

# How Students who Initially Enroll at a Four-Year Institution Utilize the Community College System

---

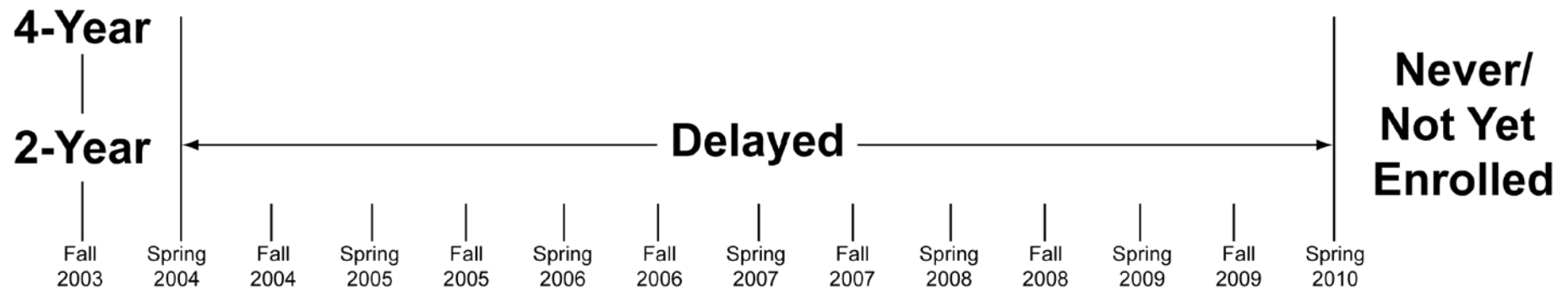
Eric Lichtenberger, Ph.D.  
Assistant Research Professor  
Illinois Education Research Council



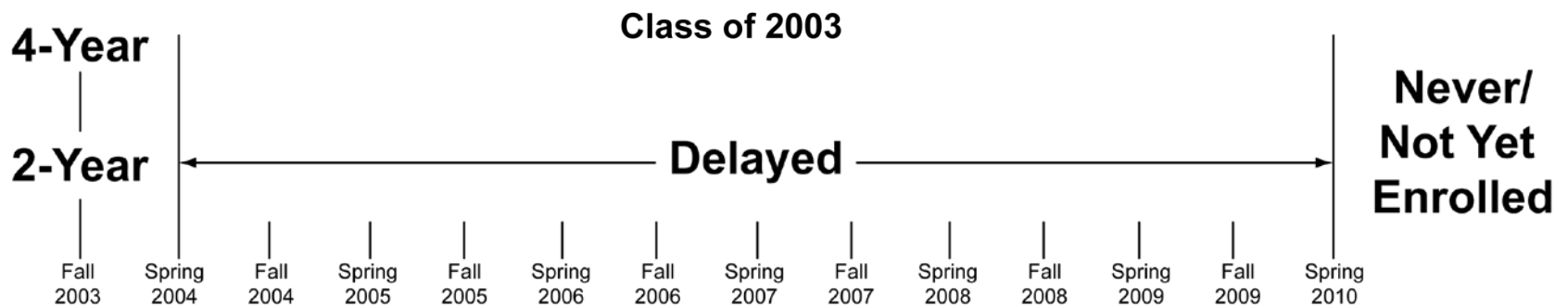
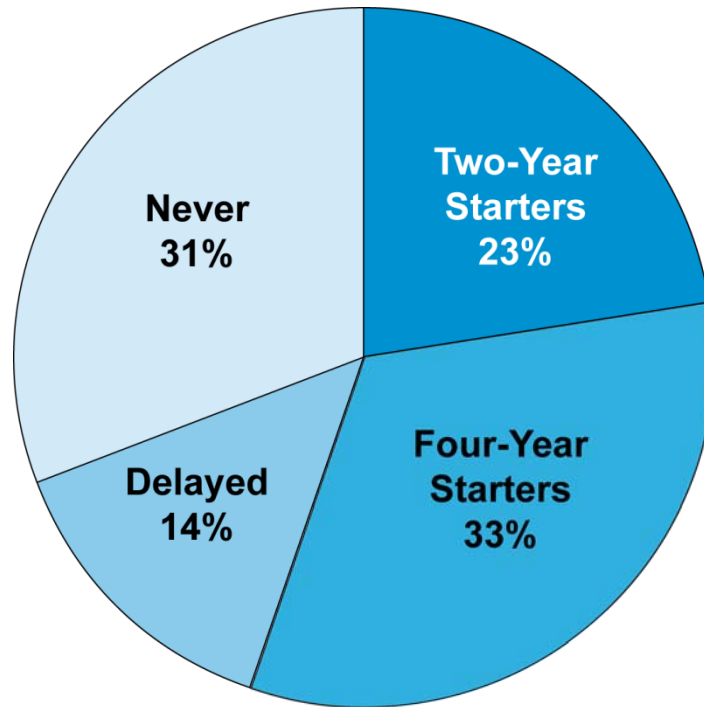
# Sources of Data

- **ACT**-Prairie State Achievement Examination and the Student Interest Profiler
- **National Student Clearinghouse**-covers 92% of all postsecondary enrollment
- **Illinois High School Report Card**-characteristics of the high schools
- **IPEDS**- characteristics of the postsecondary schools
- **Barron's**-selectivity of the four-year institutions

