



Living & Learning Communities at North Carolina A&T State University

Dr. Regina Williams-Davis, North Carolina A&T State University

Dr. Julie Edmunds, UNC Greensboro

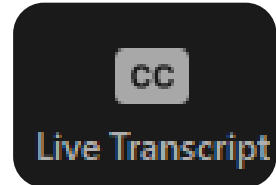
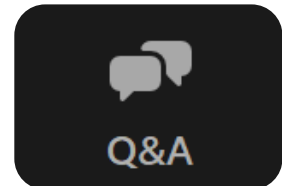
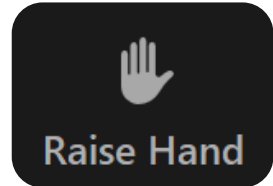
Dr. Aubri Rote, University of North Carolina at Asheville

Lunch and Learn Series

- **Student Success Innovation Lab**
 - Fund the implementation of promising student success interventions
- **Math Pathways Initiative**
 - Increase retention and completion rates in gateway and entry-level math courses
- **Select third-party evaluators from within the UNC System to:**
 - Partner with practitioners to develop the interventions
 - Analyze outcomes for interventions
 - Develop recommendations for future research

Announcements

- Attendee Engagement
 - Raise Hand: Receive technical assistance
 - Q&A: Submit question about presentation
 - Email: studentsuccess@northcarolina.edu
- Closed Captioning and Live Transcription
- Recorded Webinar: Will receive via link to video and be posted on the SSIL website.



SSIL – Living & Learning Communities at North Carolina A&T State University

Aggie Success Academy

- Provide an immersive summer residence program that will integrate incoming first year students into the university community and prepare them for success at the college level.
- Initiative Team Lead: Dr. Regina Williams-Davis, Assistant Provost for Student Success and Academic Support, North Carolina A&T State University
- Research Affiliate: Dr. Julie Edmunds, Director, Secondary School Reform Program at SERVE Center, UNC Greensboro

Living and Learning Community Assessment

- Assessed if LLC enrollment resulted in greater retention and academic performance. Also examined trends in experiences among LLC advisors.
- Evaluator: Dr. Aubri Rote, Associate Professor of Health and Wellness, UNC Asheville



AGGIE SUCCESS ACADEMY

Dr. Regina Williams-Davis
North Carolina A&T State University

Dr. Julie Edmunds
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Snapshot of Key Findings

- ASA met all of its outcome goals, with more students on track for graduating in four years.
- Initial results show that 54.5% of ASA students earned more than 30 credits compared to 22.2% of comparison students.
- Students reported the program better prepared them for college.

Problem Statement

- Approximately a quarter of A&T freshmen do not return for their sophomore year.
- Students who have the following risk factors are less likely to remain in school:
 - low-income students;
 - students with lower GPA;
 - students living off campus and
 - in-state students.

Research Questions

- What is the impact of the Aggie Success Academy on students' academic performance in their freshman year?
- What is the impact of the Aggie Success Academy on students' confidence and their perceptions of belonging and community?
- What is the impact of the Aggie Success Academy on students' persistence into their sophomore year?

ASA Content

The Aggie Success Academy provides a summer residency program allowing students to earn general education course credits while building math and coding skills; develop peer connections.

The goal is to increase retention and graduation rates of students identified as at-risk.

Program Details

Eligibility: NC Students with a GPA greater than or equal to 2.85-3.00 who have completed their Intent to Enroll at the university.

Time frame: 6 weeks (Second Summer Session)

Access to courses: NC A&T State University History: A Legacy of Social Activism and Aggie Pride, English 100, Freshman Studies, Math Boot Camp, Coding

Pre- and Post-Test for Math Boot Camp

Workshops with Campus Partners: Financial Aid, Career Services, ROTC, Counseling Services, Accessibility Resources, Student Leaders

Program Details

- Learning Specialist and Peer Tutors
- Advising and Professor Office Hours
- New Student Orientation
- Health and Fitness Class
- Field Trips

