Executive Summary:

In an effort to understand the reasons why students drop or stop out of classes at GVSU, a telephone survey was conducted in which we attempted to reach all undergraduate students who were enrolled in fall 2003 but did not re-enroll in winter 2004. Of 1,504 students with those qualifications, valid responses were collected from 868, for a 57.7% response rate.

Among the students who participated in our survey, lack of money was the most common reason cited for not re-enrolling, followed by conflicts with work schedules. A general classification of the responses follows. Note that individuals could cite multiple reasons for not returning, so the percentages total to more than 100%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason given</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t have enough money</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with work</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family obligations</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course(s) not offered at needed time/location</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Needed a break’</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with a particular academic unit</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient / seasonal student</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred to an inst. closer to home</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal problems</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical problems</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed program / graduated</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desired program not offered by GVSU</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with drive / location</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Not for me”</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reassessing plans</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>GVSU tuition too high</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with student services</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid problems</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved away</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school student dual enrollment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending CC specifically to transfer credits to GV</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with advising</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course not offered</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with social environment</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with housing/roommate</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolving incompletes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not admitted to academic program</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition increase</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting to be admitted to program at GVSU</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlisted in armed forces</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic difficulty</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted on-line coursework</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics issues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Note that three of the categories related to tuition ("not enough money", "tuition too high", and "tuition increase") are very similar but have been treated as mutually exclusive in the analysis of the data. Students who explicitly expressed dissatisfaction with the tuition increase were counted in the third group, while other students who indicated that they thought GVSU tuition levels are unnecessarily high were counted in the second group. The first group consists of respondents who cited lack of funds as a reason for not enrolling, but did not express dissatisfaction with tuition rates. The three categories combined comprise 16.7% all responses.

Overall, 31.9% of respondents expressed some dissatisfaction with GVSU. The converse of this is that 68% of respondents were apparently satisfied with the university and left for other reasons, mostly external to the university. Forty-one respondents (4.7%) volunteered praise for the university and 5 offered specific praise for particular departments or teachers.

About 30% of respondents are currently attending other postsecondary institutions. Of those, 57% were enrolled at two-year or technical schools.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents said they definitely intended to return to GVSU in the future, and 13.3% volunteered the information that they intended to return in either summer or fall of 2004. Twenty-three percent of respondents thought they might return to GVSU, and 20.1% said they would not re-enroll.
The Survey:

Students were contacted by telephone by a staff member from Records and Registration. The questions were similar to the mail survey of non-returning FTIACs that was conducted by the Office of Institutional Analysis in March 2002. Students were asked the following questions:

1. Are you currently taking classes at another institution?
   If yes, what institution?
2. Why did you decide not to attend GVSU this term?
3. Do you think that you will return to GVSU in the future?
4. Was there anything specific that GVSU could have done that would have resulted in your re-enrolling this term?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about why you didn’t return, what you’re doing now, or your future plans?

The phone center made at least two efforts to reach each student by phone between the dates of Feb 4 and Feb 17, 2004. Responses were accepted from parents or other relatives when the student was not available. The final response rate was 57.7% (868/1504). This is an excellent response rate for a “stop-out” population.

The open-ended question format was intended to allow respondents flexibility in their answers, but presents additional challenges for data collection and analysis. The staff members who administered the survey did an excellent job recording and encapsulating the verbal responses. To analyze the data, I reviewed the “full” text of all the responses to identify recurring themes. Once I had a relatively comprehensive list of themes that occurred in the responses, I went back to tally how many times each theme appeared.

Results:

Didn’t have enough money – 104 respondents (12.0%) indicated that they couldn’t afford to enroll for winter courses. Note that these students did not express any rancor over tuition rates – students who were dissatisfied with tuition rates are coded elsewhere. Following are some examples:

- “Not enough money to pay tuition”
- “Financial reasons”
- “Took semester off to make money”
- “ Couldn't afford it”
- “Owed GVSU money and couldn't afford it so got dropped from classes”
- “Working more hours to save money”
- “Got laid off and couldn't afford to go to school.”
- “Just had no money”
- [transferred to MCC] “Cost”

Nine of the 104 (1% of all respondents) indicated that they had lost their job or were unemployed. Students who cited lack of money as a reason for non-enrollment were less likely than other respondents to be enrolled elsewhere (16% vs. 35%), and more likely to have plans to return to GVSU (70% vs. 53%).

