Bridge Assessment and Evaluation

2010-2014

Administrative Summary Report

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Summary and Evaluation of the IUPUC Bridge Program 2010-2014

Introduction

Beginning in 2009, a committee of committed faculty and staff designed and implemented a program aimed at transitioning first-year students to IUPUC successfully. Of interest, the group chose to focus on students at moderate risk (coded Conditional Admit), however, they also included other students (i.e., fully qualified, and Cautionary Conditional Admits). The IUPUC Bridge program focuses on the socialization of incoming first-year students. Uniquely, we focus on addressing the needs of our students such as: success and engagement at a commuter campus; navigating college as a first-generation student; learning technology skills unique to the campus; as well as the transition from the home-school or rural school environment. The program has evolved in the past four years to reflect the feedback of Bridge students and mentors and to become integrated into the broader First Year Experience at IUPUC. This report includes information about the program, and assessment procedures and data. The major outcomes assessed are 4-6 year graduation rates; retention; GPA; but also more qualitative outcomes such as student engagement.

Who is involved in Bridge?

Students who have applied to attend IUPUC in the Fall are invited to the program. From 2011-2013, the program was mandatory for admitted persons considered ‘Cautionary Conditional Admits’ and was encouraged for ‘Conditional Admits’. In 2014, the Summer Success program was developed and implemented to address the academic preparedness, namely their mathematical skills, of these most-at-risk students. Bridge has been developed and revised to serve all admitted students, both conditionally admitted and fully-qualified students.

Over a dozen faculty and staff dedicate hours of planning across the academic year. Further, eight to ten student mentors with two student coordinators work together with the faculty and staff to implement the Bridge Program during ten days in August.

What is Bridge?

Bridge is intended to assist with transitioning students to the college environment, particularly in terms of socialization. A major idea behind Bridge is Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs and motivations, which suggests that students cannot achieve academically until social and self-esteem needs are satisfied. By creating a welcoming environment for these students, they build a support network of peers, more senior students, faculty, and staff, and, therefore, they become identified with IUPUC and its institutional mission. These relationships become invaluable for the academic and personal growth of students.

Students in Bridge are expected to attend half-day long sessions on a variety of topics of interest to incoming first-year students. These usually include: tech-camp (introducing OnCourse/Canvas); interactive introductions to different programs and courses first-year students often encounter (i.e., Communication, Writing, Science, and Math courses); time and stress management activities and
lessons; plus personality lessons which students apply to harness their inner strengths to succeed in an academic environment. Additionally, time is allotted daily for interactions with peer mentors and cohort members to build a strong IUPUC identity.

Where and when is it?

Bridge is held on the IUPUC campus for a week in August each year. The length of the program is considerably shorter than most Bridge programs nationwide, and lasts for up to ten days, with sessions lasting four hours. Students are expected to attend at least 80% of sessions if they are required to attend Bridge for full admission. Rarely have students failed to attend the required sessions. Those cases were referred to the Passport Program and Ivy Tech without complaint.

Outcomes of Bridge

The goals of the Bridge Program are broadly defined under the umbrella of student success. Because the students in Bridge are typically considered at-risk, one aim is to help this group perform as well as average, fully-qualified students. The hope is that Bridge students exceed this aim.

Student success can be defined a number of ways. In this report we address student success in different ways:

1) Graduation in 4-6 years with rates higher than equivalent students.
2) Retention rates higher than equivalent students.
3) Engagement on campus equal to or better than equivalent students.
4) Return on investment: the Bridge Program fosters enrollment, retention, and graduation rates which compensate the cost per student.
5) Students in Bridge are less likely to be on Probation, and more likely to have a strong GPA.

It is important to note to constraints to the data presented. First, data were drawn only from Bridge students who have provided informed consent (IRB) and provided their student ID number. Second, an equivalent comparison group was not available, so all comparisons are against the first-time full-time beginning student population. A complete summary of the cohorts is provided as the Appendix.

