Early Arrival Programs

Scholars Academy & STAR

Rick Sluder, Brelinda Johnson, Travis Strattion

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Origins of the Program

2005 High school seniors from underserved populations signed contracts to enter MTSU and remain in the Academy through college graduation

2006 The first Summer Institute was established to assist gifted and underachieving minority and first-generation students in realizing their potential

- ✓ Originally an initiative of Office of Institutional Diversity and College of Continuing Education
- ✓ Then moved to Intercultural and Diversity Affairs, a unit in Student Affairs
- ✓ Now resides in the Office of Student Success, a unit within Academic Affairs

2005-15 Two major components: five-week residential Freshman Summer Institute (students enrolled in University Seminar and Fundamentals of Communication) and on-going academic and social support services provided through fall and spring semesters

2016-18 Program was redesigned to a two-week early arrival Freshman Summer Institute and enrollment was increased by 100 students each year

MTSU's Story: The *Quest for Student Success*
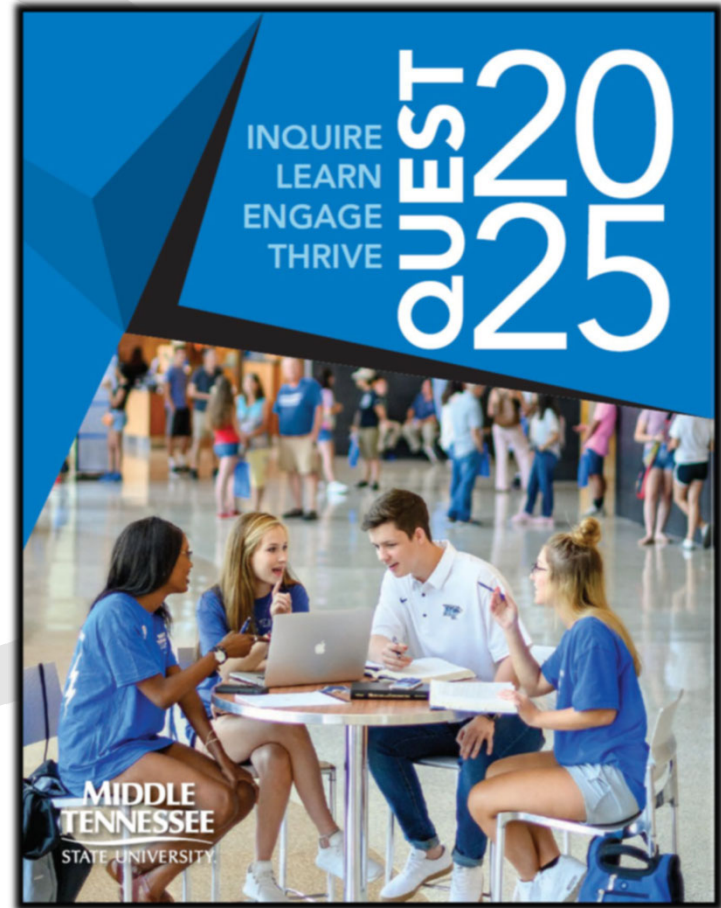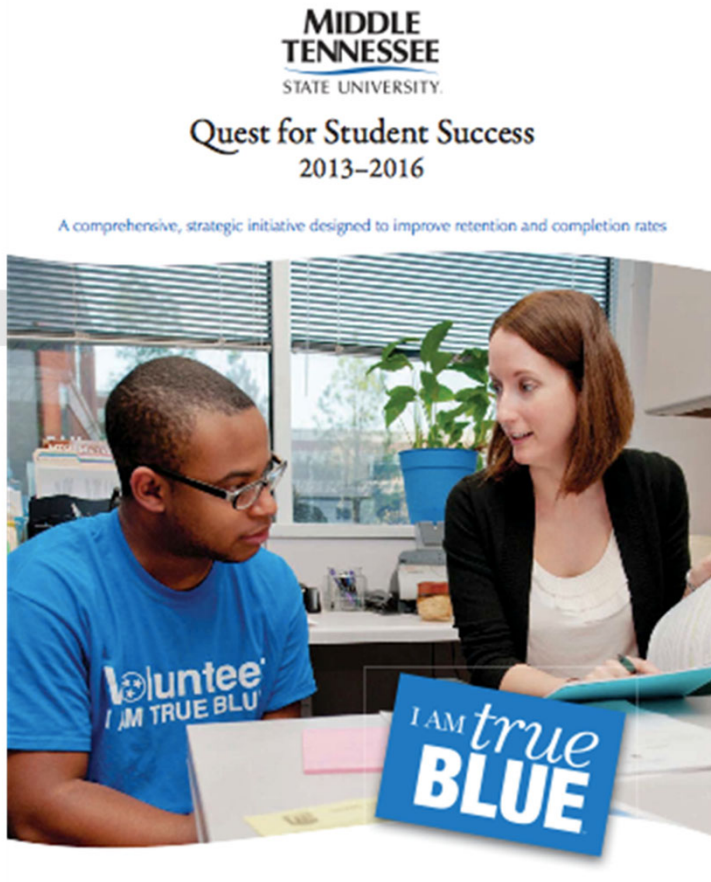
Developing the Program

1 Advisor Support

2 Campus Partners Support

3 Program Redesign

4 Communication Plan with Counselors and Parents

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Guiding Principles

✓ ***Scholars Academy Mission Statement***
MTSU's Scholars Academy is a holistic, realistic, and intrusive program that assists students with their transition to the collegiate setting. All students, with an emphasis on the needs of first-generation and/or Pell-eligible students, are provided the opportunity to enhance their learning experiences by receiving a quality education in a supportive, learning environment. Providing a foundation for academic, social, and identity development, the Scholars Academy promotes excellence and helps to accelerate student's abilities to succeed in the classroom and become assets to the community.

A Student success as a key strategic goal

B Data-informed (and assessed) practices

C A one-university, learner-centered model

D A focus on outcomes

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Refining the Program

2018   **Appointed Scholars Academy Manager and Assistant Manager**

2019   **Reformatted Peer Mentor Program, Opening & Closing Ceremonies, and Freshman Summer Institute schedule to be similar to individualized college schedules with M/W and T/R course offerings**

- ✓ **Added campus partners from math, reading, counseling, tutoring services, health services, and advising to course offerings during Freshman Summer Institute**

- ✓ **Created Student Transition and Academic Readiness (STAR) program to offer more students an opportunity for an early arrival experience**

- ✓ **STAR is a one-week program structured as a student conference**

2020   **Created remote Peer Mentor Training and Freshman Summer Institute**

Investing in the Program

Annual support from the President's Office for the program: Approximately $491,000

Full-time positions to staff the program:

- ✓ **Associate Vice Provost for Student Success**

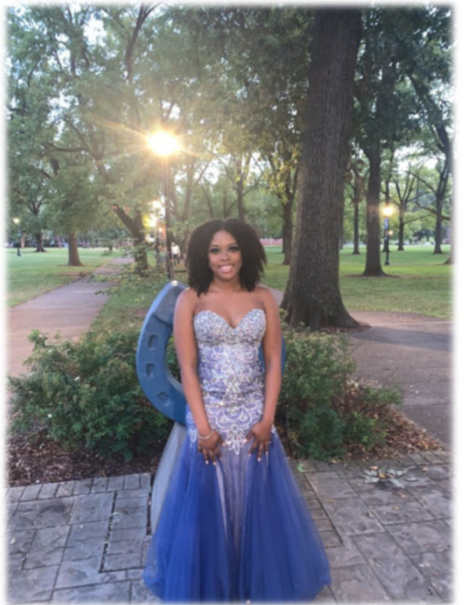- ✓ **Manager, Scholars Academy**

- ✓ **Assistant Manager, Scholars Academy**

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Scholars Academy

- Target Population- students with one of the following criteria:
  - Underrepresented
  - 1st Generation
  - 3 ACT sub scores 16 – 19
  - High school GPA 2.75 or below
  - High school graduates of high metropolitan areas (Chattanooga, Memphis, Nashville)
- Two-week early arrival program
- Consistent check-ins and communication with students and parents in 1st year

S.T.A.R.

- Target Population – All incoming freshmen and transfers
- One-week early arrival student conference
- Enrollment of UNIV 1010 for fall semester
- Introduction to campus academic and social resources
- Midterm check-in

Outcomes

Retention, Graduation Rates for Scholars Academy Freshmen and Other Freshmen

	Scholars Academy Overall											Six Year Graduation	Six Year Graduation
			One Year Retention	One Year Retention	Two Year Retention	Two Year Retention	Three Year Retention	Three Year Retention	Four Year Retention	Four Year Retention			
# in Pgm	Cohort Fall Term		Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen	Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen	Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen	Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen		Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen
33	2013		81.82%	70.35%	78.79%	59.99%	60.61%	53.64%	33.33%	27.19%		54.55%	46.27%
112	2014		84.82%	73.32%	70.54%	63.46%	66.07%	57.09%	31.25%	25.61%		**48.21%**	50.85%
164	2015		83.54%	75.33%	72.56%	65.76%	62.80%	57.76%	27.44%	22.80%			
308	2016		77.27%	76.40%	69.16%	65.22%	64.29%	58.96%	27.27%	23.75%			
347	2017		77.81%	75.35%	66.57%	66.17%	59.37%	58.60%					
461	2018		75.49%	75.08%	64.43%	66.95%							
181	2019		79.01%	78.38%									

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Outcomes

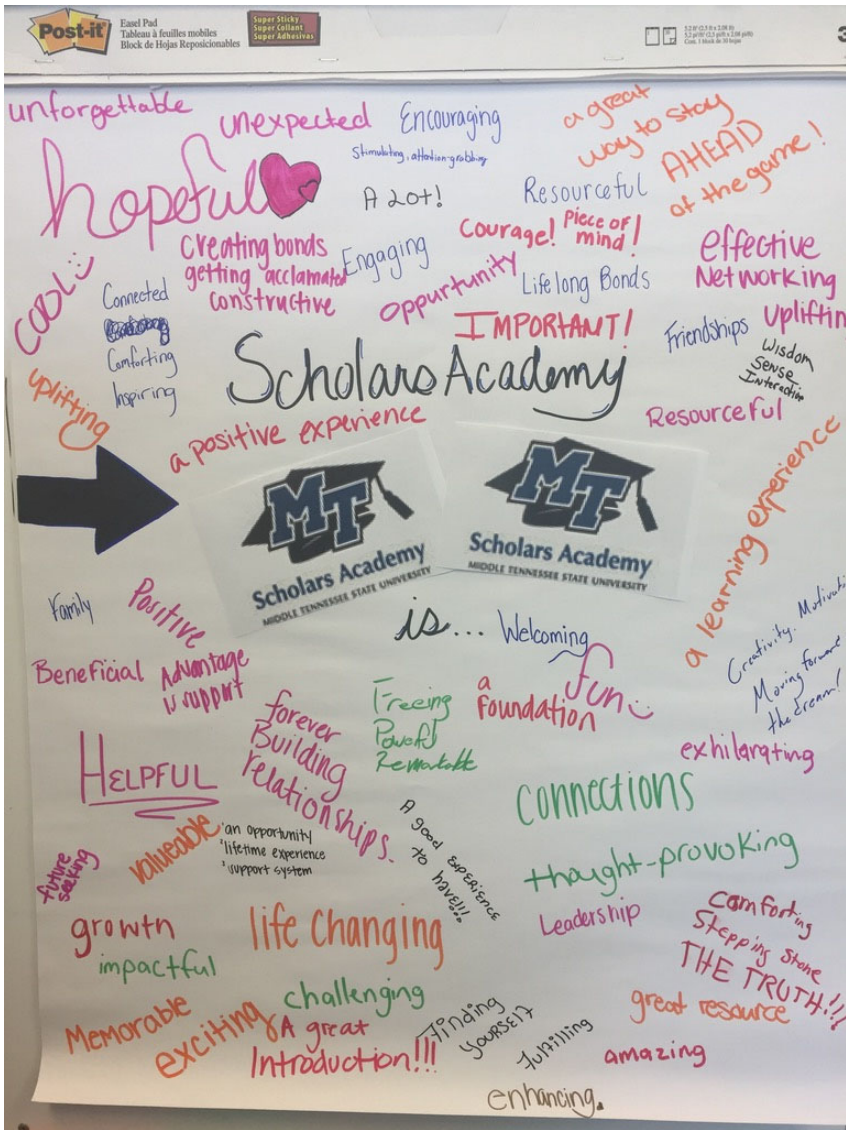## Retention, Graduation Rates for Scholars Academy Black Male Freshmen and Non-Scholars Black Male Freshmen

			One Year Retention	One Year Retention	Two Year Retention	Two Year Retention	Three Year Retention	Three Year Retention	Four Year Retention	Four Year Retention	Six Year Graduation	Six Year Graduation
#in Pgm	Cohort Fall Term		Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen	Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen	Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen	Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen	Scholars Academy	Other Freshmen
12	2013		83.33%	63.66%	83.33%	50.62%	66.67%	42.24%	41.67%	27.02%	50.00%	30.43%
18	2014		83.33%	68.16%	66.67%	58.78%	66.67%	51.84%	50.00%	27.35%	33.33%	37.55%
48	2015		79.17%	66.67%	70.83%	57.14%	56.25%	47.62%	27.08%	30.16%		
70	2016		77.14%	62.05%	62.86%	53.33%	58.57%	47.18%	30.00%	24.62%		
75	2017		69.33%	68.03%	58.67%	57.79%	46.67%	49.59%				
89	2018		66.29%	65.82%	50.56%	57.14%						
50	2019		76.00%	68.22%								

Scholars Academy Black Males & Non-Scholars Black Males

unforgettable   unexpected   Encouraging   a great way to stay AHEAD at the game!

