



LOST A-HMONG THE DATA: DISAGGREGATING THE HMONG STUDENT EXPERIENCE

"As a Hmong American, having a college education is something that is intangible. I've always heard about my parents' struggles in Laos [and] then Thailand and in the 70s when they came to America. I feel like my degree is [the] conclusion to their refugee journey and it just empowers me to do better. It is a sign of some progress that even without a country, many of us Hmong students are determined to be here."



SACRAMENTO
STATE

Redefine the Possible



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A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT S. NELSEN



Sacramento State is proud to be home to a thriving Hmong student population. We have conducted research and developed a comprehensive report on the educational challenges and successes of our Hmong population to better serve them and to increase understanding on campus and in the community.

To support the institution's goals of fostering student health, retention, persistence, and graduation, our second report is a follow up to "Ecological factors in Hmong American educational success" (Vang, 2018). The report focuses on students' perception of how a healthy community and family along with robust institutional support structures positively impact their educational journey.

I hope by reading the report, the data will illuminate and shed light on a range of elements—cultural, social, familial, religious, and economic—that are central to the collective experience of the aspirations and educational pursuits of our Hmong students. I trust that you find the information in the report useful, insightful, and compelling. I believe it will help inform education policy discussions in this region for years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert S. Nelsen".

Dr. Robert S. Nelsen
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Mills".

Dr. Ed Mills
Vice President for Student Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Marcellene Watson-Derbigny".

Dr. Marcellene Watson-Derbigny
Associate Vice President, Student Retention and Academic Success

KEY SUMMARY

Key Institutional Data Describing Hmong Students

Among first-time freshmen undergraduate Hmong students:

- Average high school GPAs were 2.75 for Fall 2015, 3.27 for Fall 2016, 2.77 for Fall 2017, and 3.49 for Fall 2018.
- From Fall 2009 to Fall 2018, total enrollment increased from 541 to 1,012.
- From Fall 2007 to Fall 2017, 65% of these students identified as first-generation college students.
- From Fall 2007 to Fall 2017, 93% were eligible for Federal Pell Grants.
- From Fall 2009 to Fall 2018, more than half held a major in the Colleges of Health and Human Services (24%), the College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics (14%), or the College of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Studies (17%).
- The Fall 2015 cohort's top five majors were Undeclared, Social Work, Nursing, Biology, and Child Development.
- The Fall 2015 cohort's retention rate was 77% at the end of year 1, 66% for year 2, and 61% for year 3.
- The Fall 2007, Fall 2008, and Fall 2009 cohorts' four-year graduation rates were 0%, 0%, and 0%, and their six-year graduation rates were 12%, 11%, and 9%.

Among Hmong students who transferred for their junior years:

- Average high school GPAs were 3.26 for Fall 2015, 3.22 for Fall 2016, 2.98 for Fall 2017, and 3.06 for Fall 2018.
- From Fall 2007 to Fall 2017, 73% of these students identified as first-generation college students.
- From Fall 2007 to Fall 2017, 86% were eligible for Federal Pell Grants.
- From Fall 2015 to Fall 2018, their top five majors were Business, Social Work, Communication, Psychology, and Kinesiology.
- The Fall 2007, Fall 2008, and Fall 2009 cohorts' two-year graduation rates were 0%, 17%, and 15%; their three-year graduation rates were 8%, 13%, and 13%; and their four-year graduation rates were 16%, 4%, and 3%.

KEY SUMMARY CONT'D

Key Findings from the Survey of Hmong Students

Student Characteristics

- 97% of Hmong students grew up speaking the Hmong language
- 79% of Hmong students were first-generation college students
- 70% of Hmong students had an annual household income of less than \$40,000

Adjustment to College Life

- 90% of Hmong students indicated that a parent/guardian encouraged their decision to go to college
- 59% of Hmong students indicated “I did it myself,” regarding the transition into college
- 65% of Hmong students indicated that family/cultural responsibilities interfered with their schoolwork

Campus Climate

- 69% of Hmong students frequently or occasionally felt depressed
- 58% of Hmong students felt like a member of the Sacramento State community
- 49% of Hmong students frequently/occasionally felt lonely or homesick

Student Services

- 85% of Hmong students never utilized psychological services
- 83% of Hmong students never utilized the Career Center’s services
- 66% of Hmong students never utilized student health services

Student Engagement

- 89% of Hmong students never participated in an undergraduate research program
- 82% of Hmong students never participated in an internship program
- 42% of Hmong students never participated in a student club or group

Student Success

- 99% of Hmong students indicated a faculty or staff mentor was helpful in facilitating their degree completion
- 98% of Hmong students indicated moral support from family was helpful in facilitating their degree completion
- 94% of Hmong students indicated the partnership between the university and the Hmong community was helpful in facilitating their degree completion

INTRODUCTION

“The price paid by people of color who act as change agents or advocate for certain groups needlessly becomes great. Also from a psychological dimension, one has to have a strong sense of identity, confidence, and security that will allow a person to without the constant testing, rejection, and loneliness that results from being faithful to the concept of the betterment of people of color, acting legitimately but in opposition to the established values and customs of the academy” (Valverde, 2003 p. 8).

These words inspired me as the son of refugee parents from the mountainous northern region of Laos who had no formal education. I am one of ten siblings and a product of the public school system in the Central Valley city of Stockton, California; both of these experiences have fueled my passion to work with disadvantaged, underserved, and marginalized students and communities of need.

My readers must understand that my role as an engaged member of the higher education community in the Sacramento, California, region, has shaped this report from the ground up. Arising from an emancipatory motive, the report will illuminate for the region and the educational community that large-scale data overtly mischaracterizes all Asian students as high achievers. Consequently, the categorization of Hmong students into a single group has significantly concealed the educational disparities relative to other ethnic minority groups. Teranishi, Lok, and Nguyen (2013), working with the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, underscored this sentiment by noting, “Simply put the aggregation of AAPI subgroups into a single data category is a significant civil rights issue for the AAPI community that has yet to be resolved” (p. 2).

Despite the challenges faced by Hmong students, there are environmental and societal factors, including family-related and cultural influences, that are central to Hmong students’ aspirations and educational pursuits. The Hmong population in the education pipeline is quite young; in the Sacramento-Arden Arcade-Roseville region, the median Hmong age is 20 years, and 79.6% of Hmong ages 3 years or older are currently enrolled in preschool through 12th grade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). Consequently, Hmong students’ matriculation into higher education will increase.

This current report, as a follow-up to “Ecological Factors in Hmong American Educational Success” (Vang, 2018), will further examine this community. The report will provide information about how to work with this community and create relations with stakeholders in order to support Hmong students’ high school completion, transition to college, college matriculation, and beyond.





METHODOLOGY

In Fall 2014, 496 of the roughly 1,000 Hmong students attending California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State), completed the 52-item questionnaire survey. This resulted in a 49% response rate. This report consists of a single higher education institution in the greater Sacramento region, and therefore it only represents some Hmong students. This limited representation, therefore, cannot be used to generalize to the entire population of Hmong students at the institution, not to mention in the region, the state, or the United States. Since there were no hypotheses stated and inferential statistics were not performed, with a small sample from a single higher education institution, our findings cannot be used as definitive proof to describe the entire population of Hmong Americans. Similarly, our findings can only be used to describe the social and cultural experiences of Hmong students at Sacramento State. Figures 1-15 and Tables 1-2 were drawn from the Office of the President Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning (2018), the Division of Student Affairs, and personal communication from M. Wong (2019); they were not part of the data collection in 2014.



FINDINGS: COHORT AT A GLANCE

Figures 1-3 and Tables 1-2 show the high school grade point average (GPA), academic major selection/choice, term GPA (at the end of the first semester in college), academic standing (at the end of the first semester in college), and retention rates at the end of year one, year two, and year three for the Fall 2015 to Fall 2018 cohorts of Hmong first-time freshmen (FTF) vs. non-Hmong FTF. A first-time freshman is a student who enters college following high school graduation. Similarly, the figures show the demographic data for junior Hmong transfer students vs. junior non-Hmong transfer students. A junior transfer is a student who completed 60 units at a community college and transferred to a four-year university to complete a bachelor's degree. **Data for FTF Hmong was incomplete. Fall 2018 high school GPA for FTF Hmong will be updated once the high school GPA has been finalized.*

Figure 1. High school GPA for Hmong FTF vs. non-Hmong FTF and for junior Hmong transfer students vs. junior non-Hmong transfer students, Fall 2015 - Fall 2018.

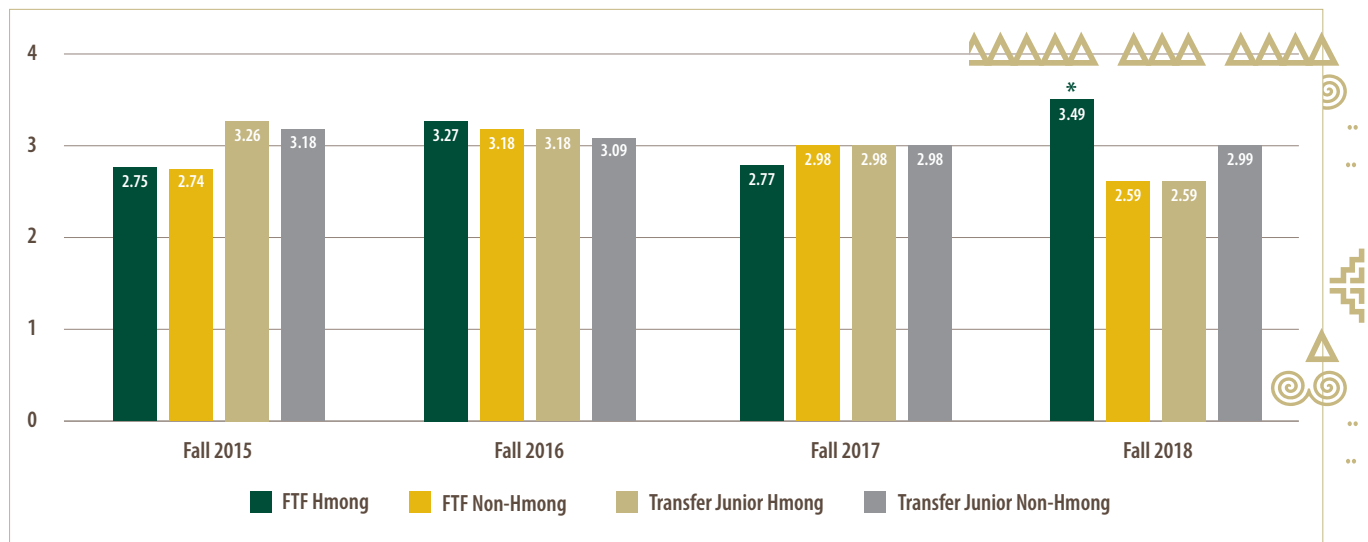


Table 1

Top Majors Among Hmong FTF vs. Non-Hmong FTF and Among Junior Hmong Transfers vs. Junior Non-Hmong Transfers, Fall 2015 - Fall 2018

	Hmong FTF	Non-Hmong FTF	Hmong Transfers	Non-Hmong Transfers
Fall 2015	Undeclared	Undeclared	Business	Psychology
	Social Work	Criminal Justice	English	Criminal Justice
	Nursing	Mechanical Engr.	Social Work	Communication
Fall 2016	Computer Engr.	Undeclared	Business	Psychology
	Nursing	Nursing	Psychology	Criminal Justice
	Undeclared	Mechanical Engr.	Social Work	Communication
Fall 2017	Undeclared	Undeclared	Business	Psychology
	Biology	Nursing	Social Work	Communication
	Nursing	Biology	Communication	Criminal Justice
Fall 2018	Biology	Undeclared	Business	Psychology
	Undeclared	Nursing	Communication	Criminal Justice
	Nursing	Biology	Kinesiology	Communication

Figure 2. Term GPA among Hmong FTF vs. non-Hmong FTF and among junior Hmong transfers vs. junior non-Hmong transfers, Fall 2015 - Fall 2018.

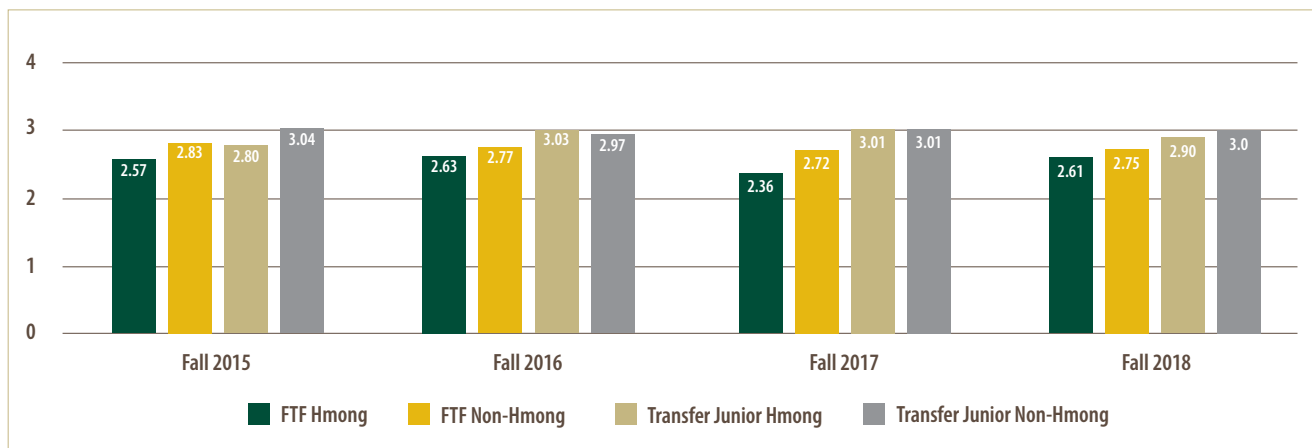


Figure 3. Percentage in good academic standing among Hmong FTF vs. non-Hmong FTF and among junior Hmong transfers vs. junior non-Hmong transfers, Fall 2015 - Fall 2018.

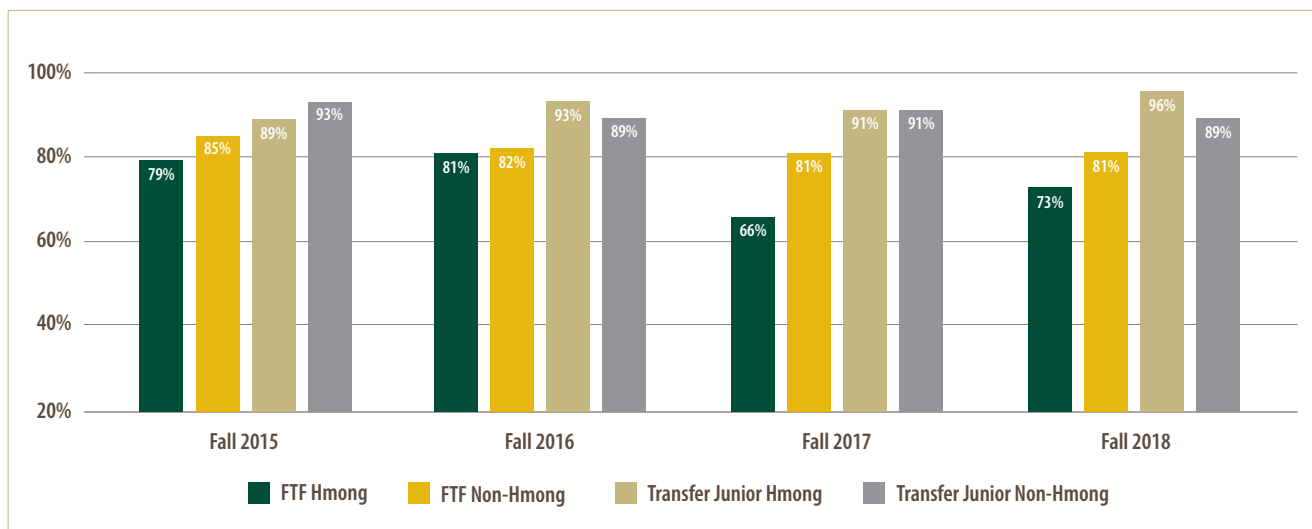


Table 2
Retention Rate for Hmong FTF vs. Non-Hmong FTF and for Junior Hmong Transfers vs. Junior Non-Hmong Transfers, Fall 2015 - Fall 2017. Note: some transfer students graduated prior to year 3.

	Hmong FTF	Non-Hmong FTF	Hmong Transfers	Non-Hmong Transfers
Fall 2015				
Year 1	77%	81%	86%	89%
Year 2	66%	72%	51%	52%
Year 3	60%	67%	20%	12%
Fall 2016				
Year 1	85%	82%	89%	89%
Year 2	70%	71%	60%	43%
Fall 2017				
Year 1	96%	94%	92%	94%

Figure 4 shows the total number of Sacramento State Hmong students enrolled in undergraduate and post-baccalaureate programs between Fall 2009 and Fall 2018. Similarly, Figures 5 and 6 compare how the enrollment has changed over time and how the rates differ between female and male Hmong students from Fall 2009 to Fall 2018. During this time, female Hmong students' enrollment consistently outpaced male Hmong students' enrollment. In Fall 2018, a total of 598 female Hmong students and 414 male Hmong students were enrolled at Sacramento State.

Figure 4. Total Hmong students enrolled, Fall 2009 - Fall 2018.

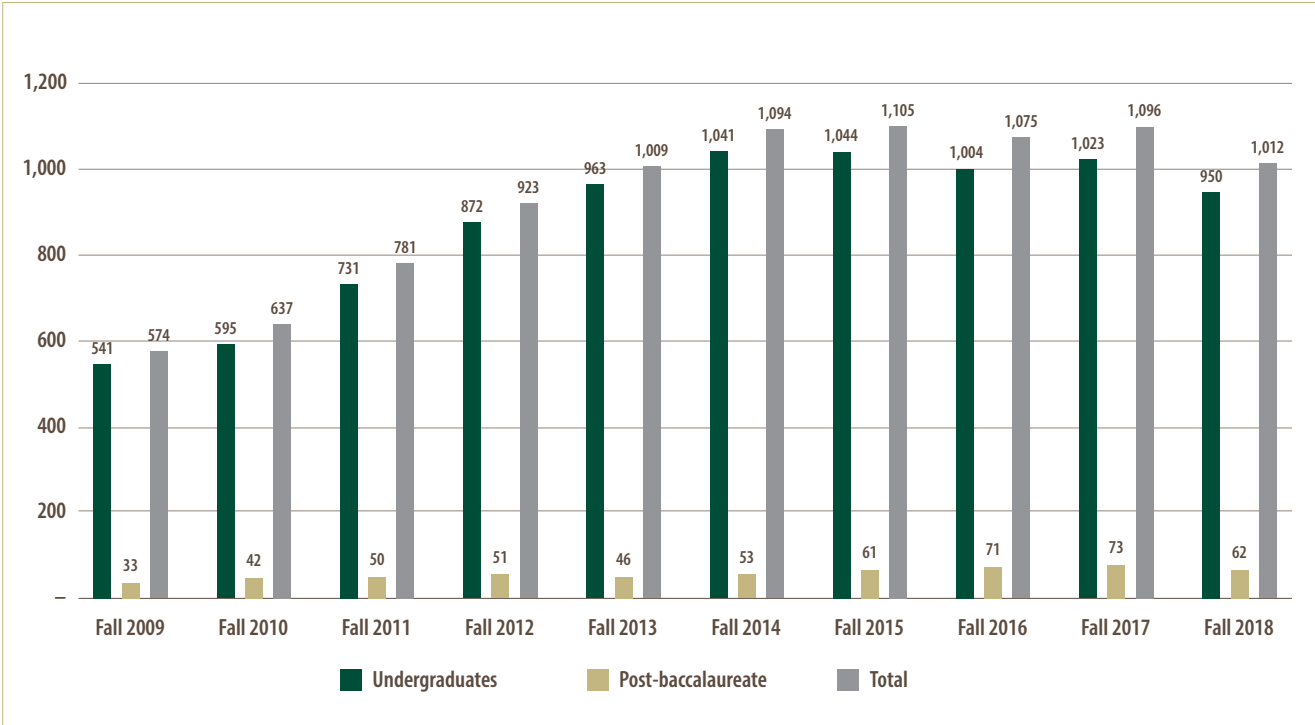


Figure 5. Female Hmong students enrolled, Fall 2009 - Fall 2018.

