Annenberg Institute
BROWN UNIVERSITY

EdWorkingPaper No. 26-1570

The Disparate Impacts of Academic Probation

Serena Canaan
Simon Fraser University
and IZA

Stefanie Fischer
Amazon

Pierre Mouganie
Simon Fraser University
and IZA

Geoffrey Schnorr
U.S. Military Academy
atWest Point

Institutional rules that appear neutral can produce unequal outcomes when applied to students who differ in how they respond to them. We study this in the context of academic probation, a policy used by nearly every U.S. college to warn students whose grades fall below a fixed threshold that continued enrollment is conditional on improvement. To do so, we draw on student records from a large California public university, linked to state administrative earnings data. We identify the causal effects of probation using a regression discontinuity design comparing students who narrowly scored above the cutoff to those who just missed it. We find that probation raises dropout, lowers degree completion, and reduces earnings at ages 24 to 31 among low-income students, while high-income students are largely unaffected. We then contrast the standard policy with an alternative, at the same institution, which incorporates a coaching program. We find that the alternative policy eliminates these effects and improves academic performance. Taken together, these results suggest that the design of institutional policies is critical for closing socioeconomic gaps in degree completion.

VERSION: September 2026

Suggested citation: Canaan, Serena, Stefanie Fischer, Pierre Mouganie, and Geoffrey Schnorr. (2026). The Disparate Impacts of Academic Probation. (EdWorkingPaper: 26-1570). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: https://doi.org/10.26300/qh7n-y428

The Disparate Impacts of Academic Probation*

Serena Canaan[a], Stefanie Fischer[b], Pierre Mouganie[c], Geoffrey C. Schnorr[d]

[a]Simon Fraser University and IZA
[b]Amazon
[c]Simon Fraser University and IZA
[d]U.S. Military Academy at West Point

August 27, 2026

Abstract

Institutional rules that appear neutral can produce unequal outcomes when applied to students who differ in how they respond to them. We study this in the context of academic probation, a policy used by nearly every U.S. college to warn students whose grades fall below a fixed threshold that continued enrollment is conditional on improvement. To do so, we draw on student records from a large California public university, linked to state administrative earnings data. We identify the causal effects of probation using a regression discontinuity design comparing students who narrowly scored above the cutoff to those who just missed it. We find that probation raises dropout, lowers degree completion, and reduces earnings at ages 24 to 31 among low-income students, while high-income students are largely unaffected. We then contrast the standard policy with an alternative, at the same institution, which incorporates a coaching program. We find that the alternative policy eliminates these effects and improves academic performance. Taken together, these results suggest that the design of institutional policies is critical for closing socioeconomic gaps in degree completion.

*This paper subsumes and extends an earlier working paper, "Keep Me In, Coach: The Short- and Long-Term Effects of a University Coaching Intervention". This paper has benefited from helpful conversations with Michael Bates, David Card, Damon Clark, Laura Giuliano, Joshua Goodman, Mark Hoekstra, Jason Lindo, Lance Lochner, Jack Mountjoy, Philip Oreopoulos, Uros Petronijevic, Evan Riehl, Sarah Reber, Heather Royer, Jesse Rothstein, Bruce Sacerdote, Sally Sadoff, Jonathan Smith, Douglas Webber and seminar participants at Boston University (Wheelock College of Education and Human Development), Georgia State University, Hitotsubashi University, University of California-Santa Barbara, University of California-San Diego (Rady School of Management), University of California-Riverside, University of Melbourne, Université de Montréal, and Western Washington University. We thank participants at the following conferences for providing useful feedback: ASSA Annual Meetings (2025), Canadian Economic Association Annual Meeting (2025), WEAI Annual Conference (2025), Society of Labor Economics Conference (2026) and the NBER Economics of Education Fall Meeting (2025). We also thank the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research and the Canada Research Chairs Program for support in conducting this research.

1 Introduction

The labor market returns to attending U.S. public universities are substantial, particularly for low-income students, making a college degree an effective pathway towards upward mobility (Hoekstra, 2009; Zimmerman, 2014; Smith et al., 2020; Chetty et al., 2020). Nonetheless, low-income students often do not realize these returns, because they are less likely than their higher-income peers to complete their degree (Mountjoy, 2026). Only 13% of students from the lowest income quartile attain a bachelor's degree by age 24, compared to 62% of those from the highest (Cahalan et al., 2021). Equalizing enrollment rates would still leave large completion gaps, reflecting large socioeconomic disparities in persistence (Bailey and Dynarski, 2011).

These persistence gaps stem from a variety of financial, informational, and behavioral barriers that low-income students face after college enrollment (Dynarski, 2003; Hoxby and Turner, 2013; Lavecchia et al., 2016). Additionally, supply-side factors, such as institutional resources or policies, influence overall completion rates (Bound et al., 2010; Deming and Walters, 2017; Dynarski et al., 2023). What is less clear is whether the barriers faced by low-income students interact with institutional policies in ways that exacerbate socioeconomic gaps in degree completion. Moreover, if such interactions exist, it is even less clear how policies can be redesigned to mitigate them.

We study these questions in the context of academic probation, a near-universal policy at U.S. post-secondary institutions. Academic probation is a label given to students whose grade point average (GPA) falls below a minimum threshold set by their university, coupled with a warning that they must return to good academic standing to avoid further penalties. An estimated 10 to 20 percent of college students have a first-year GPA low enough to warrant placement on probation (Bowman, 2022). Academic probation conveys negative information about students' academic prospects and makes continued enrollment conditional on improvement, which may induce some of them to drop out. Such dropout can be welfare-improving, provided it redirects students who are mismatched with their universities. A concern, however, is that the costs of this uniform standard fall instead on low-income students, who have fewer resources to navigate probation or are more inclined to read the label as confirmation that they do not belong.

This paper provides causal evidence that academic probation widens socioeconomic gaps in college persistence, completion, and earnings, and that pairing the same warning with a coaching program mitigates these gaps. We focus on a large, selective public 4-year university located in California. Our setting offers a rare opportunity to contrast how students at the same institution fare under two different probation policies. Before 2009, the university operated a standard probation policy. Freshmen whose first-quarter GPA fell below 2.0 were placed on probation and warned to return to good academic standing. In 2009, an alternative probation policy was piloted in four of the university's six colleges and expanded university-wide in 2010. Importantly, the GPA criteria for probation placement remained unchanged. However, first-year students placed on probation at the end of their first quarter, were now required to participate in a coaching program at the beginning of the winter quarter.

The coaching program is a two-hour workshop designed to strengthen social belonging, encourage help-seeking, and address present bias, built around the message that failure is common and surmountable. It opens with a thirty-minute session in which all participants watch a video of high-profile individuals who overcame failure and receive information on campus resources and probation rules. It continues with an interactive breakout session of six to eight students led by a trained faculty or staff coach, who shares a personal experience of failure and guides goal-setting and time-management exercises. By week five, students must visit a campus resource or meet their coach one-on-one. Three features distinguish the program from lighter-touch interventions and align it with support programs shown to raise graduation rates (Carrell and Sacerdote, 2017; Weiss et al., 2019; Carrell and Kurlaender, 2023). It is conducted in person and offers participants individualized support and encouragement. The program is also delivered in a group setting, which normalizes academic probation. It is conducted at a critical time, right after students are placed on probation for the first time.

Our analysis draws on detailed administrative records covering every student who entered the university between fall 2007 and fall 2017, including term-by-term GPA, probation placement, coaching participation, and graduation. We link these records to the universe of UI-covered employment in California, which allows us to follow students from their first term into their late twenties. We estimate the effects of both policies using a regression discontinuity design based on the 2.0 GPA threshold that determines probation placement. Students whose first-quarter GPA falls below the cutoff are placed on probation, while those at or above it are not. Comparing students who fall marginally on either side of the threshold recovers the causal effect of probation placement. The standard policy ran before 2009 and the coaching policy from 2009 on, so pre-2009 cohorts identify the effect of standard probation and later cohorts the effect of probation combined with coaching.

Results indicate that standard academic probation substantially widens socioeconomic gaps in degree completion. In the full sample, probation has no significant effect on first-year GPA but increases first-year dropout by 8.5 percentage points (p.p.). It also reduces six-year graduation rates by 7.2 p.p., although this estimate is not statistically significant at conventional levels. These average effects mask stark heterogeneity. High-income students' outcomes are largely unaffected, while low-income students bear the full costs of the standard policy. Probation significantly raises their first-year dropout rate by 10.7 p.p. and lowers their six-year graduation rate by 20.6 p.p.

By contrast, probation paired with coaching produces a different pattern of results. It raises first-year GPA by 0.226 standard deviations in the full sample, with gains for both low- and high-income students. Additionally, unlike the standard policy, it has no adverse effect on dropout or graduation for either group. The same GPA threshold therefore widens the socioeconomic gap in completion when it delivers a warning alone, but not when the warning is paired with support.

These comparisons contrast policies observed in different time periods—standard probation before 2009 and probation with coaching after. To the extent that the composition of entering students or the broader conditions they faced changed around the transition period, this contrast could partly reflect those changes rather than the coaching program. To address this, we leverage within-cohort variation

from the 2009 pilot, in which four of the university's colleges adopted probation with coaching while the remaining two retained the standard policy, enabling us to compare both policies across students who entered in the same year. Reassuringly, this comparison reproduces our main results, though less precisely given the smaller sample. Standard probation again substantially reduces low-income students' six-year graduation, while probation with coaching does not, and instead improves their first-year GPA.

The magnitude of the effects we document is meaningful relative to national gaps in college completion. Among students who enter university, only 32% of those in the bottom family income quartile complete a degree, compared with 68% for students in the top quartile (Bailey and Dynarski, 2011). This amounts to a 36 p.p. completion gap. Scaling our 20.6 p.p. graduation estimate by the 17.2% of low-income students placed on probation implies that standard probation lowers overall low-income completion by up to 3.5 p.p., roughly 10% of the national completion gap. Notably, pairing probation with coaching removes these effects at a cost of roughly $145 per student. We present details of these calculations in Section 6.3.

We also find that the costs of standard probation extend beyond college into the labor market. Low-income students placed on probation have 24% less earnings in their late twenties compared to those who narrowly avoid it. By contrast, the estimate for high-income students is small and statistically insignificant. Pairing probation with coaching, however, eliminates these earnings losses for low-income students, consistent with its effects on academic attainment.

A natural question is why probation affects low- and high-income students so differently. One possibility is that students may strategically respond to probation placement. Higher-income students may be better able to avoid probation's consequences by switching to easier majors or reducing course loads to raise their GPA, while low-income students may lack the information to do so. We find no evidence of this channel as neither group adjusts its major or course load after being placed on probation. A second possibility is that students may be forced to drop out due to failing other institutional thresholds, such as those related to dismissal or financial aid eligibility. We find no strong evidence that being placed on academic probation affects the likelihood of crossing these thresholds. Ruling out these explanations, we conclude that probation most likely discourages students, inducing them to leave voluntarily. Low-income students may be especially susceptible to this discouragement. They face greater barriers to degree completion, including a weaker sense of belonging (Walton and Cohen, 2011).

Surveys of coaching participants, though mostly descriptive, give a picture of what this discouragement involves. After the program, participants report a large increase in belonging and support, including a 0.699 standard deviation gain in a combined support-and-belonging index, a 22.9 p.p. rise in knowing that other students are also on probation, and a 42.5 p.p. increase in identifying a faculty or staff member who cares about their success. They also report greater help-seeking, but no increase in confidence about their academic prospects. In sum, the survey points to belonging and support, not measured confidence, as the margin the program moves.

This paper identifies a novel driver of the socioeconomic gap in college degree completion, the near-universal higher education policy of academic probation. A key contribution of our study is that we not

only document the probation-induced gap but also show how to address it. Our results inform a literature focusing on the role of supply-side factors in shaping college completion rates. Financial aid and increased per-student spending are promising avenues for improving degree completion (Dynarski, 2003; Bound and Turner, 2007; Bound et al., 2010; Cohodes and Goodman, 2014; Deming, 2017; Bettinger et al., 2019; Deming and Walters, 2017; Angrist et al., 2022). Other institutional factors, such as within-university policies, can instead undermine student success. Major-restriction policies push minority students out of high-earning fields (Bleemer and Mehta, 2024). Dismissal and probation policies lower completion, though the evidence is mixed (Lindo et al., 2010; Ost et al., 2018; Dong, 2019; Bowman, 2022; Bowman and Fenton-Miller, 2025; Brady, 2017; Fletcher and Tokmouline, 2017; Casey et al., 2018; Bowman et al., 2020; Wright, 2020; Albert and Wozny, 2022).

In contrast, who exactly bears the costs of these policies has been largely overlooked, particularly whether they fall on low-income students. Furthermore, it is even less clear how such policies can be redesigned to mitigate their costs. Our paper fills these gaps in the literature, by highlighting that while probation applies the same standard to all students, its costs fall disproportionately on low-income students, who experience substantial reductions in degree completion and earnings. Importantly, we show that this gap is not inevitable, and that a simple redesign of the standard policy to incorporate low-cost academic supports can mitigate it. By comparing two policies in the same setting, our findings highlight that the design of probation policy is crucial in determining its effects on student success.

An advantage of our study is that we can track students into the labor market, where we show that probation reduces low-income students' earnings well into their late 20s. Our paper thus relates to a recent literature documenting substantial earnings gains to attending public four-year colleges, particularly for low-income students (Hoekstra, 2009; Zimmerman, 2014; Smith et al., 2020; Kozakowski, 2023; Bleemer, 2024). However, many low-income students do not fully realize these returns, as they often fail to complete their degree even after enrolling in college (Mountjoy, 2026). We complement this literature by showing that one reason low-income students may not realize the earnings gains from college is the disproportionate costs that institutional policies may impose on them.

Finally, our paper adds to the literature on college coaching interventions by showing that pairing probation with an in-person coaching program can be a low-cost way to mitigate its negative effects and improve academic performance. Prior work establishes that interventions delivering in-person, proactive, and individualized support are effective at improving college students' outcomes (Angrist et al., 2009; Bettinger and Baker, 2014; Carrell and Sacerdote, 2017; Oreopoulos and Petronijevic, 2018; Canaan et al., 2022; Carrell and Kurlaender, 2023), while the evidence on lighter-touch and online interventions is more mixed (Oreopoulos and Petronijevic, 2019, 2023). Our findings highlight that academic supports can be directly embedded within existing university policies such as probation, offering a low-cost and scalable mode of delivery.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 details the institutional background. Section 3 describes the data. Section 4 outlines the empirical framework. Section 5 presents results and section 6 discusses the mechanisms at play. Section 7 concludes.

2 Institutional Setting

Our setting is a large public four-year college located in California. The university serves approximately 21,000 students, and focuses on undergraduate education, particularly in engineering and agriculture fields. Tuition and fees (excluding books, supplies, room/board, etc.) total nearly $10,000/year for California residents and $25,000 for out-of-state and international students. The university operates on a quarter calendar where three eleven-week terms make up the academic year: fall, winter and spring quarters. Freshman students typically enroll in their first quarter with a declared major.

The university is selective. From 2013 to 2017, acceptance rates for first-time freshmen fluctuate between 29% and 34.5%. Additionally, the 2019 first-time freshmen entering cohort has an average high school GPA of 4.1 (on a 5.0 scale), an average SAT score of 1,375 (among the top 20% nationally) and an average ACT score of 29. According to the College Scorecard, students who first enroll at the university have median yearly earnings of around $91,700 after 10 years.[1] This is relatively substantial as the midpoint in the College Scorecard for 4-year colleges is $53,747.

2.1 Academic Probation

Academic probation is a near universal policy in US postsecondary institutions. Probation is a label given to students who score below a minimum GPA threshold set by their university. At this university and similar to other institutions, academic probation is solely a function of a student's GPA. At the end of each quarter, students whose cumulative or term GPA is less than 2.0 are placed on academic probation. Students are sent an email which notifies them of their probation status, explains that they need to improve their GPA to return to good academic standing, and refers them to campus resources. Students remain on probation until their term and cumulative GPAs are above the 2.0 threshold. They may be subject to dismissal from the university if their cumulative GPA falls below a certain threshold; but this cutoff is lower than that for academic probation.[2] Freshmen cannot be subject to dismissal before the end of their first-year's Spring quarter.[3]

Academic probation is meant to serve as a wake-up call for capable students who are underperforming, and remove students who are "mismatched" and would be better off going to a less selective university. However, a major concern is that probation may unintentionally discourage capable students. Lindo et al. (2010) argue that when a university places a student on academic probation, it is effectively imposing a performance standard, as the student has to raise her GPA sufficiently to be taken off probation. This discourages students who either lack the ability to meet the higher standard or do not believe they are capable of doing so, leading them to drop out. Low-income students may be particularly discouraged by academic probation given the challenges they disproportionately face during their postsecondary studies.

[1] The U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard reports median yearly incomes of students who first enroll at a university and receive federal financial aid, regardless of graduation status. These are reported 10 years after initial enrollment and for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 cohorts.

[2] The dismissal cutoff depends on the student's academic progress level. For freshman students, the cutoff is typically 1.5.

[3] Students who are subject to dismissal can submit an appeal. If their appeal is approved, they have to sign an academic success agreement, a personalized plan to get them back on good academic standing.

First, they may lack information or awareness about educational options, leading to suboptimal decisions (Lavecchia et al., 2016). For example, they may not fully understand the rules and consequences of academic probation, or be aware of academic supports, such as advising or tutoring, that can help them navigate it. Second, behavioral barriers to academic success that students commonly face tend to be especially pronounced among those from low-income backgrounds (Dynarski et al., 2021). One of those barriers is present bias, whereby students may put too much emphasis on the short-term costs of academic probation, such as the effort required to raise their GPA and get out of probation, and not enough on the long-term gains of graduating from the university. Furthermore, students often make choices that are in line with their social identity and the behavioral expectations of their closest social group (Dynarski et al., 2023). Low-income students, who often lack examples of college graduates in their immediate social networks, may feel out of place during their first year of college and interpret academic probation as a negative signal of their ability and a confirmation that they do not belong.

2.2 Coaching Program

In 2009, the university introduced the Success Program (SP) for freshmen who are placed on academic probation at the end of the Fall quarter. SP is an in person group coaching workshop led by trained faculty or staff.[4] The program was first implemented as a pilot in the Fall of 2009 for four of the university's six colleges, and was extended to the entire university the following year.[5] The 2.0 GPA cutoff for being placed on academic probation remained unchanged. However, students placed on probation at the end of their first Fall quarter at the university were now required to complete the coaching workshop during the Winter quarter.

Program participation was enforced, as students who did not complete it were unable to enroll in their Spring quarter courses. The university typically offers two workshop dates during the first two weeks of the Winter quarter to accommodate student and faculty schedules. Roughly 320 students qualify for the program each Fall quarter, and almost all of them participate in one of the two workshop sessions. A small share of students are unable to attend the sessions due to a scheduling conflict and complete the requirement one-on-one with a trained faculty or staff.

The coaching workshop is designed to address psychological and behavioral barriers to academic success among students on probation. It is a two-hour workshop divided into two parts: a thirty-minute meeting with all program participants, followed by a ninety-minute breakout session with a smaller group of 6-8 students. The workshop's design was mainly informed by research on social belonging. A large body of literature highlights that students who perceive their challenges as unique and not shared by others are more likely to believe they do not belong at university and drop out (Walton and Brady,

[4]Faculty and staff who lead this program select into this service role. Faculty receive service credit from their home departments for their participation, and staff's time spent on SP is considered part of their typical work day. Faculty and staff undergo a two-hour training led by the SP leadership team.

[5]The colleges that participated in the pilot are the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Engineering and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. The College of Science and Mathematics and College of Liberal Arts did not participate.

2017). Brief interventions that expose students to stories of individuals who overcame difficulties can address these beliefs. They signal that setbacks are a common and shared experience, and encourage students to view their difficulties as temporary and surmountable (Oreopoulos and Petronijevic, 2019).

The coaching workshop takes this approach. At the beginning of the large group session, students watch a video featuring stories of high-profile individuals from Silicon Valley who have overcome challenges. The breakout session also opens with the coach, one of the trained faculty or staff, sharing a personal experience of failure and how they overcame it. Together, these narratives aim to normalize failure and convey the message that success is possible despite setbacks.

The coaching program further offers students concrete and actionable support to help initiate sustained behavioral change. During the large group session, coaches outline the rules of academic probation and provide information on campus resources such as tutoring, advising, health, and counseling services (see Appendix C). This is intended to reduce anxiety surrounding the probation term and initiate help-seeking behavior, by making students aware of the supports available to them. The small group session of the workshop is more interactive and discussion based. A coach facilitates a reflection and goal-setting exercise. The intent of this exercise is for students to leave the workshop with a tangible plan to change their academic trajectory going forward. Goal-setting also addresses present bias, as it encourages students to focus on the future instead of on the immediate costs of academic probation (Lavecchia et al., 2016). To guide this process, participants work through a worksheet (see Appendix C), pausing to discuss their responses with the group. Students first reflect on why they chose to attend college and on positive aspects of their university experience. They then set personal, academic, and social goals for the winter quarter. They are also encouraged to identify campus resources that can help them achieve these goals, as well as possible challenges they may encounter and how they plan to overcome them.[6] Participants are also required to complete a time management worksheet in which they are encouraged to allocate time for classes, studying, and social activities (Appendix C). Finally, to further encourage help-seeking, students are required to visit a campus resource or attend a one-on-one follow-up meeting with their session leader by week 5 of the winter quarter.

Importantly, throughout the workshop, students are provided with encouragement and positive personalized feedback from the coaches. The workshop is also a targeted intervention administered at a critical time, immediately after students are placed on probation for the first time. As Carrell and Sacerdote (2017) argue, targeted interventions implemented at the right time can have substantial effects on student success.

2.3 Prior Research on Effectiveness of College Interventions

We next compare the coaching program to prior college interventions in an effort to understand which of its features have the potential to promote student success. The coaching workshop is designed to

[6]These include academic challenges such as problems with time management, study skills, class attendance, or school/life balance; college adjustment difficulties such as roommate issues, homesickness, difficulty finding resources, or difficulty fitting in; and personal hardships such as mental or physical health issues, personal or family crises, or identity-based isolation

strengthen social belonging, encourage help-seeking, and address present bias. While previous research has shown that interventions sharing common elements with the coaching workshop can be effective at improving students' academic outcomes, the overall evidence is mixed. A large literature from experimental psychology indicates that brief online social belonging interventions can substantially improve student success and are particularly effective for minority and disadvantaged students (Walton and Cohen, 2011; Yeager et al., 2016; Broda et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2020; Walton et al., 2023). These interventions typically have students read stories of older peers who overcame struggles, and have been shown to increase academic performance and persistence. Other work also finds that online goal-setting programs for students with academic difficulties can increase GPA (Morisano et al., 2010). On the other hand, recent studies from economics replicating and scaling these interventions have found limited effects on student outcomes (Dobronyi et al., 2019; Oreopoulos and Petronijevic, 2019, 2023; Oreopoulos et al., 2022; Alam et al., 2026).

