

ACADEMIC SUCCESS AT PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE



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The Academic Success Center at Paul Smith's College has maintained and expanded services to serve 65% of the student population on an annual basis while enhancing training of student leaders and marketing of services.

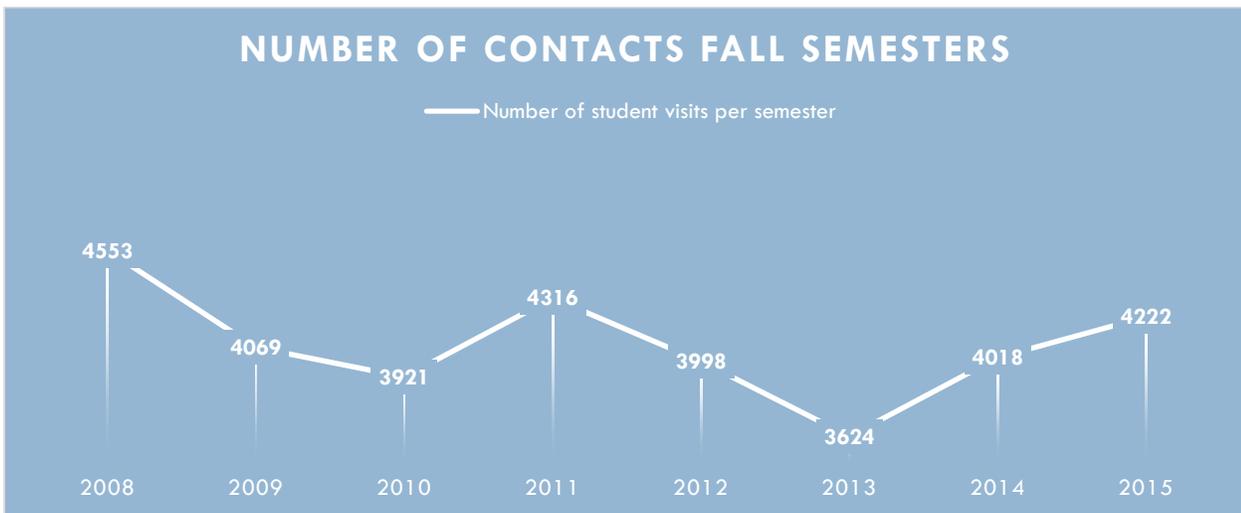
Helping students to thrive at Paul Smith's and beyond. . .

Academic Success at Paul Smith's College

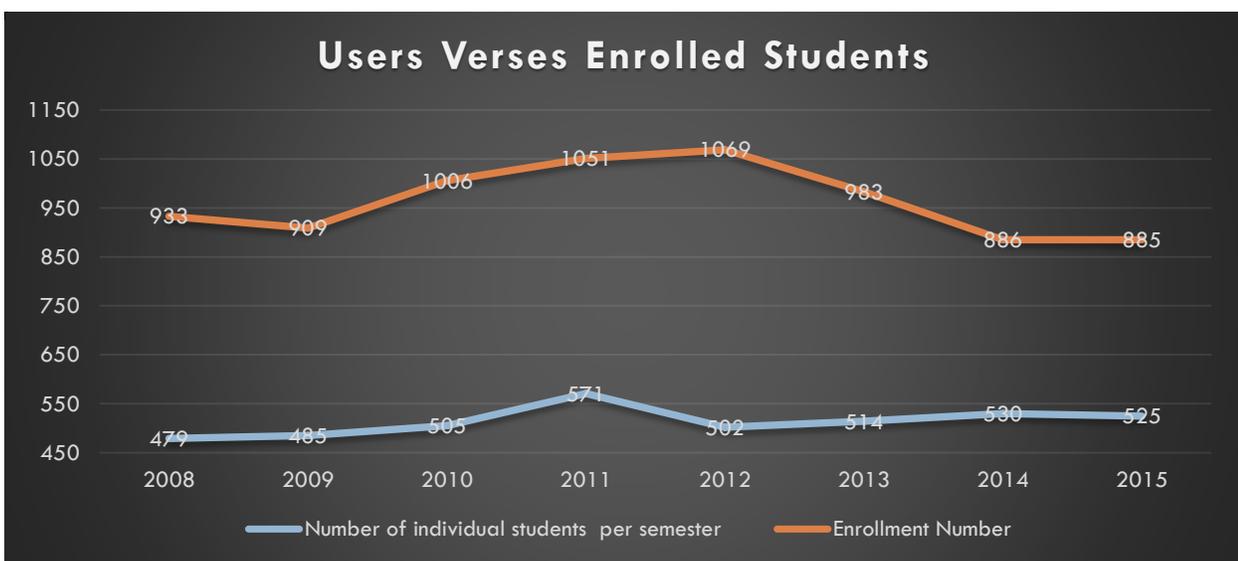
Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction (SI)

