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Evaluation of the Summer Transition Grant Program

Report to the 2012 Legislature



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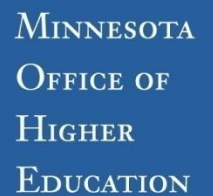
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Introduction

The 2009 Minnesota Legislature created the Summer Transition Grant program to provide financial assistance directly to eligible Minnesota students attending research-based high school-to-college summer developmental transition programs offered by Minnesota colleges in the summer between high school graduation and the freshman year of postsecondary education. The grant program is administered by the Office of Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as “The Agency”) and was first implemented during the summer of 2010 for students who graduated from high school after December 31, 2009. The annual program appropriation was originally designated as \$4.9 million from the 2010-2011 biennium State Grant appropriation but was subsequently reduced during the 2010 legislative session to \$1.0 million per year.

According to the statute (Appendix A), the purpose of summer transition programs is to develop the skills and abilities necessary to be ready for college-level coursework when the student enrolls in a postsecondary program. Programs must address the academic skills identified as needing improvement by a college readiness assessment completed by the student, as well as provide support services to participating students.

Legislation included a strong evaluation component to measure the effectiveness of summer transition programs in meeting goals. The program statute requires the Agency to convene a data working group comprised of knowledgeable data collection and academic delivery staff from the types of institutions participating in the program. This group assists the Agency in developing the methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of programs designed to improve academic performance and postsecondary retention, including the identification of appropriate comparison groups.

This report includes information about Summer Transition Grant recipients enrolled in participating summer bridge programs during the summer of 2011, as well as follow-up college enrollment data on recipients who completed a summer bridge program during the summer of 2010.

Summer Transition Grant Program Overview

Application Process

As part of their program proposal, participating campuses were required to have marketing and outreach plans to reach potential students and direct them to the appropriate application materials. In order to apply for a Summer Transition Grant, students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) accessible at: www.fafsa.gov. Students also completed either the paper or on-line Summer Transition Grant application developed by the Agency in order to collect data needed for award calculation and program evaluation (Appendix B). The application also contains a data release section whereby the student permits colleges to release private student data to the Agency for program evaluation purposes. As with the Minnesota State Grant program, the Summer Transition Grant application was submitted no later than 30 days after the start of the summer program.

Eligible Students

The program is intended to serve students who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education, though the statute does not specifically exclude other types of students from participating. Underrepresented groups in this case include: African-American, American Indian, Latino and Southeast Asian or other historically referenced racial/ethnic minorities; students who are economically disadvantaged and/or first-generation college.

To be eligible for a Summer Transition Grant to attend a summer transition program, a student must:

- Graduate from high school (or earn GED in lieu of high school diploma) the year of the summer transition program
- Plan to enroll in college the fall term following high school graduation
- Demonstrate a need for academic remediation based on the college readiness test administered to the student prior to beginning the summer transition program
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Complete the Summer Transition Grant application no later than 30 days after the start of the summer transition program
- Be enrolled for at least three but no more than 15 credits in an eligible summer transition program at an eligible Minnesota postsecondary institution during the summer following high school graduation or receipt of a GED
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen. An “eligible noncitizen” means a permanent resident of the U.S., a conditional permanent resident of the U.S., or a holder of an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) with one of the following designations: Refugee, Asylum Granted, Parolee, Victim of Human Trafficking, T-Visa holder, or Cuban-Haitian Entrant.
- Be a Minnesota resident as defined in Minnesota Statutes 136A.101
- Demonstrate financial need according to the award calculation formula (typically, students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs in high school will qualify)

Eligible Institutions and Programs

All Minnesota public and private higher education institutions are eligible to participate in the Summer Transition Grant program if they meet the definition of eligible institution used for other state financial aid programs in Minnesota Statutes 136A.101, Subd.4.

Proposed program strategies that will lead to student success may differ based on the interests, needs and resources of the student participants and project site. According to Minnesota statutes, summer high school-to-college transition programs must be research-based, include instruction to develop the skills and abilities necessary to be ready for college-level coursework and address the academic skills identified as needing improvement by a college readiness assessment completed by the student. Academic coursework may be existing developmental courses offered by the institution or courses designed specifically for the summer transition program. Programs must also provide support services surrounding academic coursework to assist the student in transitioning to the college environment.

In the fall of 2010, the Agency sent information about the Summer Transition Grant program to all Minnesota postsecondary institutions and encouraged them to submit program proposals for the summer of 2011 by February 1, 2011. The notice was sent to college presidents as well as academic affairs, student services, diversity/multi-cultural and financial aid offices on each campus. The proposals submitted were reviewed and approved by Agency staff. Five campuses offered programs during the summer of 2011: The Art Institutes International Minnesota, Central Lakes College, Dunwoody College of Technology, Hamline University and North Hennepin Community College. Campuses that chose not to participate cited the inability of students' grants to cover the cost of offering the program, inadequate staffing, turnover of key personnel on campus and the workload associated with program evaluation and student financial aid as reasons for nonparticipation. Additionally, some of the summer programs did not meet the requirements in statute because they accepted all students regardless of college-readiness level or year of high school graduation or did not offer developmental classes in core subject areas of math, reading and writing.

Program Evaluation

The program statute provides a list of data elements that should be used during the evaluation process (see Appendix C). The statute also requires the Agency to form a data working group comprised of campus program administrators and research staff to advise the Agency on program evaluation and assist with gathering the necessary data needed for the annual program evaluation report due to the Legislature on March 15. The Agency called the group together in September 2011 to discuss required data elements and selection of comparison group data for the evaluation report. The group consisted of program administrators and research staff from the five campuses participating in the Summer Transition Grant program during the summer of 2011.

Description of Participating Programs

During the summer of 2011, a total of 27 students received a Summer Transition Grant for attending summer transition programs offered by the five participating campuses. Additional students participated in the summer transition programs, but did not meet the eligibility requirements for receiving a grant.

Art Institutes International Minnesota

Students in the Summer Transition Academic Readiness program (S*T*A*R) participated in a learning community that included registration for nine credits of developmental courses: Transitional English, Transitional Math and College Success. Prior to commencing their coursework, students took the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory which provides detailed information about students' perceptions of academic readiness, levels of personal support, receptivity to institutional assistance and willingness to engage with the campus community. Participants were supported by an intrusive academic advising model, featuring frequent one-on-one contact. Other college staff members were also involved with the students, including staff from Student Affairs, Career Services and Student Financial Services. During the summer of 2011, a total of nine students participated in the program but only two students qualified for a Summer Transition Grant. The college decided to include students in the summer program who were not eligible for the Summer Transition Grant due to graduation date and age stipulations. This was done to both create a good cohort size and to provide additional underrepresented students with the opportunity to develop academic and foundational skills required to meet the rigors of college.

Central Lakes College

Central Lakes College's High School-to-College Summer Readiness Program included nine credits of developmental courses, college success courses, workshops and support services over an eight-week period. This is the second year the college offered its summer program. Seventeen students participated in the program, 12 of whom were eligible for a Summer Transition Grant. Based on Accuplacer college readiness test scores, each student was placed in one or more of the appropriate developmental reading or math courses ranging from one to five credits, as well as other courses such as Career Planning and Staying On-Course in College. Workshops offered included Career and Leadership Program Options, Job Shadowing, Career Planning & Goal Setting, and Understanding Student Financial Aid. Students also had the opportunity to plan and participate in student life and civic engagement activities. Strategies used by the campus to ensure program success included scholarships for students who enrolled for fall term and college upperclassmen serving as personal mentors throughout the summer and into fall term. There was also a strong academic advising component to this program, whereby students met with an academic advisor during the program and before fall semester to create and monitor an individualized education plan consisting of course selection, statement of academic goals and professional development goals. Students were also encouraged to meet with an advisor before the start of spring semester.