Stimulating, attention-grabbing

hopeful

A lot!

Resourceful

cool!

Connected

Comforting

Inspiring

creating bonds   Engaging   courage!   piece of mind!   effective Networking

getting acclamated

constructive   oppurtunity   Lifelong Bonds

IMPORTANT!

Friendships   uplifting

Wisdom Sense Interaction

uplifting

a positive experience

Scholars Academy

Resourceful

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a learning experience

Family   Positive

is... Welcoming

Fun

Creativity, Motivation, Moving forward to the dream!

Beneficial   Advantage u support

a foundation

Helpful   forever Building relationships.

Freeing Powerful Remarkable

exhilarating

connections

valueable   'an opportunity 'lifetime experience 'support system

A good experience to have!!

thought-provoking

future seeking

growth

impactful   life changing

Leadership

Comforting Stepping Stone THE TRUTH!!!

Memorable   exciting   challenging   Finding yourself   great resource

A great Introduction!!!

fulfilling   amazing

enhancing.

Scholars Academy

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S.T.A.R.

All MTSU students by race and ethnicity: Fall 2011, Fall 2020

	Fall 2011	Fall 2020
All Students	*26,442*	*22,080*
Black, All	18.3%	19.6%
Black Female	10.8%	11.7%
Black Male	7.5%	8.0%
Hispanic, All	3.3%	7.0%
Hispanic Female	1.7%	4.0%
Hispanic Male	1.5%	3.0%
Asian, All	4.0%	5.9%
Asian Female	1.9%	3.3%
Asian Male	2.1%	2.7%
American Indian, All	0.9%	0.8%
American Indian Female	0.4%	0.4%
American Indian Male	0.4%	0.4%

	Fall 2011	Fall 2020
All Students	*26,442*	*22,080*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, All	0.2%	0.2%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Female	0.1%	0.1%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Male	0.1%	0.1%
White, All	71.4%	65.7%
White Female	37.7%	35.4%
White Male	33.7%	30.3%
Unclassified, All	1.9%	0.8%
Unclassified Female	1.0%	0.3%
Unclassified Male	0.9%	0.5%

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Undergraduate MTSU students by race and ethnicity: Fall 2011, Fall 2020

	Fall 2011	Fall 2020
Undergrads	*23,415*	*19,188*
Black, Undergrad	18.9%	20.2%
Black Female	11.1%	12.0%
Black Male	7.8%	8.2%
Hispanic, Undergrad	3.4%	7.4%
Hispanic Female	1.8%	4.1%
Hispanic Male	1.6%	3.3%
Asian, Undergrad	3.7%	5.6%
Asian Female	1.7%	3.0%
Asian Male	2.0%	2.6%
American Indian, Undergrad	0.9%	0.8%
American Indian Female	0.4%	0.4%
American Indian Male	0.5%	0.4%

	Fall 2011	Fall 2020
Undergrads	*23,415*	*19,188*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Undergrad	0.2%	0.2%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Female	0.1%	0.1%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Male	0.1%	0.1%
White, Undergrad	70.9%	65.0%
White Female	36.3%	34.1%
White Male	34.6%	30.9%
Unclassified, Undergrad	2.1%	0.8%
Unclassified Female	1.1%	0.3%
Unclassified Male	1.0%	0.5%

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Source: Enrollment and Technical Services, Fall 2011 and Fall 2020 census files.

Why have college enrollments declined nationally?

- Strong economy that incentivizes going to work instead of going to college
  - From 2011 to 2019 college enrollment nationwide declined 11%

- Declining high school graduation rates
  - Attributable to the "birth dearth" and declines in fertility rates about 20 years ago

- Declining state support and therefore increasing costs to students and parents
  - As tuition increases, and financial aid and scholarships don't, fewer students can afford college

Grawe, N. D. (2018). Demographics and the demand for higher education; The Hechinger Report and NBC News: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/education/crisis-looming-u-s-colleges-not-just-because-pandemic-n1235338; American Progress: (https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/reports/2020/09/28/490838/time-worry-college-enrollment-declines-among-black-students/);
NPR: (https://www.npr.org/2019/12/16/787909495/fewer-students-are-going-to-college-heres-why-that-matters)

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SOME COLLEGE AND NO DEGREE

How individuals who attend and don't graduate feel about education

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20 years, more than 31 million students have enrolled in college and left without receiving a degree or certificate.[1] Re-enrolling this "some college, no degree" population is at the center of many states' plans for boosting the educational attainment of their population.

Among many resources highlighting the importance of these efforts, the National Student Clearinghouse recently came out with a report providing a descriptive overview of the some college, no degree population nationally and for each of the 50 states on key objective variables.[2] The report highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of this population to make re-enrollment efforts more effective. Adding to this descriptive understanding, our report provides the firsthand subjective perspectives of more than 40,000 individuals who stopped out of college before completing a degree.

The data and insights shared here are drawn from the Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey: an unprecedented telephone survey of more than 340,000 U.S. adults ages 18–65 that explores their educational experiences and attitudes. Strada Education Network, Lumina Foundation, and Gallup collaborated on this report as part of a larger series of reports on adults without degrees.

[1] National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Some College, No Degree: A National View of Students with Some College Enrollment, but No Completion. Accessed Dec. 4, 2019, https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport7.
[2] National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Some College, No Degree. Accessed Dec. 4, 2019, https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/SCND_Report_2019.pdf.
[3] Sample size for likely to enroll questions = 3,021. Sample size for quality questions=8,860.

Based on the responses of 42,190 adults ages 25-64 with some college, but no degree and who are not currently enrolled,[3] the report's key findings include:

- The most common reason people cited for stopping out was difficulty balancing school and work at the same time.

- The factors that would have the most impact on getting this population to re-enroll are affordability, schedule flexibility and a guaranteed employment outcome connected to further education.

- Those who stopped out rated lower the quality of the academic and career advising they received than peers who completed degrees.

- Only 19 percent of these adults report they are no longer interested or don't need to complete their education. Cost and time pressures continue to be barriers that keep people from re-enrolling.

- Adults with some college but no degree say that if they enroll in additional courses or training, they are most likely to do so via an employer. When considering nonemployer providers, they are most likely to enroll at a community college.

- Younger people, people of color and those who are working in certain occupations, such as food preparation, are more likely to say they will enroll in additional courses or training.
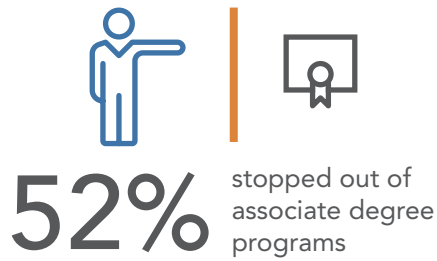
WHO ARE THEY?

Many state policies are focused on re-enrolling adults with some college, no degree, but these policies are often broadly stated and could improve their impact with additional understanding of this population. There is a wide range of experience in terms of when people stopped out, where they had previously been enrolled, and their current income and employment status. The adults in the survey were split almost evenly between the type of institution they had attended, with slightly more having been enrolled at a two-year institution. Highlighting their repeated efforts, about half of these individuals had attended multiple postsecondary institutions – one-third had attended two, 12 percent had attended three, and 5 percent had attended four or more. While Black and Hispanic students are more likely to stop out than white students, the majority of college stop-outs are white.[4] The race and ethnicity breakdown of the some college, no degree survey sample was 65 percent white, 17 percent Black, 15 percent Hispanic, 1 percent Asian and 2 percent some other race or ethnicity. About half were earning less than $35,000 per year, one-fourth between $35,000 and $60,000, and another fourth $60,000 or more. About two-thirds were employed full-time.
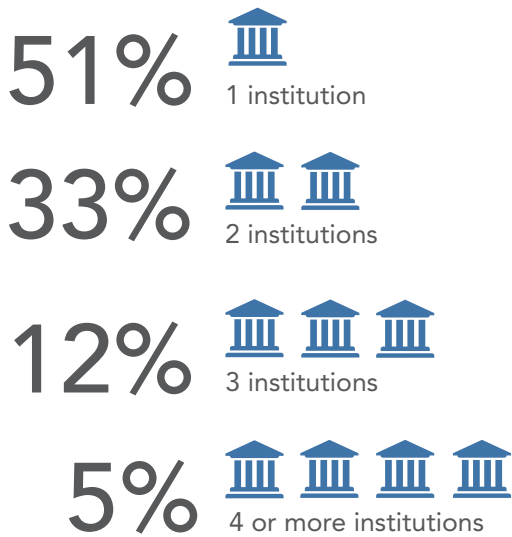
[4] National Center for Education Statistics. Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups, Indicator 23: Postsecondary Graduation Rates. Accessed Dec. 4, 2019, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_red.asp.
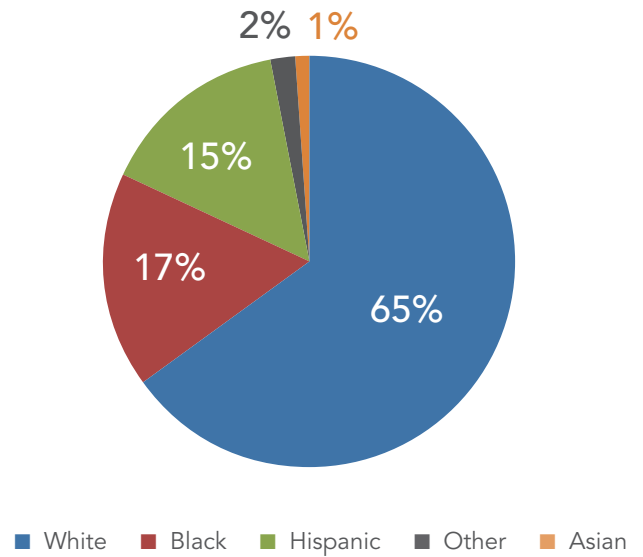
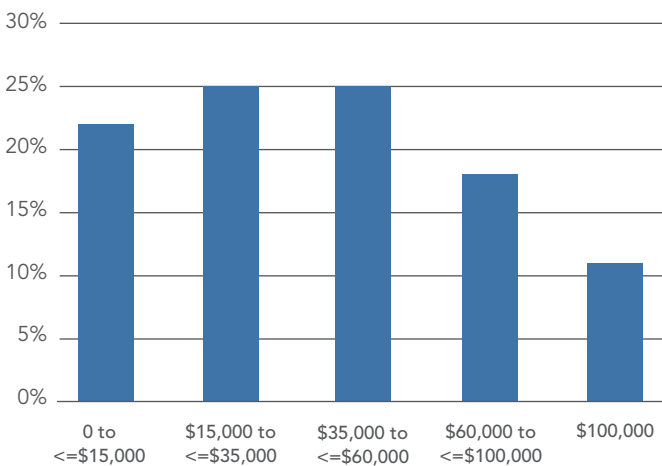FIGURE 1 THE SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE POPULATION
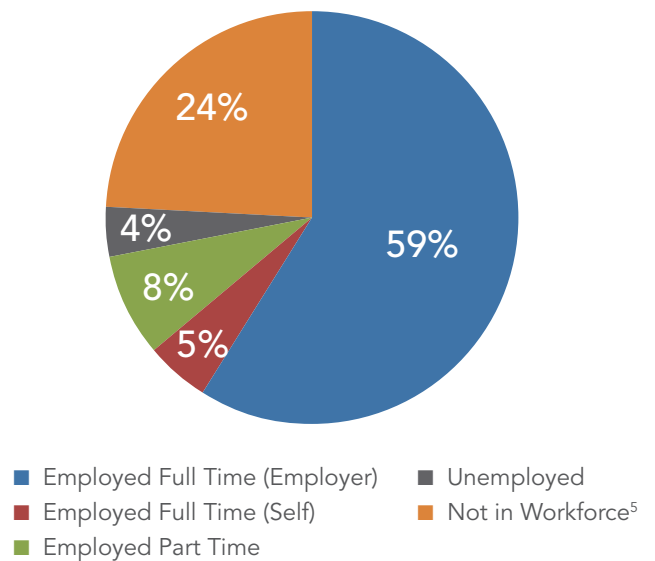
Type of Institutions Attended

52% stopped out of associate degree programs

47% stopped out of bachelor's degree programs

Number of Institutions Attended

51% 1 institution

33% 2 institutions

12% 3 institutions

5% 4 or more institutions

Race/Ethnicity

2% 1%

15%

17%

65%

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Other
- Asian

Income Level

Income	Percentage
0 to <=$15,000	22%
$15,000 to <=$35,000	25%
$35,000 to <=$60,000	25%
$60,000 to <=$100,000	18%
$100,000	11%

Employment Status

59%

5%

8%

4%

24%

- Employed Full Time (Employer)
- Employed Full Time (Self)
- Employed Part Time
- Unemployed
- Not in Workforce[5]

[5] Not in the workforce refers to people who are not working and not looking for work, as opposed to unemployed, who are not working but are seeking work.

