



**Significant Increases in Associate Degree Graduation Rates:
CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)**
(June 1, 2016)

Founded in 2007 with support from the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), ASAP is a comprehensive program for associate-degree students at nine CUNY colleges: Borough of Manhattan, Bronx, Hostos, Kingsborough, LaGuardia, and Queensborough Community Colleges; Medgar Evers College; and College of Staten Island and New York City College of Technology, as of fall 2015. Key program components include full-time enrollment, block scheduled first-year courses, cohort course taking, financial support, intrusive and mandatory advisement, a student-success seminar, career services, and tutoring.

The program is committed to graduating at least 50% of students within three years through provision of comprehensive support services and financial resources that remove barriers to full-time study, build student resiliency, and support timely degree completion. Currently less than 25% of CUNY community college students and only 16% of urban community college students nationally graduate within three years.¹

There have been nine ASAP cohorts totaling 12,780 students admitted across all participating colleges, with the first cohort entering in fall 2007. In academic year 2015-16, ASAP served 8,016 students.

ASAP has proven to be one of CUNY's most successful community college initiatives with students in the program graduating at a rate more than double that of similar students. The program has garnered national attention and been rigorously evaluated. ASAP evaluation includes ongoing internal analysis by CUNY utilizing a quasi-experimental constructed comparison group design, a five-year experimental design random assignment study led by MDRC, and cost-benefit analysis led by Professor Henry Levin and the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education (CBCSE) at Teachers College Columbia University.

Key findings from CUNY's evaluation of ASAP² reveal:

- ASAP students graduate at more than double the rates of non-ASAP students. To date, across six cohorts, ASAP has an average graduation rate of 53% vs. 23% of comparison group students.
- Students who start ASAP with developmental needs graduate at high rates just like students who enter fully skills proficient: After three years, 48% of ASAP students with developmental needs and 60% of fully skills proficient ASAP students have graduated vs. 21% of non-ASAP students with developmental needs and 29% of fully skills proficient non-ASAP students.
- There are large and significant differences between ASAP and comparison group students in terms of retention rates, movement through developmental course work, credit accumulation, and graduation rates. These differences are seen as early as the first semester and continue to be found at all junctures over three years.
- Students from underrepresented groups appear to benefit more from ASAP than other students.
- When longer term outcomes across CUNY are considered, ASAP students are more likely to earn a degree. Seven years after beginning, 64% of ASAP students had earned either an associate or baccalaureate degree (or both) vs. 42% of comparison group students.

¹ Source: CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) and CUNY OIRA analysis of data from the Institutional Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS).

² Complete ASAP evaluation findings can be found at: <http://www.cuny.edu/academics/programs/notable/asap/about/evaluation.html>.

External Evaluation of ASAP

MDRC has released a three-year report from its random assignment study of ASAP, which includes a sample of 900 students.³ Participants include ASAP students from cohorts three and four from three community colleges who entered with developmental education needs. Students were randomly assigned to either the program group or control group, ensuring that the two groups were similar in terms of background and motivation and differences in outcomes are a direct result of participating in ASAP. MDRC's three-year report found that ASAP students outperformed the control group students with respect to persistence, credit accumulation, full-time enrollment, three-year graduation, and transfer to four-year colleges. The three-year graduation rate for ASAP students was nearly double the graduation rate of control group students. MDRC stated that "ASAP's effects are the largest MDRC has found in any of its evaluations of community college reforms. The model offers a highly promising strategy to markedly accelerate credit accumulation and increase graduation rates among educationally and economically disadvantaged populations" (Scrivener et al. 2015).

ASAP was also the subject of a comprehensive cost-benefit study led by Dr. Henry Levin of the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education (CBCSE) at Teachers College Columbia University.⁴ Part one of Dr. Levin's study, a cost-effectiveness analysis of ASAP, reveals that despite higher up-front costs, the average cost per three-year ASAP graduate is *lower* than for comparison group graduates. The study found an average savings of \$6,500 per graduate. Part two of Dr. Levin's analysis looked at the benefits of timely graduation, both for the individual and for the public sector, by examining increased earnings and tax revenues as well as reduced costs for social services such as public health, public assistance, and criminal justice. The study found that an investment in ASAP has large financial returns for both the taxpayer and the student. For every dollar invested in ASAP by the taxpayer, \$3.50 are returned per associate degree conferred in the form of increased tax revenues and social service savings, and for each dollar invested by the ASAP student, \$12.20 are returned through increased earnings. Dr. Levin and his team conclude that the total net benefits for 1,000 ASAP students is \$46.5 million *higher* than for 1,000 comparison group students who do not enroll in the program.

