



Project Success Request for Research

December 2022

Lee College:

Findings from a Stop-Out and Re-Engagement Survey Project

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Executive Summary

Lee College expressed interest in better understanding the reasons certain students have exited the institution without a degree or credential, and how the college can assist these students with re-enrollment.

The stop-out and re-engagement survey opened on August 8th, 2022 and closed on August 29th, 2022. Surveys were sent to 7,045 former students, of which 249 responded for a response rate of 3.5 percent. Not including open-entry response items, 88.0 percent of respondents completed all questions.

Due to the nature of ‘Check all that Apply’ questions and rounding errors, the sum of response frequencies may not equal 100 percent.

See Appendix A for full tables of the descriptive statistics below, and Appendix B for analyzed and summarized write-in responses.

Table 1. Survey Metrics – Lee College	
Survey Population	7,045 students
Responses	249 students
Response Rate	3.5 percent
Completion Rate	88.0 percent

Key Findings: Student-Supplied Reasons for Leaving Lee College (Q2, Q20-Q25)

Former students (n=241) were asked to specify which factors impacted their decision to either withdraw or not re-register at Lee College (Q2).

The most frequently identified issues are listed below, in descending order (Table 2). For those with a corresponding follow-up question (see Q20-Q25), at least three of the top sub-reasons are included. These findings are limited to the subset of students who selected the corresponding issue in Q2 (e.g., only those who selected “personal financial issues” in Q2 are discussed within that bullet).

Table 2. Reasons for Leaving Lee College (Q2) (n=241)	
Personal financial issues (lack of funds, bills, debt, etc.)	35%
Family/Personal reasons	27%
Financial aid issues (insufficient financial aid, aid package, delivery, etc.)	24%
Employment (conflicting work/school schedule, need to work, etc.)	22%
Cost of attendance/tuition	20%
I have transferred or intend to transfer to another institution	18%
Course/Major offerings (available classes, majors offered, degree offerings)	17%
Academics (GPA, course grades, difficulty of courses, etc.)	16%
Health reasons	9%
Reasons related to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic	9%

- **Personal financial issues – 35 percent (Q22)**
 - In this survey, many stopped-out students who selected “personal financial reasons” as a reason for leaving the college reported significant cash flow problems. While **more than**

two-thirds of these former students said a lack of funds had affected their decision to leave Lee College, **36 percent** also encountered unexpected expenses. Further, **42 percent** of these respondents could not afford their monthly bills. See Appendix B for more context on personal financial issues from former students.

- **Family/Personal reasons – 27 percent (Q25)**
 - **Fifty percent** who selected “family/personal reasons” experienced challenges with their mental or emotional health, such as anxiety, depression, etc., and **27 percent** felt alone or isolated.
 - Before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, college students across the United States were already reporting a range of mental health challenges. From 2018-2019, The Healthy Minds Study surveyed over 60,000 college students on more than 79 campuses and found that 37 percent of students met the criteria for at least one mental disorder in the prior 12 months.¹ The CDC and other trusted organizations have warned that the coronavirus pandemic may worsen or exacerbate existing mental health problems.²
 - Family-related issues were also common with **52 percent** relating that family responsibilities had changed or were a challenge. In addition, **19 percent** found that childcare was not available or was too costly.
- **Financial aid issues – 24 percent and/or Cost of attendance/tuition – 20 percent (Q21)**
 - Affordability concerns were common among former students. **More than half** (54 percent) indicated that tuition at Lee College was more than they could afford, and **17 percent** expressed that their financial aid was insufficient for meeting costs. Further, **19 percent** did not understand the financial aid process. Similar sentiments were also shared in the write-in responses for Q1; see Appendix B for more detail.
- **Employment (conflicting work/school schedule, need to work, etc.) – 22 percent (Q2)**
- **I have transferred or intend to transfer to another institution – 18 percent (Q2)**
- **Course/Major offerings – 17 percent and/or Academics – 16 percent (Q20)**
 - Of the students who indicated that “academics” or “course/major offerings” had influenced their decision to not return to Lee College, **more than one in ten** experienced difficulties with faculty at the college. Faculty often develop the most regular and familiar relationships with students and can influence a student’s overall educational experience.
 - **Nineteen percent** reported that they were placed on academic probation or suspension.
 - **More than one in ten respondents** said their courses were too difficult.
 - Some respondents indicated issues with course scheduling and availability; for instance, **34 percent** indicated that classes they needed were full or not offered at times they could attend, and **23 percent** thought there were too many required courses.
- **Health reasons – 9 percent (Q2)**
- **Reasons related to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic – 9 percent (Q2)**
- **Institutional services – 9 percent (Q24)**

