

SUMMER MELT

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SREB webinar
August 16, 2018





What is summer melt &
why does it occur?

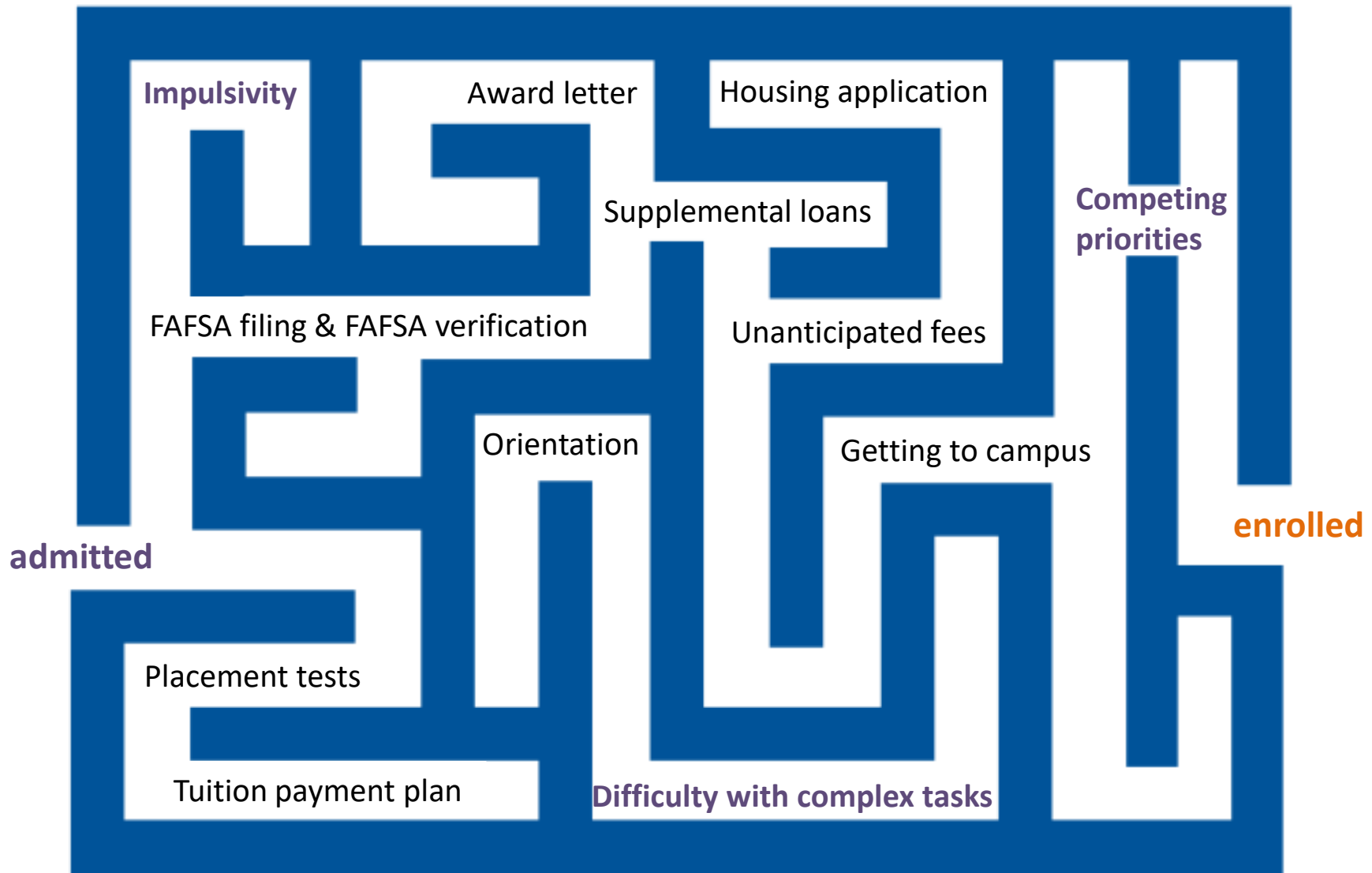
Revisiting the concept of summer melt

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Summer melt is a term traditionally used by college admissions officers to describe the phenomenon that students pay a deposit to attend a particular college but do not matriculate *at that college* the following fall.

Here, *summer melt* describes the phenomenon that college-intending students fail to enroll in college *at all* in the fall following high school graduation.

Why does it occur?



...during a period of little access to professional help.

