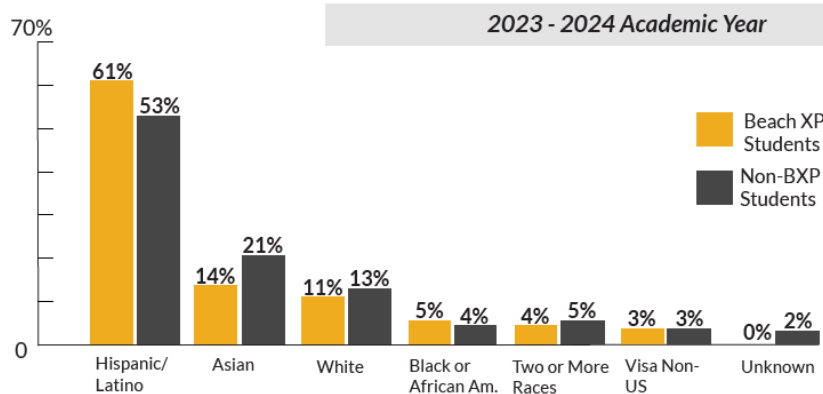# Report on First Year Persistence

2023-2024

Introduction

On a mission to increase first-year persistence and empower students to foster long-lasting connections at CSU Long Beach, the campus came together in Fall 2023 to launch its first-ever sweeping learning community program, the Beach Experience (Beach XP). Beach XP represents the university's commitment to supporting incoming first-year students in their academic and social transitions.

Offering a true holistic approach, the program fosters community building through smaller college-specific learning cohorts. Students meet weekly for first-year experience courses and scheduled activity hours that create a consistent space for them to engage, connect, and support one another. This structure also expands their access to important opportunities and campus resources, at the same time nurturing a staff culture of collaboration that bridges gaps in our pursuit to become a student-ready university.

In its inaugural year, Beach XP served 742 students (13% of the incoming cohort). In this first year, colleges recruited students to participate on a mostly opt-in basis, while also trying to target students most in need of support. In terms of demographics, Beach XP students represented the larger CSULB student population.

2023 - 2024 Academic Year

Chart legend:
- Beach XP Students
- Non-BXP Students

Category	Beach XP Students	Non-BXP Students
Hispanic/Latino	61%	53%
Asian	14%	21%
White	11%	13%
Black or African Am.	5%	4%
Two or More Races	4%	5%
Visa Non-US	3%	3%
Unknown	0%	2%

Other Demographics	Beach XP	Fall 2023 FTFY
Female	68%	60%
1st Gen	30%	29%
Pell-Eligible	57%	52%
Local	36%	37%

Overall Persistence

The COVID-19 global pandemic had devastating effects on college enrollment across the nation. Students that did enroll may have experienced gaps in their high school academic preparation and many struggled with the transition back to in-person instruction. These factors led to lower persistence after the first year, which will ultimately yield declining graduation rates and degree completion.

At CSU Long Beach, our first-year persistence rates dropped below 86% for the post-pandemic 2021 and 2022 cohorts. However, our 2023 persistence rates are back up, indicating that our dedicated efforts to supporting student retention are on track toward reversing this downward trend.