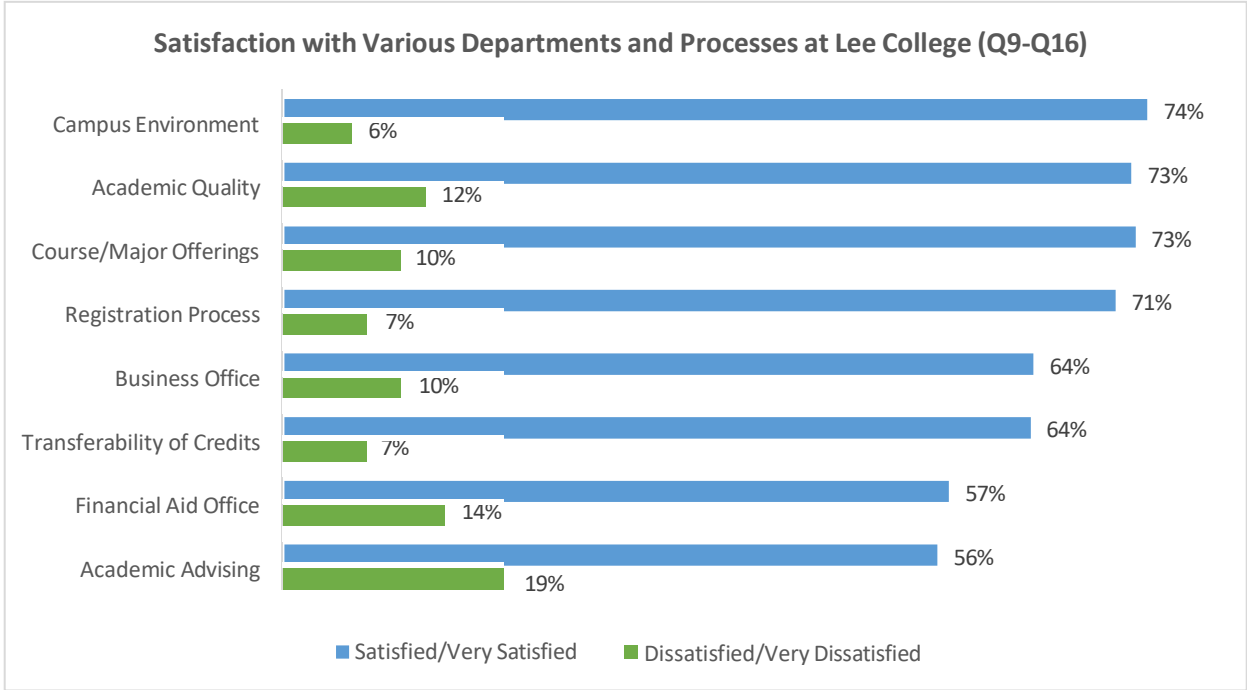
¹ Eisenberg, D. et al. (2019). The Healthy Minds Study: 2018-2019 Data Report. https://healthymindsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HMS_national-2018-19.pdf

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Stress and Coping. <https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

- While only **nine percent** of former students referenced “institutional services” as a contributing factor in leaving the institution, some of these students expressed dissatisfaction with the various areas measured. For instance, **27 percent** were not satisfied with staff at the college. Faculty often develop the most regular and familiar relationships with students and can influence a student’s overall educational experience; however, **33 percent** were dissatisfied with faculty at Lee College.
- Dissatisfaction with academic advising was high at **47 percent**. Further, **one in five** of these respondents were not satisfied with the Office of Financial Aid.
- **Campus life/location – 7 percent (Q23)**
 - Dissatisfaction with the campus varied among these respondents—while only **20 percent** reported that the campus felt unsafe, **two in five** expressed displeasures with the campus social life. Additionally, **60 percent** were unhappy with the school location.
- **Transportation issues – 2 percent (Q2)**
- **Issue with school name/mascot – 1 percent (Q2)**

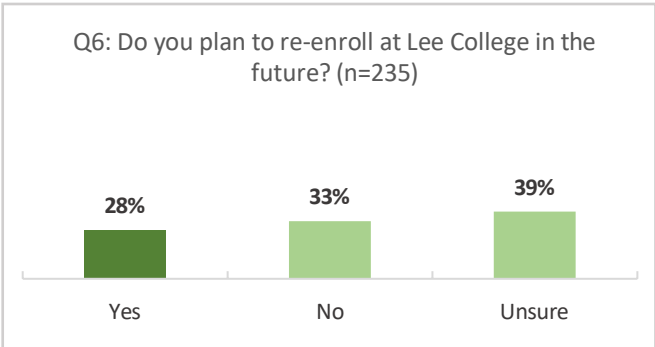
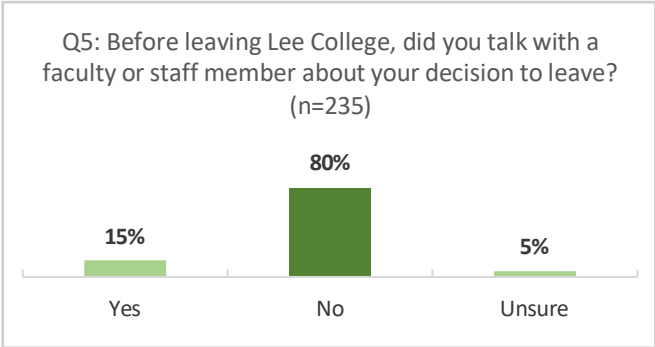
Key Findings: Satisfaction with Academics, Registration, and Other Topics (Q9-Q16)

- **Students reported mixed levels of satisfaction with course/major offerings, the registration process, and other topics:** In Q9-Q16, all former students (regardless of their self-reported reasons for not returning to the college) were asked to rate their satisfaction with various departments and processes at Lee College.
- Respondents reported the highest levels of satisfaction with **the campus environment** (74 percent), followed by **academic quality** (73 percent), **course/major offerings** (73 percent), and **the registration process** (71 percent). Students expressed the highest levels of dissatisfaction with **academic advising** (19 percent).



Key Findings: Past, Present, and Future Enrollment Plans (Q5-Q6)

- **Four in five respondents did not talk with a faculty/staff member before leaving: While 15 percent of surveyed students** indicated they had talked with a faculty or staff member before leaving Lee College, **80 percent** did not signal their departure. This can be a lost opportunity to retain the student or to remind them of any financial aid or loan responsibilities they may have. **Q5**
- **Future enrollment plans were mixed, but more than a quarter plan to return: More than a quarter of former students** (28 percent) plan to re-enroll at Lee College in the future, while **39 percent** were ‘unsure’. A spreadsheet of former students wishing to be contacted by Lee College was delivered to the institution in early September. **Q6**



Key Findings: Lee College - Net Promoter Score (NPS) (Q3)

- **Overall, respondents were willing to recommend Lee College:** This survey included a customer satisfaction rating to allow Lee College to better understand how former students perceive their institution. Trellis collected this information using a scale that allows a Net Promoter Score (NPS) to be calculated. NPS is a method, based in research, to benchmark customer satisfaction ratings across different services, businesses, and products to determine customer loyalty.³ NPS uses a 0-10 scale from “Not at all Likely” to “Very Likely”.

