Improving Student Retention Through Data Analytics Update

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Charting the Future of Indiana Phase 3

Partner Schools

01   **Marian University**

02   **Anderson University**

03   **Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College**

04   **University of Southern Indiana**

05   **University of Indianapolis**

Charting the Future of Indiana Phase 3

Goals and Objectives

01   **Increase retention of students at each partner school**

02   **Increase 4- and 6-year graduate rates at each partner school**

03   **Improve financial standing of each partner school**

04   **Improve the Indiana state economy through increased employment opportunities due to increased degree achievement**

Charting the Future of Indiana Phase 3

Strategies

01   **Predictive Analytics**

02   **Process Improvement**

03   **Data Infrastructure**

04   **Qualitative and Quantitative Student Survey**

THE Farnsworth GROUP

Research. Insight. Answers.

Non-Returning Student Factors

June 2023

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA®

STUDY OBJECTIVES

This report is a summary of the qualitative interviews. The content purpose is to develop an understanding of the following:

01 **Key factors that influenced school choice**

02 **Perceptions of USI's performance**

03 **Perceived value of a USI education**

04 **Reasons for not returning to USI**

Methodology

Qualitative Phone Interviews took place between March 31 and June 24

- Interview Length: 20-25 minutes
- Non-returning University of Southern Indiana students (n=7)

Executive Summary

Common Themes for the University of Southern Indiana

USI provides an exceptional campus and atmosphere.

Students loved the size and beauty of the campus. Plentiful activities made it a welcoming and safe environment.

The location, tutoring, good food, majors offered, faculty, housing, sports, scholarships, diversity, and friendly student body are other USI positives.

Even more majors are wanted.

Though USI has many classes, students wanted a different major or to pursue their major online.

One student wanted more communication, another had a hard time understanding the professors. A student in the Greek system believes USI is strict about campus activities.

Price to value perceptions are outstanding.

Cost of attending is cheaper than other schools. Students enjoyed their time at USI and experienced growth while there. The one student who didn't feel that USI was a good value was online teaching themselves during covid and wanted more interaction.

Value derived from USI includes reasonable cost to attend, feeling of home and safety, a place to learn and grow, and produced critical thinkers.

Costs were not a driving factor to not return.

Two students transferred due to their majors.

Other reasons for not returning included the cost, to finish their accounting degree sooner, distance from home, and entering the workforce.

Finances had a moderate impact as other factors for not returning.

Five students attended another school after USI.

01   **Key factors that influenced school choice**

Distance from home, majors offered, and scholarships were the factors most affecting school choice. School location, proximity to home, and environment was most important when selecting a school. Research was conducted in person or by word of mouth more than via google.

MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN SELECTING A SCHOOL

- Distance from home (3) - Closer
- Majors offered (2) – Computer science
- Scholarship opportunities (2)
- Ability to transfer credits (1)
- Location (1)
- Bigger school (1)
- Well-known school (1)
- Family school (1)
- Curriculum/program (1)

"Transfer credits and scholarship opportunities."

"The distance and location. I wanted to move to a bigger school. They were well known school."

"It was close to home, and I had a scholarship."

"I wanted to being a computer science that I why chose USI."

"Family school."

"Close to home."

"The major I needed. The curriculum. I needed to know the qualifications. Was the program good for me?"

OTHER THAN FINANCES/ SCHOLARSHIPS, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR SELECTING A SCHOOL

- Location (3)
- Close to home (3) – Wanted to commute
- Campus environment (2) – Felt right
- Major (1) – C# computer degree
- Smaller school (1)
- Perfect class size (1) – 25 students
- Liked the faculty (1)
- Inexpensive (1)

"It was close to home."

"The whole decision was based on fining a good computer degree that focused on C#. I also wanted to commute there."

"Campus environment."

"Smaller school, a happy medium. Class size was perfect at 25."

"USI was closer to home. Liked the location and USI was cheap. Liked the faculty. It felt right."

