Institutional Roles in Academic Disengagement & Student Attrition

Satomi Furuichi, PhD
Fanny Yeung, PhD
Kevin Gin, PhD

2021 CAIR Conference
October 29, 2021

CAL STATE EAST BAY
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
AND RESEARCH OFFICE

Today's Session

- Introductions
- Connection to conference theme
  - "Behind every number is a student"
- Session outcomes
  - Define a data proxy for academic disengagement
  - Identify a connection between academic disengagement and departure
  - Frame academic disengagement to compel institutional action

What is Disengagement?

- May be related to **negative campus climate**, i.e., an "unfamiliar, uninviting university culture" (Kraus, 2005)

- **Feeling of alienation**- e.g., student as an outsider, lack of creativity, loss of ownership in the learning process, disciplined into docility through assessment process, strategy or self-preservation (Bryson & Hand, 2007)

- **Not a steady state** but may display varying degrees within a class, task, assignment (Bryson & Hand, 2007)

- Early identification in the **first year of study** is crucial (Nelson & Creagh, 2013)

# Proxy for Institutional and Academic Disengagement

- Withdrawal Unauthorized Grades (WU's)
  - Student fails to complete course
  - Most common use: student has not completed sufficient coursework or participated sufficiently
  - WU is counted in GPAs as an "F" grade

Cal State East Bay

- Institutional Profile
  - Mid-size institution (~15,000 students)
  - Half of undergraduates are Pell eligible
  - Two-thirds of undergraduate students are first generation
  - Almost half of students are URM (i.e., Black, Latinx, Native American)

- Graduation/Retention Outcomes
  - Average six-year freshmen graduation rate: 47%
  - Average first-year retention rate: 77%

Sample Student Profile (started as freshman or transfer between fall 2002 and spring 2021)

Number of WUs

Fall 2002
1,041 WUs
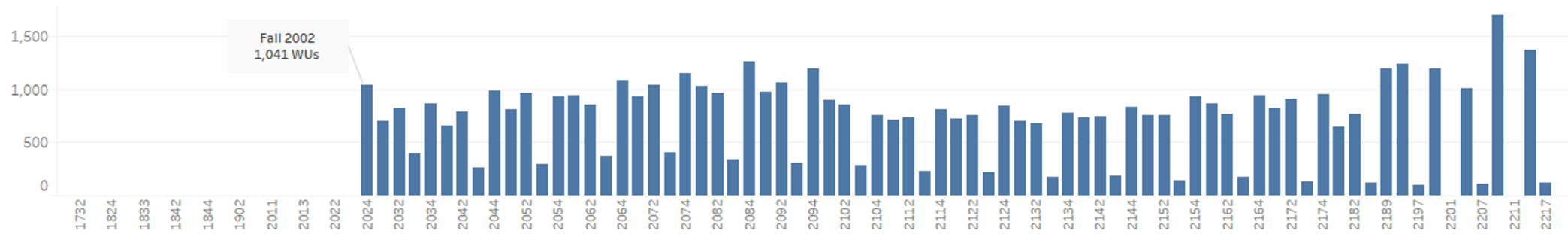
First Generation

N	29,942	42%
Y	40,970	58%
Total	70,912	100%

Pell Eligible

N	40,723	57%
Y	30,189	43%
Total	70,912	100%

URM

N	44,386	63%
Y	26,526	37%
Total	70,912	100%

Program Status

Graduated	45,187	64%
Discontinued	16,048	23%
Active	5,344	8%
Dismissed	4,331	6%
Grand Total	70,910	100%

Academic Standing

Good Standing	47,772	87%
Academic Probation	4,225	8%
Academic Disqualification	2,725	5%
Grand Total	54,722	100%

Sample Student Profile by WU Status (N = 70,912)

Legend: ■ 1+ WU ■ No WU

URM

	1+ WU	No WU
Y	31%	69%
N	22%	78%

Pell Eligible

	1+ WU	No WU
Y	28%	72%
N	24%	76%

First Generation

	1+ WU	No WU
Y	27%	73%
N	25%	75%

Program Status

	1+ WU	No WU
Dismissed	76%	24%
Discontinued	40%	60%
Active	31%	69%
Graduated	15%	85%