1. Extent of Service

The number of students using tutoring and SI served has risen the past two years. Students are requesting help early, often after the first week of classes. Students become familiar with our services after Welcome Week, during FYS classes, or when referred by Professional Staff. It is important to keep meeting the expectation that when student requests help they will be matched up within a week of their request.



We continue to see over 500 students a semester even with a smaller enrollment number. ***During just the most recent fall semester we served 60% of the population.***



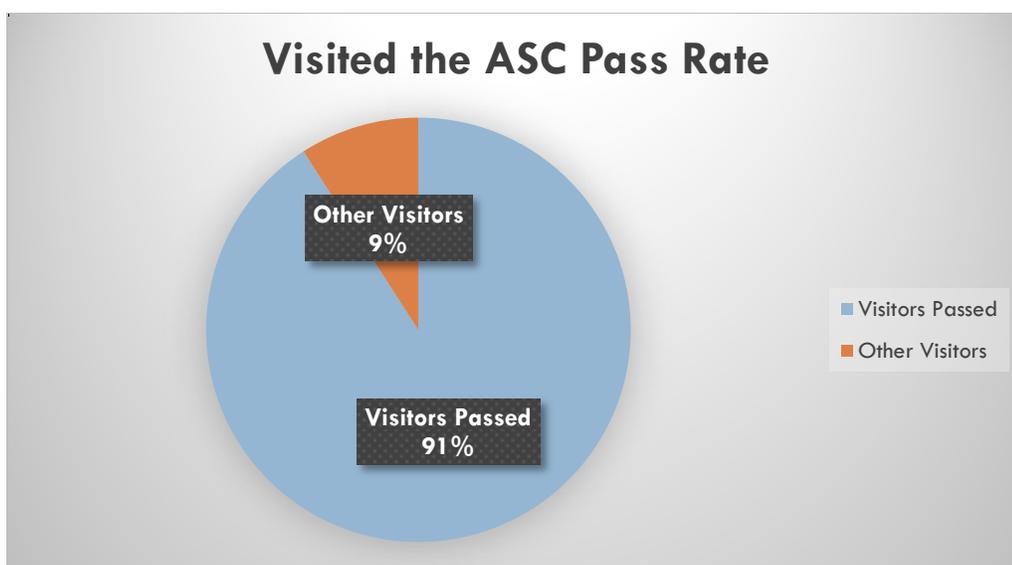
Service Type	Fall 2015 Student Visits	Fall 2014 Student Visits	Fall 2015 Individual students	Fall 2014 Individual students
All	4222	4018	525	530
SI	1815	1557	395	383
Tutoring	1858	1891	221	231
Writing Center	317	439	145	151
Study Groups	232	131	76	58

There was a 15% increase in SI attendance from Fall 2014 to Fall 2015. This may indicate a preference for walk in assistance rather than appointments. This type of service will be tracked closely when planning how to offer our service in the future.

The Writing Center saw 145 students. FOR 101 was the most visited class at 120 and ENG 101 had 44 visits. Overall there was a 28% decrease in visits from Fall'14 (439) to Fall'15 (317). This decline does not appear to be because of the hours the Writing Center is open. **83% of students surveyed found the Writing Center hours to be convenient.** The Writing Center saw about the same number of students. Therefore, examining the data closely, we can see a trend of fewer repeat visitors. With some targeted marketing and a strong faculty connection may be a strategy to see improvement in more regular usage of the Writing Center. Specific training may be a way to increase the number of return visits to the Writing Center.

