



# INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE

arc-research@losrios.edu | ITC 116



## Spring 2020 Student Experience Survey for ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American Disproportionately Impacted (DI) Project Teams: **Exploratory Analyses Part 2 Brief Report: On the Relationship between Challenges to Completion and Student Achievement Outcomes**

### Background

During the Spring 2020 semester, ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students were surveyed about their experiences and perceptions at ARC. This survey (*The Student Experience Survey*,  $n=885$ ) was developed and administered by ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American Disproportionate Impact Project Teams.

The preliminary results revealed that most of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students had positive student experiences at ARC, including feeling a sense of community, feeling socially accepted, and being academically supported. However, the results also identified areas for improvement, such as cultural, racial, or ethnic discrimination and tension, and financial uncertainty. These results were presented at [ARC's Fall 2020 convocation](#).

A subsequent analysis [on the relationship between student experiences and student achievement outcomes](#), revealed that ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students' experiences and perceptions (as measured on the survey) were significantly associated and predictive of their actual student achievement outcomes, including their course success rates, course drop rates, and persistence rates (continued enrollment from Spring to Fall). For example, students who agreed that "I see myself as a part of the college community" had a higher average success rate (A, B, C, Credit, Pass) in their classes than students who did not agree (81% vs 70%) and were more likely to persist to the Fall 2020 semester (72% vs 60%). Students who agreed that "I have at least one professor who cares about my academic success at ARC", had a higher average success rate (81% vs 73%), a lower average drop (withdrawal) rate (10% vs 17%), and were more likely to persist to the Fall 2020 semester (71% vs 48%) than students who did not agree.

### Scope

The current analyses focused on whether there was a relationship between ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students' reported challenges to completing their certificate, degree, or transferring to a university (as measured by the Student Experience Survey) and their actual student achievement outcomes.

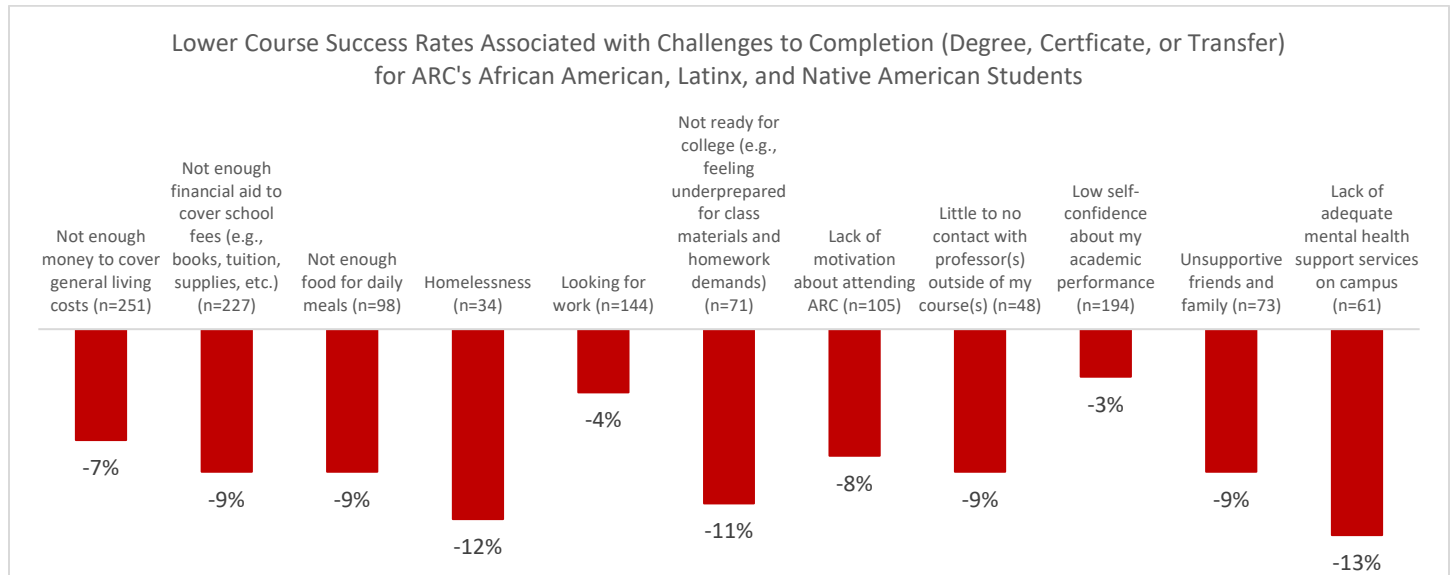
### Key Finding

**ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students' reported challenges to completing their certificate, degree, or transferring to a university were significantly associated with lower student success (success rates in courses) and higher student drops (withdrawal rates from courses)<sup>1</sup>.**