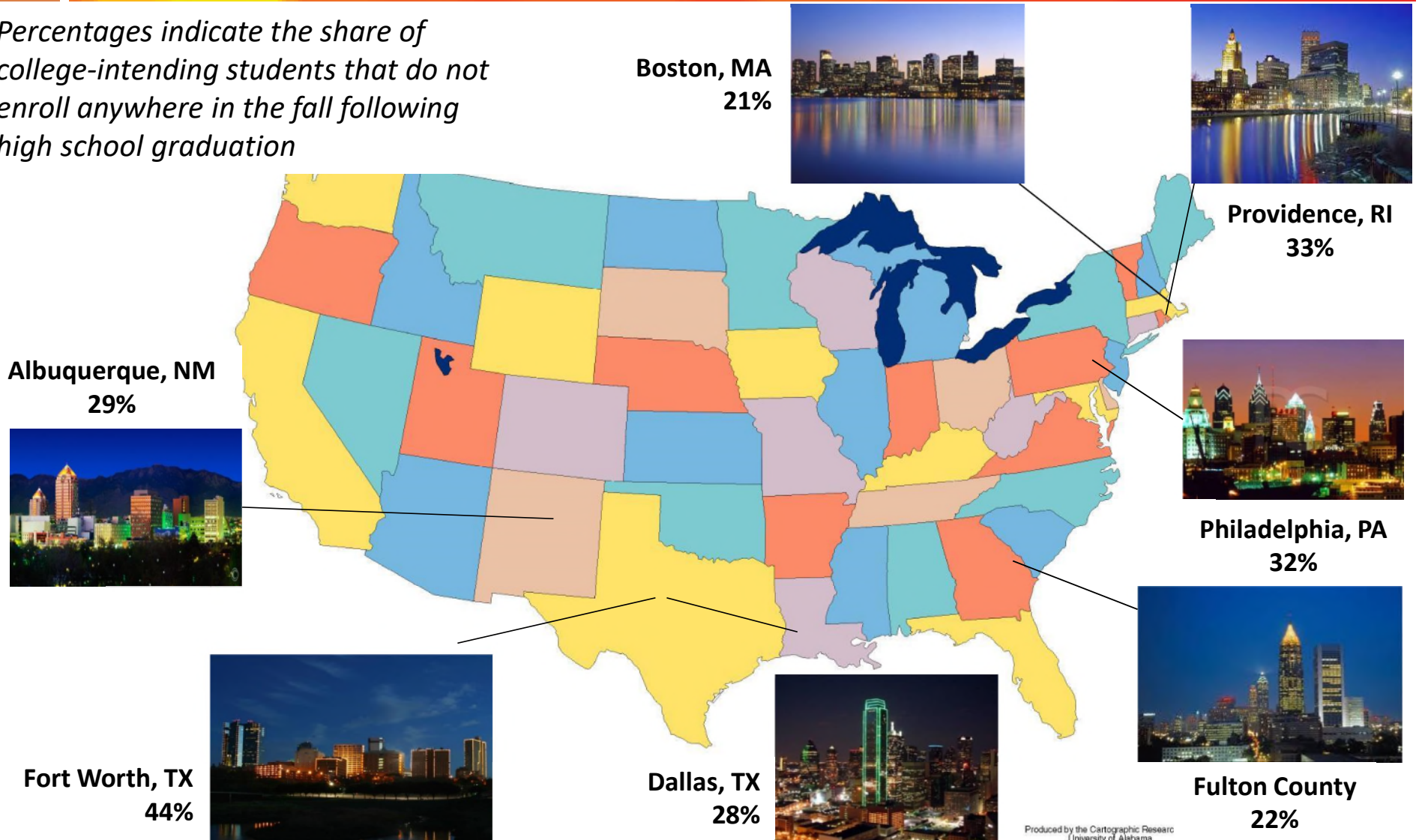


How prevalent is summer melt?

Magnitude of the summer melt problem


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Percentages indicate the share of college-intending students that do not enroll anywhere in the fall following high school graduation



Capacity: 107,601

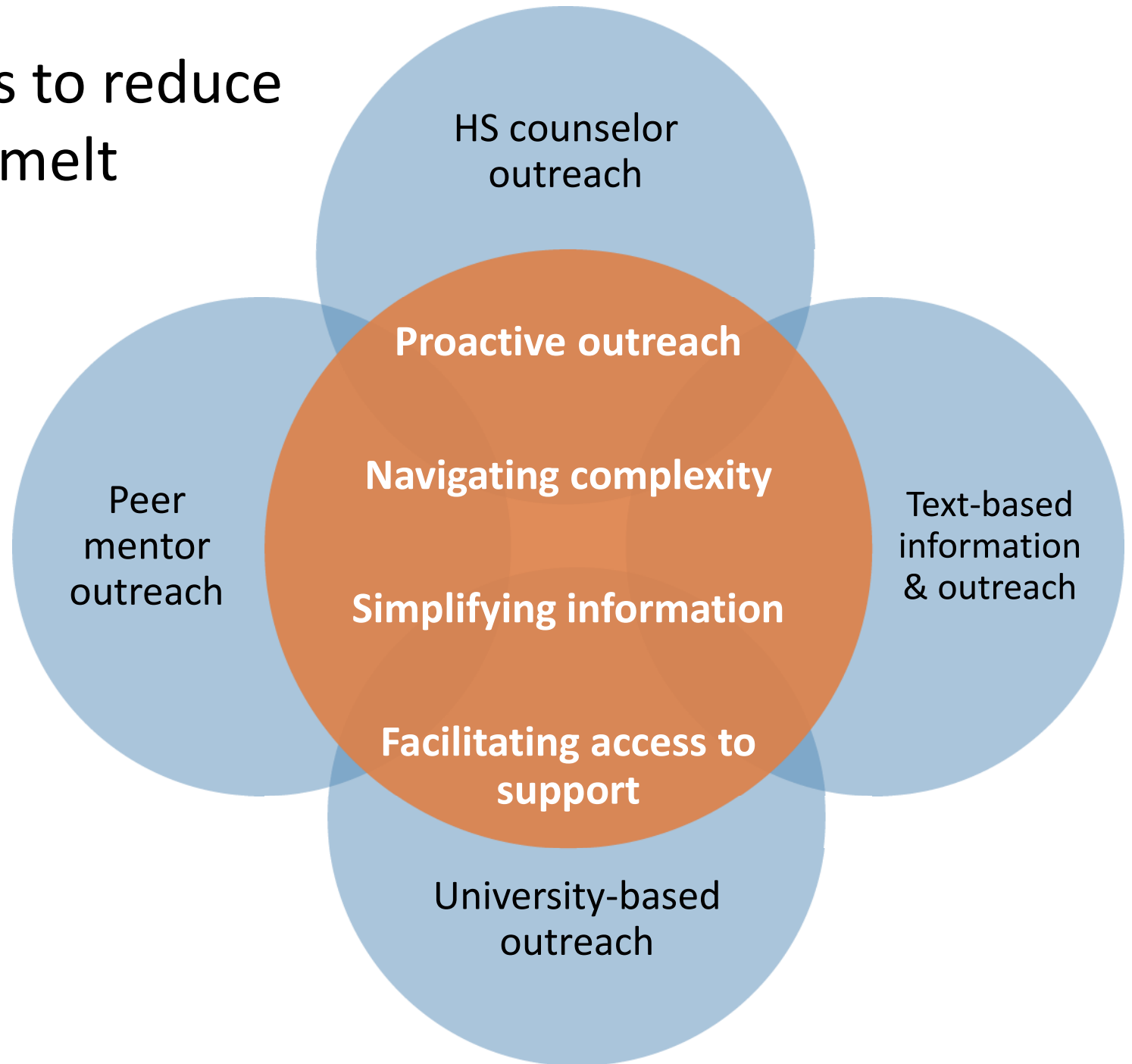




What can I do to reduce
summer melt among my
students?