Academic Standing

	1+ WU	No WU
Academic Disqualification	73%	27%
Academic Probation	67%	33%
Good Standing	18%	82%
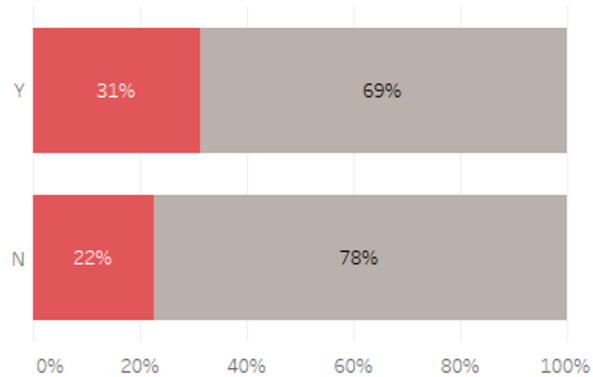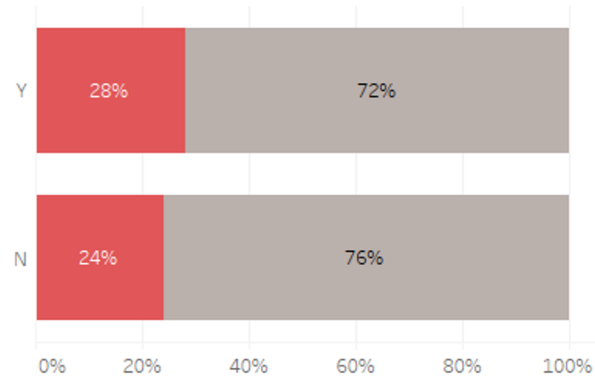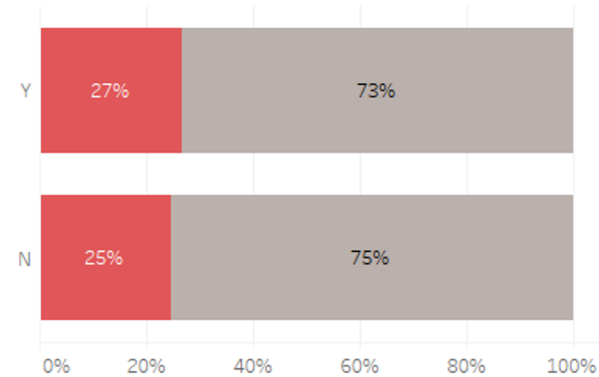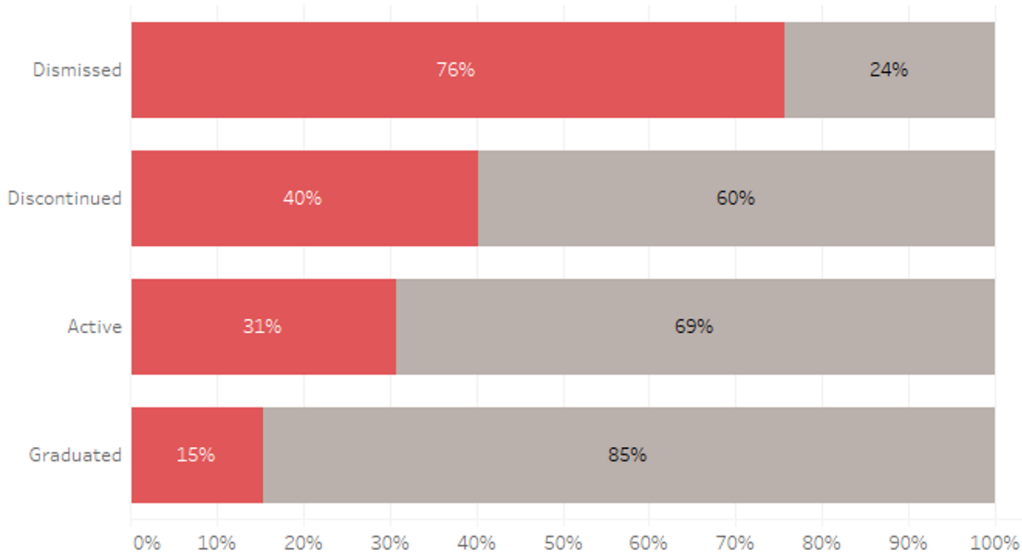