# Stop out student survey

### Demographics

To determine if there were any specific subgroups that were more likely to stop out – not reenrolling for Summer 2020, Fall 2020, or Spring 2021 of students who were enrolled in Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 – the relative proportions of demographic subgroups for Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 were compared to those who had stopped out. This group yielded a few notable differences. Fewer first time (-5%) and continuing students (-8%) stopped out, while returning (~8%) and K-12 students (4%) were more likely to stop out.

Low income students were more likely to stop out than non-low income (~4%).

Our major age demographic of 18-22 was less likely to stop out (-11%) and while older age groups were more likely, only the 29-39 age group stopped out at a rate of over 3%.

There were no major differences on the basis of race/ethnicity, first generation status, or gender. Stopped out students enrolled in an average of 5 units and a median of 4 units in their last term at the district (either Fall 2019 or Spring 2020).

### Loss of low income students

When comparing Fall 2019 to Fall 2020, there was a reduction in the proportion of the student body that qualified as low income (6% decrease) this change was accentuated due to a contraction in the low income population of about 1,500 students, while non-low income remained stable. The loss of low income students appears to be from fewer low income students enrolling (-1%) and fewer low income students continuing (-3%). The students who did not continue would have been identified in the stop out survey while the lack of new low income enrollments would have been missed. These low income students were likely first generation students as well. As first generation, low income students also showed a 3% decrease Fall to Fall while first generation, non-low income students increase by 2%.

## The Stopped out student survey

Approximately 11,000 stopped out students were texted or emailed a link to a survey inquiring about the reasons they had stopped out and what could be done to support them. 824 (~7%) students responded with female students overrepresented and Asian students, and White non-Hispanic students slightly overrepresented. Hispanic students were slightly underrepresented within this sample.

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| --- | --- |
| **Selection** | **Count** |
| I had to prioritize my job/work | 196 |
| I prefer not to enroll in online classes | 190 |
| Other | 172 |
| I am attending college elsewhere | 135 |
| I needed to prioritize my care for children/family | 101 |
| I am taking a break from school for now | 95 |
| I needed to focus on my mental health/wellness | 81 |
| I could not (and cannot) afford to attend right now | 81 |
| I moved out of the area | 80 |
| I needed to focus on my physical health/wellness | 55 |
| I do not have a quite place to study | 47 |
| I did not feel supported while I was enrolled | 40 |
| My Wifi and internet access are unreliable | 29 |
| I could not find a program | 27 |

### Stopped out survey responses

Students were given 13 predefined selections and a free response box to indicate why they had not re-enrolled and were allowed to select all relevant options.

Of the students who selected Other, there were five main themes from their free response data: They had completed course requirements/graduated/transferred, they were waiting to be in person, college processes had created an impediment to their re-enrolling, various life reasons, and a lack of classes that they were interested in.

When examining those who prefer not to enroll in online classes, low income students are slightly over represented – 26% selecting this option compared to 22% of respondents. Additionally, White non-Hispanic students were more likely to indicate that they prefer to not enroll in online classes while most other race/ethnic subgroups were less likely or equally likely to select this option.

When asked if they would re-enroll if there were both face-to-face and online course options, 52% of respondents indicated that they would return.

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| **Selection** | **Count** |
| I need to prioritize my job/work | 134 |
| I moved out of the area | 100 |
| Other | 86 |
| The course(s) I need are not offered at the time(s) I need them | 79 |
| I need to focus on my mental health/wellness | 66 |
| I cannot find a program of study that interests me | 64 |
| I need to prioritize my care for children/family | 55 |
| I need to focus on my physical health/wellness | 52 |
| I cannot afford to attend college right now | 51 |

The remaining 48% were asked what the three largest obstacles to their re-enrollment were. Respondents were only allowed to select up to three items. The main themes for those that selected other were transferred/graduated/completed course requirements, they have switched schools, or they prefer in person instruction.

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate what the top three things San Mateo Community Colleges could do to support their return to college in the future. Once again students were only allowed to select up to three options. Of those who selected Other, over half indicated None/Not applicable, a minority indicated a return to in person instruction, and finally more diverse course offerings.

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| --- | --- |
| **Selection** | **Count** |
| More scheduling options: getting the courses I want when I want them | 328 |
| Financial Support | 323 |
| Help choosing courses programs etc. | 203 |
| Personal counseling | 152 |
| Help with registering for courses | 146 |
| Other | 130 |
| Transportation to/from campus | 88 |
| Support with technology | 86 |
| Support with accessing food and/or housing | 82 |
| Support with childcare | 51 |

### Summary

The students who stop out were generally similar to the overall population of students who attended Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. While a preference for in person instruction was a concern for a subset of respondents, it was never the most common issue. Prioritization of work and flexibility around course scheduling were recurring themes throughout the survey.