

GUIDE:

Giving Undergraduates Important Direction in their Education

Vermont State Gear Up's 7th Year Program

Gear Up West, September 2013

Portland, Oregon

Linda Shiller

Vermont State GU Director

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- **Start-up fall 2012**
- **Team leader and three GU (PT) staff led the effort**
- **All current GU counselors assisted with transition to the program, events and contacts**
- **188 students served Year 1**
- **2/3 attended in-state colleges**
- **Robust services delivered to students on 12 in-state campuses**
- **Contact with OOS students varied**

Multiple Choice “Quiz”

Persistence rates are low among FG/LI students due to ...

1. Issues of affordability and financial aid
2. Student preparation
3. Lack of good instructional practices
4. Lack of good advising and support including personalized attention
5. Personal issues
6. All of the above

What barriers do your students face (or you think they will face) as they navigate the transition to college?

- **completion of their freshman year**
- **persisting through graduation**

Doing the Research ...

Successful interventions include:

- Peer mentoring/coaching
- Summer bridge programs
- Intensive “pre-orientation” and orientation programs
- Strong, accessible student support services
- Structured learning communities
- Ongoing communication: especially texting

Vermont “GUIDE” Model:

Setting the stage for seniors:

- ✓ Assigning the name “GUIDE SCHOLAR”
- ✓ Signing them up for their Facebook account
- ✓ Holding end year receptions for students and parents to celebrate their college acceptance while providing vital information to avoid summer melt and establish lines of communication
- ✓ Holding Campus workshops : Summer program scenarios” for Rising Seniors

Vermont GUIDE Model:

- **Summer contact with each student: phone and texting**
- **Pre/post survey: perceived competence, access of resources, plan for 3rd semester**
- **Pre-orientations in partnership with colleges**
- **Peer coaches/mentors assigned to students**
- **Campus events**

- **FASFA Renewal Workshops on campus**
- **Closed Facebook page with weekly postings and reminders**
- **Referral to Student Support Services**
- **Funding for enhanced campus-based programming focused on 1st year success**
- **Newsletters to students and parents**

What We Fund on Campus

- **Residential Life pilot program for orientation training and leadership development for peer leaders**
- **Parent activities during orientation weekend**
- **Summer Bridge program activities**
- **Summer Outdoor Education orientation program**
- **“Meet and Eat” events**

Multiple Choice

What key office on campus is crucial to develop a relationship with to ensure successful transitions for students entering their first year:

- 1. Financial Aid**
- 2. Registrar**
- 3. Dean of Students**
- 4. Residential Life**
- 5. Student / Academic support services**
- 6. Campus based 1st year program staff**
- 7. All of the above**

Lessons Learned from Year One

- **Need to start developing relationships with various offices and services on campus EARLY**
- **Not all students WANT to stay in touch! Be persistent and convince them**
- **FERPA challenges: address early**

Lessons Learned ...

- **Social media is extremely effective for ongoing communication with students and parents**
- **Texting is more effective than calls and e-mail**
- **Peer coaching works: time intensive but worth it**
- **Regular contact with students over the summer after graduation is vital**

Lessons Learned ...

