

Predictors of Six-Year Graduation Rates among FYE & Non-Traditional Students



Steve Cavote
&
Karen Kopera-Frye

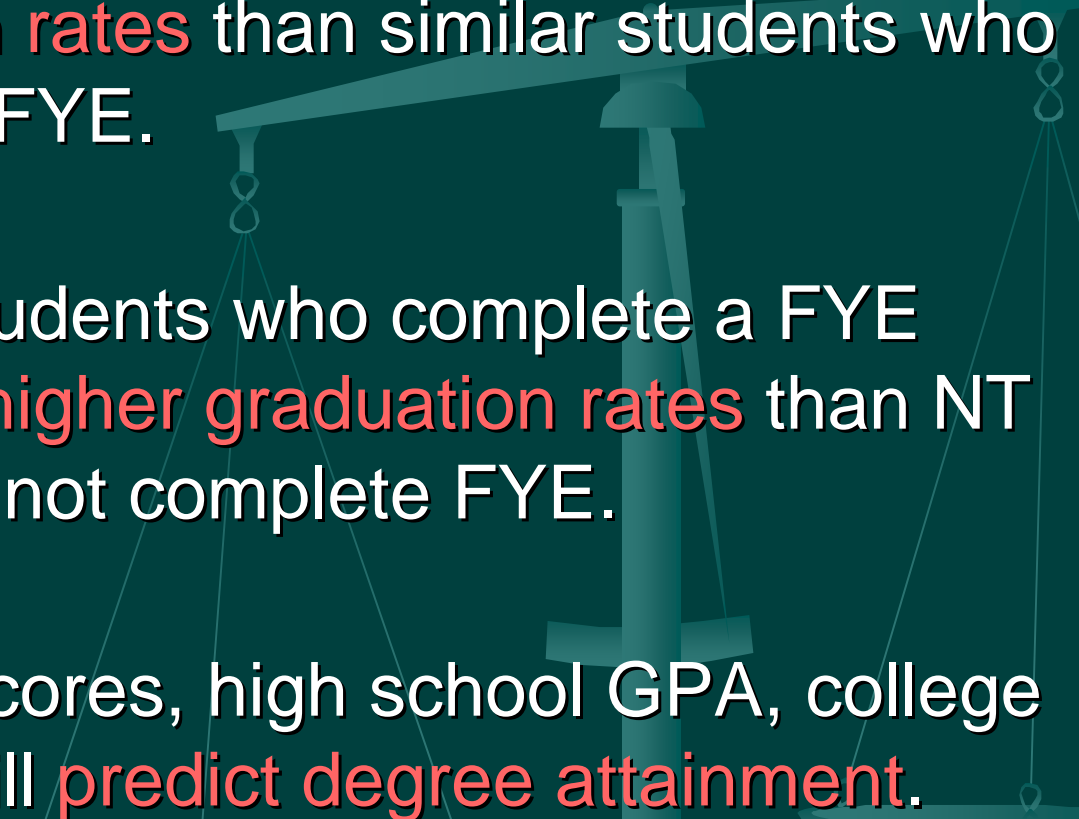
University of Nevada, Reno

First Year Experience (FYE)



- Overview of orientation courses
- South Carolina Model – John Gardner
- Brevard Policy Center (<http://www.firstyear.org/>)
 - Publications, Journal, Research & Surveys
- Types of FYE courses
 - Special Intervention
 - Thematic & Cluster
 - Academic focus
 - Mixed (UNR)

Hypotheses

1. Students who complete a FYE course will have **higher graduation rates** than similar students who did not complete FYE.
 2. Non-traditional students who complete a FYE course will have **higher graduation rates** than NT students who did not complete FYE.
 3. Entrance exam scores, high school GPA, college GPA, and FYE will **predict degree attainment**.
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SAMPLE

- 1999 first term students (n = 711)
 - 17 FYE sections, n=379
 - 23 Eng Comp sections, n= 332
 - Gender and ethnicity
 - ACT & high school GPA

Group	N	ACT	HSGPA	F99GPA	Graduated (% of Group)
FYE	379	23.78**	3.42**	2.84	192 (51%)
NFYE	332	22.86**	3.32**	2.79	163 (49%)
Total	711	12 to 36	1.98 to 4.0		355 (50%)

**p <.01

UNR's 6 year graduation rates '95- 49%, '96 - 47%, '97 - 48%

■ Procedure

- Compared **FYE/NFYE** 6-year graduation rates
- Logistic Regression Model Variables
 - ACT & HS GPA, FYE, & F99 College GPA

