2018 National Freshman Motivation to Complete College Report

A study of the challenges and opportunities for completing a college degree, based on an analysis of more than 90,000 college freshmen

RUFFALO
NOEL LEVITZ

FRESHMEN WANT TO FINISH COLLEGE. SO WHY DON'T MORE OF THEM GRADUATE?

Nearly all freshmen who enter college want a diploma—97 percent say they are "very committed to earning a college degree, no matter what gets in their way" according to the respondents in this report. While their initial enthusiasm is admirable, many students have challenges with achieving that goal. Some of those challenges arise from motivations and attitudes that undermine their ability to graduate, including financial obstacles, indecision about career choice, lack of social engagement with other students, and more.

But what if institutions could get early insights into how freshmen are gauging their potential to graduate? What strengths are they bringing with them to college? Are there any barriers that could hinder graduating, such as financial issues or curriculum challenges? What issues—beyond academic—may influence their likelihood of returning for their second year? What are the top requests students are making as they begin college? Are students aware of available campus support programs and resources? Such crucial knowledge could help institutions identify the needs of their incoming students and form proactive responses to the challenges students face.

Seven strategies to address the greatest needs and biggest barriers related to student success

The **2018 National Freshman Motivation to Complete College Report** examines the noncognitive motivations of college freshmen at the beginning of their first year and as they progress throughout that year. It includes data from the RNL Retention Management System *Plus™* (RMS *Plus*), an early-alert motivational assessment that surveys college students about their educational goals, academic motivations, general coping resiliency, and other factors that may indicate whether they will be successful students or have barriers to completing college. **The data provide a national snapshot of the motivations and attitudes of freshmen, which colleges and universities can use to:**

• **Assess how their students are doing compared to national norms**
• **Plan student interventions that can circumvent any roadblocks to graduating**
• **Develop targeted student success programs**
• **Increase student retention, completion, and outcomes**

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This report is based on responses from 93,000 entering freshmen who completed two motivational, noncognitive assessment surveys—one as they entered college, another at mid-year. **For details about the assessment instruments, students surveyed, and methodology, please see page 19.**

1 BEGIN OUTREACH BEFORE CLASSES BEGIN SO STUDENTS START WITH STRONG ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

TOP FIVE REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM ENTERING STUDENTS

Attend an informal gathering to meet new friends	Help with the most effective ways to take college exams	Talk with someone about career qualifications	Help in improving study skills	Find out more about clubs/organizations
71%	**69%**	**67%**	**67%**	**67%**

One of the most impactful ways campuses can help students is to ask them early on what they need to develop an educational plan that helps them be socially engaged and academically successful.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Students want to meet new friends, form a community, and feel socially connected when they start college. Helping students establish relationships with fellow students and to the campus community, through activities, clubs, and volunteering, fosters a sense of belonging and a commitment to the institution.

- Almost 7 out of 10 entering freshmen want help with improving their academic skills. Hidden behind the students' high-school GPAs may be a strong desire to improve their skills for a stronger academic performance in college.

- Nearly 70 percent of freshmen are not only thinking about career planning, they have specific questions and are seeking answers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Shape your new student orientation program to meet the needs and motivations of incoming freshmen. Don't wait for the semester to begin to start conversations about study habits, social opportunities, or even career possibilities.

Communicate available on-campus resources to students. Let them know before they start classes which resources are available for getting academic help, career guidance, curriculum advice, and financial counseling.

Encourage increased interaction and engagement on social media with current students. Capitalize on the opportunities for engagement with social media between incoming and current students.

Inform your campus community about student interests and needs. Staff should be ready to reach out and help incoming freshmen get acclimated and off to a strong start. Faculty will appreciate a deeper understanding of their students.

Keep parents in the loop. The more you can inform them, the more they can help students with the transition to college.

