the odds for the entire population.

With orientation, it was clear that the odds of students *not returning* were the highest for students attending the August session of orientation. Students attending all

other orientation sessions had odds values for *not returning* lower than the odds of a student who attended the August session of orientation for *not returning* (May=.44, Summer 1=.28, Summer 2=.50, Summer 3=.40, Summer 4=.49, Summer 5=.69). Additionally, only the May session of orientation (0.17-1.15) and Summer session five (0.45-1.07) had a confidence interval with an odds ratios that captured an odds value greater than one. Therefore, it was clear from looking at the confidence intervals that the odds of students attending the August session of orientation of *not returning* are greater than the odds for students attending Summer sessions one, two, three, and four of *not returning* and likely greater for *not returning* than the odds of students attending the May or Summer session five orientation.

Model 3: Logistic Regression with Endogenous Outcome Variables Only

Since outcomes of student success are different from inputs (student characteristics or institutional/other support characteristics), the third model only included the endogenous outcomes of interest: number of hours earned through the Summer of 2008 and USA GPA the student attained through the Summer of 2008. The first and second models can be used based on data known before or at least early on after the student comes to campus. This third model can only be used after Summer 2008 has ended. A model with input, environmental, and endogenous outcome variables was also tested but the two outcome variables suppressed the results of the other predictors in the model (high school GPA flipped to show lower GPAs were more likely to return which is clearly not the case). Additionally, a simpler more parsimonious model is desirable and the classification rates for returning (same) and non returning students (3.9% lower) were almost identical.

The correct classification rate for this third model (see Table 8: Model 3 Classification Table) once again decreased to 90.0% for returning students. However, predictably the model dramatically increased the correct classification rate (63.4%) for students who did not return since this snapshot was based on data representing Summer 2008 student success outcomes instead of pre-Fall 2007 student and institutional/other support characteristics. The overall correct classification rate for this model was 81.4%.

Table 8: Model 3 Classification Table^a

Observed			Predicted		
			Returned		
			Yes	No	Percentage Correct
Step 1	Returned	Yes	854	95	90.0
		No	166	287	63.4
	Overall Percentage				81.4

a. The cut value is .500

In the third model (see Table 9: Model 3 Final Variables in the Equation), only earned hours at USA was significant. As expected, the third model showed that the odds (Exp B) of a student *not returning* were higher for students with fewer earned hours (0-6=90.20, 6.5-12=43.41, 12.5-18=20.78, 18.5-24=5.46, 24.5-30=3.59) than for students with 30 or more earned hours completed by Summer 2008. Additionally, all confidence intervals (95%) indicated that the odds of a student with fewer earned hours not returning are greater than students with 30 or more earned hours since the confidence intervals do not encompass an odds value lower than one.

Table 9: Model 3 Final Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for Exp(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Step 1	0-6 Earned Hours	4.502	.299	90.200	50.248	161.917
	6.5-12 Earned Hours	3.771	.303	43.412	23.993	78.548
	12.5-18 Earned Hours	3.034	.301	20.776	11.512	37.495
	18.5-24 Earned Hours	1.698	.306	5.461	2.998	9.949
	24.5-30 Earned Hours	1.278	.298	3.590	2.003	6.434
	Constant	-3.078	.248	.046		

a. Comparison group for USA Earned Hours=30 or more.

Additionally, this third model was tested with only USA GPA used as a predictor (earned hours was excluded) of whether or not students would return (see Table 10: Model 3 Final Variables in the Equation). Results showed that the odds of a student *not returning* were greater for students with lower USA GPAs (2.0 or below=14.22, 2.01-2.5=3.29, 2.51-3.0=2.32, and 3.01-3.5=1.30). Only a USA GPA of 3.01-3.5 captured an odds value less than one (0.72-2.33) indicating that there were distinct differences with retention based on USA GPA after Summer 2008 at all other GPA levels.

