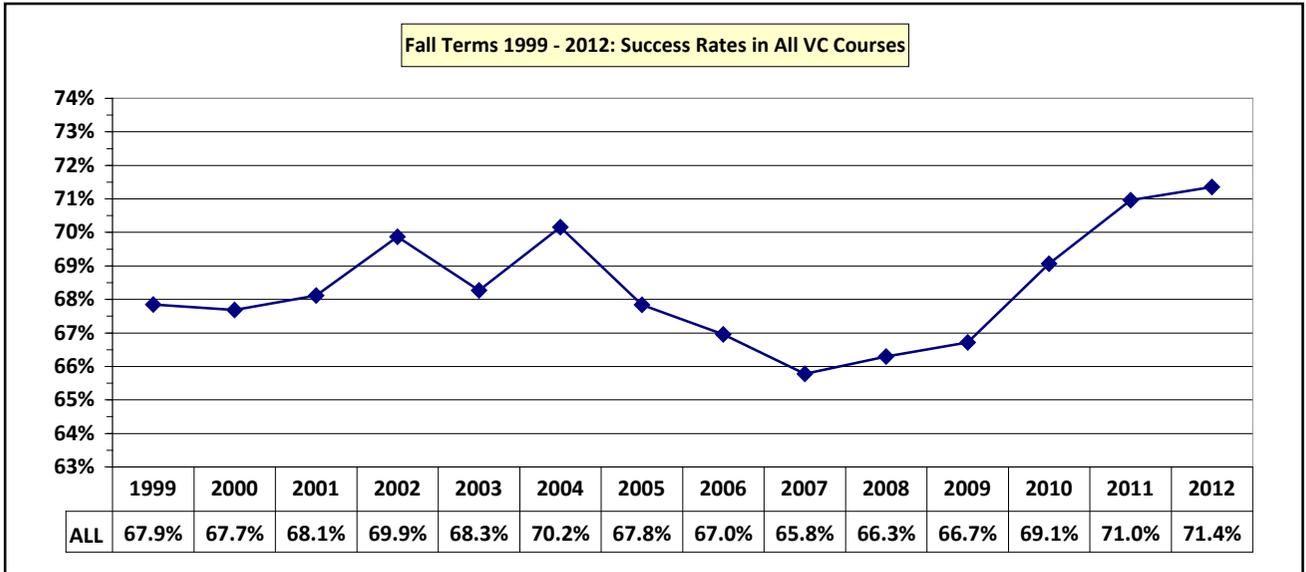


Analysis of Grades Distributions and Success Rates – Fall Terms: 1999 to 2012

**SUMMARY**

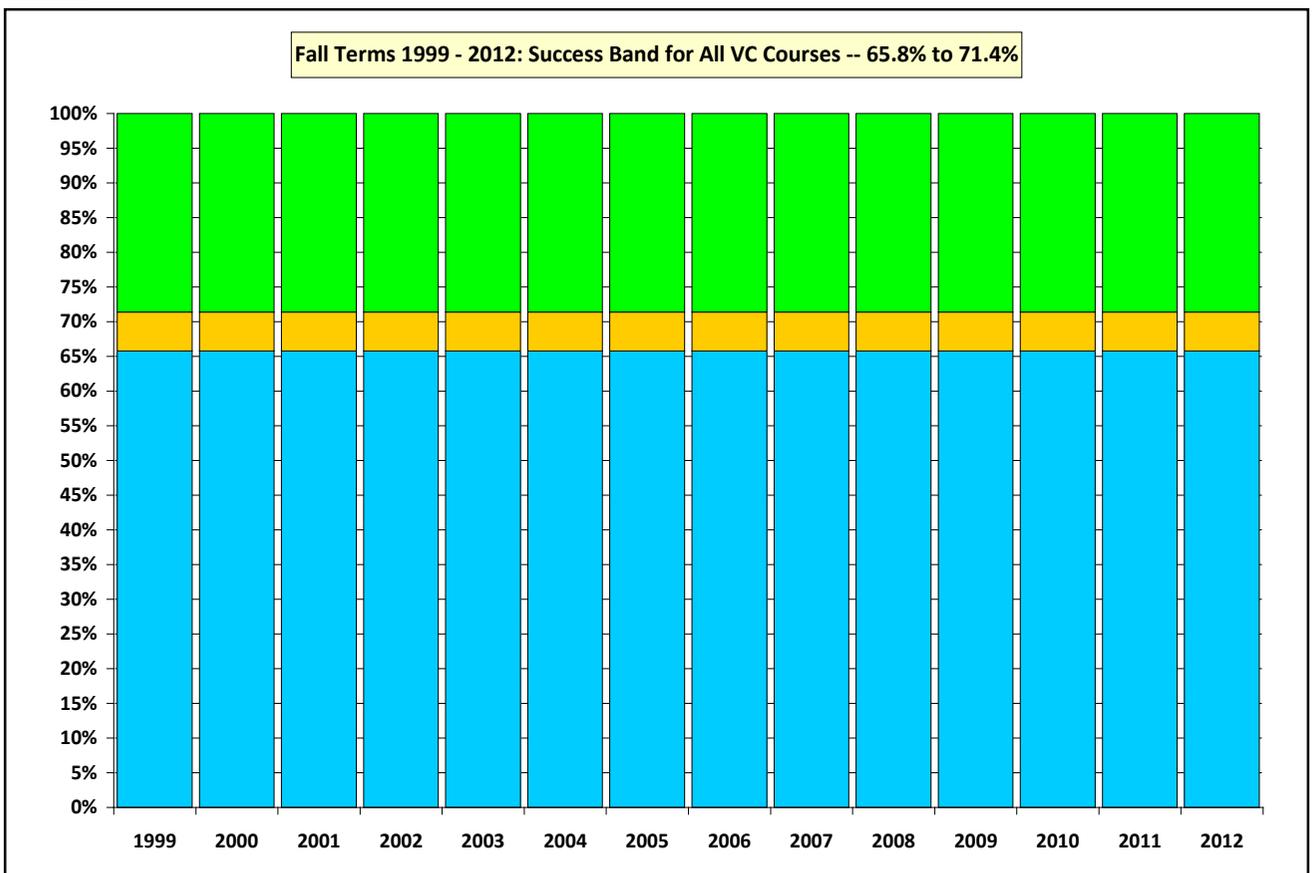
Over the past **fourteen** fall terms (1999 to 2012), the success rates in **all** VC courses (**Chart A**) has ranged from a **low** of **65.8%** (fall 2007) to a **high** of **71.4%** (fall 2012). The difference between the low and high success rates is **5.6** percentage points. This **success band** is illustrated in **Chart B**.

**Chart A**



Success is defined as a final grade of A, B, C, or P in the course.

