Toward Understanding Student Success in International Education

Dr. Terrence Graham, Eugenia Kim, Jessica Slagle
Center for International Education

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Research Questions

CIE has two primary areas of inquiry:

1. How can we understand factors contributing to international student retention and success?

2. Can we gain an understanding of how participation in international education, study abroad in particular, influences student success at an institutional level and nationwide through CSULB's participation in the Consortium for the Analysis of Student Success through International Education (CASSIE) project?

Introduction

1. Understanding factors contributing to international student enrollment, retention, and success contributes to CSULB's goal of increasing the percentage of international students on campus. International students currently account for 4% of all degree-seeking students. The university goal is to reach 10% by 2025. International students bring diverse perspectives to campus and carry the CSULB name all over the world. This effort aligns with Graduation Initiative 2025 and CSULB's inclusive excellence mission.

2. Taking part in the CASSIE project is linked to CSULB's global engagement mission, emphasis on high-impact practices, and strategic priority of increasing participation in study abroad.
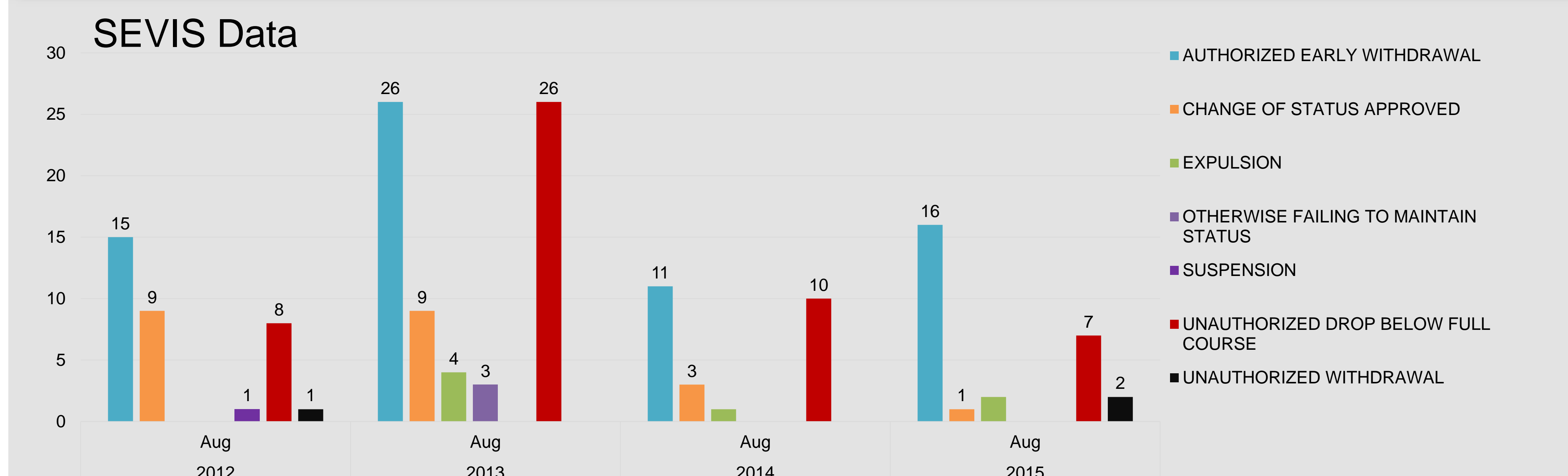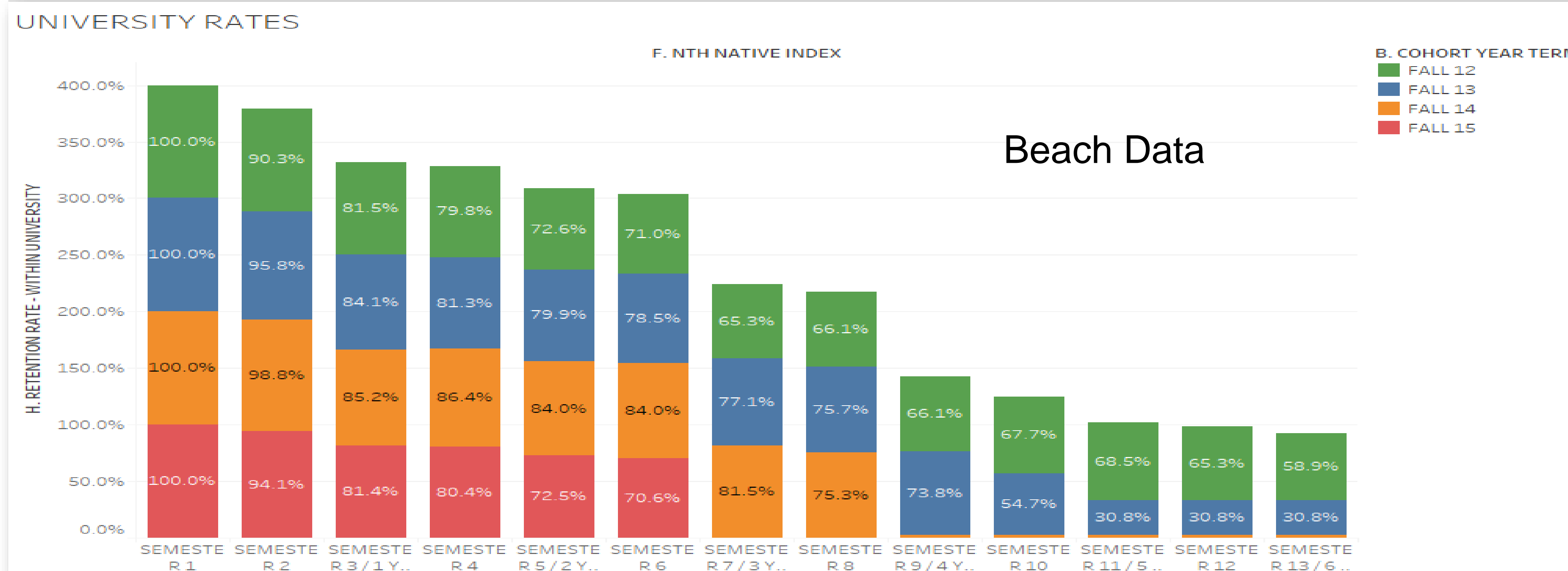
Methods