Conflict with work – The second most frequently cited reason for non-enrollment was conflicts with work. These included people with scheduling problems between jobs and class, people whose jobs required them to travel, and some who just didn’t have enough time to do both.
Those who specifically cited scheduling problems are also counted under “Course(s) not offered at needed time/location” below. A total of 75 respondents cited work conflicts. Six of them work for GVSU. Following are some examples:

- “Had to drop because left the state for work for 2 months”
- “Only has 7 classes left to take and he takes them when he has time.”
- “Got called back to work. Doesn't have time-- classes only offered during the day.”
- “Job change”
- “Work conflicts with school. Works full-time and couldn't make arrangements.”
- “Took a job offer and couldn't take classes around work schedule”
- “Needed a break from classes because she works full-time.”
- “Working 2 jobs - no time”
- “Got a promotion at work and couldn't learn new material at work and concentrate on class at the same time.”
- “Has a full-time job now. Can't do both”
- “Works here and can only take on class a year”
- “Between work and school… didn't have time to study so he took a semester off to work.”
- “Involved with work. Plans to attend in the future, but won't be for a couple of years.”
- “More demands from work”
- “Work schedule and class didn't work well together. Class times are difficult for people who work full-time and can't get a lot of time off.”

Students with work conflicts were less likely than other respondents to be enrolled elsewhere (8% vs. 35%), and more likely to have plans to return to GVSU (71% vs. 54%).

**Family obligations** – Fifty-five students cited family obligations as the reason they didn’t enroll for winter. Note that this does not include pregnancies for female students (which are tabulated separately below), but it does include new babies for male students. The most commonly cited family obligations had to do with parental responsibilities, given by 15 respondents, followed by getting married, which was cited 10 times. Six male respondents took time off from school because their wives/girlfriends were having babies, and 4 respondents indicated that they alternated college enrollments with their spouse (e.g. “my husband is going this term”). Four respondents cited deaths in the family. The remainder of the family obligations cited were either unspecified (e.g. “Family issues”, “Family emergency”) or defied categorization.

Students who cited family obligations were less likely than other respondents to be enrolled elsewhere (20% vs. 34%), and more likely to have plans to return to GVSU (73% vs. 54%).

**Course(s) not offered at needed time/location** -- Fifty-four students complained that they could not enroll for the classes they wanted or needed at the location they wanted to attend. Many (14) respondents requested more night classes. These were frequently also people who cited work conflicts. Twelve respondents said they didn’t return because the section(s) they wanted were full.

Seventeen people mentioned problems with the selection and/or scheduling of courses specifically at off-campus locations:

- “Couldn't take classes that were in Holland.”
- “Needed to take core classes and were not offered at the off-campus locations”
- “Classes offered only in Allendale that he needed to take and didn't have enough time in the day.”
- “The class she needed wasn't offered dt” [downtown? Daytime?]
• “Lives in Holland -- long drive to other campuses” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “More classes in Holland”
• [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Wish we had classes in Muskegon”
• “Have more classes available during the day at the downtown campus.”
• “Don't offer enough classes at Holland campus at night. Offer one-day class - 3-4 hours. More night classes. Classes are always MW or TR”
• “Offer a couple of classes during the day at Petoskey.”
• “Goes to Holland campus and didn't see any classes she wanted to take.”
• “Holland campus not offering classes needed and student didn't have transportation to get to Allendale because she's in a wheelchair.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Bussing between Holland campus and Allendale campus.”
• “Lives in Muskegon. Classes he wanted weren't available at GVSU Muskegon.”
• “Elementary education needs to be offered at West shore CC.”
• “In traverse city - nothing left to take.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Varying the classes offered at the traverse city campus -- that is why she's taking classes at NMC”
• “More classes in traverse city - like lab classes for biology”
• “Holland classes not available when needed.”
• “No classes available that she wanted to take.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Offer more classes in Traverse City - no selection.”

Students who mentioned schedule and location problems were much more likely to plan to return to GVSU than other respondents (96% vs. 53%). There is no significant relationship between schedule/location problems and the probability that the student was enrolled elsewhere for winter term.

“Needed a break” – Fifty-two students responded that they just needed “a break”, or “a semester off.” Some of these respondents elaborated about why they needed a break (in which case that information is coded elsewhere), but many did not. I regard this response by itself as meaningless, and I only report the frequencies for the sake of completeness.

Dissatisfied with a particular academic unit -- Fifty-one students mentioned problems with specific academic units among the reasons they did not return. Some comments are quite mild, while others are more serious. The responses follow, organized by department or college:

Art
• “Didn't like the art program…. Art program wasn't for her. Not a friendly atmosphere to be in.”
• “Mix-up in art dept. Thought could get second major in two years. Talked to advisor and told her no way could get done in two years. Only could do in four years… If advisors and professors had told her it wasn't possible to finish in two years, probably would not have enrolled. Wasn't until she went to chair of art dept that she got the correct information.”
• “Interested in CAD. LSSU offers it first year, whereas GVSU offers it starting 3rd year.”
• “Wasn't satisfied with GVSU -- no one in her field to help enroll classes. Once enrolled, found out courses weren't going to towards her work, so did a complete withdraw. Field was art ed. Was not satisfied with advising. Student likes the private atmosphere at Hope and feels there is more ‘one-on-one’ there.”
• “Came to GV with a BA in art. Was going through the GTC program and wanted to teach. In limbo with the Art department about them accepting her major which held her back in her teaching.” [DO YOU THINK THAT YOU WILL RETURN TO GVSU…]
“Definitely not.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Other than having the art department getting everything straight – no.”

