

THE PELL INSTITUTE
for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education

*Promising Practices
Supporting Low-Income,
First-Generation Students
at DeVry University*

May 2011

About The Pell Institute

For the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education

The Pell Institute, sponsored by the Council for Opportunity in Education, conducts and disseminates research and policy analysis to encourage policymakers, educators, and the public to improve educational opportunities and outcomes of low-income, first-generation, and disabled college students. The Pell Institute is the first research institute to specifically examine the issues affecting educational opportunity for this growing population.

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About The Council for Opportunity in Education

Established in 1981, the Council for Opportunity in Education is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to expanding educational opportunity throughout the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands. Through its numerous membership services, the Council works in conjunction with colleges, universities, and agencies that host federally-funded college access programs to specifically help low-income, first-generation students and those with disabilities enter college and graduate.

The mission of the Council is to advance and defend the ideal of equal educational opportunity in postsecondary education. The Council's focus is assuring that the least advantaged segments of the American population have a realistic chance to enter and graduate from a postsecondary institution.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	//////// 5
Executive Summary	//////// 6
Introduction	//////// 10
Methodology	//////// 10
Literature Review	//////// 12
National Comparison Data	//////// 14
Promising Practice Findings	//////// 26
Campus Characteristics	//////// 26
Students Served	//////// 27
Campus Culture	//////// 27
<i>Customer Service Orientation</i>	//////// 28
Recruitment	//////// 28
Dual Enrollment	//////// 28
<i>DUAA</i>	//////// 29
Admissions	//////// 30
Orientation	//////// 30
Academic Structure	//////// 30
<i>Developmental Coursework</i>	//////// 31
<i>Faculty Involvement</i>	//////// 31
Advising: One-Stop Shop Model	//////// 32
<i>Student Success Center</i>	//////// 32
Degree Progress Tracking	//////// 32
<i>Monitoring & Alert System</i>	//////// 34
<i>Attendance Tracking</i>	//////// 34
Financial Support	//////// 34
Career Placement	//////// 35
Social Support	//////// 35
Discussion	//////// 36
Recommendations	//////// 38
Appendices	//////// 42

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Abby Miller, Project Manager and Research Analyst, Chandra Taylor Smith, Director, and Andrew Nichols, Senior Research Analyst at The Pell Institute. We extend many thanks to Nicole Norfles, Consultant, for her assistance on the site visits, and Khadish Franklin, graduate intern, for his research on the literature review. We also acknowledge and thank Don Heller and Karen Boran, Pell Institute Advisory Board members, Lennox Alfred, Pell Institute Program Assistant, and Holly Hexter, Consultant, Council for Opportunity in Education, who provided editing assistance for the report.

We would like to extend a special acknowledgement to DeVry University campus leaders including Candace Goodwin, Jamal Scott, and Piotr Lechowski, who participated in this study, for opening their campuses and sharing information with us about their strategies for supporting low-income students. All campus

representatives, from the President to administrators, faculty, support staff, and especially students, provided a warm welcome and coordinated their schedules in order to make time to meet with us. Their participation was invaluable in our efforts to better understand the programs, policies, and people that support the success of students. None of the efforts would have been realized in producing this study if it were not for the support from DeVry University and the genuine interest and cooperation of the administrative leadership to have an external party conduct a qualitative analysis that would capture the promising practice of the support services at the DeVry University campuses in Chicago.

Please note that the responsibility for the content of this report, including any errors or omissions, lies solely with the authors.

Executive Summary

Background

Promising Practices Supporting Low-Income, First-Generation Students at DeVry University offers a comprehensive description of the academic and social support systems for low-income, first-generation students attending a major four-year, for-profit, multi-campus university. College retention and success research has determined that effective support services succeed in retaining and graduating low-income, first-generation students by “acknowledging their backgrounds, needs, and expectations and then taking action to accommodate them” (Myers, 2003). Campuses like DeVry University do not have federal outreach such as TRIO Student Support Services, which are federally-funded programs designed to provide academic and social assistance for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Consequently, the goal of this study is to identify the kinds of academic and social support services, if any, that a for-profit education institution like DeVry University provides. While data are not yet available that can determine the effectiveness of DeVry University’s recent support initiatives, the findings from this study highlight practices at DeVry that are grounded in the literature on effectively supporting low-income, first-generation students. These are practices that other for-profit institutions can look to emulate.

To develop this descriptive resource about for-profit education practices, The Pell Institute sought to identify promising approaches that aim to support low-income, first-generation students through academic, personal and financial support. We observed the practices at these institutions while drawing on our extensive research of the characteristics of successful institutional practices to support low-income, first-generation students. We found that many of the practices identified at DeVry are in the early stages, which is why their evidence of effectiveness is not yet substantiated in data. However, the feedback we received from administrators, staff, faculty and students provides insight into the typical experience of a low-income, first-generation student at a four-year, for-profit university—an experience which merits further consideration.

Method

The following broad questions framed our approach in the interviews and focus groups conducted during our site visits:

1. What are DeVry University’s approaches to recruiting underserved, low-income and first-generation students? How are these students targeted in high schools? Are there special pre-college programs developed to attract and support these students in the application process? What are admissions requirements, especially academic measures?
2. What types of academic or other support is provided beyond enrollment, for underserved, low-income, first-generation students?
3. How could DeVry University better serve its low-income, first-generation student population?

To answer these questions, The Pell Institute conducted a qualitative study of DeVry University Chicago to learn more about services offered to students, the majority of whom are low-income and the first in their families to attend college. The site visits to three Chicago area campuses consisted of interviews with staff, administrators, faculty, and focus groups with low-income students. Where available, we supported qualitative findings with data provided by the institution. Descriptive data utilizing national data sets support a literature review to provide further insights into four-year, for-profit student characteristics and outcomes in comparison with other sectors.

Promising Practice Findings

Based on our many years of studying the characteristics of successful institutional practices to support low-income, first-generation students, we found that some of the types of student support services established in the literature as setting a high standard for strategic academic and social student assistance are incorporated in the DeVry University structure. The following three categories frame what we identify as DeVry University's guiding strategies behind the supportive practices for their students:

- ***Approaching Support Services for Students as Customer Service***
- ***Providing Early, In-Depth, On-Campus Student Opportunities***
- ***Establishing and Sustaining a Shared Sense of Community***

These three overarching categories are distinctive because of the way in which the dynamic confluence of corporate business values and higher education practices come together to inform DeVry's educational culture. What is most promising about these categories is the calculated investment that DeVry University has made to weave together the practices, and how they continue to develop and refine these practices to better support their students, the majority of whom are low-income and first-generation.

Approaching Support Services for Students as Customer Service

Our research has shown that the success of many higher-performing colleges and universities is attributed to the personalization of the educational experience for low-income, first-generation students. In other words, valuing students as customers can establish an effective college success culture, especially for low-income, first-generation students. For DeVry, providing "world class customer service" entails treating students with "kindness and respect, taking the initiative to solve problems, and do simple things like walk students to classes or services they cannot find." Moreover, students at DeVry express that they appreciate feeling valued as a customer and receiving individualized attention from the staff, administrators and faculty.

Several essential elements of DeVry's promising practices for approaching support services as customer service include:

- ***One-Stop Shop Advising Model***
- ***Early Intervention/ Warning System***
- ***Degree Progress Tracking***
- ***Academic Success Centers***
- ***Career and Job Placement Service***

Providing Early, In-Depth, On-Campus Student Opportunities

Our research on student success continues to indicate that exposing low-income, first-generation students to college as early as possible enhances their ability to successfully navigate the college access process, and to persist and graduate from college with a degree. First-generation students often describe experiencing even greater anxieties and problems than other students in making the transition to college life, due to a lack of social and cultural capital. However, involvement with pre-college programs helps students anticipate common anxieties by acclimating them to college life early. Moreover, first-generation students have emphasized that the personal relationships and trust that they develop with program staff in pre-college programs allows them to be receptive to support that helps them get into and through college.

Among the promising ways that DeVry provides early, in-depth, on-campus student opportunities include:

- ***StartNow Dual Enrollment***
- ***DeVry University Advantage Academy***
- ***Foundations Coursework***

Establishing and Sustaining a Shared Sense of Community

In several Pell Institute studies, we have recommended that campuses establish and sustain a sense of shared community, to foster a campus culture and environment that encourages students to take ownership of their academic experience, to participate as active citizens of the institution, and to use their education to improve their individual lives and those of their families and communities. This sense of ownership is also exhibited by the campus

presidents, administrators, staff and faculty at DeVry, in their collective belief in the value, capacity and potential of their students. Thus, all members of the campus community strive to send a clear and consistent message that if you “set the bar high and standards high, students will rise to them.”

DeVry establishes and sustains a shared sense of community in the following ways:

- ***Collaborative Campus Programming***
- ***Faculty Involvement***

Recommendations

Based on experience studying the characteristics of successful institutional practices to support low-income, first-generation students, we found evidence that the types of supportive practices known to be successful at other institutions are either in the early stages or already a part of the culture at DeVry University. While the findings we present identify a number of promising practices that support students at a for-profit institution, we recommend several improvements for DeVry University to enhance their practices and, ultimately, increase their student retention and success rates:

- ***Expand the use of disaggregated data to track the outcomes of low-income, first-generation students.*** Currently, DeVry institutes marketing measures typical of for-profit corporations to track levels of student engagement and satisfaction. While the student-as-customer philosophy may be effective at providing students with attentive and customized support, the university should implement more traditional postsecondary institutional measures of tracking student success. The university’s current focus on term-to-term persistence rates should be expanded to year-to-year persistence and six-year graduation rates for four-year degree seekers. DeVry should also regularly disaggregate these measures by student characteristics, particularly Pell Grant receipt or other indicators of income level, to assess the outcomes of this population high in need and dominant at the institution.
- ***Establish greater transparency around student services and outcomes.*** The practices identified here, while supportive, are invisible to the average consumer

through publicly available materials such as the institutional website. Without conducting in-person visits, one may not be aware of institutional scholarships or initiatives such as Student Central. Additionally, information about student success rates – both overall and tied to recently implemented support practices – is not easily obtainable. Such information is critical to meeting the needs of students, parents, and educators identified below as they navigate the college access process.

- ***Clarify and reconsider rigid attendance tracking policies.*** While closely monitoring low-income, first-generation students who are generally at risk of dropping out is crucial, the students we met with were unclear about attendance withdrawal policies. In addition, the students – many of whom are nontraditional-aged working adults with families – felt the policies bordered on overly intrusive. DeVry academic sessions are short and intensive and therefore require regular class attendance. However, if a student misses two classes, they are automatically dropped and must obtain a faculty letter within one week to appeal the withdrawal process and be reinstated. Students had varying understandings of the exact number of excused absences allowed and the time allotted for appeal. In addition, students did not know whether they could attend class during the appeals process, thereby potentially missing an additional week of class. While this policy has good intentions, it must be communicated more clearly during orientation or through the mandatory Student Central academic advising sessions. Students must be made aware of the risks and financial ramifications. In addition, DeVry may wish to offer the possibility of making up a class – either by meeting with faculty in person or online, or by reviewing coursework at the tutoring center. DeVry can begin examining this policy by analyzing the effects of absences and withdrawals on overall success rates.
- ***Consider implementing additional programs and services supported by the research, such as learning communities and supplemental instruction, proven to be effective for this student population in other sectors.*** DeVry has already taken significant steps to better support low-income, first-generation students. Once external evaluators can determine the effectiveness of recently implemented

support systems within DeVry's for-profit structure, the university can more easily incorporate additional mechanisms that facilitate student success.

- ***Strategically acknowledge staff and faculty who excel in their efforts to support low-income, first-generation students.*** While DeVry staff and faculty generally seem to embrace the need to support this student population, systematically formalizing the acknowledgement and reward of personnel who embed this support into their everyday practice would further cultivate the promising practices on their campus.

Implications for Institutions

While data are not yet available that can determine the effectiveness of DeVry's supportive practices, similar institutions should consider the strategies guiding the implementation of these services, which are grounded in the literature on effectively supporting low-income, first-generation students. Other four-year, for-profit institutions can learn from the implementation of supportive practices within a similar structure and framework. Investing resources in such services—particularly if those services are tied to higher success rates—can help for-profit institutions validate their high tuition costs.

Implications for Parents, Guardians and/or Students

Because of the high cost of tuition at for-profit institutions, parents, guardians and students should expect that in addition to adequate financial aid, any for-profit higher education institution they consider attending offers the range of student support services for low-income and first-generation students that constitute the promising practices at DeVry University, at minimum.

Implications for Counselors and College Access Professionals

Because of how important “college match” has become in the college selection and decision process for low-income and first-generation students, pre-college counselors and other College Access and Success professionals need to advise their students to become better informed about the promising student support service practices such as those established at DeVry University, as a key measure in their college match criteria.

Implications for Policy and Research

Because higher education institutions must become more competitive in enrolling and successfully graduating more low-income, first-generation students in order for the nation to increase its college degree attainment ranking, education policy should be designed to incentivize campuses that implement an array of student support services such as those that we found as promising practices at DeVry University. Further research should explore the efficacy of such practices identified, as data become available.

Introduction

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To develop this descriptive resource about for-profit education practices, The Pell Institute sought to identify promising approaches that aim to support low-income, first-generation students through academic, personal and financial support. We observed the practices at these institutions while drawing on our extensive research of the characteristics of successful institutional practices to support low-income, first-generation students at other institution types. At four-year public institutions, for example, promising practices we have identified include: intrusive advising, small class size, dedicated faculty, and early warning systems (Muraskin & Lee, 2004; Engle & O’Brien, 2007). At the community college level, supportive practices identified include: a structured academic pathway, dual enrollment, developmental coursework initiatives, active learning, learning centers, flexible scheduling, first-year seminars, learning communities, culturally-sensitive leadership, and staff and faculty role modeling (Taylor Smith, Miller & Bermeo, 2009). The Pell Institute and the broader higher education literature, however, have yet to examine the existence or efficacy of such practices within the structure of a for-profit institution.

We found that many of the practices identified at DeVry are in their early stages, which is why their evidence of effectiveness is not yet substantiated in data. However, the feedback we received from administrators, staff, faculty and students provides insight into the typical experience of a low-income, first-generation student at a four-year for-profit university—an experience which merits further consideration.

The following broad questions framed our approach in the interviews and focus groups conducted during our site visits:

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3. How could DeVry University better serve its low-income, first-generation student population?

Methodology

To answer these questions, The Pell Institute conducted a qualitative study of DeVry University Chicago to learn more about services offered to students, the majority of whom are low-income and the first in their families to attend college. The site visits to three Chicago-area campuses consisted of interviews with staff, administrators, faculty, and focus groups with low-income students. Each visit consisted of an average of six one-hour interviews with three to four staff or faculty each, and one two-hour focus group with approximately eight to ten students.

Staff and administrators we met with included the campus president, and individuals responsible for: advising, academic support, student services, financial aid, outreach, Student Central, admissions, registration, and career services. Faculty and deans

represented major programs including business, health sciences, computer information sciences and liberal arts. All students were low-income and first-generation, and in some cases had been through extreme circumstances such as homelessness or drug addiction. The majority of the students we met with were upperclassmen planning to graduate within the next two years (see limitations, below). Students ranged in age from 18 to 51 and represented a variety of academic programs including: business management, multimedia design, engineering, business administration, accounting, computer information systems, technology/database management, networking and systems administration.