2 IDENTIFY EACH INCOMING STUDENT'S NONCOGNITIVE, MOTIVATIONAL RISKS TO COMPLETION AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

While 97 percent of entering students say they are "very committed to earning a college degree no matter what gets in their way," students do identify areas where they have challenges, including:

32% My studying is very irregular and unpredictable

28% I have financial problems that are very distracting

Regarding financial distractions, first-generation students and students of color are more likely to have this issue.

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS THAT ARE VERY DISTRACTING

FIRST-GENERATION	HISPANIC/LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE
39%	37%	34%	23%

Students also identify areas where they desire assistance, including:

Help in obtaining a scholarship	Advice from experienced students	Improving their math skills
65%	55%	50%

1 in 5

Entering students plan to work more than 20 hours/week while going to college full-time, a work load which can cause distractions from their studies.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

• GPA is not the only factor when it comes to understanding students' motivation levels and commitment to completing their educational goals. Noncognitive data also play an important role.

• Students may start college with a strong aspiration to graduate, but many face barriers to reaching this goal. Addressing challenges early on and knowing the areas in which students are seeking assistance (and connecting students to available resources) are necessary to help more students persist from year to year and complete their educational goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Share these data with the student community. Students want to know they aren't isolated in their feelings and that other students might be experiencing the same barriers. Knowing this, students can form relationships with peers who deal with similar challenges and can work together to create solutions.

Promote available campus resources. This can include creating targeted communications campaigns based on the specific needs of students, such as how to apply for scholarships, how to join a study group, career planning, and more.

Align campus resources and programs with students' requests for assistance. Utilize the aggregate student data and coordinate the development and funding of programs and services that address students' desires for support and assistance.

3 USE DATA TO MATCH CAMPUS SERVICES TO THE NEEDS OF SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

The new normal at most institutions is diversity—greater racial/ethnic diversity, more first-generation students, and wider differences in age, economic backgrounds, and prior college experience among students. Reaching out to these diverse student groups and understanding their needs and challenges is important when developing targeted interactions and programming.

Noncognitive data reveal that students of color and first-generation students are strongly committed to finishing their degree:

STRONGLY DEDICATED TO FINISHING COLLEGE

HISPANIC/LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	FIRST-GENERATION	ADULT LEARNERS
96%	95%	96%	96%

The data also reveal that students of color and first-generation students are receptive to institutional assistance:

ACADEMIC

I would like to receive some help in the most effective way to take college exams:

Hispanic/Latino **75%**
African American **80%**
First-Generation **74%**

I would like to get help in improving my study skills:

Hispanic/Latino **79%**
African American **81%**
First-Generation **74%**

SOCIAL

I would like to attend an informal gathering to meet new friends:

Hispanic/Latino **69%**
African American **75%**
First-Generation **66%**

I would like to find out more about campus clubs/organizations:

Hispanic/Latino **68%**
African American **71%**
First-Generation **63%**

CAREER GUIDANCE

I would like to talk with someone about career qualifications:

Hispanic/Latino **76%**
African American **79%**
First-Generation **73%**

FINANCIAL GUIDANCE

I would like to get help finding a part-time job during the school year:

Hispanic/Latino **54%**
African American **58%**
First-Generation **51%**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Data indicate that diverse student populations are highly receptive to institutional assistance—and are anticipating needing assistance to be successful in college.
- There are many common needs among diverse student populations. Be aware of what's common among students, and work to implement systemic strategies that will meet their needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Educate faculty and staff. Use data to inform faculty and staff about the motivational characteristics different student groups have.

Create awareness and inclusion. Provide data to peer leaders (orientation leaders, residence life staff, peer tutors) so that they are well prepared to work with students from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds and help students feel welcomed.

Keep the conversation going. Provide continuous communications to parents of students of color and first-generation students about available campus resources.

4 PRIORITIZE ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES AND STUDENT SUCCESS INTERVENTIONS EARLY IN THE FIRST AND SECOND TERMS

The following results show how students assess key academic skills at the beginning of the first year as well as at the beginning of the second term.