Strategies to reduce Summer melt



Research Design

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Advisors/counselors advertised the availability of summer support to all eligible students prior to HS graduation

Control group:

Did not receive proactive outreach, but received same level of support if initiated contact

Treatment group:

Received proactive outreach from counselor, peer mentor or via text at several points during the summer

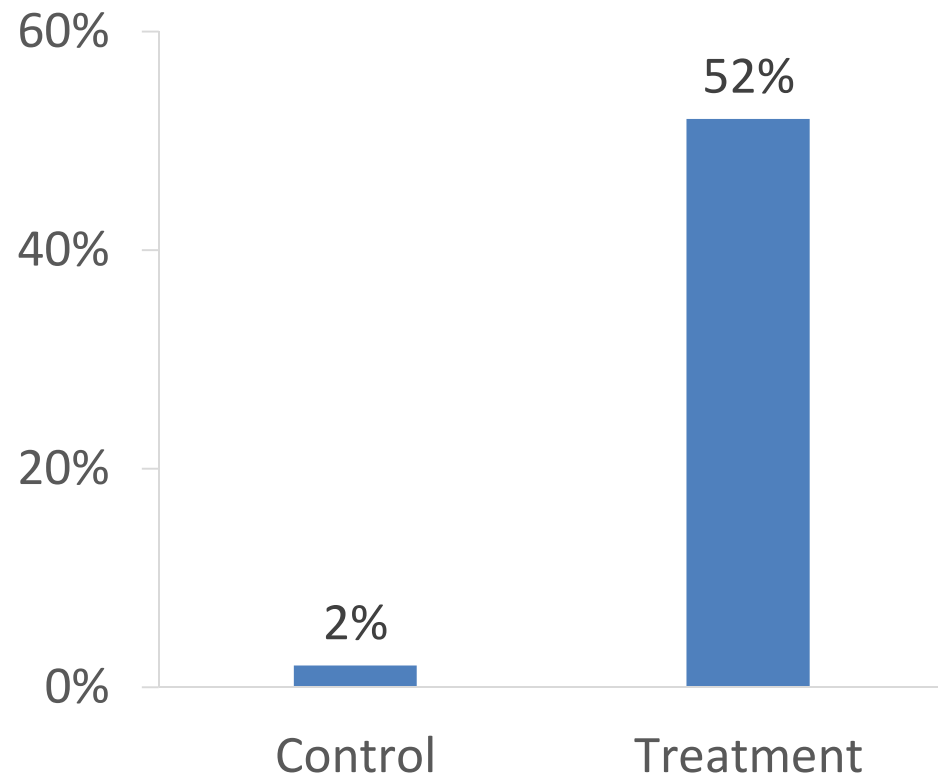
Implemented with over 30,000 students in 13 urban school districts and with university partners since 2011





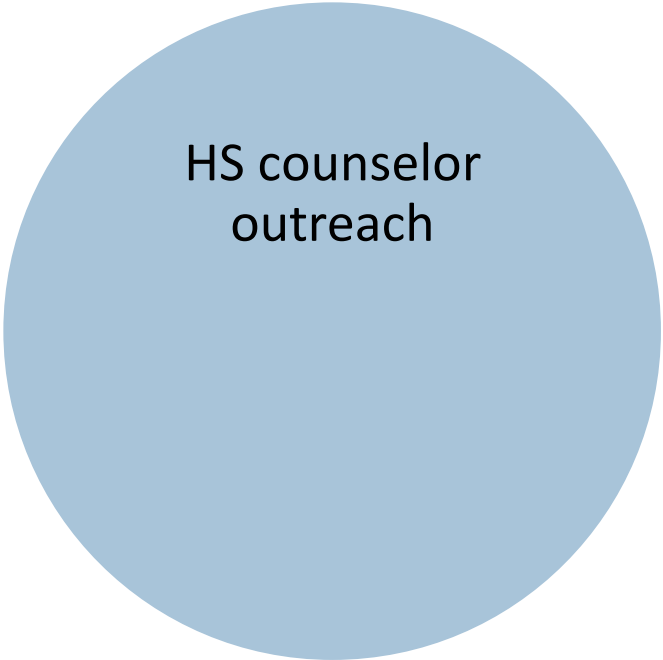
Key principle:
Be proactive!

