

Back to School: Student Choices during Pandemic

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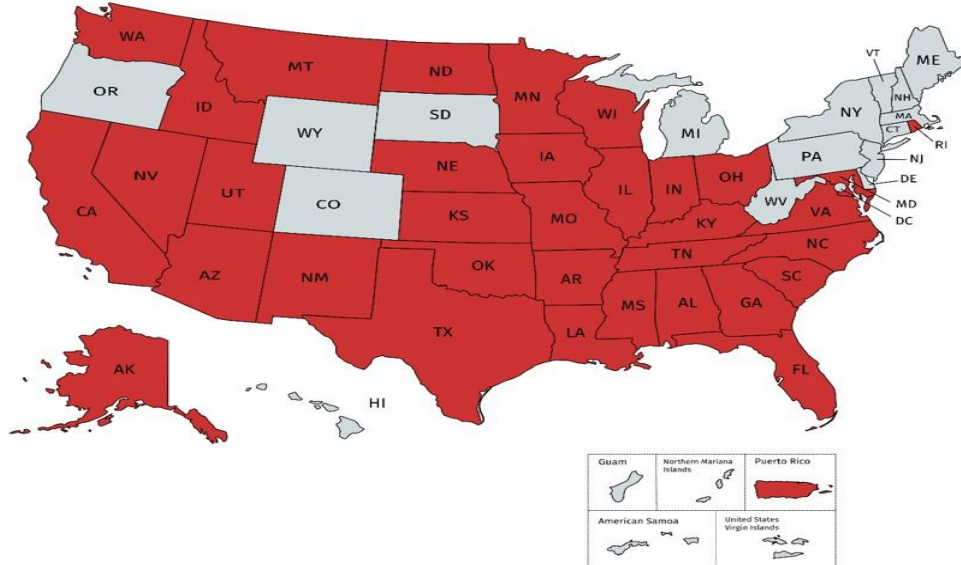


Introduction

- Colleges faced a pandemic in 2020.
- In Spring 2020, all U.S. colleges closed campuses and moved to remote learning.
- As Universities moved to online teaching, they faced substantial losses in revenues.
- To bring back students to campus, Universities had to grapple with the following:
 - Keep students socially distant in classrooms, dining halls, etc.
 - Find space for students to quarantine on campus.
 - Abide by the state laws regarding COVID related safety.

Literature Review

- Singhal (2020) identifies the origin of the virus in Wuhan, China, scientific makeup and timeline of SARS-CoV-2. He suggests that the virus rapidly started to spread in January 2020.
- Shah and Mekala (2020) show that patients who were put in isolation presented immediate stress symptoms. The study also suggests that families felt more isolated because of the way the general public tried to avoid them.
- Bradley and Fox's (2020) study conclude that to open universities safely, they must test frequently to prioritize safety for families and students



- A timeline shown (Ballotpedia, 2021) gave me an idea of what states were restricted from New York where some students resided in these restricted states.

Variables

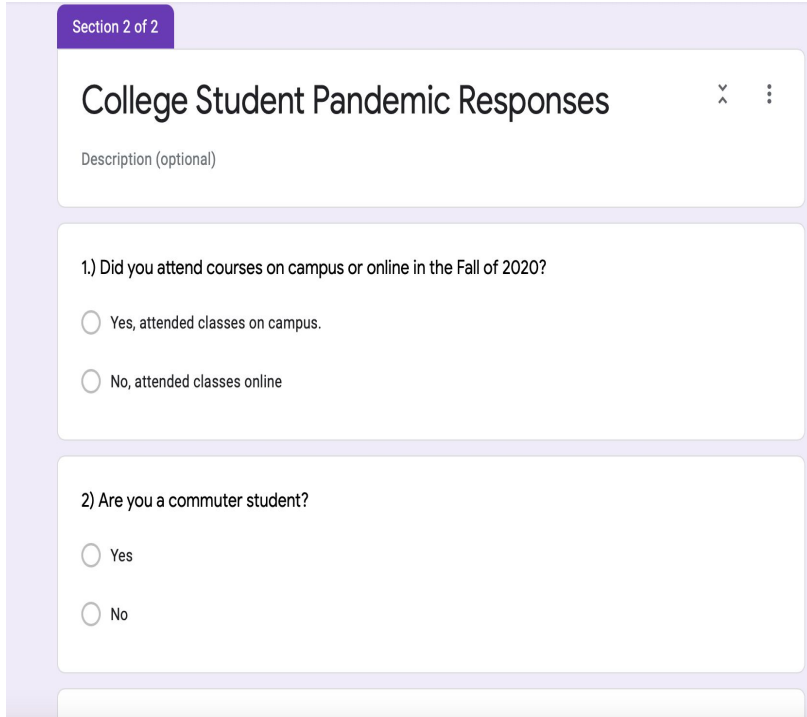
- **Dependent Variable:**

- *Decision*: whether a student decides to attend class in person or online in the fall semester of 2020.