Dunwoody College of Technology

Dunwoody's Youth Career Awareness Program (YCAP) included developmental coursework in reading, English and math, as well as a Gateway New Student Seminar. Students also received assistance with college admissions, financial aid and preparing for college entrance exams. Mornings were spent on coursework, with afternoon sessions reserved for tutoring and career exposure through visits to the architecture, auto, manufacturing and computer networking programs on campus, as well as site visits to companies that hire Dunwoody graduates. There were 24 students enrolled in the program, six of whom were eligible for a Summer Transition Grant. According to the program director, several students were unable to receive a grant due to failure to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or respond to follow-up documentation requests from the financial aid office. However,

the transition program was also open to graduating seniors outside of the YCAP program that needed academic support to transition successfully into college.

Hamline University

Hamline University offered a four-week immersive residential summer bridge program, which included an intensive four-credit course focused on quantitative reasoning and critical reading and writing skills. (These students also followed up with a two-credit Introduction to Liberal Arts lab during fall term, which developed basic strategies and skills for success in college.) The program also integrated workshops and modules from other departments and offices on campus. Faculty, staff and peer-mentors engaged one-on-one with students during the summer and will continue to do so throughout their first year of college. The program also connected students with work-study opportunities so they could have positions in place at the start of fall term. A total of seven students participated in the program, six of whom were eligible for a Summer Transition Grant.

North Hennepin Community College

The Cornerstones College Readiness Program administered by North Hennepin Community College offered students seven credits of developmental reading and writing courses and a non-credit First Year Experience workshop during an eight-week summer session. This is the second year the college offered this summer program. Summer program tutors attended classes with students and provided a tutoring hour in the middle of each class day. For the Academic Development course, students completed a portfolio to document their learning experience. Academic advisors provided assistance with completing the FAFSA. Opportunities for service-learning were also embedded in the curriculum. Fridays were used for college visits and other college-related field trips. Upon completion of the program, families were invited to a College Readiness Fair in July and program graduation ceremony in August. While only one student qualified for a Summer Transition Grant, 10 students participated in the program. Most students who would otherwise have qualified for the grant did not graduate from high school in the year prior to the program or did not have an Expected Family Contribution low enough to qualify for the grant.

Program Operations

The Agency developed a user-friendly web-based system for use by students, program and financial aid administrators and agency staff. After entering each student's application data into the system, the campus program administrator enters academic information such as the name of the student's high school, high school grade point average, college readiness test scores, summer courses taken and course outcomes. The financial aid director enters the student's Expected Family Contribution, number of credits for which the student is enrolled and whether or not the student is receiving a Federal Pell Grant. The Summer Transition Grant is calculated online so the campus can inform the student about the award amount. The Agency disburses funds to the campus to cover all the awards entered by the campus. Any refunds from student withdrawals are returned to the Agency and recorded in the system. Once fall term is completed, Agency staff collect fall term college enrollment data and grade point averages from campus program administrators.

Award Calculation

The Summer Transition Grant award calculation is described in the Minnesota State Grant statute 136A.121, Subd. 9b. For students with an assigned family responsibility greater than zero, the Summer Transition Grant award calculation is identical to the Minnesota State Grant award calculation with one exception: the Federal Pell Grant is not subtracted in the award calculation unless the student is actually

awarded a Pell Grant for that term. Students in transition programs offered by two-year public institutions are typically admitted to a college degree or certificate program prior to enrolling in the summer program and therefore have Pell Grants subtracted in the Summer Transition Grant formula. Table 1 shows the Summer Transition Grant award calculation for a student with an annual nine-month \$500 assigned family responsibility taking nine credits and receiving a Pell Grant during the summer transition program at Central Lakes College.

Table 1: Summer Transition Grant Calculation

Student with \$500 Assigned Family Responsibility Taking Nine Credits at CLC	
Tuition & Fees	\$1,478
Living & Miscellaneous Expense Allowance	+ \$2,880
Award Calculation Budget	= \$4,358
48.2% Assigned Student Responsibility	- \$2,101
96% Assigned Family Responsibility (\$500/2 x .96)	- \$ 288
Federal Pell Grant	- \$1,913
Summer Transition Grant	= \$ 56

For students with an assigned family responsibility of zero, the Summer Transition Grant award calculation is less similar to the Minnesota State Grant award calculation. While the award calculation budget is identical, a \$1,200 summer work expectation takes the place of the assigned family responsibility. Further, the Federal Pell Grant is not subtracted, even if the student is awarded a Pell Grant for that term. Thus, the Summer Transition Grant award formula generates a much higher award than the State Grant award formula. Table 2 shows the Summer Transition Grant award calculation for a student with a \$0 assigned family responsibility taking nine credits and receiving a Pell Grant during the summer transition program at Central Lakes College.

Table 2: Summer Transition Grant Calculation

Student with \$0 Assigned Family Responsibility Taking Nine Credits at CLC	
Tuition & Fees	\$1,478
Living & Miscellaneous Expense Allowance	+ \$2,880
Award Calculation Budget	= \$4,358
Summer Work Expectation	- \$1,200
Summer Transition Grant	= \$3,158

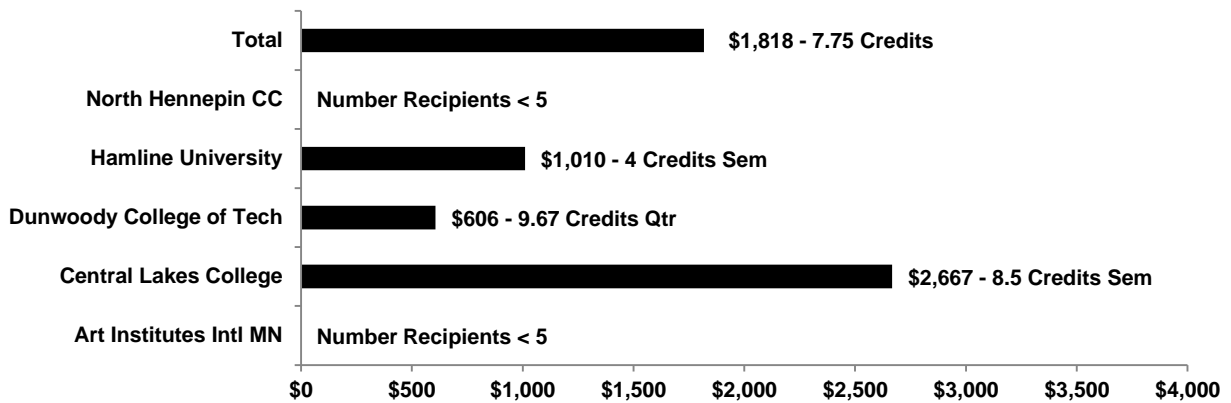
It should be noted that awards for summer 2011 were greater than usual due to the annual State Grant living and miscellaneous expense allowance being increased from \$7,000 to \$9,600 prior to the summer term to spend out a projected surplus in the State Grant program.

Summer Transition Grant Participants 2011

During the summer of 2011, a total of 27 students received Summer Transition Grants totaling \$49,091 for participation in summer transition programs. The five participating summer transition programs served the student populations intended. Participants included a high percent of students of color, low-income students and first-generation college students. Most students were from families with incomes low enough to have a zero assigned family responsibility and thereby qualify for the maximum Summer Transition Grant.

Figure 1 shows the mean Summer Transition Grant amount at each participating campus, ranging from \$606 at Dunwoody College of Technology to \$2,667 at Central Lakes College, with an overall mean award of \$1,818. Participants who were not awarded either withdrew from the program prior to disbursement of the award, did not meet program eligibility requirements, did not demonstrate financial need for an award or failed to complete required applications and documentation required for the program.