The site visits yielded qualitative data which we then analyzed to identify factors common across all three campuses that either fostered or hindered student success. Where available, we supported qualitative findings with data provided by the institution. Prior to visits, we developed interview protocols that addressed the areas of interest specified in our research questions (see Appendix B). An initial literature review yielded limited findings on students in this sector. We therefore supported the literature review with descriptive data utilizing national data sets to provide further insights into students in this sector.

We selected three Chicago campuses that DeVry administrators indicated enrolled the highest portions of low-income and underrepresented minority students. We validated the campus demographics to the extent possible, although detailed data were not available. We focused on the Chicago area because of the Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) history with DeVry. DeVry was founded and is headquartered in Chicago, and has worked closely with CPS to serve low-income students. We approached the study with a general sense of the students being served by DeVry campuses in Chicago as being similar to those at CPS – namely, majority minority, low-income, first-generation, and academically underprepared. In addition, we were aware that DeVry Chicago Main had formed a partnership with CPS to provide dual-enrollment programming on its campus in a unique and successful program, the DeVry University Advantage Academy (DUAA). We sought to explore the elements at DeVry Chicago that made this program successful, and to examine what other innovations had occurred that might make DeVry stand out from other institutions in the for-profit

sector. Moreover, we sought to learn more about the typical student experience at a major for-profit institution, from enrollment through coursework to support services, given the relative dearth of literature on this sector.

Limitations

It should be noted that students with whom we met and conducted focus groups were not randomly selected. We asked administrators to select a diverse group of low-income students (Pell Grant recipients) and offered to provide lunch as an incentive for their participation. As is often the case with institutional site visits, however, staff selected the most involved students because they are the most likely to attend the focus group. These students generally feel a sense of connection and satisfaction with the institution, and are often top performers on track to graduate. In this particular case, many of the students we met with had excelled as tutors. Nonetheless, students did represent a diverse range of ages, race/ethnicities and were for the most part, as specified, low-income and first-generation college students. Therefore, while responses may be slightly skewed in terms of positive institutional perceptions, these students still faced challenges common to low-income students. And, as students who spend a great deal of time at the institution, they were familiar with the services available and had experienced the various types of support offered.

Summary

The following report begins with a review of the literature and analysis of data comparing low-income, first-generation students at proprietary schools to other sectors on measures such as retention and graduation rates. We then present detailed descriptions of programs and policies of admissions, academics and social support services provided by DeVry University on the campuses visited and institution-wide. We also provide students' perceptions of the university and any remaining challenges to their success. Finally, we identify both successful strategies and opportunities for improvement at DeVry, and recommendations based on our knowledge of promising practices at institutions serving similar populations of students. Ultimately, the report can provide guidance to any similar for-profit institution seeking to better support low-income, first-generation students.

Literature Review

The burgeoning expansion of proprietary options in the American higher education milieu has been met with both intense scrutiny and cautious optimism (Bailey & Badway, 2001; Kelly, 2001). “Once considered well outside of the mainstream of America’s higher education system, for-profit, degree-granting institutions have emerged as an integral and increasingly influential part of the system” (Kelly, 2001, p. 1). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2010a), slightly over 3,000 for-profit institutions received Title IV federal funds in 2009-2010. Although for-profit institutions comprise 43.7% of institutions receiving Title IV funds, these schools only account for 26.7% of all degree-granting institutions. Within this sector (both degree-granting and non-degree granting), the vast majority (over 80%) are two-year institutions or less, while less than one-fifth (19%) are four-year institutions. Despite the increase in number of for-profit institutions, enrollments remain small, comprising only 12% of all undergraduates in 2008-09 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010b).

Proprietary schools differ from the traditional model of higher education in many discernible ways, though the most fundamental difference lies in their profit-driven mission (Hawthorne, 1995; Kelly, 2001; Lee & Merisotis, 1990; Zamani-Gallaher, 2004). Proprietary degree-granting institutions vary from loosely organized local operations to “an increasing number of large higher education systems that are owned and operated by publicly traded for-profit corporations, many with multiple campuses in several states” (Foster, 2004, p. 1). Kelly (2001) classified for-profit institutions into three basic types: “the enterprise colleges, characterized by their small size and caring environment; the super systems, which enroll thousands of students in carefully designed programs at strategically located campuses; and Internet-based institutions, which use technology to deliver programs.” (p. 26)

Another important difference in proprietary institutions is the design of their curriculum and delivery of instruction (Kelly, 2001; Lee & Merisotis, 1990). Proprietary schools’ curricula cover a wide range of subject matter and career fields. Their programs tend to focus on high-demand occupational fields including: business, information and technology, health services, culinary arts and automotive repair (Fraas, 1990; Kelly, 2001). Instructionally, proprietary educational environments foster the development of job-related skills, preferring hands-on training to theory (Lee & Merisotis, 1990).

The student demographic enrolled in the for-profit sector is also quite different than the student body typical of public and private not-for-profit institutions. This is due, in part, to the less selective admissions standards driven by a commitment to providing college access for groups traditionally excluded from institutions of higher education. Thus, students attending for-profit institutions are more likely to be financially independent, have dependents, and work part-time or full-time (Chung, 2008). Additionally, enrollees are more likely to have a GED than students enrolled in the public and private sectors. Furthermore, students who are female, black, Latino/a, and Pell Grant recipients are more likely to dominate for-profit enrollments compared with institutions in the public and private sector (Garrity, Garrison, & Fiedler, 2010). Data examining student demography by institutional level within the for-profit sector reveal that many of the low-income, minority, and female students attending for-profit institutions are disproportionately enrolled in the two-year and less-than-two-year institutions (Oseguera & Malagon, 2011).

For-Profit Education under Fire

Of late, the for-profit higher education sector has received much more negative publicity than notable acclaim. A recent report from an undercover investigation by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) claimed four for-profit colleges encouraged fraudulent practices and 15 made deceptive or questionable statements to undercover GAO applicants (GAO, 2010). This report fueled an ongoing perception about the deceptive nature of for-profit recruiting practices that target and take advantage of low-income, uninformed consumers.

In addition, congressional hearings by the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions in September 2010 and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce in March 2011 have called into question the for-profit institutions’ reliance and profiting on federal dollars (Title IV funds), and their capacity to adequately prepare students for gainful employment. In 2008-2009, for-profit institutions received nearly \$24 billion in federal student aid with Pell Grants accounting for \$4.3 billion of those dollars (U.S. Department of Education, 2010c). For-profit institutions enroll only 12% of all undergraduates, but nearly 25% of all Pell Grant recipients are enrolled at these schools (Lynch, Engle, & Cruz, 2010).

Although the disproportionate concentration of low-income students in for-profit institutions raises concerns of institutional stratification in higher education, the primary concern involves the maximization of institutional profit from federal dollars with little accountability for student graduation rates and the gainful employment of graduates upon completion. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2010d), the six-year bachelor's degree completion rate for students who started at for-profit institutions in 2002 was 22%, compared to 55% at public four-year institutions and 65% at private four-year institutions. In contrast, the certificate and associate's degree completion rates of for-profit institutions are much better. For-profit institutions boasted a 58% completion rate for students starting in 2005 (taking into account certificates) while private and public institutions graduated students at rates of 48% and 21%, respectively.

Despite the high certificate and associate's completion rates, critics have questioned the quality of these degrees, due to correspondingly high loan default rates. While only accounting for 12% of degree-seeking undergraduates in fall 2009, students enrolled at for-profit institutions comprised 43% of all students that began federal student loan repayment in 2008 and defaulted by 2010 (Asher, 2010). Controlling for student demographics, a study by Guryan and Thompson (2010) found that students who enrolled at for-profit institutions were nearly two times more likely to default on student loans, compared with their peers enrolled in the public and private sector of higher education.

Both the low graduation rates at four-year institutions and the high default rates raise concerns about the waste of federal dollars and the harm done to students who take on considerable debt and have no practical way of repaying this financial burden. Student loan default can influence one's credit rating, impacting a student's ability to purchase a car, house, or receive future loans. Federal student loans have no statute of limitations, and future wages, tax refunds, and Social Security checks can be garnished by the government (Asher, 2010). In addition, private loans can become the responsibility of co-signers and remain collectable postmortem. In either case, declaring bankruptcy often does not relieve student loan debt.

The recent scrutiny and negative publicity surrounding for-profit education has created a perception that all proprietary institutions are amassing large profits and providing students with large debts and few tangible skills. We do not argue that this does not occur, but we cautiously suggest that for-profit education be examined more carefully. As we have detailed, the for-profit sector is quite diverse. However, much of the outcomes data on for-profit institutions categorize institutions in ways that may not accurately depict exactly what is occurring. As Kevin Kinser (2007) writes:

“There are thousands of proprietary institutions in the United States. They are a diverse set of colleges: Small schools with a few dozen students, huge institutions with dozens of campuses, wealthy universities with millions in market value, modest colleges with century-old traditions. Nevertheless, most of what one reads about the sector neatly ignores this. We hear about a rather narrow band of proprietary schools – corporate owned, degree-granting institutions – and not much else. We draw conclusions about the size, scope, and impact of the for-profit system with little awareness of the different institutional models that contribute to this picture. We are blind to trends. We miss significant developments.” (*Kinser, 2007, p. B9*)

As Kinser points out, adopting a homogenous perspective on for-profit education may prevent researchers, policymakers, and critics from adequately assessing what seems to be a rather diverse set of institutions serving a high proportion of students in need of support. Certainly, some institutions are more effective than others, as one would find in any sector. However, a black or white narrative that portrays for-profit colleges and universities negatively is dangerous and could inhibit the potential for learning from a myriad of practices and philosophies that for-profit institutions use to support and serve students, particularly those from low-income and racial/ethnic minority backgrounds. To date, very little research has focused on examining the programmatic practices and procedures of for-profit institutions, so very little is known about the manner in which students are supported at these institutions, both academically and personally.

Table 1 / Degree-granting institutions, by control and type of institution: 2000–2001 to 2009–2010

YEAR	ALL	PUBLIC		PRIVATE			
	TOTAL	4-YEAR	2-YEAR	NOT-FOR-PROFIT		FOR-PROFIT	
				4-YEAR	2-YEAR	4-YEAR	2-YEAR
2000–01	4,182	622	1,076	1,551	144	277	512
2001–02	4,197	628	1,085	1,541	135	318	490
2002–03	4,168	631	1,081	1,538	127	297	494
2003–04	4,236	634	1,086	1,546	118	350	502
2004–05	4,216	639	1,061	1,525	112	369	510
2005–06	4,276	640	1,053	1,534	113	408	528
2006–07	4,314	643	1,045	1,533	107	453	533
2007–08	4,352	653	1,032	1,532	92	490	553
2008–09	4,409	652	1,024	1,537	92	530	574
2009–10	4,495	672	1,000	1,539	85	563	636
% growth	7.5%	8%	–7.1%	–0.8%	–41%	103.2%	24.2%

Note / Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Changes in counts of institutions over time are partly affected by increasing or decreasing numbers of institutions submitting separate data for branch campuses.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, "Institutional Characteristics Survey" (IPEDS-IC:86–99), and Fall 2000 through Fall 2009. (This table was prepared September 2010.)

Table 2 / Enrollment and degrees conferred in postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV programs, by type and control of institution, and type of degree: 2008–09

SELECTED CHARACTERISTIC	ALL TITLE IV PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS	DEGREE-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS			NON-DEGREE-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS		
		PUBLIC	PRIVATE		PUBLIC	PRIVATE	
			NOT-FOR-PROFIT	FOR-PROFIT		NOT-FOR-PROFIT	FOR-PROFIT
Enrollment, fall 2008							
Total	19,574,395	13,972,153	3,661,519	1,469,142	119,956	23,204	328,421
4-year institutions	12,131,855	7,331,809	3,626,168	1,173,459	40	379	0
2-year institutions	7,100,631	6,640,344	35,351	295,683	52,841	11,004	65,408
Less -than-2-year institutions	341,909	†	†	†	67,075	11,821	263,013
Degrees conferred, 2008–09							
Total	3,851,373	2,285,332	842,202	419,599	68,143	18,110	217,987
Certificates	805,755	360,593	13,915	127,148	68,143	18,110	217,855
Associate's degrees	787,466	596,098	46,929	144,298	9	0	132
Bachelor's degrees	1,601,368	1,020,435	496,260	84,673	0	0	0
Master's degrees	656,784	308,206	285,098	63,480	0	0	0

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2008, 2009, and 2008–09 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Winter 2009–10, Spring 2009, and Fall 2009. (This table was prepared August 2010.)

Student Characteristics

Fig 1 / Four-year for-profit institutions enroll a higher share of low-income students than any other sector with the exception of two-year for-profit institutions, where nearly half (45%) are from the lowest income quartile. Nearly one-third (29%) of students at four-year for-profit institutions represent the lowest income quartile, only slightly higher than the share at public two-year institutions (26%) and public four-year institutions (24%). Private, not-for-profit four-year institutions are the least likely to enroll students from the lowest income quartile, where they make up one-fifth (20%) of the student population. Students of the highest income quartile are the least likely to enroll in for-profit institutions. The reverse is true at private, not-for-profit institutions, where high-income students represent a greater share than any other quartile (35%).

Fig 2 / Students at four-year for-profit institutions are more likely than those enrolled in other sectors to be non-traditional aged (over the age of 24), followed by two-year for-profits (48%) and community colleges (45%). Four-year for-profit institutions are the only sector where nontraditional-aged students are in the majority (66%).

Fig 3 / In addition to being older than students in other sectors, four-year for-profit students are also more likely to be independent. In fact, the vast majority at four-year for-profits (82%) are independent, followed by two-year for-profits (70%) and community colleges (57%). At more traditional four-year institutions, roughly one-third of students are independent. More specifically within dependency and marital status, students at four-year institutions are more likely than any other to have dependents (52%) followed by students at two-year for-profit institutions (46%) and community college students (32%). Far fewer students at public and not-for-profit four-year institutions have dependents (13% and 18%, respectively).

