CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

# OFFICE OF RESEARCH & PLANNING

# RESEARCH BRIEF

Topic:      Comparison of course success by instructional mode (2017-2019)
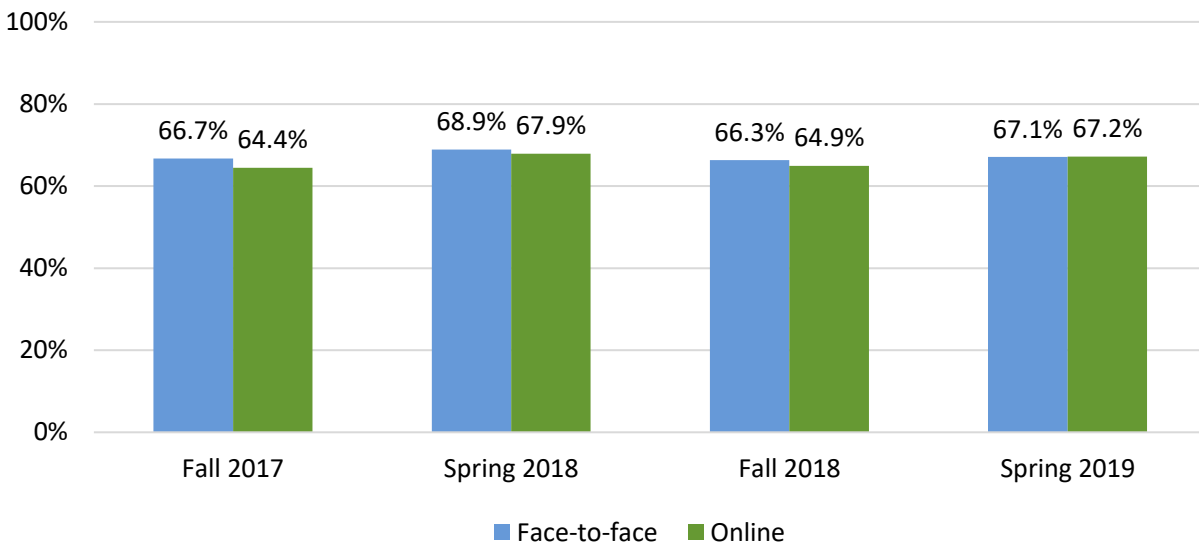
Date:       October 31, 2019

## OVERVIEW

The Office of Research & Planning examined rates of course success in comparable face-to-face and online sections. We analyzed students' grades in online and face-to-face sections, limited to courses that were offered in both modalities, during primary terms, between Fall 2017 and Spring 2019.  Our analysis dataset included approximately 22,000 enrollments in each of the four terms, with an average of just over one-quarter of the enrollments in online sections. (See Figure 4 for a description of the dataset.)

