

A Mixed Methods Approach to Determine Why Students Leave

Gay Hylton
Institutional Research and Planning
Humboldt State University
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Background



“I decided to leave due to lack of funding and the inability to finance my education without employment. I have moved to my hometown where I'll be attending CSUS. I also didn't like the campus culture and found it hard to make friends, and I felt alone being a student of color.”

Survey Participant



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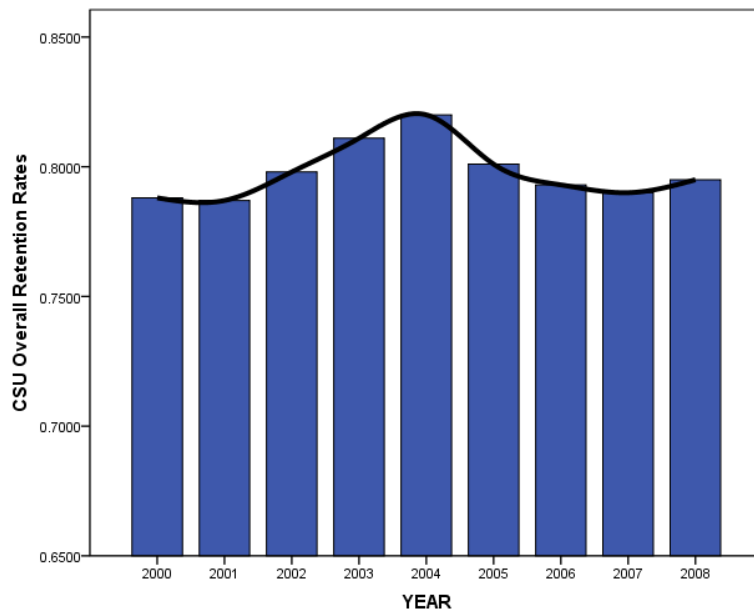
HSU Fall 2010 State Enrollment by County

HSU Fall 2010 Enrollment

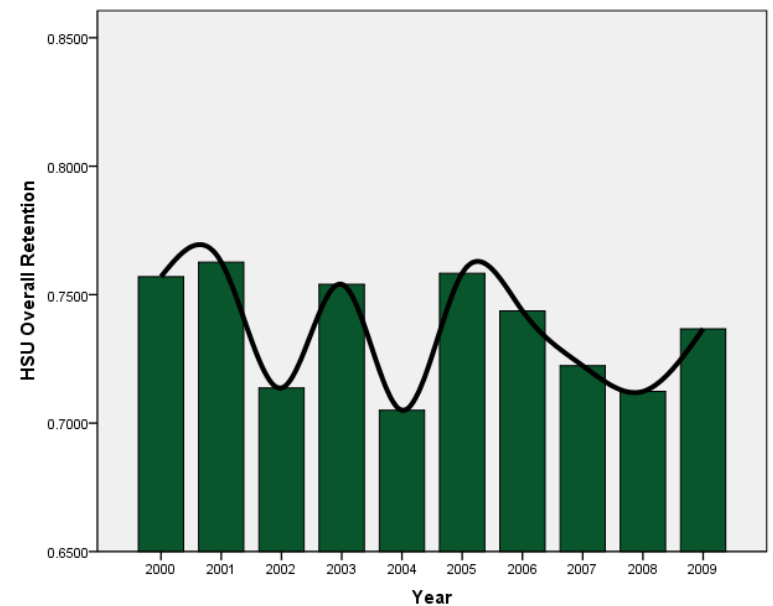
Ethnicity	Humboldt State University		Humboldt County*
	#	%	
American Indian	133	1.7%	5.7%
Black	268	3.4%	0.9%
Latino	1133	14.3%	3.1%
Asian	314	4.0%	1.7%
Pacific Islander	50	0.6%	0.2%
Two or more	496	6.2%	4.4%
White	4662	59.0%	81.6%
Unknown	846	10.8%	2.4%
Grand Total	7902	100.0%	100.0%

*U.S. Census Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Comparison of One Year Retention Rates CSU vs. HSU