## Basic Types of Postsecondary Enrollment for the Illinois High School Class of 2003

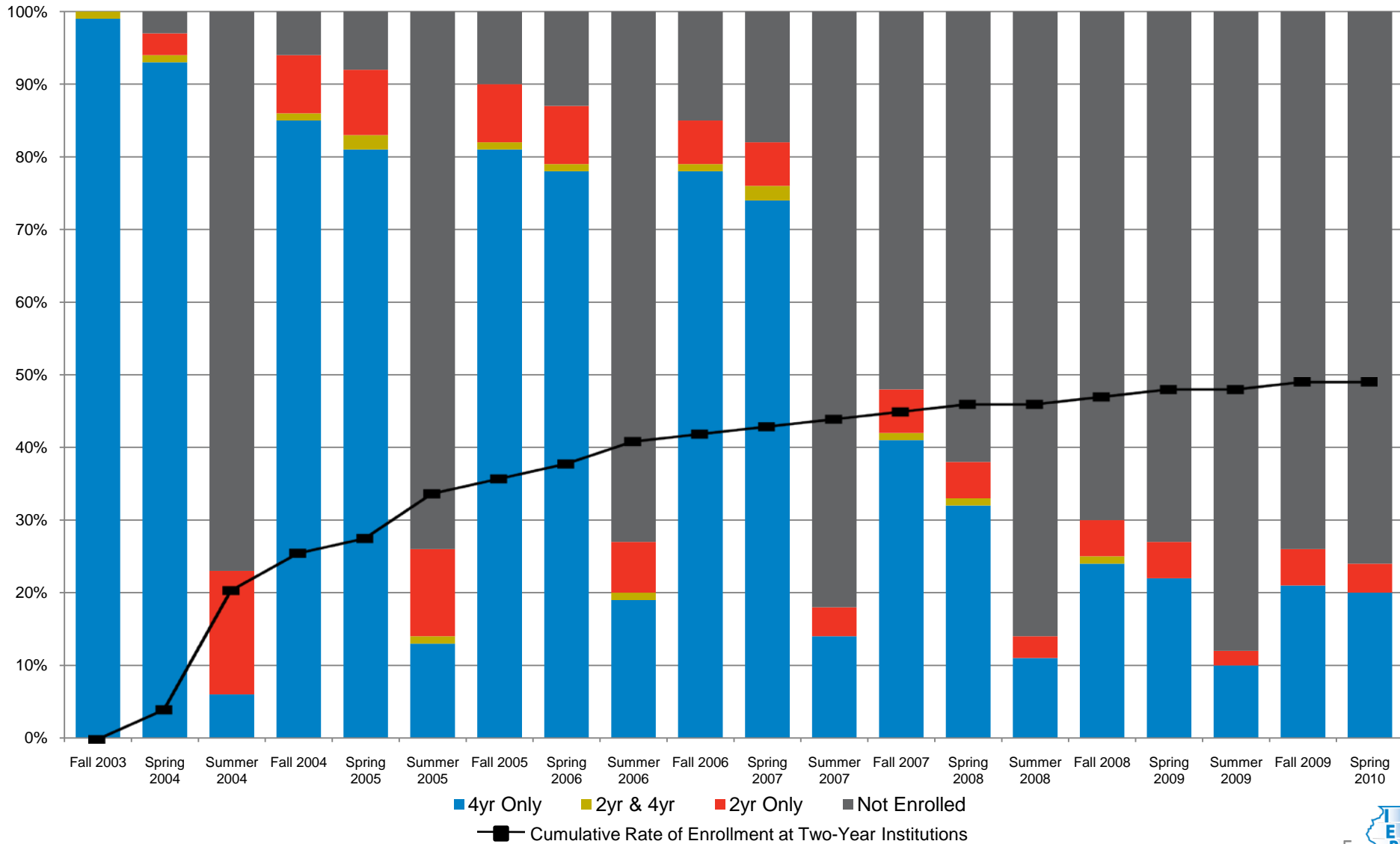


The study starts with the portion of the Illinois High School Class of 2003 (N=115,677) that enrolled at a four-year institution during the fall semester of 2003.