AREA OF NEED	Start of first year	Mid-way through their first year:
Want help improving math skills	**50%**	**36%**
Want help improving writing skills	**49%**	**40%**
Tutoring in one or more courses	**47%**	**33%**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- These results suggest that many students are more confident in their math skills by the start of the second term, but more than one-third of freshmen still want help in this area. A high number of freshmen still need writing assistance in their second term.

- The desire for tutoring—almost half of entering students and a third of students at the mid-point of their first year—means that campuses should pay close attention to how tutoring is available and accessible for first-year students.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Provide consistency with campus support programs and services. Ensure that academic support programs/ services are just as strong in the second term as they are in the first term.

Deliver effective academic recovery programs. For students who did not do well academically in their first term (GPA is below a 2.5), include them in services that are offered to students who are on academic probation.

Get the word out. Create compelling marketing strategies to make students aware of the academic support resources and services available throughout their first year.

5 ENGAGE STUDENTS IN TIMELY CONVERSATIONS WITH ADVISORS AND STUDENT SUCCESS PROFESSIONALS **THROUGHOUT THE FIRST YEAR**

Most "first-year programs" are really just first-semester programs. Data from mid-year assessments show that the majority of students want to be proactive with their career planning and educational futures.

ISSUES STUDENTS WANT TO DISCUSS MID-WAY THROUGH THEIR FIRST YEAR INCLUDE:

Salaries and future outlooks of various occupations	Qualifications for various occupations	Help with an educational plan to get a good job	Information on holiday or summer jobs	How to manage their finances
55%	**54%**	**54%**	**39%**	**34%**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

• Academic advisors must adopt a holistic approach to their work with students. Gone are the days they solely advise on course scheduling.

• Anticipate the needs of students by gathering and using relevant data throughout the entire first year. This is essential to providing a successful year of structured support.

• Academic advisors and student success coaches should have greater understanding of the career development process and the resources available to help students in their career planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Be prepared. Provide relevant career development information to academic advisors, which they can incorporate into their work with students.

Be committed. Set expectations that academic advisors will be just as engaged with their first-year students in the second term as they were in the first term.

Be helpful. Help students make the most of existing campus-based student employment opportunities and strive to expand the campus work program to generate future work opportunities.

GIVE STUDENTS REASONS TO STAY RIGHT AWAY

1 in 5

Entering students question the value of earning a college degree. Meanwhile, 12 percent already plan to transfer. Make sure you show incoming students the value of earning a degree from your institution so they will persist and succeed at your campus.

6 INITIATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONVERSATIONS EARLY BY IDENTIFYING WHERE STUDENTS ARE IN THEIR CAREER PLANNING PROCESS

Half of entering students ask for help or information about career options. Yet only about one-third say they receive that information by the middle of their first year.

AREA OF CAREER ASSISTANCE	Want at the beginning of the year	Received at mid-year	Still want at mid-year
Information about the future outlooks for various careers	55%	32%	53%
Help selecting an occupation suited to their interests	52%	37%	48%
Discuss the advantages/disadvantages of various careers	51%	N/A*	52%

Note that students were not asked if they received help with this item at mid-year, but half still wanted it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

• First-year students are eager for career advice. Their professional development needs are evident, yet only one-third say they receive career information by the middle of their first year.

• Colleges and universities have opportunities to redesign their professional development services to better address the career planning needs of first-year students.

• There is a large gap between the number of students who make requests for help at the start of the freshman year and those who say they received the desired help or information.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Start career planning early. Engage first-year students in career discussions—such as with orientation, first-year seminars, advising, and residence life programs.

Keep students' parents informed. Let them know about career development resources and programs directed at first-year students.

Offer career development planning throughout a student's first year. Ensure that career planning support is available all year long.