Similar to this prior literature, the coaching program exposes struggling students to stories of individuals who overcame setbacks, and has them work through goal-setting and time management exercises. However, it differs from the aforementioned interventions in one critical way: it is conducted in person. This allows for two important features. First, coaches are proactive and provide students with encouragement and individualized positive feedback, particularly during the small breakout sessions. Proactive, in-person and individualized support is an essential feature of previous interventions that were successful at increasing college students' academic performance, retention and graduation rates (Bettinger and Baker, 2014; Oreopoulos and Petronijevic, 2018; Canaan et al., 2022; Carrell and Kurlaender, 2023).[7] Second, the workshop is conducted in a group setting, which is meant to foster a sense of community and to provide students with direct evidence that they are not the only ones on academic probation, reinforcing the message that setbacks are common and a normal part of the college experience.[8] In Section 6.2, we provide evidence that these are important elements of the program's effectiveness, by drawing on surveys administered to the coaching program's participants.

3 Data

Our data are taken from several sources allowing us to track students' academic and labor market trajectories. We first draw administrative records from the university's Office of Institutional Research. These include every student who first enrolled at the university in the fall quarters between the years 2007 and 2017. We can observe all students in every quarter they are enrolled at the university. These data contain students' baseline characteristics and detailed academic outcomes such as GPA, placement on

[7] In a multi-arm randomized controlled trial, Oreopoulos and Petronijevic (2018) find that while online goal-setting and coaching via email/text messages have limited effects, one-on-one proactive coaching substantially increases academic performance, suggesting that the personal element is crucial in coaching interventions. Carrell and Kurlaender (2023) conduct a light-touch intervention in which college students are sent personalized emails from their professors. The intervention largely increased underrepresented students' course grades, persistence and graduation, likely because of the personalized messaging.

[8] The group element is a feature of several highly effective comprehensive support programs such as CUNY's ASAP (Weiss et al., 2019) and Pathways to Education (Oreopoulos et al., 2017).

academic probation and graduation. We merge these records with data taken from the Success Program's Office which we use to document participation in the coaching program.

We then link students' university records to administrative earnings data taken from California's Employment Development Department (EDD). We combine two data sources maintained by the EDD and used to administer the unemployment insurance (UI) program in California: the Quarterly Earnings Records, and the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). The Quarterly Earnings Records include total earnings in the relevant quarter for each employer-employee (firm) pair. The QCEW data contain earnings and employment at the establishment-quarter level, which we aggregate to the firm level (summing across establishments in California). Together, these two datasets form the universe of UI-covered employment in California for the years 2000-2022. The EDD estimates that 92% of employed Californians are included in the data in a given quarter (Gurantz, 2019).[9] In section 5.2, we show that crossing the probation threshold does not affect the likelihood of being observed in the earnings data, limiting concerns over selective attrition (Foote and Stange, 2022).

We conduct two separate analyses to examine how students are impacted by academic probation placement (henceforth "probation only") and by the offer of coaching with academic probation (henceforth "probation + coaching"). Prior to 2009, students were only exposed to academic probation. The coaching program was rolled out as a pilot in four of the six colleges in 2009, and then across the entire university in 2010. To estimate the impact of academic probation alone, we focus on students who first enrolled at the university in 2007 and 2008, as well as those who first enrolled in non-pilot colleges in 2009. For probation with coaching, we use entry cohorts from fall 2010 to fall 2017, and the 2009 entry cohort in colleges that were part of the pilot program.

Panel A of Table 1 shows summary statistics for students' baseline characteristics. Column (1) reports these for our "probation only" cohorts which contain 8,632 first-time, full-time students. Column (3) includes all 37,266 students who first enrolled in the later years and were exposed to both probation and coaching. Columns (2) and (4) respectively restrict these samples to students with a GPA between 1.0 and 3.0 at the end of their first freshman quarter—that is, those whose GPA is marginally on either side of the 2.0 threshold. Compared to the full samples, students around the threshold have lower SAT scores: 628 versus 615 on the Math SAT in the probation-only cohorts, and 653 versus 636 in the probation with coaching cohorts. They are also less likely to be women and more likely to be non-White and low-income. We classify students as low-income if they are eligible for need-based federal financial aid, i.e., if their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is below the university's $30,000 Cost of Attendance.[10] 65% and 55% of students around the threshold, in the probation-only and probation with coaching samples, are

[9]The data excludes federal government employees, independent contractors, the self-employed and those who live or work outside of California.

[10]The EFC is calculated from information submitted through the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Students whose EFC is below the university's Cost of Attendance ($30,000) are eligible for need-based federal aid. We classify students who do not file a FAFSA as high-income. This involves no assumption about their incomes: among FAFSA filers in the probation-only cohorts, the 99th percentile of the EFC distribution is $24,383, and virtually no filer's EFC exceeds the Cost of Attendance. Filing itself thus separates the aid-eligible from the aid-ineligible in this setting, and our income classification coincides with need-based aid eligibility.

high-income.

Panels B and C show means for treatment and academic outcomes. A large share of freshmen are placed on academic probation after their first quarter (between 7% and 19% depending on the sample and cohort). In the later cohorts, 11% of students around the probation threshold participate in the coaching workshop. Looking at academic outcomes, students around the threshold in the probation with coaching cohorts consistently perform better than those in the probation-only cohorts: average first-year GPA is 2.55 versus 2.46, first-year dropout rate is 8% rather than 10%, and 83% versus 74% graduate within 6 years.[11]

Labor market outcomes' means are reported in Panel D. These data are stacked and reported at quarters 25–55 (6–13 years) from initial enrollment to ensure that earnings are measured at overlapping ages for the probation-only and probation with coaching cohorts.[12] Since the typical student is 18 at enrollment, we observe labor market outcomes at approximately ages 24–31. Across all samples, 69% of students are observed in the earnings data in any quarter. In the sample of students close to the cutoff, average quarterly earnings are $19,532 for probation only cohorts and $20,624 for probation with coaching cohorts.[13]

4 Identification Strategy

4.1 Regression Discontinuity Design

We analyze the impacts of two separate policies on student outcomes. The first is the policy of placing students on academic probation, while the second is offering coaching in combination with academic probation. For both policies, we use a regression discontinuity design to estimate their causal effects. This is possible because prior to 2010, students who scored below a 2.0 GPA at the end of their first quarter were placed on probation, while students scoring at or above this cutoff were not. For subsequent cohorts, students who scored less than 2.0 GPA at the end of their first quarter were placed on probation and assigned to coaching, while those who scored above the threshold were not.

The key identifying assumption underlying our design is that all determinants of future outcomes vary smoothly across the threshold—a point we return to in Section 4.2. If this holds, then we can attribute any mean difference in outcomes between the treatment (students who score just below the 2.0 GPA) and control (students who score 2.0 or just above) groups to be the causal effect of academic probation placement for the pre-2010 cohorts. For the later cohorts, this would be the causal effect of probation

[11] The definition of GPA excludes first-quarter GPA since it is used to determine probation status. First-year dropout takes the value of 1 if a student does not appear in the data the following academic year, and 0 otherwise. Six-year graduation can only be measured for students observed for a full six years after entry. Because our graduation records extend through 2019, this outcome is defined for cohorts entering through 2013 and is set to missing for all later entrants. This is why the probation with coaching sample is smaller for six-year graduation than for the first-year outcomes.

[12] Despite this restriction, we cannot observe labor outcomes in all years (i.e., in every year of years 6 through 13). For example, students enrolled in the year 2013 can only be observed up until year 10. Probation cohorts are always observed in each year 6–13 relative to entry, while "Probation+Coaching" cohorts are only fully observed for years 2009 and 2010.

[13] We use the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers to adjust dollar amounts to 2019.

along with coaching.

Formally, we estimate the following reduced-form equation:

$$Y_{ic} = \alpha + g(S_{ic}) + \tau D_{ic} + \delta X_i + \gamma_c + \mu_k + \epsilon_{ic} \tag{1}$$

Y_{ic} represents either outcomes for student i in cohort c. D_{ic} is a dummy variable indicating whether student i is below the cutoff of 2.0. S, our running variable, represents students' first quarter GPA relative to the 2.0 cutoff. The function $g(.)$ captures the underlying relationship between the running variable S_{ic} and the dependent variable Y_{ic}. We also allow the slopes of the fitted lines to differ on either side of the admissions threshold by interacting $g(.)$ with the treatment dummy D. X_i is a vector of student baseline covariates that should not significantly change the treatment estimate if our identifying assumption holds. Additionally, we include cohort or year fixed effects γ_c to account for cohort-specific shocks as well as college (i.e. faculty) fixed effects μ_k throughout. ϵ_{ic} represents the error term. Finally, the parameter τ gives us the causal effect of the policies.

We follow the convention in the literature by specifying $g(.)$ to be a linear function of S using local linear regressions with a triangular kernel. This approach has the benefit of generating estimates that are more local to the threshold without imposing any strong functional assumptions on the data. We use a fixed bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points for all outcomes, which enables us to estimate effects on a common sample of marginal students and compare magnitudes across outcomes. As a robustness check, we also show how our RD estimates vary across a range of bandwidths for all outcomes of interest. Finally, we report robust bias-corrected confidence intervals throughout (Calonico et al., 2014). In cases where we stack quarterly labor market outcomes for the same individual, we report clustered standard errors at the individual level.

In Figure 1, we show that both policies are binding in practice. These figures are our "first stage" RD regressions and take the same form as those after, in that scatter points represent local averages of the outcome over a 0.1 GPA range and are reported using a bandwidth of 1 GPA point on either side of the cutoff. Figure 1a reports the likelihood of being placed on probation as a function of first-quarter (Q1) GPA for cohorts entering the university in Fall of the years 2007, 2008 and faculties that were not part of the coaching program pilot in 2009. The figure shows that all students scoring below the cutoff are placed on probation and all those scoring above are not, which lends itself to a sharp RD design. Figure 1b reveals that the probation label was also fully binding for the cohorts exposed to coaching. Figure 1c plots the likelihood of coaching program participation by first-quarter GPA for all entering cohorts from fall 2010 to fall 2017.[14] A sharp jump in the likelihood of coaching program participation is visible at the 2.0 GPA threshold. No student with a first-quarter GPA above the threshold participates in coaching while virtually all students scoring below the 2.0 cutoff participate.[15]

[14] We exclude from this figure students from the few faculties who were selected for the SP pilot in 2009 as we do not have program participation data for them.

[15] Each fall quarter there are a few students (less than 10) who qualify for the coaching program but who are granted a waiver by the dean of their college and are thus excused from participating. These waivers are typically reserved for extenuating circumstances such as health shocks or family emergencies.

4.2 Tests of Validity of RD Design

A standard concern with any regression discontinuity design is the ability of individuals to precisely manipulate the running variable. In our setting, this can occur if students are able to precisely manipulate their GPA around the cutoff, leading to differences in unobserved determinants of outcomes near the threshold. Note that this requires precise control around the cutoff which is distinct from motivated students expanding more effort in general. Our running variable, first-quarter GPA, is the average of three or four courses which makes it difficult to precisely control. Nonetheless, we conduct empirical checks to alleviate any concerns that unobserved attributes of students just above and just below the cutoff differ.

The first informative test is to check for jumps in the distribution of the running variable at the cutoff (McCrary, 2008). If students are able to precisely control their first-quarter GPA, then we would expect to observe a mass of students just above the probation cutoff of 2.0 preceded by a dip just before. However, a continuous running variable is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for identification. Indeed, this test may not be as helpful if discontinuities in the distribution of the running variable can be attributed to exogenous factors. In the case of GPA as the running variable, it is common to see more whole-number than decimal values, particularly because it is calculated from a small number of equally-weighted courses (Zimmerman, 2014; Ost et al., 2018).

Figures 2a and 2b show the first-quarter GPA distribution of all students in the probation only cohorts as well as the probation with coaching cohorts, respectively. The distributions mirror those found in studies by Zimmerman (2014) and Ost et al. (2018) with heaps in the GPA distribution. Notably, in addition to the heap at the 2.0 cutoff, we observe distributional discontinuities at GPA values of 1 and 3, as shown by the scatter points just above the vertical dashed lines in the figures. While the 2.0 GPA cutoff is considered "high-stakes" in our setting, GPA values of 1.0 and 3.0 carry no special or significant designation and are thus not considered high-stakes. Hence, these distributional discontinuities are most likely due to the number of course combinations resulting more in whole-number rather than decimal GPAs, especially when measured after only one quarter.

To further validate that the observed pattern of grade distributions is not the result of strategic sorting, we test for potential imbalances in student predetermined characteristics. For each of our probation-only and probation with coaching cohorts, we regress the likelihood of 6-year graduation on our baseline covariates. We then plot the resulting predicted values as a function of the running variable in Figures 2c and 2d. We consider covariates that are known to be good predictors of future outcomes: Math and verbal SAT scores, gender, race, remedial course requirements, Pell grant eligibility, financial aid eligibility and whether a student's father or mother went to college. The running variable is defined as the number of GPA points above or below the probation threshold. Figures 2c and 2d show that the predicted graduation rates are smooth at the threshold for both the probation only and the probation with coaching cohorts, indicating that baseline covariates are balanced at the threshold. We also show how threshold-crossing affects each of the aforementioned baseline characteristics in Appendix Table A1. Local linear RD estimates reported in the table are based on bandwidths of 0.5 and 0.75 for each outcome. Notably, 15 out

of the 16 outcomes are statistically insignificant at conventional levels. This is in line with our identifying assumption and is also consistent with the premise that any observed discontinuities in the distribution of the running variable are not the result of strategic sorting on the part of students or administrators. Thus, any documented discontinuities in outcomes can be attributed to the probation policies.

Finally, as noted in Barreca et al. (2016), even if heaping was not due to manipulation, spikes in the density function of the running variable could still potentially bias estimates. As a result, in Section 5, we complement our main RD estimates with those from 'Donut' RD regressions that involve dropping heaped observations at the cutoff. Our findings remain unchanged.

5 Results

5.1 Impacts on Academic Outcomes

We begin by examining the impacts of the probation-only and probation with coaching policies on students' academic outcomes. Figure 3 presents regression discontinuity (RD) plots for our academic outcomes, with first-quarter GPA as the running variable. Figures on the left show effects at the 2.0 GPA cutoff for students in cohorts exposed to the probation-only policy, while those on the right present effects for cohorts exposed to probation with coaching.

Figure 3 provides visual evidence of meaningful differences between students exposed exclusively to academic probation and those exposed to probation with coaching. In Figure 3a, being placed solely on academic probation has no significant impact on first-year GPA. In contrast, probation with coaching noticeably boosts students' GPA, as we see a clear discontinuity at the cutoff. Table 2 reports RD estimates of the effect of each policy on our academic outcomes using a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points. Consistent with the visual evidence, placement on academic probation has no significant effect on GPA, while probation combined with coaching significantly boosts first-year GPA by 0.226 standard deviations (Column (1) of Table 2). Figure 3c and Column (2) of Table 2 further reveal that, in the probation-only cohorts, students just below the cutoff are 8.5 p.p. more likely to drop out by the end of their first year than those just above it. This large and meaningful gap at the cutoff is greatly reduced to a statistically insignificant 2.6 p.p. for cohorts exposed to both policies. Under the assumption that probation would have affected the later cohorts the same way, this implies that the coaching program offsets probation's negative effect on dropout.

Additionally, visual evidence presented in Figure 3e suggests that students in probation-only cohorts with a GPA just below the threshold are less likely to graduate in 6 years. The corresponding estimate in Column (3) of Table 2 indicates a 7.2 p.p. drop in 6-year graduation; however, this estimate is not statistically significant at conventional levels. For cohorts exposed to both policies, Figure 3f and the corresponding estimate in Column (3) of Table 2 indicate that threshold-crossing has no significant impact on 6-year graduation.

Impacts by Socioeconomic Background. As discussed in section 2.1, our overall effects may mask contextual heterogeneity as probation may be particularly harmful to low-income students. Indeed, parental income tends to be highly correlated with student success and evidence from the literature suggests that low-income students, in particular, make sub-optimal decisions in educational settings (Roderick et al., 2008; Bowen, Chingos and McPherson, 2009; Smith, Pender and Howell, 2013). We therefore examine heterogeneous effects by student family income. As described in Section 3, low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal financial aid, i.e., if their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is below the university's $30,000 Cost of Attendance.

Figures 4 and 5 plot our academic outcomes against the running variable for low- and high-income students, respectively, with probation-only effects on the left and probation with coaching on the right. The clear pattern is that low-income students bear the brunt of probation's negative effects. While probation does not significantly affect first-year GPA for either group, it raises low-income students' first-year dropout rate by 10.7 p.p. (significant at the 10% level), with no significant effect for high-income students (Column (2) of Table 3; Figures 4c and 5c). The same asymmetry holds for degree completion. Probation lowers low-income students' 6-year graduation rate by 20.6 p.p. (Column (3); Figure 4e), while the high-income estimate is insignificant. Overall, the standard probation policy substantially penalizes low-income students and widens the socioeconomic gap in college completion.

Our RD regressions use a fixed bandwidth that enables us to compare results on the same sample. To show our effects are not driven by this choice, Appendix Figures A1, A2 and A3 plot the RD estimate for each outcome, with 95% confidence intervals, across bandwidths from 0.25 to 1 GPA point (probation-only cohorts on the left, probation + coaching on the right). Across this range, the estimates are stable and consistent with our main findings. For 6-year graduation, for example, the probation-induced drop for low-income students holds steady across bandwidths (Figure A2e), while the probation-with-coaching estimate for low-income students and both estimates for high-income students remain insignificant and near zero throughout (Figures A2f, A3e and A3f). Additionally, we show that our findings are robust to a 'Donut' RD specification that drops the heaped observations at the 2.0 threshold. As shown in Table A2, the resulting estimates are very similar to our main results and our conclusions are unchanged.

Taken together, these results indicate that the costs of standard probation fall almost entirely on low-income students, but they exhibit no such losses when probation is paired with coaching. High-income students are largely unaffected by either policy. The same GPA threshold therefore widens the socioeconomic gap in degree completion when it delivers only a warning, yet has no negative effects and even improves performance when that warning is paired with structured support.

Variation in policies within the same cohort. Our findings indicate that coaching can counter the negative effects of academic probation, particularly for low-income students. A potential concern with this interpretation is that the probation-only and probation with coaching estimates come from different entering cohorts. The difference between them could, in principle, reflect changes in student composition over time or in the setting they entered, rather than the effect of coaching itself. To address this, we leverage

the fact that the coaching program was piloted in fall 2009 in only four of the university's six colleges.[16] The College of Agriculture, the College of Business, the College of Engineering, and the College of Architecture adopted probation with mandatory coaching, while the College of Science and Mathematics and the College of Liberal Arts retained the standard policy. Comparing students at the probation threshold across these two sets of colleges within the same entering cohort identifies the effect of coaching while holding fixed any factor common to the 2009 cohort, including changes in student composition over time and cohort-specific shocks. We summarize these estimates in Table 4. We find that standard probation lowers low-income students' six-year graduation rate by 34.1 p.p. (significant at the 5% level) and raises their first-year dropout rate, though this estimate, while large, is not significant at conventional levels. By contrast, probation with coaching improves first-year GPA and leaves dropout and graduation unaffected. Because the analysis is identified from a single cohort, the samples are small. This forces a wider bandwidth and leaves some probation-only estimates insignificant despite their large magnitude. Even so, the within-cohort estimates are similar in sign to our main cross-cohort results, which indicates that the contrast between the two policies does not reflect changes in student composition over time or cohort-specific shocks that correlate with changes in probation policy.

One limitation of the within-cohort design is that it requires a comparison of different colleges, so a remaining possibility is that college types respond differently to changes in probation policy. To investigate this, we estimate a complementary specification that instead holds the colleges fixed, comparing the 2007–08 standard-policy cohorts to the 2009 coaching cohort within the four pilot colleges. The results are summarized in Appendix Table A3 and are consistent with the within-cohort estimates. We find that standard probation raises low-income students' first-year dropout by 14.4 p.p. and lowers six-year graduation by 22.4 p.p. points (both significant at the 1% level), while the 2009 coaching cohort in the same colleges shows neither effect.[17]

5.2 Impacts on Earnings

Next, we examine whether our effects extend into the labor market, focusing on earnings. We measure earnings as log quarterly earnings, observed 25 to 55 quarters (roughly 6 to 13 years) after initial enrollment.[18] Restricting to this window ensures earnings are compared at similar ages across the probation and probation-with-coaching cohorts; since the typical student enrolls at 18, this corresponds to roughly

[16] Our main specification already includes cohort fixed effects, which absorb shocks common to a given entering cohort, and college fixed effects, which absorb fixed differences across colleges. These do not address the present concern. Because the two policies are never observed in the same year in the main analysis, the probation-only and coaching estimates are identified from disjoint sets of cohorts, so any shock or trend that differs across these two sets of years remains. The within-cohort design removes this by identifying both policies within a single entering cohort. The 2009 cohort, for example, entered during the Great Recession, so students under both policies faced the same labor market and financial aid environment.

[17] We use the two cohorts immediately preceding the pilot and the pilot cohort itself, so that the two policies are compared over a narrow window, leaving little scope for changes in student composition or cohort-specific shocks to account for the difference. The specification is otherwise identical to our main analysis.

[18] Despite this restriction, we cannot observe labor outcomes in every year from 6 to 13. For example, students who enrolled in 2013 are observed only through year 10. The probation cohorts are observed in each of years 6–13 relative to entry, while the probation-with-coaching cohorts are fully observed only for the 2009 and 2010 entry years.

ages 24 to 31. We estimate a student-quarter–level variant of Equation (1) using local linear regressions with a triangular kernel and a 0.75 GPA-point bandwidth. Figure 6, Figure 7 and Table 5 report the results.

