

TO: Members of the Saint Mary's College Community

FROM: Mary McCall, Office of Institutional Research

DATE: March 2, 2010

SUBJECT: UG Student Academic Probation Report for Fall 2009

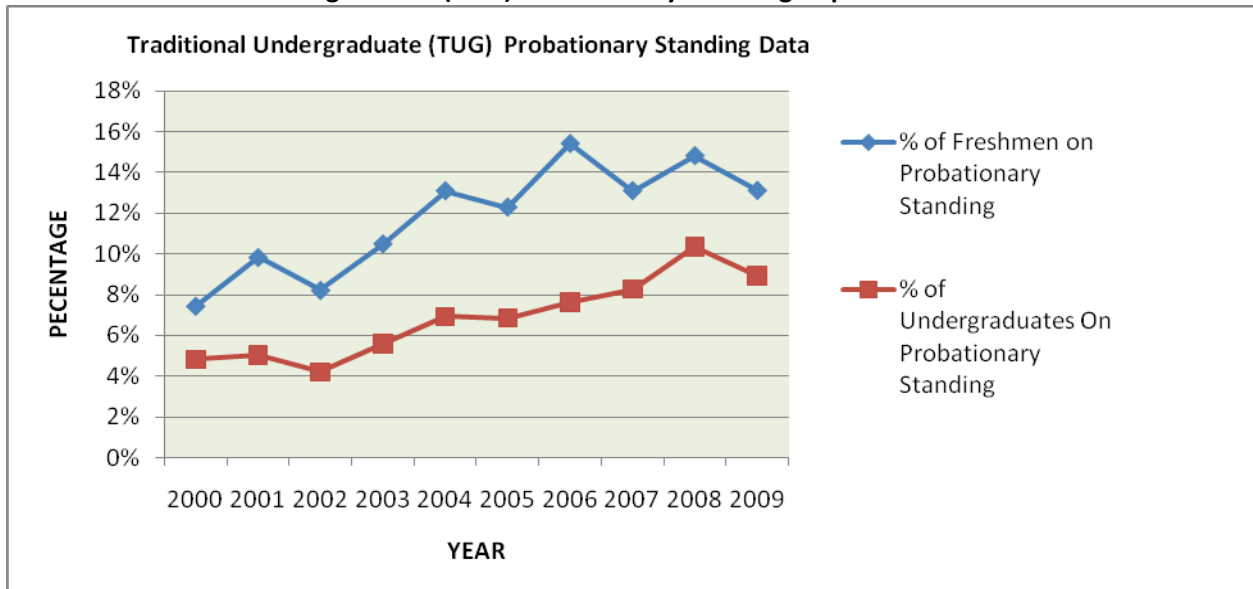
In a continued effort to disseminate and utilize campus data to inform our practice, information regarding traditional undergraduate students on academic probation follows.

The probation process is such that initial grades are filed at the end of the fall semester and students are informed that they are either: a) removed from probation from the previous term; b) on academic probation for the current fall term (a cumulative or major grade point average below 2.0); c) subject to disqualification (if their current GPA is below 1.5); d) on special academic probation (more than one semester on academic probation, but with conditions for continued enrollment); or f) disqualified (not allowed to continue under the current circumstances). Students may then file appeals to the Academic Review Board, which then considers each appeal and renders a final decision. This report presents the data from both the initial list of students on probation at the end of fall term, as well as the final list of students on probation, after appeals have been considered.

For Fall 2009, 13.11% (75/572) of first-time, full-time freshmen, now referred to as New First Year Students (NFYS), have been placed on probation, which is a decrease from last fall's rate of 14.81%. The percentage of NFYS on probation has ranged from a low of 7.4 % (46/618) in Fall 2000 to a high of 15.4% (94/610) in Fall 2006.

