

The New Face of Summer School: Decreasing Time-to-Degree & Improving Academic Success

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Research Questions & Background

Research Questions

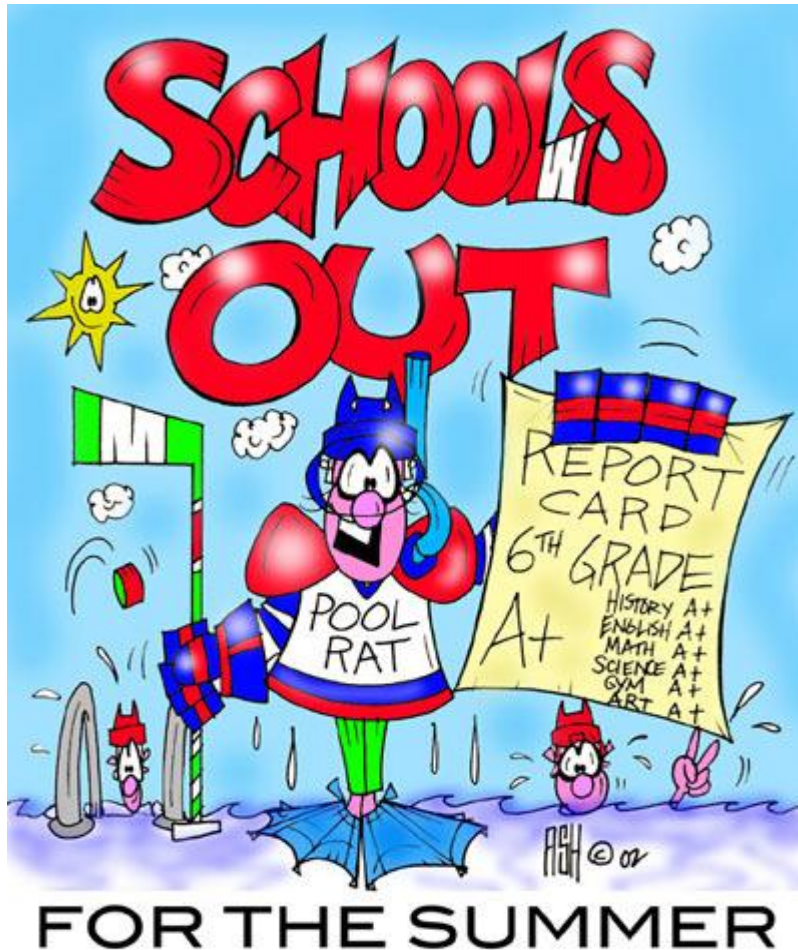
1. Does earning credit during the summer help students graduate in a timely manner, keep them on track toward graduation, and lead to better academic performance?
2. What courses do students take in the summer and who takes advantage of summer courses?
3. Do tuition discounts and marketing campaigns increase summer course enrollment?
4. What are students' perceptions and attitudes about taking summer courses?

Research Methods

- Descriptive Statistics
- Hierarchical Multiple Regressions Linear and Logistic to examine impact of earning summer credit on retention rates, graduation rates, and academic performance
- Focus Groups



Old Face of Summer vs. New Face of Summer



Why Encourage Summer Enrollment?

- Promising initiative for ensuring that students will complete their degrees in a timely manner (e.g., graduate in 4-years)
- Keeps students on track and continuously engaged in learning.
- Helps students reach milestone of 30 credits in first year.
- May offer opportunity for students to take most difficult courses and focus on just one or two courses.



Past Research

- Although educational institutions have faced pressures to decrease time-to-degree rates, college students are taking longer than four years to complete their baccalaureate degrees.
- Studies from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) show that a 5-year Bachelor's degree has been the norm since the 1970s (Jenkins, Brown & Yang, 2007).

Past Research (Continued)

- 58 percent of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2004 completed a bachelor's degree at that institution within 6 years or 150 percent of normal completion time to degree (NCES, 2012).
- Jenkins, Brown and Yang (2007) found that upper-division students were more likely to attend summer courses compared to lower division students and that summer school participation significantly increased the four-year graduation rate.

Characteristics of Students who Earn Credit During Summer

Who Takes Advantage of Summer?

Students Who Earned Credits in Summer 2012 had Significantly Higher:

- **HS GPAs**
- **SAT Scores (converted ACT)**
- **Average Course Loads in Fall and Spring Semesters**

Who Takes Advantage of Summer?