**Figure 1
Summer Transition Grant
Mean Awards and Credit Loads
Summer 2011**



Student Demographic Information

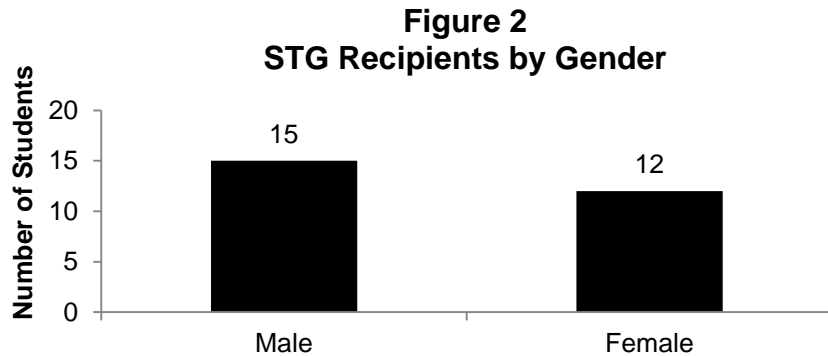
Of the 27 recipients, two enrolled at The Art Institutes International Minnesota, 12 enrolled at Central Lakes College, six enrolled at Dunwoody College of Technology, six enrolled at Hamline University and one enrolled at North Hennepin Community College.

Age

The age of the 27 students participating in programs approved for Summer Transition Grant ranged from 17 to 20 years, with a median age of 18.

Gender

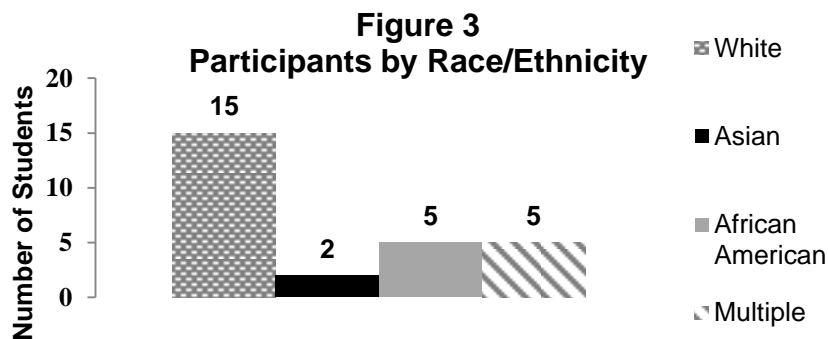
As shown in Figure 2, 15 program participants were male and 12 were female, as reported on the program application. Central Lakes College had the largest number of female participants and Dunwoody College of Technology had the largest number of male participants.



Race and Ethnicity

On the Summer Transition Grant application, students were presented with the same racial and ethnic categories used for U.S. Department of Education reporting purposes.

Out of a total of 27 recipients in all programs, 15 students indicated they were white, five students indicated they were African-American, and two students indicated they were Asian. The remaining five students indicated they had multiple racial backgrounds (see Figure 3).



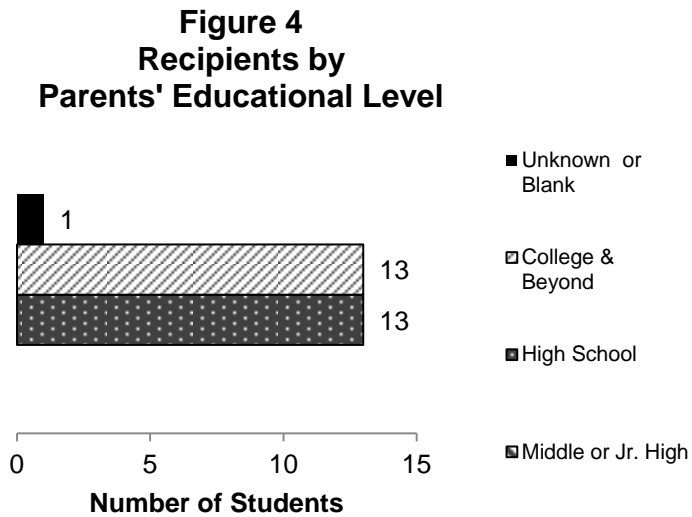
Adjusted Gross Income and Household Size

Adjusted gross incomes for grant recipients, as reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), ranged from \$0 to \$84,645 (family size of six), with a median adjusted gross income of \$15,406.

Recipient family size, as reported on the FAFSA, ranged from one to 10 family members, with a median household size of four. Though most students were classified as dependent students for financial aid purposes, some were able to apply for financial aid as independent students with a household size of one because they were wards of the court, orphans or had been in foster care at some point after they reached age 13.

Parents' Educational Attainment

As shown in Figure 4, out of a total of 27 recipients, 13 students reported on the FAFSA that their parents had attended college, 13 reported their parents highest level of education was high school graduation and one student left the question blank.



High School of Origin

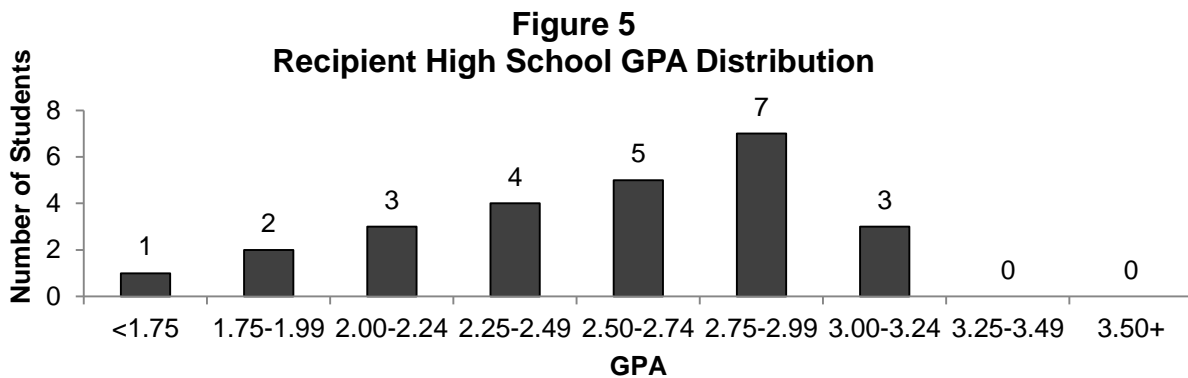
Summer transition programs recruited students from a wide array of regional high schools, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3
Summer Transition Grant Participant High Schools**

Art Institutes Int'l MN	Central Lakes College	Dunwoody College	Hamline University	North Hennepin Community College
# Recipients < 5	Aitken HS Bertha-Hewitt HS Brainerd Senior HS Staples Motley HS	Blaine HS Chanhassen HS Edison Senior HS Home Schooled Osseo HS Patrick Henry HS	Gordon Parks HS Northfield HS Roseville HS Saint Anthony Village HS School of Environmental Study St. Louis Park HS	# Recipients < 5

High School Grade Point Average

The mean high school grade point average for grant recipients was 2.56. The distribution of high school grade point averages shown in Figure 5 ranges from 1.73 to a high of 3.20. High school grade point averages were not available for two recipients.



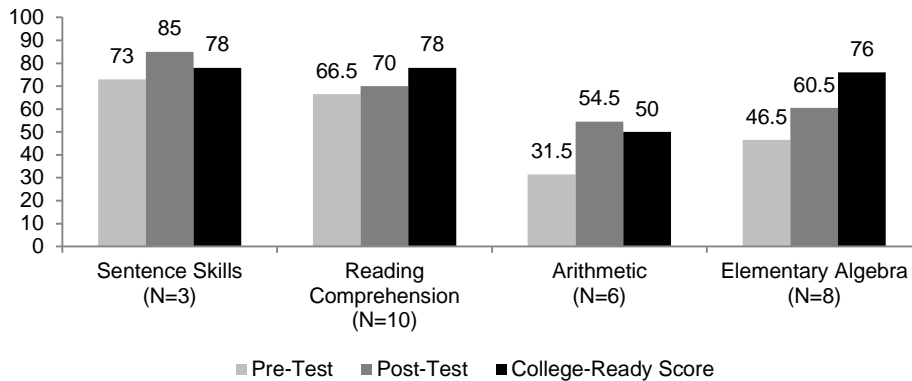
Pre- and Post-Program Metrics

The program statute provides a list of data elements that should be used during the evaluation process. Many of these elements focus on pre- and post-program measures of student performance including college readiness test scores and course grades. These metrics are detailed below.