Overall, 8.9% of the SMC traditional undergraduate (TUG) population (212/2379) was on probationary standing (term, major or cumulative GPA below 2.0) as of the end of the Fall 2009 Term. This is lower than last year (10.3%) and is in the context of the 10-year TUG average of 6.84%. (See Chart 1 and Table 1)

**Chart 1. Traditional Undergraduate (TUG) Probationary Standing Report**



**Table 1. Traditional Undergraduate (TUG) Probationary Standing Report—Ten-Year Comparisons**

| Traditional Undergraduate (TUG) Probationary Standing Data--End of Fall Semesters, 2000-2009 |              |              |              |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  | 2000         | 2001         | 2002         | 2003          | 2004          | 2005          | 2006          | 2007          | 2008          | 2009          |
| <b>Total New TUG Freshmen</b>  | 618          | 580          | 645          | 562           | 611           | 675           | 610           | 603           | 675           | 572           |
| <b>New TUG Freshmen on Probationary Standing</b>   | 46           | 57           | 53           | 59            | 80            | 83            | 94            | 79            | 100           | 75            |
| <b>% of Freshmen on Probationary Standing</b>  | <b>7.44%</b> | <b>9.83%</b> | <b>8.22%</b> | <b>10.50%</b> | <b>13.09%</b> | <b>12.30%</b> | <b>15.41%</b> | <b>13.10%</b> | <b>14.81%</b> | <b>13.11%</b> |
| <b>Total Fall TUG Enrollment</b>   | 2492         | 2497         | 2572         | 2494          | 2440          | 2525          | 2489          | 2504          | 2514          | 2379          |
| <b>Undergraduates on Probationary Standing</b>   | 120          | 126          | 108          | 139           | 169           | 173           | 190           | 207           | 260           | 212           |
| <b>% of Undergraduates On Probationary Standing</b>  | <b>4.82%</b> | <b>5.05%</b> | <b>4.20%</b> | <b>5.57%</b>  | <b>6.93%</b>  | <b>6.85%</b>  | <b>7.63%</b>  | <b>8.27%</b>  | <b>10.34%</b> | <b>8.91%</b>  |

**First Term Performance**

Table 2 below provides data on the breakdown of term GPAs for NFYS students on probationary standing. Overall, the Fall 2009 data still represent an increase in the number of students at the lowest GPA levels (0.00 to 1.50).

**Table 2. Fall SMC Term - NFYS Grade Point Ranges**

| <b>Term GPA of NFYS on Probationary Standing</b> | <b># of NFYS Fall 2007 N = 79</b> | <b># of NFYS Fall 2008 N=100</b> | <b># of NFYS Fall 2009 N=75</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 0.00   | 2                                 | 8                                | 5                               |
| 0.01-0.99  | 11                                | 9                                | 13                              |
| 1.00-1.25  | 7                                 | 14                               | 12                              |
| 1.26-1.50  | 10                                | 16                               | 9                               |
| 1.51-1.75  | 22                                | 13                               | 8                               |
| 1.76-1.99  | 27                                | 25                               | 28                              |
| <b># Subject to Disqualification</b>             | <b>26</b>                         | <b>36*</b>                       | <b>39</b>                       |

\*This number reflects a total of 56 students, minus 7 who were disqualified from SMC, 12 who withdrew and 1 who took a leave.

**Midterm Grades**

Investigating the status of midterm grades among the students who ended up on academic probation revealed the following: of the midterm grades that were recorded (not all faculty submitted midterm grades), 31 students had a grade of D or F in one course; 24 students had a D or F in 2 courses ; 6 students had 3 courses in which they received a D or F, and 1 student received 4 Ds or Fs at midterm. There were 8 students who did not have any Ds or Fs at midterm, but still ended up on academic probation at the end of the term.

Closer examination of the courses in which students were most frequently receiving unsatisfactory midterm grades showed that Greek Thought was the most common course in which grade deficiencies were reported for this group. Thus, it may be useful for first-year academic advisors to check for that midterm grade and work more intentionally with those students who receive a D or F in Greek Thought at midterm time.

### **Disciplinary Violations**

Inquiry into the disciplinary violations showed that 8 students (11%) were found to be in violation of the student code of conduct during fall term. The most common infraction was either alcohol or drug possession.