**First-Year Persistence Rate by Cohort 2018-2023**
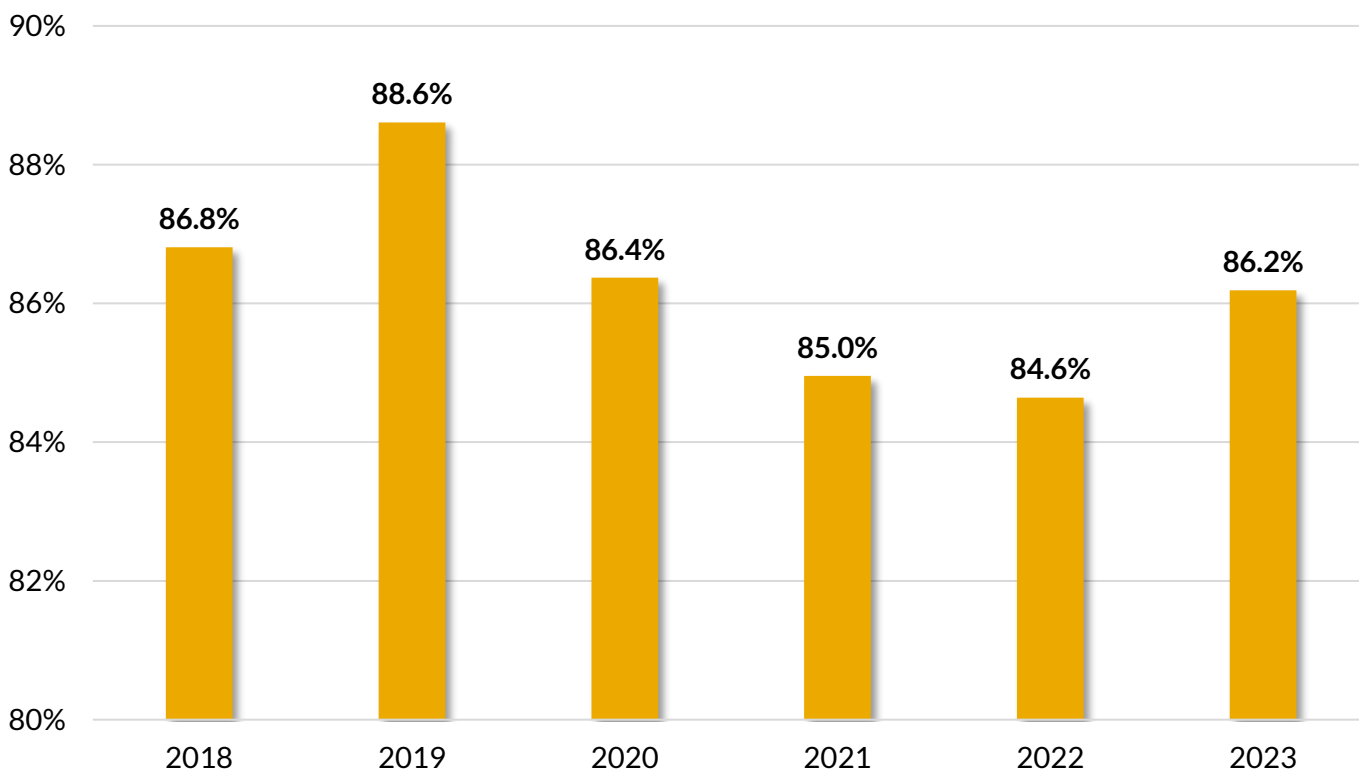
Overall	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Headcount	4,912	5,161	4,908	4,865	5,365	5,756
Persistence Count	4,264	4,573	4,239	4,133	4,541	4,961
Persistence Rate	86.8%	88.6%	86.4%	85.0%	84.6%	86.2%

Beach XP Persistence

In addition to our overall persistence rates being up, the 742 students who participated in Beach XP had higher persistence than their peers who did not participate. Coupled with qualitative testimonials from students, faculty, and the campus community, there is promising evidence that this program has had an overall positive effect on student success.