WHY DID THEY STOP OUT?

Understanding why people stopped out is key both to re-enrolling as well as increasing retention and preventing future stop-outs. As part of the Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey, an open-ended question was asked about why the respondent took college courses but did not complete a degree. In all, 38,468 adults between the ages of 25-64 answered this question. Adults gave many different reasons for why they did not complete the degree they started. The most common had to do with the need to work and the difficulty balancing school and work:

What is the main reason you took college courses but did not complete a degree?

"The main reason was I was trying to work and go to college, and I wasn't getting good grades, so I just stopped going to college. I couldn't multitask."

"I worked full time and went to school full time. It became too much. I had four kids at home at the time. It was just too much."

"Family – you have to make money; it's hard to go to college and make money at the same time, especially in nursing school."

Other common reasons cited were financial pressures or other life events or personal challenges (See appendix for Table 1: What is the main reason you took college courses but did not complete a degree?).

Stopped out students also may have suffered from a lack of guidance – most did not have good experiences with academic or career advising while they were enrolled. As seen in Figure 2, more than half (51 percent) of students who had stopped out from a two-year institution rated their academic advising as poor or fair, and 55 percent rated their career advising as poor or fair. For those who had stopped out of a four-year institution, 54 percent rated academic advising as poor or fair, and 59 percent rated career advising as poor or fair. In contrast, most adults who attained an associate or bachelor's degree rated their academic and career advising as good or excellent.

FIGURE 2

QUALITY OF ADVISING FOR COLLEGE GRADUATES AND STUDENTS WHO DO NOT
COMPLETE A DEGREE
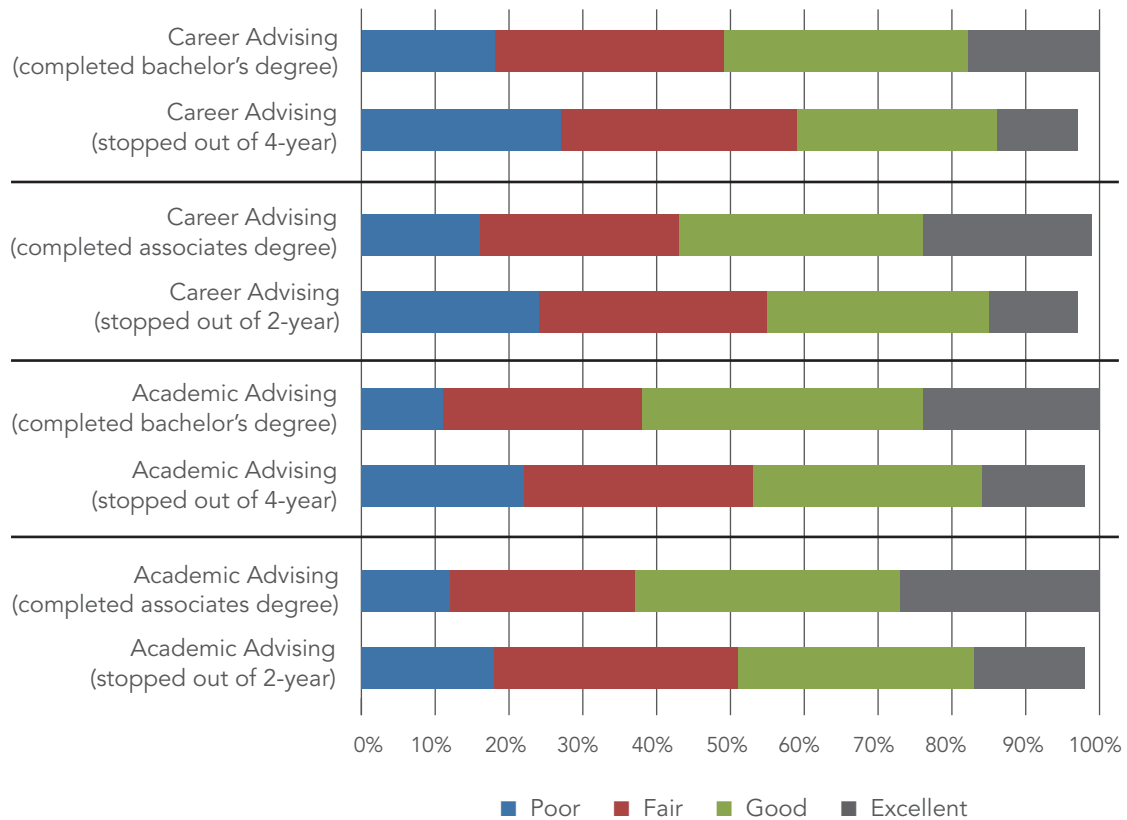
WHY HAVE THEY NOT RE-ENROLLED?

Another open-ended question on the survey asked adults with some college, no degree
why they are not currently enrolled. This question was answered by 37,101 adults age 25-64.
We found that for most people, the reasons they stopped out of college continue to be the
primary barriers to them returning. Those who stopped out because of difficulty balancing
school and work were most likely to say that they are not enrolled because they are already
working and do not have enough time for classes. Those who stopped out due to financial
issues are most likely to say that they are not enrolled because of cost. Many times, worries
about time and cost are bound together – people need money to pay for education, but they
need to work to have the money and, therefore, do not have enough time.

At the same time, a new theme also emerges: About 1 in 5 were simply no longer interested
or did not feel that additional education would benefit them in their career (19 percent).
Others express a similar sentiment: They are unsure if school would be worth the investment
of time (11 percent) and money (12 percent), and they have work responsibilities that are
pre-eminent (17 percent). (See appendix for Table 2 : What is the main reason you are not
currently taking college courses?).

[6] Percentages do not sum to 100 as some respondents chose to answer "don't know" or refused the question.

What is the main reason you are not currently taking college courses?

"There's no need for me to. I own my own business, and I am doing well at it."

"I just don't feel the need to go. I like the job I have right now, and I don't need to go to school with what I do."

"Too many bills to pay and I have to work full time and can't afford to go back until I get more financially stable."

"I have my family, so I have to pay rent, and I don't get paid much, so I don't have time."

"I want to know which direction I want to go. I don't want to just go to college to go to college; I want my degree to be towards something that's useful."

WILL THEY COME BACK?

In Strada's report *"Back to School?,"* we found that adults with some college, no degree are no more likely than those who never went to college at all to say that they need additional education. They are only marginally more likely than other adults without degrees to say that they plan to enroll in postsecondary education within the next five years. Given the priority of the some college, no degree population for many state policies and institutional efforts, it is worth digging deeper to understand the nuance in likelihood to enroll within this group.[6]

Across all groups, people said they would be more likely to enroll in courses or training offered by an employer than any other provider. The role of employers has become increasingly paramount given the ever-evolving changes in skills needed to compete. Employers have always been responsible for creating jobs and, to some degree, providing training, but there has been a significant shift toward identifying market needs and helping to ensure that education providers, including employers, are preparing learners to meet those needs. Given that many of those who have stopped out are working, it makes sense that they would prefer to re-enroll in courses or training where they are.

[7] The question wording was: "On a five-point scale, where 5 means extremely likely and 1 means not at all likely, in the next five years, how likely are you to enroll in courses or training offered through each of the following?" This series of questions was added to the survey in January 2019. The total n for these questions for the some college, no degree population is 3,021. After January 2019 this series of questions was only asked of those age 49 and younger, so the sample differs from the broader sample in terms of age categories: 38 percent age 25-34, 32 percent age 35-44, 21 percent age 45-54, and 10 percent age 55-64. This group is also slightly more likely to be in the workforce than the broader sample (81 percent versus 76 percent). Race and ethnicity, income and type of institution attended were similar to the broader sample.

Looking at nuances within subpopulations, age is the first distinction found (See Figure 3). Unsurprisingly, younger people were more likely to say they plan to re-enroll.[7] While all age groups said they would be most likely to enroll via an employer, the youngest group of stop-outs had a relatively higher likelihood of enrolling at a community college compared to older age groups.

FIGURE 3

SELF-REPORTED LIKELIHOOD TO ENROLL IN COURSES OR TRAINING WITHIN FIVE YEARS BY AGE
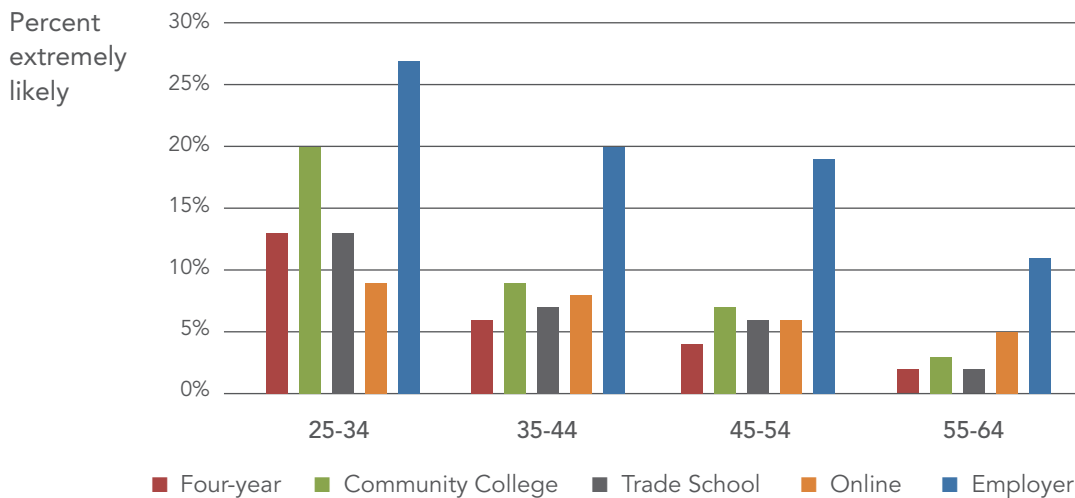
There were distinct differences across racial and ethnic groups as well (See Figure 4). Whites were much less likely to report that they would enroll anywhere within the next five years. Likelihood to enroll was more similar among Blacks and Hispanics, with Blacks reporting slightly higher likelihood. All racial and ethnic groups reported the highest likelihood to enroll in courses or training offered by employers, followed by community colleges.

FIGURE 4

SELF-REPORTED LIKELIHOOD TO ENROLL IN COURSES OR TRAINING WITHIN FIVE YEARS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY
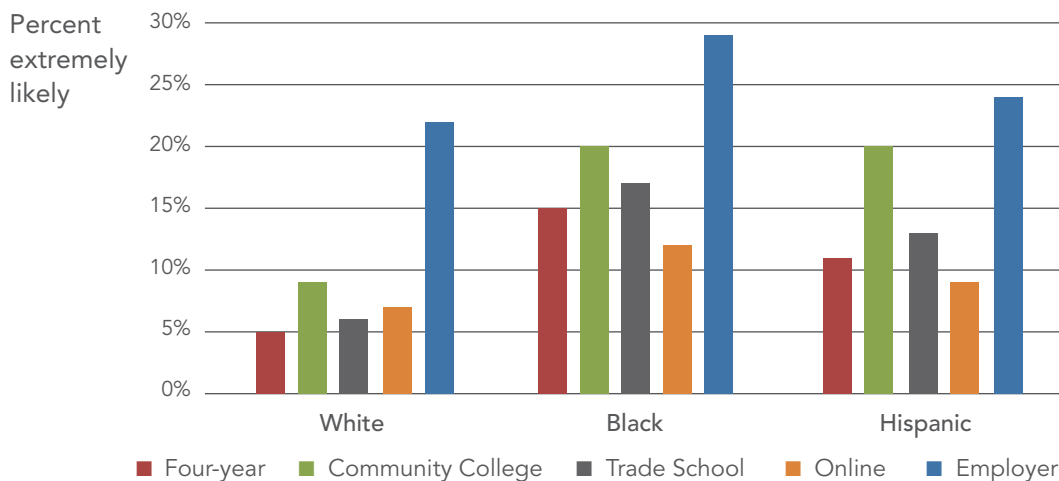
[8] Previous Strada research has found that younger people are more likely than older people to consider enrolling in education (Strada Education Network. Back to School? Accessed Dec. 4, 2019, https://www.stradaeducation.org/report/back-to-school.). Some older adults report feeling that they are now too old to go back to school and that colleges aren't well designed to serve older students.