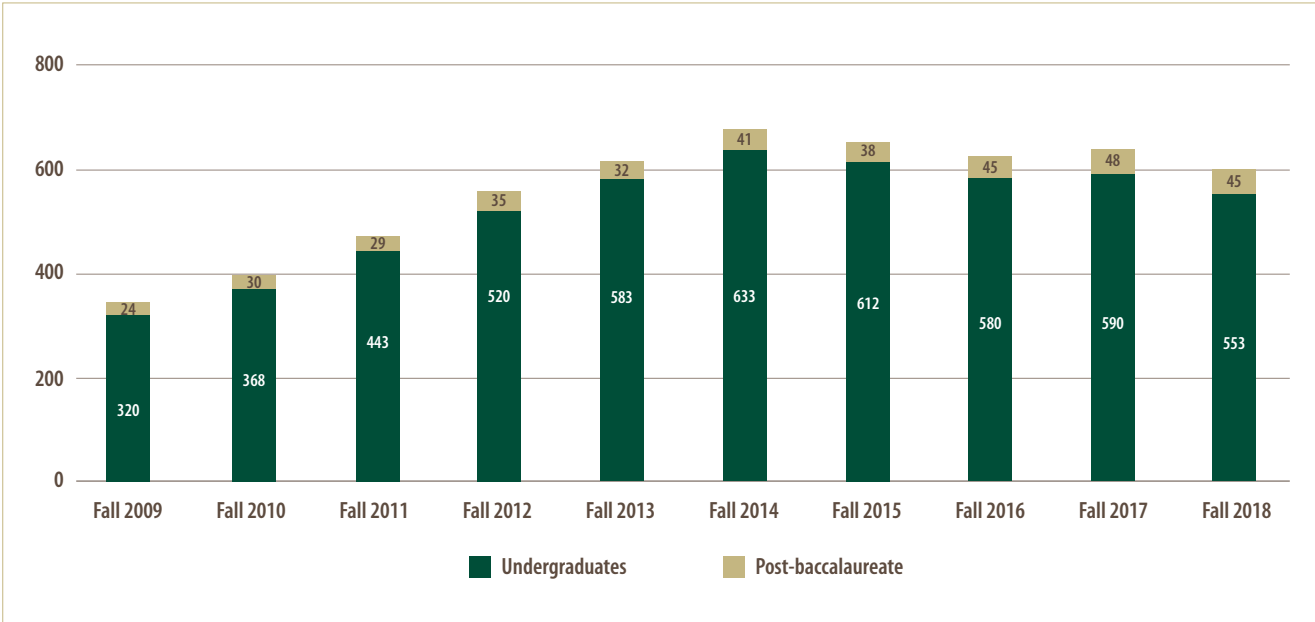


Figure 6. Male Hmong students enrolled, Fall 2009 - Fall 2018.

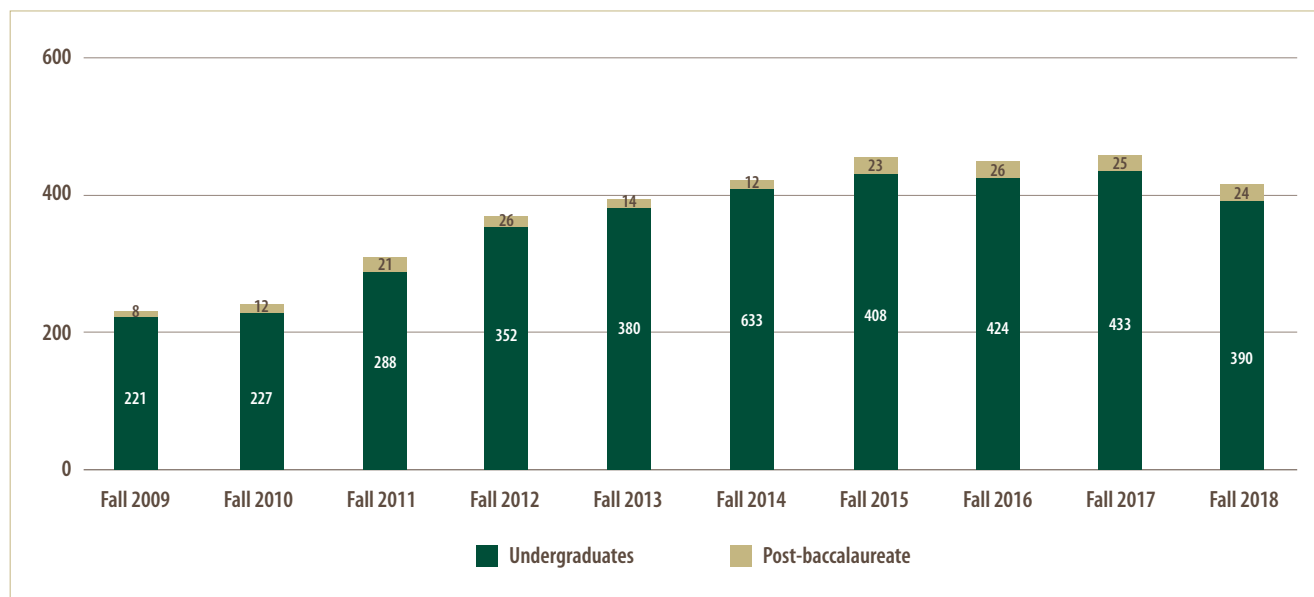


Figure 7 shows the total average percentage (64%) of Hmong students who identified as first-generation college students (i.e., no parent or guardian had a four-year college degree) between Fall 2007 and Fall 2017. Additionally, Figure 7 shows the percentage of Hmong students who displayed exceptional financial need and were eligible for a Federal Pell Grant between Fall 2007 (96%) to Fall 2017 (90%).

Figure 7. Total Hmong students who identified as first-generation college students and were eligible for Federal Pell Grants, Fall 2007 - Fall 2017.

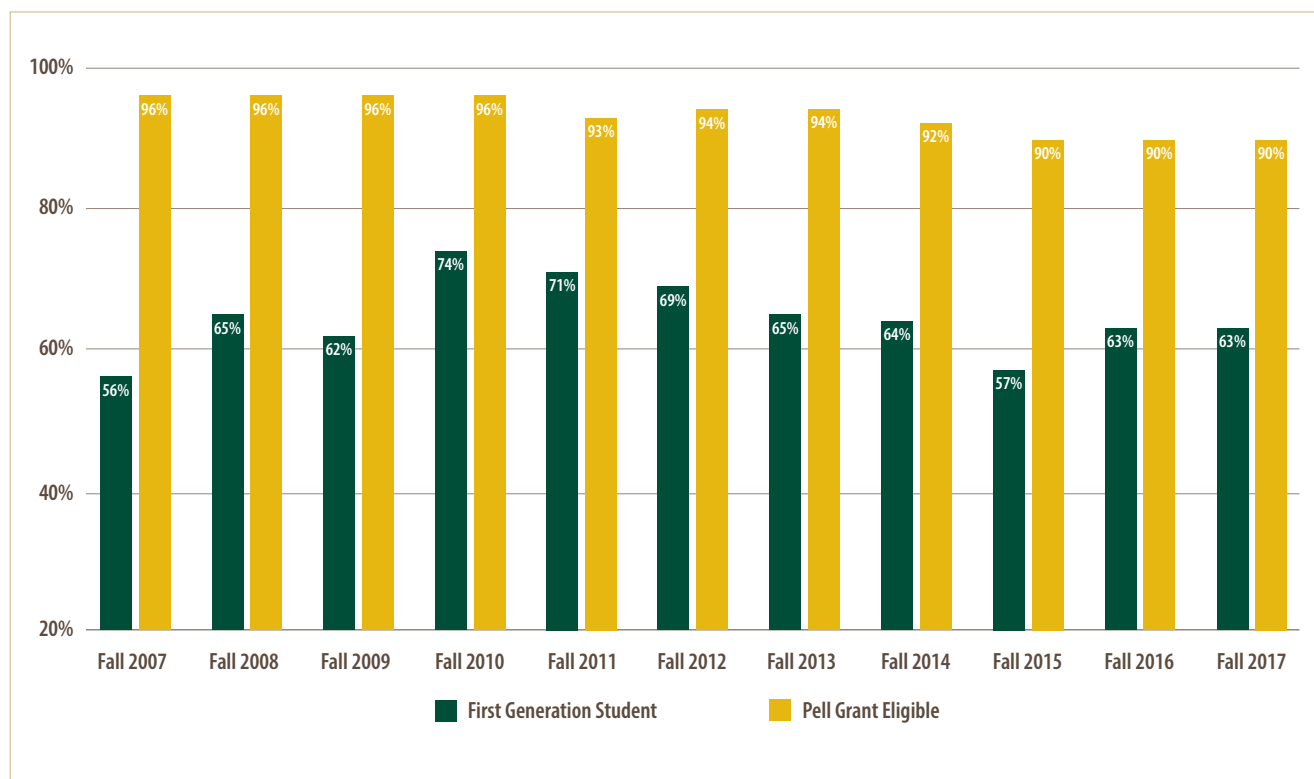
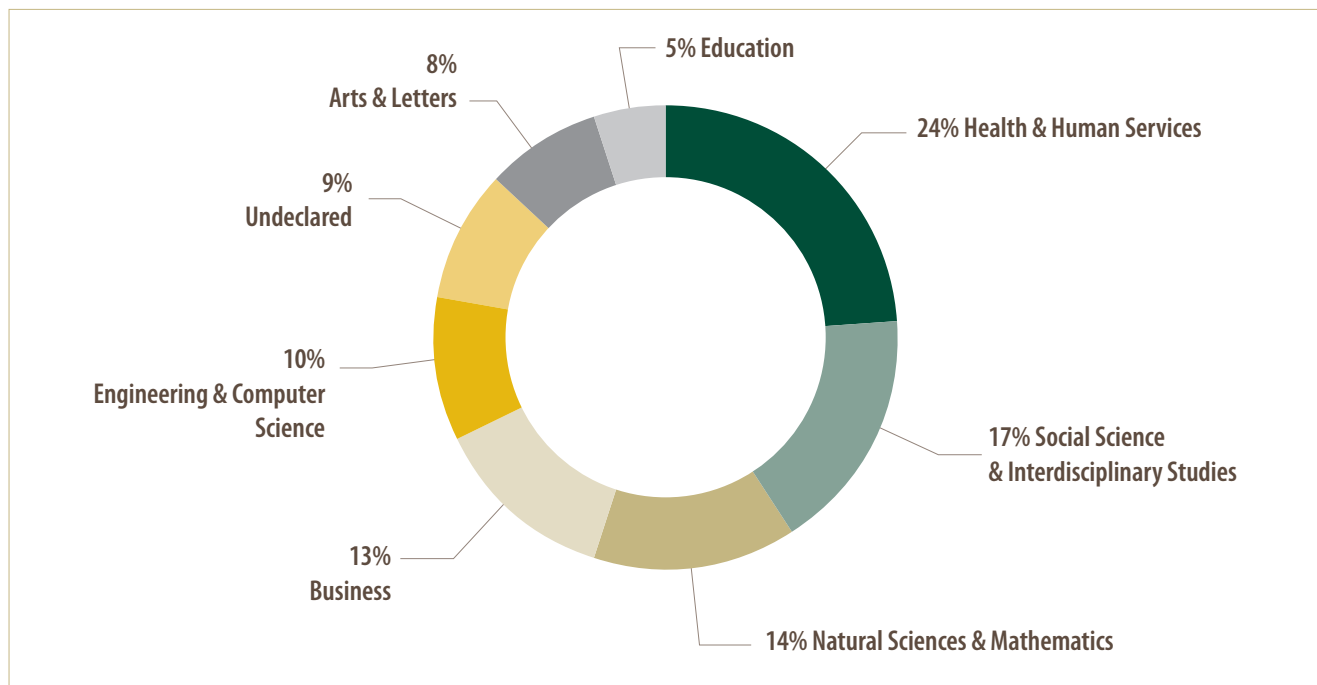




Figure 8 shows the percentage of Hmong FTF enrolled by colleges between Fall 2009 and Fall 2018. The figure reports that 24% of Hmong students held a major in the Colleges of Health & Human Services, including Criminal Justice, Kinesiology and Health Science, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Recreation, Parks and Tourism, Social Work, Communication Sciences, and Disorders. The second most common majors were in the College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics (14%), including Chemistry, Geography, Geology, Mathematics and Statistics, Physics, and Astronomy. Third was the College of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Studies (17%), which includes Anthropology, Asian Studies, Economics, Environmental Studies, Ethnic Studies, Family and Consumer, Sciences, Gerontology, Government, Liberal Studies, Psychology, Public Policy and Administration, Social Science, Sociology, and Women’s Studies. Together, these three colleges accounted for over half of Hmong FTF’s majors.

Figure 8.



Retention rates measure the percentage of FTF who return to the same institution in the fall of the following academic year. Figure 9 shows the retention rate (percent still enrolled or graduated) at the end of year one, year two, and year three for first-time undergraduate Hmong students who began seeking a baccalaureate degree for each entering cohort from Fall 2007 to Fall 2017. The Fall 2015 cohort's retention rates at the end of year one, year two, and year three were 77%, 66%, and 61% respectively. Further, Figures 10 and 11 compare how retention rates changed over time and how they differed between female and male Hmong students for each entering cohort at the end of year one, year two, and year three. Figure 10 shows that the retention rates for the Fall 2015 entering cohort of female Hmong students at the end of year one, year two, and year three were 77%, 63%, and 57%. Similarly, Figure 11 shows the retention rates among the male cohort were 82%, 76%, and 70%.

Figure 9. Total Hmong FTF retention rates, Fall 2007 - Fall 2017.

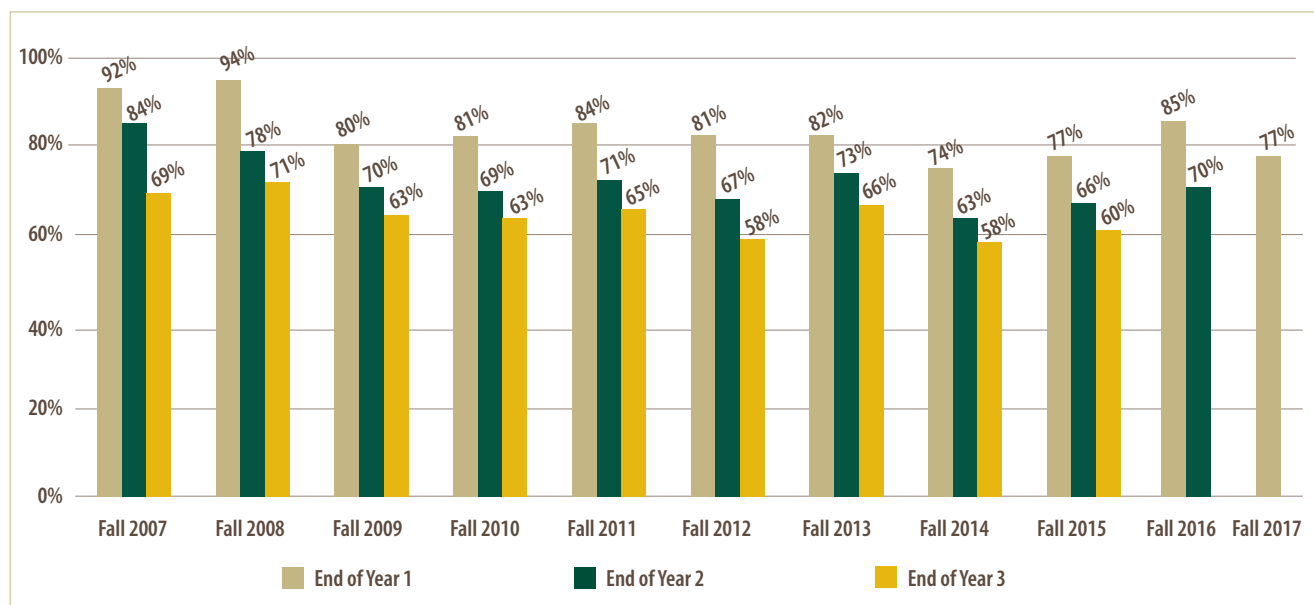


Figure 10. Female Hmong FTF retention rates, Fall 2007 - Fall 2017.

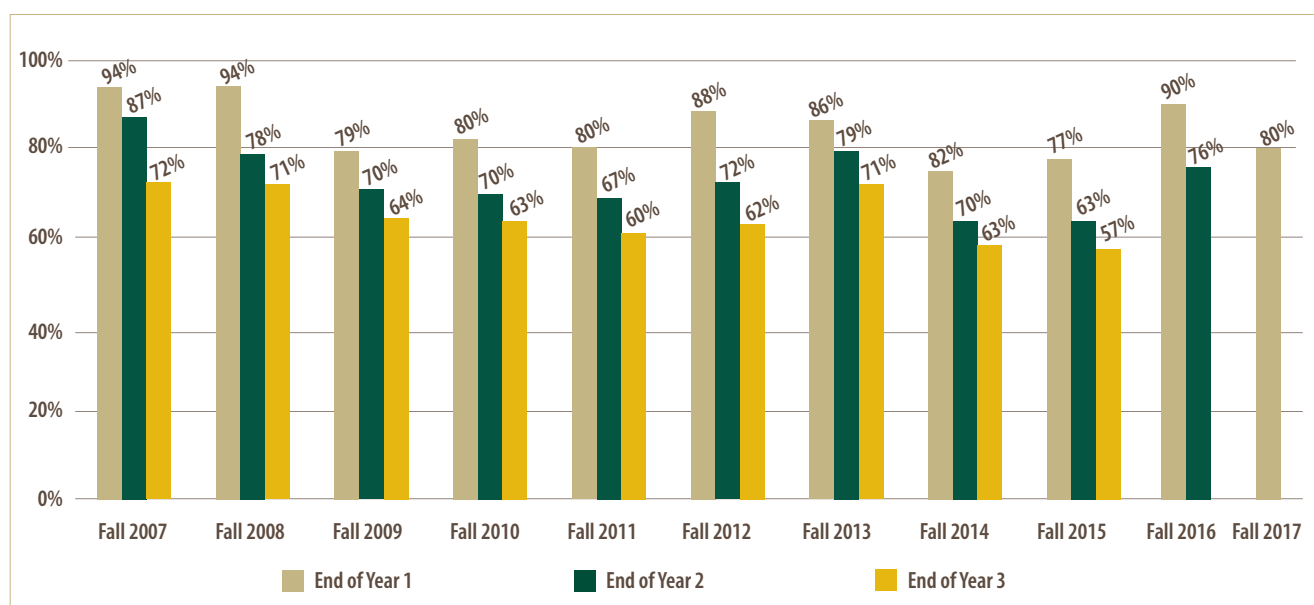
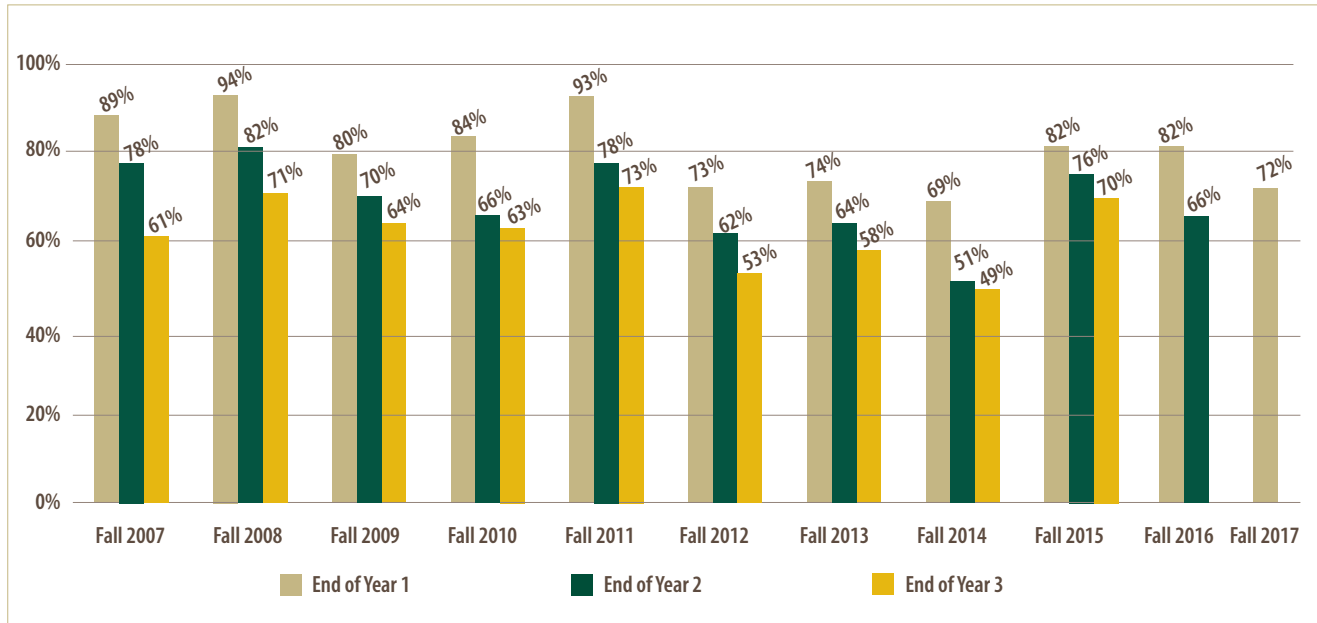
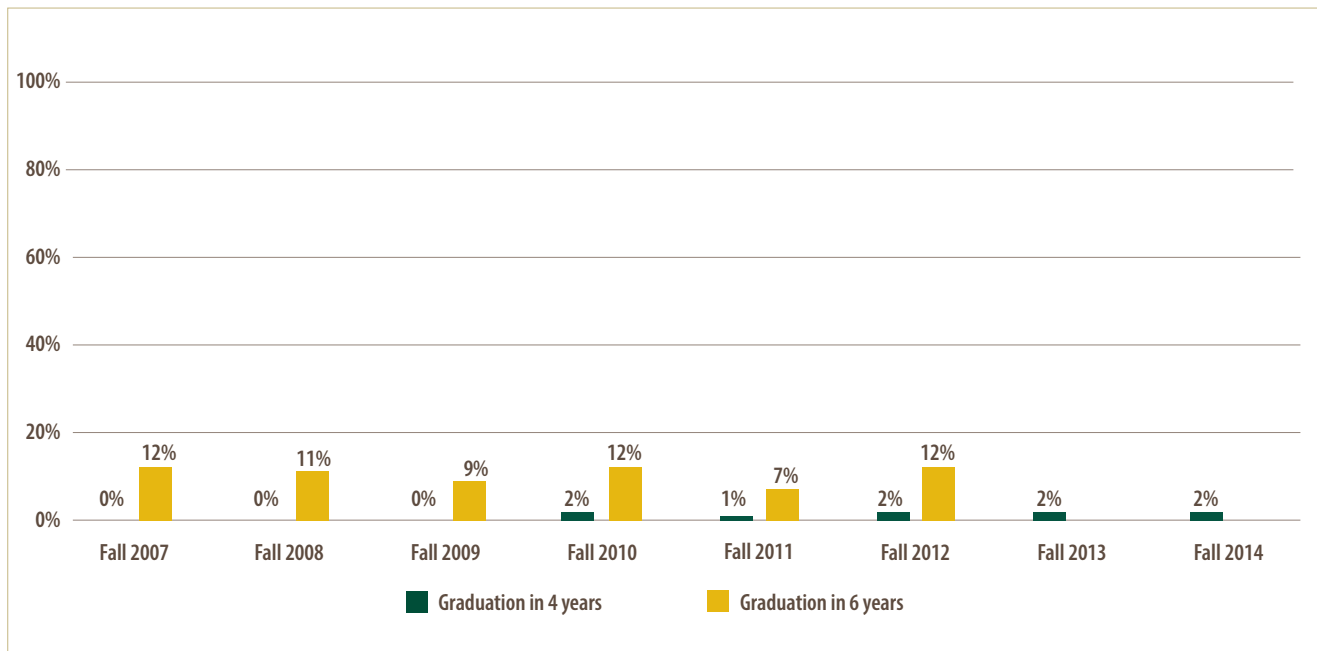