---

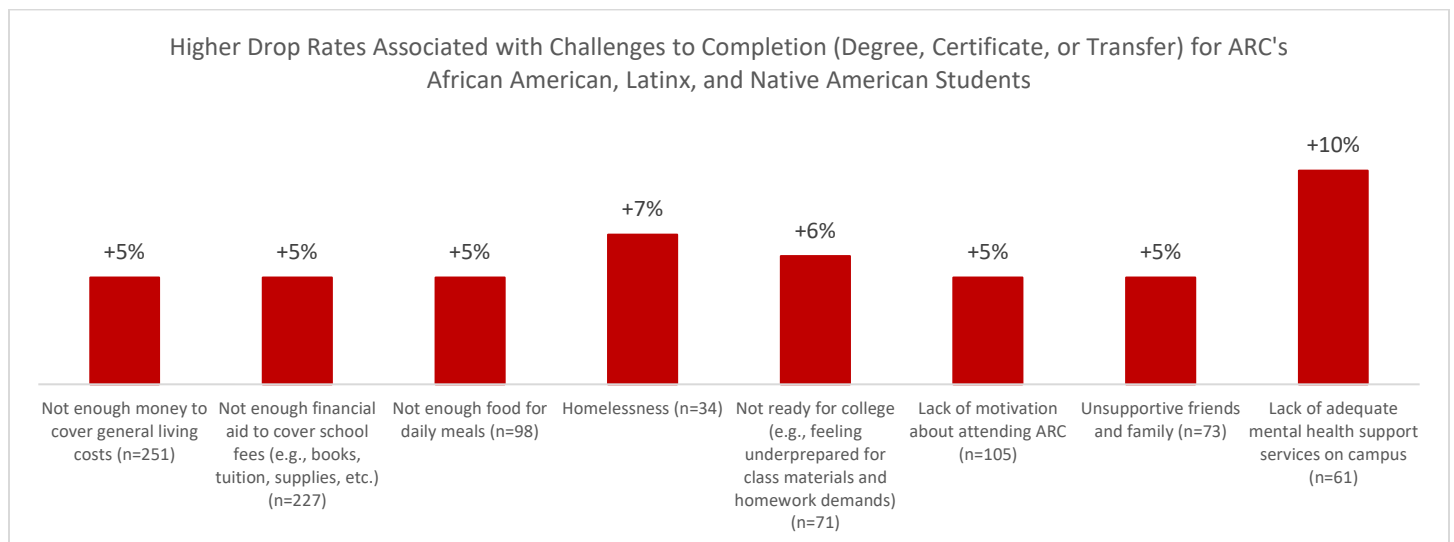
<sup>1</sup> Note: The student achievement metrics reported here should not be directly compared to metrics typically reported on the ARC website or on college, district, or state data dashboards as these metrics differ in important ways. Specifically, these "individualized" student achievement metrics reported here represent student achievement at the student level, rather than at a course or section level. In addition, these metrics were unweighted and could reflect performance over a varying number of terms. (e.g., Student X's success rate could have been computed based on 1 semester and 12 total units, while Student Y's success rate could have been computed based on 4 semesters and 60 total units. Both students were given equal weight in the analyses in this report to reflect each student's "career" success and drop rate at ARC.

As shown in Figure 1 below, a number of challenges to completion were significantly associated with lower course success rates (all  $p$ 's < .05). For example, 251 students indicated "Not enough money to cover general living costs" as a challenge to completion (far left column). Those African American, Latinx, and Native American students had a 7% lower course success rate as compared to African American, Latinx, and Native American students who did not indicate that as a challenge (75% vs. 82%). The challenges to completion associated with lower course success rates included lack of financial resources, housing and food insecurity, concerns regarding academic preparedness, motivation, and self-confidence about academic performance, and lack of academic and social support, and mental health support services.



