

First Year Students' Reasons for Leaving: A survey of voluntary withdrawals

**Survey Sample:
*Voluntary Leavers from the
Fall 1997 Cohort and Fall 2003 Cohort***

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Cohort Comparisons: Entering Characteristics

Table Two.
1997 and 2003 Cohort Comparisons: Academic Preparation
and Retention Statistics

	<u>2003</u>	<u>1997</u>
Cohort Size	4077	3737
Math SAT (Mean)	576	557
Verbal SAT (Mean)	561	551
HS GPA (Weighted)	3.28	3.09
% Dismissed	5.9%	8.2%
% Voluntary Withdrawal	11.8%	12.8%
Total One Year Attrition	17.7%	21.0%

Eight Clusters of Reasons:

Response Categories: “Major Reason”, “Minor Reason”, “Not a Reason”

- **Personal Attention** (treated like a number, classes too big, too little faculty contact, inadequate academic advising).
- **Personal Constraints** (Be closer to home, family responsibilities, personal illness, roommate problems)
- **Social Life** (residence hall life, didn't fit in)
- **Cost** (too expensive, not enough value for money)
- **Student Effort** (not enough effort, poor study skills, too much partying, academic ally too difficult)
- **Quality** (instructor quality, academic reputation, not challenging, poor facilities)
- **Access** (couldn't get into classes, major of choice)
- **Climate** (Experienced harassment, felt racial/ethnic tension)

Survey Sample and Response Rates

Phone survey was administered by SAREO in the Fall following initial enrollment. 1997 Cohort (Fall 1998), 2003 Cohort (Fall 2004)

Table One: Final Disposition of the One-Year Non-Returner Sample

	2003 Cohort Survey		1997 Cohort Survey	
	n	% of Total	n	% of Total
In and cooperated	183	40.4	187	40.0
In, but would not cooperate	45	9.9	23	4.9
Unable to Contact	225	49.7	257	55.0
Total	453	100.0	467	100.0

There were no statistically significant differences in entering characteristics (i.e., SATs, HS GPA, race/ethnicity, or gender) between respondents and non respondents.