"The location of the school."

HOW RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED ON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY SCHOOLS

- Campus visit (3)
- High school guidance (2) – Advisor
- Advice from friends (2)
- Researched in high school (1)
- Phone calls with administration (1)
- Internet (1)

"Through my guidance in high school."

"In school I researched college and careers."

"I did a lot of visits and phone calls. They offered me to come down and converse with computer science. Very caring towards the students there."

"Toured the school."

"…My high school advisor."

"Researching on the internet. Getting friend and peer advise. Visiting the school."

Totals may add to more than 7 with more than 1 response allowed per student.

1. What were the most important factors you considered when selecting a school? 2. Other than finances or scholarships, what one factor would you say was most important in your decision making? 3. How did you research or find out that schools offered these programs or services that you thought were important?

02 **Perceptions of USI's Performance**

The top reasons for applying was for the majors, close to home, and cost. A student wanted the application website updated. Another was unable to speak to a live person during covid. More financial aid information was needed along with specific, not general emails.
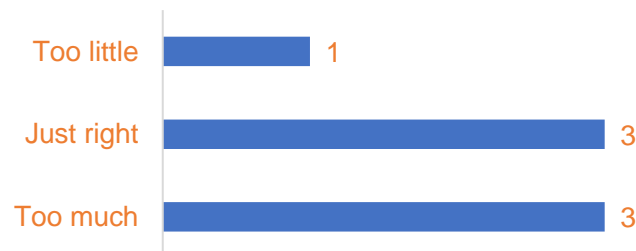
APPLICATION PROCESS

Why applied to USI
- Had the major wanted
- Close to home
- Inexpensive
- In a bigger city
- Excellent housing
- Brother attended
- Scholarship
- Great professors

Communication during the application process
- Positive – Prompt, 10 out of 10, no issues, professional
- Negative – Couldn't talk to anyone in person due to covid

Perceived amount of information

Too little	1
Just right	3
Too much	3

Communication that made USI stand out
- Discussed healthcare major
- Not straightforward
- Helpful

What they would change in USI's application process
- Outdated website
- Speak with a live person

Missing communication
- Not specific enough – Too many general automatic emails
- Wanted more financial aid information

* Underlined text was mentioned by more than 1 student.

11

The campus, activities, and food are the most-mentioned strengths of USI. No improvements were mentioned more than once. They included more communication, being less strict about campus activities, difficulty understanding some professors, and needing more campus housing.

USI OVERALL PERCEPTIONS

Positive perceptions of USI
- Campus
- Activities
- Food
- Faculty
- Atmosphere/Environment
- Tutoring
- Location
- Campus size
- Library
- Easy to communicate with students
- Life choices classes
- Safe
- Sports programs

What USI needs to improve
- Communication with students
- Too strict about campus activities
- Hard to understand professors
- More campus housing

* Underlined text was mentioned by more than 1 student.

03 Perceived value of a USI education

Almost all the students felt that USI provided a good value, citing the cost to attend was relatively cheap. Students enjoyed their time at USI. The value it provides was unique to each student and includes feeling of home, a place to learn, and USI produced critical thinkers.

VALUE OF AN USI EDUCATION

Type of Value USI Provides
- Full value – Not expensive
- Feeling of home
- Felt safe
- Place to learn and grow
- Produced critical thinkers
- Learned what a campus looks like
- Forced interaction – Made friends

USI Provided Good Value for the Cost (6)
- Cost of attending – Relatively cheap
- Enjoyed time there
- Experienced growth
- Interactive professors
- Loved it

USI is Not a Good Value for the Cost (1)
- Online teaching myself during covid

* Underlined text was mentioned by more than 1 student.

04 **Reasons for not returning to USI**

The influence of finances on not returning was mixed with the same number feeling it was more important than other factors as feeling it was the same. More financial aid or scholarships would have changed only a couple students' decision to not return to USI. Two students indicated they may have stayed if USI had their major.

FINANCIAL INFLUENCE ON NOT RETURNING

Financial influence on not returning compared to other factors:

Much less important 1	About the same 3	Much more important 3

If USI offering more financial aid or scholarship opportunities would have changed their decision:

Yes 2	No 5

Why they didn't return:
- Major
- Cost
- Wanted to finish degree sooner
- Closer to home
- Further from home
- Entered the workforce

What USI could have done to retain the student besides finances:
- Had their major

Improvements for the future:
- Eliminate language barrier
- Online courses
- Better communication with students
- More financial aid
- Hire more faculty
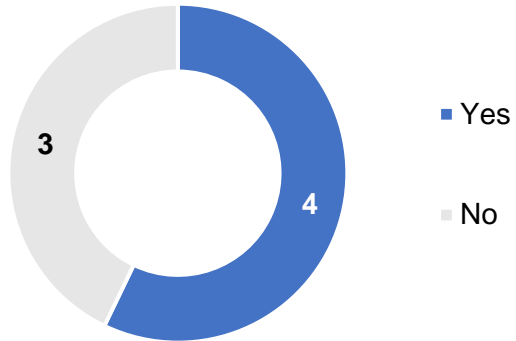- Make school more accessible

Schools attended after USI:
- Indiana University
- Purdue at Indianapolis
- Illinois College
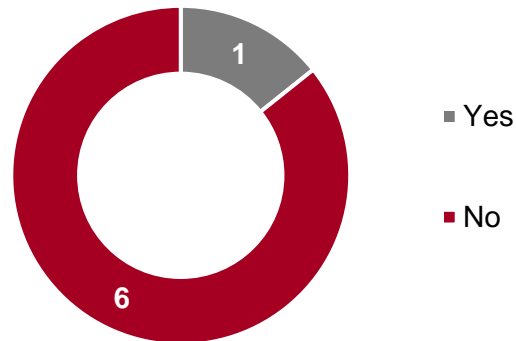- Madisonville Community College (KY)
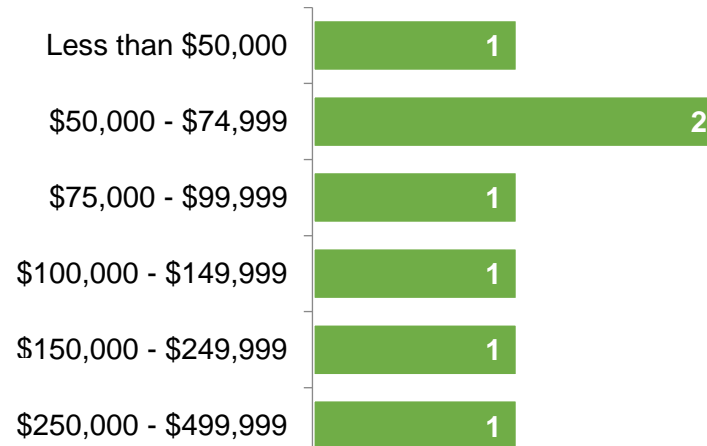
RESPONDENT PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHICS

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT

- Yes — 4
- No — 3

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Less than $50,000	1
$50,000 - $74,999	2
$75,000 - $99,999	1
$100,000 - $149,999	1
$150,000 - $249,999	1
$250,000 - $499,999	1

% COLLEGE WILL BE PAID FOR USING…

- Scholarship-Athletic
- Student loans — 17%
- Scholarship-Financial Need — 24%
- You or your family — 27%
- Scholarship-HS Academics — 31%

INVOLVED IN COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

- Yes — 1
- No — 6

ETHNICITY

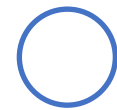|	
Caucasian or White	7

Q32. Are you a first-generation college student?
Q33. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?
Q34. Were you involved in collegiate athletics at USI?

Q35. Thinking about how you were paying for college, out of 100% what percent would you say was paid using…?
Q36. What is your household income?

Next Steps and Questions