

A STUDY OF PROBATIONARY STUDENTS AT
MANATEE JUNIOR COLLEGE

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Introduction

This study was conducted for two purposes. The first purpose was to determine some characteristics of students who entered Manatee Junior College on probation or who were placed on probation after attempting at least one semester's courses. The second purpose was to study the eventual success or failure of these probationary students.

In general, a student at the present time is placed on probation at admission for any one of the following reasons:

1. One of the two admissions test scores is below the admission standard. The required scores are 281 for the School and College Ability Test (SCAT) and 150 for the total on the Florida Twelfth Grade Testing Program.
2. Previous college credit (if any) has yielded a grade point average of less than 2.0 (C).
3. One or both test scores are not available.

Under present rules, a student is placed on academic probation when he fails to produce a 1.80 grade point average at the end of his first semester of full attendance (which is defined as 12 or more semester hours attempted). A student not already on probation will be placed on probation if he fails to produce a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C) at the end of his second semester of full attendance (or 24 or more semester hours attempted). A full time student must earn a grade point average of 2.0 (C) during any semester he is on probation or the student will be suspended. A student remains on academic probation until such time as his cumulative grade point average reaches 2.0 (C). The cumulative grade point average of transfer students includes work attempted at previously attended institutions.

The study covered the original six years of the existence of Manatee Junior College. During the first four years of the study period there were no entrance requirements except high school graduation or its equivalent. The total cumulative enrollment for the six year period was 7440 while the probationary students during this time numbered 1173, or 15.8 per cent of the total enrollment.

Characteristics of the Probationary Students

The probationary students are categorized into two groups, each of which has several subgroups. All subsequent references are to these groups as they are defined in Table 1.

Students placed on probation upon admission can be described in terms of School and College Ability Test (SCAT) scores and total percentile scores on the Florida Statewide Twelfth Grade Testing Program.

The SCAT percentile distribution had a full range for each of the four subgroups; however, there were apparent differences in average performance. The SCAT mean percentile for all of the subgroups were as follows: 1a (full-time, first time in college), 22; 1b (part-time, first time in college), 17; 1c (full-time, transfer), 47; and 1d (part-time transfer), 32. The overall mean of the SCAT percentiles was 42.

The distribution of Twelfth Grade test scores is presented in Table 2. Many transfer students had not taken this test. Out of the 408 students who were admitted on probation, only 207 of them are included in Table 2.

These 12th grade test scores indicate better-than-average intelligence for such students admitted on probation, more than half of whom meet the present university entrance requirement of 300. The majority of these with high 12th grade scores were, in fact, transfer students who had enrolled at another college previously. Ten per cent had a score of 150 or less while 14.5 per cent had a score under 200.

From these data, it would seem that more than half the students entering on probation were not deficient in the cerebral field but could be lacking in motivation or some other vital area. Based on these tests, it would appear that as high as 85 per cent of these entering probationary students had the ability to succeed.

The SCAT and Twelfth-Grade Tests were compared in a scattergram analysis that is not presented here. It was noted that some students with excellent Twelfth-Grade scores do very poorly on the SCAT. In general, however, the reverse was not true.

A check was also made on all probationary students as to their rank in their respective high school graduating

Table 1

Distribution of Probationary Students
By Type of Probation

Code	Type of Probation	Frequency
Admitted on Probation		
1a	Full-time - 1st time in college	17
1b	Part-time - 1st time in college	14
1c	Full-time - transfer	240
1d	Part-time - transfer	<u>137</u>
	TOTAL	408
Placed on Probation		
2a	Academic	744
2b	Disciplinary	0
2c	Academic and disciplinary	0
2d	Second-time academic	20
2e	More than twice	<u>1</u>
	TOTAL	765
	GRAND TOTAL	1,173

Table 2

Distribution of Florida Twelfth-Grade Total
Percentiles for Students Admitted on Probation

Score Interval	Group				Totals
	1a	1b	1c	1d	
300-495	3	1	95	28	127
250-299	0	1	24	12	37
200-249	0	1	9	3	13
150-199	4	0	3	2	9
100-149	2	0	7	3	12
0-99	5	4	0	0	9
TOTALS	14	7	138	48	207

Table 3

A Comparison of the Origins of Probationary
Students to the Origins of All Students

Origin	Percentage of Total	
	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Number of Probationary Students
Tanatee County	54.1	31.8
Sarasota County	36.2	32.0
DeSoto County	1.3	1.2
Other Florida Areas (including GED)	5.7	14.9
Out-of-State or unknown origin	2.7	20.1

class. Rank-in-class was converted to percentiles for this phase. The average of the probationary students' percentile rank-in-class was 42. The surprising finding of this study was that six per cent of these students ranked in the top twenty per cent of their respective high school class. At the other end of the scale, twenty per cent were at the lowest twenty per cent of their respective class.

