

**Communicating
Opportunity
Value and
Information
During Crisis**

**Research
Series**

**Focus:
Student Retention
and Academic
Experience**



Student Retention and Academic Experience

COVID Research Series

The COVID research series reports on a national survey of college and university students whose institutions transition to remote learning in the spring of 2020 in response to COVID 19.

Focus:

- Plans for Fall 2020
- Learning Experience
- Academic Support
- Academic Challenges

Plans for Fall 2020

68% of participants plan to continue their education next fall.

Many students are planning or contemplating a change of institution.

When asked about their plans for fall of 2020, continuing students indicated...

- **68%** plan to **stay** at their current institution
- **17%** plan to **change** institutions
- **9%** are **contemplating** a change
- **5%** plan to stop out for at least a semester and **return** to their institution
- **1%** plan to permanently **leave**



Plans for Fall 2020

More continuing students plan to stay at public four-year universities than at private four-year universities.

Public Four-Year Institutions

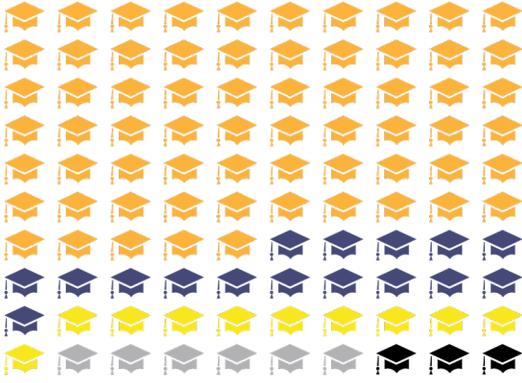
- **75%** plan to stay
- **19%** plan to change or contemplate change



■ Stayer (74.59%)
 ■ Changer (12.17%)
■ Contemplator (6.35%)
 ■ Returner (5.82%)
■ Leaver (1.07%)

Private Four-Year Institutions

- **65%** plan to stay
- **26%** plan to change or contemplate change



■ Stayer (65.45%)
 ■ Changer (15.83%)
■ Contemplator (10.07%)
 ■ Returner (5.78%)
■ Leaver (2.88%)

Learning Experience

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While continuing students feel prepared to advance in the fall, many reported challenges with the transition to online learning this spring.

73%

Agree or Strongly Agree

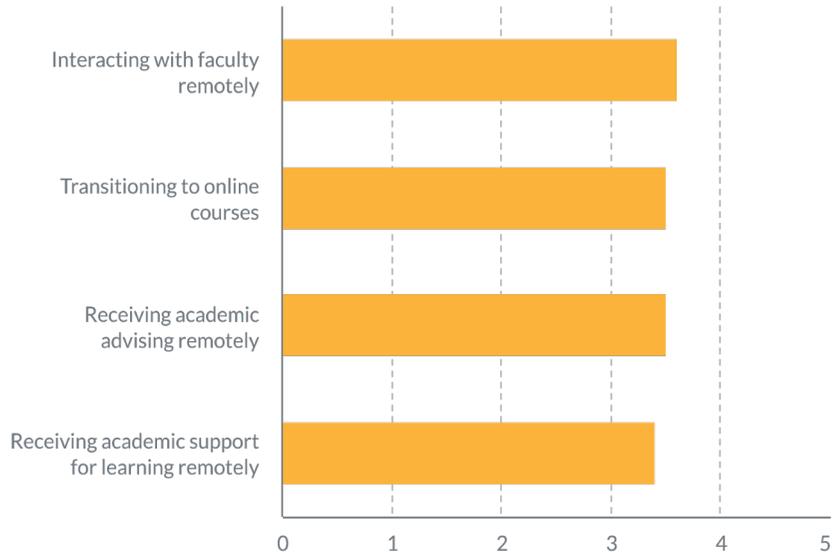
**I mastered my coursework this semester.
I am prepared to advance next year.**

|| Working remotely has been a challenge ||
for everyone, but I think the ones who
are struggling the most are the teachers
who aren't familiar with newer forms of
technology.

Learning Experience

Students reported moderate satisfaction with their learning experience and the online transition. All scores were slightly above mid-point.