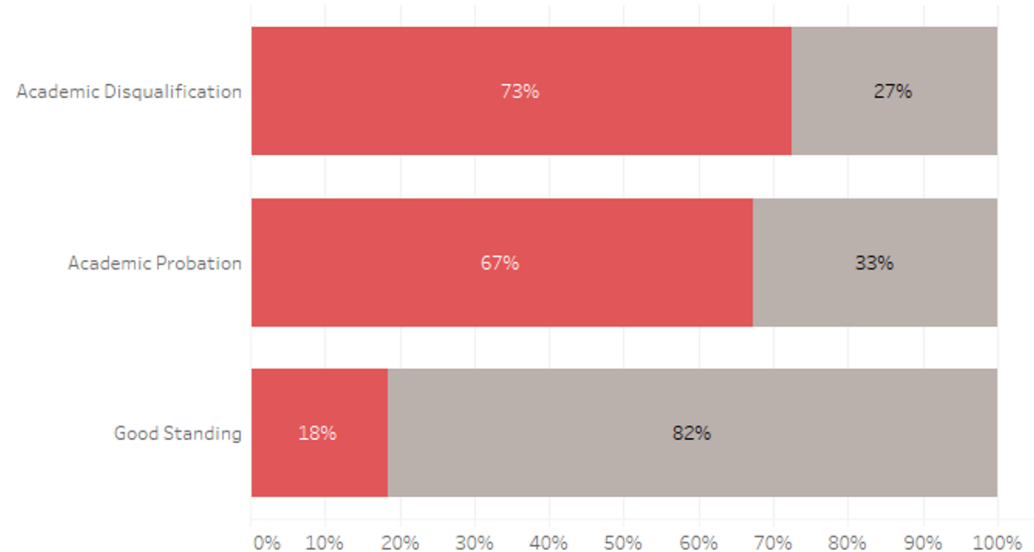
Where do we see WUs? (Fall 2018 to Spring 2021)
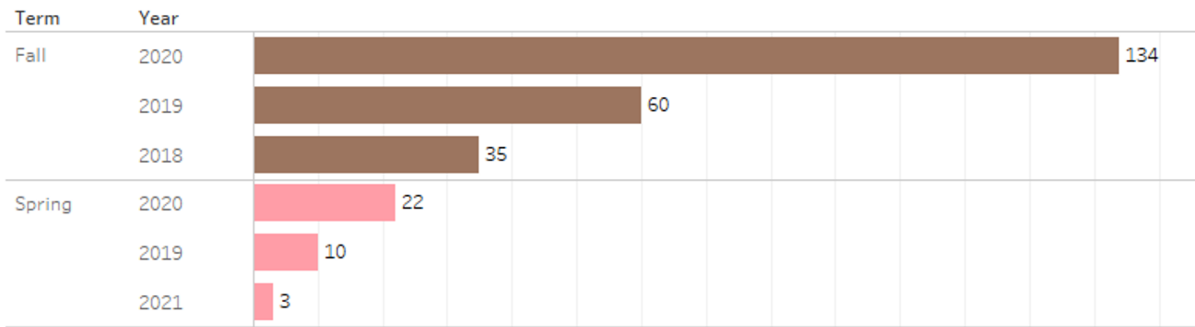
Increasing Number of WUs in GS 101A and Disproportionate Impact on Equity
Fall 2018, Fall 2019, and Fall 2020