- **Independent Variables:**

- *Commuter*: whether the student commutes to school or lives on campus.
- *Grade*: what grade the student is in.
- *International Student*: whether the student is an international student or not.
- *Hot Spot State*: whether the student resides in a restricted state from New York or not (as of August 10, 2020).
- *Off Campus Lease*: whether the student has an off campus lease or not.
- *Online Classes on Schedule*: how many classes were made online by their professor regardless of their decision.
- *Student-Athlete*: whether the student plays a sport on campus or not.
- *Significant Other*: whether the student has a significant other that attends Wagner or not.
- *Preference on Learning*: whether the student prefers to learn in a classroom setting or online.
- *Friends*: whether friends were primary factor in coming back to campus or not.

Data Collection



The image shows a screenshot of a Google Form titled "College Student Pandemic Responses". The form is displayed in a light purple-themed interface. At the top left, there is a purple tab labeled "Section 2 of 2". Below the title, there is a section for a "Description (optional)". The form contains two questions, each with radio button options:

1.) Did you attend courses on campus or online in the Fall of 2020?

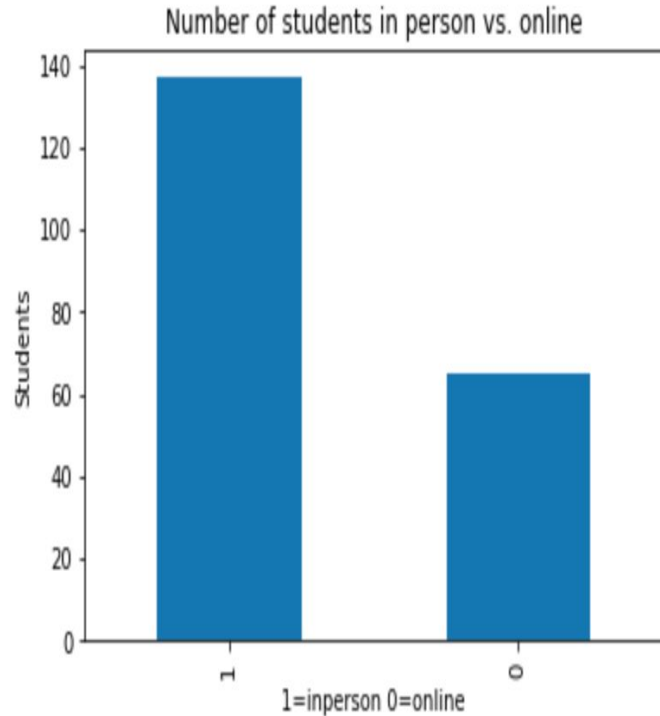
- Yes, attended classes on campus.
- No, attended classes online

2) Are you a commuter student?

- Yes
- No

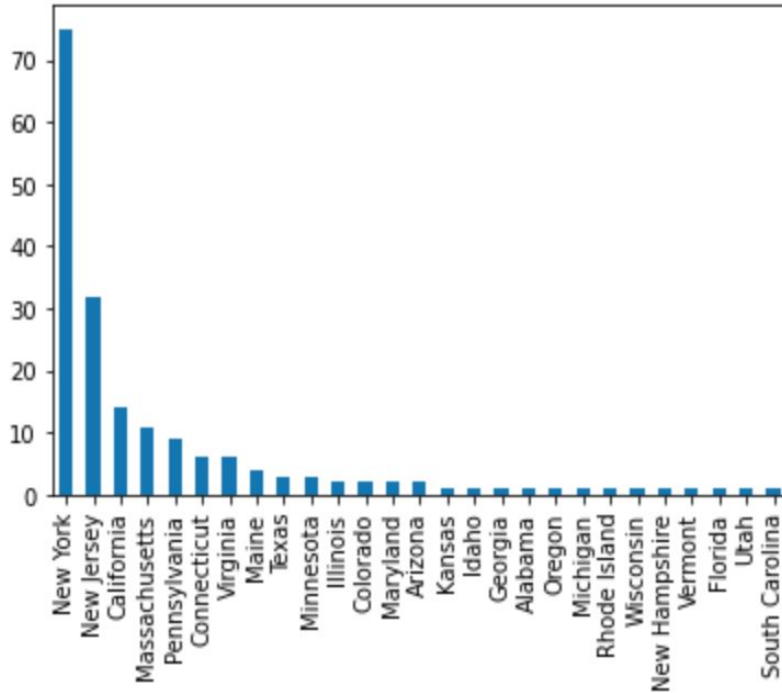
- Data collected through a google form
- Google form linked to Google sheet
- Survey sent out through student mailing list

