



# **Discovering why students leave school using an Exit Survey**

**Wendy Marson, Institutional Planner,  
UW-Stout**

**Susan Greene, Associate Institutional  
Planner, UW-Stout**

**November 2008**

# University of Wisconsin-Stout

- 4-year Public University – UW System
- Special Mission Institution
  - 32 Undergraduate majors
  - 19 Graduate majors
- Wisconsin's Polytechnic University
- Baldrige Award recipient



# Need for new survey (2006)

- Not getting useful information from existing survey
  - ▶ “Laundry list” of reasons for leaving
  - ▶ No primary reason for leaving
- Desire for more detailed information to relate to retention

# Process for survey development (Fall 06)

- **Survey design review**
  - ▶ Computer-adaptive surveys
  - ▶ ACT non-returning student survey
- **Retention literature review**
- **Existing research/documents**
- **Subject Matter Experts (SME's)**

# Survey Design Review (Fall 06)

## ■ Computer-Adaptive Surveys

- ▶ Shaik, 2006

- ▶ Item Response Theory (IRT) to reduce boredom/fatigue

- ▶ Convenience aspect of online survey

# Retention Literature Review (FA06)

- Reviewed several articles on retention to identify factors linked to retention/attrition
- Compiled a list of factors from each study as a starting point

# **Review of Existing Research/Documents (FA06)**

- **Chancellor's Enrollment Task Force final report (2004)**
- **Exit Interview for Students report (2005)**
- **UW-Stout Plan 2008, University Priority C – culture of affirmation**
- **First-year Experience Survey results**

# Survey Development

- **Determine list of major fields**
  - ▶ **Develop drill-down questions for each major field**
- **Develop additional questions**
  - ▶ **Services utilized**
  - ▶ **Did they speak with their Advisor?**
  - ▶ **Are they planning to return?**
  - ▶ **Did they come here with the intention of graduating?**



# **Subject Matter Experts (Jan 07)**

- **Sent an overview of the project and a list of possible factors for attrition**
- **Asked for their input on additional factors**
  - ▶ **Student Health Services**
  - ▶ **Dean of Students Office**
  - ▶ **Teaching and Learning Center Director**
  - ▶ **UW-Stout Counseling Services**

# Subject Matter Experts (Jan 07)

- ▶ University Housing
- ▶ UW-Stout Financial Aid
- ▶ Advisement Center
- ▶ Office of Budget, Planning and Analysis



# Survey Pilot (March 07)

- Survey was piloted in freshman courses
- Survey was administered in paper form, with detailed instructions given for how to answer branching questions.
- Participants were comfortable with the format and the questions.

# Survey Administration (Spring 07)

- **Develop a process to administer survey to exiting students**
  - ▶ Utilization of laptop computer return
  - ▶ Posting survey link on website(s)
    - The webpage on withdrawing – Registrar’s Office
    - The webpage on Commencement – Dean of Students Office
    - The Business Office webpage
    - The Laptop return information webpage
    - Advisement Center Webpage
  - ▶ Sending embedded link in emails from advisement center, registrar, etc
    - The email and written notification to students on dismissal – Dean of Students Office

# **Create online survey instrument (April – July 2007)**

- **Work conducted by graduate students**
- **Created on campus online survey instrument (Select Survey)**
- **Tested by Office of Budget, Planning and Analysis**
- **Launched July, 2007**



# Online Survey

# Survey Organization

- Primary reason for leaving
- Secondary reasons for leaving
- General questions about UW-Stout experiences

# Survey Link

University of Wisconsin - Stout Search UW-Stout Go

## Advisement Center Advise - Support - Inspire

You are here: [Student Services](#) > [Advisement Center Home](#)

### What if I Missed Advisement Day

If you are a First Year Freshmen, you must make up the Advisement Day meeting before you will be allowed to register.  
Make up sessions for Freshmen will be held on:

- Monday October 25 at 3:00pm in the lounge of South Hall
- Tuesday October 26 at 7:00pm in AFM
- Wednesday October 27 at 7:00pm in the basement classroom of H80C
- Friday October 31 at 10:10am in Bowman Hall 13
- Friday October 31 at 2:20pm in Bowman Hall 13

All other students: Refer to the Advisement Day Schedule and/or contact your advisor.  
Where do I go and what do I do? [Advisement Day Schedule](#)

### Registration Tips and Tools

Here are the tools you need to select and register for classes:

- [Step by Step Guide for Registration for Classes](#)
- [Your Program Guide Sheet](#)
- [The Official List of General Education Courses](#)
- [Course Descriptions](#)
  - [How to Interpret Course Descriptions](#)
- [Your Program Evaluation available on Access Stout](#)
  - [How to read your program evaluation / degree audit](#)
- [Open Course List](#)
- [Practice Schedule Form](#)
- [Advisement and Registration Tips](#)
- [What if I want to change my major?](#)

### How to Schedule an Appointment with First Year Advisor



[AdvisorTrac Login](#)

Did you know that you can schedule an appointment with your First Year Advisor using a convenient on-line resource? Here are the [step by step instructions](#) for using AdvisorTrac to schedule an appointment with your First Year Advisor.

### Got Questions? Add us to your Friends list

The Advisement Center and the Peer Advising Assistants are available on



Monday - Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm to answer your quick questions, then you don't know who else to ask.

Just add us to your [Friends](#) or [Buddy](#) list.

**AOL Instant Messenger:** Screen name is "Stoutfypaa"  
**MSN Messenger:** Add "Stoutfypaa@hotmail.com" to your buddy list  
**Yahoo Messenger:** Screen name is "Stout FY PAA"  
**Facebook:** Become a fan of the "Advisement Center UW-Stout"

### Leaving UW-Stout?

[Exit Interview](#)

To Top | About This Site | Comments and Suggestions  
Updated: October 24, 2008 © University of Wisconsin Board of Regents  
Advisement Center  
11 Bowman Hall  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Menomonie, WI 54751  
Phone: 715/232-1465



■ The survey is available to exiting students via a link on UW-Stout's Advisement Center Home page

# Survey – Page 1



## Exit Interview Survey

Page 1

Student ID Number

Welcome to the UW-Stout Exit Interview Survey

Comments made on this survey will be collected and shared with appropriate administrators for decision-making purposes, but these comments will never be identified by the name of the person making them.

Please enter your student ID number.  
7-Digit UW-Stout Student ID Number

Please enter your name  
Last, first

Name

Next

Cancel

# Survey – Page 2



## Exit Interview Survey

Page 2

Class Status

Please indicate your class status:

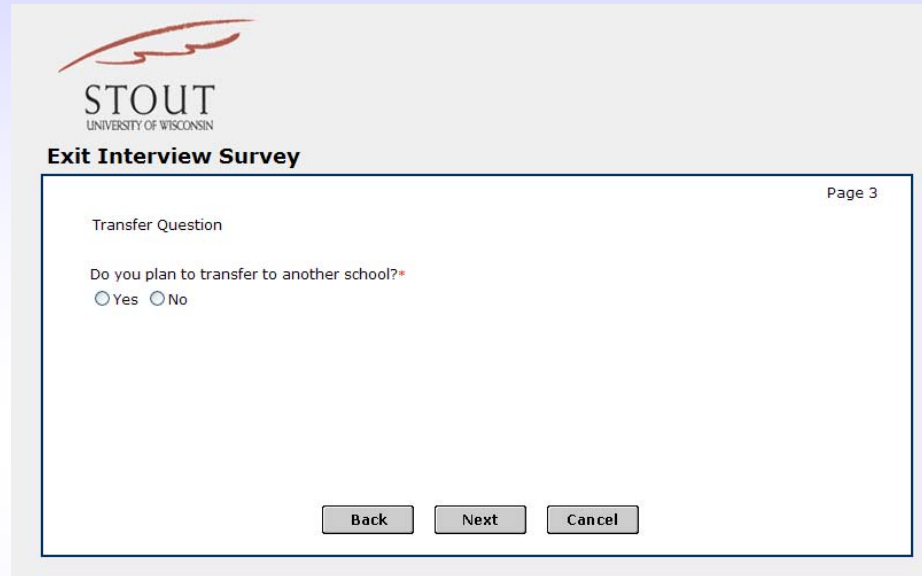
- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

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Cancel

# First Branching Question



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**Exit Interview Survey**

Page 3

Transfer Question

Do you plan to transfer to another school?\*

Yes  No

- Students must answer this question to continue on
- If answer “yes” then go to School Specific question
- If answer “no” then go to Primary Reason for Leaving questions

# Transfer School



## Exit Interview Survey

Page 4

### Transfer Information

Please provide the following information:

School Name

City

State

### Type of School\*

- Community College
- Technical College
- 4-year
- Specialty (real-estate, culinary, etc)
- Other, please specify

Are you going to receive more financial aid at this institution than at UW-Stout?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