There were also some notable differences in likelihood of re-enrolling by occupation. Figure 5 shows the top 10 occupational categories in which the some college, no degree population is employed, along with the percent who said they were extremely likely to enroll in either community college (the most popular of the four nonemployer types of academic providers) or with an employer within the next five years. Those working in food preparation occupations stand out as significantly more likely to enroll in community college than those working in other categories. Health care workers were the most likely to say they would enroll in additional education and training through their employer.
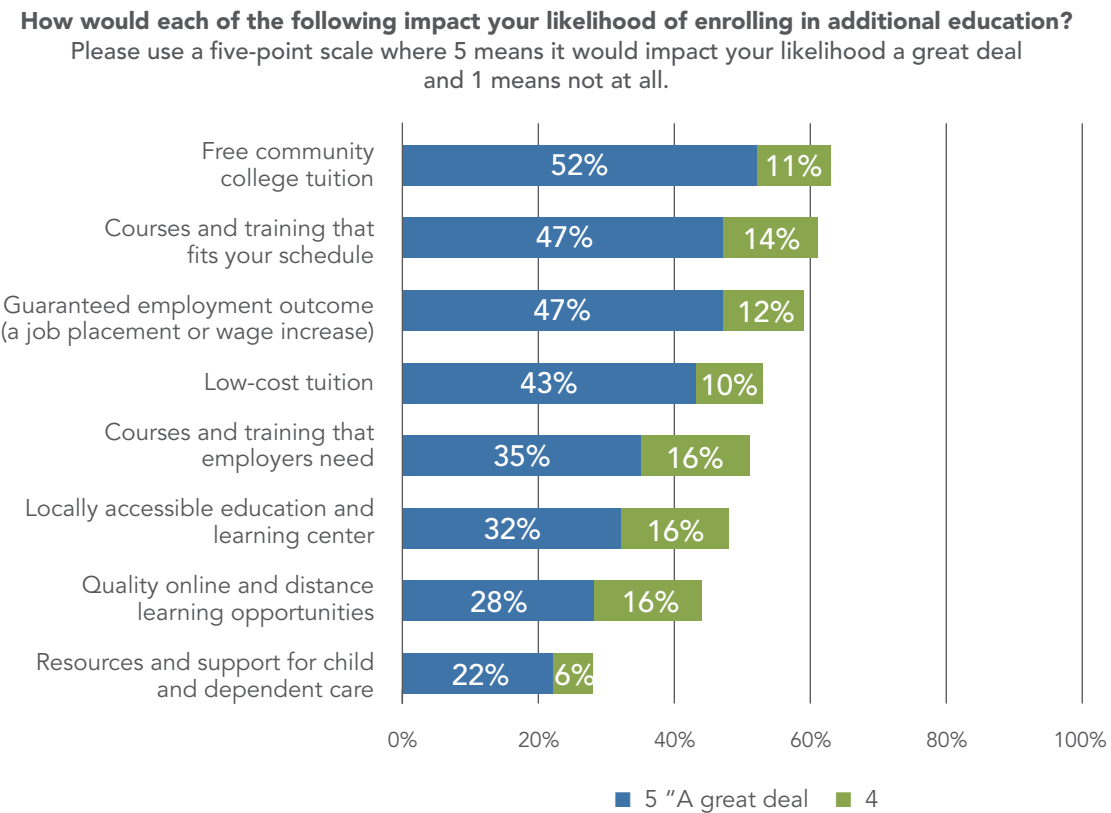
FIGURE 5

SELF-REPORTED LIKELIHOOD TO ENROLL IN COURSES OR TRAINING WITHIN FIVE YEARS BY CURRENT OCCUPATION

Percent extremely likely

■ Employer   ■ Community College
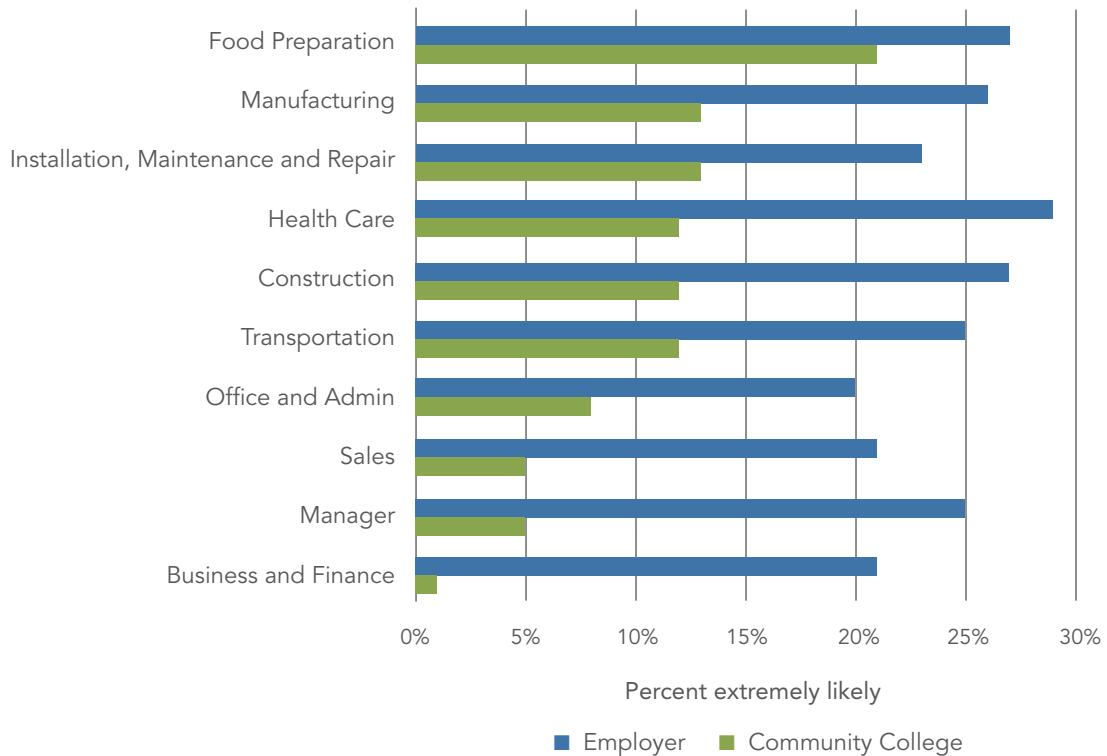
WHAT COULD HELP THEM RE-ENROLL?

When asked about a variety of factors that may impact their likelihood to enroll, adults with some college, no degree said the factors that would have the biggest impact on them were free community college tuition, courses and training that fit their schedule and a guaranteed employment outcome, such as a job placement or wage increase (See Figure 7). These three factors are also the top three among all adults without degrees[8] but in a slightly different order. The categories, however, are consistent: adults without degrees need career outcomes, affordability and schedule flexibility to enroll.

FIGURE 7

FACTORS IMPACTING SELF-REPORTED LIKELIHOOD TO ENROLL IN COURSES OR TRAINING

How would each of the following impact your likelihood of enrolling in additional education?
Please use a five-point scale where 5 means it would impact your likelihood a great deal and 1 means not at all.

Free community college tuition — 52% | 11%
Courses and training that fits your schedule — 47% | 14%
Guaranteed employment outcome (a job placement or wage increase) — 47% | 12%
Low-cost tuition — 43% | 10%
Courses and training that employers need — 35% | 16%
Locally accessible education and learning center — 32% | 16%
Quality online and distance learning opportunities — 28% | 16%
Resources and support for child and dependent care — 22% | 6%

■ 5 "A great deal   ■ 4

Focusing on the top three categories and breaking them apart by occupation reveals interesting nuance in terms of which policies have the biggest impact on which groups, as seen in Figure 8. For example, free community college tuition has the biggest reported impact on enrollment for those working in office and administrative, food preparation and transportation occupations; while for those working in health care or manufacturing, guaranteed employment outcomes would be much more impactful. Those working in sales, management or construction place the most emphasis on schedule flexibility.

⁹ Strada Education Network. Back to School? Accessed Dec. 4, 2019, https://www.stradaeducation.org/report/back-to-school.

FIGURE 8

FACTORS IMPACTING SELF-REPORTED LIKELIHOOD TO ENROLL BY CURRENT OCCUPATION

Percent Great Deal of Impact

- 🟩 Free community college tuition
- 🟥 Course and training that fits your schedule
- 🟦 Guaranteed employment outcome
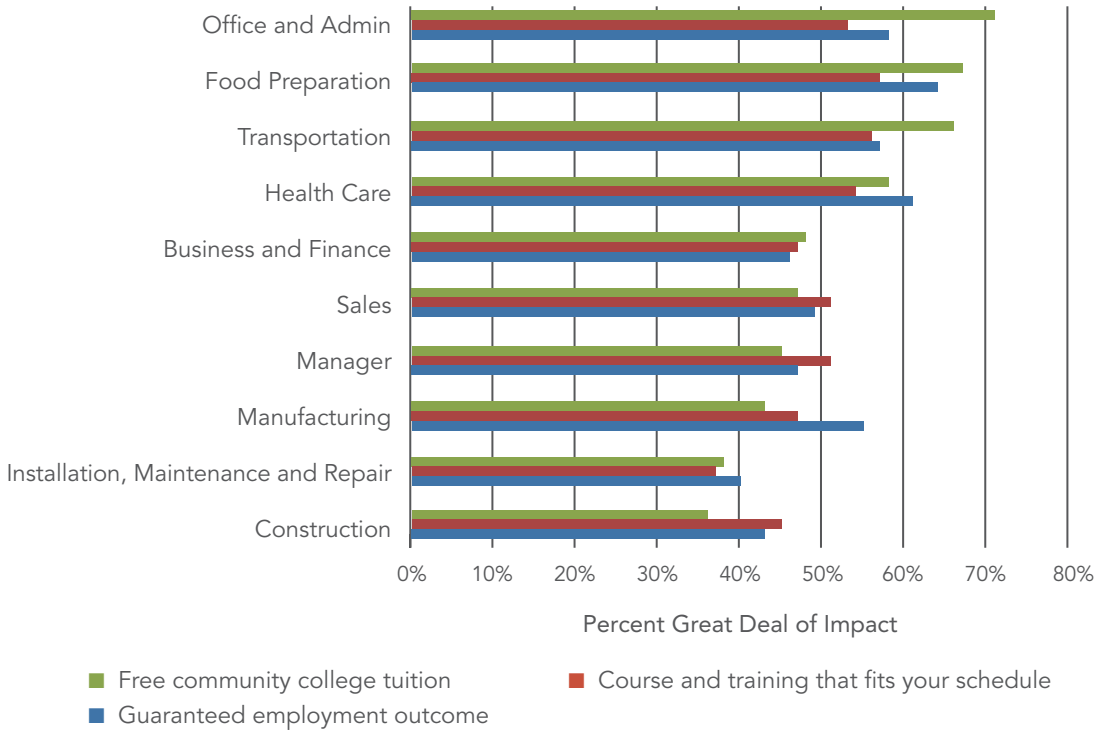
When looking at the impact on likelihood to enroll across racial and ethnic groups, compared to whites, people of color report a higher impact for all factors (Figure 9). This is consistent with earlier findings that whites report being less likely to enroll in additional education or training. All groups said that free community college tuition would have the greatest impact on their likelihood to enroll.

FIGURE 9

FACTORS IMPACTING SELF-REPORTED LIKELIHOOD TO ENROLL BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Percent Great Deal of Impact

- 🟩 Free community college tuition
- 🟥 Course and training that fits your schedule
- 🟦 Guaranteed employment outcome
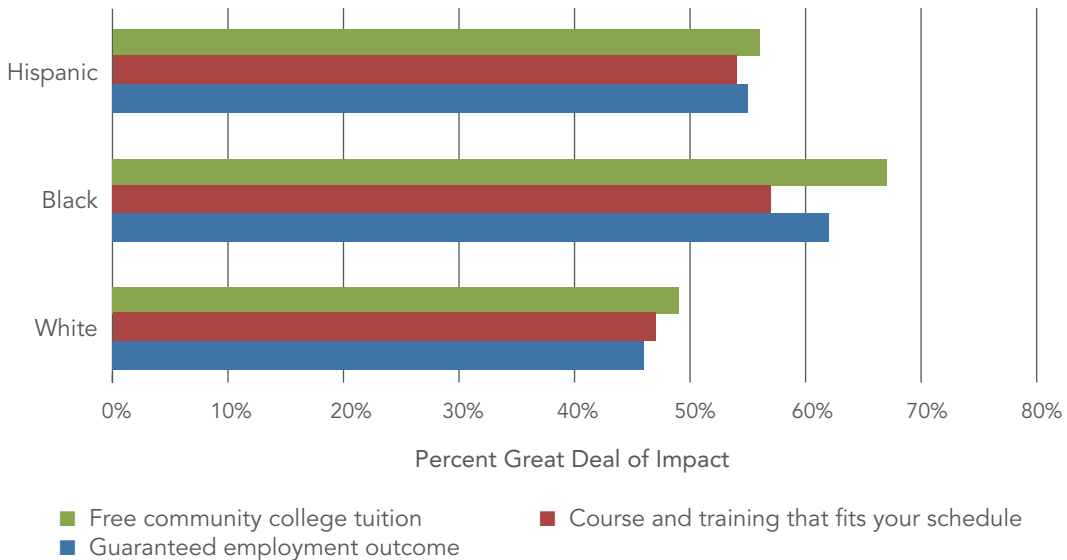
CONCLUSION

By speaking directly with individuals who have some college but no degree, we obtain new insights to guide policy makers and education providers in developing more effective solutions to serve these adults. Based on their personal experiences:

- Difficulty balancing school and work is a key reason people stop out of college. Educational providers need to acknowledge that a high percentage of their students will be working and going to school – and provide the flexibility to make it possible for these students to do both.