Fig 1 / Income Quartile by Institution Type

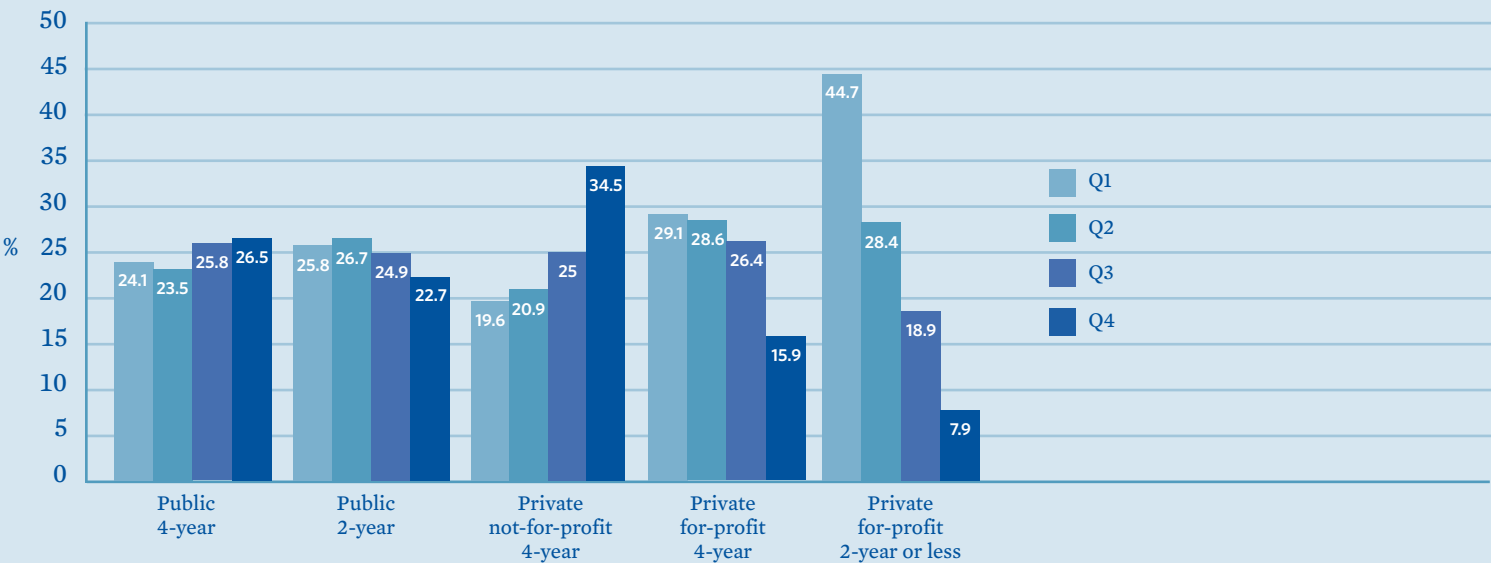


Fig 2 / Age by Institution Type

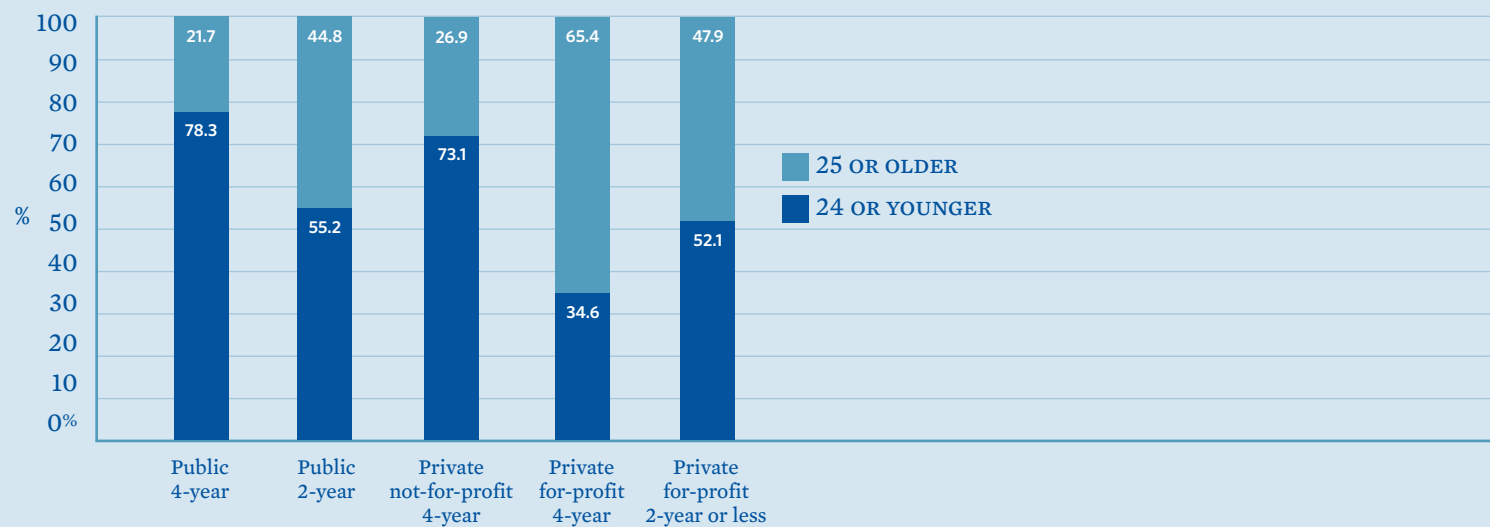


Fig 3 / Dependency and Marital Status by Institution Type

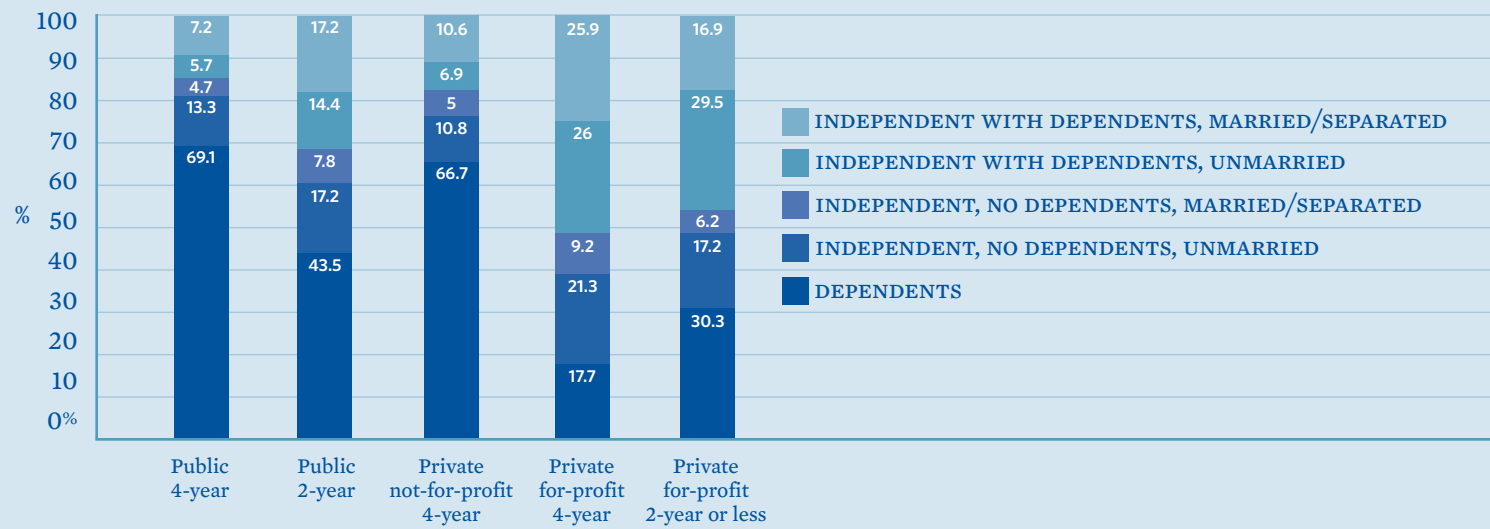


Fig 4–6 / The student populations at for-profit institutions are more ethnically diverse than any other sector. Roughly half at both two and four-year for-profits are of racial/ethnic minorities (58% and 48%, respectively). Of those, one-quarter are African American. Latino students are particularly prevalent on two-year for-profit campuses, where they make up over one-quarter of the share of students (26%). In addition to being more diverse, for-profit institutions have higher percentages of female students. While females are in the majority across sectors, they represent higher shares of students at four-year for-profit institutions (66%) and two-year for-profit institutions (72%). In addition to being low-income, students in the for-profit sector are the most likely to be the first in their families to attend college. Parents of roughly half at both four and two-year for-profit institutions (47% and 55%, respectively) have never attended college.

Employment and Enrollment Patterns

Fig 7 / Given that for-profit students tend to be older, independent and lower-income than peers in other sectors, they are more likely to be working full-time while enrolled – particularly those enrolled at four-year for-profit institutions where nearly half (49%) work full-time. Community colleges follow, with 41% working full-time. At two-year for-profits, however, it is interesting that only 28% work full-time, which is just slightly higher than the rate at not-for-profit four-year institutions (24%). At both four-year for-profit institutions and community colleges, only roughly one-fifth (21% and 19%, respectively) do not work off-campus, compared with approximately one-third at private not-for-profit four-year institutions, two-year for-profit institutions, and public four-year institutions (35%, 33%, and 29%, respectively).

