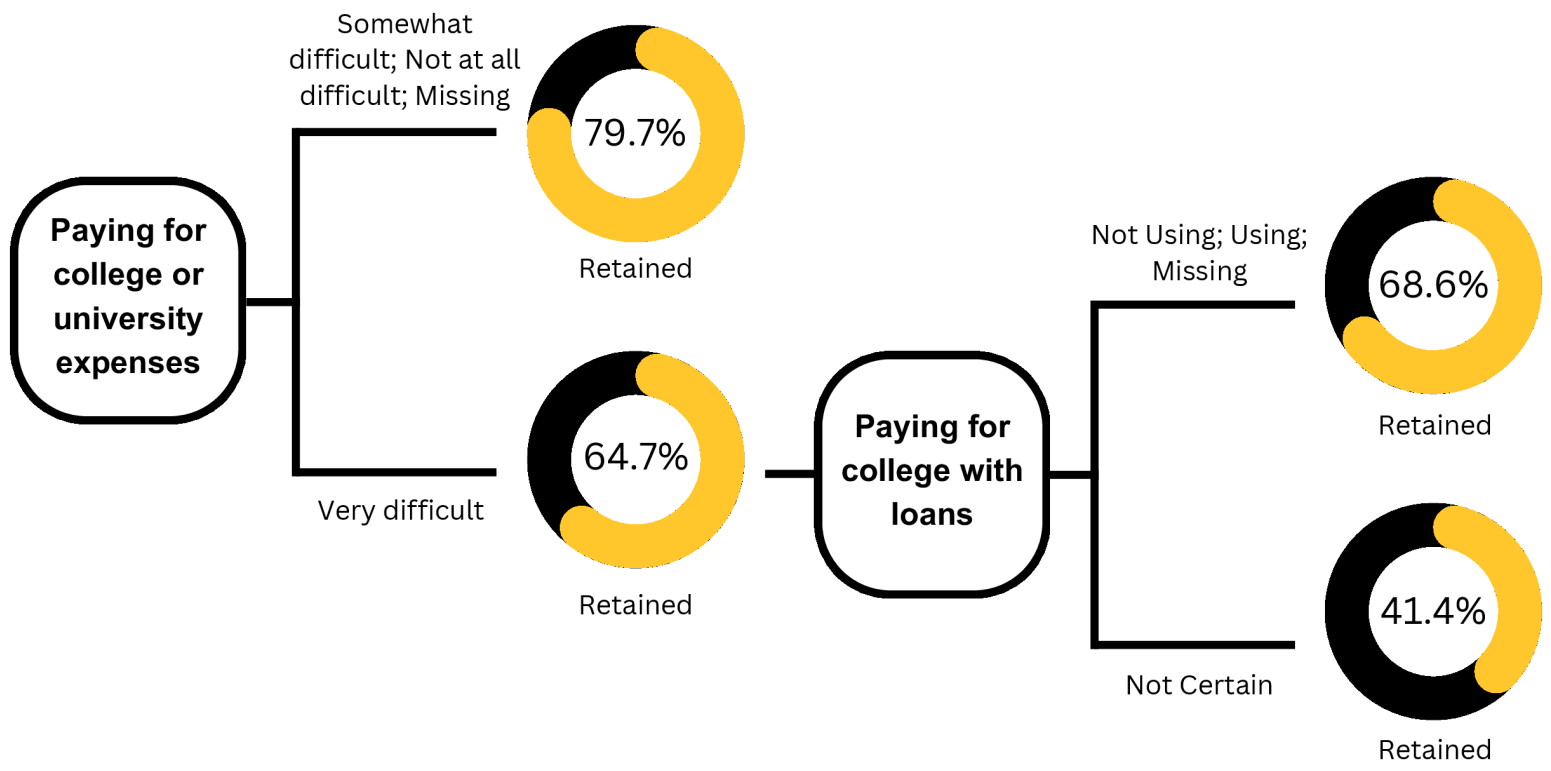# BEHIND THE METRICS:
BCSSE RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Beginning College Survey on Student Engagement (BCSSE): 5 Quick Facts about First-Year Student Expectations

The BCSSE is a national survey administered to first-year students prior to the start of their freshman year. BCSSE items include how first-year students expect to utilize their time, their expectations for interacting with faculty, staff and fellow students, as well as their perceptions of academic and campus support. Below are insights on items related to first-year retention and our incoming fall 2024 class.

