



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE
STUDENT AFFAIRS

ADMITTED NON-ENROLLED STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE AND OUTREACH INITIATIVE

AUGUST 2015

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

As of July 17, 2015, there were 1,744 individuals who applied and were admitted into the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Anchorage campus in either Fall 2014 or Spring 2015 and never enrolled in UAA courses.

Why haven't they come to UAA? Did they enroll elsewhere? Do they still plan to enroll at UAA? What can UAA do to support their student success?

The Admitted Non-enrolled Student Questionnaire is part of a pilot outreach initiative which aims to gather information about the factors that influence students' decision not to enroll and how UAA can best support them and future students in their academic pursuits.



The outreach effort was paired with a postcard mailed to the student to invite them to reactivate their application for admission and remind them that they may still enroll in fall courses.

The Admitted Non-enrolled Student Questionnaire is part of a pilot outreach initiative which allows students to get started in reactivating their application or letting us know that they've made other plans. Questionnaire findings reveal information about factors that influence students' decision to not enroll at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA).

METHODOLOGY: Findings are based on the UAA Admitted Non-enrolled Student Questionnaire completed by **239** individuals (response rate = 14%) between July 21 and August 14, 2015. This survey was administered electronically through Campus Labs Baseline by the Office of Student Affairs to 1,744 individuals who applied and were admitted into UAA in either Fall 2014 or Spring 2015 and had never enrolled in UAA courses as of July 17, 2015. **Please note, the numbers published in this report pertain to the UAA Anchorage campus only and percentages are rounded for clarity purposes.*

When asked to describe their current education status, respondents indicated:

- 45%** I am not currently attending college or university, but have graduated high school
- 38%** I am currently attending college or university
- 0%** I am still in high school
- 16%** Other

When asked, "Which statement best describes your decision regarding your admittance to UAA?" respondents indicated:

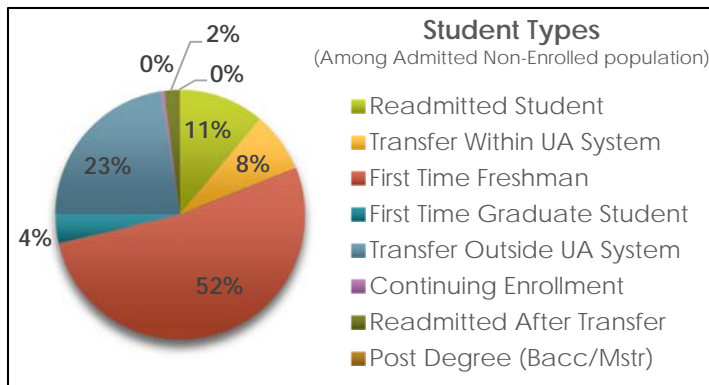
- 26%** I would like to **postpone my application** and enroll at UAA at a future date
- 28%** I decided to enroll or stay at a **different college or university**
- 7%** I am currently **not planning to attend** college or university
- 22%** I am currently an enrolled **student at UAA**.
- 18%** Other

Questionnaire respondents received personalized follow-up contact based on their respective answers. Of the 1,744 admitted non-enrolled students, **73 ended up enrolling in Fall 2015 courses**.