Table 10: Model 3 Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for EXP(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Step 1	USA_GPA(1)	2.655	.238	14.222	8.922	22.671
	USA_GPA(2)	1.191	.271	3.290	1.936	5.593
	USA_GPA(3)	.840	.273	2.315	1.355	3.957
	USA_GPA(4)	.260	.298	1.297	.723	2.326
	Constant	-2.226	.219	.108		

Peer Comparisons

Finally, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) was used to compare USA to 25 peer institutions⁴ to gain a better idea of graduation rates and retention rates (see National Center for Education Statistics IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2007). Compared to this group of peer institutions, USA had a lower but somewhat similar full-time enrollment in Fall 2006 compared to the peer group median at all levels except full-time first-professional. The percentage of White, non-Hispanic students (68% USA to 75% for peers), Black, non-Hispanic students (18% for USA compared to 16% for peers), and female students (60% for USA compared to 58% for peers) was also very similar compared to the peer group median. The percentile composite ACT, English

⁴ List of 25 IPEDS Peer Institutions used is included at end of report.

ACT, and Math ACT scores of first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students were almost identical at the 25th and 75th percentiles for undergraduate students compared to the peer group median. However, retention rates and six year graduation rates were lower in all categories for USA compared to the peer group median, particularly for Black, non-Hispanic students (28% for USA compared to 43 % for peers).

National Center for Education Statistics IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2007

Focus institution=University of South Alabama

Enrollment Comparisons

Chart/Indicator	USA	Comparison Group Median
Full-time enrollment, by student level: Fall 2006		
Total full-time (N=25)	9,744	11,784
Full-time undergraduate (N=25)	7,474	10,271
Full-time, first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate (N=25)	1,355	2,015
Full-time graduate (N=25)	1,994	1,280
Full-time first-professional (N=25)	276	0
Percent of all undergraduate students enrolled, by race/ethnicity, and percent women: Fall 2006		
White, non-Hispanic (N=25)	68%	74%
Black, non-Hispanic (N=25)	18%	16%
Women (N=25)	60%	58%
Percentile ACT scores of first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students: Fall 2006		
25th percentile Composite (N=24)	19	20
75th percentile Composite (N=24)	24	24
25th percentile English (N=23)	19	19
75th percentile English (N=23)	26	25
25th percentile Math (N=23)	17	18
75th percentile Math (N=23)	24	24
Graduation rate cohort as a percent of all undergraduates and as a percent of total entering students (Fall 2006); graduation rate (2000 cohort); and retention rates (Fall 2006)		
Full-time retention rate (N=25)	72%	75%
White, non-Hispanic (N=25)	41%	45%
Black, non-Hispanic (N=25)	28%	43%
Graduation rate cohort as a percent of entering class (N=25)	48%	59%
Graduation rate, overall, degree/certificate-seekers (N=25)	39%	44%

Implications

The focus of the study was to determine which student characteristics (inputs) and environmental characteristics (support from USA and others) can be used to best predict the persistence of USA freshman students. The logistic regression model that included input and environmental variables showed that high school GPA, ethnicity, and the orientation session attended were the most significant factors in explaining freshman student retention after one year for the Fall 2007 cohort. Additionally, a model testing the endogenous outcomes of number of earned hours through one year of attendance at USA and the USA GPA after one year⁵ found that the number of earned hours was the most significant predictor of freshman one year retention.

This knowledge along with the cross tabular comparative results can be used as a starting point of discussion to increase freshman retention at USA in the future. While the models did a much better job of classifying returning students than non returning students, these results can still be used to design interventions to help promote student success and retention while also providing greater insights about characteristics of returning and non returning freshman students from the Fall 2007 cohort. Implications and recommendations which follow are based on analysis of the data. Furthermore, input from USA personnel was included in this study to determine which efforts are currently in place to promote freshman student success and to gather additional ideas for increasing freshman student retention in the future.