2. Effectiveness of Services: Impact on Academic Performance and/or Persistence

Tutoring and SI have a direct impact on Academic Performance. *For students who utilized these services there was a 91% pass rate. 77% received a C or higher and over half (52%) received a B or higher.*



Earliest Outreach:

*The Academic Success Center use **Data Analytics** developed by the IR office to identify incoming freshmen who are at-risk for failing their first year of college. A combination of data from the College Student Inventory and the incoming student profile are combined to trigger a high risk concern. STARFISH Early Alert is used to get this information to the right support offices. Students receive personalized early outreach through email, workshops, one-on-one meetings, and in their First Year Seminar classes. Even before their first day of class, most students have had the chance to meet and make connections with many members of the Academic Success Center and other support offices.*

Data Analytics ...the right information to get the right support to the right student at the right time.

Additional factors can enhance effectiveness: the type or attitude of the student, how early they seek support and the tutor effectiveness.

- CSI data can be utilized to help identify students' attitudes toward receiving help. This is an area to investigate and utilize in a greater capacity in the future.
- Students were tutored in 95 courses. ***Of students that utilized the center, 70% came 3 or more times.*** They are seeking help often. How early they identify depends on the individual student. ***Our comprehensive approach and partnerships with faculty, advisors and other support areas has helped to encourage more students "to get the help at the right time to make the most difference."*** Effectiveness of the support can be greatly enhanced if students seek help early.
- Currently the primary measure of tutor effectiveness is a tutor survey given to students who have accessed our services each semester. ***98% of students surveyed said tutoring helped me improve my grades and understanding of the material for class.*** SI Leader observations also take place with follow up consultations with the Tutor Coordinator. An evaluation system for tutors is also a consideration for measuring and improving tutor effectiveness.

3. Communication and Outreach to the Campus Community

A new approach to SI was piloted this semester under the term Guided Study Groups. This team approach included involvement from Faculty, Academic Success Center & Student Leaders. All worked closely together. The Student Leader, Jonathan Stetler, presented packets of materials to students in his General Ecology SI so that they could create and utilize their own study guide. This approach helped students "learn how to learn". After two Guided Study Group, test grades improved by 10%. Dr. Celia Evans mentored and promoted the SI in conjunction with the Academic Success Center and Jonathan.

A promotional video was put together by the team and presented to Faculty and Staff at the Annual Spring Meeting. The Lightning Talk is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6VWrN8QPhE>.

4. Emphasize relevant teaching/learning strategies

Training was provided twice this semester in a large group setting. In the first training, Tutors were presented with information on FERPA and their roles as a student leader, discussed common tutoring scenarios, and were given new Study Tools. At the second training, students prepared 5 day study plans for courses they tutored and shared ideas on the login and tracking system. New tutors shadowed and completed on-line training. The New Tutor Training will be assessed and refreshed. Other tutors sought help with developing study plans after tests and using note taking strategies.

The most important goal of emphasizing relevant teaching and learning strategies is to have more Student Leaders incorporate the Guided Study Group model into SI session. The Tutor Coordinator will work closely with the General Ecology SI Leader to implement with tutors and SI Leaders. The goal is to increase the training to once a month and utilize hands on work including: scenarios, role playing, videos, etc.

5. Develop Leadership Opportunities

The Academic Success Center Professional Staff has worked together to move one of our SI Leaders into a Success Leader SI position. This student will work with the Academic Success Counselors in the First Year Rebound workshop focused on study skills, time management and organization. The Success Leader will also provide evening support to SI Leaders, tutors and office help. The goal is for this Leader to support Professional ASC Staff and Tutors/SI Leaders.

Our tutors came together to support the Coming Home Challenge, contributing change to the “Paws Banks” displayed in the Academic Success Center. We also displayed a banner and gave away mugs to students who donated. There were a total of 18 Tutors/SI Leaders who contributed, their totals are below. This was a great way to bring our Students Leaders together and help them take a leadership role in contributing to the Paul Smith’s community.



Student total = \$95.64
Total of student gifts and match = **\$1,052.04**

Staff also contributed to separate banks. The total of staff gifts and match will be = **\$95.10**

GRAND total: \$1,147.14



The Academic Success Center honored our December Graduates with lunch in the St. Regis Café. This thank you also provides valuable feedback about our services from the Student Leader perspective. Pictured Claire Nellis and Danica Maloney at the St. Regis Café. Tutor gifts were also given to all our tutors as an end of the semester thank you and to promote team building.