First-Year Persistence Rate by Cohort and Beach XP Participation

2021	2022	2023	Beach XP	Non-Beach XP
85.0%	84.6%	86.2%	87.5%	86.0%
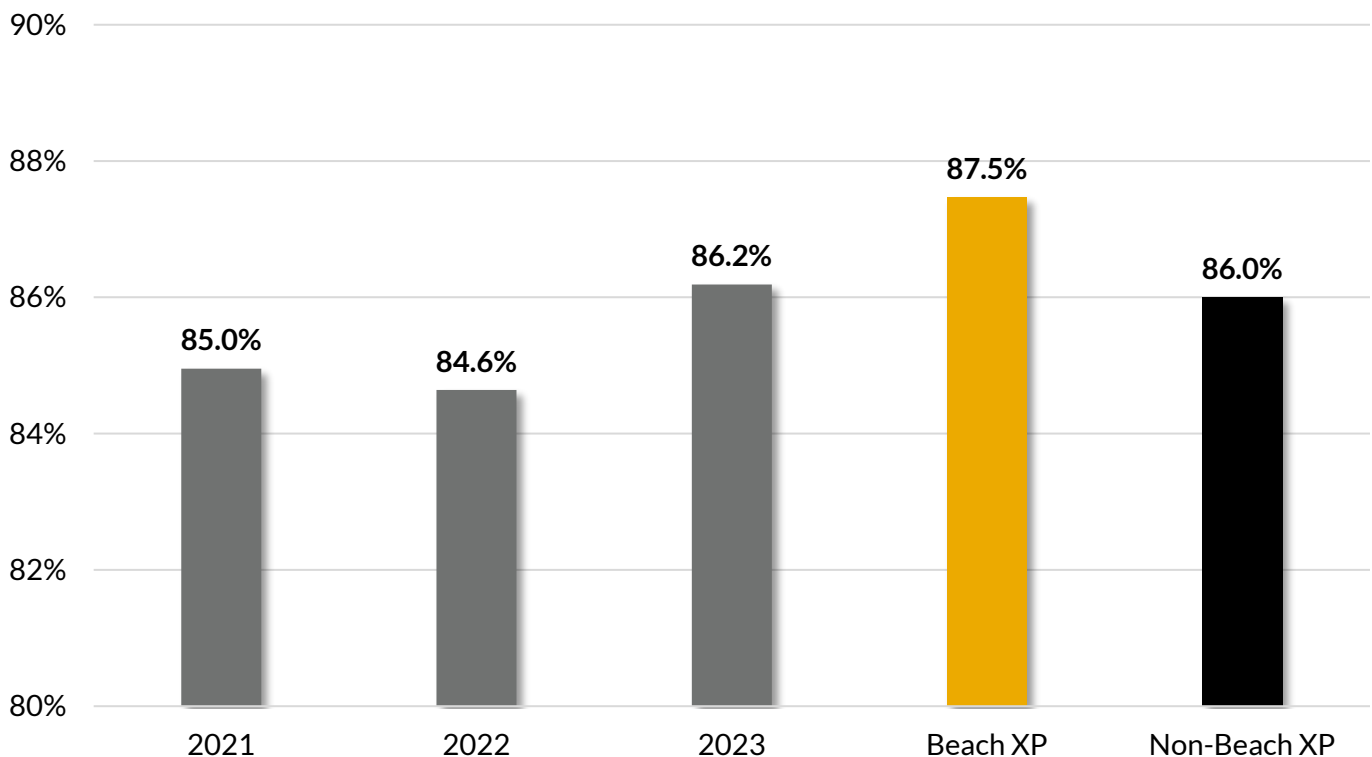
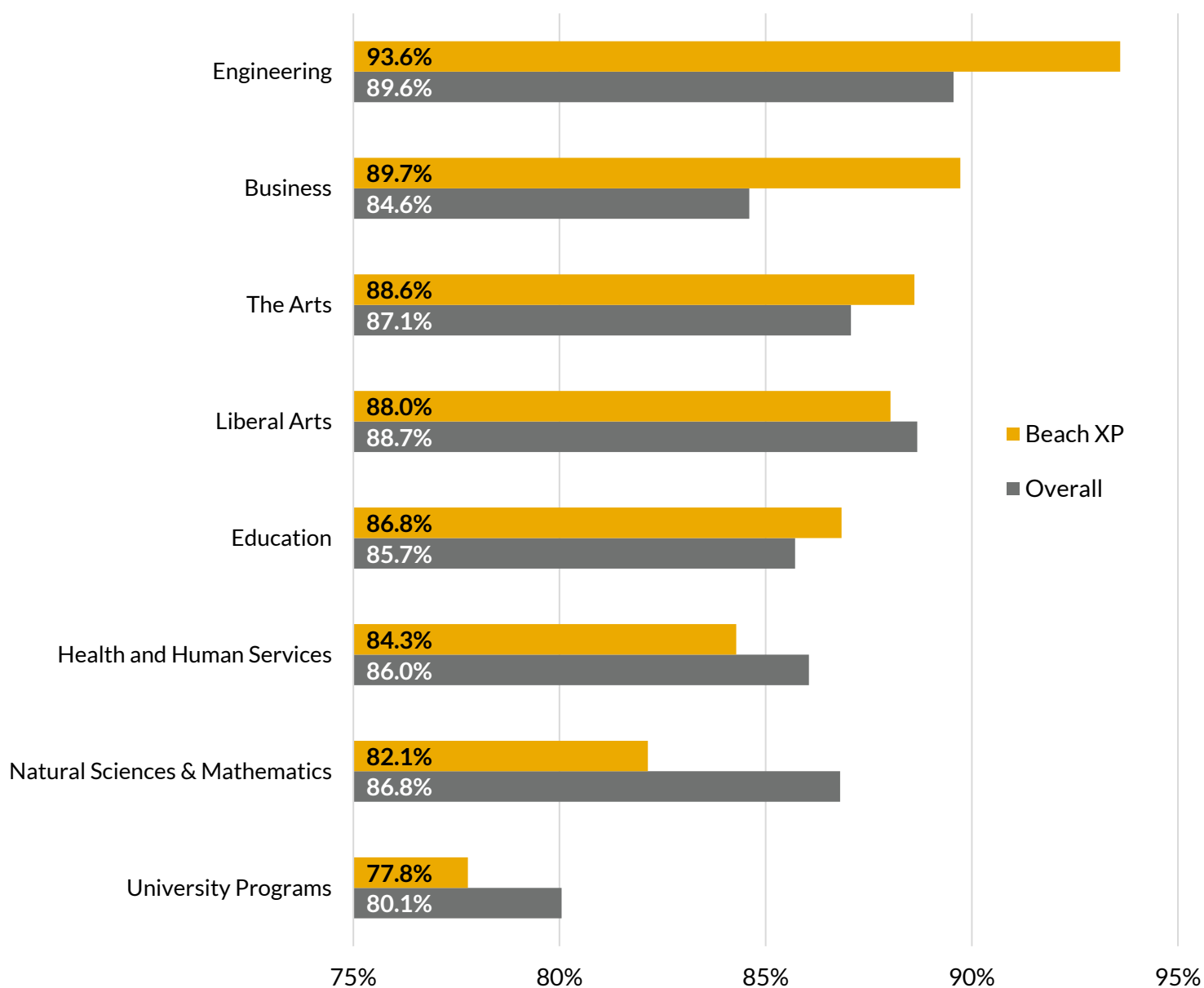| Beach XP Trends	2021	2022	2023	Beach XP	Non-Beach XP
Headcount	4,865	5,365	5,756	742	5,014
Persistence Count	4,133	4,541	4,961	649	4,312
Persistence Rate	85.0%	84.6%	86.2%	87.5%	86.0%