CONNECTING STUDENTS, CAREER SERVICES, AND EMPLOYERS

Given that half of all incoming students show interest in career planning, it's critical to engage students with the career development process early on and to make sure these services can connect those students with professional development opportunities across the entire student lifecycle. **Find out how Ruffalo Noel Levitz can help at RuffaloNL.com/CareerServices.**

7 DEVELOP FIRST- AND SECOND-YEAR PROGRAMMING WITH A FOCUS ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Early intervention and assistance for incoming freshmen helps them get off to a strong start, but to really improve graduation rates, institutions need a success plan for the first through the fourth semester. That means not only assessing their needs and connecting them at the start of their careers, but following through with assessment and intervention throughout the first year and in the second as well.

Consider these results and observe how many students ask for assistance in these areas, but don't receive by mid-year.

REQUEST FROM STUDENTS	Requested at start of first year	Received by mid-year	Still desired at mid-year
Attend an informal gathering to meet new friends	71%	44%	27%
Help on most effective ways to take college exams	69%	52%	37%
Talk with someone about career qualifications	67%	34%	54%
Help in improving study skills	67%	55%	38%
Find out more about clubs/organizations	67%	55%	33%
Get information about future outlook of careers	56%	32%	53%
Find out more about student government/activities	53%	42%	24%
Selecting an occupation suited to my interests	52%	37%	48%

KEY TAKEAWAYS

• A significant number of students are not receiving the support they requested at the start of their first year by the end of their first term.

• The ongoing request for career information and assistance suggests a skepticism of their academic return on investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Develop a first- through fourth-term completion/student success program. Many campuses have double-digit attrition through the fourth semester. The issues of career development, academic skills, and community building require attention during the first four semesters as students transition to majors and academic departments.

Look out for "sophomore slump" issues as students transition to their second year. Make sure as students finish their first year, they are informed about and connected to the resources that will help them when they return for their second year.

Appendix: Complete responses and about the respondents

Complete findings by overall freshmen, first-generation, and students of color

The following are the responses to every item from the RNL College Student Inventory, Form B, which formed the basis for this report. The results are broken down by scale from the survey.

BY SCALE	ETHNICITY			GENERATION		OVERALL NATIONAL
	HISPANIC/ LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE	FIRST-GENERATION	NON FIRST-GEN	
Desire to finish college						
Strong desire to continue my education	97.1%	95.6%	97.0%	96.3%	96.8%	96.6%
Strongly dedicated to finishing college	96.1%	95.3%	95.8%	95.5%	95.7%	95.6%
Deeply committed to my educational goals	94.3%	93.5%	93.6%	93.4%	93.6%	93.5%
Of all the things I could do now, going to college is most satisfying	82.9%	84.1%	78.6%	81.8%	79.4%	80.0%
Wonder if college is worth the time, money, and effort	24.3%	29.5%	17.0%	25.0%	19.6%	21.0%
Societal pressure to attend college and would rather do something different	15.7%	16.0%	10.2%	14.7%	11.9%	12.7%
Many things I would rather do than go to college	10.9%	12.1%	9.4%	11.1%	10.4%	10.6%
Dread school and would like to give it up	11.1%	12.3%	6.9%	11.5%	7.9%	8.8%
Attitude toward educators						
Teachers respected and treated me fairly	84.7%	81.1%	84.1%	82.2%	83.8%	83.3%
Most teachers have been very caring and dedicated	78.6%	77.6%	81.3%	78.3%	80.4%	79.8%
Liked my teachers and feel they did a good job	75.4%	70.5%	78.8%	74.7%	77.3%	76.6%
Most teachers have superior attitude that is annoying	16.3%	20.0%	12.7%	15.5%	14.5%	14.8%
Teachers I had were too opinionated and inflexible	14.8%	15.9%	12.5%	14.8%	13.3%	13.7%
Teachers are more concerned about themselves than students	13.6%	17.5%	12.2%	13.5%	13.5%	13.5%