Share of students receiving summer help





Strategies to reduce Summer melt



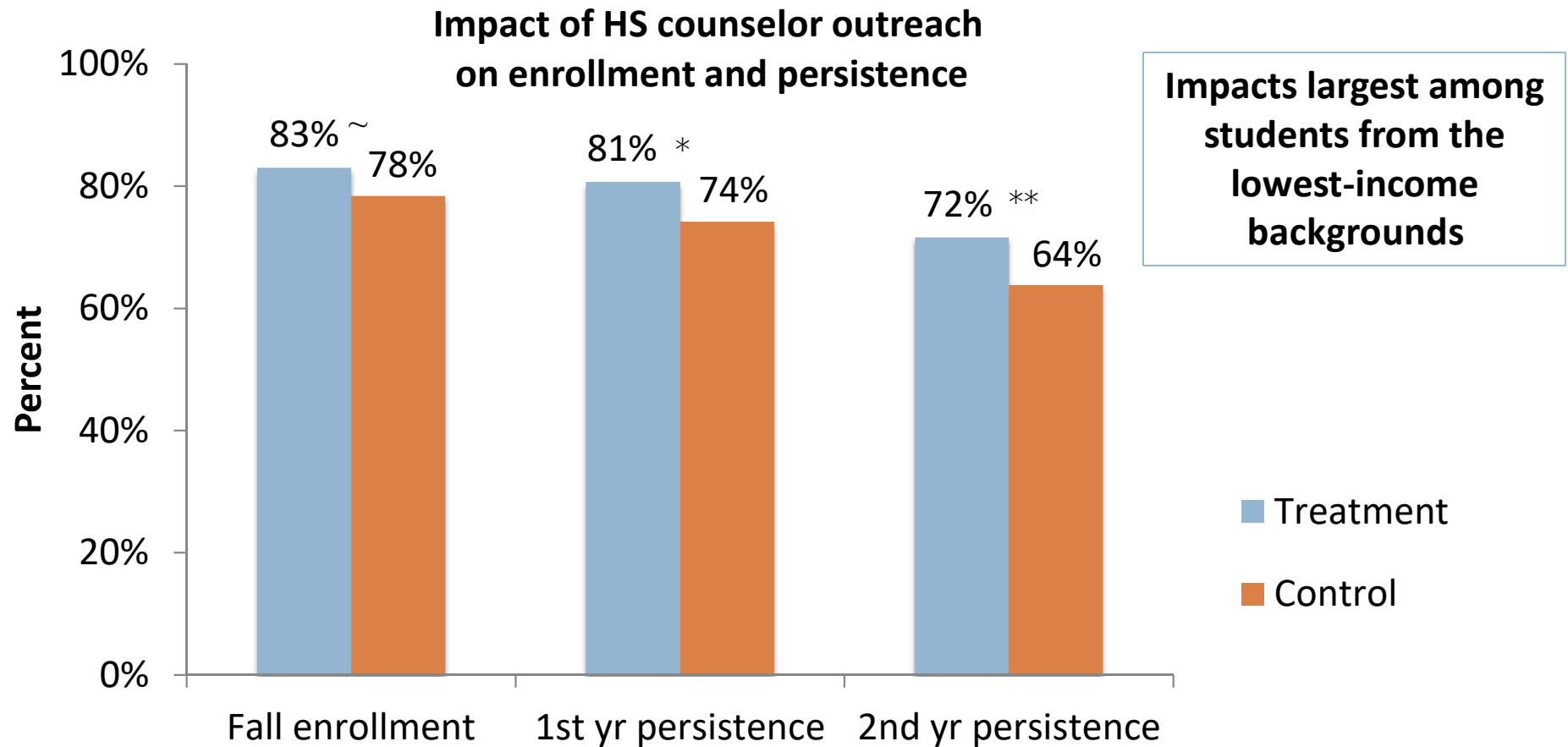
HS counselor
outreach

Summer counselor outreach: Implementation & learnings


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- Counselors paid to work over the summer months
- Counselors assigned to caseloads of ~40 students each
- Counselors responsible for:
 - ▣ Reaching out to each student approximately weekly
 - ▣ Reminding students of key college transition tasks
 - ▣ Checking in on questions & progress
 - ▣ Providing guidance & support
- Learnings:
 - ▣ Text & Facebook messaging more effective than phone / email
 - ▣ Many student questions relate to financial aid process
 - ▣ Students responsive to the offer of support

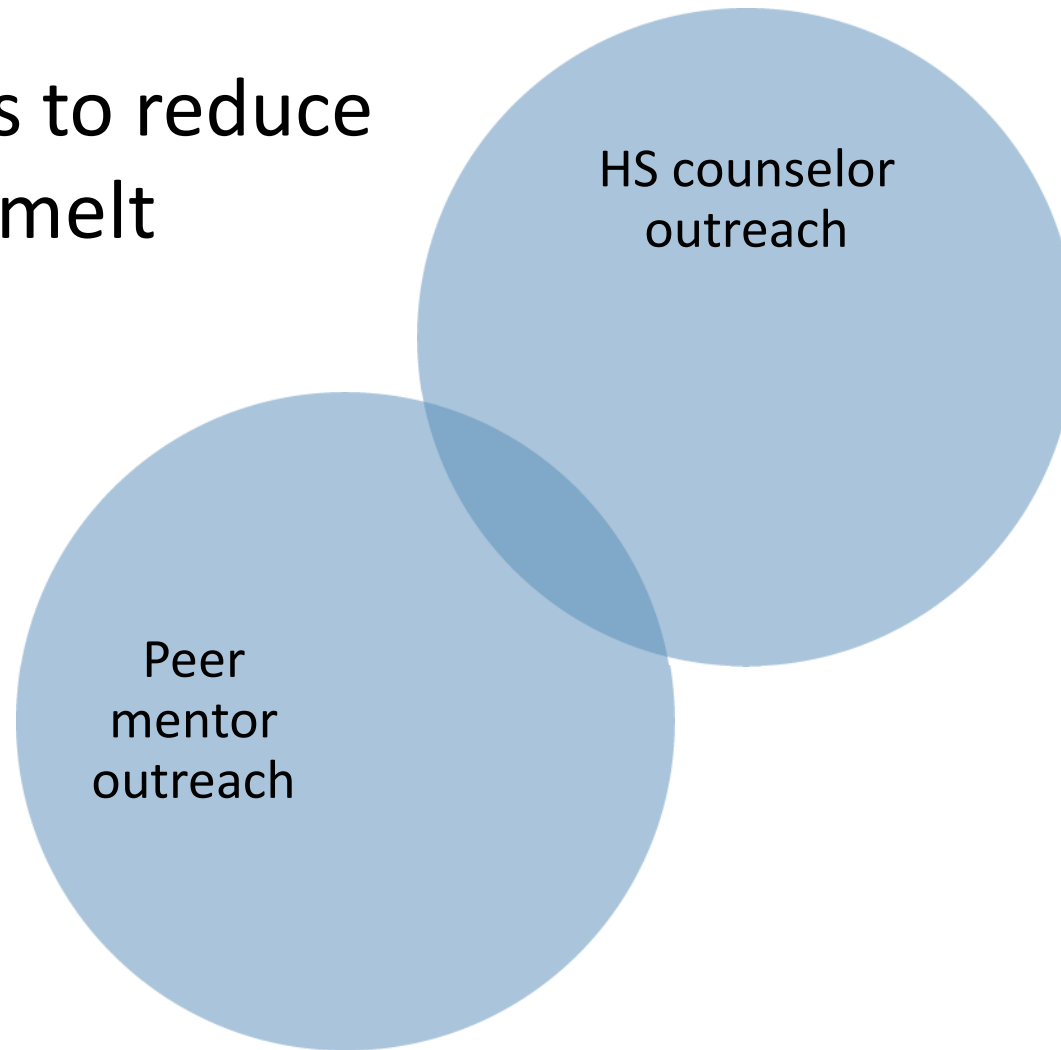
Summer counselor outreach: Improved enrollment & persistence



• Levels of statistical significance: ~ p < 0.10 * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01



