

Academic Accelerator Program Report, AY 2014-15
University of Kansas
November 24, 2015

Introduction

The Academic Accelerator Program (AAP) is a three-semester, integrated academic program for international students. To qualify for the program students must demonstrate advanced levels of English proficiency and enter the University with a minimum 2.5 high school GPA. Students accepted into the AAP program complete a Freshman year of courses and achieve required levels of English proficiency to progress into the wider set of academic programs. The first semester of study includes courses in math, science, humanities, and English for Academic Purposes. The second and third semesters have a range of academic courses as well as supplemental English instruction. Students who do not meet the English proficiency requirements enter the Pre-AAP that centers on intensive English language study.

Prospective students can begin the program in the Fall, Spring or Summer semesters. Students complete the 12-month program terms with 33-37 academic credits towards graduation. Successfully completing the AAP curriculum leads to progression into the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences with Sophomore standing and provides opportunities to apply to schools and majors outside the College.

This year-end report provides a summary of the AAP's first year of operation. For the purposes of this report, students are referenced in language that represents when they entered KU (i.e., Fall 2014 Cohort) as well as segment of the 3-term AAP program (i.e., Term 1, Term 2, or Term 3). In general, students are doing well and progressing through the program towards degree completion. As numbers of students increase in coming semesters, KU will have a better data set from which to measure the overall success of the AAP program.

Demographic characteristics of AAP students

During the first year of operation the AAP enrolled 127 new students at KU, including 57 students who started in the Fall 2014 semester, 51 in the Spring 2015 semester, and 19 in the Summer 2015 semester. Throughout the first year of the APP program, the student profile has been fairly consistent. Individuals in this program start at a traditional college-going age (with averages for each cohort varying between 18 and 19 years old) and the majority of students are male (cohorts from the first year range from 76-84% male). Early statistics for the 2015-16 academic year indicate this trend could shift to be more evenly distributed between male and female (i.e., 70% of the Fall 2015 cohort is male). Since the program's first semester, the majority of students have been and continue to be from China. Still, the AAP program has drawn students from 12 different countries. See Table 1 for additional information describing the demographic characteristics of the AAP students.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the AAP

	Fall 2014 <u>Cohort</u>	Spring 2015 <u>Cohort</u>	Summer 2015 <u>Cohort</u>	Fall 2015 <u>Cohort</u>
Number of Students	57	51	19	175
Age at arrival (average)	19	19	18	18
Sex				
Female	23%	24%	16%	30%
Male	77%	76%	84%	70%
Nationality				
China	90%	55%	74%	88%
El Salvador	0%	0%	0%	0.5%
Great Britain	0%	2%	0%	0%
India	3%	2%	5%	0.5%
Iraq	0%	0%	0%	0.5%
Kazakhstan	0%	0%	0%	0.5%
Korea	0%	2%	0%	0.5%
Nigeria	2%	2%	0%	0%
Russia	2%	0%	0%	0%
Taiwan	0%	0%	0%	1%
United Arab Emirates	0%	35%	21%	8%
Vietnam	3%	2%	0%	0.5%

Academic performance of AAP students

GPA of entering AAP students. Students enrolling in the AAP tend to be well-prepared from their high school, as demonstrated by their incoming GPA (i.e., 3.45 for the Fall 2014 cohort, 3.50 for Spring 2015, and 3.58 for Summer 2015), well above the minimum 2.5 high school GPA required for program admission. Students who begin their studies in the pre-AAP track, which is equivalent to levels 1, 2, and 3 in the AEC, tend to have a semester GPA slightly lower than their counterparts who start in the AAP curriculum (see Table 2). However, it is worth noting that this includes students from all levels of pre-AAP study (i.e., Levels 1-3 of the AEC), which may distort the data. A closer look at the term GPAs for those students in the AAP curriculum will show that term GPA increases as the students persist from semester to semester. One explanation for this is that a few students performed poorly and were either dismissed from the AAP program or chose to return to their home country prior to dismissal, thus as they left KU, the cohort average increased. The first cohort of students who progressed in the University from the AAP curriculum included 24 students who had a cohort cumulative GPA of 2.98.