1. Financial circumstances can have an impact on first-year student retention.

Paying for college expenses can be a barrier to first-year student retention. Students who responded, "Very Difficult" to their ability to pay for college had a second fall retention rate of 64.7% compared to students who responded, "Not at all difficult" or "Somewhat difficult", which corresponded to a 79.7% retention rate. These financial barriers are compounding. Additionally, students who found paying for college expenses "Very Difficult", and were "Uncertain" about using loans to pay for college were even less likely to return in fall, with a second fall retention of 41.4%.

Paying for college or university expenses

Somewhat difficult; Not at all difficult; Missing — 79.7% Retained

Very difficult — 64.7% Retained

Paying for college with loans

Not Using; Using; Missing — 68.6% Retained

Not Certain — 41.4% Retained

2. Lack of time management skills can lead to first spring attrition.

First-year students' perception of their ability to manage their time was related to first-spring retention. Students who responded time management would be "very difficult" had a first spring retention rate of 87.3% compared to 96.4% of students who responded, "Not at all difficult."

Time Management	Not Retained	Retained
Not At All Difficult	3.57%	96.43%
Somewhat Difficult	8.99%	91.01%
Very Difficult	12.69%	87.31%
No Response	8.03%	91.97%
Grand Total	**9.40%**	**90.60%**

3. First-Time Freshmen intent to graduate from NKU can be a factor in first-year retention.
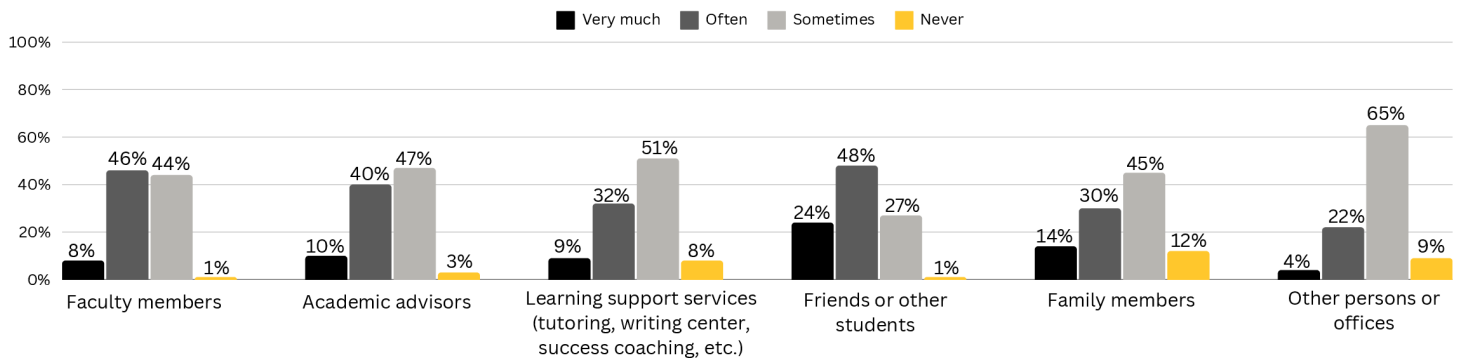
Students who were "Uncertain" if they will graduate from NKU, had a second fall retention rate of 58.9% compared to 77.4% of students who responded "Yes". Furthermore, these "Uncertain" students were least likely to perceive paying for college expenses as very difficult, indicating that there are likely other factors besides finances that are contributing to their uncertainty of graduating from NKU.