ASAP Expansion and Replication

Thanks to generous support from the City of New York ASAP will expand to 25,000 students by academic year 2018-2019. Part of the ASAP expansion will include serving more Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors and a campus-wide expansion at Bronx Community College to serve most incoming first-time, full-time freshmen by academic year 2018-2019.

In addition to serving more CUNY students seeking their associate degree, ASAP is also beginning to serve students who are pursuing their bachelor's degree. CUNY received funding from the Robin Hood Foundation to adapt the ASAP model to a four-year college setting, in this case the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, which launched their program in the fall of 2015 with a pilot cohort of 262 students.

To expand the reach of ASAP beyond New York City, CUNY is working with MDRC and the Ohio Department of Education (ODHE) to support adaptations of ASAP at three Ohio community colleges. With support from the Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation, CUNY is providing technical assistance to ODHE and the three partner colleges, which launched programs in 2015-16 serving 1,500 low-income students. MDRC plans to release an initial report on the Ohio demonstration in fall 2016. Furthermore, CUNY and MDRC, with support from the Gates Foundation, have begun outreach to other states and college systems to assess opportunities for replicating and adapting ASAP across the country.

For more information about ASAP, please visit www.cuny.edu/sites/asap.

³ MDRC ASAP reports can be found online at: <http://www.mdrc.org/publication/doubling-graduation-rates>

⁴ Dr. Levin's reports can be found online at: http://cbcse.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Levin-ASAP-Cost-Effectiveness-Report_092412_FINAL-5.pdf and http://cbcse.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Levin_ASAP_Benefit_Cost_Report_FINAL_05222013.pdf.

Summary Profile of Combined ASAP and Comparison Group Cohorts¹

Preliminary Data

| | | Combined ASAP Students | Combined Comparison Group Students ² |
|---|------|------------------------|---|
| Total Enrollment | N | 12,780 | 20,803 |
| College | | | |
| BMCC | % | 23.0 | 28.4 |
| Bronx | % | 10.1 | 8.5 |
| CSI | % | 2.5 | -- |
| Hostos | % | 9.1 | 6.3 |
| Kingsborough | % | 16.3 | 20.7 |
| LaGuardia | % | 15.8 | 15.7 |
| Medgar Evers | % | 4.6 | 1.6 |
| NYCCT | % | 1.8 | -- |
| Queensborough | % | 16.8 | 18.8 |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | % | 41.2 | 44.6 |
| Female | % | 58.8 | 55.4 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| American Indian/Native Alaskan | % | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | % | 11.8 | 14.6 |
| Black | % | 32.9 | 28.7 |
| Hispanic | % | 42.4 | 39.8 |
| White | % | 12.5 | 16.5 |
| Age Group | | | |
| 18 or younger | % | 46.2 | 36.1 |
| 19 | % | 15.8 | 19.3 |
| 20 to 22 | % | 18.1 | 25.2 |
| 23 to 29 | % | 12.2 | 13.8 |
| 30 or older | % | 7.6 | 5.7 |
| Mean Age | mean | 19.5 | 19.4 |
| Admission Type | | | |
| First-time Freshmen | % | 65.7 | 50.2 |
| Transfer Students | % | 7.2 | 19.0 |
| Continuing Students | % | 27.1 | 30.8 |
| Developmental Students³ | | | |
| At Time of Application to ASAP | % | 80.1 | 77.0 |
| At Time of Entry into ASAP | % | 67.8 | 69.2 |
| College Admissions Average ⁴ | mean | 76.6 | 75.2 |
| GED Recipients ⁴ | % | 8.6 | 8.4 |
| Pell Receipt ⁵ | % | 74.6 | 85.6 |

¹ Combined cohorts include ASAP students admitted in fall 2007, fall 2009, spring 2010, fall 2010, fall 2011, fall 2012, fall 2013, fall 2014, spring 2015 and fall 2015, and comparison group students admitted in fall 2006, fall 2008, spring 2009, fall 2009, fall 2010, fall 2012 and fall 2013. Medgar Evers College joined in fall 2014. CSI and NYCCT joined in fall 2015. Profile data has not been updated for the fall 2015 cohort.