- “Didn't have classes he wanted (Photoshop 3D, StudioMax, for graphic design)”

**Biology**

- “Needs bio classes offered in evening.”
- “More classes in traverse city - like lab classes for biology”

**Business**

- “Didn't get into SSB.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…]
  “Better counselors in SSB -- didn't feel like they were willing to help.”
- “His paperwork to get into SSB was lost… He was very dissatisfied with the service he received from SSB. Instead of helping him out, they told him that he would have to wait until next semester.”

**Chemistry**

- “On probation. Got discouraged because of Chem. class.”

**Communication**

- [mother responded for student] “Wasn't doing well grade-wise. Got discouraged. Was trying to get in film / video and they were dragging their feet… “Whenever he emailed to try and find out where he was at about getting into the film program, emails and phone calls were not returned. Needed to speak to a counselor and he couldn't get one until his major was declared and he couldn't declare major because he never got an answer on getting into film”
- [ANYTHING ELSE…] “Going into television production and wants to attend a school that specializes in that. She does not want to have to take classes that do not pertain to what she's interested in.”

**Computer Science**

- [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Had more sections available – MTH 323, MTH 325, CS 362 (Data Structures).”

**Education**

- “Waiting to get into School of Ed and has no more classes to take until then. School of Ed needs better communication between students and advisors.”
- “Had a hard time with SOE. Didn't feel like was advised enough. Felt misinformed and confused about what we need to do.”
- [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Better guidelines as to what's needed to be admitted to the School of Ed. They notified her after the deadline to register for classes for 041.”
- “School of Ed wasn't very helpful…”
- “Didn't like the education program here. She's in the English program [at OU] and likes it very much.”

**Engineering**

- “Engineering program was very young compared to what he was used to.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Better contacts in Engineering department who were overseeing the students.”
- “Didn't like engineering program. It was too long.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Make changes to engineering program and then he'll return.”

**History**

- “History department didn’t have enough classes that she wanted to take.”

**Honors**

- “Wasn't challenged in honors program.”

**Math**
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- **[ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Had more sections available – MTH 323, MTH 325, CS 362 (Data Structures).”**

**Music**
- **[ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Get a continuing ed program in the Music dept.” [ANYTHING ELSE…] “Music dept didn't help to accommodate her.”**

**Nursing**
- “Nursing program would take years to complete at GVSU.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “probably open curriculum up to more people - for nursing program.”
- “Unhappy with nursing program… Wants to be worked with better in the Nursing program… I felt like a number and I really did not matter… Main reason for dropping was problem with Nursing.”
- “Nursing program needs to be reorganized - too difficult to get into… Majoring in nursing at NMU and NMU has more classes.”
- “Nursing program - problems getting into program.”
- “Nursing program - wanted a 2-year program.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Nursing program too difficult to get into.”
- “Problems with nursing program.” [ANYTHING ELSE…] “I felt very cheated by GVSU” “Told by advisor to apply in winter to begin Nursing in spring, but found out later applications were not being taken until fall. Some advisors told her there was nothing they could do and told her to transfer.”
- “Nursing program is too crowded.”
- “Told by nursing program to transfer to another school so he could bring his GPA up.”
- “Nursing program and how it's run. He doesn't agree with the lottery system in the nursing program.”
- “Didn't want to stay after all of the changes to the nursing program.”
- “Didn't like how the nursing program was set up.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Organize the nursing program better.”
- “Nursing program problems.”
- “Frustrated with the nursing program.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Organize the nursing program better. “ [ANYTHING ELSE…] “She felt that the advisor she met with wasn't very nice. She also felt that as an older student she couldn't connect with anyone but the professors.”
- “Too difficult to get into the nursing program. Lottery -- not sure what chances and she needs to get her degree.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Make it easier to get into the nursing program.”
- [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Nursing program - waitlist to get just getting longer and longer - can't wait for degree when I can go someplace else and get right in.”
- “Wait on nursing program.” [ANYTHING ELSE …] “She can start now at WCC, go for 2 yrs. & then transfer to U of M for another 2 years.”
- “Nursing program was messed up.”
- “Met with dean 3 times -- changed nursing requirements…” “Cut 2 years off the program by going to hope. Emailed dean here and email was never returned.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “If deans would have worked with her more. She was in the Hope nursing program for 2 years, then met with dean here 3 times to make sure all credits would transfer. They told her they would. When she got here, all the rules changed…”
• “Felt nursing program made her take classes that didn't apply to her.”
• [per student’s mother] “Doing youth mission in China, but part of her decision to do this was because of the way the Nursing program is set up. Student was very turned off by it and is considering other possibilities.”
• “Decided GVSU not school for her. Nursing program upset her…” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Just frustrated with nursing program. Was told by dept [it] was going to be extremely difficult to get into and she felt like [she] was wasting her time and money to up a GPA that was already high enough to get into the program.” [ANYTHING ELSE…] “… Teachers were great too.”
• “Can get RN in 2 years at Baker - 3 yrs at GVSU.” “Dean of Nursing said if you want to get into nursing you should look somewhere else.”
• “Nursing program.”
• “Disliked nursing program -- 2 months to get ahold of advisor, supposed to help her and didn't.”
• “Nursing program – admission.” [DO YOU THINK THAT YOU WILL RETURN TO GVSU…] “Never.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Figured one admission policy for Nursing program and stick with it.”

