

Non-Returner Survey



Summary Report

California State University, Los Angeles

2022-23 AY

Administrative Summary

The non-returner survey was administered for each term (Fall and Spring).

Non-returner (NR) students here are referred to students who have enrolled a previous term at Cal State LA but have not yet registered for the subsequent upcoming term. These students embody a segment of the campus that typically remains under-investigated and overshadowed in discussions about student success. This survey serves to 1) explore barriers students face that prevent them from continuing enrollment and 2) prompt students to enroll in the subsequent term.

NR students were surveyed in Fall and Spring of the 2022-2023 academic year (see Table 1 for distribution timeline). A total of 825 students responded to the survey with an 8.42% response rate (Table 2).

Table 1

Non-Returner Survey Email Distribution Schedule

Fall 2022	Spring 2023
7/7/2022	12/15/2022
7/14/2022	12/20/2022
7/21/2022	1/17/2023
8/4/2022	
8/10/2022	

Table 2

Total Response Rate

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Total
Total Audience	4776	5027	9803
Respondents	482	343	825
Response Rate (%)	10.1	6.82	8.42

Prompt to Enroll

Non-Returners are first asked “We noticed that you have not enrolled for Spring 2023. Are you still planning to enroll for Spring 2023/Fall 2022 at Cal State LA?” with “yes” or “no” response choices. NRs who select “yes” will be referred to as Potential Non-Returner (PNR) while those who select “no” will be referred to as Definite Non-Returner (DNR).

Of the total respondents, nearly 83% ($n = 684$) of students responded as PNR indicating intent to enroll in the following term, and nearly 62% ($n = 411$) expressed interest to meet with an advisor. PNR are then added to an academic advising outreach listserv. After each survey term administration, we measured the rate of

students who enrolled in the following term. On average, 78.4% ($n = 536$) of PNRs indeed enrolled for the following term (Table 3).

Potential Non-Returners are asked no further questions and the survey ends. Definite Non-Returners, however, are asked a series of questions exploring reasons for not continuing education and personal student goals. The data is partitioned based on students responding as PNR and DNR.

Table 3

Survey Frequencies of Students Who are Planning to Enroll for the Subsequent Term

We noticed that you have not enrolled for Spring 2023. Are you still planning to enroll for Spring 2023/Fall 2022 at Cal State LA?				
	n	%		
Yes (PNR)	684	82.9		
No (DNR)	141	17.1		
Total	825	100		
Would you like to meet with an advisor?				
	n	%		
Yes	411	61.9		
No	253	38.1		
Total	664	100		
*Students who enrolled:				
	Marked "Yes"		Marked "No"	
	n	%	n	%
Fall 2022	310	79	5	5
Spring 2023	226	77.1	12	24
Total	536	78.4	17	12.1

Note. *Percentages are subset of total respondents (e.g., 78.4% of students who marked "Yes" and did enroll). Potential Non-Returners (PNR) are respondents who marked "Yes" when asked if they are planning to enroll for the following term, while Definite Non-Returners (DNR) are those who marked "No".

Barriers to Enrollment

The top reason for DNRs not re-enrolling in courses are financial constraints (29%), followed by personal reasons (health, family, or other situations; 25%). See Table 4 for frequencies. We explore these reasons further by asking students to specify in open text the reason for not returning to college.

The primary reasons for non-returners, in order of frequency, are:

- Financial constraints (29%)
- Personal reasons such as health, family, or other situations (25%)

- Other reasons (21%)
- Transferring to another institution (18%)
- Academic challenges (16%)

Among those who selected "Other reasons," the predominant reasons included (see Table 5):

- A perceived disconnect with faculty/staff ("...counseling staff ignored my several attempts to contact them" and "Begged for help from every staff I could")
- Academic struggles: limited availability of online classes ("Offered very few online classes" and "None of the classes I need are online")
- External financial strains school ("Gas prices still high. I am transferring back to community college and then to another university that is local to me" and "I am glad for the opportunity given to attend CSULA, as much as I want to continue my education, I can't as I need to work")

After exploring barriers to re-enrollment, we asked DNRs about their educational future. Over 80% reported having plans to continue their education in the future, but only about 41% are considering doing so at Cal State LA specifically (see Table 6).

Table 4

DNRs Reasons for Not Returning to Cal State LA in the Following Term

Which of the following describes the reason why you did not return to Cal State LA in Fall 2022 (please select all that apply)?		
	n	%
Could not afford to return financially	41	29%
Personal reasons (e.g., health, family situations)	35	25%
Other*	30	21%
Transferred to another institution	26	18%
Struggled to pass classes	22	16%
I did not feel faculty/staff cared about me	21	15%
Could not get the classes that I needed	15	11%
Was not eligible to return because of grades	9	6%
Job opportunities	6	4%
Cal State LA does not have the major that I am interested in	5	4%

Note. Only includes students who marked "No" when asked if they are planning to enroll.

*= Students are asked to describe further when "Other" is selected. See Table 5.

