

Using High School Data to Predict College Success in Palau

To support efforts to improve students' college readiness and success, leaders at the Palau Ministry of Education and Palau Community College want to understand the experiences and background of Palau High School graduates who are better prepared for Palau Community College. However, most research on predictors of college readiness and success was conducted in the United States, which differs from Palau in many ways, including political, cultural, demographic, and education contexts.¹

This study identified the Palau High School academic preparation variables (such as high school grade point average and achievement in high school English language arts and math courses) that predict success at Palau Community College, as measured by three outcomes: earning a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher in the first year of college, persisting to a second year of college, and completing an associate degree or certificate within three years. This study provides new evidence on high school academic preparation variables that predict community college success and is expected to support the Palau Ministry of Education and Palau Community College in their strategic planning to ensure that public high school graduates are college and career ready.

Key findings

- **Less than 20 percent of Palau High School graduates who enrolled in Palau Community College completed an associate degree or certificate within three years.** Although 60 percent earned a grade point average of 2.0 or higher in the first year of college, and 56 percent persisted to a second year, just 20 percent completed an associate degree or certificate within three years.
- **High school grade point average positively predicted two community college success outcomes.** It was predictive of earning a grade point average of 2.0 or higher in the first year at Palau Community College and of completing an associate degree or certificate within three years but not of persisting to a second year of college.
- **Math scores on the grade 12 Palau Achievement Test positively predicted one college success outcome.** Math scores were predictive of a grade point average of 2.0 or higher in the first year of college but not of persistence to a second year or completion of an associate degree or certificate within three years.
- **English scores on the grade 12 Palau Achievement Test did not predict any community college success outcomes.**
- **Earning a grade of C or higher in English I and English IV in high school each predicted one community college success outcome.** A grade of C or higher in English I was predictive of completing an associate degree or certificate within three years, and a grade of C or higher in English IV was predictive of persisting to a second year of college. Grades in English II and English III were not predictive of any college success measures.
- **Grades in high school math courses were not significant predictors of any community college success measures.**
- **Graduates in the Construction Technology Career Academy were less likely than graduates in the other career academies to persist to a second year of college or to complete an associate degree or certificate within three years.** Enrollment status in other career academy courses did not predict any community college success outcomes.

1. Agarwal, R. (2013). *Asserting identity: Youth culture, education and nationalism in contemporary Palau* (Doctoral dissertation). Brandeis University.