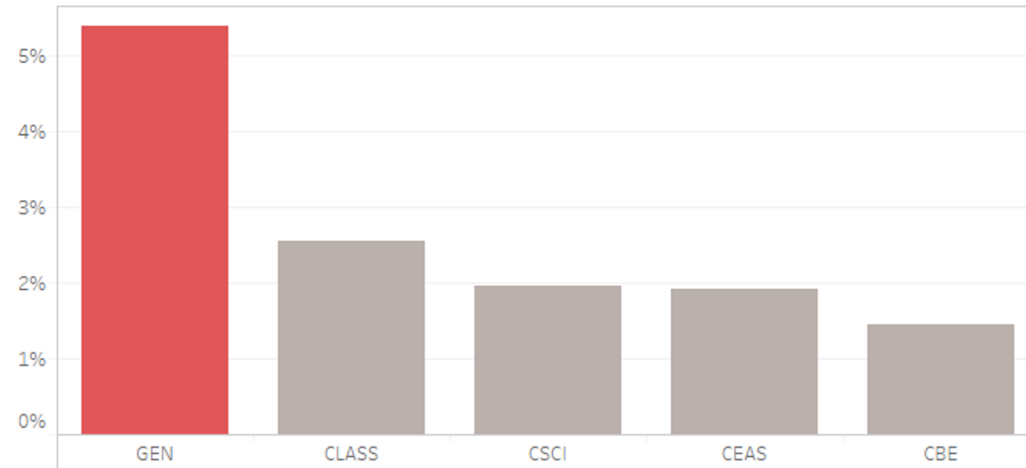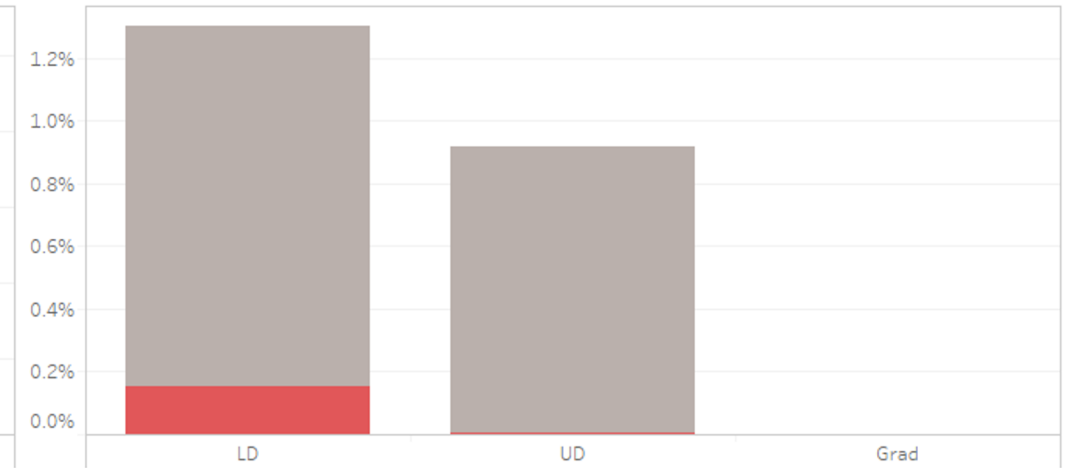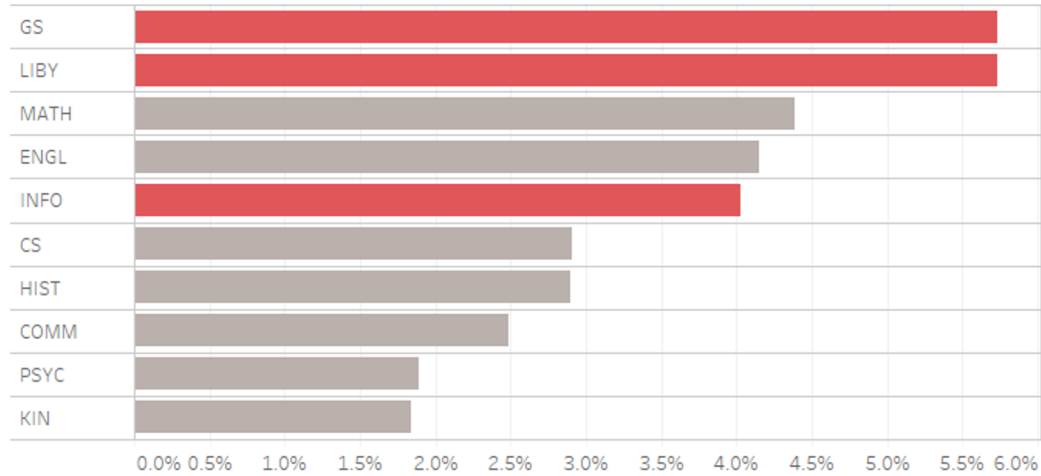
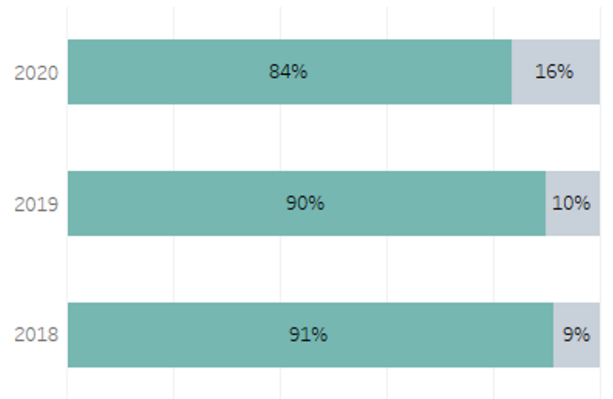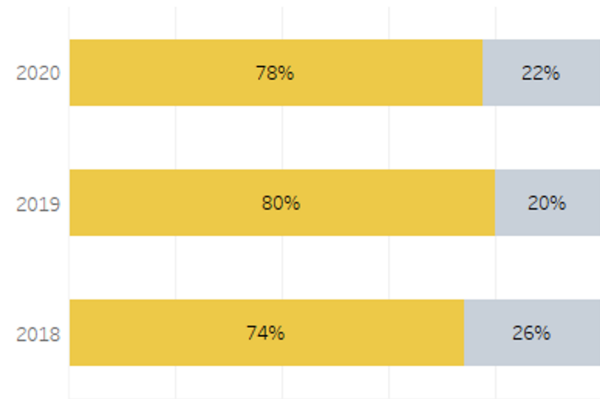### From "Ten Courses with the Highest Number of WUs"