Students Who Earned Credits in Summer 2012 were significantly more likely to:

- **Earn HS Honors Diploma**
- **Be from Higher Income Families**
(less likely to receive a Pell Grant)
- **Not be from an underrepresented group (African American)**
- **Not be first-generation college students**
- **Work fewer hours off-campus for pay**
- **Have fewer concerns about ability to finance college education**

**Effects of Earning Summer
Course Credits On:
Retention, Graduation Rates, &
Academic Performance**

2006-2007 Cohort & Summer Credit Earned

Summer School Credits	N
No Credits Earned	1210
1-6 Credits Earned	367
7-12 Credits Earned	301
More than 12 Credits Earned	391
Total	2269

2006-2007 Cohort Summer Credit Earned & One-Year Retention

Summer School Credits	1-Year Retention Rate
No Credits Earned	60.3%
1-6 Credits Earned	94.2%
7-12 Credits Earned	98.2%
More than 12 Credits Earned	100.0%
Total	66.8%

2006-2007 Cohort Summer Credit Earned & Four-Year Graduation

Summer School Credits	4-Year Graduation Rate
No Credits Earned	4.8%
1-6 Credits Earned	15.7%
7-12 Credits Earned	27.8%
More than 12 Credits Earned	47.2%
Total	15.2%

2006-2007 Cohort Summer Credit Earned & Five-Year Graduation

Summer School Credits	5-Year Graduation Rate
No Credits Earned	10.9%
1-6 Credits Earned	44.9%
7-12 Credits Earned	58.7%
More than 12 Credits Earned	71.8%
Total	32.4%

2006-2007 Cohort Summer Credit Earned & Six-Year Graduation

Summer School Credits	6-Year Graduation Rate
No Credits Earned	14.1%
1-6 Credits Earned	57.0%
7-12 Credits Earned	71.8%
More than 12 Credits Earned	81.1%
Total	40.2%

Summer Course Completion & 4-Year Graduation Rate

Hierarchical Logistic Regression Results

- Covariates Entered in Step 1: HS GPA, SAT Score, Campus Housing, Low Income (Pell Grant Received), and Gender
- Summer Course Completion Significantly Predicted 4-Year Graduation Rate.
- Students who earned course credit during summer sessions had **11.41** better odds of graduating in four years compared to students who did not earn credit in the summer (based on the odds ratio).
- Nagelkerke $R^2 = .213$ for Step 1: Nagelkerke $R^2 = .378$ for Step 2 .

Summer Course Completion & 1-Year Retention Rate

Hierarchical Logistic Regression Results

- Covariates Entered in Step 1: HS GPA, SAT Score, Campus Housing, Low Income (Pell Grant Received), and Gender.
- Summer Course Completion Significantly Predicted 1-Year Retention Rate.
- Students who earned course credit during summer sessions had **13.90** better odds of being retained compared to students who did not earn credit in the summer (based on the odds ratio).
- Nagelkerke $R^2 = .081$ for Step 1: Nagelkerke $R^2 = .204$ for Step 2 .

Summer Course Completion & 30 Credit Hour Milestone in First Year

Hierarchical Logistic Regression Results

- Covariates Entered in Step 1: HS GPA, SAT Score, Campus Housing, Low Income (Pell Grant Received), and Gender.
- Summer Course Completion Significantly Predicted Attainment of 30 Credit Hour Milestone.
- Students who earned course credit during summer had **10.76** better odds of reaching 30-hour credit milestone compared to those who did not earn summer credit.
- Nagelkerke $R^2 = .308$ for Step 1: Nagelkerke $R^2 = .462$ for Step 2.

Summer Course Completion & Academic Performance

Hierarchical Logistic Regression Results

- Covariates Entered in Step 1: Cumulative First-Year GPA (prior to semester after summer), Campus Housing, Low Income (Pell Grant Received), and Gender
- Summer Course Completion DID NOT Significantly Predict GPA in Subsequent Semester, once covariates were entered in Step 1.

**Examining the Effects of
Initiatives to Increase Summer &
Attendance and Summer Course
Taking Patterns**

Summer Classes



**Graduate early by enrolling
in IUPUI summer classes!**

- ◆ 25% undergraduate tuition discount in Summer 2012
- ◆ Smaller classes
- ◆ Shorter course duration
- ◆ Walk to downtown concerts, festivals, and fun
- ◆ On-campus employment experiences and housing available