Because the UI records cover only California, a concern is that probation could change the type of students we observe with positive earnings, by for instance, inducing out-of-state migration. We therefore first verify that the likelihood of having positive earnings is smooth at the 2.0 cutoff. Column (1) of Table 5, plotted in Figure 6 and Figure 7, shows no discontinuities in this likelihood for either high or low-income students, indicating that neither policy differentially selects students into the earnings data. We can therefore interpret any observed discontinuity in earnings as a true earnings effect rather than an artifact of compositional change in who we observe.

Turning to earnings, for the full sample neither policy has a significant effect, though the point estimates suggest that standard probation lowers earnings by about 9.1 log points. These effects, however, mask substantial heterogeneity by income. Among low-income students, the group that faces the largest academic penalty from probation, standard probation reduces earnings by roughly 27.2 log points, or about 24% (Table 5; Figure 7c), a large and statistically significant effect, whereas the estimate for high-income students is small and insignificant. In contrast, probation with coaching produces no significant earnings losses, consistent with its neutralizing effect on academic outcomes. These patterns are robust to the choice of bandwidth (Figure A4 and Figure A5) and to a 'donut' RD specification that drops the heaped observations at the 2.0 threshold (Table A4).

The confidence intervals around our labor market estimates are often wide, a consequence of the smaller samples available for this analysis. Nevertheless, the weight of the evidence indicates that standard probation depressed affected students' earnings well into their late twenties. This penalty was borne by low-income students, precisely those who experienced the largest academic losses. Pairing probation with coaching closes the resulting gap between low- and high-income students. Given the dearth of evidence on the long-run labor market consequences of either academic probation or college coaching, we view these findings as an important step toward understanding the full consequences of probation policies.

Dynamics of enrollment and earnings. Understanding what happens to low-income students who drop out as a result of probation is useful for interpreting our earnings effects. To do so, we examine the year-by-year dynamics of university enrollment and earnings. Table A5 first shows the likelihood of completing each year at the university since initial enrollment. The probation-induced decline in university persistence after the first year for low-income students does not fade over time, and if anything, it progressively increases in magnitude. Low-income students are 13.1 p.p. and 20.4 p.p. less likely to complete their second and fourth years at the university, and these effects persist until year 6. This suggests that students who drop out do not return to the university. Figure A6 plots, for different subgroups, the RD estimates of the effects of probation-only (left) and probation with coaching (right) on earnings by year since initial university enrollment. Statistical precision is reduced due to the smaller samples. However, we observe an interesting pattern in low-income students' earnings due to the probation-only policy. In year 2, their earnings increase, suggesting that students work in the year after dropping out.

However, this effect dissipates by year 3. This suggests they may re-enroll at another postsecondary institution, though it is unclear whether this is a 2-year or 4-year college.[19] After year 3, students who are marginally placed on probation have persistently lower earnings than those who marginally avoid it. This is consistent with our documented negative earnings effects and suggests that, if below-threshold students re-enroll at other institutions, these colleges are of lower quality than the university we study.

Benchmarking magnitudes of earnings estimate. The earnings losses likely operate in part through reduced graduation rates among probation students. We next examine how the magnitude of our earnings effects compares to those from the literature on the returns to a college degree. We first estimate the number of years of education lost due to probation, and then calculate the implied earnings penalty per forgone year of education. Column (1) of Table A6 shows the estimated effects of probation-only and probation with coaching on the number of years spent at this university across all subgroups. Students in the overall sample pursue 0.318 less years of education as a result of probation-only. This is driven by low-income students who spend 0.895 less years at the university. On the other hand, high-income students are not affected, and probation with coaching cohorts experience no significant changes in their years of education. If low-income students' 24% earnings loss is solely driven by their forgone years of education, then the earnings penalty to one less year of education is $\frac{24}{0.895} = 26.8\%$. The magnitude of this effect is comparable to Ost et al. (2018) who show that for students who are marginally dismissed from Ohio's public four-year colleges, the earnings loss per year of education is 25%. Our estimate is however an upper bound of the penalty to one forgone year of education. Indeed, probation may have discouraged students, reducing their earnings irrespective of its effect on educational attainment. The possibility of a discouragement effect is one reason our estimates are not directly comparable to studies of the earnings gains from marginal admission to U.S. four-year colleges. Nonetheless, these studies generally report large returns to university quality for low-income students (Zimmerman, 2014; Smith et al., 2020; Kozakowski, 2023). Estimates from California four-year colleges tend to be particularly large, consistent with their higher per-student institutional spending relative to other states (Mountjoy, 2026). Additionally, according to the College Scorecard data, students who first enroll at our university have median yearly earnings of around $91,700 after 10 years, a relatively large premium compared to the median 4-year colleges estimate of $53,747.

6 Discussion

This paper shows that academic probation widens socioeconomic gaps in degree completion and earnings, while pairing the same warning with coaching eliminates these effects and improves first-year performance. Taken together, coaching appears to counteract the negative effects of probation. In this section, we discuss potential mechanisms behind our effects.

[19] We do not directly observe enrollment at other institutions, since we cannot link National Student Clearinghouse data to our records.

6.1 Discouragement Effects of the Standard Probation Policy: Mechanisms

We start by examining possible explanations for academic probation's negative effects on dropout and degree completion, particularly for low-income students. A first possibility is that low-income students may lack information or awareness about educational options, leading to suboptimal decisions (Lavecchia et al., 2016). In this case, higher-income students may have more information on how to strategically get out of academic probation. For example, they can switch to "easier" majors, rather than drop out entirely like their lower-income peers. Column (2) of Table A6 reports RD estimates of the probation policies' effects on the probability of switching majors for both low- and high-income students. This outcome takes a value of 1 if a student ever switches majors and 0 otherwise. Results indicate that this is not an important dimension in our context, as neither probation nor probation with coaching induces students to switch majors.

Students may also strategically reduce their course load to improve their GPA and return to good academic standing. Table A7 shows no evidence of this. Neither high- nor low-income students reduce total credits attempted in the winter or spring quarters following probation placement. We also find no significant effects on full-time enrollment or taking at least 12 credits per quarter (columns 1 and 4). Nor do we find effects on the likelihood of taking at least 15 credits, the typical course load for on-time graduation. Overall, our results are inconsistent with a strategic response driving the differential effects of probation between high- and low-income students.

Another potential mechanism for the increase in dropout rates is that students may fail to meet other consequential institutional requirements due to probation. We check this in the remaining columns of Table A6. First, freshmen are subject to dismissal if their cumulative GPA by the end of the spring quarter is less than 1.5. We find that probation-only has no significant effect on failing to meet this threshold; however, the estimate for low-income students is on the order of 4.7 p.p. and we cannot rule out large effects. Interestingly, probation with coaching significantly reduces, by 2.6 p.p., the likelihood of being subject to dismissal. Students who are subject to dismissal are not necessarily dismissed; they often have the option of filing an appeal and working with their advisor on an academic plan to return to good academic standing. Nonetheless, failing to meet the dismissal threshold may still lead to dropout if the dismissal status further discourages students or if students do not have enough information to pursue the appeal process.

Second, students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in order to remain eligible for federal financial aid. The SAP requirements state that, by the end of the spring quarter, freshmen must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 and must have completed at least 67% of attempted credits. Columns (4) to (6) show that probation only has no significant effect on any of these outcomes. In contrast, low-income students are more likely to meet these thresholds when they are offered coaching with probation. They are 6.6 p.p. less likely to have a cumulative GPA below 2.0, 4.1 p.p. more likely to complete 67% of attempted credits, and 7.5 p.p. less likely to fail to meet either of these requirements.

To what extent does failing to meet these requirements explain the probation-induced dropout? We should first note that failing to meet the SAP and dismissal thresholds is not a mechanical consequence of being placed on probation. Students are placed on probation at the end of the fall quarter and, therefore,

have two quarters to improve their GPA and meet these requirements. Although the estimates are statistically insignificant, we cannot rule out that probation raises the risk of failing to meet dismissal and SAP requirements for low-income students. However, our dropout and graduation effects are orders of magnitude larger than the potential effects on meeting these thresholds. Additionally, Table A5 indicates that dropout rates increase after the second year of university enrollment. This suggests that while some students may drop out because probation leads to dismissal or to loss of financial aid, much of the dropout effect appears to be voluntary.

Another interesting finding is that probation with coaching increases the probability that low-income students meet both the dismissal and SAP thresholds. This could be the result of the coaching program providing information on academic probation rules and institutional policies. However, these effects are also consistent with, and could be the result of, the GPA improvement induced by probation with coaching. Importantly, the bulk of the evidence indicates that combining coaching with probation not only neutralizes the long-term discouragement effects of probation, but also improves short-term outcomes that were not necessarily affected by probation alone. These effects are unlikely to be driven by any single component of the coaching program, such as improved awareness of institutional policies, but instead point to a more generalized change in behavior and perhaps beliefs.

Indeed, despite having several components, the coaching program broadly targets negative social identity, feelings of not belonging, and present bias. Although it was not designed specifically with low-income students in mind, certain behavioral patterns that are typical among students, like present bias, are particularly pervasive among this group (Dynarski et al., 2021). Additionally, low-income students, who often lack examples of college graduates in their immediate social networks, may feel especially out of place during their first year of college and be more prone to interpreting academic probation as confirmation that they do not belong.

6.2 Why is Coaching Effective at Improving Participants' Outcomes?

Our results indicate that combining academic probation with coaching, does not lead to the discouragement effects of the standard probation policy and, if anything, it improves students' academic performance. We next exploit data from surveys conducted by the university's Success Program Office, to provide suggestive evidence on why coaching is effective at promoting student success.

Survey Data and Analysis. The surveys were administered online to all SP participants pre- and post-program completion for eight cohorts of students: those qualifying in the Fall quarters 2013 and 2015-2018 and those qualifying in the Winter quarters 2017-2019.[20] Survey questions are presented in Appendix D. Because only program participants were surveyed, we cannot use a regression discontinuity design to identify effects. Instead, we rely on more suggestive evidence from within-student comparisons of outcomes before and after program participation. We also cannot link the survey responses to student

[20]The coaching program was first implemented university-wide in Fall 2010 and has been in operation each fall since. For a subset of years, the university also operated a second program in the year for students qualifying in the winter quarter (Winter quarters 2017-2019). While we do not use Winter quarter participation in our main analysis, we do use survey responses from these cohorts of students in the mechanism analysis.

records, so we are unable to distinguish high- from low-income participants. We estimate the following regression:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 Post_t + \delta_i + \epsilon_{it} \tag{2}$$

where Y_{it} is an outcome for individual i in period t, $Post_t$ takes the value 1 to indicate the post-program period and zero otherwise, and δ_i are individual fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

The 2013 survey focuses on whether students changed their study behaviors after the coaching program, while the 2015-18 surveys measure students' academic self-efficacy and sense of belonging. We conduct two separate analyses, one using the 2013 cohort and another stacking the 2015-18 cohorts. We use a principal component analysis (PCA) to create several indices that we use as outcomes in our individual fixed effects model. These indices are standardized weighted-averages of the corresponding survey responses. Table 6 reports estimates of the change in these PCA indices before and after program participation. Tables A8 and A9 show effects on the individual questions underlying these indices. The 2013 cohort was also asked about what aspects of the program were most beneficial. While we cannot do a pre- and post-analysis for these outcomes, Table A10 reports, for each question, the share of participants giving each response.

Participants Connected with Peers and Coaches. In Section 2.3, we argue that the program is likely effective because it is conducted in person, allowing coaches to provide personalized encouragement and participants to see that peers are also on probation which normalizes the experience. The 2015–18 surveys allow us to test this, as they ask students about their beliefs regarding their confidence in their academic trajectory, sense of belonging, and feelings of being supported. In Panel B of Table 6, we find that students do not report improved confidence in their future academic success after coaching.[21] On the other hand, participants experience a significant 0.699 standard deviation increase in their support and belonging index. Interestingly, this seems to be driven by two specific changes in students' perceptions: students are 22.9 p.p. (30%) more likely to report knowing that other students are also on academic probation (Panel B of Table A9). Furthermore, students' ability to identify a faculty or staff member who cares about their academic success increases by 42.5 p.p. following the program, off a pre-program mean of 0.480. This finding echoes Carrell and Kurlaender (2023), who show that receiving personalized encouraging emails from instructors increases students' sense that their professor cares about their success. Notably, their light-touch intervention substantially raised persistence and graduation rates among underrepresented students.

Table A10 further suggests that students find the personal elements of the program to be the most valuable. Most participants report that the small breakout sessions are more beneficial than the large group session (Panel A). Importantly, discussions with other students was the most commonly cited benefit of the breakout sessions, as 29.3% of participants identified it as the most valuable component, above

[21] Panel A of Table A9 shows that students report greater confidence in specific skills such as time management. However, they do not report improved confidence in broader academic goals, such as improving their grades or graduating from university.

goal setting, resource awareness, and every other element of the breakout sessions (Panel C of Table A10). 79% of participants further report that they followed up with their coach later in the quarter, suggesting that the program's effects are reinforced through additional interactions with coaches after the workshop ends. Taken together, these results suggest that personal connections formed with peers and coaches are crucial to the coaching program's effectiveness.

Coaching Improved Effort, Study Skills and Self-Efficacy. The 2013 survey allows us to examine whether coaching changed students' study behavior. Overall, the program seems to change the academic behaviors it directly targets, but there are also spillovers to other behaviors. During the workshop, students were informed about campus resources and were encouraged to identify resources that can help them achieve their goals. Consistent with this, Panel A of Table 6 shows that the help-seeking index significantly increases by 0.959 standard deviations (column 1) following program participation. Looking at the individual outcomes underlying this index, the workshop seems to have not only improved knowledge about academic support services, but also led to a generalized increase in help-seeking behavior: students are more likely to ask clarifying questions in class, attend 1.1 more faculty office hours (26%) per week, and are more likely to ask family or friends for help.

Estimates reported in columns (2)-(4) in Panel A of Table 6 suggest that coaching also improved students' study effort, behavior and self-efficacy. The program targeted goal-setting and time management and unsurprisingly, students report better time management (26 p.p. or 40% increase) and are able to better prioritize studying (Panel B of Table A8). However, the program also improved behaviors that were not directly targeted. For instance, students report studying 4.5 extra hours per week (of off a control group mean of 13.5 hours/week), and report changes in the way they study. Additionally, they are 33 p.p. (63%) more likely to review their class notes when they perform poorly on a test, and are 24 p.p. (35%) more likely to state that they adjust their learning style to instructors' teaching styles. Participants also report higher confidence in specific academic tasks such as taking exams and writing (Panel D of Table A8). On the other hand, we see no significant changes in the life balance index, which is based on hours spent on activities other than studying.

Taken together, our findings suggest that coaching improved study behaviors and help-seeking. Some of these elements, such as time management and knowledge of campus resources, were directly targeted by the workshop. However, students also reported broader behavioral shifts, including increased study effort and changes in study strategies, that were not explicitly supported by the program. These behavioral shifts likely reflect changes in whether students feel like they belong at university. Indeed, coaching substantially raised participants' sense of belonging and their belief that faculty and staff care about their success.

6.3 Cost Effectiveness, Scalability and Policy Implications

Our findings indicate that low-income students are 20.6 p.p. less likely to graduate from university after being placed on academic probation, while high-income students are unaffected. We next perform back-of-the-envelope calculations to understand what portion of the national socioeconomic college com-

pletion gap could be attributed to academic probation. To do so, we first estimate that the share of low-income students in our sample who are placed on standard probation is 17.2%.[22] If the effect we estimate at the threshold extended to all low-income students, standard probation would reduce six-year completion by roughly 3.5 p.p. (0.206×0.172). This is economically meaningful and amounts to roughly 10% of the 36 p.p. national gap in completion between low- and high-income students who enter college (Bailey and Dynarski, 2011).

A natural question is whether universities should simply eliminate academic probation rather than pair it with a coaching program. In practice, this is unlikely to occur. Federal regulations require institutions that disburse Title IV financial aid to monitor students' satisfactory academic progress, including a minimum GPA threshold typically set at 2.0 for undergraduates.[23] Universities that fail to identify and act on students falling below this threshold risk losing eligibility to administer federal aid programs. Probation also serves an internal role in flagging students who are struggling academically and signaling to them that they need to improve their performance. Our paper does not argue that probation should be abolished. Rather, we show that, in its standard form, it carries unintended consequences for low-income students. The coaching program preserves the role of probation while offsetting its adverse effects, and places low- and high-income students on equal footing in their ability to recover from early academic setbacks.

To assess whether other universities could adopt the coaching program, we next calculate its costs. The relevant counterfactual for probation with coaching is the standard probation policy. Under that policy, low-income students are 20.6 p.p. less likely to graduate within six years and earn about 24% less. Our results show that coaching closes these gaps at a low cost. The total yearly cost of running the program is $64,107.50, which consists of a one-time setup cost of $5,174 and recurring annual costs of $58,933 that cover the time of the program director, staff, and session leaders.[24] In the most recent cohort for which we have data (2018), 442 freshmen were placed on academic probation and were required to participate in the coaching program. This yields a per-student cost of $145.04. This cost is far below other college interventions. CUNY's ASAP, a comprehensive support program for community college students, costs several thousand dollars per student per year (Weiss et al., 2019), and the InsideTrack coaching program evaluated in Bettinger and Baker (2014) costs around $1,000 per student. Unlike these standalone programs, our coaching program is a targeted addition to a policy the university already

[22] This number is the share of low-income students on probation in the cohorts that were not offered coaching (i.e., those first enrolling in the university in the years 2007, 2008 and in the non-pilot 2009 colleges). We use our sample to proxy for low-income students' probation placement rate, as national estimates are not available by income. Bowman (2022) estimates that 10 to 20% of first-year students at U.S. colleges are placed on probation. Our institution's overall probation placement rate of 13% lies at the lower end of this range, consistent with its selectivity. This suggests that for low-income students, national estimates of their probation placement rate would be larger.

[23] Under 34 CFR 668.34, institutions participating in Title IV federal student aid programs must establish, publish, and apply reasonable standards of satisfactory academic progress for students receiving aid. These standards include a qualitative measure (cumulative GPA), a quantitative measure (pace of completion), and a maximum time frame for degree completion. Students failing to meet these standards may lose eligibility for federal aid, including Pell Grants, Direct Loans, and Federal Work-Study.

[24] To get the hourly rate of the coaches, we use the average annual salary and benefits package for California State University professors, where average benefits are 58% of the salary (https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/faculty-staff/employee-profile/csu-faculty/Pages/average-salaries-for-full-time-faculty-by-rank-and-appointment-type.aspx). We obtain the hourly rate of the program director and support staff from the university budget office.

administers, a design that keeps costs low and makes it straightforward for other universities to adopt.

Finally, even if the coaching program is inexpensive, universities may lack the infrastructure to adopt a similar program. In Table A11, we provide suggestive evidence that this is not necessarily the case. The table shows academic support programs for probation students already in place at other four-year public universities. We collected information from institutions that differ in student population and selectivity.[25] These programs are similar in scope to our coaching program, as they offer group workshops or online modules and individual meetings with an advisor or coach. That such programs already operate at institutions spanning this range of size and selectivity suggests that implementation is not confined to well-resourced universities.

7 Conclusion

Our paper shows that the standard academic probation policy carries a large and previously undocumented penalty for low-income students. As a result of probation, these students are more likely to drop out after their first year and less likely to graduate within six years, and they earn substantially less a decade later. High-income students at the same threshold are largely unaffected. When probation is instead combined with coaching, these negative effects disappear and first-year academic performance improves.

Our setting offers a rare opportunity to study how universities can address the unintended consequences of academic probation. While probation is implemented similarly across U.S. postsecondary institutions, the programs designed to counteract its effects differ substantially in content and availability. Few universities have implemented a coaching program of this scope, and fewer still in a way that allows credible evaluation against the standard policy. Our findings show that the harm probation does to low-income students is not a necessary feature of the standard it sets, but a consequence of how that standard is enforced, and that a modest, low-cost redesign is enough to undo it.

[25] The most selective university in our sample is the University of Virginia, with a 17% undergraduate admission rate. The largest is the University of Arizona, which enrolls around 56,000 students and admits 86% of applicants.

References

Alam, A. N., P. Oreopoulos, and U. Petronijevic (2026). The (lack of) efficacy of social belonging and growth mindset interventions among college students. *NBER Working Paper No. 35230*.

Albert, A. and N. Wozny (2022). The impact of academic probation: Do intensive interventions help? *Journal of Human Resources*.

Angrist, J., D. Autor, and A. Pallais (2022). Marginal effects of merit aid for low-income students. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics 137*(2), 1039–1090.

Angrist, J., D. Lang, and P. Oreopoulos (2009). Incentives and services for college achievement: Evidence from a randomized trial. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 1*(1), 136–63.

Bailey, M. J. and S. M. Dynarski (2011). Gains and gaps: Changing inequality in us college entry and completion. Technical report, National Bureau of Economic Research.

Barreca, A. I., J. M. Lindo, and G. R. Waddell (2016). Heaping-induced bias in regression-discontinuity designs. *Economic Inquiry 54*(1), 268–293.

Bettinger, E., O. Gurantz, L. Kawano, B. Sacerdote, and M. Stevens (2019). The long-run impacts of financial aid: Evidence from california's cal grant. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 11*(1), 64–94.

Bettinger, E. P. and R. B. Baker (2014). The effects of student coaching: An evaluation of a randomized experiment in student advising. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 36*(1), 3–19.

Bleemer, Z. (2024). Top percent policies and the return to postsecondary selectivity. Working paper, Princeton University.

Bleemer, Z. and A. Mehta (2024). College major restrictions and student stratification. *NBER Working Paper No. 33269*.

Bound, J., M. F. Lovenheim, and S. Turner (2010). Why have college completion rates declined? an analysis of changing student preparation and collegiate resources. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 2*(3), 129–57.

Bound, J. and S. Turner (2007). Cohort crowding: How resources affect collegiate attainment. *Journal of public Economics 91*(5-6), 877–899.

Bowman, N. A. (2022, March). How to fix problems with academic probation. Inside Higher Ed (Opinion). Accessed December 19, 2025.

Bowman, N. A. and S. Fenton-Miller (2025). When and how does placement onto academic probation affect six-year college graduation? *The Review of Higher Education 49*(1), 67–99.

Bowman, N. A., N. Jang, D. M. I. Kivlighan, N. Schneider, and X. Ye (2020). The impact of a goal-setting intervention for engineering students on academic probation. *Research in Higher Education 61*(1), 142–166.

Brady, S. T. (2017). *A Scarlet letter?: Institutional messages about academic probation can, but need not, elicit shame and stigma*. Ph. D. thesis, Stanford University.