**In total there were 37,165 four-year starters**

# Enrollment at 4yr and 2yr Institutions

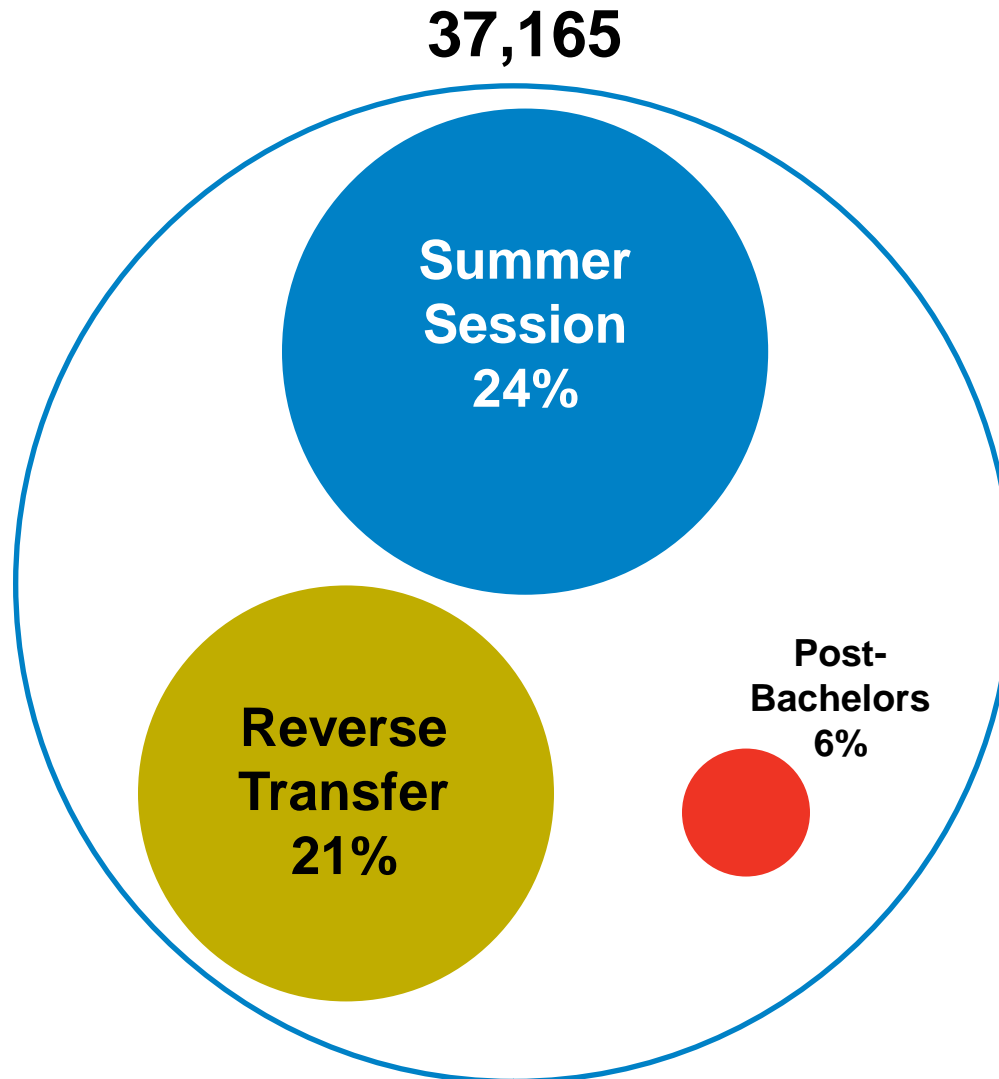


# There are different ways the four-year starters utilize the community college system.

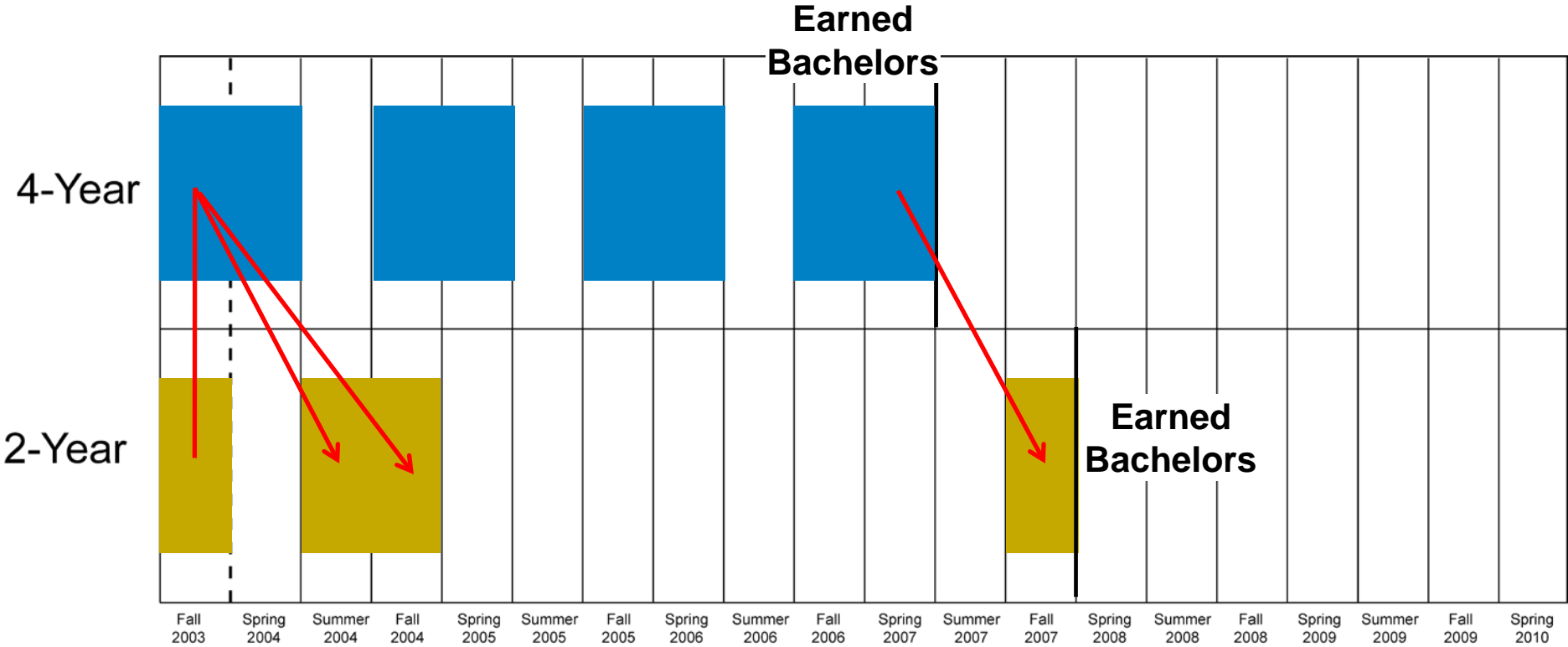
- During summer session (24%)
- By sake of reverse transferring (21%)
- After earning a bachelor's degree (6%)
- Concurrently with a four-year institution (12%)
- To finish a graduation requirement at a four year institution (<1%)