Additionally, the report written by George Kuh (founding director of the National Survey of Student Engagement) and funded by the Association of American Colleges and Universities entitled “*High-Impact Educational Practices: What Are They, Who Has Access To Them, and Why They Matter*” can be helpful in making decisions about how to increase student success and retention as well as increasing student engagement in the campus environment and the classroom. The practices described in this report include first-year seminars, service learning, learning communities, internships, capstone courses, and undergraduate research opportunities which “appear to engage participants at levels that elevate their performance across multiple engagement and desired-outcomes measures such as persistence”.

⁵ Attendance and USA GPA for Fall 2007 cohort through Summer 2008.

However, Kuh found that far too few students are exposed to the proven practices. First-generation college students and other traditionally underrepresented students in higher education are least likely to participate in these techniques, even though research shows that first-generation college students and other traditionally underrepresented students benefit even more than their peers. The primary reasons for these differences included cost and obtaining necessary faculty buy-in.

Minority Students

In terms of ethnicity, compared to White students, the retention rates and odds of students not returning who are of another ethnicity (not including international students) are similar to or lower than the odds of White students for not returning. However, the same is not true for African-American students. Compared to students in the Fall 2006 freshman cohort, the retention rate for African-American students in the Fall 2007 cohort dropped from 76% to 54%. With African-American students (258) representing 18.2% of the overall Fall 2007 cohort of 1,418 students, this large drop in retention of African-American students in the Fall 2007 cohort compared to the Fall 2006 cohort is an important issue⁶.

As Kuh's research indicated, first-time generation students and students from underrepresented backgrounds often are unaware of what opportunities are available to them to participate and become more involved in during their time as a student, both inside and outside of the classroom. A greater effort to encourage African-American, other minority students, and/or first-time in college students to participate in research, internships, service learning, or learning communities would be beneficial. A greater effort could also be made by faculty and other offices on campus to create an awareness of the programming provided by Multicultural Affairs as well as opportunities to participate in student organizations and/or fraternities that are targeted towards African-American students and/or other minority students to help them make connections to peers, faculty, and staff on campus.

In a report conducted earlier this year by the Education Sector research group related to closing the gap between African-American and White student graduation rates, Florida State University and the University of Alabama were cited for the efforts these

⁶ IRPA Retention Studies Fall 2008.

two institutions have made to raise their African-American graduation rates to a point where both institutions actually graduate a slightly larger share of African American students compared to White students over six years⁷. Florida State credits having a single office called the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (CARE) for this success. The CARE office coordinates both state and federally financed programs aimed at improving retention and reports to both the vice president for student affairs and to the vice president for undergraduate education linking both student affairs and academics in this retention based effort.

The University of Alabama credits the set up of an early-alert program that closely monitors the progress of freshmen during their first six weeks and seeks to ensure that those who are academically struggling get help quickly, as well as the placement of freshmen in learning communities providing students access to individualized instruction and academic support. Other effective strategies included “intrusive” counseling where counselors proactively watch over students. The University of Alabama also provides state-financed scholarships to academically promising low-income students.

Another possible reason for USA’s big drop in African-American retention may be because USA is not the first choice institution for many African-American students. At a recent student association meeting, 75 students in the African-American Student Association were asked if USA was their top choice institution when they applied for college and about 80% of these student leaders said, “No”. Financial issues, family situations, or other circumstances precluded them from attending one of their top choice institutions. With USA not serving as the top choice institution for this group, and perhaps a number of others in the cohort, these students would be less likely to persist if they were struggling for academic, financial, or other personal reasons than students who indicated that USA was their top choice institution. It becomes more challenging to reach students who are here out of happenstance or circumstance instead of choice.

In order to explore the issue of understanding what happened to USA freshman non returners, National Student Clearinghouse data will be used to complete another retention study of the Fall 2006 and Fall 2007 freshman cohorts. This study will be

⁷ Schmidt, P. (2008). Improving black graduation rates is mainly a matter of will. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 21, 2008.

undertaken later this year to examine if non returning students transferred to another institution. However, for now it is evident that discussions about interventions targeting African-American students (who represent almost 20% of the freshman student population) need to take place to lower the odds of African-American students not returning in the future. Losing almost half of this large group in the population is definitely a point of concern.

