

DROPPED STUDENT SURVEY ANALYSIS

Prepared for Cuesta College

March 2018



In the following report, Hanover Research analyzes the results of a survey administered to students who unenrolled from Cuesta College. These results examine what factors influenced respondents to leave, why they left, and potential ways that Cuesta can influence them to stay enrolled through graduation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In the following report, Hanover Research (Hanover) presents an analysis of the Dropped Students Survey, conducted on behalf of Cuesta College (Cuesta). The report includes results in the aggregate, as well as segmented by enrollment status (i.e., currently enrolled or not enrolled in college courses) and by cohort (i.e., 2012 or earlier, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017).

The survey collected responses from students who decided to end their enrollment at Cuesta based on a list of email addresses provided to Hanover by Cuesta. Hanover administered the survey in two ways. Hanover used both Qualtrics and computer-aided telephone interviews (CATI) administered by a third party to gather respondents' data. A data supplement (Excel file), which presents aggregate and segmented results for all currently available data, accompanies this report.

Overall, this report consists of two sections and a data supplement:

- **Section I: Aggregate Results**
- **Section II: Respondent Characteristics**

METHODOLOGY

The initial dataset, after removing duplicate, blank, disqualified, and test respondents, consisted of 177 respondents. Hanover performed quality checks on the data to remove low-quality respondents for a final sample size of **166** valid respondents. However, sample sizes will vary from question to question for the following reasons:

- Hanover excludes all 'Not applicable'-type responses from charts and figures.
- Not all respondents provided answers to every question.

Hanover presents survey results in aggregate, segmented by enrollment status and cohort. Within the data supplement, statistically significant differences between segmented groups at the 95% confidence level are shaded blue, bolded, and have a comment attached. In addition, the data supplement also contains verbatim responses to all open-ended prompts and 'Other, please specify:' response options. Within this report, Hanover only presents statistically significant and meaningful differences between one or more groups. Figure ES.1 provides an overview of the survey sample, in addition to relevant segmentations. Figure ES.2 highlights notable characteristics of the survey sample based on respondents' answers.

Figure ES.1: Survey Sample

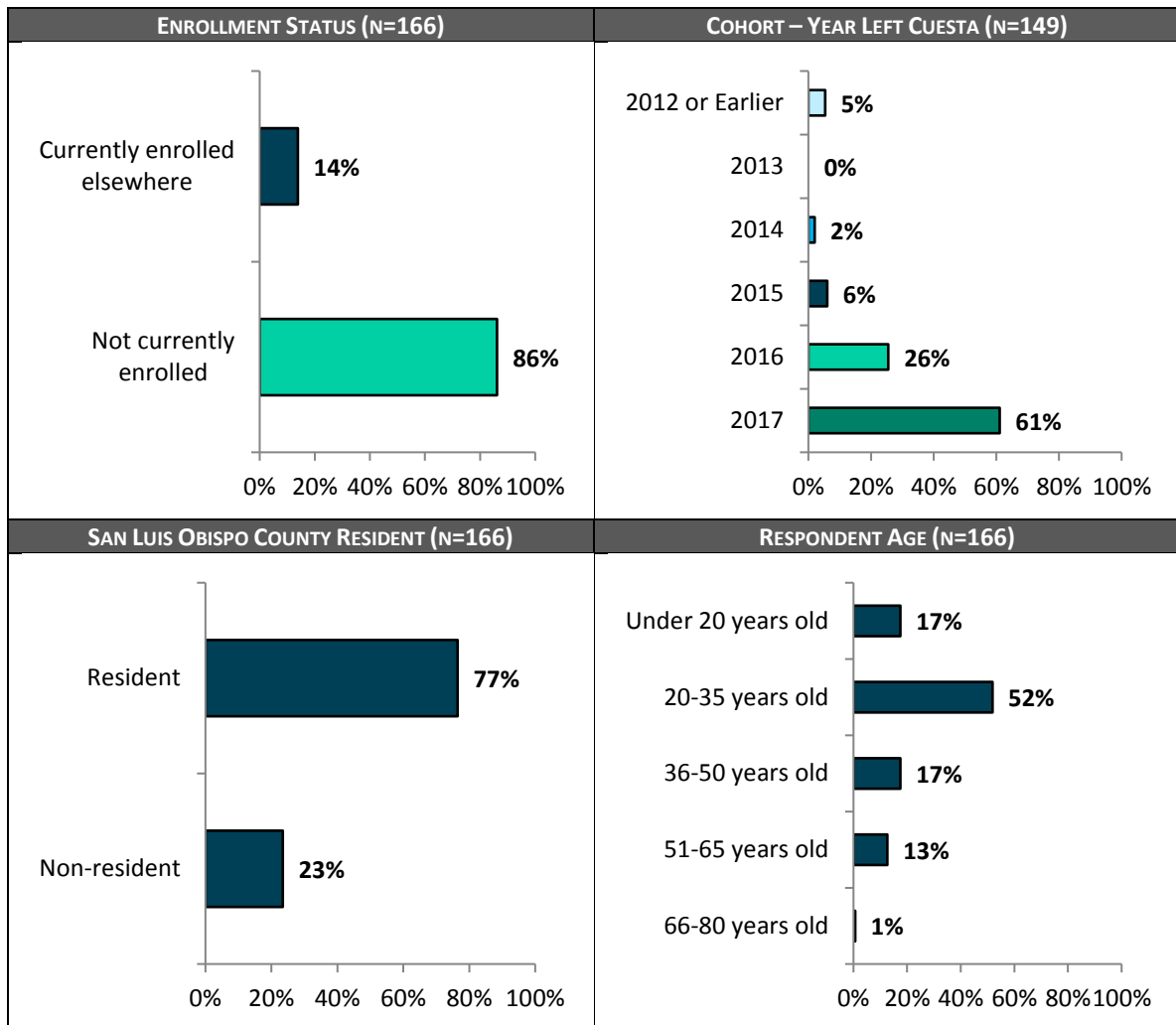


Figure ES.2: Typical Characteristics of a Survey Respondent

Respondents...

- ...typically drove to Cuesta when enrolled (89%).
- ...did not use the regional transit bus to get to Cuesta (87%).
- ...are NOT currently enrolled in college courses (86%).
- ...commuted 30 minutes or less to get to Cuesta (80%).
- ...did not receive or are unsure about receiving a Pell Grant (76%).
- ...left in 2017 (61%).
- ...did not declare a major before leaving Cuesta (53%).
- ...have an annual family income from \$0 to \$74,999 (53%).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Adopt a more flexible delivery format for key courses to help students avoid scheduling conflicts.** Respondents to the survey often cite scheduling issues with work and family as influential factors in their unenrollment decision. Additionally, respondents also indicate that their inability to get the classes they wanted/needed or to take these classes at times they can attend influenced them.
- **Refocus financial counseling on identifying and applying for financial aid opportunities.** Over half of respondents felt that financial issues influenced their decision to unenroll. However, they also suggested that additional financial aid opportunities could influence them to stay.
- **Improve students' access to counseling services.** Personal issues, like needing a break from classes or having to take care of home responsibilities, influenced respondents' decision-making. Furthermore, dropped students indicate that additional college/personal counseling services is a factor that could have influenced them to stay enrolled.

KEY FINDINGS

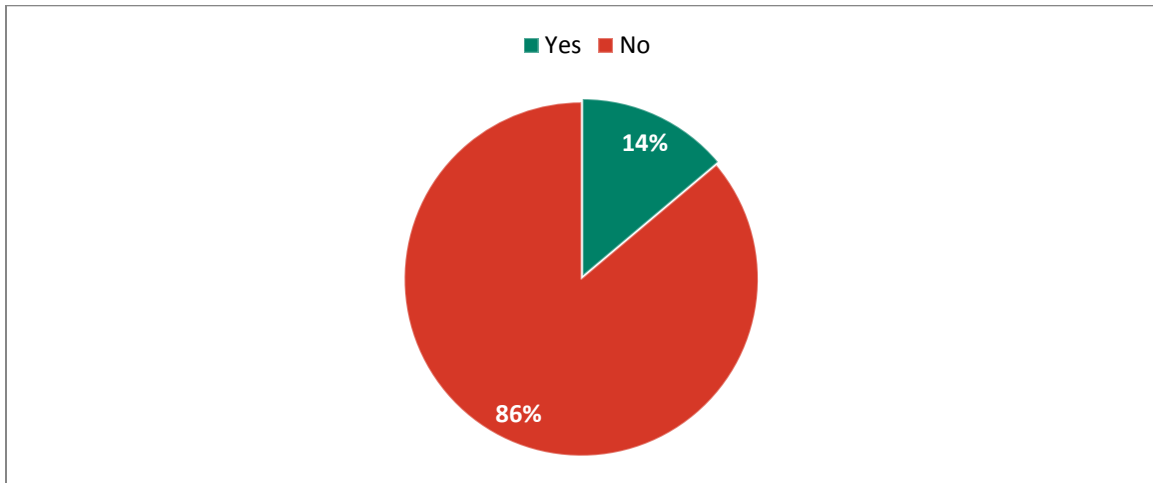
- **Respondents typically decide to unenroll from Cuesta for scheduling and personal reasons.** Over 60 percent of respondents indicate that a conflict between their job and their studies is an influential factor in their decision to leave.
 - Moreover, respondents frequently find that factors like classes not being offered at times they could attend and being unable to get the classes they needed/wanted in their schedule are influential factors in their decision.
 - The most influential personal factors in this decision are needing a temporary break from studies, financial issues, and home responsibilities.
- **Other than financial issues, respondents rarely found student support and social/community factors influential in their decision.** After financial issues, only 20-35 percent of respondents found other student support factors influential in their decision to unenroll. In terms of social/community factors, less than 30 percent of respondents considered these factors influential.
- **Factors that could influence respondents to stay focus on addressing scheduling, personal, and financial issues students might face.** Over two-thirds of respondents indicate that additional online courses, college/personal counseling services, financial aid opportunities, and evening classes could have influenced them to stay.

- **Transportation was not an influential factor in respondents' decisions.** Most respondents (80%) have an average commute of 30 minutes or less, and only three percent commute longer than an hour. Overall, less than one-fifth say that the amount of time they took to get to Cuesta was influential in their decision to leave.
 - Notably, although only 13 percent of respondents used the Regional Bus transit system to get to Cuesta, all who used the system (100%) felt at least moderately satisfied with it.
- **Despite their decision to leave, respondents are likely to return and even more likely to recommend Cuesta to family and friends.** Overall, most respondents are very or somewhat likely to recommend Cuesta to a friend or family member, and over 60 percent are as likely to re-enroll and attend Cuesta again in the future.
- **Respondents who enroll elsewhere typically choose other two-year colleges for their programs of study, affordability, and location.** Although only 14 percent of respondents are currently enrolled elsewhere, those who are typically chose other two-year colleges and Hancock College. Currently enrolled respondents typically chose their current institution because its programs of study are more suited to their interests, it is more affordable, and location.