"I enjoyed the friendships and relationships made in the classroom. It helped build the strongest relationships I have personally on this campus. I became friends with classmates who ultimately became great people to be with even outside of the classroom setting." – BXP student

"Beach XP program built a sense of community fast amongst the students! This was the best attendance, best grades, and best participation in class that I've ever had teaching this class." – BXP Faculty

Beach XP Persistence by College

Each of the seven academic colleges and the University Center for Undergraduate Advising (UCUA) developed a college-specific experience for students in the Beach XP program that considered major-specific curriculum, college services and resources, and the unique needs of their student populations. For Fall 2023, the College of Engineering has both the highest Beach XP and overall persistence, while the College of Business has the second highest Beach XP persistence and the College of Liberal Arts the second highest overall persistence.

First-Year Persistence by College and Beach XP Participation

| College	Beach XP	Overall
Engineering	93.6%	89.6%
Business	89.7%	84.6%
The Arts	88.6%	87.1%
Liberal Arts	88.0%	88.7%
Education	86.8%	85.7%
Health and Human Services	84.3%	86.0%
Natural Sciences & Mathematics	82.1%	86.8%
University Programs	77.8%	80.1%

Historical Persistence by College

A closer look at persistence trends by college over the last couple of years show how much progress has been made. When comparing the Fall 2022 and Fall 2023 cohorts, all colleges except Education had higher overall persistence in 2023 (highlighted in yellow below). Looking at Beach XP in particular, the Colleges of Business, Education, Engineering, and The Arts had higher persistence among Beach XP students than their overall population (highlighted in green below).

College		2021	2022	2023	Beach XP	Non-Beach XP
Business	Headcount	522	622	682	107	575
	Persistence Count	437	509	577	96	481
	Persistence Rate	83.7%	81.8%	84.6%	89.7%	83.7%
Education	Headcount	90	101	133	38	95
	Persistence Count	80	89	114	33	81
	Persistence Rate	88.9%	88.1%	85.7%	86.8%	85.3%
Engineering	Headcount	739	828	900	125	775
	Persistence Count	636	729	806	117	689
	Persistence Rate	86.1%	88.0%	89.6%	93.6%	88.9%
Health and Human Services	Headcount	907	946	1,025	140	885
	Persistence Count	781	809	882	118	764
	Persistence Rate	86.1%	85.5%	86.0%	84.3%	86.3%
Liberal Arts	Headcount	778	868	839	142	697
	Persistence Count	672	740	744	125	619
	Persistence Rate	86.4%	85.3%	88.7%	88.0%	88.8%
Natural Sciences & Mathematics	Headcount	580	614	720	84	636
	Persistence Count	493	531	625	69	556
	Persistence Rate	85.0%	86.5%	86.8%	82.1%	87.4%
The Arts	Headcount	529	593	665	79	586
	Persistence Count	463	512	579	70	509
	Persistence Rate	87.5%	86.3%	87.1%	88.6%	86.9%
University Programs	Headcount	720	793	792	27	765
	Persistence Count	571	622	634	21	613
	Persistence Rate	79.3%	78.4%	80.1%	77.8%	80.1%

Equity Gaps by Sex & Race

In addition to females being overrepresented in terms of population size on campus at about 60% compared to 40% males, males overwhelming have lower persistence and graduation compared to females. This gap is even more pronounced when measuring the success of historically underserved men of color. However, the 2023 cohort shows the first signs of closing this persistent equity gap.

