**Examination of Late Registration Procedures**
**Academic Standards Committee**
**Edison State College**

The Academic Standards Committee of Edison State College has been asked to review the college's procedures concerning students who enter the college as a late registrant. The supposition is that such late registrants have a lower retention rate across terms and across academic years. This paper examines the relevant literature and seeks to make suggestions concerning late registration of students.

It is not surprising to find that no studies argue in favor of late registration *vis-à-vis* acceptable pedagogy. However, there is much concern about turning away potential fee-paying students – especially in an "open door" public college. The discussion here centers around three main points (1) what the studies say about how late registration effects student retention and achievement, (2) which student are most likely to enroll late, and (3) what can we do for late registrants to mitigate problems with learning outcomes and retention.

### The Effects of Late Registration

A "late registrant" is a student who enrolls in a class on or after the first day of classes within a given term. This student has a varied background but basically falls into two categories. The first is the First-Time-In-College student who made a decision to not only enroll in a class late, but also enter the college late. The second category is the student who has already enrolled in the college and has completed the registration of some courses early. However, this cohort would like to "Late Add" a course.

Diablo Valley College (2004) has labeled the former group "Late Registrants" and the latter group "Early-Late Registrants". Diablo Valley added a third group, "Early Registrants", Within a study of academic performance, they found that

> "...students who registered early, then fine-tuned their schedules
> during the late-registration period had the best chance of performing
> well (success rate 73%). Early registrants performed dependably well, if
> not as well as the early-late registrants (success rate 70%). Students that
> registered late [only] had [statistically significant] lower success rates
> than students in the other two groups (success rate 63%)."

Sova did a study for the Institute for Community College research at Broome Community College in Binghamton, New York (1985) in which she examined the grade results for early and

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late registrants. She had examined the final grade results for 1,673 students in the basic and first-year English courses. She states that "As shown in Figures [2 and] 3 a significantly lower percentage of late admits passed English, slightly more than 50%. More than a quarter failed, while nearly 20% withdrew. … The percentage of 'I' grades were at least three times that of regular admits."

The data from Sova's(1985) study are represented in the following pie charts taken directly from the report.
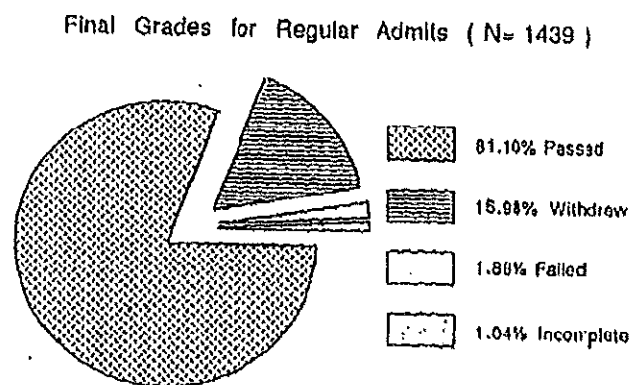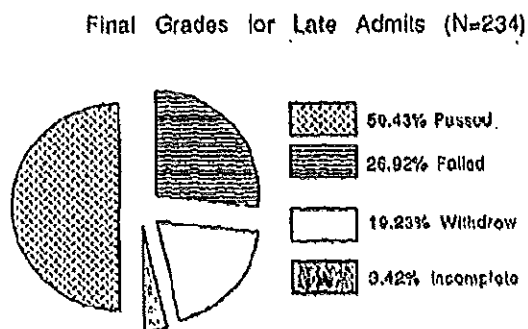
Figure 2

Final Grades for Regular Admits ( N= 1439 )



- 81.10% Passed
- 15.98% Withdrew
- 1.88% Failed
- 1.04% Incomplete

Figure 3

Final Grades for Late Admits (N=234)



- 50.43% Passed
- 26.92% Failed
- 19.23% Withdrew
- 3.42% Incomplete

Figures taken from "A study of success rate of late admits in freshman English at the two-year college.

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LynnTincher-Ladner (2006) of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College found in her study that "a student who registers during preregistration or regular registration has on average a 26.53% higher GPA than a student who registers during late registration".

More and Shulock (2007) found that among degree-seeking student who registered late for their courses only 62% made it to the second term and 50% made it to the second year. This compared unfavorably with the 78% retention of early registrants in both categories.

Ford, Walker and Stahl (2006) found that late registrants were 21% less likely to pass a course, had a 23% lower course average, had a 28% lower semester GPA and had a 33% lower overall GPA.

McCuen(1978) reports on faculty problems with late registrants. He reported "on the following three problems with students who registered late:

    (1) They interrupt at the beginning of class hours (or during class) seeking admission.
    (2) If admitted, they frequently never catch up or hold back the rest of the class – or both.
    (3) If they gain admission to classes that had been closed, they – and others – learn the value of registering late, thereby causing increased late registration."

