



Findings

This report provides an analysis of student characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, Pell Grant status, and number of college credits earned that may shed light on factors that contribute to student attrition. The population of this study consisted of 73,841 degree-seeking students who left the FCS in the 2007 academic year. **Exhibit 1** provides a comparison between student leavers and those who enrolled in the FCS in 2007. By comparing the profile of students who left without a degree with that of students in the system as a whole, it is possible to identify populations at higher risk of leaving college without a degree.

Exhibit 1: Demographic Comparison of Leavers vs. Students Enrolled in FCS (2007)*

	Black	Hispanic	White	Other
Leavers (73,841)	19.9%	20.8%	53.6%	5.7%
FCS Students (693,784)	17.4%	21.2%	52.4%	9.0%
	Under 18	18 to 25	26-35	36 & Over
Leavers	0.1%	50.1%	28.3%	21.6%
FCS Students	3.0%	49.3%	19.8%	26.6%
	Did Not Receive Pell		Received Pell	
Leavers	80.0%		20.0%	
FCS Students	84.9%		15.1%	
	AA		AS	
Leavers	71.7%		28.3%	
FCS Students	74.9%		25.1%	

*Students whose ages were unknown (approximately 1.2% of FCS students) are not included in this table.

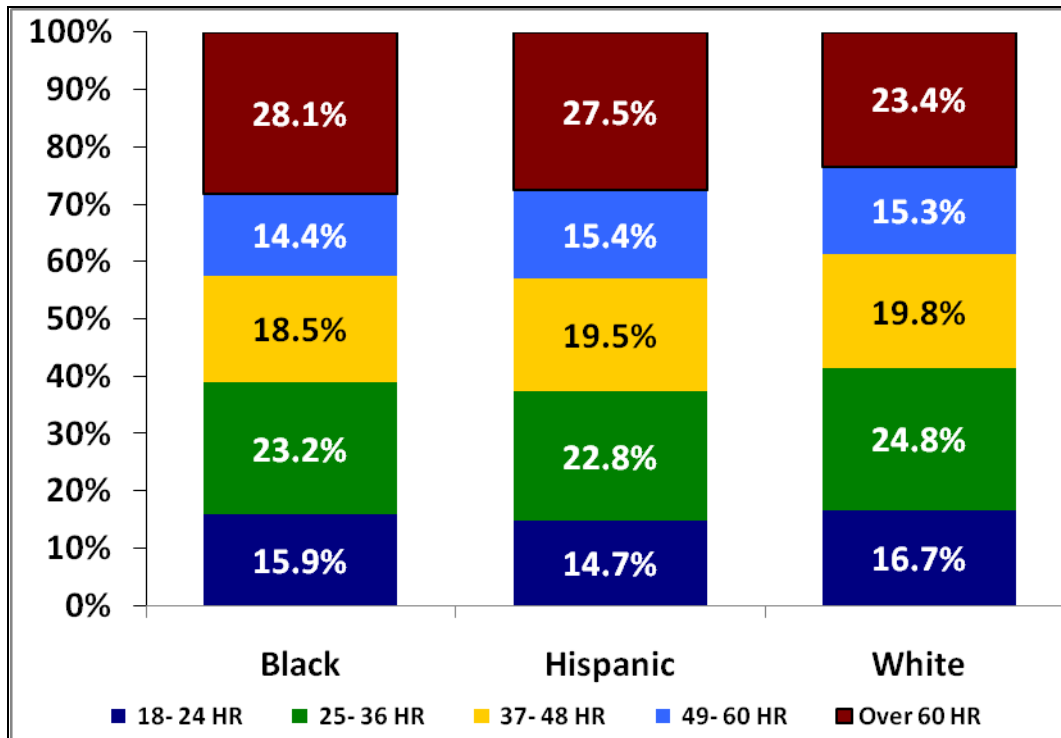
Source: Division of Florida Colleges

Exhibit 1 shows that compared to their counterparts who were enrolled in 2007, leavers were somewhat more likely to be black (20% vs. 17%, respectively). For Hispanic students, the percentage of leavers and enrolled students was about the same (21%) and there was only a difference of one percentage point between leavers and enrolled students who were white. Age is also related to exiting college early. Students aged 26-35 are significantly more likely to leave (28.3% compared to 19.8% of the overall population) while students 36 and older are less likely to leave early.

Exhibit 1 also compares leavers and enrolled students by Pell status and by degree program. Pell recipients are much more likely to leave prior to graduation (20.0% compared to 15.1%). Of the students enrolled in AA and AS programs, AA students were less likely to leave (71.7% compared to 74.9%) while AS students were somewhat more likely to leave without a degree. In short, Pell recipients, black students, and students enrolled in AS programs had a greater tendency to leave without completing their degree.