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Cancel

Response  
to this  
question is  
required

# Primary Reason for Leaving



## Exit Interview Survey

Response to this question is required

Page 5

### Primary Reason

This is a list of reasons that students have given for not returning to UW-Stout. What **one** reason stands out as the primary reason you are not returning to UW-Stout?\*

- To pursue a major/program not offered by UW-Stout
- I'm not doing well academically
- Unable to get the classes I need/want
- Financial
- Health
- Residence Hall experience
- I don't like Menomonie
- I don't fit in at Stout
- I want to be closer to home
- Military
- Not interested in pursuing a degree at this time
- Other, please specify

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Cancel



# **Drill Down for Primary Reason for Leaving**



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## Exit Interview Survey

Program/Major

To pursue a major/program not offered at UW-Stout

What program?\*

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Cancel

**Response  
to this  
question is  
required**

Page 6



## Exit Interview Survey

Page 7

### Academic Reasons

I'm not doing well academically for the following reasons:  
(Check all that apply)

- I was not academically prepared for college
- I was unable to prioritize my academic work with other activities
- I lacked motivation
- Fell hopelessly behind in class work
- Had to drop classes
- Was unable to negotiate changes in class or "major" requirements
- Did not know where on campus to turn for help
- e-Scholar/laptop program - too much emphasis on the use of technology in learning
- e-Scholar/laptop program - technical problems with my laptop
- Personal/family issues
- Other academic reasons not listed here (Please list)

### The following questions ask about other academic issues:

How was your attendance in classes this semester?

- Poor (missed 4 or more classes a week)
- Fair (missed class 2-3 times a week)
- Average (missed class once a week)
- Good (never/rarely missed a class)

Did you drop any classes after the tenth day of classes this semester?

- Yes  No

Did you use any of the following services?

Check all that apply

- Math TLC
- Writing Lab
- ASPIRE/Disability services
- Counseling Center
- Student Health Services
- Advisement Center
- Multicultural Student Services
- Instructor
- ASK5000
- I did not use any of the above services
- Department - Specific Tutoring (Please list the department(s) providing tutoring)

Were you academically dismissed?

- Yes  No

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Cancel





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## Exit Interview Survey

**Response  
to this  
question is  
required**

Page 8

Unable to get classes

I was unable to get classes I need/want at UW-Stout

Which classes were you unable to get?\*

Please list

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Next

Cancel

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AIRUM: November 2008,  
Bloomington, MN

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## Exit Interview Survey

Response to this question is required

Page 9

### Financial Information

#### Financial\*

(Check all that apply)

- UW-Stout's fees and tuition are more than I expected
- Laptop program costs too much
- I plan to live at home and go to school somewhere else
- I need to save money before I can continue my education
- I can't afford to attend school at this time
- I plan to work full-time
- General education requirements are cheaper somewhere else
- Didn't receive enough Financial Aid
- I received aid, but loans only and I don't want the debt
- Even with financial aid offered, still can't afford to attend
- Can't manage money
- Gambling debt
- Other debt (credit cards, car payment, etc)
- Other financial reasons not listed here (please list)

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Cancel



## Exit Interview Survey

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### Health Issues

#### Health Concerns

(Check all that apply)

- Physical
- Mental/behavioral
- Depression
- Anxiety
- ADHD/ADD
- Eating disorder
- Family - Someone in my family is currently experiencing a health crisis and I need to be there
- Family - Death of a family member or friend
- Alcohol use
- Drug use
- Relationship issues
- I missed too much school as a result of something checked above
- Other health concerns not listed above (please list)

#### Did you use any of the following services?

(Check all that apply)

- Counseling Center
- Student Health Services
- Disability Services
- Advisement Center
- Dean of Students
- Medical/Counseling services outside of UW-Stout
- I didn't use any of the above services

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Cancel



### Exit Interview Survey

#### Residence Hall Experience

Why were you unhappy with your residence hall experience?  
(Check all that apply)

- Wasn't happy with my assigned location
- I didn't want to live on campus
- Had trouble sleeping
- Had trouble studying
- I felt unsafe
- I did not want to have a roommate
- I didn't like my roommate
- Too many rules
- The conditions were not good for my health
- Other residents in my hall were not accepting of diverse students/cultures/lifestyles
- I felt discriminated against
- I did not make connections with other residents in my hall
- Other reasons related to my residence hall experience not listed above:

Did you talk to anyone about your concerns?