Reasons sorted by Mean "Major Reason" Percent for Items in Cluster

2003 Cohort: Most Commonly Mentioned Factors Related to Leaving UMass Amherst
 ("Not a reason" not shown)

■ Minor Reason ■ Major Reason

Personal Attention



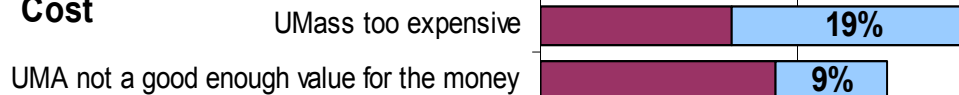
Personal Constraints



Social Life



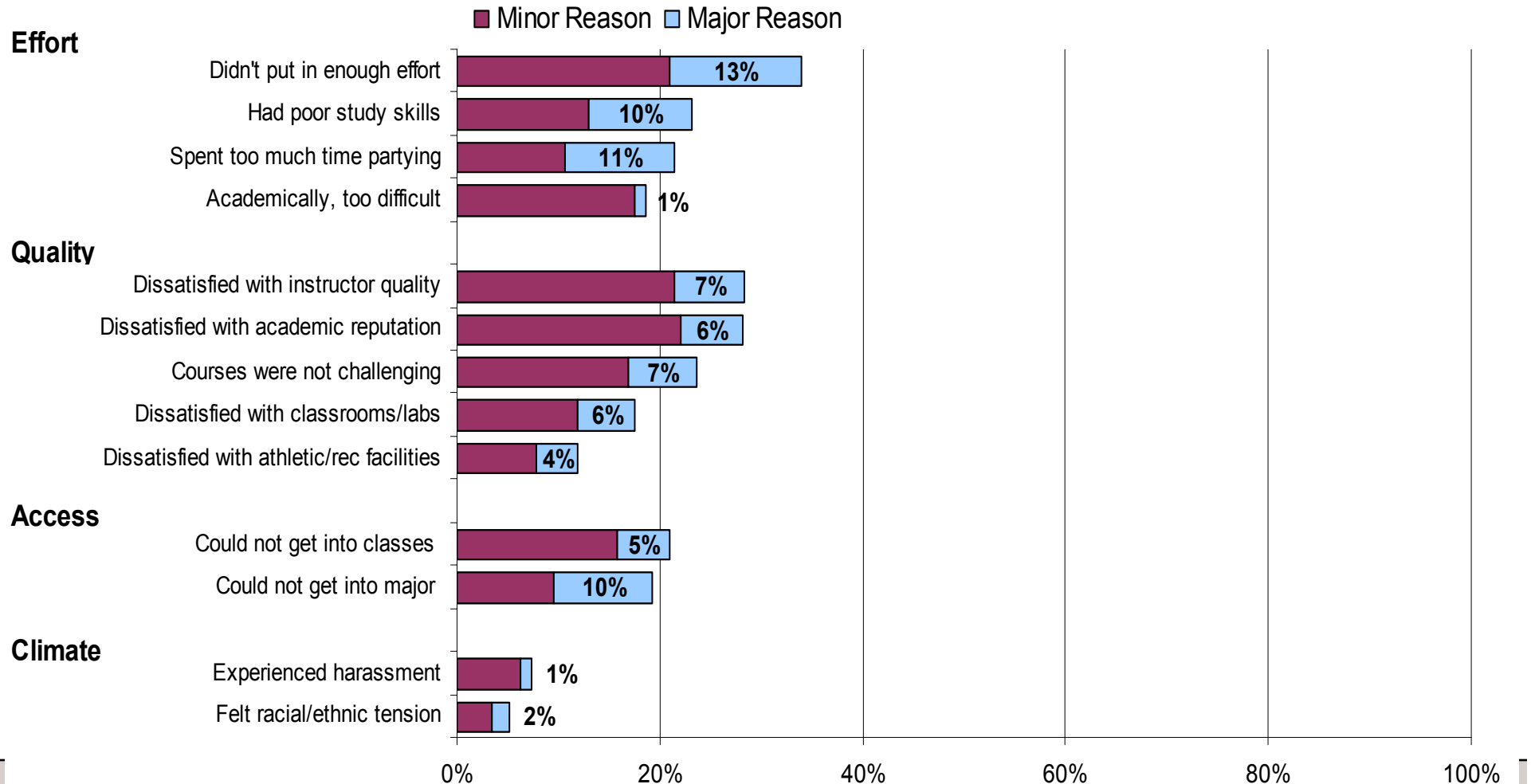
Cost



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Reasons sorted by Mean "Major Reason" Percent for Items in Cluster