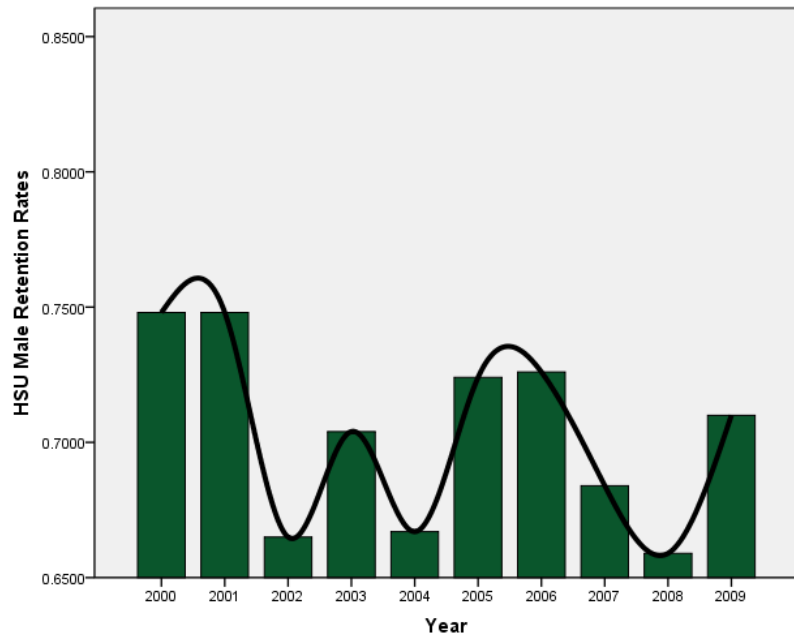


CSU Overall Retention Rates

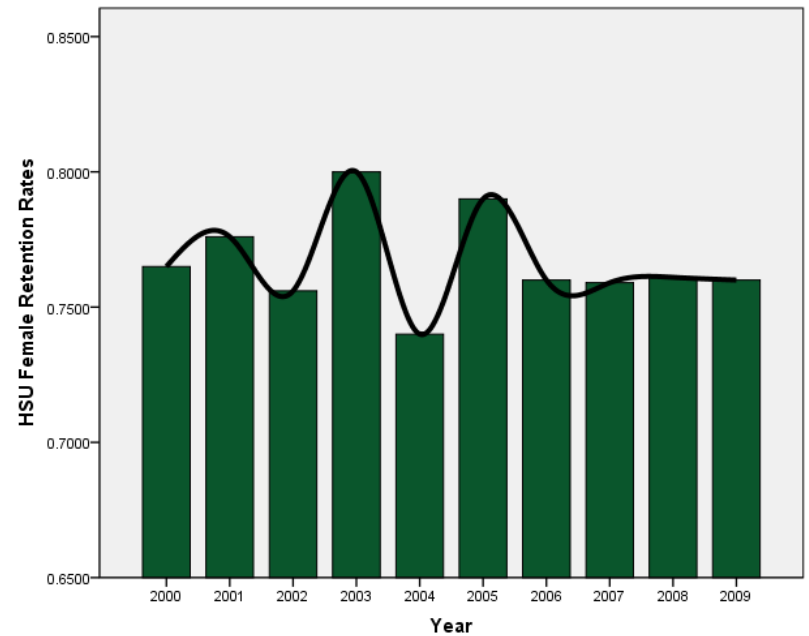


HSU Overall Retention Rates

One Year Retention Rates of Males vs. Females

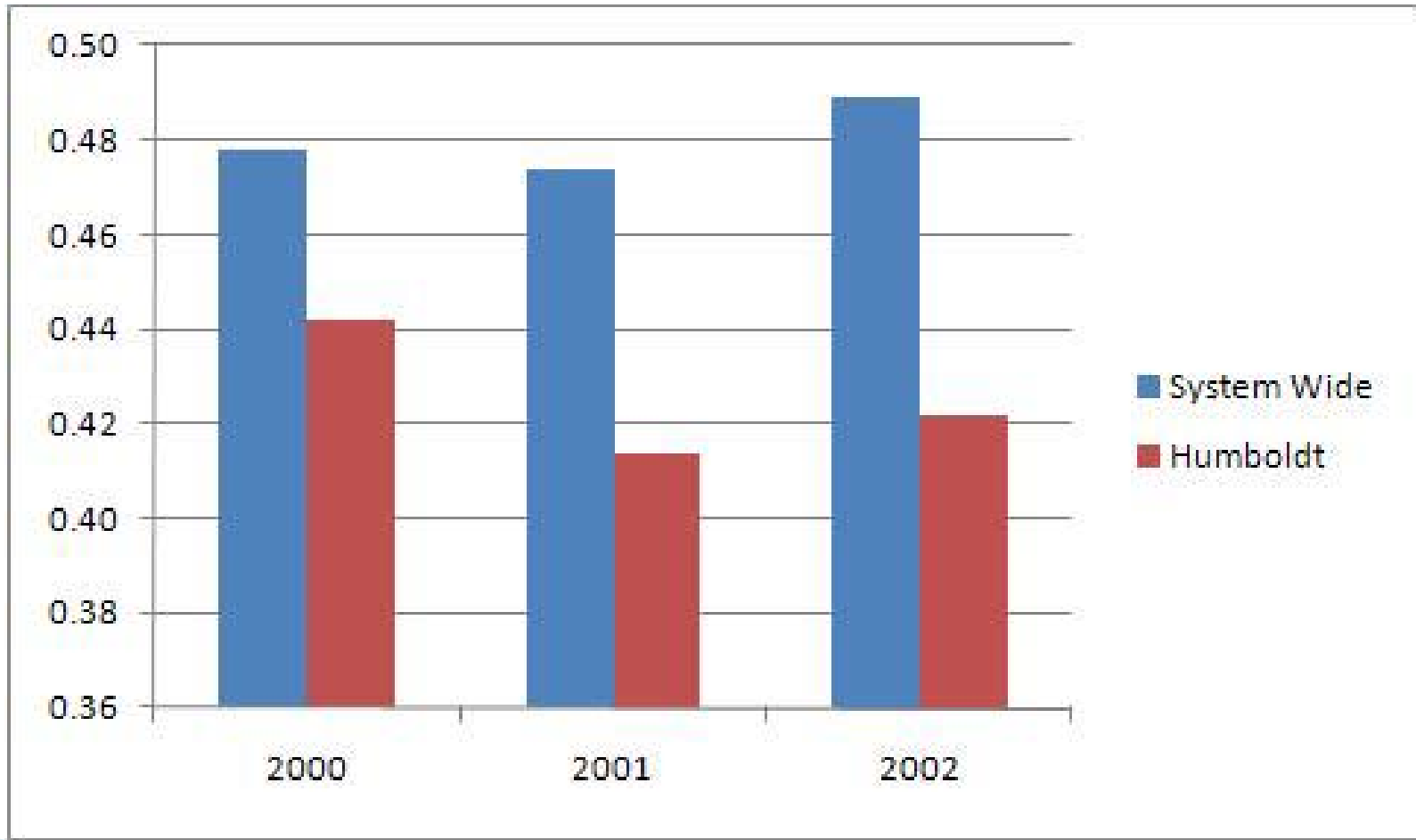


HSU Male Retention Rates



HSU Female Retention Rates

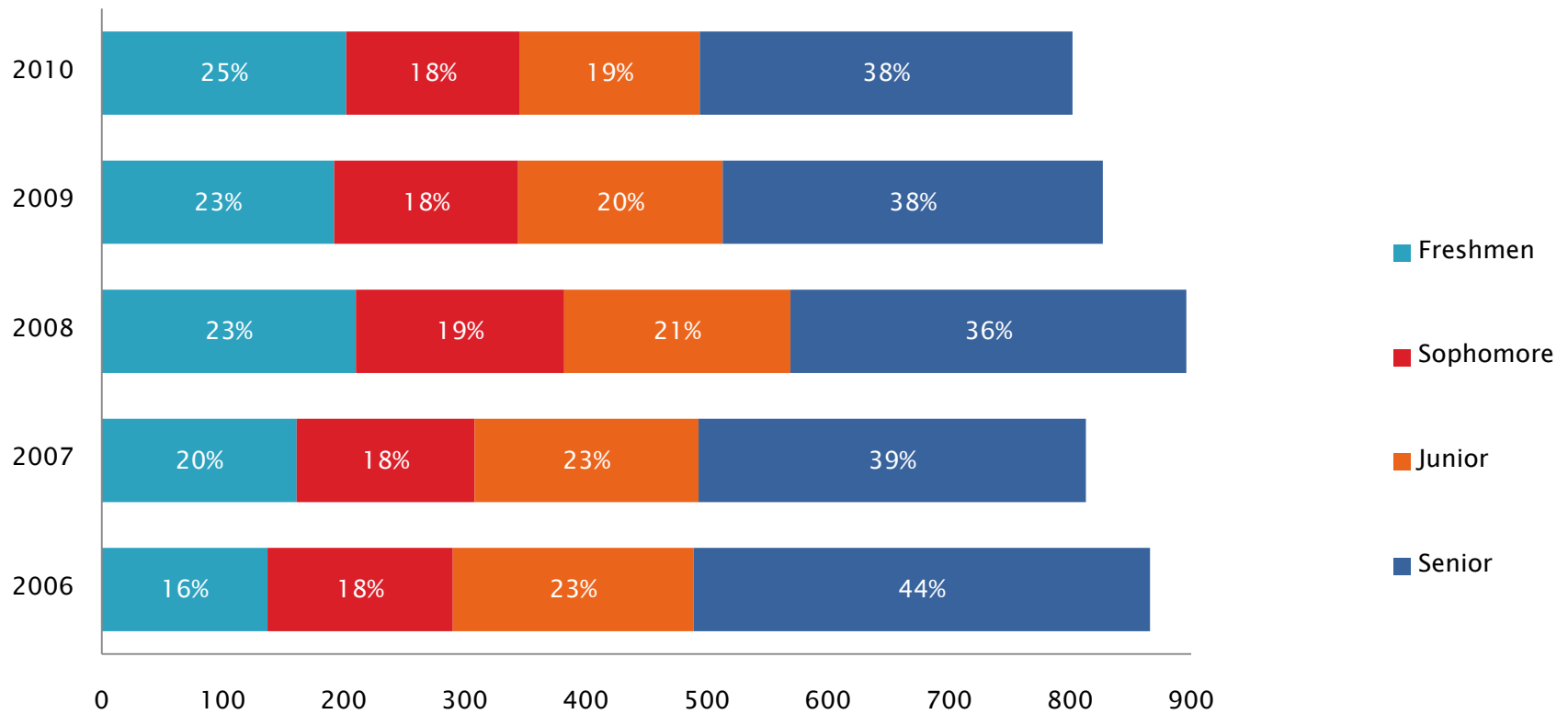
Six-Year Graduation Rates



Why Do Second Year Students Leave HSU?

- ▶ Qualitative study done in 2009 by Dr. Rees Hughes
- ▶ Cohort of first-time freshmen Fall 2006
- ▶ Highlighted several reasons
 - Money Issues
 - Academic Performance
 - Closer to Home/Homesickness
 - Institutional Fit
- ▶ Generally positive about HSU experience

5 Year Trend for Non Returning Spring to Fall



Fall 2010 Non Returners Compared to Returners

Class	Returned		Did Not Return		Total
Freshman	1011	83.3%	202	16.7%	1213
Sophomore	904	86.3%	143	13.7%	1047
Junior	1273	89.5%	149	10.5%	1422
Senior	1547	83.4%	308	16.6%	1855
Total	4735	86.0%	802	14.0%	5537