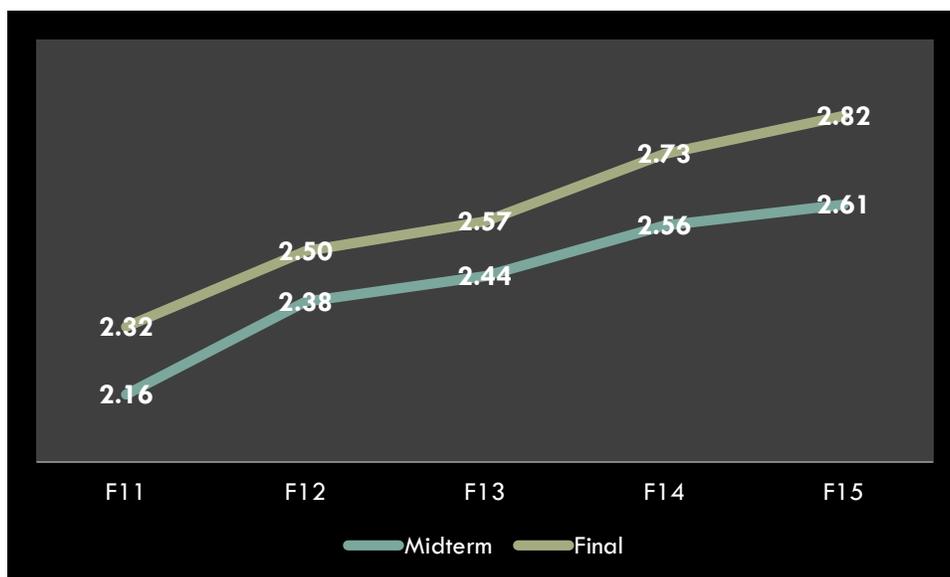
EARLY OUTREACH and VOLUNTARY SUPPORT

The Early Outreach program is designed to provide the right support to the right student at the right time. *It is the cornerstone of our comprehensive approach to student success.* As can be seen from Table 1, we are outreaching to more students, we are meeting with more students, and now more than 60% of the students we see for academic counseling are opting into the voluntary support program, meeting with us regularly throughout the semester. The Fall Semester data in Table 1 shows that we reach about 20% of the population through our early outreach efforts, doubling the numbers over the five year period. Since 2011 we have seen an average of 88% of these students complete the semester in good standing, with even higher numbers attaining good academic standing during the spring semester. Graph 1 shows *continued improvement in GPA over the five year period* for the students opting into the Voluntary Support program. This improvement is of particular significance, *demonstrating the value of continued relationships* with these Academic Success Counselors over multiple years. These positive outcomes and ability to reach more students demonstrate the importance of this program and its impact on overall retention and student success.

Table 1. Usage & Outcomes – 5 Year Comparison by Fall Semester.

Comparison by Fall Semester	Early Outreach		Voluntary Support	
	Total Student Contact (Numbers)	Total Student Contact (Percentage of student population)	Students Opting In for Voluntary Support	Percent Finishing in Good Academic Standing
Fall 2011	103	10%	68	85%
Fall 2012	133	13%	73	90%
Fall 2013	185	19%	79	86%
Fall 2014	184	21%	123	88%
Fall 2015	164	19%	106	92%
Averages:	153.8	15%	89.8	88%