Broda, M., J. Yun, B. Schneider, D. S. Yeager, G. M. Walton, and M. Diemer (2018). Reducing inequality in academic success for incoming college students: A randomized trial of growth mindset and belonging interventions. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness 11*(3), 317–338.

Cahalan, M. W., M. Addison, N. Brunt, P. R. Patel, and L. W. Perna (2021). Indicators of higher education equity in the united states: 2021 historical trend report. *Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education*.

Calonico, S., M. D. Cattaneo, and R. Titiunik (2014). Robust nonparametric confidence intervals for regression-discontinuity designs. *Econometrica 82*(6), 2295–2326.

Canaan, S., A. Deeb, and P. Mouganie (2022). Advisor value-dded and student outcomes: evidence from randomly assigned college advisors. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*.

Carrell, S. and B. Sacerdote (2017). Why do college-going interventions work? *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 9*(3), 124–51.

Carrell, S. E. and M. Kurlaender (2023). My professor cares: Experimental evidence on the role of faculty engagement. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 15*(4), 113–141.

Casey, M. D., J. Cline, B. Ost, and J. A. Qureshi (2018). Academic probation, student performance, and strategic course-taking. *Economic Inquiry 56*(3), 1646–1677.

Chetty, R., J. N. Friedman, E. Saez, N. Turner, and D. Yagan (2020). Income segregation and intergenerational mobility across colleges in the united states. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics 135*(3), 1567–1633.

Cohodes, S. R. and J. S. Goodman (2014). Merit aid, college quality, and college completion: Massachusetts' adams scholarship as an in-kind subsidy. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 6*(4), 251–85.

Deming, D. J. (2017). Increasing college completion with a federal higher education matching grant.

Deming, D. J. and C. R. Walters (2017). The impact of price caps and spending cuts on us postsecondary attainment. Technical report, National Bureau of Economic Research.

Dobronyi, C. R., P. Oreopoulos, and U. Petronijevic (2019). Goal setting, academic reminders, and college success: A large-scale field experiment. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness 12*(1), 38–66.

Dong, Y. (2019). Regression discontinuity designs with sample selection. *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics 37*(1), 171–186.

Dynarski, S., C. J. Libassi, K. Michelmore, and S. Owen (2021). Closing the gap: The effect of reducing complexity and uncertainty in college pricing on the choices of low-income students. *American Economic Review 111*(6), 1721–1756.

Dynarski, S., A. Nurshatayeva, L. C. Page, and J. Scott-Clayton (2023). Addressing nonfinancial barriers to college access and success: Evidence and policy implications. In *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, Volume 6, pp. 319–403. Elsevier.

Dynarski, S. M. (2003). Does aid matter? measuring the effect of student aid on college attendance and completion. *American Economic Review 93*(1), 279–288.

Fletcher, J. M. and M. Tokmouline (2017). The effects of academic probation on college success: Regression discontinuity evidence from four texas universities. *IZA Discussion Paper* (11232).

Foote, A. and K. M. Stange (2022). Attrition from administrative data: Problems and solutions with an application to postsecondary education. Technical report, National Bureau of Economic Research.

Gurantz, O. (2019). Impacts of state aid for non-traditional students on educational and labor market outcomes. *Journal of Human Resources*, 0618–9570R2.

Hoekstra, M. (2009). The effect of attending the flagship state university on earnings: A discontinuity-based approach. *The Review of Economics and Statistics 91*(4), 717–724.

Hoxby, C. and S. Turner (2013). Expanding college opportunities for high-achieving, low income students. Discussion Paper 12-014, Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, Stanford, CA.

Kozakowski, W. (2023). Are four-year public colleges engines for economic mobility? Evidence from statewide admissions thresholds. EdWorking Paper 23-727, Annenberg Institute, Providence, RI.

Lavecchia, A. M., H. Liu, and P. Oreopoulos (2016). Behavioral economics of education: Progress and possibilities. *Handbook of the Economics of Education 5*, 1–74.

Lindo, J. M., N. J. Sanders, and P. Oreopoulos (2010). Ability, gender, and performance standards: Evidence from academic probation. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 2*(2), 95–117.

Morisano, D., J. B. Hirsh, J. B. Peterson, R. O. Pihl, and B. M. Shore (2010). Setting, elaborating, and reflecting on personal goals improves academic performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology 95*(2), 255.

Mountjoy, J. (2026). Marginal returns to public universities. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics 141*(1), 429–497.

Murphy, M. C., M. Gopalan, E. R. Carter, K. T. U. Emerson, B. L. Bottoms, and G. M. Walton (2020). A customized belonging intervention improves retention of socially disadvantaged students at a broad-access university. *Science Advances 6*(29), eaba4677.

Oreopoulos, P., R. S. Brown, and A. M. Lavecchia (2017). Pathways to education: An integrated approach to helping at-risk high school students. *Journal of Political Economy 125*(4), 947–984.

Oreopoulos, P., R. W. Patterson, U. Petronijevic, and N. G. Pope (2022). Low-touch attempts to improve time management among traditional and online college students. *Journal of Human Resources 57*(1), 1–43.

Oreopoulos, P. and U. Petronijevic (2018). Student coaching: How far can technology go? *Journal of Human Resources 53*(2), 299–329.

Oreopoulos, P. and U. Petronijevic (2019). The remarkable unresponsiveness of college students to nudging and what we can learn from it. Technical report, National Bureau of Economic Research.

Oreopoulos, P. and U. Petronijevic (2023). The promises and pitfalls of using (mostly) low-touch coaching interventions to improve college student outcomes. *The Economic Journal 133*(656), 3034–3070.

Ost, B., W. Pan, and D. Webber (2018). The returns to college persistence for marginal students: Regression discontinuity evidence from university dismissal policies. *Journal of Labor Economics 36*(3), 779–805.

Smith, J., J. Goodman, and M. Hurwitz (2020). The economic impact of access to public four-year colleges. Technical report, National Bureau of Economic Research.

Walton, G. M. and S. T. Brady (2017). The many questions of belonging. In *Handbook of Competence and Motivation: Theory and Application* (2 ed.)., pp. 272–293.

Walton, G. M. and G. L. Cohen (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science 331*(6023), 1447–1451.

Walton, G. M., M. C. Murphy, C. Logel, D. S. Yeager, J. P. Goyer, S. T. Brady, K. T. Emerson, et al. (2023). Where and with whom does a brief social-belonging intervention promote progress in college? *Science 380*(6644), 499–505.

Weiss, M. J., A. Ratledge, C. Sommo, and H. Gupta (2019). Supporting community college students from start to degree completion: Long-term evidence from a randomized trial of cuny's asap. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 11*(3), 253–97.

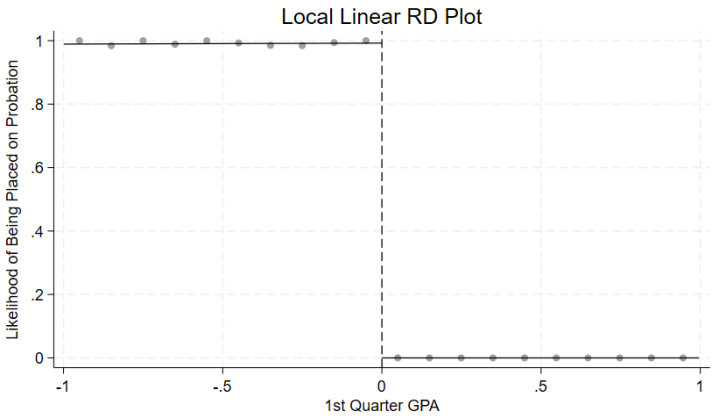
Wright, N. A. (2020). Perform better, or else: Academic probation, public praise, and students decision-making. *Labour Economics 62*, 101773.

Yeager, D. S., G. M. Walton, S. T. Brady, E. N. Akcinar, D. Paunesku, L. Keane, D. Kamentz, et al. (2016). Teaching a lay theory before college narrows achievement gaps at scale. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 113*(24), E3341–E3348.

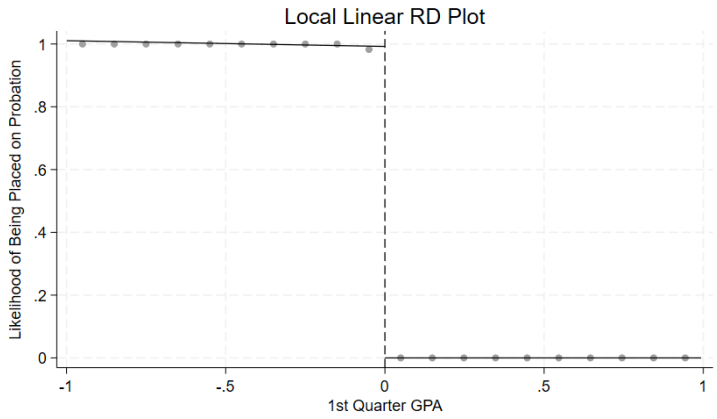
Zimmerman, S. D. (2014). The returns to college admission for academically marginal students. *Journal of Labor Economics 32*(4), 711–754.

A Figures

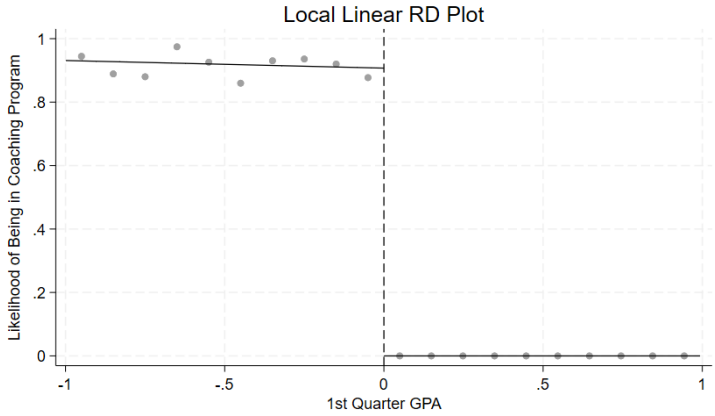
Figure 1: Policies in Practice



(a) Probation likelihood, probation only cohorts



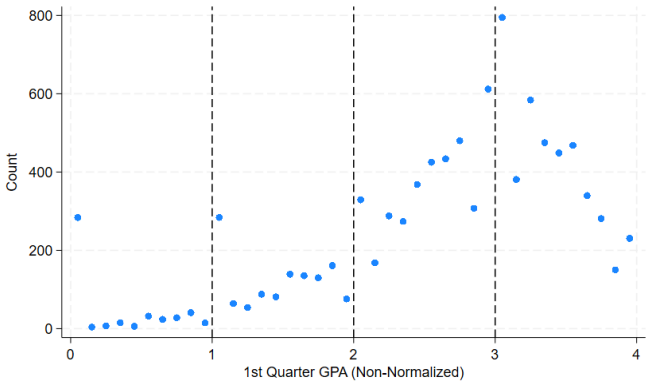
(b) Probation likelihood, probation + coaching cohorts



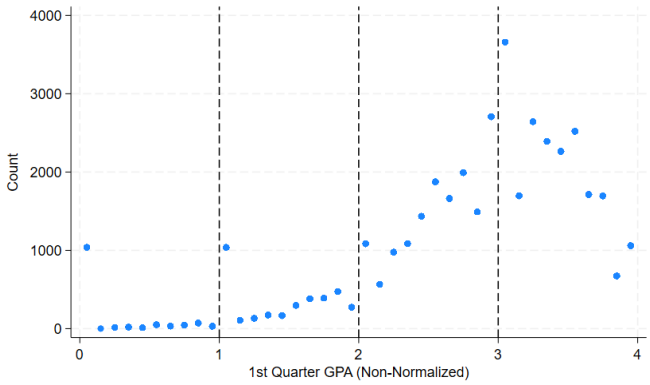
(c) Coaching program placement

Notes: The sample in Figure 1a includes all first-time freshmen entering the university in fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties)—i.e., those exposed to only probation. Figures 1b and 1c include cohorts exposed to both probation and the success program. The sample in Figures 1b and 1c include all first-time freshmen entering the university in the fall cohorts 2010-2017. In all figures, the running variable is first quarter GPA. Circles represent local averages over a 0.1 GPA range. Figures are drawn using a linear fit on either side of the cutoff.

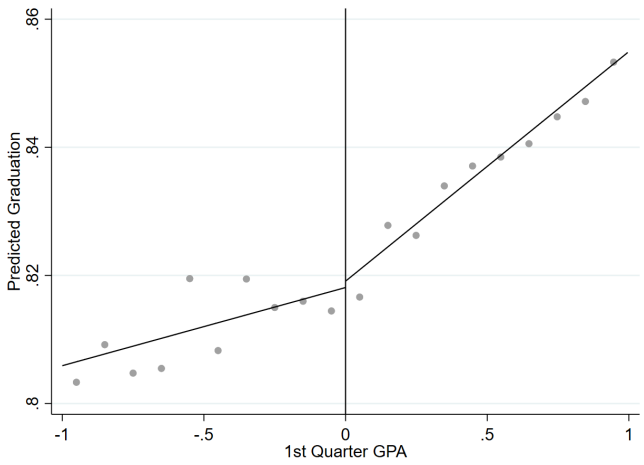
Figure 2: Identification Checks



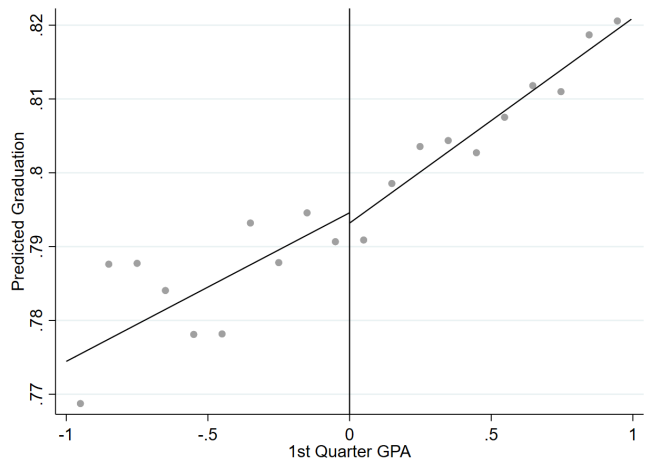
(a) Distribution of Q1 GPA, probation only cohorts



(b) Distribution of Q1 GPA, probation + coaching cohorts



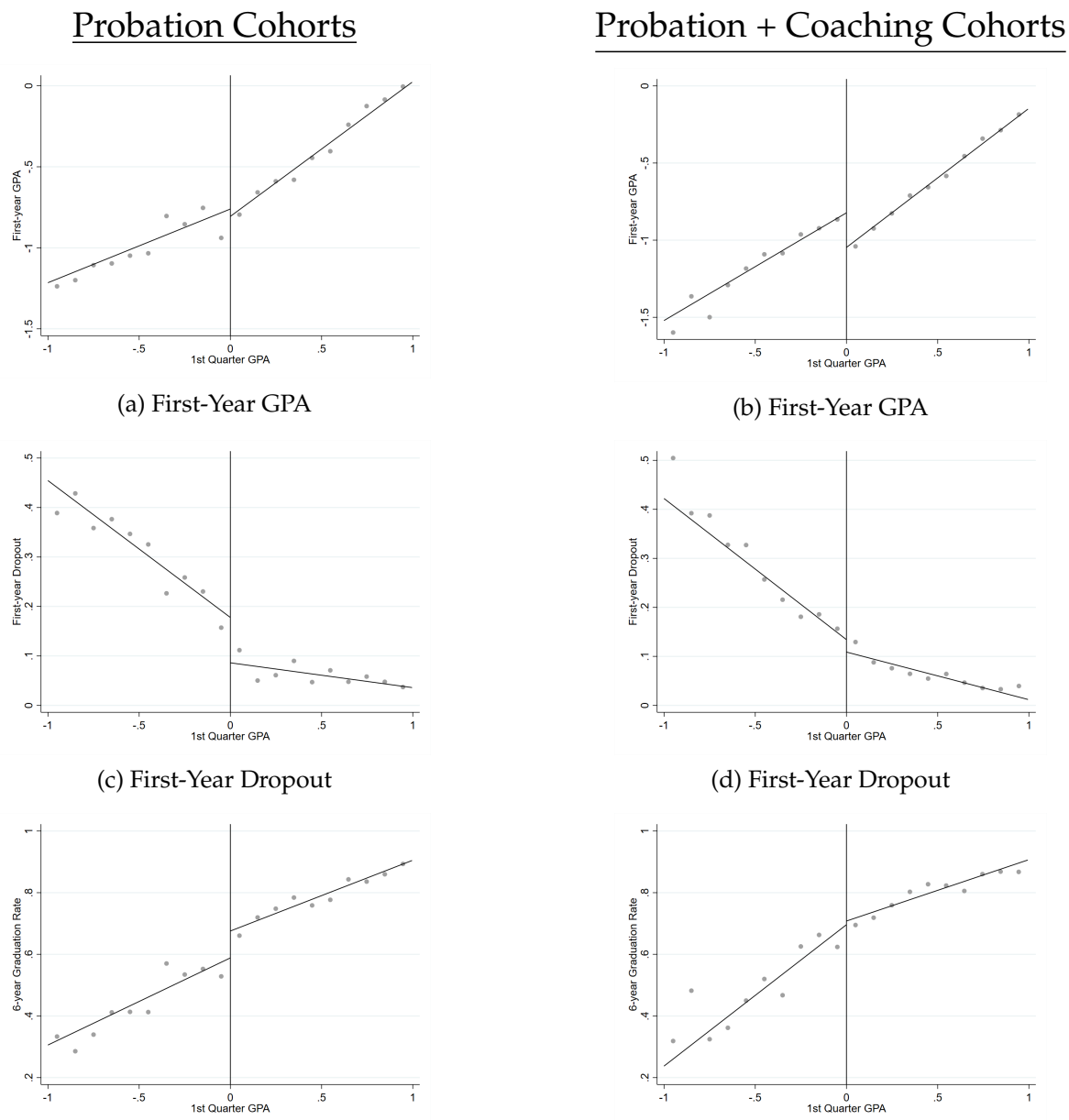
(c) Predicted Graduation Rate, probation only cohorts



(d) Predicted Graduation Rate, probation + coaching cohorts

Notes: The sample used in Figures 2a and 2c includes cohorts exposed to academic probation only (2007, 2008 and part of 2009 cohort). The sample in Figures 2b and 2d includes all cohorts exposed to both coaching and probation (the four colleges of the 2009 cohort and 2010-2017 cohorts). Circles represent local averages over a 0.1 GPA range. The running variable is first-quarter GPA. Figures 2c and 2d are drawn using a linear fit on either side of the cutoff. Predicted outcomes are based on the following controls: SAT scores, gender dummy variable, non-white dummy variable, California resident dummy variable, pell eligibility dummy variable, EFC scores, mothers' and fathers' college graduation dummy variables.

Figure 3: RD Figures for Academic Outcomes



(a) First-Year GPA

(b) First-Year GPA

(c) First-Year Dropout

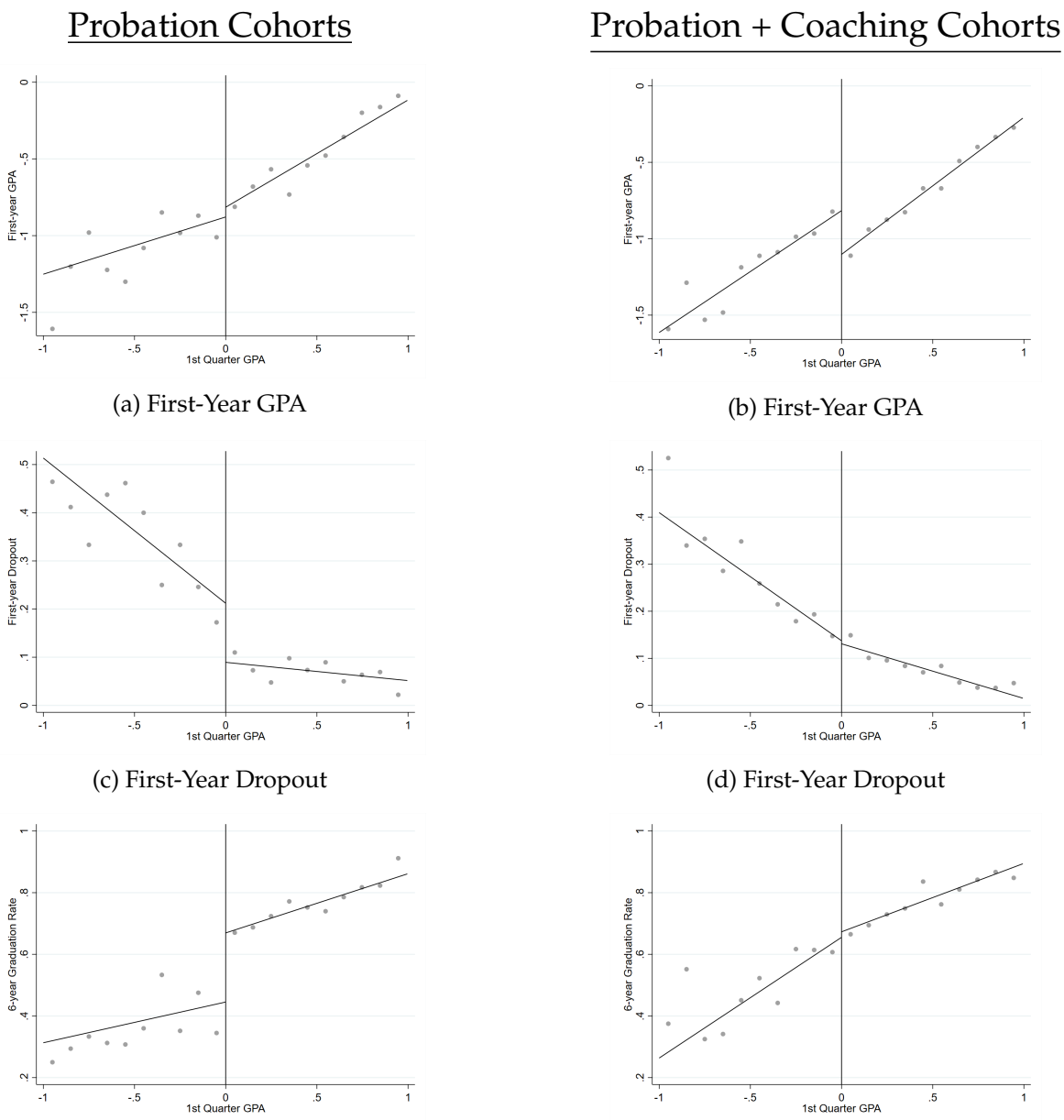
(d) First-Year Dropout

(e) 6-Year Graduation

(f) 6-Year Graduation

Notes: Probation-only cohort figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation + coaching figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. First-year GPA includes Winter and Spring quarter GPA, as the Fall quarter GPA is the running variable. 6-year graduation is observed only for cohorts entering through 2013, as this is the last cohort with six full years of post-entry data are available; later cohorts are excluded from this outcome. Circles represent local averages over a 0.1 GPA range. Figures are drawn using a linear fit on either side of the cutoff.