**Chart B**



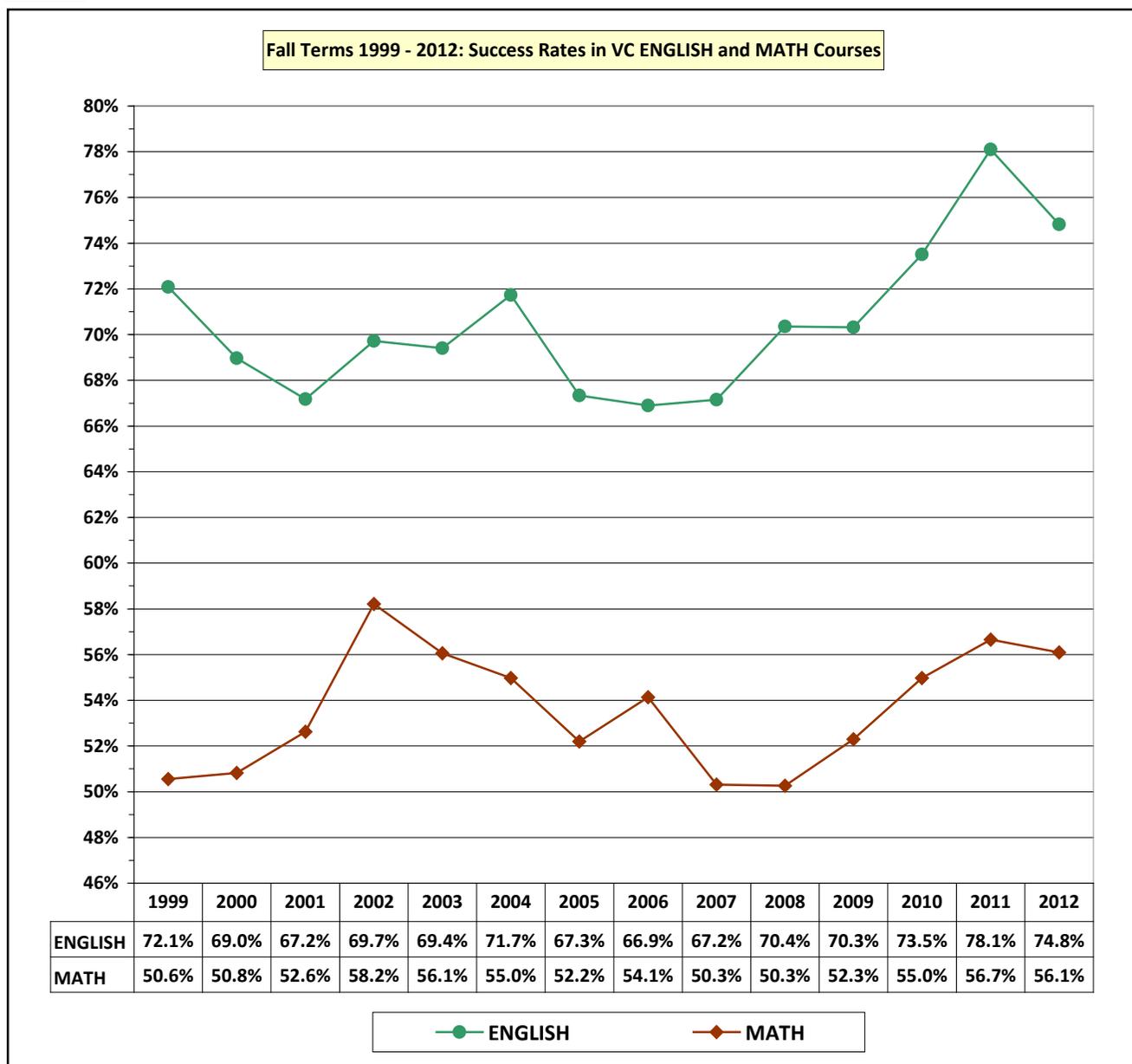
Analysis of Grades Distributions and Success Rates – Fall Terms: 1999 to 2012

High and low success rates in **English** and **Math** courses over the fall 1999 – fall 2012 period are presented in the table below. The difference between high and low success rates for English courses is **11.0** percentage points and for Mathematics courses it is **7.9**. The high-to-low range for **all** courses is **5.6**, which is the least of these three groups.

Ventura College Rank	ALL Courses		ENGLISH Courses		MATH Courses	
	Fall Term	Success Rate	Fall Term	Success Rate	Fall Term	Success Rate
High	2012	71.4%	2011	78.1%	2002	58.2%
Weighted Mean	----	68.3%	----	70.7%	----	53.7%
Low	2007	65.8%	2007	67.1%	2008	50.3%
Range	5.6		11.0		7.9	

Chart C graphically depicts course success rates in **English** and **Math** from fall 1999 to fall 2012.

Chart C



## **INTRODUCTION**

Community colleges nationwide are being expected to improve their **degree granting** and **transfer** rates. Student academic preparation, enrollment status (full-time/part-time), educational goal, and course availability are fundamental factors in determining a college's degree and transfer rates. Another, and perhaps underlying determinate of a college's degree and transfer rates, is the college's **course success** (completion) **rate**. Since **course success** rates will vary not only among disciplines, but also by course level and instructor, innumerable different course success rates could be computed. Among the myriad potential course success rates, the following **three** are among the most important:

1. The overall success rate in all of the institution's courses
2. The success rate in English courses
3. The success rate in Mathematics courses

The overall course success rate can be viewed as a measure of efficiency, from both a student and an institutional perspective. From a student standpoint, the overall course success rate relates to the "average student time" required to attain an educational goal – be it a degree, a certificate, or transfer. Although grades of D are acceptable in non-major courses, successful completions are needed in the vast majority of degree-applicable and/or transfer courses. Non-successful course outcomes require students to re-take those courses or to take a different course that also meets the general education or major requirement. Since about 75% of VC students are assessed at the basic skills level in English and/or Math, success rates in remedial courses also impact students' time to program completion.

Because enrollments in English and Math courses account for around 20% of all course enrollments, success rates in these two disciplines have a disproportionate effect on the college's overall course success rate (in fall 2012, Math accounted for 11.8% of all final grades; English accounted for 8.2%).

