



AACRAO, ACE Survey Finds Uncertainty About Current College Student Fall Enrollment Plans, Optimism About Completing Spring Coursework

April 23, 2020

A national survey administered to more than 2,000 currently enrolled U.S. college students finds that nearly one in five are uncertain about their plans for re-enrolling in the fall, or definitely are not going at all. However, 82 percent of students say they will be able to complete all or most of their spring coursework as planned, while just 5 percent indicated they will not be able to complete any courses as planned.

The survey, conducted during March and April, was commissioned by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) as part of a forthcoming white paper for ACE's National Task Force on Transfer of Credit.

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COVID-19 IMPACT

on College Student Spring Completion and Fall Enrollment Plans



The American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and the American Council on Education (ACE) partnered on a snapshot survey of over 2,000 currently enrolled U.S. students to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the ability to complete courses in the spring and on the fall enrollment plans.

COMPLETING SPRING COURSEWORK

64%

of a students will be able to complete **ALL** courses as planned

18%

of a students will be able to complete **MOST** courses as planned

12%

of a students will be able to complete **SOME** courses as planned

5%

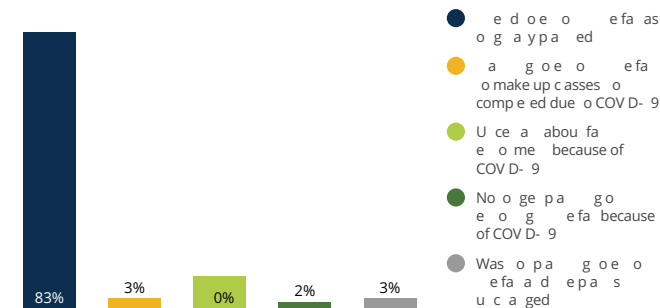
of a students will **NOT** be able to complete **ANY** courses as planned

FALL ENROLLMENT PLANS*

83% of a students intend to enroll in the fall term as originally planned before COVID-19

10% are now uncertain if they will do so

COVID-19 IMPACT ON STUDENTS' FALL ENROLLMENT PLANS



Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

*Excludes current students graduating prior to fall 2020 term

92%

of students who intend to enroll in the fall as originally planned, will stay at their current institution

n = 543

66%

of students who are uncertain about their plans to enroll in the fall due to COVID-19 say they would stay at their current institution if they return

n = 85

The COVID-19 data are derived from data collected in a national survey by ACE and AACRAO conducted between March and April 2020 on college students' experience transferring institutions. The national survey and forthcoming white paper are commissioned as part of ACE's National Task Force on Transfer of Credit with support from the Charles Koch Foundation.



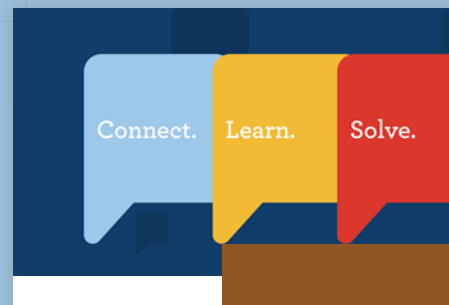
As the above infographic shows, asked about how COVID-19 is impacting fall enrollment plans, a total of 12 percent are uncertain or no longer plan to enroll at all. Meanwhile, an