Figure 4: RD Figures for Academic Outcomes—Low-income Students



(a) First-Year GPA

(b) First-Year GPA

(c) First-Year Dropout

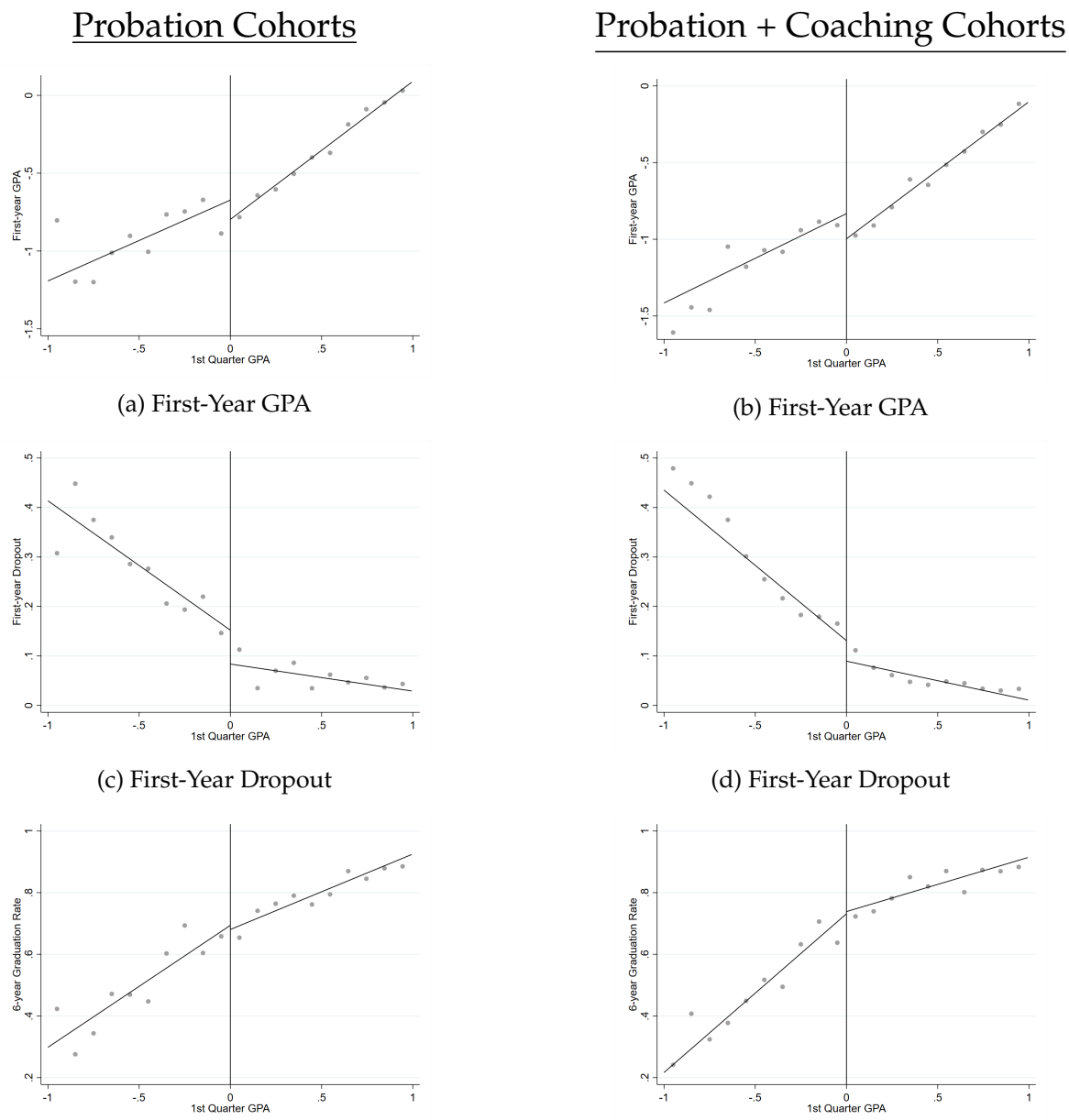
(d) First-Year Dropout

(e) 6-Year Graduation

(f) 6-Year Graduation

Notes: Sample includes only low-income students, i.e. those with an Expected Family Contribution of less than $30,000. Probation-only cohort figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation+coaching figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. 6-year graduation is observed only for cohorts entering through 2013, the last for which six full years of post-entry data are available; later cohorts are excluded from this outcome. Circles represent local averages over a 0.1 GPA range. Figures are drawn using a linear fit on either side of the cutoff.

Figure 5: RD Figures for Academic Outcomes—High-income Students



(a) First-Year GPA

(b) First-Year GPA

(c) First-Year Dropout

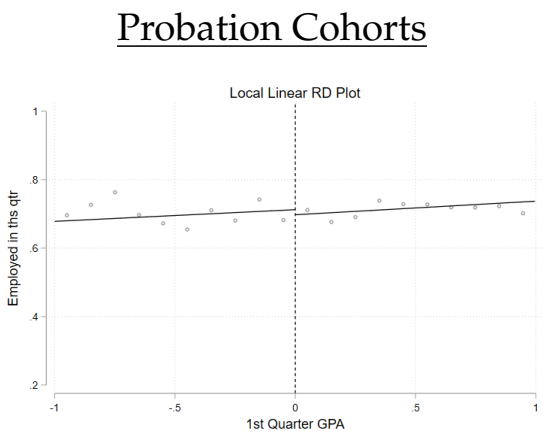
(d) First-Year Dropout

(e) 6-Year Graduation

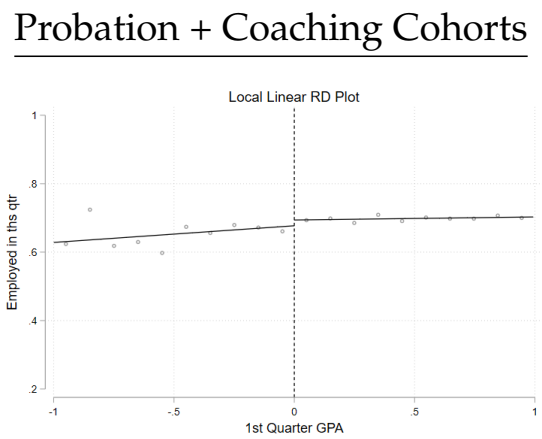
(f) 6-Year Graduation

Notes: Sample includes only high-income students, i.e. those with an Expected Family Contribution of more than $30,000. Probation-only cohort figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation+coaching figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. 6-year graduation is observed only for cohorts entering through 2013, the last for which six full years of post-entry data are available; later cohorts are excluded from this outcome. Circles represent local averages over a 0.1 GPA range. Figures are drawn using a linear fit on either side of the cutoff.

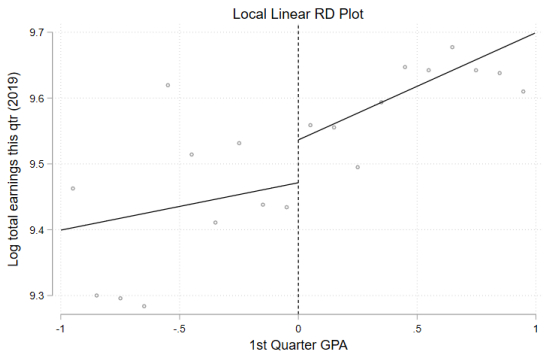
Figure 6: RD Figures for Labor Market Outcomes



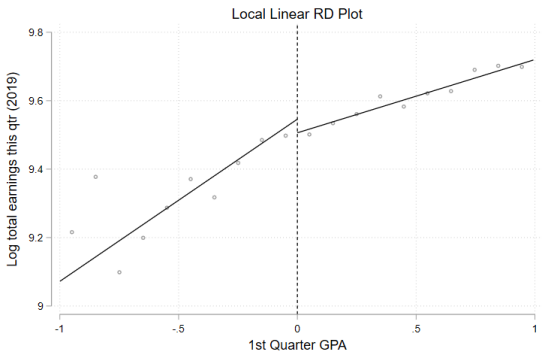
(a) Observed Positive Earnings



(b) Observed Positive Earnings



(c) Log Earnings



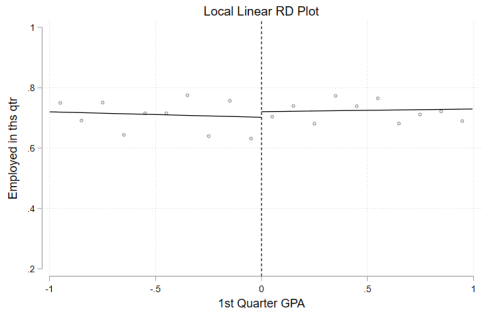
(d) Log Earnings

Notes: Probation-only cohort figures include students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation + coaching figures include students enrolled in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. Circles represent local averages over a 0.1 GPA range. Figures use a linear fit on either side of the cutoff and are based on stacked labor market outcomes measured 25 to 55 quarters after university enrollment. The last calendar quarter in the sample is 2022 Q4. Dollar amounts are adjusted to 2019 dollars using the CPI-U.

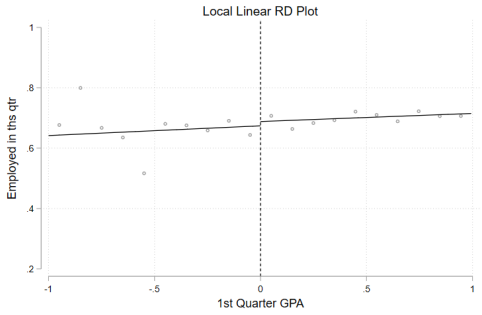
Figure 7: RD Figures for Labor Market Outcomes—Low and High-income Students

Probation Cohorts

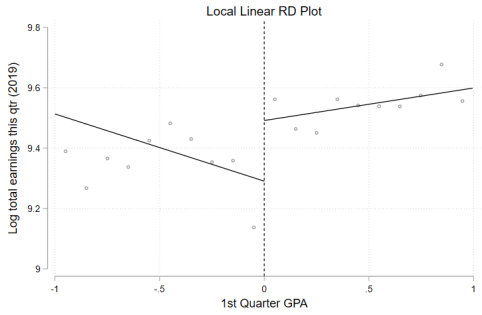
Probation + Coaching Cohorts



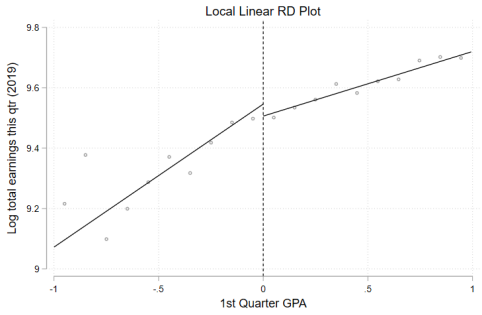
(a) Observed Positive Earnings (Low-Income Students)



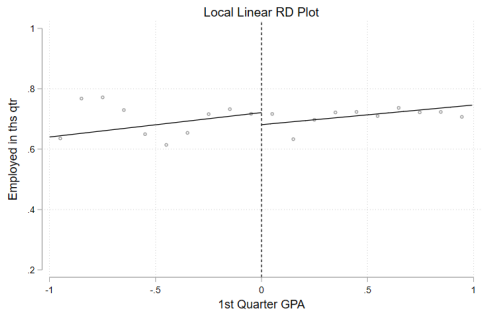
(b) Observed Positive Earnings (Low-Income Students)



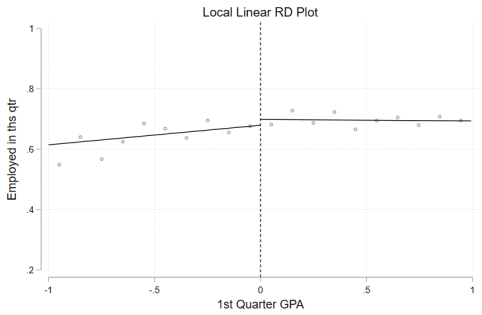
(c) Log Earnings (Low-Income Students)



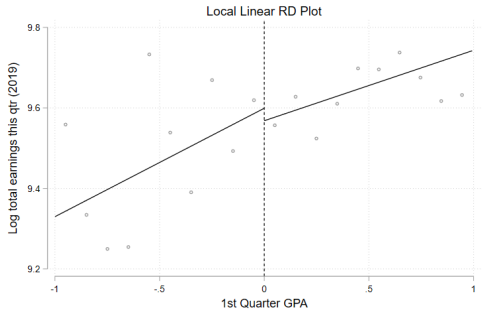
(d) Log Earnings (Low-Income Students)



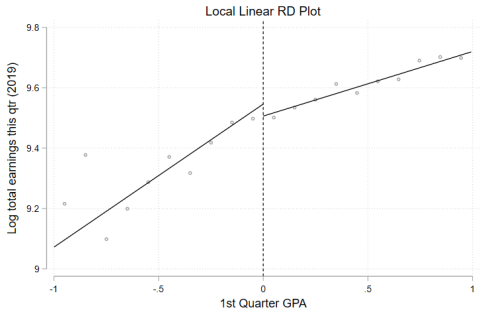
(e) Observed Positive Earnings (High-Income Students)



(f) Observed Positive Earnings (High-Income Students)



(g) Log Earnings (High-Income Students)



(h) Log Earnings (High-Income Students)

Notes: Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Probation-only cohort figures include students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation + coaching figures include students enrolled in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. Circles represent local averages over a 0.1 GPA range. Figures use a linear fit on either side of the cutoff and are based on stacked labor market outcomes measured 25 to 55 quarters after university enrollment. The last calendar quarter in the sample is 2022 Q4. Dollar amounts are adjusted to 2019 dollars using the CPI-U.

B Tables

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	Probation Only		*Probation + Coaching*	
	Whole Sample (1)	RD Sample (2)	Whole Sample (3)	RD Sample (4)
Panel A: Baseline Characteristics				
SAT Math	628	615	653	636
	(75)	(74)	(72)	(70)
SAT Reading	575	561	596	577
	(75)	(74)	(75)	(74)
Female	0.47	0.43	0.48	0.45
	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.50)
Non-White	0.33	0.37	0.39	0.44
	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.49)	(0.50)
Resident	0.94	0.94	0.85	0.86
	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.35)	(0.34)
Pell Grant Eligible	0.13	0.14	0.17	0.20
	(0.33)	(0.35)	(0.38)	(0.40)
High-income (EFC $\geq$ \$30,000 or no FAFSA)	0.66	0.65	0.57	0.55
	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.49)	(0.50)
Father College	0.81	0.79	0.80	0.77
	(0.39)	(0.41)	(0.40)	(0.42)
Mother College	0.82	0.80	0.83	0.80
	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.38)	(0.40)
Panel B: Treatment Outcomes				
On probation after first quarter	0.13	0.19	0.07	0.13
	(0.34)	(0.39)	(0.26)	(0.34)
Participated in coaching	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.11
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.24)	(0.32)
Panel C: Academic Outcomes				
First-Year GPA (Q2+Q3)	2.76	2.46	2.90	2.55
	(0.67)	(0.59)	(0.63)	(0.55)
Dropped out after first year	0.09	0.10	0.06	0.08
	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.23)	(0.27)
Graduated within 6 years	0.80	0.74	0.88	0.83
	(0.40)	(0.44)	(0.33)	(0.38)
Observations (students)	8,632	4,595	37,266	17,528
Panel D: Labor Market Outcomes				
In earnings data this quarter	0.69	0.71	0.69	0.69
	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.46)
Total earnings this quarter	14,562	14,130	14,639	13,659
	(21,812)	(20,568)	(20,787)	(18,565)
Total earnings (excl. zeroes)	20,694	19,532	22,359	20,624
	(23,612)	(22,225)	(23,724)	(20,539)
Received UI	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.03
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.18)
Observations (student-quarters)	265,688	141,349	470,298	231,488
Observations (students)	8,608	4,578	31,937	15,202

Notes: Means with standard deviations in parentheses. The "Probation only" sample includes all first-time freshmen who first enrolled at the university in Fall 2007, 2008 and 2009 (non-pilot colleges only). The "Probation + coaching" sample includes first-time freshmen who first enrolled in 2009 (Coaching program pilot colleges only) up until 2017. 6-year graduation is observed only for cohorts entering through 2013, as this is the last cohort with six full years of post-entry data are available; later cohorts are excluded from this outcome. RD samples in columns (2) and (4) are students with a first-quarter GPA between 1 and 3 points. Labor market outcomes are measured 25–55 quarters after university enrollment. The last calendar quarter in the labor market sample is 2022 Q4. Dollar amounts are adjusted to 2019 dollars using the CPI-U.

Table 2: RD Estimates of Probation Policies on Academic Outcomes

	GPA (Q2+Q3) (1)	Year-1 Dropout (2)	6-Year Grad. (3)
Panel A: Probation Only			
Probation Effect	0.053	0.085**	−0.072
	(0.080)	(0.034)	(0.045)
Observations	2,938	3,053	3,053
Panel B: Probation + Coaching			
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.226***	0.026	0.010
	(0.047)	(0.019)	(0.032)
Observations	10,497	10,958	5,898

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. The sample size for the 6-year graduation outcome in Panel B is reduced since it cannot be observed for later cohorts. Each point estimate is from a separate RD regression. All local linear RD regressions use a triangular kernel with a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as cohort and college fixed effects. GPA outcomes are standardized by cohort. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 3: RD Estimates of Probation Policies by Socioeconomic Background

	GPA (Q2+Q3) (1)	Year-1 Dropout (2)	6-Year Grad. (3)
Panel A: Low-Income			
Probation Effect	−0.059	0.107*	−0.206***
	(0.124)	(0.056)	(0.065)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.268***	0.008	−0.009
	(0.067)	(0.027)	(0.046)
Observations (Prob.)	1,066	1,109	1,109
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	4,799	4,994	2,697
Panel B: High-Income			
Probation Effect	0.122	0.068	0.034
	(0.102)	(0.043)	(0.056)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.187***	0.042	0.022
	(0.065)	(0.026)	(0.044)
Observations (Prob.)	1,872	1,944	1,944
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	5,698	5,964	3,201

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. The sample size for the 6-year graduation outcome in Panel B is reduced since it cannot be observed for later cohorts. Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Each point estimate is from a separate RD regression. All local linear RD regressions use a triangular kernel with a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as cohort and college fixed effects. GPA outcomes are standardized by cohort. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 4: RD Estimates of Probation Policies within the Same Cohort

	GPA (Q2+Q3) (1)	Year-1 Dropout (2)	6-Year Grad. (3)
Panel A: All Students			
Probation Effect	0.034	0.075	−0.156
	(0.212)	(0.096)	(0.118)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.422***	0.001	0.013
	(0.137)	(0.054)	(0.067)
Observations (Prob.)	495	510	510
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	1,191	1,257	1,257
Panel B: Low-Income			
Probation Effect	−0.134	0.249	−0.341**
	(0.293)	(0.162)	(0.168)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.432*	0.044	0.020
	(0.236)	(0.097)	(0.098)
Observations (Prob.)	200	209	209
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	470	500	500
Panel C: High-Income			
Probation Effect	0.119	−0.074	−0.047
	(0.292)	(0.115)	(0.162)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.448***	−0.039	0.022
	(0.170)	(0.070)	(0.093)
Observations (Prob.)	295	301	301
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	721	757	757

Notes: The analysis exploits variation in exposure to two distinct probation policies within the entering cohort of 2009. The College of Science and Mathematics and the College of Liberal Arts place students on academic probation only; the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Engineering, and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design introduced academic probation combined with mandatory coaching (SP program). "Probation only" and "Probation + Coaching" effects are estimated from separate local linear RD regressions for each college group. All regressions use a uniform kernel with a bandwidth of 1 GPA point and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as college fixed effects. The wider bandwidth and uniform kernel reflect the more demanding data requirements of this analysis, which is identified from variation within a single cohort only. Low-income students are those with an Expected Family Contribution below $30,000; high-SES students are those at or above this threshold. GPA outcomes are standardized by cohort. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 5: Labor Market RD Estimates of Probation Policies

	Observed Positive Earnings (1)	Log Earnings (2)
Panel A: All Students		
Probation Effect	0.035	−0.091
	(0.032)	(0.071)
Probation + Coaching Effect	−0.015	0.041
	(0.023)	(0.046)
Observations (Prob.)	94,015	66,944
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	147,168	101,677
Panel B: Low-Income		
Probation Effect	−0.012	−0.272**
	(0.049)	(0.117)
Probation + Coaching Effect	−0.004	0.083
	(0.033)	(0.066)
Observations (Prob.)	34,237	24,614
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	66,490	46,048
Panel C: High-Income		
Probation Effect	0.070	0.038
	(0.042)	(0.085)
Probation + Coaching Effect	−0.024	0.002
	(0.032)	(0.064)
Observations (Prob.)	59,778	42,330
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	80,678	55,629

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Each point estimate is from a separate RD regression. All local linear RD regressions use a triangular kernel with a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as cohort and college fixed effects. Labor market outcomes are measured 25–55 quarters after university enrollment. The last calendar quarter in the sample is 2022 Q4. Dollar amounts are adjusted to 2019 dollars using the CPI-U. Standard errors clustered at the individual level are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