Overview of Sample



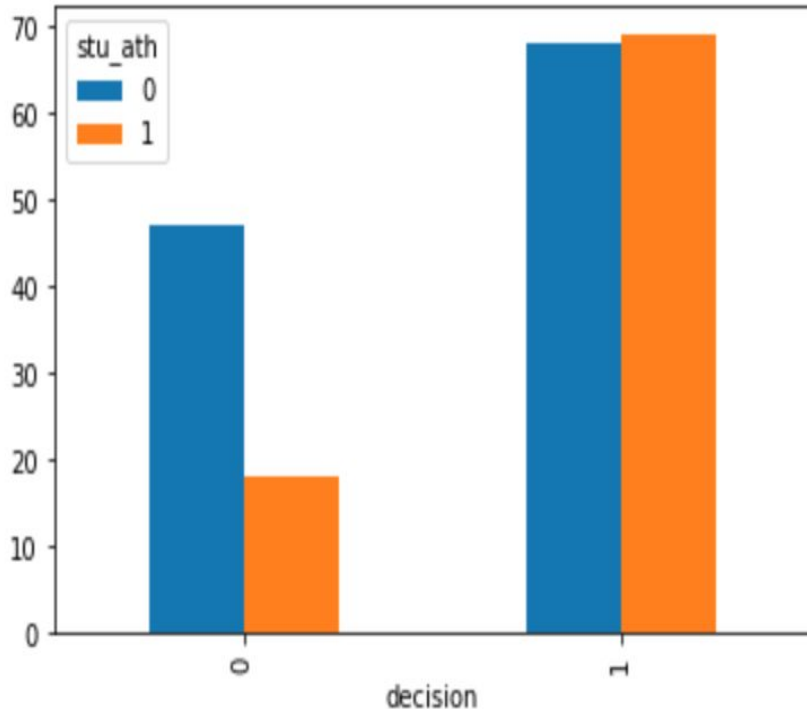
- 202 students responded to the survey.
- 137 students returned to in person learning.
- 65 students stayed home and learned remotely.

Overview of Sample (Continued)



- Students reside from 27 different states in the sample.
- 42 students reside in a restricted state based on New York's law.
- 160 students do not reside in a restricted state.
- 18 students are international students.

Overview of Sample (Continued)



- 79.3% student-athletes decided to return to campus.
- Only 59% of non student-athletes decided to return to campus.

Results

- Theoretical Equation:
 - $\text{decision} = B_0 + B_1\text{commuter} - B_2\text{grade} - B_3\text{international student} - B_4\text{hot spot state} + B_5\text{off campus lease} - B_6\text{online class on schedule} + B_7\text{student athlete} + B_8\text{significant other} + B_9\text{major requirement} + B_{10}\text{preference on learning} + B_{11}\text{friends} + e$
- Estimated Equation:
 - $\text{decision} = 0.461 + 0.96\text{commuter} - 0.051\text{grade} - 0.011\text{international student} - 0.111\text{hot spot state} + 0.064\text{off campus lease} - 0.056\text{online class on schedule} + 0.054\text{student athlete} + 0.035\text{significant other} + 0.055\text{major requirement} - 0.001\text{preference on learning} + 0.340\text{friends}$
- Online class variable was negatively statistically significant.
- Friends variable was positively statistically significant.
- Model could explain more than 55% of variation in the student's choice.

Takeaways

- Conditional on the instructor's choice of mode of instruction, the probability of a student returning to campus went down with an unit increase in availability of online classes.
- Friends present on campus increased the probability of choosing an in-person instruction mode for the representative student.