

Issue Brief: Distribution of UW-Madison Undergraduates by Class Standing and Semesters Enrolled

This brief is in response to interest in UW-Madison undergraduates with a high number of credits and semesters enrolled at UW-Madison, particularly students in this category that do not have a declared major. They represent a small percentage of undergraduates (1%) and we show evidence that academic and personal challenges, beyond declaration of a major, may be impacting their progression to graduation.

As a framework for this brief, we grouped the undergraduates in the spring of 2014 (27,830 students) based on how long they have been enrolled at UW-Madison and how many cumulative credits they had at the start of the semester into four analytics quadrants:

- **Quadrant A** (45% of undergraduates, 12,482 students). These students have been enrolled at UW-Madison for fewer than 7 semesters (75% of the 8 semesters typical of a four-year degree) and have fewer than 86 credits (less than senior standing).
- **Quadrant B** (24% of undergraduates, 6,558 students). These students have senior standing (86 or more credits) and have been enrolled at UW-Madison for fewer than 7 semesters. 10% of this group indicated an intention to graduate at the end of the semester.
- **Quadrant C** (1% of undergraduates, 279 students). These students have enrolled at UW-Madison for more than 7 or more semesters but have fewer than 86 credits.
- **Quadrant D** (30% of undergraduates, 8,511 students). These students have been enrolled at UW-Madison for 7 or more semesters and have at least 86 credits. 53% of this group indicated an intention to graduate at the end of the semester.

Distribution of Enrolled Undergraduates in Spring 2014 By Number of Credits and Semesters Enrolled

		Cumulative Credits	
		Fewer than 86 (Freshman-Junior Standing)	86 or more (Senior Standing)
Terms Enrolled	Fewer than 7	A: 45%	B: 24%
	7 or more	C: 1%	D1: 16% (graduating) D2: 14% (not graduating)

Focus on Quadrant D2 Undergraduates (Senior Standing, 7 or more enrolled semesters, not graduating)

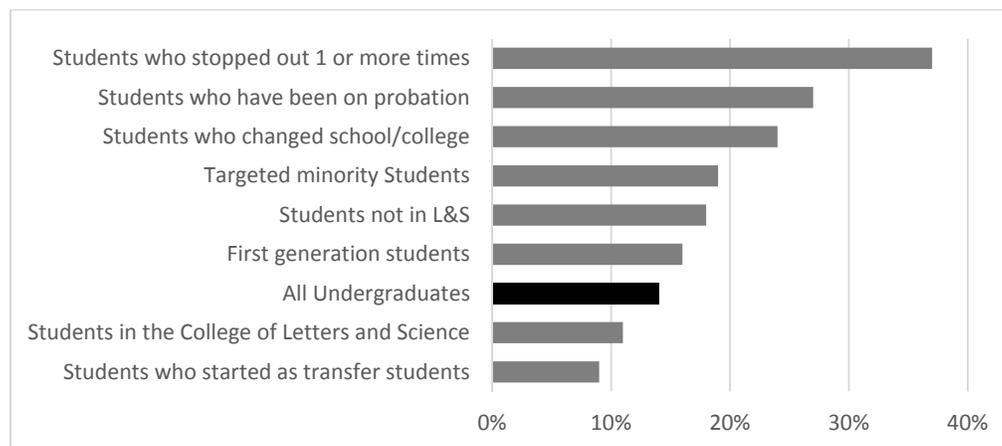
The remainder of this brief focuses on the undergraduates in quadrant D2 who did not expect to graduate in spring 2014 – 14% of undergraduates (3,962 students). Students with evidence of academic difficulty, students not in the College of Letters and Science, students who have changed degree programs, and students in underrepresented demographic groups are overrepresented in this category.

Compared to the overall undergraduate population, where 14% are in quadrant D2:

- 37% of students who stopped out one or more times are in quadrant D2.
- 27% of students who have been on probation are in quadrant D2.

- 18% of undergraduates whose school/college is not the College of Letters and Science are in quadrant D2 (compared to 11% of L&S undergraduates who are in quadrant D2).
- 23% of undergraduates who have changed their school/college one or more times (a signal of a substantial change in degree requirements) are in quadrant D2.
- 19% of targeted minority students and 16% of first generation students are in quadrant D2.
- 9% of students who started at UW-Madison as transfer students are in quadrant D2.

% of Undergraduates in Quadrant D2



Focus on Quadrant D2 Undergraduates without Declared Majors (1% of undergraduates)

Most of these students with senior standing and at least seven semesters at UW-Madison who are not graduating do have declared majors or have other indicators that they are working towards the requirements needed to declare a major. There are 359 students (of the 3,962 students in quadrant D2) that did not have a declared major in spring 2014.

- These students are connected to advisors. These 359 students are served by 155 different advisors, meaning that any intervention with these students using the advising community will require a campus-wide effort spanning every school and college.
- Seventy-four percent (74%) of these students are in the College of Letters and Science. This is expected since L&S is the designated academic home for most undecided students. Some of these students have spent considerable time (in semesters) in other school and colleges before entering L&S and were already high in credits and time at UW-Madison before entering L&S.
- The other 25% of students in this category are in other schools and colleges with “pre-major” designations. These students have indicated an intention to major in something but do not yet have the required prerequisites to declare that major. These students are relatively evenly split between Agricultural and Life Sciences, Education, and Nursing.
- Twelve percent of these students with undeclared majors in spring 2014 had a declared major in a previous semester. These students have since dropped or become ineligible to continue in that major.
- A few of these students have been enrolled for an astonishing number of semesters and have accumulated a large number of credits. While this is not the norm for students enrolled at UW-Madison, nor typical of students in this category, these egregious examples highlight the lack of policy recourse when these kinds of students are using UW-Madison to fulfill goals that are not related to progress towards graduation.