Bear Down Camp (BDC) AY2025-26 First-Time Full-Time Cohort Retention Report

Overview

Bear Down Camp (BDC) supported by the Associated Students of the University of Arizona (ASUA) provides various activities led by student counselor to help incoming freshmen or first-year students of the University of Arizona to acclimate and transition to a university environment. Students will learn about academic and on-campus resources which include involvement opportunities, educational and health resources, history and traditions, and general information about the University of Arizona. This transitional camp also helps students gain their first college support system, friendships, and network.

Methods

A total of 219 students participated in Bear Down Camp in August 2025, of which 217 students were identified as first-time full-time (FTFT) cohort and included in the following analysis. This analysis aimed to understand the impact of BDC participation on first-year student retention to fall 2026. The propensity score matching (PSM) was used as a statistical technique to create a peer comparison group. Eligible non-participants were matched with factors that influenced student success outcomes (e.g. ethnicity, gender, Pell grant recipients, high school GPA, and campus living status).

Results

Propensity score matching (PSM) results show that compared to similar peers, BDC FTFT participants in fall were 4 percentage points more likely to return on the next academic year (see Table 1).

Table 1. First-Time Full-Time (FTFT) cohort

2025-26	Retention
BDC Participants (N=217)	89%
Peer Comparison Group (N=217)	85%

BDC 2025 FTFT Cohort Demographics			**All Main Campus FTFT (*N* = 7,122)**
	N	%	*N* (%)
Race/Ethnicity			
African American	9	4%	311 (4%)
Native American/ American Indian	2	1%	106 (1%)
Asian	5	2%	373 (5%)
Hispanic	31	14%	2,302 (32%)
International Student	3	1%	189 (3%)
Pacific Islander	-	-	17 (0.2%)
Two or more races	18	8%	428 (6%)
White	148	68%	3,252 (46%)
Unknown / Other	3	1%	144 (2%)
Gender			
Female	130	59%	4,167 (59%)
Male	89	41%	2,955 (41%)
Living on Campus			
Yes	216	99%	4,758 (67%)
No	3	1%	2,364 (33%)
Generation Status			
First-Generation	22	10%	2,106 (29%)
Continuing Generation	197	90%	5,016 (71%)
Residency			
AZ Resident	106	48%	4,627 (65%)
Out-of-State	113	52%	2,495 (35%)
Pell-Recipient			
Pell-Recipient (FCD)	33	15%	2,283 (32%)

Non-Recipient	186	85%	4,839 (68%)
High School GPA (Mean)	3.53		3.46

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