2003 Cohort: Additional Factors Related to Leaving UMass Amherst
 ("Not a reason" not shown)

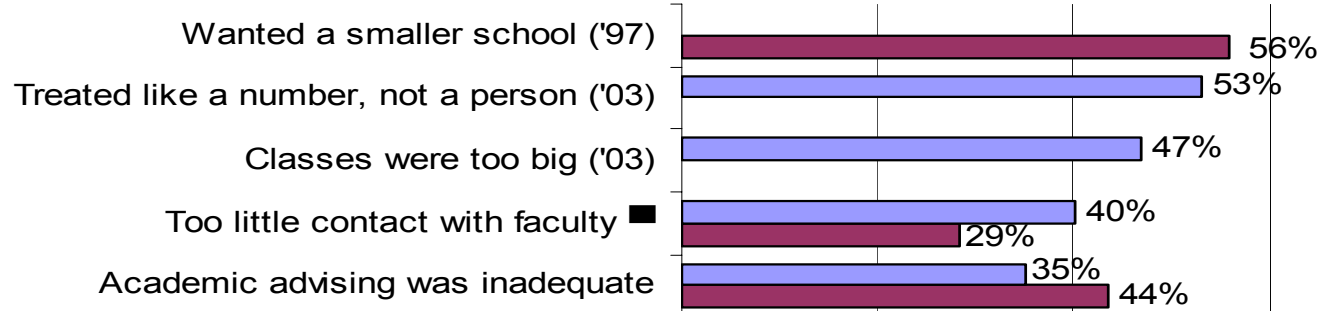


Comparison of 1997 and 2003 Cohorts

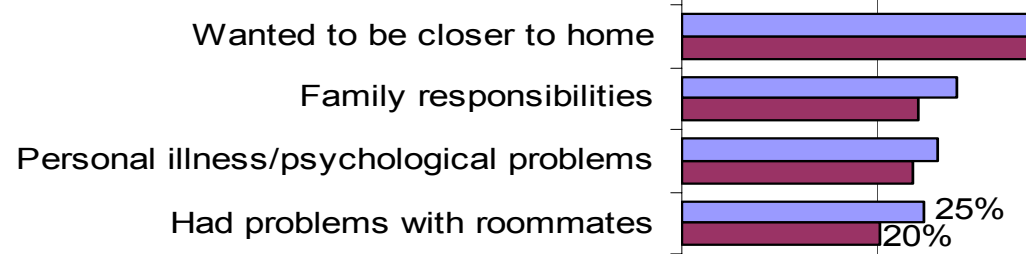
(Percentages are only shown for differences of $\geq 5\%$)

■ 1997: A Reason ■ 2003: A Reason

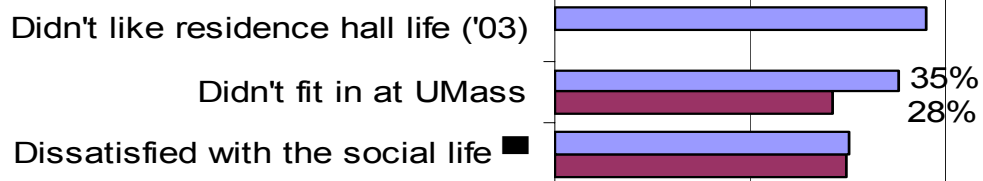
Personal Attention



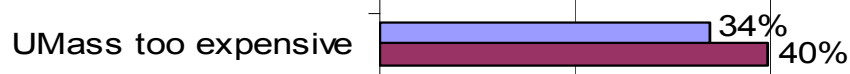
Personal Constraints



Social Life



Cost



UMA not a good enough value for the money (03)

- Item Reworded from 1997 Survey
- 97: "Faculty were unapproachable"
- 97: "Quality of Social Life"

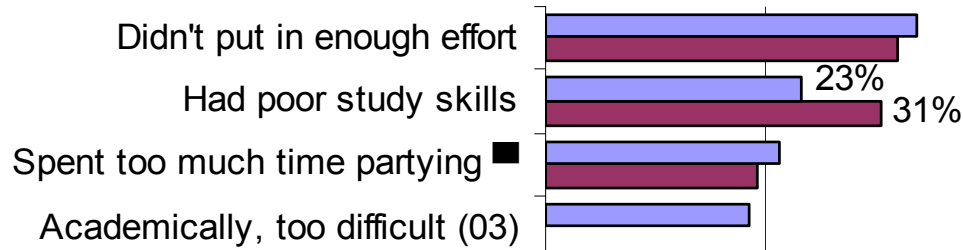
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Additional Comparisons of 1997 and 2003 Cohorts

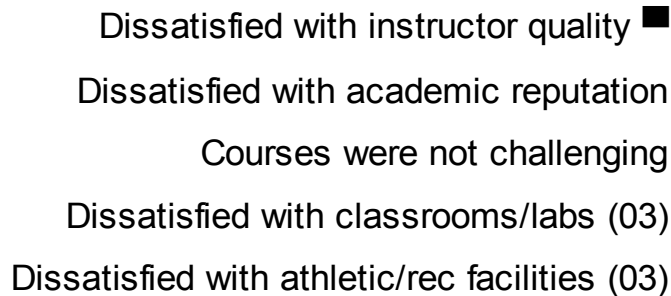
(Percentages are only shown for differences of $\geq 5\%$)

■ 1997: A Reason ■ 2003: A Reason

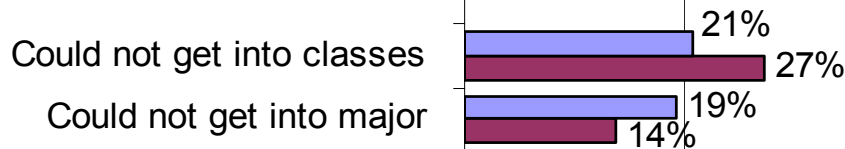
Effort



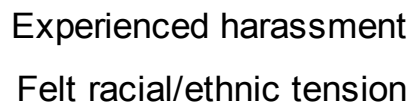
Quality



Access



Climate



■ Item Reworded from 1997 Survey

■ 97: "Trouble managing social life"

■ 97: "Dissatisfied with quality of instruction"

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%