Why Students Choose to Drop Courses

Fall 2016

Beginning in fall of 2015, before students could drop a class they were asked to answer the following question: What is the main reason for dropping your class(es)? Based on the results from the first semester of data collection, response options were modified to be more inclusive of common reasons students drop courses throughout the semester.

The response options provided at the beginning of fall 2016 included the following response options:

- Changed majors or class not required
- Financial/cost
- Family and/or health issues
- Class was cancelled
- Falling behind in class or other course issue
- Instructor issue
- Work/school balance
- Working more or work schedule change
- Do not feel prepared for class(es)
- Failing the class(es)
- Moving/Transferring
- Personal Choice
- Tested out of the class
- Schedule Issue-course conflicts/overlaps
- Other (please specify)

Based on the results from the fall 2016 semester of data collection, one response option will be added and two will be modified to be more inclusive of common reasons students drop courses throughout the semester. These additions include the following:

- Course issue; wrong class, time, location, want online/face to face, already took class, signed up by mistake will be merged with Schedule Issue-course conflicts/overlaps
- Moving/transferring converted to Moving/Transferring/Leaving Lake Land
- Financial/Costs converted Financial/Costs/Transportation

The tables below synthesize data representing the reasons for dropping courses for the following four time periods across the semester.

- Why students drop courses BEFORE the first day of classes.
- Why students drop courses between the first day of class and the 10th day of class.
- Why students drop courses between the eleventh day of class and midterm.
- Why students drop courses after midterm and the last day to drop.

Students can drop multiple courses at one time or drop single courses at various points over time or a combination of multiple and/or single courses at various times. This means that a single student may drop three classes at three different time points and for three different reasons. As a result, the data below are presented based on the number of unique students instead of the number of courses dropped. The percentages in the table represent the percent of unique students indicating the response as a reason for dropping a class during the stated time period.

Reasons students drop BEFORE the first day of class:

In the fall 2016, 813 unique students dropped one or more classes BEFORE the beginning of the term. Some students provided multiple reasons for dropping a class and/or dropped a course more than once before the start of the semester. Of the 813 students who dropped a class 41 did not provide any reason for the drop. Specified "other" reasons provided by students were summarized and included in the response options. The "main" reasons for dropping one or more classes for the remaining 772 students are summarized below. The main reason is the first reason students chose for dropping course(s).

Reasons for dropping classes before classes start	n	%
Schedule Issue/Course Conflict Overlap	189	24.5%
Personal Choice	128	16.6%
Changed major class not required	107	13.9%
Financial/Costs/Transportation	98	12.7%
Work/School or Life Balance	68	8.8%
Tested out of the class	50	6.5%
Moving/Transferring/Leaving Lake Land	34	4.4%
Working more work schedule change	30	3.9%
Do not feel prepared	17	2.2%
Family or health issues	16	2.1%
Class Cancelled	10	1.3%
Other	25	3.2%
Total Reasons	772	

Of the 772 students who dropped one or more courses before the first day of class, approximately 25% indicated that they dropped due to scheduling issues or course conflicts. These reasons could range from signing up for the wrong class, signing up for a class already taken, signing up for courses at the wrong time or location (i.e., signed up for Kluthe and wanted on campus) to signing up for the wrong type of course (i.e., signed up for online and wanted face to face). Almost 17% also reported that they dropped the course as a personal choice. Close to 14% of these 772 students dropped courses because they changed their

majors and/or they no longer needed the course for their major, and 13% reported financial costs or transportation were issues.

Reasons students drop between the first day of class and 10th day:

During the fall of 2016, 464 unique students dropped a class between the first day of classes and the 10th day of the semester. Of the 464 students who dropped a class between day one and day 10 of the semester, 14 did not provide any reason for the drop. The 450 reasons for dropping one or more classes during this time for the remaining 450 students are summarized below. The main reason is the first reason students chose for dropping course(s).

