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Using the Student Experience in the Research University to Gain Insight into Why Students Leave Rutgers Before Graduating

The SERU (Student Experience at the Research Institution) survey has been an important tool for assessing student satisfaction, academic work effort and use of time, self-assessment of current skills and of gains in skills, student engagement and disengagement, scholarship development, and campus climate. Answers to questions about these broad concerns provide critical insights into the behaviors, activities, motivations, and learning patterns of Rutgers undergraduate students.

While the response of undergraduates to the SERU survey come from students who are currently enrolled at Rutgers during the time the survey was administered, some of these students subsequently left the university without graduating after participating in the SERU survey. The responses of those students who left Rutgers can be compared to students who remain enrolled at Rutgers to determine what differences, if any, exist between these two groups of students. SERU data was collected from 2009-2012 to help better understand what aspects of the student experience may lead students to leave Rutgers. What follows is a series of tables and graphs that investigate these differences and to ascertain some of the reasons why students leave Rutgers before successfully completing their undergraduate academic careers.

Table1. Reported Levels of Satisfaction

		Stayed at Rutgers		Left Rutgers	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Satisfaction with overall social experience	N	14,086	2,879	1,376	505
	%	83.03%	16.97%	73.15%	26.85%
Satisfaction with overall academic experience	N	13,702	3,251	1,317	564
	%	80.82%	19.18%	70.02%	29.98%
Satisfaction with value of your education for the price you're paying	N	12,301	4,645	1,212	671
	%	72.59%	27.41%	64.37%	35.63%

Figure 1. Reported Levels of Satisfaction Graphs

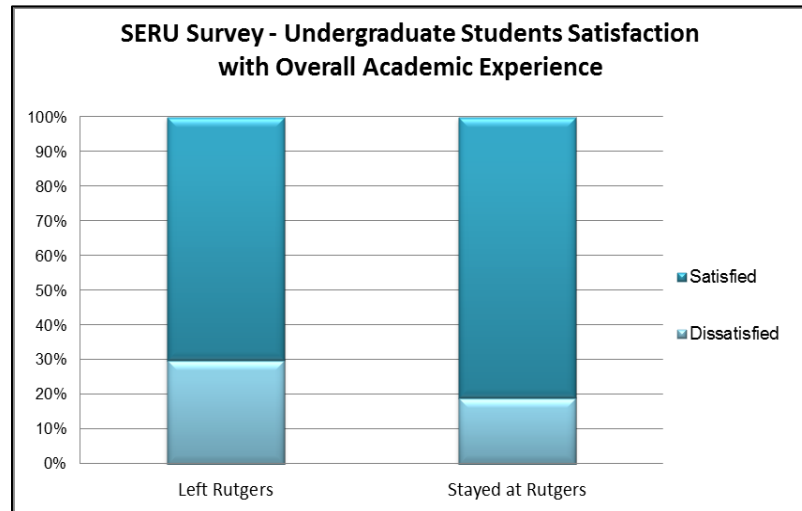


Figure 1. Reported Levels of Satisfaction Graphs (cont'd)