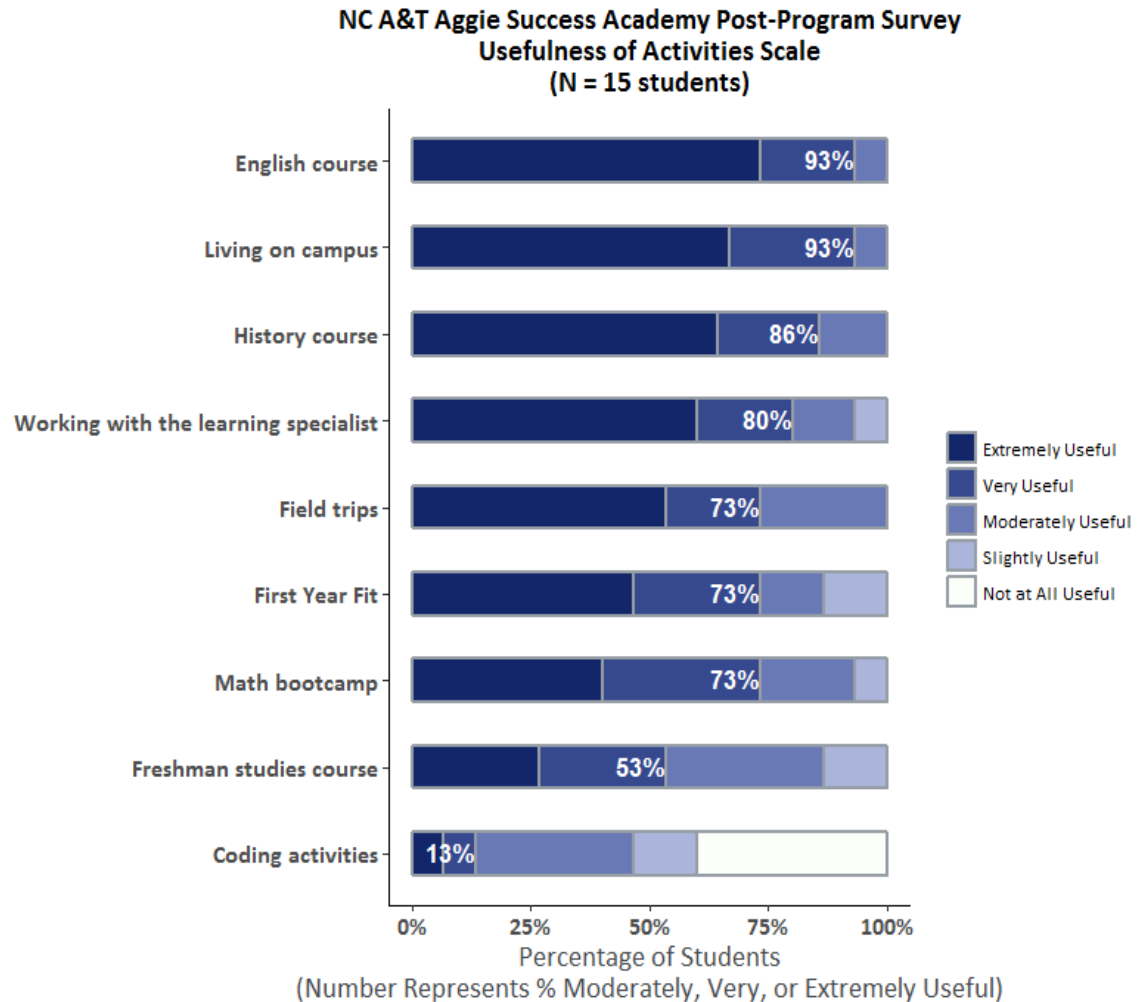


Targeted Outcomes

- Increased credits earned by end of freshman year (Target is 23)
- Increase % of students earning at least 30 credits in freshman year (Target is 34.0%)
- Improve GPA (Target is 2.3)
- Increase persistence to sophomore year (Target is 64%)
- Increased sense of belonging, increase awareness of campus resources, increased awareness of learning styles, increased digital literacy

Implementation Findings

- Activities were implemented as intended and students were overall very satisfied with their experience.
- Coding component is being revisited.



Summer Outcomes

- 21 out of 22 enrolled students completed the ASA.
- All 21 students who remained for the full five weeks earned at least six credits. Across all courses, students had an average GPA of 3.14.
- Students reported substantial impacts on their readiness for college.

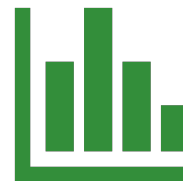
I think it was worthwhile because it prepares you for the fall. Kind of like how your teacher or your teacher's teaching styles, the campus, too. Learned a lot about the campus just going back and forth to class, doing different projects, going to the library.—Student

Impact Study



Study Design:

Year 1: students who enrolled in ASA compared to non-enrolled students. Non-enrolled students are weighted so that they have similar characteristics.