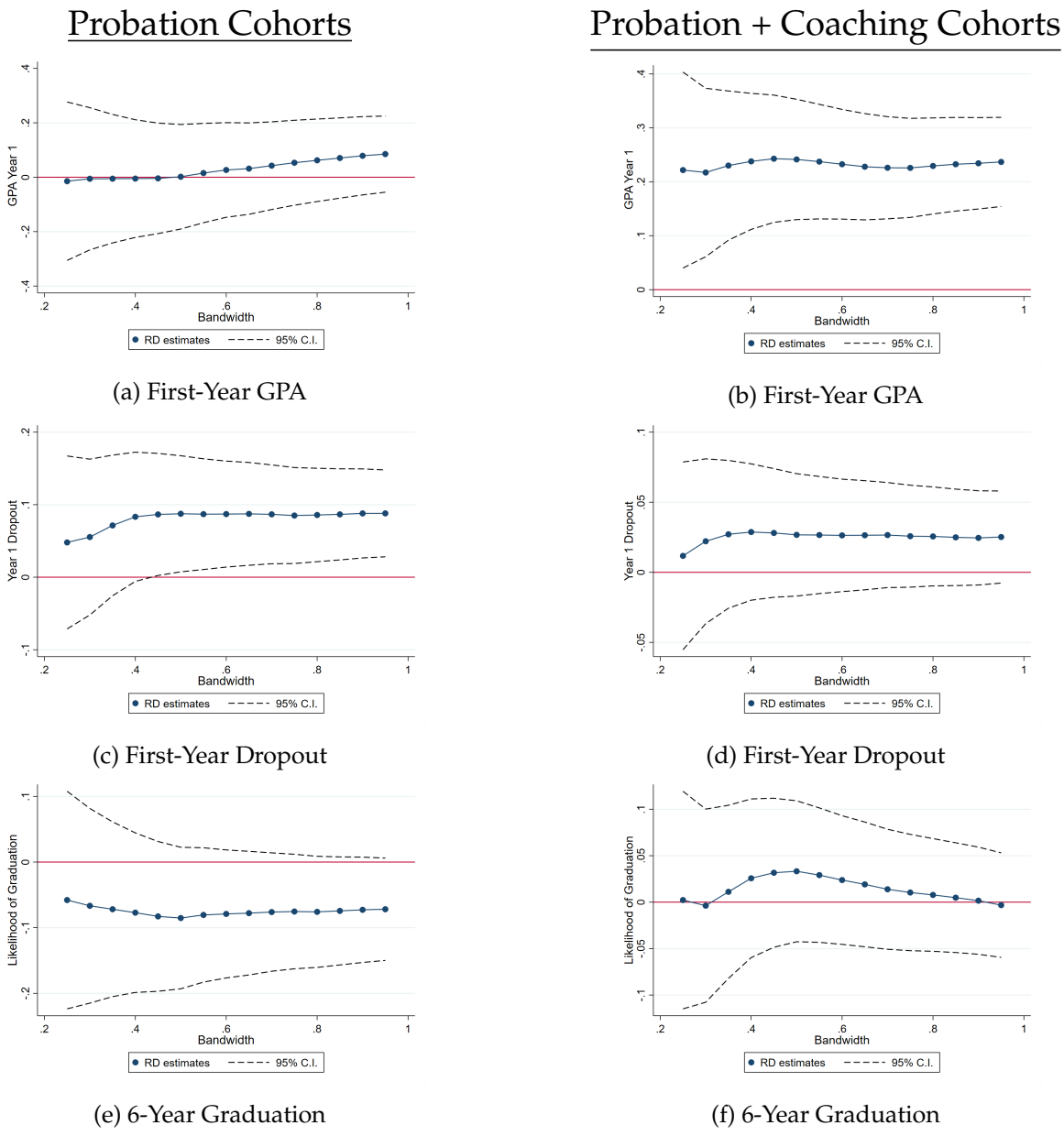
Table 6: Effects of SP Participation on Study Behaviors and Beliefs

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A: Study Behaviors					
	Help-Seeking & Belonging	Academic Engagement & Effort	Study Skills	Academic Self-Efficacy	Life Balance
Post	0.959***	0.654***	0.755***	0.456***	-0.022
	(0.067)	(0.071)	(0.077)	(0.080)	(0.078)
Obs.	430	430	430	430	430
Panel B: Beliefs					
	Academic Confidence	Belonging & Support			
Post	-0.034	0.699***			
	(0.039)	(0.040)			
Obs.	1,842	1,842			

Notes: The data come from pre- and post-SP program survey responses. An observation is a student-survey, where there are two survey waves (pre and post SP). All regressions include a post program indicator and individual fixed effects. The sample for Panel A is a balanced panel of 430 observations for those participating in SP in 2013. The sample for Panel B is a balanced panel of 1,842 observations from those participating in SP in 2015-2018. Outcomes are a standardized index; mean 0, standard deviation 1. The survey administered in 2013 includes a different set of questions from that administered in the following years (2015-2018), as such, the responses cannot be aggregated across these two periods. Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are clustered at the individual level. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

A Appendix Figures

Figure A1: Robustness of Bandwidth Choice for Academic Outcomes



(a) First-Year GPA

(b) First-Year GPA

(c) First-Year Dropout

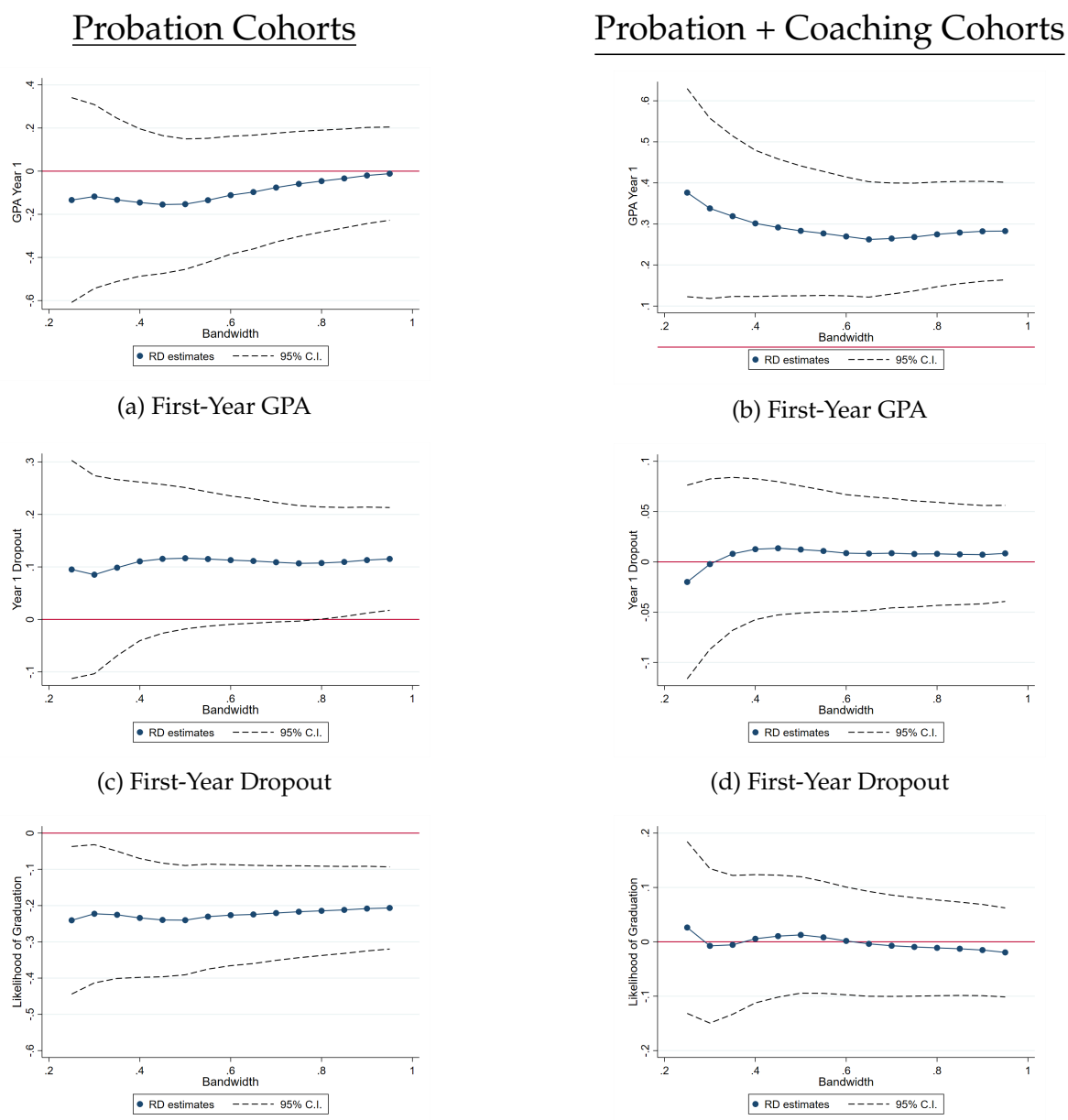
(d) First-Year Dropout

(e) 6-Year Graduation

(f) 6-Year Graduation

Notes: Probation-only cohort figures include students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation + coaching figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. 6-year graduation is observed only for cohorts entering through 2013, the last for which six full years of post-entry data are available; later cohorts are excluded from this outcome. Scatter points represent estimates from local linear regressions ranging from 0.25 to 1 GPA point on either side of the cutoff. Dashed lines show upper and lower 95% confidence intervals. GPA is standardized by cohort and reported for all students.

Figure A2: Robustness of Bandwidth Choice for Academic Outcomes—Low-Income Students



(a) First-Year GPA

(b) First-Year GPA

(c) First-Year Dropout

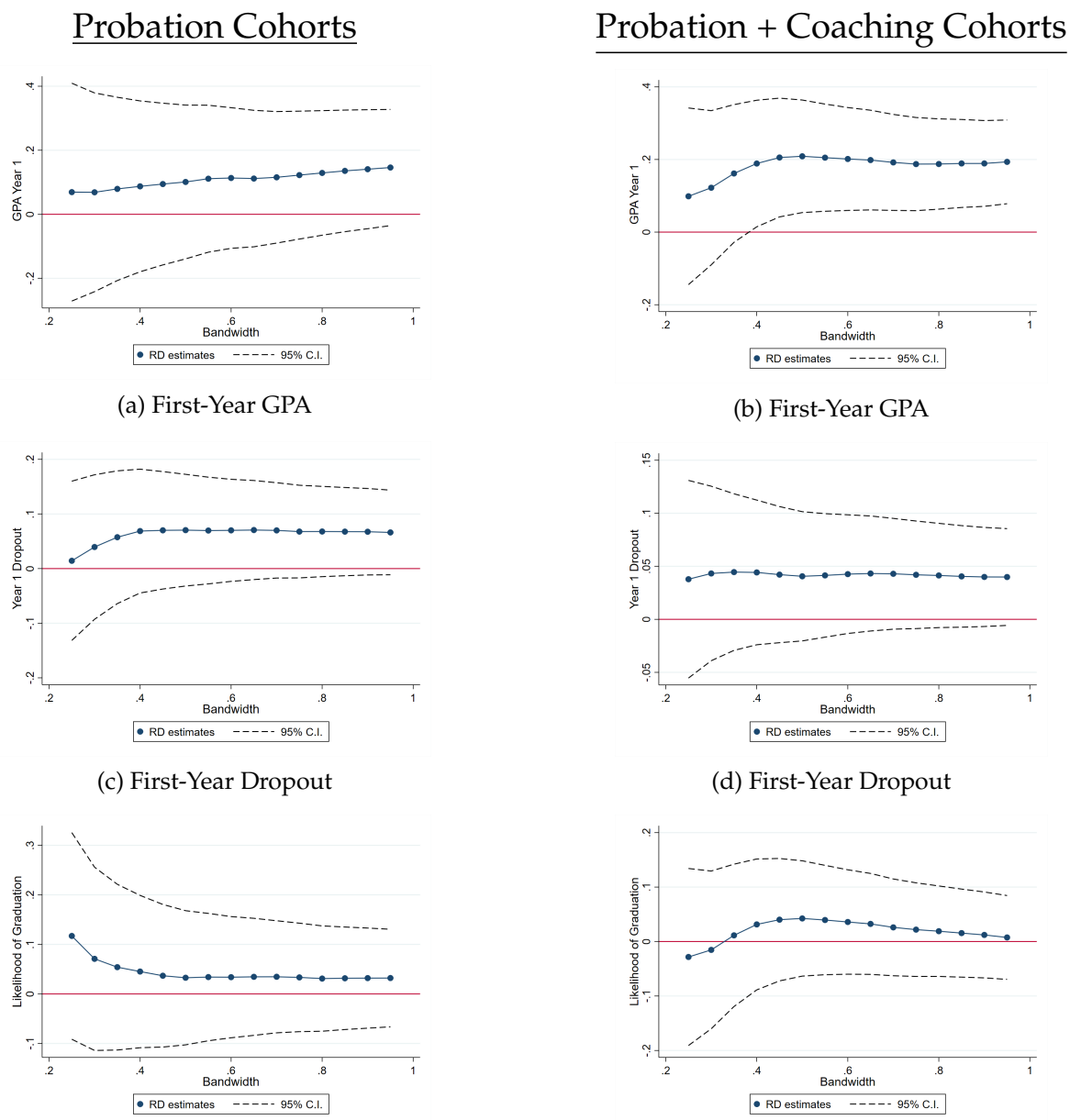
(d) First-Year Dropout

(e) 6-Year Graduation

(f) 6-Year Graduation

Notes: Sample includes only low-SES students, i.e. those with an Expected Family Contribution of less than $30,000. Probation-only cohort figures include students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation+SP figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. 6-year graduation is observed only for cohorts entering through 2013, the last for which six full years of post-entry data are available; later cohorts are excluded from this outcome. Scatter points represent estimates from local linear regressions ranging from 0.25 to 1 GPA point on either side of the cutoff. Dashed lines show upper and lower 95% confidence intervals. GPA is standardized by cohort and reported for all students.

Figure A3: Robustness of Bandwidth Choice for Academic Outcomes—High-Income Students



(a) First-Year GPA

(b) First-Year GPA

(c) First-Year Dropout

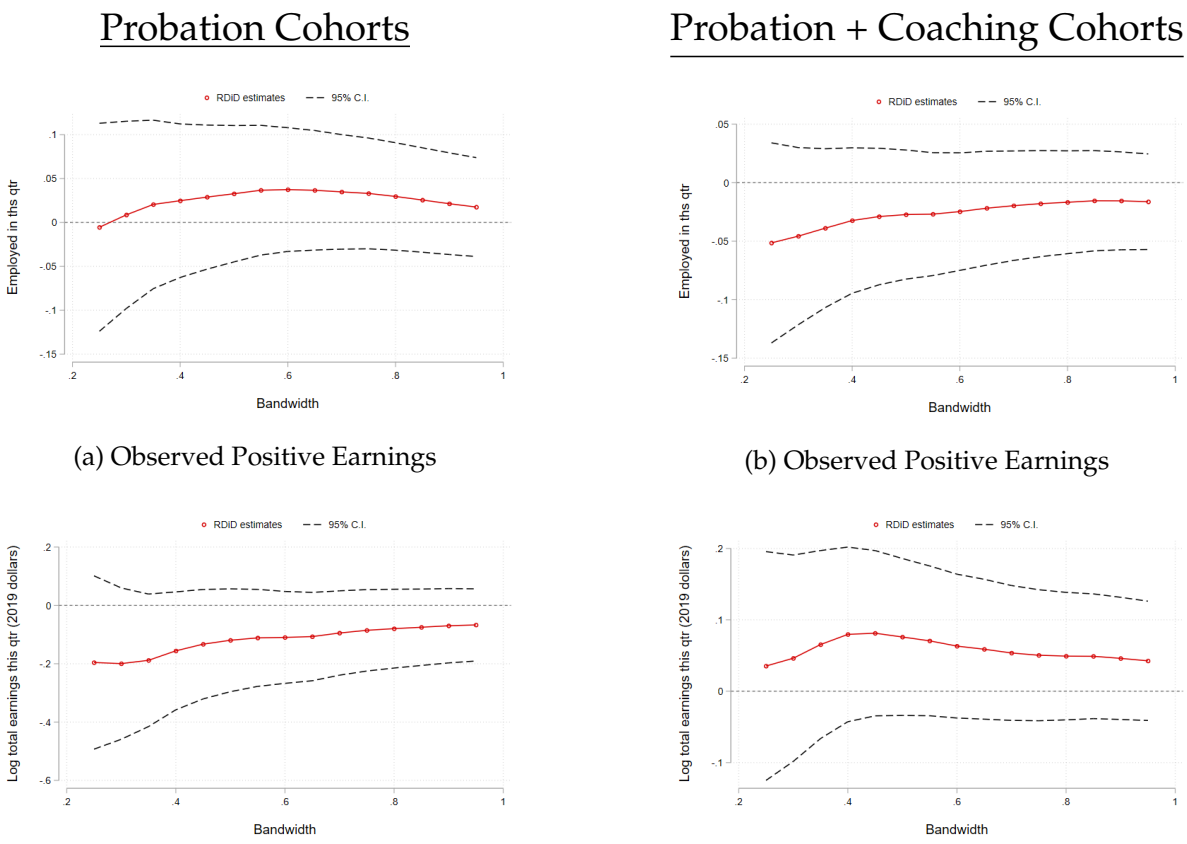
(d) First-Year Dropout

(e) 6-Year Graduation

(f) 6-Year Graduation

Notes: Sample includes only high-SES students, i.e. those with an Expected Family Contribution of more than $30,000. Probation-only cohort figures include students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation+SP figures include the sample of students enrolled at the university in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. 6-year graduation is observed only for cohorts entering through 2013, the last for which six full years of post-entry data are available; later cohorts are excluded from this outcome. Scatter points represent estimates from local linear regressions ranging from 0.25 to 1 GPA point on either side of the cutoff. Dashed lines show upper and lower 95% confidence intervals. GPA is standardized by cohort and reported for all students.

Figure A4: Robustness of Bandwidth Choice for Labor Market Outcomes



(a) Observed Positive Earnings

(b) Observed Positive Earnings

(c) Log Earnings

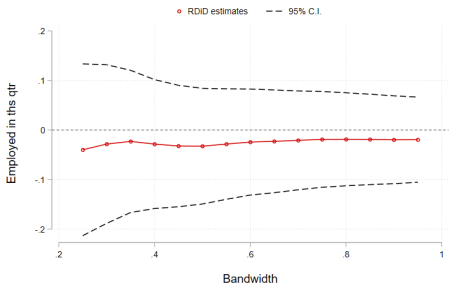
(d) Log Earnings

Notes: Probation-only cohort figures include students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation + coaching figures include students enrolled in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. Scatter points represent estimates from local linear regressions ranging from 0.25 to 1 GPA point on either side of the cutoff. Dashed lines show upper and lower 95% confidence intervals. Figures are based on stacked labor market outcomes measured 25 to 55 quarters after university enrollment. The last calendar quarter in the sample is 2022 Q4. Dollar amounts are adjusted to 2019 dollars using the CPI-U.

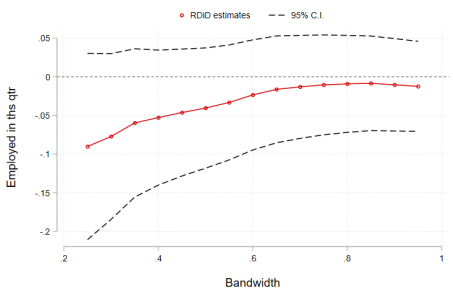
Figure A5: Robustness of Bandwidth Choice for Labor Market Outcomes—Low and High-Income Students

Probation Cohorts

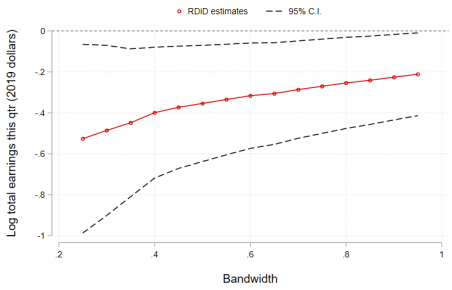
Probation + Coaching Cohorts



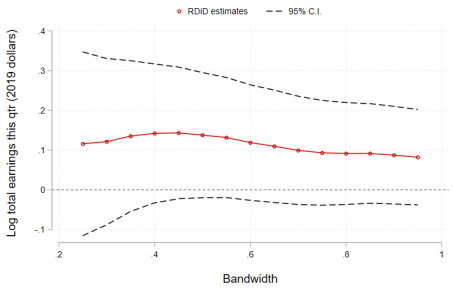
(a) Observed Positive Earnings (Low-Income Students)



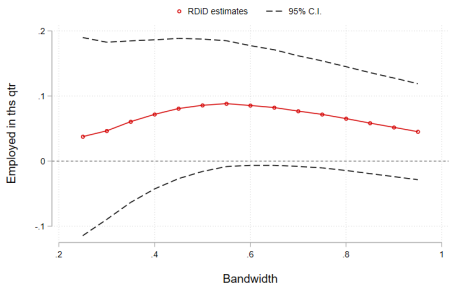
(b) Observed Positive Earnings (Low-Income Students)



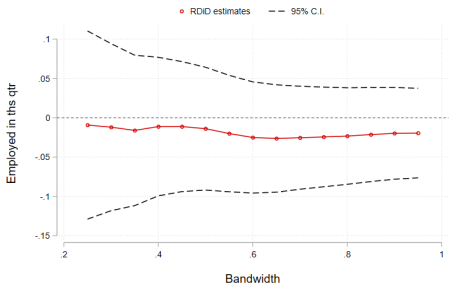
(c) Log Earnings (Low-Income Students)



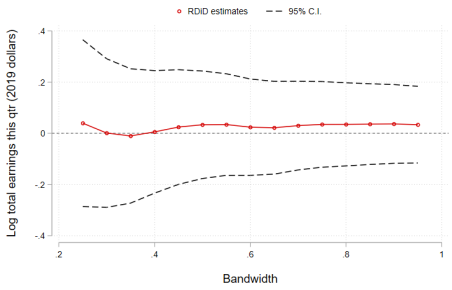
(d) Log Earnings (Low-Income Students)



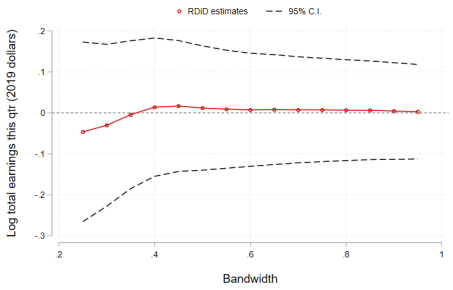
(e) Observed Positive Earnings (High-Income Students)



(f) Observed Positive Earnings (High-Income Students)