- Yes  No

If yes, check all that apply  
(Check all that apply)

- Resident Advisor
- Hall Director
- Advisor
- Counseling Center
- Student Health Services
- Other, please list



## Exit Interview Survey

Page 12

Menomonie

I don't like Menomonie because:  
(Check all that apply)

- Too big
- Too small
- Not enough community activities
- Not accepting of diverse students/cultures/lifestyles
- I felt discriminated against
- Lacks adequate resources like: childcare, transportation, jobs, shopping
- List what resources were missing:

Other reasons I didn't like Menomonie that were not listed above:  
(Please list)

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Cancel



## Exit Interview Survey

Page 13

UW-Stout

I don't fit in at UW-Stout because:  
(Check all that apply)

- I did not make connections with other students here
- I did not make connections with my instructors
- Not enough activities
- Not enough support services
- Not academically challenging
- I felt unsafe
- Campus is too big
- Campus is too small
- I didn't fit in socially because I don't drink/party
- Campus is not diverse enough
- Campus is not accepting of diverse students/cultures/lifestyles
- I felt discriminated against

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Cancel



## Exit Interview Survey

Page 14

Closer to Home

I want to be closer to home because:  
(Check all that apply)

- Being away from my friends and family is too stressful for me
- I plan to live at home to save money
- My family is currently experiencing a period of stress/crisis and I feel I need to be with them
- I am currently experiencing a period of stress/crisis and I need the support of my family/friends
- I did not make connections at UW-Stout with other students
- I am not interested in pursuing a degree at this time given my other responsibilities such as: family, work, career, etc.
- Other reasons I want to be closer to home not listed above: Please describe

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Cancel

# Secondary Reasons for Leaving



## Exit Interview Survey

Response  
to this  
question is  
required

Page 16

Program/Major (List)

Was one of the reasons for leaving UW-Stout because you decided to pursue a major/program not offered by UW-Stout?\*

If this was your primary reason, please select "No".

Yes  No

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Cancel

# If answer “yes”, drill down



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## Exit Interview Survey

Program/Major (Question)

To pursue a major/program not offered at UW-Stout

What program?\*

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Next

Cancel

Response  
to this  
question is  
required

Page 17

# Secondary Reasons: “Yes”/”No” responses are required

## Exit Interview Survey

Page 18

Academic (List)

Was one of the reasons for leaving UW-Stout because of not doing well academically?\*

If this was your primary reason, please select "No".

Yes  No

## Exit Interview Survey

Page 22

Classes needed/wanted (List)

Was one of the reasons for leaving UW-Stout was because you were unable to get the classes you need/want?\*

If this was your primary reason, please select "No".

Yes  No

## Exit Interview Survey

Page 24

Financial (List)

Was one of the reasons for leaving UW-Stout because of financial difficulties?\*

If this was your primary reason, please select "No".

Yes  No

## Exit Interview Survey

Page 27

Health (List)

Was one of the reasons for leaving UW-Stout due to health issues? (Yours or someone else's)\*

If this was your primary reason, please select "No".

Yes  No





### Exit Interview Survey

Page 41

Last Page

Did you come to UW-Stout with the intention of graduating from UW-Stout?\*

Yes  No

Why did you choose UW-Stout?  
(Use text box below to answer)

What types of financial aid did you receive from UW-Stout?  
(Check all that apply)

- None
- Scholarship
- Grant
- Loan
- Work-study

Do you plan to return to UW-Stout

Yes  No

If yes, When?

What could UW-Stout have done to assist you in remaining enrolled?

Please use this space to share any additional comments about your experience at UW-Stout that you think might be helpful.

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Done

Cancel

**Response  
to this  
question is  
required**



# Results

# Results of last two Survey Administrations

- Initial plan was to collect data and report twice/year
- After two survey reporting cycles, results are consistent enough to reduce reporting to once/year.
  - ▶ Most frequent primary response for leaving is “To pursue a major/program not available at UW-Stout”.



# Summary

Online survey allows for ...

- Tailoring to institution-specific needs
- Allows IR department to investigate “urban myths” about why students leave
- Collaboration across departments
  - ▶ Data is more readily used
  - ▶ Results are more easily accepted

**And it's Environmentally Friendly**



# For more information:

<http://www.uwstout.edu/bpa/ir/surveylist.html>

“Exit Interview for Students Survey”

[swansonw@uwstout.edu](mailto:swansonw@uwstout.edu)

[greenes@uwstout.edu](mailto:greenes@uwstout.edu)