IUPUI

Summer Session Attendance: Demographic

<u>Session</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>% African Amer.</u>	<u>Hispanic/Latino(a)</u>	<u>%Under-Represented Minority</u>	<u>% Female</u>
2009					
SS1	7151	11%	2%	13%	59%
SS2	5986	11%	2%	14%	57%
Combined Summer	9546	11%	2%	13%	58%
Fall/Spring Combined	23326	11%	3%	14%	57%
2010					
SS1	7487	11%	3%	14%	57%
SS2	6236	12%	3%	16%	56%
Combined Summer	9846	12%	3%	15%	56%
Fall/Spring Combined	23487	11%	4%	15%	56%
2011					
SS1	7167	11%	4%	15%	58%
SS2	5832	12%	4%	16%	56%
Combined Summer	9327	11%	4%	15%	57%
Fall/Spring Combined	23252	12%	4%	16%	56%
2012					
SS1	7700	10%	4%	14%	57%
SS2	5805	11%	5%	16%	56%
Combined Summer	9835	10%	4%	14%	57%

Summer Session Attendance: Class Standing

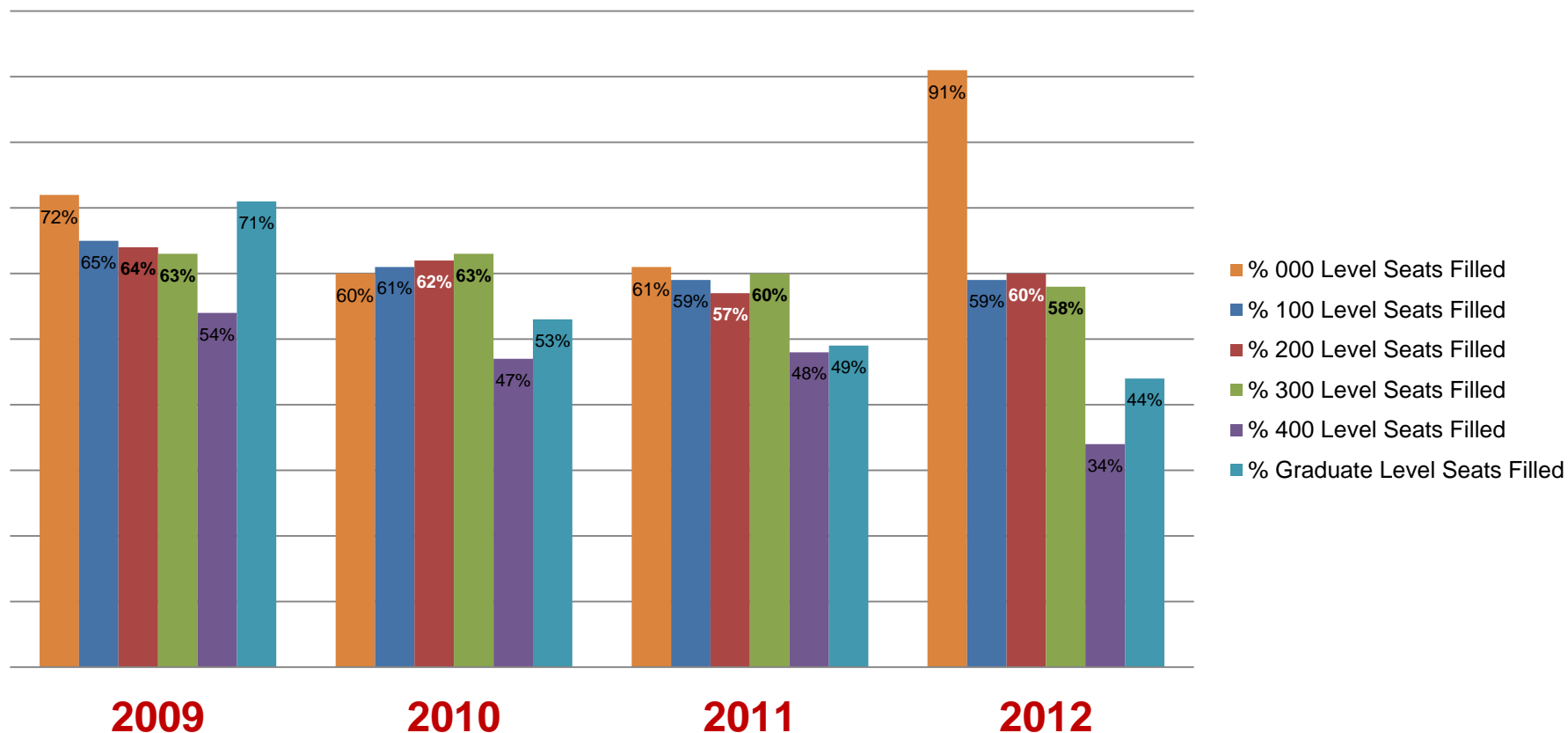
<u>Session</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Freshmen</u>	<u>Sophomore</u>	<u>Junior</u>	<u>Senior</u>	<u>%H-School</u>	<u>% Undergraduate Special</u>
2009							
SS1	7151	5%	20%	20%	44%	0%	10%
SS2	5986	6%	18%	20%	43%	0%	13%
Combined Summer	9546	6%	20%	20%	42%	0%	13%
Fall/Spring Combined	23326	21%	22%	19%	30%	1%	6%
2010							
SS1	7487	5%	20%	21%	44%	0%	9%
SS2	6236	5%	18%	21%	44%	0%	12%
Combined Summer	9846	5%	20%	21%	42%	0%	12%
Fall/Spring Combined	23487	20%	22%	20%	32%	1%	5%
2011							
SS1	7167	4%	18%	22%	47%	0%	8%
SS2	5832	4%	16%	22%	46%	0%	11%
Combined Summer	9327	5%	18%	22%	45%	0%	11%
Fall/Spring Combined	23252	20%	22%	20%	33%	1%	5%
2012							
SS1	7700	5%	18%	22%	46%	0%	9%
SS2	5805	5%	17%	22%	45%	1%	11%
Combined Summer	9835	5%	18%	22%	44%	0%	11%