- Better experiences with higher-quality academic and career advising are linked with completion. Students need to see how their education connects to a purpose. Implementing a proactive advising model is one approach that could be taken to better support learners.

- Employers are identified as the most likely pathway for individuals across all demographic breakdowns of those with some college, no degree to enroll in additional courses or training. Strategies to meet educational attainment goals will be more effective as they integrate employers.

- When considering whether to re-enroll, adults with some college, no degree have three key needs:
  – Education must be affordable.
  – They must be able to fit education into the rest of their lives, including work and family.
  – They want to see a clear career benefit to invest the time and money in further education.

To bring back the some college, no degree population, state policymakers and institutions of higher education must be more responsive to these individuals' needs and circumstances.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1

What is the main reason you took college courses but did not complete a degree?

Work-related	17%
Financial pressure	12%
Other life event or personal problem	11%
Just wanted to learn more or didn't need a degree	7%
Pregnant or had children	7%
Classes, degree or school was not a good fit	4%
Got bored, lost interest or became distracted	4%
Family obligations	4%
Personal health reasons	3%
Didn't have enough time for classes	3%
Couldn't decide on a career or field of study	2%
Was not mature enough	1%
Family pressure	1%
Classes were too difficult	1%
Deployed	1%

TABLE 2

What is the main reason you are not currently taking college courses?

Don't need it or not interested	19%
Work-related	17%
Too expensive	12%
No time for classes	11%
Family obligations	7%
Age	6%
Personal health problems	5%
Retired	4%
Life	1%
Inconvenient location	1%

ABOUT THE STRADA-GALLUP EDUCATION CONSUMER SURVEY

Results for the Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey are based on telephone surveys conducted from June 2016 through April 2019 with a random sample of more than 340,000 respondents aged 18 to 65, living in all fifty U.S. states and the District of Columbia. The sample includes national adults with a minimum quota of 70 percent cellphone respondents and 30 percent landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within a region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers are selected using random-digit-dial methods. Landline respondents are chosen at random within each household based on which member will have the next birthday.

Interviews are conducted in English and Spanish. Samples are weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. The data are weighted to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education and region. Demographic weighting targets are based on the most recent current population survey figures for the population aged 18 to 65.

All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting. At the 95 percent confidence level, the percentage point margin of error for sample size of 42,000 is +/− 0.6 percent, for 3,000 it is +/− 2.1 percent. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

Strada Education Network is a national social impact organization dedicated to improving lives by forging clearer and more purposeful pathways between education and employment. We engage partners across education, nonprofits, business and government to focus relentlessly on students' success throughout all phases of their working lives.

Learn more about how Strada Education Network is listening to education consumers and compiling the nation's largest dataset of consumer insights on education experiences after high school, as well as collecting insights from employers, alumni and current college students. Visit stradaeducation.org/consumer-insights.

What happens to 100 Students
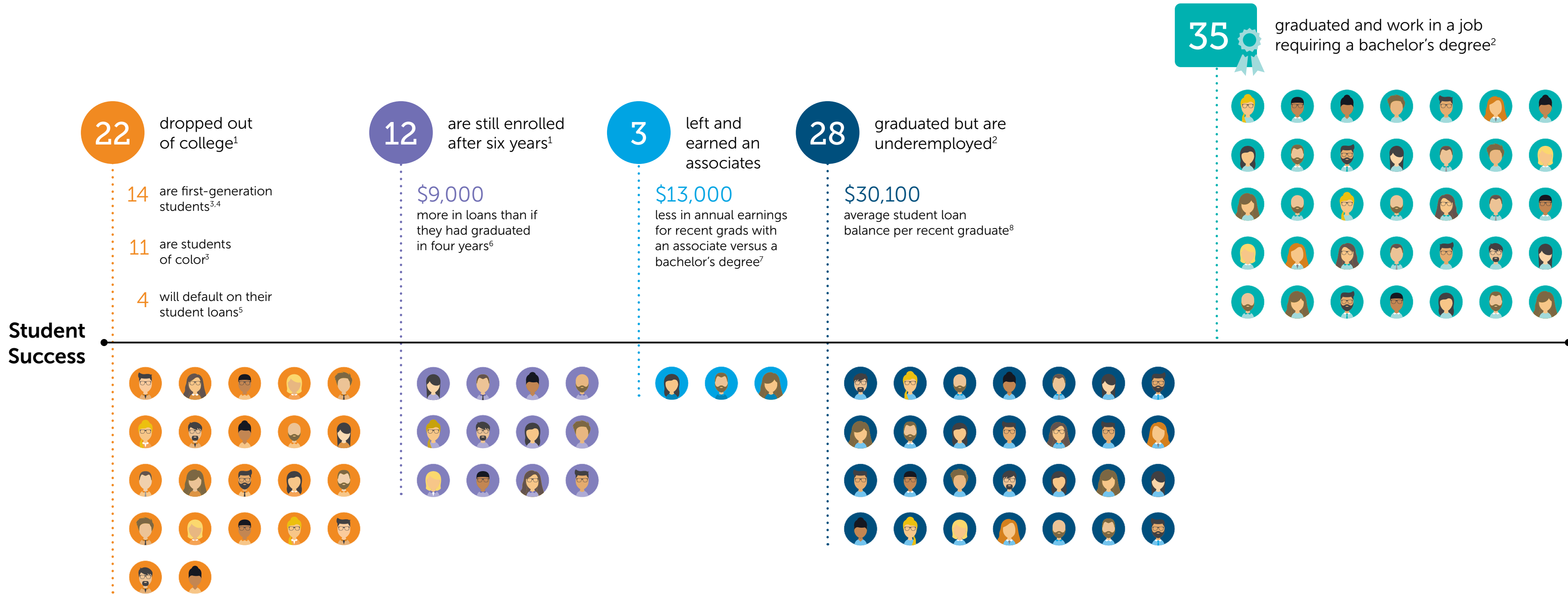## who start a bachelor's degree?

Just 35 will get a "return on education"

Colleges and universities face seemingly constant scrutiny from external stakeholders questioning the value of a postsecondary education. Is this criticism warranted? The lack of centralized, longitudinal, industry-wide records makes it frustratingly difficult to understand what really happens to our students. In response, researchers at EAB have pulled together disparate national data sets to assemble a comprehensive picture of student outcomes. Given the nature of the data, this analysis should be interpreted as "directionally correct" rather as a precise measurement. Any institution that strives to elevate any of the numbers on this page can rightly be said to be working to improve their "return on education."

35 graduated and work in a job requiring a bachelor's degree[2]

22 dropped out of college[1]
- **14** are first-generation students[3,4]
- **11** are students of color[3]
- **4** will default on their student loans[5]

12 are still enrolled after six years[1]

$9,000 more in loans than if they had graduated in four years[6]

3 left and earned an associates

$13,000 less in annual earnings for recent grads with an associate versus a bachelor's degree[7]

28 graduated but are underemployed[2]

$30,100 average student loan balance per recent graduate[8]

Student Success

Our New Student Success Mandate

Graduate more students... → ...in less time and at lower cost... → ...with better post-grad outcomes... → ...to ensure a positive return on education

EAB

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1. NSC data includes outcomes for transfers and thus does not match the federal graduation rate. Source: Shapiro D, et al., "Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates – Fall 2010 Cohort (Signature Report No. 12)," National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2016).
2. "Underemployed" is defined as the percentage of college graduates aged 22-27 who are not working in a job requiring a bachelor's degree. Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, "The Labor Market for Recent College Graduates," https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market/index.html.
3. Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, "Digest of Educational Statistics: 2015," Tables 306.50 and 326.40.
4. "First-generation" is defined as a student whose parents had some or no college. Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, "Six-Year Attainment, Persistence, Transfer, Retention, and Withdrawal Rates of Students Who Began Postsecondary Education in 2003-04," (NCES 2011-152) Table 1.1-C.
5. Source: Nguyen M, "Degreeless in Debt: What Happens to Borrowers Who Drop Out" American Institutes for Research (2012).
6. This is an approximation based on data from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Source: http://www.utsa.edu/moneymatters/cost/graduating.html.
7. Based on the median annual earnings of all full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34. Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, "Digest of Educational Statistics: 2016," Table 502.30.
8. Includes federal and non-federal loans taken by students who graduated from public and non-profit private institutions. Source: Institute for College Access and Success, "Student Debt and the Class of 2015," (October 2016).

Learn more about how your institution can improve its return on education
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Reasons Why MTSU Students Discontinue Their Studies: 2013 Non-Returning Student Survey

Report completed by:
MTSU Office of Institutional Effectiveness
Planning & Research

Background

Two popular models for studying student retention include Tinto's Student Integration Model (1975) and Bean's Student Attrition Model (1980). Cabrera, Nora and Castaneda (1993) utilized structural equation modeling to identify how these models overlapped and developed an Integrated Model of Student Retention (1993). Factors in the Integrated Model that were significant and associated with retention were: Financial Attitudes, Encouragement from Family and Friends, Goal Commitment (to earn a degree), Institutional Commitment (to remain with the institution), Social Integration, Academic Integration, Academic Performance and Intent to Persist. Social integration refers to the student's ability to establish relationships and make friends, and academic integration measures the student's anticipation of academic success and satisfaction with the quality of their academic program and the faculty. External factors play a role, and retention is also impacted by a student's pre-college characteristics (Cabrera, Nora and Castaneda (1993).

Although the research summarized in this report is qualitative, the Integrated Model was the framework for categorizing the responses from the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Non-Returning Student Survey that was conducted during the spring 2013 semester. Student reasons for not returning were so varied, that a framework was needed to summarize the data, and the Integrated Model was selected for this purpose.

The non-returning student survey is a follow-up study to an initial analysis conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Planning & Research (IEPR) where it was found that 3,121 students, who were enrolled at MTSU in fall 2012, had

not returned in spring 2013 (as of January 31). (Students, who graduated in fall 2012 or who had a pending graduation in May 2013, were taken out of this number.) Of the 3,121 students, who were no longer enrolled, 825 were on academic probation or suspension (418 on probation and 407 on suspension). Another 290 were purged because they had an unpaid balance and did not arrange for a payment plan during the term. President McPhee wanted to know why the remaining students did not return. The IEPR Office conducted telephone and online surveys to answer this question.

Study Methods

The MTSU advancement office has a phone center for fundraising purposes. The IEPR Office was able to use this center and train the student workers to make phone calls for five evenings from March 17th to March 24th. Student callers were asked to probe and make sure they understood why the student did not come back, rather than just knowing what they were doing (such as transferring elsewhere, joining the military, etc.)

Phone calls were made to 1,697 students for the non-returning student survey. This was lower than the 3,121 because those on probation, suspension, or purged were not included. Another 170 were removed because these students were non-degree-seeking, deceased or had a privacy flag on their records; doctoral students were excluded. There were 139 who had already been called by advisors so the students did not call them again. The phone calls resulted in responses from 486 students who gave a reason for withdrawal.

Non-respondents were then surveyed using SurveyMonkey, an online survey software; the survey closed on April 15, 2013. There were 181 students who responded to the online survey.

Overall, there were 667 responses from the phone and online surveys (a 39% response rate). Information from advisors, who had called students at the beginning of the term, was added when there was reason as to why the student had not enrolled

(65), again not just what they were doing, for a total sample size of 727 students, who were coded as degree-seeking in the information system.

The survey data consisted of open-ended responses about why students had not returned. The online and phone surveys also had questions about whether students were dissatisfied with anything about MTSU, whether or not they planned to re-enroll at MTSU in the future, and whether they wanted an advisor to contact them to help them re-enroll. The names and contact information for 164 students was sent to Dean Mike Boyle, University College. He volunteered his staff to contact these students because they wanted help from an advisor to possibly re-enroll.

A research analyst in IEPR coded the 727 responses using NVivo 10, a qualitative analysis software. After the data was coded, matrix queries were run to break out the reasons for nonattendance by a student's class level. The counts and frequencies were tabulated in several tables. See Appendix 1. Each coding or categorization of a response is known as a reference in NVivo 10.