GS	101A	Foundations of Success I	GE	264

WU grades by Semester

Term	Year	
Fall	2020	134
	2019	60
	2018	35
Spring	2020	22
	2019	10
	2021	3

By Pass/Fail

2018
- 5% 71
- 2% 35

2019
- 7% 100
- 4% 60

2020
- 4% 40
- 13% 134

Legend: ■ Pass, N ■ Fail, N ■ Fail, WU

First Generation

2020	84%	16%
2019	90%	10%
2018	91%	9%

Pell Eligible

2020	78%	22%
2019	80%	20%
2018	74%	26%

URM

2020	78%	22%
2019	73%	27%
2018	71%	29%
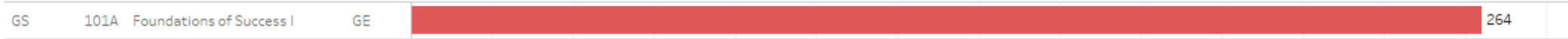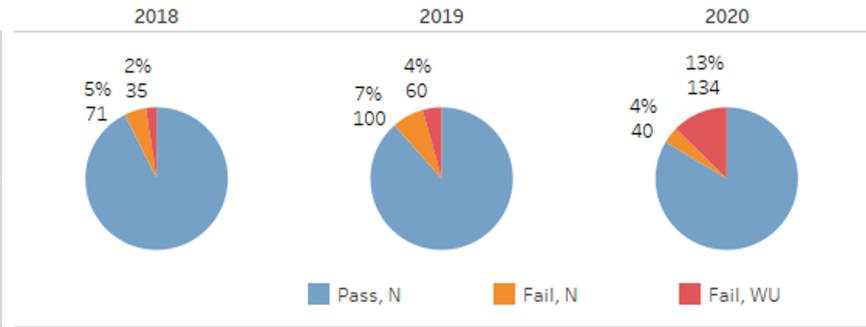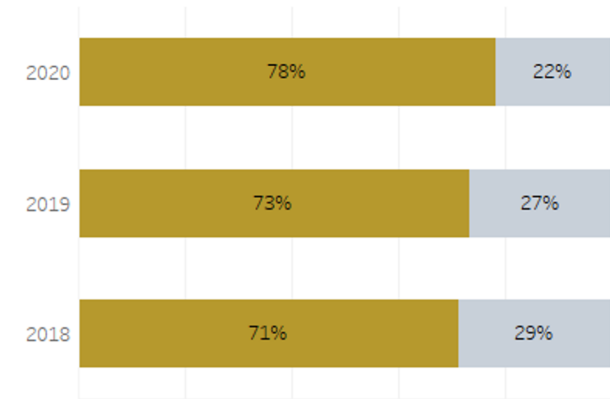
Students Enter Cal State East Bay...