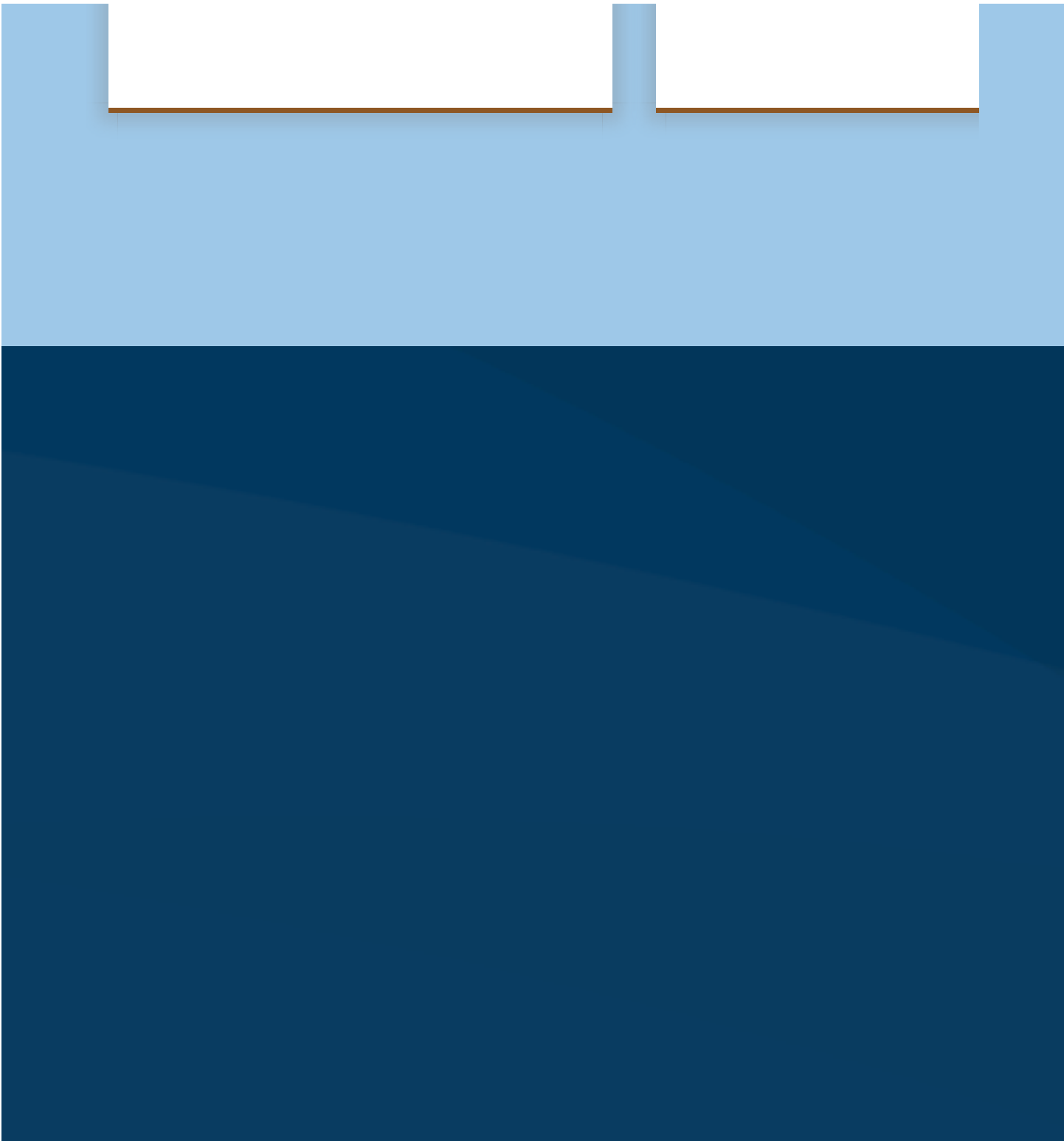
additional three percent say they are planning to enroll in the fall to make up classes not completed in the spring due to COVID-19, meaning it is not clear those students are planning to fully re-enroll. Finally, three percent say they were not planning to enroll previously and that has not changed.

All that totals 17 percent of students who are uncertain or definitely not returning, a mixed picture for institutions already suffering significant financial losses due to the pandemic and adding to a very uncertain portrait of what fall enrollment might look like.

These findings are relatively consistent with other surveys completed on prospective college students. For instance, *Inside Higher Ed* **reported** on a number of similar surveys, noting that among them, a Maguire Associates survey found 12 percent of prospective students indicated they are considering delaying enrollment to spring or fall 2021, and a Primacy survey found that 29 percent strongly or somewhat agree that "I have considered deferring attending college until COVID-19 passes." Another example cited in that story, a survey by the Art & Science Group, found that 17 percent of high school seniors indicated they definitely or likely will change their plans to attend a four-year institution in the fall, instead planning to take a gap year or enroll in a program part time.

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Aug 19, 2020 - Economy & Business

1 in 5 college students don't plan to go back this fall



Erica Pandey, author of [@Work](#)



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AXIOS



Illustration: Eniola Odetunde/Axios

As the coronavirus pandemic pushes more and more universities to switch to remote learning — at least to start — 22% of college students across all four years are planning not to enroll this fall, according to [a new College Reaction/Axios poll](#).