BY SCALE	ETHNICITY			GENERATION		OVERALL NATIONAL
	HISPANIC/ LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE	FIRST-GENERATION	NON FIRST-GEN	
Intellectual Interests						
Books have broadened my horizons and stimulated my imagination	56.2%	59.5%	57.1%	55.3%	59.0%	58.0%
Don't enjoy reading serious books and articles	43.6%	46.0%	43.1%	43.9%	43.2%	43.4%
Get personal satisfaction from reading	44.0%	44.8%	41.0%	43.6%	42.5%	42.8%
Books have never gotten me very excited	36.5%	37.3%	37.2%	37.1%	36.3%	36.4%
Study Habits						
Study very hard for all my courses	69.4%	66.1%	66.2%	68.2%	66.5%	66.9%
Take careful notes during class and review them before a test	68.6%	70.9%	64.8%	68.3%	66.1%	66.6%
Have developed system of self-discipline	55.3%	60.5%	58.6%	56.6%	58.7%	58.1%
My studying is irregular and unpredictable	35.0%	38.3%	29.7%	34.0%	31.7%	32.3%
When I study, I get bored and quit	35.5%	35.1%	27.1%	33.5%	28.6%	29.9%
Difficulty concentrating on school work	25.8%	24.3%	17.8%	24.5%	19.3%	20.7%
Math and Science Confidence						
Have very good understanding of general biology	55.0%	53.7%	57.2%	51.9%	58.0%	56.4%
Good grasp of scientific ideas	47.6%	47.1%	58.3%	46.0%	58.0%	54.8%
Hard time solving complex math problems	49.7%	48.9%	40.5%	49.0%	41.6%	43.6%
Math has always been challenge	47.9%	48.8%	38.6%	47.9%	39.6%	41.8%
Enjoy challenge of solving complex math problem	33.6%	33.0%	33.8%	32.4%	34.9%	34.2%
Weak understanding of physical sciences	24.9%	25.2%	17.8%	25.0%	18.7%	20.4%

BY SCALE	ETHNICITY			GENERATION		OVERALL NATIONAL
	HISPANIC/ LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE	FIRST-GENERATION	NON FIRST-GEN	
Verbal Confidence						
Capable of writing a clear and well-organized paper	61.1%	66.1%	71.2%	60.5%	70.8%	68.0%
Pick up new vocabulary words quickly	59.6%	65.9%	61.6%	59.1%	63.2%	62.1%
Good at figuring out deeper meaning in short story or novel	49.7%	58.3%	50.3%	49.3%	53.0%	52.0%
Had difficult time analyzing style and theme of authors in English classes	30.6%	26.9%	27.7%	30.6%	27.3%	28.2%
Difficulty organizing ideas in paper	31.7%	29.5%	21.9%	30.9%	23.3%	25.4%
Learning new vocabulary is slow and difficult process for me	19.2%	16.6%	13.2%	19.0%	13.8%	15.2%
Career Closure						
Have found attractive potential career	80.5%	82.2%	81.4%	80.7%	81.1%	81.0%
Made decision to enter certain occupation	66.0%	70.3%	63.9%	66.8%	64.8%	65.3%
Confused when trying to choose occupation	26.7%	20.3%	23.0%	24.5%	23.6%	23.8%
Confused about occupation to pursue	25.3%	20.1%	21.7%	22.7%	22.5%	22.5%
Family Emotional Support						
As a child, parents respected and understood me	73.7%	74.3%	80.8%	68.9%	80.7%	77.5%
My parents and I communicated well as a child	73.3%	72.2%	77.5%	69.4%	77.3%	75.1%
Family had one-sided way of looking at me as a child	18.9%	21.2%	12.4%	21.7%	13.5%	15.7%
As a child, family members often said hurtful things towards me	14.2%	16.0%	9.8%	17.0%	10.7%	12.4%