SECTION I: AGGREGATE RESULTS

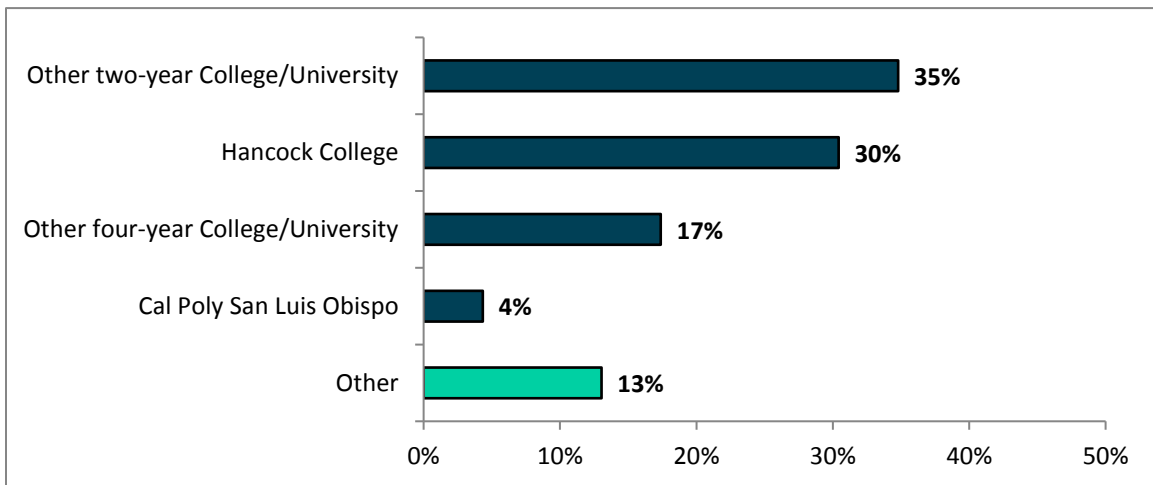
CONTINUATION OF STUDIES

Figure 1.1: Are you currently enrolled in college courses?



n=166

Figure 1.2: Where are you currently enrolled?



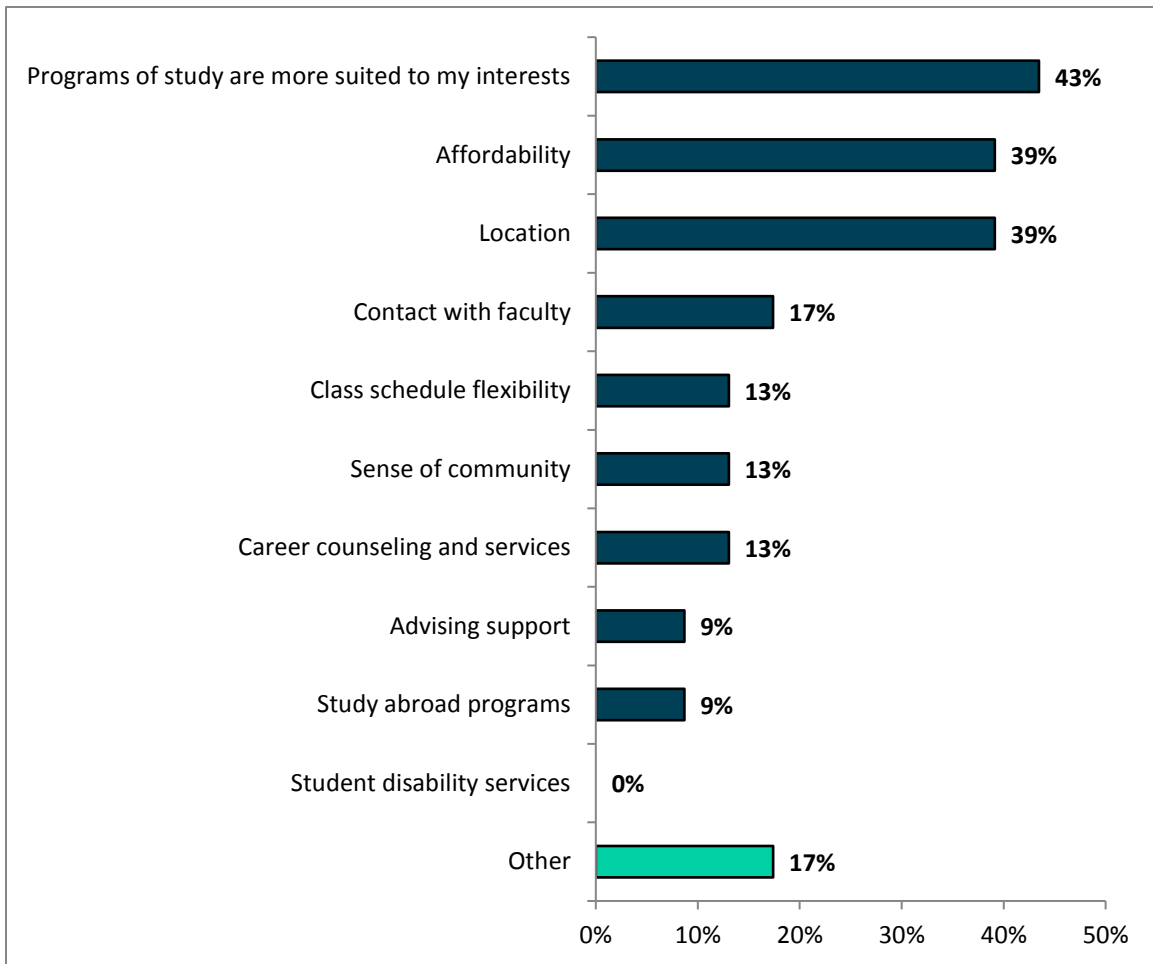
WHAT WERE YOUR REASONS FOR ENROLLING IN CUESTA COLLEGE? (N=4)		
REASON	COUNT	PERCENT
I needed to complete general education coursework	4	100%
I needed to take prerequisite courses for a specific major (e.g., business, nursing)	1	25%
Cuesta College offered a good financial aid package	1	25%
Other	1	25%

'Where are you currently enrolled?' n=23

Note: Only respondents who answered 'Yes' to 'Are you currently enrolled in college courses?' answered 'Where are you currently enrolled?'

Note 2: Only respondents who are enrolled at another four-year college/university or Cal Poly San Luis Obispo answered this 'What were your reasons for enrolling in Cuesta College?'

Figure 1.3: What attracted you to this other school? Please select all that apply.



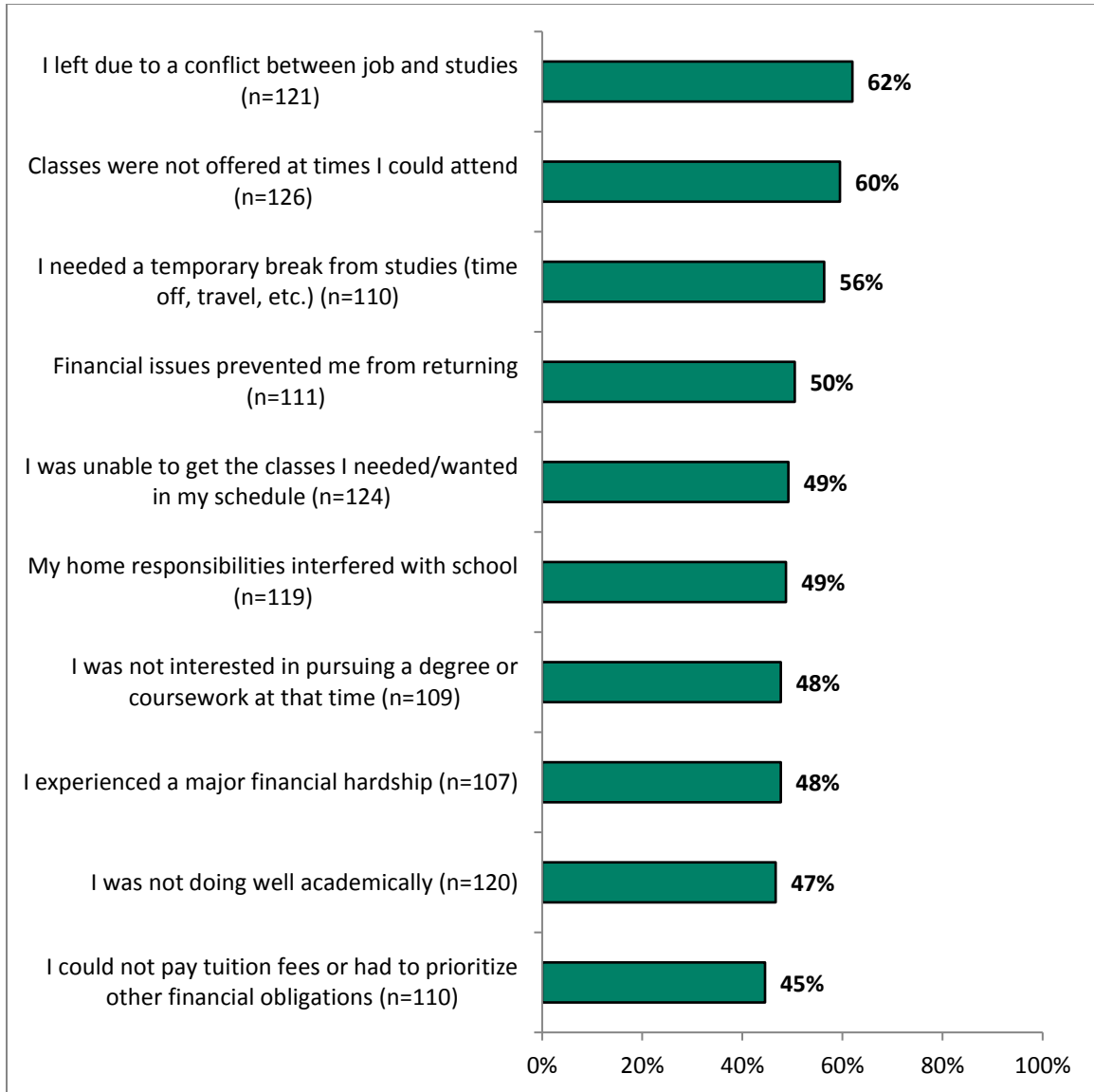
n=23

Note: Only those who answered 'Yes' to 'Are you currently enrolled in college courses?' answered this question.