**These are not mutually exclusive**

# The Overlap of Types of Utilization



# Different Types of 2-Year Enrollment



- Concurrent
- Summer
- Reverse Transfer
- Post-Bachelors
- To Complete



## **Research Questions: Conditional Upon Initially Enrolling at a Four-Year Institution:**

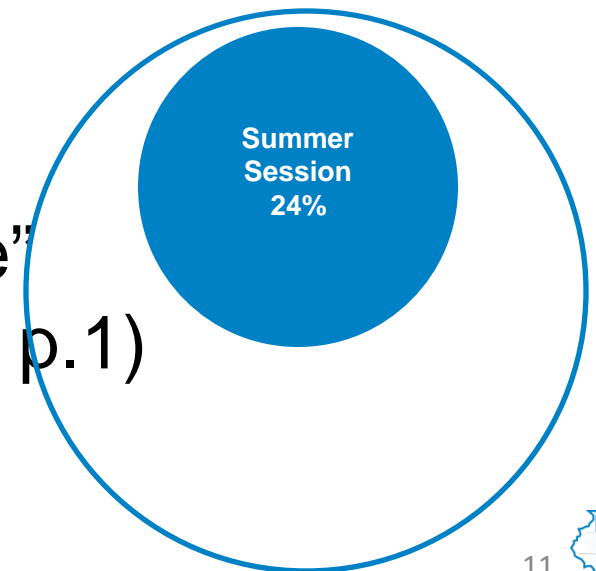
1. Which factors are related to utilizing the community college system during summers?
2. Which factors are related to reverse transferring; returning to a four-year; and graduating?
3. Which factors are related to post-bachelor's enrollment at a community college?

# Factors

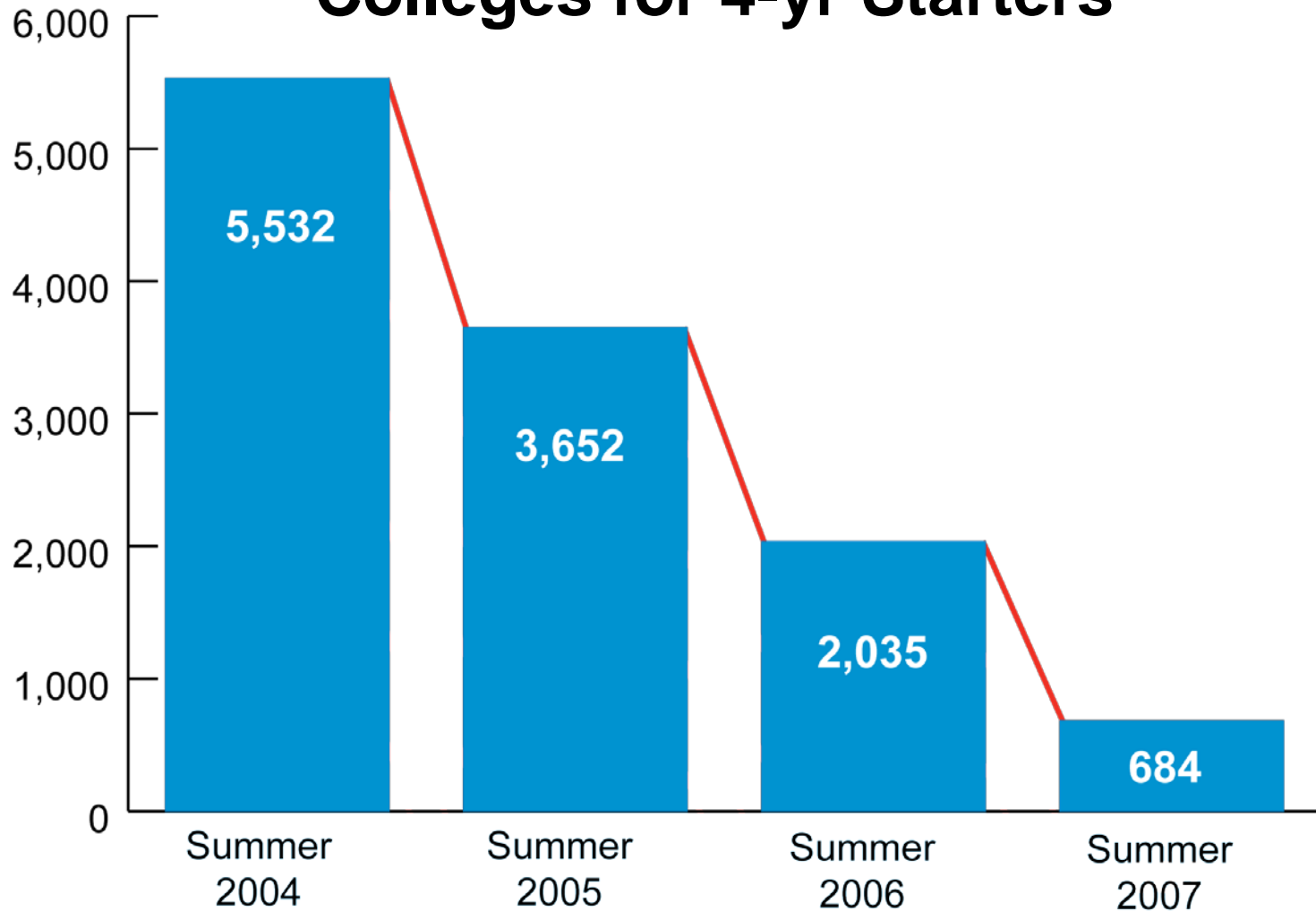
Category	Variables
<b>Student Characteristics</b>	Gender & Race
<b>Student Academic Characteristics</b>	High school class rank, IERC college readiness, highest expected degree, core curriculum, ACT composite, level of surety regarding major and occupation, sector/readiness alignment
<b>Ability to Pay/ Financial Aid</b>	Parental income, number of siblings, expecting to receive financial aid, expecting to work while enrolled
<b>High School Characteristics</b>	Teacher academic capital, adjusted per pupil school funding, region, locale
<b>Four-Year Characteristics</b>	Sector, selectivity, state, distance from the student's home

