

NON-RETURNER STUDENT SURVEY - FALL 2023

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The Division of Student Affairs wanted to understand why students living on-campus their first year of school did not return to UNT in Fall 2023. To answer this question, the Department of Student Services Assessment created a 6-question survey to ask students why they didn't return.

THE QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE SURVEY WERE:

1. Did you not return because of lack of space for returning students to live on-campus?
2. Did you not return because of off-campus housing issues (cost of housing, lack of options, etc.)?
3. If you answered yes to either question above, please explain why.
4. Why have you not registered for Fall?
5. How can UNT help you re-enroll in the future?
6. What would help you to continue towards your degree?

METHODS

The Qualtrics 6-question survey stayed open for 2 weeks and was sent to 1,042 students who lived on campus in FY 22-23 and did not return to UNT (no other non-returners to UNT are represented in this survey).

N=133 survey participants

13% response rate

FINDINGS

When asked if they planned on returning to UNT in the future, **51% said yes or maybe (n=56)** and 49% said no (n=53; total n=109).

39% (n=42) of students responded that they did not return because of lack of space for returning students to live on-campus.

41% (n=44) responded yes when asked if they did not return because of off-campus housing issues (cost of housing, lack of options, etc.).

Qualitative Responses

Students were asked to provide responses to open-ended questions for items 3-6 of the survey. The following themes were pulled from their responses:

When asked, "Why have you not registered for Fall", the students' responses most frequently expressed the following themes:

Financial Constraints & Difficulties

Cost of tuition, housing, and living expenses were cited as the primary reasons for not returning. Some mentioned both on-campus and off-campus housing being unaffordable. Additionally, difficulties with financial aid and attaining scholarships or grants were mentioned as contributing factors.

Housing Issues

High housing costs, lack of affordable options, and the unavailability of on-campus options for upperclassmen were cited most frequently. Students expressed frustrations with freshman being prioritized over upperclassmen, leaving them without on-campus housing options.

When asked, “How can UNT help you re-enroll in the future”, the students’ responses most frequently expressed the following themes:

Financial Assistance

Many students expressed that financial aid, scholarships, grants, and lower tuition costs are factors that could contribute to their re-enrollment.

Housing

Many students expressed that on-campus housing options, particularly for upperclassmen, and affordable off-campus options could encourage re-enrollment in the future.

Academic support

Some students expressed the need for various types of academic support, such as, counseling serves, grade improvement programs, or better advising as factors that can support their re-enrollment.

When asked, “What would help you to continue towards your degree”, the students’ responses most frequently expressed the following themes:

Financial Support

Financial aid, scholarships, grants, lower costs for attending, were expressed as factors that would help students continue towards their degree.

Access to Resources

Better access to, and options for, online classes, more class options in their field of study, more resources for low-income students, and help with courses that do not offer tutoring, were among the factors that could help.

Housing

Students expressed that more options for on-campus housing, availability of housing for upperclassmen, and affordable off-campus options could help them towards their degree.

CONCLUSION

Students’ concerns around the financial feasibility of attending college seems to reflect national trends about the affordability of higher education. Providing earlier interventions for students to become aware of financial resources and money management guidance could be of assistance. Further research should examine the at-risk status for this student population based on their Pell Grant status, socioeconomic status, and similar demographic data.

Housing, whether on or off-campus, was a concern to students and seemingly related to overall affordability of college and not dissimilar to national trends. Specific policy regarding requirements for First-Year students could be supplemented by parallel policy and practices in how the university chooses to house returning students. While the university provides support in finding off-campus housing to students, benchmarking and research with similar institution types and town/city types may offer guidance for future support on the student experience.