FACTORS AFFECTING UNENROLLMENT

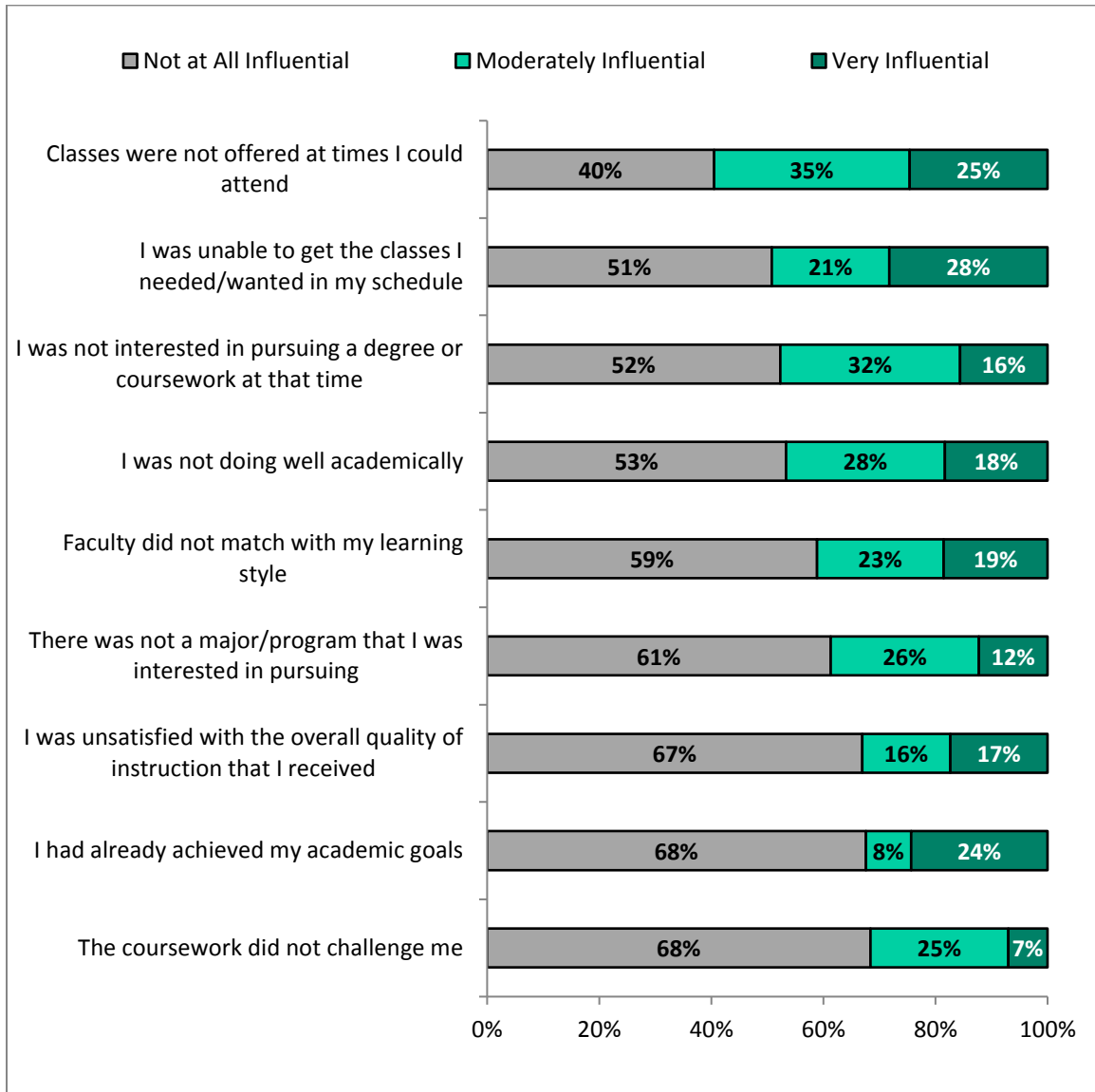
Figure 1.4: Top 10 Most Influential Factors in Unenrollment Decision

Percent 'Very Influential' and 'Moderately Influential'



ACADEMIC

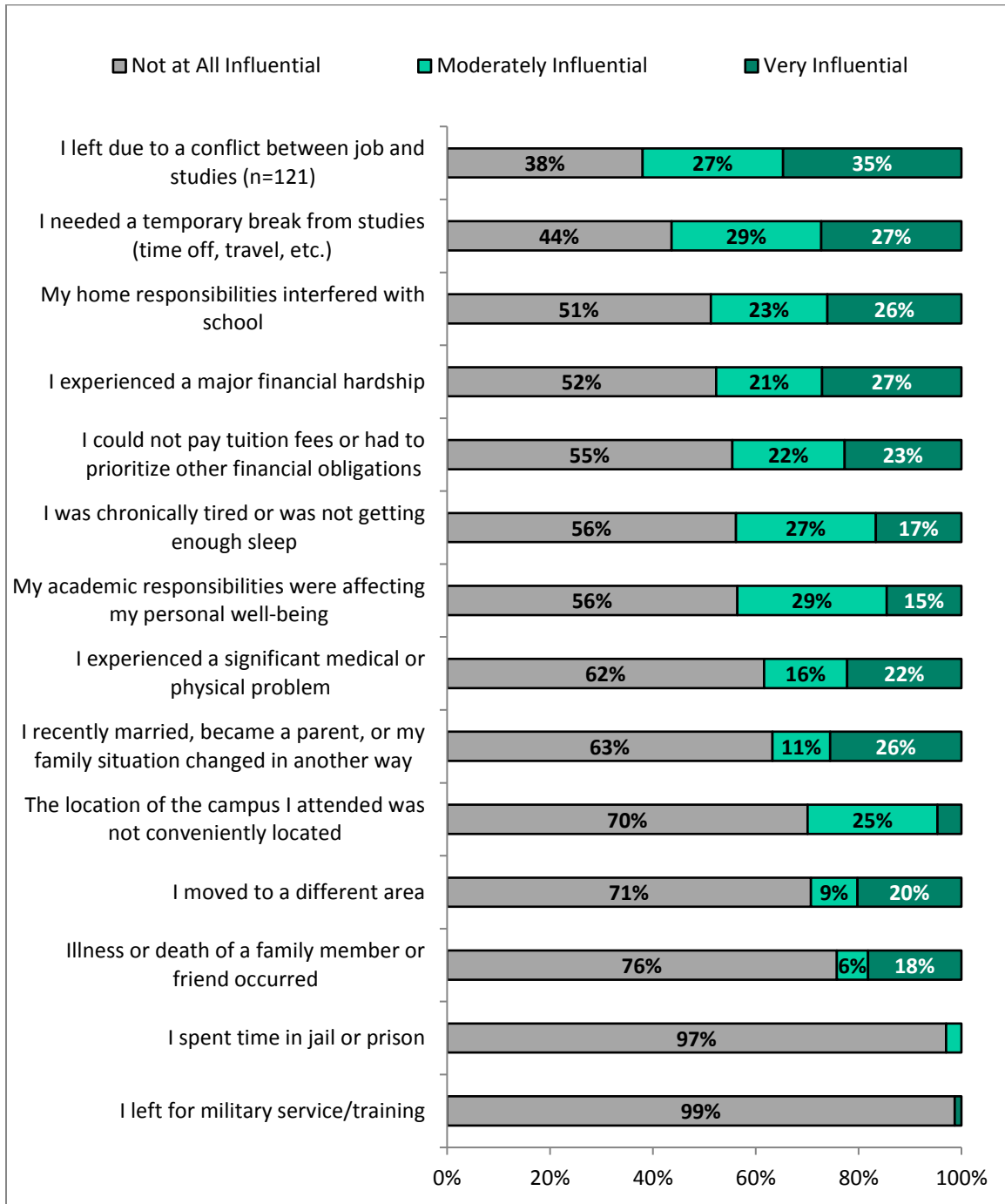
Figure 1.5: Thinking about the semester(s) for which you discontinued your enrollment at Cuesta College, how influential were each of the following academic factors in your decision?



n=106-126

PERSONAL

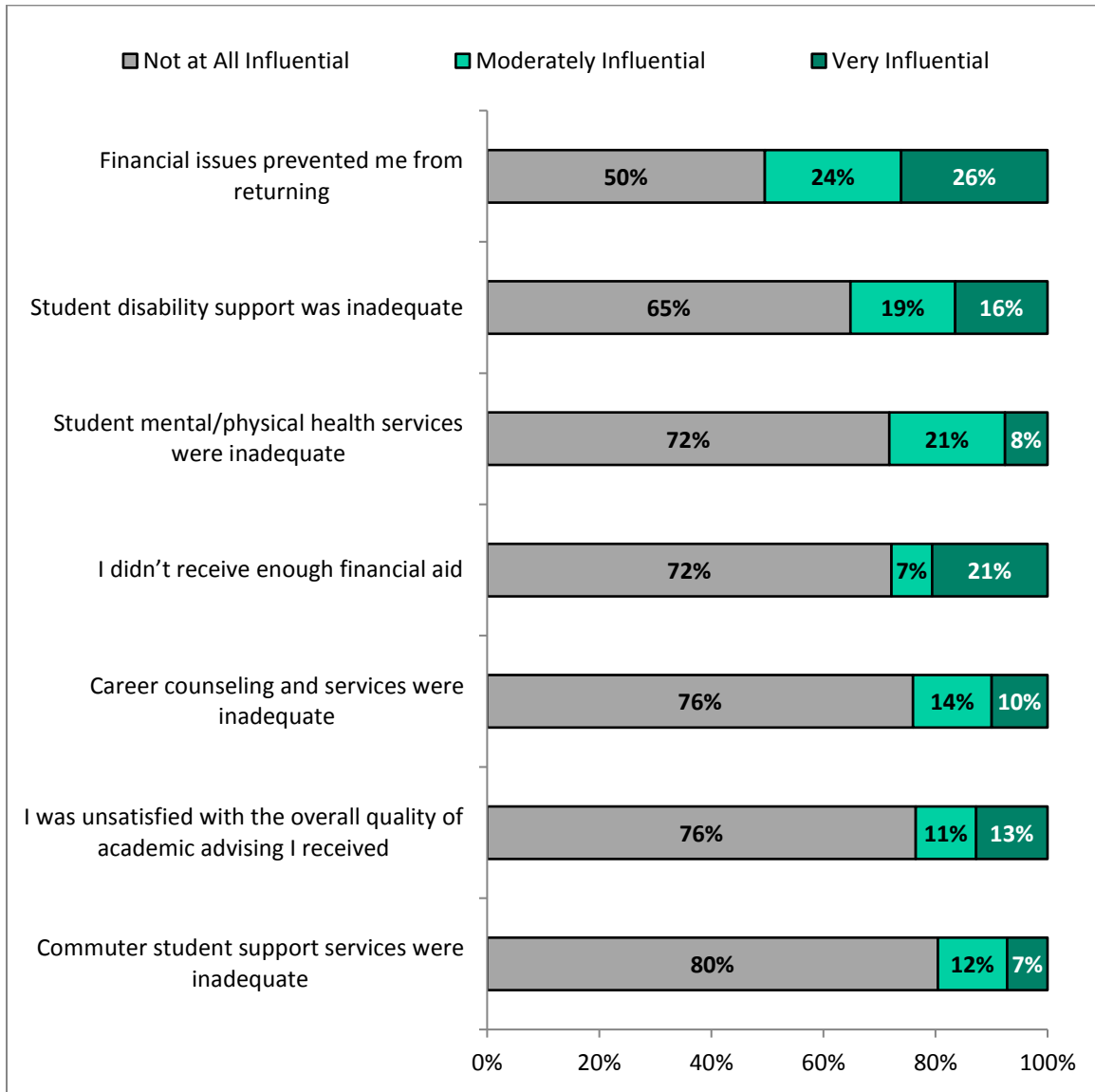
Figure 1.6: Thinking about the semester(s) for which you discontinued your enrollment at Cuesta College, how influential were each of the following personal factors in your decision?