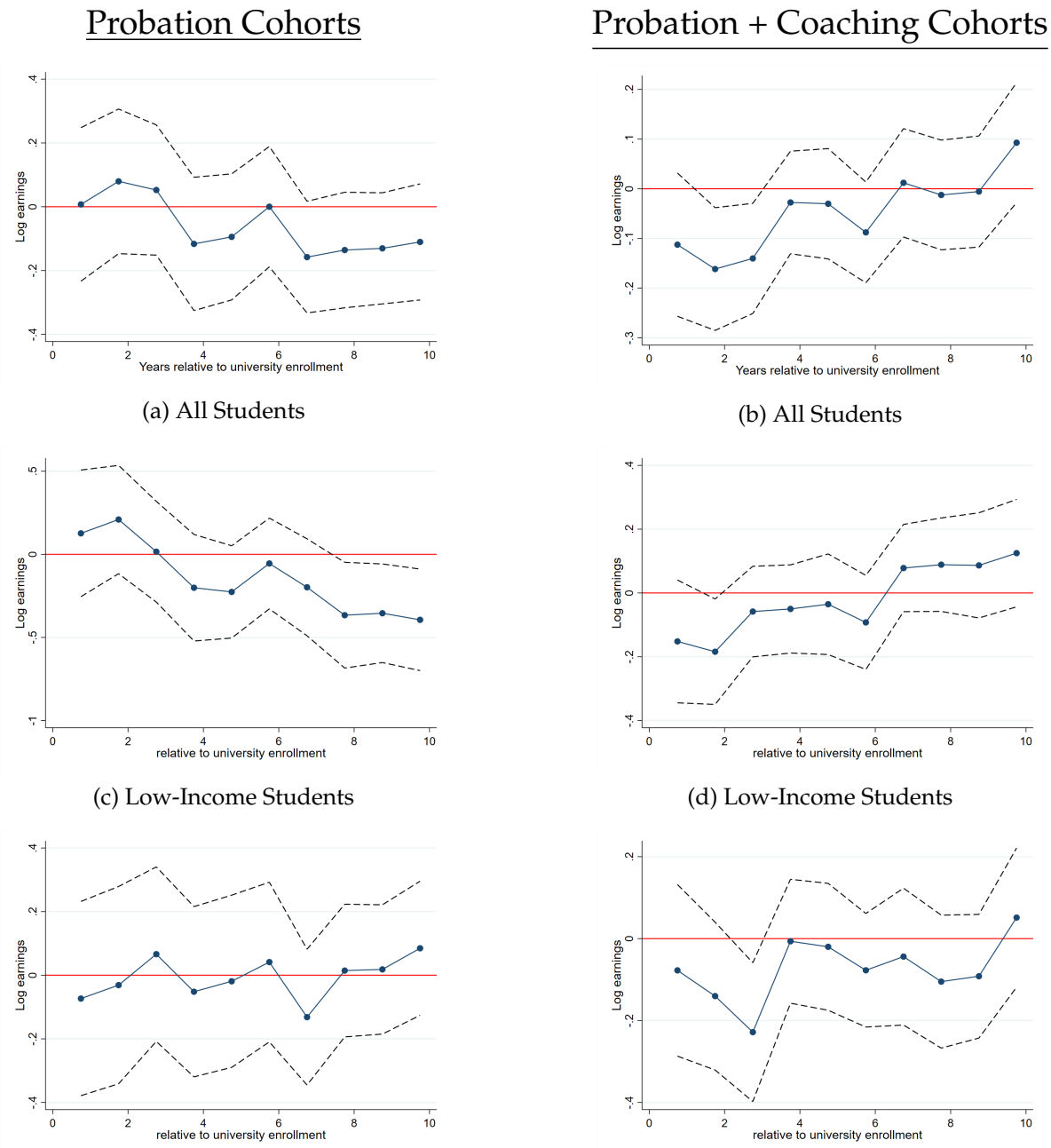
(g) Log Earnings (High-Income Students)



(h) Log Earnings (High-Income Students)

Notes: Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Probation-only cohort figures include students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation + coaching figures include students enrolled in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. Scatter points represent estimates from local linear regressions ranging from 0.25 to 1 GPA point on either side of the cutoff. Dashed lines show upper and lower 95% confidence intervals. Figures are based on stacked labor market outcomes measured 25 to 55 quarters after university enrollment. The last calendar quarter in the sample is 2022 Q4. Dollar amounts are adjusted to 2019 dollars using the CPI-U.

Figure A6: RD Wage Estimates Relative to University Year Enrollment



(a) All Students

(b) All Students

(c) Low-Income Students

(d) Low-Income Students

(e) High-Income Students

(f) High-Income Students

Notes: Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Probation-only cohort figures include students enrolled at the university in 2007, 2008 and a subset of colleges in 2009. Probation + Coaching figures include students enrolled in select colleges in 2009 and all cohorts from 2010 to 2017. Scatter points represent RD estimates of the effect of probation on log earnings relative to year of university enrollment. Dashed lines show upper and lower 95% confidence intervals. RD estimates are from local linear regressions using a triangular kernel and a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points.

B Appendix Tables

Table A1: Baseline Covariates Balance Check

	(1) SAT Math	(2) SAT Reading	(3) Female	(4) Non-White	(5) CA Resident	(6) Pell Elig.	(7) EFC <$30K	(8) Father College	(9) Mother College
Panel A: Bandwidth = 0.50									
Probation	11.989*	1.786	−0.044	−0.051	0.036	0.006	0.024	−0.037	−0.008
	(7.146)	(8.420)	(0.046)	(0.056)	(0.028)	(0.045)	(0.056)	(0.050)	(0.049)
Probation + Coaching	4.953	7.371	−0.041	−0.003	0.010	0.001	0.014	0.027	0.030
	(3.858)	(5.145)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Observations (Prob.)	1,891	1,808	1,897	1,898	1,898	1,898	1,898	1,898	1,898
Observations (Prob. + Coaching)	6,398	5,045	6,615	6,615	6,615	6,615	6,615	6,615	6,615
Panel B: Bandwidth = 0.75									
Probation	9.735	3.780	−0.028	−0.040	0.026	0.018	−0.005	−0.020	−0.000
	(5.977)	(6.872)	(0.039)	(0.045)	(0.021)	(0.036)	(0.045)	(0.040)	(0.039)
Probation + Coaching	5.738	3.385	−0.014	−0.034	0.016	0.018	−0.031	−0.011	0.010
	(5.641)	(6.271)	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.019)	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.037)	(0.036)
Observations (Prob.)	3,042	2,882	3,053	3,055	3,055	3,055	3,055	3,055	3,055
Observations (Prob. + Coaching)	3,089	2,926	3,100	3,102	3,102	3,102	3,102	3,102	3,102

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. Each point estimate is from a separate RD regression using either a bandwidth of 0.50 or 0.75 with a triangular kernel. All regressions include cohort and college fixed effects. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A2: 'Donut' RD Estimates of Probation Policies on Academic Outcomes

	First-Year GPA (1)	First-Year Dropout (2)	6-Year Graduation (3)
Panel A: All Students			
Probation Effect	0.056	0.094***	−0.071
	(0.085)	(0.034)	(0.046)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.241***	0.022	0.009
	(0.049)	(0.019)	(0.033)
Observations (Prob.)	2,800	2,908	2,908
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	10,052	10,499	5,616
Panel B: Low-Income			
Probation Effect	−0.125	0.131**	−0.233***
	(0.132)	(0.057)	(0.069)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.262***	−0.001	−0.021
	(0.071)	(0.028)	(0.049)
Observations (Prob.)	1,005	1,046	1,046
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	4,573	4,764	2,556
Panel C: High-Income			
Probation Effect	0.167	0.071	0.042
	(0.108)	(0.044)	(0.058)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.220***	0.041	0.031
	(0.068)	(0.027)	(0.046)
Observations (Prob.)	1,795	1,862	1,862
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	5,479	5,735	3,060

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. The sample size for the 6-year graduation outcome in column (3) is reduced since it cannot be observed for later cohorts. Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Each point estimate is from a separate 'Donut' RD regression that excludes the heaping point at the 2.0 GPA cutoff. All local linear RD regressions use a triangular kernel with a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as cohort and college fixed effects. GPA outcomes are standardized by cohort. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A3: Probation Policies Within the Pilot Colleges, Across Cohorts

	First-Year GPA (1)	First-Year Dropout (2)	6-Year Graduation (3)
Panel A: All Students			
Probation Only (2007–08)	0.067	0.114***	−0.093**
	(0.074)	(0.032)	(0.040)
Probation + Coaching (2009)	0.422***	0.001	0.013
	(0.137)	(0.054)	(0.067)
Observations (2007–08)	2,978	3,083	3,083
Observations (2009)	1,191	1,257	1,257
Panel B: Low-Income			
Probation Only (2007–08)	0.003	0.144***	−0.224***
	(0.117)	(0.052)	(0.060)
Probation + Coaching (2009)	0.432*	0.044	0.020
	(0.236)	(0.097)	(0.098)
Observations (2007–08)	1,053	1,089	1,089
Observations (2009)	470	500	500
Panel C: High-Income			
Probation Only (2007–08)	0.099	0.092**	0.015
	(0.096)	(0.043)	(0.052)
Probation + Coaching (2009)	0.448***	−0.039	0.022
	(0.170)	(0.070)	(0.093)
Observations (2007–08)	1,925	1,994	1,994
Observations (2009)	721	757	757

Notes: The sample is restricted throughout to the four colleges that adopted the coaching pilot in fall 2009: the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Engineering, and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. The grouping is defined by 2009 adoption status, including for the 2007–08 cohorts, when no coaching program existed at the university. "Probation Only" rows use the 2007–08 entering cohorts; "Probation + Coaching" rows use the 2009 entering cohort and are identical to the corresponding estimates in Table 4. Each point estimate is from a separate local linear RD regression at the 2.0 GPA threshold using a uniform kernel with a bandwidth of 1 GPA point, with controls for gender, race, and parents' education and college fixed effects (cohort fixed effects included in the pooled 2007–08 rows). The probation criterion and notification process were identical across all cohorts shown. Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. GPA outcomes are standardized by cohort. Coefficients are reported as policy effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A4: 'Donut' RD Estimates of Probation Policies on Labor Market Outcomes

	Observed Positive Earnings (1)	Log Earnings (2)
Panel A: All Students		
Probation Effect	0.045	−0.054
	(0.034)	(0.074)
Probation + Coaching Effect	−0.010	0.060
	(0.024)	(0.048)
Observations (Prob.)	89,538	63,792
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	140,232	96,751
Panel B: Low-Income		
Probation Effect	−0.026	−0.242**
	(0.052)	(0.121)
Probation + Coaching Effect	0.005	0.087
	(0.034)	(0.070)
Observations (Prob.)	32,293	23,242
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	63,098	43,646
Panel C: High-Income		
Probation Effect	0.088**	0.065
	(0.044)	(0.089)
Probation + Coaching Effect	−0.022	0.034
	(0.034)	(0.066)
Observations (Prob.)	57,245	40,550
Observations (Prob. + Coach)	77,134	53,105

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Each point estimate is from a separate 'Donut' RD regression that excludes the heaping point at the 2.0 GPA cutoff. All local linear RD regressions use a triangular kernel with a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as cohort and college fixed effects. Labor market outcomes are measured 25–55 quarters after university enrollment. The last calendar quarter in the sample is 2022 Q4. Dollar amounts are adjusted to 2019 dollars using the CPI-U. Standard errors clustered at the individual level are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A5: Persistence at University by Year for each Policy

	(1) Complete Yr 2 (or Graduate)	(2) Complete Yr 3 (or Graduate)	(3) Complete Yr 4 (or Graduate)	(4) Complete Yr 5 (or Graduate)	(5) Complete Yr 6 (or Graduate)
Panel A: Probation Only					
All Students	−0.088**	−0.052	−0.058	−0.066	−0.064
	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.045)
Low-income	−0.131**	−0.173***	−0.204***	−0.189***	−0.190***
	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.066)
High-income	−0.050	0.040	0.052	0.028	0.034
	(0.050)	(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Observations (All)	3,053	3,053	3,053	3,053	3,053
Observations (Low-Income)	1,109	1,109	1,109	1,109	1,109
Observations (High-Income)	1,944	1,944	1,944	1,944	1,944
Panel B: Probation + Coaching					
All Students	−0.018	0.015	0.027	0.017	0.029
	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Low-income	−0.009	0.005	0.033	0.014	0.035
	(0.042)	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.046)
High-income	−0.025	0.021	0.020	0.015	0.020
	(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.044)
Observations (All)	5,898	5,898	5,898	5,898	5,898
Observations (Low-Income)	2,697	2,697	2,697	2,697	2,697
Observations (High-Income)	3,201	3,201	3,201	3,201	3,201

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Each point estimate is from a separate RD regression. All local linear RD regressions use a triangular kernel with a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as cohort and college fixed effects. GPA outcomes are standardized by cohort. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A6: Mechanisms: Years of Education, Major Switching, Forced Dropout and Financial Aid Eligibility

	(1) Years of Education	(2) Switch Major	(3) GPA $<$ 1.5 (Yr 1)	(4) GPA $<$ 2.0 (Yr 1)	(5) Completion $<$ 67%	(6) Lose Aid (Either)
Panel A: Probation Only						
All Students	−0.318*	0.003	0.018	0.012	0.017	0.015
	(0.187)	(0.037)	(0.019)	(0.037)	(0.024)	(0.038)
Low-SES	−0.895***	0.021	0.047	0.026	0.015	0.039
	(0.294)	(0.052)	(0.037)	(0.063)	(0.042)	(0.066)
High-SES	0.127	−0.009	−0.006	−0.005	0.015	−0.009
	(0.227)	(0.048)	(0.018)	(0.045)	(0.031)	(0.047)
Observations (All)	3,053	3,053	2,952	2,952	2,952	2,952
Observations (Low-Income)	1,109	1,109	1,071	1,071	1,071	1,071
Observations (High-Income)	1,944	1,944	1,881	1,881	1,881	1,881
Panel B: Probation + Coaching						
All Students	−0.004	0.011	−0.003	−0.020	−0.028***	−0.033*
	(0.106)	(0.021)	(0.010)	(0.019)	(0.011)	(0.019)
Low-SES	0.000	0.022	−0.026**	−0.066**	−0.041***	−0.075***
	(0.151)	(0.031)	(0.013)	(0.027)	(0.015)	(0.028)
High-SES	−0.003	−0.003	0.019	0.026	−0.015	0.008
	(0.149)	(0.028)	(0.015)	(0.026)	(0.014)	(0.026)
Observations (All)	7,288	10,958	10,545	10,545	10,545	10,545
Observations (Low-Income)	3,319	4,994	4,825	4,825	4,825	4,825
Observations (High-Income)	3,969	5,964	5,720	5,720	5,720	5,720

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Each point estimate is from a separate RD regression. All local linear RD regressions use a triangular kernel with a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as cohort and college fixed effects. Columns (4)–(6) measure financial-aid eligibility under the university's Satisfactory Academic Progress rules: a student loses eligibility for need-based aid if, by the end of the first year, cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 (column 4), the cumulative completion ratio (credits earned divided by credits attempted) falls below 67% (column 5), or either condition holds (column 6). Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A7: RD Estimates of Probation Policies on First-Year Course Load

	Winter (Q2)			Spring (Q3)		
	(1) ≥12	(2) ≥15	(3) Credits	(4) ≥12	(5) ≥15	(6) Credits
Panel A: Probation Only						
All Students	0.007	0.021	−0.051	0.002	−0.061	−0.311
	(0.015)	(0.044)	(0.183)	(0.016)	(0.045)	(0.192)
Low-SES	0.017	−0.001	−0.155	−0.016	−0.116	−0.452
	(0.021)	(0.068)	(0.283)	(0.026)	(0.071)	(0.301)
High-SES	0.000	0.034	0.017	0.013	−0.027	−0.247
	(0.021)	(0.060)	(0.252)	(0.021)	(0.061)	(0.256)
Observations (All)	2,991	2,991	2,991	2,952	2,952	2,952
Observations (Low-Income)	1,084	1,084	1,084	1,071	1,071	1,071
Observations (High-Income)	1,907	1,907	1,907	1,881	1,881	1,881
Panel B: Probation + Coaching						
All Students	−0.002	−0.026	−0.010	−0.009	−0.011	−0.104
	(0.007)	(0.026)	(0.109)	(0.008)	(0.026)	(0.115)
Low-SES	−0.010	−0.017	0.004	0.001	−0.033	−0.148
	(0.010)	(0.037)	(0.156)	(0.010)	(0.036)	(0.158)
High-SES	0.006	−0.033	−0.004	−0.017	0.006	−0.078
	(0.009)	(0.036)	(0.152)	(0.014)	(0.037)	(0.160)
Observations (All)	10,731	10,731	10,731	10,545	10,545	10,545
Observations (Low-Income)	4,902	4,902	4,902	4,825	4,825	4,825
Observations (High-Income)	5,829	5,829	5,829	5,720	5,720	5,720

Notes: The "probation sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled at the university in entering fall cohorts 2007, 2008 and 2009 (select faculties). The "probation + coaching sample" includes all first-time freshmen enrolled in entering fall cohorts 2009 (select faculties) up until 2017. Low-income students are those eligible for need-based federal aid (Expected Family Contribution below $30,000); high-income students are all others, including students who did not file a FAFSA. Outcomes are measured in the winter (Q2) and spring (Q3) quarters of the first year, the quarters following placement on probation at the end of the fall quarter, and are defined for students enrolled in the relevant quarter. Columns (1) and (4) are indicators for attempting a full-time load of at least 12 units; columns (2) and (5) are indicators for attempting a full on-track load of at least 15 units; columns (3) and (6) are total credits attempted. Each point estimate is from a separate RD regression. All local linear RD regressions use a triangular kernel with a bandwidth of 0.75 GPA points and include controls for gender, race, and parents' education as well as cohort and college fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates that the policy increases the outcome. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A8: Effects on Individual Survey Questions by Index (2013 Survey)

Panel A: Help-Seeking & Belonging	Knows Student Services	Asks Clarifying Questions in Class	Number of Faculty Office Hours/Quarter	Asks Family, Friends or Others for Help	Feels Connected to University
Post	0.749***	0.214***	1.098***	0.167***	0.000
	(0.030)	(0.036)	(0.306)	(0.034)	(0.026)
Pre-Survey Mean	0.191	0.651	4.260	0.749	0.870
Obs.	430	430	430	430	430

Panel B: Academic Engagement & Effort	Attends Class	Study Hours/Week	Completes Assigned Readings	Studies in Advance for Test vs "Cramming"	Studies Despite Distractions	Prioritizes Study Time	Manages Time Well
Post	0.042	4.465***	0.098***	0.177***	0.065**	0.140***	0.260***
	(0.034)	(0.411)	(0.027)	(0.033)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.033)
Pre-Survey Mean	0.735	13.547	0.837	0.735	0.847	0.819	0.642
Obs.	430	430	430	430	430	430	430

Panel C: Study Skills	Takes Time to Revise Writing	Class Notes Help Prepare Adequately for Tests	Reviews Notes After Poor Test	Adjusts to Instructor Teaching Style	Retains Homework Information	Recalls Class Material	Easily and Effectively Communicates Thoughts
Post	0.121***	0.056**	0.330***	0.242***	0.074***	0.116***	0.033
	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.029)	(0.021)
Pre-Survey Mean	0.837	0.902	0.521	0.693	0.874	0.814	0.921
Obs.	430	430	430	430	430	430	430

Panel D: Academic Self-Efficacy	Confident in Taking Exams	Confident in Writing Ability	Motivated to Focus on School	Self-Motivates in Uninteresting Courses
Post	0.112***	0.065***	0.009	0.209***
	(0.034)	(0.024)	(0.017)	(0.034)
Pre-Survey Mean	0.758	0.860	0.953	0.670
Obs.	430	430	430	430

Panel E: Life Balance	Hours of Sleep/night	Hours Socializing/day	Hours Watching TV/day
Post	-0.186	-0.279	-0.586*
	(0.147)	(0.247)	(0.299)
Pre-Survey Mean	8.405	7.586	5.270
Obs.	430	430	430

Notes: The data come from pre- and post-SP program survey responses. An observation is a student-survey, where there are two survey waves (pre- and post- SP). Estimated effects are taken from regressions of individual survey questions on a post program indicator and individual fixed effects. The sample is a balanced panel of 430 observations for those participating in SP in 2013. Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are clustered at the individual level. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A9: Effects on Individual Survey Questions by Index (2015-18 Survey)

Panel A: Academic Confidence	Confident in Time Management	Confident in Decision to Attend University	Confident Will Improve Grades	Confident Will Graduate	Motivated to Focus on Academics
Post	0.181***	0.054***	-0.016**	-0.008	-0.148***
	(0.021)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.013)
Pre-Survey Mean	0.547	0.908	0.984	0.980	0.965
Observations	1,842	1,842	1,842	1,842	1,842

Panel B: Social Belonging & Resources	Knows Others Also on Probation	Can Identify Faculty or Staff Who Cares	Feels Connected to University	Knows Resources to Get Back on Track
Post	0.229***	0.425***	-0.300***	-0.041**
	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.017)
Pre-Survey Mean	0.746	0.480	0.788	0.810
Observations	1,842	1,842	1,842	1,842

Notes: The data come from pre- and post-SP program survey responses. An observation is a student-survey, where there are two survey waves (pre and post SP). Estimated effects are taken from regressions of individual survey questions on a post program indicator and individual fixed effects. The sample is a balanced panel of 1,842 observations from those participating in SP in 2015-2018. Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are clustered at the individual level. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A10: Student Perceptions of the Success Program

	(%)
Panel A: Most Beneficial Program Component	
Both equally effective	33.49
Breakout sessions (small group with coach)	53.49
Presentation (large group)	13.02
Panel B: Most Beneficial Part of Large Session	
ID ways to achieve goal GPA	13.02
ID why grades don't reflect effort	10.70
Learn about relevant policies	4.65
Learn about resources	20.93
Learn how to improve performance	7.91
More motivated to achieve goals	13.49
Reduced anxiety about performance	20.00
Nothing	6.98
Other	2.33
Panel C: Most Beneficial Part of Breakout Session	
Discussion with other students	29.30
Goal setting	24.19
Learn about resources	19.07
Nothing	6.51
Other	1.86
Reflection exercise	19.07
Panel D: Most Changed Behavior Since Program	
Increased hours of sleep per night	10.23
Increased hours studying per day	39.53
Increased visits to office hours	10.23
Increased resource utilization	6.98
Better time management	33.02
Panel E: Followed Up with Coach Later in Quarter	
Yes	79.30
No	20.70

Notes: Data comes from 2013 Survey. The table reports for each question, the shares of SP participants who report each answer.

