Data Focus - November 2019
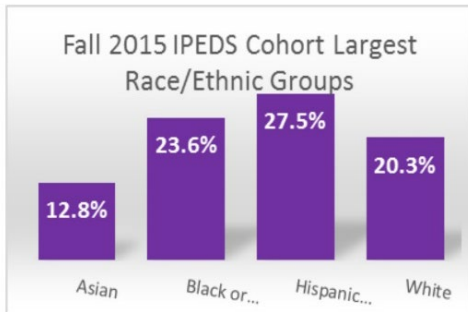

Figure 1

As we continue to examine the student academic journey through a disaggregated lens this year, course pass rates—disaggregated by race and gender—provide snapshots of student success, and are often predictors of long term success. Using IPEDS data, 1,998 students made up the fall 2015 cohort, entering the College as first-time, full-time, degree seeking students. The largest percentage of this cohort group was Hispanic, then Black, White and Asian (*Figure 1*), with more male students (56 percent) than female students (42 percent).
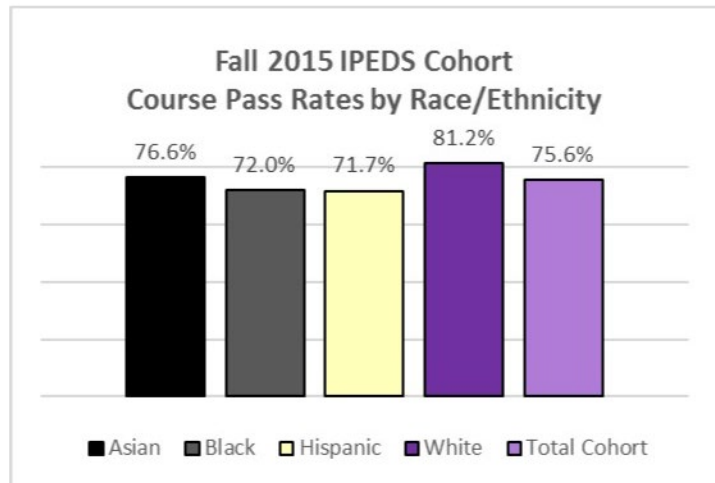
Race/ethnicity. Course pass rates represent the percentage of students that earn an A, B, C, S or H in credit and/or developmental courses. Over a four-year period, 75.6 percent of the fall 2015 cohort earned passing grades in their courses. There are some marked differences when data are examined by race/ethnicity (*Figure 2*). Comparatively, a smaller percentage of Hispanic and Black students earned passing grades than their Asian and White counterparts.

Figure 2

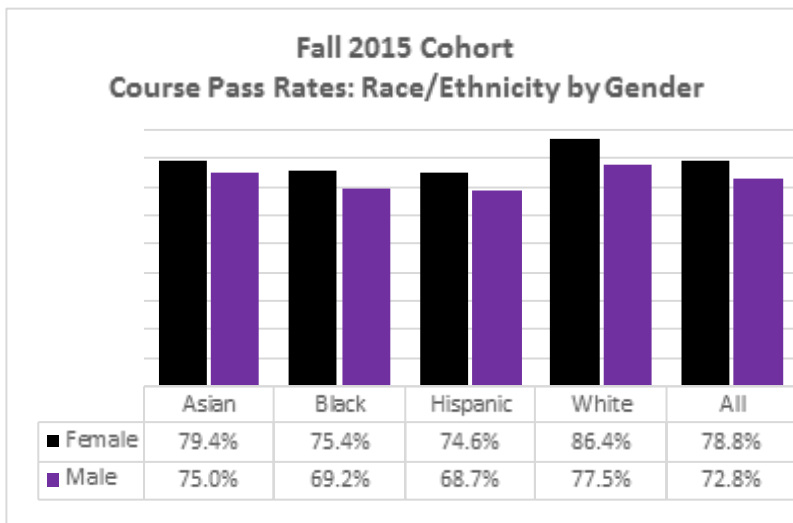|	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	All
Female	79.4%	75.4%	74.6%	86.4%	78.8%
Male	75.0%	69.2%	68.7%	77.5%	72.8%

Figure 3

Female students had higher course pass rates than their male-student counterpart across race/ethnicity, with a percentage-point differential of six points (Figure 3). White female students showed the highest course pass rate (86.4%), which is more than 10 percentage points above the pass rate for the total cohort group of (75.6%). Black male students and Hispanic male students had lower course pass rates than their female counterparts.

"Course pass rates" is an indicator of academic progress. The data clearly show that Black and Hispanic students-- most notably males—have lower course pass rates, which could negatively impact academic persistence and retention. Additional data on the fall 2015 cohort group show that the course pass rate for those who graduated and/or transferred in four years was dramatically higher (89.1%) than those who did not graduate and/or transfer in four years (63.1%). Accordingly, students who struggle with success in courses, especially in gateway courses, are less likely to persist to graduate and/or transfer. Academic initiatives like embedded support in many gateway courses with high failure rates are designed to increase student success in these early stages, and the likelihood of progress to graduation/completion.