

# ACUE-Certified Faculty Spur Improvements in Students' Passing Rates, DFW Rates, and Grades at Broward College



## Students more likely to pass, less likely to receive DFW grades, and earn modestly higher grades when taught by ACUE-certified faculty.

At Broward College, three cohorts of faculty completed the ACUE course in Effective Teaching Practices during the 2018–2019 academic year. In Research Brief 13 (2020), we analyzed the impact that these ACUE-certified faculty had on their students' outcomes in the year in which faculty were completing the ACUE course. In this follow-up analysis, we focused on the impact of ACUE-certified faculty in the year after faculty completed the ACUE course. Specifically, student course outcomes were analyzed for the 72,503 non-unique enrollments of students taught by the ACUE-certified faculty, along with all enrollments from sections of the same courses that were taught by non-certified instructors. The analysis found that passing rates, DFW rates, and course grades improved more for students of ACUE-certified faculty compared to students in matched sections.

### Key Findings:

#### ★ Passing:

Students' likelihood of passing courses improved from the baseline period to the year after the faculty completed the ACUE course across the entire sample, and the improvement was significantly larger among students of ACUE-certified faculty,  $p = .001$ ,  $OR = 1.10$ .

- Students of ACUE-certified faculty were 1.34 times more likely to pass their courses during the year after faculty completed the ACUE course compared to students of the same faculty at baseline,  $p < .001$ .
- Students in matched sections were 1.21 times more likely to pass their courses during the post-ACUE time period compared to students in matched sections at baseline,  $p < .001$ .
- These results indicate that controlling for faculty and student demographics and the overall improvements that occurred at Broward, an additional 200 students passed their courses than would have otherwise.

#### ★ DFW:

Students' likelihood of receiving DFW grades decreased from the baseline period to the year after the faculty completed the ACUE course across the entire sample, and the decrease in likelihood of receiving DFW grades was significantly larger among students of ACUE-certified faculty,  $p = .001$ ,  $OR = .92$ .

- Students of ACUE-certified faculty experienced a 26% reduction in the odds of receiving a DFW grade during the year after faculty completed the ACUE course compared to students of the same faculty at baseline,  $p < .001$ .
- Students in matched sections experienced a 20% reduction in the odds of receiving a DFW grade in their courses during the post-ACUE time period compared to students in matched sections at baseline,  $p < .001$ .
- These results indicate that controlling for faculty and student demographics and the overall improvements that occurred at Broward, 209 fewer students received DFW grades in their courses than would have otherwise.

## Key Findings (continued):



### ★ Grades:

Students' course grades improved from the baseline period to the year after the faculty completed the ACUE course across the entire sample, and the improvement was significantly larger among students of ACUE-certified faculty,  $p < .001$ ,  $b = .05$ .

- The average course grade in sections taught by ACUE-certified faculty was approximately .18 points higher, on a 4.0 scale, in the year after faculty completed the ACUE course compared to students of the same faculty at baseline,  $p < .001$ .
- The average course grade in matched sections was approximately .13 points higher, on a 4.0 scale, in the post-ACUE time period compared to students in matched sections at baseline,  $p < .001$ .
- Adjusting for instructor and student demographics as well as overall improvements that occurred at Broward, average grades were .05 grade points higher in 2019-2020 among sections taught by ACUE-certified faculty than would have been otherwise—2.78 instead of 2.73 on a 4.0 scale.

### ★ COVID-19:

Given the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic during spring 2020, we separately use fall 2019 and spring 2020 as the post period to explore the extent to which academic disruptions affected the continued impact of ACUE faculty. In the overall sample:

- The increase in the likelihood of passing and the decrease in the likelihood of receiving DFW grades were both marginally significant when using fall 2019 as the post period,  $p$ 's  $< .10$ , and they were both significant when using spring 2020 as the post period,  $p$ 's  $< .05$ .
- The increase in grades was significant when using fall 2019 as the post period and when using spring 2020 as the post period,  $p$ 's  $< .05$ .

## Methodology

Course data were analyzed at the student enrollment level for three cohorts of faculty who completed the ACUE course in Effective Teaching Practices during the 2018–2019 academic year. The sample included 40,757 non-unique student enrollments from 1,801 sections taught by ACUE-certified faculty and 389,198 non-unique student enrollments from 15,893 matched sections during the baseline time period (fall 2015–spring 2018). There were also 15,265 non-unique student enrollments from 639 sections taught by ACUE-certified faculty and 117,988 non-unique student enrollments from 4,497 matched sections during the ACUE course (fall 2018–spring 2019), and 16,481 non-unique student enrollments from 695 sections taught by ACUE-certified faculty and 101,446 non-unique student enrollments from 3,984 matched sections during the ACUE course (fall 2019–spring 2020). Analyses controlled for faculty position and the student demographics of race/ethnicity, gender, Pell eligibility, college generational status, international student status, age, and credits earned to date.

<sup>1</sup>ACUE. (2020, May). Research Brief 13. [https://web.archive.org/web/20201209141744/https://acue.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ACUE-Research\\_Brief\\_13\\_final.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20201209141744/https://acue.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ACUE-Research_Brief_13_final.pdf)