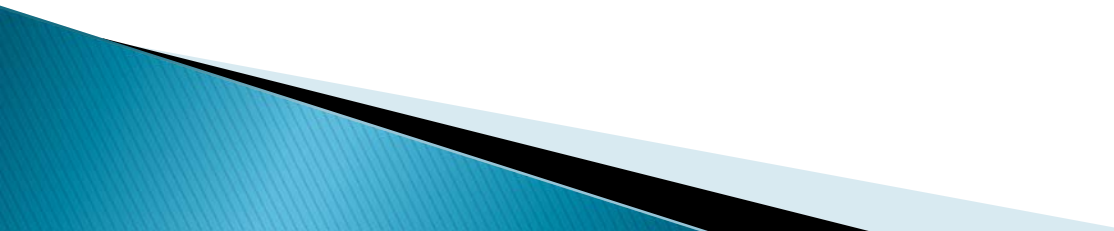
The Survey



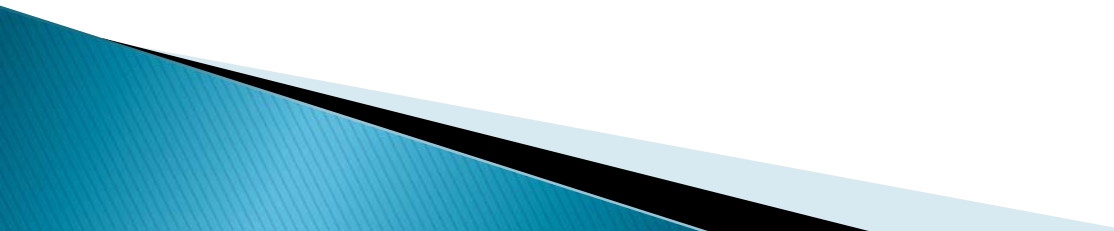
“Immensely enjoyed Arcata, Humboldt State, and the community culture.. but not satisfied with the general educational system.”

–Survey Participant

Deployment

- ▶ Via Survey Monkey
 - ▶ Personal email from me to their HSU email address
 - ▶ First invitation sent on August 24, 2010 (classes started 8/23/10)
 - ▶ Second invitation sent on August 31, 2010
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Who We Asked

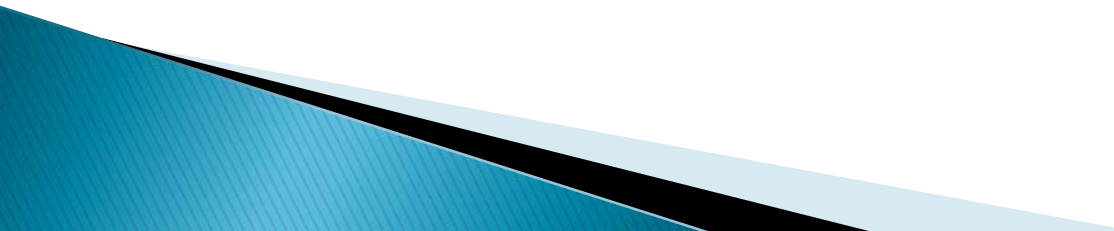
- ▶ Undergraduates
 - ▶ Not academically disqualified
 - ▶ Not a transitory student
 - ▶ Those eligible but not yet registered by 2nd day of classes
 - ▶ N=802; 30% response rate
- 

- ▶ You have received this survey because you have not yet registered for Fall 2010 classes at Humboldt State University. Please take approximately 5 minutes to complete this survey and better inform us of students' decisions about attending HSU. This will help us to identify services needed for student success at HSU.

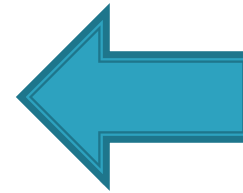
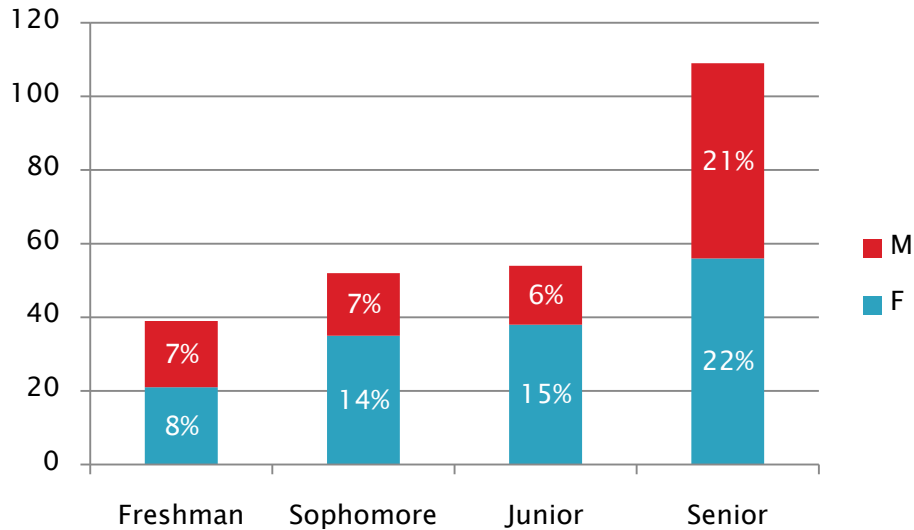
Do you plan to register and attend HSU for the Fall 2010 semester?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	8.6%	21
No	91.4%	223
answered question		244
skipped question		0