# Summer Sessioners

- Nearly one quarter—24.4%—of the four-year starters met this distinction (n=9,085).
  - Does not include post-bachelor's enrollment
  - Does not include summer enrollment after reverse transferring
- “to make up a course, improve grades, lighten their fall schedule” (Reverse Transfer Project, 1999, p.1)



# Summer Enrollment at Community Colleges for 4-yr Starters



**Most of the summer enrollment falling within this definition occurs early in the study.**

# Factors associated with summer enrollment at two-year institutions among four-year starters.

- Gender: Female
- Race: Asian rather than white and white rather than African-American
- Socioeconomic status: ability to pay
- College Readiness: moderately prepared overall, but not college ready in science and reading
- Alignment: overmatched in terms their readiness and the selectivity of their four-year institution
- Locale: rural rather than urban areas or towns
- Four-year Sector: public and in-state institutions
- Distance: enrolled at a four-year closer to home

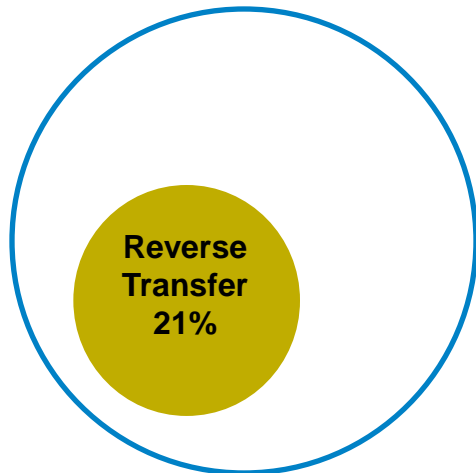
# Summer Enrollment was Related to Bachelor's Completion\*

- 84% of the summer sessioners earned bachelor's degrees, compared with 68% of all other four-year starters.
- Timing of the summer enrollment appeared to factor into the likelihood of bachelor's completion.
- The number of summer sessions enrolled appeared to factor into the likelihood of bachelor's completion.

\*based on descriptive statistics

# Reverse Transfers

- More than one out of every five four-year starters met this distinction (21%)
  - Does not include summer enrollment
  - Does not include concurrent enrollment
  - Does not include post-bachelor's enrollment



# Current Reverse Transfer Studies

Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer (2009)-

- 15% transferred in reverse and 41% returned.
- 22% bachelor's completion rate overall, 49% among those who return
- Common among students from less-educated families
- Partly due to lower levels of academic performance during their freshman year