College Readiness Test Scores

The program statute requires campuses to administer a college-readiness test prior to the start of the summer transition program to identify and address the areas showing a need for remediation. The same test must be administered upon completion of the program to measure program effectiveness. During the summer of 2011, Art Institutes International Minnesota, Central Lakes College and North Hennepin Community College used the Accuplacer test, a product developed by the College Board. Dunwoody College of Technology used Pearson assessments for math, reading and English and Hamline University developed its own diagnostic instrument for math and English competencies crucial to its undergraduate curriculum. Figures 6 through 8 show pre and post-program college readiness test scores for the grant recipients participating in each of the summer transition programs, as well as the college-ready or mastery scores used to place students in college-level courses.

Figure 6
Recipient Median Accuplacer Scores
Art Institutes International MN, Central Lakes College &
North Hennepin Community College



Because two of the three campuses using the Accuplacer had such a small number of Summer Transition Grant recipients, scores for all three campuses were merged to arrive at the median scores shown in Figure 6. Post-program median Accuplacer test scores increased for all subject areas but, with the exception of the sentence skills and arithmetic components, did not reach college-ready scores. Sentence skills scores increased from 73 to 85 points, with a college-ready score of 78 points. Reading comprehension showed the smallest gain, with the median score increasing from 66.5 to 70 points and a college-ready score of 78. However, three out of 10 test takers tested above the college-ready level for reading at the end of the program. The median score for the arithmetic component increased from 31.5 to 54.5 points. The median elementary algebra score increased from 46.5 to 60.5 points. Students must reach a score of 76 on elementary algebra and 50 in arithmetic to be placed in a college-level algebra course. One out of nine test takers exceeded this requirement.

Figure 7
Dunwoody College of Technology
Median Pearson Test Scores

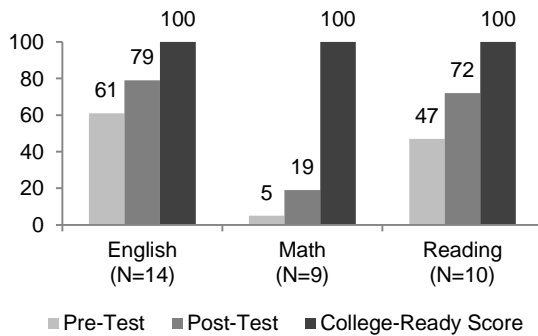
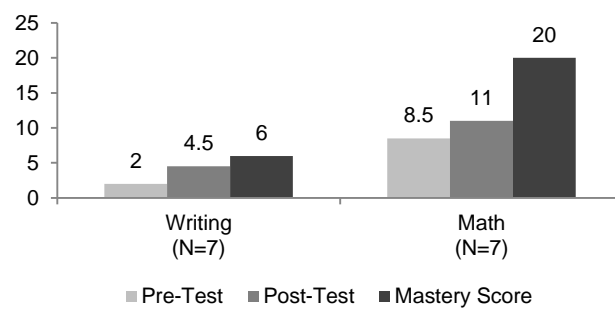


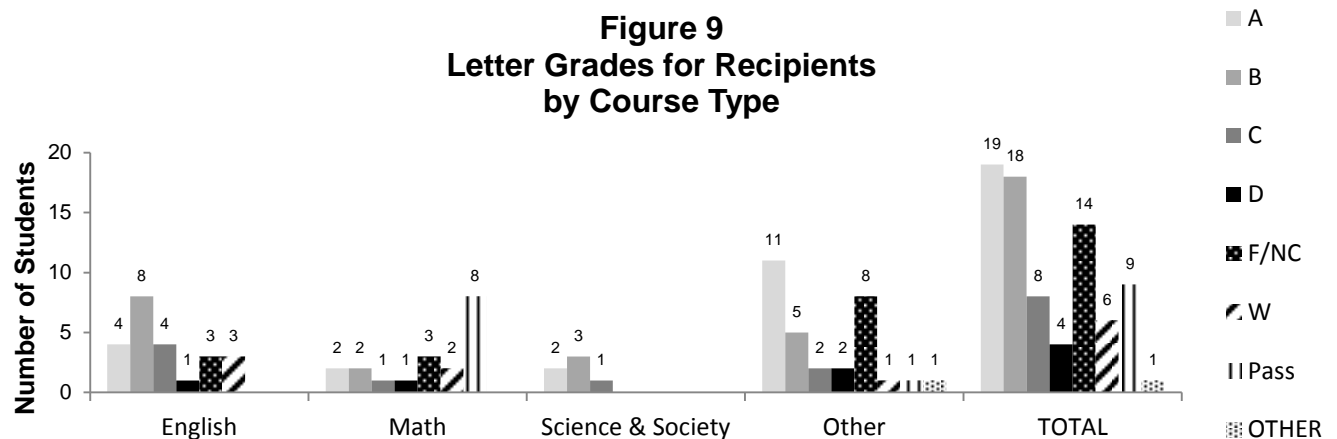
Figure 8
Hamline University
Median Diagnostic Test Scores



As shown in Figure 7, students in the summer bridge program at Dunwoody College of Technology made significant gains in scores for all three Pearson test components. Median post-program scores did not reach college-ready levels, but some individual students did achieve scores between 80 and 91. The median reading scores showed the largest gain, increasing from 47 to 72 points upon completion of the program. The median math scores showed the smallest increase, from five up to 19 points. Hamline University designed its own diagnostic test for math and writing competencies. Figure 8 shows the median writing score increased from two to 4.5 competencies on a scale of six while median math scores increased from 8.5 to 11 competencies on a scale of 20.

Summer Transition Program Course Grades

Summer course grade distributions for Summer Transition Grant recipients are shown in Figure 9.



Because some of the participating campuses had such a small number of recipients taking certain classes, class grades for recipients at all campuses were merged into subject areas for purposes of comparison. Out of a total of 79 course grades, 59 grades (74.7 percent) were at or above the passing level (includes grades A through D, Pass and Other). In each subject area, more students passed than failed or withdrew from courses. Withdrawals accounted for six out of 79 grades (7.5 percent). Most of the withdrawals occurred at a campus where, despite repeated reminders from program and financial aid staff, students failed to complete the FAFSA and withdrew because they hadn't paid course charges. A total of 14 out of 79 grades (17.7 percent) were for failed courses. However, most of the courses with failing grades were not core English and math courses (which includes Science & Society, which had an intensive math and reading component), but supporting courses such as planning, study skills, etc. At one participating college, an academic support course was offered on a pass/fail basis for no college credit. The college subsequently restructured the course and offered it as a graded, credit-bearing course to give further weight to the importance of successful completion of the course. Another campus indicated some students received failing grades because they did not take advantage of the tutoring services offered by the program.

Fall Term 2011: Enrollment, Credit Loads and Grade Point Averages

Pursuant to statute, the Agency and institutions measured fall term 2011 enrollment, number of credits enrolled, and fall term grade point averages in order to evaluate longer-term program outcomes. To evaluate the number of credits enrolled and fall term grade point averages for Summer Transition Grant participants, the Agency utilized existing data and requested additional data from colleges and the MnSCU Central Office for comparison group data. As fall term 2011 comparison group data was not available from the MnSCU Central Office, a comparison group of fall term 2010 students was used.

For each of the participating colleges, comparison group students had the following characteristics:

- graduated from high school in:
 - 2011 (2010 for MnSCU) for summer 2011 recipient comparison group
 - 2010 (2009 for MnSCU) for summer 2010 recipient comparison group
- enrolled at the participating college during fall term following high school;

- enrolled in one or more developmental credits during the first fall term of enrollment (as a proxy for below college-ready level Accuplacer scores); and
- qualified for a Federal Pell Grant based on the student’s Expected Family Contribution for the first fall term of enrollment

Comparison group data is presented where appropriate in the sections below. Because some of the participating colleges had such a small number of grant recipients and/or could not obtain an adequate number of students for a comparison group, data was consolidated, weighted and reported for all groups as a whole.