BY SCALE	ETHNICITY			GENERATION		OVERALL NATIONAL
	HISPANIC/ LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE	FIRST-GENERATION	NON FIRST-GEN	
Sense of Financial Security						
Have the financial resources needed to finish college	38.1%	41.0%	54.2%	36.4%	53.3%	48.8%
Don't have financial problems that interfere with schoolwork	29.0%	35.1%	47.8%	28.8%	46.6%	41.8%
Have financial problems that are distracting	37.2%	34.3%	22.7%	38.9%	24.0%	28.0%
Bad financial position and pressure to earn extra money will interfere with school	28.6%	23.8%	16.1%	28.2%	17.4%	20.3%
Sociability						
Enjoy crowds of people and having fun	82.9%	82.5%	84.5%	79.7%	84.8%	83.4%
Adventurous and outgoing at large social gatherings	57.5%	60.2%	54.0%	54.5%	56.0%	55.6%
Little interest in large social gatherings	29.0%	30.0%	25.6%	31.0%	26.0%	27.3%
Hard for me to relax and have fun with a group of people	15.2%	14.7%	14.9%	16.4%	14.7%	15.2%
Opinion Tolerance						
Easy to be friends with people who have different political opinions	68.1%	64.2%	72.9%	68.9%	71.0%	70.4%
Feel comfortable with someone who thinks different on major social issues	63.3%	62.2%	68.5%	64.0%	67.0%	66.1%
Get along well with people who disagree with my opinion	63.3%	63.0%	60.5%	63.1%	60.8%	61.4%
Tend to stay away from people whose ideas are quite different than mine	8.3%	11.5%	8.4%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%
Feel uneasy and distrusting toward people who think dissimilar to me	8.4%	11.0%	6.6%	8.7%	7.7%	7.9%
I am unfriendly and avoid people with different opinions than my own	6.7%	8.1%	7.1%	6.9%	7.4%	7.3%

BY SCALE	ETHNICITY			GENERATION		OVERALL NATIONAL
	HISPANIC/ LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE	FIRST-GENERATION	NON FIRST-GEN	
Receptivity to Academic Assistance						
Would like instruction on how to take college exams	75.2%	79.9%	64.5%	73.5%	67.9%	69.4%
Receive help to improve study habits	79.2%	81.2%	59.6%	73.7%	64.9%	67.3%
Receive individual help to improve math skills	64.4%	66.2%	41.2%	59.6%	46.7%	50.1%
Receive help on improving my writing skills	61.5%	64.6%	40.2%	56.8%	46.3%	49.1%
Receive tutoring for one or more of my courses	58.8%	63.9%	39.1%	53.7%	45.1%	47.4%
Receive training to improve my reading skills	51.0%	49.5%	26.4%	44.8%	32.3%	35.7%
Receptivity to Career Counseling						
Talk about qualifications needed for certain occupations	76.0%	77.8%	61.1%	70.3%	66.3%	67.4%
Talk with someone about salaries and future for occupation	63.2%	66.3%	49.9%	58.0%	54.6%	55.5%
Help selecting occupation suited to my interests	61.6%	58.5%	46.5%	55.2%	51.0%	52.1%
Talk about advantages and disadvantages of certain occupations	59.0%	61.0%	45.6%	53.3%	50.7%	51.4%
Help selecting education plan to get good job	60.6%	55.7%	44.3%	55.0%	47.9%	49.8%
Receptivity to Financial Guidance						
Talk about getting a scholarship with someone	76.3%	79.2%	57.0%	71.0%	62.8%	65.0%
Talk to someone about a part-time job	53.5%	58.4%	44.0%	50.7%	48.1%	48.8%
Talk to someone about the opportunities available for summer employment	56.1%	62.2%	39.6%	50.8%	46.2%	47.4%
Talk about getting loan to help get through school	28.9%	32.0%	22.6%	31.2%	23.5%	25.6%