First-Year Persistence by Sex
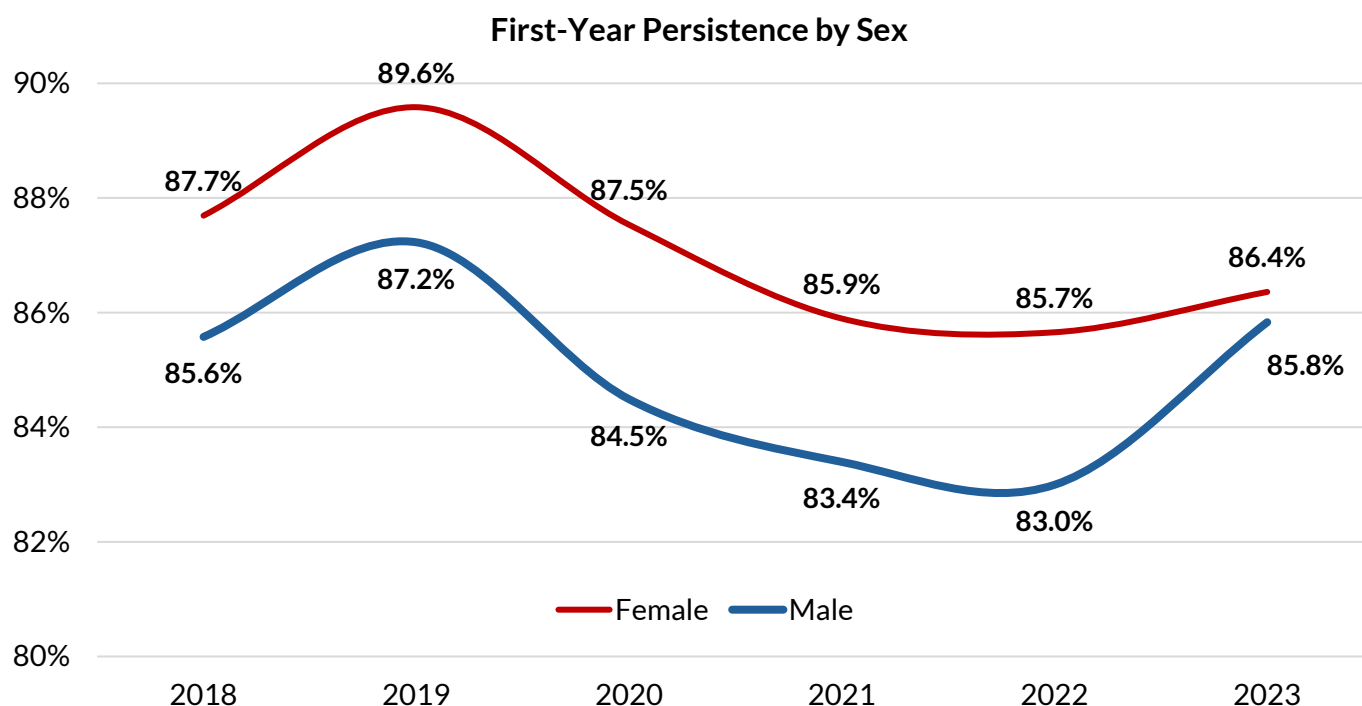
Black males demonstrated a higher persistence overall and particularly in Beach XP, though the total number of participants was low (11). Latino males' overall persistence is slightly up for 2023, but that increase was mostly felt among Beach XP participants. These figures indicate that men of color have especially benefited from Beach XP.

Sex & Race		2021	2022	2023	Beach XP	Non-Beach XP
Black Male	Headcount	63	78	77	11	66
	Persistence Count	48	57	66	10	56
	Persistence Rate	76.2%	73.1%	85.7%	90.9%	84.8%
Latino Male	Headcount	893	1,028	1,130	144	986
	Persistence Count	723	811	929	124	805
	Persistence Rate	81.0%	78.9%	82.2%	86.1%	81.6%

Equity Gaps by Race

Black and Latinx students have consistently had lower persistence rates than White and Asian students, a gap that grew wider post-COVID. However, in 2023, persistence is up for all groups when compared to 2022, with Black students experiencing the highest increase.