Data sources

Survey administered to treatment and comparison students in fall 2019 and spring 2020

Administrative data (Credits earned, GPA, one-year persistence rate)

Survey Findings

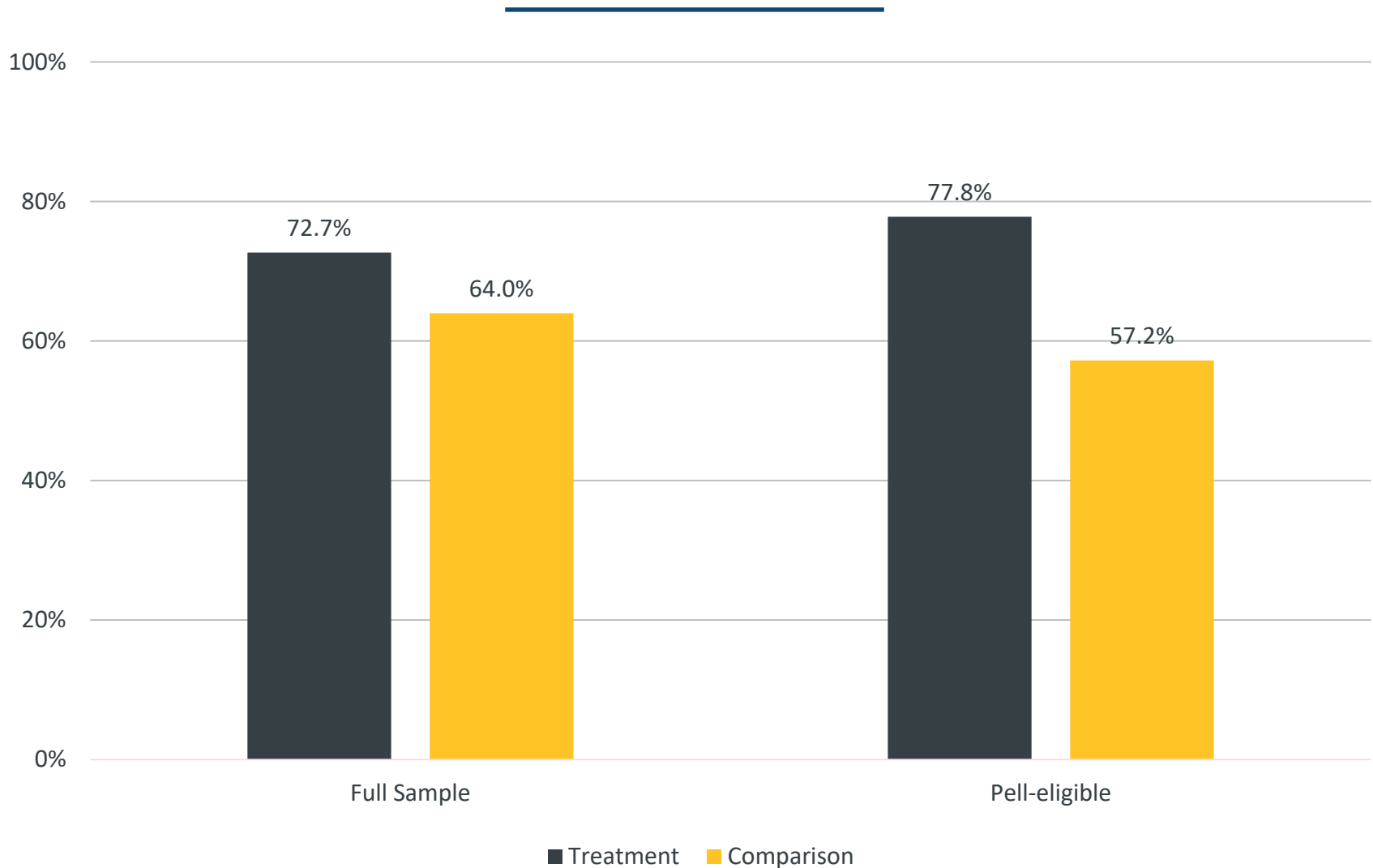
Construct	Fall Impact	Spring Impact
Felt prepared for college	0.9**	1.1*
Study Skills	0.3	0.6*
Comfort with technology	0.4	0.6*
Stress and exercise	0.1	0.5
Learning styles	0.2	0.3
Grit	0.0	0.3
Beliefs about schoolwork	0.4	0.2
Awareness of college resources	0.1	0.2
Belonging/connection to A&T	0.3	0.1
Positive relationships with faculty	0.5*	0.1
Positive relationships with peers	0.4*	0.1
Comfort with math	0.0	0.1

Year 1 Findings

Outcome	Target	ASA Treatment Group	Comparison Group (Adjusted Mean)	Impact Estimates
Credits earned	23.0	27.5	21.1*	+6.4
% earning more than 30 credits	34.0%	54.5%	22.2%*	+32.3%
GPA	2.30	2.47	2.31	+0.16
Enrolled in Fall 2020	64.0%	72.7%	64.0%	+8.7%

Sample: 22 Treatment students compared to 80 students who were eligible for the treatment, did not participate, but ended up enrolling in A&T. Results weighted by background characteristics.

Larger Impact on Persistence for Pell-Eligible Students



Modifications for Summer 2021

- Creating a sense of belonging in the virtual Aggie Summer Academy
- Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Course Delivery
- Learning Specialist will meet with students virtually
- Tutoring services will be available 24/7 online.
- Coding 101, Math Boot Camp, and Health and Fitness will be delivered virtually.

