

# Students Who Drop Out So Effectively that They Don't Count as Students

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In response to a question from Vice President Baston, we examined the loss of officially withdrawn students. At this point 1,335 students who registered for Fall 2016 classes at LaGuardia have performed some sort of official withdrawal. Of these, 407 (260 first-time, 147 new transfers) were new students or about 30%. None of these students will receive a WU-failing grade for stopping attendance without notice. Those students are discussed in an older paper attached to the end of this one.

None of these students are included in retentions studies, either in a base or as attending later. If they attended previously, they are counted as not attending. If they had not attended, they are not included in the base to determine retention.

Nevertheless, those who attended at least one class are counted in enrollment figures by CUNY. This only excludes those who were cancelled and those who received all WNs. Enrollment numbers in the *Institutional Profile* match CUNY numbers. For internal research purposes, however, we do not include official withdrawals as enrollments.

Cancellations followed by non-re-registration and those who dropped all classes in August and those who dropped in September form the three largest loss groups as shown in Figure 1a.

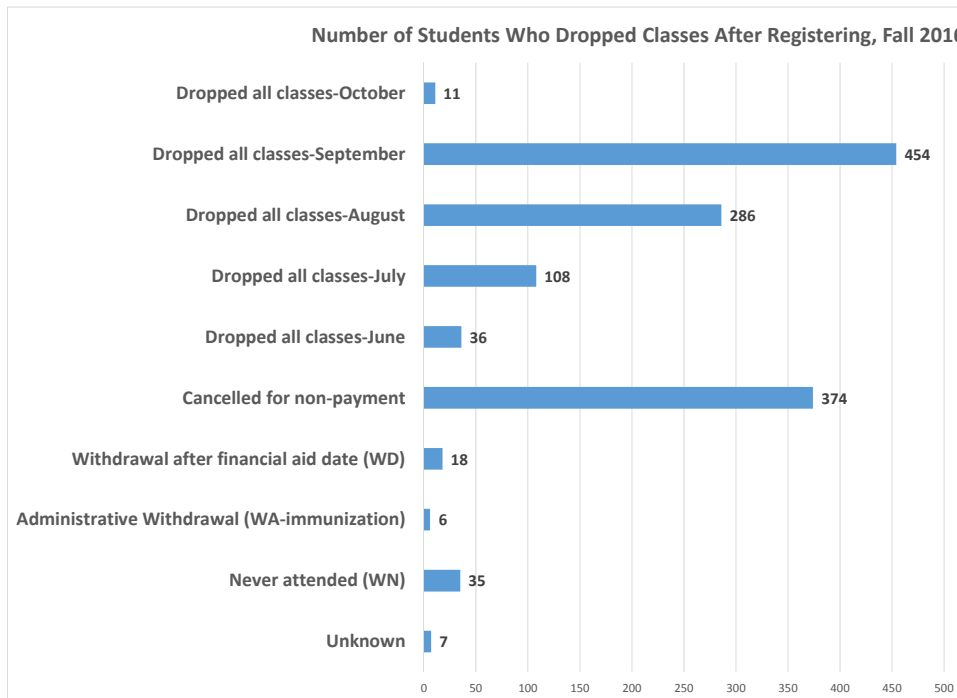


Figure 1a

We also looked at whether these students were less likely to have applied for financial aid. Table 1 shows that 40% had applied for financial aid, whereas 50% of students who did not drop all classes or failed to show applied for aid. The number awarded is also much higher to attending students, but students who dropped all classes would have been denied awards.

	<b>Fall 2016 All Students</b>	<b>Registered then Failed to Show Students Fall 16</b>
# of Registered	19,151	1,335
# of Applied for Financial Aid	9,604	537
% Applied	50%	40%
# of Awarded	9,035	173
% Awarded/Applied	94%	32%
* Preliminary data as of April 12, 2017.		

**Table 1**

Table 2 shows that about 20% of those who registered and then failed to continue for fall 2016 registered again in the spring. This appears to be the case whether or not they were awarded financial aid (those with fall 2016 aid also re-enrolled in the spring at a 22% rate). Nevertheless, 75% of those with spring awards returned in the spring.

<b>Fall 2016 Registered then Failed to Show Students Fall 16</b>			
	All	Awarded with Pell/TAP/FWS for Fall 2016	Awarded with Pell/TAP/FWS for Spring
# of Registered	1,335	50	150
Enrolled for Spring 2017	271	11	112
Return Rate	20%	22%	75%
* Preliminary data as of April 12, 2017.			

**Table 2**

To complete this picture, we have attached an earlier paper showing the timing of students who stopped attending all classes for Fall 2011.