☑ **Capable**

☑ **Motivated**

☑ **Eager**

Capable of Achievement

- Credentials to Excel
  - 76% completed at least 1 AP course in high school
  - 84% received grades of B- or higher

- High School Involvement
  - 44% involved in honors/academic societies
  - 87% involved in co-curricular activities

Source: 2019 BCSSE survey

Motivated to Succeed

- Resilient Mindsets
  - 76% intended to graduate from Cal State East Bay
  - 85% would stay positive when they did poorly on an assignment
  - 86% expected to get grades of B- or higher
  - 92% would finish tasks even when encountering challenges

Source: 2019 BCSSE survey

CAL STATE EAST BAY
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND RESEARCH OFFICE
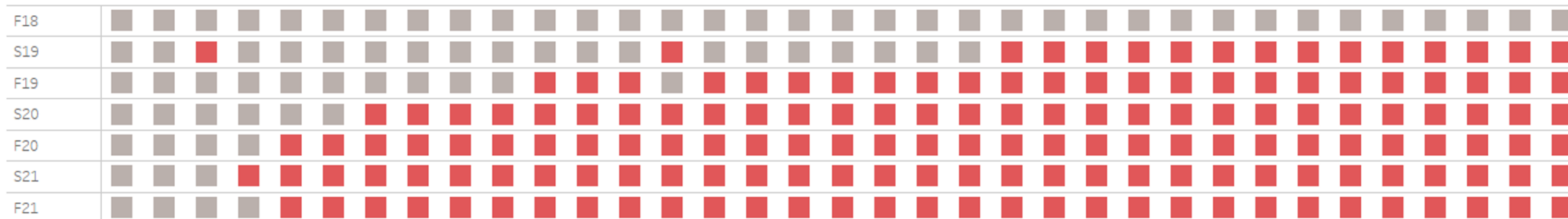
Eager to Learn

- Collaboration with Peers
  - 97% expected to explain course materials to other students
  - 98% expected to ask for help from other students

- Establish Connections with Faculty
  - 97% expected to talk with faculty about career plans
  - 99% expected to seek help from faculty

Source: 2019 BCSSE survey
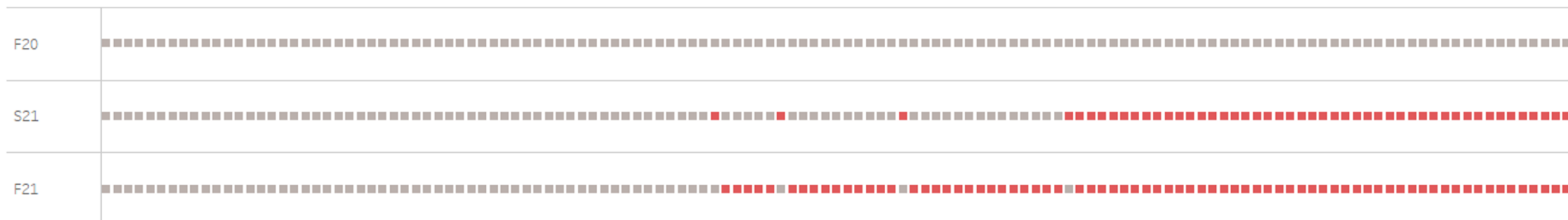
Over 80% of GS101A WU students depart within 2 years

