

Honors College at the University of Illinois Chicago

The Honors College is made up of students, faculty, and advisors who work together to create a community of scholars from every degree-granting undergraduate college at UIC. It has a mission to “bring together a diverse group of exceptional undergraduate students, faculty, and staff, and provides an environment for advanced academic growth, creative engagement, and a foundation for lifelong learning in the world class city of Chicago.” Members of the Honors College are expected to take honors courses and/or participate in an array of experiences beyond the classroom each semester. Participation in community service is one of them.

This study is conducted to explore the relationship between participation in community service and academic outcomes:

- Cumulative GPAs
- Cumulative credits
- Enrollment
- Graduation

By comparing

- the treatment group (HC students who participated in community service) and
- the comparison group (HC students who did not participated in community service)
- Archival data from four cohorts of freshman students in HC (2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016); PSM is used to create equivalent treatment and comparison groups.
- A separate analysis was conducted for students who are considered underrepresented by the institution (i.e. Hispanic, Black, Multiracial, Pell eligible and first-generation students).

Table 1. Means, standard deviation and effect sizes for outcome variables in matched groups

	Full sample					Underrepresented students				
	Treatment		Comparison		g	Treatment		Comparison		g
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD	
<i>Cumulative GPAs</i>										
2013	3.57	.42	3.25	.60	.70	3.58	.42	3.21	.59	.70
2014	3.60	.30	3.25	.58	.74	3.58	.33	3.14	.61	.88
2015	3.65	.29	3.35	.56	.67	3.65	.27	3.27	.54	.87
2016	3.60	.43	3.45	.42	.34	3.53	.39	3.30	.45	.52
<i>Cumulative Units Earned</i>										
2013	114.42	23.34	111.91	24.73	.18	116.13	22.90	111.68	24.62	.18
2014	115.25	13.41	106.22	23.18	.47	117.20	12.56	104.84	27.19	.58
2015	92.62	11.77	87.25	19.04	.33	92.56	11.47	87.58	17.10	.34
2016	65.25	7.91	60.66	6.37	.63	64.25	5.37	59.29	6.46	.82
<i>Retention</i>										
2013	91.4%		86.4%		/	90.9%		85.4%		/
2014	95.4%		89.5%		/	97.8%		85.7%		/
2015	94.8%		91.2%		/	96.2%		91.1%		/
2016	100%		100%		/	100%		100%		/
<i>Graduation</i>										
2013	90.0%		82.1%			90.0%		80.0%		
2014	78.4%		65.3%			97.8%		85.7%		

Note: Highlighted parts are the significant results. Students who dropped out during or before their fourth semester in college were excluded from analysis. For the 2016 cohort, this means that all students in the analysis were enrolled as of Spring 2018.

In summary, participation in community service is associated with several positive outcomes for the general students in HC as well as the underrepresented students in HC such as higher GPAs, more credits earned for some cohorts and higher retention and graduation rates for some cohorts. Due to the fact that retention and graduation rates usually remain at a high level for all students in Honors College, it is reasonable that there were usually no significant difference detected concerning those variables.

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