Using Multiple Approaches to Understand Why Students Don't Continue at UIC:
A Report on the Students who didn't return for Fall 2013

prepared by the Office of Academic & Enrollment Services

Summary: This report examines two facets of the fall 2013 '*eligible but not enrolled*' population. These are undergraduate students who did not continue at UIC, although they were academically eligible. First, we report on fall enrollment at other institutions using the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Student Tracker data. Second, we administered a brief survey of these students to seek better information on the factors that contribute to a not enroll decision. Sixty-four percent of students who did not enroll were in good academic standing at the end of spring 2013 term. Of the 'non-enrolled' students, 50% were enrolled at another institution during fall 2013 term.

Background

A total of 15,300 degree-seeking undergraduates completed the Spring 2013 term at UIC. Of that total, 2678 students graduated at the end of spring or summer term. A total of 321 were dropped for academic reasons. The total number of returning students enrolled in Fall 2013 was 11,370, thus, 930 students were eligible to return, but did not enroll. Without additional information, we can only speculate on the reasons these students did not enroll. Some might have transferred, others just stopping out. Anecdotal evidence suggests a myriad of factors contribute to the decision to not continue at UIC – academic reasons, financial factors, and personal influences. This report examines two facets of the fall 2013 '*eligible but not enrolled*' population:

- Tracking subsequent enrollment at other U.S. postsecondary institutions using the National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker; and
- Understanding the reasons for not returning to UIC through a survey of the students. (A copy of the survey questions is found in Appendix A).

This is the second year that Academic & Enrollment Services has administered this survey. Some comparisons to the Fall 2012 findings are included.

The Target Sample

The target sample is the approximately 900 undergraduate students who were eligible to enroll for the Fall 2013 term, but did not enroll. This sample includes students in good academic standing and on probation; and students at all class levels (freshmen to seniors). Table 1 provides a summary profile of the students in the population for the analysis.

TABLE 1: Characteristics of the Students Eligible to Enroll Fall 2013, but Did Not Enroll (N=930)					
Class Level		**Race/Ethnicity**		**College (Spr. 2013)**	
Freshman	27%	Afr Amer	9%	CBA	11%
Sophomore	24%	Hispanic	26%	Education	1%
Junior	19%	Asian	17%	Engineering	13%
Senior	30%	Caucasian	42%	CADA	7%
		Other	7%	LAS	63%
Academic Standing				Nursing	1%
Good Standing	64%			AHS	4%
Probation	36%			CUPPA	<1%

Methods

This project is designed to gather information about UIC undergraduates who decide not to continue their enrollment. The sample was 930 UIC undergraduates who completed the Spring 2013 term and were eligible to enroll in the Fall 2013, but did not enroll.

Phase I: In order to determine if the students were enrolled at another institution during the fall 2013 term, a request was submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Student Tracker system. As a member of the Student Tracker service, UIC is able to track student enrollment at over 3300 U.S. institutions. A request for subsequent enrollment of the not -enrolled students (N=930) was submitted in December 2013.

The file with subsequent enrollment records from NSC was matched to UIC records and analyzed to provide summary information disaggregated by student characteristics.

Phase II: The second phase of the analysis was designed to gather information about students' reasons for not continuing their enrollment at UIC. A brief survey asking students about the factors wthat influenced their decision not to enroll during the Fall 2013 was administered to the 930 students who were eligible, but did not enroll.

Results

Phase I Results: From the 930 records submitted to NSC, a data file yielding 428 student enrollment records was returned to UIC. There were an additional three records for which subsequent enrollment information was blocked either by the student or by the institution. Of the 428 students enrolled at another institution:

- 428 students (46%) were attending 95 different institutions
- 45% were attending a four-year institution
- 90% were attending an institution in Illinois
- 70% were in *'Good Standing'* at the end of spring 2013 term at UIC.

Table 2 shows characteristics of the students with a subsequent enrollment record.   **Table 3** shows the top 25 subsequent enrollment institutions.