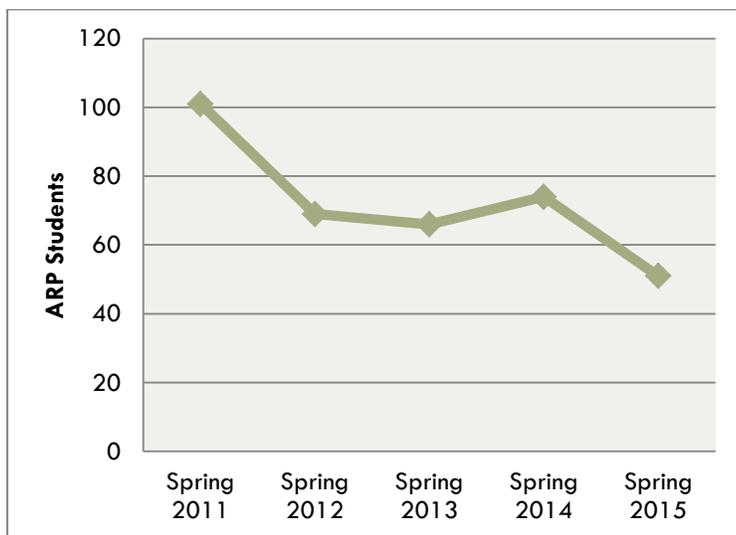
Graph 1. 5 year Comparison Voluntary Support: Average GPA Change Midterm to Final.



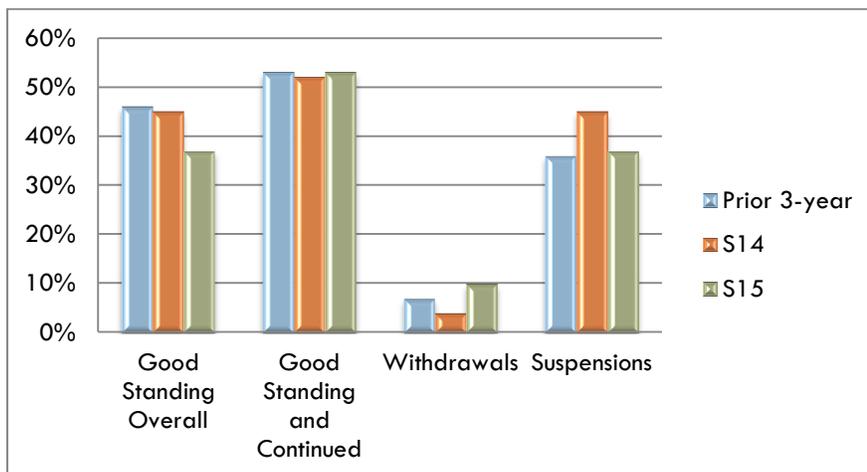
Academic Recovery Program

The Academic Recovery Program provides academic counseling and support to all students on probation and reinstated from suspension. It allows students an opportunity to reflect on their progress, integrate new success strategies and apply their learning to life goals. Students meet with an advocate on a weekly basis and must adhere to a contract and success plan. **Over the past five years we are seeing fewer students on Academic Recovery and more students are finding their way to good standing.** Graph 1 shows a decline of nearly 50% since 2011 when 11% of the PSC student population was in Academic Recovery to 6% in Spring 2015. We are also seeing improved outcomes for this most at-risk population. Graph 2 shows 53% finishing with a successful semester GPA. Prior to the comprehensive student support program (2009) we only saw 34% make this turnaround. Spring 2015 saw five students on Academic Recovery earn above a 3.0 GPA, including *two students who went from Probation to Dean's List*.

