



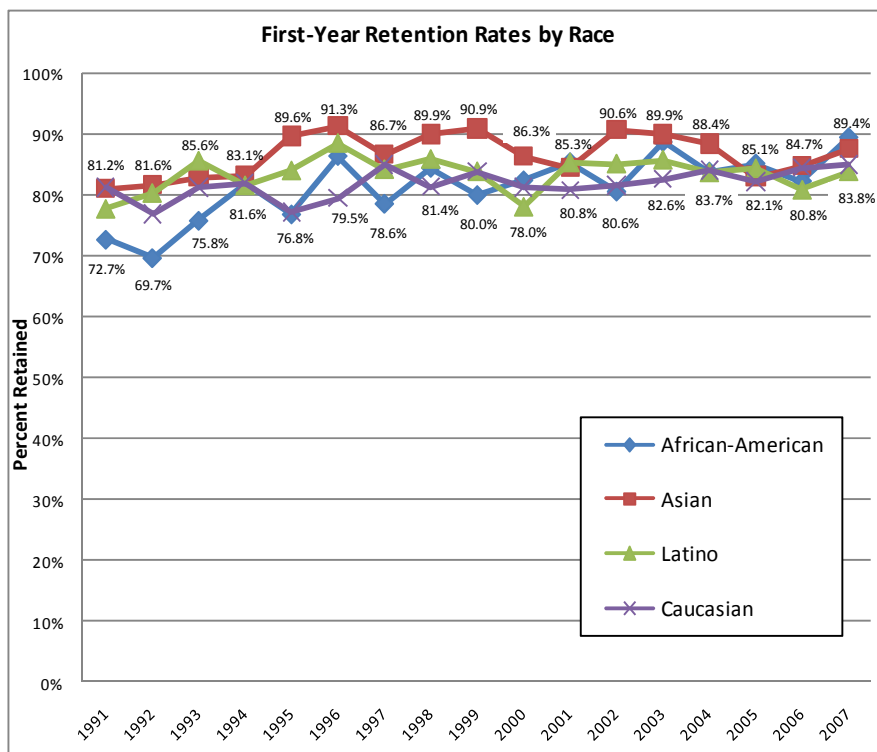
IR Abstract

Insights and Outcomes from Institutional Research at DePaul University
From the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing

ISSUE 2—APRIL 2009

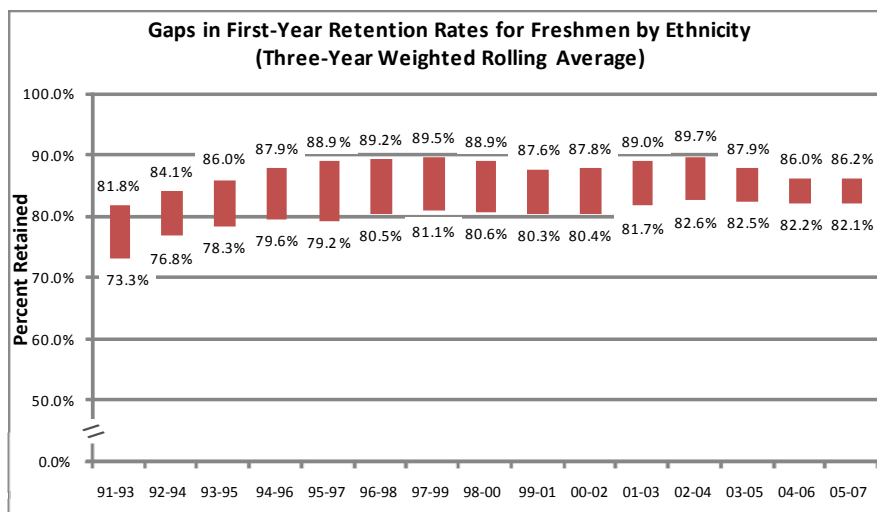
Closing the Gap in the Retention of Underrepresented Groups

One of the national concerns about college access and attainment is the persistent gap in retention and graduation rates when comparing racial/ethnic groups of students. Likewise at DePaul, we've seen differences in the retention rates of underrepresented groups relative to majority students. Admission strategies and programmatic interventions were initiated in an attempt to "close this gap" in retention.



The chart to the left shows the first-year retention rates by ethnic group. Although the rates tend to fluctuate within groups from one year to the next, it can be seen that in most years, African-American or Latino students have lower retention rates than Caucasian or Asian students.

This gap can be calculated by taking the difference between the lowest and highest retention rate among the four primary racial/ethnic groups for each entering cohort of freshmen from fall 1991 thru fall 2007. For example, looking at the chart above, the gap for the 1991 cohort is the difference between the Asian student rate (81.2%) and the African-American student rate (72.7%)—a gap of 8.5 percentage points.



Three-year rolling averages were calculated, weighted by relative counts of students within each cohort, to smooth out year-to-year fluctuations. As shown in the chart to the left, the gap in first-year retention rates has been declining steadily since 1997 and is now less than half (4.1) of what it was in 1991-93 (8.5).