Table 3. Net Promoter Score		
Q3: How likely is it that you would recommend Lee College to a friend or family member?		
	Lee College	Project Success 2-Year Schools
Promoters (Score 9-10)	42%	43%
Passives (Score 7-8)	27%	22%
Detractors (Score 0-6)	31%	35%
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	11.0	9.0
	n=245	n=1,433

³ Hyken, S. (2016). *How effective is Net Promoter Score (NPS)?* Forbes Magazine. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2016/12/03/how-effective-is-net-promoter-score-nps/#253a33123e4c>.

Those respondents who score 9-10 are promoters, 7-8 are passives, and 0-6 are detractors. %Promoters - %Detractors = NPS. A positive NPS (>0) is generally considered good, with highest performers usually between 50 and 80. Generally, when surveying students who have left the institution without a degree (i.e., stop-outs), a low NPS can be expected. The information for Lee College is benchmarked to similar studies Trellis has conducted with other two-year schools in the Project Success program.

Key Findings: Write-in Responses (Q1, Q4, Q7)

To provide Lee College with a more holistic overview of the reasons that certain students stopped out of the institution before earning a credential, more than 500 write-in responses from students were reviewed and analyzed. See Appendix B: Findings from Write-in Responses for more information.

Why students stop out or leave without a degree? (Q1)

In Q1, respondents (n=232) were asked to briefly “explain [their] primary reason for leaving Lee College.” Students provided a broad range of reasons for leaving the institution, including: (1) Personal finances (n=40); (2) Family or personal reasons (n=30); (3) Working full-time or difficulties balancing college with employment (n=28); (4) Transferring to another institution after taking prerequisites at Lee College (n=23); and (5) Problems with financial aid (n=21) (see Appendix B for more details).

In total, former students referenced issues with their personal finances and/or with their individual and family circumstances (e.g., health or death of a family member, caregiving, children and childcare needs, general stress, etc.) 70 times in this question alone. Often, these respondents shared sentiments like, “financial hardship,” “couldn’t afford it despite having a good income,” “I was doing bad mentally,” and, “being a caregiver 24/7.” Their responses may reflect the difficult time period during which they were trying to attend college. Two respondents shared the stories behind why they are no longer able to enroll at Lee College:



“Money. I took time off to save money to finish my degree, but a lot of things happened. My family got hit by the pandemic really hard, and I haven’t been able to fully recover enough to return to college.”



“Personal reasons [...] My mother is full care (bed bound). Did not have enough prepared healthcare to assist in taking care of my mother to continue my education.”

In addition, the decision to leave college for a job, or in part because of difficulties balancing college with employment, was identified 28 times. In some cases, the former student simply needed to work more. In other cases, they perceived working (when the right opportunity arose) to be a beneficial choice over continuing college, or they wanted to stay in college but could not find classes that accommodated their work schedules.

Another former student wrote in regarding why they left Lee College while working:



“I received an operating opportunity, and I took it since the pay rate was the same as the rate for [the area] which I was studying.”

More commonly mentioned reasons for leaving without a degree included: Issues with financial aid (n=21); Insufficient course/major offerings (n=18); Feeling uncomfortable, unsafe, or unsupported on campus (n=14); Perceived lack of quality teaching (n=14), and Problems with academics, such as suspension, failing to pass, struggling in difficult classes, or not learning how to study (n=13).

Why did students initially enroll at Lee College? (Q4)

In Q4, former students were asked to “explain the primary reason [they] initially enrolled at Lee College.” The top three reasons given by students (n=226) for enrolling at the institution were: (1) Campus location (n=68); (2) To complete basics or prerequisites (n=40); and (3) To get a degree or credential (n=35) (see Appendix B for more details).

Stopped-out students cited the college’s location—local and close to home or work, with a short commute—as their primary reason for enrolling. A great deal of respondents provided explanations such as “I am a Baytown resident,” “in district,” “convenience,” “I wanted to go to college where it wasn’t too far from my mother because she was sick,” “nearest location to get a college education,” and “it’s the college in my hometown.”



A former student succinctly stated that Lee College’s location was what appealed to them: “I loved that it was so close.”

Many stopped-out students also chose to attend because they wanted to complete college basics and prerequisites at a community college, again, close to home, with smaller class sizes, and/or for a more affordable cost. Some respondents added that they wanted to determine their interests or improve their GPAs at Lee College before applying or matriculating elsewhere. They shared statements like to “get[ting] my core curriculum started at a cheaper price,” and “complete my basics” before continuing to university for fields like medicine or psychology, as two respondents mentioned. In addition, one respondent shared their reason for attending Lee College:



“It offers great courses to get your basics out of the way as well as great staff and smaller class sizes. Additionally, there were a ton of resources that helped me transfer!”

Simply earning a degree or other credential was another motive that led to some students’ initial decisions to attend Lee College. Participants shared statements like, “to get a degree which would help me get a good paying career,” “to get an Associates,” “I wanted a college degree,” “to gain/obtain certification,” and “to work toward finishing a degree started years ago.”

