Determining the Effect of Benchmarks on Retention and Graduation Rates

A application of ACT subject benchmarks
ACT’s 2004 Crisis at the Core

- ACT estimated 29 percent who took the ACT Assessment and did not meet any of the three (English, Math, Science) benchmarks (28% in 2011)
- When students meet or exceed the three initial ACT College Readiness Benchmarks 83% returned the following Fall term
- As many as 49 percent of the ACT-tested high school graduates could make substantial improvements in college readiness while they were still in high school
- Of the ACT-tested high school graduates, 22 percent met or exceeded all three College Readiness Benchmarks (in 2011, 25% all four)
UVU & Benchmarking

Questions
- Will national findings apply to a mixed mission institution?
- Does the use of benchmarks improve 1-year retention?
- Do students meeting benchmarks have better graduation rates at 100% and 150% for their expected degree?
- Do the differences apply across degree types?

Methods
- Used Tableau dashboard to examine differences.
- Baseline set for students meeting no benchmarks.
- Used different year grouping and degree levels.
- Used both national & state based benchmarks.
https://viz.uen.org/t/uvu/views/ACT_Benchmark_0/Dashboard#1
Results & Findings

- Benchmarks have a meaningful impact on 1-year retention.
- The impact of benchmarks show even larger impact on both 100% and 150% graduation rates.
- The effects are seen on both associate and bachelor level degrees.
- Similar results are evident when national and state developed benchmarks are used.
- Implications for use in high school advisement of students in course taking to impact future college success is clear.
- Math and Science benchmarks have the largest impacts.
- Reading normally outperforms English as a benchmark.
- Overall Math has the most impact on both retention and graduation.