Table 2 : Students with Subsequent Enrollment Record		
Race/Ethnicity	**Did Not Return**	% with subsequent enrollment record
African American	80	35%
Hispanic	239	40%
Asian	160	50%
Caucasian	387	51%
Other	64	42%
Total	930	46%
Academic Standing		
Good Standing	597	50%
Probation	333	39%
Class Level		
Freshman	255	61%
Sophomore	219	61%
Junior	175	49%
Senior	281	19%

Table 3 : Top 25 Subsequent Enrollment Institutions			
College Name	Total	2YR/4YR	# left UIC in *Good Standing*
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS @ URBANA	36	4	35
COLLEGE OF DUPAGE	26	2	14
CITY OF CHICAGO - WRIGHT COLLEGE	25	2	12
OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE	23	2	18
CHAMBERLAIN COLLEGE OF NURSING	19	4	18
MORAINE VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	19	2	7
JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE	18	2	9
CITY OF CHICAGO - HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE	16	2	4
WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE	16	2	6
COLLEGE OF LAKE COUNTY	15	2	11
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY	13	4	10
TRITON COLLEGE	11	2	9
CITY OF CHICAGO - RICHARD J. DALEY COLLEGE	9	2	3
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY	9	4	8
CITY OF CHICAGO - MALCOLM X COLLEGE	8	2	5
SOUTH SUBURBAN COLLEGE	8	2	6
CITY OF CHICAGO - HARRY S TRUMAN COLLEGE	7	2	4
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY	7	4	4
CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY	6	4	5
COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO	6	4	5
ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE	6	2	4
GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY	6	4	5
PRAIRIE STATE COLLEGE	6	2	4
SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY	6	4	6
WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	5	2	2

Phase II Results: A total of 138 students responded to the survey – a 15% return rate. While this is a low response rate, we fully expected that a number of students had disengaged from UIC and would be reluctant to respond. Results reported in this section should be interpreted with the caveat of the low response rate. However, it is useful to examine the feedback both in the survey responses and the open-ended responses to understand the students' experiences and perspectives.

    Table 4 provides a profile of the survey participants. The distribution of the participants across racial/ethnic categories and college of enrollment approximate the distribution of the target population. A total of 102 students -- 75% of the respondents were in academic 'good standing' at the end of spring 2013 term. That is, their cumulative course performance at UIC did not signal academic difficulty.

Table 4: Survey Target Population and Respondent Profile				
	Population (N=930)		Respondents (N=138)	
Race/Ethnicity	**count**	**%**	**count**	**%**
African American	80	9%	13	9%
Hispanic	239	26%	42	30%
Asian	160	17%	19	14%
Caucasian	387	42%	54	39%
Other	64	7%	10	7%
Total	930	100%	138	100%
College				
CBA	99	11%	13	9%
Education	11	1%	1	<1%
Engineering	123	13%	22	16%
CADA	62	7%	5	4%
LAS	584	63%	94	68%
AHS	40	4%	3	2%
Nursing	7	1%	0	0%
CUPPA	3	<1%	0	0%
Academic Standing				
Good Standing	597	64%	102	75%
Probation	333	36%	36	25%
Class Level				
Freshman	255	27%	43	31%
Sophomore	219	24%	28	20%
Junior	175	19%	34	25%
Senior	281	30%	33	24%

The survey allowed students to indicate factors that influenced their decision to not enroll for fall 2013. The factors were grouped as: academic, financial, and personal. Within each set of factors, students were able to indicate multiple factors within each group or indicate that none of the factors listed in that group influenced their non-enrollment.   **Table 5** reviews the responses to the survey questions. Also shown are the responses to the same question for the Fall 2012 non-returning student survey.

A few general observations about the survey responses are noted below:

- The most frequently cited factor was a change in students' financial situation.
- Overall, students cited an academic factor more frequently than financial factors or personal factors in their reason for not enrolling for fall term.
- Students indicated combination of academic influences (more than one factor), more frequently than multiple financial factors or personal factors.
- Issues around academic advising, academic support and feeling overwhelmed (all academic factors) were always cited in conjunction with other academic factors, i.e., never cited as the sole academic factor.
- Students citing inadequate academic advising as an academic factor decreased from the Fall 2012 administration of the survey.

Table 5: Summary of Non-Returning Student Survey Responses

Q: How likely are you to enroll at UIC in Spring 2014?