## FINDINGS

## How does course success compare between face-to-face and online sections?

During fall and spring terms, in 2017-18 and 2018-19, students in face-to-face sections had slightly higher course success rates than students enrolled in the online counterparts. The average course success rate for face-to-face sections was 67.2%, while the average course success rate in online sections of the same courses was 66.2%. This pattern is consistent across semesters (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Course success rates in face-to-face sections and online counterparts by term
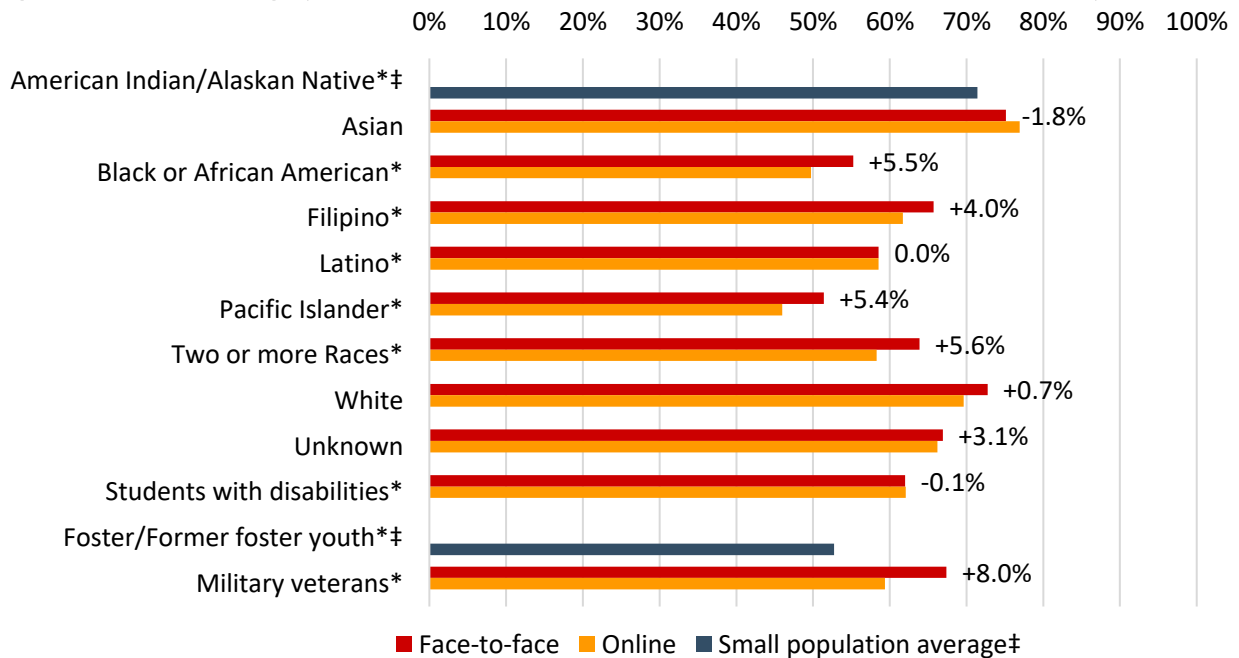
## Does course success by instructional mode vary by student demographics?

The difference between face-to-face and online course success was slightly larger for students in equity groups, 2.4%, compared to students who are not part of an identified equity group, 0.7% (Figure 2). Among specific demographic groups, the difference in online and face-to-face course success rates ranges; there is no difference for Latino students, average course success in face-to-face sections is 1.8% lower than in online sections among Asian students, and for military veterans the face-to-face course success rate is 8.0% higher than online (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Term enrollment and course success for student equity groups

| Student Equity Group | Term | Face-to-face | | Online | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Enrollment count | Course success | Enrollment count | Course success |
| Not a member of a Student Equity Group | Fall 2017 | 7,053 | 75.5% | 2,237 | 72.6% |
| | Spring 2018 | 6,822 | 77.1% | 2,735 | 76.3% |
| | Fall 2018 | 7,037 | 75.9% | 2,785 | 75.5% |
| | Spring 2019 | 6,731 | 76.1% | 3,208 | 76.6% |
| Is a member of a Student Equity Group | Fall 2017 | 9,569 | 60.3% | 2,764 | 57.9% |
| | Spring 2018 | 9,001 | 62.7% | 2,990 | 60.1% |
| | Fall 2018 | 9,829 | 59.5% | 3,564 | 56.6% |
| | Spring 2019 | 9,080 | 60.4% | 3,613 | 58.8% |

Figure 3. Student demographics and course success in face-to-face sections and online counterparts



*Demographic groups that are identified as a CCSF Student Equity Group
‡Average course success displayed for groups with too few students to disaggregate

# METHODOLOGY

## Description of the dataset

Figure 4. Enrollments by modality for courses offered both online and face-to-face

| Modality | Fall 2017 | Spring 2018 | Fall 2018 | Spring 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Online enrollments | 5,001 | 5,725 | 6,349 | 6,821 |
| Face-to-face enrollments | 16,622 | 15,823 | 16,866 | 15,811 |

## Definitions
- Analysis is limited to enrollments in courses that are offered both online and face-to-face.
- Analysis includes all enrollments that resulted in a grade.
- Course success rate is the number of students earning a grade or C or better, out of all graded enrollments.

## Source
CCSF Banner DEVL: SSBSECT, SHRTCKN, SHRTCKG, SWBRBKG
Data extracted: October 31, 2019
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