

16.3.2026

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**Title**

Measuring the impact of a university first-year experience program on student GPA and retention

**Publication year**

2009

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher Education. - 57 (2009) 3, S. 373 - 391

**Inventory number**

25697

**Keywords**

Ausland : USA : Studenten, Studium, Lehre ; Ausland : USA : einzelne Hochschulen

**Abstract**

In 1997 a medium-size Midwestern public university in the U.S. initiated a first year experience program. The program is designed to infuse added curricular and extracurricular components into core courses in an effort to integrate students into the university community. This article examined the FYE impact on grade point average (GPA) and retention after 1 year for the fall 2006 cohort of entering students. The findings suggest no positive FYE effect on retention, but on average FYE students earned higher GPAs than non-FYE students. Reducing the sample to include only courses identified as goal compatible FYE courses yielded a positive effect on retention and also accentuated the GPA differential. The estimated positive FYE impact on retention was larger for below average students (especially females) and smaller for above average students. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)