

# IRP@FHDA

**To:** Angela Caballero de Cordero, PhD, Dean of Counseling and Matriculation, De Anza College  
**From:** Lourdes Del Rio-Parent, PhD, Sr. Research Analyst/Data Warehouse Coordinator FHDA  
**Date:** December 3, 2013  
**Re:** Factors related to the use of Degree Works by COUN 200 students to develop an education plan, follow-up study

This document summarizes results for correlation and regression analyses used to identify factors that, according to preliminary analyses, were related to the use of Degree Works<sup>1</sup> by COUN 200 students at De Anza College to develop an education plan. Previous results had shown that COUN 200 students who were Asians, participated in the international program, and planned to transfer to a 4-year institution without a degree were more likely to have an approved and active educational plan in Degree Works when compared to students from other ethnic/groups, non-international, and for whom transfer was not their main education goal, respectively. In addition to the interrelationship among these factors, these analyses also assessed the extent to which differences in students' use of Degree Works were mainly accounted by differences in the level to which this audit system was emphasized or covered during the course, as measured by the percentage of students enrolled in the section with recorded Degree Works activity, independently of student education plan approval status (whether the plan was approved by the instructor).

Correlation analyses were used to test previous findings, using dichotomized variables for *Degree Works education plan status* (having an active and approved educational plan), *transfer education goal* (transfer to a 4-year institution with or without a degree), *Asian* (single or multiple race Asian ethnicity), and *international status* (participating in the International Student program at the College). For these factors, students were classified into two groups identified as 1 ("yes" or positive) and 0 ("no" or negative). Regression analyses were used to find the simplest explanation of the observed results,

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<sup>1</sup> Ellucian web-based degree audit system

after taking into account the possible effects of confounding<sup>2</sup> variables within the equation. The model or equation tested the extent to which students' *transfer educational goal*, *international student status*, *Asian ethnicity*, and *section Degree Works activity* could predict use of Degree Works for the development of an education plan.<sup>3</sup>

Correlation coefficients in Table 1 replicated previous findings, COUN 200 students with the goal of transferring to a 4-year institution, Asians, and those who participated in the internal program were more likely to have an active and approved plan in Degree Works than comparable groups. The data showed that Asian ethnic/race status was positively related to having a transfer educational goal and international student status. The analysis also showed a very strong relationship between section Degree Works activity and having developed a plan in Degree Works (education plan status).

Multiple regression coefficients in Table 2 showed that when taking into account all four factors, *section Degree Works activity* and *international student status* were the only significant predictors of students' use of Degree Works for the development of an educational plan. Uniqueness indices<sup>4</sup> indicated that *section Degree Works activity* was the simplest and most substantive predictor of students' *Degree Works education plan status*. *International student status* was shown to be statistically significant, but accounted for less than 1% of the variance. Figures on Table 3 showed significant variance across COUN 200 sections (range of 0% to 100%) and instructors (range 1% to 97%) regarding levels of Degree Works activity.

In sum, results indicate that despite student differences, the key predictor of COUN 200 students' use of Degree Works for the development of an educational plan is the extent to which this tool is covered or emphasized in the course (Degree Works activity). At this point, results suggest the need to identify, address, and monitor factors that could explain differences across sections or instructors regarding their use of Degree Works, such as motivation, training, and user friendly references available.

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<sup>2</sup> Extraneous variables that modify results due to their relationship with other variable(s) within the model or equation.

<sup>3</sup> Degree Works Ed Plan, Transfer Ed Goal, International Status, and Asian variables were dichotomized; students were classified into two groups with two possible values: 1 for positive, and 0 for negative. Section Ed Plan Pct referred to the percentage (decimal) of students in the section with Degree Works activity, independently of their educational plan approval status. It was used to measure the level to which the use of Degree Works was covered or emphasized in the class.

<sup>4</sup> Uniqueness indices are less sensitive than p values to a large sample size, such as the one used on this analysis, 2,499.