1. International Student Retention
- Fall FTF Cohorts 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
- Beach Data Retention Rates
- SEVIS Terminated Student List
- Reasons for Termination Field
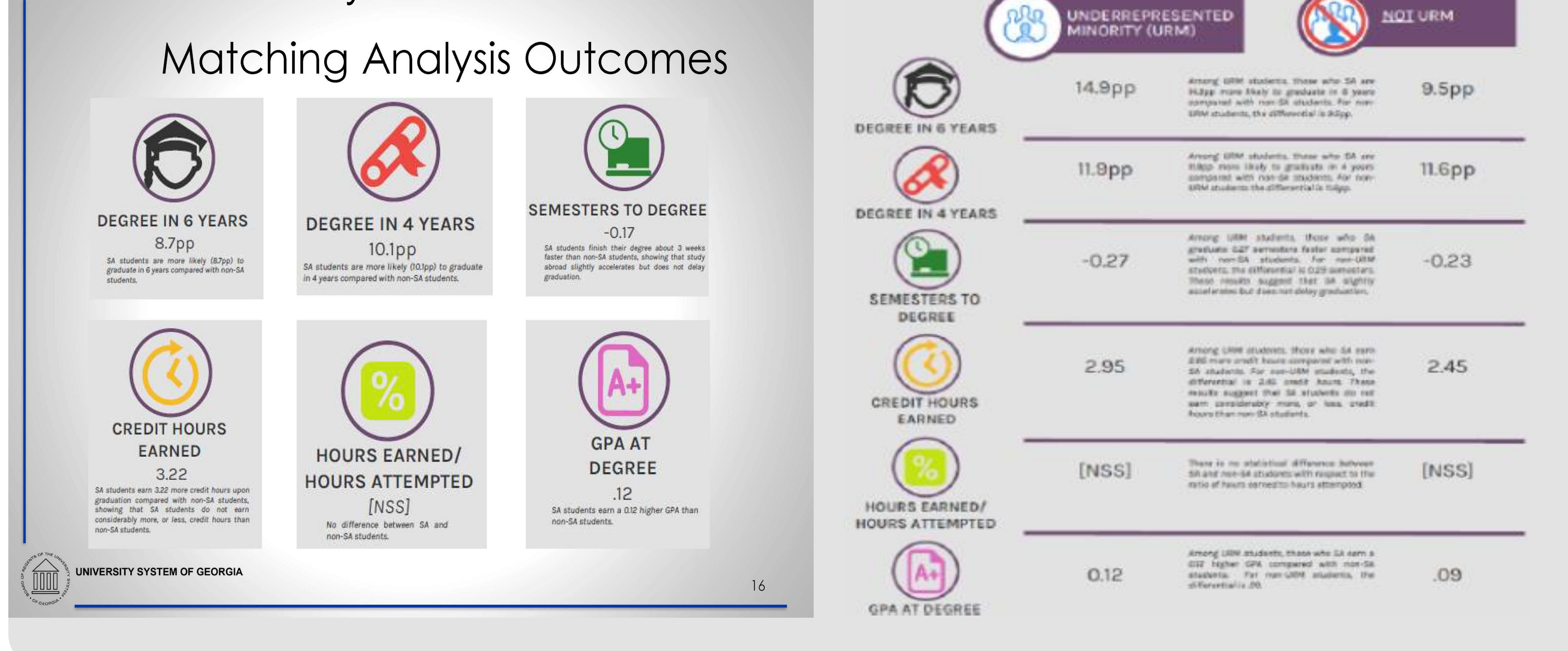- Qualitative look into advisor comments on termination reason