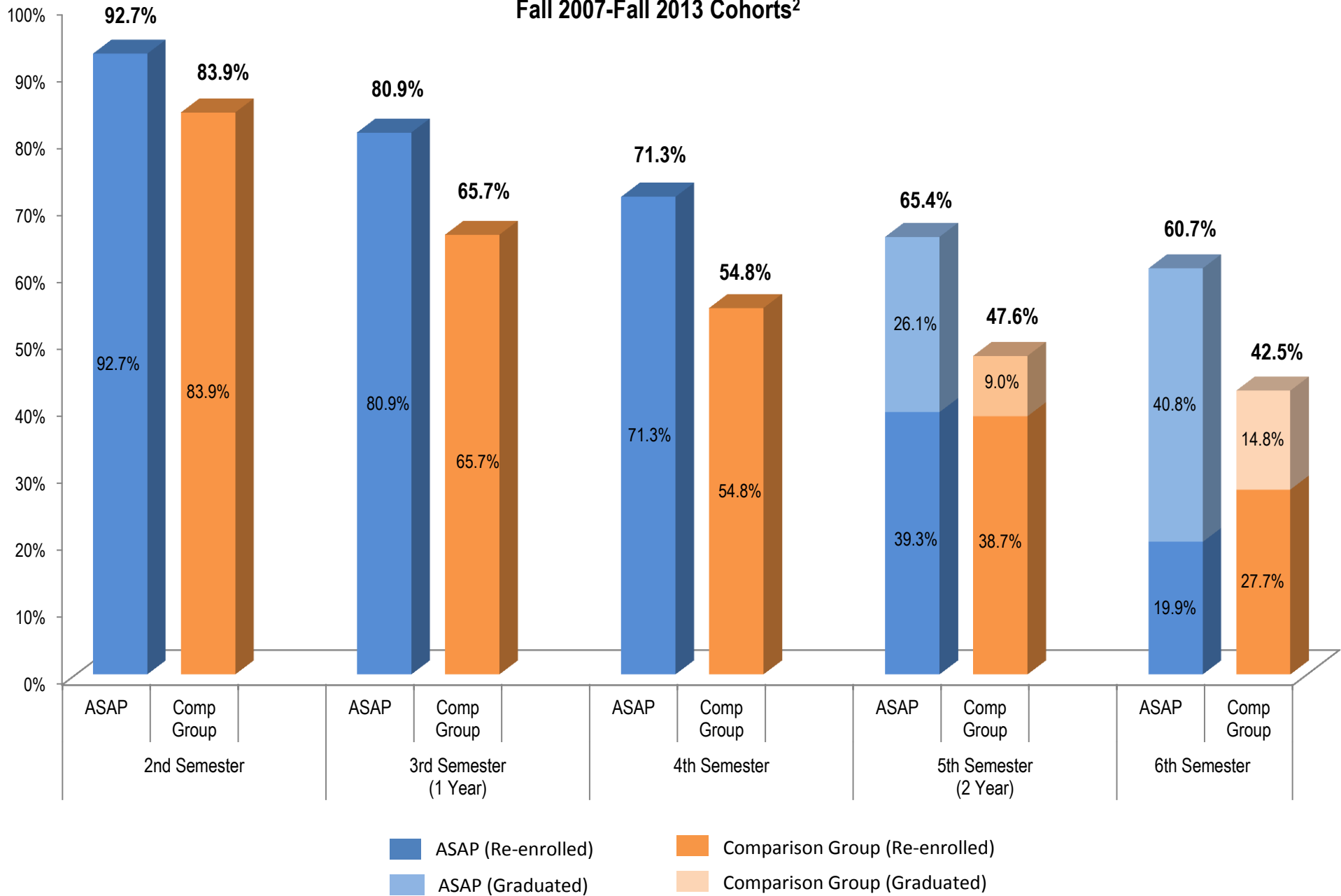
² A comparison group has not yet been constructed for the fall 2015 cohort.

³ Students who required developmental coursework. ASAP data is reported by college ASAP directors. Comparison group data come from the CUNY Institutional Research Database. Percentages are the average of the percentage for each cohort, not the percentages of the overall group. Cohort 1 is excluded.

⁴ Data is not available for all students; Data is missing for most transfer students and students who applied as direct admits to the college.

⁵ Data is not yet available for students entering in fall 2013, fall 2014 and fall 2015.