n=67-121

STUDENT SUPPORT

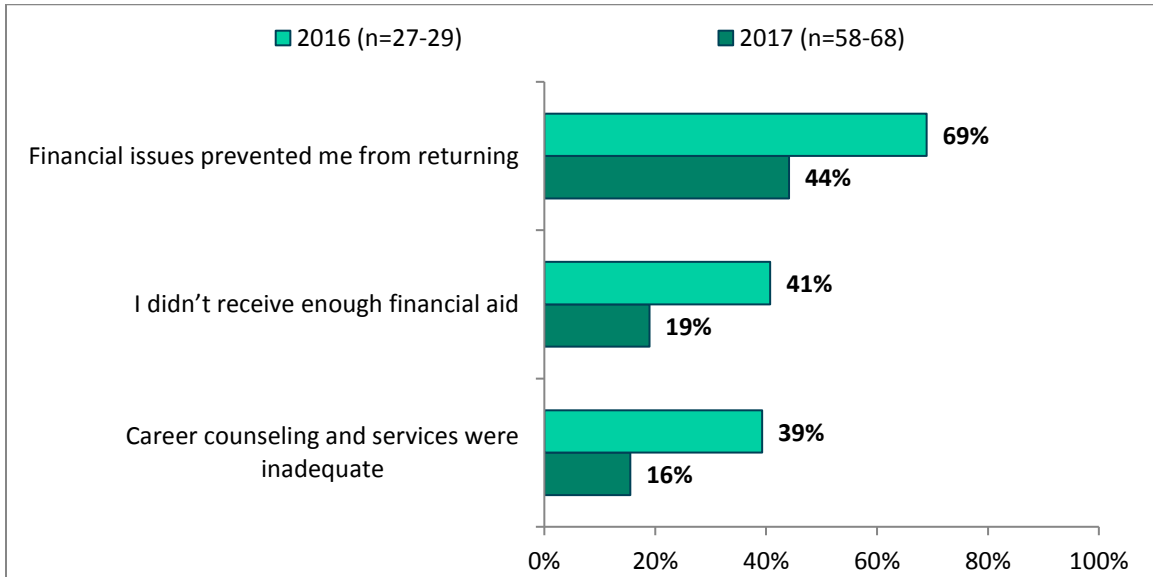
Figure 1.7: Thinking about the semester(s) for which you discontinued your enrollment at Cuesta College, how influential were each of the following student support factors in your decision?



n=91-111

Figure 1.8: Thinking about the semester(s) for which you discontinued your enrollment at Cuesta College, how influential were each of the following student support factors in your decision?

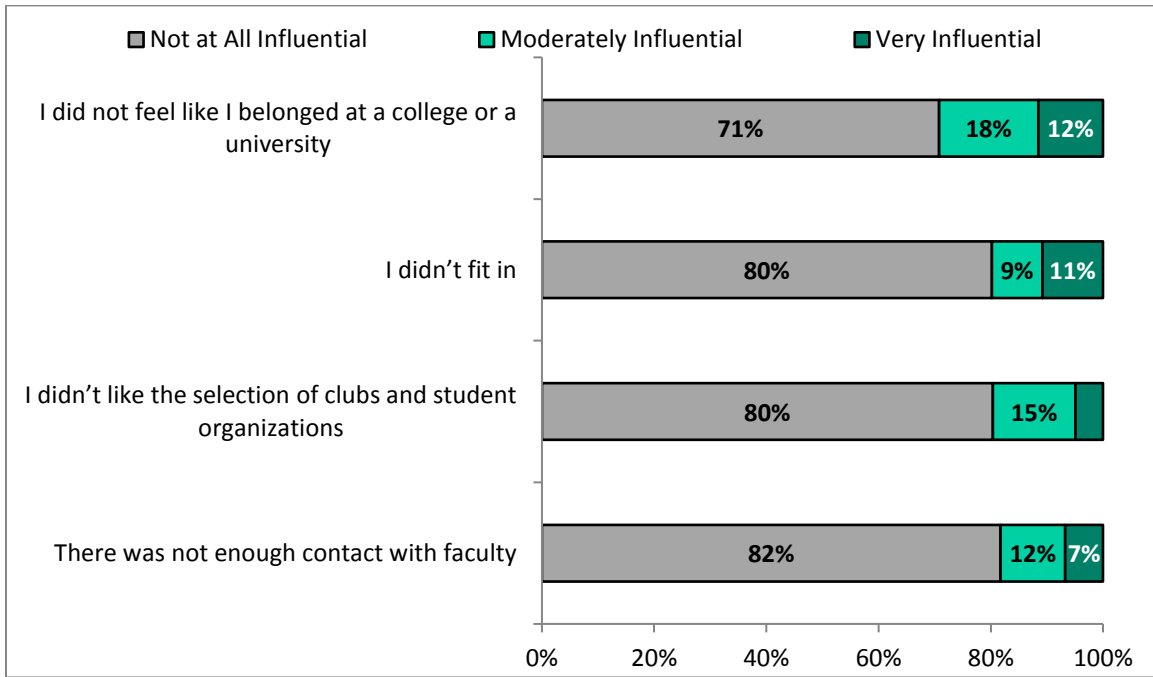
Segmented by Cohort Year, Percent 'Very Influential' or 'Moderately Influential'



Note: All factors presented on this chart differ significantly between the 2016 and 2017 cohorts at the 95% confidence level.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY

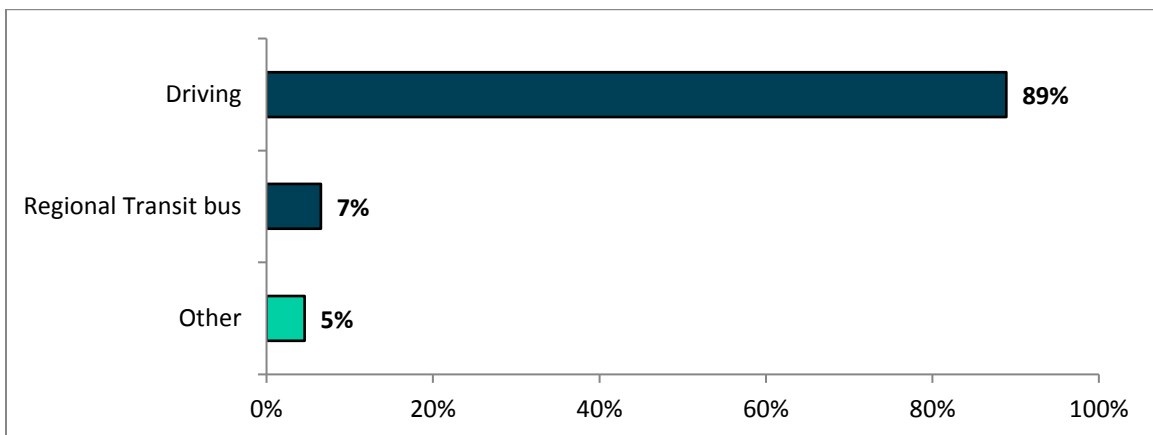
Figure 1.9: Thinking about the semester(s) for which you discontinued your enrollment at Cuesta College, how influential were each of the following social and community factors in your decision?



n=102-113

TRANSPORTATION

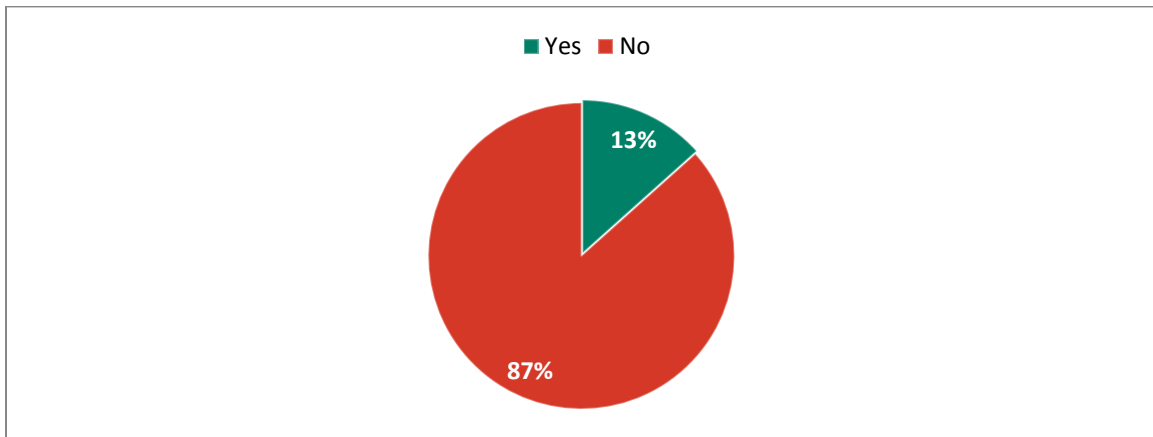
Figure 1.10: While enrolled in Cuesta College how did you typically get to school?



n=152

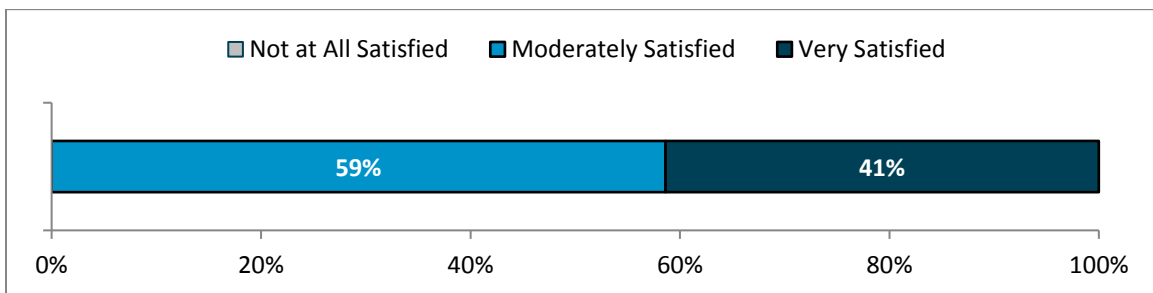
Note: No respondents indicated that they walked or bicycled to school.