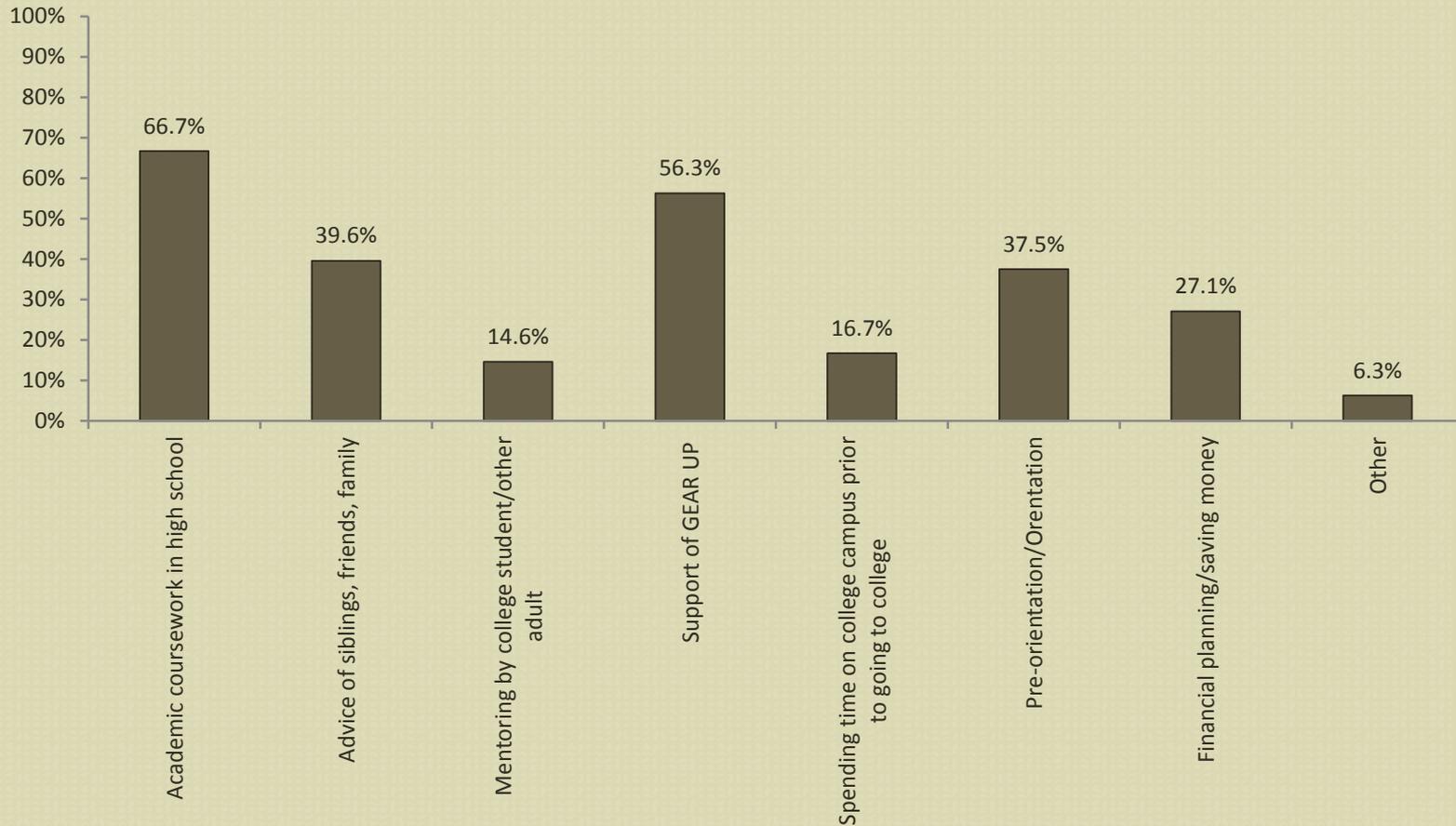
- **Students who get involved in at least one non-academic activity on campus feel more connected and are less apt to “flee”**
- **Connecting students to at least one person on campus increases their chance of success**
- **Pre-orientation programs on a college campus help with the student transition (summer bridge, outdoor education programs, “city orientations”, etc.)**

Mining the Data ... not an easy task

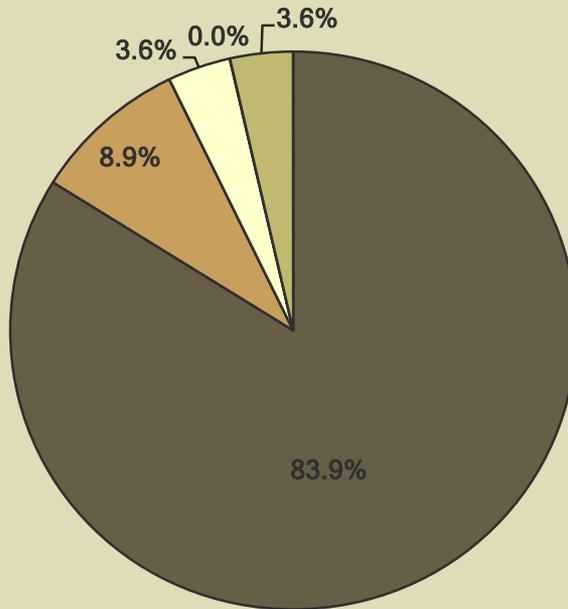
As of September 2013, we know that of the 188 students in the program:

- 51% have enrolled in their second year**
- 6.4% have not**
- 43% are not accounted for but WILL BE within the next month**
- 56% returned their post surveys to date**

What was most helpful in preparing you for the first year of college (check all that apply)?