Plan to Graduate From NKU	Not Retained	Retained
No	50.00%	50.00%
Yes	22.59%	77.41%
Unsure	41.10%	58.90%
No Response	16.45%	83.55%
Grand Total	**23.25%**	**76.75%**

4. Fall 2024 freshmen expect to seek help from friends instead of faculty.

Of the incoming fall 2024 class, 72% of respondents indicated that they would use friends and other students "Often" or "Very Often" to seek help with coursework compared to just over half (54%) seeking help from faculty. Furthermore, only 41% plan to seek coursework help from learning support services like tutoring or the writing center.
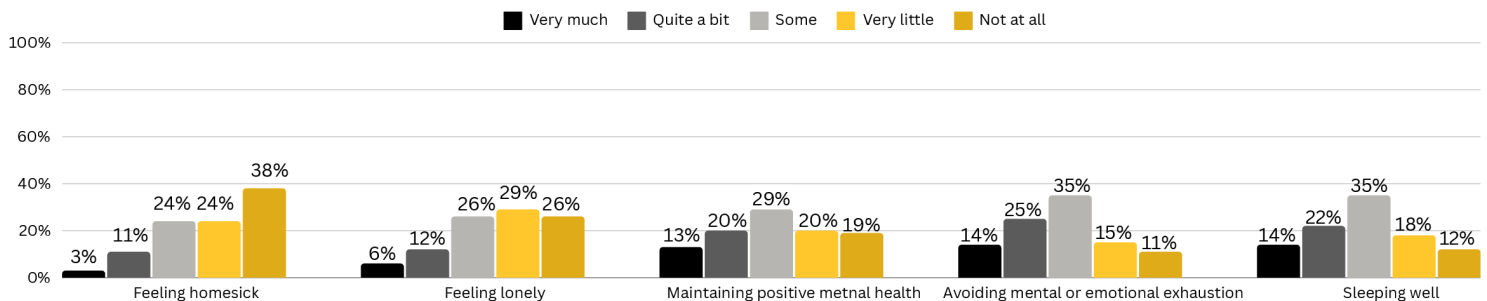
During the coming school year, about how often do you expect to seek help with coursework from the following sources?

Legend: ■ Very much ■ Often ▨ Sometimes ■ Never

Source	Very much	Often	Sometimes	Never
Faculty members	8%	46%	44%	1%
Academic advisors	10%	40%	47%	3%
Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	9%	32%	51%	8%
Friends or other students	24%	48%	27%	1%
Family members	14%	30%	45%	12%
Other persons or offices	4%	22%	65%	9%

5. Mental exhaustion is a major concern for incoming first-year students.

Over 1 out of 3 freshmen are "Very Much" or "Quite a bit" concerned with avoiding mental or emotional exhaustion. Additionally, 1 out of 3 first-year students are "Very Much" or "Quite a bit" concerned with getting adequate sleep during the coming school year.

During the coming school year, how concerned are you about the following?

Legend: ■ Very much ■ Quite a bit ▨ Some ■ Very little ■ Not at all

Concern	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little	Not at all
Feeling homesick	3%	11%	24%	24%	38%
Feeling lonely	6%	12%	26%	29%	26%
Maintaining positive metnal health	13%	20%	29%	20%	19%
Avoiding mental or emotional exhaustion	14%	25%	35%	15%	11%
Sleeping well	14%	22%	35%	18%	12%

Special thanks to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions for collaborating with PIR on the BCSSE administration. We couldn't have done it without you!

BEHIND THE METRICS:
PERSISTENCE RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Research into multiple variables that potentially impact persistence for all first-time students who began in Fall 2022 has uncovered some predictive relationships in the data.

- Results of Binary regression and decision tree analyses show that **Un-met Need, along with Entering GPA, Prior Credit, and Underrepresented Minority (URM) Status, were predictive of second spring persistence or graduation** for the first-time student group.