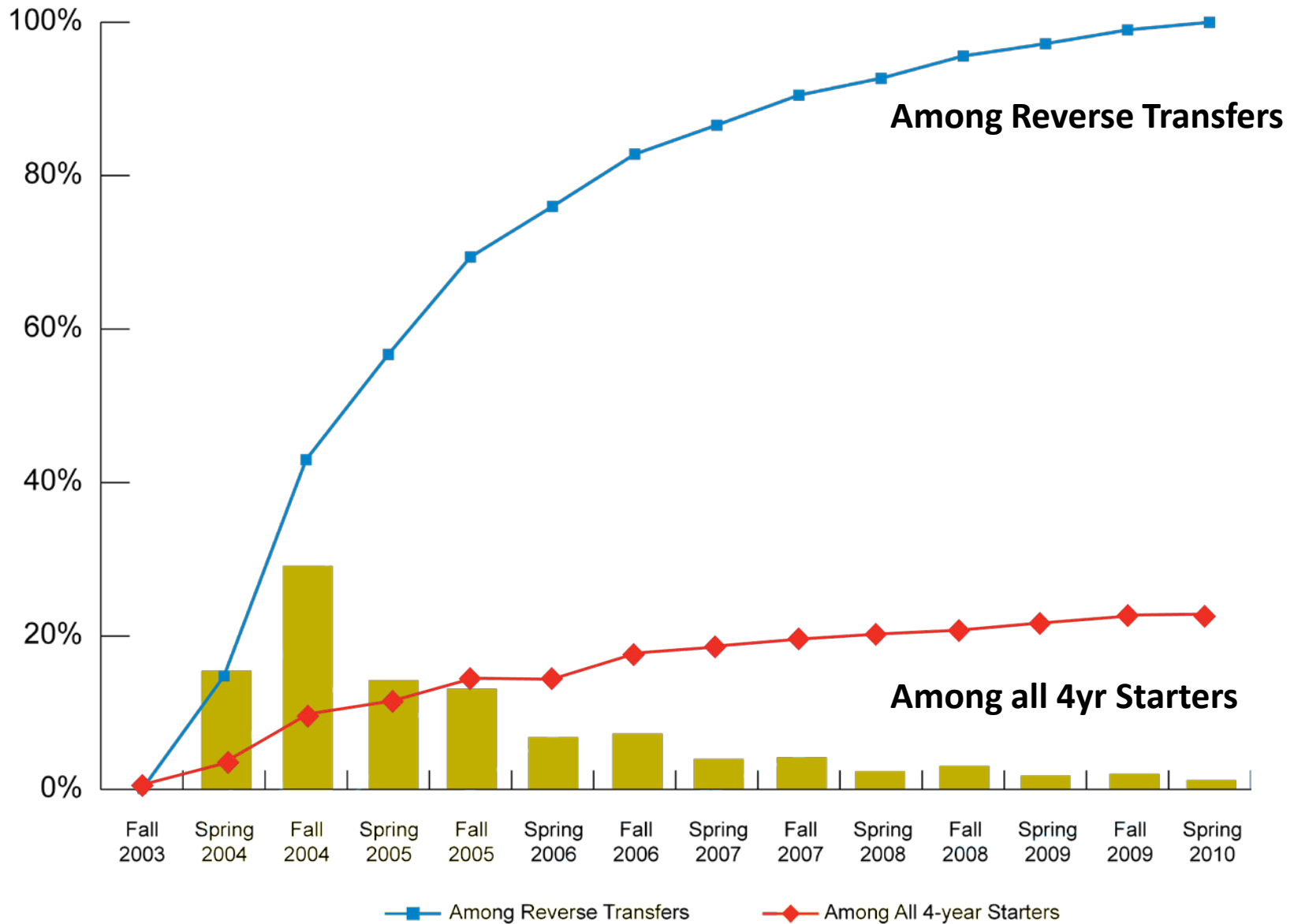


# Current Reverse Transfer Studies

Kalogrides and Grodsky (2011)-

- 10% transferred in reverse and 26% earned a degree from a 2-yr and 18% earned a bachelor's.
- Family education played a significant role
- Family income did not
- Reverse transfers had more navigational capital (transfer sooner than drop-outs)
- Less prepared for college than those persisting

# Cumulative Reverse Transfer Rate



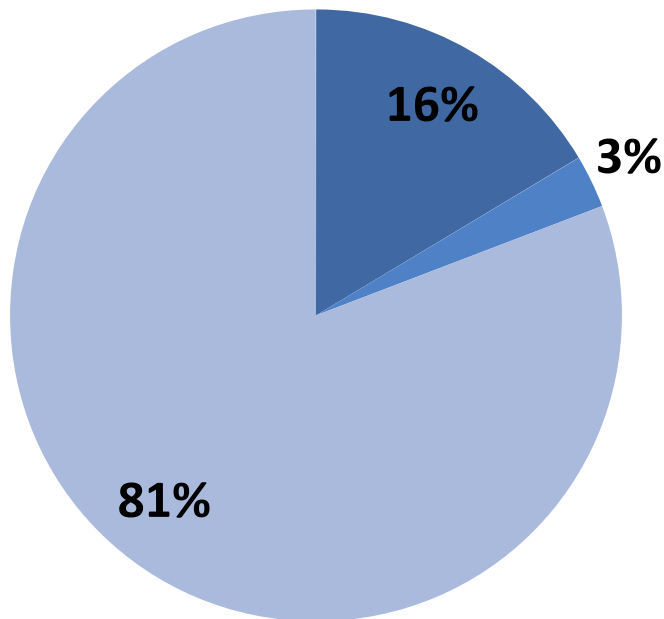
# Factors associated with an increased likelihood of reverse transferring

- Gender: Male
- Race: Hispanic rather than white
- Socioeconomic status: from families with limited economic resources
- College readiness: less prepared
- Sector and Selectivity: less selective; public; and in-state four-year institutions
- Major: unsure about their choice of major
- Region: from the Southeast region rather than Chicago
- Teacher academic capital: from high schools with lower degrees of teacher academic capital