Graph 1. Number of ARP Participants

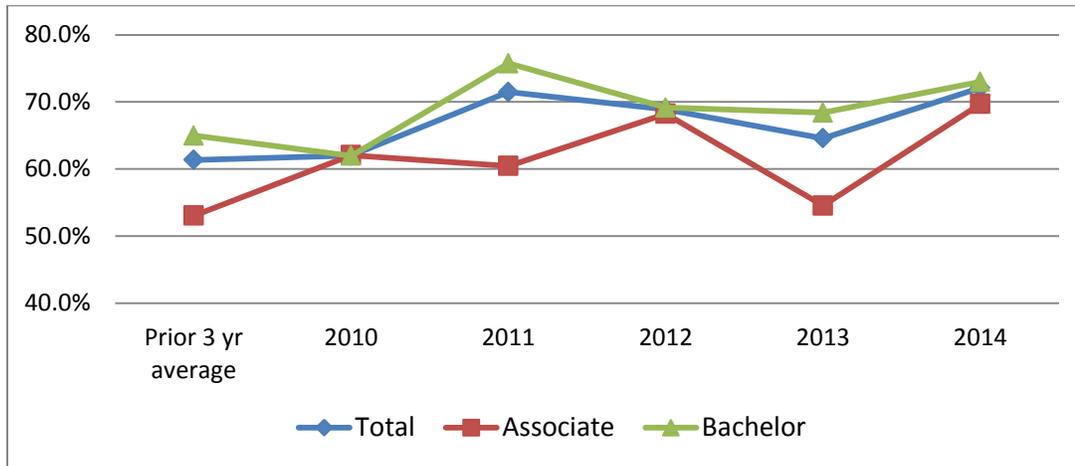


Graph 2. Academic Recovery Program Outcomes

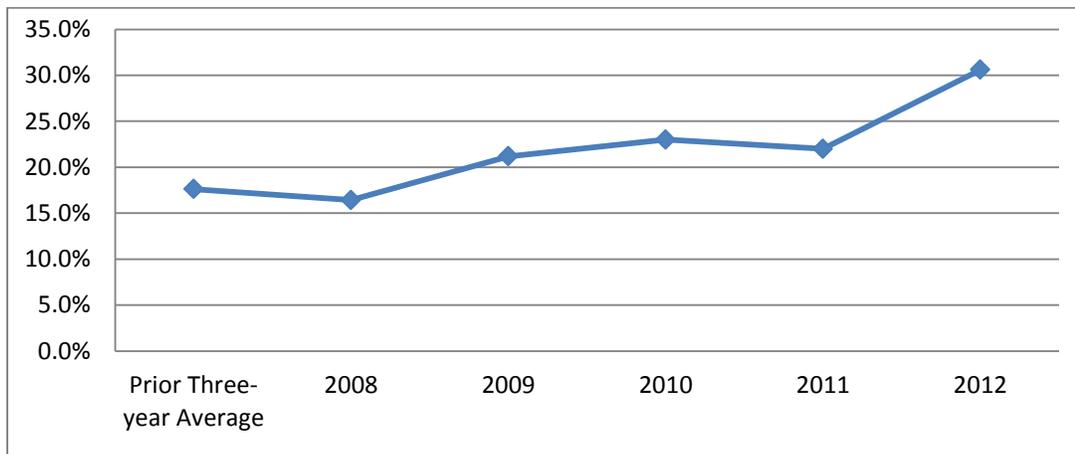


The Big Picture

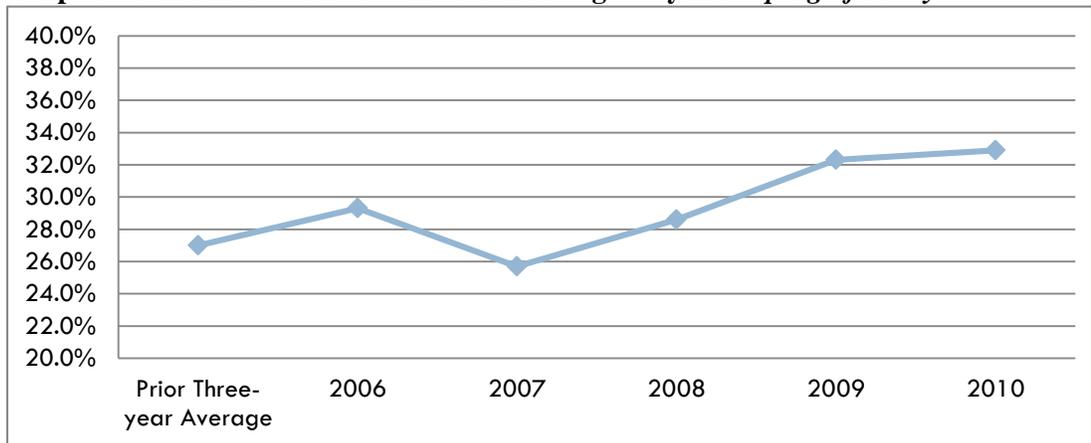
Graph1. First Time Full Time Retention: Above 70% twice in five years