Activities and Events

- Daily Zoom Meetings facilitated by Ms. Caldwell to promote student engagement.
- Student-led chat sessions hosted by former Undeclared and ASA students.
- Virtual field trips (links found on page 2)
- Virtual social activities, (ex. painting class, DJ battle, comedy show)
- Virtual Talent Show (Apollo Style)
- Virtual Guest Celebrity Speakers

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

- May be important to figure out ways of extending the school year for more students.
- Potential intervention for students in the “murky middle”

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Ensure that financial aid opportunities can cover summer or extended year programming
- Ensure a reasonable offering of freshman and sophomore level of courses are available during the summer.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS

- In quasi-experimental designs, it is hard to think about how what makes a good comparison group
 - Participants in ASA might be more or less motivated than their peers
 - They decided to participate in ASA so might be more motivated OR they were only able to participate because they were not motivated enough to have other summer plans already.
 - Also, if ASA encourages marginal students to matriculate in the fall, then they might be lower performing than their peers who enrolled without ASA
- RCTs can help solve this problem, when possible.
- Matriculation might be another good outcome for bridge programs.



LIVING AND LEARNING COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Dr. Aubri Rote

University of North Carolina at Asheville

Purpose

- Compare academic performance and retention for students enrolled in a Living Learning Community (LLC) at NC A&T to a similar group of students not in an LLC.
- Examine if there were differences GPA and retention among different LLCs at NC A&T
- Examine trends in experiences among LLC advisors at NC A&T

What is a Living Learning Community?



NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL
AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY

RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Housing and Residence Life strives to promote educational excellence in the Residential Learning Community and increase retention for North Carolina A&T State University. Through strong collaborations with Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, the Residential Learning Communities enable residents to experience a more educationally enriched community supporting his/her academic and career aspirations.

Moreover, Housing and Residence Life recognizes the importance of life skills for the employability of our students. As such, these communities will focus on a Residential Curriculum guiding students toward competencies in life skills such as critical thinking and reasoning, social and civic responsibility, character, ethics, and communication. Visit each residential community page below for more information.