**Table 4
Recipients and Comparison Group by Campus**

Institution	STG Recipients	Comparison Group
SUMMER 2011		
The Art Institutes International MN	2	11
Central Lakes College	12	79
Dunwoody College of Technology	6	<10
Hamline University	6	11
North Hennepin Community College	1	248
SUMMER 2010		
Central Lakes College	9	32
Minneapolis Community & Technical College	15	334
North Hennepin Community College	9	214

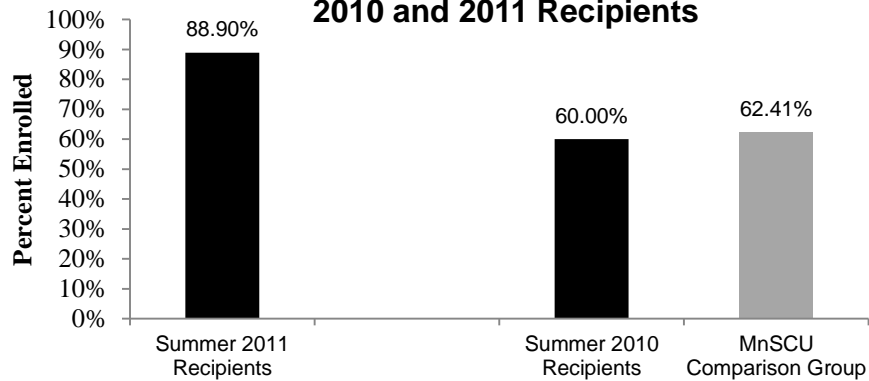
Fall Enrollment in College

Twenty-four of 27 (88.9 percent) of 2011 Summer Transition Grant recipients enrolled at a Minnesota college during the fall term of the 2011-2012 academic year. College enrollment rates ranged from 83.3 percent at Dunwoody College of Technology to 100 percent at three of the other participating campuses. All but three of the recipients who did enroll in college during fall term 2011 enrolled at the same campus that offered the summer transition program.

As of the end of fall term 2011, only four of 27 recipients (14.8 percent) who enrolled in college had withdrawn which may be a positive indicator of the program’s effect on retention. First-generation students are 8.5 times more likely to withdraw from college than students with college-educated parents (Ishitani, 2006). Participants will continue to be tracked to monitor retention rates.

With respect to the summer 2010 recipient cohort, 60 percent of those who were enrolled for fall term 2010 were still enrolled in college during fall term 2011, slightly below the MnSCU comparison group first-to-second year retention rate of 62.41. A comparison of enrollment rates for both summer cohorts is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10
Fall Term 2011 Enrollment Rates for
2010 and 2011 Recipients



Fall Term Credit Loads

As shown in Figure 11, summer 2011 recipients had a mean credit load of 14.3 credits, exceeding the comparison group's mean credit load of 12.12 credits. The mean credit load for summer 2010 recipients enrolled in fall term 2011 was 11.8 credits, slightly above the comparison group's mean credit load of 11.42 credits.

Figure 11
Mean Credit Load for STG Recipients & Comparison
Groups for Fall Term 2011

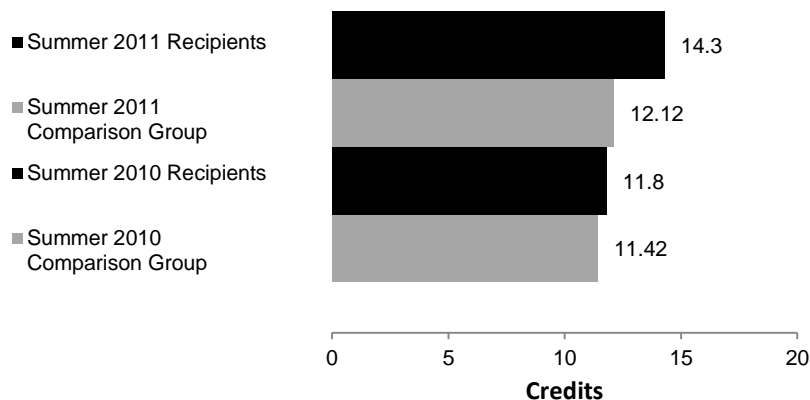
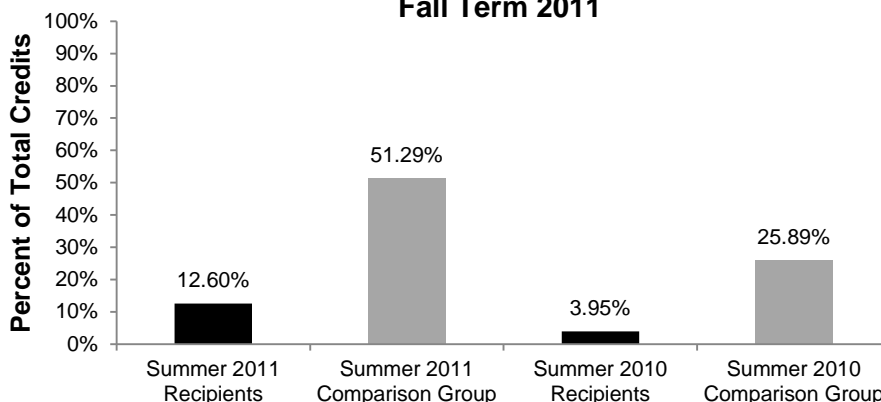


Figure 12 displays the percent of total credits for fall term 2011 that were developmental credits for Summer Transition Grant recipients and students in the comparison groups. Developmental credits for Summer 2011 recipients made up only 12.6 percent of their total credit load, significantly below the comparison group rate of 51.29 percent. One would expect a lower rate for these recipients, since they took developmental coursework during the summer program. Summer 2010 recipients, in their second year of enrollment, also took a much smaller percentage (3.95 percent) of developmental course credits than did their comparison group (25.89 percent).

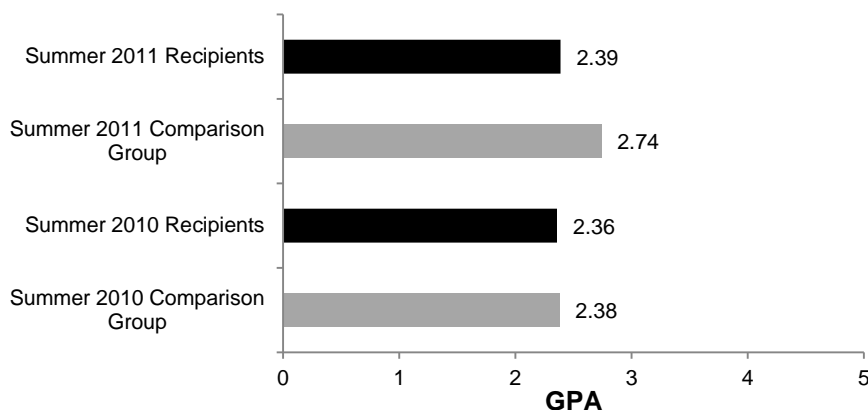
Figure 12
Developmental Credits as Percent of Total Credits
STG Recipients & Comparison Groups
Fall Term 2011



Fall Term College Grade Point Averages

Fall term 2011 mean grade point averages for summer program participants are compared to students in the comparison groups in Figure 13. The mean grade point average for summer 2011 recipients (2.39) was lower than the mean GPA for students in the comparison group (2.74). Mean grade point averages for 2011 recipients ranged from 0.00 to 4.00. Summer 2010 recipients in their second year of college during fall term 2011 had a mean grade point average of 2.36, very close to the corresponding comparison group mean grade point average of 2.38. Although summer recipients have lower mean grade point averages than their comparison groups, they took significantly fewer developmental credits than did students in the comparison groups, as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 13
Mean Grade Point Average
STG Recipient & Comparison Groups
Fall Term 2011