Roueche (1989) sums up the finding of a multitude of studies in the area of late registration.

> "I can think of no academic policy more counterproductive to student success in an open-access situation than a policy which permits (and perhaps encourages) student to begin their studies a week or two late."

## The Late Registrant

Wang and Pilarzyk (2007) state that the late registrant:

> "…tend to be older students more likely to 'stop-out' after high school, and more likely to need financial aid and be part-timers. Consistent with other studies these students fit into the profile of an at-risk student. They are not only late with their program applications, they are also late in financial aid applications, financial aid awards, and course registrations."

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Dana Freer-Weiss (2004) completed a study that showed that the late registrant fit the profile of the "at-risk" student. Since these students are typically the students that must be more closely monitored, there may be things that an educational institution can do to reduce the size of this cohort. Those that do register late may need closer supervision – at least in the short term.

## Programs for Late Registrants

Many of the aforementioned studies have offered possible solutions to mitigate the unfavorable outcomes in course completion and student retention for the late registrant. Belcher and Patterson (1990) reported on a survey of students at Miami-Dade Community College. They found that about 20% of the students enrolled one week prior to the start of the term and that 12.4% enrolled during the first week of classes. Astoundingly, 42% of the late registrants did not even know that they were registering during the first week of classes. When asked if they would register earlier if substantial late fees were imposed (rather than registering late) 74.1% of the late registrants said they would then register early. If NO late registration was allowed, 79.7% of the late registrants said they would register early rather than opt for no college courses.

Street (2000) suggests that students on academic probation not be allowed to register late, students on financial aid be told of any alternate plans for paying for textbooks (while they await financial aid), and require mandatory group discussion sessions on time management. In other studies, Boylan (1999) recommends that no developmental courses allow students after the start of classes. Studies have shown a retention rate as low as 10% for these students.


## Committee Recommendations

The Academic Standards Committee has been charged with making recommendations that might improve the retention and success of students who arrive at the college as late registrants. These recommendations follow:

1. **Students should not be allowed to begin their registration process for a given semester duringthe week classes actually begin. The first week of classes should be limited to drop/add for current registrants.**
2. **Designate the week prior to the start of classes as "late open registration". This designation serves as notice to prospective students that registration must be completed. Impose late registration fees for this week (as well as the first actual week of classes).**
3. **Do not allow any new registrations or course additions for developmental classes after midnight the first day of the semester.**

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4. Continue to pursue (as needed by each department) the implementation of late start classes, provided space and faculty are available.
5. Make first day attendance mandatory. Students not present on the first day will be automatically dropped from the class. A waitlist for the class can be kept with 'first on – first added' capabilities. Thus students waiting for a class can enter by having attempted to register at an earlier time. This process probably cannot be done for online classes.
6. Do not allow any drop/add after the first week of classes.

**Bibliography**

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ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS (MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE) > CONFIRMATION > FIRST DAY ATTENDANCE

📖 First Day Attendance

This is the most current registration listing for your course. After selecting any absences, you may proceed to the confirmation page by clicking the Submit button below.

[PRINT]

| PRESENT | | Ray Bester<br>U###### | ABSENT |
| PRESENT | | Lynda Fontana<br>U###### | ABSENT |

[CANCEL] [SUBMIT]

The FDA tool before attendance is taken.

Clicking on the [PRESENT] button confirms that they are in class and turns the identification area green to indicate this with a round checkmark icon on the left side. Clicking on the [ABSENT] button builds the list of non-attendees and turns the identification area red, with a round X icon on the right side to confirm this.

*Note: At any point you may leave the FDA and your work will be saved.*

| PRESENT | | ✓ Ray Bester<br>U###### | ABSENT |
| PRESENT | | Lynda Fontana<br>U###### ✕ | ABSENT |

Ray Bester is present and Lynda Fontana is absent.

Changes may be made at any point in this process, so if a student comes in late you may simply hit the [PRESENT] button next to their name to undo a previous [ABSENT] click.

Once you get to the bottom of the list you will find a [SUBMIT] button which will take you to a confirmation page. This page will lists students that have been marked [ABSENT] and asks you to confirm their absence. **It is recommended to take attendance at the beginning of the course and leave this final confirmation step for the end to allow for latecomers.**

When you submit this confirmation page, the information is sent to the Registrar and the students will be automatically dropped from the course. **If any student wishes to reverse this process they will need to re-register for the course.***Note that they will not be immediately removed from your course in myUSF, but will be once the Registrar has performed the drop and that information is sent back to myUSF.*