Orientation

Rankings based on the order of preference of which institution was a USA student's top choice, second choice, etc. were not included in this analysis. However, the orientation data may serve as a proxy for this variable based on an analysis of the data. It is very clear that aside from the May orientation session for students enrolling in the Summer 2007 semester, retention rates decrease for every other session compared to the previous orientation session. The orientation session attended was the only significant environmental variable in the logistic model. The odds of students attending the August orientation session were higher to *not return* than for any other session.

Possibly, students who are best prepared for college, are most excited to attend USA, and/or are most anxious to begin their freshman year are attending the earliest orientation sessions. As the Summer goes on, students who are less prepared for college, who are not as sure about their decision about whether to attend USA instead of another institution, and/or may not be as excited to even attend college at all are attending the later orientation sessions. Descriptions offered by multiple administrators and faculty about the differences between students who attend earlier orientation sessions compared to the later orientation sessions confirmed this explanation. Recognizing that student retention and perhaps motivation levels to attend USA and/or college seem to differ based on the orientation session attended can be utilized as a signal that such students need additional support

Involving faculty in the orientation session may also strengthen the program. While there is an extensive involvement by student affairs in orientation, there could be opportunities for students to interact more with faculty at the orientation before they took any classes. More staffing and support from colleges may also prove helpful for Summer Session five. For the Fall 2007 cohort, 66 more students (280 total) attended Summer

session five than any other orientation session. Identifying ways to meet the class scheduling needs of students who attend later orientation sessions should also be a topic of discussion because many classes are filled by the end of the Summer. This makes creating a class schedule for students attending the last two orientation sessions more difficult.

Freshman Seminar

In a previous study by Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment of this Fall 2007 cohort, the retention rate for the 1,376 students (69%) who took Freshman Seminar was much higher than the retention rate of the students who did not take Freshman Seminar (48%) and also higher than the retention rate of the Fall 2007 freshman cohort (67%). When comparing students who took Freshman Seminar in this cohort to students who did not take Freshman Seminar, the mean difference was statistically significant at the .000 p level. In short, taking Freshman Seminar positively impacted retention for this freshman cohort.

Similar to findings at USA, first-year programs including Freshman Seminar, learning communities, and the integration of academic advising with first-year programs has been found to have the greatest contribution to retention of 1,061 colleges surveyed by ACT in 2003⁸. Noel-Levitz found similar results in 2007 in a survey of 193 four-year institutions with the top three retention strategies identified as 1) Freshman Seminar, 2) intrusive advising, and 3) early alert systems⁹. However, according to John N. Gardner, who is nationally recognized for his efforts to develop and promote Freshman Seminar, retention is not the only reason and/or benefit realized from Freshman Seminar programs nor should it be. Rather it should have a more substantive intellectual rationale¹⁰.

Freshman Seminar is used by several institutions to assist students with knowledge and skills development such as studying, test-taking, writing, oral communication, listening, reading, textbook master, and information literacy/library

⁸ Habley, W. R. & McClanahan, R. (2004). What works in student retention? ACT Survey of Colleges.

⁹ Noel-Levitz 2007 National Research Report.

¹⁰ Gardner, J. N. (2007). Strategies and good counsel for administrators of first-year seminars: Effective leadership for new student success and retention. *Cengage Publishing/Wadsworth Seminar*, October 3, 2007.

usage¹¹. Other benefits of Freshman Seminar include: 1) integration of academic and social elements found inside and outside of class, 2) increasing student interaction with each other, upper-level students, and with faculty/staff, 3) increasing student involvement, commitment, and time on campus, 4) linking the curriculum to the co-curriculum (out of class experiences), 5) increasing academic expectations and levels of academic engagement, and 6) assisting students who have insufficient academic preparation for college¹². Freshman Seminar has also been linked to higher cumulative GPAs and earned credit hours with students of similar characteristics¹³.