1st Question on Survey

And Then We Asked

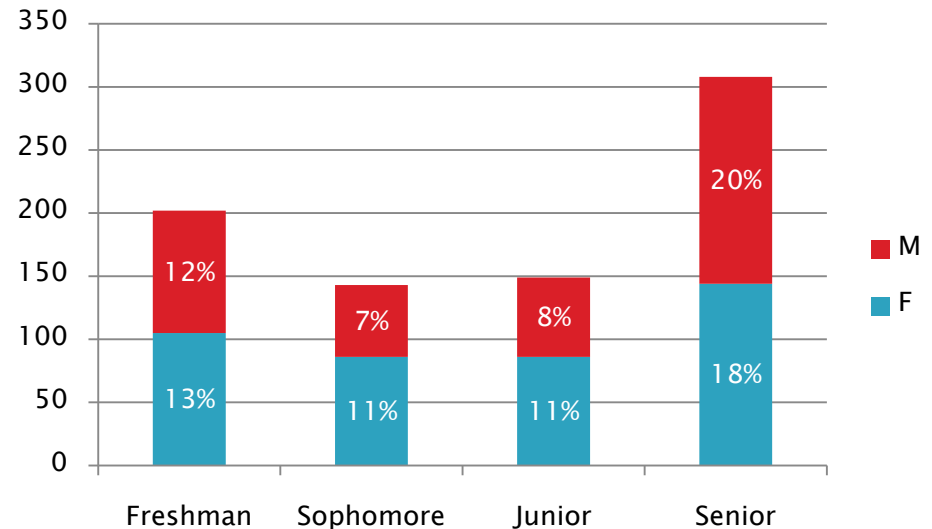
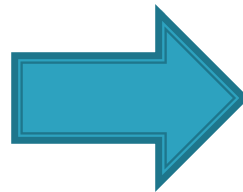
- ▶ Critical issues in their decision to not return
 - ▶ Did they contact any professors, administrators or staff prior to their decision
 - ▶ Specifically who they contacted and if the information was helpful
 - ▶ Geographical location
 - ▶ First generation information
 - ▶ Overall HSU experience
 - ▶ Enrollment at another institution
- 