Figure 1.11: While enrolled at Cuesta, did you ever use the regional transit bus to get to school?



n=142

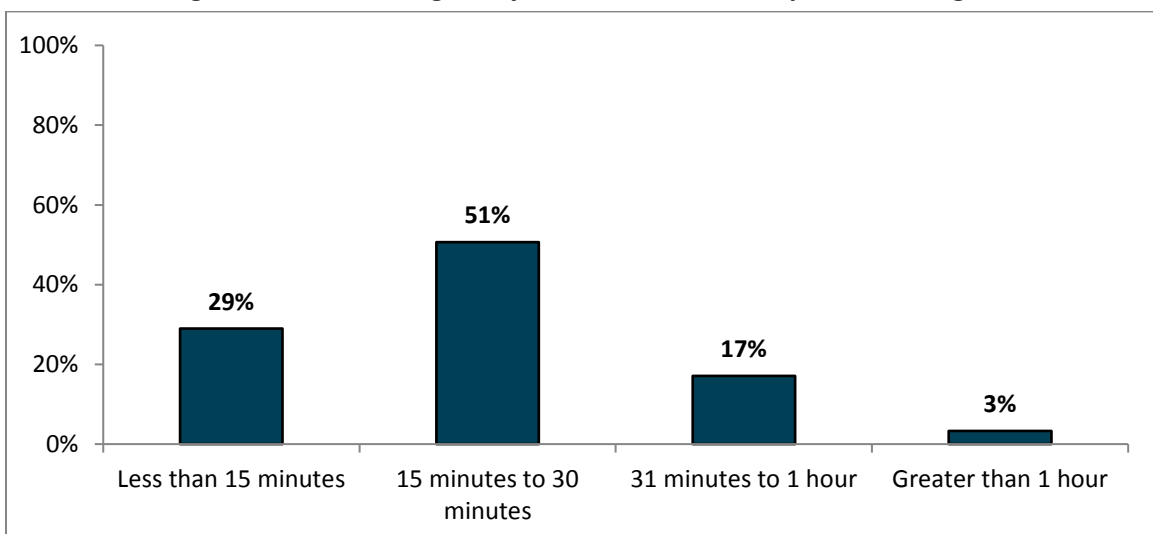
Figure 1.12: How satisfied were you with the Regional Transit bus system?



n=29

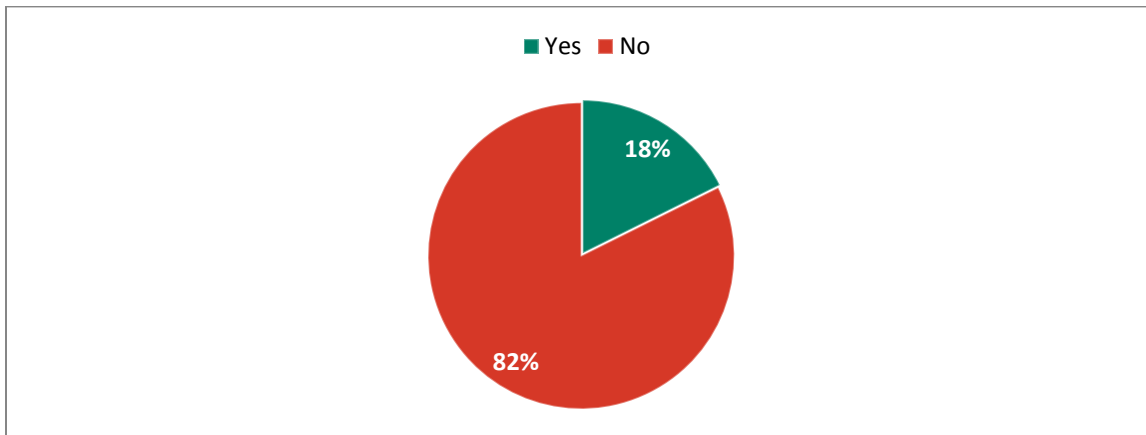
Note: Only those who said 'Yes' to 'While enrolled at Cuesta, did you ever use the regional transit bus to get to school?' answered this question.

Figure 1.13: How long was your commute to campus on average?



n=152

Figure 1.14: Was the amount of time it took you to get to school influential in your decision to leave?



n=152

ADDITIONAL FACTORS

Figure 1.15: In a few words, please describe if there were any other reasons for your decision to end your enrollment at Cuesta College.

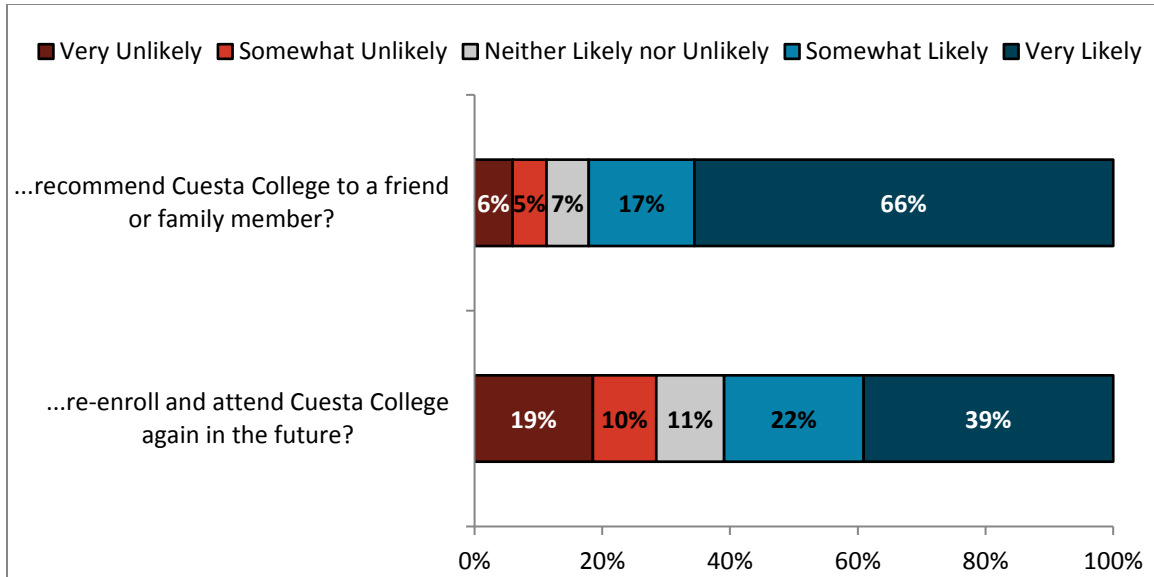
THEME	COUNT	PERCENT	EXAMPLE
Specific Personal Reasons	40	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I needed a break and spend a semester to figure out what major I wanted to pursue. I had an offer to take online classes which was more convenient for me at the time and is being paid for by my job. I was always going through a lot of stress at the time.
Specific Academic Reasons	39	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I could not get the class that I wanted, there [were] only enough spots for like 30 people and it was full and I was put on a waiting list.
Specific Support Reasons	18	14%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disappointed in the counseling that was offered there. They rarely were available to answer my questions. I became bored with the same exact staff being there the entire time I was enrolled.
Enrolled Elsewhere	10	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuesta College has enabled me to acquire the specific requirements to be in my current program. Cuesta College remains a viable option for future options to complete my degree.
Plan to Return	7	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I did not want to leave. It was for medical reasons that i had to take time off. I am hoping to return to finish my...degree.
Satisfied with Current Degree/Fulfilled Requirements	3	2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm a high school student and I filled my requirements so I no longer need to attend Cuesta College.
Other	5	4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I had taken a different career path and there were new opportunities for me within my job.
None	27	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No other reasons.

n=132

Note: Percentages may add up to more than 100 percent, as responses may incorporate multiple themes.

POSSIBLE AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

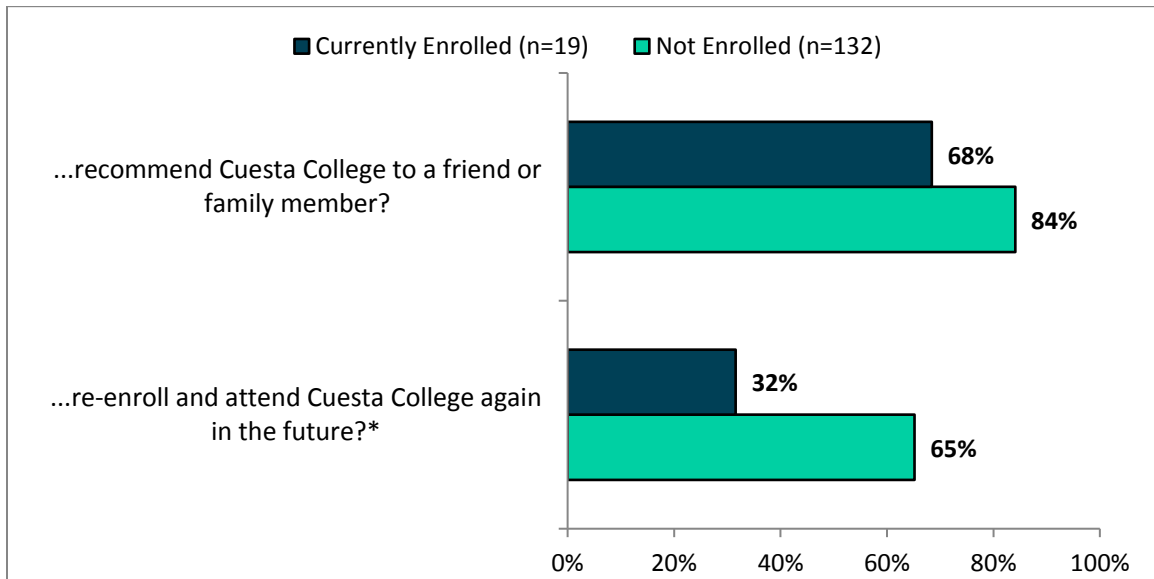
Figure 1.16: How likely are you to...



n=151

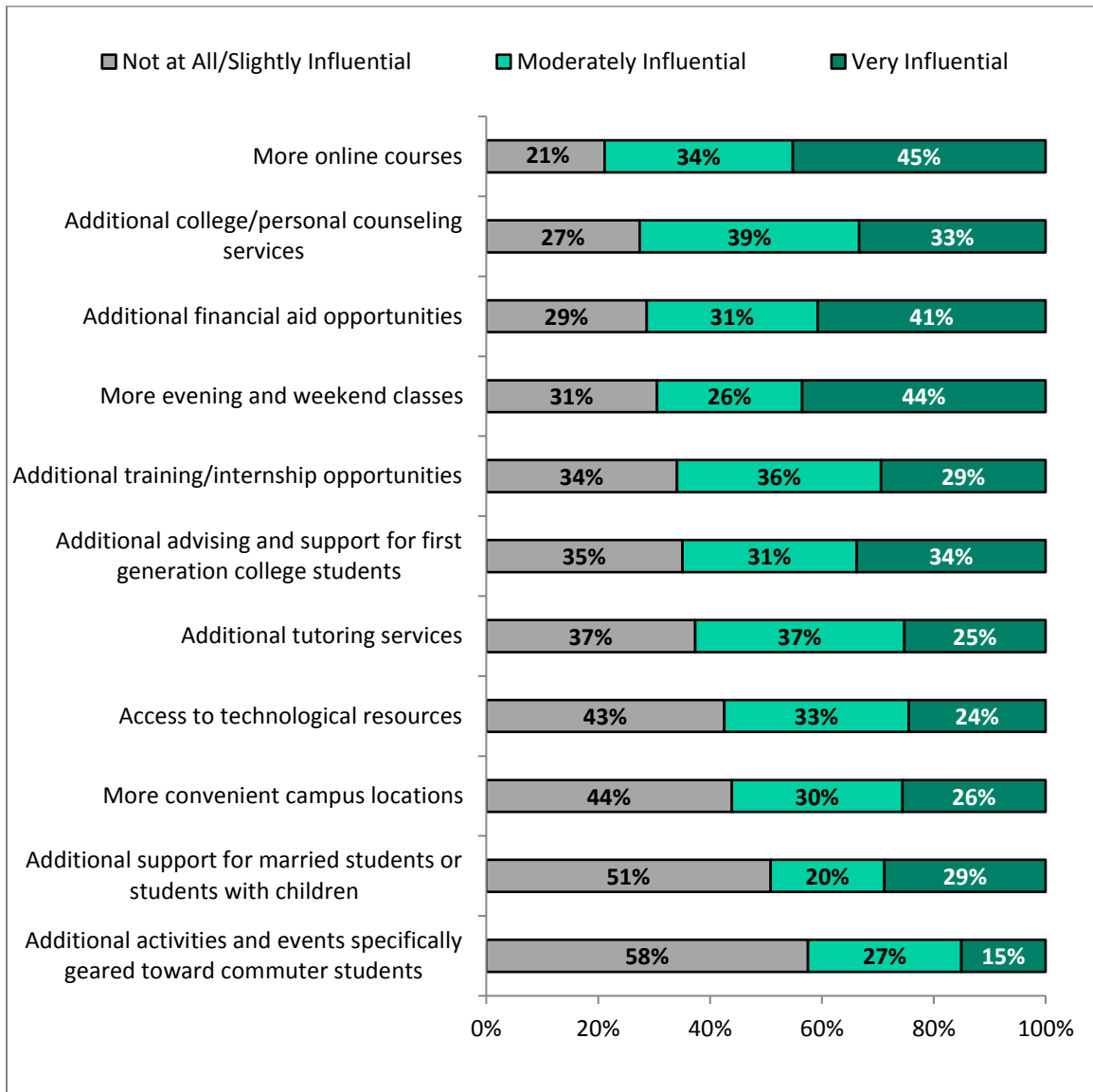
Figure 1.17: How likely are you to...