Figure 11. Male Hmong FTF retention rates, Fall 2007 - Fall 2017.



The graduation rate measures the percentage of FTF who complete their degrees at the same institution within a specified time. Figure 12 reports the four- and six-year graduation rates for Hmong FTF who began seeking a baccalaureate degree for each entering cohort from Fall 2007 to Fall 2014. The Fall 2007, Fall 2008, and Fall 2009 cohorts' four-year graduation rates were each 0%, but their six-year graduation rates were 12%, 11%, and 9%. In other words, none of the undergraduate Hmong students who entered as FTF completed a bachelor's degree within four years.

Figure 12. Graduation rates, Fall 2007 - Fall 2014.





FINDINGS: TRANSFER JUNIOR STUDENTS

Figure 13 shows the percentage of junior Hmong transfer students who identified as first-generation college students. Between Fall 2007 and Fall 2017, an average of 73% identified as first generation. Additionally, Figure 13 shows the percentage of Hmong students who were eligible for Federal Pell Grants (i.e., they displayed exceptional financial need) between Fall 2007 (66%) and Fall 2017 (89%).

Figure 13. Junior Hmong transfer students who identified as first-generation college students and were eligible for Federal Pell Grants, Fall 2007 - Fall 2017.

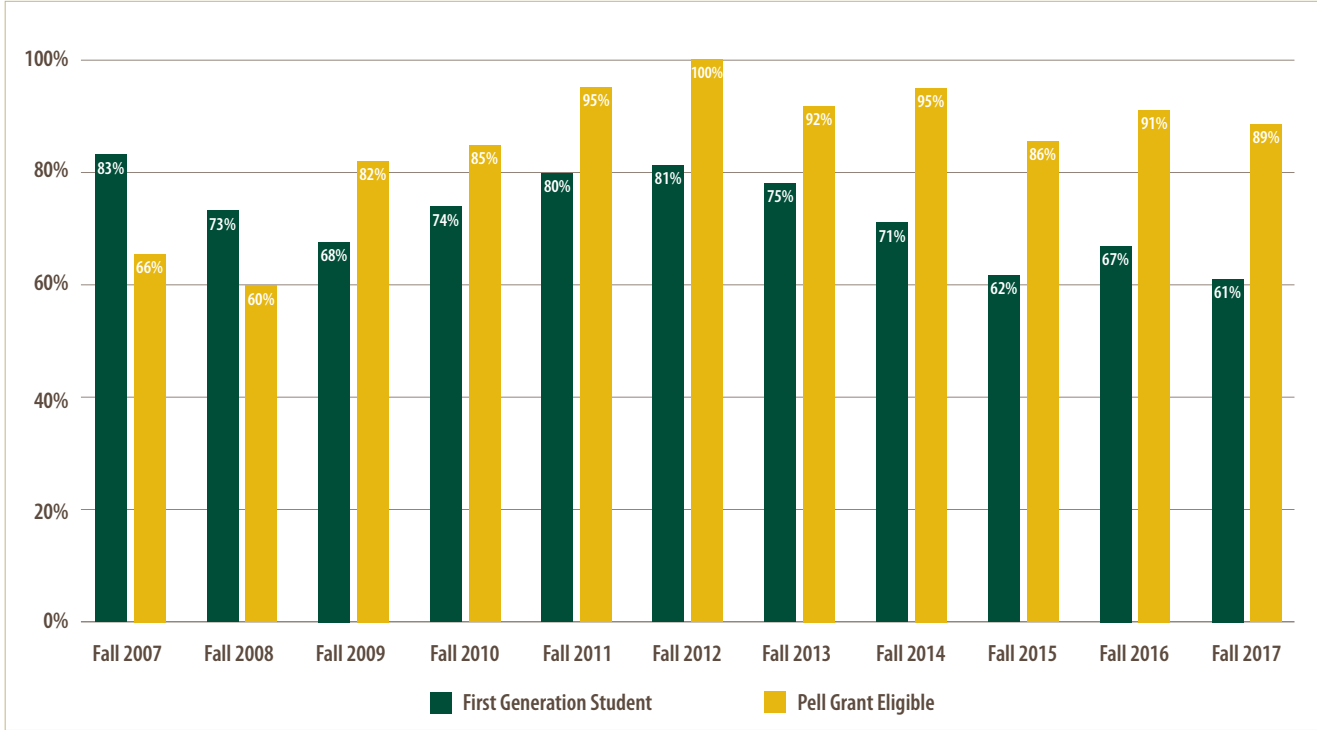
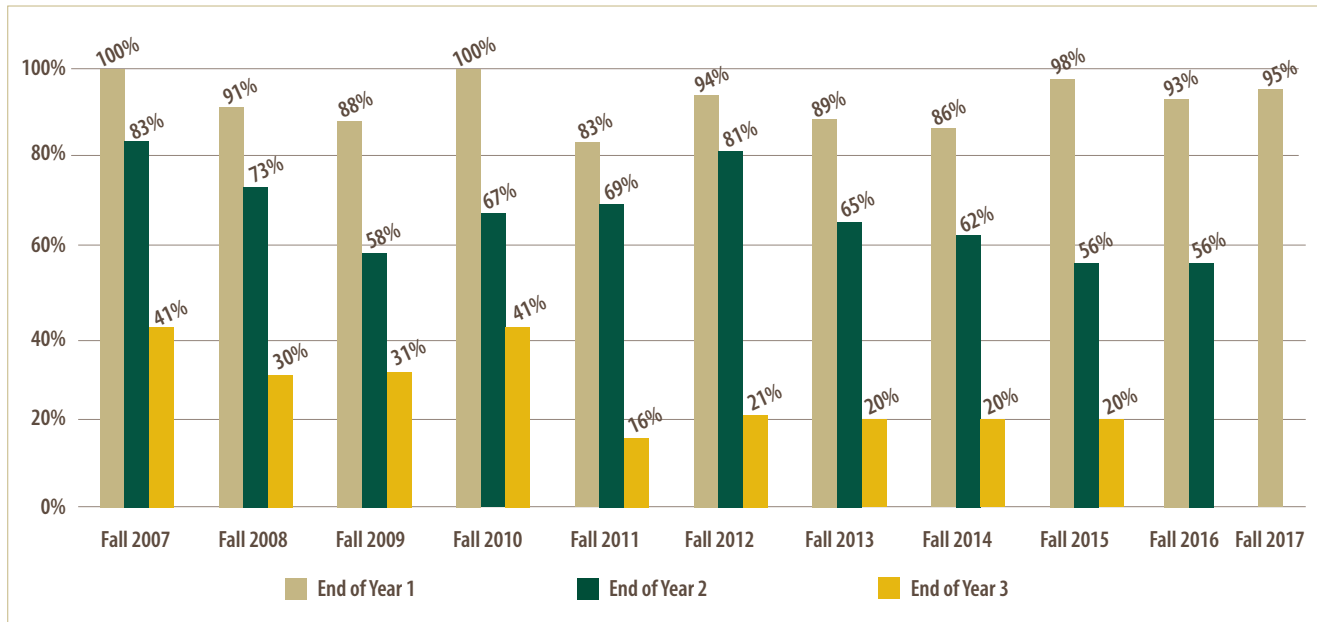


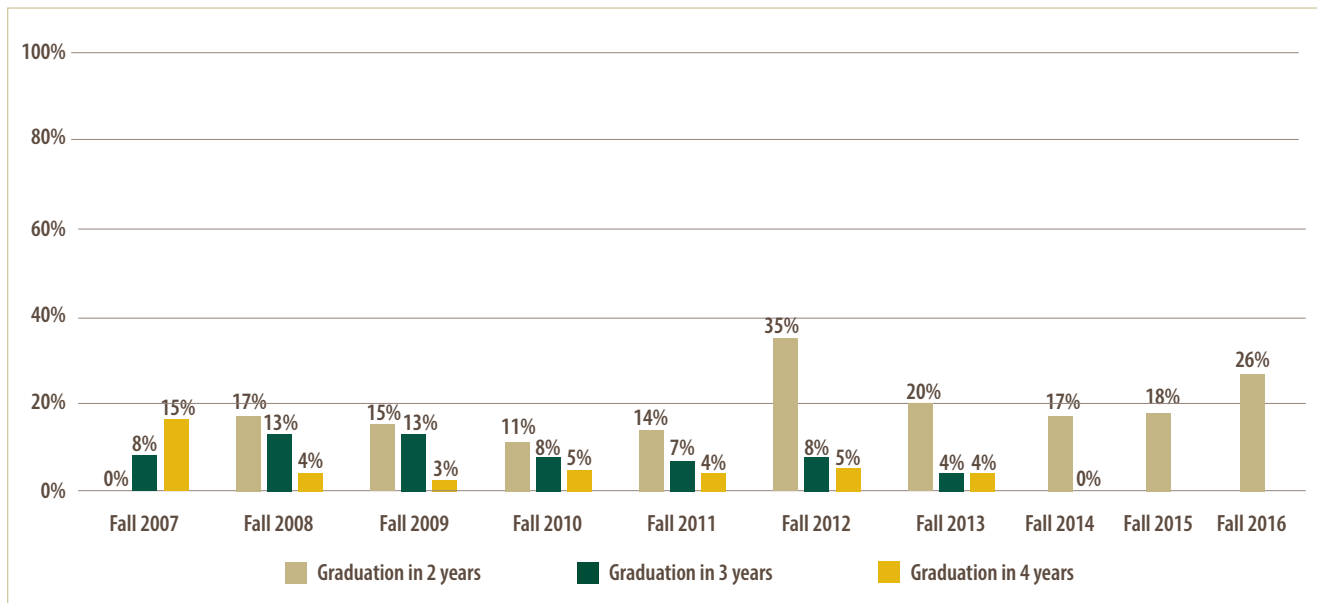
Figure 14 shows the retention rates at the end of year one, year two, and year three for junior Hmong transfer students who began seeking a baccalaureate degree for each entering cohort from Fall 2007 to Fall 2017. The figure reports the Fall 2015 cohort's retention rates at the end of year one, year two, and year three were 98%, 56%, and 20% (some graduated in two or three years)

Figure 14. Retention rates for junior Hmong transfer students, Fall 2007 - Fall 2017.



Further, Figure 15 shows the two-, three-, and four-year graduation rates for junior Hmong transfer students for each entering cohort from Fall 2007 to Fall 2017. The figure reports that the Fall 2007, Fall 2008, and Fall 2009 cohorts' two-year graduation rates were 0%, 17%, and 15%; three-year graduation rates were 8%, 13%, and 13%; and four-year graduation rates were 16%, 4%, and 3%.

Figure 15. Graduation rates for junior Hmong transfer students, Fall 2007 - Fall 2016.



SURVEY FINDINGS

Figure 16 shows that the vast majority of all respondents were born in the USA (85%), with the remaining born in Thailand (14%) and Laos (1%).

Figure 16. Country of birth for Hmong students.

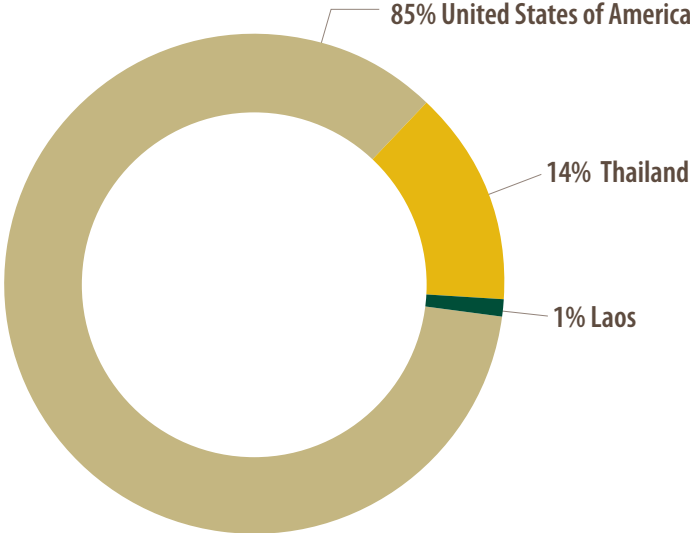
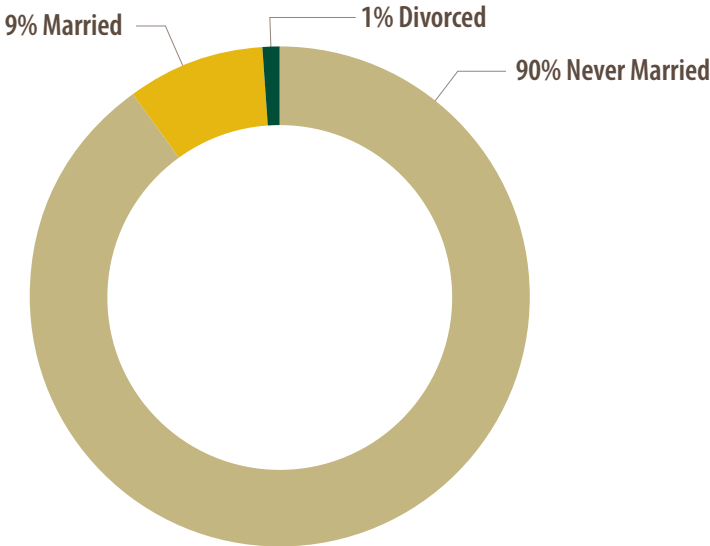


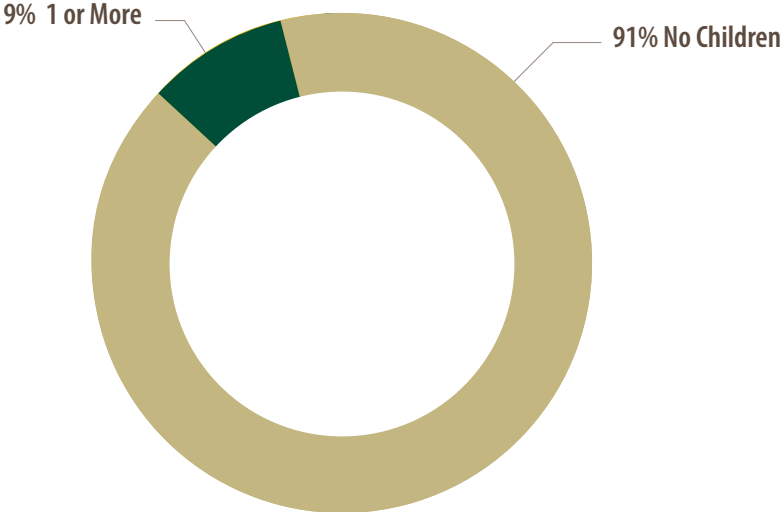
Figure 17 shows that 90% of the respondents had never been married.

Figure 17. Marital status of Hmong students.



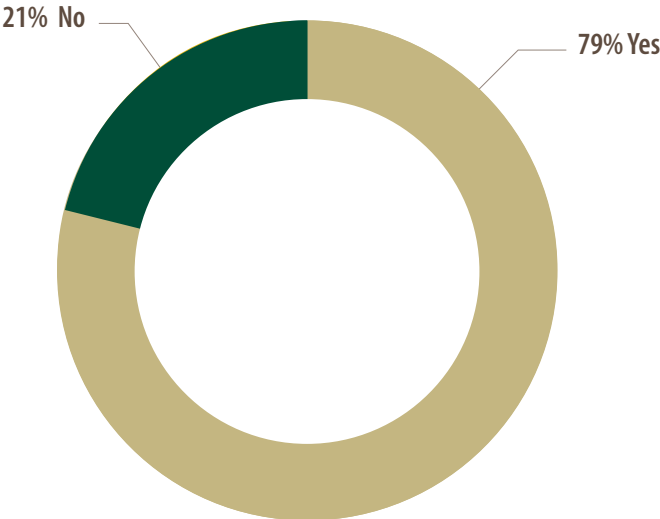
Student respondents were asked whether they had children of their own; Figure 18 shows that a vast majority had no children, with only 9% of respondents identifying as parents.

Figure 18. How many children the Hmong students had.



They were also asked whether they were the first in their family to attend college, that is, whether the student’s biological parents had not completed a four-year college degree. Figure 19 shows that 79% of respondents identified as first-generation college students.

Figure 19. Whether Hmong students identified as first-generation college students.



Student respondents were asked where they resided during the school year. If they lived at home, they were also asked how many people resided in the household. Figure 20 shows that a vast majority of all respondents lived off campus (99%), with only 1% living on campus. For students who lived at home, Figure 21 shows that almost half (45%) lived with 7 or more people in the household.