Why it matters: Scores of colleges were already approaching a financial cliff before the pandemic began. Steep drops in enrollment could push some over the edge.

Students are making alternative plans for the fall.

- Of those not returning to school, most — 73% — are working full time. Around 4% are taking classes at a different university, and 2% are doing volunteer work.
- Freshmen who are unwilling to sacrifice the experience of a normal first year of college appear to account for a big chunk of those who are planning not to enroll this fall. Harvard, which is going fully remote, [says](#) 20% of the students in its incoming freshman class are deferring.
- Students also recognize the risk. 85% believe they are likely (or very likely) to be exposed to the coronavirus if they're on campus this fall.

Some colleges are planning to welcome students back. And those kids are preparing for a very different college experience.

- **No more dorm life:** Of the students returning to a campus, 56% are living off-campus, 7% are in single dorms and 9% are in doubles. Many universities are limiting dorm capacities.
- **Party police:** A clear majority — 58% — of students say they'll tell the school if they see a peer violate campus safety protocol.

- **Tailgating is over:** 77% say their school shouldn't participate in football and other sports this fall.

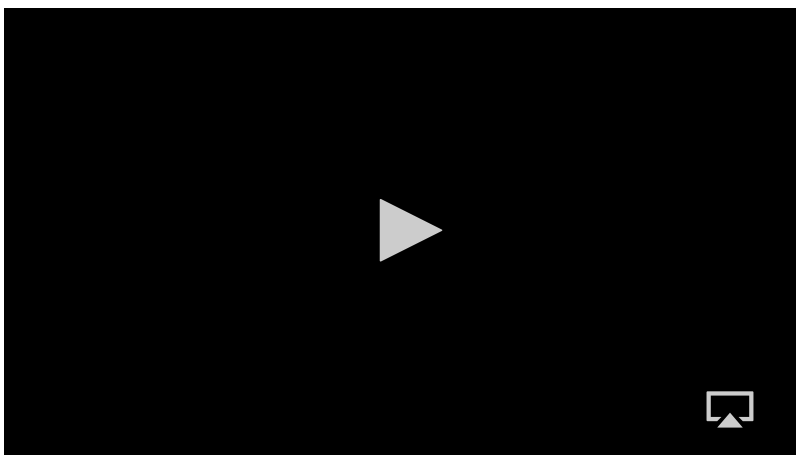
Methodology: *The poll was conducted August 16-17 from a representative sample of 798 college students with a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.*

College Reaction's polling is conducted using a demographically representative panel of college students from around the country. The surveys are administered digitally and use college e-mail addresses as an authentication tool to ensure current enrollment in a four-year institution. The target for the general population sample was students currently enrolled in accredited 4-year institutions in the United States.



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Jacob Knutson

Aug 18, 2020 - Health

Michigan State University to go online-only for fall semester

Michigan State University student union building in 2018. Photo: Education Images/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Michigan State University will hold online-only classes for its fall semester, university [President Samuel Stanley announced](#) Tuesday, just days before students were set to move onto campus.

Why it matters: Michigan State is the third major university this week to revert to fully online classes for the upcoming term. The University of Notre Dame and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [both announced online-only classes](#) following spikes in coronavirus cases.

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Rashaan Ayesh

Aug 18, 2020 - Health

Notre Dame cancels in-person classes after surge of COVID-19 cases

The University of Notre Dame [announced](#) Tuesday that it is canceling in-person classes for at least two weeks following a spike in coronavirus cases.

Why it matters: Notre Dame is the second prominent university to announce this week that it would revert back to remote learning, following the the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on Tuesday. The reversals underscore the challenges facing colleges and universities as more students are set return to campus.

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Bryan Walsh

16 hours ago - Technology

How an AI grading system ignited a national controversy in the U.K.

Illustration: Eniola Odetunde/Axios

A huge controversy in the U.K. over an algorithm used to substitute for university-entrance exams highlights problems with the use of AI in the real world.

Why it matters: From [bail decisions](#) to [hate speech moderation](#), invisible algorithms are increasingly making recommendations that have a major impact on human beings. If they're seen as unfair, what happened in the U.K. could be the start of an angry pushback.

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