Table 5*Summarized Text Responses for Other Reasons for Not Enrolling in Following Term*

Which of the following describes the reason why you did not return to Cal State LA in Fall 2022 (please select all that apply)?		
Topic	Description	Samples
Disconnect from Faculty/Staff	Students felt that faculty/staff did not treat them with respect	Lack of educational effectiveness regarding psy instructor
		Classes I was required to take weren't offered, counseling staff ignored my several attempts to contact them and I received no financial aid for the spring semester
		begged for help from every staff I could. My child was brutally raped and no one at this school could assist me with anything.
		Staff never knew what they were doing. Very disorganized. An embarrassment to attend this institution.
Lack of Available Online Classes	Online classes were not available	I was able to enroll into one class
		Offered very few online classes
		Classes I was required to take weren't offered, counseling staff ignored my several attempts to contact them and I received no financial aid for the spring semester
		There were no online classes available for the classes I need to take. Not everyone can return to campus in person. The school needs to realize that over the pandemic many peoples lives have changed and not everyone can return to in person instruction.
		None of the classes I need are online
Costs outside of School	Some students have other life events that reduce their ability to pay for school	both financial aid and my father is I'll. I will try to return spring 2023
		With Gas prices still high. I am transferring back to Community college and then to another University that is more local to me. Idk if there's any paperwork that I have to fill out at CSULA. I am proud to pass Calculus 1, organic chem, and recently Calculus 2. :)
		I am glad for the opportunity given to attend CSULA, as much as I want to continue my education, I can't as I need to work. I plan on getting money and hopefully comeback to finish my education.
		taking math at community college

Note. Count 24 valid text responses for this question. Only includes students who marked "Other" when asked about reasons for not enrolling.

Table 6*Questions Related to Future Education*

Do you plan to continue your education in the future?		
	n	%
Definitely not	1	.8
Probably not	2	1.6
Might or might not	22	17.3
Probably yes	22	17.3
Definitely yes	80	63
Total	127	100
Do you plan on returning to Cal State LA to continue your education in the future?		
	n	%
Definitely not	19	15.7
Probably not	18	14.9
Might or might not	34	28.1
Probably yes	11	9.1
Definitely yes	39	32.2
Total	121	100
Is there anything that Cal State LA can help you to return to school?		
	n	%
Yes	54	44.6
No	67	55.4
Total	121	100

Table 6

Summarized Text Responses when Asked What Cal State LA Can Do to Help Them Return

Is there anything Cal State LA can do to help you return to school?		
Topic	Description	Sample
Financial	Students describe financial difficulty with attending college	Provide more financial help and information or opportunities to live outside student housing. Especially if your home is not financially, mentally and emotionally supportive
		Reducing the cost of enrollment and fees associated with units per class
		Help me with some financial aid
		Provide support on how I can come back and if there are possibilities of getting more financial help
		It's too expensive to attend school so financial aid would help
Online Classes	Lack of available online classes for needed courses prevented some students from returning to university, especially if they have another job or life circumstances (e.g., single parent)	Provide support on how I can come back and if there are possibilities of getting more financial help
		more online classes
		Offer more online classes and support for students
		Offer more online classes and online programs
		If they offered more online classes or night time class options for full time workers.

		Hopefully my major will offer online classes for management. And figure out ways to not receive a student loan for my education, and ensure my fathers recovery from his stroke.
		Add more online classes for psychology (my major)
		Offer more online classes for Animation majors
		I'm a full time mom, it would be more helpful if there was more online class for social work and sociology
Class Registration Support	Students describe needing support with registering for the correct major classes to graduate timely	What choices can be made to enroll in classes for next term.
		Just provide the help I need with my major and which classes to take
		I want to see what I need to graduate and know opportunities after graduation. I take blame for not reaching out to the school, I can count with one hand how many times I've been on campus, I just feel disconnected with my education at the time.
		Switch my major
Classroom Management	In their current classes, some students experience some instructors being unreasonable or adding unnecessary stress to the coursework	I was able to enroll into a class I failed again I am on the waitlist.
		Have online classes available. Have better math teachers who actually teach their students and take their time instead of making sarcastic remarks when students ask a question. Teacher stated, "We just read that" and rolled his eyes. School failed me and made me depressed.

		I was forced to drop a class because I missed 1 quiz. NO matter how high of a grade I would get on the following quizzes, I had no chance to redeem my grade despite missing class due to a personal medical matter.
		Maybe not add so much stress to students by putting workload on difficult assignments that consume a lot of time
Mental Health Support	Some students described needing mental health support to continue university, especially when negative life events occur	My father recently passed and I've been struggling with that. I have a psychiatric team that provides medication, therapies, resources, support and even financial support. I also am a member of Project Rebound, who have also shown me much empathy and support throughout this process. I'm still grieving. I was a daddy's girl, I was named after my father and this transition has been very hard on me. I haven't given up on school but I know that I couldn't thrive academically at this time. I would still be interested in school event emails or even theatre productions, I love Cal State LA, I want to show my support. But I cannot attend at this time.
		Provide more financial help and information or opportunities to live outside student housing. Especially if your home is not financially, mentally and emotionally supportive
		Better mental health support and access to disability assistance. Faculty and administration that actually care about student well being.

		I thought I wanted to be part of this system, but the staff and admin are the most unorganized and unhelpful, rude humans and I can not for the life of me understand how anyone would want to attend this school after what I went through trying to pass. My child was brutally raped and my professors, all but one, were unaccommodating and basically unreachable to assist me with not having to drop out. My whole life is in ruins and CALSTATELA played a HUGE roll in that
		More accessible counseling, especially for DSS students

Note. Count 49 valid responses. Only students who marked “Yes” when asked “is anything Cal State LA can do to help you return to school?” are asked for an open text response.