Figure 20. *Hmong students' place of residence during the school year.*

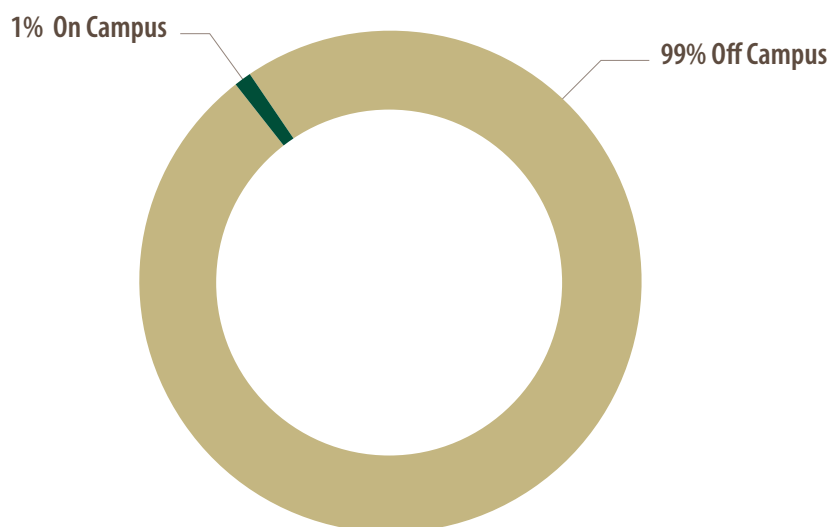
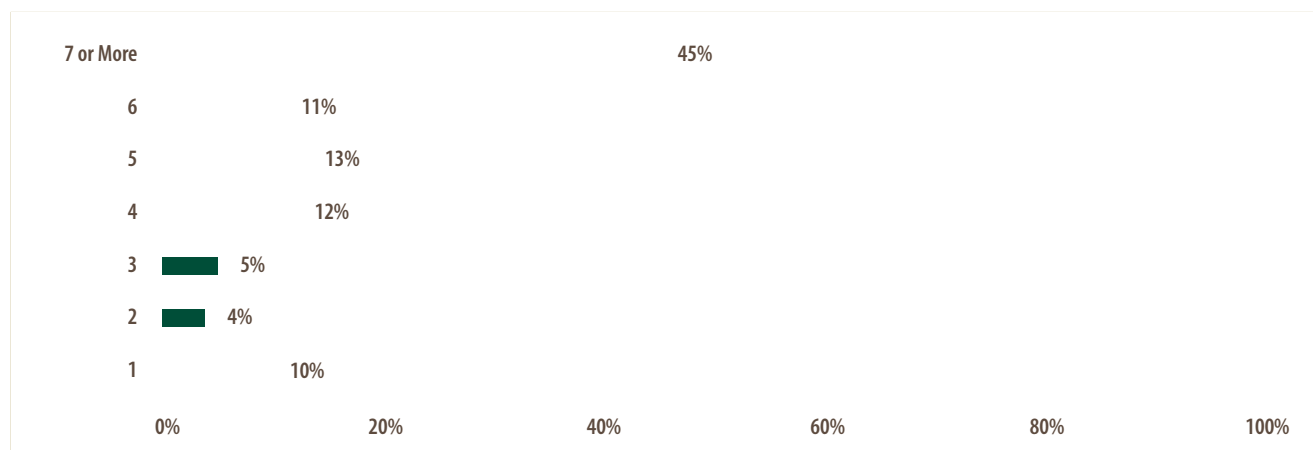


Figure 21. *For Hmong students living at home, the number of people in the household, including the student.*



Student respondents were asked about the highest known education of their father and mother. Figures 22 and 23 shows that the largest group of respondents did not know the education of their father (39%) or mother (46%), and only 9% of their fathers and 4% of their mothers were known to have a college degree. The respondents were also asked about the number of immediate family members who had a college degree. Figure 24 shows that 68% of all respondents had one or more immediate family members who had attended college and completed a degree.

Figure 22. Highest education level of Hmong students' fathers.

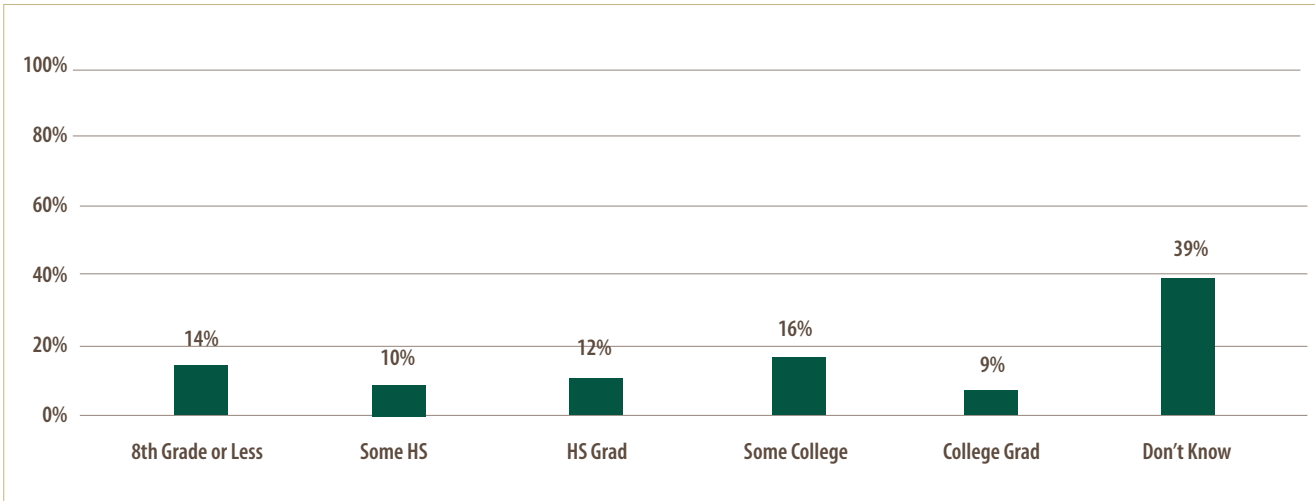


Figure 23. Highest education level of Hmong students' mothers.

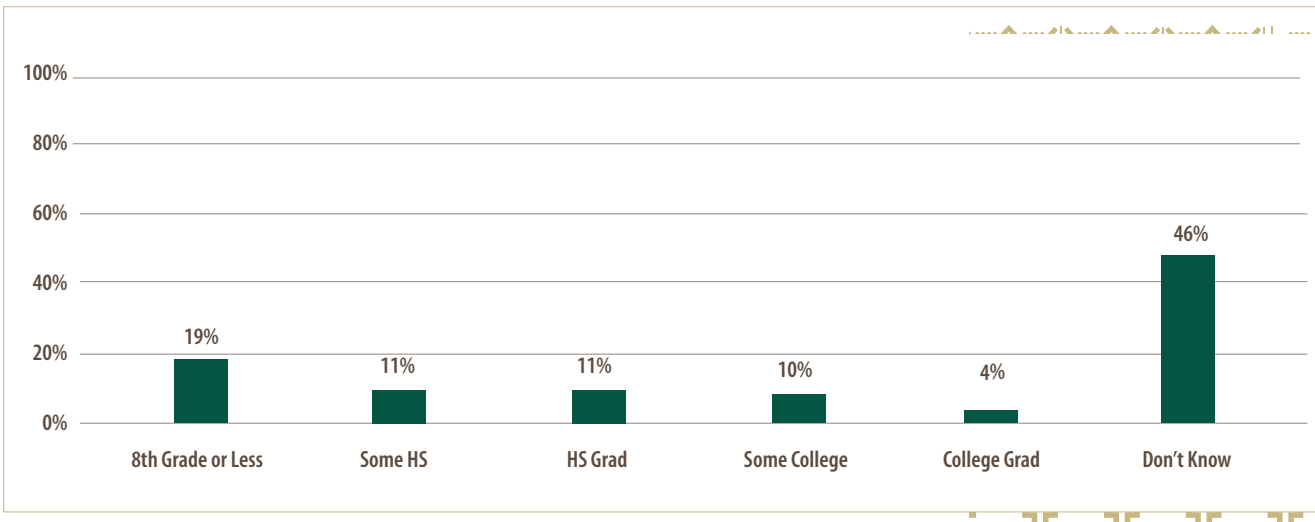
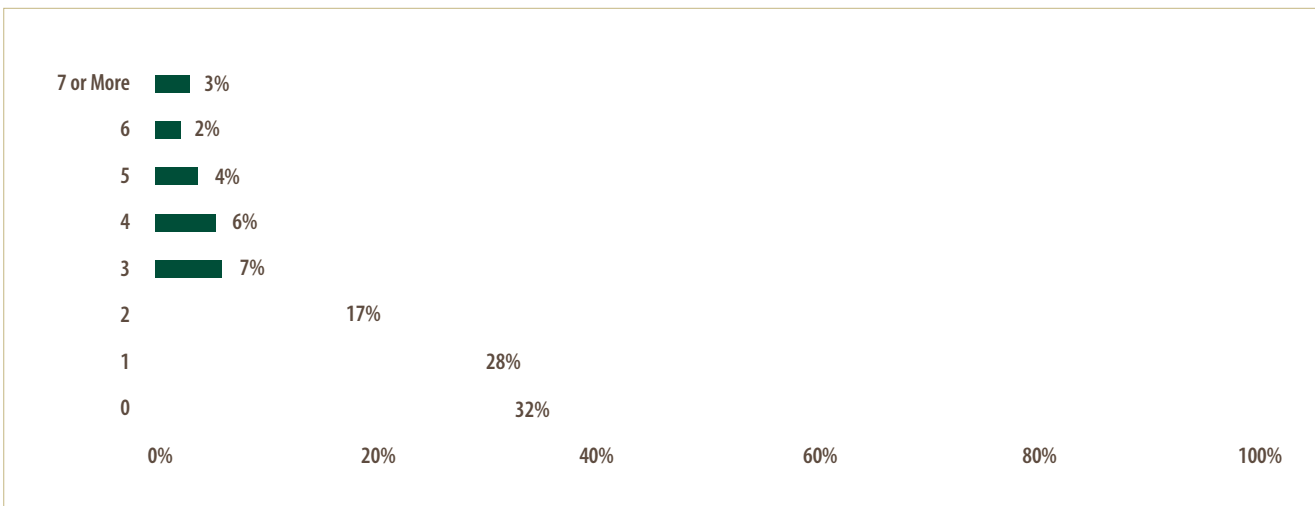


Figure 24. Number of Hmong students' immediate family members who had attended college and completed a degree.



Student respondents were asked about their enrollment status when they first entered Sacramento State. Figure 25 shows that a vast majority of all respondents enrolled as FTF (70%), 26% transferred from community colleges, and 4% were new graduate students. Figure 26 shows that almost half (45%) indicated Sacramento State was not their first-choice college.

Figure 25. Hmong students' first enrollment status at Sacramento State.

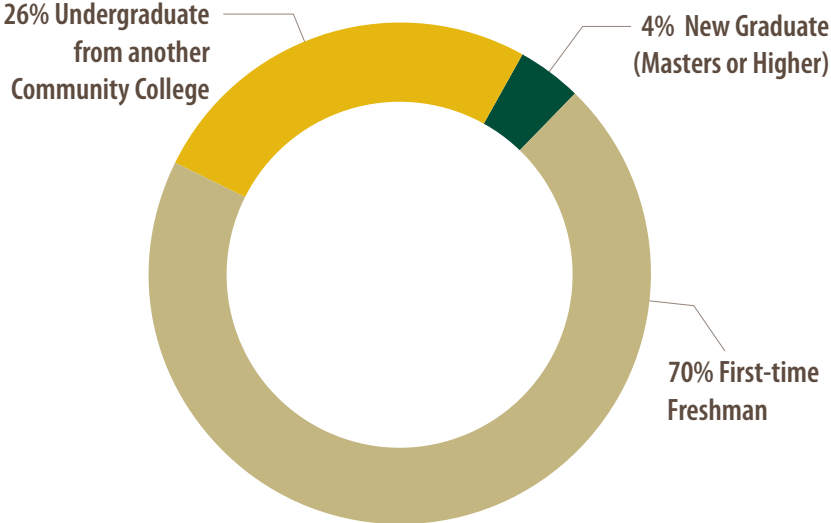
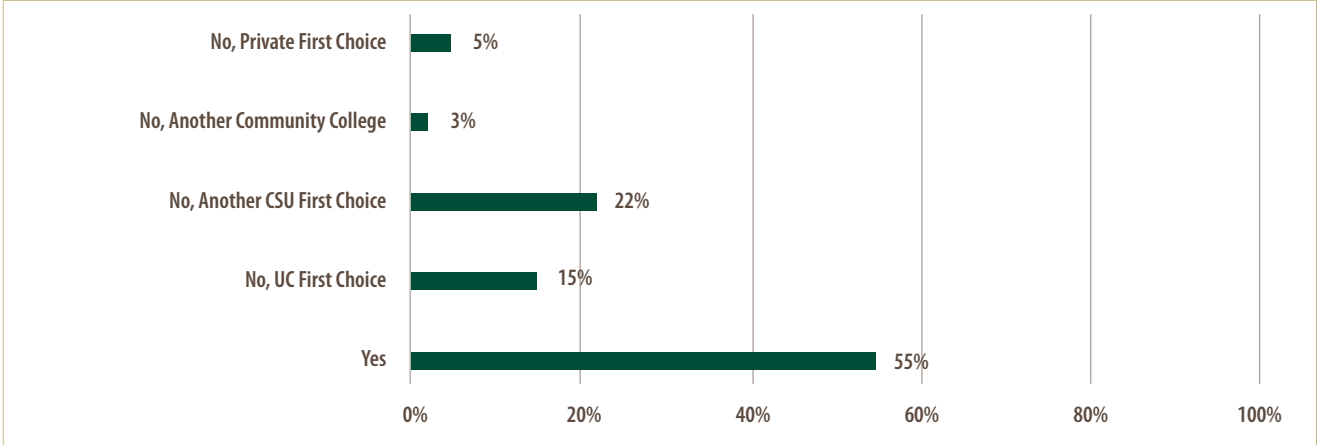
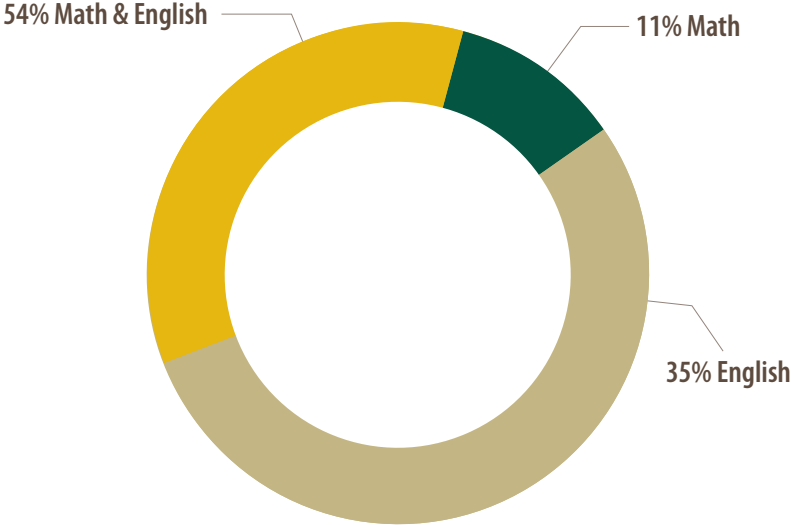


Figure 26. Whether Sacramento State was the Hmong students' first choice or only choice.



Student respondents were asked whether they had taken remedial courses. Of those who had taken remedial courses, Figure 27 shows that a majority (54%) had enrolled in both math and English courses, 35% in English only, and 11% in math only.

Figure 27. Remedial subjects taken by Hmong students enrolled in remedial courses.



Respondents were also asked about their employment status and their families' economic status. Figures 28 and 29 show that 55% of respondents were employed on or off campus, and 81% of those employed worked 11-40 hours a week. Figure 30 shows that 70% indicated an annual household income between \$10,000 and \$39,000.

Figure 28. Hmong student employment status while pursuing a degree.

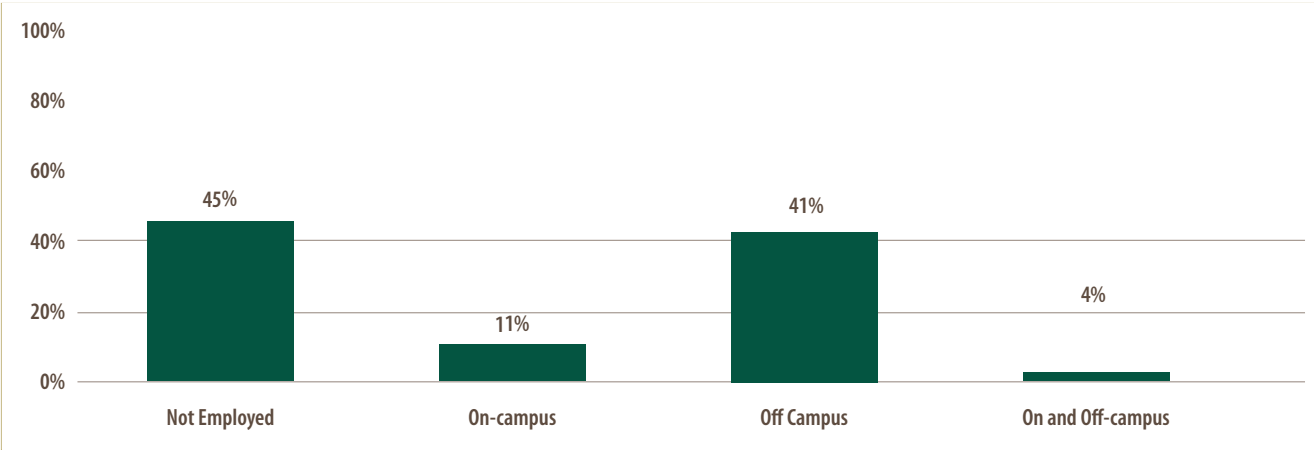




Figure 29. For employed Hmong students, the number of hours worked per week..