### **Background Characteristics**

Overall, the NFYS class had an average High School GPA of 3.40 and an average SAT score of 1091. With respect to those students on academic probation, both male and female NFYS had lower average incoming high school GPAs and total SAT scores compared to the overall NFYS. (See Table 3)

**Table 3. Fall 2009 NFYS on Probationary Standing by Gender, High School GPA & Mean SAT Scores.\***

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>% of NFYS on Probation</b> | <b>% of Total NFYS</b> | <b>Mean SMC GPA of NFYS on Probation</b> | <b>Mean High School GPA of NFYS on Probation</b> | <b>Average High School GPA of All NFYS</b> | <b>Avg. SAT Scores of NFYS on Probation</b> | <b>Avg. SAT (Total) Scores of All NFYS</b> |
|---------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Female</b> | 45%                           | 62%                    | 1.20                                     | 3.09   | 3.42                                       | 1050  | 1061                                       |
| <b>Male</b>   | 55%                           | 38%                    | 1.40                                     | 2.99   | 3.28                                       | 987   | 1080                                       |
| <b>All</b>    | 100%                          | 100%                   | 1.31                                     | 3.04   | 3.40                                       | 1008  | 1091                                       |

More specifically, the data reveals that:

- Similar to Fall 2008 data, male NFYS make up a substantially higher percentage of students on probation (55%) as compared to the total male NFYS population (38%).
- Incoming characteristics (average high school GPA and average total SAT scores) are relatively higher for female NFYS on probation compared to males, though this was not statistically significant. These data, too, are similar to Fall 2008.
- The average Fall 2009 term GPA of NFYS on probation (1.20) was lower for freshmen females than the SMC term GPAs for females on probation in Fall 2008 (which was 1.35) while the same GPAs for freshmen males was actually higher (1.40) than in Fall 2008 (1.30).
- Similar to findings in previous years, there seems to be no common “profile” that may assist in predicting students who may end up on academic probation, particularly with respect to incoming student characteristics such as high school GPA and SAT scores. *NFYS on academic probation had average high school GPAs which ranged from 2.44 to 3.96 for Females and 2.20 to 3.95 for Males. (The average HS GPA of all NFYS was 3.40.) The average Total SAT score of all NFYS for 2009 was 1091. (In 2008, the average Total SAT score was 1081.)*

### **Ethnic Groups and Probationary Standing**

The Office of Institutional Research examined differences among groups of students to see if variations in rates of probation standing exist. Table 4 below presents the percentages of ethnic groups of students and their respective rates of academic probation.

**Table 4. Fall 2009 NFYS on Probationary Standing, Comparative Data, by Ethnic Group**

| <b>Student-Reported Ethnicity</b>               | <b>Total Number of NFYS</b> | <b>% of NFYS Population</b> | <b>Total Number of NFYS on Probation</b> | <b>% of NFYS on Probation</b> | <b>% of Total Group on Probation</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>African American</b>                         | 41                          | 7.20%                       | 8  | 10.67%                        | 19.43%                               |
| <b>Native American</b>                          | 9                           | 1.50%                       | 2  | 2.67%                         | 23.31%                               |
| <b>Asian-American / Pacific Islander (AAPI)</b> | 77                          | 13.50%                      | 12                                       | 16.00%                        | 15.54%                               |
| <b>Latino</b>                                   | 137                         | 23.90%                      | 20                                       | 26.67%                        | 14.63%                               |
| <b>White</b>                                    | 256                         | 44.80%                      | 23                                       | 30.67%                        | 8.98%                                |

- Although African-American students represent 7.2% of the NFYS class, they represent 10.7% of students on probation. It is promising to note that, proportionately, fewer African-American students were on probation this year (19.43%) than in the previous two years. (The Fall 2008 percentage of African-American NFYS was 21%; Fall 2007 was 24%).
- White students make up almost one-third of NFYS on probation (30.7%) but are almost one-half of the entire freshman population. Continuing to show improvement from the previous two years, there were fewer White NFYS place on Academic Probation this Fall (37.4% in Fall 2008 and 56% in Fall 2007).
- Asian-American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) students constitute 13.5% of the incoming class but 16% have been placed on probation. For the second year in a row, this shows an increase in the number of AAPI students placed on probation from the prior year’s NFYS class, which was 14%. (In 2007, only 5% of the AAPI NFYS population was on probation at the end of fall term.)
- Latino students represent almost 24% of this year’s freshman class and 26.7% of Latino NFYS placed on probation. This is a lower probation rate than last year’s rate of 30%, nearly equaling the 27% of first-year Latino students from fall 2007.