ADMITTED NON-ENROLLED STUDENT POPULATION

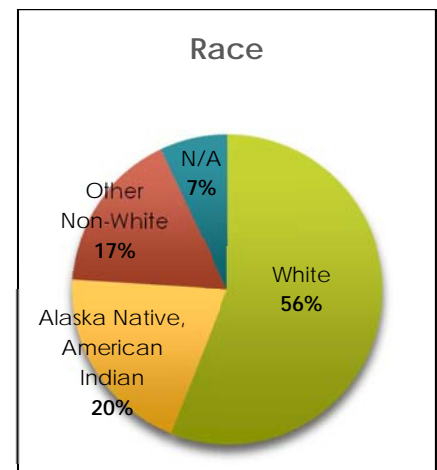
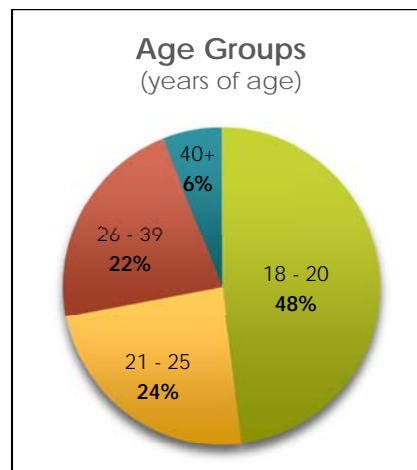
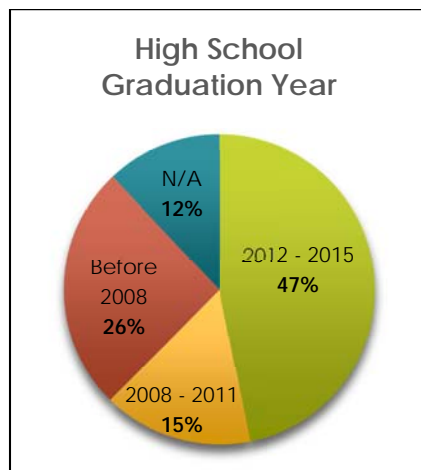
A total of 6,326 applicants were admitted to UAA for Fall 2014 and Spring 2015.

Of the non-enrolled student population, 1,264 were admitted for Fall 2014 and 480 were admitted for Spring 2015. When looking at the program type, 1,681 were admitted to an undergraduate program and 63 were admitted to a graduate program.



Student Affairs
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Degrees with the Most Admitted Non-Enrolled Students	Number of Admitted Non-Enrolled Students	Majors with the Most Admitted Non-Enrolled Students	Number of Admitted Non-Enrolled Students
Bachelor of Science	554	Pre-Major Nursing Science	148
Bachelor of Arts	414	Pre-Major Nursing	115
Associate of Applied Science	394	Exploratory Major/Undeclared	102
Bachelor of Business Administration	115	General Program	92
Associate of Arts	92	Psychology	85
Occupational Endorsement Certificate	37	Pre-Major Engineering	79
Certificate	30	Biological Science	73



OPPORTUNITIES

- Focus efforts on enrollment barriers and degree pathways for majors with the most non-enrolled admitted applicants. Of the 1,744 admitted non-enrolled population, 15% (n=269) applied for nursing-related majors (i.e., Nursing Science, Pre-Major Nursing Science, Pre-Major Nursing).
- Further promote a college-going culture to prospective students in the 18- 20 age group.

POSTPONED APPLICATIONS

A priority of this outreach effort is to offer support to students who are still interested in enrolling at UAA. At least **38%** of respondents indicated (either directly or indirectly) that they **would like to postpone their application**.

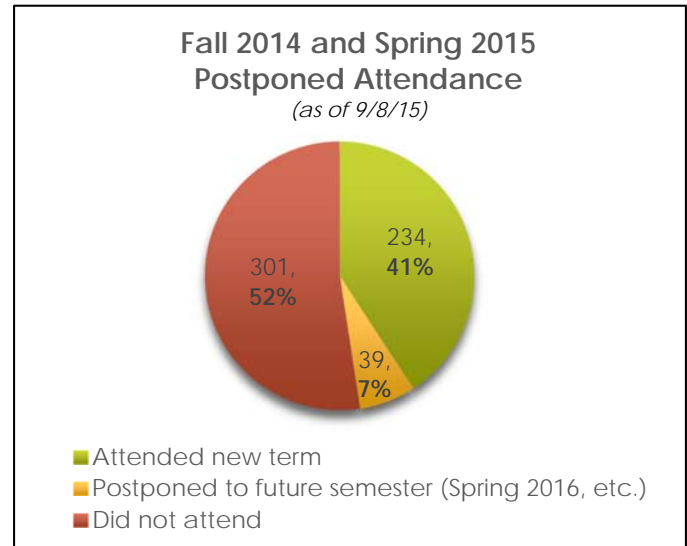
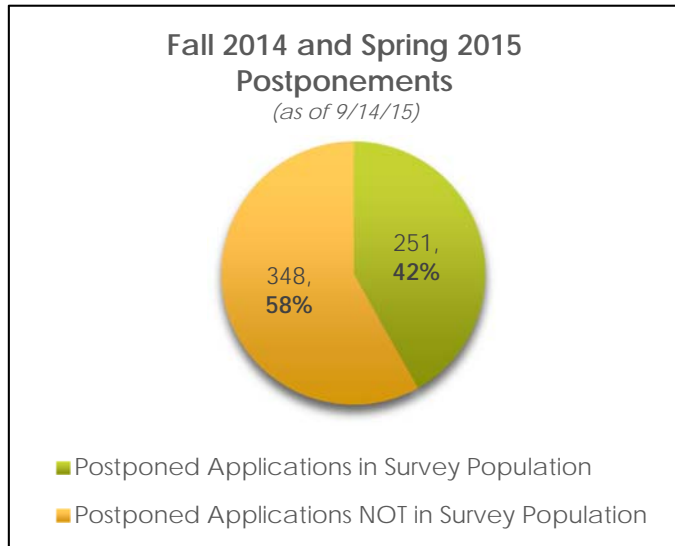
Through the questionnaire, **26%** (n=61) of respondents indicated they **would like to postpone their application** and enroll at UAA at a future date. Additionally, of the 42 respondents who select "Other" to describe their decision, 69% (n=29) actually indicated intent to enroll at UAA in a future semester.