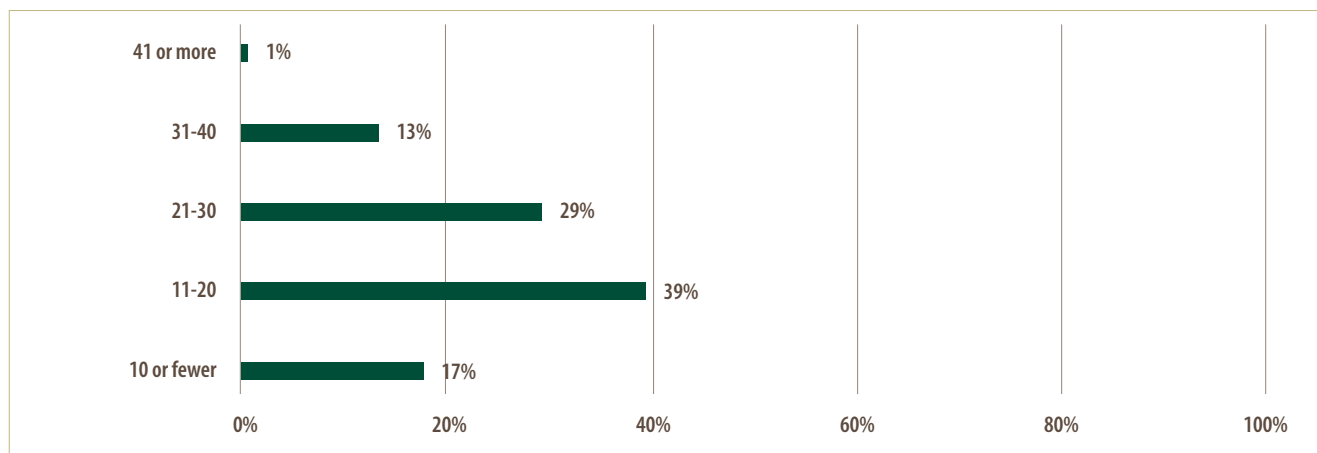
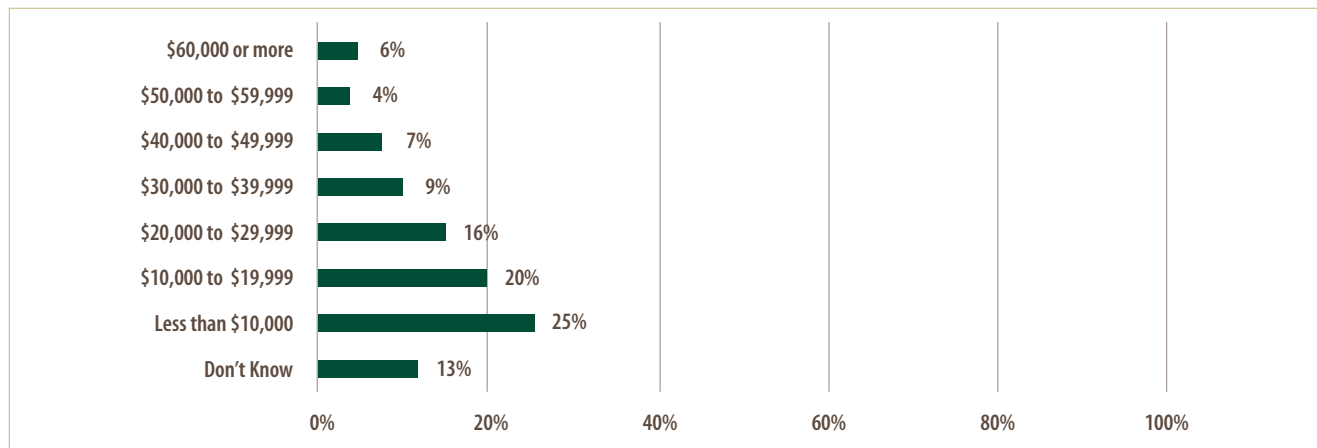


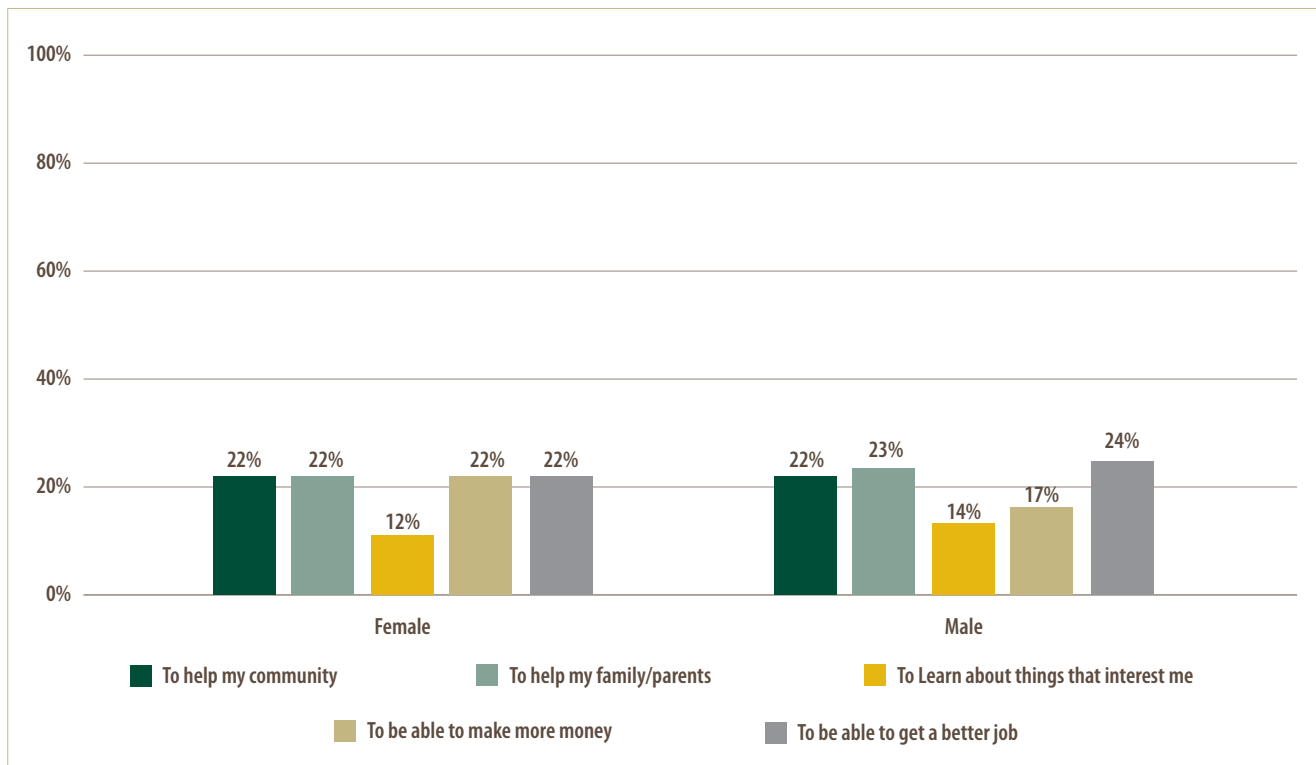
Figure 30. Annual household income for Hmong students' families.





Student respondents were asked to indicate their primary reason for pursuing higher education. Figure 31 shows that Hmong female students indicated “to help my community” (22%), “to help my family/parents” (22%), “to be able to make more money” (22%), and “to be able to get a better job” (22%). Figure 31 shows that Hmong male students’ most common reason was “to be able to get a better job” (24%), followed by “to help my family/parents” (23%) and then “to help my community” (22%).

Figure 31. Female and male Hmong students’ reasons for pursuing higher education.



Student respondents were asked whether they had heard about applying to college during high school. Figures 32 and 33 show that a vast majority of female Hmong students (78%) often or always heard about applying to a four-year university, and 54% often/always heard about applying to a community college. Similarly, Figures 32 and 33 show that 76% of Hmong male students often/always heard about applying to a four-year university, and 48% often/always heard about applying to a community college.

Figure 32. Female and male Hmong students who heard about applying to community college during high school.

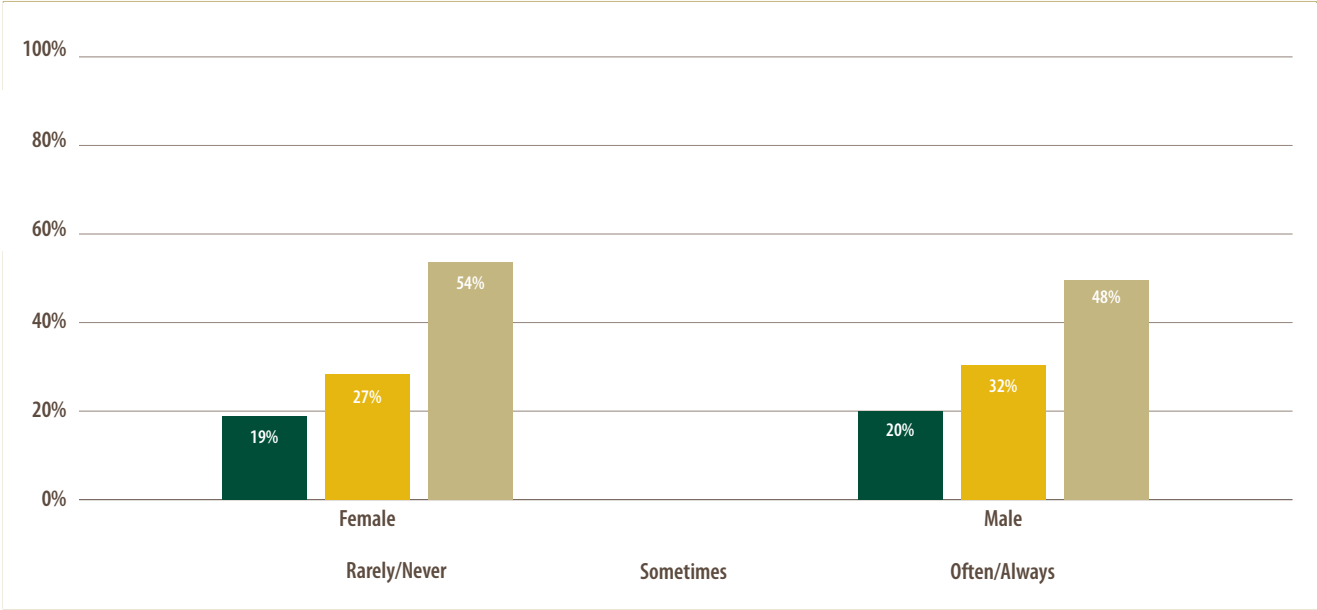
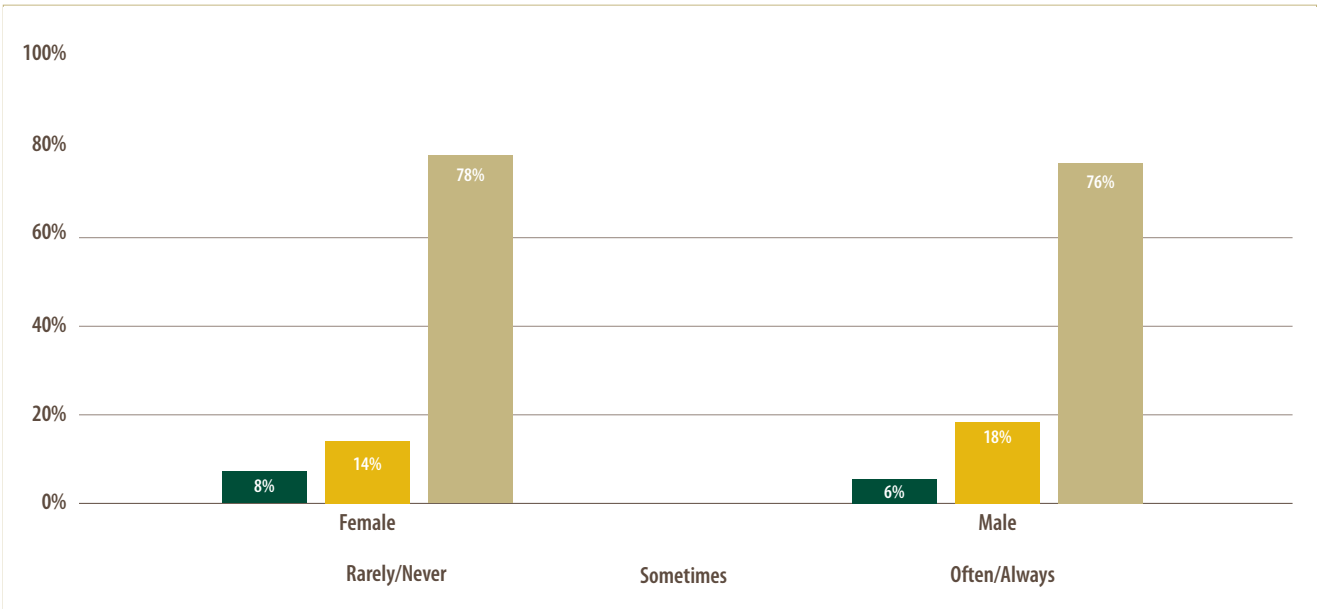


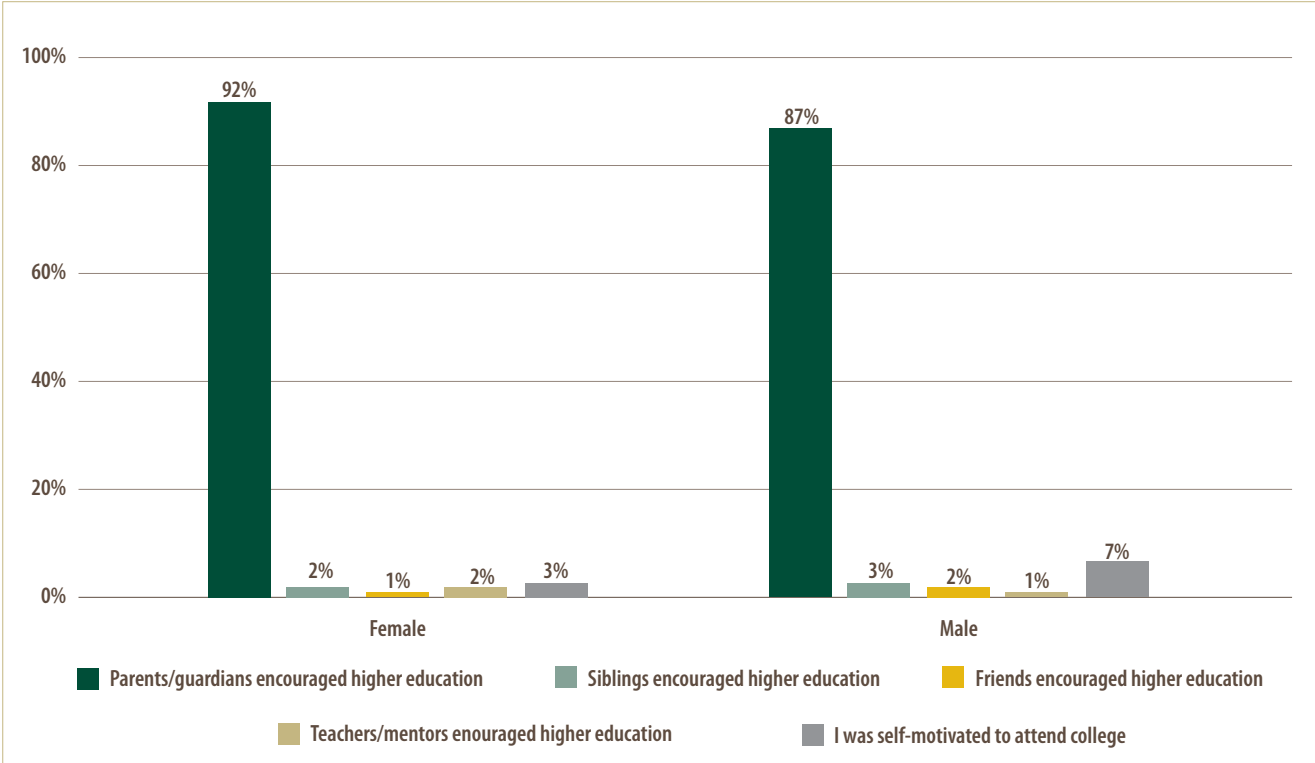
Figure 33. Female and male Hmong students who heard about applying to a four-year college during high school.





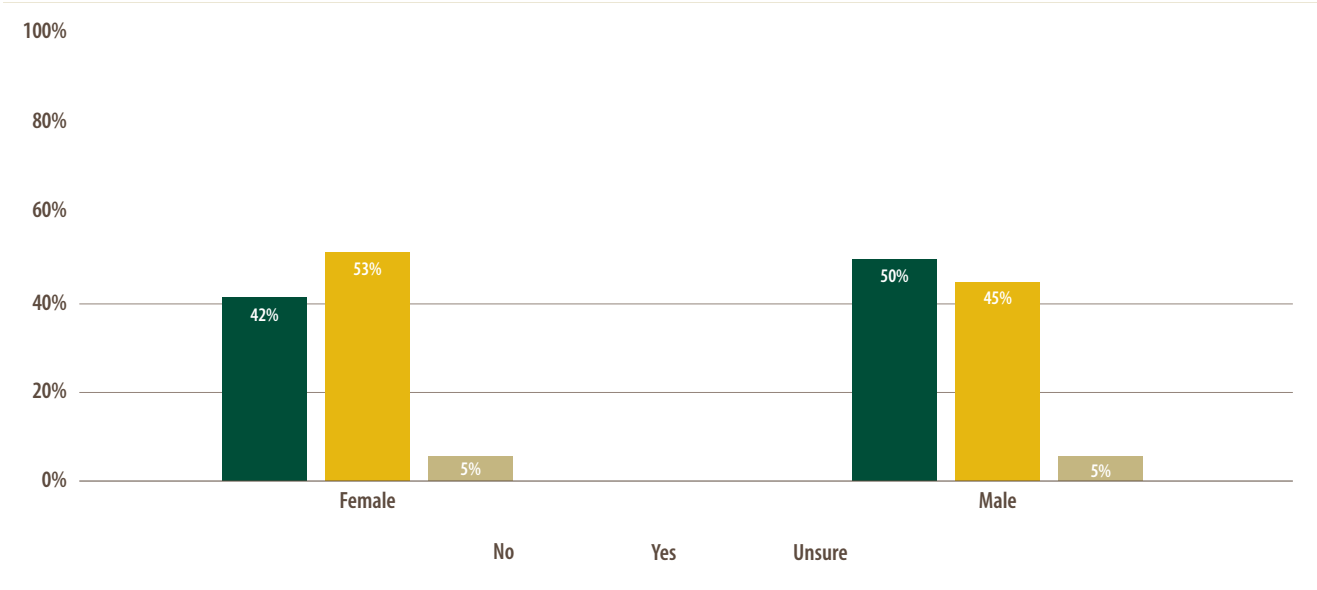
Student respondents were asked whether anyone had encouraged or motivated them to attend college. Figure 34 shows that a vast majority of both female students (92%) and male students (87%) were encouraged by a parent or guardian in their pursuit of higher education, and that was their primary motivator. This was followed by self-motivation and then encouragement from siblings, friends, and teachers/mentors.

Figure 34. The primary factors that encouraged or motivated college attendance for Hmong female and male students.



Student respondents were asked whether they had participated in pre-college programs (e.g., AVID, AP, or MESA) through high school to help them prepare for and/or apply to college. Figure 35 shows that 53% of female Hmong students and 45% of male Hmong students had participated in pre-college programs through high school.

Figure 35. Whether female and male Hmong students participated in pre-college programs through high school to help them prepare for and/or apply to college.



Student respondents were asked whether their high schools prepared them to gain admission to a four-year college and to succeed in college work. Figure 36 shows that a vast majority of both female (77%) and male (74%) Hmong students believed their high schools prepared them to gain admission to a four-year college. Figure 37 shows that 68% of female Hmong students and 61% of male Hmong students believed their high schools prepared them for success in college work.

Figure 36. Whether their high schools prepared female and male Hmong students to gain admission to a four-year college.