These data indicate that students of color continue to be overrepresented in the ranks of those on academic probation and point to the need for further analysis of factors that may be contributing to this situation. Both academic factors such as readiness and study skills should be investigated, as well as exacerbating non-academic factors such as financial stress, working hours, family issues and campus climate characteristics. Previous research has shown that these other factors also have a large impact on academic performance of students of color.

With the institution of the new First Year Advising Cohort (FYAC) program, we may have more insight into the challenges that our new first-year students face. The evaluation of that program includes questions about sources of stress for these students and this may help us focus our efforts to help students succeed and stay at Saint Mary’s.

## **Students Other Than New First Year Students On Probation**

An analysis of students on probation, other than NFYS, revealed the following results. There were 23 seniors, 38 juniors, 56 sophomores, and 24 non-NFYS freshmen\* on probation after the Fall 2009 term. (\*Non-NFYS freshmen are those who completed less than 9 credits their previous year or transferred in at the freshmen level). Of the 24 non-NFYS freshmen, 13 had been on probation the previous year. Of the 56 sophomores, 13 had been on probation the previous year. In this group, 38% (53/141) had below a 2.0 grade point average GPA in their cumulative GPA; 55% (78/141) earned below 2.0 for their term GPA; and, 48% (68/141) were on probation due to their GPA in their Major. Table 5 outlines the percent of students in different majors who were placed on probation after Fall 2009.

**Table 5. Percent of Students on Probationary Standing by Major**

|                           | <b>% ON PROBATION IN MAJOR BY CLASS LEVEL</b> |             |            |            |               |
|---------------------------|---|-------------|------------|------------|---------------|
|                           | <b>FROSH</b>                                  | <b>SOPH</b> | <b>JRS</b> | <b>SRS</b> | <b>totals</b> |
| <b>SCIENCE (all)</b>      |   |             |            |            | 10.2%         |
| BIOLOGY (n=49)            | 0.0%  | 6.1%        | 6.1%       | 0.0%       |               |
| EES (n=2)                 | 0.0%  | 100.0%      | 0.0%       | 0.0%       |               |
| HLTHSCI (n=39)            | 2.6%  | 7.7%        | 7.7%       | 7.7%       |               |
| PSYCH (n=139)             | 0.7%  | 2.9%        | 2.9%       | 3.6%       |               |
| 3+2 ENG (n=7)             | 0.0%  | 0.0%        | 28.6%      | 0.0%       |               |
| <b>SEBA (all)</b>         |   |             |            |            | 4.4%          |
| ACCTG (n=64)              | 0.0%  | 0.0%        | 1.6%       | 1.6%       |               |
| BUSAD (n=248)             | 0.0%  | 1.6%        | 1.6%       | 1.6%       |               |
| ECON (n=31)               | 0.0%  | 0.0%        | 0.0%       | 3.2%       |               |
| <b>SOLA (all)</b>         |   |             |            |            | 6.5%          |
| ANTH (N=28)               | 0.0%  | 3.6%        | 0.0%       | 0.0%       |               |
| COMM (n=133)              | 0.8%  | 0.0%        | 3.8%       | 4.5%       |               |
| ENG (n=76)                | 0.0%  | 2.6%        | 3.9%       | 0.0%       |               |
| HISTORY (n=32)            | 0.0%  | 0.0%        | 3.1%       | 3.1%       |               |
| KINES (n=99)              | 0.0%  | 9.1%        | 8.1%       | 1.0%       |               |
| L&CS (n=87)               | 0.0%  | 1.1%        | 0.0%       | 0.0%       |               |
| MATH (n=14)               | 0.0%  | 7.1%        | 7.1%       | 0.0%       |               |
| POLITICS (n=53)           | 1.9%  | 1.9%        | 1.9%       | 1.9%       |               |
| SOC (n=51)                | 2.0%  | 0.0%        | 2.0%       | 0.0%       |               |
| <b>UNDECIDED (n=1005)</b> | 1.9%  | 2.5%        | 0.1%       | 0.0%       | 4.5%          |

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Office of Institutional Research at x4754 or email Mary at ([mmccall@stmarys-ca.edu](mailto:mmccall@stmarys-ca.edu)).