**Figure 1.** Course success rate differences associated with challenges to completion.

As shown in Figure 2 below, many of the same challenges were significantly associated with higher course drop rates (withdrawals). For example, 61 students indicated "Lack of adequate mental health support services on campus" as a challenge to completion (far right column). Those African American, Latinx, and Native American students had a 10% higher overall course drop rate as compared to African American, Latinx, and Native American students who did not indicate that as a challenge (20% vs. 10%). The challenges to completion associated with higher course drop rates included lack of financial resources, housing and food insecurity, concerns regarding academic preparedness and motivation, and a lack of social support, and mental health support services.



**Figure 2.** Course drop rate differences associated with challenges to completion.

Details regarding the challenges to completion that were significantly associated with student success and/or student drops are below:

#### Not enough money to cover general living costs

29% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 251) indicated "Not enough money to cover general living costs" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (75% vs 82%) and higher drop rates (14% vs. 9%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 617)<sup>2</sup>.

#### Not enough financial aid to cover school fees (e.g., books, tuition, supplies, etc.)

26% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 227) indicated "Not enough financial aid to cover school fees (e.g., books, tuition, supplies, etc.)" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (74% vs 83%) and higher drop rates (14% vs. 9%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 641).

#### Not enough food for daily meals

11% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 98) indicated "Not enough food for daily meals" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (72% vs 81%) and higher drop rates (15% vs. 10%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 770).

#### Homelessness

4% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 34) indicated "Homelessness" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (69% vs 81%) and higher drop rates (17% vs. 10%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 834).

#### Looking for work

17% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 144) indicated "Looking for work" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (77% vs 81%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 724). Significant differences did not emerge for drop rates.

#### Not ready for college (e.g., feeling underprepared for class materials and homework demands)

8% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 71) indicated "Not ready for college (e.g., feeling underprepared for class materials and homework demands)" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (70% vs 81%) and higher drop rates (16% vs. 10%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 797).

#### Lack of motivation about attending ARC

12% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 105) indicated "Lack of motivation about attending ARC" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (73% vs 81%) and higher drop rates (15% vs. 10%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 763).

#### Little to no contact with professor(s) outside of my course(s)

5% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 48) indicated "Little to no contact with professor(s) outside of my course(s)" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (72% vs 81%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 820). Significant differences did not emerge for drop rates.

---

<sup>2</sup> Sample size differences between the total survey sample (n = 885) and the sample sizes represented in the analyses in this report are due to missing values for some students for individual student success rates and student withdrawal rates (e.g., for a student who received an EW and for whom no other grade records exist at ARC).

#### Low self-confidence about my academic performance

22% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 194) indicated "Low self-confidence about my academic performance" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (78% vs 81%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 674). Significant differences did not emerge for drop rates.

#### Unsupportive friends and family

8% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 73) indicated "Unsupportive friends and family" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (72% vs 81%) and higher drop rates (15% vs. 10%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 795).

#### Lack of adequate mental health support services on campus

7% of ARC's African American, Latinx, and Native American students (n = 61) indicated "Lack of adequate mental health support services on campus" as a challenge to completion. These students had significantly lower course success rates (68% vs 81%) and higher drop rates (20% vs. 10%) than students who did not indicate this as a challenge to completion (n = 807).

Note: Although not significantly associated with student success or student drops in the current analyses, "Difficulty balancing work and family demands (28%)" and "Taking care of family members (e.g. children, elders, parents, etc.) (20%)" were also among the top 5 challenges to completion.

#### Limitations and Implications:

Importantly, these analyses are correlational—they do not prove cause and effect between challenges to completion and student achievement. Another caveat is that the African American, Latinx, and Native American survey respondents included a higher proportion of successful students compared to the African American, Latinx, and Native American students in the Spring 2020 cohort, suggesting an oversampling of higher achievers. Lastly, as noted previously, the success and drop metrics were computed per individual over their career at ARC, rather than per course or section within a term, so they differ from those typically reported as college statistics and are not directly comparable.

However, even with these caveats, these results suggest that student reported challenges to completion may play a role in student achievement outcomes. These challenges to completion included a lack of financial resources, housing and food insecurity, concerns regarding academic preparedness, lack of motivation, and low self-confidence about academic performance, and lack of academic and social support, and mental health support services.