## **SUCCESS RATE BAND**

In this brief study, VC course success rates were examined over fourteen fall semesters (fall 1999 to fall 2012). When overall success rates were plotted (**Chart A**, page 1), it became apparent that they comprised a **band**, or **ribbon**, that is **5.6** percentage points wide with upper and lower boundaries of **71.4%** and **65.8%**. Until 2011, the highest success rate was 70.2% (fall 2004). In 2011, the success rate was 71.0% and in 2012, it was 71.4%.

Since 2001, Ventura College has had five Title V HSI grants and one HSI STEM grant. A stated or implied objective of each grant was to increase overall course success rates. After viewing the course success data, one may ask: Is there a de facto **upper limit** on course **success rates**?

With the exception of the last two fall semesters, overall success rates have not exceeded 70% in the past fourteen fall terms. It remains to be seen whether the fall 2013 success rate will be above 70%.

In order for the **possibility** of success rates to increase, there needs to be elasticity in faculty grading practices. If most faculty **grading methods** are based on preset **percentages**, then success rates will only fluctuate within a tight band. For example, a grading method that always assigns roughly 12% A's, 18% B's, 40% C's, 18% D's, and 12% F's will assure that success rates are consistently around 70%. In contrast, a grading method that is based on **competency** would assign grades according to student competency levels, permitting grades distributions (and success rates) to fluctuate – either up or down. There, of course, are other **criteria-based** grading methods that do not limit success rates to pre-defined percentages. It should be noted that this discussion of grading methods does **not** in any way suggest that course standards and/or rigor be modified to increase success rates.

Improving course success rates is not solely dependent upon teaching faculty. It also requires the efforts of counselors, Student Services personnel, college staff, and special programs such as Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, and the college's Title V grants.

Analysis of Grades Distributions and Success Rates – Fall Terms: 1999 to 2012

**DATA TABLES**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table A. Highest to Lowest Rankings of Success Rates	4
Table B. All Courses: Grades Distributions and Success Rates	4
Table C. English Courses: Grades Distributions and Success Rates	5
Table D. Mathematics Courses: Grades Distributions and Success Rates	5

**Table A. Highest to Lowest Rankings of Success Rates**

Rank	ALL Courses		ENGL Courses		MATH Courses	
	Fall Term	Success Rate	Fall Term	Success Rate	Fall Term	Success Rate
Highest 1	2012	71.4%	2011	78.1%	2002	58.2%
2	2011	71.0%	2012	74.8%	2011	56.7%
3	2004	70.2%	2010	73.5%	2012	56.1%
4	2002	69.9%	1999	72.1%	2003	56.1%
5	2010	69.1%	2004	71.7%	2004	55.0%
6	2003	68.3%	2008	70.4%	2010	55.0%
7	2001	68.1%	2009	70.3%	2006	54.1%
8	1999	67.9%	2002	69.7%	2001	52.6%
9	2005	67.8%	2003	69.4%	2009	52.3%
10	2000	67.7%	2000	69.0%	2005	52.2%
11	2006	67.0%	2005	67.3%	2000	50.8%
12	2009	66.7%	2006	66.9%	1999	50.6%
13	2008	66.3%	2001	67.2%	2007	50.3%
Lowest 14	2007	65.8%	2007	67.1%	2008	50.3%