Summary of Results

The open-ended survey responses from the students were coded into nine major categories based on the Cabrera, Nora, and Castaneda Integrated Model of Student Retention (1993). The category, Encouragement from Family and Friends, was included; however, only one student in our study mentioned this as part of their reasons for withdrawing. We modified the framework to include three additional categories: Student Characteristics, External Factors and Campus Services. Financial Attitudes was changed to Financial Concerns. More specific reasons for withdrawal were placed under these general categories to summarize the responses in a coherent order. Students often listed more than one reason for discontinuing their studies. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Reasons MTSU Students Discontinue Their Studies-Major Categories
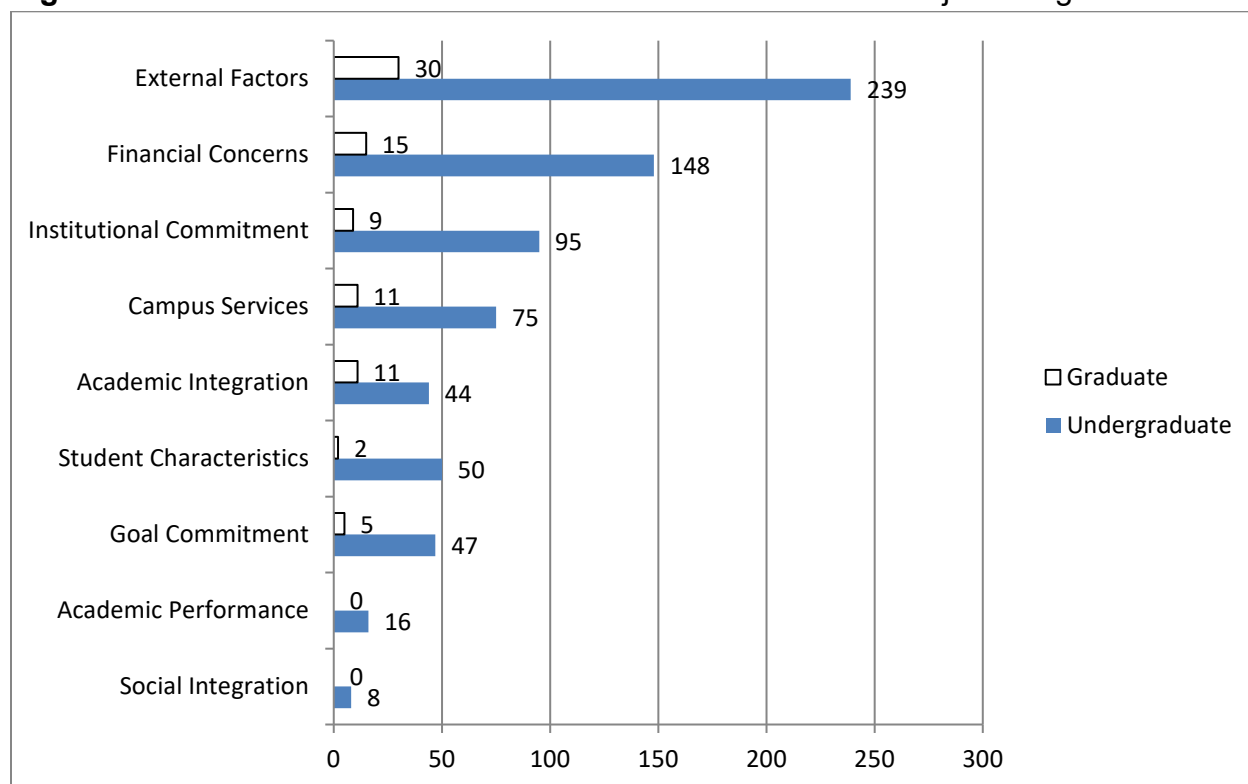
As shown in Figure 1, External Factors often explain why students discontinue their studies at MTSU (269 unduplicated responses, 37%). These are events in a student's life or personal commitments they have, which the university typically has little influence over, except for giving these students accommodations or providing advising/counseling.

Work demands were cited most frequently (113), followed by personal injury, illness or medical issues (46), pregnancy (25), caring for children (24), other personal issues (20), wanting to maintain family ties or being closer to home (18), family issues (16), moving out-of-state (15), being deployed by the military or required military training (13), getting married (5), etc. See Table 1 in Appendix 1 for more detail. A few responses below provide a description of this category.

> There were not enough available night classes and online classes for her degree. Needed these classes because she is a single mom and works. Still working full time.

> Had to get divorced and needed some personal time.

Student's father passed in November, and it was too hard for him to come back. He will be back in the fall.

My mom got sick, and I have to raise my siblings. Working.

She found out that she was pregnant and took the semester off. She will be back in the fall and loves MTSU.

I received major 2nd and minor 3rd degree burns to upper torso, arms, neck, shoulders, and entire head. Tried to attend classes in the fall after the accident last year but didn't last long. My condition both physical and psychological led me to unofficially withdraw just a few weeks into the semester. I don't really care about anything anymore.

Medical issues caused her to miss classes, and her teachers wouldn't work with her to make up the work.

Financial Concerns is next (163 unduplicated responses, 22%). If Work Demands under the External Commitments category is included, then Financial Concerns becomes the most common category followed by External Factors. (It can be debated where to place work demands.) However, the 825 students on academic probation and suspension, who withdrew, need to be considered along with the 290 students who were purged during the term for owing money to MTSU. When considering those not in the survey, academic performance (low grades) is the number one reason, followed by finances, and then other external factors.

In the financial category, students reported that the cost was too high, and that they were having financial difficulties (94 unduplicated responses). They owed money to MTSU (27), had concerns with student loans (19), did not receive financial aid (12), were on financial aid suspension (10), had unexpected expenses (8), lost their lottery scholarship (5), etc. Paying out-of-state tuition, losing financial aid, educational assistance from an employer, or educational benefits for veterans; and not being eligible for federal financial aid were also mentioned. The quotes below provide examples of why students dropped out for financial reasons.

Because of financial aid, I could not pay my tuition for the fall 2012 semester. No, I do not have any other interests. I still want to attend MTSU, but I don't have enough income to pay for my tuition. Financial aid kept telling me, that they did not receive all of my father's paperwork. And every time my dad sent paper work, they would find something new to tell me that my father needed to do in order to get financial aid.

He couldn't afford it; he owed too much. He found another school that was cheaper and worked with his work schedule - Ben Foster online school.

Out-of-state tuition was too high, so he decided to wait the rest of the year so he can receive in-state tuition. Just waiting for the cheaper price.

Couldn't get adequate funding. Student says he has tried to get funding from scholarships and all other possible sources. He was very upset about not being able to finish his last semester.

Student couldn't afford it this semester. Student did not have the money for the spring semester. Student was aware of financial aid options, but wanted to save money to pay out-of-pocket instead of accumulating more student loans. Student will be returning next semester.

Campus services had an impact (86 unduplicated responses, 12%). Students reported problems with advising (19), not getting into courses they needed at desired times (16), being unable to enroll in online courses (14), problems with receiving financial aid (12), parking issues (11), etc.

The classes that he needed to take were already full, and therefore he could not register. Scheduling problems.

I am taking this for my son. Due to the fact he was told that he had all of the classes to graduate and was led to believe that he graduated "just now" to find out after he did not get his diploma through the mail that he was instructed to take two wrong history courses which cost us $1,600. He now has to take two other history courses in order to graduate. The school should be responsible for this mess up, and the advisor should not be allowed to cost individuals time and money. I do not think he is, but from

> what has happened now and from other stories that I have heard from other parents, I would run from MTSU. Lack of advising.

> Someone in the financial aid office thought that she was graduating and therefore, she could no longer receive financial aid for this term. She said it was something that they couldn't fix in time for her to attend this semester.

> I was a full time student my freshman year but due to unforeseen issues had to transfer out for a year. When I transferred back I had numerous issues with the admissions office, losing my transfer information; multiple transcripts from the year I attended another college.

A number of non-returning students did not develop an affinity for their academic program or the faculty (academic integration) (55 unduplicated responses, 8%). They wanted to pursue other majors or programs not offered at MTSU (20). Students expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction (12). A few were only in online courses (7), had perceptions that faculty were uncaring (7) or were never accepted into their major or program of interest.

> I felt as though my professors, with the exception of one, didn't care about my education. I actually had a professor tell my class, "I don't care what grade you get, as long as you pass, and we can get more funding." I know that I can receive an education of a higher quality at my previous school of choice. I am earning my degree at the University of Tennessee at Martin where I began school my freshman year. I felt as though the professors did not care about any of the student's education. I did not like that most of my professors seldom used the online tools . . . causing me to drive 45 minutes one-way just to turn in an essay or be told class was cancelled.

Many students did not have a commitment to the university and expressed a lack of fit between what the institution had to offer and their needs (52 unduplicated responses, 7%). As a result, several former students said they would transfer elsewhere (42). Some believed the campus was not a good fit for them (18); it was too big and class sizes were too large. Students felt like they were a number in an impersonal campus environment. Some didn't like a commuter school. They believed another institution would better serve their needs (49):

> I didn't feel connected to the university. I didn't feel supported by my counselor. I wasn't learning well and realized a hand's-on learning experience might be better for me. I just didn't feel like I fit in. Hoping too. Having a hard time figuring out what I want to focus on.

> The school is so big the teacher-student ratio is out of hand. I'm just a number in class. My teachers never learned my name because there were too many in my class. Teachers never would meet during office hours. Yes I am in school elsewhere to receive my nursing degree.

Students often made statements that reflected a lack of commitment to finishing their program at MTSU (52 unduplicated responses, 7%). They needed a break from school (10), were not ready or committed to college (8), decided to work rather than continue their education (6), dropped out because they could not make a decision on the major they would study (6), were unsure about whether they wanted to pursue a degree (5), wanted to follow other interests (4), or were too busy with other things to pursue a degree (4).

> He and college just did not click. He did not like going to class, studying. It got to be too much. He was not ready for college. He was young and not doing well academically.

Other reasons were given by students for discontinuing their studies at MTSU. Even though they officially reported that they were degree-seeking, some were never intending to earn a degree at MTSU (pre-professional, taking courses to get into graduate school, planned to finish elsewhere, taking a few courses) (35). Others didn't want to commute anymore to attend MTSU (17). Some had lower grades than desired or were not doing well academically from their perspective (14). A few students admitted to having difficulty with social integration (having trouble with roommates, feeling depersonalized on a large campus) (8). Others were completing an internship (7).

Differences Among Student Groups

Results were broken out by class level (in the tables and for the open-ended written comments provided in the appendices). A few differences emerged that are worth mentioning. Graduate students were less likely to list financial concerns as a reason for withdrawing (15% or 15 respondents) compared with 24% of undergraduates (148 unduplicated responses). About 15% of the seniors (29) were non-degree seeking compared with less than 3% for other undergraduates (5); although these students were coded in the system as degree-seeking, the seniors admitted that they were only taking courses to satisfy pre-requisites for graduate school, prepare for certifications or for other interests. Some of the graduate students were participating in a dual program with Tennessee State University (TSU) (7, 7% of graduate students) and were taking courses there. Graduate students also took the semester off to work on their thesis or dissertation (5, 5% of graduate students).

Ways to Improve

The responses from students regarding the reasons for withdrawal were more varied and complex than initially expected. It was difficult to summarize such a wide variation in reasons for discontinuing. Thus, there is no simple answer to how to retain students.

The surveys included questions about whether there was anything MTSU could have done differently to keep students enrolled. About 24% said "yes" to this question, and another 55% said they might return and attend MTSU in the future. Another 24% reported that they were dissatisfied with some aspect of their experience at MTSU.

Suggestions from students are not always feasible or reasonable. Nevertheless, they do have good suggestions as well. See Figure 2.

Student Suggestions

The most common suggestion was to improve financial assistance to students: Lower tuition, more scholarship opportunities and altering the institution's debt payment policies were the most common within this category. Students mentioned the need for additional payment plan options, an easier appeals process and clear, easy to find instructions. They did not want to be overcharged or wanted the financial aid office to correct their records.