Summer Session Attendance: Student Group & Class Type

<u>Session</u>	<u>N</u>	%Distance Education	%Gateway	%Veteran	%21st Century Scholar
2009					
SS1	7151	28%	30%	2%	5%
SS2	5986	23%	32%	2%	5%
Combined Summer	9546	30%	37%	2%	5%
Fall/Spring Combined	23326	29%	37%	2%	7%
2010					
SS1	7487	31%	30%	4%	7%
SS2	6236	25%	28%	4%	7%
Combined Summer	9846	34%	36%	3%	7%
Fall/Spring Combined	23487	26%	37%	3%	8%
2011					
SS1	7167	36%	30%	4%	7%
SS2	5832	25%	29%	4%	7%
Combined Summer	9327	37%	34%	4%	7%
Fall/Spring Combined	23252	31%	36%	3%	9%
2012					
SS1	7700	38%	30%	4%	7%
SS2	5805	28%	25%	5%	8%
Combined Summer	9835	39%	32%	4%	7%

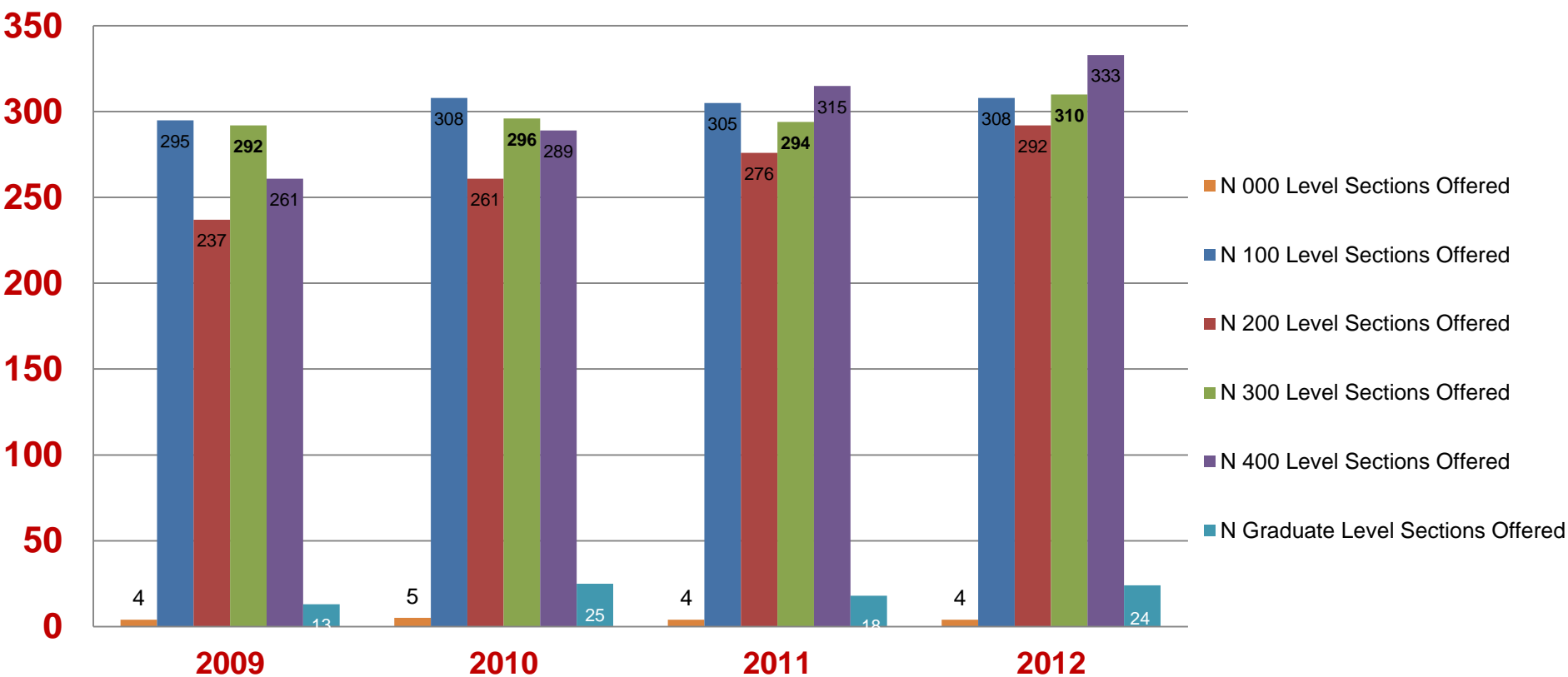
Summer Session Class Changes

Percentage of Seats Filled, Summer 2009 - 2012



Summer Session Class Changes

Number of Sections Offered, Summer 2009 - 2012



Student Focus Groups

Qualitative Approaches

(36) Undergraduates participated in (n = 6) separate focus group interviews...

- Spring 2011, originally part of another project
- Amended IRB study & added ?'s to protocol
- Interviews tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

ATLAS.ti or other CAQDAS may be helpful content.analysis.de

Focus Group Participants

Enrollment Experiences	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Enrolled in Summer Course Previously	8	22%
<u>Not</u> Enrolled in Summer Course Previously	28	78%
	Total	36 100%
Plan to Enroll in Summer 2011 Course	14	39%

Reasons for Enrolling in a Summer Course (n = 22)

Make Progress & “Get Ahead” in Course Work or Major

- “I want to go for four years - and I don’t want to go for five - so that’s why I’m trying to take some summer courses - to get ahead...”

More Relaxed Learning Environment

- “I was told that some of the summer classes like Speech and others are easier to do in the summer - maybe they go faster - but it’s more relaxed - just get them out of the way.”

Summer Engagement at IUPUI

Return “Home for the Summer”

- “I actually have nothing to do with IUPUI. Like I go home...Like I don’t really do anything till about July and get my books and stuff...”

Engaged with College Peers (But not in an “official” capacity)

- “I’ll be here but I won’t (be) here. I’ll be in Indianapolis because I have a job and I have to pay rent for a house that live in. I’ll be here but I won’t be engaged in any IUPUI campus activity...”