Additional common reasons for enrolling initially that former students shared are the following: Offering their specific desired program and/or interesting classes (n=33); Reasons related to employment (n=32); Personal motivation, including the desire to learn, grow, gain knowledge or skills, do something worthwhile, etc. (n=31); and Affordable costs (n=30).

How can Lee College assist these students in returning to school? (Q7)

Respondents who answered “Yes” or “Unsure” on the possibility of re-enrolling at Lee College were asked to share, in 1-2 sentences, how the institution can support them in returning to school (n=122).

Many hopeful respondents discussed how critical it is to provide financial assistance (e.g., connecting students to scholarships, stipends to help with classes and other bills, free classes, and/or offering and devising payment plans) when attempting to encourage and re-enroll former students like themselves. Specifically, former students mentioned that their bills or finances prevent them from re-enrolling. A set of respondents asked the college to forgive the small unpaid balances they owe from previous enrollment that constrain their options to re-start. Some additional responses suggested providing financial aid options for specific groups of students, including DACA recipients, (single) parents, and those who live outside the current district lines.

One former student wrote that an act from the college of “reaching out with possible financial programs” would help them finish their degree. Another student, among others, described balance forgiveness as the path to their ability to re-enroll:



“By helping me waive what I owe in past semesters. I passed the classes, but financial aid didn't cover the rest, and I didn't know, so that's what's stopping me.”

A student in a similar situation, a single parent who wants to finish their nursing degree, mentioned that owing \$250 prevents them from getting back into college.

In this question, stop-out students also stressed the importance of effective assistance for the re-enrollment process. They asked for help to get started, with online system hurdles, and with the financial aid process, FAFSA, and payment planning. Respondents also wrote in with statements like, “staff being detailed in knowledge” and “help with finding the classes I need.”

For more context on these student-generated suggestions, and the other questions presented above, see Appendix B.

Appendix A: Survey Frequencies

S1:	Are you currently enrolled at, taking classes from, or have graduated from Lee College?	
	Yes	15%
	No	85%
		<i>n=323</i>

Q2:	Did any of the reasons below contribute to your decision to leave Lee College? Please check all that apply.	
	Personal financial issues (lack of funds, bills, debt, etc.)	35%
	Family/Personal reasons	27%
	Financial aid issues (insufficient financial aid, aid package, delivery, etc.)	24%
	Employment (conflicting work/school schedule, need to work, etc.)	22%
	Cost of attendance/tuition	20%
	I have transferred or intend to transfer to another institution	18%
	Course/Major offerings (available classes, majors offered, degree offerings)	17%
	Academics (GPA, course grades, difficulty of courses, etc.)	16%
	Other – Please explain:	16%
	Health reasons	9%
	Reasons related to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic	9%
	Institutional services (advising, faculty, student services, etc.)	9%
	Campus life/location - Baytown, Texas	7%
	Transportation issues	2%
	Issue with school name/mascot	1%
		<i>n=241</i>

Q3:	How likely is it that you would recommend Lee College to a friend or family member?	
	Promoters	42%
	Passives	27%
	Detractors	31%
	Net Promoter Score	11.02
		<i>n=245</i>

**NPS is a method, based in research, to benchmark customer satisfaction ratings across different services, businesses, and products. NPS uses a 0-10 scale. Those respondents who score 9-10 are promoters, 7-8 are passives, and 0-6 are detractors. %Promoters - %Detractors = NPS.

Q5:	Before leaving Lee College, did you talk with a faculty or staff member about your decision to leave?	
	Yes	15%
	No	80%
	Unsure	5%
		<i>n=235</i>

Q6:	Do you plan to re-enroll at Lee College in the future?	
	Yes	28%
	No	33%
	Unsure	39%
		<i>n=235</i>

Q9:	Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following at Lee College: Course/Major Offerings	
	Very Satisfied	33%
	Satisfied	41%
	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	17%
	Dissatisfied	7%
	Very Dissatisfied	3%
		<i>n=217</i>

Q10: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following at Lee College: Business Office

Very Satisfied	20%
Satisfied	45%
Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	25%
Dissatisfied	6%
Very Dissatisfied	4%

n=204

Q14: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following at Lee College: Academic Advising

Very Satisfied	23%
Satisfied	34%
Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	25%
Dissatisfied	12%
Very Dissatisfied	7%

n=203

Q11: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following at Lee College: Financial Aid Office

Very Satisfied	19%
Satisfied	38%
Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	29%
Dissatisfied	6%
Very Dissatisfied	8%

n=191

Q15: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following at Lee College: Campus Environment

Very Satisfied	28%
Satisfied	46%
Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	20%
Dissatisfied	3%
Very Dissatisfied	3%

n=207

Q12: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following at Lee College: Academic Quality

Very Satisfied	31%
Satisfied	42%
Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	15%
Dissatisfied	8%
Very Dissatisfied	4%

n=212

Q16: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following at Lee College: Transferability of Credits (to Lee College from previous college/university)

Very Satisfied	27%
Satisfied	37%
Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	29%
Dissatisfied	3%
Very Dissatisfied	4%

n=175

Q13: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following at Lee College: Registration Process

Very Satisfied	27%
Satisfied	44%
Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	21%
Dissatisfied	5%
Very Dissatisfied	3%

n=216

Q19: Did you complete a degree at the institution(s) you transferred to?