Applicants were able to select to postpone applications to Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Summer 2016 or Fall 2016. The Admissions team updated students' applications accordingly. This questionnaire provided students the convenience to make the same changes to their application as the *Request to Change Application for Admission* form.

Since July 17, 2015, the Admissions team has **postponed 99 applications for admission**.

It is important to note that the Admissions team postponed a total of **599 applicants for Fall 2014 and Spring 2015**. However, only 251 of these applicants were included in the 1,744 survey population. The remaining 348 are students who did not complete the admission process (i.e. not submitting transcript or test scores). Further investigation is required to understand what factors prevented these individuals from completing the admission process. Of the 96 postponements made after the start of the survey period, 76 of those applications were part of the 1,744 survey population.

Of the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 students who postponed, **41% attended in the new term** they had selected at the time of their postponement.



Over half of the respondents who requested to postpone (52%), chose the option to have UAA staff contact them and provide additional support with the enrollment process.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Clarify to students what it means to postpone an application and what it means to be a currently enrolled student.
- Expand the survey to include students who did not complete the admission process.
- Better promote the opportunity for admitted students to postpone their application for admission. This would prevent individuals from re-applying for admission in instances where they could have postponed.

BARRIERS TO ENROLLING

Among respondents who requested to postpone, the primary reasons for not enrolling at UAA at this time included **conflicting work obligations, could not afford to attend college at this time, and conflicting family obligations.**

Financial barriers continue to challenge applicants and are significantly apparent in replies to the question, "In your own words, please tell us why you did not enroll this semester?" Financial barriers are especially evident for those admitted students who still intend to enroll at UAA at a future date.

- **42% of respondents could not afford to attend college at this time.**
- 19% said not enough financial aid was available.

Among respondents who selected a different institution, 19% indicated that the cost of living in Anchorage was too expensive and 16% said tuition was too expensive. Similarly, 18% of respondents who do not plan to attend college or university indicated that the cost of living in Anchorage was too expensive and 18% said tuition was too expensive.

Student comments related to financial barriers include:

- *I just DON'T think 2 weeks is ENOUGH time to pay almost 7 thousand dollars.*
- *I couldn't afford it, and I got a job instead.*
- *It was too expensive even with financial aid. It also took 6-7 months for me to hear back about my financial aid from my initial application.*
- *I would love to but cannot get student loans*
- *I would like more way(s) for financial assistance as a California resident student while attending course work at UAA. The problem in the past was due to low amounts of financial assistance, and this time*

around I'd prefer to get all my ducks in a row so to speak upon arrival for Spring 2016. So if there is someone who can somehow give further and a much more realistic insight financially I'd greatly appreciate it.