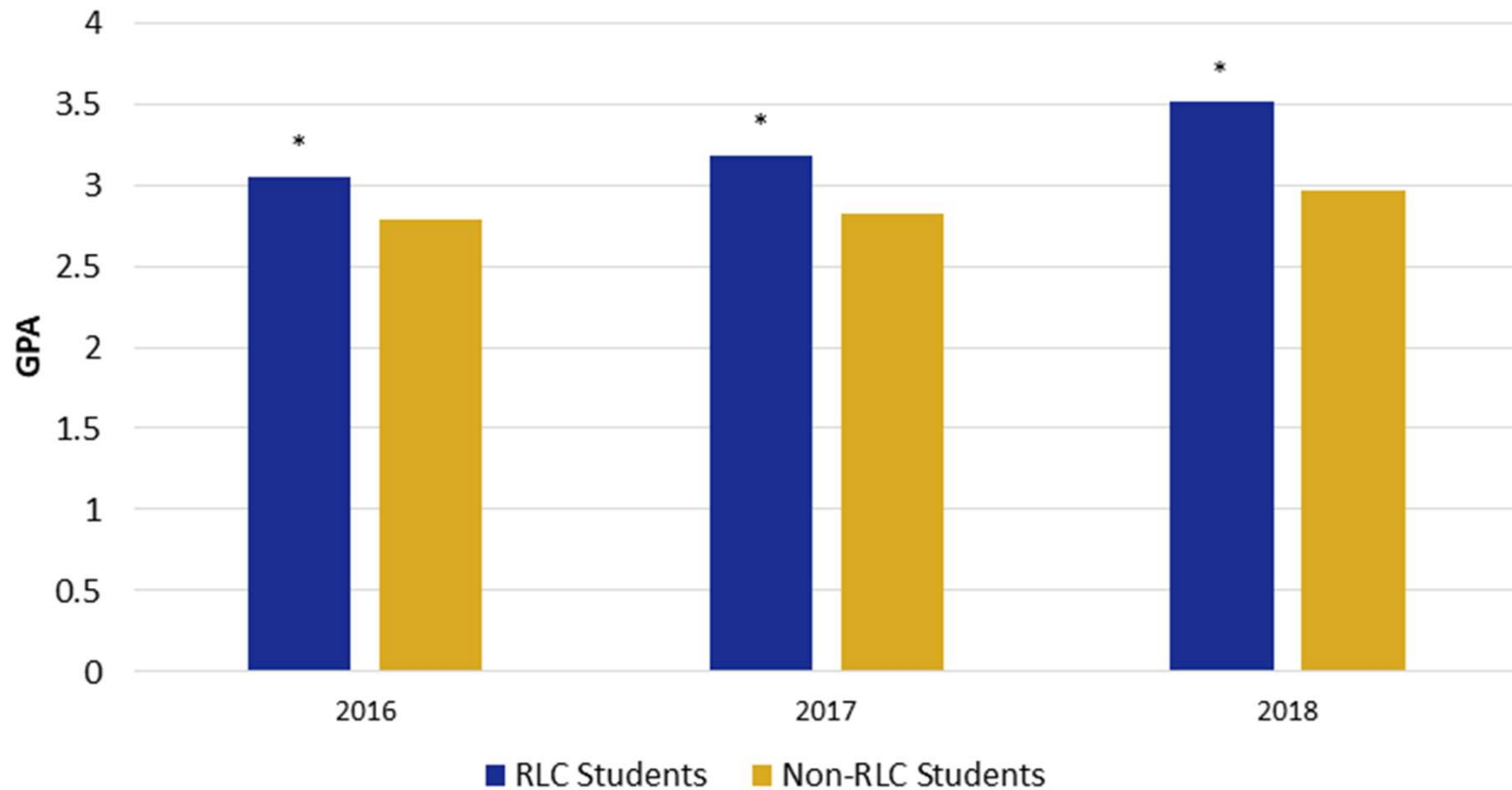
Snapshot of Key Findings

- GPA was significantly higher ($p < .001$) for students enrolled in an LLC compared to similar students not in an LLC for each of the three academic years.
- Retention was significantly higher for students enrolled in an LLC compared to similar students not in an LLC over several fall semesters examined.
- Wide variability among LLCs in numerous aspects, both quantitative and qualitative