Yes	53%
No	5%
Degree In Progress	42%

**Logic applied – filtered by answer to Q2: “transfer or intend to transfer”* *n=38*

Q20: How did academics and/or course/major offerings contribute to your decision not to return to Lee College? Please check all that apply.*

Desired major was not offered	35%
Classes I needed were full or not offered at times I could attend	34%
Desired courses were not offered	31%
Too many required courses	23%
Placed on academic probation or suspension	19%
Courses were too difficult	13%
Other – Please explain:	13%
Difficulty with faculty	11%
Courses were not challenging enough	5%

**Logic applied – filtered by answer to Q2: "academics" or "course/major offerings" n=62*

Q22: How did a personal financial issue impact your decision to not return to Lee College? Please check all that apply.*

Lack of funds	69%
Could not afford monthly bills	42%
Debt issues (e.g., credit cards, loans, owing money to friends and family)	38%
Unexpected expenses	36%
Drop in work hours/loss of employment	26%
Family emergency	21%
Transportation issues (car broke down, maintenance costs, gas)	19%
Medical expenses	15%
Other – Please explain:	14%

**Logic applied – filtered by answer to Q2: "personal financial issues" n=72*

Q21: How did tuition and financial aid impact your decision to not return to Lee College? Please check all that apply.*

Tuition was more than I could afford	54%
Applied for financial aid, but did not receive any	35%
Family was no longer able to contribute to educational costs	29%
Financial aid package only included loans	26%
Lost financial aid package or eligibility	22%
Did not understand financial aid process	19%
Financial aid package was insufficient for meeting costs	17%
The aid package was not provided in a timely manner	9%
Did not receive a scholarship, but expected one	6%
Other – Please explain:	6%

**Logic applied – filtered by answer to Q2: "financial aid" or "cost of attendance/tuition" n=69*

Q23: How did campus life impact your decision not to return to Lee College? Please check all that apply.*

Did not care for school location - Baytown, TX	60%
Dissatisfied with the campus social life	40%
Did not feel like a part of the college	40%
Campus felt unsafe	20%
Other – Please explain:	20%
Had conflicts with students	10%
Did not care for name of college or mascot	10%
Unhappy with campus rules and regulations	0%

**Logic applied – filtered by answer to Q2: "campus life/location" n=10*

Q24: How did institutional services impact your decision to not return to Lee College? Please check all that apply.*

Academic advising was not satisfactory	47%
Dissatisfied with faculty at Lee College	33%
Other – Please explain:	33%
Experience with staff at Lee College was not satisfactory	27%
Financial Aid Office was not satisfactory	20%
Business Office was not satisfactory	13%

**Logic applied – filtered by answer to Q2: “institutional services”* n=15

Q25: Did any of the following family or personal issues impact your decision to not return to Lee College? Please check all that apply.*

Family responsibilities changed or were a challenge	52%
Experienced challenges with my mental or emotional health (anxiety, depression, etc.)	50%
Felt alone or isolated	27%
Problems with living situation	23%
Childcare was not available or was too costly	19%
Other – Please explain:	15%
Wanted a break from my studies	13%
Wanted to live closer to my parents or loved ones	13%
Felt tension regarding my identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.)	0%
Influenced by parents or relatives to leave college	0%

**Logic applied – filtered by answer to Q2: “personal/family issues”* n=52

Appendix B: Findings from Write-in Responses

Note: The responses below represent sentiments expressed in open-entry responses and do not reflect the opinions of Trellis Company or its employees. For questions with more than 25 responses, write-ins are grouped by primary theme and presented in aggregate. To better highlight the various themes presented, relevant responses from students are included. Presented responses have been lightly edited for clarity and to ensure anonymity.

Write-in Responses from Q1: Primary Reasons Students Exited Lee College

In Q1, former students were asked to “explain [their] primary reason for leaving Lee College.” The most prevalent reasons given by students (n=232)⁴ for not returning to the institution were: (1) Personal finances (n=40); (2) Family or personal reasons (n=30); (3) Working full-time or difficulties balancing college with employment (n=28); (4) Transferring to another institution after taking prerequisites at Lee College (n=23); and (5) Problems with financial aid (n=21). These reasons for leaving the institution are presented in descending order by primary theme with excerpts from students, when available.⁵

1. Personal finances (n=40)

- Financial hardship
- Couldn't afford it despite having a good income
- I'm unable to afford classes at this time, and I'm not comfortable taking out any more loans.

2. Family or personal reasons (n=30)

- Being a caregiver 24/7
- My mom's death rattled me a bit. I couldn't focus and lost my purpose. Personal reasons is probably the most acceptable answer.
- Life became stressful

3. Working full-time or difficulties balancing college with employment (n=28)

- Too many hours having to work and not able to study properly. I pay for college, and I felt like my money was being wasted.
- Full time job
- I took a job as a plumber and decided I like it.

4. Other response or vague response (n=25)

- N/A
- Never re-enrolled
- Didn't like school

5. Transferring to another institution after taking prerequisites/basics (n=23)

⁴ For Q1, 13 of the original student responses were removed from the dataset, arriving at the total of 232. Of those, 3 responses were deleted because those students said they have not left Lee College and are restarting. Ten of the responses were deleted because those students were never really enrolled, as they were just auditing classes, joining free community classes, taking only one course for their circumstances, or taking courses as high school students or as exchange students who knew they would leave.

⁵ For Q1, some excerpts contain multiple themes, resulting in a total of 305 codes applied.

- Finished taking my prerequisites
- Transferred to a four-year university
- I just needed a few classes for prerequisites to get into a graduate program

6. Problems with financial aid (n=21)

- Were not very helpful when applying for financial aid.
- Issues with obtaining financial aid. The department was not willing to assist me with what I needed.
- Can't afford to pay them back after my financial aid didn't hit in time.

7. Insufficient course/major offerings (n=17)

- You don't offer any programs I'm interested in
- Program not available/offered
- I was told we did not have a teacher [for class needed]

8. Campus climate felt uncomfortable, unsafe, or unsupportive (n=14)

- Discrimination and lack of services for students with disabilities
- Experienced racism
- Teachers talked about me to [other] students

9. Perceived lack of quality teaching (n=14)

- The professors are not passionate about their students. They don't help to pass courses successfully.
- Some of the professors were absolutely awful & inappropriate.
- The teachers did not take time to teach. Instead only used previously recorded classes, had no time for questions.