### **Last Day of Attendance of Drop Outs, Fall 2011 Semester**

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An important question for those who intend to help students stay in college is: When do the students we lose give up and fail to return? That is: What proportion of those who fail to come back the next semester makes it to the end of the semester before they decide not to return?

- 21% of students who did not return after session I left *before* Thanksgiving in Fall 2011.
- 19% of students who did not return after session II left *before* the end of January in Fall 2011.

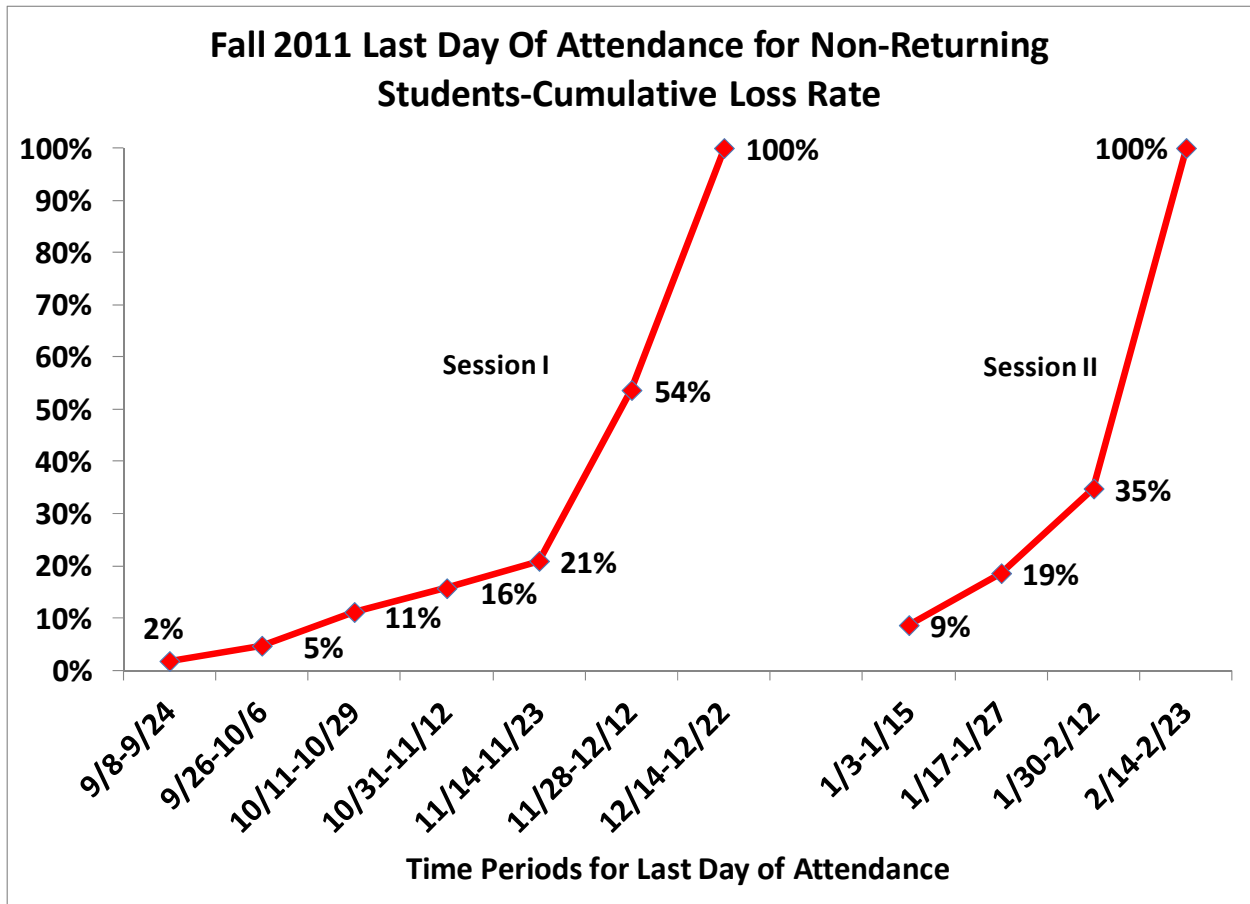


Figure 1

Figure 2 shows the numbers of students lost in each two-week (approximately) period in the Fall 2011 semester. The largest numbers of students drop out after attending all of a session or nearly all. 1,170 students attended through the end of Session I. 708 leaving-students attended through the end of Session II.