BY SCALE	ETHNICITY			GENERATION		OVERALL NATIONAL
	HISPANIC/ LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE	FIRST- GENERATION	NON FIRST-GEN	
Receptivity to Personal Counseling						
Talk with counselor about general attitude toward school	24.1%	28.4%	11.7%	22.3%	16.2%	17.9%
Talk with counselor about difficulties in my social life	15.8%	19.7%	9.5%	15.7%	12.0%	13.0%
Talk with counselor about emotional tensions	14.3%	17.4%	9.8%	14.3%	11.8%	12.4%
Talk with counselor about feelings of discouragement and unhappy thoughts	13.0%	17.0%	8.1%	13.0%	10.4%	11.1%
Talk with counselor about eliminating unwanted habit	12.5%	15.5%	6.1%	12.0%	8.4%	9.4%
Talk with counselor about family problems	8.3%	10.1%	4.7%	8.8%	5.9%	6.7%
Receptivity to Social Enrichment						
Would like to meet some new friends at informal gathering	69.1%	74.5%	70.6%	66.1%	72.7%	70.9%
Find out more about clubs and social organizations at college	67.6%	70.7%	64.6%	62.5%	67.9%	66.5%
Meet an experienced student to seek advice	63.1%	67.2%	48.8%	57.8%	54.4%	55.3%
Find out about student government and activities on campus	57.7%	64.5%	48.1%	53.8%	53.0%	53.2%
Desire to Transfer						
No desire to transfer	51.5%	57.4%	72.1%	58.5%	67.6%	65.1%
I plan to transfer before completing degree at this college	19.5%	16.5%	7.5%	15.2%	10.3%	11.6%

Respondent demographics and additional findings

Gender	
Female	**55.7%**
Male	**44.3%**

Racial/Ethnic Origin	
African American	**14.9%**
American Indian or Alaskan Native	**1.0%**
Asian or Pacific Islander	**4.7%**
White/Caucasian	**57.4%**
Hispanic/Latino	**16.1%**
Multiethnic or other ethnic origin	**4.0%**
Prefer not to respond	**2.0%**

Highest education level of mother	
8 years or less	**4.2%**
Some high school	**6.6%**
High school diploma	**24.3%**
1 to 3 years of college	**23.5%**
Bachelor's degree	**25.0%**
Master's degree	**12.2%**
Professional degree	**3.9%**

Highest education level of father	
8 years or less	**5.1%**
Some high school	**9.2%**
High school diploma	**28.8%**
1 to 3 years of college	**19.8%**
Bachelor's degree	**21.1%**
Master's degree	**10.1%**
Professional degree	**5.0%**

Highest degree planned by respondent	
None	**0.1%**
1-year certificate	**0.6%**
2-year degree (associate)	**6.0%**
4-year degree (bachelor's)	**39.7%**
Master's degree	**30.7%**
Professional degree	**22.8%**

Time expecting to spend at work	
0 (I have no plans to work)	**24.9%**
1 to 10 hours per week	**25.6%**
11 to 20 hours per week	**29.8%**
21 to 30 hours per week	**12.5%**
31 to 40 hours per week	**5.7%**
Over 40 hours per week	**1.5%**

Average grades as senior in high school	
A	**25.4%**
A to B	**38.8%**
B	**16.6%**
B to C	**15.0%**
C	**2.8%**
C to D	**1.2%**
D	**0.2%**

Self-assessment of academic knowledge	
Highest 20%	**20.1%**
Next to highest 20%	**33.9%**
Middle 20%	**43.5%**
Next to lowest 20%	**2.1%**
Lowest 20%	**0.3%**

Self-assessment of academic ability	
Considerably below average	**0.4%**
Slightly below average	**3.4%**
Average	**29.7%**
Slightly above average	**36.2%**
Considerably above average (top 20%)	**27.2%**
Extremely high (top 5%)	**3.1%**

Timing of decision to attend chosen college/university	
Decision made few days before	**2.5%**
Decision made weeks before	**13.7%**
Decision made many months before	**83.7%**

INCREASE RETENTION AND STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS

About the instruments used in this report

Campuses cannot maximize their retention potential without intervention and initiative. As this study shows, students are eager to complete college, open to assistance, and also have many challenges that could undermine their success. To retain them, you need actionable data to inform interventions, assistance, and planning.

