Upswing

Ana Insights 2024

Findings from the 2023-2024 Academic Year

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the key findings from the 2023-2024 academic year as collected by Ana, Upswing's SMS engagement tool. This report aims to illuminate the challenges and successes experienced by students across various institutions, particularly focusing on non-traditional and historically marginalized groups. By sharing these insights, we hope to inform and support administrators in enhancing their strategies for student engagement and success.

Data for this report was meticulously gathered through Ana's proactive and reactive messaging campaigns, which send millions of messages to students each year. Each message was designed to offer information, reminders, connections to resources, and encouragement. The responses from students, whether solicited by Ana or initiated by the students themselves, provided a rich source of data reflecting their needs, concerns, and sentiments. Our Student Success team, trained to act as an extension of our partners' campuses, played a crucial role in analyzing this data to improve campaign content and offer timely support to students.

The report is structured into several sections, each dedicated to a specific insight derived from the data. These sections cover various topics, including the financial challenges faced by non-traditional students and the impact of recent FAFSA application issues. It highlights the importance of social support systems in enhancing student well-being and success, discusses the stigma surrounding mental health and effective strategies to address it, and emphasizes the necessity of holistic support services in improving student retention and academic success. Additionally, it identifies gaps in career readiness among students and suggests solutions. Each section provides detailed analyses, industry trends, and actionable recommendations based on the data collected.

Ultimately, the goal of this report is to equip educational administrators with the knowledge and insights needed to foster a supportive and responsive environment for all students. By leveraging the data and recommendations provided, we hope to enhance the overall student experience, increase engagement, boost retention, and support the academic and personal success of every student.

ABOUT ANA

Ana is Upswing's SMS engagement tool. Each year it sends millions of proactive messages to students at colleges and universities across the U.S. These messages are designed to provide students with information, reminders, connections to on-campus and off-campus resources, empathy, and encouragement.

Ana also receives hundreds of thousands of messages back from students each year. Some of these messages are responding to Ana messages, but others are students reaching out to Ana organically asking for help, an answer to a question, or even requesting kindness or humor to lighten their day.

HOW ANA WORKS

Ana is powered partly by AI, but more importantly by Upswing's Student Success team who are trained to act as an extension of our partners' campuses.

The Student Success team is responsible for analyzing Ana data to improve Ana's campaign content. They are also on hand to help answer students' questions, provide moments of humor and support, and help escalate students in distress to administrators.

Through extensive research of our partners' campuses and collaboration with administrators, the Upswing Student Success team is able to step in and help students when they need it the most.

ANA BY THE NUMBERS

Through the data collected by Ana, administrators can better understand what their students need and how they react to messages related to important tasks and deadlines like FAFSA completion. All Ana schools receive a detailed reporting dashboard that includes engagement data and campaign information that can be viewed at the group or individual response level. Ana is also often used for campus-wide surveys such as those determining students' intent to return the following semester or school year. With the use of automated follow-up questions, administrators can better understand the reasoning behind responses and then be able to proactively intervene if necessary.
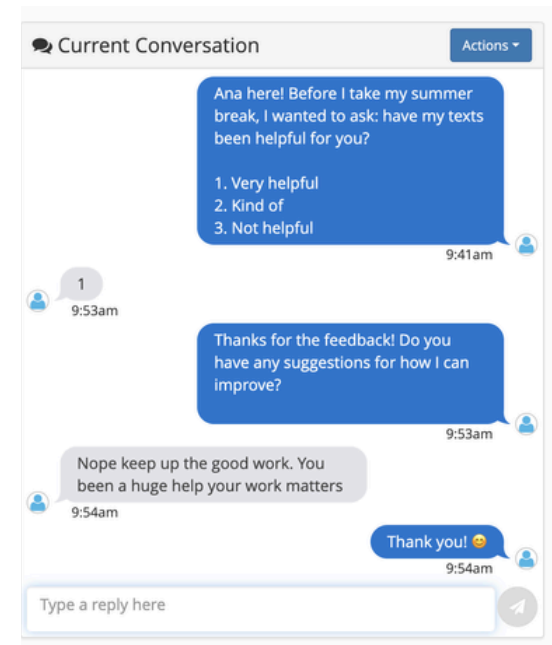
INSIGHT #1: NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS AND FINANCIAL INSECURITIES

INDUSTRY TRENDS

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) has had a significant impact on students and families across the U.S. for the 2024-25 school year. The problems began with the rollout of a new online application system, which was plagued by technical glitches and accessibility issues. These technical difficulties led to widespread confusion and frustration, as many applicants were unable to complete or submit their forms on time. Additionally, the changes in the verification process increased the complexity of the application, causing delays in processing and disbursement of aid. As a result, many students faced uncertainty about their financial aid status, jeopardizing their ability to plan for and afford their education. The Department of Education has been criticized for its handling of the situation, prompting calls for improved support and transparency to ensure that students can access the aid they need without undue hassle. As of April of 2024, FAFSA completion rates were down nearly 30%.

Estimated Percent of Seniors Submitting a FAFSA, High School Classes of 2023 and 2024

Inside Higher Ed

Historically marginalized students have been particularly affected by these financial aid challenges. Upswing's mission is to help non-traditional and historically marginalized students graduate from college, and currently over 75% of Upswing's partners are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), or Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). These students often face greater hardships of financial insecurity. A study conducted by Jobs for the Future (JFF), in partnership with Trellis Strategies found that across all six measures of financial insecurity, Black and Latino students faced the greatest financial hardships. The recent FAFSA issues have only exacerbated these challenges, making it even more difficult for these students to access the financial aid they need to pursue higher education.

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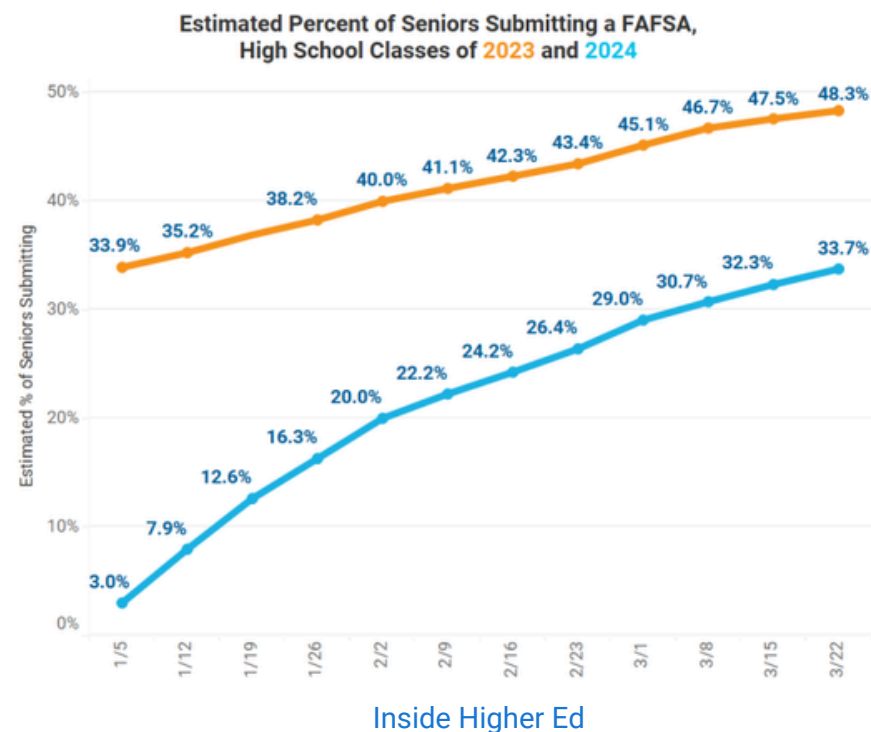
ANA CAMPAIGN MESSAGE AND DATA: SCHOLARSHIPS / FINANCIAL AID (FAFSA) (FALL 2023)

CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

If you're not graduating soon, FAFSA is a big step in making sure you receive your financial aid! There are some changes to the process this year, so I want to make sure you have all the info you need.

Will you be submitting a FAFSA application this year? (Ex. reply "2")

1. Yes, I will!
2. No, not this year.

CAMPAIGN DATA

Overall Data		
Engagement		
Total Number of Students Received	60703	
Total Number of Students Engaged	5110	
Overall Engagement Rate	8.42%	

Decision Tree Breakdown		
Yes, I will!	4473	89.10%
No, not this year.	547	10.90%
Total	5020	

- Yes, I will!
- No, not this year.

89.1%
10.9%
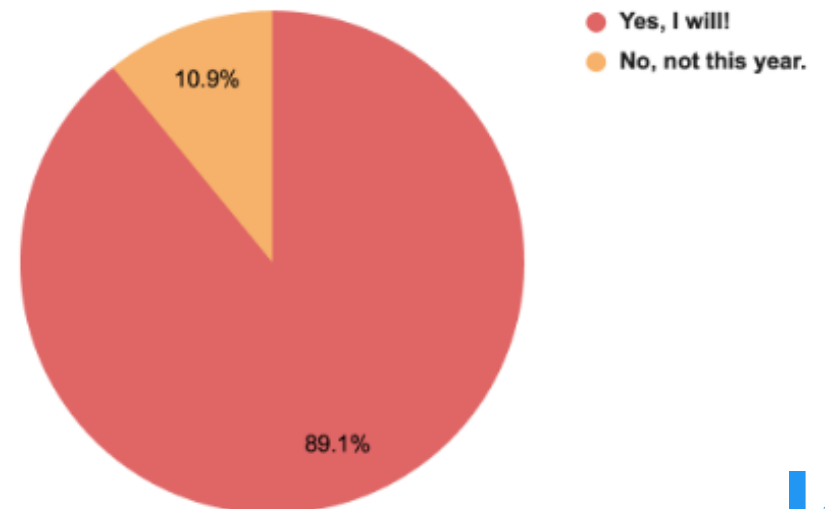
CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

The table and chart on the previous page shows the number and percentage of students that received and responded to the FAFSA application campaign as well as the percentage of students that selected each option provided. The engagement rate of 8.42% was significantly higher than previous campaigns we've sent related to financial aid. A very large majority of students (89.1%), indicated that they plan to submit a FAFSA this year. These results can also be attributed to the changes of the FAFSA process and the increasing rates of financial insecurity amongst college students. However, we believe these results can also be attributed to the changes of the FAFSA process and the increasing rates of financial insecurity amongst college students.

ACTIONS TAKEN

With the problematic updates to the FAFSA process and high rates of financial insecurity amongst non-traditional and historically marginalized students, we wanted to ensure that we had multiple campaigns built into our message plan that shared information about financial assistance opportunities, including alternatives to federal aid. We decided to write three campaigns related to financial concerns:

Campaign #1: FAFSA Application Reminder
This campaign includes information about how to get started with the FAFSA, as well as alternatives such as state aid programs, scholarships, and aid for international students.

Campaign #2: Scholarship Season
We anticipate that there will be a greater need for scholarships because of the issues students experienced with the FAFSA application this year. To get ahead of this, we wrote a campaign scheduled to be sent in November that provides students with helpful scholarship resources, as well as tips on how to submit strong scholarship applications.

Campaign #3: Money Management Resources
Towards the beginning of the Spring semester, we decided to share additional financial resources, including scholarship information, low-income relief opportunities to help students pay bills and non-tuition expenses, as well as helpful resources for managing personal finances.

INSIGHT #2: SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS IN A POST-COVID WORLD

INDUSTRY TRENDS

As noted by a report from UT Austin, a strong support system is crucial for non-traditional students, particularly first-generation students, as it significantly enhances their academic success and personal well-being. Such a support system provides essential resources, including academic advising, financial aid guidance, and mental health services, tailored to their unique needs and challenges. It also fosters a sense of belonging and community, helping these students navigate the complexities of higher education with confidence. By addressing both academic and non-academic factors, a robust support system ensures that non-traditional and first-generation students can thrive and achieve their educational goals.

Since COVID-19, social anxiety has significantly increased among university students. The pandemic disrupted traditional social interactions, leading to prolonged isolation and limited face-to-face communication. As students returned to campus, many struggled with heightened anxiety about socializing and engaging in group activities. The abrupt shift from remote learning to in-person settings intensified these feelings, as students had to readjust to social norms and interactions. This surge in social anxiety has underscored the need for enhanced mental health support and resources to help students navigate post-pandemic challenges and rebuild their social confidence.

Mental health outcomes among college students can be significantly improved through the establishment of personal and meaningful connections. Strong relationships with peers, mentors, and faculty provide emotional support, reduce feelings of isolation, and enhance a sense of belonging. As seen with projects like ProjectConnect at Kent State, these connections offer students a network of individuals who understand their challenges and can offer guidance, encouragement, and companionship. By fostering environments where students feel valued and understood, universities can help alleviate stress and anxiety, promoting overall mental well-being and academic success.
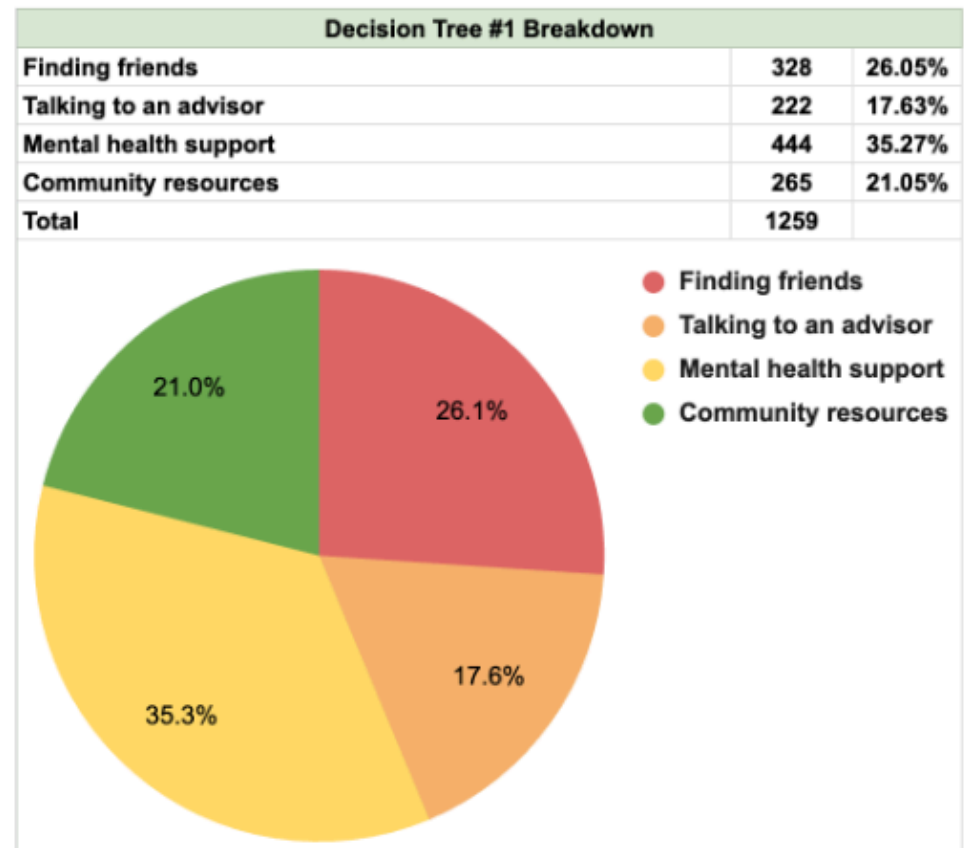
ANA CAMPAIGN MESSAGE AND DATA: CAMPUS RESOURCES (FALL 2023)

CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

Hi there! You have a world of support to help you be healthy, happy, and successful. Let me know if you'd like to learn about anything below! (Ex: reply "3")

1. Finding friends
2. Talking to an advisor
3. Mental health support
4. Community resources (incl. food assistance, childcare, health clinics)

CAMPAIGN DATA

Decision Tree #1 Breakdown		
Finding friends	328	26.05%
Talking to an advisor	222	17.63%
Mental health support	444	35.27%
Community resources	265	21.05%
Total	1259	

Pie chart:
- Finding friends: 26.1%
- Talking to an advisor: 17.6%
- Mental health support: 35.3%
- Community resources: 21.0%

CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

Looking at the response breakdown of this campaign, we see that the second most chosen option was for information about finding friends, behind mental health support.

ACTIONS TAKEN

With the number of responses from students requesting information about how to make friends, and the rise of social anxiety post-COVID, we want to send a campaign to students specifically intended to provide them with information about peer-support resources available to them. Within the campaign, we will inform students about on-campus organizations, upcoming events where they can meet students, and ways they can meet other people within their communities.
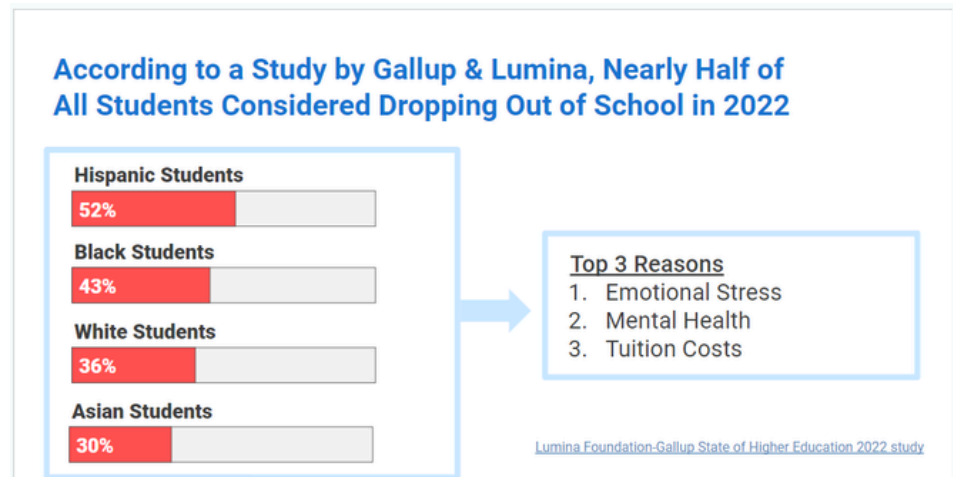
INSIGHT #3: UTILIZING DIFFERENT WAYS TO TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Stigma around mental health remains a significant barrier, particularly among non-traditional students, such as adult learners, part-time students, and those balancing education with work or family responsibilities. These students often face unique stressors, including financial pressures, caregiving duties, and job-related challenges, yet they may feel reluctant to seek mental health support due to fear of being perceived as weak or incapable. Cultural factors and past experiences can also contribute to this stigma, making it harder for them to acknowledge and address mental health issues.

As a result, non-traditional students may suffer in silence, leading to decreased academic performance and increased dropout rates. The stigma is compounded by the lack of targeted mental health resources and support systems for non-traditional students. Traditional college mental health services often cater primarily to younger, full-time students, leaving non-traditional students feeling underserved and misunderstood.

This lack of tailored support can reinforce feelings of isolation and inadequacy. Addressing this stigma requires institutions to develop inclusive mental health programs that recognize the diverse experiences and needs of non-traditional students. By promoting open discussions about mental health and providing accessible, relevant resources, we can help break down the stigma and ensure all students receive the support they need to succeed.

According to a Study by Gallup & Lumina, Nearly Half of All Students Considered Dropping Out of School in 2022

Hispanic Students
52%

Black Students
43%

White Students
36%

Asian Students
30%

Top 3 Reasons
1. Emotional Stress
2. Mental Health
3. Tuition Costs

Lumina Foundation-Gallup State of Higher Education 2022 study

ANA CAMPAIGN MESSAGE AND DATA: (SPRING 2024)

CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Initial Campaign:
With finals around the corner, I wanted to make sure you have everything you need to finish this semester as strongly as you can. Are you feeling ready for your final exams and assignments? (Ex. reply "2")
1. I'm as ready as I can be!
2. I could use some extra help.

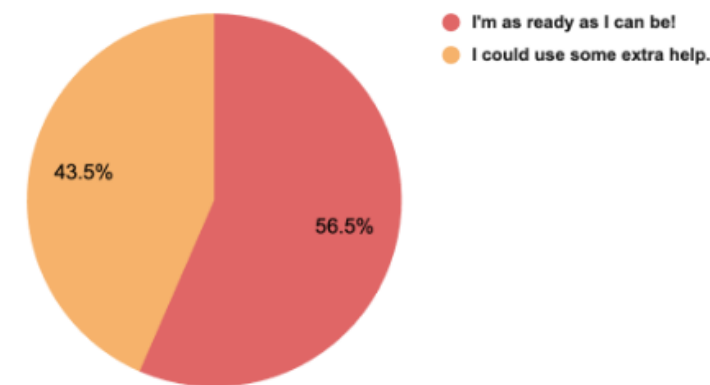**Response to students who selected "I could use some extra help."**
Good call! What kind of help could you use right now?
1. Tutoring
2. Stress relief
3. Study spaces
4. Something else

CAMPAIGN DATA(DT#1)

Decision Tree #1 Breakdown		
I'm as ready as I can be!	940	56.52%
I could use some extra help.	723	43.48%
Total	1663	

DT#1 Breakdown

- I'm as ready as I can be!
- I could use some extra help.

43.5%

56.5%

CAMPAIGN DATA(DT#2)

Decision Tree #2 Breakdown		
Tutoring	221	31.94%
Stress relief	310	44.80%
Study spaces	96	13.87%
Something else	65	9.39%
Total	692	

DT#2 Breakdown

- Tutoring
- Stress relief
- Study spaces
- Something else

9.4%

13.9%

31.9%

44.8%
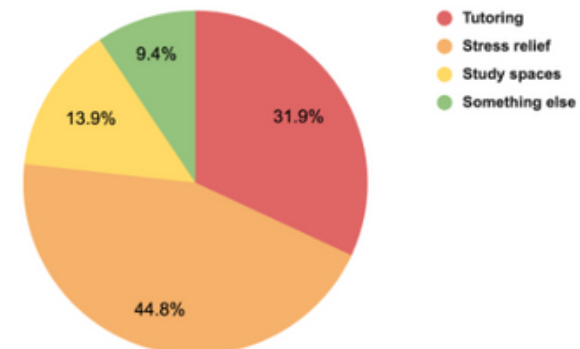
CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

When we asked students if they would like any help going into final exams in the Spring semester, about 44% of students who responded indicated that they needed some extra help. In response to these students, we asked what kind of help they needed, and the number one response from students was "stress relief". While final exams are absolutely a stressful time for students, it is interesting to consider that the use of "stress relief" instead of mentioning mental health more directly as it could have contributed to this result.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Considering the stigma that is often associated with the term "mental health", and the fact that mental health support is more than just counseling, we want to share mental health resources with students in a more indirect and approachable way. Instead of explicitly asking students if they want information about "mental health resources", we subtly mention positive mental health practices throughout the message plan. Some examples include:

Two campaigns about self-care:
- One campaign that talks about the four types of self-care: physical health, mental stimulation, emotional health, and connection with self and others. When talking about emotional health, we share with students information about counseling services on campus.
- One campaign that asks students if they've taken any time for themselves to do something that promotes positive well-being, such as going for a walk, stretching, reading a book, or just relaxing.

INSIGHT #4: SUPPORTING THE "WHOLE STUDENT" THROUGH NON-ACADEMIC RESOURCES

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Holistic student support has been proven to increase student retention in higher education by addressing a wide range of student needs beyond academic performance. This approach encompasses mental health services, financial aid counseling, career advising, and social support networks, all of which contribute to a well-rounded student experience. By providing comprehensive resources and creating a supportive environment, institutions help students manage the various challenges that can impede their academic progress, leading to higher retention rates.

Research indicates that when students feel supported in all aspects of their lives, they are more likely to stay enrolled and complete their degrees. Moreover, holistic support fosters a sense of belonging and community among students, which is crucial for their engagement and persistence in higher education. Programs that include mentoring, peer support groups, and culturally relevant services help students feel connected to their institutions and motivated to succeed. This sense of belonging can be particularly important for underrepresented and marginalized students who may face additional barriers to success.
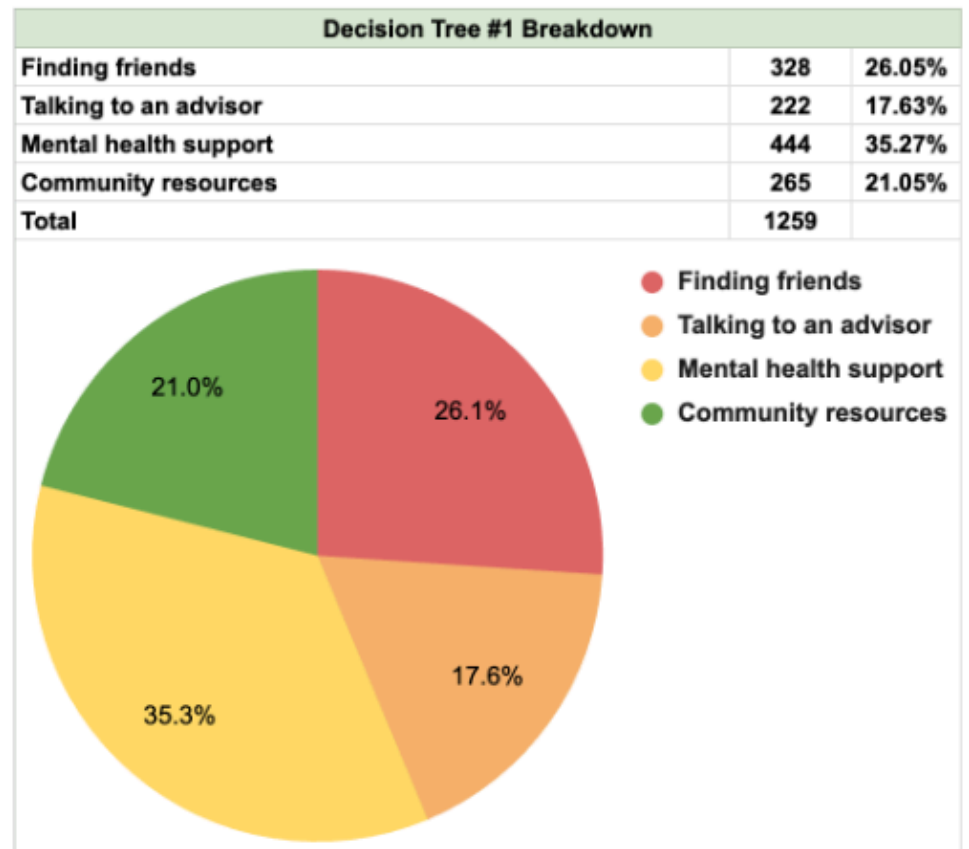
ANA CAMPAIGN MESSAGE AND DATA: CAMPUS RESOURCES (FALL 2023)

Hi there! You have a world of support to help you be healthy, happy, and successful. Let me know if you'd like to learn about anything below! (Ex: reply "3")

1. Finding friends
2. Talking to an advisor
3. Mental health support
4. Community resources (incl. food assistance, childcare, health clinics)

CAMPAIGN DATA

Decision Tree #1 Breakdown		
Finding friends	328	26.05%
Talking to an advisor	222	17.63%
Mental health support	444	35.27%
Community resources	265	21.05%
Total	1259	

CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

Looking at the decision tree breakdown of this campaign, we can see that the least chosen answer was for information about meeting with an academic advisor. Mental health support was the top choice, followed by help finding friends and community resources. The wide range of options selected by students in response to this campaign indicates that institutions should adopt a holistic approach to student support services, offering a broad array of options for students to choose from.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Taking into consideration that students need more than just academic support, our message plan consists of campaigns that cover a wide range of non-academic topics. Topics of non-academic resource campaigns include:

- Mental health
- Peer support
- Basic needs resources, such as food, housing, help paying bills, healthcare, etc.

While we want to make sure students are able to succeed in their classes by utilizing academic support services, we also recognize that there's far more that contributes to a student's success than access to tutoring and academic advising.

To better support the whole student, our Student Success Team has built out resource articles to guide students on both academic and non-academic topics. To support students academically, our team has written guides on topics including study strategies, how to prepare for exams, and note-taking techniques. Our team can also provide students with guidance on soft-skills to help them succeed during and after their academic career. As a result, we've created guides that cover topics like time management, prioritization, motivation, and self-care.

We also understand the need for students to know of different resources they can turn to in times of need. We've compiled hundreds of resources related to food assistance, affordable housing, low-income relief, accessible healthcare resources, and assistance for student parents or soon-to-be parents.

INSIGHT #5: THE NEED FOR CAREER PREPARATION RESOURCES

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Non-traditional students often return to school to improve their career options, driven by the desire for career advancement, higher earning potential, and job stability. Many of these students have experienced the limitations of their current educational background in the workforce and seek additional qualifications to access better opportunities. Returning to school allows them to acquire new skills, gain up-to-date knowledge, and enhance their professional credentials, making them more competitive in the job market. This investment in education not only opens doors to new career paths, but also provides personal and professional growth.

However, non-traditional students face unique challenges when returning to school to improve their career opportunities. Balancing educational pursuits with work and family responsibilities can be particularly demanding, often leading to time management and scheduling conflicts. Financial pressures are also significant, as many non-traditional students may have dependents or other financial obligations. Additionally, they may encounter difficulties in adapting to new technologies and academic environments, especially if they have been out of school for a while. These challenges require institutions to provide flexible, supportive programs tailored to meet the needs of non-traditional learners.

Career counselors are uniquely positioned to support non-traditional students by providing tailored guidance and resources that address their specific needs and challenges. They can help these students navigate the complexities of balancing education with work and family responsibilities, and assist them in developing effective time management and study strategies. Additionally, career counselors can offer valuable insights into aligning academic pursuits with career goals, ensuring that non-traditional students maximize their educational investments. However, counselors must be mindful of the unique barriers these students face, such as financial pressures, technological gaps, and adapting to academic environments, to provide comprehensive and empathetic support.

CAMPAIGN MESSAGE AND DATA: POST-BREAK RESOURCES (SPRING 2024)
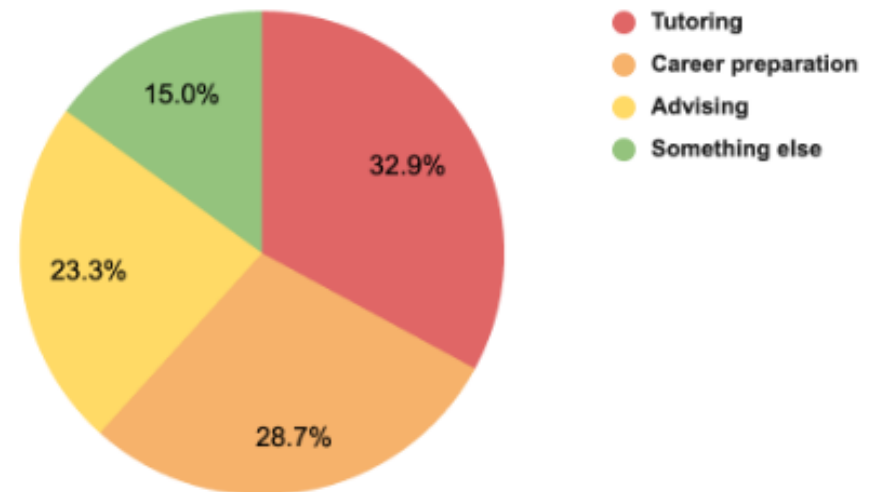
CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

I hope you were able to get some rest over the break! Let's take a moment to think about what you'll need to power through the rest of the semester. (Ex. reply "2")

1. Tutoring
2. Career Preparation
3. Advising
4. Something else

CAMPAIGN DATA

Decision Tree Breakdown		
Tutoring	371	32.92%
Career preparation	324	28.75%
Advising	263	23.34%
Something else	169	15.00%
Total	1127	

DT Breakdown

- Tutoring — 32.9%
- Career preparation — 28.7%
- Advising — 23.3%
- Something else — 15.0%

CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

Our message plan this past year didn't include any campaigns specifically about career services or career preparation. With this campaign, we can see that the second most chosen option by students was "Career preparation", signaling to us that students would like guidance on the next steps after graduation.
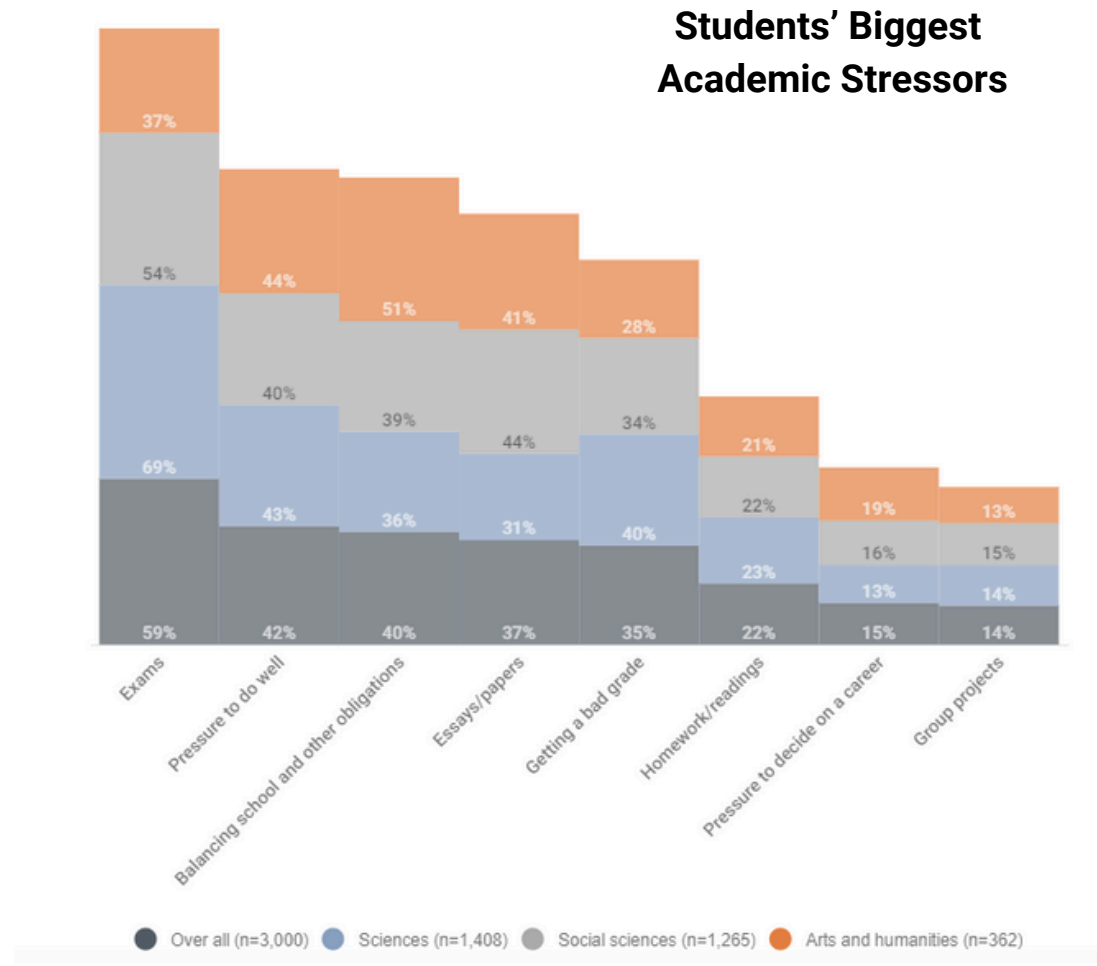

ACTIONS TAKEN

Given the feedback from this campaign, and student requests for more information about career opportunities, help with resumes and interviews, and other career-related services, we want to include a message within our base message plan specifically about those topics. Additionally, we decided to send this campaign earlier in the semester, as opposed to waiting until after Spring Break. We hope that sending the campaign earlier will provide students with the assistance they need in finding internship and career development opportunities over the summer.

INSIGHT #6: COMPARING STUDENT SENTIMENT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FALL VS. SPRING

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Student sentiment often evolves from the fall semester to the spring semester, reflecting changes in academic and personal experiences. In the fall, students typically face the excitement and challenges of starting new classes, adapting to new schedules, and building social connections. As the semester progresses, they may feel increased stress due to midterms and final exams. By the spring semester, students generally feel more settled and familiar with their routines and campus life. However, they may also experience fatigue from continuous academic pressures, which can impact their motivation and overall sentiment. The transition period offers opportunities for reflection and adjustment, helping students to refine their strategies for academic success and personal well-being.

Students' Biggest Academic Stressors

Legend: ● Over all (n=3,000) ● Sciences (n=1,408) ● Social sciences (n=1,265) ● Arts and humanities (n=362)

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ANA CAMPAIGN MESSAGE AND DATA: (GETTING ORGANIZED - FALL 2023)

CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

Initial Campaign:
Hey there, it's Ana! I hope your semester is off to a good start. Have you been able to get set up with everything you need for this semester? Think textbooks, email, financial aid, etc. (Ex: reply "2")

1. Yes I have, and I'm feeling good to go!

2. I'm a little stuck and could use some extra help.

**Message in response to "I'm a little stuck and could use some extra help:**
"No worries, I can make sure you have what you need! What could you use help with? (Ex: reply "4")

1. Logging into a campus service like email

2. Using Upswing tools like tutoring, assignment reviews, writing help, and more

3. Financial aid or tuition payments

4. Getting or using my textbooks

5. Something else

## CAMPAIGN DATA (GETTING ORGANIZED - DT#1 - FALL 2023):

Total Number of Students Received	61404	
Total Number of Students Engaged	6555	
Overall Engagement Rate	10.68%	

Decision Tree #1 Breakdown		
Yes I have, and I'm feeling good to go!	4152	70.18%
I'm a little stuck and could use some extra help.	1764	29.82%
Total	5916	
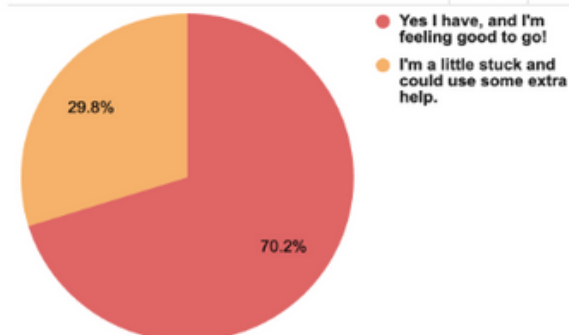
CAMPAIGN DATA (GETTING ORGANIZED - DT#2 - FALL 2023):

Decision Tree #2 Breakdown		
Logging into a campus service like email	40	2.78%
Using Upswing tools	120	8.33%
Financial aid or tuition payments	570	39.56%
Getting or using my textbooks	442	30.67%
Something else	269	18.67%
Total	1441	
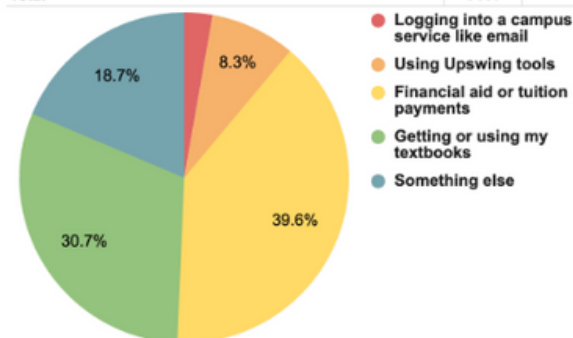
CAMPAIGN MESSAGE(TOOLS FOR SUCCESS - SPRING 2024):

Initial Campaign:
Hi again! Are you feeling equipped with everything you need to be successful this semester? I've got plenty of resources to help you out! (Ex: reply "2")

1. I'm ready to rock this semester!
2. A little extra help sounds great right now.

**Message in response to "A little extra help sounds great right now."**
I'm proud of you for asking! That's what I'm here for.
What kind of help are you looking for today?

1. Using Upswing tools
2. Tips for online classes
3. Graduation info
4. Financial aid or tuition payments
5. Getting or using your textbooks
6. Something else

## CAMPAIGN DATA (TOOLS FOR SUCCESS - DT#1 - SPRING 2024):

Engagement		
Total Number of Students Received	59263	
Total Number of Students Engaged	3382	
Overall Engagement Rate	5.71%	

Decision Tree #1 Breakdown		
I'm ready to rock this semester!	1830	58.62%
A little extra help sounds great right now.	1292	41.38%
Total	3122	
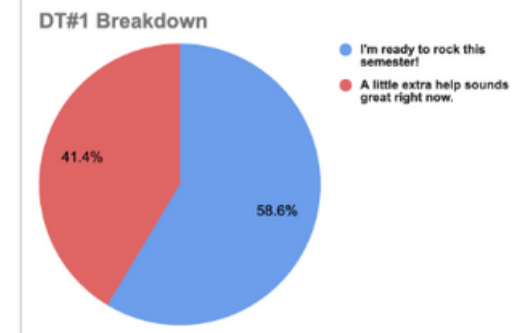
DT#1 Breakdown

CAMPAIGN DATA (TOOLS FOR SUCCESS - DT#2 - SPRING 2024):

Decision Tree #2 Breakdown		
Using Upswing tools	315	31.00%
Tips for online classes	207	20.37%
Graduation info	63	6.20%
Financial aid or tuition payments	139	13.68%
Getting or using your textbooks	85	8.37%
Something else	207	20.37%
Total	1016	

DT#2 Breakdown
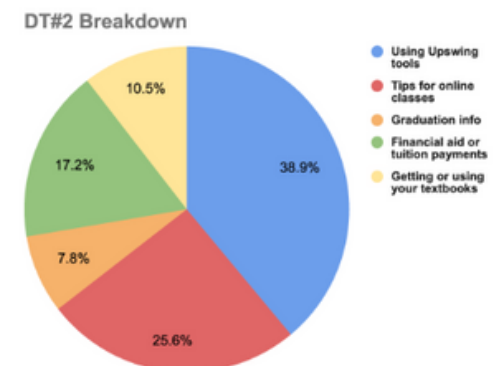
CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

When we compare responses to the initial message of both campaigns, we can see that a higher percentage of students responded to the semester-start campaign in the Spring requesting help. However, we can see a difference in the resources requested by students in decision tree choice #2. When we look at the decision tree choice #2 responses to the Fall campaign, we can see that students needed assistance with topics like financial aid and textbooks. These two topics are key to students being able to attend classes and may be more confusing or difficult for students, especially freshman, in the Fall semester. However, in the Spring, students requested information about Upswing, suggesting that students in the Spring may want to start the Spring semester strongly by learning about academic support resources early on.

When looking at student feedback to Ana at the end of the Spring semester, we noticed that many students requested more encouragement from Ana throughout the semester. By the Spring, students may be experiencing slight burnout or a lack of motivation, and Ana can be there for students to provide the boost that they're wanting.

It's worth noting that, although these campaigns were very similar, the overall engagement rate declined sharply from fall to spring, dropping from 10.68% to 5.71%. This could be a result of several factors; as noted above, students generally may not feel as compelled to reach out for help simply because, as a group, help isn't as needed in the spring, and/or students are more independent and autonomous, settling into a routine by the beginning of the spring semester. However, another possible reason for this decline in engagement could come from Ana.

Having campaigns that sound too similar, for example, can discourage students from engaging as much because they assume the content will be similar when this isn't necessarily the case (especially in this structure of campaign, where the real content is only available after responding that they want help). We've attempted to mitigate this in the coming year by making the content accessible from the beginning of the campaign, as well as trying to anticipate the differences between student needs in the fall (calendar, textbooks, financial aid, studying tips, and learning aids) versus the spring (schedule and materials, motivation, time management, disbursement and refunds, school events). One of our goals exemplified by this type of campaign structure is to continue learning about the ebb and flow of student needs, improving Ana's responsiveness and consistency to generate authentic interest.

Metric	Fall '23	Spring '24	% Change
Ana Intro	11.1%	5.53%	-50.18%
Getting Organized	10.68%	5.71%	-46.55%
Campus Resources	2.16%	3.37%	+56.02%
Encouragement	7.87%	5.41%	-31.27%
Advising/Spring Registration	6.31%	4.67%	-25.95%
Stress & Time Management	3.24%	2.21%	-31.79%
Prep for Finals	4.72%	2.99%	-36.65%
End Survey	16.88%	12.07%	-28.47%

When comparing engagement rates across campaigns with similar content, we do generally see a decrease in the spring, but it's also interesting to see that Campus Resources - FA (Campus Resources fall campaign) actually had a lower engagement rate than Campus & Community Resources - SP (Campus Resources spring campaign). We feel this stands out partially because of the formatting of the questions asked as well as the evolving needs of students. A key takeaway here is once again to remain responsive and possibly have Ana focus more on academics in the fall, but focus more on student life and wellbeing in the spring to keep students more engaged.

ACTIONS TAKEN

We wanted to continue to include campaigns specifically designed to inform students about resources available early on in the semester. However, we also wanted to include additional resources that students might be interested in. In the Fall, we decided to share information about upcoming deadlines, textbooks, financial aid, Upswing, and studying or learning tips. In the Spring, we chose to share slightly different resources, including class scheduling and course materials, motivation tips, time management resources, and financial aid information. In addition, our Spring message plan includes two encouragement campaigns, one of which is focused on encouraging students to take some time to practice self-care. We understand that the Spring semester presents different challenges than the Fall one, and want to be there for students that are struggling to make it to the end of the school year.

SUMMARY

The 2023-2024 academic year has been a testament to Upswing's unwavering commitment to supporting students through innovative and comprehensive services. Central to this mission is Ana, Upswing's SMS engagement tool, which has proven instrumental in delivering timely and relevant information, reminders, and access to both on-campus and off-campus resources. The data-driven insights gathered from Ana enable administrators to better understand student needs and respond effectively to critical tasks and deadlines, such as FAFSA completion. The proactive engagement facilitated by Ana, combined with the dedicated efforts of the Upswing Student Success team, creates a robust support system for students, particularly those from non-traditional and historically marginalized backgrounds.

This academic year, Upswing has demonstrated exceptional adaptability in addressing the evolving challenges faced by students. The strategic design of campaign messaging, tailored to the specific needs of each semester, reflects a profound understanding of student engagement dynamics. By focusing on academic resources during the fall and emphasizing well-being in the spring, Ana has maintained high levels of student interaction and support.

As financial insecurities and mental health challenges persist, Upswing's mission to empower students through accessible and integrated support services remains vital. Through continuous innovation and collaboration with educational institutions, Upswing is poised to further its impact on student success in the years to come.

ABOUT UPSWING

OUR MISSION

Upswing exists to empower historically marginalized people to achieve their life goals. Upswing is a technology company founded on the premise that access to educational support services should be universal and free. By partnering with educational institutions, we provide students, staff, and admins with a modern student services experience that results in more students attaining a degree.

OUR SERVICES

Upswing offers a wraparound student services platform that is designed to provide holistic student support through tutoring, assignment review, advising, and mental health. We also proactively support students through Ana, our SMS engagement tool. These products and services in conjunction with our partners' resources work seamlessly together to provide on-demand, accessible support for students no matter where they are.

OUR PARTNERS

Upswing currently works with colleges, universities, and non-profit organizations in the U.S. and Canada. Our partners include community colleges, HBCUs, HSIs, PBIs, and 4-year universities and colleges. Through our thought leadership and work, we are committed to helping as many non-traditional and historically marginalized students graduate college.

AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT · BLINN COLLEGE DISTRICT · BMCC · HCC HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE · IU · THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS · PANOLA COLLEGE · IOWA CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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