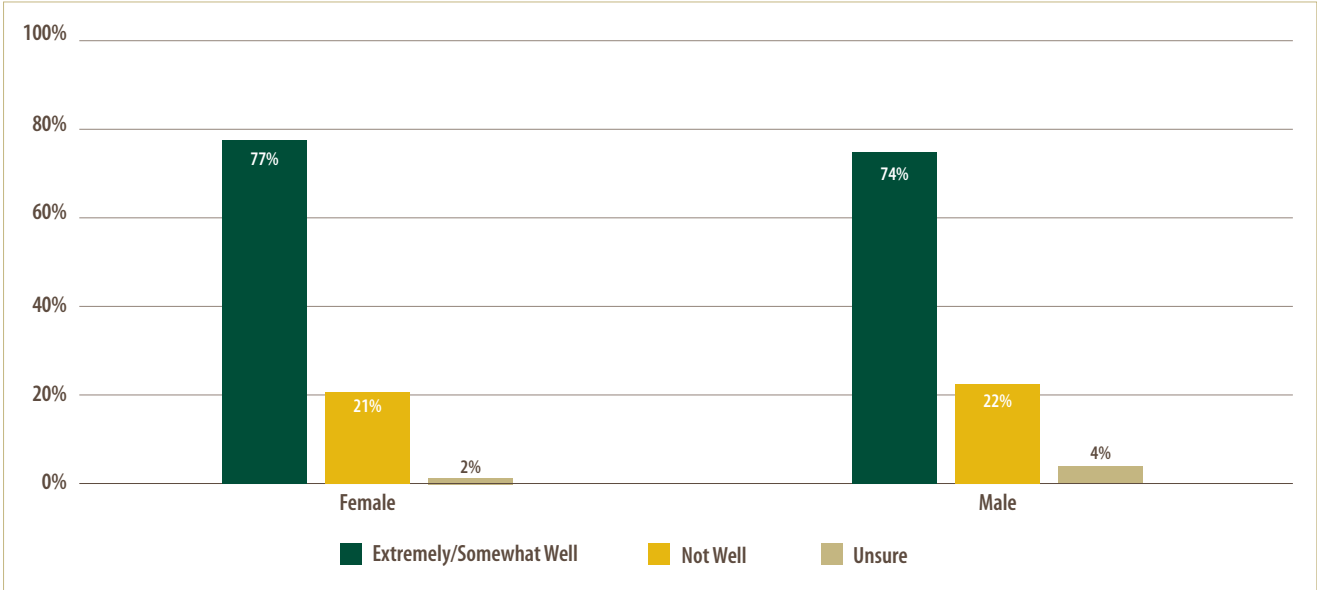
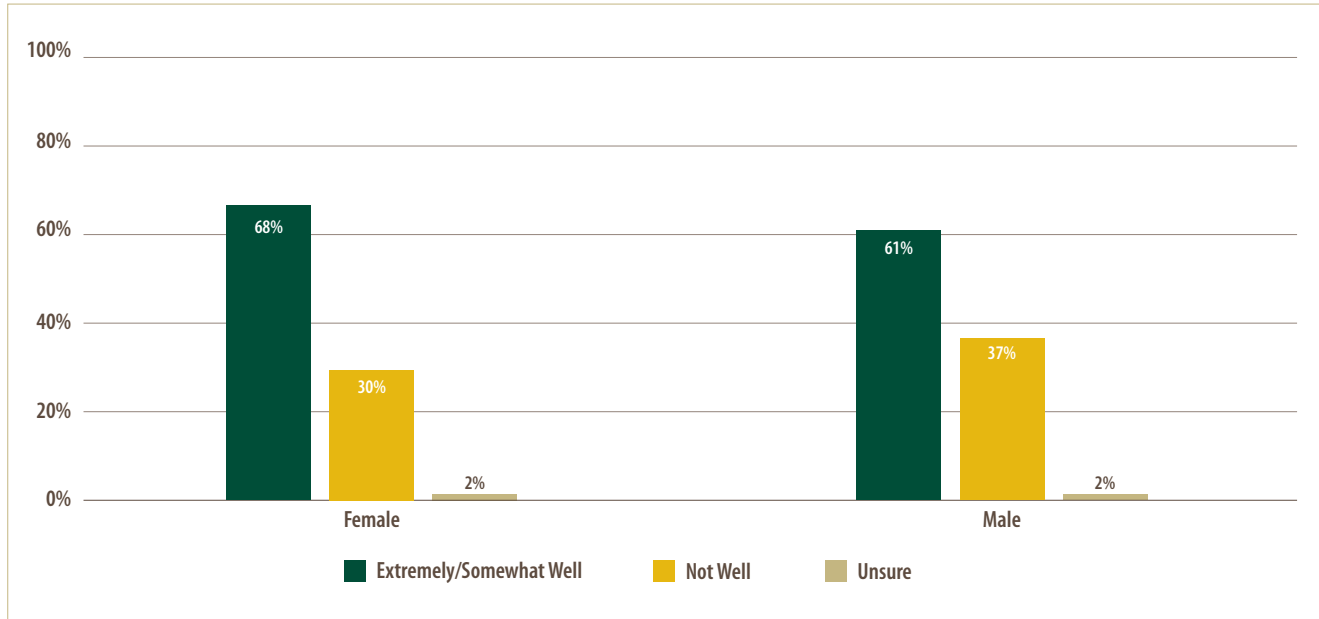
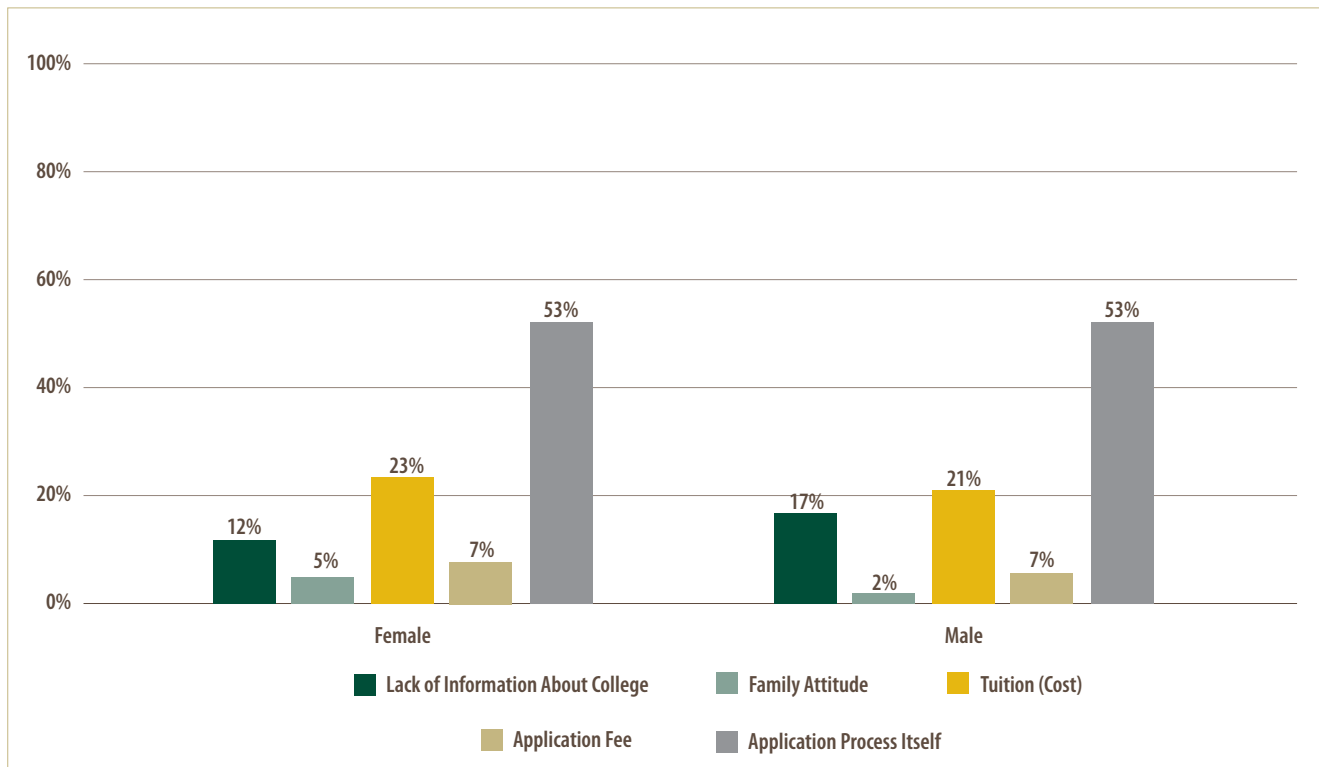


Figure 37. Whether their high schools prepared female and male Hmong students to succeed in college.



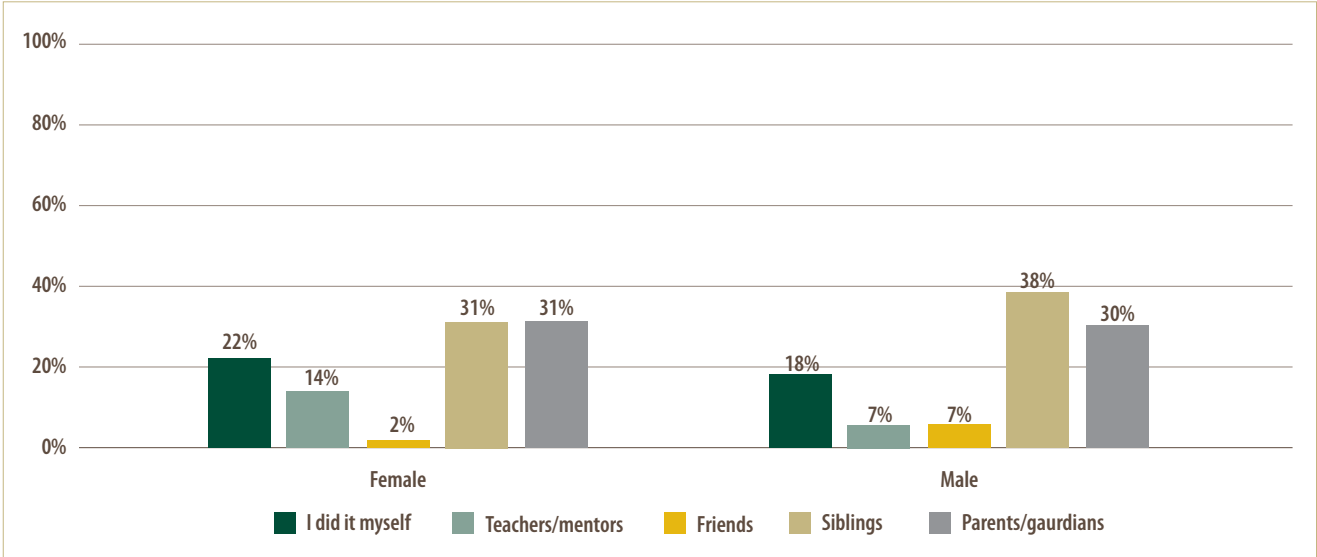
Student respondents were asked whether they faced barriers during the college application process. Figure 38 shows that a majority of both genders (53% each) found that “the application process itself” was the primary barrier, followed by tuition cost, lack of information, and family attitude.

Figure 38. Barriers that female and male Hmong students faced during the college application process.



Student respondents were asked whether anyone helped them with their transition into college. As Figure 39 shows, female Hmong students' top selections were parents/guardians (31%) and siblings (31%), followed by "I did it myself" (22%), teachers/mentors (14%), and friends (2%). Male Hmong students most commonly selected siblings (38%), followed by parents/guardians (30%), "I did it myself" (18%), teachers/mentors (7%), and friends (7%).

Figure 39. People who were most helpful in female and male Hmong students' transition into college.



Student respondents were asked a series of questions relating to their overall wellness and campus engagement. Figure 40 shows that 50% of female Hmong students frequently/occasionally felt lonely or homesick, 67% frequently/occasionally felt isolated from campus life, 54% frequently/occasionally worried about their health, and 34% frequently/occasionally felt unsafe on campus since entering Sacramento State. Figure 41 shows that 45% of Hmong male students frequently/occasionally felt lonely or homesick, only 9% indicated frequently/occasionally felt isolated from campus life, 44% frequently/occasionally worried about their health, and 57% frequently/occasionally felt unsafe on campus since entering Sacramento State.

Figure 40. How often Hmong female students felt emotional factors in their overall wellness and campus engagement since entering college.

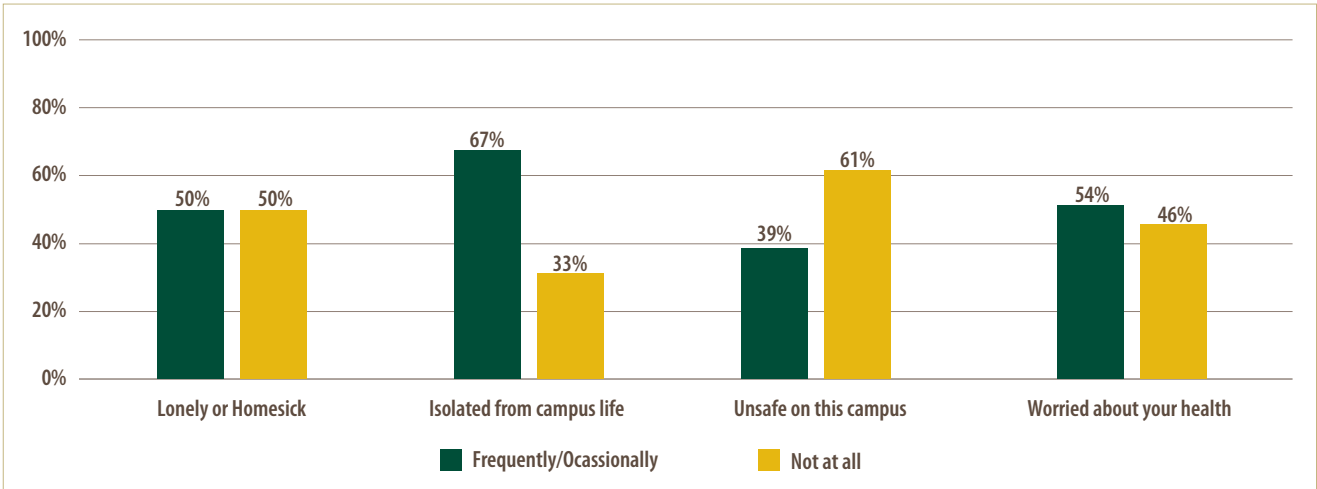
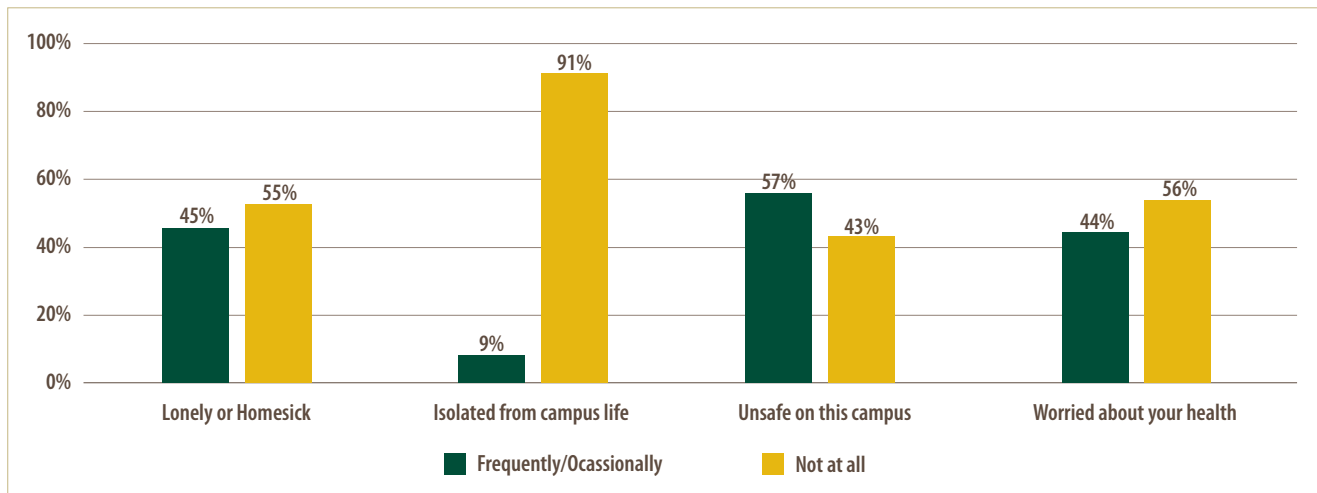
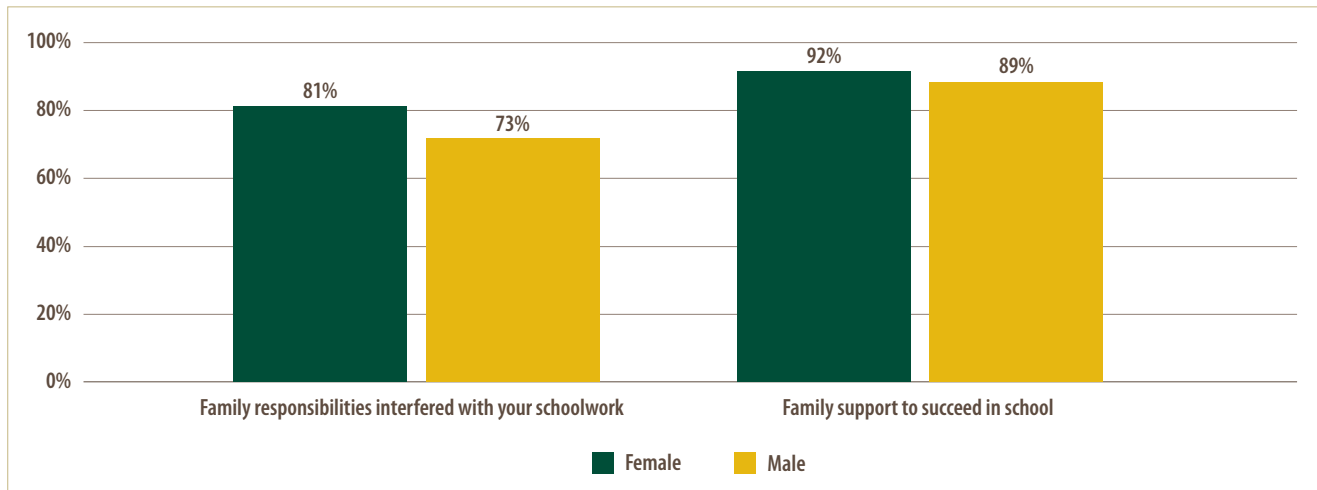


Figure 41. How often Hmong male students felt emotional factors in their overall wellness and campus engagement since entering college.



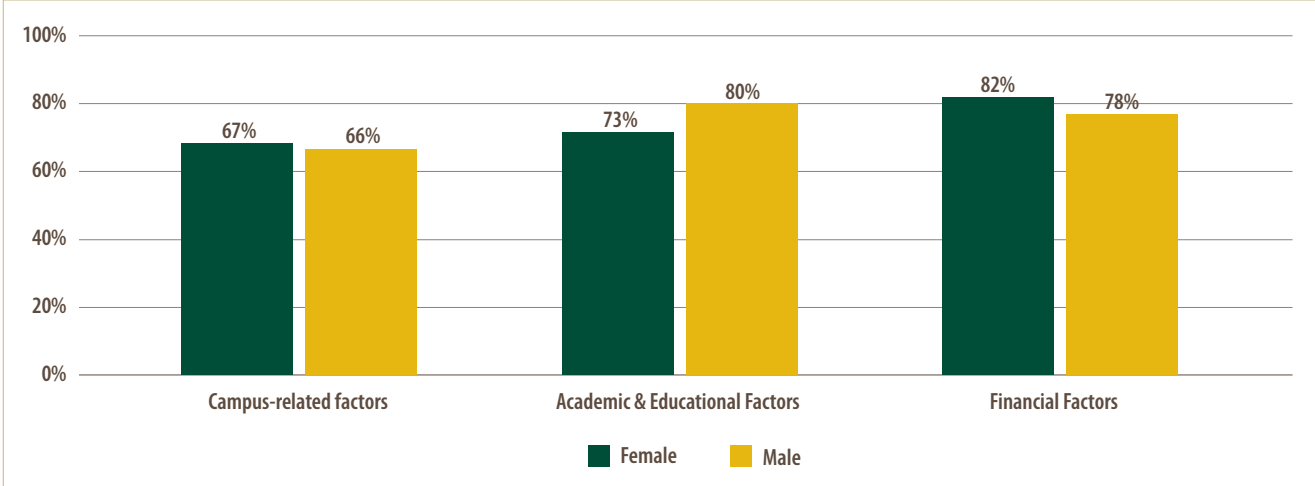
Student respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the role that family played in their college experiences. Figure 42 shows that for a vast majority of female (81%) and male (73%) Hmong students, family responsibilities frequently/occasionally interfered with their schoolwork. At the same time, 92% of female Hmong students and 89% of male Hmong students frequently/occasionally needed family support to succeed in school.

Figure 42. The percentage of female and male Hmong students who frequently/occasionally felt that familial factors affected their college experience.



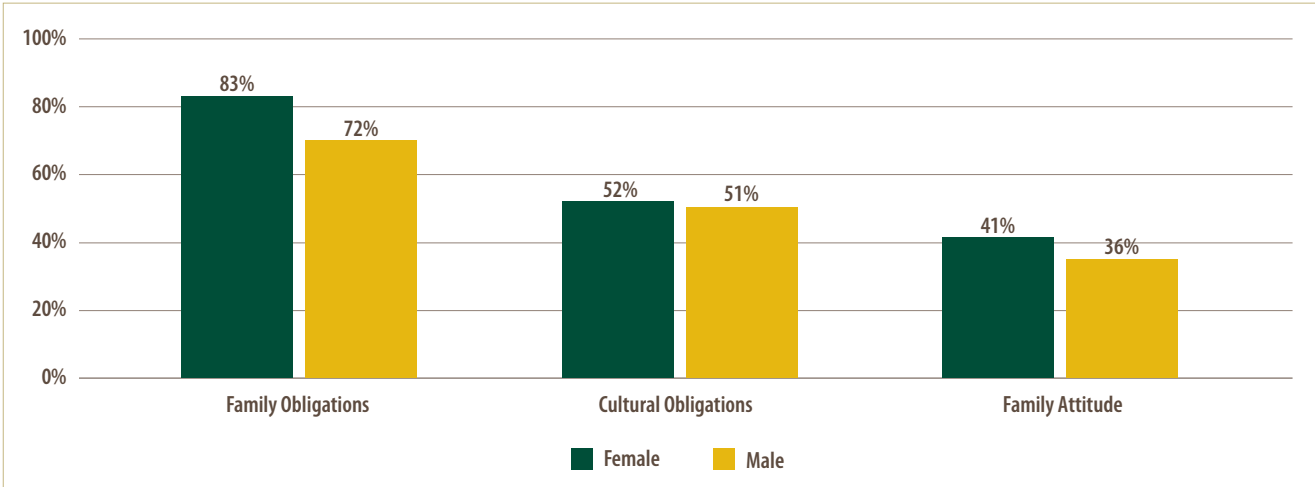
Student respondents were asked whether campus-related factors (e.g., course variety, availability of courses, instructors, advising, or support services), academic and educational factors (e.g., lack of adequate preparation for college, lack of proper motivation, or poor choice of major), and financial factors (e.g., tuition or books) interfered with their ability to complete a degree in a timely manner. Figure 43 shows that a vast majority of female and male Hmong students did feel that campus-related, academic and educational, and financial factors interfered or somewhat interfered with their progress to degree completion. Financial factors were the primary issue for female Hmong students (82%), followed by academic and educational factors (73%) and campus-related factors (67%). Conversely, the figure shows that academic and educational factors were the primary issue for male Hmong students (80%), followed by financial factors (78%) and campus-related factors (66%).