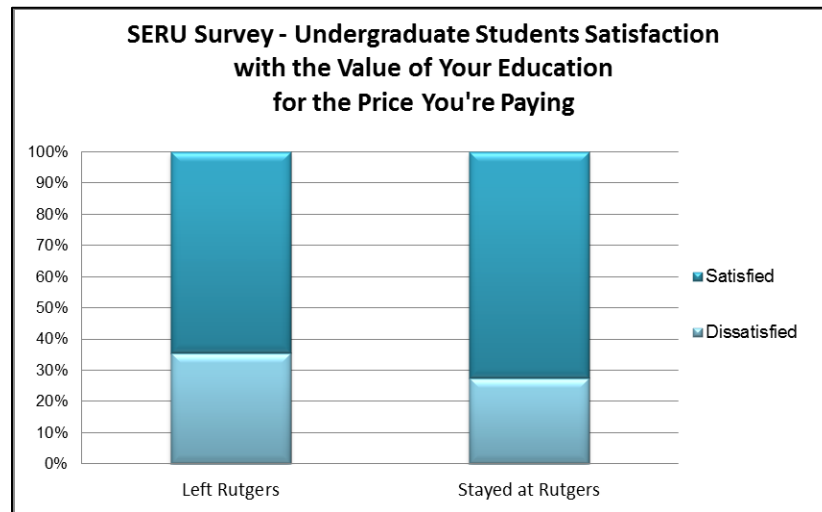
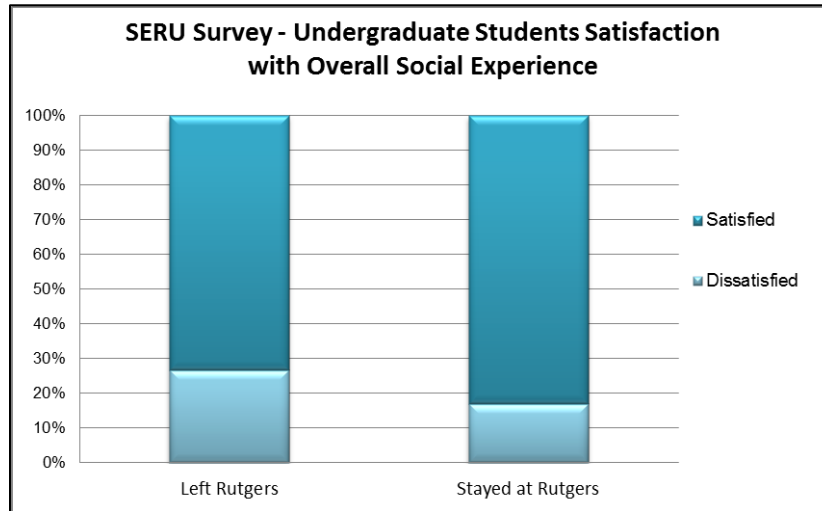


Table 2. Reported Time Spent on Academic Activities

		Stayed at Rutgers			Left Rutgers		
		10 hours or less	11-25 hours	More than 25 hours	10 hours or less	11-25 hours	More than 25 hours
Hours per week on attending classes, discussion sections or labs	N	3,224	14,053	1,809	434	1,470	216
	%	16.89%	73.63%	9.48%	20.47%	69.34%	10.19%
Hours per week on studying and other academic activities outside of class	N	9,531	8,009	1,464	1,044	860	210
	%	50.15%	42.14%	7.70%	49.39%	40.68%	9.93%

Figure 2. Reported Time Spent on Academic Activities Graphs

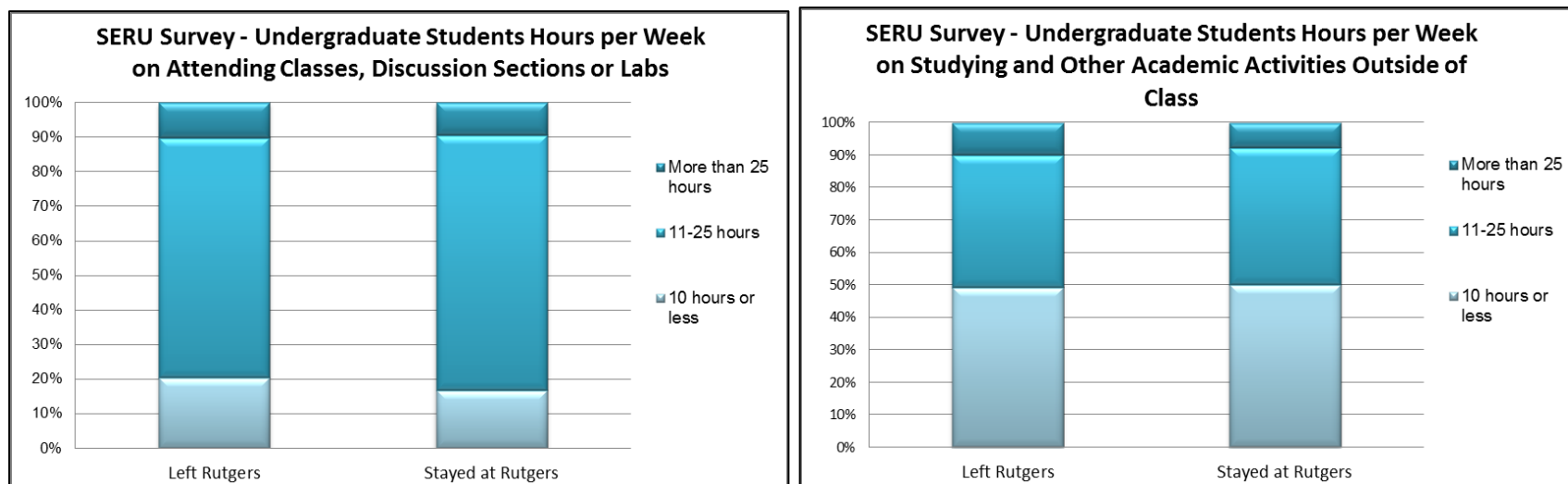


Table 3. Reported Levels of (Dis)engagement

		Stayed at Rutgers		Left Rutgers	
		Often	Rarely	Often	Rarely
Gone to class unprepared	N	3,594	14,832	437	1,579
	%	19.51%	80.49%	21.68%	78.32%
Skipped class	N	2,895	15,459	467	1,538
	%	15.77%	84.23%	23.29%	76.71%

Figure 3. Reported Levels of (Dis)engagement Graphs

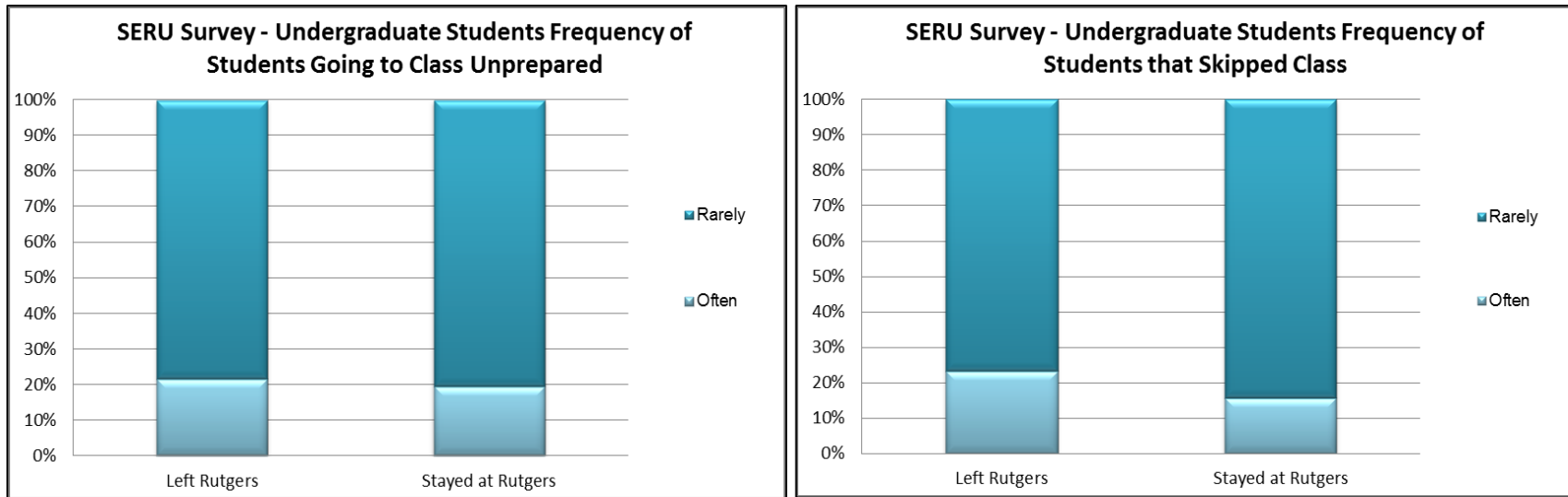


Table 4. Reported Levels of Analytical and Critical Thinking Gains

		Stayed at Rutgers			Left Rutgers		
		No Gain	Moderate Gain	Large Gain	No Gain	Moderate Gain	Large Gain
Analytical and critical thinking gains	N	5,439	7,286	3,312	752	746	228
	%	33.92%	45.43%	20.65%	43.57%	43.22%	13.21%

Figure 4. Reported Levels of Analytical and Critical Thinking Gains Graph

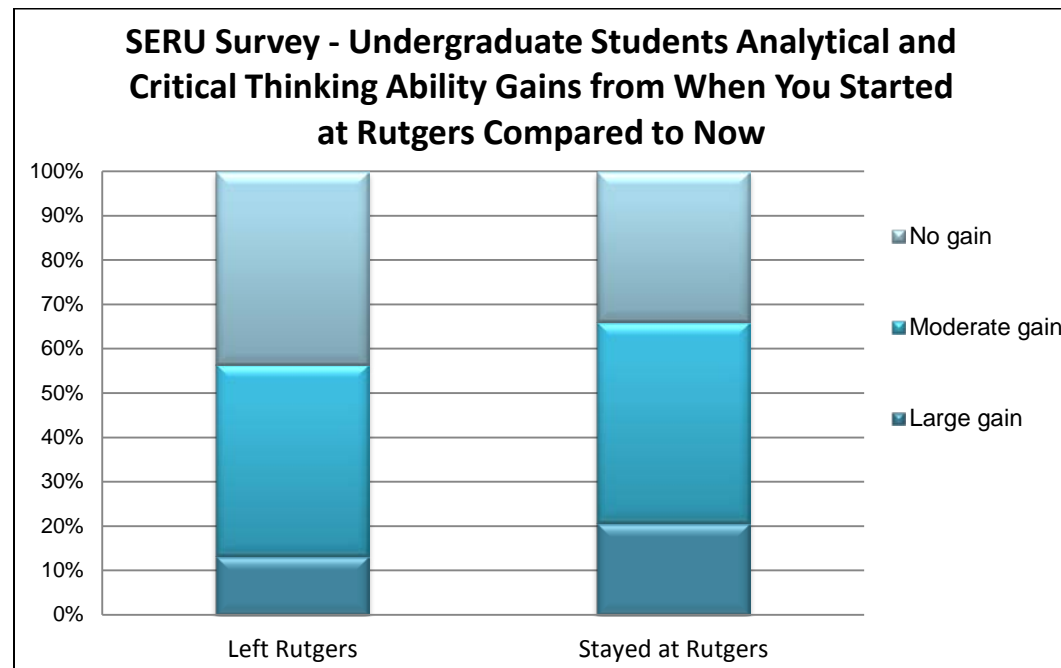
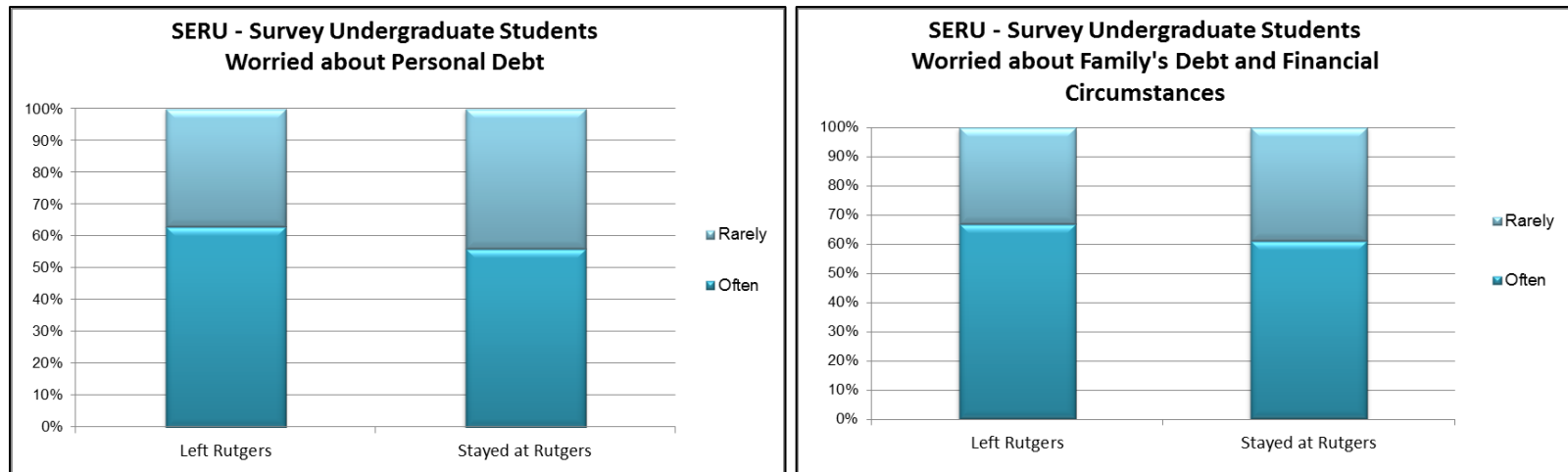