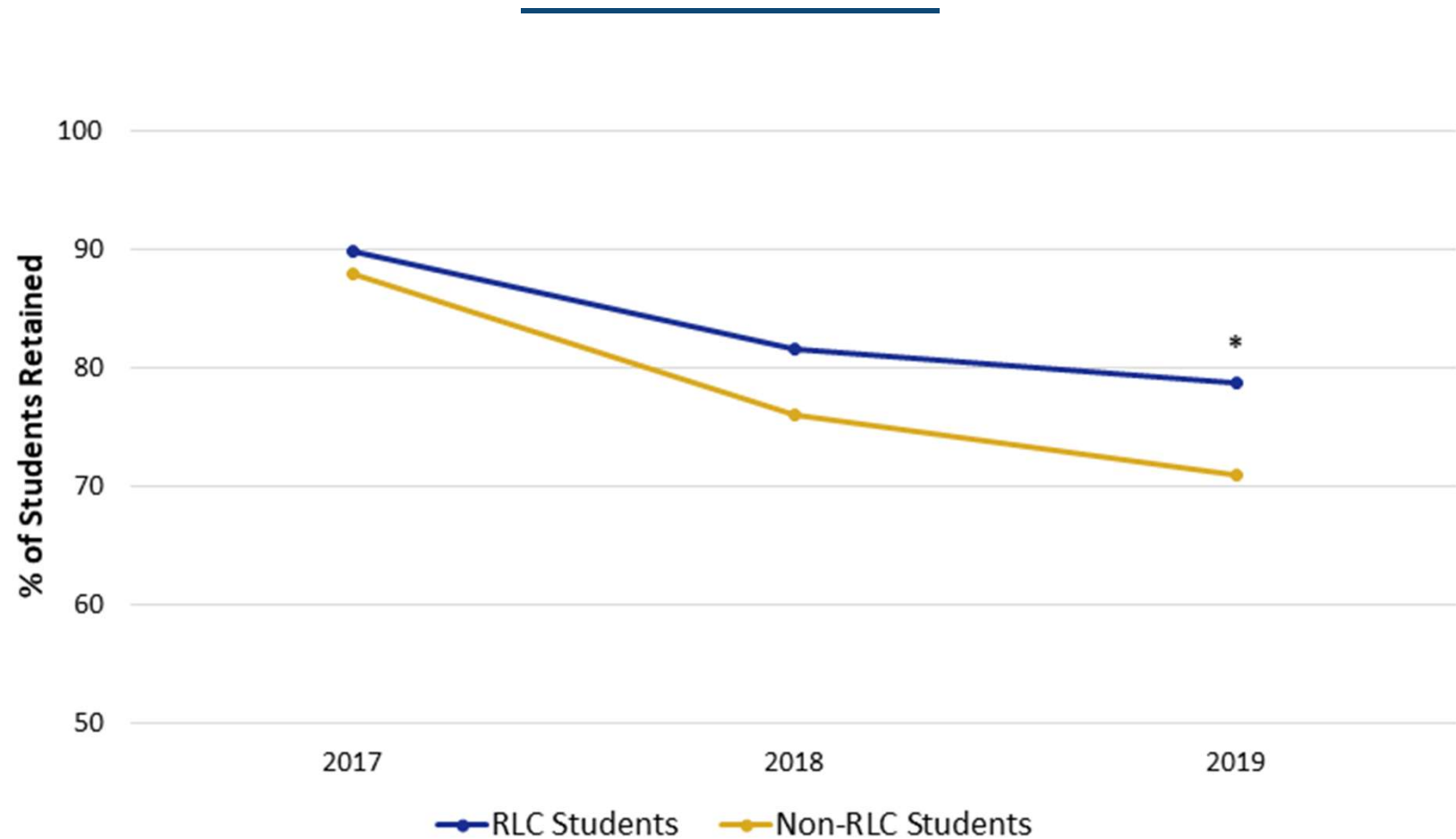
Quantitative Assessment - Methods

- Data from AY 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 obtained from Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OSPIE)
- Comparison groups were created by matching year in school and major. This resulted in the following samples sizes:
 - 2016-2017 – LLC (n=288) vs. non-LLC (n=285)
 - 2017-2018 – LLC (n=375) vs. non-LLC (n=377)
 - 2018-2019 – LLC (n=535) vs. non-LLC (n=538)
- Statistical Analyses
 - Independent t-tests - assess differences in institutional GPA
 - Two-proportion z-tests - assess differences in the proportions of students retained the following year by group