Fig 4 / Race/ethnicity

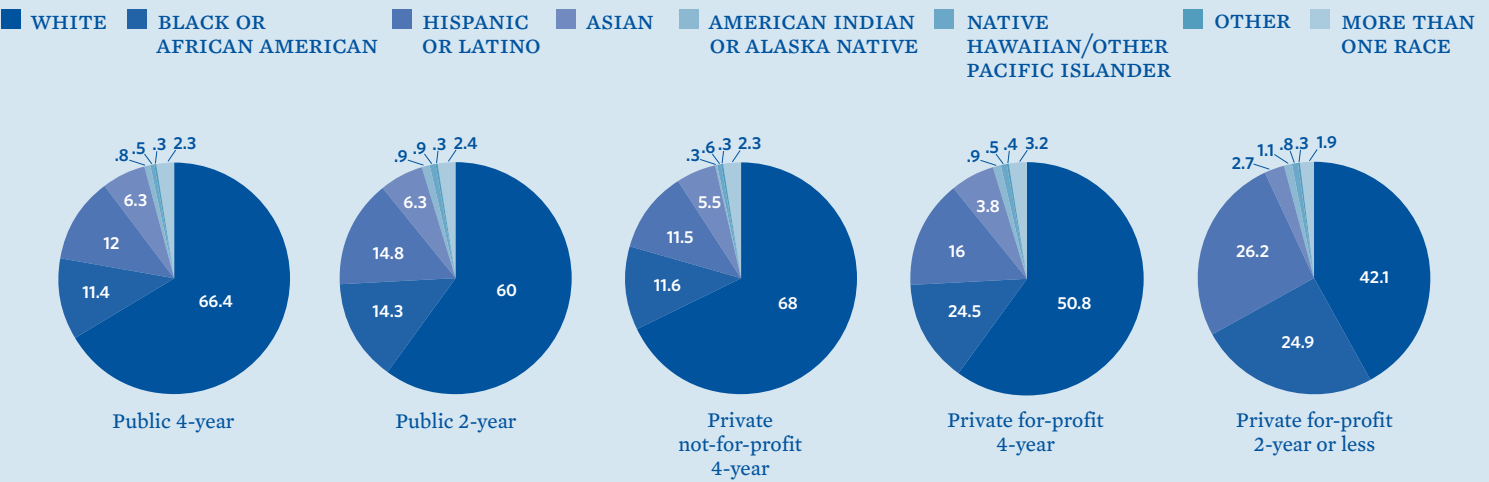


Fig 5 / Gender by Institution Type

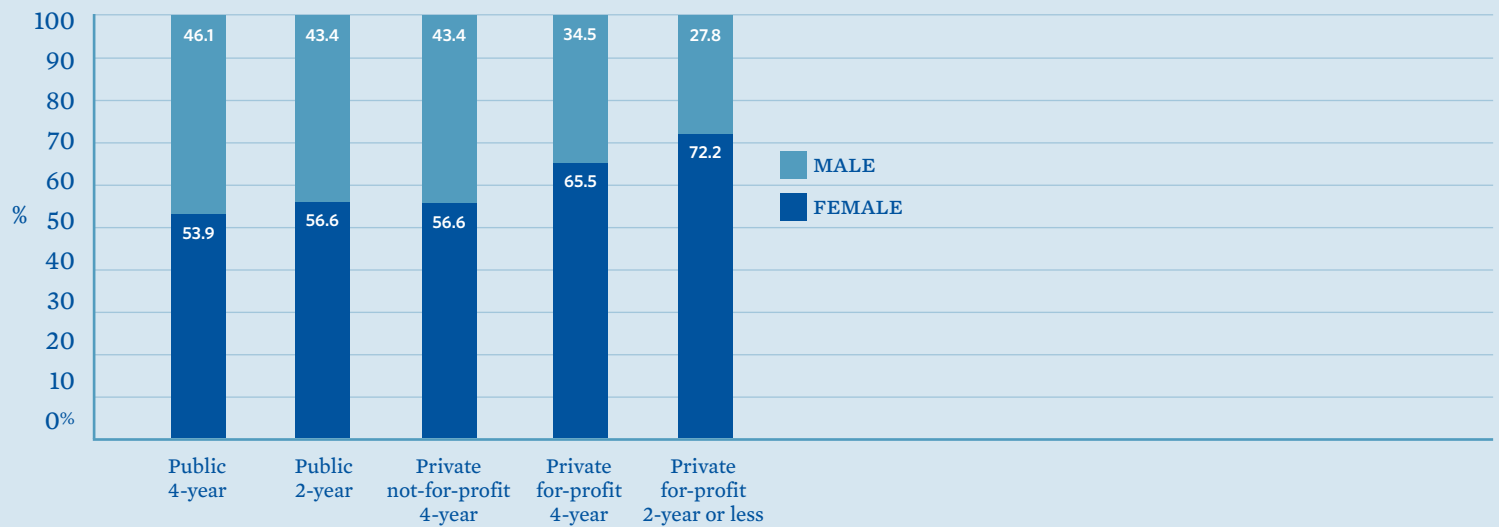


Fig 6 / Parent's Highest Education Level

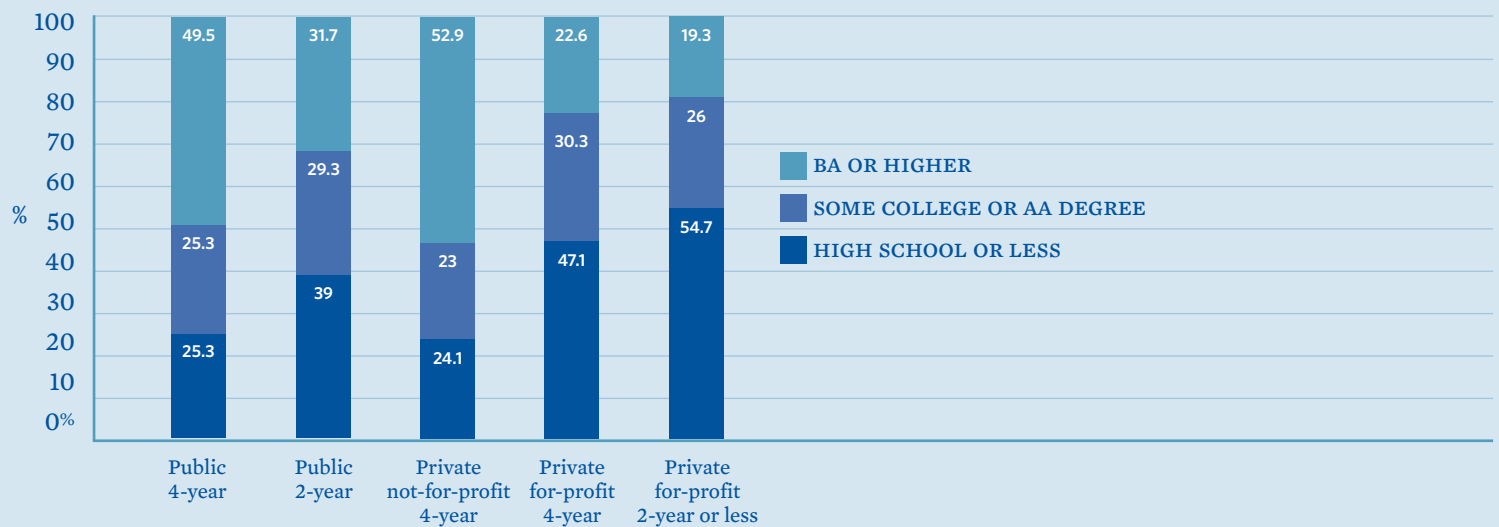


Fig 7 / Employment by Institution Type

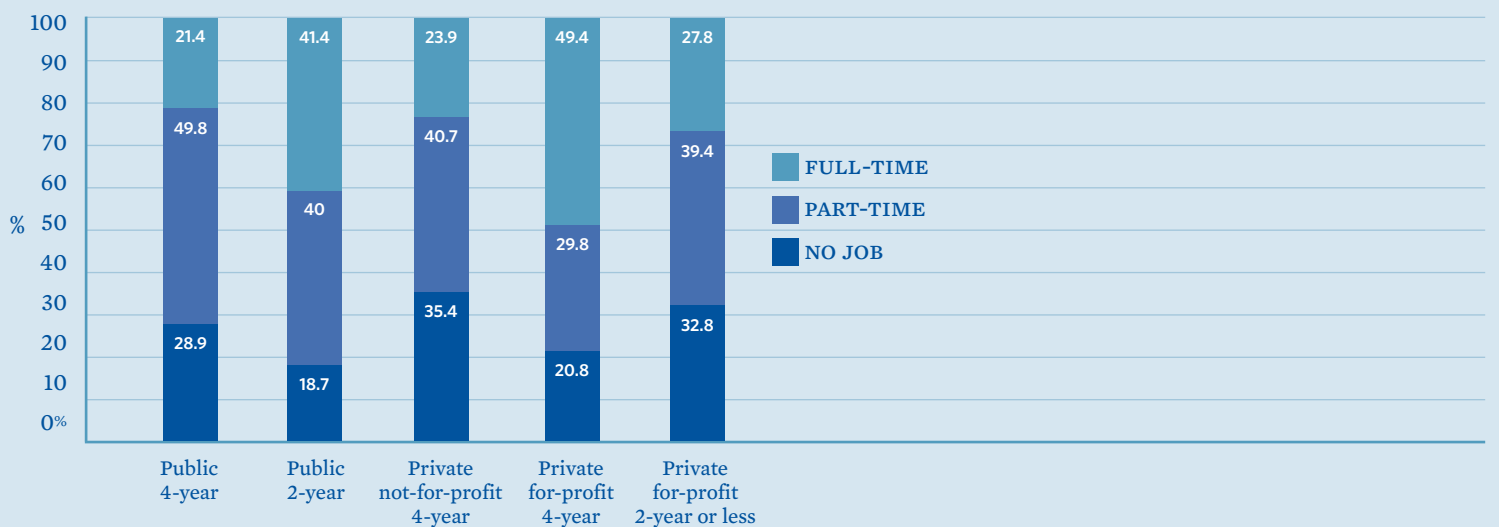


Fig 8 / Despite working longer hours than in other sectors, for-profit students are still highly likely to attend the institution full-time. In fact, the majority at for-profit four-year (66%) and two-year institutions (70%) attend full-time, roughly on par with those at private not-for-profit institutions (70%) and more than twice the rate of students at community colleges (27%). For-profit students may have a greater likelihood to attend school full-time due to either: more flexible class scheduling and delivery (online) options for working students; an often fast-paced curriculum; or in order to maximize financial aid.

Fig 9 / For-profit students are more likely than their peers in other sectors to delay enrollment in postsecondary education following K-12 completion, another risk factor as defined by the Department of Education as associated with attrition. Over half of students at both four and two-year for-profit institutions (54% each) delay entry into higher education, more than twice the rate at more traditional four-year institutions.

Fig 10 / Four-year for-profit students are the most likely to see themselves as an “employee who decided to enroll in school” rather than a “student working to meet expenses.” Roughly half of students at four-year for-profit institutions identify primarily as employees (48%), followed by 39% at community colleges and 32% of two-year for-profit institutions. While the share of students who identify primarily as students rather than employees is in the majority across all sectors, the portion is highest at more traditional four-year institutions.

Fig 11 / Perhaps unsurprisingly, due to the fact that four-year for-profit students are older, independent, working longer hours and more likely to identify as employees, they are also the most likely to have had prior employment before enrolling in postsecondary education (73%). Just as with the previous indicator of primary role, the percentage who worked prior to enrolling in higher education at for-profit institutions is only slightly higher than at community colleges and two-year for-profits (68% and 66%, respectively), while just over half of students at traditional four-year institutions worked prior to enrollment.

Fig 8 / Enrollment Intensity by Institution Type

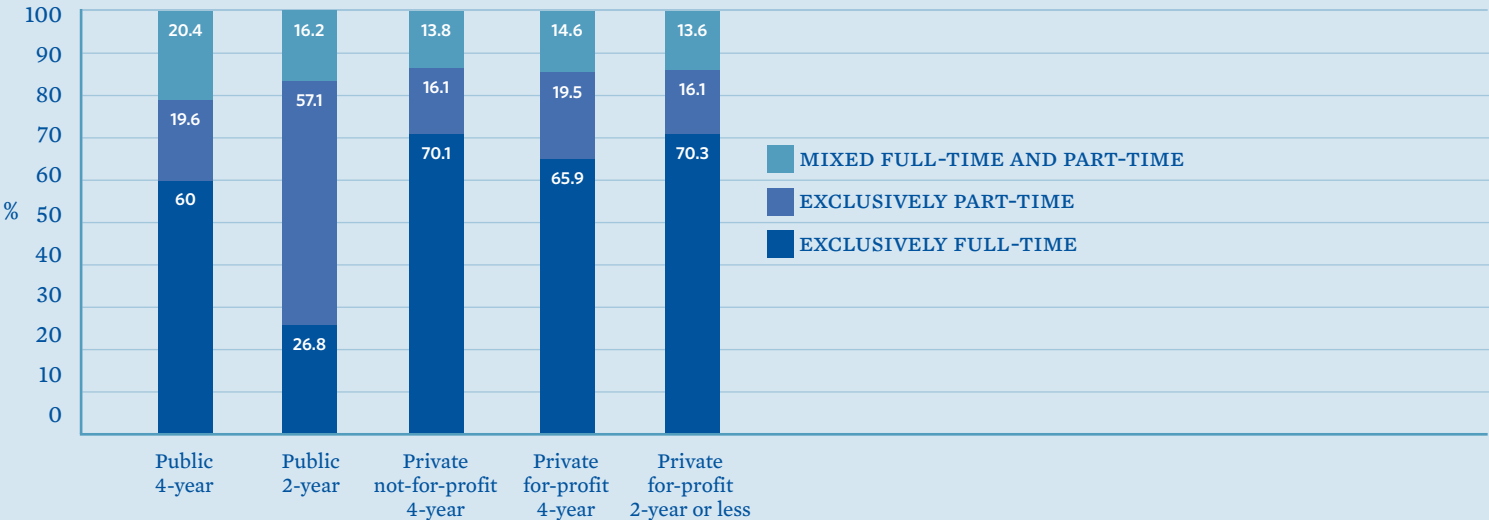


Fig 9 / Delayed Enrollment

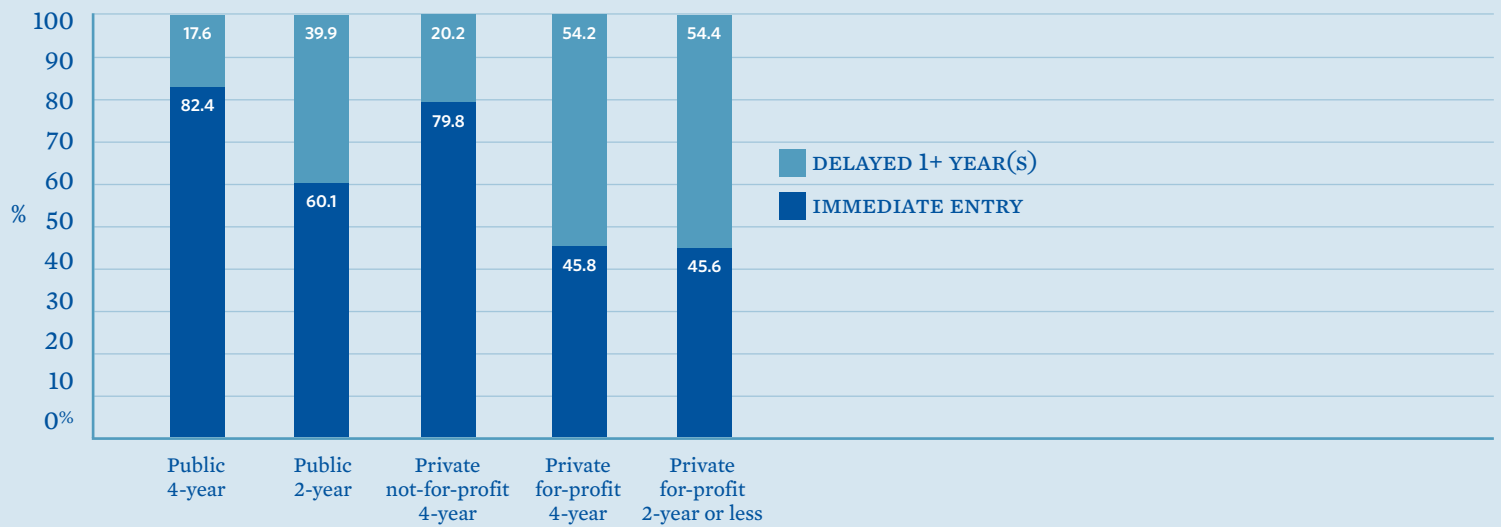


Fig 10 / Primary Role (Student or Employee) by Institution Type

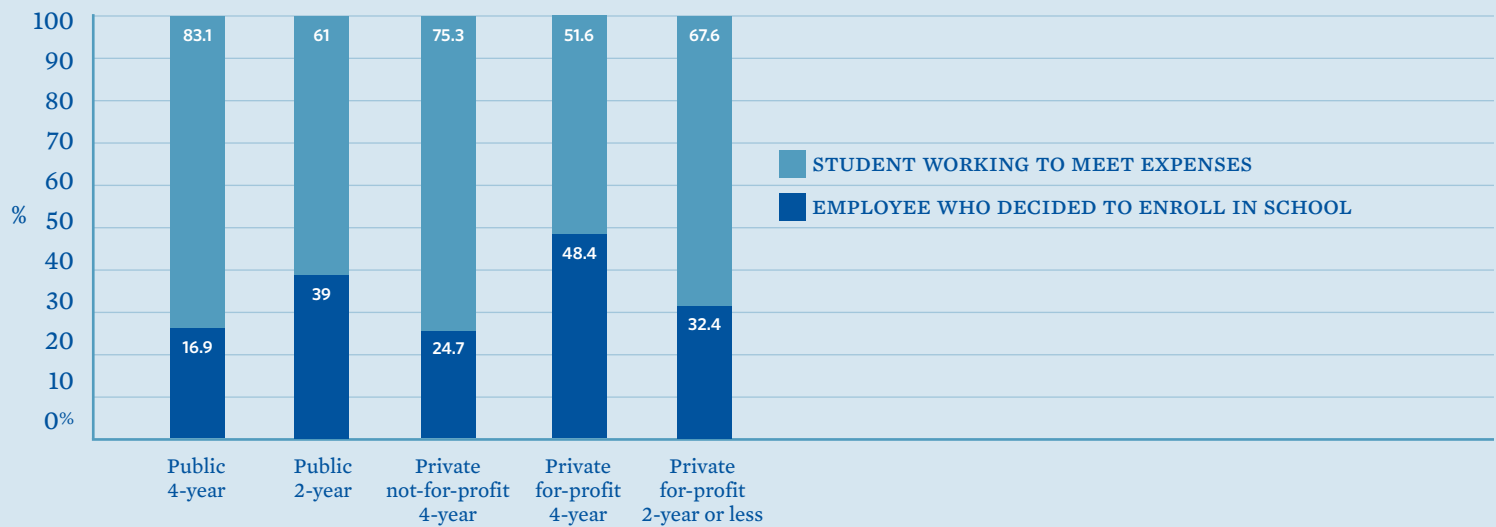
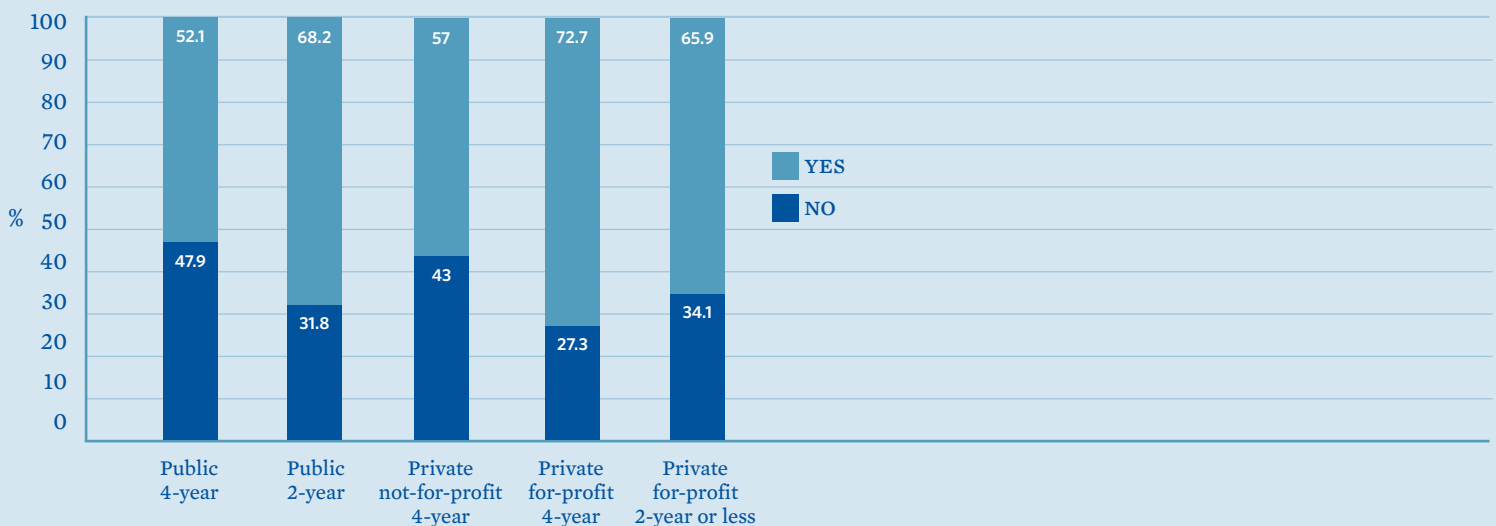


Fig 11 / Prior Employment by Institution Type



Cost of Attendance

Fig 12 / The average cost for students attending four-year for-profit institutions, including tuition, fees, books and supplies, and living expenses is just over \$31,000, roughly equivalent to four-year not-for-profit institutions. The figure below represents costs for in-state tuition and living off-campus, since the students focused on in this study are most likely to stay near their work and/or families for college, and not likely to live on campus. The cost of community colleges is roughly half as much as private four-year institutions, and public four-year institutions are approximately \$10,000 less than the private sector.

Table 3 / Nearly all students at four-year for-profit institutions apply for some form of financial aid, and for federal aid in particular (99% and 96%, respectively) – higher than any other sector. Two-year for-profit institutions follow closely behind, as do not-for-profit four-year institutions in overall aid. The majority of all students in all sectors apply for some form of aid.

Fig 13 / Due to the large population of low-income students, for-profit institutions enroll a higher share of Pell Grant recipients than any other sector. In fact, the majority at four-year for-profit institutions (58%) are awarded Pell Grants, compared with only one-quarter at public and private not-for-profit four-year institutions (25% and 26%, respectively). At the two-year level, for-profit institutions enroll a higher share of Pell recipients than any other sector (69%), while community colleges enroll the smallest percentage (21%).

Table 4 / Nearly all students at four-year for-profits receive some type of aid (98%) and federal loans in particular (94%), more than in any other sector. Students at four-year for-profits are also the most likely to receive private loans, although at lower rates (48%). Over half receive federal grants, compared with roughly a quarter at four-year institutions in other sectors. Students in other sectors are more likely to receive institutional aid, particularly at private, not-for-profit institutions where over half (52%) receive institutionally-funded grants.