- Because a lot is going on, getting a new job and coming from Hawaii is just not a cheap thing, also getting my GI Bill benefits started is also hard.
- Cost of education is beyond my means even with assistance. Especially when proof of having been in Alaska for more than two years has been denied.
- I wanted to start school but with my student loan in default, I did not qualify for financial aid. But I took care of my student loan and will now qualify for a grant
- My parents are unwilling to assist me with the FAFSA application and my financial counselor told me that was not a good enough reason to not apply so I wasn't able to apply for support for while I am in school. So I am waiting until I turn 25 next year and don't need my parents' information on my application.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Further address the primary reasons for not enrolling at UAA at this time, with an emphasis on students who still want to attend UAA at a later date.
- Provide and communicate educational financial planning resources and support to applicants and newly admitted students. Utilize student comments and concerns to guide focus areas.

STUDENTS SELECTING OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The questionnaire investigates what other institutions these students selected instead of UAA and for what reasons. Of the survey respondents, **28%** (n=67) indicated that they **decided to enroll or stay at a different institution**. The primary reasons for not attending UAA include **lack of academic programs to meet interests, relocated to a different city or state, and lack of course availability**.

Among students who selected a different institution, UAA compares at a variety of levels to other colleges and universities to which they applied. UAA rankings are as follows:

- 6%** UAA was my first-choice school
- 33%** UAA was among my top choices
- 19%** UAA was in the middle of the group
- 24%** UAA was among my bottom choices
- 18%** I don't know / Not applicable

Of respondents who selected another institution:

- **53% visited UAA before** reaching their decision not to attend.
- **30% applied for financial aid** at UAA.
- **18% received a financial aid** award or scholarship **from UAA**.
- **57% received a financial aid** award or scholarship **from other schools**.

Students who selected another institution, were asked to compare UAA to the school they chose on the following characteristics:

	UAA is superior to my school	UAA and my school are about the same	My school is superior to UAA	N/A – No basis to judge
Affordable	22%	33%	22%	22%
Student-focused	0%	26%	34%	40%
Respected	4%	36%	38%	23%
Challenging	2%	27%	25%	46%
Friendly	6%	29%	31%	35%
Welcoming	6%	25%	35%	33%
Social	10%	18%	29%	43%

Students indicated that they are **currently enrolled or plan to enroll at the following different institutions:**

*Alaska Career College
Alaska Pacific University
American Military University
Anne Arundel Community College
Austin Peay State University
Barry University
Brigham Young University
British Columbia Institute of
Technology
Carrington College Pleasant Hill
Chatham University
Colorado Mesa University
Concordia University, Portland
Corban University
Dartmouth College
DeVry University*

*Florida International University
Fort Lewis College
George Mason University
Johnson & Wales University
Missouri University of Science and
Technology
Newcastle University
Pennsylvania State University
Regis University
San Jacinto Community College
Seattle University
Slippery Rock University
St. Petersburg College
The Ohio State University
University Of Nebraska
University of Alaska Fairbanks*

*University of Alaska Fairbanks -
Kuskokwim Campus
University of Alaska Southeast
University of Hawaii at Hilo
University of Mary
University of Nevada, Reno
University of North Dakota
University of Wyoming
University of Southern California
Utah State University
University of Wisconsin - Stevens
Point
Virginia Commonwealth University
Wayland Baptist University
Weber State University
Westchester Community College*

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Research characteristics and recruitment plan for competing institutions and the selected institutions cited in the questionnaire.
2. Address UAA characteristics where respondents largely indicated they had no basis to judge, including student-focused, challenging, friendly, and social.

NOT PLANNING TO ATTEND COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

7% (n=17) of survey respondents indicated that they are currently **not planning to attend college or university**. Of these students, **41% applied for financial aid** at UAA and **zero reported receiving a financial aid award or scholarship** from UAA. Two-thirds of these students (66%) visited UAA before reaching their decision not to attend.

The primary reason for not attending college or university was that they **relocated to a different city or state**. Other leading factors include **conflicting work obligations, deciding college was not for them, not knowing what they want to study, and that their job doesn't require a degree**.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Focus on addressing and combating primary reasons for not attending college when recruiting and building a college-going culture in Alaska.
2. Partner with diverse industries and employers to illustrate to applicants why a college degree is important to their job even if that job does not require a degree.

