

**DFW Course Enrollment and Persistence Rates  
Fall 2021 FYS Cohort**

Here are the differences in persistence rates between those first-year students who CHANGED THEIR MAJOR at some point during the first year, and those who remained in their major for the entire year:

Here is the data for the 2020 FYS Cohort:

	Overall Persistence Rate	Persistence Rate of Major Changers	Persistence Rate of Students who did NOT change their major	Persistence Gap between Major Changers and Non-Major Changers
<b>Overall Cohort</b>	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>
<b>URM Students</b>	56.4%	81.7%	42.2%	39.5%
<b>First Generation Students</b>	63.0%	82.5%	51.1%	31.4%
<b>Female Students</b>	71.3%	86.7%	60.8%	25.9%
<b>Male Students</b>	69.1%	83.5%	60.6%	22.9%
<b>White Students</b>	73.3%	86.1%	64.8%	21.3%

Here is the same data for the 2021 FYS Cohort, noting year to year changes in persistence rates:

	Overall Persistence Rate	Persistence Rate of Major Changers	Persistence Rate of Students who did NOT change their major	Persistence Gap between Major Changers and Non-Major Changers
<b>Overall Cohort</b>	<b>73.6% (3.2%)</b>	<b>85.2% (-0.2%)</b>	<b>66.8% (6.1%)</b>	<b>18.4% (-6.3%)</b>
<b>URM Students</b>	63.5% (7.1%)	78.8% (-2.9%)	55.7% (13.5%)	23.1% (-16.4%)
<b>First Generation Students</b>	67.5% (4.5%)	81.9% (-0.6%)	60.4% (9.3%)	21.5% (-9.9%)
<b>Female Students</b>	75.4% (4.1%)	86.3% (-0.4%)	68.0% (7.2%)	18.3% (-7.6%)
<b>Male Students</b>	71.1% (2.0%)	83.3% (-0.2%)	65.5% (4.9%)	17.8% (-5.1%)
<b>White Students</b>	75.4% (2.1%)	86.2% (0.1%)	69.0% (4.2%)	17.2% (-4.1%)

Here is a different way of looking at the same data for the 2021 Cohort – CUM GPA, Persistence, and Persistence of Major Changers as a function of the number of actual grades of D, F, or W earned by the student during their first year:

No. of DFW Grades Earned in the First Year	N	CUM GPA	Overall Persistence to Fall 2022	Changed Major in the first year?	Persistence to Fall 2022
0	1053 (0.9%)	3.36	913 (86.7%) (2.7%)	YES: 402 (38.2%) (-4.8%) NO: 651 (61.8%)	372 (88.6%) (-1.9%) 541 (83.1%) (4.0%)
1	253 (0.9%)	2.61	184 (72.7%) (-4.3%)	YES: 109 (43.1%) (-2.7%) NO: 144 (56.9%)	89 (81.7%) (-5.6%) 95 (66.0%) (-2.5%)
2	135 (1.1%)	1.96	85 (63.0%) (7.0%)	YES: 45 (33.3%) (-3.8%) NO: 90 (66.7%)	35 (77.8%) (-8.2%) 50 (55.6%) (17.2%)
3	115 (0.0%)	1.25	59 (51.3%) (-4.3%)	YES: 37 (32.2%) (1.4%) NO: 78 (67.8%)	27 (73.0%) (9.1%) 32 (41.0%) (-10.9%)
4	126 (-0.4%)	0.71	46 (36.5%) (2.9%)	YES: 39 (31.0%) (-0.3%) NO: 87 (69.0%)	25 (64.1%) (-0.2%) 21 (24.1%) (4.5%)
5	82 (-2.5%)	0.34	23 (28.0%) (4.2%)	YES: 18 (22.0%) (2.8%) NO: 64 (78.0%)	8 (44.4%) (-39.8%) 15 (23.4%) (9.1%)
6	21 (0.0%)	0.29	6 (28.6%) (9.6%)	YES: 4 (19.0%) (0.0%) NO: 17 (81.0%)	2 (50.0%) (50.0%) 4 (23.5%) (0.0%)
7	4 (0.0%)	0.06	1 (25.0%) (25.0%)	YES: 1 (25.0%) (25.0%) NO: 3 (75.0%)	1 (100.0%) (100.0%) 0 (0.0%) (0.0%)
9	1	4.00	0 (0.0)	YES: 1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0)
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1790</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>1317 (73.6%) (3.2%)</b>	<b>YES: 656 (36.6%) (-2.6%)</b> <b>NO: 1134 (63.4%)</b>	<b>559 (85.2%) (-0.2%)</b> <b>758 (66.8%) (6.1%)</b>

## Key Takeaways for the 2021 Cohort:

**The overall persistence rate** INCREASED by 3.2% - all groups showed increases in persistence, but the largest increases were shown among URM (7.1%) and First-Generation students (4.5%).

**The percentage of students who changed their major** in the first year decreased by 2.6% from 2020.

**The persistence rates of major changers** remained very strong in the 2021 Cohort but declined slightly across most groups.

- **Persistence rates among students who did NOT change their major** showed significant INCREASES across the board, with the largest increase in persistence among URM students (13.5%).
- **The persistence gap** between major changers and students who remained in their major decreased by 6.3% from 2020 to 2021 but is still a very significant difference of 18.4%...with the largest differences among URM (23.1%) and First-Generation students (21.5%).

**The persistence gap between URM students (63.5%) and Majority students (75.4%)** was 11.9%, which represents a 5% decrease from 2020 to 2021.

- The persistence gap was 7.4% for major changers: 78.8% (URM) vs 86.2% (majority) – an increase of 3% from 2020.
- The persistence gap was 13.3% for non-changers: 55.7% (URM) vs 69.0% (majority) – a decrease of 9.3% from 2020.

**The percentage of students who EARNED two or fewer D, F, or W grades** INCREASED by 2.9%

- the persistence of these students INCREASED by 5.4%.

**The percentage of students who earned 3 or more D, F, or W grades** DECREASED by 2.9%

- the persistence of these students INCREASED by 37.4%.

**There were 205 undecided majors at the point of matriculation:**

- 124 changed their major during the first year (60.5%) – 90.3% of these students persisted to the second year.
- 81 did not change their major during the first year (39.5%) – 29.6% of these students persisted to the second year.

**Even when you remove the undecided majors from the total population (N=1585), there is a 14.3% persistence gap:**

- 532 students changed their major during their first year (33.6%) – 84% of these students persisted to year two.
- 1053 students did NOT change their major (66.4%) – 69.7% of these students persisted to year two.

## Some conclusions to draw from these data:

- Students performed better academically in 2021/22, which is reflected in persistence rates.
- A smaller percentage of students changed their major in the 2021 Cohort, and there were significant gains in persistence made by the group of students who did not change their major, both of which could be a reflection of this stronger academic performance. A reflection of moving back to traditional course delivery (and out of the worst of the COVID pandemic) perhaps??
- URM students showed the largest overall gain in persistence, and the persistence gap between URM and majority students DECREASED by 5%.
- Ensuring that first-year students “find a major that fits” as early as possible in their first year remains critical to persistence, as shown by the 18.4% difference in persistence between major changers and students who remain in the major they declared at the point of admission.
- This is even more essential for URM and First-Generation students, who show persistence rates that are well over 20% higher among those individuals who changed their major in the first year...so adopting a *Purpose First* strategy that integrates major and career exploration into programs like LEAD is critical to do as soon as possible.