Table 5. Reported Levels of Anxiety Caused by Debt¹

		Stayed at Rutgers		Left Rutgers	
		Often	Rarely	Often	Rarely
Worried about my personal debt	N	7,443	5,813	850	500
	%	56.15%	43.85%	62.96%	37.04%
Worried about family's debt and financial circumstances	N	8,070	5,171	902	448
	%	60.95%	39.05%	66.81%	33.19%

Figure 5. Reported Levels of Anxiety Caused by Debt Graphs¹

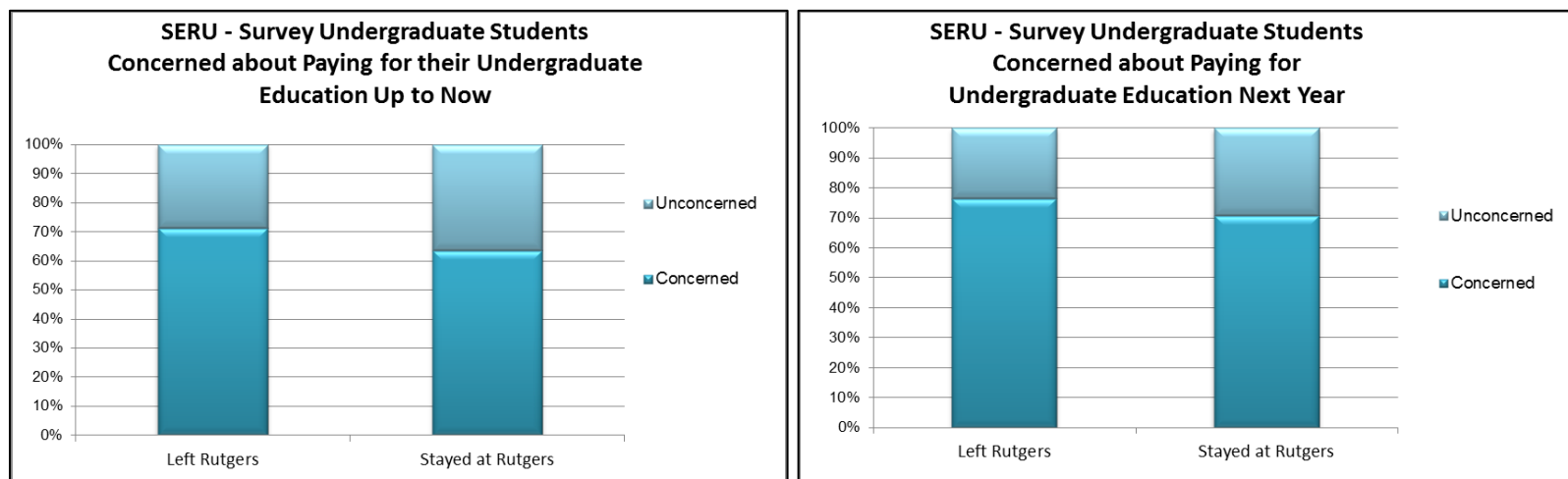


¹ Only includes data from 2010-2012

Table 6. Reported Levels of Concerns Over Debt²

		Stayed at Rutgers		Left Rutgers	
		Concerned	Unconcerned	Concerned	Unconcerned
Concerned about Paying for their Undergraduate Education Up to Now	N	8,076	4,622	920	372
	%	63.60%	36.40%	71.21%	28.79%
Concerned about Paying for Undergraduate Education Next Year	N	5,963	2,473	862	266
	%	70.69%	29.31%	76.42%	23.58%

Figure 6. Reported Levels of Concerns Over Debt Graphs²



² Only includes data from 2010-2012