Institutional Program Goals and Objectives

Table 5
The Art Institutes International MN Summer Transition Program Goals

Goals	Outcomes
Participants will successfully complete TS094 Transitional English and TS095 Transitional Mathematics courses.	3 out of 4 participants successfully completed the TS094 Transitional English and TS095 Transitional Mathematics courses. 1 out of 4 participants completed only TS095 Transitional Mathematics.
Participants will successfully meet the college-ready scores on the Accuplacer Assessment placement for English and mathematics	2 out of the 4 students met the college-ready scores for mathematics. Overall, participant post-test scores did not meet the college-ready score for English. However, one student's score improved by 13 points.
Participants should show a decrease in risk factors on the Noel-Levitz College Success Inventory (CSI) for predicted academic difficulty, educational stress and an increase in their receptivity to institutional help.	Overall, participant post-test scores saw a decrease in risk factors except for "Educational Stress" where responses were mixed.
Participants will meet with their academic advisor.	Participants met with their academic advisor over the course of their program.
Participants will participate and successfully complete the PS095 College Success course.	2 out of 4 students did not complete all requirements of the course while 1 student dropped the course. 1 student successfully completed the course.

Program goals and outcomes for The Art Institutes International Minnesota are shown in Table 5. Seventy-five percent of the participants successfully completed both the developmental courses in English and mathematics, with the remaining 25 percent (one student) successfully completing the developmental mathematics course. Fifty percent of students met the post-test college-ready scores in mathematics, with 75 percent seeing an average increase in post-test scores of 29 points. Overall, students did not meet the post-test college-ready score for English (87 on Sentence Skills sub-test), but one student's post-test score increased by 13 points.

Students partook in the Noel Levitz College Success Inventory and, with the exception of Educational Stress, post-test scores noted decreases in risk factors associated with poor academic performance. The inventory results may demonstrate student reflection on the college experience and requisite academic rigor. All students met with their academic advisor throughout the course of the program as well as faculty tutors in both mathematics and English. Twenty-five percent of students successfully completed the College Success course and 75 percent completed partial course requirements. The college subsequently changed the course structure to a graded, credit-bearing course to give further weight to the importance of successful completion.

Table 6
Central Lakes College Summer Transition Program Goals

Goals	Outcomes
30 participants will be served.	17 students were served, including 12 grant recipients.
67% of participants will be both low-income and first generation college students. 33% of participants will be from either group.	41.2% (7 out of 17) of students were both low-income and first-generation. 88.2% (15 out of 17) of students met income guidelines for Free and Reduced Price Lunch. 58.8% (8 out of 17) of students were first generation college students. 88.2% (15 out of 17) of students were from either group.
40% of participants will test at college-ready level for either reading or mathematics on the post-program Accuplacer test.	30.8% (4 out of 13) of those tested were college-ready in reading comprehension 28.6% (2 out of 7) of those tested were college-ready in mathematics. 69.6% (16 out of 23) showed improvement in reading or mathematics.
50% of participants taking a reading course will successfully complete the course.	73.3% of students successfully completed Reading I or II. 3 out of 3 students successfully completed Reading I. 8 out of 12 students successfully completed Reading II.
75% of participants will achieve a score of 65 or higher on the arithmetic portion of the Accuplacer test or successfully complete Math 0594.	82.4% (14 out of 17) of students met this goal.
80% of participants will persist through summer program and into fall term.	76.5% 13 out of 17 students enrolled during fall term. 4 of 13 students withdrew during fall term.
50% of participants who enrolled fall term will persist into their second year of college	37.5% 3 of 8 students enrolled during fall term 2010 persisted to fall term 2011.

Central Lakes College did not meet its goal of recruiting 30 students, but did have a larger participant group than some of the other campuses. Though only 41.2 percent of participants were both low-income and first generation college students, 88.2 percent met guidelines for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program and 58.8 percent were first generation college students. The college did not meet its goal of 40 percent of students testing at the college-ready level on the Accuplacer for either math or reading, but 69.6 percent of students did show improved test scores in these areas. Just over 73 percent of participants successfully completed a reading course, exceeding the college's goal of 50 percent. Further, 82.4 percent of participants achieved a score of 65 or higher on the arithmetic test or successfully completed the development math course, with the goal set at 75 percent. The college came close to meeting its goal for 80 percent of participants enrolling for the fall term with a 76.5 percent enrollment rate, but fell short of its goal for a 50 percent first-to-second year retention rate with 37.5 percent of summer 2010 participants enrolling during fall term 2011.

Table 7
Dunwoody College of Technology Summer Transition Program Goals

Goals	Outcomes
Recruit 50% male and 50% female program participants.	23 of 24 (95.8%) of participants were male.
Recruit 75% students of color.	7 of 24 (29.2%) participants were students of color.
95% of participants will show improvement on Pearson assessment test upon completion of the program.	100% of participants tested showed improvement on Pearson assessment test.
60% of participants will pass their summer courses.	64.7% passed Technical English, 64.7% passed Technical Math and 65% passed New Student Seminar.
88% of participants will attend postsecondary education at Dunwoody College of Technology.	15 of 24 (62.5%) of participants enrolled at Dunwoody College of Technology for fall term 2011.

Dunwoody College of Technology did not meet its goal of a 50/50 gender split for participants, but this may be unrealistic since many of the college's majors attract a predominantly male student body. Just over 29 percent of program participants were students of color when the college's goal was set at 75 percent. The college exceeded two of its academic goals, with 100 percent of participants showing improvement on the college readiness test and almost 65 percent successfully completing their developmental summer courses. Unfortunately, the college did not retain 88 percent of its summer participants into fall term, but 62.5 percent did enroll for the fall term.

Table 8
Hamline University Summer Transition Program Goals

Goals	Outcomes
Persistence: First-to-second year persistence rate has historically been 50% for students in this targeted population. The summer program hopes to increase this rate to 70% for its first cohort and further to 80% by the third year of the program.	Not yet available until fall 2013. All summer 2012 program participants who were MN residents enrolled for fall term. Nine out of 10 participants enrolling for fall term completed the term and performed at or above levels for their freshman cohort.
Graduation: Over 10 years, move the 6-year graduation rate from 65-69% to 70-75%. The 6-year graduation rate for summer program participants will be on par with the broader population.	Not yet available.
Textual and Quantitative Skills: 100% of summer program participants will pass their first-year writing course without having to retake the course and 80% of those who take a math or science course in their first year will successfully complete that course.	Not yet available.

Hamline University selected longer term goals for its summer bridge program, so incremental or final results will not be known until fall term of the 2012-2013 academic year. Though the campus did not identify short term goals, its summer 2011 participants showed improvement on college readiness assessment testing. All 10 participants who were Minnesota residents successfully completed the summer course. These participants subsequently enrolled for fall term 2011 and all but one completed the term and performed at or above the levels of all incoming students in their first-year cohort.

Table 9
North Hennepin Community College Summer Transition Program Goals

Goals	Outcomes
25 participants will be served	10 students served
90% of participants will participate in orientation day	100% of participants attended orientation day
85% of participants pass both ENGL 0950 and Adev 0952 and are ready to enroll in college-level courses for fall term 2011	90% of participants passed both ENGL 0950 and Adev 0952 and are ready for college-level courses for fall term 2011
10 participants will have perfect program attendance	9 participants had perfect program attendance

Although North Hennepin Community College did not meet its program recruitment goal, it came close to meeting or exceeded all of its other program goals. Most importantly, 90 percent of program participants passed both the developmental English course and academic development course.

Conclusions

Results for the second year of the Summer Transition Grant program are mixed.