■ Outcome Measure

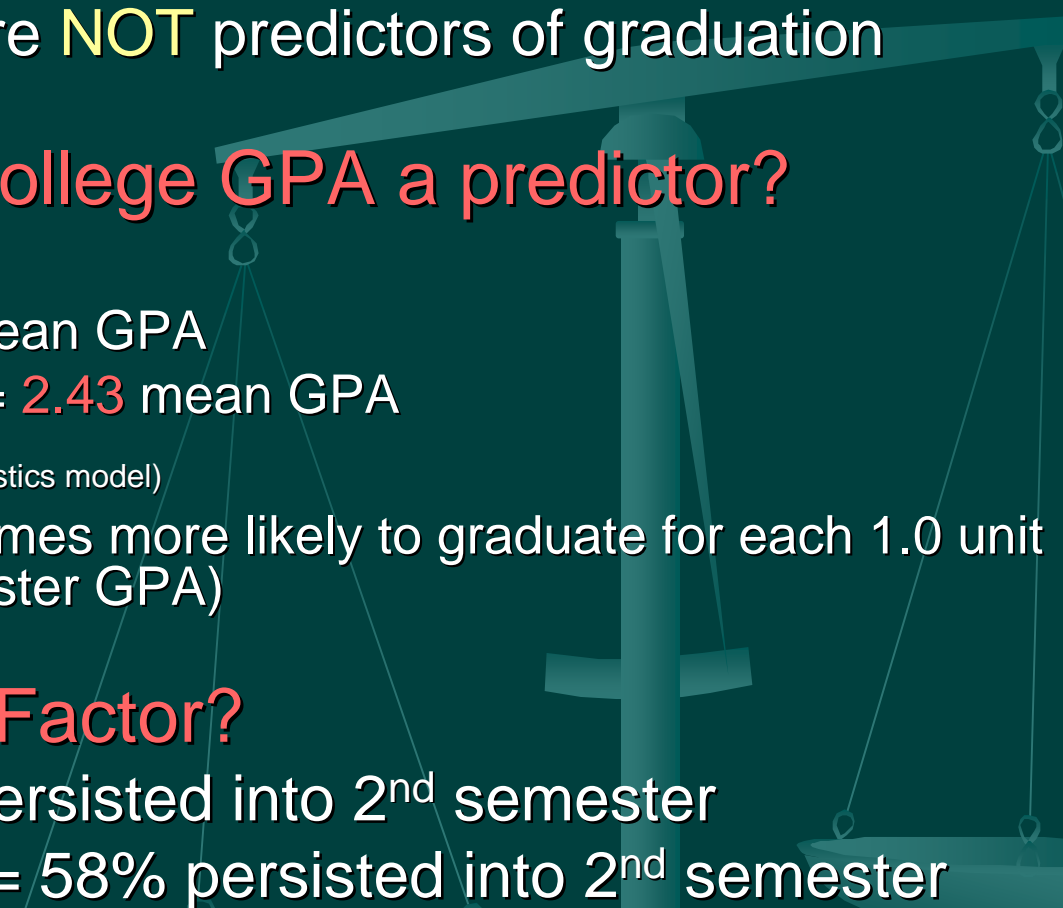
- Graduated

Graduated	FYE	NFYE	Total	ACT	HSGPA	F99GPA
YES	192	163	355	23.932***	3.480***	3.207****
NO	187	169	356	22.710***	3.258***	2.425****
Total	379	332	711	-	-	-