Segmented by Enrollment Status, Percent 'Very Likely' or 'Somewhat Likely'



(*) Denotes significant difference between groups at the 95% confidence level.

Figure 1.18: Please indicate to what extent the following factors would have influenced you to remain at Cuesta College.



n=59-108

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Figure 1.19: In a few words, please answer the following question; “What additional comments about student retention at Cuesta College do you have?”

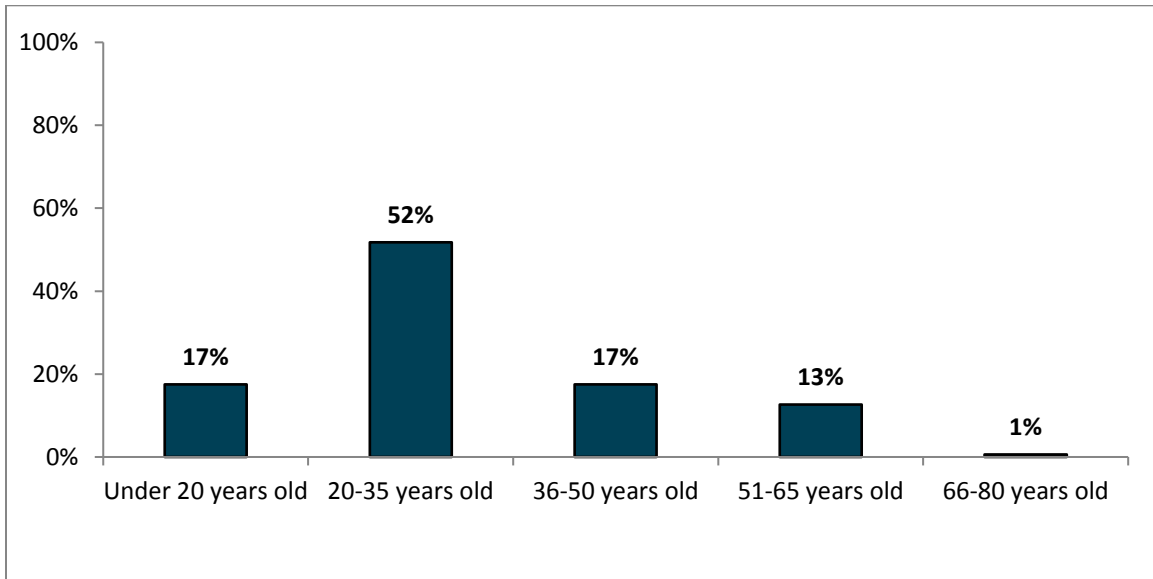
THEME	COUNT	PERCENT	EXAMPLE
GENERAL FINDINGS (N=123)			
Positive Comments	12	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's a great school and I would recommend it to someone in the area or someone thinking about going there. Teachers really care about what they're teaching.
Suggested Improvements	35	28%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I guess more classes, there are certain core classes that you have to take for certain degrees and those fill up really fast, so they need more core classes such as general education classes.
N/A	76	62%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing at the moment.
IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS (N=35)			
Academics	17	49%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students would do better if they find a connection between the required courses and what they really would like to do. Get the students excited or have more demonstrations about what they could use that skill set for and how that affects them.
Financial Aid	7	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairer financial aid system would be nice. Kids who needed more didn't get enough and those who didn't got way too much.
Faculty	4	11%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure the teachers are [more] people oriented.
Counseling	3	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counseling was not available for me when I sought help in meeting the goals to complete my degree. They did not have any solution or offer substitute classes. I do not have faith in the capabilities of the academic counselors.
Student Support	3	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As ESL student, I wish to have more teachers and time to help.
Scheduling	2	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is hard to work and go to school at the same time.
Other	3	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking was always an issue with me at the college. Also, it was very difficult to get the classes that I wanted.

Note: Percentages may add up to more than 100 percent, as responses may incorporate multiple themes.

SECTION II: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

SCREENING QUESTIONS

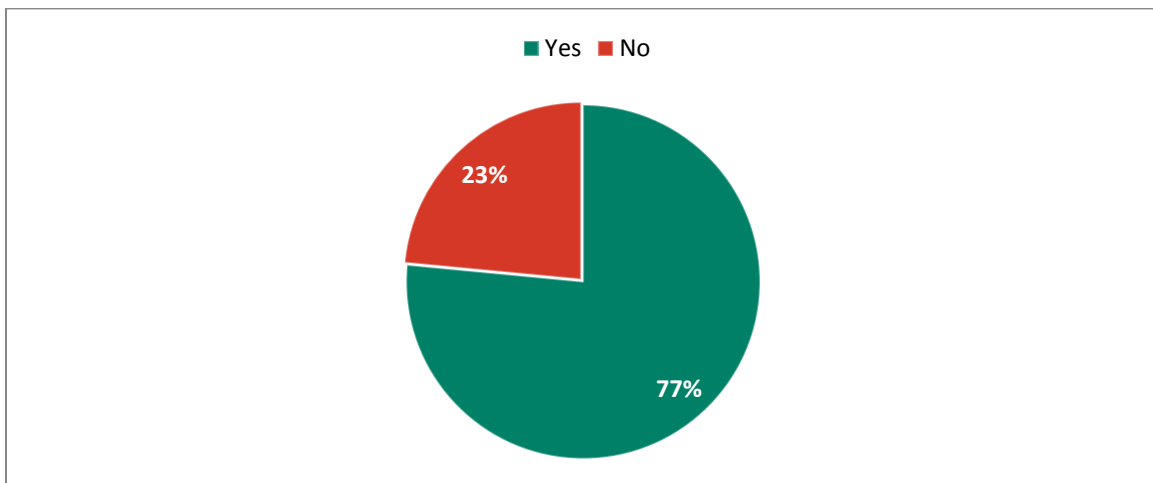
Figure 2.1: What is your age?



n=166

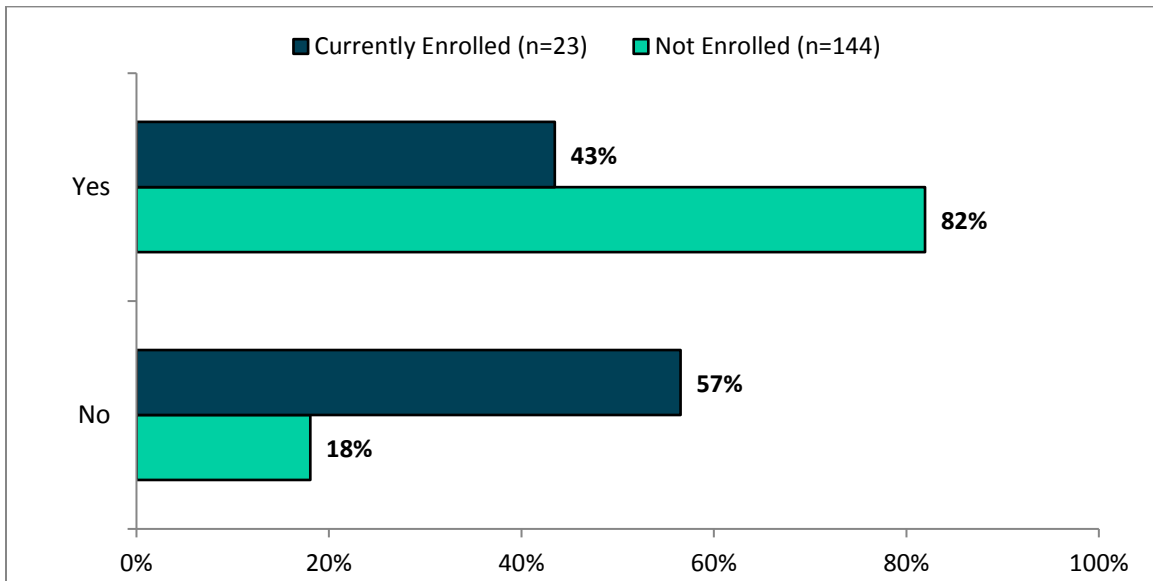
Note: No respondents stated that they are older than 80.