Fig 12 / Average total cost for in-state students living off-campus 2009-10, by institution type: degree-granting, Title-IV institutions

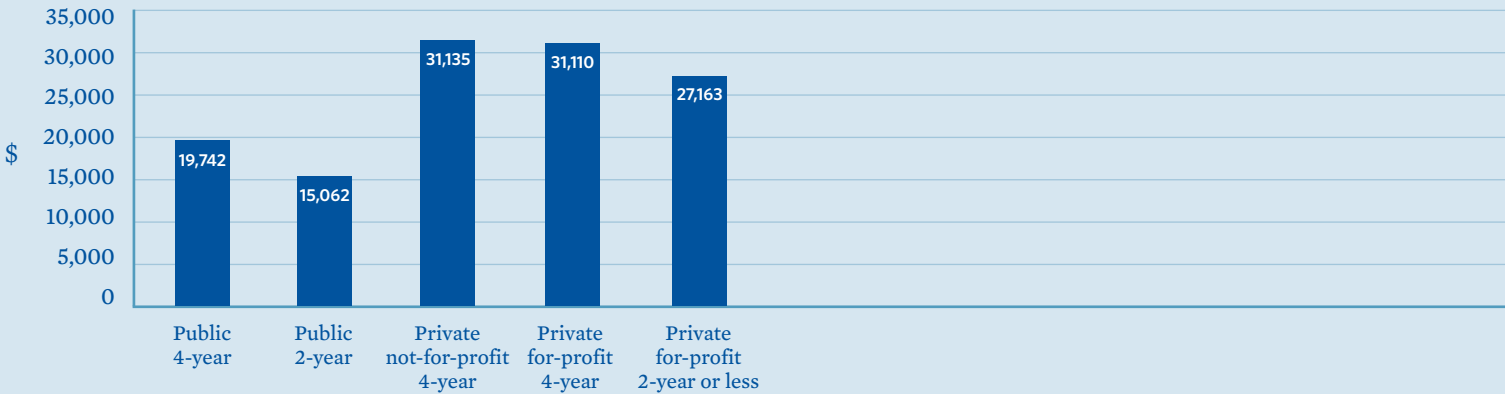


Table 3 / Aid Application by Institution Type

INSTITUTION TYPE	APPLIED FOR ANY AID	APPLIED FOR FEDERAL AID
Public 4-year	78.6%	62.1%
Public 2-year	59.8%	43.5%
Private not-for-profit 4-year	87.7%	69.7%
Private for-profit 4-year	98.7%	96.4%
Private for-profit 2-year or less	97.1%	94%

Fig 13 / Pell Receipt by Institution Type

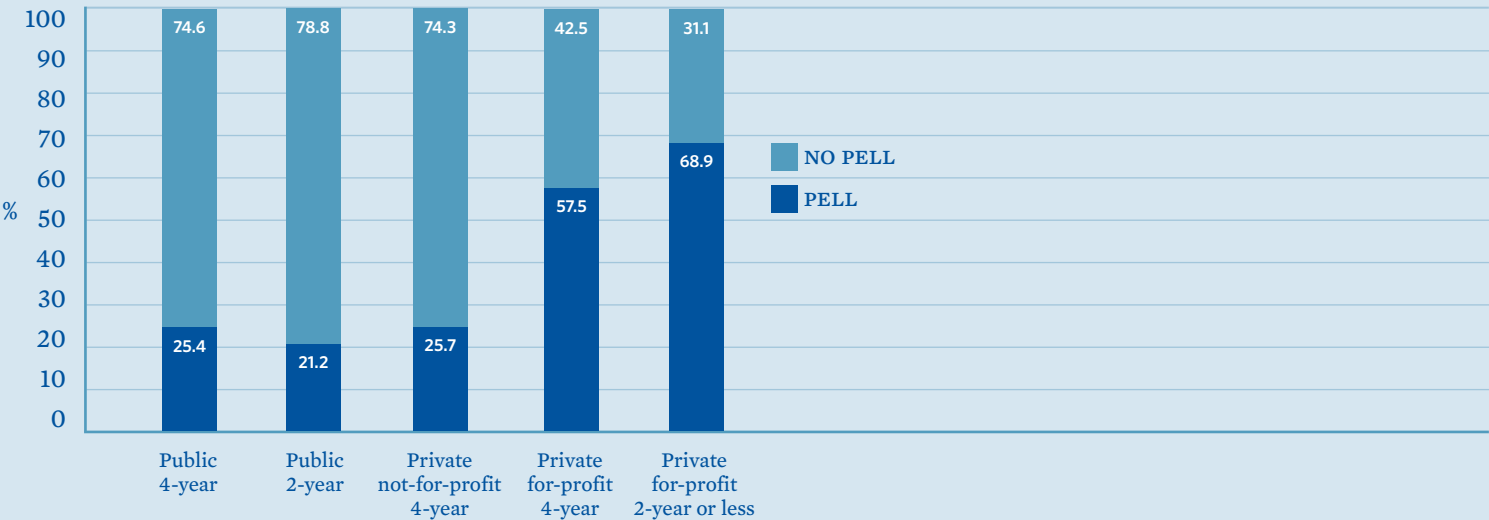


Table 4 / Aid Receipt by Source and Instituion Type

INSTITUTION TYPE	ANY AID SOURCE	FEDERAL GRANTS	FEDERAL LOANS	PRIVATE LOANS	INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS	STATE AID	FEDERAL WORK-STUDY
Public 4-year	71.3%	25.7%	42.4%	15%	22%	23.9%	5.7%
Public 2-year	48.5%	21.3%	11.4%	5%	11%	12.4%	2.6%
Private not-for-profit 4-year	84.5%	26.3%	55.1%	25.7%	51.9%	25.2%	17.7%
Private for-profit 4-year	97.6%	57.6%	93.7%	47.4%	8.7%!	6.1%	2%
Private for-profit 2-year or less	95.2%	69.1%	82.9%	38.8%	5.5%	10.4%	1.6%

! Interpret data with caution. Estimate is unstable because the standard error represents more than 30 percent of the estimate.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08).

Table 5 / Students at private not-for-profit four-year institutions take out higher amounts of loans from all sources with the exception of institutional loans. Students at for-profit institutions borrow less from the federal government than students attending four-year institutions in other sectors. Community college students take out the least amount of loans, both public and private. Four-year for-profit students take out roughly the same amount of private loans as their counterparts at public four-year institutions, and nearly \$3,000 less on average than their peers at private not-for-profit institutions.

Table 6 / The total average aid amount ranges from \$3,589 (public two-year institutions) to \$17,226 (private not-for-profit four-year institutions). The total aid amount for for-profit institutions falls roughly in the middle (\$10,063 for two-year and \$11,585 for four-year for-profits). Average Pell Grant amounts do not vary a great deal between institution types.

Student Outcomes

Table 7 / When comparing student outcomes by institutional sector, it is important to separate four-year for-profit institutions such as DeVry from those awarding two-year degrees or less. In doing so, the six-year bachelor's degree attainment rates are higher than

for students who begin at community colleges (16% compared with 12%, respectively). However, four-year for-profit institutions still have a higher dropout rate than any other sector. This is likely due to the demands facing students described above who are of the lowest income quartile, often working full-time, and attending courses as a secondary role to working. Two-year for-profits have the lowest six-year attrition rate, since these students face similar demands and primarily intend to complete certificates.

Fig 14 / National graduation rates are lower for low-income students than for more affluent peers. However, programs such as TRIO Student Support Services aimed specifically at supporting low-income students in college help this population attain higher success rates. After six years following initial enrollment in a post-secondary program, students that participated in the Student Support Services Program have a higher bachelor's degree attainment rate (30.9%) than other low-income college students, regardless of whether they received (21%) or did not receive (8.9%) Pell Grants.

Table 5 / Average Loan Amounts By Source and Institution Type

INSTITUTION TYPE	TOTAL FEDERAL LOANS (includes PLUS)	TOTAL NON FEDERAL LOANS	INSTITUTIONAL LOANS
Public 4-year	6380.90	6,269.20	3,256.90
Public 2-year	4,072.80	3,683.10	659.30
Private not-for-profit 4-year	7,559.20	9,129.90	3,037.80
Private for-profit 4-year	6,160.90	6,382.20	4,692.40
Private for-profit 2-year or less	5,861.10	5,545.10	2,592.40

Table 6 / Average Aid and Grant Amounts By Source and Institution Type

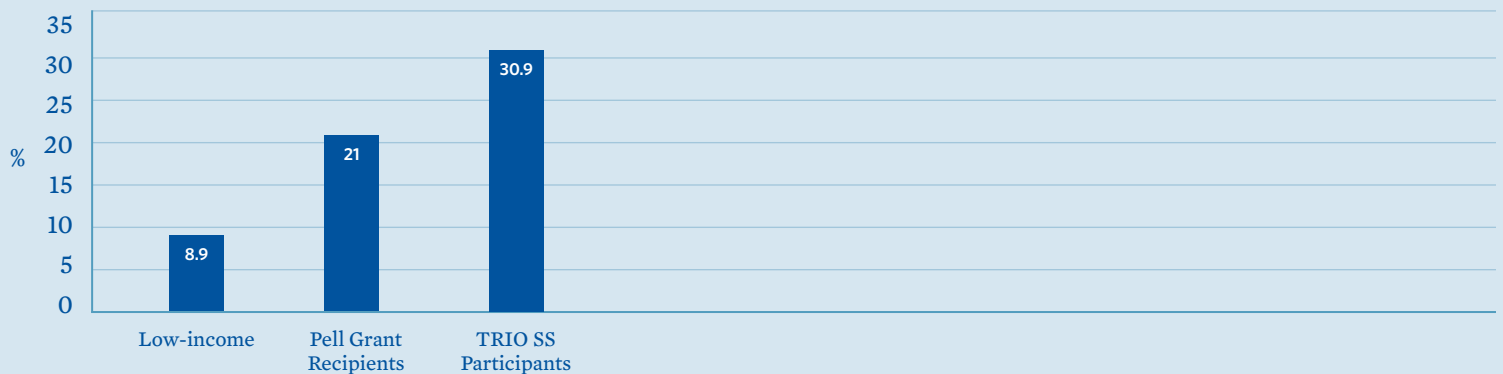
INSTITUTION TYPE	AID TOTAL AMOUNT	FEDERAL PELL GRANT	INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS TOTAL
Public 4-year	9,361	2,830	3,617
Public 2-year	3,589	2,279	727
Private not-for-profit 4-year	17,226	2,842	9,388
Private for-profit 4-year	11,585	2,361	1,522
Private for-profit 2-year or less	10,063	2,530	1,807

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08).

Table 7 / Six-year Attainment/Enrollment Rates

ATTAINMENT OR LEVEL OF LAST INSTITUTION ENROLLED THROUGH 2009 BY FIRST INSTITUTION SECTOR (LEVEL AND CONTROL) 2003-04					
INSTITUTION TYPE	ATTAINED BA	ATTAINED AA	ATTAINED CERTIFICATE	NO DEGREE, ENROLLED	NO DEGREE, NOT ENROLLED
Public 4-year	59.5%	3.8%	1.6%	12.9%	22.2%
Public 2-year	11.6%	14.4%	8.5%	19.6%	46%
Private not-for-profit 4-year	64.6%	3.8%	1.5%	11.1%	19%
Private for-profit 4-year	15.7%	14.6%	3.6%	11.3%	54.8%
Private for-profit 2-year or less	0.3%	8.4%	39%	9.6%	42.6%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, BPS:2009 Beginning Postsecondary Students

Fig 14 / Low-income, Pell Recipient and SSS Participant Graduation Rates

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1995-96 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS:96/01); U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services, Performance and Efficiency Measure Results: 2004-05; Mortenson, T., Bachelor's Degree Attainment by Age 24 by Family Income Quartiles, 1970-2006 (2008), retrieved from www.postsecondary.org.

Promising Practice Findings

Campus Characteristics

DeVry University was founded in 1931 in Chicago by Herman DeVry as the DeForest Training School, specializing in technical and vocational education including electronics and movie, radio and television production. The university grew following the G.I. Bill in the 1940's and in 1953 became DeVry Technical Institute. DeVry became accredited to offer its first associate's degree in 1957 in electronics engineering technology and the first bachelor's degree in the same subject in 1969. In the 1980's, DeVry expanded its baccalaureate offerings to computer science, business, accounting and networking. DeVry merged with the Keller Graduate School of Management in 1987 and became DeVry University in 2002. DeVry is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association and in 2000 began offering coursework online. DeVry recently added degrees in biomedical engineering technology, health information technology, and gaming and simulation programming, in response to workforce demands. DeVry currently enrolls over 93,000 students online and in-person on over 90 campuses in the U.S. and Canada.

DeVry is currently in the midst of "Project ONEUniversity." This project is designed to help the institution standardize its services across campuses. DeVry wants to ensure that students at each campus have a similar experience. And while each DeVry campus has its own president, website, and distinguishing student characteristics, the DeVry University "home" office largely dictates university-wide policies and practices to which each campus must adhere. Each president, however, does have some flexibility in how they operate their particular campus. For example, while the "home" office directs marketing and media campaigns, campus presidents shape the local outreach efforts to the community, including partnership development and recruitment. And while course structure and curricula are fairly standardized, faculty have some room for shaping the delivery of content.

The DeVry Chicago Main campus is the largest campus in the Chicago metropolitan area. Also referred to simply as Chicago or Main, the demographics reflect the surrounding area with approximately 85% underrepresented minorities, and nearly 75% low-income and first-generation, most of whom receive Pell Grants. Like other campuses, the majority of the student body at Chicago Main is comprised of non-traditional college-aged adults, with an

average age of approximately 26. Chicago Main does have a greater representation of traditional-aged students than other campuses, however, due to its DeVry University Advantage Academy (DUAA), an on-site partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and other dual-enrollment programs. Chicago Main is located north of downtown Chicago and is comprised of three adjacent office buildings used for classroom space, administration, and support services.

The Tinley Park campus is similar to Chicago Main in its locale and demographics; however, this campus skews slightly older due to having both the Keller Graduate School of Management and Becker CPA Review on its campus, which largely attract experienced professionals. The Tinley Park campus is slightly smaller than Chicago Main, containing all programs in one single building.



DeVry Loop (the Loop) Campus sits in the heart of Chicago's downtown "loop," occupying three floors of an office building for courses and support services. DeVry Loop was previously a "Tech school." During that time, the campus enrolled primarily males in technology-focused programs. The typical student was about 24 years of age with some community college or work experience. DeVry Loop has since moved away from that image as it has evolved into more of a graduate business school. Currently, the campus is dominated by females, higher numbers of nontraditional-aged adult students, and an increased interest in business programs. The current vision of DeVry University is that DeVry Loop develop into more of a traditional university serving larger numbers of undergraduates.

Students Served

The typical DeVry Chicago student body is highly diverse with respect to age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, international and national culture, first language, and the segment of the city they come from. But generally all are from families of low socioeconomic status (SES) and many are first-generation college-goers, as high as 75%. At all three campuses visited, the student demographic at the institution was described as majority-minority or traditionally underrepresented students. Most students were described as needing substantial financial support (nearly 80% low-income) and most are first-generation students. Students were also described by staff as academically underprepared; faculty indicated that a high percentage of students need developmental coursework in math and English (the exact percentage is not available).