First-Year Persistence by Race
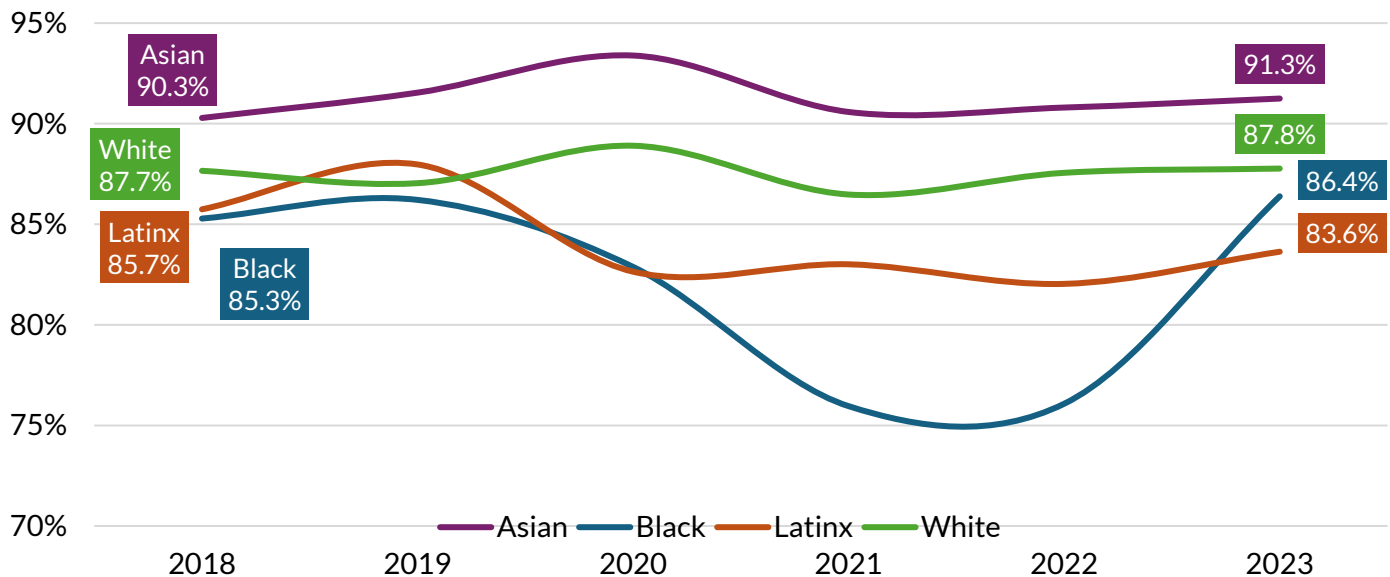
Regarding Beach XP, students who identified as Asian, Latinx, or Two or More Races had higher persistence with Beach XP participation.
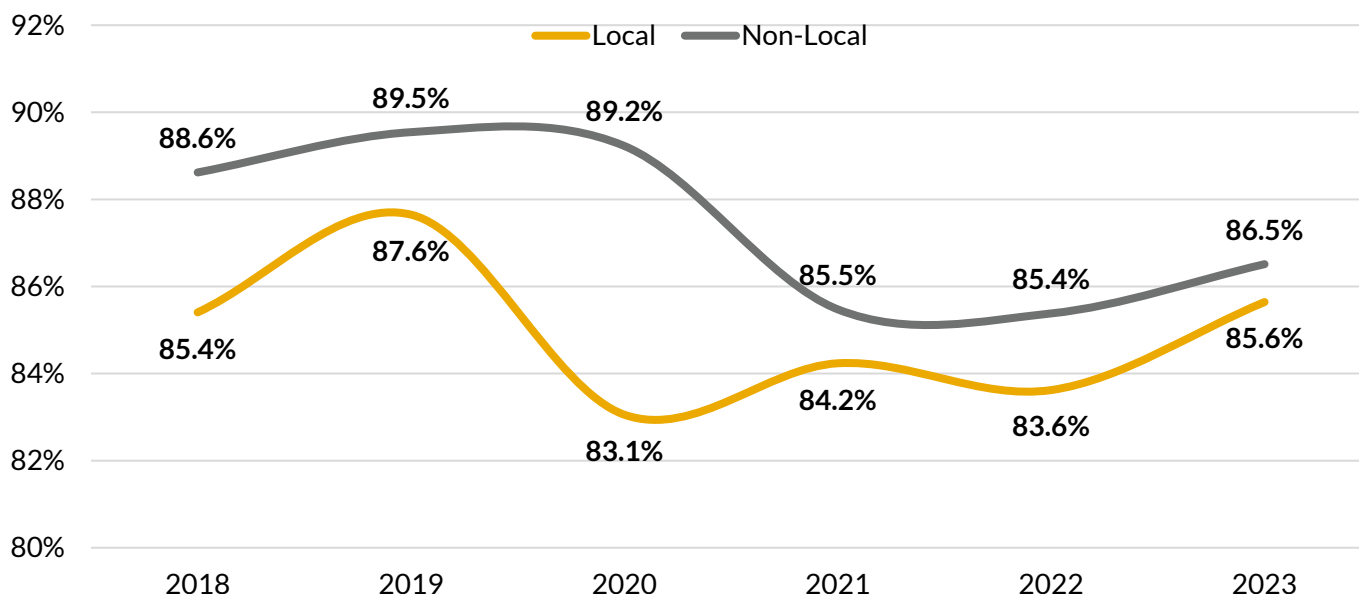
Race/Ethnicity*		2021	2022	2023	Beach XP	Non Beach XP
Asian	Head count	1,147	1,207	1,143	107	1,036
	Retention Rate	90.6%	90.8%	91.3%	97.2%	90.6%
Black	Head count	183	209	213	34	179
	Retention Rate	76.0%	76.1%	86.4%	82.4%	87.2%
Latinx	Head count	2,478	2,817	3,104	453	2,651
	Retention Rate	83.0%	82.0%	83.6%	85.7%	83.3%
Two or More Races	Head count	202	248	286	33	253
	Retention Rate	85.6%	87.1%	87.1%	90.9%	86.6%
Visa Non-U.S.	Head count	152	154	162	23	139
	Retention Rate	82.9%	81.8%	87.0%	87.0%	87.1%
White	Head count	636	651	744	81	663
	Retention Rate	86.5%	87.6%	87.8%	85.2%	88.1%

*The following groups are omitted because they contained counts of less than 10: American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Unknown.

