

Explore Lehigh Pilot Evaluation Findings & Key Metrics

Executive Summary

The Explore Lehigh pilot program, launched in Fall 2025 with an inaugural cohort of 11 students, was designed to support first-year students in making intentional, confident college and major declarations. Evaluation of enrollment data, academic performance, and qualitative reflections indicates that the program successfully reduced decision-making anxiety, facilitated deliberate major choices, and maintained full student retention into their second year.

Key Academic Performance & Retention Metrics

Comparative analysis of academic performance and retention between the Explore Lehigh cohort and non-participant peers demonstrates strong academic standing alongside significantly higher intentional major exploration.

Metric	Explore Lehigh Cohort	Non-Participant First-Years
First-Year Retention Rate	100.00%	94.16%
Average Cumulative GPA	3.41	3.42
Average Cumulative Hours Passed	32.55 hrs	31.40 hrs
College Shift	90.91%	~9.27%

- **Academic Performance:** Explore Lehigh participants performed on par academically with the general first-year population (3.41 cumulative GPA vs. 3.42) while accumulating slightly more passed credit hours on average (32.55 vs. 31.40).
- **Full Retention:** The program achieved a 100.00% First-Year retention rate across all 11 active cohort members.

Major Shifts and the "Business Convergence" Trend

A central finding of the pilot evaluation was the high degree of deliberate academic pivots among participants compared to the broader student body.

- **Intentional Direction Changes:** 90.91% (10 out of 11) of Explore Lehigh students altered their college or major pathway between initial entry intentions and current declarations. In comparison, only a small fraction of non-participating peers shifted college declarations during the same timeframe.
- **Business Convergence Pattern:** 36% of the cohort (4 out of 11) declared for the College of Business despite initially applying to other colleges. Overall, 45% (5 students) declared for Business.
- **Primary Shift Drivers:**
 - **Early Orientation Exposure:** 75% of non-Business applicants who ultimately declared Business had attended the College of Business Welcome Event at the start of the semester.
 - **Demystifying Disciplines:** Faculty guest speakers helped students eliminate mismatched paths early. For instance, a psychology professor's candid description of lab work and research paper rigor prompted a student to pivot to marketing as an applied alternative for understanding human behavior and choice.
 - **Career Flexibility Realization:** Guest speakers demonstrated that majors do not strictly dictate lifetime career trajectories, relieving significant decision-making pressure and encouraging broader exploration.

Fall 2026 cohort

434 applicants

123 admitted

29 current students

Application Interest	Colleges/ of Interest	EXL Courses for Fall 2026
Biology	RCEAS, COB	BUS 001, BQS, ENGR 005
Business Analytics	CAS, COB, COH	BUS 001, BQS
Political Science	COB, CAS	BQS, BUS 001, FREN 001
Finance	CAS, COB	BQS, BUS 001
Psychology	CAS, COB	BQS, BUS 001, ENGR 005, PSYC 001
Psychology	CAS, COB	BQS, BUS 001
Marketing	CAS, COB	BQS, BUS 001
Management	COB, RCEAS	BUS 001, ENGR 005, ECO 001
Interdisciplinary	COB, CAS	BUS 001, CHM 030
Civil Engineering	COB, RCEAS, IBE	ENGR 005, BUS 001, PHY 011
Finance	COB, COH	BUS 001, HLTH 090
Env Engineering	RCEAS, COB, IDEAS, IBE	ENGR 095, BQS
Psychology	COB, CAS	BUS 001, BQS
Finance	COB, CAS	BUS 001, BQS, ECO 001
Spanish and Hispanic Studies	CAS, COB	BQS, BUS 001, SPAN 011
Computer Science (AS)	RCEAS, CAS, COB, CSB	BQS, ENGR 005
Business Analytics	CSB, COB	CSB 010, BUS 001, CSE 007
Interdisciplinary	CAS, COB	BUS 001, BQS
Mechanical Engineering	CAS, RCEAS, IDEAS	ENGR 095, BQS
Journalism	CAS, COB	BUS 001, BQS, ECO 001
Design	CAS, COB	BUS 001, BQS
Mechanical Engineering	RCEAS, IDEAS	ENGR 095, BQS
Economics	RCEAS, CAS, COB	ENGR 005, BQS
Physics	RCEAS, CAS, COB	ENGR 005, BUS 001
Environmental Studies	CAS, RCEAS, COH	HLTH 090, BQS
Management	CAS, COB	BUS 001, BQS, POLS 001
Psychology	CAS, COB	BUS 001, BQS
Anthropology	RCEAS, CAS	BQS, ENGR 005
Architecture	CAS, RCEAS	BQS, ENGR, ART 004