Table A11: Academic probation support programs at other universities

University	University Characteristics	Probation Placement Criteria	Structured Academic Supports
Clemson University	number of students enrolled: 29,077; undergraduate admissions rate: 38%	Cumulative GPA < 2.0	Students on probation encouraged to participate in "Success Matters": online interactive modules focused on goal-setting, well-being, campus connections and learning about probation + meeting with academic advisor to design success plan.
University of Arizona	number of students enrolled: 56,365; undergraduate admissions rate: 86%	Cumulative GPA < 2.0	First-time probation students in College of Science required to enroll in "Making the Grade" 1.5 hour workshop: learn about university policies, how to work with academic advisor, campus resources + follow-up meeting with academic advisor.
University of Nebraska Lincoln	number of students enrolled: 24,393; undergraduate admissions rate: 87%	Term or Cumulative GPA < 2.0	Probation students required to participate in Academic Recovery Program: group intake meeting + individual meeting with coach (faculty or staff). Students develop academic plan for success and identify causes of academic struggles, encouraged to use academic support services.
University of Texas Austin	number of students enrolled: 53,864; undergraduate admissions rate: 27%	Cumulative GPA< 2.0	Academically struggling students in College of Liberal Arts can participate in "UTurn": regular one-on-one meetings with academic coach, optional peer mentoring, workshops focused on study skills, health and well-being, navigating college, time management, goal-setting.
University of Virginia	number of students enrolled: 26,409; undergraduate admissions rate: 17%	First-year students with Semester GPA$<$ 2.0 placed on academic warning	First-year students on academic warning in College of Arts & Sciences required to enroll in one-credit academic support class focused on study strategies, time management, resilience mindset.

Notes: This table summarizes academic probation policies and structured support programs for students on academic probation at a range of public 4-year universities. University characteristics are from the National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024. Information on academic probation policies and support programs is taken from the corresponding universities' websites.

C SP Workshop Materials

Campus Resource Guide

Campus Resources (Scan QR codes to learn more!)

1-3: Study Skills: Find resources and videos on popular topics such as:

- Study strategies, text anxiety tips and study guides
- Flashcards, video tutorials, interactive exercises
- Lecture note taking
- Memorization
- Learning style (Vark Questionnaire)

Study Skills

4-5: Tutoring on Campus (Location Varies)

- Free 1-1 or group tutoring for a variety of classes
- Supplemental Workshops: 1 unit workshop to go alongside certain Science and Math classes. Recap information from class, get help with study skills, test prep, and group studying.
- Study sessions: Weekly sessions made of 8-15 students for multiple subjects. Submit a request through the portal

Tutoring

6-7: Office hours can sometimes be intimidating and confusing on what you should ask. Here are some helpful tips:

- If office hours conflict with your schedule, contact professors for an alternate time to meet. They are more than happy to help out!
- Show problems on homework or tests that you were confused about, ask the professor to walk you through each steps.
- Bring in class notes that you would like more explanations on
- Explain your study strategies and ask about additional tips or tricks

Professors are very knowledgeable in their field and know of many outside resources and sometimes even internship or research opportunities, get to know them!

8-9: Associated Students, Inc. (ASI):

- Student Government
- Clubs and Organization
- Craft Center Classes
- The Recreation Center
- Activities and events

ASI

Dean of Students

- Club Sports
- Center For Service in Action
- Center for Leadership
- Fraternity & Sorority Life

Dean of Students

10: Cross Cultural Centers(Location varies)

- **Gender Equity Center-** Educating and empowering feminist, womxnist, mujerista moments though an intersectional lens and striving for social justice.
- **Men & Masculinity-** Creates spaces to express and evaluate masculinity and intersections with other identities through programs, dialogs and trainings.
- **Multicultural Center-** Provides space and events for people across all races, ethnicities, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic class, religion, citizenship and their intersections
- **Pride Center-** Provides brave spaces and events to all sexualities, gender identities and expressions. Check out their peer mentoring program!

CCCs

Student Academic Services (Location Varies)

- **Dream Center-** Offers an inclusive space and a multitude of events for all undocumented students, those in mixed-status families and their allies. Stop by for a space to study, or to hang out with friends!
- **Black Academic Excellence Center (BAEC)-** Offers a supportive and enriching environment to promote excellence among Black students on campus. Stop by their center to say hello or attend one of their events!

SAS

11-14: Campus Health and Wellbeing (Bldg. 27):

Health Services:

- Mostly free services
- Walk in or make an appointment for medical attention or advice
- Educational programs about drugs, alcohol, sexuality and other topics
- On site lab testing, X-rays, and Shots (e.g Flu, TB tests)
- Discounted Pharmacy
- After-hours nurse advice
- PULSE peer mentoring health education program, covering topics such as, drugs and alcohol use and/or recovery, physical and sexual health and mental well being.

Health & Wellbeing

Counseling Services:

- Individual, couples, group therapy sessions
- Emotional Well Being Workshops
- End of Quarter Survival Kit Workshops
- Clinicians specializing in: Anxiety, Eating Disorders, Multicultural issues, Trauma, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Suicide Prevention and many more.

Counseling Services

15-18: Basic Needs & Crisis Services (Location Varies)

Food Insecurity:

- CalFresh- Provides monthly payments to eligible students that can be used where food is sold like grocery stores, and farmers markets.
- Meal Vouchers- Students experiencing short-term financial need, can dine at 805 Kitchen during the school year and The Avenue for the summer.
- Food Pantry (Bldg 27, Lower Level)- Students can access free, packed and canned foods, frozen meals and personal hygiene products.
- Food Bank Distribution- Once a week on Mott Lawn, bags of fresh produce and food for free.

Basic Needs

Financial Hardships:

- Cares Grant- One-time grant for unexpected emergencies like, paying for tuition, academic supplies, medical expenses, emergency housing and other temporary hardships.
- Professional Clothing Closet- Free, high-quality work clothes for interviews and future internships and jobs
- Financial Aid Office: Offers daily drop in hours where students can meet with a counselor to discuss ways to cover the cost of college.

15-18 (Cont.): Crisis Services

- Safer (Bldg 65, Rm 217)- Provides confidential crisis counseling, advocacy and education and support resources by state-certified advocates. Learn about your options, rights, and other resources about sexual assault or misconduct, dating or domestic violence and stalking.

Safer

Reporting Hate Crimes

- Bias Incident Report- If you believe you have witnessed an act of discrimination or harassment on or off campus, you may file a report online though the Dean of Students.

Bias Incident Report

19-20: Career Services (Bldg. 124): Drop in or make an appointment with the Freshman Focus Team or any other Career Counselor to talk about:

- Career exploration
- Major Exploration
- Interviewing skills
- Resume and Cover letter

Career Services

21-22: Advising Centers: Have a question and don't know where to start? Visit an advisor!

College Advising Center: CAED, CAFES, CENG, CLA, CSM, OCOB,

- Course planning
- Navigating your curriculum
- Major and support related classes
- Tracking progress to degree
- Concentration

Specialty Advising

- Pre-Health Career Advising
- International/Study Abroad

Success Center (Bldg 52-D37):

- Referring you to academic and/or on-campus resources
- Understanding university and college-specific policies and procedures
- Navigating tools such as PASS and Student Center
- Change of Major process
- GE Classes
- Minors
- Transfer courses

Advising

23-24: Conflict resolution Ombuds (Library 35-113):

- If you feel that you got an unfair grade in a class
- If you feel that you got treated unfairly by someone in the University Community
- If you want to discuss a sensitive question or issue

Ombuds

25: Disability Resource Center (Bldg. 124): Provides services to those with long-term <u>or</u> short-term disabilities:

- How to request services
- Eligibility
- Information on testing for Learning Disabilities
- Possible accommodations - in and outside the classroom
- Peer Mentor Program

DRC

xx

My Success Plan

I decided to attend University X because:

_____
_____

A positive experience I have had at University X:

_____
_____

My favorite part of University X:

_____
_____

During my time at University X, I am most looking forward to:

_____
_____

Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals

S	M	A	R	T
Specific Make your goal detailed and specific to know what you are working towards	**Measurable** Set parameters so that you can identify tangible evidence towards achieving your goal	**Attainable** Draft realistic goals that challenge you but you are confident to achieve	**Relevant** Make sure each goal is consistent with other goals you have established and fits with your immediate and long-term plans	**Time-Bound** Set a time that you would like to achieve your goal by

Original Goal:		**SMART Goal:**
I want to read more	**S**: 12 books a year **M**: 1 book a month **A**: 1 hour at lunch, 1 hour before bed **R**: More than currently reading **T**: 1 book a month, 12 a year	I am going to read 1 book a month by reading for an hour during lunch and an hour before bed for a total of 12 books a year.

xx

WINTER QUARTER SMART GOAL:

Action steps:

I will complete the following action steps:

Personal	Academic	Social
(ex: *I will create a calendar/schedule to keep me on track with attending classes & completing assignments)*	**(ex: *I will use time in between classes to study, read, and review notes)***	**(ex: *I will refrain from social outings, TV, parties, social media, video games, etc. until all my homework is complete for that day)***

Resources:

I will utilize the following resources to help me achieve my goal:

(Example: I will visit the Success Center, , by Week 3 to discuss Change of Major)

1. I will visit _____located in_____by_____

   to discuss_____

2. I will visit _____located in_____by_____

   to discuss_____

Challenges: (What could stop/de-motivate me along the way?)

1. _____
2. _____

Ways to overcome my challenges:

1. _____
2. _____

Who's got your back? (The person(s) in my life that I will share my action plan with and ask to help keep me accountable for accomplishing my goal & action steps)

_____

I am fully committed to completing this success plan this quarter.

SIGN: _____DATE:_____

You will receive an email from your Coach in Week 5 to follow up on your goals and action steps. Once you have communicated with your coach and completed a post-survey, your requirements with the First Year Success Program will be fulfilled.

ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER

Weekly Schedule

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
12:00 PM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							
11:00 PM							
12:00 PM							
1:00 AM							
2:00 AM							

Quarter Schedule

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							
Week 5							
Week 6							
Week 7							
Week 8							
Week 9							
Week 10							
Week 11							
Finals							

D SP Pre- and Post-Surveys

All surveys were administered via the online platform SurveyMonkey.

Pre-Survey for Students Qualifying for SP in Fall 2013

Q1: What is your first name?

Q2: What is your last name?

Q3: What is your university email address?

Q4: Which college are you from?

Q5: In the Freshman Success Workshop, you will participate in a small group that will be led by an academic coach. An academic coach will lead a discussion and help group members develop an action plan to achieve success after being put on academic probation. Please check all the ways you wish to work with an academic coach.

- ☐ Identify resources to improve my study skills
- ☐ Generally improve my academic performance
- ☐ Identify ways to achieve my goal GPA
- ☐ Identify why my grades do not reflect my effort
- ☐ Stay motivated and on track to achieve my academic goals
- ☐ Learn about relevant policies
- ☐ Reduce anxiety and stress about my academic performance
- ☐ Complete the Freshman Success Workshop
- ☐ Other, please explain

Q6: On average, how many hours per week do you study?

Q7: On average, how many hours do you sleep each night?

Q8: How many times did you attend faculty office hours last quarter?

Q9: How many hours each day do you spend socializing or doing extracurricular activities?

Q10: How many hours each day do you spend watching TV, going on Facebook, gaming, etc.?

Q11: Please read the below prompts and respond to each with one of the following options: "Always, Sometimes or Rarely".

- ☐ I feel motivated to focus on school.
- ☐ I complete the assigned reading for all my classes.
- ☐ My class notes help me prepare adequately for a test.
- ☐ I retain the information I read for homework assignments.
- ☐ I feel confident about my writing ability.
- ☐ I take the time to revise my writing to make it clear, correct, and consistent.
- ☐ I easily and effectively communicate my thoughts.

- ☐ When I do not understand my professor, I ask the right questions to clarify.
- ☐ I easily remember things I learn in class.
- ☐ At the end of a lecture, I can summarize what was presented.
- ☐ I feel confident when taking an exam.
- ☐ When I think I did poorly on a test I just finished, I go back to my notes and review all the information I had forgotten.
- ☐ I prepare in advance for a test rather than ”cramming” the night before.
- ☐ I manage my time well.
- ☐ I change my other priorities to have enough time for studying and completing course assignments.
- ☐ I can successfully balance many aspects of my life (such as friends, family, school, work, extracurricular, etc.).
- ☐ I study even when less important things distract me.
- ☐ When I have to take a course that doesn't interest me, I find a way to motivate myself to earn a good grade.
- ☐ I attend my classes regularly.
- ☐ I ask for help from family members, friends, or other appropriate individuals when needed.
- ☐ I know about the student services offered by Cal Poly and know how to use them.
- ☐ I easily adjust my learning style to my instructors' teaching styles.
- ☐ I feel connected to a community at Cal Poly.

Post-Survey for Students Qualifying for SP in Fall 2013

Q1: What is your first name?

Q2: What is your last name?

Q3: What is your university email address?

Q4: Which college are you from?

Q5: What day and time did you attend a workshop?

Q6: Please rate your academic coach in the following areas by selecting "Excellent, Average, Below Average, or Not Applicable" for each of the following:

- ☐ Approachability
- ☐ Knowledge
- ☐ Preparation

Q7: Which part of the Freshman Success Program was most effective? (select one)

- ☐ The presentation at the beginning
- ☐ The breakout session
- ☐ Both were equally effective

Q8: What did you find most beneficial from the big session? (please select one)

- ☐ Identified resources to improve my study skills
- ☐ Identified ways to achieve my goal GPA
- ☐ Identified why my grades do not reflect my effort
- ☐ Learned about relevant policies
- ☐ Learned how to improve my academic performance
- ☐ More motivated and on track to achieve my academic goals
- ☐ Reduced anxiety and stress about my academic performance
- ☐ I didn't find anything beneficial from this session
- ☐ Other (please explain)

Q9: What did you find most beneficial from the small group breakout session? (please select one)

- ☐ Discussion with other students
- ☐ Learning about resources
- ☐ SMART goals/goal setting
- ☐ The Self-Evaluation
- ☐ I didn't find anything beneficial from this session
- ☐ Other (please explain)

Q10: As a result of attending the Freshman Success Program, I am more likely to...(check all that apply)

- ☐ Attend class
- ☐ Do the assigned reading
- ☐ Manage my time more efficiently
- ☐ Seek out resources I need
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please explain)

Q11: Next year, if we were to incorporate a student panel (video) segment into the big presentation of previous students on academic probation, would you be interested in participating?

Q12: In what area do you think your behavior has changed the most this quarter? (please select one)

- ☐ Increased the number of hours of sleep per night
- ☐ Increased the number of hours spent studying per day
- ☐ Increased the number of visits to office hours
- ☐ Managing my time better
- ☐ Utilizing campus resources

Q13: So far this quarter, how many hours per week do you study?

Q14: So far this quarter, on average, how many hours do you sleep each night?

Q15: So far this quarter, how many times have you been to faculty office hours?

Q16: So far this quarter, how many hours each week do you spend socializing or doing extracurricular activities?

Q17: So far this quarter, how many hours each week do you spend watching TV, going on Facebook, gaming, etc.?

Q18: Please read the below prompts and respond to each with one of the following options: Always, Sometimes or Rarely.

- ☐ I feel motivated to focus on school.
- ☐ I complete the assigned reading for all of my classes.
- ☐ My class notes help me prepare adequately for a test.
- ☐ I retain the information I read for homework assignments.
- ☐ I feel confident about my writing ability.
- ☐ I take the time to revise my writing to make it clear, correct, and consistent.
- ☐ I easily and effectively communicate my thoughts.
- ☐ When I don't understand my professor, I ask the right questions to clarify.
- ☐ I easily remember things I learn in class.
- ☐ At the end of a lecture, I am able to summarize what was presented.
- ☐ I feel confident when taking an exam.
- ☐ When I think I did poorly on a test I just finished, I go back to my notes and locate all the information I had forgotten.

- ☐ I prepare in advance for a test rather than ”cramming” the night before.
- ☐ I manage my time well.
- ☐ I change my other priorities to have enough time for studying and completing course assignments.
- ☐ I can successfully balance many aspects of my life (such as friends, family, school, work, extracurricular, etc.).
- ☐ I study even when less important things distract me.
- ☐ When I have to take a course that doesn't interest me, I can find a way to motivate myself to earn a good grade.
- ☐ I attend my classes regularly.
- ☐ I ask for help from family members, friends, or other appropriate individuals when needed.
- ☐ I know about the student services offered by Cal Poly and know how to use them.
- ☐ I easily adjust my learning style to my instructors' teaching styles.
- ☐ Although I exert great effort, my grades are lower than I expect them to be.
- ☐ I feel connected to a community at Cal Poly.

Q19: Do you have any additional comments you would like to add?

Pre-Survey for Students Qualifying for SP in Fall or Winter 2015-2018

Q1: What is your first name?

Q2: What is your last name?

Q3: What is your university email address?

Q4: Which college are you from?

Q5: What is your major?

Q6: After taking the StrengthsFinder assessment, what are your top five strengths?

Q7: Which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I know I am not the only one on academic probation at Cal Poly.
- ☐ I feel as though I am the only one on academic probation at Cal Poly.

Q8: Which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I can identify a staff or faculty member at Cal Poly who cares about my success.
- ☐ I am looking for a staff or faculty member at Cal Poly who cares about my success.

Q9: Looking back at Fall Quarter, were there internal factors affecting your academic performance? Mark up to three that apply to you regarding your Fall Quarter academic difficulties.

- ☐ I could not find motivation to focus on academics.
- ☐ I felt like I did not have the appropriate study skills to succeed.
- ☐ I managed my time poorly.
- ☐ I did not attend all my classes.
- ☐ I recognized that I was having difficulty, but I was not comfortable seeking campus resources.
- ☐ I focused on extracurricular activities more than I should have.
- ☐ None of the above (no internal factors affected my academic performance).
- ☐ Other (please explain).

Q10: Looking back at Fall Quarter, were there external factors affecting your academic performance? Mark up to three that apply to you regarding your Fall Quarter academic difficulties.

- ☐ I had roommate issues that kept me from studying.
- ☐ I do not like my major and, therefore, did not do well in my classes.
- ☐ I had mostly General Education classes and was not interested in my classes.
- ☐ I got sick and missed too many classes.
- ☐ I had a personal crisis and had to focus my energy in other areas besides school.
- ☐ I had a bad professor(s) during Fall Quarter, which led to me being on Academic Probation.
- ☐ I did not have a choice in my block enrolled schedule, so I didn't like the times I had classes.
- ☐ None of the above (no external factors affected my academic performance).
- ☐ Other (please explain).

Q11: Which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I know of at least one campus resource that will help me get back on track.
- ☐ I do not know of at least one campus resource that will help me get back on track.

Q12: List your involvement in campus clubs, organizations, or activities.

Q13: List your interests outside of your academic life.

Q14: Which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I am motivated to focus on my academics at Cal Poly.
- ☐ I am not motivated to focus on my academics at Cal Poly.

Q15: Which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I feel connected to Cal Poly.
- ☐ I do not feel connected to Cal Poly.

Q16: Which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I am confident in my time management skills.
- ☐ I am not confident in my time management skills.

Q17: How confident are you in your decision to attend Cal Poly?

Q18: How confident are you that you will be able to get your grades up enough to be taken off academic probation by the end of Winter Quarter?

Q19: How confident are you that you will graduate from Cal Poly?

Post-Survey for Students Qualifying for SP in Fall or Winter 2015-2018

Q1: What is your first name?

Q2: What is your last name?

Q3: What is your university email address?

Q4: Which college are you from?

Q5: After the First Year Success Program, which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I know I am not the only one on academic probation at Cal Poly.
- ☐ I feel as though I am the only one on academic probation at Cal Poly.

Q6: After the First Year Success Program, which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I can identify a staff or faculty member at Cal Poly who cares about my success.
- ☐ I still have not yet found a staff or faculty member at Cal Poly who cares about my success.

Q7: Looking back at Fall Quarter, were there internal factors affecting your academic performance? Mark up to three that apply to you regarding your Fall Quarter academic difficulties.

- ☐ I could not find motivation to focus on academics.
- ☐ I felt like I did not have the appropriate study skills to succeed.
- ☐ I managed my time poorly.
- ☐ I did not attend all my classes.
- ☐ I recognized that I was having difficulty, but I was not comfortable seeking campus resources.
- ☐ I focused on extracurricular activities more than I should have.
- ☐ None of the above (no internal factors affected my academic performance).
- ☐ Other (please explain).

Q8: Looking back at Fall Quarter, were there external factors affecting your academic performance? Mark up to three that apply to you regarding your Fall Quarter academic difficulties.

- ☐ I had roommate issues that kept me from studying.
- ☐ I do not like my major and, therefore, did not do well in my classes.
- ☐ I had mostly General Education classes and was not interested in my classes.
- ☐ I got sick and missed too many classes.
- ☐ I had a personal crisis and had to focus my energy in other areas besides school.
- ☐ I had a bad professor(s) during Fall Quarter, which led to me being on Academic Probation.
- ☐ I did not have a choice in my block enrolled schedule, so I didn't like the times I had classes.
- ☐ None of the above (no external factors affected my academic performance).
- ☐ Other (please explain).

Q9: Do you feel that incorporating your top five strengths helped you come up with a relevant and productive Winter Quarter goal?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please explain)

Q10: After the First Year Success Program, which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I know of at least one campus resource that will help me get back on track.
- ☐ I do not know of at least one campus resource that will help me get back on track.

Q11: Which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ After identifying a resource (academic advising, Career Services, professor's office hours, etc.) in the First Year Success Program, I have not utilized this resource by the time of completing this survey.
- ☐ After identifying a resource (academic advising, Career Services, professor's office hours, etc.) in the First Year Success Program, I have utilized this resource by the time of completing this survey.

Q12: After the First Year Success Program, which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I am more motivated to focus on my academics at Cal Poly.
- ☐ I am equally as motivated to focus on my academics at Cal Poly as before the program.

Q13: After the First Year Success Program, which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I feel more connected to Cal Poly.
- ☐ I feel equally as connected to Cal Poly as before the program.

Q14: After the First Year Success Program, which statement best applies to you?

- ☐ I am more confident in my time management skills.
- ☐ I am equally as confident in my time management skills as before the program.

Q15: After the First Year Success Program, how confident are you in your decision to attend Cal Poly?

Q16: After the First Year Success Program, how confident are you that you will be able to get your grades up enough to be taken off academic probation by the end of Winter Quarter?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not confident

Q17: After the First Year Success Program, how confident are you that you will graduate from Cal Poly?