KEY CONCEPTS

D, F, Drop Rate
The percentage of students enrolled in a course whose final course outcome is a D, F, or course drop. These represent an unsuccessful course outcome.

D, F, Drop Rate = \( \text{D, F, drop count/course enrollment count} \times 100 \)

GRADE GAP TRENDS

Overall, 8% of undergraduate course outcomes are D or F grades or course drop. D, F, Drop rates are higher for targeted minority and first generation undergraduates.

D, F, Drop rates for targeted minority undergraduates have decreased from 18% to 13% over the last five years. The average D, F, Drop rate for targeted minority and first generation undergraduates is still higher than the overall average.

Examples of Course Grade Gaps

Each blue dot represents a UW-Madison course with at least 35 targeted minority or first generation students and 100 total undergraduates in 2012.

Each dot’s position shows the D, F, Drop rate for two groups of students, one on the X axis and one on the Y axis.

The red line shows where the dots would all lie if the D, F, Drop rates were equal between the two groups. The farther a dot is from the red line, the larger the grade gap is.

Courses with large grade gaps have some common characteristics. They tend to be quantitative, open to freshmen, and at an introductory or intermediate level. Grade gaps in the first course of a multi-course sequence can have large impacts on student progression into majors.

Ongoing Initiatives to Reduce Grade Gaps

Madison Initiative for Undergraduates (MIU)
All projects funded by the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates are required to address grade gaps and include strategies for increasing student success.

Learning Analytics Pilot: UW-Madison is participating in a pilot learning analytics project with UW-Platteville and UW Colleges. This project is funded by a UW System Growth Agenda grant and will explore using behavioral data collected through the learning management system to identify at-risk students early.

Delta Program’s Course-based Interventions Course instructors are learning about predictors of course success and are making evidence-based interventions into their courses to reduce grade gaps.

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