Average Retention Rates of ASAP and Comparison Group Students¹: Fall 2007-Fall 2013 Cohorts²

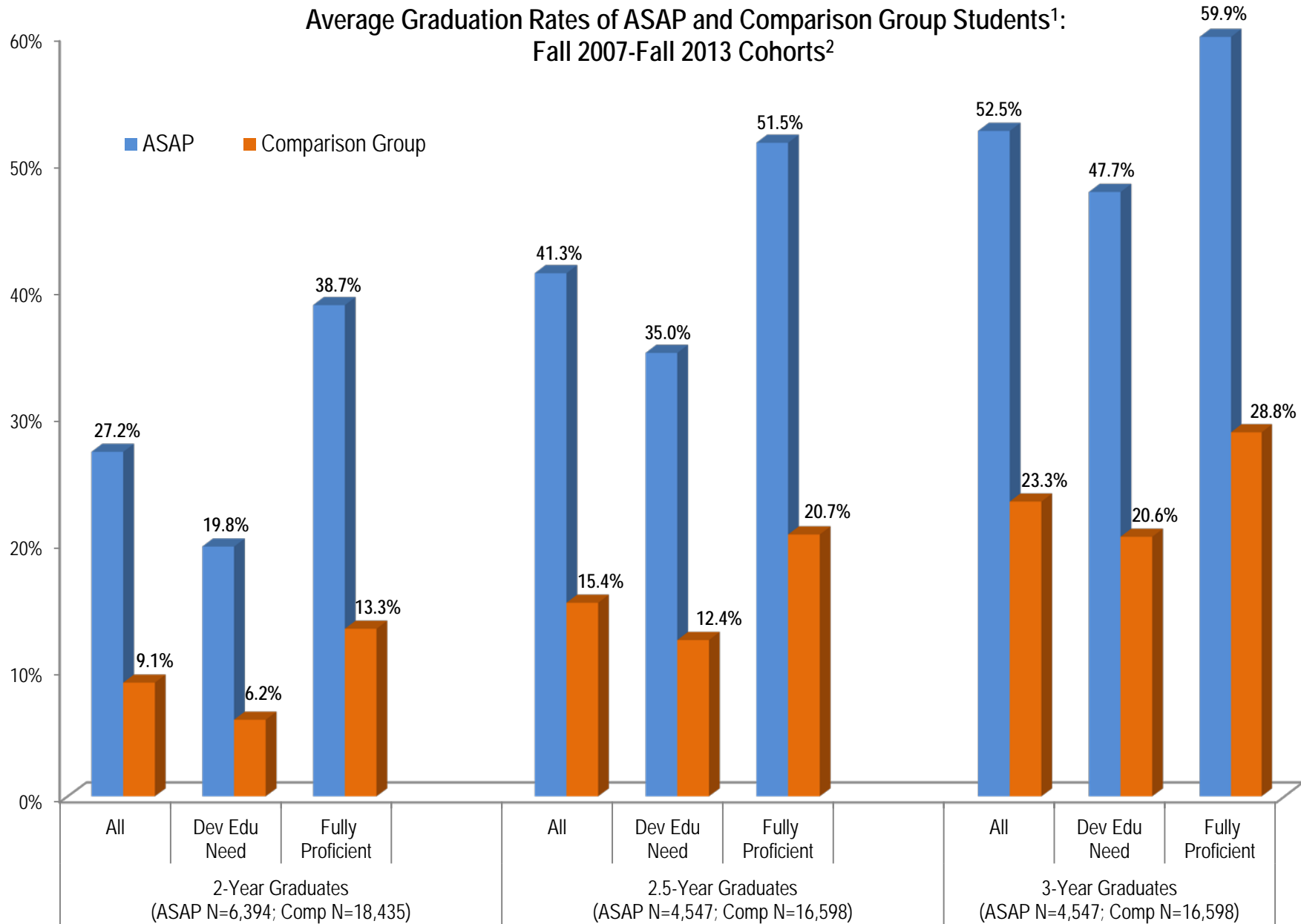


¹ Comparison groups are constructed for each cohort and consist of students enrolled at each college who met ASAP eligibility criteria but did not participate in ASAP.

² Semester to semester retention at college of entry. Second and third semester retention rates for cohorts entering in fall 2007, fall 2009, spring 2010, fall 2010, fall 2011, fall 2012 and fall 2013 (ASAP N=6,394; Comp group N=22,824). Fourth and fifth semester retention rates for same cohorts except fall 2013 (ASAP N=4,547; Comp group N=19,090). Sixth semester retention rate for same cohorts except fall 2012 and fall 2013 (ASAP N=2,985; Comp group N=15,042). Overall rates are calculated by averaging individual cohort rates.