Physical Therapy
• “Did not want to be in school for as long as P.T. program here allowed…”

Public Administration
• “Going for masters degree in Public Administration. She can do it on-line… GVSU wanted her to piddle around with undergrad classes and it was a waste of her time and money.”

Students who complained about particular academic units were more likely than other respondents to be enrolled elsewhere (65% vs. 31%), and less likely to have plans to return to GVSU (29% vs. 57%).

Pregnant – Forty-five students said they did not enroll because they were having a baby during the winter term. Only one of these respondents was currently enrolled at another institution (closer to her home). Pregnant respondents were very likely (84%, vs. 54% of other respondents) to indicate plans to return to GVSU.

Transient / seasonal student – Forty-four students indicated that they had never intended to enroll for winter classes because their fall enrollment was part of a transient or seasonal enrollment pattern. There are several recurring sub-categories within this classification: 16 of the students were guest students who intended to transfer their GVSU credits back to their home schools; 8 of the students had enrolled in only golf courses for the fall and were apparently not interested in other subjects; 4 indicated that they were taking a specific class required by their jobs; 4 said they were completing graduate school prerequisites; and 3 were GVSU employees who cited university policy as the reason they could not take more frequent classes.
Transferred to an inst. closer to home – There were 42 respondents who transferred to a new school for the winter term and mentioned proximity to home or family as a major reason for the change. A few students who moved back home but didn’t enroll for winter courses are tallied under “Personal reasons” or “Family Obligations.” Also, students from the tri-county area who transferred to schools closer to home are counted under “Dissatisfied with drive / location” instead of this category. Students who transferred to be closer to home went to the following institutions:

- Oakland University (4)
- Wayne State University (3)
- Eastern Michigan University (2)
- Jackson CC (2)
- Oakland CC (2)
- U of M Dearborn (2)
- College Of DuPage
- Delta College
- Gov. State Univ.
- Henry Ford CC
- “In California”
- Indiana Wesleyan
- Kellogg CC
- Lake Mi College
- Lake Superior State
- Macomb Community College
- Madonna University
- Monroe County CC
- Michigan State
- Northwestern Michigan College
- North Central Michigan College
- Olivet College
- Purdue Univ.
- Saginaw Valley
- Southwestern Michigan College
- St Clair CC
- University Of Detroit Mercy
- Western CC
- Western
- Unspecified

Personal problems – There were 42 respondents who cited personal problems not classifiable elsewhere as the reasons for not returning. These students were similar to other respondents with respect to their likelihood of returning to GVSU (62% said “Yes”), and the proportion who had transferred elsewhere (24%).

Medical problems – Medical problems figured in the reasons why 40 respondents didn’t re-enroll. Nine indicated that they were having surgeries and the remaining responses were either non-specific (“Health Problems”, “Medical reasons”) or defied classification. Twenty-one percent of these students had transferred to other schools, and 64% said they intended to return to GVSU in the future.

Completed program / graduated – Although students who earned bachelors degrees in December were excluded from the study, 38 respondents indicated that they had finished up their formal coursework in the fall. Many indicated that they were resolving Incompletes (n=6, 0.7% of all respondents) or needed to test out of WRT 305 (n=6, 0.7%). Eight students had finished up their requirements for teaching certificates, and four had completed second majors or minors for their bachelors degrees. Other respondents indicated delays in filing their Application for Degree forms.

Desired program not offered by GVSU – The following 36 responses were provided by students who wanted programs that are not offered at GVSU:

- “Needs to transfer schools for the degree he wants to pursue… Plans to be a music producer. GVSU doesn't offer that program.”
- “Starting beauty school in 2 weeks… Loved this school. Just changed mind about what she wants to do. Might come back after she gets license.”
- “Transferring to Aquinas… GVSU didn't offer major - Ministries (Catholic)”
• [student transferred to Robert Morris College] “Didn't have program… Computer networking -- GVSU does not offer this program… If GVSU does offer computer networking degree, would consider returning for masters.”
• [student transferred to Case Western Reserve U] “Change of major and change of location”
• [student transferred to LCC] “Went into fire science and those courses aren't offered here.”
• [student transferred to University of UT] “Attending national outdoor leadership school - changed major… No outdoor programs.”
• “Decided to get culinary degree.”
• [student transferred to Oakland U] “Interested in health science program, mainly exercise science, and GVSU doesn't have the program
• “Was looking for more technical programs.”
• [student transferred to MSU] “Transferred for major -- took the basics here.”
  [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Carrying her major – nutrition.”
• [student transferred to Olympia] “Wanted an idea of medical field, so attended Olympia while attending GVSU. Decided to do Olympia and then come back to GVSU for RN.”
• [student transferred to Southwestern Mich. College] “Was here for engineering, but decided he wanted to do Automotive Technology.”
• “Changed major - program not offered… Mortuary Science… will transfer to Wayne State for Funeral Directing.”
• [student transferred to Univ. of Phoenix (online)] “Going to chiropractic school… GVSU doesn't offer courses in his area of interest.”
• [student transferred to GRCC] “Changed major and we don't have her program here, so she'll be transferring to FSU next fall.”
• “… GVSU doesn't have the program she's interested in”
• [student transferred to Reformed Bible College] “Switched to social work… Wants to go into ministry.”
• “None of our programs interested her…. She's a visual learner, and that's why she's going to cosmetology school.”
• “GVSU didn't offer major -- transferring to Ferris… Civil Engineering”
• “Thinking about going to aviation school.”
• [student transferred to KVCC] [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “If would have offered Fire Science courses, the core classes, would have taken them at GVSU.”
• “Not offering major… Transferring to MSU in the fall.”
• “Baker College -- really enjoys their EMT program”
• [student transferred to Northwest MI College] “Don't have Industrial Arts Ed program… Enjoyed the college and would return if the program was offered.”
• [student transferred to Olympia Career Training Inst] “Changed career paths -- GVSU didn't offer practical nursing, associate RN.”
• [student transferred to Lansing CC] “GVSU didn't have sonography program.”
• [student transferred to MCC] “Changed major - police work.”
• “GVSU does not offer her program, which is materials management/purchasing.”
  [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “If offered something similar to her program… Add materials management/purchasing major.”
• [student transferred to GRCC] Ultrasound program not available.”
• [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Have a vet tech program.”
• “Dental program was not offered here - planning on transferring somewhere else.”
• [student transferred to Cornerstone] “Going into youth ministry.”
• [student transferred to MSU] “Because of degree – telecommunications… Don't have telecommunications major - probably would have stayed if we had that major.”
• [student transferred to Horizons College] “Wanted to work to get certifications. Applied all over. It's a 3-month certification class she's taking.”
• “Don't have a program that she's interested in.”

**Dissatisfied with drive / location** – Thirty-six respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the university’s location or the drive to Allendale. These respondents were significantly more likely than other respondents to have transferred (69% vs. 32%). They were also significantly less likely (39% vs. 58%) to say they would return to GVSU. Specific colleges to which these students transferred were:
- Muskegon CC (5)
- Grand Rapids CC (3)
- Aquinas (2)
- Baker College (2)
- Kalamazoo Valley CC (2)
- Western Michigan (2)

**Not for me** – Thirty-four respondents appeared to indicate general incompatibility between themselves and the GVSU environment with statements like “It wasn’t the right school for me” or “I wasn’t happy there.” Some went on to elaborate specific problems categorized elsewhere, but most did not specify the source of their disappointment. Six respondents had problems with the size of GVSU – five said it was too big for them and one said it was too small. One said the school was not diverse enough, another said it was not conservative enough, and another said he didn’t morally or spiritually like things at GVSU. These respondents were significantly more likely to transfer to other schools (71% vs. 31%) and significantly less likely to plan to return (10% vs. 57%) than other respondents.

**Reassessing plans** – Thirty respondents indicated that they had left GVSU to reassess their educational plans. Following are some typical responses:
- “Had to choose major and hasn't decided yet. Too expensive to take classes she may not need.”
- “Needs to figure out direction to go in.”
- “Reassessing major”
- “Hasn't decided what he wants to be when he grows up.”
These students were not significantly different from other respondents in terms of the percentage who transferred (23%) or plan to return (43%).

**GVSU tuition too high** – Twenty-nine students indicated that GVSU tuition was too high (without explicitly mentioning the winter tuition increase). Most of these students responded to the question “Was there anything specific that GVSU could have done that would have resulted in your re-enrolling this term?” with “Lower tuition.” In about half of the cases, that comment was the only justification for inclusion in this category. Several (n=10) others simply pointed out that their community college courses cost less than GVSU courses. To categorize these responses as “dissatisfied” is a stretch, but I think there’s value in distinguishing them from those I have categorized under “didn’t have enough money” above. For example, while the “not enough money” group was significantly more likely than others to plan a return to GVSU (70% vs. 53%), the “tuition too high” group was no different from others (55% vs. 57%) in this respect.
Dissatisfied with student services – The following 29 responses indicate some measure of dissatisfaction (or at least misunderstanding) about services the student received at GVSU. Note that problems with specific academic departments, advising, or financial aid are counted elsewhere.