In addition to academic and financial needs, staff and faculty cited students' personal challenges such as disciplinary issues, a lack of support at home, need for basic study skills and time management as well as a lack of motivation. Staff also indicated that students often lacked basic needs such as transportation to campus. In some cases, students who stopped attending class were difficult to reach because of temporary residences or non-working telephone numbers. In addition, many students do not have regular access to the Internet or email outside of DeVry.

At Chicago Main, the student body varies with the time of day. Adult students primarily attend class in the evenings (after 7 p.m.), while the age is skewed much younger during the day due to that campus' DeVry University Advantage Academy (DUAA) program

which enrolls local high school students. Chicago Main experienced a recent 20% increase in high school student enrollment, likely as a result of the expanded recruitment efforts that target more high schools with information about the offerings at DeVry, including DUAA.

DeVry staff noted that the institution has always focused on this population of students who did not have equal access to higher education opportunities, and who needed extra encouragement and support throughout the education process.

Campus Culture

DeVry recognizes that its mission is different than more traditional four-year institutions, and strives to fill a gap by providing education to students otherwise underserved. According to some, DeVry plays an important role in society by serving inner-city youth who would not otherwise have the opportunity to enter postsecondary education. Several administrators mentioned the philosophy of "doing well by doing good." One of the campus presidents expressed a strong belief that first-generation students have a stronger desire to learn and, based on her experiences, are perhaps more appreciative of their educational opportunities than more privileged peers.

Staff and faculty describe the culture at DeVry as "supportive" and "collective." Many also described this culture of collaboration as a willingness to contribute to the institution beyond one's job description. As one administrator said, "We all do everyone's job." Campus executive committees representing the IT department, career services, admissions, and student central, enrollment services, human resources, academic departments, financial aid, the business office and the president meet biweekly to learn about each department's activities.

One of the campus presidents noted that DeVry is willing to "reinvest" its resources to fix problems and concerns that may impede the institution from achieving better results. He has worked extensively at both for-profit and not-for-profit institutions and expressed confidence in the competency of his staff and faculty, describing them as the "smartest folks I've worked with." Some faculty and staff have been at DeVry Chicago as long as 15 to 20 years, and exhibit a desire to help students succeed. He feels that not only staff but also faculty have "stepped up" to provide support.

Many staff and faculty express a connection with the first-generation college student, having received their own educations at DeVry, and feeling a sense of responsibility to support students' educational opportunities and future work goals. Some faculty and deans described the opportunity to serve these students as a "privilege," enabling them to enact social justice on a daily basis.

Customer Service Orientation / The customer service model is an approach used to support students on each campus we visited. All campuses we visited stressed that providing “world class customer service” to students, who are seen as customers, is of critical concern. Students appreciate the personal contact and follow-up they receive beginning with the admissions office. They reported that campus staff treat them with kindness and respect, take the initiative to solve problems, and do simple things like walk them to classes or services they cannot find.

This customer service orientation is also evident in policies. Individual campuses such as the Loop are strategically growing, to ensure they can provide the same “customer service and quality” for a larger number of students. The campus presidents seemed very aware of their local competition, one noting the presence 50 campuses within a 25-mile radius. Therefore, if students do not feel they are receiving what they need at DeVry, they will look elsewhere. This drives staff and faculty to act competitively in better supporting students and valuing their success.

DeVry carries the customer analogy beyond student satisfaction, and views students' connection to the university as "product buy-in." DeVry strengthens this "customer buy-in" by offering free "Foundations" or basic skills courses to students who do not meet admissions requirements. Additionally, DeVry employs "Net Promoter Score" (NPS) as the key indicator of student satisfaction and success, which is a distinctly different way of viewing student progress compared with more traditional postsecondary institutions. NPS measures students' likelihood of recommending DeVry to other potential students. This represents DeVry's customer-service focus, a belief that "the satisfied customer also refers others to DeVry."

Recruitment

DeVry assigns specific recruiters on each campus to target either the high schools or adult students. The high school recruiters visit local schools to talk to students, generally about the importance of attending college, and specifically about DeVry. Interested students who wish to attend an information session must bring a parent or guardian with them. The adult recruiting division fields online and phone inquiries about the institution. Adult recruiters also visit career and job fairs, churches, and other community organizations.

While marketing campaigns are conducted nationally, each campus focuses on a roughly 20-mile radius via grassroots campaigns, college fairs, and community events to meet with prospective students and inform them of available programs. DeVry has developed strong relationships with community colleges, including articulation agreements that aid in the transfer of course credit towards bachelor's completion at DeVry.

The students we met with indicated that their first impressions of DeVry were largely influenced by the media and feedback from friends or relatives who had attended DeVry. One student's interest in DeVry was piqued when he learned about DeVry's regional accreditation offerings through a television commercial. This put the university higher on his list than a more selective college that would not accept his community college credits.

The current wave of backlash against for-profit institutions in the media is among the major challenges DeVry faces in recruiting. Recruiters often encounter individuals who are not willing to speak with them. The primary selling points that recruiters rely on are: 1) practical application of coursework; 2) flexibility of class scheduling; and 3) time-to-degree completion, which can be accelerated due to the curricular structure of short, intensive class sessions. Recruiters meet with career services staff at DeVry regularly to receive updates on what the employment market is demanding so this information can be communicated with potential students.

The External Relations office is the face of Chicago Main in the community. This office helps to establish relationships with high schools, adult populations and diverse communities, while promoting DeVry branding, outreach, organization partnerships and community college targets.

Dual Enrollment

StartNow is a program for high school seniors who have applied and been accepted into DeVry, enabling them to take classes early without cost. Students take up to two courses in cohorts and are supported by success coaches. Passport2College is a similar dual-enrollment program available to students in their junior and senior years of high school. Another outreach offering is “crash a class,” a class shadowing experience available during holiday breaks. Administrators match prospective DeVry students with current DeVry students based on career interests. The idea is to expose high school students to DeVry coursework and allow them to determine whether the institution is the right fit. Both programs are free and recruiters feel “the best marketing is to let kids try DeVry.” A study is currently underway by The University of Chicago to assess DeVry’s dual-enrollment programs.

DUAA / One unique program serving low-income, first-generation high school students at DeVry Chicago Main is the DeVry University Advantage Academy (DUAA). In addition to providing dual enrollment opportunities to disadvantaged students from Chicago Public Schools (CPS), DUAA promotes high school recruitment to DeVry. DUAA evolved from an initiative led by now-U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in his role as CEO/Superintendent of CPS and then-Mayor Richard Daley to move more graduating CPS students into jobs. The original purpose was for graduating CPS students to earn associate’s degrees in network communications and web graphic design. Nearly 20% of pilot participants found jobs as a result of the program. The thought was simply to find jobs for disadvantaged youth, but the unintended consequence was that 90% of students graduated with an associate’s degree. The majority pursued Bachelor of Science degrees elsewhere, while thirty percent continued towards a bachelor’s degree at DeVry. More than 800 students have graduated from DUAA.

DUAA is endorsed, and was initially financially supported, by CPS. CPS continues to fund the high school portion of the program and its faculty. CPS faculty teach the high school classes at DUAA, and CPS funds the high school portion of the program. Beginning in 2009-10, DeVry helped pay for the high school program as well, since CPS did not have sufficient funding. CPS originally spent \$5,000 per student but due to CPS budget pressures, the university and the CPS agreed to a temporary reduction that requires CPS

to fund just \$1,000 while maintaining the highly successful program. Nearly all (94%) of DUAA students graduate, compared to just over half (57%) of CPS students. Given that some students entered DUAA with a 2.5 GPA, many believe the success rate is high. Already replicated in Columbus, Ohio, DeVry is looking to make DUAA available in other cities across the country, partnering with America’s Promise Alliance to create additional new sites over the next three years.

DUAA is set up as a traditional high school within the DeVry Chicago Main campus, on its own floor designated within the same building where college students take classes. DUAA students participate in extracurricular activities as well, including a prom and yearbook. Most classes operate during the week in a three-hour program with students bussed on to campus. DUAA has its own dedicated college success coach and tutors. Attendance is a high priority and is tracked, given the intensity of the college courses.

Senior DUAA students mentor juniors, and class sizes are kept small to allow students and teachers to know one another by name. Incoming DUAA students attend an orientation with team-building activities and a mixer for students to get to know one another. Evaluations are conducted monthly to discuss intervention issues such as pregnancy, drugs, behavior, homelessness, as well as academic issues and parental expectations of students’ future work.

CPS circulates information about DUAA to parents and requires parental involvement at DUAA information session. Students must first meet CPS freshman and sophomore coursework requirements. Students then take a DeVry entrance exam and, if they pass the test at standard level, they are accepted. Many begin at Chicago Main in the summer before their junior or senior year.

The 2010-2011 class of 221 students is the 8th cohort. Student demographics are typical of CPS – highly diverse with a large percentage of minorities; 35% are African American, 30% are Hispanic, and 20% are Asian. The 221 CPS students are enrolled in 11th and 12th grades with an equal mix of male and female students. Students we met with felt confident in their likelihood of graduating on time and expressed general satisfaction with the program, while noting two challenges. One is adapting to the level and intensity of college coursework in a dual-enrollment program. Students coming from CPS are exposed to college-level coursework

for the first time and need to adjust their study habits. The other issue is one of transportation; students commuting from downtown Chicago need support to get to the campus, which is north of downtown. Many of the DUAA students we met with are now considering attending DeVry as undergraduates.

Admissions

A primary goal of admissions is to enroll students who can pass the assessment tests and complete coursework. Admissions staff see their role as “recruitment and screening for the right fit.” Admissions staff note that “doing the right thing” entails counseling a student to attend an institution that best fits his or her needs, even if that ultimately means acknowledging that DeVry is not the best fit for the student.

Students must provide a high school diploma, take the ACT or SAT, and/or complete an admissions placement test. Placement testing helps DeVry place students in the appropriate math or English course if they have not taken the ACT or SAT, or posted low scores on those tests. Due to compliance, the Admissions office is not to: 1) engage in discussions of financial aid, or 2) engage in discussions about different college and universities. During orientation, students receive financial advice and information about tutoring and support services.

Application requirements include meeting with an admissions advisor to select an academic program. The admissions advisor reviews an applicant's academic history, makes suggestions concerning career options, and helps a student “decide on what the proper career path is for them” by explaining the components of each program and by dispelling myths. Student meetings with admissions staff cover the application process and waiver options and include a review of DeVry statistics on graduates, job placement, college pricing, and specifics of what is offered, followed by question and answers.

Orientation

DeVry offers a two-hour orientation session to students every eight weeks on the Saturday before the start of each session. Since most DeVry students begin classes in the summer, the July orientation is the most widely attended and is split into two separate sessions – one for traditional-aged students and one for non-traditional

students. Recent high school graduates are the only group of students that meet as a cohort.

Increasing student participation in orientation has been a challenge, due to the many competing responsibilities of students who work, are nontraditional, and/or care for dependents. It is estimated that only 40% to 45% of new DeVry students attend orientation. DeVry is currently piloting a longer, more intense orientation that would provide more in-depth information. However, staff are concerned that anything longer might result in lower participation rates.

During the orientation, students tour the building, meet with the campus president, and then break into workshops on various topics with advisors, such as information technology and accessing course materials online, successful study tips with coaches, class attendance, financial aid, and campus life, including involvement in student organizations. Students meet with the dean of their respective college for lunch and participate in a motivational mock-graduation event to “impress upon them why they are here.” Many faculty attend orientation, hoping to make students more comfortable interacting with and approaching them.

A faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences leads students in a required critical thinking and problem-solving class. In this class, students learn how to identify and articulate skills needed for academic and professional success, where to go for assistance, and how to manage their finances, among other topics. DeVry is now implementing University College, a First-Year Experience program. The course will integrate blended instructional methods with more hands-on learning in class than online.

Academic Structure

The academic year at DeVry is composed of three 16-week semesters (Fall, Spring, Summer) that are broken into two intensive eight-week sessions (A & B) each. Incoming students typically enroll in two courses per session (the equivalent to a 12-credit semester) to become acclimated to the DeVry course schedule.

Students must declare majors upon enrolling at DeVry, after completing career diagnostics and inventories. They have the option to change majors later if the one they chose initially was not the right fit; however, they begin working on their major coursework

immediately upon matriculating at DeVry. Advisors provide degree plans that help students determine which courses they will need to take each semester in order to graduate on time and “not lose any money.”

DeVry appeals to students with its emphasis on practical, experiential education over theory. The faculty place an emphasis on concrete skills that can be readily applied to the workforce over abstract thinking. Over one-third (35%) of course content is “hands-on” or “real world.” DeVry’s class size and flexible scheduling also appeal to its students. Even introductory-level courses are rarely over 25 students, and students appreciate that. Students who had previously attended larger public institutions described feeling overwhelmed by their size. Flexible class scheduling appeals to low-income students, many of whom work and/or are non-traditional aged with families. DeVry offers classes online, at night, and on weekends.

The courses are arranged so students have a choice of three delivery types: 1) on-site, face-to-face classroom instruction, 2) classroom instruction combined with online engagement (“blended learning”), and 3) online instruction. The blended course method is “learning on your own, but not learning alone.” DeVry has been moving some of its coursework in this direction since 2009. DeVry is currently examining which mode is best suited for students in first-year courses.

The courses are posted online in “shells” within a central portal, and students have online access to most course materials and assignments. Even course books are available as e-books, for a small fee, and students can have live Internet chats with faculty. This is all part of DeVry’s initiative to go paperless.

Students also have the option of taking courses at other campuses. Students are admitted for either on campus or online instruction, but can engage in a mix of course delivery methods. Faculty assess student performance by: a) participation – quality and quantity, b) weekly assignments, c) projects, and d) quizzes and tests.

Developmental Coursework / Incoming students who have not taken the SAT or ACT are required to take an institutional placement test. The test assesses skills in four areas: reading,

writing, arithmetic, and algebra. Depending on placement scores, students may be required to take and pass a free, basic course in English and math before officially entering DeVry. Once students complete Foundations courses with a passing grade, they are eligible for admittance to DeVry and must move through two levels of remedial-level coursework before enrolling in credit-level English and math. The staff we met with estimated that approximately half of the students who take the Foundations courses eventually attend DeVry.

Foundations courses also have time management and study skill development components. Students in Foundations classes work closely with instructors and participate in community-building through simple perks such as donuts or lunch to draw students to the room. In a recent Foundations class at Chicago Main, the pass rate more than doubled from 40% to 85% due to this increased emphasis on promoting community in the classroom, a more supportive faculty, and following up with students by phone to provide additional encouragement.

Students who are enrolled in pre-admission Foundations courses in English and math have access to free, open computer labs as well as test-taking classes. Chicago Main estimates that 30% take advantage of this opportunity, although no data exist yet to support that figure. Math is noted as the major challenge, but the university would like to examine participation rates more closely to gauge the effectiveness of these additional support structures.

Faculty Involvement / Many faculty told us they relate personally to the unique needs of their diverse students, and feel strongly about supporting them both in the classroom and more informally as mentors. Students described faculty as “approachable,” and “human.” One student said “they talk to you like you are their next door neighbor.” Others said “they don’t belittle you” and “they don’t wear their titles.” Some faculty and staff stressed the non-formal education experience of coaching and mentoring, and confidence-building – rather than strictly interacting through material taught in class.

DeVry deans select faculty—both full-time and adjuncts—carefully. They are not interested in the research capabilities of faculty, but rather place emphasis on teaching skills. Deans base

instructor promotions primarily on the level of student support and engagement. Deans expect faculty to adhere to an attitude that student success—not failure—is a measure of their ability.

