

Retention Outcomes – Fall 2015 FTFT Freshmen Cohort

Project Summary

This study compares the retention rates among UA first time, full-time freshmen who utilized THINK TANK services in their first year to those who did not. Additionally, it analyzes the differential impact of THINK TANK usage for under-represented minority (URM) students in the cohort. Using propensity score analysis, a statistical control group was created for comparing outcomes for the two groups. The results show that:

- Students who visited the THINK TANK at least 5 times in their freshmen year were retained at a rate 8.5 percentage points higher than non-participants.
- Regular usage of THINK TANK services was especially impactful for URM students. The URM retention rate 9.6 percentage points higher for URM students who visited THINK TANK at least 5 times than that of non-participants.

Data and Methodology

This analysis is on the full-time, first-time freshmen cohort of fall 2015. While THINK TANK offers a variety of free and fee-based services, we limited this analysis to use of free services that were available to all students. Those services include drop-in tutoring for math, science, language, or business; Supplemental Instruction; Academic Skills Tutoring appointments and workshops; and the Writing Center. Of the 6,973 students in the freshman cohort, 3,862 (55.4%) visited the THINK TANK for one of these free services in their first year.

For analyzing outcomes, program participation status is defined by students' use of five or more visits throughout the year. A number of demographic and academic variables were used to create the control group: students' Academic Index (AI), URM status, first-generation status, Pell grant eligibility, residency status, and gender. Under-represented minority status includes Hispanic, Native American, and African American students.

Results and Conclusions

Among the matched data set, freshmen in the THINK TANK User group had a one-year retention rate of 90.0%, 8.5 percentage points higher than the control group.

	N Fall 15	N Retained F16	1-Year Ret Rate	Diff
THINK TANK Users	1,386	1,247	90.0%	+8.5
Control Group	1,386	1,131	81.5%	
URM THINK TANK Users	428	389	90.9%	+9.6
URM Control Group	428	348	81.3%	

The difference in retention rates is significant for the participant group as a whole and also for under-represented minority students. As shown in Table 1, the difference for URM students was 9.6 percentage points. These results indicate that under-represented minority students benefited the most from use of THINK TANK services in terms of persisting into their second year. Regular participation in THINK TANK services appears to support student success by increasing retention from freshman year to sophomore year.