George Kuh, over his extensive career in researching student engagement and success in directing the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) research program, has also seen the positive benefits of a solid Freshman Seminar program on hundreds of campuses. When asked the question on his visits to these campuses, “What is the one thing we should do to increase student engagement and success on our campus?” Kuh states¹⁴ that there is growing evidence that when done well, a handful of selected programs and activities appear to engage participants at levels that boost their performance across a variety of educational activities and desired outcomes such as persistence and he specifically listed Freshman Seminar as one of the more promising “high impact” practices.

Gardner¹⁵ offered a number of suggestions of how to increase Freshman Seminar effectiveness. He said training matters with course effectiveness only as good as training support. Recurring hard monies for the course is vital. Stand alone Freshman Seminars are not as effective because synergies come when combining the course with service learning, living learning communities, learning communities, etc. Peer leaders strengthen

¹¹ Barefoot, B. O. (2008). Gathering evidence on first-year seminar effectiveness. *Wadsworth E-Seminar Series*, February 25, 2008.

¹² Barefoot, B. O. (2000). The first-year experience: Are we making it any better? *About Campus*, January/February.

¹³ Sidle, M.W. & McReynolds, J. (1999). The freshman year experience: Student retention and student success. *NASPA Journal*, 36(4), Summer.

¹⁴ National Survey of Student Engagement Experiences That Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success Annual Report 2007.

¹⁵ Gardner, J. N. (2007). Strategies and good counsel for administrators of first-year seminars: Effective leadership for new student success and retention. *Cengage Publishing/Wadsworth Seminar*, October 3, 2007.

the course since the greatest influence on students is other students. More credit is almost always better because it makes it more like a “real” college course.

Gardner stated that reporting lines and home units matter as well. Reporting to Academic Affairs yields a higher probability of long term viability, but if combined with Student Affairs it would be better to have a shared reporting line. However, he did state it was important to not house Freshman Seminar in Developmental Education.

Ultimately, Gardner said the greatest single key for an effective Freshman Seminar course was connectedness to faculty. He also added that Freshman Seminar should not be viewed as an island to retention. The best results come with combined efforts of faculty and staff to improve the overall first-year experience of students, not just one course.

Learning Communities

One approach that the College of the Business has pursued for freshmen is to require all freshmen to participate in a learning community in the Fall and Spring semester of their freshman year. Students in the Fall 2007 cohort were registered during Summer 2007 new student orientation in one of six Freshman Seminar courses which was linked to a microeconomics course. Some students also had a third linked course as well (English composition). This allowed students to have a smaller scale cohort or “learning community” where they could get to know the 25-30 students in these two classes during their first semester in college. Again in the Spring 2008 semester, freshman students in Business took the same introduction to business course which was linked to a macroeconomics course. This placed the student in the same “learning community” with 50-60 students during Spring 2008 semester as well.

In short, freshman students took at least four linked courses, two each semester, in the College of Business during their freshman year instead of waiting until later in their academic experience to interact with business faculty. Typically, this type of community does not take place until students are sophomores or juniors and are taking their major classes. This was so successful in its first year that the College of Business freshman students from the Fall 2007 cohort requested that they also have an option during their sophomore year to participate in a learning community. As a result, in Fall 2008

accounting and statistics courses were linked for sophomore students who returned from the Fall 2007 cohort.

Learning communities have been popular with students at other institutions and also positively impacted student learning and retention. Studies at other institutions have shown that students in learning communities typically have higher institutional GPAs and course credit completions. Creating learning communities where students can take all of their courses together during their first semester in college would be even better than linking just a couple of courses for USA freshman. One obstacle is that the capability to link sections of courses to form learning communities is currently not an option in Banner. Therefore, the College of Business had to manually link course sections together to ensure students were linked in these smaller scale “learning communities”.

