

Finances and Stress

Partners in Prevention is Missouri's higher education substance abuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 21 public and private colleges and universities in Missouri. Each year, PIP implements the Missouri Assessment of College Behaviors (MACHB), a statewide survey of college students designed to assess high-risk behaviors. The MACHB provides demographic data that can be utilized to assess risk factors for academic retention related to finances, demographics, and stress.

Academic Retention and Finances

Many factors affect academic retention among college students. Financial situations often require additional obligations that shift focus from academic responsibilities to obtaining money in order to finance education. The MACHB assesses the ways in which Missouri students pay for their education, along with the levels of stress they feel, and their thoughts of quitting school with key indications of why they are thinking of discontinuing their education.

Students who take the MACHB report how they pay for a majority of their education. Options include pre-existing school savings, parents pay, scholarships, and having a job. In 2018, 33% of Missouri College students indicated that they pay for a majority of their education with a job. 22% reported having pre-existing school savings, while 63% indicated scholarships. 46% of Missouri college students report that their parents help them pay for school*.

*Select all that apply

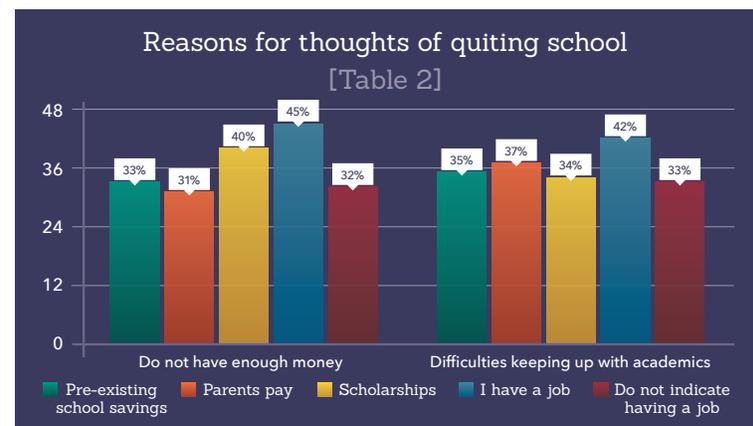
Students with Jobs

According to the 2018 MACHB, 18.5% of students who have jobs to primarily fund their education reported thoughts of quitting school. Compared to counterparts who possess pre-existing school savings, scholarships, and parental support, this number is the highest (see table 1).

The MACHB asks students who indicate thoughts of discontinuing their educations to identify factors that contribute to their overall thoughts of quitting school.



These factors include not having enough money and difficulties keeping with academics. According to the 2018 MACHB, students who have jobs report both not having enough money (45%) and difficulties keeping up with academics (42%) as a barrier to retention at a higher percentage than their peers. Students who do not indicate having a job but indicate thoughts of quitting school report these barriers at a rate of 32% and 33% respectively. Financial support that comes primarily from other sources to fund education may counter some of these barriers and other stressors that exist with having a job while in school.



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These potential stressors are not specifically indicated by the MACHB, but as the MACHB asks about stress in general, students who report having a job indicate that they are overwhelmed at a rate of 30% compared to their peers with pre-existing school savings (26%). These trends remain the same for students whose primary sources of funding come from other means. Additionally, working students report that stress has impacted their academic (29%) and personal (40%) lives considerably or a great deal more frequently than their peers.

Title [Table 3]		
	Stress impacted academic life considerably/ a great deal	Stress impacted personal life considerably/ a great deal
Pre-existing school savings	24%	33%
Parents pay	26%	33%
Scholarships	26%	34%
I have a job	29%	40%
Do not indicate having a job	25%	33%

Discussion

Although this cannot be interpreted as causal data, it is important to consider factors that may influence academic retention in higher education. As Missouri students strive to complete school, levels of financial support may affect the ways in which students can keep up with their academics. Additionally, as students with jobs to primarily finance their education indicate being more academically and personally stressed, more steps can be taken to assess the extent to which finances and job duties influence the lives of Missouri college students.

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