- “All her credits she took at another school transferred to Calvin”
- “There was a mix-up about classes being dropped. One didn't get dropped, which student was unaware of and got an F. Trying to go through the appeal process at this time”
- “Was frustrated because GVSU did not tell her she needed to fill out repeat grade forms so she got frustrated because her GPA lowering. She said it has lowered her self-esteem and morale.”
- “Thought he couldn't enroll because he is on academic probation.”
- “Didn't know where to go for help on classes.”
- “Got an F in a class that she didn't ever attend and tried to appeal, so if F was waived she would come back.”
- “Disabled student -- was in the hospital for some time and her instructors gave her failing grades for 033… The office of academic support was no help to her.”
- “Wish we had classes in Muskegon.” “Needs language tutor.”
- “Needed tutoring at Holland location.”
- “She's waiting on the admissions dept to process her application.” [WW for CJ grad due to GPA]. [Will return to GVSU] “if the mess gets cleared up… Admissions needs to be more timely in their processing of applications… Very unhappy. Turned in application at the end of last semester.”
- “Unsatisfied with counseling services and administrative help.”
- “Handicapped parking is not very good - ex: the library.”
- “Wasn't happy with billing.”
- “ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…” “More placement and counseling… Couldn't find a job in his field. Very frustrated and enlisted in the army.”
- “Was dropped from classes - too much hassle to get back in them… Had no idea tuition went up -- can't find any notices”
- “Problems with parking – Allendale”
- “We need more handicapped parking by buildings (‘MAN’ for one).”
- “Has a disability - can only come summer and fall term. Didn't want to do exit counseling.”
- “Fix the administrative glitches in the admittance process (i.e. website is difficult to understand, like where to pay.)”
- “ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…” “Provided child-care.”
- “Career services needs a boost. Also thought could have been informed better about graduation and how to go about making sure students know when to do it.”
- “Didn't have time to get into SSB because at first he didn't have GPA to get in, but when he did, classes had already started.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Taken less than a week to put major into computer. SSB should be able to change student's major and not give it to someone else. He's very pissed.”
- “ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…” “More organized -- transcripts took 5 months to get to GVSU and to get credits transferred. No computerized waiting list. Frustrated with how financial does not get held because of paper waitlist. Thinks computer waitlist so financial aid doesn't get dropped.”
- “Lost credits when transferring.”
“Was enrolled. Sent in confirmation. [Student received a] letter that classes were dropped because confirmation wasn't received [and] decided not to go through all hoops to get classes back since was not degree-seeking… if confirmation note had been received, would still be taking classes here.”

“Thinks gen-eds are ridiculous and why take them at a university when can go to a CC and save some money.”

“Parking frustrations - don’t like driving around for 20 min. To find a spot. Thinks parking ramps at Allendale would be a good idea

[mother responded for student] [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “More available for career counseling -- need follow-up. More connection with the students. Need outreach for students that are afraid of asking questions. Decision-making help is offered after or during registration. More involvement after freshman year. Concerned about dropout rate – relates to counseling.”

“People needed to be more helpful about how to establish residency. She felt that she kept getting told different things about how to do it. Got no straight answers.”

Seven (24%) of these respondents had transferred to other schools. Fifteen (52%) percent said they planned to return to GVSU.

**Financial aid problems** – Twenty-eight students cited financial aid problems among their reasons for not enrolling. Half of these (n=14, 1.6% of all respondents) seemed to express dissatisfaction with GVSU related to financial aid – Eight indicated administrative problems related to financial aid (listed below), while 6 simply commented that the school should offer more financial aid.

- “Problems with financial aid - dean - getting signatures was a huge hassle.”
- “Financial aid office messed up his award - they didn't take into account that his status changed to a Junior and that tuition went up… Mother believes he should be compensated.”
- [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Speed up on financial aid process.”
- “Went to talk to someone in financial aid and he received information concerning financial aid, but no one talked to him about it and was disappointed about it.”

He went to Amsterdam via our study abroad program and is still there because the semesters there are longer than ours. GVSU doesn't seem to be aware that the school that they have an exchange with has longer semesters. So he just got finished and might lose his federal aid because his grades weren't posted and the federal aid office thinks he's not attending GVSU anymore.

- “Working 2 jobs because financial aid told her she was going to get some money and then came back and said there wasn't any for her… Wants in writing from financial aid or a counselor there that (a) student loan or (b) Pell grant. She wants it at least 30 days before classes can be dropped.”

- [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Better processing of financial aid -- had no money to pay for classes or books (they took too long to process loan).”

- “Frustrated with how financial does not get held because of paper waitlist. Thinks computer waitlist so financial aid doesn't get dropped.”

Of the 14 respondents reporting financial aid problems who did not indicate dissatisfaction, 13 simply said that they couldn’t get financial aid, and one said she had a better aid offer from another school.
Respondents who mentioned financial aid problems were significantly less likely than other to have enrolled elsewhere for Winter 2004 (7% vs. 35%). Three quarters of them said they planned to return to GVSU in the future.