Housing

Results showed that freshman students living on campus have higher retention rates than students living off campus. These results confirm why some institutions require all freshmen to live on campus, although that would not be feasible at USA. However, with living on campus positively affecting retention, as the campus continues to grow, a dilemma may occur about whether or not to give freshmen or sophomores and upper classmen priority for University Housing. Almost 40% of the Fall 2007 cohort lived on campus (545), but as the freshman class continues to grow, the ability to provide University housing for freshmen wanting to live on campus may exceed capacity. Future housing plans should include discussion about what percentage of University housing should be reserved for freshmen.

Adding a dining hall closer to University housing is another option to consider that would improve residential life for students. This would provide an opportunity for students to eat dinner with their peers in a convenient location, particularly since not all students living on campus have transportation. When making other infrastructural plans for University housing, considerations should also be made to add more common areas and spaces for students to gather and meet in. Common areas and spaces are not prevalent in current University Housing facilities. In fact, many of the older University housing units were built more like a motel, which do not provide these communal areas important to creating opportunities for students to interact and build a sense of community.

Another improvement that may help increase retention of students living on campus would be purchasing roommate matching software which allows freshmen to identify roommates in advance with whom they were more likely to become friends and enjoy sharing space on campus. Funding for more peer advisors living in University Housing would provide an opportunity for freshmen to connect with upperclassmen who can help freshmen living on campus with adjusting to life at college and at USA. Resources to expand educational programming would also enhance residential life by providing more opportunities for students to learn and to grow both inside and outside the classroom. Living learning communities linking academic classes with students living in certain housing units may also prove beneficial.

Scholarships/Financial Aid

With scholarships positively impacting student retention, the disparity in the number of scholarships for minority students should be addressed. In a previous study of freshman scholarship retention by Institutional Research and Planning of the Fall 2006 and Fall 2007 cohorts, White students received 65% of all scholarships in 2006 and 66% of all scholarships in 2007. The scholarships analyzed in this report (Bay Area, Honors, Mitchell, Presidential, or Starnes) were merit based scholarships, or in other words, heavily based on the high school GPA and/or ACT scores of the student. Additional consideration for minority students should be given when awarding existing scholarships. Where possible, increasing the scholarship amount for existing scholarships would also allow USA to compete with other institutions in the state to attract high performing minority students.

Creating needs based scholarships would also seem to benefit a number of USA freshman students. University sponsored financial awards for at-risk students and/or new scholarships that target minority students should also be enlarged. Efforts should also be made to seek privately funded scholarships for at-risk students who persist as well.

Additionally, new scholarships that reward attributes such as leadership and service which are not solely based on academic performance should be introduced. Leadership and service related scholarships would bring students to campus that may have been very involved in their high schools and/or communities but who may not have high enough GPAs and/or ACT scores to receive existing scholarships. However,

students who have strong leadership and/or service experiences would also contribute significantly to the campus and to the community. Students with leadership and service oriented experiences would likely become involved and engaged in campus activities helping them make critical connections with peers, faculty, and/or staff on campus. These connections would encourage leadership or service scholarship recipients to persist and graduate from the institution. In addition to seeking private funding to endow new scholarships, new scholarships could come from other sources such as student parking tickets or other auxiliary sources similar to what is done at other universities.

Service Learning

Expanding service learning opportunities on campus is another option to consider and would nicely complement the addition of leadership and service related scholarships. Incorporating service into academic learning is a terrific way to allow the student to interact with faculty and peers and to grow in many ways by participating in service projects connected with classroom learning experiences in the local community or other places around the world. A number of institutions have realized the positive public relations and benefits to students and the community.

Advising

The retention rates of students varied based on the college housing the major the student selected. Since advising takes place in the college the student selected, there may be opportunities to improve student retention through intrusive advising (early and frequent intervention) and student mentoring programs. Furthermore, colleges should look at the retention rates of freshman students and work to identify ways to increase retention of students majoring in degree programs in the college.

Having an early academic alert system is another intervention to consider. This could include requiring a midterm grade for freshman students. Mid-term grade reviews assess academic progress before “it’s too late” and provide an opportunity to ensure that students receive early feedback before the end of the semester. This would allow advisors, faculty, and staff to intervene earlier rather than at the end of the student’s first semester when it may be too late to retain the student. Also, students who are identified as at-risk could receive intensive academic advisement from selected faculty members to

ensure that at-risk students receive the additional advisement they need to assist them during their first year in college.