Table 2. Average GPA of Pre AAP and AAP students

	Fall 2014 Cohort	Spring 2015 Cohort	Summer 2015 Cohort
Incoming HS GPA	3.45	3.50	3.58
Pre-AAP GPA*	2.53	2.58	3.09
Term 1 AAP GPA	2.60	2.94	3.10
Term 2 AAP GPA	2.78	3.10	N/A
Term 3 AAP GPA	2.89	N/A	N/A
Cumulative GPA at Progression	2.98	N/A	N/A

*Includes first term GPA of students in each of the three pre-AAP levels

Persistence and Retention. Persistence and retention rates provide another data point to measure student success. For the purposes of this report, persistence rates are measured from

term to term (i.e., Fall to Spring) while retention rates are year to year. Through the first year of the program term to term persistence rates varied from 93% to 100% (see Table 3 for additional detail). One-year retention rates for the Fall 2014 cohort were 88% for the entire cohort, 83% for those who started in the AAP curriculum, and 93% for those who started in the pre-AAP curriculum. As demonstrated by Table 3, later cohorts are following similar, if not better trends than the Fall 2014 Cohort as it relates to persistence.

Table 3. Persistence and retention rates of Pre AAP and AAP students

	<u>Term 1 Enrollment</u>	<u>Persistence Rate Term 1 to 2</u>	<u>Term 2 Enrollment</u>	<u>Persistence Rate Term 2 to 3</u>	<u>Term 3 Enrollment</u>	<u>Persistence Rate Term 3 to Progression</u>	<u>Enrollment after 1 year</u>	<u>1 year Retention Rate</u>
<u>Fall 2014 Cohort</u>								
Total New Students	57	98%	56	96%	54	93%	50	88%
AAP	30	97%	29	93%	27	93%	25	83%
Pre-AAP	27	100%	27	93%	25	100%	25	93%
<u>Spring 2015 Cohort</u>								
Total New Students	51	96%	49	94%	46			
AAP	33	94%	31	94%	29			
Pre-AAP	18	94%	17	100%	17			
Progressed to AAP from F'14	9	100%	9	100%	9			
<u>Summer 2015 Cohort</u>								
Total New Students	19	100%	19					
AAP	6	100%	6					
Pre-AAP	13	100%	13					
Progressed to AAP from F'14	6	100%	6					
Progressed to AAP from Sp'15	7	100%	7					

Academic interest areas of AAP students

The final segment of this report summarizes students' area of academic interest. Both at the point of entry as well as when they progress into the wider university curriculum. Initial trends indicate a strong interest in business and STEM disciplines at point of applying to KU (see Table 4). For the Fall 2014 cohort that has progressed out of the AAP, there remains a strong interest in business and STEM disciplines with a growing interest in the humanities and social sciences. A high level summary is provided in Table 5. Within the STEM fields, students are currently pursuing majors in Biology (1), Computer Engineering (1), Computer Science (5), Electrical Engineering (1), Environmental Science (1), and Mechanical Engineering (1). The remaining two students are currently undeclared with heavy enrollment in Math and Science coursework. When taking a closer look at the intended majors of those under the liberal arts and social sciences students are pursuing studies in Geography (1), Psychology (1), and undeclared areas (3).

Table 4. Academic interest areas of students as they enter KU

Entering Academic Interest*	Fall 2014 Cohort		Spring 2015 Cohort		Sum. 2015 Cohort	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Architecture, Design, & Planning	2	4%	2	4%	-	-
Business	25	43%	13	26%	6	32%
Liberal Arts & Social Sciences	7	13%	8	16%	5	26%
STEM	23	40%	28	54%	8	42%
Total	57	100%	51	100%	19	100%

*Based on admissions application

Table 5. Academic interest of as students enter into the wider University

<u>Progressing Academic Interest**</u>	<u>Fall 2014 Cohort</u>	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Architecture, Design, & Planning	1	4%
Business (Pre-business)	6	25%
Liberal Arts & Social Sciences	5	21%
STEM	12	50%
Total	24	100%

**Based on KU Student Information System

Conclusion

This report on the first year of the AAP provides a foundational understanding of the program and the students who enroll in it. As the program enrolls more students and gathers more data future reports will also include students gains within the learning outcomes of the curriculum, variations of student success based on level of entry, and qualitative analysis of these and other student outcomes. Similarly, as the AAP continues in years and students' progress further through their respective degree programs graduation rates and other success factors will be measured.