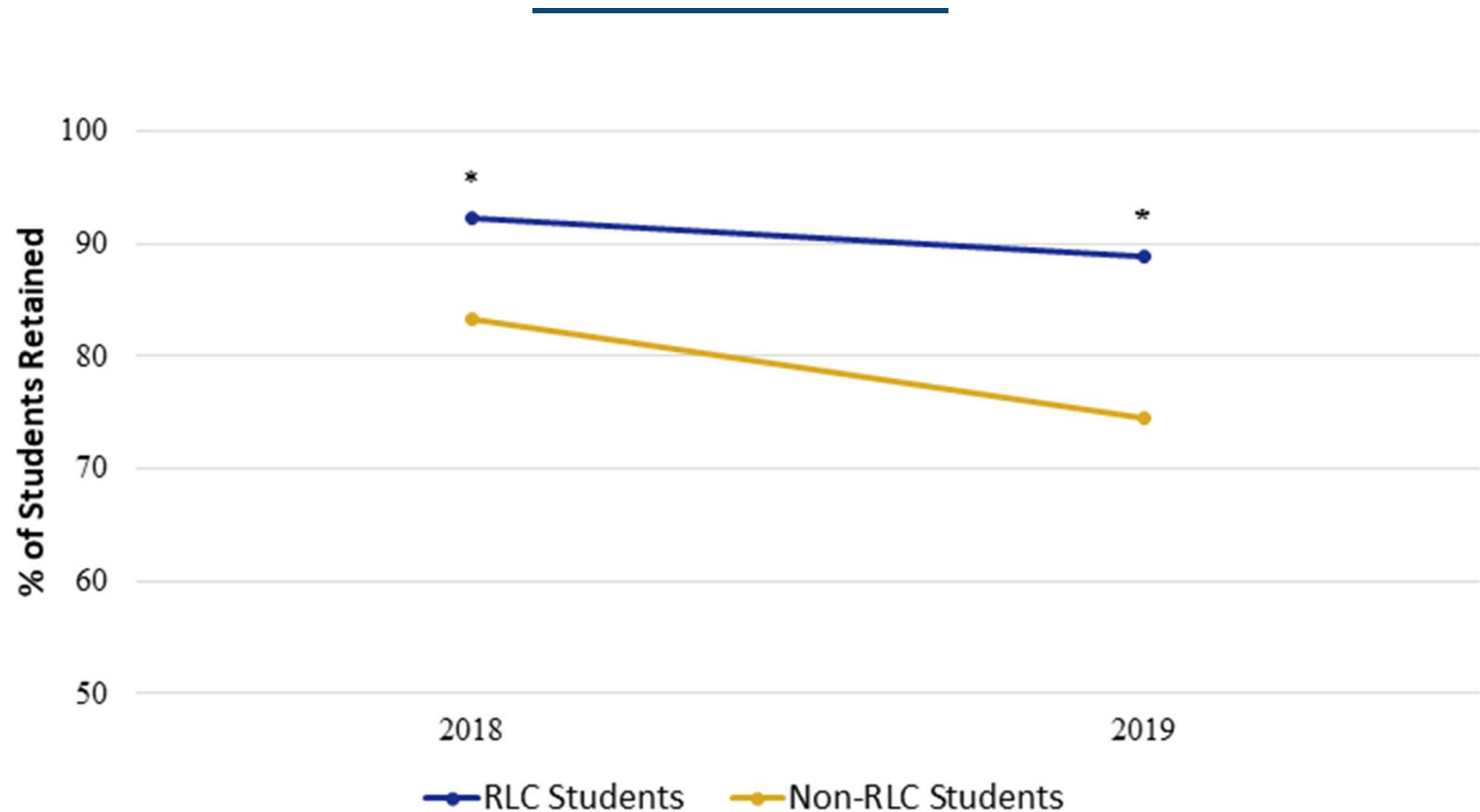
Institutional GPA Compared by Group



Retention at Fall Semester: 2016-2017 Cohort



Retention at Fall Semester: 2017-2018 Cohort



GPA and Retention Rates by LLC Type: 2016-2017

LLC Type	GPA M (SD)	Retained at Sophomore Year (%)	Retained at Junior Year (%)	Retained at Senior Year (%)
FIT (n=12)	3.23 (.49)	91.7	91.7	83.3
Honors (n=82)	3.42 (.67)	95.1	91.5	89.0
ICEE (n=16)	3.04 (.72)	87.5	81.3	75.0
MARCH (n=26)	2.41 (.91)	73.1	65.4	61.5
Nursing (n=16)	3.22 (.46)	87.5	81.3	81.3
SISTERS (n=42)	3.13 (.63)	88.1	73.8	69.0
STEM (n=39)	2.93 (.68)	92.3	82.1	84.6
TECH (n=18)	2.55 (.79)	77.8	77.8	77.8
TRIO (n=19)	2.62 (.84)	94.7	73.7	68.4

GPA and Retention Rates by LLC Type: 2017-2018

LLC Type	GPA M (SD)	Retained at Sophomore Year (%)	Retained at Junior Year (%)
FIT (n=17)	3.32 (.37)	82.4	70.6
Honors (n=120)	3.44 (.67)	95.8	95.8
ICEE (n=19)	2.55 (.94)	78.9	68.4
MARCH (n=31)	2.39 (1.04)	83.9	77.4
Nursing (n=14)	3.00 (.58)	85.7	71.4
SISTERS (n=39)	2.87 (.89)	82.1	76.9
STEM (n=33)	2.94 (.74)	97.0	87.9
TRIO (n=24)	3.10 (.53)	95.8	95.8

GPA and Retention Rates by LLC Type: 2018-2019

LLC Type	GPA M (SD)	Retained at Sophomore Year (%)
FIT (n=12)	3.26 (.73)	75.0
Honors (n=121)	3.57 (.54)	95.9
Honors Ambassadors (n=221)	3.64 (.27)	98.6
ICEE (n=25)	2.97 (.95)	84.0
Noble (n=27)	3.36 (.51)	81.5
SISTERS (n=36)	3.11 (.69)	97.2
STEM (n=30)	3.32 (.70)	93.3
TRIO (n=10)	2.91 (.82)	100
Cheatham-White (n=20)	3.89 (.17)	100
Dowdy (n=19)	3.64 (.58)	100

Qualitative Assessment - Methods

Members of the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) and a representative from Housing and Residence Life worked together to develop 10 questions to pose to LLC advisors. These questions are as follows:

1. How did you come into the role of Residential Learning Community (RLC) advisor?
2. What kinds of experiences or preparation do you have for the role of RLC advisor?
3. Did you conceptualize the RLC you supervise?
4. Are you also the Academic Advisor for students in your RLC?
5. How do you recruit for your RLC, and do you believe this has an impact on the students in the RLC?
6. Do students self-select into your RLC, and if so, do you think this impacts their performance in the RLC?
7. What campus partnerships do you rely on to run your RLC?
8. How much funding do you receive for your RLC, and how is this funding distributed?
9. What have you observed are the benefits of your RLC in relation to student growth and development? What are the drawbacks?
10. What percentage of your students utilize the early registration dates, and what impact have you noticed for students who do or do not use it?

Qualitative Assessment - Results

- 6 of 7 respondents were assigned advisor role because of a position they held (e.g. Career Advisor, retention advisor).
- 1 of 7 advisors conceptualized the LLC, whereas the others were assigned the role after it had been developed.
- Preparation experiences
 - o Master's in School Counseling
 - o Work as a graduate assistant in the NC A&T Office of Career Services
 - o Experience they gained as an academic advisor
 - o Getting involved in the LLC and learning from there

Qualitative Assessment - Results

- 4 of 7 also served as Academic Advisors
- Recruitment strategies include:
 - Sharing information with eligible students (via invitations and applications through housing registration)
 - Partnering with CAE and the bridge program
 - Hosting recruitment events.
- One advisor reported that they randomly select students since they are seeking a variety of students
- Another advisor said they do not recruit.