Strategies to reduce Summer melt



Power of peer-to-peer support

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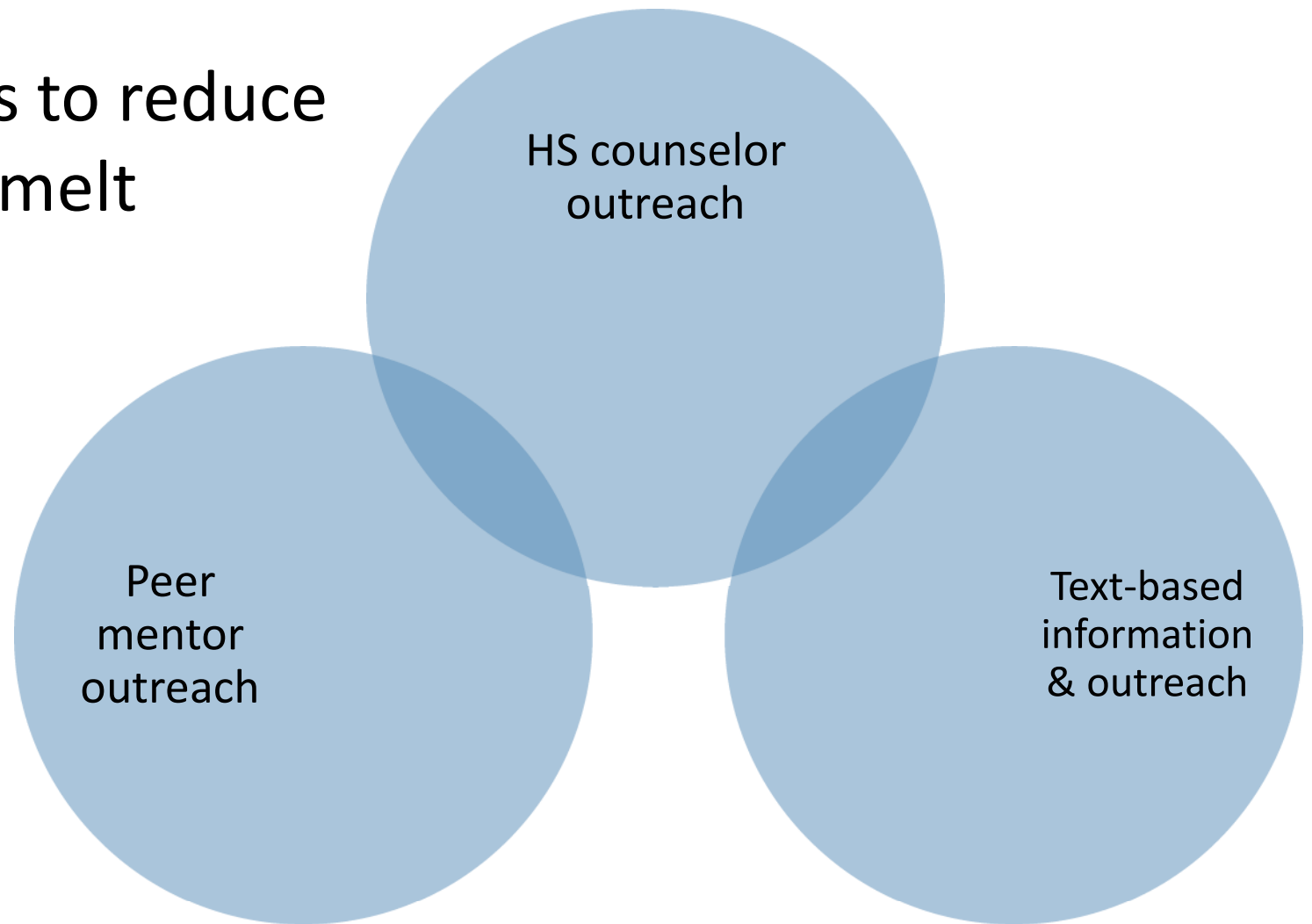
Working as a *Bridge to College* coach provided me with the inspiration not to quit. There I was, serving as a role model to other people. What would it look like for me to transfer back to the city? Coaching other kids through the summer made me see how important it was for me to stay at Skidmore, complete my four years, and not give up on myself. I returned, became more involved in activities, and felt more encouraged to succeed myself.

--Yabi Guerrero, Skidmore class of 2014





Strategies to reduce Summer melt



HS counselor
outreach

Peer
mentor
outreach

Text-based
information
& outreach

Text-based outreach: implementation & learnings

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- Text outreach included ~10 messages on topics such as:
 - ▣ FAFSA and financial aid award letters
 - ▣ Orientation, placement tests, and housing
 - ▣ Tuition bill and health insurance
 - ▣ Getting to campus for start of the semester

Hi Alex! have you signed up for the UM-Boston orientation? Last one is [7/15](#). Need to register? <http://1233433.org>. Need help? Reply to talk w/ an advisor.

Hi Alex! Need help w/ the FAFSA? Questions about your fin. aid award letter, or need more aid? Reply to meet with a DISD counselor

Example text responses

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July 2: “Awwww! Thank you so much!”

July 2: “Who’s this?”

July 8: “Oh hey! You couldn’t text me at a better time! I was wondering if I can make an appointment with you...I need to update my financial aid with my tax forms and I don’t know how to do it. I need your help!”

Typically only a small fraction of students (~5 percent) opt out of a text messaging campaign whereas a large fraction (~75 percent) engage in the messaging.

Facilitating student-counselor interactions: The **SignalVine** platform

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uAspire reminder: Fall bill due 8/7. Do you have a good plan for paying ur bill? Need help? Questions about loans? Text us or visit our walk-in hrs!

I saw what my bill is so is that what financial aid takes care of

Do you know how much your bill is for?