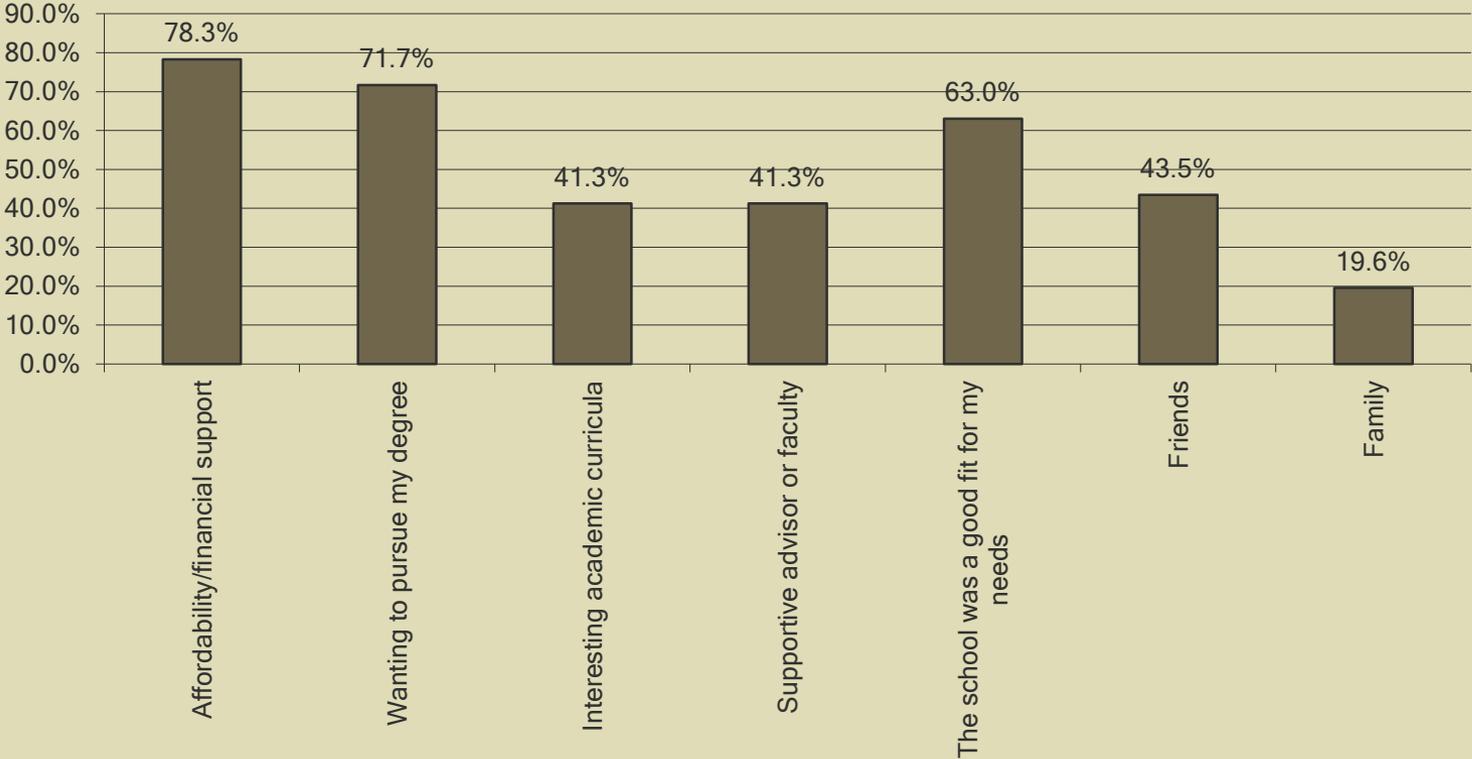


What are your plans for the Fall of 2013?



- Return to the same college/university that I attended this past year
- Transfer to a different college/university
- Take a semester off with plans to return to college/university the following term or year
- Discontinue college/university at this time, with no specific plans for returning
- Unsure

If you are returning to the same school, what were the most important factors in your decision (check all that apply)?



Questions?

Contact ...

Linda Shiller

shiller@vsac.org

or

Laurie Berryman

berryman@vsac.org