Of DeVry's 3,250 onsite and online faculty members, approximately one-fifth (23%) are full-time while the remaining 2,500 teach either as visiting professors or independent contractors. DeVry requires that 60% of its full-time undergraduate credit hours be taught by full-time faculty. DeVry documents faculty expectations, responsibilities and three pathways that faculty can follow: a purely academic career path, academic leadership positions, or non-academic leadership positions. All Assistant Professors must have a master's degree from a regionally accredited institution, 3-5 years business or industry experience appropriate to subject matter and previous teaching experience.

The students appreciate that many of their faculty bring directly relevant working experience from the field in which they teach. Faculty often work part-time in industries of interest to their students, and some have attended DeVry, including the Keller Graduate School of Business. Beyond coursework, students shared stories about professors taking an active interest in their personal lives. Faculty often make phone calls to students at home to ask why they had missed class. Overall, a general consensus emerged that faculty take an active interest in student learning at DeVry.

Advising: One-Stop Shop Model

Student Central is a newly implemented joint-advising strategy offering students combined financial consulting and academic advising through one central location. Before Student Central, one student support advisor provided both academic and financial advisement. This arrangement did not seem sufficient to support students. With Student Central, pairs of specialized, designated financial aid “consultants” and academic advising “coaches” together provide holistic student advising. Student Central launched in 2010 as the consolidation of three departments: campus life, which includes international student services, disability, crime reporting and judicial reviews; academic advising; and, financial aid.

Currently, student success coach and financial aid consultant teams, or “pods,” have a case load of about 250 students each.

Advising is a large resource and said to account for about 20% of costs. The advising teams communicate not only with their assigned students but also with each other to better understand the various challenges facing each student. Students are served in a walk-in or appointment basis. One of the directors of Student Advisement, a former TRIO professional, compared the current Student Central model at DeVry as being very similar to what she oversaw in TRIO.

Student Success Coaches are expected to take on an intrusive and proactive role. They call the student each week during the first term. The goal is to take a proactive stance with first-generation students who are unfamiliar with the college process by asking students if they have any questions. Coaches have found that if they establish a relationship through weekly calls, students will be more willing to open up and discuss their problems. Beyond the first term they transition to biweekly calls, then one call every four weeks, to one call at the beginning of each session.

Student Success Coaches also help develop each student's academic roadmap, which they review together each semester. The coaches help students choose classes and stay with each student from the beginning to the end of their studies at DeVry. Student success coaches are trained to be proactive by identifying students who are not progressing based on grades and degree tracking. Student success coaches do not provide tutoring, but they do make appointments on students' behalf or provide them with contact information for tutors in subjects such as finance, science, and math. Coaches also meet with professors to help identify students struggling through specific coursework. Finally, coaches reach out to students on academic appeal to discuss the seriousness and implications for outcomes and student aid. Coaches, along with faculty, will then reevaluate the student's plan and make changes as needed to their schedule. Newly implemented bi-weekly team meetings further reassess student progress.

The financial advisors work with students to ensure that they have adequate funding for their classes. Students learn how much their education costs and what they are responsible for paying. Financial advisors explain to students the differences between loans, grants, and scholarships, help students seek sources of aid, assist them in applying for aid, and help them understand how financial aid works. The financial advisor meets with students during the

loan application process and promotes financial responsibility by explaining concepts such as loan limits, loan usage, refund checks, loan payback requirements, debt and why it is so important to stay enrolled. Financial aid staff may sometimes encourage students to withdraw from a class and take the course later as opposed to dropping out and jeopardizing their aid.

The Chicago Main financial aid office has two financial aid consultants who speak Spanish to meet the needs of the surrounding population. Financial aid consultants learn about students' financial needs and their "buy in committee" – a parent or spouse who is critical in the financial aid process.

Financial aid coaches develop regular workshops to help advise students on how to best use, save and invest their funds. The coaches participate in two-week trainings with the "home" office (University headquarters in Chicago), and keep students regularly updated about new policies through webinars and updated student website portals. The information is provided proactively to ensure that even though students may not ask, they are up to date on financial aid information and policies.

In terms of personal counseling, DeVry does not offer on-site counselors but does provide students access to a free 24-hour telephone service (ASPIRE), which students can call with a range of personal issues, from relationships to referrals for any symptoms of mental health disorders.

DeVry seeks to meet persistence goals through increased reporting from Student Central. For example, coaches may identify the need for a new course offering that could aid in degree completion. Student Central directors also collaborate on appeals to determine if any other measures can be taken to address a student's challenges, such as offering them tutoring.

DeVry believes that the institution has improved in both retention and on its 'Net Promoter Score' indicator since implementing the Student Central model, although data are forthcoming.

Student Success Center / An academic success center on each campus supports and collaborates with the writing and math labs, provides research assistance, and offers referrals to tutors and faculty. Students are not only referred but often personally escorted to labs or academic departments to receive additional help. The

tutoring centers offer free tutoring in subjects such as English and math. An average of three upperclass student tutors per academic program are trained and certified and communicate regularly with the class instructors. Tutoring is available for enrolled students not only during the daytime but also in the evenings and on weekends. Students are assisted by tutors who have expertise in the students' areas of need. Tutors must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0. One challenge is that upper-level courses do not have tutors, since the tutors are students who have only developed expertise in introductory courses. Adjunct faculty therefore provide additional subject matter support to tutors and other upperclass students.

Degree Progress Tracking

DeVry's Degree Navigator system helps track each student's rate of progress, including GPA, to make sure students are on track to graduate. Before DeVry began tracking students' course of study, students had difficulty knowing what classes they needed to enroll in next. This confusion was further complicated by a large number of students entering with incoming transfer credits. Student Central was tasked to review each student record to inform students of their expected graduation date. This helped put students on the right track by scheduling classes and checking availability of classes on their campus ahead of time.

The registrar produces reports to inform Student Central and academic departments of student progress in their program of study. The reports disaggregate students by program, terms, and other variables to provide a snapshot of the student's rate of progress, and courses completed versus courses attempted. Registrars also provide reports of students at risk of dismissal so advisors can address the problems and prevent them from dropping out and incurring debt.

Additional reports that are generated include a probation report, attendance system report, "catch and release" report (to identify students currently enrolled but not meeting academic standards), grade reports (to verify that students have met prerequisites), academic quality reports, and an academic standing report. These reports are distributed to departments that can help students on a one-on-one basis.

The registrar's office also generates a 'Failure or Probation Report' to alert both coaches and instructors when a student needs additional support. The report triggers additional needed advising, tutoring, and the creation of an individualized plan of action for a student.

Financial Support

In 2008-09, the average net price of attendance was \$24,959 for full-time undergraduates (including tuition, fees, books, supplies, room and board minus all federal aid, state and institutional grants). Tuition according to the DeVry University academic catalog varies by program, ranging from \$580 to \$600 per credit hour for the first eleven hours, then discounted at 40% off for additional credit hours (12 or above).

The majority of DeVry students work while enrolled (78%). Each campus offers work-study opportunities that provide students with experience relevant to their career area of interest, such as accounting or business. Chicago Main offers 150 work-study

²Institution and sector-wide figures calculated by DeVry Financial Aid using Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2008-09.

If a student withdraws, their financial aid consultant will conduct an exit interview, advise the student about the six-month repayment schedule and encourage the student to come back. The institution also reaches out to first-year withdrawals during their grace period to provide additional repayment reminders and guidance, and tracks borrowers through their cohort period. Financial aid consultants sometimes make attempts to intervene if students fall delinquent in repaying their college loans. Every semester the campuses conduct campaigns to bring back students who withdrew.

Another source of support at DeVry is job placement and career services. Career services staff provide workshops on topics such as communication skills and networking, and conduct mock job interviews. Career service staff are required to stay in touch with graduates for six months following graduation to track their job search progress. DeVry cites a 90% job placement rate within six months of graduation for students who actively seek employment.

The majority (86%) of graduates are employed in their fields, but only students actively seeking employment are included in employment statistics. Chicago campuses have a particular advantage in the job market because DeVry was founded and is headquartered there, and students are exposed to a large network of local graduates who furnish them with advice and help them find jobs. Employer liaisons work with area companies in fields such as consulting and pharmaceuticals, to develop training programs for graduates.

Extracurricular activities vary by campus. At the Loop, for example, which is in the city and dominated by older, working and graduate-level students, the only official student activity is a softball team. Due to the small campus size, DeVry Loop is seen as a close-knit environment, providing students with a sense of belonging. The campus often organizes community service opportunities, such as volunteer events at soup kitchens.

Chicago Main, which has a larger traditional-aged student body, seeks to create a more collegiate environment where students want to spend time outside of class. The campus currently has a soccer team and student government offered to both high school and college students. The campus also celebrates events such as Hispanic Heritage Month and provides seminars, for example, on healthy eating. Additionally, the campus recently developed the Metro Leadership Program, which provides diversity training, work-life balance and time management skills, and team building. Thirty-five low-income students with an expected family contribution (EFC) of \$0-500 were invited to participate in the pilot and are referred to as “trailblazers,” to put a positive spin on their first-generation status by emphasizing their driving motivation and determination.

Discussion

The students we met with had overwhelmingly positive perceptions of DeVry. However, as noted in the limitations, the students selected by staff to participate in focus groups are likely to be more engaged. Students expressed appreciation that DeVry offered them a chance, whereas other institutions felt out of reach. Students also appreciated feeling valued as “customers” and received individualized attention from staff and faculty. Some students chose DeVry because of the small individual campuses; others were influenced by feedback from friends who had attended DeVry. At DeVry Loop in particular, students cited the location and proximity to their work downtown. Overall, DeVry students were attracted to the emphasis on workforce skills in the curriculum and career development services.

Many staff and faculty interviewees credited the recently implemented Student Central model of academic coaching and financial aid consulting with raising first-to-second session student persistence. However, the longer-term effects of recent initiatives such as Student Central on graduation rates are still unknown. The current DeVry university-wide six-year graduation rate is approximately 30% for first-time, full-time freshmen (although the students in this traditional definition of a cohort only represent 37% of the DeVry population). DeVry is pushing to increase completion rates through all of the recently implemented services that provide additional student support, but campus leaders acknowledge that progress takes time and feel that “even those students that do not finish at DeVry are more successful than those that do not go at all.”

Students at DeVry must deal with a range of personal, academic and financial challenges, including responsibilities such as full-time work and raising families. The eight-week class schedule facilitates the need for any student to step out and return between sessions without a major interruption. Some students, however, had difficulty adjusting to the fast pace of the intensive eight-week courses. A team of individuals including success coaches, financial aid advisors, faculty and registrars are involved in the follow-up process to keep students on track toward degree progress. Campus staff and leadership feel that students from first-generation backgrounds are grateful to be enrolled in higher education, have a sense of pride, and view their time at any postsecondary institution including DeVry as an opportunity and a promise of a

better future. Therefore, DeVry personnel feel that students take this opportunity seriously. Administrators, staff and faculty work hard at developing a sense of trust with students to provide them with the confidence and encouragement they need to succeed.

Many students are single parents requiring childcare, transportation, stable housing, and a place to do homework. As a result, campuses are commonly open on weekends to provide access to study space and computer labs. Other services include clothing donations for job interviews. The Chicago Main and Tinley Park campuses are not easily accessible from downtown Chicago and require students to change buses and/or trains which results in commutes as long as two hours. The recent U-Pass provides a discount on Chicago Transportation Authority (CTA) buses and trains for low-income students. DeVry would also like to provide additional student housing for those who must travel a great distance.

Traditional-aged first-generation students’ parents are often under-involved in the education process and do not adequately provide needed support. This can be particularly problematic when attempting to complete the FAFSA. A unique issue with the FAFSA is that students are not able to apply independently for financial aid until the age of 24, even though these students may be living independently. Parents frequently do not supply the information needed to successfully apply for financial aid.

It is important to note that many of the innovative services we observed are relatively new and not yet grounded in data supporting their effectiveness. Though many supports are provided, some staff believe students are further disadvantaged by “spoon-feeding” information to them. This view holds that higher education’s role is to prepare individuals for the “real world” of working independently. While some see the support level as overly intrusive, others credit the level of attention with supporting the success of this student population.

Students graduating with bachelor’s degrees at DeVry are encouraged to pursue graduate coursework at the affiliated Keller Graduate School of Management, if they are interested in the MBA track. Whereas career services are provided for those seeking work upon graduation, students interested in pursuing graduate coursework are not provided with any alternatives to DeVry’s graduate school.

This is to be expected from a for-profit institution interested in benefiting from the success of its students; however, as an institution providing opportunity to low-income students who were academically underprepared, one wonders if this practice limits their true potential. It is possible that DeVry provides an education that prepares its graduates to attend the most selective institutions in the country to receive their master's degrees or PhD's. While the support currently offered to students at DeVry is encouraging, it would be a disservice not to better inform students about the options available to them upon graduation.

The policies and programs identified in our site visits to DeVry Chicago campuses instill confidence that four-year for-profit institutions have real potential to better serve low-income, first-generation students. Staff, administrators and faculty all seem keenly aware of the challenges particular to this student population, and continually work to improve support structures. Many of the promising practices identified herein are relatively new, and we look forward to learning about their impact on student success.

Recommendations

Based on our many years of studying the characteristics of successful institutional practices to support low-income, first-generation students, we found that the types of services provided to students at the three DeVry University campuses establish a high standard for strategic academic and social student assistance. The following three categories frame what we recommend as DeVry University's promising student support practices:

- *Approaching Support Services for Students as Customer Service*
- *Providing Early, In-Depth, On-Campus Student Opportunities*
- *Establishing and Sustaining a Shared Sense of Community*

These three overarching categories are distinctive because of the way in which the dynamic confluence of corporate business values and higher education practices come together to inform DeVry's educational culture. What is most promising about these

categories is the calculated investment that DeVry University has made to weave together the practices and how they continue to develop and refine their strategies for helping students persist and graduate.

Approaching Support Services for Students as Customer Service

Our research has shown that the success of many higher-performing colleges and universities is attributed to the personalization of the educational experience for low-income, first-generation students. In other words, valuing students as a corporate business appreciates its customers can establish an effective college success culture, especially for low-income, first-generation students. For DeVry, providing "world class customer service" entails treating students with "kindness and respect, taking the initiative to solve problems, and do simple things like walk students to classes or services they cannot find." Moreover, students at DeVry express that they appreciate feeling valued as a "customer," and receiving individualized attention from the staff, administrators and faculty.

Several observed elements of DeVry's promising practices for approaching support services as customer service include:

- **One-Stop Shop Advising Model:** Student Central is a newly implemented joint advising strategy, offering students combined financial consulting and academic advising through one office. The designated financial aid "consultant" and academic advising "coach" advise individual students together in teams, resulting in holistic support.
- **Early Intervention/Warning System:** During the third week of each session, faculty post the first set of grades online via the course management software system, and continually update grades in the system. Faculty then report students whose grades fall below a C average on a weekly basis. Registrars send academic warning reports to both coaches and instructors to alert them that students need additional support which triggers needed advising, tutoring and the creation of an individualized plan of action for the student.