p <.001, *p <.0001

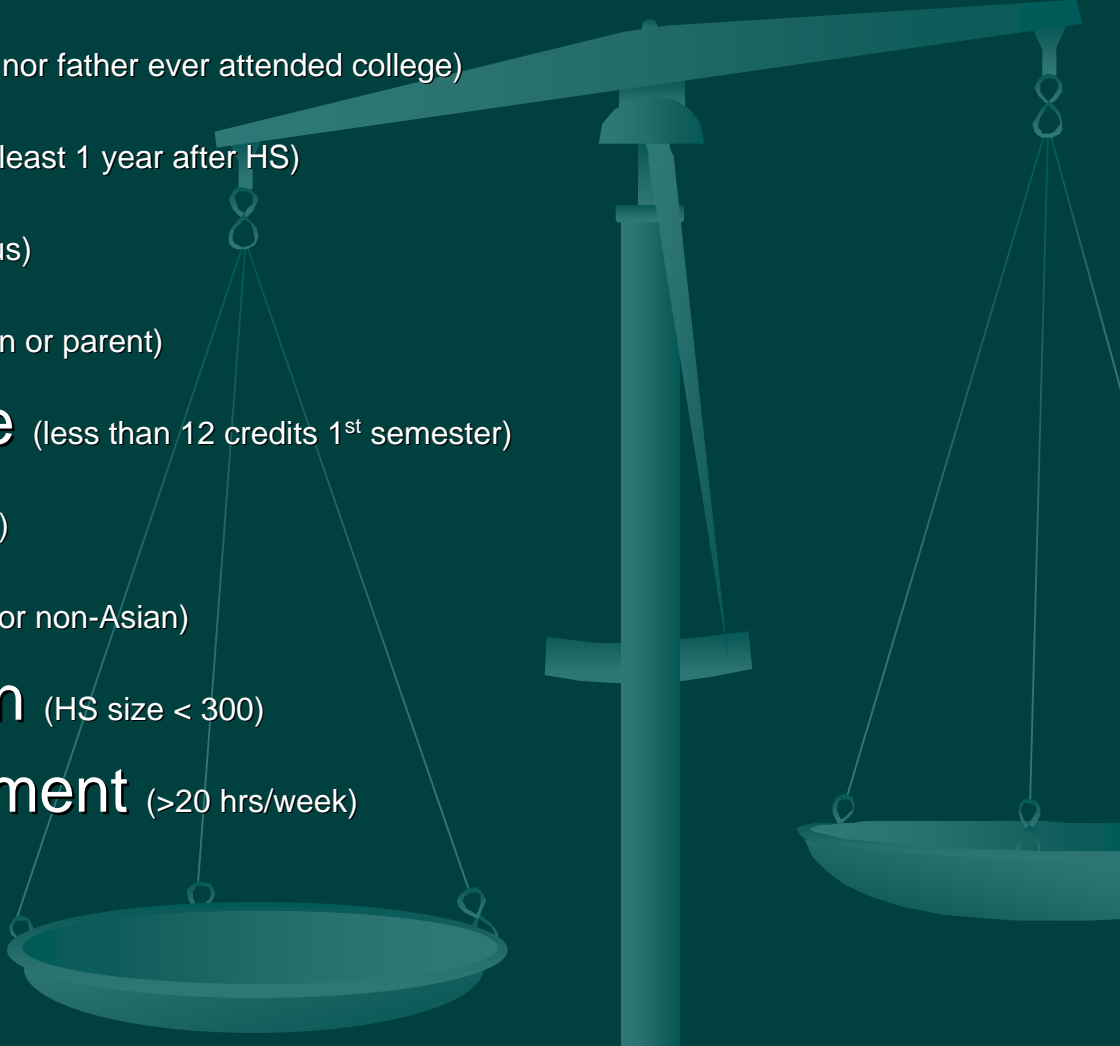
1995 - 1999 UNR Freshman ACT mean = 22

RESULTS

- **Were ACT, HS GPA, or FYE Predictors?**
 - NO!
 - These variables were **NOT** predictors of graduation
 - **Was 1st Semester college GPA a predictor?**
 - Yes!
 - Graduated = **3.21** mean GPA
 - Did NOT Graduate = **2.43** mean GPA
 - Odds Ratio = **3.4** (logistics model)
 - (a student was 3.4 times more likely to graduate for each 1.0 unit increase in 1st semester GPA)
 - **Was Persistence a Factor?**
 - Graduated = 98% persisted into 2nd semester
 - Did **NOT** Graduate = 58% persisted into 2nd semester
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What is the Role of Traditionality (Relationship to Graduation)

Same sample examined using NPSAS Risk Factor Index

1. **First generation** (mother nor father ever attended college)
 2. **Delayed entry** (skipped at least 1 year after HS)
 3. **Commuters** (drives to campus)
 4. **Dependent care** (children or parent)
 5. **Part-time attendance** (less than 12 credits 1st semester)
 6. **Age** (>23 when first enrolled at UNR)
 7. **Race/ethnicity** (non-white or non-Asian)
 8. **High School of Origin** (HS size < 300)
 9. **Off Campus employment** (>20 hrs/week)
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Gender

Group	N	ACT	HSGPA	F99GPA	Graduated (% Grads)
Female	383 (54%)	22.76***	3.40*	2.922**	215 (61%)
Male	328 (46%)	24.07***	3.34*	2.69**	140 (39%)
Total	711				355

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Traditional v Non-Traditional