Definitely will	24	17%
Probably will	15	11%
Might or might not	27	20%
Probably won't	21	15%
Definitely won't	51	37%

Q: Following is a list of academic/financial/personal factors that may or may not influence your decisions about enrollment. Please read each statement and check those that contributed to your decision to not enroll at UIC for the Fall 2013 term. (Check all that apply)

	Fall 2013	*Proportion*	
Academic Factors	Count	Fall 2013	Fall 2012
Achieved all that I wanted to achieve at UIC	10	7%	3%
Changed my major/academic interest	22	16%	11%
Courses were not challenging	6	4%	4%
Dissatisfied with my grades	30	22%	20%
Couldn't register for the classes I needed	22	16%	17%
Felt overwhelmed by the demands of college	21	15%	17%
Did not receive adequate academic advising	32	23%	34%
Did not receive adequate academic support	20	15%	16%
Unhappy with quality of instruction	37	27%	34%
Unsure about my academic goals	16	12%	14%
Transferred to another institution	43	31%	42%
None of these factors contributed to decision	*46*	*33%*	*21%*
Financial Factors			
Experienced a change in my financial situation	47	34%	26%
Did not anticipate the full cost to attend UIC	17	12%	12%
Feel the education at UIC is not worth cost	25	18%	29%
Did not receive adequate financial aid	42	30%	32%
My job interferes with my academic success	17	12%	13%
Wanted to get work experience	15	11%	5%
None of these factors contributed to decision	*48*	*35%*	*32%*
Personal Factors			
Health related problem (personal or family)	17	12%	9%
Didn't seem to fit in at UIC.	27	20%	20%
Dissatisfied with campus social life	29	21%	21%
Change in personal circumstances	33	24%	18%
Missed my friends and family from home.	5	4%	7%
Could not balance work and school	19	14%	11%
Could not balance family and school	9	7%	14%
None of these reasons contributed to decision.	*55*	*40%*	*42%*

The final item on the survey was an open-ended question which simply asked: "Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about why you are not enrolled at UIC this fall?".

A total of 82 students (59% of the students) provided some feedback. Twenty-eight responses reported simply administration or personal factors that were key influences –e.g, pregnancy, military duty, simply completing an incomplete course grade before graduating, stopping-out.

The remaining 54 comments covered a range of topics and sometimes addressed multiple concerns. Topics, in order of the frequency of the mentions included:

- Academic concerns including classroom teaching, academic program and advising
- Financial concerns including financial aid, cost to attend, and cost/benefit for value
- Course offerings/scheduling concerns
- Campus life and physical plant

Representative quotes below with student class level and college convey sentiments on some topics of concern:

Classroom

Most of the professors/ TAs could barely speak English, which caused confusion and held back my learning ability for those courses. They did not communicate well at all.
Sophomore, LAS

My overall experience at UIC has been pretty much negative. Most professors that I had didn't seem to be concerned with the students they we're teaching. Most TAs I've had have been bad. They have had bad English skills which interfered with them teaching. There is one TA in particular that had absolutely no business teaching. He was always late, was never present during his office hours, and never would take the time to help students that needed it. There is also a professor named ▮▮▮▮▮ who was completely disorganized.
Sophomore, CBA

I was unsatisfied with the engineering program at UIC. I personally felt that the faculty was not very helpful or engaging.
First year, ENGIN

Academic Program

I was not happy that I would not be graduating in four years. I did not feel it was necessary for me to stay an extra year because of my major. It is quite scandalous that UIC is known for graduating their students later than intended. Everyone jokes about being 5 year+ students!
First year, EDUC

My major is philosophy, I do understand that philosophy is not a popular major; however, that does not give a right for UIC to assign graduate students to teach classes. Three out of the four of my professors in the Spring semesters were graduate students .. I am very upset about the philosophy department at UIC, did not expect such a professional university to provide me with inexperienced graduate students to teach, and will not come back to UIC. I will never recommend going UIC to any of my friends.
 Junior transfer, LAS

The art program kept getting gutted and compressed. That simple.
Sophomore, CADA

I did not make it into the Nursing school.
Junior, LAS

Advising

I can finish my major requirement - which is one class to be able to graduate. I met again with an advisor last semester and he told me I would need to finish 30 credit hours at UIC to be able to graduate. Had I known that it would take that much more time and money I wouldn't even consider returning. I wasted my time and money there (at UIC) last semester for nothing. So, that is the reason why I left. I am at another university where instructors and advisors care more about you than making money.
Readmitted Senior, LAS