**Moved away** – Twenty-seven students moved away for reasons that appeared to be unrelated to their college plans. Of these, four were armed service members deployed overseas and one other was leaving West Michigan upon being decommissioned. Five of the 27 (18.5%) had enrolled in college at the new locations.

**High school student dual enrollment** – Twenty-four of the respondents were current high school students who had been dual-enrolled for fall term. These students generally indicated that they didn’t have time for college classes, although two are enrolled (at MCC, GRCC) this term. None indicated dissatisfaction with GVSU. Eight (33%) indicated that they planned to return to GVSU in the future.

**Attending CC specifically to transfer credits to GV** -- Twenty students responded that they were attending community colleges this winter with the specific intention to transfer the credits back to GVSU. The reasons cited were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower cost</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower cost AND more convenient</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To bring up grades</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More convenient</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section availability</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons unclear</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dissatisfied with advising** – Seventeen responses indicate problems (or potential problems) with student advising. Many of these responses have already been cited under “Dissatisfied with a particular academic unit.” The following eight responses express dissatisfaction with advising without specifying a department. They’re organized by the students’ primary majors, although the problems may not have occurred in those departments.

- Art – “Unhappy with different advisor - had to get new one each semester… Kept changing his program every semester and felt like was never going to finish.”
- Biology – “Couldn't get organized - school counselors were of no help.”
- Criminal Justice – “Oversight with graduation -- still 2 credits short.”
- English – “Didn't get accepted to School of Ed. Would have been enrolled if not for conflicting advisors. Different campuses (Traverse City & Grand Rapids). Person needed to know what to tell her before they sat down and told her the wrong information.”
- Film & Video – “Advisor was on sabbatical; add three classes to his major.”
- History – “Unsatisfied with counseling services and administrative help.”
- Liberal Studies -- [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Informed better about how 4 credits didn't go towards graduation - prolonged his time here at GVSU.”
- NDUG – “Class was full and she was told that there were probably not going to be openings.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “If they wouldn't have told her that it wouldn't be worth trying to get into the class -- probably yes.”

Thirty-nine percent of respondents citing advising problems had transferred to other schools. Fifty-six percent said they planned to return to GVSU.

**Course not offered** – Sixteen students said that they didn’t enroll because the particular courses they needed weren’t offered this winter. Following are the responses, by the students’ primary majors:
• Accounting “The class she needed to take was SWS and she didn't need another SWS.”
• Biomedical Science “A few classes are only offered once a year and only one class. If could offer more sections at different times of the year.”
• Computer Science “Because he has 2 classes left and they were not offered this semester… Needs 2 more classes which he hopes will be offered in fall.”
• DSUG “Applied to nursing program this semester and taking some required courses at GRCC.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Offered more sections - Microbiology & Biochem.”
• Finance “Class he needed to graduate was only offered every other semester.” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] Have required classes offered more. Need to be on a regular basis.”
• Integrated Science “Needed human growth and development course and GVSU didn't offer it.”
• History “No classes for major or minor offered.”
• History “Her class was cancelled.”
• Math “History department didn’t have enough classes that she wanted to take.”
• NDUG “Class he wanted was closed and there were no other sections. Other classes he was interested in were only offered every other semester… Offer more sections of classes and offer classes that are needed every semester, not every other.”
• NDUG “More classes that he wants are offered in the spring.”
• Sociology “Classes needed weren't offered. Have to wait until classes come. (Classes he needed – MTH 097, MTH 110, STA 215)”
• Writing [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Offer classes that are needed on a regular basis instead of every other semester.”
• Pre-business “Did not offer the classes he needed.”
• Pre-engineering “None of classes she needed.”
• Pre-engineering “Didn't have classes he wanted (Photoshop 3D, StudioMax for graphic design).”

These students were significantly more likely than others to plan to return to GVSU (82% vs. 57%). Forty-one percent of them were enrolled elsewhere for the winter term.

Dissatisfied with social environment – Fifteen respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their social experience at GVSU. Following are fairly representative examples:
• “All of his friends are at MSU.”
• “As an older student she couldn't connect with anyone but the professors.”
• “People were stuck-up.”
• “Wasn't a lot to do.”
• “Everyone goes home on weekends…”

Students who were unsatisfied with the social environment were much more likely to have transferred (93% vs. 33%), and much less likely to plan to return (13% vs. 58%), compared to respondents who didn’t have social complaints.

Dissatisfied with housing/roommate – There were 13 responses that mentioned problems with university housing or roommates. Five essentially said that the student didn’t get along with a roommate. The other comments follow:
• [Student transferred for an academic program not offered at GVSU] “Mother was not happy about being charged $400 to break the housing contract. Student did finish fall term, did not get deposit back ($150), and then was charged another $250.”
• “Was a freshman and had to live off campus. Was lonely. Found it hard to meet people as 80% of students commute. No one here on weekends. [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Have it mandatory that freshmen have on-campus housing.”
• [per mother] “Sexually dysfunctional roommate and mother had to get a lawyer to try and get the student out of the situation and mom was not very happy about it.”
• “Housing issues”
• [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Better housing - little small”
• “Didn't like her roommate. Lived in an unfriendly dorm. Dorm was unorganized and offered no activities.”
• “Social life kinda sucked. Lived in winter hall and was really boring.”
• “Not happy with housing - they need more communication with students.”