These data show that, among students admitted on probation, many have average to above-average ability and achievement. Probationary students can be highly intelligent so factors other than intelligence are probably operating.

Origin of Probationary Students

During the six years covered by this study most Manatee Junior College students came from schools in Manatee County or Sarasota County. Substantial numbers of students came from De Soto County and the rest of the student body came from other Florida areas or from out of the state. It was believed that the origin of the student was a possible contributing factor to probationary status. The distribution of probationary students by origin was compared to the distribution of the origins of the total enrollment. These distributions are summarized in Table 3.

The two distributions appear to be substantially different. At a glance, it can be seen that a disproportionate number of probationary students come from out-of-Florida. On the other hand, it appears that home-county students have the best chance of remaining off of probation. This appears to indicate that underclass students who remain in the home environment do better than those entirely divorced from their home environment. If true, this reinforces one of the basic concepts of the community junior college.

Major Areas of Study of Probationary Students

The courses of study followed by the students involved in probationary action are presented in Table 4. It is to be noted that there were no Technical Education or Nursing programs prior to 1960.

It is possible that course of study is a contributing factor to probationary status. To check this possibility, the last columns of Table 4, which presents the distribution of probationary students by field of study, was converted to a percentage distribution. This percentage distribution was compared to the distribution of total enrollment by field of study. The data for the six year study period are summarized

Table 4

Courses of Study Followed by Probationary Students

Program	Type of Probation						Number
	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2d	
University Parallel	11	7	206	114	574	16	928
Technical Education	5	4	14	17	62	2	104
Nursing Education	1	0	10	2	43	1	57
Data Processing	0	0	3	3	27	1	34
Other Terminal	0	3	6	0	37	0	46
Unknown	0	0	1	1	1	0	3

Table 5

Percentage Distributions of Probationary Students
And Total Enrollment Across Fields of Study

Program	Probationary Students	Total Enrollment
University Parallel	79.2	85.8
Technical Education	8.9	7.3
Nursing Education	4.9	3.1
Data Processing	2.9	2.5
Other Terminal	3.9	1.3

in Table 5. The total enrollment percentage distribution was based on a total of 7440 students.

Table 5 seems to indicate that the percentage of students on probation in any program agrees reasonably well with the percentage of students enrolled in that program. There is a slight tendency for the vocational type of program to have a disproportionately larger number of probationary students than is the case for the university parallel program.

Achievement of Probationary Students

The second major purpose of this study was to examine the success and failure of students who were placed on probation. Several alternatives could occur--the student could eventually graduate, drop out, be suspended, or still be enrolled either on probation or not on probation. Table 6 summarizes the present status of the study sample.

Table 6 indicates that 175, or 14.9 per cent, of the probationary students graduated and that another 205, or 17.5 per cent of them were still enrolled at the time of the study. Therefore 32.4 per cent, or about one third, either eventually graduated or are still trying.

A further breakdown indicated that students admitted on probation for the first time in college have a rather difficult time in achieving success since the proportion of success is one in thirty. However, the success proportion to transfer students admitted on probation is nearly 3 in 10. The breakdown also shows that perseverance counts, as indicated by the fact that, among students placed on probation, 25 per cent were not finally barred from getting a degree.

Eventual success might be a function of the educational program. Table 7 presents some summary data of the student achievement by type of program.

This tabulation indicates that Nursing Education did the best job in salvaging probationary students while Data Processing had the lowest percentage of probationary students graduating from its program. The largest percentage of drop-outs was in the "Other Terminal". For all programs combined, approximately one student in every six on probation was able to graduate. The same ratio applies to both the University Parallel and Technical Education programs.