Graph 2. Associate Students Graduating in two years: almost doubled



Graph 3. Graduation Rate for Bachelor Seeking in 4 years: up significantly



Sharing our story

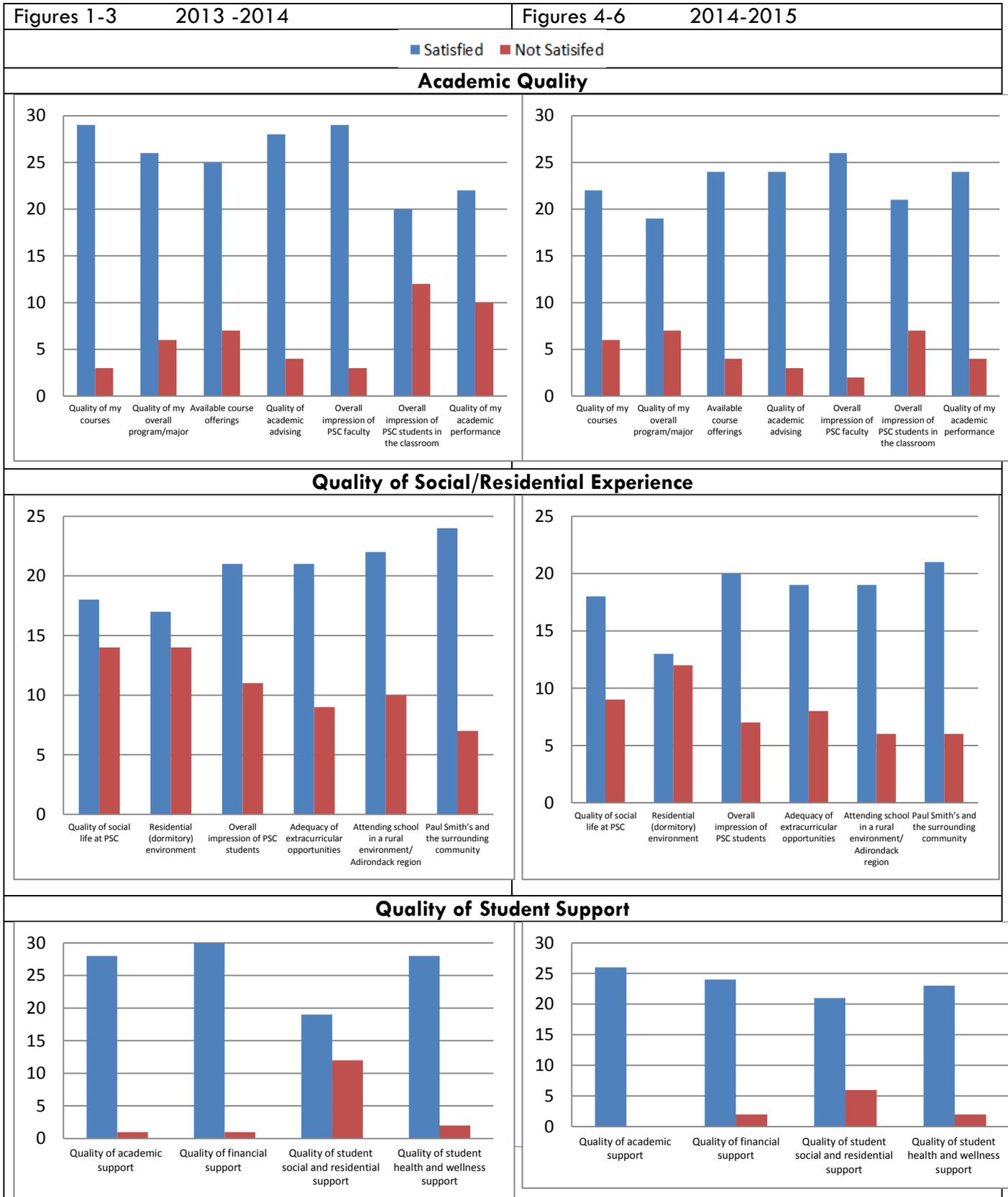
It is important to communicate the results of our student success efforts to the campus community and beyond. We have presented to the Board of Trustees, School Meetings and the Curriculum and Standards Committee. We have been published in the proceedings of the *National Symposium on Student Retention in 2011 and 2012*, and we have presented a full day workshop at the symposium for the past three years. We were recognized and published as a *Postsecondary Practical and Promising Strategy with US Department of Education*, and published in EDUCAUSE Review. Our efforts have resulted in three national awards: 1) *Lee Noel and Randi Levitz Retention Excellence, 2013*; 2) *Starfish 360, 2013*; and 3) *A 2015 University Business Model of Excellence*

4. Retention = Revenue – An analysis done in Fall 2014 finds over *\$5 million dollars in additional revenue* demonstrated by the new approach to student success begun in 2010. These numbers are compared to baseline three year averages prior to the start of the program.