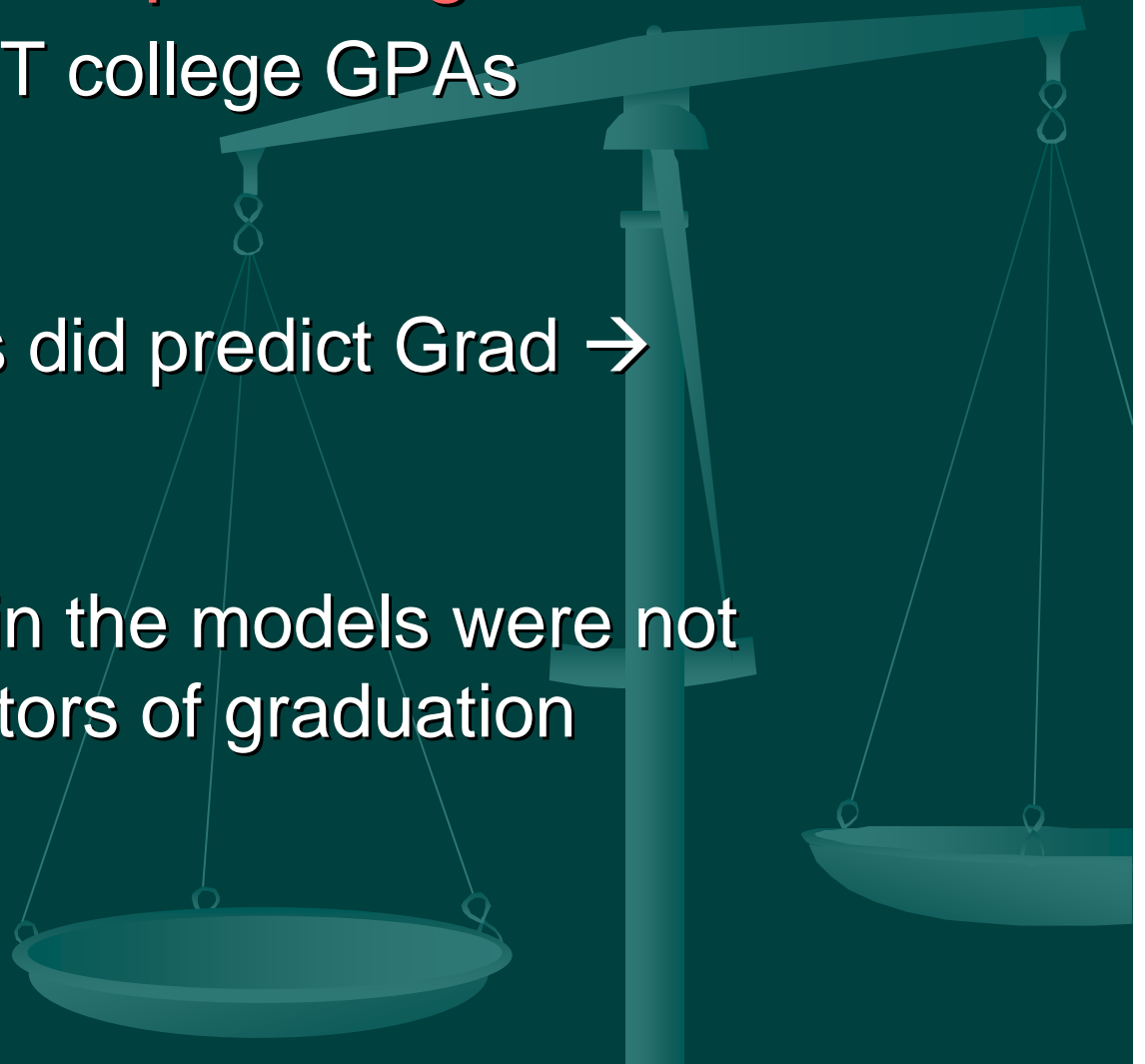
Group	N	ACT	HSGPA	F99GPA	Graduated (% Group)
Traditional	280 (39%)	23.89**	3.41	2.985***	178 (64%)
Non-Traditional	431 (61%)	22.93**	3.35	2.706***	177 (41%)
Total	711				355

p<.01,*p <.001

1995 - 1999 UNR Freshman ACT mean = 22

RESULTS

- Did ACT, HS GPA, Ethnicity, Sex, 1st term GPA, or T/NT status predict graduation?
 - 1st Semester T/NT college GPAs
 - Odds Ratio = 3x
 - Traditional status did predict Grad →
 - Odds Ratio = 2x
 - Other variables in the models were not significant predictors of graduation