3000 & some change

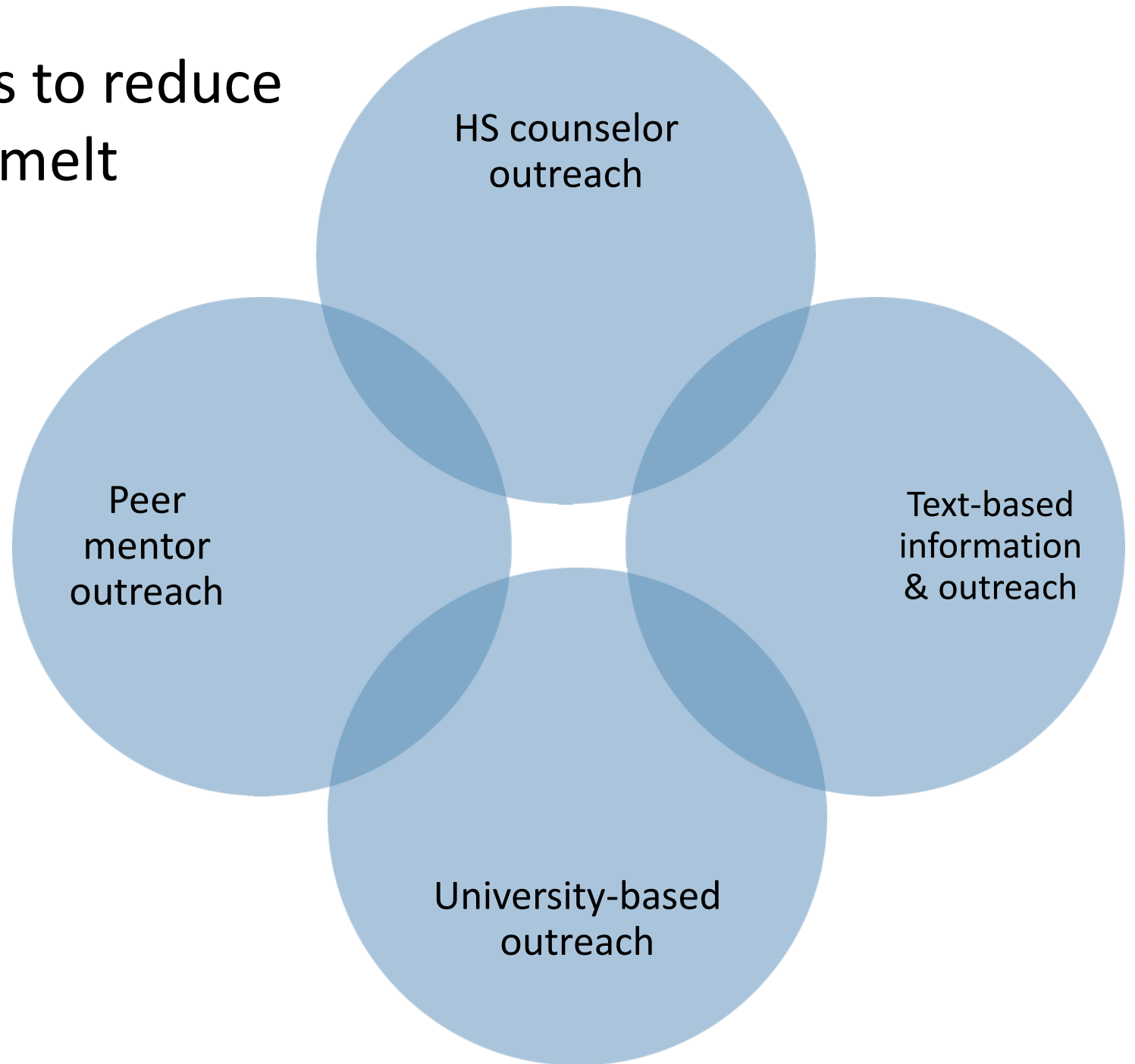
That doesn't sound like your fin aid has been applied yet. Did you check your email? Check to see if you have any emails from the aid office.

I figured it out, they need my transcript

Ok that makes sense. Once they received this, the fin aid office may have more papers for you to fill out. Be sure to check your email often and let us know.



Strategies to reduce Summer melt



Georgia State University partnership

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□ GSU context

- ▣ High rates of summer melt among recent cohorts
- ▣ Majority of incoming students are Pell eligible
- ▣ 1/3 admitted students are first-generation college goers

□ Research collaboration with AdmitHub



Meet Pounce

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Reminders



Guided Tutorials



Surveys

Building Pounce

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Separate workflows pertaining to all steps in the GSU college transition process