10. Problems with academics (n=13)

- I was struggling in my classes. I thought maybe college just wasn't for me.
- Didn't pass / failed out
- Didn't focus on the classes.

11. COVID-19 Pandemic (n=11)

- Because of the way Lee College handled itself during the Covid-19 pandemic [...] Also lack of availability with resources to help students during covid made it difficult to finish and felt that Lee College really did not care about their students.
- Stopped taking classes due to covid
- I was in the nursing program when covid happened, and we weren't given proper resources. [...] Lee College was not helpful in leniency or understanding of the gravity of the situation and how we were not prepared to deal with that situation.

12. Issues with institutional services or systems (n=11)

- The disability service made everything worse. They didn't do the supportive things they said they would to help with courses, were late to scheduled meetings, and staff often told the student that their computer/email was messed up.
- Unorganized staff
- I was just having trouble reenrolling into the program. I did not remember my password or login sadly.

13. Health issues, including mental health (n=11)

- Stress and anxiety after having gone through Hurricane Harvey
- Mental exhaustion/struggle
- Had medical problems

14. Unsure about college (n=9)

- Better opportunities without college
- I wasn't really sure on what major I wanted to pursue
- Lack of direction

15. Moved (n=9)

- Moved out of state or to another city in Texas

16. Did not like shift to online (n=8)

- Online classes wasn't a good teaching method for me.
- I need on campus classes, and when I attempted an online class, I didn't do well with that.
- Having to do classes online wasn't ideal for me.

17. Lack of communication or help (n=8)

- Unable to communicate with professors
- I had a lot of trouble getting in contact with anyone. I was the only person in college in my household and no one at home knew how to help me either. It was very discouraging.

18. Location or commute (n=6)

- The distance / Lee College is too far
- No longer have a reason to be in Baytown

19. Issues transferring credits (n=3)

- Lee college no longer offers classes that are transferable to my university, otherwise I would continue
- They wouldn't accept my transfer credits
- No one ever explained to me why they wouldn't accept [algebra class and grade], even though it was accepted previously by Lee College.

20. Not accepted into desired program (n=2)

- Took a break after not getting into the nursing program and did not feel like returning after

- Didn't get accepted into the nursing program, but did elsewhere

21. In jail (n=2)

- I went to jail

22. Housing (n=1)

- I was unable to keep my residence so I had to stop going to school

Write-in Responses from Q2: Student-Supplied Reasons for Leaving Lee College

In Q2, former students were asked to select the issues that contributed to their decision not to return to Lee College. The most prevalent issues given by students (n=31)⁶ for not returning to the institution were: (1) Insufficient course/major offerings (n=5); (2) Feeling uncomfortable, unsafe, or unsupportive (n=5); (3) Feeling unsure about college as a path (n=4); and (4) Employment (n=3).⁷ These student-supplied reasons for their initial enrollment at the institution are presented in descending order by primary theme with excerpts from students, when available.⁸

1. Insufficient course/major offerings (n=5)

- I could never find a program short enough to finish
- Different certification programs would be nice
- Health care professionals recommended a different college for nursing

2. Feeling uncomfortable, unsafe, or unsupportive (n=5)

- Disability rights access
- Teachers made me uncomfortable
- Disagree with bringing political beliefs into classroom

3. Feeling unsure about college (n=4)

- Career path better in skilled trades
- Doing general studies I felt like I had no direction and like I was working without motivation
- Times change, college not for everyone

4. Employment (n=3)

- After COVID I went to work in the plants
- Exxon Mobil hired me

5. Moved (n=2)

- I have moved and Lee College is much farther away.
- Relocation

⁶ For Q2, 3 responses were dropped during analysis, because they repeated or referenced (i.e., "same answer as above") their responses to Q1.

⁷ For Q2, 4 responses were categorized as "Other," including responses like "none applied" or that were not legible.

⁸ For Q2, some excerpts contain multiple themes, resulting in a total of 38 codes applied.

Did not like shift to online (n=2)

- My core classes were online. I learn better in a class and that was not being offered.
- Closed campuses

Graduated or transferred (n=2)

- I graduated from university
- I transferred necessary credits to my 4-year institution.

8. Jail/incarcerated (n=2)

- Jail, had to wait for court to prove I was innocent
- Incarcerated

9. Communication (n=2)

- I felt like I could get no help from school or the teachers or counselor working there.
- No one seemed to care about my concerns (instructor, counselor)

10. Health (n=1)

- Mental health

11. Institutional systems and services (n=1)

- I didn't remember my password or login and I'm not up to date with computer skills.

12. Finances (n=1)

- Lost the job that was sending me to school

13. Credit transfer issues (n=1)

- I can no longer transfer credits to my current University.