Conclusions

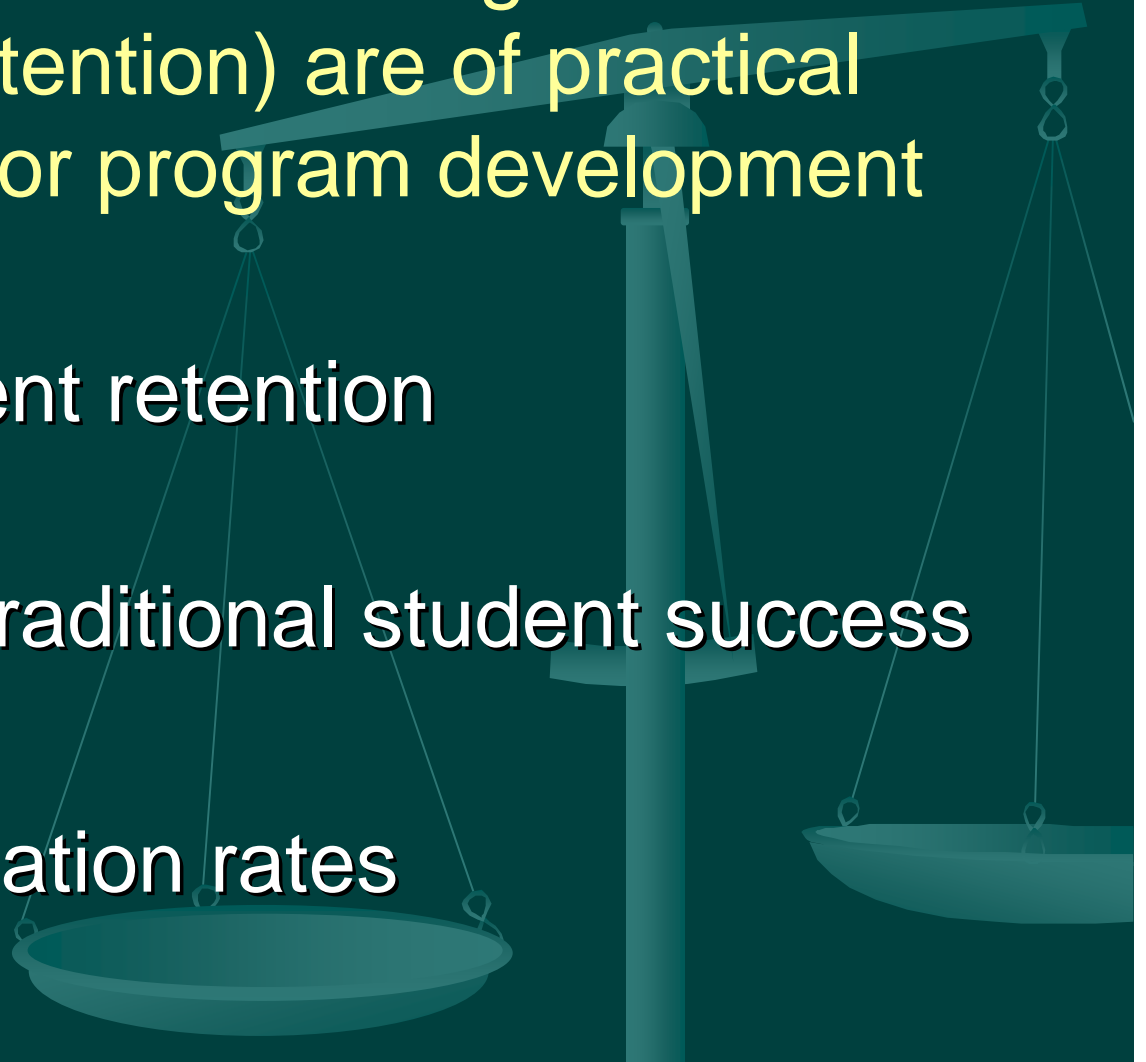
College advancement in the first year is a **critical** determinant of persistence, hence

- FYE courses need to be examined with an eye to meeting the **varied demands** of diverse students (*each student is unique*)
- NT students would most likely benefit from a **varied set** of 1st year college experiences (*one course does not fit ALL*)

What does this mean?

Knowing which variables are significant for graduation (& retention) are of practical value, a **MUST** for program development aimed at

- Increasing student retention
- Promoting non-traditional student success
- Improving graduation rates



Thank you



Steve Cavote

scavote@unr.edu

(775) 784-4837

Karen Kopera-Frye

kfrye@unr.edu

(775) 784-7010