Population Served

For the most part, the five participating summer transition programs served the student populations intended. Forty-four percent of recipients were students of color and 52 percent were first generation college students. Most recipients had incomes below the guidelines for the Free or Reduced Price Lunch program and tested below college-ready levels on college readiness tests.

Financial Aid Administration

The Agency disbursed funds to campuses for recipients in a prompt manner. A web-based system developed by the Agency was up and running in early May in time for schools to enter student application data and calculate awards for the summer term. Once student awards were calculated on the system by campus program administrators, funds were disbursed by the Agency prior to the anticipated state government shut down to avoid delays for students.

Several of the participating campuses reported difficulties with students not completing the appropriate financial aid documentation despite numerous reminders from staff. In large part, this may be due to students having to complete two financial aid applications: one for the summer program taking place in the 2010-2011 academic year and a 2011-2012 application for the freshmen year of college. Thus, some of the students in the summer programs did not receive a Summer Transition Grant. The college with the most grant recipients had to spend a significant amount of financial aid staff time selecting and tracking students and ushering them through the financial aid application process. Campus program administrators indicated that it is difficult to predict a student's financial eligibility for the grant prior to admitting students to the program. While a family may qualify for the Free or Reduced Price Lunch program in high school based on the parents' adjusted gross income and family size, there are other factors used in the federal need analysis formula for college financial aid that may result in an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that does not qualify for a significant grant, such as a dependent student's own income and savings or parental untaxed income and assets. The fact that students are enrolled part-time in summer programs further reduces grant eligibility due to the award calculation.

Academic Improvement

While median post-test scores did not reach the college-ready level on most subject areas, they did show improvement in all subject areas and many individual students did test at the college-ready level in one

or more subject areas. Campus program administrators continue to caution that students are not enthusiastic about having to retake the college readiness test upon completion of the program and do not give it their best effort. Thus, summer program or fall term course grades may be a better indicator of academic achievement.

Approximately 75 percent of summer program courses were successfully completed (grade of D or above), with letter grades of A and B accounting for almost half of all the course grades. However, just under 18 percent of grades were failing grades, most for academic support courses rather than core English and math courses. This may indicate that participating campuses need to do a better job of monitoring student progress throughout the summer program. One of the campuses with a high number of failing grades for its college support course subsequently restructured the course from a Pass/Fail to letter grade system and offered it for college credit to stress the importance of successful course completion.

On a more positive note, 88.9 percent of summer 2011 recipients enrolled in college during fall term 2011, with participation rates as high as 100 percent at some of the campuses, though they had a very small number of recipients. Summer 2010 recipients first enrolled for fall 2010, had a first-to-second year retention rate of 60 percent for fall term 2011, just slightly below the 62.41 percent rate for the comparison group.

Only 12.6 percent of the total credits taken by 2011 summer program participants during fall term 2011 were developmental credits, compared to 51.29 percent for the comparison group. For summer 2010 recipients, the percentage of developmental credits for fall term 2011 dropped to four percent, compared to 25.89 percent for the comparison group. Fall term 2011 mean credit load for summer 2011 participants was 14.3 credits, compared to 12.12 for the comparison group. Summer 2010 recipients had a mean credit load of 11.8 credits for fall term 2011, slightly higher than 11.42 mean credit load for the comparison group.

There was a slight decline in mean grade point average for the summer 2010 cohort. The mean fall term 2011 grade point average for this cohort was 2.36, compared to 2.56 for the previous fall term. Summer 2011 recipients had a mean grade point average of 2.39 for fall term 2011, which was less than the comparison group mean grade point average of 2.74. However, 2011 recipients took a substantially lower percentage of developmental course credits during fall term 2011 than did the comparison group.

Finally, only four of 27 summer 2011 recipients who enrolled in college for fall term 2011 (14.8 percent) withdrew during fall term. With respect to the summer 2010 cohort, only one in 15 (6.7%) recipients who continued enrollment into fall term 2011 withdrew, though seven of 15 (46.7%) withdrew some but not all credits.

While it is too early to determine the long-term effects of summer transition program participation on academic achievement and persistence, fall term 2011 results for the summer 2010 cohort do not show any gains over the comparison group, other than taking a slightly higher credit load and a smaller percentage of developmental credits. The first-to-second year retention rate and mean grade point average for the 2010 cohort are less than that of the comparison group. However, given the small size of both the summer 2010 and 2011 cohorts, evaluation results are tenuous. The Agency and participating campuses will continue to collect enrollment and grade point average data on program recipients and comparison groups during future academic years.

Program Participation

Although there were five participating campuses for the summer of 2011 compared to three campuses for the previous summer, the number of student grant recipients (27) remains extremely low, which negatively affects the Agency's ability to conduct meaningful program evaluations.

One of the main reasons cited by program administrators that inquired about the program but decided not to participate was the lack of personnel and resources to offer a summer bridge program. Participating campuses are unable to recoup their full program costs through individual grants to students. Campuses cannot predict at the time of program planning and hiring how many students will enroll in the summer program and qualify for grants. All of the participating programs consisted of part-time credit loads, making revenues from student grants even less sufficient to fully fund programs. Some summer programs do not offer college credit, which is problematic, since the Summer Transition Grant award calculation formula is based on the number of credits for which the student is enrolled. Thus, the funding structure for the program does not encourage campuses to offer a program unless they can secure additional funding sources. Many campuses stated they would have participated had the program been structured as a competitive grant to colleges which would cover full program costs.

Related to the program's current funding structure is the additional administrative tasks associated with ushering students through the financial aid process, screening students for program eligibility requirements, disbursing financial aid and calculating refunds for students who withdraw. One of the campuses that participated in this program during the summer of 2010 opted out for summer 2011 because the time and effort needed to administer the student financial aid component, as well as pre- and post-program Accuplacer tests, was not worth the small amount of grants their students received. Two additional campuses opted out for the summer of 2012.

Lastly, some of the summer transition programs currently offered by colleges did not meet the requirements in statute for this program. Summer bridge programs are sometimes designed to socially acclimate first-generation college students to the college environment and do not offer intensive math and English components. Many four-year colleges only admit students who are ready for college-level work and do not offer developmental courses.

Recommendations

1. Restructure program funding to a competitive block grant model

All campus program administrators felt the program would be more successful if it were restructured as a competitive block grant to campuses. There are four primary reasons for restructuring funding in this manner. First, as a competitive block grant, state funding could be used to cover all or a significant portion of summer transition program costs. Second, such a move would also allow campuses to start program planning and recruitment earlier in the year without needing to identify individual students for grants. Third, a competitive block grant may provide a sufficient incentive for other campuses to offer summer transition programs. Finally, a competitive block grant would eliminate the need for students to complete two FAFSAs and reduce the burden on campus financial aid staff to rush the processing of student financial aid applications for summer term awarding.

The costs of running summer bridge programs can be high for small populations of students. For example, hiring summer tutors, opening residence halls and dining services, and holding extra classes over the summer can cause financial stress for institutions. This is often why many summer bridge programs are offered through federal TRiO grant programs, such as Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, or Student Support Services. These programs have specified program funding separate from institutional resources or student financial aid.

Changing to a competitive block grant would have a minimal impact on students as admitted students would qualify for the traditional forms of need-based financial aid, such as the Federal Pell Grant and Minnesota State Grant. Furthermore, individual student stipends could be provided to offset living expenses so that students can concentrate on academic improvement. For the summer of 2011, there

were no participating programs that utilized student stipends as an incentive for program attendance and completion.

2. Emphasize monitoring and support of students throughout the freshman year of college.

Given the slight dip in college grade point averages and credit loads for the second year of enrollment, as well as the first-to-second year retention rate of 2010 program recipients (60 percent vs. 62.41 for the comparison group), there may be a need for continued programming and more intensive support services for recipients during the first full year of enrollment. Future summer program proposals submitted by colleges will be reviewed with this recommendation in mind.

References

- Ishitani, T. T. (2006). Studying attrition and degree completion behavior among first-generation college students in the United States. *Journal of Higher Education*, 77(5), 861-885.
- impact on student achievement and retention. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 29(2), 2-33.