This study uses data from 93,000 students who completed the **RNL College Student Inventory™ (CSI)**, a college completion risk survey and self-assessment administered during orientation or in the first weeks of classes. The data and reports provided by the CSI help institutions:

- **Increase persistence, retention, and completion rates overall and for specific populations**
- **Identify each incoming student's noncognitive, motivational risks to completion and requests for assistance**
- **Prioritize academic support services and student success interventions early in the term**
- **Equip advisors and student success professionals to engage students in timely conversations and to proactively connect them with relevant support services**
- **Develop each institution's first- and second-year programming with a focus on student engagement**

In addition, this study includes data from the **RNL Mid-Year Student Assessment™**, given at the mid-point of the first year. To keep up the assessment efforts into the third and fourth terms, institutions also use the **RNL Second-Year Student Assessment™**.

See the instruments yourself at RuffaloNL.com/ EarlyAlertSurveys

See samples of these three instruments and learn how they can enable you to proactively address students' specific strengths, weaknesses, needs, and concerns—ultimately increasing student retention and completion.

ABOUT RUFFALO NOEL LEVITZ

Ruffalo Noel Levitz is the leading provider of higher education enrollment, student success, and fundraising solutions. More than 1,900 colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations rely on RNL for advanced analytics, personalized engagement, and industry-leading insights to achieve their missions. The firm is distinguished by its powerful portfolio of solutions focused on the entire lifecycle of enrollment and fundraising, assuring students find the right college or university, graduate on time, secure their first job, and give back to support the next generation. Ruffalo Noel Levitz conferences, research reports, papers, and articles help clients stay on top of current trends.

Learn more about our solutions for student success

Our student success solutions include student motivational assessments, satisfaction and priorities assessments, predictive modeling for student retention, career services management, and student retention consulting.
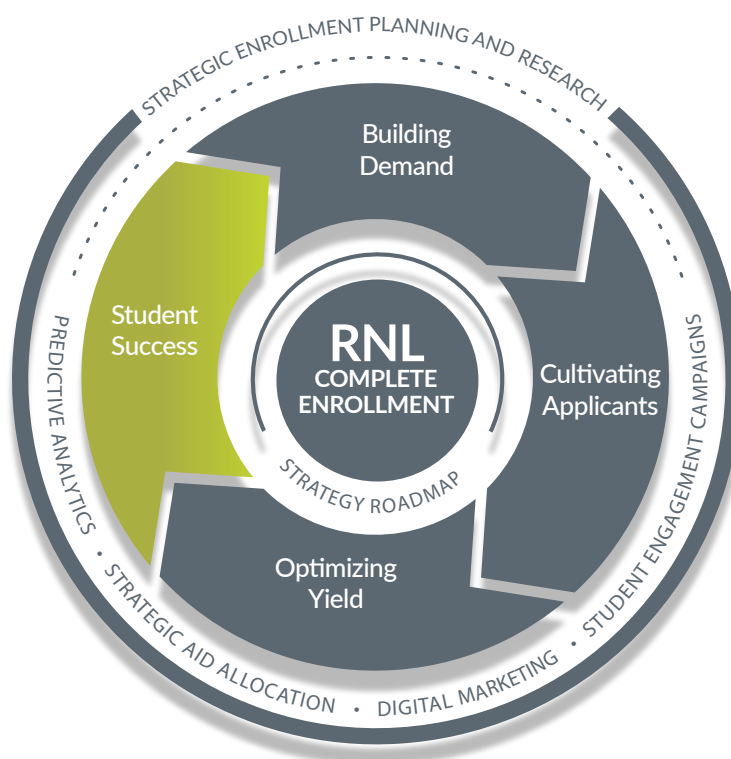
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Visit RuffaloNL.com/StudentSuccess for more details, email **ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com,** or **call 800.876.1117**

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