Who Responded

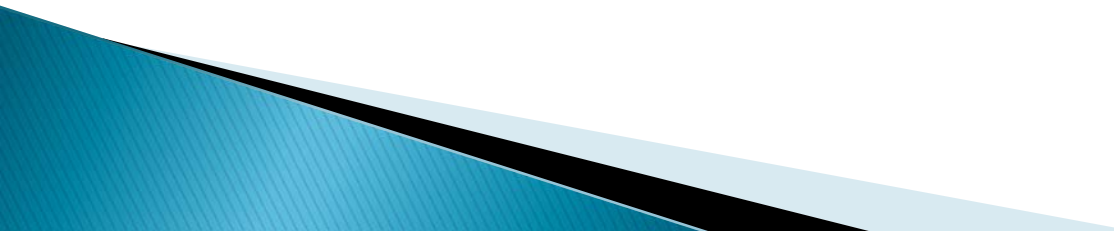


Respondents

All Non Returning Students



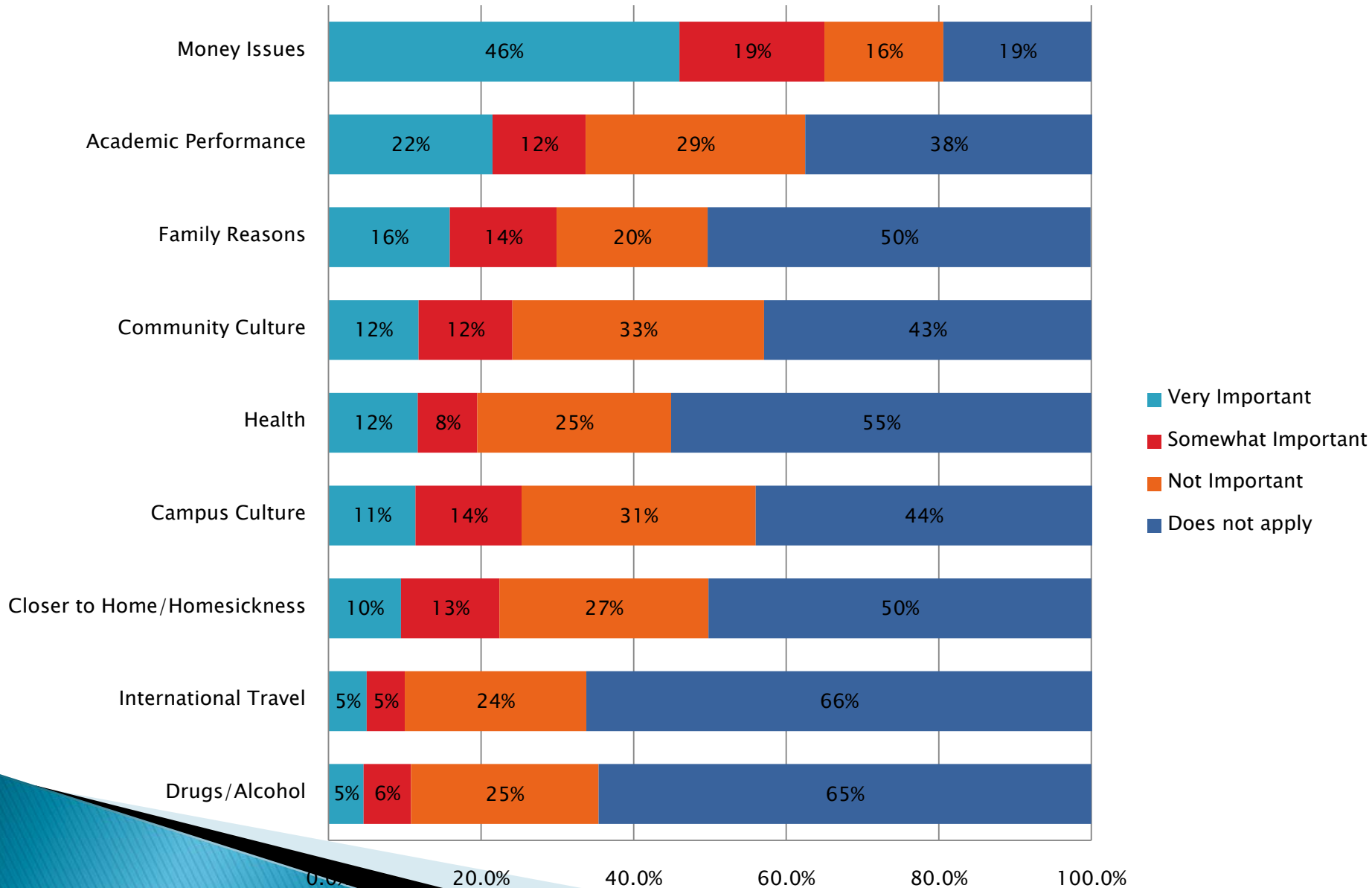
Other Contacts Attempted

- ▶ Why – Try to increase response rate and obtained additional information
 - ▶ Phone Calls
 - Attempted during a regular work day by graduate interns
 - Limited to freshmen who had not replied to the survey
 - Out of 130 calls only obtained 11 responses
 - ▶ Focus Groups
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What they said

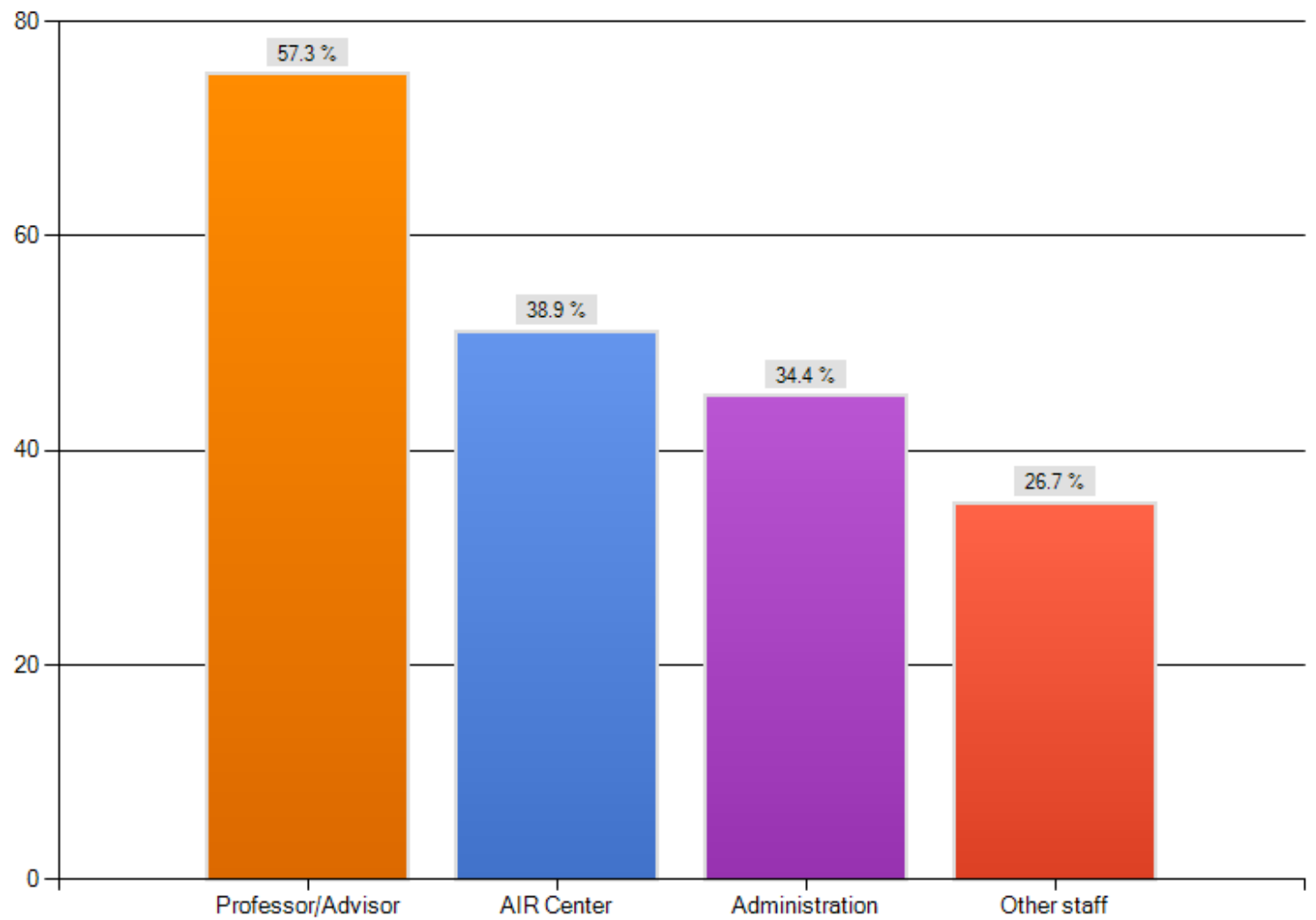
- ▶ How would you rate your educational experience at HSU?
 - 52% rated their experience positive
 - Another 21% rated their experience somewhat positive
 - AND
 - Only 5% responded that their experience was negative

Please tell us how critical the following issues were in your decision not to return to HSU for Fall 2010.



Help

Who did you contact? Choose all that apply.