14. Reasons related to Covid-19 (n=1)

- I got COVID-19 and it was hard when I missed school because I was so behind

15. Location (n=1)

- No longer have a reason to go to Baytown

16. Academics (n=1)

- Had difficulties dropping a class (due to stress and anxiety) before the deadline

Write-in Responses from Q4: Primary Reason(s) Students Initially Enrolled at Lee College

In Q4, former students were asked to “explain the primary reason [they] initially enrolled at Lee College.” The top three reasons given by students (n=226)⁹ for enrolling at the institution were: (1) Campus location (n=68); (2) To complete basics or prerequisites (n=40); and (3) To get a degree or

⁹ For Q4, two responses were dropped from the analysis. One said they are not enrolled and want to enroll, and the other said “see previous answer.”

credential (n=35). These student-supplied reasons for their initial enrollment at the institution are presented in descending order by primary theme with excerpts from students, when available.¹⁰

1. Campus location (n=68)

- Convenience
- Close to home
- In district

2. To complete basics or prerequisites (n=40)

- Improve GPA
- Complete prerequisites at a cheap price
- To complete my associates degree and transfer to a university

3. To get a degree or credential (n=35)

- To get a degree which would help me get a good paying career
- To get an Associates
- I wanted a college degree

4. Desired major/course offerings (n=33)

- Business administration
- Process technology
- Offered the course I was interested in

5. Reasons related to employment (n=32)

- Part of my job's trade school program
- To better my career/get better job opportunities
- To learn a new vocation/change career

6. Motivation (n=31)

- Ready to make something of myself/do something worthwhile
- I am a lifelong learner
- To continue/further my education

7. Cost (n=30)

- Affordability
- Cheaper/least expensive
- To save money

¹⁰ For Q4, some excerpts contain multiple themes, resulting in a total of 319 codes applied.

8. Academics (n=17)

- It is a great school
- Good community college
- Great teacher to student ratio

9. Financial aid (n=7)

- I had gotten a scholarship to attend
- My FAFSA covered all tuition costs
- Tuition was free

10. High school (n=6)

- Earned dual credit while in high school
- Started attending during high school

11. The campus (n=5)

- I enjoy the environment
- I like the small community college life
- It is a nice campus

12. Schedule (n=4)

- Flexible schedule
- Offered courses I needed to take during summer, online and asynchronous
- Hours classes were given were convenient

13. Family/personal reasons (n=4)

- My older sister had attended a few years before. The professors were friendly and willing to work with you if there was ever a personal emergency.
- My sister graduated and recommended it
- I had amazing neighbors who were amazing advisors, faculty, staff

14. Wellbeing (n=3)

- Like being around young people
- Attending exercise classes

15. Athletics (n=1)

- To play college volleyball for a year abroad

16. Transfer support (n=1)

- There were a ton of resources that helped me transfer

17. Able to attend while incarcerated (n=1)

- I went to Lee while I was incarcerated in Huntsville.

18. Other (n=1)

- A good college for me

Write-in Responses from Q7: Individual Suggestions for Re-Enrolling Former Students

Respondents who answered “Yes” or “Unsure” on the possibility of re-enrolling at Lee College were asked to share, in 1-2 sentences, how the institution can support them in returning to school (Q7). The top four solutions identified by students (n=122) were: (1) Provide financial assistance (n=40); (2) Assist with the re-enrollment process (n=20); (3) Empathize with students’ unique situations (n=15); and (4) Improve academic quality, teaching, and course offerings (n=15). Student-supplied solutions are presented in descending order by primary theme with excerpts from students, when available.¹¹

1. Provide financial assistance (n=40)

- Other ways to pay for my classes
- A stipend or grant
- Talk to students about the financial aid available

2. N/A (n=27)

- N/A
- I really don’t know
- Right now is not a good time

3. Assist with the re-enrollment process (n=20)

- Send a link to reenroll to my email address
- I don’t know how to return
- Helping me get started

4. Empathize with students’ unique situations (n=15)

- Help with childcare / daycare
- Offering programs to help those who are first generation for college.
- I need a curriculum that would work with me. My health just doesn't let me stay focused enough to retain the information like others.

5. Improve academic quality, teaching, and course offerings (n=15)

- More focus on helping students keep track with schoolwork.
- If there were any classes offered that would help me understand a topic better
- Hold professors accountable

6. Communication (n=14)

¹¹ For Q7, some excerpts contain multiple themes, resulting in a total of 176 codes applied.

- Call me about signing up for classes
- Reach out regarding your available programs
- A counselor available to talk to when I call

7. Schedule (n=12)

- Working full time and sitting in class til 10pm is not ideal for adequate rest
- If classes are available with my work schedule
- Offering evening, weekend, or night classes, just as varied as daytime classes

8. Advising (n=10)

- I would like to have a more broken-down explanation of how my previous semester would affect me going forward and what I could do to fix the position I had put myself in.
- Bringing many people with various job backgrounds and allow students in general studies to meet them and ask questions to help decide on what career path students would like to take.

9. Adjust academic expectations (n=10)

- It would be nice to have the placement exam lifted
- Have no homework
- Not putting in courses that aren't part of my career path requirements

10. Offer online options (n=9)

- Support more hybrid classes
- Have lectures online
- Make online classes and remote learning more available

11. Credits/transcripts help (n=2)

- By taking my submitted and approved transcripts and uploading to Lee's new system.
- Accept my credits and allow for me to receive my degree.

12. In-person class (n=1)

- More classes that don't have online meetings could help

13. Transportation (n=1)

- I would need to travel. I currently cannot travel due to work and lack of a second vehicle.

Write-in Responses from Q17: Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Returning to Lee College

If respondents selected "Reasons related to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic" as a reason for leaving the institution in Q2, they were directed to Q17, where they were asked to further explain their decision. Responses from respondents (n=21) are presented below:

- Hard to handle my mental health with only taking online courses especially when the professors were not doing their part in online courses.