- **Degree Progress Tracking:** DeVry's Degree Navigator system helps track each student's rate of progress on their degree path. It calculates students' GPA to make sure students are on track to graduate.
- **Academic Success Centers:** On each campus, academic support centers collaborate with the writing and math labs and provide research assistance and referrals to tutors and faculty. Students are not only referred, but indicated they have been personally walked over to labs or academic departments to receive additional help.
- **Career and Job Placement Service:** Services provided to students include mock interviews, career fairs, and competitions through academic clubs. The job placement and career services staff are required to stay in touch with graduates for six months following graduation to track their job search progress.
- **Passport2College** is a similar dual-enrollment program available to students in their junior and senior years of high school, and **"Crash a Class"** is a class shadowing experience available during holiday breaks.
- **Foundations Students:** Students who do not meet admission requirements may elect to enroll in free Foundation courses (which include time management and study skill development). Once completed with a passing grade, Foundations students may enter the university and then move through two levels of remedial-level coursework before enrolling in credit-level English and math. These students have free access to labs and tutoring.
- **DeVry University Advantage Academy (DUAA):** This innovative and effective dual-enrollment program is designed like a traditional high school within the DeVry Chicago Main campus. DUAA has its own designated floor in the building. Class sizes are kept small, allowing for DUAA students and teachers to know one another by name. DUAA students are bussed on to campus and participate in clubs and activities such as prom and yearbook.

Providing Early, In-Depth, On-Campus Student Opportunities

Our research on student success continues to indicate that exposing low-income, first-generation students to college as early as possible enhances their ability to navigate the college access process, and to persist and graduate from college with a degree. First-generation students often describe experiencing even greater anxieties and problems than other students in making the transition to college life, due to their lack of social and cultural capital. However, involvement with pre-college programs helps students prepare for and anticipate common anxieties, by acclimating them to college life early. Moreover, first-generation students have emphasized that personal relationships and trust they developed with program staff in pre-college programs led them to become receptive to the support that helps them get into and through college.

Among the promising ways that DeVry provides early, in-depth, on-campus student opportunities include:

- **StartNow:** This is a program for high school students who have applied and been accepted into DeVry, enabling them to take classes without cost. Students take up to three courses in cohorts, and are supported by success coaches.

Establishing and Sustaining a Shared Sense of Community

In several Pell Institute studies, we have recommended that campuses establish and sustain a sense of shared community, foster a campus culture and environment that encourages students to take ownership of their academic experience, to participate as active citizens of the institution, and to use their education to improve their individual lives and those of their families and communities. This sense of ownership is also exhibited by the campus presidents, administrators, staff and faculty in their collective belief in the value, capacity and potential of their students. Thus, all members of the campus community at DeVry strive to send a clear and consistent message that if you "set the bar high and standards high, students will rise to them."

Because higher education institutions must become more competitive in enrolling and successfully graduating more low-income, first-generation students in order for our country to increase the number students with college degrees, education policy should be designed to incentivize campuses that implement an array of student support services such as those that we found as promising practices at DeVry University. Further research should explore the efficacy of such practices identified, as data become available.

- **Collaborative Campus Programming:** Campus executive committees representing the IT department, career services, admissions, student central, enrollment services, human resources, academic departments, financial aid, the business office and the president meet biweekly to learn about each department's activities. These meetings foster a culture of collaboration which motivates as a willingness to contribute to the institution beyond one's job description. As one administrator said, "We all do everyone's job."
- **Faculty Involvement:** Expressing confidence in the competency of his staff and faculty, one DeVry President describes them as the "smartest folks I've worked with." Some faculty and staff have been at DeVry University Chicago for up to 15-20 years, and continue to exhibit a strong desire to help students succeed. Thus, many faculty attend orientation to make students more comfortable interacting with and approaching them. Moreover, many of the DeVry faculty expressed a connection with the first-generation college student, having received their educations at DeVry, and feeling a sense of responsibility to support students' educational opportunities and future work goals. Some faculty and deans described the opportunity to serve these students as a "privilege," enabling them to enact social justice on a daily basis.

Implications for Policy and Research

Implications for Parents, Guardians and/or Students

Because of the high cost of tuition at for-profit institutions, parents, guardians and students should expect that in addition to adequate financial aid, any for-profit higher education institution they consider attending offers the range of student support services for low-income and first-generation students that constitute the promising practices at DeVry University, at minimum.

Implications for Counselors and College Access Professionals

Because of how important “college match” has become in the college selection and decision process for low-income and first-generation students, pre-college counselors and other College Access and Success professionals need to advise their students to become better informed about the promising student support service practices such as those established at DeVry University, as a key measure in their college match criteria.

Recommendations for Improvement

Based on experience studying the characteristics of successful institutional practices to support low-income, first-generation students, we found evidence that the types of supportive practices known to be successful at other institutions are either in the early stages or already a part of the culture at DeVry University. While the findings we present identify a number of promising practices that support students at a for-profit institution, the current graduation rates leave room for improvement. Just under a third of first-time, full-time students at DeVry with baccalaureate aspirations complete a bachelor's degree within six years (30%). When comparing this rate to institutions serving similar populations of low-income students, however (defined as 30% or more receiving federal grants), DeVry's rate is only slightly behind four-year public institutions' rate of 41%.

DeVry is making strides in better supporting its population high at risk of attrition, and shows promise for continued improvement through the recent implementation of innovative services. Given DeVry's recent efforts to boost graduation rates through increased support including the Student Central initiative, degree tracking and early alert systems, it will be interesting to revisit the graduation rates once data reflecting institutional efforts become available. In the meantime, further research must explore the other side of the story, by reaching out to students who did not make it to graduation.

We recommend several improvements for DeVry University to enhance their practices and contribute strategically to their efforts to increase their student retention and success rates:

- **Expand the use of disaggregated data to track the outcomes of low-income, first-generation students.** Currently, DeVry institutes marketing measures typical of for-profit corporations to track levels of student engagement and satisfaction. While the student-as-customer philosophy may be effective at providing students with attentive and customized support, the university should implement more traditional postsecondary institutional measures of tracking student success. The university's current focus on term-to-term persistence rates should be expanded to include year-to-year persistence and six-year
- graduation rates for four-year degree seekers. DeVry does report these figures as required to IPEDS for first-year, full-time students only. Internally, however, leaders need to shift the focus of staff awareness from short-term persistence rates to longer-term six-year graduation rates, disaggregated to allow for insights into the 'typical' DeVry student. This will allow DeVry to establish and track targets of success for student groups of interest including those who are low-income, first-generation, and non-traditional aged, to assess the outcomes of this population high in need and dominant at the institution.
- **Establish greater transparency around student services and outcomes.** The DeVry practices identified here, while supportive, are invisible to the average consumer through publicly available materials such as the institution's website. Without conducting in-person visits, one may not be aware of institutional scholarships or initiatives such as Student Central. Additionally, information about student success rates – both overall and tied to recently implemented support practices – is not easily obtainable. Such information is critical to meeting the needs of students, parents, and educators as they navigate the College Access process.
- **Clarify and reconsider rigid attendance tracking policies – while closely monitoring low-income, first-generation students, who are generally at-risk of dropping out; this is crucial and the students with whom we met were unclear about attendance withdrawal policies.** In addition, the students – many of whom are nontraditional-aged working adults with families – felt the policies bordered on the overly intrusive. DeVry academic sessions are short and intensive and therefore require regular class attendance. However, if a student misses two classes, he or she is automatically dropped and must obtain a faculty letter within one week to appeal the withdrawal process and be reinstated. Students had varying understandings of the exact number of excused absences allowed and the time allotted for appeals. In addition, students did not know whether they could attend class during the appeals process, thereby potentially missing an additional week of class.

While this policy has good intentions, it must be communicated more clearly during orientation or through the mandatory academic advising sessions with Student Central. Students must be informed of the risks and financial ramifications. In addition, DeVry may wish to reconsider the process of communicating warnings to students and opportunities for making up a class by meeting with faculty in person or online, or by reviewing material at the tutoring center. DeVry can begin examining this policy by analyzing the effects of absences and withdrawals on overall success rates.

- ***Consider implementing additional programs and services supported by the research, such as learning communities and supplemental instruction, proven to be effective for this student population in other sectors.*** DeVry has already taken significant steps to better support low-income, first-generation students. Once external evaluators can determine the effectiveness of recently implemented support systems within DeVry's for-profit structure, the university can more easily incorporate additional mechanisms that facilitate student success.
- ***Strategically acknowledge staff and faculty who excel in their efforts to support low-income, first-generation students.*** While DeVry staff and faculty generally seem to embrace the need to support this student population, systematically formalizing the acknowledgement and rewarding personnel who embed this support into their everyday practice would further cultivate promising practices on their campus.

Appendices

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Appendices

B. Interview Protocols

Staff and Faculty Interview Guide

Introduction

We are currently conducting site visits to DeVry Chicago campuses as part of a study on the approaches to college admission, academic and social support, persistence and graduation of low-income, first generation students at your institution.

- This study is sought by your institution's leadership to better address any challenges to supporting the educational advancement of low-income, first-generation students.
- We would like to gain further insight into what programs and practices your institution has implemented to support low-income, first-generation students.
- Please note that we are interested in learning about the institution as a whole but would like to focus in particular on low-income, first-generation and disadvantaged students.
- All responses will remain anonymous unless you give us permission to be named in the report.

All staff/faculty

1. Please describe your position/department and responsibilities here at the university. How many staff report to you? How is success within your department defined? What is success for you?
2. Describe a "typical" student at DeVry Chicago?
(prompt if needed) For example: average age, residence, educational background, work/enrollment patterns, SES, family, other demographics, course load, involvement on campus, etc.)
3. Do you interact on a daily basis with low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented/disadvantaged students? How so?
4. Do you know the success rates of this population (compared with other, non-low-income students)? If so are you pleased with those rates? Do you think any challenges exist to producing high rates of retention and graduation of low-income students?

5. What is the institutional commitment to this population? Has it been expressed? If so, how?
6. What academic or personal support is provided on campus for underserved, low-income, first-generation students? What challenges are different for this population vs. all others?
(prompt if needed) For example: academic intervention; counseling or advising; tutoring or mentoring; institutional policies; instructional approaches such as learning communities or supplemental instruction; scheduling flexibility; class size/ratio; full-time faculty; extracurricular activities; etc.
7. What are DeVry University's approaches to recruiting underserved, low-income and first-generation students? How are these students targeted in high schools? Are there special pre-college programs developed to attract and support these students in the application process? What are admissions requirements, including any academic measures? What recruiting approaches are different for this population vs. all others?
8. Are there any institution-wide goals or policies that affect recruitment, retention or graduation of low-income students?
(prompt if needed) For example, the institutional mission, any retention committees or strategic plans?
9. Are any incentives in place that encourage the support of low-income students? Does the college receive resources or recognition based on its retention or completion rates?
10. Can you think of any "stories" of extraordinary institutional or faculty effort to help ensure the success of low-income students?
11. Is there any department collaboration? What about other external collaborators?
12. What are post-graduation outcomes of low-income DeVry University students, both financially and in terms of job placement? Do you hear from alumni who have entered the workforce? What have been their experiences? Do you disaggregate student data by income to consider any of these questions?

Recruitment & Admissions

13. What enrollment goals have been set by the institution? How are the goals set? What is the institution’s “target” student, if any?

Financial Aid

14. Please describe institutional policies for need-based aid.

- What is the typical mix of grant/loan aid for a low income freshman student and how much of “need” is likely to be covered?
- What other sources of assistance may be available? How much work/study assistance is available?

Academic Affairs/Deans/Faculty/Advising

15. Please describe the structure of developmental/remedial education at the institution and the sequence of developmental courses.

- How does the institution determine who enrolls in developmental education and for what period of time?
- Are students required to enroll in developmental courses prior to other course taking, and how strongly are sequencing requirements enforced?
- What percentage of new students enrolls in developmental classes in math? In English?
- What is the “progression” out of developmental education—i.e., how long do students typically take these classes and what percentage of those who take developmental courses complete the sequence and enroll in credit courses?
- What evidence is there about the impact of the institution’s approach to developmental education on retention and completion?

16. Please describe the advising process for new freshmen and continuing students.

- Who advises students about which courses to take?
- When does advising take place? When are students advised to declare majors?
- Is admission to some majors restricted, and if so, how?
- What are the policies with respect to dropping courses? How commonly do students drop courses?
- Does the college have an early alert or warning system to alert advisors when students are having academic difficulty?
- At what GPA level is any action taken, and what actions are taken? How common are such actions?
- What evidence is there on the effects of the advising process on continuation, transfer or completion?
- Were, or are, there any challenges in advising that should receive policy or process changes?

17. What, if anything, does the institution do to “structure” the first year at the institution? Please describe any special programs, such as a pre-freshman “bridge” program, freshman seminars or college success courses, learning communities, “home base” or affinity groups, educational opportunity programs, study groups, other.

- Who is likely to be encouraged to enroll in special programs?
- What is the evidence of impact on retention or completion?
- When were these programs first developed? What was the motivating factor?

Institutional Research

18. Please describe your institution using data from institutional profiles, IPEDS data, institutional studies, fact books, etc.—size, student body characteristics, full/part time enrollment rates, main academic programs, main transfer programs, organization of college, faculty, etc. (whatever you think is critical).

- Also include financial data including per FTE student expenditures, annual budget with relative shares for administrative and instructional costs, tuition costs and share of resources from tuition, physical setting.
- Show trends where possible. Describe results of institutional studies of student characteristics, performance, and outcomes; instruction; services; etc.
- What experiences and academic backgrounds, educational objectives, needs, etc. do students bring to the institution?
- Do you disaggregate student data by income to consider any outcome issues? If so, what issues or concerns have been raised for policy consideration?
- Is institutional and student data used to identify problems or measure progress?

Closing

What additional considerations should we be aware of while conducting this site visit? Is there any other place on this campus you would recommend we visit?

Data/report request: We are interested in collecting any data, documentation or studies you may have regarding the characteristics, experiences and outcomes of your students. We have signed a confidentiality agreement with the institution and would appreciate any assistance you can provide in helping us develop a profile of your institution for the final report.

Appendices

B. Interview Protocols

Student Interview Guide

Introduction

We would like to learn more about your experiences here at DeVry, as well as your graduation and career plans. We will be asking you a series of questions about your interactions with staff and faculty, and participation in various programs and services. Please know that while we may ask your name in this interview, it is only to help us clarify responses, but your responses will remain anonymous in the final report.

1. First, we would like to begin by collecting some basic information from you – your age, where you are from, enrollment status (full or part-time), program or major, educational goals, and year expected to graduate, and if applicable, number of hours that you work.
2. How long have you been enrolled at this institution? Was this the first college you attended? If not, what other institutions have you attended?
3. When did you first learn about DeVry? Were you ever approached by a recruiter? Was this the first college of your choice? If not, what were your other choices and why did you select DeVry?
4. For those of you who recently graduated from high school, did you participate in any DeVry pre-college programs such as the Advantage Academy?
5. What were your educational goals when you entered this college? Have they changed? If so, how?
6. Did you receive advising on which courses to take when you first entered the institution? Was that advice helpful? Do you continue to receive academic advising?
7. Have you received any other form of academic or personnel support? Please share.
(prompt if needed) For example, mentoring, tutoring, counseling, etc. What prompted you to get this support?

8. Do you receive financial aid? If so, grants, loans, or both? Has the financial aid office been helpful in finding sources of aid to cover the cost of your education? How so?
9. Do you participate in any extracurricular activities on campus? What are they? Do they help or hinder your educational goals? How so?
10. Are there any specific courses that you have struggled to complete? Please list and explain why you feel you are struggling.
11. What specific challenges, if any, have you faced towards completing your degree?
(prompt if needed) For example: time/competing priorities outside of class such as family or work, problems navigating the campus or paperwork, challenging coursework, etc.
12. What have been your most positive experiences at the institution?
(prompt if needed) For example: any specific faculty or staff member/offices or programs/classes or activities, etc.
13. What are your plans for graduation and work? Is support offered to assist you with placement?

Thank you again for your time, we appreciate your feedback. Please be assured that your responses will remain anonymous and do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

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