CONSIDERATIONS BEYOND PILOT

1. **Identify appropriate points of contact with diverse roles to support in the personalized outreach effort.** Much of the assistance needed by questionnaire respondents is beyond the role of staff from New Student Recruitment or Admissions. Many questions are more specifically related to academic advising, financial aid or other specialized areas. A collaborative approach would benefit this initiative.
2. **Revise Q2, "Which statement best describes your decision regarding your admittance to UAA?"**
 - Clarify verbiage to **"postpone an application"** with a student-centered focus regarding intent to attend UAA at a future date. Respondents seemed to misinterpret the option, "I would like to postpone my application to enroll at UAA at a future date." While 61 students selected to postpone, of the 42 students who select "Other" to describe their decision, 69% (n=29) actually indicated intent to enroll at UAA in a future semester.



- Clarify option to select, **"I am currently an enrolled student at UAA."** At the file of survey launch, there was only one student on the distribution list who had registered for Fall 2015 classes since the distribution file was pulled. However, 22% (n=52) of survey respondents indicated that they are currently an enrolled student at UAA. These students were not asked any additional survey questions. Upon review some of these students' records, they are not currently enrolled. In some cases they have taken recent courses within the UA system and in other cases the student has no enrollment history with UAA. Additional questions should be asked of these students to clarify their student status. Consider revising option to read, **"I am currently registered in classes at UAA."**
 - Add option for **students waiting to be admitted to a specific academic program.** Many students indicated that they were not enrolled in classes because they were waiting for a slot in a specific program or course. While UAA does not have formal waitlist process, students are admitted to the institution but may need to continually apply to an academic program until they are admitted. Thirteen respondents indicated challenges related to the wait for UAA's **nursing program**; seven of those applicants indicated that the long wait for the program influenced their decision to not enroll at UAA. Of the 1,744 applicants, 15% (n=269) applied for nursing related majors (i.e., Nursing Science, Pre-Major Nursing Science, Pre-Major Nursing). Engineering was another program cited as having a wait.
3. **Exclude unique populations from distribution file.**
 - **Exclude graduated students.** There were some instances where a student applied for admission in order to apply for graduation and did not need to take any additional classes. In many cases the student needed to reapply for admission in order to apply for graduation because their admissions expired.
 - **Exclude applicants who have previously postponed their application.** Many students included in the list have previously postponed their application. For example, a student who applied for Fall 2013 could have postponed until Fall 2014. If they did not register for Fall 2014, they would have been included in the file and given the opportunity to postpone yet again until Fall 2015 or even Fall 2016. Removing these students from the file would prevent the process from encouraging multiple postponements beyond the one-year postponement limit.
 - **Exclude students who reapplied for a future semester for the same program.** There are also instances where admitted students could have postponed; however, they instead resubmitted an identical application for a future term. For example, students who were admitted to Spring 2015 but never enrolled and wanted to be enrolled in Spring 2016 could have requested to postpone their application. However, many reapply for that future semester instead. These students should be excluded because they already indicated to UAA their intention to enroll at a future semester by submitting a new application.
 - **Exclude international students.** International students have other admission requirements that may not make it possible to postpone an application. Therefore, outreach to these students should be handled separately.
 4. **Include applicants who did not complete the admission process.** The Admissions team postponed 348 Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 applications for students who did not complete the admission process (i.e., not submitting transcript or test scores). Further investigation is required to understand what factors prevented these individuals from completing the admission process.
 5. **Identify tool for recording outreach and communication with the questionnaire respondents.** Consider project integration with new CRM platform. Determine whether the CRM platform has the capacity to distribute questionnaires to non-enrolled admitted students or if outreach efforts related to this questionnaire could be recorded in the system.

QUESTIONS

Please direct any questions concerning this report to:

Whitney Brown
Coordinator of Student Affairs
Research, Assessment and Staff
Development
Office of Student Affairs
wabrown3@uaa.alaska.edu
907-786-6156

Michael Worth
Data Analyst
Office of Student Affairs
mjworth@uaa.alaska.edu
907-786-6097

Lara McFarland
Admissions Officer
Office of Admissions
ldmcfarland@uaa.alaska.edu
907-786-1646

