

Reasons Students Drop Courses – Survey Results

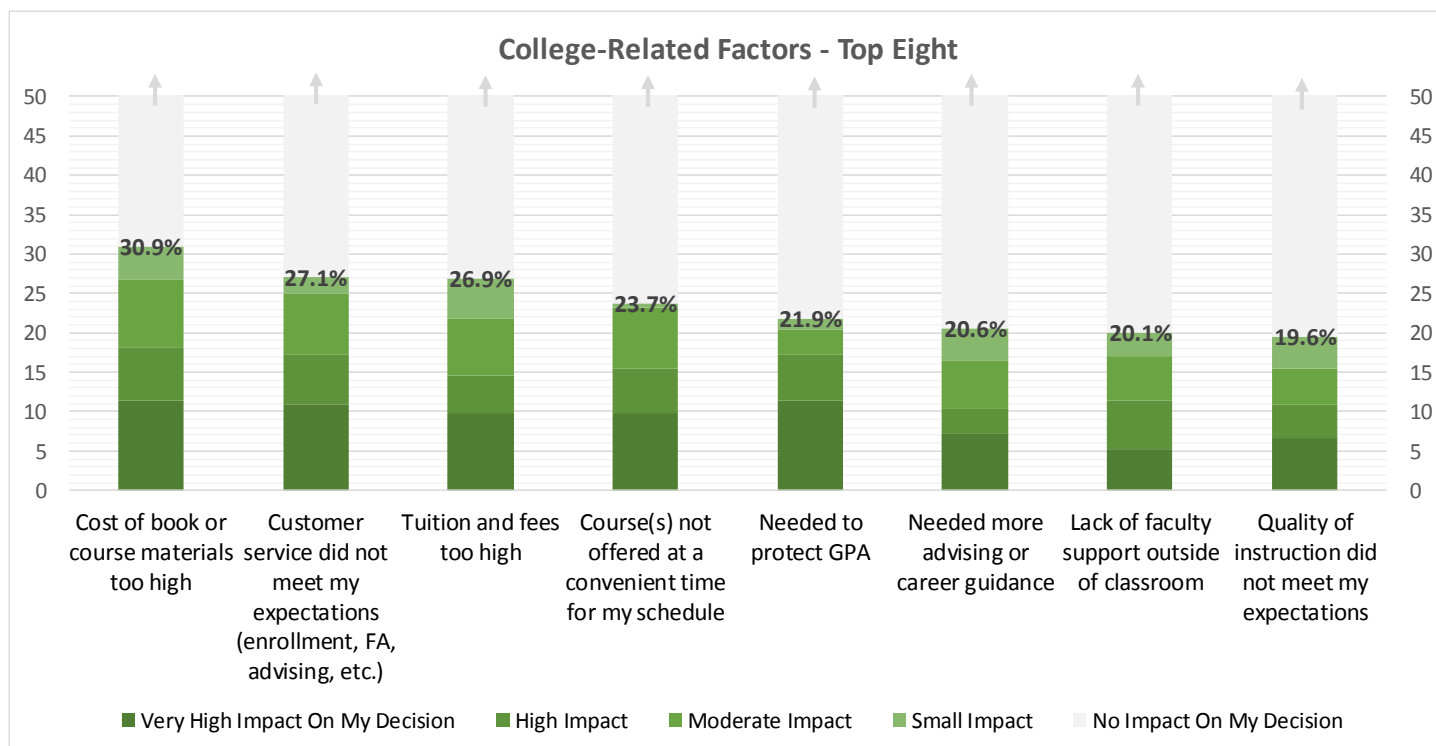
In an effort to better understand the reasons students drop their courses, a telephone survey was conducted. About 190 students provided feedback on factors that impacted their decision to drop course(s) during Fall 2013. The survey results are intended to inform improvement efforts aimed at retaining students.

When respondents were asked in an open-ended question to provide the *primary or one most important reason* for dropping course(s) at Prairie State, the top six most frequently cited reasons had to do with the following:

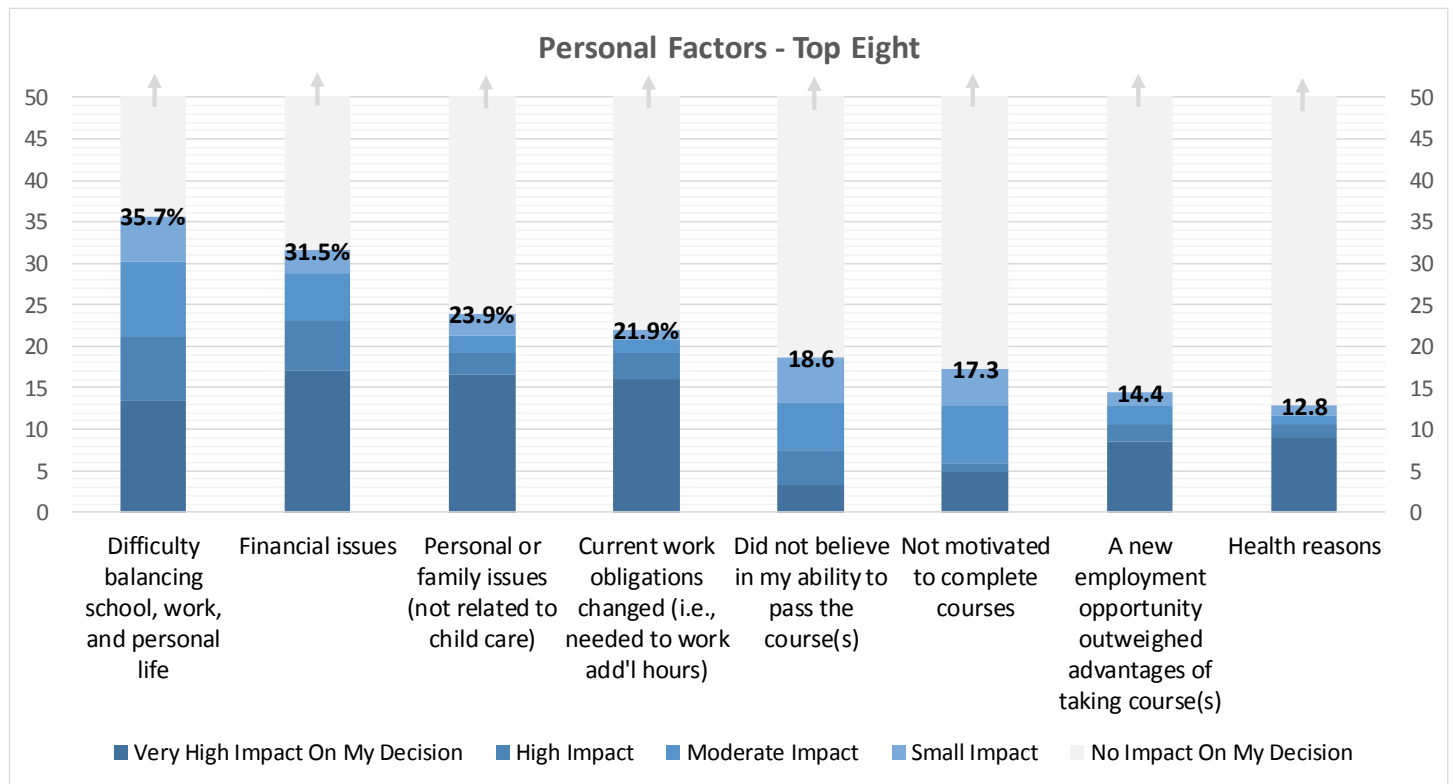
1. Financial-related issues (33 responses)
2. Job/work related issues (29 responses)
3. Personal issues (21 responses)
4. Medical issues – self/family member (16 responses)
5. Moved or had issues with living arrangements (14)
6. Chose to attend another school/no longer attending college/transferred (12)

Respondents were also asked to rate the degree to which 31 factors (15 personal and 16 college-related) impacted their decisions to drop their course(s). The mean score of all 31 factors was 1.5 on a scale of 1 to 5, with a standard deviation of .25. The scores are clustered around the mean, indicating that there is only a minor variation in the degree to which each factor influenced students' decisions to drop course(s). The top two factors with the highest mean score were both related to personal factors: 1) *difficulty balancing school, work, and personal life*, and 2) *financial issues*.

The following chart illustrates students' responses when asked to indicate the impact of **college-related factors** on their decisions to drop their course(s). About 31% of respondents indicated that *cost of books or course materials too high* had some impact (*Very High* to *Small*) on their decision.



The following chart illustrates students' responses when asked to indicate the impact of a list of **personal factors** on their decision to drop their course(s). Nearly 36% of respondents indicated that *difficulty balancing school, work and personal life* had some impact (*Very High to Small*) on their decision.



When asked whether *PSC could have done something different that would have changed their decision to drop their course(s)*, 69% responded *no*, and 31% responded *yes* (Figure 1).

When asked whether they *may return to PSC in the future to take classes*, over 50% responded *yes* or had *already registered for a subsequent term* (Figure 2).

Figure 1

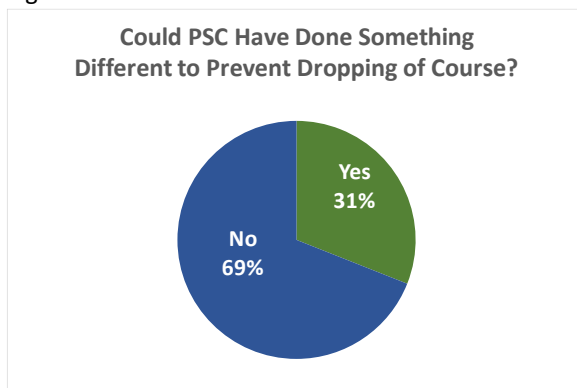
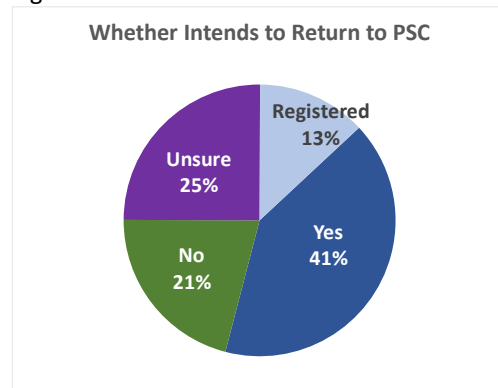


Figure 2



Summary

A wide range of issues, personal and college-related, impacted the students' decisions to drop course(s) at PSC. The degree to which the factors impacted students' decisions varies only slightly. Financial-related issues were the most frequently cited factor. Personal issues (self, family, balancing work/school/family) and work-related issues (new job or schedule changes) also had an impact. Additionally, medical issues and moving out-of-district/housing issues impacted students who dropped their course(s). Class scheduling and customer service issues were also identified as influencing the students' decisions.