Some additional interesting information is seen in the distributions of entrance test scores for probationary students who graduate, drop-out, or are dismissed. These distributions are presented in Tables 8 and 9. The average

Table 6

Follow-up Data on the Probationary Students*

Disposition of Students	Type of Probation						Total
	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2d	
<u>Graduates</u>							
Graduated in 4 semesters	0	0	11	1	14	0	26
Graduated full-time in more than 4 sem.	0	1	57	10	75	5	148
Graduated part-time in more than 4 sem.	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Sub Total, Graduates	0	1	68	12	89	5	175
<u>Dropped Out or Withdrew</u>	7	7	84	84	319	9	510
<u>Suspended or Dismissed</u>	7	5	66	16	244	2	340
<u>Removed Probation</u>							
In one semester	4	1	55	11	68	13	152
In two semesters	1	1	86	20	53	2	163
In three semesters	0	0	7	5	19	3	34
Removed "I"***	0	0	0	1	11	1	13
Sub Total, Removed Probation	5	2	148	37	151	19	362
Currently Enrolled	3	1	36	27	133	5	205
TOTALS	22	16	402	176	936	40	1592

*Duplication occurs because two or more results pertain to several students.

**Incompletes are graded "F" until work is completed.

Table 7

Records of Probationary Students by Area of Study

Program	Graduated		Dismissed		Drop-Outs		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
University Parallel	140	17.0	238	34.3	401	48.7	824
Technical Education	14	16.5	28	32.9	43	50.6	85
Nursing Education	14	29.2	14	29.2	20	41.6	48
Data Processing	2	8.7	7	30.4	14	60.9	23
Other Terminal	5	11.9	7	16.7	30	71.4	42
Totals	175	17.1	339	33.2	508	49.7	1022

Table 8

Distribution of SCAT Percentiles for Probationary Students Who Graduate, Drop-Out, or Are Dismissed

Score	Graduates	Drop-Outs	Dismissed
0-9	5	29	20
10-19	9	57	46
20-29	22	81	73
30-39	17	53	51
40-49	32	71	62
50-59	13	20	22
60-69	18	51	17
70-79	20	17	11
80-89	20	34	18
90-99	10	25	6
Total Available	172	438	326

Table 9

Distribution of Twelfth-Grade Test Scores
For Probationary Students Who Graduate,
Drop-Out, or Are Dismissed

Score	Graduates	Drop-Outs	Dismissed
300 or over	68	120	86
280-289	7	17	14
260-279	10	21	16
240-259	6	20	17
220-239	8	26	13
200-219	1	26	13
180-199	3	18	17
160-179	8	13	17
140-159	4	19	15
120-139	2	15	11
100-119	4	11	16
under 100	0	21	15
Total available	121	327	250

percentiles of the SCAT were 50 for graduates, 40 for drop-outs, and 35 for dismissals. The average Twelfth-Grade total scores were 320 for graduates, 255 for drop-outs, and 243 for dismissals. Although these averages indicate a trend for eventual success to be related to initial ability, the interesting aspect of these data is that students with low test scores can succeed if they so desire and apply themselves. Thus, 8 per cent of those graduating had a 12th grade score under 160 and a SCAT percentile below 20. On the other hand, better than 10 per cent of the drop-outs and dismissed had a SCAT percentile from 80-99, while more than one third of these two groups offered 12th grade scores of 300 or over. Clearly, scores alone are not the complete answer.

Summary and Conclusions

This report presented data on probationary students at Manatee Junior College. It was shown that probationary students represent the full range of ability of the SCAT and the Florida Twelfth-Grade Tests. Probationary students were shown to represent the various academic programs roughly in proportion to the total enrollments in the various programs. A tendency was noted for a disproportionately large number of probationary students to come from out-of-Florida and from Florida counties other than those quite near the school of study. Fifteen per cent of all probationary students have graduated while over seventeen per cent are still enrolled. Eventual success was seen to be at least partially a matter of program of study, and largely a matter of student perseverance. Although college success among these students is certainly related to academic ability, large numbers of low ability, probationary students were able to make satisfactory progress.

This study will be amplified at a later date by following-up probationary students still enrolled. In the meantime, it is hoped that these results will cause thoughtful consideration of the probationary student and prompt some different approaches to determine the reasons for the variances indicated in this report.