Student Satisfaction COVID Transition – Learning Experience (1-Very Bad, 5-Very Good)

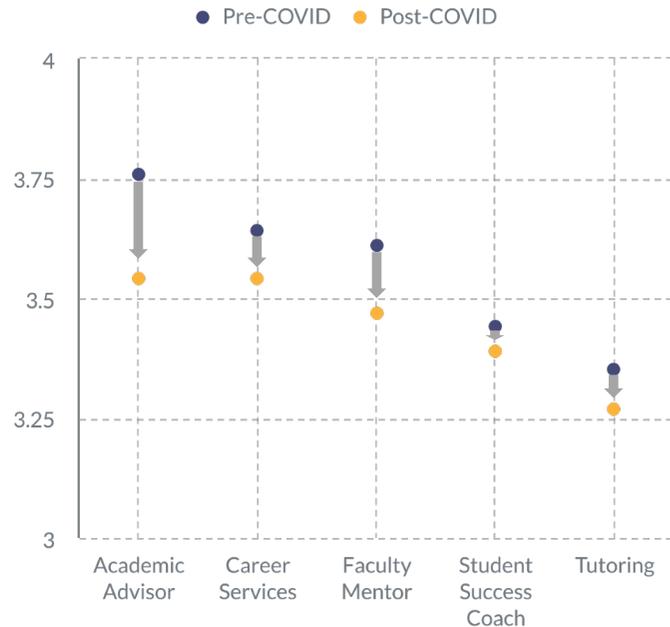


|| I have managed to maintain most of the valuable relationships that I forged with my instructors prior to the pandemic. ||

Academic Support

Student assessment of the impact of academic support services on their success dropped pre-COVID to post-COVID.

Impact of Services on Student Success Pre-COVID vs. Post-COVID (1-Low, 5-High)



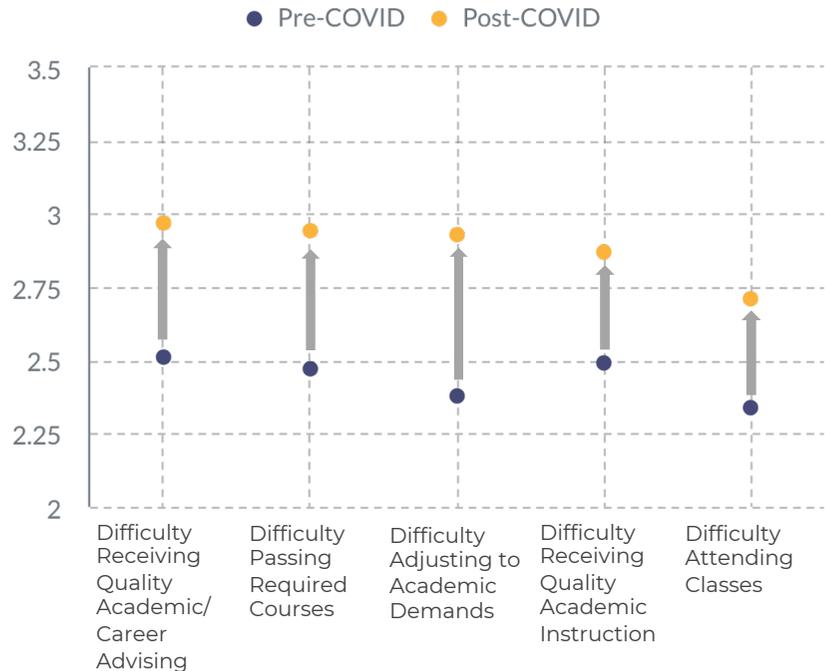
■ I am struggling learning online and I'm not getting much help. ■

Academic Challenges

Academic challenges increased post-COVID.

The most significant increases were for adjusting to academic demands and getting quality advising.

Level of Challenge Pre-COVID vs. Post-COVID (1-Minor, 5-Major)



Strategies for Fall 2020

Focus on quality academic experiences that can flexibly transition between in-person and online delivery.



RETENTION

Ask your students about their plans to return
Identify and “re-recruit” changers and contemplators



TRANSFER

Review transfer processes and allow for flexibility
Expand transfer advising and transition support



ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Expand outreach and online effectiveness
Understand post-COVID challenges and intervene



INSTRUCTION

Continue to develop flexible teaching modalities
De-brief spring outcomes and address challenges



PROGRESSION

Review pre-requisite outcomes for required courses
Evaluate dismissal and probation policies



Survey Methodology

Data were collected from April 29 to May 4, 2020. More than 500 participants were traditional-aged college students (18-25) located in the United States whose campus had transitioned to remote instruction during spring of 2020.

Demographics:

- 55% male, 45% female
- Average Age: 22
- Residence: 45 of 50 States

Institutions:

- 46% four-year publics
- 34% four-year privates
- 20% two-year institutions

Additional information on methodology available upon request.

TorchStar Education

TorchStar Education, Inc. is a consulting firm focused on higher education. We help institutions understand stakeholder perspectives and use insights to improve student recruitment, retention, and philanthropy outcomes.

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