Figure 2.2: Are you currently a resident of San Luis Obispo County?



n=166

Figure 2.3: Are you currently a resident of San Luis Obispo County?
Segmented by Current Enrollment Status

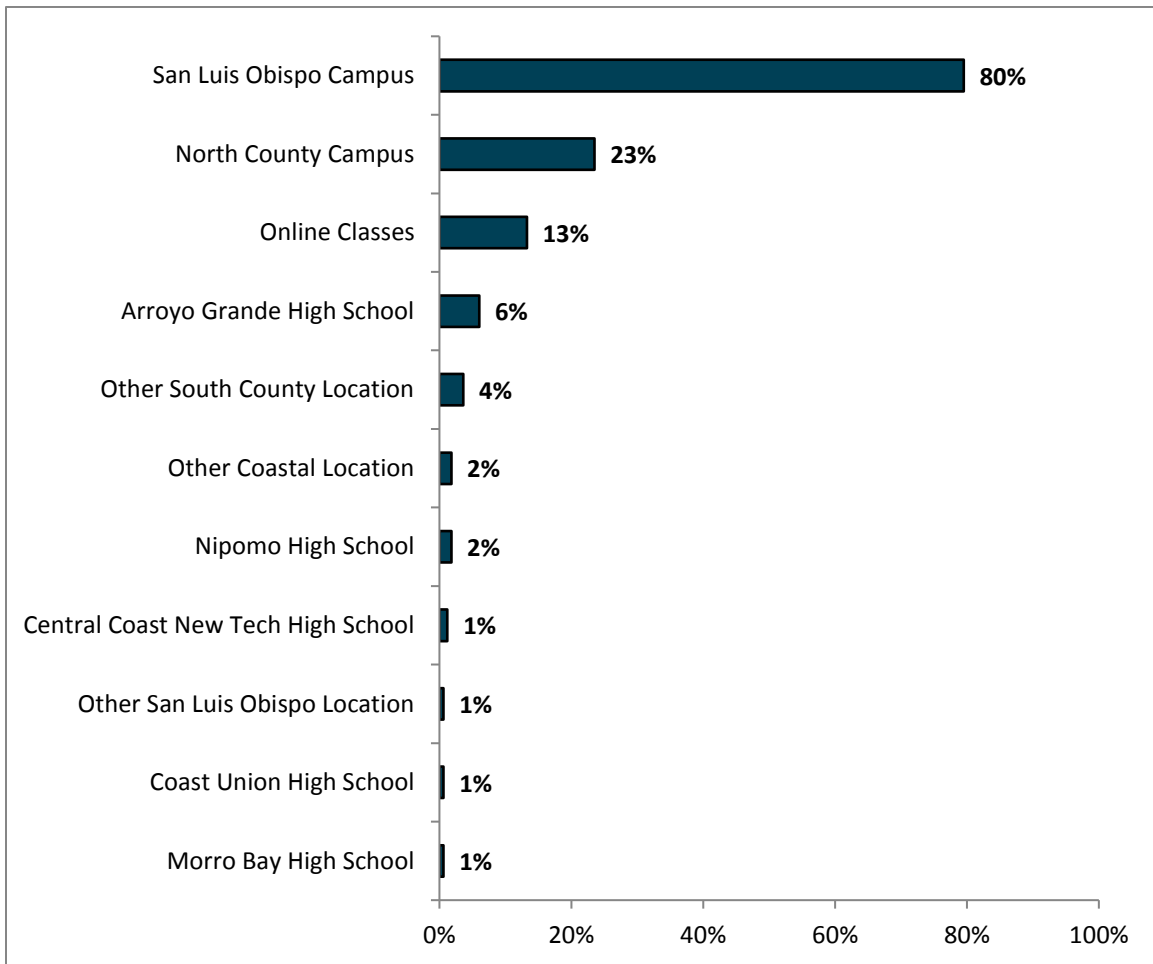


Note: Differences between groups are significant at the 95% confidence level.

Figure 2.4: What is your zip code?

ZIP CODE	# OF RESPONDENTS (N=166)	% OF RESPONDENTS
93422	22	13%
93405	18	11%
93446	17	10%
93401	16	10%
93402	8	5%
93420	8	5%
93442	8	5%
93433	6	4%
93445	6	4%
93428	5	3%
93444	4	2%
93449	2	1%
93465	2	1%
93430	1	1%
93432	1	1%
93451	1	1%
93453	1	1%
93424	0	0%
93452	0	0%
93461	0	0%
Other	40	24%

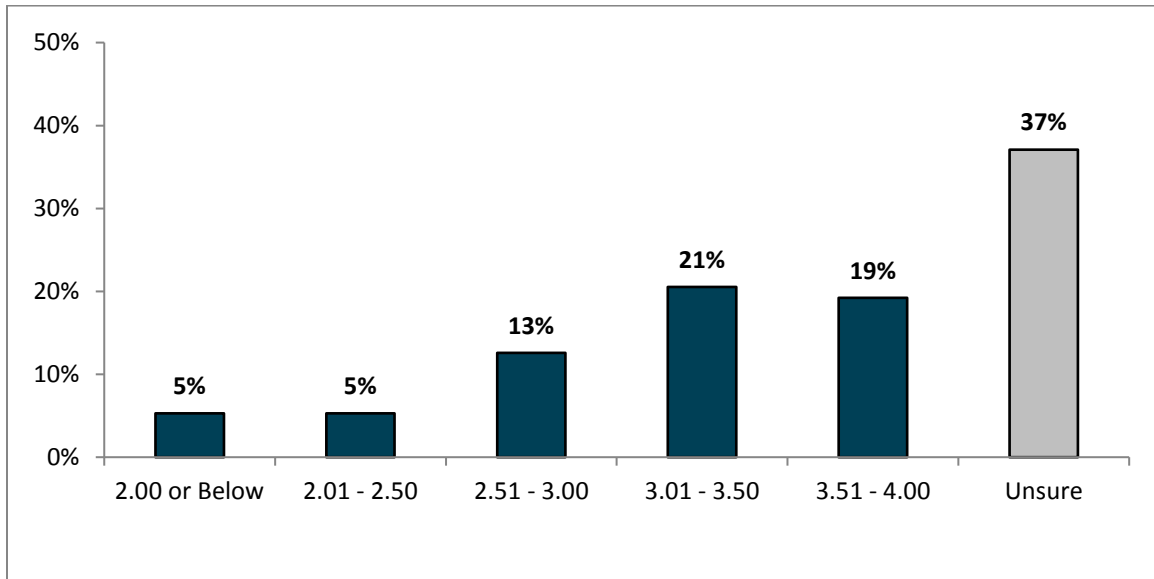
Figure 2.5: At which locations did you take courses at Cuesta?



n=166

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Figure 2.6: What was your GPA when you left Cuesta College?



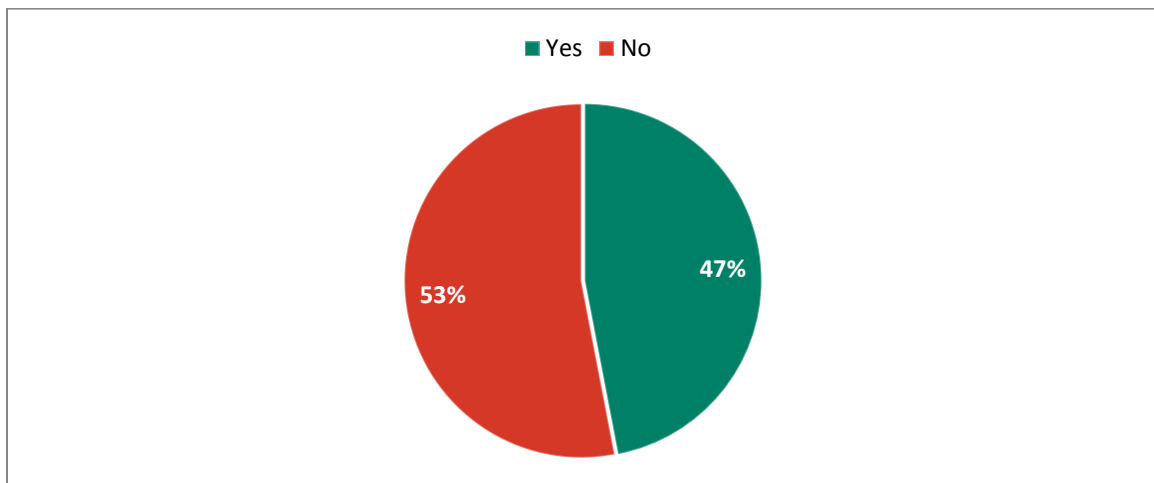
n=151

Figure 2.7: What was the last semester you attended Cuesta College?

TERM	2012 OR EARLIER		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Spring	6	4%	0	0%	2	1%	4	3%	15	10%	30	20%
Summer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	3	2%	4	3%
Fall	2	1%	0	0%	1	1%	4	3%	20	13%	57	38%
Total	8	5%	0	0%	3	2%	9	6%	38	26%	91	61%

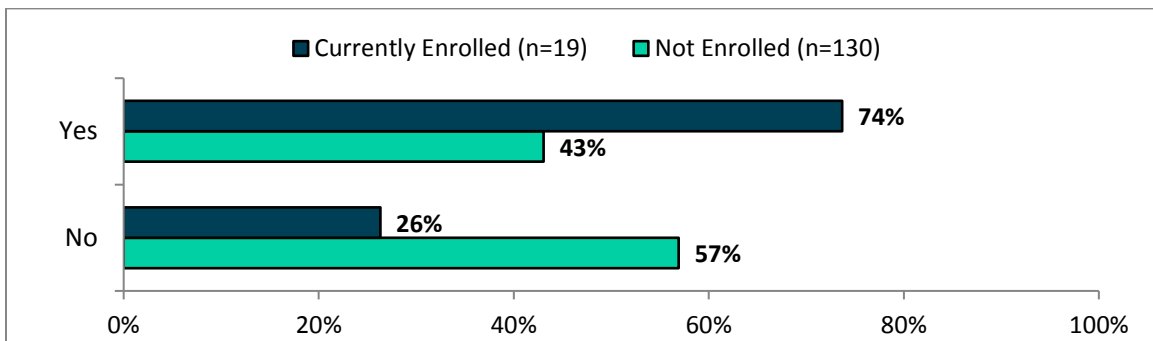
n=149

Figure 2.8: Before leaving Cuesta College, did you declare a major?



n=149

Figure 2.9: Before leaving Cuesta College, did you declare a major?
Segmented by Enrollment Status



Note: All differences between groups are significant at the 95% confidence level.

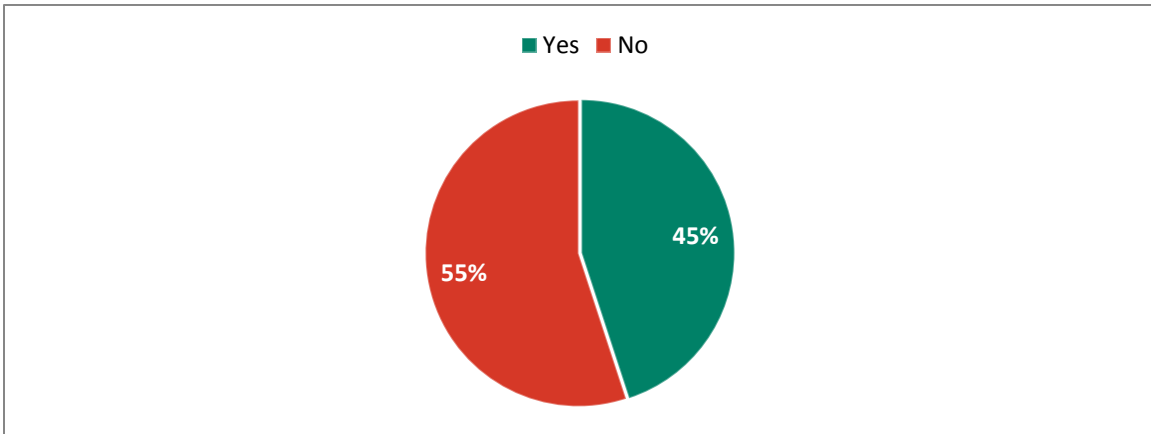
Figure 2.10: While at Cuesta, what was your major or intended major?