Did not receive adequate academic advice and was struggling with cost versus educational goals and opportunities. Needed to finish some gen ed's to maintain my career path and found COD could provide this for me at a much lower cost.
Sophomore, LAS

Financial

Many classes I need are available at community colleges for a much lower cost (close to 10% of what UIC charges) After I have exhausted all those classes I will then return to UIC to finish my degree.
Sophomore ENGIN

I loved UIC but the cost was overwhelming and I found very little leniency with the financial aid department. I had to pay much more out of pocket than anticipated just to keep myself open to register.
First year, LAS

Campus life/Facilities

As diverse as the school is, I found that a lot of the students were very 'clique-y' and would only surround themselves with people that were 'like them' which made it seem like anyone who wasn't like them were outsiders. ..I will not be attending this school again.
First year, AHS

Campus life is dead and it seems that powers that be want it that way. No school spirit.
 Junior, ENGIN,

I did not like the dorms at all. They were disgusting and the staff was horrid.
First year, LAS

Classrooms were dirty and subpar for the cost.
First year, ENGIN

<u>Layers of discontent</u>

Honestly, the main reason I am not enrolled at UIC this fall is because of my financial situation. But if that were not the issue, I probably wouldn't have enrolled anyway because UIC is a very depressing school. I suffer from clinical depression and this may sound ridiculous, but UIC made it even worse. The campus is depressing. The teachers are depressing. The students are depressing. Everyone is so cold and angry. It seems like nobody cares about you. There's no campus life or excitement or anything of a sort.
First year, LAS

You are a business first and an institution of higher learning second. This much is clear.
Transfer Junior LAS

Closing Thoughts

      The reasons students don't persist at UIC are varied. Sometimes students find a better academic or personal fit at another institution, for other students, transfer may have always been a goal. Unfortunately, some students may not find a fit, for some students financing education is too much of a burden. Gathering information in varied ways allows us to begin to piece together a complex picture of the individual student narrative to better inform campus efforts to improve student success.

For additional information on the *Eligible but Not Enrolled Student Survey* or other aspects of this report, contact Patricia Inman, pinman@uic.edu.

APPENDIX 1: Survey Questions

1. Do you plan to enroll at UIC Spring 2014?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Not Sure

2. Are you attending another college or university during the Fall 2013 term?
   - ☐Yes   ➔➔   Which college/university?: _____
   - ☐ No

3. Which of the following ACADEMIC factors contributed to your decision not to enroll at UIC in Fall 2013? (check all that apply):
   - ○ Achieved all that I wanted to achieve at UIC
   - ○ Changed my major/academic interest
   - ○ Courses were not challenging
   - ○ Dissatisfied with my grades
   - ○ Couldn't register for the classes I needed
   - ○ Felt overwhelmed by the demands of college
   - ○ Did not receive adequate academic advising
   - ○ Did not receive adequate academic support (e.g., tutoring)
   - ○ Transferred to another institution
   - ○ Unhappy with the quality of instruction
   - ○ Unsure about my academic goals
   - ○ Transferred to another institution
   - ○ My reason(s) for not enrolling at UIC had nothing to do with these academic factors.

4. Which of the following FINANCIAL factors influenced your decision to not enroll at UIC this fall? (check all that apply):
   - ○ I experienced a change in my financial situation
   - ○ I did not anticipate the full cost to attend UIC
   - ○ I feel the education at UIC is not worth the cost
   - ○ I did not receive adequate financial aid
   - ○ My job interferes with my academic success
   - ○ I want to get work experience.
   - ○ My reason(s) for not enrolling at UIC had nothing to do with these financial factors.

5. Which, if any of the following PERSONAL factors influenced your decision to not enroll at UIC this fall? (Check all that apply):
   - ○ Health related problem (personal or family)
   - ○ I just didn't seem to fit in at UIC.
   - ○ Dissatisfied with campus social life
   - ○ A change in personal circumstances
   - ○ I missed my friends and family from home.
   - ○ Could not balance work and school
   - ○ Could not balance family and school
   - ○ My reason(s) for not enrolling at UIC had nothing to do with these personal factors.

6. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?
[TEXT BOX]
Thanks for your input!