Appendix A: Minnesota Statutes 2010

M.S. 135A.61 High School-to-College Developmental Transition Programs

Subdivision 1. **High school-to-college developmental transition programs.** All public higher education systems and other higher education institutions in Minnesota are encouraged to offer research-based high school-to-college developmental transition programs to prepare students for college-level academic coursework. A program under this section must, at a minimum, include instruction to develop the skills and abilities necessary to be ready for college-level coursework when the student enrolls in a degree, diploma, or certificate program and must address the academic skills identified as needing improvement by a college readiness assessment completed by the student. A program offered under this section must not constitute more than the equivalent of one semester of full-time study occurring in the summer following high school graduation. The courses completed in a program under this section must be identified on the student's transcript with a unique identifier to distinguish it from other developmental education courses or programs.

Subd. 2. High school-to-college developmental transition programs evaluation report.

(a) Institutions that offer a high school-to-college developmental transition program and enroll students that receive a grant under section 136A.121, subdivision 9b, must annually submit data and information about the services provided and program outcomes to the director of the Office of Higher Education.

(b) The director must establish and convene a data working group to develop: (1) the data methodology to be used in evaluating the effectiveness of the programs implemented to improve the academic performance of participants, including the identification of appropriate comparison groups; and (2) a timeline for institutions to submit data and information to the director. The data working group must develop procedures that ensure consistency in the data collected by each institution. Data group members must have expertise in data collection processes and the delivery of academic programs to students, and represent the types of institutions that offer a program under this section. The data group must assist the director in analyzing and synthesizing institutional data and information to be included in the evaluation report submitted to the legislature under subdivision 3.

(c) Participating institutions must specify both program and student outcome goals and the activities implemented to achieve the goals. The goals must be clearly stated and measurable, and data collected must enable the director to verify the program has met the outcome goals established for the program.

(d) The data and information submitted must include, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) demographic information about program participants;
- (2) names of the high schools from which the students graduated;
- (3) the college readiness test used to determine the student was not ready for college-level academic coursework;
- (4) the academic content areas assessed and the scores received by the students on the college readiness test;
- (5) a description of the services, including any supplemental noncredit academic support services, provided to students;
- (6) data on the registration load, courses completed, and grades received by students;
- (7) the retention of students from the term they participated in the program to the fall term immediately following graduation from high school;

- (8) information about the student's enrollment in subsequent terms; and
- (9) other information specified by the director or the data group that facilitates the evaluation process.

Subd. 3. **Report to legislature.** By March 15 of each year, beginning in 2011, the director shall submit a report to the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over higher education finance and policy that evaluates the effectiveness of programs in improving the academic performance of students who participated in the transition programs.

M.S. 136A.121 Subd. 9b Onetime grant for high school-to-college developmental transition program

(a) A student who enrolls in a program under section 135A.61 is eligible for a onetime grant to help pay expenses to attend the program. The amount of the grant must be determined according to subdivision 5, except as modified by paragraph (b). The requirement in subdivision 9a that subtracts a federal Pell Grant award for which a student would be eligible, even if the student has exhausted the federal Pell Grant award, does not apply to a student who receives a grant under this subdivision in the award year in which the grant is received. The maximum grant under this subdivision must be reduced by the average amount a student would earn working in an on-campus work-study position for ten hours per week during a summer term. The office must determine an amount for student earnings in a summer term, using available data about earnings, before determining the amount awarded under this subdivision.

(b) For a student with an expected family contribution of zero, the maximum amount of the grant is the cost of attendance under subdivision 6.

(c) A grant under this subdivision counts as one of the nine semesters of eligibility under subdivision 9. A grant under this subdivision must not be awarded for the same term for which another grant is awarded under this section.

EFFECTIVE DATE. M.S. 136A.121 Subd. 9b became effective for students who graduate from high school after December 31, 2009.

Appendix B: Application

SUMMER 2011

APPLICATION FOR SUMMER TRANSITION GRANT PROGRAM

The Summer Transition Grant program provides financial assistance to eligible high school graduates attending summer transition programs offered by Minnesota colleges and universities during the summer between high school graduation and fall term enrollment in college. Students must be U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens, Minnesota residents, 2011 high school graduates and attending an eligible summer transition program offered by one of the colleges shown below. The amount of the Summer Transition Grant will vary based on the income and assets of your family and the cost of the summer transition program you selected. To apply for a Summer Transition Grant you must:

1. Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for both the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 academic years. The results of the 2010-2011 FAFSA will be used to determine eligibility for the Summer Transition Grant program and the 2011-2012 FAFSA will be used to determine eligibility for financial aid for the first year of college. Be sure to respond quickly to any requests from the financial aid office for further information needed to process your FAFSA applications.
2. Complete this application and return it to the Summer Transition Program administrator at the college offering the summer program (contact information provided on the top of this form). The administrator will then notify you about your eligibility for and the amount of your Summer Transition Grant.

Your Full Name:		Date of Birth: / / MM/DD/YYYY	
Social Security Number:		Phone Number: ()	
Permanent Address:			
Email Address:			
Gender: Male <input type="radio"/> Female: <input type="radio"/>		Race/Ethnicity:	
High School Name , City and State		Are you Hispanic or Latino? (a person of Cuban, Mexican, Chicano, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture, regardless of race)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
High School Graduation Date: / / Month/Year		Check all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Two or More Races <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	
Summer Program you Will Attend: (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Art Institutes Int'l, MN <input type="checkbox"/> Central Lakes College <input type="checkbox"/> Dunwoody College of Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Hamline University <input type="checkbox"/> North Hennepin CC		College you Plan to Attend Fall 2011: City/State in Which College is Located:	

Student Consent for Access to Educational Records

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Summer Transition Grant program, the Office of Higher Education will need to obtain information from the college offering the summer transition program, as well as the college(s) you attend after completing the program, regarding your high school GPA, college readiness test scores, courses taken, course grades and financial aid received. Because student educational records are considered private data under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the college(s) you attend will need your permission to release this data to the Office of Higher Education. The Office will use this data for the sole purpose of evaluating the Summer Transition Grant program and will not release the information to outside parties. By signing below, you are giving permission to the colleges you attend to provide your data to the Office of Higher Education for the sole purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the Summer Transition Grant Program.

Student's Signature

Date Signed

Appendix C: Evaluation Report Requirements

High School to College Developmental Summer Transition Program Evaluation Report Requirements

DATA MATRIX

Item #	Data element	Description in statute	Level of detail	Data source	Time frame
1	Demographics: <i>Age</i> <i>Income</i> <i>Household size</i> <i>Parent's Educational Attainment</i>	Demographic information about program participants.	Student	FAFSA	Summer
	<i>Gender</i> <i>Race</i>		Student	Program Application	Summer
2	High School of Graduation & year	Name of the high school from which the student graduated and year graduated.	Student	Program Application	Summer
3	Readiness test name and description	College readiness test used to determine the student was not ready for college-level academic coursework.	Program	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
4	Readiness test content description	The academic content areas assessed in readiness test.	Program	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
5	Readiness test scores	Pre- and post-program scores received by students on the college readiness test.	Student	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
6	Services provided list; description	A description of the services, including any supplemental noncredit academic support services, provided to students.	Program	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
6	Credits attempted Credits completed	Data on the registration load, courses completed.	Student	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
7	Course grades	Course grades received by students.	Student	Campus Program Administrator	Summer
8	Institution of Fall Enrollment, current year	The retention of students from the term they participated in the program to the fall term immediately following graduation from high school.	Student	College OHE State Grant database OHE Enrollment database	Fall
8	Institution of Fall Enrollment, future years	Information about the student's enrollment in subsequent terms,	Student	OHE State Grant database OHE Enrollment database	Fall
9	HS GPA	Other information specified by the director or the data working group that facilitates the evaluation process.	Student	Campus Program Administrator	Summer