2. Impact of Ed. Abroad
- CIE partnered with IR&A to provide data to CASSIE.
- Sample: FTF Cohorts Fall 2010 and Fall 2011
- CMS data matched with Ed. Abroad data from Terra dotta and paper files.
- CASSIE will use matching analysis method to analyze CSULB data.
- Nationwide data set provides macro-level analysis; Reports for individual institutions provide micro-level analysis and benchmarking opportunities.

Results

UNIVERSITY RATES — F. NTH NATIVE INDEX — Beach Data

SEVIS Data

CASSIE Preliminary Results — Matching Analysis Outcomes

Conclusion / Discussion

1. International Student Retention: Through Beach Data we identified patterns of international student attrition. For example, the most significant attrition occurs between freshman and sophomore year. We then compared this to SEVIS data to examine the reasons why students left. SEVIS data revealed that the top reasons for departure are: Authorized Early Withdrawal, Change of Status, and Expulsion. A closer look at advisor comments in SEVIS, however, shows a more complex picture. For example, often students who are granted authorized early withdrawal later re-enroll. In addition, students who change status likely remain enrolled at CSULB as residents.

2. CASSIE completed its first year of analysis of data from the State University System of Georgia. These preliminary results show the impact of Study Abroad on timely graduation, GPA, and credits earned. Phase II of the project will include data from 19 institutions nationwide in addition to the State of Georgia; CSULB is the only institution from California to enlist in the project. Our task was facilitating collaboration between Ed. Abroad and IR&A linking data from CMS and Ed. Abroad to conform with the data protocols required by CASSIE. Our participation in CASSIE will provide CSULB with an institutional report on the impact of study abroad and allow for benchmarking against other universities. CASSIE plans to expand its analysis to include the impact of multiple aspects of international education (not only study abroad) on post-graduation success.

Implications for Action

1. **International Student Retention.** These preliminary findings suggest a need to examine further:
- Details relating expulsions/DQs and how to anticipate these occurrences and intervene appropriately.
- Address data discrepancies between SEVIS and CMS to develop better tracking of international students.
- Collaboration with key campus departments to inform better advising practices.

2. CASSIE results can inform messaging to students who wish to study abroad, but see it as a barrier to timely graduation or may be unaware of the impact of study abroad on career outcomes.

Next Steps / Future Directions

1. **International Student Retention**
- Acquire test score data to examine relationship between admission factors and student success.
- Examine transfer student retention and reasons.

2. **CASSIE**
- Collaborating with IR&A to establish automated ways to link CASSIE-related data.
- Sharing results with campus community through advisor institutes.