Source: CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Average Graduation Rates of ASAP and Comparison Group Students¹: Fall 2007-Fall 2013 Cohorts²

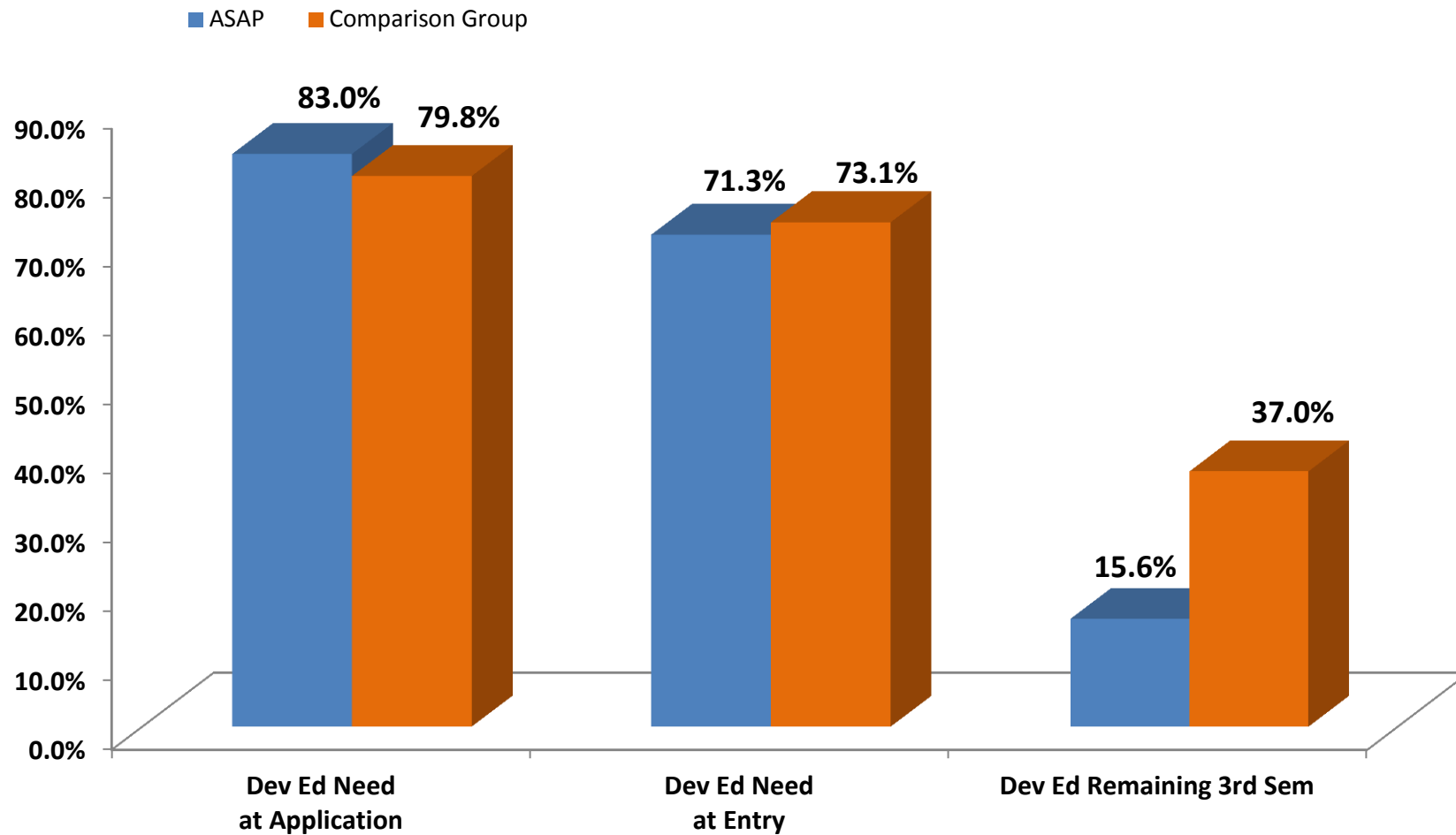


¹Comparison groups are constructed for each cohort and consist of students enrolled at each college who met ASAP eligibility criteria but did not participate in ASAP.

²Students who have officially graduated through summer 2015. The 2.5-year and 3-year rates include fall 2007, fall 2009, spring 2010, fall 2010, fall 2011 and fall 2012 ASAP cohorts and their comparison groups. The 2-year rates also include the fall 2013 ASAP cohort and comparison group. Overall graduation rates are calculated by averaging the individual cohort graduation rates. Developmental education need or skills proficiency is based on status at time of entry.

Source: CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, CUNY ASAP participating colleges, and National Student Clearinghouse.

Movement Through Developmental Education for Combined ASAP and Comparison Group Cohorts ¹



¹Includes fall 2009, spring 2010, fall 2010, fall 2011, and fall 2012 ASAP cohorts (N=3,407) and their comparison groups (N=17,406).
Source: CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and CUNY ASAP participating colleges.