Local Students

With students from the local area of Mobile or Baldwin County and also from the Mississippi service area having lower retention rates than students from the rest of Alabama, the Florida service area, and the rest of the United States, it appears there is an opportunity to focus on retaining local students. With scholarships positively impacting retention, perhaps extending the length of the Bay Area merit based scholarship from the current length of one year to a greater period of time as long as the student meets certain GPA requirements would increase student retention for local area students. Additionally, providing some other form of scholarship to students attending high schools from the local area may be an option to consider.

Older Students

It is clear that students who are older, particularly 20 or older, are less likely to return than younger students. Older students are more likely to be working full-time and attending college part-time. These students have different needs than freshman students coming to the institution straight out of high school. Scheduling of evening classes and the provision of student support services for older first-time freshman students should be another focus of the institution to encourage them to persist.

Expand Office of Student Success/Retention

Due to the lack of available professional staff support, the Office of Student Academic Success and Retention focuses to a large extent on assisting under-prepared and at-risk students, especially conditionally admitted freshmen. With 4,109 new students (freshman and transfer students) enrolling at USA in Fall 2008, adding a professional staff member to this office would allow more emphasis specifically on students in the freshman class who are not conditionally admitted. Such emphasis would greatly increase the ability of this office to coordinate efforts across the entire campus to provide educational programming, intrusive advising, and other activities to assist regularly admitted freshmen adjust to their first year in college. This office could also work on easing the transition for the large number of transfer students who enroll at USA every year as well. In short, as the Education Sector report states, “Often, the distinguishing

factor for minority” and other student graduation rates and retention “isn’t whether programs exist, but whether they’re coordinated, supported, and well run”¹⁶. An expanded Office of Student Academic Success and Retention would greatly assist with making sure programs are well run, coordinated, and supported.

Flat Tuition Rate

With number of credit hours earned serving as a significant predictor of freshman student retention, charging a flat tuition rate like the University of Auburn (flat rate for 10-15 hours) or University of Alabama (flat rate for 12-17 hours) should be considered by the institution. Charging a flat tuition rate for students would encourage students at all levels, not just freshmen, to take additional classes while also saving the student money and in the long term would shorten the student’s time to degree. Perhaps conditionally admitted freshman may be better off focusing on taking a maximum of 14 hours. However, allowing other students the opportunity to take at least 15 (like Auburn) to 17 credits (like Alabama) for the same flat rate as 10 (Auburn) or 12 (Alabama) credits would seem to be very beneficial in helping students save money and also graduate in a timelier fashion.

Future Retention Research

This report is one of four retention related studies completed by Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment during the Fall 2008 semester. Previous retention studies conducted this semester examined Freshman Seminar retention, transfer student retention, and retention of freshman scholarship recipients. A future retention study will use National Student Clearinghouse data to explore the issue of “Where did USA freshman non returners go?” The Fall 2006 and Fall 2007 freshman cohorts will be used to determine how many non returning students transferred to another institution and the characteristics of these students who transferred out of USA.

¹⁶ Schmidt, P. (2008). Improving black graduation rates is mainly a matter of will. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 21, 2008.

Summary of Recommendations to Consider

Learning Communities

- Encourage African-American, other minority students, and/or first-time in college students to participate in research, internships, service learning, or learning communities.
- Expand the opportunities for students to participate in learning communities in all colleges.
- Develop learning communities for conditionally admitted students to focus more on academic skills.
- Utilize living learning communities for freshman students living on campus linking academic classes with students living in certain residence halls.
- Expanding service learning opportunities on campus.