Did not ask for help

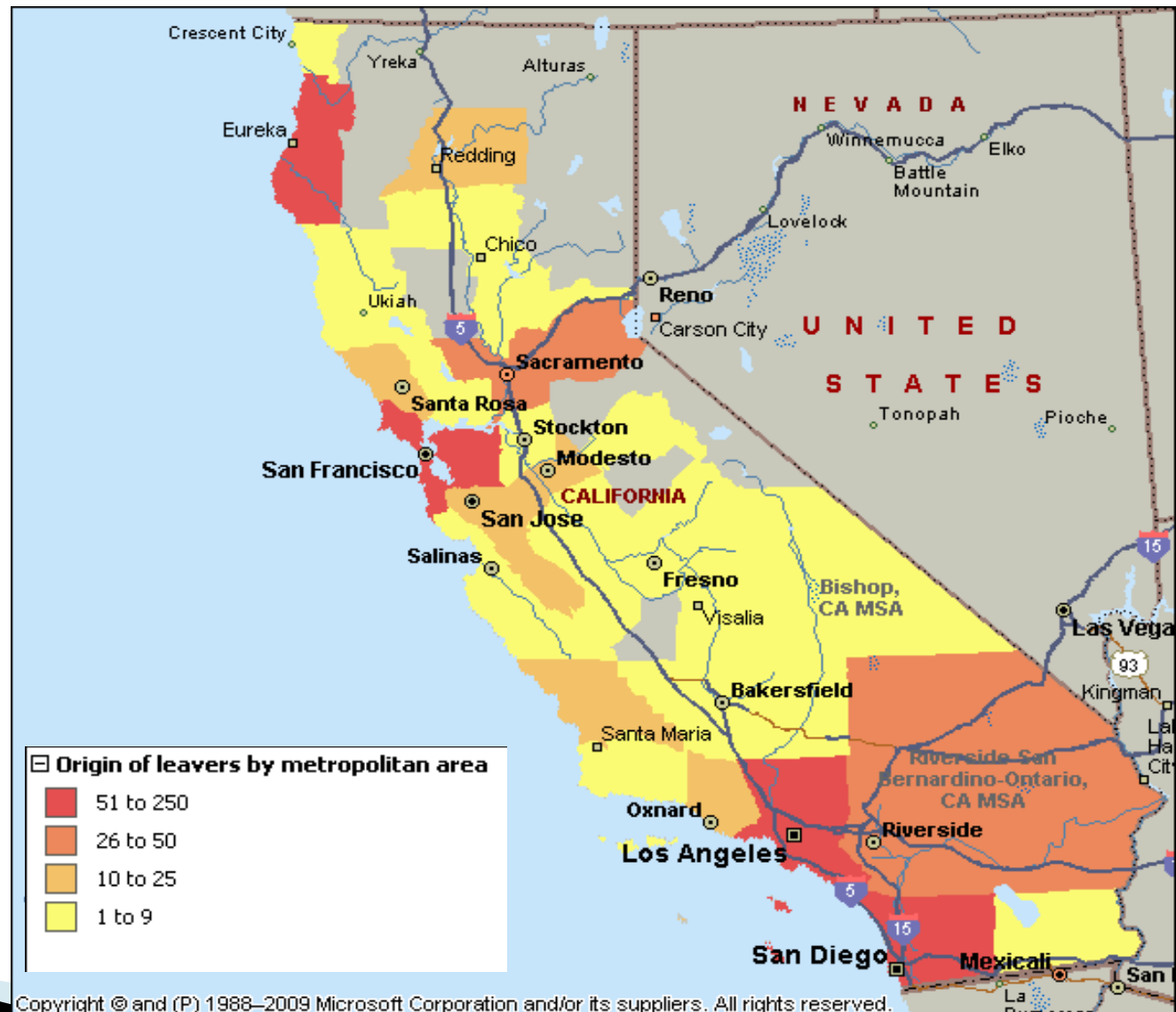
	Total No Contact	Did not know who to contact	Reasons for leaving had nothing to do with HSU	Received unsatisfactory information in the past
Freshman	10(12%)	2(7%)	6(15%)	1(9%)
Sophomore	19(22%)	10(32%)	7(17%)	1(9%)
Junior	17(20%)	6(19%)	9(22%)	2(18%)
Senior	39(46%)	13(42%)	19(46%)	7(64%)

Where they went

»» “Transferred to a different university with a program more suited to my needs.”