These students were much more likely than others to have transferred to another school for winter term (85% vs. 33%), and much less likely to intend to return to Grand Valley (8% vs. 58%).

Resolving incompletes – Thirteen students said they were taking time off from classes to resolve incompletes. Twenty-three percent of these students were enrolled elsewhere, and 38% plan to return to GVSU in the future.

Not admitted to academic program – Twelve students said they didn’t enroll because they had been denied admission into their chosen programs. The programs mentioned were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified Grad School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventeen percent of these respondents were attending another institution. Sixty-four percent said they planned to return to GVSU in the future.

Tuition increase – Twelve students explicitly mentioned the tuition increase among the reasons they were not attending. Five (41%) of them were enrolled at other institutions for the winter term, and 6 (50%) said they would return to GVSU in the future.

Waiting to be admitted to program at GVSU – There were 12 respondents who said that they were not enrolled this winter because they were waiting to get into programs here. The programs mentioned were Education (n=6), Nursing (4), SSB (1), and Film & Video (1).

Dissatisfied with teachers – The following 11 responses express dissatisfaction with instructors at GVSU. Five (45%) of these students transferred elsewhere, and only 3 (27%) said they would come back to GVSU.

• “Withdrew -- teachers are terrible.”
• [GVSU has] “a lot of professors who are not native speakers of English and is very difficult for foreign student to understand.”
• “Wasn't very happy with the oboe teacher.”
• “Not happy with teaching of classes.”
• “Had problems in 2 classes -- talked with professors… If he would have gotten more help from his professors, he could have done better. Got lost in the system.”
• “Misled about her accounting class and what was expected of her.”
• “She had a problem with a Chem professor. He wasn't nice and didn't teach well.”
• “Had problems with 3 profs --PSY prof. kept a huge paper for 2 1/2 mos.; teaching prof. get paper back on time but had to ask for a copy - no comments or any feedback - when asked the prof about comments said 'you got an A-', stu said ‘but no feedback’, and prof...
said ‘haven't really read it yet’ - thought was very unprofessional; art prof would not help her - went to the chair 3 times about him”

- “Professors made her feel stupid.”
- “Needed a break from the class that she had 033. Instructor was not willing to work with her. She didn't want to share the instructor's name, but she did say other people in the class had the same problem.”
- “Professors need to have closer relationship with students.”

**Enlisted in armed forces** – Ten students enlisted in the armed forces rather than enroll for winter classes. Half of them said they would return to GVSU in the future.

**Academic trouble** – Seven students cited poor academic performance among their reasons for not returning. Two (28%) transferred to other colleges and two plan to return to GVSU.

**Wanted on-line coursework** – Six respondents indicated a preference for online coursework. Five are currently taking online courses elsewhere -- 2 from U of Phoenix, 1 ea. from Baker, Keller School of Management, and Davenport. Only the one who had not transferred indicated that he would return to GVSU.

**Athletics issues** – Five students said they did not return for reasons related to intercollegiate athletics:

- “Overwhelmed by size of GVSU… is now attending a Christian college, and he's playing football.”
- “Got onto Calvin's baseball team… some issues with GVSU baseball coach… Unsure of where he'll be next year. He just really wanted to play baseball
- “Problems with swim coach and with the university… Felt hassled while he was here.”
- “Baseball playing all through at GVSU, so he went [to community college] to play.“
- “Baseball coach dumped him,” [ANYTHING SPECIFIC GVSU COULD HAVE DONE…] “Change baseball coaches.”

**Internship** – Five students responded that they did not enroll for classes because they were doing internships.

**Other Responses** – There were 60 responses that either contained substantive information that couldn’t be categorized elsewhere or were uninterpretable. Four of them indicated that the students had found satisfying career goals that didn’t require higher education, and there were also four respondents who said they preferred two-year programs. Three others were doing study abroad experiences (without GVSU winter term credit), and another three said that classes conflicted with their vacation plans. Two respondents said they were looking for more “hands-on” learning environments.

**Praise for departments / people** – The following responses offered unsolicited praise for departments or instructors. In addition to the following, 41 respondents voiced general praise for the school, saying that they love the university or think it’s a good school.

- “Took one class for fun. Would love to take another one if work permits…enjoyed the class she took very much.”
- “[If student returned to GVSU it would be] “for photography. She loved this and the people.”
- “He took one speech class in Holland & that's where he lives. He also wanted to comment on the instructor - Valerie Peterson. He said she was excellent.”
• “She really loves the education program here.”
• “Staff is great, RA was awesome, and was very impressed with housing. Also said teachers were great too.”