Advising

- Create greater awareness of the programming provided by Multicultural Affairs as well as opportunities to participate in student organizations and/or fraternities that are targeted towards African-American students and/or other minority students.
- Provide/expand intrusive advising (early and frequent intervention) and student mentoring programs.
- Create an early academic alert system to include requiring a midterm grade for freshman students.
- For students who are identified as at-risk, provide intensive academic advisement from selected faculty members to ensure that at-risk students receive the additional advisement they need to assist them during their first year in college.
- Evaluate availability of student support services for older and/or evening class students.
- Add professional staff member to Office of Student Academic Success and Retention to focus on freshman students who are not conditionally admitted and transfer students.

Orientation

- Since student retention and perhaps motivation to attend USA and/or college seem to differ based on the orientation session attended, design interventions to

- assist students attending orientation sessions at different points in the Summer, not just at orientation but also once they arrive on campus to attend classes.
- Personalize orientation sessions for the group of students attending the orientation session, particularly the Summer session five and August orientation session.
 - Include greater academic emphasis with new student orientation by involving faculty more in the orientation at each college level.
 - Provide more staffing and support from colleges for Summer session five which had 66 more students (280 total) than any other orientation session.
 - Identify ways to meet the class scheduling needs of students who attend later orientation sessions because many classes are filled by the end of the Summer.

Freshman Seminar

- Increase involvement of peer leaders in Freshman Seminar to facilitate a more successful social transition into USA.
- Ensure that first generation and/or minority students are well represented among the peers selected for Freshman Seminar when hiring student peer leaders.
- Include and/or add more skill building activities and more of a career component in Freshman Seminar.
- Provide necessary training and support for instructors.
- Combine effort to increase effectiveness of Freshman Seminar with efforts to expand service learning, living learning communities, learning communities, etc. on campus to realize the synergies that come from doing so.
- Keep reporting line for Freshman Seminar with Academic Affairs to yield a higher probability of long term viability.

Housing

- Add a dining hall closer to University housing.
- Fund more peer advisors living in University Housing.

Scholarships/Financial Aid

- Provide additional consideration for minority students when awarding existing scholarships.
- Increase scholarship amount for existing scholarships in order to compete with other institutions in the state to attract high performing minority students.

- Award needs based scholarships in addition to existing merit based scholarships.
- Provide University sponsored financial awards for at-risk students and/or new scholarships that target minority students.
- Create new scholarships that reward attributes such as leadership and service which are not solely based on academic performance
- Consider extending length of Bay Area scholarship beyond one year and/or add other scholarships targeted towards large local student population.
- Charge flat tuition rate like the University of Auburn (flat rate for 10-15 hours) or University of Alabama (flat rate for 12-17 hours).

IRPA/gem

25 Selected IPEDS Peer Institutions
Focus institution: University of South Alabama

Unitid	Institution Name	City	State
100858	Auburn University Main Campus	Auburn	AL
198464	East Carolina University	Greenville	NC
220075	East Tennessee State University	Johnson City	TN
433660	Florida Gulf Coast University	Fort Myers	FL
139940	Georgia State University	Atlanta	GA
101480	Jacksonville State University	Jacksonville	AL
232423	James Madison University	Harrisonburg	VA
140164	Kennesaw State University	Kennesaw	GA
159647	Louisiana Tech University	Ruston	LA
237525	Marshall University	Huntington	WV
220978	Middle Tennessee State University	Murfreesboro	TN
232982	Old Dominion University	Norfolk	VA
100751	The University of Alabama	Tuscaloosa	AL
138354	The University of West Florida	Pensacola	FL
102368	Troy University	Troy	AL
100663	University of Alabama at Birmingham	Birmingham	AL
100706	University of Alabama in Huntsville	Huntsville	AL
106245	University of Arkansas at Little Rock	Little Rock	AR
157289	University of Louisville	Louisville	KY
159939	University of New Orleans	New Orleans	LA
199139	University of North Carolina at Charlotte	Charlotte	NC
199148	University of North Carolina at Greensboro	Greensboro	NC
176372	University of Southern Mississippi	Hattiesburg	MS
141264	Valdosta State University	Valdosta	GA
172644	Wayne State University	Detroit	MI