Freezing Summer Melt: Supporting Students from College Acceptance to Matriculation

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Overview

• What is summer melt?
• Who does it impact?
• Factors that increase melt rates
• Strategies to freeze summer melt
What is summer melt?

• Traditionally used by college admissions officers to describe the phenomenon of students who pay a deposit to attend college but do not matriculate to that college in the fall

• We use summer melt to describe the phenomenon of students who have applied to, been accepted by, and made a deposit to a college, but end up not attending that college or ANY other college
Summer Melt Defined

“For college-intending students, successfully navigating the post-high school summer requires a level of financial and college literacy that may be unrelated to their ability to succeed in the classroom. As a result, students who have already surmounted many obstacles to college enrollment and who would potentially earn high returns to postsecondary education may fail to matriculate.”

- Castleman and Page, The Forgotten Summer
Who is Impacted by Summer Melt?
First-gen confounding factors

First-generation college students share confounding variables:

- Community college
  - 45% of community college students are first in their family

- Low-income
  - More likely to be from bottom income quartile

- Minority
  - 61% Latinos, 41% Black, 42% Native American
No prevalent data on the rate of summer melt. Likelihood of immediate enrollment is lower for first-generation students.

Source: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED563393.pdf
Students with lower EFC are more likely to attend a community college.
Community College Melt Rate

Students entering community college are more vulnerable due to confounding factors:

- Lower SES
- Fewer resources
- More first-gen students

![Summer Melt Rates 2-Year vs. 4 Year](chart)

Source: Castleman and Page, *A Trickle or a Torrent*
Latino males are less likely to enroll and minority males who do enroll have higher melt rates.
Melt rates are significantly higher among low socioeconomic status school districts.

Bottom quartile SES = bottom 25% of all household incomes.
Academic ability does not improve melt rates for low-income students.

Bottom quartile SES = bottom 25% of all household incomes.
Magnitude of Summer Melt

- Boston: 21%
- Providence: 33%
- Fulton County, GA: 22%
- Fort Worth ISD: 44%
- Houston area high schools: 50%
Why do students melt?
College Transition Challenges

- Difficult navigating a new and complicated process
- Interpreting award letters and tuition bills
- Complexity of federal financial aid applications and process of applying
- Difficulty completing paperwork (i.e. verification)
- Lack of and/or limited access to counseling/guidance

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The Unexpected
How do we freeze summer melt?
Strategies Across the Pipeline

Start early and plan ahead

- What are melt rates at your school or institution?
- Know your students and their needs

Share responsibility to ensure fall enrollment

- High School
  - Summer assistance
  - Proactive advocacy on student’s behalf

- College
  - Maintain strong communication with high school counselors
  - Collaborate to assist students who need summer support
  - Create opportunities for student and family summer engagement

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What can we do on-campus?

Take Ownership – Break the silos

- Who owns the class?
- Look out for red flags
- Increase inter-campus collaboration to provide support and reassurance
Student-Family Programs and Initiatives

Design programs to dispel fears and promote community and sense of belonging in meaningful ways:

- Summer bridge
- Family orientation
- Freshman camps
- Alumni-Student Send-Offs
- Phone outreach

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Utilize Power of Technology

- 68% teens text on daily basis
- 1 in 3 teens sends more than 100 texts per day
- Meet students where they are:
  - Text messaging
  - Social media

Most teens text friends daily
The % of teens who contact their friends daily by different methods, by age

Text messaging

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54% All teens

Call on cell phone

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38% All teens

Talk on a landline phone

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30% All teens

Social network site

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25% All teens

Instant messaging

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24% All teens

Talk face-to-face

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33% All teens

Email

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11% All teens

Source: Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project surveys “All teens” refers to all teens ages 12-17.
Power of a Simple Nudge

1. **Nudge**: personalized and timely messages to urge students to complete tasks and navigate processes

2. **Counsel**: provide access to resources and one on one counseling through key decision making moments
Text for Success

1. Text messaging has a major cost advantage when compared to other strategies such as in person counseling

2. 11% increase in matriculation

3. 20% increase in persistence

4. 20% decline in student loan borrowing

5. 60% reduction in administrative burden

Congrats on your admission to Sapp State, Amy! We are so excited to meet you on Admitted Students Weekend. Register here: URL

Are you ready, Amy? Parking goo.gl/M2hXcX; Meal plan goo.gl/VFQRs7; Books goo.gl/G1lgRD; Housing assignment goo.gl/s0tRv3. C U in two weeks!

Crush your first day of class, Amy! Introduce yourself to your professors and advisor. You got this!

#nacacGW1 @NACACedu
Our Challenge

1. Get to know your students and their needs
2. Know your melt rates to determine appropriate interventions
3. Provide timely guidance during key decision-making moments
4. Simplify information AND demystify complex processes
5. Develop high-impact, scalable, low-cost solutions
Discussion and Q&A
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Sana Meghani
sana.meghani@trelliscompany.org
A Trickle or a Torrent

Department of Education Summer Melt
https://www.ed.gov/content/summer-melt

Pew Women’s College Enrollment
Resources

The Atlantic Men as a Minority

Harvard Summer Melt Handbook

University of New Mexico
Immigrant Students

Naranjo, Melissa M., Valerie Ooka Pang, and Jose Luis Alvarado. 2015. Summer melts immigrant students' college plans: Immigrant high school graduates, especially those from low-income homes, tend to choose schools below their abilities and often decide over the summer after graduation not to attend college at all. (immigration & education). *Phi Delta Kappan* 97 (4): 38.