1. Graduation Rates

The Bridge Program began in 2010, during which time the institution was concerned with 4-6 year graduation rates. Since 2013, the focus has become ‘Finish in Four’. Graduation rates were available on the IUPUC website for the 2007 cohort, and were reported at 25.4%. For the 2010 Bridge students, the four-year graduation rate was 25%. Although lower than the campus average, it is important to note that this is a comparison against all students, not only conditionally admitted students, nor are these rates statistically different. Thus, we consider the 2010 Cohort to be performing at the expected level of fully-qualified students.

2. Retention rates.
We considered two different measures of retention: one-year retention, and Spring 2014 enrollment (which may be as much as four-year retention). Figure 1 shows one-year retention rates for all Bridge cohorts, compared with Campus averages of all students (most of whom are fully-qualified).

Across these four years, the campus-wide one-year retention rate was 62.6% for full-time beginning students. For Bridge students, the average retention rate was 66%. This is slightly higher than the campus average.

As Figure 2 illustrates, retention after this first-year remains remarkably consistent for Bridge students. Data were unavailable for other students as a point of comparison.
3. Student Engagement.

Student engagement is more difficult to quantify than retention. Remembering that Bridge targets at-risk admits, these students have demonstrated through their engagement, that they are not only performing on par with average students, but excelling at IUPUC. They have earned the reputation for becoming active campus citizens in the following ways:

- They obtain campus jobs, and often have several because they demonstrate their abilities and become in demand.
- At least four have obtained Office of Student Research grants, demonstrating academic excellence, and strong relationships with faculty.
- They hold leadership positions around campus in clubs and organizations.
- They are recognized notably at Honors Convocation each Spring as some of the top students in their disciplines, and are inducted into Alpha Lambda Delta.
- They become model students as demonstrated by holding positions like student ambassador, Orientation Leader, and FYE Peer Mentor.

4. Return on investment.

The Bridge Program costs $10,000 annually. Faculty and staff are not paid with this money, rather it is spent on peer mentors and supplies for the program. The Bridge Committee firmly believes that investing in our student mentors, we continue to enhance these students’ commitment to academic excellence at IUPUC, and ultimately they are better retained, and will graduate sooner. Notably, Bridge student receive Financial Aid education at Bridge, and based on the 2010 cohort, are more likely to pay their tuition bill on time than other students. Additionally, because these students are retained at the same rate as full-qualified students, they add to our enrollment each semester.

5. Grades.

Bridge students’ grades for each semester were used to calculate overall academic success. Several comparison points are used. First, the cut-off for Academic Probation is a GPA of 2.00. Second, because IUPUC data were not all yet available as a comparison point, we used the comparisons of the 2010 control cohort and IUPUI Bridge control cohort. Table 1 shows how Bridge students’ current (as of July 2014) cumulative GPA compares with these figures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>First-Semester GPA</th>
<th>Current Cumulative GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IUPUI Conditional Admits (no Bridge)</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUPUI Conditional Admits (with Bridge)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 No Bridge Equivalent Group</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Bridge</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Bridge</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Bridge</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Bridge</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As is shown in the table, on average, Bridge students had a GPA above that of academic probation, higher than equivalent students who opted out of Bridge, and approximately equal to that of the IUPUI Bridge students.

**Conclusion:**

The Bridge Program was designed to improve student success of at-risk students. We have provided evidence that Bridge students are retained and graduate at the same rate as the campus average. When compared with the IUPUI Summer Bridge (which our program is loosely based on), retention rates of Bridge vs. Non-Bridge students at IUPUC are similar to those at IUPUI. Considering that these students have a reduced probability of success without intervention, we consider this to be a success, with room to improve.
**Appendix: Complete cohort information**

Table 2. Cohort information including required students, and specific n’s. Spring 2014 enrollment used until Fall 2014 census is available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Group Required</th>
<th>Beginning n</th>
<th>One-year n</th>
<th>Enrolled Spring 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>None – pilot year</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Cautionary Conditional Admits; open to any others</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Cautionary Conditional Admits; open to any others</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Cautionary Conditional Admits; open to any others</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Footnote:

1. See pages 39-40 specifically for IUPUI’s Bridge retention information as a point of reference for success: