

# CHASS GATEWAY LECTURES

Impact on Retention and Academic Performance  
Fall 2008 Cohort



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## Introduction

The Gateway Lectures is one of three First-Year Learning Community (FYLC) programs offered for new entering freshmen in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS). The Gateway Lectures are tied to the annual CHASS theme and led by an eminent UCR scholar. Peer Educators are embedded into the program and help students acclimate to the university by providing information about study skills, time management, and campus resources.

The primary goals of the Gateway Lectures are to:

- Increase first-year retention, and
- Increase academic performance, as measured by first quarter and first-year cumulative GPA.

An evaluation of the Gateway Lectures was conducted for the 2008 new entering CHASS freshman cohort to analyze the impact of the program in meeting its goals. For more information about the Gateway Lectures visit:

[http://chassfirst.ucr.edu/gateway\\_lectures](http://chassfirst.ucr.edu/gateway_lectures).

## Sample

Students who participate in the Gateway Lectures self-select into the program during Highlander Orientation (<http://www.orientation.ucr.edu/>).

Approximately five percent of the entering freshman cohort in CHASS voluntarily participated in the program (Table 1).



## Helping Students Transition

CHASS FIRST in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences provides a variety of programs to help students transition to UCR.

New entering freshmen in CHASS who participated in the CHASS Connect program were excluded from the base population of this analysis, in order to determine the true impact of participation in the Gateway Lectures. The sample sizes for the treatment and comparison groups are as follows:

- Treatment Group: 101 students (Gateway Lecture participants)
- Comparison Group: 1,946 students (non-participants)

## Methodology

This evaluation compares entering freshman students in CHASS who participated in the Gateway Lectures to those who did not participate during fall 2008. The analysis utilizes a multiple regression model which controls for student background characteristics, such as gender, race/ethnicity, SAT scores, and high school GPA to determine whether

participating in this program has a significant impact on first-year retention and academic performance.

## Results

### Retention

Students who participated in the Gateway Lectures had a marginally higher average first-year retention rate than their counterparts in CHASS: 86% compared to 85% respectively. The analysis of the impact on first to second year retention revealed that participation in the program did not yield a statistically significant impact (Table 2).

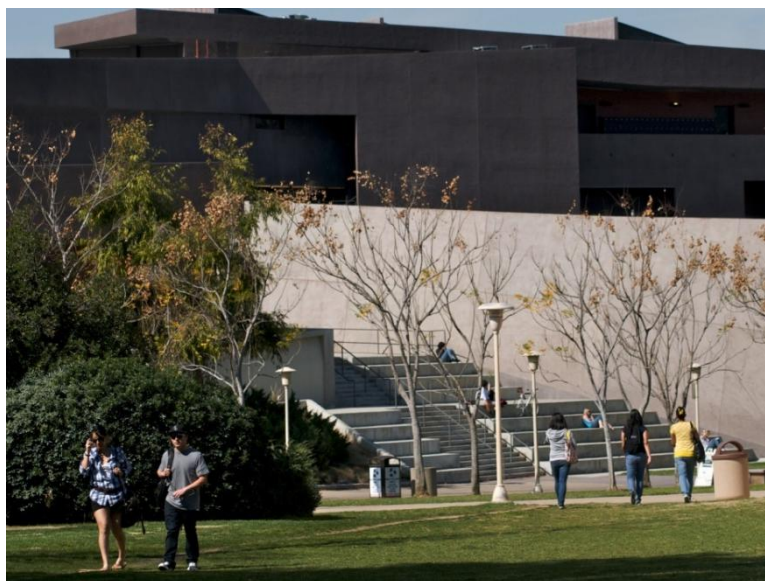
### Academic Performance

Students in the Gateway Lectures had higher term GPAs (Tables 3 and 4). Program participant's average fall term GPA was 2.72 compared to non-participants at 2.62; participants may expect a 0.25 grade point increase in their fall term GPA. Although both participants

and non-participants had an average cumulative GPA of 2.83, results showed the effect of participating in the Gateway Lectures could approximately increase their overall first-year GPA by 0.10 grade points. Not surprisingly participants who lived on-campus saw a larger impact on their fall term and first-year GPAs. Previous evaluations have shown that students who live on-campus have a greater success rate as measured by academic performance, first-year retention, and graduation rates.

## Conclusion

Although this evaluation did not detect a statistically significant positive impact on first-year retention, no negative impacts were found. Importantly, Gateway Lectures were found to successfully enhance participants' academic performance as measured by GPA. Additionally, program participants living on-campus had higher GPAs.



**First-Year Programs are aimed at creating conditions that foster student success at UCR.**



## CHASS Gateway Lectures: Fall 2008 New Freshman Cohort

Table 1: Sample

Fall 2008 Cohort	
<b>Involvement</b>	
CHASS Entering Freshmen Population	1,946
Gateway Entering Freshmen Participants	101
<i>Average Participation Rate</i>	<b>5.2%</b>
<i>Average CHFY 010 Course Grade</i>	3.04

Note: Excludes CHASS Connect Participants

Table 2: Impact on First-Year Retention

Fall 2008 Cohort	
<b>First Year Persistence</b>	
Gateway Participants	85.9%
Non-Gateway Participants	85.2%
Impact on First Year Persistence (First to Second Year)	$\beta = 0.021$ $t = 0.553$ $sig = 0.580$
Gateway Participants Living On-Campus Impact on First Year Persistence (First to Second Year)	$\beta = -0.093$ $t = -1.174$ $sig = 0.241$

Table 3: Impact on Academic Performance, Fall Term GPA

Fall 2008 Cohort	
<b>Average Fall Term GPA</b>	
Gateway Participants	2.72
Non-Gateway Participants	2.62
Impact on Academic Performance (Fall Term GPA)	$\beta = 0.246$ $t = 3.015$ $sig = 0.003^*$
Gateway Participants Living On-Campus Impact on Academic Performance (Fall Term GPA)	$\beta = 0.314$ $t = 1.833$ $sig = 0.067^{**}$

Table 4: Impact on Academic Performance, Cumulative GPA

Fall 2008 Cohort	
<b>Average First Year Cumulative GPA</b>	
Gateway Participants	2.83
Non-Gateway Participants	2.83
Impact on Academic Performance (First Year Cumulative GPA)	$\beta = 0.097$ $t = 1.754$ $sig = 0.080^{**}$
Gateway Participants Living On-Campus Impact on Academic Performance (First Year Cumulative GPA)	$\beta = 0.258$ $t = 2.198$ $sig = 0.028^*$

\* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Statistically significant at the 0.10 level