MAJOR	COUNT	%
Nursing, Registered (RN/AND)	12	17%
Business	9	13%
Engineering	5	7%
Psychology	5	7%
Computer and Networking Technology	3	4%
Early Childhood Education	3	4%
Kinesiology	3	4%
Liberal Arts	3	4%
Architectural Technology	2	3%
Biology	2	3%
Human Development/Human Services	2	3%
Journalism and Digital Communication	2	3%
Music	2	3%
Anthropology	1	1%
Art	1	1%
Chemistry	1	1%
Communication Studies	1	1%
Computer Information Systems	1	1%
Criminal Justice	1	1%
English	1	1%
Geology	1	1%
International Studies	1	1%
Legal Studies	1	1%
Mathematics	1	1%
Medical Assisting	1	1%
Nursing, Licensed Vocational (LVN)	1	1%
Nutrition	1	1%
Physical Education	1	1%
Political Science	1	1%
Sociology	1	1%

n=70

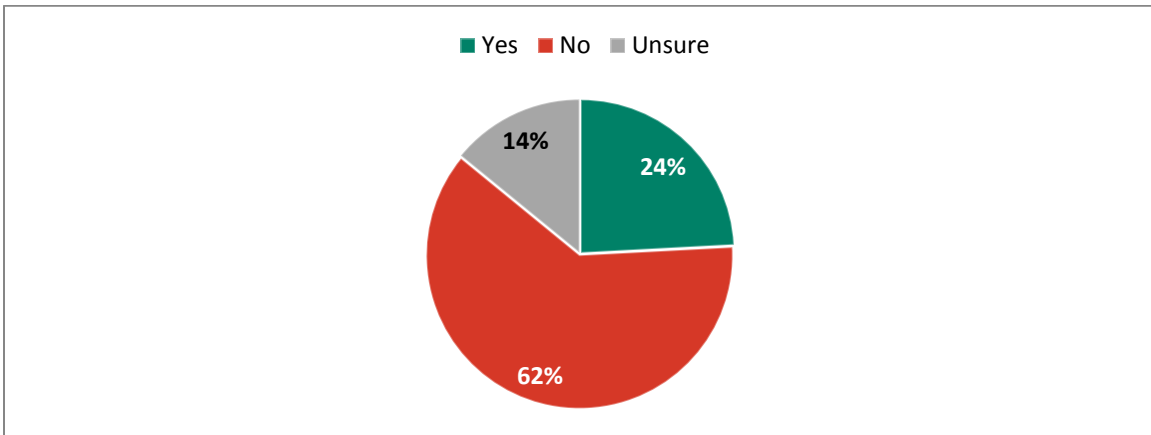
Note: Only respondents who answered 'Yes' to 'Before leaving Cuesta College, did you declare a major?' answered this question.

Figure 2.11: Are you a first-generation college student?



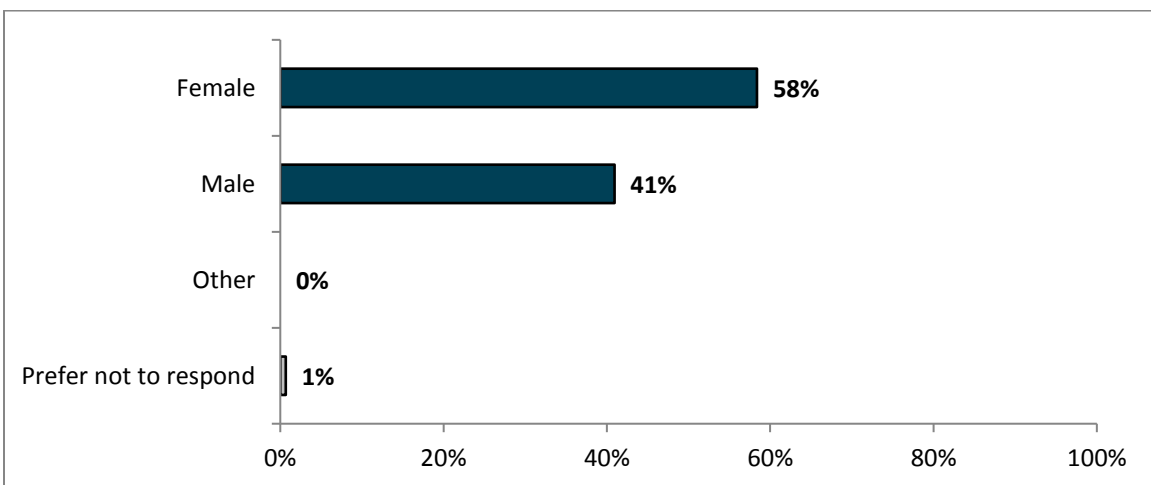
n=149

Figure 2.12: Were you the recipient of a Pell Grant?



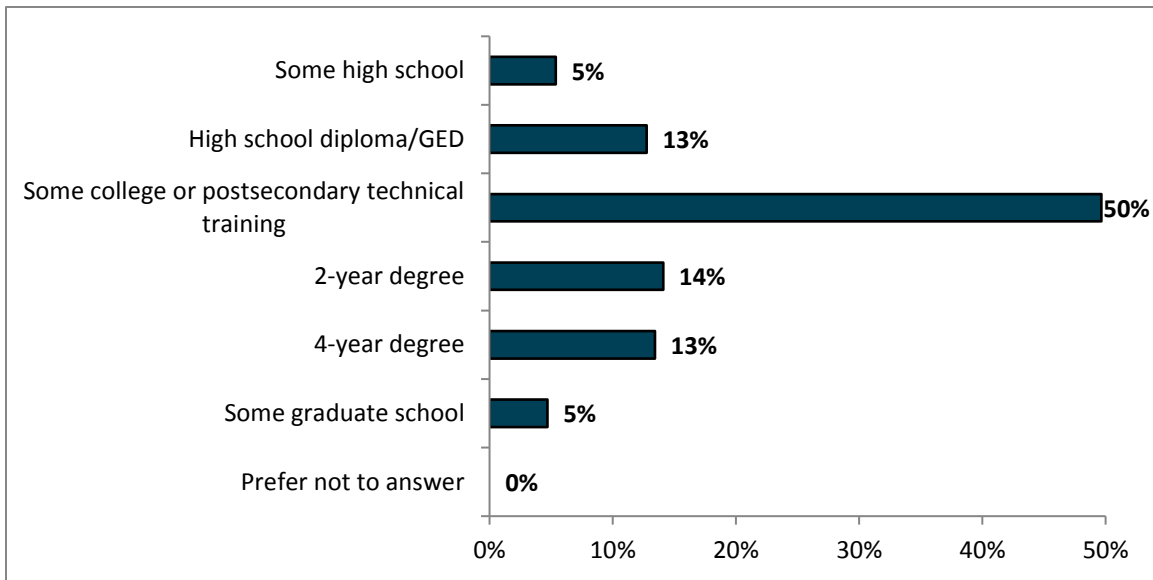
n=149

Figure 2.13: What is your gender?



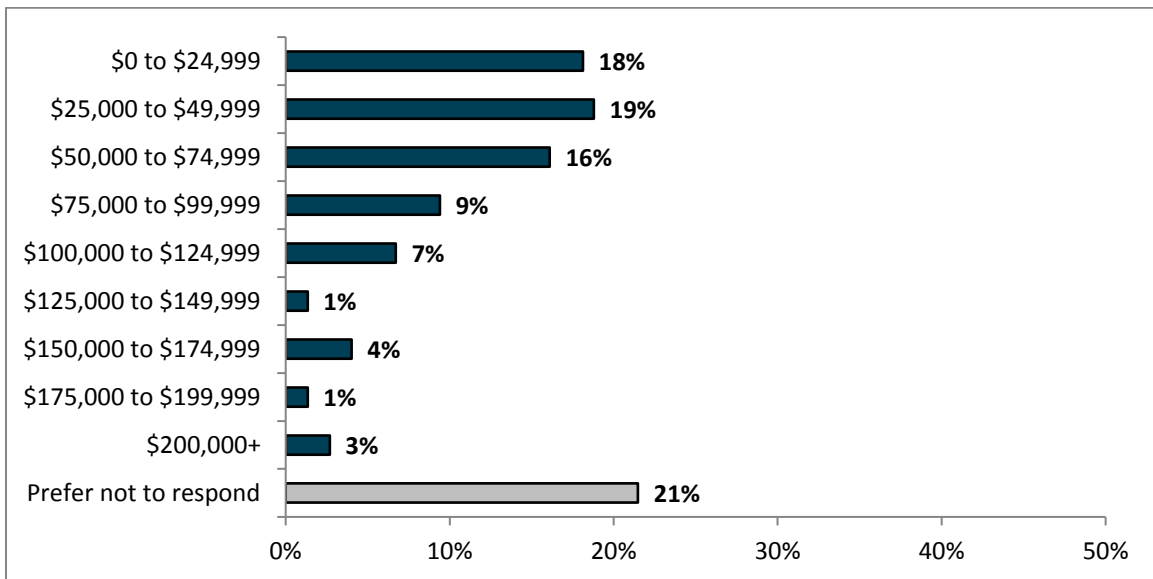
n=149

Figure 2.14: What is the highest level of education you have achieved?



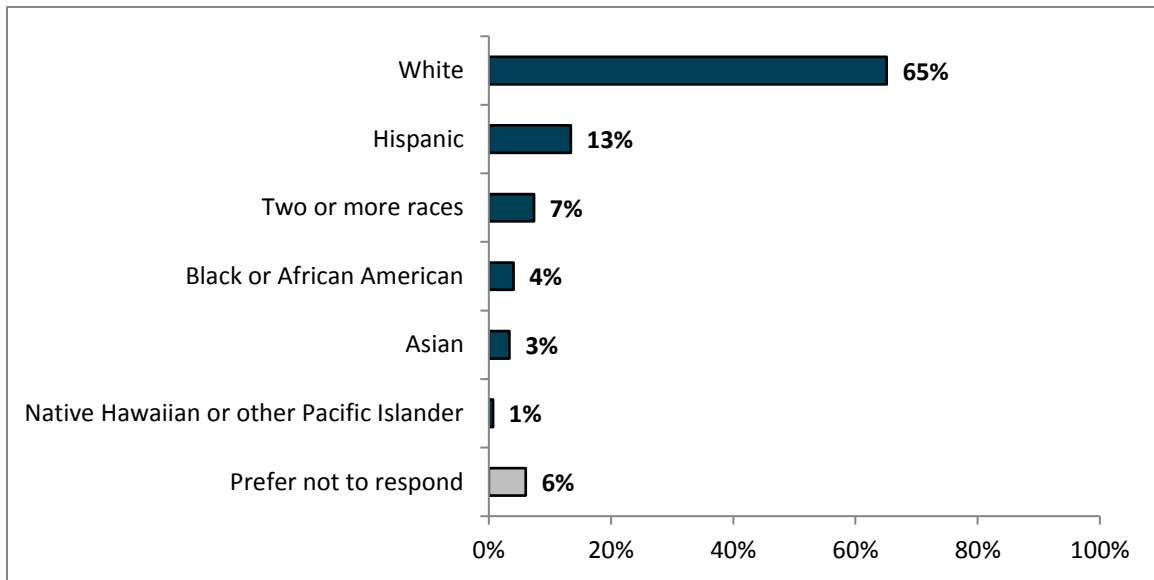
n=149

Figure 2.15: What is your family's annual income?



n=149

Figure 2.16: What is your race/ethnicity?



n=149

PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

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