Reasons for dropping classes between day one and day ten of the semester	n	%
Personal Choice	100	22.2%
Work/School or Life Balance	98	21.8%
Schedule Issue/Course Conflict or Overlap	65	14.4%
Financial/Costs/Transportation	50	11.1%
Changing Majors or Class not Required	30	6.7%
Do not feel Prepared	26	5.8%
Working more or Work Schedule Change	26	5.8%
Family and/or Health Issues	18	4.0%
Tested Out of the Class	12	2.7%
Falling Behind or Other Course Issue	10	2.2%
Instructor Issue	6	1.3%
Moving/Transferring/Leaving Lake Land	6	1.3%
Other	2	0.4%
Failing the Course	1	0.2%
Total Reasons	450	

Around 22% of the 450 students who provided a reason for dropping a class in the first 10 days of the semester indicated it was a personal choice. Almost 22% dropped due to struggling to balance work, school, and life responsibilities. Close to 14% dropped due to scheduling issues or course conflicts. These reasons could range from signing up for the wrong class, signing up for a class already taken, signing up for courses at the wrong time or location (i.e., signed up for Kluthe and wanted on campus) to signing up for the wrong type of course (i.e., signed up for online and wanted face to face). Around 11% dropped because of financial or transportation challenges. Close to 7% dropped courses because they changed majors and or the course was no longer needed.

Reasons students drop between 11th day and midterm:

For fall 2016, 231 unique students dropped at least one class between the eleventh day of classes and midterm. Of these 231 students, 10 did not provide any reason for the drop. The 221 "main" reasons for dropping courses for these students are summarized below.

Reasons for dropping classes between day eleven and midterm	n	%
Work/School and Life Balance	46	20.8%
Falling Behind or Other Course Issue	43	19.5%
Personal Choice	29	13.1%
Changed Major or Class not Required	18	8.1%
Family and/or Health Issue	16	7.2%
Working More or Work Schedule Change	16	7.2%
Instructor Issue	15	6.8%
Do not Feel Prepared	10	4.5%
Failing the Course	9	4.1%
Financial/Costs/Transportation	8	3.6%
Moving/Transferring/Leaving Lake Land	5	2.3%
Schedule Issue/Course Conflict	5	2.3%
Tested out of the Class	1	0.5%
Total Reasons	**221**	

The most commonly reported reasons for dropping courses between the 11th day of class and midterm are struggling with work/school and life balance (20.8%), falling behind or other course issues (19.5%), personal choice (13.1%), changed major and/or class not required (8.1%), family and/or health issues (7.2%), work schedule change (7.2%), and instructor issues (6.8%). Less than five percent of students reported financial/costs/transportation, moving/transferring/leaving Lake Land, scheduling issues, instructor issues, or tested out of class as the main reason for dropping classes during this time period.

Reasons students drop between midterm and last day to drop:

For fall 2016, 436 unique students dropped one or more classes between the midterm and the last day to drop. Of these 436, 16 did not provide any reason for the drop. The 420 "main" reasons for dropping for these students are summarized below.

Reasons for dropping classes between midterm and last day to drop	n	%
Falling Behind or Other Course Issue	117	27.9%
Failing the Course	65	15.5%
Work/School and Life Balance	64	15.2%
Personal Choice	47	11.2%
Family or Health Issue	34	8.1%
Work more or Work Schedule Change	22	5.2%
Changed Major Class not Required	20	4.8%
Do not Fell Prepared	15	3.6%
Instructor Issue	12	2.9%
Schedule Issue/Course Conflict	10	2.4%
Financial/Costs/Transportation	7	1.7%
Moving/Transferring/Leaving Lake Land	3	0.7%
Other	3	0.7%
Tested Out of the Class	1	0.2%
Total Reasons	**420**	

The most commonly reported reasons for dropping courses between midterm and the last day to drop are falling behind or course issues (27.9%), failing the class (15.5%), struggling with work/school and life balance (15.5%), personal choice (11.2%) and family/health issues (8.1%). Less than five percent of students reported work schedule changes, changing majors, not feeling prepared for class, instructor issues, scheduling or course conflicts, finances or transportation, moving or transferring, or tested out of class as the main reason for dropping classes during this time frame.