Discontinued and Dismissed Students who Graduated from Other Institutions

Discontinued (N=4,081)				Dismissed (N=751)			
Median YearsToBeginNextInst	Min. WU Units	Avg. WU Units	Max. WU Units	Median YearsToBeginNextInst	Min. WU Units	Avg. WU Units	Max. WU Units
1.6	1	8.5	49	1.0	1	11.6	74

Highest Degree Earned
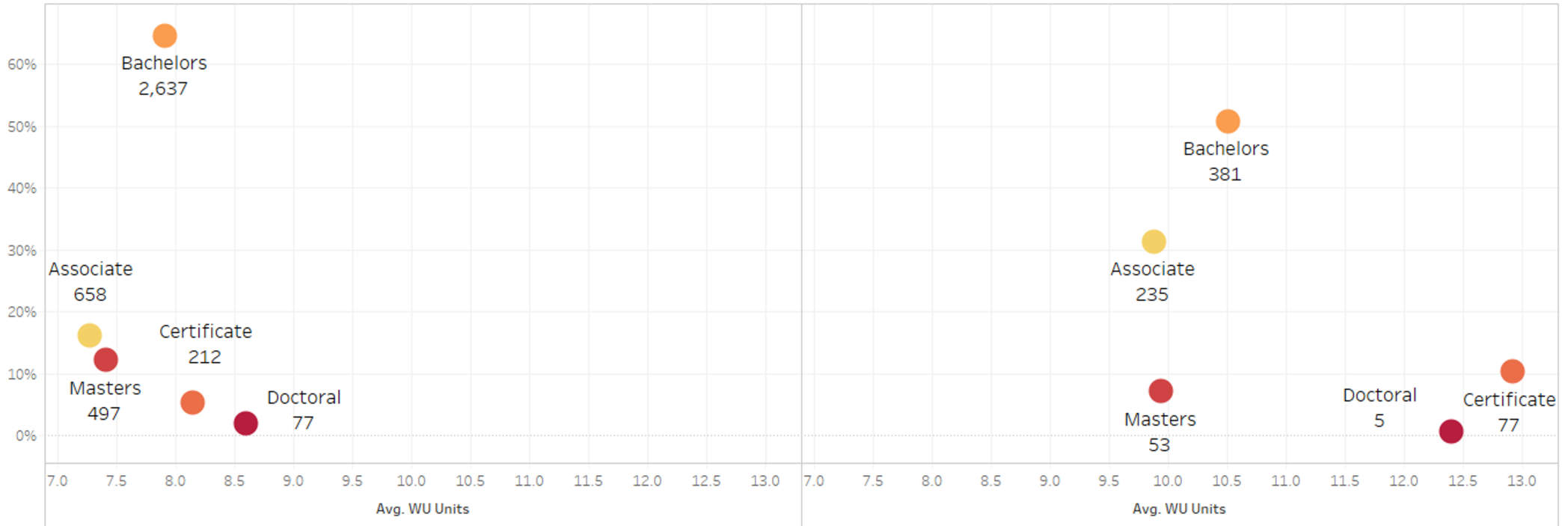
"Students may respond in a negative way to the university experience, often as a consequence of poor advice in course selection, poor course organization or mediocre teaching. Opting out of a course is therefore a perfectly rational response when expectations are not made"
(Chipchase et al., 2017)

Next Steps

- Present and Deliver Data to Campus

- Reimagine Course Outcomes and Pedagogy
  - High-touch and high-context instruction for first-gen students
  - Consider culturally sustaining pedagogy
  - Disrupt deficit thinking

Questions? Thank you!

Connect with us!

https://www.csueastbay.edu/ir/

IER@csueastbay.edu

CAL STATE
EAST BAY

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
AND RESEARCH OFFICE