# Outcomes for Reverse Transfers at Two-Year Institutions

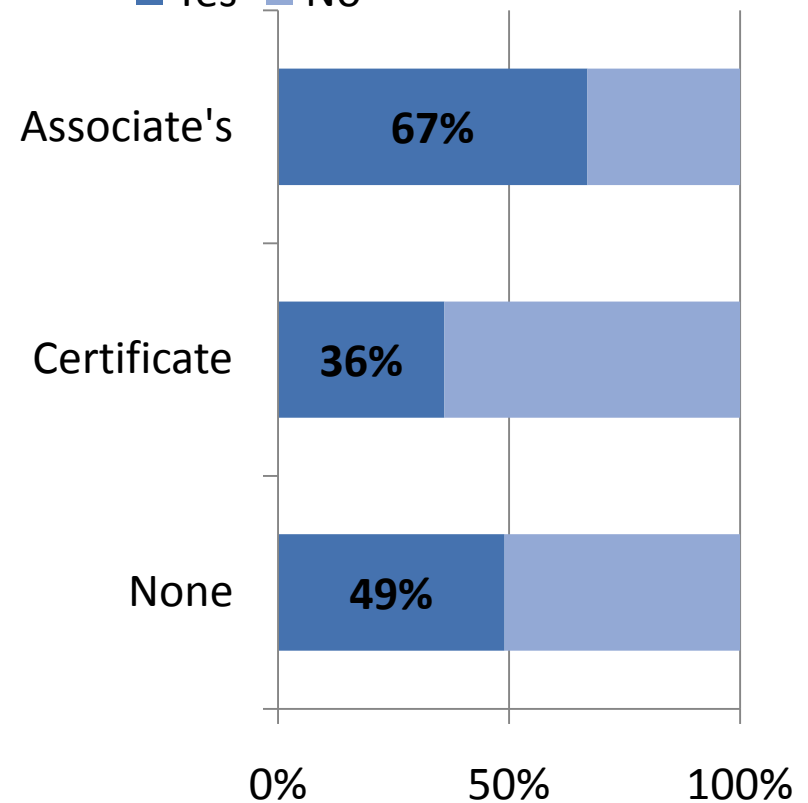
## Highest Two-Year Degree

■ Associate's ■ Certificate ■ None



## Returned to a Four-Year Institution

■ Yes ■ No

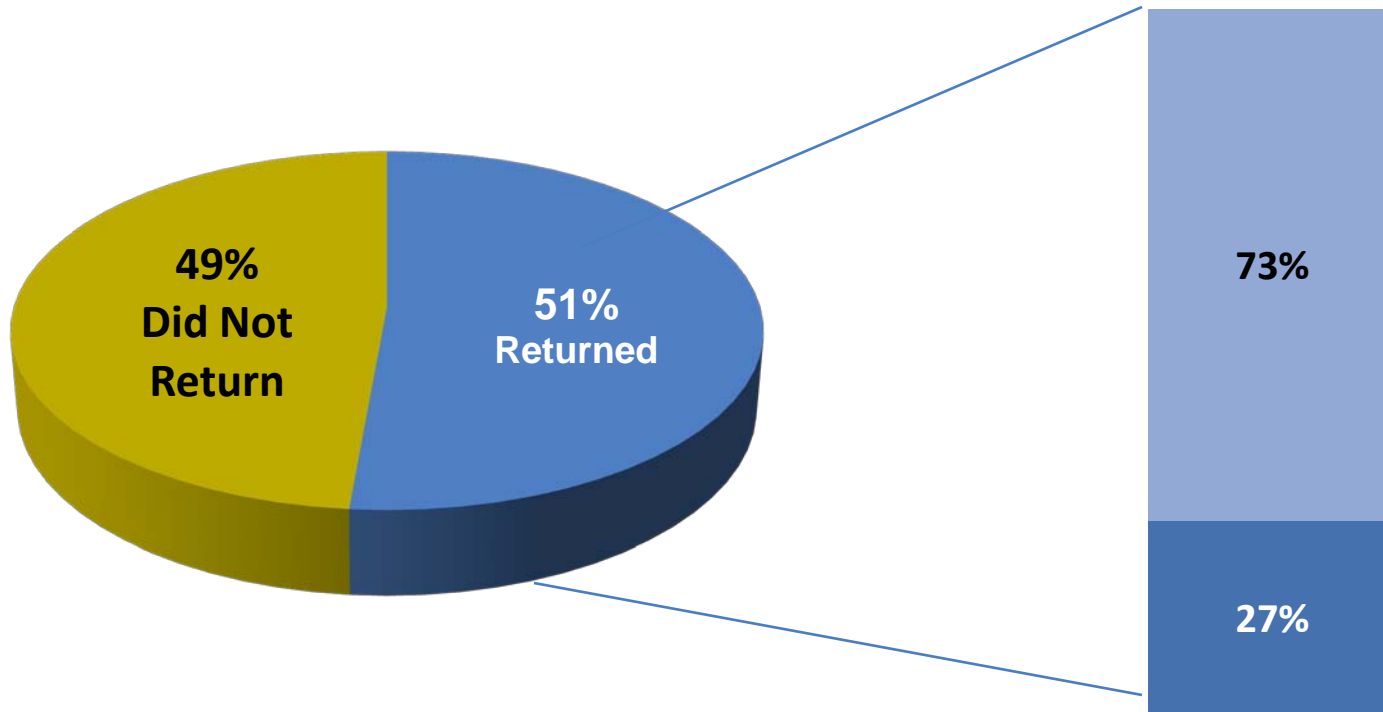


# Returning to a Four-Year

## Reverse Transfers

### Alignment Between Four-Year Institutions

■ Same ■ Different



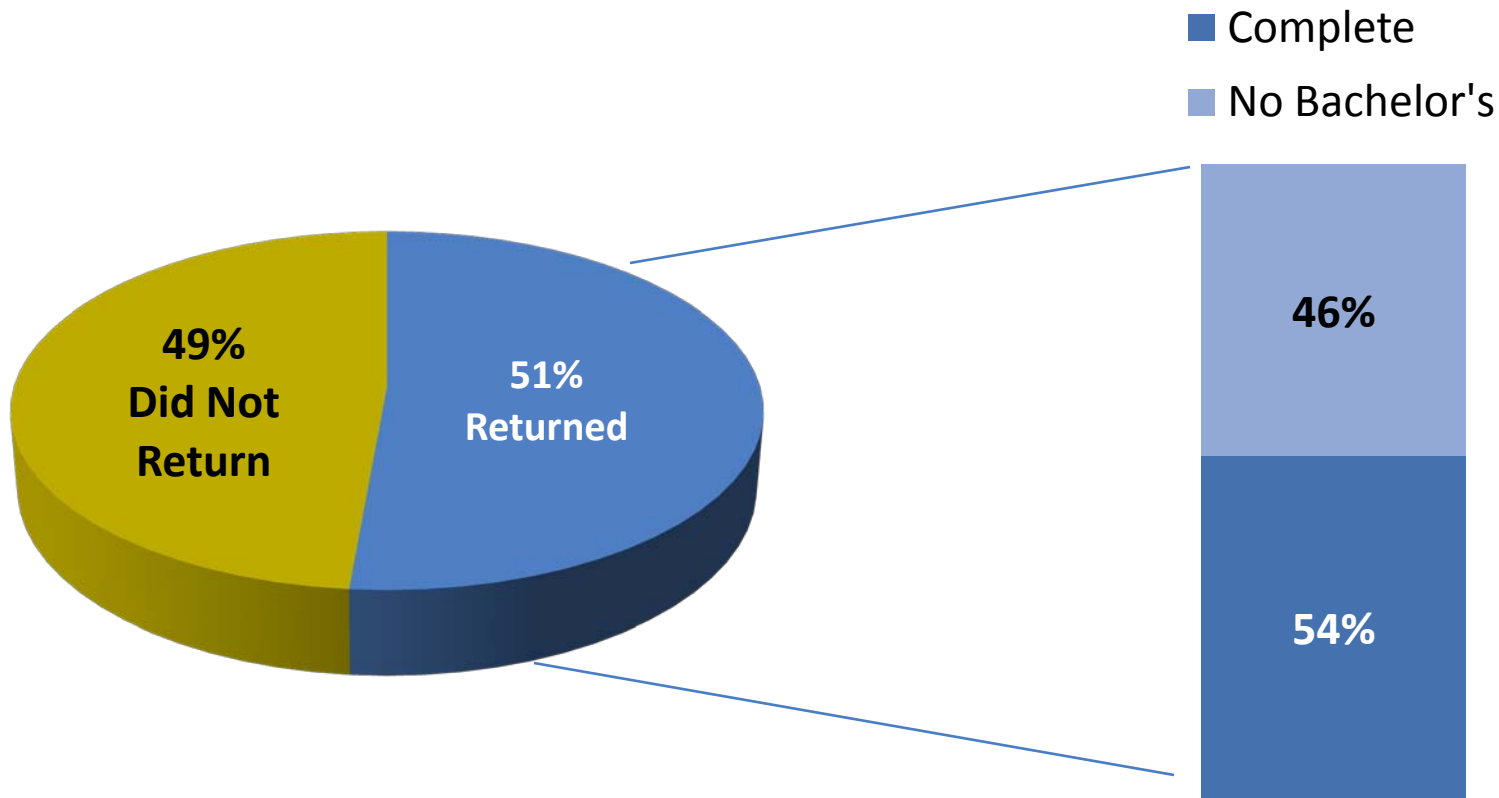
Nearly three-quarters of reverse transfers who return to a four-year do so at a different institution.

# A logistical account of factors associated with returning to a Four-Year Institution\*

- Race: Asian rather than White and White rather than Hispanic
- SES: From a smaller family
- Not expecting to work during school
- Not expecting to receive financial aid
- College readiness: more academically prepared
- Initially enrolled at a more selective institution and out-of-state
- Expecting to earn a graduate degree
- To have earned an associate's degree while at the community college

\*conditional upon reverse transferring

# Bachelor's Completion among Reverse Transfers



Slightly more than half of those returning to a four-year complete a bachelor's degree.

# A logistical account of factors associated with bachelor's completion\*

- Race: white rather than African-American
- College readiness: initially more ready for college
- Gender: female
- Occupation: very sure regarding their occupation
- Selectivity: initially enrolled at a more selective institution
  - Earning an associate's degree did not factor into bachelor's completion for reverse transfer students

\*conditional upon returning for reverse transfers



# Post bachelor's Enrollment at Community Colleges

- 6% of the four-year starters met this distinction (n=2,330)
- Roughly 10% of the bachelor's degree earners
  - Students with liberal arts degrees enrolling for the purpose of learning a trade? ... Only 5% earned a certificate or degree.
  - Students preparing for graduate school in a discipline unrelated to their bachelor's degree?

## Factors associated with an increased likelihood of post-bachelor's enrollment at a 2yr institution

- Gender: Female
- Race: Asian rather than white
- Selectivity: graduating from very competitive and competitive institutions rather than highly competitive institutions
- Region: from the Southeast region rather than all other parts of the state
- Locale: from rural rather than urban areas
- Nearly half have enrolled in graduate school

# Summary

- First-time four-year starters use the community college system at a surprisingly high rate and in a variety of different ways
- Factors varied in terms of their predictive importance across the different ways the community colleges are utilized
- Four-year starters who utilize the community college system should not be treated as a homogeneous group