

Factors affecting the retention of first year students

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According to data collected by the American College Testing Program (ACT), the first year retention rate of all 4 year private institutions was approximately 70% in 2009 (ACT, 2009). This ACT data shows considerable variation in retention rates by type of institution in terms of selectivity (open, liberal, traditional, selective, and highly selective) and programs offered (2 year, BA/BS, Masters, and Doctorate). For 2 year public institutions, the freshmen retention rate was 53.7%, while for Ph.D. granting private institutions it was 80.6% (ACT, 2009). Jacksonville University, a 4 year private university that also grants Masters degrees, had a freshmen retention rate of approximately 60% during this time period. This is considerably lower than the average retention rate for similar institutions, reported to be 72% (ACT, 2009). A logistic regression model was developed to investigate retention at Jacksonville University. It was determined that freshman retention at this institution was influenced by high school GPA, SAT score, total gifts, and if the student was admitted late.