

SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING COVID-19

How the revised pass-fail grading policy helped students on academic warning and probation

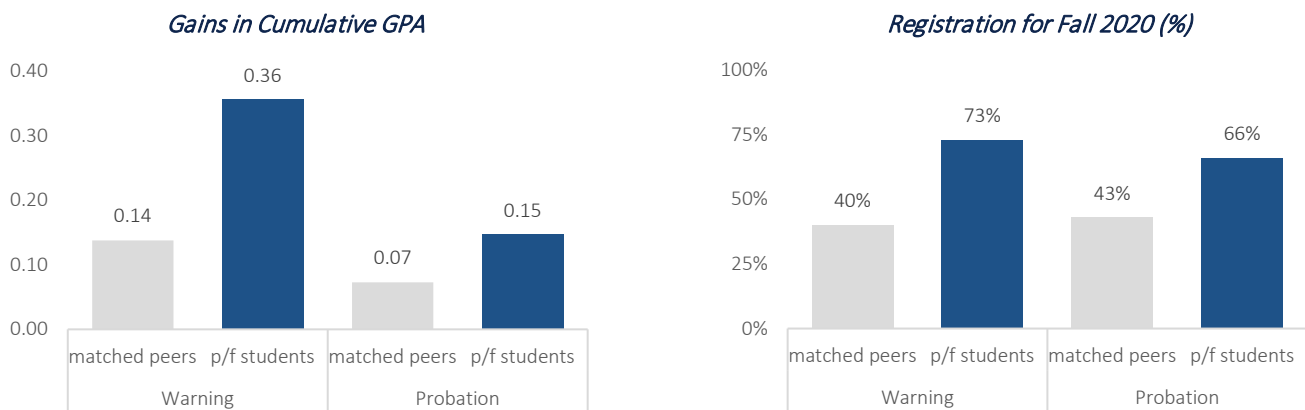
A previous report¹ showed considerable benefits to University of Arizona students who adopted the revised pass/fail policy offered in Spring 2020. This brief focuses on the impact of that policy on the 8% of degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled on main campus or through Arizona Online who were on academic warning or probation at the start of the spring semester.

SIMILAR RATES OF ADOPTION AMONG STUDENTS

The revised pass/fail policy was adopted by a statistically equivalent proportion of students on academic warning (35%) and probation (33%) compared with the undergraduates as a whole (36%). About two thirds of students in each academic eligibility group opted to use it in just one or two classes.

IMPACT: PASS/FAIL BOOSTED GPA GAINS AND STUDENT PERSISTENCE

By matching students who were on academic warning or probation and used the revised pass/fail policy to similar peers who did not, we can observe how the policy impacted these students' ability to make gains in their cumulative GPA and their persistence. As was the case for Arizona undergraduates as a whole, students on warning and probation who used the policy fared better than peers who did not.



As shown above, students on warning or probation who used the revised pass/fail policy made larger gains in GPA and were more likely to be registered for Fall than their peers ($p < 0.001$). *The improvement in GPA for students on academic warning who used the pass/fail option were large enough that 43% pulled their GPA above 2.0, compared to 26% in the peer comparison group.* Student outcomes according to the full range of metrics presented in the earlier report are shown below.

	All Students (previous report)		Students on Warning		Students on Probation	
	Pass/fail group	Matched peers	Pass/fail group	Matched peers	Pass/fail group	Matched peers
Units earned towards degree	14.3	13.6	9.2	5.1	9.1	5.8
Spring 2020 term GPA	3.50	3.47	2.71	2.39	2.81	2.65
Change in cumulative GPA (Fall 19 to Spring 20)	+0.08	+0.07	+0.36	+0.14	+0.15	+0.07
Reenrollment for fall 2020	88.6%	81.7%	73.3%	40.2%	65.9%	43.4%

Data and methods: This analysis used data from the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 census files prepared by Assessment & Research, pass-fail usage data from the Registrar's office as of early July, and data on Spring 2020 student outcomes, Fall registration (as of 8/20), and academic eligibility from UAccess Analytics. The analytical approach was consistent with that described in length in the earlier report (see footnote). Contact Sarah Kyte, Ph.D. (skyte@arizona.edu) with any questions.

¹ "Supporting Students during COVID-19: How the revised pass-fail grading policy helped students." Contact skyte@email.arizona.edu for a copy.