Exhibit 2: Percentage of Leavers, by Race and Number of Hours Completed

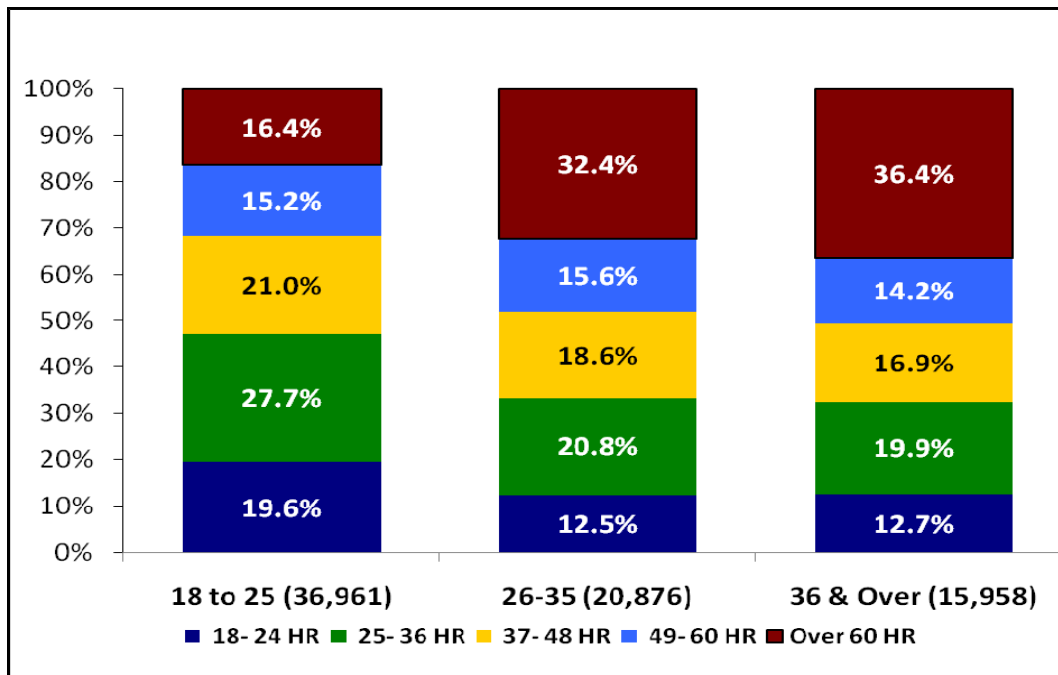


Source: Division of Florida Colleges

Exhibit 2 shows the percentage of leavers by race and number of hours earned before leaving. The question here is whether some groups of students accumulate more hours before exiting the system. Overall, the data show, that most students leaving college have earned either 25-36 credit hours or are over 60 credit hour thresholds. The two groups with the largest percentage of leavers, the 25-36 credit hours and over 60 credit hour cohorts, represent approximately half of all leavers. There is little variation between the race and ethnic groups of college leavers with just a slight tendency for black and Hispanic students to leave with more credit hours.



Exhibit 3: Percentage of Leavers, by Age and Number of Hours Completed



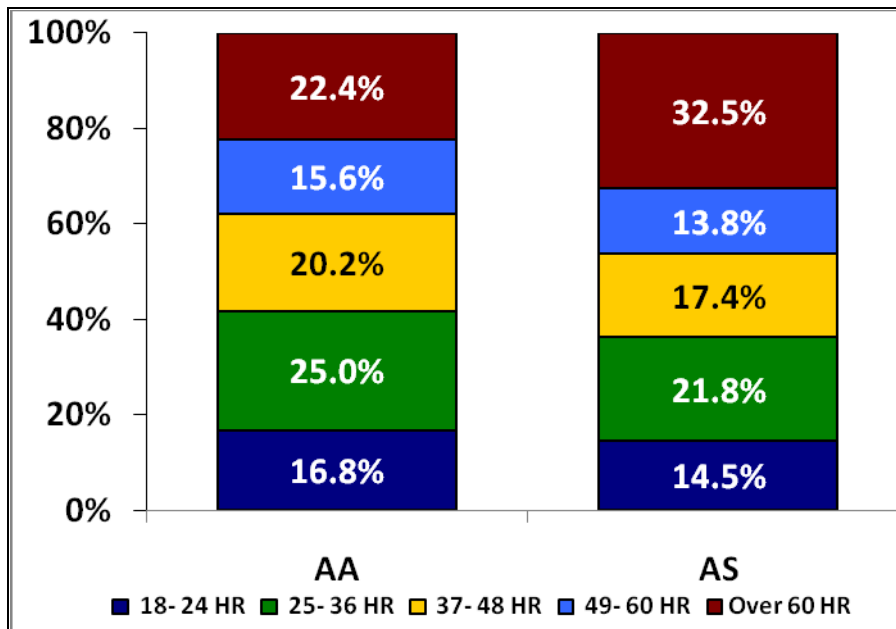
Note: Leavers under the age of 18 comprised 0.1% of the total leavers population and are not included on this graph.

Source: Division of Florida Colleges

Student age is strongly related to the average number of credits earned before leaving. **Exhibit 3** shows that older students are much more likely to leave with more credit hours. Again, the question here is not whether students from a group are more likely to leave, but among those that do leave early, are there some groups that accumulate more credits. Among 26-35 year old students, 32.4% left with 60 or more credit hours and among 36 and older students that number rises to 36.4%. A possible explanation for the number of leavers in the 18-24 year old category could be credit earned through dual enrollment. Fewer students in this age group leave college as they earn more credits compared to students from the older age groups.



Exhibit 5: Percentage of Leavers, by Degree Type and Number of Hours Completed



Source: Division of Florida Colleges

The chart in **Exhibit 5** shows that there is a strong variation between degree types. As seen in Exhibit 2, the most critical time for leaving is the 25-36 credit hours and over 60 college credit hour marks. However, more students (32.5%) from AS programs are likely to leave after earning over 60 credit hours when compared to AA students.

Summary

Almost 74,000 students left college in 2007 without completing the necessary coursework to receive a degree. Understanding why these students left, some with 60 or more credit hours, represents an excellent opportunity to improve completion rates. This analysis revealed that black students are slightly more likely to exit early and that Pell recipients and students just outside the traditional college age, those 26-35 are more likely to leave early. Of those that exited early, this report found that black students are somewhat more likely to accumulate more hours prior to exiting and that students over age 26 and students in AS degree programs are much more likely to leave with 60 or more credits.