- Although the strongest predictors were Entering GPA and Un-Met Need, the regression model indicated that **students with a URM status were 1.56 times more likely to persist.** This may indicate that we are serving this student population well with campus support services.
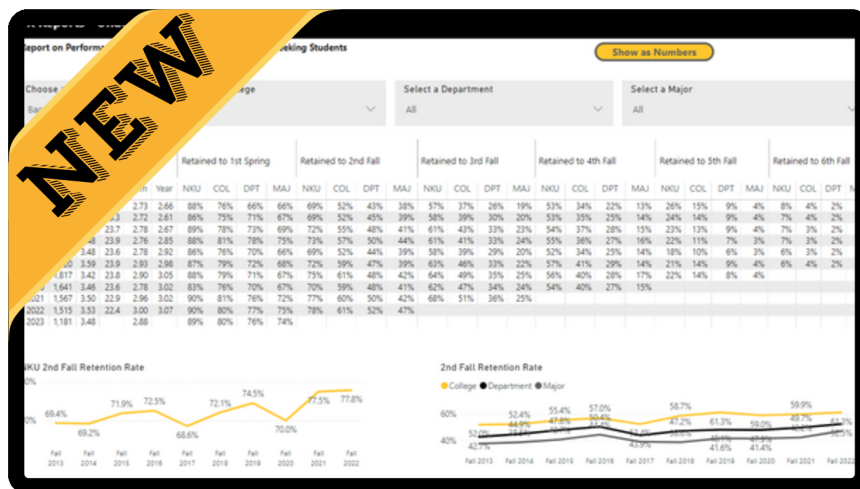

- Campus housing was included among predictive variables; the decision tree analysis highlighted that being in **campus housing (University Suites or New Residence Hall) was related to persistence** among students in the lower Entering GPA band of <=3.00.

- Finally, we looked at Campus Recreation Center visits. **Visiting the Campus Recreation Center during the first fall is positively associated with second fall persistence**, especially among students with <= 3.00 Entering GPA and who are categorized as low income.

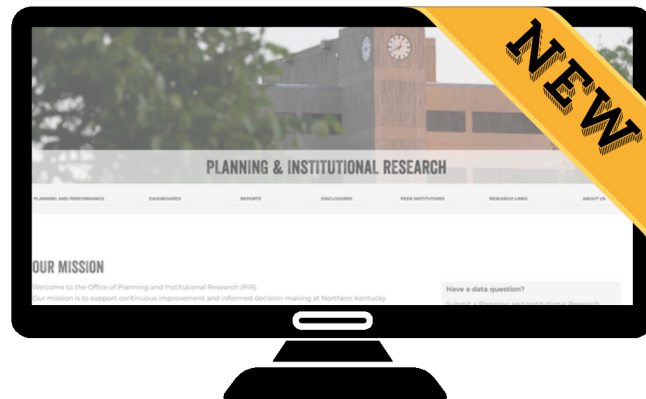## Retention and Graduation Dashboards Now Available

We have a new version of Retention and Graduation Reports (formally known as IRReports). The new version has been transformed into interactive Power BI dashboards with enhanced features. Please follow this link to the PIR Data Center. From the side bar menu, select Student Retention, and then Retention Rate or Graduation Rate dashboards. Note, a login is required; please use your MyNku credentials to access.

You can also find a link to the PIR Data Center in the Planning and Institutional Research Website at this location: Dashboards: Northern Kentucky University, Greater Cincinnati Region (nku.edu).

The PIR Website Has Been Updated

The PIR Website redesign is officially complete. Our new webpage features an easier to navigate layout including a set of quick links for faster access to our most frequented data tools and resources. Our PIR ticket system is also featured prominently to help you have easier access to requests. Also, be sure to check out our new A to Z Glossary of PIR data terms.

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Annual Assessment Reminders

2023-24 Assessment Plan Cycle
- Completed in WEAVE by **September 15, 2024**
- Finalize Findings, Analysis of Findings, and Action Plans
- PIR will promptly begin the End-of-Cycle review of all Administrative Divisions Plans on September 16

2024 Assessment Summit
- **September 20, 2024** in **SU 104**, 8:00am – 1:00pm (Lunch provided)
- Dr. Tisha Paredes presenting Building a Culture of Effectiveness: Becoming a Learning Organization
- Event Registration Link

2024-25 Assessment Plan Cycle
- In Progress in WEAVE by **October 15, 2024**
- Include Mission Statement, Goals, Objectives, Supported Initiatives, Measures, Targets