Increase in Net Student Revenue due to Increased Overall Retention Rate			
	Increased retention	Total Additional Students	Net Student Tuition
Spring 2010 to Fall	4.40%	36	360,000
Fall 2010 to Spring	0.80%	39	390,000
Spring 2011 to Fall	3.60%	59	590,000
Fall 2011 to Spring	2.00%	70	700,000
Spring 2012 to Fall	5.90%	102	1,020,000
Fall 2012 to Spring	1.20%	99	990,000
Spring 2013 to Fall	4.80%	107	1,070,000
		Grand Total	\$5,120,000

Next Steps

1) **Greater emphasis on Social/Residential Experience:** Our completion rates and first time full time retention rate have improved but are still not high enough. Figures 1-6 present an analysis of survey responses from students who chose to leave at the end of a semester. These data show lower levels of satisfaction with the quality of the Social/Residential Experience. This trend can also be seen in the 2013 Student Satisfaction Inventory findings.



This nationally normed instrument shows a gap between our students' desire for a positive campus climate and their satisfaction with what they experience. In addition, a decline has been noted since the previous survey in 2011. A positive campus climate measures the institution's attitude toward students and the extent to which students feel welcome and valued. Together these results are helping to inform the 2020 Strategic Plan. A focus on the residential/social experience is essential to our comprehensive student success effort.

2) **Degree Planning:** Together the Academic Success team and advisors work each day with students to support them as they find their pathway to graduation. At times we are severely limited by the lack of the 21st Century information we have available to help students understand the consequences of their decisions. As part of a targeted group, we assisted in applying for a Gates Foundation IPASS grant in 2015. We did not receive the hoped for funding; however we did receive recognition as a Community Partner. As a result members of the PSC community receive travel funds to attend meetings and learn more about strategies to integrate systems for advising and student success. ***Integrated systems for degree planning (and completion) are essential to gaining even greater student success outcomes.*** Our demonstrated success with the Starfish Early Alert Platform shows how a moderate investment can result in significant returns by increased retention and graduation numbers. ***We will continue to advocate for these integrated systems that can help motivate students to see their pathway and make the right decision at the right time to finish their degree on time.***

3) **Data Analytics** – As described earlier (see page 3), we have taken advantage of the data analytic tools we have available for our earliest outreach efforts. ***The capacity to develop and train end-users to effectively use data can have a positive impact on student success.*** Greater use and integration of the College Student Inventory is a step that can be taken now. However, we need to continue to stay informed of this rapidly emerging area and advocate for greater use of this technology.

4) **Helping students THRIVE at Paul Smith's College and beyond!** When we look at the student that stays at Paul Smith's College, we often see a student who has found meaning and purpose here. They have taken "what we have and ran with it" we often like to say. One of most promising areas in the student success literature focuses on the non-cognitive factors that contribute to student success and what it takes to flourish in college and beyond. Martin Seligman's work on Positive Psychology at University of Pennsylvania has found that there are five elements to wellbeing:

- Positive emotion
- Engagement
- Positive Relationships
- Meaning
- Achievement

As a campus community, an important next step in student success will be to find ways to create conditions that allow our students to thrive – to grow and engage in this community. ***As the best Smitty stories demonstrate, student success goes beyond grades.*** The 2020 Strategic Plan provides for ways to bring these ideas to life by focusing its very first goal on student engagement. It is important that we find the funding and make the time for to this vision to become a reality. Together with TRiO Student Support Services, we have already begun the Thriving Project @ PSC to contribute to a comprehensive student experience at Paul Smith's College, helping each student develop the strategies to not only succeed, but thrive during their time at Paul Smith's College and beyond. We look forward to being a part of the journey ahead.

The Thriving Project @ PSC

The application of positive psychology research toward the enhancement of student success, personal growth, and the health and well-being of the PSC community.