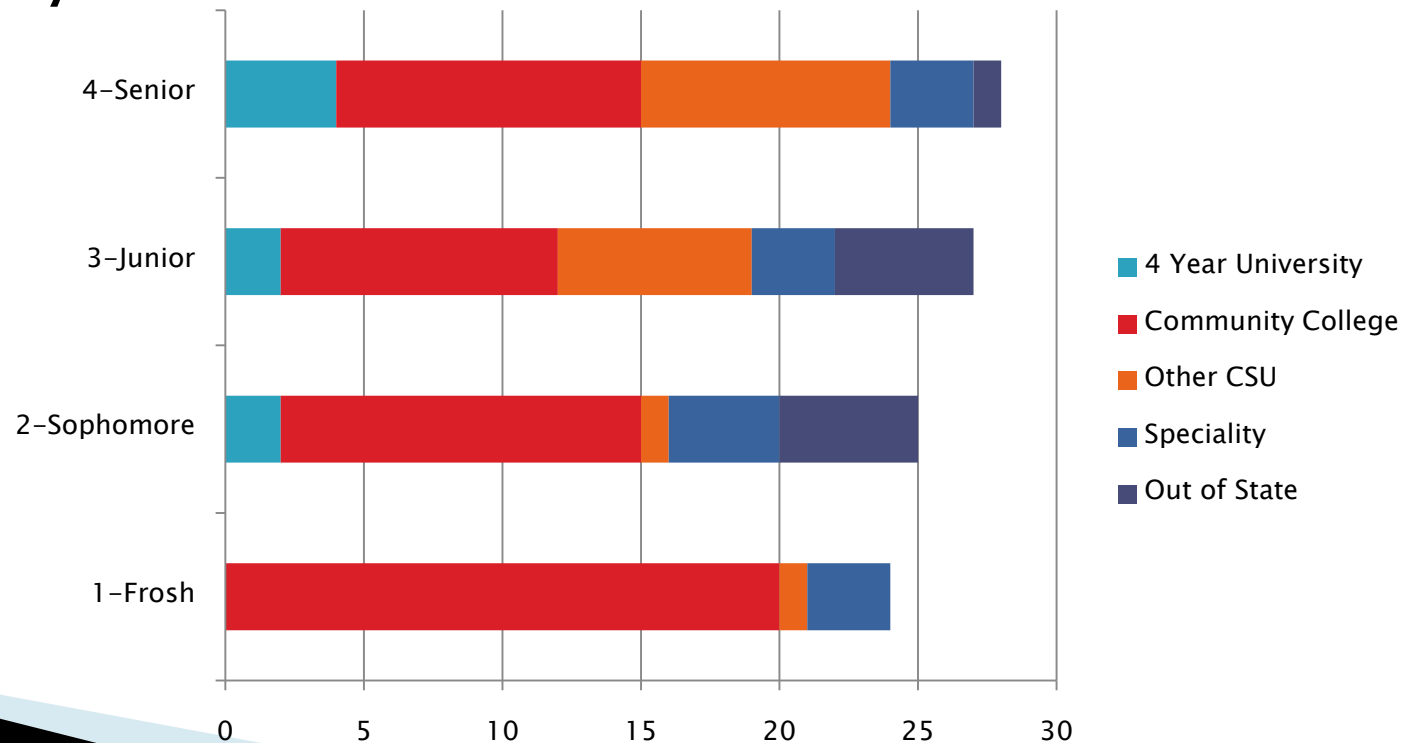
–Survey Participant

Origin of Non Returners 2010



Responders

- ▶ 75% said geographic location of HSU did not influence their decision to leave
- ▶ ½ of the responders hometown is over 500 miles away

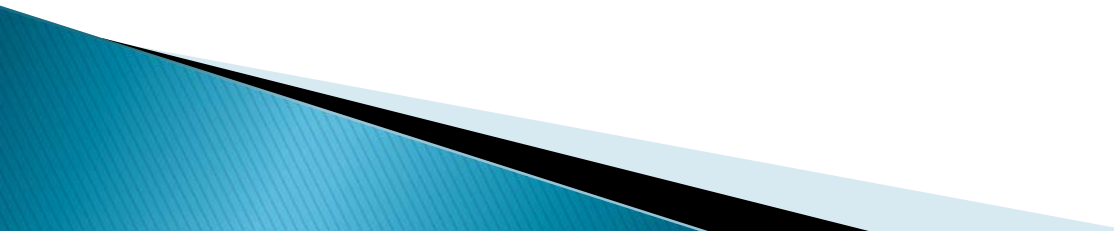


Where do we go from here?

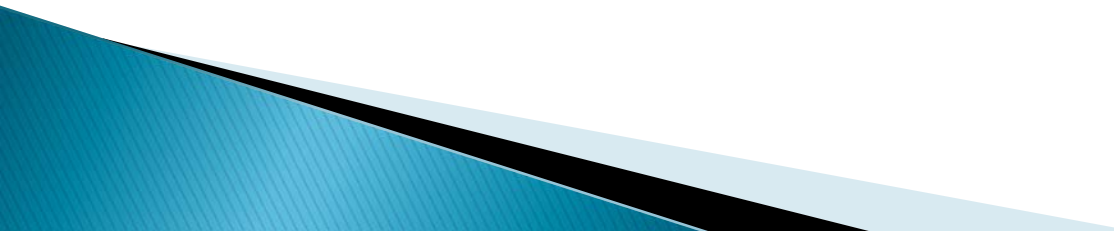
»» “No assistance, Humboldt State was the best school I ever went to, but my homesickness kicked in for sure and I could not handle it anymore. Thank you for the wonderful two year experience I could never replace.”

–Survey Participant

Semester Off

- ▶ No formal university notification required to take a semester off
 - ▶ 2006 – Of the 866 non returners from Spring to Fall – 36% have since graduated
 - ▶ Of the respondents who indicated they were taking a semester off – 55% were seniors.
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Further Analysis

- ▶ Match to National Clearinghouse data
 - ▶ Provide information to Financial Aid
 - ▶ Ask again – with expanded questions based on our findings
 - ▶ Tracking seniors?
 - ▶ Graduation Initiative
- 

THANKS



James Clifton, Graduate Intern

Michael Le, Graduate Intern

Hughes, Rees. "Why do second year students leave HSU?." *HSU Student Services*. (2009): Print.

Questions?

- »» “Who questions much, shall learn much, and retain much.”
–Francis Bacon

HSU Institutional Research and Planning

www.humboldt.edu/irp

Gay Hylton

gay.hylton@humboldt.edu