Equity Gaps by Local Status

Local students have over time had lower persistence and graduation than non-local students. This gap has narrowed post-pandemic as both groups had lower persistence. However, in 2023, we are seeing an upward trend for both local and non-local students and evidence that the equity is closing between these groups.

First Year Persistence by Local Status

Local ⏤ Non-Local

- Non-Local: 88.6% (2018), 89.5% (2019), 89.2% (2020), 85.5% (2021), 85.4% (2022), 86.5% (2023)
- Local: 85.4% (2018), 87.6% (2019), 83.1% (2020), 84.2% (2021), 83.6% (2022), 85.6% (2023)

Long Beach College Promise students make up approximately 10% of the student population and are an integral part of the Beach community. Many of these students come from low-income and historically underserved backgrounds and are the first in their families to attend college. Due to their unique challenges, Promise students have among the lowest persistence rates.

In 2023, 68 Long Beach Promise students participated in Beach XP (out of 616 total, 11%). 88% of those students persisted after the first year, which is an historic high for this group and among the highest across the cohort.

First-Year Persistence for Long Beach Promise

- 2021: 81.9%
- 2022: 83.4%
- 2023: 83.1%
- Beach XP: 88.2%
- Non-Beach XP: 82.5%
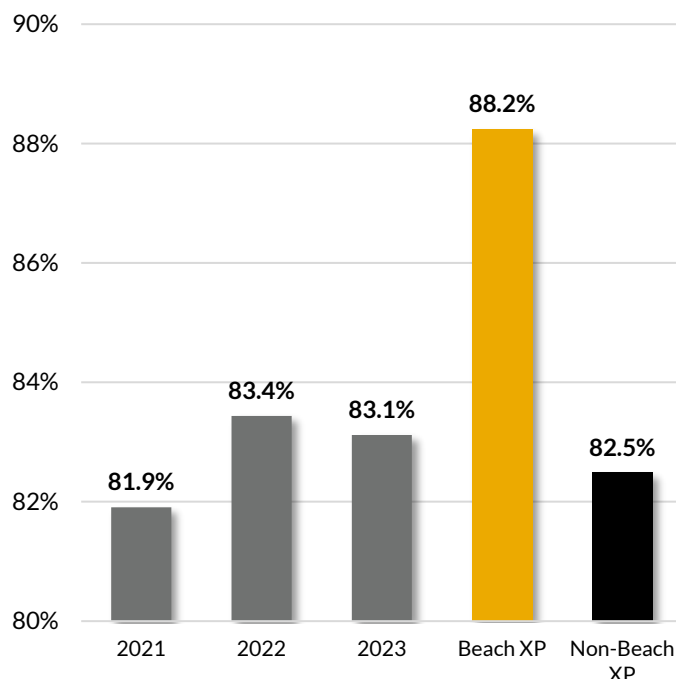
Equity Gaps by High School GPA

High school GPA is one of the greatest predictors of first-year retention. Post-pandemic, less than 60% of students with below a 3.0 would persist beyond the first year compared to over 90% of students with above a 4.0. However, the 2023 cohort demonstrates an increase in persistence for students with below a 3.5 GPA, particularly among the participants in Beach XP.