Qualitative Assessment - Results

- Funding
 - Most LLCs do not receive any funding.
 - Some advisors reported that they have access to a small amount of money if their LLC is part of a larger program (e.g. Honors Program).
 - “I pay for my events myself out of my salary.”
 - “For the most part we rely on people donating their time and we rely on collaborating with other departments to carry out programs.”
- Partnerships
 - Housing and Residence Life (n=5),
 - Counseling Services (n=3),
 - The Office of Student Development (n=2)
 - The Office of Career Services (n=2).

Qualitative Assessment - Results

- Benefits
 - o Development of personal relationships
 - o Development of career goals and interests
 - o Improved student retention
 - o Intellectual development
 - o Increased use of on-campus resources
 - o Increased pursuit of internships, scholarships, and on-campus employment
 - o Increased involvement with student organizations, leadership roles, and volunteering
 - o Self-actualizing personal identity
 - o The fact of being in a group of others who are similar can increase motivation and provide support (e.g. study groups).

Qualitative Assessment - Results

- Drawbacks
 - o Lack of or limited funding
 - o Restrictions in what can be done with federal money
 - o Limited time interacting with students in LLCs
 - o Loss of students in LLC due to academics
 - o Large size of LLCs can make it difficult to interact with all students
 - o The need for more support from the university.

Implications - Practitioners

- Data from this assessment demonstrate the positive impact LLCs can have on academic performance and retention.
- The benefits of these programs appear to outweigh the drawbacks.
- Considerations for implementation:
 - Clarity on the role and training for LLC advisors
 - Data on the efficacy of programs is key for continued support and development of the program.
 - Early data planning and collection for LLCs
 - Hiring a data/research specialist for your team
 - Connecting with faculty on campus to serve in this role
 - Partnering with institutional research units on campus

Implications - Researchers

- Lots of potential for future studies on LLCs
- Partnering early in the planning process would be highly beneficial.
- Fostering connections with institutional research units on campus is key.
- Other data to consider
 - Examining factors contributing to variability among different LLCs
 - Examining student perceptions of LLCs
 - Examining barriers to participating in LLCs
 - Examining post-graduation outcomes

Implications - Policymakers

- LLCs need adequate financial support.
 - The clear benefits of these programs warrant university investment.
- Differences in retention have potentially large implications for the university budget.
 - Extrapolating the percentage differences in 2017-2018, an additional 34 students were retained at sophomore year who were in an LLC compared to students who were not.
- Data implications
 - Acquiring data to complete this analysis was very challenging.
 - Policies connecting institutional research units, faculty, and student success programs is essential.

Acknowledgements

Regina Davis

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Shun Robertson

QUESTIONS?

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Lunch and Learn Series

February 24	Advising 2.0: Measuring the impact of an Academic Case Manager at UNC Asheville
March 12	Evaluating Classroom Supports: Drop-In Tutoring Lab Program at Appalachian State University & the Learning Community Program at East Carolina University
March 26	Living & Learning Communities at North Carolina A&T State University
April 27	Removing Barriers to Access: Completion Grants Across Four UNC System Institutions

Register, Access Presentations, and Replay Webinars

<https://www.northcarolina.edu/impact/student-success/student-success-innovation-lab-ssil/student-success-innovation-lab-events>

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LIVING & LEARNING COMMUNITIES AT NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY

SESSION PRESENTERS

Dr. Regina Williams Davis is the Assistant Provost for Student Success and Academic Support at North Carolina A&T State University, where she has worked for 18 years. Dr. Williams Davis earned tenure and rose to the rank of full professor. In her administrative roles, she chaired the department of Liberal Studies, became the director for the Center for Academic Excellence, and now serves as the Assistant Provost for Student Success and Academic Support. Dr. Williams Davis has written several books, has earned several student success grants and was a team member of the network OASIS: Optimizing Academic Success and Institutional Strategy.

Dr. Julie Edmunds is Program Director at the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where she conducts program evaluations, ranging from development evaluations to rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental impact studies. Dr. Edmunds' work focuses mostly on the transition to college. She is Principal Investigator of a 16-year experimental study of the impact of early colleges and is also leading a five-year evaluation of the impact, implementation and cost of North Carolina's dual enrollment program. Dr. Edmunds has led a randomized controlled trial of an effort to redesign online courses in a community college setting.

Dr. Aubri Rote is Chair and Associate Professor in the Health and Wellness Department at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. Dr. Rote teaches courses on chronic disease, body image, exercise science as well as currently oversees the senior capstone experience for Health and Wellness majors at UNC Asheville. Dr. Rote's research areas include decreasing weight bias and improving body image. In addition, due to Dr. Rote's passion for teaching, she also conducts research examining novel pedagogical strategies. Dr. Rote has also served as a Fellow with UNC Asheville's Center for Teaching and Learning and the Chair of UNC Asheville's Faculty Welfare and Development Committee where she focused on improving leadership development on campus and increasing equity in a variety of dimensions for faculty across campus.