Figure 2. Non-returning Student Suggestions for Improvement
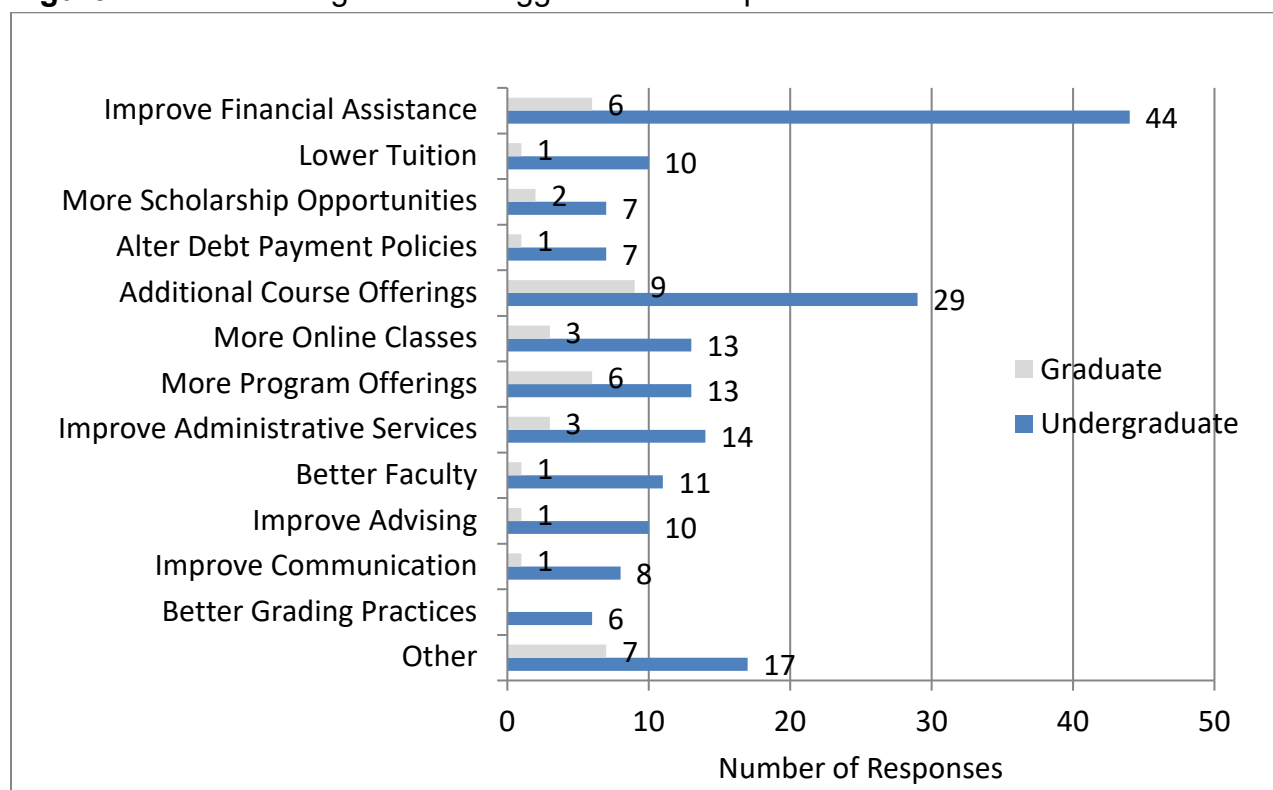
The second most common suggestion to keep them enrolled is to improve course offerings; the most requested were additional online courses. Students had to wait longer to graduate, even dropping out for the spring term and taking their final classes later. According to students, this might be reduced by offering courses more frequently. Students wanted more class times, additional classes in the afternoons,

early evenings or at night, condensed classes, increased online course offerings, more professors in their major and collegiate level courses.

The desire for more degree programs is third. These included more options for nursing, engineering, a doctoral program in mass communications; other programs such as mechatronics, culinary arts, cosmetology, criminal justice, veterinary technology and more online degree programs.

Students wanted improvements in administrative services, better faculty, improved advising and communication and better grading practices (in rank order).

The quality of the faculty and instruction always makes a difference. Students wanted instructors who taught more relevant lessons, interacted with the class, promoted active learning, responded in a timely way to their email, understood their situation, offered help and had realistic expectations.

Other Recommendations

Retention affects the entire campus community. All members of the college community need to be committed to the welfare of the student and have a stake in the success of policies and practices that reduce student departure (Braxton et al., 2004).

The campus community could make use of these study results by reading through this summary and the comments made by students to evaluate where they might improve in each of their areas of responsibility. Other recommendations are listed below.

■   Create innovative methods of instruction in courses with high failure rates and provide more tutoring as recommended by the provost and the deans. Peer tutoring may be an option (Kuh, et al. 2005, 69).

■   Make sure there is follow-up with students being identified in the academic alert system. Possibly set up an extension grade policy (Kuh et al. 2005, 181).

■   Identify additional online and evening courses that could be offered where enrollments are sufficient to cover the costs.

■	Review financial aid services by conducting a financial aid customer feedback survey or possibly setting up a formative peer review to enhance services where possible.

■	Expand student employment on campus where possible (Kuh et al. 2005, 48).

■	Obtain regular feedback from students on administrative services (student shoppers, point-of-contact surveys, freshmen satisfaction survey-includes ratings of services). Review the results with administrators.

■	Establish a committee to review the results of the advising survey to improve advising services on campus; set up an ongoing campus-wide advisor evaluation that students complete after advising sessions.

■	Find ways to enhance the freshmen experience to promote student retention.

■	Set up mandatory training for faculty and staff on accommodations that need to be made for students who experience the death of a relative, injury or illness, or other personal extenuating circumstances.

■	Establish a scholarship fund working with the Advancement Office to assist students in special circumstances (Examples: student who dropped out to take care of her ill mother and to raise her siblings, student who was a burn victim, etc.).

■	Develop a checklist of items and open-ended questions on reasons why students withdraw and integrate it into the new customer relations management database (CRM).

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External Factors

	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Deployed Military/Training	4	2.2	3	2.3	3	2.5	1	0.5	11	1.7	2	2.1	13	1.8
2 : Family Ties	10	5.6	5	3.8	1	0.8	2	1.0	18	2.9	0	0.0	18	2.5
3 : Caring for Children	6	3.4	2	1.5	8	6.7	5	2.5	21	3.3	3	3.1	24	3.3
4 : Pregnancy	4	2.2	5	3.8	4	3.4	8	4.0	21	3.3	4	4.1	25	3.4
5 : Getting Married	1	0.6	3	2.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	0.6	1	1.0	5	0.7
6 : Illness, Injury, or Medical Issues									0					
Family Member	3	1.7	5	3.8	3	2.5	1	0.5	12	1.9	0	0.0	12	1.7
Self	11	6.1	6	4.5	6	5.0	8	4.0	31	4.9	3	3.1	34	4.7
7 : Mission	2	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.3	0	0.0	2	0.3
8 : Moved Out-of-State	5	2.8	1	0.8	4	3.4	3	1.5	13	2.1	2	2.1	15	2.1
9 : Other Family Issues	2	1.1	2	1.5	4	3.4	6	3.0	14	2.2	2	2.1	16	2.2
10 : Personal Reasons or Issues	7	3.9	1	0.8	7	5.9	2	1.0	17	2.7	3	3.1	20	2.8
11 : Work Demands	20	11.2	21	15.9	29	24.4	28	14.0	98	15.6	15	15.5	113	15.5

Total References	75	41.9	54	40.9	69	58.0	64	32.0	262	41.6	35	36.1	297	40.9
Unduplicated Respondents	67	37.4	48	36.4	64	53.8	60	30.0	239	37.9	30	30.9	269	37.0
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

Financial Concerns

	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Aid not Received or Delayed	3	1.7	7	5.3	0	0.0	1	0.5	11	1.7	1	1.0	12	1.7
2 : Cost	27	15.1	16	12.1	17	14.3	26	13.0	86	13.7	8	8.2	94	12.9
3 : Expenses	1	0.6	3	2.3	2	1.7	2	1.0	8	1.3	0	0.0	8	1.1
4 : FAFSA	1	0.6	2	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.5	0	0.0	3	0.4
5 : Financial Aid Suspension	3	1.7	4	3.0	3	2.5	0	0.0	10	1.6	0	0.0	10	1.4
6 : Grants	1	0.6	1	0.8	0	0.0	1	0.5	3	0.5	1	1.0	4	0.6
7 : Loans	3	1.7	2	1.5	6	5.0	5	2.5	16	2.5	3	3.1	19	2.6
8 : Owes Money to MTSU	7	3.9	8	6.1	6	5.0	4	2.0	25	4.0	2	2.1	27	3.7
9 : Lost Scholarship	3	1.7	2	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	0.8	0	0.0	5	0.7
10 : Other	3	1.7	1	0.8	4	3.4	5	2.5	13	2.1	4	4.1	17	2.3
Total References	52	29.1	46	34.8	38	31.9	44	22.0	180	28.6	19	19.6	199	27.4
Unduplicated Respondents	43	24.0	38	28.8	30	25.2	37	18.5	148	23.5	15	15.5	163	22.4
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

Appendix 1. Data Tables

Total References: Total number of comments coded with a particular reason for withdrawal.

Unduplicated Respondents: Number of student responses.

Total Students: Total number of students in each class level whether or not they cited any reason listed in the table.

n = number

% = percentage of the Total Students

Institutional Commitment

	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Institutional Fit - Didn't Like MTSU	7	3.9	6	4.5	4	3.4	0	0.0	17	2.7	1	1.0	18	2.5
2 : Other Institution to meet Needs	9	5.0	11	8.3	11	9.2	11	5.5	42	6.7	7	7.2	49	6.7
3 : Transfer	16	8.9	12	9.1	6	5.0	6	3.0	40	6.3	2	2.1	42	5.8
4 : Other	2	1.1	5	3.8	1	0.8	2	1.0	10	1.6	0	0.0	10	1.4
Total References	34	19.0	34	25.8	22	18.5	19	9.5	109	17.3	10	10.3	119	16.4
Unduplicated Respondents	30	16.8	28	21.2	20	16.8	17	8.5	95	15.1	9	9.3	104	14.3
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

Campus Services														
	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Administration	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.5	3	0.5	1	1.0	4	0.6
2 : Admissions	2	1.1	1	0.8	0	0.0	2	1.0	5	0.8	0	0.0	5	0.7
3 : Advising	4	2.2	3	2.3	2	1.7	5	2.5	14	2.2	5	5.2	19	2.6
4 : Course Scheduling	1	0.6	5	3.8	2	1.7	6	3.0	14	2.2	2	2.1	16	2.2
5 : Disabililty Services	1	0.6	1	0.8	3	2.5	2	1.0	7	1.1	0	0.0	7	1.0
6 : Financial Aid	1	0.6	6	4.5	1	0.8	3	1.5	11	1.7	1	1.0	12	1.7
6 : Online Offerings	1	0.6	1	0.8	3	2.5	7	3.5	12	1.9	2	2.1	14	1.9
7 : Parking	2	1.1	3	2.3	3	2.5	2	1.0	10	1.6	1	1.0	11	1.5
8 : Registrar's Office (Records & Scheduling)	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.8	4	2.0	6	1.0	0	0.0	6	0.8
9: Other	3	1.7	3	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	3.4	0	0.0	6	0.8
Total References	16	8.9	23	17.4	15	12.6	34	17.0	88	14.0	12	12.4	100	13.8
Unduplicated Respondents	13	7.3	20	15.2	12	10.1	30	15.0	75	11.9	11	11.3	86	11.8
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

Academic Integration

	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Faculty Relationships	1	0.6	1	0.8	2	1.7	2	1.0	6	1.0	1	1.0	7	1.0
2 : Not Accepted in Program	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.8	2	1.0	4	0.6	2	2.1	6	0.8
3 : Only Online Courses Taken	1	0.6	2	1.5	2	1.7	1	0.5	6	1.0	1	1.0	7	1.0
4 : Quality of Instruction	1	0.6	2	1.5	3	2.5	4	2.0	10	1.6	2	2.1	12	1.7
5 : Different Major/Program Not Offered	4	2.2	2	1.5	6	5.0	4	2.0	16	2.5	4	4.1	20	2.8
6 : Dissatisfied with Program	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.5	2	0.3	1	1.0	3	0.4
7 : Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.7	2	1.0	4	0.6	1	1.0	5	0.7
Total References	9	5.0	7	5.3	16	13.4	16	8.0	48	7.6	12	12.4	60	8.3
Unduplicated Respondents	8	4.5	7	5.3	15	12.6	14	7.0	44	7.0	11	11.3	55	7.6
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

Goal Commitment

	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Different Pursuits	0	0.0	1	0.8	3	2.5	0	0.0	4	0.6	0	0.0	4	0.6
2 : Job Instead of College	2	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	2.0	6	1.0	0	0.0	6	0.8
3 : Needed a Break from School	3	1.7	1	0.8	1	0.8	5	2.5	10	1.6	0	0.0	10	1.4
4 : Not Ready or Committed	5	2.8	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	1.0	2	2.1	8	1.1
5 : Not Enough Time for School	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.5	4	0.6	0	0.0	4	0.6
6 : Undecided Major	1	0.6	3	2.3	0	0.0	2	1.0	6	1.0	0	0.0	6	0.8
7 : Unsure About Pursuing Degree	1	0.6	1	0.8	0	0.0	1	0.5	3	0.5	2	2.1	5	0.7
8 : Other	5	2.8	3	2.3	1	0.8	4	2.0	13	2.1	1	1.0	14	1.9
Total References	18	10.1	10	7.6	5	4.2	19	9.5	52	8.3	5	5.2	57	7.8
Unduplicated Respondents	17	9.5	9	6.8	5	4.2	16	8.0	47	7.5	5	5.2	52	7.2
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