First-Year Persistence by High School GPA
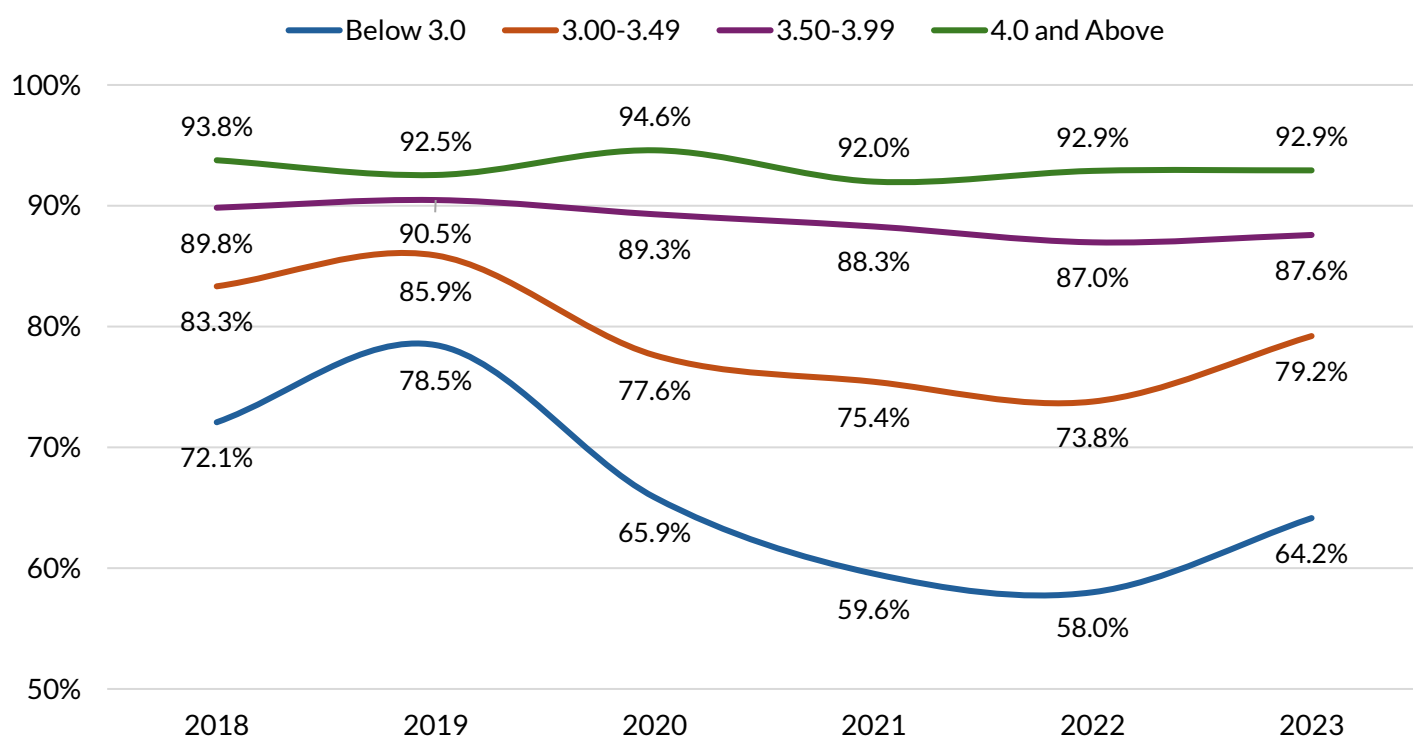
High School GPA		2021	2022	2023	Beach XP	Non-Beach XP
4.0 and Above	Headcount	1,025	1,308	1,245	139	1,106
	Persistence Count	943	1,215	1,157	131	1,026
	Persistence Rate	92.0%	92.9%	92.9%	94.2%	92.8%
3.50 - 3.99	Headcount	2,503	2,765	3,086	362	2,724
	Persistence Count	2,210	2,405	2,703	323	2,380
	Persistence Rate	88.3%	87.0%	87.6%	89.2%	87.4%
3.00 - 3.49	Headcount	1,136	1,084	1,179	195	984
	Persistence Count	857	800	934	164	770
	Persistence Rate	75.4%	73.8%	79.2%	84.1%	78.3%
Below 3.0	Headcount	178	181	212	40	172
	Persistence Count	106	105	136	26	110
	Persistence Rate	59.6%	58.0%	64.2%	65.0%	64.0%

Looking Ahead

Year 2 (2024-2025)

In its second year, Beach XP has nearly doubled in size to approximately 1,300 students across 55 college-specific cohorts. Beach XP continues to offer programming and flagship events such as Fun Theory, Pep Rallies, Yoga at the Japanese Garden, monthly cultural events, and Lunch and Learn. Additionally, several colleges have restructured their course and activities to center on the shared learning outcomes of building community, learning about campus resources, and developing skills to be a successful college student.

Year 3 (2025-2026)

Building on its early successes in increasing first-year persistence and engaging the campus community in a collaborative effort to focus on student success, Beach XP is looking to expand once again to reach approximately half of the incoming first-time, first year class.

Colleges are exploring new models to reach more students such as auto-enrolling all students from particular majors, offering online content to supplement activity hours, and integrating learning outcomes into existing introductory course curricula. By reaching a critical mass of students, we believe we can truly move the needle on student success at the Beach.

Beach XP Growth

■ Beach XP ■ Non Beach XP

	Year 1 2023-24	Year 2 2024-25	Year 3 2025-26
Total	5,756	6,505	6,500
Non Beach XP	5,014	5,230	3,500
Beach XP	742	1,275	3,000