Figure 43. Factors that interfered with female and male Hmong students' ability to complete a degree.



Student respondents were asked whether family obligations (e.g., taking care of siblings or personal problems), cultural obligations, or family attitude (e.g., lack of support) had interfered with their ability to complete a degree in a timely manner. Figure 44 shows that for a vast majority of female and male Hmong students, family obligations were the primary interference, followed by cultural obligations and family attitude. Female Hmong students most commonly selected family obligations (83%), followed by family attitude (41%) and cultural factors (52%). Male Hmong students also selected family obligations as the top interference (72%), followed by cultural factors (51%) and then family attitude (36%).

Figure 44. Familial and cultural factors that interfered with female and male Hmong students' ability to complete a degree.



Student respondents were asked whether they had discussed their academic and personal challenges with anyone during college. Figures 45 and 46 show that for a vast majority of both genders—92% of female Hmong students and 89% of male Hmong students—a friend was the primary person with whom they had discussed academic challenges, followed by a sibling, a parent/guardian, a counselor/advisor, and a faculty/staff member. Similarly, Figures 47 and 48 show that for a vast majority of both genders—87% of female and 82% of male Hmong students—indicated that a friend was the primary person with whom they had discussed personal challenges, followed by a sibling, a parent/guardian, a counselor/advisor, and a faculty/staff member.

Figure 45. People with whom female Hmong students discussed academic challenges.

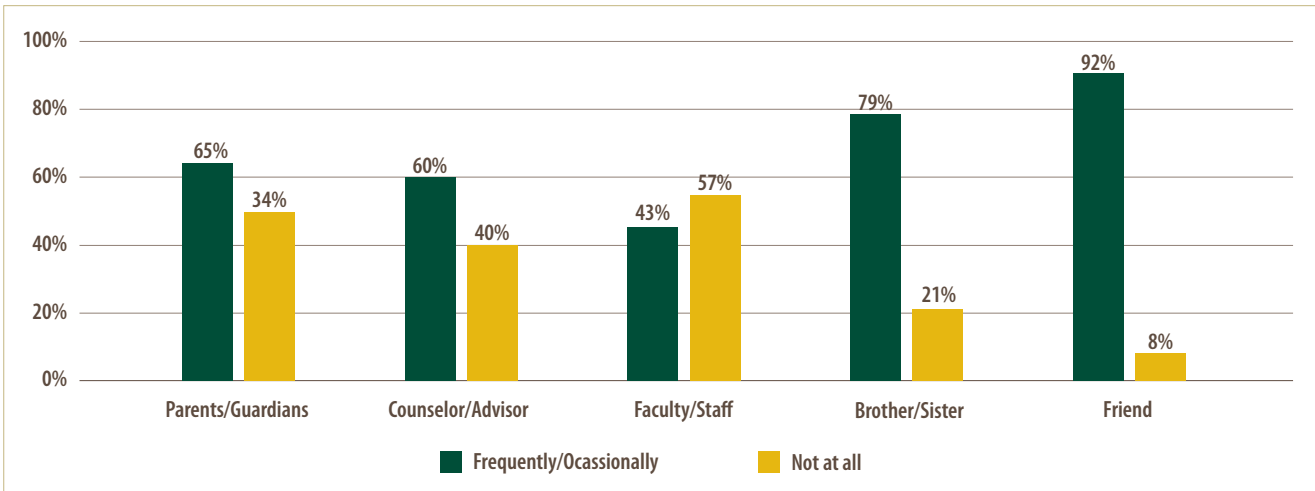


Figure 46. People with whom male Hmong students discussed academic challenges.

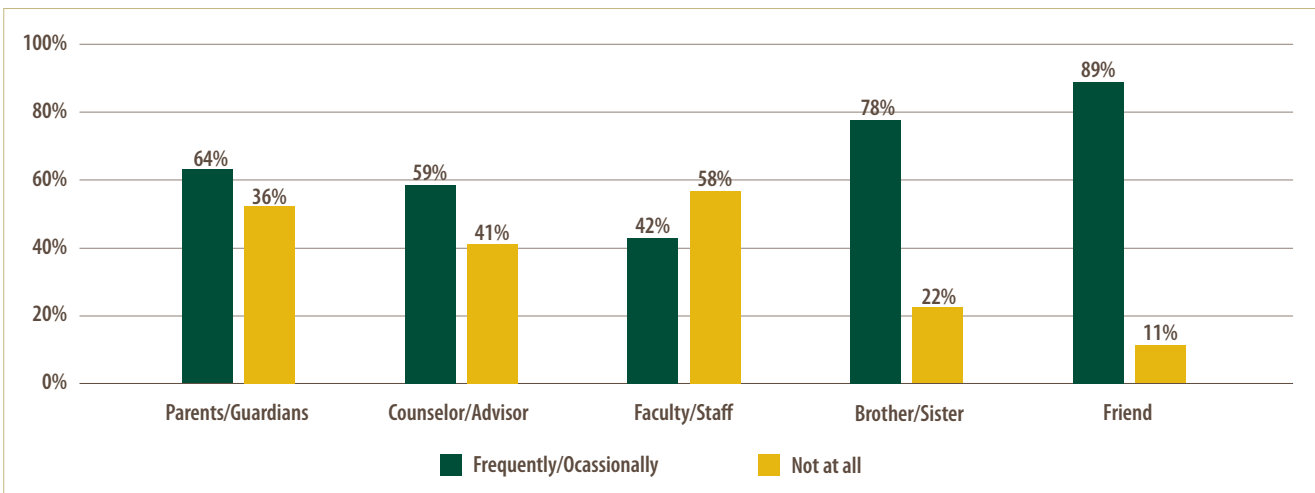


Figure 47. People with whom female Hmong students discussed personal challenges.

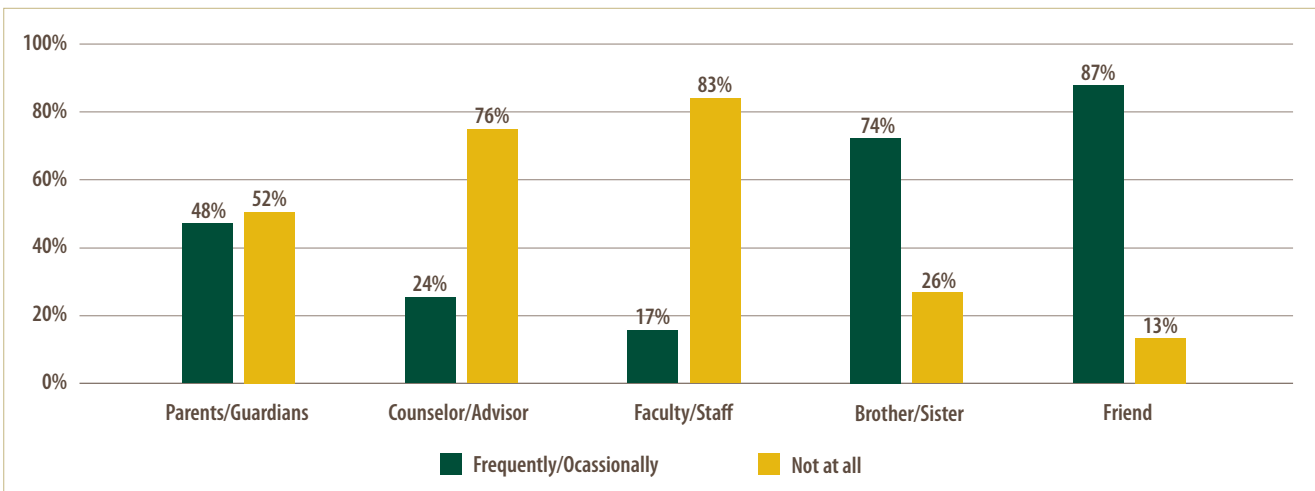
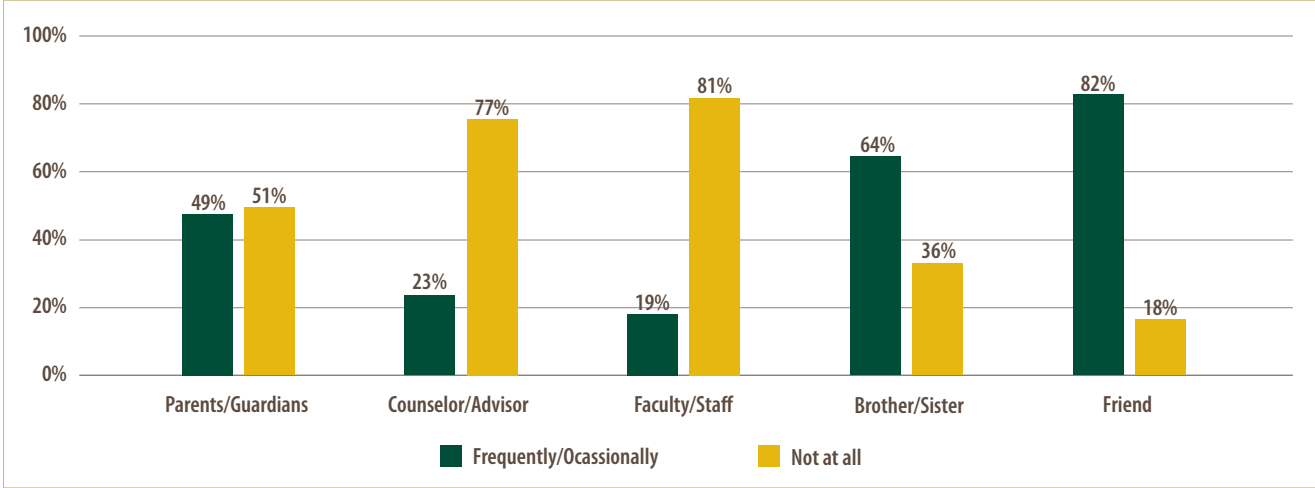
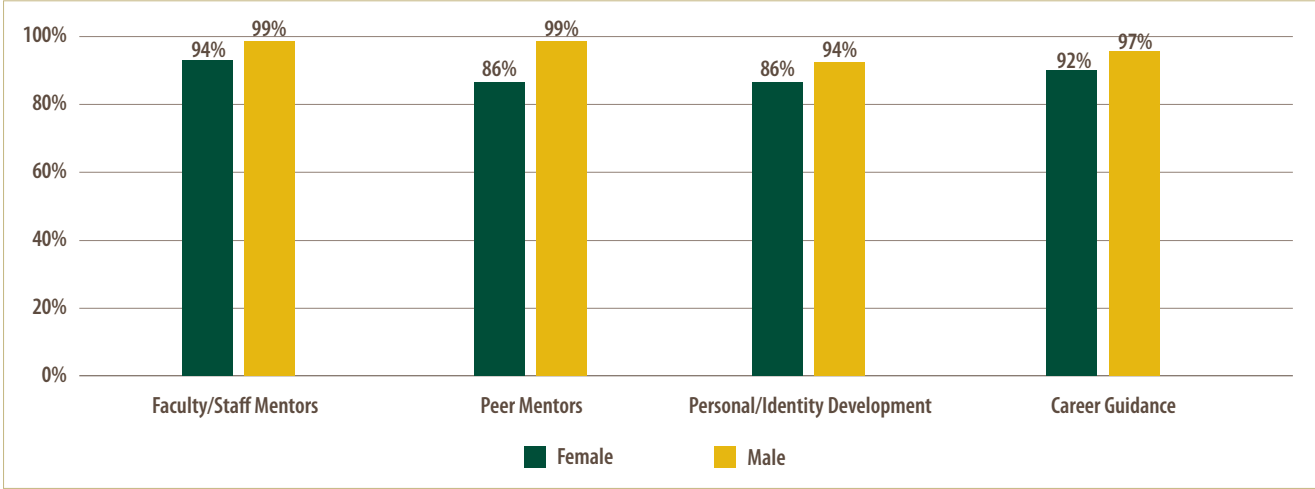


Figure 48. People with whom male Hmong students discussed personal challenges.



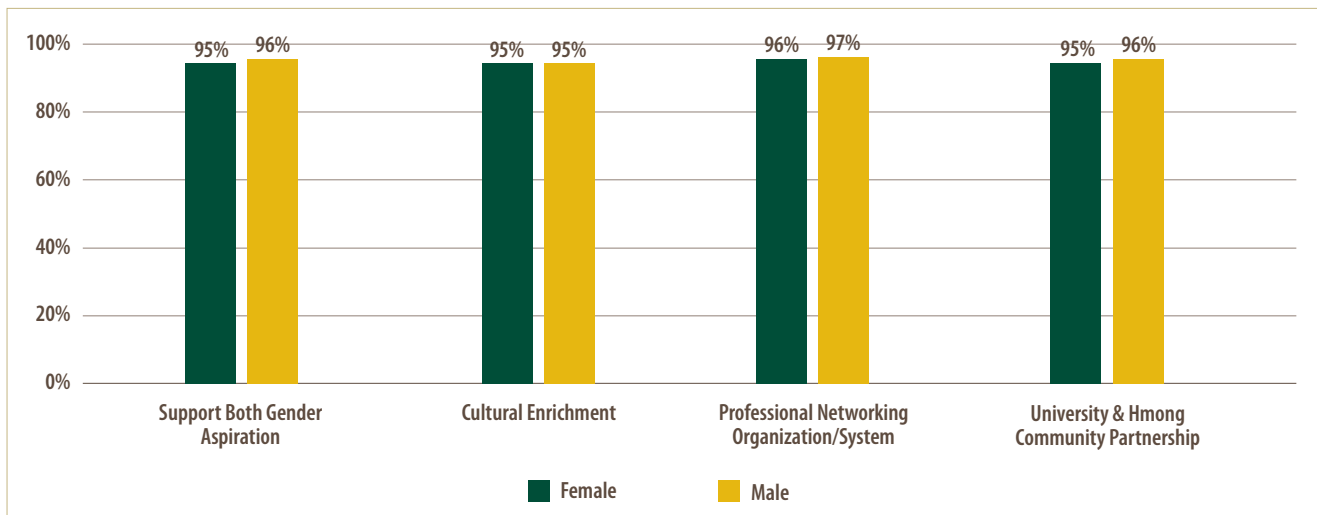
Student respondents were next asked whether providing university support, information, or services would be helpful for their degree completion. Figure 49 shows that for a vast majority of female (94%) and male (99%) Hmong students, faculty/staff mentorship would be very or somewhat helpful, followed by peer mentors, personal identity development (e.g., Hmong classes, events, or workshops), and career guidance.

Figure 49. University support, information, or services that would be most helpful to facilitate degree completion for female and male Hmong students.



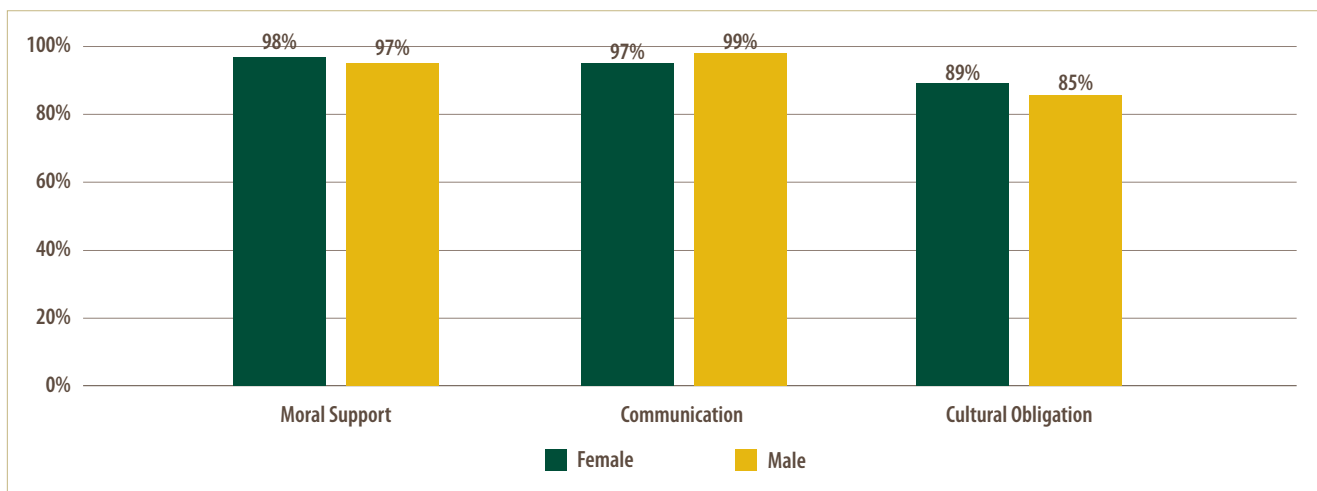
Student respondents were asked whether a series of support, information, or services would be helpful for their degree completion, if they were provided by the institution and supported by the Hmong community. Figure 50 shows that a vast majority or 96% of female and 97% of male Hmong students believed a professional networking system would be very or somewhat helpful in facilitating their degree completion, followed by supporting both genders' aspirations, cultural enrichment (e.g., history and language), and a university and Hmong community partnership.

Figure 50. Support, information, or services for the Hmong community that would be most helpful to facilitate degree completion for female and male Hmong students.



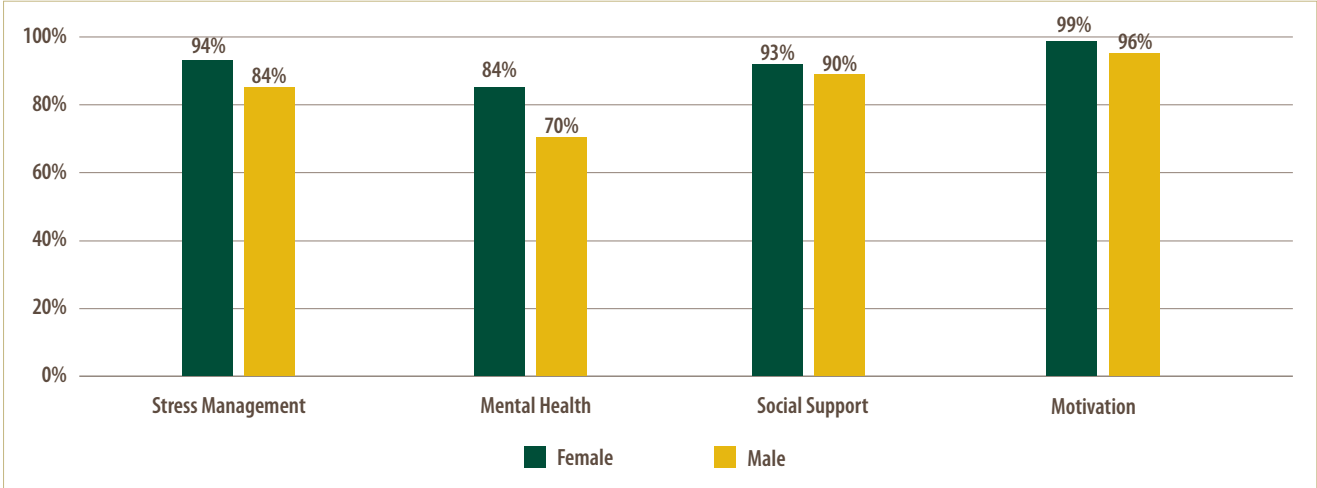
Student respondents were asked whether moral support (e.g., encouragement and emotional support), communication with their families, and cultural responsibilities (e.g., ceremonies) would be helpful in supporting their degree completion. Figure 51 shows that a vast majority of female and male Hmong students indicated moral support, communication, and cultural obligations would be very or somewhat helpful in facilitating their degree completion. Communication was the top choice for male Hmong students (99%), and moral support was the top choice for female Hmong students (98%).

Figure 51. Types of family support that would be most helpful to facilitate degree completion for female and male Hmong students.