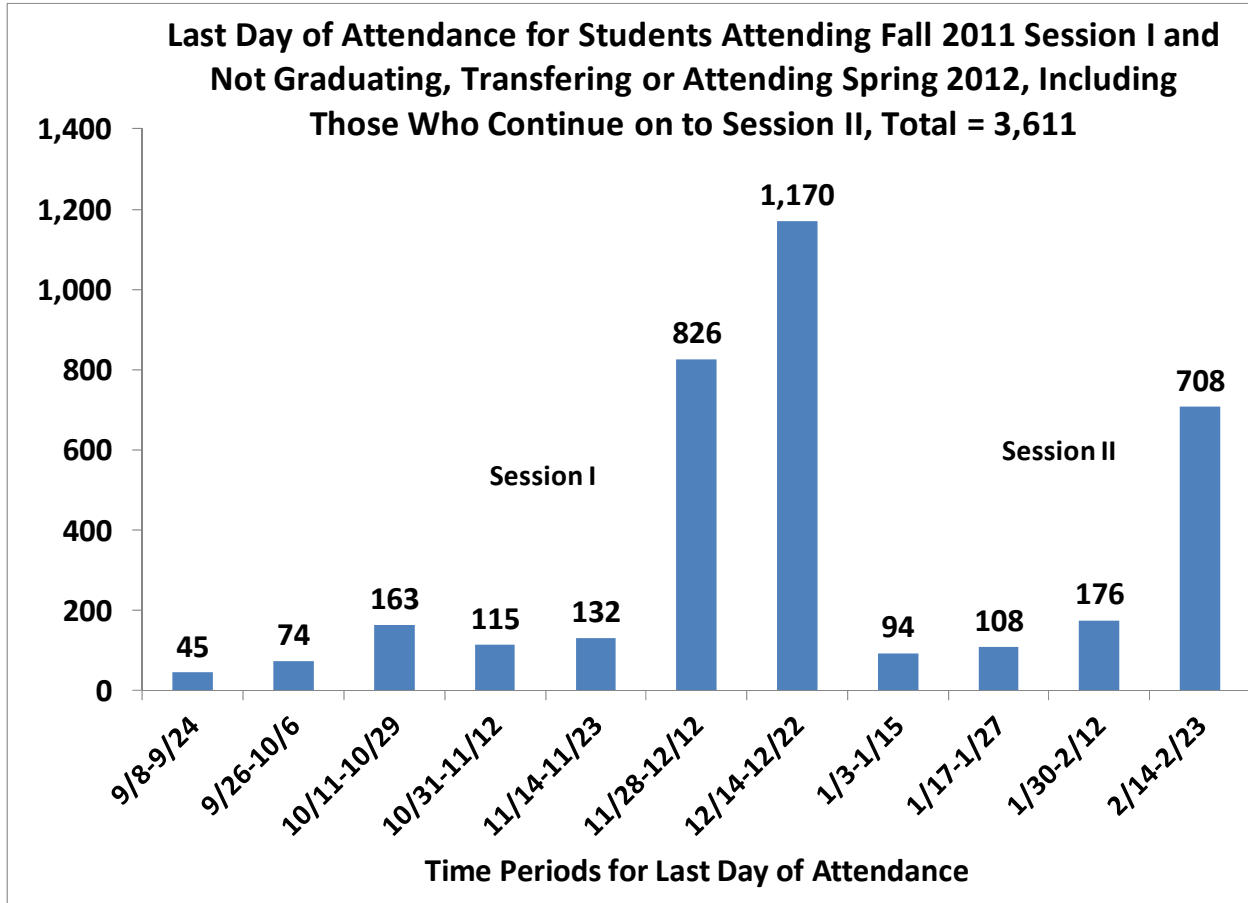


Figure 2

Notes:

- Data from the LaGuardia eAttendance system were used for this study.
- Students who attended only Session II were not included.
- Students with no positive attendance records were excluded.
- Attending any single class was counted as attendance on a particular day.
- Students where all faculty for that student stopped marking attendance part way through the semester would be counted as having stopped attending.
- Students who graduated immediately after Fall 2011, who were shown as attending another college in Spring 2012 by the Clearinghouse, or who attended the LaGCC Spring 2012 semester were excluded. Included students were either drop-outs or stop-outs.
- Last day to drop in Session I was 10/25. Last day to drop in Session II was 1/25.

### **Conclusions from both studies**

Students decide to stop attending during three critical periods associated with semesters: 1) between semesters, especially if they had trouble paying for the previous semester (see research on retention of students who owed balances: online as "[Return Rate F15 to F16](#)"), 2) near the end of the semester when they find they are behind in their work, and 3) at the beginning of the semester when they can withdraw from all courses without a grade penalty.

After filing an application, testing and registering 407 new students decided to withdraw from all classes. While this shows up as part of "summer melt," it occurs so late that it might be called "fall melt."