Intent to enroll form submission



FAFSA submission/verification, accepting loans, paying tuition bill



Orientation registration & attendance



Transcript and test scores submission



Housing deposits



Immunization records submission



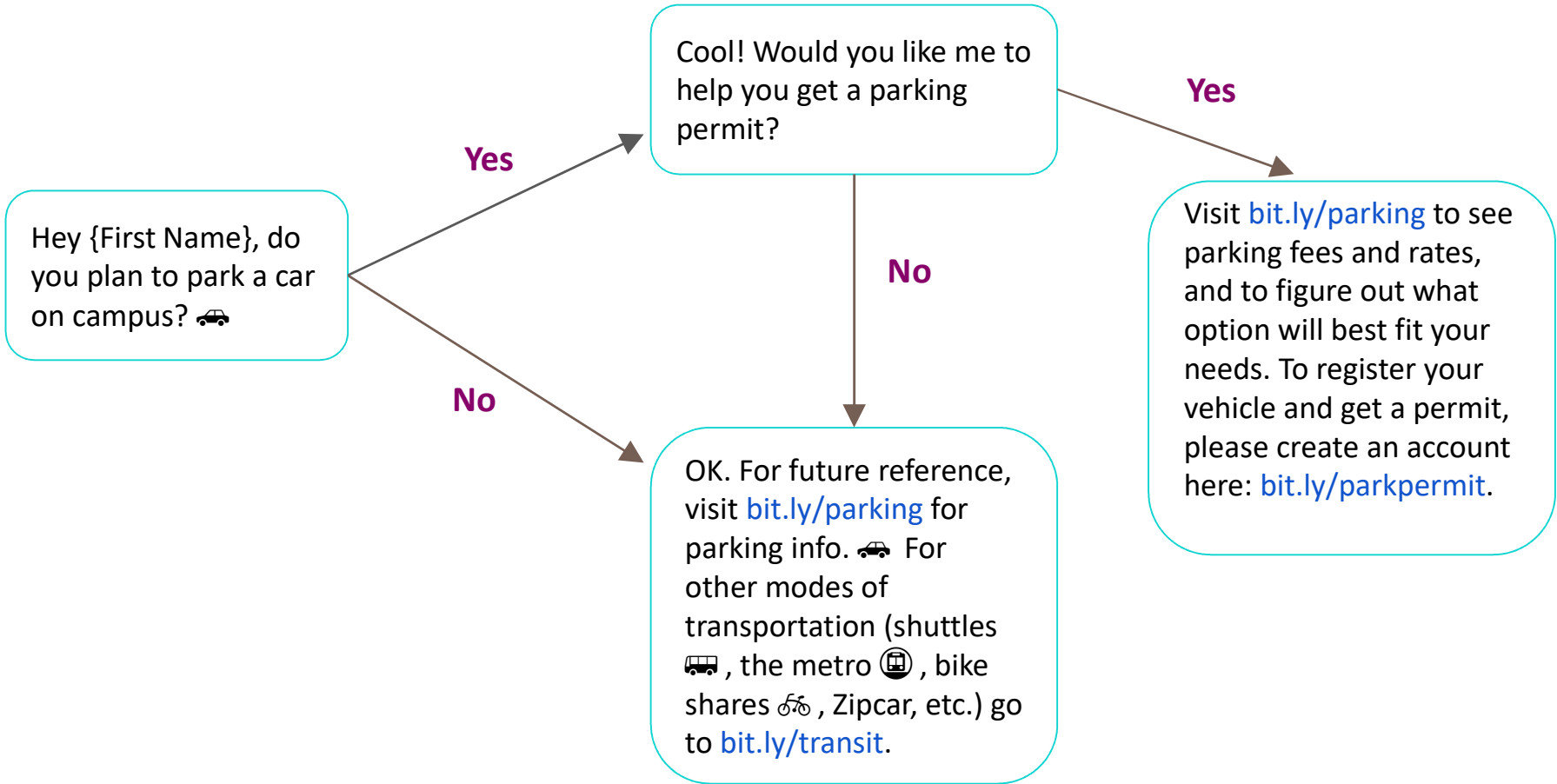
Placement test sign-up

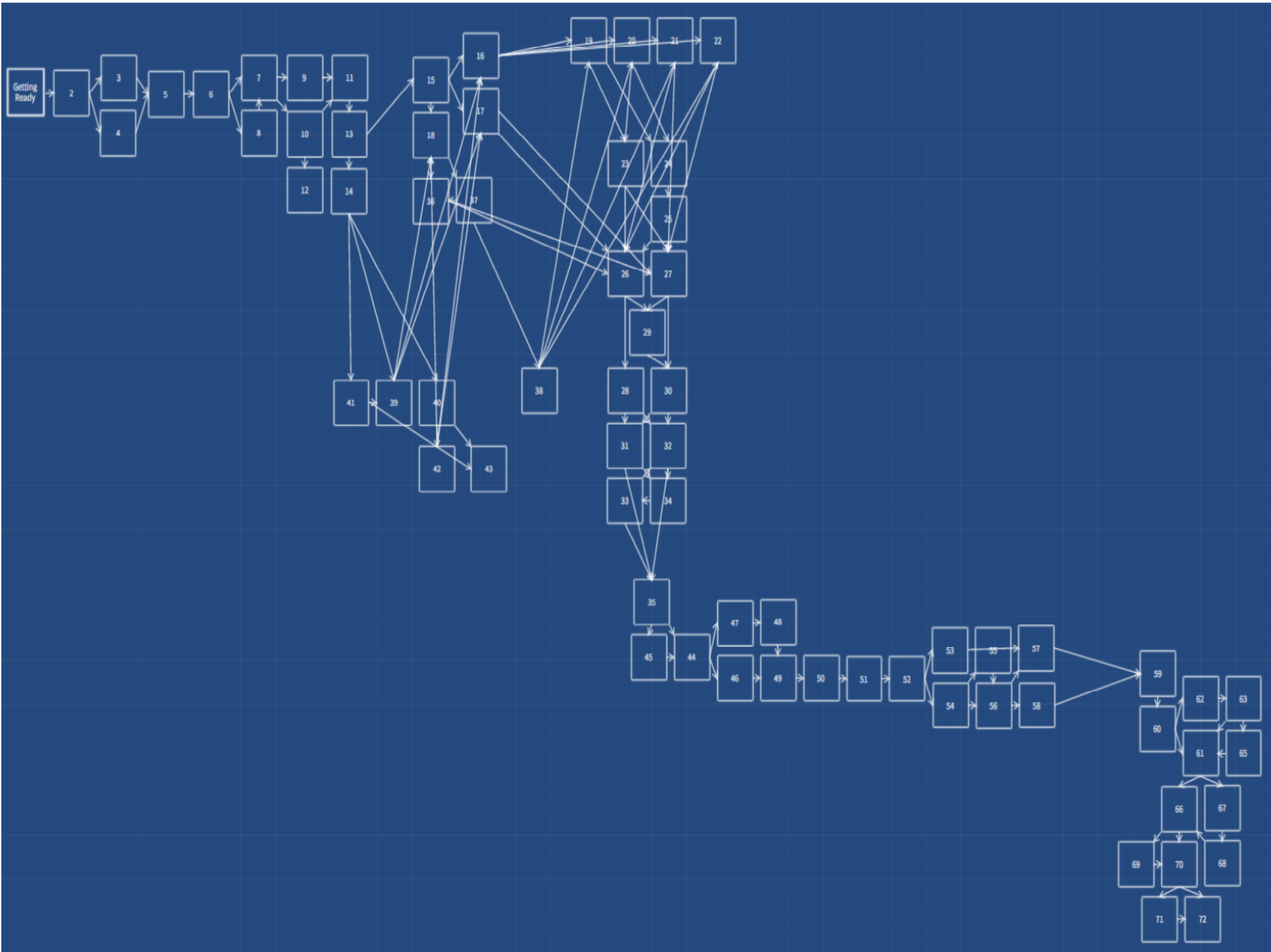


Planning for transportation



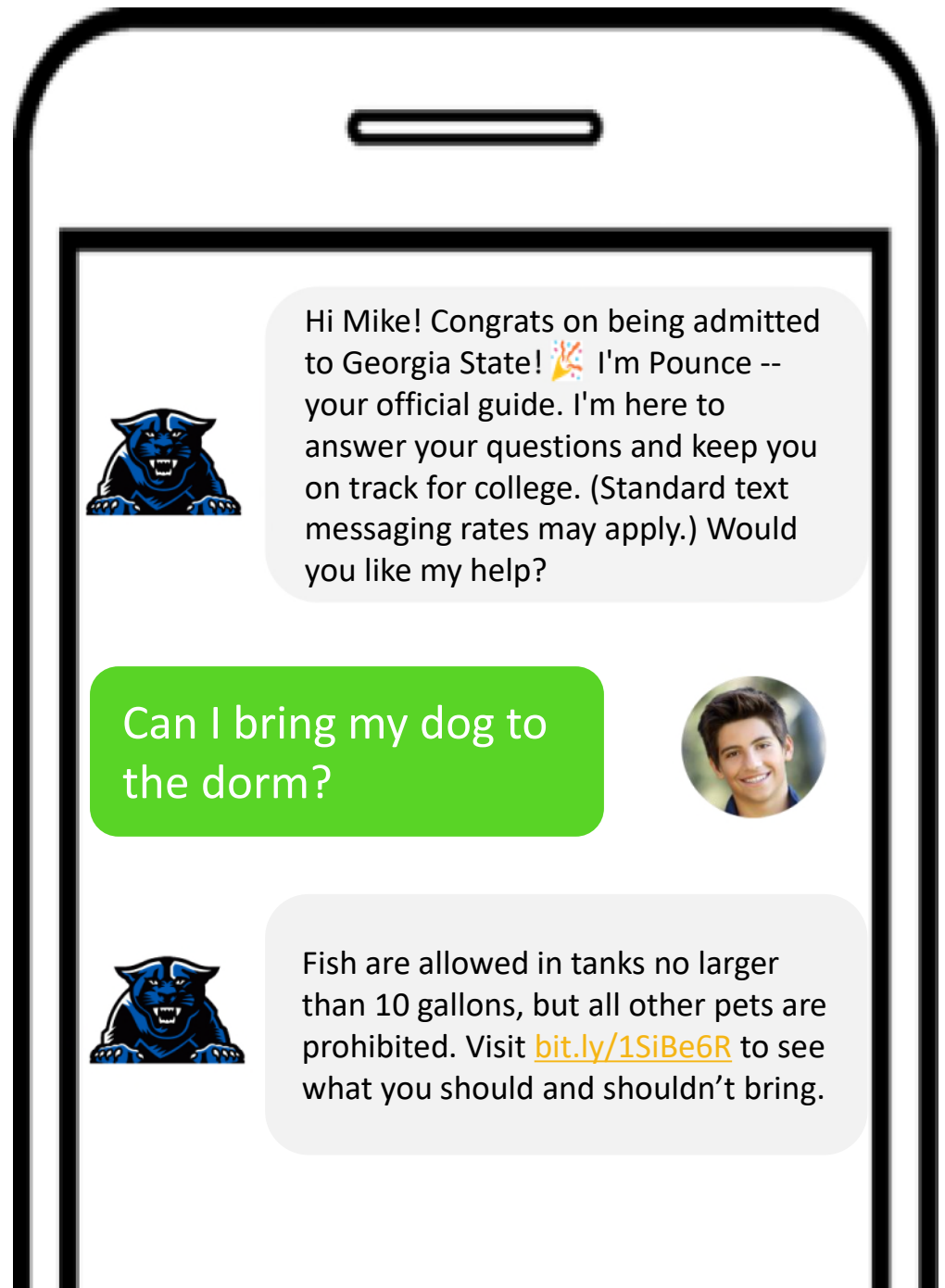
Meal plan sign-up





Chatbots

Computer programs that mimic conversation with people using artificial intelligence



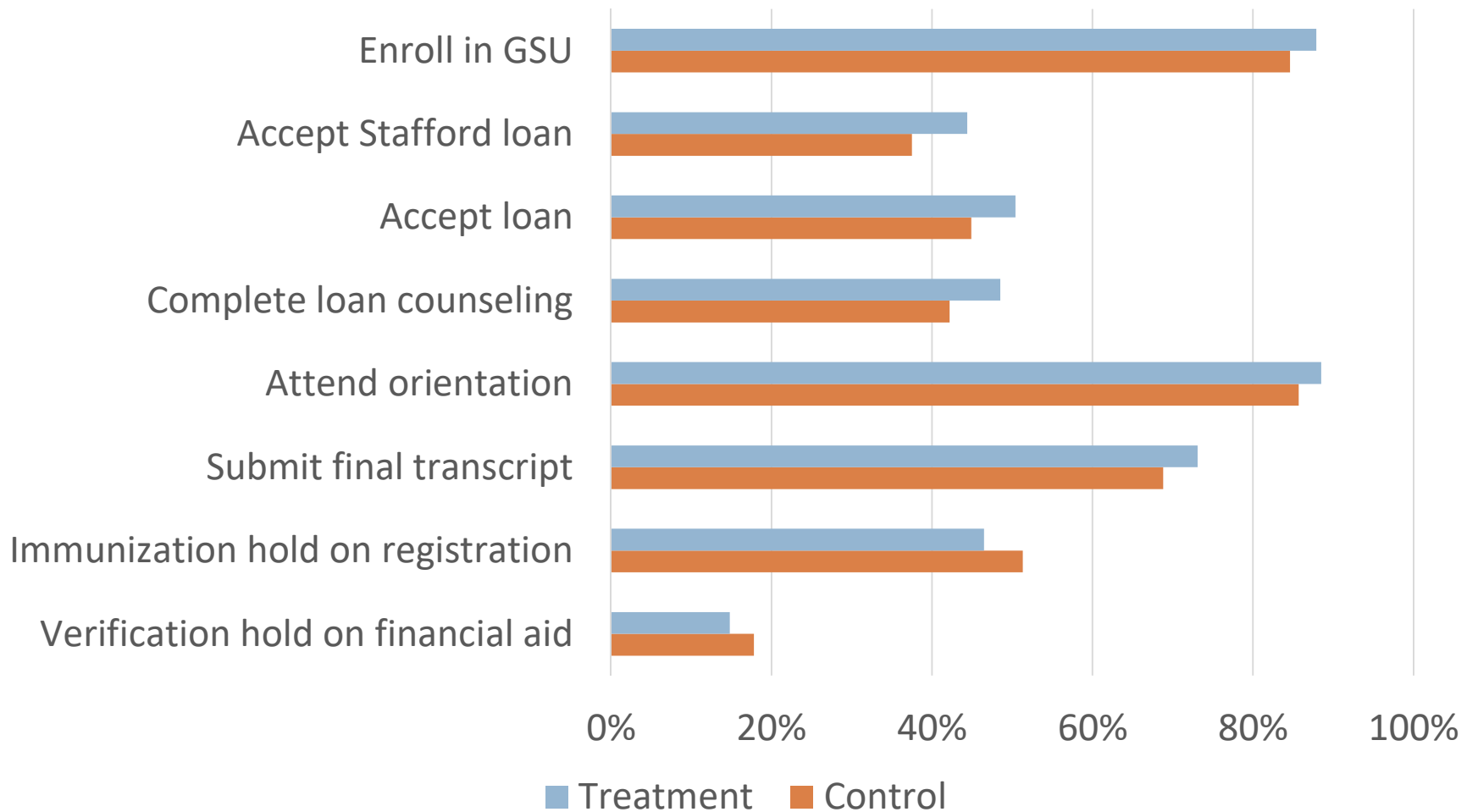
Implementing Pounce

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- Implemented in Summer 2016
- Integrated with GSU student information system
 - ▣ Specific workflows targeted only to students who needed them
- When Pounce couldn't answer student questions automatically, it forwarded them via email to a campus advisor
- Counselor responses filtered through system to student & were used to update Pounce's knowledge base – making the system smarter over time

Impacts of Pounce

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Thank you!

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