**Table B. ALL Courses: Grades Distributions and Success Rates**

Fall Term	Total Grades	Successful		Grades Distribution							
		Number	Rate	A	B	C	CR/P	D	F	NC/NP	W
1999	30,235	20,515	67.85%	9,238	5,833	3,743	1,701	1,248	2,134	472	5,866
2000	31,406	21,258	67.69%	9,625	5,905	3,546	2,182	1,146	2,089	693	6,220
2001	32,799	22,344	68.12%	10,470	6,185	3,755	1,934	1,179	2,184	600	6,492
2002	33,838	23,642	69.87%	10,944	6,305	3,901	2,492	1,145	1,975	686	6,390
2003	32,889	22,453	68.27%	10,012	6,209	4,104	2,128	1,379	2,734	472	5,851
2004	31,678	22,226	70.16%	10,094	6,271	4,100	1,761	1,330	2,582	535	5,005
2005	31,323	21,250	67.84%	9,539	5,975	4,058	1,678	1,402	2,789	634	5,248
2006	31,856	21,332	66.96%	9,838	5,861	4,080	1,553	1,348	3,186	578	5,412
2007	34,522	22,708	65.78%	10,512	6,268	4,303	1,625	1,679	3,831	567	5,737
2008	38,187	25,319	66.30%	11,791	7,085	4,789	1,654	1,819	4,040	574	6,435
2009	39,483	26,344	66.72%	12,333	7,332	4,973	1,706	1,950	4,445	593	6,151
2010	37,530	25,922	69.07%	12,033	7,517	4,977	1,395	1,899	3,893	474	5,342
2011	37,508	26,166	70.96%	11,533	7,940	5,531	1,612	1,923	3,458	457	5,024
2012	35,869	25,596	71.36%	11,218	7,819	5,566	993	1,996	3,348	211	4,718
<b>Totals</b>	479,123	327,075	<b>68.26%</b>	149,180	92,505	61,426	24,414	21,443	42,688	7,546	79,891
<b>Overall Percentage Dist.</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	

Analysis of Grades Distributions and Success Rates – Fall Terms: 1999 to 2012

**Table C. ENGLISH Courses: Grades Distributions and Success Rates**

Fall Term	Total Grades	Successful		Grades Distribution							
		Number	Rate	A	B	C	CR/P	D	F	NC/NP	W
1999	1,827	1,317	72.09%	446	462	278	131	84	85	13	328
2000	2,085	1,438	68.97%	472	555	305	106	74	107	34	432
2001	2,197	1,476	67.18%	517	529	301	129	80	145	36	460
2002	2,140	1,492	69.72%	498	550	296	148	90	111	38	409
2003	2,154	1,495	69.41%	506	499	313	177	119	134	30	376
2004	2,023	1,451	71.73%	485	518	295	153	88	121	37	326
2005	2,256	1,519	67.33%	430	584	366	139	135	132	66	404
2006	2,287	1,530	66.90%	505	519	348	158	136	172	64	385
2007	2,393	1,607	67.15%	479	583	377	168	152	149	64	421
2008	2,470	1,738	70.36%	617	590	359	172	114	160	49	409
2009	2,645	1,860	70.32%	662	639	344	215	137	152	76	420
2010	2,684	1,973	73.51%	628	669	401	275	137	191	71	312
2011	2,653	2,072	78.10%	699	649	383	341	126	141	45	268
2012	2,924	2,188	74.83%	664	722	468	334	155	200	76	305
<b>Totals</b>	32,738	23,156	70.73%	7,608	8,068	4,834	2,646	1,627	2,000	699	5,255
<b>Overall Percentage Dist.</b>			100.0%	23.2%	24.6%	14.8%	8.1%	5.0%	6.1%	2.1%	16.1%

**Table D. MATHEMATICS Courses: Grades Distributions and Success Rates**

Fall Term	Total Grades	Successful		Grades Distribution							
		Number	Rate	A	B	C	CR/P	D	F	NC/NP	W
1999	2,805	1,418	50.55%	498	442	472	6	188	307	6	886
2000	2,737	1,391	50.82%	557	435	394	5	161	287	5	893
2001	2,879	1,515	52.62%	579	526	405	5	187	281	5	891
2002	2,913	1,696	58.22%	636	582	465	13	162	257	4	794
2003	3,111	1,744	56.06%	638	588	507	11	219	373	5	770
2004	2,883	1,585	54.98%	592	515	469	9	229	399	7	663
2005	3,044	1,589	52.20%	531	545	506	7	252	385	4	814
2006	3,140	1,700	54.14%	591	557	547	5	199	381	4	856
2007	3,359	1,690	50.31%	586	519	578	7	310	525	10	824
2008	3,774	1,897	50.26%	663	589	633	12	322	530	10	1,015
2009	4,101	2,145	52.30%	662	646	693	144	304	601	90	961
2010	4,162	2,288	54.97%	670	729	720	169	321	570	121	862
2011	4,562	2,585	56.66%	780	697	808	300	335	577	153	910
2012	4,250	2,384	56.09%	821	790	768	5	411	715	4	736
<b>Totals</b>	47,720	25,627	53.70%	8,804	8,160	7,965	698	3,600	6,188	428	11,875
<b>Overall Percentage Dist.</b>			100.0%	18.4%	17.1%	16.7%	1.5%	7.5%	13.0%	0.9%	24.9%