- I had to move states.
- I prefer to not be around people.
- I was contacted with the virus more than once and it put me behind so much.
- I was covid positive for more than 6 weeks and it took a very long time to get results back.
- I was going to class when it started and when we had to go back I got covid and then I was scared to go back.
- It probably had the biggest impact on me leaving. Financially it halted my process of returning.
- It put me behind it courses when going online.
- Left my job due to constant exposure to coronavirus, which left me with no money in my budget for school this year.
- Lost 3 jobs in 2 years.
- Me and my family got real sick and hours of work got cut so I had to put my college degree on pause but that's behind me now and I'm trying to figure out a way to get back on it an finish what I started.
- Online school was difficult for me to keep up with and was my only option due to the pandemic.
- Shutdown.
- The athletic teams got suspended because of covid which impacted my possibility of staying for a second year.
- The classes for my major were not offered on campus.
- The covid pandemic ultimately was the reason I failed out of the nursing program in my final semesters.
- The covid-19 pandemic impacted my decision mainly by how the college handled itself. When the college closed, a lot of the classes did not adapt well to the online format and left students hanging. When I was first attending, I had access to the library which I could do my course work and other access to services available if needed. When they closed, I did not have access which some of the programs were expensive and could not afford it on my current income level. Also, when I was trying to get help, it seemed that I was getting the runaround and either would not hear back or they would not get back with me. There are other ways that the pandemic impacted my decision which I would be more than happy to go into detail with you if you would like to reach me by phone or email.
- The option to be more online was not available and being a nurse required me to spend more time at work attending to my patients.
- The school was shut down because of the pandemic. I also lost my job and credentials to continue my education.
- They were not having classes. It was all online.
- Why should I trust a college that ignores science?

Write-in Responses from Q18: (Transfer Students Only) Name of Transfer Institution(s) (n=31)

- Bloomsburg University
- Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Services
- Dallas Baptist University
- Del Mar College
- Hardin-Simmons University
- Lamar State College Orange
- Lamar University (n=3)
- Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich
- Prairie View A&M University
- Sam Houston State University
- San Jacinto College (n=4)
- Tarleton State University
- Texas A&M University (n=3)
- The University of Texas at San Antonio (n=3)
- The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- University of Houston (n=2)
- University of Houston Clear Lake (n=3)
- University of North Texas
- University of St. Thomas

Write-in Responses from Q20: Reasons for Leaving Lee College – Academics

If respondents selected “Academics” or “Course/Major Offerings” as a reason for leaving the institution in Q2, they were directed to Q20, a follow-up question where they were asked to further explain their decision. Responses from respondents (n=7) who selected “Other – Please explain,” are presented below:

- Did not want to start over.
- Financial issues.
- Hardships are not considered all the time.
- Not applicable.
- Teachers and professors weren't very helpful when I reached out to them about me struggling.
- Unable to attend nursing program due to need for a full-time job. Wish the program offered other scheduling options for those that cannot opt for part-time work.
- Zero feedback from professors as to what was needed to complete assignments, so I failed both semesters. Perhaps in-person schooling is the better option than online only.

Write-in Responses from Q21: Reasons for Leaving Lee College – Tuition and Financial Aid

If former students selected “Financial Aid” as a reason for leaving the institution in Q2, they were directed to Q21, where they were asked to further explain their decision. Responses from respondents (n=3) who selected “Other – Please explain,” are presented below:

- I don't think I will get financial aid because I had to leave during the pandemic.
- Even though I applied and told them that I do not depend on my parents since they make enough money, I was not eligible
- My legal status did not allow me to qualify for aid (DACA).

Write-in Responses from Q22: Reasons for Leaving Lee College – Personal Financial Issues

If respondents selected “Personal Financial Issues” as a reason for leaving the institution in Q2, they were directed to a follow-up question (Q22), where they were asked to further explain their decision. Responses from respondents (n=10) who selected “Other – Please explain,” are presented below:

- Dealt with mental health issues.

- Financial aid didn't hit in time for my classes, so I owe for the classes I took. I have no money to repay.
- Husband was the sole provider. In 2008, when the oilfield business crashed his work was almost nonexistent.
- Lost vehicle to a car accident
- No longer working to keep our granddaughter so our household lost my income and now a one-income provider.
- Not applicable.
- Nothing specific, just inflation making things a little more difficult.
- School is too expensive and I don't want to take loan and spend my life paying that.
- Someone to babysit.
- With no help from FAFSA or my family, I was making minimum wage and trying to pay for college completely by myself. It was too much for me.

Write-in Responses from Q23: Reasons for Leaving Lee College – Campus Life

If former students selected “Campus Life/Location” as a reason for leaving the institution in Q2, they were directed to Q23, where they were asked to further explain their decision. Responses from respondents (n=2) who selected “Other – Please explain,” are presented below:

- Did not attend on campus, N/A.
- None.

Write-in Responses from Q24: Reasons for Leaving Lee College – Institutional Services

If former students selected “Institutional Services” as a reason for leaving the institution in Q2, they were directed to a follow-up question (Q24), where they were asked to further explain their decision. Responses from respondents (n=4) who selected “Other – Please explain,” are presented below:

- Disability Services was unsatisfactory.
- It was just one faculty member who wouldn't allow me to drop a class and no resolve with the counselor/advisor.
- The Biology teacher was a nightmare and not up to date with technology.
- Unfortunately, I did not follow up with the school to see if there was any other way I could complete my classes to complete my associates degree.

Write-in Responses from Q25: Reasons for Leaving Lee College – Family or Personal Issues

If former students selected “Family/Personal Issues” as a reason for leaving the institution in Q2, they were directed to a follow-up question (Q25), where they were asked to further explain their decision. Responses from respondents (n=2) who selected “Other – Please explain,” are presented below:

- Death of son and several other close family members.
- I had to get out of the state of Texas - had nothing to do with Lee College. Living in Texas as a Democrat has been impossible since 2016.
- I needed to move back to PA to help care for my father.
- Job hours dropped and roommate moved out. Made it challenging to pay rent.
- My father passed away.

- My medical condition was very extended and bills were a priority for my recovery.
- My work required me to be available every morning till noon. This impacted my classes and focus to homework.
- Parent health issues.