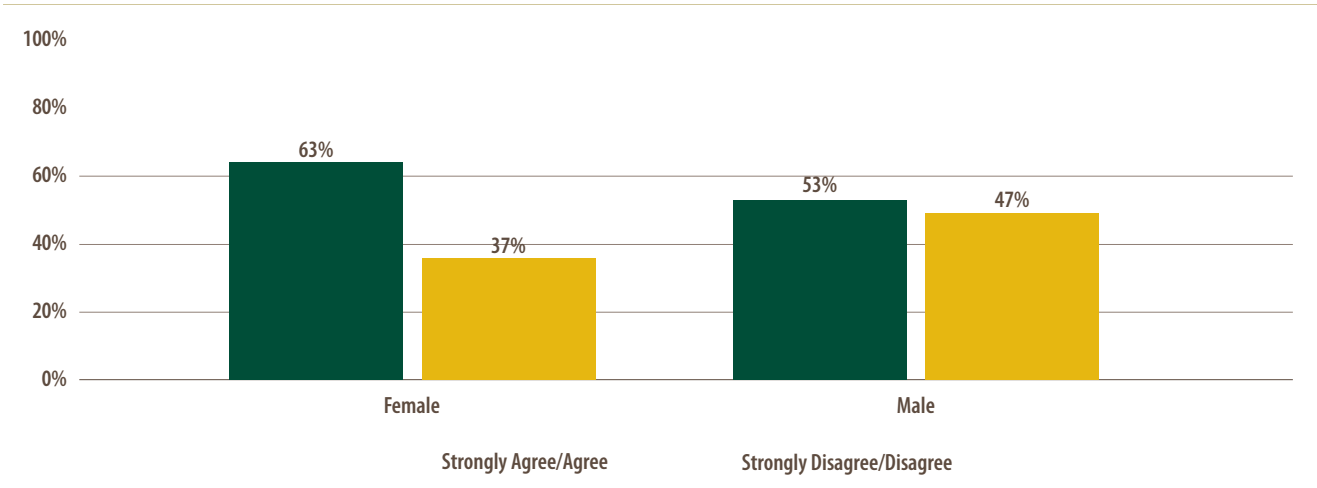
Student respondents were asked a series of questions about personal wellness factors that could help support their degree completion. Figure 52 shows that a vast majority of both genders—99% of female and 96% of male Hmong students—indicated motivation as the top choice, noting it as very or somewhat helpful in facilitating their degree completion. For female students, this factor was followed by stress management (94%), social support (e.g., support from friends; 93%), and mental health (84%). For male students, motivation was followed by social support (90%), stress management (84%), and mental health (70%).

Figure 52. Personal support, information, or services most helpful in facilitating degree completion for female and male Hmong students.



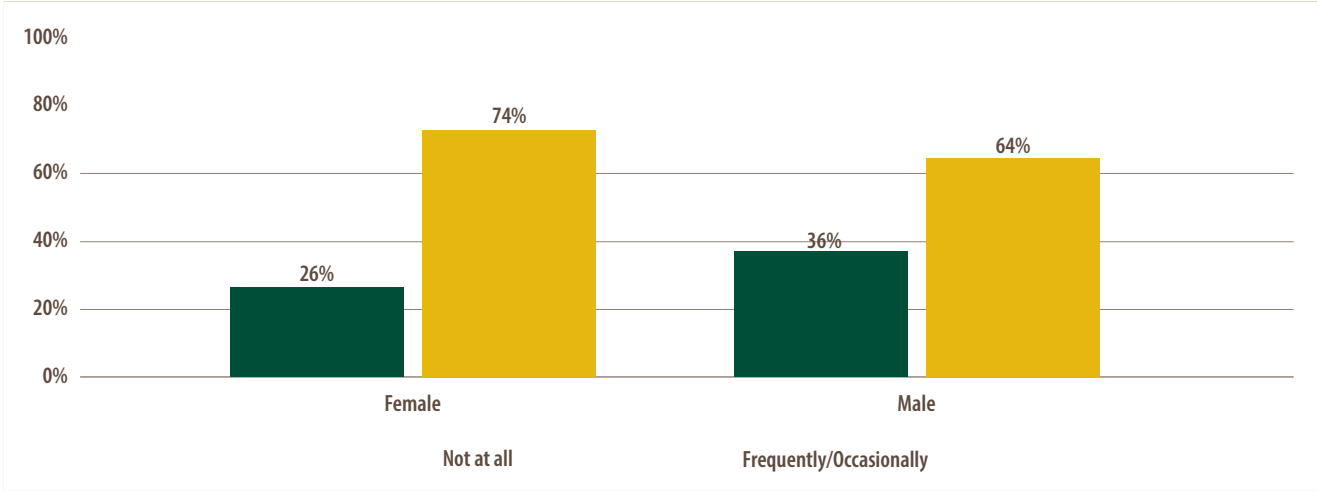
Student respondents were asked whether they saw themselves as a part of the campus community. Figure 53 shows that a majority of both female Hmong students (63%) and male Hmong students (53%) agreed with the statement.

Figure 53. Percentages of female and male Hmong students who saw themselves as part of the campus community.



Student respondents were asked whether they had felt depressed since entering college. Figure 54 shows that a vast majority of both genders—74% of female Hmong students and 64% of male Hmong students—had frequently or occasionally felt depressed since entering Sacramento State.

Figure 54. How often female and male Hmong students felt depressed since entering college.



Student respondents were asked whether they had participated or engaged in any on-campus programs during college. Figures 55 and 56 show that an equally vast majority of female (85%) and male (85%) Hmong students had never participated in undergraduate research programs. Figure 55 shows that the majority of female Hmong students had also never participated in an internship program (82%), and nearly half had not participated in student clubs or groups (47%). Similarly, Figure 56 shows that 37% of Hmong male students had not participated in student clubs or groups, and 81% had not participated in an internship program.

Figure 55. Whether female Hmong students had participated in on-campus programs since entering college.

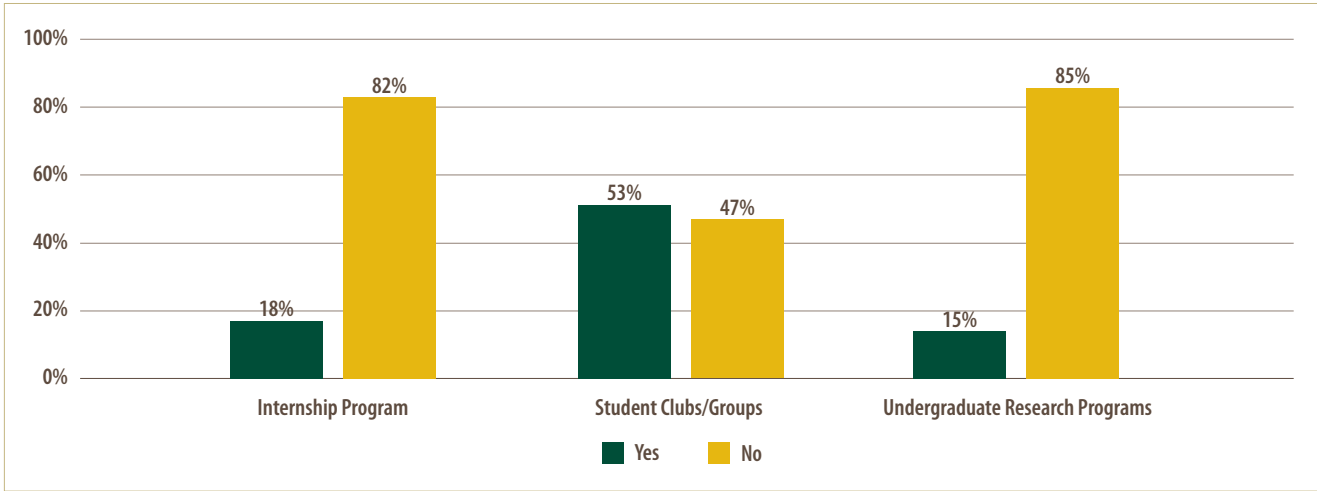
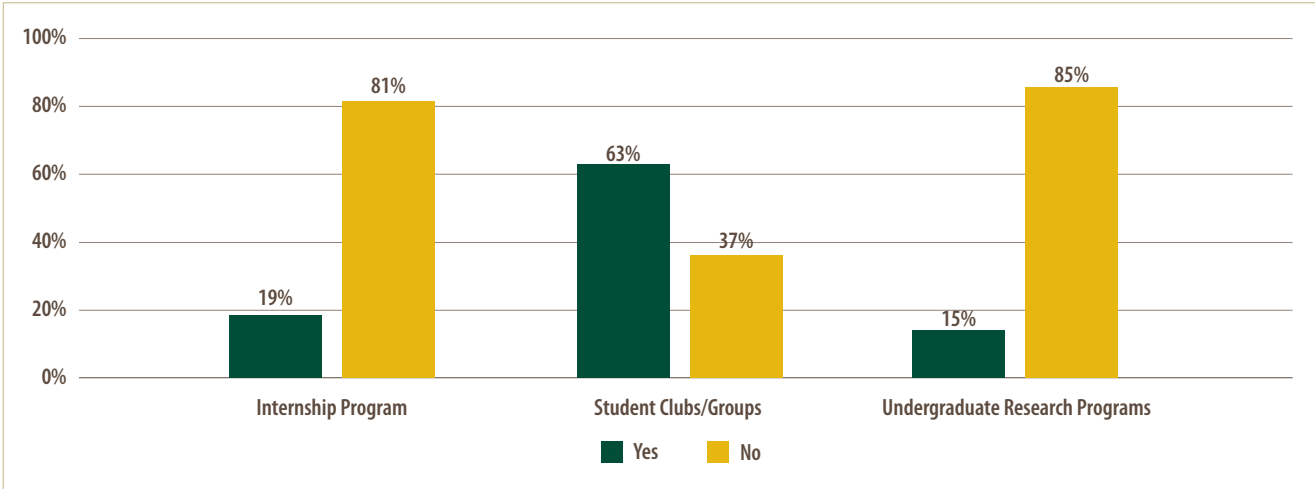


Figure 56. Whether male Hmong students had participated in on-campus programs since entering college.



Student respondents were asked whether they had frequently or occasionally utilized any on-campus programs and services during college. Figures 57 and 58 show that a vast majority of female (84%) and male (82%) Hmong students had never utilized Career Center services. Smaller but still notable majorities of female (68%) and male (64%) Hmong students had never utilized student health services. Only 8% of female and 23% of male Hmong students had frequently or occasionally utilized psychological counseling.

Figure 57. How often female Hmong students had utilized on-campus programs and services since entering college.

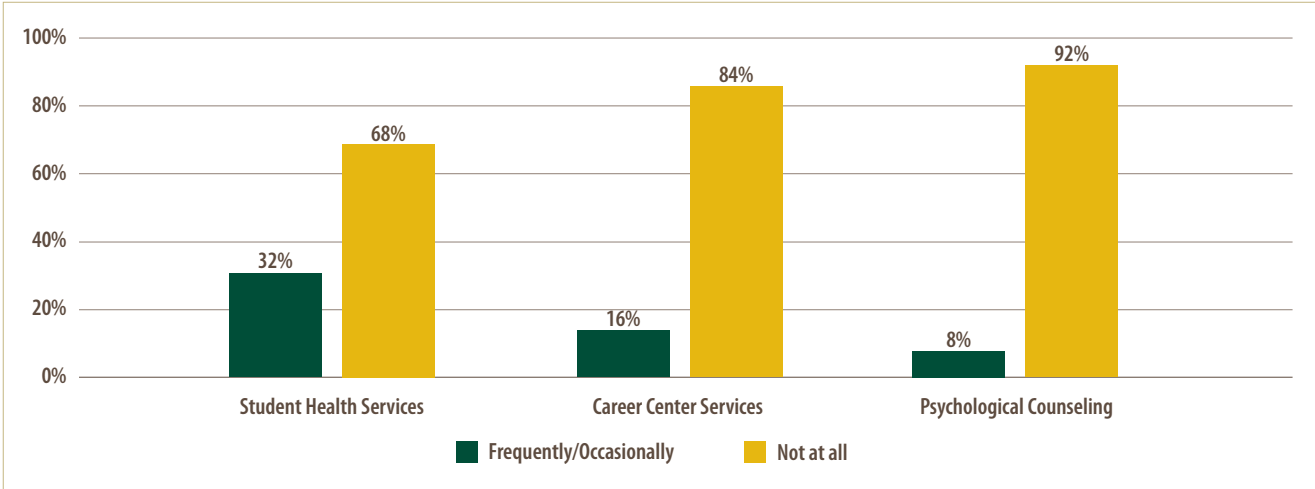
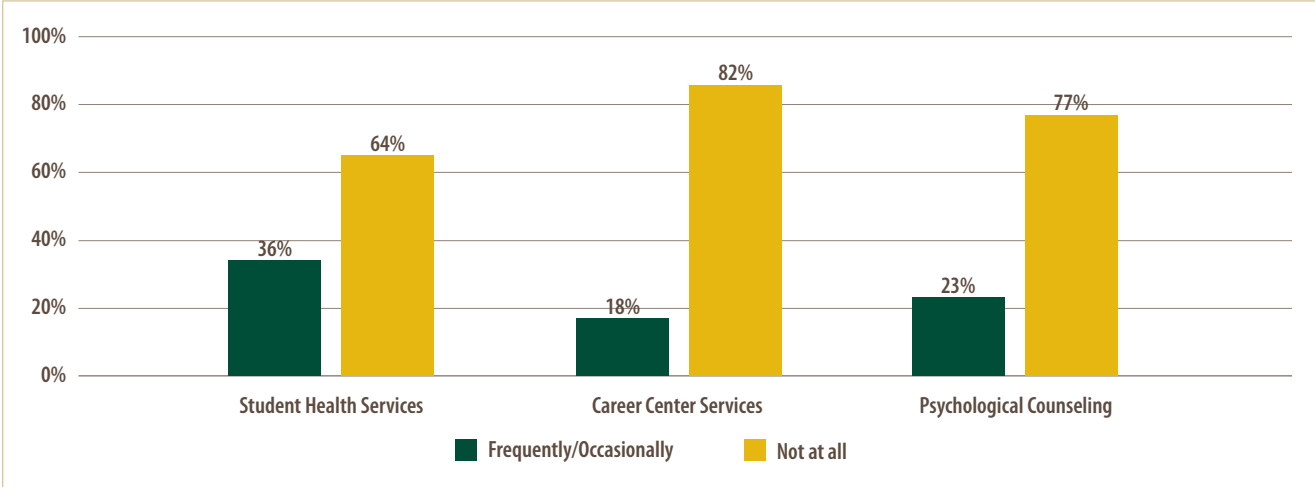
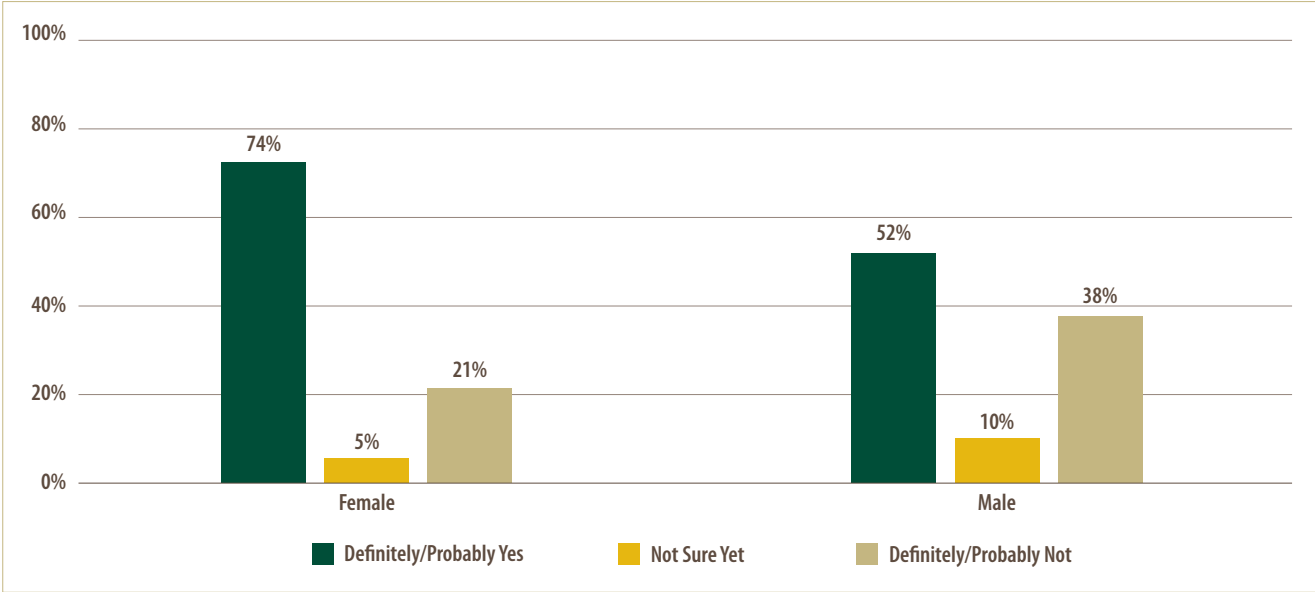


Figure 58. How often male Hmong students had utilized on-campus programs and services since entering college.



Student respondents were asked whether they would choose Sacramento State again as their first college choice. Figure 59 shows that a vast majority of female Hmong students (74%) and a small majority of male Hmong students (52%) would select Sacramento State again.

Figure 59. Percentages of female and male Hmong students who would still choose to enroll at Sacramento State if they could make the choice again.





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

The purpose of this report is to ensure that Hmong students have an equitable chance and a positive experience as they progress, persist, and complete their degree programs. Successfully graduating these students will require appropriate responses from individuals, families, the Hmong community, and the institution, creating broad, multilevel, and extraordinary changes in policy, practice, and resources. Though a few generic recommendations might be offered to better serve all of America's underperforming minority groups (e.g., mandatory first-year advising), the Hmong population—like all other subgroups—is unique, and it requires individual attention.

The following recommendations are carefully selected to present systematic strategies to support Hmong students. Each recommendation comes from a policy standpoint. Recommendation 6 presents practical implementation suggestions for educational leaders, faculty, and professional staff to help them integrate these ideas into their everyday practices. Each of these recommendations is vitally important in changing the discourse of what it means to be a Hmong American college student. These priorities represent a vision to address the myriad educational needs of these students, ranging from broad to specific, from cultural to structural.

Recommendation 1:

Intentionally disaggregate and disseminate major institutional data sets and information used to drive decision-making.

Recommendation 2:

Recruit, hire, and retain administrator, faculty, and staff members who are representative, have shared experiences and/or understanding of the Hmong student population.

Recommendation 3:

Foster strategic collaboration with K-12 school districts/key stakeholders to create transition summer programming to strengthen students' college and career readiness.

Recommendation 4:

Establish and institutionalize programs that promote, contribute to, and improve the sense of belonging and the educational success of Hmong students.

Recommendation 5:

Form meaningful and sustainable relationship with the community/family around cultural and social activities to promote intergenerational dialogue and discourse.

For practical application, here are some questions that faculty and student affairs professionals can ask themselves.

Senior Administrators

Are there subpopulations or programs that underperform the university average?

Deans

Where do I need to adjust academic support resources to improve student outcomes?

Chairs and Faculty

Which courses should I prioritize for review and possible redesign?

Staff/Advising

What milestone/benchmark thresholds can I use to target overlooked students for early-advising interventions?

**Source: Student Success Collaborative, 2017*



CONCLUDING REMARKS

The goal of this report is to carve out a place in the academic literature for the Hmong student experience, thereby opening up the possibility for a true shared understanding, which is frequently absent from robust quantitative studies.

This document is dedicated to the Hmong students who stay the course and successfully graduate despite challenging environmental and societal factors, including familial and cultural influences central to Hmong student aspiration and educational pursuits.

I am hopeful that one day a community cadre of Hmong professionals will actively participate in addressing issues that impact our community and will successfully negotiate a path for positive change. This cadre would be a political force in California that addresses the health, educational, economic, and social disparities that affect our Hmong community. I conclude with a student quote that encapsulates the Hmong student experience:

“I feel like being Hmong in general was [once] a disadvantage. Because I would say, maybe it relates to our history [and] how we came to the United States not like 100 years ago like some other Asian ethnicities. We came here 40 years ago, [and] mostly our grandparents and parents were farmers then fast forward to [being] American. Our parents tried to figure how to live a new life and we are trying to [figure out] how to be college students going through first generation college student experiences. It’s hard. It made me realize the Hmong population here has been growing like we have more advantage now. I think people are starting to realize that we are important and we are a growing population. In the last few years, I feel like it’s been an advantage.”

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