Suggestions for Improvement

Improve Financial Aid & Funding Information

- “...I didn’t know anything about summer being tied into fall and spring financial aid. -I thought it was a whole different financial aid thing. I thought you would get extra money...”

More Promotion & Information about Summer Courses

- “I think it would be helpful if there was more information kind of on like when you register... I think it would be helpful to know when it’s offered and for who...”

Focus Groups: Implications for Practice

- Importance of Student Voices
- Effective report strategy:
 - ≤ 5pages,
 - executive summary,
 - highlights section,
 - actual student comments
- Lessons Learned

Implications for practice....

Conclusions & Implications

Conclusions

- Students who earn credit in summer courses really do seem to get ahead (graduate in more timely manner and more likely to reach 30 credit hour milestone).
- Students who take advantage of summer tend to be more academically prepared, engaged, and from families with higher incomes than students who do not take summer courses.
- Upper division students more likely to take summer courses.

Conclusions (continued)

- Marketing and tuition discount initiatives do seem effective in terms of increasing summer enrollment.
- Many first-year students seem to lack understanding about summer course offerings.
- First-year students who do take courses in the summer tend to do so to “get ahead” and take classes in a “more relaxed atmosphere.”

Implications for Practice

- IR and assessment professionals can help institutional leaders understand importance of summer attendance and effectiveness of initiatives designed to increase summer enrollment.
- Institutions should consider investing resources in attracting more students to summer courses.
- Marketing initiatives should focus on “target groups” and tailor messages.
- May take effort to change student culture and perceptions of “summer school.”

Limitations

- Single institution study limiting generalizability.
- Unable to determine if summer course attendance *caused* improved academic success and timely graduation.
- Limited number of cohorts examined: 2006-2007 and 2011-2012.
- Only conducted focus groups with first-year students.

Questions!