Academic Performance

	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Courses too Hard	1	0.6	2	1.5	1	0.8	0	0.0	4	0.6	0	0.0	4	0.6
2 : Grades Lower Than Desired	2	1.1	3	2.3	0	0.0	5	2.5	10	1.6	0	0.0	10	1.4
3 : Other	2	1.1	0	0.0	1	0.8	0	0.0	3	0.5	0	0.0	3	0.4
Total References	5	2.8	5	3.8	2	1.7	5	2.5	17	2.7	0	0.0	17	2.3
Unduplicated Respondents	5	2.8	4	3.0	2	1.7	5	2.5	16	2.5	0	0.0	16	2.2
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

Student Characteristics

	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	`	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Commuter	3	1.7	5	3.8	5	4.2	3	1.5	16	2.5	1	1.0	17	2.3
2 : Non-degree Seeking	2	1.1	0	0.0	3	2.5	29	14.5	34	5.4	1	1.0	35	4.8
Total References	5	2.8	5	3.8	8	6.7	32	16.0	50	7.9	2	2.1	52	7.2
Unduplicated Respondents	5	2.8	5	3.8	8	6.7	32	16.0	50	7.9	2	2.1	52	7.2
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

Social Integration

	Freshmen		Sophomores		Juniors		Seniors		Under-graduates		Graduates		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 : Not Fitting In	4	2.2	3	2.3	1	0.8	0	0.0	8	1.3	0	0.0	8	1.1
Unduplicated Respondents	4	2.2	3	2.3	1	0.8	0	0.0	8	1.3	0	0.0	8	1.1
Total Students	179		132		119		200		630		97		727	

ACADEMIC INTEGRATION

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY

FINANCIAL ATTITUDES

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

INTENT TO PERSIST

PERSISTENCE

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

GOAL COMMITMENT

___Significant Paths
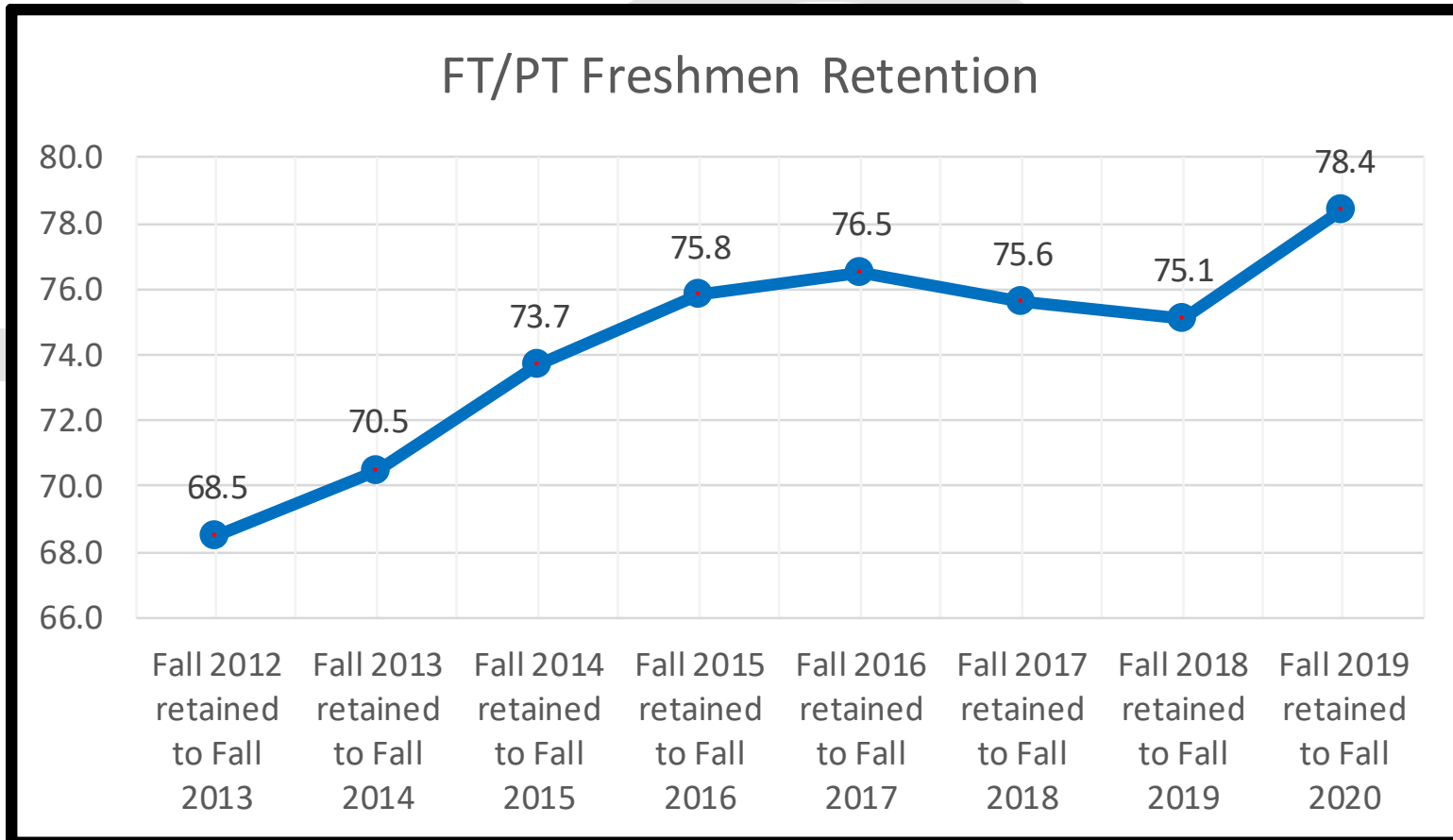-----Non-significant Paths
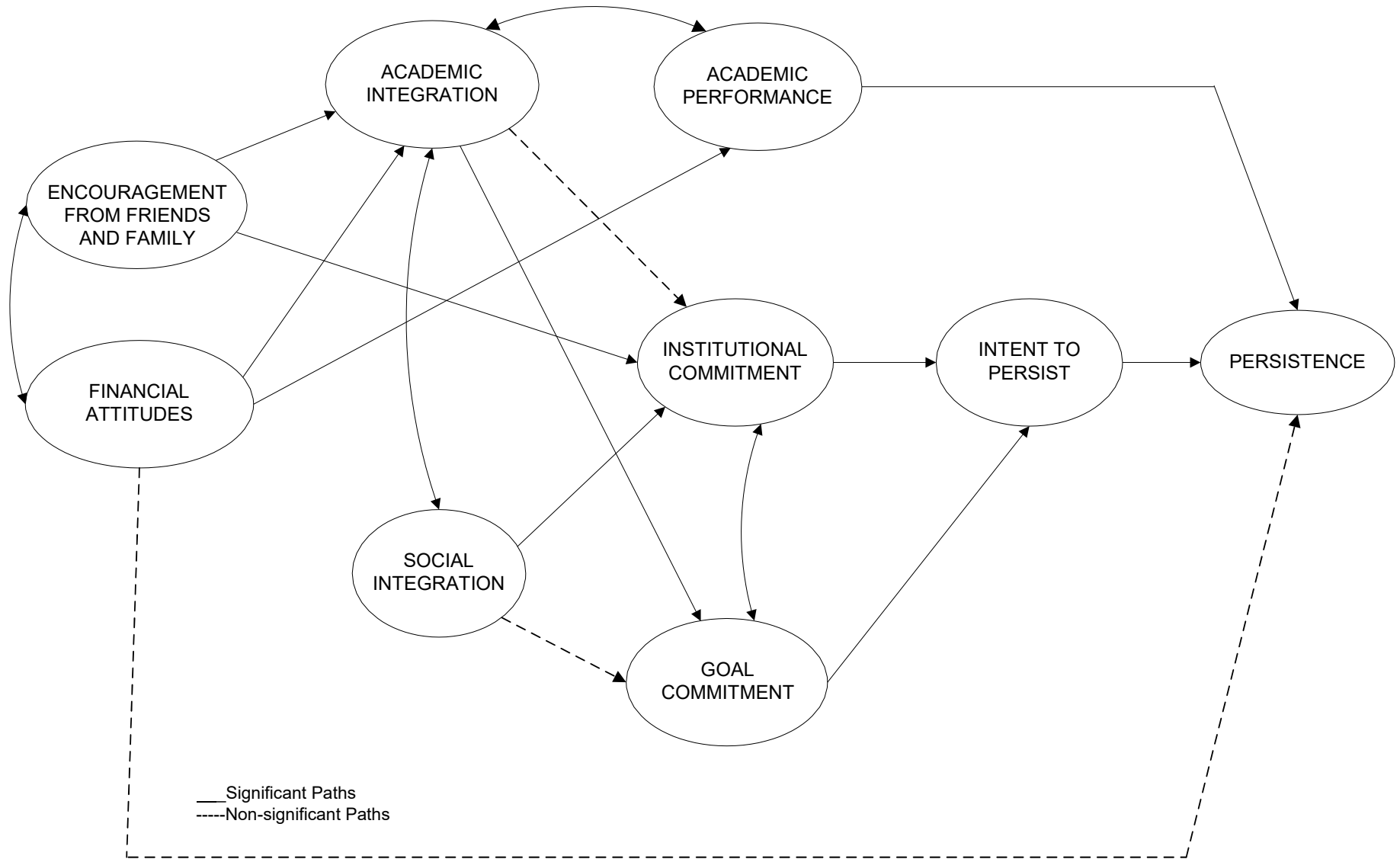
Integrated Model of Student Retention

Board Committee Update: Retention and Fiscal Impact

Alan Thomas, Rick Sluder

May 25, 2021

Retention: A difference made and lives changed

FT/PT Freshmen Retention

Retention: The fiscal impact

FT/PT Freshmen Retention

68.5 — Fall 2012 retained to Fall 2013
70.5 — Fall 2013 retained to Fall 2014
73.7 — Fall 2014 retained to Fall 2015
75.8 — Fall 2015 retained to Fall 2016
76.5 — Fall 2016 retained to Fall 2017
75.6 — Fall 2017 retained to Fall 2018
75.1 — Fall 2018 retained to Fall 2019
78.4 — Fall 2019 retained to Fall 2020
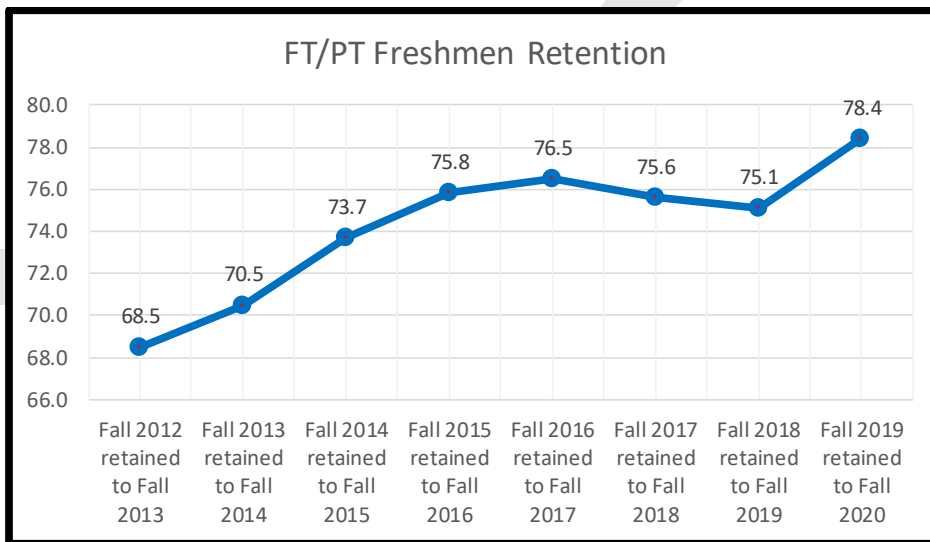
How many more students are at MTSU because of these gains in retention?

What is the fiscal impact of these additional students in terms of revenue generated from tuition and fees?

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

ROI: The impact of improving retention rates

- ✓ If we were performing in Fall 2020 at the same level as in Fall 2013

- ✓ And, let's confine our analysis to freshmen, sophomores and juniors

	Retention Rate	Number of Students in the Cohorts
Retention Rate for Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors from Fall 2012 to Fall 2013	75.8	14,797
Retention Rate for Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020	82.3	12,442

If MTSU's retention rate in Fall 2020 was at the same level as in Fall 2013, there would be 803 fewer students enrolled.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

ROI: The impact of improving retention rates

- ✓ Tuition – 803 students * $3,777/student/semester $3,032,931

- ✓ Fees – 803 students * $935/student/semester $750,805
  - ✓ Less: Institutional Scholarships at 18% $545,928

> ✓ Increases in retention for freshmen, sophomores and juniors between 2013 and 2020 means that an estimated additional $3,237,808 in tuition and program services fees were generated in the Fall 2020 semester (net of scholarships)

- ✓ The above estimate does not include any additional funds that would be awarded through the performance funding model.

- ✓ $25,150   Average debt of undergraduates at graduation (May, 2020)
- ✓ 58%   Average % of undergraduates with debt at graduation (May 2020)

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY