Where the Student Journey Breaks Down

Integrated findings from internal and external research, told through 14 student moments

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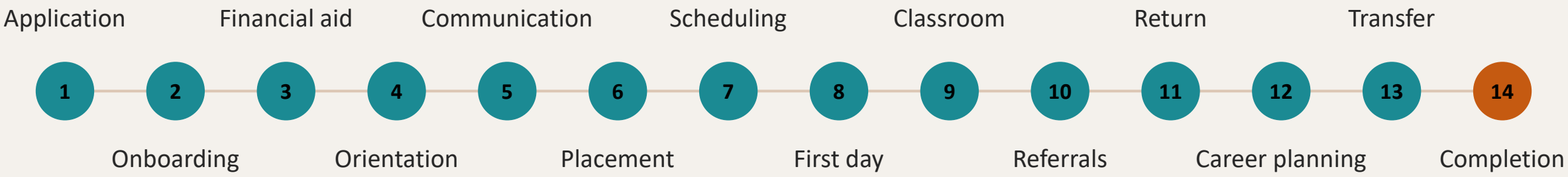
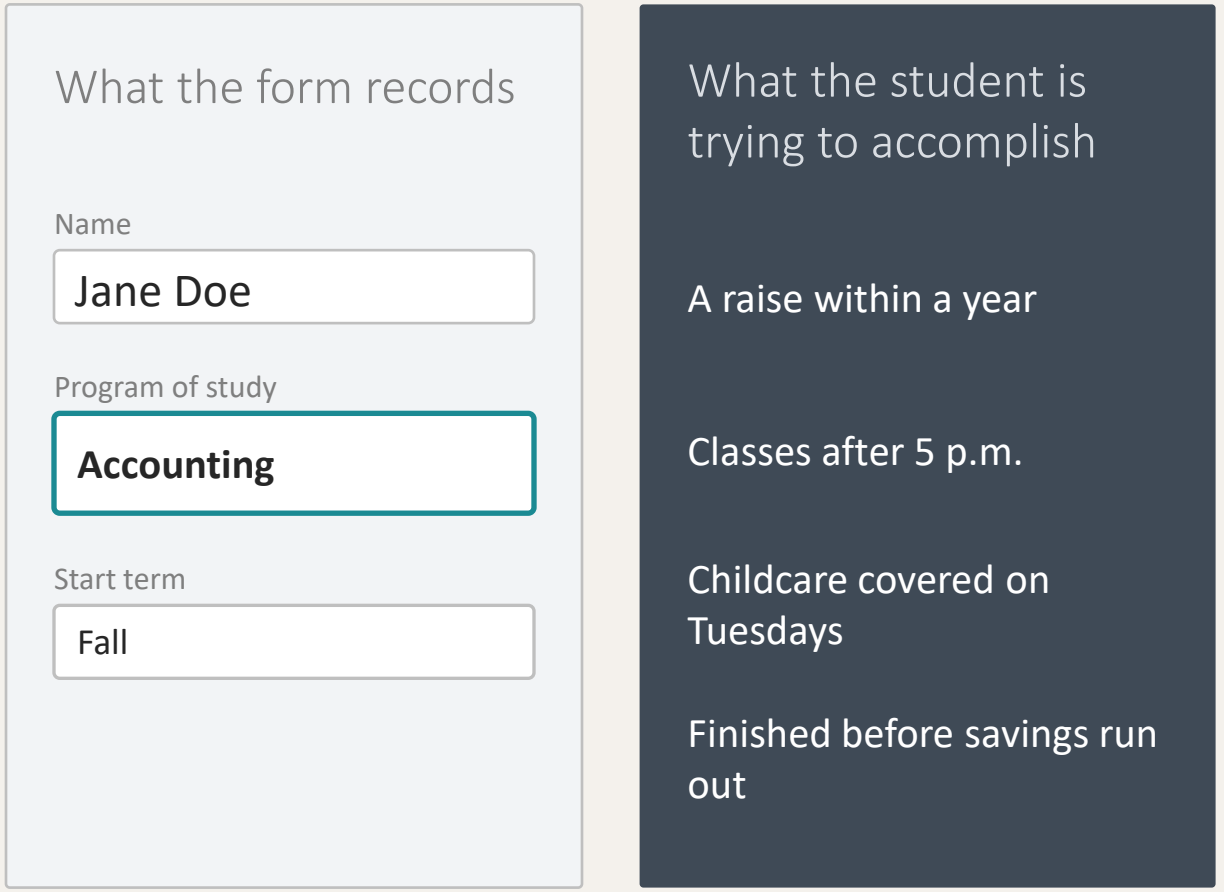
Fourteen points in the student journey where we lose our students.



1

At application

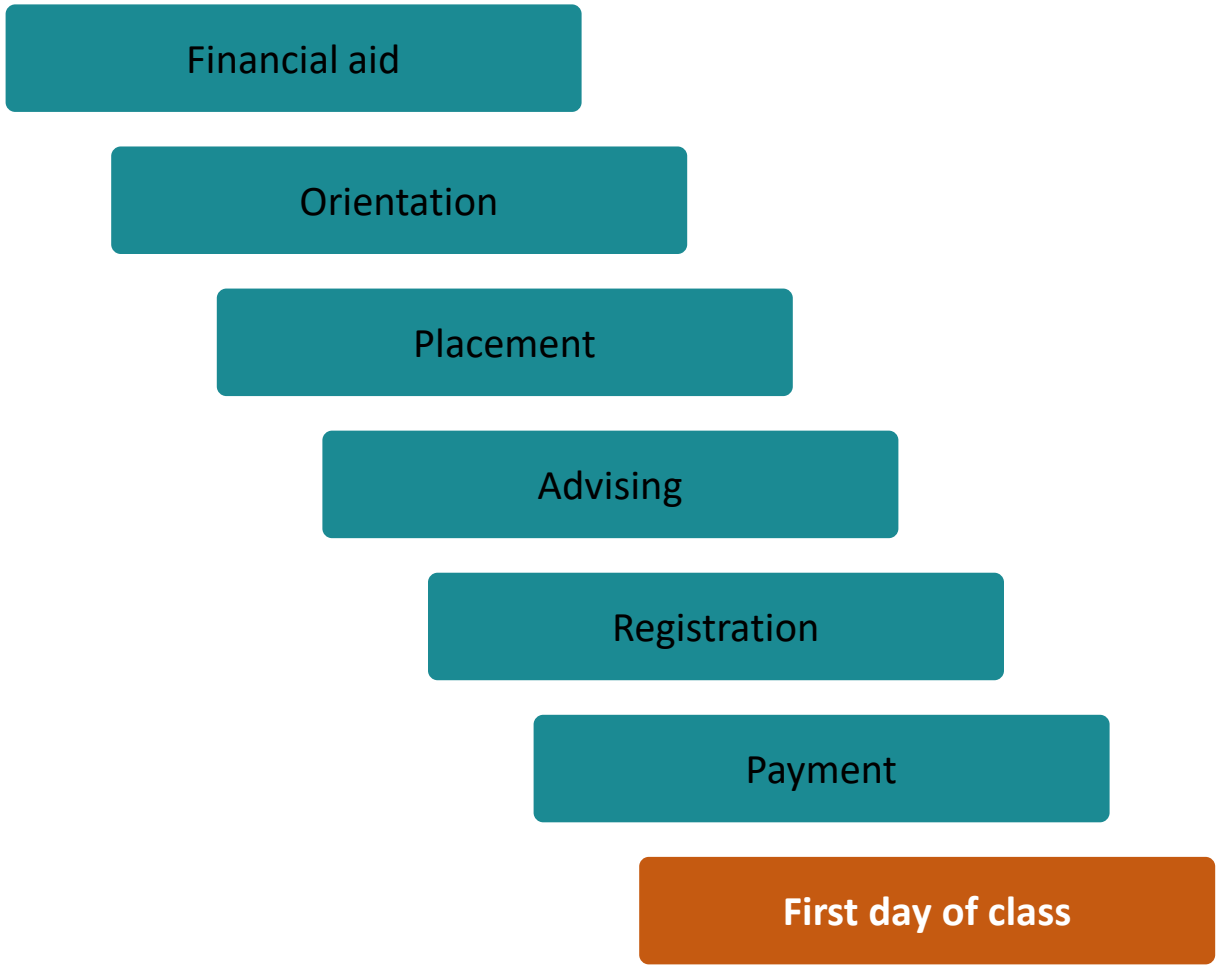
We ask students to choose a program before we ask **what they are trying to accomplish**.



2

Between application and the first class

We make new students satisfy six functions before they reach a classroom.



3

At financial aid

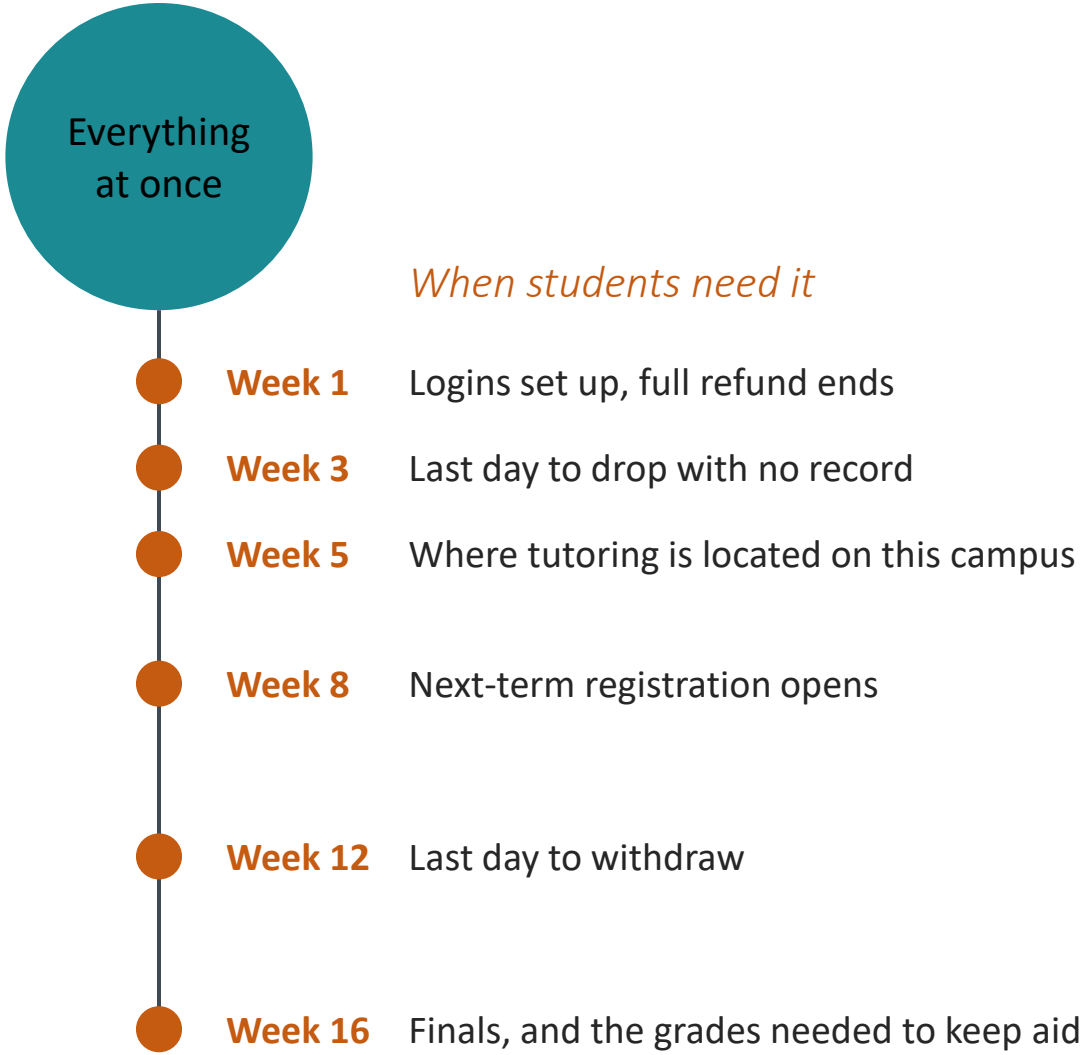
Some students are dropped for nonpayment before the aid arrives.



4

At orientation

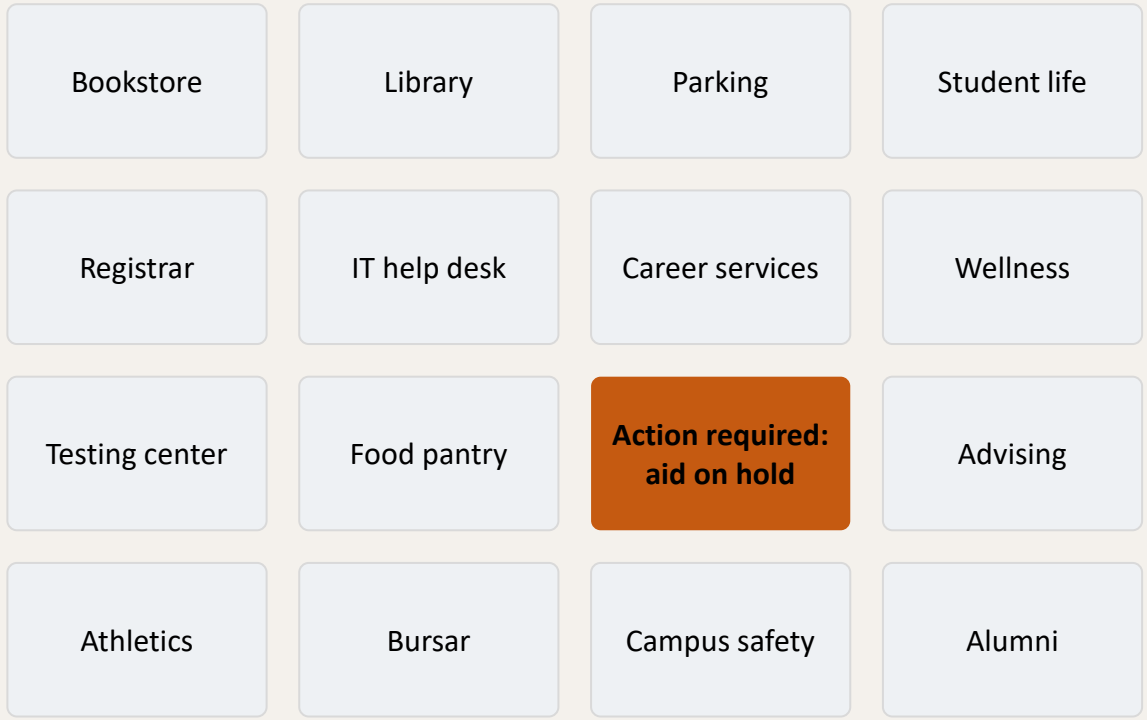
We tell students everything they need to know on **the one day they can absorb the least**.



5

In college communication

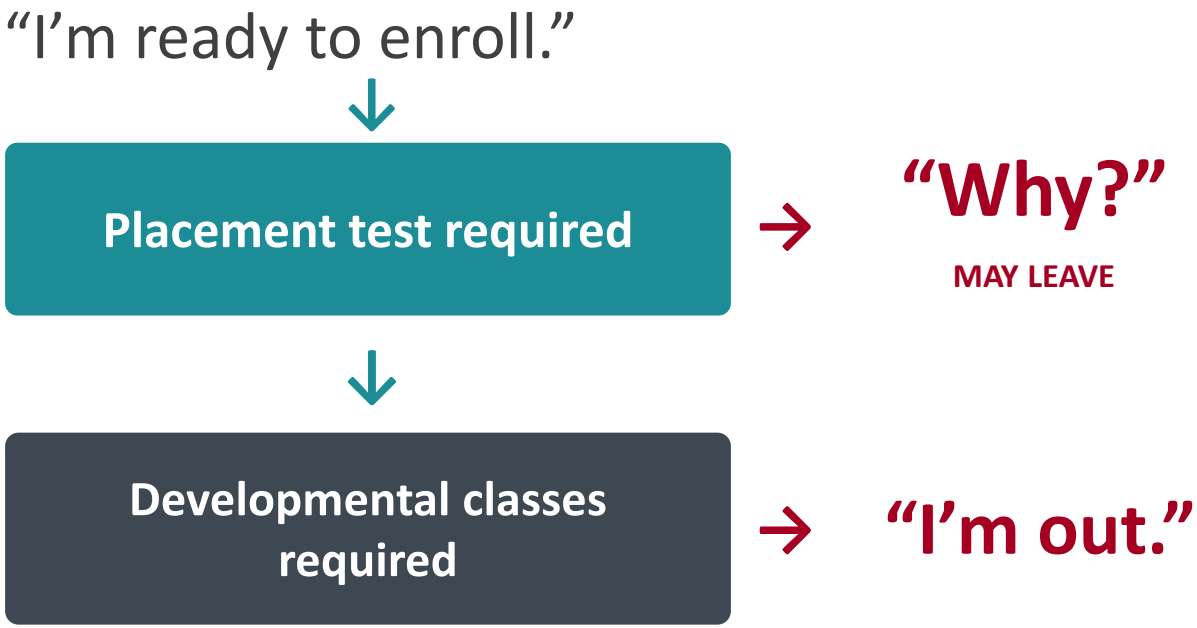
We confuse sending a message to students with **informing that student**.



6

At placement

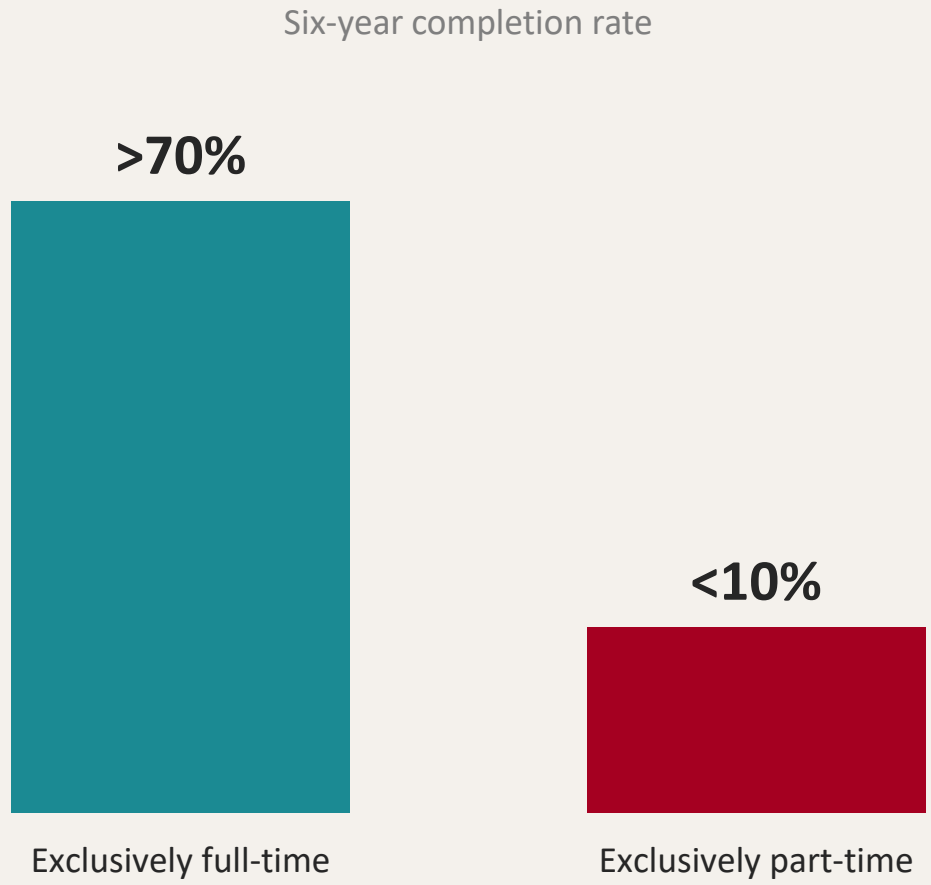
We can lose adults **before their first class.**



7

At scheduling

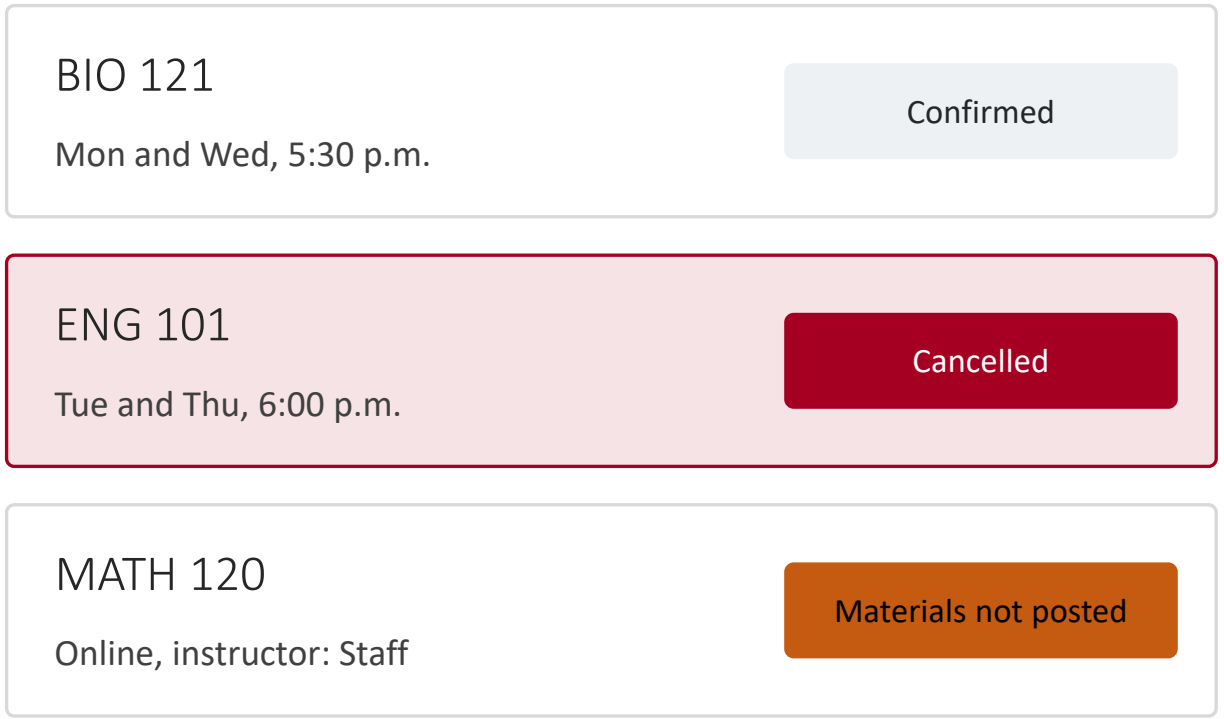
Students arrive intending to go full-time, and **our schedule talks them out of it**.



8

On the first day of class

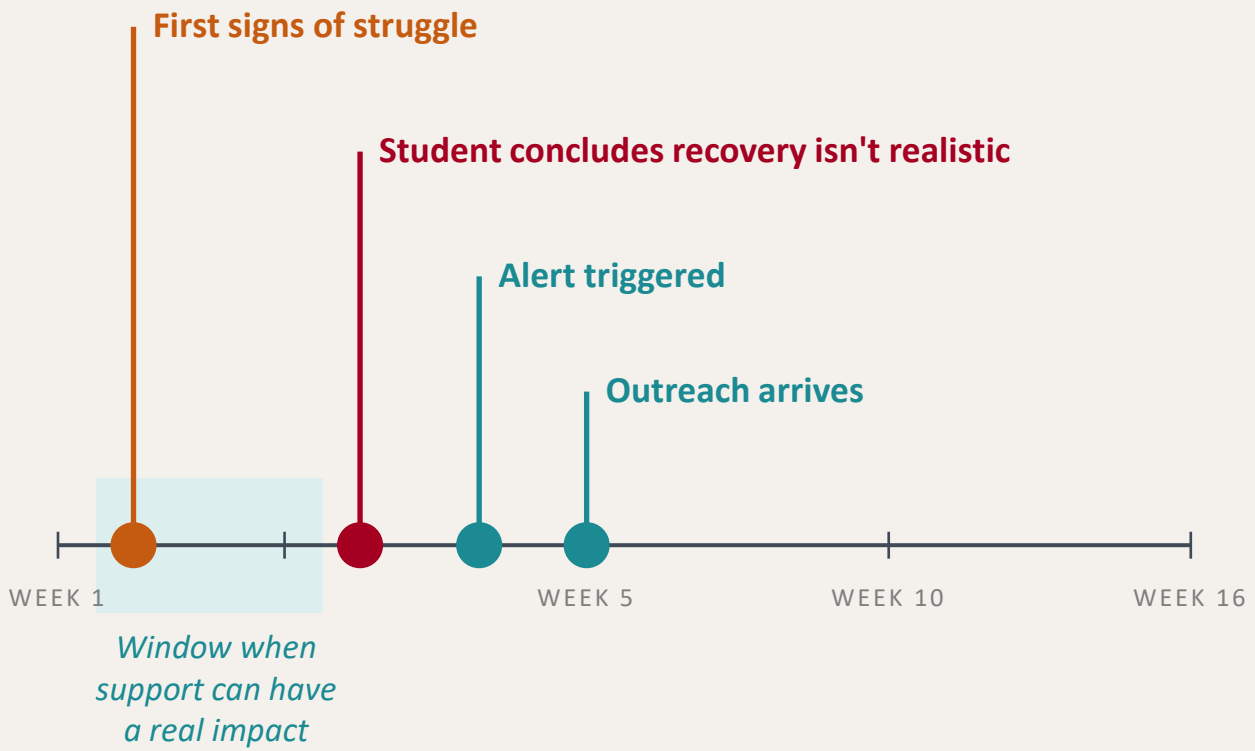
We cancel sections **after students have rearranged work and childcare** around them.



9

In the classroom

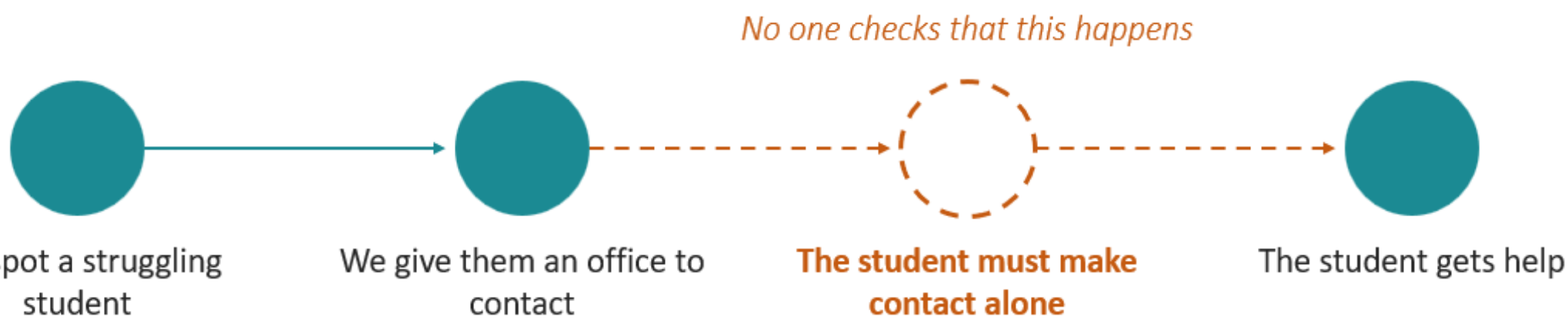
Early Alert tells us a student is struggling **weeks after the struggle began**.



10

At service referral

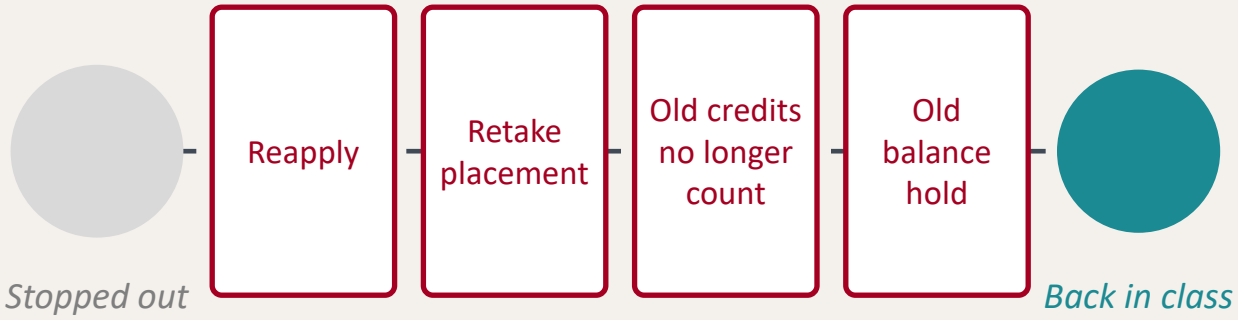
We hand struggling students a referral and leave the rest to them.



11

At return

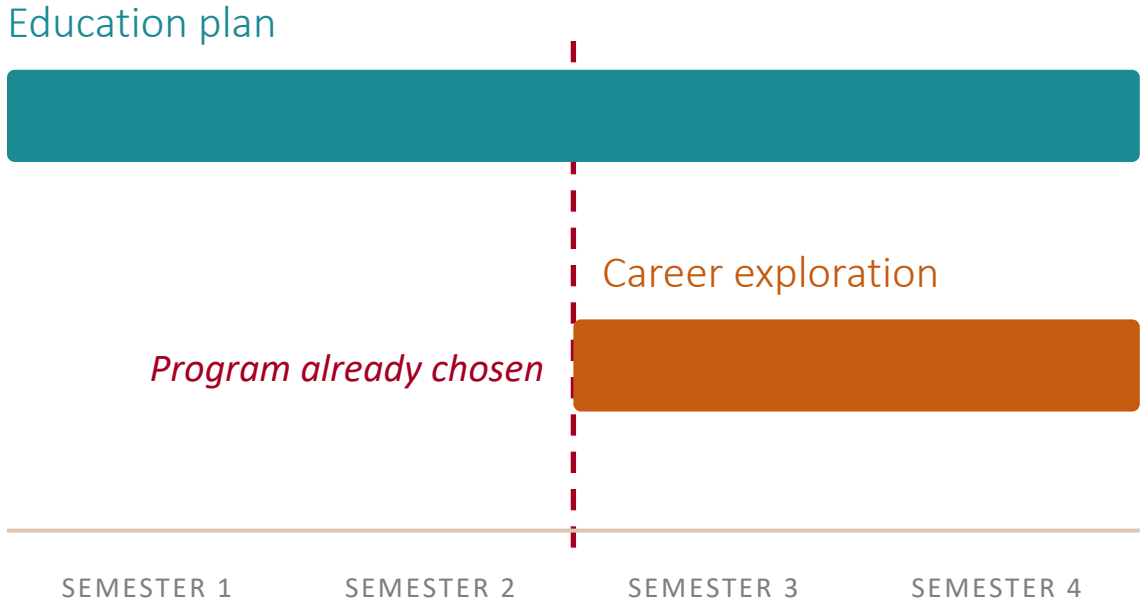
When adults return to the College, **we can often make them start over**.



12

At career planning

Students often learn what starting salary their program offers **after they have already invested time and money in it**.

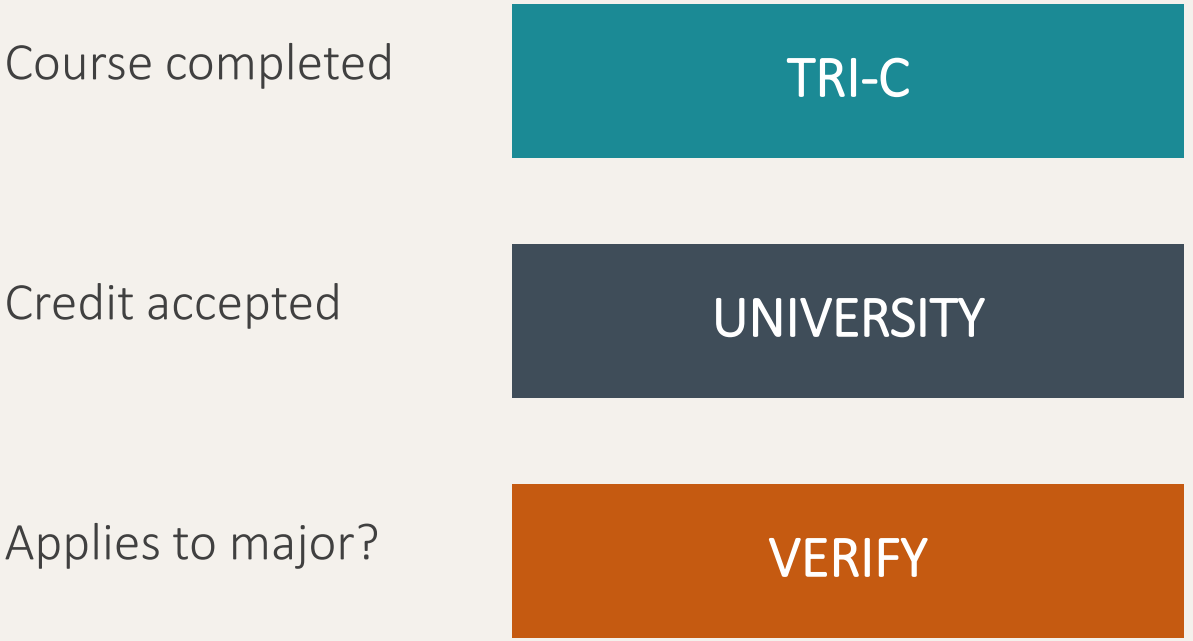


13

At transfer

A transferable course may not count toward a **student's BA major**.

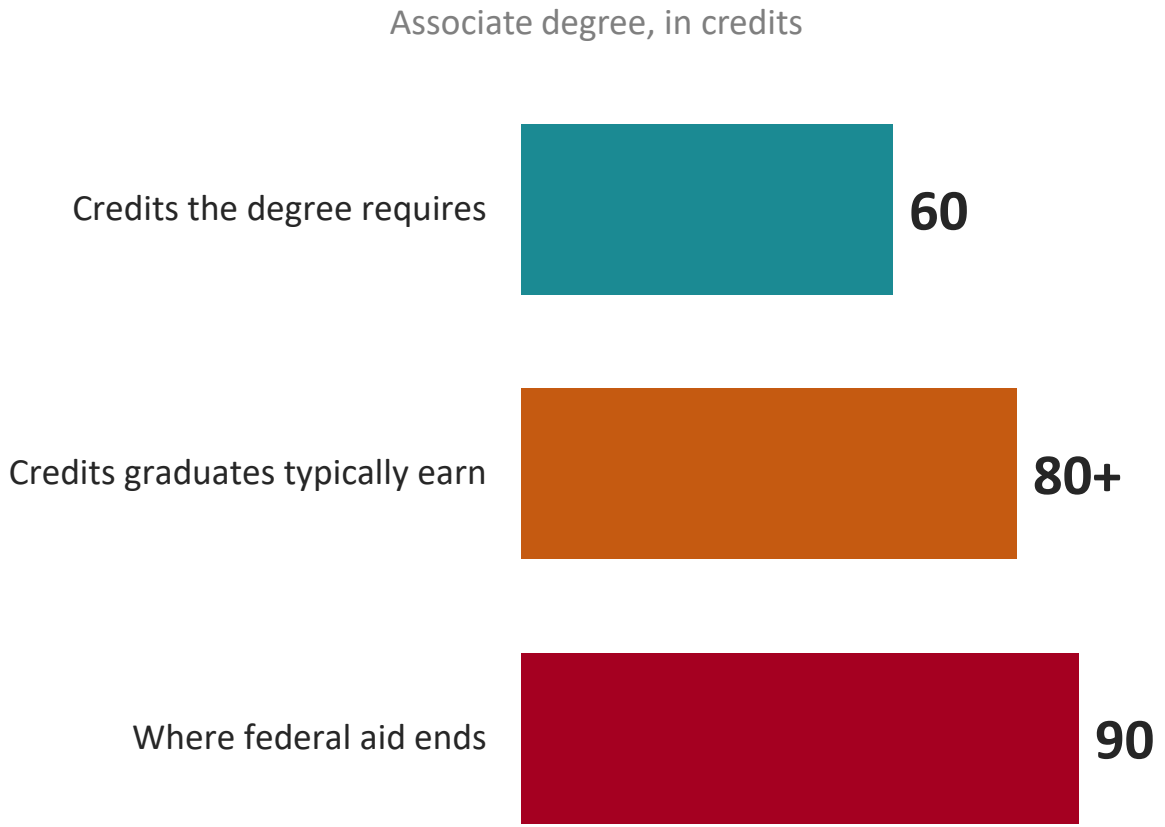




14

At completion

Our graduates discover how many **credits they took that their degree never required**.



How many students report having had zero of these 13 frustrations ?*

~5%

How many students report having four or more?

~45%

* Why 13 and not 14: The surveys did not explore the full-time/part-time dilemma. Those findings come from independent research.

What's at stake if we don't fix these problems?

November 4, 2026 student panel question:

How important is it that you complete your Tri-C program of study?

Student response:

I feel like my whole life is at stake.

Thank you

Gregory Stoup

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